An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 1

From Surah al-Fatiha (1) to Surah al-Baqarah (2) v.154

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author (s): Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 10
What is a 'Commentary'? 11
The Current Commentary 12
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 13
The Problems in Translating 13
Translators Note 14
Editor's Note 15
Notes 17
Acknowledgment 18
Notes 18
References 19
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 19
English Translations of Qur'an 19
Supporting Technical References 20
Phraseological and Philological Sources 20
A Presentation to Muslims 22
Notes 23
Surah Al-Fatihah, Chapter 1 24
Surah Al-Fatihah (The Opening) 24
No.1 (7 Verses) 24
Contents of the Surah 24
1. The Tone of the Surah 24
2. Al-Fatihah, the Basis of the Qur'an 25
3. Al-Fatihah, Magnificent Honour of the Prophet (S) 25
4. The Importance of its Recitation 25
5. The Titles of the Surah 26
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 1 26
Explanation: Is the Phrase 'Bism-il-Lah' a Part of Each Surah? 27
Allah, the Most Inclusive Name of God 28
Allah's General and Specific Mercy 29
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 2 30
The World is full of His Mercy 30
Virtue of the Verse 31
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 3 32
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 4 33
‘Faith in the Resurrection’, the Second Principle 33
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 5 35
Man in the Presence of Allah 36
Explanation- Allah: the Only Site of Reliance 37
The Social Aspect of Worship 37
We Ask Allah for Help in Confronting Forces 37
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 6 38
Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 7 42
Two Paths of Deviation 42
Explanation 42
Supplication 45

Notes 45
Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2, Introduction..... 47
Surah Al-Baqarah..... 47
(The Cow)..... 47
No.2 (286 Verses)..... 47
Contents of the Surah 47
The Virtue of Studying this Surah..... 47
Notes 49
Section 1..... 50
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 1-5..... 50
The Abbreviated Letters of the Qur'an 50
Piety in Lexicon and Religion 53
The Stages of Piety..... 53
The Effects of Piety on Man's Spirit and Body..... 54
The Pious Ones, the First Group..... 54
1. Faith in the Unseen..... 54
2. Relationship with Allah 56
The Excellence & Importance of Prayer 57
3. Relationship with People..... 58
Note:..... 61
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 6-7..... 61
Disbelievers, the Second Group 62
Infidelity and its Meaning 63
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 8-16 63
Hypocrites, the Third Group..... 64
Explanations 67
The Appearance of Hypocrisy and its Roots 67
The Necessity of Knowing the Hypocrite 68
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 17-20 69
Two Interesting Parables manifesting the Hypocrite..... 70
Notes 72
Section 2..... 73
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 21-22 73
Do Worship Allah!..... 73
Some Explanations..... 74
The Sky and the Earth are Bounties 75
Explanation: Idolatry in Different Forms..... 77
A Detailed Scientific Meaning of Atmosphere..... 77
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 23-24 78
مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ 78
Why do Prophets Need Miracles? 80
The Holy Qur'an, The Everlasting Miracle of the Prophet of Islam (S)! 81
The Holy Qur'an, Global and Eternal..... 81
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 25..... 82
The Specialties of the Bounties in Heaven 82
Occasion of Revelation 84

Explanations 84
1. Faith and Deeds 84
2. The Purified Spouses 85
3. The Material and Spiritual Blessings in Heaven 85
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 26 86
Occasion of the Revelation 87
Explanation 88
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 27 88
The Real Losers! 88
Notes 89
Section 3 90
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 28-29 90
The Mysterious Bounty of Life! 90
Conclusion 92
The Seven Firmaments 93
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 30-33 94
Man, Allah's Deputy on Earth! 94
Angels on Trial 97
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 34-36 98
Adam in the Garden 99
Explanations 99
Why did Iblis Disobey? 99
The Heavy Forfeit Paid by Adam 102
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 37-39 103
Adam's Return to Allah 103
Explanation: The ' Words' Adam (as) Learnt from the Lord 104
Notes 105
Section 4 106
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 40 106
The Remembrance of the Favours of Allah 106
Explanations 107
Jews in Medina 107
The Jews' Twelve Covenants with Allah 107
Allah will fulfil His Covenant, too! 108
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 41-43 109
Explanation 110
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 44 111
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 45-46 111
How to Overcome Difficulties 112
What is 'Meeting with Allah'? 113
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 47-48 113
The Vain Imaginations of the Jews 114
Supplication 115
Intercession in the Qur'an and Traditions 115
Notes 117
Section 5 118
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 49 118
Slavery of Females, Past and Present 118

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 50 119
The Rescue from Pharaoh! 119
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 51-54 122
The Israelites' Greatest Deviation 123
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 55-56 124
An Unjust Demand! 124
Note 126
Section 6 127
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 57 127
Abundant Bounties! 127
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 58-59 128
The Israelites' Intensive Obstinacy 128
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 60 129
The Miracle of Water Gushing Forth in the Desert! 129
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 61 130
Demanding a Variety of Food 130
Note 131
Section 7 132
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 62 132
A General Principle for Salvation 132
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 63-64 133
Hold the Signs of Allah Firmly! 134
How was the Mountain Raised over the Israelites' Heads? 134
Notes 135
Section 8 136
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 65-66 136
Those Who Exceeded on the Sabbath! 136
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 67-74 137
The Story of the Israelites' Cow 138
Notes 140
Section 9 141
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 75-77 141
Occasion of Revelation 141
A Futile Expectation! 141
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 78-79 142
Occasion of Revelation 143
The Jewish Learned Men's Plots of Oppression Against the Laymen 143
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 80-82 143
Explanation: Earning Sin 145
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 83-86 145
The Breachers of the Covenant! 146
Explanation: The Best Strategy for the Survival of Nations 147
Note 148
Section 10 149
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 87-88 149
Their Covered Hearts 149
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 89-90 150
A Religious Adherent & an Infidel! 150

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 91-93 151
Racial Bigotries of the Jews 151
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 94-101 153
None Denies Divine Signs Save the Transgressors! 156
Note 157
Section 11 158
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 102-103 158
Solomon (as) and the Sorcerers in Babylon 158
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 104-105 160
Occasion of Revelation 160
Leave No Pretext for Enemies! 161
A Precise Meaning 161
Notes 162
Section 12 163
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 106-107 163
Purpose of Abrogation 163
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 108 164
Occasion of Revelation 164
Some Futile Pretexts 164
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 109-110 165
Envy and Obstinacy 165
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 111-112 166
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 113 167
Occasion of Revelation 167
Exclusivity, the Fruit of Ignorance 167
Note 168
Section 13 169
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 114 169
Occasion of Revelation 169
The Most Unjust Ones! 169
Explanation: Mosques and the Ways of their Desolation 170
Supplication 171
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 115 171
Occasion of Revelation 171
Allah, the Omnipresent 171
Philosophy of the Qiblah 172
Notes 174
Section 14 175
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 116-117 175
The Jews, Christians, and Pagans and their Superstitions 175
Explanation 175
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 118-119 176
Another Pretext 176
Explanation: Their Hearts are All Alike! 178
Two Instructive Principles 178
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 120-121 179
Occasion of Revelation 179
Two Unsatisfiable Groups! 180

Explanation 180
Pleasing Enemies has its Limits 181
Allah's Guidance if the Only True Guidance 181
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 122-123 182
Notes 183
Section 15 184
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 124 184
Imamat, the Climax of Abraham's (as) Honour 184
Eligibility for Imamat 185
Prophethood, Messengership, Imamat and their Differences 187
An Imam, by Allah's Commission 189
Two Questions 190
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 125 191
The Magnificence of the Ka'bah 191
'Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those 192
Explanation: The Secure Refuge, its Social and Educational Effects 192
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 126 193
Abraham's (as) Petition to Allah! 193
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 127-129 194
The Structure of the House of Ka'bah 194
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 130-132 195
Abraham (as), a Human Prototype 196
Notes 198
Section 16 199
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 133-134 199
Occasion of Revelation 199
Everyone is Responsible for his Own Deem 199
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 135-137 200
Occasion of Revelation 200
Only Our Creed is True! 201
Explanation: The Oneness of the Prophets' Invitation 202
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 138-141 203
Notes 206
Section 17 207
Part Two 207
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 142 207
Occasion of the Change of Qiblah 207
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 143 208
An Ummat of Middle Standing 209
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 144 210
Turn Towards the Sacred Mosque 210
“...and now We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah 211
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 145 211
They will Never be Content! 212
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 146-147 213
Notes 214
Section 18 215
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 148 215

Every Religion has a Qiblah 215
Explanation: The Day When Imam Mahdi's (as) Adherents Assemble 216
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 149-150 216
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 151-152 219
Explanation 220
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 153 220
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 154 222
Notes 225
Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought 226

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward”[1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5],

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray,

the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness

which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِ الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Al-Fatihah, Chapter 1

Surah Al-Fatihah (The Opening)

No.1 (7 Verses)

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ للّه رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحْمـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اهدِنَـــــا الصِّرَاطَ المُستَقِيمَ

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

1. ***"In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful."***
2. ***"(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds."***
3. ***"The Beneficent, The Merciful."***
4. ***"Master of the Day of Judgement."***
5. ***"Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help."***
6. ***"Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path."***
7. ***"The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."***

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Holy phrase ***'In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful'*** / *bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim* / is, in fact, mentioned both at the onset of the Qur'an and at the beginning of every Surah, except Surah 9, (Surah Taubah -Repentance). And, since the purpose of Allah's Word, i.e. the whole Qur'an, is to guide people; as Surah Al-Maidah, No. 5, verses 15-16 say:

"...Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah", "With it Allah guideth him who follows His pleasure to the ways of peace and safety...";

therefore, this guidance, being a grant and a fundamental principle, begins with Allah's Holy Name.

This Surah, among all Suras of the Qur'an: has an extraordinary; radiance which originates from the following merits:

1. The Tone of the Surah

This Surah, The Opening, in comparison with other Suras of the Qur'an regarding its tone and melody, has a particular style which is, clearly different and extraordinary.

The other Suras contain instructions from Allah, Who gives commands and admonishments to His servants, but, in this Surah, His words are uttered

on behalf of the servants. In other words, in this Surah, Allah has taught His servants how to supplicate and speak to Him, simply and without a mediator.

2. Al-Fatihah, the Basis of the Qur'an

It is narrated that the holy Prophet (S) has said:

"By the One, in Whose hand is my soul, Allah has not sent down a similar Surah to this Surah (Al-Fatihah), neither in the Turah, nor in the Gospel, nor in the Psalms, nor even in the Qur'an and it is Umm-ul-Kitab"; [1] which means that it is the basis and origin of all excellence.

In fact, besides referring to the Resurrection, this Surah presents facts concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence, Unity of Attributes, Unity of Divine Acts, and Unity of Worship. It is the essence of the whole meaning of the Qur'an.

It is narrated from Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) that:

"All secrets of Allah are in Divine Books; and the contents of all those Divine Books are comprised in the Qur'an; and what is found in the Qur'an is condensed in Surah Al-Al-Fatihah, and what is in Al-Fatihah is gathered in / bismillah /, and what is in /bismillah / is concentrated in / b /, (the first letter of 'Bism-il-la ')..." [2]

Based on the entirety of great commentators' statements, it is understood that this tradition indicates clearly the importance of both the Holy Qur'an and / bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / in which science and knowledge, from the beginning to the end, is comprised.

The interpreter and elucidator of these sciences is the holy Prophet (S), and after him there are his true vicegerents including Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as). [3]

3. Al-Fatihah, Magnificent Honour of the Prophet (S)

Surah Al-Fatihah, more so than the other Suras in the Holy Qur'an, was revealed to the holy Prophet (S) as a great bounty. It stands on a par with the whole Qur'an. The seven verses in the Surah sum up the whole Qur'an:

"And We have bestowed upon thee the Seven Oft-repeated (verses) and the Grand Qur'an",[4] .

This meaning is also referred to in a narration from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) quoting the Prophet's (S) tradition who said:

"Verily, Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed (His) favours on me particularly for 'The Opening' (Al- Fatihah) and has positioned it on a par with the whole Grand Qur'an, and surely Fatihat.-ul-Kitab (the Opening of the Qur'an) is the dearest (item) in the treasures of the 'Arsh, (Throne of Heaven)". [5]

4. The Importance of its Recitation

The recitation of this Surah, because of its extreme importance, is frequently emphasized in Islamic traditions and narrations.

As for its virtue, it is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) that:

"The reward of any Muslim who recites the Surah 'Opening', is like that of a person who has recited two thirds of the Qur'an, and so much reward would he receive as if he has given every believing Muslim, man or woman, a free will offering ". [6]

5. The Titles of the Surah

There are ten titles given to this Surah, as taken from Islamic narrations and books, thus: Fatihat-ul-Kitab, Umm-ul-Kitab, Umm-ul-Qur'an, Sab'-ul-Mathani, Al-Wafiyah, Al-Kafiyah, Ash-Shafiyah, Al-Asas, As-Salat, and Al-Hamd. [7]

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

It is a custom among most people of the world to recite the name of one of their great and very beloved personalities that the worthiness of their work might be elevated. That is, they relate that work to that personality from the very beginning of their endeavour.

Among all beings, the One Who is eternal is only Allah, and, therefore, everything and every activity should begin with His Holy Name.

It should be enveloped in His Light, and help should be always asked only from Him. So, in the first verse of the Qur'an, we recite 'Bism-illah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim', (***In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful***).

This action should not be done only with the tongue, but it should be done truly and meaningfully, because this kind of connection with Him sets work in the right direction and keeps it far from any deviation.

For this very reason, such a work will certainly be successful and blessed. The holy Prophet (S), in a tradition, has said:

"Any important work that begins without mentioning / bismillah /, will remain in valid" [8]

After narrating this tradition, Hazrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) added:

"For every action that a person wants to do, he / she should recite / bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / which means that he / she begins the action with the Name of Allah, and every action that begins with the Name of Allah is blessed. " [9]

On the excellence and importance of / bism-il-lah /, it is narrated from Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (as), who has said thus:

"(The holy phrase) 'Bism-il-lah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim' is closer to 'the Exalted Name of Allah' than the pupil is to the white of the eye". [10]

Again, Ibn-Abbas narrates from the holy Prophet (S) thus:

"As soon as a teacher tells a child to say 'Bism-il-lah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim' and the child says it, Allah records immunity (from fire) for the child, his or her parents and the teacher". [11]

Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said:

"No Holy Book ever came down from heaven but that it began with 'Bism-il-lah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim' ". [12]

In 'Khisal' by Shaykh Sadduq it is cited that Imam Baqir (as) has said:

"...When we begin an action, great or small, it is appropriate to recite / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / and that action may be blessed ". [13]

In short, the stability and permanence of an action is due to this very relation to Allah.

The phrase / bism-il-lah / at the start of the Surah, teaches us to seek the help of Allah from His pure perfect Essence when we begin any action.

That is why Allah, the Exalted, in the first verses revealed to the holy Prophet (S) instructed him to -initiating the proclamation of Islam -perform this great task with the Name of Allah: "Proclaim in the Name of your Lord..."[14]: and the words of Noah (as) to his followers, at the time of the Flood are:

"So he said: Embark ye on the Ark, in the Name of Allah, whether it moves or be at rest!..."[15].

Again, Soloman's letter to the Queen of Sheba begins, thus:

"It is from Soloman, and is (as follows): '***In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful***'"[16].

Based on the same principle, all of the Suras of the Holy Qur'an, (except Surah At-Tauba, No.9) begin with / bism-il-lah / [17] in order to pursue the essential aim of guiding man and leading him to prosperity with success, far from getting a taste of defeat.

In any event, when we begin our work with reliance upon the Supreme Power of Allah, Whose Power is above all power, we feel, psychologically speaking, far more powerful; therefore, we may be more confident.

We may try more, be more persevering, and more courageous in challenging with difficulties, more hopeful, and, similarly, our intentions and the essence of our actions may be more purified. At the time of beginning any affair, reciting the Name of Allah is the secret to its success.

To whatever extent we further explain this verse, it will still be seen insufficient, because, according to a narration, Hadrat Ali (as), regarding the of the verse, talked to Ibn-Abbas from the beginning of a night until the next morning, but it was only for the of / b /, the first letter of / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim /. [18]

Explanation: Is the Phrase 'Bism-il-Lah' a Part of Each Surah?

Almost all Islamic scholars unanimously hold the opinion that / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ is, as was stated before, a part of Surah Al-Fatihah and, also, of the other Suras of the Qur'an (except Surah At-Taubah, No.9).

In essence, the inclusion of / bism-il-lah / at the beginning of all Suras of the Holy Qur'an, except the above mentioned one, is a vital piece of evidence bearing witness to this very fact, and the belief is so firm that no change has been made in the Qur'an and nothing has been added to it since it was revealed to the Prophet of Islam (S).

Mu'awiyat-ibn- 'Ammar, one of the companions of Imam al-Sadiq (as), said that he had asked the Imam whether he should say /bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / at the beginning of Surah Al-Fatihah when he stood for prayer, and he (as) replied: "Yes". He had questioned him (as), again, as to if he should recite / bism-il-lah / when Surah Al-Fatihah ended and before reciting the next Surah. Then, Imam al-Sadiq (as) again, answered: "Yes ". [19]

Dar Qutni, a learned Muslim researcher, according to a sound document narrates from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) that someone asked him (as): "What is As-Sab-al-Mathani (Seven Verses)?" "It is Surah Al-Hamd", he

(as) answered. The man said: "Surah Al-Hamd consists of six verses". He (as) replied: " 'Bism-illah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim' is also one verse." [20]

Moreover, Muslims have always preserved the practice of reciting / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / at the beginning of every Surah (except (Surah 9) when reciting the Holy Qur'an and it has been proven, on numerous accounts that the holy Prophet (S) used to recite it, too.

It has been said that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) was asked to say whether / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / was a part of Surah Al-Fatihah. He (as) answered:

"Yes, the Messenger of Allah used to recite it and considered it one verse (of the verses) of the Surah, and he said that Fatihat-ul-Kitab (The Opening) is the same as 'Sab-al-Mathani' (seven verses)." [21]

Allah, the Most Inclusive Name of God

The term / ism / in the phrase / bism-il-lah /, as men of letters in Arabic literature say, is originally derived from / sumuww / with the meaning of 'height, elevation'.

The reason why any 'noun' is called by an' appellation' is that after choosing to call a 'noun' by the particular given 'name' (ism), the hidden meaning of the expression appears, and the sense of the 'name' is elevated, therefore forsaking meaninglessness.

In the phrase / bism-il-lah /, the word Allah is the most complete and comprehensive name among the Lord's many names. This is because each of Allah's names, which are found in the Holy Qur'an, as well as in other Islamic sources, truly reflects one particular aspect of Allah's Attributes.

In other words, the only name that refers to all of His Attributes of Glory and Beauty is Allah. That is why other names are often used as modifiers for the word 'Allah'.

For example, "Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful", (Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2. verse 226), refers to Allah's forgiveness; "..Allah heareth and knoweth all things", (No. 2. verse 221) shows His being well-acquainted with what is audible and what comes to pass, respectively; "And Allah sees well all that you do", (Surah Al-Hujurat. No.49. verse 18) states that He has information on each and every thing that is done by anyone; "Surely Allah is He Who gives (all) sustenance, the Lord of Power, steadfast (forever)", (Surah Ath-Thariyat. No.51. verse 58) points to His giving sustenance to all creatures and, at the same time, discloses that He is powerful and firm in His actions.

And, finally, Surah Al-Hashr No. 59 verse 23, 24 reveals some other Attributes of Allah. The terms 'Creator' and 'Evolver' are suggestive of His creativeness and inventiveness, and 'Bestower of Forms' indicates His giving shapes:

"Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; -the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme (in creating all creatures)... ." "He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names..."

Another piece of evidence which is a clear indication that this Name, Allah, is all-inclusive is that the acceptance of Faith, in Islam, is possible

only by reciting the sentence: / la: ilaha illalah / "There is no god, but Allah"; and each of the other phrases such as: 'All-Knowing', or 'Creator' or' Bestower of Sustenance' and the like, alone, is not sufficient enough to proclaim as evidence of Monotheism in Islam.

And, that is why in religions other than Islam, the God of Muslims is referred, to as 'Allah', because it is only Muslims who use 'Allah ' to refer to, what they do worship.

Allah's General and Specific Mercy

The words 'ar-Rahman' (The Beneficent) and 'ar-Rahim' (The Merciful) are adjectives, both derived from 'ar-Rahmah' (Mercy). The former word, the Beneficent, as it is popularly recognized among some commentators, refers to the General Mercy of Allah which is bestowed upon all creatures; among them are the believers and the disbelievers, good-doers and evildoers.

And, as we can see, the Divine bounties of life are distributed everywhere and all human beings enjoy the endless merits therein. This is their sustenance. They draw it out of the abundant blessings encompassing the whole world of existence.

The word 'ar-Rahim' (The Merciful) refers to that Specific Mercy that is endowed upon the believing, obedient servants alone. The believers, because of their true belief, good actions, and faithful active obedience, deserve this special, exclusive mercy, of which the disbelievers are deprived.

The particular fact ratifying this topic is that the word Rahman is always used in the Qur'an with the meaning of an infinite form of mercy, which is a sign of its generality, while the word Rahim is sometimes used with the meaning of a finite form, which is a sign of its , specificity such as:

"...And He is full of Mercy to the Believers", (Surah Al-Ahzab. No. 33 verse 43).

And it is sometimes used in an infinite form such as in Surah Al-Fatihah.

A narration from Imam al-Sadiq (as) says:

"Allah is the God of all things and is Beneficent to all His creatures, and He is Merciful, especially, to the believers." [22]

Therefore, at the moment that we initiate any action, when we begin with the Name of Allah, we must seek His Mercy, General and Specific Mercy, both.

It is interesting to note that this power, which has a broad concept, much the same as gravitational pull, and has the ability to draw hearts closer together, is the very Attribute of Mercy. This Attribute of Mercy is the very means by which men can attain a close relationship with the Creator, also.

That is why true believers, when reciting the holy verse / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim /, at the beginning of their affairs, detach their hearts from everything else and rely only upon Allah;, and seek help only from Him, because He is the only One Whose Mercy is 'All-Encompassing' and no creature is deprived of it.

Another fact that can also be understood from / bism-il-lah / is that Allah’s acts are based on Mercy and, punishment has an exceptional aspect which will not be fulfilled unless there are some exact, clear reasons for it.

When we recite the supplication entitled, 'Jaushane Kabir', Section 20 thus: "O' Lord, Whose Mercy surpasses His Wrath..." The above point becomes clear.

Human beings should attach importance to mercy and affection and behave accordingly in their daily lives and use violence and harshness only for those times when it is clearly warranted.

We conclude this discussion with a tradition, rich in meaning, from the holy Prophet (S), who, when commenting on the many different kinds of His All-Encompassing Mercy, said:

"Verily, there are one hundred mercies belonging to Allah, from which, He has sent down to the Earth only one and distributed that one among His creatures. All the mercy and affection they have, issue from it. He, the Merciful, withheld the other 99 for Himself to show mercy upon His servants on the Day of Resurrection". [23]

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 2

الْحَمْدُ للّه رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

2. "(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds"

The World is full of His Mercy

After reciting the phrase / bism-il-lah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim /, to begin the Surah, our first duty is to bring to mind the Great Creator and Cherisher of the world of being, and His endless bounties which have surrounded us thoroughly. In doing so, it is both 'a guide' for us to observe the existence of Providence and 'a motive' for showing our servitude and worship to Him.

It is 'a motive' because any man, after receiving a gift, wishes to know its giver at once, in order to show his gratitude and thankfulness to him. This quality is in man's innate disposition prompting him to manifest his acknowledgment of Him.

This same quality in man, in discussing the theological motives of 'the necessity of expressing thankfulness to the Bestower', according to what man's nature and rationale leads him to, is considered one of those motives.

And it is 'a guide' to knowing the Lord and His bounties, because the best and the most direct way towards the acknowledgment of the Origin is the study of the secrets of creation, especially, the existence of the bounties of life as related to human beings.

Therefore, perhaps, it is for these two reasons that Surah Al-Fatihah, alongside / bism-il-lah /, begins thus:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds ".

Or, in other words, the verse "(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds" points to both the Unity of Divine Essence, and the Unity of Divine Attributes and Acts.

Originally, qualifying Allah (s.w.t.), here, with the phrase / rabb-il-'alamin / (the Lord of the Worlds) is, in fact, mentioning the reason after stating the claim. It seems that someone has asked why all praise is (only) Allah's and the response is that it is for the reason that 'He is the Lord of the Worlds'.

This is one of the characteristics of Allah. In another occurrence, the Holy Qur'an says:

"He Who has made everything which He has created most good...," (Surah As-Sajdah. No. 32 Verse 7).

And again, in Surah Hud No.11. Verse 6, it says:

"There is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance depends on Allah... "

It is, also, clearly understood from the word /al-hamd /, 'praise', used in this verse, that Allah has created all these bounties and benefits, basically, by His Choice and His Will.

It is interesting to note that by stating the phrase, '(All) praise is (only) Allah's', it is not only helpful to use it for the commencement of affairs, but, as the Qur'an teaches us, it is also used as a conclusion, like in Surah Yunus No.10. Verse 10, about the good-doers in Heaven, it says:

"(This will be) their cry therein: 'Glory to Thee, O God!' And 'peace' will be their greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: 'Surely, the Praise is Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds! ' ".

Virtue of the Verse

Concerning the virtue of this Holy verse, there is a narration from Imam al-Sadiq (as) which says that in a tradition from the Prophet (S), he has said:

"When a believing servant says 'The Praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds', such a praise that befits Him and His Rank, the angels are unable to record it. They will be asked by Allah why they did not record the reward of the phrase which the believing servant stated.

Then, in response to their not recording the reward, they will ask how it is that they could even understand and estimate the high standard of saying such a phrase which contains the praise befitting and deserving only to Him. Allah, the Exalted, will tell them that they should record the phrase and it would be for Him to endow the servant with the reward of the praise be fitting Him. [24]

The word / rabb / originally means 'the owner of something who proceeds to train and improve it'.

This word is absolutely applied to Allah, alone, and if it is applied, in Arabic, for other than Him, it is certainly used in a possessive form, as / rabb-ud-dar / 'the owner of the house', or / rabb-us-safinah / 'the owner of the ship'. In any case, the word, itself, conveys the meaning of 'training'.

There is another idea mentioned in Majma'-ul-Bayan that says: " / rabb / means: 'an important person whose orders are obeyed'." However, it is probable that both meanings refer to the same origin.

The term / alamin / is the plural form of / alam / 'the world' and we cite it, here, with the meaning of 'a collection of different creatures with common characteristics or a common time and place'.

For example, we say: the world of Man, the world of animals, and the world of plants, or, we say: the world of the East and the world of the West, or: the world of today and the world of yesterday. Therefore, when / alam /, which has a plural sense by itself, is used in a plural form, it refers to the 'universe'.

The writer of the Al-Manar says that it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) that he has said / alamin / means 'peoples', only. Then, the writer adds that the term is used in the Qur'an with the same meaning; for example:

“...That it may be an admonition to all peoples", (Surah Al-Furqan, No.25. verse 1). [25]

It is true that the term / alamin / in many occurrences, in the Qur’an, is used with the meaning of 'peoples', but, sometimes, it is also used with a broader scope of meaning which envelops other creatures; for instance:

"Then Praise be to Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds!", (Surah Al-Jathiyah. No. 45 verse 36).

And, also, like:

"Pharaoh said: 'And what is the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds?' (Moses) said: 'The Lord and Cherisher of the heavens and the earth, and all between them...", (Surah Ash-Shu’ara, No.16. verses 23.24).

It is interesting that in a narration from Hadrat Ali (as), Saduq has cited in the book ' 'Uyun-ul-Akhbar', that he (as), commenting on the verse, has said:

"(The phrase) / rabb-il-alamin / refers to all creatures whether they are inanimate or living". [26]

There is, of course, no contradiction between these traditions, because, although the meaning of the term / alamin / is very vast, Man is , the most significant being among all creatures of the world, so, he is sometimes especially considered the central point of them, and other creatures are dependent upon him and in his shadow. Therefore, when, in the tradition of the Imam (as), the term is rendered into ‘peoples’, the reason is that the main purpose of creation, in this great gathering of beings, is Man.

This point is, also, interesting that some have introduced two forms of / alam / 'the world': 'the great world' (macrocosm) and 'the lesser world' (microcosm) by which they refer to Man as 'the lesser world', because the entity of a person alone is a collection of different powers which govern 'the great world'.

In fact, 'man' is a sample of the whole world. So Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his poems, addressing Man, says:

"You think that you are a small body, while (you should know that) you contain 'the great world' (macrocosm) inside you." [27]

One of the factors that causes us to emphasize the vast meaning of / alam / 'the world', is that the term has occurred after the phrase /al-hamd-u-lil-lah /, in which we devote all the praise to Allah, only, and, then, we reason our statement with / rabb-il-alamin / 'The Lord of the Worlds'.

We say the praise is only Allah’s because all perfections, all bounties and all blessings, in this world, belongs to Him, the Lord, the Cherisher.

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 3

الرَّحْمـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

3. "The Beneficent, The Merciful."

The meaning of / ar-rahman / 'the Beneficent' and / ar-rahim / 'the Merciful', together with their broad sense of meaning and the difference between them, was explained at length while commenting on / bism-il-lah /, the repetition of which is not required.

A point that should be added to the , here, regarding 'ar-Rahman' and 'ar-Rahim', is that these two attributes, which are the most significant attributes of Allah, are repeated at least 30 times, every day, in our (5) daily prayers; (twice in Surah Al Fatihah, and once in the Surah we recite after it). In this way, we praise Allah sixty times as being 'Merciful' each day.

This, indeed, is a lesson taught to all human beings more than anything else that they should try to acquire this attribute, and practice it in their daily lives and activities.

Moreover, it points to the fact that if we count ourselves among the true, obedient servants of Allah, we should not follow or imitate the manner in which tyrant slave owners use against their servants when dealing with our servants.

The history of slavery indicates that the tyrant owners used to treat their slaves in horrifyingly cruel ways.

For example, if a slave moved a little slow in performing services, he would receive harsh punishments: i.e. be whipped, put in chains or fetters, fastened to a mill-stone and forced to turn it, instructed to work in mines, imprisoned in deep, dark, wet holes and, if his faults were greater, he would be hanged.

Another reference in the history of slavery also shows that condemned slaves were put in wild animal cages. If the slave succeeded in staying alive, another animal would be let in on him.

These are some examples of the conduct of some owners with their slaves. But, Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, has mentioned repeatedly, in the Holy Qur'an, that Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful to the servants who are repentant of their disobedience to Him.

For example: Surah Az-Zumar. No.39, verse 53 says:

"Say: 'O ' My servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins, for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful' ".

Therefore, the terms 'ar-Rahman' (the Beneficent) and 'ar-Rahim' (the Merciful) used after the phrase / rabb-il- alamin / 'the Lord of the Worlds' refer to the idea that, He, with the absolute Power He has, is yet Merciful to all His creatures. This quality, which Allah possesses, attracts His servants to Him and they eagerly say: 'ar-Rahman-ir-Rahim', (the Beneficent, the Merciful).

It is here that one's attention is drawn to the fact that the behaviour of Allah, the Exalted, toward His creatures is, by far, different from that of masters toward their servants, in particular, during the horrible period of slavery.

Therefore, 'belief in Allah ' is the first of the five principles of Islam.

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 4

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

4. "Master of the Day of Judgement."

'Faith in the Resurrection', the Second Principle

In this verse, attention is paid to the second important principle in Islam, i.e. Resurrection and the Hereafter when it says:

"Master of the Day of Judgement."

Thus, the focus of the idea of the Origin and End, which is the main foundation of all ethical and social improvements in Man, reaches the peak of perfection.

It is noteworthy, here, that the mastership of Allah, or His Ownership, is pointed out, which illustrates His Sovereignty and Domination over everything and everyone on that Day, when all human beings will attend that Great Court for reckoning, before their real and genuine Master.

They will see all their deeds and even their thoughts present without there being aught less than the original or anything forgotten. They will even have to accept their share of responsibility for any customs for which they have merely been the founders of, not necessarily the doers of them.

Allah's Ownership, on that Day, is not similar to our imaginary ownership of that which belongs to us from the things of this world. His Ownership, regarding the world of existence, is the real ownership.

It is the special dependence of creatures on the Lord and their being in need of Him. If the flow of His blessings ceased even for a single moment, it would cause them to perish altogether.

In other words, this ownership is the consequence of His Creatorship and Divinity. He, Who creates beings, gives them life every moment and cherishes them, protects them and guides them, is the real master of all creatures. As a matter of fact, He is the only Ruler of all powers in the world of existence.

There is no doubt that Allah is 'The Lord of the Worlds'. The question to be raised here is this: 'Is not Allah the Absolute Owner of this world? ‘versus our statement to this effect that 'He is the Master of the Day of Judgement'.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that the 'Ownership of Allah’, though it comprises both worlds, enjoys further manifestation in the Hereafter. This is because all material ties and imaginary ownerships are cut off (in the Hereafter), and no one has anything of his or her own on That Day.

Even intercession, if ever achieved, is by Allah’s command, as the Qur'an says about the Reckoning Day:

"The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command That Day shall be (wholly) Allah's", (Surah Al-Infitar, No. 82. verse 19).

In other words, occasions arise, in this world, when one helps another through his or her speech, money, power, advocates, plans, designs, and so on. On That Day (the Hereafter), however, certainly not a single trace of such affairs will exist.

Therefore, when people are asked: "Whose will be the Domination This Day…?", they answer:

“...that of Allah, the One, the Almighty! ", (Surah Al-Mumin. No. 40, verse 16).

This is also an answer to those who reject the idea that when Allah is the Owner of everything why, then, He is called the 'Master of the Day of Judgement’.

Man, with no belief in the Hereafter and the Day of Reckoning, would have the potential to be the most immoral of beings, the biggest tyrant committing the worst and the most hideous crimes, for, in his view, there is not anyone to question or punish him if he is clever enough not to get caught and, with such characteristics, sometimes, it would be so terrible or impossible for other fellow-creatures to continue their lives in this world.

Therefore, faith in life after death and the Day of Judgement, which is an essential part of Islam, like prayer, is very helpful in controlling men against committing sins.

Emphasizing the Ownership of Allah on the Day of Judgement has this effect, too, that it stands against the disbelief of disbelievers in the Hereafter. It is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an that Faith in Allah has been a common belief even among disbelievers in the Age of Ignorance.

Surah Luqman, No.31. Verse 25 says about them: " If thou ask them, who it is that created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: 'Allah'...", while they did not accept the speech of the Prophet (S) about the Resurrection:

"The Unbelievers say (in ridicule): 'Shall we point to you a man that will tell you, when ye are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that ye shall (then be raised) in a New creation?"

"Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, or has a spirit (seized) him?..", (Surah Saba No.34. Verse 7, 8).

A tradition from Imam Sajjad (as) says:

"When Ali-ibn-il-Husayn, (as)began reciting 'Master of the Day of Judgement', he repeated it so many times that he was at the point of losing his life ". [28]

The phrase / yaum-id-din /, is repeated more than ten times in the Qur'an, exclusively with the meaning of 'the Hereafter':

"And what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is?" "Again, what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is?" "The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command that Day shall be (wholly) Allah's ", (Surah Al-Infitar, No.82. Verses 17-19).

The phrase / yaum-id-din / is used in the sense of 'the Day of Judgement', for 'That Day' is the day of rewards; and / din / in Arabic philology means: 'reward, recompense'. The most evident procedure fulfilled in the Hereafter is the procedure of paying rewards or inflicting punishments.

On That Day, the curtains will be removed and the deeds of all will be reckoned, precisely, and everyone shall reap the fruit of his own actions, be they good or evil.

Imam al-Sadiq (as) said in a tradition that the Day of Judgement is 'The Reckoning Day'. [29]

It is also noteworthy to mention that some commentators believe that 'Resurrection' is called /yaum-ud-din / because on That Day, everyone t is recompensed for his own religion, if he has followed it accordingly.

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 5

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

5. "Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help."

Man in the Presence of Allah

Here, this verse is a start for a servant to plea and ask his needs from Allah. In fact, from here on, the tone of the statements changes. The former verses were the praise and attributes of Allah, and the statement of Faith in His Pure Unity, consisting of a confession to the belief in the Day of Resurrection.

But, from this verse on, it seems that the servant, with that firm foundation of Belief in the knowledge of Allah, sees himself in front of Him, the Pure Essence. He addresses Him and speaks, firstly, about his own worship for Him and, then, about His help which he seeks from Him. Thus he says:

"Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help."

In other words, when the concepts of the former verses settle in one's soul, and his entire entity is enlightened with the Light of Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds, and when he recognizes His 'General Mercy' and 'Specific Mercy', the individual transforms into a complete person from the point of 'belief ' and 'Faith'.

The prime fruit of this deep belief in monotheism, for a person, in one respect, is to be a pure true servant of Allah, free from any idol and idolatry, far from tyrants and lusts; and, on the other hand, to seek help only from His Pure Essence.

In fact, the former verses state the Unity of Essence and Attributes, while, here, the statement is regarding the Unity of Worship and Unity of Acts.

'Unity of Worship' means that we acknowledge no person or thing worthy of worship other than Allah, Whose commands alone do we obey and Whose laws only do we follow, avoiding any kind of servitude and submission to other than Him, the Pure Essence.

'Unity of Acts' means that we clearly recognize Him as the only real 'Author of Causes ' in the world. It does not mean that we would refuse the world of 'cause' and be neglectful of searching for the causes of things, but it means that we would believe that any effect from any cause is under His command. It is He Who has given heat to fire, light to the sun, and vivacity to water.

The outcome of this belief is that one relies on Allah alone, and knows that all authority and power are His only. In his view, other than Him is powerless, mortal and perishable.

Allah is the only Essence to be relied on and worshipped. It is only He Who is deserving of man's reliance for everything.

This kind of thought and belief sets man apart from anyone or anything else and joins him only to Allah. He obeys Allah even when he pursues after 'the world of ways and means', i.e. he sees the Power of Allah, the Cause of causes, in control of the means.

This belief elevates the soul of man so high and the scope of his thought so broad that it reaches eternity and becomes free from any limited circumstances, in so far as, Hadrat Amir-ul-Mumineen, the Master of the Virtuous, Ali (as), regarding Allah, says:

"I worship you neither for the fear of the Fire (of Your Hell) nor for the desire of Your Paradise, but I found You fit for worshipping and I worshipped You." [30]

Explanation- Allah: the Only Site of Reliance

According to the Arabic literature, when the object of the verb precedes its subject, in that language, the meaning of exclusiveness is understood, and, here, the word / iyyaka / 'Thou' has preceded the words / na'bud / 'we worship' and / nasta'in / 'we seek help' which indicates exclusiveness in which its result is the very Unity of Worship and Unity of Acts that were explained before.

Even in our own worship, we need His help for which we must ask Him. We may be involved in self-conceit, deviation, hypocrisy and similar things, which destroy our worshipping and servitude totally. Then, in all affairs and activities, our full attention should be exclusively on Allah, the Exalted.

In other words, this, in itself, is one of the stages of monotheism, a high stage of it, which is rendered into 'monotheism in speculation'. That is, one should always and in all circumstances, think of Allah only.

He should rely exclusively on Allah. He should fear nothing but Allah; and he should trust Allah only. He should see nothing save Allah; he should want nothing save Allah; and he should love none save Allah. As the Qur'an says: "Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body... ", (Surah Al-Ahzab, No.33, verse 4)

The Social Aspect of Worship

The pronoun 'we', which is in the plural form, used in terms / na'bud / 'we worship' and / nasta'in / 'we seek help', and in the next verses, shows that worship, especially prayer, is based on 'plural' and community.

The servant must consider himself among the community even when he is standing in front of Allah for invocation, much less during his other daily activities.

Thus, from the point of view of the Qur'an, any individualism, solitariness, and the like are not accepted in Islam. Particularly, the ritual prayer, from the prayer call: / hayya 'alas- salat / 'hasten to the prayer', which is an invitation to initiate prayer, to Surah Al-Hamd at the beginning of the prayer, and the term / assalamu alaykum.../ 'peace be on you all...' at the end of the prayer, all are statements of verification to the concept that this worship basically has a social aspect; viz, it ought to be performed as a congregational prayer.

It is true that the prayer performed individually is also accepted in Islam, but personal worship is considered as the secondary degree.

We Ask Allah for Help in Confronting Forces

We have to confront different forces in this world, both the forces in nature and our innate, or inborn natural forces. To be able to challenge with these destructive, misleading factors, we need to be helped.

Hence, we shelter under the protective umbrella of Allah. We get up every morning and repeat the verse / 'iyyaka na'budu wa 'iyyaka nasta'in / (Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) we seek help) to confess

our servitude to Allah and to ask His Pure Essence help to make us successful in this great challenge.

We do the same in the evening before we go to bed. We get up in the morning with His remembrance, and we go to bed in the evening with His remembrance, and each time we ask help from His Pure Essence.

What an excellent state this is for the person who is in this stage of Faith! He never bows to any tyrant. He never loses himself for the attraction of material gain, and as the Qur'an reveals about the Prophet of Islam (S), saying:

"...Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for the Cherisher of the Worlds ", (Surah Al-An'am No.6. Verse 162).

Therefore, the recitation of this Holy Surah may provide the solution to all problems in our lives. It has plenty of properties which can bring us to safety. An example is from a narration cited by one of the companions of the Prophet (S).

He said that in one of the battles, he was with the Messenger of Allah (S). When the fight became difficult, he (S) lifted his head and said: "O' Master of the Day of Judgement! Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) we seek help". At that moment the army of enemies was defeated and (many of them) were killed while the Prophet (S) and Muslims won. [31]

It is stated in another narration: "When a difficulty arises for a believing servant, and he recites this Holy verse, it will become easy for him". [32]

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 6

اهدِنَـــا الصِّرَاطَ المُستَقِيمَ

6. "Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path."

After confessing his obedience and servitude to Allah, reaching the state of worship, and asking for help from Him, the first thing that the servant seeks is His guidance to the 'Straight Path', the path of the righteous, the path of Justice, and the path of Faith and good deeds.

So, he asks the Lord, Who has bestowed on him all of these bounties, to give him the bounty of 'guidance', too.

Such a man, in the above stated condition, is a believing one who is acquainted with the Lordship of his Lord, but it is possible, too, that suddenly he would cease to receive this bounty because of some component of wickedness, and, consequently, he would stray from the Right Path.

Therefore, he must ask his Lord, at least ten times a day, to protect him from any kind of aberration.

Moreover, this 'Straight Path', which is the very Divine creed, has some stages. All people are not on the same level of spiritual preparedness necessary for attaining these stages. Whatever stages a person attains, there are still some higher stages above them that a believing servant might ask Allah to guide him to reach.

Here, a question arises: "Why must we always ask Allah for guidance to 'the Straight Path', as if we are being misguided?".

Besides, supposing the statement is true about us, the ordinary believers, but what about the holy Prophet and sinless Imams (as) who were the

examples of complete human beings? In answer to this question, we may say:

Firstly, the fact is that Man is liable to deviate from the Right Path with each step that he takes as he is walking along the path of guidance. So, he should rely on Allah and ask Him to keep him firm on the 'Straight Path'.

We must not forget that our existence, our being, and all the bounties which always come to us, are from His Origin. To clarify the matter, we cite a simple example:

All creatures, including human beings, (from one point of view) resemble an electric lamp. We see that the light of a lamp, when it is on, appears to be constant and monotonous. The reason is that the electrical current flows constantly from a generator to the lamp.

The generator continuously produces some new electrical power, a part of which reaches the lamp by some connective wires. Our being is similar to the lamp. Although it appears as a sustained being, it is, in fact, a continually renewed being that flows ceaselessly to us from the Original Being, the Bountiful Creator.

Therefore, as the continually new being reaches us, we need constant new guidance, too. It is natural that if something wrong or some barriers manifest themselves in our spiritual connective wires with Allah; the vices, injustice, wrong doings, etc., will disrupt our connection with the Origin of guidance. At that moment, we may deviate from the' Straight Path'.

We ask Allah that these barriers be removed and not obstruct our way that we may remain steadfast along the 'Straight Path'.

Secondly, receiving 'guidance' is the same as travelling the path of 'development' along which man can gradually promote from lower degrees to higher and higher ones.

We also know that the path of development is endless and continues towards 'infinity'.

So, it is no wonder that even the prophets and sinless Imams (as) ask Allah to guide them to the 'Straight Path', because the Absolute Perfection is Allah and all of us, without any exception, are on the path of perfection, then it is acceptable that they, too, ask Him for higher promotions.

Do we not often send greetings to the holy Prophet (S) by the special formula of 'Salawat'? Does 'Salawat' not have the meaning of requesting new blessings from Allah for Prophet Mohammad and his descendants (S)?

Is it not expressed in the Qur'an regarding the Prophet (S) who used to say:

"...O' my Lord! advance me in knowledge", (Surah Taha, No.20, verse 114)?

Does the Holy Qur'an not say:

"And Allah doth advance in guidance those who seek guidance...", (Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 19)?

And, again, does it not say:

"But to those who receive guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their piety and restraint (from evil) ", (Surah Muhammad, No.47, verse 17)?

This explanation makes clear the answer to the question regarding the benediction which we recite for the Prophet and the sinless Imams (as) by which We beseech Allah, in fact, for a higher and better position for them all (as).

Here are two traditions which make the above idea clearer: Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) commenting on the verse 'Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path', says:

"It means: '(O' Lord) continue bestowing Your blessings on us as You did during the days passed by which we succeeded to obey You, so that we can obey You in the .future of our lives, too'". [33]

Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said about the verse:

"It means: '(O' Lord) show us the way which ends in Your love, leads us to Your Paradise, and prevents us from following our destructive desires or our own wrong and destroying decisions'" [34]

What is the 'Straight Path'?

According to what is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the 'Straight Path' is the same as the 'Monotheistic Creed'; the religion of Truth and the belief in the instructions of Allah, as Surah Al-An'am. No.6. verse 161 says:

"Say: 'Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight, -a religion of right, -the path (trod) by Abraham the true in faith, and he (certainly) joined not gods with Allah'."

Here, 'a religion of right' and 'the theistic path of Abraham (as) as the true faith', in which he called on no god but Allah, are introduced as the 'Straight Path'. This shows the belief aspect.

But, Surah Yasin, No.36, verses 60 and 61 say:

"Did I not enjoin on you, O' ye children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he is to you an enemy avowed?" "And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this is the Straight Way?"

These verses, here, point to the 'practical' aspects of the 'religion of truth'. They urge us not to commit any Satanic deed or any wrong action.

Clinging to Allah, the Qur'an says, is the key to reaching the 'Straight Path':

"...Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown a Way that is straight", (Surah Al-i-Imran. No.3. verse 101).

It is necessary to mention this point that the 'Straight Path' is always only one way, not more than that, because the shortest distance between two points is always only one straight line.

Therefore, when the Qur'an says that the 'Straight Path' is the very true belief in the Divine religion with its moral and practical aspects; it is because it is the shortest route to a spiritual connection with Allah.

And it is also for this same reason that 'the religion of truth' is not more than one:

"The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will)...", (Surah Al-i-Imran. No.6. verse 153).

Later it will be made evident that 'Islam' has a vast meaning which envelops all the monotheistic religions that were lawful at their own times but were nullified by the new one. Thus, it clarifies that all different

commentaries that commentators have cited on the matter, i.e. the 'Straight Path', refer, indeed, to the same thing.

Islam, the Pure Unity, Qur'an, the Prophet, and his vicegerents (as), are some explications that commentators have offered for the meaning of the 'Straight Path'. All of the stated explications refer to the Divine religion in the aspects of 'Faith' and 'practice'.

Also all of the various narrations and traditions cited on the subject in the Islamic sources, each of which points to a separate dimension of the question, in substance, refer to one essence. Some examples are as follows:

It is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who has said:

"The 'Straight Path' is the path of prophets and they are those on whom Allah hath bestowed His Grace". [35]

Here are three traditions from Imam al-Sadiq (as), who, when commenting on this verse, said:

"It is the 'way' and the 'cognizance' of Imamate". [36]

Again, in another tradition, he (as) says:

"By Allah, we (Ahlul Bayt) are the 'Straight Path' ". [37]

Another tradition from the same Imam (as) says:

"The' Straight Path' is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)". [38]

Ahmad-ibn-Mohammad-ibn-Ibrahim Al-Tha'labi, a Sunni scholar, has narrated from Abu-Buraydah Al-Aslami, who was one of the companions of the holy Prophet (S), that he said:

"The 'Straight Path' is the path of Mohammad and his descendants ". [39]

This means that their path is based on the doctrine of Islam which consists of the belief in: 'Oneness of Allah', 'Justice', 'Prophethood', 'Imamate', and the 'Hereafter'. There is no doubt that the path of Ahlul Bayt (as) is the' Straight Path', and that adhering to it causes prosperity and salvation, while pursuing other than that leads to loss and injury.

Ibn-il-Maqazali has narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who has said:

"The example of my household (Ahlul Bayt) is similar to the Ark of Noah. He who embarked it was rescued (from drowning and destruction), but, he who refused it drowned (and perished) ". [40]

Other traditions narrated from Ahlul Bayt (as) also confirm the concept. In addition, the well-known tradition 'Thaqalayn ' from the holy Prophet (S) is another good clear witness to the matter, too. It says:

"I leave behind me amidst you two Great things; should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you become astray: the 'Book' of Allah (the Holy Qur'an) and my progeny, my 'Ahlul Bayt'." [41]

As was previously stated, it is certain that the holy Prophet (S), Hadrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and all of the other infallible Imams (as) invited people to the theistic religion of Allah, an invitation to Faith and practice in truth, which elevates Man to the climax of ability, guidance, dignity, and human excellences.

By the way, it should not be neglected that there are two kinds of guidance: 'Divine Guidance ' and 'Religious Guidance'.

'Divine Guidance' is the human intelligence bestowed on a person by Allah, which recognizes the difference between: good and bad, right and

wrong, gain and loss, felicity and wretchedness, virtue and vice, and so on. It is, in fact, the inner messenger of a person.

‘Religious Guidance' means that Allah sends prophets, Divine Books and legislation to guide Man to all merits of this world and the next, as well as making him aware of the injuries and damages of the two worlds.

Of course, when Man is guided by the above guidance and acts accordingly, he will be worthy of receiving the blessings of the next world; this is made possible through the development of the soul by acquiring knowledge, good habits, and commendable moral qualities in which state he will certainly attain the happiness of this world and that of the next, together with the infinite grace of Allah.

‘Intellect' is called a 'guide' in that it enlightens man as to what is right and what is wrong. The Prophets (as), Imams (as), and scholars are called 'Guides’, too, because they guide the human race to the salvation and felicity in both worlds. But, really, Allah is the main Supreme Guide, and these are the means appointed for the guidance of Man.

Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse 7

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

7. "The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."

Two Paths of Deviation

This verse is, indeed, a clear illustration of the 'Straight Path’, which was dealt with in the previous verse.

It says that the person asks Allah to guide him onto the path of those on whom He has blessed with many kinds of bounties; (such as the blessings of guidance, success, the leadership of people of truth, knowledge, good actions, holy wars and martyrdom); not those who deserved His wrath because of their wrong doings, nor those who neglected the right path and went astray.

"The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath nor (of those) gone astray."

In fact, we are not familiar with the method of guidance, so the Lord's command, in this verse, is that we ask for the path of the prophets, good doers and all of those to whom Allah has extended His bounties, blessings and favours.

It also warns us that there are two deviated paths in front of us: the path of those inflicted with His wrath, and the path of those gone astray.

Explanation

1) Who are 'Those upon whom Allah has bestowed his bounties'?

Surah An-Nisa No.4, verse 69 has introduced these people, thus:

"All who obey Allah and the Apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, -of the prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of Truth), the Witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! What a beautiful Fellowship!"

As it demonstrates, this verse introduces the people on whom the bounties and Mercy of Allah are bestowed. They are four groups; the Prophets, the Sincere, the Witnesses, and the Righteous. These four states may refer to an idea that: for the attainment of a sound, progressive and faithful society, prophets and divine leaders should form the foundation.

After the prophets are the sincere truthful missionaries and preachers whose words attest to their actions by extend the prophets' missions throughout their societies.

Following this period of the formation of these structural states, naturally, some evil-minded individuals, who serve as barriers on the path of truth, may appear in the way. There should be some others to stand against them. In this struggle a few of these defenders of truth may be gifted with martyrdom, whose blood would then water the tree of ‘Theism'.

The fruit of these struggles and devotions is yielded as 'the Righteous' with whom the society can be pure, efficient, and abounding with spirituality.

Therefore, in the Holy Surah Al-Fatihah (The Opening), we are encouraged to repeatedly ask Allah, during the day and night, that we be led on the path of these previously mentioned four groups, and, obviously at each time, we must emphasize with sincere effort and endeavour, on one of these four states more than the others in order to perform our duty and mission well.

2) Who are the Last Two Groups in this Verse?

The separation of these two groups from each other indicates that each group has some defining characteristics.

To make distinction between these two groups, there are three commentaries:

A) From the application of these two words in the Qur'an, it is so understood that / maqdubi 'alayhim / 'those inflicted with His Wrath' are in a worse condition than /dallin / 'those gone astray'.

In other words, 'those gone astray' are the ordinary misguided and /maqqubi 'alayhim/ 'those inflicted with 'His Wrath' are the misguided who are obstinate or hypocritical. And, for these two very reasons, the Curse and Wrath of Allah have been cited towards them in frequent occurrences in the Qur'an. The followings are some instances:

“...But such as open their breast to Unbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah,...", (Surah An-Nahl No.16. verse 106).

"And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and Polytheists, men and women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil; the Wrath of Allah is on them. He has cursed them and got Hell ready for them: and evil is it for a destination", (Sur Al-Fath. No. 48, verse 6).

However, this group, i.e. 'those inflicted with His Wrath' were those who, besides their unbelief, pursued the path of obstinacy and enmity against Allah, and whenever they could, they even injured the Divine leaders and prophets (S).

As Surah Ale-Imran No.3, verse 112 says:

"...They draw on themselves Wrath from Allah, and pitched over them is (the tent of) destitution. This because they rejected the Signs of Allah, and slew the Prophets in defiance of right; this because they rebelled and transgressed beyond bounds".

B) Some of the commentators believe that / dallin / 'those gone astray' refers to the misguided of the Christians; and / maqdubi 'alayhim / 'those inflicted with His Wrath' refers to the misguided of the Jews.

This idea was formed because of the particular responses that these two groups showed in reply to the invitation to Islam. For, as the Qur'an has clearly pointed out in different verses, the misguided Jews used to show a special grudge and enmity against the invitation of Islam, though, at the beginning, their scholars and learned men were the bearers of the glad tidings of Islam.

Very soon, though, under the effect of deviation of thought, belief and notion, and, also, because their financial gains were being endangered, they became the most obstinate enemies of Islam and they did whatever evil they could against the progression of lslam and Muslims.

(Even today, Zionism and Zionists hold the same position regarding the manner in which they treat Islam and Muslims.)

Therefore, to render these people as 'those inflicted with His Wrath' seems very correct.

But, the misguided of the Christians, who upon encountering with Islam were not so grudging, but were misled because of their misperception of the Divine religion and therefore refusing the Truth, were rendered into / dallin / ' those gone astray’.

They believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost instead of clinging to true Monotheism, the worship of Allah. This is, in itself, one of the greatest examples of 'astray' and 'aberration'.

In the Islamic traditions, too, / maqdubi 'alayhim / ' those inflicted with His Wrath' are interpreted as the Jews, and / dallin / ' those gone astray' as the misguided of the Christians. The foundation of this interpretation is the same as was mentioned in the above.

C) It is also probable that / dallin / 'those gone astray' refers to those who are misguided but do not insist on making others go astray, while/ maqdubi 'alayhim / ' those inflicted with His Wrath' refer to those who both 'go astray' and' lead others astray’. They try vigorously to change others to become like themselves.

The references to this meaning are the verses that introduce the persons who obstruct the way of guidance of others and are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as 'those who would hinder (men) from the Path of Allah'.

Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 16 says:

"But those who dispute concerning Allah after He has been accepted, - futile is their dispute in the sight of their Lord: on them is Wrath, and for them will be Penalty terrible".

Other traditions have also been cited concerning the matter, including a narration from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as). It says:

"Everyone who has disbelieved in Allah, on him is Wrath, and he is astray from His path". [42]

In 'Ma'ani' a book of traditions, it is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Shi'ah (the followers) of Ali (as) are those on whom Allah has bestowed the bounty of 'Wilayat' love of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as); His Wrath is not on them, and they are not on the wrong path". [43]

Supplication

O'Lord! Count us not among 'those inflicted with Your Wrath' and 'those gone astray', but consider us among true believers, the followers of the school of Ahlul Bayt (as).

O' Lord! Guide us on the Straight Path in our every circumstance and in all our affairs!

O' Lord! We thank you for this Divine blessing and say: "Praise belongs to Allah (alone) Who set us among those holding steadfast to the love of Ali ibn Abi Talib and the other immaculate Imams (as)."

Notes

1. Majma-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 17
2. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 28 & Masabih-ul-Anwar vol. 1, p. 435
3. Manhajus Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 90
4. Surah Al-Hijr. No.15. verse 87
5. Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. one, p. 21; & Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 83
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. one, p. 17.
7. Rauh-ul-Jinan, Abul-Futuh Razi; , vol. one, p. 16
8. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 76, chapter 58, p. 305 (according to' Tafsir Al-Bayan', vol. one, p. 461)
9. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 76, chapter 58
10. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 18
11. Ibid
12. Al-Mahasin by Barghi p. 40 & Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 234
13. Tafsir-us- Safi, vol. 1, p. 70 & Al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 26 (Persian version)
14. Surah Al-Alaq No. 96. verse 1
15. Surah Hud No. 11 verse 41
16. Surah An- Naml No.27, verse 30
17. The phrase / bism-il-lah / is used as a contraction of / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim /.
18. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 28
19. Al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 312
20. Al-Itqan, vol. 1, p. 136
21. Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 92
22. Kafi, Tauhid by Saduq, and Ma'ani-yul-Akhbar, (according to Almizan).
23. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 21
24. Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 32, tradition 8; and Tafsir Furat-ul-Kufi; vol. 1, p. 52
25. Al-Manar , vol. 1, p. 51
26. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn , vol. 1, p. 17
27. From the collection of Poems of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn Abitalib (as), p. 175
28. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn. , vol. 1, p. 19
29. Majma'-ul-Bayan. vol. 1, p. 24; &, Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 24

30. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 186
31. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 4, p. 36 (taken from Tafsir-i-Baqawi, and 'Amal-ul-Youm wal-Laylah)
32. Minhaj-us-Sadiqin, Comentary, vol. 1, p. 114
33. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 254; and. Tafsir us-Safi. vol. 1, p. 72
34. Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 484
35. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 20, tradition 86
36. Ibid, p. 21, tradition 88
37. Ibid, tradition 89
38. Ibid, tradition 94
39. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 24, p. 16 & Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 116
40. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 23, p. 124, tradition 50
41. Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, vol. 9, pp. 309- 375
42. Tafsir-us- Safi, vol. 1, p. 74
43. Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 32, tradition 8; and, Tafsir Furat-ul-Kufi: vol. 1, p. 52

Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2, Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

No.2 (286 Verses)

Contents of the Surah

This Surah contains 286 verses, rendering it the longest Surah in the Holy Qur'an. It is indisputable that this Surah was not revealed all at once, but partially and in increments as necessitated by the various Islamic social circumstances and conditions found at different times in Medina.

But, the fact is that the inclusiveness of this Surah from the point of Islamic doctrine in Faith and many practical issues (social, political, economic, and religious) is not deniable, for, there are various subjects discussed in it, including the followings:

1. There are some discussions about Monotheism and gaining knowledge of Allah, especially by way of studying the mysteries of creation.

2. There are many statements about the Resurrection and life after death with a few tangible examples, like the story of Abraham (as) and how the birds became restored to life, and the story of Ezra.

3. There are some facts about the inimitability of the Qur'an and the significance of this Heavenly Book.

4. There are long discussions and explanations concerning the Jews and hypocrites and their peculiar positions against Islam and the Qur'an, evidenced by their various mischievous hindrances against them.

5. There are some narrations about the history of the Great Prophets, including Abraham (as) and Moses (as) in particular.

6. There are some passages that contain a few Islamic rules related to varying subjects, such as: prayers, fasting, Holy War on the path of Allah, the pilgrimage to Mecca, the change of the Qiblah (the direction of prayer) from Jerusalem to Mecca, marriage and divorce, commerce, debt, and a great many of the ordinances concerning usury.

Donation for the sake of Allah is abundantly discussed. The problem of retaliation, the banning of different kinds of forbidden meat, and also gambling and wine drinking are discussed, in addition to a few other ordinances related to the subjects of writing wills, testaments, and the like.

The appellation 'Al-Baqarah' (the Cow), the title of this Surah, is taken from the story of the Israelites' Cow, mentioned in verses 67 to 73 of this Surah, whose description will be explained later in this very (on pages 208 to 213).

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

There are some significant traditions and narrations on the virtue of studying this Surah, cited in Islamic literature, including the followings:

The Late Tabarsi has so cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan that once the Prophet (S) was asked: "Which Surah of the Qur'an is the best?" He (S) answered:

"Al-Baqarah". They asked: "Which verse of the Surah (is the best)?" He replied: "Ayat-ul-Kursi, the Verse of the Throne', (verse 255)". [1]

The superiority of this Holy Surah is, apparently, due to its comprehensiveness, and the preference of the 'Verse of the Throne', (verse 255) is because of its special monotheistic content, which will be dealt with later in this .

It is not contrary to the fact that some other Suras of the Qur'an are considered superior in other aspects. All the Suras of the Qur'an have been considered from different points of view.

Again, it is narrated by Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) that the Prophet (S) said:

"He who recites the first four verses of Surah AI-Baqarah, the 'Verse of Throne' (verse 255) with its next two verses (256,257) together with the last three verses of the Surah, will not meet any trouble in himself; in his family members, and in his wealth; and Satan will not approach him, and he (having paid attention to the Qur'an in his life) will not forget the Qur'an". [2]

Also, 'Ubayy ibne Ka'b quotes from the holy Prophet (S) thus:

"He who recites this Surah (Al-Baqarah) will be encompassed by the bounties of Allah and His Mercy; and He will reward him as much as that of a person who has fought fearlessly on the path of Allah for one year". [3]

Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) added that Muslims should study this Surah, know it, and do it accordingly in order to be benefited by the Mercy of Allah in this world and the next.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"He who recites Al-Baqarah and 'Al-i-Imran, these two Suras will come above his head on the Day of Judgement like two clouds similar to two umbrellas, (and will protect him from the heat of That Day) ". [4]

Here, it is necessary to mention the important fact that those rewards, virtues and significant compensations that have been cited for studying the Qur'an or some special Suras and verses of the Qur’an never meant that one simply should be contented with the fact that one has recited them as invocations.

On the contrary, the recitation of the Qur’an is for understanding, and understanding is for contemplation, and contemplation is for action.

As a matter of fact, every virtue, which is mentioned for a Surah or a verse, corresponds very much with the contents of that Surah or verse. For example, among the virtues of reciting Surah An-Nur, No.24, we see that it says that Allah may protect the person and his children from committing adultery and slander when he perseveres in studying it.

This consequence is because the contents of Surah An-Nur contains some important instructions on resisting sexual deviations; i.e. the instructions advising single persons to hasten to marriage; the instructions about 'cover' (hijab); the instructions about refraining from ogling and desirous aoks; the instruction that forbids spreading any rumours and accusations about others; and, finally, the instruction on executing the punishment for fornication and adultery upon any perpetrators: be they men or women.

It is obvious that when the content of this Surah be observed by the members of a society or a family, the iniquity of adultery will not appear

therein. It is the same concerning the verses of Surah al-Baqarah, mentioned above.

They are all related to the subject of Monotheism, belief in 'Qayb' (the Invisible), knowing Allah, and resisting evil temptations. So, if a person recites them and observes the instructions in them carefully and from the depths of his soul, he will certainly obtain those virtues.

It is certainly true, however, that the recitation of the Qur'an deserves rewards, but, besides the original and essential rewards given by Allah, its effects on personal behavior will exist only when this recitation is a premise for contemplation and action.

Notes

1. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 26; & Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 32
2. Thawab-ul-A'mal (according to the citation of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn vol. 1, p. 36).
3. Minhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 120; & Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 32
4. Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. I, p. 52

Section 1

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاةَ وَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

والَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

أُوْلَـئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M'."

2. "This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the pious ones,"

3. "Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (in charity) of what We have provided them."

4. "And who believe in what has been revealed to you (Muhammad), and what has been sent down (to other apostles) before you; and of the Hereafter they are certain."

5. "They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the successful."

The Abbreviated Letters of the Qur'an

At the beginning of 29 Suras of the Holy Qur'an, there are several certain abbreviated letters, the Muqatta'at, which seem separate from each other; i.e. they do not form an apparently meaningful word, but wherever they occur, in the Qur'an, the Surah follows immediately with some expressions about the Qur'an and its importance.

This in itself indicates that there is a relation between these letters and the origin of the Qur'an. As an example, Surah An-Naml, No.27, verses 1-2, say: "'Ta. Sin. These are verses of the Qur'an, a Book that makes (things) clear." There are, also, many other examples, similar to this one, in the Qur'an.

The abbreviated letters of the Holy Qur'an have always been considered mysterious. In the words of scholars and commentators, the letters that are prefixes to some Suras, such as 'Alif 'A' Lam 'L', Mim 'M', and the like, are among the 'metaphorical expressions' of the Qur'an.

They are secrets that none knows except the Prophet (S) and, after him, his successors (as) who have left some traditions and narrations which testify to this very matter:

1 Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Every book has all elite and the elite of this Book (The Qur'an) is the 'abbreviated letters'." [1]

2. It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

'Alif 'A' Lam 'L', Mim 'M', are the letters among the (whole) letters of the' Exalted Name' of Allah, which are separated and scattered in the Qur'an and

whenever the Prophet and the sinless Imams (as) call Allah by that 'Exalted Name', their prayer will be accepted." [2]

3. It is narrated from Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (as), thus:

"The Quraysh and the Jews refuted the Qur'an and said: 'It is mere magic and he has made it by himself'. So, Allah said: ''Alif, Lam, Mim. This is the (True) Book...', i.e. 'O' Muhammad, this Book that is sent down to you, is made up of the abbreviated letters and 'Alif Lam, Mim are among them. They are the same as the letters of the alphabet that you (people) use in your words. Bring similar to it if you are genuine'." [3]

4. It is narrated from Ibn-Abbas and 'Akramah who have said that these letters are the 'letters of oath', as well as 'the Name of Allah', by which He (s.w.t.) has Sworn.

The reason why Allah has sworn by these letters is, perhaps, for their importance and greatness through which the Glory and Highness of Allah and the secrets of the world of creation are stated.

All sciences, from the beginning to the end, daily activities and arrangements of affairs in societies and their communications throughout the world, the development of industries, the trading and commercial activity between people, their marriages, the social laws, regulations, and the jurisprudence of the religions of human beings, all in all, depend on the letters of the alphabet.

The transmission of ancient civilizations and cultures from old generations to the later ones has been possible only through transcribing and recording them essentially with the help of the bounty of alphabets.

Even this very book, which is the statement of the Divine laws and the description of the Qur'anic concepts, is being published and distributed throughout the world in different languages including the English language, because of the existence of the letters of the alphabet. Furthermore, an oath is usually taken to an important and great subject.

These abbreviated letters have such an importance and greatness. Hence, Allah, the Exalted, taking an oath to a letter of the alphabet, says:

"Nun. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write," (Surah Al-Qalam. No.68. verse 1).

However, there are more than one hundred other traditions on the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an cited by Muslim scholars in many authentic and tradition books.

Another aspect is that some eminent men have said that these letters refer to the idea that this heavenly Book, with such splendour and reputation that it stirs wonder in the great speakers, both Arab and non-Arab, and that has made the men of letters and all others unable to challenge it, is composed of the sort of the very alphabetical letters that are within the reach of everyone.

This fact shows that the Qur'an has not been produced by the mind of Man, but it is an absolute revelation and, therefore, none can produce the like of it.

Imam Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (as) is narrated to have said in a tradition: "Verily, Allah has sent down this Qur'an narrated by the very letters that all Arabs apply ordinarily". And, thus, Allah, Glory be to Him and Highly Exalted is He, says:

"Say, 'If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support ", (Surah Al-Isra', No. 17, verse 88).

Following the abbreviated letters, the Surah, referring to the importance of this heavenly Book, says:

"This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt..."

This meaning may point to the idea that Allah promised His prophet (S) to send down to him a Book for the guidance of men and now it was done. For, it is a Book wherein is a source of guidance for all truth-seekers, and, these believers, in fact, have no doubt in it.

The Qur'an says that there is no doubt in this Book, and this statement is not a mere claim. It means that the content of the Qur'an has such a style that it, in itself, attests to the authenticity of itself.

In other words, the signs of truthfulness, greatness, and firmness together with the depth and synthesis of meanings, the sweetness and elegancy of the words and its stylistic form found in the statements are so evident that no doubt or temptation can interfere and every truth-seeker reaches the limits of certitude.

It is interesting that over the course of time not only the freshness of the Holy Qur'an does not decrease, but, with the progress of science and the secrets of created things being uncovered, the facts of the Holy Qur'an become more manifest.

As the international standards of development, science, and industry are raised, the luminosity and resplendence of these verses become more evident.

This is not only a claim but it is a reality that will be dealt with in this very book, Allah-Willing.

What is Guidance?

The term 'guidance' is utilized in many occurrences in the Qur'an. In all these cases the root meaning of the word refers to two main guidances: Divine Guidance and Religious Guidance.

A) Divine Guidance is the guidance that exists in all creatures of the world. (In other words, 'Divine Guidance' means the leadership of Allah upon creatures under the regulation of creation governed by some definite laws and secrets of the world of existence.)

There are some verses in the Holy Qur'an concerning the subject; like the verse where the Qur'an reveals through Moses (as):

"...Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance", (Surah Taha No.20. verse 50).

It can also be said that those who are in lack of Faith are characterized in two groups. The members of the first group are those who generally seek for the truth and hold enough piety in their souls so that wherever they confront the truth they accept it.

The second group is some obstinate, fanatical, lustful people that not only do not seek for the truth but wherever they find it, they try to blowout its light.

It is certain that the Qur'an, or any other heavenly Book, has always been beneficial for the first group, but the second group does not take any advantage from it. Hence, the Qur'an says:

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is healing and a mercy unto the believers, but it adds not to the unjust but perdition", (Surah Al-Asra', No.17. verse 82).

However, it is a fact that saline soil does not grow flowers such as hyacinth though it rains a thousand times on it. But, if the land is ploughed, fertilized and prepared for planting, the life-giving droplets of rain will be useful for it.

The land of the self of man is similar to this parable. It should be empty of obstinacy and enmity; otherwise, the seed of guidance will not grow in it. So, Allah qualifies the Qur'an as:

"(The Qur'an is) a guidance to the pious ones".

B) 'Religious Guidance' is introduced by prophets and Divine Books. It is through their teaching and training that man can progress on the path of development. The references to this fact are found abundantly in the Holy Qur'an, including the verse that says:

"And We made them Leaders guiding (men) by Our Command...", (Surah Al-Anbiya No.21. Verse 73).

Why is Guidance Particular to the Pious Ones?

It is certain that the Qur'an was sent down for the guidance of all human beings. So, the question is that why the guidance is introduced as particular to the 'pious ones'.

The reason is that it is impossible for Man to take benefit from the guidance of the Divine Books unless he attains some degrees of submission and kindles the light of piety in his self.

Piety in Lexicon and Religion

The term / taqwa /, philologically, is derived from / wiqayah / ' to protect from what harms'. Allah, the Exalted, says: "...save yourselves and your families from a fire...", (Surah At- Tahrim. No. 66. verse 6). Then, piety, in this sense, is 'the protection of oneself from what one fears'.

And, in religion, the pious are 'people who preserve their selves from what harms them in the Hereafter'.

The Stages of Piety

There are some stages of piety. The first stage is to avoid and restrain from committing sins and wrong doings; as it is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) that none reaches (this stage of) piety unless he avoids unlawful things. [4]

In a tradition from the Prophet (S), deeds of people are divided into three kinds:

1) Those that are clearly lawful, whose lawfulness is vividly apparent. 2) Those that are clearly unlawful, whose unlawfulness is certain. 3) Some dubious things that are situated between these two. They are lawful but resemble the unlawful. The person who avoids even the dubious things will never approach the unlawful ones. [5]

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) is narrated to have said:

"A pious person is he whose deeds would not include anything shameful if they are put in a tray and displayed it around the world (to show them) ". [6]

The second stage of piety is the full obedience to what is revealed to the Prophet (S). Thus, piety consists of performing obligatory things (Wajibat) and avoiding the unlawful things.

The third stage of piety is to rid the heart and soul of everything save Allah. In this sense, a pious person is one who strains out from his wishes, those that are not pleasing to Allah, and relies not on individuals but on Him only; viz, he forsakes from hoping in every other being and hopes only in Him; he focuses his view on observing the Beauty and Glory of His Lordship.

This is real piety; so the Qur'an says:

"O ' you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah with the care which is due to Him...", (Surah Ale-Imran No 3. verse 102).

The Effects of Piety on Man's Spirit and Body

Regarding the Faith and practices in Islam, the Qur'an, at the beginning of this Surah, divides people into three different categories:

1. The pious ones (Muttaqin), who accept Islam in all aspects.

2. Unbelievers, who are in the exact opposite state as compared to the first group. They confess their infidelity and do not refrain from expressing hatred and acting hostilely against Islam.

3. The hypocrites, who portray contradictory features. They show themselves Muslims when they are with Muslims, but they behave hostilely towards Muslims when they are with the enemies of Islam. Their main fundamental features are, in fact, the very infidelity of theirs, but they simulate affection for Islam, too.

Undoubtedly, the harm of this group, for Islam, is greater than the second group. Hence, the Qur'an, concerning them, is more severe.

This quality, of course, is found not only in Islam but also in all ideological schools of the world. Their members are either faithful to the doctrine of that school, or are clearly opposed to it, or they are conservative hypocrites. Furthermore, this proposition does not refer only to a specific time; it has always existed in all ages of the human world.

The Pious Ones, the First Group

The verses under discussion deal with the first group. These verses explain the special characteristics of the pious ones from the point of view of Faith and practice in five matters: Faith in the Unseen, establishment of prayer, spending in charity from all of the divine merits they possess, belief in the invitation of all prophets, and Faith in the Resurrection Day.

1. Faith in the Unseen

At first, the verse describes the pious ones as those: "Who believe in the Unseen...".

'The world of the Unseen' and 'the world of the senses' are two concepts opposite each other. 'The world of the senses' is the visible and physical world, while 'the world of the Unseen' is a world beyond our senses.

Therefore, the term / qayb / is used 'for that which is concealed from us'. The Qur'an says: "...the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. (Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, Verse 22).

'Faith in the Unseen' is just the first characteristic that separates the believers from unbelievers. Thus, the believers in heavenly religions contrast with the deniers of God, revelation, and Resurrection. It is for this very reason that 'Faith in the Unseen' has been mentioned as the first characteristic of 'the pious ones'.

The believers have cleft the limits of the world of 'materiality' and freed themselves from their restrictions. They have stepped into a quite vast open world and, with this broad scope of view that they have obtained, they have connected themselves with the realm of an extraordinary, bigger, and greater world.

But, the contrary group insists on confining Man, as an animal, inside the walls of the world of materialism. They call this retrogression, which is a kind of life filled with lusts and excessive luxuries, an advanced civilized life.

Comparing the concepts and doctrines of these two groups, we conclude that the 'pious ones' believe in 'the Unseen', a world very much wider and bigger than what can be seen or touched with the external senses in the world of existence.

The Creator of this universe is Omniscient and Omnipotent, Who has infinite Glory and Insight. He is Eternal and has no end. He has planned the world in a good, regular, and precise design.

In the world of believing men, the spirit of Man has produced a great distance between humans and animals. For them, death does not mean an end. On the contrary, it is one of the stages of progression towards man's development. Death is an opening to a broader and greater world.

Whereas, a materialist believes that the world of being is restricted to what we can see. He says that natural science has proved that the rules of nature are a chain of obligatory rules by which, without any designs or special programs, this world has been fashioned.

They believe productive power of the world has no intellect even as little as that of a child. And, Man is a part of nature, i.e., when he dies everything ends. His corpse is decomposed in a few days and joins with nature again as a natural component. They conclude that there is no life after death for Man, and there is no difference between Man and animal.

Are these two people with these two different methods of thinking comparable with each other? Are their actions and behaviours in the society the same?

The first one cannot ignore that which is right, just and benevolent, and helping other fellow members. But the second does not see any reason for any of these matters. He cares for only what is effective and beneficial in his physical life at present or in the future.

That is why that, in the lives of truthful believing people, there is purity, brotherhood, mutual understanding, and cooperation; while in the lives governed by materialism, colonialism, exploitation, plunder and murder are

seen. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an, in the above mentioned verses, considers 'Faith in the Unseen' the first stage of piety.

Opinions are divided among the commentators as to whether Faith in the Unseen, here, points to Faith in Monotheism, or to a vast meaning that covers Faith in the world of revelation, Resurrection, angels and, in general, what is beyond the external senses.

We already pointed out that Faith in 'the world of beyond the external senses' is the first phase of separation of the believers from unbelievers. This makes it clear that the term 'Unseen', here, contains the same vast meaning as the term that was pointed out.

Moreover, the application of the word in this verse is absolute and unrestricted. There is nothing included in the verse that would confine its meaning to a specific one.

In some traditions from Ahlul Bayt (as) [7] " the term 'Unseen', in the verse under discussion, is rendered to the '12th Imam (as)', who, as we believe, is alive right now but is concealed from the eyes of people.

This idea does not contrast with what was said in the above, because it is one of the aspects of 'Unseen', too. And, in other words, 'Unseen' is something which is not possible to be seen or heard by our external senses, such as sight or hearing or things outside the grasp of our other senses.

The Existence of Allah is apparently hidden because of the limit of our external senses. The Hereafter, the status of the next world, is concealed from our eyes.

In this gloomy time in which we live, the presence of prophets and our sinless Imams (as) are necessary for us, but, even our Expected Imam (as) whom we need to be our guide out in front of us, whose light of mastership, which would help us follow along this dim, murky, dangerous road that lies before us upon which we must travel until we reach the sound abode of ours, is absent from us.

Apparently, he is out of our reach. Though, he, the esteemed one (as), is never heedless of his true followers and he is always aware of their circumstances. (There will be a more comprehensive discussion concerning the '12th Imam (as), later in the .)

This statement shows that at this time, which is the worst of the ages, how high the position of the persons with complete Faith is! And, as it is narrated, there is reason for the holy Prophet (S) to say about them: "How much I am eager to see my brothers (who will come to being) in 'the end of time'! ". [8]

We may consider that the Prophet (S), with such high rank and glory, has expressed his eagerness for seeing the true believers of this time, and has introduced them as his 'brothers'.

2. Relationship with Allah

Another specialty of the 'pious ones' mentioned in the Qur'an is their prayers.

Prayer, which is the key to communion with Allah, holds the believers in permanent and perpetual contact with that great Origin of Creation. They have found the way to the world beyond this world, viz, the world of the supernatural.

They bow only to Allah and submit only to the Great Creator of the World of Being. That is why there is no place for submission or surrender to any tyrants and oppressors in their agenda.

Such a human feels that he has been promoted to a situation higher than that of all other creatures for that he has the honour of standing in front of Allah and is worthy of speaking directly with Him. This status is the greatest factor necessary for training.

The person who, with his whole heart and mind, stands in front of Allah, at least five times a day and sincerely utters invocation, his thoughts, his actions and his speech altogether will become divine. How is it possible that a person like that could do anything against Allah's pleasure?

The Excellence & Importance of Prayer

Prayer is the pillar of Faith, the means of attaining nearness to Allah, the expression of obedience to Him, the thanksgiving for His infinite Mercy, the imitation of the examples of the holy Prophet and immaculate Imams (as), the strong link between a person and Allah, and the constant means of seeking and receiving His Guidance and assistance and avoiding errors and evil.

Prayer is the only way in which faith that lives in the heart, can be made manifest in our actions, and can ensure admission to the realm of everlasting happiness in our life in this world as well as the life in the next world.

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an and plenty of traditions in Islamic literature on the importance and virtue of prayer. Intellectual and religious considerations approve its excellence, too.

Here, we narrate the words of the Late Sahib Jawahir cited in 'Jawahir-ul-Kalam', vol. 7, page 1. The words and ideas are based on the contents of the verses of the Qur'an and some authentic traditions:

"Prayer is an action that prevents the performance of hideous indecent deeds. This status causes the Fire of Hell to extinguish, and any pure believer to be linked with Allah by which he can make, spiritually, progress.

Just as the water of a stream washes away dirt from the body, prayer washes away the sins of believers; and, its repetition five times a day is similar to washing the body in that stream repeatedly. Allah told Jesus (as) and other prophets (as) as well, to pray throughout their lives ".

"However, prayer is the basis of Islam and it is the best deed and the best subject (which is legislated by the religion). It is the standard and criterion of other deeds of people. Thus, when a person has performed the prayer completely, the reward of all other of his deeds is complete, because all of his good deeds are accepted.

Therefore, prayer, comparing with other religious practices, even the religion itself; is considered as a pillar similar to the central pole of a tent. For this reason the first deed of a mortal, which will be questioned about in the next life and will be discussed, is prayer'.

If prayer is accepted from a person, other (good) deeds of his lifetime will be evaluated and accepted from him. But, if it is refused, his other deeds will not be looked at and will be refused and returned to him.

So, regarding this, it is not surprising if an abandoner of prayer is called an 'unbeliever’. Yes, it is certainly so when the reason of its abandonment is

especially for the scorning of the religion. Prayer is something that Imam al-Sadiq (as) did not know anything better or higher and more beloved than that with Allah.

Even, he (as) has said that these five daily canonical prayers are obligatory. He, who establishes them and observes them at their proper times, will meet Allah on the Judgment Day, and He holds a covenant stating that because of this he will enter Paradise.

But, he who does not keep up these obligatory prayers and does not observe them at their proper times, then, it will be up to Allah whether to forgive him or to punish him. And, the obligatory prayer is better than twenty Hajj-performances, each of which is better than a room full of gold that would completely be paid as donation in the way of Allah.

Or, the obligatory prayer is better than one thousand Hajj-performances, every one of them being better than the whole world with all its contents. Verily, obedience to Allah is service to Him, on the earth, and no service is comparable with prayer.

That was why the angels called Zachariah (as) while he was praying in his sanctuary. When a person is preparing for saying prayer, the Divine favours come down from heaven to him on the earth and some angels surround him. An angel proclaims that if this prayerful believer knew what existed in the prayer, he would never neglect it..."

"Hadrat Rida, the 8th holy Imam (as), wrote as an answer to the problems of Muhammad-ibn-Sanan that the reason of (the importance of) prayer is that it is the confession to the Lordship of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and lack of attributing partners to Him.

Prayer means to stand in front of the Almighty, Glory be to His Majesty, in a manner of humility, abasement and wretch ness and to seek forgiveness for the sins committed.

In prayer, a servant puts his head down on the soil several times a day in order to glorify Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and to furnish His remembrance all the time.

To stand in the presence of Allah in prayer, causes a believing person to avoid evils and it hinders him from all kinds of sin and corruption." [9]

3. Relationship with People

Besides the constant communion with Allah, the pious ones have a close and permanent relationship with people, the creatures of Allah. For this very reason, the Holy Qur'an introduces their third characteristic in this verse as thus:

"(They) spend (in charity) of what We have provided them".

It is noteworthy that the Qur'an does not say that 'They spend (in charity) of what they have" but it says: ‘of what We have provided them'. In this manner, it generalizes the subject of 'charity' so broadly that it includes all the material and spiritual gifts of Allah.

Therefore, the pious ones are those who donate not only from their material bounties but also from their spiritual gifts such as knowledge, science, intellect, physical power, or social abilities, and, in short, from all they have in their own possession. They donate from their own capital to

those who are in need of them, and, in the meantime, they do not expect any recompense from them.

Another point is that the regulation of donation is a general regularity in the world of creation and, also, in the bodily system of every living creature. The heart of a man does not beat for itself alone but it donates of whatever it has to all of the cells.

The brain and the lungs, as well as other organs of the body, continually donate the vital results of their active functions. And, generally speaking, social life with the lack of donation is meaningless.

Sincere coherence with human beings is, in fact, coherence and attachment to Allah. A person who is attached to Allah, and knows that all bounties and sustenance proceed from Him, not from himself, will not be displeased with giving charity but will be happy to donate His gifts to His servants on His way, and, as a consequence, he gains the physical and spiritual merits for doing it for himself.

(For the importance of charity and its effects, refer to later explanations concerning Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 verses 261-274).

At any rate, this kind of thinking purifies the soul of man from miserliness and envy. It changes the world of 'struggle for existence' to the world of 'humanity and civilization', a world in which everybody bonds himself to sharing his bounties with all the needy in his environment and, like the sun, gives light to his surroundings without expecting any favor in return or recompense.

It is notable that on the meaning of the phrase: "(They) spend (in charity) of what We have provided them", a tradition from Imam-Sadiq (as) says:

"It means that they share (and teach to those who need) the knowledge and science Allah has taught them." [10]

It is obvious that this statement does not mean that donation is specific to knowledge but, since when speaking about charity almost all the attention is usually turned to monetary donations, Imam al-Sadiq (as), by mentioning this kind of spiritual donation, wanted to clarify the broadness of the meaning of 'donation'.

So therefore, this idea makes it very clear that the word 'charity', referred to in the verse under discussion, is not restricted to the 'obligatory alms giving' (Zakat), but refers to alms in general, irrespective of obligatory or recommended ones; therefore, it has a vast meaning which includes any kind of help given gratuitously.

Another characteristic of the pious ones is belief in all of the prophets and the Divine designs. The Qur'an says that they are those who believe in what has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) (i.e. the Qur'an) and what has been sent down (to other apostles preceding him like the Turah, the Evangel, the Psalms of David and the rest of the Divine Books).

Therefore, not only they do not feel that there is any difference in the basis of the invitation of prophets, but they know all prophets to be similar truthful teachers and trainers who came, one after another, in this great school of the world of human beings to persuade people to pave the path of their development.

Further, the pious ones not only do not consider the Divine religions the cause of dispersion and hypocrisy, but, regarding their fundamental unity, recognize them as a means of relation and sincere communication among nations.

Those who have this sort of concept and this point of view would cleanse their souls and minds from the dirt of obstinacy, and believe in all that the prophets of Allah have brought forth for the guidance and development of the human race. They would respect all the 'guides' of the path of 'Monotheism'.

Belief in the instructions of the prophets of the past (as), of course, does not mean that they do not adapt their thoughts and deeds to the religion of the last prophet (S), which is the last and completing link of the series of religions. If they do anything other than that, they, in fact, regress on their path towards development.

Faith in the Resurrection is an epithet which is mentioned as the last quality in this series of qualities for the pious Ones. 11 It says:

"...and of the Hereafter they are certain ".

In the phrase / wa bil 'axirati hum yuqinun / the word /yaqin / is the state of conviction and certainty reached through accepting undoubtable evidence or unquestionable proof in / muttaqin /. One of the epithets of 'the pious ones', / muttaqin /, is having an unshakably firm conviction and certainty that the ultimate purpose of life here lies in the realm beyond it, in the direction towards the Absolute.

They are sure that Man is not created uselessly and purposelessly. The creation has defined a route for him which will never end with death, for, if everything came to a completion in this world, all of these statements and tremendous activities and movements in the universe would certainly be in vain if it was meant only for a brief temporary life.

He accepts that the Absolute Justice of Allah is waiting for all humankind and it is not so that our deeds in this world will be disregarded without having any reckoning and compensation.

This belief provides him with ease and tranquility. The stresses resulting from the fulfillment of responsibilities not only do not hurt him, but on the contrary he receives them willingly. He stands firmly in front of misfortunes.

He does not resign to any unjust matter. He is sure that even the smallest action, good or evil will be compensated; and, after death, he will be transferred to a more comprehensive world where no cruelty or oppression exists. But he will meet the infinite favour and Mercy of Allah, the Just.

Belief in the Hereafter means cleaving the binding walls of materialism and reaching a happy realm, better and higher than that. The present world is like a school wherein Man should best prepare himself for the coming world. The present life is not the final goal but it is a preparation for the next life which will be eternal.

The life in this world is also similar to the prenatal period of a foetus in the mother's womb. This period is not the purpose of the creation of man, of course, but it is an evolutional stage for the next period of life. Yet, if this

foetus does not finish its course safely and without any defects or harm until the baby is born, it will not be happy and prosperous in its next life.

Belief in the Hereafter brings a profound effect in the behaviour of human beings. It gives them courage and bravery, because, 'martyrdom' in the way of a Divine holy purpose, which is life's climax of honour and pride in this world, is the most beloved thing to a believing person. Since, to him, martyrdom is the beginning of an eternal and everlasting life.

Belief in the Hereafter controls man against sins. In other words, our sins have a reverse ratio with our Faith in Allah and the Hereafter. The more that Faith is firm and decisive, the less the amount of sin is. One reference is the words of Allah where He commands David (as):

"...and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah: (as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning", (Surah Sad, No, 38, verse 26).

Yes, this forgetfulness of the 'Day of Reckoning' in man is the origin of the kinds of disobedience, cruelty, and corruption which are the total source of grievous punishment.

The last verse in the verses under discussion refers to the fruit and the destination of the pious ones who have acquired the above five attributes. It says:

"They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the successful."

In fact, both their guidance and their successfulness are guaranteed by Allah. So, it can be said that the only path towards felicity and salvation is the path of this group who, with these five special attributes, have received the guidance of Allah.

The reason for the restriction, / 'ula'ika / the pious ones only -, is clear in that His guidance is always universal but only the people with such characteristics who have chosen His narrow path, and none else, can be benefited by it, and will be successful in their life-journey in this world and the next.

It is worthy to note that the term / hidayat / 'guidance', as was stated before, has a vast meaning including many kinds of guidance, all of which originate from Him alone, such as: Divine Guidance, Religious Guidance, and Natural Guidance. Some details about 'guidance' were discussed when commenting on verse 6 from Surah Al-Fatihah. [12].

Note:

By the way, imitating the style in Surah Al-Fatihah, these five beginning verses of the Surah, which were mentioned as a group at first, are exceptionally repeated again one by one both in Arabic and English when commenting on each of them. The cause of this repetition was the length of their descriptions. But from here on, only the English translations and the descriptions will be mentioned.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 6-7

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

خَتَمَ اللهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عظِيمٌ

6. "Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they will not believe."

7. "Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and over their eyes is a covering, and there awaits them a great punishment."

Disbelievers, the Second Group

The followers of this group are just the opposite of 'the pious ones'. Their characteristics are concisely expressed in the above two verses. In the first verse, it says:

"Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they will not believe."

The first group, i.e., the pious ones, in all aspects and with all of their talents and faculties, are thoroughly ready to accept the truth and follow it when they receive it.

But this group, i.e. disbelievers, insist on their aberration so rigorously that they do not agree to show any inclination towards the truth even when it becomes completely clear to them. The Qur'an, which is a guide for the pious ones, is totally non-effective for this group.

It makes no difference to them whether you describe for them or not, warn them or not, give good tidings to them or not. In principle, they are not spiritually ready to follow the 'right path' or submit to it.

The second verse refers to the reason behind the existence of this bigotry and stubbornness. It indicates that they have sunk into impiety, infidelity, and enmity so deeply that they have lost their power of distinction. It says:

"Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and over their eyes is a covering,…"

And for that reason, a great penalty is appropriate for them as the consequence of their deeds, and they deserve it. As Allah warns:

"…and there awaits them a great punishment.."

Thus, the eyes by which the pious ones see the signs of Allah, the ears through which they hear the words of right, and the hearts (and minds) wherein they conceive realities, are of no avail to the second group.

They have minds, eyes, and ears but, when it comes to realities, they are not able to understand, to see, or to hear, indeed, because their disgraceful actions, their stubbornness, and their enmity, like curtains, have covered over these means of acknowledgement.

It is certain that man is worthy of being guided before he reaches this state, even if he is rather astray. But when he loses his sense of distinction, there will not be any way for him to attain felicity, because he does not have the means of acknowledgement.

So, it is natural that 'the great punishment awaits him'. This case is like the situation of a lazy student who, by his own mischoice, does not strive to study hard enough and consequently becomes involved in the torment of ignorance and lack of certification.

The important fact is that one should be careful of sins, and when he commits one, he should repent soon and wipe it out with doing good deeds,

lest the sin will remain as a fast colour stain on his heart, that which would seal the heart (with sin). The turning of the mind and the heart from the 'real' towards the 'unreal', when it gets rigid is termed in the Holy Qur'an as 'sealing'.

A tradition from Imam Baqir (as) says: "There is not a believing servant but there is a white bright site on his heart, When he commits a sin, there appears a black dot in that site.

If he repents, the black dot will disappear, But if he continues committing sins, that black dot enlarges until it covers the white bright site completely, When this site is covered (with blackness) the holder of this heart will never return back to doing good deeds.

This is the meaning of the words of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, when He says: Nay! Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts'." (Surah Mutaffifin, No 83. verse 14) [13]

Infidelity and its Meaning

Philologically, the term / kufr / means 'to cover, to conceal'. In religion it means: 'to deny the Grace or the Existence of Allah, His prophet, the prophecies of the apostles, and the Resurrection'. He who denies these principles of the religion, even only one of them, according to the consensus of Muslims, is out of the Circle of Islam and becomes counted among the disbelievers.

Anyhow, infidelity is 'the corrupt tree' whose root is false ideas, its trunk is immorality, its branches and leaves are sins and vices, and its fruit is disgrace in this world and punishment in the coming world.

But Faith is 'the good tree' whose root is true conviction, its trunk is fair virtues, its branches and leaves are good deeds, and its fruit is the happiness and prosperity in this world and the next world which, itself, is eternal salvation.

Surah Ibrahim, No 14, verses 14-16 say: "Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a goodly word (being) like a goodly tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven, -"

"Yielding its fruit in every season by the leave of its Lord ? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may receive admonition". "And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the surface of the earth, it has no stability".

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 8-16

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

يُخَادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّهُ مَرَضاً وَلَهُم عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَـكِن لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُواْ أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاء أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاء

وَلَـكِن لاَّ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْاْ إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
ُسْتَهْزِئُونَ

اللّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُواْ الضَّلاَلَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُواْ ُهْتَدِينَ

8. "And of people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day', but they do not really believe."

9. "They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith, but they deceive none save themselves, and they are not aware."

10. "In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they were lying."

11. "And when it is said to them: 'Do not make corruption in the earth', they say: 'Verily, we are only reformers'."

12. "Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware."

13. "And when it is said to them: 'Believe as the people believe', they say: 'Shall we believe as the fools believe?' Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know."

14. "And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe (in what you believe)', but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: 'Verily, we are with you; we were only mocking'."

15. "Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on."

16. "These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright)."

Hypocrites, the Third Group

The above verses state a short but very expressive explanation on 'hypocrites' and their spiritual specialties and characteristics illustrated by their actions.

Attention should be attracted to the fact that: In a special period of its sensitive historical course, Islam was faced with a specific group among the whole of the people, who neither had the courage to truly accept the invitation of Islam, nor had the power and boldness to openly oppose it.

This third group, whom the Qur'an calls, in Arabic terminology, /munafiqun/ 'hypocrites', is also termed the two-faced ones. They penetrate in the rows of true Muslim communities and become a great danger for Islam and Muslims.

It is usually difficult for the faithful believers to recognize them, because they appear in the society with the same manner as other Muslims do. But the Qur'an yields some clear exact signs and specialties about them which identify their hidden routines everywhere and in all centuries. These particular qualifications can provide good criteria for the real Muslims to recognize them.

At the beginning, it gives an illustration of hypocrisy itself, saying:

"And of the people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day', but they do not really believe."

****

They imagine this action of theirs as a kind of cleverness or, so to speak an advantageous policy. Therefore:

"They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith..."

It is not such as they think:

"...but they deceive none save themselves, and they are not aware".

Having deviated from the Straight Path, they spend their whole lives misled. They apply their power and potentials in vanity where their gain is nothing but failure, infamy, and a painful Divine penalty.

****

In the next verse, the Qur'an points to the fact that hypocrisy is, indeed, a disease. A safe and sound person does not have two faces. There is complete harmony ruling between his soul and his body, since outward and inward, as well as body and spirit, are complementary to each other.

If a person is a believing one, his entire being cries Faith and indicates his conviction. And if he goes astray, his deviation is revealed both outwardly and inwardly. This dissimilarity of spirit and body possessed by the hypocrite is a new additional disease. It is a sort of contradiction or duplicity or cleft that governs over the self of a man. Then, it says:

"In their hearts is a disease..."

Hence, in the regularity of creation, everybody who chooses a path and equips himself with the necessary means to pave it would go forth on that very path. Or, in other words, the abundance of actions and imaginations of a man on his chosen route would make the above idea much more colourful and secure. Then, the verse continues saying:

"...so Allah has increased their disease..."

The investment of the hypocrite is 'lies'. They adjust the contradictions found in their lives, as much as they can; each lie with its own set of excuses. Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they were lying ".

****

Then, the Qur'an refers to their specialties, the first of which is the claim of being 'reformers', while they are, in fact, mischief-mongers, saying:

"And when it is said to them: 'Do not make corruption in the earth', they say: 'Verily, we are only reformers'."

****

"Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware."

Both their persistence on the path of hypocrisy and their accustomedness to these hideous disgraceful agenda have caused them to think, gradually, that their activities are useful and constructive.

And, as it was mentioned previously, when sin is in excess and treads the limits, it seizes the sense of distinction, or even, it reverses the man's distinction. In this state, impurity and impiety prevail as his second nature.

****

Another specialty of this group is that they think themselves wise and clever while they think the believers are some simple-minded and credulous fools; as the Qur'an says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Believe as the people believe', they say: 'Shall we believe as the fools believe?'..."

Thus, they accuse the truth-seeking, pure-hearted people of foolishness, for that these people, observing the signs of reality and rightfulness in the content of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S), have humbly accepted it.

The hypocrites consider corruption, duplicity, and hypocrisy signs of their cleverness and wisdom. Yes, in their logic, intellect has changed its place with foolishness.

So, the Qur'an, answering them, says:

"...Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know."

Is this not, within itself, a kind of foolishness, that a person does not specify his conviction, but changes colour according to whatever group or class of ideology he joins, and assumes duplicity or even multifarious ness? Is it not silly for a person to spend his faculties and abilities in doing evil and making plots for destruction and, in the meantime, to count himself among the wise?

****

The third specialty is that they change colour everyday, and choose the direction of every group they meet. As the Holy Qur'an says:

"And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe (in what you believe)'...".

They tell the believers that they follow the same school of thought as theirs, that is, they have accepted Islam eagerly and there is no difference between them.

"...but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: 'Verily, we are with you..."

They tell their fellow men that they are mocking the believers when telling them that they have believed:

"...we were only mocking…"

They say to them that they are deceiving them and, actually, they are supporters of their fellow men whom they have taken friend with and, keep their secrets safe and hidden.

****

Then, the Qur'an, with a beating and decisive tone says:

"Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on."

****

The concluding verse, on this subject, expresses their final fate which is a very grievous, inauspicious, and dark end, thus:

"These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright)."

For this very reason, their purchase not only is of no avail for them, but also they have lost even their investment.

Explanations

The Appearance of Hypocrisy and its Roots

When a revolution takes place in a society, particularly a revolution like the Islamic Revolution which was founded on the virtues of Right and Justice, the interests of an oppressive, tyrannical, and selfish, group will be exposed and possibly placed in danger.

At first, this group mocks it, and then they apply the power of guns, economic sanctions, and continuous social propagation in order to try to subvert it.

But when the signs of triumph are made manifest for all of the forces and authorities of the region, some of the opponents change their practical style of opposition and apparently resign themselves, but, in fact, they organize a hidden antagonistic group against the revolution.

These vicious individuals who are termed 'hypocrites', because of their actual duplicity, are the most harmful enemies of the revolution, because their position is not quite clear so that the revolutionists can recognize them and avoid them.

They deceitfully imitate and join the faithful people and occupy some social positions in the rows of the pure, truthful believers. They sometimes attain the sensitive posts, even.

Until the time when the holy Prophet (S) emigrated from Mecca to Medina, Muslims had not established a government. The prime essential basis of the Islamic government was founded when the holy Prophet (S) arrived in Medina. This process was made more manifest with the occurrence of the triumph of Badr, viz.; a small but progressive government was formally organized.

It was at that time that the profits of many authorities in Medina, particularly that of the Jews, who were respected by Arabs, were being threatened. The Jews were respected at that time, mostly because they were of 'the People of the Book'. [14]

They were fairly learned, and they were economically advanced. It was they who, before the advent of the prophet of Islam (S) used to give the good news of his coming.

There were others, too, who were aspiring for the leadership of the people of Medina and were disappointed due to the migration of the Messenger of Allah. The cruel, selfish chieves of Medina and their plunderers adherents saw that people, even their relatives, were tending to Islam and abundantly believing in the Prophet (S).

They, after resisting for a short time, understood that they could not help but to accept Islam, though only outwardly.

They realized that if they had opposed and stood against the new process, besides the damages of war and economic problems, they would have faced the danger of destruction; particularly because the total power of the Arab was his tribe, but their tribes had separated from them for the most part.

For this reason, they had developed a grudge in their hearts against the holy Prophet (S) and his mission. So, they secretly planned to subvert Islam. Therefore, they selected a third way. They decided to accept the Prophet (S) apparently, and to follow their own plots hiddenly. [15]

In short, the appearance of hypocrisy in a society is usually the effect of one of these two causes. The first is the triumph and power of the existing revolutionary school of thought in the society. The second cause is the spiritual weakness and the lack of nobility and courage needed to challenge such a force.

The Necessity of Knowing the Hypocrite

Undoubtedly, hypocrisy and the hypocrite were not only particular to the time of the Prophet (S); they are found in any society and at any time. They should be recognized, of course, according to the defined criteria that the Qur'an has introduced them with, in order to prevent their probable damages or harms.

There are various characteristics mentioned about the hypocrite in the former verses, as well as through Surah Al-Munafiqun No.63 and, also, in numerous Islamic traditions. Here are a few of these characteristics:

1. Great public outbursts and high claims with lots of boasting, but little action making their claims and actions unparalleled.

2. To swing to every side in any environment with any group; to speak among any society with the ideas of that society's school of thought, and to show themselves adherents in the society of true followers but, in the meantime, to cooperate with the oppositional group.

3. To separate their affairs from those of the people and to form secret hidden societies with specific plans.

4. Characterized by tricks, deceit, lies, flattery, breach of promises, and treachery.

5. To act before others with self-aggrandizement and self.-conceit, counting people silly, simple, and foolish, while knowing themselves wise and clever.

In short, duplicity of personality, or contrast between internal and external, which is the clear characteristic of the hypocrite, has different effects on their personal and social behaviour, which can be easily figured out by the keen observer.

How beautifully the Qur'an puts it when it says: "In their hearts is a disease...". Which sickness can be worse than the sickness of duplicity of outward and inward character? What disease is more painful than the illness of self -aggrandizement or lack of courage for challenging the things that we do not believe in?

However, the disease of hypocrisy, though it is hidden, is recognizable by its different features. It is similar to heart disease which cannot be concealed wholly; although it is unseen, its signs and symptoms can be seen in one's face and limbs quite vividly.

Hypocrisy, in its specific meaning, is the condition of some faithless persons who are apparently counted among Muslims, but their hearts are actually pledged to infidelity. They are the most dangerous group, not only for Islam but also for any revolutionary progressive school of thought.

The hypocrites penetrate into the communities of Muslims and misuse any chance or opportunity for hindering affairs. For this very hostile position that they have, they are the object of serious attacks in the Qur'an.

One complete Surah of the Qur'an is revealed about their circumstances which is entitled 'Al-Munafiqun'. They have also been reproached and condemned very strongly in the narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as).

To introduce the hypocrite, a tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who has narrated from the Prophet (S) says:

"There are three specialties that when they are in a person, he/she is a hypocrite even the one who observes the fast, practices prayers and considers oneself a Muslim: he who is treacherous when he is trusted, when he speaks he tells lies, and when he promises he fails it". [16]

Here, we attract your attention to the noble words of Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) about the hypocrites. He says:

"O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to fear, and I warn you against the hypocrites. They themselves are misguided and they will misguide you. They are lost in the labyrinth of sins and vices and will make you lose your straight path in that tortuous maze. They change their colours to suit their surroundings, and their words always have double meanings.

To convert you to their views and to win your sympathies they will resort to every sort of fraud and pretence, will adopt varieties of artifices and pretexts and will apply all possible allurements and deceptions. They always lie in ambush to seduce you. They pretend to be sincere and honest but their hearts are full of hypocrisy and vileness.

Their movements are very subtle. To mislead you they work so artfully and cunningly that you cannot easily find out their purpose. They poison your minds without your knowing it, like a disease spreading inside your body without your realizing the fact.

They behave as if they are ministering cures to your ailments. They talk as if they really feel for your troubles, but the result of their activities and their persuasions will affect you like an incurable disease.

Happiness and prosperity of others make them jealous and unhappy. They will do their worst to drag others into difficulties, reverses, and troubles. They will exert themselves to convert hopes of others into disappointments and despairs. And they have their victims in every walk of life.

They know how to touch your heart and how to gain your ears. For your every sorrow they have crocodile tears to shed and for every pain they offer you a balm, ineffective or injurious. If they praise you, it is with the hope of getting louder praises out of you.

If they want to get something out of you, they will pester you with their demands. If they wish to slander anybody they will expose him threadbare. If they pass judgments they always forsake equity and justice ". [17]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 17-20

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَاراً فَلَمَّا أَضَاءتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لاَّ يُبْصِرُونَ

صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاء فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ واللهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكافِرِينَ
يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاء لَهُم مَّشَوْاْ فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَا ُواْ وَلَوْ شَاء
اللهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

17. "The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled afire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing."

18. "(They are) deaf, dumb, blind -so they shall not return (to the right path)."

19. "Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death; thus Allah encompasses the infidels."

20. "The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight, whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them they stand still. Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things."

Two Interesting Parables manifesting the Hypocrite

After stating the epithets and characteristics of the hypocrite, the Holy Qur'an, in order to illustrate their condition, likens them to two expressive parables:

1. In the first parable, the idea is that they are similar to a person who kindles a fire (by dark night) - (to distinguish the right way from the false way under its light and reach the destination). It says:

"The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing".

They think they can challenge against the darkness they are in with a small little fire. But, it happens that suddenly a storm arrives, or a heavy rain falls, or their fuel runs out and the fire dies in coldness; so, they remain helpless, wandering in the terrible darkness.

****

Then, it adds: "(They are) deaf, dumb, blind -so they shall not return (to the right path)", because they no longer have the essential necessary means of grasping the truth in their possession.

Allah, the Exalted, stating the status of the hypocrites and unbelievers, informs His Messenger that they have totally lost their human innate potentialities. They, abusing it, have destroyed the talent which Allah has originally put in their created nature and they should revive it in order for it to be used correctly.

They have entirely deprived themselves of the real function of the divine faculties of sight, hearing, and speech. These sense organs are practically left useless and ineffective.

2. In the second parable, the scene of their life is illustrated in another way.

It is a dark fearful night, full of terror and danger. The rain is heavily falling and lightning flashes in the corner of the horizon every now and then. The horrible crashes of thunder seem to tear the eardrums.

A defenseless person, amazed at the situation in this vast dark dangerous plain, gains no benefit. For this frightened person, whose back is wet from the rain, there is neither a safe and secure shelter to take refuge, nor does the darkness let him step forth towards his destination.

The Holy Qur'an, in a short sentence, explains the situation of such a wandering passenger, thus:

"Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning..."

Then, it adds:

"...They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death..."

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to a fact that wherever the disbelievers go, they are under the forceful control and watch of Allah. It says:

"...thus Allah encompasses the infidels."

****

In this situation lightning brightens the expanse of the sky again and again.

"The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight,..."

Whenever the lightning strikes and lightens the dark spread of the desert, they walk a few steps under that light, but, immediately after that, they find themselves in the same darkness they were in before:

"...whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them they stand still..."

Every moment, they feel the danger in front of them because there is nothing in this desert, such as a mountain, a tree, or anything else for them to seek refuge in order to protect themselves from the danger of the flash of lightning and thunderbolt. At any moment they may be seized by the lightning as its prey and be laid in ashes in a blink of an eye!

There is even the danger of the sound of thunder tearing their eardrums and the sharp flash of lightning blinding their eyes. Yes, it is true:

"...Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things."

At the time of the holy Prophet (S), the quick spread of Islam, like the lightning, dazzled their eyes, and the verses of the Qur'an, which uncovered their secrets, surrounded them as quick as lightning. They thought that another verse might come down, too, and remove the curtains from some other secrets, so, they would become publicly more disgraced.

The Qur'an also points to this very meaning where it says:

"The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Surah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts, say: 'Mock you! But verily Allah will bring to light all that you fear (should be revealed)'." (Surah At-Taubah. No.9. verse 64).

Again, the Qur'an, verifying that the hypocrites were always in terror and fear that with their secrets being manifested, Allah. command would come

down for the Muslims to fight them, the worst interior enemy of Islam, and destroy them, says:

"Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition in the City, desist not, We shall certainly stir thee up against them: then will they not be able to stay in it as your neighbours for any length of time:" "They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain (without mercy)." (Surah AL-Ahzab No. 33. verse 60 & 61).

In the Islamic literature, as was mentioned before, the traditions and data narrated about the hypocrite are abundant. One of them is the tradition that Imam al-Sadiq (as)quoted from his father and grandfathers who, in turn, had narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who, addressing Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), said:

"There are three sign for a believer: prayer, fasting, and alms. There are also indications referring to a hypocrite: when he speaks he tells lies, when he promises, he breaks them, and when he is entrusted with (something), he proves himself to be dishonest" [18]

Again, Abdullah 'Umar narrates from the holy Prophet (S) that there are four characteristics which are the signs of hypocrisy: lie in speech, excuse in promise, wickedness in enmity, and dishonesty in deposit. [19]

Notes

1. Tafsir-us-Safi; vol. 1, pg 78
2. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, pg 66
3. Al-Burhan, vol. 1, pg. 54
4. Makhzan-ul-' Irfan, vol. 1, p. 81
5. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 221
6. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 82
7. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 31
8. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 99
9. Jawahir-ul-Kalam, vol. 7, p. 1
10. Majma'-ul-Bayan vol. 1, p. 39; and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 32
11. True Faith is, indeed, accompanied with / yaquin / 'certainty'. This status in a person may be defined from different scopes of view. The most important one of them is 'certainty of knowledge', which has been described as having three stages. More details are given on page 208, vol. 2, the current .
12. For further explanation about 'guidance' review pages 55-61 in this very book.
13. Usul-i-Kafi: vol. 2, p. 209, Tradition 20
14. For the meaning of 'the People of the Book' see p. 202.
15. This example also happened in the Islamic Revolution of Iran where they played the same role but, luckily, under the light of Allah's Grace and through the awareness of this honourable nation, they failed.
16. Safinatul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 605
17. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 194 Arabic print, and No.199, p. 172 English version
18. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 53, Tradition 3.
19. Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. 2, p. 198

Section 2

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 21-22

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ
الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ فِرَاشاً وَالسَّمَاء بِنَاء وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ
الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقاً لَّكُمْ فَلاَ تَجْعَلُواْ لِلّهِ أَندَاداً وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

21. "O' mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you, and those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),"

22. "Who has spread out the earth as a resting place for you, and has made heaven as a canopy, and has sent down water from heaven, wherewith He brings forth fruits for your sustenance; so do not set up rivals with Allah while you know."

Do Worship Allah!

In the former verses, Allah describes the statuses of three groups of people (the righteous, the disbelievers, and the hypocrites), by explaining that the righteous are inside the circle of the Divine Guidance and the Qur'an guides them; while the hearts of the disbelievers are sealed with ignorance and, because of their own deeds, their eyes are covered with negligence which has taken away their sense of perception. And, the hypocrites are some ill-hearted people whose evil actions increase their sickness.

In the verses under discussion, after that vivid comparison, the path of felicity and salvation is specified as following the path of the first group, the righteous:

"O' mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you, and those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),"

What is Servitude and Worship?

The word 'servitude' in lexicon means: 'the condition of subjection, submissiveness and obedience of a slave to a master'. Worship is the utmost aspect of submissiveness to the One Who is at the highest degree of virtue, kindness, benevolence, and magnanimity. That is why He has distinctly commanded:

"...That you worship none but Him,..." (Surah Al-Asra, No.17. verse 23)

The person who has a little understanding can apply his intellect to know himself and his own Lord. When he recognizes himself, the one who has been considered the noblest creature, he will know his own Lord and Cherisher, too.

This is a popular tradition that the person who after knowing himself, would know his Lord and Cherisher by that recognition. Then, as it is said, the key to the recognition of Allah is the recognition of one's self.

When he finds himself in his servitude and his Lord in His Divinity, he understands that he should concentrate his obedience, humility, submissiveness and servitude unto the One in Whose hand and Will is his soul and entity; the One from Whom (s.w.t.) he takes sustenance constantly.

If the emanation of existence from the Absolute Bountiful Origin ceased from him even for a moment, he would be deprived of the bounty of existence.

Some Explanations

Regarding the above verses, there are some points, here, that should be paid attention to:

1. The phrase / ya ayyu-han-nas / 'O' mankind', which occurs twenty times in the Holy Qur'an, has a general and collective meaning that envelops all human beings of any race, tribe, or colour.

This clearly shows that the Holy Qur'an does not pertain exclusively to a special group of people, but it invites every single person to its invitation, in general. It persuades everybody to accept Monotheism and refuse any idolatry and deviation from the path of theism.

2. To invoke the sense of people's thankfulness and to concentrate their attention on the worshipping of Allah, it begins from the greatest bounty, i.e., the bounty of the creation of all human beings.

It is a bounty that illustrates both the tower or Allah and His Knowledge, in addition to His 'General Mercy' and 'Specific Mercy', because in the creation of Man, the best creature in the world of existence, the signs of His infinite Knowledge and Power, together with His vastly distributed bounties, are clearly seen.

The reason that some do not bow before Allah and do not worship Him is mostly because they do not contemplate their own creation and the creation of those who came before them. They do not take into consideration that it is not right to attribute this magnificent creation to the blind and deaf causes of nature.

We cannot think of these accurate, reliable and incomparable bounties, which are vividly seen in the body and the spirit of Man, from any origin except Allah, Who is the source of all knowledge and power.

Therefore, the remembrance of these bounties is both a reason for theology and a stimulus for thankfulness and worshipping, along the path of Allah.

3. The fruit of this worshipping is piety and righteousness:

"...so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),"

Thus, our worshipping and prayers do not add anything to the Dignity and Glory of Allah, just as the abandoning of them does not take anything from His Greatness and Beauty. These kinds of practices are some training classes to teach man piety, which is synonymous with having a sense of responsibility, and, the standard of measuring one's personality.

Finally, it is worship that causes man to attain the epithet of being pious, -a good mood in the spirit of man, that comes into being as a result of worship and servitude unto Allah.

4. The emphasis on the phrase: 'Those before you' in the verse, may refer to the idea that if you agree with the custom of your ancestors that you should worship idols, Allah is the creator of both you and your ancestors. He is the Master and the Cherisher of you and your ancestors both. So, worshipping the idols, either done by you or by your ancestors, is not anything but aberration.

The Sky and the Earth are Bounties

In the next verse, it points to some other great bounties of Allah that can serve to motivate men to be thankful. At first, it refers to the creation of the Earth and its Creator:

"Who has spread out the earth as a resting place for you..."

The earth is like a mount that carries you on its back. It continues moving at a wonderful speed in space. It has different movements but you feel no shaking at all. So the earth is one of Allah's great bounties.

Another bounty is the gravity of the earth which enables you to walk, rest, build houses and to prepare gardens, fields, and all kinds of vehicles, instruments, etc; for your usage. Have you ever thought that if the gravity of Earth did not exist, because of its rotation, all of us and all of our houses and furniture, or, in general, everything on the globe would be immediately thrown floating into space?

The term / firas / 'a resting place' not only has the meaning of rest and tranquility, but also contains the concept of being pleasant and warm with a moderate temperature.

It is interesting that, commenting on this verse, Ali ibn al-Husayn, the fourth Imam of the Shi'ah school (as), has clearly explained this meaning, thus:

"Allah has arranged the earth adapted to your nature and appropriate for your bodies. He made it neither very hot so that it roasts you, nor very cold so that it freezes you. He made it neither too aromatic so much so that its odor hurts your brains, nor too foul-smelling to cause your death.

He planned it neither too soft so that you be drowned in it, like in water, nor too rigid and stable to enable you to build houses and make graves to bury the corpses of your men (which cause many disasters when they remain unburied)... Yes, it is for this reason that He has spread out the earth as a resting place for you'." [1]

The word / bana /, considering the term / alaykum/ 'above you', refers to the meaning that the heaven is made up above you like a canopy. This idea is mentioned in another place in the Holy Qur'an, saying:

"And We have made the heaven as a canopy wellguarded...", (Surah Al-Anbiya', No. 21, verse 32)

This statement may seem amazing to some of those who are acquainted with the intrinsic structure of the heaven and earth from the point of modem astronomy. They may ask where and how this canopy is.

Does this idea not call to mind the Ptolemaic Theory which indicated that planets are set over each other in the sky like the layers of an onion? The subject will be made clear when the following explanation is considered.

The term / sama' / has been used in the Qur'an in different places whose common meaning is something alongside the solution to the above problem. One of those meanings is referred to in this verse.

It is the very atmosphere around the earth, that is, the thick aerial distance with a mass of gases that has surrounded the globe whose thickness, according to what specialists have said, is, roughly speaking, hundreds of kilometers, though it is not distributed uniformly in the vertical direction.

If we contemplate the essential and vital function of this mass of air, generally called the atmosphere, which has enveloped the whole earth, we will understand how this strong and stable canopy, or ceiling, is effective in protecting the lives of human beings.

This special amount of air which, as a crystal ceiling, has surrounded us, the inhabitants of the earth, is so strong and resisting that in comparison with a steel dam several meters thick, it is stronger; while it does not hinder the brilliant sunshine, which has a vital, life- giving and pleasant ray, from reaching us.

If this ceiling were not over us, the earth would be continuously beaten with showers of celestial meteorites, wherein human beings would have no peace and calmness. But this several hundred kilometer thick airy ceiling burns almost all the celestial meteorites before they reach the surface of the earth, except a few of them which can sometimes pass through it and fall somewhere on the ground to warn the earthly living creatures as a ring of danger.

This small number of stones has never succeeded to destroy the security of human lives yet; except on those occasions that Allah used them to destroy previous generations for their evil deeds.

The atmosphere, a vast and complicated physical system, has a basic environmental influence on plant, animal, and human life.

One of the references which shows that one of meanings of the Arabic word / sama / as 'the atmosphere of the earth', is a tradition cited by the sixth Imam, Imam al-Sadiq (as) describing the colour of the sky for one of his followers, Mufaddal.

He said:

"O Mufaddal! Contemplate the colour of the sky which Allah has created so that it seems blue, -a colour that is the most appropriate for the eyes, and looking at it strengthens the vision." [2]

We all know today that the blue colour of the sky is nothing but the reflection of sunlight on the intense thick air around the earth. Therefore, the word / sama / 'sky', here, refers to the very 'atmosphere of the earth'. [3]

Surah An-Nahl, No.16, verse 29 says:

"Do they not look at the birds held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky?"

Then it refers to rain, thus:

"...and has sent down water from heaven...".

But, what water! It is a life-giver, an essential producer of vital energy, and the origin of all inhabited regions containing many material blessings.

The phrase: "and has sent down water from heaven ", confirms the fact, once more, that /sama'/, here, means the atmosphere of the earth. And we know that it is clouds that produce rain and clouds are the formation of water vapor floating in the air, above the surface of the earth.

Commenting on the bounty of rain coming down from the sky, Ali ibn al-Husayn, Imam Sajjad (as), has cited an interesting narration which says:

"Allah has sent down rain from the sky to water the peaks of mountains, and hills, ditches and, on the whole, all sites high or low (saturating them completely).

He planned for it to rain continually and gently, with raindrops being individual and separated from each other; sometimes in the form of drizzles or mist like, and sometimes in the form of rainfall, in order to let it go down in the soil and saturate it. He did not let it fall as a flood which would wash away and destroy the lands, trees, fields and fruits". [4]

Then, the Qur'an refers to the kinds of fruits and nutritious foods that are produced because of rain and awarded to men as their sustenance. It says:

"…where with He brings forth fruits for your sustenance;…"

This process of producing fruits is one of the most valuable proofs of His Existence. On one hand, it indicates the vast extent of Allah's Mercy unto all human creatures, and on the other hand, it specifies His Power by which, from colourless water, He can create thousands of colours in fruits and grains whose different properties are useful for men, as well as other living creatures. Hence, immediately after that, it adds:

"…so do not set up rivals with Allah while you know".

Verily, you know that these idols, or partners, which are the creations of your own fancy, have neither created you nor given you sustenance nor any of your bounties. Then, how do you go after those false gods? Do not adopt any equals for Allah and be devoted to Him to translate His Will into a practical life.

Explanation: Idolatry in Different Forms

It is necessary to note that the false gods are not exclusively wooden or stone idols, or, for example, recognizing a man such as Jesus Christ (as) as one of the trinity, but the concept has a broader scope of meaning.

The false gods may be superstitions, self, or even some great or glorious things like rank, position, art, poetry, science, or, kinds of pride which can be the hidden forms of idolatry when they are set up as rivals to Allah. So, in general, knowing anything save Allah, effective in life is a kind of idolatry.

A Detailed Scientific Meaning of Atmosphere

The Qur'anic term /sama'/ 'sky', wherefrom the rain, for example, comes down, sometimes has the meaning of atmosphere, whose explanation according to some encyclopedias is as follows:

The 'atmosphere' is the mass of 'air' surrounding the earth to a distance of several hundred kilometers. It appears insubstantial but in reality it has enormous mass. It is not simply a formless mass of gases which can be divided into several layers on the basis of meteorological and electromagnetic considerations, but it consists, roughly, of three major layers which differ widely in their characteristics. These layers are: the troposphere, the stratosphere, and the ionosphere.

The troposphere is the layer of air that lies next to and immediately above the earth's surface. The height of the troposphere varies from the poles of the earth to the Equator, being about four or five miles at the poles and about 10 miles at the Equator.

Stratosphere was the term formerly applied to the entire atmosphere above the troposphere. Later it was found that the temperature did vary

significantly with the height and also that there existed various stratifications.

Some scientists have introduced rather detailed terminology to describe various layers of increasing, decreasing, and constant temperature in the atmosphere and the Ozone layer. But here the distinction will be made between two layers only: the 'stratosphere' extending upward from the tropopause to the ionosphere, and the ionosphere, whose lowest ionized layer is found at a height of 35 to 40 miles.

The standard pressure of the atmosphere (760 millimeters) is very nearly equal to 1000000 dynes per square centimeter and is often referred to as the 'bar'. The 'millibar' is 1/1000 of this quantity, sanctioned by the International Meteorological Conferences as the standard for the expression of barometric pressure.

If the atmosphere were of uniform density at a standard pressure of 760 millimeters of mercury and at a temperature of 0°C, its height could easily be calculated based on the weight of a cubic centimeter of air being 0.0012928 grams.

The height of such a uniform atmosphere is 7.99 kilometers (4.97 miles), and is known as the 'height of homogeneous atmosphere' conveniently useful in certain physical computations.

The actual height of the atmosphere is somewhat difficult to determine since it becomes very tenuous at great heights.

We may, however, infer its extent from three sources: (1) the duration of twilight which depends upon scattered sunlight from high atmospheric particles; (2) the height at which meteors become luminous; and (3) observation of auroral streamers.

Twilight has been observed to exist until the sun is about 18° below the horizon, which, at altitude of 45°, indicates the existence of sufficient atmospheric particles to scatter sunlight at a height of over 60 kilometers (37 miles). Meteors have been observed to become luminous as high as 300 kilometers (186 miles).

Auroral streamers have been seen to stretch upward to a height of 1100 kilometers (680 miles). It is very difficult to assign an upper limit to the earth's atmosphere. Atmospheric gases in an exceedingly tenuous condition probably extend hundreds if not thousands of miles above the earth's surface.

(This piece is extracted, here, from the Encyclopedia Americana, vol. 2, p. 508; and Encyclopedia International, vol. 2, p. 165).

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 23-24

مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُواْ وَلَن تَفْعَلُواْ فَاتَّقُواْ النَّارَ الَّ وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

23. "And if you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our (faithful) Servant (Muhammad), then bring forth one Surah the like thereof, and call your witnesses other than Allah, if you are truthful."

24. "And if you do not do so, and you will never do it, then fear the Fire whose fuel is People and Stones, prepared for the infidels."

After Allah (s.w.t.) explains the state of the hypocrite and disbelievers, and, through the creation of the heaven and the earth, sending down rain and growing plants on the ground, proves the existence of the Creator and Cherisher of the universe, He begins to validate the rightfulness of the Holy Qur'an and the truthfulness of His Messenger.

In order to show everyone the miraculous ness of the Qur'an with clear evidence, according to one's portion of wit and understanding, that the Qur'an will be an argument for all, Allah confirms the prophet hood of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an by suggesting a challenge, a direct confrontation, not only to all the contemporaries of the Prophet (S) but also to men in all ages.

"And if you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our (faithful) Servant (Muhammad)..."

It addresses all the rejectors, with a concrete test, saying that if you imagine that the Qur'an, which has been sent down from Pure Holiness to the chosen servant of Allah in the form of statements and with the combination of ordinary alphabetical letters, is not from Him and it is the word of a human, then since outwardly you are in the same state from the point of being a human as the Prophet of Islam (S) is, you should be able to produce a Surah like that of the Qur'an and call your own witnesses that are like you, the disbelievers of the Qur'an.

You would compare your evidence with one of the Suras of the Qur'an, even if it be a small one such as Surah Kauthar and the like. If those two were similar in comparison in all their qualities, merits and privileges, you could rightfully reject the legitimacy of the Qur'an.

The disbelievers and pagan Arabs, who were the masters of literature and eloquence, refrained from accepting this challenge despite their pride and haughtiness in eloquence and avoided the competition.

Therefore, inevitably, they turned the literary contest into a bloody battle. Thus, getting killed was easier for them than being disgraced and defeated in a literary contest. The Arab literature became helpless and meagre against the challenge of the Qur'an.

Neither those who lived at the time of the Qur'an's revelation, nor the people born in the centuries after that could bring anything like this Holy Book, or could do anything against it, in spite of trying with their utmost strength. They were thus forced to retreat after exerting utmost efforts.

Why is the Holy Qur'an a Miracle and How?

Being complete true revelation, the Qur'an is itself a miracle. As it is authentically known and also was mentioned in the above, at the time of the Qur'an's revelation the literary talent and eloquence of Arabs were at their peak, yet the miraculous ness of the Qur'an is not confined to its inimitable literary excellence and eloquence.

It stands on its own innumerous different merits some of which are beyond the reach of the complete conception of the literary geniuses of the Arab world. It has such a rhetorical capacity and linguistic excellence that is able to express different views and knowledge in a manner that is understood and appreciated by every rational human being of any standard and accomplishment of all the ages.

Then everybody in any time, once provided with the opportunity to become acquainted with the Holy Qur'an, which offers information by which all of his/her arguments will be completed, he/she can find himself or herself convinced by it.

Such extensive knowledge and such power of expression are beyond the limitations of human ability. Even of the literate Arab people, as were previously referred to, especially at the time of the Qur'an's revelation when the literature of the Arabic language had reached its climax, none dared to bring a Surah similar to even its shortest one. This very single point is the smallest miraculous aspect of the Qur'an.

There is no doubt that if the Qur'an were the word of a human and the Prophet (S), himself, who was known to the world as an illiterate one, had produced it, they would bring many Qur'ans like it and would prove that this is not the word of Allah revealed to him (S).

In that condition, the enemies of Islam would maintain their works which would be available everywhere and in any ages so that they could publish and distribute them, even now, to defame the one genuine Qur'an, but there is none.

Apart from the inimitable literary excellence, the Holy Qur'an with its other names such as 'Furqan' and 'Tibyan' referring to the abilities it has, presents to the human world, definite prophecies fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled, and long after.

It contains some facts about endowments in nature which the human knowledge of science as it progresses will have to understand, for its further advancement. The perfect ness of such nature naturally will be the last word with regard to the ideas, religious and social laws, sciences, and many, many other things that it contains and will remain forever, until the Hereafter.

This universality of the truth expressed in the idea and beauty and the attractive force of the language is so divine that, as we said before, it is beyond the reach of the expressive power of any limited being. It is in this regard that the Holy Qur'an claims to be not only the word of Allah, inimitable, but the Final Word in respect to truth and justice - the better or even the like of it is impossible to be produced by anyone.

However, it is true to say simply and shortly that the Holy Qur'an is a miracle with respect to its contents which is the source of all knowledge and science, as it itself says:

"Say: If the sea were ink (wherewith to write out) for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto for its aid", (Surah Al-Kahf, No.18. verse 109).

Thus, this verse, by itself, is a vital piece of evidence regarding the Correctness of the above said claim. [5]

Why do Prophets Need Miracles?

We know that the Divine mission of prophethood is a great rank endowed upon some of the purified distingished members of the human race. Since the purpose of prophethood is the comprehensive guidance ruling over the body and spirit of individuals, and society, toward perfection

and the laying down of a legal system and social order for mankind, the assumption of responsibility involved is necessarily heavy and taxing.

So, it requires great capacity and energy. Allah, therefore, bestows the position of prophethood on those who have the ability and capacity to receive and follow through the light of revelation. This unique privilege and specialty of prophets is also shown in their miracles, which all of them had.

And, to prevent some false, deceitful impostors from claiming the position, it is necessary that, besides the revelation, the real ones should have sufficient evidence to bear testimony to the truth of their declaration and prove the claim that they are sent by Allah.

That is, a prophet should utter such words and exhibit such deeds which could not be uttered or performed by any natural means within the power of a finite being, such as: restoring the dead to life again, communicating with animals and inanimate bodies, and the likes of them. These supernatural events are termed as miracles.

The prophet who has a miracle should introduce it to people and invite them to challenge with it. If they can produce none similar to that, thus, by the means of his miracle, he proves the truthfulness of his declaration.

The Holy Qur'an, The Everlasting Miracle of the Prophet of Islam (S)!

Amongst the miracles issued by the Prophet of Islam (S), the Qur’an is the best remaining evidence of his rightfulness. We know, of course, that, according to what the leading scholars of Islam have said, he (S) had about 4440 miracles. But the Qur’an is a Book beyond the thoughts and mind of a mortal being. None has been able to bring one similar to it yet. It is a great heavenly miracle.

The reason that amongst all the miracles of the Messenger of Allah (S) the Qur’an has been chosen as the greatest remaining evidence of legitimacy of the Prophet of Islam (S) is that it is a miracle which is 'expressive', 'everlasting', 'world-wide', and 'spiritual'.

Each of the former prophets (as) had to accompany his miracle to prove its inimitability when he used to invite his opponents for challenging and bringing the like of it. In fact, his miracle or miracles could not express themselves and it was the explanations of the prophet that would complete them. This statement is also true for all the miracles of the Prophet of Islam (S) except the Holy Qur’an.

The Qur’an is a clear miracle which need not be introduced. It invites others to itself, demands the rejecters to challenge it while it defeats them, condemns them and it always stands victorious. That is why it, after passing centuries, viz., since the departure of the Prophet (S) up to the present, has been continuing its invitation the same as it did during his lifetime. It is both religion and miracle; law, and the document of the law.

The Holy Qur'an, Global and Eternal

The reputation of the Holy Qur'an cleft the bonds of time and distance and influenced beyond them. The miracles of the prophets before the Prophet of Islam (S), and even his own miracles save the Qur’an, happened in a special period of time, at a definite place and for a specific group of people.

For example: the utterances of the holy little child of Virgin Mary, and raising the dead by Jesus (as) were done at some definite times and places before the eyes of some particular people. And we know that regarding the things that depend on time and place, the farther we move away from them correlatively the weaker I they become. This is one of the properties of affairs related to time.

But, the Holy Qur'an does not depend on time and place. Its brilliance and authority that illuminated the darkness of Arabia fourteen centuries ago continues unwaveringly to shine with its original splendor.

Besides that, the passing of time, the advancement of science and the development of information have made it possible for us to understand it and take its advantages even more than the nations of former ages did.

It is evident that what time and place cannot influence will continue to be everywhere in the world for eternity. It is also clear that a world-wide everlasting religion should have a world-wide everlasting document of legitimacy in its possession. Then we can discuss the Holy Qur'an:

- From the point of modern science;
- And the scientific explorations;
- And the rotation of the Earth;
- And reproduction in the plant kingdom;
- And general reproduction in all the particles of the world;
- And general gravity;
- And the surrendering of the Sun and the Moon;
- And the secrets of the creation of mountains;
- And the advent of the world;
- And the existence of life on other planets;
- And the winds, the pollinator of plants;
- And the question of the roundness of the Earth; [6]
- And many other scientific facts and knowledge about the world can be found in the Holy Qur'an, too.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 25

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِين آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُواْ مِنْهَا مِن ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقاً قَالُواْ هَـذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَأُتُواْ بِهِ مُتَشَابِهاً وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

25. "And (O' Muhammad) give glad tidings to those who have Faith and do good deeds that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are provided with fruits there from, they shall say: This is what we were provided with before! and they shall be given the like thereof, and there for them shall be spouses purified dwelling therein forever. "

The Specialties of the Bounties in Heaven

In the aforementioned verse, the infidels and the rejecters of the Qur'an were severely threatened with a grave chastisement. Now, in this verse, to make the fact clear, by comparing the destinies of the two contradictory

groups, as the style of the Qur'an is, the destiny of the true believers is referred to as the antithesis to the painful fate of the disbelievers.

First, it says:

"And (O' Muhammad) give glad tidings to those who have Faith and do good deeds that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow...

We know that those gardens that have not a permanent source of water and need to be occasionally irrigated are not so bountiful and pleasant because of frequent difficulties concerning their up keeping. The complete freshness is of those gardens which always have enough water easily available and within their reach.

The water that belongs to them, making them self-sufficient, will never end. Then drought and shortage of water will never threaten them. The gardens of Heaven have such a condition. Then to point out the numerous kinds of fruit in those gardens, it says:

"...Every time they are provided with fruits there from, they shall say: 'This is what we were provided with before!'..."

The commentators have cited some rather different commentaries concerning this statement:

Some of them have said that the objective meaning of this statement is that these blessings are for the good deeds they did formerly in the world. It was those deeds that were previously sent before them and the path was paved for them in the Hereafter.

Some others have asserted that when the Heavenly fruits are brought for them for the second time, they say that these fruits are the same as they had before, but when they eat them they sense a new taste and a fresh pleasure in them.

Or, for example, when we eat grapes and apples in this world, every time we eat them or drink their juices they have basically the same tastes; but the fruits in Heaven will have a different taste every time they will be tasted, although they are apparently alike. This is one of the privileges of that world being as if there is no monotony in it!

Some have also said that it means that when they see the fruits of Heaven, they find them like the fruits in this world in order not to be odd and curious for them, but when they eat them they sense the flavor quite newly-tasting and excellent.

There is no controversy that the above statement refers to all these meanings and even to some other interpretations beyond them, because the words of the Qur'an sometimes bear several meanings.

Then it adds:

"...and they shall be given the like thereof,.."

"That is, from the point of beauty and wholesomeness, all of the various Heavenly fruits are alike and they are at such a high standard that none of them can be preferred over others. They are not like the fruits in this world that some may be too ripe or aromatic while some others are, for example, too green or tasteless.

The fruits in the gardens of Heaven, likening them with those of this world, are all pleasantly fragrant, delicious, wholesome, and beautifully interesting.

And finally, the last bounty, which is referred to in this verse, is 'purified spouses', where it says:

"...and there for them shall be spouses purified..."

The spouses are purified and are free from all the dirt and taints, bodily and spiritually, which they may have in this world.

One of the problems that man is confronted with, concerning the bounties in this world, is that at the same time that he possesses a bounty he thinks of its perdition and is worried about the time he is going to be in lack of it.

For this very reason, the bounties in this world can never produce real tranquility for him. But the bounties in Heaven are eternal. They have no end and no perdition or discontinuation. They are full, complete, soothing and calming. So, to confirm this meaning, at the end of the verse, it says about the believers:

"...dwelling therein forever.."

Occasion of Revelation

On the occasion of the revelation of this verse, the leading commentators have narrated from Ibn-Abbas as saying: "This verse has been revealed on the virtue of Hadrat Ali-ibn Abitalib (as) and the true believers", [7] (since they have both 'Faith' and 'good deeds').

Explanations

1. Faith and Deeds

In many of the verses in the Qur'an, 'Faith' and 'good deeds' are mentioned to be so closely together that they seem to be inseparable. True, it is so because Faith and practice are complementary to each other.

If Faith influences the depths of man's soul, its radiance will certainly reflect in his acts and cause his deeds to become 'good deeds'. It is like a room wherein a bright light is kindled whose beams radiate outside through all the doors and windows. The same is the bright light of the lamp of Faith when it is glowing inside a man's enlightened heart.

If this occurs, the light of that brilliant lamp of Faith radiates from his eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet.

Surah At-Talaq, No. 65, verse 11 says:

"...And those who believe in Allah and work righteousness, He will admit to Gardens beneath which rivers .flow, to dwell therein for ever..."

Also, Surah An-Nur, No.24 verse 55 says:

"Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power)..."

Fundamentally, 'Faith' is as the root of a plant, and 'good deeds' are its fruit. The existence of pleasant sweet fruit shows evidence to the soundness of the root which causes that useful fruit to be produced.

Some unbelieving persons may occasionally do some good deeds but that act will surely not be performed continuously. What is noble and certain to

bring forth good deeds is the Faith that has penetrated the depths of man's soul and causes him/her to have a feeling of responsibility.

2. The Purified Spouses

It is interesting that the only epithet that is mentioned in this verse to qualify the Heavenly spouses is the attribute of 'purified'. This is an indication to the idea that the first and the most important status of a spouse is 'purity', and all good qualities other than that are totally out shown by its radiance.

The well-known tradition that is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) makes this fact even clearer. He has said: "Avoid the green plants grown over dunghill". The Messenger of Allah (S) was asked what he meant by 'the green plants grown over dunghill', and he answered:

"It is the beautiful women who have grown up among filthy family members." [8]

The word /azw-aj / in the plural means mates -or wives -which in the case of the female sex means husbands. This may mean the faithful wives of the faithful husbands i.e., women who had been true and faithful believers in the truth and who had been the wives of the men who were also believers.

However, the women in Heaven, whether they are 'houri' (angels) or 'human creatures', are purified and clean both from the point of outward dirt such as: blood, urine, feces, semen, menstruation, postpartal bleeding, excessive menstruation, dirtiness, and the like; and from the point of inward dirt such as: bad qualities of character, evil dispositions like: rancour, grudges, envy, habitual frowning, and the like of them; and also from the point of some hideous behaviours like: adultery, fornication, and all kinds of similar vices.

They, having the total aspects and conditions of purification, are clean from all sorts of corruption and possess purity in its entirety.

Sa'id-ibn-' Amir has narrated a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) which says:

"If one of the women of Heaven looks once towards the earth the whole world will be full of perfume of musk and the radiance of her light will prevail over the light of the sun and the moon". [9]

3. The Material and Spiritual Blessings in Heaven

In many of the verses of the Qur'an the words are about the blessings of Heaven, bounties such as: gardens beneath which rivers flow, castles, purified spouses, numerous fruits, loyal and faithful companions, etc.

But, besides these bounties, some other excellent blessings are also mentioned whose splendour and magnificence is impossible to be estimated with the worldly criteria that we have.

For example, Surah At-Taubah. No.9. verse 72 says:

"Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme felicity."

And, in Surah Al-Bayyinah No. 98 verse 8 after mentioning some material blessings in Heaven, it says:

"..Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him..."

And truly, if a person reaches the position that he feels his Lord; pleased with him and he is also pleased with Him, he will dismiss all other pleasures. He will attach only to Him and will think of none else. This is a spiritual pleasure that cannot be described with any words nor in any language.

Finally, since the Resurrection has both 'spiritual' and 'physical' aspects, the bounties in bliss have both of those aspects, too, in order hat their comprehensiveness be established and everyone, according to his/her worthiness and eligibility, will enjoy them.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 26

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَسْتَحْ أَن يَ ْ بَ مَثَلاً مَّا عَوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَـذَا مَثَلاً يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيراً وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيراً وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلاَّ الْفَاسِقِينَ

26. "Allah does not disdain to set forth the parable even of a gnat, or anything greater than that. As for those who have Faith, they know that it is the truth from their Lord. And for those who reject Faith, they ask: 'What does Allah mean by this parable?' Thereby He leads many astray and guides many, and He leads none astray save the transgressors".

The purpose of a parable is to make the meaning of an abstract idea more clear and explicit with the help of a material thing in order to assist the mind in catching the idea through consideration. The more man's wisdom is dependent on his base understanding, the less vigorous strength he has to conceive the spirit and reality of things when his imagination interferes.

That is why that in the Divine Book and in the words of the wise and men of letters, the essence of meanings are stated in the form of parables to make complicated concepts plain, hence through a logical thing find a way to the philosophical.

A 'gnat' is a small insect which is perceptible by the naked eye. Gnat is mentioned in this verse, perhaps, to show that striking a similitude between small things or beyond it is not inappropriate for the Glorious Dignity of the Essence of Allah, but to confirm that the proportion of His Sovereignty is the same over big or small, high or low and, in general, all are encompassed by His Power and are benefited by His endless Mercy and Grace.

Furthermore, if we observe carefully, we will see that all the creatures, whether complex or simple, like a chain, are linked to one another. They are so interrelated and perform their duties with such surprising harmony and regularity that it is as if they have formed a single unit to take part in a general service.

The term 'gnat', in this verse, may refer to the greatness and fairness that is used in the creation of a gnat, this very small creature.

Concerning this meaning, there is a tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

"Verily, Allah (s.w.t.) has set forth a parable of a gnat because He has created 'gnat', with that small size it has, consisting of all that He has created

in {an elephant' with that bigness it possesses, and He has added two other limbs (for gnat) in order to stimulate (the attention of) the believers to notice the delicacy and frailness of His creation and His wonderful production. " [10]

In another occurrence in the Qur'an, He (s.w.t.) has said:

"Do they not look at camels, how they are created?" (Surah Al-Qashiyah. No. 88. verse 17).

Upon the importance of the intriguing creation of living creatures, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his sermons has said: "...How could it be? Even if all the animals of the earth whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men –all jointly try to create (even) 'a gnat' they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation.

Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and they return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realizing that they are too weak (even) to destroy it..." [11]

The verse continues saying:

"...As for those who have Faith, they know that it is the truth from their Lord..."

Those who have believed in Islam and accepted the Word of Allah know that these miraculous statements are issued from the Origin of revelation. They know quite well that these parables are vivid and appropriate and are revealed from their Lord.

They conceive the fact in this way because their hearts are empty of envy, grudges and pride and their souls are the site of the light of illumination and knowledge.

"...And for those who reject Faith, they ask: 'What does Allah mean by this parable?'..."

Those who have disbelieved and covered the light of Faith with the curtain of infidelity have ultimately blinded their own insight. They have made their ears, which were able to hearken to the Divine Words, deaf. They, ignorantly or mockingly, inquire that what was Allah's aim by giving this for a similitude that He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright.

In Tafsir-ut- Tibyan, vol. 1, page 19, Shaykh Tusi says: " It is like that a speaker asks what Allah means by this parable that thereby some may be led astray and some be guided. In answer to this question, Allah says that none will be led astray save the transgressors; but the way is open to the believers to reach the climax of understanding and conception with knowledge and true Faith."

Occasion of the Revelation

When the previous verses, i.e., the verses that say: "The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled afire..." and" Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from the heaven...", (2:17,19) were revealed, the hypocrites said that Allah is much exalted to bring forth these parables. So, to refuse their guise and statements, it says:

"Allah does not disdain to set forth the parable even of a gnat or anything greater than that."

Explanation

Some commentators have cited their ideas about the verse under discussion as follows:

The Arabic term / yudillu / means: 'misleading'. Wherever this word is used in the Qur'an, relating to Allah, it means the withdrawal of His Grace and allowing the individual to have the way of his own choice as a punishment, consequent to the individual's rejecting the Divine Guidance voluntarily offered to him.

The Holy Qur'an presents the justification to the frequent metaphorical expressions in the form of parables, to stimulate the human mind and heart. The result is obvious: that a healthy mind grasps the Truth whereas the perverted mind increases its doubts as to what Allah meant by the parable. Thus the one and the same expression has two opposite effects.

The right impression is 'guidance' / hidayat / which is assigned to' the pious' /muttaqin/, and the wrong impression is /dalalat / 'going astray' which is allotted to the wrong-doers, and pointed out in the next verse.

The two important characteristics of the wrong-doers are: the breach of the Covenant of Allah, after it has been confirmed and /qata'a ma amarallah / i.e., the severing of the relation or the connection with what Allah has commanded man to establish, and doing things subversive and harmful to the harmonious life on earth.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 27

الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُولَـئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

27. "Those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined, and they make corruption on the Earth; - they are the losers".

The Real Losers!

In the aforementioned verse, the subject was partly based on the wrong-doers and their mischievous deeds. In this verse, these people are introduced clearly by three qualities:

Referring to the first quality it says:

"Those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation..."

Then, it refers to their second quality, saying:

"...and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined,..."

Many of the commentators have pointed out that this verse refers especially to the desertion of kinsfolk and breaking off ties of relationship. But careful attention to the concept of the verse leads us to a broader and more general meaning, in which the desertion of kinsfolk is one of its examples.

The evidence that supports the above idea is that the verse indicates that the makers of corruption cut the ties that Allah has commanded to remain fixed and firm. These joining ties cover the union of kindred, meeting of friends, social relationships, connections with the divine leaders, and relation with Allah. Therefore, we should not confine the meaning of the verse to a single idea alone.

In some Islamic narrations, however, the phrase: 'What Allah has commanded to be joined' is rendered in connection with Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Imam Ali (as) and the entire Ahlul Bayt, the immaculate, (as).

The third quality of the makers of corruption on the earth, which is lastly referred to in this verse, is:

"...and they make corruption on the Earth..."

It is, of course, evident that they have neglected the path of Allah and disobeyed Him. These disbelievers, who do not observe mercy even towards their relatives, certainly treat others with cruelty.

They pursue their own pleasures and personal interests. It does not matter to them where the society may be led. Their central aim is to increase their profit and to obtain their desires. They do not care if they must do any wrong or commit any offense to reach their goals. It is obvious how destructive the result of this kind of thinking and acting may be in the society.

The Qur'an, at the end of this verse, says:

"...they are the losers."

Truly, it is so. What a greater loss than this that a man spends his entire physical and spiritual capital on the way to the destruction and disaster of his own life!

What fate can they have save this dreadful one when some people step out of the circle of obedience to Allah's Command to the extent of the meaning of the term / fisq / ' mischief'?

Mischief, in Islam, is one the most abhored crimes, as the Qur'an says: "Mischief is more grievous than murder ", (2:217). This is one of the many indications that Islam stands for peace on earth and never tolerates anything which disturbs it.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 41
2. Tauhid-i-Mufaddal (Theism), p. 1, (Persian version).
3. Other meanings of the sky will be dealt with when discussing verse 29 of the current Surah. Explanation about the atmosphere, when commenting on verse 22, is helpful, too.
4. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 41
5. O' dear respected reader of this book! Have you ever thought that when more than two-thirds of the globe is covered with sea water and if we consider it twice as much when we use it entirely as ink in order to write out the science and secrets of the Qur'an, i.e. the word of Allah, sooner would the doubled oceans of the globe be exhausted than would the words of Allah, the science and secrets of the Qur'an? Then be careful when considering how magnificent the Glorious Qur'an is !
6. For details, refer to: 'The Holy Qur'an and the Last Prophet (S)', pg 147, (Persian version)
7. Tafsir-us-Safi: vol. 1, p. 89, & Tafsir-i-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 70
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 14, p. 19
9. Manhaj-us-Sadiqeen, vol. 1, p. 199
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn- vol. 1, p. 46, Tradition 65
11. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 186

Section 3

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 28-29

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتاً فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاء فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ

بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

28. "How can you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then again restore you to life, and unto Him you will be returned?" (Therefore, neither your life nor your death is in your will; what you have is Allah's.)

29. "It is He Who created for you all that is in the earth; then turned (His Will) to heaven and fashioned it into seven heavens, for He is All-Knowing of all things."

The Mysterious Bounty of Life!

In these couple of verses, through a series of the Divine blessings and some of the marvelous phenomena of creation, the Holy Qur'an attracts man's attention to the Lord of the world and His Magnificent Sovereignty. It very clearly completes the undisputable evidence set forth for the acknowledgment of Allah's Omnipotence that was previously cited in verses 21 and 22.

It must be remembered that the correct conception of Allah is the basic need for proper faith. This faith serves as guidance from the main generative source (Allah) for the whole system of religion.

The most practical method of acquiring this basic knowledge about the existence of the Essence of Allah is to carefully observe and thoughtfully reflect on the creation which is before our own eyes.

This is a point that nobody can deny or express any doubt about. This method is repeatedly impressed and demanded in the Holy Qur'an. The course adopted in the Holy Qur'an to educate man is the most scientific and the most modern one, i.e. of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract.

At first it inquires:

"How can you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life..."

The Qur'an reminds all individuals that formerly they were inanimate like the pieces of stone, wood, and the like of them. The water of life had not been poured on you and the breeze of vitality had not blown through the garden of your being to open the blossom of your lifetime in the realm of your entity.

Now, you are gifted with the bounty of life and you are actually living. Numerous organs and limbs, and various integral systems of sensing to form conceptions are bestowed upon you. Who has given you this very blessing of life and being? Did you yourself give it to your own self?

It is clear that every rational person will unhesitately confess that this blessing is not from his own origin, but it has come from a knowing, mighty source, the One Who knows all its secrets and its complicated arrangements; and Who is able to design it totally. In this case there will arise the question of why you deny the One Who has granted you life.

Today, it has been proven by the scientists of the world that there is not anything more complicated than the phenomenon of life. Man has surprisingly gained a great deal of successful progress in the field of science, in general, and experimental natural science, in particular, but the secret of the riddle of life has not been uncovered yet.

This subject is so mysterious that it has remained inexplicable for millions of learned individuals whose thoughts and efforts have been left fruitless in conceiving it. Possibly, in the future, under the light of further scientific development, man will gradually become more acquainted with the secrets of life.

But the main question is: Can anybody ascribe such an extraordinarily delicate and precise phenomenon, which is full of mysteries and is in need of superior knowledge and power for itself, to the irrational nature, which itself does not have 'life' from its own ?

That is why we say the phenomenon of life, in the world of nature, is the greatest evidence for the affirmation of the existence of Allah about which abundant books have been compiled. The Qur'an, in the above verse, emphasizes on the very matter, too.

After the citation of this bounty, it refers to another vivid example, i.e., the phenomenon of death. It says:

"...then He will cause you to die..."

Everybody usually sees that his relatives, kinsfolk, acquaintances, companions, and friends die one after another, and their lifeless bodies are buried in the soil.

This actual circumstance is also a station of contemplation: Who took their beings from them? If their beings were theirs by themselves, they would be eternal. When it is taken from them, it is further proof that life is bestowed upon them by someone else.

True, the ' Bestower of life' is the' Bestower of death', as the Qur'an says:

"He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed...", (SurAl-Mulk, No. 67. verse No 2).

The Qur'an, after providing these two clear statements as proof for the Essence of Allah in order to make the soul of man disposed to grasp other problems, refers to the subject of Resurrection and being restored to life after death. It says:

"...then again restore you to life..."

This phenomenon of life after death, indeed, is not so surprising because it is not unfamiliar and man has formerly seen the same situation in nature.

Therefore, regarding the first statement, viz. 'the enlivening of the inanimate', the acceptance of raising the dead after the decomposition of the body, it is not so difficult, but it is easier than the first time He created man; (although the easiness and hardness is meaningless for the Essence Whose Power is infinite).

It is odd that there have been some people who have been doubtful about man's life after death. They believe that the first life has originated from some inanimate things.

It is interesting that the above verse has made everything, from the beginning to the end, manifest before the eyes of man. In a short argument,

it has expressed the advent of life to its last point in this, world, death, and then the Resurrection is illustrated for him.

The objective meaning of the phrase "Unto Him you will be returned" is returning to Allah's blessings; that is, you will return to the blessings of Allah in the Hereafter. The witness to this meaning is Surah Al-'An'am. No.6. Verse 36 which says:

"...As to the dead, Allah will raise them up; then will they be turned unto Him".

The objective of "Unto Him you will be returned" may be a reality more delicate and fragile than that. It is to say that: all creatures, in the process of development, begin from the station of non-existence, the zero point, and go forth towards 'infinite', which is the Pure Essence of Allah.

Thus, the path of development does not end with death, but, in the Hereafter, man will continue his life again, miserably, or prosperously with a higher standard of living to pave the path of his further development.

Conclusion

The Arabic term / kuntum /, (the second person plural), applied in the above verse, may address the human ego which was not as it is now as a conscious entity. The previous state is termed as 'being dead', brought into the present conscious state, by Allah's means of 'enlivening'.

The departure of the conscious self from the body is termed death appointed by Allah. The state of the human cognitive self, after its departure from the body, is termed as the 'enlivening' and from that state proceeding to the other states, up to the Infinite point of the return to Allah.

This shows that once our life begins; there is no reversion or regression. It is the continuous process from one state to the next, dying from the previous state and entering life into the succeeding one. Be the succeeding state pleasant or painful, it is the evolutionary consequence of the preceding state.

Also, this single verse alone denotes the continuous evolutionary transformation and the transcendence of a conscious human entity up to the communion with the Infinite, not in the sense of annihilation or the absorption of the finite into the infinite, but in the sense of the realization of the fact that nothing is real but the One, the Cause of all causes: the Essence of Allah, the Exalted.

****

After mentioning the blessing of life and pointing to the' Origin and End', it refers to another Divine bounty from among the immense bounties of Allah. It says:

"It is He Who created for you all that is in the earth..."

In this manner, it specifies the worthiness of the existence of man and his high mastership over all beings in the earth. It is just this very matter that clarifies for us that Allah has created Man for a very worthy and magnificent affair.

It is so important, that everything in the world is created for him! What is he created for? Yes, he is the most excellent being in the world of existence and the worthiest of all. A partial explanation will also be provided when commenting on verses 30-33 of the current Surah.

It is not this verse alone that defines the majestic position of Man but there are also abundant verses in the Holy Qur'an that reveal the same and introduce Man as the main goal of the whole world of creation; for example:

"And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on the earth:...", (Surah -Al-Jathiyah. No. 45 verse 13).

Some further instances from the verses of the Holy Qur'an are as follows:

"...Who hath made the ships subject to you,..." (14: 32).

"...And the rivers (also) hath He made subject to you..." (14: 32).

"...And the Night and the Day hath He also made subject to you." (14: 33).

"It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you,...", (45: 12).

"And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon,...", (Surah Ebrahim. No.14. verse 33).

On this subject, we will have some explanations later, too, when commenting upon Surah Ar-Ra'd, No.13, verse 2, and Surah Ebrahim No.14, verses 32 and 33.

Again, it turns to the concept of monotheism and says:

"...then turned (His Will) to heaven and fashioned it into seven heavens; for He is All-knowing of all things."

The Seven Firmaments

The word / sama /, as oppose to /' ard / 'the earth', in the lexicon means: 'to be lofty, upward'. This is a collective meaning which encompasses numerous concepts, in which some of the dimensions were formerly mentioned. [1]

But what is the objective meaning of the phrase 'seven heavens' here? The Islamic scholars and the commentators of the Holy Qur'an have offered different arguments on the subject, but the important idea, which seems to be the most correct is that the purpose of 'seven heavens' is its very actual meaning of 'seven firmaments'.

Yet, from the verses of the Qur'an, it is understood that the whole of celestial bodies: planets and fixed stars that we can see, are totally in the first heaven, and there are six other heavens that are not visible to us and even our modem scientific equipment are not able to show them. Therefore, there are, on the whole, seven firmaments which make up the very 'seven heavens'. [2]

The evidence to this statement is the words of the Qur'an where it says:

"...And We adorned the lower heaven with lights'..." (Surah Al-Fussilat, No.41. Verse 12)

In another occurrence it says:

"We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars..." (Surah As-Saffat, No.37. Verse 6)

These verses clearly indicate that what we see in the sky, which are generally called stars, are completely located in the first heaven. Beyond this heaven, there are six other heavens about whose details we do not have any exact data at present.

The reason why we said that there are six other heavens which are unknown to us yet, and science may realize them in the future, is that human

knowledge is still incomplete. The more developed it becomes, the more new surprising facts about the creation it discovers.

For instance, the science of astronomy has now reached a point where earthly telescopes are incompetent and satellites equipped with powerful radars and specific means for the purpose, are utilized instead.

What the great astronomical observatories and the modern equipment with the help of spacecrafts and scientific excavations have discovered, in the Arc of Descent, is a distance as far as about one thousand million (a billion) light years away from us wherein they have discovered innumerable solar systems other than ours.

The astronomers themselves have confessed that this is just the beginning of the way of the world, not the end of it, and the discovery of further such systems is yet expected with the successful invention of or the enhanced structure of stronger telescopes or more advanced means of celestial excavations.

Therefore, there is no doubt that, in the future, with the further progress in astronomy and science, other galaxies and firmaments, or the like, might be discovered.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 30-33

وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاء وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاء كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلاَئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاء هَـؤُلاء إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قَالُواْ سُبْحَانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

30. "When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am appointing on the earth a deputy', they said: 'Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, -while we celebrate Your Praise and extol Your Holiness?' He said: surely I know what you know not'."

31. "And He taught Adam all the names, then He presented them before the angels, and said: 'Tell Me the names of these if you are right'."

32. " They said: 'Glory be to You! of knowledge we have naught save what you have taught us. Surely, you (alone) are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'."

33. " He said: 'O' Adam, tell them their names'. And when he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not say unto you that I surely know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and (that) I know what you reveal and what you were hiding?"

Man, Allah's Deputy on Earth!

Through the previous verses we have understood that Allah has created all the endowments on the earth for Man, whereas in these verses the leadership and vicegerency of Man is formally proclaimed. Thus, here, Man's spiritual rank and worthiness of all these merits, are exposed.

In these verses, which begin from verse No.30 and end with verse 39, the creation of Adam (the first human) is referred to and the following three fundamental subjects are set forth:

1. Allah informs the angels about man's vicegerency on the earth and their questioning of Him.

2. Angels are commanded to prostrate before the first human, Adam. This situation is referred to in numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an concerning different circumstances.

3. The illustration of the situation of Adam and his life in Heaven and the events causing him to be sent out from Heaven, and then, his repentance and the order that he and his children were to live on the earth, are pointed out.

The verses under discussion speak about the first stage. It was His Will, so He created a being on the earth to be His vicegerent. The attributes of this deputy would be a reflection from the rays of Allah Attributes, and his position somehow higher than that of the angels.

It was His Will that the earth and all its endowments, i.e. forces, treasures, mines, and all its potentials be subjected to the will of such a human being.

Such a being must have a vast share of wisdom, intelligence, conception and a special capacity so that he can undertake the leadership and mastership of the earthly beings.

Therefore, in the first verse, it says:

"When your Lord said to the angels:

'I am appointing on the earth a deputy '..."

According to what the leading Islamic scholars and learned men, and experts in , have said, the objective meaning of 'khalifah' (deputy) is the divine vicegerent on the earth, because the question which the angels asked later, - saying that the human race may make mischief and shed blood on the earth while they (the angels) celebrate His Praise,- reinforces this very meaning, that Allah vicegerency on the earth is incompatible with these deeds.

Also, teaching the names to Adam, whose explanation you will read in the following verses, is good evidence supporting this claim. Again, the angels' humility and veneration before Adam is another witness to this idea.

However, Allah was pleased to create a being above all the creatures of the universe, the best creation, appropriate for being a Divine vicegerent, Allah's Deputy on the Earth.

Commenting on these verses, Imam al-Sadiq (as) in a tradition has referred to the same meaning and said that the angels, after recognizing the position of Adam, realized that he and his children deserved to be the deputies of Allah on the earth and serve as His guidance among peoples. [3]

Then, in the current verse, the angels put forth a question, in order to understand the reality and not to protest, as it says:

"...they said: 'Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood,"

"...'while we celebrate Your Praise and extol Your Holiness?'..."

But, here in this verse, 'Allah's answer to them is a complicated reply whose details will be given in later verses.

"...He said: 'Assuredly I know what you know not '"

As it is realized from their words, the angels had comprehended that this human was not a docile one: he makes mischief, sheds blood, does wrong, etc. But how did they know it?

It is sometimes said that Allah had previously told the angels the future of Man in brief, while some others have cited that maybe the angels had comprehended the idea themselves from the term / fil'ard / (on the earth).

They knew that Man would be created from soil; and, because of the complexity of 'matter', naturally it is the center of conflict and difficulties. For, this limited world of matter cannot satiate the avaricious nature of human beings, even if the whole world were given to a single one, he would not be satisfied.

This status can sometimes be the main cause of mischief and bloodshed particularly when there is not enough sense of responsibility.

Some of the other commentators believe that the predication of the angels resulted from the fact that Adam was not the first human creature on the earth, but, before him, there had also been some other humans who had lived on the earth and had committed corruption and shed blood. This bad record caused the angels' suspicion about Adam and his descendants.

These three commentaries are not so contradictory to one another; viz, they, comprehensively, may have caused the attention of the angels to be attracted towards this subject.

And, incidentally, this fact that they expressed was never denied by their Lord in His answer to them, but, besides this fact, He pointed out that there were some other more important facts about man and his capabilities that the angels did not know.

They thought that if the purpose were only for worshipping and servitude, they would be the best examples, because they were always praising Him and were the most appropriate ones for being the vicegerents!

They did not consider that when lusts, wrath and various desires have no chance to influence on their behaviours and selves, their worshipping is different from the servitude and worshipping of Man whose lusts and desires have surrounded him and Satan's temptations attack him from every side.

What a long distance there is between the obedience of this feeble being and the adoration of those holy and pure angels!

They did not know that in the seed of Adam there would come such great prophets as Mohammad (S), Abraham (as), Noah (as), Moses (as), Jesus (as), and some Imams as the twelve sinless Imams (Ahlul Bayt) (as) in addition to many pious believers, martyrs, and a great many men and women who lovingly donated the whole of their properties in the way of Allah.

There would be some off springs of Adam whose one hour of contemplation is equal to years of worshipping of the angels.

It is noteworthy that the angels emphasized on three aspects about their characteristics: / tasbih / (glorification), / hamd / (praise, eulogy) and / taqdis / (sanctification). Undoubtedly, both the first and the second mean:

celebrating His Praises and knowing Him and His Glory absolutely pure and perfect, free from any impurity or imperfection or from anything derogatory.

But what is the main objective meaning of / taqdis / 'sanctification'? Some have considered it as the purification of Allah from any imperfection which is, in fact, an emphasis again on the very meaning of / tasbih / 'glorification'.

Some others believe that the term / taqdis / is derived from the root / quds / which means: 'to purify the earth from the wicked and corruptors', or 'to purify oneself from anything bad, evil and immoral in order to clarify the soul and body for the sake of Allah'.

They have considered the term / laka / (for you) in the phrase / nuqaddisu-laka /, we extol Your Holiness (for you)', as its witness. The angels did not say: 'we extol You', but they meant to say: 'we purify ourselves and assist those who obey You, for You, or towards You'.

In fact, they wanted to say: if the purpose is obedience and servitude, they are obedient; and if it is worship, they are always busy doing it; and if the purpose is the purification of themselves or throughout the expanse of the earth, they are doing that too. But this matter-made human is both immoral, himself, and makes mischief on the earth.

To clarify the facts completely for the angels. He set them on trial in order that they themselves might confess that there was a great difference between them and Adam.

Angels on Trial

Adam, being given effective faculties by Divine favour, had an extraordinary receptive potential for the facts of the world of being, and as the Qur'an says:

" And He taught Adam all the names,..."

The commentators, from the point of view of their various styles of , have delivered different ideas on the phrase 'teaching names', but it is certain that its aim is not that of teaching some insignificant words or meaningless 'names', because this could not be counted an honour for Adam. The aim is teaching the nature of these names and the concepts and the things that they refer to.

Of course, this acknowledgement of the nature and the facts of the world of creation and the secrets of the world of being with its different properties in different creatures was a great honour for Adam.

It is narrated in a tradition that Imam al-Sadiq (as) was asked about the meaning of this verse and he (as) said:

" The purpose (of names) is: lands, mountains, valleys, riverbeds (and on the whole, all things). Then he looked at the rug under him and said that even that rug was among the things He taught Adam." [4]

Therefore 'teaching names' has not been something like teaching words but it refers to the philosophy and secrets of the properties and qualities of things. He taught Adam this knowledge in order that he could use the merits and advantages of this world alongside the path of his development towards perfection.

He (s.w.t.) also taught him the capacity of language learning and the skill of writing with its proper application to be able to nominate objects and

whenever he needs them, instead of showing them, he merely calls their names.

This is a very great bounty of the Lord bestowed on man. We can comprehend the importance of this subject when we observe that what modern science and human beings have is under the shade of the existence of language and writing.

All the scientific and cultural, historical ancient records have been kept and preserved as treasures in man's written collections generation after generation. If he could not use language and pen, it would be impossible for him to convey the knowledge and experimental data from old generations to the recent nations and the coming ones.

"...then He presented them before the angels, and said: 'Tell Me the names of these if you are right'."

****

But the angels, who were in lack of such knowledge, failed in that trial and could, not pass the divine examination successfully. So, their response to Him was such:

"They said: 'Glory be to You! Of knowledge we have naught save what You have taught us..."

"...Surely, You (alone) are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise".

They said that they did not know anything regarding this matter and their question was simply because of their lack of knowledge. They were unaware of the capacity and wonderful power of Adam (as), his God-given endowment.

It was a great privilege to him above the angels. They accepted that Adam (as) really deserved to be the vicegerent of Allah on the earth and in the world of all beings, where without him, the whole creation would remain incomplete.

****

Then, it was Adam's turn, by the command of Allah and in the presence of angels to speak and explain the names and secrets of beings in His creation along with the insight to the knowledge of the realities or the latent properties or the hidden native endowments in each of them.

"He said: 'O Adam, tell them their names'..."

"...And when he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not say unto you that I surely know the unseen things of heavens and the earth, and (that) I know what you reveal and what you were hiding ?' "

Allah, having the knowledge of all the hidden things of the heavens and the earth, knew also what the angels did hide in their imaginations, which was that they deemed themselves more deserving of the high office of being the Deputy of Allah among His creation. This belief of the angels made them inquire into the Divine Will about Adam's being the vicegerent.

But when Adam (as) spoke and the angels observed that surprising glory in him, they respected Adam for the vast knowledge and immense information and worthiness that radiated from him. Thus, it was made clear for them that it was only Adam (as) who was apt enough to be His deputy on the Earth.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 34-36

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلاَئِكَةِ اسْجُدُواْ لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلاَ مِنْهَا رَغَداً حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلاَ تَقْرَبَا هَـذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الْظَّالِمِينَ

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا ِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ َعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ ُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ

34. "And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' They all prostrated themselves except Iblis; he refused and was full of pride, and so he became one of the infidels."

35. "And We said: 'O' Adam, dwell you and your spouse in the Garden and eat of the plentiful therein (both of you) wherever you desire, but do not approach this tree, lest you become one of the unjust'."

36. "But Satan caused them to fall there from, and brought them out from the state (of felicity) in which they had been. And We said: 'Get down all of you, and be enemies one of another, and for you on the earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time'."

Adam in the Garden

In the former statements, the high rank and glory of Man was discussed. Now, in these verses, another aspect of the subject is dealt with. At first, to call upon our minds, the Qur'an says:

"And when We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam., They all prostrated themselves except lblis; he refused and was full of pride,..."

Yes, he was proud and it was for this very pride that he became one of the unbelievers:

"...and so he became one of the infidels…"

It should be noted that the above verse is the most valid piece of evidence and a vivid witness to the magnificence and nobility of Man whom, after his being created, all the angels were commissioned to make obeisance and pay homage to, and bow before that splendid creation.

He was really appropriate for the position of being the divine deputy and His vicegerent on the earth. This one, who had such a high glorious rank, that was apt to bring up, from his seed, some refined and respectful children, some of whom would be prophets, was worthy of such obeisance and honour.

You may consider the position of an ordinary learned person who knows some definite formulas in a branch of science, and think of how immensely we respect him. Then, the position of Adam with all of his glory and vast knowledge about the world of being is obvious.

Explanations

Why did Iblis Disobey?

We know that 'satan' is a common noun that envelops both the first Satan and all other satans. But, ' Iblis ' is a proper noun which refers to the same one that tempted Adam (as).

According to the verses of the Qur'an, Iblis was not of the same nature as the angels, but he was from a different genus i.e. of the Jinn, of the nature of matter, who had been assembled among the angels. One of the verses wherein Iblis is spoken of as a Jinn is as follows:

"And when said We unto the angels: 'Prostrate ye unto Adam ': then they (all) prostrated but Iblis, he was of Jinn...", (Surah Kahf. No.18. Verse 50).

His motive in this disobedience was pride and a special bigotry which had dominated his behaviour. He imagined that he was superior to Adam (as) and he should not have been ordered to prostrate himself before him (as). He thought Adam should prostrate before him. The explanation of this idea will be discussed later, in comments referring to Surah Al-A'raf. No.7. Verse12.

The cause of his blasphemy was also that he considered the wise command of Allah rather inappropriate. He not only disobeyed practically, but also protested theoretically. Thus, his pride and self-conceit annulled a life-time of his worshipping and rendered it worthless! Beware; pride has many effects of 'this kind'!

The phrase: "...so he became one of the infidels" shows that before this command, too, he had changed his path from the path of angels and obeying the command of Allah, and had had ideas resulting from pride in mind.

Perhaps, he had told himself that if the order of obeisance were given to him, he would certainly never obey it. The phrase: "...what you conceal", in verse 33, may hint to this meaning. This idea is also referred to in a tradition from Imam Hassan 'Askari, the eleventh Imam (as), cited in Tafsir-ul-Qummi. [5]

Was the Prostration for Allah or for Adam?

There is no doubt that / sajdah / or a formulated prostration with the purpose of worshipping is deserved by none but Allah alone and the meaning of 'Unity of Worship' means the same: that we worship and make obeisance to none else other than Allah, or it will be 'shirk', (i.e. associating the object with Allah).

Therefore, it is beyond doubt that the infallible beings like the angels prostrated themselves for Allah, but it was for the creation of such a splendid being, Adam, that they obeyed Him by prostrating. Or, if they prostrated for Adam, their prostration was a kind of 'obeisance' not an act of worshipping.

In the book' 'Uyun-ul-Akhbar' by Shaykh al-Saduq, it is cited that Imam Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (as) said:

"The angels' prostration was for the adoration of worshipping Allah, on one side, and for the obeisance and respect of Adam (as), on the other side, because we (Ahlul Bayt) were in his seed." [6]

****

However, after that episode with Iblis and the trial of the angels, Adam was ordered that he and his spouse ought to abide in Paradise:

"And We said: 'O' Adam, dwell you and your spouse in the Garden and eat of the plentiful therein (both of you) wherever you desire, but do not approach this tree, lest you become one of the unjust'."

It is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an that Adam (as) was created to live on the earth, this very terrestrial globe, but, at the beginning He had temporarily placed him (and his wife) in a beautiful and prosperous Garden, bountiful with blessings and free from any trouble and incommodity.

This arrangement occurred, maybe, because Adam was not acquainted with the process of living on the earth. It was difficult for him to tolerate immediately all the troubles therein.

Therefore, at first, he was to obtain some more information about the kind of life to expect on the earth, and hence, it stood to reason that he should remain for a length of time in the Garden and learn the necessary skills there in order to find out that life on earth is accompanied with accepting some responsibilities and performing some duties whose accomplishments would bring his felicity, development and continuity of blessings, whereas, their refusal would cause him to be involved with pain and hardship.

Also, he must know that although he has been created free, this freedom is limited. He cannot do whatever he wishes, but he must do without some of the things existing in this world for his own good.

And again, he need know that it is not so that if he does a wrong or an err all the doors of felicity and happiness will be closed to him. He can return and repent and promise not to do anything against the order of Allah, and in such a case, when his repentance is accepted, he will return to the divine blessings.

Adam (as) had to remain in that environment to gain some experience in order to be able to recognize his friend and his enemy, to learn how to live on the earth. Yes, there were a series of skills which were necessary for him to learn before stepping onto the earth.

Those were the things that both Adam (as) and his children needed for their future lives. Hence, the one who was created to be the vicegerent of Allah on the earth might stay in the Garden, perhaps, so that some instructions could be given to him for his information and practical use.

The following enlightening paragraph cited in Almizan upon the idea may also be mentioned here.

"It should not be overlooked that even when Allah pardoned them (the couple) after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden -they were sent down to the earth to live therein.

If their eating of the tree, the coveting of their private parts and the life of this world were not a confirmed divine plan, and an irrevocable predetermined decree, they would have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as they were forgiven for their mistake.

In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend some time in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allah, was caused by their eating from the forbidden tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and this happened because they listened to the whispering of Satan." [7]

****

Adam found himself in a position that it was best for him to follow the instruction of Allah about restraining from eating of the forbidden tree. The whisperer, Satan, had sworn to be busy whispering and making Adam (as) and his children stray.

As some other verses of the Qur'an indicate, Satan assured Adam (as) that if he and his wife ate from that tree they would become angels and would live in the Garden forever. Satan even swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser:

"...Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you", (Surah Al-A'raf. No.7. verse 21).

"But Satan caused them to fall there from, and brought them out from the state (of felicity) in which they had been..."

Yes, they were removed from the Garden where they had been in ease and tranquility, far from any pain and trouble. This event took place as the direct result of the effect of Satan's deceit.

Then the Qur'an says: "...And We said: "Get down all of you, and be enemies one of another...". In this enmity, Satan was on one side, and Adam (as) and his wife were on the other side.

"...and for you on the earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time'."

It was at this time that Adam (as) realized that he had really done injustice to himself, because he was removed from the Garden for his submission to the whispers of Satan, and was to sojourn in a place full of pain, toil, and trouble.

True that Adam (as) was a prophet and was immaculate, but, as we will discuss later, if a prophet commits an err; Allah will react severely towards him as if an ordinary person had committed it. It is the same for the ordinary people when they commit sins.

The Heavy Forfeit Paid by Adam

The Late Allamah Tabatabaie pointed out his point of view about this subject concerning Adam (as) and his spouse as follows:

"The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was neither a sin (as this term is used in the Shari'ah) nor an injustice against Allah. It shows that the prohibition was in the nature of advice, pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force of an ordained law.

Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard for that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. offence, from the Shari'ah point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely removed, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all.

If Adam (as) and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only advice.

Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to leave the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a

punishment for any sin or crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves." [8]

For a more detailed explanation about the subject, an expressive narration from Hazrat Rida, the eighth Imam (as), mentioned in 'Uyun-ul-'Akhbar, p. 108 & 109 which is also referred to in Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 11, pp. 78 & 104, can be studied, as well as another one on p. 156 from Imam Baqir (as). Muhammad Jawad Muqniyyah, in his well-known: At Tafsir-ul-Kashif, vol. 1, pp. 84-86 has also cited some considerable details upon the matter. All of these references can surely be helpful in clarification of the meaning.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 37-39

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ مِنْهَا جَمِيعاً فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

37. "Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord. And He turned towards him (mercifully). Truly He is Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

38. "We said: 'Get you down from it, all together; until there shall come to you a guidance from Me, for whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve'."

39. "But those who reject Faith and deny Our Signs, they are the inhabitants of the Fire, dwelling therein forever."

Adam's Return to Allah

After the temptation of Iblis and the removal of Adam from the Garden, Adam realized that he had truly done injustice to himself when he was removed from that quiet environment full of bounties as a result of the temptation of Iblis and was placed on the earth, a grievous environment full of toil and pain. At this time, Adam thought of compensation for his mistake and earnestly attended to the Lord with his whole heart and soul, but with a great deal of regret and penitence.

At the same time, the Mercy of Allah was bestowed on him with 'some effective words' by the means of which Adam repented and He accepted his repentance mercifully; as the Qur'an says:

"Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord..."

"...And He turned towards him (mercifully)..."

It did happen because:

"...Truly He is Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

The term / taubah / originally means: 'to return'. In the statements of the Qur'an, it means: 'to return from sin'. This meaning is applied when it refers to a sinful person. But, sometimes, the term is used when concerning Allah.

In this case, it means 'to return to His Mercy'; that is, the mercy which a person was deprived of because of committing sin. When a sinful one returns to the path of obedience and worship, He returns that Mercy to him/her, too. That is why the Lord is attributed as 'Oft-Returning', too.

By the way, it should be noted that the Arabic word / taubah /, which is generally understood as 'repentance', does not imply the mere utterance of any verbal prayers. It demands a real and active change in the behavior as well as the active attitude of the individual towards the purity of his/her life.

It demands a moral conversion with a strong and definite determination on the part of the repenting individual, never again to return to the mistake or the wrong that had been committed before.

In other words, the term / taubah / 'repentance' is a word commonly used both for Allah and His servants. When it is used for the servants of Allah, it means that 'they have returned to their Lord', because any sinner, in fact, has abandoned his Lord, and when the servant repents, he/she returns to Him.

When servants fail to obey their Lord, it seems that they cause Him, also, to turn away from them. When Allah is attributed with / taubah /, it means that He returns His Mercy and Favour to them.

It is true that Adam, indeed, did not do any unlawful thing against the Lord, but that very mistake was counted a. 'a comparative wrong' regarding him. Adam (as) immediately felt his condition and returned to his Lord. He repented by the means of the 'words' he received, and his repentance was accepted. But what the nature of the 'words' was will be discussed separately under the title of' Explanation'.

****

Anyhow, Adam's repentance was accepted but not abstaining from the use of the fruit of the prohibited tree which had a potential innate effect ultimately resulted in the form of his settlement on the earth. This consequence remained unchanged for the couple, as the above verses say:

"We said: 'Get you down from it, all together; until there shall come to you a guidance from Me, for whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve'. "

"But those who reject Faith and deny Our Signs, they are the inhabitants of the Fire, dwelling therein forever."

Explanation: The ' Words' Adam (as) Learnt from the Lord

Commentators have cited different ideas commenting on the quality and the meaning of the 'words' that Allah taught Adam (as).

Mere common sense suggests that what was bestowed upon Adam by the All-Knowing, All-Merciful Lord could not have been anything of an ordinary prayer. It must have been something very special or extraordinary which the All-Merciful Himself bestowed upon him by means of which Adam (as) or anyone could unfailingly invoke the Mercy of the Lord after having displeased Him.

It is popularly accepted that the 'words' were the same words and meanings revealed in Surah Al-'A'raf. No.7. Verse 23 thus:

"They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost'."

A group of commentators have said that the purpose of the 'words' might have been this invocation:

"O' Lord! There is no deity but You! Glory be to You, and Yours is the Praise! O' my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then

forgive me! For Thou art the Best of those who forgive". Or, "...And have mercy upon me: for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy!" Or "...And turn unto me (in Mercy); for Thou art verily the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful!"

This idea has been cited in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as), the fifth Imam. [9]

Some phrases similar to the above ones have occurred in the Qur'an. For example, Jonah (Yunus) (as), asking Allah to forgive him, says: "...Glory to Thee: I was indeed wrong!" (Surah Al-.Anbiya. No.21. verse 87). And, about Moses (as), the Qur'an says:

"He prayed: 'O' my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me! 'So (Allah) forgave him..." (Surah Al-Qasas No.28. verse 16).

Many Islamic traditions narrated from Ahlul Bayt (as), such as Tafsir-i-Durrul-Manthur, denote that the objective meaning of the 'words' taught to Adam (as) by Allah was the holy names of the Holy Five; viz: the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Ali, his daughter Fatimah, and his sons (i.e. grandsons) Hassan and Husayn (as). Adam (as) relied on these 'words' and asked Him to forgive him. Then, Allah accepted it and forgave him.

These three commentaries do not contradict one another since the entirity of the 'words' might have been taught to Adam (as) in order that, through their (the 'words') reality, depth, and innate nature, he could obtained a pure perfect spiritual change in his heart and soul totally so that Allah would shower him with His Grace and Guidance.

Notes

1. For the word / Sama'/ in the sense of 'atmosphere', look at the on verse 22, Surah Baqarah, this vol., pp. 113-114
2. An imaginary, approximately similar meaning to this idea is seen in Milton, Pardise Lost, iii 56, 481. The same imagery will be found in Dante.
3. Tafsir-i-Almizan, vol. 1, p. 121
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 76
5. Tafsir Almizan, vol. 1, p. 126
6. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 58; & Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. II, p. 139
7. Almizan, vol. 1, p. 181 (English version)
8. Almizan, vol. 1, pp. 185-186 (English version)
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 89

Section 4

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 40

يَا بَنِي إِ ْ ءَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَ ِ َ الَّ ِ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُواْ بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ

40. "O' Children of Israel, remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfil My covenant and I shall fulfil your covenant, and have awe of none but Me."

The Remembrance of the Favours of Allah

In the previous verses we learnt about the commission of Adam's vicegerency on the earth, the respectful treatment of the angels towards him, Iblis's reaction of pride, and the negligence of his covenant with Allah, and, consequently, his removal from the Garden and, thereafter, his penitence.

Through these events, this fundamental principle was made clear that: in this world, there are two opposite forces, i.e. right and wrong, or just and unjust, which are always at odds with each other.

He who, following the temptations of Satan, chooses the wrong path gets farther and farther away from felicity and salvation and involves himself in toil and pain, the fruit of which is remorse and regret.

But those who, heedless of the Satanic temptations and those of vicious fellows, choose the path of obedience of Allah will live a happy life, free from spiritual pain and grief.

There is a close similarity between the story of Adam (as) and that of the Israelites when they were rescued from the clutches of Pharaoh before their vicegerency on the earth, and, after that, their negligence of their solemn promise to Allah which caused them to be involved in pain and misery.

Their fate not only resembles that of Adam's, but it can also be considered as a subdivision of that general principle. Hence, in the above verse and several verses after that, Allah refers to some different aspects of the lives of the Children of Israel and their lamentable end to complete with them the educative lesson which He started with the story of Adam's fate.

He addresses the Israelites and says:

"O' Children of Israel, remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfil My covenant and I shall fulfil your covenant, and have awe of none but Me."

Those three instructions (the remembrance of the great blessings of Allah, being loyal to His covenant, to be in awe of only Him) are, indeed, the basis of all Divine programs.

The remembrance of the blessings of the Lord leads Man to the knowledge of Allah, and provokes a sense of gratitude in him. Then, believing that those bounties are not given unconditionally and He has taken a covenant for them makes man aware of his duties and responsibilities.

After this, not having awe of anybody or any power in the way of performing the Divine duties, causes Man to remove all the barriers and obstructions from his way and fulfil faithfully his responsibilities and promises, for, having awe of this and that, is one of the greatest obstacles on this way, especially in the case of the Israelites who were under the control

of Pharaonic governments and, consequently, fear had become a part of their lives.

Explanations

Jews in Medina

It is interesting that, according to what historians of the Qur'an have cited, Surah Al-Baqarah is the first Surah that was revealed in Medina. This Surah talks mostly about Jews, because they were the most dominate group of the 'People of the Book' there.

Before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S), as their own religious books indicated, they were waiting for such an advent, and used to give its glad tidings to others. They were also in a very good economic condition at that time and, on the whole, they had a deep influence on the social affairs of Medina.

But, with the advent of Islam, many of them not only did not accept the invitation of Islam, but stood, hiddenly and openly, against it, because Islam hindered them from their unlawful interests and did not let them continue their evil social projects. Now, after the passing of more than fourteen centuries, this same hostility is still alive and active against Islam.

It was at that time when the above verse and the verses after that were sent down which blamed them intensively and, by mentioning the sensitive aspects of their historical background, moved them so violently that those Jews, who had the least sense of justice and truth-seeking, awoke and accepted Islam. Besides that, this admonishment was a comprehensive lesson for all the Muslim believers, too.

In the discussions of the verses that will come later, we shall talk about some of the outstanding circumstances of these people such as their rescue from the grips of Pharaoh, the cleaving asunder of the sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his horsemen, the appointing place of Moses (as) on Mount Sinai (Toor), the calf (of gold) worshipped by the Israelites when Moses (as) was not among them which caused them to receive the instruction of the bloody repentance and, thereafter, the special bounties of Allah were sent down for them, and some other events similar to these, each of which contains a lesson or lessons to be learnt by all.

The Jews' Twelve Covenants with Allah

As it is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the covenant mentioned in the above verse is the very covenant of worshipping Allah; to treat parents, kindred, orphans, and the needy with kindness; to have fair behaviour with people, to attend and be steadfast in ritual prayers; to pay alms; to avoid doing grievous wrongs, and to avoid shedding blood.

The witness of this statement is Surah Al-Baqarah. No. 2 verses 83 and 84:

"And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel (instructing): 'You shall not worship any but Allah; and A (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy, and speak kind words to people, keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakat)'. Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you backslide (even now)."

"And (remember) when We made a covenant with you: 'You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your dwellings', then you confirmed it while you bore witness."

These two verses, in fact, refer to the ten different covenants that Allah had taken from the Jews. When we consider, and add, the two other covenants of Surah Al-Maidah. No 5. Verse 12, which advises them to believe in the Divine prophets and help them respectfully, the fact is made clear that they had given numerous covenants to Allah for those great Divine blessings; and they had been promised by Allah to be settled in the Gardens of Heaven under whose trees and castles streams flow, if they would have kept their promises, thus:

"Allah did aforetime take a Covenant from the Children of Israel... and Allah said:'I am with you: if ye (but) establish regular Prayers, practice regular Charity, believe in My apostles, honour and assist them... And admit you to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath..."

But, unfortunately, in spite of the long expectations of the Jews based upon the prophecies in their sacred scriptures, they, finally, observed none of those promises and they continued their most vehement and the most torturous opposition and persecution against Islam and Muslims not only at the advent of Islam but they have also been continuing it until the present time.

The fruit of their evil actions was that they became vagrant, and this condition will always be seen in their lives till the time when they will be destroyed. If we see that, with the support of this or that, they flourish in their authorative existence for a short length of time, it cannot be counted a real reason for their final victory.

We know it well that one day the true followers of Islam, free from any tribal or racial adherences and only under the light of the Holy Qur'an, will rise and put an end to all these vanities.

Allah will fulfil His Covenant, too!

The bounties of Allah have never been given unconditionally and every blessing is accompanied by a responsibility or responsibilities.

A tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) says that the objective meaning of the phrase: 'I shall fulfil your covenant', mentioned in this verse, is that Allah will fulfil His covenant in admitting them into Heaven. [1]

It is not surprising that, in this tradition, the belief in the mastership of Hazrat Ali (as) is mentioned as a part of this covenant, because one of the items of the covenant of the Children of Israel was the acceptance of the prophecy of the Divine Apostles and the assisting of them.

And it is evident that the acceptance of their vicegerents is also a part of the acceptance of that leadership and mastership, which should be established at any time appropriate with that age. At the time of Moses (as), it was he who held that position; and at the time of Hazrat Muhammad (S), he did, and thereafter Hazrat Ali (as) continued it.

By the way, the phrase: “...and have awe of none but Me", referring to an awe of His punishment because of their disobedience of His command, is an emphasis on this subject that, in fulfilling their covenant with Allah, they should fear of no one and no circumstance.

Why are Jews Called the Children of Israel?

'Israel' was one of the titles of Jacob, Yosuf's (Joseph) father. Both the well-known commentators 'Tabarsi' in his book: 'Majma'ul-Bayan ' (vol. 1, p. 92), and 'Shaykh-ut- Ta'ifah' the Late Toosi in his book entitled: 'at-Tibyan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an' (vol. 1, p. 180) have expressed:

"Israel is the same as Jacob, the son of Issac (Ishaq) the son of Abraham (as)...".

These two great commentators believe that the word / isra'il / is a combination of the term 'Isr', / 'abd /, with the meaning of 'servant' and' 'il ' with the meaning of 'Allah'. Then, the word means 'the servant of Allah'; and it is a 'Hebraic' word.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 41-43

وَآمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلاَ تَشْتَرُواْ بِآيَاتِي ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ

وَلاَ تَلْبِسُواْ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُواْ الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُواْ مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

41. "And believe in what I have revealed (the Qur'an), confirming that (Scripture) which is with you, and be not the first to reject Faith therein, and sell not My Signs for a miserable price; and be in awe of none but Me."

42. "And confound not the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (it)."

43. "And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakat), and bow down in prayer with those who bow down (in congregation)."

The Lord commands the Jews that they should believe in His revelation, the Qur'an, and accept it because the acceptance of the Qur'an is just the same as the acceptance of the Turah:

"And believe in what I have revealed (the Qur'an) confirming that (Scripture) which is with you..."

This statement indicates that the Turah, in which they believe, itself has pointed out the glad tidings of the advent of the promised Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (S), and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, the requisite belief in the content of the Turah is belief in the Qur'an.

"...and be not the first to reject Faith therein..."

The verse addresses the Jews and says that those people, who are of the "People of the Book" and among whom there are scholars and learned men who believe in God and have accepted the Divine prophets, should not be the first group to reject the Qur'an and deny its rightfulness. When their scholars do not accept the truth, many others also follow them and reject it.

"...and sell not My Signs for a miserable price..."

Some authentic narrations denote that many of the scholars and Rabbis of the Jews used to sell the verses and some features of Hadrat Muhammad, the promised Prophet (S), mentioned in the Scripture of old, the Turah, to some of the rich Jews at that time and perverted the verses of the Turah in exchange for taking money from them.

Here, Allah scorns them and forbids them from doing this abominable action and directs them not to corrupt the Scripture for that little sum of money. The money they used to take was, of course, a large sum, but, in comparison with what they committed, it was very little.

Allah's signs are worth more than all their paltry considerations, and changing and perverting those Divine Signs is a very great sin so that gold and silver, howsoever much they may be, or even high social positions, seems naught in comparison with it. So, He says:

"...and be in awe of none but Me."

****

"And confound not the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (it)."

This verse provides another emphasis on the above meaning. The Jewish scholars are told, here, not to mix up the truth with falsehood by perverting the verses of the Turah and hiding its revelations about the Prophet of Islam (S), when they are supposed to make them manifest, because they recognize them and, in connection to this, know the difference between right and wrong very well.

****

"And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakat), and bow down in prayer with those who bow down (in congregation)."

In Islam, next to the belief in Allah, His Messenger, and the Resurrection, prayer and alms (zakat) are the two essential pillars of Faith without which the establishment and endurance of Faith is impossible.

Prayer and poor-rates, as well as observing their proper times, are strictly and repeatedly emphasized in the concerning verses of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic traditions and narrations. The excellence and importance of prayers are briefly pointed out in commenting on verse 3, the current Surah on pages 80-83 in this volume.

Explanation

Islam, as a religion, has revealed information with the perfection necessary to train mankind and to discipline the human race and to enable them to raise themselves from the depths of material degradation to the unlimited elevation of spiritual glory in order to qualify each - individual as an adherent, as much as he or she personally desires, to rise towards the divinity in store for every sincere seeker of it.

The curbing of the physical desires of a human being is sure to have the natural consequence of sublimating it by the resulting moral effect on the mind which can gradually put it well on the way to receiving the enlightenment of the higher meanings of life. A certain degree of piety and devotion is essential for a human being to be initiated into the realm of spiritual bliss.

All the previous religions, particularly the creed of the Jews and the Christians, were limited to some extreme systems of optional ascetic hermitage of extremes which did not agree with the natural demands of the social life of the people.

The imposition of such extremes, with the freedom to do it or not, could help only a few to follow the order, discarding completely their worthy life

but the bulk of the people had sunk deep into hypocritical observances and practices.

Islam, as a practical and fully regulated religion, bases its foundation first on humbling the ego of man by making him conscious about his relation to his Creator and thus making him yield to the Lord, his God, in complete submission to Him by worshipping in a way suiting his humble position.

By this, Islam brings man in the presence of his Lord. The first cardinal doctrine or ordinance of Islam is 'salat' or, 'prayers' which develops in a human being the appropriate feeling in relation to God and puts the individual in direct contact with the great qualities of the Absolute Divinity.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 44

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

44. "Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you forget your own selves (to practice it)? And you read the Scripture? Have you then no sense? "

This verse is apparently addressing and scorning the scholars of the Jews who, before the Divine invitation of Hadrat Muhammad (S), recommended people to embrace Islam. They enjoined them to pay charity and favour each other, but they did not do these good deeds themselves. They did not accept Islam in order to continue their mastership, nor pay charity lest they might become poor.

But, the verse, in fact, addresses and admonishes all those who habitually recommend others to piety and neglect their own souls.

"Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you forget your own selves (to practice it)?..."

It is not logical that a person enjoins his fellow men to help others and work righteousness but,'he himself does not observe it. That is why, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...And you read the Scripture? Have you then no sense? "

It inquires how you do not understand that you should enjoin righteousness on yourselves first and do accordingly to be as an example, and then expect others to obey you and receive your recommendation, with their whole hearts.

Experience has proved that words which are uttered only by the tongue, as simple statements, physically strike the ears and perish. But reasonable speech that arises from the soul and reality settles in souls firmly and affects hearts deeply.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 45-46

وَاسْتَعِينُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلاَّ عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلاَقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

45. "And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, save upon the humble,"

46. "Those who bear in mind the certainty that they will meet their Lord and that verily unto Him shall they return."

To enable Man to overcome his latent low desires and to clean his mind from the love of position and rank, the Qur'an says:

"And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, save upon the humble,"

How to Overcome Difficulties

To overcome difficulties and solve problems demands two fundamental principles. The first principle is a strong inner will, and the second one is a firm outward refuge. These two principles are referred to in the above verse as 'patience' and 'prayer'.

Patience, here, has been rendered into' fasting' and' perseverance' during difficulties while prayer is a connection with Allah and a means of communication with this Helpful Refuge.

About the term / sabr / ' patience', one of the books [2] says that it is a natural phenomenon well-known to every enlightened one that bodily mortification is to some extent necessary in disciplining the human ego accommodated in the physical framework, to lighten it by liberating it from the clutches of the desires and passions of the material world otherwise it would sink deeply into its own devious personal interest.

This is essential to elevate it unto the heights of the spiritual realms. A religion merely consisting of some mere formal rituals and the offering of chanting or the recitation of some verbal prayers or charms without the demand on the individual for the practical control of the animal-self in him can hardly be worth anything.

The truth endowed or the spiritual strength one gets through overcoming his selfish passions, is by itself a very vast subject to be dealt with in the brief notes meant to explain the particular aspects of the wordings of the Divine verses here.

However, an Islamic tradition says that Imam al-Sadiq (as) was once asked about the meaning of the word / sabr / 'patience', mentioned in this verse, when he said: "Patience means fasting." [3]

Again, commenting on this verse, the leading commentators have cited that whenever any difficulty confronted the Prophet of Islam (S), he used to resort to' fasting' and 'prayers' to be helped with. [4]Also, Hazrat Ali (as) did the same.[5]

It is also narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who has said:

"It does not matter that when one of you is involved in a grief out of the grieves of the world, you would make ablution and enter a mosque. Then, you would recite a prayer and offer a petition therein to Allah, because I know He has commanded: 'And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer'." [6]

Yes, verily prayer connects Man to an everlasting Power, to Allah, for Whom all the hard problems and complicated difficulties are easy. This very feeling causes man to be calm, powerful, and steadfast against misadventures.

And with prayer, -what else can ever be imaginably more effective or successful than any individual in his helplessness approaching the All-Merciful, Almighty through prayers for help ?

****

In the verse following the above one, the Holy Qur'an introduces the humble ones, thus:

"Those who bear in mind the certainty that they will meet their Lord and that verily unto Him shall they return."

So, it is narrated from Amir-ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) who has said that one of the characteristics of the humble ones who are the same as the believers is knowledge and certainty about their meeting with Allah which will take place in the Hereafter. [7]

What is 'Meeting with Allah'?

The idea of 'meeting with Allah ' has been mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an where it totally means 'Presence in the Hereafter'. It is obvious that the purpose of 'meeting with the Lord' is not a physical meeting like the meeting of people with each other face to face.

We also know that Allah is not a bodily substance to have colour or place, or to be seen with the eyes. Then, as some commentators have said, the purpose of the phrase may be the observation of the effects of His Power in the scene of the Hereafter, such as: His bounties, rewards, and punishments.

Or, it means an esoteric intuition in the heart or soul, because, sometimes, Man reaches a point that he sees the Lord in front of him by his heart's eye, and in that case no doubt will continue for him.

This state may come to being for some people in this world as a result of piety, worship, and purification of the carnal soul. The following explanation, cited in Nahjul Balagha, attests to the idea:

One of the companions of Amir-ul Mu'mineen Ali (as), Di'lib al-Yamani, who was a learned man, once asked him (as) whether Ali (as) had seen Allah, his Lord, when he (as) replied:

"Do I worship the One Whom I have not seen?"

Then the man asked him to explain it more and Ali (as) added:

"Eyes do not see Him face to face, but hearts (souls) perceive Him through the (light of) realities of Faith..." [8]

However, in the Hereafter, all human beings will attain this esoteric intuition, since, therein, the effects of the Glory and Power of Allah will be so manifested that none can deny them, and all will have a decisive Faith in everything.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 47-48

يَا بَنِي إِ ْ ـَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَ ـَ الَّ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

47. "O' Children of Israel, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you, and that I made you excel the nations (of that time)."

48. "And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from anyone, nor shall any ransom be taken from anyone, nor shall they be helped (from outside)."

The Vain Imaginations of the Jews

In these verses, again, the Lord addresses the Children of Israel and reminds them of His bounties bestowed on them, thus:

"O' Children of Israel, call to mind My favours which I bestowed on you..."

These bounties were numerous consisting of Faith, Divine Guidance and their rescue from the grips of pharaohs which led them to regaining their splendour and independence.

Then, among these bounties He has pointed out the bounty of their being made to excel the nations of their time which in itself is a combination of different bounties. He continues and says:

"...and that I made you excel the nations (of that time)."

Some may think that the objective meaning of the phrase, "I made you excel the nations ", is that He has made them excel the nations all over the world and forever.

But, regarding other verses, the Qur'an makes it clear that the application of the address 'you' is meant for those immediately present at that time and in their own locality, because in another occurrence the Qur'an, addressing Muslims, says:

"You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, " (Surah Ale-Imran. No. 3. verse 110).

Another verse about the Israelites says: "And We made a people, considered weak (and of no account), inheritors of lands in both East and West…", (Surah Al-A'raf No.7. verse 137). It is obvious that the Children of Israel did not inherit the world entirely at that time.

So, it means that they inherited the east and the west of their own region, Therefore, their preference to other nations means preference to the other nations in their environment at that time.

****

The Qur'an rejects the vain considerations of the Jews, They thought that, on the Day of Judgment, their forefathers and ancestors, who were prophets of Allah would make intercession for them; or they imagined that on that Day those prophets could give ransom for their sins the same as some of their people employ bribery in this world, The Qur'an says:

"And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another ",

"Nor shall intercession be accepted from anyone", "nor shall any ransom be taken from anyone," "nor shall they be helped (from outside)"

In brief, the 'Judge' on that Day is He Who accepts, from the servants, only pure good actions done with true belief, as the Qur'an says about it:

"The Day when on neither wealth nor sons will avail," " But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart" (Surah Shu'ara No.26. verses 88 & 89).

The verse under discussion, in fact, is a hint to this reality that, in this world, saving a sinful person from punishment by applying all possible means is an ordinary custom. Sometimes someone undertakes the payment of another person's compensation and pays it.

If this way fails, intercession may be resorted to and some respectable personalities who have power and influence may be brought forward to intercede for him. If intercession does not avail either, the person tries to save himself by paying for the fine. And, if this, too, provides no results, he asks his friends and fellow men to help him somehow, so that he can escape from the grips of punishment.

There are different ways of fleeing from punishment in this world, but the Qur'an says that the chastisements in the Hereafter are completely different from those in this world and none of these behaviours are acceptable there. The only way of rescue is to refuge under the shade of Faith and righteousness, and to ask help from Allah, the Merciful.

Supplication

O'Lord, the Creator, the Cherisher! We humbly ask You to guide us so that, at the end, You will be pleased with us and we can be prosperous.

Intercession in the Qur'an and Traditions

The term / safa'at / ' intercession', with all its derivations, has occurred about thirty times in the Qur'an. This status shows the depth of the importance of the matter.

Undoubtedly, the punishments of the Lord, whether in this world or in the next, are not for revenging at all, but they are, in fact, to warrant the obedience of the Divine ordinances and, consequently, the development and progress of men. Therefore, everything that weakens this security should be avoided in order that people would be less likely to commit sin and vice.

On the other hand, the way of repentance and return to righteousness and improvement should not be completely closed to the sinners. They must have the opportunity and possibility of improving themselves which results in piety and returning to the path of Allah.

Thus, intercession means that, on the Day of Judgement, prophets, saints, and some special righteous ones will intercede with Allah's permission for those who have not cut their tie of Faith with Allah and preserved their spiritual relationship with Him and His Messengers.

In other words, intercession, in its proper meaning, exists for the preserving of this equilibrium. It is a means for the sinners and the wrong-doers to return from their present way to the path of obedience and servitude.

We may emphasize that the doctrine of intercession is quite natural, reasonable and logical. It is a natural, just, and merciful classification of souls according to the natural affinity and the bonds of love and sincere attachment which existed between the individual and the faithful servants of Allah, viz. the holy Prophet (S) and the holy Ahlul Bayt (as) whose purity of spirit, flawlessness of conduct and character, selfless services and matchless sacrifices for the cause of truth, are universal factors and whose goodliness is unreservedly acknowledged by the Muslims and even by the non-Muslims as well.

However, as it was mentioned before, there are numerous verses in the Qur'an concerning 'intercession'. To understand these verses completely and

correctly, all of them should be studied carefully and considered as a whole to follow the unity of purpose they are meant for.

It is absolutely wrong that for proving our claim we take only one verse from amongst the numerous verses on intercession and neglect the others. The errors that have come into being upon the subject of intercession, as well as upon some other rational subjects, are the effect of such wrong and imperfect investigations.

This method, in which we take a single verse and refuse or neglect other verses that can be elucidative and frames of reference for that particular verse, is far from the right manner of researching.

Then, firstly, besides all the other arguments of the various expositions on the validity of intercession based upon the other verses of the Qur'an, as was mentioned formerly, and with further assurance by the traditions of the holy Prophet (S), it is a natural and logical conclusion, beyond all doubt, that on the Day of Judgement intercession cannot be but an undeniable fact.

That is, Allah regard for His holy and faithful servants is accepted as a natural and logical necessary factor. Secondly, it is certain that the Holy Qur'an in many places, some of which are mentioned below, asserts the effectiveness of intercession under some conditions, on the Day of Judgement, when those authorized by the Lord shall have the right to do it.

The Qur'an says:

"On that Day shall no intercession avail except for those for whom permission has been granted by (Allah) Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him ", (Surah Taha, No.20. Verse 109).

"No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission...", (Surah Saba, No.34. Verse 23).

"And those whom they invoke besides Allah have no power of intercession; -only he who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him)", (Surah Az-Zukhraf, No.43. Verse 86).

For further elucidation on the doctrine of intercession some of the verses which can also be referred to are: 26: 100, 2: 123 & 255, 74: 48, 21: 28, and 19: 87.

In the authentic literature of Muslims, both the Sunnite and Shi'ah schools, through some Islamic narrations, there are many implications to the existence of 'intercession' in the Hearafter which are presented as explanatory statements for the aforementioned verses on intercession.

Some of these books are: Bihar-al-Anwar, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Tafsir-i-Almizan, At-Tibyan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, Al-Khisal by Shaykh al-Saduq, Usul al-Kafi, Sunan-i-Ibn-Majah, Musnad-i-Ahmad, Muwatta-i-Malik, Sunan-i-Tirmizi, Sunan-i-Darmi, Sahih-i-Muslim, Sahih-i-Bukhari,…

Out of the many traditions and narrations cited in the above mentioned books, a few of them have been chosen here:

1. The holy Prophet (S) has said:

"I will be the first one who intercedes and the first one whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah)." [9]

2. Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"...We will intercede and those who love (and follow) us will do so, too..." [10]

3. The holy Prophet (S) also said:

"...I have been bestowed on (five privileges: the first is), 'intercession' which I have kept for my followers (Ummah). Intercession is (permitted) for the one who associates no partner with Allah..." [11]

4. Again, the Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

"...The most prosperous people by my intercession on the Day of Judgement will be those who have sincerely said from their deep hearts (souls): there is no god except Allah (i.e. sincerely believe in Allah)." [12]

5. The holy Prophet (S) has also said:

"My intercession is for all (true) Muslims." [13]

6. Firdous-ud-Diylami, Abuhurayrah, narrates from the holy Prophet (S) who has said:

"The intercessors (in the Hereafter) are five: the Qur'an, relationships, trust, your Messenger, and the people of the house (Ahlul Bayt) of your prophet." [14]

7. Imam al-Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"There is none of (the people of) ancient times and (those of) the later times but needs Muhammad's intercession (S) on the Day of Judgement." [15]

8. In Usul al-Kafi, it is also cited that Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said in a tradition:

"He who wishes to enjoy of intercession by the intercessors with Allah, should try to gain His pleasure." [16]

We hope that Allah, the Merciful, may bestow the success of obedience and servitude on His path upon all of us and may He save us from any err and sin in our deeds. May He deprive us not of the intercession of the holy Prophet (S) and Ahlul Bayt (as) on the Day of Reckoning. Amin, O' Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol, 1, p 73
2. The Holy Qur'an, with English Translation of the Arabic Text and , p. 98
3. Al-Burhan Fi Tafsiril Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 14 & Tafsir-as-Safi: vol. 1, p. 111
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 99
5. Ibid, p. 100
6. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 480
7. Atyabul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 21
8. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 179
9. Sunan-i- Tirmizi vol. 5, p. 24 & Sunan-i-Darmi; vol. 1, p. 26 & 27
10. Al-Khisal by Saduq, p. 624
11. Musnad-i-Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 301 & Sunan-i-Nisai vol. 1, p. 172
12. Sahih-al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 36
13. Sunan-i-Ibn-Majah, vol. 2, p. 1444, tradition 4317
14. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 43
15. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 38, tradition 16
16. Usul al-Kafi; vol. 8, p. 11 & Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 53

Section 5

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 49

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُم مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُو ُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُم بَلاء مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

49. "And (remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh who had afflicted you with evil torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing your women-folk, and in that was a great trial from your Lord. ":

In this verse, the Qur'an points to another great bounty out of the bounties He bestowed on the Children of Israel. This favour is the bounty of deliverance from the grips of those transgressors. This is the greatest bounty amongst the bounties of Allah on them and He reminds them, saying:

"And (remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh..." "...who had afflicted you with evil torment..."

"...slaughtering your sons and sparing your women-folk..."

They let your women-folk live as maid-servants and serve hard for them.

"...and in that was a great trial from your Lord."

To illustrate the torments of Pharaoh upon the Israelites, the Qur'an has particularly applied the term / yasumuna / in the future tense of the verb, which, in Arabic, indicates the duration and continuity of that evil torment.

Thus, they saw for themselves that their innocent sons were slaughtered before their eyes and their daughters were taken away from them to serve in the Egyptians' houses as maid-servants. That conduct caused them to tolerate and experience torture permanently, too. They were considered as servants, workers, and slaves of the Coptic people in Egypt and of the men of Pharaoh.

It is a matter of importance that the Qur'an counts this event as a great and grievous trial for the Children of Israel and, of course, bearing all those bitter harsh afflictions had been a hard tremendous trial.

It is also probable that the term / bala' / ' trial', here, has been used with the meaning of 'punishment'. The reason is that before that event, Israelites had been enjoying an abundance of bounties with great power and authority. But they became ungrateful and the Lord punished them.

Anyhow, the day when the Children of Israel were delivered from the tyrannical clutches of the Egyptian monarch, the Pharaoh, was a very important historical day in their lives on which the Holy Qur'an has emphasized repeatedly.

Slavery of Females, Past and Present

In the history of the Israelites, their bondage in Egypt was indeed a tremendous trial for them. Even the Egyptians' wish to spare the lives of the Israelites' females when the males were slaughtered, as the Qur'an declares, added to their bitterness. So, their rescue from that cruelty was really counted as a bounty.

It seems that the Qur'an intends to warn all human beings that they should try to obtain their rightful freedom however hard it may be, and protect it.

Hadrat Ali (as) has pointed out this matter in one of his sermons:

"...Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying in the way of freedom..." [1]

But the modern world is different from that of the ancient in this manner. At that time, for example, Pharaoh, through his peculiar cruelty, slaughtered the men and the sons of the people who were his enemies and let their females remain alive to serve Egyptians.

While, today, in this modern world, the spirit of manhood among males is often slaughtered under some other circumstances, and their females are mostly made slaves for the lustful pleasure of a group of filthy men.

Sometimes, the Pharaohs of the Age have pity upon neither men nor women; neither sons nor daughters; neither adults nor infants. They have verified this statement in the massacres they have committed in some Islamic and non-lslamic countries by using chemical bombs and the likes of them. Their actions are often even worse than what the Pharaohs of Egypt used to do.

Now, why did Pharaoh decide to kill the Israeli boys and let their women-folk live? Some of the commentators believe that the reason for that murderous decision was the dream that Pharaoh dreamed. A more appropriate answer to this question will be discussed when commenting on Surah AL-Qasas No 28 verse 4.

Therein, you will come to know that the reason for that murder was not only Pharaoh's dream, but he and his clique also stood in awe of the increasing number of the Children of Israel and that they might become powerful and destroy the government of Pharaoh. This factor helped them make that hostile decision.

Some details about the miserable lot of the Israelites under the bondage of Pharaoh and how they were rescued, are also explained in Exodus -the opening chapter of the Bible i.e. Chapter 1.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 50

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

50. "And (remember) when We divided the sea for you, and delivered you and drowned Pharaoh's people while you were looking on."

The Rescue from Pharaoh!

In the previous verse the miraculous rescue of the Israelites from the tyrannical grips of the Egyptian monarch, the Pharaoh, was briefly pointed out. The present verse is, in fact, an explanatory statement of that rescue, which itself is a sign of the great bounties of Allah upon the Children of Israel. It says:

"And (remember) when We divided the sea for you,..."

"...and delivered you and drowned Pharaoh's people while you were looking on."

The incident of the drowning of Pharaoh and his horsemen in the sea, and the rescue of the children of Israel from their cruel clutches is expressed in several Suras of the Qur'an, including: Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 136 - Surah Al-' Anfal, No.8, verse 54 -Surah Al-' Asra', No.17 , verse 103- Surah

Ash-Shu'ara', No.26, verses 63 & 66 -Surah Az-Zukhruf, No.43, verse 55- and Surah Ad-Dukhan, No.44, from verses 17 onwards.

More or less all the details of that happening are stated in the above Suras, but by the verse under discussion the story is hinted at only from the point of the favour and grace of Allah upon the Children of Israel in order to attract them to the invitation of Islam, the new religion of salvation, and to invoke them to accept it.

As you will read the explanation of this subject in detail through the aforementioned Suras, Moses (as), after a long time of preaching and inviting Pharaoh and his people to the Divine Faith and showing them numerous miracles and receiving no positive response from them, was commissioned that he and the Children of Israel move from Egypt at midnight. But when he reached the seashore, he realized that Pharaoh and his horsemen were closely pursuing them. The Israelites were terribly afraid.

They had the frightful sea in front of them and at their heels the forceful army of the Pharaoh, whom they could not challenge, threatened them. At that time Moses (as) was commanded to strike the water of the sea with his Rod and he obeyed. Then several dry paths appeared in the sea on which Moses (as) and his people passed.

When they crossed the sea from between the walls of water and arrived on the other side of the sea safely, Pharaoh and his army, who were following them, entered the same paths. They reached the midst of the sea when the walls of water came together and all of them drowned.

Their corpses were floating over the sea water as the Children of Israel were watching them and witnessing how helpless their enemies were in front of their eyes.

That terrible anxiety and the horrible fear they had compared with this miraculous rescue both deserved to be contemplated, and demanded that they express thanksgiving to Allah.

In this manner, the Qur'an tells the Jews that Allah has granted them His Mercy so that they could rid themselves of that anxiety and awe; then why do they repudiate the Prophet of Islam, Allah's Messenger, and do not accept Islam?

By the way, this verse teaches the human race to rely on Allah and trust in that everlasting Power in their lives. They ought to try hard and not stop in their endeavours and seek His help, because He helps them even in their most grievous moments.

A detailed story of this miraculous event is given in the Bible, Exodus; Chapter 14.

1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

2. Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

3. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

www.alhassanain.org/english

5. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this that we have let Israel go from serving us?

6. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him.

7. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them.

8. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel and the children of Israel went out with a high hand.

9. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

10. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

11. And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

12. Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever .

14. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15. And the LORD said unto Moses: Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.

16. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

17. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get honour upon Pharaoh, upon all his host, upon his chariots and upon his horsemen.

18. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

23. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24. And it came to pass that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of the fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.

25. And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, let us flee from the face of Israel: for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen.

27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD over-threw the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

29. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

31. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

The above text is exactly narrated from the Bible, published in London by the British and Foreign Bible Society, 146 Queen Victoria Street.

Then, if some signs and punctuations are not the same as those used in the present style of English writing, it should not be taken as being wrong or misused, but it is because of the method of writing in the original English translated Bible that we observed carefully, without making any changes in the text. The case is also true for page 190 in this book.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 51-54

وَإِذْ وَاعَدْنَا ُوسَى أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن َعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

ُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُم مِّن َعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا ُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

وَإِذْ قَالَ ُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُواْ إِلَى

بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُواْ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ

الرَّحِيمُ

51. "And (remember) when We appointed forty nights for Moses, and you then took the Calf (for worship) after him, and you were unjust (to yourselves)."

52. "Then We pardoned you after that in order that you might be thankful."

53. "And (remember) when We gave Moses the Book as a Criterion (between right and wrong) so that you might be guided (aright)."

54. "And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O' my people, you have indeed wronged yourselves by worshipping the Calf; so turn (in repentance) to your Creator and slay yourselves (the wrong doers), that will be better for you with your Creator'. Then, He turned towards you (mercifully). Truly, He is the Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

The Israelites' Greatest Deviation

In these four verses, the Qur'an refers to another episode in the adventurous history of the Children of Israel and reminds the Jews of some shaking events of theirs.

These verses speak of their greatest deviation throughout the history of their lives which was their aberration from the path of monotheism to the worshipping of the calf. The Qur'an warns them that they had gone astray once in their history because of the temptations of the mischief makers.

Now they should beware not to repeat that mistake. They should be attentive that the way of pure monotheism, viz. the way of Islam and the Qur'an, is open to them. They must not detach from it. First the verse says:

"And (remember) when We appointed forty nights for Moses..."

When he (Moses) departed from you and his thirty night appointment delayed for forty nights,

"...and you then took the Calf (for worship) after him, and you were unjust to yourselves."

This event will be scrutinized when commenting on Surah AL-'Araf. No.7. verse 141 and Surah Taha, No. 20 verses 86 on. The story in brief is as follows:

After the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the tyrannical grips of Pharaoh and his men, who drowned in the sea, Moses (as) was commanded to leave for Mount Sinai to stay there for thirty days and nights in order to receive the Law or the Turah on the Tablets from the Lord.

Subsequently, the term was extended by ten more days and nights for the trial of the people. The delay in the return of Moses (as) to his people at the end of thirty days, owing to the extension of the time by ten days and nights, was sufficient to create in the minds of the Israelites doubt about the authenticity of Moses (as) as a true Prophet, on one hand, and for fallacious seductive Sameri to make a golden Calf possessing a special sound in order to deceive the Israelites, on the other hand. They, thereby, were deluded into calf-worship.

The majority of the Children of Israel joined him. Aaron (as), the deputy and brother of Moses (as) with a minority of people remained faithful to their monotheistic creed. They tried very much to restrain others from that great deviation, but they failed finally.

When Moses (as) returned from the Mount and observed the circumstances, he became angry about it and scorned them severely. They understood that they had done wrong and decided to repent. Moses (as) on Allah's command suggested to them an important repentance, whose explanation will be presented in future verses-

****

In the next verse it says:

"Then We pardoned you after that in order that you might be thankful."

****

Then, it continues mentioning the series of happenings that had occurred before, saying:

"And (remember) when We gave Moses the Book as a Criterion (between right and wrong) so that you might be guided (aright)."

****

"And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O' my people, you have indeed wronged yourselves by worshipping the Calf..."

"...so turn (in repentance) to your Creator..." your repentance should be fulfilled in this definite form: "...and slay yourselves (the wrong doers)...", in which the righteous had to kill the wrong doers.

Of course, those who had not worshipped the calf were not condemned to death, but they were commissioned to slay those calf-worshippers among themselves, be they their own kith and kin, i.e. their own fellow men whom they loved the most because they had associated a partner, the Calf, to the Lord, the One True God. 1

"...that will be better for you with your Creator..."

"...Then, He turned toward you (mercifully). Truly, He is the Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

The phrase /innakum alamtum anfusakum/ 'you have indeed wronged yourselves', here, is also noteworthy because: in Islam, sin which a man or a woman commits, is done against the individual's own self. For, the first and the immediate effect of a sin committed is that the individual becomes degenerated and thus gets far away from Divine Mercy.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 55-56

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا ُوسَى لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

ُمَّ َعَثْنَاكُم مِّن َعْدِ َوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

55. "And (remember) when you said: 'O'Moses! We will never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly', so the thunderbolt struck you while you looked on."

56. "Then We raised you up after your death in order that haply you might be thankful."

An Unjust Demand!

These two verses remind the Children of Israel about another bounty amongst the great bounties that Allah bestowed upon them. This illustrates how stubborn and obstinate those people were, and how the divine grievous torment encompassed them as a result of their unjust demand. But, thereafter, the Mercy of Allah blessed them again. It says:

"And (remember) when you said: 'O' Moses! We will never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly..."

This kind of demand might originate from their' ignorance', because the minds of ignorant ones usually cannot understand beyond the impressions of

their senses. Their minds are not able to conceive anything invisible. So, they demanded to see the Lord openly with their own eyes.

Or, it originated haply from their stubbornness and their habit of seeking pretext which was one of the characteristics of those people.

At any rate, they frankly told Moses (as) that they would never believe in him until they saw the Lord manifestly and with their very eyes.

Here, they insisted on seeing Him. This placed Moses (as) in a helpless predicament. So, they saw, instead, one of the creatures of Allah that they did not have the ability to look upon. This incident might have made them understand that the eyes of the head were not able to see even many of the creations of Allah, much less their ability to see His Pure Self, the Almighty.

Then, a thunderbolt came down and struck the mountain. It issued an amazing light with a horrible sound and an awful earthquake so that everybody there, because of their intensive fear, fell down dead. So, the Qur'an, following the above sentence says:

"..-so the thunderbolt struck you while you looked on."

****

Moses (as) was very worried about that event. Seventy persons from amongst the great leaders of the Israelites had died in that occurrence. It was a very crucial event for the Children of Israel to endure and they would make life hard for Moses (as). Then he (as) asked Allah to raise them up and let them live again. His supplication was accepted, as the Qur'an says:

"Then We raised you up after your death in order that haply you might be thankful."

This short explanation of the above two verses is also expounded more comprehensively in Surah Al-'Araf. No.7. verse 155 and Surah Nisa No. 4. verse 153. Concerning seeing God, we have in Exod. 33: 20: " And He said: 'Thou canst see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live'."

See the Bible, Exodus 19: 16 and 17, too, which is as follows:

16. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

This story shows that while inviting the ignorant and stubborn people to the right path, the great prophets of Allah were involved in many complicated problems. Sometimes, the people asked for improvisatorial miracles from the prophets; and sometimes they went further and demanded of them to see the Lord openly with their physical eyes.

They said decisively that they would never believe in them unless their demand was actually performed. They insisted on their vain thoughts and put forth some new excuses even when they were faced with respective violent responses from the Lord.

But, the Grace and Mercy of Allah assisted the prophets on their path, else it was impossible for them to resist and stand firm when receiving all those excuses.

This tendency of demanding extraordinary and silly manifestations as miracles had also been the habit of the opponents of the holy Prophet (S), (the Holy Qur'an 4: 153, and 17: 90-96).

By the way, this verse is one of the verses that attest to the existence of the possibility of ' restoration of life', in this world, because its occurrence in one respect is evidence of its possibility in other respects, too.

Note

1. Atyabul-Bayan, vol. 2, pg 34

Section 6

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 57

وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِن كَانُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

57. "And We outspread the clouds to shade you, and We sent down 'manna' and 'quail' upon you, (saying): Eat of the good things We have provided for you'.

(But they rebelled); to Us they did no harm, but they were putting themselves to destruction."

Abundant Bounties!

As it is understood from Surah AL-Maidah, verses 20 to 22, when the Children of Israel were saved from the hostility of the Pharaoh and his army, Allah commanded them to move toward the Holy Land of Jerusalem and enter in it.

But the Israelites did not obey the command saying:

"...in this land are a people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it: if (once) they leave then shall we enter ", (the Holy Qur'an 5: 22).

Those rebellious people's disobedience did not stop there. They even told Moses (as):

"...Go thou, and thy Lord, and fight ye two, while we sit here (and watch) ", (SurahAl- Maidah No. 5. verse 24).

Moses became very displeased with their words and told the story of his grievance to the Lord. Finally, it was appointed that the Children of Israel wander through the desert (of Sinai) in distraction for forty years.

A group of those people regretted their wrong action and returned to the Lord repenting of that sin. Then, He bestowed His bounties on them again, a part of which is referred to in the verse under discussion, where it says:

"And We outspread the clouds to shade you,..."

It is obvious how happy a wandering passenger, who has been walking under the hot sun in the desert that he has to pass through without any shelter from morning till evening, is when he receives the welcome shade of clouds!

True, it is probable that shady clouds sometimes appear in the sky of the deserts, but the verse clearly declares that the event was not an ordinary thing that occurred for the Children of Israel. It was the favour of Allah that often showered upon them and they enjoyed it.

At the same time, during that long span of time, the passengers in that hot dry desert needed food and sustenance. That problem was also solved for them by the Merciful Creator, as the verse continues saying:

"..And we sent down 'manna' and 'quail' upon you,..."

"...(saying): 'Eat of the good things We have provided for you.'..."

In order that you may enjoy of the pure delicious nutritious sustenance and not disobey Him. Yet, they were not thankful to Him.

"...(But they rebelled); to Us they did no harm, but they were putting themselves to destruction."

The terms 'manna' and 'salwa' are differently interpreted by different philologists and commentators. However, the fact is: 'manna', and 'salwa' refer to the heavenly provisions the Israelites were provided with, without any strain or burden on their part.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 58-59

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُواْ هَـذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُواْ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَداً وَادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّداً وَقُولُواْ حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ رِجْزاً مِّنَ السَّمَاء بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْسُقُونَ

58. "And (remember) when We said, 'Enter this city (Jerusalem) and eat of the plentiful therein, wherever you desire, and enter the gate with humility and ask forgiveness,

We shall forgive you your sins, and give more (the portion of) those who do good'."

59. "But those who were unjust substituted a saying other than that which had been spoken unto them, so We sent down upon those who were unjust a torment from heaven for what they used to pervert."

The Israelites' Intensive Obstinacy

Here we are dealing with another aspect of the life of the Children of Israel concerning their entrance in the Holy Land. It says:

"And (remember) when We said: 'Enter this city (Jerusalem)..."

The term /qaryah / in our ordinary speaking usually means: 'a village or a town', but in the Qur'an it is applied for any place where people are gathered to live in, whether it is a city, town, or village. The meaning, here, is Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Then it adds:

"...and eat of the plentiful therein, wherever you desire..."

"...and enter the gate with humility and ask forgiveness..."

"...We shall forgive you your sins, and give more (the portion of) those who do good"

It should be noted that the term / hittah / philologically means: 'a putting down', and, here, it means: 'a petition for the putting down of a leavy burden of sin from them and asking Allah to forgive their faults.'

The Lord commanded the Israelites to say that phrase with their whole hearts and spirits for the purpose of asking, thereby, for the putting down of their heavy burdens from them, because they needed to be put down from them before entering the Holy Land.

And, they were promised that they would be forgiven their sins if they did perform the command accordingly. Maybe, it is for the same reason that one of the doors of Heaven is entitled ' Bab-ul-Hittah ' (the door of forgiveness). Abu Hayyan Andulusi says that the objective meaning of

/bab/, here, is one of the doors of Jerusalem which is known as ' Bab-ul-Hittah'. 1

The verse finally proclaims that as for the doers of good, besides forgiving their sins, there will be endowed some additional bounties and rewards upon them, too. It says:

"...and give more (the portion of) those who do good."

****

However, Allah ordered them to express this phrase sincerely as a sign of their repentance and request for forgiveness in order to show their humility unto Him. The Lord promised them that He would forgive them their sins if they followed through with the command. In that case, He would also increase His favour and reward for the good doers among them along with the forgiveness of their faults.

But, as we know and are acquainted with the stubbornness and obstinacy of the Children of Israel, some of them even refused to utter the phrase and mockingly they said another incongruous word (Hinta) 'wheat' instead of it. Then, the Qur'an says:

"But those who were unjust substituted a saying other than that which had been spoken unto them..."

"...so We sent down upon those who were unjust a torment from heaven for what they used to pervert."

Divine Punishment in some form or other awaits those who unwarrantedly and unjustly change the word of Allah and His covenant, to something other than the original presented to them.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 60

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْناً قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ مِن رِّزْقِ اللّهِ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْاْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

60. "And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people, so We said: 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs. Each (group of) people knew their (respective) drinking-place. 'Eat and drink of Allah's provision, and commit you not evil in the earth, doing corruption'."

The Miracle of Water Gushing Forth in the Desert!

Again in this verse, Allah has pointed out one of the important favours bestowed upon the Children of Israel, saying:

"And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people..."

When Moses (as) prayed for water, Allah accepted his plea as the Qur'an says:

"...so We said: 'Strike the rock with your staff.'..."

"...Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs..."

Each of those springs flowed for a definite tribe so that among all of the tribes of Israelites:

"...Each (group of) people knew their (respective) drinking place..."

There are a variety of ideas about what kind of stone that rock was and how Moses (as) was supposed to strike that rock, and in what form the flow of water appeared from it. What the Qur'an says is not more than that Moses

(as) struck the rock with his staff and then twelve springs gushed forth there from.

This incident is referred to in Exod 17: 1-6, with the only difference being that the number of twelve springs that gushed forth from the rock is not mentioned. However, the Lord, on one hand, sent ' Manna' and 'Salwa' (quails) for them, and, on the other hand, provided them enough water, easily available, and told them:

"...'Eat and drink of Allah's provision, and commit you not evil in the earth, doing corruption'."

In fact, the Lord advises them, as a showing of gratitude for these great bounties, that at least they should lay stubbornness and obstinacy aside and stop hurting prophets (as).

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 61

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنبِتُ الأَرْضُ مِن بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُواْ مِصْراً فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآؤُوْاْ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواْ وَّكَانُواْ يَعْتَدُونَ

61. "And (remember) when you said: 'O' Moses! never can we (always) endure one sort of food, so beseech your Lord for us, to produce for us of what the earth groweth, -its pot-herbs, and cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions'. He (Moses) said: 'Would you have in exchange what is worse for what is better? Enter a city, thus you shall get that which you demanded! , Abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them and they incurred wrath from Allah; that was because they went on rejecting Allah's Signs and slaying the prophets unjustly. That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing."

Demanding a Variety of Food

To continue the description mentioned in the former verses about the different bounties Allah bestowed on the Children of Israel, here in the verse under discussion, the unthankfulness and ingratitude of the Israelites for those great favours is illustrated.

The verse indicates how obstinate they were, so much so that perhaps no people can be found in the history of the human race similar to them from the point of being ungrateful for Divine favours.

At first it says:

"And (remember) when you said: 'O' Moses! never can we (always) endure one sort of food,..."

"...so beseech your Lord for us, to produce for us of what the earth groweth,- its pot-herbs, and cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions'..."

But in reply to them:

"He (Moses) said: 'Would you have in exchange what is worse for what is better?.."

Now that it is so:

"...Enter a city, thus you shall get that which you demanded!'..."

Then, the Qur'an adds that:

"...Abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them, and they incurred wrath from Allah..."

"...that was because they went on rejecting Allah's Signs and slaying the prophets unjustly..."

"...That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing."

Why were the Israelites Stamped with Abasement and Humiliation?

As the above verse indicates, they incurred humiliation and wretchedness because of two things: the first was because they went on disobeying the orders of Allah and straying from the path of monotheism to that of infidelity.

The second factor was that they used to kill the righteous and apostles of Allah. This hard-heartedness and heedlessness of the Divine laws and even against most human laws that even today clearly continues among the Jews might be the cause of that humiliation and abasement.

Right now, as we are writing these lines, the territory of Lebanon is being invaded savagely by this hard-hearted tribe where thousands of men and women, among whom are innocent, old persons, infant babies, hospital patients and the like, are unjustly and tyrannically being slain in a pitiable way.

Their bodies are lying lifelessly on the ground in wait of burial. We are sure that this tribe will certainly have to pay the penalty for their cruelty in the future.

Note

1. At-Tafsir-ul-Kashif, vol. 1, p. 109

Section 7

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 62

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

62. "Verily those who believed (in the Prophet of Islam), and those of Jews and Christians and Sabians, whoever believed (truly) in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness -for them is their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve. "

A General Principle for Salvation

The Qur'an, here, points to a general and common principle when it proclaims that that which is worthy is' truth' and 'reality'. With Allah, only ' true Faith ' and ' good deeds ' are accepted.

"Verily, those who believed (in the Prophet of Islam), and those of Jews and Christians and Sabians, whoever believed (truly) in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness -for them is their reward with their Lord..."

Therefore, they will have no fear in the future or any grief for their past:

"...and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

This verse, with nearly the same form, has occurred in Surah Al-Maidah No. 5. Verse 69: and with a further variation on the same subject in Surah AL-Hajj, No. 22. Verse 17.

A careful study over the verses cited after this verse in Surah Al-Ma'idah, makes it clear that the Jews and Christians boasted that their religions were better than other religions. They imagined that all of Heaven would be for them alone, exclusively.

That very pride, perhaps, was seen in the manner of some Muslims, too. The current verse denotes that superficial faith, especially with the lack of doing good deeds, whether it proceeds from Muslims or Jews, Christians and Sabians, or the followers of any other religion, is worthless.

Faith in Allah and the Last Day of Judgment is noted worthy by Allah when it is true, pure, and sincere, and accompanied with righteous deeds. Only this agendum deserves rewards and causes peace, security, and salvation for a believer.

Who are the Sabians?

There are a variety of opinions as to who the Sabians are. Here you are introduced to a few of them which are usually referred to. For example, the description cited in: 'An Arabic -English Lexicon, Part 4,' p. 1640, by Edward William Lame is, in brief, as follows:

The term / Sabi'un / in the Kur'an is said to mean: 'Those who depart from one religion to another (The Sabians,) said to worship the stars secretly, and openly to profess themselves to belong to the Christians: They are called / as-sabi'ah / and / as-sabi'un/: and they assert that they are of the religion of Sabi the son of Sheyth (or Sheth) the son of Adam: their appellation may also be pronounced / as-sabiyun / or the Sabi'un are a certain class of the people who possess revealed scripture: or a people whose religion resembles that of the Christians, except that their Qiblah is

towards the place where blows the (south, or southerly, wind called) Jannb... or according to some, their Qiblah is the Ka'bah: and they assert that they are of the religion of Noah.

It is said that they are thus called in relation to Sabi the son of Lamak (or Lamech), the brother of Noah. It is said that they are worshippers of angels: and it said that they are the worshippers of the stars: and that their appellation is Arabic; from / saba / he departed from a religion '; or from / saba / he inclined because of their inclining from Truth to falsehood.

Another idea about 'Sabians', the appellation mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, is what the known scholar, Raqib, cites in his book, 'Mufradat'.

He says:

"They are a group of followers of Noah (as), and their name mentioned along with the names of Believers, Jews and Christians, is also an evidence that they have been a religious group of people, believing in one of the heavenly religions who believed in God and the Hereafter, too."

Some other commentators have said that the idea that some have called them pagans and star worshippers, or some others have considered them Zoroastrians, does not seem right, because Sabians believed that: first, the heavenly Holy Books were revealed to Adam (as) and then to Noah (as) and after him to Sam (as), then to Ram (as) and thereafter to Abraham (as), then to Moses (as) and after him to John (as) the son of Zachariah, all of which were sent rightfully and Divinely.

Who are the 'People of the Book'?

The Qur'anic phrase / 'ahlul kitab / ' the People of the Book' has occurred in more than 30 different verses of the Qur'an where it mostly means both the Jews and the Christians or either of them.

The above mentioned Arabic-English Lexicon, part one, page 121 explains the phrase / 'ahlul-kitab / thus: '(the people of the Scripture, or Bible; and) the readers, or reciters, of the Mosaic Law, and of the Gospel.'

Apparently, all the adherents of the prophets who had revealed Books, the clearest example of whom are Jews and Christians, may be called 'the People of the Book'. If so, we can also consider the Prophet's tradition when he was asked about the number of the Books Allah revealed and he (S) replied:

"One hundred and four books were revealed: ten books to Adam (as), fifty books to Shith, thirty books to Ukhnukh (Enoch) and he is the first one who wrote by pen, ten books to Abraham, the Turah to Moses, the Ingeel to Jesus, Zabur to David, and the Qur'an to Muhammad (the Prophet of Islam)." [1]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 63-64

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُواْ مَا آتَيْنَاكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُواْ مَا فِيهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنتُم مِّنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

63, "And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Tur (Mountain) above you; (saying): 'Hold you fast that which We

have given you with the strength, and remember all that is therein (to do accordingly); haply you shall guard yourselves (against evil)',"

64. "Thereafter, you turned back, and had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah on you, you had certainly been among the losers,"

Hold the Signs of Allah Firmly!

In these verses, the subject of taking a covenant from the Children of Israel for the practicing of the contents of the Turah and, then, breaching that covenant, is pointed out, At first it says:

"And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Tur (Mountain) above you; ",

"…(saying): 'Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, "

",and remember all that is therein (to do accordingly); haply you shall guard yourselves (against evil)',"

But you people neglected your covenant.

"Thereafter, you turned back,"

"..and had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah on you, you had certainly been among the losers,"

The objective of the covenant, here, is the same that has been mentioned in verse 40 of the current Surah and what is in verse 83 and 84, which will be discussed later.

The items of that covenant are: worshipping only Allah; treating parents, relations, orphans, and those in need with kindness; speaking to and treating people fairly; attending and being steadfast in ritual prayers, paying alms, avoiding shedding blood, the like of which had been mentioned in the Torah, too.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, No.5, verse 12, also denotes that Allah had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel to believe in all of the Divine prophets and help them, and practice regular charity in the way of Allah. Then, at the end of the same verse, Allah promises that if they keep this covenant and actually do it, they will be allowed to abide in Paradise.

How was the Mountain Raised over the Israelites' Heads?

The leading famous commentator, the Late Tabors, has narrated from 'Abuzeyd ' that when Moses (as) returned from Mount Sinai and brought the Torah with him, he told his people that he had brought a Divine Book consisting of some religious instructions and rules about lawful and unlawful things.

He told them to take the instructions that Allah had ordained and practically observe them in their lives. [2]

But the Jews, with the excuse that he (as) had brought them difficult duties to perform, disobeyed and exceeded the limits. The Lord commanded the angels to raise a great big rock from Tor Mountain above them.

At that moment Moses (as) announced that if they promised to perform the orders of Allah and repented for their disobedience, that punishment would be removed from over them, else they would be destroyed.

The Jews, who expected that the Mountain would fall on them at any moment, submitted and accepted the Turah and prostrated for Allah.

Then, finally, that chastisement was warded off because of their repentance. This very occurrence, with a little difference, is mentioned in verse 93 of the current Surah; and in Surah An-'Nisa. No. 4. Verse 104: and in Surah AL-A'raf. No.7 Verse 171.

It is necessary to note, here, that as for the suspending mountain and as to how it could stand high above as a covering overhead for the Israelites, some commentators believe that it was by the command of Allah that Tor Mount was shaken and taken up from its place and, then, suspended above them as a canopy. [3]

A more detailed explanation will be referred to when commenting on Surah Al-'A'raf, No.7, verse 171.

The above mentioned event as described in the Qur'an was quite known by the Jews, who had these original statements in the Turah about it with them. Besides that, this event is also recorded in Talmud Aboda Sara. 1: 2 which says: 'I will cover you with the mountain like a roof'. Talmud.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 476
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 128
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 128

Section 8

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 65-66

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَواْ مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُواْ قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَ مَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

65. "And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits on the Sabbath, so We said to them:, Be you (as) apes despised and rejected'."

66. "So We made it an exemplary punishment to those who witnessed it and to their posterity and an admonishment to the pious ones."

Those Who Exceeded on the Sabbath!

These two verses, like the previous verses, point out the disobedience and transgression dominating the souls of the Jews, and their intensive interest in economic gain.

At first, it says:

"And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits on the Sabbath..."

And, also, you have known that:

"...so We said to them: 'Be you (as) apes, despised and rejected'."

Some may think that the present state of the Israelites and their apparent progress, after the first and the second World Wars or after their unlawful occupation of the Holy Land does not tally with this but yet they are hated by most nations and they have no rest in the real sense of the term, and the term 'a Jew' has passed into a proverb for a niggardly, miserly person -this is due to their own vanities and their hatred towards the others which, for example, they have shown in many places such as Palestine and Lebanon, both openly and hiddenly, during these recent years.

"So We made it an exemplary punishment to those who witnessed it and to their posterity..."

"...and an admonishment to the pious ones."

It is worthy to note that Imam Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as) are narrated from, who, on the meaning of this verse, have said:

"The purpose of the phrase /ma bayna yadayha / 'those who witnessed it ' if the generation of that time, and the objective of the phrase / ma xalfaha / 'their posterity, is about us Muslims." [1].

That is, that exemplary lesson was not exclusive to the Israelites alone, but it was meant for all of us, the Muslims, too; or, all who come after them until the Day of Judgement and who do the same as they did.

Explanation: Divine Miracles of Moses (as)

Whenever an apostle of Allah wanted to introduce himself to his people as a true, authentic Messenger of Allah, he would prove his claim by performing some miracles given by Him.

Here, it must be remembered that the following wonderful events wrought by divine and supernatural phenomena are counted in the Holy Qur'an as the miracles given to Moses (as) as the proof of his prophethood; each of which will be discussed in its appropriate place.

They are as follows:

1. The Rod of Moses (as) becoming a serpent. (7:107, 26:32)
2. The Palm of Moses (as) shining brightly. (7:108, 26:33)
3. The dividing of the sea. (2:50)
4. The gushing of water from the rock. (2:60, 2:74)
5. The shower of manna and quails from heaven. (2:57)
6. The shadowing of the cloud over the Israelites' heads. (2:57, 2:93)
7. The raising of the dead to life. (2:56, 2:73)
8. The suspension of the mount above the heads of the people. (2:63)
9. The transformation of the transgressors into despised apes. (2:65, 7:166).

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 67-74

وَإِذْ قَالَ ُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللّه يَأْ ُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُواْ َقَرَةً قَالُواْ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُواً قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللّه
أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ
قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لّنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا َقَرَةٌ لاَّ فَارِضٌ وَلاَ بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌ َيْنَ
ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُواْ مَا تُؤْ َرونَ
قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنّهَا َقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاء فَاقِعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ
النَّاظِرِينَ
قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ البَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاء اللّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ
قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا َقَرَةٌ لاَّ ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الأَرْضَ وَلاَ تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ ُسَلَّمَةٌ لاَّ شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُواْ
الآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُواْ يَفْعَلُونَ
وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْساً فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ
فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْ اللّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ
ُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّن َعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ
مِنْهُ الأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاء وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّه وَمَا اللّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

67. "And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'Surely, Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow'. They said: 'Do you mock us?' He said: 'I take refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant!' "
68. "They said ' Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what she is.' Moses said: 'He says: Surely she is a cow neither old nor young, but of middle age; so do what you are commanded'."
69. "They said: 'Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what colour she should be. 'Moses replied: 'He says she should be a yellow cow, bright in colour, giving delight to the beholders'."
70. "They said: 'Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what kind of cow must it be, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and, if Allah wills, we shall surely be guided aright.'"
71. "(Moses) said: 'Verily, He says: Verily, she is a cow not (yet) trained to till the soil or to water the fields; sound and without blemish.

They said: 'Now you have brought the truth. Then they offered her in sacrifice, though they had not the mind to do (it)."

72. "And (remember) when you killed a man and disputed thereon: but Allah was to bring forth what you were hiding."

73. "So, We said: 'Strike him (the corpse) with a part of it (the sacrificed cow)'. Thus, Allah gives life to the dead and shows you of His signs, so that you might understand."

74. "Then your hearts hardened after that as stones or even worse in hardness; for verily, among stones there are some from which rivers gush forth, and others that split asunder and water issues out of them, and others tumble down through fear of Allah, and Allah is not heedless of what you do. "

The Story of the Israelites' Cow

Among what we have already studied about the Children of Israel in Surah Al-Baqarah, all of the facts were mentioned shortly and briefly.

The event of the Israelites' Cow which is referred to in the above verses, in contrast to all of the previous incidents, is explained in detail and comprehensively. This is so, perhaps, for the reason that this story is mentioned in the Qur'an only once.

Besides that, there are many instructive subjects involved in it which requires such an extensive explication. One of these subjects which are vividly seen throughout the story is the persistency of the Israelites in seeking for excuses.

It also illustrates their level of faith in the revelations brought forth by Moses (as). Most important of all is that the story provides clear emphatic evidence to the possibility of the Resurrection.

As it is understood from the Holy Qur'an and its commentaries, the incident was described that one of the Israelites was murdered in a mysterious way, in which his murderer was not at all known.

So, there arose a dispute among the different tribes and divisions of the people as to who murdered the man. Every tribe accused the members of another tribe of the crime and announced that the members of its own tribe were innocent.

For its judgement and solution, the problem was brought to the Apostle Moses (as). One one hand, that crime was committed hiddenly and the murderer of the man could not be found by any ordinary means employed at that time.

On the other hand, that dispute might have led to a great complicated disturbance among the Children of Israel. Then, finally Moses (as), by the help of the Grace and Guidance of Allah and through a miraculous way, whose explanation will come later, solved the problem.

The Qur'an begins the description of the event as thus:

"And (remember) when Moses said to his people:

'Surely, Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow'..."

They said:, Do you mock us ?'

He said: 'I take refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant! ' "

That is, causing division and mocking others are acts of the ignorant and never is a prophet of Allah of such people.

****

When the Israelites realized that it was not a mockery and the matter was serious,

"They said: 'Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to what she is, "

The phrase: 'Ask your Lord' which is repeated several times in their demands, carries a kind of hidden impoliteness and ridicule in itself. It seems that they considered the Lord of Moses (as) a different Lord from their own Lord.

However, as a reply to their demand:

"...Moses said: 'He says: Surely she is a cow neither old nor young, but of middle age;'... "

In order to stop them from prolonging the matter by bringing new excuses forth to postpone that fulfillment of the command of Allah, at the end of the statement, it has been added:

"...so do what you are commanded'."

****

But, they still continued their insistence and obstinacy.

"They said: 'Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what colour she should be.'..."

"...Moses replied: 'He says she should be a yellow cow, bright in colour, giving delight to the beholders'. "

Anyhow, this cow should be very good and interesting in colour. The colour should be so bright and beautiful that any beholder wonders and becomes delighted when looking at it.

It is amazing that they were not satisfied with that and went on seeking for excuses by which, every time, they made the fulfillment of their duty more difficult.

A tradition says that Imam Rida (as) has said that any cow would have been sufficient, but they imposed the particulars upon themselves, and the more they did so, the more did Allah impose the restrictions as a punishment for their persistent demands for unnecessary details.

All this, while Moses (as), acting under inspiration, was driving them to purchase a particular cow belonging to a particular man who was very holy and pious and deserved to be favoured. They had to pay him an enormous price for this cow which was the only one then available. Hence they were very near to not doing it. [2]

****

"They said: Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what kind of a cow must it be..."

"...for surely to us the cows are all alike..."

"...and, if Allah wills, we shall surely be guided aright…"

Again,

"(Moses) said: Verily, He says: Verily, she is a cow not (yet) trained to till the soil or to water the fields; sound and without blemish...."

"...They said: Now you have brought the truth... "

So, they tried with much effort to find that particular cow, and, finally, they found it.

"...Then they offered her in sacrifice, though they had not the mind to do (it)."

After describing this story in detail, again the Qur'an retells it briefly, and generally through the following two verses, thus:

"And (remember) when you killed a man and disputed thereon: but Allah was to bring forth what you were hiding."

"So, We said: Strike him (the corpse) with a part of it (the sacrificed cow)..."

".. Thus, Allah gives life to the dead..."

"...and shows you of His signs, so that you might understand."

In the last verse of the verses under discussion, the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites is referred to. It points out that after witnessing all these events and observing the Signs of Allah and the miraculous evidence that Moses (as) prepared for them, yet their hearts became hard, even harder than stone, because, there are some rocks that bring forth water, or shatter and fall down for the fear of Allah. It says:

"Then your hearts hardened after that as stones or even worse in hardness..."

"...for verily, among stones there are some from which rivers gush forth..."

"...and others that split as under and water issues out of them..."

"...and others tumble down through fear of Allah..."

So, your hearts are even harder than these rocks, because neither a spring of passion, love, or knowledge flows out of them nor tremble they from the fear of Allah. Then in the last sentence of the verse, it says:

"...and Allah is not heedless of what you do."

This is a subtle threat against this group of Israelites and all others who behave like them or do the same as they did.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 130
2. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, pg 88-89

Section 9

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 75-77

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُواْ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلاَمَ اللّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُواْ أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ اللّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوكُم بِهِ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

أَوَلاَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

75 "Do you then hope that they would believe in you (in Faith),- and a party among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then perverted it after they had understood it, and they know (this) ? "

76. "And when they meet those who have Faith, they say: 'We believe', but when they are alone with one another, they say:, Do you speak to them of what Allah has revealed to you, that they may thereby dispute with you about this before your Lord ? Have you then no sense? ' "

77. "What! Do they not know that Allah knows what they hide and what they make known? "

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of the revelation of these first two verses, some of the commentators have narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who has said: "A group of the Jews, who had not enmity with the truth, when they met the Muslims they would tell them of what had been mentioned in the Turah about the specialties of Prophet Muhammad (S).

The leaders of the Jews understood the matter and told them to avoid informing Muslims of what was cited in the Turah about the epithets of Prophet Muhammad (S) lest they would argue with the Jews about it before their Lord. Then this verse was revealed." [1]

A Futile Expectation!

As noted from these verses, the Qur'an has discontinued the story of the Israelites and, with an instructive conclusion, has turned to the Muslim believers, saying:

"Do you then hope that they would believe in you (in Faith), and a party among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then perverted it after they had understood it, and they know (this)?"

Therefore, when you see that they reject the inspiring words of the Qur'an and the miracles of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), you should not be annoyed. They are the children of the same people who, as the elected members of the tribe, went to Mount Sinai, heard the words of Allah, and understood His instructions, but when they returned they altered them.

It is perceived from the phrase: ‘and a party among them indeed...", that not all of them but a party, who probably formed the majority of them, were of those who perverted Allah's Words.

It is cited in 'Asbab-un-Nuzul ' that when some of the Jews returned from Mount Sinai, they told their people: "We heard that Allah ordered Moses,'

whenever you can do My instructions do them, but when you cannot, leave them ", and this was the first perversion.

However, at the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S), it was expected that the Jews would accept this religion before others embraced it, because they were the followers of the Book, whereas the pagans were not. Besides that, they had learnt the epithets of the Prophet of Islam (S) from their own books.

But the Holy Qur'an says that, considering their previous bad reputation, your hope is of no avail. The reason is that some deviated characteristics which dominated the spirits of this group caused them to separate from truth, though it was well within the realm of their ability to embrace it.

The next verse uncovers another bitter fact about this deceitful hypocritical group. It says:

"And when they meet those who have Faith, they say: 'We believe'..."

"...but when they are alone with one another, they say:

'Do you speak to them of what Allah has revealed to you….'"

"...that they may thereby dispute with you about this before your Lord ? Have you then no sense? ' "

In commenting on this very verse, this probability also exists that the initial words of the verse are about the hypocritical Jews who pretended to be believers in the presence of the Muslims but in their absence they denied it. They even scorned those pure-hearted Jews who had conveyed the secrets of the Turah to the Muslims.

At any rate, this is a confirmation to what was said in the previous verse that a group with such attributes governing their spirits should not be expected to become faithful.

The phrase: / fatahallahu 'alaykum /' what Allah has revealed to you' may mean: 'the Divine command which was in the authority of the Children of Israel'. Or, the phrase may refer to the idea that Allah had opened the doors of the divine secrets and the prophecies about the coming religion unto them.

It is noteworthy that this verse clearly shows that the Faith of this hypocritical group in Allah was so weak and hollow that they considered Him as an ordinary person and imagined that if they could conceal a fact from the Muslims, it would be concealed from Allah, too.

Then, in the next verse, it frankly says:

"What! Do they not know that Allah knows what they hide and what they make known? "

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 78-79

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلاَّ أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَظُنُّونَ

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَـذَا مِنْ عِندِ اللّهِ لِيَشْتَرُواْ بِهِ ثَمَناً

قَلِيلاً فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

78. "And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but only fancies and mere conjectures."

79. " So, woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say: , This is from Allah, so that they may sell it for a little price, so, woe

to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of the learned men of the Jews altered the epithets of the holy Prophet (S) mentioned in the Turah. This perversion was contrived to protect their social positions and benefits which they used to obtain from their common people over the years.

When the Prophet of Islam (S) announced his mission and they recognized his epithets coincided with what was mentioned in the Turah, they were afraid that their profits would be endangered if the fact became evident. Therefore, they wrote some epithets completely different from what was actually cited in the Turah.

The ordinary Jews, who had heard the true epithets of the Prophet of Islam (S), more or less, asked their scholars frequently whether this Prophet was the same promised prophet whose advent they had given them glad tidings of. Then the Jewish savants and scholars decided to recite some perverted verses from the Turah to them in order to make them content thereby.

The Jewish Learned Men's Plots of Oppression Against the Laymen

Following the previous description about the vicious deeds of the Jews, these verses divide them into two definite groups: the laymen and the deceitful learned men. A few of the Jewish scholars, of course, accepted the truth and believed in Islam and joined the community of Muslims. It says:

"And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but only fancies and mere conjectures."

The phrase / ummiyun / 'the illiterates' is the plural form of the term / ummi / which, here, means an illiterate person who remains the same in his native endowments as he was when he was born without any external education or training from anyone whosoever; and this state is ordinarily known as illiteracy.

Or, this case also occurs because some mothers, because of their naive motherly love for their children, ignorantly do not let their children separate from them and go to schools to study.

The term / amaniyy / is the plural form of / amniyyah / 'conjecture', and, here, it may refer to the privileges, vain desires, wishful thinking and mere conjectures of the Jews that they considered for themselves.

****

The second group was the Jewish priests and savants who often altered the facts for their own benefit, as the Qur'an says:

"So, woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say: 'This is from Allah..."

"...so that they may sell it for a little price..."

"...so, woe to them for what their hands have written..."

"...and woe to them for what they earn..."

From the last meanings of the verse, it is well understood that they had used impious means and had come up with an incorrect conclusion.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 80-82

وَقَالُواْ لَن تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلاَّ أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ اللّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ اللّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

بَلَى مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيـئَتُهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

80. "And they said: 'The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days'. Say: 'Have you taken such a promise from Allah, .for He never fails in His promise? Or do you speak against Allah what you do not know? ' "

81. "Yea! Whoever earns evil and is encompassed by his sins, -these are the inhabitants of the Fire, therein shall they abide forever."

82. "And those who have Faith and do deeds of righteousness -they are the inhabitants of Paradise, therein shall they abide forever."

The Qur'an, here, points to one of the false statements of the Jews of which they were proud and that very pride was the origin of part of their deviation. Thus the Qur'an responds to it:

"And they said: 'The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days… ' "

"...Say: 'Have you taken such a promise from Allah, for He never fails in His promise? Or do you speak against Allah what you do not know?"

One of the most obvious reasons for the stubbornness and egoism of this group is their belief in the' preference of the Jewish race over all other races, and that they are different from other nations, and that their sinners will have to tolerate the Fire only for a few days as 'their punishment and, therefore, Paradise will be theirs exclusively forever.

This claim of privileges is not logical in any aspect, because, before Allah, there is no difference between the members of the human race from the point of rewards or punishments for their deeds.

Can they support the expectation to their claim of being exceptional among nations and therefore receiving special treatment regarding the general law of penalties by describing something they have done to deserve it?

However, the above verse with a logical statement refuses their vain imaginations and denotes that their claims depict one of these two conditions: they should either have taken a particular promise from Allah on the matter -that they have not -or, they tell lies and calumniate against Him.

****

The next verse expresses a common and universal law which is logical from any point of view. It says:

"Yea! whoever earn evil and is encompassed by his sins, -these are the inhabitants of the Fire, therein shall they abide forever."

This is a general rule for the sinners belonging to any sect, nation, in any locality, and at any time.

****

There is also a universal, general law for the pious believers, which the next verse announces:

"And those who have Faith and do deeds of righteousness -they are the inhabitants of Paradise, therein shall they abide forever."

Explanation: Earning Sin

The Arabic term /kasb/ and / iktisab/ both mean: 'to earn or gain something willingly and consciously'.

Earnings are received in return for something done to profit one's self. This is quite different from merely falling into evil. It is to selfishly seek one's own gain that is evil.

One sin leads to another sin and thus the conscience of the individual gradually becomes deadened until sinning becomes natural and normal for that person and he is totally abandoned to evil and attempts to justify his actions and to deny that he deserves eternal punishment.

The law of cause and effect works in its natural order in the case of evil as in the case of virtue. Those who devote themselves wholly to evil, must naturally find themselves beset on every side by the consequent evil effects of the causative evil factors wrought by the individual.

But those who struggle against evil, however long it may take for them to overcome it, the inclination towards the evil, cannot be considered equivalent to those who are out to earn evil.

Those who struggle to overcome evil hate and detest it and the individual's earnest and sincere effort to overcome evil, naturally ends in the triumph of good in the human nature. With this endeavour of good against evil, the natural consequence of the struggle strengthens the nobility in the individual's personality.

But, purposefully yeilding to evil with a selfish motive -for any selfish gains, gradually erects a fortress of evil for the individual so that the access of good becomes more and more difficult and ultimately renders the individual's approach to any goodness as impossible.

As the individual is totally lost, for all times, to evil, he convicts himself to the perpetual consequences of the evil all around him forever.

These kinds of people are those who are referred to, later, in Surah 2: 86 which says:

"Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter, -for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 83-86

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِ ْ ـَائِيلَ لاَ تَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً وَذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى
وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ ُ مَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنكُمْ وَأَنتُم
مِّعْرِضُونَ
وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لاَ تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءكُمْ وَلاَ تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ُ مَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ
ُ مَّ أَنتُمْ هَـؤُلاء تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقاً مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم
بِالإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَارَى تُفَادُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ

الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاء مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلاَّ خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالآخِرَةِ فَلاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

83. "And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel (instructing): 'You shall not worship any but Allah; and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy, and speak kind words to people, keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakat)'. Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you backslide (even now)."

84. "And (remember) when We made a covenant with you: 'You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your dwellings " then you confirmed it while you bore witness

85. "Yet you kill one another and expel a group of your people from their dwellings, helping others against them in sin and enmity, and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them -yet their very expulsion was forbidden for you. Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part? What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but disgrace, in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection to be consigned to the most terrible punishment? And Allah is not heedless of what you do."

86. "Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter, - for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped."

The Breachers of the Covenant!

In a few of the verses mentioned before, the covenant of the Children of Israel was hinted at, but no details were given about it. Through the verses under discussion, Allah reminds them of some of the items of this covenant.

Most of these items -or all of them - should be counted as the fundamental principles and permanent laws of the Divine religions, because this same covenant and these instructions, in some form or other, are comprehensively found in every religion.

In these verses, the Qur'an severely scorns and blames the Jews because they broke their covenant, and threatens them with disgrace in the life of this world and the most grievous punishment in the Hereafter.

This covenant, that the Children of Israel were witnesses of and confessed to, contains the following items:

1. Monotheism and worshipping Allah, as the verse says:

"And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel (instructing): 'You shall not worship any but Allah..."

2. "...and (you shall do) good to (your) parents..."

3. "...and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy..."

4. "...and speak kind words to people..."

5. "...keep up the prayer..."

6. "...and pay the poor-rates (zakat).'..."

"...Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you backslide (even now)."

7. "And (remember) when We made a covenant with you: 'You shall not shed your blood..."

8. "...nor expel one another from your dwellings..."

9. "...then you confirmed it while you bore witness." (This item of the covenant is perceived from the sentence: "Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part?")

But you disregarded many of these aspects of your covenant with Allah.

"Yet you kill one another and expel a group of your people from their dwellings,.."

"…helping others against them in sin and enmity…"

All of these deeds you did are a breach of the covenant you had taken with Allah.

"…and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them-..."

"…Yet their very expulsion was forbidden for you,"

It is surprising that you, in paying ransom, and setting your captives free, comply with the ordinances of the Turah and the Divine Covenant:

"…Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part?..."

"…What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but disgrace, in the life of this world..."

"….and on the Day of Resurrection to be consigned to the most terrible punishment?..."

"…And Allah is not heedless of what you do,"

Then, He, the Just, will take all of them into account and will judge upon you according to your deeds in the Divine Court of Justice.

****

The last of the verses under discussion, in fact, states their main motive for doing these contradictory actions, It says:

"Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter, -.."

For this reason:

"….for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped, "

Explanation: The Best Strategy for the Survival of Nations

These verses have been revealed about the Children of Israel, but they contain a series of universal laws for the whole human race throughout the world. These laws consist of some advice for those nations who wish to survive and to exist successfully, as well as the secrets of failure and destruction.

From the view point of the Qur'an, nations will be happy and able to continue living when the individuals of that nation, avoiding sins, attach themselves to the greatest Power and rely on that Everlasting Source for help in all conditions.

It is obvious that this Origin can be none but Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they should obey Allah and bow only to Him, i.e. being sincere unto Him alone in obedience.

If nations follow this law, they will be afraid of none. Genuine sincerity and perfect intentions of a believer in the way of Allah, do not tolerate the

www.alhassanain.org/english

yielding of himself, in any regard, to anything or anybody else other than the One and Only True God, Allah.

For it will mean the individual's surrender to his self which is nothing more than surrender to Satan which is the equivalent of worshipping him.

As it was already pointed out, the means of salvation, i.e. for a nation to survive and endure successfully, is firm adherence of its members to the Divine Covenant and their faithful and loyal attachment to the divinely commissioned guides.

It is obvious that misdeeds or sins weaken faith, adherence, and the love of goodness, and the excess of it may result in the total severance of the Holy connection, and in the individuals becoming totally lost in the darkness of infidelity, hence eternal punishment and no salvation in either this world or the coming world will be the result for such a nation.

These verses of the Holy Qur'an, if studied properly and judged dispassionately almost suffice to illustrate what is meant by the religion Islam and what kind of life Islam invites its believers, or all nations to live. And if the members of nations act upon these commandments, I how peaceful, pleasant, and enjoyable will be the life here on earth.

These are on one side, but on the other side, the secret of the failure and defeat of nations, which finally leads to their destruction and abolishment, lies in the existence of hate and enmity between them and between the members inside each nation, i.e. being heedless to the above mentioned commandments.

Such a nation will soon perish because of disregarding Allah's covenant by not relying on Him, by not respecting and helping their parents, family members, kindreds, neighbours, and all fellow men, by shedding blood and by not observing the rights of others by expelling them out of their houses or lands in order to occupy their properties:

"...You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your dwellings,…"

And, finally, one of the factors of the destruction of nations is unjust discrimination in the execution of laws, i.e. when they observe those laws which protect their personal profits but neglect what is beneficial for the society.

"…Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part?…"

And these are some of the causes of either the development or failure of nations from the viewpoint of the Qur'an.

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 142

Section 10

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 87-88

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا ُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِن َعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ا ْنَ َرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقاً كَذَّ ْتُمْ وَفَرِيقاً تَقْتُلُونَ

وَقَالُواْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلاً مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

87. "And We gave Moses the Book, and after him sent Messengers in succession; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whensoever (thereafter) there came to you a Messenger, with what your selves desire not, you became arrogant? - Some you denied, and others you slay."

88. "And they said: Our hearts are covered'. Nay! Allah has cursed them for their disbelief. Little is that which they believe."

Their Covered Hearts

In these verses, again, the Children of Israel are addressed. Yet the concepts and criteria mentioned in them are universal and apply to all.

At first, it says:

"And We gave Moses the Book..."

"...and after him sent Messengers in succession..."

There came Messengers such as David, Solomon, Joshua, Zacharia and John.

"...and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit..."

"...Is it that whensoever (thereafter) there came to you a Messenger, with what your selves desire not, you became arrogant?"

This domination of desire on you was so intense that from among those prophets:

"...Some you denied, and others you slay."

This verse makes a fact clear that the Divine apostles, when communicating their prophecies, on the path of Allah, were heedless of the oppositions of the materialists. And, it must be so, because a correct sincere leadership is not anything save that.

If prophets tend to follow the unconditioned desires of people and adapt themselves to people's selfish inclinations, they will be the followers of the misled, rather than being a divine leader for the followers of the path of truth.

"And they said: 'Our hearts are covered.'... "

"...Nay! Allah has cursed them for their disbelief..."

And it is for the same reason that: "...Little is that which they believe."

The above sentence may be about the Jews who either rejected the prophets (S) or killed them. It is also probable that it refers to the Jews who were con temporary with the holy Prophet (S) and used to inflexibly oppose him with obstinacy and enmity.

However, it states the fact that Man, following his desires, may reach a point that he be cursed by Allah and be deprived of His Mercy. It is in this case that his heart is enclosed in a covering so tight that the truth can rarely penetrate into it.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 89-90

وَلَمَّا جَاءهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُواْ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُواْ فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم مَّا عَرَفُواْ كَفَرُواْ بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْاْ بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ بَغْياً أَن يُنَزِّلُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَن
يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَآؤُواْ بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

89. "When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them -and, from before, they had been praying for victory over those who rejected the Truth -when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved in it. So Allah's curse is on the disbelievers."

90. "Evil is the thing they have sold themselves for, denying in what Allah has sent down, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomever He wills of His servants, and they have incurred Wrath upon Wrath, and for the disbelievers awaits a humiliating punishment."

A Religious Adherent & an Infidel!

The words in these verses are again about the Jews and their lives. They formerly had an ardent love and were desirous for the advent of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (S) for which they had settled in Medina waiting to see the signs of the new Prophet (S) about which they had studied in their heavenly Book, the Turah.

From before, they usually gave each other the happy tidings of the advent of such a Prophet (S) and they hoped that his appearance would help them to be able to defeat their enemies. But when they received a Book from Allah, the Qur'an, which contained the same message that the Jews had had with them, in the Turah, they rejected it.

"When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them -and, from before, they had been praying for victory over those who rejected the Truth -when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved in it..."

"...So Allah's curse is on the disbelievers."

Yet, it sometimes happens that a person eagerly pursues a certain fact, but when he reaches it and finds it opposite to his personal interests, he, being affected by his low desires, refuses it and abandons it, or even sometimes he stands against it.

****

In fact, the Jews have willingly acquired defeat. Those people who, with the purpose of accepting and following the promised Prophet (S) had emigrated from their own homes and, with many difficulties, had settled in Medina in order to attain their goal, ultimately joined the camp of the pagans and hostile disbelievers. Therefore, the Qur'an says:

"Evil is the thing they have sold themselves for....."

"...denying what Allah has sent down, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomever He wills of His servants,..."

It seemed they expected that the promised prophet (S) would be one from among the Children of Israel. They were displeased of the Qur'an having been sent down to someone else. Then they, surrendering themselves to infidelity and disbelief in the Truth, showed their envy to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S). Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and they have incurred Wrath upon Wrath, and for the disbelievers await a humiliating punishment."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 91-93

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ قَالُواْ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرونَ بِمَا وَرَاءهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
ُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنبِيَاء اللّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ
وَلَقَدْ جَاءكُم مُّوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن َعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ
وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُواْ مَا آتَيْنَاكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاسْمَعُواْ قَالُواْ سَمِعْنَا
وَعَصَيْنَا وَأُشْرِبُواْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

91. "When it is said to them: Believe in what Allah has sent down " they said: We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before)'. But they disbelieve in what is beyond that, while it is the Truth confirming what is with them. Say: Why then were you slaying the Prophets of Allah in former times, if you were (indeed) faithful?' "

92. "And, also, Moses came to you with clear signs; yet you took to worship of the Calf after him (in his absence) and you were (willful) wrongdoers."

93. "And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Mount, above you, (saying): Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, and hear (Our commandments)'. They said: We hear and disobey '; and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the Calf into their hearts because of their disbelief. Say: Evil is what your faith bids you if you be, indeed, faithful'."

Racial Bigotries of the Jews

In commenting on the previous verses, it was said that the Jews tolerated a lot of trouble and toil on the path of reaching the Prophet (S) that the Turah had promised, but when he (S) came, they did not believe in him, because of envy, or for the reason that this prophet (S) was not from the Children of Israel, or because their personal interests were in danger.

Now, through the verses under discussion, the Qur'an refers to the racial bigotries of the Jews by which they are known throughout the world. It says:

"When it is said to them: 'Believe in what Allah has sent down " they said: 'We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before)'. But they disbelieve in what is beyond that..."

The Jews believed neither in the Evangel (Ingu) nor in the Qur'an, but they paid attention only to the racial aspects and their personal benefits.

The Jews said that they believed in what had been revealed to, them, i.e. to the Israeli prophets (as) and they would not believe in anything revealed to a non-Israeli prophet (i.e. the holy Prophet Mohammad (S)).

The reply to this arrogance is given in this verse saying that that which has been sent down to the holy Prophet (S) is truth verifying that which is in the Book with them, referring to their prophecy proclaimed in Duet. 18: 15-18. And, now, the Qur'an says:

"...while it is the Truth confirming what is with them..."

Then, the Holy Quran uncovers their falsehood and says that their excuse for their disbelief is that Prophet Muhammad (S) is not from among them:

"...Say: 'Why then were you slaying the Prophets of Allah in former times, If you were (indeed) faithful?' "

If they truly believed in the Turah, the Divine Book in which murder is considered a major sin, they would not slay the great prophets of Allah.

Furthermore, this statement that they say: "We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before)", is a clear deviation from the path of Monotheism, or, in other words, it is, in itself, blasphemy. This is a kind of arrogance and selfishness whether it be in the form of a personal issue or racial one.

The purpose of Monotheism is to eradicate these disgraceful habits from the unity of human beings so that they accept Allah's commandments merely because they are issued from that Origin.

In other words, if the acceptance of the Divine instructions is only on the condition that they be sent down to us, it is, in fact, disbelief, rather than 'belief', or it is infidelity rather than 'faithfulness' in Islam. The acceptance of such instructions is not at all true evidence of Faith.

It is worthy to note that when the above verse says: "When it is said to them: 'Believe in what Allah has sent down,' " it refers neither to Muhammad (S) nor to Moses (as) nor to Jesus (as). It merely says:

"Believe in what Allah has sent down."

****

To make their falsehood clearer, in the next verse, the Quran provides further evidence against them. It says:

"And, also, Moses came to you with clear signs; yet you took to worship of the Calf after him (in his absence) and you were (willful) wrongdoers."

The Qur'an tells the Jews that if you are true and you believe in your prophet, why did you worship the Calf after those clear signs and that monotheistic evidence? What kind of faith is it that when Moses (as) goes to the Mount, in his absence, it escapes from your hearts and immediately infidelity is substituted therein; or the Calf takes the place of Monotheism?

Yes, with this wrong action, you committed an injustice both to yourselves and your society, and to your coming generations.

****

In the subsequent verse, the Holy Qur'an cites another example proving the meagerness of their claim. It refers to the covenant of Mount Sinai and says:

"And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Mount, above you, (saying):

'Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, and hear (Our commandments) " They said: We hear and disobey '; …"

"…and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the Calf into their hearts because of their disbelief…."

Yes, blasphemy and mammonism, whose symbol was the love of the golden Samaritan Calf, had influenced their hearts and took root throughout their souls. That was why they forgot their Lord.

Strange! What sort of Faith is it that condones both the slaying of prophets and the worshipping of the Calf, but neglects the observance of firm Divine Covenants?

Yes,

"….Say: 'Evil is what your faith bids you if you be, indeed, faithful'"

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 94-101

قُلْ إِن كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ عِندَ اللّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُاْ الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَن يُعَمَّرَ وَاللّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلّهِ وَمَلآئِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلاَّ الْفَاسِقُونَ

أَوَكُلَّمَا عَاهَدُواْ عَهْداً نَّبَذَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَمَّا جَاءهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللّهِ وَرَاء ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

94. "Say: 'If the Last Abode with Allah is yours exclusively and not for other people, then long for death - if you are truthful'."

95. "But never will they long for death, because of what their hands have sent forth; for Allah who knows the unjust."

96. "Indeed, you will find them the greediest of people for life, even more than those who associate partners (to Allah); each one of them is covetous to live (even) a thousand years, yet the prolongation of his life shall not remove him further away from the punishment. Allah sees what they do. "

97. "Say (O' Muhammad): 'Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, who brought down (the Qur'an) upon your heart by Allah's leave, confirming what was before it, and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers ' ; "

98. "And whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael (should know that) Allah is surely an enemy to the infidels."

99. "Verily, We have sent down to you clear Signs, and none denies them except the transgressors."

100. "What! Whenever they made a covenant, a group of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them do not (truly) believe. "

101. "And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming what was with them, a part of them who were given the Book cast the Book of Allah behind their backs, as though they knew (it) not! "

"Say: 'If the Last Abode with Allah is yours exclusively and not for other people, then long for death - if you are truthful'."

From the former verses, it was understood that the Jews claimed that they would not be touched by the Fire but for a few days when they worshipped the Calf, saying: "The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days".

Also, when they were told to believe in Allah's revelation they replied that they would believe only in their Book, the Turah: "We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before)." They imagined that they were the only people who would be qualified for salvation and felicity, while other nations would be punished and receive eternal destruction in the Hereafter.

Then, to cancel this kind of idea and to verify that the case is not as they considered, it is told them:

"…then long for death – if you are truthful…"

The Messenger of Allah is commanded to tell them that if the abode of the Hereafter and the blessings of Heaven are exclusively theirs, they must strive to reach such bliss and invoke for death in order to get rid of the disasters and miseries of this world. It is in this situation that they would attain eternal happiness which they falsely think belongs to them alone.

And in another occurrence, as a protest to them, the Qur'an says:

"… If you think that you are friends to Allah, to the exclusion of (other) men, then invoke your desire for death if you are truthful!" (Surah Al-Jumu'ah. No.62. verse 6).

Yes, a sincere friend desires to be with his friend, someone in love wishes to see one's love, and a seeker of a particular thing is anxious and desirous to obtain that which one is seeking.

Worldly affairs and materialism often stand as a curtain or barrier between Allah and His servants. They usually do not let one approach Him and be acquainted with his / her Creator deservingly. Therefore, the true sincerity towards Him is the desire of death.

Then, here, to unvail the falsehood of the statement of the Jews, Allah announces that if they truly believe that the future abode with Allah is exclusively theirs and think that only they are those who are the favoured people of Allah, not any other people, they must invoke death with their tongues, hearts, and actions to reach Him without any natural barrier.

"Indeed, you will find them the greediest of people for life, even more than those who associate partners (to Allah)..."

But they never invoke death because they are the greediest of all people for the life of this world. They love the long life of this world even much more than pagans and idolators.

"...each one of them is covetous to live (even) a thousand years,..."

Besides their hideous deeds and that they do not seek death in order to meet the Lord, each of them would like to live one thousand years.

The figure (one thousand years) metaphorically refers to the idea that they wish to live a long life. This is evidence to their lie and they know that neither the Last Abode with Allah is theirs, nor are they the friends of Allah.

They arrogantly state these things, based on bigotry, in order to tell the Muslims that both the Jews and their ancestral religion are right, and Muslims are wrong and their religion is untrue. Then Allah, by this clear evidence, made their falsehood manifest by stating that the friends of Allah are those who are desirous of death to attain their goal.

"...yet the prolongation of his life shall not remove him further away from the punishment..."

"...Allah sees what they do..."

That is, the Jews will never long for death, then how can they desire a long life when it does not save them from the punishment?

Yet, they are the greediest people for the low life of this world which can be a barrier obstructing entrance into the everlasting felicity of the life in the coming world.

Furthermore, the members of this group having belief in the Hereafter and the life after death are greedier for the life of this world than pagans and blasphemers, who wrongly believe that Man will be destroyed and perish after death.

"Say (O' Muhammad): (Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel..."

The commentators believe that, as 'Abdullah-ibn-Abbas cites, the occasion of revelation of this verse was as follows:

One of the scholars of the Jews by the name of Ibn--Suriya, with a group of Jewish people from Fadak, was attending the holy Prophet (S) when he put forth some questions to test his gift of prophecy. Thereby being convinced that Muhammad (S) was a true prophet of Allah, he asked as to which of Allah's angels had conveyed the Divine messages to him, and he (S) answered that Gabriel had.

The Jew said he would not believe, as Gabriel was the enemy of his people and he is the angel of punishment, annoyance, displeasure, indignation, and execution; while Michael was not, and if Michael would have been the one who came down to the Prophet (S), then they would believe in him (S). So, Allah (s.w.t.) sent down this verse and told the holy Prophet (S) to say that he who is the enemy of Gabriel, is the enemy of the one:

"...who brought down (the Qur'an) upon your heart by Allah's leave..."

"...confirming what was before it, and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers…"

Thus, the Qur'an attests to the rightfulness of all the heavenly Books such as the Turah, the Evangil, Psalms of David, the Written Sheets (Scriptures), and what Allah had sent to other prophets (as).

The word / hudan / 'a guidance' here, may refer to the guidance of the Qur'an for all of the believing members of the Jinn and humans. The guidance is apportioned to the believers perhaps for the reason that it is only

the believers who are benefited by the Qur'an, so therefore, the glad tidings are given to them.

****

Now, this verse reiterates the subject matter of the previous verse but with more emphasis and accompanied with a threat. It says:

"And whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael (should know that) Allah is surely an enemy to the infidels."

This statement is an indication to the meaning that these instances are not separable. The Essence of Allah, angels, all His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael or any other angels, from this point of view, are all the same and to have enmity with one of them is, in fact, having enmity with the others.

In other words, Allah's ordinances, which are helpful on the path to development of the human race, have been revealed from His Origin unto prophets (S) by means of angels.

And if there be any difference between their missions, it is a difference of the division of responsibilities, not a contrast in missions. They are all alongside the path of the same goal. So, being an enemy against one of them is showing enmity against Allah.

****

Upon the occasion of revelation of verse 99, there is a narration from Ibn-Abbas who said:

"lbn-Suriya, a Jewish scholar, told the Prophet (S): ‘O Muhammad, you have not brought anything for us that we understand it, and also the Lord has not sent a clear sign to you so that we follow you thereby’. Then, Allah sent down this verse which was a frank vivid answer to that statement. [1]

None Denies Divine Signs Save the Transgressors!

Through this verse, the Qur'an points to the fact that Allah has given the Prophet of Islam (S) enough evidence and sufficient Signs all of which are so clear that nobody can deny them. Hence, those who deny them, indeed, have recognized the rightfulness of his invitation, but, because of their special evil intentions, they oppose it.

"Verily, We have sent down to you clear Signs, and none denies them except the transgressors."

Contemplation over the verses of the Qur'an makes the way clear for any pure-hearted truth-seeker. By reciting these verses, the reality and truthfulness of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S), as well as the greatness of the Qur'an, can be understood.

But, only those can understand this meaning that their hearts have not been darkened as a result of committing sin. Thus, it is not surprising that transgressors and those who have stained themselves with sins by disobeying the commands of Allah, never believe in Islam.

"What! Whenever they made a covenant, a group of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them do not (truly) believe."

With reference to the previous verses, this verse is also a protest against the Jews as to why some of these people neglect and breach their covenant that they make with Allah. They not only break their covenant but also have no faith at all. It may refer to this idea that if they believed in Allah and His

www.alhassanain.org/english

prophets (as), they would never break their covenant or never fail in their promise.

"And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming what was with them,..."

The purpose of the term' Messenger', here, may be the Last Prophet (S), or it may refer to all those prophets (as) who came after Moses (as), because, according to the previous verses, the Qur'an protests against the Jews for rejecting all of the great prophets after Moses (as).

These prophets (as), with their Divine commissions, abrogated Moses' religion whereas, in the meantime, they confirmed the rightfulness of what the Jews had in their hands -the Turah -yet, some of them (the Jews) put the Book of Allah behind their backs:

"...a part of them who were given the Book cast the Book of Allah behind their backs,..."

Some of the learned men of the Jews put the Book of Allah, the Turah, which attested to the prophethood of the Last Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (S), "behind their backs" and, by neglecting his specific description which was recorded in the Turah, they abandoned it totally:

"...as though they knew (it) not!"

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol, 1, p. 168

Section 11

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 102-103

وَاتَّبَعُواْ مَا تَتْلُواْ الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَـكِنَّ الشَّيْاطِينَ
كَفَرُواْ يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ
أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولاَ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلاَ تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا
هُم بِضَآرِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلاَ يَنفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُواْ لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا
لَهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلاَقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْاْ بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُواْ يَعْلَمُونَ
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُواْ واتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُواْ يَعْلَمُونَ

102. "And they followed what the Shaitans chanted of sorcery in the reign of Solomon; and Solomon disbelieved not, but the Shaitans disbelieved by teaching people sorcery; and that which was sent down to the two angels, Harut and Marut, in Babylon. Even though they (the two) never taught anyone without saying: 'We are only a trial for you, therefore do not disbelieve'. So they learned from these two (magic spells) by which they might cause separation between a man and his wife, though they cannot hurt anyone (thereby) but by Allah's leave. They learn what harms them and profits them not; and they surely knew that the buyers of it would have no share of happiness in the Hereafter. And vile was the price for which they sold their own selves, had they but known (this)! "

103. "Yet, had they believed (in Allah) and guarded themselves (against evil) a reward from Allah would have been better, had they but known (this)!"

Solomon (as) and the Sorcerers in Babylon

It is understood from the Islamic literature that, at the time of Solomon (as), some of his fellow countrymen used to practice the art of sorcery. Solomon (as) ordered that their records and related materials be gathered and kept locked in a safe place.

(Their preservation was, perhaps, for the purpose that there may have been some pieces of paper among them helpful for breaking the spells of the sorcerers' magic.)

After the departure of Solomon (as), a group of people took them out and began spreading and teaching others sorcery.

Some, taking advantage of this opportunity, said that Solomon (as) was not a prophet at all, and the wonderful power that he had over the realms of nature was through witchcraft; so it was with the help of those magic tricks that he could dominate his country and do extraordinary things.

By following this group, some of the Israelites were severely engaged in the art of sorcery; so intensively that they put the Turah aside.

When the Prophet of Islam (S) announced his invitation and, through the verses of the Qur'an, proclaimed that Solomon (as) had been one of the apostles of Allah, some of the Jewish rabbis told their people: 'Are you not surprised that Muhammad says Solomon was an apostle while he was a sorcerer?'

This statement by those Jews was counted a great accusation against this Divine prophet (S), because when they said he was a sorcerer it insinuated that he was a lier and not a true prophet. This action caused him to be considered a blasphemer. Then, the above verse responded to their false accusation.

However, the first verse of this group of verses illustrates another dimension of the hineous actions of the Jews: that they accused the apostle of Allah, Solomon (as), of sorcery and witchcraft. It says:

"And they followed what the Shaitans chanted of sorcery in the reign of Solomon..."

The pronoun 'they', existing in the Arabic word /wattaba'u /, 'they followed', may refer to the Jews contemporary with the Prophet of Islam (S) or those contemporary with Solomon (as) or all of them.

The objective meaning of the term / sayatin / may be the evil people, or devils of the Jinn, or both of them.

Then, after stating the above idea, the Qur'an adds:

"...and Solomon disbelieved not..."

Solomon (as) never did practice sorcery, and he did not take any advantage from it in attaining his goals:

"...but the Shaitans disbelieved by teaching people sorcery..."

"...and that which was sent down to the two angels, Harut and Marut, in Babylon...."

Yes, they stretched their hands toward sorcery from two sides: one, from the side of sorcery which was taught by the Shaitans during the time of Solomon (as); and the other side was the instructions that Harut and Marut taught people for the purpose of breaking the spells of sorcery.

"...Even though they (the two) never taught anyone without saying: 'We are only a trial for you, therefore do not disbelieve '..."

In short, when these two angels appeared in the society, sorcery was in fashion among those people and a popular item in their marketplace. At that time, most of the people were captured in the grips of sorcerers.

The two angels taught people the ways in which they could counter the effects of such wicked practices (the witchcraft) of the sorcerers as an art of self-defense. But learning this art demanded, firstly, that they learn about the magic itself.

So, in order to be able to negate sorcery, they initially had to learn sorcery itself, and the ways in which it might work effectively, as good skillful magicians.

But Jewish mischief mongers took this matter as a means for spreading sorcery more and more. They expanded it so vastly that they accused the Divine prophet, Solomon (as), of sorcery and said that if nature, or even Jinns and humans, obeyed him (as), it was merely the effect of sorcery.

Yes, this is the common habit of the vicious: to accuse the great men as being their followers to justify their own school of thought.

At any rate, they could not pass this Divine trial successfully and, consequently, failed in keeping the right path, the true Faith.

"...So they learned from these two (magic spells) by which they might cause separation between a man and his wife..."

But the Power of Allah is above all these abilities.

"...though they cannot hurt anyone (thereby) but by Allah's leave..."

"...They learn what harms them and profits them not..."

Yes, they altered this divine constructive training. Instead of utilizing it on the path of improving their society and using it as a means of defense against the witchcraft of the sorcerers, they applied it to doing evil.

"...and they surely knew that the buyers of it would have no share of happiness in the Hereafter...."

"...And vile was the price for which they sold their own selves, had they but known (this)! "

****

They were heedless of their own happiness and of that of the society they belonged to, and were drowned in the whirlpool of blasphemy.

"Yet, had they believed (in Allah) and guarded themselves (against evil)… a reward from Allah would have been better, had they but known (this)! "

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 104-105

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَقُولُواْ رَاعِنَا وَقُولُواْ انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُواوَلِلكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

مَّا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلاَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ مِّن

رَّبِّكُمْ وَاللّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

104. "O' you who have Faith! Do not say (to the Prophet), 'ra'ina', but say 'unzurna'; and hearken (unto him) and for unbelievers awaits a painful punishment."

105. "Neither those who reject Faith from among the people of the (earlier) Book, nor those who take partners to Allah, wish that any good should be sent down upon you from your Lord, and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His Mercy and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abbas, the leading commentator, is narrated to have said that the early Muslims, when the Prophet (S) was speaking and teaching them the divine verses and commandments, often asked him to speak slowly so that they could comprehend the material well and could have opportunity enough to ask their questions.

For this purpose, then, they applied the phrase /ra'ina:/ derived from the root / arra'a:/ 'to give respite', which means: 'give us respite, wait for us.' [1] But the Jews took the same word from the Arabic root /ar-ra'unah / used with the meaning of 'foolhardiness, thoughtlessness, foolishness', which means: 'make foolish of us ' and suggests an insult. [2]

Here, the Jews had found something by which they could ridicule and make fun of the Prophet (S) and the Muslims. The first verse of the above verses was revealed to prevent this derisive usage of the word by the Jews. It commanded the believers to use /unzurna / instead of / ra'ina / which had the same meaning, but was plain and unambiguous. Thus, the enemies could not misuse it.

Some other commentators have said that the phrase / ra'ina / was employed by some Jews in whose language it had an uncomplimentary meaning. They repeated it again and again.

Some others of the commentators have also said that the Jews pronounced / ra'ina / instead of saying / ra'ina / and, addressing the Prophet (S) with that term which meant 'our cattle-tender, shepherd', ridiculed him.

These occasions of revelation do not contrast with each other, so that all of them may be right.

Leave No Pretext for Enemies!

Regarding what was said about the occasion of revelation, the first verse of the verses under discussion says:

"O' you who have Faith! Do not say (to the Prophet) ' ra'ina' but say, unzurna...."

"...and hearken (unto him), and for unbelievers awaits a painful punishment."

It is well understood from this verse that the Muslims, should be careful to avoid giving their enemies any pretext, because they may misuse even one short sentence against them. The Qur'an advises the Muslims to avoid uttering even the smallest common word, which they might transform into a term of reproach in order to weaken the spirits of the Muslims.

They should be careful not to select words which have multiple or ambiguous meanings that may be misused by the enemies to mock them thereby but rather should choose appropriate, unambiguous words. They must guard themselves against the cynical trick of using words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them.

When Islam is so meticulous that it does not let Muslims give their enemies pretext for these little things, the duty of Muslims is clear for greater and more important subjects, both concerning their interior affairs and international matters.

It is also noteworthy that the phrase / ra'ina /, besides what was stated before, is not free from impoliteness in meaning, because this term may also be derived from the word /mura'at /, which mean that ' you should observe us and we will observe you likewise'. Then, the Qur'an has bidden the Muslims not to use it anymore, since it contains a sense of impoliteness, besides the abusing of it by the Jews.

A Precise Meaning

The honorific and enlivening sentence /ya 'ayyuhallaθina 'amanu /, O' you who have Faith', addressed to the believers, has occurred 80 times in the Qur'an. The above verse is the first one which contains this phrase.

It is interesting that this phrase has occurred only in the verses that have been revealed in Medina, viz. it is not seen in the Meccan verses. It may be for the reason that with the emigration of the Prophet (S) to Medina, Muslims gathered together and it was then that the situation of Muslims became stabilized, especially when they formed a strong, powerful government. Hence, Allah (s.w.t.) addressed them with this phrase:

"O' you who have Faith!"

This phrase conveys another meaning, too. It indicates that now that you have Faith and have submitted to the truth, i.e. you have taken a covenant with Allah; you should obey Him according to the commandments that have come along with it. In other words, your Faith necessitates that you follow these instructions accordingly.

It is also notable that in many references of Islamic literature, including the ones of the Sunnite, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said: "No verse has Allah revealed with O' you who have Faith' save that Ali is at its top and is its chief." [3]

In the next verse, the Qur'an pulls back the curtain on the enmity and grudge of the pagans and the People of the Book towards the believers. It says:

"Neither those who reject Faith from among the people of the (earlier) Book, nor those who take partners to Allah, with that any good should be sent down upon you from your Lord…"

But this is not but a bare wish for them, because:

"…and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His Mercy…",

"… and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace,"

Because of their envy and enmity, the enemies of Islam did not want to be witnesses to this honour and glory given to Muslims, and they could not adapt to the fact that a great Prophet with a Divine Book from Allah could be appointed for them (Muslims), But, it was impossible for those hostile enemies to hinder the Mercy and Grace of Allah.

Notes

1. Aa-Durr-ul-Manthur, vol. 1, pp. 252-253
2. Jami'-ul-Bayan, by Muhammad-ibn-Jarir Tabari; vol. 1, pp. 469-473
3. Tafsir-i-Furat-ul-kufi; p. 49, Tradition 7; & Tarikh-i-Damishq, Ibn 'Asakir, vol. 2, p. 428

Section 12

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 106-107

مَا نَنسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلِهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ ُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ مِن وَ ٍّ وَلاَ نَصِيرٍ

106. "Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to beforgotten, We bring a better or the like of it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? "

107. "Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"

Purpose of Abrogation

The central meaning of these verses is again the Jewish evil propaganda against the Muslims.

The Jews occasionally said that the true religion was the religion of the Jews and the real Qiblah was the direction that they used for their prayers. The evidence supporting their idea was that the Prophet of Islam (S) used to pray toward their Qiblah (Jerusalem).

But when the command for changing the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah came down and, according to verse 144 from this very Surah, Muslims had to pray toward the direction of Mecca (Ka'bah), this pretext was taken away from the Jews.

Therefore, they tried to assert a new pretext and said that if the first Qiblah was right, then what was the second instruction for? And, if the second instruction was correct, then the Muslims' previous religious actions performed towards Jerusalem would be considered invalid.

The Qur'an replies to their objections through these verses and, thereby, enlightens the hearts of the believers. It says:

"Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to beforgotten, We bring a better or the like of it."

And it is easy for Allah, of course:

"…Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?"

"Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"

"Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth…"

Allah has the right to change His ordinances in any form He pleases and He is the most knowledgeable of all as to the welfare of His servants.

"...and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"

In fact, the first part of this verse denotes the absolute sovereignty of Allah in religious ordinances and that He is able to recognize and has the required knowledge to decide what is good for His creatures. Then, believers should not hearken to the vain words of some self-centered fellows who have doubt in the abrogations of the Divine Ordinances.

And the second part of the verse is a warning to those who choose refuge and support in other than Allah, because there is no real support in the world save Allah.

It should also be noted that the term / nasx / 'abrogation' in philology means: 'to abolish, destroy', and from the point of view of religion it means: 'to nullify a rule and substitute another in its place'. The detailed explanation about this subject will be discussed later.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 108

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْأَلُواْ رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَى مِن قَبْلُ وَمَن يَتَبَدَّلِ الْكُفْرَ بِالإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاء السَّبِيلِ

108. "Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime? And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."

Occasion of Revelation

In the books you may find some apparently different occasions of revelation for this verse, but their conclusions are nearly the same. A few of them are as follows:

One of the occasions of revelation upon the above verse has been narrated by Ibn Abbas. It is stated that once Wahab-ibn-Zayd and Rafi'-ibn-Harmalah came to the holy Prophet (S) and asked him to bring a letter from Allah for them to read and then they might believe. Or, it happened that he (S) was asked to make some streams appear and flow for them so that they might follow him.

Some other commentators have said that a group of Arabs wanted from the Prophet of Islam (S) the same things that the Jews wanted from Moses (as). They asked him to show the Lord clearly so that they could see Him with their own eyes and then they would believe.

As a response to them for their demand, the above verse was revealed.

Some Futile Pretexts

The addressees, in this verse, are some Muslims whose Faith was feeble, or the pagans. The Jews are not mentioned directly in this verse but, as we will explain later, it is not far removed from the story of the Jews.

It was, perhaps, after the event of the change of the Qiblah that some of Muslims and pagans, affected by the temptations of the Jews, requested some vain and futile demands from the holy Prophet (S), the examples of which were cited in the above. Allah, the Almighty, forbade them to ask such questions. The Qur'an says:

"Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime?..."

But you have decided, indeed, to evade believing by the acceptance of these vain pretexts.

In view of the fact that this action is a way of exchanging Faith for blasphemy, at the end of the verse it adds:

"...And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."

It should be noted that Islam has never prevented people from asking scientific or logical questions, as well as asking the Prophet (S) to perform miracles in order to prove the Divine rightfulness of his prophecy, because the means of gaining understanding and Faith are the same.

But there were some people who asked some futile questions and demanded some irrational pretexts in order to shirk the invitation of the holy Prophet (S).

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 109-110

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّن بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّاراً حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْفُواْ وَاصْفَحُواْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُواْ لأَنفُسِكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِندَ اللّهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

109. "Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be infidel, after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was manifest to them. (Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah has power over all things."

110. "And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates; whatever good you shall forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah; surely Allah sees what you do."

Envy and Obstinacy

There were many members of the People of the Book, especially those of the Jews, who not only disbelieved in Islam but they also urged the believers to abandon their Faith. Their motive, for this action, was nothing but envy.

Through the above mentioned verses, the Qur'an addresses this matter by saying:

"Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be infidel, after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was manifest to them..."

Here, the Qur'an bids the believers to forgive them their evil endeavours aiming at the destruction of Faith until Allah sends His command:

"...(Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah has power over all things."

This is, in fact, a tactical instruction given to Muslims that they should stand firm before the intense pressure of the enemies; and in this particular circumstance utilize the weapon of forgiveness while they focus their abilities upon constructing themselves and their Islamic society, and wait for the command of Allah.

As a great many of the commentators have said, the purpose of 'the command of Allah' here, is 'the command for the Holy War' which at that time had not been revealed yet.

The reason for the delay may have been that their conditions were not completely appropriate for that command. That was why, according to many

of the commentators, the idea in this verse was changed by the subsequent verses regarding 'the Holy War', which will be referred to later.

****

The verse following the above one bids the believers to perform two great constructive commands. One of them is about 'prayer' which establishes a firm relationship between the servant and his Lord. The second is alms-giving, which is the secret of cohesiveness among the members of societies. These two are necessary for defeating enemies. It says:

"And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates..."

By these two deeds you may strengthen both your spirit and body. Then, it adds that you should not think that the good deeds you do and the material wealth you pay as poor-rates in the way of Allah will be lost totally. It is not so, but:

"...whatever good you shall forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah..." "...surely Allah sees what you do."

Thus, He definitely knows which deeds you have done for His sake and which ones for the sake of other than Him.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 111-112

وَقَالُواْ لَن يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلاَّ مَن كَانَ هُوداً أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُواْ بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

111. "And they said: 'None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' Such are their fancies. Say: 'Bring your proof, if you are truthful'. "

112. "Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good, his reward is with his Lord; no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

In the above verses, the Qur'an has referred to one of the other vain, inappropriate statements of a group of the Jews and the Christians, and then, it has responded to them with a knockdown answer. It is as thus:

"And they said: 'None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian'…"

In reply to them, at first, it says:

"...Such are their fancies....", and they will never reach such wishes. Then, addressing the Prophet (S) it says:

"...Say: 'Bring your proof, if you are truthful'. "

****

Every claim needs its own proof for verification. When the fact became clear that they had not any proof for their claim and that their insistence that Paradise was exclusively theirs, which was merely a bare desire of theirs, the essential basic criterion for entering Paradise was given, as a general law in this verse, as it says:

"Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good,

his reward is with his Lord..."

Therefore,

"...no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

In short, the fact is that entering Paradise, the reward of Allah, and attaining felicity and salvation in the coming eternal life is exclusive to no tribe or particular race, but these merits belong to the ones who have the following two attributes:

The first attribute is that the person should submit himself wholly to the commands of Allah, and obey all of His commandments without considering any difference between this ordinance or that one.

It should not be so that he accepts those commandments that are compatible with what he considers his benefit and puts aside those that are opposite to that which he desires. Yes, such ones are entirely submitted to Allah's Will.

The second attribute is that the effect of Faith is illustrated in their deeds in the form of good actions. These people are good to all human beings in all of their affairs.

By this statement, in fact, the Qur'an, as a general rule, nullifies the inappropriate racial bigotries, and absolutely dismisses true salvation and happiness from the confinement of a special tribe. To sum it up, the verse distinguishes Faith and good deeds as criterion for true felicity.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 113

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَىَ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُواْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

113. "The Jews said: 'The Christians rest on naught', and the Christians said: 'The Jews rest on naught'; yet they (both) recite the (same) Book. Even so, similar to their sayings, spoke those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement in what they differ."

Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators have narrated from Ibn Abbas that when a group of Christians who were from Najran were attending a gathering of the Prophet's (S), some of the Jewish scholars were there, too.

These two groups began disputing with each other before the Prophet (S). Rafi'-ibn-Harmalah, one of the Jews, turned to the Christians and said that their religion was based on naught. Thus, he was rejecting the prophethood of Jesus (as) and his Divine Book.

Then, a man from among the Christians from Najran, too, replied to him with a similar expression and said that the religion of the Jews was based on naught. Thus, he also rejected both the prophethood of Moses (as) and the Turah. It was at that time that the above verse was revealed and reproached both groups for their fabricated statements. [1]

Exclusivity, the Fruit of Ignorance

In the previous verse, we became acquainted with a portion of the rootless claims of a group of the Jews and the Christians. The verse under

discussion indicates that when a proof less claim comes forth, it results in exclusivity and then leads to contradiction.

"The Jews said: 'The Christians rest on naught ', and Christians said: 'The Jews rest on naught'..."

The phrase: ‘rest on naught' may mean that they have no rank and honour with Allah; or their belief is not a thing worthwhile.

Then, to complete the above idea, it adds:

"...yet they (both) recite the (same) Book..."

That is, with the Divine Book that they have in their hands which can guide them toward the right path concerning these problems, it is surprising that they say such words which originate from nowhere except prejudice and enmity.

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"...Even so, similar to their sayings, spoke those who know not."

(Although these are the People of the Book and those are pagans or idolaters.)

This verse introduces ignorance as the origin of bigotry and prejudice, because ignorant people are always shut in their own worlds and do not accept other than that which they know. They seriously believe only in the Faith that they have been acquainted with from their early childhood, even if it is false or superstitious. Therefore, they put aside everything other than that which they believe.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"...Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment in what they differ."

It is in the Hereafter where the facts will be entirely evident and the proof and references of all things will become perfectly manifest. None will be able to deny what is right and, thus, there will remain no dispute. Yes, one of the special characteristics of the Resurrection Day is that all disagreements will come to an end.

By the way, the above verse reminds Muslims that although the followers of these religions have stood against them and rejected Islam, therefore, they need not be worried because the Jews and Christians do not verify even themselves. Each of them nullifies the other and, in principle, ignorance is the origin of bigotry and bigotry is the source of exclusivity.

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 188, & Tafsir Ghartabi and Tafsir Almanar

Section 13

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 114

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا أُوْلَـئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلاَّ خَآئِفِينَ لهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

114. "And who if more unjust than he who prevents the mosques of Allah of His Name being remembered therein and strives for their ruin? Such (people) might never enter them, save in fear. For them if disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great punishment."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbas, cited in the book 'Asb-ab-un-Nuzul', that this verse was revealed about Fatlus-ur-Rumi, a Roman, and his friends. They fought against the Children of Israel and burnt the Turah. In that war, Jewish children were made captives, and Jerusalem was ruined and filled with corpses. [1]

The Late Tabarsi, a great commentator, narrates from Ibn Abbas, in his book 'Majma'ul-Bayan' that this strives for the destruction of Jerusalem was continued until when that Holy Land was conquered by Muslims... [2]

A tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) says that this verse was revealed about the Quraysh when they prevented the holy Prophet (S) from entering Mecca and the Ka'bah. [3]

Also, a third occasion of revelation is cited for this verse. It says the verse is referring to the sites in Mecca where Muslims used to pray at, which pagans destroyed totally after the emigration of the Prophet (S) from that City. [4]

There is no discrepancy in saying that all three of these occasions of revelation refer to their own individual incidents. Therefore, each of them illustrates one of the dimensions of the subject.

The Most Unjust Ones!

When dealing with the occasions of revelation of the above mentioned verse, it is understood that the words are about all three groups: the Jews, the Christians and the pagans, while the words in the previous verses were mostly about the Jews and sometimes about the Christians.

At any rate, the Jews, creating mischief about the Qiblah, tried to return the direction of the prayers of Muslims toward Jerusalem in order to appear to have, by that manner, a kind of superiority in the eyes of the community of Muslims and also weaken the luster and elegance of the Sacred Mosque and the Ka'bah. [5]

The pagans of Mecca, having prevented the holy Prophet (S) and Muslims from visiting and pilgrimaging to the Sacred House, the Ka'bah, practically stepped forth toward the desolation of this Holy Structure.

The Christians, too, having conquered Jerusalem and having performed actions which gave rise to what was said to be the occasion of revelation of this verse, as narrated by Ibn Abbas, tried to ruin it.

The Qur'an, warning these three groups and all others who pave a similar way, says:

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents the mosques of Allah of His Name being remembered therein and strives for their ruin?....."

Thus, the Qur'an considers this prevention unjust and introduces contrivers of it as the most unjust people. Indeed, what greater 'unjust' could be committed than that they strive to ruin the Monotheistic centers and prevent people from remembering the Name of their Providence, whose consequence would be the spread of polytheism and corruption in the society!

Then, the verse continues saying:

"...Such (people) might never enter them, save in fear..."

That is, Muslims and monotheists of the world should stand so firm against these transgressors that their hands be curtailed from these sacred sites so that none of them can freely and without fear enters therein.

In commenting on the above verse, a possible meaning is that these kind of unjust people with these kind of actions will never truly is succeed in taking these Holy shrines and places of worship under their own control.

The final circumstance will be such that they will not be able to enter them save in fear. They will be subject to just the same fate and fortune that the pagans of Mecca had regarding the Sacred Mosque.

Finally, through the concluding words of the verse and with a shocking statement, the Qur'an has referred to the penalty of those transgressors both in the present world and the coming world. It says:

"...For them is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great punishment. "

And this is the end of those who want to separate servants from their Providence.

Explanation: Mosques and the Ways of their Desolation

There is no doubt that the above verse has a vast meaning which is not confined to a particular time or place. The verse, from this point of view, is like other verses of the Qur'an which have been revealed in relation to a specific condition or circumstance referred to as the occasion of revelation, but their ordinances are valid in all ages.

Therefore, anyone or any group who strive in any form to ruin the mosques of Allah, or prevent the Name of Allah from being remembered and adored therein, will be faced with the same disgrace and great punishment which have been pointed out in this verse.

It is also necessary to pay attention to this fact that the prevention of worshippers from entering into the Sacred Mosque and the barring of the remembrance of the Name of Allah and His adoration along with striving for ruining it, does not only refer to the mosque being destroyed by shovel and pick, but involves any actions that cause mosques to be ruined or seem dull and lusterless.

As it will be explained when commenting on Surah Al-Taubah, No.9, verse 18, the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /ya'muru masajid /, mentioned in the verse, according to the clear meanings of some Islamic narrations and traditions, is not merely 'to build or to mend the mosques'.

Attending these holy shrines and remembering the Name of Allah and adoring Him therein not only is a means of maintaining them but also is counted as their most important form of maintenance.

Therefore, in the opposite case, whatever causes people to neglect the remembrance of the Name of Allah and keeps them apart from the mosques, is a very grand injustice.

Supplication

O' Lord! Guard us from, and against, any deviation and corruption!

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 115

وَلِلّه الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّواْ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّه إِنَّ اللّه وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

115. "And to Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Occasion of Revelation

There are different narrations cited on the cause of the occasion of revelation of this verse.

Ibn Abbas says that this verse concerns the change of the Qiblah. When Muslims' Qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah, the Jews tried to reject it by objecting to the Muslims and demanding of them how the Qiblah could, be changed. This verse was revealed and replied to their objection that the East and the West of the world belong to Allah. [6]

Another tradition indicates that this verse has been revealed regarding 'the recommended prayers'. It refers to this meaning that one can pray his supererogatory prayers in any direction that his mount moves towards, even if he is facing opposite to the Qiblah. [7]

Some others have narrated from Jabir who said that the Prophet (S) once sent some of the Muslims to fight in a war. When the dark of night fell and they wanted to pray their night prayer they could not confirm the correct direction of the Qiblah.

Then, every one used an approximate direction towards the Qiblah and offered his prayers. At the break of dawn they found out that they had prayed towards a direction other than the Qiblah. They informed the holy Prophet (S) about it and the above verse was revealed declaring that their prayers were all correct in such a condition. [8]

(This religious creed, of course, has some conditions that should be studied in jurisprudent books.)

It is realistic that all of the above occasions of revelation are correct for this verse. That is, the verse refers to the idea of the change of the Qiblah as well as reciting the supererogatory prayer when riding on a mount, and the obligatory prayers performed when the correct direction of the Qiblah is not recognizable.

Besides, no verse, in principle, is allocated exclusively to its occasion of revelation, but its content should be considered as a general ordinance; and, sometimes, what a great number of different ordinances can be derived from it.

Allah, the Omnipresent

The previous verse was about the oppressors who prevented worship in the mosques of Allah, and strived for the destruction of them. The verse under discussion is a continuation of the same idea. It says:

"And to Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence of Allah..."

It is not such that if they prevent you from entering the mosques of Allah and attending the monotheistic centers, the path of adoring Allah would be entirely closed to you. The East and the West of the world belong to Him. Whithersoever you turn, He is there.

Also, the change of the Qiblah, which was ordained because of some particular circumstances, has not the least effect on our worship. Can any place be found where Allah is not there. In principle, Allah has no limited place. (A further explanation can be studied on page 322).

That is why at the end of the verse, it says:

"...Surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

The point noteworthy here is that the East and the West mentioned in the verse should not be taken as confined to the directions where the sun rises or sets, as they are only relative expressions. The emphasis on the East and the West may be because the first directions that man is able to recognize are these two directions, and the other directions can be figured out by determining them.

The Qur'an, concerning these directions, also says: "And We made a people, considered weak (and of no account), inheritors in both East and West," (Surah A'raf. No.7. verse 137).

Philosophy of the Qiblah

The first question that arises here is that if ' wherever we turn, there is the Presence of Allah', then why is it necessary that we observe the direction of the Qiblah?

As we will explain later, observing the Qiblah does not mean to confine the Presence of Allah to a particular direction. Since man is a creature dependent on material and concrete thought, he should pray towards whatever direction the commandment has mandated. All should pray towards a single direction in order to unite all Muslims in single rows, and to avoid dispersion and disorder.

Imagine how disgraceful it would be if every individual prayed toward a separate direction or in dispersive rows.

By the way, the direction which is appointed as the Qiblah (the direction towards the Ka'bah) is a holy place and it is the most ancient sacred site of monotheism whose consideration evokes monotheistic remembrance.

The phrase / wajhullah / does not mean ' the face of Allah', as some have rendered, but it means, here, 'the Unity or Presence of Allah'.

As it was stated before, in the occasion of revelation, and many Islamic narrations attest to, this verse has been taken as the basic reference to certify the validity of the prayers offered by those who would pray toward a direction other than the direction of the Ka'bah by mistake or because of lack of the capability of verification.

This very verse is also referred to for the validity of reciting prayers when riding on a moving mount. (For more details concerning this subject,

refer to the jurisprudential books 'Was-a'il-ush-Shi'ah', Kit-ab-us-Sal-at' and, Abw-ab-ul-Qiblah'.)

Here, we attract your attention to three authentic traditions about the term / wajhullah/ and its meaning:

1. It is cited in the book 'Al-Tauhid ' from Salman Farsi, through a tradition known as Jathliq, who asked Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) some questions which were comprehensively replied to. One of them was that he asked him (as) which direction his Lord's presence was.

Hadrat Ali (as) told Ibn Abbas to have some firewood fetched for him. The firewood was brought and was kindled. When the fire was flaming, Hadrat Ali (as) asked the man which direction the face of the fire was, and the Christian answered that its face was on every side.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) said:

"This fire which is a material is not recognized by its face, then Allah, its Creator, is not like that. To Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence of Allah.'..." [9]

2. Again, keeping in mind that the commands given by the Holy Messenger (S) are those that he has received from Allah, it is narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said that the manifestation of Allah (s.w.t.) is Ahlul Bayt (as) who are the guides and Imams for people whose obedience to them has been enjoined by Him the same as it has been enjoined to Him and His Messenger (S).

That is, the only way to the cognizance of / wajhullah / 'the Presence of Allah' and the Divine Majesty is through Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), who are His witnesses. [10] That is, haply, why they (Imams) have said:

"It is through us that people know Allah, and through us (with our guidance) they worship Allah." [11]

3. Tariq-ibn-Shahab has narrated in a tradition from Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

"O! Imam is the Word of Allah, the Proof of Allah, the Presence of Allah, the Light of Allah..." [12]

There are some other expressive narrations on the subject cited in Biharul-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 228, which can be referred to, too.

Notes

1. Asbab-un-Nuzul, p. 22, Arabic version
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 189
3. lbid
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 189 & Almizan, the of the verse.
5. Tafsir Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. 4, p. 9
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 191
7. Manhaj-us- Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 348, & Abulfutuh-Razi; vol. 1, p. 302
8. Tafsir-ut- Tibyan, vol. 1, p. 424 & Tafsir Nimunah, vol. 1, p. 413
9. Bihar-ul-Anwar vol. 25, p. 168
10. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 93, p. l18, & Al-Ihtijaj by Tabarsi
11. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 23, p. 102, Tradition 1
12. Bihar-ul-Anwar vol. 25, p. 168

Section 14

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 116-117

وَقَالُواْ اتَّخَذَ اللّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَل لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَ ٰ أَ ْ راً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

116. "They said: 'Allah has taken to Himself a son'. Glory be to Him! Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth: all are obedient to Him. "

117. "Originator (is He) of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees a matter to be, He only says to it ' Be' and it is."

The Jews, Christians, and Pagans and their Superstitions

The superstitious belief that Allah has got a child is accepted by the Christians, a group of the Jews, and some pagans. All of them believe that He has chosen a child for Himself.

Surah At-Taubah No.9 verse 30 says:

"The Jews call 'Uzair (Ezra) a son of Allah and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! "

Also, about the pagans, Surah Yunus, No 10, verse 68 says:

"They say: 'Allah has begotten a son!' -Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient!..."

There are many other verses in the Holy Qur'an that refer to this inappropriate idea of theirs.

To condemn this superstition, the first verse of the verses under discussion says:

"They said: 'Allah has taken to Himself a son'. Glory be to Him!..."

Why would Allah need to take a son for Himself! Is He in need of one? Is He limited? Does He need to be helped? Or, is it necessary for Him to have any descendants?

"...Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth..."

"...all are obedient to Him."

He is not only the Possessor of all things and creatures in the world of existence, but also,

"Originator (is He) of the heavens and the earth..."

And He has created all of them without any previous design, preparation, or without being in need of any pre-existing material.

What necessity is He forced by to have a child while everything is immediately ready for Him?

"...and when He decrees a matter to be, He only says to it ' Be' and it is."

Explanation

Besides the above verse, the phrase / kun fayakon / 'Be! and it is' has occurred in several verses of the Qur'an, including the followings:

1. Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 47

2. Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 59

3. Surah Al-An'-am, No.6, verse 73
4. Surah An-Nahl, No.16, verse 40
5. Surah Maryam, No.19, verse 35
6. Surah Yasin, No.36, verse 82
7. Surah Qafir, No.40, verse 68

This phrase is about the Will of Allah and His Absolute Sovereignty on the subject of creation.

To understand this well, we should know the meaning of the Unity of Acts and the creation of all created beings by Allah's Will. Precisely; Unity of Acts, in terms of His acts, does not need any help or helper from outside Himself. Should He use any means for that purpose, the means itself is created by Him and used by Him.

It is not that He needs some help from outside Himself which is not connected to Him, and to be brought from somewhere else, or if so Allah would not be able to do whatever He wants to. No, it is not like that at all. Allah's Acts need none but Himself and His Will alone.

The explanation is that the objective meaning of the phrase / kun fayakun / ('Be! 'and it is) is not that Allah issues a verbal command with the word 'Be', but the reality is that when He wills something to exist it exists. There will be no time between that Will and its existence, not even a moment.

In other words, the phrase / kun fayakun / ('Be! and it is) is only to bring home to the human mind the Omnipotent Will which, properly speaking, can never be translated into any verbal expression. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), of whom the holy Prophet (S) had declared: 'I (i.e. the holy Prophet himself) am the City of knowledge and Ali is its Gate', in referring to the phrase mentioned in this verse; -regarding the Divine Omnipotence and the execution of His Will says:

"Not by sound uttered, nor by voice heard, His Word, blessed be He, is Action proceeding from Him ". [1]

There is a similar idea in a tradition from Hadrat Musa-ibn-Ja'far, the seventh Imam (as), cited in Al-Kafi as well as in Touhid Saduq. [2]

This meaning, with a slightly different explanation, is also mentioned in Tafsir-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 146.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 118-119

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلاَ يُكَلِّمُنَا اللهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّثْلَ
قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ
إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلاَ تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ

118. "And the ignorant said: 'Why does Allah not speak to us or a Sign comes not to us?' Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made clear the Signs to people who are sure."

119. "Verily, We have sent you (O' Muhammad) with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and you shall not be questioned about the inhabitants of the Blazing Fire."

Another Pretext

Similar to the pretexts of the Jews, in the initial verses of the above group of verses, another party of pretext-seekers are referred to, whom, apparently, were the Arab pagans. It says:

"And the ignorant said: 'Why does Allah not speak to us or a Sign comes not to us?'…"

This group of unbelieving people, whom the Qur'an has referred, to as / allaŎina la ya'lamuna / 'the ignorant' had, indeed, two illogical demands:

1. Why does Allah not speak to them?

2. Why does sign not come to them?

In answer to these selfish demands, the Qur'an says:

"...Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made clear the Signs to people who are sure."

If they truly intend to understand the Truth, these very verses revealed to the Prophet (S) are clear Signs to the rightfulness of his Call. Why should some verses be independently and directly revealed to each individual separately? And, what does it mean that a person insists that Allah must speak to him, himself, directly?

A similar idea to this is also stated in Surah Al-Muddaththir, No.74 verse 52 thus:

"For sure, each one of them wants to be given scrolls (of revelation) spread out!"

This manner, in principle, besides that it is not necessary, contrasts with Divine Wisdom, because firstly, the rightfulness of the prophethood of prophets has been proved to all peoples by way of the verses which were revealed to them themselves.

Secondly, it is not possible for verses and miracles to be revealed to every individual, for this need a special kind of eligibility, preparation, and purity of soul. It closely resembles to a situation in which all the wires of the vast electrical system of a city (the strong thick wires and the very thin ones) be expected to receive the same extraordinarily high amount of electricity that immediately arrives into the initial thick wires directly from the main generator.

This expectation is certainly a vain, incorrect expectation. The engineer who has arranged these various wires for different purposes has calculated the capability of each wire. Some of them convey the electricity directly and immediately from the generator, while some others do it by means of some intermediary wires and with a variety of voltages.

****

The next verse addresses the holy Prophet (S) and defines his duty regarding their demands for miracles and other pretexts. It says:

"Verily, We have sent you (O' Muhammad) with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner..."

That is, O' Muhammad (S) your responsibility is that you proclaim our commandments to all people, to illustrate the miracles, and to express the facts logically and with clear statements. This action should coincide with persuading the good doers and warning the evil doers. This is your duty.

"...and you shall not be questioned about the inhabitants of the Blazing Fire."

Explanation: Their Hearts are All Alike!

In the above verses we learnt that the Qur'an declares:

"Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike."

This idea points to the fact that the passing of time and the instructions of prophets (S) should have had such an effect that the later generations could gain a larger portion of knowledge so that they would put aside vain statements which are a sign of ignorance.

But unfortunately, this group of people usually has no share in the process of development. They are always retrogressive so that it seems as if they belonged to thousands of years ago, and the passing of time has not affected the least change in their minds.

Two Instructive Principles

'Glad tidings' and 'warning' or 'encouragement' and' threat', form a great part of the motives of educational and social affairs. A person should be both encouraged for his good deeds and punished for his wrong actions, in order to be prepared for paving the first path and avoiding the second route.

Mere encouragement is not enough for the attainment of improvement in an individual or a society, because in this condition the individual is sure that committing sin does not harm him.

The present followers of Christ (as), for example, believe in 'ransom'. They think that Jesus (as) has been sacrificed for their sins. Even their clergymen sometimes promise them Heaven, and forgiveness for their sins on behalf of the Lord. It is evident that such a group of people may easily commit sins.

In a Guide to Christian Workers of the New American Standard Version Bible (pg. 1295), it is cited about Christ (as):

"He tasted death for me, thus He bore the supreme penalty of my sins."

Surely this incorrect idea makes its followers bold in committing wrongs and corruption.

In short, those who think mere encouragement is enough in training men (irrespective of children or adults) and threats, punishment and revenge have no place and should be completely put aside, are completely wrong.

On the other hand, those who, neglecting the encouraging aspect, think that training is based only on threats and terror are on a wrong path as well.

These two groups have a mistaken conception of Man, because they do not have this fact in mind: that Man is made up of a combination of hope and fear, love of living and hatred of destruction. His nature is to attract gain and to repel loss.

Observing the parallel between these two principles is particularly essential since if encouragement and hope goes beyond limits, it results in boldness and negligence. And when threats and punishment is abundant, it produces despair and extinguishes the flames of love and vitality.

For the exact same reason, in the verses of the Qur'an, the terms 'glad tidings' and 'warning' have occurred in conjunction with each other. It has

happened that the term 'glad tidings' has sometimes preceded the term 'warning', like in the verse under discussion; and sometimes it is vice versa, as in Surah Al-A'raf No.7 Verse 188, which says:

"...I am a warner and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have Faith."

In fact, in the majority of these verses of the Qur'an, 'glad tidings' has preceded 'warning'. This may be because, in general, the Mercy and Grace of Allah have preceded His Wrath and punishment, as we call Him in supplications: "O' He Whose Mercy precedes His Wrath."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 120-121

وَلَن تَرْ عَنكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلاَ النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَى وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءهُم بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّهِ مِن وَلٍّ وَلاَ نَصِيرٍ

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلاَوَتِهِ أُوْلَـئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمن يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

120. "For, never, will the Jews be pleased with you nor the Christians unless you follow their religion. Say: 'Behold Allah's guidance is the only (true) guidance. And verily if you follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, you shall have from Allah neither protector nor helper. "

121. "Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it ought to be read, they are the ones that truly believe in it, and whoever disbelieves in it, they shall (surely) be the losers."

Occasion of Revelation

On the occasion of revelation of the first of the above verses, it is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Jews in Medina and the Christians from Najran expected that the Prophet of Islam (S) would traditionally accept the same Qiblah as they had.

When Allah altered the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah, they became disheartened with the Prophet of Islam (S). (Perhaps, some of the Muslim believers, too, criticized that they should not do anything that would offend the Jews and the Christians).

The above verse was revealed and informed the Prophet (S) that that group of Jews and Christians would be satisfied with him neither by coming into agreement upon the Qiblah nor by anything else except that he would follow their creeds. [3]

Some others have narrated that the Prophet (S) insisted very much on convincing them to accept Islam. The above verse was revealed telling him (S) to disregard that idea because never would they be pleased with him unless he followed their religion. [4]

There are also various narrations upon the occasion of revelation of the second of the above verses. Some of the commentators believe that this verse was revealed about those people who came with Ja'far-ibn-Abitalib from Abyssina to Medina.

They had joined Islam and accompanied him when he left there. They were 40 men, thirty-two of whom were from Abyssina and eight men were

from the monks of Syria among whom there was a famous Christian monk by the name of Bahira. [5]

Some other commentators believe that the verse was revealed about some people from among the Jews such as Abdillah-ibn-Salam, Shu'bat-ibn-'Amru, Tamam-ibn-Yahuda, and so on who accepted the invitation of Prophet Muhammad (S) and became true believers. [6]

Two Unsatisfiable Groups!

The previous verse relieves Hadrat Muhammad (S) of any responsibility concerning those stubborn misguided people. Now, this verse, elaborating on the same idea, informs the Prophet (S) of the reason why it is so:

"For, never will the Jews be pleased with you nor the Christians unless you follow their religion..."

"...Say: 'Behold Allah's guidance is the only (true) guidance'..."

Allah's guidance is a guidance which is not adulterated with superstitions and wrong thoughts of ignorant people. Yes, such pure noble guidance should be followed.

Then, it adds:

"...And verily if you follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, you shall have from Allah neither protector nor helper. "

But, since some of the Jewish and Christian truth-seekers accepted the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) and embraced Islam, the Holy Qur'an, after scorning the aforementioned group, commemorates this group well by saying:

"Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it ought to be read, they are the ones that truly believe in it,..."

"...and whoever disbelieves in it, they shall (surely) be the losers."

These people were those who truly read their Divine Book as it ought to be read and followed it accordingly. This manner of striving resulted in their being guided.

Therein, they had studied the glad tidings of the advent of the promised prophet and they found those attributes congruous with Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (S) so thereby they submitted, and Allah, therefore, appreciated them.

Explanation

The phrase / wa la 'initaba'ta 'ahwa'ahum /, ' and verily if you follow their desires', may prompt the readers of the verse to ask this question: Was it possible that Muhammad (S) would, with his inerrant position of prophethood, follow the desires of those misguided Jews?

In answer to this question we say that these statements, which are frequently cited in the verses of the Qur'an, do not contradict with the state of inerrancy of prophets (as), because on one hand, it is a conditional sentence, therefore the mentioning of the protasis does not lean that the action will definitely be performed.

On the other hand, the state of being immune from sin does not refute the capability of committing sin and errs by prophets (as) though prophets and Imams (as) are able to commit sin and heir free will is not taken away from

them, they would never contaminate themselves with corruption or even taint their souls with a single sin.

In other words, they can commit sins but their belief, knowledge, and virtue is so intense that they never draw near to any sin. Therefore, such admonishments as the above are completely appropriate for them.

Thirdly, this statement, although addressing the holy Prophet (S), may envelop all believers entirely.

Pleasing Enemies has its Limits

It is true that one should attract the enemies' attention towards his invitation with the magnetic power of excellent ethics and superior character, but there are some who never accept the truth. They are not worth worrying about. They will never believe in the true path, hence, endeavouring to attract their attention is a waste of time.

Allah's Guidance if the Only True Guidance

This fact is also understood from the above verses that the only ,aw which can lead man towards salvation and happiness is the law and guidance of Allah, because to whatever extent the knowledge of man progresses, it is still interwoven with ignorance, doubt and deficiency from the points of view of various aspects.

Hence, the guidance which comes forth under the shade of such incomplete knowledge cannot be considered an absolute guidance. The only One Who can provide Absolute Guidance 'is the One Who possesses ' Absolute Knowledge', without any ignorance or imperfection. This Attribute applies only to Allah.

How Should the Book be Read?

This meaning is an expressive one which defines a clear path for us regarding the Holy Qur'an, the Divine Book.

Now, those who read the verses of the Qur'an are defined in several groups: One of these groups emphasize on the forms of pronunciation and articulation of the phonemes and morphemes and also the overall intonation of the verses of the Qur'an with their own proper Arabic points of articulation.

They always think of linguistical regulations for the Arabic pronunciation of the signs and sounds, pauses and extensions, and, finally, for observing the special letters in the Qur'an known as /yarmalun/.

They usually are not particularly concerned with the meaning and the content of the verses they read. When they disregard the meaning of the Qur'an, their actions accordingly are obvious. The example of this kind of people is depicted in the Qur'an saying:

"...is as the likeness of the ass bearing books..." (Surah. Al-Jumu'ah No. 61. Verse 5).

The second group is those who, in addition to the verbal utterances, pay close attention to the meanings of the verses and contemplate over the elegancies and exquisite points of the Qur'an.

They try to understand the sciences described therein, but they do not actually comply with its ordinances. The third group is those true believers

who accept the Qur'an as a mandate of action and use it as a comprehensive program for their lives.

They consider the recitation of this great Book, contemplation over its meanings, and conception of its purposes as preliminary for their actions.

That is why whenever they recite the Qur'an, a fresh and pleasing state encompasses their souls allowing them to make new decisions with vigorous intention and a strong inner feeling of preparedness for their actions.

This is, perhaps, the privilege granted for reading the Book in the way in which it ought to be read.

A tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as), commenting on this verse, says: "They recite its verses slowly, and understand it, and act according to its orders, and hope for its promises, and are afraid of its threats, and take lessons from its stories, and obey its commandments, and desist from what it prohibits. By God, it does not mean memorizing its verses, and studying its letters, and reciting its chapters, and learning its one-tenths and one-fifths.

They remembered its words and neglected its boundaries. And what it means is meditating on its verses and acting according to its orders. Allah, the High, has said: (It is) a Book We have sent down to you abounding in good, so that they may ponder over its verses'...", (38: 29), (Irshadul-Qulub, ad-Daylami). [7]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 122-123

يَا بَنِي إِ ْ ءَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَ ِ الَّ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ تَنفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ هُمْ

يُنصَرُونَ

122. "O' Children of Israel! call to mind My favour which 1 bestowed on you and that I made you excel all the nations (of that time) ."

123. "And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another, neither shall any ransom be accepted from any one, nor shall intercession profit any one, nor shall they be helped (from outside)."

Once again, in these verses, Allah addresses the Children of Israel and reminds them of His favours bestowed on them; particularly that He preferred them to all other nations of their time.

"O' Children of Israel! Call to mind My favor which 1 bestowed on you and that 1 made you excel all the nations (of that time)."

****

But, since every blessing is followed by a corresponding responsibility and, therefore, Allah gives man a duty or a responsibility to undertake for each bounty which is given him, in the next verse He threatens him by saying:

"And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another..."

"...neither shall any ransom be accepted from anyone..."

"…nor shall intercession profit any one…"

And, if you think that anyone can help others that day, save Allah, you are mistaken, because He says:

"...nor shall they be helped (from outside)."

Therefore, none of the means of rescue that they would grope for in this world to save themselves will be available there. There will be only one way open to them which is the path of Faith, good action, repentance of sins, and self-improvement.

These two verses are quite similar to verses 47 and 48 of the current Surah, where we explained the idea of intercession in detail. Here, it is referred to, again, reminding that the warning, i.e. that 'intercession shall not be of any avail', does not at all mean that the intercession by the holy Prophet (S) or any other of his divine allies will also be ineffective on the Day of Judgment.

It is a warning against the disbelievers who, as a figment of their own fanciful imaginations, think that their guardian deities, gods or goddesses will come to their aid, or to those of the Jews and Christians who stubbornly claim the intercession of Moses (as), or that Christ's (as) blood has been paid as a ransom for the sins of his followers.

This verse clearly denies any such ransom for sins or intercession for the sinners who do not believe in the divinely promised Last Apostle of Allah, Muhammad Mustafa (S), and reject faith in the truth which he preached. But, as it was mentioned before, the intercession of the holy Prophet (S) or the other holy ones (as) will be accepted by the leave of Allah (s.w.t.).

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balagha, Arabic version by Subh-i-salih, p. 274
2. Tafsir-as-Safi, vol. 1, p. 167
3. Abul-Futuh Razi, vol. 1, p. 308
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol., p. 197
5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p.198
6. lbid, & Tafsir Abul-Futuh Razi, vol. 1, p. 310
7. Al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 70 (English Version)

Section 15

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 124

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لاَ يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

124. "And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he fulfilled. He said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind.' (Abraham) pleaded: 'And of my offspring (as well)? , He, (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'."

Imamat, the Climax of Abraham's (as) Honour

From this verse on, the topics of discussion are Abraham (as), the honourable prophet of Allah and the hero of Monotheism, the structure of the Ka'bah, the sacred site of worship, and the importance of this great monotheistic center. These subjects are referred to in the next eighteen verses. Three main ideas were the objectives of these verses:

The first aim was that they might provide people with the necessary preparation for the change of the direction of the Qiblah and to inform Muslims that the Ka'bah is a legacy of Abraham (as), the idol-breaker. If pagans and idol-worshippers used it as an idol temple, it was only temporarily and it did not decrease the glorious high rank of the Ka'bah at all.

The second goal was to address the problem of the Jews and Christians who were claiming to be the heirs of Abraham (as) and his religion. These verses, reflecting back on the numerous former verses about the Jews, clarify how very unfamiliar they were with the creed of Abraham (as).

The third purpose was that Arab pagans believed in a special incessant ancestral link between them and Abraham (as). They, too, had to be made to understand that their belief systems and codes of behavior had no similarity with that of Abraham (as), the iconoclastic prophet.

In this verse, at first, it says:

"And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he fulfilled..."

Yes, this verse speaks about the important occurrences in Abraham's life, i.e. his great tests and how he passed them successfully, which illustrates his high rank and superior personality and manifests the worthiness of his being.

When Abraham (as) passed these trials successfully, Allah saw fit to give him a gift as a prize. Therefore, addressing him:

"...He said: "Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind.'..."

In order that this Divine gift would continue in his seed, and prophethood and 'Imamat' would not come to an end with his death:

"...(Abraham) pleaded: 'And of my offspring?'..."

The answer to this question was:

"...He (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'."

That is, I accepted your plea, but only for those of your offspring who are doers of righteous deeds and are pure and sinless i.e. those who are worthy of this rank.

Explanation: What does 'words' mean?

Studying the verses of the Qur'an and noting the great and important deeds that Abraham (as) fulfilled and, hence, being appointed to the position of Imamat by Allah, leads us to the conclusion that the term / kalim-at / meaning 'words', or the Divine commandments by which Abraham (as) was tried, were not those of the usual sort.

It clearly indicates that the tests were not connected with matters of ordinary reasoning or faith.

They can never be considered ordinary tests. The purpose of the 'words' was a series of heavy, hard, laborious, grave duties which were given to Abraham, the sincere pure prophet (as), and he was the only one who had the qualifications to successfully complete them. Some of those commandments were such is the followings:

One trial was concerning the steadfastness of his faith in Allah. Abraham (as) was commanded through a vision in a dream to slay his on Ishmael. When he awoke, he unhesitatingly acted as he was bidden, (37: 105-108).

This indicates that Abraham (as) already knew that he was Allah's prophet and what he saw in the vision was no other than Allah's command. With such a certainty in his mind, he was willing to do, by Allah's command, something that no other loving or sensible father possibly could slay his own son.

In another incident, by Allah's command, he took and left his wife and his infant son to an area of dry land, where no food and water or any inhabitants could be found.

He also stood against the idol-worshippers of Babylon and very bravely defended Monotheism in his historical trial after he had broken their idols. He miraculously held firm in faith and patience when he was thrown into the midst of fire.

Recalcitrating, he emigrated from the land of idol-worshippers, and went to a faraway region in order to proclaim his prophecy.

He did many things similar to those mentioned above and each of those trials was, indeed, heavy and difficult for a man to undertake, but he, with the power of Faith, was able to perform them successfully thereby proving himself worthy of the position of 'Imamat', Divine leadership.

Eligibility for Imamat

Precisely speaking, it is understood from the above mentioned verse that the position and rank of Imamat which was bestowed upon Abraham (as), only after successfully enduring those frequent difficult trials, was above and beyond the rank of prophethood.

The primary sense of meaning of the term / imam / is that of being foremost, but it also has other different meanings including:

A) Leadership in the worldly social affairs of people, (as the Sunnite school of thought believes).

B) Authority over the religious affairs of people in this world (as some others of them have interpreted).

C) Responsibility of bringing religious duties into action, whether it is through the establishment of government in its vast meaning or performing the commandments and ordinances of Allah, and the execution of social justice along with the training of souls, both outwardly and inwardly.

The rank of Imamat is higher than the rank of prophethood, because prophethood and messengership is only a matter of receiving some commandments from Allah and preaching them as glad tidings and warnings.

All of these are true in the case of Imamat, in addition to practicing the Divine ordinances and training the souls of individuals, outwardly and inwardly. (It is clear, of course, that many of the prophets had had the rank of Imamat, too.)

Imamat, in fact, is the position of presenting the aims of religion practically, and guidance is 'attaining the ideal' not merely ' showing the way'.

Besides that, Imamat includes 'Divine Guidance', too. It means the innate quality of the Imam's spiritual influence and the attracting glow of his pureness encompassing, deeply touching, and truly affecting the realm of receptive people's hearts which results in their spiritual guidance.

From this point of view, an Imam is just like the sun that, with its life-giving light, fosters and gives vitality to all living creatures. The function of an Imam in spiritual aspects is the same as the physical function of the sun.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers ", (Surah Al-Ahzab. No. 33 verse 43).

It is well understood from this verse that the special mercies of Allah and the hidden aid given by His angels can lead the believers and those who trust in Him to come out from 'darkness' into 'light'.

This is also true about an Imam. The innate authority of an Imam and the great prophets (as) who had also possessed the rank of Imamat as well as their vicegerents, had a deep effect on receptive individuals by which they could train them and therefore bring them from the depths of ignorance and error into the light of guidance.

There is no doubt that the purpose of Imamat in this verse is the third meaning, because it is understood from many of the verses of the Qur'an that the concept of 'guidance' lies within the meaning of Imamat, as Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32. verse 24 says:

"And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have Faith in Our Signs."

This guidance does not mean merely 'showing the way', because, in principle, Abraham (as) had the rank of prophethood and Messengership for giving guidance in the sense of' showing the way' before becoming an Imam.

However, the Qur'an clearly attests to this fact that Imamat was bestowed on Abraham (as) when he persevered with patience in tolerating the difficulties which he encountered as he paved the path of certitude alongside

his Faith, and passed his various great tests successfully. This rank was above and beyond the rank of guidance with the meaning of preaching glad tidings and warning people.

Therefore, guidance within the concept of Imamat is nothing save 'attaining the ideal', cherishing the soul of religion and bringing forth training programmes for the individuals who are prepared to grasp them.

This meaning is cited in an expressive tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) which says:

"Verily, Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, took Abraham (as) as His slave before He took him as a prophet. And verily Allah took him as His prophet before He took him as a messenger.

And Allah took him as His messenger before He made him a confident (khalil). Allah took him as a confident before He appointed him as an Imam. When He had brought all these things together in him: He (Allah) said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind'."

The Imam (as) continued: "Since this was something very great in the eyes of Abraham, he said: 'And of my offspring (as well)?'He (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'. "

The Imam (as) concluded: "A stupid person cannot be the Imam of the pious." [1] This means that only those seed of Abraham (as) who were pure and infallible were worthy of being Imam.

Prophethood, Messengership, Imamat and their Differences

As it is understood from the verses of the Qur'an and various ideas existing in traditions and Islamic literature, those who were commissioned by Allah had different ranks.

A. Prophethood means the ability to receive revelation from Allah. Then, a prophet is one on whom the Divine revelation comes down and whatever he receives by revelation he delivers to people.

B. Messengership means to preach the Divine revelation, to spread the ordinances of Allah, and to train the souls and minds of individuals through education and acknowledgement.

Therefore, a Messenger is he who is commissioned, by effort and endeavour and utilizing any acceptable and proper means available to him, to invite people unto Allah and His commandments in order to elicit an ideological, convictional, educational and mental transformation in them.

C. Imamat, means to guide and lead people. In fact, an Imam is he who tries to execute, actually, Allah's ordinances by acquiring the power necessary to organize a godly government; and if he is not able to organize a formal government, he does his best in carrying out the ordinances of Allah, both personally and socially.

In other words, an Imam is commissioned to execute Allah's commandments and assure their performance, while a Messenger is commissioned to preach those commandments. Again, in other words, Messenger shows the path but an Imam, besides his other heavy responsibilities which were pointed out before, paves the path for 'attaining the ideal'.

Let it not remain unsaid that it is clear that many of the prophets, like the Prophet of Islam (S), were possessors of all three ranks. They had Divine

revelation bestowed upon them. They preached the commandments of Allah and endeavoured in organizing godly governments for executing His ordinances, while they were training the souls of people according to their own religions.

In brief, Imamat is the essence of leadership in all aspects: materially and spiritually, physically and theologically, apparently and hiddenly. Imam is the chief of government as well as the leader of the society, a guide in religious affairs, and a teacher of ethics to train people both inwardly and outwardly.

It is the Imam who, with his mysterious spiritual strength, guides receptive persons forward along the path of inner development, instructs the ignorant ones with his ability and knowledge, and, by means of his government or other executive resources enforces the principles of Justice.

Imamat, the Climactical Rank of Abraham (as)

In defining the reality of Imamat, it was made clear that a person may become a prophet or a Messenger while he has not been appointed as an Imam. This position demands special eligibility in all aspects.

It is the same position that Abraham (as) attained after successfully passing many difficult tests and proving his genuine worthiness; this being the last step of his development to qualify for that rank.

Some may imagine that the qualifications of an Imam is only that a person ' be worthy and a model’. They do not consider the fact that this condition existed in Abraham from the very beginning of his prophethood.

Furthermore, not only Abraham, but also all prophets and Messengers, had had this epithet from the onset of their calling. It is for this reason that a prophet should be sinless since his deeds are considered as models.

Therefore, Abraham (as), who was a prophet and Messenger of Allah, was gifted the rank of Imamat by Allah after he passed his trials successfully and proved that he was worthy of it.

Who is Unjust?

The objective meaning of the Arabic word ' the unjust, mentioned in this verse: "My covenant does not include the unjust" is not only ' being unjust to others’.

But the term 'unjust' (in contrast with the philosophical meaning of ' justice ' which means to set everything in its own proper place), here, is used with its broad sense of meaning. Thus, committing an 'unjust' act means that 'a person, an action, or a thing has been arranged in a situation which is not appropriate’.

Since the position of Imamat and the outward and inward leadership of people is an extraordinarily splendid position with many responsibilities, the committing of the slightest sin or disobedience disqualifies a person from attaining this rank.

So, in the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (as) we see that, for proving the vicegerency of Hadrat Ali (as) immediately after the holy Prophet (S), they have quoted this very verse as justification, indicating that others had been idol-worshippers before Islam, in the age of ignorance, and the only person who did not prostrate before an idol, besides Prophet Muhammad (S), even for a moment was Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

What unjust act is greater than that a person performs idol-worshipping! Did Luqman not tell his son:

"O my son? Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing"? (Surah Luqman No. 31, verse 13).

Hisham-ibn-Salim, as an example, narrates from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

"Surely, Abraham was a prophet but he was not an Imam until when Allah said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind'.

Abraham pleaded: 'And of my offspring (as well)? 'He (Allah) answered: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'. Those who have worshipped an idol, they will not be an Imam (leader)." [2]

In another tradition, 'Abdillah-ibn-Mas'ud narrates from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

"Allah told Abraham: 'I do not give you My covenant (of lmamat) for the unjust of your children.' Abraham said: 'Who are these unjust whom Your covenant does not include of my offspring? , Allah said: 'Whoever prostrated before an idol, leaving Me, I will never make him an Imam " and he is not worthy of being an Imam..." [3]

An Imam, by Allah's Commission

It is also understood from the current verse that an Imam (a sinless comprehensive leader of people) should be appointed by Allah. The reason is that: firstly, Imamat is a kind of covenant from Allah and it is evident that such a person should be ordained by Him, the One Who is the Maker of the covenant.

Secondly, the persons who have even tainted their lives with iniquity, even as small as a dark spot, whether it is against themselves or against others, or if there is a sign of idol-worshipping even for a short period of time in their lives, they are not eligible for Imamat. They should be perfectly sinless throughout their whole lives in order to become an Imam.

It is Allah who knows the hearts and minds of men and has given us criteria by which to evaluate them. This point will be discussed more comprehensively at a later time.

If we want to recognize the vicegerent of the Prophet (S), according to the above criterion, there would not be anyone save Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as).

It is noteworthy that the writer of Al-Manar narrates from Abu-Hanifah that he believed the government of the time was exclusively suitable for the Alawites. That was why he approved rebellion against their ruling government (which was headed by Mansor of the Abbasides).

And it was also for the same reason that he did not agree, himself, to be in charge of the position of Supreme Court Judge in the government of the Abbasides.

Then, the writer of Al-Manar adds that the four kalifs of the Sunnite school of thought all did not agree with the governments of their time, whom they did not approve as worthy chiefs of the Muslims, because the governors were some cruel unjust ones. [4]

It is ironical that, in our time, some of the Sunnite scholars approve and support the tyrannical governments whose relations with the enemies of

Islam are certain and definite, and their mischief and unjust acts are clear to all. But, this is insignificant compared to the fact that, they also consider them / 'ulul'amr / ' political and religious chieves' and / wajib ul 'ita'ah / 'necessary to be obeyed'.

Two Questions

This fact should also be noted that the concept of Imamat does not necessarily mean that an Imam forcedly leads all people to the Truth; but it means that people having their own free will, together with their potential for receptiveness and their eligibility, can take advantage of and use the Imam's quality of effectiveness in outward and inward leadership in order to be guided.

It is just like we stated earlier, that the sun has been created to furnish light, heat and energy for all living creatures which have the potential to receive these bounties and are capable of development.

Another question that may be proposed is that according to the above it seems that every Imam previously must have been a prophet or a Messenger and then be appointed as an Imam, whereas the sinless vicegerents of the holy Prophet (S) were not in such a position.

As an answer, we say that it is not necessary that the Imam, himself, be previously a prophet or a Messenger and then reach that position.

When his predecessor had the rank of prophethood, Messengership and Imamat, (such as the Prophet of Islam (S)), the eligible vicegerent can continue executing the duties of Imamat as an Imam. This situation occurs when a new Messenger is not needed, like after the Prophet of Islam (S), who is the seal of the prophets.

In other words, if the process of receiving Divine revelation and communicating all the ordinance have been formerly performed and, only the stage of their execution remains, the true successors of the prophet can continue the prophet's line of execution, and it does not necessitate that he, himself, be a prophet or a Messenger.

The Distinguished Personality of Abraham (as)

Abraham's (as) name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in 69 occurrences which are gathered in 25 Suras. In these verses, this great prophet (as), whose worthy epithets are mentioned therein, is highly praised and appreciated by Allah from all aspects. He was a prototype, an example, of a complete human being.

The supremeness of his knowledge about Allah, his clear logical statements against idol-worshippers, his intense efforts and endeavours in challenging with the tyrants of his time, his dedication and forbearance in obeying the commands of Allah, and his unique perseverance against the storms of adventures and grievous trials, are all good examples for Muslims, and those who pave the path towards Allah, to take and follow in their lives as their models.

As the Qur'an says about Abraham (as), he was of the elect and good, [5] in the ranks of the Righteous, [6] a model, [7] a man of truth, [8] most tender-hearted, and forbearing. [9] Furthermore, he was incomparably, brave and extraordinarily generous as well.

Allah Willing, we will offer a more detailed explanation concerning this matter later when commenting on some of the verses of Surah Ibrahim, No.14, especially the last part of the Surah.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 125

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْناً وَاتَّخِذُواْ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ُصَلًّ وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْ ِ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

125. "And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people, (saying): 'Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer'. And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying): 'Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those who abide in it and pay devotion, and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves'… "

The Magnificence of the Ka'bah

After explaining the high rank of Abraham (as) stated in the previous verse, the Qur'an, in this verse, directs attention towards the magnificence of the House, the Ka'bah in Mecca, which was built by Abraham and his son (as). It says:

"And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people..."

Since the term / maθabah / originally based on / θaub /, means 'a place to which people return' or 'a place where people assemble', and the Ka'bah has been a center where monotheists gather every year, then, by this assembly, believers, not only bodily but also spiritually, return to Divine Unity and to their intrinsic nature.

So, that may be why the term / maθabah / (a resort, an abode, a house) has been used for this Sacred House.

And, since a man's house is the continuous returning site of its inhabitants who, after having completed their affairs, can experience rest and tranquility therein, there lies this sense of resting and tranquility in the meaning of the term / maθabah /.

This emphasizes the concept of its next word / amnan / ' secure sanctuary' especially with the word 'people', which indicates that this secure center is a common refuge for all people of the world.

This is, in fact, the acceptance by Allah of one of the requests that Abraham (as) sought. (We will discuss this subject on page 300.)

Then, it adds:

"...(saying): 'Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer.'..."

The opinions of the commentators are divided as to what, Abraham's Station' is. Some of them have said that the whole Hajj is Abraham's Station. Some others have rendered it to / 'arafah /' the Mount of Recognition', / mas'arul haram / ' Sacred Monument', and / jamarat / 'lapidations'; while others believe that the entire sacred premises of Mecca is considered the 'Station'.

But, as many Islamic narrations denote, and many of the commentators have said, too, the verse apparently refers to the very standing-place of

Abraham which is located close to the Ka'bah where pilgrims offer their circumambulatory prayer after performing their ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah. Thus, the purpose of the term / musalla /, mentioned in the verse, is ' the place of prayer', too.

Then, it refers to the covenant that He made with Abraham (as) and Ismail (as) about the purification of the Ka'bah, where it says:

"...And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying):

'Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those

who abide in it and pay devotion,

and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves'. "

What is the meaning of sanctification here? Some have said that the meaning of sanctification here is purification from the existence of idols.

Some others have said that the purpose is purification from outward dirt like blood and the contents of animals' stomachs which people sacrificed therein, because there were some ignorant persons who thoughtlessly did such deeds as leaving these remains behind.

Furthermore, some believe that sanctification, here, means ' purity of intent' when building this House of Monotheism.

There is no reason for us to confine the meaning of sanctification here. Its purpose is purification of this 'House of Monotheism' from any dirt, physically and spiritually.

It is for this reason that in some traditions we read that this verse has been rendered into sanctification from pagans and in some others into washing and purifying the body from dirt.

Explanation: The Secure Refuge, its Social and Educational Effects

According to the above verse, 'the House of Ka'bah' has been chosen and proclaimed as 'a secure refuge' by Allah. We know that there are resolute rules in Islam instructing every believer to avoid any quarrel, war, fight and bloodshed within the limits of this Holy land, Mecca.

It is so that not only the members of humankind, regardless of nationality, race, gender, group, or condition, should be safe and secure there, but also animals and birds are protected there, in that nobody is allowed to hurt them.

In this world, where fighting and wars are always within the overall scene, the existence of such a peaceful center can function as a special helpful fortress within which the problems of many nations can be solved.

The security of this region lets different peoples, with all their differences and enmities that they may have, gather together therein, sitting, speaking, and solving their difficulties. Thus, one of the most important problems which usually exist, initiating face to face oral communications about dismissing or decreasing enmities between nations, can be solved.

It frequently happens that the two sides of a conflict or the opposing governments in the world are willing to put an end to their antagonism and have parley for this purpose, but they cannot find a secure and respectable place wherein both sides can feel free to speak therein peacefully and securely. This case has been anticipated in Islam, and Mecca is introduced as such a center.

Now that most of the Muslims of the world are unfortunately involved in some hostile conflicts, they can make use of this sacred secure land, and, under its banner of holiness and special spirituality which enlightens the hearts, begin speaking with each other to solve their problems.

Why the 'House ' of Ka'bah?

In the above verse, the Ka'bah is referred to by the Lord as 'My House', while it is clear that neither is Allah bodily substance nor does He need a House. The purpose, here, is to honour and glorify the Ka'bah by stating its honour and lofty status, and, therefore, it is called / baytullah / 'the House of Allah'.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 126

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَـذَا بَـَ ا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُم بِاللّه
وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلاً ُ مَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَى عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

126. "And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this a secure City and provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last Day.' He said: 'And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while, then I shall drive him to the Punishment of Fire -and an evil destination it is! ' "

Abraham's (as) Petition to Allah!

In this verse Abraham (as) asks Allah two great requests in favour of the inhabitants of this Holy land, one of which was referred to in the previous verse. The Qur'an says:

"And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this a secure City..."

As it was pointed out in the previous verse, Allah accepted this invocation from Abraham (as) and set this Holy land as a secure center, both outward and inward security.

His second petition was thus:

"...and provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last Day.'..."

It is interesting that Abraham (as) requested 'security' first, and then he asked for material gifts which itself is a reference to the fact that a safe and sound economic status is not possible unless there exists security in a town or country.

The opinions are divided amongst the commentators as to the meaning of the term 'fruits' here. On the whole, it seems that the word has a vast meaning, so broad that it includes any material bounty whether it is fruits or other nutritious substances, as well as spiritual bounties.

Concerning the meaning of this term in the above verse, Imam al-Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said: "It is the fruits of hearts." [10] This indicates that Allah attracts the attention and affection of human beings to the people of this Holy land.

This is also noteworthy, that Abraham (as) invocates this petition only for the believers in Allah, the only True God, and the Last Day, because he might have realized from the statement: "My covenant does not include the

unjust," cited in the former verse, the fact that some groups of his future offspring would follow the path of polytheism and injustice; then, to show reverence in a courteous manner, here, he did not include them in his petition.

However, Allah's answer to this invocation of Abraham (as) was:

"...He said: 'And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while..."

"...then I shall drive him to the Punishment of Fire - and an evil destination it is !"

This is, in fact, the same ' General Mercy ' of Allah by which His unlimited bounties are available to all creatures so that good doers and evildoers equally enjoy from His vast bountiful Table in this world, but in the next world, where His ' Specific Mercy ' comes forth, wrongdoers will have no share of it and also they will have no way to rescue themselves.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 127-129

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ العَزِيزُ الحَكِيمُ

127. "And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; (saying): 'Our Lord,! Accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, Ali-Knowing'.",

128. " 'Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You, and show us our ways of worship, and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful'."

129. " 'Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them; for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise'."

The Structure of the House of Ka'bah

It is clearly understood from the numerous verses of the Qur'an, the Islamic traditions, and some historical records that the House of Ka'bah had been founded before Abraham (as) and that it had been established at the time of Adam (as).

Surah Ibrahim. No. 14 verse 37 quoting from the tongue of Abraham (as), says:

"Our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive (of fruit) near Your Sacred House..."

This verse confirms that when Abraham (as) with his wife and his infant son Ismail arrived at the Holy land of Mecca, there was no sign of the Ka'bah seen therein, but he was guided there by Divine inspiration.

Another verse says:

"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: full of blessing..." (Surah 'ALe-Imran. No. 3 verse 96).

It is certain that the worshipping of Allah and the structure of the center of adoration did not begin from the time of Abraham (as). It had started before that and was established at the time of Adam (as).

The idea mentioned in the verse under discussion indicates the same meaning, too. It says:

"And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; (saying): 'Our Lord, accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing'"

This statement refers to the concept that the foundations of the Ka'bah had existed from before, and Abraham (as) and Ismail (as) raised them up.

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his sermons known as Qasi'ah also says:

"Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, up to the last ones in this world with stones... He made those stones into His Sacred House... Then He commanded Adam and his sons to turn their attention towards it…" [11]

In short, the verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations confirm this historical fact that the House of Ka'bah was originally built by Adam (as). Then during the Flood at the time of Noah, it fell down. Then, later, it was rebuilt by the hands of Abraham (as) with the aid of his son Ismail (as).

The second of the above two verses attests to the fact that Abraham (as) and his son Ismail (as) sought from Allah five important invocations.

These prayers, which were offered when they were busy building the Ka'bah, are so exact and consistent with all the necessities of material and spiritual life, that they can lead man to the recognition of the magnificence of the souls of these two great Apostles of Allah.

At first, Abraham (as) prays:

"'Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You..."

Then he invocates:

"...and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You..."

He continues saying: "...and show us our ways of worship..." (So that we can adore You in a way worthy of Your Highness).

After that, he (as) seeks Allah for repentance, thus:

"...and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful'. "

****

The fifth invocation, which was sought from Allah at the time of constructing the Holy Ka'bah by Abraham and Ismail (as), is this:

" 'Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own..."

"...who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them..."

"...for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 130-132

وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلاَّ مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَوَ ّ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللّه اصْطَ َ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إَلاَّ وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

130. "And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself ? Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he shall be among the righteous."

131. "When his Lord said to him, ' Submit', he said, ' I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds'."

132. "And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob, 'My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims'."

Abraham (as), a Human Prototype

In the former verses, Abraham's personality was partly introduced. Some of his services and quite a few of his comprehensive invocations, which included material and spiritual aspects, were discussed.

From the totality of these words, it is concluded that this great Apostle can be a good model for all the truth-seekers throughout the world, and his school of thought can be an instruction guideline for all human beings.

Based on this very matter, in the first verse of the above verses, it says:

"And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself!..."

Is this not foolishness that one forsakes such a pure brilliant creed and goes astray along the misleading paths of polytheism, blasphemy, and corruption? This is a religion which is appropriate for and coinciding with the soul and nature of man. It is a process that parallels wisdom and logic. This creed is beneficial for man both in the present world and the next world.

Then, it adds:

"...Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he will be among the righteous…"

Yes, Abraham (as) is chosen by Allah, and he is among the ranks of the righteous and that is why he should be chosen as a model.

****

The next verse, as an emphasis, refers to one of the other outstanding qualities which is, in fact, the origin of the rest of his qualities.

"When his Lord said to him, ' Submit', he said,

' I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds'."

Yes, it is when Abraham (as), that pure true believer and self-sacrificer, hearkens to the call of his innate nature that the Lord enjoins him' Submit', and he submits himself totally to His command. Abraham (as) sees that the stars, the moon, and the sun, all in all, have precise settings.

Then he, with his mind and perception finds out that they are subject to the regulations of creation. Therefore, he proclaims that none of them can be his Lord, and he says:

"For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall give partners to God." (Surah Al-An'am No. 6, verse 79)

In fact, the first step to attaining worthiness for a person is through purity and sincerity, and it was owing to this same quality in Abraham (as) that he was able to submit exclusively to the command of Allah, therefore He was pleased with him and chose him, and for this same reason He selected him to introduce His religion.

The entirety of Abraham's (as) deeds, throughout his life, from beginning up to the end, were unique. One of his expressions of faith was through his challenge with idol worshippers and star worshippers.

Another was when, while in the midst of fire, he showed such strength of faith that his hostile enemy, Nimrod, was so affected by him that he unwillingly said: If a person wants to take a god, he should take one similar to the God of Abraham (as). [12]

Also, bringing his wife and suckling son to that hot dry land, i.e. the Holy land, building the House of Ka'bah, and taking his beloved son into the place of sacrifice, each was an example of the resoluteness of his manner.

****

Abraham's (as) bequest to his children at the last moments of his life was also a model, as the last verse of the verses under discussion says:

"And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob..."

Each of them told their sons:

"...'My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims'."

It seems that the Qur'an by stating the bequest of Abraham (as) intends to reiterate the fact that you human beings are not only responsible for your children while they are with you but you are responsible for their futures, too. When you are on your deathbed, do not think of only your financial affairs and that of your children after your death; you had better think about their spiritual life, too.

Not only did Abraham (as) bequeath such a testament, but also his grandson, Jacob (as), imitated Abraham's same manner and at the last moments of his life enjoined his children to attain the secret of victory, success and happiness via this short phrase:

'Submit to the Lord of the worlds'.

The mentioning of Jacob from among all prophets, here in this verse, is perhaps with the aim of telling the Jews and Christians, who each in their own way used to join themselves to Jacob, that the blasphemic creeds which they followed and the lack of pure submission in the Truth that they showed by their actions, did not coincide with the manner of the one whom they joined themselves to.

Notes

1. Usul al-Kafi: vol. 1, chapter 2 concerning the degrees of the prophets (Nabiy), the Messengers (Rasul), and the Imams (as), p. 133
2. Usul al-Kafi: vol. 1, chapter: prophets and Messenger, Tradition 1.
3. Al-Amali; by Shaykh Tusi: published in 1414, pg 379
4. Al-Manar, vol. 1, pp. 457-458
5. Surah Sad, No.38, verse 47
6. Surah Nahl, No.16, verse 122
7. Ibid. verse 120
8. Surah Maryam, No.19, verse 41
9. Surah Al-Taubah, No.9, verse 114
10. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 12, pp. 86 & 100
11. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 192
12. Al-Kafi: vol. 8, p. 368, narration 559

Section 16

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 133-134

أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَاء إِذْ حَ ـ ـ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُواْ نَعْبُدُ
إِلَـهَكَ وَإِلَـهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَـهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ ُسْلِمُونَ
تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلاَ تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

133. "Nay, were you witnesses when death approached Jacob? When he said to his sons: 'What will you worship after me? ' They said: 'We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ismail and Isaac, the One (true) God (alone) and to Him we do submit'…"

134. "That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that, which they have earned, and yours is what you have earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of the Jews believed that when Jacob (as) was on his deathbed, he enjoined on his children the same religion which the Jews currently believe in (with all its corruption of the scriptures). For the nullification of their belief, Allah sent down this verse. [1]

Everyone is Responsible for his Own Deem

As it is also understood from the apparent meaning of the verse, there were some rejecters of Islam who falsely charged Jacob (as), the prophet of Allah, regarding this matter. (The matter was mentioned in the description of the occasion of revelation.)

To reject this false claim, the Qur'an says:

"Nay, were you witnesses when death approached Jacob?.."

Were you there when he frankly questioned his children the way he did? Yes, that which you (Jews) charge Jacob (as) with is not true.

The factual account which occurred was that:

"…When he said to his sons: 'what will you worship after me?'…."

"...They said: 'We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ismail and Isaac, the One (true) God (alone) and to Him we do submit'.

"Yes, he did not enjoin them with anything but to believe in monotheism and to submit to the command of Allah, which is the root of submission to all the Divine ordinances.

It can be deduced from this verse that when Jacob was on his deathbed, a feeling of anxiety and worry existed in him about the future of his children. Finally he expressed his anxiety and asked his sons what they would worship after him.

He especially asked ' what (thing) ' and he did not ask ' whom ', because there were some idol-worshippers in the locale who used to prostrate before some particular ' things'. Jacob wanted to know whether there was any tendency towards those beliefs in the depths of their hearts. But when he heard his children's answer, he found, again, his peace of mind.

This is also noteworthy that Ismail (as) was not Jacob's father or forefather, but he was Jacob's uncle, whereas in the verse under discussion,

the term / aba' / which is the plural of the word / 'ab / (father) has been applied.

This makes it clear that, in the Arabic language, this word was sometimes used for 'uncle'. Hence, we say that if this word has been used regarding 'Azar in the Qur'an, it does not negate the fact that 'Azar was Abraham's uncle, not his father.

****

The last of the above verses mentioned is an answer to one of the delusions of the Jews. They emphasized very much on their ancestors and the honour and glory they ascribed themselves in relation to Allah. They imagined that even when they tainted themselves with sin, they could be rescued under the comforting shade of such ancestors. Then, the Qur'an says:

"That is a nation that has passed away;

theirs is that which they have earned, and yours is what you have earned..."

And, in the same way that they are not responsible for your deeds, also,

"...you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

Therefore, instead of expending all your energy trying to prove that you, by right of ancestry, deserve the honour and high position that your pure ancestors enjoyed, you should try to improve your own Faith and deeds.

The addressees in this verse are apparently the Jews and 'the People of the Book', but it is evident that this statement is not specifically referring to them alone, in that this basic principle pertains to us Muslims, too.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 135-137

وَقَالُواْ كُونُواْ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُواْ قُلْ بَلْ ِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

قُولُواْ آمَنَّا بِاللّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالأَسْبَاطِ

وَمَا أُوِ َ ُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوِ َ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لاَ نُفَرِّقُ َيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ ُسْلِمُونَ

فَإِنْ آمَنُواْ بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنتُم بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَواْ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللّهُ وَهُوَ

السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

135. "And they said: 'Be Jews or Christians, you shall be guided aright'. Say: 'Nay! Rather the creed of Abraham, the upright; and he was not of those who associate partners to Allah'..."

136. "Say: 'We have believed in Allah and that which has been sent down to us, and (in) what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes; and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to all prophet from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit'..."

137. "If then they believe in what you believe, they indeed are guided (aright); but if they turn away, then they are clearly in schism; Allah will suffice you against them; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of these verses it is narrated from Ibn Abbas that some of the Jewish scholars and some Christians from Najran

were disputing with the Muslims. Each of these two groups considered their own creed more superior than the other's regarding the Truth, then they negated each other.

The Jews said that their prophet, Moses (as), was superior and their Book, the Turah, was the best. The Christians, on the other hand, had the same claim. They said Jesus (as) was the best guide and the Evangel was the best among the heavenly Books.

Even though they could not settle their own disputes between themselves, the followers of both creeds invited the Muslims to their own religion. The above verses were revealed and answered them both. [2]

Only Our Creed is True!

Egoism and self-conceit usually cause one to think that Truth is exclusively his own and therefore, he considers others wrong. This very person, consequently, tries to divert others to his own way of seeing things, as the Qur'an through the first verse of the above verses says:

"And they said: 'Be Jews or: Christians, you shall be guided aright'..."

Tell them that distorted religions can never be the source of guidance, but:

"...Say: 'Nay! Rather the creed of Abraham, the upright; and he was not of those who associate partners to Allah'. "

The true believers in pure Faith are those who follow the pure Monotheistic creed, i.e. the Monotheism which has never been tainted with any form of polytheism. The most important basic principle for recognizing the pure religion from the corrupted ones is by keeping in mind this very perfect creed of Monotheism.

Islam instructs us not to make distinction between the divine prophets and to respect their religions totally because the fundamental principles of all Divine religions are entirely the same. Moses (as) and Jesus (as) reinstituted the pure (hanif) doctrine of Abraham (as), which is to live and die with faith in the One True God.

They believed in the non-polytheistic creed of Abraham (as), the pure Monotheist, although their religions were later contaminated with polytheism by their ignorant followers. The Jews, though they taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the trinity or borrowed it from pagans.

(Of course, if they search for the pureness of truth, they will realize that there is no difference between what their prophets preached and what was brought forth by Islam and that they, in performing their duties today, should follow the divine creed of Islam which has come down from the direction of Allah for this Age).

****

Concerning the statements of the Muslims' opponents, the next verse enjoins the followers of Islam thus:

"Say: 'We have believed in Allah and that which has been sent down to us, and (in) what was sent down to Abraham, lsmail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes; and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to all prophets from their Lord..."

"...We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit'."

Self-conceit and tribal or racial prejudices should never lie at the root of our accepting some of the prophets and rejecting the others. They were all Divine teachers who spent their lives training and guiding people in different eras of time. Their aim was only to guide human beings towards pure Unity, Truth, and Justice, although each of them had some particular duties and special qualifications related to their own specific periods of time.

****

Then it adds:

"If then they believe in what you believe, they indeed are guided (aright)..."

"...but if they turn away, then they are clearly in schism..."

If they do not mix their racial and tribal problems, and the likes of them, with the religion, and formally accept all the prophets, they are also guided, otherwise they have put away the truth and followed the wrong.

The term / siqaq / originally means 'cleft, conflict, and fight' and, here, it has been rendered into ' blasphemy', and sometimes into 'misleading', or 'separation from Truth and tending to falsehood', all of which, in fact, basically point back to the same fact.

Some of the commentators have cited that when the former verse was revealed whereby Jesus (as) was mentioned in a row with some other prophets, some of the Christians said that they did not agree with that statement because Jesus (as) was not like other prophets; he was the son of God. The last verse of the above verses was sent down [3] and warned them that they were misguided and they were in schism.

However, at the end of the verse, it encourages the Muslims not to be afraid of the plots of enemies; saying:

"...Allah will suffice you against them; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Explanation: The Oneness of the Prophets' Invitation

In several occasions, the Holy Qur'an points out that there is no difference between the prophets of Allah because all of them had received the revelation from one single Source and pursued one goal.

Therefore, the Qur'an enjoins the Muslims to respect all of the Divine prophets equally. But, as it was stated before, this exhortation does not conflict with the idea that every new religion sent down from Allah abrogates the former religions and Islam is the last religion in the world.

Of course, no religion on earth, except Islam, has ever demanded of its adherents to believe equally in the truthfulness and flawless godliness, sinless purity of conduct and character of the other apostles of Allah and in the other sacred scripts as the revealed Word of Allah.

This command in Islam was given because the Divine Apostles were like some teachers and everyone of them instructed the human race as one class. It is evident that when the period and the course of one class finishes, the trainees will be promoted to another teacher, to a class of a higher degree.

Therefore, all nations are to fulfill the requirements given by the last prophet of their times, which is the last stage of the development of the religion in their period of time. This statement will never contrast the rightfulness of the invitations of other prophets.

Who were ' Asbat '?

The term / sebt / originally means: ‘stretching, or expanding of something easily’. A tree is sometimes called ' sabat ' because its branches expand freely. The leading lexicologists expressly declare that / sebt / the plural of which is / asbat / include sons' children and daughters' children. [4]

The meaning of the term / asbat /, here is the groups and tribes of Israelites who came forth from Jacob's twelve sons, and, since there were some prophets among them, in the above verse they are counted among those upon whom the Divine verses have been sent down.

So, the objective meaning of the term, here, is the tribe of Israelites or the tribes of Jacob's children who consisted of some prophets, not all the children of Jacob. Some of those children were not entirely eligible to be prophets because they committed sin in their dealings with their own brother.

****

The Arabic term / hanif / is based on / hanaf / with the meaning 'orthodox, true', or 'inclined from misguidance to right opinion'. So, those pure monotheists who turn away from polytheism and incline to this basic principle are called ' Hanif’.

It is also for this reason that one of the meanings of / hanif / is ' true, straight’.

This explanation makes it clear that the meaning offered by the commentators for the term / hanif / such as Hajj, the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, adhering to truth, following Abraham (as), and the pureness of deeds, are all reflections of that inclusive meaning and each of them is an example of it.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 138-141

صِبْغَةَ اللّه وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّه صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدونَ

قُلْ أَ تُحَآجُّونَنَا فِي اللّه وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالأَسْبَاطَ كَانُواْ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ

أَأَنتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِندَهُ مِنَ اللّه وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلاَ تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

138. "(Receive) the baptism of Allah and who is better than Allah in baptizing? And Him do we worship."

139. "Say (to the Jews and Christians): Would you dispute with us concerning Allah Who is our Lord and your Lord? For us are our deeds and for you are your deeds: and we are sincere to Him’. "

140. "Or do you claim that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Who then knows best, you or Allah? 'Who is more unjust than he who conceals testimony received from Allah? And Allah is not heedless of what you do. "

141. "That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned and yours is what you earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

Following the invitation, in the former verses, to the adherents of all religions to accept the Divine messages of all prophets, in the first verse of this group of verses, it commands them all to:

"(Receive) the baptism of Allah..."

Which is the same as the purification by Faith and true monotheism resulting in the manifestation of one true colour? Then, it adds:

"...and who is better than Allah in baptizing? And Him do we worship."

Thus, the Qur'an commands that all racial, tribal and other separative colours be put aside and that everyone take on (symbolically) the colour of Allah.

Some commentators have recorded that it was a custom among the Christians to baptize their new-born children in baptismal water which was mixed with dye or a colour, signifying that the baptized person received new colour in life. They said that this baptism, especially with this particular colour, caused the person to be cleaned from the original sin that he had inherited from Adam (as).

The Qur'an rejects this baseless logic and tells them that in order to purify their souls and minds from any stain of sin instead of using colours of rituals, superstitions and dispersiveness; they had better accept the colour of truthfulness and godliness.

Truly, what a delicate and beautiful sentence it is! How nice it would be if all people accepted the godly colour, i.e. the colour of unity, purity and virtue! viz. the colour of colourlessness, the colour of justice, equality, patience and perseverance.

Under the light of the colour of unity and sincerity, all conflicts and fights can be put to an end and the main weed of polytheism and dispersion might be rooted out.

This is, in fact, that very colourlessness, or in other words, pulling away of all colours.

In several traditions, commenting on this verse, it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who has said that the objective meaning of / sibqatallah / ' the baptism of Allah ' is the pure creed of Islam. [5]This idea is also a reference to what was said in the above.

Some of the Jews, and some others, occasionally disputed with the Muslims claiming that all the prophets were chosen from among them and their religion was the oldest of all religions, and their book was the most ancient of Divine Books.

They said that if Muhammad (S) had really been a prophet, he would have been appointed from among them. They sometimes said that their race was superior to the Arab race, for the acceptance of creeds, and they were more receptive to revelation than Arabs, because they had practically been idol-worshippers while the Jews were not.

The Jews considered themselves the sons of God, the ones who claimed Heaven exclusively theirs. The Qur'an refuses all of these false imaginations. At first, it tells the Prophet (S):

"Say (to the Jews and Christians): 'Would you dispute with us concerning Allah Who is our Lord and your Lord?..."

This Lord is not exclusively for one particular tribe or a certain race. He is the Lord of all human beings and all creatures in the world of existence.

Addressing them, it adds that they should also know that: there are no privileges for anyone except for those attained by a person's good deeds:

"...For us are our deeds and for you are your deeds:..."

But there is a difference between those deeds. We serve Him sincerely and associate none with Him, (while most of you have polluted Unity with polytheism):

"…and we are sincere to Him…".

****

The next verse replies to some other vain claims of theirs. It says:

"Or do you claim that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians?.."

"...Say: 'Who then knows best, you or Allah?'..."

Allah knows best of all that they were neither Jewish nor Christian.

You also know, whether you admit it or not, that many of those prophets came in to this world before Moses (as) and Jesus (as), and if you do not know it, then you have ignorantly charged them with such a belie which in itself, is a great sin and an attempt at hiding the true fact. Thus:

"...Who is more unjust than he who conceals testimony received from Allah?..."

"...And Allah is not heedless of what you do."

What a wonder! When it happens that a person's mind is dominated by obstinacy and prejudice, he denies even the well-known facts of history.

For instance, the Jews counted the prophets such as Abraham (as), Isaac (as) and Jacob (as), who came into the world and passed away before Moses and Jesus, as being from among the followers of Moses (as) and Jesus (as).

They denied the above mentioned fact which is pertinent to the fate of their people and defines their Faith and religion. It may be for this very reason that the Qur'an introduces them as the most unjust.

There is no unjust action worse than that some persons intentionally deny some facts in order to misguide people so that they wander aimlessly in that misguidance.

****

In the last of the verses under discussion, which is also the last verse of the first part (out of the thirty parts) of the Holy Qur'an, the Qur'an answers them in another style indicating that supposing all these claims were correct, then, this is the answer:

"That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned..."

"...and yours is what you earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

In conclusion, a nation should rely upon its own deeds, not on its past history. As a person should thrive on his own excellencies, not on those of his ancestors.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Abulfutuh-Razi, vol. 1, p. 339
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 216
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 218
4. Arabic-English Lexicon, parl 4, p. 1294, by: E.W. Lane
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 132

Section 17

Part Two

1

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 142

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاء مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلاَّهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّ كَانُواْ عَلَيْهَا قُل لِّلّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ
يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاء إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

142. "The fools among the people will say: 'What has turned them from their Qiblah (direction of prayer) which they were facing at.' Say: 'Allah's is the East and the West; He guides whoever He pleases to a straight way'. "

Occasion of the Change of Qiblah

This verse together with a few verses following it refers to one of the great happenings in the history of Islam which caused a huge wave of excitement among the people of that time.

The explanation for the occurrence is that the Prophet of Islam (S), under divine direction, prayed towards the direction of Jerusalem for thirteen years in Mecca after proclaiming his mission and then, also, for several months in Medina after his migration.

But again, under divine direction, the Qiblah (i.e. the direction of prayer) was changed and Muslims were commissioned to pray towards the Ka'bah.

The commentators are divided as to the length of time that Muslims worshipped facing towards Jerusalem in Medina. The duration of this ritual situation has been cited from seven to seventeen months. However, during this period, Muslims were always entangled with the reproaches of the Jews, because Jerusalem was originally the Jewish Qiblah.

Since the Muslims used to pray towards the direction of Jerusalem, the Jewish Qiblah, during that time, they blamed that their (Muslims) acceptance of their (Jewish) Qiblah proved, as they thought, that the Jews were right in their creed and Muslims, who were not independent for themselves in the direction of prayer, were not.

These statements were difficult for the Prophet of Islam (S) and Muslims to bear. They were, on one hand, showing obedience to the command of Allah, and, on the other hand, the ceaseless sarcasm of the Jews was intolerable.

It was for this reason that by night Prophet Muhammad (S) occasionally turned his face towards the heavens in a way that showed he was expecting to receive Divine revelation.

After some time of waiting, finally the command for changing the Qiblah was revealed. It was while the Prophet (S) was praying the noon prayer and he had already performed only two rak'ats of the prayer in Bani-Salim Mosque towards the direction of Jerusalem when Gabriel was commissioned by Allah to take the arm of the Prophet (S) and turn his face towards the direction of the Ka'bah.

The Jews were annoyed with this occurrence and according to their old traditional style, they began seeking pretexts. Aforetime, they used to say

that they were superior to Muslims because Muslims were dependent on the Jews regarding their Qiblah. But, when the command of changing the Qiblah was sent down by the Lord, a party of the Jews protested; as the Qur'an says:

"The fools among the people will say: 'What has turned them from their Qiblah (direction of prayer) which they were facing at?'..."

The Jews disputed about why the Muslims altered the former prophets' Qiblah that day. They said if the first Qiblah was correct, then why the change? And, if the second one was right, then why had they been praying towards the direction of Jerusalem for more than thirteen years?

The Lord ordered His Apostle thus:

"...Say: 'Allah's is the East and the West; He guides whoever He pleases to a straight way'."

Similar to this circumstance the words East and West, besides the verse under discussion, have occurred in four other verses of the Qur'an: 2: 115, 2: 177, 26: 28, 73: 9. There is a short explanation about their objective meaning when commenting on verse 115 (pg. 267 this vol.).

The content meaning of these terms refers to the Omnipresence of Allah as the Absolute Reality, the hold of which penetrates the universe in its every part and particle as well as its whole meaning both the rise of the light in the East and its setting in the West are the various aspects of manifestation of Allah's Might and Glory i.e. whichever direction the mind turns there is this aspect of His.

This verse was a decisive clear reasonable answer for those who sought pretext by letting them know that Jerusalem the Ka'bah and all other places belong to Allah, and, intrinsically, Allah has no house and no place; He is the Omnipresent.

The main principle here is that we servants should submit to His command and whatever direction He appoints for prayer that direction is sacred and respectable and that direction should be prayed towards. Without His commission, no place has excellence or preference in its own essence.

And, the change of the Qiblah, in fact, is one stage of the many different stages of trial and development, each of which is an example of Divine Guidance. It is He Who guides people to the 'Straight Path'.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 143

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُواْ شُهَدَاء عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّ كُنتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلاَّ لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِن كَانَتْ
لَكَبِيرَةً إِلاَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

143. "And thus have We made you an Ummat of middling stand that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger may be (as) witness over you. We did not make the (former) Qiblah (direction of prayer) towards which you were facing at, except that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels; it was indeed hard except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah would never let your Faith be wasted -truly Allah is to mankind Most Affectionate, Most Merciful."

An Ummat of Middle Standing

In this verse a part of the philosophy and secret of the change of the Qiblah is referred to. At first it says:

"And thus have We made you an Ummat of middling stand..."

A nation that is a medium one from any aspect, viz. it is in a state that is neither in excess nor defects and can be brought forth as an example.

But, why is the Muslims' Qiblah a middle one? Haply, it is because most of the Christians were living in countries west of their Qiblah. In order to stand towards the direction of the birthplace of Jesus which was located in Jerusalem they had to stand nearly towards the direction of the East.

Therefore the East was considered the direction of their Qiblah. The Jews, who mostly were living in Syria, Babylon and the like, prayed towards Jerusalem which was located nearly in the West for them. Hence, the West was considered the direction of their Qiblah.

But, for the Muslims of that time (Muslims in Medina); the Ka'bah was located in the South, between the East and the West which, thereby, was considered a middle ground.

All of those meanings, in fact, are understood from the phrase /wakaŎalika/ 'and thus' stated in the verse. The Qur'an, however, apparently, may intend to refer to the position of all Islamic programs and that not only the Muslims' Qiblah is middle standing but also in all other aspects they have this specialty.

Then, it adds:

"...that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger may be (as) witness over you... "

The expression of the Muslims being ' witnesses' over the people of the world, and the Prophet (S) bearing 'witness' over the Muslims may be an insinuation to' being as a model', since witnesses are always chosen from the eligible ones. Thus, the purpose might be that you (Muslims), with these instructions and this creed, are a model nation, as the Prophet (S) is a model among you.

You, by your deeds and behaviour bear witness that a man can be both a man of action and a man of religion while he is living in this very world. He, being sociable, can quite properly protect the limits of his spiritual and moral aspects.

Portraying these thoughts and activities, you bear witness that not only there is no contradiction between religion and science, or the present world and the coming world, but they serve one another.

Then, the Qur'an has pointed to one of the secrets of the change of the Qiblah when it says:

"...We did not make the (former) Qiblah (direction of prayer) towards which you were facing at, except that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels;…"

It is interesting that the Qur'an does not say: ‘him who follows you' but it says: 'him who follows the Messenger' which confirms the fact that you (Muhammad) are commissioned by the Lord and you are a guide, so, they must be obedient to your command in all things.

In this relation, the change of the Qiblah is simple; if the command were beyond that, it should be obeyed and their seeking pretext in it is a sign of their holding on to the customs of the age of paganism and idol worshipping.

The Qur'anic phrase "from him who turns back upon his heels" which originally means ' to turn on one's heel' is a hint to a kind of retrograde manner or retrogression.

"….it was indeed hard except for those whom Allah has guided…"

Yes, the soul of absolute submission to the command of Allah will not come to being unless there is Divine Guidance. This is an important matter that one ought to be so submissive that he does not feel in his self even the slightest heaviness for the execution of such commandments; on the contrary, because it is from Allah, he embraces it willingly and eagerly.

Since the seductive enemies or the ignorant friends thought that with the change of the Qiblah our services would become futile and our reward be wasted, at the end of the verse it says:

"….Allah would never let your Faith be wasted -truly Allah is to mankind Most Affectionate, Most Merciful,"

Allah's commandments are issued as prescriptions for the purpose of our remedy; then one day this one is useful and the next, something else. Each of them in its proper place is the best to provide our felicity, prosperity, and development.

Thus, the change of the Qiblah should not create any anxiety for you about your former prayers and worshipping nor those in the future, because all of them have been right and proper.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 144

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاء فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُواْ الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

144. "Indeed We see turning your face (O' Muhammad) to the heavens, and now We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah that you shall be pleased with. Turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it (for prayer) and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know well that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not at all heedless of what they do."

Turn Towards the Sacred Mosque

As it was mentioned before, Jerusalem was the first, but temporary, Qiblah of the Muslims.

So, as the Prophet (S) was waiting to receive the command from Allah to change the Qiblah, especially after he had migrated to Medina and continued praying towards the same direction, i.e. towards the direction of Jerusalem, the Jews used to very frequently taunt the Muslims at not having a Qiblah of their own and stated that but for the Jews' faith, the holy Prophet (S) would not even know the direction towards which, by the direction of Allah, he should turn in prayer.

Owing to the sneers of the Jews he (S) desired a change and Allah granted it to him. In the above verse this subject is referred to when the command of the Qiblah has been issued to the Prophet (S). It says thus:

"Indeed We see turning your face (O' Muhammad) to the heavens..."

"...and now We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah
that you shall be pleased with..."

"...Turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque..."

"...and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it (for prayer)..."

According to the Islamic traditions, we know that this change of the Qiblah happened in Medina, at a very sensitive moment when the Prophet (S) was praying the noontime prayer.

The bringer of Divine revelation took Muhammad's (S) arm and turned him from the direction of Jerusalem to the direction of the Ka'bah. At the same time Muslims immediately changed their rows, too.

It is also said that in that event even the women had to change their place of prayer with the men. (It should be noted that in that occurrence Jerusalem was located approximately towards the North while the direction of the Ka'bah was towards the South.)

It is also noteworthy that the change of the Qiblah had been one of the signs of the Call of the Prophet of Islam (S) written in the former scriptures. The Jews had learnt therein that he (S) would pray towards two directions for his Qiblah.

Therefore, in the above verse, after the command of the Qiblah, it adds:

"...and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know well that it is the truth from their Lord...."

The phrase "those who have been given the (earlier) book" means the Jews who through the prophecies in their scriptures (Vide Deut 18: 15 & 18) already knew that the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) was a true prophet, thus:

"The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto Me; unto him you shall hearken:" Deut 18: 15.

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Deut 18: 18,19

Moreover, the Prophet of Islam (S) did not follow the customs of his locale at first, and put aside the Ka'bah which was the center of idols that the Arabs loved very much. He formally accepted the direction of the Qiblah of a limited minority, i.e. Jerusalem. This was, in itself, considered proof of the rightfulness of his invitation and the Divinity of his Call.

At the end of the verse, it adds:

"…And Allah is not at all heedless of what they do,"

That is, instead of introducing the change of the Qiblah as a sign of his rightfulness, they rejected it and raised a tumult. But Allah is heedless neither of their actions nor of their intentions.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 145

وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُواْ الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَّا تَبِعُواْ قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُم بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءهُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذاً لَّمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

145. "And even if you were to bring every Sign to those who have been given the (earlier) Book, they would not follow your Qiblah, nor would you be a follower of their Qiblah, neither are they the followers of each other's Qiblah. And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will surely be of the Unjust."

They will Never be Content!

Commenting on the previous verse it was described that the 'People of the Book' knew that the change of the Qiblah from the direction of Jerusalem to the direction of the Sacred Mosque not only was not an objection to the authenticity of the Prophet of Islam (S), but that it was one of the signs of his rightfulness to prophethood, because they had learned through their religious books that the Apostle of Islam (S) would pray towards the directions of two Qiblahs. But their vain religious fanaticism did not let them accept the fact.

In principle, until when a person has not made a decision on a subject yet, by bringing proof, reasons, logic, and miracles for him, he might be made to understand the fact or the fact, itself, might be proved and be manifested to him and consequently, he changes his belief.

But, when formerly he has decidedly confirmed his position, especially in the case of a zealous or ignorant person, it is not at all possible to change his mind.

So the Qur'an decisively says:

"And even if you were to bring every Sign to those who have been given the (earlier) Book, they would not follow your Qiblah..."

Therefore, do not tire yourself, for they will never surrender to the truth because the truth-seeking soul has died in them.

Unfortunately, all of the Divine prophets were faced with such persons who were either of the rich puissant ones, or of the deluded and mammonish scholars, or of the ignorant zealous laymen.

Then, it adds:

"...nor would you be a follower of their Qiblah,..."

That is, if they think that, with their sayings and uproars, the Muslims' Qiblah may change again, they are mistaken. This Qiblah is permanent and it is the final everlasting Qiblah for all Muslims.

This kind of speaking is, in fact, one of the ways of concluding the reproaches of opponents by standing firm and proving that those futile uproars will not change anything.

Then it adds that they are so fanatic in their creed that:

"...neither are they the followers of each other's Qiblah..."

Neither would the Jews follow the Christian's Qiblah nor would the Christians follow the Jews' Qiblah.

Then, again for more emphasis, it warns the Prophet (S):

"...And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will surely be of the Unjust."

Such warnings which are stated in the form of conditional sentences, addressing the Prophet (S) are frequently seen in the Qur'an, the purpose of which is threefold:

The first is that all know that, regarding the law of Allah, there is no difference between the servants of Allah and even the Divine prophets are included under those laws, therefore, if, for the sake of argument, the holy Prophet (S), too, were to delude from the Truth, he would also be involved with the Lord's punishment, though such a supposition is impossible concerning the prophets (as) with their Faith and immense knowledge and whose ranks of virtue are known. (And, as it was stated before, a conditional proposition does not necessarily verify the existence of a protasis.)

The second thing is that, taking into consideration the above circumstance, other people would think about their own situations and know that when the Prophet (S) is being warned, then how much more they should be careful about their responsibilities and duties. They must never follow their enemies' perverted desires or give attention to their uproars.

The third aim is to make it clear that the holy Prophet (S), too, has no right on his own to change anything in Allah's ordinances. It is not so that anyone can collide or come to terms with him, since he is a servant, too, and obedient to His Command.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 146-147

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقاً مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

146. "Those to whom We have given the (earlier) Book, recognize him (the Prophet) they recognize their sons, but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)."

147. "The Truth is from your Lord, therefore be not one of the doubters."

Following the former discussions about the obstinacy and bigotry of a party of the People of the Book, the first verse of the above says:

"Those to whom We have given the (earlier) Book, recognize him (the Prophet) they recognize their sons..."

They have learnt about his name and his specific characteristics in their religious books.

"...but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)."

Some of them, of course, having seen those clear signs of the promised Prophet (S) embraced Islam. It is quoted from, Abdillah-ibn-Salam, who previously had been one of the Jewish scholars and then accepted Islam, that he said that from before, he knew the Prophet of Islam (S) better than he knew his son, [2] and the other scholars knew the Prophet of Islam well, too.

This verse uncovers an important fact. It denotes that the earlier Divine Books had contained a very vivid and distinct illustration of the physical and spiritual characteristics of the Prophet of Islam (S). It had been so clear

that those who were acquainted with those Books could draw a clear image of him in their minds.

Can anybody imagine that any name or description about the Prophet of Islam's (S) characteristics could not be found mentioned in the Turah and the Evangel?

Certainly not, because, as the above verse indicates, the Prophet of Islam (S) was announced openly and very clearly before their eyes by his epithets that were cited in the books of the 'People of the Book'. If this statement were not true, might the scholars of the' People of the Book' not rise against it?

Would they not present their books to him and insist that he should prove his claim thereby according to their Books? Was it possible that even one of their learned men would surrender to the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) without sufficient cause?

Thus, such verses in the Holy Qur'an are, themselves, clear evidence for them to the rightfulness of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S).

****

Then, to emphasize upon the former statements about the change of the Qiblah or the ordinances of Islam in general, it says:

"The Truth is from your Lord, therefore be not one of the doubters."

The announcement to the holy Prophet (S) that he, in fact, is the Apostle from Allah sounds to some as a consolation to the holy Prophet himself (S) so that he would never doubt when the enemies sneered or scorned upon either the change of the Qiblah or about other problems, even if all of them allied with each other against him.

As it was mentioned before, any warning or threat addressed to the holy Prophet (S) is always and invariably meant, not for the holy Prophet (S), but for his followers. He never doubted in the Divine revelation because the revelation was, for him, on the level of 'certainty of sight'.

Notes

1. The of the First Part of the Holy Qur'an ended on the previous page, but verses about the theme of Qiblah in the Qur'an is still continued. Hence, to complete the idea, we had to add some verses of Part 2, here, at the end of this volume.
2. AL-Manar, vol. 2 & AL-Tafsir-ul-Kabir, Fakhr-i-Razi: vol. 4, p. 128

Section 18

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 148

وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُواْ الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُواْ يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

148. "Everyone has a direction to which he turns, so hasten to precede each other towards all that is good, Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him); surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things,"

Every Religion has a Qiblah

This verse is, in fact, an answer to the Jews who made a vast uproar about the event of the change of Qiblah. It says:

"Everyone has a direction to which he turns,…"

There had been different directions of the Qiblah during the history of prophets. The change of the direction of a Qiblah is not a strange thing, because it is not like the principles of the religion which are permanent, nor is it similar to Divine affairs which are impossible to interfere in, Therefore, do not make such a big deal about the Qiblah,

"…so hasten to precede each other towards all that is good …"

Instead of spending all your time on talking about this minor subject, you had better pay attention to doing good deeds and having pure intentions which have a broad racing field where you can challenge to precede each other, because the criterion of the value of your existence is your pure good actions,

This meaning is just like what is stated in verse 177 of the current Surah:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is that one should have faith in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles…"

If you want to examine Islam or Muslims, you can utilize this criterion for analysis, not the problem of the change of the Qiblah.

Then, as warning to the objectors and encouraging the good-doers, it says:

"...Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him)..." in the Great Court of the Hereafter which is the final stage of reward and punishment.

It is not such that some be busy doing righteous works and some others do not do anything but destruction and spend their time spoiling others' deeds and, yet, these two groups be treated equally without having any reckoning or any recompense.

The idea may seem surprising for some people that how it is possible that Allah gathers the particles of the scattered dusts of men wherever they may be, and brings them into a new life, then, it immediately says:

"...surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Indeed, the existence of this statement at the end of the verse is evidence for the statement preceding it, which says:

"Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him)"

Explanation: The Day When Imam Mahdi's (as) Adherents Assemble

According to numerous traditions narrated from the holy Ahlul Bayt (as) cited in Islamic literature, the expression: "Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him)" has been rendered into the adherents of Imam al-Mahdi, the twelfth Imam (as).

It is quoted in 'Rauqat-ul-Kafi' from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) who, after mentioning this expression, said:

"It means the adherents of Imam Gha'im (as) who consist of three hundred and thirteen men.

By Allah, they are the objective meaning of the phrase / ummat-ul-ma'dudah /. By Allah, they all will gather together at the same time like the autumnal wind-driven broken clouds that become cumulus." [1]

It is also narrated from Ali-ibn-Mosa-ar-Rida, the eighth Imam (as), who has said: "By Allah, when al-Mahdi (as) rises, Allah will gather all our followers from all cities unto him." [2]

There is no doubt that this is one of the deep innate meanings of the verse. Based on Islamic traditions, we know that there are layers upon layers of meaning concerning the verses of the Qur'an.

One of them is the apparent meaning which is universal and general; and others, which are the deeply hidden ones which none knows except the Prophet (S), the sinless Imams (as), and those whom Allah wills.

In other words, these traditions refer to this very meaning that the Creator, Who is able to gather the particles of the scattered dusts of men from different parts of the world, can easily bring the adherents of al-Mahdi (as) on one day and at one time together to strike the first spark of the establishment of the revolution for the settlement of the godly government in order to put an end to tyranny and transgression, and establish Divine Justice among people throughout the world.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 149-150

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلاَّ يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنْهُمْ فَلاَ تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

149. "And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do."

150. "And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face (in prayer) towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no dispute against you, save those of them that are unjust. Have no awe of them, but stand in awe of Me; and that I may Perfect My blessing upon you, and so that you might be guided (aright)."

In the previous verse where the direction of the Sacred Mosque is referred to, it concerns Medina, the city where most Muslims inhabited at

that time. But, in the first of the above verses, the meaning is more general and it says that from wherever you come forth and set out for travelling, turn your face towards the Ka'bah in prayer.

"And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque..."

Here are some points and messages that can be noted:

1. In numerous verses of the Qur'an, the subject of the Qiblah and turning towards it is repeated and emphasized. These repetitions are not undue. Through every one of these verses, besides the proposition of the Qiblah, a new point is propounded.

In the current Surah, [3] after commissioning the Prophet (S) and the Muslims to turn their faces towards the Qiblah, the Sacred Mosque, it says: "...and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know well that it is the truth from their Lord...", because they had learnt from their religious books that the Prophet of Islam (S) would pray towards two Qiblahs, so, "...We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah that you shall be pleased with ", in order to fulfil the prophecy which was given to the 'People of the Book' cited in their Book which they were expecting.

Here, the subject is emphasized again, thus: "...Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord..."

In the next verse, there is another reason mentioned for these reiterations which will be referred to in the following.

2. Whenever a new subject is proposed, the matter should necessarily be reiterated to be renewed and settled in the minds and hearts of people.

It is narrated in a tradition that the first phrase in the prayer call (i.e. Allahu-Akbar) is repeated four times in order that people be prepared and receptive, but the phrases following that are repeated only two times, because people's attention has already been attracted by the proclamation of the call to prayer.

The Lord warns those who disobey His Command, saying: "...And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do."

****

In the second of the above verses, too, immediately after the ordinance of turning the face towards the Sacred Mosque, the Lord says:

"...so that people shall have no dispute against you..."

As it was formerly pointed out, the' People of the Book' knew that the Prophet of Islam (S) would pray towards two Qiblahs, so, if that had not come to pass, they would have questioned or objected that the Prophet (S) lacked the qualities mentioned in the earlier heavenly Books, or they would have sneered and despised the Muslims accusing them that they, who had not an independent Qiblah for their own, were the followers of the Jewish Qiblah.

This objection was not, of course, only from the side of the Jews, but the pagans also assisted them in their ridicules, criticizing: 'Why does not Muhammad respect the Ka'bah, the Holy House built by Abraham and Ismail (as), exclusively for the prayer to God and does yield towards the religious centre of the Jews?'

The hypocrites, too, were busy objecting to the change of the Qiblah. They said that the Prophet (S) was not firm in his decision.

However, this verse, with emphasis and repetition, prepares the Muslims for acceptance and perseverance. It informs them that those people who accept proof and reasons will not object to you, but those who are wrong doers and unjustly conceal the truth will not stop seeking pretexts. "...-so that people shall have no dispute against you, save those of them that are unjust..."

Therefore, you should neither give heed to them nor be afraid of them. You should fear only Allah.

"...Have no awe of them, but stand in awe of Me..."

Another point which is noteworthy, here, is that the Qiblah is the symbol of Monotheism. The Qiblah, the direction of prayer, is the emblem of the Muslims. In Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 173, the Qiblah is referred to as ' a clear sign, or a distinguishing flag'.

Idol worshippers and star worshippers, when worshipping, turned towards idols or stars or the moon. Instead of those misguided directions, Islam introduced the Ka'bah as the Qiblah for Muslims.

Thus turning towards the Sacred Mosque is considered a sign of being mindful of the Lord. Some traditions indicate that the Prophet of Islam (S) usually sat towards the direction of the Qiblah. We are even advised by the Holy Ahlul Bayt (as) to lie, to sleep and to sit down towards that direction. This action has been counted as a form of worship.

There are some special obligatory ordinances on observing the Qiblah while performing certain ritual actions. For instance, slaughtering animals to be used for food, burial of a Muslim corpse in the grave, and establishing the obligatory prayers should be done towards the Qiblah. Elimination of bodily wastes while facing or with one's back to the Qiblah is unlawful.

In addition to what was said in the above, the Qiblah is the sign and the factor of uniting Muslims. If we look from above the earth down at the Muslims of the world, we see that they turn towards the Qiblah at least five times a day with special regularity and in a particular order.

Throughout history, the Ka'bah has been the center point of the godly movements and revolutions, including that of Abraham (as), Prophet Muhammad (S), up to Imam Husayn's (as); and in the future, Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) will start his blessed movement from the site of the Ka'bah. Then, we conclude that:

1. The Ka'bah is the Qiblah of Muslims, all of whom, wherever they be, are commissioned to turn towards it when they stand praying-

"And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do. "

2. Muslims should avoid doing anything that causes their enemies to seek pretext.

"...so that people shall have no dispute against you..."

3. Independence is a 'value' while tolerating flattery is a disgrace.

4. The change of the Qiblah is the fulfilment of the conditions and qualities promised in the earlier Divine Books.

5. The change of the Qiblah was a factor to nullify the vain objections and pretexts of the' People of the Book', pagans, and hypocrites.

6. It is not right to be silent when there is injustice: "...save those of them that are unjust..."

7. Foreign enemies cannot be the greatest danger for the Muslims, while impiety and having no awe of Allah is the real danger.

8. Appointing an independent Qiblah for the Muslims was to prepare the perfection of Allah's blessing upon them.

"...and that I may Perfect my blessing upon you..."

"...and so that you might be guided (aright)..."

9. Appointing an independent Qiblah for Muslims' prayers towards the Sacred Mosque is a process for the guidance of believers.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 151-152

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولاً مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُواْ تَعْلَمُونَ
فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُواْ ِ وَلاَ تَكْفُرُونِ

151. "Even as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelations to you that purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know."

152. "Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me, and be you not ungrateful."

The subject matter of the first verse is the Messengership of the Prophet of Islam (S) which was in answer to the invocation of Abraham (as) who had asked:

"Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall recite unto them Your revelations,...", (Surah Al-Baqarah, No.l, verse 129).

Besides, that the Prophet of Islam (S) also repeatedly said:

"I am (the fruit of) the very acceptance of my father's invocation, Abraham (as)." [4]

Thus, Allah sent a prophet to the people from among themselves who were familiar with their demands, needs, and wishes. He used to communicate with them through their own language, and he lived amongst them.

"Even as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelations to you that purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know."

Through the second verse, Allah has promoted the rank of Man by saying that He and we remember each other.

"Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you..."

The level and standard of knowledge and understanding of people is different, so, Allah tells a group of servants: "...Remember Allah's favour on you...", (Surah Ale-Imran. No.3. verse 103), while he addresses some others of them thus: “...remember Me...", as in the current verse.

The remembrance of Allah is a prerequisite to being thankful to Him, hence, it has preceded the term thankfulness. This is an illustration of the

consideration of Allah's honour for Man as a reflection of His Grace unto His servants.

On one end of this scale, there is Man with his ignorance, poverty, mortality, and feebleness, while on the other end, there is Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Sufficient, the Eternal, and the All-Mighty Who wants him to remember Him in order to show his gratitude for the great blessings of the Qiblah and the Messenger of Islam, and He promises to remember him, too.

This very remembrance is also a favour from Allah bestowed upon His servants.

No doubt, if a person neglects Allah in life, He, of course, will be heedless towards him, too.

"...and be thankful to Me, and be you not ungrateful."

Explanation

Here, your attention is attracted to the following descriptions and messages derived from the above verses:

1. The recitation of Divine revelations, the purification of receptive souls, the instruction of the Book and Wisdom, and teaching of people what they do not know, are among the duties of prophets.

2. That leader is successful who is from amongst the people themselves, because he is acquainted with their problems and speaks the same language as theirs.

"...a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelation to you..."

3. Human beings are not able to solve all their scientific problems by themselves. That is why He did not say in the verse / malata'lamun / '(He teaches you) what you do not know', but He said: / malamtakunu ta'lamon / '(He teaches you) that which you did not know' in order to remind us that if the prophets (as) had not existed, Man could never have found the answers to many of his problems.

For example, he could not have found out what his future (the next world) will be, or, he could not recognize which path was the true path of felicity and salvation.

4. Prophets were not merely the teachers and leaders of ethics and theology, but they were also the instructors of science. Without their leadership in science, human knowledge would have remained undeveloped in all fields.

"...and teaches you that which you did not know."

5. The remembrance of Allah is not only the cause for the Grace of Allah, but with the remembrance of Allah the hearts will gain peace and rest. Surah Al-Ra'd. No.19 Verse18 says:

"...Certainly! By Allah's remembrance are the hearts at rest."

6. Establishing prayer is the best way to remember Allah, as in Surah. Taha No. 20 Verse14, Allah Himself says:

"...keep up prayer for My remembrance..."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 153

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اسْتَعِينُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَةِ إِنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

153. "O' you who have Faith! seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer, verily Allah is with the patient ones (in the time of adversity)."

The phrase / ya'ayyuhallaŎna'amanu / "O' you who have Faith!" addresses all those who have Faith entirely, foremost of whom Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and the rest of the immaculate Imams are distinguished.

This idea is expressed in many Islamic narrations; for instance, it is quoted from Ibn Abbas narrating from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

"No revelation containing' O' you who have faith' was sent down except that Ali is at its top and is its chief." [5]

Again, it is narrated from 'Akramah who narrates from Ibn-Abbas that has said:

"Allah has sent down no verse in the Qur'an consisting of 'O' you who have faith' but Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) is the leader of it and the chief of it". [6]

Of course, the more complete and the higher the degree of Faith is, the content of the verse about it is clearer and more apparent.

(This phrase has also been discussed more comprehensively when commenting on Surah No, 2 verse 104 on pages 250 and 251 in the current volume.)

The phrase / wasta'inu / "seek you help from Allah" is a guiding imperative phrase because at every moment and in all affairs a mortal is in need of Allah's help, whether it is something which is inside his free will, because he is not an absolutely independent subject, though he is created free in will; or it is something which is outside of his will.

Man is in complete need of Him (s.w.t.) and he should constantly invocate for everything and seek help from the Lord. A person most naturally and reasonably can be qualified for the special blessings from God.

If this verse is to be taken as referring to the conquest of Mecca, even then it holds good, if it means to say that the people must prove their worthiness or value to the Truth in Islam by bearing the hardest trials with constant prayers to the Lord; for prayer suggests the praying individual's acknowledgment of God's Omnipotence and the individual's confidence in God being the All-Merciful one, as the only One who can grant the prayers of the sincere supplicants.

Real Faith can never be mere empty words. It must express or manifest itself through patience or endurance in all that befalls the individual to show his faithfulness to God, and the help from God must be sought through prayers or supplications to the Lord.

The aid of Allah requires eligibility. This eligibility is confirmed by two things:

The first is having patience in worldly hardships and perseverance in bearing its bitter circumstances. And also having patience in tolerating the hardship of performing Divine services, and obtaining knowledge and good ethics, patience in withholding one's self from lusts and the fleeting pleasure of committing sins and yielding to low desires, is necessary. This bitterness of hardship, which is short in time, finally results in a sweet fruit which lasts a long time.

Concerning the epithets of the true believers, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has said:

"The short period of patience resulted in a long period of tranquility for them." [7]

The term / sabr / ' patience ', in this verse, is rendered into 'fasting' and 'holy war'. The second thing is 'prayer' which is the highest means of turning towards and approaching Allah by which we may seek help and aid from that Origin of favour and Grace.

Some commentators have rendered the term / salat / into 'supplication' whose explanation demands a separate chapter.

Some others, based on some Islamic traditions, have interpreted it into the 'obligatory prayers' and 'supererogatory prayers'.

For example: it is cited in Tafsir 'Ayyashi narrated from Fudayl from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"O' Fudayl, convey our salam (regards) to our followers whom you visit and tell them I say that I avail you aught (in keeping you far) from the punishment of Allah save by piety.

Then, they must control their tongues and be careful of their hands. They should be attentive to patience and prayer. Verily Allah is with the patient ones." [8]

The first part of the verse has also occurred in verse 45, the explanation of which can be referred to on pages 169 and 170.

The objective meaning of the phrase "Allah is with the patient ones" is that His help, assistance, guidance, success, favours, the protection from pests, the perfection of intentions, as well as His other blessings are showered upon the patient by Him.

Above all of the aforementioned bounties, there is the reward of Allah granted to the patient believers in the Hereafter about whom He says:

"Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!" (Surah Az-Zumar, No 39. verse 13).

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 154

وَلاَ تَقُولُواْ لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاء وَلَـكِن لاَّ تَشْعُرُونَ

154. "And do not say of those who are slain in Allah's way: 'They are dead.' Nay (they are) alive, but you perceive (it) not."

The Qur'anic phrase ' of those who are slain in Allah's way' refers to those who are slain (i.e. martyred) in the battles led by the Prophet (S) or Imams (as) or one of their specific deputies, as well as anyone who is martyred on the path of Islam and propagation of the religion of Allah.

The content of the verse is inclusive of not only all who are slain in the path of Allah such as: the immaculate Imams (as) their ministers, Muslim scholars and believers, although the occasion of revelation of the verse is reported that it was revealed about the Muslims who were martyred in the battle of Badr, but also anyone other than them.

"And do not say of those who are slain in Allah's way: 'They are dead'..."

The phenomenon of martyrdom is more clearly described in Surah Ale-Imran No.3. Verses 169,170 which gives further information about the truth

that those who surrender or sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah. (i.e. the martyrs) are alive receiving their sustenance from their Lord.

"And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord;" "Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace..."

The term / sahid / 'martyred' used in many occurrences in the Qur'an refers to this blissful state of realization.

Therefore, this stage of life, i.e. the life immediately after death, i.e. the purgatory life, is not allocated to martyrs alone, though the verse is about them, but it envelops all people because stating something does not mean that the unstated, but applicable, instances are not involved.

For example, when we say, this man is just', it does not mean that justice belongs to him exclusively and there is not any other just person; while there may be thousands of people who are just.

Thus, this verse, here, confirms the purgatorial life for the martyrs. This life, the intermediate state, according to many verses of the Qur'an and abundant Islamic traditions, exists for all believers and nonbelievers both, with a distinction.

The soul of a believer, after departuring from its physical body, will settle in a body similar to this one and will be sustained in that world until when the Hereafter comes forth; while the soul of a nonbeliever, during the time when passing this course, will be in torment, as the Qur'an says:

"(In falsehood will they be) until when death comes to one of them, he says: ‘O' my Lord! send me back (to life), -" " In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected. ' By no means! It is but a word he says, -Before them is a partition till the Day they are raised up." (Surah Al-Mu'min No.23 verses 99 and 100)

It is narrated from Yunus-ibn-Thibyan who said he was sitting with Imam al-Sadiq (as) when he was explaining about the believers' souls and he (as) said:

"O' Yunus! When Allah gets the soul of a believer taken, He puts his soul in a setting like his body that was in this world. So, they eat and drink and when a comer enters he recognizes them in the same form as they were in the world." [9]

Also, Abu-Basir narrates from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who, about the believers' souls, said:

"(They will be) in Heaven with the same features as their (worldly) bodies were so that if you see him (one of them) you will surely recognize him and say who he is." [10]

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"...Nay, (they are) alive..."

Life is divided into four sorts: the plant-life, the animal-life, the human-life, and the Faith-life.

Plant-life is the power of growth which is common among plants and animals including human beings. The death of this particular life is when that power stops. Animal-life is the power by which feeling and conscious movement comes to being. Human beings and animals have this life in common. It dies when this power ceases.

Human-life is the faculty of general reasoning and perceiving by which Man is distinguished from animal. This phenomenon emerges because of that abstract and rational soul which administrates this body.

Its death causes the interruption of this administration and breaking off its connection with the body but there is no destruction for it and it remains to return to the body again when the Resurrection occurs. So, this purgatorial state exists not only for martyrs or Muslims, but for the soul of every conscious being.

Faith-Life is the peace of mind, assurance of self, and clearness of heart all of which come into existence for a believer through Faith and knowing Allah.

It is in this state that he can live in rest and tranquility with joy and pleasure because the toils, hardships, and miseries of this world would not create any awe, worry, anxiety or instability for him. This very condition originates from his reliance and belief in Providence, Who gives only goodness.

This life is the same as the 'good life', about which the Lord says:

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions." (Surah An- Nahl. No.16. verse 97).

And, the Qur'an also says:

"O' you who have Faith! give your response to Allah and His Apostle, when He calleth you to that which will give you life..." (Surah Al-Anfal, No 8, verse 24).

It is said that the utterances in a language indicate meanings so that letter and spirit correspond with each other. For example, the term 'light or lamp' is applied to any means which is used in darkness to get brightness from. Then, whatever has this function, the application of that term for it is correct, although the substance is different from the point of material, form and other qualities.

Life is a general sense which is recognized by the appearance of the effects which are expected from it. In this sense, the term' life' is used for the Essence of Allah, too.

The example of this idea is recited in Surah. Ale-Imran. No.3. verse 2, which says: "Allah! there is no god but He, the living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal." That is, the Essence from Whom the effects of knowledge and power are clear and manifest.

That is why some scholars said that Allah's life is His very Knowledge and Power. Of course, the Essence of the Knower and the Mighty is alive. Therefore, wherever the effects of this meaning exist, the application of this utterance is correct, but it are not necessary that its kind and its characteristics and properties, which are appropriate to those particular situations, be the same everywhere and in all circumstances.

Hence, the life in Purgatory, from the point of quality for martyrs and other people, is of the quality of the same world. It is for this reason that the people of this world with their senses, the quality of the nature of which is

of the quality of this world, cannot perceive that which is of the quality of the nature of that world.

"…but you perceive it not."

By the way, this verse clears the doubt of materialist and pagans who believe that with death, man's life becomes extinct, i.e. there is no life after death. Here, the Qur'an warns all, Muslim or non-Muslim, that man's life does not perish after death, but it does remain.

So, with this in mind, we realize that there is nothing more valuable or worthwhile than the time spent striving for the perfection of such a life. May Allah help us all to follow His Ordinances that He so graciously made available to us by way of the Qur'an in order that we might experience success in this life and in the Hereafter-

Notes

1. Raudat-ul-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 313, Tradition 478
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 231
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 144
4. Al-Amili, by Shaykh Tusi, p. 379
5. Tafsir-i-Furat-ul-Kufi; p. 49, Tradition 7
6. Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 167
7. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 113, Tradition 48
8. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 82, p. 232
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 236
10. Ibid

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 2

From Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 154- to Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 252

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author (s): Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 7
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 8
What is a 'Commentary'? 9
The Current Commentary 10
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 11
The Problems in Translating 11
Translators Note 12
Editor's Note 13
Notes 15
Acknowledgment 16
Notes 16
References 17
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 17
English Translations of Qur'an 17
Supporting Technical References 18
Phraseological and Philological Sources 18
A Presentation to Muslims 20
Notes 21
Section 19, Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2 22
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 155-157 22
Trial, an Indisputable Divine Rule 22
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 158 25
Occasion of Revelation 25
Acts Done Ignorantly 26
Explanation 26
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 159-160 27
Occasion of Revelation 27
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 161-163 28
Notes 29
Section 20, Oneness of Allah, Fate of the Polytheists 30
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 164 30
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 165 33
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 166 34
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 167 34
Notes 35
Section 21, Only lawful and clean food should be taken 36
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 168-169 36
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 170-171 37
Blind following of the ancestors is condemned 37
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 172 38
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 173 38
Explanations 39
General Conclusion 40
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 174-176 40
Explanations 41
Notes 42
Section 22: Genuine Righteousness, Retaliation & Bequest 43

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 177 43
Explanations 43
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 178-179 44
Occasion of Revelation 45
Saving of Life in Retaliation 45
Retaliation & Pardon, a Complete Assemblage 47
Explanations 48
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 180-182 49
Bequest in a Fair Manner 50
Explanation 52
The Philosophy of Testament 52
Justice in Testament 53
Bequest, Obligatory or Recommended 54
Bequest, is Changeable during the Life 54
Notes 54
Section 23, Fasting during Ramadan, Rights of Property 55
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 183-185 55
Fasting, the Origin of Piety 55
Explanations 58
Fasting and Its Educational, Social, and Hygienical Effects 58
The Social Effect of Fasting 59
Fasting and Its Hygienical & Remedial Effects 59
Fasting in Former Religions 60
Ramadan, the Transcendent Month 61
Conclusion 62
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 186 63
Occasion of Revelation 63
An Armament Called Supplication 63
How Are Supplications Answered? 64
A Few Narrations Upon Supplication 66
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 187 66
Occasion of Revelation 67
Explanation 69
Allah's Limits 69
The Dawn 69
Piety, the Beginning and the End 70
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 188 70
Bribery, a Calamity 71
Notes 72
Section 24, Fighting in Self-defense, Pilgrimage under Restrictions ... 74
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 189 74
Occasion of Revelation 74
Natural Measures 75
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 190 76
Occasion of Revelation 76
Fight: Why & Against Whom? 76
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 191-192 77
Explanations 78

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 193 79
Islamic Holy War (Jihad), in fact can be divided into three categories: 79
1. The Preliminary Holy Wars for Freedom 79
2. A Defensive Holy War 80
3. Holy War Against Infidelity & Idolatry 80
Why Was Holy War Legislated in Medina? 80
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 194 81
Explanations 81
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 195 82
Spending, a Prevention of Destruction 82
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 196 83
The Rites of Pilgrimage 83
Notes 86
Section 25, No Warfare during the Pilgrimage months, Warning against the Hypocrites 87
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 197 87
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 198-199 88
Economic Activities in Hajj Season 88
Why 'Arafat? 90
Mash'ar-ul-Haram 91
Explanations 91
Note 92
A Few of the Qur'anic Verses on Hajj 93
The Time for the Pilgrimage and the Discipline Therein 94
Disciplinary Restrictions of Amnesty during the Hajj Period 94
The Lawful Game during the Pilgrimage 95
The Sanctity of the Holy Ka'bah and the Month and the Offerings ... 95
The Disciplinary Conduct to be followed during the Pilgrimage 95
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 200-202 96
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 203 97
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 204-206 99
Occasion of Revelation 99
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 207 100
Explanations 101
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 208-209 102
Occasion of Revelation 102
Explanations 103
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 210 103
Notes 105
Section 26: Rejection of the Signs and the Apostles from Allah 106
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 211 106
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 212 106
Occasion of Revelation 107
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 213 107
Explanations 108
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 214 109
Occasion of Revelation 109

Intense Adversities as a Divine Practice 110
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 215 110
Occasion of Revelation 111
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 216 111
Notes 115
Section 27, Questions about various important topics 116
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 217-218 116
Occasion of Revelation 116
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 219 118
Explanations 120
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 220 121
Explanations 122
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 221 122
Occasion of Revelation 122
Notes 124
Section 28, Regulation about Divorce 125
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 222 125
Occasion of Revelation 125
Hygienic Concerns during Menstruation 125
Permitted Sexual Intercourse 126
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 223 129
A Means of Protection for the Human Race 129
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 224 130
Occasion of Revelation 130
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 225 131
Messages 131
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 226-227 131
Messages 133
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 228 133
Notes 135
Section 29, Divorce and the Respect for the Law 136
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 229 136
Occasion of Revelation 136
Messages 137
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 230 138
Occasion of Revelation 138
Messages 138
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 231 138
Mock not Allah's Laws 139
Note 140
Section 30, Discipline during the Term, Re-marriage Negotiation ... 141
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 232 141
Occasion of Revelation 141
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 233 142
Seven Instructions upon Suckling 143
Note 145
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 234 145
Superstition against Women in Old Times 145

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 235 147
Can Widows Be Engaged during Warning Period? 147
Section 31, Extra Provision for Divorced Women & Widows 148
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 236 148
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 237 148
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 238 149
Occasion of Revelation 149
Note 150
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 239 150
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 240 150
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 241 151
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 242 151
Section 32, Fight in the Cause of Allah. References to the Conduct of the Ancient People 153
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 243 153
Occasion of Revelation 153
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 244-245 154
Occasion Of Revelation 155
Why Is Donation Rendered To Loan? 155
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 246-252 156
Explanation 157
An Introduction to the above Group of Verses 157
Explanations 159
Conclusion 160
Explanation 162
Notes 163
Section 33, Saul's Victory over Goliath 164
Verse 249 in Deep 164
Traditions 164
Explanation 166
Darbatu Aliyin Youmal Khandaq 167
Explanation 168
Notes 169

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward”[1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5],

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray,

the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, *1412* (*1370* H. / *1991*), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness

which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Section 19, Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 155-157

Note: Part 2 of the Qur'an begins from verse 142 in Surah Al-Baqarah, and the commentary of its beginning verses were added to the previous volume in order to give the exegesis of the verses concerning the theme of Qiblah together. Now, this volume begins from verse no.155 added to those verses of part 2.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفْ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الأَمَوَالِ وَالأنفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُواْ إِنَّا لِلّهِ وَإِنَّـا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعونَ

أُولَـئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

155. "And We will surely test you (all) with something of fear and hunger and loss of property, lives and fruits; but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient."

156. "Who, when a calamity befalls them, (by showing perseverance), say: 'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return'."

157. "Those are they on whom are blessings and Mercy from their Lord, and they are the ones that are guided (aright)."

Trial, an Indisputable Divine Rule

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said: *"Even though Allah, the Glorious, knows them more than they know themselves, yet He does so to let them perform actions with which they earn reward or punishment."* [1]

Concerning the sense of trial, in a sermon, he (as) also has remarked:

"...Certainly, Allah tries His servants in respect of evil actions by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and closing treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to recall (forgotten good) may recall, and he who wishes to abstain (from evil) may abstain...." [2]

Allah (s.w.t.) tests all human beings, but with varieties. All the different sites of the world are the testing-places, and all the members of humanity, even the prophets, are under trial, and all the pleasant and unpleasant things are the means of trial.

We ought to know that the Divine examinations are not done in order to clear out the ambiguity, but they are to evoke and train the capacities and abilities of humankind.

The means of this trial are all bitter and sweet happenings of Man, including: fear, hunger, loss of property, lives, agricultural products, fear from enemies, economic siege, and taking part in Holy War himself, or by sending children and dear ones to the battle of war.

These trials were experienced in the first war of Islam (battle of Badr), and will also come forth at the time of the reappearance of the Expected Mahdi, the twelfth Imam (May Allah hasten his glad advent), for which Muslims should be prepared.

The inflictions, which human beings encounter with, are usually concerned with wealth, life, children, or the fear of the loss of either of them.

The secret of mentioning 'fear', among the means of trials, first, may be that the purpose is the fear for the lack of either of those three things. It is always before the loss of the very things that one fears of losing them.

Then, next to fear, hunger is pointed out, which comes into being as a result of poverty. Yet, in this respect, fasting is counted one of the examples of hunger.

Loss of property has been situated in the third degree. The loss of wealth, of course, is very bitter, especially for a rich person when he becomes poor. Then there comes the loss of life, which often occurs because of different ailments or after being wounded: in a battle-field and Holy War in the way of Allah, and so on.

And, finally, the loss of fruits comes forth. Some of the commentators have rendered this loss into the death of one's child, which is the heaviest calamity.

"...but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient."

It addresses the prophet of Islam (S) that he gives glad tidings to those people who persevere with patience in their calamities and difficulties.

Some commentators have said that this 'glad tidings' points to the reward of Heaven and the merit of Divine forgiveness for them, as Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said: "Allah, Mighty and Glorious, said: '...but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient', or, (that is), with Paradise and forgiveness." [3]

But in another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (as) has rendered the concept of 'glad tidings' into the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (as), where he says:

"Before the rise of Qa'im (Al-Mahdi) (May Allah hasten his auspicious reappearance) there will appear some signs by which Allah tries the Muslim believers."

Muhammad-ibn-Muslim, (who was one of the special followers of the Imam), said that he required to know what those signs were; and he (as) answered: "Those are the same that Allah, the Glorious, has expressed in the Qur'an, thus:

'And We will surely test you (all) with something of fear and hunger and loss of property, lives and fruits;'

So far as he (as) recited: '...but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient', and continued to say: 'This means to give glad tidings to the believers who show patience and perseverance in these calamities for the advent of the Qa'im (as), (viz., Hadrat Mahdi May Allah (s.w.t.) hasten his glad advent.)" [4]

Yes, the world is anxiously awaiting the advent of this great reformer (as). When he comes, he will fill the world full of justice. Then, there will be no inequity, no cruelty, and no transgression. Allah will open the doors of blessings out of the earth and heaven because of his auspicious appearance. At that time, the believing people can continue to live peacefully and easily under his esteemed government, to prove their worship and servitude to Allah.

Concerning this meaning, in a tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has said: "Al-Mahdi is mine. His luminous forehead is high and wide, while over whose nose there is a little projection. He will fill the earth with justice, just as it is filled up with aggression and cruelty." [5]

"Who, when a calamity befalls them, (by showing perseverance), say: 'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return'."

After recounting different calamities, and giving glad tidings to the patient, it introduces this group of patient who, with this competency, rightfully deserve to be given glad tidings, It is clear that every ordinary person is not fit to be rewarded with all these excellences and dignities.

Hence, that reward, i.e. the glad tidings, is specialized to the ones whose patience originates from a firm foundation. This particular glad tiding is qualified by a special blessing and Mercy from the side of Allah. These kinds of people are those ones whose hearts turn to their Lord at the moment of meeting with a calamity when, they say:

'... Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return'."

They treat such because they have realized, through knowledge of certainty or by visual certainty, that whatever exists belongs to Allah and is under His Will. So, whatsoever He has given to human-kind in this world, such as: soul, property, children, and all other similar respects, are fictitious.

They also know that whatever Allah has bestowed upon them has been based upon His Wisdom, and when He takes it from them, it is not taken because of miserliness, but it is for His good that He takes a blessing from a person to mercifully impart a better one. They have found out that their return, their destination, as well as the return of everything, is undoubtedly unto Him.

However, he who, based on these foundations, knows and remembers that his soul, wealth, and whatever he possesses belongs to Allah and is under His Authority, surrenders to His divine decrees. The one, with this awareness, will be patient and thankful properly and reasonably. Such a person, of course, is one of those eligible believers for whom Allah says:

"Those are they on whom are blessings and Mercy from their Lord...", and they are prosperous.

Some of the commentators have said that / salawat / (blessings and peace), which comes from Allah (s.w.t.), is the same as ' forgiveness', while some others believe that it is 'praise'.

The term / salawat / (blessings) is said in the plural form because it refers to the abundant mercy of Allah. It may mean that there are many frequent blessings for these steadfast patient from Allah which do not cease.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: "The person who receives a calamity and thereafter, whenever the one remembers it, utters the phrase 'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return', Allah gives the believer once again the reward of the day when the one received that calamity". (Even though there has passed a long time after that calamity). [6]

He (S) has also said in another tradition that, for such a person, Allah will amend that calamity with a better quality than before and his destiny will conclude well. [7]

"...and they are the ones that are guided (aright)."

This group of the patient, as was mentioned in the above, when they entangle with a calamity, are patiently steadfast, since they have known that they themselves and what they have are all Allah's and in His possession.

They also know that their return is unto Him, and they express this fact, too, by their tongue and with uttering the above holy phrase. Such people have attained the rank and position of nearness to Allah. Their march is gain after gain, i.e. an ever progressive gain. They are, in fact, guided aright.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 158

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ اللّه فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللّه شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

158. "Behold, Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols (appointed by) Allah; so whoever makes the pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House, or Performs 'Umrah, therefore it is no blame on him to go round them both. And for whoever (obeys Him and) initiates good, then verily Allah is Grateful, All-Knowing."

Occasion of Revelation

Running between Safa and Marwah, is obligatory with the Shi'ah, the followers of Ahlul-Bayt (as), and it is one of the main actions in both greater pilgrimage (Hajj) and lesser pilgrimage ('Umrah).

But, at the beginning of Islam, those Muslims were not willing to perform it because they had imagined that there had been something wrong in it, for, at the Age of ignorance, there had been an idol in Safa called: 'Usaf, and another in Marwah named: Na'ilah, which pagans used to touch both while running therein.

So, this very verse was revealed to make the Muslims free from that false imagination. This very meaning is cited in At-Tibyan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) [8] The idea is also cited with more details in Majma'-ul-Bayan, narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as). It begins thus:

"Muslims had usually seen some signs of innovation from the pagans of pre Islamic era of Ignorance, (so they disliked to circumambulate them). Then, Allah sent this verse down (to remove that aversion)." [9]

The expansion of this description is thus that before the advent of Islam and also at the time of revelation some pagans and idol-worshippers used to go to Mecca to make Hajj pilgrimage with a particular form which was common at that time.

Their fulfillment of Hajj pilgrimage was principally originated from Prophet Ebrahim (Abraham) (as) but with a mixture of superstitions and polytheism. Some of their ritual actions were: halt at 'Arafat, sacrifice, circumambulation, and run between Safa and Marwah, which were done in a special state.

Islam, clearing out that noble performance from superstitions, accepted Hajj pilgrimage as a great worship and approved all of its correct and pure ceremonies.

One of the deeds which was to be done then was / Sa'y /, i.e., running between two hillocks called Safa and Marwah, over which the aforementioned idols were kept and pagans touched them when climbing those two hillocks.

Hence, Muslims were averse to going to these hillocks and thought that in that circumstance it was not right for them to perform running between Safa and Marwah.

Then, it was at the time of 'Umrat-ul-Ghada (in seventh AH.) that the above verse was revealed and announced that Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah and, although some ignorant people have polluted them with idols, it is not right that Muslims abandon the obligatory running between them.

Acts Done Ignorantly

This verse, regarding the particular psychological condition that was mentioned in the occasion of revelation, preliminarily informs Muslims that Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah:

"Behold, Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols (appointed by) Allah..."

After this introductory sentence, it subsequently comes to the meaning that:

"...so, whoever makes the pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House, or Performs 'Umrah, therefore it is no blame on him to go round them both...."

The wrong behaviour of pagans, that had polluted the symbols of Allah with those idols, should never decrease anything of the importance of those two sacred sites.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... And for whoever (obeys Him and) initiates good, then verily Allah is Grateful, All-Knowing."

Therefore, the Lord, by giving good rewards bountifully, thanks the servants for their obedience and doing right actions; while He is completely aware of their intentions and knows who is interested in the idols and who is averse to them.

Explanation

It may be worthy to say that the terms Safa and Marwah are referred to in the Qur'an only once.

These two hillocks stand nearly 420 meters opposite each other. This distance is now set up as a covered hall under whose ceiling the pilgrims perform the running, / sa'y /. The height of Safa Mount is 15 meters, and that of Marwah is 8 meters.

These two terms, used now as proper names for those two hillocks, are philologically meaningful, too. The term / safa / means a hard smooth stone, while / marwah / means a hard rough stone.

The Qur'anic term / Sa'a'ir / is the plural form of / Sa'irah / which means 'ritual sign'. Therefore, the phrase / Sa'a'irillah / means anything which reminds a person of Allah, and revives a sacred remembrance in one's mind which, itself, would be an act of virtue or devotion to Allah.

The term / 'i'tamara /, derived from / 'umrah /, originally means the additional parts that are added to a building in order to complete it. This word, used in religious terminology, is applied for special deeds added to the performances of Hajj Pilgrimage.

(When 'Umrah is done separate from Hajj pilgrimage, it is called / 'umrah mufradah /, a single 'Umrah). This minor pilgrimage to Mecca is very much similar to Hajj pilgrimage in many aspects, but its difference is not so minute, of course.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 159-160

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ
أُولَـئِكَ يَلعَنُهُمُ اللهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ
إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُواْ وَأَصْلَحُواْ وَبَيَّنُواْ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

159. "Verily, those who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidence and the guidance, after We made it clear for mankind in the Book; they are those that Allah does curse them and (also) curse them (all) those who curse (such ones)."

160."Except those who repent, and amend (themselves) and make manifest (the truth). These it is unto whom I turn (mercifully; and I am the Oft-Returning (to mercy), the Merciful (to people)."

Occasion of Revelation

Jalal-ud-Din Suyuty has narrated in his book, 'Asbab-un-Nuzul, from Ibn-Abbas that several Muslim people, such as Ma'ath-ibn-Jabal, Sa'd-ibn-Ma'ath, and Kharijat-ibn-Ziyd asked scholars of the Jews several questions about some subjects in the Torah (which concerned the advent of the Prophet (S)). They concealed the reality of the subject and, (in their answers), did not refer to the main idea. The above verse was revealed about them. [10]

In the occasion of revelation it was mentioned that the addressees in this verse were the scholars of the Jews, but the meaning is general and never limits the concept of the verse to them only. It covers all whosoever that conceal the truth.

This holy verse intensively blames such people, saying:

"Verily, those who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidence and the guidance, after We made it clear for mankind in the Book; they are those that Allah does curse them and (also) curse them (all) those who curse (such ones)."

By this verse, we realize that both Allah and the servants of Allah and angels totally hate this action. In other words, concealing the fact is an action that stimulates the wrath of all adherents of truth from jinn, mankind, and angels.

What a treachery is greater than that the scholars, for the sake of their personal interest, hide the Messages and evidences of Allah, which are His deposits, and cause people to go astray.

The phrase: "after We made it clear for mankind in the Book;" indicates that such persons, in fact, attempt to spoil the struggles of prophets and the

devotions of the godly people alongside the path of the propagation of the Messages of Allah. This action is really a great sin so that none can ignore.

****

The Qur'an, as a book of guidance, never blocks up the way of return and does not shut the windows of hope to people. It never makes people despair for the Mercy of Allah, however much they are sinful. Hence, in the next verse, it shows the way of repentance of this great sin, thus:

"Except those who repent, and amend (themselves) and make manifest (the truth). These it is unto whom I turn (mercifully); and I am the Oft-Returning (to mercy), the Merciful (to people)."

The phrase: "and I am the Oft-Returning (to mercy), the Merciful (to people)," regarding that it has occurred next to the phrase: "These it is unto whom I turn (mercifully)" refers to the particular affection and kindness of Allah unto the repentant ones.

It says if they return, Allah will return, too. If they return to the obedience and servitude, and reveal the fact, Allah will return to Mercy and again shower over them the blessings He had ceased.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 161-163

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

وَإِلَـهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لاَّ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

161. "Verily those who reject faith, and die while they are infidels, upon them shall be the curse of Allah, (of) the angels, and (of) mankind all together."

162. "Abiding therein forever, the torment shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite."

163. "And your God is One God. There is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

It was described in the former verses that if the people who conceal the fact repent and express the reality, they will be involved in the mercy and grace of Allah. But in this verse they are warned that if they do not repent and remain in the state of infidelity until they die, they will be in the same situation that Allah, angels and all people curse them.

Of course, the repentance that occurs before death is accepted, but the repentance at the moment of death is not helpful.

At first, it says:

"Verily those who reject faith, and die while they are infidels, upon them shall be the curse of Allah, (of) the angels, and (of) mankind all together."

This group of infidels, similar to the aforementioned group, is involved in the curse of Allah, angels, and people, too. The difference is that this group, because of their continuous insistence on being faithless, can not have a way to return to the right path.

****

Then, it adds:

"Abiding therein forever, the torment shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite."

****

Since the principle of the Faith in theism can put an end to all these misfortunes, in the last verse of this group of verses, it says:

"And your God is One God...."

Again, to emphasize more, it says:

"... There is no god but He..."

Then, at the end of the verse, as the reason for that statement, it adds:

"...He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

Yes, only the One, Whose general mercy encompasses all creatures, on one side, and on the other side, Whose specific Mercy reaches the true believers, deserves servitude, and no one else.

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balagha, Saying No.93
2. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 143
3. Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 169
4. Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. l, p.197
5. Tara'if, by Sayyid-ibn-Tawus, p. 177; & Sunan Abi-Dawud, vol. 4, p. 152
6. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 82, p. 142
7. Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 2, p. 143
8. Tibyan fi-Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. 2, p.44
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 240
10. Lubab-un-Nuqul fi 'Asbab-in-Nuzul, p. 22

Section 20, Oneness of Allah, Fate of the Polytheists

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 164

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاء مِن مَّاء فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاء وَالأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

164. "Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, and (in) the ships that sail on the sea with what profits mankind, and (in) the water which Allah sends down from heaven and enlivens therewith the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of animal, and in the change of the winds and the clouds controlled (for service) between the sky and the earth; surely there are signs for a people having understanding."

The previous verse spoke about the Oneness of the Lord. Then, here in this verse, there is the reason and evidence to prove the existence of the Providence and that there is only One God, the Glorious. He, the Almighty, is the cause of all causes and the source of knowledge, power, order, and regularity.

Primarily, we attract attention to the fact that uniformity and order, in general, are signs for the existence of intelligence and knowledge, where harmony is a reason for the being of unity.

Based on this principle, the explanation of which has been stated in the books of theism, when we deal with the various aspects of 'order' in the world of existence, we come to the harmony and the unity of action in the regular working of the universe, on one side, and on the other side, we encounter with a single source of knowledge and power that all these glorious effects originate from.

So, the native uniformity and the perfect and the never disturbed harmony in the working of the universe, loudly and most eloquently suggests and clearly manifests the Unity of the Creator and the unchallengeable or unquestionable supremacy of its Single Master or Lord.

Man is exhorted to reflect over the creation and realize the divine unity in the midst of the diversity and the manifoldness of the innumerable objects in the heavens and the earth and in the forces of nature and the perfectly harmonious working of the natural phenomena.

The uniformity and the harmony in the objects and the working of the universe is constantly referred to in the Holy Qur'an as a sign of the Unity of the Maker.

Taking this short introductory explanation into consideration, we continue explaining the commentary of the verse again.

In this verse, there are six aspects of the indication of regularity in the world of existence, each of which is a symbol for the unity of that Infinite Essence or an indication to the Eternal One, the pure Essence, the Supreme Being.

1. The first symbol, which refers to the Unity of the Creator, is the creation of the heavens and the earth:

"Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth..."

Yes, this glorious universe with all its stars and planets, including millions and millions of illuminating suns, some of which meaningfully twinkle at us when we look at the sky at night or show themselves far from behind some great telescopes, all in all are the signs and means of reflection of His Power, Knowledge, and Unity.

It is surprising that the more the knowledge of the human race increases, the clearer the greatness and vastness of this universe is recognized, and it is not evident that how large and up to when this scientific expansion of the recognition of the still secrets of the universe will continue.

Today, scientists and astronomers inform us that there are thousands and thousands of galaxies in the universe where our solar system is only a part of one of them. In our galaxy alone, there are hundreds million suns and bright stars among which, according to the scientists' data, there can be found some millions of inhabitable planets. What a Splendor! What a Power.

In addition to the tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S)[1] and Ahlul-Bayt (as) about some of the verses of the Qur'an confirming the existence of the living creatures in the Heaven and other planets (earths) besides our dwelling earth, there have been written many scientific books on this subject by a lot of Islamic and non-Islamic scholars that the followings are a few examples out of hundreds of similar examples:

a) The Earth, the Sky and the Stars from the View of the Qur'an; by Dr. Muhammad Sadiqi.

b) The Qur'an and the Modern Science; by: 'Abdul-Qani, Al-Khatib; translated by: Dr. Asadullah Mubashshiri.

c) Jahan 'Afarin; by: Husayn Nuri, one of the esteemed scholars in the Religious Teaching Center of Qum.

d) The Earth and the Sky; by: A Welkuf; translated by: Ali Dukhaniyati.

e) Galaxies and Quasars; by: William J. Kaufmann, III (Department of Physics, San Diego, State University).

It should be noted that the life found on other planets may be, of course, rather in a different form from what exists on our globe.

Therefore, in investigations of the matter, we must not consider only the kind of the life on the earth as a standard, because those globes have their own life-conditions for themselves which are certainly different from the circumstances of the life on the earth, so that, in a great deal of cases such as temperature, water, air and light, they are incomparable with that of the earth.

2. The second indication is seen in the constant change of the day and the night, where it says:

"...and the alternation of night and day..."

Yes, the constant change of night and day, the absence of darkness and the presence of light, with that regularity that they have, and, that one ceaselessly becomes shorter and the other one becomes longer, that as a result of which the four seasons come into being, when trees, plants, and animals obtain their evolutions under these gradual changes are totally the signs of His Exalted Essence and Attributes.

If these gradual changes were not, or they happened without order, or they were always either day or night alone, there would be no life throughout the world at all.

3. Then, it points to the ships which move on the water of the seas for the benefit of Man-

"... and (in) the ships that sail on the sea with what profits mankind..."

Man travels long voyages over the seas and oceans by small and large ships towards different points of the world to perform his purposes. This kind of transportation over sea-water can be afforded by employing some factors, particularly when it is done by a sailor.

The first factor is the regular winds that blow from the surface of the seas towards the land and vice versa, including the ceaseless winds blowing from the North Pole and South Pole called 'Arctic winds and Antarctic winds', or the regional winds which blows in their own proper times and let the ships utilize this natural force gratuitously setting forth to their destinations,

Another factor is the natural property of wood against the special pressure of water which causes that it floats over water,

Again, there are the two invariable magnetic poles of the earth which fix the hands of a compass,

The arrangement of the stars in the sky, which lead people to their destinations, is also counted a factor.

Yes, it is with the combination of all these arrangements that the application of ships, with their abundant benefits alongside the help of men, can be made possible. Thus, all these processes are indications of His Pure Essence.

Concerning the sailing ships, it is surprising that today, with the invention of the force of powerful engines used in the ships, not only this meaning has not lost its importance but it has also gotten a higher position in this respect, because the great gigantic ships are still among the best means of transportation and communication between people of different spots.

Some kinds of modern ships are as large as a town, having arenas, pleasure centers, playgrounds, and even a market-place for shopping. Or, in some particular ships, there are airports where several airplanes can land on or take off from.

4. Now, the rain, the life-giving water which is sent down from the sky to the earth, is pointed out. It says:

"...and (in) the water which Allah sends down from heaven and enlivens therewith the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of animal..."

Yes, wherever the pure life-giving drops of rain fall down, thereby, life, freshness, blessing, abundancy, and movement may appear therein. This lifeless but splendid water, which falls down with special order, and waters all those plants and living creatures continually, is the harbinger of His Power and Grandeur.

5. Then, for the useful currents and regular and irregular blowing of the winds, it says:

"...and in the change of the winds..."

The winds blow not only over the seas and oceans and cause ships to move about, but also over the surface of lands, mountains, valleys, and plains. They sometimes take the male pollen from stamens and pollinate the pistil and help their pollination in order to yield us fruits.

They also scatter seeds in different spots of the land to grow. They, at a time frequently move the waves of the seas to stir them and make the conditions conducive for the living creatures.

With transferring the hot weather of the warm regions to the cold regions, and transferring the cold weather of the cold regions to the warm regions, the winds are effective in making the climate of the globe moderate.

Sometimes, the winds push the polluted and poisonous air of the cities, which has not enough oxygen, out into the deserts and forests and cause the fresh air, full of oxygen, to come unto the reach of human beings and other living creatures.

Yes, the wind, that blows and gifts man with benefits and blessings is another sign of His Infinite Grace and Wisdom.

6. The last indication, mentioned in this verse, is clouds which, as servants, in spite of the gravity, are suspending between the sky and the earth to be moved here and there, carrying millions of tons of water easily with them without posing the least danger for anybody. Hence, they are counted as a sign of the Greatness of the Creator, where He says:

"...and the clouds controlled (for service) between the sky and the earth..."

However, if there were not the management of the irrigation of the clouds, there would not be any water throughout the world for man to drink, nor any spring or stream for plants to grow and, everywhere, the lands would be dry and dead. Therefore, this is also another trace of the Knowledge and Might of Allah.

"... surely there are signs for a people having understanding."

Yes, all of the above mentioned indications are the evidence of the existence of that Pure Essence, but for the people who understand and contemplate, not for the unaware ones and the people of little wisdom who have eyes but have not eyesight, or have ears but are deaf.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 165

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللّه أَندَاداً يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللّه وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلّه

وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلّه جَمِيعاً وَأَنَّ اللّه شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

165. "And yet, of men, there are some who take unto themselves (for worship) objects other than Allah, and love them as the love due to Allah; but for those who have faith, their love of Allah is more intensive. And if only those who are unjust could see (what they will realize) when they behold the punishment, that the Power is wholly Allah's, and that Allah is severe in (enforcing) the Penalty."

Disbelievers have gone astray. Their affection to things other than Allah is like the wish and desire of a sick person unto eating the food which is harmful for his sickness but the patient ignorantly persists on having it. In

contrast with them are the believers. So those who have Faith surely love Allah very intensively and more than anything or anybody else.

The pagans, who have done unjustly to themselves, will see their miserable destination on the Day of Reckoning, when they will recognize their wrong thought and their deviation. On that Day they will understand fully that the entire Power belongs to Allah and that they had gone a wrong way when they had referred to other than Him.

The intensive punishment of Allah, on that Day, will be upon those who, thoughtlessly and unreasonably, had left out the attachment to Allah and clung to some vain and chaffy imaginations.

Then, it is so that in Surah 'Anam. No.6. verse 102, to guide them, Allah warns them thus:

"That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things."

By the way, it is narrated by Muhammad-ibn-Muslim that Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as), speaking about the phrase: "...but for those who have faith, their love is more intensive" had said: "They are the progeny of Muhammad (S) ". [2]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 166

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُواْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُواْ وَرَأَوُاْ الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الأَسْبَابُ

166. "When would those that were followed disown those who followed and they would see the torment and their ties (between them) are cut asunder."

Beware who your leader is and whose love you carry in your heart! Those of you who love these tyrants and pay your affections to other than Allah, should know that they (the tyrants) want you for their own interests in this world.

Therefore, they abuse your abilities and sincerity to obtain their own wishes, power and authority. But, on the Resurrection Day, they will avoid you and, hating you, will leave you alone.

This meaning should also be noted that in Tafsir-ul-Burhan and in the book 'Ikhtisas', by Shaykh Mufid, there are some traditions cited about the meaning of the phrase: "when would those that were followed disown those who followed...".

Among them, there is a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) who said: "By Allah, O' Jabir, these are the leaders of transgressors and their means for injustice." [3]

Therefore, in contrast with this group, as was referred in the previous verse, are the truly faithful ones, who bear the intensive love in their heart for Allah. They love not only the genuine leaders of the religion but also everything that Allah loves.

The basic reason for this is that everything they love is only for gaining Allah's pleasure. Even when they love their own family and issues, they love because it is their duty to do so as prescribed by Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 167

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُواْ لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّؤُواْ مِنَّا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ

167."And those who followed shall say: 'Had there been for us a return (to the world), then we would disown them even as they have (now) disowned us. Thus Allah will show them their deeds; bitter regrets will be upon them. And never shall they get out of the Fire."

These mislead followers, who see the unfaithfulness of their leaders so evident, console themselves by saying:

"Had there been for us a return (to the world), then we would disown them even as they have (now) disowned us..."

But, what a pity! It is too late, because there is no possibility for them to return to life again.

Then, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... Thus Allah will show them their deeds; bitter regrets will be upon them. And never shall they get out of the Fire."

Yes, they can afford nothing but sigh and regret bitterly. A regret for the wealth they gathered but others took the benefit of it. A regret for the extraordinary opportunities that they had had for attaining prosperity and being saved, but they missed them all easily. Regret for adoring some incapable worthless leaders instead of adoring Allah, the Almighty.

But, it is a vain regret, because it is neither the time of action nor the occasion for making up for the past. Nay! it is only the time of punishment and receiving the results of one's own deeds.

According to some traditions, there are some different halts in the Hereafter. In a few of these halts people cannot speak anything and silence dominates lips, where they can merely look at others regretfully and shed tears. In some other of these halts, there are people who ask each other for help, while some others curse and hate each other for their former deeds.

This verse indicates that at this time when the cruel leaders, who were adored, loved, and followed formerly, here, disown their followers and accept no responsibility for them. So, the followers disown them, too, and regret very much why they loved them, supported them, and followed them.

But they gained naught. They regret in heart and express their regret by tongue in this manner that if they could return to life once more, they would never follow them. They say that these people who are so disloyal that they denounce their followers here on this Day (the Reckoning Day), they (the followers), too, would denounce them if they could return to the world again. They regret, but what is the use of this regret? It is of no use, and they cannot come out from the blazing Fire of Hell.

Notes

1. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 58, p. 102,106
2. Tafsir-i-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 172
3. Tafsir-al-Burhan. vol. 1. n. 172

Section 21, Only lawful and clean food should be taken

Injunction about the use of food-stuff -Blind following disallowed.

Concealing of truth and corrupting the Word of God and bartering it for worldly gains amounts to the eating of Fire.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 168-169

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُواْ مِمَّا فِي الأَرْضِ حَلاَلاً طَيِّباً وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاء وَأَن تَقُولُواْ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

168."O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is a manifest foe for you."

169. "Verily, he (Satan) enjoins you evil acts and indecency and that you should speak against Allah what you know not."

One of the signs of a complete religion is that it considers the usage of the unlawful food-stuffs a Satanic deed (as the Qur'an says: "...intoxicants and games of chance... are an abomination of Satan's work...") [1], and the inappropriate avoidance of eating the lawful ones originated from the temptations of Satan, (as the Qur'an says: "...eat of what Allah has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan…").[2] Therefore, in the current verse, too, it says:

"O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...."

In some of the historical narrations it is cited that a few of the Arab tribes had unreasonably forbidden a part of their crops and their animals for themselves, where they used to sometimes attribute those prohibitions to Allah. Then, the above verse was revealed to dismiss that ambiguity.

Islam pays also specific attention to the material life of people. At the top of these things is the food necessities about which there are found tens of Qur'anic verses and hundreds of traditions in Islamic literature.

One of the duties of prophets has been to define the lawful and unlawful edible materials and drinks beside the introduction of the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. This verse emphasizes that we have to consume from what is religiously lawful and pure / halal / on the earth:

"O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good;..."

And that we must not prohibit ourselves from some things under the effect of the Satan's temptation, because it is certain that Satan is our open enemy:

"...and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is a manifest foe for you."

Imam Baqir (as) has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said: "Worship of Allah is divided into seventy divisions, the best of which is earning a living lawfully." [3]

Again, in another tradition, the very holy Imam, the fifth Imam, (as) has said: "He who seeks for sustenance in this world in order to be independent of people for his needs, to provide for his family members, and to stretch

affection unto his neighbours, will meet Allah, Almighty and Glorious, on the Day of Judgement while his face will be as bright as the full moon." [4]

****

It is cited in Tafsir-i-Rouh-ul-Bayan that Satan has some different stages in his invitations unto temptations. At first, he invites to infidelity. If he fails in this phase, he invites to innovation. If he does not succeed, he invites to lesser sins.

Failing in these stages, Satan invites to doing good and lawful deeds instead of worshipping Allah. When he fails in this phase, too, he invites to performing worships with lower qualities than the noble ones in order to stop a person from promoting to higher degrees. [5]

Thus, the statement of the verse is a warning against what Satan does and how he leads men astray by his different forms of evil whispers when the Qur'an says:

"Verily, he (Satan) enjoins you evil acts and indecency and that you should speak against Allah what you know not."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 170-171

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنزَلَ اللهُ قَالُواْ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يَهْتَدُونَ

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لاَ يَسْمَعُ إِلاَّ دُعَاء وَنِدَاء صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ

170."And when they are told: 'Follow what Allah has sent down,' they say: 'Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon,' even though their fathers had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright.

171. "And the parable of those who reject Faith is as the likeness of the one who shouts to that which hears no more than a call and a cry; deaf, dumb, and blind (are they) wherefore they do not understand."

Blind following of the ancestors is condemned

The previous verse warned us to avoid following the whispers and footsteps of Satan. Now, in this verse, one of the examples of those footsteps, which is the blind following of others, is pointed out. It says:

"And when they are told:

'Follow what Allah has sent down,'

They say: 'Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon'…"

They mean that they do not care what the verse of Allah say or the messenger of Allah invites to. So, in answer to them, the Qur'an says:

"…even though their fathers had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright."

This statement refers to the fact that: if their fathers had no wisdom and understanding by themselves nor had they accepted the godly guidance of the prophets, then, would they follow their fathers yet? If their ancestors or the infidels themselves had wisdom or were guided, it would not matter, but it is not so.

There are two comparisons in this verse: 1) the likening of the caller of Truth to a shepherd; 2) the likening of infidels to some beasts that

understand nothing from the speech of the shepherd save a call and a cry. This simile has been confirmed in a tradition by Imam Baqir (as), too. The parable means that the invitation of the Prophet (S) from that faithless crowd to Truth and breaking the dam-like barrier of blindly imitation is similar to the person who shouts to cattle of sheep or some animals in order to save them from danger but they do not understand this message.

"And the parable of those who reject Faith is as the likeness of the one who shouts to that which hears no more than a call and a cry..."

Then, at the end of the verse, to emphasize more and to explain it more clearly, it adds:

"... deaf, dumb, and blind (are they) wherefore they do not understand."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 172

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُواْ لِلّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

172. "O' you who have Faith! eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if Him it is you worship."

In this verse, too, Allah advises us to be grateful for using the blessings and bounties, and thank Him. There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S), cited in Tafsir Safi, stating that Allah says that He creates people, but they worship other than Him; and, He provides (them) sustenance, but they thank others save Allah. [6]

It is made clear in this verse that we ought to eat from the good wholesome foods that Allah has provided us sustenance and be thankful to Him.

"O' you who have Faith! eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah..."

Intellect necessitates the act of thankfulness to the giver of a bounty, too.

"... if Him it is you worship."

However, being thankful to Allah is a means of continuity and abundancy of bounties. And, to be grateful to Allah is a sign of sincerity and the purity of one's Faith.

It is narrated from Imam Hadi (as) who said that the wrath of Allah encompasses those who prohibit or deprive themselves from the godly lawful things and permissible deeds. [7]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 173

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللّهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلاَ عَادٍ فَلا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

173. "Verily, He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name) than Allah's been invoked upon it. But whoever is forced (by necessity), not desiring nor transgressing, no sin shall be on him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Following the previous subject, this verse states that certain edible things are lawful to eat, and we should not prohibit the lawful things of Allah to ourselves opinionatedly and because of some vain imaginations. Yet, Allah

has forbidden us carrion, blood, swine flesh or the flesh of any animal slaughtered invoking the name of anybody else other than God, as it says:

"Verily, He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name) than Allah's been invoked upon it...."

There are some logical and acceptable reasons cited for this Divine law of prohibition, of course. For example, it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

"No one obtains anything from carrion but weakness of his body, decrease of his strength, and cease of his offspring. And, the consumer of carrion dies not but by a sudden death. Those who consume blood (as food stuff) become hard-hearted...." [8]

According to some hygienical advice, the flesh of swine is the carrier of two kinds of microbes called tapeworms and trichina. (The latter is a very small nematode worm trichinella, whose larvae infest the intestines and voluntary muscles of man, pigs etc., causing trichinosis).

Today, it is forbidden to use swine flesh even in some Eastern countries. In former divine religions, such as the religion of the Jews, the flesh of swine has been held in great detestation. In the Bible, the sinners are also likened to swine.

There is an exception, of course, where the term / qayrabaqin / denotes not for enjoyment but forced by unavoidable necessity, and term / 'adin / means without any intention to revolt against the prescribed laws of Allah or not exceeding the bare limits of the actual want or the bare necessity.

If anybody under circumstances beyond his control or forced by necessity, to save his life, takes such things, it will not be a sin upon him.

"...But whoever is forced (by necessity), not desiring nor transgressing, no sin shall be on him..."

This permission is because of the Mercy and Grace of Allah, as the verse itself says:

"...surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful..."

It is cited in Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn in an expressive tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said: "Whoever is forced (to eat) carrion or blood, or swine flesh and he avoids eating something of it until he dies, then he is an infidel." [9]

Explanations

1. Islam has paid full attention to the problem of food-stuffs. It has frequently warned Muslims against the putrid, harmful, and unlawful food. The prohibition of swine flesh, carrion and blood is found in four occurrences in the Qur'an. The Messages of this prohibition were preached two times in Medina and two times in Mecca.

2. Considering Allah, and invoking His name at the time of slaughtering animals, is necessary. This is to warn us to know and be aware that everything belongs to Allah and therefore, none of our deeds should be done out of the circle of theism.

3. Islam is a complete and an easy religion. It stops in no, circumstance. Every ritual duty or religious prohibition can be changed when there is an emergency.

4. No one must misuse the necessary circumstances in this respect.

General Conclusion

Here in this verse, and in the similar other verses of the Qur'an, is laid down the principle of the Islamic law to be observed under normal conditions and the law of exception for the state of emergency.

The things forbidden under normal conditions may be permissible in the emergency. The spirit of the law to be observed in both the cases is the sense of obedience, and sticking to the prescribed limits. Under no circumstances any revolt against any law is allowed.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 174-176

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلَ اللهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً أُولَـئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي
بُطُونِهِمْ إِلاَّ النَّارَ وَلاَ يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلاَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الضَّلاَلَةَ بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُواْ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

174. "Surely those who conceal any part of the Book which Allah has sent down (to them), and sell it for a small price - they shall eat naught but Fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment."

175. "Those are they who have bought error for guidance and punishment for forgiveness; how they shall endure the Fire!"

176. "This is because Allah has sent down the Book with the Truth; and surely those who differ in the Book are in flagrant schism."

Before the advent of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), the Jewish scholars used to tell their people about that happy advent and described the signs of that promised Prophet for them from the Torah.

But as soon as the Prophet of Islam (S) was divinely appointed and announced his Call, they did not confess the prophet hood of Muhammad (S) for they thought they would lose their position, wealth, etc. It was why they neglected everything and concealed the Truth.

Such people, by concealing the fact, might remain in their position receiving some presents and gifts for a length of time but this is a little price comparing to that great sin of theirs.

"Surely those who conceal any part of the Book which Allah has sent down (to them), and sell it for a small price..."

What they take and eat in this bargain is naught, indeed, but Fire.

This meaning is similar to the content of the verse where eating the wealth of orphans is likened to Fire, too, as if they ate Fire in their bellies. [10] So, it says:

"...they shall eat naught but Fire into their bellies..."

On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will not speak to these people mercifully, while the believers can speak with Him then. This talk, of course, may be either through some waves created in the space, or by inspiration and the mute tongue of the heart. On that Day all believing people can become interlocutors of Allah.

Those persons, who tried to bar the influence of the sound of truth from reaching the ears of people, have shut, in fact, the way of the speech of Allah on the Reckoning Day to themselves. They will not hear a word of kindness, but hear the word of wrath in Hell, being addressed with words such as:

"Go away into it and speak not (to Me)...". [11]

Allah will not purify them from their sins then, because there will be a painful punishment prepared for them as a result of their evil actions in this world.

"...and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment."

Explanations

1. Selling Faith, in any case and rate, is a loss and the obtained price is a little: "...and sell it for a small price.."

2. The unlawful food or drinks of this world will incarnate in the form of Fire in the Hereafter, "...but Fire..."

3. Punishment should be appropriate to the crime. Those who bar the way of reaching the word of Allah for people to hearken in this world must be deprived from the pleasure of hearing the speech of Allah in the next world.

4. Concealing the truth is not only about the holy Prophet (S). Those who conceal the truth about the true successors of Prophet Muhammad (S), receive the same punishment, too.

That is, those who have hidden the announcement of the Messenger of Allah in Qadir-i-Khum and obliterated it from their history and commentary books and perverted the process of the verses of the Qur'an with their own justifications in order to mislead Muslims towards some particular ones other than the immaculate Imams have concealed the Truth, too.

Those who conceal the Truth are some persons who exchange misguidance for guidance and punishment for forgiveness.

"Those are they who have bought error for guidance and punishment for forgiveness..."

Do they not know that they somehow share with the corruption and aberration of mankind throughout history by their action when they conceal the Truth? Do they think that they are able to bear the punishment of Allah?

"... how they shall endure the Fire! "

It is narrated in a tradition that the holy Prophet (S), speaking with Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), said: "The worst of men is he who sells his coming world for his present life, and more evil than this is the one who sells his coming world for the present life of someone else." [12]

****

The people who conceal the Truth are severely warned and threatened with Divine punishments, because Allah has sent down the Book so clearly and reasonably that no doubt or ambiguity remains for anyone.

"This is because Allah has sent down the Book with the Truth..."

Yet, there are some people who, to protect their personal interests, take action in justification and falsification of the concepts of the revealed Book and cause people to differ in it. In this way, they intend to gain some profits without any due, or unlawfully. Then, Allah, introducing them, says:

"...and surely those who differ in the Book are in flagrant schism..."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No.5, verse 90
2. Surah Al-'An'am, No.6. Verse 142
3. Tafsir Al-Burhan fi vol.1 p. 173
4. Al-Kafi vol. 5 p.78
5. Tafsir-i-Rouh-ul-Bayan. vol. 1. p. 272
6. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 193
7. Tafsir-i-Nur, vol. 1, p. 329
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 16, p. 310
9. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 155
10. Surah An-Nisa’, No.4, verse 10
11. Surah Al-Mu'minun, No.23, verse 108
12. Man La Yahduruhul-Faghih, vol. 4, p. 253

Section 22: Genuine Righteousness, Retaliation & Bequest

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 177

لَّيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَـكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّآئِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُواْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاء والضَّرَّاء وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

177. "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles, and for the love of Him gives (of) his wealth, although he likes it, to the kindred, the orphans, the needy, the travelers, beggars and for the (emancipation of) slaves, and keeps up the prayer, and pays the poor-rates (zakat); and those who fulfill their promise whenever they make a promise, and are patient in distress, adversity, and in the time of war, these are they who are the truthful (in Faith verbally and actually) and these are the pious ones."

The Faith of a person in Allah causes him to be humble before Him and to stand firm, with no obedience, before tyrants; where the Faith in Resurrection creates eyesight and magnanimity; and Faith in angels refers to the existence of belief in the processes of supernatural including the Faith in revelation, Providence, etc.

Faith in prophets is a belief in a straight way and true guidance existing throughout history. It is evidence leading to the fact that Man has never been aimless and absolutely free in this world.

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles..."

The Qur'anic phrases: "gives (of) his wealth" indicates the assistance and humanity of believers; "keep up the prayer" refers to the direct link with Allah; "pay the poor-rates (zakat)" leads to planning the social life for solving the problem of different layers of the society; "Those who fulfill their promise whenever they make a promise" strengthens the coherence and connection between people; and the concept of "are patient" is an active factor in Man to become persevering and stable.

"... and for the love of Him gives (of) his wealth, although he likes it, to the kindred, the orphans, the needy, the travelers, beggars and for the (emancipation of) slaves, and keeps up the prayer, and pays the poor-rates (zakat); and those who fulfill their promise whenever they make a promise, and are patient in distress, adversity, "and in the time of war, these are they who are the truthful (in Faith verbally and actually) and these are the pious ones."

Explanations

1- This verse is one of the most consistent verses of the Qur'an. It is cited in Al-Mizan, that the Messenger of Allah said in a tradition that everyone who acts according to this verse has a complete Faith. [1]

2- We should heed the content and essence of the religion rather than to go after the mere mottoes, which hold us back from the main godly aims.

3- The number of those who claim Faith is very large, but the true believers, who follow all the details of this verse, are a particular small group: "These are they who...".

4- Belief in Allah, Resurrection and revealed Book is mentioned before the fulfillment of the righteous deeds.

5- In this verse, the act of attachment to Allah "Faith in Allah", and connecting with the poor and deprived people, and also social aids upon accidents and afflictions have been stated together, one after another, in the verse.

6- For reaching a true piety, donation in both obligatory and non-obligatory forms are necessary. There are some people who sometimes help the poor while they do not pay their religious obligatory payments.

There are also some other believing people who pay their obligatory payments but are often indifferent to the poor and the deprived. Here, in this verse, the true pious believers are introduced as those who pay both their obligatory alms and recommended donations; as well:

"... and for the love of Him gives (of) his wealth"

Regarding this meaning, that is why that some Islamic narrations say that in the wealth of the rich, besides the poor-rates, there is a portion for the deprived and the poor. [2]

And also, the one who goes to bed while he is satiated but someone in his neighborhood is hungry, has faith neither in Allah nor in the Hereafter. [3]

Therefore, to feel responsibility for the hungry people, is a duty on us, whether we have paid the obligatory alms or not.

7- It is necessary to show patience and perseverance in all the followings:

Being patient and firm in facing with poverty and afflictions.

To show patience and endurance in having ailments.

To be patient in battle and at the time of Holy War.

However, patience is the cause of all virtues. So, the Qur'an introduces patience as one of the factors for entering Heaven, where it says: “These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient…” [4]

These are given high positions as a reward for the patience they had, while some others are honored by angels in Heaven with these words: “Peace be on you because you were constant…” [5]

And, one of the conditions of obtaining the position of Imamate is to be patient, as the Qur'an says: “And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command when they were patient…” [6]

8- The application of the term / birr / (righteous) is similar to the application of honey. Whoever or whatever is very sweet and wholesome is likened to honey, Then, whosoever is very good and benevolent is called ' righteous'; viz, , such a one is absolutely a right-doer.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 178-179

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالأُنثَى بِالأُنثَى فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاء إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

178. "O' you who have Faith! Retaliation (Qisas) if prescribed for you in the matter of the (unlawfully) murdered: the freeman for the freeman, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. But for him who if forgiven somewhat by his (aggrieved religious) brother, then prosecution (for blood-wit) should be made according to a fair manner (ma'ruf) and let the payment be made to him with kindliness. This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy; so whoever transgresses the limits after this, he shall have a painful punishment."

179. "And in (the law of) retaliation there if (saving of) life for you, O' people of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."

Occasion of Revelation

The custom in the Age of Ignorance among some Arabs was so that when an individual was murdered from their tribe, they would decide to kill as many members from the murderer's tribe as they could.

That thought was so harsh that they were ready to destroy even the entire people of the murderer's tribe for only a single murder. Then, the above verse was sent down and announced the just law of retaliation, (Qisas).

This Islamic decree was, indeed, a medial status between the two different injunctions which were current at that time. Before the revelation of this ordinance of Islam, some people considered retaliation necessary, with no changes, so that nothing else was permissible to substitute it, while some other groups believed that only the rule of blood-wit should be followed.

So, Islam decreed the law of retaliation in the case of the discontent of the heirs of the murdered, and blood-wit when both parties agree upon it.

Saving of Life in Retaliation

From this verse on, in the current Surah, a series of decrees and ordinances of Islam are stated and completed.

At first, it begins with the protection of the value of blood which is an extraordinary important problem in social connections. Through this verse, Islam makes all the concerning old customs invalid. The Qur'an, addressing the believers, says:

"O' you who have Faith! Retaliation (Qisas) is prescribed for you in the matter of the (unlawfully) murdered..."

The Holy Qur'an, in the case of some indispensable commands, sometimes makes use of the phrase: "It is prescribed for you" to state the matter. The above verse, for example, is an instance of this application where the coming verses, which speaks about 'making bequest' and 'fasting', are other ones.

In any case, this particular phrase makes the importance and emphasis of the theme clear, because those matters are always written that, from any point of view, have reached to the state of positiveness and are earnest.

As it was pointed out in the occasion of revelation, these verses, with the application of the term retaliation and in order to moderate the intemperance which the Age of Ignorance fulfilled about murder, show that the heirs of the murdered are rightful to accomplish, against the murderer, exactly the same that that person has committed upon the murdered.

But the Qur'an does not suffice only to this amount. In this very verse, it exposes the problem of equality to discussion with a particular explicitness where it continues saying: '…the freeman for the freeman, the slave for the slave, the female for the female…'

Allah willing, we will explain that this idea is not an evidence, as some have considered, for the superiority of the male-blood to the female-blood, and that a male murderer, under certain conditions, can be punished by the law of retaliated for the murder of a woman.

Then, to make it clear that the subject of retaliation is merely a right for the heirs of the murdered and it is not a convincing ordinance for them when they can simply forgive the murderer, if they wish, and take a blood-wit, or even, they can take no blood-wit at all, it immediately adds:

"...But for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (aggrieved religious) brother, then prosecution (for blood-wit) should be made according to a fair, manner (ma'ruf) and let the payment be made to him with kindliness...."

Thus, on one hand, the avengers of blood are advised not to be immoderate in taking a blood-price if they dispense with retaliation, and take the blood-wit with a fair price and according to what Islam has appointed and also by installments so that the party be able to pay it.

And, on the other hand, through the sentence: "...let the payment be made to him with kindness", it recommends the murderer to pay the blood-price in a right style and without any negligence so that his debt be entirely paid on time. Therefore, the Qur'an has defined the duty of each party and how they should treat to each other.

At the end of the verse, for emphasis and to attract the attentions to the fact that transgressing the limits of Allah, from the side of whoever it may be, deserves a severe punishment, it says:

"...This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy; so whoever transgresses the limits after this, he shall have a painful punishment."

This equitable command for 'retaliation' and 'forgiveness' which makes up a quite logical manly assemblage, condemns, on one hand, the wrong method of the Ignorance Age which considered no equality in retaliation and, similar to the tyrants of this very age of space, sometimes killed hundreds of people in excuse of the murder of one person.

And, on the other hand, it does not shut the door of pardon to people. In the meantime, it does not lower the respect of blood, and does not allow murderers to become bold and presumptuous. And also, thirdly, it announces that neither of the two parties is permitted to transgress the limits after accepting the principle of pardon and blood-wit.

This command was issued in spite of the old custom of the Ignorant tribes where the heirs of the murdered might kill the murderer even after forgiving him and taking the blood-wit.

****

The next verse, in a short but very expressive sentence, answers a great deal of questions in regards to the problem of retaliation. It says:

"And in (the law of) retaliation there is (saving of) life for you,

O' people of understanding so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."

This verse, which in the Qur'anic text consists of ten particles, is expressed in utmost eloquence and clarity. It is so interesting that its first phrase has become as an Islamic motto used by common Muslim people.

It clearly shows that Islamic law of retaliation is not for revenging at all, but it is a door-way to life for men to let them continue living.

Retaliation, on one hand, guards the safety of the life of the society, because if the ordinance of retaliation were not in any form at all, the hard-hearted persons would feel security and, consequently, the lives of people would be in danger.

The evidence for this is the countries wherein the law of retaliation has been nullified and the number of murders and crime has incredibly increased.

On the other hand, the law of retaliation causes the life of a homicidal person be saved since it prevents him considerably from the thought of murder and brings him under control.

For the sake of the necessity of equality and order, the law of retaliation is a hinder against the frequent slaughters and puts an end to the customs of some Ignorant tribes in which a single murder has been the pretext of several murders and the latter, in turn, has been the cause of further slaughters, too. By this way, the law of retaliation has also stopped some of those homicides and caused a few societies continue to live peacefully.

Regarding the fact that it is only in the absence of pardon that the ordinance of retaliation can be executed, the existence of the Islamic law of retaliation, in general, is also another phase opened to life and living.

The concluding phrase which says: "... so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)" completes this wise ordinance of Islam. This meaning is also considered as a warning which halts or retards any oppression and transgression.

Retaliation & Pardon, a Complete Assemblage

Islam, in all respects, follows the problems inclusively and with their proper practical aspects. It has stated the right perfect idea about the proposition of unlawfully murdered, far from any injustice or excessive progressiveness.

This Islamic law is similar neither to the perverted Jewish law, which emphasizes only on mere retaliation, nor to the present Christianity, which advises its followers to pave only the way of either pardon or compensation; because the latter causes to embolden the homicides and the former can become a factor of harsh vengeance and brutality.

Suppose that the murdered and the murderer be two brothers, or they have some background of friendship or social connections. In this case, bonding to retaliation, may produce a new additional grievance for the family of the murdered, especially when the concerning people are full of human love and affection, then, forcing them to execute the act of retaliation, itself, can be considered another grief and torture upon them. On the other hand, limiting the law to pardon and compensation alone also makes the corruptive people bolder.

This is why Islam has decreed the law of retaliation as the main ordinance and, to moderate it, has added the ordinance of pardon beside it and along with it.

In other words, the heirs of the murdered are rightful to choose one of the following varieties:

1- The execution of retaliation,

2- To pardon without taking any blood-wit.

3- To pardon with taking the blood-wit. (In this case, of course, the consent of the murderer is also necessarily considered.)

Explanations

It is possible that some groups object that the command in the verses of retaliation is that a 'man' should not be killed for the murder of a 'woman', then, what is the difference between the life of a man and that of a woman?

Why should a male not be killed under the punishment of the law of retaliation for the slaughter of an innocent female, -a gender (i.e. the feminine gender) that forms half of the population over the earth?

The answer to this question is that: the verse does not mean a 'male' should not be retaliated against by capital punishment for a 'female'. But according to what is detailed in the books of Islamic jurisprudence, the heirs of the murdered woman can punish the male-murderer by the law of retaliation (i.e. capital punishment) on condition that they pay half of the blood-price.

In other words, the purpose of the lack of retaliation (Qisas) of a 'man' for the slaughter of a 'woman' is retaliation without any condition; but his killing is permissible, of course, when half of the blood-price is paid.

No explanation is necessary here that the payment of the aforementioned sum for the execution of the punishment under the law of retaliation does not mean that a woman, from the point of philanthropy, is lower than a man or a female is less dear than a male. This is, indeed, absolutely a wrong and illogical imagination.

The apparent form of the term 'blood-price' may have been the origin of the appearance of this imagination. The act of the payment of the half sum of blood-price is only for the compensation of the loss that the man's family members suffer from his capital punishment by the law of retaliation.

The expansion of the explanation is that: males are usually the effective financial factor of their families. It is often men, in families, who earn a living and pay money for the expenditures, in general, and run the economical affairs therein.

Therefore, the difference between a man and a woman, from the point of economy and finance in their own family, is quite clear to everybody. If this

difference be not observed, the remaining family members and the innocent children of the murdered man have surely to suffer an amount of unreasonable financial damage.

Hence, Islam, with the rule of the payment of half of the blood-wit for the punishment of a 'man' by the law of retaliation, has considered the rights of all members, and prevented the unforgivable injury and stroke that a family may be given.

Islam never lets the rights of some individuals, such as the children of the person who has been punished by the law of retaliation, be trod under the pretext of the term 'equality '.

It is possible, of course, that some women earn a living in their own family better than men there. But we know that a law or an ordinance does not turn around the pivot of an individual, and we must compare the totality of men with the totality of women.

Another point that attracts the attention, and is understood from the phrase "by his brother", is that Islam strengthens the relation of brotherhood between its followers so firm that even after the illegitimate shedding of blood it is still valid.

So, to encourage the heirs of the murderer to forgiveness and moderation, and also to put their affection in motion, Islam introduces them as the brothers of the murderer. And, this meaning is both surprising and interesting.

The mentioned situation, of course, is about those murderers who have taken action in this great heinous sin under the force of emotion, wrath, and the like of them, and the murderers have also become regretful and repented of their wrong action.

But, the murderers who are proud of their crime and, with no regret or repentance, boast about it, are neither worthy of the appellation of ' brethren 'nor are they eligible for pardon.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 180-182

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالأَقْرَبِينَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ
فَمَن بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
فَمَنْ خَافَ مِن مُّوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلاَ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

180."It is prescribed for you, when death approaches (any) one of you, and if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives that he makes a bequest in a fair manner - (this is) a duty (incumbent) on the pious ones."

181. "Whoever then changes it (the bequest) after he has heard it, the sin thereof shall be on those who change it. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

182. "But if anyone fears injustice or sin on the part of a testator, and establishes agreement among them (the parties concerned), then there is no sin upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Bequest in a Fair Manner

The speech in former verses was about problems such as life, murder, murdered, and retaliation, while in these verses a part of the ordinances of bequest in relation with the financial affairs is referred to, where it says:

"It is prescribed for you, when death approaches (any) one of you, and if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives that he makes a bequest in a fair manner..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"... (this is) a duty (incumbent) on the pious ones."

Bequest should not be considered as a bad omen. Some persons think that bequest is a sign of death or passing away soon, while bequest is a kind of providence and farsightedness. So, if the verse tells us to leave a bequest at the presence of death by saying: "When death approaches (any) one of you..." it is for the reason that those moments are the last occasions; else, an individual can lay down a bequest years before the time of death.

Some Islamic groups have considered the bequest an obligatory ordinance, but as it is understood from the phrase "... (this is) a duty on the pious ones" this action is voluntary, otherwise it would say: this is a duty on the believers.

According to the attitudes of the Islamic commentators and jurisprudents, leaving a bequest is, of course, incumbent when the one is in debt to people or there is a religious duty upon the one which must be fulfilled.

These duties may be such as: one fifth levy (khums), poor-tax (zakat), performance of pilgrimage (Hajj), etc., and in other ordinary cases, similar to them, leaving a bequest is emphatically praiseworthy.

By the way, in this verse, the Arabic term 'khayr' has been applied for 'wealth' to make it manifest that Islam knows wealth a good thing and a blessing from Allah when it has been earned in a lawful way and is spent alongside the path of the help and benefit of people.

This idea nullifies the wrong attitudes of those who think of wealth substantially as a bad thing. Islam hates those deviated pretenders to piety who have not recognized the spirit of Islam and think of Islamic piety as a quality equivalent to poverty.

The wrong thought and behaviour of such apparent believers cause the stagnation of some Islamic societies and, consequently, the development of the exploiters.

In the meanwhile, this very meaning of the verse is a slight hint to the idea that the logical abundance of wealth is lawful in Islam. The evidence is that the unlawful wealth that a person leaves behind in this world is not 'fair', but it is adversity and evil.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the word 'khayr', here, refers to the considerable wealth that needs being bequeathed. Therefore the inconsiderable properties, which the heirs can divide between themselves according to the canonical law of heritage, need not be bequeathed.

In other words, a small amount of wealth is not something that one separates one third of it to leave a bequest for. [7]

The phrase: "...when death approaches (any) one of you," is for the statement of the last opportunity available for leaving down a bequest so

that if it be postponed, it may be missed. At any rate, it is fairly appropriate that we, having forethought and utilizing our opportunity, prepare ourselves by writing down our bequest.

This manner, as it is understood from the Islamic literature, not only is good but also quite admirable.

The Messenger of Allah said: "Whosoever dies and has left a bequest has died as a martyr." 8This meaning is considerably mentioned in some other traditions, too. Then, it is from improvidence of a person who imagines that leaving a bequest is a bad omen through which a person pushes his death forward.

But, bequeathing is a kind of undeniable factual farsightedness which, although it might not prolong the longevity, will surely never shorten the life time.

Bequest restricted with the term / bil ma'ruf / (in a fair manner) shows that a bequest must be reasonable in all respects. It should be done in a fair manner both from the point of amount of wealth and in respect of the person to whom the bequest is addressed, so that customary law and common-sense know it rationally a good action; not a sort of unjust discrimination which usually causes conflicts and deviation from the limits of justice and truth.

****

When a bequest contains all the above mentioned qualities, it is respectable and sacred in all aspects. Hence, any change or conversion in it is forbidden and is counted unlawful (haram), as the verse itself says: "Whoever then changes it (the bequest) after he has heard it, the sin thereof shall be on those who change it...."

And, if they imagine that Allah does not know their plots, they are intensively in err, as it says:

"...Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

This verse may also point to this fact that the wrong actions committed by the executor of testament never nullify the reward of the testator. When such an evil happens, the sin is only upon the executor of testament who has changed something from the quality or quantity of the testament or has interfered with the fundamentals of the testament itself.

Yet, the testator will obtain his own concerned godly reward whether the testament that he has left be changed later, in any form, or not.

Another probability has also been cited in the commentary of the verse. It says that the purpose is: when the property of the dead, as the result of the wrong actions of the executor of testament intentionally is given to some ones who are not deserving of it, (and they are not aware of that wrong action), there is no sin on them. So the sin is only on the executor of testament who deliberately has committed such a wrong.

It should be also noted that there is no contradiction between these two commentaries, and both can be gathered from the meaning of the verse.

****

So far, concerning this Islamic decree, it has become quite clear that any change, of any kind and of any amount, in testaments is a sin. But, since there may be exceptions in a law or ordinance, then, in the last verse of this group of verses, it says:

"But if anyone fears injustice or sin on the part of a testator, and establishes agreement among them (the parties concerned), then there is no sin upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Thus, the exception is only due to the instances where the testament has not been arranged properly. It is only in this status that a change made by the executor of testament is permissible.

Then, if the testator is still alive, the executor must notify him/her of that intention to change the testament, but if the testator has passed away, the executor takes action on changing it himself. This situation, from the point of the Islamic jurisprudence, is restricted to the following cases:

1. When the testator has bequeathed more than one third of his total wealth. According to the Islamic literature based on the traditions narrated from the holy Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (Ahlul-Bayt) (as), a person can make a bequest on his wealth only up to one third of it, since more than that is not religiously permissible in Islam. [9]

Therefore, making bequest over the entire property benevolently for good intentions, which is common among some unaware people, is, regarding the Islamic laws, perfectly wrong. So, the duty is upon the executor of the bequest to decrease it up to one third of the remaining wealth.

2. If the testator has bequeathed something of sin, transgression, and evil to be performed, it is up to the executor to change it. For example, when the testator makes bequest that a part of his wealth be spent on the spread and development of some mischievous centers, or, also, when the bequest causes a necessary duty to be abandoned unreasonably, the executor is allowed to change it.

3. When something of the bequest brings about means of conflict, corruption, or blood shedding, in this case, the circumstance should be adjusted under the direction of the Islamic judge.

By the way, the Arabic term / janaf /, which means a deviation from the path of Justice and a unilateral inclination, hints to the deviations that seize the testator unconsciously; while the term / 'iθm / (sin) refers to the intended deviations.

The final phrase of the verse which says: "... Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" may point to the fact that if the executor of testament effectively removes or improves the wrong that the testator has done and returns him to the right way, Allah forgives him, too.

Explanation

The Philosophy of Testament

Regarding the law of heritage, only a particular group of relatives, and with a definite portion, inherits the wealth. This situation may be in the case that some other near and far relatives, or some of the close friends and local people, are in dire need of some financial aid.

In addition to that, sometimes it happens that the religiously ordained portion, ordained concerning the amount of heritage, is not sufficient to supply the needs of some heirs.

The inclusiveness of the Islamic laws does not let these gaps be left unfilled. So, it has issued the law of testament alongside the law of heritage.

It lets Muslims decide on one third of their wealth to be spent after their death in a manner they like.

Besides that, sometimes a person wishes to do some good actions, but during his life-time he is not able to perform them, because of some financial necessities that he has. The logic of intellect demands that he decides on a part of the wealth, that he has suffered to earn during his life, to be spent on these good affairs after his death, at least, and not to be deprived of them.

All these circumstances have caused that the law of testament be decreed in Islam, and it has been emphasized with the phrase: "this is a duty on the pious ones."

Testament is not restricted only to the above mentioned aspects, of course, but a person should explain all his debts to people, the deposits that others have given him to charge of, and the like of them in the testament so clearly that there may remain no ambiguous subject concerning the rights of men or the rights of Allah which have been upon him.

In Islamic literature, testament is frequently emphasized on. For example, a tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) says: "It is not appropriate for a Muslim believer to sleep at night except that his testament is under his head." [10]

The phrase 'under his head', mentioned in the above tradition, is, of course, for emphasis and the purpose is that he must always be prepared in this respect.

Justice in Testament

Taking the abovementioned explanation about the lack of transgression in testament in mind, there are many traces in Islamic traditions emphasizing upon the lack of 'transgression' and 'damage' in testament which, on the whole, indicate that as much as making a testament is a good and worthy deed, the same quality transgression in it is blameworthy and counted among grievous sins.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (as), in a tradition, says: "He who regards justice in his testament is like the person who has given the same amount as charity (in the way of Allah) during his own life; but the one who treats unfair in his testament will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment while He will have turned away His Grace from him." [11]

Transgression, treating unfair, and damage in testament is that a person bequeaths more than one third of his wealth and deprives the heirs from their religiously lawful rights. Or, he may make some undue distinctions for the sake of his unreasonable loves and hatreds.

In the cases that the heirs are in dire need, even, the recommendation is that bequeathing one third of the wealth be decreased to a quarter or one fifth of the wealth. [12]

When we study the Islamic narrations and the statements of the leaders of Islam in relation to the subject, we understand the emphasis and importance that they have considered for the existence of Justice in testament. The following tradition is one of the concerning instances:

Once at the time of revelation, one of the men from the Ansar tribe passed away. He had some little children, but he had spent his wealth on

the path of Allah in a manner that there remained no more property from him. When the Prophet (S) became aware of it, he asked: "What did you do with that man?"

Then, the people thereby answered that they had buried him. The holy Prophet (S) said: "If I had been informed of it before, I would not have permitted you to bury him in the graveyard of Muslims, because he has left his little children reduced to beggary."

Bequest, Obligatory or Recommended

As it was said before, making testament, in essence, is among the emphatically recommended actions, but sometimes it becomes obligatory for some people. For instance, when a person has neglected or failed to pay the godly obligatory rights, or there are some things with him belonging to people, (formerly deposited to him), and the one thinks that their rights may be transgressed if he does not bequeath, then bequeathing is obligatory.

More important than that is when the position of a person in a society is so that if he does not make a bequest it is probable that the safe system of that society or their religion be inflicted an irreparable severe blow upon. So, in all of these circumstances, it is obligatory to bequeath.

Bequest, is Changeable during the Life

The testator is not restricted by Islam to what he has bequeathed himself. A person is allowed to review the amount, the manner, and the executor of the bequest as long as he is alive, because when the time passes, circumstances may vary and his attitudes upon the aforementioned subjects change, too.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned that we must make use of bequest as a means of repairing our former shortcomings, in a manner that even if some of our relatives had shown unkindness to us, we display affection to them by the way of testament.

It is cited in some Islamic narrations that the leaders of Islam bequeathed some money especially for those relatives who were not kind to them in order to attract their affection again.

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 615 (Persian version)
2. Tafsir-il-Qurtubi; vol. 2. p. 242
3. Usul-i-Kafi. vol. 2. p. 660
4. Surah Furqan, No.24, verse 75
5. Surah Ar-Ra'd No.13, verse 24
6. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 72, verse 24
7. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 159
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 352
9. Wasa’il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 361
10. Wasa’il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 352
11. Wasa’il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 359
12. Ibid, p. 360

Section 23, Fasting during Ramadan, Rights of Property

To fast during the month of Ramadan-Prayer and supplication to God-Discipline to be observed during the month-Rights of property to be respected:

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 183-185

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ
أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ
يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ وَأَن تَصُومُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ
شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِيَ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ
مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلاَ
يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُواْ الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُواْ اللّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

183. "O' you who have Faith! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."

184. "(Fast for) a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) the same number of other days, and for those who are hardly to do it, (there is) a redemption by feeding an indigent. But whoever volunteers to do good, it is better for him; and it is better for you that you fast, if you did (only) know."

185. "The month of Ramadan that wherein the Qur'an was sent down to be a guidance for mankind, and as clear signs of guidance and a criterion (between right and wrong). Therefore, whoever of you is present (at his home) during the month, he shall fast therein and whoever is sick or on a journey, he shall then (fast) the same number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you; so you should complete the number (of days decreed), and exalt Allah for His having guided you, and that haply you might be grateful (to Him)."

Fasting, the Origin of Piety

Next to several important ordinances of Islam stated in the former verses, these current verses refer to another ordinance, i.e. fasting, which is one of the most serious acts of worship. The Qur'an, with the same tone of emphasis that was applied for the previous verses, says:

"O' you who have Faith! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you..."

Then, immediately after this, it refers to the philosophy of this humanizing worship and, in a short but meaningful sentence, says:

"…so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),"

According to what the Late Kolayni says in his famous book (Al-Kafi), piety is rendered into one's restriction from sin. Most sins originate from

wrath and lust. Fasting brings the extravagance of this instinct under control, which, consequently, decreases corruption and increases piety. [1]

Yes, fasting is a great effective factor in the process of training the spirit of piety in all dimensions of every field; this will be addressed in detail later.

Since this worship is accompanied with deprivation from some material pleasures and one must suffer some troubles especially when it is in summer, there are different particular meanings used in the above verse to make the mind of believers ready for the acceptance of this decree.

To attract the attentions and to make the subject an interesting one for the addressees, it begins with the phrase:

"O' you who have Faith!"

Then, it refers to the statement of the fact that fasting is not appointed only for Muslim Ummah but it had been practiced by the former nations, too.

Finally, the philosophy of fasting, and that the fruitful results of this Divinely ordered duty return totally to you, is stated.

A tradition narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) says:

"The pleasure found in (the phrase: ' O' you who have Faith! ' is so that) it has removed the tiredness of this worship and effort." [2]

****

In the next verse, again, in order to reduce the hardship of fasting, it states a few other commands regarding this. It initiates the subject thus:

"(Fast for) a certain number of days...."

It is not so that you be obliged to fast all the year through or a considerable part of it, but fasting is for only a small section of the year.

Another matter is that:

"..But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) the same number of other days..."

Then there comes the third group, those who are absolutely unable to fast, such as elderly men, elderly women, the constant patients with chronic diseases, where it says:

"... and for those who are hardly able to do it, (there is) a redemption by feeding an indigen.."

"…But whoever volunteers to do good, it is better for him..."

And finally, at the end of the verse, the fact is restated, which itself is another emphasis on the philosophy of fasting, thus:

"... And it is better for you that you fast, if you did (only) know."

This meaning also refers to the fact that the worship of fasting, as other worships, does not add anything to the Glory and Dignity of Allah but all its merits are for the worshipper. Islamic traditions confirm the same meaning, too.

The holy Prophet (S) has said: "He who fasts during the fasting month for the sake of Allah, all his sins will be forgiven."[3]

It is also cited in a divine tradition that Allah says: "Fasting is Mine, and I do reward it."[4]

Also, in another tradition it is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

"There is an alm for everything, and the alms of bodies is fasting."[5]

Hence, it makes clear that the phrase: "...it is better for you that you fast..." addresses all those who fast, not only a particular group of them. The last verse of this group of verses introduces the time of fasting and a part of its ordinances and their philosophies. At first it says that those certain days that you must fast are the month of Ramadan, and:

"The month of Ramadan is that wherein the Qur'an was sent down..."

And this Qur'an is the same that is:

"...to be a guidance for mankind, and as clear signs of guidance and a criterion (between right and wrong)..."

Then again, the command for the passengers and the sick is restated and, as an emphasis, it says:

"... Therefore, whoever of you is present (at his home) during the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, he shall then (fast) the same number of other days..."

The repetition of the ordinance of the sick and passenger in this verse and the previous one may be for the purpose that some people, thinking that not to fast is absolutely a disgraceful action, insist on fasting when they are sick or are on a journey, so the Qur'an, by this repetition, makes the Muslims understand that fasting is a divine duty for the safe and sound persons while, in the same manner, not fasting is also a divine command for the sick and passengers (with their proper conditions) so that the offense of it is a sin.

At the end of the verse, it pays attention to the philosophy of the divine legislation of fasting once more, and says:

"... Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you..."

It points to this fact that although fasting is apparently a kind of strictness and limitation, its conclusion is ease and tranquility of man, both spiritually and materially.

This sentence may hint to this matter that the Divine commands are not similar to the commands of tyrants. In the case that the fulfillment of an action is very labour some, Allah enjoins an easier duty to be performed. Therefore, the ordinance of fasting, with all its importance, was exempted for the sick, passengers, and those feeble ones unable to perform it.

Then, it adds:

"...So you should complete the number (of days decreed)..."

This means that everyone who is safe should fast one month a year because it is necessary for his health. For this reason, if a person is sick or on a journey during the month of Ramadan, the one must belate the accomplishment of fasting those days until the same number is completed.

Even menstruous women, who are excused from establishing prayers, are not exempted from fasting at a later date.

So, in the final sentence of the verse, it says: "...and exalt Allah for His having guided you, and that haply you might be grateful (to Him)."

Yes, we must exalt Allah for the guidance He has endowed upon us, and be thankful to Him for all those blessings He has mercifully given us.

It is noteworthy that the act of thanksgiving is mentioned with the term 'haply', while the matter of exalting Allah is stated conclusively.

This difference of statement may be for the reason that the fulfillment of this worship (fasting) is, at any rate, the exaltation of the Essence of Allah, but thanksgiving, which is the same as using the blessings if, their proper sites and taking benefit from the effects and practical issues of fasting, has some conditions which will not be fulfilled unless those conditions be obtained, the most important of which are: a perfect sincerity, the recognition of the reality of fasting, and acknowledgement about the philosophy of fasting.

Explanations

Fasting and Its Educational, Social, and Hygienical Effects

1-From the point of various affects that fasting may spiritually and materially produces in the unity of man; it has different dimensions that can be discussed. The ethical dimension and the philosophy of fasting are the most important of all.

Fasting makes the soul of man elegant, then strengthens his will, and moderates his instincts.

The one who observes the fast, although he is hungry and thirsty, must restrain himself from eating food and drinking water, and also, from the pleasure of sexual intercourse when he is fasting. One must prove that he/she can hold the rein of his/her restive passions and is able to dominate his/her desires and lusts.

Indeed, the most important philosophy of fasting is this very spiritual status of it. A person who has many kinds of food and drinks available at his reach to use of them whenever he is hungry or thirsty cannot be so tolerant at the time he is in lack of them.

But the one who observes the fast is like a plant which grows in a dry desert. It resists when water is rare, stands steadfast against strong storms and intense cold. Such people can deal with deprivations when they are challenged with them, and, therefore, can be firm and perseverant.

Fasting trains the soul of a person. With temporary restrictions, fasting gives man perseverance, authority in will, ability of challenging with severe deprivations, and, since it controls restive instincts, it showers light and inner purity into the heart.

However, fasting causes man to promote from the animate nature so that he can ascend unto the rank and the world of angels.

The phrase: "...haply you might be grateful (to Him)" may point to the same fact.

And, also, the famous tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) is another hint to the same matter which says: "Fasting is a protector from Fire." [6]

Another tradition narrated from Arnir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says that the Prophet (S) was asked what they would do that Satan be banished, and he (S) answered: "Fasting blackens his face; charity breaks his back; the love in (the path of) Allah, and persistence in righteous deeds put an end to him, and seeking (Allah's) forgiveness cuts his aorta." [7]

When Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), stating the philosophy of worship, speaks about fasting and he, says: "(Allah has laid down) fasting as a trial of the people in their sincerity..." [8]

In another tradition, the holy Prophet (S) has said: "Verily, there is a door for (entering) Heaven by the name of 'Al-Rayyan, (quenched of thirst) none enters therein but fasting ones." [9]

Explaining this tradition, the late Sadduq cites in his book 'Ma'any-ul-Akhbar' the reason that this name has been taken for that door of Heaven is that much of the toil of a fasting person is because of his thirst. So when the fasting ones enter this door, they will be so saturated that they will never become thirsty thereafter.

The Social Effect of Fasting

Every intelligent person realizes that fasting works as a lesson of equality among the members of a society. By practicing the religious command, the rich realize perceptibly both the state of the hungry and the deprived of their society, and, with saving in their daily meals, can help them well.

It is possible; of course, that by explaining the status of the hungry and the deprived to the rich, it will make them understand that status, but if this condition becomes perceptible and objective, it will react more effectively. Fasting gives this great social subject a perceptible form to those who observe it.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) in a well-known tradition that Hisham ibn Hakam asked him about the reason for the divine legislation of this ordinance when he (as) said:

"Allah has enjoined fasting in order to settle equivalence between the rich and the poor, and this is for the sake that the rich feel the taste of hunger and, consequently, be merciful toward the poor (by giving them their rights). And, since the things are usually available for the rich, then Allah, the Exalted, is pleased when equivalence is erected between His servants. So, He, thereby, has ordained that the rich feel the taste of hunger and pain so that they feel sympathy for the weak and be merciful toward the hungry." [10]

Verily, if the populations of rich countries throughout the world customarily fast a few days a year and feel the taste of hunger, will there still remain so many hungry people in the world?

Fasting and Its Hygienical & Remedial Effects

In modern medicine, as well as the old one, the miraculous effect of 'abstinence' in curing kinds of sicknesses have been proven so evidently that it cannot be deniable. Few of physicians have not pointed out this fact in their scientific notes.

As all of us know, the reason of the origin of many diseases is gluttony, because the unabsorbed extra materials of food-stuffs in the form of obtrusive tallow or additional sugar in blood remain in different parts of the body.

These additional materials, inside the levies of muscles of body, are, in fact, as some putrid oozy sites where kinds of microbes of some infectious diseases can grow. The best way of defending against these sicknesses is to annihilate them by means of abstinence and fasting.

Besides this property of fasting, which causes the additional and unabsorbed materials of the body to be burnt; fasting is a considerable factor for servicing the body with giving a rest to the organs of digestion.

This rest is extremely necessary for these organs. They are the most important parts of the body and are continuously busy working throughout the year.

It is clear that one who observes the fast, as Islam advises, ought not to eat too much food at the time of breaking the fast and just before the dawn during the fasting month of Ramadan in order to enjoy the result of the hygienical effect of fasting, otherwise the consequence may become contrary.

Alexy Sufurin, a Russian scientist, writes in his book that by means of fasting a specific result can be obtained in treating diseases such as: anemia, dyspepsia, chronic extended enteritis, furuncle and inner abscess, consumption, rheumatism, gout (padagra, chiragra, gonagra), dropsy, sciatica, some opthalmic diseases, diabetes, skin diseases, renal diseases, and so on.

Treatment through fasting is not limited to the foregoing diseases alone, but also the sicknesses concerning the fundamentals of the body involving the bodily cells like cancer, syphilis, and plague can be cured by means of fasting. [11]

The holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said in a famous tradition: 'Fast to be healthy.' [12]

Again, in another tradition he (S) has said: "The stomach is the site of all ailments, while dietary (abstinence) is the head of all remedies." [13]

Fasting in Former Religions

The existing Torah and Bible indicate that the Jews and the Christians had fasting, too, (Math.6:16, 17; and Luke 5: 33-35). The followers of some other religions used to fast in times of sorrow and affliction.

In the Lexicon of the Bible it is cited that fasting, in general, has always been practiced among every nation and in any religion at the time of an unexpected sorrow or disaster. [14]

It is also caught from the Torah that Moses (as) had forty days of fasting. It is cited in the Old Testament thus: "When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water." [15]

Also, at the time of repentance and seeking the pleasure of the Lord, the Jews fasted. So, it is cited in the Lexicon of the Bible that when the Jews got the opportunity that they wanted to state their weakness and humility before the Lord, they fasted in order that they confess their faults and to obtain the pleasure of His Essence by means of that fasting and repentance. [16]

It is probable that 'the Great Fasting with atonement', which was for one particular day a year, was common among the Jewish people. They had, of course, some other temporary days to fast in remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem, etc., too. [17]

As the Bible indicates, Jesus (as) had also forty days of fasting. It says thus:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2) And when he had fasted forty days and nights, he was afterward an hungred." [18]

It is also understood from the Evangel that the disciples of Jesus used to fast. It says: "33) And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? 34) And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35) But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast those days." [19]

Again, it is cited in the Lexicon of the Bible that the lives of disciples and believers, in old times, were full of negation of pleasure and tremendous toils accompanied with observing the fast. [20]

Thus, the Qur'anic sentence saying: "... as it was prescribed for those before you..." is also confirmed whit many historical religious evidences existing in other divine religions even after they had been perverted.

Ramadan, the Transcendent Month

The month of Ramadan has been selected for fasting because it has a preference to other lunar months of the year. In the verse under discussion, this preference is stated such that the Qur'an, which is the Book of Guidance for humankind and, with its commands and legislations, has separated the right from wrong to lead man toward prosperity, was revealed in the month of Ramadan. Besides that, both some verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic literature indicate that all the great heavenly Books, such as the Torah, the Bible, the Psalms of David, the Books of Ibrahim, and the Qur'an, have all totally been sent down in this month.

In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq (as) said: "The Torah was sent down on the sixth of Ramadan, the Bible on the twelfth, the Psalms on the eighteenth and the Qur'an by the Night of Destiny (Laylat-ul-Qadr) in Ramadan." [21]

Thus, the month of Ramadan had always been the month of the great heavenly Books to be sent down. This month had been the month of education, since training without teaching and practice is fruitless. The training aim of Fasting should also be parallel with the more and the utmost profound knowledge about the divine instructions so that it wipes out the soul and self of man from sin.

Once, on the last Friday of Sha'ban, the Prophet of Islam (S) delivered a sermon about the significant of the month of Ramadan to prepare his companions for receiving this sacred month. In that great sermon he (S) said:

"O' people! Allah's month has approached you laden with blessing, mercy and forgiveness. It is a month which Allah regards as the best of all months."

"Its days, in the sight of Allah, are the best of days; its nights are the best of nights; and its hours are the best of hours."

"It is a month in which you are invited to be the guests of Allah, and you are regarded during it as worthy of Allah's Grace."

"In this month, your breathing praises Allah, and your sleeping adores Him. Your deeds (of worship) are accepted, and your pleas are answered therein."

"Therefore, ask Allah, your Lord, in sincere intentions and pure hearts to enable you to observe the fast and to recite His Book (the Qur'an) during this month, for only a wretch is the one who is deprived of Allah's Forgiveness in this great month."

"Let your hunger and thirst during it remind you of the hunger and the thirst of the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and indigent among you, respect your elderly and be kind to your youngsters, and strengthen blood-kinship of yours."

"Safeguard your tongues (from sin), do not look at what Allah has prohibited your eyes from watching it, and do not listen to what your ears are forbidden to hear. Be kind to the orphans of other people, so that your own orphans be consequently given affections, too...."

The Principle of ' No Hardship'

In the above mentioned verse, this matter was pointed out that Allah, Will is not that you be troubled and uneasy, but He ordained so that you feel ease. It is certain that this ordinance here is about the proposition of fasting and its benefits together with the concerning commandment due to passengers and sick persons.

But, regarding its universality, this ordinance has been used as a general principle upon all Islamic rules, and the verse has been taken as a reference for it which is known as the rule of' No Hardship' (la-haraj) among jurisprudents.

This religious rule says that the foundation of the Islamic legislation is not based upon hardship. So, if, somewhere, an ordinance creates intense hardship, it can be exempted temporarily. For instance, the jurisprudents have said that when performing one's ablution or standing erect, and the like of them, due to establishing prayers requires much pain, it changes to dry ablution and prayers in sitting position.

Concerning the lack of hardship in Islam, it is also stated in Surah Hajj No.22 verse 78, thus: "...He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion."

Also, another hint to this subject is the famous tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) where he says: "I was appointed to a tolerant and facile religion." [22]

Conclusion

In these verses, the philosophy of fasting accompanied with some concerning ordinances are stated for the benefit of Muslim believers to follow.

By the way, fasting had been in vogue in every religion in some form or other. It is one of the cardinal doctrines of the practice of the faith, in Islam, taking its rank next only to the obligatory five times daily prayers. These verses of the Qur'an show that fasting was enjoined by all the prophets of Allah who preceded the holy Prophet Muhammad (S).

It should also be noted that fasting in Islam is to train to suppress our natural appetites and shun evil. It does not mean abstaining only from food

but from every kind of evil. Abstention from food is only a step towards the realization that if one has to abstain from that which is lawful, how much more he must abstain from what had been forbidden by Allah. The main object of the Islamic fast is to purify the conduct and character and get the soul charged with divine attributes of Allah n the practical life for one complete month. It helps the Muslims to guard themselves against evil as well as conditioning with restrain by habituating themselves to suffer physical affliction and self-control and resistance and fortitude which they must always be prepared to suffer in the defense of faith and the faithful.

On the other hand, since Islam is a tolerant and easy religion, fasting is not allowed for those who are on lawful journey. Or, it is exempted for Muslims in the case of the risk of any illness being aggravated, testified by a reliable doctor. This status is for that Islam does not will intense hardship for its followers.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُواْ لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُواْ بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

186. "When My servants ask you concerning Me, then (say unto them:) verily I am nigh: I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me; so (they should) hearken unto My call, and believe in Me, in order that they may be led aright."

Occasion of Revelation

Once someone asked the holy Prophet (S) whether Allah was near so that they could whisper to Him or He was far so that they would speak to Him loudly. Then, the above verse was revealed (to answer that Allah is close to His servants.). [23]

An Armament Called Supplication

Since one of the means of approaching to Allah for His servants is the phenomenon of supplication, next to the statement of a great part of Islamic ordinances in the former verses, this verse pays particular attention to this subject.

This phenomenon is a general process for all supplicants and those who want to resort to Allah, yet its occurrence among the verses related to fasting gives it an additional concept. The reason is that the spirit of every worship is obtaining nearness to Allah by the sincere wailing or cry of the heart.

This verse, addressing the Prophet (S) says:

"When My servants ask you concerning Me, then (say unto them) verily I am nigh"

I am closer (to them) than they may consider. I am closer than you to yourself; and closer than your life-vein to you. In another occurrence in the Qur'an, Allah, referring to man, says: "...and We are nearer to him than his life-vein "[24].

Then, it adds:

"...I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me..."

"...so (they should) hearken unto My call..."

"...and believe in Me..."

"...in order that they may be led aright."

It is noteworthy that, in this verse, Allah has pointed to His pure Essence seven times, and to His servants, too, seven times. Thus, He has illustrated thereby His utmost connection, nearness and love unto His servants.

'Abdullah-ibn-Sanan says that he heard that Imam al-Sadiq (as) said: "Try to pray very much because it is the key of Allah's forgiveness and the means of obtaining any want. There are some blessings and graces with Allah that reaching them is impossible but via supplication. And, do know that any door which you knock it will finally be opened." [25]

Yes, He is near to us. How can He be far from us while His site is between the self of man and his heart, as the Qur'an says: "...and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart..."[26].

How Are Supplications Answered?

Before that we expect our supplications be answered, we must practice purifying our heart and soul, repent from our sins, and follow the way of the divine leaders' career.

1- Imam al-Sadiq (as) is narrated who has said: "Be aware, anyone of you, not to ask his Lord any thing of the necessities for this world and the coming one unless the one initiates with praising Allah and paying tribute to Him, and with benediction upon the Prophet and his progeny (S). Thereafter, he ought to confess his sins (before Him) and then asks his want." [27]

2- A person should strive to sanctify his life from properties that he has obtained by usurpation, oppression and cruelty so that his food-stuff would not be from any unlawful origin. There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who has said: "He who wishes that his supplications be answered must surely purify his food and his earnings (to be lawful)." [28]

3- A person should not restrain from struggling against corruption and inviting others unto right and truth, since those who abandon the act of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, their supplications are scarcely ever answered.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: "You should enjoin right and forbid wrong, or Allah may set up your wicked ones as absolute masters over your good ones. Then, whatsoever the good pray it will not be answered." [29]

The abandonment of this great duty, in fact, creates some disorders in the society, the result of which is boldness of the vicious of the society with no defense therein. In this case, supplication for the removal of its fruits is useless, because those evil effects are the direct consequence of the behaviour of those people themselves.

4- True faith, righteous deed, faithfulness and uprightness are some other conditions of the fulfillment of supplications. Hence, the person who does not keep his promise before Allah should not expect to be involved among those whom Allah has promised to answer.

Once, someone went to Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and complained about why his supplications were not answered though Allah had said: "...call upon Me, I will answer you..." (Surah Al-Mu'min, No.40, verse 60).

In answer to that question, the holy Imam (as) said: "Your hearts (minds) have acted treacherously toward eight characteristics, (so, your supplications are not answered):

1- You have known Allah but you have not paid His right such that has been enjoined upon you. Therefore, your cognition does not benefit you anything.

2- You have believed in His Messenger while thereafter, you have opposed his Sunnah. You are in his religion, then, where is the fruit of your Faith?

3- Surely you have recited his revealed book but you do not act accordingly. And, you said: "We have heard and we obey" [30], whereas you opposed it then.

4- You say you fear the Fire (of Hell), While you always commit your own sins, and you approach it thereby; then, where is your fear?

5- You say you are eager and interested in Heaven (the Divine reward) but you always do some things which send you away from it; so, where is that inclination that you have to it?

6- Verily, you eat the blessing of Allah but you do not show gratitude about it.

7- Certainly Allah has ordered you to be the enemy of Satan, and He has said: "Surely the Satan is your enemy, so take him for an enemy...". (Surah Fatir No. 35 verse 6). Verbally you claim that you are his enemy but actually you make friends with Satan without opposing him.

8- You have put the faults of people before your eyes and your own ones at your backs. Then, what supplication of yours can be answered for you with this case that you yourselves have closed its doors? So, fear Allah and improve your deeds, purify your intentions, and enjoin right and forbid wrong. It is in this case that Allah answers you your supplications." [31]

This expressive tradition clearly says: the promise of Allah to answer supplications is a conditioned promise, not an absolute one. It is conditioned that you fulfill your promises and covenants, too; whereas you have broken promises in eight ways. So, if you put an end to this breach of promise, your call will be answered.

Practicing upon the foregoing eight instructions which are, in fact, the conditions of supplications to be answered, is enough for training Man and employing his faculties alongside a productive and fruitful path.

5). Another condition of the answering of supplication is that it should be accompanied by struggle, effort and studious action. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says: "He who prays but does not exert effort is like the one who shoots without a bow-string." [32]

Regarding to the fact that a bow-string is the means of sending an arrow towards the target, the function of effort and action in the efficacy of prayer is made manifest.

All the aforementioned five conditions illustrate this reality that not only supplication should not substitute the natural phenomena and ordinary means of obtaining the goal, but for its being answered, a general change is also necessary to occur in the career of the supplicant.

His spirit should be renewed, and his former deeds must be reviewed so that the demanded results come into existence for the supplicant.

Thus, reverting to supplication or the efficacy of prayer does not at all exclude the necessity on the part of the supplicant of the use of the necessary external means of achieving the desired object. The connection between the practical means and prayer is indissoluble.

Any sincere seeker of an object will naturally look for the practical means to achieve it. In the search for the means one must endeavor as best as possible for him, employing all his native faculties, devoting the necessary time and attention to achieve the desired object.

When one is in his search for the means, open and hidden, he naturally desires guidance from the Higher Power from which nothing is hidden and for which nothing is impossible or difficult. Prayer blesses the supplicant by granting him the guidance necessary for the realization of the desire.

A Few Narrations Upon Supplication

1- It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said: "The most beloved deeds on the earth with Allah, Mighty and Glorious, is prayer; and the best worship is piety". Imam al-Sadiq (as) added that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) was a man who used to pray very much. [33]

2- Imam al-Sadiq (as) narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: "Prayer is the believer's armour, the pillar of religion, and the (spiritual) light of the heavens and the earth." [34]

3- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) said: "Prayer is the keys of (safety and) success and the keys to (the doors of) prosperity. The best supplication is that which arises from a pure chest and a pious heart..". [35]

4- The holy Prophet (S) said: "Shall I not lead you to a weapon which saves you from your enemies, and increases your sustenance (abundantly)?" They answered him positively. Then he said: "Call your Lord both in night and day, because supplication is the armour of a believer." [36]

5- Imam al-Sadiq (as) has narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said: "Supplication is the shield of a believer; whenever you knock on a door very much, it will be opened for you." [37]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 187

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَآئِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَخْتانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنكُمْ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُواْ مَا كَتَبَ اللّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّواْ الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الَّليْلِ وَلاَ تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللّهِ فَلاَ تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

187. "It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fasts; they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. Allah knew that you used to act unfaithfully among yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and pardoned you. So now you may associate with them and seek what Allah prescribed for you. Eat and drink until the

white thread (of dawn) becomes manifest unto you from the black thread (of night) at the dawn-break, then complete the fast till nightfall and do not approach them (your wives) while you are at your devotion in the mosques. These are limits (set by) Allah, therefore do not approach (violate) them. Thus Allah makes clear His Signs for mankind, so that they may guard themselves (against evil)."

Occasion of Revelation

It is so understood from the Islamic literature that at the advent of the revelation of the command of fasting, Muslims were allowed to eat a meal before sleeping at night. So, if anyone occasionally fell asleep at night and then awoke, eating and drinking was unlawful (haram) for the one.

Once, one of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Mat'am-ibn Jubayr, who was a weak man, fasted in that situation. In the evening, he entered home for breaking the fast. When his wife went to prepare food for him, he fell asleep because of fatigue and weariness.

After some while he woke up and, then, he said he was not allowed to eat and he could not break the fast, and, therefore, with the same state of hunger, he slept. Next morning, in the state of fasting, he attended a place around Medina to dig ditches in order to prepare them for the battle of ahzab.

While he was in the effort and struggle of digging, he fainted as a result of hunger and weakness. Then, when the Prophet (S) came to him he was touched upon seeing his situation.

Also, a group of young Muslims, who could not control themselves, associated with their wives during the nights of Ramadan.

It was in that circumstance that the revelation was sent down and let Muslims eat and drink during the length of night and associate (sexual intercourse) with their own wives as well.

As it was mentioned in the occasion of revelation, at the advent of Islam, association with wives was forbidden during night and day in Ramadan. Eating and drinking after sleeping was also not permissible. That was, perhaps, a trial as well as a preparation for Muslims so that they would accept the ordinances of fasting.

The verse under discussion, which consists of four Islamic ordinances about fasting and the act of devotion in the mosques, initiates the matter thus:

"It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast..."

Then, it pays to the philosophy of this subject and says: "...they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them..." The primary thought or the meaning accommodated in the description of clothing used here relating to the mutual relation of husband and wife and the mutual comfort and protection they afford to each other, is superb and unique in its expression.

There cannot be a better description of the position of a man and wife and their relation to each other, which is unsurpassed in beauty.

Clothing, on one hand, protects man against heat and cold, and also against the danger of foreign bodies scraping or penetrating the skin. On the other hand, clothing not only covers the disgraces of the body, but also is an

ornament for a person. The metaphor mentioned in this verse is a hint to all of these meanings.

Two spouses protect each other from deviations. They hide the faults and blemishes of each other. They provide the means of rest and tranquility for each other. Each of them is counted as the ornament of the other.

This meaning makes the utmost spiritual connection and coherence of man and woman clear as well as their nearness to each other. It also points to the equality of man and woman in this respect, since whatever thing is said about men equally, and with no change, is mentioned about women.

Then, -the Qur'an refers to the reason of the change of this divine law and says:

"Allah knew that you used to act unfaithfully among yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and pardoned you..."

Yes, in order that you commit no more sin, Allah mercifully made that duty easy for you and decreased the length of its restriction.

"...So now you may associate with them and seek what Allah prescribed for you...."

This matter is certainly not in the sense of obligation but it is permission after that state of prohibition. So, the idea can be taken as an evidence of permissibility.

The phrase: "...and seek what Allah prescribed for you..." points to this fact that utilizing this permission and reduction, which is on the path of the laws of creation and preservation of the regularity of 'seed permanence', is no problem at all.

Then, it refers to the second ordinance and says:

"...Eat and drink until the white thread (of dawn) becomes manifest unto you from the black thread (of night) at the dawn-break..."

Therefore, Muslims could eat and drink all the night long until the dawn when they would stop

Then the statement is upon the third ordinance, thus:

"...then complete the fast till nightfall..."

This statement is another emphasis on the prohibition of eating and drinking and sexual intercourse during the day time for those who observe the fast. It is an indicative point to the beginning and the end of a fast which begins from the dawn and ends at night.

Finally, it points to the fourth ordinance when it says:

"...and do not approach them (your wives) while you are at your devotion in the mosques...."

The statement of this ordinance is like an exception for the former ordinance, because in this situation, the length of which is at least three days, they fast but during this limited time they can have sexual intercourse neither in days nor at nights.

At the end of the verse, alluding to all the foregoing ordinances, it says:

"These are limits (set by) Allah, therefore do not approach (violate) them...."

Approaching the bounds is sometimes tempting and causes that man violates them and commits sins. Yes,

"...Thus Allah makes clear His Signs for mankind, so that they may guard themselves (against evil)."

Explanation

Allah's Limits

As is was mentioned in the commentary of the above verses, the Holy Qur'an, after stating some ordinances about fasting and being at devotion, renders these -ordinances, as the 'limits set by Allah': the bounds between lawful (halal) and unlawful (haram) matters, and the limits between prohibited and permissible things.

It is noteworthy that the Qur'an does not say 'do not pass the limits', but it says: "do not approach them", because approaching the limits is tempting and sometimes, under the influence of lusts or because of being involved in mistakes, a person may violate them.

It is for this very reason that some Islamic laws forbid man from stepping into the situations that may cause him to slip and commit sins, such as taking part in a society of sinners, even though he himself does not share in it; or being with a non-relative, of the opposite sex in a lonely private place wherein no one can enter.

The term originally means 'to seclude oneself in a place, or to remain a long time beside something'. In religion it means keeping to the mosques for the purpose of worship. The duration of this retreat is three days during which the person fasts and abandons some pleasures.

This worship has a profound effect in purification of the soul and attending to the Providence. The manner and conditions of this worship are mentioned in the books of Islamic jurisprudence. This worship, of course, is essentially counted among the recommended deeds, but in some particular circumstances, exceptionally, it becomes obligatory.

At any rate, the verse under discussion refers to only one of its conditions because of its connection to the proposition of fasting, i.e. the lack of association with wives whether at night or in the daytime.

The Dawn

The term / fajr / basically means 'break open', hence the light of the dawn, which breaks the gloom of night with its bright advent, in the Qur'anic term is called / fajr /.

In the verse under discussion, in addition to the above term, the dawn has been rendered thus:

"...until the white thread (of dawn) becomes manifest unto you from the black thread (of night)..."

It is interesting that a tradition says that 'Udayy-ibn-Hatam, one of the believers, once came to the Prophet (S) and said that he had put two white and black threads in front of him watching them, but it (the dawn) did not become manifest for him.

Then, the Prophet (S) laughed so that his holy teeth appeared. Then, he (S) said: "O' son of Hatam! verily, it is the whiteness of day (dawn) and the darkness of night. Then, begin from this time." [38]

At the end of the night, at first a very weak white colour rises in the sky without extending laterally and appears to be black, presenting itself like an

obstacle on the horizon, and is compared to the tail of a fox whose narrow end is onto the horizon and its conical shaped end is in the mid-sky.

This is the 'False Dawn'. But after a while a clear white light appears, rising, filling the horizon with its whiteness, like a white thread stretched beside a black thread, and, thereafter, spreads throughout the sky with a special brightness by which the night ends and the day begins. This is the 'True Dawn' when the Morning Prayer can then be performed.

Piety, the Beginning and the End

It is interesting that in the first verse concerning the ordinance of fasting it was stated that the ultimate aim of it is piety. This very meaning is also exactly repeated at the end of the last verse of this group of verses saying: "So that they may guard themselves (against evil)."

This shows that all of these rites are a means of training the spirit of piety and self-restraint in man in order to produce a faculty of guarding against evil and to feel responsibility before the duties of mankind.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 188

وَلاَ تَأْكُلُواْ أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُواْ بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُواْ فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالإِثْمِ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

188. "And do not devour your property among yourselves by wrongful means, nor offer it as a bribe to judges, with intent that you may unlawfully swallow up a portion of other people's property, while you know."

This verse prohibits Muslims from committing a very indecent action. It tells them not to swallow up the property of other people unrightfully, and not to earn wealth through a wrong way.

They should be aware not to occupy the belongings of others forcefully and unjustly and then the oppressors refer to the judges so that haply they might give them something as a present or bribe in order to appropriate people's properties oppressively. If so, they have done two great wrongs: devouring others' rights, and bribery.

"And do not devour your property among yourselves by wrongful means, nor offer it as a bribe to judges, that you may unlawfully swallow up a portion of other people's property, while you know."

The subject of bribery is so important in Islam that Imam al-Sadiq (as) says about it:

"...and bribery in judgment is the same as disbelief in Allah, the Exalted." [39]

The holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said in a famous tradition:

"Curse of Allah be upon the bribee, the briber and the one who makes every effort between them." [40]

Something similar to this meaning is expressed in Surah An-Nisa No.4, verse 29 where it says: "...do not devour your property among yourselves falsely, except that it be trading by your mutual consent..."

The verse under discussion clearly says that if some ones gain a case by giving bribes, the wealth under the suit which they win will be unlawful for them. Thus, the mere apparent winning in the court does not make the

properties lawful. This very fact is clearly referred to in a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) where it says:

"Verily, I am a human being (who is commissioned to judge between you through apparent means). If a conflict comes forth to me in which some of you may have stronger evidence than that of the other party, then I will judge in favour of him according to it. So, if I thereby judge for him upon the right of a Muslim, it is a piece of fire. He can take it or leave it off." [41]

Bribery, a Calamity

One of the calamities that humankind had been entangled with from the earliest times, and which is running with a more intense speed today, is bribery. It has been one of the greatest barriers of the execution of social justice.

It causes that the regulations and laws, which must basically preserve the rights of the oppressed groups, to be employed, in most societies, to support the interests of the authoritative groups.

It is the rights of the weak, in fact, that law must support, for the rich and powerful people, with the possibilities they have, are always capable to defend their benefits. Evidently, if the path of bribery be opened, laws and judges may produce just a contrary result, because it is usually the powerful ones who are able to spend in bribery.

Therefore, as a consequence, laws can be a new toy for them to continue their Satanic game of transgression and cruelty against the rights of the oppressed.

For this reason, when bribery influences in a society, it destroys the foundation of the social life of those people. In this situation, transgression, inequity, injustice and undue distinction penetrate in all organs and, as a result, there remains but a bare name of laws and justice.

That is why Islam, showing the foulness of bribery, has condemned it intensely so that it has been counted a great sin in the view of the religion. It is worth noting that the ugliness of this indecent action is often covered in some other fallacious arguments and charming terms.

This status causes that bribers and bribees usually make use of words such as: present, offering, dedication, lip, reward, recompense, and so on, for the bribe. But it is clear that these variations of names do not change the nature of bribery at all, and, however the money paid or taken thereby is certainly unlawful (haram).

It is cited in Nahjul-Balagha that Ash'ath-ibn-Qays went to Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) in a night with a closed flask full of honey paste to give it to him (as) as a present hoping that he would win the case in the court of Hadrat Ali (as). But Ali (as) surprised and violently said:

"Childless women may weep over you. Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah? "

"By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exits under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has 'Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?..." [42]

Islam has condemned bribery in any form and by any name. It is narrated in the history of the life of the Prophet of Islam (S) that once he was informed that one of his governor-generals had received a bribe in the form of a present. Then the Prophet (S) harshly told him:

"Why do you take the thing which is not your right?"

Then the man, apologizing to him (S), said that it was a present. Again, the Prophet (S) expressed:

"If you were to remain at home while you were not a governor from my side, would people present you with anything?" [43]

Then, the Prophet (S) ordered the present to be taken and be sent inside the Muslim public treasury, when he dismissed him from his rank.

Even, in order that a judge would not confront with bribery in its hidden shapes, Islam advises that judges would not go shopping in the market themselves, lest discounts unconsciously affect on them and, when judging the suit, they eventually take the side of the giver of the reduction.

How good it is that Muslims, inspired by their heavenly Book, do not sacrifice all their holy things at the foot of bribery!

It is also said that the purpose of the verse is that they do not spend the wealth and properties of each other by means of vain pleasures like gambling or other games.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said: "The Quraish used to play games upon their wives, children, and personal wealth, losing them. Allah prohibited them of doing that." [44]

It is better to consider all of these commentaries for the verse, because it can bear the meanings of them all totally.

Notes

1. Al-Kafi, vol. 2; p. 18
2. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 27
3. Tafsir-i-Mariqy, vol. 2, p. 69
4. Tafsir-i-Maraqy, vol. 2, p. 69
5. Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 100
6. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 256
7. Ibid, p. 255; aorta is the main artery of the body carrying blood from the left ventricle of the heart to arteries in all organs and parts.
8. Nahjul-Balagha, Saying No.252
9. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 252
10. Wasa’il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 7, fasting section, p. 3
11. Fasting, a New Method in Treating Diseases, p. 65 (first edition)
12. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 25
13. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 62, p. 290
14. The Lexicon of the Bible, p. 427

www.alhassanain.org/english

15. The Old Testament, Book called Deuteronomy, Chapter 9, No.9, p. 222, (English version) printed by British and Foreign Bible Society, AD. 1611
16. The Lexicon of the Bible, p. 428
17. Ibid
18. The New Testament, the Gospel St. Matthew, Chapter 4, No.1-2, p. 983 (English version) printed by London, the British and Foreign Bible Society, AD. 1911
19. The New Testament, the Gospel St. Luke, Chapter 5, No.33-35, p. 1053 (English version), printed by London, the British and Foreign Bible Society, AD. 1911
20. Ibid, and the Lexicon of the Bible, p. 428
21. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 7, section 18, tradition 16
22. Kanz-ul 'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 178; & vol. 11, p. 445
23. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 278
24. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 16
25. Al-'Usul-min-al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 468
26. Surah Al- Anfal, No 8 verse No 24
27. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 312
28. Ibid, p. 372
29. Ibid
30. Surah An-Nisa', No.4, verse 46
31. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 276
32. Nahaj-ul-Balagha, Saying No.337
33. Al-'Usul-min-al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 467 (Arabic)
34. Al-'Usul-min-al-Kafi, vol. 2, p.468
35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 281
39. Wasa’il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 12, chapter 5
40. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 104, p. 274
41. Fi-Zilal-il-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 252
42. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon, No.224
43. Al-Imam Ali (as), vol. 1, pp. 155,156
44. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 282

Section 24, Fighting in Self-defense, Pilgrimage under Restrictions

Religious Calendar to be according to the Lunar Year, Regard for the sanctity of the Sacred Month-Fighting in self-defense, Regard for the sanctity of the holy city, Self-defense during the sacred month, Pilgrimage under restrictions, combining 'Umrah' with 'Hajj'

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 189

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الأهِلَّةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوْاْ الْبُيُوتَ مِن ظُهُورِهَا وَلَـكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى وَأْتُواْ الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

189. "They ask you concerning the new moons; say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (for) the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself (against evil); and enter the dwellings by their (proper) doors, and fear Allah: that you may be prosperous."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been said that Ma'az-ibn-Jabal came to the Prophet (S) and said that he was frequently asked about the crescent of the moon and that why it gradually changes to a full shape and then alters to its first status.

Also, it is narrated that the Jews asked the Messenger of Allah (S) what the crescent of the moon was for and what the use of it was. At that time the above verse was sent down and announced that the different states of the moon have different material and spiritual advantages in the system of the human beings' lives.

As mentioned in the occasion of revelation of the verse, some people asked the Prophet of Islam (S) a few questions about the reason of the different peculiar shapes that the Moon seemed to have and the concerning use of them.

In answer to these questions, Allah ordered the Prophet (S) to tell them the effects and the different usages of the crescent for all people.

They ask you concerning the new moons; say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (for) the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself (against evil); and enter the dwellings by their (proper) doors, and fear Allah: that you may be prosperous."

The rising of the Moon at the beginning of each lunar month in the form of crescent, and then its gradual change, can be the source of many uses in the act of practicing worship and the accomplishment of religious duties by people, and in their material career as well.

Everybody can easily count days of the month and enumerate the month of the year by the help of the varying shapes or forms of the Moon when dealing with trading and writing agreements due to appointing the times of promises and contracts.

Besides that, fasting, the performances of the great worship of Pilgrimage and festivals, etc., prescribed by Islam, are timed according to the lunar months. The best way for people to recognize them and decide to arrange

the affairs is this very form of the crescent in various shapes when they see them differently at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the months.

It is obvious that the regularity of the social life of man without a common and precise means of dating is impossible. So, the Moon, indeed, is a natural calendar for all human beings. It is a natural phenomenon that the entire people, whether literate or illiterate, wherever in the world they are, can make use of it.

For this reason, the Creator, the Great, has made this worldly calendar available for the use of the human race in their life system.

Natural Measures

One of the advantages of Islamic laws is that their orders have usually been arranged corresponding with the natural measures, for these measures are some means that are available to all people and, besides that, the passing of time does not affect them.

But, on the contrary, unnatural scales are not within reach to all human beings for every thing. For example, the population of the world have not been able to use of some international measures for timing the evening yet.

Therefore, we see that Islam has sometimes assigned the measure of a span, or a man's height and the like of it. And, for appointing a time, phenomena such as sunset, break of dawn, decline of sun from the meridian and the vision of the Moon are usually pointed out.

"It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs..."

In this verse the statement is partly about the Hajj Pilgrimage which can be performed at its proper time by visual noting the crescent of the Moon. It has also pointed to one of the superstitious customs of the Age of Ignorance accomplished in the rites of pilgrimage which Allah prohibited them from.

It was the practice among Arabs that after getting into the pilgrim garments ('Ihr'am) they considered it unlawful to enter their house through the usual doors. Hence they cut a new entrance under the ground from behind their premises.

They did so because they thought it was a good action since it was desuetude of habit and, therefore, they would complete the act of the pilgrim garment which was desuetude of habits. [1]

But the Qur'an explicitly says that righteousness lies in piety, not in the superstitious customs. So, it immediately tells them seriously to enter the houses from the very ordinary doors.

But the object and the significance of the revelation of this verse is reasonably wider, greater, and more common. For the fulfillment of any action, whether it is a ritual action or a non-religious one, we should enter it through its proper way, not from a deviated path.

Here, entering from behind is a figurative expression for turning aside from the right course, and entering by the door means sticking to the right path. This meaning is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) by Jabir, one of his companions. [2]

In the commentaries from Ahlul-Bayt (as) it is narrated about this verse that they have said:

"We are the doors and the ways of Allah that invite unto (His) Heaven...". [3]

This tradition means that in your total religious affairs you should arrive by the main door and take your agenda from them (as) who are trained in the school of revelation and the Divine Messages were revealed in their house, (Ahlul-Bayt).

The phrase: "It is not righteousness..." may point to another narrow meaning saying that you question about the crescent, instead of inquiring about theology, is like the manner of the one who has put the main and right path of the house aside and enters it through a burrow from behind the premise. What a disgraceful manner!

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 190

وَقَاتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلاَ تَعْتَدُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبِّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

190. "And fight in the cause of Allah (against) those who fight you, but be not aggressive, for surely Allah loves not the aggressors."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated by Ibn -'Abbas that this verse was revealed about the 'Peace of Hudaibiyah'. The incident was in this manner that the holy Prophet (S) started on a journey to go to Mecca for 'Umrah accompanied by 1400 people out of his companions.

When they arrived Hudaibiyah, (a land near Mecca), pagans hindered them from entering into Mecca and doing the sacred rites of the 'Umrah.

After a lot of debates and discussions, they agreed with the Prophet (S) that Muslims would go to Mecca the following year when the pagans would empty the City for them to circumambulate the Sacred House for three days.

The next year, when they set out towards Mecca, they were scared that the pagans might not be loyal to their promise and prohibit them, hence, consequently, a battle could come forth and the Prophet (S) was not willing to fight in the forbidden month. So, this verse was sent down and .permitted them to defend and fight against the enemies if they initiated fighting.

In this verse, the Qur'an has issued the command of fighting upon hose who initiate war against Muslims. It lets Muslims use swords or any weapons and defensive means in order to stop the enemies. This condition, in fact, is for the time when the circumstances require and the course of patience in Muslims has ended, so they can openly and courageously defend their rights.

Fight: Why & Against Whom?

There are three subjects pointed out in this verse. They make manifest the logic of Islam about war.

1- The first phrase of the verse points to the ideal of the wars in Islam. It says: "And fight in the cause of Allah..."

Then, the main goal in Islamic fights (jihad) is the cause of Allah and the stretch of the Divine laws including: truth, justice, monotheism, and eradication of transgression, degeneration and deviation.

Thus, Islam condemns the wars aiming for: vengeance, ambition, conquering other countries, taking lands of others, and obtaining spoils of

war. So, taking weapon and setting to war is right only when it is done in the path of Allah.

2- Now, the question is that against whom the holy struggle is right. The second phrase of the verse answers:

"...(against) those who fight you..."

It clearly says that Muslims should not begin war unless the opponents initiate fighting by using weapons, except for some peculiar cases which will be pointed out when discussing the verses about Holy War.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that civil people (women and children in particular), who have not risen for fighting, must not be invaded and they are, therefore, privileged from invasion. .

Basing oil this principle, the great leader of Islam, Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) orders his soldiers thus:

"Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting, because, by the grace of Allah, you are in the right and to leave them till they begin fighting will be another point (of right) from your side against them..." [4]

3- The limit of war is defined by the next clause, saying:

" …but not aggressive... "

The basis of this meaning is that fighting in Islam is for the sake of Allah and in the path of Allah, where there should not be any transgression and aggression.

"…for surely Allah loves not the aggressors..."

That is why Islam, in spite of the wars of our Age, advises Muslims to observe many ethical principles in war.

For example, it tells them not to kill in fight those who put down their weapons and surrender, those who have lost their ability of fighting or, basically, are not able to fight, like old men and women and children.

Such people should not be invaded. Gardens and trees should not be destroyed. Muslims must not poison the water that their enemies use as their drinking water by poisonous ingredients (the chemical and microbial war).

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"...If, by the Will of Allah, the enemy if defeated, then do not kill the runner away. Do not strike a helpless person. Do not finish a wounded. And, do not inflict on women even though they may attack your honour with filthy words and abuse your officers..." [5]

The above mentioned explanations prove the invalidity of the numerous accusations of the enemies of Islam against Islam about the Islamic Holy wars. With these clear statements of the Qur'an, upon the aims of fighting in Islam and the different dimensions that the Holy War has, the answer to the objections of the enemies is made manifest.

There will come forth some more explanations, of course, when commenting other verses of Jihad. Allah willing.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 191-192

وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلاَ تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِندَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِن قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاء الْكَافِرِينَ فَإِنِ انتَهَوْاْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

191. "And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away. And persecution is more grievous than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them; such is the retribution of the infidels."

192. "But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This verse tells Muslims to fight against the idol worshippers of Mecca, who had expelled them (Muslims) from their own home and city, and to drive them (the idol worshippers) out from that city, since they had persecuted the Muslims for years.

That treatment was more grievous than slaughter, because slaughter is taking the worldly life of a person instead of which the one reaches the prosperity of the next world, while in torture the one has neither the comfort of the present world nor the pleasure and ease of the coming world.

Yet, it enjoins Muslims not to fight at the Sacred Mosque in order to preserve the security and sanctity of it. But, if pagans did not observe the respect of the Mosque and fought against Muslims, they would do the same and punish them.

Explanations

1- Reciprocation and conclusiveness with harshness is certain in some respects.

2- Sacred premises of Mecca and the Sacred Mosque are holy but the esteem of the blood of Muslims is more sacred. So, here, the comparison of the state of important and more important is considered.

3- Since Muslims should not initiate in fighting, they must not initiate destroying the sacred things, either.

4- Knowing the reason of a commandment is the secret of mirth and obedience. The Qur'an expresses the reason for the command of fighting. It says that they persecuted you for years, and that torture is more grievous and dangerous than slaughter. If the Qur'an issues the command of expulsion, it is for the reason that they had expelled the Muslims from their houses for years.

"And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away.

And persecution is more grievous than slaughter.

And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless

they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them;

such is the retribution of the infidels. "

****

In the next verse it says that Allah accepts their repentance if they put aside the custom of infidelity and idolatry and, consequently, they will be brethren of Muslims. They will be even exempted from the taxes and from the punishments that offenders must tolerate.

"But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The clemency enjoined by Islam upon its adherents even against their bloodthirsty enemies in the battlefield, has no match in any religion. The Muslims have been definitely commanded to sheathe their swords if the enemy desists from fighting.

The fight allowed by Islam has to be only against the wrong done, and there should be no rancor against the enemy when they correct themselves or even when they end the hostility.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 193

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لاَ تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلّهِ فَإِنِ انتَهَواْ فَلاَ عُدْوَانَ إِلاَّ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

193 "And fight with them until there is no (more) persecution, and the religion is only for Allah But when they desist, there should be no hostility save against the (willful) aggressors."

In this verse, the purpose of the Holy War in Islam (Jihad) is stated. It says that fighting is not for the sake of ordinary aims that humankind usually follow in their battles, nor for the sovereignty over the earth and conquest, nor for earning so much spoils, nor for preparing some selling markets and obtaining sufficient food stuff, nor for giving superiority to a group or a race over another group or race.

The aim of Holy Struggle is one and only one thing, and that is the attraction of Allah's pleasure which lies in the settlement of social justice, supporting the person, who have encountered with deceit and aberration, wiping out the environment of human societies from infidelity and idolatry, and, finally and particularly, getting the instruction, of Allah up in action.

Therefore, as it is realized, lighting is for eradiation or persecution among humankind and settling the creed of monotheism in them throughout the world.

"And fight with them until there is no (more) persecution, and the religion is only for Allah…"

And at the end of the verse, it adds that if they return and leave out infidelity, corruption and idolatry, Muslims should not bother them to revenge the past. They must ignore the past because opposition and reciprocal fighting is used only against oppressor when the circumstances require.

Islamic Holy War (Jihad), in fact can be divided into three categories:

1. The Preliminary Holy Wars for Freedom

Allah has designed some commands and programs for the sake of happiness, freedom, development, prosperity, and tranquility of Man. He has commissioned His prophets (as) to communicate these commands to people.

Now, if a person or a group of people imagine that this communication is against their personal mean benefits so that they produce some barriers on the way of Prophets' invitation, the prophets are rightful to remove those barriers from their way and acquire the freedom of delivering propagation, at first, through a peaceful way and, if it is not possible, then with the use of violence.

In other words, people of all societies have the right to hearken to the heralds of truth and be free to accept their invitations.

Now, if some persons decide to deprive them of their lawful right and do not let the call of the heralds of truth reach the ears of their spirits and, as a result, become free from the bounds of mental and social slavery, the

adherents of these agenda are rightful to employ any means in order to obtain that freedom. Hence, the necessity of preliminary Holy Wars (Jihad) in Islam, as well as other heavenly religions, is made manifest.

Also, if some persons bear pressure upon some Muslim believers to invert them to their previous religion, they can apply any means to remove that pressure.

2. A Defensive Holy War

It sometimes happens that war is posed to a person or a group of people, viz, they are unexpectedly invaded or unwarily transgressed by an enemy. Here, all the heavenly laws and human rules consider the attacked person or group of persons rightful to rise and defend themselves.

Alongside this defense, they can use all their potentialities powerfully and do their best to protect their entity. This kind of struggle is called defensive Holy War. Wars such as the Battles of Ahzab, Uhud, Mutah, Tabuk, Hunain and some other battles at the advent of Islam are counted among this kind of Holy War, which have had defensive forms.

3. Holy War Against Infidelity & Idolatry

At the same time that Islam invites the people of the world unto its call, which is the last and highest godly creed, it respects 'freedom of belief'. For this reason, it gives the nations who have the heavenly Book an enough respite to study and contemplate over Islam and willingly accept it.

If they do not accept it, they will be treated as 'a confederate minority', in a peaceful life under some particular conditions, of course, which are neither complicated nor difficult.

But infidelity and idolatry is neither a religion nor a creed nor is counted respectful. It is but a kind of superstition, a deviation, and stupidity. In fact, it is a kind of mental and ethical disease which should be, with any possible means, rooted out.

The terms 'honour' and 'respecting others' opinions' are used in the cases that those opinions have a safe and sound foundation. But, sickness, deviation, superstition, and aberration are not some things that can be counted respectable.

That is why Islam orders that idolatry be rooted out from the human societies, however much costly it may be, even at the cost of fighting. Idol-temples and the signs of idolatry, if not possible peacefully, should be destroyed by force.

Why Was Holy War Legislated in Medina?

We know that Holy War was enjoined for Muslims in the second year AH, while it was not compulsory before that.

The reason of this subject is clear because, on one hand, the number of Muslims in Mecca was so small that rising practically meant suicide.

On the other hand, the enemy was quite powerful in Mecca, and, indeed, Mecca was counted the main center of anti-Islamic powers. The opponents of Islam were so strong there that it was impossible to fight them inside Mecca.

But, when the Prophet (S) entered Medina, a great deal of people believed him, so many that he was able to spread his invitation clearly

inside and outside of Medina. He (S) could form a simple government and prepare the necessary means for fighting with his enemies and since Mecca was a rather far distance from Medina, he succeeded to do it with tranquility and peace of mind, and the revolutionary Muslim troops could prepare themselves for fight and defense against enemies.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 194

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُواْ عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

194. "The sacred month for the sacred month; and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation. Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you; and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

According to the Islamic calendar, there are four lunar months in very year which are specifically respected, and fighting is unlawful and forbidden therein. One month of these four months, i.e., Rajab is separate while the rest, i.e., Zil Qa'dah, Zil-Hajjah, and Muharram, are consecutive.

One of the reasons that the month Zil-Qa'dah is so called is that in this month it is necessary to have a halt of fighting.

This is the law of Islam that enjoins the adherents not to fight during four particular months of the year, but non-Muslim enemies always lie in ambush to misuse the opportunities. So, they may think that since Muslims are obliged to observe this law, they had better attack.

This verse says that if your opponents rush upon you during these four months, you can stand against them, too, and fight in the same months. So, you may apply the sacred month for the sacred month, because the sanctity of the blood and protection of the system if Islam is much more than the sanctity of these months.

"The sacred month for the sacred month…"

Then, whosoever did not regard with reverences should be treated under the law of retaliation.

"and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation."

Hence, as a, general rule, it says:

"Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you..."

Islam is not a religion of aggression and transgression, but it does not accept the aggression of others. Yet, the style of action should be in a manner that piety be always observed, and in retaliation, limits would not be violated when we do know and ought to be aware that Allah is with the pious ones.

"...and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

Explanations

1- No path is blind in Islam. The protection of the unity of Islam and the souls of Muslims are preferred to the sanctity of places and times.

2- We must be equitable even in contact with enemies.

"Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you..."

3- The necessity of piety, even at the time of fighting, is another one of the Islamic training principles.

4- The order of legislation should not be in a manner that it becomes a means of despair for Muslims and boldness in disbelievers. The principle of similar reciprocation stands for this very sake.

5- At the time of fighting in similar reciprocation, if you do not violate the limits of justice and be of the pious ones, you will enjoy of the Divine help.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 195

وَأَنفِقُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ تُلْقُواْ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوَاْ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

195. "And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition: and do good (to others), for verily Allah loves the doers of good."

Holy War needs as much money and property as it needs the sincere, strong experienced battle men, because in Holy War, the existence of both the spiritual and physical preparation, and suitable weapons, artillery and other fighting equipments for troops are necessary.

True it is that the most important effective factor of the fate of a war is the involving soldiers, but a soldier needs to be equipped. Hence, the verse emphasizes that the lack of spending wealth in this way is to bring themselves and other Muslims to destruction.

"And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition..."

At the time of revelation, in particular, a great deal of Muslims were full of ardor and emotions for Holy War, but they were so poor that they could not prepare the artillery. As the Qur'an states, they used to come to the Prophet (S) and ask him to supply the necessary means in order to send them to the battle-field.

But they usually came back with sorrow and grief while their eyes were shedding tears because the required means could not be supplied. The statement of the Qur'an in Surah At- Taubah. No.9. verse 92 is thus; "...they went back while their eyes overflowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that which they should spend."

Spending, a Prevention of Destruction

A general fact and a social rite can be taken from this holy verse in account of disbursing, although the subject is mentioned next to the verses of Holy War. The idea is that spending, in general, causes the members of a society to be delivered from perdition.

And, on the contrary, when the custom of donation be neglected and the properties be compiled in one pole of the society, there will come forth a majority of the poor and deprived. So, very soon, a great burst happens in the society in which the selves and wealth of capitalists will be burnt by the fire of that revolution. Here, thereby; the relation of 'donation' and 'prevention of destruction' is made clear.

Therefore, disbursement is useful for capitalist, before it would be beneficial to the state of the deprived; that is, the justification of wealth s a protector of wealth. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has pointed to this very fact where he says:

"...guard your properties by paying alms tax..." [6]

Next to the stage of Holy War and donation, it leads to benevolence and, at the end of the verse, it commands to doing good because the stage of doing good is the highest stage in the course of human development which Islam regards to fully. It says:

"...and do good (to others), for verily Allah loves the doers of good."

The occurrence of this phrase at the end of the verse on donation points to this meaning that the act of donation must be fulfilled with an absolute sincerity and affection: far from any term of reproach or what annoys or hurts the person whom the favour is done to.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 196

وَأَتِمُّواْ الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلاَ تَحْلِقُواْ رُؤُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهُ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضاً أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِّن رَّأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنتُمْ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ لِمَن لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

196. "And complete the Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah; but if you are prevented (to complete it), then (send) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) as may be obtained with ease; and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches w place (of sacrifice); but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he (should) make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing. And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the Hajj (he should offer) of whatever offering is easily available (for him).

But whoever finds none (to give), should fast three days during the Hajj (Pilgrimage), and seven days when you have returned; these (make) ten (days) complete. That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque. Have awe of Allah, and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty."

The Rites of Pilgrimage

The visitors of the holy shrine of Mecca usually perform the ceremonies of minor pilgrimage first. The rites are as follows:

They put on pilgrim's garb ('ihram) from some definite sites known as 'Trusting Place'. It means that they undertake to abandon doing a series of deeds which are unlawful for the person in a pilgrim state. They cover themselves with pilgrim's garb which consists of two pieces of unsewn cloth, and they continually say 'labbaika' while going towards Ka'bah.

When they reach Mecca, at first, they circumambulate Ka'bah in seven rounds. Then, they keep up a two-rak'at-prayer in a place called Maqam-i-Ebrahim (Station of Abraham). After that, they ply to and fro between two

mountains named Safa and Marwah for seven times. Finally, they, having cut a piece of a nail or some hair of theirs, take off the pilgrim's garb.

Then, again for the ceremonies of Pilgrimage, they put on pilgrim's garb and go unto 'Arafat, which is a land 24 kilometers far from original city of Mecca, in order to stay therein on the ninth of Zil-Hajjah, from noon until sunset, busy praying with invocation. After sunset, they move to Mash'ar-ul-Haram (Sacred Monument), which is located at a distance of 15 kilometers from Mecca, where they must remain until morning.

When the sun rises, they move into Mina, a land nearby there, and, on the same day, which is known as Feast of Sacrifice, they throw seven pebbles at a special Pillar called: 'Jamarah 'uqba', and then they sacrifice before shaving their heads (while women cut off a piece of hair from their heads). When they did their hair cut (Taqsir), they take off their pilgrim's garb at last.

They return to Mecca .the same day or after that and perform the ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah, circumambulation prayer, running between Safa and Marwah, Nisa' circumambulation and Nisa' circumambulation prayer.

On the eleventh and twelfth of the month, they throw pebbles at three special pillars in Mina which are called 'Jamarat', one after another seven times at each pillar each day while, during the nights before these days, they have to remain in Mina.

Thus, they accomplish the rites of the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) each of which is the survival of one historical event and that they are some effective hints and implicit declarations to the matters of refinement of character and social philosophies. (The description of each philosophy will be delivered when commenting on the concerning verses).

Now it is necessary to notify that the verse indicates that all these actions should be fulfilled for the sake of Allah and according to His commandments, not for making display and pretence or for the sake of idols.

Therefore, the first clause of the verse proclaims that in the deeds of Pilgrimage, both the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the lesser formal one ('Umrah), no motive should interfere but seeking to be nearer to Allah.

"And complete the Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah..."

Then it adds that if something like sickness and fear of enemy happens that hinders you from performing the ritual rites of Hajj and 'Umrah after you are clothed in pilgrim's garb you must sacrifice an animal as it is possible for you.

"... but if you are prevented (to complete it), then (send) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) as may be obtained with ease..."

It should be noted, of curse, that if the prevention is as a result of sickness and the like and the pilgrim's garb is done for the lesser formal Pilgrimage ('Umrah Mufradah), the sacrifice should be sent to Mecca, but if it has happened from the side of an enemy, the duty of sacrifice must be done at the same place where the prevention has occurred.

The Prophet (S) behaved in the same manner in Hudaybiyah, too. But, if the person is in the pilgrim's garb of Hajj and becomes sick, the one must send the sacrifice to Mina.

"and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its place (of sacrifice)..."

One of the rites that should be done in Hajj (Pilgrimage) is shaving the head (for men, and cutting some hair of the head for women). But they must be careful that they are not allowed to do this duty before sacrificing the offering in the place of sacrifice.

"...but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he (should) make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing...."

The exception is for the person who has an ailment or a difficulty that has to shave before the appointed time. If the person did so, (i.e. shaved his head because of ailment and the like), it is necessary for the one to give ransom. This ransom can be three days of fasting, or feeding six indigents, or slaughtering a lamb.

"...And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the

Hajj (he should offer) of whatever offering is easily available (for him). But whoever finds none (to give), should fast three days

during the Hajj (Pilgrimage), and seven days when you have returned..."

When you are free from sickness and enemy and you want to perform the 'greater Pilgrimage', you must sacrifice whatever you can from animals such as a camel, cow, or lamb. But if any of you cannot find the animal, or financially is not able to afford it, he must fast three days during the days of pilgrimage (the seventh, eighth, and ninth days) and seven days after returning from Hajj so that it makes ten days.

"...these (make) ten (days) complete..."

It is evident that three days and seven days make ten days, yet the Qur'an says that they are totally ten days complete. This meaning may point to the idea that the ten days can be substituted for the sacrifice completely.

This greater Pilgrimage with these orders is for those who are not dwelling nearby the Sacred Mosque. (The known state among Muslim jurisprudents is that everyone who is sixteen kilometers far from Mecca his duty is to follow the rites of the 'greater Pilgrimage', but those who are not far from Mecca by this distance, their duty is the 'separation Pilgrimage' (Hajj-i-Qir'an). This subject is detailed in books of jurisprudence furnished with its concerning evidences.)

"... That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque..."

Finally, at the end of the verse, the command is due to piety and that believers be aware not to have any shortcoming about the divine instructions in order to protect themselves from the severe punishment of Allah.

"...Have awe of Allah, and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty."

This emphasis may be for this that Pilgrimage (Hajj) is a great Islamic worship so that if the rites of it be not carefully observed and its spirit be neglected, there will be a large loss for Muslims.

This worship (Hajj) is the very one that Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has considered it the 'flag' and 'magnificent motto' of Islam. At the last moments of his life, he (as) has remarked in his will, thus:

"Fear Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'bah). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned, you will not be spared." [7]

Some enemies of Islam have also said that while Pilgrimage is in process they cannot gain victory.

One of the great believing men says: woe unto Muslims if they do not comprehend the meaning of Hajj, and woe unto others if they do not catch its meaning!

Notes

1. Tafsir-Baydawi, vol. 1, p. 40
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 282
3. Ibid
4. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No.14
5. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No.14
6. Nahjul Balagha, saying No. 146
7. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No. 4

Section 25, No Warfare during the Pilgrimage months, Warning against the Hypocrites

No warfare during the Pilgrimage Months -Warning against the hypocrites,

Further instructions regarding Hajj -Invitation to complete submission to God (i.e. Islam);

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 197

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَن فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلاَ رَفَثَ وَلاَ فُسُوقَ وَلاَ جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُواْ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ

197. "(The performance on the Hajj (Pilgrimage) is in months well-known, whosoever then undertakes (to perform) the Hajj therein, then let there be no intercourse, nor indulge in ungodliness, nor disputing in the Hajj. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And make provision, but surely the best provision is the piety. So, have awe of Me, O' people of understanding."

"(The performance of) the Hajj (Pilgrimage) is in months well-known..."

In this verse, the Qur'an remarks that the rites of Pilgrimage (Hajj) should be fulfilled in certain months of the year not throughout it. The books of tradition, Qur'an commentary, and jurisprudence say that this great worship can be fulfilled only in Shawwal, Zil-Qa'dah, and during the first ten days of Zil-Hajjah, (a part of which relates exclusively to the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth days of the month and another part of it can be performed during this whole length of time).

"...whosoever then undertakes (to perform) the Hajj therein,

then let there be no intercourse, nor indulge in ungodliness,

nor disputing in the Hajj..."

This part of the verse indicates that those who have made the performance of Pilgrimage (Hajj) obligatory for themselves, by putting on pilgrim's garb and engaging in the rites of Pilgrimage, should restrain themselves from enjoying even lawful sexual association and committing wickedness.

They must avoid obscene and vain debates or foul speech and all that appertains thereto, because the place is the site of worship, sincerity, and abandoning the material worldly pleasures.

It is an environment from where the spirit must gain strength and, separating from the world of material entirely, find way into the world of super material. This status should be in a manner that the relation of brotherhood and alliance can be tightened.

Then, it adds:

"...And whatever good you do, Allah knows it...."

This is the first reward which is given to a good doer, because the happiness of a true believer is, in the first stage, to know that his Lord is

aware of the good action that the one has done for His sake. This, by itself, is very delightful and delectable.

"...And make provision, but surely the best provision is the piety...."

In this part of the verse the command unto the believers is due to making provision.

It is said that at the advent of Islam some people, particularly from Yemen, used to journey to Mecca on pilgrimage without sufficient provisions for their sustenance on the pretence that they trusted in Allah's help.

But Allah gives sustenance through natural ways and by ordinary means. So, in this section of the verse, the Qur'an enjoins upon the pilgrims to first make the necessary provisions for the whole journey and then, taking it with them, proceed.

By the way, the term 'making provision' may point to a spiritual aspect, meaning that besides this material provision there is another necessary provision which should be made and that is the provision of 'piety' and 'righteousness'.

This phrase contains a narrow hint to this fact that in the journey of Pilgrimage there are many instances for making spiritual provision which should not be neglected. In Mecca, the illustration of Islam, the lively scenes of the self-sacrifices of Abraham, the hero of theism, and some specific manifestation of the splendour of Allah are seen, the which that can be comprehended in no other place.

These who have a vigil spirit can gain spiritual provisions from this unique journey for their life in this world as well as the coming one.

Then, it concludes the verse by saying:

"...So, have awe of Me, O' people of understanding..."

This final phrase addresses the possessors of mind and intellect telling them that they should be pious, because it is they who enjoy the utmost merits of this excellent educational process, while others only share a small portion of it.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 198-199

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَبْتَغُواْ فَضْلاً مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُم مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ
عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِن كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّآلِّينَ
ثُمَّ أَفِيضُواْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُواْ اللّهَ إِنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

198. "There shall be no sin for you to seek bounty from your Lord. Then when you hasten on (in multitude) from 'Arafat, remember Allah by the sacred Monument (Muzdalifah), remember Him He has guided you, although before that you were surely of those who went astray."

199. "Then hasten on from where the people hasten on, and seek forgiveness of Allah; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Economic Activities in Hajj Season

At the Age of Ignorance, people considered trading and taking passengers or baggage to different destinations during the Hajj season

unlawful (haram) and a sin. They counted the Hajj performances of those who did such activities invalid.

At the season of Hajj, Muslims were naturally expecting to know whether the ordinances of that Age were still valid or they were worthless from the view of Islam. Then, the above verse was revealed telling them:

"There shall be no sin for you to seek bounty from your Lord..."

The verse under discussion announces the aforementioned ordinance of the time of ignorance, which counted bargain at the time of Hajj a sin, is incorrect. It proclaims that trade and the like activities are no problem during the season of Hajj, and it does not matter that people enjoy of the blessings of Allah and gain profit from their work and activities.

As Islamic literature indicates about the philosophies of Hajj, in addition to the ethical, political and cultural philosophies, this verse points to the philosophy of economics, too.

This idea says that the transportation of Muslims from different points of the world toward the Ka'bah and the formation of that great Islamic congress can be a good basis for a common movement due to economics in Islamic societies.

In this great meeting, before or after the rites of Hajj, the thoughtful Muslim minds in economics can assemble, and, with cooperation and association of each other, establish a firm foundation for the economics of the Islamic societies.

They can produce, by the help of correct commercial exchanges, for example, such a strong and fixed economy that they become independent and free from want from enemies and non-Muslims.

Therefore, these trades and commercial exchanges, themselves, are among the means of strengthening the Islamic nations against the enemies of Islam. The reason is that no nation will have complete independence without having a powerful economy.

Yet, it is evident, of course that the commercial activities should be set in a position after the ethical and worshipping aspects of Hajj, not prior and dominative to it. Fortunately, pilgrims have enough time for this job both before and after the rites of Hajj.

Husham-ibn-Hakam said that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (as) about the reason that Allah enjoined people to circumambulate the House (Ka'bah) and perform Hajj.

Imam al-Sadiq (as) replied:

"Verily Allah has created human beings...and has enjoined them to do an action (Hajj) which contains the obedience of religion and is good for the affairs of their world.

He assigned that (at the time of Hajj), Muslims assemble from the east and west of the world in order to be acquainted with each other, and in order that every nation makes use (of the productions and) trades of other nations, and that the muleteers and cameleers make profit (in this journey by hiring out their vehicles to others), and that they become familiar with the effects (traditions) of the Prophet (S) (so that those traditions continue to survive by) remembering and not to be forgotten. If it were so that every nation spoke about only their own environment, and whatever there was therein,

they would be destroyed and the cities would turn to ruin, and commercial profits would be wasted, and the traditions and signs of the Prophet (S) would be vanished. This is the philosophy of Hajj." [1]

"...Then when you hasten on (in multitude) from 'Arafat, remember Allah by the Sacred Monument (Muzdalifah)..."

In this section of the verse, the Qur'an's command is due to this subject that after performing the rites that should be fulfilled in' Arafat, they must move to Mash'ar-ul-Haram (the Sacred Monument), which is located between Mina and' Arafat, and remember Him therein.

"...remember Him as He has guided you…"

Here, the speech of the verse remarks that for thanksgiving and being grateful for the guidance of Allah, remember Him (s.w.t.) in Mash'ar-ul-Haram, a remembrance appropriate to the guidance that He has given you.

At that time, Muslims could realize well the value of this great blessing, viz. guidance, because they were not so far from the time that the inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula had gone astray totally, and could see how Allah had saved them from all those aberrations and misfortunes by leading them to the blessing of this pure divine religion, Islam.

"...although before that you were surely of those who went astray."

Why 'Arafat?

It is said that 'Arafat is a land about 24 kilometers away from the center of Mecca where pilgrims halt from noon until evening on the ninth of Zil-Hajjah. The origin of this appellation has been differently described.

One of them is that when the harbinger of revelation, Gabriel, showed Abraham (as) the rites of Hajj therein, he (as) responded: "I recognized,", "I recognized" ('Araftu). But it is probable that this appellation points to another fact, too.

That land, from which the first steps of the performance of Hajj begins, is a very fitting place for the recognition of the Pure Essence of Allah. Verily, that spiritual attraction that man finds in him at the arrival of that indescribable land, is not comparable with that of any desert.

In 'Arafat, originally everywhere is the same, everything contains a harmony, all pilgrims behave alike in that desert.

They have relieved themselves from the noise of the cities and from the tumult and dazzling glare of the material world, busy contemplating therein, under the blue sky, in the clean fresh air clear from sin, where the harbinger of revelation has stretched wings, where accompanied with its breeze the murmur of Gabriel and the manly sound of Abraham (as) strengthened with the delightful voice of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the true believers of early Islam, are spiritually heard.

In this remindful land where as if a window had been opened to the supernatural world, not only man can be drowned in the emanation of gnosis of Allah and may follow the common praising murmur of the whole creation but also he might find himself inside his own ego, the which he has lost for a lifetime and has been looking for.

If so, he will also become gnostic to his own rank and will comprehend that he is not the one who works hard day and night and greedily pokes about here and there to earn a living and whatever more he obtains the less

his thirst of greed is quenched. He finds out that there is another diamond-like nobility in his soul that he is, in fact, the same worthy existence.

Yes, this very land is called 'Arafat, the site of recognition. What an interesting and appropriate appellation!

Mash'ar-ul-Haram

The statements cited about the appellation used for Sacred Monument as 'Mash'ar-ul-Haram' denote that the place is a center for the 'mottoes of Hajj', and it is a sign for its great glorious divine concerning rites.

However, it must not be neglected that the Arabic term / mash'ar / is derived from / shu'ur / which means: 'sense, consciousness or awareness '.

In that exciting unique night, i.e., the night before the tenth of Zil-Hajjah, when the pilgrims, after passing their training course in, Arafat, have moved into Muzdalifah to spend a night long until after sunrise there, lying over the smooth sands under the starry sky, find themselves among a crowd which seems as a small pattern of the Great Resurrection in the Hereafter.

This shakening scene, with that pure serenity that the surroundings has, makes the pilgrims, being covered in those innocently plain clothes of 'Ihram, feel a special new spring of thought, understanding and awareness inside their own entity, so that, if they contemplate, they can clearly hear the fall of that consciousness in the depth of their hearts. That is why that venerable place is called 'Mash'ar'.

****

"Then hasten on from where the people hasten on..."

By this verse, the Providence has notified the privileges that the Quraish had considered for themselves. The Quraish used to call themselves 'Humus' (those who are firm in religion) and, counting themselves the off springs of Abraham and custodians of Ka'bah, imagined themselves superior to the people of other Arab tribes.

Hence, they stayed to avoid joining the other pilgrims in proceeding to the plain of Arafat under the pretext that it was out of the limits of Mecca, though they knew that it was among the rites of Hajj and a part of the creed of Abraham.

In the above verse, the Qur'an tells Muslims that they all must halt in one place ('Arafat) and from there all should go towards Mash'ar from which they totally move to Mina. Thus, that wrong privilege of the Quraish passed off.

"...and seek forgiveness of Allah; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful..."

It adds that they ought to avoid those wrong ideas of the age of ignorance and seek forgiveness of Allah because Hajj, or Islam, does not recognize any such distinctions and had already leveled every such difference and distinction. Then, it remarks that Allah is forgiving and merciful.

Explanations

In addition to the aforementioned descriptions about the Pilgrimage, cited in the commentary upon verse No.196 under the title of 'The Rites of Pilgrimage', there are some detailed explanations given at the beginning of an English translation of the Qur'an, by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, which are exactly adopted here, as follows:

"It is incumbent on every Muslim who has the necessary means to do it, to visit, on Pilgrimage, the Holy Mosque, the Ka'bah, in Mecca once in his life. The carrying out of this ordinance is subject to the condition that the individual has the means to do it. The main conditions are:

1. The individual must be a major and not a minor.

2. He must have the means to meet the expense of the journey, without detriment to his ability to continue his business or the means of his living.

3. The health of the individual should permit the journey.

4. There should be no risk of life in the journey. (For exact details refer to 'Fiqh')

The essential formality of Hajj is the Ehram, i.e., the male should remove his stitched clothes and get himself wrapped with two pieces of unstitched, clean cloth, one covering his body from his neck to his loins and another from his waist to his feet. A female should wrap these two pieces over and above her usual clothes.

The Ehram cloth should have been lawfully acquired and it should not be silken or transparent.

The moment the individual puts on the Ehram, i.e., the garb of a Pilgrim, (i.e., a Hajj), he becomes responding exclusively to the call of the Lord which was issued to mankind through the great Prophet Abraham: -

"And (remember O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) when We fixed for
Abraham the place for the House, (saying): 'Associate thou not with Me
aught, and cleanse My House for those who make the circuits and
stand in prayer, and bow and prostrate themselves (unto Me)."

"And proclaim thou unto the people the Pilgrimage (Hajj)! They will come
unto thee on foot and on lean camel, coming from every remote (high) way! " (22:26, 27)

Putting on the Ehram, the pilgrim in response to the call of the Lord issued through Abraham, calls: -

'Labbaik, Allahomma Labbaik!', La Sharika laka Labbaik'

Yes, here I am O' Lord, here I am. There is no partner for thee. Yes, here I am.

'Innal-Hamd laka wan-Ne'mata laka', Wal Mulka laka Labbaik',

Verily, the Praise and the bounties are Thine. And the Dominion is Thine. Yes, I am here, O Lord! "

Note

The above mentioned response of Hajj is cited in the aforementioned book. But the exact words that they actually recite now are as follows: Labbayk, Allahumma Labbayk! Labbayka la Sharika Laka Labbayk! Innal-Hamda wan-Ni'mata Laka wal-Mulk, la Sharika Laka Labbayk!

It is worth noting that the call of the Lord to mankind, issued through Abraham thousands of years ago has been made to ring and resound into the ears of men through Islam and today the Holy House of the Lord, the Ka'bah, is visited regularly and punctually every year on the fixed dates in the month of Zilhaj, the last month of the Islamic Calendar year.

After putting on the Ehram, the Haji or the pilgrim has to do the following: -

1. "Tawaf, i.e., circumambulation), i.e., going seven times round the Ka'bah.

2. After the' 'Tawaf' is completed, a prayer (salat) of two Rak'ats, like that of the Morning Prayers, must be performed.

3. After the prayer, the pilgrim has to cut the nails (or the hair). These formalities are performed immediately as the pilgrim arrives in the city of Mecca for the pilgrimage and this is called 'Umrah and the cutting of the nails (or the hair) is called 'Taqseer'. This could be performed from the first of the lunar month Shawwal to the 8th of Zilhaj.

On the 8th Zilhaj the pilgrim should put on the Ehram.

On the 9th Zilhaj the pilgrim should go to the plain of Arafat and stay there until sunset.

After (the sunset the pilgrim should proceed to the place called Mashar and stay there at night.

On the morning of l0th Zilhaj the pilgrim should go to the plain of Mina, offer sacrifice and effect the Taqseer' (shaving his head clean).

After this, the pilgrim should put off the Ehram but must remain in Mina for two or three nights.

During the day the pilgrim goes to Mecca to perform 'Tawaf and offer two Rak'at prayer.

After completing the 'Tawaf the pilgrim should perform the Sa'i between the two hillocks, Safa and Marwa.

After completing the Sa'i, the pilgrim should conclude the performance by repeating the 'Tawaf called the 'Tawaf-i-Nisa'.

(Caution: -Be it known -the above note about the performance of Hajj, is only a bare skeleton just to give an idea of pilgrimage in Shia'ism -For the exact details one should refer to 'Fiqh').

This completes the pilgrimage and the Hajj now returns to Mecca. After the Hajj, the pilgrim proceeds to Medina to visit the shrine of the Holy Prophet (S) and the graves of the Four Holy Imams (as) in the Cemetery 'Jannatul-Baqi' viz.

1. The Second Holy Imam Hasan Ibne Ali Al-Mujtaba.
2. The Fourth Holy Imam Ali ibnul Husain Az-Zainul'abideen.
3. The Fifth Holy Imam Muhammad ibne Ali Al-Baqir.
4. The Sixth Holy Imam Ja'far ibne Muhammad As-Sadiq.

The Mausoleums over graves of the above Holy ones have been demolished and the pilgrims are not allowed by the Saudi Rule to offer any prayers like Fatiha or the recitation of any salutation to the Holy Souls.

Every sincere Muslim loyal to the Holy family of the Holy Prophet (S); the Ahlul-Bait (as), particularly the Shi'as, feel for the ruined condition of the holy graves and the unwarranted and unreasonable ban on the recitation of either the Holy Qur'an or offering any salutation to the Holy Souls, and earnestly prays to God for the restoration of the freedom to offer the Salutation etc., on the Holy Shrines as it was before, and for the removal of the Un-Islamic ban.

A Few of the Qur'anic Verses on Hajj

"Verily, the First House made for mankind is the one at Mecca, Blessed and Guidance for the worlds." "In it are clear signs; the standing place of Abraham; and whoever entereth it is secure; and (purely) for God, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither; And whosoever denieth then Verily, God is Self-sufficiently independent of the Worlds." (3: 95, 96)

The Time for the Pilgrimage and the Discipline Therein

'The pilgrimage' is performed in the known months; so whosoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be then no foul speech nor abusing nor disputing in the pilgrimage, and whatever good you do, God knoweth it and maketh provision. 'Verily the best of provision is the piety of oneself and fear Me, O' men of understanding '.

There is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord, so when ye hasten on from Arafat then remember God near the Holy Mash'ar, Monument, and remember Him as He hath guided you, though before that ye were certainly of those gone astray.

"Then hasten on from where the people hasten on, and seek forgiveness of Allah; Verily, God is Forgiving, Merciful."

So when ye have performed your devotions, then laud God as ye lauded your fathers, rather a greater lauding. But there are some people who say, 'Our Lord give us in this world, and they shall have no portion in the hereafter.

"Hajj is the months well-known, whosoever then undertaketh the pilgrimage therein, then let there be no intercourse, nor bad language, nor quarrelling during the pilgrimage; and whatever of good ye do, God knoweth it; so make provision (for your journey) and verily the best provision is piety; and fear Me, O' ye people of understanding."

"It shall be no guilt on your part if ye seek bounty from your Lord (in trade during pilgrimage); then when ye march from Arafat remember God near the Holy Monument, and remember Him as He hath guided you, although ye were surely before this, of those who had gone astray.

"Then march ye on from whence the other people march on and seek pardon of God; verily God is Forgiving, Merciful.

"And among them there are some who say Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and save us from the torment of the (Hell) Fire.

"These shall have a portion of what they have earned; verily, God is quick in reckoning.

"And remember ye God on the numbered days; and whosoever hasteneth off in two days it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarrieth (there), on him (also) there will be no sin and this is for him who guardeth (against evil) so take ye shelter in God and know ye (that) unto Him ye shall (all) be gathered." (2: 197-203)

Disciplinary Restrictions of Amnesty during the Hajj Period

"O' ye who believe! kill ye not (any) game while ye are in the pilgrim garb; and whoever among you killeth it intentionally, the compensation (of it) is the like of what he killed from the cattle, as adjudged by two just

men from among you, as an offering to be brought to the Ka 'bah or the expiation (of it) is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the heinousness of his deed; God hath pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returneth (to it); then will God exact penalty from him, and God is Mighty, Lord of Retribution." (5:95)

The Lawful Game during the Pilgrimage

"Allowed unto you is the game of the sea and eating thereof a provision for you and for the travellers; and forbidden unto you is the game of the land so long as ye are in the pilgrim garb; and fear ye God unto Whom ye shall be gathered." (5:96)

The Sanctity of the Holy Ka'bah and the Month and the Offerings

"God hath made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a Sanctuary (Place of stay in peace) for mankind and the Sacred Month and the Offerings and the (animals with the) garlands; this is that ye may know that God knoweth whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that God is the Knower of all things." (5:97) (For details refer to 'Fiqh').

The Disciplinary Conduct to be followed during the Pilgrimage

In the case of Ehram for Hajj, the repetition of the Talbiah should stop at noon on the day of 'Arafat. The Hajj during Ehram should abstain from the following: -

1. Hunting or helping in any form and utilizing a hunted animal.
2 All sexual enjoyments, even witnessing a marriage contract.
3. Any deliberate action causing discharge of sperm.
4. Use of any incense or perfume.
5. Any kind of mischief or uttering a lie, or falsehood.
6. Any kind of dispute or quarrel particularly it is associated with any kind of swearing by God.
7. Killing even any insect on the body.
8. Removal of hair on the body, by any means.
9. Covering the head and the top of the foot. The head should not be even submerged in the water.
10. Sheltering under moving shelters, like umbrellas, hooded cars or carts or aeroplanes. No harm in remaining inside stationary shelters like rooms etc.
11. Cutting of nails, trees, plants and herbs.
12. Use of cosmetics decorations and ornaments.
13. Wearing of weapons unless necessary.
14. Rubbing or scratching the body. (RF.)

After entering Mecca, one should not leave it before Hajj is over.

Wear the Ehram after one of the daily compulsory prayers.

Recite Talbiah when wearing the Ehram.

Take off the Ehram when the 'Umrah is over, but no shaving to be done.

Remove hair before wearing the Ehram.

Take the Gusle Ehram and Wudu for prayers.

After completing the Say of 'Umrah cut hair or nails.

There are two Tawafs: -

(as) For 'Umrah,

(b) In Zilhaj.
At Mina on the 10th.
Stone the three Satans.
Shave head and offer the sacrifice.
After giving the sacrifice come out of Ehram.
On the 11th and 12th also perform the other rites and stoning at Mina.
For the exact details do consult 'Fiqh' books.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 200-202

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن
يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلاَقٍ
وِمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
أُولَـئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُواْ وَاللّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

200. "When you have performed your (holy) rites, then remember Allah, as you remember your forefathers or even with more intense remembrance. And there are some men who say: 'Our Lord! give us in this world', they shall have no portion in the world to come."

201. "But there are some who say: 'Our Lord! want us good in this world and good in the world to come, and save us from the torment of the Fire '. "

202. "These shall have a portion of what they have earned; and Allah is quick in reckoning."

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) that in the Age of Ignorance when the performance of Hajj ended there usually formed a meeting of people where they used to boast about the fanciful honours that they had owned from their ancestors. They used to explain their stories in detail.

The Qur'an says that after finishing the rites of Hajj remember Allah, and speak about Him and His endless blessings in that large gathering. This remembrance of the Lord might be, at least, with the same enthusiasm and affection that you had in your boastings and glory towards your ancestors in the Age of Ignorance, though this one should be even more intense than the former one.

"When you have performed your (holy) rites, then remember Allah, as you remember your forefathers or even with more intense remembrance…"

This verse also teaches us that greatness and honour is true under the shadow of relation with Allah, not boasting for the vain honours of forefathers,

"…And there are some men who say: …"

After that, the Qur'an makes the situation of people clear, and points out the standard of thought and understanding of people. There are some groups of people who do not look for anything but the material interest for themselves, and do not seek from Allah but for the same. They say:

"…'Our Lord! give us in this world',…"

These people do not seek for any share of spiritualities, here in this life. They will not have any share of them in Hereafter, either. In the coming

eternal world, where all need everything of that kind, they will have nought, and no portion of the good things of the next world will be given them.

"…They shall have no portion in the world to come."

The second group is those whose thoughts are not limited to the material life alone. They seek for both the good things of the life of this world, as the primary stage of the spiritual development towards perfection, and the felicity of the next world.

So, this verse defines, in fact, the logic of Islam due to the material subjects and spiritual subjects. It condemns those who are drowned only in material ties as well as those who have no regard and attention to the worldly life.

"But there are some who say: 'Our Lord! grant us good in this world and good in the world to come,…"

They also ask Him to save them from the painful chastisement of the coming world, saying thus:

"…and save us from the torment of the Fire."

It is obvious that the term / hasanah /, which means 'goodness', has a vast meaning in the verse so that it includes all the material and spiritual merits. But, in some traditions, it is narrated that the Prophet (S), in answer to the question that what the goodness of this world and the world to come was, said:

"He who has been bestowed a thankful heart, a busy praising tongue, and a pious wife who helps him in his affairs of this world and the next, then, surely, he has been given the good of this world and the good of the coming world, and will be kept off from the torment of Fire." [2]

Evidently, this meaning is among the kind of commenting on a general concept upon a specific one, and pointing to the clear examples rather than to be exclusive to these particular ones.

"These shall have a portion of what they have earned; and Allah is quick in reckoning."

Following the foregoing ideas, in this verse it says that these two groups of people will enjoy of what they have obtained, both those who seek Allah for only the things of this life and those who demand Him the good of this life and the next. Neither of them are deprived from what they seek for, but each group will be confined to their own demands.

Allah will reckon the account of all people in the Hereafter in a short time without interfering one person's account with that of another person.

It has been narrated from Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

"Verily Allah will reckon the human beings in a single whole time similar to (the way) that He provides them sustenance wholly in a time." [3]

So, the Qur'an says:

"...and Allah is quick in reckoning."

In his verse, the question of speediness of reckoning from the side of Allah has been pointed out.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 203

وَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلاَ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

203. "Celebrate the praise of Allah during the appointed days (Dhul-Hijjah 11,12,13), but whoever hastens off within two days, it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarries (there), on him (also) there will be no sin, (this is) for him who guards (against evil). Then be in awe of Allah, and know that unto Him you shall be (all) gathered."

This verse, following to the explanation of the remembrance of Allah at the conclusion of the performance of the rites of Pilgrimage, defines the process of it and that they, instead of vain boastings of the Age of Ignorance, must specifically remember Allah in a few days the minimum of which is two days.

These days, based on the frame of reference of the former verses, are the days after the Feast of Sacrifice which naturally are the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth of the month. In the terminology of traditions, these days are called 'the days of Tashriq'.

As this appellation denotes, these days are the time when the mind and spirit of a person can be delighted under the light of the performance of those splendid religious rites.

"Celebrate the praise of Allah during the appointed days (Dhul-Hijjah 11,12,13), but whoever hastens off within two days, it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarries (there), on him (also) there will be no sin..."

In the Islamic literature, it is recommended that after the fifteen daily prayers, (the first of which is the noon prayer on the Feast of Sacrifice and its final one is the morning prayer on the thirteenth day of the month), the following inspiring phrases be recited; the Arabic transliteration of which are pronounced thus:

"Allahu akbar , Allahu akbar, la 'ilaha 'illallahu wallahu akbar , Allahu akbar , wa lillahil hamd, Allahu akbaru ala ma hadana, Allahu akbaru ala ma razaqna min bahimatil-'an'am, wal-hamdu lillahi ala ma 'ablana "

"Allah is great, Allah is great. There is no God save Allah. Allah is great. Allah is great and all praise is due to Allah. Allah is great in that He has guided us. Allah is great in that He has granted us animals for sustenance, and all praise is due to Allah for what He has destined for us."

This part of the verse which says: "it will be no sin on him" may point to the choice of either two or three days in remembrance of Allah. Then, this clause means that there is no sin upon the one who chooses either of them. (And, the primary apparent meaning of the phrase is this very one.)

Also, these words may be rendered to the negation of sin absolutely for the pilgrims of the Sacred House.

According to this interpretation, after the performance of the rites of Hajj, having been done faithfully and with full attention and sincerity, which ends with the above mentioned holy phrases, all the signs of former sins and their evil remaining consequences upon the heart and soul of pilgrims will be wiped out.

It is at this time that the pilgrims, with clean souls and free from the burden of sins, leave that great site, i.e., that moral training land. The commentators have taken the term /li-man-it-taqa/, "(this is) for him who guards (against evil)", as an attestation to this recent mentioned meaning.

At the end of the verse, it advises us that we mortals should be in awe of Allah and be aware that our path is unto Him and we all will be mustered when our deeds, whether good or evil, will be reckoned and we will be rewarded for them.

"Then be in awe of Allah, and know that unto Him you shall be (all) gathered."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 204-206

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللَّه عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّه لاَ يُحِبُّ الفَسَادَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّه أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

204. "And among people is he whose speech in the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries."

205. "And when he turns back, he strives to cause mischief on the earth, and to destroy the tilth and the stock. But Allah does not love mischief."

206. "And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah', pride drives him towards sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode indeed. "

Occasion of Revelation

These verses were revealed about a man by the name of 'Ukhnos-ibn-Shariq. He was a handsome man and of attractive speech. He pretended to the friendship of the Prophet (S) and showed himself a Muslim.

Whenever he went to the Prophet (S), he expressed his Faith to him and, though he was a hypocrite, he took an oath that he loved the Prophet (S) and had believed in God. The Messenger of Allah spoke with him warmly and treated him with his kindness and affection.

When there came a conflict between the Prophet (S) and the members of the Thaqif Tribe, that man took Muslims by surprise and killed their beasts. He burnt their farming crops.

Some other commentators have said that he passed by a farm belonging to Muslims and set its agricultural crops on fire. He hamstringed their beasts, too, and, thereby, made his hidden hypocrisy manifest. Then, the above verses were revealed.

As mentioned in the occasion of revelation, the verse points to the hypocrisy of some mischief makers and warns the Messenger of Allah (S) against them. It says:

"And among people is he whose speech in the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries."

There are some people who, with their smooth tongue, express Faith and indulge in plausible talk with many oaths. But, the same persons are the

most harmful enemies and hostile ones against Islam; and, hiddenly they stir up quarrels and cause all sorts of mischief: they spoil the crops of the farms, strive to waste and defame the believing men and the religion of the Truth.

Allah uncovers their tricks and makes their interiors manifest for His Messenger that they try in the path of making mischief. If they were true in their statements, they would not cast mischief and destruction, because everybody knows that Allah does not love mischief.

"And when he turns back, he strives to cause mischief on the earth, and to destroy the tilth and the stock. But Allah does not love mischief. "

There may come forth this question that why the Prophet (S) treated such people kindly. The reason was for that he was commissioned to accept the statements of all people as long as they did not show the contrary status. And such should be that, of course.

Some commentators have said that the purpose of the phrase /wa'iŎa tawalla/ "And when he turns back', at the beginning of the second verse may have been in the sense of 'government', since the term /tawalla/ derived from the root /wilayat/ means government.

Taking this consideration, the commentary of this verse is such: when the hypocrites take the government in their control, they begin making mischief and destruction and stretching oppression and transgression amongst people.

Then as the result of the spread of oppression and cruelty, the cities and societies turn to ruin and the lives and properties of people will be in danger. These wicked people are so that when they are prohibited from doing disgrace, their fanaticism and obstinacy will be excited, then, they not only do not hearken to the advices of the benevolent advisers but, with their own specific pride, increase their wickedness and evil actions. Such people cannot be controlled save with the Fire of Hell.

"And when it is said to him, Fear Allah "
pride drives him towards sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode indeed."

In fact, this verse is a hint to one of other characteristics of hypocrites which is a stable zeal and a harsh pride and obstinacy that drive them to the limits of the greatest evil:

"...pride drives him towards sin..."

In contrast to this group, there are the believing people who, under the government of Faith, are apart from this hideous and dangerous quality.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 207

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاء مَرْضَاتِ اللّهِ وَاللّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

207. "And among people is he who sells his self to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is affectionate unto His (faithful) servants."

Ibn-i-Abil-Hadeed, one of the scholars of the Sunni schools who lived in the seventh century A.H., has cited in his famous book, Sharh-i-Nahjul-Balagha (the Explanation of the statements of Imam' Ali (as), that the commentators totally had said that the above verse was revealed about and in the praise of Ali ibn Abi Talib after that he readily slept in the bed of the Prophet (S) on the night known as Laylat-ul-Mabit. [4] This idea is in wide scale famous so that none can deny it but a pagan or a crazy one.

The explanation of the event precisely is such that the pagans of Mecca decided to elect one person from each tribe to kill the Prophet Muhammad (S) all together in order to prevent the rise of Bani-Hashim tribe in vengeance for his bloodshed.

They thought, in that way, they could be free from the Prophet's Call. But the Prophet (S) became aware of their hostile plot before it was too late. Then, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) accepted readily to sleep in the Prophet's bed so that he (S) could get out of Mecca safely.

As soon as Ali (as) slept in that bed instead of the holy Prophet (S), the Providence questioned His two dear angels, Gabriel and Michael, which of them was ready to be devoted to the other, but neither of them was ready to do that. So, the Lord told them to watch then how' Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was ready to devote his soul for the Messenger of Allah (S).

Many of the Muslim scholars have confessed to the above fact. The Late 'Allamah Amini has mentioned the names of such scholars in his famous hook: Al-Qadir, vol. 2, p. 48, including Musnad-i-Imam Ahmad Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 348.

It is cited in Atyab-ul.Bayan Fi Tafsir-il Qur'an that the book called Qayat-ul-Maram has narrated twenty traditions, nine of which are through the Sunnite scholars and eleven of them are narrated through Shi'ah scholars, denoting that the verse under discussion was revealed on the virtue of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) on Laylat-ul-Mabit i.e. the night when he (as) slept in the Prophet's bed and the Messenger of Allah (S) migrated to Medina. [5]

One of the hooks written in the third century A.H. entitled: Tarikh-i-Tabari, vol. 2, p. 373 has explained the description of the event of Laylat-ul-Mabit, the night in which' Ali (as) slept in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (S). This event is also explained in Tarikh-i- Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 39.

Ibn-i-Abil-Hadeed expresses in Sharh-i-Nahjul-Balagha, vol. 4, p. 73 that Mu'awiyah paid four thousand Dirhams in order that it would be said by people that the above holy verse was revealed upon the virtue of Ibn-i-Muljim.

Some of the books from both Sunni and Shi'ah schools, which have vividly considered the revelation of this verse upon the virtue of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), are as follows:

'Ihya'-u-'Ulum-id-Din, vol. 3, p.238 by Qazali; Tathkirat-ul-Khawas, by Sebt-ibn-Jauzi Hanafi; As-Sirat-un-Nabawiyyah Ibn-i-Husham, vol. 2, p. 291, by Ibn-i-Husham; As-Sirat-ul-Halabiyyah, vol. 2, p. 29, printed in Maktabat-ut- Tijariyat-ul-Kubra, Egypt, by Halabi; Al-Fusul-ul-Muhimmah, by Ibn-i-Sabbaq Maliki.

Explanations

1- Sometimes it happens that an evil person says something which seems wonderful: "And among people is he whose speech... causes you to wonder..."[6] ; but, in comparison with that, a true believer does something that causes the world to wonder:

"And among people is he who sells his self..."

2- The most profitable bargain is the one that a person sells his best property, his soul, to Allah, his Creator. Such a bargain is done neither for

Paradise nor for being safe from the Fire of Hell, but it is merely performed for gaining His pleasure:

"...to seek the pleasure of Allah;..."

3- This is important that a person ventures his self and puts his soul in danger on the way of Allah by going forward towards the danger with no fear of it, whether the one confronts that danger or not. Regarding to the occasion of revelation, the praise is for the one who exposes his soul in the process of sale although there happens no adventure.

4- The love and affection of Allah is the best reward. Allah has ordinarily assigned a definite reward for every action in the Qur'an, but in this verse, instead of expressing any sorts of reward, it simply says Allah is affectionate:

"...and Allah is affectionate unto His (faithful) servants."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 208-209

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ ادْخُلُواْ فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

فَإِن زَلَلْتُمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

208. "O' you who have Faith! enter you all into submission (to Allah in being in peace), and follow not the footsteps of Satan, for he is a manifest foe for you."

209. "But if you slip after clear arguments have come to you, then know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Akramah that this verse was revealed about the Jews who had converted to Islam, such as: 'Abdullah-ibn-Salam, Thabat-ibn-Salam, Ibn-i-Yamin, Asad and Asid (the sons of Ka'b), Shu'bat-ibn-Amr, Bahira-Rahib, Sa'id-ibn-Amr, and Ghays-ibn-Zayd.

They went to the Messenger of Allah (S) and asked him to allow them to glorify Saturday and recite the Torah; and, similar to the custom in the Age of Ignorance, to avoid consuming the milk and meat of camel. [7]

The worldly peace is possible only under the Shadow of Faith. The Qur'anic words /silm/ and /salam/ in lexicon mean 'peace' and 'quietness'. So, this verse invites all the believes to peace, and in view of the fact that it addresses the believers, the verse means that peace can come into existence only with the existence of Faith.

Thus, war and anxiety cannot be removed only by relying on mere human made rules and laws based on material affairs. Then, it is only by the use of the spiritual power of Faith that human beings, in spite of all their differences, can live peacefully and in fellowship together when they, consequently, may form a worldly government.

"O' you who have Faith! enter you all into submission (to Allah in being in peace)..."

It is evident that material affair such as: language, race, wealth, geographical region, and social classes are totally the origin of separation

and dispersion. They cannot provide the real worldly peace which needs a firm circle of connection between the hearts of human beings in the world.

This linking circle is only Faith in Allah which is beyond those differences. Therefore, a certain worldly peace without Faith is impossible; the same manner that the inner peace and tranquility in the unity of a person and in his spiritual environment, without having a true Faith, is impossible.

"...and follow not the footsteps of Satan..."

As it was formerly mentioned, the Satanic temptations and deviations usually come forth gradually and, according to the meanings of the Qur'an, each of them is counted as the following of a step of Satan. [8]

Here, this fact is stated again that deviation from the right and following the stimuli of enmity, hypocrisy, fighting and blood-shedding usually begin from slight and simple stages. Believing people should be aware of their advent in order to stop them.

There is a proverb common among Arab people which say: Verily, a destructive fight begins with a slap.

"... for he is a manifest foe for you…"

The enmity of Satan against human kind is not something hidden or unknown. Satan has decided and sworn to behave inimically towards man since the beginning of the creation of Adam, and does his best to settle this enmity among the human race. Yet, as it has been described before, this opposition and hostility cannot harm the true believers but it is a secret alongside the path of spiritual development.

****

"But if You slip after clear arguments have come to you..."

The path is clear; the program is clear; and the destination is also clear; so, there is no room for falling for the temptations of Satan. Yet, if you deviate from the straight path and go astray while you have all of these clear reasons in hand, it will be your own fault.

Thus, do know that Allah is both 'Mighty', so that no one can flee from His justice and 'Wise' so that He judges nothing unjustly.

"...then know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise… "

Explanations

Another interpretation of the verse says: this verse indicates that the Holy Prophet (S) through this revelation was informed of what will happen to those who joined the ranks of Islam for some interest of their own or other.

It is clearly stated in this verse that those who backslide after adopting the faith, may not foolishly imagine that their going astray is going to affect in the least, the cause of God or would cause any inconvenience to the cause of those who believe in God.

Those who go astray need not be arrogant as to imagine that they will defeat God's Power or Wisdom. The loss will be of those who go astray and not in the least of anybody else.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 210

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللّهِ تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ

210. "Are they waiting for aught but Allah should come to them in the shadows of clouds, with the angels? The matter has (already) been decided; and to Allah is the reversion of all affairs."

In this verse Prophet Muhammad (S) is addressed, where the Lord, following the previous subject, remarks whether all these available signs and clear evidences and ordinances are not enough to protect people from deviation and being safe from the grips of their obvious foe, (Satan).

Do the followers of Satan's command, besides having all those clear signs, expect that Allah accompanied with the angels, should come unto them in canopies [9] of cloud and yield them some evidences more clear than the present ones?

This is impossible, because Allah is not substance. Suppose this impossible happening becomes possible, what is the use of it when it is not needed?

"Are they waiting for aught but Allah should come to them in the shadows of clouds, with the angles? .."

It is in the case that the whole matter is decreed and determined, and nothing has remained undone.

"...The matter has (already) been decided..."

And the destination of everything is to Allah, thus the end of all affairs is unto Him.

"...and to Allah is the reversion of all affairs..."

Therefore, the apparently interrogative sentence at the beginning of the verse, in meaning, is a negative question which means such a thing cannot happen. (This is besides that, as we said, the occurrence of this impossible action is not necessary, because all the means of guidance have sufficiently been provided for the human race).

So, according to this interpretation, there is nothing hidden in the meaning of the verse; and, therefore, the words of it have exactly and totally been commented on.

But, some of commentators have not taken the Initial sentence of the verse as a positive interrogation with a negative sense. They have considered it a kind of warning against the sinners and those who follow the temptations of Satan, (a threat causing worldly punishment or the punishment of the world to come). In this case, the meaning of the verse will be as follows:

Are such people, with those unbecoming deeds and behaviour of theirs, awaiting for the command of Allah and His angels (of wrath) to come upon them for their punishment and put them in the chastisement of this world or the coming world, and put an end to their affairs? Of course, their deeds have no fruit for them but this very mentioned one indeed.

It is also worthy to note the explanation by al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at- Tabataba'i in Al-Mizan , vol. 3, pp. 152, 153 (English version), about the verse under discussion where it says:

It is self-evident truth, which is also proved by the Qur'an and the sunnah, that attributes of the body cannot be used for Allah, nor can He be described with adjectives of transient things. No such word, phrase of

sentence can be used for Him which implies transience, need, deficiency or want.

Allah says: Nothing whatsoever (is there) like the like of Him.[10]; and Allah is He Who is Self-sufficient[11]; Allah is the Creator of everything.[12] There are numerous such verses; and all of them are confirmed and decisive ones to which the ambiguous verses should be referred.

It is these confirmed verses which guide us towards the correct interpretation of the ambiguous ones. If any verse apparently attributes to Allah and action or a characteristic of transient things, then it must be referred to the confirmed verses and interpreted in a way which is not below His dignity nor opposed to His beautiful names.

Now here is a verse which attributes the action of 'coming' to Allah. A few other verses also have used this word for Him. And comes your Lord with the angels arrayed in ranks[13]; then came upon them Allah from whence they did not expect[14]; so Allah came upon their structure from the foundations[15].

In all such verses, it is necessary to interpret them with such meaning which are worthy of Divine sublimity. We may give them the meaning of, let us say, sending His chastisement upon them or surrounding them with His power of wrath.

Accordingly, the meaning of 'Allah should come to them' in this verse shall be: 'Allah should surround them with His power for enforcing His decree on them'.

Notes

1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, p. 14
2. Majma' ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 298
3. Ibid
4. Sharh-i-Nahjul-Balagha, vol. 13, p. 262, Egypt Edition, 1961
5. Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 386
6. The Qur'an, 2: 204
7. Qur'an-il-Hakim, Persian translation, by Muhammad Khajawi, p. 263
8. The Qur'an, 2: 168; 6: 142; 24:21
9. The term /zulal/ is the plural form of /zullah/ meaning: 'awning, sun-shade, canopy, tent... or whatever that produces shade'. Thus, the phrase /zulalin min-al-qamam/ means: 'canopies or clouds'
10. 42:11
11. 35:15
12. 39:62
13. 89:22
14. 59:2
15. 16:26

Section 26: Rejection of the Signs and the Apostles from Allah

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 211

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُم مِّنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَن يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

211. "Ask the Children of Israel how many dear signs We gave them; and whosoever changes Allah's blessing after it has come unto him, then, verily Allah is severe in retribution. "

This verse points to the manner of the Children of Israel that how they were entangled with the punishment of Allah when they changed the blessings of Allah and showed ingratitude after having those clear signs and divine favours.

"Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We gave them; and whosoever changes Allah's blessing after it has come unto him..."

The purpose of 'change of blessing' is that one misuses the blessings, favours, and material and spiritual sources of authority, potentialities and talents that the one naturally has in his possession on the path of destruction, deviation, transgression, and vicious actions.

Allah gave the Children of Israel both spiritual trainees and powerful leaders. He (s.w.t.) bestowed upon them all sorts of material and spiritual facilities and possibilities, but they changed those bounties. That behaviour they had, not only ruined their lives in this world, but also causes that there will be waiting a painful chastisement for them in the world to come.

"... then, verily Allah is severe in retribution."

The problem of 'change of blessing' and its painful resulting fate is not conclusive to the Israelites. At this very present Age, the industrial world is also entangled with this great adversity. The human race of today has so much abundant and different bounties and facilities that no period in the history has recorded the like of them for human kind.

Yet, as a result of being distant from the heavenly instructions of prophets and because of 'change of blessing', human beings of this Age have applied those bounties terribly alongside the way of their own destruction.

They have produced the most dangerous destructive weapons out of them (those bounties) to ruin the world. Or, they have gained profits by misusing their own material natural potentialities for the spread of transgression, oppression, exploitation, and have changed the world into an insecure and unpeaceful site in all respects.

The initial phrase of the verse: "Ask the Children of Israel" is in fact, for the reason that the blessing of Allah be confessed by them, and then, it be remarked why they were faced with that adversity: that they scattered wandering in the world.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 212

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاء بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

212."The life of this world has been made to seem fair to those who disbelieve, and they mock those who believe, but those who guard (against evil) shall be above them on the Day of Judgement and Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure."

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn-Abbas, the famous commentator, says that this holy verse was revealed about the chief leaders of Quraysh, a minority of wealthy people in their disbelieving tribe, who were living in easy circumstances.

They used to mock a group of steadfast Muslim believers, who were poor from the point of finances. These disbelievers said: if the Prophet Muhammad (S) had really been appointed from the side of God and was a noble prophet, the rich and authoritative ones would have followed him. Then, this verse was revealed and answered their vain statements.

The occasion of revelation of the verse does not hinder us from taking the verse as a general and common rule, or consider it as the perfecter of the previous verse about the Jews. The verse says:

"The life of this world has been made to seem fair to those who disbelieve..."

Thus, they were so proud that they ridiculed those believers who were rather poor:

"...and they mock those who believe..."

Yet, in the meantime, the attention should also be paid to this condition that:

"...but those who guard (against evil) shall be above them on the Day of Judgement..."

The reason for that condition lies in the coming world where the spiritual ranks will be illustrated in their objective forms and believers will be positioned in such elevated high ranks that these miserable people, comparing them to as if the believers are in high sky of honour, feel themselves in the lowest and deepest earthly abode of disgrace. This is not surprising, of course, because the foregoing detailed condition is the fruit of their own deeds:

"...and Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure."

These facts are, indeed, some glad tidings for the poor believers and also a severe warning to the rich who are proud and faithless unto the Truth.

And the phrase stating that 'Allah provides with sustenance for whomever (here, the believers) He wills without measure' may point to this idea that Divine rewards, from the view of quantity and quality, are never equivalent to our good deeds. They are bestowed according to His Grace and Generosity, and, also, we know that there is no limit to the Grace and Generosity of Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 213

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُواْ فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْهُمُ

الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لِمَا اخْتَلَفُواْ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاء إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

213. "(All) Mankind was but a single nation, then Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and warners, and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth that it might judge between people on that wherein they differed. And none were at odds over it, except those very (people) whom it was given unto, after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves. So Allah guided by His Will, those who believed regarding that which people had differed about the truth. And Allah guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path."

It is understood from this verse that human race had a simple and plain life at the beginning. Then, later, after the increase of population and the appearance of a variety of tastes among them, little by little, diversities and oppositions arose.

"(All) Mankind was but a single nation..."

As some Islamic traditions indicate, this period has been adapted to an Age before the time of Noah (as) when people, with little information, used to live a simple limited life.

But, sometime later there appeared some conflicts between individuals when they wanted to gain more and more interests especially by employing others for reaching the foregoing purposes via them. This caused that the classes of people and social levels came into existence.

"…then Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and warners…"

The necessity of a social life is the existence of a firm and just law in that society. This law should be able to solve the problems of people. Allah appointed the prophets for solving the problems and removing the opposition created thereby.

He (s.w.t.) sent some heavenly Books down to them, but some arrogant groups consciously stood against the invitation of the prophets and produced a new conflict, added to their former ones.

"…and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth…"

In this way, of course, Allah led some receptive people to His guidance with His grace and favour, and left those who, as a result of envy, jealousy, force, or oppression, resisted against the truth alone to themselves until they receive their retribution.

"…that it might judge between people on that wherein they differed…"

Explanations

1- The larger the number of contemporary people in one region is, the more variety of demands will arise; and, when the life is simpler and the number of people is smaller, the less the contradictions will be.

2- Wherever there lies a dispute, there needs a judge. Human made laws and civilizations are not able to solve the discords of mankind, because all human groups or individuals usually look for their own personal needs or demands.

The solution of the human problems should be made up via the path of Divine prophets and through the revealed laws which are free from any fault

and falsification because they are sent down from the side of Allah (s.w.t.) and by an infallible figure, i.e. a godly prophet.

"…And none were at odds over it, except those very (people) whom it was given unto…"

3- The best way of solution to contradictions is Faith in the Resurrection. This doctrine utilizes the subject of glad tidings to prevent the appearance of contradictions, and uses the subject of warning as its remedy.

4- The worst kind of contradiction is the intentional one which comes forth with the aim of jealousy and oppression while there are clear evidences available.

"...after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves...."

5- The path to the solution of contradiction, therefore, is belief in Truth and obeying the law of prophets:

"...So Allah guided by His Will, those who believed..."

6- The critical statement of the Qur'an is targeted to that pertinacious contradiction in which a person does not accept the judgement of prophets appointed by Allah based on the Divine Law, else the contradictions and disputes that finally surrender to justice are not objected.

This kind of diversity is similar to the two pans or scales of a balance which move up and down until one finally parallels with the other.

"...regarding that which people had differed about the truth...."

7- There sometimes appear disputes between the believers, too, but they will be led under the guardianship of Allah; while disbelievers will be wandering in darkness forever.

"...And Allah guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path. "

8- Rescue from contradiction is, surely, counted "the Straight Path."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 214

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُواْ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْاْ مِن قَبْلِكُم مَّسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاء وَالضَّرَّاء وَزُلْزِلُواْ حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللّهِ أَلا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللّهِ قَرِيبٌ

214. "Or did you suppose you would enter Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you? They were afflicted by distress and adversity and were so shaken that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When will Allah's help (come)?' Surely Allah's help is (always) nigh! "

Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators say that this verse was revealed on the occasion of the battle of Ahzab, or the Confederate, when the Muslims got impatient and terribly terrified in the battle. So, they, being surrounded by the enemy, began asking about the help of Allah, the Almighty.

Therefore, the revelation of this verse invited them to patience and perseverance and made them hopeful of triumph through the help of Allah.

It is also reported that when Muslims were defeated in the battle of 'Uhud, Abdillah-ibn-'Ubayy, reproaching them, inquired that until when those Muslims were going to give themselves in death and he added that if Muhammad (S) was really the Messenger of Allah, then He (s.w.t.) would

not let his companions be captured or killed. At that moment the above verse was revealed.

Intense Adversities as a Divine Practice

The above verse indicates that some of the believers thought that the main factor of arriving in Heaven was only the expression of Faith to Allah and, thereafter, no trouble or pain they might tolerate. Hence, Allah would arrange their affairs, they imagined, and destroy their enemies without any effort and endeavor that they themselves might suffer.

Against this kind of wrong thinking, the Qur'an points to the true and usual method of Allah. It says that the believers must be ready to devote themselves and to face with troubles and difficulties along the path of Faith and its influence.

These difficulties are, in fact, some trials which make the real Faith from the unreal one manifest. The Qur'an also explains that these trials and difficulties exist as a general law, and that is why they had afflicted the former nations and all previous sects, too,

"Or did you suppose you would enter Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you?..."

The Israelites, for example entangled with many sufferings in order to be rescued from the oppressive grips of the Pharaoh. When they were amazed and did not know what to do, the grace and favour of Allah came and helped them to win their enemy.

This situation was not exclusive to the Children of Israel alone, but, as the above verse points out in the phrase: "by those before you", all earlier nations had a common status from this point of view, too. It seems that this is a Divine practice which is the secret of training and spiritual development in human kind-

"...They were afflicted by distress and adversity..."

All dynasties should be involved in the current of adversities and calamities so that they be prepared for some more important and graver adventures, and also, by this way, the efficient and experienced ones be recognized and with repelling the unworthy persons, the society be filtered.

"...and were so shaken that the Messenger and those who believed with him said..."

Another point that we must be aware of in commenting on this verse is that, at the end, it proclaims that afflictions and adversities had so intensely encompassed the former nations that even the believing people and prophets, all together, said:

"...'When will Allah's help (come)?'..."

It is evident that the purpose, here, is not a protest against the Providence, but this manner of statement is itself a kind of invocation and a plea for help. So, the Qur'an says:

"...Surely Allah's help is (always) nigh! "

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 215

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنفَقْتُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ
وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

215. "They ask you (O' Muhammad) what they should spend; say: 'Whatever you spend that is good, (from your material and spiritual wealth to avail) for parents, relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the traveller; and whatever you do that is good, verily Allah is All-Knowing of it'."

Occasion of Revelation

'Arnr-ubn-i-Jamuh was an old man who was rich, too. Once he asked the Prophet Muhammad (S) what he would spend as charity and to whom he could give the charity. Concerning this matter, the above verse was revealed.

There are many verses in the Qur'an which speak about charity in the way of Allah. The Lord of the world has variously encouraged Muslims to spend in charity and help the indigent, but the status of the verse under discussion is different. At the time of revelation, some people wanted to know what kind of property they should spend from. So, it says:

"They ask you (O' Muhammad) what they should spend;..."

The verse, in answer to this question, besides explaining what should be spent, points to another problem, too. It adds the situations and persons that charity might be spent on. And, as it was mentioned in the above, the occasion of revelation also shows that both problems (the material which should be spent, and the persons whom charity should be given to) had been questioned about.

In reply to the first subject, i.e. the matter that should be dispensed with by the way of charity in the way of Allah, applying the term 'khayr' (good), there has been given a complete, expressive and inclusive answer to the question. The answer simply is whatsoever good that may benefit the others. Thus, it concludes all beneficial capital, irrespective of material or spiritual.

"...say: Whatever you spend that is good, (from your material and spiritual wealth to avail)..."

In reply to the second subject, i.e. the person and the order in which charity should proceed, a logical series is given. The claim of the parents and of the nearest relatives is made the first concern of the charitable. Then, it refers to the orphans and the indigents before paying to the needy travelers.

"...for parents, relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the traveller..."

It is self-evident that making provision for relatives, besides the ordinary effects that any charity has, contains a profound result in firmness of their relationship.

"...and whatever you do that is good, verily Allah is All-Knowing of it'."

The dispensers of charity should not persist on the matter so that others understand their benevolence, and their good actions should be done for obtaining more sincerity. It seems that the secret of that fact lies in this sense that the One Who gives reward knows everything including whatever deed we do. So, the Exalted One in Whose possession is the recompense of all deeds, with Him are the accounts of all human beings, too.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 216

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَن تَكْرَهُواْ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَن تُحِبُّواْ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

216. "Fighting (in the cause of Allah) is prescribed for you, although you dislike it. Yet it may happen that you dislike a thing while it is good for you; and it may happen that you love a thing while it is evil for you; surely Allah knows, and you know not."

The previous verse was about charity while this verse is about donating soul and blood, both of which run in the field of devotion, both together in one rank.

This verse states that, it is necessary for you to fight against the enemy. This command has surely been legislated and is incumbent upon Muslims, while human kind naturally is inconvenient with suffering toils: and pains.

"Fighting (in the cause of Allah) is prescribed for you, although you dislike it...."

The next part of the verse points to the fact that fighting and struggling with the enemy is basically hard and disagreeable, because it causes the death of some people, together with pain and loss of limbs and properties in an environment of terror and insecurity for some others.

Yet, there are always some devoted persons who never withhold of any self -sacrifice in the way of their own sacred aims.

But, the majority of ordinary people are those who, as was reasoned in the above, tend not to take part in the holy struggle and self -sacrificing practically.

The Lord of the world, with a sharp tone, condemns this kind of thinking of theirs, but He opens a new doorway to them. The Qur'an, addressing Muslims, says that you are not aware of the expediencies of affairs. How do you know?

There may be something good behind what you suppose is inconvenient, and there may be something evil at the back of what you like. It is only Allah Who knows the whole secret of affairs. Yet, it is certain that those who are studious and clever (not the inattentive people) can find a way to the solution of a part of the secrets of some qualifications.

"...Yet it may happen that you dislike a thing while it is good for you; and it may happen that you love a thing while it is evil for you"

This verse points to a fundamental principle in the Divine laws of creation and legislation. It develops the spirit of regulation and resignation in man unto these laws. It is so that human members, concerning the Divine laws, should not take their own distinction and concept as a criterion of judgment, because surely their knowledge is limited in all aspects and, comparing with their unknown quantities, it is naught, or as if it were a drop of water in the face of a sea.

"...surely Allah knows, and you know not."

Therefore, they must never frown at such laws which originate from the knowledge of Allah, the knowledge that is infinite from any points of view. But, they ought to know that all of these laws are totally alongside the benefit of the human race whether they are the laws of legislation such as:

Holy War, alms tax, and the like of them, or the laws of creation and the incidents that occasionally occur in life and are never avoidable.

They are like death and grievous inflictions unto our friends and relatives which come forth unexpectedly and unavoidably; or like the future secrets which are concealed from Man, and the similar subjects.

However, Holy War is one of the important applications of Islam. There are many verses of the Qur'an as well as Islamic traditions from Prophet Muhammad (S) and Ahlul-Bayt (as) found upon the importance and virtue of Holy War.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said: "Good deeds comparing with Holy War in the way of Allah are not but a corpse in an unfathomable sea."[1]

It is also narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said: "Holy War (in Islam) is the best (of all) things next to the obligatory duties (such as: prayers, fasting, Hajj and alms tax)." [2]

Again, the Messenger of Allah (S) is narrated who has said: "Heaven has a door which is called the Door of Strivers."[3]

Holy War has not been allocated only to Islam. Other Divine religions before Islam had also had it, as the current Torah has narrated the injunctions of Moses (as) about fighting with several tribes other than the Israelites. Some definite references among them are: DEUTERONOMY, Chapters 7, 13, and Chapter 20; EXODUS, Chapter 32; and NUMBERS, Chapter 31.

The prophet Jesus (as) also has been commissioned to Holy War as it is recognized from MATTHEW, Chapter 10, No.34 and LUKE, Chapter 19, No.27 and Chapter 22, No.36.

Some stories of a few other former prophets who fought against disbelievers are referred to in the Qur'an, too. A few examples are:

Surah Ale-Imran No 3 verse 47: Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2. Verse 246: 11 Surah Al-Maidah No. 5 Verse 27. [4]

A Referential texts from the Book of the Old Testament, referred to in the above, are as follows:

The fifth book of Moses called DEUTERONOMY; Chapter 7, p. 219 No.2 to 5 say:

2. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them:

3. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4. For they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

5. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

And, Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, pp. 227 & 228, No.9 and 15 say: 9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

12. If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying,

13. Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

14. Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you;

15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

Again, Deuteronomy, Chapter20, p.234, No.1-4 say:

1. WHEN thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3. And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

4. For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Also, in the second book of Moses, called: EXODUS; Chapter 32, pp. 106, 107, No.27-29, it says:

27. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

29. For Moses had said, consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

However, in the fourth book of Moses called: NUMBERS, Chapter 31, p.201, No.1-12 says thus:

1. AND the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

2. Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

3. And Moses spoke unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

4. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

6. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.

12. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

B. The referential texts from the Book of New Testament are as follows:

a. The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 10, P.902, and No.34: such is recorded:

34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

b. The Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 19, p.1076, No.27 reports:

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

c. And, St. Luke, Chapter 22, p. 1080, No.36 explains thus:

36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Notes

1. Jami'-us-Sa'adat & Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 100, p.89 --
2. Al-Kafi, vol. 5, p. 3
3. Al- Tahthib, vol. 6, p. 123
4. Atyab-ul-Bayan, , vol. 2, p. 414

Section 27, Questions about various important topics

Persecution during the sacred month - Mischief graver than carnage - Pardon and Mercy for the emigrants and those who strive and struggle in the way of the Lord -Question about intoxicants and gambling, Alms -Orphans - Matrimony with believer men and women.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 217-218

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّه وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ
وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللّه وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلاَ يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
حَتَّىَ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُواْ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُواْ وَجَاهَدُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه أُوْلَـئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللّه وَاللّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

217. "They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave (sin); but to bar (people) from Allah's and to deny Him (to prevent access) to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver (crime) with Allah. Sedition is more grievous than slaughter. They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and dies disbelieving - such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter; those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever."

218. "Those who believed and those who migrated (suffered exile) and struggled in the way of Allah - these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of Revelation

It is said that this verse was revealed about the struggle of 'Abdillah ibn Jahish. The event was as follows:

Before the occurrence of the battle of Badr, the Messenger of Islam (S) sent for 'Abdillah ibn Jahish. When he came, the Prophet (S), accompanying him eight men from among the Emigrants, gave him a letter and told him to start on a journey immediately, and after two days of paving the way, then he would open the letter to read and follow what it said.

So, after two days of traveling, 'Abdillah opened the letter and found thus: "When you opened the letter, you go forward to 'Nakhlah', (a land between Mecca and raw, and from there watch the situation of Quraysh. Then report to us the circumstances."

'Abdillah told his companions the matter and added that the Prophet (S) had commanded him not to force them on that way. So, those who would be ready to be killed might follow him, and the rest could return.

All the members decidedly started to go forward with him. When they reached Nakhlah, they encountered a caravan from Quraysh wherein was 'Amr-ubn-i-Hadrami. That day was the last day of Rajab (one of the Sacred

Months), so, they began consulting whether they could attack that group or not.

A few of them said if they left the caravan to continue their way, they would enter the limits of the sacred town, Mecca, where it was forbidden to attack them. Hence, finally, the Prophet's agents invaded them bravely.

They succeeded to kill 'Amr-ubn-i-Hadrami and brought the caravan with two captives to the Prophet (S). The Messenger of Allah (S) said he had not ordered them to fight in a sacred month. Therefore, he did not mix himself with the booties and the captives.

The victorious warriors felt annoyed and Muslims thereby began scolding them. Infidels also sarcastically stated that the Prophet Muhammad (S) made fighting, blood shedding, and capturing in the Sacred Months lawful. At that time the first verse of the above verses was revealed.

After the revelation of this verse, 'Abdillah-ibn-i-Jahish and his companions stated that they had strived on that way to obtain the reward concerning the Holy War. They also asked the Prophet (S) whether they had got the reward of the strivers. Then, the second verse in the above was sent down. [1]

As the occasion of revelation denotes, the verse intends to answer the questions about fighting in Sacred Months. It clearly proclaims the prohibition of fighting in Sacred Months and counts such a fighting a great sin.

"They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave (sin)..."

Yet, it emphasizes that the infidels who have committed great sins such as infidelity to Allah, banning people from being lead to the straight path, expelling the inhabitants of Mecca from their home, trampling on the divine sanctuary and security of the sacred premises of Mecca, where the birds, beasts and plants should be secured, are not rightful to object to a group of Muslims who took action in fighting by mistake during a Sacred Month.

"...but to bar (people) from Allah's way, and to deny Him (to prevent access) to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver (crime) with Allah..."

In addition to that, pagans have made mischief, because any subversive move against truthful people and barring them from embracing the theistic creed is a movement to creating a mischievous environment full of infidelity and idolatry. This crime is graver than fighting in a Sacred Month.

"...Sedition is more grievous than slaughter..."

Thus, these Qur'anic words address Muslims and warn them to be careful not to be affected by the evil propagations of infidels. It informs them to have insight and be conscious for pagans who always try to convert them from Islam. It says:

"...They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can..."

To prevent this situation, the Qur'an warns that whoever of Muslims turns back from the Truth and dies in that status while the one is an infidel, this infidelity nullifies all his good deeds of this world and the next world totally.

"... But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and dies disbelieving -such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter'..."

When a person, with such a condition of disbelief, has no valid good deeds in Hereafter, reasonably the one will be permanently involved in the torment of Allah.

"...those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever..."

There is a description about the Arabic term / habt/ (forfeiture) in Al-Mizan, , a part of which is as follows: In short, "habt of deeds' means their coming to nothing and their being of no effect. It has been said that it is derived from / habata / which is used when an animal over-eats and its stomach distends, often resulting in its death.

The gist of the verse under discussion, like other verses of forfeiture, is that disbelief and apostasy make the deeds ineffective, i.e., such deeds lose their power to make life blissful. On the other hand, true faith and belief give life to the deeds and they create felicity, bliss and happiness in life.

If someone acquires true faith after disbelief, his deeds are given a new life and they become effective in making life blessed and happy (although they were forfeited and ineffective before).

Likewise, if he apostatizes after having been a believer, all his deeds become dead, null and void; they cannot make life in this world or in the Hereafter happy. Thereafter, if he leaves his apostasy and comes back to the fold of Islam, it is hoped that his deeds will be revived; but if he dies in the apostasy, the forfeiture will have been confirmed and misery unhappiness will be written down for him. [2]

****

The Arabic term /jihad/ literally means striving that can be with wealth i.e. spending money in the way of Allah, or with life which means giving away life or getting killed in Allah's way i.e. for Allah's cause.

"Those who believed and those who migrated (suffered exile) and struggled in the way of Allah -these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy...."

This point is also remarked in the second verse that some warriors in the cause of Allah (s.w.t.), as a result of being unaware or being insufficiently cautious, may make some errors, (the foregoing story of 'Abdillah-ibn-i-Jahsh was an example of this meaning), but Allah will forgive them for their greater services that they usually do faithfully and sincerely.

"...and Allah is Forgiving Merciful."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 219

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا
وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

219. "They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people; but their sin are greater than their profit'. They ask you as to what they should spend. Say:

'Whatsoever can be spared'. Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you, in order that you may ponder."

The statement in this verse is about two questions and their divine answers. The first question is about 'wine' and 'gambling', thus:

"They ask you concerning wine and gambling...."

The term 'Khamr' in Arabic lexicon means 'a cover', hence the veil that women wear to cover their heads to observe' Hijab', it is called' khimar'. Since the alcoholic beverages often delude the ability of the distinction of the person who drinks and, in fact, it covers the wisdom, in Arabic language that kind of liquor is called 'khamr'.

The term 'Maysir' is derived from the Arabic word /yusr/ which means: 'ease, easiness, and facility', as if, in gambling, each of the two parties wants to take the wealth of the other easily.

In answer to the question of some believers about wine and gambling, the verse, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"...Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them,

and (some) profits for people..."

This profit maybe refers to those interests that the producers of wine obtain through planting vineyards or preparing raisins for wine, or selling wine; or the money taken as taxes, charges, and custom-duties; or the profit some gain by establishing game-houses. But the sin and interior loss of these two is graver than their exterior profits.

Here are a few disadvantages resulting in drinking wine and gambling listed in some commentary books:

1. Shortening the lifetime,

2. The negative effects on the procreation of babies especially if the intercourse of the couple happens when the person is intoxicated.

3. The spread of immorality and the increase in the number of crimes such as: theft, combat, murder, sexual offenses, and dangerous driving accidents.

One of the scholars, expert in natural science has said: "If governments in the drunkard nations close half of the vintneries, we will be able to close half of the hospitals and psychiatric asylums."

Gambling is also known among the causes of: disturbance, neurasthenic diseases, apoplexies -cerebral and hemacardiorrhagia, the increase of heartbeats, inappetence, paleness, and so on. Those who deal with the factors of crimes (in some societies) have formally issued that about thirty percent of the number of crimes are related to gambling.

By the way, gambling surely has a destructive function in the development of economics, because it wastes the mirth of the useful work.

Gambling has been announced forbidden and illegal in some of non-Islamic countries during the recent years. In England, for instance, that law passed to be executed in 1853, in America in 1855 (where it is again now practiced in some states), in Russia in 1854, and in Germany it passed in 1873.

The second question is regarding to the quality of /'afw/ 'charity', when the Prophet (S) is asked about:

"...They ask you as to what they should spend. Say:

'Whatsoever can be spared.'

Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you,

in order that you may ponder..."

In the Arabic dictionary, the term /'afw/, in addition to the sense of 'pardon' and 'forgiveness', means: 'moderation, superfluous goods, and the best thing of the wealth'. Each of these meanings is fitting in the verse; and the purpose of the term /'afw/, here, may conclude all of these senses.

That is, if you desire to spend, you should observe both moderation, and do not disburse all your property as charity so that thereafter you yourself become needy, and when you give something to someone, give that of your most beloved things; for the Qur'an says:

"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love;..." (Surah Ale-Imran No.3, verse 92).

Explanations

1- When dealing a thing, we must be just. The verse does not connive the profits of wine and gambling, but it propounds the subject so that it animates the power and faculty of contemplation and meditation in us.

2- Both wine and gambling are the means of destruction of body and soul. They are both causes of failure, so, they have come together in the Qur'an.

3- Protect both wisdom and peace. With the prohibition of wine, wisdom and contemplation has been protected; and by the prohibition of gambling, the safety of peace and spiritual and economical security have been guarded.

4- As the commentary books indicate, at the advent of Islam, the prohibition of wine had been introduced step by step until when it was fully performed throughout the Islamic society.

At the call of Islam, people habitually used to drink wine although it had been forbidden in the former religions. The Divine Messages gradually made them ready to accept its prohibition.

In Surah An-Nahl No.16, verse 67 the revelation says: "And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes -you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision..." which means you may obtain both spirituous liquor and good provision from grapes, i.e., spirituous liquor is not a good provision.

After that, concerning wine and gambling, the verse under discussion was sent down, saying that their harm, in comparison, is more than their profits:

"...There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people; but their sin are greater..."

Then, in another occurrence, a different verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed,[3] and commanded Muslim believers:

"...do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated."

And, finally, the prohibition of wine was completely made manifest and perpetual when the word of Allah announced in Surah Al- Maidah, No.5. Verse 90, thus:

"... intoxications and gambling...are only an uncleanness, the Satan's work..."

There are so many traditions and narrations from the Prophet (S) and also from the holy Imams (as) condemning the use of wine and as to what a miserable fate awaits the individual on the Day of Judgment.

The holy Prophet (S), for example, is narrated to have said: "All intoxicants are prohibited; and, curse of Allah is on liquor, on him who manufactures it, on him who helps its manufactures, on its seller, its purchaser, its distributor, the user of its money, its loader, its bearer, and its consumer." [4]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 220

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَى قُلْ إِصْلاَحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ
وَاللّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاء اللّهُ لأعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

220. "(Ponder) over this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you concerning orphans. Say: 'To set right for them (their affairs) is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren. Allah knows well the mischief maker from the peace-maker; and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The initial phrase of the verse: 'over this world and the Hereafter' refers either to the subject of charity, which was mentioned at the end of the previous verse, meaning that your charity is for your happiness in this world and the next.

This act of spending should, of course, be neither in a manner that you donate your whole wealth so that you fall into trouble in your life, nor in a form of stinginess that causes your deprivation of the divine rewards in Hereafter. [5]

Or, it refers to pondering over that which was mentioned in the former verse. If so, it means that everybody should think about the affairs of this world and the next, because we have to obtain the spiritual rewards of the next world only in this very world.

This pondering can simply be contemplating over the problems such as Unity of Allah, Resurrection, the secrets of creation, and the dominating laws of nature in order to understand them and to accept them, although the acceptance of the creed is not conditioned to the recognition of all secrets perfectly. So, the verse says:

"(Ponder) over this world and the Hereafter...."

Concerning the question about orphans, the commentary books denote that: when the tenth verse of Surah An-Nisa 'No.4. was revealed announcing that those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, swallow fire into their bellies, the families who had orphans in their houses felt anxious so that some of them even exiled the orphans from their houses and some others separated the dishes of the orphans' food from those of theirs. In that situation both the orphans and the householders encountered several annexing difficulties.

Therefore, they went to the Prophet (S) and asked him about the quality of their manner towards the orphans. The Prophet (S) replied to them that if they tried to improve the affairs of orphans it would be better for them.

They should not dismiss the orphans and shirk the responsibility of managing them for that their wealth could be mixed with that of theirs while the orphans are religiously their brethren. So, it did not matter that they might mix their properties with each other in the case that their intention in living with orphans was not to swallow their wealth.

"..And they ask you concerning orphans. Say:
'To set right for them (their affairs) is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren…"

They should also be aware that Allah recognizes good doers from evil doers; and His Will is not to ordain hardship for the believers; and He is, of course, Almighty and All- Wise.

"...Allah knows well the mischief-maker from the peace-maker; and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Explanations

1- Orphans are neither our sons nor our servants, but they are our younger brothers and are counted with us in number: "They are your brethren"; so, they must live with us and be inside our lives.

2- To shirk the affairs of orphans is not right, but public interest is that we, as a custom, endeavor justly for them with a good intention and brotherly.

3- It is not important that some individuals claim for improvement, because Allah knows who is a peace-maker and who is a mischief-maker. So, beware not to swallow the wealth of orphans under the pretext of improvement, nor to evade it for the fear of mischief.

4- There is no unbearable duty in Islam, (considering the occasion of revelation of the verse cited in the above).

5- Any improvement given in the life of orphans is valuable. The term 'improvement', mentioned in the verse, has come in an absolute form to encompass all sorts of improvement including: scientific, financial, practical, educational and theological aspects.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 221

وَلاَ تَنكِحُواْ الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَّ وَلأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ وَلاَ تُنكِحُواْ الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُواْ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُوْلَـئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللّهُ يَدْعُوَ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

221. "And do not many idolater women until they believe, and a believing maid is definitely preferable to an idolater (free) woman even though she may please you. Nor give (your women) in marriage to idolater men until they believe; and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater (free man), though he may please you. Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to paradise and forgiveness by His Will, and He makes clear His Signs to people, so that they may take heed."

Occasion of Revelation

Once there came a man into Mecca by the name of Marthad. He was a brave man who had converted to Islam. He occasionally met "'Anagh", the

beautiful woman whom he was acquainted with formerly, at the time of Ignorance.

She invited him to sinful actions as before, but Marthad, who had become a Muslim, did not accept her wish. Hence, the woman asked him to marry her. Marthad replied that it was contingent on the permission of the Prophet (S).

Then, after performing his affairs, he returned to Medina and told the Prophet (S) about the matter. So, this verse was revealed and stated that the idol-worshippers and pagan women are not eligible to be married by Muslim men.

The term /nikah/ in Arabic philology means: ' matrimony, wedlock, and marriage'.

Islam has considered a number of conditions for the wife that a man wants to select. These conditions are identified in Islam because this religion takes the matrimonial life important for the sake of the assured heritable effects upon offspring, and, also, for the sake of the training issues of the family environment over the fate of the children.

It says, for example, that a pagan woman is not suitable to be married by a Muslim. Supposing that such a woman be chosen for marriage, the resulting children will naturally obtain her spiritualities and qualities under the principle of heritage, and after birth, if they trained by that mother, (whereas it is often thus), these children may have an abominable end. That is why the Holy Qur'an, in this verse, has explicitly prohibited marriage' with the women who are infidel or idol-worshippers.

"And do not marry idolater women until they believe, and a believing, maid is definitely preferable to an idolater
(free) woman even though she may please you...."

In addition to that, if pagans, who are counted foreigners in an Islamic society, penetrate into the houses of Muslims by means of marriage, that society will be inflicted with disorder and interior enemies. In such a situation the different tows and categories therein are not recognized from each other. Hence, the Qur'an, hereby, tells them not to marry with that group of women.

However, Islam has not closed all the doors absolutely to them. Therefore, in order to use their sexual tendency towards their felicity, the Qur'an says:

"...Nor give (your women) in marriage to idolater men until they believe;
and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater
(free man), though he may please you...."

Similar to the statement at the threshold of the verse that prohibits men from marrying idolatress or infidel women, in this part of the verse, giving girls and women in marriage to infidels and idolater men is prohibited, too.

And, similar to the idea that the believing maids are more eligible to marry with than the free idolater women even with admirable beauty or wealth, the believing servants and slaves are more eligible to marry with than the handsome men who are apparently of dignity but disbelieving.

In fact, the wedlock of believing women with disbelieving men is forbidden while they are infidels; but there is no sin in marrying them when they accept the truth, and believe. This is the very way of return which was also pointed out at the beginning of the verse.

In the subsequent sentence, the reason of the prohibition for the wedlock of believing ones with idolaters and infidels, men and women, is expressed:

"...Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will..."

The prohibition of marriage with an idolater is for the reason that they call their companions towards idolatry and some disgraceful manners. Their behaviour, of course, originates from idolism especially when this companionship is via matrimony whose intensity of mutual effect is deeper and more impressive. The fruit of this conduct is the blazing Fire of Hell.

Briefly speaking, acquaintance with them, particularly through the way of marriage, is in acquaintance with Allah; and approaching them is, indeed, keeping aloof from the Lord.

The believers, unlike that group, because of belief and high human qualities resulting from their true Faith, call their companions to the Truth and excellence. The fate of this manner is Paradise and the forgiveness of Allah.

In this occasion, regarding the close and sincere relation that the true believers have with Allah, He has applied His own appellation instead of using 'believers' and has said:

"...Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will..."

Commenting on the last part of this holy verse, the author of Atyab-ul-Bayan says: Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 441

Allah (s.w.t) makes His Signs clear to people to be guided and consequently, they haply take heed. When they recognize the difference between obedience and disobedience, they may avoid sin and follow worship.

These Signs are irrespective of revealed prescripts, applicable duties, and ethical instructions; or the verses of macrocosm and microcosm which lead the servants towards the path of felicity and salvation so that they are rescued from the calamities of this world and those of the next world."

"... and He makes clear His signs to people, so that they may take heed."

Notes

1. Sirah Ibn-i-Husham vol. 2 p. 252
2. Al-Mizan, , vol. 3, pp. 245, 247, (English version)
3. Surah An- Nisa', No.4, verse 43
4. Al-Kafi, vol. 6, p. 398
5. 'Ilahi-Qumshih-'ie, translation of the Qur'an, Persian version

Section 28, Regulation about Divorce

Men not to go near women during the monthly course -Glad-tidings to the believers about their meeting Allah -period of waiting for divorced women -Reconciliation after the divorce and re-establishment of conjugal relations.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 222

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُواْ النِّسَاء فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللّهُ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

222. "They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say: 'It is a hurt; so avoid (intercourse with) women during menstruation and do not approach them till they be cleaned. When they are thus purified, then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you.' Verily, Allah loves those who repent constantly, and (He) loves those who purify themselves."

Occasion of Revelation

Women have a state of menstruation every month the course of which is at least three days and at most ten days. It is discharging of blood from the woman's womb, with some special qualities which the concerning jurisprudent books detail. The woman in this condition is called: /ha'id/ 'menstruous woman' and that blood is called 'menstrual blood'.

The existing religious regulations among the Jews and the Christians due to sexual intercourse of men with such women are opposite to each other, so different that it creates questions for a person not from amongst them.

Some of the Jews say that the association of men with such women is absolutely unlawful, even in the form of eating food with them at the same table, or living in one room. They say, for example, a man should not sit where a menstruous woman had sat before.

So, if the man sat thereon, he would have to wash his clothing, else it is unclean, /najis/. Or, if he sleeps in her bed, he must wash both his clothing and body. In short, according to the current Torah, a woman, during this period, is considered an unclean one necessary to avoid.[1]

Christians are just opposite with this group. They actually make no difference between the menstrual period of woman and other than that. There is no bar for them to have any association with their wives including sexual intercourse during that period, even.

Pagan Arabs, the ones who were living in Medina in particular, had become, more or less, sociable with the habits of the Jews, and treated menstruous women like the Jews did. They used to keep aloof from their wives when they were in their monthly courses.

That very notable difference in those religious notions and the existing custom among their adherents caused that some Muslims posed that question to the Prophet (S). In answer to their question, this verse was revealed.

Hygienic Concerns during Menstruation

"They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say: 'It is a hurt..."

The Arabic term /mahid/ is an infinitive form which, here, philologically means 'menstruation'. Thus, the meaning of the verse is: O' Muhammad they ask you about menstruation and its injunctions. In answer to that, say 'It is a hurt'.

In fact, this phrase states the philosophy of the ordinance of the prohibition of sexually approaching women during their monthly course. This matter is referred to in the subsequent sentence. Sexual intercourse with women in this state, besides being repugnant, brings forth much harm. This fact has been approved by modern medicine, too, which can be found in concerning medical books.

Some of these harms are as follows:

1- At first, preparing a good environment for the increase of venereal microbes (as a result of dropping particles from the mucus of endometrium in the womb during this period).

2- The probability of the increase of venereal diseases, or STD, both in man and woman.

3- Creating a kind of hatred in man.

And, however, for more data, the books concerning the hygiene of women should be referred to.

"... so avoid (intercourse with) women during menstruation and do not approach them till they be cleaned...."

The beginning phrase of this verse, which enjoins avoidance and prohibits approaching and having intercourse with menstruous women, initially seems similar to the present regulations in the creed of the Jews.

But, regarding to the sentence: 'then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you', which is upon the permission of sexual intercourse with women after being cleaned from the menstruation, it is recognized that the purpose of avoidance and barring the approaching is only abstention from sexual intercourse during that period.

Thus, Islam has paved a moderate path due to the monthly course of women. And, the method of Islam everywhere is always the middle way; so, it is always aloof from excess and defect. Here, it also condemns the excess of the Jews by saying that, any companionship and association with women in their course, except for sexual intercourse, does not matter.

It also rejects the method of the Christians who consider no limitation for the association with menstruous women. In this way, Islam, observing the honour and personality of woman and abandoning her humiliation, has prevented the deeds which cause hygienical harms and hurts for both man and woman.

Permitted Sexual Intercourse

"...When they are thus purified, then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you.'..."

This part of the verse is, in fact, an explanation of the permitted intercourse with women. It is understood from the terms ' when they are thus purified' that as soon as women are free from monthly course, sexual intercourse with them is allowed for their husbands; because this phrase has occurred after the qualification of the uncleanliness of menstruation.

That is, when women are cleaned from this uncleanliness, the prohibition will be removed. The interpretation of /tatahharna/ 'are thus purified' into ritual ablution /ghusl/ for women is not fitting with the apparency of the verse, because there has not been any statement of obligatory 'ritual ablution' /ghusl/ at the beginning of the verse.

In other words, the apparent meaning of the earlier phrase that says: 'till they be cleaned' is that the prohibition is during the time of uncleanliness of a woman; and the phrase: 'when they are thus purified', which has begun, in Arabic, with a sign of subdivision, refers to the meaning of the earlier phrase, i.e. when they become cleaned, this prohibition will be removed.

And, this is the same judgment that our great religious jurisprudents have also chosen in jurisprudence and have decreed that: sexual intercourse with women, after being cleansed from blood, and even before performing their ritual ablution /ghusl/, is permissible.

By the foregoing explanation, it became defined that the phrase 'are thus purified' , in spite of what some have supposed, does not have any indication to performing ritual ablution, and the obligation of it has been proved through another reason.

In the next sentence, it commands that you may approach your wives in the same way that Allah has ordered you:

"...then you may go unto them Allah h commanded you.'..."

This phrase can be an emphasis on the previous statement, i.e. you may have sexual intercourse only in the case of cleanliness of your wives, not in other than that.

It may also convey a wider and more general concept, viz. after being cleaned, the sexual approachment should also be performed in the limits of the commandments of Allah.

The commandment can evidently encompass both the genetic commandment of Allah and the divine legislation, because, for the purpose of the maintenance of the human kind, Allah has settled a kind of interest and attraction between the two sexes toward each other that, for the same reason, each party enjoys a special pleasure from the other one.

But it is certain that the aim of that status has been for the maintenance of the generations of human kind, and this struggle and pleasure is a preparation for that aim. Therefore, sexual pleasure should be settled alongside the path of the maintenance of the human race.

For this very reason, masturbation, sodomy and the like of them, which are a deviation from this genetic commandment, are totally forbidden. By no means can these disagreeable acts provide the main aim of sexual intercourse and are not even towards it (besides other grave harms that they have).

"...Verily, Allah loves those who repent constantly, and (He) loves those who purify themselves."

The term' repentance' means return from sin and regret from disobedience to the command of Allah.

The main pillars of repentance are three:

1- The acknowledgment that the one has ignorantly disobeyed the commandment of Allah formerly.

2- To feel sorry about that action.

3- A firm decision upon its abandonment in the future and making an effort to make up for the past.

When such a situation appears in a person, the one is called /ta'ib/ 'repentant', and that action is termed /taubah/ 'repentance'. (More explanation about repentance and its conditions have been detailed and will be cited upon the verses of consequence.)

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /tathir/ 'purification' in this verse is 'not to be polluted by sin' and 'refrain from disobeying Allah'.

The occurrence of this phrase at the end of the verse is for that, after the command of the Lord enjoining the avoidance of the believers from sexual intercourse during the monthly period of women, some might not restrain themselves from that because of the intense pressure of their natural instinct and inspite of the order of Allah would commit sin.

So, in order that this group of people be hopeful and could return to rightfulness, the Qur'an remarks that if (such) people repent, Allah loves them, while those who keep purified themselves from the beginning and do not pollute themselves with this sin, have a larger portion of the love and grace of Allah.

Old Testament, Leviticus, Chapter 15, p. 138, No.19 to 29, concerning women at the period of menstruation, says thus:

19. And if a woman has an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.

20. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.

21. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

22. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

23. And if it be on her bed or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.

24. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

25. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.

26. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

27. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

28. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

29. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 223

نِسَآؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُواْ حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُواْ لأَنفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّكُم مُّلاَقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

223. "Your women are a tilth for you, so come into your tilth as you will, and forward (good deeds) beforehand for yourselves, and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that you shall meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers (O' Muhammad)."

A Means of Protection for the Human Race

In this verse wives are likened to tillage. This metaphor about women may seem heavy in the eyes of some people because Islam has stated such a speech upon half of the population of the world. But there is a thin and delicate meaning in this comparison.

By this statement, in fact, the Qur'an intends to illustrate the necessity of the existence of women in the human crowd as an essential means of protection and maintenance of humankind, not as a means of quenching the lust and venereal desire-

"Your women are a tilth for you, so come into your tilth as you will..."

Similar to the need of man for nourishment for the continuance of his life, that without farming and producing food stuff this aim cannot be obtained, the same is for the maintenance of human race wherefore, and as one of the reasons that, the existence of women is needed.

This meaning is counted as warning to those who consider women as a toy and a means of sensuality.

"...and forward (good deeds) beforehand for yourselves..."

This phrase again is, indeed, a hint to this matter that the ideal of sexual intercourse is not a mere pleasure and seeking of enjoyment. Believing persons should utilize the gift of conjugal relations for producing and training good and eligible children which is itself a sacred service as a spiritual supply forwarded beforehand for their own coming life in the Hereafter.

Hence, the Qur'an attracts the attentions to this important fact that, in choosing a wife, observe some principles that lead to developing righteous offspring and supplying this great social and manly treasure.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) who has said: "When a person dies, (the continuity of his deeds ceases except for three (things): the current charity, the knowledge that be benefited from, and the righteous child who prays for him."

This means that after death there is no deed for a person, so the one can provide no more supply for himself except by means of three things that if the person possesses them, they be helpful for the mortal after death. These three things are:

The first is 'the current charity', that is the benevolent effects which are always used along the path of social benefits, such as: mosque, hospital,

library and the like of them. The second is providing some scientific work, like: compiling a useful book, educating some righteous pupils, and so on.

And the third is training some righteous children who, by their tongues and good actions, seek forgiveness for their parents who have passed away.

"...and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that you shall meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers (O' Muhammad)."

Since the subject under discussion (sexual intercourse) is very important and connects with the most attractive instincts of mankind, that is the very sexual instinct, the Lord has invited them to being careful of the problem of venereal association and being attentive to His commandments; so, He says:

"...and be careful (of your duty) to Allah..."

Then, it attracts their attention to the Resurrection that they will meet their Lord and they will see the fruit of their deeds:

"...and know that you will meet Him..."

Finally, it gives glad tidings to those believing ones who obey these orders, which are useful for both the material and spiritual lives; saying thus:

"...And give glad tidings to the believers (O' Muhammad)."

****

Another commentator has rendered the phrase: /qaddimu li anfusikum/ 'and forward (good deeds) beforehand for yourselves' into a rather different dimension of its meaning.

This commentary says the phrase mentioned here clearly indicates in every manner or behaviour man should be mindful to see that this move advances something good for him for his future (or the life after death) and that it does not displease God, and a mortal should always remember that his ultimate object is meeting Allah, and this idea contains a good tidings to the believers and a warning to the unbelievers.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 224

وَلاَ تَجْعَلُواْ اللّهَ عُرْضَةً لِّأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ وَتُصْلِحُواْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

224. "And do not make Allah, because of your swearing (by Him), an obstacle to your doing good and guarding (against evil) and making peace among people; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Occasion of Revelation

In many commentary books of the Qur'an including Majma'-ul- Bayan and Ruh-ul-Bayan, the occasion of revelation of this verse shortly is narrated thus:

There appeared a dispute between, the bridegroom and the daughter of one of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Abdullah-ibn-Rawaheh. He had sworn not to interfere in their affairs and not to make peace between them. The revelation was sent down and prohibited such oaths.

The Arabic term / 'ayman / is the plural form of / yamin / in the sense of 'oath'; and the word:

/ 'urqah/ means: 'liable to, object, or impediment', according to different renderings.

The following messages and points can be taken from the above verse:

1- Do not appeal to swearing as a barrier for doing good:

"And do not make Allah, because of your swearing (by Him), an obstacle to your doing good..."

2- Use no oath as a means for adjusting your escape from your own responsibility; and do not miss good and benevolent actions and, consequently, their rewards thereby.

"...and guarding (against evil) and making peace among people..."

3- Do not misuse Allah and His Holy Name in any occasion. This manner is a kind of boldness and impoliteness.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who has said:

" Take no oath by Allah whether you are right or wrong..." [2]

4- High values and benevolence should not be abandoned.

5- Beware that Allah hears all statements and He also knows even what have not been uttered, (but they have been thought of). Then take into account every word and thought of yours.

"... and Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing."

6. Distributing goodness and benevolence amongst people under the light of piety and virtue are valuable. Hence, these actions should not be abandoned with the pretext of swearing by His Holy Name. And, basically, being mindful of the value of these good things, such oaths ought not to be taken.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 225

لاَّ يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِيَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَـكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

225. "Allah will not hold you liable for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but He will hold you liable for what your hearts have incurred; and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

The oaths which have been taken thoughtlessly, carelessly, or at the time of anger and with no intention or will; or the oaths taken because of loquaciousness and in hurry-scurry speaking, are not legally valuable.

"Allah will not hold you liable for thoughtlessness in your oaths..."

The liability to an oath is payable only when it is taken deliberately, in a normal situation, and by the Holy Name of Allah for a useful affair. This sort of oath is religiously obligatory to be executed. Therefore, breaking it is unlawful and the atonement of which is detailed in Surah Al-Ma'idah.

3So, the expiation of it is the feeding of ten indigents or suitable clothing given to them, or the freeing of a slave; but if the one finds the possibility of none of them then, he/she should observe the fast for three days.

"...but He will hold you liable for what your hearts have incurred; and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

Messages

The responsibility of man depends on his will and decisions for what he elects. Allah forgives the faults of His servants which have been issued from them in some abnormal conditions.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 226-227

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَآئِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَآؤُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّه غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
وَإِنْ عَزَمُواْ الطَّلاَقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّه سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

226. "For those who swear to abstain from their wives, there shall be a waiting of four months; so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful,"

227. "And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

One of the methods that was customary in the Age of Ignorance for the separation of a husband from his wife was /'ila'/ 'forswear'. This method was also followed by those Muslims who had newly embraced Islam. The word means: 'oath of sexual abstention'.

At the Age of Ignorance, when a man displeased his wife, he sometimes took oath to abstain from associating with her, and by this unmanly way, he created a straitened circumstance for her.

Neither he neither divorced her legally to make her free to marry with her desired husband and obtain her own wishes, nor he himself was ready to make peace with her and continue to live with her as a spouse.

"For those who swear to abstain from their wives..."

So, the verse under discussion speaks about the design that Islam has planned for that problem to put an end to it. It says that husband has a respite of four months to make the woman free from this captivity and entanglement. He may either renounce his oath, and continue to live with his wife, or legally divorces her and lets her be free.

"...there shall be a waiting of four months…"

Choosing the first way, and not to disturb the assembly of the family, is undoubtedly reasonable and also pleases Allah.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The concluding sentence: "…surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" denotes that renouncing this oath will not be counted a sin, (though it is understood from the statement that the essence of taking oath is not an agreeable action).

****

If the man decides to become separate from her and divorces her, forgiveness and mercy is not assured for his action, and Allah, Who is aware of all secrets, knows whether his sensuality has forced the husband to misuse the law of divorce, or his situation and conditions have really required that.

The Lord is All-Hearing unto the apparent execution of divorce and is All-Knowing about the motive of it, as well. So, the Qur'an says:

"And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing"

But it should be noted that, although Islam has not absolutely nullified the proposition of forswear, but it has, indeed, wiped out its effects, because, it does not allow any man to separate from his wife and abandon sexual intercourse by forswearing and taking oath.

If we see that the verse has given this kind of man a respite of four months time to decide, it is not for showing that it is really possible to reject any right of the matrimonial rights by forswearing, but it is for the sake that sexual intercourse, as a religious obligation, is necessary at least once every four months.

(It is, of course, so that the woman might not commit sin because of this length of time, otherwise, especially for the young ladies that may commit sin as a result of that long time, the length of time between the sexual intercourses should be shortened as much as that her sexual need be provided for.)

Messages

1- To wipe out the social customs and old traditions treated superstitiously and ignorantly has been a principle among the duties of prophets.

2- Being attentive to the rights and spiritual and instinctive needs of one's wife is a principle for the husband.

3- Sometimes, Man uses the most sacred appellations for the worst aims.

4- For the return of some individuals to the right path and that they make a wise decision, giving a respite is necessary.

5- Islam is the advocator of the oppressed. Women have always been oppressed and their rights have been transgressed all along the length of the history. Therefore, the Qur'an has frequently supported them.

6- People should be encouraged to lead safe and sound lives. The statement: "...so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" has occurred in the verse to make man aware of the fact that reverting to the course of life is the secret of receiving the forgiveness and mercy of Allah.

7- Islam accepts divorce, with all its bitterness and ugliness, but it does not bear that a wife be suspended and her situation unclear.

8- Be careful of sensuality and be in awe of a decision that destroys the livelihood of a woman, because:

"Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing"

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 228

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلاَثَةَ قُرُوَءٍ وَلاَ يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَن يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّهُ فِي
أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِن كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُواْ إِصْلاَحًا
وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

228. "And the divorced women should wait (not wedding anyone else) concerning themselves for three (monthly) courses; and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and (in) the Last Day. And their husbands have a greater right (than others) to take them back in the meanwhile, if they wish for reconciliation (indeed). And they (women) have rights similar to those against them in a fair manner, but men have precedence above them; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

In the previous verse the words were about divorce, and then, in this verse, a part of the ordinances of divorce and some of its concerning details

are stated. There are five ordinances mentioned in it. At first, it speaks about' waiting period saying:

"And the divorced women should wait (not wedding anyone else) concerning themselves for three (monthly) courses …"

The Qur'anic term /quru'/, mentioned in the above verse, is applied in the sense of the period of cleanliness of a woman.

And, since the accomplishment of divorce should be performed at the time that the woman is clean and has not had sexual intercourse with her husband, this cleanliness is counted once, and when, afterward, she passes two menstruations and becomes clean, one after another, as soon as the third cleanliness finishes and at the moment that menstruation is seen, the waiting period has passed and, at that very status, her marriage is permissible.

The second ordinance is:

"...and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and in the Last Day..."

It is noteworthy that the problem of the beginning and ending of the waiting period, that usually a woman understands herself rather than anyone else has been trusted to the statement of the woman and it is accepted as a document.

The third ordinance understood from the verse is that the husband can revoke during the waiting period of a revocable divorce. It says:

"..And their husbands have a greater right (than others) to take them back in the meanwhile, if they wish for reconciliation (indeed)...."

In fact, when the woman is passing the waiting period of the revocable divorce, the husband can begin the conjugal relation again without any ceremonies. This meaning may happen with any word or action which is with the intention of revocation.

Then the verse pays to the fourth ordinance, stating:

"...And they (women) have rights similar to those against them in a fair manner, but men have precedence above them..."

Thus, as there are some rights for men upon the wives, there are also some rights for women upon husbands who are charged to observe them.

Regarding to the clear difference between the physical and spiritual powers of woman and man, the administration of the family is up to man and its assistance has been given to the woman. This difference cannot be an obstacle that some women, from the point of spiritual offices, knowledge, and piety be in a higher degree than many of men.

The Arabic term /ma'ruf/ which means a benevolent, logical and reasonable action, has been repeated 12 times in these verses to be counted as a warning against men and women in order that they do not abuse their rights, but, by respecting the mutual rights of each other, they should try to fix their conjugal relations and obtain the pleasure of Allah.

Finally, at the conclusion of the verse, it says:

"...and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

This concluding phrase of the verse points to the fact that the Wisdom and Prudence of Allah requires that in the society every person undertakes the very duties that the law of creation has assigned for the one and they are adapted to the structure of his body and spirit.

The Wisdom of Allah also requires that similar to the duties that have been given over to women, there would be settled some certain rights for them, too, in order that there appears an equality and justice between duty and right.

The significance of this meaning, and the difference between the sexes and their responsibilities, will be explained later when the occasion applies.

Notes

1. (The Torah, Leviticus, Chapter 15, p. 138, No.19-29 which is exactly narrated at the end of the current discussion.)
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 322
3. Surah Al-Ma'idah No. 5 verse 89

Section 29, Divorce and the Respect for the Law

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 229

الطَّلاَقُ مَرَّتَانِ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلاَ يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَأْخُذُواْ مِمَّا
آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلاَّ أَن يَخَافَا أَلاَّ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللّهِ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللّهِ فَلاَ تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللّهِ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

229. "Divorce (is permissible) only twice, then either maintain (them) in honor or let (them) go in kindness. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep (themselves) within Allah's bounds; and if you fear that they cannot keep (themselves) within Allah's bounds, it is no sin on either of them about what she gives up to get herself freed (from the wedlock). Those are Allah's limits; so do not transgress them. And, whoever transgresses Allah's limits -then these are they that are the (willful) wrongdoers."

Occasion of Revelation

Once there came a woman to one of the Prophet's wives and complained about her husband that he repeatedly divorced her and then revoked again to create damages for her thereby.

And, it was customary among pagan Arabs that a man could divorce his wife thousands of times and revoke it, while there was no limit in this regard. When this grievance was reported to the Prophet (S), the above verse was revealed and limited the divorce to three times.

It was pointed out in the commentary of the former verse that the regulations of 'waiting period' and 'revocation' are for the improvement of the conditions of family status and preventing from separation and dispersion.

But, some of the new converted believers acted according to the old paganism and abused this regulation. To hurt their wives, they divorced them and revoked it again and again. So, this verse was sent down and prevented that ugly and unmanly action. It says:

"Divorce (is permissible) only twice..."

This kind of divorce (revocable divorce), of course, should be accomplished in different meetings, not in one session alone.

Then, the Qur'an adds that in each of these two meetings the husband should either keep his wife honorably with him and make peace with her, or kindly let her go and separate with her for ever.

"...then either maintain (them) in honor or let (them) go in kindness...."

Therefore, the third divorce has not any revocation, because when they had two occasions of dispute and divorce and then peace and revocation were fulfilled, they must put an end to it.

The purpose of the phrase: 'let (them) go in kindness' is that the husband ought to pay that woman her rights fully and does not let himself say unsuitable words behind her back after he separates from her.

He must not make the attitude of other people bad against her and lets her retain the possibility of marriage. Hence, separation should also be

accompanied with kindness and benevolence. That is why the verse continues saying:

"...It is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them,…"

It is not lawful for the husband to take or withhold anything out of what he has given or promised to give i.e. 'Mahr' or dower to the wife. The dower amount is usually large and much of it usually remains unpaid by the husband, the payment of the dower amount, particularly when the divorce is pronounced, is another check upon the husband resorting to an indiscriminate and unnecessary divorce of his wife.

So, at the time of separation and divorce, the husband is not allowed to take back from the woman forcefully what he has given her as a marriage-portion.

In the next part of the verse, it points to the divorce of khul', and says that it is only in one phase that taking the dower is possible. It is in the case that the woman does not want to continue the conjugal life and they both fear that they are not able to observe the limits of Allah in that kind of life.

"...unless both fear that they cannot keep (themselves) within Allah's bounds..."

Under this law the wife may seek to get freed of the wedlock by returning the dower to husband, if she has already received it, or to forgo it, if it be still due to her and take the divorce of khul' from Hakim-i-Shar', viz. the Islamic judge. Then it says:

"...and if you fear that they cannot keep (themselves) within Allah's bounds, it is no sin on either of them about what she gives up to get herself freed (from the wedlock)."

In this phase, the origin of separation is, in fact, the wife. So, she must pay the indemnity of this action and let the man, who is willing to live with her, marry another lady with the same marriage-portion.

At the end of the verse, it points to the whole of the ordinances that are stated in this verse, and says:

"...Those are Allah's limits; so do not transgress them. And, whoever transgresses Allah's limits -then these are they that are the (willful) wrongdoers."

Messages

1- Plurality of divorce is based on plurality of marriage, i.e. there should be a marriage before a divorce. When a man, in one session, tells his wife: 'I divorced you thrice', there has occurred, indeed one divorce, because he has not ceased more than one marriage.

For this reason, in the jurisprudence of Ahlul-Bayt (as) it is cited that a number of divorces should be fulfilled in a number of stages; and before every divorce there should also be wedlock. This plurality, besides the apparent indication of the verse, is for a closer common good, too.

It is not convenient that the relation of a family be disturbed in one gathering and by one decision for ever.

2- Earning the life by the husband and obedience of the wife unto her husband are the limits of Allah.

3- The breaker of the law is unjust.

"...And, Whoever transgresses Allah's limits -then these are they that are the (willful) wrongdoers."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 230

فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلاَ تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِن بَعْدُ حَتَّىَ تَنكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَن يَتَرَاجَعَا إِن ظَنَّا أَن يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللّهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

230. "If he divorces her (for the third time), she shall not be lawful to him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and if he (the latter) divorces her, then it is no sin on (either of) them to return to each other (by marriage), if they think that they can keep Allah's bounds. Those are Allah's limits; He makes them clear to a people who know."

Occasion of Revelation

Once, at the time of Prophet of Islam (S), a woman came to him and said she had been the spouse of her cousin by the name of Rifa'ah, who divorced her thrice. After that, she married a man named, Abd-ur-Rahman, but he, before any sexual relations with her, divorced her, too. Then, she asked the Prophet (S) whether she could return to her first husband.

The Messenger of Allah (S) did not agree and said that her marriage with that first husband was right if she had sexual intercourse with her new husband. The above verse was revealed.

In the commentary of the previous verse this fact was briefly referred to that: after the second divorce, the couple should either follow the path of peace and kindness, or separate from each other for ever.

The verse under discussion is counted as a note, indeed, added to that ordinance. It says:

"If he divorces her (for the third time), she shall not be lawful to him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and if he (the latter) divorces her, then it is no sin on (either of) them to return to each other (by marriage), if they think that they can keep Allah's bounds"

Messages

1- Men should not misuse their conjugal rights. They ought to know that they are not free and authoritative upon their wives forever in this regard.

It is narrated from Imam Rida (as) who said: "Do not take divorce light, and do not cause your wives to incur a loss." [1]

2- Not every one knows the secrets and the Wisdom of the Divine laws, therefore some people, maybe, look at these instructions surprisingly, while the secrets of them are clear for those who have insight. Common people often see the apparent of these instructions, but the cognizant recognize the spirit and the depth of them.

3- Muslims should know that the limits of Allah are not liable only to prayers, alms, Hajj, and Holy War. Observing the family affairs are the limits of Allah, too.

"...Those are Allah's limits; He makes them clear to a people who know."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 231

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاء فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلاَ تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُواْ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ وَلاَ تَتَّخِذُوَاْ آيَاتِ اللّهِ هُزُوًا وَاذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُم بِهِ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

231. "When you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, then either retain them in a fair manner or set them free in a fair manner; and do not retain them for injury, so that you transgress (the limits); and whoever does that he indeed is unjust to his (own) self: And do not take Allah's Signs in mockery, and remember Allah's blessing upon you and what He has sent down unto you of the Book and Wisdom to admonish you thereby, and be in awe of Allah and know that Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

This verse, following the subject of the previous verse, states some limits that Islam has legislated upon divorce in order to prevent some disregards unto the rights and honour of women.

The verse indicates that during the waiting-period, even if there is only one day remained from that term, man is allowed to return to his wife and retain her with the purpose of living together sincerely.

But, if the circumstances are not favourable, he can set her free. At any rate, whatever his decision is: either revocation or separation, it should be fulfilled in a fair manner and with goodness and, consequently, far from any revengefulness.

"When you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, then either retain them in a fair manner or set them free in a fair manner..."

Then the verse interprets the Qur'anic term /ma'ruf / (a fair manner) saying that the revocation should be based on serenity and sincerity.

"...do not retain them for injury, so that you transgress (the limits); and whoever does that he indeed is unjust to his (own) self..."

Since, at the Age of Ignorance, divorce and revocation had often been used as a means of injury and vengefulness, the verse, with a severe tone, says that retaining a woman as one's wife should not be performed with the aim of hurting her or transgressing her, because this manner is not only unjust against her but also unjust to his own self. This meaning may be for the sake that:

1- The revocation which is based on the purpose of transgression contains no tranquility and peace with it.

2- From the view point of the Qur'an, in the system of creation, man and woman are complementary parts of one unit. So, for a husband treading the rights of his wife is a transgression and injustice to his own self.

3- The one who acts unjustly against another person, he, indeed, goes forward unto the punishment of Allah and, thus, he has done cruelty to himself, in fact.

Mock not Allah's Laws

Some people usually commit thousands of offences, but, to fly from the pressure of their inner sense or, as they imagine, to fly from the chastisement of Allah, they seek protection of some legal devices and cling to the apparent meaning of verses or ordinances.

The Qur'an considers this style a kind of mockery to the revealed verses and the Divine laws. This swerve, unfortunately, is seen applied upon many of the ordinances, one of which is this very one of divorce.

As it was said before, the right of revocation is up to husband for the sake that the wedlock remains steadily all the longer. But some people move exactly opposite to this direction, i.e., abusing the right of revocation, they try to take revenge and hurt the woman. They cover their real cruel feature under the veil of acting upon Law.

This is the same as mockery unto the Qur'an and the Law. The verse under discussion remarks that we beware not to mock the Messages of Allah (s.w.t.) and remember the Divine great blessing of the religion of truth and the heavenly Book, too, which has come for our happiness.

"... And do not take Allah's Signs in mockery, and remember Allah's blessing upon you and what He has sent down unto you of the Book and Wisdom to admonish you thereby..."

Religion and its collection of regulations has originated from the firm system of this very world, and has been legislated based upon the real interests of men.

Therefore, it is not right that, by neglecting the requirements, we clasp to the apparent of some ordinances and make up some spiritless frames which put our interests in danger. They are also counted as heedlessness to Allah's Signs.

At the end of the verse, in order to defend from the rights of women and to prevent from the divine ordinances probably being abused, it reminds of this fact that to be careful of your duties to Allah and know that He is aware of all your activities and all the secrets of this world"

"...and be in awe of Allah and know that Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

Note

1. Manlayahduruhul-Faqeeh, vol. 3, p. 502

Section 30, Discipline during the Term, Re-marriage Negotiation

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 232

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاء فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلاَ تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَن يَنكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْاْ بَيْنَهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ مِنكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ ذَلِكُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ وَاللّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

232. "And when you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands, when they agree between themselves in a fair manner. With this is admonitioned whoever of you believes in Allah and the Last Day; that is more virtuous and purer for you; surely Allah knows and you know not."

Occasion of Revelation

One of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Ma'qal-ibn-Yasar opposed the marriage of his sister with her former husband named 'Asim ibn 'Ady. This man, 'Asim, had divorced her but, after concluding the prescribed waiting-period, both of them were willing to fasten their wedlock again by a new wedding.

For this reason the revelation was sent down and prevented him (Ma'qal) from opposing such a marriage.

It is also cited in another narration that the verse was revealed when Jabir-ibn-'Abdullah opposed the marriage of his cousin with her former husband. Perhaps, in the Age of Ignorance, this right had been given to many close relatives.

(No doubt, in our jurisprudence, brothers and cousins have no guardianship (wilayat) over their sisters or cousins, but, as we will explain in this discussion later, the meaning of the above verse is a general ordinance about guardians and other than them that neither of these people may rightfully oppose such a marriage: neither father nor mother, nor cousin, nor non-relative persons.)

Another Chain Was Broken!

As was stated in the former explanations, in old times women were living bound in the chains of ignorance and were terribly captured by the will, desire, and lust of lewd men without having any regard for women's affection, thought and decision.

One of the examples of that status was the subject of choosing husband where the like or dislike and willingness of women had no place. Concerning to this style, even when the woman was formally married and then separated from her husband thereafter, her second marriage with him again depended on the decision of her guardian or guardians, although those two (the man and the woman) wished to continue their former conjugal life.

Their guardians, then, used to prevent that wedlock because of their (guardians') own interests or for some vain imaginations and superstitions.

The Qur'an has clearly condemned this style. It says that the guardians and other individuals have not such a right, because when both the man and

woman, who are the main elements of marriage, have unanimity with each other and after that separation they are willing to marry again, opposition of others is meaningless.

"And when you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, do not prevent them from marrying their husbands, when they agree between themselves in a fair manner...."

Thus, it is understood from this verse that divorcees need not to obtain permission or agreement of their guardians to marry again, and even the opposition of their guardians, if any, is invalid.

Now, the question is about the marriage of the virgin girls that: is it necessary to obtain her guardian's permission? The above verse is silent in this regard and we must refer to the jurisprudent books for its explanation. It only continues saying:

"…With this is admonitioned whoever of you believes in Allah and the Last Day…"

This part of the verse means that these ordinances, that are stated for individuals' benefits, affect on those who believe both in Allah, the Creator of the world, and in the Day of Judgment. It is in this case that a person, under the light of theology, can detach from egoism and, controlling his low desire, rescues himself from deviation.

"...that is more virtuous and purer for you; surely Allah knows and you know not… "

This concluding statement points to the fact that the fruit of one's action upon these ordinances is perfectly his, but as a result of insufficient information some individuals may not be aware of the philosophy of divine ordinances; while the Lord, Who knows all the secrets, has assigned these instructions for the sake of protecting their interests and purification and cleanliness of family members.

It is noteworthy that in this sentence, acting upon these instructions are introduced as the causes of both virtue and purity, (more virtuous and purer), which means that acting upon these instructions removes both the different impurities, resulted from doing some wrong deeds, from families so that it purifies them, and attains development, improvement, favour and blessing for them.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 233

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلاَدَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ
رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لاَ تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا لاَ تُضَآرَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلاَ مَوْلُودٌ لَّهُ بِوَلَدِهِ
وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالاً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدتُّمْ أَن
تَسْتَرْضِعُواْ أَوْلاَدَكُمْ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُم مَّا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ
اللّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

233. "And the (divorced) mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years for him (father) who desires to complete the period of suckling. It is (incumbent) upon the father to provide (sustenance) and their clothing (nursing mothers) in a fair manner. No soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity; neither shall a

mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child, and the same devolves upon the heir. But if they desire to wean by mutual consent and consultation, then it is no sin on them. And if you desire to seek a wet nurse for your children, it is no sin on you as long as you pay what you promised for in a fair manner; and be in awe of Allah, and know that Allah sees what you do."

In Arabic philology the term /walidah/ is used for 'mother' while the term /umm/ has a wider meaning and, besides applying the term for 'mother', its concept sometimes refers to the 'root' or 'source' of everything.

In this verse, the Qur'an points to several instructions about the problem of suckling and the different rights that mother, child, and father have in this regard. These instructions, on the whole, are seven various ordinances.

Seven Instructions upon Suckling

1- The right of nursing the child for two whole years is specialized to mother, because it is she who can suckle and look after her child during this time. In view of the fact that the nutrition of the baby, bodily and spiritually, has a close and firm relation with mother's milk and affections, although the guardianship of little children has been given to father, the right of protection and maintenance of a child is given to mother.

On the other hand, maternal affections should be observed, too, because the mother cannot bear to see that her bosom is empty from her child and. remain silent in such sensitive moments. Therefore, specializing the right of suckling and maintenance of a child to mother is a kind of mutual right which is helpful for both the circumstances of the mother and the conditions of her child.

"And the (divorced) mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years..."

2- It is not necessary that the duration of suckling to be positively two years. This two-year-suckling period is for the one who wants to accomplish it perfectly.

"...for him (father) who desires to complete the period of suckling...."

But, regarding to the position of the child's body and observing its health, the mother has also the right to diminish this course when she thinks it is favourable.

A tradition from Ahlul-Bayt (as) says that the whole course of suckling is two years while its incomplete course is twenty one months.

This idea may be abstracted from gathering the concepts of this verse and verse 15 from Surah Al-Ahqaf, No.46, where it says: "...and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months..." And, we know that the course of pregnancy is usually nine months.

Therefore, the remaining time, which is twenty one months, is the ordinary time of suckling.

And, also in view of the fact that, in Surah Al-Ahqaf, the matter has not been cited in a compulsory form, hence, considering the health of the child, mothers may rightfully diminish the suckling months to less than 21 months, too.

3- Mother's expenses for food and clothing during the suckling course, even when she is divorced, is upon the baby's father in order that mother be able to nurse the child conveniently and with a peace of mind.

"...It is (incumbent) upon the father to provide (sustenance) and their clothing (nursing mothers) in a fair manner...."

Here, the Qur'anic phrase /almaulud-i-lahu / (i.e. the one for whom the child is born) which is used instead of applying the term, father attracts the attention. It seems the revelation intends to move the affections of the father all the more towards the path of doing his aforementioned duty.

That is, if the expenses of the mother and child during the suckling course have been trusted with father to pay, it is for the reason that the baby is his own beloved child and is the fruit of his heart, not a foreigner.

The occurrence of 'in a fair manner', here, shows that mother's clothing and food should be given in a scale about the usage and also appropriate to her position. Neither stinginess nor immoderation is right in this regard.

Then, to remove any ambiguity, it explains more about this subject that the duty of a father is due to his capacity, as Allah has assigned no duty beyond the ability of any individual.

"...No soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity..."

4- Neither father nor mother should disregard the fate of their child because of their own oppositions. This may cause harm for the mind and spirit of the child which cannot be compensated later.

"…neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child..."

Men ought to be attentive to the mothers' right of suckling and protection. They should not tread it by taking the child from them. By the way, mothers should not abuse the right which is given to them, either, by restraining suckling through some various vain pretexts, or deprive the man from visiting his child.

5- After the death of the father, his heir should undertake this duty and provide the necessities of the mother during the time she nurses the child.

"…and the same devolves upon the heir…"

6- The allowance of weaning is given to parents though the previous verses have defined some limits for suckling the child. Parents, with the agreement of each other, can wean whenever they think it is suitable for the physical state of the child.

"…But If they desire to wean by mutual consent and consultation, then it is no sin on them…"

That is, if parents counsel and agree to decide to wean, there will be no problem for them.

In the meanwhile, the mother is not obliged to nurse the baby. So, whenever she wishes she can stop it, while it is better for her to forsake some of her own desires for the sake of development of her child and not let herself lose the cooperation and the due consultation of her husband alongside this way, so that the mutual consent, pointed in the verse, actually happens.

7- It is impossible to prevent the mother from nursing her child, unless mother herself refrains from suckling, or there really comes forth a barrier for her. Hence, it says:

"...And If you desire to seek a wet nurse for your children, it is no sin on you as long as you pay what you promised for in a fair manner…"

The last part of the above sentence means that engaging another woman to suckle the child instead of mother after consultation and obtaining mutual consent, does not matter. It is of course, upon condition that this manner does not cause the mother's right due to the length of her former suckling to be trodden. This right should be paid to her in a fair manner.

Since disputes and oppositions between man and woman sometimes awaken the spirit of revengefulness in them, and their fate or that of their helpless child may be exposed to danger, and each of them may think of evil planning for the other, at the end of these ordinances, the Qur'an says: "...and be in awe of Allah, and know that Allah sees what you do."

Note

A thin and delicate explanation is also cited upon this verse which we narrate exactly here: The root, 'darara' meaning harm; in its original form to do harm (transitive) and in its secondary form 'Tadarrar' meaning to suffer or to receive harm (intransitive).

Here the secondary form 'Mudarra' has been used which usually means mutual give and take, meaning neither to harm nor to get harmed. As such this passage means that on account of the child or the disagreement between the parents none of the three (viz. the father, mother or the child) should be harmful to the other, or should be harmed by the other. This interpretation covers the various commentaries given by the different commentators.

The implication of the passage regarding the mutual rights of the wife and the husband during the period of suckling of their issues, and the right and the duty of the heir of the husband and the condition for the permissibility of employment of a wet-nurse for the suckling of the issue, there are very subtle points for which you may please refer to 'Fiqh', jurisprudent books.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 234

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

234. "And those of you who die, and leave widows behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten (days); when they have completed their waiting period, then it is no sin on you for what they do for themselves in a fair manner. And Allah is fully aware of what you do."

Superstition against Women in Old Times

One of the main problems and basic difficulties for women is their marriage after the death of husband. Since the immediate marriage of the widow with another spouse after the death of her husband often contradicts with affections and keeping the regards of the ex-husband, it is not fitting,

with the spirit and sensations of the relatives of the Late, besides that the lack of a child in woman's womb must become certain.

So, the above verse has conditioned the remarriage of the widows to keeping themselves in waiting for four months and ten days.

Observing the honour of matrimonial life even after the death of the spouse is a natural innate proposition. That is why there have always been some special customs common on this purpose among different tribes.

Sometimes in these social traditions, the behaviour has been so excessive that women would become helplessly captured in a manner that sometimes the worst crimes could be committed upon them. For example, in some tribes it was customary to burn the widow; and in some others they would bury her alive with the man.

Some groups of people used to deprive the widows from their remarriage forever and, thus, those kinds of widows were isolated thereby.

In some tribes, widows had to stay for a length of time beside their husband's grave inside a black tent and in some dirty shabby clothing, plain and without any ornamentation. They could not even wash themselves during days and nights.

The above verse put an end to all of these superstitions, and, in the meanwhile, it worthily and respectfully supported the principle of observing the honour of matrimonial life by keeping the waiting-period after the death of husband.

"And those of you who die, and leave widows behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten (days)..."

The Arabic term /tawaffa/, which is used in many occurrences in the Qur'an, means 'to take'; and the term / baŎr/, which has no past tense form in Arabic, means 'strewing'. So, the verse says the women who lose their husbands have to wait for four months and ten days as waiting-period and abstain from remarriage.

"...when they have completed their waiting period, then it is no sin on you for what they do for themselves in a fair manner...."

The sense of / buluq-i-'ajal / refers to the conclusion of the period. This part of the verse indicates that after finishing this length of time, women can remarry everybody they want.

The prescribed waiting period of four months and ten days is compulsorily to be observed by a widow whether she had intercourse with the bereaved husband or not. In the case of her being pregnant the maximum prescribed waiting period or the period or the delivery, whichever be the later, should be observed.

Dealing with the divorce and the waiting period, it was appropriate to deal with the question of an outsider overtly or covertly proposing to marry the divorced one. Qur'an says there would be no harm provided the talk does not exceed the limit of modesty and no contract is finalized before the conclusion of the waiting period.

****

In view of the fact that sometimes concerning guardians hinder the marriage of the widows because of some superstitions and vain imaginations, the verse addresses them and tells them that they have no

responsibility in this regard and widows can have their re-wedlock on a proper base with whoever they desire.

"…And Allah is fully aware of what you do."

The guardians should stand away from interfering in their children's affairs, and know that the Lord is aware of everything, and He recompenses all for their good actions and evil actions.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 235

وَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُم بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاء أَوْ أَكْنَنتُمْ فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَـكِن لاَّ تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلاَّ أَن تَقُولُواْ قَوْلاً مَّعْرُوفًا وَلاَ تَعْزِمُواْ عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّىَ يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

235. "There is no sin on you if you make an indirect proposal of marriage to (such) women, or keep concealed (the intention) to yourselves; Allah knows that you will think of them; but make no promise to them in secret, unless you speak in fairness. And do not resolve on a wedlock until the prescribed period is completed, and know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so beware of Him; and know that Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

Can Widows Be Engaged during Warning Period?

As to the foregoing Qur'anic discussion about the waiting-period of women after their husband's death, in this verse, one of the important ordinances in relation to the widows in their waiting-period is pointed out. It says:

"There is no sin on you if you make an indirect proposal of marriage to (such) women, or keep concealed (the intention) to yourselves; Allah knows that you will think of them; but make no promise to them in secret, unless you speak in fairness...."

It is, in fact, a natural phenomenon that a woman may think of her future fate after the death of her husband. And, on the other hand, some men may also be in thought of marriage with them because of easier conditions that widows usually have.

Then, continuing the subject, the verse says:

"…And do not resolve on a wedlock until the prescribed period is completed… "'

It is certain that if a person confirms a wedlock which is during the waiting-period, it is totally invalid / batil /, Moreover, if he does it intentionally, that action causes the woman to be unlawful / haram / to him forever.

Then, it follows saying:

"…and know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so beware of Him; and know that Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing…"

That is, Allah does not hasten to punish His servants, because He is 'Forbearing' about what they do.

Section 31, Extra Provision for Divorced Women & Widows

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 236

لاَّ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاء مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنُّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُواْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ

236. "There is no sin on you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor settled any dowry on them; yet make provision for them, the rich according to his 'means, and the straitened according to his means; a provision in a fair manner. (This is) a duty on the doers of good."

Continuing about the theme of divorce, there are also some other ordinances in the above verse and the verse after that. It says:

"There is no sin on you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor settled any dowry on them..."

This circumstance is, of course, when either the man or the woman, after confirming the marriage tie and before having any sexual relations, understands that they can not live together as a married couple because of some problems.

In this case, it is so much the better that at this time they separate from each other by means of divorce and do not let it be postponed to later stages when it surely will become more difficult.

After that, the verse pays to another ordinance concerning the subject, where it says:

"… yet make provision for them..."

For the payment of this gift, in fact, the ability of man should also be considered. That is why the verse continues saying:

"...the rich according to his means, and the straitened according to his means; a provision in a fair manner...."

Both the wealthy men and the poor men should pay this gift, but due to their ability. And, in view of the fact that this gift has a considerable effect on the woman in preventing her from taking vengeance and freeing her from the pressure or the weight which may fall on her heart as a result of breaking their tie of marriage, the above verse concerns the gift to the benevolent nature of man, and says:

"... (This is) a duty on the doers of good."

This idea points to the fact that the payment should be accompanied with benevolence and also performed in a peaceful manner by the husband.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 237

وَإِن طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلاَّ أَن يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَن تَعْفُواْ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلاَ تَنسَوُاْ الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

237. "And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already settled a dowry on them, then (pay them) one-half of what

you have settled, unless they (women) remit it, or he remits it in whose hand is the marriage tie; and that you (yourselves voluntarily) remit (the whole) is nearer to piety. And, do not forget generosity among yourselves. Surely Allah sees what you do."

In this verse, those women are spoken about who separate from their husbands before any relations while there have been appointed a dowry for them. It says:

"And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already settled a dowry on them, then (pay them) one-half of what you have settled."

This lawful legislation is an ordinance which gives the right to the woman to take half of the whole marriage-portion completely although there has been no sexual intercourse.

After fixing this matter, it pays to some moral and affectional aspects, and says:

"…unless they (women) remit it, or he remits it in whose hand is the marriage tie..."

The tone of the verse, on the whole, is based upon the principle of 'fair manner' and 'benevolence'. It emphasizes that even divorce and separation should not be mingled with any dispute, conflict and opposition originated from the sense of revengefulness. On the contrary, it should be based on nobility, generosity and forgiveness. It says:

"…and that you (yourselves voluntarily) remit (the whole) is nearer to piety. And, do not forget generosity among yourselves, Surely Allah sees what you do"

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 238

حَافِظُواْ عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ والصَّلاَةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُواْ لِلّهِ قَانِتِينَ

238. "Guard your prayers, and (especially) the middle prayer and stand devoutly before Allah."

Occasion of Revelation

At the time of revelation of the Divine Messages, a group of hypocrites did not participate in congregational prayer under the pretext of the hot weather in order to disturb the order of the rows of Muslims.

Tracing and following them, some of the true Muslims did not take part in the congregational prayer, either. The Messenger of Allah (S) was annoyed about it so that he threatened them with a probable intense heavenly punishment.

So, as it is narrated in a tradition, in the extraordinary hot midday of summer, the Prophet (S) performed the prayer (midday prayer), in congregation. That prayer was the most grievous canonical prayers for the companions of the Prophet (S) so that it happened that usually there stood no more than one or two lines of them behind the Prophet (S) for midday prayer.

In that circumstance, he (S) said he had decided to burn the houses of those who did not participate in their prayer there. Then the verse was revealed and the importance of the noon prayer (in congregation) was emphasized thereby.

The importance of the prescribed daily prayers, especially the midday prayer, is emphasized repeatedly in the verses of the Qur'an, for prayer is the most effective factor in the connection of man with Allah. As an instance, in the above verse it says:

"Guard your prayers and (especially) the middle prayer …"

The verse recommends to stand humbly, and truly obedient, before the Lord.

"... and stand devoutly before Allah."

Beware that the heat and the cold of weather, or the engagements of the world, such as: wealth or wife and children, do not hinder you from this great duty.

The purpose of / salat-il-wusta / (the midmost prayer) is the very 'midday prayer'.

Note

The Arabic term /wusta/, used in the above verse, means: 'middle, or the best, or the most excellent'. Commentators differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of the authorities seems to favour interpreting it as the 'asr or the midday prayer, since it is mostly neglected and yet it is most necessary to remember Allah in the midst of the worldly engagements.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 239

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالاً أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنتُمْ فَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُواْ تَعْلَمُونَ

239. "And if you fear (an enemy or danger), then (pray) on foot or riding; but when you are safe, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know."

In this verse it emphasizes that you cannot abandon establishing prayers even in the most grievous conditions such as in the battlefield. But in circumstances like that many of the obligations of prayer are diminished, for example: being to the direction of Qiblah, the performances of bowing and prostration in ordinary manner, and so on. Hence, it says:

"And if you fear (an enemy or danger), then (pray) on foot or riding..."

Therefore, constant attending to prayers is not only for the time of security and safety, but canonical prayers should be kept always and in any condition.

"...but when you are safe, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know."

And, when you are in security, then prayers in this status have to be kept in the ordinary form and with all their ritual manners and conditions.

It is clear that the thankfulness of servants due to this divine teaching, in which He has taught them the way of establishing prayers both in the secured time and in fear, is by way of the very performance of them, as they should be kept.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 240

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِّأَزْوَاجِهِم مَّتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِيَ أَنفُسِهِنَّ مِن مَّعْرُوفٍ وَاللّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

240. "And those of you who are about to die and leave wives behind, make a bequest in favour of their wives, a year's maintenance without turning them out; but if they leave (of their own accord), there is no sin on you in what they do themselves in a fair manner; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The Qur'an returns to the problem of marriage and divorce again and deals with its concerning affairs. At first it speaks about the husbands who are approaching death while they are leaving wives behind them. It advises that they ought to bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance and residence in their homes. Thus it says:

"And those of you who are about to die and leave wives behind, make a bequest in favour of their wives, a year's maintenance without turning them out..."

This ordinance is, of course, in the case that they (widows) do not leave their homes, and if they leave the husband's house, they have not any right of maintenance and residence.

"...but if they leave (of their own accord), there is no sin on you in what they do with themselves in a fair manner..."

As if for the sake that such women be not anxious about their future, it consoles them at the end of the verse, and says that the Providence is able to open a new way to them after the lack of their former husband; and, therefore, there is certainly wisdom in that calamity.

"... and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 241

وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

241. "And for the divorced women make a provision according to a fair manner; (this is) a duty on the pious ones."

In this verse, the Qur'an has paid to another ordinance of the ordinances of divorce. It says;

"And for the divorced women make a provision according to a fair manner..."

The ordinance in this verse, similar to what was said in verse 236, is about the women whom are not appointed a dowry for at the time of wedlock, and they are divorced before any sexual intercourse.

This provision is a gift which is paid from the side of husband, and it is appreciated.

"... (this is) a duty on the pious ones."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 242

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

242. "Thus Allah makes clear to you His Signs, so that you might understand."

In this verse, which is the last verse from the group of verses about divorce, the Qur'an says:

"Thus Allah makes clear to you His Signs, so that you might understand."

It is evident that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase / la'allakum ta'qilun / 'so that you might understand' is that the intention of movement from the beginning should be towards the destination of 'action'; else, mere contemplation upon ordinances and understanding them, with no deed, will be fruitless.

Section 32, Fight in the Cause of Allah. References to the Conduct of the Ancient People

Death caused by Allah against those who refused to fight when they were ordained -Muslims enjoined to sacrifice their lives and their wealth in the cause of Allah -Saul's kingdom over Israel and their demur against Saul being chosen as their king.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 243

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُواْ مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللّهُ مُوتُواْ ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ
إِنَّ اللّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

243. "Have you not considered those (of old) who fled their homes, though they were thousands (in number), for fear of death? Then Allah said to them: 'Die! '(and they died); then He restored them to life. Truly Allah is gracious to people, but most people are not thankful. "

Occasion of Revelation

Once, one of the cities or Syria became smitten with a plague and people passed away one after another. At that time, some people, hoping that they might flee from the grips of death, abandoned their homeland.

After leaving their environment and escaping from death, they felt powerful and independent in them. They, neglecting the Will of Allah and expecting the natural phenomena to help them, became proud and haughty. Therefore, the Lord destroyed them in that desert by the same sickness.

This verse indirectly and also instructively points to the awesome fate of one of the old nations. They encountered with a terrible infectious disease in their environment where thousands of them fled from.

"Have you not considered those (of old) who fled their homes, though they were thousands (in number), for fear of death?..."

Then it refers to their fate, saying:

"...Then Allah said to them: ' Die! ' (and they died);

They died by the same sickness that they had used as the pretext of their flight. Then Allah brought them back to life, maybe, in order that the story of their lives might serve as a warning for others who can take an example from it.

"...then He restored them to life...."

This creative command is similar to the command cited in Surah Yasin No.96, verse 82, where it says: "His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: ' Be', so it is."

The phrase: / umma 'ahyahum / (then He restored them to life), mentioned in the verse, hints to the story of those people who, after death, were quickened by the invocation of Ezekiel, the Prophet, (as). Since their coming back to life was one of the clear blessings of Allah both from their points of view and from the point of warning other people, the verse finally says:

"...Truly Allah is gracious to people..."

Not only this group of people received, but also all humankind always receives the grace, kindness, and blessings of Allah, while they are usually not grateful.

"...but most people are not thankful."

The late Sadduq, a great famous scholar from Shi'ah school of thought, reasoning on this verse for the possibility of resurrection, says: "One of our convictions is belief in resurrection (that some former people return to life again in this very world)." [1]

This holy verse can also be a document for the problem of the Resurrection and raising the dead in the Hereafter.

****

The explanation of Ezekiel's invocation, as has been cited upon the description of the concept of the Qur'anic phrase: "Then He restored them to life", is as follows:

Owing to the repeated visits of the plague, the children of Israel numbering several thousands left their homes for fear of death. It happened so that the disease once again pested the town and the people in a huge number of thousands got out of the town being confident of their escape from death which evidently indicated lack of faith in God.

Allah commanded all of them to die and they were all dead and reduced to dust; only their bones were lying on the earth. One of the Israelite prophets, Ezekiel, passed that way and prayed to the Lord to raise the people to life.

Ezekiel, was inspired by Allah to pray to Him reciting a particular name and to sprinkle water on the rotten bones of the dead, which' Ezekiel' did and the people were once again quickened. Thus it was manifested for the knowledge of the faithless people that Allah does whatsoever He pleases and they could never go their own way against the Will of the Lord.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 244-245

وَقَاتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

مَّن ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

244 "And fight in the way of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

245. "Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold? And Allah straitens and extends and unto Him you will be returned."

From here on the verses of Holy War come forth. It begins with the command of fighting in the path of Allah, and warns us to beware that He hears what we say and knows what we have in our hearts, from our motives and intentions, regarding the Holy War in the way of Allah. It says:

"And fight in the way of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In spite of all that has been said that Islam prefers peaceful methods of preaching the truth, and that it never took any initiative in waging war against its opponents, the fact is that Islam recognizes the right of taking

even the initiative in using force against those who persist in ungodly activities causing human degradation or social or moral deterioration.

But this measure cannot be adopted save by the Prophet of Allah or his Vicegerent authorized by him and none else. As the fifth Holy Imam Muhammad Ibne-Ali Al-Baqir (as) says 'A war may be termed as holy or godly (jihad)' if the object be to make people give up submission to anyone besides Allah, and to submit only to God's authority and the Divine Will.

But if the object be to make them give up submission to one creature in order to submit to any other, it is the usual war waged for selfish and some worldly gain. Hence it is unholy and thus condemned by Islam.

However, Islam enjoins on Muslims to be always ready, well prepared and well equipped to meet all exigencies or an eventuality which may unexpectedly develop against them, and then they should gather strength as much as they can so that their opponents, the opponents of the divine cause may refrain from any unprovoked aggression.

Occasion Of Revelation

It is narrated that the holy Prophet (S) once said that whoever gives any alms will receive it twice in Heaven. Abud-Dahdah Ansari, addressing the Messenger of Allah (S), said that he had two gardens and questioned if he donated one of them as alms, would he have it twice in Heaven?

Then the Prophet replied him positively. After that he donated his more privileged garden to the Prophet (S) before when the revelation was sent down making his alms two thousand thousand fold for him. This is the interpretation of / ad'afan kaθirah/ ' manifold '.

This verse inquires who is it that offers to Allah a goodly gift and donates from the wealth He has given to him on the path of Holy War and alongside the way of helping the needy, so that Allah would multiply it to him manifold. It says:

"Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold?..."

Thus, according to this verse, lending Allah is also rendered into the donations which are performed in the way of Holy War.

So, at the end of the verse, it says that it is Allah (s.w.t.) Who both withholds and amplifies the sustenance of the servants. This statement points to the idea that do not think that donation and giving alms causes your wealth to be diminished. The increase and decrease of your sustenance depend on Allah.

"... And Allah straitens and extends and unto Him you will be returned. "

Why Is Donation Rendered To Loan?

In several verses of the Qur'an donating in the path of Allah has been rendered into giving a loan to Allah. It shows the ultimate grace of Allah unto His servants, on one hand, and the utmost importance of the subject of donation, on the other hand.

In Nahjul-Balagha, Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"Allah asks you for a loan while the treasures of heavens and the earth belong to Him and He is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy. (It is not because of His want), but that He may try you for which of you is the best in action." [2]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 246-252

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلإِ مِن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِن بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُواْ لِنَبِيٍّ لَّهُمُ ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُّقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلاَّ تُقَاتِلُواْ قَالُواْ وَمَا لَنَا أَلاَّ نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِن دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَآئِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْاْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنْهُمْ وَاللّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللّه قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوَاْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللّه اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نِبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَى وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللّه مُبْتَلِيكُم بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي أَنَّهُم مُّلاَقُو اللّه كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللّه وَاللّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُواْ لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُواْ رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ اللّه وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللّهُ وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلاَّ مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُواْ مِنْهُ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ مَعَهُ قَالُواْ لاَ طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاء وَلَوْلاَ دَفْعُ اللّه النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ الأَرْضُ وَلَـكِنَّ اللّه ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللّه نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

246. "Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way'. He said: ' Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?' They said: 'Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children?' But when fighting was written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust."

247. "And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king.' They said: ' How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?' He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.'"

248. "And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you, wherein shall be a tranquility from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are (truly) faithful."

249. "So when Saul marched out with the troops he said: ' Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful.' But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he (Saul) crossed it (the river), those who believed with him said: 'We have no power today against Goliath and his troops.' Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: ' How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the (steadfast) patient ones '."

250. "So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: 'Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people '."

251. "Thus they routed them by Allah's leave, and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of what He willed. And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all (His) creatures."

252. "These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you (Muhammad) in truth, and verily, you are (one) of the Messengers."

Explanation

An Introduction to the above Group of Verses

In these verses Providence, the Great, points to one of the wonderful adventures of a group of the Israelites that happened after the time of Moses (as). The statement of this happening, of course, is following the statement of Holy War and the defence from the limits of the religion of Allah, which is, in fact, the same as the limits of humanity. It is stated, indeed, for the Muslims to take lesson from that marvelous incident.

A Marvelous Incident!

The Israelites who had become weak and poor under the domination of Pharaoh, gained great power and splendour under the wise leadership of Moses (as).

Allah showered many blessings upon them with the sanctity of this Great Prophet, including the Ark of the Covenant. The Jews, by carrying the Ark before the troops, got a kind of confidence and spiritual capability.

This power and glory continued a length of time after Moses (as). But the same victorious capacity and blissful bounties they had, gradually made them proud and, thereby, they became disobedient.

Finally, they were defeated with a great slaughter by Philistines when they lost their power and authority accompanied with loosing the Ark. After that, they became so weak and inflicted with dispersion that they were not able to defend themselves even against the smallest enemies.

It was so that their enemies expelled a great many of them from their own land and captured their children, too.

That status continued for years. At last, their prayer was heard and Allah raised a prophet for them called Samuel, to save them and guide them.

Those people, who had become tired and worn from the cruelty and transgressions of their enemies, were seeking for a shelter to take refuge in. Therefore, they gathered around him and asked him to appoint a king for them.

They all had decided to follow the command and leadership of such a king to fight unitedly against their enemy with heart and soul in order to regain their last honour and glory.

Prophet Samuel, who was well acquainted with their spirituality and knew their disloyal characteristics from before, told them he was afraid that they might disobey their commander, as to face with their enemy, when the order of Holy War in the way of Allah would be prescribed for them.

They objected that how they could disobey their commander and do not do their own duty in the case that the torturous enemy had expelled them from their home and had occupied their land and captured their children.

When Prophet Samuel found that those people had recognized their ailment and were seeking for the remedy, as if they had realized the secret of their state of being retarded, he prayed and asked the Lord what those people wanted. It was revealed to him to introduce Saul as their king.

Samuel invoked Allah that he had not seen Saul yet and he did not know him. The revelation came down indicating that he would be sent to him. Samuel was commanded that when Saul came to him, he (Samuel) would give him (Saul) the commandership of the troops and Holy War.

"Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way'. He said: 'Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?' They said: 'Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children?' But when fighting was written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust."

After Prophet Moses (as), the Israelites lost their power as a result of their self-indulgence and being desirous in welfare and laziness. So they became involved again in the domination and oppression of the tyrants when they lost both their freedom and home.

In order to be free from vagrancy and come out of the yoke of servitude of those tyrants, they decided to fight. Therefore, they went to their Prophet and asked him to appoint a king, a commander, for them so that they could struggle by Holy War against the tyrannical ruler of their time.

"Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way...."

The Prophet (as), regarding their notorious background, questioning them said: was it not probable that, after prescribing the command of war to them, they would disobey and would not be ready to fight?

"... He said: ' Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?

They did not agree with that idea and said that they would fight, for they had been expelled from their home and had been made vagrant for a long time, because their cities had been occupied by the enemy and their children were captured:

"... They said: ' Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children? '... "

But, with all these claims, when the command was issued, all of them, except a few, did not attend the battle-field and disobeyed that command.

"... But when fighting way written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust… "

Explanations

Explanations [3]

Vr. 246 (279) The event alluded to in this verse has a reference also in the Bible. (1 Samuel 8: 19, 20).

19. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay! but we will have a king over us;

20. "That we also may be like all the nations, and that our kind may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

After 'Moses,' prophets after prophets were appointed to succeed him and to maintain the Law ('Torah'). 'Moses' was succeeded by 'Usha bin Noon,' 'Kalib.' 'Ezekiel' and 'Ilyas' and 'Elisha' and as time passed the people neglected and ultimately gave up the Law and became idolatrous.

And in the time of the prophet 'Yasa' there appeared an enemy for the Israelites who were the people of the land of 'Shalisha,' from the tribe of Goliath ('Jaloot') who had captured all the land on the shores of the Mediterranean including Palestine and Egypt.

They subdued the Israelites, killed 440 Israelite princes and noblemen and had taken the Israelites as their subjects and taken away their lands. (1 Sam. 17: 1). Now the Israelites had no prophet to guide them out of the calamitous state.

They prayed to God for a prophet. At last their prayer was heard and God sent a prophet to them in Samuel. When Samuel appeared and claimed apostleship of God, the Israelites asked him to appoint a king for them to lead them in the battle for freedom from the subjection and servitude they had been suffering under the enemy.

In those days battles were fought only under kings and the Prophet was only the adviser or the administrative adviser or a director of the affairs. Prophet Samuel warned them beforehand that they might disobey after it gets prescribed for them to fight in the way of God.

Here was the question of fighting for the freedom of the people against the torturous subjection and it has been termed as the fight in the way of God. It is evident that the fight for right means the fight for God.

"And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king.' They said: ' How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?' He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you,

and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing ',"

This group of oppressed Israelites, though they had asked their prophet to appoint a chief for them to guide them to be able to escape from the torturous subjection of the tyrant rulers, failed in the field of trial.

"And their Prophet said to them: (Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king.'..."

It is appropriate to note that their Prophet was Samuel. Talut, who is the same as Saul, was called 'Talut' (according to the Bible) on account of his height and the strength of his stature, for he was the tallest of his people (Sam. 10: 23). The proper names used in Arabic are different from their Hebrew originals.

So, when their prophet, Samuel, appointed Saul (Talut), who was an unknown poor shepherd, as their chief, they being affected by their proud and vain consideration that they had from their own leader and leadership, despised Saul's kingship for the lack of wealth and reputation.

Those people, who had wealth in abundance, said that they were worthier than him for the position because of the gross great wealth they had.

"... They said: ' How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth? '..."

When the prophet heard their pretexts about the poverty and lack of wealth of Saul, he told them that undoubtedly Allah had appointed him as a king for them, and, instead of wealth, he had ability in knowledge and in body. Besides that, he had the necessary authority and ability of command of an army in fight.

"... He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.

So, Allah selects whosoever He wills for leadership due to his efficiency and his inner faculties.

"... Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-knowing'."

Conclusion

Whatever be the details of the Israelites' history referred to here, the instructions to be inferred from it regarding the religious authority who can wage war in the way of God is as follows: -

1. Besides the presence of a divine legislator and a religious judge sometimes an executor is also needed. It should be borne in mind that all the three aspects of government (Aamiriyat).. i.e. legislation justice and execution are included in the sovereignty of God.

He may delegate all the aspects to anyone man as His Vicegerent and He may distribute the various functions to different persons. In any case the appointment rests with God and none else. Here the Prophet represents the Divine Authority in law and justice.

When the people asked him to appoint a king as an executor, he said that God has appointed 'Talut' as their king, indicating that he (the Prophet) had no right to do it. This refutes the tendency now developing among the

people that in the establishment of the legislative and the judicial bodies the 'Kitab', i.e., the Book and the 'Sunnat', i.e., the Tradition to be the final authorities, and the people should have no voice in the matter.

But in the establishment of the final executive authority people may have voice and call it the Theo-democratic form of government.

The sovereignty ('Aamiriyat') is exclusively God's. To allow the public to have any say in it, means return to the age of ignorance and not Islam.

2. 'Jihad', i.e. war in the way of God was prescribed and practiced by the previous prophets also, and the reaction favorable or unfavorable, to this precept had been the same as in Islam.

3. The unfavorable reaction of the people to the divine appointment as based on temporal considerations which are known to the limited and narrow views, as was the case with the angels regarding the vicegerency of Adam.

The answer to this criticism is almost the same that it was God's selection and the selection is based on the extensity and the intensity of knowledge, strength and character and that the Kingdom is God's and He alone has the right to give to anyone whom He likes, but His liking is not arbitrary or unreasonable.

It is based on the superiority and the excellence of the person, known only to Him, as He alone is the all-Pervading and the Omniscient. This discards the importance of the temporal consideration as wealth, seniority in age, racial or parochial.

Therefore whenever the question of the authority succeeding the Holy Prophet in regard to legislation, justice and execution, is dealt with, the implication of this exemplary passage should be taken into consideration, as the method of the succession to the Holy Prophet has continued to be the same as before[4].

"And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you, wherein shall be a tranquility from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are (truly) faithful."

To make that group of Israelites sure about the kingship of Saul, their prophet told them that the Ark of the Covenant, /tabut/, the sacred Chest of the Children of Israel, will be returned to them as a sign that Saul was appointed by Allah.

"And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you..."

The purpose of /tabut/ is the wooden Chest wherein Moses's mother put her baby and, by the commandment of Allah, set it afloat in the water, of the Nile. Then, the men of Pharoah took it and brought the baby unto Pharoah.

The Chest remained safe in the Court of Pharoah. When Moses (as) was appointed to prophethood, he (as) put the Tablets of the Torah in it and gave it to his vicegerent, Yusha'-ibn-Nun (Joshua), and when he died, his armour and some of his belongings were put in it, too.

That Chest, which had been known among the Children of Israel as 'the Ark of the Covenant', remained in the hand of the very Children of Israel as a Sacred Chest, and they used to carry it before their forces in the battles.

But, little by little, its sacredness wretched and the Chest was taken away. But, according to the verse under discussion their prophet, Samuel, promised them that the Ark of the Covenant would be returned to them soon as a sign of truthfulness of his statement.

That glad tidings naturally was considered very magnificent for the Children of Israel, because by seeing that Sacred Chest, which they knew as a token of their ancient independence and glory, they thought they could regain their lost tranquility and splendour.

There are some statements about this Chest mentioned in the Torah, a part of which will be cited at the end of this commentary under the title of explanation.

Finally, at the time of the kingship of Saul, Allah returned that Sacred Chest, which was taken away, unto them through angels. That Chest brought them tranquility and peace.

"... wherein shall be a tranquility from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are (truly) faithful. "

Explanation

The term' Tabut ' in this verse stands for the Holy Ark of Chest 3 yards long and 2 yards broad with- divine signs in it decipherable only by the Apostles of God. This Ark had divine blessings that whenever it was presented by the Israelites against their enemy in the midst of a battle, the enemy forces had no other choice but to take to their heels for their lives.

The Israelites used to always keep the Chest in front of their forces whenever any occasion of their proceeding against any enemy had occurred and they used to come out victorious. This Ark passed from one apostle to another apostle of God.

It is reported to contain the shoes, the rod and clothes of Moses, the turban of Aaron and some other sacred relics. This Ark had been certainly endowed with miraculous effects. It was this Ark that was brought out from Shiloh to help the Israelites in the war with Philistines....

"And when she (mother of Moses) could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink."[5]

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an clears the meaning of 'Tabut'. The address in the following verse is to Moses:

"And when we revealed unto thy mother what was revealed. That; Put him into a chest, then cast it down into the river." (20: 38:39)

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Tafsir-Nimunah, vol. 2, p. 159
2. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 183, p. 268
3. This detail is narrated exactly from the footnote of the translation of the Holy Qur'an, by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, P. 217
4. See the Qur'an, 24: 55
5. OT Ex. 2: 3

Section 33, Saul's Victory over Goliath

Verse 249 in Deep

"So when Saul marched out with the troops he said: 'Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful.' But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he (Saul) crossed it (the river), those who believed with him said: 'We have no power today against Goliath and his troops.' Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: 'How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the (steadfast) patient ones'."(2:249)

In this verse, the Qur'an announces the failure of a large group of Israelites in their test when they drank water from the prohibited stream. They did not tolerate the thirst therein. So, they were not successful in that trial.

"So when Saul marched out with the troops he said: 'Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful. ' But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he (Saul) crossed it (the river)..."

However, the remaining group, who succeeded in the foregoing examination, had another practical examination, too. It was a spiritual examination. When they encountered the great forces of Goliath, they said that they could not fight against that armed force.

"... those who believed with him said:

'We have no power today against Goliath and his troop'..."

But, those who believed in the Resurrection and meeting Allah in the Hereafter, said that victory is in Allah's hand, and it is by His leave that a small group may win a large and numerous troop. It says:

"... Those who knew that they would meet Allah said:

'How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the (steadfast) patient ones'."

Traditions

Traditions[1]

Muhammad ibn Yahya narrated from Muhammad ibn Ahmad from Muhammad ibn Khalid and al-Husayn ibn Sa'id from an-Nar ibn Suwayd from Yahya al-Halabi from Harun ibn Kharijah from Abu Basir from Abu Ja'far (as) saying in a tradition, inter alia: "And Allah reports the words of Talut: 'Surely Allah will try you with a stream; whoever then drink from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me.'

But all of them drank from it, except three hundred and thirteen men; among them were those who took a handful of water as well as those who did not drink at all. When they went out against Goliath, those who had taken handful of water said, ' We have today no power against Goliath and his forces'; and those who had not taken it said, 'How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah's permission, and Allah is with the patient ones.' " (al-Kafi)

The author ('Allamah Tabatabai) says: That there remained with Talut only three hundred and thirteen men (equal in number to the Muslim 'army' in the battle of Badr) is mentioned in numerous traditions from Shi'ah and Sunni chains.

The details that those who said: "We have today no power..." were those who had taken a handful of water, and those who said, "How often a small party..." were those who had not tasted it at all, may be inferred from the position of the exceptional clause in the verse,… "

"So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: 'Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people'. "

In this verse, the incident of those two forces facing each other is pointed out. It says:

"So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: '(Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people'."

In fact, Saul and his troops asked for three things from their Lord in their prayer, and the prayer is well graded. First, patience and perseverance was prayed for. Their second beseech from Allah was steadfastness in the field.

They asked Him to make their steps firm in order that they would not flee. The first invocation, indeed, had an inward aspect while the second prayer had an apparent and outward aspect; and surely the firmness of step is one of the consequences of the spirit of patience and perseverance.

Their third prayer was that Allah might help them to be victorious against those infidels. That was, of course, the result or the reward of those two qualities: i.e. patience and perseverance, and being firm in the battlefield.

Bible says:

9. "And it was so, that when he (Saul) had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart."

10. "And the spirit or God came upon him and he prophesied. [2]

There is some similar incident mentioned in the Bible[3] of trying the people with thirst, but that is a different incident. It was when Gideon tried his forces by the 'Well of Harod '. The trial of the people under Saul was by the river.

From this verse it becomes clear that the one who leads the people should have inspired knowledge of good and evil for his followers and be able to conduct trials of the people's faith as was Saul who directed his men not to drink more than one handful of water from the river, even though they were dying of thirst. It was only a trial that a few, who were true believers, succeeded and Allah helped them to win Goliath and his troops.

"Thus they routed them by Allah's leave, and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of that He willed. And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all (His) creatures."

It is completely certain that Allah will not leave such believers alone, although the number of them be small and the number of their enemy be

large. That is why the verse expresses that they set out to fight against them and it was by the leave of Allah that they defeated he enemy. It says:

"Thus they routed them by Allah's leave..."

David, who was a very young lad, but was vigorous and brave, had attended the army of Saul to fight against the enemy. He succeeded to all Goliath.

"...and David slew Goliath..."

The young warrior threw one or two stones by means of a sling which he had with him, towards Goliath. He utilized the sling so skillfully that the stone hit just upon the head and pierced the forehead of Goliath.

So, Goliath cried loudly and fell down on the ground. At that moment, fear and terror rushed into the hearts of his troops. They began to flee. It seemed, Allah had decided to show his authority, here, and by demonstrating how a king, with all that glory and abundant force could be destroyed by a lad inexperienced in fighting, and particularly with an apparently simple and worthless tool, a sling. Then it says:

"...and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of what He willed...."

In this verse it has not been explicitly stated that this David is the same David who was the great prophet of the Israelites and was Solomon's father, yet the above mentioned phrase of the verse indicates that this David had attained the rank of Prophethood.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to a general law, thus it says:

"... And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all (His) creatures."

This concluding part of the verse clearly indicates that the only, aim or object of warfare should be nothing but dispelling of mischief and the establishment of peace on earth and not at all any territorial expansion.

Explanation

[4]

An account of the formidable strength of the mighty forces of Goliath, is given in the Bible[5] David slew Goliath in a single combat. The Philistines seeing Goliath killed by David all of them fled and that was the end of the battle.

Quite a similar event took place in the early days of the start of Islam. The infidels of Mecca with all the strength of the strongest of their allies with the best and the choicest and the most experienced of their warrior heroes attacked the Muslim refugees in Madina who then numbered only a few hundreds including women and children and who were practically unarmed and the enemy consisted of several full equipped battalions.

The battle is called the battle of 'Ahzab' i.e. the battle of the Confederates. All the idolatrous tribes of Arabia had united in one body against the few hundreds of ill-equipped or practically unarmed Muslims.

The mighty host was twelve thousand strong and there could be hardly any fight at all. It was the question of life and death for Muslims and Islam including the Holy Prophet himself. The well-known giant-like warrior hero of the enemy's strength leapt across the ditch which the Muslims had dug

between themselves and the enemy's forces, and coming forward challenged the Holy Prophet to send anyone to fight him in a duel or a single combat.

The Holy Prophet turned towards the small band of his men and asked them if there was anyone who would answer 'Amr' on behalf of Islam and the Muslims. Though there were those present in the Muslim ranks who later, after the departure of the Holy Prophet prided themselves as the greatest heroes and the defenders of Islam and who also claimed to be the closest companions of the Holy Prophet during his life, but none stirred, and some of them even tried to hide their faces lest the choice of the Holy Prophet might fall upon them and they be commanded by the apostle of God to go to fight the giant like warrior standing fully equipped and well prepared to finish anyone that comes to face him.

Every time the call was sounded by the Holy Prophet to his men for a match to meet 'Amr' there was no response even from those who claimed closest companionship with him save Ali Ibne Abi Taleb, who at every time readily stood up and cried: 'Ana lahu ya Rasullullah' (I am here for him O Prophet of God!).

But the Holy Prophet asked Ali to sit down. Thrice did the Holy Prophet call for a match from his ranks and every time none but Ali stood up. Once, some of the people gave cowardly answers acknowledging the matchless strength and the dauntless courage of the challenging hero of the enemy.

Third time when again none but Ali stood up to fight the giant-like warrior, the Holy Prophet called forth Ali, set right his dress and placed his own turban on his head and bade him go to fight in the way of the Lord, praying to God for the triumph of Islam against the total strength of the idolatrous Arabia and declared:

'Qad Barazal 'Imanu Kulleh 'ila Kufre Kulleh.'

i.e. 'Certainly proceeds the Whole of the Faith against the Whole of the Infidelity. 'Ali met Amr', the details of which one can have from ay of the detailed Muslim history, and ultimately within a few minutes Ali brought the severed head of Amr' the challenging idolater herd of the infidel's forces, and threw it before the feet of the Holy Prophet saying: "Here is, O Prophet of God! The head of the enemy of God and Islam", at which the Holy Prophet (S) thanked God for the victory and declared:

Darbatu Aliyin Youmal Khandaq

Afdalu min 'ibadatuth thaqalayn.

i.e. "The one stroke of Ali on the Day of the Ditch (The battle is called the Battle of the Ditch), is superior to the service (prayers) of both the worlds." This saying of the Holy Prophet (S) is well-known to the Muslim world and is invariably recorded by all historians and the traditionists and unanimously acknowledged and accepted by the Muslim world as a whole.

As on the triumph of David against Goliath the enemy fled away, at the triumph of Ali against 'Amr' the combined forces of the Confederates of the enemy gave up the, battle and left the field in chaos and confusion and the battle ended completely routed and disappointed forever.

"These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you (Muhammad) in truth, and verily, you are (one) of the Messengers."

This expressive verse is the last verse of the second part of the Holy Qur'an, the commentary of which has been discussed in the current volume.

In this verse, the Qur'an points out that these stories and incidents which were explained about, should be heeded as a warning and instructive lesson for Muslims. In particular, where the story of the death of a thousand people in one moment and then their coming back to life again by the invocation of their prophet is stated.

All of these are the effects of the Signs of Allah: granting the rank of leadership to an unknown young shepherd who, in the meanwhile, was wise and eligible; the victory of a small group against a large group of armed enemies; the bravery of a young lad in that fight and endowing him the position of prophethood by the Lord.

These events, mentioned in the Qur'an, are totally some indicative hints to the truthfulness of the speech and Messengership of the Prophet of Islam (S). It says:

"These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you (Muhammad) in truth, and verily, you are (one) of the Messengers."

Considering the contents of the previous verses, makes it clear that the elements of victory lie in the following factors:

1) A capable worthy leader; 2) truthful followers; 3) trusting in Allah; 4) patience and perseverance; and, 5) having a godly motive.

On the whole, the Qur'an recognizes the clash and struggle for power and authority as an important factor in the development of the terrestrial life which is supported by 22:40.

The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest is a natural factor in the development and the progress of the creation as a whole but with the advent of Adam and the birth of the intellectual faculties and the development of inspiration in man, the natural tendencies and values gave place to the conventional moral and legal values instead of fighting for food and the material necessities, man began to struggle for right and wrong, what ought to be done and what ought not to. To stop this struggle means deterioration and reversion to animal life.

Islam advocates the sublimation of the natural tendencies and the native urge in the best conventional and the highly improved forms by decrying the false values and the evil use of the faculties.

There should be competition and struggle: for such an attainment and rank which takes one closer and nearer to Allah. Hence one should always be prepared to fight against the evil in his own self which would take him back to animal life; and to fight against the evil in the society and the state in which he lives. He should compete with the others in attaining whatever is good and godly.[6]

Explanation

7 So, this is history and its various defects which can never be glossed over or corrected. With this background, we should never compare the historical events mentioned in the Qur'an, with the narrations of the same events given in the books of history.

The Qur'an is a divine revelation, free from mistake and falsehood. How can it be judged with the help of history, the history which nobody believes to be free from lie and error?

Many historical events, as given in the Qur'an, like this very story of Talut, differ from the reports in the Bible. But why should we worry? The Bible is no better than other history books. The alterations, suppressions, additions and omissions carried out in these books are too well-known to need any description. The story of Samuel and Saul was written in the Bible by an unknown hand.

The story of Talut in the Qur'an is the true words of Allah.

This much about history in general; now let's see what is the Qur'an's main object in such narrations. The Qur'an is not a book of history, nor does it describe an event with all its details as a book of history purports to do.

The Qur'an is divine speech, poured into the mould of revelation, "With it Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety." That is why it does not narrate an event from the beginning to the end with all its details. It only picks out a few such points of an event as will be useful to the listener as a lesson, sermon and moral.

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 112 (English Version), by al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al- Tabataba'i
2. Samuel 10: 9.10
3. Judges 7: 1-6
4. Adopted from the footnote of The Translation of the Holy Qur'an, by S. W. Mir Ahmed Ali, p. 221
5. 1. Samuel 17: 4-11
6. See the Qur'an 2: 148 and 5: 148.
7. Al-Mizan, commentary, vol. 4 p. 123 (English Version) by al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 3

From Surah al-Baqarah(2) v. 253- An-Nisa' (4) v. 23

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author (s): Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 12
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 13
What is a 'Commentary'? 14
The Current Commentary 15
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 16
The Problems in Translating 16
Translators Note 17
Editor's Note 18
Notes 20
Acknowledgment 21
Notes 21
References 22
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 22
English Translations of Qur'an 22
Supporting Technical References 23
Phraseological and Philological Sources 23
A Presentation to Muslims 25
Notes 26
Section 34, Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2 27
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 253 27
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 254 28
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 255 28
'Ayat-ul-Kursi, One of the Most Important Verses 28
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 256 30
Occasion of Revelation 31
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 257 31
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 258 32
How the dead are again raised by Allah 32
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 259 33
Explanations 33
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 260 34
Explanations 35
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 261 35
Explanations 36
Notes 36
Section 35 37
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 262 37
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 263 37
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 264-265 38
Another Interesting Similitude 39
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 266 39
Another Similitude 40
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 267 40
The Occasion of Revelation 41
What Kind of Property Can Be Given in Charity? 41
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 268 42
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 269 43

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 270 - 271 44
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 272 44
Explanations 45
Notes 45
Section 36 47
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 273 47
Explanations 47
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 274 48
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 275 48
Explanations 49
The Disadvantages of Usury 50
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 276 51
Explanations 51
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 277 52
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 278 52
Explanations 53
Notes 53
Section 37 54
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 279 54
Explanations 54
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 280 54
Explanations 54
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 281 55
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 282 56
Commercial Documents in the Qur'an 57
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 283 59
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 284 60
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 285 60
Occasion of Revelation 61
Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 286 61
Notes 62
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Chapter 3 63
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 1-4 63
A Note 63
Explanations 65
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 5-6 66
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 7 66
The Decisive & the Allegorical Verses in the Qur'an 66
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 8-9 67
Notes 68
Section 1: The Ultimate Triumph of the Unity of Allah 69
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 10-11 69
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 12 70
Explanations 70
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 13 70
Explanations 71
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 14 72
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 15 72

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 16-17 73
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 18 74
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 19 75
Notes 75
Section 2: Chastisement for those who slay the Apostles 77
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 20 77
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 21-22 77
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 23 78
Explanations 79
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 24 79
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 25 79
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 26 80
Explanations 80
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 27 81
Explanation..... 81
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 28 82
Explanations 82
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 29 83
Explanation..... 83
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 30 83
Explanations 84
Notes 84
Section 3: Allah's choice of the descendants of Abraham (as)..... 85
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 31 85
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 32 85
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 33-34 85
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 35-36 86
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 37 87
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 38-39 89
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 40 90
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 41 90
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 42 91
Explanations 91
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 43 92
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 44 92
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 45 92
Explanations 93
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 46 93
Explanations 93
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 47 94
Explanations 94
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 48 94
Explanations 95
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 49 95
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 50 97
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 51 97
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 52 98
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 53 99

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 54 99
Explanations 99
Notes 99
Section 4: The Christians were invited to the Spiritual Contest - Promise of Rescue to Jesus 101
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 55 101
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 56 101
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 57 102
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 58 102
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 59 102
Explanations 102
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 60 103
Explanations 103
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 61 103
Explanations 105
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 62 105
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 63 106
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 64 106
An Invitation to Unification 106
Notes 106
Section 5: Invitation to the followers of the Book to Unity of Allah as a common basis of Faith 108
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 65 108
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 66 108
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 67 109
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 68 109
Explanations 109
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 69 110
Explanations 110
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 70 110
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 71 111
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 72 111
Explanations 111
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 73 112
Explanations 112
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 74 112
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 75 113
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 76 113
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 77 113
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 78 114
Occasion of Revelation 114
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 79 114
Occasion of Revelation 115
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 80 115
Notes 116
Section 6: Previous Scriptures confirms Islam 117
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 81 117
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 82 117

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 83 117
Explanations 118
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 84 118
Explanations 118
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 85 119
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 86 119
Occasion of Revelation 119
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 87 120
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 88 120
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 89 120
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 90 121
Occasion of Revelation 121
A Vain Repentance 121
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 91 121
Notes 122
Section 7 123
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 92 123
The Believers and Giving Charity 123
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 93 124
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 94 125
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 95 125
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 96 125
Explanations 126
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 97 126
Explanations 127
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 98 128
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 99 128
Explanations 129
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 100 129
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 101 130
Explanations 130
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 102 130
Explanations 131
Notes 131
Section 8 132
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 103 132
An Invitation to Union 132
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 104 133
Explanations 133
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 105 134
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 106 134
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 107-108 135
Explanations 135
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 109 135
Notes 136
Section 9: Muslims raised for the welfare of mankind 137
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 110 137
Again, an Invitation to Truth 137

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 111 137
Explanations 138
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 112 138
Explanations 138
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 113 139
The Truth-seeking Soul in Islam 139
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 114 139
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 115 140
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 116 140
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 117 140
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 118 141
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 119 141
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 120 142
Notes 142
Section 10 143
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 121 143
Explanations 143
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 122 143
Explanations 144
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 123 144
Explanations 144
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 124 144
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 125 145
Explanations 145
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 126 145
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 127 145
Explanations 146
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 128 146
Explanations 146
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 129 147
Section 11: Usury forbidden - Means of achieving success 148
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 130 148
Explanations 148
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 131 148
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 132 149
Explanations 149
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 133 149
A Race on the Path of Felicity 149
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 134 149
The Feature of the Pious Ones 150
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 135 150
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 136 151
Explanations 151
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 137 151
Explanations 151
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 138 152
Explanations 152
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 139 152

Explanations 153
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 140 153
Explanations 153
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 141 153
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 142 154
Explanation 154
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 143 154
Explanation 155
Notes 155
Section 12: Perseverance and Patience in Suffering Enjoined 156
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 144 156
Explanations 156
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 145 156
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 146 157
Former Strivers 157
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 147 158
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 148 158
Section 13: Delinquency and Dread with some Muslims in the Battle of 'Uhud 159
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 149 159
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 150 159
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 151 159
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 152 160
A Failure after Triumph 160
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 153 161
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 154 161
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 155 163
Explanations 163
Section 14: The Faithfuls and Hypocrites in the battle of 'Uhud 164
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 156 164
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 157 164
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 158 164
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 159 165
Explanations 165
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 160 166
Explanations 166
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 161 166
Explanations 166
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 162 167
Explanations 168
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 163 168
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 164 168
Explanations 168
Complementary Explanations 169
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 165 169
Explanations 170
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 166 170
Explanations 170

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 167 171
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 168 171
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 169 172
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 170 172
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 171 172
Notes 173
Section 15: Uhud a loss to the Enemy 174
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 172 174
The Battle of Hamra'-ul-Asad 174
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 173 175
Explanations 175
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 174 175
Explanations 175
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 175 176
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 176 176
Explanations 176
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 177 177
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 178 177
Explanations 178
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 179 178
Explanations 179
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 180 179
Notes 180
Section 16: Jewish carping at the Apostle 181
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 181 181
The Occasion of Revelation 181
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 182 181
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 183 182
Explanations 182
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 184 183
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 185 183
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 186 184
Explanations 184
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 187 184
Explanations 185
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 188 185
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 189 186
Notes 186
Section 17: The Triumph of the Faithfuls 187
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 190 187
Explanations 187
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 191 187
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 192 188
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 193 188
Explanations 189
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 194 189
Explanations 189
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 195 190

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 196 191
Explanations 191
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 197 191
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 198 191
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 199 192
Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 200 192
Notes 193
Surah An-Nisa', Chapter 4, Introduction 194
(The Women) 194
Introduction to the Surah 194
The Virtue of Studying This Surah 194
Notes 194
Section 1: Responsibilities of the Guardians of Orphans 195
Respect for the ties of relationship -Care of orphans' property 195
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 1 195
Challenge against Unjust Discrimination 195
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 2 196
Occasion of Revelation 196
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 3 197
Occasion of Revelation 197
Justice about Wives 198
Explanations 198
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 4 198
Explanations 198
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 5 199
Explanations 199
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 6 200
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 7 201
Occasion of Revelation 201
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 8 201
An Ethical Ordinance 202
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 9 202
Explanations 202
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 10 203
Explanation 203
Notes 203
Section 2: Law of Inheritance 204
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 11 204
The Portions of Inheritance 204
Why Is the Heritance of Man Equal of the Portion of Two Women? 206
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 12 206
Inheritance of Spouses from Each Other 206
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 13 207
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 14 208
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 15 208
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 16 209
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 17 209
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 18 210

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 19 210
Occasion of Revelation 210
Explanations 211
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 20 211
Explanations 211
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 21 212
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 22 212
Notes 212
Section 3: Women who may be taken in wedlock 213
Surah An-Nisa',Verse 23 213
Explanations 214

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward”[1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5],

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray,

the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, *1412* (*1370* H. / *1991*), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness

which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Section 34, Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 253

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَآتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَاء اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِم مِّن بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَـكِنِ اخْتَلَفُواْ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُم مَّن كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاء اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُواْ
وَلَـكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ

253. "These are the Messengers We have made some of whom excel the others; of them are some to whom Allah has spoken, and some of them He has raised in degrees. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. And had Allah willed, those who came after them would not have fought (one another) after the clear Signs had come to them; but they differed. So, of them (there were) some who believed and some who disbelieved. Yet, had Allah willed, they would not have fought (one another); but Allah does whatever He wills."

In this verse some particular privileges of a few prophets are referred to. For instance, as the following separate verse indicates, Moses (as) talked to Allah, and it was the Will of Allah to choose him for that purpose; as the Qur'an says:

"He said: 'O' Moses! Verily I have chosen you above the people with My Messages and with My words (discourse)..." [1]

So, the verse under discussion says:

"These are the Messengers We have made some of whom excel the others; of them are some to whom Allah has spoken ..."

In this regard, the holy Prophet of Islam (S) had some more privileges than other prophets before him, such as; being 'the seal of the prophets', the immunity of his Book (the Qur'an) from distortion, and being entitled as 'a Mercy unto the worlds'. This is the word of Allah:

"And We sent you not (O' Our Apostle Muhammad) but a Mercy unto all the worlds." [2]

Or, Abraham (as) and Noah (as) received the best regards from the side of Allah. Or, as the above verse says, that Jesus (as) was strengthened with the Holy Spirit. It says:

"... and some He has raised in degrees. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit..."

By the way, it is also mentioned in this Verse that if Allah willed, He could stop the opposition and fighting between people who came after those prophets and set them in one peaceful way. But Allah's way of treatment is that people be free and wilful in order that they be able to accept or reject a proper path by their own choice.

"... And had Allah willed, those who came after them would not have fought (one another) after the clear Signs had come to them; but they differed. So of them (there were) some who believed and some who disbelieved. Yet, had Allah willed, they would not have fought (one another); but Allah does whatever He wills."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 254

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لاَّ بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلاَ خُلَّةٌ وَلاَ شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

254. " O' you who have Faith! spend (in alms) of that which We have provided for you, before there comes a day wherein shall be no bargaining, neither friendship, nor intercession; and the infidels -they are the unjust."

This verse is rendered as a warning to the believers, telling them to give alms and not to lose the respite they have in this life. They are recommended to provide some fitting provisions thereby for their certain journey; the next life, the Hereafter. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! spend (in alms) of that which We have provided for you..."

On the Resurrection Day, there will be neither any bargain to buy the means of felicity and security against one's infidelity, nor any friend or intercessor to make their infidelity invalid.

"... before there comes a day wherein shall be no bargaining neither friendship, nor intercession; and the infidels - they are the unjust."

They are deprived from intercession in that world because they were the cause of deprivation for others in this world. For example, a miser person not only is unjust to himself, since he extinguishes the light of generosity inside his self and wastes his situation in the Hereafter, but also practically proves inequity against others when he ignores the Divine commandments.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 255

اللّهُ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لاَ تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلاَ نَوْمٌ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلاَّ بِمَا شَاء وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَلاَ يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

255. "Allah! there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-Subsisting (the Sustainer of all things); slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep; to Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they comprehend nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His Kursi (knowledge) extends over the heavens and the earth; and preserving them both tires Him not; and, He is the Highest, the Greatest."

'Ayat-ul-Kursi, One of the Most Important Verses

Upon the importance and excellence of this verse, the only holy tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S), explained in the following, is enough.

Once, the Messenger of Allah (S) asked Ubayy-ibn-Ka'b which verse of the verses of the Qur'an was the most important one, and he answered the verse saying:

"Allah! there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting (the Sustainer of all things)..."

Then the Messenger of Allah (S) touched his chest as a sign of favour and told him,

"May your knowledge be wholesome to you. By the One in Whose hand is Muhammad's soul, this verse has two tongues and two lips which glorify the Lord below the Divine throne of authority," [3]

Another tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) says:

"The one who recites Ayat-ul-Kursi once, Allah will remove one thousand unbecoming things from his worldly unbecoming affairs, the easiest of which is poverty, and one thousand unbecoming things from his (affairs) in the Hereafter, the easiest one among which is the pain of grave," [4]

The verse begins with the Pure Essence of Allah and continues with the subject of Unity, Asma'-ul-Husna, and His attributes. It says:

"Allah! there is no god but He…"

"Allah" is the particular appellation for God Which means the Essence that includes all the attributes of Divine Perfection, Glory, and Beauty.

Then, it adds two other attributes of Allah, saying that He is the Lord Who is Alive forever and is self-subsisting so that all other creatures in the universe depend on Him. It says:

"the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting (the Sustainer of all things); "

It is evident that life for Allah is the real life, because His life is the same as His Essence, His Knowledge, and His Power. It is not like that of living creatures whose lives are casual and after a length of time they die.

Allah is completely different from His creatures from the point of life, as verse 58 from Surah Al-Furqan. No.25 says:

"And rely you on the (Ever) Living One Who dies not..."

Then, to indicate that neither drowsiness, nor deep sleep seizes Him and never He stops managing the world, it continues saying:

"…slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep;.."

The Arabic term /sanah/ 'slumber' is the sleep which appears first in the eyes, but when it becomes deeper and reaches the mind, it is termed in Arabic /naum/ 'sleep'. This verse, pointing to the latter state, means that the governance of the Absolutely Bountiful, Allah, is perpetual and never ceases, even for a moment.

Then, it refers to the absolute ownership of Allah, saying:

"….to Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, …"

This is the fifth attributes from the attributes of Allah mentioned here. Formerly, four other attributes of Allah were referred to: Oneness of Allah, the Everliving, the Self -subsisting, and that He never sleeps.

It is quite clear that this attribute, that everything belongs to Allah, has a great training effect in human beings.

When they know that whatever they have does not really belong to themselves and it is temporarily handed over them as a deposit to use for a short time, they will surely avoid of transgressing others' rights.

These people, with this cognition, will certainly withdraw committing such wrong actions as colonization, hoarding, greed, miserliness, and the like.

For the sixth attribute, it says:

"…Who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave?…"

In fact, by a positive interrogation with a negative sense, it says that no person can intercede at His presence but by His leave.

Intercession was discussed fairly vastly when commenting on verse 48, Surah Al-Baqarah No.1, in vol. part 1, pp. 174-177,

Referring to the seventh attribute, it says:

"…He knows what is before them and what is behind them..."

Therefore, whatever is in the expose of time and place is entirely manifest in His Knowledge. That is why everything, even intercession, depends upon His command.

In stating His eighth attribute, this fact is pointed out that He has let others know only a small part of His knowledge that has been advisable and proper for them. It says:

"….while they comprehend nothing of His knowledge except what He wills, …"

Thus, the limited knowledge of others is a beam of the light of His unlimited knowledge.

So, two other points is also understood from the above phrase. The first is that no creature has cognition from his own and all human cognizances are from the source of Allah.

The second is that Allah may award a part of some concealed knowledge and some hidden secrets to those He pleases.

His ninthly and tenthly attributes are stated thus:

"...His Kursi (knowledge) extends over the heavens and the earth; and preserving them both tires Him not..."

Then, power and sovereignty of Allah encompass the totality of the heavens and the earth, and His Knowledge (Kursi) encompasses all of these expansions wholly, so that nothing is out of His dominion and authority.

It is, even, understood from some of the Islamic traditions that the expansion of Kursi is very larger than the heavens and the earth. For example, in a tradition Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Heavens and earth, comparing Kursi, is like a ring in the midst of a desert; and Kursi, in comparison with 'Arsh, is like a ring in the midst of a desert." [5]

It is true, of course, that science has not discovered the secret of this meaning yet.

Describing His eleventh and twelfth attributes, it says:

"...and, He is the Highest, the Greatest."

The Lord, Who is the Highest and the Infinite, is able to do everything so that nothing is difficult for Him. Never has He tired of managing the world of existence. Never He remains neglectful, unaware and feeble of it. His Knowledge involves all things because He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent.

It is worthy to note that, in spite of what is popular, the verse entitled 'Ayat-ul-Kursi is this very single verse alone.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 256

لاَ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللّه فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لاَ انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

256. "There is no compulsion in religion. Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error. Therefore, whoever rejects false deities ((taghut) and believes in Allah, has grasped the firmest handle, that shall never break; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing."

Occasion of Revelation

There was a man from Medina by the name of Abu-Haseen who had two sons. Some of the Christian merchants, who used to import merchandise from abroad into Medina, invited those two lads to Christianity whenever they met them in Medina. Those two young men were seriously affected by them, too.

Abu-Haseen became very inconvenient from that condition. He went to the Prophet (S) and, informing him the matter, requested him to bring those children back to their own religion. He asked whether he could bring them forcefully to Islam. Then, the verse was revealed and manifested this fact that there is no compulsion in accepting the religion.

The previous verse, 'Ayat-ul-Kursi, infect, was a collection of Unity and the Attributes of Allah, Beauty and Glory, which make up the foundation of the religion. This meaning is acceptable in all stages with reasonable proofs. That is why embracing the faith needs not any compulsion or force, and in this verse, it says:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error..."

This verse is a serious answer to those who imagine that Islam applies obligation and has developed and spread through the force of sword and martial power.

Then, as a conclusion of the previous verse, it adds:

"….Therefore, whoever rejects false deities (taghut) and believes in Allah, has grasped the firmest handle, that shall never break…"

And, at the end of the verse it continues saying:

"…and Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing,"

This concluding phrase is a hint to the fact that the problem of belief and disbelief is not something that can be fulfilled by mere pretence, because Allah hears the words of all entirely, whether they state openly or they speak privately and hiddenly.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 257

اللّه وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

257. "Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of darkness into light; and those who reject faith, their guardians are false-deities, (taghut), who bring them out of light into darkness; they are the inhabitants of the Fire wherein shall they abide forever. "

With reference to the state of belief and disbelief, which was mentioned in the previous verse, here, in this verse, it distinguishes the situation of believers and disbelievers from the point of leader and guardian. It says:

"Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith…"

So it is under the favour of this guardianship and leadership, that:

"…He brings them out of darkness into light…"

Then it adds:

"…and those who reject faith, their guardians are false-deities, (taghut), who bring them out of light into darkness; .."

It is for this reason that:

"…they are the inhabitants of the Fire wherein shall they abide forever,"

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 258

How the dead are again raised by Allah

Abraham's argument against Nimrod -Illustration of how the dead are again raised by Allah -Abraham directed to an experiment to see how Allah raises the dead.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَآجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رِبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِـي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِـي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّه يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

258. "Have you not seen him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingship? When Abraham said: 'My Lord is He Who gives life, and causes to die.' He said: 'I (too) give life and cause to die.' Abraham said: 'Verily, Allah brings the sun from the East; so you bring it from the West', whereupon the one who disbelieved was confounded. And Allah does not guide the unjust people."

It is said in history and the Islamic narrations that it happened that Nimrod (Namrood), the king of Babylon, disputed with Abraham (as) about the Lord.

"Have you not seen him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingship?.."

Abraham (as) said that his Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die.

"... When Abraham said: ' My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die' ..."

In response, Nimrod said that he, too, gave life and caused to die. Then, he ordered to fetch two prisoners and let one of them go and commanded his men to kill the other,

"...He said: 'I (too) give life and cause to die. '... "

When Abraham (as) saw the wrong concept of Nimrod from giving life and causing death and how he tried to prevail over others and impose his false whims, he (as) immediately told him that Allah raises the sun from the East, so if he claimed that he governed the world of existence and everything was under his order and power, as he claimed, he would bring the sun up from the West.

"... Abraham said: 'Verily, Allah brings the sun from the East; so you bring it from the West.'..."

At that time Nimrod astonished and could say nothing save keeping silent.

"... where upon the one who disbelieved was confounded. And Allah does not guide the unjust people."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 259

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِـي هَـذِهِ اللّه بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللّه مِئَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَل لَّبِثْتَ مِئَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى العِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللّه عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

259. "Or like him (Ezra) who passed by a town and it had fallen on its roofs, he said: 'How shall Allah bring this to life again after its death?' So Allah made him die a hundred years, then He raised him up and said: 'How long have you tarried? ' He said, ' (Perhaps) I have tarried a day or a part of a day.' He said: ' Nay, you have tarried (thus) a hundred years. But look at your food and your drink -they show no effect of age; and look at your ass; and that We may make of you a sign for people; and look at the bones, how We assembled them together and then clothed them with flesh! So, when it became clear to him, he said: 'I know that Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

The previous verse stated the dispute of Abraham (as) with Nimrod around the subject of Unity. That statement, indeed, was guidance through logical reasoning. Now, this holy verse speaks about Resurrection, wherein guidance is accomplished through illustration of some sensible things.

"Or like him (Ezra) who passed by a town and it had fallen on its roofs..."

Some Islamic narrations and books denote that the name of the man referred to in this verse has been 'Uzayr (Ezra). They also said that he must be a prophet whom, as the verse indicates, Allah has spoken to.

Explanations

1. Illustration is the best way of reasoning.

"...but look at your food and your drink -they show no effect of age..."

2. It is appropriate to die one hundred years to recognize one important point.

3. Increase your knowledge by experience, inquiring, and so on, although you know the fact.

"... he said: 'How shall Allah bring this to life again after its death? …"

4. We should take new lessons from old ruined towns and ancient civilizations, too, and ask questions.

5. Everybody will be raised with the same feature the one has at the time of death.

"...then He raised him up..,"

6. The past of time, however much long may be, does not affect on the Might of Allah.

"...so Allah made him die a hundred years, them He raised him up..,"

7. With Allah's Will, the firm bones rot, but fresh food, which becomes rotten in a short time, remains one hundred years fresh.

"…and said: ' How long have you tarried?'

He said, '(Perhaps) I have tarried a day or a part of a day.'

He Said: ' Nay, you have tarried (thus) a hundred years…."

8. The exposition of Allah's Power is for guiding and leading people.

"…and that We may make of you a sign for people;.."

9. Allah has brought a scene of the Hereafter in this world. The verse says:

"...and look at the bones, how We assembled them together and then clothed them with flesh.'..."

10. The Resurrection is a resurrection of the body, because if it were a mere spiritual resurrection, the statement of bone, dead and grave would not come forth.

"...and look at the bones..."

11. A handful of a thing is a sample of a ton of that thing.

"So when it became clear to him, he said: 'I know that Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

12. The dead returning to life again is also admissible in this very world and before that the final Resurrection Day happens.

"...so Allah made him die a hundred years, then He raised him up ..."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 260

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِـي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قَالَ بَلَى وَلَـكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَ ُ ْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّه عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

260. And when Abraham said: ' My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead ', He said: 'Do you not believe?' 'Yes', said Abraham, 'but to make my heart at ease.' He said: 'Take four of the birds. Then make them to incline unto you and (cutting them into pieces) place a part of them on each mountain, and thereafter, call them. They will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise.

This unique matchless claim is narrated but from the only man of significance in history who after the Messenger of Allah said:

"If the curtains be removed, there will be added nothing to my certitude."
6

But, other people wholly like to see what they were told, or what they believe, in their objective state. For example, everybody likes to see how sugar is produced and obtained from sugar-beet or sugar-cane although they know that sugar is originally from it.

Concerning the above verse, it is cited in some books that: once Abraham (as) was walking on the bank of a sea when he saw a corpse of a man over the sands there. The corpse was half in the water and half on the land so that

both the animals in the sea and the birds and animals on the land could feed from it.

Abraham thought himself if this condition happened for a man whose little bits of body were distributed among other living creatures, how could these bits be gathered together and raise on the Resurrection Day? So, he (as) invoked Allah:

"And when Abraham said...."

"... My Lord! Show me how You give life to dead..."

Explanations

1. We should attempt to elevate the standard of our faith and belief in ourselves as much as we reach the limit of certainty.

"... He said: 'Do you not believe?' 'Yes ', said Abraham, 'but to make my heart at ease.'..."

2. Intuition and vision appears only for those who have paved some length of the path of knowledge, faith, and reasoning.

3. The call of the saints and Apostles of Allah can affect even on the particles in the world:

"...and thereafter, call them. They will come to you in haste..."

4. Resurrection is a bodily resurrection, because, on the Day of Judgement, the return of the soul will be unto the very particles of the body.

5. Since the goal is reaching the certitude, the accomplishment is done by Abraham (as) himself. (He killed four different birds, mixed their meat with together and divided it upon several mountains.)

"... He said: 'Take four of the birds. Then make them to incline unto you and (cutting them into pieces) place a part of them on each mountain ..."

6. For the purpose of a deep instruction, applying art and demonstration is necessary.

However, we must always beware of the fact:

"... And know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. "

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 261

مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِّئَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

261. "The likeness of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All- Knowing."

Enjoining others to giving charity and prohibition from immoderation and extravagance are the best way to solving the problem of the difference of social classes. On the other hand, the appearance and spread of usury is the origin and motive of social classes to be created.

That may be why that the necessity of giving charity and prohibition of usury are stated beside each other in the Qur'an.[7]

By the way, it should be noted it is not so that any grain of corn planted in any land does grow seven ears with a hundred grains. But, the grain

should be safe, the land should be susceptible, the time must be appropriate, and the preparation and protection should be complete.

Explanations

1. Applying the natural phenomena will never become out of fashion at any time. They are always comprehensible for all people in any age and in any acceptable conditions.

2. Encouragement and promise of reward are often the most intensive motives for individuals to move forward.

3. The grace of Allah is unlimited.

"... And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

4. That charity is worthy which is given in the way of Allah.

"The likeness of those who spend their property in the way of Allah..."

5. The praise of the Qur'an is upon those who spend in charity as a habit in their current life. The Arabic term /yunfiquna/ (spend their property), which is mentioned in this verse, refers to an action done continually.

6. The best example is that example which has external reality.

"...is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear..."

7. If spending one's property can be multiplied as much as seven hundred times then what about those who give their lives in charity for the sake of Allah?

Notes

1. Surah Al-A'raf, No.7, verse 144.
2. Surah Al-'Anbya', No.21, verse 107
3. Durr-ul-Manthur, vol. 2, p. 8
4. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 262
5. Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 241
6. Tafsir Ruhul-Bayan, Vol. 1, P. 416
7. Al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 406

Section 35

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 262

الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ ثُمَّ لاَ يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنفَقُواْ مَنًّا وَلاَ أَذًى لَّهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

262. "Those who spend their property in the way of Allah, (and) thereafter, do not follow up what they have spent by reproach and with injury, for them shall be their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

A Worthy Charity!

In the previous verse, the importance of charity in the way of Allah was pointed out in general. Here, in this verse, some of its qualities are stated, too. It says:

"Those who spend their property in the way of Allah, (and) thereafter, do not follow up what they have spent by reproach and with injury, for them shall be their reward with their Lord..."

Besides the above mentioned privilege, this quality is in them again, that:

"... and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Therefore, those who spend some of their property in the way of Allah, but after that benevolent action, they reproach or do something that cause injury, they destroy their reward, indeed, with this reprobated action.

It can also be said that such persons, in many cases, not only are not good doers, but also are some transgressors, because the honour of a man and his psychological social capitals are often surely more valuable than property and wealth.

The Qur'anic holy phrase:

"...for them shall be their reward with their Lord;"

makes the givers of charity sure that their reward is reserved with their Lord in order that they go forth with a good amount of certainty along this path.

More than that, the application of the Qur'anic term /rabbihim/ (their Lord) in the verse, is a hint to this meaning that their Lord trains them and will multiply it.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 263

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ

263. "A kind word and forgiveness is better than a charity that is followed by injury, and Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing."

This verse, in fact, completes the idea in the previous verse. It says that those who have a good manner and good statement, facing with the people in need, and forgive them even when their insistence is with rudeness, their action is better than the donation of those who cause injury and irritation thereafter.

"A kind word and forgiveness is better than a charity that is followed by injury, and Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing."

This verse makes clear the logic of Islam due to the social values concerning the honour of people. Islam considers the value of the action of

those who speak helpfully and leadingly with the needy people in order to protect them and keep their secrets hidden.

This is more valuable than the charity of some selfish short-sighted individuals, who have sorts of approach and injury on such honourable persons for a small donation they give.

As was mentioned before the loss of these stingy people is more than their profit. When such persons give something, they ruin something else, too. Thus, the above statement made it clear that the Qur'anic phrase /qaulun ma'ruf / 'a kind word' has a vast meaning so that it envelops any word of kindness, consolation, affability and guidance.

The word /maqfirat / (forgiveness), mentioned in the verse, is used in contrast with the rudeness of the needy people.

In Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the , [1]it is narrated from the (holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"When a needy person asks you, do not interrupt his statement until he completes it. Then, respond him calmly and politely, or give him what you are able to spend, or return him agreeably, because the one may be an angel who is commissioned to try you in order to see how you behave with the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you. "

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 264-265

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تُبْطِلُواْ صَدَقَاتِكُم بِالْمَنِّ وَالأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاء النَّاسِ وَلاَ
يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لاَّ يَقْدِرُونَ
عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُواْ وَاللّهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ
وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاء مَرْضَاتِ اللّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ وَاللّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

264. "O' you who have Faith! do not nullify your charities by reproach and injury, like the one who spends his property to be seen by people, and does not believe in Allah and the last Day; so his likeness is as the likeness of a rock whereon is (a little) soil, (then a heavy rain falls upon it and leaves it just a bare stone. They shall not be able to gain anything of what they have earned; and Allah does not guide the disbelieving people."

265. "But the likeness of those who spend their property to seek the pleasure of Allah, and to strengthen their own souls, is as the likeness of a garden on a high ground, upon which a heavy rain falls and it yields its fruit two-fold; but if a heavy rain does not fall upon it, then a light rain (is sufficient); and Allah sees what you do."

In the previous couple of verses, at first, this fact was pointed out that the believers should not make their charities in the way of Allah invalid because of reproach and injury.

Then, two interesting similitude are expressed upon those charities which are followed by reproach and injury and also for hypocritical acts and ostentation, and those charities which are originated from loyalty and human sympathy.

Consider a piece of rock covered with a little amount of dust., When it be sown with good seeds and exposed to fresh air and sunshine, and then, a harsh rain falls upon it, the rain will surely washes out the thin dust from the rock and scatters the containing seed with the dust.

Consequently, the hard impenetrable rock, on which no plant can grow, appears with its rough feature. This is not for that the fresh air; sunshine and falling rain have had a bad effect. It is because the place where the seed was sown has been an inappropriate place for the aim.

Its appearance was adorned while its inner side was an impenetrable rough rock with a mere thin amount of dust over its surface. It is in a state that plants and trees, besides having suitable conditions above the ground, need a good preparation under the ground for the roots in order to spread and feed.

"O' you who have Faith! do not nullify your charities by reproach and injury, like the one who spends his property to be seen by people and does not believe in Allah and the last Day..."

The Qur'an has likened the hypocritical deeds and charities followed with reproach and injury, that which originate from the callous, hearts, to a rock covered with a little dust from which no profit can be gained. So, the efforts of the farmer and the sower will be wasted, too.

"...so his likeness is as the likeness of a rock whereon is (a little) soil, then a heavy rain falls upon it and leaves it just a bare stone. They shall not be able to gain anything of what they have earned; and Allah does not guide the disbelieving people."

Another Interesting Similitude

Consider a green grass garden which is located on a high productive land and benefited from fresh free air and sufficient sunshine. Useful downpour falls water it, but when the rainfall is not enough, drizzles and drops of dew preserve the pleasantness and freshness of the garden.

As a result, such a garden usually yields its fruits two-fold more than the other ordinary gardens. This sort of gardens, besides having productive land, enjoy of dew and drizzles added to enough rainfalls. They have such a beautiful view that attracts the attention of any visitor from the distance. They are also safe from the threat of floods.

Those who give their wealth in charity for the sake of Allah's pleasure and for strengthening Faith and certainty in their hearts and souls, are like this garden which have a bountiful valuable product.

"But the likeness of those who spend their property to seek the pleasure of Allah, and to strengthen their own souls, is as the likeness of a garden on a high ground, upon which a heavy rain falls and it yields its fruit two-fold; but if a heavy rain does not fall upon it, then a light rain (is sufficient); and Allah sees what you do."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 266

أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاء فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

266. "Would any of you like that there should be for him a garden of date palms and vines beneath which rivers flow with all kinds of fruit for him therein, while he is stricken with old age, and he has feeble offspring, then a whirlwind with fire in it strikes and it gets burnt up? Thus Allah makes the signs clear to you, so that you may ponder."

Another Similitude

In this verse, the Qur'an expresses another interesting similitude to make manifest that how seriously man is in need of righteous deeds on the Judgement Day, and how hypocrisy, reproach and injury ruin the charities and good deeds of man.

This similitude illustrates the view of an old man who possesses a green, fresh and delightful garden with various trees such as date-palms, vines, etc. which are watered continuously and do not need to be irrigated.

There are some lazy, careless and weak children around him whose means of earning life is the very garden. If this garden vanishes neither the old father nor the feeble children are able to re-establish it.

It happens that suddenly a fiery hurricane blows upon it and burns it totally dry. How does this old man feel when he has lost the strength of his youth, and who cannot earn his living from any other ways, while his children are feeble, too? And, what a deadly regret and grief may rush over him?

"Would any of you like that there should be for him a garden of date palms and vines beneath which rivers flow with all kinds of fruit for him therein, while he is stricken with old age, and he has feeble offspring, then a whirlwind with fire in it strikes and it gets burnt up? ..."

The condition of a person who does a righteous work and then ruins it by hypocrisy, reproach, and injury is similar to such an old man who has tolerated many tasks, but when he is in dire need of the fruit of his efforts, all of them as a whole vanishes and leaves him alone with his grieves and regrets.

In view of the fact that the source of all misfortunes, especially the foolish act of reproach, whose benefit is a little but the loss of it is soon and great, originates from the application of no wisdom, then, at the end of the verse, Allah invites people to contemplation and pondering. It says:

"...Thus Allah makes the signs clear to you, so that you may ponder."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 267

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَنفِقُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُم مِّنَ الأَرْضِ وَلاَ تَيَمَّمُواْ الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُم بِآخِذِيهِ إِلاَّ أَن تُغْمِضُواْ فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

267. "O' you who have Faith! spend (in charity) of the good things that you have earned, and of what We produce for you from the earth, and do not aim at what is bad to spend thereof (in charity) while you yourselves

would not accept it except that you connive at it, and know that Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

The Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that this verse was revealed about a group of people who had earned some wealth from usury at the Age of Ignorance. They usually spent out from it in charity in the way of Allah. Allah prohibited them from that action and commanded them to spend out in charity from the good property they had earned.

In Majma'-ul-Bayan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, next to narrating this tradition, it quotes from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

"This verse has been revealed about those who used to mix the dry and bony dates with good dates when they wanted to spend in charity." [2]

They were, therefore, commanded not to do that action.

These two occasions of revelation are never contradictory with each other. The verse may have been revealed upon both groups, when one of which is due to spiritual goodness and the other concerns to the appearance and material goodness.

What Kind of Property Can Be Given in Charity?

In the previous verses, the effects of charity, the qualities of givers of charity, and the deeds that may corrupt this godly action and ruin its reward were pointed out. In this verse, the quality of the property, which is to be spent in charity, is explained. In the first phrase of the verse, Allah commands believing people to spend from good of their wealth.

"O' you who have Faith! Spend (in charity) of the good things that you have earned, and of what We produce for you from the earth..."

The term /tayyib/, the plural of which is /tayyibat/, in philology means: good, pleasant and agreeable'. This meaning refers to both spiritual and material purity; i.e. to be clean inwardly and outwardly.

That is, that part of wealth might be given in charity that is good, useful, and valuable. It must be free from any dubiosity and pollution, either. The above mentioned occasions of revelation attest to the generality of this meaning, too.

The phrase:

"...while you yourselves would not accept it except that you connive at it..."

cannot be taken as an evidence that the objective meaning here is exclusively outward of cleanliness, because the believing persons also might not accept the things which are apparently polluted, or worthless, as well as the doubtful and disapproved materials, but with conniving at it and dislike.

The Qur'anic phrase: /ma kasabtum/ 'that you have earned' refers to the commercial incomes, while the phrase: /mimma axrajna / 'what We produce' refers to the incomes earned from farming, mines and subterranean sources.

Thus, it envelops all the kinds of income, because the source of all incomes of man is often from the earth and its different issues. Even, the origin of industries, trades, and the like of them all is the ground. However, this sentence indicates that all these merits are given you by Allah.

Therefore, you ought not spare spending a part of it in charity in the way of Allah.

"...and do not aim at what is bad to spend thereof (in charity) while you yourselves would not accept it except that you connive at it..."

Some of people have the habit of spending out in charity mostly from the worthless and worn out things that they do not use any longer themselves. This kind of charities are neither effective in growing spiritual training of the essence of humanity in the giver of charity, nor is so useful to the needy. It can be counted sort of disgrace and scorn unto them, too.

This sentence explicitly prohibits Muslims from doing that. It says how they spend in charity from those things which they themselves do not like to accept, but hatefully. Must their Muslim brothers, and beyond that, the Lord, in Whose way they spend out in charity, be considered, in their view, lower than themselves?

Indeed, the verse points to a precise fact. It is that the charities given in the way of Allah have two ends. On one end there are the needy ones, and on the other end there is Allah, for Whose sake the charity is spent.

In this case, if the charity is taken from the low and worthless things, from one hand, it is counted an aspersion to the high rank of the Lord that the giver of charity has not regarded Him eligible for a 'good' thing.

On the other hand, it is a disgrace to the needy ones who, in spite of their poverty, mostly have a high level of faith and human hood, whose soul may be injured because of such a disagreeable charity.

By the way, it should be noted that the term /la tayammamu / 'do not aim' may be a hint to this fact that can be something of undemanded quality which inattentively is given among the material spent in charity. This aspect is hot involved in the contents of this statement. The statement is about those who intentionally accomplish it.

"...and know that Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

This sentence intends to say that you must be aware that the Lord in Whose way you spend in charity is the One Who never needs your charity, and Who is worthy of all praise. It is He Who has bestowed the whole bounties upon you.

The term /'hamid/, 'praiseworthy, may be used in the sense of 'adorer'; i.e., while He is Self-Sufficient, He adores the charities you spend. Therefore, do try to spend out from good things in charity.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 268

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاء وَاللّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلاً وَاللّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

268. Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to indecency; but Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

At first, the verse admonishes that when you decide to spend in charity or to pay your alms, Satan threatens you of poverty, particularly if you want to give from your worthy and considerable things mentioned in the previous verse.

Many a time it happens that this Satanic temptation hinders the act of giving charity and donation. It may affect even on the payment of Alms, Khums (one fifth levy), and other obligatory expending.

"Satan threatens you with poverty ..."

Allah awares man thereby that refraining from giving charity in awe of poverty is a wrong imagination. It is one of the temptations of Satan. Avoiding from thinking that this Satanic temptation looks like a logical scare, it immediately says:

"and enjoins you to indecency; ... "

Therefore, having awe of poverty and indigence in any condition is wrong, because Satan invites not save to falsehood and aberration.

Basically, any thought which is disappointing, impedimental and short-sighted originates from deviation from natural disposition and following the temptations of Satan. But, any thought which is positive, instructive, and broad-sighted comes from the source of godly inspirations and the pure divine innate disposition.

Keeping in mind that the Satanic temptations are against the law of creation and Allah's commandments and ordinances are paralleled and adapted to creation and disposition, results to a notable livelihood, peacefulness and prosperity.

"...but Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance..."

In Majma'-ul-Bayan a tradition is narrated about charity from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Two things are from Allah and two things are from Satan. Those two from Allah are forgiveness of sins and abundance in sustenance. And those two from Satan are promise to poverty and enjoinment to indecency."

Therefore, as Ibn-Abbas has quoted, the purpose of forgiveness is the forgiveness of sins and the objective meaning of "abundance" is increase of wealth under the cause of giving charity. [3]It is interesting that Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) is narrated who has said:

"When you are confronted with poverty, bargain with Allah through charity, (spend out in charity until you get free from poverty)," [4]

The phrase: "Allah is All-Embracing" means that the Power of Allah is vast, and He is All-Knowing unto all affairs and details.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 269

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاء وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيراً وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلاَّ أُوْلُواْ الأَلْبَابِ

269. "He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been granted wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good; yet no one will mind but the possessors of intellects."

The Qur'anic term /hikmat/, here, has been rendered, into the sense of' knowledge, the cognition of secrets, awareness of facts, and reaching to reality'. Allah bestows it upon some persons for the sake of their piety, purity and their strive.

They recognize the difference between the Satanic temptations and godly inspirations, false and true. None can benefit from this privilege, which is abundant good, save those who possess proper intelligence.

"He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been granted wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good; yet no one will mind but, the possessors of intellects."

The Arabic term /albab/ is the plural form of /lubb/ in the sense of 'heart, love, intellect, and understanding'. Every man of wisdom is not counted among /ulul 'albab/, because this title is termed for only those men of understanding who utilize their intellect definitely to find out the path of real happiness in their lives.

However, Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said that /hikmat/ is 'knowledge and becoming learned in religion'; while another tradition indicates that / hikmat / is obedience to Allah and knowing Imam. [5]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 270 - 271

وَمَا أَنفَقْتُم مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُم مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّه يَعْلَمُهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ

إِن تُبْدُواْ الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاء فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم

مِّن سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّه بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

270. "And whatever you spend in charity, or (whatever) vow you vow, surely Allah knows it. While, there will be no helpers for the unjust."

271. "If you give alms openly, it is well; but if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you, and it will remove from you some of your sins; and Allah is aware of what you do."

"And whatever you spend in charity..."

Spending in charity, here, means whatever you spend in the way of Allah or in the way of Satan.

"... or (whatever) vow you vow..."

Or, whatsoever you have made obligatory to yourself by the way of vow, whether it be alongside the path of obedience of Allah or for committing sins, He knows it.

"... surely Allah knows it..."

Verily, your deed is not concealed to Allah, and He will reward you according to it.

"... While, there will be no helpers for the unjust."

The objective meaning of 'unjust' here, is those who spend their wealth in the way of disobedience of Allah and committing sins. They do not give the alms of their property; or do not fulfil what they have vowed; or they vow to do that which is sin. For such people, there will be no friend who can save them from the Divine Judgment or prevent His punishment.

"If you give alms openly, it iv well; but if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you, and it will remove from you some of your sins; and Allah is aware of what you do."

That is, if you give your alms hiddenly to the indigents 'it is better for you', viz., giving alms hiddenly is better for you: and its due reward is better and more. The purpose of alms that the concealment of which is better is the recommended alms, because making the obligatory alms manifest is more reasonable.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 272

لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَـكِنَّ اللّه يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاء وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلأنفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلاَّ ابْتِغَاء وَجْهِ اللّه وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تُظْلَمُونَ

272. "It is not upon you to guide them (O' Muhammad), but Allah guides aright whomsoever He' wills. And whatever of good you spend in charity shall be for your own selves; and you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah; and whatever of good you spend shall be repaid to you in full and you shall not be dealt with unjustly."

In Majma'-ul-Bayan and Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Fakhr-Razi, there are cited some occasions of revelation for the above mentioned verse which, on the whole, indicate that Muslims were in doubt to give charity to the indigents of pagans and non-Muslims. When they inquired about it from the Messenger of Allah; (S), this verse was revealed. [6]

Explanations

1. Do not employ the abundance of giving charity and the economical pressure for bringing infidels towards the Faith,

"It is not upon you to guide them (O' Muhammad)..."

2. Serving the deprived is a human sympathy, as well as a duty, and generosity is a value. Hence, do give charity to non-Muslims, too.

3. Islam is a school of humanitarianism. It does not approve poverty and deprivation, even for non-Muslims.

4. The faith which be pretended under the pressure of economics is not worthy.

5. Guidance is a divine success which encompasses only the receptive hearts,

"... but Allah guides aright whomsoever He wills."

6. The consequence of charity returns to you. It survives the spirit of generosity in you. It is through charity that the appearance of levels among groups of people and social bursts can be prevented and, instead, love and kindness may grow therein. However, in charity there can be found not deprivation while there is immunity in it.

"... And whatever of good you spend in charity, shall be for your own selves..."

7. Do not spend out but for Allah, because, soon or late, all the worldly benefits and merits will be vanished, but if giving charity be done for the sake of Allah, it will remain forever and you will enjoy of its incomes.

"... and you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah..."

8. Be bountiful in spending out, since whatever you give in charity will come back to you with no decrease.

"... and whatever of good you spend shall be repaid to you in full..."

9. If you accomplish something for Allah, you will obtain your reward whether a Muslim or a pagan enjoys of it.

"... and you shall not be dealt with unjustly."

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 283
2. Majma'-ul- Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 380
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 381
4. Nahjul-Balagha, Saying 258

5. Bihar-al-Anwar, Vol. 24, p. 86
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 1, p. 385

Section 36

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 273

لِلْفُقَرَاء الَّذِينَ أُحـ ُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاء
مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُم بِسِيمَاهُمْ لاَ يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللّه بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

273. "(Charity is) for the poor who are restrained in the way of Allah, and are unable to move about in the land. The unaware consider them wealthy because of their restraint (from begging). You shall recognize them by their countenance - they do not beg people importunately. And whatever of good things you give, then Allah is All-Knowing of it."

In some books such as: Tafsir-Kabir by Fakhr Razi: Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Tafsir-il-Gurtubi, it is cited that this verse has been revealed about the Companions of the Ledge.

They were about four hundred people who had emigrated to Medina. Since they had not any house and familiars there, they used to live on a large platform in a corner of the Prophet's Mosque. They were always ready for (Jihad), struggle in the way of Allah.

Explanations

1. There is a portion for the indigents in the wealth of the rich.

"(Charity is) for the poor..."

2. The martial-blow groups, devotees in force bases, shelter less emigrants and, on the whole, all those who are besieged in the way of Allah and have not the opportunity of trying to earn the living should be taken into necessary consideration. The scientific missions, diplomatic corps, and research centers are in the similar condition, too.

"(Charity is) for the poor who are restrained in the way of Allah, and are unable to move about in the land…."

3. Those who are able to earn their living by travelling about should not stay and abide in one land waiting for the charity of others.

"... and are unable to move about in the land "

4. The immaculate, pious and respectable poor ones are praised by Allah (s.w.t).

5. The gentle-looking and undistinguished needy ones have priority.

"... The unaware consider them wealthy because of their restraint (from begging). You shall recognize them by their countenance… "

6. They do not insist on begging from other people even when there comes forth a necessity for them.

"... they do not beg people importunately..."

7. The feature of the indigent persons is illustrated, in this verse; and in the final sentence, people are encouraged to spending out good things.

"... And whatever of good things you give, then Allah is All-Knowing of it."

8. It is not just that some people devote their selves and what they have in the cause of Allah while some others impose insularity even in giving charity in that way.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 274

الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلاَنِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

274."Those who spend their property by night and day, secretly and openly, for them shall be their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

In some books, like Tafsir-us-Safi, Majma'-al-Bayan, Tafsir-al Qurtubi, Tafsir-al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi, it is cited that this verse has been revealed about Hadrat Ali (as).

Once it happened that he had only four silver coins when he spent out in charity one coin in daytime, one coin at night, the third coin openly and the fourth coin hiddenly in the way of Allah.

"Those who spend their property by night and day, secretly and openly, for them shall be their reward with their Lord..."

But, in addition to the above mentioned occasion of revelation, the promise of this holy verse covers all those who act similarly to that.

Such people neither scare of poverty in the world, because they believe in the promises of Allah and trust in Him, nor become grievous because of charity, since they are attentive to obtaining the pleasure of Allah and what the action of giving charity will bring forth for them in the Hereafter.

In another occasion in this very current Surah,[1] too, the givers of charity are stated about.

"... and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 275

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لاَ يَقُومُونَ إِلاَّ كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَن جَاءهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَانتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

275. "Those who devour usury will not rise up save like such the one whom Satan has confounded with the touch of madness. That is because they say: 'Bargaining is just like usury', whereas Allah has permitted bargaining and forbidden usury. Hence, whoever receives an admonition from his Lord, then desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allah. And whoever reverts (to usury) -then they are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

In Arabic philology, the word /riba/ (usury) means 'an excess, an addition'. Usurers have been likened to the persons whom Satan has driven them mad. On the Day of Judgement, usurers will be raised like mad ones, because they have such an unjust manner in this world.

Mammonism makes their eyes of intellect blind. By their action, they produce difference of levels in the society, because they do not even think of sympathy, emotions and humanitarianism. They go so far that poverty and hatred cause a burst in the society so that the principle of possession becomes unstable, too.

"Those who devour usury will not rise up save like such the one whom Satan has confounded with the touch of madness…"

Another point is that: to some persons, usury seems a principle, too. Hence, they say that bargaining and usury are the same. As the verse says:

"... whereas Allah has permitted bargaining and forbidden usury."

Explanations

1. The usurers are deprived from equilibrium and, consequently, they disturb the economical equilibrium of the society.

2. The justification of sin pave the way for more committing sins.

"... That is because they say: 'Bargaining is just like usury..."

3. It can be spared for those who are not aware of it, but not at all for those who know it and persist on doing it.

"... And whoever reverts (to usury) -then they are the inhabitants of the Fire..."

Objecting on usury began through verses of the Qur'an revealed from before the Prophet's Emigration. For example, in Surah Ar-Rum, which was revealed in Mecca, a verse about usury says:

"... but it increases not with Allah..."[2]

Then, in Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No.3 Allah commands:

"…Devour not interest ...."[3]

which means usury is prohibited. Thus the most criticism and prohibition have occurred in these verses of Surah Al-Baqarah.

By the way, the Qur'an through the statement:

"And, (for) taking interest, though indeed forbidden were they against it ..."[4]

announces that usury had been forbidden in the Jewish religion, too. This prohibition is stated in Turah manifestly. [5]

In Surah Al-Baqarah, the verses of usury have occurred next to the verses of charity in order to state the two aspects of good and evil which may come forth by means of wealth. Charity is a 'giving' without recompense, but usury is a 'taking' without recompense.

In contrast to the good effects that charity has in the society, usury creates evil effects therein. That is why the Qur'an, in the next verse, says:

"Allah effaces usury and He causes charities to flourish...". [6]

The threats that are cited in the Qur'an against taking interest in usury and accepting the dominance of illegitimate rulers are such that they are not cited against even murder, oppression, drinking wine, gambling, and fornication. Therefore the prohibition of usury has been decidedly considered as a great sin by all Islamic parties.

"... Hence, whoever receives an admonition from his Lord, then desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allah ..."

It is narrated in a tradition that when Imam Sadiq (as) was informed that so and so was a usurer, he said:

"If I were allowed by Allah I would behead him. " [7]

It happened that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) met a usurer. He (as) wanted him to repent from his action. When he repented Ali (as) let him go and told him:

"The usurer must be made repent from his action just like that a person is made repent from polytheism ".

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"The worst income is (the interest of) usury." [8]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"When Allah wills to destroy a town, usury appears therein."[9] "And, Allah has cursed usurer, his agent, and the writer of usury."[10]

Shaykh Mufid has cited in his book:[11] "Whoever considers usury lawful, should be beheaded."

Imam Sadiq (as), stating the reason of repetition of the verses of usury in the Qur'an, says:

"It is for making the rich prepared to do works of benevolence and spending charities; because, on one hand, usury is unlawful (haram), and, on the other hand, compiling wealth as a file is also unlawful. Then, there remains no remedy for the rich but charity and productive useful jobs."[12]

Also, upon the motive of the prohibition of usury, it is said that since usury is a kind of hinder for money to be used in the way of production and works of public utility, and, instead of effort and endeavour, only the interest of money is enjoyed, then usury has become forbidden.

Again, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said: "If usury were permitted (halal), people would leave their businesses and trade."[13]

It is also narrated from Imam Rida (as) who said: "If usury becomes prevalent, the loan giving will disappear."[14]

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... And whoever reverts (to usury) -then they are the inhabitantly of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

The word /ada/ 'returns', here, means that those who do not return from usury and commit again devouring interest, will be the inhabitants of the Fire of Hell and they will remain there for ever.

The Disadvantages of Usury

Taking additional money, without performing any useful work, is unjust and it is overburdening, which causes hatred and enmity. The giver of interest sometimes has to fail and, as a result of debts that increase progressively, accepts kinds of disgrace and captivity.

Usury disturbs the equilibrium of the society and causes it to be divided into two poles: the oppressors and the oppressed.

Usury is the reason of prayers to be invalid. Regarding these destructive causes, not only in the religion of Islam, but also in all heavenly religions, usury has been forbidden. But, clinging to few pretexts, some worldly people try to justify usury or try to find a way of fly.

Yet, usury has certainly its own destructive effects, though some social groups have accepted it in their own economical system.

Usury is an injustice and its disadvantages encompass those who apply it. The progress of the western communities is because of their attentiveness to science and industry, not because of usury.

By the way, usurers should be aware of the warnings of the Qur'an. (Applying to legal tricks, like the Jews who did for going fishing on

Saturday, is only a sort of game.). The Qur'an has not been heedless of such games and has criticized them.

Also, since economic affairs may attract people into the trap of usury, there is a tradition which says:

"He who begins trading without knowing (the religious laws of trading), will be involved in usury".[15]

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 276

يَمْحَقُ اللهُ الْرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

276. "Allah effaces usury and He causes charities to flourish, and Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner."

The Arabic word /mahq/ means 'effacement, obliteration, erasure', and the term /muhaq/, from the same root, is used for the moon when it disappears by the nights at the end of the lunar month. Then the term /riba/ 'usury interest', with the sense of gradual increase, is applied in the opposite correspondence.

This verse admonishes that though a usurer takes interest from others in order to compile wealth, Allah seizes the abundance and good results that he expects from the gross of wealth gained through usury. The property resulted from usury may not necessarily be obliterated itself, but the goals, which are considered from compiling wealth, fail.

"Allah effaces usury ..."

In the course of usury, there is no love, happiness, and security, so that many a rich person can gain no sort of comfort, peace, or amiability from their wealth. On the contrary, in the regulations, where there is charity, or donation and good loan, people enjoy of many favours.

In such societies, the poor are not disappointed, and the rich are not encountered with callousness of the heart and do not mind the multiplication of wealth. So, in these regulations, the deprived do not think of revenge, theft, and the like, and the rich are not anxious about guarding and protecting their properties.

This society will have a relative equilibrium accompanied with kindness, compassion, security and mutual understanding.

"... and He causes charities to flourish ..."

In Tafsir Kabir by Fakhr Razi, it is cited that when usurer obliterates equilibrium, compassion, and human justice from him, his self and his property will be cursed by the poor, and every moment, hatred, plot and theft threaten him. This is an example of that effacement which is stated in the verse.

Explanations

1. Do not note and gaze at only the apparent growth of wealth.

"Allah effaces usury ..."

2. Sustenance is with Allah. The possessor of wealth may be deprived of welfare while the poor may often live in the best state of peace of mind.

3. Usurer is the one who is very ungrateful, and sin has settled in his soul: "ungrateful sinner". By taking interest, he makes himself debtful to people. He makes his livelihood unlawful for himself, and also he nullifies his worships. He lets callousness, greed and avarice dominate over him.

"... and Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner."

Yes, He is a very ungrateful, as well as a sinner.

4. To efface the wealth emerging from usury is Allah's way of treatment which will be continued forever. The reference for this meaning is the Qur'anic word /yamhaqu/ 'efface' where the present tense of which, in Arabic, denotes the continuity of the verb.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 277

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتَوُاْ الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

277. "Verily, those who have faith, and do righteous works, and establish prayer, and pay the poor-rates, for them shall be their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve".

Opposite to the manner of the usurers who are 'ungrateful sinners', this verse portraits the future of the believers, those who do righteous deeds, establish prayers, and pay the poor-rates.

People are divided into four categories:

1. A group of people believe in truth and do righteous works. These are the believers.

2. There are some people who neither believe nor do righteous deeds. These are infidels.

3. Some people believe, but do not work righteously. These are the mischievous ones.

4. There are some people who have not faith but they apparently do good deeds. These are hypocrites.

Separate from usurers, who have taken apart from the Lord and human beings, there are some believers who have faith, do righteous actions, and have relevance with Allah by the way of prayer. They communicate with people through paying the poor-rates.

"Verily, those who have faith, and do righteous works, and establish prayer, and pay the poor-rates, for them shall be their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve".

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 278

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَذَرُواْ مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

278. "O' you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah, and forgo what remains (due to you) of usury, if you are faithful."

It is cited in some books, such as: Majma'-ul-Bayan, Al-Mizan, and Maraqi, that when the verse upon the prohibition of usury was revealed, some of the companions of the prophet (S), like Khalid-ibn-Walid, Abbas, and Uthman, had claimed some amount of interest from people. They asked the Prophet (S) about their claims, when the above mentioned verse was revealed.

After the revelation of this verse, the holy Prophet (S) said:

"My uncle, Abbas, is not rightful to demand interest either."

Then, the Messenger of Allah added:

"First of all, my relatives must abandon usury".

He also in a sermon said:

"I put all the interests of usury (belonging to) the age of ignorant under my feet, and the first one I put is the interest of Abbas." [16]

Explanations

1. The requisite of faith is to dispense with the rights of others and the prohibited wealth.

"... if you are faithful."

2. The sign of piety is giving up the unlawful commodity.

"O' you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah, and forgo what remains (due to you) of usury..."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, Verse, 262
2. Surah Ar-Rum, No.30, verse 39.
3. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No.3, verse 129
4. Surah An-Nisa, No.4, verse 161.
5. The Turah, Exodus, Chapter 23, and Levitious, Chapter 25.
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, no.2, verse 276
7. Wasa'il-ush-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 429.
8. Al-Kafi, vol. 5, p. 147.
9. Kanz-ul-'A'mal, vol. 4, p. 104.
10. Wasa'il-ush-Shiah, Vol. 12, p. 430.
11. Muqna'ah, p. 129.
12. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 12, p. 423.
13. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 103, p. 1l9.
14. Alhayat, vol. 4, p. 334.
15. Nahjul-Balagha, Saying 447
16. Fi Zilal-il-Quran, Vol. 1, p. 486

Section 37

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 279

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُواْ فَأْذَنُواْ بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُؤُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لاَ تَظْلِمُونَ وَلاَ تُظْلَمُونَ

279. "But if you do (it) not, then be you apprised for war from Allah and (His Apostle, and if you repent, you shall have your capital; (thus) deal you not unjustly (with others), nor you be dealt with unjustly."

In Islam, neither usury nor taking undue gains are allowed nor can the property of people be confiscated unilaterally.

In some governmental regulations, ownership is abrogated and all properties are forcefully taken from their possessors. In some other ones exploitation, devouring other's rights, and usury, in any form, is free.

Explanations

1. Usurer is a fighter against Allah. Any usurer would know that, in this battlefield, he (who is a feeble and contemptible mortal) is on one side, and Allah, the Almighty, is on the other side.

"But if you do (it) not, then be you apprised for war from Allah and His Apostle...."

2. Since usurer is a fighter against Allah, it is to the Islamic Government, as a duty, to take action against usurers.

3. The right of usurer is to be content with only the capital, without any interest.

"... you shall have your capital ..."

4. Both being oppressor and oppressive are condemned. Neither accept oppression nor be an oppressor.

"... (thus) deal you not unjustly (with others) nor you be dealt with unjustly."

5. Beware not to spare the principle of ownership of people for rescuing the deprived.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 280

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

280. "And if (the debtor) is in straitness, then grant a respite until the time of ease; and if you remit it as charity it is better for you, if you but know,"

Concerning this verse, it is necessary to note that although giving a respite to the debtor is recommended, here, the debtor should not misuse this matter, because if he delays paying his debt without having any plausible excuse, he is counted a sinner.

An Islamic narration says that those who do not pay their debt without any excuse will be recorded sinful the same as it is recorded for a thief; and for the givers of respite, a reward will be recorded similar to that of martyrs,

Explanations

1, Not only do refrain from taking interest, but also give a respite for taking the capital, even,

2, The capability of the debtor is the base for the length of time in repayment of the debt,

"….then grant a respite until the time of ease…"

3, Islam is a supporter for the indigent,

"And if (the debtor) is in straitness…"

4, Remittal, due to the insolvent debtor, is better for you, because it may happen that you will be in the same situation in future.

"….and if you remit it as charity it is better for you …"

5. Taking tile capital will be forgotten, but remittal to an insolvent debtor will never be forgettable.

6. Gaining the indigent's consent and the pleasure of Allah are much better than gaining wealth,

"... if you but know."

7. In religious jurisprudence, putting the excused debtor in prison is forbidden. In cases that a debtor is not really able to pay his debt, it is to the Islamic government to pay that debt.

8. In Islamic literature, it is said that every day that the debtor is given respite, the reward of the charity of the same amount of money is to Allah to be recorded for the creditor." 30

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 281

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

281. "And be in awe of a Day in which you shall be returned to Allah, and every one shall be paid in full what the one has earned; and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

After stating some particular characteristics of the divine ordinances and Islamic affairs, the normatic custom of the Qur'an is that it often brings a general, common and inclusive notification forth at the end of a group of verses in order to emphasize and strengthen what has been cited before, and in order that the senses penetrate in the mind and spirit.

Therefore, in this verse, having attracted the attentions of the believers to the Resurrection and the chastisement of the wrong doers there, it warns them to be aware that there is a great Day in front when all the actions of every person, without anything less or more, totally will be given to him. .

"And be in awe of a Day in which you shall be returned to Allah ..."

It is at that time that the one will terribly wonder about the consequence of his evil deeds. They are the fruit of what he himself has produced. No one has done unjust against him, but he himself has done wrong against himself.

"... and every one shall be paid in full what the one has earned and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

However, usury has ethically a very bad effect on the spirit of the debtor so that he finds a special spite in his heart against the usurer. It slackens the cord of social cooperation and mutual assistance amongst the members of communities.

In Islamic narrations it is cited upon the prohibition of usury that Husham-ibn-Salim has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Verily, Allah, Almighty and Glorious, has forbidden usury so that people do not avoid of doing good work." [1]

1. Ibn-Mas'ud narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"There have not been usury and fornication in no community save that they have incurred the punishment of Allah upon themselves." [2]

2. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"O' people! Learn the jurisprudence and the laws of the religion at first, and then go after trading. By Allah, usury is found in this so that it is more concealed than the movement of an ant over a hard smooth stone."[3]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"On the Day of Judgement, three persons are in the shelter of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, until the one becomes free from the Divine reckoning: 1) The person who has never taken action in fornication; 2) The person who has never mixed his property with usury; and 3) The person who has never had any effort in usury and fornication." [4]

4. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"The business being in usury is the worst jobs." [5]

5. Imam Rida (as) said:

"Beware that certainly usury is an unlawful job which causes shame and disgrace. It is among the great sins for which Allah has promised the Fire of Hell upon the executor, and we refuge to Allah from the Fire of Hell. And, according to all prophets and all the heavenly Book, usury is unlawful." [6]

6. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Most of my anxiety about my Ummah is for the unlawful jobs and unlawful incomes." [7]

7. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"The worshipper who does not avoid unlawful wealth and unlawful food, is like the one who builds upon a sandy land."[8]

8. Jabir said that the Prophet (S) cursed the usurer, the writer of it, and its witness."[9]

9. A similar tradition to the above one is mentioned in Sahih-i-Bukhari, 3, and p. 78.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 282

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا تَدَايَنتُم بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَّيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلاَ يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلاَ يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِن كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَن يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُواْ شَهِيدَيْنِ من رِّجَالِكُمْ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاء أَن تَضِلَّ إْحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الأُخْرَى وَلاَ يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاء إِذَا مَا دُعُواْ وَلاَ تَسْأَمُوْاْ أَن تَكْتُبُوْهُ صَغِيرًا أَو كَبِيرًا إِلَى أَجَلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِندَ اللّهِ وَأَقْومُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَى أَلاَّ تَرْتَابُواْ إِلاَّ أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلاَّ تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوْاْ إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلاَ يُضَآرَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلاَ شَهِيدٌ وَإِن تَفْعَلُواْ فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللّهُ وَاللّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

282. "O' you who have Faith! when you contract a debt for a stated term, then write it down; and let a scribe write it down justly between you, and no

scribe may refuse to write as Allah has taught him; so let him write, and let the one who incurs the debt dictate and he should be in awe of Allah, his Lord, and not diminish anything from it. And if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding, or weak (mentally), or if he is not able to dictate himself; then let his guardian dictate justly; and call to witness from among your men, two witnesses; but if two men are not available, then a man and two women from among those whom you approve as witnesses; so that if either of the two women errs, the other will remind her; and the witnesses should not refuse (to evidence) whenever they are summoned.

And be not averse to writing it down, be the transaction small or big, with its fix term. That is more equitable in Allah's sight and more proper for testimony, and the surest way of avoiding doubt among yourselves; unless it is ready merchandise which you handle between yourselves, then there is no sin on you not to write it down. And have witnesses when you are trading one with another. And let no harm be done to a scribe or witness; and if you do, that is transgression on your part. Be in awe of Allah, and Allah teaches you, and Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

Commercial Documents in the Qur'an

After stating ordinances of charity given in the way of Allah, and the problem of usury, this verse, which is the longest verse of the Qur'an, expresses some ordinances upon the commercial and economical affairs in order that the capitals gain their natural growth and no difficulty or conflict comes forth for people.

There are nineteen significant instructions about financial communication and trading in this verse which are dealt with in the following.

1. In the first ordinance it says:

"O' you who have Faith! When you contract a debt for a stated term, then write it down..."

This meaning, however, makes the problem of loan clear, too, saying that it is permitted, as well as appointing a time for the loan. The verse under discussion includes the whole debts which are found in bargains, like: a time-bargain, purchases on credit, and the loan itself.

2 & 3 Then, to create more confidence and that the contracts to be safe from the probable interference from the side of either of the parties, it says:

"... and let a scribe write it down just between you..."

Thus, contracts must be arranged by a third person who is just.

4. The person who is able to write must not refrain from writing.

"... and no scribe may refuse to write as Allah has taught him..."

That is, for the sake of that blessing which Allah has bestowed upon him, he should not flee from performing that writing of contract, and he must help the two sides of the bargaining in this essential problem.

5.

"...So let him write, and let the one who incurs the debt dictate..."

6.

"...and he should be in awe of Allah, his Lord, and not diminish it"

7.

"…And if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding, or weak (mentally), or if he is not able to dictate himself; then let his guardian dictate."

8. The Guardian should also observe justice in dictating and confessing the debt of those who are under his guardianship.

"....justly…."

9. Then it adds that besides that beware,

"... and call to witness from among your men, two witnesses..."

10 &11

"...from among your men...",

means that, these two men should be both 'grown up' and 'Muslim'.

12.

"... but if two men are not available, then a man and two women..."

13.

"... from among those whom you approve as witnesses... "

14. In the case that witnesses are two men, either of them can bear witness independently. But when the witnesses are two women and a man, those two women must bear witness with together:

"... so that if either of the two women errs, the other will remind her..."

It is for the reason that women, because of the strong emotions, they have, may be affected by some factors and deviate from the right path.

15. One of the ordinances upon this subject is that:

"... and the witnesses should not refuse (to evidence) whenever they are summoned...",

Therefore, bearing witness is obligatory, when the invitation for the matter comes forth.

16. Debt should be written done whether it is small or big, because the safety of the economical relations, which Islam means requires that, even in the contracts concerning the small debts, the documents be written, too. That is for the same reason that the next sentence of the verse says:

"... And be not averse to writing it down, be the transaction small or big, with its fix term..."

Then, it adds:

"... That is more equitable in Allah's sight and more proper for testimony, and the surest way of avoiding doubt among yourselves..."

This sentence, in fact, is a hint to the philosophy of the above mentioned ordinances about writing transactional documents. It vividly shows that these recorded documents can be applied by the judge as witnesses and proofs.

17. Then, one aspect is exceptionally separated from this ordinance, when it says:

"...unless it is ready merchandise which you handle between yourselves, then there is no sin on you not to write it down..."

18. In cash transactions, though arranging and writing document is not necessary, still calling to witnesses is better for them, because it can prevent the probable future disputes. So, it says:

"... And have witnesses when you are trading one with another…"

19. For the last ordinance mentioned in this verse, it says:

"... And let no harm be done to a scribe or witness..."

Then, it is added:

"... and if you do, that is transgression on your part.. "

Finally, after mentioning all these ordinances, the Qur'an invites people to piety, virtue, and obedience to Allah, saying:

"... be in awe of Allah..."

Next to that, it reminds that whatever is necessary for your material and spiritual life, Allah teaches you:

"...and Allah teaches you..."

The occurrence of the above two phrases beside each other indicates that piety and worshipping Allah have a deep effect in appearing insight, cognizance and the increase of knowledge.

And, He is aware of everything that is good or evil for people. So, He determines what is good and appropriate for them.

"... and Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 283

وَإِن كُنتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُواْ كَاتِبًا فَرِهَانٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلاَ تَكْتُمُواْ الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

283. "And if you are on a journey and you do not find a scribe, then take a pledge with possession. But if one of you entrusts to another, then he who is trusted should pay back his trust; and let him be in awe of Allah, his Lord. And do not conceal testimony, and whoever conceals it, then surely his heart is sinful; and Allah is all-Knowing of what you do."

With stating some more ordinances upon the problem of commercial documents here, this verse, in fact, can be a complement to the previous one. The ordinances are as follows:

1.

"And if you are on a journey and you do not find a scribe, then take a pledge with possession…"

Of course, when the matter happens at home and there is not any scribe available either, sufficing to pledge is allowed.

2. The pledge should certainly be taken in possession of the creditor so that there can be felt an authority of confidence. It says:

"... then take a pledge with possession..."

3. Then, as an exception for the ordinances stated in the earlier verses, it says:

"... But if one of you entrusts to another, then he who is trusted should pay back his trust; and let him be in awe of Allah, his Lord…"

It is interesting that the claim of the creditor is stated as a deposit wherein treachery is a great sin.

4. Then, addressing all people, the Qur'an ordains an inclusive instruction upon bearing witness. It says:

"... And do not conceal testimony, and whoever conceals it, then surely his heart is sinful..."

Thus, those who are cognizant of the rights of others have a duty to attend to bear witness when they are summoned and they should not conceal it.

Since concealing testimony and refraining from bearing witness is done by mind and heart, it is introduced by the Qur'an as a sin of heart, and it says he who does it his heart is sinful.

Then, at the end of the verse, to emphasize and to attract the attentions better to the protection of deposits, delivering the rights of others, and stopping the concealment of testimony, the Qur'an warns by saying:

"... and Allah is All-Knowing of what you do."

People may not know which person is able to bear witness and who is not. Or, people may not know who the creditor is and who the debtor is in the case where there is not any pledge. But Allah knows everything and rewards everyone according to his / her own deeds.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 284

لِّلَّهِ ما فِي السَّمَاواتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِن تُبْدُواْ مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ اللّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

284. "To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth; and whether you reveal what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills, and will punish whom He wills; and Allah is All-Powerful over all things. "

This verse, in fact, completes what was said at the end of the previous verse. It says:

"To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth; and whether you reveal what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account for it..."

Then, the continuation of the verse means that do not suppose that actions such as concealing testimony and heartily sins are covered to Him. No, He is the One whose sovereignty is over the world of existence and the earth and the heavens totally. So, there will be nothing concealed to Allah.

"... Then He will forgive whom He wills, and will punish whom He wills..."

At the end of the verse, it says:

and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

That is, He is both cognizant due to all the things of the world and able to determine the eligibilities and competencies and He is also able to compensate the disobedients.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 285

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللّهِ وَمَلآئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لاَ نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُواْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

285. "The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. (They) all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His Messengers. (They say:) We make no difference between any of His Messengers '; and they say : 'We hear, and obey. Our Lord! Your forgiveness (do we ask), and toward You is the destination."

Occasion of Revelation

When the previous verse was revealed telling the believers that everything they had in their minds Allah knows and keeps account of it, whether they concealed or made manifest them, a group of the Prophet's companions became afraid of their state.

(They thought that none of them was free from the innate temptations and heartily occurrences. So, they told the Prophet (S) what they thought). Then, the revelation was sent down, and taught them how to believe in Allah and in what manner they would Supplicate, and what style of obedience and submission to Him they should follow.

Surah Al-Baqarah begins with a part of theology and faith in Allah and it ends with the same meaning, too. Thus, both the beginning and the end of the Surah are on the same line. However, the Qur'an says:

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord..."

This is the privilege of the godly prophets who seriously believed in their own doctrine and theology, and had no hesitation in their faith. First of all and before anybody else, they themselves had believed, and they persevered more than all others. Then, it says:

"…..and (so do) the believers. (They) all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His Messengers. (They say :) 'We make no difference between any of His Messengers '..."

Then, it adds that, besides having a firm and inclusive faith, in relation to action, believers also deliver such a statement:

"... and they say: 'We hear, and obey. Our Lord! Your forgiveness (do we ask), and toward You is the destination."

Therefore, belief in origin and the Divine Messengers should go forth and parallel with the practical commitment of all commandments of Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 286

لاَ يُكَلِّفُ اللّهُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لاَ تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن
نَّسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلاَ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلاَ تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لاَ
طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنتَ مَوْلاَنَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

286. "Allah does not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his capacity; in his favour shall be what he has earned, and against him shall be (the evil) he has wrought. Our Lord! punish us not if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! lay not upon us a burden such as You did lay upon those before us. Our Lord! burden us not with what we have no strength to bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us; You are our Guardian, so help us against the people who are infidels"

The beginning statement of this verse says:

"Allah does not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his capacity; ... "

The entirety of the Islamic legislations, from the view point of capacity and capability of man, are rendered and depended on this very verse. Then, it adds that whatever good or evil a person does return to him:

"... in his favour shall be what he has earned, and against him shall be (the evil) he has wrought..."

By this statement, the above verse awares the believers of their responsibilities and the result of their own actions. It rejects the imagination of determinism, chance, horoscope and fancies of this kind.

Next to these two essential principles (that the duty of fulfilment is due to capacity, and everyone is responsible for one's own deeds), seven supplications are asked Allah from the tongue of the believers. These invocations are indeed, as instructions for all in general, to teach them what they say in supplication and what they ask for. At first, it says:

"...Our Lord! punish us not if we forget or make a mistake..."

Therefore, the forgetfulness resulted from carelessness are punishable. Since they know that they are punishable for their own actions, they call Allah as their Lord, the One Who has a specific grace in their training with a special cry and say that life, in any rate, is not empty of forgetfulness and mistake.

They try not to commit any intentional sin, but it is Allah Who may forgive them their mistakes and sins. As to their second invocation, it says:

"Our Lord ! lay not upon us a burden such as You did lay upon those before us..."

For their third invocation it adds:

" ...Our Lord! burden us not with what we have no strength to bear..."

This sentence may refer to the divine severe trials, or the hard punishments of this world and the next, or both of them. In the fourth, fifth and sixth invocations, they say:

"…And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us..."

Finally, in the seventh invocation, which is the last invocation, here, they say:

"...You are our Guardian, so help us against the people who are infidels."

Thus, their invocations cover the affairs of this world and the next, those like personal and social successes, divine forgiveness, and the mercy of Allah. This is an inclusive supplication.

Notes

1. Wasail-ush-Shi'ah, vol 12, p. 422.
2. Kanzul-'Ummal, vol 4, p. 107
3. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol 100, p. 17
4. Ibid, p. 18
5. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol 1, p. 507
6. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol 100, p. 121
7. 'Usul-Kafi, vol 3, p. 178
8. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol 100, p. 157
9. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol 3, tradition No. 106

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Chapter 3

The Qur'an and the previous scriptures -the correct knowledge of the verses of the Qur'an -Misinterpretation of the figurative verses - Prayer for guidance from Allah,

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 1-4

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

اللّه لا إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنجِيلَ

مِن قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِآيَاتِ اللّه لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللّه

عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ

1. "'Alif ', Lam L, Mim 'M'"

2. "Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting (the Sustainer of all things)."

3. "He has sent down to you the Book with truth, confirming that which is before it, and He sent down the Turah and the Evangel."

4. "Aforetime, a guidance for people, and He sent down the Furqan. Verily those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, for them there is a severe chastisement and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

A Note

As was mentioned at the beginning of the of Surah Al-Baqarah, Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M' are known as abbreviated letters, the Muqatta'at. The best and well known definition about them is to say that they are secrets between Allah and His Messenger. Or, this subject may be referred to by saying that the Quran has been composed of these very abbreviated letters.

In other words, Allah has sent down the Quran through letters. This itself is a miracle, the same as He creates Man from soil, while man makes potsherd, brick, earthenware etc. from it. This is the difference of the Divine Power and human power.

It is worthy to note that the above abbreviated letters have occurred at the beginning of six Suras in the Quran: Al-Baqarah, Ale-Imran, Al-'Ankabut, Ar-Rum, Luqman, and As-Sajdah.

And the abbreviated letters Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R' have also occurred at the beginning of Suras: Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ar-Ra'd, Ibrahim, and Al-Hijr.

Again the abbreviated letters Ha 'H', Mim 'M', have occurred at the beginning of Suras: Ash-Shaura, Fussilat, Az-Zukhruf, Ad-Dukhan, Al-Jathiyah, and Al-' Ahqaf.

As the evidences show in the above, every one of these instances of abbreviated letters has been revealed at the beginning of six suras, while in each of other instances the abbreviated letter(S) has been stated for only one Surah.

In creation, Allah has complete cognizant administration and domination upon the whole creation. The material factors and appliances can be causes of creation but they are not alive when the cause of their existence is not from their own.

The material instances have not any independent knowledge, life, and power. It is only He, the Ever-Living that the life of every living creature depends on Him.

"Allah, there is no god but He, The Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting (the Sustainer of all things)."

It is cited in Jaushan-Kabir, the Supplication: He has been alive from before any living thing, and will be alive after any living thing. There is no living thing as His partner. He is in need of none.

He is the Alive Who has no death, but the life of any living creature, as well as his sustenance, is in His control. He is a living Essence Who has not got it heritably from another living being.

Now, here is a close translation for the exact text of the supplication:

"O' Ever-Living, preceding every living being,"

"O' Ever-Living, succeeding every living being,"

"O' Ever-Living, like unto Whom there is none,"

"O' Ever-Living, Who has no living partner,"

"O' Ever-Living, Who is not dependant on any living being,"

"O' Ever-Living, Who causes every living being to die,"

"O' Ever-Living, Who provides sustenance to every living being,"

"O' Ever-Living, Who has not inherited life from any living being," [1]

1. The qualification of a god to be worshipped is having nominal perfections such as being Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent.

2. Monotheism is at the top and is the framework of all Divine Books.

The term Torah is a Hebrew word which means: 'law, the whole body of Jewish religious literature, including the Scripture. The Torah contains five chapters, entitled: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Since the event of the death of Moses (as) and the explanation of his burial are mentioned in the Torah, the Judgement is that these subjects of the Torah have been added after the time of Moses (as).

The term Evangel has a Latin root (evangelium) which means 'good news', or 'the teaching of the New Testament'.[2] The Evangel is the Divine Book of the Christians and wherever in the Qur'an it is mentioned it is stated in the singular form while, today, there are different Books amongst the Christians by this name, four of which are very famous. They are as follows:

1. Matthew is one of the four Evangelists, the first book of the New Testament, and the reputed author of the first Gospel. Matthew is one of the twelve students of Jesus (as).

2. Mark, the second book of the New- Testament, telling the story of Jesus' life. Mark wrote this book under the authority of Petros after the time of Jesus (as).

3. Luke, a physician and companion of the apostle Paul and the reputed author of the third Gospel.

4. John the fourth Gospel, the book of revelation. He has also been one of Jesus' students.

It is also remarked that the abovementioned Gospels have all been written wholly after Jesus (as).

Explanations

1. The heavenly Books of prophets, one after another, are complementary of the formers:

"... Conforming that which is before it..."

2. The confirmation of the former heavenly Books and prophets is a factor to the unity of theists and one of the manners of inviting others as the verse says: "conforming".

3. The confirmation of the Qur'an upon the Torah and Evangel is a proof for the idea that the former Books are heavenly, and, also, it is a great right upon the former divine religions. Otherwise, regarding the superstitions that have been added to the Torah and the Evangel, their being heavenly would be forgotten totally.

4. The means, instructions and the stages of training are different in the former Books due to their time and conditions of revelations. Yet they are on the same line of development and unity towards the godly goal.

5. The revelation of the Qur'an unto the Prophet (S) is an honour from Allah unto his personality when He preceded the phrase 'to you' to the term 'the Book':

"He has sent down to you the Book with truth..."

6. The Qur'an is secured from any falsehood, and it is coinciding to reality and truth.

7. In spite of the fact that the Torah and the Evangel were separately and wholly revealed at once, the Quran was sent down gradually during twenty three years. This is in the condition that it was revealed to the heart of the Prophet (S) at once by the Grand Night.

8. Considering the qualities mentioned in the previous verse, the revelation of the heavenly Books is a manifestation of the attributes of Allah.

The first part of this verse, added to the meaning of the previous verse, addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and totally says:

"He has sent down to you the Book with truth, confirming that which is before it, and He sent down the Turah and the Evangel."

"Aforetime, a guidance for people ..."

Then, pointing to the Qur'an which separates right and wrong, it follows saying:

"... and He sent down the Furqan..."

Hence, after the verses of the Qur'an being sent down from the side of Allah and completing the argument being done, together with testification of innate disposition and intellect to the truthfulness of prophets in their invitations, there is not any other way against rejecters but punishment.

That is why, in this verse, next to the statement about the rightfulness of the Prophet (S) and the Qur'an, it says:

"...Verily those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, for them there is a severe chastisement ..."

And, to make it clear that there is no doubt about the capability of Allah in accomplishing His threats, it says:

"... and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 5-6

إِنَّ اللَّه لاَ يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَاء

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاء لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

5. "Verily, Allah, nothing hidden is there from Him in the earth and in the heaven."

6. "He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise."

How is it possible that something be hidden from Allah while He is Omnipresent and Omniscient? And regarding that His Essence is infinite and unlimited from any point of view, there will be no place without Him. He is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

Therefore, in the meantime that He is found in no definite site, He dominates everything. This domination is in the sense of His Knowledge and cognizance upon all the things and affairs of the world.

"Verily, Allah, nothing hidden is there from Him in the earth and in the heaven."

Then, the verse points to one of the distinguished things in the world of creation which is, indeed, one of the clear examples of Allah's. Knowledge and Power, by saying:

"He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases ..."

Yes, it is completely true that:

"... there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise."

The formation of Man in mother's womb, and designing wonderful, marvellously beautiful features, one after another, in that dark environment is really surprising. It is especially with those varieties that a human being may have from the point of stature, face, gender, kinds of capacities and faculties.

Man carries different qualities in him. So, that is why there is no god but He, and it is for this very reason that only He, His pure Essence, the Almighty, is worthy of being worshipped.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 7

هُوَ الَّذِيَ أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا

الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاء الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاء تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلاَّ اللّه

وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلاَّ أُوْلُواْ الأَلْبَابِ

7. "He it is Who has sent down to you the Book; in it are decisive verses which are the basis of the Book, while others are allegorical. But for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking it (their own) interpretation, while none knows it's (hidden) interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge. They say: 'We believe in it, the whole (of it) is from our Lord;' and none minds save the possessors of intellect."

The Decisive & the Allegorical Verses in the Qur'an

In former verses, the statement was upon the revelation of the Qur'an as one of the clear evidences and proofs of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S).

Now, in this holy verse, one of the specialities of the Qur'an is pointed out. This quality is the manner of expressing statements that is applied in this grand heavenly Book. At first, it says:

"He it is Who has sent down to you the Book; in it are decisive verses which are the basis of the Book, while others are allegorical..." .

These allegorical verses, that in the first glance seem complicated because of high level of the subject or of other factors in them, are criterions to try individuals in order to separate truthful scholars from stubborn seditious persons. So, next to that, it says:

"... But as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking it (their own) interpretation, while none knows its (hidden) interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge..."

Then, it points to those who, under the light of their correct understanding the meaning of both decisive and allegorical verses, declare:

"... They say: 'We believe in it: the whole (of it) is from our Lord;'..."

Yes! Verily:

"... and none minds save the possessors of intellects."

Through the above mentioned verse, it is recognized that the verses of the Qur'an are divided into two groups. A part of the verses have such a clear concept that there is no place for denial, justification or misuse in them.

These verses are called 'decisive verses'. But there are other verses that, because of high level of subject or discussing about things which are out of our reach, like: the unseen world, the world of Resurrection, and the attributes of Allah, are such that their hidden meanings and the secrets and the depth of their reality need a particular scientific ability to be rendered.

These verses are called 'allegorical verses'.

Some perverse persons try to abuse these verses by commenting on them untruly in order to make mischief among people and deviate them from the right path. But Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge know the secrets of these verses and explain them for people.

Of course, those who are in the first line, from the point of knowledge, (like the Prophet and Immaculate Imams), know the whole secrets while others may understand from them as much as the amount of their own knowledge.

Hence, it is this very fact that sends people, even the learned scientists, after the divine teachers to catch the mysteries of the Qur'an.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 8-9

رَبَّنَا لاَ تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْوَهَّابُ

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لاَّ رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

8. "(They say:) 'Our Lord! let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and bestow on us from Your mercy, for You are, indeed, the Ever-Bestower."

9. "Our Lord! verily You are the Gatherer of mankind unto a Day in which there is no doubt; for surely Allah never fails (His) promise."

Since the allegorical verses of the Qur'an and their hidden secrets may cause to be the means of going astray for some persons so that they fail in this kind of trial, so, those firmly rooted in knowledge and the believing intellectual ones, besides utilizing their own existing knowledge in comprehending the true meanings of these verses, seek refuge to their Lord.

Both of the above mentioned verses, which are stated from the tongue of those firmly rooted in knowledge, make this fact clear. They say:

"(They say:) 'Our Lord! let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and bestow on us from Your mercy, for You are, indeed, the Ever-Bestower '."

In view of the fact that belief in Resurrection and being regardful to the Day of Judgement are the most effective things for controlling one's desires and lusts, then those firmly rooted in knowledge, remembering That Day, say:

"Our Lord! Verily You are the Gatherer of mankind unto a Day in which there is no doubt; for surely Allah never fails (His) promise."

Therefore, they, thereby, avoid of low desires, sensuality, and excessive sentiments, which cause one to do wrong, and thus they can understand the Divine verses as they really are.

Notes

1. Jaushan-Kabir Supplication, Item 70
2. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition.

Section 1: The Ultimate Triumph of the Unity of Allah

Prophecy about the Vanishment of the disbelievers. Allah's help in the Battle of Badr -Unity, the basis of the faith in Allah - Islam, the only True Religion.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 10-11

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَن تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلاَ أَوْلاَدُهُم مِّنَ اللّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَـئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ النَّارِ
كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاللّهُ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

10. "Verily those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them aught against Allah, and they themselves will be fuel for the (Hell) Fire."

11. "Like the People of Pharaoh and those who were before them, they denied Our Signs, so Allah caught them for their sins; and Allah is severe in penalty."

In this situation, those hearts that are deviated and are not on the straight path are referred to. The verse says:

"Verily those who disbelieve ..."

These are those who disbelieved in the verses of Allah and His Messengers; so:

"... neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them aught against Allah ..."

Concerning the Qur'anic phrase /minallah/, Abu'ubaydah says that it means 'with Allah', while Al-Mubarrad says that the Arabic word /min/ (from) is used with its own meaning here, which is 'beginning'.

Hence, the purpose of the whole phrase is that, from the beginning to the end, there will be no avail for them out of their wealth and their children. Some others say that the phrase /minallah/ metaphorically means /min 'aŎabillah/ (from Allah's punishment), which has been rendered that: nothing will avail them to be away from the punishment of Allah [1]

"... and they themselves will be fuel for the (Hell) Fire."

They themselves, i.e. their bodies, are the fuel of the fire. This very meaning is also mentioned in another verse, saying that they are 'fuel' for Hell. [2]

There are different meanings cited upon the and the sense of the Arabic term /da'b /in the Qur'anic phrase /ka da 'bi 'ali fir'aun/ "like the people of Pharaoh", stated in the above mentioned second verse. They are as follows:

1. The habit of these infidels in rejecting both you (O' Muhammad) and what has been revealed to you is like the habit of Pharaoh's men in rejecting prophets and what Allah had revealed to them. In this regard, Ibn-'Abbas has rendered the Arabic term /da'b/ into 'habit'.

2. The effort and endeavour of this group in obtaining victory and overcoming you, in order to destroy your activities, is similar to the effort of Pharaoh's men for defeating with Moses (as). In this regard, the term /da'b/ is taken with the concept of 'effort'.

"... and those who were before them ..."

The people mentioned in this phrase are the disbelievers of the former religious communities.

"... they denied Our Signs, so Allah caught them for their sins..."

Here, for the concept of 'to punish', the term 'to catch' has been applied, because, 'punishment' is taking the wrong doer for his sin.

"... and Allah is severe in penalty."

This Divine severe chastisement, in fact, is for those who deserve that punishment.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 12

قُل لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

12. "Say to those who disbelieve: ' You shall be vanquished, and gathered, unto Hell and it is a terrible abode! "

It is cited in some books, like: Majma'-ul-Bayan, Fakhr Razi, Maraqi, and some other ones, that when the Muslims gained a considerable victory in the Battle of Badr in the second year after Emigration, a group of the Jews said that the victory was counted as a sign to the truthfulness of the Prophet (S).

They reasoned that they had studied in the Torah that he (S) could win. Another group of the Jews said that they would not haste, since haply the Prophet (S) would fail in the battles thereafter.

In the third year when the Uhud Battle came forth, and Muslims were defeated, this group of the Jews became happy. Then, the verse was sent do telling them not to hurry in judgement so soon and they (the Jews would be defeated in near future.

"Say to those who disbelieve: ' You shall be vanquished, and gathered unto Hell and it is a terrible abode! "

Explanations

1. One of the miracles of the Qur'an is its true prophecies. In this prediction, it happened that, after a short time, Muslims succeeded to defeat two Jewish tribes: Bani Quraydah and Bani An-Nadir in Medina. Also, in the conquest of Mecca, they vanished the pagans successfully.

2. Soothing the believers and threatening the disbelievers is a sign of proper leadership and belief in the goal.

3. Prophets have taken care of both the worldly defeats and the damages that may come forth in the next world together.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 13

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُم مِّثْلَيْهِمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ وَاللّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَ ْ هِ مَن يَشَاء إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَّأُوْلِي الأَبْصَارِ

13. "Indeed there has been a sign for you in the two hosts that encountered: one fighting in the path of Allah and the other disbelieving; they (infidels) saw twice as many as they were with the sight of the eye; and Allah confirms with His aid whom He pleases. Surely there is a lesson herein for those who have insight."

This fact has been recorded in books, including: Majma'-ul-Bayan, Maraqi, Fakhr Razi and many other ones that this verse concerns Battle of Badr. In that fighting, Muslims struggled against infidels. The number of Muslims was 313 men, among whom 77 figures were from the Emigrants and 236 men from the Helpers (Ansar) for whom Sa'd-ibn-'lbadah was the flagman.

As military equipment, Muslims had only seventy camels, two horses, six armours, and eight swords; while the opposite army, the pagans, were one thousand men with one hundred horses.

The Muslims won the battle wherein twenty two of them became martyrs: 14 martyrs from the Emigrants and 8 martyrs from the helpers, when hostile pagans had to give seventy killed persons and 170 men as captives.

This incident is a lesson for those who have intellect and sight that how a small group of Muslims with little equipment could defeat an equipped army the number of whose fighters was three-fold of Muslims. This shows that mere material possibilities are not the enough cause of victory.

"Indeed there has been a sign for you in the two hosts that encountered: one fighting in the path of Allah and the other disbelieving; they (infidels) saw twice as many as they were with the sight of the eye..."

Explanations

1. The victory in the Battle of Badr, by a few persons against a larger number of equipped fighters, is the prevalence of Allah's Will over people's will. It is the best example of prevalence of Truth over untruth and Faith over disbelief.

"... and Allah confirms with His aid whom He pleases..."

2. Wherever Allah pleases, visions, recognitions, and thoughts vary: with these very eyes, they see the same crowd twofold.

3. The worth of fight lies in fighting itself;

"In the way of Allah"

4. It is True that Allah helps anyone He wills, but the condition of Allah's aid is mentioned in another occasion where it says that people should assist the religion of Allah:

"... if you help (the cause of Allah), He will help you and make firm your feet." [3]

5. All the Muslim fighters have one goal: "... one fighting in the path of Allah ...", but the disbelieving fighters have various goals and different ways:

"... and the other disbelieving..."

6. Signs are for all, but taking lesson from these sings needs a special insight.

"...surely there is a lesson herein for those who have insight."

7. The Battle of Badr was not performed with formerly preparation. It began with the purpose of confiscation of pagans' properties who had confiscated the emigrant Muslims' properties in Mecca, but it ended with military conflict.

"... the two hosts that encountered...."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 14

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاء وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ
وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللّهُ عِندَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ

14. "The love of desires (that come) from women, and of offspring, and heaped-up hoards of gold and silver and well-bred branded horses and cattle and tilth, is made to seem fair to mankind. This is the provision of the life of this world, while Allah is He with Whom is the good resort. "

The Arabic term /qanatir/ is the plural form of /qintar/ which in the Qur'anic Glossary means 'heap of talent' or, here, 'abundant wealth'. The word /muqantarah /, from the same root, has been added after that for additional, emphasis.

The term /xayl/, applied in this verse, means 'horse' and a 'riding horse'. And the word /musawwamah/ means 'branded', Viz. the horses that possessed special prominces. That speciality was because of the beauty of their stature and or the kind of training they had gotten. Those horses were called 'well-bred branded horses'.

"The love of desires (that come) from women, and of offspring, and heaped-up hoards of gold and silver and well-bred branded horses and cattle and tilth, is made to seem fair to mankind...."

Things being seemed fair to mankind may sometimes be done by the means of imaginations, sometimes by Satan, and sometimes by flattering people in around.

The attractive examples mentioned in the verse are those in regard of the time of the revelation. They can have some new and different examples in every period.

"... This is the provision of the life of this world, while Allah is He with Whom is the good resort. "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 15

قُلْ أَؤُنَبِّئُكُم بِخَيْرٍ مِّن ذَلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَاللّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

15. "Say: 'Shall I tell you of what is better than these? For those who keep from evil are gardens with their Lord; beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, and pure spouses, and Allah's pleasure; and Allah is well aware of the servants."

In the previous verse, Allah's word was upon belittling the love of this world and enjoining people to piety and good goal of life. In this verse, it introduces the Hereafter, as grand and worthy, and encourages people towards it.

"Say: 'Shall I tell you of what is better than these? ..."

It addresses the Prophet (S) commanding to 'say' a great information in the form of a question. Some of commentators believe that the content of the inquiry stretches up to the phrase 'with their Lord' in the verse. They say what it informs which begins from the Qur'anic phrase 'gardens beneath which rivers flow'.

Therefore, the consequence of the meaning of the verse is: 'Shall I inform you of what is better than that which was formerly said about the desires of this world and lusts and their attractions?'

"... For those who keep from evil... "

"... are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow..."

Then it adds:

"... where in they will abide forever ..."

When enumerating the merits in Heaven, it refers to spouses therein who are pure from any pollution, filthiness, indecent qualities, and disgraceful manners:

"…and pure spouses ..."

Besides Heaven of this kind, the pleasure of Allah is theirs-

"... and Allah's pleasure... "

Finally, it adds:

"... and Allah is well aware of the servants."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 16-17

الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالأَسْحَارِ

16. "Those who say: ' Our Lord! Verily we believe, so forgive us our sin and save us from the torment of the Fire."

17. "The patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (benevolently), and those who seek forgiveness before dawn (times)."

The characteristics of the pious ones, who were hinted out in the previous verse, are stated here in this verse with more details.

At first it says about them:

"Those who say: 'Our Lord! We believe..."

That is: we believe in You and Your Apostle. Then, they continue saying:

"...so forgive us our sin and save us from the torment of the Fire."

After that, the Qur'an has stated some other characteristics of the pious ones where it has praised them. It says the pious are the same as:

"The patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (benevolently), and those who seek forgiveness before dawn (times)"

Thus, the pious have the following qualities:

1. Patience in tolerating the difficulties, the prohibitions, and the Divine services.
2. To be truthful in speech and manner.
3. Humility and submission without pride and self -admiration.
4. Giving in charity from what Allah has provided them as sustenance.
5. Supplications and seeking forgiveness from their Lord during the time before dawn.

The term /munfiqin / (those who spend out), in the verse, refers to those who spend out their wealth benevolently in righteous deeds, when it consists of giving obligatory alms and recommended charity.

Opinions are divided as to the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /wal mustaqfirina bil ashar/ (and those who seek forgiveness before dawn times). They are four varieties as follows:

1. To establish prayer at midnight, (said by Qattadah). This very meaning has been cited by Imam Rida (as) who narrated from his father (as) from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as). [4]

2. Those who seek forgiveness before dawn, (said by 'Anas).

3. Those who keep the morning prayer in congregation, (said by Ziyd-ibn 'Aslam).

4. Those who continue keeping prayers until before dawn and then ask Allah to forgive them their sins, (said by Hassan).

It is narrated from Imam -Sadiq (as) who has said:

"Whosoever, at midnight, seeks forgiveness seventy times is involved in the people of this verse..." [5]

In a tradition it is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Verily Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says: ' Whenever I will to punish the people of the earth, I restrain it from them when I observe the constructors of mosques, the performers of the night prayers, those who make friends with each other in My way, and those who seek forgiveness before dawn (times)..." [6]

In Islamic literature, it is cited that if a person continuously recites /astaghfirullaha rabbi wa 'atiibu 'ilayh/ seventy times in his personal prayer of odd prayer at midnight for one year, the one will be involved of the people of this verse.[7]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 18

شَهِدَ اللّهُ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَأُوْلُواْ الْعِلْمِ قَآئِمَاً بِالْقِسْطِ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

18. "Allah (Himself) bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and the possessors of knowledge, standing firm for justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise."

By creating a single regularity over the world of existence, Allah testifies upon the Oneness of His Own Essence. That is, the existing harmony and order, in the whole creation, is an evidence to the sovereignty of only One Power over existence.

In other worlds, Allah informs of His Oneness through the wonders of creation and His wise Providence, which are like the examples of life. Allah calls the creation of the creatures as a witness to His Own Unity.

By the way, He causes to understand that the phenomena He brings into existence are so that none is able to generate even one of them.

"Allah (Himself) bears witness that there is no god but He..."

By observing the wonders and greatness of power, angels bear witness to the Oneness of Allah.

Those possessed of knowledge, /'ulul-'ilm/, who know, and it has been proved to them, that none is able to bring the wonders of the world of creation into existence but He, bear witness to the Oneness of His Essence, too.

This fact must also be noticed that though the phrase: 'the possessors of knowledge' refers to all scientists and knowledgeable ones in general, according to some Islamic narrations; the objective meaning of it is prophets and the Imams of right guidance (as). [8]

"...and (so do) the angels and the possessors of knowledge, standing firm for justice..."

And, angels testify that there is no god save the One, Allah, by Whom justice is firm.

"...there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise."

It is He the One, and none else, Who gives sustenance, treats His servants Justly, and there is no inequity in His affairs.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 19

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِندَ اللّهِ الإِسْلاَمُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُواْ الْكِتَابَ إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

19. "Verily the (true) religion with Allah is Islam, and those whom (formerly) the Book had been given to did not differ but after the knowledge (of the truth) had come to them, through envy of each other. And whoever disbelieves in Allah's Signs, then, verily, Allah is quick in reckoning."

The spirit of religion is the very submission to Allah. Next to the statement of the Unity of Allah, the Qur'an refers to the oneness of religion, and says:

"Verily the (true) religion with Allah is Islam..."

Thus, the true religion with Allah is surrender or the submission of the self of adherent to the Will or Command of Allah. The spirit of religion, in fact, in any time and period, is not anything but submission to Divine Will:

"...and those whom (formerly) the Book had been given to did not differ..."

The objective purpose of the verse is the Jews and the Christians whose discord was that they rejected Islam.

"...but after the knowledge (of the truth) had come to them..."

When they comprehended that the religion of Islam was rightful, the followers of Jesus (as) believed in trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost), and the Jews said: "Ezra is God's Son."

Thus; both of them differed in the prophet hood of the Prophet (S) although they had studied the epithets and specialities of the Prophet (S) in their Books (the Torah and the Evangel) and recognized them completely. They knew very well that Muhammad (S) was the Messenger of Allah and was His Apostle.

"... through envy of each other..."

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, P. 412 (Arabic Version)
2. Surah Al-Jinn, No.72, Verse 15.
3. Surah Muhammad, No.47, verse 7.
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, P. 419 (Arabic version).
5. Ibid
6. Ibid

7. Atyab-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, P. 137
8. Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 273

Section 2: Chastisement for those who slay the Apostles

Those who slay Apostles of Allah shall be punished.

To Allah alone belongs the kingdom and He alone bestows the kingdom upon whoever He wills and takes away from whoever He wills.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 20

فَإِنْ حَآجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلّه وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ وَقُل لِّلَّذِينَ أُوْتُواْ الْكِتَابَ وَالأُمِّيِّينَ
أَأَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُواْ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَواْ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلاَغُ وَاللّه بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

20. "So if they dispute with you, say: 'I have submitted myself (totally) to Allah, and whoever follows me'. And say to those who have been given the Book and the unlettered ones: 'Do you (also) submit yourselves?' So if they submit then indeed they are rightly guided, and if they turn back, then upon you is only the delivery of the message, and Allah is well-aware of the servants."

"So if they dispute with you, say: 'I have submitted myself (totally) to Allah, and whoever follows me'..."

The Lord, addressing the Prophet (S), has commanded him that if the Jews and the Christians disputed with him upon the religion, he would tell them that he had surrendered his self wholly to Allah, the One, and had taken no partner for Him with himself and had not worshipped another god with Him.

The purpose is that the Prophet (S) tells them that his religion is theism, and this creed is the same principle that all the responsible persons are obliged to confess.

"... And say to those who have been given the Book..."

These people are the people of the Book, i.e. the Jews and the Christians.

"... and the unlettered ones..."

These are those who had not Book, i.e. the pagan Arabs. "...' Do you (also) submit yourselves? '..."

With reference to the evidences and signs which are with you, have you embraced Islam, or you still resist on your own infidelity?

"...So if they submit then indeed they are rightly guided..."

If they embrace Islam it is useful for themselves, because they have been delivered from aberration and guided to the right way.

"... and if they turn back, then upon you is only the delivery of the message, and Allah is well-aware of the servants."

If they refrain and do not accept Islam, there will be no harm on you, O' Muhammad! You are the Messenger of Allah and your duty is only to convey the Message and to attract their attention to the way of right and guidance.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 21-22

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّه وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ
مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

21. "Verily, those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those, of people, who enjoin equity, give tidings to them of a painful chastisement."

22. "They are those whose works come to nothing in this world and in the next, and they will have no helpers."

"Verily, those who disbelieve in the Signs of Allah ..."

These people are the Jews, the people of the Book, the formers of whom slew both the prophets and their followers, those who were among the worshippers of the Children of Israel.

The reason why, at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, Allah gave the Jews the glad tidings of punishment was that they were pleased and content with the deeds of their ancestors.

Besides that, they tried to slay and were in thought of killing the Prophet (S) as well as the believers. If there were not the support of Allah, they would accomplish their evil intention.

"...and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those, of people, who enjoin equity, give tidings to them of a painful chastisement."

Here, the meaning of the term 'unjustly' is not that it is possible to kill prophets justly, but the purpose is that the slaying of prophets has always been done unjustly and oppressively."

"They are those whose works come to nothing in this world and in the next, ... "

The purpose of the nullification of deeds that the verse says: 'Their works come to nothing in this world ' is that, by following the Torah, their blood and wealth would not remain safe and, they could not succeed to be praised in this world.

And also their deeds will come to naught in the next world, since they will deserve no reward. Therefore, it seems that they have had no good deeds; and this is the very reality of the Qur'anic term /hubut/, 'unfruitfulness & destruction'.

"... and they will have no helpers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 23

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوْتُواْ نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ

23. "Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the book of Allah that it may judge between them, then a group of them turn back, while they are opponent "

In the books of both schools of Shi'ite and Sunnite, it is cited that: it happened that a woman and a man from the Jews committed adultery while they had spouses.

As the Torah had ordained, they should be pelted with stone, but since those two were among the notables, they tried to flee from the execution of the Torah's instruction. So, they came to the Prophet of Islam (S) in order that he judged.

He (S) also commanded to stoning, and said that the law of Islam in this regard is similar to that of the Torah. But they denied the Torah's ordain. Ibn-Suriya, who was one the Jewish scholars, was summoned from Fadak to Medina in order to recite the Torah concerning the matter.

Since he was aware of the subject, when reciting the verses of the Torah, he put his hand on the phrases related to the subject of stoning so that the verse of stoning could not be seen. 'Abdillah-ibn-Salam, who was among the Jewish scholars at that time, was present in that meeting. He recognized the situation and made the matter manifest.

Explanations

1. Heedlessness of the followers of a religion to their own religious Book, is the beginning of the calamity.

"Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Book?.."

2. Allah's ordinances should be executed about all individuals for the same matter with no difference.

"... They are invited to the Book of Allah that it may judge between them, then a group of them turn back, while they are opponent"

3. Mere claim is not an indication of Faith.

4. This meaning is a warning to the Muslims that they should not treat like the Jews when executing the laws of the Qur'an, and that they would be careful not to turn away from the commandments of the Lord.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 24

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُواْ لَن تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلاَّ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِم مَّا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ

The vain mottoes and wrong imaginations of the Jews have immensely been mentioned in the Qur'an that they used to say some things with the sense that: "We are the exalted and beloved nation with Allah, and we will not be punished except for those forty days that our ancestors worshipped the calf ". This very sort of imagination caused them their pride and deviation.

"This is because they said: The Fire shall not touch us but for a number of days'. That which they were forging has deceived them in their religion."

Even today, the Israelites believe in their racial superiority, and they refrain from no transgression to gain it.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 25

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لاَّ رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

25. "Then, how (will it be with them) when We shall gather them together for the Day (of judgement) about which there is no doubt, when everyone shall be paid in full what the one has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly? "

By rejecting the vain imaginations of the Jews, this verse threatens them and says that the divine court will be held up based upon justice and no one will be treated unjustly.

"Then, how (will it be with them) when We shall gather them together for the Day (of judgement) about which there is no doubt, when everyone shall be paid in full what the one has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly?"

All people are equal before the Divine Justice, and rewards and recompenses will be given due to Faith, good deed and piety, not because of tribal relationships and, or, for a special group.

No action will be eliminated, for every deed will return to its performer, who is its owner, too.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 26

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَاء وَتَنزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاء وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَاء وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَاء بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

26. "Say: ' O' Allah! Master of the Kingdom! You shower the kingdom upon whom You please and take away the kingdom from whom You please! and You honour whom You please and abase whom You please; all goodness is in your hand. Verily You are All-Powerful over all things."

In some books, such as Majma'-ul-Bayan and Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Fakhr-Razi, it is recorded that the Prophet of Islam (S), after conquering Mecca, prophesied for the Muslims to be victorious in the battles against Iran and Room. At that time some of the hypocrites looked at each other perhaps mockingly. Then this verse was revealed.

Some other commentators have reported that the revelation of the verse occurred at the time of digging a ditch, when the Prophet (S) sharply struck with a pick on a stone and a few sparks appeared.

Then, he (S) said:

"I received the conquest of the castles of Ctsiphon (an ancient city near Baghdad) and Yemen from Gabriel in these sparks."

Hearing this, the hypocrite smiled mockingly and then this verse was revealed.

It is necessary to mention that whatever from endowment, honour, and abasement have been referred to in this verse from the side of Allah, are according to the law and way of treatment of Allah.

Otherwise, Allah does not give a person honour or does not abase another one. For example, an Islamic narration says:

"Whosoever humbles himself for Allah, He will make him honourable; and whosoever be arrogant, He will despise him."[1].

Therefore, both honour and abasement belong to Allah, but paving their way and preparing their causes depend to us.

This verse refers to the powers and governments which have been brought into existence because of the competency of persons and attachment of people. The verse does not mean those oppressive governments and powers which have come into being by the application of force and terror, furnished by making collusion with internal and external factors.

Explanations

1. The real possessor of all governments is Allah. The ownership of other than Allah is temporary and limited.

2. Allah gives the government to the one who is eligible, as He gave it to Solomon, Joseph, Talul, and Zul-Qarnayn.

3. Unity in supplication and worship is a necessity. In Munajat-ush-Sha'baniyyah, from the Immaculate Imams, we recite: "O' Lord, my immensity and my deficiency are in Your hand (up to Your Will), not in that of other than you." [2]

4. Now that He is the Possessor, then others are not any things but depositaries and should act according to the consent of the Essential Possessor.

5. What He determines (for giving and taking) are all good, though we may not know its philosophy and judge hurriedly.

6. Honour and abasement is up to the Lord, therefore, do not expect honour from others.

The Qur'an has criticized severely those who seek for honour from other than Allah and says:

"...Do they seek honour from them?.." [3]

7. When the mortals are not really the landlords of their properties, why are they proud of having them in their possession or become despair for losing them?

"Say: 'O' Allah! Master of the Kingdom! You shower the kingdom upon whom You please and take away the kingdom from whom You please!

and You honour whom You please and abase whom You please;

all goodness is in your hand. Verily You are All-Powerful over all things."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 27

تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَن تَشَاء بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

27. "You cause the night to pass into the day and You cause the day to pass into the night, and You bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living, and You provide with sustenance for whom You will without measure."

In this verse and the previous one the Power of Allah is mentioned for twelve times to evoke the spirit of theism in man. At first, the verse speaks about the decrease and increase of the length of the night and the day in different seasons. (It may, of course, refer to the graduality of sunset and sunrise, too, but the first meaning is clearer).

Then, the verse points to the Power of the Providence, the Omnipotent, about bringing forth the living from the dead and vice versa. The example of this meaning is seen in the creation of living cells from lifeless foodstuff and making dead from the living creatures.

In another point of view, it is recognized that He causes the pious believing children to come into being from deadly-hearted unbelievers; and He brings the disbelieving deadly-hearted children into existence from the pious believing ones.

Explanation

1. Besides creation, any modification and arrangement is due to His Wisdom.

"You cause the night to pass into the day and You cause the day to pass into the night." [4]

2. The 'Power of Allah is not finite. He, the Almighty, brings the living out of the dead, and makes dead from the living.

"... and You bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living...."

3. The sustenance of all beings depends on His Will, the All-Wise.

"… and You provide sustenance for whom You will without measure,"

4. The changes of the night and the day and, consequently, the appearance of seasons together with the arrangement in atmospheric conditions are among the blessings and favours of Allah.

5. The purpose of 'sustenance without measure' is 'bountiful sustenance' and, therefore, it does not mean that its account is out of His control.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 28

لاَّ يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاء مِن دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ أَن تَتَّقُواْ مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

28. "The believers should not take the infidels as their friends, rather than the believers, and whoever does that then nothing of Allah is his, except when you guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully; and Allah warns you to be cautious of (disobeying) Him; and toward Allah is the destination."

In this holy verse, the feature of the foreign policy, encountering with the unbelievers and that assuming the master ship of disbelievers is on a par with losing the master ship of Allah, the necessary conditions of concealing of faith /taqiyyah/ and prevention of abusing it, have been stated.

Explanations

1. It is prohibited that the believers assume the master ship of disbelievers.

"The believers should not take the infidels as their friends, rather than the believers..."

If the Muslims of the world had acted according to only this principle, the status of the Islamic countries would not be in such a condition that it is now.

2. Not only the acceptance of the master ship of disbelievers, but also being content with infidelity and approving it, is unlawful for the believers.

"... and whoever does that then nothing of Allah is his..."

3. The apparent connexion with disbelievers for reaching some higher aims, in some circumstances, is permissible.

4. Political relationship should not result in accepting domination of, or heartily connexion with, the infidels.

"... except when you guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully..."

5. Concealing of Faith is only for the sake of protection of religion. Beware not to be attracted by the infidels under the pretext of concealment of Faith, and not to misuse this concept!

"... Allah warns you to be cautious of (disobeying) Him..."

6. In circumstances that the basis of religion is in danger, everything must be devoted, and everybody should only be in awe of Allah.

"... and to Allah is the destination."

7. Connection or disconnection ought to be performed on the basis of contemplation and belief, not upon the basis of racial, tribal and family affections, or economical concerns, and so on.

8. In place of infidels, Muslims must make friends and communicate with each other among themselves.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 29

قُلْ إِن تُخْفُواْ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمْهُ اللّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَاللّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

29. "Say: ' Whether you hide what is in your hearts, or manifest it, Allah knows it, and (also) He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah is All-Powerful over all things '."

Next to the verse of concealment of Faith, the above mentioned holy verse, maybe, refers to the idea that Muslims should never communicate with disbelievers under the shelter of concealment of Faith, where the Lord knows all decisions and intentions.

Explanation

1. This verse is a warning to those who try to communicate with the disbelievers under the excuse of concealment of Faith.

"Say: ' Whether you hide what is in your hearts, or manifest it, Allah knows it..."

2. Allah is aware of whatever deed we do.

3. The Lord is aware even of our intentions.

4. Allah's knowledge encompasses the things hidden and the things manifest similarly. He knows whatever is in the earth and whatever is in the heavens.

"... and (also) He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth..."

5. Allah is both knower of thoughts of human beings and is All-Powerful over all things. That is, in a moment, He is able to make infamous all those who do evil.

"... and Allah is All-Powerful over all things"

6. What can be concealed from the One Who is Omnipotent and knows all the secrets of heavens?

"...He knows whatever is in the heavens ..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 30

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِن سُوَءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

30. " On the Day (of Judgement) when everyone shall find present what he has done of good; but (as for) what he has done of evil, he will wish there were a far distance between it and himself; and Allah warns you to be cautious of (disobeying) His Essence and Allah is full of pity to the servants."

This verse is similar to verse No.49 from Surah Al-Kahf, No.18, which says:

"... what they had done they shall find present (in the Hereafter)..."

It is cited in Al-Burhan, the , that every Friday when Imam Sajjad, the fourth Imam (as), wanted to preach for people in Masjid-un-Nabi (S) he recited this verse.

Explanations

1. In the Hereafter, our today deeds will be incarnated in front of us.

"On the Day (of Judgement) when everyone shall find present what he has done of good..."

2. On the Day of Judgement, the evildoers will be ashamed of their own deeds that they have done in this world.

3. The warning of Allah is a sign of His kindness towards His servants in order that they do not commit sins.

4. Many of those actions that people like to do in this fleeting world will be hatred through them in the Hereafter.

"... but (as for) what he has done of evil, he will wish there were a far distance between it and himself..."

5. On that Day, regret will be of no avail and wishes will not be doable.

6. The origin of warnings is also His love and His kindness.

"... and Allah warns you to be cautious of (disobeying) His Essence ..."

7. The Lord loves all people.

"... and Allah is Full of Pity to the servants."

8. The Pity of Allah towards people is direct.

"... and Allah is Full of Pity to the servants."

Notes

1. Bihar-al-Anwar. vol. 101, p. 109.
2. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 94, p. 97.
3. Surah An-Nisa', No.4, Verse 139.
4. Some more details upon night and day are mentions on pp. 39-40 in the previous Volume of the current commentary.

Section 3: Allah's choice of the descendants of Abraham (as)

Sins of those who love Allah and his Apostle are forgiven - Mary's dedication for service to the Lord - The glad tidings to Zachariah of being granted a son,

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 31

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّه فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّه وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّه غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

31}}

31. "Say: ' If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful ',"

The verses under discussion, including the above verse, have been revealed about a group of the People of the Book, (the Christians from Najran), who used to say:

"We are the lovers of the Lord."

Then Allah defines 'the followers of the Apostle of Allah' as the clear example of this love, and tells His Apostle Muhammad thus:

"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me..."

If you are true in what you claim -that you love Allah -then follow the Apostle of Allah. This act of following is the same as obeying Allah. It is in this case that, Allah loves you and forgives your sins.

"…Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful'."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 32

قُلْ أَطِيعُواْ اللَّه وَالرَّسُولَ فإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّ اللَّه لاَ يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

32. "Say: ' Obey Allah and the Apostle '. But if they turn back, then verily Allah does not love the disbelievers."

The love of Allah due to His servant is that He wills to reward the servant, while the love of a servant towards the Lord is that the one heartily wishes to obey Him and to serve Him, because love originate from one's intention. Then, to emphasize on this subject, the Qur'an says:

"Say: 'Obey Allah and the Apostle '..."

The objective meaning of this sentence is as such: if you claim that you love Allah, then you should reveal the sign of your love by obeying and following Allah and His Messenger.

But, if you disobey Him and His Apostle by rejecting the religion of Allah, the case is different.

"... But if they turn back..."

Then, Allah does not love disbelievers and, as a result of their infidelity, He will not give them any reward.

"... Then verily Allah does not love the disbelievers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 33-34

إِنَّ اللَّه اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِن بَعْضٍ وَاللَّه سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

33. "Verily Allah chose Adam and Noah, and the progeny of Abraham and the progeny of 'Imran above all people."

34. "Some of them are offspring of the others; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

From this verse on, the explanation of the story of Mary and her forefathers begins. The purpose of' the family of Abraham' mentioned in this verse is Ismael and Issac and the offsprings of these two. The purpose of 'family of 'Imran' is Moses and Aron, the sons of 'Imran-ibn-Yashar.

"Verily Allah chose Adam and Noah, and the progeny of Abraham and the progeny of 'Imran above all people."

The term / Ŏurriyah / (offspring) is another form used instead of 'the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imr'an', and the phrase /ba'duha min ba'din / (one of the other) means that the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran are both progenies from one origin separated from each other.

"Some of them are offsprings of the others; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In some books,[1] it is cited that 'the family of Abraham' is the same as' the family of Muhammad', Viz. Ahlul-Bayt, who, after Muhammad (S), are the immaculate ones from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali and Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) up to Hadrat Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent), and that Allah does not choose anyone from amongst His servants unless the one be sinless, pure, and immaculate.

Therefore, such special persons elected from the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran have to be the ones who have been sinless, whether they would have been chosen as prophets or as Imams.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 35-36

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنثَى وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعَتْ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالأُنثَى وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

35. "(Remember) when the wife of Imran said: ' My Lord! Verily I vowed to You what is within my womb to be (dedicated) for You (for Your service) freed; therefore accept from me; verily you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing'."

36. So, when she delivered her, she said: 'My Lord! I have delivered a female (child) -and Allah knew best what she delivered - and the male is not like the female; and I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from the accursed Satan'."

The spouse of 'Imran, son of Mathan, was Mary's mother and grandmother of Jesus (as). Her name was Hannah. She had a sister by the name of 'Isha' who was Zachariah's wife. Her father's name was Faghuth. Thus, both Mary and Yahya (John) were cousins for each other.

The term /muharrir/, mentioned in the verse, means 'freed' for serving in Jerusalem so that another person does not appoint her upon doing one's own affairs.

"(Remember) when the wife of 'Imran said...."

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said: "Allah revealed 'Imran that He would give him a son who could heal the blind and the leprous and raise the dead to life by Allah's leave, and He would make of him a prophet unto the Children of Israel, 'Imran informed his wife of that matter," [2]

So, when Hannah became pregnant with Mary, she said:

"..' My Lord! Verily I vowed to You what is within my womb to be (dedicated) for You (for Your service) freed, therefore accept from me..."

Here, the phrase 'accept from me' means that, I ask You to accept my vow with Your consent.

"…Verily You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing'."

"So, when she delivered her, she said: …"

The spouse of 'Imran wished to deliver a son, but when she delivered Mary she became ashamed and, with her head hung, bashfully said:

"…'My Lord! I have delivered a female (child),…"

'Imran's wife expressed this statement with sigh and regret, because she hoped to deliver a son and hence she vowed to devote him for the service of the Lord in the place of worship,

"…. and Allah knew best what she delivered -and the male is not like the female; ....."

And You know that, for the aim I have vowed, son and daughter are not alike. A female can not afford the duties concerned to a male as he is able to perform them. Therefore, to magnify her she-child, Allah, in reply to her, said:

"…and Allah knew best what she delivered- …"

This response means that the Lord is more cognizant than her to Mary and what is concerned to her due to the important affairs that her mother does not know.

It is recognized from this sentence that naming Mary with this appellation was done by her mother at the time of delivery. By the way, it should be noted that the term Mary, in their lexicon, meant 'a saint worshipping lady'.

So, this kind of naming had been a sign of ultimate love and affection of that pure mother for dedicating her dear child alongside the path of the servitude of Allah (s.w.t.). That is why, after performing this auspicious naming, she asked the Lord to protect this child and the progeny that would come into being from her thereafter from the temptations of Satan and to keep them in His merciful shelter.

" ...and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from the accursed Satan'."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 37

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقاً قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ هَـذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ اللّه إِنَّ اللّه يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاء بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

37. "So, her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made (the plant of) her grow a goodly growth, and He cherished her under the care

of Zakariya. Whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to (see) her, he would find with her a sustenance. He said: ' O' Mary! Whence have you got this?, She said: 'It is from Allah. Verily Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure'."

"So, her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance... "

Mary was a girl, yet Allah accepted the vow of her mother with pleasure (that she be set in Jerusalem to serve instead of a boy), which itself was a grace of Allah to her.

"... and made (the plant of) her grow a goodly growth ..."

The Lord made her growth and development good. He trained her well and, in all circumstances in her life, improved her affairs nicely.

"... and He cherished her under the care of Zakariya..."

That is, Allah added Mary to the family members (Ahlul-Bayt) of Zachariah and caused him to be Mary's cherisher and guardian, as well as a sponsor of her interests.

"... whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to (see) her, he would find with her a sustenance..."

Every time Zachariah entered Mary's sanctuary, (and he used to do it frequently), he would find fresh wholesome fruits with her which did not belong to that season.

"….He said: ' O' Mary! Whence have you got this?'…"

When Zachariah asked her where that sustenance had come from, Mary answered:

"... She said: 'It is from Allah '..."

That is, Mary replied him that it had come from Heaven, and that was a grace from the side of Allah unto her.

In Kashshaf , (At- Tafsir-ul-Kashshaf),' it is cited that during the time of famine and drought, one day the Prophet (S) had become hungry.

Then, Fatimah (as) sent two loaves of bread and some meat as a present for him in order to make him happy and honour him. The holy Prophet (S), carrying that present with him, came to Fatimah's house. When he entered the house, he said:

"My daughter! Come to me. "

When she came nigh to him, the Prophet (S) put the cover from over the tray aside. At that time, (those who were present there saw that) the tray was full of bread and meat. So, Fatimah was surprised when she saw them and comprehended that they had come down from the side of Allah.

Then the Prophet (S) asked her:

"Whence has this come to you?"

Fatimah (as), answered:

"It is from Allah. He provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure."

Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"I praise Allah Who has set you (O' Fatimah!) like the chief Lady of the women of Israelites (i.e. Mary)."

After that, the Prophet (S) called Hadrat Ali-ibn Abi Talib (as), Imam Hassan (as), Imam Husayn (as) and all the members of his-house to gather around that tray. Then, all of them ate from that food so that they satiated.

Yet, there was still some considerable food remained in the tray, (so much so as if nothing had been consumed of it). So, Hadrat Fatimah (as) distributed it among people living in her neighbourhood. [3]

"…. Verily Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure, ' "

Allah gives sustenance without measure since His power and sovereignty has no limit or finite, and whatever is taken from it, nothing will be decreased of it.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 38-39

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِن لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاء

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

38. "It way then (that) Zakariya prayed to his Lord; he said: 'My Lord! grant me from You a good offspring; verily You are the Hearer of all prayers'."

39. "Then the angels called unto him while he way standing praying in the sanctuary: 'Verily Allah gives you the glad tidings of Yahya (who comes) to confirm a Word from Allah, and honourable and chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous'."

"It way then (that) Zakariya prayed to his Lord..."

The first Qur'anic word mentioned in the above verse is /hunalika/ which means: 'in that place'. It was the place at the sanctuary where Zachariah saw the position and honour of Mary with Allah and wished he had also a child from his wife, 'Isha', similar to the child of his sister, Hannah, although his wife was barren.

"... he said: 'My Lord! grant me from You a good offspring..."

Zachariah prayed and asked his Lord to give him an auspicious, pious and sound child.

"...Verily You are the Hearer of all prayers."

"Then the angels called unto him while he was standing praying in the sanctuary: 'Verily Allah gives you the glad tidings of Yahya (who comes) to confirm a Word from Allah, and honourable and chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous'."

At that time, when Zachariah (as) was standing praying in the sanctuary, some angels called him that Allah granted him the glad tidings of a son, Yahya (John), in the case that he (John) would confirm the Word of Allah (Hadrat Masih, Jesus), and would become a leader and honourable. He would be apart from low desires and a prophet from among the pious.

Thus, not only Allah informed him the acceptance of his prayer by the angels, but also stated five characteristics of the qualities of that pure child. They are as follows:

1. Yahya (John) acknowledged Jesus (as) as a true prophet and he believed him. John was six months older than Jesus (as), and he confirmed his prophet hood. He was the first certifier of him and testified that Jesus (as) was the Word and the Spirit of Allah.

This very fact was one of the miracles concerning Jesus (as) as well as the most authoritative means of the advent and propagation of his auspicious prophet hood, because people did accept the statement of John due to his piety and truthfulness.

By the way, in Arabic, the terms 'Isa and Yahya nearly have a similar meaning. Both of them mean 'to live long'.

"... (who comes) to confirm a Word from Allah ..."

2. Yahya (John) became the chief of his tribe and had preference over them from the point of honesty, knowledge, worship, and good manner.

"... honourable and chaste ..."

3. He restrained himself from the low desires, and also from following the violent filthy passions, and mammonism.

4. He would become an honest exalted prophet. It should also be noted that the prophet hood of John had been settled from his childhood. The reference for this meaning is Surah Maryam, No, 19, verse 13 which says:

"... and we granted him wisdom while yet a child."

That is, we gave him the rank of prophet hood at the time of his childhood. In many Islamic traditions, the Imamate of Hadrat Imam Jawad (as), who became Imam when he was seven years old, as well as the Imamate of Hadrat Mahdi (may Allah hasten his glad advent), have been reasoned to John and Jesus (as) who became prophets when they were in the course of their childhood.[4]

"... and a prophet from among the righteous."

5. This prophet (John) was from amongst the righteous people.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 40

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىَ يَكُونُ لِي غُلاَمٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاء

40. "He said: ' My Lord! how can I have a son (born) while, indeed, old age has already over taken me, and my wife is barren ? ' He said: 'Even so does Allah whatsoever He pleases'."

By hearing that glad tiding Zachariah became very happy so that he could not conceal his surprise because of such a subject that happened. Therefore:

"He said: ' My Lord! how can I have a son (born) while, indeed, old age has already over taken me, and my wife is barren?' ..."

Then, he was answered thus:

"... He said: ' Even so does Allah whatsoever He pleases'."

With this concise sentence, which laid emphasis on the influence of the Divine Will, Zachariah was convinced.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 41

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَل لِّيَ آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلاَّ تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلاَثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلاَّ رَمْزًا وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ كَثِيراً وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالإِبْكَارِ

41. "He (Zakariya) said: 'My lord! Appoint a token for me'. He said: ' The token for you (will be) that you cannot speak unto human beings for three days except by signals; and remember your Lord immensely and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning."

Here, Zachariah (as) asked Allah for a token for that glad tiding he received, in order to make his heart completely certain. It was similar to the case that Abraham (as) requested Allah to see the scene of resurrection to make his heart certain more than before.

"He (Zakariya) said: 'My Lord! Appoint a token for me' .."

In answer to him, Allah said that the token for him was that he could not speak to people for three days, except by signals, and his tongue, without having any disease or natural disorder, would stop talking with men:

"... He said: 'The token for you (will be) that you cannot speak unto human beings for three days except by signals..."

Yet, to show his (Zachariah's) gratitude to that bounty, the verse says:

"….and remember your Lord immensely and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning."

Thus, the Lord accepted the request of Zachariah. But his tongue could not move speaking with people for three days and nights without being involved by any natural cause. Yet, in the meanwhile, he was in a condition that he was still able to be busy murmuring the name of Allah.

That wonderful state was a sign of Allah's power dominated over everything. The Lord, Who is able to open the speechless dumb tongue when it starts to invoke the name of Allah, is also able to bring a believing child into existence from a fruitless barren womb. This occurrence can be the manifestation of the remembrance of the Providence, too.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 42

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللّه اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاء الْعَالَمِينَ

42. "And (remember) when the angels said: 'O' Mary! Verily Allah has chosen you and purified you and preferred you above the women of the worlds '."

It is cited in some books such as: Al-Minar, Qurtubi, Maraqi, Rouhul-Bayan, and Fakhr-Razi that the pre-eminents of the women of the world were four persons: Mary, 'Asiyah, Khadijah, and Fatimah (as).

Some Islamic literature, narrated from Ahlul-Bayt (as) also denotes that Mary was the preeminent woman among the women of her time, while Fatimah (as) is the preeminent throughout of the history.[5]

It should be noted, of course, that when Allah, the Wise, chooses a person as preeminent it is because of a special series of efficiencies and eligibilities that the one has. So, this preeminence of Mary over all women of the world was not but because of her piety and virtues. Yes, she had been chosen to give birth to a prophet such as Jesus (as).

Explanations

1. Angels may speak to human beings other than prophets, too.

2. A woman can reach the rank of Divine sainthood so that Allah sends messages to her.

3. Mary was both chosen for virtues and became the preeminent of the women. That is why the Arabic phrase /istafaki/ (has chosen you) has been repeated twice in the verse.

"And (remember) when the angels said:

'O' Mary! Verily Allah has chosen you and purified you and preferred you above the women of the worlds '."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 43

يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

43. "O' Mary! worship your Lord devoutly and prostrate yourself and bow you down with those who bow (unto Him)."

In this verse, the statement is from other angels who addressed Mary and told her:

"O' Mary! Worship your Lord devoutly and prostrate yourself and bow you down with those who bow (unto Him)."

This accomplishment of Mary, indeed, is a kind of gratitude for those great bounties she was given.

By the way, the attendance of women in worshipping communities has been recommended, (on the condition that women treat similar to that which Mary did).

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 44

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنبَاء الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيكَ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُون أَقْلاَمَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

44. "This is of the news of the Unseen which we reveal to you; and you were not with them when they did cast (their lots with) their pens as to which of them should have the charge of Mary; and you were not with them (to see) when they were quarrelling (among themselves)."

This verse points to another part of the story of Mary. It denotes that: O' Muhammad! what Was expressed for you about the story of Mary and Zachariah is from among the news of Unseen revealed to you:

"This is of the news of the Unseen which We revealed to you..."

This is revealed to you because these stories in this form, which are proper and free from any superstition, and whose reference is merely heavenly revelation of the Qur'an, are not found in any of the former revealed Books, those which have been distorted later.

Then, it continues saying that when they throwing their pens into water to cast their lots in order to decide who should have the charge of Mary, you were not present therein with them. And also, when the scholars of the Israelite were quarrelling among themselves to obtain the honour of her guardianship, you were not with them. So, We informed you of all of them by means of revelation.

"... and you were not with them (to see) when they were quarrelling (among themselves)."

It is understood from this verse and the verses of Surah As-Safat, No 37, about Yunus (Jonah) that when a problem comes forth which is not soluble, or when there is an endless dispute with quarrelling that no way is found to put an end to it, and it is impossible to unite that knot, casting a lot can be applied.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 45

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلآئِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

45. "(Remember) when the angels said: ' O' Mary! Verily Allah gives you the glad tidings with a Word from Him whose name shall be Christ, Jesus, son of Mary; eminent in this world and the Hereafter, and of those nearest (to Allah),"

In the Qur'an, Jesus is nominated to /kalimah/ (word) which, in the Qur'anic texts, has been used in the sense of a 'creature', One example is its application in Surah Al-Kahf. No.18. Verse 109, where it says:

"….the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted…"

Here, 'words' has been rendered into 'creatures'.

The commendation 'held in honour in this world and the Hereafter' has been used in the Qur'an only for Jesus (as) and, thus, none else is qualified by it throughout the Qur'an,

Explanations

1. The position of a woman elevates so high that Allah talks to her by the way of angels,

"(Remember) when the angels said: 'O' Mary! Verily Allah gives you the glad tidings with a word from Him…"

2. Allah sometimes nominates His saints before their birth:

"…whose name shall be Christ, Jesus..."

3. Jesus (as) is not a son of Allah but he is a creature of Allah:

"…a Word from Him…"

How can be the son of Allah the one who was borne from Mary and had passed the foetal course!

"….son of Mary…"

4. A child is a bounty,

"...eminent in this world and the Hereafter and of those nearest (to Allah)."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 46

وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلاً وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

46. "And he will speak to the people in the cradle and in adulthood, and will be one of the righteous."

To speak as prediction in cradle is the miracle of Jesus. He spoke to people when he was in cradle. His speech, when he would become aged, was another prediction of Jesus which meant he would live to become grown up.

"And he will speak to the people in the cradle and in adulthood."

Explanations

1. The One who is able to bring a child for Mary without having a husband, can make a baby speak in the cradle.

2. Where Allah wills to protect a person from accusation and imputation, He makes the mute tongue of a baby speak.

3. Where Allah intends, a baby speaks like a grown up person, too.

4. The child of a righteous woman, such as Mary, is Jesus, the righteous.
"... and will be one of the righteous."
5. In childhood, too, it is possible for him to convey the message of Allah to others. So, some of our Imams, like Imam Jawad (as), Imam Ali-an-Naqi (as), and Imam al-Mahdi (as), were appointed to Imamate when they were in childhood.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 47

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكِ اللهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاء إِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

47. "She said: 'My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has touched me?' He said: 'Even so Allah creates what He pleases. When he decrees a matter (to be), He only says to it 'BE!' and it is '."

The Will of Allah is the cause of creation and he can create without any material means or material cause. Allah is the cause of all causes. Sometimes He takes the effect of a thing from it and sometimes gives a particular effect to a thing.

The appearance of existence, the maintenance of existence, the effects of existence, and the quantity, the quality and the duration of the effects of all things depend on the Will and pleasure of Allah. The Qur'an, in answer to the request of Zachariah, says:

"Even so does Allah whatsoever He pleases."[6]

While in answer to Mary it says:

"Even so Allah creates what he pleases."

The secret of this difference -does & creates -in the statement may lie in this that a child coming forth from a lady without being touched with a spouse is more surprising than that an old man brings an offspring from his old wife.

Then, to complete this meaning, the Qur'an says:

"...When He decrees a matter (to be), He only says to it 'BE!' and it is '."

Explanations

1. Allah is powerful in creation. He can create creatures both through the natural means and without natural means. Both of them are the same for Him,

"... He said: 'Even so Allah creates what He pleases."
When he decrees a matter (to be), He only says to it 'BE!' and it is '."

2. Allah's creation through an unusual way is not a new thing. This manner has had some former samples, too.
3. It does not matter for a person to wonder and ask question when its origin is not denial and obstinacy.

"She said: 'My Lord! how can I have a child when no man has touched me?'

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 48

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنجِيلَ

48. "And He will teach him the Book, and the wisdom, and the Torah and the Evangel."

In books provided by both main Islamic schools of thought, it is cited that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase 'He will teach the Book' is 'writing, and teaching how to write' and the purpose of /hikmah/ (wisdom) is being conversant unto the merits, effects, goodness and evils of things, deeds morals and beliefs, whether those things belong to this world or to the coming world.

Explanations

1. One of the principles and conditions of leadership is knowing the necessary things -being conversant unto science, wisdom, and the contents of the heavenly Books.

"And He will teach him the Book, and the wisdom, and the Torah and the Evangel."

2. At any time, the leader of a community should have conversance of the former incidents and laws. (Jesus (as) was taught Torah which was from the time of Moses.)

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 49

وَرَسُولاً إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُم بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ الطِّينِ
كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ والأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِـي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللّهِ
وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

49. "And (He will make Jesus) a Messenger to the Children of Israel, (saying): 'Verily, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. I will make for you like the figure of a bird out of clay, then I will breathe into it, and it shall become a bird by Allah's leave; and I will (also) heal the blind and the leprous and will raise the dead to life by Allah's leave; and I will inform you of what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Verily in that is a sign for you if you (indeed) are believers. "

This verse points to the miracles of Jesus (as). At first it says:

"And (He will make Jesus) a Messenger to the Children of Israel..."

Then, the Qur'an continues saying that he was commissioned to tell people:

"...I have come to you with a sign from your Lord..."

This sign was not only a single sign but it had also some numerous branches; thus:

"... I will make for you like the figure of a bird out of clay, then I will breathe into it, and it shall become a bird by Allah's leave..."

Then, it refers to his second miracle and states about the treatment of refractory diseases in some ordinary ways. It says:

"... and I will (also) heal the blind and the leprous... "

No doubt these subjects, especially for the physicians and scholars of that time, were some undeniable miracles.

In the third stage, it points to another miracle, saying:

" ...and will raise the dead to life by Allah's leave..."

This phenomenon is something that is considered among miracles and extraordinary actions at any time or period. The writer of Majma'-ul-Bayan says that Jesus (as) raised many dead persons to life.

Among them, it happened that he saw a dead was being carried in a coffin on the shoulders of people. Jesus (as) prayed for the dead one to bring him back to life again when the dead raised to life and came down from people's shoulder. Then he wore clothes and returned to his home and, later, he got a son.[7]

Another time Jesus (as) raised a ten-year-old girl to life when it was one day after her death. She returned home and, after a length of time, she married and borne an offspring.

These kind of miracles also occurred abundantly by, and at the time of the Prophet of Islam (S) and Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and other Imams from Ahlul-Bayt (as). For example, one day a man from Kufah, an ancient city in Mesopotamia, came to Hadrat Rida in Khorasan, located in the east of Iran, and said:

"O' progeny of the Messenger of Allah! the inhabitants of Kufah have seen many miracles from your ancestor, Amir-ul- Mu'mineen Ali (as) and, now, I ask you to do a miracle so that I can take it as a present to the people of Kufah."

Hadrat Rida (as), addressing the man, said:

"What do you want that I do?"

"My mother has died," the man said:

"I ask you to invocate that Allah raises her to life."

Imam Rida told him:

"Return home and you will find your mother alive."

When the man reached home in Kufah, he found his mother alive. He announced to people that the happening was the miracle of Imam Rida. So, that woman lived for some years after that and finally she died again.[8]

It is noteworthy that the reason that Jesus (as) was given those kinds of miracle was that at his time the science of medicine had progressed vastly. So, Allah appointed his miracle of the same knowledge of that time so that Jesus (as) could overcome the scientists and scholars of his time, expert in that field, in order that his prophet hood be proved.

The similar case happened for Moses, son of 'Imran (as), when sorcery had gone to its climax and had spread very vastly. Allah gave him the miracle of Rod to nullify their magic, and made the sorcerers unable to bring something like that.

The knowledge and art of the people at the time of our prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (S), was rhetoric and elegance. Therefore, Allah manifested the miracle of the Qur'an to them: the surprising tone and the wonders of statements, and the marvellous style of the word of Allah, all of which made those people unable to bring the like of it.

However, in the fourth stage, it refers to the hidden secrets of people. Usually everybody has some personal affairs in his / her life that are mysteries and others rarely know them, but Jesus (as) said:

"...and I will inform you of what you eat and what you store up in your houses..."

At the end, the verse, referring to all of these four divine miracles, says:

"... Verily in that is a sign for you if you (indeed) are believers."

It is understood from the content of the above mentioned verse, as well as the similar verses of this sense in the Qur'an, that the saints and Messengers of Allah can, by His leave, interfere in the world of nature and creation, when it is necessary.

They can cause some incidents to happen which are extraordinary and different from the natural process of the current affairs. This matter is something higher than Master-ship /wilayah/ (in religion, i.e. guardianship over people), which, in Islamic literature, idiomatically is called: /wilayat takwini/ i.e. (genetic authority).

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 50

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُم بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُم بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

50. "And (I come) conforming that which is before me of the Torah and to make lawful to you a part of that which has been forbidden unto you; and I come unto you with a sign from your Lord; therefore, be in awe of Allah and obey me."

This verse is also the continuation of the expressions of Jesus (as), In fact, he explains a part of the aims of his appointment to prophet hood. It says:

"And (I come) conforming that which is before me of the Torah…,"

He said he also came to allow them to use some of the things which (because of transgression and sin) had become forbidden for them. (The things were such as the meat of camel, some of animal fats, some birds, and some kinds of fish.)

"…and to make lawful to you a part of that which has been forbidden unto you…"

Then, it adds:

".. and I came unto you with a sign from your Lord; .."

Through Surah Al-'An'am, No 6, verse 146, Allah says:

"And to those who were Jews We made unlawful every animal having claws, and of oxen and sheep We made unlawful to them the fat of both, except such as was on their backs or the entrails or what was mixed with bones:…"

Therefore; may be, those unlawful things which became lawful by Jesus (as) are these very things.

And, at the end of the verse, it concludes thus:

"… therefore, be in awe of Allah and obey me."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 51

إِنَّ اللّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَـذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ

51. "Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord: therefore worship (only) Him; this is a straight path."

In this verse, the Qur'an speaks from the tongue of Jesus (as) and to remove any ambiguity or doubt and falsehood, and also in order that some people do not attach his exceptional birth as a means for his divinity, it says:

"Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord: therefore worship (only) Him; this is a straight path."

Here, Jesus (as) emphasizes that you must worship only Allah, neither me nor anything else. This is the way of monotheism, the straight path, not the path of paganism nor the path of duality or polytheism.

There are many other verses in the Qur'an, too, wherein Jesus (as) emphasizes on his worship and servitude before Allah. In spite of what is cited in the present perverted Evangels from the tongue of Jesus (as) that he often used the term ' Father' about himself, the Qur'an narrates the word /rabb/ (Lord) and the like of it from Jesus (as) which itself is an evidence to his utmost attention toward the effort and strive against paganism, or against the claim of divinity of Jesus (as).

Hence, as long as Jesus (as) was alive and was among people, no one dared to introduce him as one of gods. Besides that, as the Christian researchers have confessed, the subject of Trinity and belief in three gods (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) appeared from the third century AD.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 52

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنصَارِي إِلَى اللّه قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ اللّه آمَنَّا بِاللّه وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

52. "And when Jesus perceived infidelity on their part, he said: "Who are going to be my helpers (on the way) towards Allah?' The disciples said: 'We are the helpers (on the way of) Allah! We believe in Allah and bear you witness that we are "Muslims'."

The Arabic term /hawariyun/ (helpers) is the plural form of /hawari/ in the sense of 'change of way '. The 'helpers' on the way towards Allah were those who left the deviated way of people and joined to the path of right,

In Safinat-ul-Bihar, it is narrated from Imam Rida (as) who in this respect, said:

"They were some people who purified and brightened themselves and tried to purify others both."[9]

It is cited in Al-Kafi, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The helpers of Jesus left him when the stage of action came forth, but our helpers heartily accept kinds of calamities and do not abandon our obedience….." [10]

As Moses (as) prophesied, too, before coming Jesus (as), the Jewish people were waiting for his advent, but when he appeared and the unlawful interest of a perverted group of Children of Israel were exposed to danger, only a small group followed Jesus (as). The verse says:

"And when Jesus perceived infidelity on their part, he said: "Who are going to be my helpers (on the way) towards Allah?'…"

Here, only a small group responded this invitation positively. The Qur'an refers to these people as /hawariyun/ (helpers, the special disciples of Jesus (as).)

"...The disciples said: 'We are the helpers (on the way of) Allah! We believe in Allah and bear you witness that we are Muslims '. "

To prove their sincerity; the disciples of Jesus, in answer to him, said that they were the helpers (on the way of) Allah and they did not say that they were his helpers.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 53

رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلَتْ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

53. "Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and we follow the Messenger, so record us among the witnesses."

In this verse, there are some expressions stated which denote to the utmost sincerity and theistic belief of the disciples.

They presented their belief unto Allah like this and said:

"Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and we follow the Messenger, so record us among the witnesses."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 54

وَمَكَرُواْ وَمَكَرَ اللّهُ وَاللّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

54. "And they devised, and Allah devised, and Allah is the best devisers."

At the time of the holy Christ (as) to stop the call of his invitation, a group of evil people planned some satanic plots against him. They devised to capture and prison him in order to set the preparation of his execution by hanging him.

So, they assigned some prizes to those who could show his place or would deliver him (as). But Allah obliterated their plots totally and rescued him in the best form.

"And they devised, and Allah devised, and Allah is the best devisers."

Explanations

1. The Will and device of Allah is above all kinds of effort and device that anybody may bring forth.
2. The Lord is the supporter of His saints.
3. The evil or good devices and deeds of human beings are the main factors to call the wrath or the grace of Allah.

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 1, p. 277; Atyab-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p. 178; and Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 433
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 203
3. Tafsir-Kashshaf, Vol. 1 p. 427
4. Atyab-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, P. 189
5. A1-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 65 (Persian version)
6. The Quran, Surah Ale-'Imran, No.3, Verse 40
7. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, P. 446
8. 'Ithbat-ul-Huda, Vol. 6, P. 149 (Persian version)
9. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 493
10. Ibid, narrated from Al-Kafi; Kitab-ul-Kufr

Section 4: The Christians were invited to the Spiritual Contest - Promise of Rescue to Jesus

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 55

إِذْ قَالَ اللّهُ يَا عِيسَى إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

55. "(Remember) when Allah said: 'O' Jesus! I will take you and raise you up to Myself and purify you of those who disbelieve and place those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Judgement. Then, unto Me shall be your return and I shall judge between you as to that therein you used to differ."

This holy verse is again the continuation of the explanatory verses concerning the life of Jesus (as) Basing on Surah Nisa', No.4, verse 157, it is popularly assumed amongst the Islamic commentators that Jesus (as) was never killed but Allah took him to heaven. The verse under discussion is something referring to the same meaning. It says:

"(Remember) when Allah said: ' O' Jesus! I will take you and raise you up to Myself.."

And, then it adds:

"... and purify you of those who disbelieve..."

The purpose of this purification is saving him from the grips of disbelieving filthy people; or saving him from unjust accusations and dastardly plots that ended in the victory of his religion.

Then, it continues saying:

"... and place those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Judgement..."

This verse is one of the miraculous predictive verses of the Qur'an which speaks of the hidden news when it says that the followers of Jesus (as) will be always above the Jews who were opponent to Jesus. Then it adds:

"...then, unto me shall be your return and I shall judge between you as to that therein you used to differ."

That is, what was said about those victories are related to this world, while the final court and the ultimate Judgement over the deeds of people is something that will happen in Hereafter.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 56

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَأُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

56. "And as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with a severe chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

This verse and the following one are addressed to the Christ (as). It says: when people return to the Lord and He judges between them, the rows of people separate from each other. Then, this is the fate of those who recognized the right and rejected it:

"And as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with a severe chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

It is cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan that the chastisement of this world for them is that they become contemptible by being killed or captured, giving poll-tax, and whatever from despite and insolence come upon them. And the chastisement of the Hereafter is the blazing fire of Hell. [1]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 57

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

57. "And as to those who believe and do righteous works, He will pay them their rewards (fully) and Allah does not love the unjust."

After the explanation about the first group, in this verse, it refers to the second group and says:

"And as to those who believe and do righteous works, He will pay them their rewards (fully) ..."

Then, in conclusion, it emphasizes again that:

"... and Allah does not love the unjust."

Thus, the Lord, Who does not love the unjust, will never treat with the servants unjustly and will give them their rewards completely.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 58

ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ

58. "This We recite unto you of the Signs and the Wise Reminder."

Next to the explanation of the story of Jesus (as), this verse addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"This We recite unto you of the Signs and the Wise Reminder."

That is, this is that which was revealed to you in the form of the verses of the Qur'an that is free from any falsehood and superstition.

It is in the case that others had polluted the story and the fate of this great prophet, Christ (as), with thousands legends, superstitions, and innovations.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 59

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِندَ اللّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

59. "The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him' BE! ' and he 'was'.

A group of Christian people entered in Medina and went to meet the Prophet of Islam (S). They, talking with him, stated that the birth of Jesus (as), without having a father, was a sign of, and an evident for, his divinity.

Then the verse was revealed and answered them such that: if the fatherless creation is the evidence for Christ's divinity or being the Son of Allah, the creation of Adam is something more important than that, because Adam had neither father nor mother. So, why do you not consider Adam the Lord or Son of the Lord?

"The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him 'BE!' and he 'was'.

Explanations

1. The opponents are usually invited to the right in the same way which they have accepted. (The Christians have accepted that Adam (as) is the creature of Allah although he had no parents.)

2. Stating the events of history, explaining the past experiences and presenting the actual specimen are the best way of invitation.

3. Power of Allah is not limited.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 60

الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُن مِّن الْمُمْتَرِينَ

60. (This about Jesus is) the truth from your Lord, therefore be not you of the doubters.

The Arabic term /Mumtarin/ is derived from /miryah/ which means 'doubt, suspicion'. An expression rather similar to the words of this verse has also occurred in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 147. By this verse, it makes clear that the right firm statement and the fix real speech should come from the side of the Lord Who is right and fix.

Otherwise, a fix rule and a steadfast proper speech cannot be expected from some human beings who, because of the storms of desires and instincts, are not often steadfast.

Explanations

1. There is no rightfulness but in the path of Allah, the word of Allah, and the Law of Allah.

"(This about Jesus is) the truth from your Lord ..."

2. The large number of the opponents, their hard effort and strive, their wealth, their propagation, and so on; ought not have any effect on you.

"... Therefore be not you of the doubters."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 61

فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْاْ نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءنَا وَأَبْنَاءكُمْ وَنِسَاءنَا وَنِسَاءكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَةُ اللّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

61. "And whoever dispute with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge, say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us invoke in earnest and lay the curse of Allah upon the liars."

This holy verse, because of containing the phrase /nabtahel/ in its Arabic text, is known in Islamic literature as the verse of 'mutual cursing' /mubahilah/. The Arabic term /mubahilah/ means: to leave the personal tendencies and attracting the attention towards invocation and supplication before Allah for asking curse and perdition unto the one who is not right.[2]

In books from both Sunni and Shi'ah school of thought as well as in some books of tradition and history books, it is recited that in the tenth year A.H., from the side of the Prophet (S), some Muslims were commissioned to go to Najran, a region in Yemen, in order to preach Islam.

The Christian inhabitants of Najran set out a religious mission from their side to attend Medina and discuss with the prophet of Islam (S).

After some debates and disputes between them and the Prophet (S), they felt hesitation and sought for pretexts. Then, this verse was revealed, stating:

"And whoever disputes with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us invoke in earnest and lay the curse of Allah upon the liars."

That is, any curse which would reach either of two parties showed that that party was not right. Thus, the revelation of this verse put an end to that discussion thereby.

As soon as the missionaries of the Christians of Najran heard the suggestion of performing the mutual curse from the Prophet (S) looked at each other while they were surprised. They asked the Prophet of Islam (S) for respite to contemplate and consult over the subject.

Then, when they were dismissed from the presence of the Messenger of Allah they began consulting with each other. The Chief Monk, the Leader of the selected holy group of the Christians told them that they could accept the suggestion.

Then, if the Prophet of Islam (S) came for cursing with ceremonies and followed by a large group of people, they would not be worried about it and knew that nothing might happen.

But, if they saw that he came to the spot with a few people, they would give up the act of /mubahilah/ and compromise with him.

On the day of cursing, they saw that the Prophet of Islam (S) entered the appointed spot followed by two boys, a young man and a lady. Those two boys were Hassan and Husayn, (as) the young man was Ali-ibn- Abitalib (as), and the lady was Fatimah (as), the Prophet's daughter.

When the Chief Monk saw them, he exclaimed:

"By God! I see the faces that, if they pray to God for mountains to move from their places, the mountains will immediately move."

"If they curse you, you will be wiped out of existence to the last day of the life of the earth."

Therefore, the Christians asked Muhammad (S) to give up the idea of the agreed /mubahilah/ (mutual cursing) and they announced they were ready for compromise. They offered to pay two thousand suits -each of which cost, more or less, at forty dirhams (drachma) every year (in addition to some other things)... .

This event is cited in books of both great sects of Islam: Sunnites and Shi'ites.[3]

According to some of the Islamic traditions, the day of Mubahilah (mutual curse) was the twenty fourth or twenty fifth day of Zil-Hajj, and fits place, at the time of the holy Prophet (S), was somewhere outside of Medina which has located inside the city now.

At this place, there has been built a mosque by the name of Masjid-ul-'Ijabah which is about two kilo meters far from the Holy Tomb of the Prophet (S) in Masjid-un-Nabi.

'Mutual curse' /mubahilah / was not confined to that time. Some of Islamic traditions indicate that every believer can apply it, too, if the one wishes. In Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 351 a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated upon this subject who has issued a few instructions about it.

In Usul-Kafi, vol. 2, 'mutual curse', there are also cited five traditions which denote that every believer can apply 'mutual curse' with the opponents, too, by improving oneself through observing the fast for three days. Its order is such that: at twilight he puts his right hand fingers in his opponent's fingers and recites the concerning special supplication.

There may arise a question that when Faimah (as) was the only woman attended in that event, why does the Qur'an has applied the plural form of the word; " nisa'ana " (our women)?

The answer is that there are some examples of this specimen in the Quran where Allah refers to a single person in the form of plural, like Surah Ale-Imran. No.3. verse 181 wherein Allah says: " ...those who say: 'God is poor..." while only one Jewish person had said that aspersive sentence.

Or, the Quran, referring to Abraham (as) as an Ummah in himself standing alone against his world, says:

"Abraham was indeed a model..."[4]

Explanations

1. Ali-ibn-'Abitalib (as) has been counted as the 'self' of the Messenger of Allah (S):

"Our selves. "

2. When logic, reasoning, and miracle do not make a person accept the Truth, he must be threatened to destruction.

3. The last winning means and the forceful weapon of a true believer is supplication.

4. If you stand firm, the enemy, because of not being right, will retreat.

5. By that great event, the Lord and the Messenger of Allah (S) made us understood that these holy persons were the assistants and the associates of the Messenger of Allah (S) in inviting people to the Truth and to his sacred goal. They, following him, were ready to face with dangers, and continued the path of his movement.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 62

إِنَّ هَـذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَـهٍ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

62. "Verily this is certainly the true explanation. There is no god but Allah; and verily, Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Next to the explanation of the life of Jesus (as), in this verse, as an emphatic statement, it says that these explanations are the real story of Jesus (as). They are not some false claims such as the divinity of Christ or that he is the son of God:

"Verily this is the true explanation ..."

Neither the claimants of his divinity nor those who called him the son of God were right. The right is that which Muhammad (S) brought forth and he (S) said that he (Christ) (as) was a mortal creature and a prophet of Allah who, by a divine miracle, was borne from an immaculate mother without having a father.

Again, for a more emphasis, it says:

"... There is no god but Allah..."

And for Allah, considering His power, the birth of a child without having a father is not an important subject.

"... and verily, Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Yet! such a One deserves to be worshipped, not other than Him.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 63

فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

63. "But if they turn back, then, verily Allah is All-Knowing of the mischief makers."

In this verse, the Qur'an threatens those who reject accepting these facts after having the proper clear evidences before them. It says:

"But if they turn back, then, verily Allah is All-Knowing of the mischief makers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 64

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى كَلَمَةٍ سَوَاء بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلاَّ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَلاَ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضاً أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُولُواْ اشْهَدُواْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

64. "Say: ' O' People of the Book! come to a ward common between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate not anything with Him, and (that) some of us do not take any others for lords other than Allah '. And if they turn back, then say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims'."

An Invitation to Unification

In the former verses, the direction of invitation was towards Islam with its all specialities. But, in this verse, the aim is an invitation to the common points between Islam and other creeds of the People of the Book. It addresses the Prophet (S) and states:

"Say: ' O' People of the Book! come to a ward common between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate not anything with Him, and (that) some of us do not take any others for lords other than Allah '..."

By this method of reasoning, it teaches us that if there are some people who are not willing to cooperate with us in all holy aspects, we may try to attract their cooperation at least in common aims and utilize it as a base for the progression of our holy affairs. Then, at the end of the verse, it say:

"... And if they turn back, then say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims '."

That is, after this logical invitation to the common points of theism, when they still reject the Truth, tell them: We totally submit to Allah but you do not. And, therefore, your distance from the Truth will not have the least effect on our selves and we will keep and continue our way, viz. the path of Islam.

So, we worship Allah alone, and only His Laws we follow. And, there will be no human worshipping, of any kind, among us.

Notes

1. Majma ul-Bayan, vol 2, PP. 450 & 451
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 702, P. 452
3. The author of Al-Mizan has cited in his commentary book, Al-Mizan, vol. 3, P. 25'7 that this event has been reported similarly by 51 Companions of the Prophet. Also, in

commentary books by Fakhr-Razi, Aloosi, Maraqi, and in Kitab-ul-Kamil, by Ibn-'Athir, Vol. 2, P. 293, in Mustadrak Hakim, vol. 3, P. 150, in Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. One, P. 185, and also in Ruh-ul-Bayan, Al-Minar, Commentary of Ibn-Kathir, and in many other Islamic sources, this event has been recorded and it has been confirmed that the Messenger of Allah, (S) Ali-ibn-'AbiTalib, Fatimah Zahra, Hassan and Husayn (as) were the ones whose prayers were answered. This is a worthy document evidence for the greatness and magnificence of Ahlul-Bayt (as). In Ihqaq-ul-Haq, vol. 3, p. 49 the names of 61 respected people from the Sunnis school of thought are mentioned who all said this verse is on the greatness of the holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as)

4. Surah Nahl. No.16, verse 120

Section 5: Invitation to the followers of the Book to Unity of Allah as a common basis of Faith

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 65

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَاةُ وَالإِنجِيلُ إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِهِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

65. "O' People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Abraham when the Torah was not sent down, neither the Evangel, but after him? Have you then no sense? "

Both Jewish people and Christian people considered Abraham exclusively theirs. These kinds of statements were so current that the Qur'an says:

"Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian... "[1]

Hence this verse, to refer to the absurdity of their claim, addresses them both and says how do you know Abraham (as) the follower of the Torah and the Evangel while he lived before those two Books. Surely, the Book which was not revealed had not any follower. So, do you not contemplate at least thus far that your speech be adapted to the history?

"O' People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Abraham when the Torah was not sent down, neither the Evangel, but after him?

Have you then no sense? "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 66

هَاأَنتُمْ هَؤُلاء حَاجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُم بِهِ عِلمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

66. "Ha, you are those who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? Surely Allah knows, and you know not."

This verse is both a reminder and a warning to the People of the Book. It tells them that they raised objections and asked some inappropriate questions upon what they knew. For instance at that time, they observed the natural life of Jesus (as) with their own eyes, and saw -his material needs: his need to food, his need to clothing, and his need to residence, yet they disputed about him.

Some of them called him (as) a liar and some others considered him Son of God! Or, they disputed about Muhammad (S) whose tokens were clearly cited in the Torah and Evangel and they were known to them.[2]

When you can not find a definite point and dispute upon what you know, why do you refer to a phenomenon that you have not knowledge about it and, for example, you seek for the religion of Abraham (as)?

"Ha, you are those who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? ..."

This is because Allah knows everything but you do not. (Then you should learn it from the concerned ones, viz. from the Prophet (S) and his book.)

"... Surely Allah knows, and you know not."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 67

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلاَ نَ ْ َانِيًّا وَلَـكِن كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

67. "Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian but he was an upright Muslim, and he was not (one) of polytheists."

The Arabic term /hanafa/ means: 'tending to the Truth', while its opposite Arabic term is /janafa/ which means: ' deviation or swerving to falsehood?

The term / hanif / is applied for a person who is on the path of Truth. But this very word was one of the perverted words which the idolators used to employ about themselves. Therefore, the pagans were also called /hunafa/ which is the plural form of this word.

With the occurrence of the term /musliman/ 'a muslim' in this verse and beside the term /hanafan/, the Qur'an has purified both Abraham, from the dirt of polytheism, and this holy word from the misusers.

"Abraham was neither (as) Jew nor (as) Christian but he was an upright Muslim, and he was not (one) of polytheists."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 68

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَـذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَاللّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

68. "Verily the nearest people to Abraham are those who follow him and this Prophet and those who believe, and Allah is the Guardian of the believers."

It is realized from this verse that the theological relationships are higher and fixer than the family relationships. Those who have the same belief, the same line, and the same goal, are closer to each other than those who are apparently relatives but are aloof from each other from the point of idea and belief.

An evidence for this meaning is found in the tradition of Imam Sadiq (as) who in a statement told 'Umar-ibn-Yazid:

"By Allah! You are from among the family of Muhammad (S)", and then he (as) recited the above verse. [3]

Again, the holy Prophet (S) said about Salman:

"Salman is from us, Ahlul-Bayt."[4]

Explanations

1. The essential relationship between people and their leader is a theological relationship. It is not a tribal or linguiform, or regional or racial relationship.

2. The standard of being nigh to the Prophets, in general, is the obedience that one proves of them.

3. The Prophet of Islam (S) and Muslims are alongside the same line with Abraham (as) and they have the same purpose and the same aim.

4. There is a tradition from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan which says:

"Verily the lover of Muhammad is the person who obeys Allah although the one is far from him (S) from the point of relationship. And, verily, the

enemy of Muhammad is the person who disobeys Allah, although the one is a near relative of him." 5

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 69

وَدَّت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّونَكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

69. A group among the people of the Book desire to make you go astray, while they make not astray but themselves, and they are not aware.

The Arabic term /ta'ifah/ is derived from /tawaf/ and is applied for a group or a community who, in order to be safe from the danger of savage animals and robbers, decamp tribally both in summer and in winter to continue their lives,

The feature of cultural attack and ideological plots are dealt with in this verse and the following three verses. In this verse, it informs of ideological grudges. In the next verse the Quran informs of obstinacy and infidelity.

The seventy first verse of the current Surah speaks about the style of neglecting aright, overlooking justice, and intentional concealment. Verse seventy second informs of a technical cultural attack arising from inner denial and objecting the existence of weakness and instability among some groups of people.

Explanations

1- Knowing the enemy and his wants is necessary for being safe from the probable harms.

2- Those who try to pervert others may commit the sin of deceit, hypocrisy, rancour accusation, and plot.

"... While they make not astray but themselves, and they are not aware."

3- One of the aims of the enemies of Islam is planning for the creation of moral and ideological deviation amongst Muslims.

4- In Judgements, do not forget justice and equity.

"A group among the people of the Book desire to make you go astray ..."

5. The danger of ideological and cultural attacks are the most important dangers which need an earnest awareness.

6. Do not trust in the hypocritical expressions of the opponents. They heartily desire your aberration.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 70

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّه وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

70. "O' People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah while you bear witness (to their truth)? "

This verse, maybe, hints to the glad news that the people of the Book had studied in the Torah and the Evangel about Hadrat Muhammad (S).

They did know the Prophet of Islam (S) as they knew their own children. But, they denied all those divine tokens in order to keep their social situation and protect their material interests. So, the Qur'an says:

"O' People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah while you bear witness (to their truth)? "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 71

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

71. "O' People of the Book! Why do you confound the Truth with falsehood and hide the Truth while you know (it)?"

Many of the distorters, under the name of Islamicists, orientalists, historians, and tourists, interfered in books, places, times, and human beings and distorted them.

They worked on encyclopaedias with the title of researchers and illustrated such a feature for Islam that when the seekers of Islam study them feel the circumstance so inconvenient that they do not even think of believing in it either.

"O' People of the Book! Why do you confound the Truth with falsehood and hide the Truth while you know (it)? "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 72

وَقَالَت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ آمِنُواْ بِالَّذِيَ أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَاكْفُرُواْ آخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

72. "And a group of the People of the Book said: 'Believe in what has been sent down to those who believe, at the opening of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps (by this device) they return (from Islam)."

In the explanation of the occasion of revelation of this verse, it is said as follows.

Once at the time of the Prophet (S), twelve scholars from Jewish people, in order to create a state of agitation and doubtfulness among the Muslim believers, decided to come to meet Prophet Muhammad (S) in the morning and express their belief in Islam, but on the same day in the evening they would turn their backs to Islam and say that they met Muhammad (S) but he was not the same as the Torah and Evangel had explained.

By this skilful plan, they wanted to show off the common people that if Islam were a good creed and the former religions confirmed it; the scholars of the People of the Book would not desist from it.

Applying this manner, they could create both doubtfulness among Muslims and prevent other Jews to embrace Islam. But, by revealing this verse, the Lord made their plan manifest to all, saying:

"And a group of the People of the Book said: 'Believe in what has been sent down to those who believe, at the opening of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps (by this device) they return (from Islam)."

Explanations

1. It is possible that sometimes some individuals penetrate into the lines of Muslims and stab from behind, so we ought to be aware.
2. Muslims must not be simple-minded and credulous.
3. We must set our faith so firm that the return of several individuals does not affect our hearts.

4. In the foreign policy, the motive of holding communication, or ceasing it, is often to bring some special conditions both inside and outside the country.

5. It usually happens that, in sensitive stages, Allah divulges the secrets and plans of His enemies.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 73

وَلاَ تُؤْمِنُواْ إِلاَّ لِمَن تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَى هُدَى اللّهِ أَن يُؤْتَى أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُحَآجُّوكُمْ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

73. "And do not believe save in one who follows your religion. say: "Verily the (true) guidance is Allah's guidance -that a person may be given the like of what you have been given; or they would dispute with you in the presence of your Lord '. Say: 'Verily grace is in the hand of Allah. He endows it with whom He pleases, and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing'. "

The People of the Book had some recommendations to enjoin each other. Their first recommendation was:

"And do not believe save in one who follows your religion..."

The Divine revelation tells the Prophet (S) that in answer to them:

"... say: "Verily the true guidance is Allah's guidance..."

That is, the true guidance is not confined to your religion, therefore, your prejudice is in vain.

Their second recommendation was that: never believe:

"... that a person may be given the like of what you have been given..."

Hence, the prophet hood must be in the Children of Israel, not amongst Arab-

"... or they would dispute with you in the presence of your Lord '... "

So, you have the best logic and never believe that it be with others. Then, the Lord addresses the Prophet (S) thus:

"Say: 'Verily grace is in the hand of Allah, He endows it with whom He pleases..."

And it is not confined to any race or a particular sect.

"... and Allah is All-Embracing, All-knowing'."

Explanations

1. In their plots, the enemies of Islam recommend to concealment. They also have no trust to anyone other than themselves.

2. The grace of Allah is not restricted to a particular group.

3. Prejudice is forbidden.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 74

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

74. "He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace."

To consider that Allah endows His grace and mercy to no sect like that which He gave to the Jewish sect, is not more than a mere imagination. Allah knows well to whom He gives the charge of prophet hood. He chooses the most efficient person among his servants and bestows His

special grace upon him, because Allah's Grace is vast and His Wisdom is the elector.

"He specializes for His mercy whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 75

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِن تَأْمَنْهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ إِن تَأْمَنْهُ بِدِينَارٍ لاَّ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلاَّ مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَآئِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُواْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

75. "And among the People of the Book is he who, if you entrust him with a heap of wealth, he will return it to you; and among them is he who, if you entrust him with a dinar, he will not return it to you unless you keep standing firmly upon him (demanding it). This is because they say: 'There is not any responsibility upon us for the gentile, and they tell a lie against Allah while they know (it)."

The moral values usually resist. Honesty is always good and treachery, to anyone, is always disgraceful.

"And among the People of the Book is he who, if you entrust him with a heap of wealth, he will return it to you;

The justification of sin is graver than the sin itself.

"...and among them is he who, if you entrust him with a dinar, he will not return it to you unless you keep standing firmly upon him (demanding it). This is because they say: 'There is not any responsibility upon us for the gentile ..."

They devoured the wealth of people unlawfully and said Allah was content with it.

"... and they tell a lie against Allah while they know (it)."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 76

بَلَى مَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَى فَإِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

76. "Yes, whoever fulfils his promise and guards (against evil) -then, verily Allah loves the pious ones."

The command in this verse is: to stand firm and be steadfast before wrong ideas.

By the way, to keep one's word and fulfil the promise with virtue is the main cause to call the love of Allah, not only being the People of the Book with a bare pretension.

"Yes, whoever fulfils his promise and guards (against evil) -then, verily Allah loves the pious ones."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 77

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً أُوْلَـئِكَ لاَ خَلاَقَ لَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ وَلاَ يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللّهُ وَلاَ يَنظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلاَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

77. "Verily those who sea Allah's covenant, and their oaths, for a little price, these! there will be no share for them in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look towards them on the Day of

Resurrection, nor will He make them grow (by purifying of sin), and they will have a painful chastisement."

Allah threatens, of course, those who breach their promise to following five kinds of divine wrath and deprivation from the grace of Allah.

1. The lack of any merit in the Hereafter.
2. The deprivation from the speech of Allah.
3. The deprivation from the grace of Allah.
4. The deprivation of purity from sin.
5. To be involved in the painful punishment of Allah.

"Verily those who sea Allah's covenant, and their oaths, for a little price, these! there will be no share for them in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look towards them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow (by purifying of sin), and they will have a painful chastisement. "

In the Islamic literature, it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

"The person who does not observe trustworthiness, is faithless; and the person who does not fulfil his promise, has no religion." [6]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 78

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ اللّه وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ اللّه وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّه الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

78. "And verily among them is a group who twist their tongues with the Book that you may suppose it to be from the Book, but it is not from the Book; and they say: 'It is from Allah', while it is not from Allah; and they speak falsehood against Allah and they know (it)."

Occasion of Revelation

This verse was also revealed about a group of the Jewish scholars who used to write with their own hands some things against what was found in the Torah about the characteristics of the Messenger of Islam (S) and said that it was from the Lord. They perverted the facts of the Torah with their speech.

In this verse, again, the words are about some other wrong actions of a group of scholars of the People of the Book. It says:

"And verily among them is a group who twist their tongues with the Book that you may suppose it to be from the Book, but it is not from the Book;

They did not suffice to that action either, but they explicitly said that it was from the side of the Lord:

" ...and they say: 'It is from Allah', while it is not from Allah... "

Then, the Qur'an emphasizes that this action was not done because of their mistake, but they knowingly told a lie about Allah

"... and they speak falsehood against Allah and they know (it)."

By the way, from this verse and its previous verses, the great danger of the deluded scholars for a community and a nation is made clear.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 79

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُؤْتِيَهُ اللهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُواْ عِبَادًا لِّي مِن دُونِ اللهِ وَلَـكِن كُونُواْ رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

79. " It is not for a human being that Allah should give him the Book, the judgement and prophet hood, then he should say to people: 'Be my servants rather than Allah's'; but rather, (he would say): 'Be godly because of your constant teaching the Book and your constant studying (it yourselves)."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of the revelation of this verse and the following one, it is cited that once a person came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and said that people greeted him (S) as they did unto others, while they thought that kind of ordinary greeting was not enough for them to respect him.

The man asked the Prophet (S) to allow people honour him (S) somehow privileged, and, for example, prostrate before him.

The Prophet (S) said that prostration was not authorized before anybody other than Allah. So, they would respect their prophet only as a human being, but they ought to know his due and follow him.

This verse continues stating to nullify and improve the vain thoughts of a group of the People of the Book. It specially reminds the Christians that never Jesus (as) claimed divinity. It also clearly responds the request of those who wanted to repeat those kinds of claims about the Prophet of Islam (S). It says:

"It is not for a human being that Allah should give him the Book, the judgement and prophet hood, then he should say to people: 'Be my servants rather than Allah's'..."

Neither the Prophet of Islam (S) nor either of other prophets is rightful to say such a statement. Therefore, the qualities of this kind attributed to prophets were totally made and finished by some unaware persons who had been far from the prophets ' trainings.

Then, it adds:

"... but rather, (he would say): 'Be godly because of your constant teaching the Book and your constant studying (it yourselves)."

Yes, the Messengers of Allah never exceeded the limits of servitude and worship and they were always humble before Allah more than that others were.

It is understood from the aforementioned sentence that the aims of prophets were not only to educate individuals but also to train some godly, virtuous and learned scholars among the societies who could enlighten their environments with their knowledge.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 80

وَلاَ يَأْمُرَكُمْ أَن تَتَّخِذُواْ الْمَلاَئِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّيْنَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

80. "And neither would he enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords. What! Would he enjoin you with infidelity after you have been Muslims? "

This verse is a complementary meaning to what was said in the previous verse. It indicates that prophets did not invite people to their worship, nor invited them to worship angels nor other prophets. It says:

"And neither would he enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords..."

This sentence, on one side, is a reply to the Arab pagans who considered the angels as the daughters of God and believed a kind of divinity for them, while they introduced themselves among the followers of the religion of Abraham.

On the other side, it is a respond to Sabians who counted themselves the followers of John, but promoted the rank of the angels to the extent of worship.

It is also an answer to the Jews and the Christians who introduced Ezra and Jesus the son of God.

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"... What! Would he enjoin you with infidelity after you have been Muslims?"

That is, how is it possible that there comes a prophet and begins inviting people to Faith and monotheism, but afterward he leads them to the path of polytheism?

By the way, the verse implies the immaculate ness of prophets and that they did not swerve from the path towards the obedience of Allah.

Notes

1. Surah ' Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 67
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 457 & Tafsir-ul-Qutubi
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 458
4. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 22, p.326
5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 458
6. Naraqi Commentary, vol. 3; p. 192

Section 6: Previous Scriptures confirms Islam

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 81

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّيْنَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُم مِّن كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَى ذَلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُواْ أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُواْ وَأَنَاْ مَعَكُم مِّنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

81. "And (remember) when Allah took the pledge of the prophets (saying): 'Since I have given you of Book and wisdom -then there comes to you a Messenger, confirming that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must help him'. He said: 'Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? ' They said: ' We affirm', He said: 'Then bear witness and I am also with you among the witnesses '."

The Holy Pledge!

Following the previous verses, that denoted to the existence of the clear tokens of the Prophet of Islam (S) in the Books of the former prophets, this verse points to a general principal concerning the subject. It says:

"And (remember) when Allah took the pledge of the prophets (saying): 'Since I have given you of Book and wisdom -then there comes to you a Messenger, confirming that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must help him '..."

In the verses of the Qur'an the unity of the Messengers of Allah repeatedly have been pointed out; and this verse is one of its clear examples.

Then, for an emphasis, the Quran says:

"... He said: 'Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)?' They said: 'We affirm He said: 'Then bear witness and I am also with you among the witnesses '."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 82

فَمَن تَوَلَّى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

82. "Then whoever turns back after that, -these are they that are the transgressors"

In this verse, the Qur'an threateningly reproaches the breachers of promise and says that, after these firm pledges and emphasized promises, if anyone disobeys and turns one's back to a godly prophet, like the Prophet of Islam (S), the glad tidings of whose advent accompanied with his specialities have been mentioned in the former Divine Books, and does not believe, the one is a transgressor, i.e. out of the circle of the obedience of Allah (s.w.t.).

"Then whoever then turns back after that, -these are they that are the transgressors."

And, we know that Allah (s.w.t) does not guide such fanatic and pertinacious transgressors, as the Qur'an in Surah at- Taubah, No.9, verse 80 remarks. [1]

So, those who are not guided by the Lord will have a painful fate with the divine punishment of the Fire of Hell.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 83

أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ اللّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ

83. "Is it then other than the religion of Allah that they seek (to follow)? And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they shall be returned. "

All the creatures existing in the skies and the earth submit to Allah. All people should submit to Him, too. If some people hide this submission in the ordinary conditions, when they confront with a serious danger, they helplessly turn their hearts to Him.

Some people willingly submit to Him in the ordinary situations, while the totality of people have to submit at the case they feel danger.

Every particle in the world, any atom or sell that exist, as well as created things, all in all, follow the same rule that Allah has assigned upon them, and He is able to change it at any moment.

"Is it then other than the religion of Allah that they seek (to follow)? And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they shall be returned."

Explanations

1. The existing world submits to Him, then why do we not submit? When all the creatures of the world bow before Him, why do we not surrender?

"... And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth... "

2. The Final fate of ours is going unto Him, then why do we not turn to Him from the beginning?

"... and unto Him they shall be returned."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 84

قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لاَ نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

84. " Say: ' We believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Abraham and, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between any of them. And to Him do we submit'."

Similar to Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 136, that Allah took pledge from the former prophets to believe in their following prophet, and to introduce him and help him, this verse denotes that the following prophet, too, believes in all the former Divine Books recidivously. It says:

"Say: 'We believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Abraham and, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between any of them. And to Him do we submit'."

The purpose of the Qur'anic term /asbat/, mentioned in the verse, is those seven tribes from the Children of Israel among whom there were some prophets.

Explanations

1. We should not ignore the services of others.

2. All prophets had the same aim.

3. Religion and the guidance of Allah have been accompanied with the life of man all the times. Prophets are like the teachers of different classes who, as links of a chain, have been commissioned to guide human beings.

4. The preference of some prophets to some others of them is never a barrier for our general belief in them.

"... we make no difference between any of them..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 85

وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الإِسْلاَمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

85. "And whoever follows any religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and, in the Hereafter he will be among the losers."

In the previous verses, the feature of leadership and the theology of Islam was illustrated. Its general principles are as follows:

1. All the former prophets have been taken pledge to believe in their following prophet.

2. The whole existing world submits to Allah, and no religion can be accepted except the religion of Allah.

3. The followers of Islam believe in all prophets of Allah and the Divine Books.

This is the feature of the religion of Islam and its convictions. Now, the Qur'an explicitly announces that whoever accepts besides than that it will not be accepted from him.

"And whoever follows any religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and, in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 86

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُواْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُواْ أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

86. "How shall Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after their belief and (after) bearing witness that the Messenger is true, and clear proofs had come unto them? And Allah guides not the unjust people."

Occasion of Revelation

At the advent of Islam, one of the Helpers (the Muslims in Medina) murdered a sinless person. Being afraid of the punishment, he apostatized and escaped to Mecca, while eleven persons of his companions, who had embraced Islam, apostatized, too.

When he arrived in Mecca, he repented of his action seriously. Then, he sent one of his relatives to Medina to ask the Prophet (S) whether there was any way for him to return.

The verse was revealed and announced the acceptance of his repentance under some special conditions.

In the former verses, the speech was about the religion of Islam as a godly acceptable religion. Here, the verse speaks about the persons who have accepted Islam and, afterward they have returned from it. These persons are called 'apostates'.

It says:

"How shall Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after their belief and (after) bearing witness that the Messenger is true, and clear proofs had come unto them? And Allah guides not the unjust people."

Why does Allah not guide such people? The reason of it is evident. They have known the Prophet (S) through many clear signs and tokens and, thereafter, they have testified to his prophet hood.

Therefore, by returning from Islam to infidelity, they are, indeed, unjust and transgress. So, the one who intentionally transgresses is not eligible for the guidance of Allah. Such a person has spoilt the aspects of guidance in his self.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 87

أُوْلَـئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللّهِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

87. "(As for) those, their recompense is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and mankind altogether."

In this verse, the retribution of such people, who after knowing the Truth return from it, is stated. Now, it indicates that this retribution is the curse of Allah and of the angels and of the people altogether.

"(As for) those, their recompense is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and mankind altogether."

The Arabic term /la'n/ (curse) means to reject and to desert because of wrath or hatred. Thus, the curse of the Lord is the very deserting someone from His grace. And, the curse of angels and people is either their spiritual wrath and abhorrence, or a calling on God to deprive a person from His Mercy.

These people, in fact, have sunk in corruption and sin, so that they are abhorred by all intelligent figures of the world, irrespective of human beings and angels.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 88

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

88. "They will abide therein. Their chastisement will not be lightened, nor will they be respited."

In this verse, it is added that: not only they are involved in the general curse of all but also they will remain in it forever. In fact, they are similar to Satan who was involved in eternal curse.

Surely, the result of it is that such group of infidels will abide in a painful irreducible chastisement forever, while they will not be respited, either.

"They will abide therein. Their chastisement will not be lightened, nor will they be respited."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 89

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُواْ مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُواْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

89. "Except those who repent after that and amend, then verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This verse opens the way of returning to such people to pave it if they wish. It lets them repent, because the aim of the Qur'an, thoroughly, is improvement and training. It says:

"Except those who repent after that and amend, then verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

It is understood from this meaning that corruption creates loss in one's Faith so that the one, after repenting, should renew his Faith in a manner that this defect be wiped out.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 90

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ ازْدَادُواْ كُفْرًا لَّن تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الضَّآلُّونَ

90. "Verily those who disbelieve after their belief, then increase in infidelity; their repentance will never be accepted; and these are they who are astray."

Occasion of Revelation

Some commentators have said that this verse was revealed about a group of the People of the Book who had believed in the Prophet of Islam (S) before his advent, but when he was appointed to prophet hood they disbelieved in him.

A Vain Repentance

In the previous verse, the statement was about those who regretted from their deviated path sincerely and repented truly and, consequently, their repentance was accepted. But, in this verse, the speech is about those whose repentance is not accepted. It says:

"Verily those who disbelieve after their belief, then increase in infidelity;

their repentance will never be accepted; and these are they who are astray."

The repentance of these people is extrinsic; because when they see the triumph of the advocators of Truth, helplessly express their apparent regretful ness and repentance. Thus, it is natural that such repentance can not be accepted.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 91

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِم مِّلْءُ الأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوِ افْتَدَى بِهِ أُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

91. "Verily those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, there will never be accepted from anyone of them the whole earth full of gold, if he should offer it in ransom. These are they who will have a painful punishment and they will have no helpers."

Following to the statement of the invalid repentances hinted out in the previous verse, here, in this verse, the words are about the invalidity of some ransoms, where it says:

"Verily those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, there will never be accepted from anyone of them the whole earth full of gold, if he should offer it in ransom.."

It is clear that infidelity wastes all the good deeds that a person does. If the one could fill the earth with gold and gave all of them as charity in the way of Allah, it would not be accepted from him. And, the case, of course, will certainly be the same in the Hereafter.

At the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an refers to another point, saying:

"...these are they who will have a painful punishment and they will have no helpers."

That is, on the Day of Judgement, not only ransom or charity will have no advantage for them, but also the intercession of the intercessors does not extend over them. It is because intercession has some conditions among which is having belief in Allah. Besides that, in principal, intercession is done by the leave of Allah.

Notes

1. The verse continues saying: "…and Allah does not guide the transgressing people."

Section 7

Ever living Testimony to the Truth of Islam Attaining to goodness demands sacrifice -Main features of Abraham's religion from the basis of Islam -The first house of blessings and guidance to the worlds-

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 92

لَن تَنَالُواْ الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

92. "You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, surely Allah is well aware of it."

In this verse, the Qur'an points to one of the signs of Faith in a believer. It says:

"You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love..."

The Arabic Term /birr/ has a vast meaning which covers all good deeds irrespective of belief and pious deeds.

As it is understood from Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 177, belief in Allah, belief in the Resurrection Day, belief in prophets, helping the indigent, prayer and fasting, to fulfil the promise, and to be steadfast in confronting with problems and adventures, all in all, are counted the branches of righteousness.

Therefore, to attain the rank of righteousness needs many qualities. One of those qualities is spending out from the possessions that are loved by that person. This kind of giving charity is a standard for measuring the Faith and personality of the person.

To attract the attention of the givers of charity, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and whatever thing you spend, surely Allah is well aware of it."

The Believers and Giving Charity

1. Abu-Talhah Ansari had the largest number of date trees in Medina when his garden was his most beloved thing for him. This garden was located in front of the Prophet's Mosque wherein there was a spring with wholesome water.

Sometimes the Prophet (S) entered that garden and drunk water from the spring. The garden was so beautiful and splendid with a great income that people commonly spoke well of it. When the above verse was sent down, Abu- Talhah went to the Prophet (S) and said:

"The most beloved things with me is this garden. I want to give it in charity in the way of Allah."

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Well done! this is a wealth which will be of profit for you."

Then the Messenger of Allah (S) continued saying:

"We have accepted it from you but we return it back to you in order that you give it to your own relatives as alms."

He accepted it and divided the garden among them willingly. [1]

2. When Hadrat Fatimah Zahra (as) was going to go to her husband's house at her wedding night, a beggar asked her for a worn out dress. She

(as) remembering the above verse, gave in charity the same new dress which was for her wedding. [2]

3. Once it happened that a guest came to Abu Dharr Ghafari. Then he told the guest since he was busy at that time and he had some camels, then the guest would go out and bring him the best of them. So he went and came back with a thin camel.

Then Abu Dharr told him that he was not faithful to him with that camel. The guest replied that he found the best camel, but he thought of the future day he would need it. Then Abu Dharr said:

"Verily my needy day to it will be the day I will be put inside my grave, since Allah says: 'You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love; '." [3]

4. Once it happened that 'Abdullah-ibn Ja'far, a rather rich but gracious Muslim, entered a palm-plantation where a black slave was working. At the time of need of food, a dog came inside the garden and approached the slave.

Then he threw a loaf of bread for the dog, and it ate it. After that the slave threw the second and the third loaves of bread for the dog one after another, and it ate both of them, too.

'Abdullah, standing looking at the slave, asked him how much his everyday food was, and the slave answered: "That which you saw." 'Abdullah said: "Why did you donate (the whole your food) to this dog?"

The slave replied that the dog was not from that region and had come from a distanced place while it was hungry, so he (the slave) did not like to return it.

'Abdullah said that the slave was more gracious than him. Then, he bought the palm-plantation with all its equipments including the slave. He let him be free (not to be slave any more) when he donated him all the garden and the equipments, too.[4]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 93

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حِـلاًّ لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلاَّ مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَاةُ قُلْ فَأْتُواْ بِالتَّوْرَاةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

93. "Every food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel (Jacob) had forbidden to himself before the Torah was sent down. Say: 'Bring you hither then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful'."

It is cited in some books that the Children of Israel raised objections to the Prophet of Islam (S) that if his teachings were adopted to the teachings of the former prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Issac (as), why he (S) did not decree meat and milk of camel unlawful.

In answer to them, this verse was revealed saying that all kinds of food were lawful to the Israelites, but it was the Israel himself that made some of foods unlawful for himself.

"Every food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel (Jacob) had forbidden to himself before the Torah was sent down.

Say: 'Bring you hither then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful'."

The reason for this treatment, as it has been mentioned in some authentic books, is that whenever Israel consumed these kinds of food (meat of camel, for example), they were harmful for him and caused him to be physically unhealthy. Therefore, he avoided eating those sorts of food but the children of Israel thought that it was an eternal canonical prohibition.[5]

The Arabic term /ta'am/ 'food' is applied for something which is tasteful for human beings.

The Qur'anic word /hill/ means: 'to be free from or released from', therefore /ta'am-i-halal/ is stated for 'the lawful edible things'.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 94

فَمَنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ مِن بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَـٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

94. "So, whoever invents a lie against Allah after that, they are unjust."

In this verse, it says: now that they are not ready to bring the Torah and their false allegation unto Allah has been proved, they should know that, after this, those who invent a lie against Allah are unjust, because they know it and they commit such wrong intentionally. It says:

"So, whoever invents a lie against Allah after that, they are unjust."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 95

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُواْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

95. "Say: Allah has spoken the Truth, therefore follow the creed of Abraham, the upright (in faith) and he was not (one) of the polytheists."

The address, in this verse, is to the Prophet (S), denoting that, Allah is true and those false things had never been in the pure religion of Abraham (as). Therefore, follow the religion of Abraham (as) who was upright in faith and was not one of those who associate partners to Allah.

It says:

"Say: Allah has spoken the Truth, therefore follow the creed of Abraham, the upright (in faith) and he was not (one) of the polytheists."

That is, now that you see I am truthful in my invitation, and then follow my religion which is the same as the pure religion of Abraham, the upright. He was never one of the polytheists. So, this idea that pagans of Arab consider themselves as the followers of his creed is completely meaningless. How far the distance between an idol-worshipper and an idol-breaker is!

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 96

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

96. "Verily the first House (of worship) set up for mankind the one at Bekka (Mecca), blessed and guidance for the worlds."

One of the objections of the Children of Israel was that they said why 'Muslims had taken the Ka'bah as their Qiblah instead of Jerusalem which has been built 1500 years Before Christ by Solomon. This verse is an answer to them that the Ka'bah has existed from the beginning day and it is the first House, viz, its ancientness and its date is further than any other places of worship.

By the way, it is cited in Tafsir-Al-Mizan (vol. 3, p. 583, Persian version) that there are many traditions upon the expansion of the earth /dahw-ul-'ard/ [6] while there is no scientific reason to oppose it and it does not differ from the verses of the Qur'an.

In Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 192, Imam Amir-ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"... Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, upto the last ones in the world with stones (of Ka'bah)... " [7]

It is understood from this statement that the Ka'bah has existed from the time of Adam (as) and its background is further than any other worshipping place.

In the Qur'an and the traditions of Ahlul-Bayt (as), the Ka'bah has been referred to with different terms. Some of them are as follows:

1. The Ka'bah is the first House: Surah' Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 96.
2. Ka'bah, maintenance for the people: Surah Al-Ma'idah, No 5, verse 97.
3. The Ka'bah, the ancient (free) House: Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 29.
4. The Ka'bah, the House, a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people: Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 125.
5. The Ka'bah is a sign of Islam: Nahjul-Balagha.

Explanations

1. Ka'bah is the secret of the guidance of people, an inclusive guidance for all, since it is the Qiblah of all. It is similar to the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (S) that have been revealed and who have been appointed for all human kind.
2. When Allah wills, the stones of Ka'bah will be blessed and will guide human beings. Besides that, looking at Ka'bah is counted worship, and, by His command, Abraham and Ishmael (as) become its particular servants.
3. The Qur'an, the Messenger and the Ka'bah are independent for they are specific to Allah. Neither is the Quran made up and finished by any individual, nor the Prophet pays the allegiance of anyone, nor the Ka'bah belongs to a particular person.
4. Ka'bah is the first point in the earth.
5. Ka'bah is the first House built for the worship of people.
6. The goodness and blessings of Ka'bah are not only for the believers, but they are for all.

"Verily the first House (of worship) set up for mankind is the one at Bakka (Mecca), blessed and a guidance for the worlds."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 97

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّـنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَن دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلّه عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ
اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلاً وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ الله غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

97. "Therein are clear signs, the standing place of Abraham, and whoever enters it is secure; and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah, who can afford the journey to it; and anyone who disbelieves, then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

Mecca and Ka'bah is an exhibition of Allah's power and signs. Its history is full of memories and incidents, so that contemplating on them can be giving a lesson and serving as an admonition. In its structure, Abraham works as a builder and Ishmael as a worker.

The forces of 'Abraha equipped with elephants, did not succeed to ruin it and are abolished by birds of Ababeel. At the time of Hadrat Ali's birth (as) its wall opens for her mother and lets her enter inside to bring a child who, not very late in future, takes the idols of the Ka'bah down.

Bilal, an Abyssinian negro slave, in front of the astonished eyes of the nobles of Mecca, stands upon it and shouts the prayer call. And, finally, there will come a day when the Witness of Allah leans against its wall and announces the delivery of human kind and invites the people of the world to Islam.

Yes, Mecca is a Divine safe city where anyone enters into is in peace. When a person arrives inside the sacred Mosque, even the person is a murderer, no one can molest him. The only action that can be done against him is to straighten the circumstances for him so that the person himself be forced to come out.

The Station of Abraham is located beside the Ka'bah. According to the Islamic literature, the Station of Abraham is the same stone that was under the feet of Abraham (as) when he was building the Ka'bah and promoting its walls, on which the trace of his foot has remained.

This stone with its foot trace, which has existed from centuries before Christ (as) and Moses (as), and with all those changes that happened to Ka'bah and its surroundings as a result of invasions, floods, and destructions, is one of the signs of the Power of Allah.

Allah calls people to pilgrimage. The Arabic term 'Hajj' means: 'intention accompanied with movement', while the Arabic word /mahajjah/, from the same root, is called to a straight way which leads a person to the destination.

This word, in Islamic terminology, is applied for the intention of going to the sacred House and performing its concerning rites.

Yes, Ka'bah is the site of manifestation of the signs and Power of Allah, where the monotheists, the lovers of divine Unity, gather together after passing from hard high mountains and dry, plantless deserts in order to say /labbayk/.

Explanations

1. In the Sacred House, there are many clear signs: (the sign of holiness and spirituality, the sign of spiritual trance which recalls the divine memories of all prophets, from Adam (as) upon the last prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (S), and that it had been the place where prophets circumambulated, and the direction of all prayers that pray toward it. ….)".

"Therein are clear signs, the standing place of Abraham..."

2. It is of the privileges of Islam that it has assigned a region of the earth as a safe region where all the oppressed of the world can announce their call.

"And who ever enters it is secure..."

3. Responsibility and doing duty is decreed upon a person as much as the capability of the person allows, (whether from the point of financial ability

or physical ability or security), and capability is the proper condition of Hajj.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah, who can afford the journey to it..."

4. Denial of Hajj and its abandonment is infidelity.

"... and anyone who disbelieves..."

It is cited in the book entitled: .Man Layahduruhul-Faghih', vol. 4, p. 368 that once the Prophet of Islam (S) told Hadrat Ali (as):

"The abandoner of Hajj is infidel when he is capable."

And whoever delay it a day after another until the one dies, it is as if he has died like a Jew or a Christian.

5. Going to pilgrimage is an acceptance and answering to the invitation of Abraham (as) since it was the command of Allah to him to follow:

"And proclaim among people the pilgrimage."[8]

The first rite of the pilgrimage of the Sacred House is the change of clothing accompanied with saying. 'Labbayk', which means: O' Lord! I came.

6. The result of performing the commands of Allah will surely return to the person himself, else Allah does not need anything.

"... then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

7. This verse is the only verse in which the obligatoriness of Hajj pilgrimage for those who are capable is stated. It means that whoever has physical and financial capacity, it is necessary for the one to perform Hajj pilgrimage. The rest of the ordinances of pilgrimage are stated in the books of sacred rites of the pilgrimage by the jurisprudents.

8. The person who is capable and ought to go to pilgrimage has more duties to do (than others).

9. Allah invites to pilgrimage but He does not stoop to a favor.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah ...and anyone who disbelieves, then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

10. Obligatory things are a kind of duty upon the believers.

"... and pilgrimage to the House is a duty upon mankind for Allah ..."

11. Allah is an Absolute Self-sufficient.

"... verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 98

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّه وَاللّه شَهِيدٌ عَلَى مَا تَعْمَلُونَ

98. "Say: 'O' People of the Book Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, while Allah is Witness to what you do?"

This verse is a question accompanied with a reproach but in a polite tone. This manner is the best kind of delivering propagation. However, it denotes that if you bear Allah in mind and know Him as a witness to your deeds, you may yield infidelity.

"Say: 'O' People of the Book Why do you disbelieve in the Signs of Allah, while Allah is Witness to what you do?"

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 99

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّه مَنْ آمَنَ تَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأَنتُمْ شُهَدَاء وَمَا اللّه بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

99. "Say: ' O' People of the Book! Why do you obstacle those who believe from the way of Allah seeking to make it crooked, while you are witnesses? But Allah is not heedless of what you do? "

In the previous verse the question was about the infidelity of the People of the Book. In this holy verse, besides criticizing against their former behaviour, they are questioned if they do not believe themselves and disbelieve in the Signs of Allah; by what reason they hinder others to pave the path of Allah. But they should know that Allah is never heedless of what they do.

"Say: 'O' People of the Book! Why do you obstacle those who believe from the way of Allah seeking to make it crooked, while you are witnesses? But Allah is not heedless of what you do?"

Explanations

1. Your enemies always try to pervert you from the Truth.

"…seeking to make it crooked …"

2. Your enemies know and are witnesses to your rightfulness.

"…. while you are witnesses…'

3. The enemies of Islam might know that Allah is aware of their deeds and is lying in wait for them.

"… But Allah is not heedless …"

4. If we know that ourselves and our conduct are not overlooked, even for a moment, we may leave wrong doing.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 100

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوَاْ إِن تُطِيعُواْ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ

100. "O' you who have Faith! If you hearken to a party from among of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into disbelievers."

In several books it is cited that one of the Jews by the name of Shash-ibn-Qays once passed by the gathering of Muslims consisting of members of two tribes called 'Aus and Khazraj and saw that they were very sincere with each other.

He became worried about it and said to himself that formerly these two tribes were opposite to each other, but now, under the leadership and direction of Muhammad (S), they are living with each other peacefully. If this leadership continues, the existence of the Jews will be in danger.

He, systematically gathered a group to help him, and commissioned a young man to go inside them and to excite them by reminding them the memories of their fight in Biqath (the place where those two tribes fought against each other), so that the fire of a hard combat was going to be lit between them.

The Prophet of Islam (S), with his soothing words, warned them and made them aware of that evil plot. Therefore, they put their swords down

and kindly embraced each other while they were shedding tear and were regretful.

According to the commentators, in this incident, the above verse and the two former verses were revealed which caused the reproach and blame of the People of the Book as well as warning the Muslims.

"O' you who have Faith! if you hearken to a party from among of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into disbelievers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 101

وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنتُمْ تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتُ اللّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

101. "But how can you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are being recited unto you and His Messenger is amongst you? And whoever holds fast to Allah will indeed be guided to the Straight Path."

The cause of deviation or disbelief is either the lack of right path or the lack of guidance. But when there are Book, normatic custom, ordinances, and divine leaders, why do they pervert?

Relying on and trusting in Allah and seeking help from Him, is the key to security from all temptations and deviations.

"But how can you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are being recited unto you and His Messenger is amongst you? And whoever holds fast to Allah will indeed be guided to the Straight Path."

Explanations

1. The way of approaching to Allah is open to everybody.[9]

"... and whoever holds fast to Allah ..."

2. The existence of law alone is not enough to control infidelity and perversion. The presence of leader is necessary, too.

"... and His Messenger is amongst you? ..."

3. Seeking refuge to anyone or any authority rather than Allah, is perversion.

4. What is more important than motion, is finding the straightway and paving it.

"...(the one) will indeed be guided to the straight path."

5. Holding fast to Allah has a definite result:

"...(the one) will indeed be guided..."

6. Holding fast to Allah is an earnest movement accompanied with a cognizant choice which is paving the way with the saints of Allah and in the way of Allah.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 102

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلاَّ وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

102. "O' You who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him: and do not die unless you are Muslims."

Any perfection such as Faith, knowledge and piety has stages. There are elementary stages and the stages higher than that up to the absolute perfection. For instance, we recite the Qur'an where it says:

"O' Lord! Increase me my knowledge!"[10]

Or in Makarim-ul-Akhlaq, the Supplication, we, asking the Lord, recite: "O' Lord! Expand my Faith to a perfect faith."[11] And, in the above mentioned verse we recite:

"... be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him..."

Imam Sadiq (as) in this regard, says:

"The due piety is in the fact that Allah be obeyed and not to be disobeyed; to be remembered and not to be forgotten, and to be thanked with no ingratitude,"[12]

This shows that there are some stages and steps in piety.

Explanations

1. Every day we must promote to a higher stage.

"O' you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him...."

2. Mere belief is not enough, but to remain faithful is the condition. Beginning is not so important while the ending is more important.

"... and do not die unless you are Muslims."

3. Islam not only teaches us how to live, but also teaches us how to die.

4. Piety is the only key to the goodness of destiny.

Notes

1. Sahih-Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 395, Kitabul-Wasaya, 623, Beirut Edition, Darul-Qalam, 1987.

2. Nuzhat-ul-Majalis, vol. 4, p. 226.

3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 474.

4. Tafsir, Almanar, Vol. 3, p.376.

5. In Tafsir Nimunah, vol. 3, p. 6, it is cited that eating meat of camel caused his sciatic nerve to be moved and pain appeared in his feet.

6. The term /dahv-ul-ard/ means that the earth was expanded and extended from beneath the Ka'bah.

7. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 192

8. The Quran, Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 27.

9. In Jami'ah Kabirah, the supplication which has been brought forth by Imam Hady (as) it says: "Whoever holds fast to you has indeed held fast to Allah." That is, seeking refuge to the saints of Allah is indeed seeking refuge to the protection of Allah. As in the previous verse it says obedience to the disbelievers is the key to infidelity, while obedience to the divine leadership is also the key to belief in Allah.

10. The Qur'an, Surah Taha, No.20, verse l14

11. Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, Makirum-ul-Akhlaq, by Imam Sajjad (as)

12. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 292

Section 8

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 103

وَاعْتَصِمُواْ بِحَبْلِ اللّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلاَ تَفَرَّقُواْ وَاذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَاء فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىَ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

103. "And hold fast by the cord of Allah all together, and do not separate; and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies (of each other) then He united your hearts with (mutual) love, and thus you became brethren by His favour while you were on a brink of a pit of Fire then He delivered you from it! Even so Allah makes clear His Signs for you, so that you may be guided."

An Invitation to Union

In this verse, the ultimate subject, which is the problem of unity and standing against any separation, is referred to. It says:

"And hold fast by the cord of Allah all together, and do not separate..."

The opinions are divided among the commentators as to the meaning of the term /hablullah/ 'the cord of Allah'.

And in Islamic literature there are also varieties of narrations about it. But there is no difference in the basic meaning of them, because the purpose of 'the cord of Allah' is any means of connection with the Pure Essence of Allah, whether it be the Qur'an, the Prophet (S) or his progeny, Ahlul-Bayt (as).

Then, the Holy Qur'an points to the great bounty of union and brotherhood among Muslims. It invites them that they contemplate upon the miserable conditions of the past and to compare its dispersion with union of Islam. It says:

"... and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies (of each other) then He united your hearts with (mutual) love, and thus you became brethren by His favour ..."

Here, the subject of love and unity of the hearts of the believers is attributed to Allah, where it says:

"... then He united your hearts with (mutual) love ..."

By this phenomenon, He has pointed to a social miracle of Islam, because if we refer properly to the background of the old enmity of Arab, we will realize that how a slight and simple subject could lighten the fire of a bloody war between them. This proves that it was impossible to form one united nation from that unaware, ignorant, separated people through the ordinary ways.

The importance of unity and brotherhood among the hostile Arab tribes has not remained concealed even from the eyes of the non-Muslim scientists and historians, who totally speak of it with much wonder.

Then, the Qur'an continues saying:

"... while you were on a brink of a pit of Fire then He delivered from it!..."

That is, Allah delivered you from that horrible precipice and led you to a safe and sound point, viz. the point of 'brotherhood and love'.

The Arabic word /nar/ 'fire' mentioned in the above verse is metaphorically used for the fights and conflicts which, in the Age of ignorance, every moment could happen by a pretext among Arabs.

At the end of the verse, to emphasize it more, it says:

"... Even so, Allah makes clear His Signs for you, so that you may be guided."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 104

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

104. "And there should be a party among you who invite (others) to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these are they that shall be prosperous."

The secret of the location of the verse concerning with the subject of 'enjoining right and forbidding wrong' between two verses that instruct to union and singleness; may be in the fact that in a dispersed social system either there is not an authority to invite people to do good, or these invitations are not effective and helpful.

The act of enjoining right and forbidding wrong may be performed in two ways: 1) It may be done as a public, common duty in which everybody must undertake it as much as the one is capable to fulfil it.

2) The duty that a uniformed group undertake and follow it powerfully. Like a driver who does not observe the traffic rules in the street. So, both other drivers protest him by lights and horns and the traffic police enters the scene to face seriously with the offender.

There are many traditions and narrations upon the subject of 'enjoining right and forbidding wrong' in Islamic literature. Here, we suffice to only this one in which Imam Ali (as) says:

"Do not give up enjoining right and forbidding wrong lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then (in that case) when you pray, your invocations will not be granted to you."[1]

Explanations

1. In an Islamic society, it is necessary to be a group of inspectors and controllers, confirmed by the Islamic System, to superintend and control the situations, attitudes, and movements.

"And there should be a party among you who invite (others) to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong ..."

2. In the society, the invitation to benevolence is prior to enjoining the right.

3. To improve a society and to prevent corruption and corruptive people, without the existence of authority and a definite responsible manager, is impossible.

4. Those who compassionately sympathize with the development and improvement of the society are the true prosperous ones:

"... those are they that shall be prosperous."

5. Invitation to benevolence, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong should ceaselessly be performed in the society, not in the form of seasonal and temporary movements.

6. Prosperity is not found only in personal delivery, but the prosperity and delivery of others are also from its conditions.

7. The invitor to benevolence and right would be Islamicist, anthropologist, and one who knows the methods. It is for this reason that it is said that some of the members of community have special duty, not all of them.

8. Enjoining the right is prior to forbidding the wrong, because if the way of what is right be open, there will be little possibility for committing wrong.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 105

وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُواْ وَاخْتَلَفُواْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

105. "And be not like those who separated, and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them; and these are they that will have a grievous chastisement."

We ought to learn lessons from the bitter divergences between schools of the former times:

"And be not like those who separated,.."

We should know that the root of separations is not always only the factor of ignorance, because desires also cause discord.

"... and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them..."

Separation and disagreement not only breaks your power in this present world and finally destroys it, but also brings Fire of Hell to you in the Hereafter.

"... and those are they that will have a grievous chastisement."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 106

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُواْ الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

106. "On the Day when some faces will turn while some faces will turn black! Then as to those whose faces turn black (will be said): 'Did you disbelieve after your believing? Taste, then, the chastisement for that you were disbelieving!"

The idea mentioned in this verse upon the white faces and the black faces on the Day of Judgement, perhaps is, in fact, the illustration of the very states and spiritualities of people.

Those who have accepted the master ship of Allah in this world, He takes them from darkness into Light, and, on that Day, they will arrive there with bright features.

But those who have followed the master ship of false gods, these gods take them from Light into the darkness of desires, separation, polytheism and ignorance. These persons will be raised black in darkness on the Day of Resurrection.

In the Qur'an, sixteen times infidelity is mentioned after Faith, two times after Islam, and three times calf-worship after theism, twenty seven times denial after knowledge and evidence. All of these instances are illustrative to danger and serves as an earnest warning for all of us.

"On the Day when some faces will turn while some faces will turn black! Then as to those whose faces turn black (will be said): 'Did you disbelieve after your believing? Taste, then, the chastisement for that you were disbelieving!"

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verses 107-108

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللّه هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللّه نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللّه يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

107. "And as to those whose faces will turn white, they shall be in the Mercy of Allah; wherein shall they abide forever."

108. "These are the verses of Allah which We recite unto you in Truth; And Allah does not intend any injustice to the world."

The recitation of the divine verses, without any exaggeration or diminution, is adapted to the truth, therefore, actions and reactions, deeds and rewards, movements and recompenses of all nations have been fixed upon a single principal and way. Allah neither ordains the servants a duty beyond their endurance, nor changes the divine laws and ways of treatment with respect to nations.

Explanations

1. Allah does not cast any kind of unjust over anyone, nor does He wish any unjust for anyone.

2. Having a white face or a black face is a reflection of belief, thoughts, and deeds of individuals themselves.

"And as to those whose faces will turn white, they shall be in the Mercy of Allah;

Wherein shall they abide forever."

3. Unjust is usually offered by someone who is weak or is not able to obtain the goal through right way; or the one is neglectful due to evil, indecency and committing unjust, none of which is right to be attributed to Allah, the Pure.

Therefore, the second verse may refer to the same fact that the Lord, to Whom all things belong and the return of all is towards Him, does not need to be unjust.

"These are the verses of Allah which We recite unto you in Truth; And Allah does not intend any injustice to the worlds."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 109

وَلِلّه مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللّه تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ

109. "And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Allah, and all affairs will be returned unto Allah."

The meaning in this verse is next to the idea mentioned in the previous verse.

It consists of the reason that injustice cannot be issued from the side of Allah. This verse denotes how it can be possible that Allah, (Glory be to Him and highly exalted is He), transgresses while everything in the world of existence belongs to Him.

"And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Allah, and all affairs will be returned unto Allah."

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter 47

Section 9: Muslims raised for the welfare of mankind

Muslims, as a whole, were raised for the welfare of human beings. They might not afraid of the Jews. The strength of the Jews shall be a failure. Muslims should not take the Jews as friends.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 110

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُم مِّنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

110. "You are the best nations brought forth for (the benefit of) mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah; and if the People of the Book had believed, it would surely have been better for them. Some of them are believers while most of them are transgressors."

Again, an Invitation to Truth

In this holy verse, again it has returned to the proposition of 'enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong' and also 'belief in Allah' when it says:

"You are the best nations brought forth for (the benefit of) mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah..."

It is interesting that the reason of being the best nations for Muslims is stated the fulfilment of 'enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong' and' belief in Allah'. This shows that the improvement of human society, without belief in Allah and not being accompanied with invitation to the Truth and struggling against corruption, is impossible.

Besides that, the accomplishment of these two obligatory duties guarantees the spread of belief and the execution of all personal and social rules, while the surety of execution is verbally prior to the law itself.

Then it points out that the benefits of a religion which is so clear and the ordinances which are so magnificent are deniable for none. Therefore, if the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) do believe, it is of their own gain.

But, unfortunately, only a minority of them have recalcitrated the foolish bigotries and have embraced Islam eagerly, when the majority of the People of the Book have disobeyed the command of Allah.

"... and if the People of the Book had believed, it would surely have been better for them. Some of them are believers while most of them are transgressors."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 111

لَن يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلاَّ أَذًى وَإِن يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُوَلُّوكُمُ الأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لاَ يُنصَرُونَ

111. "They shall never harm you except for annoyance; and if they fight with you, they shall turn their back to you, then they shall not be helped."

This verse is both a prediction and a glad tidings and consolation for the Muslims. It tells them that under the shade of belief, union, and enjoining the right, they are insured. Therefore, they would not be afraid of the threats

of the enemy, because the enemy is insignificant and the victory is of the Muslims'.

Explanations

1. The school of Islam and the Muslims themselves are insured in the shade of Faith.

"They shall never harm you ..."

2. The opponents of Muslims may attain only a small part of their molesting projects.

"... except for annoyance ..."

3. He who is faithless, is in lack of the spirit of perseverance.

"... and if they fight with you, they shall turn their back to you, then they shall not be helped."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 112

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا ثُقِفُواْ إِلاَّ بِحَبْلٍ مِّنْ اللّه وَحَبْلٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَبَآؤُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّه وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّه وَيَقْتُلُونَ الأَنبِيَاء بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا وَّكَانُواْ يَعْتَدُونَ

112. "Abasement has been branded on them, wherever they are found, unless (they cling to) the cord of Allah and the cord of men; so, they have incurred wrath from Allah; and wretchedness has been stumped upon them. That is because they went on rejecting Allah's Signs and slaying the prophets unjustly. That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing."

The result of disbelief and slaying prophets is being encountered with abasement and wretchedness in this world and the wrath of Allah in the coming world. Sin and transgression is a preparation for greater sins, like infidelity and slaying the prophets.

"... That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing."

It is worthy to note that what is worse than transgression and disbelief is the continuation and persistence of the act of disbelief and transgression.

"... so, they have incurred wrath from Allah; and wretchedness has been stumped upon them."

The Jews are always abased, although sometimes they take the cord of propagation, economics and policy, yet they are in the lowest position from the point of honesty, honour, amiability and security. The example of them is like the cruel persons who are armed and create alarm and terror in order to obtain masses of wealth, but they can never attain a high honourable rank.

.

"Abasement has been branded on them, wherever they are found ..."

Explanations

1. The secret of honour is two things: The inwardly Faith in the Power of Allah, and outwardly communication with communities and nations.

"... unless (they cling to) the cord of Allah and the cord of men..."

So, each of them singly is imperfect. When there is Faith but accompanied with isolation and retreat with people, we can do nothing.

And, when we are in contact with all people, but there is not Faith from inside, we are helpless, too.

2. Maybe, the repetition of the word 'cord' is the key to the fact that these two cords are not alike.

3. Islamic literatures denote that the Jews did not mostly slay the prophets with swords themselves, but they reported the prophets' mysteries and information to the enemies and, as a result of it, the cruel forces could capture the prophets and slay them.

"... That is because- they went on rejecting Allah's Signs and slaying the prophets unjustly..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 113

لَيْسُواْ سَوَاء مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَآئِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللّهِ آنَاء اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ

113. "Yet, they are not all alike: of the People of the Book is a group upright (in faith). They recite the verses of Allah in the night time while they prostrate themselves (in adoration)."

The Truth-seeking Soul in Islam

Following to the scorns and hard blames that the former verses had against the Jews, in this verse, to observe the justice and respecting the rights of eligible persons, and that all of them cannot be considered alike, it says:

"Yet, they are not all alike: of the People of the Book is a group upright (in faith)..."

Another quality that they have, is that they usually recite the revelations of Allah during the night. It says:

"... They recite the verses of Allah in the night time... "

And, at the conclusion of the verse, it refers to their humbleness, where it says:

"... while they prostrate themselves (in adoration)."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 114

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

114. "They believe in Allah and the last Day; and they enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and hasten to do good deeds, and these are of the righteous ones."

In this verse, it adds that: some of the People of the Book, besides recitation of the verses of Allah and prostration, believe in Allah and in the Resurrection Day. It says:

"They believe in Allah and the Last Day..."

They furnish the proposition of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong as their duty-

"…and they enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong..."

Another quality of them is that, in doing good, they take precedence of each other. It says:

"…and hasten to do good deeds..."

And, finally, they are such that it says:

"…and these are of the righteous ones."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 115

وَمَا يَفْعَلُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوْهُ وَاللّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ

115. "And whatever good they do, they will never be denied the reward of it; and Allah knows the pious ones."

In the insight of Allah, nothing will ever be wasted. It says:

"And whatever good they do, they will never be denied the reward of it…"

In the Qur'an we recite:

"…Allah only accepts from those who are pious."[1]

That is, the condition of the acceptance of deeds is Faith and piety. In this regard, here the verse denotes and Allah says that We ourselves know who the pious ones, whose deeds should be accepted, are:

"…and Allah knows the pious ones."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 116

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَن تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلاَ أَوْلاَدُهُم مِّنَ اللّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

116. "(As for) those who disbelieve, surely neither their possession nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allah, and they are the inhabitants of the Five; wherein shall they abide forever."

The Qur'an has repeatedly announced that for the disbelievers neither wealth, nor progeny, nor family members, nor spouse, nor apology, nor friends, nor master, nor any thing else is of the slightest effectuality for the wrath of Allah (s.w.t.).

"(As for) those who disbelieve, surely neither their possession nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allah, and they are the inhabitants of the Five; wherein shall they abide forever."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 117

مَثَلُ مَا يُنفِقُونَ فِي هِـذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّهُ وَلَـكِنْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

117. " The likeness of what they (disbelievers) spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of a wind wherein is intense cold which strikes the tilth of a people, who have wronged themselves, and destroys it. Allah has not been unjust to them, but they are unjust to themselves."

The Arabic term /sirr/ has been applied in the sense of: 'excessive cold that scorches plants'. The attractive point in this verse is that in view of Allah mere opinion and stimulus are not effective in affairs.

That is why the verse indicates that you may not be worried about the money the disbelievers spend in a false way, because the fruit of it is like a tilth that can easily be abolished by a cold wind.

"The likeness of what they (disbelievers) spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of a wind wherein is intense cold which strikes the tilth of a people, who have wronged themselves, and destroys it..."

From the beginning of Islam up to now, there have been many plots, accusations, invasions, wars, and evil propagations done against Islam and Muslims, but every day the religion of Allah have developed more than before.

When a nation faces with the wrath of Allah, it is not an injustice from the side of Allah, but it is a reflection of their own deeds that they themselves have performed.

"... Allah has not been unjust to them, but they are unjust to themselves."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 118

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ بِطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لاَ يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالاً وَدُّواْ مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاء مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

118. "O' you who have Faith! Do not take intimate other than yourselves. They do not fall short in corrupting you. They like what distresses you. Hatred has already appeared from (the utterance of) their mouths while what their breasts conceal is greater. We have made the Signs clear for you if you ponder."

Following to the verses stated the kind of relations the Muslims may have with the disbelievers, this verse points at one of the most sensitive subjects, and, in the form of a delicate resemblance, it warns the believers. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! Do not take intimate other than yourselves. They do not fall short in corrupting you..."

It is never such that their experience of friendship with you hinders them to desire pain and loss for you because of difference in religion and creed. In the contrary, they are interested in your distress and suffering.

"... They like what distresses you..."

They are usually careful of their statements and behaviour in order that you do not be cognizant of their interior mysteries and that their secrets would not be uncovered. They speak carefully and cautiously, yet the signs of enmity are manifest from among their speech.

"... Hatred has already appeared from (the utterance of) their mouth..."

In short, by this means, Allah has shown the way of recognition of the inward state of the enemies; and informs us from their hidden minds and their interior mysteries. It says:

"... while what their breasts conceal is greater..."

Then, it adds:

"... We have made the Signs dear for you if you ponder."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 119

هَاأَنتُمْ أُوْلاء تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْاْ عَضُّواْ عَلَيْكُمُ الأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُوتُواْ بِغَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

119. "Here you are, loving them while they do not love you! Though you believe in all Books and when they meet you, they say: 'We believe', but when they are alone, they bite the ends of their fingers in rage against

you. Say: 'Die in your rage!' Surely Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

In this verse it addresses the Muslims and says that you love them because of relationship or neighbourliness, or for other reasons, neglecting the fact that they do not like you. It is in the case that you believe in all the Books that have been sent down by Allah (irrespective of your own Book and the heavenly Book of theirs), but they do not believe in the revealed Book you have.

"Here you are, loving them while they do not love you! Though you believe in all Books..."

Then, the Qur'an introduces the real feature of this group of the People of the Book, who are hypocrites, when it says:

"... and when they meet you, they say: ' We believe', but when they are alone, they bite the ends of their fingers in rage against you..."

It says to the Prophet to tell them that they would die with the rage that they have and this grief will be with them until the day of their death-

"…Say: 'Die in your rage!'..."

You were not aware of their condition, but Allah is, because:

"... Surely Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 120

إِن تَمْسَسْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِن تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُواْ بِهَا وَإِن تَصْبِرُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

120. "If any good befalls you, it grieves them; and if an evil afflicts you, they delight in it; but if you are patient and be pious, their plotting will not harm you in any way; surely Allah encompasses what they do."

In this verse one of the signs of their grudge and enmity is stated. It indicates that if a victory or a happy incident comes forth for you, those groups of the People of the Book will become inconvenient, but if an evil incident happens against you, they will become happy,

"If any good befalls you, it grieves them; and if an evil afflicts you, they delight in it;.."

But if you persevere against their hostilities and, in the meantime, you observe piety and patience, they cannot harm you by their treacherous plans, because Allah quitely encompasses whatever they do.

"…but if you are patient and be pious, their plotting will not harm you in any way; surely Allah encompasses what they do."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Maidah, no 5, verse 27

Section 10

The Battle of 'Uhud, The readiness of some and cowardice of others - The Muslims should only trust in Allah - The divine assistance at Badr - The assistance through angels - Allah's pardon.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 121

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

121. "And (remember) when you did set forth from your house folk at daybreak to lodge the believers in encampments for the battle (of 'Uhud), and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

From this verse on, the revelations are about an expansive important Islamic happening known as the Battle of 'Uhud. At the beginning, the verse has referred to the Prophet (S) and that he came out of Medina to lodge the forces at the side of 'Uhud mount. It says:

"And (remember) when you did set forth from your house folk at daybreak to lodge the believers in encampments for the battle (of 'Uhud), and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Explanations

1. The Prophet himself (S) posted the believers at their stations for battle. Thus, it shows that not every ordinary person can decide on the site of the battle and defensive regions.

"... to lodge the believers in encampments for the battle (of 'Uhud) ..."

2. Technical, geographical, and natural planning of military operations should be performed before initiating the concerning program and in a quiet and calm circumstance.

"... when you did set forth from your house folk at daybreak ..."

3. Early morning is the best time for estimating the necessary battle conditions.

4. At the threshold of fighting, we must detach our hearts from our own house folk.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 122

إِذْ هَمَّت طَّآئِفَتَانِ مِنكُمْ أَن تَفْشَلاَ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَلْيَتَوَ ِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

122. "When two parties of you had decided to flinch but Allah was the protector of them both (and helped them to change their thought); So, in Allah (alone) should the believers trust."

Two groups of Muslims by the names of' Banu Salmah ' From 'Uss Tribe and 'Banu Harithah' from Khazraj tribe decided to shirk to participate in fight. There are different reasons mentioned for the inactivity of these two groups. Some of them are as follows.

1. Their own fear, when they saw that the number of enemy was large.

2. They were inconvenient for that their attitude was not attended to and the troops did not shelter in the city in spite of the side of 'Uhud mount.

3. Why did the Prophet (S) not let the confederate Jews help them? And so on.

But, by His Mercy, the Lord protected those two groups from falling in the trap of the sin of return and escape from the battlefield and He kept them safe in His Master ship.

Explanations

1. Those who are not under the master ship of Allah are inactive.
2. Allah does not leave the believers to themselves. He assists them in sensitive moments.
3. Allah is aware of our intentions and He informs His Prophet of the thoughts of people.
4. All those who go to fight, are not the same.
5. The only remedy of weakness is trust in Allah. This effective remedy is in the hands of the believers.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 123

وَلَقَدْ نَ َكُمُ اللهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُواْ اللهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

123. "And certainly Allah did assist you at Badr when you were contemptibly scanty; so be in awe of Allah, in order that you might be thankful."

These verses are the revelations which were sent down in a critical state for the strengthening on the defeated spirits of Muslims. At first, the notable triumph of Muslims in the Battle of Badr is pointed out, so that, by its remembrance, they become assured about their future. Therefore, it says:

"And certainly Allah did assist you at Badr when you were contemptibly scanty..."

The numbers of your members were 313 with a little preparation, while the number of the disbelievers was more than one thousand, with many equipments.

Now that the situation is like this, be in awe of Allah, and avoid repeating disobedience from the command of your leader, viz, the Prophet of Islam (S), in order to be thankful for His numerous blessings.

"... so be in awe of Allah, in order that you might be thankful."

Explanations

1. Do not forget the unseen helps, especially in the battlefield.
2. The gratitude of the unseen helps is that you do not misuse them, be not proud of them, and be careful of your duty to Allah.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 124

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَن يَكْفِيكُمْ أَن يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِثَلاَثَةِ آلاَفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلآئِكَةِ مُنزَلِينَ

124. "When you said to the believers: 'Will it never suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand of angels sent down?' "

1. By the leave of Allah, angels may be at the service of the believers.
2. It is necessary for a fighting believer to be hopeful in the Grace of Allah.

3. One of the duties of the leader in an Islamic society is to make people hopeful and regardful to the unseen helps.

"When you said to the believers: 'Will it never suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand of angels sent down?' "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 125

بَلَى إِن تَصْبِرُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَـذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِخَمْسَةِ آلافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلآئِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

125. "Yes! If you be patiently steadfast and act aright even if they (the enemy) rush on you in such a headlong manner, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand of angels distinguished."

In the previous verse, the speech was upon three thousand assisting angels, and in this verse, it speaks about five thousand angels. This may be for the sake of military conditions, and the necessities, or because of the spiritual circumstances and piety of the fighting believers.

Explanations

1. Perseverance and piety are the causes of the descent of the angels and the unseen helps.

"Yes, if you be patiently steadfast and act aright ..."

2. The Laws of Allah do not change with the change of time and people.

"... your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand of angels distinguished."

3. To be steadfast in affairs is worthy when it is accompanied with piety; otherwise it is stubbornness and obstinacy.

4. Do not neglect the enemy because their attack is urgent and roaring.

"... even if they (the enemy) rush on you in such a headlong manner..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 126

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللّهُ إِلاَّ بُشْرَى لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِ وَمَا النَّ ُ إِلاَّ مِنْ عِندِ اللّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

126. "And Allah did not make it (the descending of angels) but as good tidings for you, and to reassure your hearts thereby; and there is no victory save from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise."

1. In battlefield, peacefulness and good news are of the necessities of the fighting believers.

"And Allah did not make it (the descend of angels) but as good tidings for you, and to reassure your hearts thereby..."

2. The entire preparations of men including material, scientifical, psychological, and invisible affairs, without the Will of Allah (s.w.t.), are ineffective.

"... and there is no victory, save from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise."

3. Glory and Power of Allah are accompanied with His Wisdom. (It is possible, of course, that under some particular reasons Muslims also be defeated in some instances. Yes, the helps of Allah depend on His Wisdom.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 127

لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنقَلِبُواْ خَآئِبِينَ

127. "(The Divine help was for this) that He might cut off a part of the disbelievers or abase them so that they turn back disappointedly."

As At- Tahqiq says, the Arabic word /taraf/ means the end of something (not a corner of it). Thus, the verse says that the unseen helps come forth to eradicate the disbelievers.

In the lexicon and books, it is cited that there are two kinds of despair. If a person is hopeless from the beginning, in Arabic, the state is called /ya's/. But, if the person becomes disappointed after that he has been hopeful, the state, in Arabic, is called /xa'ib/.

Explanations

1. Infidelity and infidels should either be cut off or be abased and desperate.

(Be not happy with the weak, seasonal, partial, and humble acts that do not hurt the root of infidelity).

"(The Divine help was for this) that He might cut off a part of the disbelievers or abase them..."

2. Your union, power, policy and administrator ship must be in a form that at any moment the enemy be drawn to disappointment.

"... so that they turn back disappointedly."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 128

لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

128. "The affair is no concern at all of yours whether He turns towards them (mercifully) or punishes them, for verily, they are unjust."

When the leader is completely truthful, he behaves like that. He even faithfully and bravely recites the revelations that relieve him of a responsibility. The Lord said:

"The affair is no concern at all of yours..."

We study in the books of both great sects of Islam that when the tooth of the Prophet (S) was broken and it bled in the Battle of 'Uhud, he (S) said:

"How could these people be prosperous?"

The verse was revealed that he was not responsible of people's prosperity. They would be forgiven later that time, or they might be left to themselves and be punished.

"... whether He turns towards them (mercifully) or punishes them, for verily, they are unjust."

Explanations

1. The way of repentance is not shut to even those who run away from the godly battlefields, as well as to the disbelievers who have injured the Muslims with the greatest damages.

2. Do not judge promptly.

3. Both forgiveness and punishment depend on Allah. (The merit of intercession is a gift that Allah has endowed upon the Saints. Of course, it cannot be performed without the leave of Allah; and never have prophets any independence from their own before Allah.)

4. The chastisement of human beings is the fruit of their own injustice and transgression.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 129

وَلِلّه مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّه غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

129. "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, He will forgive whom He wills, and will punish whom He wills; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This verse, is an emphasis on the meaning of the previous verse, saying that the punishments and torments are up to Allah, because the creation and sovereignty of all existence is in His control.

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth..."

It is interesting that the persons who are involved with the wrath of Allah or those who receive the mercy of Allah are not defined in the verse. This case may be for the sake that everybody remains between fear and hope, and neither pride nor despair falls upon them.

"…He will forgive whom He wills, and will punish whom He wills..."

It is clear, of course, that forgiveness and punishment depend on both the Wisdom of Allah and the bases that the person produces in oneself and in the society.

"……and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Section 11: Usury forbidden - Means of achieving success

Not to be usurer -To be in awe of Allah -To be in awe of Hell - To spend in the cause of religion -Mutual forbearance to seek the Divine Protection - The loss inflicted upon the enemy -Misfortune at Uhud.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 130

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَأْكُلُواْ الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

130. "O' you who have Faith! Do not devour usury, doubling it over and over again, and be in awe of Allah; that you may be prosperous."

This verse, together with its eight subsequent verses, has been located among the verses about the Battle of 'Uhud. This arrangement, perhaps, is for the sake that the existence of ethical and economical themes is helpful in a defensive system.

The society whose members are the people of sincerity and devotion, who hasten to do good, to repent, and are obedient to the godly leader, will be successful in war, too. But, the society whose members are mammonish, miser, disobedient, and persist in committing sin, surely will be defeated.

However, the verses on the prohibition of usury have been revealed gradually and in several stages. The first step of the prohibition of usury was a critical attack against the usury of the Jews.

This verse is for the prohibition of the usury doubling it over and over again, but, later, Islam gradually prohibited devouring even a penny of usury and introduced it as a fighting against Allah.

Explanations

1. Before the prohibition of the principal of usury, its ugly outstanding forms were prohibited.

"…doubling it over a over again..."

2. In the economical affairs, observing piety is intensively necessary. In other words, the existence of a safe and sound economy is the sign of piety therein.

"... Do not devour usury... and be in awe of Allah...."

3. Prosperity cannot be obtained by wealth and usury, but it can be obtained by piety-

"... and be in awe of Allah: that you may be prosperous."

4. Usurer is impious and an impious person does not become prosperous. A usurer is prosperous neither in this world, nor in the Hereafter. In this world he is involved with grudge and rancour of others, and in the coming world he will encounter the Wrath of Allah.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 131

وَاتَّقُواْ النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

131. "And be in awe of the Fire which has been prepared for the disbelievers."

In this holy verse the ordinance of piety and purity is emphasized again. It says:

"And be in awe of the Fire which has been prepared for the disbelievers."

From the word /Kafirin/ (disbelievers) mentioned in the verse, it is understood that, principally, usury does not fit with the nature of Faith. Therefore, the usurers have a share from the Fire which is prepared for the disbelievers.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 132

وَأَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

132. "And obey Allah and the Messenger, that you may be shown Mercy."

The cause of the failure of Muslims in the Battle of 'Uhud was their disobedience from the command of the Prophet (S). He had told them not to leave the defensive region located between the vales of 'Uhud Mount, but the guardian group left that site and, in spite of the order, went to gather the spoils of war. Therefore, the enemy attacked the Muslims from the same site and defeated them.

"And obey Allah and the Messenger, that you may be shown Mercy."

Explanations

1. The order of the Messenger of Allah (S), whether it is governmental or religious, similar to the command of Allah, is necessary to be obeyed.

2. He who decides to abandon usury in order to obey the command of Allah and the Messenger and to have pity on people, the Lord will have mercy on him, too.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 133

وَسَارِعُواْ إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

133. "And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden whose width is (as) the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious ones."

A Race on the Path of Felicity

Following to the former verses, which threatened the wrong doers to the punishment of Fire and encouraged the good doers to the grace and mercy of Allah, in this verse the effort and endeavour of the good doers is likened to a spiritual race the goal of which is the forgiveness of Allah and the eternal blessings in Heaven. It says:

"And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord ..."

Since attaining any spiritual rank is not possible without being purified from sins by His forgiveness, the goal of this spiritual race firstly is forgiveness and secondly is Heaven:

"... and a Garden whose width is (as) the heavens and the earth ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it clearly declares that this Heaven, with its wonderful splendour, has already been prepared for the pious ones. It says:

"….prepared for the pious ones!

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 134

الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاء وَالضَّرَّاء وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

134. "Those who spend (benevolently) in ease and in adversity, and who restrain (their) anger and pardon (the faults of men; and Allah loves the doers of good."

The Feature of the Pious Ones

In the previous verse, the pious ones are promised the already prepared Eternal Heaven, therefore, in this verse; it introduces the attributes of the pious ones and expresses five splendid human qualities for them. They are as follows:

1. They spend out in any condition they are in, whether when they are in ease and welfare or at the time when they are in deprivation and adversity-

"Those who spend (benevolently) in ease and in adversity ..."

It is worthy to note that here the first outstanding quality of the pious ones is mentioned 'spending'. The reason is that these verses contain the qualities opposite to those of usurers and oppressors, which were referred to in the former verses. Moreover, spending property and wealth, especially both in the states of ease and adversity, is the clearest sign of piety.

2. The third attribute of the pious ones, mentioned here, is that:

"... and who restrain (their) anger... "

3. The forth quality they have is that:

"... and pardon (the faults of) men..."

Of course, restraining anger is very good but it, singly, is not enough, because it may not eradicate enmity and grudge from the heart and thought. In this condition, for dismissing the state of enmity, 'restraining anger' and 'pardoning the faults' should gather together.

4. ' Their fifth quality is that they are 'good doers', and the Lord loves the doers of good.

"... and Allah loves the doers of good."

Here, it has referred to a higher degree of pardoning. It is the- case that a person, in spite of receiving wrong, reacts with doing good, (when the circumstance requires), in order to bum the root of enmity in the opponent's heart, and to make that person kind to himself.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 135

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُواْ فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُواْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُواْ اللّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُواْ لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلاَّ اللّهُ وَلَمْ يُ ـ ُّواْ عَلَى مَا فَعَلُواْ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

135. "And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their selves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins -and who forgives the sins except Allah? -And they (the pious) do not knowingly persist in what they have committed."

When the pious ones do something wrong or do injustice to them, they remember Allah and ask for forgiveness from Him for their sins. It says:

"And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their selves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins-..."

It is understood from the above verse that when so ever that a person remembers Allah, he does not commit sin. Thus, this forgetfulness and negligence, in the doers of good, does not remain long, and before soon they remember Allah and make up for the past.

"... and who forgives the sins except Allah?...."

At the end of the verse, to lay emphasis on the subject, it says:

"... And they (the pious) do not knowingly persist in what they have committed."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 136

أُوْلَـئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

136. "As for these, their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens beneath which rivers flow; therein they will abide forever. How blissful will the reward of (such) workers be! "

In three rather successively verses the existence of the words: 'the pious', 'the doers of good' and ' workers' is the sign for that piety is not a state with isolation or only a spiritual quality but it is often accompanied with action and kindness in the society.

"As for these, their reward is forgiveness from their Lord... "

Explanations

1. As long as a person is not purified from sins, the one is not eligible to enter Paradise.

"... and Gardens beneath which rivers flow, therein they will abide for ever..."

2. Mere wishes are not enough for obtaining the Divine favours, but effort and action are necessary.

"... How blissful will the reward of (such) workers be! "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 137

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

137. "Indeed, there have been institutions before you, therefore travel in the earth and see what has been the end of the rejecters."

In former times, as today, every nation had always some traditions. Therefore, those nations had a destiny according to their own deeds and their own qualities.

The sample of some institutions, which the former people had, is as follows:

a- The acceptance of right and their rescue.
b- The existence of denial in them and their destruction.
c- The Divine trials upon them.
d- The Unseen helps.
e- The period of grace and respite for the transgressors.
f- The perseverance of godly persons and attaining to their goals.
g- The evil plots of the disbelievers and their nullification by the Lord.

Explanations

1. The history of the past is a torch over the way of the lives of the coming generations. (The history of human kind has a mental and cultural connection with together. The yesterday changes have a reflection over the affairs of today, and, in turn, those affairs of today are effective in the lives of future dynasties).

2. Journeys with definite goal and visiting the effects of transgressors together with contemplation can be the best class, the best teacher and the best trainee for human beings.

3. There is no difference between you and other nations from this point of view. (The factors of glory or destruction, in this regard, are all the same).

4. As individuals have the state of development, splendour, and oldness in their own lives, societies and nations have the periods of development, splendour, weakness, and destruction, too.

5. In studying the history, splendours are not so important, but the fate of those people is important.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 138

هَـذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

138. "This is an explanation for mankind, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones."

This feature which was illustrated for the pious ones, and the recommendation that was given for journey and taking examples, was a statement for all human race, but, for the pious ones, it is a means of guidance and admonition.

"This is an explanation for mankind, and guidance and an admonition for the pious ones."

Explanations

1. Though the Qur'an is for all human kind, the persons who are pious and observe their duty accept admonitions properly.

2. The receptivity of persons in understanding and utilizing the verses of the Qur'an is effective.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 139

وَلاَ تَهِنُوا وَلاَ تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنتُمُ الأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

139. "Do not faint and do not grieve for you shall gain the upper hand, if you be believers."

After the defeat in the Battle of 'Uhud, which happened because of disobedience of some fighters from the command of the office of the commander, the Messenger of Allah (S), the Muslim had become out of spirits.

The verse was revealed to state that they would not lose countenance for the failure in the Battle of 'Uhud. They ought to strengthen themselves through their Faith and ought to know that they would gain the upper hand.

As the Qur'an says, Allah tells Moses (as): "... surely you shall be the uppermost,"[1] but He tells people if they be believers and be true in faith, they gain mastery.

"Do not faint and do not grieve for you shall gain the upper hand, if you be believers."

Explanations

1. A local failure is not the sign of the final defeat, (regarding to the occasion of the revelation of the verse).

2. If they did not lose the spirit of Faith and did not ignore the command of the Messenger of Allah (S), they would not be defeated, (regarding to the occasion of the revelation of the verse).

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 140

إِن يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنكُمْ شُهَدَاء وَاللّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

140. " If a wound touches you, because a wound similar to it has also touched the (disbelieving) people, and such days We deal out in turn among mankind; and that Allah may recognize (by trial) those who have believed and take witnesses from among you; and Allah does not love the unjust."

This verse, in the form of consoling the Muslims, states a fact. The fact is that if they had born some losses and damages for the sake of right and along the path of a divine goal and a clear bright future, their enemies had also had some killed and wounded figures.

If they did not win the victory in the Battle of 'Uhud that day, their enemies had also been defeated in the Battle of Badr before that day. Therefore, it is necessary for them to be patient in the divine trials.

Explanations

1. You Muslims should not be less than the disbelievers from the point of patience and perseverance.

"If a wound touches you, because a wound similar to it has also touched the (disbelieving) people ..."

2. The sweet and bitter accidents are not durable.

"... and such days We deal out in turn among mankind..."

3. The faithful people are recognized from those who only claim Faith in fighting and in the ascents and descents of life.

"... and that Allah may recognize (by trial) those who have believed ..."

4. In the bitter experience of 'Uhud, the Lord took witnesses from your own that how the disobedience from the commander ended to a bitter failure.

"..and take witnesses from among you... "

5. The temporary victory of the disbelievers is not the sign of the love of Allah to them.

"... and Allah does not love the unjust."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 141

وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ

141. "And that Allah may purge those who believe and wipe out the disbelievers."

The Arabic word /tamhis/ means to purify from any vice and defect, and the word /mahq/ in Arabic means to decrease gradually.

Maybe, in the defeat of 'Uhud, Allah wished to show the weak points of Muslims to them so that they would think of improving themselves and decide to recompense their shortcomings in order that they might be necessarily prepared for the later acts.

Sometimes the instructive failures are more convenient than the victories that cause negligence.

"And that Allah may purge those who believe and wipe out the disbelievers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 142

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُواْ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُواْ مِنكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ

142. "Or have you imagined that you will enter Paradise and that Allah does not yet know those among you who strived nor He knows the patient ones?"

In this verse it refers to the holy struggle, patience and perseverance of the believers, because the way to Heaven is through patience and Holy War. The Qur'an, addressing those who enter the Heaven, says:

"Peace be on you for that you persevered in patience! ..."[2]

In this statement there is a narrow sense. It does not say: Peace be on you for the performance of Hajj or fasting or paying alms, because accomplishment of any duty needs patience and perseverance.

"Or have you imagined that you will enter Paradise and that Allah does not yet know those among you who strived nor He knows the patient ones?"

Explanation

1. Bare Faith is not enough, effort and action is also necessary. Yes, Heaven is in the pledge of good deeds.

2. The key to Heaven is patience and Holy war. (Patience in sorrows and happiness, in sins, in obedience, and, finally, in the greater warfare and the lesser warfare)

3. Patience and perseverance in the Holy war is necessary, because the first onset of war, its continuation, and the sad effects that come forth after war, all in all, need patience and constancy.

4. Leave your vain imaginations and false expectations.

"Or have you imagined ..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 143

وَلَقَدْ كُنتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

143. "And really you were longing for death before you met it (the holy struggle); but (now that) you have seen it, you look (at it)!"

In the occasion of revelation of this verse, it has been said that after the Battle of Badr when the Muslims won the war and some believers were slain, too, some of the remaining persons wished that they had also been slain in the Battle of Badr in the path of Allah.

But, in the following year, when the Battle of 'Uhud took place, they ran away from it. These people are criticized and scorned in this verse.

Explanation

1. Be not deceived by your wishes, and do not trust on any empty motto or on anyone who claims it.

2. It is in practice and in the field of action that human beings are tried. In the supplication of the martyrs of Karbala, we recite:

"We wish we had been with you and had been killed as you."

Have we ever thought that how much do we do practically in action?

"And really you were longing for death before you met it (the holy struggle); but (now that) you have seen it, you look (at it)!"

Notes

1. The Qur'an, Surah Ta'ha No.20, verse 68
2. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No 13, verse 24

Section 12: Perseverance and Patience in Suffering Enjoined

To be steadfast in faith and to be steadfast in suffering - warning to the companions of the Apostle of Allah against giving wave in the events of trials and turning their backs upon their heels.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 144

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلاَّ رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ
وَمَن يَنقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ اللّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

144. "And Muhammad is not but only a messenger before whom messengers have already passed away. Therefore, if he dies or be killed, will you turn back (in creed) upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels will by no means do harm to Allah in the least; and Allah will reward the grateful. "

In many books from both schools of thought, it is cited that when in the Battle of 'Uhud a stone was thrown towards the teeth of the Prophet (S) by the disbelievers and it bled, someone cried that Muhammad was killed.

Some believers also considered the slain of Mas'ab by mistake as the slain of the Prophet (S). The gossip caused the disbelievers to be happy and encouraged, and a group of the unsettled Muslims ran away.

Some others thought to go to Abi Sufyan, the commander of the disbelievers, to get immunity. On the other hand, there were some Muslims there who shouted loudly:

"Suppose Muhammad (S) does not exist, but the path of Muhammad (S) and the Lord of Muhammad (S) do exist. Then do not escape! "

Explanations

1. The Islamic community should be so firmly formed that even the absence of the leader does not harm it.

2. The Prophet of Islam (S) also follows Allah's way of treatment and the natural laws, and conditions such as death and life.

"And Muhammad is not but only a messenger ..."

3. Did the followers of the former religions returned from their Faith when their Prophets died?

"... before whom messengers have already passed away..."

4. Spreading gossips is one the weapons of the enemy, (regarding the occasion of revelation of the verse).

"... Therefore, if he dies or be killed, will you turn back (in creed) upon your heels? ..."

5. Belief or disbelief of people has neither any gain nor any loss for Allah..

"And whoever turns back upon his heels will by no means do harm to Allah in the least..."

6. Persevering on the path of right is the best kind of the practical gratitude, the reward of which is with Allah.

"... and Allah will reward the grateful."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 145

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ كِتَابًا مُّؤَجَّلاً وَمَن يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَن يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ

145. "And it is not for anyone to die but by Allah's leave at a term appointed; and whoever desires the reward of this world, We give him thereof; and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We give him thereof ! and Allah will reward the grateful."

As it was said before, the vain gossip of the death of the Prophet (S), in the Battle of 'Uhud disturbed a great number of Muslims so that some of them ran away from the Battlefield. It was so terrible that a few of them even wanted to return from Islam, too. In this verse, again to warn and aware that group, it says:

"And it is not for anyone to die but by Allah's leave at a term appointed..."

Thus, if the Prophet of Allah (S) were slain in that battlefield, it would not be anything but the devised performance of Allah's way of treatment.

On the other side, escaping from the battlefield cannot prevent the coming of death of a person, the same as the participation in the Holy war does not hasten in the death of anyone.

At the end of the verse, it indicates that the effort and endeavour of no one will be wasted. Then, if the aim of a person is only the Worldly material profits (and, like those fighters of 'Uhud tries only for obtaining war spoils) the one will finally get a share of it and, however, such people will attain their aim.

".. and whoever desire the reward of the Hereafter, We give him thereof! .."

Therefore, now that obtaining both the worldly merits and those of Hereafter need effort, then why might a person not use the capital of his self along the second path, which is an excellent and constant way?

Another time again, it emphasizes that:

"… and Allah will reward the grateful."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 146

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُواْ لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُواْ وَمَا اسْتَكَانُواْ وَاللّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

146. "And how many a prophet there has been with whom were many Godly men fought; so they did not falter despite what afflicted them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they yield, and Allah loves the patient, (the steadfast)."

Former Strivers

Following the adventures of 'Uhud, this verse refers to the bravery, faith and perseverance of the strivers and followers of the former prophets. It encourages the Muslims to bravery, self-sacrifice and constancy while it scorns those who escaped from the battle of 'Uhud. It says:

"And how many a prophet there has been with whom were many Godly men fought; so they did not falter despite what afflicted them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they yield..."

It is evident that Allah also loves such servants who do not abandon perseverance-

"…and Allah loves the patient, (the steadfast),"

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 147

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلاَّ أَن قَالُواْ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا واذ ُ ْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

147. "And their statement was nothing but that they said: ' Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our prodigality in our affair and make our feet firm and help us against the disbelieving folk '."

When facing with the enemy they entangled with difficulties as a result of some mistakes, or shortcomings they had. So, instead of leaving the battlefield, or yielding to the enemy, or arising the thought of apostasy or returning to infidelity in their mind, they turned to the glory of Allah and:

"And their statement was nothing but that they said: ' Our Lord! forgive us our sins and our prodigality in our affair and make our feet firm and help us against the disbelieving folk '."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 148

فَآتَاهُمُ اللّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الآخِرَةِ وَاللّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

148. "So Allah gave them the reward of the world and the goodness of the reward of the Hereafter; and Allah loves the doers of good."

With that kind of thought and practice, they would get their reward from Allah soon. Thus, Allah, too, gave them both the reward of this world, which was their victory and overcoming against the enemy, and the good reward of the Hereafter.

"So Allah gave them the reward of the world and the goodness of the reward of the Hereafter..."

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an has counted them among the good doers, and says:

"... and Allah loves the doers of good."

Section 13: Delinquency and Dread with some Muslims in the Battle of 'Uhud

Dread and delinquency on the part some Muslims the causes of the misfortunes in the Battle of 'Uhud -after the promised victory' -the delinquents murmuring,

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 149

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوَاْ إِن تُطِيعُواْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنقَلِبُواْ خَاسِرِينَ

149. "O' you who have Faith! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back to your (faithless) ancestors, so you will turn back losers."

The Repeated Warnings!

After the end of the Battle of 'Uhud the enemies of Islam, in the form of advice and sympathy, scattered the seed of discord among the Muslims, and made them distrustful unto Islam.

This verse warns the Muslims and awares them that they must avoid following the enemies, because, after paving the honourable spiritual development along the path of Islam, they may bring Muslims back to corruption and disbelief.

"O' you who have Faith! if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back to your (faithless) ancestors, so you will turn back losers."

What damage is worse than this that a believer changes Islam with infidelity, prosperity with wickedness, and reality with falsehood.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 150

بَلِ اللّهُ مَوْلاَكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ

150. "Nay! Allah is your Guardian and He is the best of the helpers."

In this verse, the Qur'an emphasizes that Allah is the helper Who will never be defeated. No power can match His Power. But other helpers may be involved with failure and be destroyed.

"Nay! Allah is your Guardian and He is the best of the helpers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 151

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُواْ بِاللّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ

151. "We shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, for that they have associated with Allah for which He has sent down no authority, and their abode in the Fire; and how bad is the abode of the unjust!"

In this verse, it points to the marvellous security of Muslims after the Battle of 'Uhud. It says:

"We shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve..."

That is, We do the same as you saw the example of it at the end of the Battle of 'Uhud. In the second sentence of the verse, the reason of casting fear into the hearts of the disbelievers is stated such:

"….for that they have associated with Allah for which He has sent down no authority,.."

Finally, at the end of the verse, it has pointed out to the end of these people. It indicates that such people have done injustice to themselves and to their society; that is why:

"…. and their abode is the Fire;

and how bad is the abode of the unjust! "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 152

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُم بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا أَرَاكُم مَّا تُحِبُّونَ مِنكُم مَّن يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرِيدُ الآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنكُمْ وَاللهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

152. "And indeed Allah fulfilled His promise to you (in the first stage) when, with His leave, you slew them until when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the matter, and you disobeyed after that He showed you that which you loved. Some of you desire the world and some of you desire the Hereafter. Then He turned you away from them (the disbelievers) so He might try you. And He has certainly forgiven you; and Allah is gracious to the believers."

A Failure after Triumph

In the explanation of the Battle of 'Uhud, it was said that at the beginning of the war, Muslims fought unitedly and with a special bravery so that they won the battle.

But disobedience of a group of the strivers, who left their entrenchments and went to gather spoils of war, caused the circumstances to be changed and the troops of Islam bore a great failure.

When Muslim strivers, who had suffered to give many slain and a heavy loss, were returning to Medina, they were murmuring questions with each other as that: 'Had Allah not promised us the victory of the war? Then, why we were defeated in this war?

So, in these verses, the Qur'an, answering them, explains the factors of their failure. This verse indicates that the promise of Allah about their triumph was completely right.

Therefore, at the beginning of fight they won the battle; and, by the command of Allah, they killed the enemies. The Qur'an tells them that this promise went on until the time they had not left the perseverance and following the command of the Prophet (S). The failure began from the time weakness and disobedience came upon them.

"And indeed Allah fulfilled His promise to you (in the first stage) when, with His leave, you slew them until when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the matter ..."

That is, if you considered that the promise of victory had been without any condition, you made a great mistake. All the promises of victory are conditioned to the obedience from the command of Allah.

Then, the Qur'an says:

"... and you disobeyed after that He showed you that which you loved..."

Then, it continues saying:

"... Some of you desire the world and some of you desire the Hereafter..."

Here, the circumstances have changed and Allah has altered your victory to failure in order to try you and punish you and train you.

"... then He turned you away from them (the disbelievers) so that He might try you..."

Then the Lord forgave you all these disobediences and sins of yours, while you deserved to be punished. This is because Allah does not withhold any bounty to the believers.

"... And He has certainly forgiven you; and Allah is gracious to the believers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 153

إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلاَ تَلْوُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ فَأَثَابَكُمْ غُمَّاً بِغَمٍّ لِّكَيْلاَ
تَحْزَنُواْ عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلاَ مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

153. " (Remember) when you were climbing (the hillside) and paid no heed to anyone, while the Messenger was calling you from your rear, so He inflicted you with grief on grief that you might not be sorry for what escaped you and neither for what befell you; and Allah iv well aware of what you do."

In this verse the Qur'an reminds Muslims the ending scene of the Battle of 'Uhud and tells them to remember when they were scattered and they were running away without paying any attention to their fellow strivers at their backs to see in what condition they were, though the Prophet (S) was calling them from their behind.

"(Remember) when you were climbing (the hillside) and paid no heed to any one, while the Messenger was calling you from your rear ..."

The Prophet (S) was calling them, saying:

"O' servants of Allah! return to me! return to me! I am the Messenger of Allah."

It tells them that at that time neither of them attended to his words:

"... so He inflicted you with grief on grief…"

The invasion of grief and sorrow to them was for that they would not be sorry any more for losing the spoils of war, and that they would not be worried about the wounds they suffered in the battlefield in the path of victory; and surely Allah knows what they do.

"... that you might not be sorry for what escaped you and neither for what befell you; and Allah is well aware of what you do. "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 154

ثُمَّ أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْ ٰ طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ
أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ
لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لاَ يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُل لَّوْ

www.alhassanain.org/english

كُنتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

154. "Then, after that grief, He sent down security upon you (in the form of) slumber coming upon a group of you, while another group have cared only for their own selves, thinking about Allah unjustly, the thought of ignorance. They say: ' Is there anything for us in the authority? 'Say: 'Verily the authority belongs to Allah entirely '. They hide within themselves what they show not to you, saying: ' Had we had a part in the authority, we would not have been slain here '. Say: ' Even if you were in your own homes, those for whom slaughter was ordained would cel1ainly have gone forth to their deathbeds; and that Allah might try what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

The night following the Battle of 'Uhud was a dreadful night, full of anxiety and fear. The Muslims anticipated that the victorious soldiers of Quraysh would return to Medina again.

At this time the true strivers and the repentant who had regretted from their escape in 'Uhud, trusted to the Grace of Allah and were assured of the promises of the Prophet (S). The verse under discussion explains the event of that night.

It denotes that after those heavy grieves and sorrows of the day of 'Uhud, He sent down peace and security on them. It says:

"Then, after that grief, He sent down security upon you ..."

This peace was the very light sleep that fell on a group of them, but there were some others who thought of their own selves and cared nothing except their own rescue. That was why they lost the security given to them totally. It says:

"... (in the form of) slumber coming upon a group of you; while another group have cared only for their own selves ..."

Then it pays to the explanation of the talks and thoughts of hypocrites and those whose faith was not so firm and who sat up that night. They imagined something wrong about Allah, similar to the thoughts of the Age of Ignorance which existed before Islam. They had in their minds that the Prophet's promises were probably lies.

"... Thinking about Allah unjustly, the thought of ignorance ..."

They said to each other among themselves whether it was possible, with that horrible circumstance they saw, that they overcame. It says:

"... They say: 'Is there anything for us in the authority?'..."

That is, it is quite impossible. But the Qur'an, in answer to them, says: Yes, triumph is in the hand of Allah and if He wills, and finds you eligible for it, He will grant it to you.

"... Say: 'Verily the authority belongs to Allah entirely.'..."

The verse indicates that they conceal some affairs in their hearts and they do not make them manifest for you.

"... They hide within themselves what they show not to you..."

It seemed they thought the failure in 'Uhud was the sign that the religion of Islam was not right. Therefore, they said if they had been right and had a

share of triumph, they would not have given so many slain in that battle. It says:

"... saying: ' Had we had a part in the authority, we would not have been slain here.' "

In answer to them, Allah points to two subjects. It says:

"... Say: ' Even if you were in your own homes, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to their deathbeds..."

Another subject is that these events should come forth in order that the Lord tries what they had in their hearts and that the rows be recognized. Moreover, in this course, individuals might be gradually trained, and their intentions be purified, their faith be firmed, and their hearts be purged from evils.

"... and that Allah might try what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts..."

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... and Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

And it is for the very reason that Allah does not reckon only the deeds of people, but He wants to try their hearts, too, and purify them from dirt of polytheism, hypocrisy, and doubt.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 155

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْاْ مِنكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُواْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

155. "Verily those of you who turned back on the day (of Uhud) when both troops met, only Satan made them slip because of something they earned; and certainly Allah has pardoned them; Surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

This verse is about the escape of the Muslims from the Battle of 'Uhud. As most books denote, in the Battle of 'Uhud all strivers flew except thirteen ones. Five people of them were from Emigrants (muhajirin) and eight people from Helpers /ansar/. The opinions are divided as for he names of these thirteen people that who they were, except Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as).

However, in the Battle of 'Uhud, the Muslims were divided into four groups: 1. Martyrs; 2. The Patients; 3. The Fugitives, who were forgiven; 4. The hypocrites.

Explanations

1. Sin clears the field for the temptations of Satan.

"... only Satan made them slip because of something they earned..."

2. One of the reasons of escaping from fight is sin. Sin tears the curtain of piety and weakens the spirit of man and, then, paves the way for the influence of Satan.

3. Deeds effect on spiritualities. As a result of sins, some persons become coward and ran away.

4. Strivers should set themselves in the course of repentance, seeking forgiveness and self-improvement.

Section 14: The Faithfuls and Hypocrites in the battle of 'Uhud

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 156

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَكُونُواْ كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَقَالُواْ لإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُواْ غُزًّى لَّوْ كَانُواْ عِندَنَا مَا مَاتُواْ وَمَا قُتِلُواْ لِيَجْعَلَ اللّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللّهُ يُحْيِـي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

156. "O' you who have Faith! be not like those who disbelieved and said of their brethren when they travelled in the earth or engaged in fighting: 'Had they been with us they would not have died and they would not have been killed '; so that Allah may make this a regret in their hearts. And, Allah gives life and causes to die; and Allah sees what you do."

We ought to stand firm against discouraging propagations and inspirations, and gossips should not be retold. We must know that death and life are from the determinations of Allah and are not concerned to fight and journey. So, the enemy cast the evil propagation in the form of sympathy and regret.

"O' you who have Faith! be not like those who disbelieved and said of their brethren when they travelled in the earth or engaged in fighting: 'Had they been with us they would not have died and they would not have been killed '; so that Allah may make this a regret in their hearts. And, Allah gives life and causes to die..."

Thus, Allah is the Clear sighted and the Cognizant. So, be careful of your conditions, thoughts, and deeds.

"... and Allah sees what you do."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 157

وَلَئِن قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

157. "And if you be killed in the way of Allah or you die, surely forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all that they amass."

In divine world-view and heavenly theology, the death in the way of Allah (martyrdom) is better than the whole world and its belongings to be compiled.

Mercy and forgiveness have an eternal result, but wealth and property have some temporal effects. What is important is that the affairs be in the way of Allah, whether martyrdom or death.

"And if you be killed in the way of Allah or you die, surely forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all that they amass."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 158

وَلَئِن مُّتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لإِلَى اللّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

158. "And if you die or be killed, certainly to Allah shall you be gathered together."

There is no more than one way and it is going towards Allah. Then, why do we not accept the best kind of passing away contently when we move to that direction?

"And if you die or be killed, certainly to Allah shall you be gathered together."

And, if death and martyrdom is returning to Allah, then why is there anxiety in our mind?

Imam Hussayn (as) has said:

"If bodies are prepared for death, then the death of a man in the way of Allah with sword is the best death."[1]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 159

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّه لِنتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنفَضُّواْ مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّه إِنَّ اللّه يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

159. "Thus, it is due to the mercy from Allah that you have been lenient with them, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you. Therefore, pardon them and seek forgiveness for them; and consult with them in the affair. So, when you have decided, then trust in Allah; (for) verily Allah loves those who trust (in Him)."

The content of the verse works as some general instructions, but the revelation of the verse is about the Battle of 'Uhud. The Muslims who had ran away in the Battle of 'Uhud and were defeated, were burning in the fire of regret, remorse and sorrow. They gathered around the Prophet (S) and apologized. Then, the Lord issued the command of their general pardon by this verse.

Explanations

1. Lenience is a gift from Allah. Thus, those who have not lenience are deprived from this bounty.

"Thus, it is due to the mercy from Allah that you have been lenient with them ..."

2. The hard-hearted and strict people cannot have etiquette with people.

"... and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you ..."

3. A fruitful and proper leadership and administration ship is always accompanied with attraction and affection.

4. Attract those defeated in war and modest sinners.

"... Therefore, pardon them and seek forgiveness for them; and consult with them in the affair"

5. Inside consultation, there lie: sympathy, development of talents, recognition of friends from enemies, selecting the best attitude, creation of kindness and love, and a practical lesson for others.

6. You may pardon them for the injustice they treated to you, and for the sin they committed with respect to Allah, seek forgiveness from Allah for them and keep them in the scene by consulting with them in the political, social affairs.

7. Beside contemplation and consultation, do not forget to trust in Allah.

"... so, when you have decided, then trust in Allah..."

8. Consultation and reliance in Allah are beloved with Him, whether we attain the aim or not.

"... (for) verily Allah loves those who trust (in Him)."

9. In administration ship once lenience is needed, like this verse:
"... pardon them...",
while in another occasion intensity and severity is necessary:
"... and be hard against them ..."[2]

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 160

إِن يَنصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلاَ غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِن يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَن ذَا الَّذِي يَنصُرُكُم مِّن بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكِّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

160. "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you. But, if He forsakes you, who if there then that can help you after that? And on Allah should the believers rely."

In the previous verse, trust and reliance in Allah was recommended. In this verse the reason of that reliance is expressed, saying that both honour and abasement are with Allah.

It is narrated in a tradition that the Prophet (S) asked Gabriel: "What if trust in Allah?"

Gabriel answered:

"It if so that you know people do not give you profit nor loss, neither they grant nor restrain; and that you be despair of all human kind. Then, when a servant becomes like this, he will not act for anyone except Allah; he will not be hopeful of or afraid of anyone but Allah; he will not become desirous in anyone save Allah. And, this is the reality of trust, / tawakku l."[3]

Explanations

1. Both overcoming against the enemy, or being defeated from the enemy, are in the Will of Allah.

2. Natural victories are usually influenced by other factors, but the divine helps and victories are not like that.

"If Allah helps you, none can overcome you. But, if He forsakes you, who if there then that can help you after that? And on Allah should the believers rely."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 161

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَن يَغُلَّ وَمَن يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

161. "And it is not for any prophet to defraud and whoever defrauds shall bring along what he has defrauded on the Day of Resurrection. Then everyone will be repaid for whatever he has earned, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

This verse, may be as an answer that refers to those who, for the sake of gathering spoils of war, left the protective zone in 'Uhud. Imagining that they would not be deprived from their booty shares, they ignored the warnings of their commander who said that their share was preserved and it would not be far from the view of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Explanations

1. Prophets have always been trustworthy. The one, who wants to train some trustworthy persons, must not himself be treacherous. (Unfortunately, today, there are many treacherous figures among the non-heavenly leaders).

2. Not all the companions had enough Faith. Some of them were so that who might prove treacherous actions unto the Messenger of Allah (S).

3. None is safe from the suspicion of people.

4. Taking the property of others today (in this world) and returning them on that Day (in the Hereafter) is a kind of punishment. And, what a grievous state is that, that a person be brought with the wealth he had proved treacherous in before Prophets, martyrs and all human beings on the Day of Judgment.

"... and whoever defrauds shall bring along what he has defrauded ..."

Fraud; deceit, usurpation and treachery are from among the instances of /qall/ 'defraud'.

At the time of the Prophet (S), it happened that the man who was in charge of collecting alms came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said:

"This quantity of wealth have collected is alms and belongs to you, and this separate quantity is the gifts of people to myself."

Then, the Prophet (S) went up the pulpit and asked the audience:

'If this person remained at home, would any one give him a gift ? By Allah he will be raised in Hereafter with these unlawful properties.'

5. Remembrance of Hereafter restrains a person from treachery-

"... then everyone will be repaid for whatever he has earned ..."

6. Allah is just. (He both gives the reward completely and never goes to extremes, even for a dot).

"... and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

7. Defend the rights of pure servants and the saints of Allah.

"And it is not for any prophet to defraud ..."

8. The weakness of faith, from one side, and the love of the world, from another side, set men to suspect against the prophets.

9. Hereafter is a scene where the righteous will bring their good deeds and the treacherous ones will bring their own treacheries:

"... and whoever defrauds shall bring along what he has defrauded on the Day of Resurrection"

10. The rank of prophet hood never fits with treachery.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 162

أَفَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللّه كَمَن بَاء بِسَخْطٍ مِّنَ اللّه وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

162. "Is one who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who incurs wrath from Allah, and whose abode will be Hell? And an evil destination it is.! "

Upon the occasion of revelation of this verse, it is cited in books from both great sects of Islam that: When the Messenger of Allah issued the command of setting to 'Uhud the hypocrites stayed in Medina under the pretext that they were not sure of the occurrence of fight and conflict.

At the same time some Muslims whose faith was weak followed them and did not attend at the battle. This verse illustrates the feature of this group.

In a few former verses (verse 155) it said that Allah has pardoned those who ran away from the battle and after that they regretted, But, regarding to the occasion of revelation of the verse, He does not forgive the wealthy ones and the hypocrites who seek excuses.

Explanations

1. In an Islamic society, strivers and those who sit still at home should not be treated the same, (regarding to the occasion of revelation).
2. The aim of the true strivers is gaining the good pleasure of Allah.

"Is one who follows the pleasure of Allah…"

3. Returning face from battle-field is returning to the Wrath of Allah.

"…like him who incurs wrath from Allah…"

"… and whose abode will be Hell?..."

"…And it is an evil destination."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 163

هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِندَ اللّه واللّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

163. "They are of (varying) ranks with Allah; and Allah sees what they do."

Some verses of the Qur'an indicate that there are different degrees for the people. For example, Surah Al-Anfal, No.8, verse 4 says:

"... they shall have from their Lord exalted grades..."

Or, Surah Taha, No 20, verse 75 says:

"... these it is who shall have the high ranks."

In this verse the persons themselves are rendered into 'ranks'. It is similar to the meaning that a human being should act according to the scale, but later he himself becomes a scale.

Or, another example is that: at first man is 'praiser of Allah', /Ŏakir/, but later he himself becomes 'reminder', /Ŏikr/, in a way that his remembrance causes hearts to be in peace. At first, he turns around the axis, but, later, he himself becomes the axis of the Truth.

"They are of (varying) ranks with Allah; and Allah sees what they do."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 164

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُواْ مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلالٍ مُّبِينٍ

164. "Indeed Allah conferred a favour upon the believers when He raised up among them a messenger of their own selves to recite His verses unto them and purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom; although earlier they had surely been in manifest error."

The Arabic term /minnah/ is derived from the root /manna/ with the sense of a stone by which things may be weighed. Thus, every weighty and valuable bounty is called /minnah/. But showing some slight bounties as some heavy and magnificent ones is disagreeable. Therefore, donating a great bounty is good, but representing an ordinary bounty in a great shape is reprobated.

Explanations

1. The appointment of Prophets to prophecy is the greatest heavenly gift and the greatest bounty of Allah.

"Indeed Allah conferred a favour..."

2. Prophets were chosen from among people themselves.

"…when He raised up among them a messenger from among themselves..."

(See also the following complementary explanation, No.1)

3. Purification is prior to teaching. (Purification and instruction have been at the top of the training programs of prophets).

4. The mission of prophets envelops all human kind, yet only the believers are gratitude unto this bounty and enjoy of the light of guidance.

"Indeed Allah conferred a favour upon the believers ..."

5. Self-improvement and rectitude should be performed under the light of the prophets' school of thought and the verses of Allah.

"... to recite His verses unto them and to purify them ..."

The austerities and monasticisms whose origin is not verses of Allah and whose teachers are not divine prophets, themselves are deviation.

6. In order to recognize the bounty of appointment of prophets better, we should refer to the history concerning before their times.

"... although before this they had surely been in manifest error."

7. In corruptive dark and very gloomy environments it is possible to work, too.

8. In the manner of prophets, spiritual training and teaching both are accompanied with wisdom.

"... and to purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom..."

Complementary Explanations

1. The appointment of prophets from among people has some favours in itself:

a) People know the background of such a prophet and trust in him.

b) People are Pioneers in executing the commands of Allah.

c) Prophets are acquainted with the pains of people and they sympathetically have a share in their joys and sorrows.

d) Prophets are always available for people.

2. There is a popular proverb in the Arabic Language which says: Things are known by their opposites.

As it is understood from the statements of Hadrat Ali (as) in Nahjul-Balagha, in the Age of Ignorance, People had neither a sound culture nor a good hygiene.[4]

When Hadrat Ja'far Tayyar, Hadrat Ali's brother, was in Abyssinia, he illustrated the situation of the Age of Ignorance for Najashi as such:

"We were worshipping idols (but now we are worshippers of Allah). At that time, we consumed corpses; we were of corruptives; we used to break off connections with our kindred, we had ill treatments with our neighbours, the strong members of us often devoured the rights of the weak."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 165

أَوَلَمَّا أَصَابَتْكُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُم مِّثْلَيْهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَـذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّه عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

165. "Yet, when a disaster befalls you while you have certainly afflicted (the fow) with twice as much, you say: ' Whence is this?' Say: 'It if from your own selves'. Surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

When seventy persons from Muslim troop were killed in the Battle of 'Uhud and Muslims were defeated, they asked each other why they were defeated. The Lord tells them they had afflicted the enemy with twice as many in the Battle of Badr the previous year.

They killed seventy people of them and captured seventy men from them, too. Besides that, the failure of that year was for their own disunity and inactivity, and that they did not obey their commander.

Explanations

1. When judging, consider both the bitter and sweet aspects. (Do not think of the failure of 'Uhud alone and forget the triumph of Badr).

"Yet, when a disaster befalls you while you have certainly afflicted (the fow) with twice as much..."

2. In searching for the factors of failure, begin with the innate, spiritual and mental factors; and then go to follow other factors.

"….you say: ' Whence is this?' Say: 'It if from your own selves.'…"

3. Allah is powerful over all things, but we must obtain the necessary conditions and eligibilities of enjoying it.

"... Surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things'."

4. Do not imagine that to be only Muslim is enough for winning the battle and, consequently, in every failure use the question of 'why' and how, "Whence is this?", but beside Faith, it is necessary that the military rules, and divine way be paid attention to.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 166

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللّه وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

166. "And what befell you on tie day when both troops met was by Allah's leave and that He might distinguish the believers."

Allah has set a cause or causes for any effect, and then either failure or victory has some secrets. Your failure in the Battle of 'Uhud related to the law of causation. It was you who relaxed your efforts in the battle and did not come into agreement with other strivers, and were greedy to gather the spoils of war. This is Allah's way of treatment and the Divine Law is found in all fights.

"And what befell you on the day when both troops met was by Allah's leave..."

Explanations

1. Failures and triumphs take place under the Will of Allah, and His leave is the same as Allah's way of treatment.

"... by Allah's leave ..."

2. Bitter and sweet happenings are the site of trial and recognition of human beings.

"... and that He might distinguish the believers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 167

وَلْيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُواْ وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْاْ قَاتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ أَوِ ادْفَعُواْ قَالُواْ لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالاً لاَّتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِم مَّا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ

167. "And that He might distinguish those who treated hypocritically; and it was said to them; 'Come! Fight in the way of Allah, or (at least) defend yourselves '. They said: ' lf we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you '. That time they were much nearer to the infidelity than to Faith. They utter with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and Allah knows best what they conceal."

In this holy verse, another fact is referred to. It says:

"And that He might distinguish those who treated hypocritically..."

Then the Qur'an points to the debates that some Muslims and hypocrites had before the battle as such that: One of the Muslims (by the name of' Abdillah-ibn-' Amr-ibn-Hazzam, as Ibn-' Abbas has reported), observing that 'Abdullah-ibn- 'Abi Salul and his friends separated from the troop of Islam and decided to return to Medina, told them:

"... and it was said to them: 'Come! Fight in the way of Allah; or (at least) defend yourselves. '... "

But they brought forth a vain excuse and said:

"... they said: ' If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you '."

It was not more than a pretext. Both the occurrence of war was certain, and Muslims were winning the war at the beginning. If a failure came upon them, it was because of their own faults and offences Allah says that they told a lie.

"... that time they were much nearer to the infidelity than to Faith "

It is understood from the above statement that infidelity and Faith have some degrees which depend on the notion and the way of treatment of the individual.

"… they utter with their mouths what is not in their hearts,.."

They refrained from going to the battle-field as a result of their obstinacy upon their suggestion that they would fight in Medina, and because of fear from the hard blows of the enemy, or for the lack of love in Islam, But:

"…and Allah knows best what they conceal."

It is in such a case that He both manifests their evil feature for Muslims in this world, and will reckon their account in the Hereafter.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 168

الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ لإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُواْ لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَؤُوا عَنْ أَنفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

168. "those who said about their brethren while themselves sat (at home): 'Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed '. Say: ' Avert death .from yourselves then, if you are truthful."

Besides that the hypocrites themselves refrained from going to the Battle of 'Uhud, when the strivers were returning back from fight, they reproached them. The Qur'an answers their groundless speech in this verse. It says:

"those who said about their brethren while themselves sat (at home): 'Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed '. Say: ' Avert death from yourselves then, if you are truthful."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 169

وَلاَ تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاء عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

169. "Do not think of those who were killed in the way of Allah to be dead. Nay, they are alive, being provided sustenance with their Lord."

The Alive in Eternal!

This verse and two verses next to it were revealed after the incident of 'Uhud. But its meaning and its content is general, so that it involves all the martyrs of 'Uhud. The number of the martyrs there was fourteen the high rank of whom, as well as all martyrs, is referred to in this verse. It says:

"Do not think of those who were killed in the way of Allah to be dead..."

Here, the addressee is only the Prophet (S) in order that others reckon their account.

"... Nay, they are alive, being provided sustenance with their Lord."

The purpose of life here is the very purgatorial life which souls have in the world after death. This does not belong to only the martyrs. But, in view of the fact that martyrs are so involved the merits of the spiritual life that as if the life of other people in the intermediate state is rather slight in comparison with it, so only they are named.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 170

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُواْ بِهِم مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلاَّ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

170. "They are happy with what Allah has given them out of His Grace, and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them. No fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."

A part of the advantages and abundant bounties of the purgatory life of martyrs are pointed out in this verse. It says:

"They are happy with what Allah has given them out of His Grace ..."

Their second happiness is for their brothers who are strivers, but they have not joined them yet. The strivers, the future martyrs, are also happy because they see the high rank of martyrs in the next world and know that there will be no fear nor any grief upon them on the Resurrection Day, and for its terrible happenings as well. It says:

"... and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them. No fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 171

يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّه وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللّه لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

171. "They rejoice because of favour from Allah and (His) grace, and that Allah does not waste the reward of the believers."

This verse, in fact, is as an emphasis and as a more explanation upon the glad tidings that martyrs receive after their slain. They will be happy because of two matters. The first is for that they receive the bounties of Allah, -not only His bounties but His Grace, too, (which is the increase and repetition of His merits). It says:

"They rejoice because of favour from Allah and (His) grace ..."

Another matter is that they see that Allah does not waste the reward of the believers, neither the reward of the martyrs nor the reward of these true believing strivers who have not obtained the rank of martyrdom yet. It says:

"... and that Allah does not waste the reward of the believers"

Notes

1. Bihar-ul 'Anwar, vol. 44, p. 374
2. Surah Al- Tahrim, No.66, verse 9
3. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 138
4. Nahjul Balagha, sermon 26

Section 15: Uhud a loss to the Enemy

1. The misfortune of the Muslims at Uhud was no gain to the Enemy.
2. The disbelieve disabled to inflict any loss on the Muslims.
3. The Faithful were known from the Hypocrites.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 172

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُواْ لِلّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُواْ مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَواْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

172. "Those who did respond to the call of Allah and the Messenger (even) after some wound had afflicted them; for those among them who did good and acted piously there will be a great reward. "

The Battle of Hamra'-ul-Asad

As it was mentioned before, at the end of the Battle of 'Uhud, the victorious army of 'Abu-Sufyan, after winning the Battle, immediately started to go toward Mecca.

When they reached the region of Ruha', they seriously regretted from their action. They decided to return to Medina and destroy the rest of Muslims totally.

Then, the Prophet (S) was informed of the matter. So, he ordered the army of 'Uhud to be prepared for participating in another fight. This news met the army of the Quraysh when they wondered and were frightened!

At this time, another subject weakened their courage more than before. One of the pagans by the name of Ma'bad-ul-Khaza'i who saw the situation of the Prophet (S) and his followers and was shaken by it, told him (S) that observing their situation was very unpleasant and intolerable for them (the pagans).

He said those words and went away. When he reached the army of 'Abu-Sufyan in Ruha', 'Abu-Sufyan asked him about the Prophet of Islam (S). In answer to him, Ma'bad said: "I saw Muhammad with a large army who were pursuing you."

'Abu-Sufyan and his followers decided to retreat, but they asked a group from the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays, who were passing by there, to inform the Prophet of Islam (S) that 'Abu-Sufyan and the idolaters of the Quraysh, with a large army, were going towards Medina in order to annihilate the rest of the companions of the Prophet (S).

When this message reached the Prophet (S) and Muslims, they said:

"Allah is sufficient for us and how excellent is such a Protector!"[1]

They waited and waited there, but no sign appeared from the enemy's army. Then, after three days remaining there, they returned to Medina. This verse, and two verses next to it, point to this incident.

It indicates that those who accepted the invitation of Allah and the Messenger (S), and after having some wounds afflicted on the day of 'Uhud, they became ready to take part in another fight against the enemy.

From among them, those who did good and were pious, viz. those who took part in the war with pure intention and complete sincerity, will have a great reward. It says:

"Those who did respond to the call of Allah and the Messenger (even) after some wound had afflicted them; for those among them who did good and acted piously there will be a great reward. "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 173

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُواْ لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَاناً وَقَالُواْ حَسْبُنَا اللّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

173. "Those to whom the people said: 'Verily the men have gathered against you, therefore fear them '. Yet it increased them in faith and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us and how excellent is such a Protector!' "

The enemy, propagating agents, and some simple-minded and coward people advisingly inspire that the group of enemy is strong and none can combat them, so it is better not to entangle yourselves with fight. The true believers, without any fear and, as they are qualified in the verse, calmly answer them.

"Those to whom the people said: 'Verily the men have gathered against you, therefore fear them '. Yet it increased them in faith and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us and how excellent is such a Protector! ' "

Explanations

1. Be not frightened by the hollow propagations of the enemy.

2. In the fighting place and among the strivers, be careful of the penetrating members of the enemy.

3. The strongest barrier against all the threats of the enemy is Faith and trusting in Allah.

"... Allah is sufficient for us and how excellent is such a Protector!'"

4. When a believer happens to be inflicted with disasters, he increases his reliance and his connection with Allah.

"... Yet it increased them in faith ..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 174

فَانقَلَبُواْ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُواْ رِضْوَانَ اللّهِ وَاللّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

174. "So they returned (home) with the favour from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

The wounded strivers of the Battle of 'Uhud were prepared again to defend Islam by the command of the Messenger of Allah(S). Then, they pursued the enemy as far as the camping-place of Hamra'-ul-Asad.

So, the enemies, who were afraid of Muslims' preparation and courage, dispensed with attacking again and returned home. This verse is upon the praise of sincere wounded strivers of the Battle of 'Uhud.

Explanations

1. There were many a man who adventured the danger and returned safely, and there were many coward ones who flew from the danger but finally encountered with misfortune.

"So they returned (home) with the favour from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them..."

2. For the godly men, the principal is the pleasure of Allah. Neither martyrdom, nor safety, nor injury, nor welfare is the principal for them.

"... and they followed the pleasure of Allah ..."

3. The great grace of Allah is destined to only the strivers who have participated in the Battle.

"... And Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 175

إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءهُ فَلاَ تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

175. "It is only Satan that causes his friends to fear; but do not fear them and fear Me if you are believers."

A real believer does not fear of anyone other than Allah. Thus, Faith is not aloof from bravery. So, strivers ought to be afraid of only Allah and keep on being pious.

To impose horror and threat is the permanent policy of the powers.

"It is only Satan that causes his friends to fear; but do not fear them and fear Me if you are believers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 176

وَلاَ يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَضُرُّواْ اللّهَ شَيْئاً يُرِيدُ اللّهُ أَلاَّ يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظًّا فِي الآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

176. "And-let not those who hasten on to disbelief grieve you. Verily they will never harm Allah at all, Allah intends to assign them no fortune in the Hereafter and they will have a great Torment."

It seemed that the people who were defeated in the Battle of 'Uhud were afraid of each other. They thought what would happen then that they were defeated and the infidels returned to Mecca Victoriously.

In answer to them, the verse says that they would not be worried, because it was the respite of Allah in order that they could fill the capacity of their infidelity and that they do not have any merit in the coming world.

Explanations

1. Keep your peace and calmness, because the effort of disbelievers is ineffective in obliteration of Islam.

"And let not those who hasten on to disbelief grieve you..."

2. Wishful hastening in the field of infidelity deprives individuals, from having eligibility of repentance and receiving the grace of Allah.

3. The infidelity of people does no harm to His Pure Essence.

"... Verily they will never harm Allah at all..."

4. To give respite to disbelievers is the way of treatment of Allah, not as a sign of unawareness or incapability unto it.

"….Allah intends to assign them no fortune in the Hereafter..."

5. Both the wrath of Allah and His Grace are great. (In the former couple of verses, the Qur'an gave glad tidings to the grace of Allah for those wounded strivers who got prepared for the second time to go to fight by the command of the Prophet (S). Here, it also refers to the great punishment belonging to the stubborn infidels).

"... and they will have a great torment."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 177

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الْكُفْرَ بِالإِيمَانِ لَن يَضُرُّواْ اللّهَ شَيْئًا وَلهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

177. "Verily those who have bought infidelity for faith, never shall they harm Allah at all; and they will have a painful torment."

The subjects of buying and selling, and also gaining and losing, have frequently been repeated through different occurrences in the Qur'an.

In this process, the Qur'an is considered as a market, where people are the sellers, the beliefs and thoughts are the goods, and sometimes Allah and sometimes other than Allah are the customers. In this market selling is compulsory, but electing the customers is up to the choice of human beings.

That is, we cannot leave out what we have, including power, action, and belief, but we can set our belief and action in a path to be gainful or detrimental.

In the Qur'an, those who purchase with Allah and take Heaven and His pleasure in return, are praised, while another group are criticized. This group, for their perversion or for choosing gain, either do not make profit:

"Yields them no profit"[2]

or face with loss:

"Surely man is in loss"[3],

"That is a manifest loss."

Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 11 And, in some verses, of the Qur'an like the above verse, those who sell their Faith in return with infidelity are despised, and, on the other side, the believers are consoled that the apostasy of that group has no harm to Allah or to the path of Allah.

"Verily those who have bought infidelity for faith, never shall they harm Allah at all; and they will have a painful torment."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 178

وَلاَ يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُواْ إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

178. "And let not those who disbelieve think that Our giving them respite is good for their selves; We give respite to them only that they may increase in sin; and that they will have an abasing torment."

The Qur'an has repeatedly applied the phrase / la yahsabanna/ (they do not think) about infidels, hypocrites, and the persons whose Faith is weak. This is because these persons are deprived from insight, proper analysis, good intellect, and necessary clear mind.

They think that creation is vain, martyrdom is annihilation, the world is permanent, and honour is a supreme good. The Qur'an has rejected all these imaginations in different occurrences.

Sometimes, the disbelievers consider having possibilities, victories and welfare as a sign of their own eligibility, while Allah respites them upon their stubbornness towards His Essence and upon their being polluted by infidelity and corruption in order that they dive deep in their destruction.

The history details that when Yazid, the kalif of the time, had Imam Hussayn (as) slain, the house-hold members of the Imam, including Hadrat

Zaynab Kubra (as), were taken to Syria as captures. In his meeting, Yazid proudly addressed Hadrat Zaynab (as) and said:

"Did you see that Allah is with us?"

In answer to him, Zaynab (as) recited this very verse, and added:

"I know your rank low and little and it is deserving for any despising. Do whatever you wish, but by Allah, beware that you cannot quench the light of Allah', (our remembrance)."

Yes, for such luxurious people, the abasing torment has been prepared in order that their imaginary worldly honour be accompanied with abasement and degradation in the Hereafter.

However, criminals are divided into two groups: One group are those who are improvable, and Allah warns and awakens them by admonition, and by pleasant and unpleasant events. The second group are those who are not guidable.

Allah leaves them alone to themselves so that all their eligibilities of corruption appear. That is why Imam Baqir (as) in explanation of this verse said:

"Death is a bounty for the infidels, because the longer they live, the more sin they commit."[4]

Explanations

1. Respites are not counted as a sign of being loved.

2. Bounties are useful when they are used alongside the path of right, rectitude, and goodness.

3. The length of life is not important, gaining good advantages of life is important.

"And let not those who disbelieve think that Our giving them respite is good for their selves..."

In the supplication Makarim-ul-Akhlaq 'the Moral Characteristics' Imam Sajjad (as) invokes:

"O' Lord! If my life will be the pasture of Satan, shorten it! "[5]

4. Do not hasten in judgement; consider the conclusion and the coming world, too.

"... We give respite to them only that they may increase in sin and that they will have an abasing torment."

5. The welfare and authority of the tyrants is not the sign of their rightfulness and the pleasure of Allah upon them. However, it is not a reason for us to be silent before them, either.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 179

مَّا كَانَ اللّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى مَا أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىَ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَـكِنَّ اللّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِن رُّسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاء فَآمِنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِن تُؤْمِنُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

179. "Allah is not One to leave the believers in the state wherein you are, until He sorts out the vicious from the good. And Allah is not going to acquaint you with the unseen, but Allah chooses anyone He pleases from His Messengers (to acquaint with unseen). Therefore, believe in Allah and

His Messengers, and if you believe and act piously, then you will have a great reward."

This is the last verse stated about the event of 'Uhud in this Surah. The verse clearly announces that the world is a large laboratory. It is not such that everybody who claims faith be left free to live in the society ordinarily.

No, people are examined, and failures and victories are the means of recognition of their inwards.

For instance, the very failure in the Battle of 'Uhud was a means for that the hypocrites to be recognized Allah does not acquaint people with 'the knowledge of hidden things', because if right and wrong be recognized with that knowledge, the flame of hope will be quenched, the social connections will be broken, and the life will be encountered with confusion.

It is better that we do not know the supernatural secrets in order that the life continues ordinarily, and the recognition of right and wrong be performed through gradual examinations.

Explanations

1. Allah leaves the disbelievers alone to themselves in order,

"That they Increase in sin",

but He does not leave the believers alone, as It says:

"Allah is not One to leave the believers in the state wherein you are; .."

2. The separation of pure from impure is one of the ways of treatment of Allah.

"... until He sorts out the vicious from the good..."

3. Life should continue in its ordinary form. Knowing the secrets of people through 'the knowledge of hidden things' ordinarily disturbs the common life.

"... And Allah is not going to acquaint you with the unseen..."

4. Life should continue in its normal way, yet Allah endows 'the knowledge of hidden things' to some particular ones.

"... but Allah chooses anyone He pleases from His Messengers (to acquaint with unseen)..."

5. Allah gives the knowledge of unseen to those who have the rank of messenger ship from Him.

6. The ranks of all prophets are not equal to each other.

"... Allah chooses anyone He pleases from His Messengers..."

7. The knowledge of hidden things belongs to Allah alone, yet some of the chosen Messengers of Allah enjoy of a part of it (not the whole of it) only to know it.

"... Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messengers, and if you believe and act piously, then you will have a great reward."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 180

وَلاَ يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخِلُواْ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاللّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

180. "And as for those who are niggardly with what Allah has granted out of His grace, let them not think it is better for them, nay it is worse for them; that which they were niggardly of will be clung to their neck on

Resurrection Day; and to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is aware of what you do."

The Heavy Burden of Captivity!

This holy verse explains the destiny of the misers on the Day of Resurrection. These are the very people who try to heap wealth and protect it. They refrain to spend out money in charity along the path of the servants of Allah.

In the above verse, there is not anything mentioned about alms and incumbent payments, but according to the traditions by Ahlul-Bayt (as) and the statements of commentators, this verse has been appropriated to those who hinder paying alms. The Qur'an says:

"And as for those who are niggardly with what Allah has granted out of His grace, let them not think it is better for them ..."

But, in spite of the imagination of these people, this manner will be against them. It says:

" .. nay it is worse for them…"

Then, it explains their destiny in the Hereafter, like this:

"... that which they were niggardly of will be clung to their neck on Resurrection Day..."

It is understood from this verse that the wealth whose incumbent rights have not been paid and the society has enjoyed nothing of it, according to the law of embodiment of deeds, will incarnate in the form of a painful chastisement on Resurrection Day, similar to other evil deeds of man.

Then, the verse points to another subject and indicates that these properties, whether they be spent out in the way of Allah and in the path of His servants, or not, will finally be separated from their possessors; and:

"... and to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth ..."

Now that the circumstance is like this, so much the better that before separating from their wealth, instead of only having its responsibility and regret they enjoy of its spiritual merits.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... and Allah is aware of what you do."

Therefore, if you behave niggardly, He knows it; and if you apply your wealth in the path of assisting the society, He knows it, too; and He grants the reward of every one appropriately.

Notes

1. Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 173
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 16
3. Surah Al-'Asr, No.103, verse 2
4. Nur -uth-Thaqalayn, vol. l, p. 413
5. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 61

Section 16: Jewish carping at the Apostle

Jewish carping at the Apostle's calling for subscriptions - the Jews rejecting every prophet who did not follow the Mosaic Law - Muslims to bear losses and hardships,

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 181

لَّقَدْ سَمِعَ اللهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاء سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُواْ وَقَتْلَهُمُ الأَنبِيَاء بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُواْ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

181. "Allah has certainly heard the statement of those who said: 'Verily Allah is poor and we are rich '. We shall record what they state and their slaying the prophets unjustly; and We will say: 'Taste the torment of burning'."

The Occasion of Revelation

This verse and the next one are revealed upon the reproach and blame of the Jews. The Prophet (S) had a letter written to Bani Qinqa', the Jew, in which he invited them to performing prayers; paying alms, and giving loan to the Lord. (The purpose of the last part of this sentence is spending out in the way of Allah that which is stated in this form in order to move the feelings of men).

The agent of the Prophet (S) entered a house which was the center of teaching the Jewish religious subjects and it was called 'Bayt-ul-Madaris'.

He handed the letter to Fanhas, a great Jewish learned man. After reading the letter, he mockingly said: "If your statements are true, it should be said that Allah is poor and we are rich, for if He were not poor, He would not ask us for loan."

"In addition to that, Muhammad (S) believes Allah has prohibited you (Muslims) from usury while he himself promises you interest and increase of wealth for giving charity."

But, when these two verses were revealed, Fanhas denied confessing he had said these words.

In this verse, it says:

"Allah has certainly heard the statement of those who said: 'Verily Allah is poor and we are rich '..."

Therefore, their denial was useless. Then, the Lord says not only We hear their words, but also.

"... We shall record what they state and their slaying the prophets unjustly; .."

Recording and accounting their deeds is for that their total accomplishments will be put before them on the Reckoning Day in order that they see the fruit of their actions.

".. and We will say: 'Taste the torment of burning'."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 182

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

182. "This is for what your hands have sent on ahead and, of course, Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants."

In this verse, it says that the painful torment you are tasting its bitterness now, is the fruit of your own deeds. It was you yourselves who did wrong to your own souls, for never is Allah unjust to anyone. It says:

"This is for what your hands have sent on ahead and, of course, Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants."

In principle, if criminals, such as you, do not receive the punishment of their evil deeds, and be counted in the row of good doers, it will be the utmost injustice; and if Allah did not do like that, He would be the most unjust.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 183

الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَهِدَ إِلَيْنَا أَلاَّ نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىَ يَأْتِيَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

183. "Those who said: ' Verily Allah has covenanted with us not to believe in any messenger until he brings us an offering which fire (from heaven) will consume '. Say: ' Indeed Messengers came unto you before me (all) with miracles, and with that (very miracle) which you spoke of; why then did you kill them, if you are so truthful?'"

To fly from accepting Islam, some disbelievers sought a pretext and said that Allah had covenanted with them that they would believe in only a prophet who brought them an animal to offer, and a lightning from heaven would burn that victim in front of the eyes of people. It was then that they might be assure of his prophet hood.

This verse was revealed in order that the Prophet (S) would tell those pertinacious seekers of pretext that: if they were right, why did they not believe in the prophets before the Prophet of Islam? Those prophets, in addition to different kinds of miracles, also brought them what they said, i.e. bringing an offering.

Explanations

1. The history of all groups and nations, as well as their background, is the best reference to their claims.

"... Say: 'Indeed Messengers came unto you before me (all) with miracles, and with that (very miracle) which you spoke of..."

2. Do not justify your escaping from Truth by religious subjects-

"Those who said: 'Verily Allah has covenanted with us..."

The subject of offering a ram is mentioned in the Torah, Leviticus, Chapter 9, No.2, such:

"And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord."

3. The opponents' seeking pretext, throughout the history of human beings, is alike.

"... and with that (very miracle) which you spoke of ..."

4. As soon as a person pertains with the spirit of arrogance, the one neither avoids denigrating Allah,

"... Verily Allah has covenanted with us...",

nor submits to any prophet:

"... not to believe in any messenger..."

Such a person also expects that miracles adapt to his wishes and desires.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 184

فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ جَآؤُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ

184. "Then, if they reject you, messengers before you have already been rejected while they came even with clear arguments; and the Psalms and the Enlightening Book."

In this verse, Allah consoles the Prophet (S) and tells him that if these seekers of pretext reject you, it is not a new or an odd thing because the messengers before you were rejected, too. It says:

"Then, if they reject you, messengers before you have already been rejected..."

This is in a case that those messengers had both clear signs and clear miracles with them.

"... while they came even with clear arguments ..."

Those messengers had not only clear arguments and miracles but they brought also both firm, acceptable scriptures arid the Enlightening Book. It says:

"... and the Psalms and the Enlightening Book"

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 185

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَن زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَما الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلاَّ مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

185. "Everyone tastes death. And verily you will be paid in full your reward on the Resurrection Day, Then whoever is delivered from the Fire and admitted into Paradise, he indeed is prosperous; and the life of this world is not but a provision of deception."

Death, a General Destiny!

At first, this verse points to a law that involve of the world, it says:

"Everyone tastes death…"

In fact, most people are willing to forget their mortality but this is a reality that even if we forget it, it (the death) will never forget us.

Then, it says that after the life of this world, the stage of receiving the fruit of deeds (whether good reward or retribution) begins. It says:

"…And verily you will be paid in full your reward on the Resurrection Day,.."

Then, it adds that those who remove from the effect of the absorption of Hell Fire and enter Heaven, they are saved and have found their beloved and demanded ideal. It says:

"…Then whoever is delivered from the Fire and admitted into Paradise, he indeed is prosperous…"

As if, Hell absorbs human beings with all its power towards itself. Yes, verily the factors which attract man towards it are some astonishing attractions. Do the fleeting desires, unlawful sexual pleasures, unlawful positions and properties not have attraction for every human being?

In the next sentence, it completes the former discussion by saying:

"….and the life of this world is not but a provision of deception."

The important thing is that the material world and its pleasures do not become the ideal and the final goal of Man; otherwise, using the material world and its merits, as a means for attaining the human development, not only is not blameworthy, but also is necessary and essential.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 186

لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ أَذًى كَثِيراً وَإِن تَصْبِرُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ

186. "Certainly you will be tried in your wealth and your own selves, and certainly you will bear much abuse from those who were given the Book before you, and from those who are idolaters. And if you preserve patiently, and act piously, then that is indeed of determining factor in affairs."

After emigrating Muslims from Mecca to Medina, pagans began to encroach and to plunder their wealth and properties in Mecca. Whomever they could find, they hurt and troubled. On the other hand, the Jews in Medina told them words of sarcasm.

They even sang odes for Muslim women and girls with full impudence, or they (the Jews) libelled them. The Jewish person who was leading these things was called 'Ka'b-ibn-'Ashraf.

The Prophet (S) issued order that the person be killed, and thus he was killed.

This verse, solacing the Muslims, recommends them to be patient and pious, because a decision made under its shade is trustable.

Explanations

1. Your trial is an earnest subject, so, make yourselves prepared for it.

2. Hearing abuse and annoyance, and suffering much harms from the foe is among the means of your trial.

"...and certainly you will bear much abuse from those who were given the Book before you, and from those who are idolaters. And if you preserve patiently, and act piously, then that is indeed of determining factor in affairs."

3. The most applied means of trial are wealth and soul.

"Certainly you will be tried in your wealth and your own selves..."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 187

وَإِذَ أَخَذَ اللّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلاَ تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاء ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْاْ بِهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ

187. "And (remember) when Allah took a pledge from those who were given the Book (saying): 'You shall certainly make it known to people and you shall not hide it '. But they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it, then, how bad what they purchase."

The reason that there are many millions of the Christians, the Jews, and the Zoroastrians throughout the world is totally for the sake of inopportune silence of their learned people.

According to the of Atyab-ul-Bayan, there are more than sixty occurrences in the New Testament and Old Testament where the glad tidings of Islam and the Prophet (S) is referred to, but the learned persons of the People of the Book have left all of them away.

The sin of concealment is so important that Allah has used such a meaning for its retribution that He has applied for no other sin. The concerning verse says:

"... They are those that Allah does curse them and (also) curse them (all) those who curse (such ones)."[1]

Explanations

1. Whatever concealment that causes people to remain in paganism, infidelity, ignorance and corruption is a great sin, and the concealer has a share in the sin of people.

2. The motive of the annihilating silences are usually obtaining wealth or social rank and or protecting it.

"... and took a small price for it, then, how bad what they purchase."

3. The learned persons are responsible for their people.

4. The statement and exhibition of facts must be done in a way that nothing be concealed for people.

"And (remember) when Allah took a pledge from those who were given the Book (saying): 'You shall certainly make it known to people and you shall not hide it '. But they cast it behind their backs ..."

5. Mere knowledge is not enough for attaining prosperity and felicity. Piety and appropriate heedlessness to the worldly wealth and social rank is necessary, too.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 188

لاَ تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أَتَواْ وَّيُحِبُّونَ أَن يُحْمَدُواْ بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُواْ فَلاَ تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

188. "Do not think those who rejoice in what they have done and love to he praised for what they have not done, so do not think that they would be safe from the punishment and they will have a painful torment."

There are always some hypocrites in the society who like to be treated, in spite of their hypocrisy, as the believers. It is exactly similar to the cowards who wish to be entitled with bravery, and the ignorant and people with a little knowledge who are pleased to be called 'learned'.

Sometimes they appear in the society with a state to inspire people that they have the best titles and ranks. But these persons are some deceitful ones who never embrace prosperity.

Basically, people are divided into three groups:

1. Those who strive with effort and endeavour and intend that none know it but Allah. The example of this group is those who say:

"... no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks."[2]

2. Those who work with the motive that people know it and praise them.

3. Those who expect people to praise them without doing anything good. Such persons are referred to in this verse.

"Do not think those who rejoice in what they have done and love to he praised for what they have not done, so do not think that they would be safe from the punishment and they will have a painful torment."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 189

وَلِلّه مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاللّه عَلَىَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

189. "And to Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

In this verse, there are some glad tidings for the believers, and also there is a threat for the disbelievers. It says:

"And to Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

That is, it is not necessary that the believers pave the unusual ways for their development and progression. They can continue their way of progression under the light of the Power of Allah through the lawful and proper paths.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 159
2. Surah, Insan, No.76, verse 9

Section 17: The Triumph of the Faithfuls

Prayer for the promised triumph -The predicated triumph,

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 190

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ

190. "Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for the possessors of intellects."

It is cited in the books by Fakhr Razi, Qurtubi and Maraqi that once 'Ayesha was asked what the best memory was that she remembered from the Prophet (S).

She replied that all the affairs of the Prophet (S) were wonderful, but the most important one of all was that one night the Prophet (S) was relaxing in the house where Ayesha was living.

Before having a rest, he suddenly stood up and wore his clothing, made ablution and began praying. He shed tears so much so that the front of his clothes became wet. After that he bowed down for prostration. When he fell prostrate he wept so much so that the ground became wet.

Next morning, when Bilal came and asked him about so much amount of tear, the Prophet (S) said:

"Last night some verses were revealed to me (verses 190 to 194, Surah 'Ale -'Imran)."

And then he (S) added:

"Woe to the one who recites these verses and does not contemplate."

Again, in the book by Fakhr Razi, a tradition has been narrated from Hadrat Ali (as) who said:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) used to recite these verses before his midnight prayers."[1]

In another tradition we have also been recommended to recite these holy verses.

It is narrated from one of the companions of Imam Ali (as) by the name of 'Nuf Bakkali' who said: One night he was at the presence of Hadrat Ali (as). He (as) got up from his bed and recited these verses.

Then Imam asked him whether he was awake or asleep, and Bakkali answered he was awake. Then Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"Blessed are the persons who did not accept the taints of the earth."[2]

Explanations

1. The creation of the world follows an aim.
2. Knowing the existence is a primary stage for knowing Allah.
3. Those who are intelligent grasp the knowledge of Allah from everything in the world.
4. The wiser a person is, the more signs he grasps.

"Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for the possessors of intellects."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 191

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذا بَاطِلاً سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

191. "Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and mediate on the creation of the heavens and the earth, (seriously saying) 'Our Lord! You have not created (all) this in vain! Glory be to you! Save us then from the torment of the Fire'."

The remembrance of Allah in all conditions of a person is the sign of wisdom.

"Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and lying on their sides..."

And, 'the possessors of intellects' are those who remember Allah and contemplate. The Qur'an introduces them such:

"Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and mediate…,"

Faith is worthy when it is based on intelligence and contemplation. It says:

"… and mediate on the creation of the heavens and the earth …"

We should know this fact that the farther we keep aloof from the god aims, the nearer we will approach to Hell and we must return that distance again. The world of creation has not been done in vain even though we do not realize all its secrets.

"…' Our Lord! You have not created (all) this in vain! Glory be to you! Save us then from the torment of the Fire '."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 192

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ

192. "Our Lord! Anyone You cause to enter the (Hell) Fire, surely You have put him to disgrace; and the unjust will have no helpers."

Fire is important, but disgrace and notoriety is more important, and more painful than the bodily punishment.

"Our Lord! Anyone You cause to enter the (Hell) Fire, surely You have put him to disgrace…"

By the way, the transgressors will be deprived of intercession.

"... and the unjust will have no helpers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 193

رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُواْ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الأبْرَارِ

193. "Our Lord! Verily we have heard (the invitation of) a Crier calling to the faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord!' So we did believe. 'Our Lord! forgive us therefore our sins, and cover of us our evil deeds, and make us die with the righteous'. "

Perhaps, the purpose of the Arabic term /Ŏunub/ 'sins', occurred in this verse, is 'the great sins', and the purpose of the term /sayyi'ah/ 'sin' is a lesser sin '; as in the following holy verse, /sayyi'at/ (lesser sins) has occurred in comparison with /kaba'ir/ (great sins):

"lf you shun the great sins which you are forbidden, We will do away with your small sins ..."[3]

And, maybe, the purpose of the Quranic term /sayyi'at / is the effects of sins.

While in this world the wise say:

"Verily we have heard (the invitation of)...",

there are some persons who are heedless to this invitation. Certainly on the Resurrection Day, they regretfully will say: ' We wish we would hearken to the words of Allah and had obeyed His command', as the Qur'an refers to them in Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 31; and Surah Az-Zumar, No.39, verse 56.

Explanations

1. The wise are ready to accept the truth, and they, responding to the call of their innate disposition, answer the call of prophets, the invitation of the godly knowledgeable men, and the cry of martyrs.
2. Seeking forgiveness is the sign of wisdom.
3. Death with the righteous is a gift from Allah.
4. The far sighted intelligent ones wish the death with the righteous, and think of the goodness of destiny.

"Our Lord! Verily we have heard (the invitation of) a Crier calling to the faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord!' So we did believe. 'Our Lord! forgive us therefore our sins, and cover of us our evil deeds, and make us die with the righteous '."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 194

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدتَّنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ وَلاَ تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لاَ تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

194. "Our Lord! and grant us what You have promised us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Verily You do not break any promise."

In these verses, Allah has illustrated the way and manner of 'the wise' and 'the people of understanding', such that they are qualified with these qualities: the remembrance of Allah, the thought of attaining to 'wisdom', submitting to prophets, seeking Allah's forgiveness, willing to die well, and expecting to reach the bounties of Allah and saving from disgrace and notoriety.

In the previous verses, the Faith of the wise unto Allah and the Resurrection was referred to. Now, in this verse, the belief in prophet hood is also pointed out.

"Our Lord! and grant us what You have promised by Your Messengers..."

Explanations

1. The goal of the wise is reaching to divine graces, and saving from the Hell Fire and notoriety in the Hereafter.
2. The wise believe in all prophets and all promises of Allah.

"Our Lord! and grant us what You have promised us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Verily You do not break any promise."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 195

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لاَ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَى بَعْضُكُم مِّن بَعْضٍ
فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُواْ وَأُخْرِجُواْ مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُواْ فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُواْ وَقُتِلُواْ لأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ
وَلأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّن عِندِ اللّهِ وَاللّهُ عِندَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ

195. "So their Lord responded their prayer, (saying): 'I will not waste the work of any worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other. So, those who migrated and were driven out of their homes and suffered hurt in My way, and who fought and were killed, I will certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will certainly make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, as a reward from Allah; and Allah! with Him (only) is the Fairest Reward."

The content of this verse follows the subject of the previous verses. It is about the people of understanding, the possessors of intellects, and the result of their deeds.

Upon the occasion of the revelation of this verse, it is said that once 'Umm-us- Salamah' (one of the Prophet's wives) asked the Messenger of Allah (S) that there are many statements mentioned in the Qur'an about Holy war, immigration, and self-sacrifice of men, but do women have a share in them, too ? The verse was revealed and their Lord answered this question as such:

"So their Lord responded their prayer, (saying): 'I will not waste the work of any worker among you, whether male or female..."

There are some unaware people among non-Muslims that sometimes accuse Islam by saying that Islam is the religion of males, not females, Here, this statement makes it clear that how far such people are from the Truth.

Through the next words, the verse indicates that in the process of creation all human beings relate to each other, because some of them have been born from some others, i.e., women have been created from men and men from women.

"… the one of you from the other..."

In the continuation of the verse, it concludes that:

"…So, those who migrated and were driven out of their homes and suffered hurt in My way, and who fought and were killed, I will certainly cover their evil deeds..."

Then, the Qur'an adds that besides forgiving their sins they will certainly be placed in Heaven containing of various bounties. It says:

"… and I will certainly make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow..."

This is a reward bestowed by Allah which is given to them, for their self-sacrifice, and it is, of course, of the best rewards. It says:

"…as a reward from Allah; and Allah! with Him (only) is the Fairest Reward."

This part of the verse is a hint to the fact that the godly rewards are not fully and completely recognized by the people in this world, but they ought

to know that Allah's reward is higher and more significant than any other rewards.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 196

لاَ يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فِي الْبِلاَدِ

196. "Let not the (prosperous) going about of those who disbelieve deceive you in the cities."

Because of their commercial travels, the pagans of Mecca and the Jews of Medina lived in welfare. But the Muslims, as a result of leaving their wealth and properties in Mecca and emigrating to Medina, and, on the other hand, being involved with economical siege, were living in some straitened circumstances. So, the revelation of this verse caused them to console.

"Let not the (prosperous) going about of those who disbelieve deceive you in the cities."

Explanations

1. Sending political, economical, and martial missions, or holding secret meetings and having equivocal interviews performed by the enemy, should not deceive you.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 197

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

197. "(It is) a brief enjoyment! Thereafter their abode is Hell, and how bad the resting place (it is)! "

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition has said: "There is not goodness in a pleasure after which is Fire (of Hell)."[4]

The fleeting pleasures and eternal torment is for the infidels, while temporary hardships and the eternal peace and comfort belong to the believers.

"(It is) a brief enjoyment! Thereafter their abode is Hell, and how bad the resting place (it is)! "

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 198

لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْاْ رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلاً مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ وَمَا عِندَ اللّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّلأَبْرَارِ

198. "But those who are in awe of their Lord, for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow, therein they will abide for ever, a reception from Allah, and whatever is with Allah is the best for the righteous."

In Arabic Language, the term /nuzul/ is called to the first thing which the guest is usually received with, such as sweet drink, fruit and so on.

From this point of view, it seems that the verse intends to say: beware not to pervert from the path of piety and Faith when you see the commercial going about of infidels, because the gardens of Heaven are just the beginning of the reception for you, not its main one.

"But those who are in awe of their Lord, for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow; therein will they abide for ever, a reception from Allah, and whatever is with Allah is the best for the righteous."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 199

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَن يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلّهِ لاَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً أُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

199. "And surely of the People of the Book are some who believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to you and in what has been sent down to them, being humble towards Allah. They do not sell the verses of Allah for a small price. These are they that have their reward with their Lord; verily Allah is quick in reckoning."

Some commentators believe that this verse has been revealed about some of the People of the Book who embraced Islam. They were included of forty people from Najran, thirty two persons from Abyssinia, and eight men from Byzantine.[5]

Some other Books denote that the verse is revealed about Negus who died in the ninth year after Immigration in the month Rajab.

When the Messenger of Allah (S) became aware of his death, he told Muslims that one of their brethren had died somewhere out of Arabia and they would prepare to pray his funeral prayer in compensation of his services.

They asked who he was, and the Prophet (S) said it was Negus. After that Muslims, accompanying the Messenger of Allah (S) went into the Baqi', a graveyard in Medina, and prayed his funeral prayer.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 200

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اصْبِرُواْ وَصَابِرُواْ وَرَابِطُواْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

200. "O' you who have faith! do persevere and outdo (all others) in endurance, and be ready (to guard the bounds), and be in awe of Allah that you may be prosperous."

This verse recommends kinds of perseverance and patience when confronting misfortunes, as follows: In the first stage be patient in personal adversities and desires.

"O' you who have Faith! do persevere…."

In the second stage: persevere more against the pressure of the enemy.

"… and out do (all others) in endurance..."

In the third stage: try to protect the geographical bounds against the invasions of the foreign enemies; try to protect the ideological and theological bounds by means of scientific argumentations; and try to protect the bounds of the heart (mind) from the attack of temptations.

"…and be ready (to guard the bounds),.."

In Arabic language, tying something somewhere is called /rabat/ and that is way this term is also used for an 'inn', because in old times caravans used to stay there where they kept their goods, horses, and camels.

Again, it is used for a heart which is firmly tied to the grace of Allah, too. There are also some other derivations from the same root which are applied in Arabic, like: /irtibat/ (relationship), /marbut/ (related), and /rabit / (communicator).

n Islamic traditions, the phrase /rabitu / has been applied in the sense of 'expectation for prayer'. It seems that Muslims tighten their own hearts and souls by the link that they create in prayers.

Notes

1. At-Tafsirul- Kabir, vol. 9, p. 134
2. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 276
3. Surah An-Nisa, No.4, verse 31
4. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 41, p. 104
5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 561, & Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr Razi

Surah An-Nisa', Chapter 4, Introduction

(The Women)

No.4 (177 verses)

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Introduction to the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, which contains 177 verses, was revealed in Medina. Next to Surah Al-Baqarah, it is the longest Surah of the Qur'an from the point of the number of words and letters.

Its contents invite to Faith, justice, taking examples from the nations of the past, breaking the ties of friendship with the enemies of Allah, and supporting the orphans.

In this Surah there are subjects such as marriage, equitable distribution of property after death, the necessity of obeying the divine leader, immigration, Holy War in the way of Allah, and so on.

This Surah is entitled An-Nisa, (the women), since the first thirty five verses of it are about women and family affairs.

The Virtue of Studying This Surah

According to a tradition, the Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"Whoever recites Surah An-Nisa, as if this person has spent property in the path of Allah as much as any Muslim inherits by virtue of the purport of this Surah, and also, a similar reward of a person who has freed a slave, will be given to him."[1]

It is evident that the purpose in this tradition, and all of the similar traditions, is not a bare recitation of the verses, but recitation is a preparation for comprehension, the which is, in its turn, a preparation for action and behaving accordingly in personal and social life.

Thus, it is certain that if Muslims take lessons from the contents of the verses of this Surah and apply them in their own lives, besides their worldly advantages, they will enjoy of all these rewards in the Hereafter.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 3, p. 1

Section 1: Responsibilities of the Guardians of Orphans

Respect for the ties of relationship -Care of orphans' property

Conditional Polygamy Permitted -Warning against embezzlement of orphans' property.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا

رِجَالاً كَثِيراً وَنِسَاء وَاتَّقُواْ اللهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءلُونَ بِهِ وَالأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1."O' people! be in awe of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and spread from them (the couple) many men and women. And be in awe of Allah through Whom you demand one of another, as well as any ties of kinship; Surely Allah is watching over you."

Challenge against Unjust Discrimination

The first verse of this Surah addresses all human beings. The content of this verse is a message to mankind as a whole. It invites them to piety and being in awe of Allah. It says:

"O' people! be in awe of your Lord..."

Then, to introduce the Lord Who is aware of all deeds of human beings, it points to one of His attributes which is the origin of the unity of human race. It says:

"... Who created you from a single soul ..."

The phrase 'a single soul' refers to the first human being whom the Qur'an introduces as 'Adam', the father of all human beings. The application of the term /bani'adam/ 'the children of 'Adam' in the Qur'an refers to this meaning, too.

Then, in the next sentence, it says:

"…And from it created its mate ...

This means that He created Adam's wife from his nature, not from the limbs of his body. Basing on a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) the creation of Eve from one of the ribs of Adam has intensely been rejected, and it has been stipulated that Eve was created from the rest of Adam's clay.

In the next verse, it continues saying:

"... and spread from them (the couple) many men and women..."

This idea leads to the comprehension that the multiplying of the race of the children of Adam has been performed only through Adam and his wife, and no other creature has had any hand in it.

Then, for the sake of the importance that piety has in the structure of the foundation of a safe and sound society, again it invites people to observing piety. It advises people to be in awe of Allah, the One Who is Great in their view, so that when they want to demand something from others, they apply His Name. It says:

"... And be in awe of Allah through Whom you demand one of another..."

And it adds that:

"... as well as any ties of kinship..."

Mentioning this subject here is a sign of an extraordinary importance that the Qur'an maintains for strengthening blood-kinship.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... Surely Allah is watching over you."

That is, He sees all your deeds and intentions and, by the way, He protects you against unpleasant adventures.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 2

وَآتُواْ الْيَتَامَى أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلاَ تَتَبَدَّلُواْ الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ وَلاَ تَأْكُلُواْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَى أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا

2. "And give the orphans their property, and do not exchange something bad (of yours) for something good (of theirs), nor devour their property along with your own; (for) it is surely a great crime."

Occasion of Revelation

At the time of the Prophet of Islam (S), one of the members of a tribe by the name of Bani-Qatfan had a rich brother, and it happened that the rich brother passed away.

Then, as a guardian of his brother's orphans, he took his property in his possession, but when his brother's son matured and demanded it, he denied returning his right to him. The subject was explained to the holy Prophet (S).

Then this verse was revealed, and when the man heard it, he repented and returned the property to its owner. Then the man said: "I refuge with Allah from that I be polluted through the great sin."

Treachery in Orphans' Property Is Forbidden!

In any society it happens that, as a result of some events and accidents, some parents die and there remain some little children from them.

There are three important instructions upon the property of orphans mentioned in this verse.

1. At first, it instructs as such:

"And give the orphans their property,.."

This ordinance means that your interference in these properties is in the rank of a trustee and as an inspector, not as a possessor.

2. The second instruction is to prevent guardians from devouring the property of orphans.

Sometimes it happens that some guardians of the orphans, under the pretext that changing the property of the orphan is benefit able for the orphan, or it makes no difference to change it, or if it remains it will be wasted, take the best and choice parts of the properties of the orphans and put their own bad and undemanded properties in their places. The Qur'an says:

"... and do not exchange something bad (of yours) for something good (of theirs)..."

3. The third instruction has been added as follows:

"... nor devour their property along with your own..."

This sentence means that: do not mix the property of the orphans with your own property so that its result ends to the possession of the whole. Or, do not mix your undesirable property with their good property so that its result be treading the rights of the orphans.

At the end of the verse, to emphasize and prove the importance of the matter, -that this kind of transgression to the property of the orphans is a great sin, it says:

"... (for) it is surely a great crime."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 3

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ تُقْسِطُواْ فِي الْيَتَامَى فَانكِحُواْ مَا طَابَ لَكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاء مَثْنَى وَثُلاَثَ وَرُبَاعَ
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ تَعْدِلُواْ فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَلاَّ تَعُولُواْ

3. "And, if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry those women who seem good to you, two, or three, or four; but if you (still) fear that you will not act justly (between them) then (marry) only one or someone your right hands have acquired. That is more proper, that you may not deviate from equity."

Occasion of Revelation

Before Islam, it was customary in Arabia among many people that they took the orphan girls to their houses under the name of defraying and guardianship and then they married them and appropriated their property, too.

They assigned even their dowries less than what the ordinary amount was, since everything was in their own hand, and when they felt the least inconvenience from them, they would easily leave them off.

At that time the verse was revealed and instructed the guardians of the orphans that they could marry the girl orphans if they observed justice about them completely.

In this verse, another right, out of the rights of the orphans, is pointed out. It admonishes that at the time of marrying the girl orphans, if you fear that you cannot observe the right and justice about the conditions of matrimony, as well as their property, relinquish marrying them and refer to other women. It says:

"And, if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry those women who seem good to you..."

Then, it adds that you may choose from among them two or three or four to marry with. It says:

"... two, or three, or four..."

So, immediately after that it continues saying that this is in the case that you keep the perfect justice. But, if you fear that you do not observe justice unto those wives of yours, you must suffice to only one wife, so that you keep away from imposing cruelty and transgression against others. It says:

"... but if you (still) fear that you will not act justly (about them) then (marry) only one..."

Or, instead of taking a second wife, you may take advantage of the She-slave that you have, because their conditions are less heavy, although they must enjoy of their own rights, too. It says:

"... or someone your right hands have acquired..."

This action -choosing only one wife or your slave, better prevents you from cruelty and deviating from the path of equity. It says:

"... That is more proper that you may not deviate from equity."

Justice about Wives

What a man is enjoined to observe in justice about his wife is the observance of the equity in one's practical conditions and outward aspects of life, because applying justice in heartily affections is out of the ability of man.[1]

Explanations

1. Islam is the supporter of the deprived class of the society, especially the orphans, and the girl orphans in particular, emphatically on the subject of chastity, matrimony, and misusing them.

2. It is not necessary to be assured of inequity of yourself to abandon marrying the orphans, but probability and fear from it of your own side, is enough either.

3. In choosing a wife, heartily willing is a principal.

4. On the whole, Islam agrees with conditioned polygamy for men.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 4

وَآتُواْ النِّسَاء صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِن طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَن شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا

4. "And give women their dowries as a free gift, but if they, of themselves, be pleased to give up to you something of it, then consume it with pleasure and wholesomely."

Concerning the above verse where this term has been applied, it can be explained that the Arabic term /nihlah/, as Raqib Esfahani has said, is derived from /nahl/ in the sense of 'bee'. Since a bee gives honey to people and expects nothing, so, a present is also called /nihlah/.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the finest properties should be used in three occasions:

1. Dowry,
2. Hajj pilgrimage,
3. Shroud.

If you spend your best properties in paying dower, your offspring will be of the righteous.[2]

Explanations

1. Paying dower of the wife (which is her right) is obligatory.

2. Dower sum is not the rate of a lady, but it is a wedding gift and the sign of affection and friendship.

"And give women their dowries as a free gift..."

3. Dowry is the gift of man to the woman, and never it is her cost. However, we must know that dower is a financial support for the woman at the probable time of separation and as a compensation of her damage.

4. A woman has the right of possession of her dower. Thus, the parents and relatives of the lady have no right at all to take it for themselves.

5. A woman is free to take her dowry or donate it.

"... but if they, of themselves, be pleased to give up to you something of it..."

6. A wholesome wealth is that which whose owner bestows willingly and pleasantly.

"... but if they, of themselves, be pleased to give up to you something of it, then consume it with pleasure and wholesomely."

7. The extrinsic consent is not enough, but heartily consent is essential when the Qur'an says:

"of themselves".

Then, unwillingly given or compulsory remits are not valid.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 5

وَلاَ تُؤْتُواْ السُّفَهَاء أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَاماً وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُواْ لَهُمْ قَوْلاً مَّعْرُوفًا

5. "And do not give the feeble-minded your property which Allah has made for you a (means of) support, but feed them and clothe them therewith, and speak to them with kind words."

In Islamic literature distrustful winebibbers, in Arabic, are called /safih/ 'feeble-minded'. Therefore, personal properties and public properties should not be put under the authority of some unreliable persons.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the vast sense of the term "feeble - minded" covers evil-doers, too. The secret that property should not be given unto their control is that 'property' is the consistence of the society.

Thus, giving any position, responsibility and secret information, upon which the consistence of the society depends, to the persons who are habitually wrong-doers, is not right.

Explanations

1. Those who are feeble-minded, winebibbers, and unrestrained should not be authoritative in economy and wealth.

2. When the feeble-minded have authority over even their own property, it is economically harmful for your property, too.

(It is notable that the verse says: "your property" and it does not say: their property).

"And do not give the feeble-minded your property which Allah has made for you a (means of) support..."

3. In daily affairs, economical expediencies of the society and mental development ought to be noted to.

"And do not give the feeble-minded your property"

4. The feeble-minded persons are not admissible to use their properties themselves.

5. The financial and economical authorities of the system should be chosen from among some upright and experienced persons.

"And do not give the feeble-minded ..."

6. The contractors of the economical agreements must not be some wrong-doers and sinners.

7. Wealth is a means of rising-up. Then, if wealth is not utilized as a means of rising-up in a country, the economical system there is ill and its executor is a feeble-minded person even if he has got P.H.D. in economics.

8. Wealth is for the consistence of life, economics, and the leaver of the system.

"... which Allah has made for you a (means of) support..."

9. Capitals must not remain stagnantly. The wealth of the orphans and the feeble-minded persons should also be applied in the current of production and profitableness, so that its income can be enough for their lives to run and nothing of their capital would be spent.

"... but feed them and clothe them therewith ..."

10. The spiritual status and personality of the deprived must be regarded to.

"... and speak to them with kind words."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 6

وَابْتَلُواْ الْيَتَامَى حَتَّىَ إِذَا بَلَغُواْ النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُم مِّنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُواْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلاَ تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَن يَكْبَرُواْ وَمَن كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَن كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفَى بِاللّهِ حَسِيبًا

6. "And do test the orphans until they reach the age of marriage. Then, if you find in them maturity, make over to them their property and do not consume it wastefully and hastily lest they should grow up; and whoever (of the guardians) is rich, let him abstain (from taking something of the property of the orphans) and whoever is poor, let him devour reasonably. Then, when you make over to them their properly, take witnesses over them; and Allah is enough as a Reckoner."

Another instruction has been given in this verse about the orphans and the fate of their property. It begins thus:

"And do test the orphans until they reach the age of marriage.."

Then, it continues saying that, at this time; if you find enough maturity in them that they are able to run their affairs upon their own property, return it to them. It says:

"... Then, if you find in them maturity, make over to them their property..."

Here, it remarks to the guardians again that they should not devour the property belonging to the orphans wastefully before the orphans grow up. It says:

"... and do not consume it wastefully and hastily lest they should grow up..."

Another matter is that if the guardians of the orphans are rich, they must never take anything, under any plea, from the property of the orphans.

But if they are poor, for the labours they bear to protect orphans' properties' they, observing justice, can only take their recompenses from those properties. Here is the concerning statement:

"... and whoever (of the guardians) is rich, let him abstain (from taking something of the property of the orphans) and whoever is poor, let him devour reasonably…."

Then, it refers to the last ordinance of this group of ordinances about the guardians of the orphans. It orders that when you want to deliver their property to them, to avoid any accusation or any conflict, take witnesses. It says thus:

"... Then, when you make over to them their property, take witnesses over them..."

At the end of the verse it remarks that you must know that the real reckoner is Allah and the most important thing is this fact that your account is clear with Him. So, if you commit any treachery, which is concealed to the witnesses, He will reckon it. Therefore, it says:

"... and Allah is enough as a Reckoner."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 7

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاء نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

7. "Men shall have a portion of whatever the parents and the near relatives leave, and women shall have a portion of whatever the parents and the near relatives leave, be it little or much, (it is) a decreed portion."

Occasion of Revelation

One of the companions of the Prophet (S) passed away. His cousins divided his wealth among themselves though he had left some small children, and they gave nothing of it to his wife and children.

According to their custom, affected from the Age of Ignorance, they believed that only those were inheritors who had the power of fighting.

Then, responding to the grievance of the wife of that man and receiving the Divine revelation of the above verse, the Messenger of Allah (S) called the above mentioned cousins and told them to return the properties to the principle inheritors.

1. In the law of Islam, not only men but also women have the right of inheritance, and the religion of Islam is the protector of the rights of women, too.

"Men shall have a portion of whatever the parents and the near relatives leave, and women shall have a portion of whatever the parents and the near relatives leave ..."

2. In this religion, division of inheritance basing on the power and ability of fighting is forbidden.

3. The principal is the justly division of inheritance, not its amount.

"... be it little or much ..."

4. The standard of the portion of inheritance is invariable. "

"…..(it is) a decreed portion."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 8

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُوْلُواْ الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَارْزُقُوهُم مِّنْهُ وَقُولُواْ لَهُمْ قَوْلاً مَّعْرُوفًا

8. "And when the relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the division (of heritage), give them (something) out of it and speak to them kind words."

An Ethical Ordinance

Certainly this verse has been revealed after the law of division of heritage, because it says:

"And when the relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the division (of heritage), give them (something) ..."

Though the terms 'orphans ' and 'the needy' are mentioned in the abstract form, the purpose of it is the orphans and the needy of the relatives.

Then, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... and speak to them kind words."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 9

وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكُواْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَافًا خَافُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللّهَ وَلْيَقُولُواْ قَوْلاً سَدِيدًا

9. "And let those fear who, if they left behind them weakly children, would fear on their account, so let them be in awe of Allah, and let them speak right words."

As the Islamic literature denotes, devouring the wealth of orphans has reflections both in this world and in the coming world. In this world, as the verse indicates, the damage reaches to the offsprings, and in the Hereafter, there will be the Hell Fire (which is referred to in the next verse).[3]

The meaning of the verse may refer to the prohibition of abnormal donations and bequests that they bequeath or remit the whole property they have lest their small and weak children be left in poverty and misfortune after their death.[4]

Again, the verse may work as a recommendation to those who have handicapped offspring in order that, by proper planning, they would provide for their future.[5]

Explanations

1. We must substitute the conditions of others with those of ours, to recognize the pains and difficulties better.

We ought to treat the orphans with a manner that we like our orphans to be treated with it.

"And let those fear who, if they left behind them weakly children, would fear on their account ..."

2. Whoever does a wrong action, he himself will receive its fruit.

Transgression against the orphans of other people today will appear in the form of a custom in the society tomorrow, and it will involve our own orphans, too.

3. In methods of propagation, affections and innate dispositions should be utilized, too.

"... if they left behind them weakly children..."

4. Beside providing food and clothing, the orphans are in need of love, affection, and guidance.

"... and let them speak right words."

5. There should be neither treachery in the property of the orphans, nor shortcoming in their training, nor harshness in speech to them.

"... so let them be in awe of Allah ..."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا

10. "Verily; those who devour the properties of the orphans unjustly, certainly they swallow Fire into their bellies, and they shall enter the burning Fire."

In Tafsir Al-Mizan, this verse has been taken as an evidence for the embodiment of deeds in Hereafter.[6] Devouring the property of the orphan will turn to Fire on Resurrection Day.

Devouring the property of the orphan is unlawful when it is done unjustly and with transgression. Else, the usual holding familiar intercourse, which does not cause a loss or damage to the orphans and there is not any evil intention towards devouring their property, is admissible. The Qur'an says: [7]

"… they are your brothers. And Allah knows well the mischief-maker from the peace-maker..."

Explanation

The apparent shape, here, is devouring the property of the orphan, but the real feature of it will be made manifest in the form of Fire in the Hereafter.

Notes

1. It can be said that the wisdom of polygamy lies in the following:
   1. The number of death for men in wars and accidents is larger than that of women and, therefore, some women become widows.
   2. Women have monthly periods when no association occurs.
   3. Few of the young men are willing to marry a widow woman.
   4. Not all of the husbandless widows are pious or have the power to control them. Therefore, either, for the consent of the first husband, the rights of the widows should be ignored, or the problem must be solved by a project. Thus, basing on some conditions, men can marry a second wife in order to solve the difficulty of the both parties.
2. Atyab-ul-Bayan, commentary, vol. 4, p. 12
3. Tafsir-Nur -uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 370
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p.
5. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr Razi, explanation of the verse
6. Al-Mizan, commentary, vol. 4, p. 336 (Persian version)
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 220

Section 2: Law of Inheritance

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 11

يُوصِيكُمُ اللّهُ فِي أَوْلاَدِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الأُنثَيَيْنِ فَإِن كُنَّ نِسَاء فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِن كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِن كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِن كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبناؤُكُمْ لاَ تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعاً فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللّهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَلِيما حَكِيمًا

11. "Allah enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; and if they are more than two females, then they will have two-thirds of the inheritance; and if there is (only) one, she will have the half; and as for his parents, each of them shall have a sixth part of the inheritance if he has a child, but if he has no child and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have the third, and if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth after (the payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt. You do not know which of your parents and your children is closer to you in usefulness. (This is) an ordinance from Allah. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

There are ordinances of inheritance mentioned in some other religions, too. For instance, in the Torah, the Book of Numbers, Chapter 27, verses 8 to 11 some laws of inheritance are referred to. They are as follows:

8. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

9. And if he has no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10. And if he has no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

11. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the Lord commanded Moses.[1]

It should also be noted that Jesus (as) has approved, in the Bible, the same law of the Turah.

In Islam, the inheritance of a person, who has no inheritor, is given to the Islamic judge and Imam.

The pre-Islamic Arab deprived women and small children from inheritance.

The Portions of Inheritance

In this verse, the ordinance of the first class of inheritors (children, fathers, and mothers) has been mentioned.

At first, it says:

"Allah enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females...."

This meaning is a kind of emphasis on the portion of daughters taking from the inheritance and challenging with the traditions of the people in the Age of Ignorance who deprived women totally.

Then the verse denotes that if the heirs of the diseased are exclusively two daughters or more than that, two-thirds of the inheritance belongs to them. It says:

"... and if they are more than two females, then they will have two-thirds of the inheritance..."

But if there remains only one daughter, she will have half of the whole inheritance. The verse says:

"... and if there is (only) one, she will have the half..."

Now, the inheritance of fathers and mothers, who are also involved in the first class of inheritors and are in the same row with the children, is classified in three states:

The first state: is when the diseased person has an offspring or offsprings; then there will be one sixths of the inheritance for the father and again the same portion for mother. It says thus:

"... and as for his parents, each of them shall have a sixth part of the inheritance if he has a child..."

The second state: is when there exists no child and the inheritors are only the parents. In this case one thirds of the whole wealth belongs to the mother and the rest of it belongs to the father, as the verse says:

"... but if he has no child and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have the third..."

The third state: is when the inheritors are only parents and he has no offspring but he has brother(S) from the side of his parents or only from the side of his father.

Then, the portion of the mother decreases from one third to one-sixth and the remaining five-sixth of the inheritance belong to the father. It says:

"... and if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth..."

In fact, brothers, who do not inherit anything, prevent the additional amount of the inheritance of the mother, and that is why, in Arabic language, they are called /hajib/ 'chamberlain'.

Then, the Qur'an says that all of these things are after fulfilling the bequest that the diseased has bequeathed, and paying his debts, saying thus:

"... after (the payment on a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt..."

It should be noticed, of course, that only one third of the property can be bequeathed on. Therefore, if a person bequeaths more than that, it is not valid unless the heirs permit.

In the next sentence, it says:

"... You do not know which of your parents and your children is closer to you in usefulness..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it remarks that:

"... (This is) an ordinance from Allah. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

This statement is considered as an emphasis upon the former subjects so that there remains no place for people to bargain about the laws of the portions of heritance.

Why Is the Heritance of Man Equal of the Portion of Two Women?

With reference to the Islamic literature we realize that this question has actively existed in the minds of people since the beginning of Islam. They sometimes asked questions from the leaders of Islam on this regard.

For example, it is narrated that Imam Ali-ibn-Musa-ar-Rida, in answer to this question, said:

"The fact that the portion of women from inheritance is equal to the half of the portion of men is for the reason that when a lady marries she takes something (dower) and man should give something.

In addition to that, the life expenses of the wife are upon the man while a woman has no responsibility for the expenses of man as well as that of herself."[2]

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 12

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِن كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِن كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلاَلَةً أَوِ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِن كَانُوَاْ أَكْثَرَ مِن ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاء فِي الثُّلُثِ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُو َ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرَ مُضَآرٍّ وَصِيَّةً مِّنَ اللّهِ وَاللّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ

12. "And you will have half of what your wives leave, if they have no child. But if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave after (the payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt; and they shall have a fourth of what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child, then they shall have an eighth of what you leave after (the payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt. And if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of them two shall have a sixth, but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in a third after (the payment of) any bequest that does not harm (others). (This is) an ordinance from Allah and Allah is Knowing, Forbearing."

Inheritance of Spouses from Each Other

In this verse, the explanation of the heritance of spouses from each other is stated. The verse, says:

"And you will have half of what your wives leave, if they have no child..."

But if they have a child or children, even if they are from another husband, only one fourth of her property belongs to you. It says:

"... But if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave..."

This distribution is, of course, after paying the debts of the wife and fulfilling her bequests upon financial affairs, as the verse says:

"... after (the payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt..."

And, if you have not any child, there will be a fourth of your heritance for your wives. It says:

"... and they shall have a fourth of what you leave if you have no child..."

Then, the portion of your wives will be one eighth of your property, except for the land the explanation of which is stated in jurisprudent books. It is in the case that you have a child, even though this child is from another wife. It says:

"... but if you have a child, then they shall have an eighth of what you leave… "

This division, similar to the previous division, is also done after the fulfilment of the bequest you have bequeathed and paying the debts. The verse continues saying:

"... after (the payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt..."

Then, it states the ordinance of the inheritance of sisters and brothers, when it says:

"... And if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of them two shall have a sixth..."

The Arabic term /kalalah/ is used for the maternal sisters and brothers who have inheritance from the diseased person. This situation is in the condition that there remains a maternal brother and sister from the diseased person. But if they are more than one, they will have, on the whole, one third. That is they must divide one third of the property among themselves.

"... but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in a third... "

Then it adds that this is in the case that the bequest be. Performed formerly and the debts be separated from the property.

"... after (the payment of) any bequest ..."

And, it is in the condition that it does not harm the inheritors through the bequest or confessing a debt.

"... that does not harm (others)..."

So, at the end of the verse, for an emphasis; it says:

"... (This is) an ordinance from Allah and Allah is Knowing, Forbearing."

That is, this is a divine order which you must respectedly observe and He, Who has enjoined you these ordinances, is cognizant of your interests and expedients, and He is also aware of the intentions of the testators; yet, in the meantime, He is Forbearing and does not punish promptly those who treat against His command.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 13

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللّه وَمَن يُطِعِ اللّه وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

13. "These are limits (set) by Allah; and whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; and this is the great success."

Following the discussion of inheritance in the previous verse, here, in this verse, the concerning laws are referred to as 'the divine limits', where it says:

"These are limits (set) by Allah…"

These are some limits which are forbidden to pass over or transgress. Therefore, those who transgress and break the bounds of these laws are known as sinners and criminals.

Then, it speaks about those who respect these limits by observing them, saying:

"…and whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever…"

And, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"… and this is the great success,"

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 14

وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّه وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

14. "And whoso disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and transgresses His limits, He will admit him in Hell-Fire, to abide therein, and he shall have an abasing torment."

In this verse, other side of the coin is discussed about and those groups, who are opposite to the people mentioned in the previous verse, are referred to. It says:

"And whoso disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and transgresses His limits, He will admit him in Hell-Fire, to abide therein..."

Then, at the end of the verse, the final fate of such people is pointed out, where it says:

"... and he shall have an abasing torment."

In the former sentence, the bodily punishment of the Lord was referred to, while in this concluding sentence, which speaks about abasing torment, the spiritual aspect of that punishment is pointed out.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 15

وَاللاَّتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِن نِّسَآئِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُواْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعةً مِّنكُمْ فَإِن شَهِدُواْ
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّىَ يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللُّه لَهُنَّ سَبِيلاً

15. "And as for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you (Muslims) against them; then if they bear witness (to the fact), confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah makes some way for them."

The punishment of filthy women who have husband and are polluted with lewdness is pointed out in the above verse, where it says:

"And as for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you (Muslims) against them..."

Then, the verse continues saying:

"... then if they bear witness (to the fact), confine them to the houses until death takes them away ..."

Thus, the punishment of lewdness for the women who have husband has been assigned 'life imprisonment' in this verse.

But, immediately after that, it says:

"... or Allah makes some way for them."

From the above mentioned sense, it is understood that this ordinance had been a temporary ordinance, because later the holy Prophet (S) issued the divine ordinance of 'stoning', the explanation of which is found in Islamic literature and the books of jurisprudence where you may refer to it.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 16

وَاللَّذَانَ يَأْتِيَانِهَا مِنكُمْ فَآذُوهُمَا فَإِن تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرِضُواْ عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا

16. "And when two of you commit it (lewdness) punish them both, but if they repent and amend, then turn aside from them. Verily Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful."

In this verse the ordinance of fornication is stated. It indicates that the man and woman, who have not spouses and commit this indecent action, lewdness, both must be punished. It says:

"And when two of you commit it (lewdness) punish them both..."

The punishment mentioned in this verse is a general punishment, while verse No.2 from Surah Nur, No.221, which assigns one hundred stripes for each of the two parties, can be a and an explanation upon the above verse.

At the bottom of the verse, it points to the matter of repentance and forgiveness about these kinds of sinners, and says:

"... but if they repent and amend, then turn aside from them. Verily Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful."

In the meantime, it is understood from this ordinance that the persons who have repented of their faults should never be blamed for their former sins.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 17

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِن قَرِيبٍ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللّهُ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً

17. "Verily repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil ignorantly and then repent soon. So, these are they toward whom Allah returns (mercifully) and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

In the previous verse, the subject of the fulfilment of stripes upon those who commit indecency, fornication, as their punishment with repentance, was clearly stated. In the above verse, some of its conditions are mentioned, too. It says:

"Verily repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil ignorantly..."

The purpose of the usage of the term 'ignorantly' in the above mentioned verse is the violence of instincts and the domination of the strong low desires, and their conquest over the strength of intellect and faith.

In this state, the knowledge of man about sins, although does not vanish completely, under the influence of those strong instincts becomes affected and, actually, remains futile. So, when the knowledge of man loses its effect, it will practically be equal to ignorance.

In the next sentence, the Qur'an has pointed to one of other conditions of repentance, where it says:

"... and then repent soon..."

That is, they regret from their actions soon and return to Allah, since a complete repentance is that which, on the whole, wipes out the remaining effects of sins from the spirit and mind of the person.

After mentioning the conditions of repentance, the verse concludes as such:

"... So, these are they toward whom Allah returns (mercifully) and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 18

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الآنَ وَلاَ الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُوْلَـئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

18. "And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds until death comes to one of them, he says: 'Verily now I repent', nor for those who die while they are disbelievers. Those are they for whom We have prepared a painful torment."

Those whose repentance is not accepted is referred to in this verse. It says:

"And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds until death comes to one of them, he says: 'Verily now I repent,'..."

The second group whose repentance is also not accepted are those who pass away while they are infidels. The verse says about them:

"... nor for those who die while they are disbelievers..."

In fact, the verse indicates that those who have repented from their sins and they had been safe and sound and had a good faith, but at the time of death they were not faithful, their former repentance is futile, too.

At the end of the verse, it says about both groups:

"... Those are they for whom We have prepared a painful torment."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 19

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَرِثُواْ النِّسَاء كَرْهًا وَلاَ تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُواْ بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلاَّ أَن يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَن تَكْرَهُواْ شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيراً

19. "O' you who have Faith! It is not lawful for you to inherit the women against their will, and do not straiten them in order that you may take a part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest lewdness; but deal kindly with them, and if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the above verse was revealed about the men who used to keep their wives without treating with them as a spouse, waiting for their death in order to possess their properties.[3]

The verse may hint to the fact that only the wealth is heritable, and the wife of a man after his death does not belong to anyone as heritage. After the death of her first husband, a woman can choose another husband with her own decision.

Explanations

1. Islam is the defender of the rights of women.

"O' you who have Faith! It is not lawful for you to inherit the women against their will..."

2. Women have the right of possession.

"….to inherit the women…"

3. Conjugal life should be based on mutual love, not on taking possession of wealth.

4. Taking back the dower forcefully is unlawful.

"... and do not straiten them in order that you may take a part of what you have given them..."

"... unless they are guilty of manifest lewdness..."

5. Women should be treated well.

"... but deal kindly with them ..."

6. Many of goodnesses lie among the unpleasant things.

"... and if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 20

وَإِنْ أَرَدتُّمُ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنطَارًا فَلاَ تَأْخُذُواْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَاناً وَإِثْماً مُّبِيناً

20. "And if you intend to take one wife in place of another and you have given one of them a considerable property then do not take anything of it. Would you take it by slandering (her) and with manifest wrong? "

At the Age of Ignorance, when some men desired to marry another wife, he would denigrate his first wife so that she had to remit her dower in order that the husband might divorce her. After that, the husband could marry another woman with the same dower that he had taken back. This verse blames the custom of the pagans of that time.

Explanations

1. Remarriage is admissible from the point of Islam.

"And if you intend to take one wife in place of another..."

2. Divorce is in the authority of man.

3. Islam is the defender of the rights of women, and prohibits it if the second marriage might waste the rights of the first wife.

"... and you have given one of them considerable property ..."

4. Wives have possession and their whole wealth must be given to them completely.

"... then do not take anything of it..."

5. One of the worst sorts of transgression is taking the property of others by justifying, denigrating and defaming them.

"... would you take it by slandering (her) and with manifest wrong? "

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 21

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنكُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

21. "And how can you take it (back) when one of you has already gone in to the other and they have taken from you a firm covenant?"

This verse indicates that in the fulfilment of propagations and forbidding wrong, human's affections should be utilized either. (You that, for a long time, have had a whole relationship with your wife and have obtained your wishes, why do you take back her dower unjustly now?) Then, at the time of misfortunes of life, former pleasures should be remembered, too.

"And how can you take it (back) when one of you has already gone in to the other? ..."

The marriage contract is a firm covenant; therefore, breach of promise is not proper.

"... and they have taken from you a firm covenant."

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 22

وَلاَ تَنكِحُواْ مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاء إِلاَّ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاء سَبِيلاً

22. "And do not marry women whom your father married, except what has already passed; verily it is indecent and hateful and it is an evil way."

One of the customs in the pre-Islamic era of Ignorance was that whenever a person passed away, his offspring would marry their step mother (their fathers' wife).

It happened that one of the Helpers, called Abu-Qays, passed away and his son suggested to marry his step mother. The woman said that she should ask the matter from the Messenger of Allah (S). When she went to the Prophet (S) and told him the matter, this verse was revealed and prohibited the marriage with step mother.

"And do not marry women whom your father married, except what has already passed;

Verily it is indecent and hateful and it is an evil way."

Notes

1. The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, Printed by: London, the British and Foreign Bible Society.
2. Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 347
3. Al- Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1. p. 426; & Al-Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 480

Section 3: Women who may be taken in wedlock

Unlawful to wed blood and foster relations -Not to marry two sisters at a time -To marry free women - Laws regards wedding slave girls.

Surah An-Nisa',Verse 23

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالاَتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللاَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَآئِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ اللاَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُم مِّن نِّسَآئِكُمُ اللاَّتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ تَكُونُواْ دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلاَئِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلاَبِكُمْ وَأَن تَجْمَعُواْ بَيْنَ الأُخْتَيْنِ إِلاَّ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

23. " Forbidden to you (in marriage) are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your parental aunts and your maternal aunts, and daughters of your brother and daughters of your sister, and your mothers that have suckled you, and your foster sisters, and the mothers of your wives, and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in, but if you have not gone in to them, there shall not be a sin on you (to marry their daughters), and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins. And (it is forbidden to you) that you should have two sisters together (at the same time), except what has already passed, verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this verse, those women with whom marriage is forbidden are pointed out. This prohibition comes forth through three ways:

1) Birth of progeny, genealogical relationship;

2) marriage, (casual relationship);

3) suckling, (foster relationship).

The marriages with the above mentioned relatives, which had occurred before the revelation of this verse, were forgiven. The prohibition of marriage with some relatives had been enjoined in the former divine religions, too. For example, the Torah, book of Leviticus, Chapter 18, verses 6 to 23 are as follows:

6. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.

7. The nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: She is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

8. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.

9. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.

10. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for their's is thine own nakedness.

11. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

12. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman.

13. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman.

14. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother; thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt.

15. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

16. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.

17. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter; neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness.

18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.

19. Also thou shalt not approach uncover to a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.

20. Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

21. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech; neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

22. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

23. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

Explanations

1. The authority of enjoining things to be unlawful (such as alcoholic liquor, some bargains, and married women) is wholly up to Allah.

"Forbidden to you (in marriage) are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your parental aunts and your maternal aunts, and daughters of your brother and daughters of your sister, and your mothers that have suckled you, and your foster sisters, and the mothers of your wives..."

2. Consider the daughters of your wife from her previous husband who are brought into your house, as your own daughters, and be as a trainee for them, since you are their father.

"... and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in, but if you have not gone in to them, then there shall not be a sin on you (to marry their daughters)..."

3. The wives of your sons, who are from your own dynasty, are unlawful for you to marry, and the wives of your adopted sons, as well.

"... and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins"

4. The contemporary marriage with two sisters usually draws them toward personal jealousy and competition and, finally, their love and affections may be led to detestation.

The prohibition may be for this reason. The verse says:

"... And (it is forbidden to you) that you should have two sisters together (at the same time)..."

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 4

From Surah An-Nisa'' (4) verse 24 to Surah Al-Ma'ida (5) verse 86

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 4

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Translator(s):

Author (s): Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 11
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 12
What is a 'Commentary'? 13
The Current Commentary 14
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 15
The Problems in Translating 15
Translators Note 16
Editor's Note 17
Notes 19
Acknowledgment 20
Notes 20
References 21
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 21
English Translations of Qur'an 21
Supporting Technical References 22
Phraseological and Philological Sources 22
A Presentation to Muslims 24
Notes 25
Surah An-Nisa', Chapter 4, Section 4 26
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 24 26
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 25 26
Section 5: Woman's rights over her property 29
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 26 29
What Are These Limitations for? 29
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 27 29
Explanations 30
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 28 30
Explanation 30
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 29 30
Explanation 30
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 30 31
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 31 31
Explanations 31
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 32 32
Occasion of Revelation 33
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 33 33
Explanations 34
Section 6: Disagreement and reconciliation between husband and wife 35
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 34 35
Guardianship in the System of a Family 35
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 35 36
The Family Peace Court 36
Section 7 38
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 36 38
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 37 39
Hypocritical and Godly Charities 40

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 38 40
Explanations 40
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 39 41
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 40 41
Why Does Allah not Do Injustice? 41
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 41 41
Explanations 42
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 42 42
Explanations 43
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 43 43
A Few Legal Ordinances 43
Dry Ablution for the Excused 44
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 44 44
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 45 45
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 46 45
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 47 46
The People of Sabbath 46
Explanations 46
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 48 47
Explanations 47
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 49 47
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 50 48
Notes 48
Section 8: Leaning to injustice and evil to be avoided 49
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 51 49
Explanations 49
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 52 49
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 53 50
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 54 50
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 55 51
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 56 51
Explanations 52
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 57 52
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 58 52
Occasion of Revelation 52
Deposit and Justice in Islam 53
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 59 53
Who are 'Those Charged with Authority'? 54
Explanations 54
Notes 56
Section 9: Hypocrites refuse to accept the Messenger's judgement 57
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 60 57
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 61 57
Explanations 58
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 62 58
Explanations 58
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 63 59
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 64 59

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 65 60
Occasion of Revelation 60
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 66 61
Surah An-Nisa', Verses 67 - 68 61
Surah An-Nisa', Verses 69 - 70 62
Occasion of Revelation 62
Companions in Heaven 62
Notes 63
Section 10: Believers 64
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 71 64
Explanations 64
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 72 64
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 73 65
Surah An-Nisa', Verse74 65
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 75 66
Seeking Assistance through Human Affections 66
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 76 67
Note 67
Section 11: The Hypocrites' Attitude towards the Believers 68
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 77 68
Occasion of Revelation 68
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 78 69
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 79 70
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 80 70
Practice of the Prophet is Just like the Revelation of Allah 70
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 81 71
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 82 71
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 83 72
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 84 73
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 85 73
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 86 74
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 87 74
Notes 75
Section 12: Dealing with Hypocrites 76
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 88 76
Occasion of Revelation 76
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 89 77
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 90 77
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 91 78
Section 13: Murder and its punishment 80
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 92 80
Occasion of Revelation 80
Some Ordinances upon Manslaughter 80
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 93 81
Explanations 82
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 94 82
Occasion of Revelation 82
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 95 83

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 96 84
Section 14: Believers remaining with the enemy 85
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 97 85
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 98 85
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 99 86
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 100 86
Occasion of Revelation 86
Emigration, an Islamic Constructive Instruction 86
Notes 87
Section 15: To cut short prayer while travelling 88
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 101 88
Explanations 88
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 102 88
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 103 90
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 104 91
The Occasion of Revelation 91
Notes 92
Section 16: Not to side the dishonest 93
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 105 93
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 106 93
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 107 94
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 108 94
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 109 94
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 110 95
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 111 95
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 112 95
Calumny is a Crime 96
Notes 96
Section 17: Secret counsels of the Hypocrites 97
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 113 97
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 114 97
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 115 98
Section 18 100
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 116 100
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 117 100
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 118 100
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 119 100
Satan has sworn to persuade some programs 101
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 120 101
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 121 102
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 122 102
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 123 102
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 124 103
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 125 103
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 126 104
Notes 105
Section 19: Dealings with Orphans and Women 106
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 127 106

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 128 106
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 129 107
Heavenly Law Has no Contradiction with Natural Disposition..... 107
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 130 108
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 131 108
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 132 109
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 133 109
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 134 109
Note 110
Section 20: Equity to everyone -The Jewish Hypocrisy Condemned . 111
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 135 111
Social Justice 111
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 136 112
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 137 112
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 138 113
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 139 113
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 140 114
Explanations 114
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 141 115
The Qualities of Hypocrites 115
Section 21: Fate of the Hypocrites 117
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 142 117
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 143 117
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 144 118
Explanations 118
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 145 118
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 146 119
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 147 119
The End of Part Five 120
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 148 120
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 149 120
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 152 121
Notes 122
Section 22: Violation of the Covenant by the Jews 123
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 153 123
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 154 123
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 155 124
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 156 125
Surah An-Nisa', Verses 157 - 158 125
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 159 126
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 160 127
Explanations 127
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 161 127
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 162 128
Notes 128
Section 23: The Qur'an testified in the previous heavenly Books 129
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 163 129
Explanations 129

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 164 129
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 165 130
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 166 131
Surah An-Nisa', Verses 167 - 169 131
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 170 132
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 171 133
Notes 134
Section 24: Messengership of Jesus -Law of Inheritance 135
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 172 135
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 173 135
The Way to Felicity Is both Faith and Good Deed 135
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 174 136
Explanations 136
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 175 136
Surah An-Nisa', Verse 176 137
Occasion of Revelation 137
Notes 138
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Chapter 5, Introduction 139
Introduction to the Surah 139
Section 1: General Discipline 140
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 1 140
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 2 141
Eight Divine Ordinances in a Verse 141
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 3 143
Moderation in the Usage of Meat 144
Explanations 146
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 4 146
Occasion of Revelation 146
A Lawful Hunting 147
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 5 147
Consuming Food of the People of the Book and marrying them 148
Marrying with Non-Muslim Women 148
Notes 149
Section 2: Special cleanliness for Prayer -Equity enjoined 150
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 6 150
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 7 151
Divine Convictions 151
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 8 152
An Earnest Invitation unto Justice 152
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 9 - 10 152
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 11 153
Explanations 154
Notes 154
Section 3: The Covenants with the Jews and the Christians 155
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 12 155
Explanations 155
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 13 156
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 14 156

Explanation..... 157
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 15 157
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 16 157
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 17 158
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 18 159
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 19 160
Notes 161
Section 4: The Israelites breaking the Covenant 162
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 20 162
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 21 162
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 22 163
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 23 163
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 24 164
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 25 164
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 26 164
Explanations 165
Notes 165
Section 5: Jews warned against their wicked plots 166
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 27 166
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 28 166
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 29 - 30 167
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 31 167
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 32 168
The Oneness of Human Beings 168
Explanations 169
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 33 170
Explanations 171
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 34 171
Notes 172
Section 6: Penal Regulations against Offenders 173
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 35 173
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 36 - 37 173
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 38 174
Explanations 175
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 39 175
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 40 176
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 41 176
Prophets Are Sympathetic unto the Misguided..... 176
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 42 177
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 43 177
Notes 178
Section 7: Relation of the Quran to the previous heavenly Books 179
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 44 179
Explanation..... 179
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 45 180
Retaliation and Remittal 180
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 46 181
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 47 181

Those Who Do not Judge on the Divine Law 181
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 48 182
Explanation..... 183
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 49 183
Occasion of Revelation 183
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 50 183
Section 8: The relation of the Muslims with their opponents 185
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 51 185
To Dissociate from Enemy is the Condition of Faith 185
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 52 185
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 53 186
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 54 186
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 55 187
Explanations 188
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 56 189
Section 9: Mockers 190
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 57 190
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 58 190
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 59 190
Occasion of Revelation 191
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 60 191
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 61 192
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 62 192
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 63 193
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 64 194
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 65 195
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 66 196
Section 10: The Christian Deviation from the Truth 197
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 67 197
Appointment of the Successor as the Final Point of Prophetic Mission 197
Ghadeer Khumm in Brief 197
An Explanation..... 199
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 68 200
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 69 201
Explanation: What is the Objective Meaning of the Sabians? 201
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 70 201
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 71 202
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 72 203
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 73 203
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 74 204
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 75 204
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 76 205
Explanations 205
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 77 205
Note 206
Section 11: Christian nearness to Islam 208
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 78 208

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 79 208
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 80 208
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 81 209
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 82 209
The End of Part Six 210
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 83 210
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 84 - 86 211
Note 211

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward”[1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5],

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray,

the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, *1412* (*1370* H. / *1991*), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness

which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah An-Nisa', Chapter 4, Section 4

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 24

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاء إِلاَّ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ كِتَابَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُم مَّا وَرَاء
ذَلِكُمْ أَن تَبْتَغُواْ بِأَمْوَالِكُم مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُم بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ
فَرِيضَةً وَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا تَرَاضَيْتُم بِهِ مِن بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

24. "And all married women (are forbidden unto you to marry) except those whom your right hands possess (by Allah's decree in the battle against infidels). It is a written legislation of Allah unto you; and lawful for you are (all women) besides those that you may seek (them) by means of your wealth (as dower) taking them into marriage and not committing fornication. Then as to those of whom you seek content (by temporary marriage), give them their dowries as a duty; and there is no blame on you in whatever you mutually agree after the duty. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

For non-Muslims, captivity is counted as divorce. It is like the Faith of a woman that when her husband continues his infidelity and the woman has embraced Islam; the very belief separates her from her husband.

To take in marriage a woman who has husband is unlawful from the point of Islam. The woman may be from any nation and with any religion.

But captivity is like divorce, and a captive woman should observe a waiting term for one month (one menstruation) from the time she is captured, and if she is in pregnancy period, she must wait until she is delivered of her child. Thus, during this period, no conjugal connection is admissible with her.

This matrimonial device, as a permanent or contemporary spouse, is better than the device of returning her to the infidels or leaving her alone with no guardian.

"And all married women (are forbidden unto you to marry) except those whom your right hands possess (by Allah's decree in the battle against infidels). It is a written legislation of Allah unto you; and lawful for you are (all women) besides those that you may seek (them) by means of your wealth (as dower) taking them into marriage and not committing fornication. ..." ,

According to several traditions narrated from the holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as), and also according to many commentary books recorded by the scholars of the Sunnis, this phrase of the verse refers to temporary marriage where the above-mentioned holy verse says:

"...Then as to those of Whom you seek content (by marriage), give them their dowries as a duty. And there is no blame on you in whatever you mutually agree after the duty. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 25

وَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنكُمْ طَوْلاً أَن يَنكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِن مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُم
مِّن فَتَيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالله أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُم مِّن بَعْضٍ فَانكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ

وَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحَاتٍ وَلاَ مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَّ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَن تَصْبِرُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَالله غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

25. "And whoever among you is not able to financially afford to marry free believing women, then (let him marry) of those (slaves or captives) whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and Allah better knows your faith; you are (sprung) one from the other, so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries in fairness, they being chaste, not committing lewdness, nor taking paramours. And if when they are married they commit lewdness, their punishment is half that for free women. This (kind of marriage) is for those among you who fear falling into evil. But to have patience would be better for you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Following the statements about marriage, this verse expresses the conditions of marrying she slaves whose dowries and expenses are usually lighter and easier. At first it says:

"And whoever among you is not able to financially afford to marry free believing women, then (let him marry) of those (slaves or captives) whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens....."

Then it adds that for recognizing their Faith, you are commissioned to hear their apparent expressions, and as for their innate thoughts and hidden secrets, it is so that Allah knows well of your faith.

"...and Allah better knows your faith.... "

And, in view of the fact that some men were not so willing to marry the slave maidens, in this verse the Qur'an remarks that all of you have come into being from only one couple, therefore, you must not dislike marrying them. It says:

"...you are (sprung) one from the other...."

Then, the Qur'an points to one of the conditions of this marriage. It is the permission of the concerning master, while without that permission the marriage is invalid. It says:

"...so marry them with the permission of their masters...."

Next to this statement, it says:

"…and give them their dowries in fairness...."

It is understood from this sentence that an appropriate and worthy dowry should be assigned for them, and it must be given to them. It is also understood that their slaves can possess some wealth when they have lawfully obtained it.

One of the other conditions that this marriage has is that these maidens should be taken from among those who are chaste, not from among those who commit manifest lewdness.

"... they being chaste, not committing lewdness, not taking paramours….."

In agreement with the ordinances stated upon marriage with slave maidens and supporting their rights, the holy verse continues the words

about their punishment when they divert from the path of piety and chastity. It says:

"...And if when they are married they commit lewdness, their punishment is half that for free women....."

This part of the holy verse means that they must be beaten only fifty stripes.

Then, it adds that this kind of marriage with such slave maidens is for those who are severely involved in the pressure of the sexual instinct and are not capable to marry free women.

Therefore, it is not admissible for men other than them.

"...This (kind of marriage) is for those among you who fear falling into evil...."

But, next to that, it says that being patient and avoiding such sort of marriage, from the point of some ethical and social interests, is of your gain as far as you are able to restrain yourself and you do not fall into committing sin.

"...But to have patience would be better for you...."

At the end of the verse, it remarks that upon what you have done before this, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. It says:

"...and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Section 5: Woman's rights over her property

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 26

Respect of rights of property and life -Woman has as much right over her property as man -Similarly in the matter of inheritance.

يُرِيدُ الله لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

26. "Allah desires to make clear (the way of felicity) to you, and to guide you in the ways of those before you, and to turn to you (mercifully), and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

What Are These Limitations for?

Following the different ordinances in the field of marriage stated through previous verses, there may arise this question that what all these limitations and lawful restrictions are for. This verse and the two following ones answer this question.

The above-mentioned verse indicates that Allah wishes to open the way of happiness and felicity to you by these instructions. It says:

"Allah desires to make clear (the way of felicity) to you...."

Besides that, you are not alone in this path, and Allah desires to guide you towards the correct ways and practices of those who were before you. It says:

"...and to guide you in the ways of those before you...."

In addition to that, He wants to accept your repentance.

"...and to turn to you (mercifully)...."

Allah desires to return back again to you His favours and blessings that have been ceased for you because of your corruptions and deviations. This is in the case that you, too, return back from the deviated paths that were paved before Islam, in the Age of Ignorance.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"...and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

This phrase means that Allah is cognizant to His ordinances, and He has legislated them through His Own Wisdom for you.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 27

وَالله يُرِيدُ أَن تَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَن تَمِيلُواْ مَيْلاً عَظِيمًا

27. "And Allah desires that He should turn to you (mercifully), but those who follow their lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation."

At the first glance, the sexual liberty is a kind of pleasure and seeking an enjoyment. But, regarding to its personal and social evil effects, it is the greatest fall and aberration.

Libertinism and lewdness, diminishes the body, entangles the thought, wastes property, and decays confidence. It spoils the desire of family formation and delivers some illegal children to the society. It causes some venereal and psychological diseases to come forth. And, briefly speaking, sexual freedom results to the greatest captivities for human beings.

Explanations

1. The limitations and instructions which are ordained upon marriage are the secrets for the grace of Allah unto humankind-

"And Allah desires that He should turn to you (mercifully)...."

2. Those sensual ones who are indulged in libertinage do not satisfy by anything save sinking you in lusts. They want you to be their friend in their deviated path.

"...that you should deviate (with) a great deviation."

3. Do not follow the way of voluptuous ones, and do not imitate them, for they are your enemies.

"...but those who follow their lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 28

يُرِيدُ الله أَن يُخَفِّفَ عَنكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الإِنسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

28. "Allah desires that He should make light your burden, and man has been created weak."

In these latter three verses, a small part of the favours of Allah are mentioned, one after another. They denote that Allah explains the ordinances for you, leads you to the way, returns His mercy to you, and takes the affairs easy for you.

All these facilities are for that man is feeble against the storm of instincts and his ability and patience is little.

Explanation

Islam is an easy religion. It stops nowhere.

"Allah desires that He should make light your burden...."

The basis of this religion is founded on lightness, easiness, and capability.

"...and man has been created weak."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 29

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَأْكُلُواْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلاَّ أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ وَلاَ تَقْتُلُواْ أَنفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّه كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

29. "O' you who have Faith! Do not devour each other's property among yourselves in vanity, except that it be a trade by your mutual consent, and do not kill your (own) selves (one another); verily Allah is Merciful to you."

The secret of the occurrence of the prohibiting sense "do not kill" close to the meaning of "do not devour", a prohibition of false devouring, maybe, is for that an unsound economical system is a premise for the appearance of murder or destruction in the society.

Explanation

1- Personal possession is respected while domination in others' properties is unlawful, except for correct bargaining which are perfected on mutual consent.

"O' you who have Faith! Do not devour each other's property among yourselves in vanity, except that it be a trade by your mutual consent…"

2. A definite society, or an Ummah, has one unit of soul and a common fate.

"….each other's property among yourselves…"

3. Any kind of domination which is not based on divine truth' is forbidden. Some of its instances are; usurpation, theft, barring from inheritance, gambling, defraud, falsification, and purchasing the means of mischief and sin. It is so because all of these instances are the examples of vanity.

"...do not devour each other's property among yourselves in vanity....."

4. Bargains should be performed on the basis of mutual consent, not compulsively or unwillingly.

"...a trade by your mutual consent...."

5. The life of a person is respectable. Therefore, suicide, and murdering others is 'unlawful'.

"...and do not kill your (own) selves (one another)...."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 30

وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللّه يَسِيرًا

30. "And whoever does this aggressively and unjustly, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy for Allah."

The difference between the Arabic words /'udwan/ and /zulm/, mentioned in this verse, may be that the former is a transgression against others, while the latter encompasses the aggression towards one's own self, too.

The verse says:

"And whoever does this aggressively and unjustly, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy for Allah."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 31

إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُم مدْخَلاً كَرِيمًا

31. "If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We remit from you your small sins and We cause you to enter an honourable place of entering."

It is understood from this verse that sins are divided into two groups: the minor sins and the major sins. We also recite in Surah Al-Kahf, No.18, Verse 49 that, on the Day of Judgement, when sinners see the record of their evil deeds, they say:

" ...What a book this is! it does not omit a small one nor a great one.... ".

According to the Islamic literature, a great sin is a sin for which Allah has promised Fire to its performer.

The numbers of great sins are mentioned differently in the Islamic narrations. Some of the pioneers among the Muslim scholars, derived from the verses of the Qur'an and traditions, have introduced 33 great sins. There are, of course, degrees for the great sins when comparing them. Therefore, some of the great sins are called 'the most major sins'.

Explanations

1. It is necessary for us to ignore the slight offences of those whose ideological and practical doctrine is proper.

2. The reward of those who abandon major sins is that Allah (s.w.t.) forgives their minor sins.

"If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We remit from you your small sins,

and We cause you to enter an honourable place of entering."

The total number of the major sins, as many traditions denote, is 33 sins which are listed in the following:

1. To associate a partner for Allah,
2. Homicide (the believers)
3. The curse of the parents,
4. To escape from Holy Struggle,
5. To devour the orphan's property,
6. Usury,
7. False accusation of unchastity to an immaculate woman,
8. Fornication,
9. Sodomy,
10. Theft,
11. Consuming the flesh of a corpse,
12. To consume blood,
13. To eat the flesh of swine, pig,
14. To eat the flesh of an animal slaughtered without mentioning Allah's Name,
15. To defraud whether by scale or by measure,
16. Gambling,
17. A false attestation,
18. Despair from the grace of Allah,
19. To feel secured from the punishment of Allah,
20. To assist the evil-doers,
21. To rely on the tyrants,
22. To swear falsely,
23. Rancour and deceit,
24. To restrain from giving others' rights,
25. To tell a lie,
26. To behave arrogantly,
27. Immoderation and extravagance,
28. Treachery,
29. Making little of Hajj,
30. To fight against Allah's saints,
31. To be busy with diversion and play,
32. Magic and whatever causes trouble for others,
33. To drink wine.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 32

وَلاَ تَتَمَنَّوْاْ مَا فَضَّلَ الله بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُواْ وَلِلنِّسَاء
نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ وَاسْأَلُواْ اللّهَ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

32. "And do not covet that by Which Allah has made some of you excel others. Men shall have a benefit of what they earn and women shall have a benefit of what they earn; and ask Allah of His Grace; verily Allah knows all things."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of this holy verse, it has been cited that: Once Ummus-Salamah, a wife of the holy Prophet (S), asked him (S): "Why do men go to Holy Struggle but women do not? Why has Islam legislated inheritance for us half of men's portion? We wish we were men and went to Holy Struggle like men and equally obtained their social position."

The above verse was revealed and responded to this kind of questions and the like of them.

For a group of Muslims, the difference of the portion of men and women in inheritance had become a question. It seemed that they did not notify that this difference was for the reason that generally the totality of the life expenditure is as a duty upon men, while women are free from it.

Besides that, the expenditure of women themselves is upon men, too. Thus, as it was mentioned before, the portion of women, can, practically, be twice as much as that of men. Therefore, the holy verse says:

"And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others. ..."

It is such because, there are some secrets in each of these differences that are covered and concealed for you.

Of course, it should not be misunderstood that the verse points to some actual and natural differences, not those forged differences that have been produced as a result of transgression and exploitation performed by some social classes.

Then, immediately after that, it says:

"...Men shall have a benefit of what they earn and women shall have a benefit of what they earn; ..."

This difference might be either a natural one (like the difference of the two genders: male and female with each other), or the difference resulted from the optional efforts and endeavours.

Then, it adds: instead of desiring these kinds of difference, ask Allah of His Grace and Favour that He grants you different bounties, ranks and good rewards. It is in that case that you may become some happy and prosperous persons. It says:

"...and ask Allah of His Grace..."

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...verily Allah knows all things."

That is, He knows whatever sort of natural or financial differences are necessary for the social regularity. Allah also knows the innate secrets of people and, therefore, He knows who has unjust desires in the heart and, on the other side, which persons think of what is proper, positive, and constructive.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 33

وَلِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالأَقْرَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَآتُوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا

33. "And for everyone We have placed heirs (to inherit) of what parents and near relatives leave, and as for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant, give them their portion; verily Allah is ever witness over all things."

The phrase: "Your right hands have made a covenant" is a hint to the contract which used to be held between two persons before Islam. Then Islam, with a slight change in it, accepted it. In Islamic jurisprudent books, this action has been entitled /daman-i-jarirah/.

The content of this contract was so that: two persons promised that they would help each other in the life affairs, assist in the payment of compensations of one another, and one could inherit from the other.

It was something similar to the insurance contract of today which indicates: if a loss comes forth for a person, the promised party pays its compensation. Islam accepted this content, but inheriting from another one is conditioned to the lack of any hair for the diseased person.

Explanations

1. Assigning the standard of the portion of inheritance for relatives by the command of Allah.

"And for everyone We have placed heirs (to inherit)... "

2. A person has the right of transferring his/her possession to another one under some conditions.

"...and for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant ..."

3. Fulfilling a promise is obligatory.

"….give them their portion..."

4. The debtors should seek after the creditors.

"...give them their portion... "

5. The promises of a person is usually valid after that person's death.

6. Allah is always present and witnesses the deeds.

"... Verily Allah is ever witness over all things."

Section 6: Disagreement and reconciliation between husband and wife

Superiority of men over women -Wife's perverseness and desertion to effect - Duty to Allah inculcates all the other duties -Niggardliness and hypocrisy condemned,

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 34

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاء بِمَا فَضَّلَ الله بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنفَقُواْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ
فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ الله وَاللاَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ
فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلاَ تَبْغُواْ عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلاً إِنَّ الله كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا

34. "Men have authority over women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property (for the support of women). Therefore, the good women are obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded. And (as to) those (women) on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and avoid them in beds and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; verily Allah is Ever-High, Ever-Great."

Guardianship in the System of a Family

A family is a small unit of the society, similar to a large assembly of people; a family must have a single proper leader. The reason is that a leadership upon a family accomplished by several of men and women in common is of no vail. In this form of leadership, either of husband or wife must be the chief of the family and the other should be his/her assistant and under his/her governance.

Here, by this verse, the Qur'an clearly announces that the guardianship of the family must be given to the man of the family. It says:

"Men have authority over women ..."

Of course, the purpose of this statement is not a sense of casting transgression, inequity and aggression; but the aim is producing a single, fairly regular leadership regarding to the necessary consultations and responsibilities.

The second section of the verse is divided into two parts. In the first part it denotes that this guardianship is for some superiorities that, (for the sake of regularity of the society), Allah has assigned for some people comparing some others. It says:

"...because Allah has made some of them to excel others ..."

And, in the second part of the statement it implies that this guardianship is for the sake of the responsibilities that men undertake along the side of financial payments due to women and family members. It says:

"...and because they spend out of their property (for the support of women) ..."

Then, it adds that: with respect to the duties women undertake at home, they are divided into two groups:

The first group are those pious women who, because of the rights Allah has set for them, are humble and protect the secrets and rights of their husband when the husband is absent:

"...therefore, the good women are obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded ..."

That is, always, and at the absence of their husbands in particular, they commit no treachery whether from the point of property, or honour, or protecting the family secrets, and the credit and personality of their husbands.

They also truly follow their duties and responsibilities to fulfil them well. The second group are the women who usually refuse to do their duties. Thus, the signs of disagreement and discord are seen in them.

Confronting such women, men have some duties which they must follow step by step. At the first stage, it says:

"...And (as to) those (women) on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them ..."

For the second stage, it says:

"…and avoid them in beds..."

And, in the third stage, when the discord, disobedience, and the state of heedlessness toward the duties and responsibilities, the limits are transgressed, and the wife severely continues stubbornness and law breaking, so that neither admonishment nor separation from bed, nor heedlessness of man unto her, has any effect and avail, there remains no way save harshness. So, it says:

"...and beat them ..."

It is certain, of course, that if one of these stages affects positively and the woman starts doing her duties, the man has no right to hurt her under any pretext. That is why, immediately after stating this phrase, the Qur'an continue saying:

"...then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them...."

At the end of the verse, it warns men again that they should not abuse their position of guardianship in the family. They ought to think of Allah Whose Power is above all powers. It says:

"...verily Allah is Ever-High, Ever-Great."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 35

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُواْ حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِن يُرِيدَا إِصْلاَحًا يُوَفِّقِ
الله بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّه كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا

35. "And if you fear a breach between the couple, then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people. If they both desire agreement, Allah will effect harmony between them; Verily Allah is Knowing, All-Aware."

The Family Peace Court

In this holy verse, the Qur'an refers to the discord which happens between a couple, it says:

"And if you fear a breach between the couple, then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people. ..."

Then, it continues saying:

"... If they both desire agreement, Allah will affect harmony between them....."

And, in order to warn the concerning arbitrators to employ good intention in the course, it concludes the verse with this sense that Allah is aware of their intentions. It says:

"...Verily Allah is Knowing, All-Aware."

The 'family peace court', which has been referred to in this verse, is one of the distinguished works of Islam. This kind of peace-court, compared with ordinary courts, has some privileges that cannot be found in other courts. A few of these privileges are as follows:

1. In family environment the treatments cannot be dry and performed legally according to the spiritless court regulations. Hence, the Qur'an instructs that the arbitrators of this court must be of those who have kinship with the couple and are able to move their sentiments along the path of reconciliation.

2. In ordinary courts the two sides of the conflict have to divulge the secrets they have in order to defend themselves. Here, it is certain that if either of woman or man manifests their conjugal secrets for some strangers, they may hurt the feelings of each other so violently that if they be returned home forcefully, there will not exist any sign of their previous sincerity and lay between them.

3. In ordinary courts, judges are often inattentive in the course of dispute, while in the family peace-court, the arbitrators usually do their best to settle peace and sincerity between those two spouses and try to return them home.

4. Moreover, such a family court has none of the problems and heavy expenditures for the couple that the ordinary courts have.

Section 7

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 36

وَاعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكُواْ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَ وَالْيَتَامَ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِب مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالاً فَخُورًا

36. "And worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him, and do good to the parents, and to the kindred, and the orphans and the needy, and the neighbour close to you, and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companion in a journey, and the way later, and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily Allah does not love the one who is proud, boastful."

In this verse, some different rights are spoken about. They are irrespective of the rights of Allah, and the Fights of people, and also some civilities of social life. On the whole, there are Ten Commandments mentioned in the verse.

1. The first theme therein is that it invites people to worship and servitude to Allah while they should abandon idolatry and infidelity. This godly manner is the root of all Islamic agenda. The act of following the lotion of Unity and theism, purifies the soul, clarifies the intention, strengthens the will, and tightens the decision for performing any right and useful action in the cause of Allah.

Since the verse is to state a series of Islamic rights, before referring to anything else, it points to the right of Allah upon people.

"And worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him ..."

2- Then, it adds:

"...and do good to the parents ..."

The right of parents is one of the subjects which has been repeatedly emphasized in the holy Qur'an. There are fewer matters that have been recommended so much in it. In four occurrences of the Qur'an this idea has been mentioned after the subject of Unity.

3. Next to that, it continues saying:

"... and to the kindred, ..."

This subject is also one of the themes that has been emphasized abundantly in the Qur'an. It has sometimes been referred to as 'blood ties', and sometimes has been enjoined under the commandment of' doing good to the kindred '.

4. Then it pays to the rights of orphans, and encourages the believing people to doing good unto the 'orphans'. The reason of this emphasis is that, as a result of different incidents, there always exist some orphan children in every society that forgetting them not only spoils their condition but also puts the situation of the society in danger.

"... and the orphans..."

5. Next to that, the Holy Qur'an reminds us the 'rights' of the needy ones.

"...and the needy ..."

The reason of this remembrance is that: in every society there are usually some handicapped persons, some feeble ones, and the like of them that leaving them out is against all the principles of humanity.

6. After that, the verse recommends to doing good unto the neighbours who are near to us. It says:

"... and the neighbour close to you ..."

7. The neighbours who are strangers to us are then recommended. It says:

"….and the neighbour who is a stranger…"

The 'right of neighbourhood' is so important in Islam that Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has stated about it thus: "The Messenger of Allah (S) instructed about them so much that we thought he might enjoin that they would inherit from each other."[1]

Another tradition denotes that one day it happened that the holy Prophet (S) three times said:

"By Allah, he does not believe."

A person asked him (S) whom he meant, and the Prophet (S) said: "The person whose neighbour is not in security from his molestation." [2]

8. After that, the Qur'an has recommended about those who are friends and companions. It says:

"...and the companion in a journey ..."

The Arabic phrase: /as-sahib-il-janb/, of course, has a larger scope of meaning than 'friend' and 'companion'. Thus, the verse conveys a general and inclusive command regarding to having good manner due to those who somehow connect with us irrespective of real friends, fellow-workmen, fellow-travellers, those who ask us for something, students, counsellors, and waiters.

9. Another group, whom are recommended about here, are those who will be in need, because of some reasons, when they are in journey and are far from their own home, although they may be rich in their own city. So, it says:

"...and way farer ..."

10. The final recommendation is about doing good unto the slaves. It says:

"...and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess ..."

In fact, the above verse begins with the subject of the right of Allah and concludes with 'the rights of slaves'. Not only in this verse the slaves are recommended about, but also many other verses of the Qur'an are upon this matter,

At the end, the verse warns us, saying:

"... Verily Allah does not love the one who is proud, boastful. "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 37

الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ الله مِن فَضْلِهِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مهِينًا

37. "Those who are niggardly and enjoin people to niggardliness and hide what Allah has given them out of His grace; and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating chastisement."

Hypocritical and Godly Charities

This verse, in fact, is the continuation of the subject of the former verses which refers to the arrogant persons and haughty ones. Such persons not only refrain from doing good to human beings themselves, but also invite people to niggardliness. It says:

"Those who are niggardly and enjoin people to niggardliness ..."

Moreover, they often try to conceal that which Allah has bestowed them out of His Grace lest people of their society expect something from them.

"... and hide what Allah has given them out of His grace...."

Then, the Qur'an states about the fate and the end of these persons as this:

"... and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating chastisement."

Perhaps the key to the secret of mentioning the word 'the disbelievers' in this verse is that: 'niggardliness' often originates from infidelity, because the niggardly persons, indeed, have not a complete faith upon the endless merits of Allah unto the good-doers.

So, when it says that their punishment is "a humiliating chastisement ", it is for the reason that they may see the retribution of 'arrogance' and 'self-admiration' through this way.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 38

وَالَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَـاء النَّاسِ وَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَلاَ بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَن يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاء قِرِينًا

38. "And (the arrogant ones are) those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and neither believe in Allah nor in the Last Day; and anyone whose companion be Satan, (what) an evil companion then he is!"

Sometimes Satan whispers and tempts something from a long distance into some persons, and sometimes it does it from a short distance. The believers usually flee from the temptations of Satan, but sometimes Satan becomes as a constant friend and companion of some people. It may approach them very nigh, and in a manner that Surah Al-Zukhruf, No.43, verse 36 refers to. It states:

"And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent God, We appoint for him a Satan, so he becomes his associate."

Explanations

1. Both to abandon giving charity and to give charity hypocritically are bad. In the previous verse, niggardliness was blamed, and here in the above verse, hypocritical remittals are remonstrated.

2. Hypocrisy is the sign of the lack of true faith in Allah and the Hereafter. A hypocrite relies on people, and then he is deprived from the full reward in the Hereafter.

3. The goal of giving charity is not only satiating the hungry, since this aim can be gained by hypocrisy either. So, the aim of giving charity is also the spiritual growth of the giver of charity.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 39

وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ آمَنُواْ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَأَنفَقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ الله وَكَانَ الله بِهِم عَلِيمًا

39. "And what (harm) would it have done them if they had believed in Allah and the Last Day, and spent in charity of what Allah had provided them with? And Allah is ever aware of them."

In this verse, as an expression of sympathy and regret for the state of this group, it says that what would happen to them if they returned from this deviated-path and believed in Allah and the Last Day?

They could also spend a part of the bounties that Allah had given them to the servants of Allah with a sincere intention and through a pure thought. By this way, they would earn the felicity and happiness of this world and the next world both.

"And what (harm) would it have done them if they had believed in Allah and the Last Day, and spent in charity of what Allah had provided them with?

However, Allah is aware of their intentions and deeds, and He will give them an appropriate reward and retribution accordingly.

"..And Allah is ever aware of them."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 40

إِنَّ اللّه لاَ يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِن تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِن لَّدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

40. "Verily Allah does not do injustice even of the weight of an atom, and if there he a good deed He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward."

This verse, addressing the faithless and niggardly persons, whose status was introduced in the former verses, says:

"Verily Allah does not do justice even of the weight of an atom...."

The Arabic term /Ẓarrah/ originally means very small ant which is not seen easily; but, gradually it has been applied for every small thing. Accordingly, nowadays, 'atom', which is any of the smallest particles of an element, is also called /Ẓarrah/.

And, in view of the fact that the Arabic word /miṣqal/ means 'weight', the Qur'anic phrase /miṣqala Ẓarratin/ means 'the weight of an extraordinary small thing'.

Then, the verse adds that: not only Allah does not do injustice, but also:

"... and if there he a good deed He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward."

Why Does Allah not Do Injustice?

The root of injustice is usually either ignorance, or fear, or need, or greed, etc, but Allah, Who is the Self-Sufficient, Omniscient, and Glorified, does not do injustice. Moreover, Allah has enjoined people to equity and goodness Himself, then how does He do injustice? Yet, His reward is manifold: (ten-fold, hundred-fold, or more).

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 41

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَـؤُلاء شَهِيدًا

41. "How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and We bring you a witness over those (witnesses)?"

The content of this verse, which refers to the Messenger of Allah, as a witness over the Ummah, has also occurred in some other verses of the Qur'an (such as: Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 143, Surah An-Nahl, No.16, verse 89, and Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 78).

Whenever Ibn-Mas'ud recited this verse to the Prophet (S), the tears of the Messenger of Allah (S) would shed. (Narrated from Sahih-i-Bukhari, Tarmathi, and Nisa'i in Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi and Tafsir-i-Maraqi)

Allah does not need, of course, to bring any witnesses, but human beings are in a condition that the more they feel the presence of witnesses, the more effective it is for strengthening their training and their piety.

As the verses of the Qur'an indicate, there are many sorts of witnesses in the Hereafter; among them are:

Allah:

"Verily Allah is a witness over all things!." [3]

the prophets: the above verse, [4] the immaculate Imams:

"And thus have We made you an Ummah of middling stand that you may be witnesses over mankind, ..." [5];

the angels:

"And every soul shall come, with it a driver and a witness." [6];

the earth:

"On that Day, she will recount (all) her news:" [7];

the time: A tradition says that: every day the time addresses man by saying:

"I am a new day and I am a witness over you" [8];

and the limbs of the body:

"On the Day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did." [9]

And, again, we should be aware that the day of Resurrection is the Day on which the witnesses will stand forth:

"on the day when shall stand forth the witnesses." [10]

Explanations

1. Prophets are some examples for people in the world and the witnesses over them in the Hereafter.

2. It is Allah's way of treatment that the prophet of every nation be a witness over that nation. After the departure of the Prophet (S) there should be someone with the same qualities of the Prophet (S) (the immaculate Imams) to be witness over people. Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"In any Age an Imam from us, Ahlul-Bayt, is a witness over people, and the Messenger of Allah is a witness over us" [11]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 42

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَعَصَوُاْ الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّى بِهِمُ الأَرْضُ وَلاَ يَكْتُمُونَ اللّهَ حَدِيثًا

42. "On that Day will those who disbelieve and disobey the Messenger wish that the earth were levelled with them, and they will not hide any word from Allah."

On the Day of Judgement, before standing these witnesses up, the disobedient infidels deny their committing sins and corruptions in the world and try to find a way to escape. They would say:

"... By Allah, our Lord, we were not polytheists." [12]

But, in hereafter when the witnesses say the facts, there will exist no room for them to deny. So, they will desire that the earth were levelled with them.

"On that Day will those who disbelieve and disobey the Messenger with that the earth were levelled with them, and they will not hide any word from Allah."

Explanations

1. Disobedience to the governmental commands of the holy Prophet (S) is considered in a row with disbelief in Allah.

"...those who disbelieve and disobey the Messenger..."

2. The Day of Resurrection is the day of regret and desire.

"... Wish that the earth were levelled with them...."

3. On the Day of Judgement, there will remain nothing concealed.

"...and they will not hide any word from Allah."

In some verses of the Qur'an, the regretful wishes of the sinners are pointed out, as follows:

I wish I were soil. I wish I were covered inside the soil! I wish I would not have made friend with so and so! I wish I contemplated in the world! I wish I had been vanished by that very death. And some other phrases like that.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 43

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَقْرَبُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَأَنتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّىَ تَعْلَمُواْ مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلاَ جُنُبًا إِلاَّ عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىَ تَغْتَسِلُواْ وَإِن كُنتُم مَّرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاء أَحَدٌ مِّنكُم مِّن الْغَآئِطِ أَوْ لاَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاء فَلَمْ تَجِدُواْ مَاء فَتَيَمَّمُواْ صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُواْ بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا

43. "O' you who have Faith! do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you say, nor when you are polluted - unless you be passing through - until you wash yourselves. And if you are ill or on a journey, or one of you come from privy or you have touched the women and you cannot find water, then betake yourselves to pure earth then wipe your faces and your hands; verily Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving."

A Few Legal Ordinances

The following Islamic legal ordinances can be extracted from the above-mentioned verse:

1. Canonical prayers are invalid when the person is intoxicated. The holy verse says:

"O' you who have Faith! do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you say,…"

The reason of it, of course, is clear, because 'prayer' is the talk and invocation of the servant with Allah and the action must be performed in an utmost conscious state.

2. The prayer is invalid for the person who is in ritual impurity. So, the Qur'an says that you should not approach prayer when you are polluted:

"... nor when you are polluted…."

Next to that, it has stated an exception for this ordinance. It says:

"...unless you be passing through …"

In this state establishing prayer is permissible on the condition of dry ablution, which will be dealt with in the following.

3. The words refer to the allowance of establishing prayer or passing through a mosque after performing a legal bathing, which has been stated by saying:

"...until you wash yourselves...."

Dry Ablution for the Excused

Through the next phrase, all religious aspects of dry ablution are stated. At first, it points to the situation in which water is harmful for the health of the body.

"...And if you are ill or on a journey...."

Then, it continues saying:

"...or one of you come from privy or you have touched the women ..."

And, when in this situation, there is not water for ablution:

"...and you cannot find water ..."

In this condition, you must have recourse to dust:

"... then betake yourselves to pure earth...."

In the next sentence, it has stated the style of having recourse to dust. It says:

"..then wipe your faces and your hands...."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to this fact that this ordinance is a kind of facilitation and discount for you, since:

"...verily Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 44

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلاَلَةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن تَضِلواْ السَّبِيلَ

44. "Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? They buy error and desire that you should also go astray from the way."

In this verse, Allah addresses the holy Prophet (S) and, in an astonishing tone, says: whether he has not seen that group of people who were given a portion of the Book in order to be guided and guide others. But instead of obtaining guidance and felicity by it for themselves and others, they buy aberration not only for themselves but also they wish you went astray. It says:

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? they buy error and desire that you should also go astray from the way."

Thus, as a result of their bad intentions, they changed what they had I as a means of guidance for themselves and for others into a means of misleading and being misled. The reason of that manner was that they never

went after the truth, but they looked all the things with the dark glasses of hypocrisy, jealousy, and materiality.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 45

وَالله أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ وَكَفَى بِالله وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِالله نَصِيرًا

45. "And Allah knows well your enemies; and Allah is sufficient as a Guardian, and Allah is sufficient as a Helper."

In this verse, it says that they show themselves in the form of friends, but they are your real enemies. It is in the case that Allah knows your enemies well.

"And Allah knows well your enemies ..."

What enmity is higher than that they are opposite your happiness and guidance. They always pursue their own evil aims to be practised, every time in a shape. They sometimes come nigh with a tongue of benevolence, and sometimes by the way of ill-speaking.

Yet, you should never be afraid of their hostility, because you are not alone:

"...and Allah is sufficient as a Guardian, and Allah is sufficient as a Helper."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 46

مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُواْ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ
وَرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنًا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُواْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمَعْ وَانظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ
وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِن لَّعَنَهُمُ الله بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

46. "Some of those who are Jews change the words from their places and say: "We heard and disobeyed", and (impolitely tell the Messenger) do hear, but as one that never hears, and 'Infatuate us! ' distorting (the word) with their tongues and taunting about religion, and if they had said: 'We heard and we obeyed, hear you and respite us' it would have been better for them, and more upright, but Allah cursed them for their disbelief, so they do not believe; save a few."

The application of the phrases / sami'na wa 'asayna / in the Arabic language means something like Persian proverb which says: 'You may say but we do not follow'.

The Muslims of the time of the Prophet of Islam (S) used to tell him the Arabic phrase /ra'ina/. By this word they meant to say that he would pay attention to them and protect them. But the Jews perverted this word to a disgrace meaning.

When the word is taken from the Arabic root /ra'a/, it means 'to consider, to observe', but when it is taken from the root /ra'unat/, and pronounced /ra'inna/, it means: 'make of us foolish'. By twisting their tongues, the Jews used to both defame the Muslims and mock Islam.

In the previous verse, too, their hostility and that they intended to mislead the Muslims through their apostasy and infidelity, was pointed out. It was because of these hostilities and missing the light of guidance that they were cursed by Allah.

"Some of those who are Jews change the words from their places and say: "We heard and disobeyed", and (impolitely tell the Messenger) do hear, but as one that never hears, and 'Infatuate us! ' distorting (the word) with their tongues and taunting about religion, and if they had said: 'We heard and we obeyed, hear you and respite us' it would have been better for them, and more upright, but Allah cursed them for their disbelief, so they do not believe; save a few."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 47

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ آمِنُواْ بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن نَّطْمِسَ وُجُوهًا
فَنَرُدَّهَا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللّهِ مَفْعُولاً

47. "O' you who have been given the Scripture! believe in what We have revealed, confirming that which is (already) with you, before We destroy countenances and turn them towards their backs, or curse them as We cursed the people of Sabbath (the violating Jews), and the Command of Allah is ever-executed."

The words saying "…before We destroy countenances and turn them towards their backs....." may refer to the purpose of changing the feature of hearts and nature of safe and sound intellects from the path of felicity.

This status may come forth as a result of their obstinacy and arrogance against the Divine verses. Instead of going one step forward, they retrogress some steps backward, and their spiritual human features and intellects will be abolished.

Perhaps, it refers to the outward change of faces to their backs and transformation of the features, or change of shapes in the Hereafter.

The People of Sabbath

There were some disobedient Jews who violated the Command of Allah (s.w.t.) upon the prohibition of fishing on Saturdays and, by a legal trick, they did fishing. So, they incurred the wrath of Allah, and their faces transformed into the shape of monkeys.

Explanations

1. The general framework of the programs of all Divine prophets are alike. Therefore, in the style of invitation and propagation, others' opinions and their common rights should be respected.

"...confirming that which is (already) with you ..."

2. Islam invites the followers of other religions to the religion of Allah, too.

"O' you who have been given the Scripture! Believe ..."

3. The scientific figures and those who are cognizant are more responsible, and are especially addressed by the religion of Allah.

"O' you who have been given the Scripture! Believe ..."

4. When confronting the obstinate ones, the means of threat must be used.

"...before We destroy ..."

5. In order that the threat be affected, the kinds of its concrete and applicable examples should be mentioned.

"...as We cursed the people of Sabbath (the violating Jews) ..."

6. The wrath of Allah upon all of the obstinate persons, during the history of the world, is an Allah's way of treatment.

"...as We cursed the people of Sabbath (the violating Jews) ..."

7. The command of Allah is always certain.

"...and the Command of Allah is ever-executed."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 48

إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاء وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَى إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

48. "Verily Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whom He Pleases; and whoever associate (aught) with Allah, has indeed devised a great sin."

More than two hundred times the word 'polytheism' has been mentioned in the Qur'an where tending towards other than Allah (idolatry, hypocrisy, non-godly beliefs, materialism, and so on) has been criticized.

The content of this verse has also been repeated in this very Surah, verse 116; and in fact repetition can be a cause of guidance. However, polytheism will not be forgiven because it is an exodus from the process of right. It is also departing from the line of Allah and joining other than Him.

If, even a pagan leaves out paganism and sincerely repents, Allah will forgive him. It is cited in Surah Az-Zumar, No.39, verse 53 that surely Allah forgives the faults altogether, therefore do not despair of His (Mercy. Then, it is appropriate for everyone to return to Him by repenting and asking forgiveness.

It is narrated from Imam Amirul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said that the mentioned verse, to me, is the most (encouraging) beloved one among the verses of the Qur'an.

Since no one knows to whom the wisely grace of Allah will be granted, there will remain no room for pride and boldness in anyone to (commit sin. The following factors pave the way of forgiveness:

1) Repentance, 2) to do goodness, 3) to avoid the great sins, 4) intercession, and, 5) the Divine pardon (which is pointed out in this verse)

Explanations

1. Polytheism is the worst form of sins and it is a barrier against the Divine forgiveness.

2. Forgiveness of the faults relates to the Wisely Will of Allah.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 49

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ بَلِ الله يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاء وَلاَ يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلاً

49. "Have you not seen those who consider themselves pure? Nay! Allah purifies whom He pleases, and they shall not be wronged even the hair of a date-stone."

In some other verses of the Qur'an, self-praise and considering oneself faultless, chosen, and excellent are also blamed. Surah An-Najm, No.53, Verse 32, for example, says:

" ...therefore do not attribute purity to yourselves; He knows him best who keeps from evil."

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his sermons, speaking .about the signs of the pious ones, points out:

" ...whenever they are praised, they awe ..."

Therefore, that self-praise, which originates from pride, self -admiration and humiliating others, is forbidden, while praising Allah and worshipping Him is a great value. By the way, the divine retributions of people are the fruit of the evil deeds and they are not from the side of Allah.

"Have you not seen those who consider themselves pure? Nay! Allah purifies whom He pleases, and they shall not be wronged even the hair of a date-stone."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 50

انظُرْ كَيفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللّه الكَذِبَ وَكَفَى بِهِ إِثْمًا مبِينًا

50. "See how they forge a lie against Allah! And it is sufficient as a manifest sin."

The Jews considered themselves a superior race and also the children and the beloved of the Lord. This self-admiration is the greatest calumny unto Allah, because He has not appointed anyone as His child, and all human beings are equal before Him. It is in the case that, to Him, the only privilege is Faith and piety.

In belie, besides the existence of lie, there are also the sin of accusation, persecution, injustice, and desecration.

Belie upon Allah nullifies fasting, too. Imam Baqir (as) also said:

"...Telling lie is worse than drinking wine."

Yet, belie is graver than telling a lie, either.

"See how they forge a lie against Allah! and it is sufficient as a manifest sin."

Notes

1. 'Amali, by Sadugh, p. 4208 (Persian translation) & Tafsir-ul-'Amthal, vol. 3, p. 204
2. Ibid
3. Surah Al.Hajj, No.22, verse 17
4. The verse under discussion
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 143
6. Surah Qaf, No.50, verse 21
7. Surah Az-Zilzal, No.99, verse 4
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, 11. 112
9. Surah An-Nur, No.24, verse 24
10. Surah Al-Mu'min (Qafir), No.40, verse 51
11. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 399
12. Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 23

Section 8: Leaning to injustice and evil to be avoided

Jews preferring the idolaters to Muslims -Abraham's seed blessed - Recompense for disbelief and faith -Obedience to Allah, the Apostle Muhammad and those vested with the authority.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 51

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ هَؤُلاء أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ سَبِيلاً

51. "Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Jibt (idol) and Taghut (false deities) and they say about the infidels: 'These are better guided on the way than those who have believed (in Islam)'."

After that the fight of 'Uhud ended, a group of the Jews went to Mecca in order that they ally with the pagans there against the Muslims. Having the aim to please and assure the pagans the Jews prostrated before the pagans' idols. They said that their idolatry was better than the faith of Muslims in Islam and Muhammad (S).

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Jibt (idol) and Taghut (false deities) and they say about the infidels: 'These are better guided on the way than those who have believed (in Islam)'."

The Arabic term 'Jibt', which is applied for the idol of magician, has occurred only once in the Qur'an; while the term Taghut, which is derived from the sense of 'disobedience', has occurred eight times therein.

Perhaps, the objective meaning of these two terms mentioned in the verse is the very two idols before which the Jews prostrated. Or, may be, the purpose of 'Jibt' is the idol, but the purpose of 'Taghut' is the idol worshippers and the advocators of idolatry.

Explanations

1. The enemies of Islam, in order to work against Muslims, sometimes ignore their own conviction. (The Jews prostrated before idols for the pleasure of the pagans against the Muslims.)

2. The mood of obstinacy and enmity changes the way of judgement, and causes the truth to be concealed.

"... they say about the infidels: 'These are better guided…"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 52

أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ الله وَمَن يَلْعَنِ الله فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ نَصِيرًا

52. "These are they whom Allah has cursed, and whomever Allah curses, then you will not find any helper for him."

The inauspicious alliances of the opponents of the truth will never gain their expected results, (As it was seen in the alliance of the parties of infidels, Idolaters, and the Jews due to the plotting against Islam when the Jews went into Mecca and prostrated before idols, and when they judged unjustly and allied against Islam. They gained, then, nothing through opposing the Will of Allah.)

"…then you will not find any helper for him."

However, whoever is cursed by Allah, will always be wretched.

"These are they whom Allah has cursed, and whomever Allah curses, then you will not find any helper for him."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 53

أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذًا لاَّ يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيرًا

53. "Or have they a share in the kingdom? Then in that case, they do not give even a speck to anybody!"

By the commentaries of the previous couple of verses, it was said that the Jews, to attract the attention of the idol-worshippers of Mecca, testified that the idolatry of the Quraysh was better than the theistic practice of the Muslims.

Even they themselves fell prostration before the idols. In this verse, as well as the next one, this fact has been pointed out that their judgement was worthless and invalid. Each of these two verses contains a considerable proof.

In this verse the Qur'an inquires whether the Jews had any share in the government that they let themselves judge like that. And, yet, if they had such an authority, they would not give people any right when they might keep everything for themselves exclusively.

"Or have they a share in the kingdom? Then in that case, they do not give even a speck to anybody! "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 54

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ الله مِن فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُم مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا

54. "Or, do they (the Jews) envy people for that which Allah has given them of His grace? But indeed We have given to Abraham's children the Book, and the Wisdom and We have given them a grand kingdom."

In the former verses, the words were about the niggardliness of the Jews, and here, in this verse, their envy is dealt with. Envy, of course, is worse than niggardliness, because a miser simply does not remit his own property, but an envious person is inconvenient of the favour of another person, either.

The word /an-nas/ 'people', mentioned in this verse, as Tafsir-us-Safi indicates, refers to the Prophet (S) and his progeny. [1]

Thus, the verse says that the Jews envied them for that which Allah had given them out of His Grace. Then, through such judgements, they wished to quench the fire of their envy.

"Or, do they (the Jews) envy people for that which Allah has given them of His grace. ..."

Then the Qur'an says: why do you wonder and envy that the Prophet of Islam (S), chosen from the family of Bani-Hashim, has been given such a rank? It is in the case that Allah has also given the progeny of Abraham (from whose family are the Jews) the Book and the wisdom and He has

bestowed the prophets of the Children of Israel the authority of a great kingdom.

"... But indeed We have given to Abraham's children the Book and the Wisdom and We have given them a grand kingdom."

But, unfortunately you, the degenerate people, lost those worthy spiritual and physical capitals because of your own wickedness and hard-heartedness.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that he (as) was asked about this verse and he (as) answered:

"We are those whom have been jealous of by, the enemies ..."

The physical and spiritual damages of envy, irrespective of personal and social ones, are extraordinarily abundant. They have been mentioned in the traditions of the leaders of Islam. Including them, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Envy and malevolence are from the darkness of the heart and blind heartedness, which in turn originate from the denial of the bounties of Allah upon human beings. These two, (blind-heartedness and denial of the bounties of Allah) are two wings of disbelief which causes the annihilation of man."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 55

فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَّن صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكَفَى بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا

55. "So, of them were (some) who believed in it and of them were (some) who barred from it, and sufficient (to punish them) is the Blazing Fire (of Hell)."

This verse is both a soothing for the Prophet (S) and a solace for the Muslims, so that they would not be tired and despaired of the faithlessness of people. In the length of history, the circumstances have always been such, and all the prophets had been faced with the unfaithfulness of some groups of people.

"So, of them were (some) who believed in it, and of them were (some) who barred from it, and sufficient (to punish them) is the Blazing Fire (of Hell)."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 56

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُواْ الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

56. "Verily those who disbelieved in Our Signs, soon We will cast them into Fire so oft as their skins shall be burnt We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the torment. Surely Allah is the Mighty, the Wise.".

Since the infidels were constantly obstinate, they should be retributed constantly with their new skins.

Once, Ibn-i-Abil-'Uja', who was one of the opponents of the religion, asked Imam Sadiq (as) what the fault of the new skin was.

Imam (as) said: "The new skin is from the remaining of the burnt of the very first skin. It is like a sun-dried brick which breaks into pieces and will be made of it mud and a new sun-dried brick again."

Explanations

1. The punishment of the disbelievers is permanent.

"...We will change them for other skins ..."

2. The punishment, because of its continuation, will never become ordinary for the disbelievers.

3. The new skin is for tasting a severe chastisement; (since, in burning, the utmost pain is felt in the skin, and when the fire reaches the bone its pain seems less than before).

4. The Resurrection will be bodily, because the punishment will be upon the skin and the change that it will have. .

"Verily those who disbelieved in Our Signs, soon We will cast them into Fire so oft as their skins shall be burnt We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the torment. Surely Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 57

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَّهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلاًّ ظَلِيلاً

57. "And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow -therein shall they abide forever; for them are pure companions - and We will make them enter a dense shade."

In this verse, the holy Qur'an promises those believers who have a good Faith and do good deeds that surely they will live soon in gardens of Heaven, where under its trees some rivers flow. Their life therein will be forever.

Besides that, in Paradise, they will have the pure spouses who will be the source of calmness and tranquillity for both their bodies and souls. They will be pure from the point of menstruation blood, all meanness, and pollutions. They will live under some eternal shades that, unlike to the inconstant shades of this world, are permanent, wherein neither hot wind nor bitter cold enters.

"And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow -therein they will abide forever; for them are pure companions - and We will make them enter a dense shade.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 58

إِنَّ اللَّه يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤدواْ الأَمَانَاتِ إِلَى أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَن تَحْكُمُواْ بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّه نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُم بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّه كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

58. "Verily Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners, and when you judge between people, you judge with justice; verily good is the admonition Allah gives you; verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

Occasion of Revelation

This verse was revealed at the time when the holy Prophet (S), being completely victorious, arrived in Mecca. The Messenger of Allah (S) called

for 'Uthman-ibn- Talhah, the key holder of the Ka'bah, and took the key from him in order to clear out the Ka'bah from the existence of the idols.

After the fulfilment of that aim, 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, asked the Prophet (S) to give the key of the Ka'bah to him.

The rank of key-holding of the Sacred-House, in fact, was a distinguished and honourable rank among Arabs. But, contrary to that, after clearing out the Ka'bah from the filth of the existence of the idols, the Prophet (S) closed the door of the House and delivered the key to 'Uthman-ibn- Talhah while he (S) was reciting the verse under discussion.

Deposit and Justice in Islam

This holy verse, from which a general and common ordinance is understood, explicitly says:

"Verily Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners ..."

In the second part of the verse, it points to another important subject. It is the proposition of observing justice in government. The verse, conveying the command of Allah, says:

"... and when you judge between people, you judge with justice; ..."

Then, to lay emphasis on these two commands, it says:

"...verily good is the admonition Allah gives you; ..."

Again, the verse emphasizes and says that Allah is watching you in any state you are, and He both hears your words and sees what you do. It says:

"... verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

It is evident that the term' deposit' has a vast meaning. It includes any physical and spiritual capitals. Therefore, according to the clear meaning of this verse, every Muslim is enjoined not to be treacherous in any deposit and unto any person, whether the owner of the deposit is Muslim or non-Muslim. This ordinance is, in fact, one of the principles of the declaration of the rights of human kind in Islam '.

Even the scientists of a society are the depositaries. They are charged with a duty not to conceal the facts. Our children are also the deposits of Allah with us.

We must not neglect training and educating them. Beyond than that, our existence and whatever power Allah (s.w.t.) has given us are the deposits of Allah, and we should try to protect them carefully.

A tradition narrated from Imam -Sadiq (as) about the importance of 'deposit' indicates that once he (as) told one of his companions:

"If the murderer of Hadrat Ali (as) trusted me a deposit, or wanted me to advise him, or consulted me, and I accepted that from him, certainly I would be honest in the deposition." [2]

In many Islamic traditions, the purpose of the term 'deposit', mentioned in the current verse, has been introduced the leadership of the society, the men of which are Ahlul-Bayt (as). This is the clear extension of practising this verse. [3]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 59

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
فَرُدوهُ إِلَى اللّه وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلاً

59. "O' you who have Faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you. Then, if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is better and very good in the end."

This verse, together with a few verses next to it, discuss about one of the most important matters of Islam, that is, the subject of leadership. They determine the true source of imitation of Muslims for the different social and religious affairs that they may have.

At first, it commands those who have faith, saying:

"O' you who have Faith! Obey Allah…"

It is obvious that, for a believing person, all obedience must be led to the obedience of Allah. Then, any form of leadership must originate from His pure Essence and be adopted to His command, because it is He Who is the Ruler and the genetic Owner of the world of existence, and every sovereignty and ownership should be under His command.

For the second stage it, says:

"... and obey the Messenger ..,"

Obey the Prophet who is immaculate and never speaks out of desire [4], an Apostle appointed from the side of Allah amongst people, whose word is the word of Allah, and whose rank and position have been bestowed to him by Allah.

And, for the third stage, it says:

"... and those charged with authority among you..."

Obey such ones who are from the inside of the Islamic society and protect both the divine religion and worldly affairs of people.

After that, it says:

"... Then, if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is better and very good in the end."

Who are 'Those Charged with Authority'?

All the Shi'ite commentators have the same attitude on this matter that the purpose of the phrase /'ulil-'amr/ mentioned in this verse, is the immaculate Imams to whom the physical and spiritual leadership of the Islamic society, consisting of all affairs of life, have been given from the side of Allah and His Apostle (S), and it does not conclude any other than them.

This meaning is said according to the contents of 33 authentic traditions cited in At-Tafsir-ul Burhan, vol. l, pp. 381-386 (second edition).

Of course, under some conditions, the obedience of those who are appointed to a rank and charge a position in the society is necessary. This obedience is not for that they themselves are 'those charged with authority', but for that they are agents of 'those charged with authority'.

Explanations

1. Absolute obedience from the Messenger of Allah and 'those charged with authority' is a token for inerrancy of those magnanimous ones. Thus, any denotation expansion which is stated for 'those charged with authority' is not valid, if the one is not infallible.

2. The repetition of the word /'ati'u/ 'obey' is the secret of the kind of orders. The holy Prophet (S) sometimes stated the ordinances of Allah, and sometimes gave the governmental commands, since he had both offices of 'prophecy' and government. [5]

3. The name of 'those charged with authority' is mentioned next to the names of Allah and the Apostle, accompanied with an absolute obedience. This is a sign to show that the one in charge of Islamic government should be qualified with a high saintliness.

Based on many traditions, as was mentioned in the commentary of the verse, the purpose of the phrase 'those charged with authority' is Ahlul-Bayt (as).

4. People ought to accept the Islamic system and support its godly leaders by their words and deeds.

"... Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you ..."

5. In obedience, hierarchical order should be observed, that is Allah, the Messenger, and those charged with authority.

6. One of the ways of: acknowledgement is comparison with opposites and contraries.

7. When speaking of mischief-makers, the extravagant, the misguided, the ignorant, the tyrants and so on, the Qur'an's command is: "Do not yield..." and "Do not follow ..." The conclusion is that the aspects of the word /'ati'u/ 'obey' must be those whose obedience have not been prohibited of.

8. To obey false deities is forbidden.

9. If all groups assume the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet (S) as reliable testimonies, discords will be removed and unity will govern.

10. A complete religion must have a solution for discords. The Qur'an says:

"...refer it to Allah and the Messenger ..."

11. Those who are opponent to the orders of Allah, the Messenger, and 'those charged with authority' should doubt in their own religion, if they want to believe in truth.

"…if you believe…"

12. Farsightedness and being careful of the interests of long future, time is the standard of value.

"... This is better and very good in the end."

Notes

1. At-Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 425
2. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 427
3. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 380 (second edition) narrates 15 traditions upon this meaning.
4. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, Verse 3.
5. Allah addresses the Prophet (S) in the Qur'an both for the rank of statement (Surah An-Nahl, No.16, Verse 44) and 'for the rank of government (Surah An-Nisa'', No.4, Verse 105).

Section 9: Hypocrites refuse to accept the Messenger's judgement

Hypocrites' leaning to Satan -the Messenger's judgement shall be accepted-Reward for the obedience to Allah and the Messenger.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 60

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُواْ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَحَاكَمُواْ إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُواْ أَن يَكْفُرُواْ بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلاَلاً بَعِيدًا

60. "Have you not seen those who think they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you? They intend to resort in the judgement of Taghut (false deities) while they have been ordered to reject him, and Satan intends to mislead them far astray."

It happened that there arose a dispute between a hypocritical Muslim and a Jew. They decided to refer to the arbitrator.

The Jew elected the Prophet (S) as the arbitrator for trustworthiness and justice he (S) had, but the hypocrite agreed with Ka'b-ibn-'Ashraf (one of the distinguished Jews) as his arbitrator, because the hypocrite knew that he could tend the attitude of Ka'b towards his benefit by giving him some gifts. This verse is for the bleme of that manner.

"Have you not seen those who think they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you? They intend to resort in the judgement of Taghut (false deities) while they have been ordered to reject him, and Satan intends to mislead them far astray."

As for the definition of 'the false deities', Imam -Sadiq (as) says:

'false deity is he who does not judge rightfully, decides against the command of Allah, and his order is obeyed." [1]

In the previous verse, Allah and the Apostle were introduced as the place of resorts of discords, but in this verse, the blame is upon those who refer to false deities as the place of resorts of their own discords.

Thus, in that verse the virtuous cite of resort has been introduced, while in this verse the impious one has been pointed out. So, true believers do not even think of going to false deities since agreement with /Taghut/ 'false deities' is prohibited.

"... they have been ordered to reject him..."

For removing the interior discords, going to non-Muslims is forbidden for Muslims.

"... They intend to resort to the judgement of taghut (false deities)..."

Through a verse (No.35) in the current Surah, formerly the Qur'an pointed out that: for a family discord an arbitrator from the family of the wife and another one from the family of the husband should judge.

"... Then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people ..."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 61

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى مَا أَنزَلَ الله وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدونَ عَنكَ صُدُودًا

61. "And when it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger,' you will see the hypocrites barring (people) to you with utter aversion."

The reference of hypocrites to false deities and asking judgement from (non-Muslim) foreigners is not a casual happening. But, it is the quality and spiritual specification of hypocrites that they oppose the heavenly leaders and reject the path of truth.

"And when it is said: 'Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger,' you will see the hypocrites barring (people) to you with utter aversion."

Explanations

1. The hypocrites do not surrender to the law of Allah and the command of the Prophet (S). But, in the meanwhile, we must invite them to the truth.

2. The hypocrites are not sensitive to the heartily faith of people to Allah. Their main worriment is the crowd of people gathered around the heavenly Messenger.

"... you will see the hypocrites barring (people) to you with utter aversion."

3. The blameworthy plot of the hypocrites is separating people from the Prophet (S).

However, in another occurrence, the Qur'an indicates that barring the path of the Prophet (S) is, in fact, barring the path of Allah, and denying the Messenger of Allah (S) is the denial of the signs of Allah. In another verse, it says:

".. but surely they do not call you a liar, but the unjust deny the signs of Allah." [2]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 62

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَآؤُوكَ يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّه إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلاَّ إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا

62. "But how will it be, when some disaster befalls them on account of what their (own) hands have forwarded, then they come to you swearing by Allah (saying): 'We intended naught but kindness and concord '?"

The justification of the hypocrites for referring the judgment to the false deities, as they said, was that their final aim was to make peace.

So, if they had gone to the Prophet (S) for judgment and he judged for the benefit of one party, naturally the other party would have become displeased from the Messenger of Allah (S) and would have raised a tumult noisily, which was not appropriate with the position of the holy Prophet (S).

Therefore, to avoid this matter and to protect the honour, rank, and amiability of the Prophet (S), they did not take the conflict to him.

Explanations

1. The hypocritical Muslims refer to the divine leaders only when they encounter a difficulty and feel danger.

"...they come to you...."

2. The opponents usually justify their wrong actions.

"... We intended naught but kindness ..."

3. The hypocrites apply the swearing to Allah as a cover over their own goals.

"... swearing by Allah ..."

4. Among the deeds of the hypocrites is: showing a feature of benevolence, kindness and claiming the motto of peacefulness and exchanging agreements.

"....kindness and concord?"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 63

أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُل لَّهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلاً بَلِيغًا

63. "Those are they of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts, therefore turn away from them, and admonish them and speak to them concerning themselves effectual words."

The effort of the hypocrites is useless, because Allah knows both their interiors and their evil intentions, and manifests them at an appropriate time.

"Those are they of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts ..."

Also, the apology of the hypocrites is not done truthfully; otherwise they would not issue the command of rejection.

"... Allah knows what is in their hearts, therefore turn away from them ..."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 64

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَّلَمُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ جَآؤُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُواْ اللّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ اللّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا

64. "And We did not send any Messenger save that he should be obeyed, by Allah's leave, and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and sought forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger (also) had asked forgiveness for them, they would certainly have found Allah forgiving, Merciful. "

Through the previous verses, the Qur'an has seriously condemned referring to the tyrannical arbitrators. Yet, as an emphasis in this verse, it says:

"And We did not send any Messenger save that he should be obeyed, by Allah's leave, ..."

The reason of it is that those Apostles have been both the Messenger of Allah and the chief in the divine government. Therefore, people have been enjoined to obey them from the point of stating the ordinances of Allah, and the manner of practicing them both. They should not suffice only to a mere claim of faith.

Then, in the continuation of the verse, it has opened the door of return to the sinners and those who have referred to the false deities, or in some way or other, have committed a fault or faults, where it says:

"... and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and sought forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger (also) had asked forgiveness for them, they would certainly have found Allah forgiving, Merciful. "

The current discussed part of the verse points to this fact that the fruit of the obedience of Allah and His Apostle (S) returns to yourselves, as well as the result of your disobedience, which is a kind of injustice, that returns to you, too, because it disturbs the material affairs of your life and, also from the spiritual point of view, it causes your retrogression.

By the way, this verse is an answer to those who imagine referring to the Prophet or Imam is a kind of polytheism, because this verse clearly denotes that coming to the Prophet (S) and setting him as an intercessor before Allah, in order to seek forgiveness from Him for the sinners, is effective and causes their repentance to be accepted and the grace of Allah to be showered.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 65

فَلاَ وَرَبِّكَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىَ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لاَ يَجِدُواْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا

65. "But no, by your Lord! They do not believe (in reality) until they make you the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they find within themselves no dislike of which you decide and submit with full submission."

Occasion of Revelation

There was a dispute between Zubayr-ibn-'Awam (one of the Emigrants) and another Muslim from the Helpers upon the irrigation of a palm-plantation. Since the Upper part of the garden belonged to Zubayr, the Prophet (S) judged that he should irrigate it first.

The other man, the Helper, became worried from the Prophet's judgement (S) and told him: "As Zubayr is your cousin, you judged in his benefit." As soon as he uttered that expression, the face of the Prophet (S) paled, and the above verse was revealed.

Surprising! They themselves elected the Prophet (S) as an arbitrator, but they refused his judgement.

Imam -Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"If some people worship Allah by establishing prayer, performing Hajj pilgrimage, paying alms, and so on to adore Him, but they doubt about the deeds of the Messenger of Allah (S), they are not, indeed, believers."

Then he (as) recited this verse.

"But no, by your Lord! They do not believe (in reality) until they make you the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they find within themselves no dislike of which you decide and submit with lull submission."

However, the signs of a true believer are three:

A) Instead of referring to the false deities, he takes the judgement to the Prophet (S).

B) He should not have any suspicion to the judgement of the Messenger of Allah (S).

"... they find within themselves no dislike ..."

C) He ought to accept the command of the Prophet (S) ardently and surrender to it.

By the way, judgement is from among the ranks of messenger ship and master ship. And, personal attitude against the sacred Qur'anic text is forbidden, because this manner is the sign of faithlessness, (regarding to the occasion of revelation).

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 66

وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ اقْتُلُواْ أَنفُسَكُمْ أَوِ اخْرُجُواْ مِن دِيَارِكُم مَّا فَعَلُوهُ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُواْ مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيتًا

66. "And if We had decreed for them (saying): (Kill yourselves or go forth from your dwellings', they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly been better for them and more efficacious for strengthening (their faith).

Here, in order to complete the previous discussion about those who sometimes felt inconvenience for the just judgements of the Prophet (S), the verse points to some laborious duties of the former nations, such as the Jews whom, after idol-worshipping and calf-worshipping, were ordained to kill each other as an atonement of that great sin, or to go out of their beloved homes.

But, this group are not ordained a heavy and grave duty. If they were also enjoined to do hard duties, how could they tolerate?

These people who do not submit the judgement of the Prophet (S) upon the irrigation of a palm-plantation, how can they fulfil other trials? So, it says:

"And if We had decreed for them (saying): (Kill yourselves or go forth from your dwellings, they would not have done it except a few of them; ..."

Then, it points to two advantages that result from the fulfilment of the commands of Allah, saying:

"...and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly been better for them and more efficacious for strengthening (their faith).

Here, the commands and ordinances of Allah have been rendered into admonishments and advices. This shows that these ordinances are not any things that benefit the Commander (Allah), but they are some advices that benefit us ourselves.

It is interesting that the verse implies that the further a person paves the path of obedience of Allah (s.w.t.), the more his perseverance and steadfastness promotes. In fact, the obedience of the command of Allah is a kind of spiritual practice for human beings.

Surah An-Nisa', Verses 67 - 68

وَإِذاً لَّآتَيْنَاهُم مِّن لَّدُنَّـا أَجْراً عَظِيمًا

وَلَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطًا مسْتَقِيمًا

67. "And then We would certainly have given them from Our Own accord a great reward."

68. " And We would certainly have guided them in the straight path."

In these two verses, two other advantages of obeying and submitting to Allah are stated. In addition to the advantages mentioned in the previous verses, the first verse points to the third gain of this obedience. It says:

"And then We would certainly have given them from Our Own accord a great reward."

And the second verse points to the fourth result of obeying and submitting to Allah when it says:

"And We would certainly have guided them in the straight path."

The objective meaning of the term 'guidance', mentioned in this verse, is some additional graces which are bestowed upon these eligible persons from the side of Allah in the form of a secondary guidance and as a particular reward.

Surah An-Nisa', Verses 69 - 70

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّه وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ الله عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ
وَالشهَدَاء وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَـئِكَ رَفِيقًا
ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللّه وَكَفَى بِاللّه عَلِيمًا

69. "And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours, of the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous; and excellent are these as companions."

70. "This is the grace from Allah, and sufficient is Allah as the Knower."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the revelation of this verse, it has been cited that: once one of the companions of the Prophet (S), who was named Nuban, and who had a fairly intensive affection to the Messenger of Allah (S), came to him while he was very distressed.

The Messenger of Allah (S) asked him about his disturbance and he answered that he reviewed the thought in his mind on that day that if he would be admitted into Paradise on the Day of Judgement, he would surely not be in the position of the Prophet (S) therein.

And, if he would not be admitted into Paradise, his circumstances were evident. Therefore, in either of the cases he might be deprived from being at the presence of him (S). That was why he was distressed.

Then, these two verses were revealed and gave glad tidings to such people implying that the obedient persons will be the companions of the prophets and the chosen ones in Heaven. Then the Prophet (S) said:

"By Allah, the faiths of a Muslim will not he completed except that the one loves me better than himself; his parents and all his relatives, and that he he submitted to my words."

Companions in Heaven

In the previous holy verses, the privileges of the obedient to the command of Allah (s.w.t.) were enumerated. To complete them, this holy verse says:

"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours ..."

As it was mentioned in the commentary of Surah Al-Hamd, This bounty reaches to those who constantly pave the Straight Path and go astray naught.

Then, to explain this phrase, it points to the following four groups, and says:

"... of the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous; ..."

1. The prophets and the special messengers of Allah are those who take the first step for the guidance, leadership and invitation of people to the Straight Path.

2. The truthful are those who both tell the truth in their speech and prove it by their own true and sincere deeds. They practically show that they are not only some bare claimers of Faith, but they truly do believe in the commands of Allah.

In Islamic authentic literature, the whole immaculate Imams (as) and Fatima Zahra (as) are introduced as the best samples of 'the truthful'.

3. The martyrs are those slain in the path of divine goal and belief, or those distinguished persons who will be witnesses to the deeds of human beings on the Day of Judgement.

4. The Righteous are the distinguished eligible persons who have gained some prominent ranks by performing some positive, productive and useful deeds and also by obeying the commands of the prophets.

At the end of the verse, it remarks:

"... and excellent are these as companions."

It is clearly understood from the above verse that having good companions and valuable friends is so great and important that even in the Hereafter, to complete the Heavenly bounties, this great favour will be granted to' the obedient', too.

To express the importance of this great advantage (viz. the companionship of the Chosens), it says:

"This is the grace from Allah, and sufficient is Allah as the Knower."

However, being with prophets and the truthful is a grace from Allah to those who obey Him.

Allah is cognizant to the states of the obedient and disobedient people, as well as to the circumstances of the hypocrites and sincere believers. He knows those who are eligible for the friendship of the prophets, the truthful and so on, the same as the states of those who are not eligible, because He is aware of even the treachery of the eyes.

Notes

1. Al-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 387
2. Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, Verse 33.

Section 10: Believers

Believers enjoined to be always on their guard -Those Who sell this world's life for the life,

Hereafter -Reward for those Who endeavour in the way of the Lord.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 71

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ خُذُواْ حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُواْ ثُبَاتٍ أَوِ انفِرُواْ جَمِيعًا

71. "O' you who have Faith! Take your precaution (keep weapon with yourselves), then either advance in parties or march off all together. "

In the previous verse, the subject was upon the obedience of Allah, the leadership of the immaculate ones, and sovereignty of the Prophet (S). In this verse, the words imply of being careful of the necessity of power, intelligence and a martial preparation for the Islamic community and for the divine leadership.

The Arabic word /hi`zr/ means: 'being alert', 'being on the lookout', and 'the means of defence'. The Qur'anic term /`subat/ is the plural form of the term /`subat/ which means: ' separate parts of forces', (including of groups of quick attacking fighters who cause the enemy to become confused so that they cannot think what to do).

Explanations

1. Muslims should be always prepared and alert. They should be cognizant of the plans, number of forces, the sort of weapons, spirit, and internal and external co-operations of the enemy. Thus they should design their affairs and act accordingly.

2. Muslims must be trained in military courses.

"O' you who have Faith! Take your precautions (keep weapons with yourselves) ..."

3. Muslims should be mobilized.

"… or march off all together."

4. Muslims have to utilize the different styles of challenging with enemy.

"... Then either advance in parties or march off all together."

5. Muslims must protect the bounds of their country.

Acting upon the involving message of this verse, is the secret of honour and glory, while neglecting it is the mystery of the fall and failure of Muslims.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 72

وَإِنَّ مِنكُمْ لَمَن لَّيُبَطِّئَنَّ فَإِنْ أَصَابَتْكُم مصِيبَةٌ قَالَ قَدْ أَنْعَمَ الله عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُن مَّعَهُمْ شَهِيدًا

72. "And verily some of you there are that loiter; if then a misfortune befalls you he says: 'Allah has blessed me in this that I was not present with them'."

Following to the general command of Holy Struggle and trial against enemy, which was stated in the previous verse, in this holy verse, the Qur'an has pointed to some hypocrites and intends to say that these figures and such

features, who are among you, vigorously try not to take part in the rows of strivers who struggle in the way of Allah, It says:

"And verily some of you there are that loiter; …"

But when the strivers return from the battle-field, or when the news of war reaches them that they have suffered a failure or martyrdom, these hypocrites will happily say: what a great bounty Allah has given them that they (hypocrites) did not accompanied them (the strivers) to witness such heart-rending events! It says:

"…if them a misfortune befalls you, he says: Allah has blessed me in this that I was not present with them'."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 73

وَلَئِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُن بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يَا لَيتَنِي كُنتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

73. "And if some grace from Allah befalls you, he would certainly say - as if there had not been any friendship between you and him - 'I wish I were with them, So that I had achieved a great achievement!' "

As soon as the hypocrites are informed that the believers have gained the victory, and naturally have obtained some booties, they regret and, like some strangers, as if there have been no connection between them and the believers sorrowfully say:

"….'I wish I were with them, So that I had achieved a great achievement!' "

It is clear that the person who counts martyrdom in the way of Allah a kind of misfortune, and considers the lack of martyrdom a divine bounty, in his view, the victory and great felicity is not anything save physical triumph and the spoils of war.

"And if some grace from Allah befalls you, he would certainly, say - as if there had not been any friendship between you and him -

'I wish I were with them, so that I had achieved a great achievement!' "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse74

فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدنْيَا بِالآخِرَةِ وَمَن يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَو يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

74. " So let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter , and whoever fights in the way of Allah, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a great reward."

Believers must be prepared for Holy Struggle. In this verse, as well as in a few following verses, the true Muslim believers have logically and excitingly been invited to struggle in the way of Allah.

At first, it implies that only those fight in the way of Allah who are ready to sell the life of this material world for the eternal life in the Hereafter. That is, only those persons can be counted among the true strivers that are ready for such a bargain. It says:

"So let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it remarks that the fate of such strivers is quite clear. They either become martyr, or they defeat the enemy for the sake of Allah and gain the victory. In both cases, they will be given a great reward by Allah. The verse says:

"... and whoever fights in the way of Allah, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a great reward."

It is certain that such soldiers, with such a spiritual state, have no failure in their minds, because in both cases they know themselves victorious. Even the non-Muslim scholars, who have discussed about the quick triumphs of Muslims at the time of the Prophet (S), and their victories after that, have considered this doctrine as one of the effective factors in the progression of Muslims.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 75

وَمَا لَكُمْ لاَ تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاء وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَـذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ
نَصِيرًا {

75. "And what has happened to you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and for the weak among men, women and children who say: 'Our Lord! Take us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us from You guardian, and appoint for us from you helper!"

Seeking Assistance through Human Affections

In the previous verse the believers have been invited to Holy Struggle. The verse has emphasized on the faith in Allah; and the Day of Resurrection, with the reasoning of gain and loss But this verse invites them towards Holy Struggle basing on stimulating the humanities.

It inquires why do you not struggle in the way of Allah; and for the oppressed and defend less men, women and children who are captured in the grips of tyrants? Do your humanities let you to be silent and watch these pathetic scenes? It says:

"And what has happened to you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and for the weak among men, women and children ..."

Then, to stir the affections of the believers it points to the very oppressed ones and says:

".. who say: 'Our Lord! Take us out of this town whose people are oppressors...."

They also ask their Lord to send a guardian from His side to support them; and again they ask Him to appoint a helper from Himself for them.

The verse continues saying:

" and appoint for us from You guardian, and appoint for us from You helper!"

The above-mentioned holy verse, indeed, is a hint to the fact that Allah (s.w.t.) has answered to their invocation and He has trusted 'you' with this great human duty. Then 'you' are the 'guardian' and the 'helper' who have been appointed from the side of Allah (s.w.t.) for supporting and saving them.

It should be noted that according to some Islamic narrations, the immaculate Imams have said:

"We are the same oppressed that people should raise for our government." [1]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 76

الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُواْ أَوْلِيَاء الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

76. "Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of Taghut (Satan). Fight, therefore, (against) Satans patrons. Satan's plot is certainly weak."

In this holy verse, in order to encourage the strivers to struggle against the enemy, and also to specify the vows and goals of the strivers, it says such:

"Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of Taghut (Satan)..."

That is, in any case, the life is not free from struggling, but, some people struggle alongside the path of the truth and some others alongside the path of untruth and Satan.

Following to that, the verse continues saying:

"... Fight, therefore, (against) Satan's patrons..."

False deities, and the disobedient and unjust forces, though outwardly seem great and powerful, they are inwardly weak and feeble. So, do not fear of their arranged and qualified apparent, because they are hollow from inside, and:

"... 'Satan's plot is certainly weak."

It is so, because their plots are founded on the Satanic forces.

Note

1. At-Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 1, P. 371, & Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 1, 394.

Section 11: The Hypocrites' Attitude towards the Believers

The refusal of hypocrites to fight -their secret plans -their propagating falsehood -The Apostle enjoined to fight even single -handed -to depend upon Allah - To ponder over the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 77

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفواْ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُواْ رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا
الْقِتَالَ لَوْلا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدَّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَى وَلاَ تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلاً

77. "Have you not seen those to whom it was said: 'Withhold your hand (from war), and establish prayer and pay the poor-rate,' but when fighting was prescribed for them, a group of them were so afraid of men as (it should be) the fear of Allah, or (even) with a greater fear, and they said: 'Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us? Wherefore did You not grant us a delay to a near end?' Say: 'The capital of this world is scant and the Hereafter will be better for anyone who keeps from evil; and you will not be wronged (even to the extent of) the husk of a date-stone '."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Ibn-' Abbas that at the advent of Islam, when Muslims were living in Mecca and they were under the harsh pressure of the pagans there, some of them went to the Prophet (S) and said that they had been dear and honoured before Islam but they lost that glory and honesty, besides the hurt and injury they bore from the enemies.

They asked him to allow them to fight against the disbelievers to regain their glory and honour. That day, the Prophet (S) answered them that he was not commissioned to fight then.

But, later, when the command of fight was issued, some of those ardent figures knowingly tarried to participate in the battle-field. Then the verse was revealed in order to encourage the believers and also to blame those careless and neglectful persons.

Those Who only Talk!

Here, in this verse, the Qur'an implies that: indeed it is wonderful that some people, in an inappropriate situation but with a surprising state once ardently asked permission to go to Holy struggle when they were commanded to restrain then and to pay to self-improvement establishing prayer, strengthening their forces, and paying alms; After that when the circumstances became fitting and the command of Holy struggle was revealed, horror and terrible fear filled their whole entity, and they began to protest against that command. It says:

"Have you not seen those to whom it was said: 'Withhold your hand (from war), and establish prayer and pay the poor - rate, , but when fighting was prescribed for them, a group of them were so afraid of men as (it should be) the fear of Allah, or (even) with a greater fear...."

In their protest, they clearly said that why Allah revealed the command of Holy struggle so soon. It would be better He delayed it for a length of time, or that duty would be put upon the coming dynasties. It says:

"... and they said: 'Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us? Wherefore did You not grant us a delay to a near end? '..."

The Qur'an delivers two answers to these persons. The first answer lies in the content of the sentence saying:

"…a group of them fear men as (it should be) the fear of Allah, or (even) with a greater fear,…"

That is, instead of being afraid of the Mighty and the Omnipotent Allah, they fear of the feeble and incapable human beings. They are in horror from such a creature more than that they fear from Allah!

For the second answer it denotes that such people should be told that supposing that without participating in the Holy struggle, they could live calmly for a few days but, at last, this worthless life will end while the eternal life in Hereafter is more valuable for the pious ones, in particular that they will be given their reward completely and they will be wronged naught. It says:

"… Say: ' The capital of this world is scant and the Hereafter will be better for anyone who keeps from evil; and you will not be wronged (even to the extent of) the husk of a date-stone',"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 78

أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُواْ يُدْرِككُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مشَيَّدَةٍ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُواْ هَـذِهِ مِنْ عِندِ اللّهِ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُواْ هَـذِهِ مِنْ عِندِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ فَمَا لِهَـؤُلاء الْقَوْمِ لاَ يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا

78. "Wherever you be, death will overtake you, even though you be in strong towers. Yet, if something fine befalls them, they say: 'This is from Allah', but if an ill befalls them, they say: 'This is from you'. Say: 'Everything is from Allah'. But what is the matter with such people that it is nigh to perceive no word "

This verse is an encouragement unto the Holy Struggle and not being afraid of death in the battle-field. It is also an answer to the ill omens of the hypocrites that, instead of considering and recognizing the matters well, they hold Allah responsible for the distresses and failures.

By the way, the manner of defaming the leader is the style of hypocrites. Therefore, it is not right that, by relieving themselves of responsibilities, they justify the faults and hold others responsible for their own sins.

It should be realized that victories and failures, death and life, pleasant and unpleasant affairs, all in all, are in the circle of the wise providence of Allah.

"...'Everything comes from Allah'..."

Thus, regarding the death being certain and decisive so that wherever we may be it will happen. Then why would we escape from Holy struggle?

"Wherever you be, death will overtake you, even though you be in strong towers. Yet, if something fine befalls them they say: This is from Allah', but if an ill befalls them, they say: 'This is from you.' Say:

'Everything is from Allah '. But what is the matter with such people that it is nigh to perceive no word?"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 79

مَّا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِن سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِن نَّفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولاً وَكَفَى بِاللّهِ شَهِيدًا

79. "Whatever of good befalls you, it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you as a Messenger unto mankind; and Allah is sufficient (as) a witness (thereof).

From the point of the Divine theology, everything is the creature of Allah:

"Allah is the Creator of every thing..."[1]

And Allah has created every thing good and beautiful as the Qur'an says:

"Who made good everything that He has created...." [2]

What relates to Allah, in this regard, is creation, which is not separate from goodness. Therefore, our distresses and inflictions are, firstly, because of the lack of those virtues that are not created by Allah; and, secondly, whatever causes our deprivation from the divine bounties, are the personal actions or the actions of the society.

However, all the virtues of a person are from Allah, while his defects and faults are from his own self.

"Whatever of good befalls you, it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you as a Messenger unto mankind; and Allah is sufficient (as) a witness (thereof)."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 80

مَّنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللّهَ وَمَن تَوَلَّى فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

80. "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah, and whoever turns away -We have not sent you to be a watcher over them."

Practice of the Prophet is Just like the Revelation of Allah

In this verse, the situation of the Prophet (S) before people, and people's good deeds and evil deeds, has been stated. At first, it says that whoever obeys the Prophet (S) has obeyed Allah. Thus, the obedience of Allah cannot be separate from the command of the Prophet (S), because he (S) takes no step against the commands of Allah.

"Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...."

Then, addressing the Prophet (S), the verse adds that if some people disobey you and oppose your instructions, you are not responsible for their deeds, and, from this point of view, you have no duty to force them to stop any wrong doing. Your duty is to deliver propagation of the message of Islam, to enjoin right and forbid wrong, and to guide the misguided persons. It says:

"... and whoever turns away -We have not sent you to be a watcher over them."

It should be noted that this verse is one of the clearest verses of the Qur'an which is the proof upon the reasoning of the rightfulness of the practice of the Prophet (S) and the acceptance of his traditions.

Then when we see that, according to the famous tradition of Thaqalayn (two weighty things), the Prophet (S) has explicitly counted the traditions of Ahlul-Bayt some true evidences and proofs, we result from it that the obedience of the command of Ahlul-Bayt, too, is not separate from the obedience of the command of Allah.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 81

وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُواْ مِنْ عِندِكَ بَيَّتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ وَالله يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبَيِّتُونَ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الله وَكَفَى بِالله وَكِيلاً

81. "And they express: 'Obedience', but when they go out from your presence, a group of them spend the night in deciding other than what you say; and Allah writes down what they decide by night. Therefore, turn aside from them and trust in Allah; and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

In this verse, the Qur'an has pointed to the situation of some hypocrites, or a group of people whose faith is weak. It says that when they come beside the Prophet (S) and are in the row of Muslims, they harmonize with others, and express that they obey the command of the holy Prophet (S) and that they are most willingly ready to follow the Messenger of Allah.

"And they express: ' Obedience '...."

But when people go out from the presence of the Prophet (S), those h the persons whose faith is weak neglect their promises and, in their night meetings, they make some decisions against the words of the holy Prophet (S); but Allah (s.w.t.) records what they say in such meetings. It says:

"... but when they go out from your presence, a group of them spend the night in deciding other than what you say; and Allah writes down , what they decide by night..."

Yet, Allah commands His Messenger to turn aside from them with no fear from their plots. He is ordered not to rely on them in his affairs but to trust only in Allah, the Lord, Who is the best assisting helper and the Protector.

"…Therefore, turn aside from them and trust in Allah; and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 82

أَفَلاَ يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ الله لَوَجَدُواْ فِيهِ اخْتِلاَفًا كَثِيراً

82. "Do they not ponder on the Qur'an? And if it were from other than Allah, they would surely find therein much discrepancy."

Among the accusations that they brought a charge against the Prophet (S) was that they said someone else had taught the Holy Qur'an to him, "... only a mortal teaches him..." 3. This verse is an answer to them.

The lack of contemplation in the Qur'an results to the locking of the hearts. In another verse it says:

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks." [4]

It is customary that, during a long time, there happen some changes, improvements, and contradictions in the ordinary statements and written

materials. But this Qur'an was revealed during twenty three years, and was conveyed by the tongue of an illiterate person.

It was stated in different conditions of peace and war, stranger hood and fame, strength and weakness, and in various circumstances of times, without any doctrinal differences or any contradiction. This proves that it is the Word of Allah, not taught by a mortal.

Therefore, the Qur'an is the ever remaining miracle of the Prophet (S) which itself is an evidence unto his prophet hood.

"Do they not ponder on the Qur'an?

And if it were from other than Allah, they would surely find therein much discrepancy."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 83

وَإِذَا جَاءهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُواْ بِهِ وَلَوْ رَدوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللّه عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لاَتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

83. "And when there comes unto them news of security or fear, they spread it abroad; whereas had they referred it to the Messenger and to those who hold command among them, those of them who investigate matters would have known it (the truth); and were it not for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would certainly have followed Satan, except a few."

Spreading private news and also rumours have always been injurious to Muslims. Diffusion of secret news usually originates from these motives: simple-mindedness, vengeance, infliction, being subject to the will of others, greed in materials, gaudiness, expression of information, etc.

For the comprehensiveness that Islam has, it has referred to this subject and, in this verse; it blames the divulgence of military secrets. It considers narrating the information of victory or failure before offering them to the leaders as the cases of 'false pride' and 'inappropriate fear from the fanciful enemy'.

Had the warnings and the graces of Allah not existed, the Muslims would have fallen in this Satanic path (the divulgence of secrets).

Therefore, spreading gossips is one of the weapons of the hypocrites. However, the news of the battle-field and military secrets must reach a central office and, after being recognized and evaluated, some convenient part of them may be spread. Hence, spreading military news and refraining from referring to the divine leaders, is a kind of obedience from Satan.

Of course, the military and political affairs, together with leading the security news and social secrets, should be controlled under an administrations hip that consists of an independent judgement and deduction. This matter is among the deities of the rank of leadership. That is why there is a close connection between master ship and Islamic jurisprudence.

"And when there comes unto them news of security or fear, they spread it abroad;

whereas had they referred it to the Messenger and to those who hold command among them, those of them who investigate matters would have

known it (the truth); and were it not for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would certainly have followed Satan, except a few. "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 84

فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه لاَ تُكَلَّفُ إِلاَّ نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى الله أَن يَكُفَّ بَأْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَالله أَشَد بَأْسًا وَأَشَد تَنكِيلاً

84. "So, fight in the way of Allah; you are charged only with yourself, and encourage the believers may be Allah will restrain the might of those who disbelieve. Verily Allah is the strongest in might and the severest in punishment."

When the pagans won the Battle of 'Uhud, Abu-Sufyan proudly said that he would encounter the Muslims again at Badri-Suqra (a market used to be held in the month Zilqa'dah at a land called Badr). Before the appointed time, the holy Prophet (S) invited people for the Holy struggle.

There came seventy strivers, but no conflict happened and Muslims returned to Medina safely. Therefore, a leader should move in front of others when there is a danger. So, if it happens that the Muslims pay no attention to the call of the oppressed, the leader should act by himself.

"So, fight in the way of Allah; ..."

The command unto the Prophet (S) enjoining that even when he is alone he should fight against the enemy, is 'a single commandment '.

"Encourage the believers maybe Allah will restrain the might of those who disbelieve. Verily Allah is the strongest in might and the severest in punishment."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 85

مَّن يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُن لَّهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَن يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُن لَّهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ الله عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مقِيتًا

85. "Whoever intercedes with a good intercession shall have a share there from and whoever intercedes with an evil intercession shall share in its burden; and Allah keeps control over all things."

The Arabic term / muqit / means the one who gives the sustenance of another person and who is the protector of that one's life. In general, the word is applied in the sense of 'protector and accountant'.

In the previous verse the meaning was that everyone is responsible for his own deed. But, here, in this verse, it is stated that the function of invitation and acting as an intermediary in a good deed gains a portion of reward or retribution.

Therefore, advice, reconciliation, teaching, encouraging to the Holy struggle, and assisting in a good deed are the extensions of 'a good intercession'. On the other side, backbiting, slander, hindering a good affair, accusation sedition, to frighten someone from battle-field, temptation and plots are the extensions of an evil intercession.

"Whoever intercedes with a good intercession shall have a share there from and whoever intercedes with an evil intercession shall share in its burden....."

Some Islamic literature indicates that supplications for the benefit of others, enjoining to good, leading someone or even hinting him to a good action totally are the extensions of 'a good intercession'.[5]

In intercessions, we should be careful of Allah.

"... and Allah keeps control over all things."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 86

وَإِذَا حُيِّيْتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيواْ بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدوهَا إِنَّ اللّه كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

86. "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better one than it, or (at least) return it. Verily Allah takes account of all things."

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic word / tahiyyat/ is greeting or any other welcoming done by anyone who desires the life, health, and pleasure of other party, whether by speech or by action. And, the respond of a present should be given better than it, even if the present is a greeting and then responding to it.

"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better one than it, or (at least) return it..."

In the educational system of Islam, greeting is not only expected from a younger or lower person to an older or higher one. In this system, Allah, the Prophet, (S) and the angels greet, too.

1. The example of the greeting of Allah is:

"Peace and salutation to Nuh among the nations."

(Surah As-Saffat, No.37, verse 79).

2. The example of the greeting of the Prophet (S) is:

"And when those who believe in Our Signs come to you, say: 'Peace be on you,'..."

(Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 54)

3. The example of the greeting of the angels is:

"Those, whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: 'Peace be on you...'."

(Surah An-Nahl, No.16, verse 32).

Once it happened that a maid offered Imam Hassan (as) a bundle of flowers. In respond to it, Imam Hassan (as) emancipated her. Then, when he was asked about it, he recited the above verse.

In Islam (Islamic custom), greeting to others has been encouraged, whether we know them or not. So, the person who restrains to greet is counted a miser. The Prophet (S) used to greet everyone he met, even the children.

In order that people know that the manner of greetings and their answers, and the superiorities and equalities that they have and in whatever stage they may be, are not concealed to Allah, the holy verse says:

"... Verily Allah takes account of all things."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 87

اللّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللّهِ حَدِيثًا

87. "Allah, there is no god but He. He will certainly gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection. There is no doubt in it; and who is more true in word than Allah?

Either of Unity and Resurrection relates to each other.

"Allah, there is no god but He. He will certainly gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection..."

The Day of Resurrection is a day of gathering for all to be taken account of. Therefore, we should try alongside His path, and we must worship Him alone.

There is no doubt in the Hereafter after those many evidences for Resurrection. (Such as: 'Divine Justice, Wisdom, the signs of resurrection in the nature and its new life in the spring after the concerning death in the winter.) In this regard, it says:

"….There is no doubt in it …"

Then, in the conclusion of the verse, to emphasize the subject, it says:

"... and who is more true in word than Allah?"

Notes

1. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 62
2. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 7
3. Surah An-Nahl, No.16, verse 103
4. Surah Muhammad, No.47, verse 24.
5. Tafsir us-Safi, vol. 1 p. 440.

Section 12: Dealing with Hypocrites

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 88

To deal with hypocrites as enemies unless they amend their conduct:

فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِئَتَيْنِ وَالله أَرْكَسَهُم بِمَا كَسَبُواْ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَن تَهْدُواْ مَنْ أَضَلَّ الله وَمَن يُضْلِلِ الله فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلاً

88. "Why should you take both sides concerning hypocrites, while Allah has discarded them because of what they have earned? Do you want to guide someone whom Allah has forsaken to astray? For, whoever Allah has forsaken to astray, never shall you find a way for him."

Occasion of Revelation

According to what some commentators of the Qur'an have narrated from Ibn-Abbas, a group of the citizens of Mecca had embraced Islam, but in fact, they were in the row of hypocrites and that was why that they did not emigrated to Medina. Yet, finally, they had to go out from Mecca finally. (And haply, because of the particular condition they had, they did so for the purpose of spying).

The Muslims recognized the matter, but, very soon, they differed among themselves that how to treat this group. Some believed that those hypocrites should be forsaken because they were, indeed, the adherents of the enemies of Islam.

But some others, who were rather simple-minded and saw only the outward of the things, opposed that idea and surprisingly said how they should fight against some people who had testified to the Unity of Allah and the prophet hood of the Messenger.

The verse was revealed and blamed the fault of the second group and then guided them.

Regarding the above occasion of revelation, the relation of this verse and the verses next to it with the former verses about the hypocrites, is quite clear.

At the beginning of the verse, it implies why have you separated into two groups about the hypocrites and each group of you judge in a different form? It says:

"Why should you take both sides concerning hypocrites....."

Then the holy Qur'an says that Allah has taken success and His support from this group of hypocrites because of their disgraceful indecent deeds they have done, and He has reversed their thoughts totally. It is like a person who instead of standing on his feet, stands on his head. It says:

"...while Allah has discarded them because of what they have earned...."

Then, at the end of this holy verse, the Qur'an addresses those, shallow-minded Muslims who supported this group of hypocrites, and says:

"...Do you want to guide someone whom Allah has forsaken to astray? For, whoever Allah has forsaken to astray, never shall you find a way for him."

It is an everlasting way of Allah's treatment that the effect of the deeds of no one separates from him. How can you expect that those whose thoughts

are filthy, whose hearts are full of hypocrisy, and their treatment is supporting the enemies of Allah be guided? This is an illogical and, improper expectation.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 89

وَدواْ لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُواْ فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاء فَلاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاء حَتَّىَ يُهَاجِرُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدتَّمُوهُمْ وَلاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ مِنْهُمْ وَلِيًّا وَلاَ نَصِيرًا

89. "They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore do not take from among them friends until they migrate in Allah's way. But if they turn back (to infidelity), then seize them and slay them wherever you find them, and do not take from among them a friend or a helper."

In the previous verse, the words were about those hypocrites whom some simple-minded Muslims raised to support and intercede, but the Qur'an stated their separation from Islam.

Now this holy verse, following that idea, indicates that the inner darkness of these hypocrites is so much so that, not only they themselves are disbelievers, but also they desire that you should disbelieve, too, as they do, and you would become equal to them. It says:

"They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike....."

Therefore, they are worse than the ordinary pagans, because those pagans are not the thieve and robbers of others' Faith, while these hypocrites are, and they, as a habitual manner, ceaselessly try to spoil the creeds of others.

Now that they are like that, it says:

"...therefore do not take from among them friends..."

This is a frame, unless they reform their affairs and stop hypocrisy and destruction. The sign of this status is that you see they migrate from the centre of infidelity and hypocrisy to the camp of Islam in the way of Allah. It says:

"...until they migrate in Allah's way..."

But if they do not try to migrate, you should know that they have not abandoned their infidelity and hypocrisy. So, their expression of Islam is only for the purpose of spying and destruction. In this case, wherever you find them, you can capture them, or, if necessary, slay them. It says:

"...But if they turn back (to infidelity), then seize them and slay them wherever you find them....."

Then, at the end of the verse, it emphasizes again that you should never take friends from among them. It says:

"...and do not take from among them a friend or a helper."

Except this intensity of action, there is no other way to save an alive society, which is going forth alongside an improving revolutionary path, from the clutches of some seeming-friend enemies and dangerous spies.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 90

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىَ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَآؤُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَن
ُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ ُقَاتِلُواْ قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاء الله لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتَلُوكُمْ فَإِنِ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ ُقَاتِلُوكُمْ
وَأَلْقَوْاْ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ فَمَا جَعَلَ الله لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلاً

90. "Except those (hypocrites) who join a people between whom and you is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allah had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they should have certainly fought you. Therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

In the previous verse, the intensive action and slaying the hypocrites who assist infidels were referred to. In this verse two groups are exempted from them.

Military treaties, even with hostile infidels, and also international agreements should be respected at the time of peace.

"Except those (hypocrites) who join a people between whom and you is a covenant..."

And, in fighting, do not invade those who announce impartiality:

"... or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people..."

And respect the peaceful motives and offers of stopping fire that you receive, since, in Islam, the principle is based on peace, and fight is for an exceptional case.

"...Therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

You should be attentive to the Power of Allah in order that you do not encounter with pride, and your sentiments be adjusted both.

"...and if Allah had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they should have certainly fought you. ..."

Muslims should be so powerful that their opponents even do not think of attacking them. That is why only the suggestion of peace is enough. To be certain, abandoning war and inspiring peace are necessary.

"... and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 91

سَتَجِدُونَ آخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُواْ قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّ مَا رُدُّوَاْ إِلَى الْفِتْنِةِ أُرْكِسُواْ فِيهَا
فَإِن لَّمْ َعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُواْ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ وَيَكُفوَاْ أَيْدِ َهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثِقِفْتُمُوهُمْ
وَأُوْلَـئِكُمْ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مبِينًا

91. "You will find soon others who desire to be secure from you, and secure from their own people. So often as they are returned to mischief (of idolatry) they get thrown into it. Thereafter, if they do not withdraw from you, and do not offer you peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them and against these We have given you a clear authority."

In order to save their lives, a group of the citizens of Mecca came to the holy Prophet (S) and hypocritically stated that they had become Muslims. But when they returned to their own city, they continued idol worshipping so that they would not encounter with the tortures of the disbelievers.

By that way, they could enjoy both parties and would be safe from the danger of both sides. Their tendency, of course, was actually rather more towards infidelity.

Thus, Muslims should know their different kinds of enemies and treat each of them appropriately while they would not trust the statement of them.

An Islamic government has authority and master ship in suppressing the vicious hypocrites, and clearing the society of them.

"...and against these We have given you a clear authority."

Yet, the intensive and suppressive punishment is specific to those hypocrites who have activities to destroy the Islamic government.

"...and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them..."

Section 13: Murder and its punishment

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 92

Murder of a believer unintentional or intentional - treating one as an enemy - not to say any one who offers peace that he is not a believer:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلاَّ خَطَئًا وَمَن قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَئًا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ إِلاَّ أَن يَصَّدَّقُواْ فَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مؤْمِنَةً فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللّه وَكَانَ الله عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

92. "And it is not for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake, and whoever kills a believer by mistake must set free a believing slave, and pay the blood-money to the family of the slain unless they remit it as a freewill offering. But if he (the slain) is from a tribe hostile unto you, and he is a believer, then (the penance is) to set free a believing slave. And if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is a covenant. Then the blood-money must be paid to his family and (also) a believing slave must be set free. But he who finds not (the means) should fast two months consecutively. (This is) a penance from Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Occasion of Revelation

One of the idolaters of Mecca called Harith-ibn- Yazid, assisted by 'Abujahl, had seriously been torturing a Muslim believer named 'Ayyash-ibn-' Abi- Rabi'ah for the guilt of believing in Islam for a length of time. After immigrating Muslims to Medina, 'Ayyash emigrated to Medina, too.

It happened that one day he occasionally met his torturer in one of the quarters of the suburbs of Medina. Availing himself of the opportunity, he killed him.

He thought he had slain an enemy of Islam while Harith, who was going toward the Prophet (S) at that moment, had repented and embraced Islam. The circumstance was reported to the holy Prophet (S) when the verse was revealed and stated the ordinance of the slaughter which had been done by mistake.

Some Ordinances upon Manslaughter

Since the previous verses contained a kind of freedom given to the Muslims to destroy the hypocrites and the dangerous interior enemies, in this verse and the following one, the ordinances of manslaughter and intentional murder have been stated in order that lest some people misuse this law and, under the pretext of being hypocrite, take vengeance upon those with whom they have enmity. At first, it says:

"And it is not for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake....."

Then, it has stated the forfeit and expiation of manslaughter in three processes:

The first status is that the person, who has been slain, belongs to a Muslim family. In this case, the man-slayer should do two duties: 1) He

should set free a believing slave, 2) and pay the blood-money to the owners of the blood. The holy verse says:

"... and whoever kills a believer by mistake must set free a believing slave, and pay the blood-money to the family of the slain..."

It should be done unless the family members of the slain remit it. It says:

"…unless they remit it as a freewill offering…."

The second status is that the believing slain belongs to a family who are the enemies of the Muslims. In this case, the expiation of manslaughter is only setting free a believing Muslim slave. It says:

"…But if he (the slain) is from a tribe hostile unto you, and he is a believer, then (the penance is) to set free a believing slave…"

It is not necessary to pay blood-money to a group that strengthening whose financial structure may be counted as a danger for the Muslims. Besides, Islam has ceased the relation of this person with his family, who are totally enemies of Islam. Thus, there is no room for indemnification.

The third status is that the members of the family of the slain are among the pagans who have covenant with the Muslims. In this case, to respect the covenant, besides setting free a believing Muslim slave, the blood-money of the slain must be paid to his family members.

The verse says:

"..And if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is a covenant, then the blood-money must be paid to his family and (also) a believing slave must be set free…."

It seems here that the objective meaning of 'slain' is 'a believing slain'. And, at the end of the verse, the speech is about those who have not any chance to set a slave free. That is, either they are not financially able, or there is not any slave found to be set free. It says:

"…..But he who finds not (the means) should fast two months consecutively….."

And, it adds that this change of setting free a slave into two months of fasting is a kind of discount and penance from Allah, and Allah is always aware of all things, and all His commands are based on Wisdom.

"… (This is) a penance from Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 93

وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا متعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ الله عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

93. "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell wherein shall he abide forever, and Allah's wrath shall be on him and He curses him and prepares for him a mighty punishment."

In hard circumstances of the Battle of 'Uhud, one of the Muslims killed another Muslim because of their personal hostilities from the Age of Ignorance The holy Prophet (S) was informed of it by the way of revelation.

Then, when he was returning back from 'Uhud, at the region of Quba he commanded for the retaliation of a believer's murder. He (S) said that

the murderer should be killed and be paid no attention to his regret. (Maqazi, Vol. 1, P. 304)

Islam has considered the life of a Muslim, and the protection of the security of the lives of people, very important. It has assigned an eternal retribution for it in order that slaying, and heavy crimes, be hindered. The expression which has been used for the wilful murder of a believer in this verse is not seen upon any other crimes.

Explanations

In Islamic system, no authority is allowed to kill or hang others unreasonably.

Therefore, in Islam, in addition to the execution of retaliation which is a worldly punishment, there are cited four other worldly serious penalties upon the murderer of a wilful murder in the Hereafter.

1) Upon the recompense of such a murderer, the verse, says.

"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell wherein shall he abide forever….."

2) And such a person incurs Allah's wrath. It says:

"...and Allah's wrath shall be on him..."

3) And also, He repels him for His Grace.

"...and he curses him... "

4) And He has prepared a great chastisement for him.

"...and prepares for him a mighty punishment."

Deliberate murder is one of the greatest crimes and the most dangerous sins which destroy entirely the security of the society, the most important condition of a safe and sound society, if it might not be controlled.

Therefore, the Qur'an introduces the unreasonable murder of a person like slaying all the human-kind in the world. So, if a person kills another human being without that the slain be a murderer or a mischief monger on the earth, it seems he has killed all human-kind.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 94

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُواْ وَلاَ تَقُولُواْ لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلاَمَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللّهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

94. "O you who have Faith! When you go forth (to fight) in the way of Allah, make investigation, and do not say to the one who offers you peace: 'You are not a believer,' seeking the goods of this world's life! But, with Allah are abundant spoils. You, too, were such before, then Allah conferred (His) grace on you; therefore make investigation. Verily Allah is aware of what you do.!

Occasion of Revelation

It has been recorded that, after returning from the Battle of Kheybar, the holy Prophet (S) sent 'Asamah-ibn-Ziyd, accompanied with some Muslims, toward the Jews who were living in a village in the region of Fadak in order to invite them either to Islam or to submitting to the conditions of protective covenant.

One of the Jews named 'Murdas' who had been informed of the movement of the forces of Islam toward that place, hasted forth to receive the Muslims while he was shouting confessing the Unity of Allah and the prophet hood of the Messenger (S).

'Asamah-ibn-Ziyd thought that the Jewish man was confessing Islam for the fear of his life and for the protection of his wealth, and he was not really a Muslim. Then he attacked him and killed him.

When the news of it reached the Prophet (S), he became very inconvenient of it and told 'Asamah that he had killed a Muslim. 'Asamah felt sad and said that that man confessed Islam for the fear of his life and for the protection of his wealth.

The Prophet (S) told him that he ('Asamah) did not know his inside intention. He (the Jew) might become truly a Muslim. At that moment the verse was revealed.

There is a precautious instruction mentioned in this verse in order to protect the life of the sinless persons who may be only wrongly accused. The verse says:

"O you who have Faith! When you go forth (to fight) in the way of Allah, make investigation, and do not say to the one who offers you peace: 'You are not a believer,'..."

Then it adds that you should be aware not to accuse some person who express Islam as the enemies of Muslims and not to kill them for the sake of some fleeting bounties of this world and taking their properties if the form of booties. It says:

"...seeking the goods of this world's life....."

Avoid it when the eternal worthy spoils are with Allah. It says:

"... But, with Allah are abundant spoils..."

Yes, in the past, the situation was like that and at the Age of Ignorance, they had the motive of plunder.

"...You, too, were such before....."

But, now, under the light of Islam and for that Allah has conferred His grace on you and relieved you from that status, you should be grateful for this bounty and it is to you to investigate in affairs. It says:

"…therefore make investigation…"

And do know that Allah is aware of your deeds and intentions.

"...Verily Allah is aware of what you do."

Struggle is a general rule in the world of creation. All creatures the world, irrespective of plants and animals, remove their barriers from their way by struggle, so that they can reach the virtues of their own ideals.

It should be noted, of course, that in addition to the defensive, an sometimes attacking, wars, 'Jihad' (Struggle) envelops the scientific, economic, cultural and political struggles, too.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 95

لاَّ يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُوْلِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ الله الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُـلاًّ وَعَدَ الله الْحُسْنَى وَفَضَّلَ الله الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

95. "Such believers, who sit still, not having any injury, are not equal with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has raised the strivers with their wealth and lives in rank above those sitting back; and to each (class) Allah has promised good, but He has bestowed a great reward on the strivers above those sitting back."

The words in the, previous verses were upon struggle. So, in this verse, there is a comparison between the strivers and non-strivers. The holy verse says:

"Such believers who sit still, not having any injury, are not equal with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and their lives."

Then, it has expressed again the superiority of the strivers more clearly and more manifestly. It says:

"...Allah has raised the strivers with their wealth and lives in rank above those sitting back..."

But, comparing these strivers with those for whom struggle is not an individual duty, and that they are not able to take part in the battle because of illness or weakness or other acceptable causes which hinder them to participate in the holy struggle, this group are also promised good.

This is for the reason that the reward of their righteous intention, faith, and other deeds would not be ignored. So, it says:

"...and to each (class) Allah has promised good...."

Yet, in view of the fact that in the logic of Islam the importance of struggle is even more than this, it refers to the strivers again and emphasizes that:

"...but He has bestowed a great reward on the strivers above those sitting back."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 96

دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ الله غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

96. "(Strivers will have) degrees (of rank) from Him, and forgiveness and Mercy, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

That great reward mentioned in the previous verse, has been rendered into these merits announced in this verse. They are: magnificent degrees of rank from Allah and His Forgiveness and Mercy. It says:

"(Strivers will have) degrees (of rank) from Him, and forgiveness and Mercy....."

And, at the end of the verse, it implies that, in the mid time, if there are some persons who have committed some faults, when doing their own duties, and they have felt sorry about what wrong they have done, Allah has promised them forgiveness, too, since the verse says:

"...and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Section 14: Believers remaining with the enemy

Too weak to fly to their homes - those who fly to their homes not to fear strait ness:

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 97

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُواْ فِيمَ كُنتُمْ قَالُواْ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ قَالْوَاْ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُواْ فِيهَا فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءتْ مَصِيرًا

97. "Verily (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their own selves, they (the angels) will ask: 'In what state were you?' They will reply: 'We were oppressed in the land'. (The angels) will say: 'Was not Allah's land vast so that you could have migrated therein?' So these (are those) whose abide is Hell, and an evil destination it is! "

Before the occurrence of the Battle of Badr, the pagans of Mecca called the citizens of Mecca to fight against the Muslims. They ordered that all men should participate in the war.

They threatened people that the houses of those who might offend the issue would be ruined and their property could be confiscated. Some of the Muslims, who were still living in Mecca and had not immigrated to Medina, for the fear of their lives, accompanied the pagans in the war against the Muslims in the Battle of Badr, where they were killed.

The verse was revealed and counted guilty those who did not migrate and stayed in the environment of infidelity. The verse blamed them because they had wronged against themselves. Thus, it is obligatory to migrate from the centre of infidelity, and staying there to be a multitude of the soldiers of disbelievers, is unlawful.

If you can change the circumstances of the environment, do it, else you should migrate from there in order not to be called to account, because justification of faults will not be accepted.

"...We were oppressed ..."

We should know that the principle is the goal and belief, not the life and the house. Or, in other words, we must be careful that theism is the principle, not patriotism.

By the way, according to the Islamic literature, an oppressed person is he who cannot recognize the path of responsibility and the difference between right and wrong. [1]

Some Islamic traditions denote that he who migrates a distance, even as long as a span, in order to protect the religion, will be admitted to Heaven and will be companion of the holy Prophet (S) and Abraham (as). [2]

"Verily (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their own selves, they (the angels) will ask: 'In what state were you?' They will reply: 'We were oppressed in the land'. (The angels) will say: 'Was not Allah's land vast so that you could have migrated therein?' So these (are those) whose abide is Hell, and an evil destination it is! "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 98

إِلاَّ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاء وَالْوِلْدَانِ لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلاَ يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلاً

98. "Except the feeble among the men, women, and children, who neither have in their power the means nor do they know any way."

Those who know the truth and are able to move around and change the environment are not among the oppressed. These persons have not any excuse for the abandonment of emigration.

Then, those who have neither any device to ward off infidelity nor any way toward the right, are the oppressed nor such people have no religious oblation. (A tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as), cited in Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p.454.)

However, the real apologies are accepted, but seeking excuses are not.

"Except the feeble among the men, women, and children, who neither have in their power the means nor do they know any way."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 99

فَأُوْلَـئِكَ عَسَى الله أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ الله عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا

99. "So, perhaps, Allah will pardon them and Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving."

In this verse, the Qur'an implies that these people may receive the forgiveness of Allah, because He (s.w.t.) has always been pardoning and forgiving the servants.

"So, perhaps, Allah will pardon them and Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 100

وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُرَاغَمًا كَثِيراً وَسَعَةً وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِن بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلى اللّهِ وَكَانَ الله غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

100. "And whoever migrates in Allah's way, finds much refuge and abundance in the earth, and whoever goes forth from his house migrating unto Allah and His Messenger and death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with Allah and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of Revelation

It happened that one of the Muslims, who was living in Mecca, became sick. He asked to be taken out of Mecca in order to be counted as emigrants. As soon as he was taken out of the city, he died in the way. Then, this verse was revealed.

Emigration, an Islamic Constructive Instruction

Following the discussion about emigration and those who, as a result of some shortcoming in doing the duty of emigration, yield to any kind of a basement and humiliation, in this verse, the words are earnestly stated upon the quality of emigration.

The subject of emigration has been discussed from two points of view. At first, it has pointed to the good results and effects of emigration in the life of godly people in this world. It says that those who emigrate in the vast land of Allah (s.w.t.), in the way of Allah (s.w.t.), and for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.), will find many secure and bountiful sites. The verse says:

"And whoever migrates in Allah's way, finds much refuge and abundance in the earth…"

Then, it pays to the spiritual aspect of emigration; and points to this fact that if some ones get out of their houses and leave their home with the intention of emigration towards Allah (s.w.t.), and His Apostle, and die before reaching their destination, their reward is with Allah (s.w.t.), and He, the Forgiving, the Merciful, will forgive their faults.

"... and whoever goes forth from his house migrating unto Allah and His Messenger and death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with Allah and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Thus, the emigrants are victorious in both cases.

It is interesting that emigration, not for self protection but for preserving Islam, is an origin of date for Muslims. It forms the foundation of our political, social and propagative events totally. And, in any time and any place, if the same conditions come forth, Muslims are ordained to emigrate.

Notes

1. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 153.
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn. vol. 1, p. 541.

Section 15: To cut short prayer while travelling

Shortening of the Daily prayers while in travel -Prayer while in the battle.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 101

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَقْصُرُواْ مِنَ الصَّلاَةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَن
يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُواْ لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مبِينًا

101. "And when you are journeying in the land, it is not sin for you that you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve afflict you. Verily, the infidels are your manifest enemy."

Next to the former discussion upon Holy struggle and Emigration, the holy Qur'an refers to the subject of a Muslim's prayer when the one is in Journey.

The Qur'anic phrase / darabtum-fil-'ard / ' you go from one place to another', is an implicit declaration of travelling, because a traveller pounds the land under his feet. (This meaning is narrated from Mufrad'at Raqib, an Arabic dictionary)

The Qur'an sometimes applies the sense of 'it is not sin for you' instead of 'obligation '. This verse contains this sense, too.

Curtail worship has not been specified to the aspects of fear alone, but since there is usually fear when a person travels, the phrase 'if you fear' has been mentioned in the verse. Or, since at first the law of curtail worship had been ordained for the circumstances of fear and, afterward, it has been generalized upon every journey, this phrase (if you fear) has been applied here.

Explanations

1. Establishing prayers can never be stopped, but it can have alleviation.
2. Seeing the truth and flexibility is a principle in the Divine law.
3. We should not be inattentive of the enemy even while we are establishing prayers. Policy and religiosity, worship and intelligence are not separate from each other. Our hands should be busy both for prayers and for weapon.
4. Infidelity and faith are in contrast with each other.

"...Verily the infidels are your manifest enemy."

5. It seems that all disbelievers are considered as one force in hostility against you. That is why the Arabic word / 'aduww / 'enemy', mentioned in the verse, is used in the singular form, not in the plural form.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 102

وَإِذَا كُنتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلاَةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُم مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُواْ أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا
سَجَدُواْ فَلْيَكُونُواْ مِن وَرَآئِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَآئِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلواْ فَلْيُصَلواْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُواْ حِذْرَهُمْ
وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُم مَّيْلَةً
وَاحِدَةً وَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِّن مَّطَرٍ أَوْ كُنتُم مَّرْضَى أَن تَضَعُواْ أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ
وَخُذُواْ حِذْرَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مهِينًا

102. "And when you are among them (Muslim forces) and keep up the prayer for them, then let a party of them stand up (in prayer) with you, carrying their arms. Then when they have performed (their) prostrations, let them (continue the second unit solitarily and) take their precaution in your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come and pray with you (from the second unit), and let them take their precautions and their arms; (for) those who disbelieve desire that you should be heedless of your weapons and your baggage, then they would attack you all at once. And it is no sin for you to lay down your arms if you are annoyed with rain or if you are sick, but take your precautions. Verily Allah has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the infidels."

In the sixth year AH the holy Prophet (S), accompanied some believers, set out towards Mecca. On the way, when they reached the region of Hudaybiyyah, they encountered with Khalid-ibn-Walid supported by two hundred men who had sheltered thereabout and were waiting for hindering the Prophet (S) from arriving in Mecca when Bilal said the prayer call and the prayer was established. Khalid-ibn-Walid devised to profit by the time when all Muslims were busy establishing the evening prayer and to attack them at a single instance.

The verse was revealed and informed the Prophet (S) of the plot. So, seeing that miracle appeared through divine revelation, Khalid embraced Islam.

In this prayer, after performing the first unit of prayer, the first group stand up and complete the rest of the prayer, but the prayer leader waits a little so that the other group may come and join the second unit of the prayer carrying their weapons.

"And when you are among them (Muslim forces) and keep up the prayer for them, then let a party of them stand up (in prayer) with you, carrying their arms. Then when they have performed (their) prostrations, let them (continue the second unit solitarily and) take their precaution in your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come and pray with you (from the second unit), and let them take their precautions and their arms; (for) those who disbelieve desire that you should be heedless of your weapons and your baggage, then they would attack you all at once…."

Thus, in no condition prayer can be dropped and never a striver is without establishing prayer. There must be weapon in one hand and spirituality in the other.

For the importance of the congregation prayer mentioning only this fact is enough that, when facing the enemy in the battle-field, even one unit of the prayer is to be established either.

It should also be noticed that when two duties come forth with together (i.e. holy struggle and prayer) one must not be sacrificed for the other.

By the way, self-consciousness is always necessary. Even at the time of establishing prayer, Muslims should not be neglectful of the danger of the enemy. So, in no circumstances a striver must be in distance with the protective means. (If he has not any weapon, he should wear armour). It is for the caution that if the enemy attacks he can protect himself until the help comes.

"…but take your precautions."

Yet, since there may necessarily come forth some occasions that it is difficult to carry both the weapons and the protective means with together; when keeping up the prayers, at the end of the above mentioned verse it ordains such:

"… And it is no sin for you to lay down your arms if you are annoyed with rain or if you are sick…"

You should follow acting these instructions and be assured that victory is with you, because:

"…Verily Allah has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the infidels."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 103

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلاَةَ فَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنتُمْ فَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ إِنَّ الصَّلاَةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا

103. "Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining. Then, when you are secure, (from danger) establish the prayer (as usual). Verily the prayer, at fixed times has been enjoined upon the believers."

The Importance of Prayers, a Commandment!

Following the instruction of 'prayer of fear' mentioned in the previous verse, and the necessity of establishing prayer even while you are fighting, it continues saying in this verse:

"Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining. ..."

The purpose of the phrase: 'remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining' may have been the same different warfare positions in which soldiers sometimes use the various weapons designed for wars including the means of shooting. ,

Another attitude indicates that the purpose of this phrase is that in 4 all conditions including: standing, sitting and reclining, whether you are healthy or sick, and even when you are struggling against the enemy, remember Allah. [1]

In fact, the above-mentioned verse is a hint to an Islamic important instruction which denotes that: establishing prayers at the appointed times do not mean that a person neglects the remembrance of Allah in other times.

Then the Qur'an informs us that the instruction for the 'prayer of fear' is an exceptional commandment, and as soon as the condition of fear removes the circumstance will be as follows:

"…Then, when you are secure (from danger) establish the prayer (as usual)…"

The secret of all these instructions and recommendations is for the fact that prayer is one of the Divine certain obligations which is enjoined for all dynasties and in all times, because it is not separated from Faith.

However, according to some Islamic traditions, the Arabic word /mauqut/, mentioned in the holy verse, has been rendered into 'a fixed obligatory at an appointed time'. [2]

"….Verily the prayer at fixed times has been enjoined upon the believer."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 104

وَلاَ تَهِنُواْ فِي ابْتِغَاء الْقَوْمِ إِن تَكُونُواْ تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللّه مَا لاَ يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ الله عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

104. "And do not flag in pursuit of the enemy. If you suffer pain, then they also suffer, in as you suffer. But you hope from Allah what they do not hope. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. "

The Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Ibn Abbas that after the painful events of the Battle of 'Uhud, the holy Prophet (S) stood upon Mount Uhud when Abu Sufyan shouted with a victorious tone; "O' Muhammad! One day we won, but another day!" That is, this very victory that we have is instead of that defeat we suffered in the Battle of Badr." The Prophet (S) told the Muslims to answer him immediately, and they said:

"Never is our situation like yours. Our martyrs are in heaven while your slains are in Hell."

Abusufyan shouted: "We have Al-'Uzza, but you have not it." The Prophet (S) told Muslims to reply that slogan by saying:

"Allah is our guardian but you have no guardian."

Abusufyan, who felt himself weak before that lively Islamic motto, left out the idol 'Uzza and attached the idol called Hubal. He cried: "High be Hubal!"

The Prophet (S) commanded Muslims to condemn the motto of the Age of Ignorance with a stronger and better motto. They would say:

"Allah is the Higher and the Exalted."

Abusufyan, who made no gain from his own different mottoes, cried: "Our trysting-place is the region of Badr-i-Suqra."

Muslims returned from the battle-field while they were seriously annoyed of the painful events in 'Uhud. At that time the verse was revealed and warned them not to flag in pursuit of the pagans, and not to be annoyed of those painful events.

This occasion of revelation teaches us that Muslims should not be neglectful of none of the enemy's styles. They should apply some stronger logics before the logic of the enemies, and some better weapons against their weapons, else, the circumstances may change for the benefit of the enemy.

Therefore, in any time, like our time, instead of regret for the painful events and terrible corruptions that have surrounded Muslims from every side, they should actively set forth and produce some sound and useful books and publications in front of the enemies' evil books and publications.

They should utilize the best and modern propaganda means of the time against the enemy's equipped means of propaganda. To stand against the designs, philosophies, and doctrines that different political, economical and social schools introduce, Muslims must offer the inclusive Islamic designs

to all human kind. It is only by this method that they can protect their being and live as a progressive group in the world.

Following the verses concerning the Holy struggle and migration, to stir the spirit of self-sacrifice in Muslims, this verse says:

"And do not flag in pursuit of the enemy..."

This statement is a hint to the fact that to stand against the arrogant enemy, you should preserve the spirit of attack in yourselves, because, psychologically it has an extraordinary effect in knocking down the spirit of the enemy.

Then, it states a clear and living reasoning for this commandment, and says why you may linger while:

"... If you suffer pain, then they also suffer pain as you suffer. But you hope from Allah what they do not hope..."

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an emphasizes more and implies that all these annoyances, injuries, efforts and endeavours, and, perhaps, indulgences and negligence are not hidden from the knowledge of Allah. It says:

"... And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Thus, you will see the result of all of them.

Notes

1. Makhzan-ul-'lrfan, vol. 2, p. 150 & Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 413.
2. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 412 and some other commendations.

Section 16: Not to side the dishonest

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 105

Not to take up the cause of the dishonest -the Apostle may pray for his followers-Forgiveness of Allah always there is for those who seek it after evil with the necessary amendment.

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ الله وَلاَ تَكُن لِّلْخَآئِنِينَ خَصِيمًا

105. "Verily We have sent down the Book to you with that you may judge between people by what Allah has shown (taught) you. And be not an advocate for the treacherous."

Basing on what is recorded in some authentic commentary books, once it happened that, in one of the battles, a Muslim stole a chain mail.

When he was going to be marked by ignominy, he threw the chain mail into the house of a Jew, and then gathered some men saying that the Jewish person was a thief, not that Muslim. The subject was brought to the Prophet (S) and the verse was revealed, announcing such:

"Verily We have sent down the Book to you with the Truth that you may judge between people by what Allah has shown (taught) you..."

In this verse, at first Allah recommends the Prophet (S) that the purpose of sending down this heavenly Book is that these rules of the truth and equity should be practiced among people. It says:

"Verily We have sent down the Book to you with the Truth that you may judge between people by what Allah has shown (taught) you. ..."

Then, it awares the Prophet (S) by saying that:

"... And be not an advocate for the treacherous."

It is cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan (vol. 6, p. 32 Persian translation) that although this verse addresses the Prophet (S), the target is the Ummat of the Prophet (S) not the Prophet himself, because, upon the consensus of Ummat, the Prophet (S) is immaculate from all sins and disgraces.

Therefore, since the revelation of the Qur'an is based on the truth, the judgements should be performed upon the basis of the truth, too, not upon the relations. Thus, in Islam, treating on justice is also necessary even towards a non-Muslim person, (regarding to the occasion of revelation of the verse).

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 106

وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّه إِنَّ اللَّه كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

106. "And seek forgiveness of Allah. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this holy verse, the Prophet (S) is commanded that he seeks the forgiveness of Allah, for certainly Allah (s.w.t.) is forgiving and l merciful.

Yet, as it was mentioned in the commentary of the previous verse, cited by the author of Majma'-ul-Bayan, that the verse was addressing the Prophet's Ummat, here, too, it means to seek forgiveness for the Ummat, and we know that the Prophet (S) is free from any fault. The verse says:

"And seek forgiveness of Allah. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 107

وَلاَ تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبّ مَن كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا

107. "And do not plead on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Verily Allah does not love any who is treacherous, sinful."

The leaders of Islam and Muslims ought to find the treacherous ones and know their plans, so that they can decide on a suitable situation for themselves. However, injustice and treachery unto people is doing wrong to oneself.

Treachery pollutes the society and this social pollution reaches ourselves. Then, pleading a treacherous person is unlawful, and it is considered as participating in the crime and being content with the treachery.

"And do not plead on behalf of those who deceive themselves..."

We should know, of course, that the state of the slight treacheries, which are done unknowingly and gullibly, is different from the state of the treachery of the mischievous conspirators. (The Arabic words / yakhtanun/ (those who deceive), /khawwan/ (treacherous), and /'asima/ (sinful) indicate to a state of permanent treachery.) Then in this verse, it says:

"... Verily Allah does not love any who is treacherous, sinful."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 108

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلاَ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لاَ يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ اللهِ بِمَا َعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا

108. "They (the treacherous) hide from people but they hide not from Allah; while He is with them when they hold nightly discourses that do not please Him. And Allah encompasses what they do."

Allah (s.w.t.) blames the treacherous ones in this verse. The verse says they shrink from people that the inward of their deeds be manifested, but they are not ashamed of Allah!

"They (the treacherous) hide from people but they hide not from Allah..."

Allah, the One Who is Omnipresent, is always with them. So, at that time of night, when they are designing some treacherous plans and saying some words that are displeasing unto Him, He is with them and is aware of whatever they do. It says:

"...while He is with them when they hold nightly discourses that do not please Him. And Allah encompasses what they do."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 109

هَاأَنتُمْ هَـؤُلاء جَادَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا فَمَن يُجَادِلُ اللّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَم مَّن يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلاً

109. "(Suppose that) you pleaded for them in this worldly life, but who will plead for them with Allah on the Day of Resurrection, or who shall be their protector?"

In these three holy verses, the Qur'an gives three warnings to three groups:

It tells the judge not to transgress the bounds of right:

"... That you may judge between people by what Allah has shown (taught) you ..." [1]

It tells the treacherous one that Allah observes his deeds:

"…He is with them…." [2]

In the above verse, it tells the defenders of the treacherous that their efforts will be useless for the Day of Judgement.

"Suppose that) you pleaded for them in this worldly life, but who will plead for them with Allah on the Day of Resurrection.....?"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 110

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

110. "And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his own self; then seeks forgiveness of Allah, shall find Allah Forgiving, Merciful."

The Qur'anic word /su/, in philology, means 'to harm others', too. Thus, the verse refers to both being unjust to people and being cruel to oneself.

"And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his own self..."

The previous verse, criticized the treacherous and protection of the treacherous. Here, in this verse, it states the way of rescue from it. The Qur'an says that gate of the path of return is open to the wrong doers. Now, it is they who should decide and return from doing sin and repent. It says:

"….then seeks forgiveness of Allah, shall find Allah Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 111

وَمَن يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَكَانَ الله عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

111. "And whoever commits a sin, indeed he commits it only against his own self and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Sin, which is a transgression against the bound of Divine law, destroys the inner purity, virtue of the spirit, and justice; and this very effect is the greatest damage. In the system of existence and also in Allah's way of treatment, the result of injustice toward people, soon or late, reaches to our own selves.

"And whoever commits a sin, indeed he commits it only against his own self…."

And, at the end of the verse, it implies that the Lord is both All-Knowing, and is aware of all the deeds of the servants, and is All-Wise, and punishes every wrong doer fitting with whatever the one deserves. It says:

"... and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 112

وَمَن يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مبِينًا

112. "And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it an innocent, he indeed burdens (himself) with the calumny and a manifest sin."

This verse has pointed to the importance of committing the sin of calumny upon some innocent people. It says:

"And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it an innocent, he indeed burdens (himself) with the calumny and a manifest sin."

Calumny is a Crime

To denigrate an innocent is one of the most disgraceful actions that Islam has seriously condemned.

It has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said: "The one who slander a believing man or woman, or says something about them which is not in him (her), on the Day of Resurrection Allah sets the one on a heap of fire until he (she) comes out (of the responsibility) of what the one has said." [3]

Indeed, making current this unjust manner as a custom in a society causes to disturb the order and probity of that society, to pollute the truth unto untruth, the innocent be involved into difficulty and the sinner be saved, and the common confidence be vanished.

Notes

1. Verse No. 105 of the current Surah.
2. Verse No. 108 of the current Surah.
3. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 111

Section 17: Secret counsels of the Hypocrites

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 113

Endeavours of the Hypocrites to destroy the Muslims - secret plots of the Hypocrites- Plots against the Apostle doomed to failure:

وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللّه عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّت طَّآئِفَةٌ منْهُمْ أَن يُضِلوكَ وَمَا يُضِلونَ إِلا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرونَكَ مِن شَيْءٍ وَأَنزَلَ الله عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللّه عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

113. "And had it not been Allah's grace on you and His Mercy, a party of them had certainly resolved to lead you astray, but they do not lead astray but their own selves, and they shall not harm you at all. And Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and great is Allah's grace on you."

In some preceding verses, (verse 105), a part of the event of the tribe called Bani-Abiraq was explained. Now, in this verse, another part of that event is referred to. The verse says:

"And had it not been Allah's grace on you and His Mercy, a party of them had certainly resolved to lead you astray...."

By accusing an innocent person and then involving the Prophet (S) in this event, they wanted both to defame the social and spiritual personality of the Prophet (S), and to fulfil their own evil intentions upon an innocent Muslim. But, the Lord, who is the protector of His Messenger, obliterated their plans totally.

Then, the Qur'an says:

"... but they do not lead astray but their own selves and they shall not harm you at all..."

Finally, the Qur'an states the reason of immunity of the Prophet (S) from fault, such:

"... And Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know....."

And, it concludes the verse by saying:

"...and great if Allah's grace on you."

In the above-mentioned sentence, one of the basic reasons of the subject of inerrancy is shortly pointed out. It implies that Allah has taught the Prophet (S) some knowledge and science that he is saved from any fault and mistake, because knowledge and sciences, especially the knowledge of hidden things and unknown secrets, (in final stage) are the causes of light and inerrancy.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 114

لاَّ خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلاَحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتَغَاء مَرْضَاتِ اللّه فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

114. "There is no good in most of their secret conferences, except for him who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this, seeking Allah's pleasure, We will give him a great reward."

In the former verses, there was a hint to the mischievous hidden nightly meetings of some hypocrites or the like of them. In this holy verse, the subject is discussed more detailed under the title of 'secret conference'.

The Arabic term /najwa/ 'conspiring whisper', does not mean only: 'the secret whispered words'. It includes any secret and hidden meetings, too.

The holy verse denotes that: there is no goodness in their most private meetings which such people hold secretly, and they are based on some evil plans. It says:

"There is no good in most of their secret conferences....."

Then, in order that it might not be thought that any conspiring and whisper, or secret meeting, is blameworthy and prohibited, a few instances are mentioned at the end of this very verse in the form of exceptions. It says:

"... Except for him who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people....."

If such conspiring may not be for pretence or dealing hypocrisy but for the purpose of obtaining the pleasure of Allah, the Lord will assign a great recompense for them. The verse says:

"...and whoever does this, seeking Allah's pleasure, We will give him a great reward."

In principle, conspiring and secret whispering, or holding hidden meetings have been introduced in the Qur'an as' Satanic work '. Surah Mujadelah No. 58, verse 10 says:

"Secret counsels are only (the work) of Satan..."

Essentially, if secret conspiring is performed at the presence of a crowd, it may raise the suspicion of men. It can even sometimes create mistrust between friends. That is why it is better not to apply this manner except for the necessary aspects. The philosophy of this ordinance in the Qur'an may also be the very fact.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 115

وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَى وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّى وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءتْ مَصِيرًا

115. "And whoever opposes the Messenger after the guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, him We shall turn over to what he has turned to, and We shall expose him to Hell, and an evil destination it is!"

The Arabic term /musaqqah/ means that you put yourself one side and the holy Prophet (S) another side and begin hindering the affairs, and showing hostility by intentional opposition.

Therefore, after the truth being manifest to a person, it is obligatory for the one to obey the Messenger of Allah, and, evidently, opposing him (S) is unlawful.

"And whoever opposes the Messenger after the guidance has become manifest to him.... "

However, the Lord does not punish anyone by taking him into Hell without completing the argument.

"... after the guidance has become manifest to him....."

Thus, the result of opposing the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Islamic Ummah is to assume the master ship of other than Allah and falling down into Hell. It says:

"... and follows other than the way of the believers, him We shall turn over to what he has turned to....."

That is, the person follows a way other than the religion of the believing people. In such a case, Allah (s.w.t.) will leave that person to the idols which he relies on and imagines as his shelter and his support in all circumstances.

And, as a recompense of choosing aberration and leaving off the way of guidance, he will be put in Hell to taste his retribution, and it is an evil destination. It says:

"... and We shall expose him to Hell, and an evil destination it is!"

Section 18

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 116

إِنَّ اللَّه لاَ َغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاء وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللّه فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلاَلاً بَعِيدًا

116. "Verily Allah does not forgive that (anything) be associated with Him, but He forgives less than that to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, has gone astray into far error."

Polytheism is an earnest deep disease. Therefore as long as it has not been rooted out in a person, morals and righteous deeds are not spiritually of avail.

Repentance is the remedy of polytheism. So, a polytheist should come out of the circle of paganism in order to be involved in the forgiveness and Mercy of Allah. The ways toward the forgiveness of Allah are: repentance, pardon, good deed, and avoidance of committing great sins.

"Verily Allah does not forgive that (anything) be associated with Him, but He forgives less than that to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, has gone astray into far error."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 117

إِن يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلاَّ إِنَاثًا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ إِلاَّ شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا

117. "They (the pagans) invoke in His stead but female things (the Idols), and they invoke none but Satan, the persistent rebel."

The previous verse considered the polytheists being in aberration. The reason of it is referred to in the above verse.

The pagans of Mecca used to worship some angels whom they called the daughters of God. That idea was a wrong and deluded thought. The verse says:

"They (the pagans) invoke in His stead but female things (the Idols), and they invoke none but Satan, the persistent rebel."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 118

لَّعَنَهُ الله وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

118. "Allah has cursed him (Satan) and he said, most certainly I will take of Your servants an appointed share."

The origin of all adversities and destructiveness of Satan is his being cursed.

"Allah has cursed him (Satan)..."

Satan is the early enemy of man, and it is for this reason that Satan does his utmost possible effort to mislead him. Then, we must be completely aware not to fall into his trap.

"…..and he said, most certainly I will take of Your servants an appointed share."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 119

وَلأُضِلَّنَّهُمْ وَلأُمَنِّيَنَّهُمْ وَلآمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُبَتِّكُنَّ آذَانَ الأَنْعَامِ وَلآمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللّه وَمَن يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّن دُونِ اللّه فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مبِينًا

119. "And most certainly I will lead them astray and certainly I will arouse desires in them, and certainly I will bid them that they slit the ears of the cattle, and I will certainly command them that they alter the creation of Allah; and whoever takes Satan for a guardian rather than Allah, has indeed suffered a manifest loss. "

Satan has sworn to persuade some programs

1. He has said that he would take an appointed share from Allah's servants:

"... and he said, most certainly I will take of Your servants an appointed share..."

Satan knows that he has not the authority of leading all the servants of Allah astray. There are only the persons who indulge in their desires, and the people of weak faith and weak will who submit to Satan.

2. Therefore, the second thing that he has promised to do upon human beings is that he says:

"And most certainly I will lead them astray ..."

3. Then, he says:

"... and certainly I will arouse desires in them...."

4. Satan says that he will invite the servants of Allah to superstitious acts, including the following action:

"... and certainly I will bid them that they slit the ears of the cattle...."

This action refers to one of the disgraceful deeds of the Age of Ignorance. It was customary among the idol worshippers that they would split the ears of some certain cattle, or they cut their ears utterly. They believed that it was forbidden to ride on them and, thus, they took no benefit of them.

5. What Satan says in this stage is an irreparable damage that he causes against the basis of the prosperity of man. Satan says:

"...and I will certainly command them that they alter the creation of Allah..."

This sentence shows that Allah has settled monotheism and any other admirable attributes in the first nature of man, but some Satanic temptations and low desires deviate man from the straight path and lead him astray.

And, at the end of the verse, it refers to a general principle when it says:

"... and whoever takes Satan for a guardian rather than Allah, has indeed suffered a manifest loss."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 120

يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلاَّ غُرُورًا

120. "He promises them and fills them with (vain) desires, and Satan does not promise them except delusion."

When the verse of forgiveness of sins was revealed from the origin of Allah (Surah 'Ale-Imran. No. 3 verse 135), 'Iblis gathered his supporters by

a cry and told them that all their efforts would result no avail when a person repented.

Each one of them said something about it, and one of the Satans said: "Whenever a person decides to repent, I will entangle him with vain desires and promises, so that he delays his repentance. Then, Iblis was contented. [1]

"He promises them and fills them with (vain) desires, and Satan does not promise them except delusion."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 121

أُوْلَـئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلاَ يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا

121. "These are they whose abode is Hell, and they will find no refuge there from."

Hell will be an eternal place for some people and they will remain there forever.

"These are they whose abode is Hell....."

Being attentive to the fact that all misfortunes can, more or less, be avoided of but the punishment of the Hereafter which will be unavoidable, and also that there will be no return in Hereafter. Then, it is better to return from evil actions before passing away.

"... and they will find no refuge there from."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 122

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعْدَ اللّهِ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللّهِ قِيلاً

122. "But (as for) those who believe and do righteous deeds, shortly we will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow. Therein they will abide forever. Allah's promise is the truth, and who is truer of word than Allah? "

We recited in the previous verses that: whoever takes Satan for a guardian rather than Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss; and, Satan promises them and fills them with desires, and Satan does not promise them except delusion. Here, comparing them, the Qur'an states the fate of the believing persons. It says:

"But (as for) those who believe and do righteous deeds, shortly we will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow. ..."

This bounty is not like the fleeting and transitory bounties of this world, but:

"... Therein they will abide forever..."

This promise is not alike with the false promises of Satan, but it is a true promise from the side of Allah:

"…Allah's promise is the truth…."

It is evident that none can be truer in speech than Allah, because breach of promise is either for inability or ignorance or need, all of which are far from His Holy presence. It says:

"... and who is truer of word than Allah?"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 123

لَّيْسَ بِأَمَانِيِّكُمْ وَلا أَمَانِيِّ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَن يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلاَ يَجِدْ لَهُ مِن دُونِ اللّه وَلِيًّا وَلاَ نَصِيرًا

123. "It is not your vain desires, nor the vain desires of the people of the Book. Whoever does evil shall be recompensed for it, and, besides Allah, he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper."

Muslims were proud of the holy Prophet (S) as the seal of the prophets, and that they are the best Ummah (community). The People of the Book boasted of their background, too. They said that they would not remain in Hell Fire but a few days. This verse was revealed to correct the imagination of both groups, and assigned 'the action of a person' as a document.

Therefore, vain imaginations and baseless hopes must be avoided of. It says:

"It is not your vain desires, nor the vain desires of the people of the Book."

Islam is founded on realities, not on untruth, delusions or desires of individuals. (Untruth, originated from anyone and from any school, is condemned to destruction.)

However, Allah is just and His reward or retribution is based upon the 'action' that individuals perform.

"... Whoever does evil shall be recompensed for it, and, besides Allah, he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper. "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 124

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلاَ يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

124. "And whoever does deeds of righteousness, whether male or female, and is a believer, then these shall enter Heaven and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly."

It seems that the Arabic word /naqir/ is taken from the sense of 'pecking', and it is applied for the hole of a date-stone, as if it has been pecked.

In the previous verse the meaning was about 'whoever does evil', and here, in this verse, it is about whoever does deeds of righteousness, the reward or retribution of both is based upon 'deed'.

Thus, the factor of entering into Heaven is 'faith and good deed' not the race or claims or desires (which were mentioned in the previous verse).

All races, colours, nations and classes are equal for enjoying the grace of Allah.

"And whoever does deeds of righteousness ..."

Males and females are equal in reaching the spiritual virtues:

"...whether male or female, and is a believer...."

The reward of a believing good-doer is Heaven; and the righteous deeds are valuable even though they are small.

"... then these shall enter Heaven and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 125

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لله وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ واتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ الله إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلاً

125. "And who is better in religion than the one who surrenders himself entirely to Allah while he is righteous and follows the creed of Abraham, the upright one? And Allah took Abraham as a Friend."

In the verse before this verse, the word was upon the fruit of Faith and deed and it implied that merely belonging to a doctrine or a school of thought has no effect. Yet, in order that no misunderstanding arises from the former discussion, in this verse, the preference of the religion of Islam over all religions has been stated by the following sense:

"And who is better in religion than the one who surrenders himself entirely to Allah while he is righteous and follows the creed of Abraham, the upright one? ..."

In this verse, three things have been considered as the criterion of the best creed:

The first thing is the absolute submission before Allah (s.w.t.). The verse says:

"...the one who surrenders himself entirely to Allah..."

The second thing is righteousness. The purpose of that, here, is doing any righteousness by the heart, the tongue, and action.

"….while he is righteous…"

The third thing is to follow the creed of Abraham, the upright. The verse continues saying:

"... and follows the creed of Abraham, the upright one? ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it reasons its emphasis on the creed of Abraham as follows:

"… And Allah took Abraham as a Friend."

According to the Islamic literature, this rank of Abraham, being chosen as a friend by Allah, was because of his abundant prostrations, feeding the indigent, his midnight prayers, accepting the problems, and his hospitality. [2]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 126

وَلله مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَكَانَ الله بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ محِيطًا

126. "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah encompasses all things."

This verse points to the absolute sovereignty of Allah and His domination over all things. It says:

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah encompasses all things."

It refers to the fact that Allah elected Abraham (as) as His friend, never for the reason of His need to him, because Allah (s.w.t.) is free from any want, but for the virtues and the extraordinary conspicuous attributes that Abraham had.

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 1, P. 464.
2. At-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 417.

Section 19: Dealings with Orphans and Women

Equity to the interest of the orphans and women ordained -Reconciliation between husband and wife -Equity among wives, separation of man and wife - Carefulness about the duties enjoined,

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 127

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاء قُلِ الله ُيُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا ُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي َتَا
النِّسَاء الَّلاتِي لاَ تُؤْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ وَأَن
تَقُومُواْ لِلْيَتَا َ بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا

127. "And they ask you for a pronouncement concerning women. Say: Allah pronounces to you concerning them, and what is recited to you in the Book concerning the orphan women to whom you do not give what is appointed for them, while you desire to marry them, and also (concerning) the oppressed children, and that you should deal towards orphans with equity, and whatever of good you do, verily Allah knows it."

In order to defend the rights of women and saving them, we should always follow the instructions of the heavenly leader.

"And they ask you for a pronouncement ..."

Mentioning the defence of women, children, and orphans beside each other in the Qur'an, is a sign of the existence of transgression against them through the length of the history. The support of Allah from the rights of women is an unchangeable pronouncement of Allah.

And, the responses of the Messenger of Allah are the same as the pronouncement of Allah.

".... Say: Allah pronounces to you concerning them...."

Justly treating the orphans is the best sample of the righteous work.

"…and whatever of good you do…"

The Islamic community should raise for establishing justice among orphans.

"... and that you should deal towards orphans with equity ..."

However, you should know that your services for, and your helps upon, the deprived in the society will not be neglected.

"…..verily Allah knows it'."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 128

وَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِن بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلاَ جُنَاْحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَن يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا
وَالصلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الأَنفُسُ الشحَّ وَإِن تُحْسِنُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

128. "And if a woman fears ill treatment from her husband, or desertion, there is no sin on the couple if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better but avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds, and if you do good and keep from evil, then verily Allah is aware of what you do."

It happened that at the beginning of Islam, a Muslim believer by the name of Rafi'-ibn-Khadij had got two wives. One of them was old and the other was young. He had to divorce the old wife because of some discords that they had.

But before ending the waiting period, he told her that if she desired he could revoke upon condition that she would be patient when he might prefer his young wife, else they should separate after finishing the waiting period. The woman accepted the reconciliation and then this verse was revealed.

The Arabic term /nusuz/ is derived from the root /nasz/ in the sense of: 'an elevated place', which, here, means: 'disobedience'. In verse No.34 from the current Surah, the speech was about the disobedience of the wife, and here the statement is also upon ill treatment.

The Arabic word /Suhh/, when concerning a wife, means: 'avoiding of wearing appropriate clothing and lack of ornamentation'; and when concerning a man, it refers to his avoidance of paying dower sum, necessaries, and the absence of showing affection.

In any case, for the family affairs, the first stage is reconciliation between the couple without the interference of others. If it does not end to peace, others may interfere:

"…if they effect reconciliation between them…"

And it does not matter for a person to remit a right in order to obtain a higher general interest and to make safe the atmosphere in the family.

"….there is no sin…"

The origin of instability in many families is the insularities, envy and avarice that have surrounded human-kind.

"… but avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds...."

Renunciation of man from his venereal desires and being careful of justice between his two wives, are among the examples of piety and kindness. If a man remits his own right, and does good and kindness unto his wife, all of these actions are at the presence of Allah.

"...then verily Allah is aware of what you do."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 129

وَلَن تَسْتَطِيعُواْ أَن تَعْدِلُواْ بَيْنَ النِّسَاء وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلاَ تَمِيلُواْ كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِن تُصْلِحُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

129. "You will never be able to deal equitably between (your) wives, however much you be eager (to do so); then do not incline with a total inclination (to one) so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect reconciliation and keep from evil, then verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Heavenly Law Has no Contradiction with Natural Disposition

It is natural that a man shows more affection to his young wife than his aged wife. That is why the commandment of Justice is only due to the treatment of man unto his wives, not due to his heartily love.

"You will never be able to deal equitably between (your) wives...."

Now that heartily justice is not possible, then, there should be equity in action.

In Islam, there is no duty beyond the ability of a person. A human being is not usually able to adjust affection, but he is able to apply justice in dealing the affairs.

It is unlawful for a man to leave his wife undecided.

"... then do not incline with a total inclination (to (one) so that you leave her as it were in suspense;

Through reconciliation and piety, both the former shortcomings and the unconscious negligence will be forgiven.

"... and if you effect reconciliation and keep from evil, then verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 130

وَإِن يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ الله كُلاًّ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَكَانَ الله وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا

130."Yet if they (should) separate, Allah will enrich each out of His abundance, and Allah is All-Embracing, the Wise."

Next to the former discussion, in this verse it points to this fact that if he continuation of conjugal life is tiresome for the couple and there have come forth some things that the circumstance can never be remediable, they do not have to continue such a marriage and to be prisoner of a bitter family life like that.

They can separate from each other and, without having any fear from their future, they should decide bravely, because in this condition, if they separate, Allah will enrich both of them out of His abundance and Mercy. They can be hopeful to have better spouses and more delightful lives in future.

"Yet if they (should) separate, Allah will enrich each out of His abundance...."

This situation exists, because Allah has a vast inclusive Mercy and abundance, together with Wisdom. It says:

"... and Allah is All-Embracing, the Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 131

وَلله مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُواْ اللّه وَإِن تَكْفُرُواْ فَإِنَّ لِلّه مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَكَانَ الله غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا

131. "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and you (too), that you should be in awe of Allah; and if you disbelieve, then, verily, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

The Holy Qur'anic phrase: "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth...." has occurred two times in this verse and one time in the next verse. This repetition is because of its belief function, in order that we know Allah, the Almighty, is capable in performing His promises in all affairs, and that He enriches the servants (including enriching them in both marriage and divorce).

However, the Power and Sovereignty of Allah is the guarantee of execution for His promises.

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth...."

Allah is Self-Sufficient, and having the possession of what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, He is in need of neither our worship nor our faith.

"…and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

Also, the One Who has Wisdom, Power, and Possession is rightful to have the authority of legislation and recommendation, too.

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and you (too), that you should be in awe of Allah; and if you disbelieve, then, verily, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 132

وَلِلّه مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِالله وَكِيلاً

132. "And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

For the third time, it emphasizes in this verse that:

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth…"

Then, it continues the statement denoting that He himself protects and runs them all. It says:

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 133

إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ َ هَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ وَكَانَ الله عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَدِيرًا

133. "If He pleases, He can remove you, O' people! and bring others; and Allah is powerful over that."

Next to the meaning in the previous verse, it continues to imply that it is no problem for Allah (s.w.t.) that He vanishes you and substitutes you some other people who will be more receptive and more decided in the path of His obedience. And Allah (s.w.t.) is powerful to accomplish this action. The holy verse says:

"If He pleases, He can remove you, O' people! and bring others; and Allah is powerful over that."

When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (S) struck his hand over the back of Salman Farsi and said:

"These people are Iranians (non-Arabs from Persia)." [1]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 134

مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدنْيَا فَعِندَ اللّه ثَوَابُ الدنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَكَانَ الله سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

134. "Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allah is the reward of this world and the Hereafter and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

There are some believers who can ask Allah the reward of this world and the reward of the coming world, and enjoy of the bounties of both lives. If they suffice only to this world, and pursue the material interests when

accomplishing the Holy Struggle and righteous deeds, they are in a serious error. The Qur'an says:

"Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allah is the reward of this world and the Hereafter and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 3, p. 122 (Arabic version)

Section 20: Equity to everyone -The Jewish Hypocrisy Condemned

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 135

Firmness in equity, fair play and faith enjoined, coveting for worldly goods; forsaking truth is due to weakness in faith.

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُونُواْ قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاء لِلّه وَلَوْ عَلَى أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَالله أَوْلَى بِهِمَا فَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ الْهَوَى أَن تَعْدِلُواْ وَإِن تَلْوُواْ أَوْ تُعْرِضُواْ فَإِنَّ الله كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

135. " O' you who have Faith! be maintainers of justice (and) witnesses for Allah's sake, though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; whether the one be rich or poor, Allah is closer to them both, Therefore do not follow any passion so that you can deal justly; and if you swerve or decline (the right), then verily Allah is aware of what you do."

Social Justice

Following the instructions that were pointed out through previous verses about the execution of justice upon orphans and wives, here in this verse, the statement is upon a basic principle and a general law. It is about the execution of justice in all aspects and without any exception. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! be maintainers of justice …."

That is, you should accomplish justice so that you might not have the least inclination toward any side.

Then, to emphasize the matter, the verse refers to the subject of bearing witness. It recommends upon affairs concerning the witnesses, in particular, and that you should put aside all circumspections and bear witness rightfully for the sake of Allah, even if it is against you or your parents or your near relatives. It says:

"… (and) witnesses for Allah's sake, though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives;

It can be understood from this holy phrase that it is possible for relatives to bear witness for or against each other when they observe the principles of justice.

Then, it points to other factors of perversion from the principle of justice. It implies that neither the wealth of the rich nor the emotions arisen from the poverty of the poor should hinder to bear witness rightfully.

It is because Allah is more aware of the condition of the person against whom the rightful attestation is performed whether the one is rich or poor. Therefore, neither the possessors of wealth and force can damage the rightful witnesses when there is the support of Allah, nor the poor remain hungry when justice is executed. The verse says:

"…whether the one be rich or poor, Allah is closer to them both…."

Again, to emphasize on the matter, it instructs us not to follow our desires, because, in that case, there come forth some barriers for executing justice.

"…Therefore do not follow any passion so that you can deal justly…"

This sentence clearly leads us to the fact that the origin of transgressions and cruelties is carnal desires. Thus, if a group of people be not the followers of carnal desires, injustice and cruelty may not be found among them.

For the importance that there lies in the execution of justice, it emphasizes again on this commandment. It indicates that if you hinder the right from reaching the rightful person, or pervert the right, or turn aside from the right when it becomes clear to you, Allah is well aware of what you do. It says:

"… and if you swerve or decline (the right), then verily Allah is aware of what you do."

The above verse makes completely manifest the extraordinary attention of Islam to the subject of social justice in whatever form and in whatever case it may be. The application of different emphasis mentioned in these sentences shows how much Islam is sensitive for this important social subject among humankind.

But, unfortunately, there is a long distance between the action of Muslims and this excellent Islamic commandment! This very fact, of course, is one of the secrets of their retardation.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 136

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ آمِنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِيَ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللّهِ وَمَلآئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلاَلاً بَعِيدًا

136. "O' you who have Faith believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has sent down unto His Messenger, and the Book (S) which He has sent down a foretime; and whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Messengers and the Last Day, has indeed gone astray into far error."

The meaning of the verse may be such: O' you who have faith! Go a step further; or, be firm in your faith forever.

A believer should elevate himself to a higher degree of faith every day, since there are degrees in faith.

"O' you who have Faith! Believe..."

In this regard, Surah Muhammad, No.47, verse 17 says:

"And those who avail of the guidance, He adds unto them guidance..."

And, Surah Al-Fath No.48 verse 4 says:

"... that they might add further faith to their faith…."

However, disbelief, in some heavenly Books and some prophets is the same as disbelief in all.

"... Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has sent down unto His Messenger, and the Book(S) which He has sent down a foretime; and whoever, disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Messengers and the Last Day, has indeed gone astray into far error. "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 137

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ ثُمَّ كَفَرُواْ ثُمَّ آمَنُواْ ثُمَّ كَفَرُواْ ثُمَّ ازْدَادُواْ كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلاَ لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلاً

137. "Verily those who believed, then disbelieved, again believed, and again disbelieved, then increased in (their) disbelief, Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to the (right) way."

Formerly a verse similar in meaning to this holy verse was detailed, saying that the repentance of such persons is not accepted and they are the real misguided ones. Also, Surah 'Ale-Imran, No.3 Verse 90 in this field says:

"Verily those who disbelieve after their belief, then increase in infidelity; their repentance will never be accepted; and these are they who are astray."

There are some people who change their features every day. This is either for the lack of research in Truth and religion, or it is a plot in order to weaken the belief of the believers. Surah 'Ale-Imran, No.3 Verse 72 also manifests this plan by stating that they believed at the opening of (the day, and disbelieved at the end of it, with the purpose that they might weaken the Muslims in their Faith.

The clear example of the content of this verse is the persons such as Shabth-ibn-Rib'i whose instability can be, illustrated as follows:

He became Muslim but, after the death of the Prophet (S), he disbelieved. After that, he repented and joined to the adherents of Ali (as). Later, he changed to be the commander of Kharijites. Again he repented and went on to be as an adherent of Imam Hassan (as) and Imam Husayn (as).

He wrote an invitation letter to Imam Husayn (as) but he showed his disloyalty to Muslim-ibn-' Aghil in Kufa (an-ancient city, in Mesopotamia). He accepted to be the commander of Yazid's troop in Karbala, and built a mosque in Kufa as a sign of gratitude for the slain of Imam Husayn (as). The verse says:

"Verily those who believed, then disbelieved, again believed, and again disbelieved, then increased in (their) disbelief, Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to the (right) way."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 138

بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

138. "Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement."

When the Qur'anic word / bisarat / 'glad tidings' is used for punishment, it is either as a mockery due to their baseless vain thoughts, or for the sake that the Arabic term / bisarat / which is originally derived from the Arabic word / busr / in the sense of 'face', has a vast meaning. It concludes any news that affects on the face and usually makes it happy or sad.

The verse says:

"Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 139

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاء مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَيَبْتَغُونَ عِندَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ العِزَّةَ لِلّه جَمِيعًا

139. "(Hypocrites are) those who take the disbelievers for (their) friends instead of the believers -do they seek glory in them? - Then, verily, all glory belongs to Allah."

In this holy verse, the hypocrites are characterized as follows:

"(Hypocrites are) those who take the disbelievers for (their) friends instead of the believers…."

Then the Qur'an inquires what their purpose is from this choice. Do they really want to obtain a credit and honour for themselves by making friends with them? They should know that honour and glory totally belongs to Allah, because glory always originates from 'knowledge' and 'power'. Therefore, those whose knowledge and power is little are not in a position that they can be the origin of glory.

"...do they seek glory in them? -Then, verily, all glory belongs to Allah."

This verse warns all the Muslims not to seek for the disbelievers' glory in all aspects of life, irrespective of: economical glory, cultural glory, political glory, and the like of them, in making friends with the enemies of Islam.

Whenever their interest requires, they immediately leave out their own most intimate allies and refer to their own affairs, so that as if they have never been acquainted with each other. The present era is a clear witness to this fact.

(So, in the foreign policy, we must not seek our glory in attachment with pagans.) We recite in Munajat-Sha'baniyyah:

"O' Lord! my abundance and my deficiency is in Your hand, not in the hand of other than You".

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 140

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكَفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلاَ تَقْعُدُواْ مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُواْ فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

140. "And He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being disbelieved and made mock of, do not sit with them until they engage in some other discourse, otherwise you would be like them. Verily Allah will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers all together in Hell."

Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 68 contains a similar meaning to that of this holy verse. It addresses the Messenger of Allah (S) and says:

"And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our Signs, withdraw from them until they enter into a discourse other than that... "

In that verse, the addressee is the Prophet (S), while in the above-mentioned verse, the Qur'an addresses people in general.

Explanations

1. A person should not usually be inattentive when confronting the false discourses of others, (since, being silent or inattentive where a sin is being committed, is sinful.)

"...do not sit with them until they engage in some other discourse ..."

2. "You may either alter the evil environment, or come out of it."

"….do not sit with them…"

3. It is not enough to abandon committing sin only; but we should cause the performance of sin to be stopped totally. Mere being straight is not enough; the perversion of others should be hindered of, too.

4. It is not allowed to be silent in front of sin under the pretext of freedom of speech, negligence, good morals, easy circumstances, courtesy, civility; shame, and so on.

5. The person who is content with the sin of others has a share of that sin.

"...otherwise you would be like them…"

6. To be silent in front of the idle talks of the infidels is a kind of hypocrisy.

7. Companionships of this world result the companionship of the next world.

"… Verily Allah will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers all together in Hell."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 141

الَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللّهِ قَالُواْ أَلَمْ نَكُن مَّعَكُمْ وَإِن كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُواْ أَلَمْ نَسْتَحْوِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعْكُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَالله يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَن يَجْعَلَ الله لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلاً

141. "(The hypocrites are) those who wait and watch about you; then if there be a victory for you from Allah, they say: 'Were we not with you?' But if the disbelievers get a share, they tell (them): 'Did we not help you win, and held off the believers from you?' Therefore, Allah shall judge between you on the Day of Judgement, and Allah will by no means give the disbelievers a way (of success) against the believers."

The Qualities of Hypocrites

This verse and some verses after that point to some other qualities of the hypocrites and their incoherent thoughts. The verse describes the hypocrites as those who always want to make profit from any incident.

If you gain the victory, they quickly show themselves in the row of the believers and say whether they were not with you, and their worthy aids were not helpful in your victory. Therefore, they claim to have a share in its all spiritual and material incomes. The verse says:

"(The hypocrites are) those who wait and watch about you; then if there be a victory for you from Allah, they say: 'Were we not with you? ..."

But, if the enemies of Islam obtain a part of this victory, the hypocrites immediately approach them and express their consent to them about that victory. They say that it was they who encouraged them to combat with Muslims without showing any sign of resignation; therefore they have a share in that victory. The verse says:

"... But if the disbelievers get a share, they tell (them): 'Did we not help you win, and held off the believers from you?'….."

Thus, this group of hypocrites, by their own particular misusing opportunities, sometimes come toward the believers and sometimes approach the disbelievers, and spend their lives in double-dealing.

Yet, the Qur'an manifests their fate with stating a short phrase. It implies that finally there will come a day that the curtains will be removed, the masks will be taken off and their real ugly faces will be seen. Yet, it is true when it says:

"...Therefore, Allah shall judge between you on the Day of Judgement ..."

And, in order that the true believers should not be afraid of them, at the end of the verse it adds:

"...and Allah will by no means give the disbelievers a way (of success) against the believers."

This part of the verse means that the disbelievers not only from the point of logic but also from the point of political, martial, cultural, and economical aspects will not really overcome the believers.

So, if we see their victory with our own eyes in different fields against Muslims, it is for the reason that many of Muslims are not true believers.

They have neither the unity nor Islamic brotherhood among them, nor the knowledge and necessary awareness which Islam has counted necessary for all from birthday until the moment of death. Then, when they are like that, consequently, they have remained like this.

Section 21: Fate of the Hypocrites

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 142

Deceitfulness of the hypocrites -Friendship with the enemies - Fate of the hypocrites:

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّه وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُواْ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ قَامُواْ كُسَالَى يُرَآؤُونَ النَّاسَ وَلاَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّه إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

142. "Verily the hypocrites seek to trick Allah, but He is tricking them. And, when they stand up for prayer they stand up lazily; showing off to the people, and they do not remember Allah save a little."

The purpose of 'the hypocrites seek to trick Allah', perhaps, is the same expression of Faith by them and playing with the commandments of Allah. And, as Imam Rida (as) says: since Allah gives the retribution of their trick, this divine retribution is called 'trick'.

"Verily the hypocrites seek to trick Allah, but He is tricking them. ..."

However, they are far from Allah and, consequently, they do not enjoy telling Allah their secrets and praying for their needs. That is why when they stand for prayer they are thoroughly full of listlessness and laziness. It says:

"...And, when they stand up for prayer they stand up lazily...."

The hypocrites, in fact, do not believe in Allah and His magnificent promises. Then if they worship or do a righteous deed, it is also for showing off to people, not for the sake of Allah.

"...showing off to people ..."

So, if they sometimes recite the name of Allah or remember Him, it is not done sincerely and knowingly. Supposing that it is, might be, it is very little. It says:

"...and they do not remember Allah save a little."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 143

مذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لاَ إِلَى هَـؤُلاء وَلاَ إِلَى هَـؤُلاء وَمَن يُضْلِلِ الله فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلاً

143. "(The hypocrites are) swaying between this (infidelity and Faith) neither towards these (believers) nor towards those (infidels); and whoever Allah leaves to go astray, never then shall you find for him a way."

The Arabic word /taẓabẓub/ philologically means: 'to be moved to and fro, as anything suspended in the air'. [1]

Therefore, the hypocrites do not have a firm thing to rely on, and they sway between this and that, like a thing which is suspended in the air and moves by the movement of a wind. They depend on others, so they wander without having any proper aim.

"(The hypocrites are) swaying between this (infidelity and Faith) neither towards these (believers) nor towards those (infidels); "....

Also, they have not tranquillity and peace, because they must always change their own position to a new one and hurriedly make immediate decisions.

And, to conclude, the hypocrites are stray, and have incurred the wrath of Allah. The verse continues saying:

"….and whoever Allah leaves to go astray, never then shall you find for him a way."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 144

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاء مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَن تَجْعَلُواْ لِلّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مبِينًا

144. " O' you who have faith! Do not take the disbelievers for friends instead of the believers. Do you desire that you should give Allah a manifest proof against yourselves?"

The believers have not the right of accepting the master ship of the disbelievers. But it is in the case that the hypocrites have a close tie with the disbelievers. The Qur'an introduces the disbelievers as Satans of the hypocrites:

"...when they are alone with their evil ones ..." [2]

And they are as brethren of the hypocrites:

"...those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve..." [3]

The senses mentioned in Surah Nisa No.4. Verse 139 and 141 are also indications to the quality of the connection between the hypocrites and the disbelievers.

Explanations

1. 'Tawalla' (take for friends) and 'Tabarra' (dissociate) are parts of the religion.

2. Any communication, friendship, and agreement contraction that results to the loss of Muslims should be avoided of.

3. In current foreign policy, political and economical ties, choices, appointments and disposals or any action which ends to the domination of disbelievers over Muslims is unlawful (Haram) from the point of Islam, and it is rejected.

4. Any Muslim believer who accepts suffer abjectness, has no proof to give Allah for his action.

"Do you desire that you should give Allah a manifest proof against yourselves?"

5. Accepting the master ship of disbelievers does not adapt to Faith. There is no room in a heart for two opposite affections,

"O' you who have Faith! ..."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 145

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا

145. "Verily the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire, and never you shall find a helper for them."

There are some unaware Muslims who accept the friendship of the hypocrites. To make clear the situation of the hypocrites, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"Verily the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire, and never you shall find a helper for them."

It is well understood from this verse that hypocrisy is the worst kind of infidelity from the point of view of Islam, and the hypocrites are the furthest distant people from Allah. So, it is for this reason that their abode is in the worst place and the lowest stage of Hell.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 146

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُواْ وَأَصْلَحُواْ وَاعْتَصَمُواْ بِاللّهِ وَأَخْلَصُواْ دِينَهُمْ لِلّهِ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

146. "Except those who repent, and amend and hold fast to (the grace of) Allah and make their religion pure for Allah. These, then, are with the believers; and Allah will grant the believers a great reward."

The way of repentance is open to all, even to the worst ones. Repentance can take a person from the position of 'the lowest stage of the Fire' to 'the Exalted Heaven'. The Qur'an says:

"Except those who repent....."

Human beings are free and can change the way, i.e. they can repent:

"...those who repent....."

Repentance is not only an expression of regret, but it is an inclusive improvability. The verse continues saying:

"...and amend and hold fast (the grace of) Allah and make their religion pure for Allah ..."

Those hypocrites who repent should not feel loneliness for the absence of their fellow-minded, because they find some better colleagues instead of them.

"....these, then, are with the believers… "

Eclecticism in creed and thoughts is forbidden:

".....and make their religion pure for Allah ..."

Then, it is to the believers to receive the true repentant ones and consider them as themselves.

"... these, then, are with the believers and Allah will grant the believers a great reward."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 147

مَّا يَفْعَلُ اللهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنتُمْ وَكَانَ اللهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا

147. "What can Allah gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and you believe? And Allah is All-Thankful, All-Knowing."

If you believe and do righteous deeds and, in the meantime, you do not abuse the bounties of Allah, and be grateful for the bounties of Allah, without doubt, there will not be any divine punishment upon you. The verse says:

"What can Allah gain by your punishment if you are grateful...."

Then, in order to emphasize this matter, it adds that the Lord is both aware of your deeds and your thoughts, and is thankful and giver of reward for your righteous deeds. It says:

"...And Allah is All-Thankful, All-Knowing."

In the above-mentioned verse, the subject of 'thankfulness' has occurred before the sense of 'belief '. This precedence is for the fact that as long as a

person does not know the bounties and graces of Allah and does not reach the position of gratitude, cannot know Him, Himself (s.w.t.). (Be careful.)

The End of Part Five

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 148

لاَّ يُحِبُّ اللهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسوَءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلاَّ مَن ظُلِمَ وَكَانَ اللهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

148. "Allah does not love open utterance of evil in speech except by one to whom injustice has been done, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In this verse and the verse next to it, a part of the ethical instructions of Islam are pointed out. At first, the verse indicates that Allah does not like that ill-speaking be performed or the vice and disgraceful actions of people be manifested by the speech of others. It says:

"Allah does not love open utterance of evil in speech ..."

As Allah Himself is the Concealer of Faults, He does not love that individuals betray secrets and make manifest the vices of people so that they disgrace them.

Then, the Qur'an refers to some affairs that can be counted as the authority for such betraying secrets and ill-speaking. It says:

"...except by one to whom injustice has been done....."

Such persons are right to defend themselves against the cruelty of transgressors. They can complain of them, criticize them, blame them, and backbite them. They are also right to continue doing that until they get their right and ward off the transgression.

And, as the style of the Qur'an is, in order that some persons do not misuse this exception and do not make manifest the vices of people under the pretext that they have been transgressed, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 149

إِن تُبْدُواْ خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُواْ عَن سُوَءٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا

149. "If you do good openly or conceal it or pardon (others) evil, then verily Allah is All-Pardoning, All-Powerful."

Whenever you are in the position of power, and forgiveness has a training effect, do forgive; and wherever silence is abasement, and it strengthens injustice, do shout.

Therefore, vengeance and retaliation is 'legitimate', when remital and forgiveness is 'virtue'. So, it is worthy to pardon when you are powerful. It says:

"....then verily Allah is All-Pardoning, All-Powerful."

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"When you gain power over your adversary, pardon him as gratitude for being able to overpower him." [4]

Verse 150 - 151

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيْنَ اللّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلاً

أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مهِينًا

150. "Verily those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers, and desire to make division between Allah and His Messengers, and say: 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others', and seek to choose a way in between."

151. "These are, in truth, infidels, and We have prepared for the infidels a disgraceful chastisement."

The Jews and the Christians believed in some prophets and disbelieved in some other ones. This kind of behaviour was because of their foolishly desires and bigotries, and also because of some unreasonable insularity.

The verse says:

"Verily those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers, and desire to make division between Allah and His Messengers, and say: 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others'....."

It should also be attended that the process of messenger ship is the permanent Allah's, way of treatment which are linked together like a chain, and we must believe in this process totally. [5]

Therefore, Allah and His messengers are in the same row and there is no separation in between at all. Then, it is forbidden to disbelieve in Allah and the messengers, or to believe in Allah and disbelieve in some Prophets.

Eclecticism and paving a way other than the way of prophets is infidelity.

"..and seek to choose a way in between....."

"These are, in truth, infidels, and We have prepared for the infidels a disgraceful chastisement."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 152

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُوْلَـئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَكَانَ اللهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

152. "And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and make no division between any of them, He will grant them their rewards, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this verse, the Qur'an points to the position and the fate of the believers. It implies that those who believed in Allah and all His prophets and did not make any separation between them, have proved their own submission and sincerity unto the Truth and also proved to struggle against any bigotry. As for these Allah will bestow their rewards soon. The verse says:

"And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and make no division between any of them, He will grant them their rewards……"

And, at the end of the verse, another fact is referred to. It indicates that if this group of the believers had formerly committed such bigotries, divisions, and some other sins, and now have purified their Faith and returned to Allah, He will forgive them.

"...and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Notes

1. Sihah-ul-luqat
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 14
3. Surah Al-Hashr, No.59, verse 11
4. Nahj-ul-Balagha saying No.10
5. Due to Imamate, it is necessary to believe in all Imams wholly. Believing in some of them and disbelieving in the rest, or having a pause, is as disbelief in all Imams.

Section 22: Violation of the Covenant by the Jews

Jews Violating the Covenant - Their accusing Jesus and his mother Mary - The truth concerning the Crucifixion of Jesus,

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 153

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَن تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاء فَقَدْ سَأَلُواْ مُوسَى أَكْبَرَ مِن ذَلِكَ
فَقَالُواْ أَرِنَا اللّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُواْ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
فَعَفَوْنَا عَن ذَلِكَ وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى سُلْطَانًا مبِينًا

153. "The People of the Book will ask you to bring down for them a Book from heaven; and indeed they asked Moses for greater than that, for they said: 'Show us Allah vividly'. So the lightning seized them on account of their injustice. Then they took the Calf (for a god) after the clear signs had come to them; yet We pardoned that; and We gave Moses a clear authority."

The demand of the Jews from the Prophet of Islam (S) was that the Qur'an, like the Torah , should be sent down together, too. But, that demand was nothing save a mere pretext. In Surah Al-'An'am, concerning the matter, Allah says:

"And if We had sent to you a writing on a paper, then they had touched it with their hands, certainly those who disbelieve would have said: 'This is nothing but clear enchantment'." [1]

The Qur'an, in the above verse, says:

"The People of the Book will ask you to bring down for them a Book from heaven……"

The Children of Israel were not seeking for the Truth, otherwise, why did they become the worshippers of the Calf after they had got those abundant miracles?

"...Then they took the Calf (for a god) after the clear signs had come to them….."

Therefore, the continuation of this very verse, in order to console the Prophet, tells him (S) not to be worried about the disbelievers when they do not believe, since there had also been some obstinate persons against all former prophets.

"...and indeed they asked Moses for greater than that, for they said: 'Show us Allah vividly'. ..."

When we become acquainted with the difficulties that other people are involved in, it can sometimes be a remedy over our own pains.

However, it should be noted that rejection of the Truth and aberration in thought brings forth the Wrath of Allah even in this very world.

"... So the lightning seized them on account of their injustice....."

Yet, the prophets had always been supported by Allah.

"...and We gave Moses a clear authority."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 154

وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لاَ تَعْدُواْ فِي
السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

154. "And We raised the (Sinai) Mount above them at (the taking of) their covenant and We said to them: 'Enter the door prostrating', and We said to them: 'Do not transgress the Sabbath!' and We took from them a firm covenant."

The verse implies that the Children of Israel, the Jews, did not awaken from the sleep of negligence and did not come down from the mount of pride and obstinacy. It was for that reason that Allah raised the Sinai Mount above them, and in the meanwhile, He took covenant from them.

"And We raised the (Sinai) Mount above them at (the taking of) their covenant…"

The holy verse implies that Allah (s.w.t.) told them to enter the door of Jerusalem in the state of prostration and humility as a sign of repentance from their sins.

Allah also decreed emphatically for them not to work on Saturday and not to transgress, (and not to use the sea-fish that the hunting of which was prohibited for them). Allah (s. w.t.) took serious covenant for all of these things from them. But they fulfilled none of those confirmed promises.

"...and We said to .them: 'Enter the door prostrating', and We said to them: 'Do not transgress the Sabbath!' and We took from them a firm covenant."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 155

فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِم بَآيَاتِ اللّه وَقَتْلِهِمُ الأَنْبِيَاء بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ
بَلْ طَبَعَ الله عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

155. "So, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the Signs of Allah and their slaying the prophets wrongfully and their saying: 'Our hearts are covered', nay! but Allah sealed them for their disbelief, so they do not believe save a few. "

In this verse, the Qur'an points to some other parts of the wrong doings of the Children of Israel, and also those committing offences and hostilities that the Jews performed against the prophets of Allah.

At first, it refers to the breach of promise and disbelief of a group of them, by whom the slaughter of many prophets occurred. It says:

"So, for their breaking their covenant ..."

Following to this breach of promise, they rejected the Signs of Allah and paved the way of opposition.

".....and their disbelief in the Signs of Allah ..."

They did not suffice only to this wrong-doing, but also they set their hands to another great crime. They killed the leaders and the guides of the way of Truth, viz. the prophets. They slew the prophets without having any reason for their action.

".....and their slaying the prophets wrongfully ..."

They were so insolent in committing offences that they mocked the statements of the prophets and they used to explicitly say to them that their hearts were locked so that they hindered them to hear and accept the invitation of the prophets.

".....and their saying 'Our hearts are covered'; ..."

Here, the Qur'an adds a sense that their hearts are sealed totally and no truth penetrates into them, but the reason of that situation is their own infidelity and disbelief. That is why they do not believe in truth, except a small group of them who avoid these kinds of obstinacies and that they pave the path of truth. It says:

"... nay! but Allah sealed them for their disbelief, So they do not believe save a few. "

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 156

وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا

156. "And because of their disbelief and their speaking against Mary a grievous calumny."

The question of calumny against Mary is also referred to in Surah Maryam No.19, verse 27.

The calumny of fornication unto Mary was not only a sin but it was also a calumny of bastardy to Jesus (as) and his incompetence for guidance and leadership. This very sin was the reason of their disbelief unto Jesus (as).

Therefore, calumny is counted in the same row with infidelity, and, consequently, a grievous calumny deserves a grievous chastisement.

"And because of their disbelief and their speaking against Mary a grievous calumny"

However, in an immoral society, there may sometimes happen that the most disgraceful calumnies be attributed to the most immaculate persons.

Surah An-Nisa', Verses 157 - 158

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَـكِن شُبِّهَ
لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُواْ فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلاَّ اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا
بَل رَّفَعَهُ اللهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

157. "And because of their saying (in boast): 'Verily we slew Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's Messenger; 'but they did not slay him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them (a likeness of that); and indeed those who differ therein are only in doubt about it, they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and, certainly, they did not slay him."

158. "But Allah took him up unto Himself; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

They (the Children of Israel) were even proud of slaying Jesus, and they said that they themselves slew Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah. The verse says:

"And because of their saying (in boast): 'Verily we slew Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's Messenger….."

Perhaps, the sense of 'Allah's Messenger' that they said about Jesus (as) was said mockingly in order to scorn him, while they were not true in their claim. The verse continues saying:

"... but they did not slay him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them (a likeness of that)…"

Then, the Qur'an, as an emphasis on the matter, says:

"....and, certainly, they did not slay him."

Then, the Qur'an, as a separate verse, continues saying:

"But Allah took him up unto Himself ..."

The reason that the Qur'an has emphasized particularly on the subject that Jesus (as) has not been crucified, is for the purpose of perfectly nullifying the superstitious belief of ransom and making ummah (community) free from sin by payment, so that the Christians find rescue in the pledge of their own good deeds not in seeking refuge to the Cross.

We are absolutely certain that both the birth and departure of Jesus from this world occurred abnormally. He (as) was taken up to be a provision for future.

"... and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 159

وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلاَّ لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا

159. "And there is not anyone of the People of the Book but surely believes in him (Jesus) before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness over them."

There are two probabilities in commenting on this verse, each of which is considerable for, some views.

1. The verse says:

"And there is not anyone of the People of the Book but surely believes in him (Jesus) before his death....."

The above-mentioned time is when a person is going to die and his connection with the world becomes weak while it becomes more serious with the world after death. The curtains will be removed from before his eyes and he will see many things of the reality.

It is at this time that his inward eye of seeing the truth will see Jesus (as) and he will surrender before him (as).Those who denied him will believe in him, and those who considered him God, will recognize their error. But it is too late and this belief is of no vail for them. Then, it is better for them to believe just now, when belief is useful for them.

2. The purpose of the verse is that all the People of the Book will believe in Jesus (as) before death. The Jews will accept him for his messenger ship, and the Christians will leave out the god ship of Jesus.

This circumstance will happen, according to the Islamic literature, when Jesus (as) comes down from heaven at the time of the reappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (may Allah hasten his glad advent) and establishes prayer at the back of him.

The Jews and Christians will see him and will believe both in him (as) and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent). So, it is clear that, at this time, Jesus, whose religion relate to the former times has to follow the present creed, i.e. Islam, the executor of which is Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent).

Basing on the recorded Islamic traditions, at the time of Mahdi's rightful government, the security will be so much so that wolf and sheep, lion and cow, and other savage animals will graze in the same pasture. The security of life, wealth and honour will be found in the world thoroughly. There will

be no cruelty and transgression anywhere, and justice will cover the whole world of existence.

However, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... and on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness over them."

The objective meaning of the 'witness of Jesus against them' is that he (as) will bear witness that he has preached the messenger ship but he has never invited them to his own divinity and god ship. On the contrary, he has invited them to the Divinity of Allah. [2]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 160

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُواْ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّهِ كَثِيراً

160. "And for the injustice from those of the Jews We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them (before), and for their much hindering (people) from the path of Allah."

Perhaps, the objective meaning of the good things that became forbidden for them is the same things which are mentioned in Surah Al-'An'am. No.5. verse 146. It says:

"And to those who were Jews We made unlawful every animal having claws, and of oxen and sheep "....

This very prohibition is also found in the present Torah. (Leviticus, Chapter 11)

Explanations

Injustice is the preparation for deprivation from bounties.

Sometimes, some economical deprivations and material straitened circumstances are signs for the wrath and retribution of Allah.

"And for the injustice from those of the Jews We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them (before)..."

Hindering people from the path of Allah, in any form it may be, (including: distortion, concealment, innovation, corruption, and deviation), is the cause of deprivation.

"…and for their much hindering (people) from the path of Allah"

In fact, the main punishments will be given in Hereafter, yet the worldly retributions are for awareness. They are as penalty for the evil doers and as trial for the good doers.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 161

وَأَخْذِهِمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُواْ عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

161. "And (for) their taking usury when indeed they were forbidden from it, and (for) their devouring the property of people unrightfully, and We prepared for the disbelievers from among them a painful chastisement."

The prohibition of usury is also mentioned in the present Torah (Deuteronomy, Chapter 23, and No. 19 & 20):

19. Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury:

20. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou set test thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

Usury seems to be the source of profit and the factor of happiness, but it is the cause of deprivations and punishments.

All heavenly religions are sensitive, and have words, due to the material and financial connections between human-beings and also due to their gains and expenditures.

As long as injustice, usury, and living on unlawful money have not set a person in the course of infidelity, it is easy for him to return to the right path, otherwise the sins may become the cause of infidelity, and infidels are involved in punishment.

"And (for) their taking usury when indeed they were forbidden from it, and (for) their devouring the property of people unrightfully, and We prepared for the disbelievers from among them a painful chastisement."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 162

لَّـكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ
وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلاَةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ أُوْلَـئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

162. "But those firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed (to the messengers) before you, and the establishers of prayer and the givers of poor-rate, and the believers in Allah and the Last Day. Upon these We shall give a great reward."

In this verse, a great fact is referred to, on which the Holy Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized. This fact is that the reproach and reprimanding of the Qur'an upon the Jews has never had an aspect of racial or tribal combat.

Islam reproaches no race as a 'race', but it blames and reprimands the filthy and deluded persons. That is why this verse separates the believers and virtuous ones from among the Jews as an exception and admires them when it gives them the glad tidings of a great reward. The Qur'an says:

"But those firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed (to the messengers) before you, and the establishers of prayer and the givers of poor-rate, and the believers in Allah and the Last Day. Upon these We shall give a great reward."

The proof for this meaning is the fact that at the time of the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S), when some of the prominent people of the Jews saw the reasons of his rightfulness, embraced Islam and defended it heartily. These persons were respected by the Prophet of Islam (S) and other Muslim members.

Notes

1. Surah, Al- 'An'am, No.6, verse 7
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 572

Section 23: The Qur'an testified in the previous heavenly Books

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 163

Heavenly Books were revealed to the previous messengers - The disbelievers -The truth about the personality of Jesus,

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ

وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَ يوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا

163. "Verily We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We (also) revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isac and Jacob and the Tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave David the Psalms."

The names of twenty-five prophets of Allah have been mentioned, in the Qur'an. Eleven names of these prophets are referred to in the verse under discussion, and the rest of them are: 'Adam, Andreas, Hud, -Salih, Lot, Yusuf (Joseph), Shu'aib (Jethro), Thilkafl, Moses, Elyas (Elija), Yasa' (Elisha), Zakaria (Zachariah), Yahya (John), and 'Uzair (Ezra).

Some Islamic recorded traditions denote that whatever had been revealed to the former prophets (as) were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S), too. [1]

The Qur'anic term /'asbat/ is a title for those prophets who are the children of Ya'qub (Jacob).

The word /zabur/ in philology means 'book', but, as a technical term, it is used for David's Book. Psalms of David can be found in the Books of the Old Testament. This book contains 150 Chapters, each of which is a Psalm. (p.p. 606 to 681 of the Holy Bible). Here is the verse:

"Verily We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We (also) revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isac and Jacob and the Tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonoh and Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave David the Psalms."

Allah sent down revelations to all prophets one after another. But here, in this regard, before mentioning the names of some other prophets, Allah says:

"We revealed to you."

This precedence may be for the superiority of the holy Prophet's rank. .

Explanations

1. In the history of man, revelation and Messenger ship has been an unalterable process and rule.

2. In revelation both aim, and style, and the generality of the content, and the origin of them, wholly is the same; and that origin is Allah.

"Verily We revealed ..."

3. The divine revelations unto the prophets have repeatedly occurred in the history. Yet, why do the opponents of prophet hood not accept the Prophet of Islam (S) and do differ between him and other prophets? (Such people are certainly astray).

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 164

وَرُسُلاً قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَرُسُلاً لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ الله مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

164. "And earlier (there were) messengers We have already told you of, and messengers We have not told you of; and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech."

Suras Hud (No.11) and Al-'Anbiya (No.21), comparing other Suras of the Qur'an, are more inclusive in stating the stories of the prophets. In regard to learning good qualities, acquainting oneself with the history of the lives of prophets is so useful for men that Allah (s.w.t.) has paid to it, too. It says:

"....messengers We have already told you of....."

The history of prophets, of course, is more abundant than what has been mentioned in the Qur'an. Neither the length of the life of a person is enough to listen to the whole history, nor is listening to the whole history necessary.

But listening to it should be as much as to take example and to take lesson from it. This very thing shows that the Qur'an is a Book of guidance and teaching, not a Book for telling stories.

"... and messengers We have not told you of ..."

However, the styles of receiving revelations are different, inspiration in heart, or sending down the angel, or revealing from behind the (curtain), and all prophets had been the addressee of Allah (s.w.t.), but among them only Moses (as), as his epithet, was entitled /kalim-ul-lah/ ' The Interlocutor of Allah'.

"... and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech."

This title was given to Moses (as) maybe for the reason that it was necessary for him to communicate repeatedly with Allah in order to struggle and work hard against Pharaoh, or against obstinacy and stubbornness of the Children of Israel.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 165

رُسُلاً مبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلاَّ يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللّه حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرسُلِ وَكَانَ الله عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

165. "(We sent) messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no argument against Allah after the (invitations of) the messengers, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

This verse expresses the words of prophets' invitation and the method of their effort, together with the purpose of the mission of prophets to prophet hood.

The method of the work of prophets is based on two pivots: 'glad tidings' and 'warning'.

"(We sent) messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no argument against Allah after the (invitations of) the messengers, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The philosophy of the mission of prophets is Allah's 'completing the argument' for humankind so that they cannot say that they had not any leader or guide.

It is necessary to mention that from the point of personal epithets, background of life, social, political, genealogical, and physical situation, and also from the point of having miracles, clear statements, and being aided

by hidden helps, prophets should be in a state that no one be able to object any things of theirs.

And, since 'Allah is the Mighty, the Wise', none has any proof against Him, as the Qur'an states:

"Say: ' Then Allah's is the conclusive argument;'..." [2]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 166

لَّـكِنِ الله يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَى بِاللّهِ شَهِيدًا

166. "But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you that He has sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels (also) bear witness; and Allah is Sufficient as witness."

This very fact that the high standard of knowledge of the Qur'an has been delivered by an illiterate person in an environment full of ignorance and enmity, and that it changed the state of people from dispersion to unity, from avarice to donation, from paganism to theism, from ignorance to knowledge, and from descent to spiritual ascent so that they reached to the condition of formation of 'the Islamic Ummah', is an evidence for Allah's grace (s.w.t.) toward the holy Prophet (S) and for His favour to his religion.

That is why the best shelter and the source of hope in all prophets has been the support and aid of Allah.

"But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you ..."

By the way, the origin of revelation is the infinite knowledge of Allah. So, with the advance of science, every day some parts of the Qur'anic wisdom will be manifested.

"...that He has sent it down with His knowledge. ..."

It should be regarded that if there are some obstinate sinful persons in some corners of the world who seek pretexts, in spite of that, there are all the pure knowledgeable angels in the world of existence who bear witness alongside the Holiness of Allah. It says:

"... and the angels (also) bear witness; and Allah is Sufficient as witness."

Surah An-Nisa', Verses 167 - 169

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَصَدواْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّهِ قَدْ ضَلواْ ضَلاَلاً بَعِيدًا

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَظَلَمُواْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الله لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلاَ لِيَهْدِ َهُمْ طَرِيقاً

إِلاَّ طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللّهِ يَسِيرًا

167. "Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from the way of Allah, have gone astray far away (from felicity)."

168. "Verily, those who disbelieve and act unjustly, it is not for Allah to forgive them, nor will He guide them to a way."

169. "Except the way to Hell, to abide therein forever and that (retribution) is easy for Allah."

In the first verse of the above verses, the phrase 'have gone astray far away (from felicity)' denotes to the intensive stray of the disbelievers. Infidelity is an aberration, and hindering others from Faith is another one!

Disbelief is a deviation, while a disbeliever considering oneself rightful, is a deviation greater than that. Disbelief in a person is injustice to his own

self, while hindering others from the right path is injustice unto generation, in the history.

"Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from the way of Allah, have gone astray far away (from felicity)."

The objective meaning of the phrase 'act unjustly', mentioned in verse No.168, may be in the same sense of hindering others to be guided. Which injustice, in comparison, can be higher than the mental, cultural, and creedal injustice?

"Verily, those who disbelieve and act unjustly, it is not for Allah to forgive them, nor will He guide them to a way."

The most painful chastisement and the most disgraceful senses have been appointed against those pagans who hinder the message of truth to reach the ears of the truth-seekers by different kinds of propagations, accusations and Intimidations.

The lack of forgiveness, the lack of guidance, to be counted among those who abide in Hell forever and the like of them is the fruit of the indecency of their deeds.

"Except the way to Hell, to abide therein forever and that (retribution) is easy for Allah"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 170

يَا َ هَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءكُمُ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُواْ خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ وَإِن تَكْفُرُواْ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَكَانَ الله عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

170. "O' mankind! the Messenger has came to you with the truth from your Lord; then believe (in him), it is good for you And if you disbelieve, still, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The invitation of Islam is an invitation to all humankind throughout the world. The verse says:

"O' mankind!...."

The means of the spread of this invitation, and the weapon of the prophets for the aim, has been its rightfulness.

"... with the truth from your Lord...."

Before the advent of the holy Prophet (S), the People of the Book, and even the pagans, were waiting for a prophet to come.

When the same prophet came, they should believe in him and they would know that believing in him is beneficial for the people themselves. So, they might not hold Islam under obligation for their belief in it, but Allah has conferred a favour upon them for that He has guided them.

"...then believe (in him), it is good for you…."

Neither the disbelief of people incurs a loss to Allah, nor does their belief bring a gain for Him.

".. And if you disbelieve, still, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth…."

Allah knows that the felicity of people lies in following the path of prophets, and His Wisdom requires sending prophets.

"... and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 171

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لاَ تَغْلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلاَ تَقُولُواْ عَلَى اللّهِ إِلاَّ الْحَقِّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ فَآمِنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلاَ تَقُولُواْ ثَلاَثَةٌ انتَهُواْ خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللهِ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللّهِ وَكِيلاً

171. "O' People of the Book! do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say upon Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His Word that He cast unto Mary and a Spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say (Allah is) a Trinity. Desist! it is good for you; verily Allah is only one God. Far be it from His Glory that there be for Him a son; to Him belongs whatever is in heavens and whatever is in the earth; and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

Adapting to the contents of the previous verses which were about the People of the Book and pagans, in this verse the Qur'an has pointed to one of the most important deviations of the society of the Christians, i.e. trinity or believing in three foldness (the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit). In a short and reasonable sentence, it tells them to avoid this great aberration.

At first, it warns them that:

"O' People of the Book! do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say upon Allah save the truth. ..."

The subject of exaggeration about the religious leaders has been one of the most important origins of deviation in heavenly religions. For this reason, Islam has treated with a severe strictness against Extremists, 'Qalat'. So, in Islamic jurisprudence, Qalat have been introduced as the worst infidels.

Then the verse hints to some points where each of which is as a reason for the nullification of trinity, and divinity of Jesus (as). They are as follows:

1. Jesus (as) was but a son of Mary:

"... The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary....."

This phrase indicates that Jesus, similar to every other human being, was in the womb of his mother, and passed the foetal course. Like any other members of men, he was born, sucked milk and grew up in the bosom of his mother.

In other words, all the human qualities existed in him (as). How can such a person, who is object to the laws of nature and the changes of the world of matter, be a God without beginning and without end.

2. Jesus was the messenger of Allah and he was sent by Him. This rank does not fit with his divinity:

"...was only a messenger of Allah....."

3. Jesus was the 'word' of Allah that He cast unto Mary. This meaning is for hinting to the fact that Jesus was a creature of Allah. In the same manner that 'words' are His creatures, all the things of the world of creation are creatures of Allah, too.

4. Jesus is a 'spirit' that has been created by Allah (s.w.t.). This expression that has been mentioned in the Qur'an for the creation of 'Adam

or, in another sense for the creation of humankind, points to that spirit which Allah created and set in the selves of human beings, in general, and in Jesus and prophets, in particular.

"…and a Spirit from Him…"

Next to stating this meaning, the Qur'an says:

"... So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say (Allah is) a Trinity. Desist! it is good for you....."

Here, the Qur'an emphasizes on the unity of Allah once more and says:

"... verily Allah is only One God. ..."

This phrase means that you believe in oneness of God, and yet in the meantime, you accept trinity. But if Allah had a child, the child would be like Him, and, in this case, oneness of God is meaningless.

How can Allah have a child while He is far from being in need of the deficiency of wife and child, and from the deficiency of body and of being a body?

"... Far be it from His Glory that there be for Him a son....."

Besides that, He is the possessor of what is in the heavens and the earth. They are all His creatures and He is the Creator of them all. And, Muses (as) is one of these creatures.

"...to Him belongs whatever is in heavens and whatever is in the earth....."

How can an exceptional case be assumed for Him? Can a slave and a creature be both the child and the creator of his possessor! Allah not only is the Creator and the Possessor of them but also is a controller, protector, sustainer, and guardian of them. And, He is sufficient to direct and guard them.

"...and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

Basically, how is the Lord in need of a child, the One Who is without beginning and without end, and Who is in charge of the guardianship of all creatures from beginning to the end? Is He like us, the mortals, to demand a child in order to substitute that child after His death?

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 572
2. Surah Al-'An'am, No 6, verse 149

Section 24: Messengership of Jesus -Law of Inheritance

Jesus only a servant of Allah and His Messenger -The manifest proof from Allah and the Divine Light -The Law of Inheritance further detailed.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 172

لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْداً لِّلّهِ وَلاَ الْمَلآئِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ وَمَن يَسْتَنكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيهِ جَمِيعًا

172. "Never would Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the near-stationed angels; and whoever disdains His service, and prides, He will gather them all soon to Him."

Jesus himself declares that he is the servant of Allah. Why do you know him the Allah's child? Be not more royalistic than the king. The holy verse says:

"Never would Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah...."

The one who is a worshipper cannot he an object of worship. Concerning this matter, Imam Rida (as) told Jathliq, the leader of the Christians:

"All the qualities of Jesus were good save that he was not a good worshipper."

Jathliq became inconvenient and said that Jesus did the best worship. Imam (as) enquired:

"Whom did he worship?"

Jathliq said nothing, [1] since he understood that the purpose of Imam (as) was to teach that a 'worshipper' could not be an 'object of worship', and 'God '.

Near-stationed angels (including' Ruh-ul-Ghudus', Holy Spirit) also do worship Allah, why do you count Holy spirit one of the three gods?

"…nor would the near-stationed angels...."

The main cause of leaving worship is usually pride. Then, when the spirit of haughtiness comes, it brings forth all kinds of danger at its back.

"….and whoever disdains His service, and prides…"

If Jesus and the near stationed angels worship Allah, why do we not worship Him?

However, the return of all human beings is unto Allah. So, we should be in awe of the Hereafter and be not haughty.

"…He will gather them all soon to Him…"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 173

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُواْ وَاسْتَكْبَرُواْ فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلاَ يَجِدُونَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلاَ نَصِيرًا

173. "Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them more out of His Grace, and as for those who disdain and pride, He will punish them with a painful chastisement. And they will not find for themselves, besides Allah, any guardian or helper."

The Way to Felicity Is both Faith and Good Deed

Faith stands first and then there comes forth good deed. Yet they are both together. Deeds without faith and faith without deeds do not cause felicity and Heaven for you. The verse says:

"Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds. ..."

If you wish to be godly, pay the complete wage to the workers who work for you and even with a little more.

"...He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them more out of His Grace....."

Without having true faith and righteous deeds, you must not expect any intercession from the prophets.

"...and as for those who disdain and pride, He will punish them with a painful chastisement. And they will not find for themselves, besides Allah, any guardian or helper."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 174

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءكُم بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مبِينًا

174. "O' mankind! there has come for you a (firm) proof from your Lord and We have sent down to you a manifest light."

Basing on the Islamic literature, the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase 'a (firm) proof', in this verse, is the Prophet himself (S), and the purpose of 'a manifest light' is the Qur'an. [2]

The Prophet of Allah, indeed, is the proof of his religion, because such a book and knowledge has been introduced by an illiterate person that the more the time progresses and sciences develop, the rightfulness of the religion and the depth of its teachings will become clearer.

Explanations

1. Islam talks to all peoples, all generations, and all periods. Its message is worldly.

"O' mankind! ..."

2. The Qur'an is a book of reasoning, guidance and light.

"... and We have sent down to you a manifest light."

3. Sending light and proof is from among the signs of Allah's Lordship.

"... there has come for you a (firm) proof from your Lord ..."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 175

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُواْ بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مسْتَقِيمًا

175. "Then as for those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, shortly He will admit them to Mercy from Him and Grace; and will guide them toward Himself through a straight way."

The objective meaning of the above-mentioned holy phrase: 'and hold fast to Him' may be holding fast to the godly saints and leaders which works as a barrier against dispersion and division. It is cited in 'Jami'ah Supplication' thus:

"...the person who holds fast to you, he has verily held to Allah. ..."

It was pointed out in the two previous verses that the means of receiving the grace and favour of Allah should be faith and good deeds, while, in this

verse, the means is faith and holding fast to Allah. This shows that 'faith and holding fast to Allah ' is the same as faith and good deeds. These two meanings have frequently been mentioned beside each other in the Qur'an.

"Then as for those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, shortly He will admit them to Mercy from Him and Grace....."

Therefore, the straight way, or the way of guidance, is the way which leads man to Allah. It says:

"...and will guide them toward Himself through a straight way."

This fact should also be noted that according to the Islamic authentic narrations, the Qur'anic' phrase 'straight way' has been rendered into Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and Ahlul-Bayt (as). [3]

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 176

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ الله ُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلاَلَةِ إِنِ امْرُؤٌ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهَا وَلَدٌ فَإِن كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَإِن كَانُواْ إِخْوَةً رِّجَالاً وَنِسَاء فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الأُنثَيَيْنِ يُبَيِّنُ الله لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلواْ وَالله بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

176. "They ask you for a pronouncement. Say: Allah pronounces to you concerning the Kalalah (paternal, or paternal and maternal, brother and sister). If a man dies and he has no offspring, but he has a sister, for her shall be half of what he leaves; and he shall inherit from her (wholly) if she has no offspring; but if there be two (sisters), then they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there be (some) brothers and sisters, then for the male shall be the like of the shares of two females. Allah, makes clear (the laws) to you, lest you should go astray, and Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah Ansary who said that once he was seriously ill. The holy Prophet (S) went to visit him in his house where he (S) made ablution and besprinkled Jabir with some drops from the water of his ablution (as a remedy). Abdillah, who was thinking of his death, told the holy Prophet (S):

"My heirs are my sisters. How is their heritage?"

Then, this verse, which is called 'the verse of duties', was revealed and made the standard of their inheritance clear.

Some commentators of the Qur'an believe that this holy verse is the last verse that was revealed to the holy Prophet (S) about the commandments of Islam.

This verse states the amounts of the inheritance of brothers and sisters. As it was mentioned in the commentary upon the beginning verses of this Surah, verse 12, there are two verses in the Qur'an revealed upon the inheritance of brothers and sisters.

One of them is the very verse 12 which speaks about the maternal brothers and sisters, and the second one is the verse under discussion which is about the parental sisters and brothers or about only paternal brothers and sisters. It says:

"They ask you for a pronouncement. Say: Allah pronounces to you concerning the Kalalah (paternal, or paternal and maternal, brother and sister). ..."

Then, the Qur'an points to a few commandments as follows:

1. The verse says:

"... 1f a man dies and he has no offspring, but he has a sister, for her shall be half of what he leaves....."

2. It continues the statement that: if a woman dies and she has no child but she has one brother (a parental brother or a mere paternal brother) all his heritage belongs to that one brother. It says:

"...and he shall inherit from her (wholly) if she has no offspring; ..."

3. If a person dies and there remain two sisters after his death, they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; ..."

"...but if there be two (sisters), then they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves ..."

4. If the heirs of the dead are several brothers and sisters (more than two), they divide the whole inheritance among themselves so that the share of a brother is the like of the shares of two sisters.

"... and if there be (some) brothers and sisters, then for the male shall be the like of the shares of two females....."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an remarks that Allah states these facts for you so that you should not go astray and pave the path of felicity. (Surely the way that Allah shows is a true and correct way), because He is All-Knowing of all things. It says:

"..Allah, makes clear (the laws) to you, lest you should go astray, and Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

However, Surah An-Nisa'' has begun with the family discussions, and has ended with the family affairs, too.

Notes

1. Manaqib by Ibn-i-Shahr Ashub, vol. 4, p. 352
2. At- Tafsir-u-Safi, vol. 1, p. 475
3. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 429; & Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 1, p. 486

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Chapter 5, Introduction

Introduction to the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah The Beneficent The Merciful

This Surah has been called Al-Ma'idah (the food), because of the invocation of Jesus (as) that he asked for the descent of heavenly food, mentioned in this Surah, verse 114.

The Arabic term /Ma'idah/ originally is used for a tray with food inside.

Surah Al-Ma'idah contains 120 verses, and, comparing all Suras of the Qur'an, the most frequency of the phrase 'O' you who have Faith!' has occurred in this Surah. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, this phrase has been repeated eleven times, but in this Surah it has been recited 16 times.

The subject matters referred to in this Surah are questions such as: master ship and leadership, rejecting the belief of trinity in Christians, fulfilling the promise, testifying with justice, prohibition of murder, some commandments upon edibles, ablution, dry ablution, social justice, and so on.

Since it is the last Surah which was revealed, at the beginning of the Surah it enjoins to fulfilling all the promises and pledges by the phrase: 'fulfil the promises '.

Section 1: General Discipline

Fulfilment of covenants -Obligations relating to Pilgrimage -Regulations regarding food -Perfection of the Faith -Islam chosen to be the Religion -Dealings with the non-Muslims.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَوْفُواْ بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ الأَنْعَامِ إِلاَّ مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنتُمْ حُرُمٌ إِنَّ اللَّه يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

In The Name of Allah The Beneficent The Merciful

1. "O' you who have Faith! Fulfil the contracts (made by you or people). The four-footed animals are lawful to you (for food) except those which will be recited unto you, pilgrim garb, and while you are in deem not game permitted to be hunted. Verily Allah decrees whatever He intends."

Muslims should earnestly fulfil any covenant and every kind o contract that they have made. These covenants are irrespective of the recorded contracts and the oral contracts, whether they are political, economical, social, and both with authorative and weak people, friend or enemy.

The Holy Qur'an enjoins Muslims that the contracts with pagans should be fulfilled, too. Surah At- Taubah, No.9. verse 4 says:

"... so fulfil their contract ...".

According to a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 162 even the fulfilment of agreements with the sinners is necessary.

These covenants may be with Allah (s.w.t.) (like vows and promises), or with people who can be an individual or a group, young or old. The contracts may be with the countries in neighbourhood, or those of international formation.

However, as in the same manner that breach of promise and iniquity is the secret of deprivations,[1] fulfilling the promises is the cause of gains and enjoyments.

And it ought to be noted that the heavenly Books are also Allah's covenants to which should we be loyal and fulfil them entirely. The Old Testament (the Torah), the New Testament (the Evangel) and the Present Testament (the Qur'an) all are referred to in the Islamic literature. In a tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Al-Qur'an is the covenant of Allah unto His people…." [2]

However, faith is the basis of fulfilling the promises and vows. The holy Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

"There is no religion for the person who does not fulfil his promise."

If the agreements and promises be not kept, the basis of the society and common confidence will fail, and, at that line, disorder comes forth.

"O' you who have Faith! fulfil the contracts (made by you or people). ..."

Then, following the ordinance of fulfilling the promise, which involves the entire ordinances and divine covenants, the Qur'an states a number of

Islamic ordinances. At first, it refers to the meat of some animals that can be lawful. It says:

"...The four-footed animals are lawful to you (for food) ..."

But, in this ordinance, it has excepted the meat of two animals to be lawful. It says:

"...except those which will be recited unto you, and while you are in pilgrim garb, deem not game permitted to be hunted. ..."

And Allah is wilful to decree whatever ordinance He pleases, since He is Omniscient and 'Omni competent. This means that He decrees whatever ordinance which is good for the servants, and His Wisdom requires it.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تُحِلُّواْ شَعَآئِرَ اللّهِ وَلاَ الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلاَ الْهَدْيَ وَلاَ الْقَلآئِدَ وَلا آمِّينَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلاً مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُواْ وَلاَ يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُواْ وَتَعَاوَنُواْ عَلَى الْبرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَلاَ تَعَاوَنُواْ عَلَى الإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ إِنَّ اللّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

2. "O' you who have Faith! do not profane Allah's Monuments, nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the sacrificial animals with garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord. And when you are free from the pilgrim garb (and acts of Umrah), then (you can) hunt. And let not hatred of a people (once) hindered you from the sacred Mosque move you to commit aggression. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression; and be in awe of Allah (for), verily, Allah is severe in penalty."

Eight Divine Ordinances in a Verse

In this verse, several Islamic magnificent ordinances, among the latest ordinances that were revealed to the Prophet (S), are referred to. All of these ordinances, or most of them, are related to Hajj pilgrimage and visiting the Sacred House:

1. At first it addresses the believers and enjoins them not to violate the sanctity of the symbols of Allah and not to consider their prohibition as lawful. It says:

"O'you who have Faith! do not profane Allah's Monuments....."

2. Keep the sanctity of the sacred months and refrain from fighting in these sacred months.

"...nor the sacred month....."

3. Do not consider lawful the offering and the sacrificial animals which you bring for Hajj, whether they are with garlands or without garlands, and let them reach the place of sacrifice and then they can be sacrificed there.

4. All the pilgrims to the Sacred House should be enjoyed a complete freedom in the rites of this Islamic great duty. In this work, there is not any privilege between nations, individuals, races, and languages.

Therefore, you must not bring into trouble those who set out for visiting the Sacred House and seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah, or even for obtaining some commercial gains, whether they are friends or enemies of

yours. When they are simply Muslims and are called as pilgrims of the Sacred House, they are in immunity.

5. The prohibition of hunting, in Hajj performances, is limited to the time of wearing pilgrim garment. Thus, when you come out of pilgrim garment while performing the rites of Hajj or Umrah, hunting is allowed for you.

"... And when you are free from the pilgrim garb (and acts of Umrah), then (you can) hunt...."

6. If in the course of Hudaybiyyah pagans hindered you from going into the Sacred House and did not allow you to perform the concerning sacred rites of the Pilgrimage, this happening should not cause you to renew the old hostilities after they becoming Muslims, and hinder them from going into the Sacred House.

"... And let not hatred of a people (once) hindered you from the sacred Mosque move you to commit aggression. ..."

A general law can be extracted from this statement. This law is that never should Muslims be malicious and revenge the incidents that happened in old times.

Then, in order to complete the former discussion, the holy verse continues saying:

"..And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression....."

The Arabic term /birr/ has a vast meaning, including: having faith in: Allah, Resurrection, prophets, heavenly Books, and angels. The word also means: helping the deprive in the society, fulfilling the contracts properly, being patient in affairs, and helping in righteousness.

For example, if the act of studying and learning is a work of righteousness, its facilities, such as: building schools, libraries, laboratories, providing books, vehicles, training teachers, encouraging both teachers and students, etc, all are the examples of 'helping in righteousness'.

There are many traditions in Islamic literature in which we have been instructed to helping in goodness and assisting the oppressed and the deprived, and we have also been prohibited from assisting the oppressors. Here, we mention only a few of them as a blessing:

Helping a Muslim believer, in comparison, is better than performing one month recommendable fast and spiritual retreat. (Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, p. 345)

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever steps forth for helping others, has the reward equal to a striver in the Holy War." (Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 8, p. 586)

He (as) also said:

"And whoever assists a transgressor, he himself is as a transgressor." (Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, p. 345)

We have also been enjoined even not to help a transgressor in building a mosque. (Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol 12 p. 130)

We ought not to sell grapes to the maker of wine, not to give weapon to a tyrant, not to allow a plotter to act, not to give vehicles to Taghuto to Mecca, not to tell the secrets to the persons with little capacity, and not to smile to a sinner.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 3

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّه بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلاَّ مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُواْ بِالأَزْلاَمِ ذَلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلاَ تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الإِسْلاَمَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِّإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللّه غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

3. "Forbidden to you (for food) are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, what has been (slaughtered) in the name of any other than that of Allah, and the beast strangled, beaten to death, killed by a fall, the gored to death by a horn, and that which a wild beast has begun to eat, (all are unlawful), except what you slaughter (in accordance with the prescribed law). And (also forbidden is to you) what has been slaughtered before idols, or that you divide by the arrows; (all) that is ungodliness. Today those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so do not dread them but dread Me. Today have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour on you, and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion. But, whoever is helplessly forced by hunger, without inclining to sin, (can enjoy the forbidden food), then verily Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

At the beginning of this Surah, there was a statement which pointed out to the meat of the beast being lawful for eating, except what would be said thereafter. This verse, in fact, is the explanation upon the same exceptions. Here, there are eleven things which have been ordained to be prohibited.

At first, it says:

"Forbidden to you (for food) are carrion, bloods, the flesh of swine, what has been (slaughtered) in the name of any other than that of Allah, the beast strangled....."

The meat of this kind of beast is forbidden to be eaten, whether the action is done spontaneously, or by the beast, or by a person.

It had been customary at the Age of Ignorance that sometimes the animal was put between two sticks or two branches of a tree, and then it was pressed thereby so much so that it died. After that, the meat of such animal was consumed by them. It is also forbidden in Islam to eat the meat of the animals which are tortured, or beaten to death, or die because of a disease.

"... beaten to death, killed by a fall, the gored to death by a horn ..."

It is cited in At-Tafsir-ul-Qurtubi that it was a custom among some Arabs that, for the sake of idols, they would beat a few sorts of animals until they died. They considered that action a kind of worship.

The verse also continues saying:

"...and that which a wild beast has begun to eat, (all are unlawful) ..."

Then, following the prohibition of the aforementioned items, the Qur'an implies: if, before that those animals die, they can be taken and slaughtered in accordance with the Islamic laws, and sufficient blood comes out of their bodies, they will be lawful. The verse says:

"...except what you slaughter (in accordance with the prescribed law). ..."

At the Age of Ignorance, some idol worshippers had settled some pieces of stone around Ka'bah which had had no special form or shape. They called them /nusub/ and they sacrificed animals before them and poured some blood of the sacrificial animal over the idols.

The only distinguished difference between these stones and idols was that idols had a special shape and face, but /nusub/ had not. In the verse under discussion, Islam has forbidden eating the meat of such animals, and says the animals which are slaughtered on the idols or before them are all forbidden for you to eat.

"….And (also forbidden is to you) what has been slaughtered before idols…"

It is clear, of course, that the prohibition of this kind of meal has a moral and spiritual aspect, not a bodily and material one,

Another kind of animal which the verse points out as unlawful, are those which are killed and divided in the form of lottery, The action was in this manner that: ten persons among themselves laid a bet and bought an animal to kill, Then they put ten arrow shafts in a bag, on seven of them was written 'gainer', while on the rest was written' loser'.

They took those shafts out of the bag as the manner of lottery one after another by the name of the ten people. Those for whose names the seven 'gainers' came out, had a share of meat without paying anything; but those three persons, for whose names the three 'losers' were given, had to pay one-third of the price of the animal without having a share of its meat.

These arrow shafts were called /'azlam/. Islam prohibited eating such meat. It was not for the reason that the meat itself was unlawful, but for the reason that it had a form of gambling and lottery. So, it says:

"….or that you divide by the arrows…"

It is evident that the prohibition of gambling, and the like of it, is not allocated to the meat of animals, but when it is done on a thing, it is forbidden, because it is a place where all unexpected social harms and superstitions can be assembled.

Then, finally, in order to emphasize more on the prohibition of all these deeds, it says:

"….. (all) that is ungodliness…"

Moderation in the Usage of Meat

From the totality of the above discussions, as well as other Islamic literature, it is understood that the style of Islam in consuming kinds of meat, like its other commandments, is a perfectly moderate style.

That is, neither it is like the people of the Age of Ignorance, who consumed the meat of lizard, carrion, blood, and the like of them or like many people of the West who, today, do not remanciate eating even the meat of crabs and some worms, nor it is like some Hindus, who believe that eating meat is absolutely forbidden.

Thus, Islam ordains that the meat of those animals which contains pure nutriment and is not hatred, to be lawful (halal), and, by giving some

conditions for the usage of some kinds of meat, has rejected the styles of excess and defect.

Next to the statement of the above-mentioned ordinances, there are also two expressive phrases mentioned in the verse under discussion. At first, it says:

"... Today those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so do not dread them but dread Me. ..."

Then, it continues saying:

"... Today have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour on you, and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion. ..."

Which day is the day of the perfection of religion? What is the purpose of the word' today' which has been repeated in the couple of above sentences?

The answer to the first question is: "The Day of Ghadeer Khumm." This fact has been cited by Shi'ite commentators in their books, in the case that many traditions referred to by the scholars of both great sects of Islam.

Sunnites and Shi'ites confirm it, and it completely fits with the contents of the verse. That day was the day when the Prophet of Islam (S) formally assigned Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) as his successor.

It was on that day that Islam reached its final perfection and pagans sank deep inside the waves of their despair. They expected Islam to be subsistent in person and, by diminishing the Prophet (S), the circumstances would change to the former state, so that Islam could gradually vanish.

But when they observed that a man was elected as the successor of the Prophet and people paid allegiance to him who, next to the Prophet (S), was peerless among Muslims from the point of knowledge, virtue, power, and justice, despair and hopelessness, due to the future of Islam, surrounded them, and they found that it was a fixed and permanent religion.

An interesting point, which must be paid attention to here, is that the Qur'an in Surah An-Nur No.24, verse 55 says:

"Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them and that He will certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange…."

In this verse, Allah says that He will establish for them on the earth the religion which He has chosen for them.

Regarding the fact that Surah An-Nur has been revealed before Surah Al-Ma'idah, and noting that the sentence "and chosen for you Islam as a religion," which has been revealed in the verse under discussion upon the master ship of Ali (as), we deduce that Islam will be firmly established and grounded on the earth when it be combined with 'mastership', because this is the very Islam that Allah has chosen and has promised those who believe to establish it firmly on the earth.

In other more clear words, Islam will be a world-wide religion in the case that it be not separated from the subject of love of Ahlul-Bayt /wilayah/ (the loyalty or allegiance to the Imams).

Another matter that can be deduced from the combination of Surah An-Nur, verse 55 with the verse under discussion is that: in the former verse

three promises have been given to the believers. The first is that they be made rulers in the earth. The second is security and peace for the worshippers of the Lord; and the third is the establishment of a religion that Allah has chosen.

Those three promises were actually done on the day of Ghadeer Khumm (18th Zul-Hijjah) when the verse:

"... Today have I perfected your religion for you ..."

was revealed, because the perfect complete example of a believing person with good deed meant Ali (as), the one who was assigned as the successor of the Prophet (S). It was then that with the meaning of:

"Today those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion ..."

Muslims were set in a relative security and peace; and also with the meaning of '...and chosen for you Islam as religion', the chosen religion of the Lord was established among Muslims." [3]

At the end of the verse, it has returned again to the discussion of the sorts of prohibited meat and expresses the ordinance of the case of exigency. It says:

"... But, whoever is helplessly forced by hunger, without inclining to sin, (can enjoy the forbidden food), then verily Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

Explanations

1. The firmness of the religious school depends on a correct leadership. So, with its existence, all the infidels became hopeless at that time.

2. If the leader of the day of Ghadeer (and wilayah) exists in the society, Muslims must not have any fear.

3. The most important window of the hope of infidels was the departure of the Muslims' leader (S). By the assignment of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) for the leadership, that window was closed. However, the religion without having a leader is not complete.

4. The infidels, without the leader of Ghadeer, have many hopes and with that leader being appointed, they become hopeless. Then all infidels are on one side and 'Ali-ibn-' Abi-Talib is on another side.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 4

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ
تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ الله فَكُلُواْ مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُواْ اسْمَ اللّه عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّه إِنَّ
اللّه سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

4. "(O' Muhammad!) they ask you what has been made lawful for them. Say: 'Good things have been made lawful for you; and such hunting creatures as you teach, training them as hounds, and teaching them of what Allah has taught you, then eat what they seize for you and mention Allah's Name over it. And be in awe of Allah; verily Allah is swift in reckoning."

Occasion of Revelation

There are several occasions of revelation mentioned upon this verse, the most appropriate of which is as follows:

Two companions of the holy Prophet (S) by the names of Zayd-ul-Khayr and 'Uday-ibn-Hatam, once went to him (S) and said that they were among a group who used to hunt with falcons and hunting-dogs.

Those hunting-dogs would take the animals whose meat was lawful (for eating). Some of the animals would be fetched alive and killed by them, but some others would be killed by the hunting-dogs, before they had opportunities to kill them according to the Islamic law.

They asked that while they knew that the meat of carrion was unlawful for them to eat, what their duty was to do. Then, the verse was revealed and answered them.

A Lawful Hunting

Following the commandments stated in the previous couple of verses upon the lawful and unlawful sorts of meat, another part of that subject is referred to in this verse, and, as an answer to their question, the Divine revelation says:

"(O' Muhammad!) they ask you what has been made lawful for them. Say: 'Good things have been made lawful for you…."

This means that what Islam has ordained as unlawful are among malignant and impure things. Thus, never the Divine law prohibits a pure animal which has naturally been created for the usage and utility of human beings.

Then, the verse refers to the hunting when it says:

"…..and such hunting creatures as you teach, training them as hounds, and teaching them of what Allah has taught you...."

Therefore, the animals that hunting-dogs bring for you should be killed according to the law of Islam when they are alive. But, if the hunts die before the dogs can reach them, they are lawful (halal), although they are not slaughtered.

At the end of the verse, it points to two other circumstances of the conditions of such hunt being lawful, saying:

"….then eat what they seize for you…"

Thus, if the hunting-dogs have accustomed themselves to eat a portion of their own hunt and leave another portion, such hunt is not lawful. In fact, such a dog has neither been trained, nor what it leaves can be as an aspect of the Qur'anic word /'alaykum/ (for you), for the dog has hunted the animal for itself.

The second condition is:

"…and mention Allah's Name over it...."

Then, in conclusion, in order that all these godly commandments be observed, it says:

".... And be in awe of Allah; verily Allah is swift in reckoning."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 5

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ

أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلاَ مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِالإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

5. "Today (all) good things have been made lawful for you, and (also) the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And (so are) the chaste women from the believers and the chaste women from those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you) when you give them their dowries taking them in marriage, not fornicating, nor taking them for paramours in secret. And whoever denies the faith, his work indeed is vain, and he will be of the losers in the Hereafter."

Consuming Food of the People of the Book and marrying them

In this verse, which is the supplementary of the former verses, the Qur'an says:

"Today (all) good things have been made lawful for you, and (also) the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them....."

The objective meaning of the phrase: "...the food of those who have been given the Book..." is something other than the meat of animals slaughtered by them.

It is narrated in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who, on commenting this verse, said:

"The purpose of 'the food of those who have been given the Book' is cereals and fruits, not their slaughtered (animals), since they do not recite the Name of Allah when they slaughter (them)."

Marrying with Non-Muslim Women

After referring the lawfulness of the food of the People of the Book, this verse speaks about the marriage of the immaculate women from among, Muslims and the People of the Book. It says:

"... And (so are) the chaste women from the believers and the chaste women from those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you) when you give them their dowries taking them in marriage ..."

Then the verse adds the statement:

"...taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating, nor taking them for paramours in secret...."

In fact, this part of the verse decreases also some restrictions which had existed before upon the marriage of Muslims with non-Muslims, and, thereby, it authorizes their marriage with the women of the People of the Book under some conditions. More details about this subject should be studied in the Islamic jurisprudent books.

This fact should also be said that in this world of today that many of customs of the Age of Ignorance have been revived in different forms, this sort of thought has also come into being that: there is no objection for single men or women to take paramours. It has appeared not only in a hidden form, similar to that manner that existed in pre-Islamic era of Ignorance, but also manifestly.

The world of today, from the point of sexual libertinism, indeed, has gone beyond what had existed in the Age of Ignorance.

At that time, they considered only taking paramours in secret permissible, while these recent people know its manifest form unobjective, too, so that, with ultimate impudence, they re even proud of it.

This shameful custom, which can be counted a manifest obscene act, is one of the inauspicious presents which has been brought from West to East and has proved to be the origin of many misfortunes and crimes.

In view of the fact that the above-mentioned facilities upon association with the People of the Book and marrying their women may be misused by some persons and, they, knowingly or unknowingly, may be driven towards them, at the end, the verse warns the Muslims, saying:

"... And whoever denies the faith, his work indeed is vain, and he will be of the losers in the Hereafter."

This statement implies that these facilities, besides bringing some relief into your life, should work as a cause of influence and development of Islam among foreigners. It should not cause, of course, that you may be influenced by it and leave your own religion. If it happens, your chastisement will be very hard and heavy.

Notes

1. The reference is Surah An-Nisa'', No.4, verse 160, and Surah Al-An'am, No.6, verse 146

2. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 16, p. 144; & vol. 69, p. 198

3. Inside the verse of prohibition sorts of forbidden meat of carrion were mentioned in order that they be protected from the perversion of opponents. Just like a person who puts his jewels inside other ordinary goods to be protected from being taken away.

Section 2: Special cleanliness for Prayer -Equity enjoined

Prescribed cleanliness for prayer -Equity and piety enjoined -To fear Allah alone and not the enemies,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاةِ فاغْسِلُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُواْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَينِ وَإِن كُنتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُواْ وَإِن كُنتُم مَّرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاء أَحَدٌ مِّنكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لاَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاء فَلَمْ تَجِدُواْ مَاء فَتَيَمَّمُواْ صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُواْ بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُم مِّنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَـكِن يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهَّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

6. "O' you who have Faith! when you stand up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet up to the ankles; and if you are polluted, then perform a total ablution; and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you comes from the privy, or you have touched the women and you can find no water (for ablution or major ritual ablution), then betake yourselves to clean soil and wipe a part of your faces and your hands with some of it. Allah does not intend to put on you any difficulty, but He intends to purify you, and to complete His favour upon you in order that you might be thankful."

In the former verses there were different statements mentioned about 'bodily purification and some material bounties'. This verse has pointed to the 'soul purification' and what causes the purification of the self of Man.

Here, a notable amount of the ordinances upon ablution, major ritual ablution and dry ablution have been referred to, which are effective in soul purification. At first, it addresses the believing people and states the ordinances of ablution as follows:

"O' you who have Faith! when you stand up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet up to the ankles...."

Thus, only that part of the hand that has been mentioned in the verse must be washed. But its manner in the practice of the Prophet (S) that has been conveyed to us by Ahlul-Bayt (as) denotes that the elbows must be washed down to the fingers.

Then, the verse pays to the ordinance of the major ritual ablution y when it says:

"...and if you are polluted, then perform a total ablution..."

It is clear that the objective meaning of the phrase: ' then perform a total ablution' is to wash the whole body thoroughly.

The Arabic term /junub/ philologically means 'something goes away'. So, a person in a state of ritual impurity is called /junub/ for the reason that the one must avoid doing actions such as: establishing prayers, staying in a mosque and the like of them while the person is in that state.

By the way, when the Holy Qur'an in this verse enjoins the persons in the state of ritual impurity to perform a major ritual ablution for establishing prayers, it is understood that the major ritual ablution substitutes ablution.

Then, the verse continues its words referring to the statement of the ordinance of 'dry ablution' for the person who gets up and intends to keep prayers. It says:

"...and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you comes from the privy, or you have touched the women and you can find no water (for ablution or major ritual ablution), then betake yourselves to clean soil ..."

Next to this statement, the style of performing dry ablution is shortly stated. It says:

"...and wipe a part of your faces and your hands with some of it…"

And, to make it clear that there has been no restriction in the previous commandments when all of them have been legitimated for the sake of some considerable expediency, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... Allah does not intend to put on you any difficulty, but He intends to purify you, and to complete His favour upon you in order that you might be thankful."

Indeed, the statements mentioned in the above holy verse once more emphasizes on this fact that all divine commandments and Islamic enjoinments are assigned for the sake of people and for the protection of their rights.

There has been no aim other than that. By these instructions, Allah intends people provide both spiritual and bodily purification for themselves.

However, the final sentence of the, holy verse convey a general law. It denotes that the divine ordinances, in no aspect, are in the form of difficult proposals, or onerous duties.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 7

وَاذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَةَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ الَّذِي وَاثَقَكُم بِهِ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصدُورِ

7. "And remember Allah's favour on you and His covenant with which He has bound you, when you said: 'We heard and we obeyed '. And be in awe of Allah, surely Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

Divine Convictions

In this verse, the Qur'an attracts the attention of the Muslims to the importance o the endless bounties of Allah, the most magnificent of which is faith and guidance. It says:

"And remember Allah's favour on you ..."

What favour is greater than that Muslims obtained all kinds of merits, honours and effective possibilities owing to Islam? Islam caused a group of people who had been before dispersed, ignorant, blood-thirsty immoral, and corrupter to change into a society who became organized, united, and intelligent, with abundant material and spiritual privileges and possibilities.

Then, the holy verse reminds them the covenant that they have compacted with Allah, and says:

"...and His covenant with which He has bound you, when you said: ' We heard and we obeyed..."

This verse can be a hint to, all the genetic and divine covenants, (the covenants that Allah has bound Man through primordial nature, or those- that the holy Prophet (S) has bound Muslims with in different circumstances.

Basing on many Islamic authentic traditions, the objective meaning of 'covenant', mentioned in the verse under discussion, is the master ship of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as). It is the covenant that the Prophet (S) took from them in Ghadeer Khumm, on the day of Farewell Pilgrimage, and they accepted it, too. [1]

To emphasize on this meaning, at the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an says:

"...and be in awe of Allah, surely Allah is aware of what is in the breasts."

It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that the holy Prophet (S) stated both the prohibited things and the essentiality of master ship of Ali (as) during Farewell Pilgrimage. [2]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 8

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُونُواْ قَوَّامِينَ لِلّهِ شُهَدَاء بِالْقِسْطِ وَلاَ يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَى أَلاَّ تَعْدِلُواْ اعْدِلُواْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ إِنَّ اللّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

8. " O' you who have Faith! be always up rite for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be in awe of Allah; verily Allah is well aware of what you do."

An Earnest Invitation unto Justice

This verse invites to establishment of justice. At first, it addresses the believers and says:

"O' you who have Faith! be always up rite for Allah, bearers of witness with justice...."

After that, the verse points to one of the factors of deviation from justice, and warns Muslims as such that tribal hatreds and hostilities, or personal accounts, should not stand as a barrier in the way of the execution of justice and should not cause transgression over the rights of others, because justice is something beyond all of them. It says:

"...and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably....."

For the importance of the matter, it emphasizes on the subject of justice once more and says:

"…Act equitably, that is nearer to piety....."

And, since justice is the most important element of piety and righteousness, for the third time, it adds as an emphasis that:

"... verily Allah is well aware of what you do."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 9 - 10

وَعَدَ اللّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

9. "Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds that they will have forgiveness and a great reward."

10. "And (as for) those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs (revelations), these are the companions of Hell."

Allah's way of treatment is such that, in the Qur'an, next to the statement of some particular commandments, in order to emphasize and complete them, He points to some general laws and principals. So, here, in verse 9, to emphasize on the subject of the execution of justice and rightfully bearing witness, it says:

"Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds that they will have forgiveness and a great reward."

In contrast with the above-mentioned group, there are those who reject Allah and deny His Signs, i.e. the verses of the Qur'an. Such people will be in Hell. It says:

"And (as for) those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs (revelations), these are the companions of Hell."

It is worthy of attention that the phrases: 'forgiveness' and 'a great reward' are referred to in the verse as a promise of Allah (s.w.t.) where it says: "Allah has promised ..." while the 'retribution of Hell' has been mentioned as a result of 'deeds '.

The verse implies that those who have deeds such as so and so, will have a fate so and so. In fact, this meaning is a hint to the grace and favour of Allah (s.w.t.) regarding the rewards in the Hereafter which will never be paralleled with the insignificant deeds of the mortals in this world.

Also, the chastisements in the coming world have no aspect of vengeance, but they are the fruit of the evil deeds of human beings in the present world.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَن يَبْسُطُواْ إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنكُمْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

11. "O' you who have Faith! remember Allah 's favour on you when a (hostile) people were minded to stretch against you their hands, but He withheld their hands from you; and be in awe of Allah, and on Allah let the believers rely. "

The opinions are divided on that which happening this verse was revealed for. Yet, it can be considered for all the instances that Muslims have relied on Allah and have victoriously rescued when confronting the evil attempt or attack of the enemy.

Still, the remembrance of the bounties of Allah (s.w.t.) is a kind of thanksgiving. It takes away pride and negligence from man and increases, his love to the Lord.

"O' you who have Faith! remember Allah's favour on you when a (hostile) people were minded to stretch against you their hands, but He withheld their hands from you; and be in awe of Allah, and on Allah let the believers rely."

Explanations

1. Repelling the harms of the enemy is among the most important favours of Allah.

2. Absorb the grace of Allah to yourself and repel the harm of the enemy through piety, Faith and relying on Him. (Similar to the condition that Allah leaves the enemy to predominate over persons, because of their committing sins, the same is to attentive to Him that causes the harms of enemies to be removed)

Notes

1. At- Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p, 454
2. Tafsir-i-Jawami'-ul-Jami', vol. 2, p. 44

Section 3: The Covenants with the Jews and the Christians

The covenants with the Jews -The covenants with the Christians - The actual position of Jesus,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 12

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ الله مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ الله إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنتُم بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ الله قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَّأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ فَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاء السَّبِيلِ

12. "And certainly Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We raised among them twelve chiftains, and Allah said: 'Verily I am with you, if you keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and believe in My messengers and assist them and lend Allah a kindly loan, I will most certainly cover your evil deeds and I will certainly cause you to enter Gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever among you disbelieves after that, has indeed strayed from the right path."

The chiefs of the Israelites were twelve persons. The ministers of Moses (as) and the custodians of the twelve tribes were from among them. It is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who, in a tradition, said:

"The vicegerents after me are twelve. They the Israelites"[1].

The attempt of the opponents of Ahlul-Bayt (as) is in vain when they try to adapt this figure to Orthodox Caliphs, Umayyid Caliphs, and the Caliphs of Abbasids, though it adapts to neither of them.

There are, of course, many traditions recorded which denote that the Prophet himself (S) mentioned the names of these twelve persons. According to his statement recorded in a tradition[2] the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi talib and their last one is Hadrat Mahdi (May Allah hasten his auspicious advent).

The Arabic phrase: /'azzartumuhum/ is derived from the word /'azzara/ which means: 'to assist with honour'. Therefore, the Arabic term /ta'zir/ refers to a kind of assistance to the sinner in abandoning the crime. That is why those Islamic punishments have the function of education rather than vengeance.

The Qur'anic phrase /sawa'-us-sabil/ means the middle way that swerving from which is going towards aberration and fall.

Explanations

1. Allah is with us when we observe some conditions including: prayers, poor-rate, belief in Truth, assisting prophets, and giving charity. So, if we leave them, the Grace of Allah will be ceased.

2. Prayer, poor-rate, and charity have existed in all the Divine religions. However, performing obligations alone is not enough, but following the totality of obligatory and recommended deeds, without approaching the prohibited things, is effective.

3. Prayer, poor-rate, and charity are meaningful when they are accompanied with leadership and master ship -with the acceptance of master ship of the whole prophets, not a part of them.

4. There is no room for the sinners in Heaven. Purification is first, and then being admitted to enter into it.

5. The only way to the forgiveness of Allah, is Faith and righteous deeds.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 13

فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَاقَهُمْ لَعنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُواْ حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُواْ بِهِ وَلاَ تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَآئِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنْهُمُ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِب الْمُحْسِنِينَ

13. "So, for their breaking their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They alter the words (of Allah) from their places and they have neglected a part of what they were admonished with, and you shall always discover treachery in them save a few of them. Yet forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds); verily Allah loves the good-doers."

In the first verse of this Surah, the fulfilment of contracts was referred to. In the previous verse, the covenant of Allah (s.w.t.) with the Israelites, and the heedlessness of those people unto the Divine covenant, was pointed out.

In the current verse, the effects of breaching promise are stated. Therefore, this Surah has been entitled 'the covenant' too. However, the contents of the verses, as a whole, also warn about a great breach of promise.

Breach of promise causes deprivation from Allah's grace.[3] It is also an origin of the appearance of hard-heartedness in persons.

The Israelites have always been treacherous. They used to pervert the religion of Allah, therefore, they encountered with punishment. The verse says:

"So, for their breaking their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They alter the words (of Allah) from their places and they have neglected a part of what they were admonished with, and you shall always discover treachery in them save a few of them. Yet forgive them and overlook (their misdeeds); verily Allah loves the good-doers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 14

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّا نَصَارَى أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُواْ حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُواْ بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاء إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ الله بِمَا كَانُواْ يَصْنَعُونَ

14. "And of those who say: 'We are Christians' We did take their covenant, but they (also like Israelites) have neglected a part of what they were admonished with. Therefore We have stirred up among them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection; and soon Allah will inform them of what they have been doing."

In the previous verse, the words were about the breach of promise among the Children of Israel. Now, in this verse, the statement is upon the breach of promise among the Christians. That verse introduced almost all the Israelites as breachers of promise, (except a few of them). But, in this verse,

from the beginning, it separates a part of the Christians as breachers of promise when it says:

"….of those who say: 'We are Christians' …"

This shows that the number of the deluded people among the Jews is larger than those among the Christians.

"And of those who say: 'We are Christians' We did take their covenant, but they (also like Israelites) have neglected a part of what they were admonished with. Therefore We have stirred up among them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection; and soon Allah will inform them of what they have been doing."

Explanation

The Qur'anic term /nasara/ (Christians), mentioned in this holy verse, is the plural form of the word /nasrani/, and, therein, the Christians are entitled /nasara/ since the helpers and companions of Jesus (as) used to say:

"...We are helpers (in the cause) of Allah. ..."[4]

Therefore, we must take an example by the bitter results emerged from breach of promise that other people had suffered. The verse indicates that Allah took covenant from the Christians, but since they neglected it they encountered the infliction of Ahzab.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 15

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيراً مِّمَّا كُنتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَن كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءكُم مِّنَ اللّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مبِينٌ

15. "O' People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you, expounding to you much of what you have been hiding of the Book, and overlooking much. Indeed there has come to you, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book."

Islam is a world-wide religion which invites the followers of all religions to the Truth and to itself. Islam is the simplest and the most conceivable religion among all religions.

Hence, do take care not to be despair of guiding and inviting people towards the Truth, and do invite the People of the Book too, though they are breachers of promise. The manifestation of the concealed matters is a sign of knowledge of hidden things, and it is also one of the ways of knowing the holy prophet.

"O' People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you expounding to you much of what you have been hiding of the Book, and overlooking much. ..."

However, the world of humanity with the absence of the Qur'an is surely dark.

"...Indeed there has come to you, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 16

يَهْدِي بِهِ الله مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلاَمِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنِ الظلُمَاتِ إِلَى النورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مسْتَقِيمٍ

16. "With it Allah guides whoever follows His pleasure into the ways of safety, and He brings them out of darkness towards the Light by His Will, and guides them to a right path."

The Arabic term /salam/ (peace) is one of the Names of God (His Attributes). In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says:

"He is Allah, there is no god save He; the king, the Holy, the Peace..."[5]

Paradise has also been called 'Dar-us-Salam' (the house of peace). So, guiding towards the ways of peace and safety can be rendered into 'the way of Allah (s.w.t.) and Paradise'. The person who wants to reach these two, should go via /subul-as-salam/, 'the ways of safety', which is specific to the followers of 'Truth'.

The concept of /salam/ (peace, safety) includes the peace of individuals and society, family members and off springs, thought and soul, and, even, the peace of honour.

Only those people are guidable who try to obtain the pleasure of Allah (s.w.t.). Then, those who try to gain the ranks and the wealth of this fleeting world, and also follow their low desires and do revenge, are not guidable.

Certainly, all the ways toward safety and prosperity are found in gaining the pleasure of Allah. So, whoever tries to please other than Him, is in aberration.

However, all the various secondary ways towards the Truth, lead to the main unity. 'The ways of safety, end to the Straight Way. Hence, all those who, by performing different good accomplishments, in variety of conditions, try to gain the pleasure of Allah (s.w.t.), reach to one single proper way.

"With it Allah guides whoever follows His pleasure into the ways of safety, and He brings them out of darkness towards the Light by His Will and guides them to a right path."

However, the Qur'an is the best remedy and it can save its followers from any darkness - the darkness of dubious things, lusts, superstitions, crimes, agitations, and so on.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 17

لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَآلُواْ إِنَّ الله هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَن يَمْلِكُ مِنَ الله شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَن يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَلِلّه مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاء وَالله عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

17. "Indeed, they have disbelieved who said: 'Verily Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary '. Say: 'Who can hold anything against Allah, if He intends to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone, on the earth? And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth .and whatever is between them two. He creates what He pleases; and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Christians have some groundless claims about Allah to which the Qur'an hints:

1. Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost). The Qur'an says:

"... do not say (Allah is) a Trinity ..."[6]

2. The Lord of creation, one of the three gods (the Father) whom the Qur'an rejects:

"...who say: " .Verily Allah is the third of the three, '..."[7]

3. Saying that God, Jesus and the Ghost are the same, upon which, this verse is a rejection.

The Qur'anic phrase:

"....He creates what He pleases; ..."

mentioned in the above verse, refers to the creation of Jesus (as) without a father, and the creation of Adam without parents.

Islam disagrees infidelity, idolatry, and superstition in whatever ideology they may be.

If Jesus is God, then how was he slain (as you believe), and did the cross become the sign of oppression? God is an Essence that cannot be attempted against.

"Indeed, they have disbelieved who said: 'Verily Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary '. Say: 'Who can hold anything against Allah, if He intends to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone, on the earth? And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth .and whatever is between them two. He creates what He pleases; and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 18

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاء اللّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُم بَلْ أَنتُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاء وَلِلّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

18. "And the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones.' Say: ' Why does He then punish you for your sins?' Nay, you are mortals of those He has created. He forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He pleases. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth (and whatever is between them two, and unto Him is the ultimate return (of all)."

It is cited in the commentary of the Qur'an by Fakhr-i-Razi that some of the Jews said: "We are the sons of Allah and his beloved" when the Messenger of Allah invited them to embrace Islam. [8]

The Jews and the Christians did not consider themselves the real sons of God, but they imagined a kind of formal adoption for themselves. The Arabic phrase /abna'-ul-lah/ (the sons of Allah) is an implicit, declaration of their undue expectation and extravagance in ambitions.

This fact should also be mentioned that in Islam racial superiority, privilege demanding, knowing right only themselves and their own party, and applying 'relationship instead of regulations' totally are forbidden.

Another fact is that neither any person nor a nation nor a race should absolutely be assured of the forgiveness of Allah, nor despaired of His favour. But, the bold Jews, with those crimes they committed, in spite of

having those abundant Divine signs, still knew themselves the specific friends of Allah.

Slaying prophets, concealing the glad tidings upon the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S), breach of promises, perverting the heavenly Books, being afraid of entering the city, worshipping the Calf, seeking for excuses, gluttonies, and being impatient regarding the uniformity of their food (Manna and Salwa) are some examples of their crimes.

Also, for the wrath of Allah upon them, there are some examples of divine retribution such as moving the mount from its place, being wandered for forty years, transformation and humiliation. The verse says:

"And the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones.'

Say: ' Why does He then punish you for your sins?' Nay, you are mortals of those He has created. He forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He pleases. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth (and whatever is between them two, and unto Him is the ultimate return (of all)."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 19

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرسُلِ أَن تَقُولُواْ مَا جَاءنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلاَ نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءكُم بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَالله عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

19. "O' People of the Book! Indeed or Messenger has come to you to explain (things) to you after a cessation of the (mission of the) messengers, lest you say: There did not come unto us any giver of glad tidings nor any warner '; but, indeed, there has come to you a giver of glad tidings and a warner; and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

The intermission between the time of Hadrat Messiah (Jesus Christ) (as) and the advent of Prophet Muhammad (S) lasted about six hundred years. During the time when there exists not an appointed Divine prophet, the globe is not empty of Allah's Authority, because the prophets' successors have always existed.

As the words of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) indicates, the earth never lacks godly authority whether he has power, or not, because the way of Allah should not be concealed for those who want to pave it[9].

Hence, the existence of the time of intermission between coming one prophet after the former does not mean that people are left alone to themselves.

"O' People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you to explain (things) to you after a cessation of the (mission of the) messengers, lest you say: 'there did not come unto us any giver of glad tidings nor any warner'; but, indeed, there has come to you a giver of glad tidings and a warner; and Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

By the way, the intermissions, whether they are long or short, are certainly useful in the system of divine educational arrangements. There are several examples of this meaning in the length of the history of prophets.

For instance; the separation of Moses (as) from people, the spiritual retirement of prophets, the cease of revelation unto the Prophet Muhammad

www.alhassanain.org/english

(S), and minor occultation and major occultation are some distinguished references for the idea.

Notes

1. Musnd Imam Ahmad-ibn-Hunbal, vol. 1, p. 398 and many other books
2. Yanabi'-ul-Mawaddah. p. 117
3. Surah At-Taubah, No.9, verse 77 denotes that breach of promise consequences to hypocrisy.
4. Surah As-Saff, No. 61, verse 14
5. Surah Al-Hashr, No.59, verse 23
6. Surah An-Nisa'', No.4, verse 171
7. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 73
8. This claim is also mentioned in the Book of John, one of the books of the New Testament, Chapter 8, and No.41
9. Nahjul-Balagha, saying No.147

Section 4: The Israelites breaking the Covenant

People of Moses commanded to march into the Holy Land - the people's refusal to act -the punishment,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 20

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَةَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنبِيَاء وَجَعَلَكُم مُلُوكًا وَآتَاكُم مَّا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّن الْعَالَمِينَ

20. "And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O' my people! remember the favour of Allah upon you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings, and gave you what He had not given to anyone else in the world. "

The remembrance of divine bounties is the motive of love, gratitude, and worship. Now, the greatest bounties given by Allah (s.w.t.) are: the bounty of prophecy, the bounty of government and power, and the bounty of freedom.

For the invitation of people, the factor of emotion in populations should be utilized. That is why we ought to make them prepared through reminding them the favours of Allah (s.w.t.) before inviting them to action and assistance.

One of the responsibilities of prophets (as) is reminding people of Allah's favours.[1]

"...remember the favour of Allah ..."

However, we must take an example from the history of the past.

After enjoying the peculiar favour of Allah and reaching authority, the people of Moses inflicted with humiliation and wretchedness because of opposing the command of Allah.

The verse is recited as follows:

"And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O' my people! remember the favour of Allah upon you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings, and gave you what He had not given to anyone else in the world."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 21

يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الأَرْضَ المُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ الله لَكُمْ وَلاَ تَرْتَدوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ

21. "O' my people! enter the holy land which Allah has ordained for you and do not turn your backs, for then you will return (Us) losers."

In this verse, the Qur'an states the process of the arrival of the Children of Israel into the holy land as follows:

Moses (as) told his people to arrive the holy land which Allah (s.w.t.) had assigned for them, and as for that arrival, they should not afraid of its difficulties. They were enjoined not to refrain from any self -sacrifice, because had they turned on their backs, they would have been of the losers. The Qur'an from the tongue of Moses says:

"O' my people! enter the holy land which Allah has ordained for you and do not turn your backs, for then you will return (Us) losers."

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /'ard-al-muqaddas/ (the holy land) is either the whole region of ancient Shamat (Syria, Jordan, Palestine, etc.), or Jerusalem.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 22

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَن نَّدْخُلَهَا حَتَّىَ يَخْرُجُواْ مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُواْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ

22. "They (Israelites) said: 'O' Moses! verily there is a very arrogant race in it, and verily, we will never enter it until they get out from it. So if they get out from it, then certainly, we will enter."

The Arabic term /jabbar/ is derived from /jabr/ with the meaning of 'improving something accompanied with force and pressure'. Yet, the term has been applied with both of these meanings: 1) to compensate, 2) power, might, overcome. The Qur'anic word /jabbar/ has been used as a title or an appellation for Allah (s.w.t.) with both of the above two meanings.

The phrase /qaum-an-jabbarin/ (a very arrogant race), mentioned in the above verse, refers to the people of the very tribe of 'Amaliqah from the Semitic race who were living in Sinaie desert located in the north of old Arabia. They ('Amaliqah tribe) invaded Egypt and ruled there for five hundred years. [2]

However, the existence of some corrupted people somewhere cannot be a reason for eligible persons that they retire. Enemy should be sent out. We ought not to wait until the enemy himself goes out.

"They (Israelites) said: 'O' Moses! verily there is a very arrogant race in it, and verily, we will never enter it until they get out from it. So if they get out from it, then certainly, we will enter."

Mere pleasure-seeking is prohibited in Islam. We must act and ask Allah to help us to send out the enemy.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 23

قَالَ رَجُلاَنِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ الله عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُواْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مؤْمِنِينَ

23. "Two men of those that feared (Allah) whom Allah had blessed, said: 'Enter against them by the gate! for when you have entered it, you will certainly be victorious. So, upon Allah should you rely if you are believers."

As the Qur'anic commentary books indicate, those two men, who are mentioned in the verse, were from among those twelve chiefs of the Israelites. They were called Yusha'-ibn-Nun (Joshua, the son of Nun), and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, whose names are mentioned in the Torah, Numbers.[3] The verse says:

"Two men of those that feared (Allah) whom Allah had blessed, said: 'Enter against them by the gate! for when you have entered it, you will certainly be victorious. ..."

By the way, fearing God is a cause for absorbing the favours of Allah (s.w.t.) and His bounties. So, the one who is in awe of Allah (s.w.t.), does not fear any other might, and therefore, he must rely only on Allah.

"... So, upon Allah should you rely if you are believers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 24

قَالُواْ يَا مُوسَى إِنَّا لَن نَّدْخُلَهَا أَبَدًا مَّا دَامُواْ فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَرَبكَ فَقَاتِلا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ

24. "They said: 'O' Moses! we shall never enter it at all, so long as they (the arrogant) are in it. Go, therefore, you and your Lord, and fight you both! Verily we will stay here sitting."

Mecca and Jerusalem are both holy lands. When Moses (as) told his people to enter it and struggle against enemy, they made a pretext and offended against his command.

But, in the sixth year A.H., when the Muslims, accompanied with the holy Prophet (S), went toward Mecca in order to perform the rites of Umrah (lesser Pilgrimage), they would invade the city vigorously if there were not the hindrance of the Messenger of Allah (S).

It was in this journey that the agreement of 'Hudaybiyyah peace' was made. Yes, both those two peoples reached to the gates of two sacred cites while one of them were so coward that refused the command of their prophet, and the others were so brave that were eager to participate in the holy struggle.

"They said: 'O' Moses! we shall never enter it at all, so long as they (the arrogant) are in it. Go, therefore, you and your Lord, and fight you both! Verily we will stay here sitting."

The Children of Israel have been the example of the groups who are known for their impoliteness, seeking for excuses, feebleness, and loving comfort.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 25

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لا أَمْلِكُ إِلاَّ نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

25. " He (Moses) said: ' O' my Lord! I have power over none but myself and my brother, therefore make a separation between us and these rebellious people."

This verse denotes that Moses (as) became completely disappointed from that crowd of people. He (as) supplicated and asked Allah his separation from them, so that they would see the fruit of their deeds and try to improve themselves. He said:

"...' O' my Lord! I have power over none but myself and my brother, therefore make a separation between us and these rebellious people."

Of course, the action that the Children of Israel did was almost a kind of disbelief. They manifestly rejected the command of their prophet. If we recite that the Qur'an has qualified them as 'rebellious people', it is because the Arabic word /fasiq/ has a vast scope of meaning which envelops any departure from the institution of worship and servitude.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 26

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَلاَ تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

26. "He (The Lord) said: 'So it (the Holy Land) will surely be forbidden to them for forty years that they will wander about in the earth, therefore do not grieve for the rebellious people."

The Arabic term /yatihun/ is derived from the word /tayaha/ with the sense of 'wander'. But, in the lapse of time, the word /tiyah/ was applied for the plain of Sinai. It has also been called to the place where that group of people (the Israelites) lived for forty years without having the material and spiritual merits of the ground.

"He (The Lord) said: ' So it (the Holy Land) will surely be forbidden to them for forty years that they will wander about in the earth therefore do not grieve for the rebellious people."

The story of the disobedience of the Children of Israel and the Divine Wrath, and their wandering state in Tiyah is mentioned in the Old Testament, Numbers, Chapter four.

According to a tradition stated by Imam Baqir (as), after wandering for forty years and losing Moses and Aaron (as), the Israelites entered the zone by a martial attack, and their seeking comfort had no result for them but retardation and wandering.

Imam Baqir (as) has said that there will occur a similar situation for Muslims, like what happened for the Children of Israel.

Explanations

1. The recompense of showing shortcoming and despicableness, and also that of disobedience from the commandment of Alah, and escaping from the Holy Struggle, is such deprivations and vagrancies.

2. Wandering-state is a kind of punishment for the evildoers, while having the merit of light and discrimination is a kind of present for the righteous ones.

Notes

1. Some of the specific bounties given to the Children of Israel are: crossing the Nile, the movement of Tur Mount, Manna and Salwa coming down from heaven, the water of twelve springs, and so on.

2. Encyclopaedia, by Farid Wajdi

3. The Old Testament, Numbers, Chapter 14, No 6 and 9.

6. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes.

7. And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying the land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

8. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence departed from them and the LORD is with us; fear them not.

Section 5: Jews warned against their wicked plots

Cain's aggression -The Israelites warned -Punishment for those who war on the Apostle (Muhammad).

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 27

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِن أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

27. "(O' Prophet!) Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam when they offered each a sacrifice, hut it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other, (The one) said: 'I shall certainly slay you,' (The other) said: 'verily Allah accepts only from the pious ones."

The objective meaning of 'reciting the truth', maybe, is an indication to the idea that the explanation of this event has been distorted in the Torah and it has been combined with superstitions; hence, what is stated in the Qur'an is the 'truth'.

"(O' Prophet!) Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam, when they offered each a sacrifice, hut it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other, (The one) said: 'I shall certainly slay you.'…"

In Islamic literature and in the Torah, (Genesis, Chapter 4, No.3 to12),[1] it is recorded that Abel was a shepherd and he offered his best lamb as the sacrificial animal. But, Cain who was a farmer brought the worst part of his agricultural product to sacrifice. The Qur'an also says:

"You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love..." [2]

Therefore, the main principle is striving to draw near to Allah, no to simply sacrifice. Whatever the sacrificial thing may be, the criterion o the acceptance of deeds is piety.

"…'verily Allah accepts only from the pious ones '."

Also, we must know that the expansion of envy stretches forth up to slaying one's brother; so, we must avoid this quality.

".... (The one) said: I shall certainly slay you,'... "

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 28

لَئِن بَسَطتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَاْ بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لَأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

28. "1f you stretch out your hand toward me to slay me, I am not one to stretch out my hand toward you to slay you. Verily, I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

When confronting a jealous person, you ought to speak with him in a calmly manner, so that you can extinguish the fire of jealousy in him with the calmness of your speech. Thus, one of the ways of 'forbidding from doing evil' is that you assure the evil-doer that you will not transgress him in any way.

Abel did not intend to commit homicide. This does not mean that he might not defend himself either, (since submitting to a murderer's will do not adapt to piety).

"1f you stretch out your hand toward me to slay me, I am not one to stretch out my hand toward you to slay you. ..."

By the way, refraining from murder because of the awe of Allah (s.w.t.) is a value, not because of disability and weakness. However, piety and God-fearing is the restraining factor from committing sin and transgression in the most sensitive circumstances.

"... Verily, I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 29 - 30

إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَن تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاء الظَّالِمِينَ

فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

29. "Verily I desire that you should bear my sin and your (own) sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the (Hell) Fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust."

30. "Then his soul (through temptation of envy) facilitated to him the murder of his brother. So he murdered him, and thus became one of the losers."

Abel did not want to carry the burden of another person's sins; hence he did not take action on slaying his brother and shedding blood. Besides, he put the burden of his own sins on the killer's shoulder.

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition said: "Whoever kills a believer intentionally, Allah records all the sins upon the killer and make the slain free from them; and this is Allah's word:

"Verily I desire that you should bear my sin and your (own) sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the (Hell) Fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust."

This verse does not mean, of course, that silence before a tyrant with the hope that he carries the responsibility of our sins is proper.

One of the styles of 'forbidding from doing evil' is attracting the attention of a transgressor to the fact that besides the retribution of his own cruelties, he should suffer the burden of the sins of the oppressed, too, and his punishment will be added.

However, the pure nature of man dislikes homicide, but the despotic soul makes a parade of this action and persuades him to murder.

"Then his soul (through temptation of envy) facilitated to him the murder of his brother. So he murdered him, and thus became one of the losers."

Thus, we ought to know that the faith in Resurrection has been a part of the fundamental creed of human beings on the earth, and the very faith keeps a person from homicide and other crimes.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 31

فَبَعَثَ الله غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُوَارِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَا أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ

أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَـذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِيَ سَوْءَةَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ

31. "Then Allah sent a raven digging up the ground to show him (the murderer) how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: 'Woe unto me! Am I unable to be like this raven and cover the corpse of my brother?' So he became one of the remorseful."

It is narrated in a tradition that Imam Sadiq (as) said that when Cain killed his brother, he left him in the desert, because he did not know what to do. Soon after that the sawage rushed toward the corpse of Abel.

At that time, as the Qur'an says, Allah sent a raven to dig up the land and, by hiding the dead body of another raven, or by concealing a part of its own prey, (as it is the habit of a raven) showed Cain how to hide the corpse of his brother in the ground.

The verse says:

"Then Allah sent a raven digging up the ground to show him (the murderer) how he should cover the dead body of his brother. ..."

Next to that statement, the Qur'an adds that at that moment Cain became worried of his own negligence and cried:

"... 'Woe unto me! Am I unable to be like this raven and cover the corpse of my brother?'..."

Yet, finally he felt sorry about what he had done, but that regret was not a reference for his repentance from the sin.

"...So he became one of the remorseful."

The Prophet of Islam (S) is narrated that he has said:

"No blood of a person is shed unjustly unless there is a portion of its responsibility upon (Cain) the son of Adam who was the first homicide as a custom." [3]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 32

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الأَرْضِ
فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالبَيِّنَاتِ
ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنْهُم بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ

32. "For this reason We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever slays a human being for other than manslaughter or mischief in the earth, it is as he had slain mankind as a whole; and whoever saves a life (from death), it is as if he had saved mankind as a whole. And certainly Our messengers came to them with clear evidences; then verily, even after that, many of them became prodigals in the earth."

The Oneness of Human Beings

Next to the statement of the story of the Children of Adam, there has been mentioned a general conclusion in this holy verse which fits with humanities. At first, it says:

"For this reason We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever slays a human being for other than manslaughter or mischief in the earth, it is as he had slain mankind as a whole; ..."

How is it that slaying a human being is equal to slaying all human beings and saving a person is equal to saving all human beings? To answer this

question, it is only possible to say that in this verse, the Qur'an has referred to a social and training fact.

The person, who slays an innocent human being, has such a preparation, in fact, to kill some other innocent persons, too. This person is, indeed, a homicide whose prey is innocent human beings. And, we know that there is no difference between the innocent persons from this point of view.

On the other hand, the person who, because of having the quality of philanthropy and human emotions, saves another person from death has such a preparation to perform this sympathetic action unto any other human beings.

So, regarding the fact that the Qur'an has applied the phrase: /fa-ka-'anna-ma/ (it is as it), it seems that although the life and death of a person is not equal to the life and death of a society, it has a likeness to it.

Again, it can be said that in potency, there is a capability in any person to bring a great society, or a new generation, into existence. Hence, annihilating a human being sometimes results to the effacement and murder of a generation.

It is worthy to note that once someone asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the commentary of this verse when he (as) answered: "The purpose of the words: 'to slay' and 'to save from death', which have been referred to in the verse, is saving from a fire accident, a whirlpool, and the like.

Then he (as) kept silent and after that he added: "A greater interpretation of this verse is that a person invites another one to the path of right or wrong and the one accepts that invitation."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an hints to the manner of breaking law among the Children of Israel. It says:

"... And certainly our messengers came to them with clear evidences; then verily, even after that, many of them became prodigals in the earth."

The Arabic term /'israf/ has a vast scope of meaning in lexicon which envelops any transgression and exceeding the limits. Yet, it is often used for remittals, expenditures and expenses.

Explanations

1. The members of human beings originate from a common truth and have a single soul, so that they are similar to the limbs of a body. Therefore, slaying a person is the same as killing all humankind.

2. The act of evaluating deeds relates to the motives and aims. Slaying a person with the intention of transgression, is putting a society into death; while killing under the title of retaliation is counted as the life of the society.

3. The death and life of a person is sometimes effective in the death and life of a society. Similarly, sometimes the individual murders prepare the ground for some massacres.

4. The sign of a living society is helping the needy and saving the souls or lives.

5. Suicide, and even abortion, is one of the examples of 'homicide', which is unlawful.

6. Transgressing against the rights of an individual is a threat to the security of the society.

7. The managers of the professions like physicians, nurses, fire-extinguishers, reinforces, makers of medicine, etc, whose job is securing the lives of human beings, should know the position and value of their own profession.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 33

إِنَّمَا جَزَاء الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَن يُقَتَّلُواْ أَوْ يُصَلَّبُواْ أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم مِّنْ خِلافٍ أَوْ يُنفَوْاْ مِنَ الأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

33. "The only recompense of those who make war against Allah and His messenger, and strive to make mischief in the land, is that they should be killed or crucified, or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite side or they be banished from (their) land. This is degradation for them in the world, and in the Hereafter, they will have a grievous chastisement."

Upon the occasion of revelation of this verse, it is cited that a group of pagans came into Medina and then they became Muslim.

They were tired and sick; therefore, the Prophet (S) ordered that they would be taken in a good climate region outside Medina where they were permitted to enjoy the milk of the alms-tax camels therein.

When they gained their health, they took the Muslim shepherds, who were living thereabout, and cut off their hands and feet, blinded their eyes, and plundered the camels. They left out Islam, too.

The Messenger of Allah (S) ordered that they would be captured and be treated with the same manner as they had done upon the shepherds. Then, in this circumstance the above-mentioned verse was revealed.

These retributions, which are mentioned in the verse under discussion, are counted 'rights of Allah' and they are not forgivable and changeable. (Atyab-ul-Bayan)[4]

However, in order to improve the society, not only admonishment and, guidance are necessary, but weapon and severe revolutionary treatment are needed. (The words in the previous verse were some educational messages and warnings unto the murderer. Now, in this verse, the statement is upon the punishment of the one who fights against Allah and makes mischief.)

The notable point here is that fighting against the servants of Allah, the same as fighting against Allah. So, the one who stands against people, is like that he has stood against Allah.

Therefore, there have been decreed several kinds of punishment for lose who disturb the security of the society. These punishments are: execution, banishment, cutting off the hand and the foot, and to hang such wicked persons.

In the meantime, Islamic punishments are accompanied with justice. Since corruptions and the qualifications of the mischief -makers are different; the retributions are not the same, either. If the mischief has been committed tragically, its punishment is slaughter.

But, if it is superficial, its retribution is banishment. Concerning such punishments, this fact is understood from the Islamic traditions that the retribution of homicide is execution; the retribution of terrorizing is

banishment, the retribution of larceny is cutting off the hand and the foot; the retribution of murder and robbery (with arm) is cutting off the hand and the foot and being hanged. (At- Tafsir-u-Safi)

Also, it is cited in Usul-i-Kafi that one of the meanings of the phrase 'be banished from their land' (mentioned in the verse) is throwing such a person in the sea. (Al-Kafi, vol. 7, p. 267)

Explanations

1. The responsibility of the government and rulers is to protect the security of the society in cities, villages, roads, and so on.

2. Those opponents of the master ship of the Messenger of Allah(S) whose intention is destruction and who fight against the godly system, should be dispersed.

3. Those who rise against the Muslims leader, or against the Islamic government, are among 'those who make war against Allah'. (At- Tafsir fi-Zilal-il-Qur'an)

4. Imam Rida (as) said: "The length of the time of banishment for the mischief-maker is one year. The place of banishment should be announced to people in order that they break their communication with the banished person, and stop bargaining, holding familiar intercourse, and marriage with him." (Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn)

5. According to a verse of the Qur'an,[5] a usurer is also counted among 'those who make war against Allah', since such a person disturbs the economic security in the society.

Also, as some Islamic traditions indicate, disgracing a Muslim believer is considered as fighting against Allah. [6]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 34

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُواْ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَقْدِرُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

34. "Except those who repent before you have power over them. So know you that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The repentance of a mischief-maker and a person who fights against the command of Allah (s.w.t.) deserves only the retribution of threat and terrorizing, not the retribution of murder and theft. That is, repentance is effective in' the right of Allah' not in 'the right of people', because the right of people depends on the content of the possessor (S) of the right. Thus, the account of the person who fights against the command of Allah (muharib) is different from that of a murderer and thief.

In the meantime, the gate of repentance is open to everyone. Yet, that repentance is worthy when it is done before capturing the criminal and confronting the court. It should also be done consciously and wilfully, without any compulsion. (Also, repentance for other sins is accepted before death).[7]

However, the Divine punishment has the aspect of training and improving upon the individuals and the society, not as revenge. Therefore, the repentance of a sinner is efficacious. The verse says:

"Except those who repent before you have power over them. So know you that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Notes

1. 3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4. And Abel, he also brought of the first lings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.

5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his

countenance fell.

6. And the LORD said, Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?

7. If thou doest well, shall thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

9. And the LORD said unto Cain. Where is' Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; Am I my brother's keeper?

10. And He said. What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.

11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

2. Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No.3, verse 92

3. Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, recorded in Tafsir-i-fi-Zalal, vol. 2, p. 703

4. It is cited in Al-Mizan that the choice of one retribution out of these four retributions is up to the leader of Muslims. So, even when the possessors of the blood of the slain remit, one of the retributions must be executed.

5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No: 2, verse 219

6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 5, p. 283

7. The Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa'', No.4, verse 18

Section 6: Penal Regulations against Offenders

To seek means to approach Allah -To strive in the way of Allah - Hypocrisy of the Jews.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 35

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَابْتَغُواْ إِلَيهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُواْ فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

35. "O' you who have Faith! Be in awe of Allah, and seek the means (of nearness) to Him; and strive hard in His way, that you may be prosperous."

Imam Amir-ul-mu'mineen Ali (as) has said that the best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, seek nearness, is the faith in Allah and His Messenger, striving in His way, (to believe) in the expression of Divine purification, the establishment of performance of Hajj (pilgrimage) of the House (i.e. Ka'bah) and' Umrah ' (lesser pilgrimage), regard for kinsfolk, almsgiving secretly and openly, and extending benefits (to people). [1]

Therefore, in order to reach felicity, we must both stop committing sins and perform kinds of worship.

In the meantime, doing goodness are wholly the means toward felicity, if we ourselves do not waste them through our own sins.

However, Ahlul-Bayt (as) are the very firm cord and means of nearness to Allah (s.w.t.).

In Islamic literature, narrated from the Immaculate ones (as), the term /wasilah/ (means), mentioned in this verse, has been rendered into Imam (as) (At-Tafsir-u-Safi). In this regard, it is also cited in some traditions: "They are the firm cord and the means to Allah (s.w.t)." (At- Tafsir-u-Safi)

Supplication is a subject about which there has been cited in the books of many Sunnite scholars, such as: Sawa'iq, by Ibn- Hajar; Sunan-i-Bihaqi; Sahih-i-Darami; and also in Wafa'-ul-Wafa, vol. 3, p. 1371. Surah An-Nisa'', No.4, verse 64, Surah Yusuf, No.12, verse 97, and Surah At-Taubah, No.9, verse 114 can be taken as some authentic references for supplication, too.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 36 - 37

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لِيَفْتَدُواْ بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تُقُبِّلَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَخْرُجُواْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مقِيمٌ

36. "Certainly those who disbelieve, if they had what is in the earth all together and the like of it with it, to ransom themselves with it from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and for them there will be a painful chastisement."

37. "They would desire to get out from the Fire but they shall not get out of it, and for them there is a permanent chastisement."

To pursue the subject matter of the previous verse in which the believers are enjoined upon piety, holy struggle, and preparing the means, this verse, as the statement of reason for that commandment, points to the fate of unbelieving and filthy persons when it says:

"Certainly those who disbelieve, if they had what is in the earth all together and the like of it with it, to ransom themselves with it from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and for them there will be a painful chastisement."

The only possible way to delivery is through Faith, piety, struggle, and good deeds.

Then, in the second verse (verse 37), the perpetuity of this retribution is referred to. It says:

"They would desire to get out from the Fire but they shall not get out of it, and for them there is a permanent chastisement."

However, in the Hereafter, all the ways of deliverance are shut to the unbelievers. They enjoy neither the grace of Allah, since it is specific to the pious ones, nor the intercession, because it relates only to those with whom Allah is pleased. There is no death therein for the disbelievers. They are permanently alive in the Fire of Hell, and their request for death is not accepted.

The person who does not come out from darkness of ignorance and , infidelity in this world, where he has so many clear reasoning and guidance, will not come out of Hell in the Hereafter.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 38

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُواْ أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاء بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالاً مِّنَ اللّهِ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

38. "As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands as a recompense for what they have earned. It is an exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

In this verse, at first, the Qur'an refers to the male thief and then to the female thief. But in Surah An-Nur, verse 2, where the ordinance of fornication has been stated, at first, the Qur'an refers to the 'adulteress' and then to the 'adulterer'.

The reason of it may be the fact that the function of man in theft is more effective than that of a woman, and in fornication the function of the woman is more effective.

"As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands as a recompense for what they have earned. It is an exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

About one thousand years ago, it happened that the Late Sayyid Murtada 'Alam-ul-Huda, a well-known Muslim scholar, once was asked why the hand, which deserves five hundred 'mithghal' (a weight equivalent to 5 grams) gold as 'compensation for an injury', should be cut off because of the theft of one fourth 'mithghal' gold.

He answered: "Trustworthiness promotes the value of the hand, and treachery decreases its value."

According to some Islamic traditions, the standard of cutting off the hand, for this compensation, is four fingers, so that the thumb and palm should be left safe. The amount of finance for which the hand of a thief must be cut off is at least equivalent to the price of one fourth mithghal gold.

That wealth should have been kept in a protected place, not in a common place like an inn, a public bath, a mosque and the like. The wealth ought to

be given back to its owner, too, after the execution of the legal decision. Also, the thief should be aware of the law of cutting off the hand.

Otherwise, his/her hand will not be cut off. Again, the hand of a thief will not be cut off if the thief steals the wealth of his/her partner, or steals some food stuff under necessity in the years of scarcity, and the like.

Similarly, the hand of a thief will not be cut off when the theft is done by a father from his child's property, a slave from his master's wealth, a mad and a person not arrived at puberty, or the one who had thought he had the right of taking the property. There are, of course, some other retribution in all these conditions wherein the hand will not be cut off.

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said that the worst kind of larceny is stealing from prayer and performing its bowing and prostration imperfect.[2] In the statements of some Islamic saints, it has also been protested why it happens that some Muslims commit larceny in the holy phrase: /bismillah.-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ when they recite Surah Al-Hamd.

Cutting off the hand is for the first stage of theft. For the second time, the left leg will be cut off. For the third time, the retribution is life imprisonment, and annihilation is for the fourth time. [3]

Explanations

1. To cut off the hand is the only heavy withholding compensation and retribution of theft.

2. In executing Allah's bounds, we must not be affected by sympathy and kind feelings.

3. Besides cutting off the hand, the thief is responsible for the property, too.

4. The execution of these ordinances needs: rule, force, system, and organizations. Thus, Islam is a religion of government and policy.

5. Poverty is not all excuse or permission for larceny. Islam, before cutting off the hand, emphasizes on the importance and necessity of job and running the lives of the poor by the way of Muslim public treasury, near relatives, loan without interest, cooperation, and the like. [4]

6. The Divine retributions are not counted as revenge, but they are to be as withholding.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 39

فَمَن تَابَ مِن بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّه َتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّه غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

39. "But whoever repents after his inequity and makes amend (his evil deeds), then surely Allah turns to him (mercifully), verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In Islam, punishments are set beside guidance, godly training, and invitation. Through previous verse, the retribution of a thief was stated. Here, in this verse, there exists the invitation to repentance unto Allah, forgiving, and the improvement of one's own vices, which causes that Allah returns His grace and mercy to the servant.

For the wrong-doers the gate of returning and improvement is always open. This gate is the very repentance. It should also be regarded that repentance is not only an inner regret, but it must be accompanied with the amends of the past corruptions.

If a thief repents (before being captured and being sent to the court) and gives back the property, he will be forgiven both in the world and the Hereafter. But, when it is after that he is captured, the religious punishment will be fulfilled and the function of repentance is only for the Hereafter.

The verse says:

"But whoever repents after his inequity and makes amend (his evil deeds), then surely Allah turns to him (mercifully), verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 40

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاء وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَالله عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

40. "Do you not know that to Allah belongs the Dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whom He pleases and forgives whom He pleases, and verily Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Allah is not in need of the repentance of servants, because all the existence belongs to Him. So, the sinners and the corrupters should know that there is no way for them to flee, and they ought to return to Allah.

"Do you not know that to Allah belongs the Dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whom He pleases and forgives whom He pleases, and verily Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 41

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لاَ يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هِادُواْ سَمَّاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّاعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِن بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَـذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمْ تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُواْ وَمَن يُرِدِ الله فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَن تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللّهِ شَيْئًا أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ الله أَن يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

41. "O' Messenger! Let not those who hasten in infidelity grieve you, from among those who (hypocritically) say with their mouths: 'We believe', but their hearts do not believe, and from among those of the Jews who listen for (the sake of) lying, listen (with a spy manner) for other people who have not come to you. They distort the (heavenly) words from their places, saying: 'If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, beware! (be aloof) '; and whomever Allah desires to punish, you cannot avail him anything with Allah. Those are they whose hearts Allah does not desire to purify; there is a degradation for them in the world, and in the Hereafter, they will have a grievous chastisement."

Prophets Are Sympathetic unto the Misguided

The hypocrites and the Jews pursue the same goal. Their goal is the perversion of religion (Islam). Disbelievers have always some secret agents of influence and spies amongst Muslims. Therefore, religious preachers ought not to consider all their audience as well-intentioned listeners.

In the meantime, the hypocrites not only have the worldly misfortunes (including: to hear lies, to spy, to pervert the facts, to claim faith for benefits), but also the great punishment of the Hereafter waits for them.

However, we must submit to the Truth and commandments of Allah entirely; and do not accept only the religious legislations that correspond to our desires.

The verse says:

"O' Messenger! Let not those who hasten in infidelity grieve you, from among those who (hypocritically) say with their mouths: 'We believe', but their hearts do not believe, and from among those of the Jews who listen for (the sake of) lying, listen (with a spy manner) for other people who have not come to you. They distort the (heavenly) words from their places, saying: 'If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, beware! (be aloof) '; and whomever Allah desires to punish, you cannot avail him anything with Allah. Those are they whose hearts Allah does not desire to purify; there is a degradation for them in the world, and in the Hereafter, they will have a grievous chastisement."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 42

سَمَّاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَّالُونَ لِلسحْتِ فَإِن جَآؤُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِن تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَن يَضُروكَ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّه يُحِب الْمُقْسِطِينَ

42. "(They are) listeners to (any) lie, and devour the unlawful; therefore, if they come to you, judge between them or turn away from them; and if you turn away from them, they will harm you nothing; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; verily Allah loves the just."

Some of the Jews, who had committed adultery, came to the Prophet (S) to judge. They hoped to escape from the retribution of stoning, which exists in the religion of the Jews,[5] while the Islamic law for the adulterer is stoning, too. When they saw that the ordinance of Islam was the same as it was in their own religion, they did not accept it.

The Arabic term /suht/, used in this verse, according to the Islamic traditions, means: 'bribery and the gifts given for the fulfilment of an affair. It also means: 'destruction' or 'the thing which causes destruction'.

The verse says:

"(They are) listeners to (any) lie, and devour the unlawful; therefore, if they come to you, judge between them or turn away from them; and if you turn away from them, they will harm you nothing; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; verily Allah loves the just."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 43

وَكَيْفَ يُحَكِّمُونَكَ وَعِندَهُمُ التَّوْرَاةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللّه ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُوْلَـئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

43. "And how do they (the Jews) make you a judge, while with them is the Torah, wherein is Allah's judgement? Yet they turn away after that, and those are not believers."

Again, this verse follows the subject of the Jews seeking judgement from the Prophet (S), which was referred to in the previous verse. It surprisingly says:

"And how do they (the Jews) make you a judge, while with them is the Torah, where in Allah's judgement? ..."

It should be noted that the aforementioned decree (i.e. the decree of stoning the man and the woman who have committed adultery) is found in the present Torah, Deuteronoms, Chapter 22, No 21-26.

The verse continues saying:

"...Yet they turn away after that, and those are not believers."

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 110
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 84, p. 257; & Musnad-Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. 3, p. 56
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 3, p.192
4. Fi-Zalal-il-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 716
5. The Torah, Deuteronomy, Chapter 22, No.21-26

Section 7: Relation of the Quran to the previous heavenly Books

Evidence from Torah - The Evangel and its evidence - The Qur'an's confirming the previous heavenly books - Now the Qur'an to be followed.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 44

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا التَّوْرَاةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُواْ لِلَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَالرَّبَّانِيونَ وَالأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُواْ مِن كِتَابِ اللّهِ وَكَانُواْ عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاء فَلاَ تَخْشَوُاْ النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوْنِ وَلاَ تَشْتَرُواْ بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

44. "Verily We have sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light, by which the prophets, who submitted themselves (to Us), judged for those who were Jews, and (so did) the rabbis and the scholars (of divinity of the Jews) in accordance with what they were entrusted with the Book of Allah, and they were witnesses thereof. Therefore, do not dread the people, and dread (opposing) Me; and do not sell My Signs for a little price. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down; those are they that are the infidels."

Separate from confessing upon the falsification of the Torah and the Bible, the originality of the heavenly Books should be admired and glorified.

It is true that the Torah was revealed to Moses (as) and the Evangel was revealed to Jesus (as), yet they have been accepted by all the prophets and the saints after them. They wholly practiced according to the ordinances of those Books.

Thus, prophets have no commandment from their ownselves, save that they are surrended to the commandment of Allah. Then, when the prophets are surrended to the commandment of Allah, why should we not?

Islam is the religion of all. The prophets of the Israelites have been qualified with 'submission' not with Judaism and Christianity.

And, in general, the scholars of every nation are responsible for the execution of the commandments of the Lord among people. Therefore, guardianship of the jurisconsult has evidences in all religions.

"... by which the prophets who submitted themselves (to Us) judged ..."

Explanation

The Qur'anic word /rabbani/ is derived from /rabban/ which means: 'trainer'. As some other philologists have rendered, the person qualified with /rabbani/ is someone who has adjoined 'the Lord of the worlds' and does not rest with other than Him. Such a person has become godly and has assumed the responsibility of people.

The Arabic term /hibr/ means: 'the effect of a good action', since scholars are the source of benevolence in the society, they are called /hibr/ the plural of which is /ahbar/.

"Verily We have sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light, by which the prophets, who submitted themselves (to Us), judged for those who were Jews, and (so did) the rabbis and the scholars (of divinity of the Jews) in accordance with what they were entrusted with the Book of

Allah, and they were witnesses thereof Therefore, do not dread the people, and dread (opposing) Me; and do not sell My Signs for a little price. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down; those are they that are the infidels."

It is narrated from Imam Ali (as) who has said: "I am the trainer of this community". Imam Sadiq (as) also said: "Rabbaniun are the very Imams from Ahlul-Bayt."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 45

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالأَنفَ بِالأَنفِ وَالأُذُنَ بِالأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهُ وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ الله فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

45. "And We prescribed for them in it that: a life is for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds (there shall be) retaliation. But whoever remits it, it shall be an expiation (of his sins) for him; and whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, those are they that are the unjust."

Retaliation and Remittal

This verse explains another part of the ordinances concerning crimes and the bounds of Allah in the Torah. It denotes that Allah has assigned the law of retaliation in the Torah so that if a person intentionally murders an innocent one, the owners of blood can retaliate instead and execute the murderer.

"And We prescribed for them in it that: a life is for a life....."

If a person injures another one's eye and destroys it, the injured can also destroy the person's eye:

"...an eye or an eye ..."

He is also permitted to cut his nose instead of his own nose:

"....a nose or a nose ..."

Instead of cutting an ear, the one can cut one ear of his:

"...an ear or an ear ..."

And, if a person breaks the tooth of another person, he can break the criminal's tooth, too. It says:

"…a tooth for a tooth…"

In general, every person who injures or wounds another person, it can be retaliated:

"…and for wounds (there shall be) retaliation. ..."

Therefore, the ordinance of retaliation should be done justly and without considering any difference from the point of race, social level, tribe, and personality.

But, in order that nobody imagines that Allah has decreed the law of retaliation as a compulsory rigid duty, immediately next to this ordinance, it adds:

"….But whoever remits it, it shall be an expiation (of his sins) for him…"

That is, as much as he has remitted in that regard, Allah will remit out of his sins for him.

And, at the end of the verse, it says:

".... and whoever does not judge by what Allah has sent down, those are they that are the unjust."

What an unjust is greater than that we be entangled with some false affections and feelings, and dispense with the murderer absolutely by the excuse that a blood should not be washed out by a blood!

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 46

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

46. "And following them We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming that which was before him of the Torah , and We gave him the Evangel in which was guidance and light, and confirming what was before it of the Torah, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones. "

Following the verses concerning the Torah, this verse refers to the condition of the Evangel. It denotes that next to the former prophets, Allah sent Jesus. He (as) confessed the rightfulness and legitimacy of the Torah. The signs of Jesus (as) were completely adapted to those which were given in the Torah. It says:

"And following them We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming that which was before him of the Torah...."

Then, it adds:

"... and We gave him the Evangel in which was guidance and light...."

The acceptance of these two Books as 'light' by the Qur'an, is an indication to the original Torah and the original Evangel.

The verse emphasizes once more on this fact that not only Jesus, the son of Mary, confirmed the Torah, but also the Evangel, the heavenly Books, is a confirmation to the Torah. It says:

"...and confirming what was before it of the Torah....."

Then, the holy Qur'an concludes the verse thus:

"...and guidance and an admonition for the pious ones"

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 47

وَلْيَحْكُمْ أَهْلُ الإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنزَلَ الله فِيهِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ الله فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

47. "So the people of the Evangel should judge by what Allah has sent down in it, and those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, those are they that are the evil-doers."

Those Who Do not Judge on the Divine Law

After referring to the revelation of Evangel in the former verses, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"So the people of the Evangel should judge by what Allah has sent down in it...."

The objective meaning of this statement is that: after the revelation of Evangel to Jesus (as), Allah ordered the followers of it to act accordingly and judge by what He had sent down in it.

Then, at the end of the verse, it emphasizes again and says:

"... and those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, those are they that are the evil-doers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 48

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ الله وَلاَ تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاء الله لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَـكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُم فَاسْتَبِقُوا الخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى الله مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

48. "And We have sent down unto you the Book with the truth, confirming that which was before it of the Book and as a guardian over it. Therefore judge between them by what Allah has sent down and do not follow their vain desires against the truth that has come to you; for every one of you We appointed a law and a (clear) way. And if Allah had pleased, He would have made you (all) a single community, but He might try you in what He has given you. Therefore strive you excelling one another in virtuous deeds; unto Allah is the return of you all, and then He shall inform you of that in which you used to differ."

After pointing to the Books of the former prophets, there is an indication in this verse to the situation of the Qur'an, the signs of which adapt to what has been recorded in the former heavenly Books. At first, it says:

"And We have sent down unto you the Book with the truth, confirming that which was before it of the Book and as a guardian over it. ..."

Fundamentally, all the heavenly Books are paralleled in principles, and their pursue is the same goal, i.e. training and improving the human race.

Then it commands that since it is such,

"...Therefore judge between them by what Allah has sent down...."

Next to that, it adds not to follow those who intend to adapt the Divine ordinances to their own desires. It says:

"...and do not follow their, vain desires against the truth that has come to you…"

To complete this discussion, it says:

"...for every one of you We appointed a law and a (clear) way...."

Then, it continues saying about the power of Allah (s.w.t.) and that He might try you in order that your different talents be trained. The holy verse says:

"... And if Allah had pleased, He would have made you (all) a single community, but He might try you in what He has given you. ..."

Finally, the Qur'an addresses all the nations and races and invites them all that instead of spending their powers and capacities in conflicts and discords, they should pay to doing good. It says:

"...Therefore strive you excelling one another in virtuous deeds....."

Then, it points to the reason of that righteous work, and says:

"... unto Allah is the return of you all, and then He shall inform you of that in which you used to differ."

Explanation

The Arabic term /Sir'ah/ means: 'law, a way which leads to water'; and the meaning of the term /minhaj/ is: 'a clear way'. Ibn-Abbas has said that: /Sir'ah/ means: 'the ordinances that have come in the Qur'an, but /minhaj/ is that which has come in the practice of the Prophet (S). (Mufradat Raqib)

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 49

وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ الله وَلاَ تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَن بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ الله إِلَيْكَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الله أَن يُصِيبَهُم بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ

49. "So judge between them by what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their vain desires, and beware of them lest they beguile you from part of what Allah has sent down to you. But if they turn back, then know that Allah desires to afflict them for some of their sins, and surely, many of the people are evil-doers."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been narrated from Ibn-Abbas that a group of the great men of the Jews once plotted and decided to go to the Prophet Muhammad (S) with the hope that they might be able to change him from his creed.

With this planning they came to the Prophet (S) and said: "We are the wealthy and the learned men of the Jews. If we follow you, other Jewish people also will imitate us. But, there is a conflict between us and another group (about a murder or something else).

If you judge in this conflict for our benefit, we will believe in you." The Prophet (S) refrained from such a judgement (which was not just), and the above verse was revealed.

In this verse, Allah emphasizes again on the judgement of His Messenger and says:

"So judge between them by what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their vain desires....."

Then, He warns the Prophet (S) about their plot by saying:

"...and beware of them lest they beguile you from part of what Allah has sent down to you....."

Then, the statement continues saying:

"... But if they turn back, then know that Allah desires to afflict them for some of their sins....."

(Finally, at the end of the verse, it implies that if they persist so much on the falsehood, he must not be worried, because:

"...and surely, many of the people are evil-doers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 50

أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

50. "Is it then the judgement of (the era of) ignorance that they are seeking? And who is better than Allah in judgement for a people of assured faith?"

The best law is the one whose legislator is qualified with the following conditions:

1. To be aware of all the secrets of the world of existence and those of man, both for the present and future.
2. The Legislator should have no aim of gaining profits.
3. He should not have any fault of any kind, whether intentional or unintentional.
4. He might not be afraid of any power.

These conditions are gathered in Allah. And, who is better than Allah to judge?

That is why those who, having the Divine laws available for them, refer to the laws made by human beings pave the path of paganism and infidelity.

Therefore, any law of man, which contrasts the law of Allah, is considered as the law of pagans. The reason is that these laws of man have been legislated on the basis of vain desires, fears, avarices, ignorance, mistakes, and imaginations.

We must also know that ignorance does not belong to only a period. Whenever people separate from the law of Allah, that time is the period of ignorance.

May Allah protect us all from aberration.

"Is it then the judgement of (the era of) ignorance that they are seeking? And who is better than Allah in judgement for a people of assured faith?"

Section 8: The relation of the Muslims with their opponents

To treat the Jews and Christians as enemies -Only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, establish prayer and give the poor-rate are the Guardians of the Muslims,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 51

يَا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاء بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاء بَعْضٍ وَمَن َ تَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ َ هْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

51. "O' you who have Faith! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of each other. And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

To Dissociate from Enemy is the Condition of Faith

Those Islamic governments who have the relation of friendship and accepting the sovereignty of the infidels are counted among them:

"... And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them....."

In foreign relations and policy, master ship and domination of infidels over Muslims is forbidden, because the Holy Qur'an explicitly has absolutely prohibited any domination, of any kind, over Muslims, although it may be under the name of experienced, specialist, expert, attach and tourist. The verse says:

"O' you who have Faith! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of each other. And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

In the meantime, mentioning the Jews and the Christians in the verse is for giving examples of this meaning, and no master ship of any infidel should be accepted.

It is understood, of course, from some other verses of the Qur'an that enjoying the food staff produced by infidels, which are not from the animal flesh, and bargaining with them are allowed, because none of them is rendered into the sense of accepting the sovereignty of infidels.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 52

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ َ قُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ فَعَسَى اللهُ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِندِهِ فَيُصْبِحُواْ عَلَى مَا أَسَرواْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ

52. "But you will see those in whose hearts is disease hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us.' And it may be that Allah brings about a victory or (some) thing from Himself (for the benefit of Muslims), then they will be regretting for what they hid in their selves."

In this verse, the Holy Qur'an points to the pretexts that some sickly people chose for justification of their unlawful relations with the non-

Muslim foreigners. The verse implies that those in whose hearts there is sickness persist to take them as their own refuge and their confederate.

Their pretext is that they say they fear that the authority and power be in the foreigners' hand and they be fallen in calamity. Here is the verse:

"But you will see those in whose hearts is disease hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us...."

In answer to them, the Qur'an says that just as they think that someday the authority and power may be in the hand of the Jews and the Christians, they should also consider that Allah may bring a victory for the Muslims and they take-the authority and power in their own hand, so that these hypocrites be regretful for what they hid in their hearts. The verse says:

"... And it may be that Allah brings about a victory or (some) thing from Himself (for the benefit of Muslims), then they will be regretting for what they hid in their selves."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 53

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَهَـؤُلاء الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُواْ بِاللّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُواْ خَاسِرِينَ

53. "And those who believe will say: Are these they who swore by Allah with the most forcible of their oath that they were most surely with you?' Their (good) deeds failed and they themselves became losers."

The final fate of the disbelievers is pointed out in this verse. It points to the time when the true believers gain the victory and the act of the hypocrites is made manifest.

Then the believers will surprisingly say whether these hypocrites are the same people who had so many claims and intensively swore that they were with the believers. Why did their final fate become like that? The verse says:

"And those who believe will say: Are these they who swore by Allah with the most forcible of their oath that they were most surely with you?'..."

Then, as a result of the same hypocrisy, all their good deeds became invalid, because they had not originated from a pure intention and a sincere source. That was why they became of the losers both in this world and in other world. It says:

"... Their (good) deeds failed and they themselves became losers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 54

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لآئِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

54. "O' you who have Faith whoever of you turns away from his religion (he does not harm Allah, since) soon Allah will bring (forward) a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, stern against infidels, they strive in the way of Allah, and do not fear the scorn of any blamer. This is the grace of Allah; He gives it to whom He desires; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

After the statement upon the hypocrites, the words are about some apostates who, according to the prediction of the Qur'an, turn away from this sacred religion.

As a general rule, it warns all the Muslims that if any one of them turns away from his religion he does not harm Allah, His religion, Muslim society, and their rapid process of progression, because He will soon bring forward a group of people to support this religion. The verse itself says:

"O' you who have Faith! whoever of you turns away from his religion (he does not harm Allah, since) soon Allah will bring (forward) a people "....

Then the Qur'an explains the qualities of those who must undertake this great mission, as the followings:

1. They love Allah and think of nothing but His pleasure.

"....whom He loves and who love Him….."

2-3 They are humble and kind unto the believers while they are mighty, stern, and forceful against the enemies and tyrants.

"... stern against infidels....."

4. Striving in the way of Allah is their constant program.

5. The last privilege that the Qur'an enumerates for them is that, in the path of performing the command of Allah and defending the right, they do not fear any reproach of any reproacher.

"... and do not fear the scorn of any blamer. ..."

And, at the end of the verse, it remarks that gaining these privileges, besides their own effort needs the grace of Allah. He bestows it on whomever He desires and finds eligible. For, the extension of His grace and graciousness is very vast, and He (s.w.t.) is aware of those who have competency.

This is the grace of Allah; He gives it to whom He desires; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 55

إِنَّمَا وَلِيكُمُ الله وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

55. "Verily, verily your guardian (waliyy) is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate while bowing down (in prayer)."

It has been cited in the occasion of revelation of the above verse that a beggar entered the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (S) and asked people for a charity. Nobody gave him anything. Ali-Ibn-Abi- talib (as) pointed his finger to him while he was bowing in the prayer, and he (as) remitted his ring to that beggar. In honouring of this remittal, the above verse was revealed.

The explanation of the above event has been narrated by ten people among the companions of the Prophet (S), like: Ibn-Abbas, 'Ammar, Jabir-ibn-' Abdillah, 'Abuthar, 'Anas-ibn-Malik, Bilal, and so on. The scholars of both schools of Sunni and Shi'ah have confirmed this occasion of revelation.

'Ammar- yasir says that it was after the remittal of the ring and the revelation of the holy verse that the Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"The one upon whom I am master, then this Ali is his master." (Al-Mizan)

The holy Prophet (S) recited this verse in Ghadeer Khumm in order to state the position of Hadrat Ali (as). (As-Safi)

Ali-ibn-Abi- 'talib (s.) himself repeatedly recited this verse for his own rightfulness. (As-Safi)

'Abuthar, who himself witnessed the event, explained what occurred for the people in details in the Sacred Mosque. (Majma'-ul-Bayan). Almost all the authentic commentary books, compiled by both Sunni and Shi'ah commentators, have recorded the event.

The term /waliyy/, mentioned in this verse, does not mean 'friend' and 'helper' here, since friendship and helping refers to all the Muslims, not to those who give charity while bowing down in prayer.

According to the Islamic traditions, the purpose of it is only Ali-ibn-Abi-talib (as), and the application of the plural form of the verb /'amanu/ for a singular subject is for the importance of the one. A similar case is found in the verse of 'mutual cursing' where it says /'anfusana wa 'anfusakum / (ourselves and your selves)

In the meantime, many Islamic scholars and the commentators of the Qur'an have said that the objective meaning of the word /waliyy/, mentioned in the above verse, is /wilayah/ in the sense of: 'guardianship' and 'material and spiritual personal initiative' and 'leadership'.

In particular, this guardianship has been ordered in the same row of the guardianship of the Prophet (S) and the guardianship of Allah, and these three are stated in one sentence.

Thus, this verse is one of the verses that, as a Qur'anic text, indicate to master ship and Imamate of Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as).

Explanations

1. Islam is the religion of both association and disassociation, i.e. attraction and repulsion (polarization).

In the previous verses, the Jews and the Christians were prohibited to be chosen as masters. Here, in this verse, the commandment is that we take and follow Allah (s.w.t.), the Messenger (S), and Ali (as) as our masters.

2. The essence of master ship of Allah, the Messenger, and Hadrat Ali (as) is the same, and it is essentially one in nature as well as in effect. That is why the verse says: /waliyyukum/ (your guardian) in a singular form, not /'aulia'ukum/ (your guardians) in plural form.

3. The terms of prayer and alms-tax (charity) are usually mentioned in the Qur'an beside each other, but, in this verse, they are mixed with together, (giving alms-tax while bowing down in prayer).

4. Those who are not among the performers of prayer and alms-tax have not the right of guardianship and leadership over people.

5. In order to help the deprive, they do not consider even their prayer as a barrier. The mass of Muslims should not be inattentive to a poor so that he leaves them dejected and disappointed.

6. Heeding the created beings, in the cause of Allah, does not harm the sincerity. (Alms-tax while bowing down)

(People minus Allah are Marxism, and Allah minus people is monasticism, but people along side the path of Allah is the method of Islam.)

7. The person who is inattentive to the sigh of the poor should not be your leader and your guardian.

8. Some particular insignificant things (like charity) do not invalidate prayer.

9. The Qur'an has counted the freewill offering (recommendable charity) and the ring even as poor-rate.

"...and pay the poor-rate ..."

10. Guardianship over Muslims belongs firstly to Allah (s.w.t.), secondly to the Prophet (S), and then to the Immaculate Imam and after that to jurisconsult.

11. The best kind of introduction is that in which the qualities and characteristics of a particular person be mentioned and the audience adapt them to its aspect and they themselves find its extension. (The verse, without mentioning the name of Ali (as), has enumerated his qualities and actions.)

"Verily, verily your guardian (waliyy) is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate while bowing down in prayer)."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 56

وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

56. "And whoever takes for (his) guardian Allah and His Messenger and those who believe (should know that he is victorious, because) surely the party of Allah are Triumphant."

This verse is a complement for the content of the previous verse. It emphasizes and pursues its meaning. It informs the Muslims that those who accept the guardianship of Allah (s.w.t.) and the Messenger (S) and the believing persons whom were referred to in the previous verse, will become victorious, because they will be involved in the party of Allah , and the party of Allah are indeed the victors.

The verse says:

"And whoever takes for (his) guardian Allah and His Messenger and those who believe (should know that he is victorious, because) surely the party of Allah are Triumphant."

(In this verse, there is another frame of reference upon guardianship, to which was referred in the previous verse. The application of the phrase /hizbullah/ (the party of Allah) and its 'triumph' relates to the Islamic government, not to a simple and ordinary friendship.

This itself indicates that the term /wilayah / in the verse leads to the sense of guardianship, government, and governorship of Islam and the Muslims. The evidence is that in the meaning of 'the party of Allah' there lies a kind of formation, organization and society for securing the common goals.

Section 9: Mockers

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 57

The Mockers and their fault-finding -Hypocrisy and the mischief of the Jews - The Jews and the Christians enjoined to act up to their own Holy Books.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَتَّخِذُواْ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُواْ دِينَكُمْ هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكُفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاء وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ إِن كُنتُم مؤْمِنِينَ

57. "O' you who have Faith! do not take those who take your religion in mockery and play, from among those who were given the Book before you and the infidels as guardians; and be in awe of Allah if you are believers."

The worldly retribution of the act of mockery and sacrilege unto the religion of Allah and profanity is rupture of relations. Mocking the religion is a job of disbelievers. So, the condition of having Faith is having the religious zeal and dissociating from the vicious.

Never be afraid of the rupture of relation with pagans, the profaners of the religion. If you have Faith, be in awe of Allah.

"O' you who have Faith! do not take those who take your religion in mockery and play, from among those who were given the Book before you and the infidels as guardians; and be in awe of Allah if you are believers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 58

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لاَّ يَعْقِلُونَ

58. "And when you call to prayer they take it in mockery and play. That is because they are a people who do not apply reason."

Following the previous discussion upon the prohibition of friendship with the hypocrites and a party of the People of the Book who mock the commandments of Islam, this verse points to one of their deeds as an evidence. It implies that when the prayer call is recited and the Muslims are called to prayer, the hypocrites and some of the People of the Book mock it. Here is the verse:

"And when you call to prayer they take it in mockery and play....."

This Fact should be noted that 'prayer' is the feature and the sample of the religion. Thus, here, taking prayer in mockery means taking the feature of the religion in mockery. Hence, the prayer call should be recited so that the crowd of Muslims gather and prayer be established quite openly.

In Islamic society, prayer call must be recited loudly and be preached, but it should not be troublesome; of course.

In conclusion, this point is clear that the style of the wise is that they face the affairs logically while the imprudent, those who have not reason, are the makers of mockery. The verse says:

"...That is because they are a people who do not apply reason."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 59

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنقِمُونَ مِنَّا إِلاَّ أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللّه وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

59. "Say: 'O' People of the Book! Do you find faults with us (for any reason) except that we have believed in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and in what was sent down before (the Quran), and that, certainly, most of you are evil-doers'."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the Occasion of Revelation of the above verse and the verse after that, it has been narrated from Ibn-Abbas that a group of the Jewish people came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to describe his creeds for them.

Then, the holy Prophet (S) said: "I believe in Allah and in what have been revealed to Abraham, Ismael, Issac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, and all Divine Prophets, and I separate none of them from the others."

They said: "We do not know Jesus and do not accept him as a prophet." Then they added that they knew no religion worse than their religion (the Prophet's religion). It was at that time that this holy verse was revealed and answered them.

In this verse, Allah (s.w.t.) orders Prophet Muhammad (S) to ask the People of the Book why they found faults with them and criticized them for any reason, save that they had believed in Allah (s.w.t.) and submitted to what was sent down to them and to the prophets before them.

The verse says:

"Say: ' O' People of the Book! Do you find faults with us (for any reason) except that we have believed in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and in what was sent down before (the Quran) ..."

At the end of the verse, there finds a sentence which in fact, is the clarification of the previous sentence. It, from the tongue of Muslims and addressing the People of the Book, denotes that if you object us upon the pure theism and sincere submission we have unto all the heavenly Books, it is because most of you are evil-doers and have polluted with sins.

Thus, since you yourselves are polluted and deluded, then whoever are purified and pave the right path, in your point of view, their manner is blemish.

"...and that certainly, most of you are evil-doers"

Note:

1. Denial of the right and annoying the followers of the right is ungodliness.

2. When encountering the severities of the enemies do not forfeit justice and fairness. Yet, do not consider all of those hostile enemies as equally evil-doers.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 60

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُم بِشَرٍّ مِّن ذَلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِندَ اللّه مَن لَّعَنَهُ الله وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ أُوْلَـئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَاناً وَأَضَل عَن سَوَاء السَّبِيلِ

60. "Say: 'Shall I inform you of (him who is) worse than that in retribution with Allah?(Worse are those) whom Allah has cursed and

brought His wrath upon, and He turned some of whom into apes and swine, and worshippers of Taghut (false deity). They are worse in place (with Allah) and far more astray from the (right) path."

In this holy verse, some perverted creeds and some wrong deeds of the People of the Book, resulted to the inflictions they were faced with, are compared with the situation of the true Muslim believers, in order to make (clear which of these two groups deserve to be blamed and criticized.

This is, indeed, a logical answer which is used for the stubborn and fanatic persons to become mindful. In this comparison, it addresses the Prophet (S) to tell them whether the person who believes in Allah and the heavenly Books deserves to be criticized and blamed, or the wrong actions of those whose retribution of their deed is worse than that with Allah. The verse says:

"Say: 'Shall I inform you of (him who is) worse than that in retribution with Allah?.."

Then, it explains this subject when it says:

"…(Worse are those) whom Allah has cursed and brought His wrath upon, and He turned some of whom into apes a swine, and worshippers of Taghut (false deity). They are worse in place (with Allah) and far more astray from the (right) path."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 61

وَإِذَا جَآؤُوكُمْ قَالُوَاْ آمَنَّا وَقَد دَّخَلُواْ بِالْكُفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُواْ بِهِ وَالله أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكْتُمُونَ

61. "And when they come to you, they say: 'We believe '; while certainly they have entered in with infidelity, and certainly they have gone out with it; and Allah knows best what they were hiding."

In order to complete the discussion about the hypocrites among the People of the Book, in this verse it makes their inner hypocrisy manifest and announces it to the Muslims as such:

"And when they come to you, they say: 'We believe '; while certainly they have entered in with infidelity, and certainly they have gone out with it....."

And, at the end of the verse, it warns them that in spite of all these concealments, Allah is aware of what they hide. It says:

"....and Allah knows best what they were hiding."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 62

وَتَرَى كَثِيراً مِّنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

62. "And you will see many of them striving with one another to hasten in sin and transgression and their devouring the unlawful. Verily, evil is what they have been doing."

In the previous verse, the words were about their infidel spirit; and, here, the statement is about their ethical, social, and economical corruptions.

In this verse, the Qur'an refers to some other signs of their hypocrisy. As a part of the signs, it says:

"And you will see many of them striving with one another to hasten in sin and transgression and their devouring the unlawful. ..."

That is, they so act in the way of sin and cruelty that as if they go forward unto some honourable goals, and without any shame or modesty, they try to precede one another.

Therefore, preceding in corruption is found in the feature of the society of infidelity and hypocrisy. But, the feature o-f the Islamic society is precedence in good deeds.

Similarly, the main goals and ideal of the hypocrites is: lust, wealth, might, usury, bribery, enmity, and sinfulness.

Worse than that manner is that, they openly show their committing sin and being involved in it.

And, at the end of the verse, in order to emphasize on the indecency condition of their deeds and that they continue to perform them, the holy Qur'an says:

"...Verily, evil is what they have been doing."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 63

لَوْلاَ يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّانِيونَ وَالأَحْبَارُ عَن قَوْلِهِمُ الإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَصْنَعُونَ

63. "Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them (the people) from uttering sinful words and devouring the unlawful? Verily evil is what they have been working."

Then, in this holy verse, the attack is targeted at the learned men of such societies who, by their own silence, encourage them to committing sin; It says:

"Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them (the people) from uttering sinful words and devouring the unlawful? ..."

That is, in order to improve an immoral society, the knowledgeable men among them must change their incorrect thoughts and creeds. Thus, the verse shows the style of improving an immoral society to the learned people that they must begin with mental revolution.

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an has blamed the indifferent scholars who remain silent and those who abandon 'enjoining right' and 'forbidding wrong' in the same level that it has blamed the evil-doers, where it says:

" ...Verily evil is what they have been working."

Thus, it becomes clear that the fate of those who do not perform the great duty of 'enjoining right and forbidding wrong', especially when they are among scholars and learned ones, is equivalent with the fate of the sinners. They have indeed, a share of their crime.

Ibn-Abbas, the famous commentator, has been narrated from that he used to say: "This verse is the most intensive verse which scorns and blames the undutiful and indifferent scholars."

It is evident that this command does not pertain exclusively to the silent scholars of the Jews and the Christians. It encompasses all the mental leaders and scholars who sit silent at the time that people become polluted with committing sin and go forward in the path of injustice and corruption, because the law of Allah is the same for all human beings.

In a tradition from Imam Ali (as), mentioned in Sermon No.192, we recite that he has said:

" ...because Allah, the Glorified, did not curse the past age except for that they had left off enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. In fact, Allah cursed the foolish for committing sins and the wise because they gave up refraining others from evils. ..."

In other words, this part of the sermon means that former nations were destroyed for their committing sins and that their wise men did not forbid people from evils. At this time the misfortunes and divine retributions came down over them.

Then, O' people! Beware to do 'enjoining right and forbidding wrong' so that you may not have a similar fate of theirs, either.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 64

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُواْ بِمَا قَالُواْ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاء وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنْهُم مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاء إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُواْ نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

64. "And the Jews have said: The hand of Allah is tied up! and cursed be they for what they have said. Nay, both His hands (of Power) are (always) spread out. He bestows as He pleases. And what has been sent down to you from your Lord will certainly increase many of them in insolence and infidelity; and We have cast enmity and hatred between them till the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindle a fire for war, Allah extinguishes it. They strive to make mischief in the land; and Allah does not love the mischief makers.

One of the clear examples of the vain statements and sinful words of the Jews, which were generally referred to in the previous verse, has been pointed out in this verse.

Its explanation is that history shows that once the Jews were living in a very powerful state. They were ruling over a vast part of the inhabited world of that era, of which the time of David and Solomon, son of David, can be mentioned as an example. In the time after that, too, their authority continued to be exposed with some changes, of course.

But, with the advent of Islam, the light of the star of their power declined especially in Mecca and Medina.

The Prophet's fights against the Jewish tribes known as Bani-Nadir, Bani-Ghurah, and the Jews of Kheybar caused them to become very weak. At this time, considering their past glory, authority and power, some of them mockingly said that Allah's hand was tied up with chains and would not give them anything.

Since the rest of them (those Jewish people) were content with, them, too; the Qur'an has attributed this qualification to all of them, by saying:

"And the Jews have said: (The hand of Allah is tied up! ..."

In answer to them, and in order to blame and reproach such a wrong belief, at first, Allah says:

"...Be their hands tied up! and cursed be they for what they have said....."

Then, to nullify this unjust opinion, the Qur'an says:

"....Nay, both His hands (of Power) are (always) spread out. He bestows as He pleases. ..."

Allah is neither forced in His affairs, nor is He obliged to the natural phenomena or the momentum of time; but His Will is above everything and effective in all affairs.

Then, it implies that even these verses, that make the secret of their statements and opinions manifest, instead of having a positive effect on them and turning them back from the wrong path, cause many of them to become rather stubborn and also to increase their rebelliousness and faithlessness. The verse says:

"...And what has been sent down to you from your Lord will certainly increase many of them in insolence and infidelity....."

But, for these unjust statements and opinions, that they utter and the obstinacy that they have in the way of disobedience and disbelief, Allah has assigned a heavy chastisement for them in this world. He (s.w.t.) in this verse says:

"...and We have cast enmity and hatred between them till the Day of Resurrection. ..."

And, by the last part of the verse, the Qur'an points to the struggles and efforts of the Jews for kindling the flames of war. It also points to the struggles and efforts of the Jews for kindling the flames of war. It also points to the grace of Allah in protecting and rescuing the Muslims from these annihilating flames, where it says:

"….Every time they kindle a fire for war, Allah extinguishes it…"

And, in fact, this divine incident is one of miraculous aspects of the life of the Prophet (S).

Then, the Qur'an continues saying:

"...They strive to make mischief in the land; and Allah does not love the mischief makers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 65

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُواْ وَاتَّقَوْاْ لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلأدْخَلْنَاهُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

65. "And if the People of the Book had believed and kept from evil, We would certainly have remitted their sins and We would certainly have made them enter Gardens of Bless."

The Qur'an follows, here, the former criticisms upon the manner and style of the People of the Book. In this verse and the verse next to it as the training principles require, and in order to bring back the mischievous People of the Book to the straight path and admiring that minority of them who did not cooperate with them in their evil deeds, the Qur'an, at first, says:

"And if the People of the Book had believed and kept from evil, We would certainly have remitted their sins ..."

They not only will be forgiven of their sins but also will be admitted into gardens of Paradise which are the centre of kinds of blessings. The Holy Qur'an says:

"...and We would certainly have made them enter Gardens of Bless."!

This meaning refers to the spiritual bounties found in the Hereafter.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 66

وَلَوْ نَّهُمْ أَقَامُواْ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيهِم مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لأَكَلُواْ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِم مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاء مَا َعْمَلُونَ

66. "And if they had kept Up the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would certainly have had (of the bounties) from above them and from beneath their feet. Among them there are people who are moderate, but (as for) many of them, evil is what they do."

If the followers of heavenly Books other than the Holy Qur'an had submitted to the Qur'an, and had not imagined that surrendering to the Qur'an is the submission of the Children of Israel to Arabs, and had realized that the prophets' principles of teachings are all alike, and that having faith in what was revealed after the Torah and Evangel is a promotion to the higher class of belief not negating the former instructions, then, besides enjoying of the concerning merits in Hereafter, they would have received varieties of bounties in this very world, too.

In the preceding holy verse, the function of Faith in the spiritual felicity of the other life was referred to, but here, in the verse under discussion, its function in the worldly prosperity and economic welfare has been stated. The verse says:

"And if they had kept up the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would certainly have had (of the bounties) from above them and from beneath their feet. ..."

In the previous verse, the words were about the belief of the Jews saying that: "The hand of Allah is tied up", while, here, the verse points out that they should refer to the heavenly Books and then judge whether the hand of Allah is tied up or not.

The reason that their glory and might changed into disgrace and degradation as retribution, was for that they turned their backs to the heavenly instructions, not for the restraint of Allah (s.w.t.).

"....Among them there are people who are moderate, but (as for) many of them, evil is what they do."

Section 10: The Christian Deviation from the Truth

Truth to be proclaimed at all cost -The people of the Gospel do not act up to it - The errors which the Christians commit,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 67

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

67. "O' Messenger! convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message (at all); and Allah will protect you from the (vice of) people, verily Allah does not guide the unbelieving ones. "

Appointment of the Successor as the Final Point of Prophetic Mission

In this verse, only the Prophet (S) is addressed. It states but his duty. The text of the verse begins with "O' Messenger!" and continues explicitly and emphatically commending him such:

"...convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord...."

Then, for a further emphasis it warns him that if he refrains doing that, (that never might he refrain), he has not conveyed His message to people at all. The verse says:

"...and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message (at all); ..."

After that, the revelation consoles the Prophet (S), as if he was anxious and worried about a particular incident, and tells him not to be afraid of people for performing this duty. It says:

"....and Allah will protect you from the (vice of) people ..."

And, at the end of the verse, as a threat and punishment unto those who reject or deny this peculiar message and pertinaciously blaspheme it, the verse says:

"...Verily Allah does not guide the unbelieving ones."

Truly, what an important subject there existed in the latest months of the Prophet's life that in the above-mentioned verse the lack of its conveyance has been counted equivalent with the lack of messenger ship wholly.

In different books of the scholars of both Sunnite and Shi'ah schools of thought, there are many authentic traditions recorded to say that the above-mentioned verse has been revealed at Ghadeer Khumm about the appointment of the successor for the Prophet (S) and the future fate of Islam and Muslims.[1]

Ghadeer Khumm in Brief

In the last year of the Prophet's life the rites of Hajjat-ul- Wida' were very gloriously performed at the presence of the Prophet (S).

In this journey, not only the inhabitants of Medina accompanied the holy Prophet (S), but also Muslims of different parts of Arabia took part in the pilgrimage with the Prophet (S) to gain a great historical honour and credit.

The sun of Arabia was showering heat as fire over Mounts and valleys. But the sweetness of this spiritual journey made everything easy for the pilgrims of Mecca. It was nearly noon. The land of Juhfeh and behind it the

hot dry deserts of Ghadeer Khumm were showing themselves from a distance.

It was on Thursday in the tenth A.H. (anno Hijira), just eight days after the Day of Sacrifice. Suddenly the Prophet (S) ordered halt to the marching caravan.

The Prophet's Muazzin invited people to noon prayer with a loud voice of 'Allahu-Akbar '. People became ready for prayer while the weather was so hot that men had to put one side of their shoulder-mantles on the ground under their feet and another side of it over their heads when establishing prayer.

When the noon prayer was established, people were going to go immediately into their small tents which they were carrying with them to shelter therein. But the Prophet (S) informed them that everybody should attend to hearken a new Divine message. Then he announced that message through a full described sermon.

Those people who were standing in a distance from the Prophet (S) to listen to his lecture could not see him from behind the crowd.

Therefore, a pulpit was prepared from the seats used at the back of the camels. The holy Prophet (S) mounting the pulpit praised Allah and sought protection from Him. Then he addressed the huge crowd of people and said:

"Soon I am going to depart from among you by accepting the invitation of Allah. I am responsible, and you are responsible, too. How do you bear witness about me? "

The audience shouted saying:

"We bear witness that certainly you have conveyed (the mission of messenger ship), advised (the circumstance of benevolence) and strived (to guide us). May, then, Allah reward you goodness."

Then he (S) questioned:

"Do you not bear witness to Unity of Allah, my messenger ship, the rightfulness of the Day of Resurrection, and raising the dead on that Day?"

The crowd answered: "Yes, We confess." The Prophet (S) said: "O' Lord! Be witness." Again, he (S) said: "O' people! Do you hear me? ..." The audience answered positively, and then a silence dominated throughout the desert, so that there was, heard nothing but the sound of the wind.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Now, look how do you treat with these two weighty and worthy things that I leave among you?"

A voice from among the crowd asked the Prophet (S) what those two worthy things were.

The Prophet (S) immediately said:

"The first is 'the Greater Weight', the Qur'an, whose one end is in Allah's hand and another end is in your hand. Never abandon it lest you might get astray! The second worthy thing is my progeny, my Ahlul-Bayt. And verily Allah, the Subtle, the Aware, informed me that never, never, will these too get separated from each other until they meet me at Heaven. Do not anticipate them both, because you, will be perished; and be not behind-hand of those two, for you will be perished, too."

At that time, people saw that the Prophet (S) was looking round as if he was looking for someone. As soon as he saw Ali (as), he leaned over and took his hand and raised it up so high that the whiteness of their arm-pits appeared.

The entire crowd saw him (as) and recognized him that he is the very ever-victorious officer of Islam. Here, the Prophet's voice became louder and more audible when he said:

"O' people! who is superior (or the Master) among the people to the believers more than their own selves? "

They said: "Allah and the Prophet (S) know better."

The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah is my master, and I am the master over the believers, and I am superior to them more than their own selves (my decision is superior to their decision)."

Then he (S) added:

"To whomever I am the Maula (the master) this Ali is his Maula (the master)."

And he repeated this statement three times, or, as some narrators of the traditions have cited, he repeated it four times.

After stating this commandment, he looked up towards heaven and prayed, saying:

"O' Allah! Be You a friend to him who is a friend to him (Ali) and (Be You) as enemy to him who is enemy to him (i.e. Ali)."

Then he (S) said to the audience:

"Beware that all of you who are present should communicate this news to those who are absent."

The Prophet's sermon was completed while sweat was showering from the faces of the Prophet (S), Ali (as) and all people there because of the heat. Before separating the rows of the pilgrims, Ruh-ul-'Amin (Gabriel) came down and revealed this holy verse to the Prophet (S):

"...This day have I perfected your religion for you and have I completed My bounties on you and am pleased your religion to be Islam. ..." [2]

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Allah is the Greatest! Allah is the Greatest upon the perfection of religion and completion of favour, and the Lord became pleased with my messenger ship and Ali's mastership after me."

At this time there arose a sound of pleasure and uproar amongst people, and they congratulated this position to Ali (as). Two people, out of those famous ones in the gathering who felicitated Ali (as), were Abu-Bakr and 'Umar.

It was at the presence of the crowd when they one after another uttered in their Arabic tongue: "Bakhkhin bakhkhin laka yabna Abi-Talib. Asbahta wa amsayta Moulaee wa Maula kulle Mu'minin wa Mu'minah , (Hurrah, Hurrah, O' son of Abu-Talib! You have now become my Maula (master) and the Maula (master) of every believing man and believing woman.)

This report is a brief explanation of the Ghadeer Khumm which has been recorded in the scholars' books of both Sunnie and Shi'ites.

An Explanation

All of the Shi'ite commentators basing on Ahlul-Bayt's traditions, and also as some Sunnite commentators, like Fakhr-i-Razi and the author of Almanar have cited that this verse is related to the mastership (wilayah) of Ali-ibn Abi-Talib and the event in Ghadeer Khumm.

The style of the tone and address of the verse distinguishes this holy verse from the verses before and after it. It is only in this verse throughout the Qur'an that the holy Prophet (S) has been threatened due to the concealment of message.

It announces that if he does not convey that message, it is as if what he has conveyed during all the years of his messenger ship will be reduced to nothing. Therefore, it must be noted what an important message it is which has been stated there and in that manner.

It is a message that, from the point of significance, is equivalent with all the Divine messages of the whole period of his prophet hood and messenger ship. That message is the master ship, Imamate, and leadership of Ali-ibn-Abi- Talib (as) from the side of Allah.

O' Lord! accept us and our children among the true followers of Imam Ali (as) and his progeny (as), and cause us all to be mustered with them on the day of Resurrection.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 68

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ حَتَّىَ تُقِيمُواْ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَ َ يدَنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنْهُم مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا فَلاَ تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

68. "Say: 'O' People of the Book you follow naught (no true religion) till you keep up the Torah and the Evangel and what has been sent down unto you from your Lord; and surely that which has been sent down to you from your Lord (the Qur'an} shall increase many of them in insolence and infidelity. So do not grieve for the unbelieving ones."

It is necessary to believe in all the heavenly Books, and a mere claim of belief is not sufficient. Practice and establishment of action for Faith is indispensable. Thus, the person who does not practise his Faith has no religion.

The personality and value of individuals is estimated by the level of their action on the religious duties.

Infidelity and obstinacy of persons do not harm the Islamic system and ideology, but they themselves incur its harm. Allah is the protector of the religion.

"Say: ' O' People of the Book you follow naught (no true religion} till you keep up the Torah and the Evangel and what has been sent down unto you from your Lord; and surely that which has been sent down to you from your Lord (the Qur'an) shall increase many of them in insolence and infidelity. So do not grieve for the unbelieving ones."

It is evident, of course that the content meaning of this verse is not allocated to the Jews. If the Muslims suffice only to the claim of Islam, too, and do not establish the prophets' principles of training and their own heavenly Book in particular, they will have neither any rank nor value with

Allah nor in their own personal and social life. So, they will always be helpless, inferior and defeated.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 69

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَالصَّابِؤُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

69. "Verily those who believed, and those of the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians, whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

The verse relates to the Faith and the deeds of the followers of those religions mentioned in the verse at their own concerning times.

Then, with the advent of a new religion, they should believe in the new Divine law, else the appointment of the successive prophets seems useless. Then, either of the Jews, the Christians, and others should believe in Islam like Muslims and act righteously. It is in that case that they will have neither fear nor any grief.

"Verily those who believed, and those of the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians, whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

All the heavenly religions prove that the criterion of felicity is both 'Faith and righteous deed', not the bare claims and names or slogans. Thus, Faith is not separate from action; and tranquillity and security are found due to them both.

Explanation: What is the Objective Meaning of the Sabians?

Some commentators have said that they are a group of people whose religion has been taken from those of the Jews and Christians. Some others have said that they believe in Noah (as) and do not believe in all prophets after him.

But, as Imam Rida (as) has said, the Sabians are some formerly worshippers who repented and believed in both 'The Origin and the End', and did righteous deeds, too.[3]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 70

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلاً ُ"َّمَا جَاءهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُواْ وَفَرِيقًا َقْتُلُونَ

70. "Certainly We look a covenant from the Children of Israel and We sent messengers to them. Whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, some of them they would deny and some (of them) they would slay."

In Surah Al-Baqarah No.2 and at the beginning of this current Surah, Al-Ma'idah, there is a hint to the firm covenant that Allah has taken from the Children of Israel. In the above verse, too, this covenant is referred to again.

It implies that Allah took covenant from the Children of Israel to do according to what He sent down. And, He appointed some messengers for them to guide them and to demand the fulfilment of this covenant from them. It says:

"Certainly We took a covenant from the Children of Israel and We sent messengers to them. ..."

Then the verse continues implying that they not only did not do upon this covenant but also whenever a messenger brought a Divine commandment to them which contrasted their wishes and low desires, they committed the worst and the strongest struggle against him. They denied some of these prophets, while they killed those prophets whose influence they could not hinder. It says:

"... Whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, some of them they would deny and some (of them) they would slay."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 71

وَحَسِبُواْ أَلاَّ تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ فَعَمُواْ وَصَمواْ ثُمَّ تَابَ الله عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُواْ وَصَمواْ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَالله بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

71. "And they (the Jews) imagined that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf (unto the Truth); then Allah turned to them mercifully; but again many of them became blind and deaf; and Allah sees what they do."

In this verse, the vain pride of the Jews is referred to, with those plenty treacheries and violence that they had. The verse says:

"And they (the Jews) imagined that there would be no affliction ..."

As this meaning gas been pointed out in other verses, the Jews considered themselves a superior face, and they remarked that they were the Children of Allah. Finally, this dangerous pride and self-admiration, like a curtain, covered them over their eyes and ears.

So, as a result of it, they became blind for seeing the signs of Allah and, as a deaf, they did not hear the words of right. The verse says:

"... so they became blind and deaf (unto the Truth)....."

But, when they saw some samples of the punishments of Allah, and felt the evil fate of their own deeds they regretted. They, then, repented, because they realized that the divine threats were serious and that they were not a superior race. It was at that circumstance that Allah accepted their repentance. It says:

"...then Allah turned to them mercifully....."

But this recognition and regretful ness did not last long. They again began to be disobedient, violent, obstinate and heedless to the right and justice.

Therefore, the curtains of negligence, which is the result of committing sins, were put over their eyes and ears, so that they became blind again for seeing the signs of truth and deaf again for hearing the words of truth. This status enveloped many of them.

"...but again many of them became blind and deaf...."

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an, in a short but expressive phrase, implies that never Allah is heedless of their deeds and He sees all the things that they do. It says:

"... and Allah sees what they do."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 72

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ

72. "Certainly they are infidels who say: 'Verily Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary;' and the Messiah (himself) said: 'O' Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Verily whoever associates anything with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the Paradise and his abode is the Fire, and there shall be no helpers for the unjust'."

Following the discussions upon the aberrations of the Jews, which were delivered in the former verses, in this verse and the verses next to it, the words are about the deviations of the Christians. At first, it begins with the greatest swerve of Christianity, i.e. God ship of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It says:

"Certainly they are infidels who say: 'Verily Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary;'..."

They say so while Jesus (as) himself vividly told the Children of Israel to worship Allah, their Lord. The verse says:

"... and the Messiah (himself) said: 'O' Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...."

Also, for an emphasis on this subject, and in order to prevent any ambiguity and fault, the words of Jesus continue adding:

"... Verily whoever associates anything with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the Paradise and his abode is the Fire...."

And again, for a further emphasis and confirming this fact that polytheism and extremism is a kind of manifest wrongdoing, they were told such:

"...and there shall be no helpers for the unjust '."

What is found in the above-mentioned verse regarding the Messiah (as) persisting on the theme of theism[4] is a subject matter which also, adapts to the existing sources of Christianity.[5] This very matter is counted among the evidences for the significance of the Qur'an.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 73

لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلاَثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَـهٍ إِلاَّ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُواْ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

73. "Certainly they disbelieve who say: 'Verily Allah is the third of the three,' while there is no god save the One God; and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve."

This fact should be noted that what was referred to in the previous verse was the subject of extremism and unity with Allah. But, in this verse, the Qur'an points to the plurality of gods from the view point of the Christians, viz. three foldness in Divine Unity. It says:

"Certainly they disbelieve who say: 'Verily Allah is the third of the three,'... "

In answer to them the Qur'an decisively says:

"... while there is no god save the One God; ..."

Then, the Qur'an, with a strong and severe tone, emphatically warns them:

"... and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 74

أَفَلاَ يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللّه وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ وَالله غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

74. "Will they not then turn to Allah and ask forgiveness of Him? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This holy verse contains significance to the fact that perverted beliefs should be repented of.

The deviated persons from the straight path should be invited to the right path through the statement of the divine forgiveness and mercy. It can be done by saying that Allah both forgives and bestows His mercy on the servants.

The verse says:

"Will they not then turn to Allah and ask forgiveness of Him? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. "

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 75

مَّا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلاَّ رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرسُلُ وَأُمهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَأْكُلاَنِ الطَّعَامَ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الآيَاتِ ثُمَّ انظُرْ يُؤْفَكُونَ

75. "The Messiah, son of Mary, is but a messenger (that) messengers (the like of whom) has passed away before him, and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the Signs clear for them (people), and see how they are turned away (from the truth)."

Allah introduces three reasons in this verse which prove that Messiah (as) is not God.

1. He (as) has been born and he (as) is son of Mary.

2. There have been some prophets like him, too, and he is not matchless.

"The Messiah, son of Mary, is but a messenger (that) messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him....."

3. Like anybody else, he is in need of food and other necessities, and he gains his strength from food. Therefore he does not possess an absolute power to be God. Whoever needs food cannot be the creator of the food.

These are clear statements of the holy Qur'an that people understand. However, having some privileges, such as miracles and exceptions, do not prove divinity for a person. Other prophets worked miracles, too, Or, Adam had not parents, either.

".... and his mother was a truthful woman; they both-used to eat food. ..."

Allah (s.w.t.) is neither material, nor born, nor necessitous, and He has no place.

"... See how We make the Signs clear for them (people), and see how they are turned away (from the truth)."

By the way, Mary is one of God's saints. The Qur'an honours women and counts Mary 'a truthful woman'. In another verse of the Qur'an, it is said that Mary testified Allah's word and she was of the obedient ones:

" ...and she testified the truth of the words of her Lord, and His Scriptures and she was of the obedient ones." [6]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 76

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّه مَا لاَ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلاَ نَفْعًا وَالله هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

76. "Say: 'Do you worship besides Allah that which possesses for you neither harm nor profit? And Allah -He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

To complete the former reasoning about Jesus, the Qur'an in this verse remarks to the Christians that they knew that the Messiah was fully in need of what a human being needs. He was not even the possessor of his own harm and his own profit, then how could he be the possessor of their harm and profit? It says:

"Say: 'Do you worship besides Allah that which possesses for you neither harm nor profit..."

That was why Jesus was captured many times by his enemies, or that his friends were involved in some inflictions. So, had not been the Grace of Allah, he (as) could have done nothing.

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an warns them not to imagine that Allah does not hear their vain words, or He is not aware of their inside, because He is both Hearing and Knowing.

The verse says:

"... And Allah -He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."!

Explanations

1. For realizing that the path of polytheism is invalid, refer to your own human intellect and sensibility.

2. Except Allah, other gods are incapable even of hearing and knowing your necessities; much less of supplying them.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 77

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لاَ تَغْلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ أَهْوَاء قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلواْ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلواْ كَثِيراً وَضَلواْ عَن سَوَاء السَّبِيلِ

77. "Say: ' O' People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of the people who had gone astray a foretime, and led many astray, and went astray from the right path."

In this verse following the manifestation of the fault of the people of the Book in the field of exaggeration about Divine prophets, the holy Prophet (S) is commanded to invite them, with clear reasoning that they formally return from this way. The verse says:

"Say: 'O' People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion other than the truth...."

The exaggeration of the Christians is clear, of course, but the exaggeration of the Jews, who are also involved in those whom the Qur'an addresses to by the phrase: "O' People of the Book! " is probably a hint to the statement they said about prophet Ezra (as) and considered him the son of Allah.

And, since the origin of exaggeration is often following the vain desires of the misguided ones, to complete this meaning, the verse continues saying:

"...and do not follow the vain desires of the people who had gone astray a foretime, and led many astray, and went astray from the right path."

This phrase points to the fact that this meaning is recorded in the history of the Christianity, too. The idea of trinity and exaggeration about Jesus (as) was not mainly found among them in the early centuries of the Christianity.

When the Indian Idolaters, and the like: joined the religion of Christ, they added something from the remaining belief of the former, creed, viz. trinity and polytheism, to the Christianity.

Note

1. Some of these books, compiled by both main sects of Islams are as follows:
   A)
   1. Sunan-i-Ibn-Majih, vol. 1, p. 55,
   2. Al-Fada'il, by 'Ahmad-Ibn-Hanbal (handwritten)
   3. Khasa'is-un-Nisa'i p.21
   4. Al-Kanawal-'Asma', byDulabi, vol. 2, p.61
   5. Mushkil-ul-'Athar, by Tahawi, vol. 2, p. 307
   6. Al-'Ighd-ul-Farid vol 3 p94
   7. Al-'Isti'ab vol 2 p. 460
   8. Tarikh-i-Baghdad vol. 7 p.377
   9. Mustadrak-ul-Hakim vol. 3 p. 110
   10. Tarikh-i-Damishgh, vol. 2, p. 166
   11. Tafsir-ul-Hafiz, by Ibn-Kathir, vol. 2, p. 14

   B)
   1. At-Tara'if, by Ibn-Tawus, p. 140
   2. Managhib, by Ibn-Shahr'ashub, vol. 29, p.228
   3. The Book of Salim-Ibn-Ghays, p. 111
   4. 'Ikmal-ud-Din, by Ash-Shaykh-'us-Sadugh, vol. 1, p. 274
   5. Ihtijaj, by Tabarsi, p. 663
   6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 37, p. 181, tradition 68
   7. 'Ighbal-ul-'Ighbal, p. 663
   8. Raudatul-wa'izin, vol. 1, p. 89
   9. 'Al-Yaghin, p. 343
   10. Al-' Adad-il-Ghawiyyah, p. 169
   11. 'At-Tahsin p. 578
   12. As '- Sirat-ul-Mustaghim, vol. 1, p. 301
   13. 'Al-Qadir, by Al-'Allamat-ul-'Amini
   14. 'Abaghat-ul-'Anwar, by Al-'Allamah Mir-'Himid Hussayn Al-Lakhunuy (India)

www.alhassanain.org/english

15. 'Ihghagh-ul-Hagh, by Ghadi Nurullah, At-Tusturi; & tens of other books.

2. The Qur'an Surah Al-Ma'idah, No 5, verse 3

3. Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan

4. Mark, Chapter 12, No.29, indicates Jesus invites people to theism and says: "... O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord."

5. Matthew, Chapter 6, No.24 is also like that. It speaks about one God.

6. Surah Al- Tahrim, No 66, verse 12

Section 11: Christian nearness to Islam

The Israelites cursed by David and Jesus for their disobedience and exceeding the limits - Jews' enmity and the Christian friendship of the Muslims -The pious ones among the Christian priests and monks,

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 78

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُودَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا وَّكَانُواْ يَعْتَدُونَ

78. "Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David, and of Jesus, son of Mary, that was because they disobeyed and used to transgress."

Hadrat David (as) cursed the Israelites for their offence and violation regarding to holiday on Saturday.

And Hadrat Jesus (as) cursed them, too, for the reason that the Children of Israel, in order to assure their hearts, asked for heavenly food, which was descended by Allah as a result of Jesus' supplication. They ate it but they disbelieved again. Therefore, they incurred the wrath and punishment of Allah. The holy verse says:

"Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David, and of Jesus, son of Mary, that was because they disobeyed and used to transgress."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 79

كَانُواْ لاَ يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَن منكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَفْعَلُونَ

79. "They used not to restrain each other from any dishonour they committed. Certainly evil was that which they were doing! "

The curses of David (as) and Jesus (as) unto the Children of Israel were for the reason that they disobeyed and transgressed. It was also because:

"They used not to restrain each other from any dishonour they committed. Certainly evil was that which they were doing!"

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said: "They (the good people of the Children of Israel) did not take part in the (sinful) activities and meetings, but when they saw them (the sinners) they met them with smile to their faces, and association."[1]

So, the person who is careless toward corruption is cursed by the prophets.

The deed of 'forbidding from doing evil' is not allocated to the religion of Islam, but it had existed in all divine religions.

In the community of the Israelites, mischief had commonly been committed. Then, they were cursed by Allah (s.w.t.) and the Messenger of Allah (S).

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 80

تَرَى كَثِيراً مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَن سَخِطَ الله عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ

80. "You see many of them making friends with those who disbelieve. Surely evil is that which their selves send before for them (as their storage in the Hereafter), and Allah's wrath is on them, and in the chastisement shall they abide."

In this verse, another evidence upon the behaviour of the Israelites is suggested as a cause that they were cursed for. The Children of Israel make friends and master ship with the disbelievers.

So, the acceptance of the master ship of infidels is a cause for bringing forth the wrath of Allah (s.w.t.).

The verse says:

"You see many of them making friends with those who disbelieve. Surely evil is that which their selves send before for them (as their storage in the Hereafter), and Allah's wrath is on them, and in the chastisement shall they abide."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 81

وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاء وَلَـكِنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

81. "And if they had believed in Allah and the Prophet and what was sent down to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but, most of them are evil-doers."

There may be several extensions for the content of this verse. Among them are the followings:

A. If the Jews had really believed in Moses (as) and his Torah, they would never have appointed pagans as their masters. (Tafsir 'Alusi)

B. If infidels and polytheists became Muslims; the Jews would not cooperate with them. (Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan)

C. If the People of the Book, or the hypocrites, or the Muslims believed truly in Allah and the Messenger, they would not appoint pagans as their masters. The reason of it is that Faith does not adapt to infidelity. It is corruption and disbelief that cause them to accept the domination of pagans.

And, generally, whoever violates the bounds of Allah will be a prey of Taghuts (deities) and disbelievers.

The verse says:

"And if they had believed in Allah and the Prophet and what was sent down to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are evil-doers."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 82

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ قَالُوَاْ إِنَّا نَصَارَى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِّيسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَ نَّهُمْ لاَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

82. "Certainly you will find the most hostile of people to those who believe are the Jews and pagans; and you will certainly find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe are those who say: 'We are Christians.' That is because there are among them priests and monks and because they do not behave proudly."

The good treatment of Najashi, the king of Abyssinia, and the Christians of that country unto the emigrated Muslims has been cited upon the occasion of revelation of this verse.

In the fifth year after the appointment of the Prophet (S) to his mission, a group of Muslims under the management of Ja'far-ibn-'Abi-talib emigrated from Mecca to Abyssinia and became secured from the harm and hurt of the pagans of Mecca with the support of Najashi.

They were secured from the harm of the agents of the pagans there, too. The Jews, even with seeing those abundant miracles and also the good temper of the Prophet (S), did not believe in Islam. They participated in plots against Muslims.

They did breach promises and made mischief, while some Christian bishops in Abyssinia shed tears when they heard the verses of Surah Maryam and adhered those Muslims who were there.

Thus, the Jews are the most obstinate enemies of Islam, and their hostility against Muslims has an ancient and deep root.

But, the Christians, although wrongly believe in trinity, a deviated creed, are more receptive to accept the truth because of the sounder mind they have. They are not of the people of plotting, especially the intellectualities and the preachers among them.

The verse says:

"Certainly you will find the most hostile of people to those who believe are, the Jews and pagans; and you will certainly find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe are those who say: 'We are Christians.' That is because there are among them priests and monk and because they do not behave proudly."

The End of Part Six

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 83

وَإِذَا سَمِعُواْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُواْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

83. "And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the Truth. They say: 'Our Lord! we believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of Truth)."

One of the examples of the Christians' shedding tears is when Ja'far-ibn-'Abi-Talib recited the verses of Surah Maryam for Najashi in Abyssinia. Another example is also when a group of the Christians, accompanying with Ja'far, came into Medina and heard the holy verses of Surah yasin.

"And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the Truth. They say: ' Our Lord! we believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of Truth)."

Therefore, as soon as the heartily receptive persons hear the Truth, they will be touched at heart, but the blockhead ones do not move even by seeing it.

The spirit and nature of man is charmed by the Truth. Then, when he reaches his beloved, he sheds the tears of joy.

However, believers should offer a petition for the continuation of their belief and having a good end.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 84 - 86

وَمَا لَنَا لاَ نُؤْمِنُ بِاللّهِ وَمَا جَاءنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَن يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ

فَأَثَابَهُمُ اللهُ بِمَا قَالُواْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاء الْمُحْسِنِينَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

84. "And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in Allah and in the Truth that has come to us, while we long for our Lord should cause us to enter (the Heaven) with the righteous ones."

85. "Therefore Allah has rewarded them for what they said -Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein shall they abide forever, and that is the reward of the doers of good."

86. "And (as for) those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, these are the inhabitants of the Hell."

Those who, after recognizing the right, bravely and explicitly confess it with truthfulness in action, and do not fear of the atmosphere and co-religionists, are among the best righteous ones. The reason of it is that they have done good t themselves and have saved themselves from the chastisement of Hell Fire, and, by their confession, they have paved the path for others both.

Thus, the reward of Faith is Heaven, and the retribution of disbelief and rejection is Hell.

In the meantime, the objective meaning of the Arabic word /al-haqq/ (the Truth), mentioned in the verse, is: the Qur'an, Islam, and the holy personality of the Prophet (S).

Note

1. At-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 492

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 5

From Surah Al-Ma’ida (5) verse 86 to Surah al-A’raf (7) verse 87

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 5

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur’an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, “An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an” compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 11
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 12
What is a 'Commentary'? 13
The Current Commentary 14
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 15
The Problems in Translating 15
Translators Note 16
Editor's Note 17
Notes 19
Acknowledgment 20
Notes 20
References 21
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 21
English Translations of Qur'an 21
Supporting Technical References 22
Phraseological and Philological Sources 22
A Presentation to Muslims 24
Notes 25
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Chapter 5, Section 12 26
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 87 26
Explanations 26
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 88 26
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 89 27
The Atonement of Oaths 27
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 90 29
Explanations 29
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 91 30
Explanations 30
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 92 31
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 93 31
Notes 33
Section 13: Security of the Ka 'bah Inviolable 34
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 94 34
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 95 34
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 96 35
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 97 36
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 98 - 99 37
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 100 38
Note 38
Section 14: All Polytheistic Traditions Denounced 39
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 101 - 102 39
Occasion of Revelation 39
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 103 40
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 104 41
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 105 41
Everybody Is Responsible of One's Own Deeds 42
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 106 42

Occasion of Revelation 42
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 107 43
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 108 44
Note 44
Section 15: Covetousness of this worldly life 45
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 109 45
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 110 45
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 111 47
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 112 - 113 47
Explanations 48
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 114 48
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 115 49
Notes 49
Section 16: Teachings of Jesus corrupted after his departure 50
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 116 50
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 117 - 118 50
Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 119 - 120 51
Note 52
Surah Al-'An'am, Chapter 6, Introduction 53
Introduction to the Surah 53
Notes 54
Section 1 55
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 1 55
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 2 55
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 3 56
Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 4 - 5 56
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 6 57
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 7 58
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 8 58
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 9 59
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 10 59
Notes 60
Section 2: Allah has ordained Mercy on Himself 61
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 11 61
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 12 61
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 13 63
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 14 63
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 15 64
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 16 64
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 17 65
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 18 65
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 19 65
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 20 66
Notes 67
Section 3: Polytheists shall themselves confess their guilt 68
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 21 68
Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 22 68
Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 23 - 24 69

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 25 70
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 26 70
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 27 71
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 28 72
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 29 - 30 72
Notes 73
Section 4: Those who disbelieve the meeting of Allah are certainly losers 74
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 31 74
Sovereignty of Allah 74
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 32 74
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 33 75
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 34 76
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 35 76
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 36 77
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 37 78
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 38 79
Is there a Resurrection for Animals? 79
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 39 80
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 40 80
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 41 81
Natural Disposition, an Even Path toward Theology..... 81
Notes 82
Section 5..... 83
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 42 83
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 43 83
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 44 84
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 45 84
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 46 85
Do know the Bestower of Bounties..... 85
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 47 85
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 48 - 49 86
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 50 87
Notes 88
Section 6: Believers will be rewarded 89
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 51 89
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 52 89
Occasion of Revelation 89
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 53 90
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 54 - 55 91
Notes 92
Section 7: The Judgment 93
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 56 93
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 57 93
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 58 94
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 59 94
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 60 95
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 61 96

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 62 97
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 63 - 64 97
The Light that Glitters in Darkness 98
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 65 - 66 98
Various Chastisements 99
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 67 100
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 68 100
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 69 101
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 70 102
Notes 103
Section 8: Submission to Allah; Abraham's Arguments 104
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 71 - 72 104
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 73 105
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 74 106
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 75 107
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 76 107
Abraham's Dispute with Pagans 107
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 77 - 79 108
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 80 109
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 81 110
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 82 111
Notes 112
Section 9: The other Apostles followed Abraham's footsteps 113
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 83 113
A Few Explanations 113
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 84 113
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 85 - 87 114
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 88 115
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 89 115
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 90 116
Note 117
Section 10: The Divine Revelation 118
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 91 118
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 92 119
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 93 120
Explanations 121
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 94 121
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 95 - 96 123
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 97 - 98 124
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 99 126
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 100 128
Notes 129
Section 11: Allah the Creator and Knower of everything 130
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 101 - 102 130
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 103 131
Allah is not seen by the Eyes 131
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 104 131
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 105 132

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 106 132
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 107 133
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 108 133
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 109 134
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 110 134
Notes 135
Section 12: Every Apostle Had an Enemy 136
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 111 136
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 112 136
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 113 137
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 114 137
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 115 138
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 116 138
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 117 139
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 118 139
The Effects of Paganism should be removed totally 139
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 119 140
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 120 140
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 121 141
Section 13: The Arch Enemies 142
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 122 142
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 123 142
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 124 143
Occasion of Revelation 143
Allah Appoints Prophets 143
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 125 144
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 126 145
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 127 145
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 128 145
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 129 146
Notes 147
Section 14: The Decreed Punishment shall be unavoidable 148
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 130 148
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 131 148
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 132 149
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 133 - 134 149
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 135 150
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 136 150
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 137 151
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 138 152
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 139 153
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 140 154
Explanations 154
Note 155
Section 15: The Divine Gifts - The Self-Imposed Prohibitions 156
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 141 156
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 142 157
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 143 157

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 144 158
Section 16: The Forbidden Food - the Vain Excuses 160
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 145 160
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 146 161
The Prohibitions and the Jews 161
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 147 161
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 148 162
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 149 163
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 150 164
Note 165
Section 17: Guiding Regulations of Life 166
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 151 166
Ten Commandments 166
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 152 166
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 153 167
Explanations 167
The Importance of Showing Kindness to Parents 167
Slaying Children for Hunger 168
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 154 168
Section 18: Prayer, sacrifice, life and death to be only for Allah 170
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 155 - 156 170
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 157 170
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 158 171
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 159 172
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 160 173
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 161 173
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 162 - 163 174
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 164 175
Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 165 175
The Difference of Men and the Principal of Justice 176
Surah Al-'A'raf Chapter 7, Introduction 178
Introduction to the Surah 178
The Virtue of Studying This Surah 178
Section 1: The Object of the Revelation of the Qur'an 179
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 1-3 179
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 4 - 5 180
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 6 - 7 180
Explanations 181
Note 181
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 8 181
Explanations 182
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 9 182
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 10 183
Notes 183
Section 2: Creation of Adam and the Defiance of Satan 184
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 11 184
The Story of Satan's Disobedience 184
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 12 184

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 13 185
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 14 - 15 185
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 16 186
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 17 186
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 18 187
Explanations 187
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 19 187
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 20 188
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 21 188
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 22 189
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 23 189
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 24 - 25 190
Notes 190
Section 3: Mankind warned against its enemy, Satan 191
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 26 191
Raiment in the Past and Present 192
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 27 192
Explanations 192
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 28 193
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 29 193
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 30 194
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 31 195
Section 4: The Guidance through Messengers and Their Rejections . 196
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 32 196
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 33 196
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 34 197
Explanations 197
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 35 - 36 198
Explanations 198
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 37 199
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 38 200
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 39 201
Section 5: Disbelievers shall not Enter Paradise 202
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 40 202
Explanations 202
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 41 202
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 42 203
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 43 204
Explanations 204
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 44 204
Explanations 205
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 45 205
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 46 206
Who Are the People of 'A'raf? 206
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 47 207
Notes 207
Section 6: The Disappointment of the Wicked in Hell 208
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 48 - 49 208

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 50 - 51 208
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 52 209
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 53 210
Note 210
Section 7: Allah’s only is the Creation and the Command 211
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 54 211
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 55 212
The Conditions of Supplication 212
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 56 212
Explanations 213
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 57 213
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 58 214
Note 214
Sectiuon 8: The Ministry of Noah 215
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 59 - 60 215
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 61 - 62 216
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 63 216
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 64 217
Notes 217
Section 9: The Ministry of Messenger of Hud 218
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 65 218
Explanations 218
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 66 - 68 218
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 69 219
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 70 220
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 71 220
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 72 221
Section 10: The Ministries of Salih and Lut 222
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 73 222
Explanations 223
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 74 223
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 75 - 76 223
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 77 224
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 78 225
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 79 225
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 80 - 81 226
Explanations 226
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 82 226
Explanations 227
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 83 227
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 84 227
Explanation 228
Notes 228
Section 11: The Ministry of Shu 'ayb 229
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 85 229
Jethro's Messengership in Madyan 229
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 86 230
Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 87 230

www.alhassanain.org/english

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward”[1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5],

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray,

the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, *1412* (*1370* H. / *1991*), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness

which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَ ْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Chapter 5, Section 12

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 87

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تُحَرِّمُواْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللّهُ لَكُمْ وَلاَ تَعْتَدُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

87. "O' you who have Faith! Do not prohibit the good things that Allah has made lawful to you, and do not transgress. Verily Allah does not like the transgressors."

It happened that one day the Messenger of Allah (S) was speaking for people about the Hereafter and the scenes of the gathering-place of Resurrection. The audience were so touched at heart and wept that some of them decided, from then on, not to consume any good food, to prohibit comfort unto themselves, to observe a fast, to abandon their wives, and to sleep at nights less than before.

They swore over that decision to be loyal to it. When the Prophet (S) was informed of it, he mustered people in the mosque and told them: "I eat food; I sleep at nights and do not abandon my wives. Our religion is not the creed of retreat and monasticism. The monasticism of my ummah is the holy struggle. Whoever goes a direction other than my style is not a Muslim."

Some of them asked what they would do for the oaths they had taken. The subsequent verses were revealed saying that Allah does not call them to account for their vain (unintentional) oaths.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever makes a lawful thing unlawful for, himself (through a vow), the one must accomplish it, and there is nothing upon him. ..."[1]

Explanations

1. Islam is the religion of 'Fitrah' (nature), wherein retreat and monasticism, or excess and defect are forbidden.

2. A Muslim submits to the command of Allah. He neither turns a lawful thing into an unlawful one, nor vice versa.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"O' people! What I have made lawful is lawful until the day of Judgment, and what I have forbidden is forbidden until the day of Judgment." [2]

3. Edible things, clothing, and the whole lawful pleasures have been created for the usage of humankind.

4. When using the lawful things, be careful of avoiding extravagance.

"... Do not transgress ..."

5. The vows, covenants and oaths that are against the explicit prohibitions of the text of the Qur'an, are worthless and invalid.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 88

وَكُلُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّهُ حَلاَلاً طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ الَّذِيَ أَنتُم بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

88. "And eat from the lawful and good things which Allah has provided for you; and be in awe of Allah Whom you have Faith in."

In the previous verse, the words were about the prohibition of unlawful things, while in this verse it has enjoined people to lawfully enjoying the merits of Allah. It says:

"And eat from the lawful and good things which Allah has provided for you;"

The only condition in this course is that you should avoid opposing the command of Allah in whom you believe.

"... and be in awe of Allah whom you have Faith in."

That is, your faith to Allah requires that you respect all his commandments both in enjoying the merits of Allah and observing moderation and piety.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"It is obligatory for every Muslim believer, man or woman, to gain lawful things." [3]

Again, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Worship consists of seventy parts, the best of which is seeking the lawful material."[4]

Also, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking for lawful sustenance is the same as holy struggle in the way of Allah". [5]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Next to the obligatory prayers, seeking for lawful (sustenance) is necessary and compulsory." [6]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Gaining income through a lawful way, is the most exalted deed."[7]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 89

لاَ يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَـكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا عَقَّدتُّمُ الأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشَرَةِ مَسَاكِينَ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعِمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلاَثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُواْ أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

89. "Allah does not call you to account for your vain (unintentional) oaths, but he calls you to account for what you have pledged solemnly. So its atonement is feeding ten paupers with the average of what you feed your own families, or clothing them, or freeing a slave. But whoever does not find (the means to do so), should fast for three days. That is the atonement of your oaths when you pledge. But guard your oaths. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear for you in order that you might be thankful."

The Atonement of Oaths

In this verse, the general discussion is about the oaths which are taken upon the fields of making the lawful things into unlawful ones, and the like of them. These oaths, from this point of view, are divided into two sorts. At first, it says:

"Allah does not call you to account for your vain (unintentional) oaths....."

The objective meaning of 'vain oaths', as the commentators and jurisprudents have said, is the oaths that do not aim a definite goal and those that have not been taken intentionally and decidedly. Besides, the contents of such oaths are against the laws of religion, viz. they are estimated as opposite to the commands of Allah.

The second sort is the oaths which are taken willfully, intentionally, decidedly, and earnestly. Referring to these kinds of oaths, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"... but he calls you to account for what you have pledged solemnly....."

And Allah charges you with a duty to fulfill these oaths.

For the validity of an oath, of course, only its being earnest is not enough, but the content of the oath should be a lawful matter, at least. It should also be noted that an oath is not reputable except by the Name of Allah.

Therefore, if someone takes an oath by Allah, it is obligatory to perform it according to his oath. So, if he breaches his pledge, one of the following three atonements is necessary to be performed by the one. At first, it says:

"... So its atonement is feeding ten paupers ..."

Yet, in order that some people do not take this general ordinance so that they think they can give any low and worthless material of food as atonement, the Qur'an clearly explains the quality of this food, saying that it must be:

"... With the average of what you feed your own families....."

The second is: to cloth ten needy persons with proper clothing.

"... or clothing them....."

The appearance of this verse, of course, indicates that the clothing should be of a sort which normally covers the body.

Yet it can be of various kinds according to the seasons and places in different periods.

To answer to the question that whether, from the point of quality, the minimum material is enough or the average should be observed here, too, as the absoluteness of the verse implies, any sort of clothing can be enough.

The third is:

"....freeing a slave...."

Sometimes it happens that there may be some persons who are able to fulfill neither of the above two atonements. Therefore, next to stating these ordinances, it says:

"... But whoever does not find (the means to do so), should fast for three days....."

After that, as an emphasis, the Qur'an says:

"... That is the atonement of your oaths when you pledge ..."

But, in order that no one might consider that by giving atonement, breaching the proper oaths is not unlawful, it says:

"... But guard your oaths ..."

The purpose or this phrase is that you should be careful not to commit sins by breaching your oaths.

And, finally, at the end of the verse, in order that you might be grateful for these ordinances and commandments, which guarantee the happiness and felicity of both an individual and society, the Qur'an says:

"... Thus Allah makes His Signs clear for you in order that you might be thankful."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 90

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالأَنصَابُ وَالأَزْلاَمُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

90. "O' you who have Faith! Verily wine, gambling, idols, and (dividing by) arrows are an abomination of the Satan's work, so avoid it, that you may be prosperous."

At the time of the advent of Islam, the Arabs customarily were intensively interested in poetry, wine, and fighting. The Divine revelations concerning the prohibition of wine were gradually conveyed.

At first, there revealed a verse stating that provision is supplied from date and grapes either, from which you can obtain intoxication, too8. This indication of intoxication implies the statement of its badness.

The Qur'an, then, has referred to the benefits of gambling and wine (and also that their containing sin is greater than their benefits[9]. After that the Divine verse was revealed enjoining not to establish prayer at the state of being intoxicated[10]. And, finally, the above verse was revealed which considered wine as an abomination, a Satanic action, and ordained that it is unlawful.[11]

The Arabic term /xamr/ (wine) is derived from the same root as the Arabic word /xumur/ (cover) is. In Arabic, the veil of a woman is called /ximar/; since it covers the hairs. Similarly, wine covers the wisdom.

The Arabic term /maysir/ is derived from /yusr/ with the meaning of easiness, since, in gambling, players sometimes earn money by that play without tolerating any trouble.

The Qur'anic term /'azlam/ means a kind of lottery done with some sticks of arrows. It used to be performed before Islam, at the Age of Ignorance.

Explanations

1. In Islam, having Faith and drinking wine do not agree with each other.
2. Drinking wine and gambling are in the same row with idolatry.

"….Verily wine, gambling, idols, and…"[12]

3. The Islamic commandments and prohibitions have been ordained reasonably and wisely.

"... and (dividing by) arrows are an abomination of the Satan's work, so avoid it ..."

4. The verse enjoins to avoid not only drinking wine, but also approaching it. The reason of this ordinance is that a sound nutrition is effective in the prosperity of human beings. Therefore, it enjoins to avoid intoxication, so that you may be prosperous. The verse says:

"... So avoid it, that you may be prosperous."

Any kind of cooperation concerning wine, including its production, distribution and consumption, prohibited.

Imam Baqir (as) has narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that he cursed ten groups of people who are concerned somehow with drinking wine. They are as follows:

"Its planter, its guardian, its maker, its drinker, its cupbearer, its bearer, its receiver, its seller, its purchaser, and anyone who, in a way, devours from its income."[13]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 91

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاء فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلاَةِ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّنتَهُونَ

91. "Certainly Satan desires to cast enmity and hatred among you by wine and gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer. So will you stop?"

Considering the concerning statistics, a great number of murders, crimes, accidents, divorces, psychic sicknesses, and renal diseases and so on, are caused by wine, liquor. Here, in stating the philosophy of its prohibition, the Qur'an emphasizes on two points: social harms and spiritual losses, (including enmity, and neglecting both prayers and the remembrance of Allah).

Explanations

1. Stating the philosophy of ordinances is one of the factors of the effectiveness of speech.

2. All the factors that may create grudge and rancor should be challenged against.

3. Any action or any person that causes enmity and hatred amongst people is Satanic.

4. Anything, like wine or gambling, that causes the negligence of a person from the remembrance of Allah and establishment of prayers is obscene.

5. Wherever enmity and hatred come forth, it is appropriate to devote material gains, whatever they may be. (There is some profit in wine and gambling, too, but, because of their evil effects, they are prohibited).

6. The mental harms and spiritual losses are the most important damages, both bodily and financially. Wine has also bodily harm, yet, here, hatred and negligence have been emphasized on.

Thus, the prohibition of drinking liquor and gambling, enjoined by Allah, is for the goodness and improvement of people's affairs both in this world and the Hereafter.

Ibn-Abas, a leading commentator, says that the target of the verse is Sa'd-ibn-'Abi-Waghghas and a man from the Helpers who had compacted the agreement of brotherhood with each other. A man from among the Helpers invited Sa'd to a party. They prepared a table of food and wine and drank so much so that they became intoxicated.

At that time they boasted to each other so violently that their dispute ended to a conflict. The Helper took a piece of bone and struck on the nose of Sa'd so vigorously that his nose was smashed. Then Allah sent down this verse about them.

The verse means that Satan wishes to seduce you and attract you toward drinking wine in order to take your wisdom from you, and persuade you to do some evil things that you do not do them in an ordinary state.

Ghattadah says that some people played gambling upon their own property and wives. At last, those who had lost their property and their wives sat in grief, planning to take vengeance from their rivals. Therefore, gambling has no consequence but grudge and enmity.

By this way, Satan desires to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, so that you do not offer your thanks for His bounties.

Satan also desires to make you neglectful of prayer, which is the firm base of the religion. So, obey Allah (S.w.T.) and be not heedless of His prohibition. The verse says:

"Certainly Satan desires to cast enmity and hatred among you by wine and gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer. So will you stop?"

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 92

وَأَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُواْ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

92. " And obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and beware but if you turn away, then know that Our Messenger's duty is only conveyance (of the Message) Manifest."

The governmental and political commandments of the Messenger of Allah (S) are similar to, and the same as, the commandments of Allah, and for this reason it is obligatory to obey them.

Those who refrain to obey the command of Allah deserve to be punished. So, there is no responsibility upon the Messenger of Allah save conveying the message of Allah and stating it manifestly.

The verse says:

"And obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and beware, but if you turn away, then know that Our Messenger's duty is only conveyance (of the Message) Manifest."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 93

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُواْ إِذَا مَا اتَّقَواْ وَّآمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَواْ وَّآمَنُواْ ثُمَّ اتَّقَواْ وَّأَحْسَنُواْ وَاللّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

93. "On those who have Faith and do good deeds, there is no sin in regard to what they ate (before prohibition) so long as they are virtuous and faithful and do good deeds, then still they be virtuous (upon prohibited things) and believe (in their prohibition), then they are virtuous (due to prohibited things) and do good; and Allah loves the doers of good."

When the verse of prohibitions of gambling and drinking wine was revealed, there were some people who asked about their condition regarding to the time before that revelation or the condition of those who had not heard of that ordinance yet and were living in some far distances.

The verse answers them implying that those who have believed and have done good deeds but have not received this ordinance, if they have drunk

wine or have devoured from the income of gambling, there is no sin on them. The verse says:

"On those who have Faith and do good deeds, there is no sin in regard to what they ate (before prohibition) ..."

Yet, this ordinance has conditioned that such people should be virtuous, have Faith, and do good actions. Here is the continuation of the verse:

"... so long as they are virtuous and faithful and do good deeds....."

This subject is repeated once more in the verse, when it says:

"... then still they be virtuous (upon prohibited things) and believe (in their prohibition)....."

And, for the third time this meaning is repeated, with a little difference, of course. It says:

"... then they are virtuous (due to prohibited things) and do good...."

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... and Allah loves the doers of good."

Each of these three senses of virtuousness refers to a stage of feeling responsibility and piety.

However, the great commentators of both outstanding sects of Islam: Sunnites and Shi'ites, have vastly explained upon the commentary of this verse, especially about the phrase /fi ma ta'imu/ (in regard to what they ate), and mentioning the subject of 'virtue' for three times in their commentary books.

In order to observe conciseness here, we have not narrated those detailed explanations, but you can refer to their commentary books, some of which are as follows:

Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, Al-Kashif, Majma'-ul-Bayan, At-Tibyan, 'Atyab-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Abul-Futuh-i-Razi, Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, As-safi, Mulla-Sadra, Shubbar, Ayyashi, Ibn-i-'Abbas, Furat-ul-Kafi, At-Tafsir by Imam Hasan-'Askari, Jawami'-uj-Jami', Jami'-ul-Bayan by Muhammad-ibn-Jarir-i-Tabari, Vol. 5 PP. 36 - 37, Zad-ul-Masir-Fi-'Ilm-ut- Tafsir by Ibn-ul-JauZi, Vol. 2, P. 419, Tafsir-i-Ibn-i-Kathir, Vol. 2, PP. 91 - 92, Tafsir-ul-kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi; Parts 11 - 12, P. 83.

Notes

1. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, vol. 3, p. 52
2. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol., 2, p. 260
3. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 100, p. 9
4. Safinat-ul-Bihar, ward /halala/, p. 298
5. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 6
6. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 4, p. 5
7. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 4, p. 4
8. Surah 'An- Nahl. No.16. verse 67
9. Surah Al-Baqarah. No.2. verse 219
10. Surah An- Nisa'. No.4. verse 43
11. Musnad Ahmad-i-Hanbal, Sunan-i-Abi-Dawood, Nisaiee and Tarmathi have stated a vast explanation about the Occasion of Revelation of this verse which is suggested to be referred to.
12. Some Islamic traditions indicate that the drinker of wine is counted like an idolater.
13. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, P. 670

Section 13: Security of the Ka 'bah Inviolable

Hunting during pilgrimage period, prohibited-the Inviolable Security of Ka'bah declared.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 94

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمُ اللّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالُهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

94. "O' you who have Faith! Allah will surely try you with something of the game which your hands and your spears can reach, so that Allah may ascertain who fears Him in secret. So whoever transgresses after that for him there is a painful punishment."

During the time when a pilgrim to Mecca is in pilgrim garment and is performing the pilgrimage rites, the one has not the right of hunting.

During the same time, occasionally it happens that a hunt approaches a person so nigh that he can catch it by a simple jump, but the trial of Allah is in this fact that we should not touch the hunt. So, if we hunt it, the punishment of Allah includes us.

Hunting itself brings forth no painful chastisement, but chastisement is for the breaking law. In the land where Abraham overlooked Ishmael, you would overlook the hunts either. The verse says:

"O' you who have Faith! Allah will surely try you with something of the game which your hands and your spears can reach, so that Allah may ascertain who fears Him in secret. So whoever transgresses after that for him there is a painful punishment".

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 95

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَقْتُلُواْ الصَّيْدَ وَأَنتُمْ حُرُمٌ وَمَن قَتَلَهُ مِنكُم مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاء مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسَاكِينَ أَو عَدْلُ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِّيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ عَفَا اللّهُ عَمَّا سَلَف وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنتَقِمُ اللّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ

95. "O' you who have Faith! kill no game while you are in pilgrim garb: and anyone of you who kills it intentionally, its atonement is the like in cattle of what he has killed, as (to this likeness) two just persons among you judge, (and the animal) will be an offering reached to the Ka'bah, or the atonement (of it) is feeding the poor, or the equivalent of that in fasting, that he may taste the effect of his action. Allah has pardoned whatever is a thing of the past; and whoever returns (to it), Allah will take vengeance on him, and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

In this verse, the command of the prohibition of hunting at the time of being in pilgrim garment, with a general condition, has been issued more clearly and precisely.

It says:

"O' you who have Faith! Kill no game while you are in pilgrim garb....."

Then, it points to the atonement of hunting in the condition of being in pilgrim garb, and says:

"... and anyone of you who kills it intentionally, its atonement is the like in cattle of what he has killed....."

That is, such a person should sacrifice that animal and give its meat to some needy ones.

Here, the purpose of 'the like' is the likeness of the size and the shape of the animal. It is in this sense that, for example, if a person hunts a wild big animal, such as the ostrich, he should choose an ostrich as atonement; or if he hunts a deer, he should sacrifice a lamb with nearly the same size.

And, since some people may fall into suspicion upon the subject of likeness, in this regard, the Qur'an ordains that this matter should be fulfilled under the judgment of two just persons, possessed of some knowledge among you. It says:

"... as (to this likeness) two just persons among you judge....."

And, for the place where this animal should be sacrificed, the Qur'an commands that it must be killed as a sacrifice dedicated to the Ka'bah and in the land of Ka'bah. It says:

"... (and the animal) will be an offering reached to the ka'bah....."

Then, the Qur'an adds that it is not necessary that the atonement should certainly be in the form of sacrifice, but each of the two other things can substitute it. The first is that some money equivalent to it can be spent in the way of feeding the poor. It says:

"... or the atonement (of it) is feeding the poor....."

And the second thing of substitution is as follows:

"... or the equivalent of that in fasting....."

These atonements are for that the person sees the retribution of his committing offence. It says:

"... that he may taste the effect of his action...."

But, in view of the fact that usually no ordinance includes the past, the Qur'an stipulates that Allah has forgiven the offences that have been done in this field, saying thus:

"... Allah has pardoned whatever is a thing of the past....."

So, if a person does not pay attention to these frequent warnings and the ordinance of atonement and hunts at the time of being in the pilgrim garb, Allah will take vengeance of such a person and Allah is Mighty to take vengeance in the appropriate time. It says:

"... and whoever returns (to it), Allah will take vengeance on him, and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 96

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِ وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ الَّذِيَ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

96. "The game of the sea and its food is lawful for you, a provision for you and (for the caravans, but the game of the land is forbidden to you, so long as you are in pilgrim garb; and be in awe of Allah toward Whom you will be gathered."

The words in this holy verse are about the hunts of the sea. It says:

"The games of the sea and its food are lawful for you....."

The objective meaning of 'food', mentioned in this verse, is the food that can be prepared from the hunted fish. The verse intends to make two things admissible. One of them is 'hunting', and the other is 'consuming the food made from the hunted things.'

Then, the Qur'an points to the philosophy of this ordinance, implying that this permission is for the sake that you and the travelers can enjoy it. It says:

"….provision for you and for the caravans....."

In other words, the verse means: for the sake that you do not fall in trouble for nutrition when you are in pilgrim garb, and that you can be able to enjoy one kind of hunting, this permission has been given due to the hunts of the sea.

As an emphasis, the Qur'an returns to the former ordinance once more, and says:

"... but the game of the land is forbidden to you so long as you are in pilgrim garb…."

And, at the end of the verse, in order to emphasize upon all the ordinances that were mentioned, it says:

"... and be in awe of Allah toward whom you will be gathered."

The Philosophy of No Hunting when Being in Pilgrim Garb!

We know that the performance of Hajj and 'Umrah is one of the worships that makes man aloof from the world of matter and brings him into an environment full of spiritualities.

In performing the rite of Hajj and 'Umrah, the ceremonies of the material life, fights and conflicts, hatreds, sexual desires, and material pleasures, will totally be put aside and the person reaches a kind of godly legitimated asceticism. So, it seems that the prohibition of hunting, while being in pilgrim garb, is also for the same purpose.

Besides, if hunting were an allowed action in Allah’s center of pilgrimage, regarding to the large crowd of pilgrims that every year come into this holy land, the existence of many animals of the zone would be destroyed, in particular that, because of dryness and scarcity of water, its animals are not so abundant.

Paying attention to the fact that hunting animals and picking plants of that sacred land is also prohibited, even when the pilgrims to Mecca are not in their pilgrim garb, it makes clear that this commandment has a close connection with the subject of protection of environment and maintaining the plants and animals of the locality.

Therefore, the philosophy of prohibition or making something admissible is not always substantial, but it sometimes depends on the conditions of time and place. Then, geography and history are effective on the ordinance of Allah.

Thus, the abundance of people, and the performance of the worshipping rite, should not be a means of annihilation and destruction for animals and plants.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 97

جَعَلَ اللّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلاَئِدَ ذَلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

97. "Allah has made the Ka'bah the sacred House, a (means of) staying (in peace) for mankind, and (also) the Sacred Month and the offerings and the (animals with the) garlands. This is so that you may know that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that Allah is All-Knowing of all things.

As it is cited in Mufradat-i-Raqib, the Arabic word /qiyam/ is a means of staying firm, like the pillar of a tent.

Imam Sadiq (as) said about the Sacred House that it has been called Baytillah-il-Haram because it is 'haram' (forbidden) for the disbelievers to enter it.[1]

When the affairs of people are to be arranged and strengthened, a few things are needed: 1) centrality, 2) security, and 3) sustenance. Allah has set these three things in the Ka'bah and the Sacred House. It is both a center, and no one has a right of quarrel there, and the sacrifices are used as a means of nutrition and a means of livelihood for Muslims.

The Qur'anic word /hady/ means 'a sign less sacrifice', while the term /qala'id/ refers to the sacrifices with signs.

By Islamic culture, the sacred (forbidden) months, in which fighting is prohibited, are: Rajab, Zil-Gha'dah, Zil-Hajjah, and Muharram.

The plain assembly of millions of Muslims in a sacred place without showing any privileges to each other, and without any dispute or practical quarrel, is peculiar to the advantages of Islam.

There are some divine graces in Hajj, like: asking forgiveness from others at the time of leaving for Hajj and visiting each other when they return from Mecca, commercial splendor, the payment of one fifth levy (khums) and alms, to be acquainted with religious disciplines and nations, being inside the most ancient center of Unity ornamented with no ceremonies; treating the same or tracing the footsteps of prophets, repenting in the lands of 'Arafat and Mash'ar, remembering and illustrating the scene of Hereafter, political parade against infidels, etc.

If we consider them all in mind, we may understand that these programs in Hajj are sourced from the infinite knowledge of Allah, Who is Well-Aware of all things of the world of existence.

Thus, a limited knowledge can never deliver such an interesting instruction.

The verse says:

"Allah has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a (means of) staying (in peace) for mankind, and (also) the Sacred Month and the offerings and the (animals with the) garlands. This is so that you may know that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that Allah is All-Knowing of all things."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 98 - 99

اعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

مَّا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ وَاللّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ

98. "Know that Allah is severe in retribution, and that Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

99. "Nothing is (incumbent) upon the Messenger but to convey (The message of Allah), and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

Encouragement and threat should be arranged with together. The verse also implies this fact. It says:

"Know that Allah is severe in retribution, and that Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

You are responsible of your own deeds and the Prophet (S) is not someone who compels you or imposes any domain over you. His duty is only to convey the Message. .

So, since the knowledge of Allah encompasses everything, then it is indifferent with Him that you conceal or manifest the things, and your receiving or rejecting the truth does not create any deficiency in the prophet (S).

"Nothing is (incumbent) upon the Messenger but to convey (The message of Allah), and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 100

قُل لاَّ يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ يَا أُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

100. "Say: 'The evil and the good are not equal, though the abundance of evil may dazzle you. 'So be in awe of Allah, O' possessors of intellects, that you may be prosperous."

The senses of 'evil' and 'good' refer to all men, styles, properties, incomes, foods, and materials.

The standard of worth is 'right' and 'wrong', not the majority and minority. Therefore, beware that the majority and abundance may be fascinating. So, be careful that they should not attract you toward the path of sin and evil.

The possessors of intellects, i.e. the wise, advocate the Truth, not the crowd. The idea which says: 'when you are in Rome, do as the Romans do' is not a Qur'anic epithet.

In view point of this school, impiety is a sign of ignorance. The verse says:

"Say: 'The evil and the good are not equal, though the abundance of evil may dazzle you.' So be in awe of Allah, O' possessors of intellects, that you may be prosperous."

Note

1. Nur -uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, PP. 680 - 681

Section 14: All Polytheistic Traditions Denounced

Quest for the details of the unseen things discouraged - All polytheistic practices denounced -To call witness when anyone bequeaths at the time of his death.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 101 - 102

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَسْأَلُواْ عَنْ أَشْيَاء إِن تُبْدَ لَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ وَإِن تَسْأَلُواْ عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْآنُ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ عَفَا اللّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

قَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُواْ بِهَا كَافِرِينَ

101. " O' you who have Faith! Do not ask about things (and secrets) which, if they are disclosed to you, may upset you. Yet, if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being sent down, they will be disclosed to you. Allah pardoned as to these matters and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

102. "Surely some people before you asked for such (disclosures). Then they came to disbelieve in them."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of these two verses, it has been narrated from Ali-ibn-Abi Talib (as) as follows:

"It happened that one day the Prophet of Islam (S) preached a sermon in which he stated the command of Allah about Hajj. Then, a person by the name of 'Akkashah (and according to another narration Suraqah) asked whether that commandment was ordained for only that year or they should perform Hajj every year.

The Holy Prophet (S) delayed to answer him, but the man obstinately repeated his question two or three times.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Woe to you! Why do you persist so much? If I answer you positively, performing Hajj will become obligatory for all of you every year. So, if it becomes obligatory every year, you will not be able to perform it and the offender of it will be a sinner. Hence, as long as I have not said a thing to you, do not urge on it."

Then, the verse was revealed and dissuaded them from that action.

Improper Questions!

No doubt asking question is the key to the recognition of facts. The verses of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions have earnestly enjoined Muslims that they ask whatever they do not know.

But, in view of the fact that every rule usually has an exception, this basic educational principal has an exception, too. It is so that sometimes some affairs had better to be concealed in order that the system of the society be protected and the individuals' interests be safeguarded.

In such respects, researches and frequent questions, with the purpose of unveiling some facts, not only is not a virtue, but also is blameworthy and reprobated.

In this verse, the Qur'an has referred to this subject and explicitly says:

"O' you who have Faith! Do not ask about thing (and secrets) which, if they are disclosed to you, may upset you. ..."

But, since giving no answer to the questions that some persons sometimes urge on asking them repeatedly may cause some doubts for others which can bring forth greater evils, the Qur'an adds:

"... Yet, if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being sent down, they will be disclosed to you…."

In this case, you will fall into trouble.

Next to that meaning, the Qur'an implies that you should not imagine that when Allah is silent about some matters, He is neglectful of them. Nay! He desires to set you in some facilities. It says:

"...Allah pardoned as to these matters and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

We recite in a tradition narrated from Imam Ali (as) who has said:

"Verily Allah has enjoined you some obligations, do not waste them; and He has assigned some limits for you, do not violate them; and He has prohibited you from some things, do not betray (secrets of) them; and He has kept silent for you about some things which He has never been concealed because of forgetfulness. Then, do not urge to disclose these things."[1]

In order to emphasize on the subject, this verse says:

"Surely some people before you asked for such (disclosures). Then they came to disbelieve in them. "

In the conclusion of this discussion, it is necessary to hint to this point that the above-mentioned verses never close the path of asking logical, training, and constructive questions for human beings. The discussed condition is only due to improper questions and seeking the affairs that not only they are not needed, but their concealment is also better and even, sometimes, necessary.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 103

مَا جَعَلَ اللّهُ مِن بَحِيرَةٍ وَلاَ سَآئِبَةٍ وَلاَ وَصِيلَةٍ وَلاَ حَامٍ وَلَـكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ

103. "Allah has not appointed any Bahirah, Sa'ibah, Wasilah, and Ham, but those who disbelieve make up a lie against Allah, and most of them do not understand."

In this verse the Qur'an points to four improper innovations that were customary current among the pagan Arabs at the Age of Ignorance. For some reasons those people used to mark or nominate part of their animals, and prohibited eating their meat.

They did not count permitted to drink the milk of those animals, or to cut their wool, or to ride on them. In other word, they used to actually leave such animals useless.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Allah has not appointed any Bahirah, Sa'ibah, Wasilah, and Ham....."

The Qur'an implies that Allah has not ordained anything in the nature of a Bahirah, or a Sa'ibah, or, Wasilah, or a Ham.

The explanation of these four animals are as follows:

1. The Arabic term / bahirah / was applied for the animal which had given birth to offsprings for five times and the fifth of them was a female animal (and according to another tradition a male one). They used to split the ears of such an animal and let it go for itself. They would not kill it after that.

2. The Pagan Arabs used the term /sa'ibah/ for a camel which had brought forth twelve (or ten) off springs. They left that camel free so that even no one would ride on it. They might only milk it occasionally in order to give that milk to their guests.

3. The term /wasilah/ used to be applied for the lamb which could bring forth a child for seven times. (Or, according to another tradition it was used for the lamb which could bring forth twins.) Killing such a lamb was also considered unlawful (haram) by them.

4. The Arabic word /ham/ was applied for the male animal which had been used for fecundating female animals of the same kind for ten times and each time a new progeny was brought forth from its seed.

Shortly speaking, the objective meaning of mentioning these animals has been the beasts which could serve their owners considerably and frequently through the way of being beneficial for them, and their owners, in turn, offered a kind of honor and freedom to such animals, too. Then, the verse continues saying:

"... but those who disbelieve make up a lie against Allah....."

These pagans and idol worshippers used to say that those false ideas were from the laws of Allah while most of them did not apply the least contemplation about their speech. They did not utilize their intellects when they blindly imitated others' manner. The verse says:

"... and most of them do not understand."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 104

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى مَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُواْ حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَهْتَدُونَ

104. "And when it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger,' they say: 'That which we found our fathers upon is enough for us.' What! Even though their fathers did not know anything and did not follow the right way, (should they pave their way?)"

The fundamental principle is the Islamic culture, not the culture of the predecessors. Therefore, neither absolutely tending to the traditions is the principle nor the new things.

To have honor towards the predecessors and respecting them is acceptable, but following their ignorantly thoughts and manner is rejected. Blindly imitation is a sign of foolishness.

The verse says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger,' they say: 'That which we found our fathers upon is enough for us.' What! Even though their fathers did not know anything and did not follow the right way, (should they pave their way?) "

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 105

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُم مَّن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللّه
َرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

105. "O' you who have Faith! take care of your own selves. He who strays cannot harm you when you are on the right way. To Allah is your return totally; then He will inform you of what you had been doing."

Everybody Is Responsible of One's Own Deeds

In the previous verse, the words were about the blindly imitation of the people of the Age of Ignorance from their misguided ancestors; and the Qur'an warned them that such an imitation did not adapt to wisdom and logic.

Having this meaning in mind, they might question that if they separated their account in such affairs with their ancestors, then what about the fate of their ancestors. Besides, suppose they left that imitation, what would be the fate of many people who acted under the influence of such an imitation?

In answer to these questions, the holy verse addresses the believers and implies that they are responsible of their own selves. These misguided persons from among their ancestors, friends, and relatives, contemporary with them, could not harm them if they were on the right path. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! take care of your own selves. He who strays cannot harm you when you are on the right way. ..."

Then, the Qur'an refers to the subject of Resurrection and the reckoning of everyone's deeds, and says:

"... To Allah is your return totally; then He will inform you of what you had been doing."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 106

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ
مِّنكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُم مُّصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِن
بَعْدِ الصَّلاَةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللّه إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لاَ نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى وَلاَ نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللّه إِنَّا
إِذًا لَّمِنَ الآثِمِينَ

106. "O' you who have Faith! call to witness between you when death approaches any of you, while making a bequest, two just persons from among you, or two others from other than you, if you are traveling in the land and the affliction of death befalls you, detain the two after the prayer, then if you doubt them, they shall swear by Allah (saying): 'We will not sell it for any gain, even if it were a relative, and we will not conceal the testimony of Allah; for then we would indeed be among the sinners'."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the revelation of the above holy verse, as well as its two successive ones, it has been narrated that: a Muslim believer, called Ibn-i-' Abi-Mariyah, accompanied with two Christian Arabs, by the mames of Tamim and 'Uday, came out of Medina with the intention of trade.

During the time they were traveling, Ibn-i-'Abi-Mariyah, who was a Muslim, became sick. He wrote his testament and hid it inside his

properties. Then he trusted those properties with his Christian fellow-travelers.

Before his death, he bequeathed that those two Christians would deliver them to his family. After his death, those two fellow-travelers untied his furniture and took its worthy and interesting parts, and then they returned the rest to the inheritors of the man.

When the inheritors opened the parcel of the properties, they did not find some parts of what Ibn-i-'Abi-Mariyah had brought with him. But suddenly they saw the testament he had left. They found that the list of all the stolen things was recorded in that testament.

They detailed the matter for those two Christian fellow-travelers, but they denied and said that they delivered them what he had given them. Then, they could not help complaining the Prophet (S). So, the verse was revealed and stated its ordinance.

One of the most important matters that Islam emphasizes on is the subject of observing and protecting the rights and properties of people, and, in general, the execution of social justice.

At first, in order that the inheritors' rights in the properties of the diseased not to be spoilt, and that the rights of those members remained behind, including orphans and minors, not to be violated, the Qur'an instructs the believers, saying:

"O' you who have Faith! Call to witness between you when death approaches any of you, while making a bequest, two just persons from among you....."

Here, the expression of bearing witness, of course, is accompanied with the accomplishment of testament. In other words, these two persons are witnesses to both the testament and the executors of the testament.

Thus, the verse indicates that if you are on a journey and one of you is going to die and you cannot find any executors of testament and witnesses, then you may take two persons from non-Muslims for the purpose. The verse continues saying:

"... or two others from other than you, if you are traveling in the land and the affliction of death befalls you....."

The objective meaning of 'other than you' (non-Muslims) is only the people of the Book, viz. the Jews and the Christians, because nowhere Islam has attached importance to pagans and idolaters.

Then the verse says:

"... detain the two after the prayer, then if you doubt them, they shall swear by Allah (saying): We will not sell it for any gain, even if it were a relative....."

And also they should add:

"... and we will not conceal the testimony of Allah; for then we would indeed be among the sinners'."

It is cited in Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 185 that Hadrat Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The quickest retribution is the retribution of a false oath."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 107

فَإِنْ عُثِرَ عَلَى أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا إِثْمًا فَآخَرَانِ يَقُومَانُ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الأَوْلَيَانِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللّهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِن شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا اعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذًا لَّمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

107. "Then if it becomes known that both of them have been guilty of a sin (of perjury), then two others (of Muslims) shall stand up in their place from among those nearest (to the diseased) who have a claim against them, and swear by Allah: 'Certainly our testimony if truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not transgressed (the limits), for then we would indeed be of the unjust'."

It should be unconcealed that when those persons, who are next of kin to the dead, bear witness or make an oath, their action is based on the information that they have had from before about the dead person's properties at the time of journey or other than that.

Therefore, you are not rightful to search or to be inquisitive, but when there comes forth new information, the situation changes. As the explanation of Mufradat-i-Raqib, an Arabic-Persian dictionary, indicates, an acknowledgment without any research, in Arabic language, is called /'uθr/

The verse says:

"Then if it becomes known that both of them have been guilty of a sin (of perjury), then two others (of Muslims) shall stand up in their place from among those nearest (to the diseased) who have a claim against them, and swear by Allah: 'Certainly our testimony if truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not transgressed (the limits), for then we would indeed be of the unjust'."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 108

ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَن يَأْتُواْ بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَى وَجْهِهَا أَوْ يَخَافُواْ أَن تُرَدَّ أَيْمَانٌ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللّهَ
وَاسْمَعُواْ وَاللّهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

108. "This (style) is more proper that they give testimony truly, or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths. And be in awe of Allah and hearken (His commandments), and Allah does not guide the transgressing people."

The statement of this verse is about the philosophy of severity and accuracy of the case which was referred to in the previous verses upon bearing witness and taking witnesses.

Taking oath after the establishment of prayer at the presence of people, causes that witnesses to be certainly true (not false), because if their witness is not accepted, that invalidity of their oath and witness may disgrace them in the society. The verse says:

"This (style) is more proper that they give testimony truly, or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths. And be in awe of Allah and hearken (His commandments), and Allah does not guide the transgressing people."

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, P. 250 (Arabic version)

Section 15: Covetousness of this worldly life

Jesus only an apostle of Allah -The disciples of Jesus demanding Jesus to get food for them descended from heaven -Their coveting of this worldly provision.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 109

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ قَالُواْ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلاَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ

109. "(Remember) the Day Allah will gather the messengers, and say: 'What response were you given?' They will say: We have no knowledge, verily You are the All-Knowing of the Unseen'."

This verse, in fact, is a complement for the previous verses. At the end of those verses, where the words were about bearing witness upon right or wrong, the Qur'an enjoins people to piety and being afraid of offending the command of Allah.

In this verse, it warns people of the Day Allah gathers the prophets and asks them about their messenger ship and responsibility, and tells them what the people responded when they invited those people to the Truth. The verse says:

"(Remember) the Day Allah will gather the messengers, and say: ' What response were you given? ' ..."

The messengers will negate of having any knowledge from their own selves, and they will depend the whole facts to the knowledge of Allah (S.w.T.) Who knows all the Unseen and the concealed affairs of the world of existence.

Here is the rest of the verse:

"... They will say: 'We have no knowledge, verily You are the All-Knowing of the Unseen'."

Thus, the verse, addressing the concerning people, implies that they are confronted with such a Lord Who is All-Knowing and Who is the, Judge of such a court. Therefore, they must be careful of right and justice in their bearing witnesses, too.

In the concluding phrase of the verse, the Qur'an remarks that the real knowledge belongs to Allah, and whatever knowledge is found in any person bas been obtained from Him. It is similar to the fact that only He knows the Unseen, and He gives a part of its knowledge to whomever He desires.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 110

إِذْ قَالَ اللهُ يَا عِيسى ابْنَ َرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلاً وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوتَى بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَـذَا إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

110 "(Remember) when Allah said: 'O' Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My blessing on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you with the

Holy Spirit, you spoke to the people (both) in the cradle (through miracle) and in adulthood (through revelation) and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel, and when you did make of clay a thing like the shape of a bird, by My leave and then did breathe into it and it became a bird, by My leave; and you did heal the blind and the leprous, by My leave, and you did raise the dead (from their graves), by My leave and (remember) when I withheld the Children of Israel from you when you brought them manifest proofs, but those who disbelieved among them said:'This is nothing but clear magic'."

From the above verse on, up to the end of Surah Al-Ma'idah, the contents of the verses are about Jesus (as).

In this verse speaking about Messiah (as), sorts of divine favors, and at the top of all, strengthening him with the Holy Spirit, have been stated.

The purpose of blessing on Messiah's mother may be the glad tidings about Jesus to her and the talk between Mary and the angels, referred to in verses 45 to 50 from Surah 'Ale-'Imran, No 3, where it says:

"(Remember) when the angels said: ' O' Mary ! ..."

Thus, even prophets should not neglect the remembrance of the blessings of Allah. Allah's graces and blessings of Allah. Allah's graces and blessings bestowed to His saints, cause encouragement in the followers of Truth.

There are some matters stated in this verse which will be referred to as follows:

1. A woman can be promoted so high in the rank that she may be spoken about together with a prophet.

"(Remember) when Allah said: 'O' Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My blessing on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit....."

2. By a single statement in the cradle, Jesus confirmed both his own prophet hood and his mother's chastity and inerrancy.

"... you spoke to the people (both) in the cradle (through miracle) and in adulthood (through revelation)....."

3. Prophets should have both knowledge and awareness; and also they should know the words of the former prophets and have a new message both.

"... and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel....."

4. The miraculous breath of Christ caused an inanimate thing to fly. But the hearts of the Children of Israel were not moved by it.

"... and when you did make of clay a thing like the shape of a bird, by My leave....."

5. When Allah gives prophets the ability of restoring to life and healing the sick, people's supplicating and imploring for help must also be permissible. (We question the opponents of this idea whether it can be considered that Allah gives an ability to a person but prohibits people from paying attention to it.)

"... and then did breathe into it and it became a bird, by My leave; and you did heal the blind and the leprous, by My leave, and you did raise the dead (from their graves), by My leave....."

6. The Children of Isreal attempted the life of Jesus (as), but that malice was warded off by Allah.

"...and (remember) when I withheld the Children of Israel from you when you brought them manifest proofs, but those who disbelieved among them said: 'This is nothing but clear magic'."

Imam Rida (as) said:

"There were two phrases carved on the ring of Jesus (as) which were recited: " Happy is the servant by whom Allah is remembered; and woe on the servant because of whom Allah be forgotten."[1] .

Jesus (as) said:

"Whatever bad word that you utter, you will receive its response in Hereafter."[2]

Imam Sajjad (as) said that Jesus (as) told the disciples:

"Verily the world is a bridge to pass through, so do not try to furnish and maintain it."[3]

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 111

وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُواْ بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوَاْ آمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ

111. "And (remember) when I revealed unto the disciples: 'Believe in Me and in My Messenger,' they said: 'We believe, and bear You witness that we are Muslims (who submit ourselves) '."

The objective meaning of 'revealing unto the disciples', mentioned in the verse, is either inspiring unto their own hearts, or conveying the Message by the way of revealing it unto Jesus (as).

Thus, sometimes Allah may inspire some inspiration unto the receptive hearts.

The Divine inspirations unto people are alongside the path of confirming the Divine Prophets, inspirations, not against them. Therefore believing in Allah is not aloof from believing in His Messenger.

The verse says:

"And (remember) when I revealed unto the disciples: 'Believe in Me and in My Messenger,' they said: 'We believe, and bear You witness that we are Muslims (who submit ourselves) '."

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verses 112 - 113

إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَن يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاء

قَالَ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

قَالُواْ نُرِيدُ أَن نَّأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

112. "(Remember) when the disciples said: 'O'Jesus son of Mary! is your Lord able to send down to us a table from the sky? ' (Jesus) said: 'Be in awe of Allah if you are believers'."

113. "They said: 'We desire to eat from it, and our hearts would be at rest, and we would know that you have told us the truth, and that we may be of the witnesses upon it'."

This holy verse points the well-known process of 'The table of Food' sent from the sky. It says:

"(Remember) when the disciples said: 'O' Jesus son of Mary! is your Lord able to send down to us a table from the sky? ..."

Messiah became uneasy of this question of theirs, their statement contained the smell of doubt, because he had brought plenty of verses and signs for them. So, as a warning, he admonished them:

"…(Jesus) said: 'Be in awe of Allah if you are believers'."

But, soon after that, they informed Jesus that they had not an evil aim by that suggestion. They said that they did not intend obstinacy, but they wanted to eat from that 'Table of Food' in order to obtain not only the luminosity created by that nutrition in their souls (because nutrition certainly affects in man's soul), but also their hearts would be at rest.

So, by observing that great miracle, they might reach the bound of certainty of sight and knew that whatever he had told them was true, and that they could bear witness over it.

The verse says:

"They said: 'We desire to eat from it, and our hearts would be at rest, and we would know that you have told us the truth, and that we may be of the witnesses upon it'."

Explanations

1. The reason that the Surah has been nominated by the appellation of 'Al-Ma'idah' is because of the very desire of 'Table of Food' that they demanded to come from the sky.

2. The Arabic word 'Al-Ma'idah ' means both 'food' and 'the table wherein there is food'.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 114

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاء تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيداً لِّأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِّنكَ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

114. "Jesus, son of Mary, said: 'O' Allah, our Lord! send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us, for the first of us and for the last of us and a sign from You; and provide us (with our) sustenance, for You are the best of sustainers."

All supplications mentioned in the Qur'an begin with /rabbana/ 'O' our Lord'!, but in this verse it has begun with two words 'O' Allah, our Lord !'. This difference may be for the importance of this miraculous happening and the concerning consequences.

Supplication, imploring for help and asking a boon from the side of the friends of Allah, is permissible. The supplication of Jesus in this verse is as follows:

"Jesus, son of Mary, said: 'O' Allah, our Lord! send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us, for the first of us and for the last of us and a sign from You; and provide us (with our) sustenance, for You are the best of sustainers."

There have been prophets sent for all human beings and generations in the history of man.

To celebrate a festival is a proper action from the point of the Qur'an. The birth of the friends of Allah and the mission of the 'Messenger of Allah (S) is not less than the descent of the table of food from the sky. So, we must always learn things from the Signs of Allah and His Power.

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 115

قَالَ اللهُ إِنِّي مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لاَّ أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

115. "Allah said: ' Verily I will send it unto you, but whoever shall disbelieve thereafter among you, surely will I punish him with a punishment such as I do not punish anyone in the worlds (with the like of it)'."

From the point of threat, this verse is at the top in the Qur'an for warning people.

"Allah said: 'Verily I will send it unto you, but whoever shall disbelieve thereafter among you, surely will I punish him with a punishment such as I do not punish anyone in the worlds (with the like of it)'."

It is evident that the more a person expects (i.e. the Table of Food from the sky) the more he should undertake. A high summit has a dangerous deep valley.

However, it should be noted that although the table of food was descended from the sky for the companions of Jesus (as), according to some traditions, there descended fruits from Heaven for the Holy Prophet (S), too, and the essence of Fatimah (as) was formed from those heavenly fruits.

Notes

1. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 247
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 314
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 319

Section 16: Teachings of Jesus corrupted after his departure

Teachings of Jesus -Jesus was deified after his departure -Reward for the Faithful,

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse 116

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنتَ قُلتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَـهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ إِن كُنتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلاَ أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلاَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ

116. "And when Allah says: ' O' Jesus son of Mary! did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah ?' He (Jesus) says: 'Glory be to You! It was not mine to utter what I had no right to (say). Had I said it, then You would have known it. You know whatever is in my self and I do not know what is in Your Self. Verily You are the Knower of all the unseen'."

Disgust of Jesus from His Followers' Idolatry!

This verse and a couple of verses next to it discuss about the word of Allah with Jesus (as) on the Day of Judgment. It says:

"And when Allah says: ' O' Jesus son of Mary! did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' ..."

With a high respect, Jesus replies a few sentences in answer to this question.

1. At first he begins his expression with glorification of Allah from any partner and compeer, and says:

He (Jesus) says: ' Glory be to Your ..."

2. Then he continues saying that how he could say what was not appropriate to him.

"... It was not mine to utter what I had no right to say ..."

In fact, not only he negates this meaning from himself, but also he says that basically he has not such a right, and a statement like that does not apt to his rank and his situation at all.

3. Then he refers to the infinite knowledge of Allah, and, as his evidence, he says:

Had I said it, You would have known it. You know whatever is in my self; and I do not know what is in Your Self: Verily You are the Knower of all the unseen'."

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verses 117 - 118

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلاَّ مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنتَ أَنتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

إِن تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

117. "I did not say to them (anything) except what you commanded me with; (saying): 'That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness to them so long as I was among them. But when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are witness to all things."

118. " If You punish them, then surely they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are indeed the Mighty, the Wise."

Prophets are infallible and do not do anything but the command of Allah. They cause no change in the Divine revelation.

Prophet Jesus (as) considered himself as other people and trained by Allah. However, prophets are witnesses to the deeds of people. The verse says:

"I did not say to them (anything) except what you commanded me with; (saying): 'That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness to them so long as I was among them. But when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are witness to all things."

In the above-mentioned second holy verse, Jesus (as) introduces himself as a good-for-nothing one, and, depending the acts of punishment and forgiveness on Allah, he confesses that he has no ability or effectiveness in this regard.

It is only He (S.w.T.) Who has authority over His Own servants. He may punish them or forgive them as He pleases. Neither His forgiveness is a sign of weakness, nor His punishment is undue and unwise.

The verse says:

"If You punish them, then surely they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are indeed the Mightly, the Wise."

As Abuthar has narrated, one night the Holy Prophet (S) repeated this verse again and again until morning. He (S) recited it in his prayers when he bowed down and prostrated. He asked for forgiveness so much so that it was bestowed to him[1].

Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verses 119 - 120

قَالَ اللّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبَدًا رَّضِيَ اللّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُواْ عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ
لِلّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

119. "Allah said: 'This is the day when shall benefit the truthful ones their truth. For them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever. Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. This is the great success."

120. "To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in them, and He is All-Powerful over all things."

Following the explanation mentioned about the talk of Allah with Jesus, the content of this verse refers to the words of Allah after that talk and it says:

"Allah said: ' This is the day when shall benefit the truthful ones their truth. ..."

Then, concerning the reward of the truthful ones, the Qur'an says as follows:

"... For them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever....."

More significant than that blessing, which is of the material examples, there is this blessing that:

"... Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him....."

And, there is no doubt that this great merit, which is inclusive of material and spiritual merits, is counted the great salvation. The verse continues saying:

"... This is the great success."

In the second verse, it points to the possession and sovereignty of Allah, when it says:

"To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in them, and He is All-Powerful over all things."

Note

1. Tafsir-i-Maraqi; Vol. 7, P. 66

Surah Al-‘An’am, Chapter 6, Introduction

Introduction to the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This Surah is the sixty-ninth Surah that was revealed to the Prophet (S) in Mecca. As the Traditions of Ahlul-Bayt (as) indicate, all the verses of this Surah were revealed at the same time.

Similar to other Meccan Suras, the basic aim of this Surah is inviting people to the triple principals of unity of Allah, Prophecy, and Resurrection, but most of all, it emphasizes on monotheism and opposing paganism and idolatry.

Paying attention carefully to the contents of the verses of this Surah can remove the soul of hypocrisy and disperse from among Muslims, and cause the ears to be hearing, the eyes to be clear-sighted, and the hearts (minds) to be knowledgeable.

About the virtue of this Surah, in the Islamic traditions, it is cited that when this Surah was revealed, seventy thousand angels were taking after it. And that every believer who recites it, (because of its light, his soul and self may be satiated from the spring of monotheism and) all those angels will ask forgiveness for that person.[1]

Also, 'Ayyashi himself has narrated from 'Abi-Basir that Imam Sadiq (as) said: "Surah Al-'An'am was revealed at the same time while seventy thousand angels were respectfully accompanying it, because there has mentioned the name of Allah in seventy occurrences of it. If people knew how much virtue there lies in its recitation, they would never leave it out."

Then Imam (as) continued saying: "Whoever is in want of a requirement from Allah and he desires it to be granted, he should establish four units (rak'at) of prayer consisting of At-Fatihat-ul-Kitab and Surah Al-'An'am. Then when he finishes the recitation of the Surah, he should recite the following supplication:

O' The Generous! O' The Generous! O' The Generous!

O' The Great! O' The Great O' The Great!

O' Greater than any great!

O' The Hearer of supplications!

O' He Whom nights and days do not change!

Blessing and peace be upon Muhammad and his descendents!

May You have mercy upon my weakness, my poverty, my neediness, and my wretchedness!

O' He Who had mercy upon Jacob, the elder, while He returned Yusef, his dear one, to him!

O' He Who had mercy on Job after his long trial (of affliction)!

O' He Who had mercy upon Muhammad and Who sheltered him, the orphan!

And Who assisted him against tyrants of Quraysh and their false deities, and gave him authority upon them!

O' Helper! O' Helper! O' Helper!

"By Allah! If you recite this supplication and ask Allah for your whole needs, He will bestow (them to) you." [2]

Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim has narrated from Hadrat Rida (as), the eighth Imam, who said:

"Surah Al-'An'am was sent down at the same time and seventy thousand angels accompanied it with the sound of glorification, exaltation and proclamation of His greatness. Whoever recites this Surah, angels will give glory (unto Allah) for him until the Resurrection Day."[3]

Notes

1. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 91, P. 348
2. Tafsir by 'Ayyashi, Vol. 1, P. 353 - Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 1, P. 514
3. Tafsir by Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim

Section 1

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلّه الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِرَبِّهِم يَعْدِلُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "(All) praise belongs to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and appointed darkness and light; yet those who disbelieve hold (others) as equal with their Lord."

In the whole text of the Qur'an, the Arabic word /nur/ (light) has been mentioned in the singular form while its opposite term, /zulumat/ (darkness), has occurred in its plural form. The concerning reason is that the 'Truth' is only one, but the false ways are many. 'Light' is the secret of unity but 'darkness' is the cause of dispersion.

Therefore, the first verse of this Surah points to the system of existence, the second verse hints to the creation of man; and the third verse refers to the deeds and behavior of human beings.

"(All) praise belongs to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and appointed darkness and light; yet those who disbelieve hold (others) as equal with their Lord."

And, as Hadrat Ali (as) has said, this verse is an answer to three groups of the deluded people:

A) The materialists, who deny the creation and temporal contingency (phenomenally).

"…created the heavens ..."

B) Dualists, who believe that 'light' and 'darkness' have two separate origins.[1]

".....and appointed darkness and light ..."

C) Disbelievers, who associate others as partners and equal with Allah.[2]

"... yet, those who disbelieve hold (others) as equal with their Lord."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَى أَجَلاً وَأَجَلٌ مُّسمًّى عِندَهُ ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ

2. "He it is Who created you from clay, then decreed a term (for your life) and the term is fixed with Him, yet still you doubt."

In the previous verse, extroversive phenomena and the creation of the heavens and the earth were mentioned. Here, in this verse, the creation of Man and the innate affairs are referred to.

More than twenty times the term of /ajalin musamma/ (the appointed end) have been stated in the Qur'an.

Concerning the life's final term, Allah has appointed two kinds of time for humankind. One of them is so certain that if all protections be fulfilled, too, the course of lifetime will be consumed and, like the oil of a torch, it will be finished.

The second divine appointed time is concerned to our own conduct. It is like an oil lamp that contains enough oil but we put it in the current of a storm.

In the Islamic literature, deeds such as visiting ones kin, free will offering, alms, and supplications are recorded as the factors that cause the lifetime to be prolonged; while some actions like break off connection with one's kindred and injustice have been introduced as the cause of shortening the lifetime of the one.

It is narrated from Ibn- 'Abbas that Allah has set two kinds of 'appointed end' for humankind. One of them is from birthday until death, and the other is from death until the day of Resurrection.

By his deeds, a person may sometimes decrease from one and increase the time of the other. Therefore, the conclusion of the life's final term of no person is changeable.

The verse, addressing the infidels, implies that such people, who are polytheists, are doubtful about the Creator Who has created man from this worthless origin, viz. clay, and Who has passed him from these amazing and wonderful stages.

"He it is Who created you from clay, then decreed a term (for your life) and the term is fixed with Him, yet still you doubt."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah has created Adam from clay, and He has prohibited clay for his progeny to eat."

In another tradition the Imam (as) has said:

"The one who is greedy in eating clay, he has surely taken part in shedding his own blood."[3]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 3

وَهُوَ اللهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ

3. "And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth! He knows your secret and your open, and He knows what you earn."

In answer to those who consider a separate god for every type of thing, such as god of rain, god of war, god of peace, god of sky, and the like of them[4] , the verse says:

"And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth! ..."

It is obvious that the One Who dominates everywhere and in whose authority is the devise of everything, the Omnipresent, knows all the secret and concealed things. So, it is such that in the next sentence, the verse says:

"... He knows your secret and your open, and He knows what you earn."

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Allah revealed to Abraham, saying: 'O' lbrahim ! I am Aware and I like the aware ones'."[5]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 4 - 5

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِم مِّنْ آيَةٍ مِّنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلاَّ كَانُواْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُواْ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنبَاء مَا كَانُواْ بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

4. "There never came unto them any Sign from the Signs of their Lord but they turned away from it."

5. "So they indeed belied the truth when it came unto them, therefore very soon the (bitter) tidings will come to them of what they used to mock at."

As it was mentioned before, the words stated in Surah Al-'An'am mostly address polytheists. The fact is that the Qur'an applies kinds of different means to inform them might be they become aware.

This verse points to the pagans' mood of obstinacy, heedlessness, and arrogance against the truth and the sings of Allah. It implies that they are so obstinate and disrespectful that whatever sign out of Allah's signs they see they immediately turn aside from it. The verse says:

"There never came unto them any Sign from the Signs of their Lord but they turned away from it."

This quality was not confined to the Age of Ignorance and the pagans of Arab. At the present time, even, there are many persons who do not suffer the trouble of only one hour research and investigation about their Lord and the divine religion. So, it is evident that when they come across a book or a passage in this field, they do not study it.

Moreover, if a person speaks with them upon the matter, they usually do not listen to him. These people are some ignorant and unaware arrogant ones who may sometimes appear in society in the form of scientists.

Then, the next verse points to the consequence of this very action of theirs, and says:

"So they indeed belied the truth when it came unto them....."

It is in a case that if they contemplated carefully over the Divine verses, they would see the truth very well, and recognize it and believe in it. The verse continues saying:

"... therefore very soon the (bitter) tidings will come to them of what they used to mock at."

In fact, the two above-mentioned verses refer to three stages of infidelity where, stage by stage, they are intensified.

At first, it is the stage of turning away. Then there comes the stage of belying the Divine verses. And, after that, there is the stage of mocking the facts and Signs of Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 6

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن قَرْنٍ مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّن لَّكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاء عَلَيْهِم مِّدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُم بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ

6. "Have they not considered how many a generation We destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth (to the extent) that We have not established you, and We sent abundant (water down from) the sky upon them and made the rivers flow beneath them? Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and raised up after them another generation."

We must take an example from the history and fate of others.

"Have they not considered ..."

This style is one of the training methods of the Qur'an by which it states some factual and teaching stories.

The retribution of those who abuse the divine facilities given to them in this world is destruction.

"... How many a generation We destroyed before them....."

Besides the chastisement in the Hereafter, Allah punishes the sinners in the present world, too.

"... Yet We destroyed them for their sins....."

The powerful people should not think that they are always in comfort in the world. The Lord punishes them and substitutes some others in their place.

"... whom We had established in the earth (to the extent) that We have not established you, and We sent abundant (water down from) the sky upon them and made the rivers flow beneath them? ..."

Thus,. the cause of all inflictions are people's own deeds.

"... Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and raised up after them another generation."

The Qur'anic term /qarn/ is used for calling a community who had been utterly destroyed so that none of them remained after them[6].

All people who live contemporarily are also called in Arabic /qarn/. They are usually a generation living a length of time about 60 years or 80 years or 100 years[7].

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 7

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ إِنْ هَـذَا إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

7. "And had We sent down unto you a book written on a paper, so that they touched it with their hands, certainly (still) the disbelievers would have said: 'This is naught but manifest sorcery.' "

Some of pagans used to say that they might believe when a written paper accompanied with an angel was sent down to them. But they told a lie, and they were seeking an excuse.

This idea means that the circle of obstinacy of such people have become so vastly expanded that they reject the most clear perceptible things, and refrain from submitting to them under the pretext of manifest sorcery.

The verse says:

"And had We sent down unto you a book written on a paper, so that they touched it with their hands, certainly (still) the disbelievers would have said: 'This is naught but manifest sorcery.' "

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 8

وَقَالُواْ لَوْلا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَّقُضِيَ الأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لاَ يُنظَرُونَ

8. "And they said: ' Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been determined, and then they would not be granted any respite."

The disbelievers protested why there were not sent down an angel to the Prophet (S) so openly that they could see him with their own eyes and, consequently, they might attest his prophet hood.

"And they said: 'Why has not an angel been sent down to him? ..."

Then, in order to show that their disobedience has reached to its climax, the verse implies that had Allah sent down an angel as they wished, they would not have believed. So, the divine wisdom and common good required that Allah should not respite them any more, and would immediately involve them in a punishment to destroy them. The verse itself says:

"... And if we had sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been determined, and then they would not be granted any respite."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 9

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلاً وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبِسُونَ

9. "And had We appointed him (Our Messenger) an angel, We would certainly have made him as a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they (now) make confused."

If an angel were to become an example of human beings, how could it be the symbol of those persons who are in the storm of their low instincts, food and lusts?

Therefore, the verse may mean that if the Prophet were an angel, he would appear in the guise of a man so that they could see him. This matter would cause people to be led into an error whether he is a human being or an angel.

"And had We appointed him (Our Messenger) an angel, We would certainly have made him as a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they (now) make confused."

However, for the purpose of training and invitation, people should be given some symbols from among themselves, so that those symbols take the lead in invitations and actions. Besides, people and angels have not a general resemblance with each other.

Again, according to the words of the Qur'an, the prophet of Allah should be a 'male'.

Thus, Allah's ways of treatment have been arranged wisely, and they do not change with the desires of this one or that one.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 10

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُواْ مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

10. "And certainly some Messengers were mocked at, before you, then the retribution which they used to ridicule fell on them.

This verse can be counted as a soothing for the Messenger of Allah (S). The evidence is that, firstly, the former messengers of Allah were mocked, too; secondly, the mockers will be confronted with not only the chastisement of the Hereafter but also the Divine wrath in the present world. Their own dangerous plots will surround the plotters themselves.

The verse says:

"And certainly some Messengers were mocked at before you, then the retribution which they used to ridicule fell on them."

However, mockery is one of the great sins that have been promised punishment for.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The most loser of people is the one who is able to tell the truth but he does not."[8]

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Kashit, vol. 2, P.158
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, P. 701
3. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 103
4. This is the very belief of 'masters of species' which was current in ancient Greece.
5. Al-Muhajjat-ul-Bayda', vol. 1, p. 15
6. cited in Aqrab-ul-Mawarid
7. Cited in commentary books entitled Al-Mizan, and Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi
8. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 3178

Section 2: Allah has ordained Mercy on Himself

The greatness of the Divine Mercy - None can help when the wrath of Allah afflicts any one,

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 11

قُلْ سِيرُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

11. "Say: 'Travel in the earth, then see what has been the end of the rejecters '."

Here, the Qur'an has taken another method of awakening these arrogant conceited persons. It tells the Prophet (S) to admonish them by such a statement:

"Say: Travel in the earth ..."

No doubt that seeing the remaining traces of the former people by one's eyes and those nations who pave the way of destruction as a result of neglecting the facts, is more effective than studying their history in their concerning books. The reason is that these traces make the truth more sensible and perceptible.

By the way, it should be noted that such a fleeting beauty or splendor is not important, but the final consequence is important.

"... the end of the rejecters ..."

Thus, the failure of the opponents of the truth is certain. If you doubt, you can study their history, or by traveling, you can see their traces and take an example from them.

It is noteworthy to know that the divine commandment mentioned by the holy phrase: "Travel in the earth", which is recited in this verse, has occurred six times in the Qur'an.

Unfortunately, the infidels observed this expressive commandment more practically than the Muslims. They traveled into Islamic countries and explored all parts of their lands and became aware of their mines, stores, the points of their strength and weakness, their cultural works, manuscripts and arts, and spoilt them while Muslims were in the sleep of negligence.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"By his lie, a liar obtains the Wrath of Allah, the Glorified, the affront of people, and the enmity of angels."[1]

Again, Imam Ali (as) said:

"The end of telling a lie is reproach and regret."[2]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 12

قُل لِّمَن مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ قُل لِلّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

12. "Say: 'To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: 'To Allah, He has prescribed mercy on Himself: He will surely gather you on the Resurrection Day, of which there is no doubt. Those who have lost their own selves, they will not believe.' "

The phrase:

"He has prescribed mercy on Himself"

has occurred two times in the Qur'an, both of which are recited in this Holy Surah, verses 12 and 54.

The phrase,

"... of which there is no doubt ..."

has been mentioned about both the Qur'an and the Hereafter.

As Allah has ordained and assigned some duties for us, He has prescribed some duties for Himself, too. Among them are those which are mentioned in the Qur'an such as 'guidance':

"Surely Ours is it to show the way." (Surah Al-Layl, No.92, verse 12),

and Giving sustenance:

"And there is no animal in the earth but on Allah is the sustenance of it..." (Surah Hud, No. 11, Verse 6).

Bestowing mercy upon the servants:

"He has prescribed mercy on Himself."

But the condition of receiving the Divine mercy is that the servants themselves should have mercy upon others.

A tradition says: "Whoever does not have mercy (upon others) will not be shown mercy on.[3]".

The mercy of Allah is abundant. Salman has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said: "The mercy of Allah is one hundred degrees, one of which is the origin of all graces of Allah in this world. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will deal with people by the whole one hundred degrees of His mercy."[4]

This fact should be noted that the great loss of the disbelievers lies in this that instead of reasoning they go after their delusions; and instead of taking the godly saints, they seek. for false deities; and instead of Faith and observing the Hereafter, they disbelieve; and instead of submitting to the Light, they submit to Hell Fire.

But whatever comes forth from Allah upon the world of existence is based on Mercy, and Allah's Mercy is spread over all things everywhere.

1. The Qur'an indicates that the Divine Mercy involves everything. In this regard, Surah Al-'A'raf, No.7, verse 56 says:

"... My mercy encompasses all things ....."

This mercy has many examples, including:

Rain:

"And He it is Who sends down the rain after they have despaired, and He unfolds His mercy ....." (Surah Ash-Shoura. No.42. Verse 28)

Wind:

"And He it is Who sends the winds as good news heralding His mercy....." (Surah Al-'Araf. No.7. verse. 57).

Night and day:

"And out of his mercy He has made for you the night and the day....." (Surah Al-Qases No.28. verse 73).

The Prophet:

"And we have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds." (Surah Al-'Anbiya. No.21. verse 107).

The Qur'an:

"... These are clear proofs from your Lord and a guidance and a mercy ..." (Surah Al- 'Araf. No.7. vers 203).

The Torah:

"...The Book of Moses was a guide and a merc ..." (Surah Al-Ahqaf. No.46. verse 12).

Delivery:

"So We delivered him and those with him by a mercy from Us....." (Surah Al- 'Araf. No. 7. verse 72).

Love of spouse:

"... and He put between you love and mercy....." (Surah Ar-Rum. No.30.Verse 21).

Plants and fruits:

"Look then at the signs of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death....." (Surah Ar-Rum. No.30. verse 50).

Acceptance of Repentance:

"... do not despair of the mercy of Allah ..." (Surah Az-Zumur. No.39. verse 53).

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 13

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

13. "And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is All-hearing, All-Knowing'."

As a cradle, the night and the day give human beings, and all creatures, peace and tranquility in their laps. Some of the living creatures rest at night while some others rest during the day.

Whatever exists in the universe, whether they are manifested or concealed, belongs to Him. Therefore, not only the whole system of existence belongs to Allah, but also its governance and its control is His.

The verse says:

"And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is All-hearing, All-Knowing'."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 14

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللهِ أَتَّخِذُ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ وَلاَ يُطْعَمُ قُلْ إِنِّيَ أُ ـرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

14. "Say: ' Shall I take a guardian besides Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed?' Say: 'I have been commanded to be the first who submits himself '. And be not you (O' Muhammad) of the polytheists."

Again, in this verse the words are upon the unity of Allah and rejecting paganism and idolatry. In the same time that pagans accepted that the creation of the world specified to Divine Essence, they had taken idols as their support and refuge.

For the purpose of destroying the false imagination, The Qur'an instructs the Prophet (S) such:

"Say: ' Shall I take a guardian besides Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed?'..."

It is worthy to note that among all the attributes of Allah, here; the Qur'an has emphasized but on feeding the creatures and giving them their sustenance.

Using this sense, maybe, is for the sake that most of the connections in the material life of man relate to this very material need, viz, the need in eating a piece of bread, which makes persons to humiliate themselves before the masters of wealth and power. The case may be so that sometimes they bow before them as if they worship them.

In the above-mentioned verse, the Qur'an denotes that your sustenance is in the authority of Allah, not in that of them.

Then, in answer to the suggestion of those who invited the Prophet (S) to join the camp of polytheists, the Qur'an instructs him to say that besides the command of wisdom which leads him to rely oh the One Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, he also says that the revelation of Allah has instructed him to be the first Muslim who submits himself, and never he joins the row of polytheists.

The verse says:

"...Say: ' I have been commanded to be the first who submits himself '. And be not you (O' Muhammad) of the polytheists."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 15

قُلْ إِنِّيَ أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

15. "Say: 'Verily I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the retribution of a grievous Day '."

There are two kinds of fear. The first kind is that sort of awe which is indecent, such as fearing from Holy Struggle. The second kind is that fear which is agreeable and praiseworthy, like fearing from Allah ' punishment.

The Divine Law has been decreed equally for all. Even the Messenger of Allah should fear from its evil, if he sinned.

The fear of the saints of Allah, of course, is for the sake of Allah’s wrath, not from the deities or from people. And, indeed, fear is one of the impedimental factors from deviation and committing wrong.

Regarding to the existence of the Divine completing the argument denoting that the Lord is both the Creator and the Sustainer, and has commanded to submission and prohibited from polytheism, disobedience from the command of Allah deserves punishment.

The verse, addressing the Prophet (S), commands:

"Say: ' Verily I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the retribution of a grievous Day '."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 16

مَّن يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ

16. "Whoever is spared of it (the Divine retribution) on that Day, He has certainly been merciful to him, and that is the manifest triumph."

The Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"By Allah in whose hand is my soul, no one of people may enter into Paradise (merely) by his own deed."

They asked him:

"Even you, O' Messenger of Allah?"

The Prophet (S) answered:

"Even I, unless Allah shelters me with His mercy and grace."

Then, the Holy Prophet (S) put his hands on his head and recited the above-mentioned verse.[5]

"Whoever is spared of it (the Divine retribution) on that Day, He has certainly been merciful to him, and that is the manifest triumph."

Everybody is threatened to fall in danger. Saving from the Divine punishment demands a particular grace from the side of Allah.

However, prosperity can be gained only in the light of security from His Wrath.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 17

وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّه بِضُرٍّ فَلاَ كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدُيرٌ

17. "And if Allah touches you with affliction, none can remove it but He; and if He touches you with good, then He is All-Powerful over all things."

Hopes should be to Allah, and fears should also be from Allah, since the origin of all affairs is the same. It is not such that the good nesses come from one source and the cause of removing vices originates from another source.

The Laws of Allah are legitimated for all and they let no exception. The Holy Prophet (S) should betake to Allah when confronting the bitter and sweet incidents, too. The verse says:

"And if Allah touches you with affliction, none can remove it but He; and if He touches you with good, then He is All-Powerful over all things."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 18

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

18. "And He is the Omnipotent over His servants, and He is the All-Wise, the All -Aware."

In the current Surah, verse No.14, the discussion was about creative power and sustenance of Allah. In verse 15, it was about the Wrath of Allah and Hereafter. In verse 16, the words were upon the Divine rescue and mercy.

Verse 17 is about solving the difficulties and reaching the good nesses. So, in this verse, His absolute Power (Omnipotence) is stated about.

If it happens that some tyrant persons dominate others for some days because of ignorance, weakness and disunity of people, it is sure that His Omnipotence ruins all these arrangements and, in the frame of wisdom and knowledge, He utilizes His Power and Dominance. That is why the Qur'an says:

"And He is the Omnipotent over His servants, and He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 19

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادةً قُلِ اللّه شَهِيدٌ بِيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لأُنذِرَكُم بِهِ وَمَن بَلَغَ أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللّه آلِهَةً أُخْرَى قُل لاَّ أَشْهَدُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّنِي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

19. "Say: 'What thing is the greatest in testimony?' Say: 'Allah! He is witness between me and you, and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you thereby, and whomever it reaches. Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah? ' Say: ' I do not testify '. Say:, He is only One God, and verily I am quit of that which you associate (with Him) '."

The pagans of Mecca demanded witness from the Prophet (S) for his prophet hood. They did not accept the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (S) and told him that even the Jews and the Christians did not know him a divine prophet.

This holy verse, with an atmosphere of Allah's inspiration and help, and at the time of loneliness of Islam, foretells a bright and promising future for Muslims, when it hates polytheism. For three times, and in a short phrase, the Qur'an refers to Unity of Allah while quitting polytheism. The verse says:

"Say: ' What thing is the greatest in testimony?' Say: ' Allah! He is witness between me and you, and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you thereby, and whomever it reaches. Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah? ' Say: ' I do not testify '. Say: 'He is only One God, and verily I am quit of that which you associate (with Him) '."

Besides all other prophetic miracles, Unseen aids, and frustrating the hostile plots, the Qur'an itself is the greatest evidence to the Prophet's Messenger ship.

The messenger ship of Muhammad (S) is both worldly and eternal, for all humankind and in all ages.

However, a permanent warning indeed, should be accompanied with an everlasting warner.

Therefore, the divine Imamate and leadership should also be together with the Qur'an forever.

This meaning is cited in Tafsir-us-Safi and Usul-i-Kafi, narrated from Iman Sadiq (as)

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 20

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

20. "Those whom We have given The Book (the Jews and Christians) recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their sons. Yet those who have lost their own selves, they will not believe."

The content of this verse is similar to that of Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 146. Not only the name and qualities of the Prophet of Islam were mentioned in the Torah and the Evangel and the scholars of the People of the Book had informed their people of him under the title of 'the promised

prophet', but also the characteristics of this Holy Prophet (S) and his companions were recorded in their Books. The Qur'an says:

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are the firm (of heart) against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves, ...that is their description in the Torah and their description in the Evangel....."[6]

In this verse, the Qur'an clearly answers to those who claimed that the People of the Book had no evidence upon the prophet hood of the Prophet of Islam (S) , when it says:

"Those whom We have given The Book (the Jews and Christians) recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their sons. ..."

And, at the end of the verse, as a final conclusion, the Qur'an announces that, with all these clear signs, only those people do not believe in this Prophet who have lost all their things and the capital of their own selves in the bargaining market of commercial transactions of lives. It says:

"... Yet those who have lost their own selves, they will not believe."

Notes

1. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 876
2. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 502
3. Fi-Zalal, a commentary book
4. Fi-Zalal, 'Alusi.
5. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, P. 706; and Majma'-ul-Bayan
6. Surah-Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 29

Section 3: Polytheists shall themselves confess their guilt

The greatness of the guilt of being polytheist - The polytheist shall themselves deny polytheism which they had themselves held as their conviction - They shall desire to be returned to this life,

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 21

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ ِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللّه كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

21. "And who is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah or denies His Signs; Verily the unjust will not succeed. "

The Qur'anic expression /wa man azlamu/ (and who is more unjust) has occurred in the Qur'an about fifteen times. This phrase has been used with the senses of calumny against Allah , barring people from going into the mosques, and concealing the testimony of the Truth.

This denotes that cultural injustice and barring people from rectitude and comprehension, is the worst injustice upon the society.

Setting a stone and a piece of wood equal to the Lord is an injustice toward Him, and worshipping them is an injustice toward humanity. Therefore, the unjust people will never meet the true salvation. The above-mentioned verse says:

"And who is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah or denies His Signs; verily the unjust will not succeed."

The more, an oppressed person is dear and holy, the more intense is the danger of transgression against him. That is why being unjust toward the Lord and the Sacred House, and belying against Divine Holy Essence, are the worst injustice:

"And who is more unjust ..."

Transgression upon the thought and culture of nations is one of the worst transgressions. Polytheism, forging a lie against Allah, a false claim of being the divine prophet, innovation, interpretation of the Qur'an by personal opinion, concealing the Truth, and the like, are all kinds of this sort of injustice.

The following couple of traditions are recorded in Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 149.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Avoid transgression. It is the greatest sin. Verily every transgressor will be punished for his transgression."

Again, he (as) said:

"Avoid cruelty. Whoever commits it, his life will become dark."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 22

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآؤُكُمُ الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

22. "And on the Day We will muster them all together, then We will say to those who associated partners (to Allah): 'Where are your associate-gods whom you were asserting?'"

In the previous verse, it was said that the oppressors, who apparently gain some social ranks by calumny, rejection and concealing the Truth, will not

meet salvation. A prosperous person is one who has some positive matters for answering the questions in the Hereafter, because all the polytheistic imaginations will be effaced therein.

"And on the Day We will muster them all together, then We will say to those who associated partners (to Allah): 'Where are your associate-gods whom you were asserting?'"

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /jami'an/ mentioned in the verse, is either 'all human beings', or the polytheists and the idols. The evidence for this idea is the content of another verse that targets men end their wives, and what they were worshipping. That verse says:

"Gather together those who were unjust and their mates, and what they used to worship."[1]

It is true that the verse under discussion refers to polytheists, but those who accept the leadership of other than Allah's saints, and oppose the friends of Allah, are rather a kind of polytheists.

In Jami'ah Supplication, we recite: "And he who opposes you is a disbeliever."

An Islamic tradition, narrated from the immaculate ones, says: "The person who refuses us (our way) is similar to the person who refuses (the word of) Allah and such a person is as a disbeliever."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 23 - 24

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُن فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلاَّ أَن قَالُواْ وَاللّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ

انظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُواْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ

23. "Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: 'By Allah, our Lord! we were not polytheists'. "

24. "See how they (the polytheists) lie against their own selves, and that which they were forging has passed away from them."

The Arabic term /fitnah/, here, has been rendered into 'intimidated to idols and paganism'; or, it means 'excuse'.

"Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: 'By Allah, our Lord! We were not polytheists'. "

As their quality requires, liars tell lies on the Day of Judgment, too. In this regard the Qur'an says:

"On the day that Allah will raise them up all, then they will swear to Him as they swear to you, and they think that they have something; now surely they are the liars."[2]

Regarding this holy verse, Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition has said that after this lie, their lips will be sealed and their other limbs will tell the truth.

Thus, in the court of Allah, neither telling a lie is helpful, nor an oath.

"See how they (the polytheists) lie against their own selves, and that which they were forging has passed away from them."

Hence, the polytheists will dislike their own thoughts and creeds on the Hereafter Day, when they will say:

"... we were not polytheists '. "

However, on the Hereafter Day, surely hating polytheism will not be helpful.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 25

وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِن يَرَوْاْ كُلَّ آيَةٍ لاَّ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهَا حَتَّى إِذَا جَآؤُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الأَوَّلِينَ

25. "And of them there are some who hearken to you, and We have laid veils upon their hearts lest they understand it, and in their ears a heaviness; and (even) if they see every sign they will not believe in it, so that when they come to you they dispute with you, those who disbelieve say: 'This is naught but the legends of the ancients'."

In this verse, the psychological conditions of some of the pagans are hinted to. They do not usually show the least inclination from themselves when they are told the facts.

They not only do not show inclination, but also oppose these facts hostilely, and, by means of calumny, they keep themselves and others aloof from them. Concerning these people, the Qur'an says:

"And of them there are some who hearken to you, and We have laid veils upon their hearts lest they understand it, and in their ears a heaviness....."

Indeed, attributing such matters to Allah relates to 'the law of causation' and the property of 'action'. That is, the result of continuation in doing wrong and insisting on obstinacy is that it turns the soul and self of the person into its own nature.

Experience has proved this fact that, at first, evil-doers feel inconvenience with their own evil action. But little by little, they will be accustomed to it, so that there may come some day that they count doing their evil actions obligatory.

So, the verse indicates that their circumstance has changed to a state that if they see all the signs and revelations of Allah they will not believe in them.

The verse says:

"... and (even) if they see every sign they will not believe in it....."

The verse informs the Prophet (S) implying that beyond their disbelief, when they come to you they have no aim but disputing and quarrelling with you. The verse says:

"... So that when they come to you they dispute with you....."

Instead of hearkening to you heartily and, at least, in the form of a seeker of the truth that they should corn template upon it to probably find it; they stand against it with a negative soul and thought.

When they hear your statements, which have originated from the source of revelation, they cannot afford it but using the strike of calumny. The verse continues saying:

"...those who disbelieve say: ' This is naught but the legends of the ancients '."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 26

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْأَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَإِن يُهْلِكُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

26. "And they prohibit people from it, and themselves they keep afar from it, and they destroy none save themselves, while they are not aware."

The Arabic term /yan'aun/, mentioned in the verse, is derived from /na'ya/ with the sense of 'to avoid'.

Some of the commentators of the Sunnite schooled have considered this verse about Abu-talib. They have said that he prohibited people from hurting Muhammad while he himself did not believe in Islam and avoided becoming Muslim.

They similarly have considered some other verses of the Qur'an concerning this matter, such as Surah At- Taubah. No.9. verse 115, and Surah Al-Qasas, No. 25. Verse 57

But, from the view Point of Shi'ah School, Abutalib was one of the best Muslims whose belief has been reflected in his poems.

Moreover, a Muslim believing woman like Fatimah Bent-i-Asad lived as a wife with him until the end of his life. This is also another evidence for this idea[3].

However, pagans and polytheists always try to hinder people and keep them afar from the path of benevolence and good deeds.

"And they prohibit people from it, and themselves they keep afar from it, and they destroy none save themselves, while they are not aware."

Keeping afar from the acceptance of truth by a person is paving the way of annihilation upon his own self.

The real awareness is finding the path of truth, while losing the path of truth and leader of truth, from whoever it maybe, is foolishness.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 27

وَلَوْ تَرَىَ إِذْ وُقِفُواْ عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُواْ يَا لَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلاَ نُكَذِّبَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

27. "And if you could see when they are stationed before the (Hell) Fire, then they say: 'Would that we might be returned, and we would not belie the Signs of our Lord, and we would be of the believers."

According to the verses of the Qur'an, the desire of returning to this world in human beings is found both at the moment of death, and in the grave, and in Hereafter. Surah Al-Muminun. No.23. verses 99 and 100 say:

"Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: 'My Lord! send me back again (into the world)'."

"That I may do good ...".

And, again, the same Surah, verse 107 says:

"O' our Lord! Take us out of it; then if we return (to evil) we shall be unjust."

We must believe in the truth as long as we have been respited in this world, because it will be too late in the Hereafter.

"And if you could see when they are stationed before the (Hell) Fire, then they say: 'Would that we might be returned, and we would not belie the Signs of our Lord, and we would be of the believers'."

As the philosophers and wiser men have said, this world is the place of movement and the coming world is the world of actuality. As far as an apple is with the tree, it has some movement towards development. But, when it separates from the tree, that movement will end and no more growth is expected from it.

Therefore, if a person wishes to be among the dwellers of Paradise, he must prepare the concerning means of development in this life, which is the world of movement.

Otherwise, he will be involved with punishment.

By the way, the consequence of rejecting the Signs of Allah will be remorse in the Hereafter, and being entangled with the Hell-Fire.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 28

بَلْ بَدَا لَهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يُخْفُونَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّواْ لَعَادُواْ لِمَا نُهُواْ عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

28. "Rather, what they used to hide before has (now) appeared to them; and even if they were returned, they would revert to what they were prohibited, and most certainly they are liars."

The Resurrection Day is the day of manifestation of people's hidden secrets. The Qur'an has frequently pointed out this fact. A few of these Qur'anic occurrences are as follows:

"And the evil (consequences) of what they did shall become manifest to them ..." (Surah Al Jathiyah, No.45. verse 33).

"And the evil (consequences) of what they wrought shall become manifest to them....." (Surah Az-Zumar. No.39. verse 48).

On the Day of Judgment, all the secrets will be uncovered.

"Rather, what they used to hide before has (now) appeared to them....."

It is impossible for the mortals to return from the coming world back to this world. The verse continues saying:

"... and even if they were returned....."

There are some vicious persons that we cannot expect them to become well again. They will not change even with the respite they will ask for.

Sometimes it happens that a person is confronted with difficulties, calamities and bitter circumstances. When such a person is in that condition, the one may make some good decisions, but later, when he reaches to ease and welfare, he forgets all of them.

"... and even if they were returned, they would revert to what they were prohibited....."

So, when telling lies becomes a quality in a person, he will tell a lie in the Hereafter, too, and will bring some false claims there.

"... and most certainly they are liars."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 29 - 30

وَقَالُواْ إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وُقِفُواْ عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُواْ بَلَى وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُواْ العَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

29. "And they say: ' There is nothing save our life of the world and we shall not be resurrected'."

30. And if you could see when they are stationed before their Lord He will say: 'Is this not the truth? 'They will say: 'Yes, by our Lord I' He will say: 'Taste you then the chastisement for what you used to disbelieve'."

This verse is the continuation of the statements of the arrogant and stubborn pagans who, by seeing the scenes of Resurrection, desire to return back to this world once more in order to compensate.

But the Qur'an implies that if these people return to the world, they not only will not compensate their evils, but also will continue committing their vicious deeds, and, basically, they deny the Resurrection and Hereafter, too. Surprisingly, they will say that the life is only the life of this world and they will not be raised again. The verse says:

"And they say:-'There is nothing save our life of the world and we shall not be resurrected '."

In this holy verse, the Qur'an hints to these people's fate on the Resurrection Day, and says:

"And if you could see when they are stationed before their Lord He will say: 'Is this not the truth?' They will say: 'Yes, by our Lord!' ..."

They are told once more that they should taste the punishment for that they used to reject that punishment, and they disbelieved. The Qur'an says:

"... He will say: 'Taste you then the chastisement for what you used to disbelieve'."

It is sure that the purpose of 'standing before the Lord' is not that Allah (S.w.T.) has a place. It means to stand before the scenes of His punishments. This status is the same as the state of establishing the canonical prayer for which a servant says he is standing before Allah.

Notes

1. Surah As-Safat, No.37, Verse 22
2. Surah Al-Mujadilah, No 58, Verse 18
3. refer to al-Qadir, vols. 7 and 8

Section 4: Those who disbelieve the meeting of Allah are certainly losers

Rejection of Truth is a sure loss. Life of this world is nothing but play and pastime -The abode of the Hereafter is the best for the pious.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 31

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِلِقَاء اللّهِ حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءتْهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُواْ يَا حَسْرَتَنَا عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَى ظُهُورِهِمْ أَلاَ سَاء مَا يَزِرُونَ

31. "They indeed are losers who deny the meeting with Allah until, when the hour comes on them all of a sudden, they will say: 'Alas for us, for what we neglected in it!' And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now beware, evil is that which they bear! "

The purpose of "meeting of Allah" is the spiritual meeting and inner intuition in the Hereafter. The reason of it is that all of the dependences of man unto wealth, position, and relatives will be ceased from him there, and, by facing with the divine reward and retribution, he will perceive the absolute,

Sovereignty of Allah

Regret is for losing merits and interests, while remorse is for damages coming forth.[1] However, in the Hereafter regret is useless. That is why sins will be burdens on the shoulder of the sinners. They feel their evil consequence like a heavy load on their back, especially when they see the scene of the Divine punishment.

Therefore, evil is the burden that will be stored for the evil doers! The verse says:

"They indeed are losers who deny the meeting with Allah until, when the hour comes on them all of a sudden, they will say: 'Alas for us, for what we neglected in it!' And they shall bear their burdens on their back; now beware, evil is that which they bear!"

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"A loser is the one who is neglectful of improving his Hereafter's affair."[2]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"How much loser the one is who possesses no merit in hereafter."[3]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 32

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلاَّ لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَلدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

32. "And the life of the world is naught but play and pastime, and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who keep from evil; have you then no sense?"

If the life of this world does not be considered as a field for the coming world, it becomes a toy, and human beings will be busy, as children, with play things such as property, position and so on. Their status can be resembled to the scene of a theater where a person appears in the guise of a king, another one plays in the function of a servant, and the third one becomes a minister therein.

After some while, all the clothing and functions will be set aside and these persons actually find out that it has been only a play or a film wherein they had a role of playing.

The resemblance of the world to 'play and pastime' is found in the following aspects:

A) The lifetime in this world is short as the length of the time of a game.

B) Similar to a game, which contains of pleasure and tiredness, the world is also a combination of sweetness and bitterness.

C) Some neglectful aimless persons take playing games as their businesses.

Anyhow, when the Creator of the world knows the negligence of man from the coming world and being busy with the present world as 'play and pastime', why do we not believe in it?

This world, without observing the next world, is dangerous; but if this world be used as a pass way, towards the next world, and also a preliminary field of planting the plants of goodness for the coming world, it can be a place of development.

It should be noted, of course, that the cause of development, and reaching the blesses in the Hereafter, is virtue.

The verse says:

"And the life of the world is naught but play and pastime, and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who keep from evil; have you then no sense?"

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Allah, the Glorified, has distributed among people nothing better than wisdom."[4]

Again, he (as) said:

"The best bounty is the bounty of intellect."[5]

Also, the Imam (as) said:

"Avoid (vain) pastime and play, chaffy words, too much laugh and joke, and futile statements."[6]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 33

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لاَ يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللّه يَجْحَدُونَ

33. "Indeed We know that what they say surely grieves you. Yet verily it is not you (that) they belie, but the unjust deny the Signs of Allah."

It is cited in the occasion of revelation of this verse that the enemies of the Prophet (S) knew him as truthful and trustworthy person. But they said if they confirmed him, their tribe and their rank would be despised. Or, they said that Muhammad (S) was truthful, but he imagined that he was revealed to. They rejected the divine verses in such manner.

Rejecting the Prophet (S) is the same as rejecting Allah (S.w.T.). It is similar to the allegiance with the Prophet (S) that is allegiance with Allah.

The opponents of the Prophet (S) are adversaries of Allah. Thus, we should not be sorry.

The fruit of rejecting the Divine verses and the saints of Allah is being unjust both to themselves that they do not believe in the truth, and to the Messenger of Allah that they grieve him (S), and to Islam, and to generations.

The verse says:

"Indeed We know that what they say surely grieves you. Yet verily it is not you (that) they belie, but the unjust deny the Signs of Allah."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُواْ عَلَى مَا كُذِّبُواْ وَأُوذُواْ حَتَّى أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا وَلاَ مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءكَ مِن نَّبَإِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

34. "Messengers indeed have been denied before you, but they were patient on being denied and hurt, until Our help came unto them; and there is none to change the words of Allah, and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers."

The former prophets and their patience should be our models. The destruction of old nations such as: the people of Hud, the people of Salih, the people of Lut and some others, who belied the truth, should be taken an example of Allah's way of treatment is to send messengers, and people are free to accept them or not.

Then, He punishes the disbelievers and assists the messengers in their way of invitation.

"Messengers indeed have been denied before you, but they were patient on being denied and hurt, until Our help came unto them....."

It is certain that the opponents neglect no effort against the Truth. They belie it and hurt, but Truth is always victorious.[7] Moreover, Allah's way of treatment is not changeable.

"... and there is none to change the words of Allah, and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers."

The Qur'anic term /kalimat/, mentioned in the holy verse, means 'Allah's way of treatment'. The evidences for this meaning are the following holy verses:

"And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles." (Surah As-Saffat No. 37, verse 171),

"Most surely they shall be the assisted ones." (Surah As-Saffat No.37 verse 172).

"And most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones." (Surah As-Saffat No.37. verse 173).

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 35

وَإِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَن تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاء فَتَأْتِيَهُم بِآيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاء اللّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَى فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

35. "And if their turning away is hard upon you, then if you can seek a hole into the earth, or a ladder to heaven, so that you bring them a sign (they will not believe); and had Allah willed, He would have gathered them all to the guidance; so be not you of the ignorants."

The occasion of revelation of this verse indicates that pagans told the Messenger of Allah (S) that they would not believe in him unless he could make an opening in the earth so that a spring should gush for them, or he could climb up the sky: And they say:

"We will by no means believe in you until you cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us." (Surah Al-Isra, No.17, verse 90).

Haply, the verse points to the kind of their inappropriate requests that even if he seeks a hole in the earth or climbs up a ladder unto the sky, confronting himself with difficulties, it will be useless in this regard.

There is no deficiency in the Prophet's invitation, but these people are arrogant and obstinate. So, he ought not sympathize with them so much for guiding them.

"And if their turning away is hard upon you, then if you can seek a hole into the earth, or a ladder to heaven, so that you bring them a sign (they will not believe)....."

Yet, in order that no one imagines that Allah is not able to make them surrendered, the Qur'an immediately continues saying:

"... and had Allah willed, He would have gathered them all to the guidance....."

But it is clear that such a forceful faith is vain. The creation of humankind is for the purpose of a development that is based on authority and free-will. It is only in the situation of free-will that the value of 'believers' comparing with 'disbelievers', and 'good doers' compared with 'evil-doers' is recognized.

Then, the verse says:

"... so be not you of the ignorants."

This holy concluding phrase means that the Prophet (S) should not be restless so that he might lose patience and perseverance. He ought not to be worried about them more than the required measure because of their infidelity and polytheism, but he ought to know that the right way is the same one that he paves.

No doubt the Prophet (S) was aware of these facts, but the Lord, as a remembrance and in order to comfort His Prophet (S), tells him these matters.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 36

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَى يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ

36. "Only those accept who hearken, and (as for) the dead, Allah will raise them up; then unto Him they will be returned."

The Qur'an has repeatedly resembled the rejecters of Truth as the dead and the deaf. For example, Surah An-Naml, No.27, verse 80 as well as Surah Ar-Rum, No.30, verse 52, are cited as this:

"Surely you do not make the dead to hear, and you do not make the deaf to hear the call when they go back retreating."

Human beings are free to choose their own path, whether it is right or wrong.

Hearing the truth and accepting it, is a sign of the existence of the spiritual life and alertness in a person. The person, who is in lack of spiritual

life and does not accept the truth, is dead, because the animal life, which is usually rendered into eating and drinking to survive, is something that all living creatures possess, too.

The verse addresses the Holy Prophet (S) implying that he should take care of the truth-seekers, and dealing with disbelievers is referred to Allah who will call them to account on the Day of Resurrection. It says:

"Only those accept who hearken, and (as for) the dead, Allah will raise them up; then unto Him they will be returned."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 37

وَقَالُواْ لَوْلاَ نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَن يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

37. "And they say: While has not a Sign been sent down to him (Muhammad) from his Lord?' Say: 'Verily Allah is able to send down a Sign, but most of them do not know'."

Upon the occasion of revelation of the verse, it has been cited that some of the chiefs of the Quraysh, seeking for excuses, told the Prophet (S) that merely the Qur'an was not enough to work as his miracle.

They wanted him to bring some miracles similar to what Jesus, Moses, Salih and Prophets like them had brought.[8]

The Prophet (S) who reminds people of the miracles of the former prophets, of course, can surely bring the like of those miracles himself; otherwise he might not remind people of them so that they ask him for something similar to them.

Moreover, as the Islamic literature, that he recorded by Shi'ites and Sunnites scholars denote, the Messenger of Allah had some other miracles besides the Qur'an, too.

The main purpose of bringing miracles is showing the sign of Allah's infinite Power and the particular relation between Allah and His Messenger, not necessarily responding to the endless wishes of the obstinate people. Of course, sometimes miracles come forth to answer to people's request, too. The verse says:

"And they say: 'Why has not a Sign been sent down to him (Muhammad) from his Lord?' Say: Verily Allah is able to send down a Sign,'..."

However, a great deal of pretexts should not be listened to. The Qur'an says:

"And even if We had sent down to them the angels and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought together all things before them, they would not have believed…" (Surah Al-'An'am No.6, verse 111).

By the way, it should be noted that if these sorts of demands, which are produced obstinately, be replied fully and then they do not believe, all of them will be faced with the Divine punishment and will be destroyed. The reason is that this manner is the utmost dishonour unto the Holy Presence of Allah, His Messenger, His revelations, and His miracles. So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…but most of them do not know'."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 38

وَمَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلاَّ أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُم مَّا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الكِتَابِ مِن شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ

38. "And there is no creature (that walks) on the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but they are communities the like of you, We have not neglected anything in the Book, then unto their Lord shall they (all) be mustered."

This verse speaks about Resurrection and the general assemblage of all living creatures, i.e. all kinds of animals, in Hereafter. At first, the verse says:

"And there is no creature (that walks) on the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but they are communities the like of you.…"

Thus, similar to human beings, each kind of animals and birds are a community by themselves. That is, they also have knowledge, awareness, and perception in their own conditions, and they know the Lord Whom they glorify and sanctify as much as they are able to, although the standard of their perception is lower than that of human beings.

Then, in the next phrase of the verse, the Lord says:

"….We have not neglected anything in the Book...."

And at the end of the verse, the statement is:

".... then unto their Lord shall they (all) be mustered."

Hence, the verse warns the polytheists that the Lord, Who has created all groups of animals and supplies their necessities and who watches whatever they do, has appointed a resurrection for them entirely. How is it possible that He does not appoint a resurrection and a gathering for you? And, as some pagans say, there would not exist anything beyond this life and death?

Is there a Resurrection for Animals?

No doubt that the first condition of reckoning and rewards is the existence of intellect and awareness and, thereafter, duty and responsibility come forth.

The adherents of this idea believe that the life of many animals continues with an interesting and surprising regularity that denotes to their high level of perception and awareness. There are a few persons who have heard no words about ants, bees, their formicaries, their beehives and their wonderful order and their surprising system.

It is certain that we cannot simply count it as a phenomenon resulted from instinct. Natural disposition is usually the source of monotonous and constant activities. But the deeds that are not predictable in some specific conditions, done as reactions, are more similar to perception and awareness than instinct.

For example, when a lamb, which has never seen a wolf in its life, sees that savage animal for the first time, it recognizes well that this enemy is dangerous. So, the lamb tries to defend and to save itself from the danger by any means that it can find.

Apart from all of these, there are recited some meanings in a lot of verses of the Qur'an which can be counted as a considerable reason for the existence of perception and awareness in some animals.

For instance, the story of ants and their escape from the army of Solomon; the story of the hoopoe when it came into the zone of Sheba and brought some exciting news for Solomon, are a few evidences to this claim.

In Islamic literature, there are also many traditions upon the resurrection of animals, including as follows:

It is narrated from Abu thar who says: "We were at the presence of the Prophet (S) where, in front of us, two goats bunted each other.

The Prophet (S) said:

'Do you know why they bunted each other?'

The audience answered:

'No, we do not know'.

The Prophet (S) said:

'But Allah knows why, and He will judge between them soon '."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 39

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَن يَشَإِ اللّهُ يُضْلِلْهُ وَمَن يَشَأْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

39. "And those who belied Our Signs are deaf and dumb, in darkness; whomever Allah pleases He leads astray, and whomever He pleases, He sets him on a straight path."

It is true that both guidance and misguidance are in knowledge and power of Allah, but the will of man and the abilities existed in him are effective, too. Besides, the Will of Allah is also based on Wisdom. Holy struggle on the way of Allah is a cause for the Divine guidance, while being unjust toward people is a cause for misguidance.

Therefore, infidelity and hostility are some darkness that causes separation from salvation.

Concealing the Truth is counted dumbness and not hearkening it is deafness, and the fruit of people's rejection is misguidance and Allah’s wrath. The verse says:

"And those who belied Our Signs are deaf and dumb, in darkness; whomever Allah pleases He leads astray, and whomever He pleases, He sets him on a straight path."

However, paving the straight path needs a hearing ear, an impartial tongue and a transparent inward.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 40

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُكُم إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

40. "Say: "Have you considered if Allah’s torment comes to you (in the world) or the Hour (of Resurrection) comes to you, will you supplicate anyone other than Allah, if you are truthful?"

Once more, the Qur'an addresses the polytheists and, in front of them, reasons Divine Unity and monotheism in another way. It reminds them the

extraordinary difficult and grievous moments of life, and seeks assistance from their conscience. It asks them whether they consider any shelter save Allah when they forget everything during these moments.

Concerning such people, the verse commands the Prophet (S) to tell them to answer truly that if the punishment of Allah befalls them, or the Hereafter be set up with all its horrors, excitements and terrible events, do they have anyone except Allah to remove their calamities?

"Say: "Have you considered if Allah's torment comes to you (in the world) or the Hour (of Resurrection) comes to you, will you supplicate anyone other than Allah, if you are truthful?"

The essence of the meaning of this verse is perceivable not only for pagans but also for every one when calamities and painful events come forth unto them.

In ordinary cases, and in minor events, men may eek protection from others than Allah. But, when the event is extraordinarily violent, men neglect everything. At the very circumstance they feel a kind of hope for rescue in the depth of their heart, which originates from a mysterious unknown source of power. This is the very attention to Allah and the reality of Unity.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 41

بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاء وَتَنسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ

41. "Rather upon Him you will call, and He removes that for which you supplicated Him, if He pleases, and you forget what you have associated (with Him)."

Natural Disposition, an Even Path toward Theology

A sincere supplication is the gateway toward security from dangers in this life. (Pagan's invocation has no answer in Hereafter.)

Thus, why do you refer to Allah only at the times of danger when you neglect your imaginary gods, and in ordinary circumstances you do not refer to Allah?[9] The verse says:

"Rather upon Him you will call, and He removes that for which you supplicated Him, if He pleases, and you forget what you have associated (with Him)."

Notes

1. A tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that those who are in the Hell Fire will see their places in Heaven and say: "Alas for us." (Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, P. 711)

2. Madinat-ul-Balagha , vol. 2, p. 492

3. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 746

4. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 6, p. 90

5. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 176

6. Nasikh-ut-Tawarikh, vol. 6, p. 4

7. We recite in some other verses of the Qur'an: "…I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles ;...(Surah Al-Mujadilah, No, 58, verse 21), "…and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us," (Surah Ar-Rum, No, 30, verse 47), "Most surely We help Our apostles,"… (Surah Al-Mu'min, No, 40, verse 51), "…and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause…" (Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 40).

8. Majma'ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, P. 296 (Arabic version)

9. In the Second World War even Khrushof and Stalin, the leaders of Russia, invoked churches and priests asked for victory.

Section 5

How the former disbelievers were seized with distress and affliction - Warning against the approach of the punishment,

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 42

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلنَا إِلَى أُ َمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاء وَالضَّرَّاء لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

42. "Indeed We sent (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves."

The Qur'anic word /ba'sa'/ has been applied in the senses of difficulties, fight, poverty, famine, flood, earthquake, and infectious diseases; and the Arabic term /qarra' / has been used in the Arabic language with the meanings of: 'sorrow, grief, disgrace, ignorance, and failure'.

The appointment of Divine prophets, of course, and completing the argument has been a process and a Divine way of treatment in the length of history. So, the history of the past is an example for the coming generations.

Meantime, difficulties are some means for regarding Allah and managing transgressors.

Therefore, neither any welfare is a grace nor any difficulty is a wrath. At the time of calamities, the hands are raised up for supplication and asking help.

The verse says:

"Indeed We sent (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves."

It is cited in Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 717 that Imam Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as) said:

"If people invocate truthfully to Allah when calamities fall down upon them, they will be removed from all their difficulties....."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 43

فَلَوْلا إِذْ جَاءهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُواْ وَلَـكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

43. "Why then did they not entreat when Our distress came to them? But their hearts were hard, and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair unto them."

To be heedless unto divine warnings and not to be regardful is a sign of hard-heartedness.

It is for this reason that the verse implies why they did not take counsel from these painful and awakening factors, and they did not awaken from the sleep of negligence, and did not return toward Allah. The Qur'an says:

"Why then did they not entreat when Our distress came to them?..."

In fact, the reason of their unawareness was two things. The first was that, as a result of extra amount of sin and persisting in disbelief, their hearts became dark and hardened, and their souls changed to be inflexible.

"... But their hearts were hard....."

The second factor was that (applying their mood of sensuality) Satan made their deeds seem decorous to them. So, they considered right whatever

wrong they did, and counted aright and correct every offence they committed. The verse says:

"... and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair unto them."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 44

فَلَمَّا نَسُواْ مَا ذُكِّرُواْ بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُواْ بِمَا أُوتُواْ أَخَذْنَاهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْلِسُونَ

44. "Then, when they forgot that which they had been admonished to, We opened for them the doors of all things (of enjoyments), until when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly when, behold, they were in utter despair."

The Arabic term /'ilas/ means a grief accompanied with despair. It is a status that criminals may have in the court when they cannot find an answer to offer.

It is not such that always the welfare of life to be a sign of mercy. On the contrary, it is sometime the cause of chastisement.

Giving respite to evildoers and preparing welfare and comfortable life for offenders is one of Allah's way of treatment. The world and its bounties can be both a favor and indignation. It depends to whom they are given. In Surah' A 'raf, No.7, verse 94 faith and piety have been counted as the cause of blessings of Allah. It says:

"And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from heavens and the earth ..."

In the verse under discussion, the world has been counted as a divine blessing.[1] The verse says:

"Then, when they forgot that which they had been admonished to, We opened for them the doors of all things (of enjoyments), until when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly when, behold, they were in utter despair."

This fact should also be noted that the wrath of Allah and death both happen suddenly. So, we should be always prepared. Verily, it happens that the happy shout of men of pleasure usually changes into a despondent groan all of a sudden.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 45

فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

45. "So the people who were unjust were rooted out, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The annihilation of unjust people is conclusive and certain. Cruelty cannot resist long. Transgression is also effective in generation. The verse says:

"So the people who were unjust were rooted out....."

Therefore, as it is mentioned in the current holy verse, when the transgressors are destroyed, Allah should be thanked and praised. So, the verse continues saying:

"... and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

This phrase, mentioned in this verse, hints to this fact that cutting off the roots of mischief and transgression, which ends to the destruction of a people who can continue committing it, is so important that requires to thank Allah and to be gratitude of Him.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who loves the imperishability of the unjust, its meaning is that Allah to be disobeyed (by means of sins), and (the phenomenon of transgression is so important that) Allah (the Blessed and Exalted) has praised His Essence for the destruction of the unjust and He has said:

"So the people who were unjust were rooted out, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds'." [2]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 46

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللّه سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُم مَّنْ إِلَـهٌ غَيْرُ اللّه يَأْتِيكُم بِهِ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ

46. "Say: 'Have you considered if Allah takes away your hearing and your eyesight and seals on your hearts, which god other than Allah can give it back to you?' See you, how We repeat the Signs, yet they turn away."

Do know the Bestower of Bounties

In this verse, the Qur'an addresses the pagans and, at first, it implies if Allah takes away His worthy blessings, such as your ears and your eyes, from you and sets a seal on your hearts so that you cannot realize between right and wrong and good and evil, which god, save Allah, is able to return these blessings to you? The verse says:

"Say: ' Have you considered if Allah takes away your hearing and your eyesight and seals on your hearts, which god other than Allah can give it back to you?'..."

In fact, pagans believed this fact that the creator and the giver of sustenance is Allah, but they worshipped idols as the intercessors with Allah.

Then, the Qur'an continues the statement and commands them to see how Allah stated the verses and reasons in different forms for them, but they still turn away from the Truth. It says:

"... See you, how We repeat the Signs, yet they turn away."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 47

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللّه بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلاَّ الْقَوْمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

47. "Say: 'Have you considered if the punishment of Allah comes to you suddenly or openly, will anyone be destroyed but the unjust people '."

Next to mentioning these three great blessings of Allah, (i.e. eyes, ears, and comprehension), which can be the origin of all blessings in this world and the next, this verse hints to the possible removal of all these blessings in general. It says:

"Say: 'Have you considered if the punishment of Allah comes to you suddenly or openly, will anyone be destroyed but the unjust people'."

The purpose of this statement is that the only one who is able to punish through different chastisements and to take up the existing blessings, is Allah. Thus, idols have no function in this process.

Therefore, there is no reason that you refuge to them.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 48 - 49

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ آمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْسُقُونَ

48. "And We do not send the messengers but (as) announcers of good news and warners, then whoever believes and amends (himself) -no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

49. "And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing."

In this verse, the Qur'an points to the situation of messengers of Allah and indicates that not only the lifeless idols are not able to do anything, but the great prophets and divine leaders also have not anything, to do except communicating messenger ship, glad tidings, warning, encouragement, and threat.

So, all blessings that exist are from the source of Allah (S.w.T.) and they wholly have come into being merely under His command.

Therefore, whatever even the prophets desire, they may ask Him. The verse says:

"And We do not send the messengers but (as) announcers of good news and warners...."

Then, The Qur'an adds that the way to felicity is found in two things. Firstly people should believe, and secondly they amend themselves (by doing good deeds). For such people, there will be no fear because of Divine punishments, nor shall they grieve for their former actions. The verse says:

"... then whoever believes and amends (himself) - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Whoever is in awe of Allah, He, the Purified, will secure him from every thing." [3]

Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin (as) said:

"The origin and the commencement of every knowledge is the awe of Allah ". [4]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Whoever is in awe of his Lord stops transgressing." [5]

The contrary status is for those who reject the Divine revelations. They will be confronted with the punishment of Allah for the very mischief and disobedience. The verse says:

"And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing."

Imam Sajjad, the fourth Imam, (as) said:

"Avoid being a companion of sinners, helping transgressors, and neighboring with evil-doers; and beware of their sedition, and go away from their surroundings." [6]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 50

قُل لاَّ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَآئِنُ اللّهِ وَلا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلاَّ مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلاَ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

50. "Say: (O' Our prophet!) , I do not say to you that the treasures of Allah, are with me, nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I do not follow but what is revealed to me.' Say: 'Are the blind and the seeing one equal? Do you not then ponder?'"

Knowing the Unseen!

This verse is a complementary statement to answering the different protests of pagans and polytheists. Here, three divisions of their protests are responded in some short sentences.

The first one is that they suggested the Prophet (S) to bring some surprising and wonderful miracles. Secondly each of them suggested a separate thing as the one wished. Thirdly they were not contented with observing the miracles that some others asked for.

Their desires were sometimes some houses made of gold, sometimes the descent of angels, and another time they wished the dry hot land of Mecca to be changed into; a vast garden full of water and fruits.

By demanding these amazing things from the Prophet (S), as if, they expected the rank of a kind of divinity and ownership of the earth and the heaven for him. That is why, in answer to these people, Allah commands the Prophet (S):

"Say: (O' Our Prophet!), I do not say to you that the treasures of Allah, are with me....."

The Arabic term /xaza'in/ is the plural form of /xazinah/ with the meaning of 'source and treasure of everything '. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase /xaza'inullah/ (the treasures of Allah) encompasses the treasures of the whole things. This originates from His Infinite Essence, Who is the source of all virtues and powers.

Some of those people expected that the Prophet (S) would inform them of the entire secrets concerning the future and the past. They expected him to tell them what happenings would occur in their lives, so that they could try to repel their harms and attract their profits.

Then, in answer to such people, through the continuation of the verse, the Prophet (S) was told to say:

"... nor do I know the Unseen....."

Some of them expected that the Prophet (S) himself to be an angel, or an angel could accompany him. They desired that there would be no quality of human beings in him, such as eating food, walking in the roads and markets, and so on. To answer the rejection of these people, in the third sentence of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"….nor do I say to you that I am an angel....."

Then, in the continuation of this statement, he adds that he follows only the commandments and instructions that are communicated to him through revelation from the Lord.

"... I do not follow but what is revealed to me.'..."

At the end of the verse, the Prophet (S) is ordered to ask them whether the blind and those who can see are equal. Are those whose eyes, minds and intellects are shut equal with those whose eyes see the facts well and recognize them?

"... Say: ' Are the blind and the seeing one equal? Do you not then ponder? ' "

Notes

1. Faith and piety bring the blessing of the heavens and the earth for the bearers of them, while negligence shut the gates of all good things to the ignorant persons.
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan. Vol. 3 P. 302
3. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 5, p. 421
4. Bi har-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 180
5. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 5, p. 275
6. Bihar-ul- Anwar. vol. 75, p. 151

Section 6: Believers will be rewarded

To offer salutation 'Salam-un-'alaykum' to the believers whom they meet.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 51

وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَن يُحْشَرُواْ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٌ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

51. "And warn with it (the Qur'an) those who fear that they will be mustered unto their Lord; (for) there is not any guardian nor intercessor for them besides Him, so that they may guard themselves (against evil)."

At the end of the previous verse, the words meant that the blind and the seeing one are not equal. Now, in this verse, the Prophet (S) is, commanded to warn those who are in awe of the Day of Resurrection. It says:

"And warn with it (the Qur'an) those who fear that they will be mustered unto their Lord....."

This phrase means that those whose eyes of understanding is vigilant, as much as they probable there will be a Reckoning Day, have been prepared to accept the Truth under the light of this probability and with the fright of responsibility.

Then, the verse continues saying that such vigilant persons are in awe, of a day when:

"... there is not any guardian nor intercessor for them besides Him....."

Yes, the Prophet (S) is commanded to warn such people and to invite them unto the Truth, because there is a hope that they may become pious and virtuous. The verse says:

"... so that they may guard (themselves against evil)."

Upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The Qur'an warns those who have the hope of reaching their Lord, and encourages them by what is with Him, because the Qur'an, whose intercession is acceptable, will be an intercessor for them."[1]

The Prophet (S) said:

"Learn the Qur'an, because on the Day of Judgment that Book will intercede its reciters."[2]

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 52

وَلاَ تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ وَمَا

مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

52. "And do not repel those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance, Nothing of their account falls upon you nor anything of your account falls upon them, that you should repel them and thus become of the unjust."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of this verse, it is cited that when a group of rich pagans saw that there had gathered some poor persons such as: 'Ammar, Bilal, Khabbeh and the like of them around the Prophet (S), they suggested to the Prophet (S) that he would leave them in order that they themselves could gather around him.

As Al-Minar, the commentary book, narrates, the second kalif said that they would accept that suggestion to try it, and the above verse was revealed.

There is a similar verse to this one in the Qur'an. It is in Surah Al-Kahf, No.18, verse 28.

Qurtubi cites in his commentary book that from the time this verse was revealed on, the Prophet (S) did not leave the gathering of the poor unless the poor left (the place) first.

The objective meaning of 'call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening' may be the daily prayers.[3]

Regarding the occasion to revelation, Islam is a school of struggle against unjust discrimination, racialism, demanding privilege, and asking for blackmail.

Thus, protecting the sincere, poor, and striving believers is more important than the probable attraction of some rich pagans. The holy verse says:

"And do not repel those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening….."

Then, no privilege can match the Faith. Most of the followers of the divine prophets were the poor persons who believed in the Truth.

"...seeking his countenance ..."

Never should the existing believers be scorned for the attraction of the chiefs of pagans.

If the seekers of pretexts cannot find faults with the leader of the school of thought or the school itself, they try to find faults with the followers of the school of thought and their economical circumstances. (Regarding to the occasion of revelation)

However, repelling the sincere poor and the deprived, is an injustice: and, in the meanwhile, the reckoning of everybody is up to Allah (s.w.t.). In spite of the current manner in Christianity, (where priests forgive the faults), even the Prophet (S) is not responsible for the forgiveness or retribution of sins in Islam:

"... Nothing of their account falls upon you nor anything of your account falls upon them....."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 53

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُولواْ أَهَـؤُلاء مَنَّ اللّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّن بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ

53. "And thus did We try some of them by others so that they (mockingly) say: "Are these they upon whom Allah has favored from among us?' Does not Allah know best the grateful?"

In this verse, the Qur'an warns the rich disbelievers that these processes are as some trials upon them. When they fail in these tests, they should tolerate the painful results of their deeds. The verse says:

"And thus did We try some of them by others ..."

The Arabic term /fitnah/, here, means 'trial'.

Then the verse continues stating the meaning that these rich people reach a state that they look at the true believers despisingly and, as the verse adds:

"... they (mockingly) say:

'Are these they upon whom Allah has favored from among us?'..."

They ask whether these believers, upon whom Allah has bestowed Islam, are worthy that these words to be spoken about. Then, the Qur'an answers them implying that these believers are some people who have thanked for the blessing of knowledge and recognition when they applied it.

They also have thanked the invitation of the Prophet (S) by accepting him. What blessing and thanksgiving is greater than that Allah has set the Faith firm in their hearts!

"... Does not Allah know best the grateful?"

It is cited in Atyab-ul-Bayan that once; someone came to Imam Kazim (as) and complained about his poverty. Imam (as) asked him whom he thought as the richest person. The man answered that Harun-ur-Rashid was.

Imam (as) asked him whether he agreed to exchange his own Faith for his (Harun's) wealth. The man said: 'No'. Imam (as) said:

'Then, you are richer than him, since you have something that you are not ready to change for his wealth."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 54 - 55

وَإِذَا جَاءكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ
مَن عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
وَكَذَلِكَ نفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

54. "And when those who believe in Our Signs come to you, say: Peace be on you. Your Lord has prescribed mercy on Himself that whoever of you does evil in ignorance, and thereafter repents and amends (himself), then verily He is forgiving, Merciful '."

55. "And thus do We explain the Signs so that (the Truth be distinguished) and the way of the sinners be manifest."

It is cited in the occasion of revelation of this verse that a group of the sinners went to the Prophet (S) and said that they had committed many faults. The Holy Prophet (S) kept silence; and this verse was revealed.

"And when those who believe in Our Signs come to you, say: Peace be on you. Your Lord has prescribed mercy on Himself that whoever of you does evil in ignorance, and thereafter repents and amends (himself), then verily He is forgiving, Merciful '."

In this Surah, Allah has repeated twice the phrase:

"He has prescribed for Himself mercy"

. Once in the verse under discussion for the encouragement of people in this world, and the second upon the Resurrection, when the concerning verse says:

"... He has prescribed mercy on Himself. He will surely gather you to the Resurrection Day....." (Verse 12)

The holy verse leads us to this understanding that if sin is not committed arrogantly and pertinaciously, it is forgivable.

"...In ignorance…"

When it is said that the relation of the Islamic leaders is with people, it is a relation of intimacy and affection.

"….say: Peace be on you…"

Allah has prescribed mercy on Himself, but those whom this mercy is bestowed on are the repentant.

"... and thereafter repents and amends (himself)....."

However, in the next verse (No.55), it implies it is thus that Allah explains His Signs and his commandments so clear that both the way of truth, seekers and the obedient believers be distinguished and the way of obstinate sinners and that of the enemies of Truth be made manifest. The verse says:

"And thus do We explain the Signs so that (the Truth be distinguished) and the way of the sinners be manifest."

The purpose of the Arabic term /mujrim/, here, is the very obstinate sinners who, by no means, will surrender to the Truth.

That is, after this general invitation unto the Truth, including even the invitation unto those sinners who are remorseful from their deeds, the way and tradition of the obstinate and inflexible sinners will be recognized fully.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p .P .304, 305, (Arabic version)
2. Musnad-i-Hanbal, vol. 5, p. 251
3. Al-Mizan, the commentary

Section 7: The Judgment

Kingdom is only Allah’s - Allah’s knowledge comprehends every thing.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 56

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّه قُل لاَّ أَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذًا وَمَا أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

56. "Say: ' I am forbidden to worship those whom you call besides Allah Say: 'I do not follow your low desires, for then indeed I should have gone astray and I will not be of the (rightly) guided."

The undue desires, from anybody they are issued, should be explicitly responded with a negative answer.

The sources of the Prophet’s (S) determinations are Divine revelation.

Acquaintance from infidelity is a part of Islam. Polytheistic belief is the root of sensual desires.

Thus, a preacher of the Faith ought not follow to quench the people's desires, but he should act for the sake and pleasure of Allah. The verse says:

"Say: ' I am forbidden to worship those whom you call besides Allah Say: 'I do not follow your low desires, for then indeed I should have gone astray and I will not be of the (rightly) guided."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 57

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُم بِهِ مَا عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ لِلّه يَقُصُّ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ

57. "Say: "Verily I am (relying) to clear proof from my Lord, while you belied it; I have not with me that (chastisement) which you hasten, for the Judgment is only Allah’s ; Who declares the truth and He is the best of deciders '."

The Arabic term /bayyinah/ (clear proof), mentioned in the verse, is derived from /baynunah/ (separation). It is so called for the reason that it clearly and completely separates between right and wrong.

Pagans said that if it was true, why the divine chastisement was not sent down upon them. This expression is a similar meaning to the content of another verse where they said if He was right, He should send down stones upon them. Here is the verse:

"... if this is the truth from You, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment." (Surah Al -Anfal. No. 8 Verse 32)

The proofs and miracles of prophets had neither heaviness nor ambiguity. Everybody could understand them, and, if those people were not stubborn they would heartily accept them. That was why the divine prophets used to introduce themselves as messengers of Allah with some proofs.

Seeking for chastisement and hastening for the punishment of Allah were found in other communities, too. The peoples of Salih, Hud, and Noah also said that if the prophet of their time was true, he would bring the promised punishment upon them. They said:

"Then bring to us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones" (Surah Al -Araf. No.7. verse 7o , 77). (Surah Hud No.11 verse 32).

The invitation of prophets is done on proofs. It is not based on imagination and blindly imitation.

"... on clear proof ..."

Prophets should have proofs from the origin of Allah. They might not work according to what people demand every day.

"Say: "Verily I am (relying) on clear proof from my Lord, while you belied it; I have not with me that (chastisement) which you hasten for, the judgment is only Allah 's; Who declares the truth and He is the best of deciders '."

For what reason or which evidence it can be that pagans belie the proof of the Prophet (S) while they expect him to follow their low desires. Can this cause be anything save rudeness, stubbornness, and enmity?

A prophet is a divine messenger supported with logic and proofs, while the order of the world of existence is with Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 58

قُل لَّوْ أَنَّ عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ لَقُضِيَ الأَ ْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

58. "Say: 'If that which you hasten for were with me, certainly the matter would be decided between you and me, and Allah knows best the unjust."

Retributions are with Allah, but he respites the unjust as His Knowledge and Wisdom requires.

"Say: ' If that which you hasten for were with me, certainly the matter would be decided between you and me...."

People's haste does not change Allah's Wisdom. Yet, the respite in receiving Allah's punishment should not cause that pagans think that their infidelity has been neglected.

"... and Allah knows best the unjust '."

Allah better knows the status of the transgressors and that in what thing there lies their interest; and that whether their punishment should be sent down now or later.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 59

وَعِندَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لاَ يَعْلَمُهَا إِلاَّ هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِن وَرَقَةٍ إِلاَّ يَعْلَمُهَا وَلاَ حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الأَرْضِ وَلاَ رَطْبٍ وَلاَ يَابِسٍ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

59. "And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them. And He knows whatever is in the land and the sea; and no leaf (of a tree) drops down but He knows it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything wet or dry but it is (noted) in a clear Book."

Secrets of the Unseen!

In the former verses, the words were about Allah's Knowledge, Power, and the expansion of the circle of His commandment. From this verse on, the meaning stated in those verses concisely has been mentioned with some explanation. At first, the subject of Allah's knowledge is pointed out.

The verse says:

"And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them. ..."

Then, for a more emphasis and explanation, it adds:

"... And He knows whatever is in the land and the sea....."

The Arabic term /barr/ means 'a vast place', which is usually used for a (dry) land. The term /bahr/ originally also means 'a vast place' where a plenty of water is found. It is often applied for the seas and, sometimes, for the great streams.

However, Allah's knowledge upon whatever exists in the lands and the seas is something which hints to Allah's omniscience, and that His knowledge encompasses all things.

That is, He knows the movements of millions of million living creatures, small and big, in the depths of the seas. He knows the true number of the cells of every human being as well as his blood cells.

He knows the mystic circulations of all electrons inside atoms. And, finally, He knows all thoughts and contemplations pass through different parts and levels of our minds and those which penetrate into the depths of our soul.

Yes, He knows equally all of these things! Again, in the second phrase, in order to emphasize on Allah's Omniscience, it has particularly pointed to this aspect, and says:

"... and no leaf (of a tree) drops down but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth ..."

In fact, it has taken two sensitive subjects with which no human being can be thoroughly acquainted even if he lives millions of years and that the technical sets be surprisingly completed.

Who knows that, in each day, which seeds the winds separate from the plants throughout the earth, and on which spots of the ground they scatter them? Which electronic mind can count exactly the number of the leaves that separate from the branches of trees of the forests only during a day?

A glance upon the trees of a forest, especially in fall, when the leaves drop ceaselessly and make up beautiful scenery, proves this fact well that such sciences will never be within the reach of human beings.

The fall of the leaves of trees, in fact, is the moment of their death, and the fall of seeds into the concealed holes of the land is the first step of their lives. It is only He Who is aware of the system of death and life.

The statement of this subject has two effects: a philosophical effect and a training effect. Its philosophical effect is that it nullifies the imagination of those who restrict Allah's knowledge to general principles and believe that He is not aware of the details of this world. It clearly specifies that Allah is aware of both all general principles and the details.

Its training effect is also clear, because having belief in the vast knowledge of Allah, that He is Omniscience, tells us that the whole secrets of our entity, our deeds and speeches, our intentions and our thoughts are utterly clear for His Pure Essence.

With such a belief, how is it possible that a person be careless of his own condition and does not control his own deeds, speeches, and intentions?

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... nor anything wet or dry but it is (noted) in a clear Book."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 60

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَى أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

60. "And He it is Who takes your souls at night (in sleep), and He knows what you commit in the day, then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be accomplished, then unto Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you were doing."

By night, Allah takes activity out of your soul the same as He takes it by death.

He is also aware of what you do during the day.

During the night you sleep, and during the day you perform some activities. Then, Allah will raise you up from your graves so that He reckons you for what you spend your lives upon.

It is so until the appointed time comes forth, when Allah has assigned for raising the dead from their graves and giving them the fruit of their deeds. This is the Hereafter.

Thus, your return is unto Him. That is, you will attend where you will be reckoned.

On that Day, the Lord will inform you of the deeds you used to accomplish in the world, day and night.

Some commentators have rendered this part of the verse into the sense that He awakens you from sleep during the day in order that you gain sufficient interest from your life. In this verse, Allah has resembled awakening people from sleep to raising them up. The verse says:

"And He it is Who takes your souls at night (in sleep), and He knows what you commit in the day, then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be accomplished, then unto Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you were doing."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 61

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُم حَفَظَةً حَتَّىَ إِذَا جَاء أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لاَ يُفَرِّطُونَ

61. "And He is the Omnipotent over His servants, and He sends guardians (to watch) over you until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take his soul and they never neglect."

Again, in this verse, in order to emphasize on Allah’s scientific conversance with the deeds of the servants and that He keeps their account minutely to be dealt with on the Resurrection Day, it says:

"And He is the Omnipotent over His servants, and He sends guardians (to watch) over you ..."

Then the Qur'an goes on stating that keeping this account continues until the ending moments of life, when death approaches you. At this time, the messengers of Allah (the angels), who are missioner to take the souls, take the mortal away.

"... until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take his soul... "

And, at the end of the verse, it adds that these angels never neglect their duty and no shortcoming nor any defect they perform. They take the soul of a person neither a moment sooner nor a moment later. The holy verse says:

"... and they never neglect."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 62

ثُمَّ رُدُّواْ إِلَى اللّهِ مَوْلاَهُمُ الْحَقِّ أَلاَ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ

62. "Then they are returned unto Allah, their Maula (Master), the Real One. Beware! His (alone) is the Judgment (on that Day), and He is the swiftest of reckoners."

After that (death), people are taken toward the divine Judgment and Allah's reward. The Lord is their owner, their master and the guardian of their affairs. He (S.w.T.) is the Judge, Who does not judge but in truth.

On That Day, the command is only His command, not that of other than His.

Allah will reckon all humankind in a short time and neither of the accounts hinders Him to reckon those of others.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once was asked when Allah is not seen, then how He reckons people. He (as) answered them:

"In the same way that He gives them sustenance and they do not see Him."[1]

This very subject is evidence to the fact that reckoning one person does not detain Him from reckoning others. ,

Again, it is an evidence to prove that He communicates without, talking a word, otherwise it is impossible that all people be reckoned at the same time.

However, the return of all is unto Him, and He is the only Judge in the Hereafter.

And the real master is the One in Whose authority is creation, guardianship, sleep and wakefulness, death and raising up, judgment and reckoning, and He is the Lord.

The verse says:

"Then they are returned unto Allah, their Maula (Master), the Real One. Beware! His (alone) is the Judgment (on that Day), and He is the swiftest of reckoners. "

By the way, the fright from Hereafter is the fear from our own offences and Allah is both the guardian, the rightful, and the bestower of mercy and virtue.

Concerning reckoning 'and judgment on that Day, there is a tradition from the Prophet (S) who has said:

"The more a person tortures people in this world, the heavier than everybody's chastisement his punishment will be on the Day Judgment." [2]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 63 - 64

قُلْ مَن يُنَجِّيكُم مِّن ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعاً وَخُفْيَةً لَّئِنْ أَنجَانَا مِنْ هَـذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

قُلِ اللّهُ يُنَجِّيكُم مِّنْهَا وَمِن كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

63. "Say: 'Who delivers you from the darkness of the land and the sea? You call upon Him humbly and secretly, (saying): If He delivers us from this (darkness), certainly we shall be of the grateful ones'."

64. "Say: Allah delivers you from them and from every affliction, then again you assign (Him) associates'."

The Light that Glitters in Darkness

Once more the Qur'an takes the hand of pagans and leads them into inside their innate disposition, and in that mysterious place it shows them the light of Unity and monotheism.

So, it commands the Prophet (S) to question them who delivers them from the darkness of the land and the sea. The verse says:

"Say: ' Who delivers you from the darkness of the land and the sea?...."

Darkness has sometimes a substantial aspect and sometimes a spiritual aspect. The substantial aspect of darkness is when the light ceases utterly, or it becomes so weak that one cannot see anywhere or he sees with difficulty.

The spiritual aspect of darkness is the same hardships, entanglements, disturbances and pollutions whose end is both dark and ambiguous.

If this darkness combines with some terrible incidents and, for example, in a voyage by night, a person be surrounded with some awful waves in a whirlpool, its horror is of a higher degree than that of difficulties that come forth in daytime.

It is in these moments that one delivers everything to forgetfulness and does not care of anything except himself and the light, which glitters the depth of his soul, invites him to a source wherein only He can solve such problems.

These kinds of cases, which happen for everybody, are some windows to Unity and monotheism.

That is why, in the next phrase of the verses, the Qur'an says that it is in this status that:

"... You call upon Him humbly and secretly....."

And, it is in this condition that immediately you make covenant with that great source, promising that if He delivers you from danger you will certainly be grateful of His blesses and rely on none but Him.

"... (saying): If He delivers us from this (darkness), certainly we shall be of the grateful ones '."

Then, The Qur'an commands the Prophet (S) to tell them that Allah will deliver them from these darkness and from any other sorrow, as He has delivered them frequently), but, after deliverance, they pave again the path of polytheism and paganism.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Allah delivers you from them and from every affliction; then again you assign (Him) associates'."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 65 - 66

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَى أَن يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ
يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعاً وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُم بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ

وَ كَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْ ُكَ وَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

65. "Say: 'He is able to send forth upon you a chastisement, from above you or from beneath your feet, or to confuse you of different parties, and to make you taste the violence of (fighting) one another.' See how We repeat the Signs that they may understand."

66. "And your people have belied it (the Qur'an) though it is the truth. Say: 'I am not a guard upon you '."

Various Chastisements

In order to state the different ways of training, this verse has laid emphasis on the subject of threatening to the divine punishment. Clearly speaking, as Allah is the most Merciful of all merciful ones, and the protector of those who are without support, He is also the Supreme and the Avenger against tyrants and rebellious ones.

In this verse, the Prophet (S) has been ordered to threaten the sinners with three sorts of punishment. The chastisements which come from above and from beneath, the chastisement of dispute and the chastisement of fight and blood shedding.

Thus, it commands the Prophet (S) to say that Allah is able to send retributions from above them, like the punishment upon the people of L'ut, stones over the People of the Elephant, Flood of Noah, the Cry upon the People of Tham'ud, and the Wind against the People of 'Ad. And, today, there are some other retribution like atomic bombs, chemical bombs, and far-range-striking-rockets of various kinds.

And, from the downwards, there are earthquake, splitting or depressing the land, the Pharaoh being drowned, Korah (Croesus) sank into the ground, cholera, plague, famine, hunger, which are brought for you.

Or, that He makes you scattered in some separate groups to dispute with each other, and that you taste the bitterness of fighting one another. It says:

"Say: 'He is able to send forth upon you a chastisement, from above you or from beneath your feet, or to confuse you of different parties' and to make you taste the violence of (fighting) one another.'..."

The phenomenon of dispute and contradiction in speech among a society is so dangerous that it has been counted in the row of heavenly punishments, thunders, and earthquakes. Yes, it is truly so. Moreover, sometimes the destructions which are resulted from disperse and dispute are heavier than those resulted from thunders and earthquakes.

It has repeatedly happened that some developed countries have completely been ruined under the inauspicious shade of hypocrisy and disunity. This phrase is counted a warning unto the whole Muslims in the world.

Then, at the end of the verse, in order that they may realize the Truth and return to it, it is added:

"... See how We repeat the Signs that they may understand."

The second verse of the verses mentioned above, as well as its following verse, are, in fact, to complete the discussion stated in the former verses abut the invitation to Monotheism, Resurrection, and the facts upon Islam and being afraid of the Divine punishment.

At first, addressing the Prophet (S), it indicates that his people, viz. Quraysh and the pagans of Mecca, belied his teachings while all of these teachings are right and godly, so that different evidences, accepted through intellect and innate disposition confirm them. The holy verse says:

"And your people have belied it (the Qur'an) though it is the truth…."

Therefore, their rejection and denial does not decrease anything from the importance of these facts, although the number of opponents and deniers may be large.

Then, the verse continues the statement implying that it is the duty of the Prophet (S) to communicate the prophecy and he is not responsible that they accept it.

"... Say: I am not guard upon you '."

The objective meaning of the Arabic term / wakil/ is 'a person who is responsible to lead an action and who is liable due to others." [3]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 67

لِّكُلِّ نَبَإٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

67. "For every announcement there is a term and you will come to know soon."

In this verse, through a short but expressive phrase, the Qur'an warns people and invites them to choose the right path. It announces that whatever news that Allah or the Prophet (S) informs people, there is finally a term for it, and it will be accomplished in its appointed time, which they will know soon. The verse says:

"For every announcement there is a term and you will come to know soon."

By giving people the proper news, Allah and the Messenger of Allah (S) introduce the right path to them. Therefore, Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition says:

"He who has an intelligent mind looks to his goal. He knows his low road as well as his high road. The caller (of the right, i.e., the Prophet (S)) has called, and the leader (of Ummah, i.e., Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)) has tended (his leadership). So, respond to the caller (of the right) and follow (your) leader."[4]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 68

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُواْ فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلاَ تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرَى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

68. "And when you see those who cavil about Our Signs, turn away from them until they enter into (some) other topic. And if Satan causes you to forget, then, after recollection, do not sit with the unjust people."

It has been narrated by Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"When this verse was revealed and Muslims were prohibited from associating with the pagans and those who mocked the verses of the Qur'an, (a group of) Muslims said that if they wanted to treat according to that commandment everywhere, they had to neither enter the Sacred Mosque, nor circumambulate the Ka'bah, because those people were often about

inside the Sacred Mosque busy mocking the Divine verses which they heard easily by a short pause. Then the next verse was revealed and ordered Muslims to advise them and guide them as much as they could."[5]

However, since the statements of this Surah are mostly about the circumstances of pagans and idol-worshippers, both in the current verse and in the verse next to it, the Qur'an hints to the affairs concerning them.

At first, it tells the Prophet (S) that when he sees the arrogant, illogical opponents are mocking the signs of Allah, he should turn away from them so that they give up the subject and be busy with another topic.

"And when you see those who cavil about Our Signs, turn away from them until they enter into (some) other topic. ..."

Then the Qur'an adds that this matter is so important that if Satan causes you to forget and you sit with such persons unintentionally, as soon as you remember it, you should leave that meeting and do not sit with these unjust people. The verse says:

"... And if Satan causes you to forget, then, after recollection, do not sit with the unjust people."

There arises a question here: Is it possible that Satan dominates the Prophet (S) and causes him to forget his duty?

In answer to this question, it can be said that although the addressee in this verse is the Prophet (S), the main purpose, in fact, is the followers of the Prophet (S). It means that if they are entangled with forgetfulness and they take part in pagans' sinful meetings, they should come out of that meeting and leave the place as soon as they remember it.

The like of this status happens in our daily conversations and in the literature of different languages, that, in speech, one person is addressed but the aim is that others hear that statement.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 69

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ وَلَـكِن ذِكْرَى لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

69. "And nothing of the reckoning of their (deed) shall be upon those who keep from evil, but a reminding (must be given) so that they, too, may keep from evil."

When the verse of prohibition upon the vain speakers and mockers of the Divine revelations was revealed, some believers said that they should not go to the Sacred Mosque and would not circumambulate the Ka'bah, since the range of their mockery had stretched as far as there.

Participation in the meeting of sinners is allowed if it is with the intention of refraining them from wrong and guiding them to the right. Of course, this exception is only for those believers who are pious and firm in belief, since there are some Muslims who go to save others but they themselves drown.

Thinking and realizing the situation, in fact, is one of the principles of intellect and of Islam. Hearing the absurd sayings temporarily with the purpose of answering them or saving the deviated people permanently is allowed.

"And nothing of the reckoning of their (deed) shall be upon those who keep from evil, but a reminding (must be given)...."

Piety is a means of protection for man against committing sins. It is like saving-clothes for fire-extinguishers.

Besides being pious himself, such a person must try to make others virtuous, too.

"... So that they, too, may keep from evil"

By the way, there are abundant traditions narrated by the Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (as) which prohibit Muslims from companionship with sinners or participation in a gathering where faults or a single fault is being committed and they cannot bar it even if the people of the gathering are from relatives.

Imam Arnir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) recommended his son:

"Allah has prescribed for the ear not to listen to any sin and any backbite."[6]

Imam Ali (as) also said:

"Association with the wicked causes suspicion upon the righteous."[7]

This verse may be attached as an evidence for the prohibition of some wicked books, too.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 70

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُواْ دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَن تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٌ وَإِن تَعْدِلْ كُلَّ عَدْلٍ لاَّ يُؤْخَذْ مِنْهَا أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُواْ بِمَا كَسَبُواْ لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكْفُرُونَ

70. "And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and pastime, and whom the life of this world has deluded, and admonish (them) by it (the Qur'an) lest a soul be destroyed for what it has earned. It shall not have besides Allah any guardian nor any intercessor, and though it offers every compensation it will not be accepted from it. Those are they who are given up to destruction for what they have earned. They will have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement for what they used to disbelieve."

The purpose of the phrase 'leave those who ...' is 'hating them, and not having any communication with them', which sometimes ends with fighting against them. Thus, the phrase does not mean abandoning Holy Struggle against them.

The manner of taking religion for a play has different forms in different circumstances. Sometimes it is in the form of superstitious beliefs, or religious laws are considered impracticable, or sins are justified, or innovations interpretation of the Qur'an by personal opinion, and following the allegorical verses, come forth.

However, Faith has no consistency with laziness, flattery, and playing with ideology.

"And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and pastime....."

Admonishment is a means to being saved from the wrath and punishment of Allah:

".... and admonish (them) by it (the Qur'an)…."

Be not proud of the world since there will come to help you none, in the Hereafter, except Allah,

Everybody should know that the cause of all his misfortunes is his self and is own deeds.

"....for what it has earned...."

Therefore, the holy verse, pointing to a part of their painful chastisements, says:

".... They will have a drink of boiling water and painful chastisement for what they used to disbelieve…"

They will be burnt from inside by boiling water and from outside by Hell Fire.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, P. 313 (Arabic version)
2. Nahaj-ul-Fisahah, p. 59, and Kanzul-'Ummal, vol. 3, p. 500
3. There are some other phrases mentioned in the Qur'an which convey the same meaning, including: Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, Verse 107 ; Surah Yunus, No.10, Verse 41; Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, Verse 41 and Surah Ash-Shaura, No.42, Verse 6.
4. Nahaj-ul-Balagha, sermon 154
5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 3, p, 316.
6. Nahjul-Balagha
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, P. 728

Section 8: Submission to Allah; Abraham's Arguments

Submission to Allah brings peace - Abraham's reasoning for the unity of Allah.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 71 - 72

قُلْ أَنَدْعُو مِن دُونِ اللّهِ مَا لاَ يَنفَعُنَا وَلاَ يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَى أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَانَا اللّهُ كَالَّذِي
اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَى ائْتِنَا قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللّهِ هُوَ
الْهُدَى وَأُمِرْنَا لِنُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَأَنْ أَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

71. "Say: 'Shall we call, besides Allah, on that which neither profits nor harms us, and shall we be returned back on our heels after that Allah has guided us? Like someone whom Satans have lured (and) bewildered in the earth, (while) he has companions who invite him to the guidance (saying): 'Come unto us'. Say: 'Verily (it is) the guidance of Allah which is the (true) guidance, and we are commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds'."

72. "And that Establish prayer and be in awe of Him, and it is He unto Whom you shall be mustered'."

The verse addresses the Prophet (S) to tell the disbelievers who invite people to idolatry whether they should worship the things that neither benefit them nor harm them, and, by abandoning the best religion, turn back on their heels after that Allah has guided them and has shown them the straight path. The verse says:

"Say: 'shall we call, besides Allah, on that which neither profits nor harms us, and shall we be returned back on our heels after that Allah has guided us?...."

The continuation of the statement of the verse implies that if they return to idolatry they will be like a person whom Satan have seduced and bewildered on the earth; although he has companions who, inviting him to the guidance, tell him to go toward those friends.

But he does not accept their invitation and does not go toward them. He has been so influenced by Satan that he is deprived of recognizing his own interests.

The verse says:

"... Like someone whom Satans have lured (and) bewildered in the earth, (while) he has companions who invite him to the guidance (saying): 'Come unto us ' Say: 'Verily (it is) the guidance of Allah which is the (true) guidance,"

The only guidance that causes prosperity and comfort is Allah’s guidance that calls human beings to monotheism. We are dependants to that very guidance and do not avoid obeying it. We do not follow your invitation.

We accept and follow that invitation that calls us toward Islam (submission) and guides us to trust our affairs to the One Who is 'The Lord of the worlds'.

"... and we are commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds '."

The meaning of the second verse of the above verses is linked to the meaning of the previous verse. It enjoins us to maintain the prayer and avoid committing sins of Allah so that we do not confront His punishment.

He is the Lord unto Whom all human-kind will be mustered on the Day of Judgment when everybody will receive the reward or the retribution of one's own deeds. The verse says:

"And that 'Establish prayer and be in awe of Him, and it is He unto Whom you shall be mustered'."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 73

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُن فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّوَرِ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

73. "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth with the Truth; and the day He says 'Be! ' and, it is. His word is the Truth, and to Him belongs all sovereignty on the day, when the trumpet will be blown; knower of the Unseen and the visible, and He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware."

In this verse, the idea saying that 'the Trumpet will be blown only once' is pointed out, while in Surah-Zumar. No.39. verse 68 it is said that the Trumpet will be blown twice. The first blow will be the destroyer of everything, and the second one will be the raiser of people for the Resurrection.

In the previous verses, the words were about submission before Allah and establishing prayer. Now, in this verse, the reason of that meaning is mentioned. It implies that the creation entirely is with Him, and He is All-Wise, All-Aware, and He is cognizant of all things.

"And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth with the Truth; and the day He says 'Be! ' and, it is. His word is the Truth, and to Him belongs all sovereignty on the day, when the trumpet will be blown...."

Creation has been done wisely and purposefully. This idea has been mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an, including Surah Sad, No. 38 verse 27 where it says:

"And we did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain....."

Therefore, there is no hinderance for Allah's Will.

"…He says 'Be!'And, it is…."

Unseen and visible, or concealed and manifested, are the same for Allah. The verse, as His Attributes, says:

"... Knower of the Unseen and the visible....."

The basis of the sovereignty of Allah is on His Wisdom and knowledge.

On the Day of Resurrection, the splendor and appearance of Allah's Power will be manifested to everybody, since ordinary means are not effective there. For this very reason, His Power will be manifested more.

Thus, since the Creator and Administrator of the world of existence is both wise and aware, then do obey Him. The verse says:

"He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware."

However, by the blown of the Trumpet, the order of the universe will be ruined, but the reckoning and the exact records will remain fixed and proper.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 74

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لأَبِيهِ آزَرَ أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُّبِينٍ

74. "And (remember) when Abraham said to his father 'Azar: 'Do you take idols for gods? Verily I see you and your people in manifest error '."

The Arabic word /'ab/ ordinarily means 'father', but it is also applied with the sense of mother's grandfather, uncle, and educator.

According to the statement of the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"Ali and I both are the fathers of this community".

It is understood that 'Azar was Abraham's uncle, not his father. Abraham's ancestors were totally monotheists. This meaning has also been cited by 'Tabarsy, 'Alusi and Suyuty, the sunnite scholars, saying that 'Azar was not Abraham's father. Moreover, Abraham supplicated for his father and mother:

"O our Lord! grant me and my parents protection ..." [1]

This is in the case that no Muslim is rightful to supplicate for a pagan, even if the disbeliever is his family member. Abraham's seeking forgiveness for his uncle, 'Azar, had also been before the time that his belief in polytheism became manifest.

So, when Abraham (as) realized that 'Azar was not a person to accept the truth, he (as) denounced from him and departed. The Qur'an in this regard says:

"And 'Ibrahim asking forgiveness for his sir was only owing to a promise which he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he declared himself to be clear of him." [2]

From what was said above, it is understood that the word /'ab/, mentioned in this verse, does not mean father. Besides, the name of Abraham's father, as recorded in history books, has been 'Tarukh', not 'Azar.[3]

In the meantime, some Islamic traditions denote that father and the ancestors of the Prophet of Islam (S) up to Hadrat 'Adam wholly were monotheists. It has been narrated from the Prophet himself (S) who said:

"Ceaselessly Allah, the Sublime, transported me from the purified Coins of men into the purified wombs (of mothers), and never had He polluted me with the filth of paganism ".[4]

A large number of Sunnite and Shi'ite commentators have pointed out this tradition in their books. A few of them are: Tabarsi; in Majama'-ul-Bayan; Neyshaburi, in Qara'ib-ul-Qur'an; Fakhr-i-Razi; in Tafsir-ul-kabir; and 'Alusi; in Ruh-ul-Bayan.

There are some points that should be noted here carefully:

1. In the style of invitation to the Truth, close relatives should be invited first.

"And (remember) when Abraham said to his father 'Azar: ..."

2. In facing and treating others, the scale is the Truth, not the age, nor being experimented, nor abundance of people. Therefore, Abraham has clearly explained the Truth for his uncle, who was older than him, and has warned him, too.

3. Idolatry is a deviation that both alert consciences and intellect criticize it.

...' Do you take idols for gods? ..."

"... Verily I see you and your people in manifest error '."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 75

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ َلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ

75. "And thus did we show Abraham the dominions of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure."

The Qur'anic word /malakut/ is derived from /mulk/ to which two particles of emphasis and exaggeration are added. The holy phrase: 'The dominions of the heavens and the earth', mentioned in the verse, means the true and absolute ownership of the heavens and the earth.

It is cited in Atyab-ul-Bayan upon the commentary of the Qur'an that the worlds are divided into four categories: 'Lahut' (the world of Divine Essence of which none knows save Allah), Jabarut, (the world of incorporeal beings), 'Malakut' (the world of bodies), and 'Nasut' (the world) of generation and corruption with changes and transformations).

Mu'jam-ul- Wasit, an Arabic Dictionary, announces that /Malakut/ is the world of secrets, orders, wonders, and the world of Unseen'.

'Alusi says that 'the dominions of the heavens' means 'their wonders'. By seeing the dominions of the heavens and the earth, Abraham was fairly acquainted with the way of treatment, creation, wisdom, and Lordship of Allah.

"And thus did we show Abraham the dominions of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure."

According to the statement of Imam Baqir (as); Allah bestowed such a light and ability upon the eyes of Abraham that he could see what was inside the depth of the heavens and the earth.[5]

Of course, whoever recognizes the Truth and invites others to it, without being afraid of anything, Allah bestows upon him 'a heavenly light', (like Abraham (as) whom the holy verse referred to).

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 76

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَـذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لا أُحِبُّ الآفِلِينَ

76. "So when the night outspread over him, he saw a star. He said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said: ' I do not like the setting ones."

Abraham's Dispute with Pagans

When Abraham was disputing with the polytheists, he wanted to show condescension and softness in discussion, in order to reject the belief of the opposite party. He did not believe, of course, in what he told them because it was against his infallibility.

Stating 'O my people!, in the second verse after the abovementioned one, is a sign of condescension in saying 'This is my Lord'. It was also for this reason that when he saw the setting of the moon and the sun, he said: "... Surely I am quit of that you associate (with Allah)' ..." (verse 78), and he did not say 'that I associate'.

A thing that has rising and setting is objective to some regularity, not in a position of subjugating them. A thing that has movement is 'creatable' and a creatable thing cannot be God. At first, Abraham temporarily expresses its acceptance in order that he can reasonably reject it later.

Such reasoning, in deed, is one of the best methods of preaching and awakening the innate dispositions, actuating the minds and thoughts, and paying attention to sentiments.

Again, it causes us to understand that the true beloved is the one who is not captive to place, time and varieties, and also is not temporary, limited, and numerous.

"So when the night outspread over him, he saw a star. He said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said: 'I do not love the setting ones."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 77 - 79

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هَـذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لأكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَـذَا رَبِّي هَـذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

77. "Then when he saw the moon uprising, he said: 'This is my Lord!' But when it set, he said: 'If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray.' "

78. "And when he saw the sun uprising, he said: 'This is my Lord; this is greater!' But when it set, he said: 'O my people! Surely I am quit of that you associate. (with Allah) '."

79. "Verily I have turned my face (myself wholly) toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, being upright, and I am not of the idolaters."[6]

When Abraham saw that people used to worship idols and adored the sun, the moon and stars, he decided to aware them of their fault and to open the window of their insight. He tried to show them the way of thinking and reasoning, so that they could realize that none of the things they were worshipping had eligibility of being worshipped, since all of them were creatable.

Abraham (as) said:

"This is my Lord!"

This phrase is the statement of a person who intends to show condescension to his opponent. He (as) knows that the opposite party's belief is wrong, but, without showing any religious prejudice about his own creed, he narrates that person's wrong idea in order to encourage him towards the truth and to clear out his heart from falsehood.

Thus, by reasoning in the next sentence, Abraham (as) has proved the invalidity of the belief of the opposite party.

Abraham (as) told those people:

"I do not love the setting ones ".

He meant he did not like worshipping those gods which were covered with such curtains, because those qualities belonged to the corporeal substances. They were some evidences to their being creatable.

"... he said: 'If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely be of the people gone astray '."

Abraham stated this sentence as a warning to his people. He (as) announced that whoever takes the moon, which, like other stars, is a setting one, as his god, is among the astray ones. And, there is no guide to the truth save the Grace and Mercy of Allah.

"And when he saw the sun uprising, he said: 'This is my Lord; this is greater!'… "

Abraham, seeing the sun, said that it was greater (than the others). He has also stated this phrase to show condescension and softness from himself to his opposite party, but after that he said:

"... 'O my people! surely I am quit of that you associate (with Allah)'."

He implied that he disliked those corporeal substances which they had taken as partners of their Creator.

Then, Abraham (as) continued saying:

"Verily I have turned my face (myself wholly) toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth....."

That is, I have believed in the One Who has created the heavens and the earth. These phenomena themselves indicate that Allah, the Creator, has brought them forth and runs their different circumstances and regularities Himself.

He (S.w.T.) specifies their way and appoints the times of their risings and settings. Hence, I have turned my self wholly to His Lordship sincerely, and I am not one of the polytheists.

"... being upright, and I am not of the idolaters."

The Qur'anic term /'hanif/ (upright) is derived from /'hanafa/ with the sense of 'sincere' and 'without any deviation'.

Also, the Arabic word /fatara/ (created) originally means: 'cleared'. It may refer to some meaning which is found in the modern science. It suggests that, at first, the universe had been in the form of a single mass. After that, the mass cleft into some separate parts and the celestial bodies came into existence one after another.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 80

وَحَآجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِّي فِي اللّه وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلاَ أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلاَّ أَن يَشَاء رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلاَ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

80. "And his people disputed with him. He (Abraham) said: ' Do you dispute with me about Allah while He has guided me? And I do not fear of what you associate with Him; unless my Lord wishes for something. My Lord includes everything in His knowledge. Will you not then remember?' "

Abraham (as) continued his dispute with his people, the idolaters. Pointing to that circumstance, the Qur'an says:

"And his people disputed with him. ..."

Then, in answer to them, Abraham told them why they argued with him and opposed him about Allah while He had guided him unto the path of monotheism under the light of some logical and clear evidences. The verse says:

"... He (Abraham) said: 'Do you dispute with me about Allah while He has guided me? ..."

It is clearly understood from this verse that Abraham's people, who were idol worshippers, tried hard and did their best to pervert him from his belief as much as it was possible for them.

That was why they threatened him to the retribution and wrath of their gods and idols. They frightened him (as) of them because of his opposition with them.

This meaning is understood from the rest of the verse. The Qur'an, from the tongue of Abraham, says that he does not fear of the idols that they worshipped, because idols have no power to harm anyone unless Allah wishes something.

The verse says:

"... And I do not fear of what you associate with Him; unless my Lord wishes for something....:"

By saying this phrase, it seems that Abraham wants to prevent some probable happenings and to say that supposing some harms and adventures come to him when he is busy with those struggles, they do not concern the idols, but they concern the Will of Allah.

Then, Abraham continues saying that the knowledge of Allah, his Lord, is so vast and inclusive that it envelops everything.

And, finally, in order to move their thought and contemplation, the statement addresses them, saying:

"... Will you not then remember? ' "

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 81

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلاَ تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِاللّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالأَمْنِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

81. "And how should I fear what you have associated, while you do not fear that you have associated with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority to you? Which of the two parties has more right to security if you have any knowledge?"

Again, the Qur'an begins reproaching their manner and belief, where it says:

"And how should l fear what you have associated...."

Why do you force me to fear from these hand made idols of yours, while it is entirely clear that they have neither gaining nor harm?

But you have not been afraid of the Lord Who is able to give human beings benefit and harm, You dare His Essence and associate some mean beings with Him, and you do worship them.

That is, how could I fear your infidelity? I hate your disbelief, therefore, I have no scare, and Allah does not take me to task for your indecent behavior. It is you who are entangled with polytheism, and therefore, it is you who should fear.

".... while you do not fear that you have associated with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority to you? ....

There have been sent down no evidence from the side of Allah to confirm what you have associated with Him. This fact is understood from this verse that whoever says a statement or follows a religion but he has no reason for it, he is in falsehood; We have reasonably known Allah and stand for worshipping towards Him.

Are we more worthy of security or idol-worshippers who prostrate before idols and persist on this wrong belief zealously? If they apply their intellect, this fact will be manifested to them and they will distinguish between right and wrong. The verse says:

".... Which of the two parties has more right to security if you have any knowledge? "

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 82

الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُواْ إِيمَانَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمُ الأَمْنُ وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ

82. "Those who believe and do not cloak their Faith with iniquity, those are they for whom is security, and they are guided aright."

In the previous verse, this question was referred to indicating whether the monotheists are secured from the punishment of Allah, or polytheists.

Now, in this verse, in answer to that question, the Qur'an announces hat those are more secured from the punishment of Allah who have known Him and testified Him. Such people have recognized their duty and have not mixed their belief with polytheism.

"Those who believe and do not cloak their Faith with iniquity, those are they for whom is security....."

This group, who is secured from the side of Allah, has been issued the decree of being found salvation.

"... and they are guided aright."

However, according to the opinions of many commentators, and basing on some Islamic traditions and narrations, the objective meaning of the term /zulm/, mentioned in this verse, is iniquity. Their evidence is Surah Luqman, No.31. Verse13, which says:

"... Verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity."

Also, some Islamic literature denotes that, next to the Faith, putting the divine leaders aside and referring to other than them is an aspect of injustice.[7]

Notes

1. Surah 'Ibrahim, No.14, Verse 41.
2. Surah At-Taubah, No.9, Verse 114
3. Al-Mizan, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Jawami'-ul-Jami'
4. Cited in Jawami'-ul-Jami', the commentary book
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, P. 734, Tradition 138
6. The Arabic term /baziq/ is derived from the word /bazaqa/ with the meaning of 'to cleave and cause to flow blood'. As if, rising of the sun or the moon cleaves the curtain of darkness and causes to appear a slight reddish colour around itself. Abraham (as) disputed with both the star-worshippers and the worshippers of the moon and the sun.
7. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 9: The other Apostles followed Abraham's footsteps

Apostles followed Abraham's footsteps -The other Apostles.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 83

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاء إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

83. "And such was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We please; verily your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

This verse points to the entire former discussions that have been stated by Abraham upon the subject of Unity and the act of opposition against polytheism. It says:

"And such was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We please....."

Then, to complete this meaning, it says:

"... We raise up in degrees whom We please....."

But, in order that there comes forth no mistake and some persons do not think that Allah discriminates unjustly in this raising up in degrees, it says:

"... verily your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

Therefore, He is aware of the degrees that He gives. They are given due to eligibility and according to the standards of wisdom. No one may enjoy them unless the one is eligible.

A Few Explanations

1. The Arabic term /labasa/, mentioned in the previous verse, No.82, means: 'to cover'. This meaning denotes to the fact that since 'Faith' is something innate in human beings, it is not vanishable, but some mists may cover it.

2. Iniquity is the calamity of Faith, and it has a negative effect.

3. Forsaking injustice is the secret of guidance, while cruelty causes that guidance to be hindered.

4. Protecting the Faith is more important than the Faith itself, because the real security is possible to exist only under the light of Faith and justice.

5. Neither the cruel believers have been guided, nor the faithless advocators of Justice.

6. A monotheist, who stands against the perversions of the society by proofs and reasoning, deserves some elevations.

Now, it is necessary to know that the Divine degrees are given wisely. The verse says:

"... We raise up in degrees whom we please....."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 84

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلاًّ هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

84. "And We bestowed upon him (Abraham) (issues like) Isac and Jacob, each one We guided; and Noah We guided before; and of his seed

David and Solomon, Job and Joseph, Moses and Aron (We appointed prophets), and thus do We reward the doers of good."

From this verse on, a part of favours that Allah had bestowed upon Abraham are referred to. Those favors are righteous off springs, and an eligible and fruitful family which is one of the greatest Divine merits.

At first, it says:

"And We bestowed upon him (Abraham) (issues like) Isac and Jacob...."

Then, in order to show that the honor of these two Prophets does not lie only in the matter that they were the progenies of the Prophet, but they themselves had fixed the light of guidance in their hearts by their own correct thoughts and righteous deeds, it says:

".... each one We guided...."

Next to this meaning, in order that nobody imagines that there had not been any advocator for monotheism during the periods before Abraham, and that this matter has begun from the time of Abraham, the verse continues saying:

".... and Noah We guided before...."

In fact, by pointing to the situation of Noah (as), who is one of Abraham's ancestors, and the situation of a group of the prophets, who are from among his descendents and his off springs, the Qur'an defines the high position of Abraham from the viewpoint of 'heritage and nobility', and 'the fruit' of personality.

Following that, it mentions the names of several prophets who are from the seed of Abraham. At first, it says:

"... and of his seed David and Solomon, Job and Joseph, Moses and Aron (We appointed prophets) ..."

So, at the end of the verse, the statement of the holy verse continues as follows:

"... and thus do We reward the doers of good."

Thus, the Qur'an makes it clear that their rank and position existed as a result of their own good deeds.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 85 - 87

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلاًّ فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

85. "And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias; each one (of them) was of the righteous."

86. "And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot, and everyone (of them) did We prefer above all beings."

87. "And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the straight way."

Following the previous names of prophets, through the first verse of the verses mentioned above, the Qur'an refers to the names of some other prophets. It says:

"And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias; each one (of them) was of the righteous."

The purpose of the verse is that the ranks of these prophets were not given obligatory or ceremonial, but they obtained personality and greatness with Allah because of their own righteous deeds.

In the second verse, there have been mentioned four more names of the divine prophets. It says:

"And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot, and every one (of them) did We prefer above all beings."

The third verse contains a general hint to the fathers, children and brothers of the above-mentioned prophets, whose names have not been referred to in details here. It says:

"And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the straight way."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 88

ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللّه يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُواْ لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

88. "Such is the guidance of Allah; He guides by it whom He pleases of His servants; and if they were to associate others (with Him), certainly what they were doing would be vain for them."

Three Great Privileges!

After mentioning the names of some groups of divine prophets through previous verses, here, in this verse, a main and general outline of their lives are pointed out. At first, it says:

"Such is the guidance of Allah; He guides by it whom He pleases of His servants....."

Then, in order that nobody thinks that they have chosen this path obligatorily, and also nobody considers that Allah; (S.w.T.) has had a particular, exceptional and undue regard towards them, the holy verse continues saying:

"... and if they were to associate others (with Him), certainly what they were doing would be vain for them."

The last part of the verse means that these prophets are encountered the same divine laws that other people are, and there is no unjust discrimination between them.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 89

أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَـؤُلاء فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُواْ بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ

89. "These are they to whom We gave the Book, the authority and the prophet hood; so if these (infidels) disbelieve in it, We have (already) entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it."

In this verse, three magnificent privileges, which have been the base of all privileges of the prophets, are referred to. It says:

"These are they to whom We gave the Book, the authority and the prophet hood....."

The Arabic term /hukm/ originally means: 'prevention, and restrain'. Then, since wisdom prevents faults and offences; also, correct judgment hinders injustice and oppression, and a just government may restrain some other unjust governments, the term is applied in every one of these three senses.

Next to that statement, the verse continues saying that if these people, viz. pagans, the citizens of Mecca, and the like of them, do not believe in these facts, the invitation of the Prophet (S) will not remain without response.

Allah has commissioned a group of people who not only accept it, but also protect it and guard it. They are such a group that never pave the path of infidelity and are surrendered to the Truth.[1]

The verse announces:

"... so if these (infidels) disbelieve in it, We have (already) entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 90

أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّه فَبِهُدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ قُل لاَّ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرَى لِلْعَالَمِينَ

90. "These are they whom Allah has guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say (to people): 'I ask you no wage for it (the prophecy); it is naught but a Reminder to the worlds"

This holy verse introduces the program of these outstanding prophets: to the Prophet of Islam (S) as an exalted example of guidance. The verse says:

"These are they whom Allah has guided, therefore follow their guidance. ..."

Once more, this verse emphasizes that the principles of the invitation of all divine prophets are the same, although the latter religions are more complete than the former religions.

The Arabic term /hidayh/ conveys a vast meaning which encompasses both unity with other theological principles, and patience and perseverance, and all principles of morals and education.

Then the Messenger of Islam (S) is ordered to tell people that he asks them no wage for his messenger ship. As former messengers did not ask such a thing, the Prophet of Islam (S) follows that usual way of treatment of those prophets, too.

The verse says:

"... Say (to people): ' I ask you no wage for it (the prophecy)....."

Moreover, this Qur'an and this prophecy together with guidance, is a warning and a reminder to all people throughout the world. The verse says:

"... it is naught but a Reminder to the worlds"

Such a common and general blessing is like the light of the sun or like the waves in the atmosphere, or like the fall of rain, that all are common and worldwide. They are found in no bargain, and no one takes any wages for them.

Note

1. In Tafsir Almanar and Tafsir Rouh-ul-Ma'ani, it is narrated from the commentators that the objective meaning of "... a people who are not disbelievers in it" is Iranians

Section 10: The Divine Revelation

Disbelieves in the revelation to Apostle -the Qur'an revealed for all ages.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 91

وَمَا قَدَرُواْ اللّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُواْ مَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ عَلَى بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَنْ أَنزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاء بِهِ مُوسَى نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيراً وَعُلِّمْتُم مَّا لَمْ تَعْلَمُواْ أَنتُمْ وَلاَ آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلِ اللّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

91. "And they did not recognize Allah with the recognition due to Him when they said: ' Allah has not sent down anything to any human being.' Say: 'Who sent down the Book that was brought by Moses as a light and a guidance to men, which you put into papers, revealing (a part on it and concealing much (of it); and (by means of which) you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers?' Say: ' Allah (has sent it down);' then leave them sporting in their vain discourses."

In fact they did not recognize Allah (S.w.T.) the way He should be recognized, and they did not regard His Glory as it is due to Him.

"And they did not recognize Allah with the recognition due to Him when they said: ..."

They could not qualify Allah as that His infinite graces and favors unto His servants should be described. Therefore, they denied all His merits, and they said:

"...' Allah has not sent down anything to any human being. ..."

By this statement, they denied the mission of prophets and the revelation unto them, which is one of the greatest blessings and the highest favor of Allah.

When, with the purpose of exaggeration in rejecting the descent of the Qur'an unto the Prophet of Islam (S) the Jews denied all things, Allah reminded them a matter that they could not help but confessing it.

The matter was the descent of the Torah unto Moses (as), which was known to them all. By means of this affirmation of theirs, the Qur'an blamed them that they distorted the Torah, and they revealed a part of it and concealed a great deal of it. These phrases are upon this meaning:

"....' Say: 'Who sent down the Book that was brought by Moses as a light and guidance to men, which you put into papers, revealing (a part on it and concealing much (of it)....."

Moses (as) brought the Torah which was an enlightening light upon religion and a source of guidance for people.

"... That was brought by Moses as a light and guidance to men....."

It was the very Book, the Torah, which they turned into the form of some scattered pieces of paper so that they could fulfill their aim. They wanted to manifest a part of it and hide some other parts.

"….Which you put into papers....."

The phrase: ' you were taught ...' addresses the Jews. It denotes that by means of what was revealed to the Prophet (S) and he stated the revelation for them, they learnt some things, of which neither were they aware, nor their fathers.

It was in that case that they had the Torah with them, and before them, their fathers were more acknowledged than them.

The following holy verse also contains the same meaning as the above-mentioned one:

"Surely this Qur'an declares to the Children of Israel most of what they differ in."[1]

The concluding phrase of the verse, addressing the Prophet (S), implies that Allah has sent it (the Qur'an) down; so, he should leave them in that very falsehood that they have sunk into. The verse says:

"... Say: ' Allah (has sent it down); 'Then leave them sporting in their vain discourses."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 92

وَهَـذَا كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلاَتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

92. "And this is a blessed Book, We have sent it down confirming that which has been before it, and that you may warn (the people of) the Mother City (Mecca) and those around her; and those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they are careful of their prayers."

The objective meaning of the phrase 'a blessed Book', mentioned in the verse, is 'the Qur'an' which is the source of many benefits and interests.

Among them is that its recitation is good, practicing its content causes good things to come forth; it contains the first and the last sciences; the ordinances of lawful and unlawful things are found in it.

As long as the world exists and religious obligations are enjoined, the Qur'an will exist and will never be abrogated. The verse says:

"And this is a blessed Book; We have sent it down…"

Not only this Book is the source of all kinds of goodness, blessings, and triumphs, but also it confirms all the Books which were sent down before it.

".... confirming that which has been before it…"

The purpose of the statement saying that the Qur'an confirms the sacred Books before it is that all the divine signs that have been referred to in those Books adopt to it.

Therefore, both from the point of content and from the point of evidences and historical documents, the signs of rightfulness are seen in the Qur'an.

Then, the verse explains the purpose of sending the Qur'an down as follows:

"... and that you may warn (the people of) the Mother City (Mecca) and those around her....."

Mecca has been called' 'Umm-ul-Qura' because, as it is said, she is thee origin of the beginning genesis of the whole lands allover the earth. here are many Islamic traditions which denote that the existing dry lands throughout the world expanded from the ground beneath the Ka'bah which Islamic literature have been recorded by the name of /dahw-ul-'ard/ (expansion of the Earth).

Thus, the Qur'anic phrase 'and those around her' compasses all the people throughout of the world.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"... and those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they are careful of their prayers."

The Importance of Prayer!

Amongst all the religious ordinances only prayer is referred to in the above-mentioned verse. So, as we know, prayer is the symbol of the link and connection between the believing servants and Allah (S.w.T.); and, for this very reason, it is the most important worship comparing all other godly worships.

Some commentators believe that when this verse was revealed the only religious obligation had been prayer.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 93

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللّه كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَن قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ بَاسِطُواْ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرِجُواْ أَنفُسَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

93. "And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or says: 'It has been revealed to me, ' while nothing has been revealed to him, and he who says: 'I will send down the like of what Allah has sent down'? And if you had seen when the unjust shall be in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands, (saying): 'Give up your souls! Today you shall be recompensed with a disgracing chastisement for what you used to say against Allah other than the truth and (because) you used to behave with pride against His Signs."

In the former verses this fact was referred to that the prophethood of the Prophet (S) is ordained by Allah, and the Divine Book has been revealed to him, too. Now, this verse reproaches those pagans who rejected the Qur'an and claimed that they could bring the like of it. The verse says:

"And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah....."

This sentence is a positive interrogation with a negative sense. It means that none is more unjust than the one who fabricates a falsehood against Allah and introduces himself a prophet while he has not such a rank.

Or, he claims that the revelation has been sent down to him, while he has not been revealed to. It is far from the wisdom of Allah that He appoints a liar into messenger ship is claim is also a calmly and its meaning, therefore, is inside the previous sentence, but because of its importance, it has been mentioned separately.

"... or says: 'It has been revealed to me', while nothing has been revealed to him....."

"... and he who says: 'I will send down the like of what Allah has sent down?..."

Zujaj, a commentator, says that this sentence is an answer to those who had said that if they wanted they could deliver speech like the Qur'an. They claimed like that and they tried very hard and suffered a great deal of troubles and spent expenses with all the plots and devices they applied, to

quench the light of the torch of Allah, but they could not manage it and the Lord completed His light.

Some of the commentators have said that the purpose of this phrase is 'Abd-illah-ibn-Sa'd-ibn-'Abi Sarh whom once the Messenger of Allah told to write:

'certainly we created man of an extract of clay…."

"….Then We caused it to grow into another creation," (Surah Al-Muminun. No.23. verses 12 on).

At this time, this phrase was uttered by the tongue of 'Abdillah that he said: "... So blessed be Allah, the best of creators." The Prophet (S) ordered that this sentence should be written, too, and he added that the verse was revealed in the same form from the side of Allah.

After that event, 'Abd-illah-ibn-Sa'd apostatized and said that were Muhammad (S) truthful, whatever was sent down to him (S) would also be sent down to 'Abdillah. And, if he (S) is a liar, he ('Abdillah) could speak like him, too. After that, the Prophet of Islam (S) counted his blood permissible (to be shed).

"... And if you had seen when the unjust shall be in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands, (saying): 'Give up your souls! ..."

If you see the transgressors while they are in the throes of death, or in the Hell Fire, and are entangled with the most grievous tortures and the angels of taking souls or the angels of punishment, extend their hands to take their souls, or to punish them, striking on their foreheads and faces, they tell them to save themselves from that entanglement, if they are able and they are right, then you will realize that they are involved in a painful chastisement.

Some of the commentators believe that the phrase means that the angels of taking souls, with the purpose of severity and threatening them, tell them to die, although the act of passing away is not of their job, it is the duty of the angels.

Some other commentators say that taking in consideration that the verse is about the punishment in Hereafter; the purpose of the verse is that, on Resurrection Day, angels will tell them if they can they may deliver themselves from that punishment.

The verse concludes saying:

"... Today you shall be recompensed with a disgracing chastisement for what you used to say against Allah other than the truth and (because) you used to behave with pride against His Signs."

Explanations

1. The cultural injustice and claim of leadership from the side of some undue ones, is the greatest transgression.

2. Innovation in religion, which was also fulfilled by some of kalifs, is one of the extensions of fabricating falsehood against Allah.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 94

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُم مَّا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاء ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاء لَقَد تَّقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنكُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

94. "And certainly you come to Us (bare and) alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs all that We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors, those whom you imagined that they were, in you, the associates (of Allah); certainly the ties between you are (now) cut off and what you used to assert have gone away from you."

This is the word of Allah that will be told the polytheism at the moment of death or at the time of being quickened on the Day of gathering.

Some of the commentators have said that this statement is the word of the angels who, at the moment of death, say it to those whose souls should be taken.

However, they will be told that they have come unto Allah lonely and without having anything (good deeds) with them; their condition is like the day they were created in the mothers' wombs.

Here, they have not any companion and helper. At this moment they possess neither any wealth nor a child, neither a servant nor maid, nor a friend and helper.

"And certainly you come to Us (bare and) alone as We created you at first....."

In brief, your state of being quickened on the Resurrection Day is similar to the state of your creation in the beginning.

"...and you have left behind your backs all that We gave you....."

You left behind your backs the properties Allah had given you in the world, and you boasted and pride yourselves due to them. Now, you have come to Him with a burden of sins. Therefore, others may take the benefit of those properties while you are confronted their concerning retributions. What a bad fortune and regret!

"... and We do not see with you your intercessors, those whom you imagined that they were, in you, the associates (of Allah)....."

Those idols that you imagined that they are Allah’s partners in deciding on your fate and will intercede you before Allah in Hereafter are not present with you. Today you see that worshipping idols have no benefit for you, and whatever effort and endeavor you tolerated have been done in vain and error.

This verse is not allocated to only polytheists. In general, whoever worships anything or anybody other than Allah, and is hopeful to gain goodness from him, trusts him and fears of his harm, is encompassed in this verse.

"... certainly the ties between you are (now) cut off ..."

Now the links between the members of your group have been broken, and relations, friendships and the like of them have been seized, and everyone is busy with one's own affairs.

"... and what you used to assert have gone away from you."

Your imagination has become vain. You do not know now where your idols are, whom you considered as intercessors with Allah. And you gain no profit from your worshipping them.

Some of the commentators have rendered this phrase into the sense that their imagination unto the idea that there exists no Hereafter nor an account and reckoning is entirely dissipated.

This verse encourages people to do righteous deeds and to follow good affairs, the factors that bring them their felicity and prosperity, not going after wealth that they leave behind their backs when they pass away and they get no benefit from it.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 95 - 96

إِنَّ اللَّه فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّه فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

فَالِقُ الإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

95. "Verily Allah is the splitter of the grain and the (date) stone. He brings out the living from the dead and He is the bringer of the dead from the living. That is Allah! How then are you perverted?"

96. "He is the Cleaver of the Daybreak, and He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. That is the ordaining of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing."

The Qur'an has reasoned the wonders of creation and its surprising devices for disbelievers by saying:

"Verily Allah is the splitter of the grain and the (date) stone. ..."

Allah splits the dry and apparently lifeless seed, and brings a shoot of plant out of it. He also splits the dry pit and brings forth out of it a palm or other trees.

Or, the purpose of the term /faliq/ may be that split which Allah has created on the seed and has divided it into two halves, which itself is one of the wonders of creation.

However, Allah is the Creator of the grain and (date) stone.

"... He brings out the living from the dead and He is the bringer of the dead from the living. ..."

Allah brings a fresh, green and alive plant out of a dry seed; and He is able to bring a dry seed out of a green, wet, and alive plant. This interpretation has been recorded by Zujaj.

In the Arabic language a green plant is called 'an alive plant.' When the plant is cut off or becomes dry, they call it 'dead'.

Hasan, Qattadah, Ibn-Zayd, and some others of the commentators say that it means Allah brings the living beings out of the soulless sperm, and He also brings the soulless sperm out of the living creatures.[2]

"... That is Allah! How then are you perverted? "

All these affairs are accomplished by Allah. Why do you turn away from the Truth? Why do you leave out these clear evidences and follow some falsehood?

Why do you not contemplate so that you realize that it is not appropriate for you to take others as partner of Allah in your worships? Allah is the One

Who bestows upon you blessings, and Who splits the grain and from the grain and the (date) stone brings some farming into existence.

"He is the Cleaver of the Daybreak....."

The Lord is He Who splits the darkness of night and brings the pillar of morning out of it. This meaning has been cited by many commentators.

Ibn-i- 'Abbas says that the phrase means that Allah is the Creator of the morning. The verse continues saying:

"... and He has made the night for rest....."

Most of the commentators, including Ibn-i- 'Abbas, say that this sentence means that Allah has made the night as a means for resting and tranquility. So, one of the blessings of Allah is that He has arranged the night for rest and the day for effort and endeavor. Allah has set the night and the day one after the other, which itself is another reason to Allah's infinite Power.

".... and the sun and the moon for reckoning....."

Allah made the moon and the sun rotating on their orbs. The sun passes the twelve parts of the zodiac during 365. 25 days. In its rotation, the moon also causes the lunar months and the lunar year to appear. The account of nights, days, months and years in people's lives is based on the rotation of the moon and the sun, as the Qur'an says:

"The sun and the moon follow a reckoning,"[3]

It also says:

"Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; they float, each in an orbit…"[4]

This statement is a commentary on the above verse cited by Ibn-' Abbas, Sudday, Qattadah, and Mujahid.

Through this phrase, Allah has pointed out that the account of the rotation of the moon and the sun in bargains, date and the time of people's worshipping, that He has ordained, are necessary for people and are adopted to their interests.

".... That is the ordaining of the All-Mighty, the All-knowing."

All of these, viz. cleaving the darkness of the night by the morning, the appropriation of the night for resting, and the moon and the sun being as a means of reckoning, are Allah's ordaining, the One Whose Power is infinite. So, there is none to be able to disobey Him and His Power. He is aware of the interests and the device of people.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 97 - 98

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُواْ بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَهُوَ الَّذِيَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَ مُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ

97. "And it is He Who has set for you the stars, that by them you might be guided in the darkness of the land and the sea. We have explained Our Signs for a people who know."

98. "And it is He Who has produced you from one person, then there is a place of sojourn and a provisional repository. We have explained Our Signs for a people who understand."

Now, there is Allah's statement upon a subject that is the continuation of the former subjects and it is the reason of Unity and the evidence of Allah's Power. It says:

"And it is He Who has set for you the stars, that by them you might be guided in the darkness of the land and the sea....."

Allah (S.w.T.) has created stars for your benefit and that you take advantages from their light, their rising, and their stations in the darkness of the deserts and the seas, so that you find your way.

Some of stars are located in front of us and some of them are at the back, some others are in the right and in the left. They are some guides for people in traveling toward cities, in finding the direction of Ka'bah, in recognizing the time during the night, and finding the direction of the ways in desert and the seas.

Balkhy, a commentator, says the phrase "... that by them you might be guided ..." does not denote to the meaning that stars have been created only for guiding people, but Allah has created stars for some numerous important benefits.

If a person contemplates and takes care about small and large stars and their positions, orbits, relations and movements, and also takes care about the advantages of the sun and the moon and that how they are effective in the life, growth, and development of animals and plants, the veracity of this claim will be proved for him.

If they were created for only guiding people, it would not be sensible and agreeable that some of them to be bigger than others and their orbs be different from each other.

In the commentary book of Ali-ibn-Ibrahim, it is cited that the objective meaning of 'stars, here, is 'the progeny of Muhammad (S)'.

The verse continues saying:

"... We have explained Our Signs for a people who know."

That is, Allah has stated His verses and has reasoned for the people who gain knowledge through the way of contemplation.

"And it is He Who has produced you from one person....."

Allah has created humankind from Adam. All of us have been created from Adam, and Eve, our mother. She had been created from the side of Adam.

This creation itself is one of the favors of Allah upon human beings, because when all human beings are the children of one parent, the circumstances among them are more favorable in the fields of cooperation, friendship and intimacy.

The verse adds:

"... Then there is a place of sojourn and a provisional repository ..."

You have a place in the womb and a settlement in the grave, until the time you will be quickened. In other words, you have a place on the ground and a place for the Hereafter with Allah.

The Qur'an concludes the verse stating:

"... We have explained Our Signs for a people who understand."

That is, Allah has stated His reasons and verses in detail for those people who possess understanding and take an example.

The question is that why the Qur'an says: "... for a people who understand." To answer this question, it can be said that the reason is that only these people are those who utilize the Qur'anic reasoning. Similar to this meaning is the phrase which says that only the pious are those who enjoy the guidance of the Qur'an.

This concluding sentence of the verse has been mentioned both in the previous verse and in this verse in order to indicate that each one of these matters are separately worthy of being taken care and they are some evidences upon Oneness and Glory of Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 99

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُواْ إِلِى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكُمْ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

99. "And He it is Who sends down water from the sky and thereby We bring forth the shoot of every growing thing, then from it We bring forth green (foliage) from which We produce grain piled up (in the ears); and of the palm-tree, of the sheaths of it, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates, alike and unalike. Look upon its fruit when it fructifies and ripens. Verily, there are signs in that for a people who believe."

Following the former matters, which were stated upon the reasoning of Unity and Glory of Allah, this verse says that Allah sends down rain from cloud in the sky, by which the growth and development of all things come forth. That is the nutrition of beasts, birds, wild animals, and human beings are produced by means of it, in order that they consume it and develop. The verse says:

"And He it is Who sends down water from the sky and thereby We bring forth the shoot of every growing thing....."

Thus, the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /nabat-a-kull-i-say'in/ (the shoot of every growing thing) is something by which everything grows and develops.

The meaning of the verse may be that Allah has grown all kinds of plants by means of rain. Therefore, the purpose of /kull-i-say'/ is kinds of plants. Then, water is the cause of appearance of plants and the growth of the living things.

The verse adds:

"... then from it We bring forth green (foliage)

Allah brings forth from rain, or from plants, some vegetation, and from the vegetations He brings forth grains and clusters like the clusters of wheat, sesame, and the like.

"... from which We produce grain piled up (in the ears); and of the palm-tree, of the sheaths of it, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach....."

And from the spates of the palm-tree, He brings forth some clusters of dates which are low-hanging and within reach. It is evident that a palm-tree

www.alhassanain.org/english

can sometimes be tall when its fruit is not always within reach, but when it is short; its fruit is naturally within reach.

In this holy verse only the second sort is mentioned and the first sort has not been stated. In fact, the Qur'an has sufficed citing one kind and the other kind has not been mentioned, because the hearer can guess the other one by the frame of reference in the context.

Some of commentators have said that the purpose of the term /daniyah/ (within reach), mentioned in the verse, is that the fruit of the palm-tree, as a result of abundance and heaviness, has come down near the ground. Viz. the fruit of some of palm-trees is so abundant and heavy, that its branches reach near the ground.

There are some other trees the fruit of which has a sheath and a shell, too. It is only that of palm-date that has not a sheath and a shell. Yet, Allah, the Glorious, has pointed to only the latter aspect in the verse and He has restrained from stating the rest aspects. The reason of this manner may be that 'date' contains many other advantages and it is also full of nutritive.

The verse continues saying:

"... and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates....."

By the means of water, Allah produces gardens of grapes, olives, and pomegranates. Olives and pomegranates are mentioned with together because their branches seem to Arab full of leaves from top to bottom.

".... alike and unalike...."

Trees are rather similar to each other, but the tastes of their fruits are different. Some other commentators say that the phrase means that their leaves are similar to each other but their fruits are not.

It is better to say that all of them from one point are similar to each other, but from another point they are different.

".... Look upon its fruit when it fructifies and ripens...."

Look as an exemplary that how trees fructify and how their fruits ripen and are used. That is, you may follow these stages which happen in it, from the day when the fruit appears on the branch of the tree until the day when the fruit ripens, together with the changes that occur in its taste, color, odour, and also its smallness and bigness, so that you comprehend that there is a Wise Creator in the course of both its creation and administration.

The concluding sentence of the verse is as follows:

".... Verily, there are signs in that for a people who believe."

Yes, in the creation of fruits and plants, with all the proper differences that they have! and the exact wise elaborateness which have been done in their structure, there are some clear and convincing evidences for the believing people that denote they have a Creator Who has adorned them with the ornament of creation knowingly and discerningly.

Regarding what we study today in botany about fruits when they come forth and then ripen, the proper importance that the Qur'an has considered for fruits will be made manifest. The explanation of it is that fruits come into being like the birth of the off springs in the world of animals.

By some particular means (such as winds, insects and the like) stamens are separated in some special bags and are put down on the pistil of plant. After the act of pollinating and combining with each other, the first seed is

formed. Then, some kinds of nutritive stuff around it, like some flesh, encompass it.

From the point of combination, this nutritious stuff contains various substances. Also, from the point of taste, and medical properties and f nutritive properties these substances are extraordinarily different. Sometimes one fruit (like pomegranates and grapes) contains hundreds (seeds each of which, in potency, can itself be considered a tree. Every fruit, with its several levels, has an elaborate structure.

This explanation is from one side. On the other side, from the time a fruit is green until when it completely ripens, there are different stages that the fruit must pass.

This subject is greatly considerable, since the innate laboratories of a fruit are continuously busy changing its chemical combinations until it reaches the last stage and when the conditions of its chemical structure will be fixed.

Every one of these stages by itself is an indication to the Glory and, Power of the Creator.

But, it should be noted that, as the Qur'an points out, only the believers, i.e. the observers of right and the seekers of truth can see these facts. Otherwise, with the eye of enmity and quarrelsomeness, or with heedlessness and carelessness, it is impossible for anybody to see these facts.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 100

وَجَعَلُواْ لِلّهِ شُرَكَاء الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُواْ لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

100. "And they set up the jinn associates with Allah, while He created them, and they falsely attributed to Him sons and daughters without knowledge, Glory be to Him, and highly Exalted is He above what they ascribe (to Him)."

Allah is The Creator of All Things!

In this verse, and some verses next to it, the Qur'an points to a part of improper and superstitious beliefs of pagans and the believers of some wrong schools of thought, accompanied with a logical answer to them. At first, it says:

"And they set up the jinn associates with Allah..."

Then, the Qur'an answers to this superstitious imagination and, pointing to the creation of jinn, it says:

".... while He created them....."

How is it possible that a created being can be the associate of the Creator? Association is the sign of being of the same class and in the same level, while a created creature can never be in the same level with the Creator.

Other superstition was that they believed in the existence of children for the Lord. The verse continues saying:

"....and they falsely attributed to Him sons and daughters without knowledge....."

In fact, the best reason for proving that these superstitious opinions are false is the same fact that can be understood from the phrase "without knowledge". This means that they have no rational reason or evidence for these superstitions.

The question is that which sects attributed sons to Allah. In some other verses, the Qur'an has mentioned two groups who towed that false idea. One of those two groups was Christians who believed Jesus was God's son. And the other was the Jews who believed Ezra was His son.

But, Surah Taubah No.9 verse 30 denotes that the belief in the existence of son for the Lord was not allocated to the Christians and the Jews. This wrong idea had existed among the former people with superstitious schools of thought, too.

Now, what about the belief in the existence of daughters for the Lord? In Surah Az-Zukhruf No.43. verse 19, the Qur'an itself says:

"And they make the angels who are the servants of the Beneficent (God) - female (divinities) ..."

But, at the end of the verse under discussion the Qur'an nullifies all these superstitious imaginations and these vain baseless fancies, and, by an expressive and clear sentence, it says:

"...Glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe, (to Him)."

Notes

1. Surah An-Naml, No.27, verse 76
2. And, as some Islamic literature indicates, there come forth some believing persons from some disbelieving ones, and vice versa.
3. Surah Ar-Rahman, No.55, Verse 5
4. Surah Al-'Anbiya, No.21, Verse 33

Section 11: Allah the Creator and Knower of everything

Allah the Creator of the heavens and the earth, The Divine Unity - polytheism to be gradually wiped out -Not to abuse false gods lest the infidels might ignorantly abuse Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 101 - 102

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

ذَلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ لا إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

101. "(He is the) Divisor of the heavens and the earth! How can He have a child while there is for Him no consort, and He created everything, and He is All-Knowing of all things?"

102. "That is Allah your Lord! there is no god but He, the Creator of everything, Therefore worship Him, for He is Guardian over all things."

This verse answers to the superstitious beliefs. At first, it says:

"(He is the) Divisor of the heavens and the earth!"

The Qur'anic term /badi'/ means 'the producer of something new without having a precedent', That is, Allah, Glory be to Him, has brought the heavens and the earth into being without any previous substance, or design and plan.

Moreover, how is it possible that He can have a child while He has not a spouse? The verse says:

"…How can He have a child while there is for Him no consort.....?"

Basically, He does not need a spouse, and who can be His spouse when He has created all creatures?

Once more the Qur'an emphasizes the rank of Allah's creative power in respect to all existing things and all human beings, and His Scientific Omnipotence in respect to all of them, and says:

"... and He created everything, and He is All-Knowing of all things?"

After mentioning the creative power of Allah in respect to all things, and bringing the heavens and the earth into existence, and that He is Glorified to have body and bodily issues, or to have any spouse and child, and that His Scientific Omnipotence in respect to everything and all affairs, it concludes thus:

"That is Allah your Lord....."

And, since there is none to have some attributes like them, then none is eligible to be worshipped save Allah. He is both the Lord and the Creator. Therefore, only Allah (S.w.T.) can be the deity. Thus do worship Him.

The verse continues saying:

"... there is no god but He, the Creator of everything. Therefore worship Him....."

In order to cut out any hope to anything except the hope to Allah, and to eradicate any idolatry and, in general, any reliance to other than Allah, at the end of the verse it adds:

"... for He is Guardian over all things."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 103

لاَّ تُدْرِكُهُ الأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

103. "The eyes do not perceive Him, but He perceives the eyes, He is all subtle, the All-Aware."

In order to prove Allah’s sovereignty and Guardianship over every thing, and to prove His difference from the whole creatures, it says:

"The eyes do not perceive Him, but He perceives the eyes...."

Allah is the bestower of kinds of blessings, and He is aware of all details and cognizant of everything. He knows the expedients of the servants as well as their needs. Therefore, He treats them as His Grace requires.

"... He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware"

In fact, the one who wants to be guardian, educator, and shelter of every existence should be qualified with these attributes.

Allah is not seen by the Eyes

Rational demonstrations (proofs) testify that Allah can never be seen by vision, because eyes can see only substances, or some of the qualities of substances. Then, something which is neither a substance, nor it is the quality of a substance, is never seen by vision.

In other words, if something is seen by vision, it certainly should have place, direction, and material, while He, the Exalted, is above all these things. Allah is an infinite Essence that is why He is beyond the world of material. In the world of material, everything is finite and limited.

It has been narrated from Imam Rida (as) who said:

"The objective meaning of /'absar/ (the eyes) is not the eyes of head, but it is the eye of heart, the insight."

That is, He (S.w.T.) is beyond apparition, suspicion, and imagination. He cannot be contained in any body's imagination, and none can comprehend the how ness of His Essence[1].

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 104

قَدْ جَاءكُم بَصَآئِرُ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُم بِحَفِيظٍ

104. "Certainly clear proofs have come to you from your Lord. Whoever therefore sees (with insight), it is to his own gain, and whoever be blind, it is to his own loss; and am not a keeper over you."

"Certainly clear proofs have come to you from your Lord....."

The term /basa'ir/ is the plural form of /basirat/ which means some indications and guidance by which the truth will be manifested. It also means the light of the heart (mind), while /basar/ means the light of the eye. Then the phrase means that they have come to you from your Lord with the purpose of paying attention to this matter that what is right to Allah and what is not.

By means of the divine revelation, there have come down some information that are considered as a light and the power of sight for your hearts (minds).

"... Whoever therefore sees (with insight), it is to his own gain, and whoever be blind, it is to his own loss;

That is, the person who looks at the Truth and believes in it, has worked for his own profit; and the one who relinquishes it, has acted toward his own loss.

It is understood from this verse that people are not obliged in doing their affairs. They are free and authorized in choosing them and performing them.

Then, the revelation commands the Prophet (S) to tell those people that he is not a protector of them to keep their deeds and to give them rewards, but he is only an admonisher, while Allah is their protector. The verse says:

"... and I am not a keeper over you."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 105

وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الآيَاتِ وَلِيَقُولُواْ دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

105. "And thus do We repeat the Signs, that they may say (unto you): "You have studied" and that We may make it clear to a people who know."

In order to emphasize that the final decision for choosing the way of right and the way of wrong is upon the servants of Allah themselves, the verse says:

"And thus do We repeat the Signs...."

But a group of the opponents may oppose you and, without having any authentic evidence or research, they say that you have learnt these lessons from the Jews and the Christians, which have been taken from their revealed Books.

"... that they may say (unto you): "You have studied" ..."

Yet, Our aim is that We make it manifest for those who have knowledge and understanding.

"... and that We may make it clear to a people who know."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 106

اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ لا إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

106. "Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; there is no god but He; and turn away from the polytheists."

Here, the Qur'an has defined the duty of the Prophet (S) against the quarrelsomeness, rancor, and accusations of the opponents. This holy verse implies that his duty is to follow whatever has been revealed to him (S) from the side of Allah (S.w.T.), the Lord, and that there is no deity but He.

The verse says:

"Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; there is no god but He....."

His duty is also to be heedless toward polytheists, their undue accusations, and their vain words. It says:

"... and turn away from the polytheists."

In fact, this verse is a kind of soothing and spiritual strengthening for the Prophet (S), so that he can be ever firm in his strong determination and that he withdraws aught.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 107

وَلَوْ شَاء اللّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُواْ وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْهِم بِوَكِيلٍ

107. "And had Allah pleased, they would not have associated others (with Him), and We have not made you a keeper over them, nor are you over them a guardian."

This fact is confirmed again in this verse that Allah does not please to force them to believe in Truth.

"And had Allah pleased, they would not have associated others (with Him)....."

Also, the holy verse emphasizes on the same subject that was mentioned before, saying:

"... and We have not made you a keeper over them....."

As your duty is not to force them to believe, then:

"... nor are you over them a guardian."

The tones of these verses are greatly considerable from this point of view that belief in Allah and in Islam can never have the obligatory state. Hence progression in this way should be performed through the way of logic, reasoning and penetrating in the souls and minds of people.

The reason of this idea is that an obligatory belief is worthless. The important matter is that people comprehend the facts and accept them with their own authority and will.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 108

وَلاَ تَسُبُّواْ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ فَيَسُبُّواْ اللّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّهِم مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

108. "And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, or they will abuse Allah in revenge without any knowledge. Thus unto every nation have We made their behavior seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, so He will inform them of what they used to do."

In this verse, Allah emphasizes on this meaning that idols and deities of the pagans should never be abused. This action causes the holy Essence of Allah to be abused by them, revengefully and unjustly, because of their ignorance.

As it is understood from some Islamic traditions, it happened that sometimes some of the believers, who were seriously unbecoming from the phenomenon of idolatry, used indecent language and abused the idols of the pagans.

The Qur'an explicitly prohibited that action. From the point of Islam, having modesty and observing the principles of discipline, and courtesy in speech is necessary for a believer, even if it is before the most superstitious and the worst wrong religions.

It is not possible to prevent a person from a wrong way by means of abusing him, because everybody is zealous unto his own beliefs and deeds. The verse says:

"And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, or they will abuse Allah in revenge without any knowledge....."

However, every sect or group of people think that their conduct is fair, because it is as their nature pleases, but, in the meantime, they have been introduced the Truth in order that they act accordingly and avoid the falsehood. The verse continues saying:

"... thus unto every nation have We made their behavior seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, so He will inform them of what they used to do."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 109

وَأَقْسَمُواْ بِاللّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الآيَاتُ عِندَ اللّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءتْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

109. "And they swore by Allah with the strongest of their oaths, that if a sign came to them they would most certainly believe in it. Say: 'Signs are only with Allah '. And what should make you know that when it comes they will not believe? "

Once a group of pagans of the Quraysh[2] came to the Prophet (S) and said that he should bring some miracles like those of Moses and Jesus (as), so that they could believe in him. The Messenger of Allah (S) asked them what action he should do.

They answered him hat he should change the Safa mount (located in Mecca) into gold, restore he dead to life, show them the Lord and the angels, and so on. They swore that in that case they would believe.

Gabriel came down and revealed the verse to the Messenger of Allah (S) indicating that miracles are done according to Allah's Will, not according to their desires.

Moreover, some suggestions that some ignorant people offer are sometimes opposite to human intelligence. It is not such that the world becomes the hall of exhibition and the system of existence changes with the desires of some pagans.

Gabriel brought the divine message to the Holy Prophet (S) indicating that if the Prophet (S) wished, his invitation would be accepted; but if they did not believe in Islam, all of them would be punished seriously and they would be destroyed.

So, if their desires were not performed and they were not paid attention to, they might repent and turn to the right way. Then, the Prophet (S) accepted it too, and the verse was revealed saying:

"And they swore by Allah with the strongest of their oaths, that if a sign came to them they would most certainly believe in it. Say: 'Signs are only with Allah '. And what should make you know that when it comes they will not believe?"

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 110

وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

110. "And (because of pertinacities of infidels) We will turn their hearts and their sights, even as they did not believe in it the first time; and We will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."

Here, in this verse, Allah announces that as the retribution of their sin and their wrong conduct, He will derange their sights and their hearts. That is, Allah is cognizant of the secrets of the hearts and the treachery of eyes, and He sees their inward (state) that is opposite to their apparent (aspect).

Allah, the Exalted, knew that there was something in those hearts and eyes that was different from what they claimed. Therefore, if the prophetic miracles that they asked for were performed, they could not believe in him yet. It was similar to the condition of their former people when they did not believe in the verses that were revealed for the first time.

Therefore, they will be left to themselves so that they be entangled with their own sins and disobedience. They will sink in their meanness, and remain bewildered. Hence, as a result of their disobedience, they will be punished in the Hereafter.

"And (because of pertinacities of infidels) We will turn their hearts and their sights, even as they did not believe in it the first time; and We will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."

Notes

1. At-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 1, PP. 547,548; Tafsir-us-Safi, P. 145; Tafsir. Jawami'-ul-Jami', P. 230; and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, P. 754

2. The Quraysh were the noblest tribe of Arabia, the tribe to which the holy Prophet himself (S) belonged. They had the custody of the Ka'bah, the central shrine of Arabia.

Section 12: Every Apostle Had an Enemy

Opposition to the Truth from the polytheists in all ages -Every apostle had an enemy - Polytheism totally opposed to Islam.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 111

وَلَوْ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلآئِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلاً مَّا كَانُواْ لِيُؤْمِنُواْ إِلاَّ أَن يَشَاء اللّهُ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ

111. "And even if We sent down the angels to them, and the dead spoke to them, and We mustered all things before them, (even then) they would not believe, unless Allah pleases; but most of them (deliberately) ignore."

The purpose of these holy verses is to make clear that some of the seekers of surprising miracles are not true in their demands and their aim is not to embrace the Truth. That is why some of their wishes (like that Allah comes in front of them) are basically impossible.

In this verse the Qur'an explicitly says that had their demands been fulfilled in the same form that they wanted, and the angels had been sent down upon them, and the dead had come to speak with them, and in short whatever they had wished were provided for them, even then, they would not believe. Here is the verse:

"And even if We sent down the angels to them, and the dead spoke to them, and We mustered all things before them, (even then) they would not believe....."

Then, to emphasize on the matter, it implies that it is in one case possible that they believe and that is in the case that Allah forces them to accept the Faith by His Sovereign Will:

".... Unless Allah pleases...."

And, it is evident that this sort of Faith will contain no training income and no effect of perfection. So, at the end of the verse, it adds:

".... but most of them (deliberately) ignore."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 112

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نِبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاء رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

112. "And thus did We assign for every prophet an enemy, the satans from humans and jinn, who (secretly) inspire each other with flashy words to deceive (them). And had your Lord pleased they would not have done it. (Allah's way of treatment is freedom of men) therefore, leave them with what they forge."

It was said in the former verses that the hostility of the stubborn enemies against the Holy Prophet (S) was not confined to him alone, but other prophets had such enemies, too. In this verse, it says:

"And thus did We assign for every prophet an enemy, the satans from humans an Jinn…"

And their manner was that they spoke some charming words secretly and occasionally, by whispering to each other, in order to deceive them. The verse says:

".... who (secretly) inspire each other with flashy words to deceive (them)...."

Yet, it should not be made mistake, and if Allah pleased, He could forcefully stop them doing that. The verse says:

"... And had your Lord pleased they would not have done it. ..."

But Allah did not do that because He wished to let people act freely in a scene where they can be tested, improved and trained. Therefore, at the end of the verse, He commands His Messenger that he never pays attention to these followers of Satans and that he leaves both them and their accusations with themselves.

"... (Allah's way of treatment is freedom of men) therefore, leave them with what they forge."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 113

وَلِتَصْغَى إِلَيْهِ أَفْئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُواْ مَا هُم مُّقْتَرِفُونَ

113. "And (the result of those Satanic inspirations is) so that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, may incline to it, and that they may be well-pleased with it (the flashy words), and that they may commit (the evil) they were committing."

The consequence of the charming suggestions and deceitful preaches of the satans is recited in this verse, as follows:

"And (the result of those Satanic inspirations is) so that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, may incline to it....."

Then, it adds that the end of this inclination will be a complete consent to the Satanic deeds. Here is the verse:

"... and that they may be well-pleased with it (the flashy words)....."

Therefore, the end of them all, in this world, will be committing kinds of sins, indecencies, and vices, and, consequently, they will be involved with the result of the same corruptions people who had been before them in the history of the world.

"... and that they may commit (the evil) they were committing."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 114

أَفَغَيْرَ اللّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنَزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلاً وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

114. "(Say :) 'Shall I seek a judge other than Allah, while it is He Who has sent down to you the Book, (fully) explained? And those whom We have given the Book know that it has been sent down from your Lord with the truth, so be not you of the doubters."

In fact, this verse is the conclusion of the previous verses. It indicates that, with all these clear verses which were recited, whom should be accepted as an arbitrator? The verse says:

"(Say:) 'Shall I seek a judge other than Allah....."

This heavenly Book explains all the necessary training facts of man and has separated between right and wrong, light and darkness, and disbelief and

Faith; and it is Allah Who has sent it down to you. Concerning this meaning, the Qur'an continues saying:

"... while it is He Who has sent down to you the Book, (fully) explained..."

Then, addressing the Prophet (S), the verse implies that not only he and the Muslims know that this Book is from Allah, but also the people of the Book (The Jews and the Christians), who have seen the Signs of this heavenly Book in their own Books, know that this Book has been sent down from the Lord with the Truth. The verse says:

"... And those whom We have given the Book know that it has been sent down from your Lord with the truth....."

Therefore, there is no place of any doubt and hesitation in it, and you, O' Our Messenger, never doubt in it.

"...so be not you of the doubters."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 115

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلاً لاَّ مُبَدِّلِ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

115. "And perfected is the Word of your Lord in truth and justice; there naught that can change His Words, and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

In this verse, The Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), indicates that his Lord's Word was completed in truth and justice, so that no one change its containing words, and the Lord is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. The verse says:

"And perfected is the Word of your Lord in truth and justice; there is naught that can change His Words, and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

The objective meaning of the term 'word', mentioned in the above verse, is 'The Qur'an', since in the former verses the subject matter was also recited upon 'The Qur'an'.

Indeed, the verse refers to the fact that there is no doubt about Qur'an, because it is perfect and faultless in any respects. Its facts upon history and its information about events are all true, and its ordinances and laws are utterly just.

Some of the commentators, attaching this verse, have reasoned the impossibility of influencing in perverting the Qur'an.

They say that phrase: "... There is naught that can change His Words ..." points to this fact that nobody is able to cast any change in the Qur'an, neither from point of the Arabic spelling of the words, nor from the point of information of the events, nor from the point of ordinances and laws.

Therefore, this heavenly Book, which must be the guide of humankind until the end of the world, will be secured and protected from the larceny of treacherous persons and distorters.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 116

وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي الأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّهِ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَخْرُصُونَ

116. "And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from the way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture; and they do nothing but surmise. "

It was said before that the current Surah was sent down in Mecca. At that time Muslims were intensively in minority.

Concerning this minority and the conclusive majority of idol worshippers and the opponents of Islam, sometimes it might happen that some persons suspected that why there were so many followers of idolatry while that creed was futile and false, and if Muslims were right, why they were so few.

To remove this sort of imagination, the verse addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"And if you obey most of these in the earth, they will lead you astray from the way of Allah. ..."

In the next sentence of the verse, the Qur'an states the reason of this subject. It points out that the reason of it is that they do not behave upon logic and a correct thought. Their guide is conjecture based on delusion, and some imaginations polluted with low desires, lusts and lies. The verse says:

"... They follow nothing but conjecture; and they do nothing but surmise."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 117

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

117. "Verily your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He (a/so) knows best those who are guided."

In view of the fact that the concept of the previous verse is that mere majority can not show the way of truth and it is not the reason of right, the result of it is that the way of truth should be taken only from the source of Allah, although the followers of truth are in minority.

The Qur'an makes the reason of this matter clear in this verse. It points out that your Lord, Who is aware of all things and there is not the least mistake in His endless knowledge, knows best which way is the way of astray and which way is the way of guidance, and, then, He knows best the misguided and the guided.

The verse says:

"Verily your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He (also) knows best those who are guided."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 118

فَكُلُواْ مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ

118. "Therefore, eat (the meat) of that over which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you are believers in His Signs."

The Effects of Paganism should be removed totally

Through previous verses, the reality of Unity was proved, and the falsehood of paganism and idolatry was made manifest.

One of the results of this question is that Muslims should avoid consuming the meat of the animals slaughtered by the name of idols. They

should use only the meat of those animals which are slaughtered by the name of Allah.

Concerning this meaning, the Qur'an says:

"Therefore, eat (the meat) of that over which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you are believers in His Signs."

That is, the Faith is not only a bare claim, a lonely statement, and a simple belief. But it should be proved through practice, too.

The person, who believes in Allah, will consume only these kinds of meat.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 119

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلاَّ تَأْكُلُواْ مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُم مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلاَّ مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً لَّيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ

119. "And what has happened to you that you do not eat (the meat) of that over which Allah's name has been mentioned, while He has (already) explained for you what He has forbidden unto you, except what you are compelled to (eat)? And indeed many (people) mislead (others) by their desires, without any knowledge. Verily, your Lord knows best the transgressors."

In this verse, the Qur'an says why you do not eat from the meat of those animals over which the name of Allah has been mentioned, while He has detailed for you what has been made unlawful for you. The verse says:

"And what has happened to you that you do not eat (the meat) of that over which Allah's name has been mentioned, while He has (already) explained for you what He has forbidden unto you....."

Then, one case has been exceptional from this general law. It says:

"... except what you are compelled to (eat)?..."

This condition may come forth for a person in the desert or in a deserted place because of an intensive hunger or being captured in the grips of some pagans who force the one against this matter.

After that statement, it adds:

"... And indeed many (people) mislead (others) by their desires, without any knowledge. ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, it says that Allah is fully aware and knows best those who are transgressors. These are those who not only go astray from the straight and true path, but also, attaching false proofs, try to mislead others. The verse says:

"... Verily, your Lord knows best the transgressors."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 120

وَذَرُواْ ظَاهِرَ الإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَقْتَرِفُونَ

120. "And abandon outward sin and the inward one; verily those who commit sin soon shall be recompensed with what they used to commit."

Since some people usually commit this unlawful action (fornication) hidden, following that meaning, in this verse, as a general law, the Qur'an says:

"And abandon outward sin and the inward one....."

It is said that at the Age of Ignorance some people believed that fornication was not a vice when it was done secretly, and it was considered a sin when it was committed manifestly.

Even now, in the present century, there are some persons who have practically accepted this logic of the Age of Ignorance, and they fear committing only the outward sins. Such people, having no feeling of incommodity, easily commit some hidden sins. The above-mentioned verse seriously condemns this logic.

Then, as a remembrance, the verse warns the sinners to the evil fate that waits for them, and says:

"... verily those who commit sin soon shall be recompensed with what they used to commit."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 121

وَلاَ تَأْكُلُواْ مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَى أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

121. "And do not eat (anything) of that over which Allah's name has not been mentioned (at the time of slaughter) and that is indeed transgression, and verily the Satans inspire unto their friends to dispute with you, and if you obey them, you will indeed be polytheists, (too)."

This verse emphasizes on the negative aspect of the matter and its concept of prohibition. It says:

"And do not eat (anything) of that over which Allah's name has not been mentioned (at the time of slaughter)"....

Then, through a short sentence, it negates this action again, and implies that this work is a mischief, a sin, and going out from the path and manner of servitude of Allah and obeying His commandment. It says:

"…and that is indeed transgression…"

And, in order that some simple hearted Muslims would not be affected by their satanic temptations, it adds:

".... and verily the Satans inspire unto their friends to dispute with you....."

But, beware that if you submit to their temptations, you will be counted among pagans, too. The verse says:

".... and if you obey them, you will indeed be polytheists, (too)."

This dispute and temptation may refer to that very logic that pagans inspired unto each other. They said that they ate the meat of the dead animals because the Lord had slaughtered them. That is, if they do not eat the meat of carrions, it is a kind of heedlessness to the deed of Allah.

Some commentators have said that pagans of Arab had learnt it from Zoroastrians. Pagans were inattentive of the fact that the head of whatever dies naturally, besides that it often dies because of a disease, has not been cut, and, therefore, the dirty blood of its body has remained among the levels of its meat. This blood decays thereafter, and surely pollutes the meat, too.

Section 13: The Arch Enemies

The enemies' plot - Enemies shall not succeed - They shall meet disgraceful end,

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 122

أَوَ مَن كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

122. "Is he who was dead (with ignorance and polytheism) and we gave him life (by Our guidance) and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the shadows (of ignorance and polytheism) and he cannot come forth from them? Thus has been made fair seeming for the disbelievers what they were doing."

In this verse, a person who has been misguided and Allah has guided him thereafter, is resembled to a person who has been dead and He has given him life. For such a person, Allah has appointed a light by which he can diffuse light among people.

And He has resembled the person who has remained in his misguidance to a person who walks in darkness without having a guide, and he does not go out from that darkness.

The Qur'an says:

"Is he who was dead (with ignorance and polytheism) and we gave him life (by Our guidance) and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the shadows (of ignorance and polytheism) and he cannot come forth from them? ..."

However, the purpose of this light, mentioned in the above verse, is not only 'the Qur'an' and 'the trainings of the Prophet (S)', but, in addition to these, belief in Allah gives man a new insight, and a fresh concept, which broads the scope of his vision from the material life, and from the inside of the material world, high up towards an extraordinary open vast world.

Under the ray of this light, the one can find his way of life among people and can be saved from a lot of mistakes which others may be entangled with because of greed and avarice. Without that light, the one may fall in such mistakes as a result of materialistic thought, and domination of selfishness and low desires.

There is a holy phrase, recorded in Islamic narrations, which says:

"A believer looks by means of Allah's light."

This phrase is a hint to this very fact.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 123

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكَابِرَ مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُواْ فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلاَّ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

123. "And thus We have appointed in every town its leading criminals that they may plot therein. Yet they do not plot except against their own selves but they are not aware."

The content of this verse points to the situation of the misguided chiefs and the leaders of infidelity and mischief. It implies that Allah has appointed

some leading persons in every town who take the way of committing sin, and by means of plot and deceit, they pervert people from the straight path.

The Qur'anic text is recited:

"And thus We have appointed in every town its leading criminals that they may plot therein. ..."

That is, the final end of disobedience and committing abundant sins was that they became the: robbers of the way of truth, and misled the servants of Allah from the straight path.

So, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an continues saying:

"... Yet they do not plot except against their own selves but they are not aware."

It is clearly understood from this verse that the source of corruptions and calamities, which encompass some societies, is the mischievous men of authority and outstanding men inside these societies. These are those who, by kinds of plot and deceit, change the way of Allah and conceal the feature of truth from people.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 124

وَإِذَا جَاءتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُواْ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَى مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللّهِ اللّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ
رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُواْ صَغَارٌ عِندَ اللّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَمْكُرُونَ

124. "And when a Sign (from Allah) comes to them, they say: 'Never will we believe until we are given the like of what was given to Allah's apostles. Allah knows best where to place His apostleship. Soon there shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from Allah and a severe punishment because of the plots they used to devise."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been narrated that this verse was revealed about a pagan by the name of Walid-ibn-Muqayrah. He was one of the well-known chiefs of the idol worshippers.

He was considered as their reflective faculty. He told the Prophet (S) that if the prophecy were true, he deserved to take that rank more than him because of both his age; that was elder than the Prophet, (S) and his wealth; which was more abundant than that of his (S).

Allah Appoints Prophets

In this verse, the Qur'an shortly, but expressively, points to the kind of thoughts and ridiculous claims of these false leaders, or as the Qur'an says: "...its leading criminals ..."[1] when it says:

"And when a sign (from Allah) comes to them, they say: 'Never will we believe until we are given the like of what was given to Allah's apostles. ..."

The Qur'an gives them a clear answer, and implies that it is not necessary for them to teach Allah how He appoints His prophets and messengers, and among whom He might choose them, because:

"... Allah knows best where to place His apostleship. ..."

It is evident that messenger ship relates neither to age and wealth nor to the circumstances of tribes. But, before mentioning anything else, the necessary conditions of it are: spiritual receptiveness, purity of inward,

noble human virtues, splendid thoughts, strong decisions, and, finally, an extra ordinary piety and morality with the stage of inerrancy.

The existence of these qualities, especially the quality of the receptiveness of the rank of inerrancy; are some things that none knows except Allah. How far the difference is between these conditions and what they have mentioned!

The successors of the Prophet (S) should also have all the qualities and conditions of the Prophet (S), except revelation and divine legislation. That is, such a successor is both the protector of the religion and divine laws, and the guardian of the religion and its regulations, and the spiritual and material leader of people.

That is why he must have both the position of inerrancy and immunity of fault and sin so that he can fulfill his mission, and to become a trusty example and a leader whom is obeyed.

For this very reason, such a successor has to be chosen by Allah, not by people or by a consultative committee. It is only Allah Who knows where to place this position, not people.

So, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an has stated the fate of such sinners and false leaders who claim too much. It indicates that for the plots and deceits that these sinners applied to make people astray, soon they will be put in humiliation and in an intensive punishment before Allah. It says:

"... Soon there shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from Allah and a severe punishment because of the plots they used to devise."

With their wrong actions, these self-lovers wanted to protect their social situation and grandeur, but Allah will despise them so much that they feel the most painful spiritual tortures then.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 125

فَمَن يُرِدِ اللّه أَن يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلإِسْلاَمِ وَمَن يُرِدْ أَن يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا
كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَاء كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللّه الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

125. "Therefore, whomever Allah intends that He should guide him aright, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomever He intends that He should cause him to send astray, He makes his breast narrow and straitened as if he were ascending upwards into the sky. Thus does Allah lay abomination on those who do not believe."

The purpose of the divine guidance and misguidance is to provide the means of guidance for those who deserve it, and to ruin those means for those who are not eligible of it.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic term / Sadr / (breast) is 'heart and spirit', and, therefore, the purpose of 'opening the breast' is broading the scope of mind and thought, as well as the height of spirit, for accepting the Truth and guidance.

This situation needs that the person renounces the low desires and wishes of his heart. He who has not 'an open breast' usually remains inside of himself and does not dare to come out. The fruit of 'an open breast' is, firstly, insight and luminosity and, secondly, a tender heart which accepts the Truth.

Thus, accepting the Truth necessarily needs an innate receptiveness and capacity.

"Therefore, whomever Allah intends that He should guide him aright, He opens his breast to Islam....."

And, the one who is not ready to accept the Truth, can not ascend into the sky of cognition.

"....and whomever He intends that He should cause him to send astray, He makes his breast narrow and straitened as if he were ascending upwards into the sky…"

The result of coming out from the course of natural disposition, intellect, and nature is suffocation, straitened circumstances, and stresses. The corruptors are indeed entangled with straitened circumstances and stresses, although they see themselves in a worldly apparent welfare and progression.

".... Thus does Allah lay abomination on those who do not believe."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 126

وَهَـذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ ُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

126. "And this is the path of your Lord; straight. Indeed We have explained the Signs for people who take admonition."

One of Allah's ways of treatment is that He appoints 'open breasts' for the clear-hearted truth-seekers; and, on the contrary, those obstinate disbelievers who flee from Faith are involved with abomination and lack of divine aid.

Therefore, all ways, save the way of Allah, are either false or blind.

"And this is the path of your Lord; straight. ..."

Allah has completed the argument to all, if they are of those who are attentive.

"... We have explained the Signs for people who take admonition."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 127

لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلاَمِ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

127. "For them shall be the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their Guardian because of what they used to do."

In Heaven, there is no harshness, competition, contradiction, accusation and jealousy, grudge and lie, grief, and no kind of worriment, death, disease, poverty and so on,

"For them shall be the abode of peace...."

And, above the bounty of security and peace, there is the existence of being under the light of especial grace of Allah therein,

Briefly speaking, the inhabitants of Heaven are those who, like the near-stationed angels and even higher than them, have rank of nearness with their Lord.

".... with their Lord....."

However, reaching to the divine security and guardianship can be obtained under the light of (good) deeds. The verse says:

".... and He is their Guardian because of what they used to do."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 128

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ قَدِ اسْتَكْثَرْتُم مِّنَ الإِنسِ وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُم مِّنَ الإِنسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِيَ أَجَّلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلاَّ مَا شَاء اللّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

128. "And on the day He musters all together, (addressing the Satans of jinn, He says:) 'O' assembly of jinn! you took away a great part of mankind. 'And their friends from among the human beings will say: 'O' our Lord! Some of us profited by others and we have reached our term which You had assigned for us.' He will say: 'The fire is your abode, to remain in it (forever), except that Allah wills (to forgive some of you) '. Verily your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing!'

Following the former matters, the Qur'an says:

"And on the day He musters all together, (addressing the Satans of jinn, He says:) 'O' assembly of jinn! You took away a great part of mankind.'..."

Then those of human beings who had followed them will say that they profited from each other. The verse says:

"... And their friends from among the human beings will say: ' O' our Lord! Some of us profited by others ..."

The interest that the jinns have benefited from human beings is that they have been their chiefs and masters and those human beings have obeyed their low desires and lusts. The interest that human beings have benefited from jinns is that the jinns have ornamented the vain pleasures and lusts before their eyes and have made them amused by these apparently fair things.

"... and we have reached our term which You had assigned for us.'..."

This part of the verse means that they say: 'We have reached the death You had appointed for us.'

Some commentators say that the purpose of this statement is to point to the resurrection of the dead in Hereafter.

"... He will say: 'The Fire is your abode, to remain in it (forever)....."

Addressing such people, Allah says that Hell Fire is their dwelling place and they will remain in punishment there forever.

Returning from Fire is an exception that refers to guilty Muslims. If He pleases, He will punish them; and if He wills, He will forgive them by His grace.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an says that Allah is Wise in His affairs, and He knows every thing.

"... Verily your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 129

وَكَذَلِكَ نُوَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكْسِبُونَ

129. "And thus do We make some of the iniquitous to befriend others on account of what they used to earn."

As a trial, Allah may leave the unjust to themselves and make them friends of each other in order that they show affection to each other. In this

case, their retribution, that He will give them, will be as much as they deserve.

So, similar to the situation of the transgressors among jinn and human, on the Resurrection Day, when Allah will refer them to each other and He will declare Himself to be clear of them, we will refer the unjust to each other, too.

There are some persons who have followed some persons other than Allah. They will be left to their masters on that Day, and will be told to go to them for the deliverance from Fire.

The purpose of this statement is to announce them that, on the Resurrection Day, there will not be any friend to save them from the chastisement.

In other words, as a result of the friendship and affection that they had between themselves, they will be sent to the Hell following each other.[2]

"And thus do We make some of the iniquitous to be friend others on account of what they used to earn."

Notes

1. Surah 'An'am, No.6, Verse 123.

2. According to some Islamic narrations, the retribution of the following persons will be the domination of the cruel ones upon them. These persons are: those who abandon enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and those who do not pay khums (one fifth levy) alms and religious taxes, and those who assist the unjust. (Atyab-ul-Bayan, the commentary) A tradition indicates that when Allah is pleased with the deeds of a group of people, He will refer their affairs to some good persons; but when He is not pleased with their deeds, He may put their affairs in the hands of some evil ones. (Kashf-ul- 'Asrar, the commentary)

Section 14: The Decreed Punishment shall be unavoidable

The warning against the sure punishment -The decreed punishment being unavoidable -The Superstitious infanticide -Every soul shall bear witness against its own self,

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 130

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاء يَوْمِكُمْ هَـذَا قَالُواْ شَهِدْنَا عَلَى أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُواْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ كَافِرِينَ

130. " 'O' assembly of the jinn and mankind! Did there not come to you messengers fro yourselves, recounting to you My Signs and warning you of the meeting of this Day?' They will say: 'We bear witness against ourselves.' And the life of this world deceived them, and they will bear witness against their own selves that they were (constantly) disbelievers.

On the Day of Judgment, Allah (S.w.T.) will tell the cruel Satanic persons:

"'O' assembly of the jinn and mankind! Did there not come to you messengers from yourselves…"

Of course, all Divine prophets were appointed from humankind, but since the totality of jinn and men have been addressed at first, due to his respect, the prophets have been attributed to all, too, although they have been from the same kind.

"... recounting to you My Signs and warning you of the meeting of this Day?'..."

These prophets recited the proofs and verses of Allah to you, and they warned you of meeting such a Day, too.

"... They will say: 'We bear witness against ourselves.' And the life of this world deceived them, and they will bear witness against their own selves, that they were (constantly) disbelievers."

This confession of the sinners, which occurs before Allah on the Day of Judgment, denotes the fact that they have accepted that Allah’s argument has been completed to them and He has sent prophets and guides toward them.

However, it is also narrated by Ibn- 'Abbas that every prophet was chosen from among human beings, and then, that human-prophet would choose a messenger for jinns from among themselves.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 131

ذَلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُن رَّبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَافِلُونَ

131. "This is because your Lord would never destroy the towns unjustly while their people were negligent."

One of Allah’s ways of treatment is that, by sending prophets and different kinds of warning, He shows right and wrong to people and states the facts for them to complete the argument. It is in that case that if they behave heedlessly, He will punish them.

This general law and way of treatment is referred to in numerous verses of the Qur'an, including: Surah-Ash-Shu'ara, No.26. Verse 208 which says:

"And We did not destroy any town but it had (its) warners:",

and Surah Al-Isra, No.17. Verse 15; where it says:

"... nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle."

Therefore Allah's chastisements are given because of justice that exists in the Essence of His Lordship.

Regarding to this, it can be said that punishment without former statement of admonishment and warning, is unjust and is a vice-

"This is because your Lord would never destroy the towns unjustly while their people were negligent."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 132

وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجَاتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُواْ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

132. "And for all (men) there are ranks in accordance with what they have done, and your Lord is not heedless of what they do."

Allah is just and He gives everyone the rank due to the deeds the one has performed.

Thus, both the felicity and evil fortune of people depend on their own deeds and conduct.

"And for all (men) there are ranks in accordance with what they have done, and your Lord is not heedless of what they do."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 133 - 134

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِن بَعْدِكُم مَّا يَشَاء كَمَا أَنشَأَكُم مِّن ذُرِّيَّةِ قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ

إِنَّ مَا تُوعَدُونَ لآتٍ وَمَا أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

133. "And your Lord Self-Sufficient, the Lord of Mercy, if He pleases, He may take you off; and make whom He pleases successors after you, just as He produced you from the descendants of other people."

134. "Verily what you are promised, will certainly come, and you cannot make (Allah) helpless (to flee from His retribution)."

In the previous verses the statement was about rewards justly and without atrocity given to the eligible persons. Here, in this verse, the Qur'an refers to the Mercy and Self -Sufficiency of Allah, both of which are reasons to His Justice. The verse says:

"And your Lord is Self-Sufficient, the Lord of Mercy....."

That is, your Lord is not in need of His servants and their worships. He is the owner of clemency. He bestows mercy upon people. He enjoins them to do some duties in order to deliver some great benefits to them.

These benefits are not obtainable unless through the way of being eligible of them. This eligibility can be gained by means of fulfilling the divine duties accompanied with glorification and veneration unto Allah.

"... if He pleases, He may take you off; and make whom He pleases successors after you, just as He produced you from the descendants of other people."

The Qur'an addresses the sinners and says that if Allah pleased He (S.w.T.) would destroy all of you. Then, after your destruction and your annihilation, He would appoint another group instead of you who should obey Him, just as the same form that He created you from the generation of other people who existed before you.

"Verily what you are promised, will certainly come, and you cannot make (Allah) helpless (to flee from His retribution)."

It is completely sure that whatever you are promised to, such as resurrection, reward and retribution, and the varieties of situations and differences that there are between the ranks of Heaven and the levels of Hell Fire, will certainly come, while you are not outside the sovereignty and realm of Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 135

قُلْ يَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُواْ عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

135. "Say: ' O' my people! act according to your ability; verily I too act. Then soon you will know for whom will be the (good) end of the abode. Surely the unjust will not be felicitous'."

The verse announces to the disbelievers that they act as far as they can and do their best as much as it is possible for them, and also in a form that their possibilities let them.

"Say: 'O' my people! act according to your ability....."

It is so that I, in my turn, do my best, too.

"... verily I too act ..."

The purpose of this part of the verse is that the Prophet (S) says to the disbelievers that they might remain in their infidelity and hostility, and he (the Prophet) would persist on Islam and be affirmed in patience before them, too.

"... Then soon you will know for whom will be the (good) end of the abode. ..."

It will not be very late that you will come to know which of us will have a good and admirable end.

"... Surely the unjust will not be felicitous."

This phrase has been added as a warning and threat of punishment when it says that the unjust will not be successful in reaching to their own ideal?

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 136

وَجَعَلُواْ لِلّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُواْ هَـذَا لِلّهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَهَـذَا لِشُرَكَآئِنَا فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ فَلاَ يَصِلُ إِلَى اللّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى شُرَكَآئِهِمْ سَاء مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

136. "And they (the polytheists) assigned to Allah out of what He has created of filth and cattle, a portion, and said: 'This is for Allah', according to their assertion, 'And this is for our associates.' Then what is for their associates does not reach Allah, and what is for Allah reaches their associates. (How) evil is the judgment that they make!"

The statements and decisions of those who go out of the path of prophets' training and enter the land of imagination are imaginary and without logic.

They consider themselves the possessors of everything, and set divisions between them.

Once they know sons as their own share and daughters as Allah's share:

"What! for you the male and for Him the females." (Surah An-Najm No. 53 verse 21).

And another time, according to their imagination, they divide filth and cattle. The verse says:

"And they (the polytheists) assigned to Allah out of what He has created of filth and cattle, a portion, and said: 'This is for Allah according to their assertion, 'And this is for our associates.'

Then what is for their associates does not reach Allah, and what is for Allah reaches their associates. ..."

Polytheists imagined that the share of their idols was unchangeable. Therefore, they spent it upon idol temples and the servants therein; but when the money of expenditure was insufficient, they expended the share of God for idol-temples, for the reason that the God of the skies was free from want. They expended it neither for infants, nor for the poor, nor for guests.

"... (How) evil is the judgment that they make!"

They judge badly, because they consider their idols prior to God. They do something that is neither legal nor religious. And, which judgment is more indecent and more shameful than this that a person supposes a worthless piece of wood or stone higher than the Creator of the world of existence? Can a degradation of thought worse than this be considered?

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 137

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلاَدِهِمْ شُرَكَآؤُهُمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاء اللّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

137. "And thus their associates have made fair seeming to most of the polytheists the killing of their children, that they may destroy them and confound their religion for them. And had Allah pleased they would not have done so. Therefore, leave them with what they forge."

Here, Allah refers to another indecent quality of the specifications of these people. The verse says:

"And thus their associates have made fair seeming to most of the polytheists the killing of their children....."

As they assigned share from their filth and cattle for God, Satan also made fair seeming killing their daughters and burying them alive for fear of poverty and scorn.

Some commentators have said that the custom of killing daughters came forth from the time when Nu'man-ibn-Munthir plundered a tribe of Arabs and took their females captive. The daughter of Oays-ibn-' Asim was also among the captives.

When the two parties made peace, all women went their own homes except Qays' daughter, who preferred to stay among the enemy's troop. Qays made an oath that he would bury alive any daughter was born in his house.

"... that they may destroy them ..."

The Arabic sign 'li', in this part of the verse, refers to the end of the action. Then the phrase means that the result of ornamentation of slaying child was the destruction of people.

There were, of course, some obstinate persons among them who intended to kill them, too.

"... and confound their religion for them ..."

Another result was that their religion became dubious to them and they hesitated.

"... And had Allah pleased they would not have done so ..."

If Allah (S.w.T.) had desired to prohibit them its performance, or to force them to abandon it, He would have done it and prevented them from doing that. But this work did not fit to responsibility, which is an arbitrary affair.

"... Therefore, leave them with what they forge."

Do leave them then with their lies and calumnies and let them be in their own state, for Allah will retribute them. This phrase is stated in the utmost threat.

This verse indicates that ornamentation of slaying and slaughter itself both were among their own practices, and they were liars when they attributed it to Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 138

وَقَالُواْ هَـذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَحَرْثٌ حِجْرٌ لاَّ يَطْعَمُهَا إِلاَّ مَن نَّشَاء بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ ظُهُورُهَا
وَأَنْعَامٌ لاَّ يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ اللّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاء عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ

138. "And they said: ' These are cattle and tillage prohibited, None may eat them except whom we please' -so they assert -'and (there are) cattle whose back are forbidden and cattle over which they do not mention Allah's name' - forging a lie against Him, Soon He will requite them for what they used to for."

The Qur'an has referred to another false belief of idolaters' notion in this verse. They considered camels, cows, sheep, and filth unlawful, with their own imagination, and they divided them for gods. They said that none could eat from their meat unless they would let.

"And they said: ' These are cattle and tillage prohibited, None may eat them except whom we please' -so they assert -"....

When the holy verse says "So they assert" it means that they had no reason for this action of theirs, but they encumbered themselves only imaginarily.

".... 'and (there are) cattle whose back are forbidden"....

The objective meaning of the cattle on whose backs they believed was unlawful to ride, were as follows:

A she-camel that had brought forth ten she-camel issues; and a she-camel which had brought forth five issues and her ears were slit; and a male camel which had caused ten issues.[1]

"... and cattle over which they do not mention Allah's name' - forging a lie against Him ..."

Mujahid, a commentator, says that there were some cattle over which, and over their limbs, they did not mention the name of Allah, and they did

not perform pilgrimage rites on them as well. Or, when slaughtering them, they mentioned the names of idols over them, not the name of Allah.

They used to do these things with the reason that Allah had commanded them to do so. But that was a lie and a calumny.

"... Soon He will requite them for what they used to forge."

Allah will give them soon their retribution for the lies and calumnies they used to forge against Him.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 139

وَقَالُواْ مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَـذِهِ الأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِّذُكُورِنَا وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِن يَكُن مَّيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاء سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ حِكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

139. "And they said: 'What is in the bellies of these cattle is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our wives. But if it be born dead, then all of them are partners in it. Soon He will requite them for their attributing (falsehood to Him). Verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

Here, Allah narrates one of another false meaning of their statements. The Qur'an says:

"And they said: ' What is in the bellies of these cattle is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our wives. ..."

The pagans, whom were discussed about formerly, said that whatever was in the wombs of those cattle, whose meat and riding on them was unlawful for them was exclusively men's, and women were prohibited to consume it.

When it is said that something belongs exclusively to someone, it means that there is no partner for it. It is similar to an action to be done exclusively for Allah.

The term 'male' mentioned in this verse, in Arabic, originally means: 'honour, nobility. The male gender was nobler in the view of them than female gender.

"... But if it be born dead, then all of them are partners in it. ..."

If the issue was born dead, men and women could share in it. Next, the verse says:

"... Soon He will requite them for their attributing (falsehood to Him). ..."

That is, they will be punished soon for their false attribution and wrong manner.

"... Verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

Allah (S.w.T.) is All-Wise, and according to His Wisdom, He either precedes or postpones the retribution of persons. He is also All-Knowing and, therefore, He is aware of their deeds.

This verse numerates four vices concerning the belief practiced by the disbelievers.

1) They slaughtered animals without Allah's leave.

2) They ate the meat of animals, and, claiming that they had been purified, they belied Allah.

3) They made the small freed camels unlawful for women.

4) With no reason, a dead born issue was lawful for both men and women.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 140

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُواْ أَوْلاَدَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّ ُواْ مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّهُ افْتِرَاء عَلَى اللّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّواْ وَمَا كَانُواْ ُهْتَدِينَ

140. "Indeed are lost those who slay their children foolishly without knowledge, and forbid what Allah has provided them, forging falsehood against Allah. They have certainly gone astray and they are not guided aright."

Ibn-' Abbas has said that whoever wishes to know the quantity of the ignorance of the peoples at the time of pre Islamic ignorance, may recite the verses of Surah Al- 'An'am, (Those very verses that were previously discussed).

The ignorant Arabs, imagining becoming nigh to the idols, or on the supposition that they would protect honour and nobility, sacrificed their daughters before idols or buried them alive.

Once there happened that a man came to the Prophet (S) and explained the cause of his worriedness to him. The man said that at the Age of Ignorance Allah had given him a daughter. He wanted to kill her but her wife severely hindered him from committing that action.

That girl matured and there came a solicitor for her. His zeal did not let him to accept the situation. On the other hand, it was not appropriate for her to remain without husband, either. One day, he brought her to a field outside the town and dropped her down into a well. Whatever more she moaned, he did not care.

At this time, the messenger of Allah wept and said:

"Had it not been that the past was forgiven, I would have punished you."

Explanations

1. Superstitions are condemned with the most intensive statements.

2. Ignorance and foolishness are the causes of loss. (These losses may be like losing a child, damage in emotion, the absence of lawful (halal) bounties, Hell, and Allah’s punishment.)

"Indeed are lost those who slay their children foolishly ..."

3. The greatest damage is the sacrificial state of man in the way of falsehood, whether to be sacrificed for idols or to be sacrificed by false imaginations and undue zeals.

4. Banning something needs either canonical evidence or a rational demonstration.

"... without knowledge, and forbid what Allah has provided them, forging falsehood against Allah. They have certainly gone astray and they are not guided aright. "

5. The undue banning of lawful things is a belie forging against Allah; and it is forbidden.

"... and forbid what Allah has provided them ..."

Note

1. Refer to the commentary of verse 103 from Surah 5, too.

Section 15: The Divine Gifts - The Self-Imposed Prohibitions

The various kinds of Divine Gifts -The self-imposed prohibitions of the idolaters,

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 141

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أُكُلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُواْ مِن ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُواْ حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلاَ تُسْرِفُواْ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

141. "And He it is Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and the date-palm, and crops of diverse flavor, and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike. Eat of its fruit when it fructifies, and give its due on the day of harvest, and do not act extravagantly; verily He does not love the extravagant (ones)."

In this verse, Allah, the Glorified, refers to the creation of gardens, vineyards, and tithes. The verse begins as follows:

"And He it is Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised....."

The Arabic term /ma'rusat/ (trellised) points to those tall bushes which are supported on trellis-work, while the term /qayra ma'rusat/ means those bushes which have not any trellis-work and spread on the ground.

"and the date-palm, and crops of diverse flavor....."

The Lord has brought forth the date-palms and farming which contain of fruits and products with various colors, tastes, masses, and smells.

"and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike."

Allah created the trees of olive and pomegranate while some of them are similar to others in view points of taste, color, and mass, and some of them are not.

"... Eat of its fruit when it fructifies....."

The purpose of this phrase is that from the beginning time of the reappearance of the fruit, its eating is permissible. None should doubt that it is not allowed to consume it before the fruit fructifies or the time of picking it off comes.

"...and give its due on the day of harvest....."

When the time of harvest comes and you gather the product, you should pay its due.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /haqq/ here is some bandles of harvested corps and those handfuls of fruits that farmers and gardeners usually give in charity to the poor. This meaning has been narrated from the immaculate Imams.

Some other commentators have said that the purpose of this part of the verse is the poor-due which contains of one tenth or half of it (one twentieth). The aim of this commandment is that this alms giving should not be postponed from the first possible time.

"... and do not act extravagantly; verily He does not love the extravagant (ones)."

When you give things in charity do not act extravagantly, in a manner, that you give the entire product in charity and do not keep anything for your own family members.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 142

وَمِنَ الأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةً وَفَرْشًا كُلُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّهُ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

142. "And of the cattle some are bearers of burden and some (low fit) for spreading. Eat of what Allah has provided you with, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, verily he is a manifest foe for you."

The objective meaning of the Arabic word 'farsh', in this verse, is some cattle like sheep which for the nearness of their bodies to the ground are considered as spread; or that some spreads are waved from their wool, down, and hair.

The usage of wool, hair and skin of cattle is also pointed out in Surah An- 'Nahl. 'No.16. verse 80. It says:

"And Allah has given you a place to abide in your houses, and He has given you tents of the skins of cattle which you find light to carry on the day of your march and on the day of your halting, and of their wool and their fur and their hair (He has given you) household stuff and a provision for a time."

In the previous verse, the names of a few fruits were mentioned, and here, in this verse, some of the blessings of cattle are referred to. Thus, bearers of burden and spread have been connected to the fruits and gardens which were mentioned in the previous verse.

"And of the cattle some are bearers of burden and some (low fit) for spreading. ..."

Most of the commentators have rendered the 'bearers of burden' into those cattle which carry burdens, and 'spreading' into cattle which do not carry burdens. In the former verse agriculture was referred to, and in this verse it points to keeping cattle.

Therefore, the existence of the world and all His created things are purposefully and wisely tamed to humankind.

Concerning cattles, the general law and principal is that their meat is lawful to be consumed, except that there is a reason for their prohibition.

"... Eat of what Allah has provided you with, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, verily he is a manifest foe for you."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 143

ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الأُنثَيَيْنِ نَبِّؤُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

143. "(Allah has made lawful of livestock) eight in pairs - of sheep a pair and of goats a pair. Say: 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or what is contained in the wombs of the two females? Inform me with knowledge if you are truthful! "

As an explanation, in this verse some of the animals whose meat is lawful to be eaten and some other animals which are both bearers of burden and useful for men in their food, are detailed. It says:

"(Allah has made lawful of livestock) eight in pairs - of sheep a pair and of goats a pair. ..."

After mentioning these four pairs, the Holy Prophet (S) is immediately commanded to ask them clearly whether Allah has forbidden the males of those animals or the females of them, or the animals which are in the wombs of ewes or in those of she goats. The verse says:

"... Say: 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or what is contained in the wombs of the two females?..."

Then, the Qur'an adds that if they are truthful and they have only reasonable information and proof upon the prohibition of each of them, they may bring them forth. The verse says:

"... Inform me with knowledge if you are truthful! "

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 144

وَمِنَ الإِبْلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَاء إِذْ وَصَّاكُمُ اللّهُ بِهَـذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللّهِ كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

144. "And of camel a pair and of oxen a pair. Say: 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or what is contained in the wombs of the two females? Or were you witnesses when Allah enjoined you this?' Who, then, is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah to mislead the people without knowledge? Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

There are four more pairs of animals explained in this holy verse. It says:

"And of camel a pair and of oxen a pair. Say: 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or what is contained in the wombs of the two females?...."

The commandment concerning to these animals that they are lawful or unlawful, is up to Allah's Will, Who is the Creator of them and the Creator of human beings and the world of existence both. The former verse explicitly said that there was no reasonable and scientific proof with the pagans upon the prohibition of these animals.

And, since they did not claim that they themselves were neither prophets nor the site of revelation, thus, the third probability remains that they claim that when this commandment was issued, some of prophets were present and they were witnesses. It is such that it says:

"... Or were you witnesses when Allah enjoined you this? ' ..."

And, since the answer of this question has also been negative, it is clearly proved that they had no capital in this regard save accusation and calumny.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"... Who, then, is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah to mislead the people without knowledge? Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

It is understood from the above-mentioned verse that the act of belying against Allah is one of the greatest unjust: the unjust unto the Holy Essence of the Lord, the unjust unto the servants of Allah, and the unjust towards their own selves.

Section 16: The Forbidden Food - the Vain Excuses

The forbidden foods -the vain excuses of the disbelievers - Allah's wrath can not be averted by the guilty ones.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 145

قُل لاَّ أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلاَّ أَن يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلاَ عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

145. "Say: 'I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat except it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine -for that is indeed abomination or a transgression, slain invoking (the name of) other than Allah, but whoever is forced (to eat it by necessity), not desiring nor transgressing, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful."

To make the divine prohibitions clear from the innovations that pagans had asserted in the Divine creed, in this verse, the Prophet (S) is commanded to tell people explicitly that there is no forbidden food for anybody, irrespective of men and women, young and old, in what was revealed to him.

The verse says:

"Say: 'I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat ..."

This law lies with some exceptions. The first of them is that it should not be carrion. The verse continues saying:

"...except it be carrion..."

And it should not be the blood that comes out of the animal's body.

".... or blood poured forth…"

This blood is not the blood which remains inside the veins and capillary blood-vessels among its flesh that comes out from the animal's vessels after cutting them and pouring a great deal of blood from them.

The third exception is as follows:

".... or the flesh of swine -for that is indeed abomination…."

All of these abovementioned things are disagreeable in man's nature and are the source of kinds of pollutions that cause some different damages.

Then, The Qur'an points to he fourth kind of these exceptions, and says:

".... or a transgression, slain invoking (the name of) other than Allah...."

From the point of ethical and spiritual views, this action is a sign of being aloof from Allah and from the school of theism both,

Thus, there are assigned two kinds of Islamic conditions for lawful slaughtering of an animal. Some of these conditions, such as cutting the four main blood-vessels of the animal and pouring forth its blood, have the aspect of hygiene, while some others, such as setting the animal toward the direction of the Ka'bah, reciting the holy phrase: 'Bismillah', and it being slaughtered by a Muslim, have spiritual aspects.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an has made an exception, from the usage of these prohibited meats, those who are forced to eat them by necessity or because of lack of any other food in order to protect their lives, but not for pleasure nor more than the limits nor with the purpose of counting the divine unlawful things as lawful. It says:

".... but whoever is forced (to eat it by necessity), not desiring nor transgressing, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful."

In fact, these two conditions are for the sake that some people do not take this constrained circumstance as excuse for their transgression to the limits of the laws of Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 146

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُواْ حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفُرٍ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُو َمهُمَا إِلاَّ مَا
حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوِ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُم بِبَغْيِهِمْ وِإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

146. "And to those who were Jews We forbade every (animal) having claws, and of oxen and sheep We forbade unto them the fat of both, save what is upon their backs or the entrails or what is mixed with bones. This (prohibition) We recompensed them for their rebellion, and verily We are truthful."

The Prohibitions and the Jews

In this verse a part of the prohibitions of the Jews are referred to in order to make it clear that the forged and superstitious ordinances of the pagans were adapted neither with the religion of Islam nor with the creed of the Jews, (nor with the Christian creed which usually follows the creed of the Jews), So, at first, it says:

"And to those who were Jews We forbade every (animal) having claws....."

Therefore, all the animals that have not 'clean hoofs', whether they are cattle or birds, have been forbidden for the Jews. Then, it says:

"…and of oxen and sheep we forbade unto them the fat of both....."

Following this matter, it makes exception three instances from it. At first, it says:

"…save what is upon their backs…"

It continues saying about the fats that are on their sides and inside their bellies.

"…or the entrails…"

And the fats that are mixed with their bones:

"…This (prohibition) We recompensed them for their rebellion…."

Yet, at the end of the verse it announces that the prohibitions were not, in fact, decreed upon the Jews, but because of unjust and transgression they committed, by Allah's commandment, they became deprived from these kinds of meat and fat that they were interested in.

".... This (prohibition) We recompensed them for their rebellion....."

And, as an emphasis, the Qur'an adds that it is a fact.

"....and verily We are truthful."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 147

فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُل رَّبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ وَلاَ يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

147. "But if they belie you (O' Muhammad!), then say: 'Your Lord is (full) of mercy all-embracing, but (if they do not repent) His punishment will not be returned from the guilty people."

Since, the obstinacy of the Jews and pagans was clearly fixed and they might insist and belie the Prophet (S), in this verse Allah commands His Messenger, concerning this matter, as follows:

"But if they belie you (O' Muhammad!), then say: 'Your Lord is (full) of mercy all-embracing....."

This means that such a Lord does not punish you immediately. He gives you respite may be you repent and return from your wrong-doings, in order to come back unto Allah, when you become regretful.

But if you abuse again this divine respite and continue the undue calumnies and accusations that you used to act, do know that Allah's punishment is certain and, at last, it will befall you, because His punishment is not something that can be removed from the evil-doers. The verse says:

"... but (if they do not repent) His punishment will not be returned from the guilty people."

This verse makes the greatness of the trainings of the Qur'an manifest very clearly. It declares that, after the explanation of all these wrong actions of the Jews and pagans, yet He does not threaten them to punishment at once.

At first, with some affectionate words, He has left the way of return free for them in order that they be encouraged and they return towards the Truth. But in order that the vast mercy of Allah does not cause their daring, boldness and disobedience, and that they may leave their obstinacy, through the last phrase of the verse, the Qur'an threatens them to the certain punishment of Allah.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 148

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ لَوْ شَاء اللّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلاَ آبَاؤُنَا وَلاَ حَرَّمْنَا مِن شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم حَتَّى ذَاقُواْ بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِندَكُم مِّنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ تَخْرُصُونَ

148. "Those who are polytheists will say: 'Had Allah wished we would not have associated (aught with Him) nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything.' So did belie those who were before them until they tasted Our punishment. Say: 'Have you any knowledge with you to adduce for Us? You follow nothing but conjecture, and you are nothing but idle talkers '."

Following the expressions of the pagans, which were referred to through the former verses, now some of their vain reasoning and the answers of them are pointed out in this verse.

At first, it implies that in answer to the Prophet's objections regarding paganism and prohibition of the lawful sustenance, soon the pagans will say that had Allah wished they would neither have become infidels nor would

their ancestors have turned to idolatry, nor would they have forbidden anything.

Thus, they claim that whatever they have done and they have said is entirely referred to the Will of Allah. The verse says:

"Those who are polytheists will say: 'Had Allah wished we would not have associated (aught with Him) nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything.' ..."

Similar to many other evil-doers, pagans wanted to flee from the responsibilities of their wrong actions with the cover and under the title of determinism. In fact, they claimed that Allah's silence, concerning idolatry and prohibition of some animals, was as a reason for His pleasure, since if He had not been pleased with those things He should have somehow prevented them from those things.

But, the Qur'an has decisively discussed answering them. At first, it says that they are not alone who have forged such lies against Allah, but there were also some groups of people in the past who told the same lies, and, finally, they confronted with results of their wrong actions and tasted the punishment of Allah. The verse says:

"... So did belie those who were before them until they tasted our punishment.... "

Through their own statements, in fact, they both told lies, and belied the prophets. If Allah was pleased with those deeds, how did He send messengers to invite them to unity? Principally, the invitation of prophets is itself the most important proof upon the freedom of man's will and choice.

Then the Qur'an inquires that if you have any reason for your claim, why do you not bring if forth? It adds:

"... Say: Have you any knowledge with you to adduce for Us? ..."

And, finally, the verse implies that you have certainly no proof for your claim, and you follow merely your conjectures and your bare imaginations. It says:

"...You follow nothing but conjecture, and you are nothing but idle talkers'."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 149

قُلْ فَلِلّه الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاء لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

149. "Say: 'Then to Allah (alone) belongs the conclusive argument. Had He wished, He would have surely guided you all aright'."

In order to nullify the pagan's claim, the Qur'an mentions another proof. It implies that Allah has brought forth some clear and correct proofs upon the subject of His Unity as well as the ordinances of lawful and unlawful things.

They have been introduced by the means of both the prophets of Allah, and through the way of intellect, so that there remains no excuse for anyone. It says:

"Say: ' Then to Allah (alone) belongs the conclusive argument....."

Therefore, they can never claim that Allah has approved their undue deeds and beliefs by His silence. They also can not claim that they are forced in doing their deeds, because if they were forced, bringing forth those

proofs, sending prophets, and their preaching and invitations would entirely be in vain. Then, bringing forth those proofs is itself an evidence for the existence of free will in man.

And, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... Had He wished, He would have surely guided you all aright'."

But, if such a thing happened, neither that kind of belief could be worthy, nor the deeds which are performed under its shade. The virtue and development of man is in this fact that he accomplishes paving the path of guidance and felicity by himself and through his own free will.

It has been narrated from Imam Kazim (as) who said:

"Allah has two proofs upon people: the outward proof and the inward proof. The outward proof contains of prophets, messengers, and Imamaculate Imams; and the inward proof consists of intellects (and thoughts)."[1]

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 150

قُلْ هَلُمَّ شُهَدَاءكُمُ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللّهَ حَرَّمَ هَـذَا فَإِن شَهِدُواْ فَلاَ تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاء الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآخِرَةِ وَهُم بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ

150. "Say: 'Bring your witnesses who bear witness that Allah has forbidden this.' So if they bear witness, do not testify with them, and do not follow the desires of those who deny Our Signs, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and they hold (others) equal with their Lord. "

In this verse, in order to make the falsity of their claims more clear, and also that the proper principals of judgment be observed, the Qur'an invites them to bring their reputable witnesses, if they have any, proving that Allah has forbidden those animals and filths that they claim are prohibited. So, addressing the Messenger of Allah (S), the holy verse says:

"Say: 'Bring your witnesses who bear witness that Allah has forbidden this.' ..."

After that, it adds the words to imply that if they cannot find any reputable witnesses, whom they certainly may not find, and they suffice only to their own testimony Prophet (S) should never follow them to testify what they claim.

The verse says:

"... So if they bear witness, do not testify with them....."

The contexts indicate that these false ordinances of theirs have originated from some low desires and blindly imitations, because they have no evidence and proof neither from the divine prophets nor from the heavenly Books upon the prohibition of these things.

That is why, in the continuation of the verse, it says:

"... and do not follow the desires of those who deny Our Signs, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and they hold (others) equal with their Lord."

That is, idolatry, denial of the Hereafter and Resurrection, superstitions, and their sensualities are some alive witnesses that these ordinances of theirs are also artificial, and their claim about prohibition of these things from the side of Allah is groundless and worthless.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Note

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, P. 776

Section 17: Guiding Regulations of Life

Duties to Allah, self and others - Allied laws in the scriptures given to Moses (a.s)

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 151

قُلْ تَعَالَوْاْ أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلاَّ تُشْرِكُواْ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلاَ تَقْتُلُواْ أَوْلاَدَكُم مِّنْ إِمْلاَقٍ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلاَ تَقْرَبُواْ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلاَ تَقْتُلُواْ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللّهُ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

151. "Say: 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you from: that you do not associate anything with Him, and show kindness to your parents, and do not kill your children for poverty -We provide for you and for them - and do not approach indecencies, the outward among them and the inward ones, and do not kill the soul that Allah has forbidden save for justice. This He has enjoined you with so that you might understand."

Ten Commandments

After nullifying the artificial ordinances of pagans, which were mentioned in the former verses, this current verse, and two verses next to it, have pointed to the principals of prohibitions in Islam. Thereby, the Qur'an refers to the first class capital sins in an expressive short and interesting statement. These sins, which are prohibited in Islam, are detailed through ten parts. At first, it says:

"Say: 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you from: ..."

1. "... that you do not associate anything with Him....."

2. "... and show kindness to your parents....."

3. "... and do not kill your children for poverty. ...", because your sustenance and theirs are totally with Allah (S.w.T.) and He gives the sustenance of all.

"... We provide for you and for them. ..."

4. "... do not approach indecencies, the outward among them and the inward, ..."

That is, not only you must avoid doing them, but also you must not approach them.

5. "... and do not kill the soul that Allah has forbidden save for justice."

This part of the verse means that you should not pollute your hands by shedding the blood of the innocent persons. And you should not slay the souls whom Allah has held in esteem and shedding their blood is not permissible, unless the allowance of slaying them has been issued according to the laws of Allah, for example, when the one is a murderer.

Then, following these five items, in order to emphasize on it more, the verse says:

"….This He has enjoined you with so that you might understand."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 152

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُواْ مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلاَّ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُواْ الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لاَ نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُواْ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى وَبِعَهْدِ اللّهِ أَوْفُواْ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

152. "And do not approach the orphan's property except in the best manner until he reaches his maturity. And give full measure and weight with justice. We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability. And when you speak, be just, though it be (against) a relative; and fulfill Allah's covenant. This He has enjoined you with so that you might remember. "

This verse continues stating the Ten Commandments. It says:

6. "And do not approach the orphan's Property except in the best manner until he reaches his maturity."

7. "... And give full measure and weight with justice. We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability. ..."

8. "... And when you speak, be just, though it be (against) a relative....."

9. "...and fulfilled Allah's covenant. ...", and do not breach it.

The objective meaning of "Allah's covenant" is all of Allah's covenants, irrespective of genetic covenants and canonical covenants, together with the Divine duties, and any kind of promise, such as: vow and oath.

Again, for an emphasis, at the end of these four parts of commandments, the verse says:

"... This He has enjoined you with so that you might remember."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 153

وَأَنَّ هَـذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

153. "And this (the mentioned commandments) indeed is My path, straight, so follow it, and do not follow (other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His path. This He has enjoined you with, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."

Then, as the tenth commandment, the Qur'an implies that Allah commands that this is His Straight Path, which is the Path of Unity, the Path of Truth and justice, the Path of piety and virtue. You should follow it and never tread in the perverted and diverse ways that make you astray and aloof from the path of Allah. It scatters the seed of hypocrisy and discord among you. It says:

"And this (the mentioned commandments) indeed is My path, straight, so follow it, and do not follow (other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His path. ..."

And, for the third time, at the end of the holy verse, the Qur'an emphasizes that:

"... This He has enjoined you with, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."

Explanations

The Importance of Showing Kindness to Parents

Mentioning 'kindness to parents' immediately after the subject of struggling against polytheism and before some magnificent commandments, such as: The prohibitions of killing a person, and the execution of the principals of justice, are some evidences among the Islamic instructions upon the extraordinary importance of the right of parents.

This matter will be made more clear when we note that instead of prohibition of hurting parents, which parallel other prohibitions mentioned in this verse, the subject of showing kindness to parents' has been referred to.

This denotes that not only creating annoyance to them is unlawful, but, besides that, showing kindness and benevolence unto them is also necessary.

More interesting than this is that the Arabic word /ihsan/ (kindness) has been changed into a transitive form by a preposition, and it has said: "... and show kindness to your parents.....".

Thus, the verse emphasizes that the question of 'showing kindness to parents' should be taken so great and important by a person that the one performs it directly by himself and without having an intermediary.

Slaying Children for Hunger

It is understood from these verses that during the Age of Ignorance, Arabs not only used to bury their daughters alive because of their wrong bigotries, but also killed their sons, who were considered as a great capital in the society of their time, as a result of fear of poverty.

Unfortunately, this treatment of the Age of Ignorance is being repeated in another form in our own age, too. Under the excuse of probable deficiency of foodstuff on the earth, the innocent babies are intentionally killed through abortion when they are in the state of embryo.

It is true that some other reasons are also mentioned for such abortions today, but the problem of poverty and deficiency of foodstuff is one of its main reasons.

All of these facts, as well as some other affairs similar to them, show that the evil manner of the Age of Ignorance is repeated in another form in our time, so that we can say 'the Ignorance of today' is fulfilled in an even wider and more terrible case than the ignorance of before Islam.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 154

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِيَ أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلاً لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُم بِلِقَاء رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

154. "Then We gave Moses the Book, to complete (Our blessing) on him who would do good, and to explain all things, and as a guidance and a mercy, so that they may believe in the meeting of their Lord."

The discussion through a few former verses was upon the ten basical and fundamental commandments of Allah. They have been enjoined not only in Islam but also in all divine religions. Next to mentioning those commandments, the Qur'an says:

"Then We gave Moses the Book, to complete (Our blessing) on him who would do good...."

The verse implies that Allah (S.w.T.) has completed His blessing on those who are good doers, and they obey the command of Allah, and follow the fight.

Then the verse continues the statement that, in that Book, Allah explained whatever was needed and what was effective alongside the way of development of man.

"... and to explain all things....."

Also, that Book, which was sent down to Moses, was the source of divine guidance and mercy.

"... and as a guidance and a mercy....."

All of these things were for the sake that they might believe in the Resurrection Day and the meeting of the Lord, so that, by the belief in Resurrection, their thoughts, statements, and manner become sincerely pure and godly. It says:

"... so that they may believe in the meeting of their Lord."

Section 18: Prayer, sacrifice, life and death to be only for Allah

The Quran was sent down for the guidance of mankind - The law of requital - The object of life of mankind must be only to please Allah - The believers in Allah will be the rulers of the earth,

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 155 - 156

وَهَـذَا كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُواْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

أَن تَقُولُواْ إِنَّمَا أُنزِلَ الْكِتَابُ عَلَى طَآئِفَتَيْنِ مِن قَبْلِنَا وَإِن كُنَّا عَن دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

155. "And this (Qur'an) is a Book which we have sent down, blessed, so follow it, and keep from evil so that mercy may be shown to you."

156. "Lest you should say: The Book was sent down only to two parties (the Jews and the Christians) before us, and we were truly unaware of their studies."

In order to complete the previous discussion upon the heavenly Book, this holy verse points to the revelation of the Qur'an and it’s teaching. It says:

"And this (Qur'an) is a Book which we have sent down, blessed, so follow it, and keep from evil so that mercy may be shown to you."

In the second verse, mentioned in the above couple of verses, the Qur'an has closed all the ways of flight and seeking excuses to the pagans.

It announces that Allah has sent this heavenly book down, with those advantages, in order that the pagans do not say that the Book was sent down only to the couple of former parties, the Jews and the Christians, and that they were neglectful of studying, reviewing and discussing them.

And, they should not say that they disobeyed the command of Allah because His commandment was under the control of others and it was not available for them.

The verse says:

"Lest you should say: The Book was sent down only to two parties t (the Jews and the Christians) before us, and we were truly unaware of their studies."

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verse 157

أَوْ تَقُولُواْ لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَى مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَاءكُم بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ ِمَّن كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ يَصْدِفُونَ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا

سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَصْدِفُونَ

157. "Or (lest) you should say: 'If the Book had been sent down to us, we would certainly have been better guided than them. 'So indeed there has come to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and mercy. Who then is more unjust than him who denies the Signs of Allah, and turns away from them? Soon We will recompense those who turn away from Our Signs with a terrible punishment for what they used to turn away."

The same excuse that was referred to in the previous verse is pointed out more vastly and with some more claims and prides of theirs in this verse.

The holy verse implies that if the Qur'an were not sent down upon them, they might claim that they were so prepared and eager to fulfill the commands of Allah that ho other nation could match them in that regard. The verse says:

"Or (lest) you should say : 'If the Book had been sent down to us, we would certainly have been better guided than them.' ..."

Standing before these claims, the Qur'an implies that Allah has shut the gates of all ways of seeking excuses to them, because clear proofs and meaningful verses, accompanied with guidance and mercy of Allah, have come to them from the side of their Lord. It says:

"So indeed there has come to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and mercy…."

Yet, is there anyone more unjust than those who belie the Signs of Allah and turn away from them? This circumstance shows that they not only turned away from the Sings of Allah, but also kept themselves terribly far from them. The verse says:

"…Who then is more unjust than him who denies the Signs of Allah, and turns away from them? …"

The painful punishment of such thoughtless and obstinate persons who, without studying them, intensively deny the facts and run away from them is stated in a short arid expressive sentence. These people even ban the way of others, and this chastisement is the fruit of their own proofless denial.

The verse says:

"…Soon We will recompense those who turn away from Our Signs with a terrible punishment for what they used to turn away."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 158

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لاَ يَنفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِن قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا قُلِ انتَظِرُواْ إِنَّا مُنتَظِرُونَ

158. "Do they await anything but that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come, or some of your Lord's Signs should come? On the day when some of the Signs of your Lord come, the faith (and repentance) will not benefit anyone who had not believed beforehand and had not earned goodness through his faith. Say: 'Wait! we too are waiting'."

This fact was pointed out in the former verses that Allah completed the argument to the pagans and He sent the heavenly Book, i.e. the Qur'an, for the guidance of all. Now, this verse indicates that these obstinate persons are so arrogant in their affairs that these clear evidences do not affect them.

It seems that they are waiting for their own annihilation, or losing their last opportunity, or they are expecting some impossible affairs to come forth.

At first, it says:

"Do they await anything but that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come....."

That is, do they expect that Allah comes to them and when they see Him they believe in Him? In fact, they are waiting for an impossible thing to happen.

Then, it adds that they may expect to see the occurrence of some of the signs of Allah which will occur at the threshold of Resurrection, the end of the world, whereupon the doors of repentance will be closed. The verse says:

"…or some of your Lord's Signs should come?..."

Then, following this meaning, it adds:

"... On the day when some of the Signs of your Lord come, the faith (and repentance) will not benefit anyone who had not believed beforehand and had not earned goodness through his faith. ..."

Since, on that Day repentance and belief will gain a form that will be obligatory, this kind of repentance and belief is not worthy, of course. They are worthy and acceptable when they are arbitrary.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an addresses these obstinate persons and, with a threatening tone, says that now that they are waiting for such a thing, they may remain in their waiting and We wait, too, for their painful retribution. It says:

"... Say: ' Wait! We too are waiting'."

One of the interesting things that can be understood from this verse is that the Qur'an introduces the way of felicity in Faith. This Faith is the one under whose ray a goodness may be obtained and some good deeds be fulfilled.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 159

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُواْ دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُواْ شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْعَلُونَ

159. "Verily those who divided their religion and became parties, you have no concern with them. Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do."

Following the explanation of 'Ten Commandments' that were discussed through previous verses, this verse, indeed, can be counted as an emphasis and a commentary upon the subject mentioned in the tenth commandment.

Its content commands us to follow 'the Straight Path' and to struggle against any hypocrisy and discord.

At first, it says:

"Verily those who divided their religion and became parties, you have no concern with them. ..."

It means that, in no respect you have concern with them, and they have no concern with your school of thought, because your school of thought is the school of theism and Straight Path, and there is only one 'Straight Path' for all, not more than that.

Then, as a threat and reprimand against these dispersive persons, the Qur'an says:

"... Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do."

It is noteworthy that the content of this verse is a general and common commandment about all those who cause discord among people. By creating kinds of innovations, they scatter the seeds of hypocrisy and discord amongst the servants of Allah, irrespective of those who were from the former nations, or those who are in this nation.

With a full emphasis, this verse intensifies once more the fact that Islam is a religion of Unity and Oneness. It hates any kind of hypocrisy, discord and dispersion.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 160

مَن جَاء بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَن جَاء بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلاَ يُجْزَى إِلاَّ مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

160. "Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like, and whoever brings vice, he shall not be recompensed but with its like, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

In this holy verse the multifold reward given for good deeds is referred to. Through previous verse, the wrong doers were threatened and reprimanded upon their evil deeds, while here, in this verse, the Qur'an clearly says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like....."

But as for those who commit a sin, Allah will punish them equally as much as their sin. As a result of the greatness of His grace and generosity, Allah bestows the reward of a good action more than it's due, and forgives the faults of the sinners. And, if he punishes one, He punishes as much as the one deserves, not more than that. The verse continues saying:

"...and whoever brings vice, he shall not be recompensed but with it's like....."

Some of the commentators believe that the purpose of the Qur'anic word /hasanah/ (a good deed) is 'Unity', and the purpose of the word /sayyi'ah/ (a vice) is 'infidelity'. According to this meaning, the essence of good deeds is Unity and the essence of vices is infidelity.

"... and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

There win not be done any unjust against anybody, because none will be punished more than what one deserves.

Therefore, Allah treats with His grace when He gives reward, but He treats with His justice when He punishes. The tenfold rewards that He gives for a good action, only one part is the wage of it and the rest nine parts are 'Allah's grace'. Surah An-Nisa. No.4. Verse 173 says:

"... He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them more out of His Grace."

It is worthy to note that the tenfold reward is for all believers in general, but some deeds which are done in some circumstances by some qualified persons will be bestowed up to seven hundred times rewards, and even without measure rewards either.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 161

قُلْ إِنَّنِي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

161. "Say: Verily my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, the established religion, the creed of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists."

This verse, together with the next verses by which Surah Al-An'am ends, is, in fact, a summary of the subjects discusses about the struggle against paganism and Idolatry stated m this Surah.

At first, in order to stand against the illogical notions and claims of pagans and idol worshippers, Allah orders His Messenger to tell them that his Lord has guided him to the Straight Path, which is the nearest path among all paths.

This 'Straight Path' is the same path of Unity and monotheism, and the path of eradication of the creed of paganism and polytheism. It says:

"Say: Verily my Lord has guided me to a straight path....."

Thus, the Qur'an explains 'the Straight Path' in this verse and the next two verses. First of all, it implies that it is a direct religion with the utmost correctness and veracity, eternal, and subsisting to the affairs of both religion and life, body and soul.

".... the established religion....."

And, since Arabs showed a special affection to Abraham, so that they even introduced their creed as Abraham's creed, the Qur'an adds that he true creed of Abraham is the very one toward which you have been invited, not that which you have forged under his name.

".... the creed of Abraham....."

That very Abraham (as) is the one who turned away from the superstitious creed of his time and environment, arid attached the Truth, i.e. the monotheism.

"... The upright one....."

This meaning seems to be an answer to the expressions of polytheists who blamed the opposition of the Prophet (S) with the creed of idolatry, which was the creed of the ancestors of Arabs.

In answer to them, the Prophet (S) said that his manner of breaking wrong customs and turning away from the superstitious notions of the environment was not only his job, but Abraham (as), whom they wholly respect, also did like that. Then, as an emphasis, it says:

"... and he was not of the polytheists."

Abraham (as) was a hero of breaking idols. He was an active and steadfast challenger against idolatry.

Surah Al-‘An’am, Verses 162 - 163

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلاَتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَ مَاتِي لِلّه رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُ ِرْتُ وَأَنَاْ أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

162. "Say: ' Verily my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

163. "No associate (there is) for Him, and this (submission) I have been commanded to, and I am the first of the Muslims."

In the first verse, mentioned here, it points to the matter that the Prophet (S) should tell the pagans that not only from the point of belief he is a

Unitarian and a monotheist, hut also, from the point of action, whatever good deed he does, including his prayer, all his worships, and even his death and life, in all, are for the sake of the Lord of the Worlds. The verse says:

"Say: ' Verily my prayer and my worship, my life and death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

That is, I am alive for Him, and I die for His sake. I devote whatever I have in His way. All my desires, the whole love of mine, and the entire existence that I have is Allah's .

In order to nullify all kinds of paganism and idolatry, in this verse, it emphasizes that Allah (S.w.T.) is the One that there is no associate and no compeer for Him. It says:

"No associate (there is) for Him....."

And, finally, the verse continues saying:

"... and this (submission) I have been commanded to, and I am the first of the Muslims."

To be the first of the Muslims for the Prophet of Islam (S) is either from the point of quality and importance of Islam, because the degree of his submission and his Islam was higher than all prophets, or that he was the first person of this community who accepted the religion of the Qur'an and Islam.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 164

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلاَ تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلاَّ عَلَيْهَا وَلاَ تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

164. " Say: ' shall I seek a Lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of all things? And no one earns anything but to his own account; and no one bears the burden of another; then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of what you used to differ (about)."

In this verse, the Qur'an criticizes the logic of the pagans in another way. It tells the Prophet (S) to ask them whether it is appropriate to take a lord except Allah as their Lord, while He is the owner, the trainer, and the Lord of all things and His ordinance and His command is current in the entire particles of the world. The verse says:

"Say: ' shall I seek a Lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of all things? "

A group of the short-minded pagans came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and said that he should follow their creed. They added that if their creed was false, they might bear the burden of his sin.

This verse answers them by saying:

"... And no one earns anything but to his own account; and no one bears the burden of another....."

Then the verse adds:

"... then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of what you used to differ (about)."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 165

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلاَئِفَ الأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

165. "And He it is Who has made you successors in the earth, and raised some of you above others in grades that He may try you in respect to what He has given you. Verily your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed He is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this verse, which is the last verse of Surah Al-' An'am, in order to complete the former discussions upon strengthening the foundation of Unity and struggling against paganism, the Qur'an points to the rank of man and his situation in the world of existence. So, firstly it says:

"And He it is Who has made you successors in the earth....."

Man is Allah's vice-regent on the earth, and all the sources of the world are set at his disposal. Allah has issued Man's command and dominion over all these creatures. Such a man must not let himself fall so low that he becomes more degraded than an inanimate thing and then he prostrates before it.

Then the verse points to the difference of talents and the various bodily and spiritual merits of human beings, and to the aim of this difference and variation among men. The verse says:

"... and raised some of you above others in grades that He may try you in respect to what He has given you. ..."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an refers to man's freedom in; choosing the path of happiness and wretchedness, stating the conclusion of these trials, as follows:

"…Verily your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed He is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Difference of Men and the Principal of Justice

No doubt, there are a series of artificial differences among the individuals of humankind which have been emerged as a result of the transgressions and cruelties of some human beings performed upon some other people.

For example: some persons are the owners of abundant wealth, but some others are terribly poor. Or, a great deal of people is unsound and sickly weak as a result of deficiency of nutrition and lack of hygiene, while some other people are in the best condition of health, because all possibilities of life are available for them.

These kinds of differences, such as: richness and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, health and sickness, and so on, are often the consequences of colonialism, exploitation, various forms of slavery, and apparent and concealed transgressions.

Surely, these kinds of differences cannot be considered as the acts of the system of creation. So, there is no reason for us, to defend the existence of such unacceptable differences.

Humankind, all together, form also a society resembled to a great, tall and fruitful tree. Every group, or even an individual, of them is responsible for a particular mission in this huge body, which demands a proportional construction peculiar to it.

www.alhassanain.org/english

That is why the Qur'an says that these differences are as a means of your trial, and the term 'trial', in the divine statements is used in the sense of 'training and education'.

Man's Vicegerency on the Earth!

The Qur'an has repeatedly introduced Man as the 'vicegerent' and 'representative' of Allah on the earth. This introduction, in addition to making clear the position of Man in creation, also explains this fact that properties, wealth, talents, and the whole merits that Allah has bestowed on Man are, in deed, in possession of Allah.

Man is merely His representative who has been given leave by Him. It is evident, of course that no representative is independent in his dominations, but his dominations ought to be limited to the leave and permission of the main owner.

This explanation may make this fact clear that, for example, regarding to the question of ownership, Islam keeps distance from both the camp of communism and the camp of capitalism.

Surah Al-'A'raf Chapter 7, Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Introduction to the Surah

This Surah is a Meccan Surah. It has been narrated from Qattadah and Dahhak who said this Surah is a Meccan one, except verses 163-165 which were revealed in Medina.

The number of its verses, as kufians and Hejazians have numerated, is 206.

The Virtue of Studying This Surah

'Ubayy-ibn-Ka'b, a leading commentator, has narrated from the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-A'raf, Allah will set a curtain between him and the Satan and, on the Day of Judgment Adam (as) will be his intercessor."

Ayyashi, another commentator, by the way of his teacher Abu Basir, has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-'A'raf every month, will be among those that no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Section 1: The Object of the Revelation of the Qur'an

Qur'an's revelation, its object-Every soul shall be judged and every apostle will also be questioned -Deeds will be measured justly.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المص

كِتَابٌ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ فَلاَ يَكُن فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

اتَّبِعُواْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاء قَلِيلاً مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M', Sad ''S'."

2. "A Book sent down to you -so let there be no strait ness in your breast about it -that you may warn (people) thereby (and it be) a reminder to the believers."

3. " Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and do not follow any guardians other than Him; how seldom do you remember!"

The holy Surah Al-'An'am was concluded with statement about the Grace of Allah. This Surah, Al-A'raf, begins with the name of the Qur'an and also the ordinances of the religion and the wise sayings are stated therein. It says:

"'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M', Sad ''S'."

The abbreviated letters, mentioned at the beginning of some Suras of the Qur'an were discussed before.[1] They are some secrets between Allah and His Messenger (S).

"A Book sent down to you… "

The Qur'an is a Book which has been sent down to you by the command of Allah.

"... so let there be no strait ness in your breast about it…"

The verse, addressing the Prophet (S) implies that there should not be any strait ness in his breast because of communicating the Qur'an to people.

The Messenger of Allah (S) was afraid that the members of his tribe would accuse him as a liar, and then turn away from his statements, and hurt him. So, he was displeased from their injuries, and did not feel happy about it.

Hence, Allah the Glorified, made him secured, and commanded him not to consider their ill treatment important.

It should be noted that the aim of sending down this Book is to warn people and frighten them from the evil consequence of their wrong thoughts and deeds. It is also a reminder for the true believers. The verse says:

"... that you may warn (people) thereby (and it be) a reminder to the believers"

"Follow what has been sent down to you from Your Lord....."

This phrase is for the attention of those who are responsible and are also fully capable; it means that they should follow that which Allah has sent down to them. This 'act of following' concerns those affairs which are either obligatory, or recommended, or legitimate.

In these affairs a believer should follow the command of Allah, and the one must believe in them. One of its examples is that which says it is obligatory to avoid from forbidden things.

".... and do not follow any guardians other than Him...."

The verse warns us not to follow anything other than the Qur'an so otherwise we will become sinners. It is evident that whoever is not the follower of the Qur'an is the follower of Satan and the idols. That is why Allah commands us to follow the Qur'an and avoid following other than it. To follow the Qur'an is the same as to follow Allah.

".... how seldom do you remember!"

This part of the verse addresses the pagans and those disbelieving people who rarely remember the Truth and little they take advice. In fact, the purpose of this phrase is to say that the style of their manner is not agreeable. They ought to gradually adopt the admonishments of the Qur'an and learn the affairs concerning of religion and life for themselves.

The Qur'anic word 'tathakkur', here, means: ' to learn little by little '.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 4 - 5

وَكَم مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَآئِلُونَ

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلاَّ أَن قَالُواْ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

4. "And how many a town that We have destroyed, Our punishment came unto them by night or while they slept at midday."

5. "So their cry, when Our punishment came unto them, was not save that they said: 'Verily we were unjust '."

In the previous verse, people were commanded to follow the Qur'an, and to leave out following anything other than the Qur'an. Now, this verse reminds them the fate of the past unjust nations so that they may fear and not to repeat the manner of those nations. It says:

"And how many a town that We have destroyed, Our punishment came unto them by night or while they slept at midday."

Allah says that He has destroyed many people of the towns, and the Divine punishment was sent down over them by night or when they were relaxing at noon. It is obvious that having chastisement in such times is more dangerous for people than in some other times.

"So their cry, when Our punishment came unto them, was not save that they said: 'Verily we were unjust '."

When Allah's chastisement was sent down, the only matter they stated was that they said that they were unjust. Thus, when they saw the punishment of Allah with their own eyes, or when they were involved in the Divine chastisement and were still rather alive, they began to confess their faults.

This indicates that admission, confession of one's sins, and repentance at the time of befalling calamities and wretchedness are not beneficial for the one.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 6 - 7

فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَآئِبِينَ

6. "Then certainly We will question those to whom (Our messengers) were sent, and certainly We will also question the messengers."

7. "Then certainly We will relate to them with knowledge for We were not absent."

The previous verse has referred to the worldly punishment. Here, in this verse, the existence of punishment and reckoning in the Hereafter is stated with several emphases. In these two verses, the certainty of the existence of question on the Day of Judgment and that it is not specialized to the sinners alone, is mentioned, too.

Explanations

1. On the Day of Judgment, surely all people will be questioned, including: both the leaders, the nations and followers, both the good doers and the evildoers, and both the scholars and the imitators of them.

"Then certainly we will question those to whom (Our messengers) were sent, and certainly we will also question the messengers."

In the next verse, in order that no one considers that questioning from communities and their concerning prophets can be an evidence that there is some thing concealed from Allah's knowledge, clearly and with an emphasis strengthened with an oath, it implies that Allah will explain all their deeds to them with His Knowledge, because He has never been absent from them.

He (S.w.T.) has been with them everywhere and in all circumstances. The verse says:

"Then certainly We will relate to them with knowledge for We were not absent."

2. On that Day, questioning is a kind of calling to witness, making confession and reprimand. But the fact is that there is nothing concealed to Allah to be discovered by question.

Note

There are some points upon this verse which should be noted, as follows:

1. What matter or matters will be questioned?

2. The bounties will be questioned:

"Then on that Day you will surely be questioned about the bounties (you enjoined)." (Surah At- Takathur. No. 102 verse 8).

It is recorded in some Islamic traditions that the objective meaning of 'bounties', here, is the bounty of 'mastership' and 'leadership'.

3. The deeds of people will be questioned:

"... we would most certainly question them all,"

"As to what they used to do." (Surah Al-Hijr No.15. Verses 92-93)

4. The limbs will be questioned of: "... surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that." (Surah Al-Isra', No.17. verse 36)

5. As the Islamic traditions indicate, the life-time, the youth, the incomes, and the expenses will be questioned.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 8

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

8. "And the measuring that Day will be just. Then whoever's a scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."

A 'scale' is the means of weighing. Each thing has a special means of measuring. The scale of a wall is a plummet. The heat of weather is measured by a thermometer. Fruits are measured in kilo. The length of cloth, as well as many other things, is measured by meter.

The means of measuring an ordinary person, from the point of spiritualities, is some particular complete persons who are accepted as the example and symbol of justice.

Upon the commentary of the phrase:

"And we will set up a just balance ..."

mentioned in verse 47 from Surah Al-Anbiya No. 21, Imam, Sadiq (as) said: "Prophets and saints are the scales."[2]

In the supplication of Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), addressing him (as), we recite:

"Peace be upon the Scale of deeds."

These immaculate persons, who are our leaders and our guides, are the scales and the means of measuring others.

In Kifayat-ul-Muwahhideen, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"We are the scales."

That is, Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and all other immaculate Imams are the scale of distinguishing between right and wrong.

So, the verse says:

"And the measuring that Day will be just. Then whoever's a scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."

Explanations

1. On the Day of Resurrection, the possession is with the right[3], and the Day is the day of right[4], and the measuring is also just. (The above verse)

2. On that Day, arrangements of the Hereafter are justly measured and the reckoning, the judgment, the commandments, the rewards and retributions are wholly based on justice.

"And the measuring that Day will be just. ..."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 9

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُواْ أَنفُسَهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا يِظْلِمُونَ

9. "And whoever's a scale be light, those are they who have ruined their selves for they used to be unjust unto Our Signs."

Those persons, whose scales are light, will be involved in an eternal punishment, because they have denied Allah's Signs and reasoning in their lives.

The Arabic term /xusran/ (loss), mentioned in this verse, means 'to lose the capital'. The greatest capital of man is his self. When the self of a man falls into perdition, he has incurred a loss. On the contrary, those whose scales of good deeds are heavy on the Day of Judgment will be prosperous.

"And whoever's a scale be light, those are they who have ruined their selves for they used to be unjust unto Our Signs."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 10

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

10. "And certainly We have given you power in the earth, and We have made the means of livelihood for you in it, (but) little it is that you give thanks."

In the life of this world, everything is under the authority of man. The verse says:

"And certainly We have given you power in the earth....."

The creation of the earth and its conditions, from the point of rotation, heat, light, absorbing and warding off waters, receiving offal, and yielding plants, vegetables, fruits etc. all are in a state that man can take the earth as his own residence.

However, the laws of nature are in a form that man can control them and take them under his authority. If Allah had not tamed it, man, by himself, would not have had ability to bring it under subjugation and to enjoy of it. ,

"... and We have made the means of livelihood for you in it....."

Thus, these bounties should be utilized alongside the path of gratitude of man, not as a means of his negligence and gratifying his desires and his unlawful passions. The Qur'an has frequently referred to the ungratefulness, negligence and faithlessness of the majority of people. The verse says:

"... (but) little it is that you give thanks."

Notes

1. Part one, PP. 71-73. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 1
2. Al-Mizan, commentary
3. "Here is protection only Allah's, the True One....." Surah Al-Kahf, No.18, Verse 44.
4. "That is the True (sure) Day ..." Surah An-Naba', No.78, Verse 39.

Section 2: Creation of Adam and the Defiance of Satan

Adam's creation -Angels were ordered to prostrate before Adam -The defiance of Satan - The Satan cast out - Adam beguiled by the Satan - Adam's seeking Allah’s pardon.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 11

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ اسْجُدُواْ لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

11. "And indeed We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they (all) did prostrate themselves except lblees; he was not of the prostrating ones."

The Story of Satan's Disobedience

The creation of man and his being fashioned is referred to in seven Suras of the Qur'an.

In the current verse, Allah says:

"And indeed We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they (all) did prostrate themselves except lblees; he was not of the prostrating ones."

All angels, including Iblis who was in their row, while he was not from among them, were commanded to prostrate themselves unto Adam, the first ancestor of the whole human beings. They totally accepted and eagerly obeyed the command of Allah, except Iblis.

The prostration of the angels for Adam was not done in the sense of 'prostration of worship', because the act of being worshipped is specific to Allah alone. Then, prostration here is for humility and modesty.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 12

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلاَّ تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَاْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

12. "He said: ' What prevented you that you did not prostrate when I commanded you?' He said: 'I am better than him. You created me of fire while You created him of clay '."

This verse indicates that Allah called Iblis to account for the disobedience and rebellion he showed, and He asked him about the reason for which he refused prostration when He commanded him to prostrate. The verse says:

"He said: ' What prevented you that you did not prostrate when I commanded you? ' ..."

In answer to this question, Iblis resorted to an implausible excuse, as the verse points out:

"... He said: ' I am better than him. You created me of fire while You created him of clay'."

Iblis imagined, as if, fire is superior to clay. This was one of the greatest faults of Iblis. Or, perhaps, he did not make a mistake either, but he told a lie because of his arrogance and selfishness.

But the privilege of Adam was not that he was created of clay. The main superiority of Adam was that very spirit of humanity and the rank of vice-regency of Allah that he was given.

There arises a question here, asking how Satan spoke with Allah, and whether revelation was sent down to him.

The answer to this question is that there is no problem that Allah speaks with another person, not by means of revelation and messengership, but through innate inspiration, or by way of some angels, whether this person is one of the righteous and the purified ones, like Mary and mother of Moses, or one of the dishonest ones, like Satan.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 13

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَن تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

13. "(Allah) said: 'Get you down from this (state): it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Therefore, go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones '."

In view of the fact that Satan's refusal from prostrating for Adam (as) was not an ordinary and simple refusal, nor it was counted - habitual sin, but it was a rebellion accompanied with a protest and denial unto the Glory of Allah, then his opposition found a way to infidelity and negating Allah's knowledge and wisdom.

And, consequently, he had to lose his own positions and personal status in divine portal. So, Allah sent him out from the distinguished situation he had obtained in the standing ranks of angels. The verse says:

"(Allah) said: 'Get you down from this (state)....."

Then, Allah describes the origin of this getting down to him by the following sentence, and explains that he was not right to pave the path of pride in that rank.

"...it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. ..."

Again, as an additional emphasis, Allah's statement continues to be recited as follows:

"... Therefore, go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones '."

That is, not only Satan did not become magnified by that action, but also, on the contrary, he was entitled as the abject ones.

It is clearly understood from this part of the verse that the entire misfortune and wretchedness of Satan was the effect of his arrogance.

It is also narrated in Usul-i-Kafi from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said:

"The principals of infidelity (and disobedience) are three things: greed, pride, and jealousy. Greed caused Adam to eat from the forbidden tree; pride caused Iblis to disobey the command of Allah when he was ordered to prostrate for Adam; and jealousy caused one of Adam's sons to kill another one."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 14 - 15

قَالَ أَنظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ

14. "(Instead of repentance, Iblis) said: 'Respite me until the day when they are raised up."

15. "He (Allah) said: 'Verily you shall be of the respited ones."

But the story of Satan did not conclude to that only happening. When he found that he was banished from the throne of Allah, he increased his rebellion and obstinacy. Instead of repentance, returning toward Allah, and confessing his fault, the only thing Iblis asked for from Allah was that he desired to be respited until the day when all will be raised up. The verse says:

"(Instead of repentance, Iblis) said: 'Respite me until the day when they are raised up."

This demand of Satan was somehow accepted by Allah when He (S.w.T.) said that he would be of the respited ones. Here is the statement of the Qur'an:

"He (Allah) said: 'Verily you shall he of the respited ones."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 16

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

16. "He (Satan) said: 'Since You have let me wander off, I will certainly lay wait for (deceiving) them in Your Straight Path '."

Satan did not want, of course, to have a long life and to be alive in order to compensate the past, but he expressed his aim of this long life that, the same as he was wandered off, he could lay wait on the Straight Path of Allah and deceive them all, so that, the same that he got astray, they might go astray, too.

The verse says:

"He (Satan) said: 'Since You have let me wander off, I will certainly lay wait for (deceiving) them in Your Straight Path '."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 17

ثُمَّ لآتِيَنَّهُم مِّن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَن شَمَآئِلِهِمْ وَلاَ تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

17. "Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right and from their left; and You will not find most of them thankful."

In order to confirm and to complete his statement, Satan added that, not only he will lay wait on their way, but also he will come upon them from the sides of four directions to deceive them. The verse says:

"Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right and from their left; and You will not find most of them thankful."

In a tradition, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who, deeply commenting upon the four directions, said:

"The purpose of coming 'from before' is that Satan shows the coming world, which man has in front of him, simple and hollow to him.

The purpose of 'from behind' is that he (Satan) invites people to gathering properties and massing wealth, and to niggardliness concerning the payment of the compulsory alms to be abandon in favor of children ad inheritors.

The purpose of 'right side' is that he spoils the spiritual affairs in man's view by creating doubts and dubious things.

And, the purpose of 'left side' is to pretend the material pleasures and lusts beautiful in the view of man."[1]

Some Islamic traditions denote that when Satan made an oath that he will lay in wait of man from four sides in order to lead him astray or to bar him, angels, sympathizing with man, said: "O' Allah! how this man will be delivered?" The Lord answered:

"There are two ways open for him, the upward and the downward. Whenever man stretches his hands for supplication, or puts his head on the ground, I will forgive him of the sins of seventy years."[2]

As soon as Adam was informed of the domination of Satan, he invoked Allah. Then he was addressed (by Him) not to be worried, because He will count a sin one fold and a good deed ten folds. Besides, the gate of repentance is open to him.[3]

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 18

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْؤُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لَّمَن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لأَ ْلأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

18. "Said He: 'Get out from this (state), despised, driven away. Whoever of them will follow you, I will surely fill Hell with you all '."

By this verse, once more the command of dismissing Satan from the position of nearness to Allah and the rank of highness is issued. Here, there is a difference that the command of his dismissal has been issued with a more intensive despise.

Perhaps, this was for the obstinacy that Satan showed later when he insisted on the temptation upon humankind and increased a greater sin to his former sins. Therefore, as the Qur'an points out:

"Said He: 'Get out from this (state), despised, driven away. ..."

And Allah made an oath that whoever of them follows Satan He will fill Hell with him and them all. The verse says:

"... Whoever of them will follow you, I will surely fill Hell with you all '. "

Explanations

A moment of having pride and saying "I am better than ..."[4] may bring forth some surprising sequels. For instance:

"Get you down ...go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones."[5]

All these despises and falls are spread upon the proud Satan, since, instead of apology, he decided to lead astray humankind.

The Arabic term /maŎ'um/ is derived from /Ŏa'ima/ in the sense of 'a severe blemish'; and the Arabic term /madhura/ is derived from /dahr/ which means 'to drive away disgracefully'.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 19

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلاَ مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلاَ تَقْرَبَا هَـذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

19. "And O' Adam! dwell you and your spouse in the Garden, and eat you two from wherever you two desire, but do not approach this tree lest you will be of the unjust."

The statement of the verse is told Adam (as) saying that he and his wife would dwell in the Garden and that it was permissible for them to eat whatever and wherever they desired, but they should not approach that tree in order to eat from it, because they would deprive themselves from a great reward.

A detailed commentary upon this holy verse was offered under the description of Surah Al-Baqarah. No.2. verse 35.[6]

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 20

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِن سَوْءَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَـذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلاَّ أَن تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ

20. "Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) unto the two (Adam and Eve) that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shameful parts, and he said: 'Your Lord has not prohibited you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals."

Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the feature of a friend and a benevolent one. He knew that whoever's shameful parts be manifest, the one should not remain in Heaven. The only way by which the private parts of Adam and Eve could become manifest was eating from the forbidden tree. So, Satan planned a plot that they might eat from that tree.

Thus, Satan prepared the necessary things of their banishment from heaven. He told them if they had eaten from that tree, they would have turned into the form of angels and they could remain in Heaven forever. He said that the reason of that prohibition was that they would not become angels, or would not dwell in Heaven for ever.

The verse says:

"Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) unto the two (Adam and Eve) that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shameful parts, and he said: 'Your Lord has not prohibited you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 21

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

21. "And he swore unto them both: ' Verily I am a sincere adviser to you'."

Satan made an oath for Adam and Eve that he was an absolute benevolent in inviting them to eating from that tree. Therefore, their delusion was strengthened thereby, because Adam and his wife imagined that no one would swear by Allah falsely.

The verse says:

"And he swore unto them both: ' Verily I am a sincere adviser to you '."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 22

فَدَلاَّهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَن تِلْكُمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُل لَّكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

22. "Then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit; so when they tasted the (forbidden) tree, their shameful parts became exposed to them and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: 'Did I not forbid you both from that tree and (did I not) say to you that verily Satan is a manifest foe for you?'."

Satan deceived Adam and Eve and caused them to be thrown down into the valley of misfortune so that they were sent away from that exalted rank. As soon as they tasted from the fruit of that tree and ate it, their clothing fell down from their bodies, and they ashamed from each other.

The verse says:

"Then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit; so when they tasted the (forbidden) tree, their shameful parts became exposed to them ..."

The verse continues saying:

"... and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden....."

That is, they took the leaves of the trees and put them over each other in order to cover their private parts therewith. Regarding this matter, it was pointed out in Surah Al-Baqarah that the general interest was so that such a scene would come forth for Adam and Eve, and they should come out from the Garden.

Their banishment from the Garden was not their retribution, because prophets do not commit any sin so that they be deserving of retribution. It was only a 'leaving the better', i.e. if they did not do it, it would be better.

"... and their Lord called out to them: 'Did I not forbid you both from that tree and (did I not) say to you that verily Satan is a manifest foe for you? '."

This was what Allah, addressing Adam and Eve, called out to them both.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 23

قَالاَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

23. "They said: 'Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers '."

In answer to the reprimand of Allah, they both said that they were unjust to themselves. The verse says:

"They said: 'Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves....."

The objective meaning of 'being unjust', here, is that they abandoned performing a recommendable act and, therefore, they were deprived from its recompense.

Their purpose of their statement may be that as a result of coming down on the ground and being deprived from that peaceful and blissful life, they incurred unjust to themselves.

The verse, from the tongue of Adam and Eve, continues saying:

"... and if You do not forgive us and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers'."

They invocated Allah that if He did not cover their blemish and did not have mercy on them, and did not bestow His grace and His other favors by means of endowing His blessings and some other rewards upon them, they would be from those people who do not enjoy and benefit of their lives.

Whenever a person causes a loss unto himself, or does not ward off a damage from himself, he has been unjust to himself, without being worthy of bearing retribution.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 24 - 25

قَالَ اهْبِطُواْ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ

24. "He said: 'Get you down, some of you (being) the enemies of others and for you there is in the earth an abode and a provision for a (fixed) time'."

25. "He said: 'Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised'."

It was thus that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden, and, thereafter, humankind began their adventurous lives on the earth. The Qur'an says:

"He said: 'Get you down, some of you (being) the enemies of others and for you there is in the earth an abode and a provision for a (fixed) time'."

Allah says to human beings that both your lives and deaths perform on the earth, and, on the Resurrection Day you will be raised and come out from inside the ground.

He said: ' Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised'."

It is understood from this verse that, on the Resurrection Day, Allah will raise and bring out human beings from this very ground.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 4, P. 403, - Tafsir-ul-Burhan, tradition. No. 5
2. Fakhr-i-Razi, At- Tafsir-ul-Kabir
3. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth- Thaqalayn
4. Current Surah, verse 12
5. Current Surah, verse 13
6. The Light of the Holy Qur'an, Part 1, PP. 150-155.

Section 3: Mankind warned against its enemy, Satan

Mankind was warned against Satan and his Tribe -Sincerity in prayer - Justice in dealings enjoined.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 26

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

26. "O' children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shameful parts, and (for) adornment, and the raiment of piety; that is the best. This is of the Signs of Allah so that they may take admonition."

A Warning unto All the Children of Adam!

From this holy verse on, Allah states a series of constructive commandments and recommendations for all the children of Adam, which, in fact, are the continuations of Adam's affairs in Heaven.

At first, He points to the subject of clothing and covering the body, which had an important function in the event of Adam. Allah says:

"O' children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shameful parts....."

The usage of the clothing that He has sent for us is not only for covering the body and concealing its shameful parts, but it is also a factor of adornment. Clothing is a splendor and an ornament which makes one's stature seem more beautiful than what it really is.

"... and (for) adornment....."

Following this phrase, which refers to the outward clothing of people, the Qur'an stretches the discussion to the spiritual clothing. As the manner of the Qur'an is in many other instances, it combines these two aspects together, and says that the clothing of piety is better than that clothing. It says:

"and the raiment of piety; that is the best. "

The resemblance of piety and righteousness to 'raiment' is a very explicit and expressive resemblance. Clothing both protects the body from cold and heat, and is a fender against a great deal of dangers.

It both covers the vices of the body and is an ornament for persons. The essence of piety and righteousness, besides covering the ugliness of man's sins and protecting him from a lot of personal and social dangers, is also considered a very great adornment for him. It is a notable ornament which increases his personality.

The objective meaning of 'the raiment of piety' is that very spirit of piety which protects the soul of man, and, however, the sense of 'shy', 'righteous deed.', and the like of them are assembled in it.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an implies that these raiment that Allah has assigned for you, irrespective of the material raiment and the spiritual one, bodily raiment and the raiment of piety, are wholly from the signs of Allah, so that the servants of Allah may remember the Divine bounties. It says:

"... This is of the signs of Allah so that they may take admonition."

Raiment in the Past and Present

As far as the history of man indicates, human beings have always worn clothes, but, in our time, the means of producing clothes have so vastly varied and developed that it is not comparable with the past at all.

And, unfortunately, the secondary aspects of clothes, and even its unpleasant and disgraceful instances, have so vastly spread that they are being preceded the philosophy of clothing.

Clothing has been taken a factor of kinds of luxuries, expansion of corruptions, excitation of lusts, gaudiness, haughtiness, prodigality, extravagance and the like of them. Sometime there may be found some surprising clothes among people, and particularly among those young ones who imitate the western customs, that its aspect of madness precedes its aspect of intellect.

The custom of following fashion in clothing, not only wastes a great deal of wealth, but also squanders a great part of time and powers of individuals.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 27

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لاَ يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَاتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاء لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

27. "O' children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you as he expelled your parents from the Garden, stripping them both of their clothing that he might expose unto them their shameful parts. Surely he sees you, he and his Tribe, from where you do not see them. We have made the Satans the friends of those who do not believe."

The previous verse referred to raiment as a divine bounty. Here, the Qur'an warns us to be aware that Satan does not take away this raiment and bounty from us.

Satan seduces the believing people either, and causes them to deviate from the straight path. But he has not a full mastership and domination over them, because a believing person can be saved by means of repentance and refuging to Allah. Thus, his domination is over the disbelievers.

"O' children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you he expelled your parents from the Garden, stripping them both of their clothing that he might expose unto them their shameful parts. Surely he sees you, he and his Tribe, from where you do not see them. We have made the Satans the friends of those who do not believe."

Explanations

1. Any kind of propaganda and preach, which ends to nakedness, is Satanic.
2. Exposing the private parts is a preparation for the lack of belief and domination of Satan.
3. Nakedness is a factor of banishment from the rank of nearness to Allah.
4. Adam (as), who was prostrated unto by the angels, was seduced by Satan; therefore, you should be more careful.

5. Satan is not alone; He has some groups of assistances, too. They watch you in all moments-

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 28

وَإِذَا فَعَلُواْ فَاحِشَةً قَالُواْ وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءنَا وَاللّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاء أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

28. "And whenever they commit an indecency, they say: 'We found our fathers (acting) upon it, and Allah has enjoined it on us.' Say: 'Verily Allah does not enjoin indecencies. Do you say against Allah what you do not know? '."

In this verse, the Qur'an points to one of the important temptations of Satan, usually stated by the tongues of some persons who have satanic qualities.

It is so that when they do a disgraceful action, and they are asked of its reason, they will answer that it is the custom and tradition that they have found with their ancestors upon it in addition that Allah has enjoined them upon it, too. The verse says:

"And whenever they commit an indecency, they say: 'We found our fathers (acting) upon it, and Allah has enjoined it on us.' ..."

It is interesting that, for answering them, the Qur'an does not pay attention to the first reason, i.e. the blindly following their fathers. It suffices to answer their second proof. It says:

"... Say: ' Verily Allah does not enjoin indecencies. ..."

The reason of this statement is that Allah's commandment is not separate from the command of intellect.

Then the verse ends with the following holy phrase:

"... Do you say against Allah what you do not know? '."

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /fahisah/ (indecency), here, in this verse, is any indecent and disgrace action, including 'naked circumambulation. This action was performed by some ignorant people in order to follow their unjust leaders, which is counted one of its clear denotation expansions.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 29

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ

29. Say: 'My Lord has enjoined justice, and set your faces upright (toward Him) at every place of worship, and call upon Him being sincere to Him in religion. As He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you also return."

The verse begins as follows:

"Say: ' My Lord has enjoined justice....."

The Qur'an commands the Prophet (S) to say that his Lord has enjoined him justice, and to what wisdom testifies that it is proper, right, and good.

It has been said that the purpose of the Qur'anic term /qist/ (justice), here, is 'Unity'.

"... and set your faces upright (toward Him)...."

It addresses the Prophet (S) and tells him to say that the servants should intend to worship Allah while they are rightly stationed toward the direction of the Ka'bah, not toward any other direction.

"… at every place of worship,…"

You should observe this divine ordinance at anytime and place of prostration that you are. The purpose of this holy phrase is in the state of 'prayer'.

"…and call upon Him being sincere to Him in religion…"

In this part of the verse, it commands that servants should worship sincerely. That is, sincerity in worshipping Allah (S.w.T.) has been enjoined. The verse concludes as follows:

"... As He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you also return."

There are some ideas stated upon the relation of this meaning to the former circumstance, as follows:

The statement means that we should call upon Allah (S.w.T.) sincerely, since, finally, we will be raised up again and we will be given our rewards in Hereafter.

The Qur'an implies that if, from the point of intellect, it is difficult for you to consider this fact in your mind, look upon your creation in the beginning.

Then do know that, as Allah brought you forth from the infinite desert of non-existence into the flower-garden of existence, once more, after death He will give life to your earthly body, too, in the form of a new creation, and He will raise you up again.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 30

فَرِيقًا هَدَى وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلاَلَةُ إِنَّهُمُ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاء مِن دُونِ اللّهِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُم ُّهْتَدُونَ

30. "A party He has guided aright while a party error is justly their due (for) verily they took Satans for their guardians other than Allah, and they think that they are the ones guided aright."

There are some groups of people who, as a result of receptivity and accepting the invitation of the Truth, have been involved in the grace of Allah and have gained the reward of guidance.

On the contrary, those who rejected the invitation of the Truth have been deprived from the grace of Allah, and they have been left to themselves. And, consequently, the light of guidance did not brighten wide their breasts, nor it lightened their hearts, and they were deserving of aberration.

"A party He has guided aright while a party error is justly their due....."

In view of the point that this meaning has occurred after the statement of raising up the dead, it makes clear that 'guidance' is in the sense of 'leading', and 'aberration' is applied with the meaning of being deprived from good rewards and Heaven',

".... (for) verily they took Satans for their guardians other than Allah....."

This statement points out to this fact that their retribution is not undue and without any cause. It is for this condition that they have committed sins and have preferred the love of Satan to the love of Allah Instead of obeying Allah, they have obeyed Satan.

".... and they think that they are the ones guided aright."

They disobey Allah, yet they think that they are on the path of right and they are guided aright.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 31

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُواْ زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وكُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ وَلاَ تُسْرِفُواْ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

31. " O' children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer, and eat and drink but do not act extravagantly; verily He does not like the extravagant (ones)."

The verse addresses all the children of Adam, saying to them that they should take with themselves their clothing with which they ornament themselves when they perform every prayer.

It has been narrated that whenever Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) stood to keep prayer, he used to wear his best clothes. In answer to the question why he (as) used to do so, he said:

"Allah if beautiful and He likes beauty. Therefore, I decorate myself for Him."

And after that, he recited the verse under discussion.

"O' children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer....."

Some of the commentators have said that this verse enjoins Muslims to wear their own clothes at the time of performing every prayer and circumambulation. This is opposite the notion of the pagans who used to circumambulate nakedly. They said that they would not worship the Lord with the clothes in which they had committed sins.

Some other commentators have said that the purpose of 'wearing the beautiful apparel' is targeted to combing the hair at the time of establishing every prayer.

The verse continues saying:

"... and eat and drink but do not act extravagantly; verily He does not like the extravagant (ones)."

It is narrated from Ibn-' Abbas who has said: "Eat whatever you desire, and wear whatever you like, but beware that the two qualities of extravagance and pride do not cause you to commit sin."

Section 4: The Guidance through Messengers and Their Rejections

The messengers coming with the guidance -The fate of disbelievers -the guilty ones shall accuse each other and shall themselves witness against themselves.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 32

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللّهِ الَّتِيَ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالْطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

32. "Say: 'Who has prohibited the ornament of Allah and the good provision which He has brought forth for His servants?' Say: 'These are for those who believe in the (short) life of this world (to be) exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection.' Thus do We explain the Signs for a people who know."

The verse begins thus:

"Say: 'Who has prohibited the ornament of Allah and the good provision which He has brought forth for His servants?'..."

The Prophet (S) is commanded to ask who has forbidden the clothing with which people decorate themselves, and who has prohibited the pure and good sustenance. These are the things Allah has created for His servants. The verse continues saying:

"... Say: 'These are for those who believe in the (short) life of this world (to be) exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection.' ..."

These bounties, in this present world, are for the believing people, yet they are not peculiar to them, because disbelieving ones have also a share in them. But, in the Hereafter, they are special to the believers and none else will have a share in them.

The fact that in this statement Allah has not said that these are in the world for both those who believe and those who do not believe, is in order to attract the attentions to this matter that bounties have been created for the benefit of the believing people, and, in the meantime, the disbelieving ones enjoy these bounties, too.

"... Thus do We explain the signs for a people who know."

The Qur'an implies that as Allah introduces the hypocrites to you; and admonishes the benefit of your religion to you, He explains the Signs for the people who have knowledge, too.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 33

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُواْ بِاللّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَن تَقُولُواْ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

33. "Say: 'My Lord has prohibited only indecencies, those apparent of them and those concealed, and sin and unjust aggression (against people's rights) and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you say against Allah what you do not know."

"Say: 'My Lord has prohibited only indecencies, those apparent of them and those concealed....."

The purpose of this first phrase of the verse is that Allah has prohibited only the things that are indecent. The verses of the Surah, up to here, have referred to the indecencies in brief. This verse, following the subject in details, says:

"... and sin and unjust aggression (against people's rights) ..."

The indecencies are divided into four categories. They are:

l) Undue oppression and vice,

2) attributing partners to Allah and,

3) forging a lie against Allah.

Of course, oppression is always undue, but in fact, this quality has been added for emphasis.

Some commentators have said the objective meaning of 'indecencies' are 'hidden fornication' and 'to be naked in circumambulation'. The former is called 'concealed', and the latter is counted 'apparent'.

"... and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority....."

One of the other prohibited indecencies is attributing partners to Allah. There is no proof or reason to justify the sin of polytheism.

"... and that you say against Allah what you do not know"

Another forbidden indecency is saying something against Allah without having any knowledge about it.

Now, in the next verse, the Qur'an pays to soothing the Holy Prophet.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 34

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاء أَجَلُهُمْ لاَ يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلاَ يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

34. "And for every people there is (an appointed) term, so when their term comes they cannot put it back the least while nor can they advance it."

The 'appointed term' is not assigned only for individuals. There have been some communities, nations, and government that not only they themselves but also their civilizations, cultures works and social customs have been destroyed.

It is not peculiar to only life and death to have 'an appointed time'. All glories, governments, properties, and the like of them, have also appointed terms. When the appointed term reaches, all supports, endeavors, and rivals are worthless to do anything in order to change its time, sooner of later.

"And for every people there is (an appointed) term, so when their term comes they cannot put it back the least while nor can they advance it."

However, this holy verse threatens the pagans of Quraysh to the chastisement which is with Allah. Their punishment will be sent down upon them in an appointed time, the same as it was sent down upon the former unjust nations.

Explanations

1. In the world of existence, there happens nothing, nor a changing, casually and outside of the control of Allah (S.w.T.). The laws governing

over communities, similar to the laws governing over individuals, also practically exist.

"And for every people there is (an appointed) term....."

2. The possibilities and powers that you have are perishable. Therefore utilize them in the best form as far as you can.

3. Be not proud of the world and its titles.

4. The transgressors should not count the respite of Allah as a sign of His grace upon them. Their term will come, too.

5. Always there comes a group in the scene of power to be tested and to pass away.

"...their term comes ..."

6. The strugglers of the path of Allah will not despair when the tyrannical persons overcome. They continue their effort, since tyrants are perishable.

"... for every people there is (an appointed) term....."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 35 - 36

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنِ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُواْ عَنْهَا أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

35. "O children of Adam! When there come to you Messengers from among you relating to you My signs, (follow them). Then whoever guards (against evil) and amends (himself) - no fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."

36. "And those who belie Our Signs and turn away from them with arrogance -these are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

Addressing the children of Adam wholly, the verse describes that if some prophets come to you, who are of the same creation as you, in order to recite Allah's revelations to you and to aware you of His commandments, whoever keeps from evil and does not belie them, and improves his deeds and characteristics, there will be no fear upon him in this world nor any grief in the Hereafter. The verse says:

"O children of Adam! When there come to you Messengers from among you relating to you My signs, (follow them). Then whoever guards (against evil) and amends (himself) - no fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."

Then, immediately after that, the Qur'an adds that the persons, who belie Allah's revelations and arrogantly do not accept them, will abide in Hell Fire forever. The verse says:

"And those who belie Our Signs and turn away from them with arrogance- These are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

Explanations

1. Coming prophets one after another, is Allah's way of treatment, which had been planned before. The secret of the effect and influence of their speech is that they are from among people themselves.

2. The real believers in the prophets' invitations are those who are virtuous and amend themselves.

3. Peacefulness comes forth under the light of Faith and piety.

4. The consequence of belying prophets arrogantly, and rejecting their invitations, is the everlasting punishment and Hell.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 37

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللّه كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ أُوْلَـئِكَ يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيبُهُم مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُواْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّه قَالُواْ ضَلُّواْ عَنَّا وَشَهِدُواْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ كَافِرِينَ

37. "Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or belies His Signs? Those shall receive their share (of destiny) from the Book (in the world) until when Our messengers come to them to take them away, they would say: 'Where are those which you used to call upon besides Allah?' They would say: 'They have departed from us;' and they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers."

Now, in this verse, the Qur'an pays to threatening the rejecters, where it says:

"Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or belies His Signs..."

This question is to emphasize the mentioned matter, as well as the reality of the information. It implies that none is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah, or the one who belies His revelations. These signs are some clear evidences unto Unity and prophecy.

The verse continues saying:

"....Those shall receive their share (of destiny) from the Book (in the world)…"

Such persons will receive and taste their share from the divine chastisement.

In this statement, the word 'Book' has been used instead of the sense of the term 'chastisement', since it is the Book that informs them of their punishment.

Some commentators have said that the objective meaning of it is that they will enjoy the share of lifetime, sustenance, and whatever has been recorded and decreed by Allah for them. These things will not be ceased from them until death reaches them.

"... until when Our messengers come to them to take them away, they would say: "Where are those which you used to call upon besides Allah?' ..."

Then, after passing their lifetime, and that their days are numbered, when the messengers of Allah, i.e. the angels, refer to them in order to take their souls, they tell them where their idols, which they used to worship, are.

The purpose of this question is to reprimand them. It addresses them and asks them why those idols do not come and help them to save them from the punishment.

Some commentators have said that the purpose of it is not their death, but the purpose is the Day of Resurrection when the angels come to take them into Hell.

"... They would say: ' They have departed from us;' and they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers."

In answer to the question of the angels, they say that the idols have departed from them and can not defend them. They acknowledge that their worshipping, that they performed for them, are totally nullified and dissipated. They confess that they have been disbelievers.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 38

قَالَ ادْخُلُواْ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُم مِّن الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَّعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّى إِذَا ادَّارَكُواْ فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرَاهُمْ لأُولاَهُمْ رَبَّنَا هَـؤُلاء أَضَلُّونَا فَآتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلٍّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَـكِن لاَّ تَعْلَمُونَ

38. "He will say: 'Enter you into the (Hell) Fire among the groups of people and jinn that have passed away before you. Whenever a group enters (the Fire), it curses its sister-group; until when they follow each other, all into the Fire, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them: 'Our Lord! These are they who led us astray. Therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire.' He will say: 'For each one there is double (chastisement), but you do not know'."

One of the shaking scenes on the Day of Retribution is the gathering of the people of Hell and their dispute with each other there. This dispute occurs particularly between the sinners and their chiefs and those leading ones who caused these sinners to be sent into Hell.

For this very reason, these evildoers, who had been friends with each other before, here, become enemies to each other.

On That Day all friends become enemies except the virtuous ones whose friendship is fixed with each other, both in this world and the coming world. Surah Az-Zukhruf, No.43. Verse 67 says:

"The friends shall on That Day be enemies one to another, except the pious ones."

The verse begins as follows:

"He will say: 'Enter you into the (Hell) Fire among the groups of people and jinn that have passed away before you. ..."

On the Resurrection Day, Allah will tell the disbelievers to enter into the Hell Fire amongst those groups of people and jinn who had paved the path of infidelity and were destroyed before them.

"...Whenever a group enters (the Fire), it curses its sister-group....."

Every nation who enter the Hell Fire will curse the nation that have entered the fire before them and who have the same form of thought.

The purpose of the Arabic term 'ukht' (sister), mentioned in this verse, is not the sense of the word 'sister', but its objective meaning is 'of the same ideology'.

Therefore, the communities who have followed their leaders in the world very sincerely and affectionately will curse them and will tell them that they

have misled them and have brought them into Fire. Thus, they demand that the curse of Allah may be upon them!

"... until when they follow each other, all into the Fire, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them. 'Our Lord! These are they who led us astray. Therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire.' He will say: 'For each one there is double (chastisement), but you do not know '."

At the time when all of them enter the Hell Fire and gather with together therein, those who have entered later, compared with the leaders of them who have entered formerly, will address their Lord, and say that it was those leaders who caused them to be deprived from worshipping Him.

They ask Him to increase double their punishment. That is, such leaders invited them to go astray and prevented them to follow the truth.

Imam Sadiq (as) in this regard says:

"The purpose is the Imams (leaders) of transgression."

Some commentators have said that the purpose of this phrase is that they deserve two kinds of punishment. The first is the punishment of infidelity, and the second is the punishment of misleading others.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 39

وَقَالَتْ أُولاَهُمْ لأُخْرَاهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ فَذُوقُواْ الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

39. "And the foremost of them will say to the last of them: 'So there is no preference for you over us. Therefore, taste the chastisement for what you used to earn."

The verse begins as follows:

"And the foremost of them will say to the last of them: 'So there is no preference for you over us. ..."

Some commentators have said that the verse means that, in Hell, a former community will say to the latter community that they are not superior to them from the point of attitude and intellect.

"... Therefore, taste the chastisement for what you used to earn."

They tell them that they themselves chose infidelity, and they have no interference in that choice. Consequently, they should themselves tolerate the punishment of Allah.

Section 5: Disbelievers shall not Enter Paradise

No soul is charged with any responsibility but to the limits of its ability - The fate of disbelievers and the reward the believers will receive.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 40

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُواْ عَنْهَا لاَ تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاء وَلاَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ

40. "Verily those who belie Our Signs and, turn away from them with arrogance, the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle and thus do We recompense the guilty."

It can be understood from this verse that the purpose of the Arabic term / sama' / (sky), mentioned in this verse, is the place where Heaven is located in. So, in order to enter Heaven, the people of Heaven must pass through its gates.

The verse says:

"Verily those who belie Our Signs and, turn away from them with arrogance, the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle and thus do We recompense the guilty."

The Arabic term /jamal / means 'camel' or 'the thick rope by which ships are kept fastened beside the shore'. This meaning is more fitting than the meaning of 'needle and camel'. But, since the purpose is the statement of impossibility of the arrival of the disbelievers into Paradise, the meaning of 'camel' and passing a camel through the eye of a needle is nearer to the concept of impossibility.

Besides, the Bible, Luke, Chapter 18, No 25 says: "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Thus, despite Allah's gates of the grace of the sky and the earth are open to the virtuous believers, the gates of heaven are shut for the hostile beliers, the infidels.

"... the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them....."

Explanations

1. It .is probable that this meaning is understood from the apparent context of the verse that Paradise is in heavens.[1]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has said:

"The gates of the heaven are open at five times: when the struggle of strivers of Islam begins; when it is raining; when the Qur'an is being recited; at dawn; and at the time of calling to prayer."[2]

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 41

لَهُم مِّن جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِن فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

41. "For them shall be a bed of Hell-Fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We recompense the unjust."

The Qur'anic term /mihad/ is derived from/mahd/ which means 'bed'; and the term /qawas/ is the plural form of /qasiyah/ in the sense of 'cover'. It is also used with the meaning of 'a camp'.

This hostile group, who turn away from the Truth, are referred to in verse 37 of this Surah as 'infidels'. In verse No. 40, they are discussed as 'beliers and sinners.' In this current verse, they are pointed to as 'the unjust.'

The reason why they are called differently is that the one who belies the signs of Allah, is deserving to be entitled with all these words. In Surah Al -Baqarah. No.2. verse 254, we recite:

"... and the infidels -they are the unjust."

Thus, Hell Fire will encompass the whole entity of the disbelievers: from above and beneath of them. The evidence is also Surah Al-Ankabut. No.29. verse 55, where it says:

"On the day when the chastisement shall cover them from above them and from beneath their feet....."

However, applying the term / mihad / (bed) for the people of Hell, mentioned in this verse, is a kind of mocking them. It means that their resting place is Hell.[3]

The verse says:

"For them shall be a bed of Hell-Fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We recompense the unjust."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 42

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ لاَ نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا أُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

42. "And those who believe and do righteous deeds -We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability -these are the inhabitants of Paradise wherein shall they abide forever."

The Qur'an usually brings the concepts of 'glad tidings' and 'warning' ' beside each other. In the previous verse, the end of the arrogant evildoers was stated. Here, in this verse, the good end of the eligible believers is referred to.

"And those who believe and do righteous deeds -We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability -these are the inhabitants of Paradise wherein shall they abide forever."

Some apparently similar bounties of Heaven, such as: a stream of supplied in this world, with a great number of difference, of course, for a small number of people. But it is impossible to provide eternity of life here for anyone, which is possible in Heaven and the dwellers of Paradise are eternally provided with the Divine bounties.

Paradise is the reward of faith and good action that needs effort and endeavor, not any pretext.

Of course, the fulfillment of all good deeds is the best, yet, in action, every body is responsible as much as he is able to do. There is no exhausting duty upon the believers in Islam. The verse says:

"... but to the extent of his ability-…"

Again Surah Al -Hajj No.22. verse 77 says:

"... He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion....."

Then if there is any duty decreed upon us, surely we have been able to do it, although we have not applied our entire abilities.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 43

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُواْ الْحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَـذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُواْ أَن تِلْكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

43. "And we will remove whatever rancor be in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath their abodes and they will say: 'All praise be to Allah who guided us to this; and had Allah not guided us, we would not have been guided. Indeed, our Lord's messengers came with the truth.' And it will be cried out to them that: 'This is the Garden which you inherit for what you used to do."

The Arabic term /qill/ means 'a secretly penetration '. Regarding this, the secret grudge and envy are also called /qill/.

In the former verses, we recited that the dwellers of Hell curse each other. Now, in this verse, the Qur'an says that the dwellers of Heaven have no rancor in their breasts unto each other. Whatever they have is peace and affection. None may envy another's rank. All of them are thankful of the bounties of Allah in Heaven.

Explanations

1. Prophets are some means of guidance, and their guidance is accompanied with truth. They themselves, their speeches, their actions, heir styles, and their promises are entirely truth.

"... Indeed, our Lord's messengers came with the truth....."

2. According to the Islamic literature, every one of the believers and the disbelievers has a place both in Heaven and in Hell. But, believers inherit the places of disbelievers in Heaven and disbelievers inherit the Hellish places of the believers.

".... 'This is the Garden which you inherit "....

3. It is understood from the Islamic traditions that the gates of happiness and wretchedness are open to everybody. No one was created for Heaven nor for Hell from the beginning. It is the person's choice and action that leads the one toward the final abode.

4. Heaven stands instead of good action, not because of bare wishes and imaginations.

".... for what you used to do."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 44

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَن قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدتُّم مَّا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُواْ نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَن لَّعْنَةُ اللّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

44. "And the inhabitants of Paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire: 'We have found what our Lord promised us true; have you,

too, found what your Lord promised true? They will say: 'Yes. 'Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust."

It is recorded in the books of Shi'ite narrations and in some books of traditions of Sunnite school (like the book by Hakim Huskani) that the above-mentioned 'crier' will be Hadrat Ali (as).

Similarly, he (as) recited the Surah Al-Bara'ah in Mecca that announced the acquaintance of Muslims from the whole pagans of the world. Therefore, the recitation of resolutions of acquaintance and curse of Allah unto pagans are from the tongue of Ali (as), both in the world and Hereafter.

"And the inhabitants of Paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire: ' We have found what our Lord promised us true; have you, too, found what your Lord promised true? They will say: ' Yes.' Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust."

Explanations

1. In Hereafter, the dwellers of Heaven and the dwellers of Hell will speak with each other.

"And the inhabitants of paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) fire…."

2. The believers and the disbelievers will find the promises of Allah in truth and practical.

".... 'We have found what our Lord promised us true...."

3. By means of the inhabitants of Heaven, Allah will make the inhabitants of Hell confession, so that they incur some more shame and pressure[4].

4. All of the lies, accusations and sarcasms of the disbelievers will have some day a painful and sharp response.

".... Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust."

The court of Hereafter upon disbelievers will end with the motto saying:

"Allah's curse is on the unjust"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 45

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّه وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُم بِالآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ

45. "The unjust are those who hinder (people) from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked, and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."

The way of Allah is the way of Unity, submission, Faith, emigration, and Holy Struggle.

Transgressors hinder people from the way of Allah (S.w.T.) by means of creating doubts, temptations, propaganda, weakening them, and also by producing innovations and superstitions. They also oppose the leaders of truth and create despair through their hindering the affairs. Or, they cause some changes and deviations in the way of Allah (S.w.T.). The holy verse says as follows:

"The unjust are those who hinder (people) from Allah's way, and seek to make it crooked, and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."

Yes, any hindrance from Allah's way, or creating any deviation in it, is transgression, and cultural transgression is the greatest one.

The enemy may also fight manifestly and, if he can, he hinders the way of Allah absolutely. But, if he cannot, by applying different designs, he deviates the way and creates some changes alongside the path.

"and seek to make it crooked....."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 46

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلاًّ بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادَوْاْ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَن سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ

46. "And between the two (groups in Paradise and Hell) there shall be a veil. And on A'raf (the heights) there shall be men, recognizing all by their marks', who shall call to the inhabitants of Paradise: 'Peace be upon you!' They shall not have entered it; though they hope."

The objective meaning of the term 'veil' mentioned in the verse, perhaps, is the same wall which has been referred to in Surah Al - Hadid, No. 57 , verse 13. It says:

"... Then separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it: (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it, before it there shall be punishment. "[5]

The Arabic term /'a'raf/ is the plural form of the word /'urf/ in the sense of 'a high land'. The name of this Surah is taken from this part of the Qur'an as Al-'A'raf. It is only in this occurrence of the Qur'an where 'A'raf and the people of 'A'raf are referred to.

Who Are the People of 'A'raf?

In the Islamic narrations and the statements of the commentators, there are some various attitudes about them. Some of them believe that these people are some saints of Allah who will stand on a high place between Heaven and Hell, and who recognize all people.

They will greet to the inhabitants of Heaven and congratulate them their good end, but they are worried about the fate of the inhabitants of Hell.

Some others introduce these people as some weak persons who have both some sins and worshipping, and they are waiting for the grace of Allah. They are like those about whom Surah Al- Taubah. No.9 verse 106 says:

"And others are made to await Allah's command, whether He chastises them or whether He turns to them (mercifully), and Allah is Knowing, Wise."

That is, some other sinners are those whose affairs depend on Divine Will. He will either punish them by His justice, or He will forgive their sins with His grace. And, Allah knows the interests of people and is cognizant to the wisdom of creation, too.

Yet, perhaps, it can be said that the main pivot is Allah's saints, and the oppressive are in the margin. The good doers enter Paradise and the evildoers go into Hell. The weak people, those who are in the middle, are kept in' A'raf, waiting for their fate. But, the saints of Allah, who are standing on 'A'raf, will come to help them and will intercede them.

This statement is the consequence of the attitudes found amongst commentators and in Islamic narrations.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 47

وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاء أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُواْ رَبَّنَا لاَ تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

47. "And when their eyes shall be turned toward the inhabitants of the Fire, they shall say: 'Our Lord! Place us not with the unjust people."

The people of 'A'raf will look at the inhabitants of Heaven and recognize them and greet them, but they will not look at the inhabitants of Hell while their eyes shall be turned down,

"And when their eyes shall be turned toward the inhabitants of the Fire....."

In their supplications, the people of' A'raf do not ask Allah not to set them as the inhabitants of Fire, but they ask Him not to place them with the unjust people.

"... they shall say: 'Our Lord! Place us not with the unjust people."

As if, being companion with an unjust person is worse than being in fire. ('Alusi)

O' Lord! If you do not let us enter Paradise, yet do not muster us amongst the unjust people.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi; and Al -Mizan
2. Tafsir-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. Tafsir Fi-Zalal (the explanation under the verse).
4. Tafsir Al-Mizan
5. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan

Section 6: The Disappointment of the Wicked in Hell

The fate of the wicked and their disappointment in Hell,

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 48 - 49

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الأَعْرَافِ رِجَالاً يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُواْ مَا أَغْنَىَ عَنكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

أَهَـؤُلاء الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لاَ يَنَالُهُمُ اللّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ ادْخُلُواْ الْجَنَّةَ لاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلاَ أَنتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ

48. "And the occupant of A'raf (the heights) shall call to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying: Of no avail were to you your amassing and what you used to act proudly'."

49. "Are these they whom you swore that Allah will not bestow any mercy on them? (Whom Allah now says) Enter you into Paradise; no fear shall be upon you, nor shall you grieve."

The verse begins saying:

"And the occupant of A'raf (the heights) shall call to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying: ' Of no avail were to you your amassing and what you used to act proudly'."

Upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The people of' A'r'af mean divine prophets and their successors. They will call to some persons of the inhabitants of Hell, and to the chiefs of the disbelievers, and blaming them seriously, they say: 'Of no avail were to you your amassing (wealth) and what you used to act proudly'."

"Are these they whom you swore that Allah will not bestow any mercy on them?"

This statement of the Qur'an refers to the dwellers of Heaven whom the chiefs of disbelievers blamed and despised in the world. They used to belittle them because of their poverty and showed arrogance upon them with their worldly wealth. The disbelievers swore that Allah would not let them enter into Paradise.

"... (whom Allah now says) Enter you into Paradise; no fear shall be upon you, nor shall you grieve."

By Allah’s leave the people of 'A'raf will state this meaning to the oppressive ones that they enter into Heaven while they are neither frightened nor are they grievous.

Asbah-ibn-Nabatah has narrated from Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

'On the Day of Judgment' we will stand between Heaven and Hell. Then whoever has helped us (in the world) we will recognize him by his feature and will send him into Heaven; and whoever has been hostile to us, we will recognize him, too, and will send him into Hell."[1]

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 50 - 51

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَفِيضُواْ عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاء أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّهُ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُواْ دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُواْ لِقَاء يَوْمِهِمْ هَـذَا وَمَا كَانُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

50. "And the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire shall call to the inhabitants of Paradise saying: 'Cast on us of water or (and) of what Allah has provided you with.' They shall say: 'Verily Allah has forbidden them both to the disbelievers '. "

51. "(Those) who have taken their religion for pastime and a play and the life of the world has deluded them; so today We forsake them as they forgot the encounter of this their day, and that they denied Our Signs."

This verse of the Qur'an says that the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire shall call to the inhabitants of Heaven, saying:

"...'Cast on us of water or (and) of what Allah has Provided you with you…."

This statement is an evidence for the sense that Heaven is located above Hell, (because the meaning of the Arabic word / ifadah / is pouring water from above). Then the phrase means that they ask the dwellers of Heaven to pour over them from the water or the kinds of food and fruit Allah has provided them with.

"... They shall say: Verily Allah has forbidden them both to the disbelievers'."

This is the answer of the inhabitants of Heaven. They say that, Allah has forbidden the drinks and foods of Heaven to the infidels. These infidels are those who toyed with the religion of Allah, which He had enjoined to follow, and made unlawful or made lawful whatever they desired.

"(Those) who have taken their religion for pastime and a play and the life of the world has deluded them; so today We forsake them ..."

Such people will be dealt with like the person who is forgotten while he is in fire. Neither their request is accepted nor does their shedding tear cause any mercy to be shown. The same as they forgot this day and did not take it important.

"... as they forgot the encounter of this their day, and that they denied Our Signs."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 52

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُم بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

52. "And verily We have brought them a Book which We have explained with knowledge - a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."

Allah has completed the argument, but being drowned in the amusing world and forgetting the Hereafter, and denying the revelations of Allah, is the consequence of man's shortcoming himself.

"And verily We have brought them a Book…"

There are many torches to lead people towards the right path, but some groups go astray because they do not utilize them.

The Divine revelation is based upon reality and knowledge, And, the greatest grace and mercy of Allah is that He has guided Man.

".... which We have explained with knowledge...."

However, religion is guidance for the believers, not for the obstinate persons who seek only pretext.

".... guidance and a mercy for a people who believe"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 53

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ تَأْوِيلَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلُهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَل لَّنَا مِن شُفَعَاء فَيَشْفَعُواْ لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ خَسِرُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ

53. "Do they wait (for anything) but its interpretation? On the day its interpretation comes, those who forgot it before (in the world) will say: 'Indeed the messengers of our Lord brought the truth. Are there for us then any intercessors that they intercede for us? Or could we be sent back to do other than that we were doing?' Indeed they have lost their souls and that which they were forging has gone away from them. "

The Qur'anic term /ta'wil/ (interpretation) is in the sense of 'referring to the past or future'. In the Qur'an, it has been applied with the meaning of the truth, and the beginning or the end of an action.'

In the current Surah, verse No.43, the word of the inhabitants of Heaven was that they said:

"Indeed our Lord's messengers came with the truth."

Here, in this holy verse, the word of the inhabitants of Hell is the same.

"Do they wait (for anything) but its interpretation? On the day its interpretation comes, those who forgot it before (in the world) will say: ' Indeed the messengers of our Lord brought the truth. ..."

In Hereafter, disbelievers will gain no vail of their hopes, moaning, and protests. Therefore, they must take the divine threats seriously in the present world.

In the meantime, this fact should be known that neglecting the school of Islam and the Qur'an is a great loss.

Disbelievers think that their deeds are correct. On the Resurrection Day, when they recognize their own error, they wish to return back to the world. But this wish is of no avail. They say:

"... Are there for us then any intercessors that they intercede for us ? Or could we be sent back to do other than that we were doing?' Indeed they have lost their souls and that which they were forging has gone away from them."

On the Day of Judgment, there will be no sign of worldly parades, influence of false deities, idols, properties, and powers. Also, there will not be found intercessions for everybody, either.

Note

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan vol. 2 - Tafsir-us-Safi

Section 7: Allah's only is the Creation and the Command

Creation belongs only to Allah and Allah's alone is the command - The Resurrection of mankind,

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 54

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ أَلاَ لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

54. "Verily your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days; then He mounted the Throne (of authority). He covers the day with the night which pursues it urgently and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars submissive to His command. Be it known! (that) His are the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

"Verily your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days....."

The reason why Allah says that He has created the heavens and the earth in six days is that creating something after something else in order mostly indicates that its creator is knowing and wise, and directs that thing upon the requirement of wisdom.

Or, its reason is for the sake that He teaches deliberation and accuracy in affairs to His servants.

"... then He mounted the Throne (of authority). ..."

This phrase metaphorically points to the absolute encompassment of Allah, and His domination, upon the management of the affairs of the heavens and the earth after their creation. However, after the creation of heavens and the earth He held the reins of leading them. This statement means that not only creation belongs to Him, but also running and leading the world of existence are with Him.

This meaning is an answer to those who think the world needs the Lord only in creation, and not in permanence and continuation of the existence.

"... He covers the day with the night which pursues it urgently....."

When the verse says that the night urgently pursues the day, it means the night comes after the day and follows it; like that something pursues another thing with the purpose of demanding it.

"... and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars submissive to His command....."

This phrase means that the Lord is He Who has created the sun and the moon and the stars while all of them are rotating according to His device.

As if, the sun, the moon and the stars are commissioned to this rotation.

"... Be it known! (that) His are the creation and the command. ..."

It is the Lord who has created all things and runs them according to His Will; i.e. both creation, and its device and management are under His control.

"... Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The Lord eternally remains in His infinite Glory of Lordship, and He is the Creator and Possessor of the worlds, as well as a source of blessing for them.

Next to mentioning the statement of the creation of the heavens and the earth, the night and the day, the sun, the moon and the stars, and the device of the world of existence, this phrase, in fact, is a kind of praising the Holy rank of Allah which has been stated as an instruction to His servants.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 55

ادْعُواْ رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

55. "Call on your Lord humbly and secretly verily He does not like the transgressors."

The Conditions of Supplication

Through clear reasons, the previous verse proved this fact that it is only Allah (S.w.T.) Who is deserved of being worshipped. Next to that, in this verse, the Qur'an instructs that supplication and calling to Him, which is the soul and essence of worship, should be performed before Allah. At first, it says:

"Call on your Lord humbly and secretly....."

This instruction in the verse, which says to call on the Lord 'secretly', is for that this action may be performed far from any dissimulation so that it becomes nearer to sincerity. It must be done with concentration of contemplation, and attention.

And, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... verily He does not like the transgressors."

This phrase has a vast meaning which includes any transgression, irrespective of shouting aloud when supplicating, or acting hypocritically, or inclining to other than Allah in supplication.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 56

وَلاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلاَحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

56. "And do not make mischief in the earth after its improvement and call on Him in fear and hope; surely the mercy of Allah is nigh to the good-doers."

The previous verse referred to the relation of the servants of Allah with their Lord, and here, the relation of people is pointed out.

Between the previous verse and this verse, there has come the phrase: "And do not make mischief in the earth ..."in order to point out that oral supplication should be accompanied with practical effort for the social improvement. Then, offering a bare supplication by tongue and making mischief in practice, is not effective.

This verse and the former-one have pointed to the conditions of the perfection of supplication, before Allah (S.w.T.), as well as its rites and the necessary circumstances of its acceptance. Some of them are as follows:

A supplication is better to be accompanied with humiliation.

A supplication should be done hidden and aloof from any hypocrisy and dissimulation.

It must be performed with both fear and hope, and without violating the boundaries of truth.

There must not be any form of making mischief in it.

"And do not make mischief in the earth ..."

Explanations

1. An improved society may be exposed to danger:

"...after its improvement ..."

2. Those revolutionists who want to reform are not free from applying gnosis, supplication, and close communion.

"... and call on Him in fear and hope....."

3. If there be not- a moderate fear and hope in supplication, it will tend towards mischief.

4. A believer should always he between the states of fear and hope. This moderation is called 'goodness' by Allah. Goodness is a preparation and cause of receiving the mercy of Allah.

Therefore, without having goodness, the expectation of a person for receiving the mercy of Allah is undue. The verse says:

"... surely the mercy of Allah is nigh to the good-doers."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 57

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَقَلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالاً سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ
فَأَنزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاء فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِن كُلِّ ا ًمَرَاتِ كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

57. "And it is He Who sends the winds as good tidings heralding His mercy, till when they carry the heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a dead land, and therewith We send down water, and with it We bring forth fruits of every kind. Thus shall We bring forth the dead, so that you might remember."

In former verses, he words were upon theology. In this verse, Resurrection is referred to. In the discussions of concerning each of 'origin' and 'end', they have been reasoned through natural affairs and the order of creation.

Nature, of course, with all the elaboration and order that it has, is under the authority and Will of Allah, and it must not cause man to become heedless of the origin of existence.

We must be careful not to lose ourselves when we are dealing with scientific formulas and material laws. The movement of winds, the descent of different rains, and the growth of plants are certainly performed with the device of Allah (S.w.T.).

"And it is He Who sends the winds as good tidings heralding His mercy, till when they carry the heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a dead land, and therewith We send down water, and with it We bring forth fruits of every kind..."

The deniers of Resurrection have no proof. They only consider it far away.

The examples of life are found in nature. Gathering the atoms of a pear, an apple, and a pomegranate, which are scattered in the soil, is like the gathering of the atoms of the dead. These examples are sufficient to remove that consideration of theirs.

The verse says:

"... Thus shall We bring forth the dead so that you might remember."

Death does not happen in the sense of perfect non-existence, but it is a change of state. The same as the dead land (in the winter) does not mean the lack of land.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 58

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبُثَ لاَ يَخْرُجُ إِلاَّ نَكِدًا كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ

58. "And the good land -its vegetation comes forth (in abundance) by the leave of its Lord while that which is bad springs up nothing but (something useless) scantily. Thus do We repeat the Signs for a people who give thanks."

The verses of the Qur'an are like the rains of mercy. When they are recited unto the receptive persons, they bring acknowledgement, love, faith and effort afterward. But they do not increase anything in the unbelievers save obstinacy and enmity. The Qur'an says:

"And we send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe, but it adds not to the unjust but perdition."[1]

Yet, it should be said that, the family nobility, is one of the factors of heritage and personality.

"And the good land -its vegetation comes forth (in abundance) ..."

For this reason, only the descent of the rain of mercy is not enough, but the fitness and eligibility of the place, and also the leave of Allah, are necessary.

"... by the leave of its Lord....."

The Qur'an is the source of guidance and statement for all, but only the pious ones, and those who are thankful, can enjoy its contents.

"... while that which is bad springs up nothing but (something useless) scantily. Thus do We repeat the Signs for a people who give thanks."

Note

1. Surah Al-'Isra', No.17, Verse 82

Sectiuon 8: The Ministry of Noah

Noah's exhortations to his people to serve Allah alone - The people belied him and were drowned,

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verses 59 - 60

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُواْ اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَـهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّيَ أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

قَالَ الْمَلأُ مِن قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَـاكَ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُّبِينٍ

59. "Indeed We sent Noah to his people, so he said: 'O my people! Serve Allah. You have no god other than Him. Verily I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day."

60. "The chiefs of his people said: 'Verily we do see you in manifest error."

The example of 'that which is bad springs up nothing', which was referred to in the previous verse, was the people of Noah, to whom whatever he (as) advised he got nothing.

The story of the people of Noah has been mentioned in the Qur'an in Suras: Al-' A'hqaf, As-Saffat, Al-'Isra', al-A'hzab, Yunus, Al-Mu'minun, Al-Ghamar, and Noah.

However, the beginning thing that prophets invite to, is the invitation to Unity and theology. This is in common for the believers in all Divine religions.

"Indeed We sent Noah to his people, so he said: 'O my people! Serve Allah you have no god other than Him. ..."

Prophets are the true sympathizers of human beings. The verse continues the statement of Noah, saying:

"...Verily I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day."

Anyhow, this fact should be pointed out that the invitation of Noah was worldly, since all the people of the world in that time were the people of Noah. Then when he cursed, all the disbelievers throughout the world were involved in his curse, and they were drowned entirely.

The Qur'an narrates the supplication of Noah, thus:

" And Noah said: My Lord! leave not upon the earth any dweller from among the unbelievers'." [1]

The opponents of prophets have always been some groups of notable ones among the chiefs of the rich whose dazzling glare has filled the eyes of people.

"The chiefs of his people said. ..."

To know prophets as the misguided ones is worse than to disbelieve in them. When the nature of some people is transformed, they consider a true guide as a misguided one.

Now, in twenty first century, the world of atheism imagine themselves as the ones of a sound and serene mind, while they introduce the adherents of divine religions and prophets as some reactionists and simple-minded people.

He who pursues the theical system and tries to root out the system of paganism, should expect to face with any slunder, accusation, and affront.

"... 'Verily we see you in manifest error'."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 61 - 62

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلاَلَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالاَتِ رَبِّي وَأَنصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

61. "He said: ' O' my people! There is no error in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds."

62. "I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord, and I advise you sincerely, and I know from Allah what you do not know."

In response to the affront and harshness of the opponents, Noah, with a calm, firm, and tender tone, said that not only he was not misguided, but also there was no sign of misguidance in him. He added that he was a messenger of Allah, the Lord of the worlds. The verse says:

"He said: 'O' my people! There is no error in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds."

This phrase is a hint to the fact that all the different gods they believed in were in vain.

The Lord of the whole people and the things of the world is Allah, the only One God, Who is the Creator of all of them.

Noah (as) continued saying that his aim was to perform the mission of his Lord perfectly and to convey His revealed Messages to them. The holy verse says:

"I deliver you the Messages of my Lord....."

He told the opponents that he would do his best for them in the path of benevolence.

"... and I advise you sincerely....."

Then, finally Noah added that:

".... and I know from Allah what you do not know."

This phrase may be a threat against their oppositions, indicating that he knew some painful punishments for the evil doers that they were not aware of yet. And also it points to the grace and mercy of Allah that if they paved the way of obedience he would know some blessings and rewards from him that they did not know, as well as the greatness and vastness of them.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 63

أَوَعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُواْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

63. "What! do you wonder that an admonition has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he might warn you so that you might keep from evil and so that (His) mercy may be shown to you?"

The Divine statement inquires:

"What! do you wonder that an admonition hay come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he might warn you so that you might keep from evil and so that (His) mercy may be shown to you?"

The verse implies that you should not surprise that the Divine statement, the prophet hood and the messenger ship have been sent down upon a man who is from among yourselves in order that he warns you of the divine retribution if you do not believe.

When the verse implies that you should not surprise, it is for the reason that .if a person sincerely and sympathetically arises for the guidance and improvement of a community, it is not surprising.

The wonder is in this that people do not have pity on themselves, and they supply the means of their own wretchedness. Moreover, prophet hood is assigned for the interest of people. It adapts the wisdom and common good, and besides that intellect confirms it, too.

However, the purpose of coming Noah was that those people to avoid infidelity and sinning, so that they be shown mercy to.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 64

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ قَوْماً عَمِينَ

64. "But they belied him, so We delivered him and those with him in the Ark, and We drowned those who belied Our Signs. Verily they were a blind people."

As a result of the very undue wonder, the people of Noah rejected him. Therefore, Allah delivered him and those believers who were in Noah's Ark from being drowned, and, thereafter, He drowned all those who belied Noah and the Divine revelations. They were some blind-hearted people, and they were misguided.

"But they belied him, so We delivered him and those with him in the Ark, and We drowned those who belied Our Signs. Verily they were a blind people."

The Arabic word / 'amin / is the plural form of / 'amy /. It is applied upon a person whose insight and innate vision are unable to do their functions.[2]

Notes

1. Surah Noah, No.71, Verse 26
2. Al-Mizan, the commentary

Section 9: The Ministry of Messenger of Hud

Messenger Hud only exhosting his people to serve only Allah and none - The people challenging Hud against the threats of the wrath of Allah - The punishment they suffered,

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 65

وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوداً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَـهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

65. "And unto (the people on 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah (alone), you have no god other than Him, will you not keep from evil?"

This second story, the prophet hood of Hud has been told in this Surah. The detailed story of Prophet Hud has been referred to in Surah Ash-Shu'ara' and Surah Hud.

The people of 'Ad had been living in a zone in the south of Arabia by the name of' Ahghaf. Physically they were very strong and, from the point of agriculture and raising cattle, they were a powerful people. This group of people was involved in idolatry and corruption.

Hud was one of the relatives of these people. He was appointed to prophet hood among them. He invited his people to Unity, as Noah did.

Explanations

1. Invitation to Unity is at the top of the mission of prophets.

"... He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah (alone)....."

2. The most sympathetic and compassionate leaders unto people were the divine prophets.

"And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud. ..."

3. Preachers should treat as a brother with people. They ought to love them.

"... (We sent) their brother Hud. ..."

4. The Wrath of Allah upon the former disbelievers should be taken as a warner by the later generations to be aware and to take example so that they be afraid of rejecting the Divine religion.

"... you have no god other than Him, will you not keep from evil?"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 66 - 68

قَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِن قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَاْ لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ

66. "The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: 'Verily we see you in folly, and verily we do think you to be of the liars'."

67. "He said: ' O' my people! There is no folly in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds '."

68. "I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord, and I am a faithful adviser for you."

A group of disbelieving people, or a party of the rich, told Hud that they had distinguished him as a foolish, ignorant, and silly person. They added that - they thought his words were thoroughly lies. The holy verse says:

"The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said:

'Verily we see you in folly, and verily we do think you to be of the liars'."

In Answer to them, Hud said that they would be sure that he did not told them that matter foolishly. He added that he was a messenger from the side of the Lord of the worlds. The verse says:

"He said: 'O' my people! There is no folly in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds '."

Thus, the Lord, the Exalted, teaches us that no one should face the ignorant people with a disgrace word, nor the one should answer their unagreeable word with a disgrace statement. But, he should only negate whatever wrong they have attributed him with. The same as Hud did not say anything obscene to them in answer to that undue attribution.

Hud continued his statement and added that he was to deliver them the information that his Lord gave him, and he advised them not to abandon the obedience of Allah. He told them they should be certain that he (Hud) was faithful in conveying the message of Allah to them and he never told a lie, nor he changed anything. The verse says:

"I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord, and I am a faithful adviser for you."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 69

أَوَعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَاذْكُرُواْ إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَاء مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَسْطَةً فَاذْكُرُواْ آلاء اللّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

69. "What! do you wonder that an admonition has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he might warn you? And remember when He made you successors after Noah's people, and increased you in stature. Therefore, remember the bounties of Allah so that you may be prosperous."

There is no wonder that the prophecy, or in other word, the miracle and revelation has allocated to a man who is from among themselves and has grown up with them, His aim is to threaten them not to do vice.

However, the Qur'an asks them why they wonder from the messenger ship of a man who is from among them, but they do not wonder, that they worship a stone. The verse says:

"What! do you wonder that an admonition has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he might warn you?..."

Then, they should remember the favours of Allah and that, after the destruction of the people of Noah as a result of their committing sins, He, settled them on the earth and increased them in stature and strength.

".... And remember when He made you successors after Noah's people, and increased you in stature....."

When the servants of Allah do remember the bounties of Allah practically, they will consequently be prosperous both in this world and in the Hereafter.

".... Therefore, remember the bounties of Allah so that you may be prosperous."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 70

قَالُواْ أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

70. "They said: 'Have you come to us that we should serve Allah alone and give up what our fathers used to serve? Then bring us what you promise us to, if you are of the truthful ones '."

The pepple of 'Ad told Hud whether he had come to them in order that he would make them worship Allah, the One, and restrain them from worshipping their gods which their ancestors had been worshipping.

They told him if he was truthful, that he was a messenger of Allah, he would bring upon them down the punishment he had threatened them to for worshipping idols. The verse says:

"They said: 'Have you come to us that we should serve Allah alone and give up what our fathers used to serve? Then bring us what you promise us to, if you are of the truthful ones'."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 71

قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاء سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنتُمْ وَآبَآؤُكُم مَّا نَزَّلَ اللّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَانٍ فَانتَظِرُواْ إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ

71. "He (Hud) said: "There have already fallen you punishment and wrath from your Lord. Do you dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have named (your idols), for which Allah has not sent any authority? Wait then, and verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait."

The verse begins thus:

"He (Hud) said: "There have already fallen you punishment an wrath from your Lord. ..."

In answer to them, Hud (as) said to them that the punishment was certain to be fallen on them. They had done something that they deserved the wrath of Allah. The Wrath of Allah is in the manner that He wills punishment or evil-doers.

The verse continues saying:

"... Do you dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have named (your idols), for which Allah has not sent any authority Wait then, and verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait."

Hud asked them whether they hostilely disputed with him about the idols that their fathers had invented and named them with divinity, while those idols had no attribute or sign of divinity and also there had come down no proof for their divinity from the side of Allah.

It is evident that such a great claim needed a sharp and firm proof that should be offered by them, not by Hud. He said that he should bring evidences that One God was their real deity, and that there is no god but He, from Whom Hud was sent as a messenger.

Some commentators have said that they had named each of their idols in a different form. Hud said that those names were from their own wishes.

Therefore, they must wait for the punishment that he (as) was waiting for, too.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 72

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُواْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

72. "So We delivered him and those who were with him by a mercy from Us, and We cut away the roots of those who belied Our Signs and were not believers."

The verse implies that Allah brought Hud and those who had believed from among the disbelievers and delivered them from His punishment by His mercy, and He involved those who rejected Allah’s signs and did not believe in His messenger in chastisement so that He cut away the roots of them.

"So We delivered him and those with him by a mercy from Us and We cut away the roots of those belied Our signs and were not believers."

The occurrence of the phrase: "(They) were not believers" in the verse is with the purpose of showing that it was known from their status that they would not have believed if they had remained more.

It is understood from this verse that the people of Hud were caught by the punishment of Allah, and they were destroyed.

Section 10: The Ministries of Salih and Lut

Salih's exhortation to believe in an stick to Unity of Allah -The people disbelieved and got punished - Lut preached of life -He was rejected and the people were seized by a severe punishment.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 73

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَـهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءتْكُم بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ هَـذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةً فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللّهِ وَلاَ تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوَءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

73. "And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah. You have no god other than Him. There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allah, to be a sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement will seize you."

In the Qur'an, there have been referred to the name of 'she-camel' seven times and to 'the people of Thamud' twenty six times. The story of the people of Thamud is mentioned in Suras: Ash-Shu'ara, Al -Qamar, Ash-Shams, and Hud. As the commentary book Al -Mizan denotes, the people of Thamud lived in Yemen.

The verse says:

"And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah. You have no god other than Him. There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allah, to be a sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement will seize you."

There are some differences between the meaning of the Qur'anic term /bayyinah/ (divine proof, miracle) and the manner of extraordinary accomplishments of human beings, as follows:

A -A miracle needs practice, suggestion, and gaining.

B- Miracles are brought forth by some good and immaculate persons, but other accomplishments may be offered even by some inept persons.

C -The goal of miracles is guidance, while the aim of ordinary people may be ostentation, popularity, gaining wealth, and amusement.

D -The acts of prophets in miracles are accompanied with challenge. That is, they claim that others cannot do the like of them. But there is none of these signs in the act of outstanding intellectual figures, inventors, and the ascetics.

E -Prophets are in need of Divine miracles. Sometimes, miracles have been offered through the demand of people, such as: splitting of the moon, and the she-camel of Salih.

The style and the motto of prophets are the same. Monotheism .is the first invitation of prophets.

"... serve Allah. You have no god other than Him."

Prophets have come out from among people, and they treat like brothers with them.

Explanations

1. To whatever the grace and mercy of Allah reaches, it will obtain sanctity, (like the she-camel of Allah).

2. The retribution of sacrilege is the punishment of Allah. The verse says: ***"... and do not touch her"***

3. A miracle should be perceptible for human beings in all levels, (like the she-camel which came out of a mountain).

4. The kind of people's demand sometimes concerns to the conditions of their system of thought, and the social and economical circumstances of them. (For example, if it happened to day, perhaps, they might demand that a satellite comes out from the mountain.)

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 74

وَاذْكُرُواْ إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاء مِن بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِن سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا
وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَاذْكُرُواْ آلاء اللّهِ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

74. "And remember when He appointed you successors after 'Ad and settled you in the earth, you build castles on its plains and hew the mountains into houses. So remember Allah's bounties, and do not mischief in the earth, doing corruption."

In this verse, the Qur'an says:

"And remember when He appointed you successors after 'Ad and settled you in the earth…"

It means that, on one side, do not forget the abundant bounties of Allah, and, on the other side, be aware that there were some other rebellious nations before you, like the people of 'Ad, who were involved in the punishment of Allah and were destroyed as a result of their oppositions.

Then, the Qur'an emphasizes on some divine favors and possibilities of the people of Thumud. It says that they lived on a land where there were level plains with some suitable soil. They had built castles on its plains and had made houses inside the mountains for themselves. The verse adds:

"... you build castles on its plains and hew the mountains into houses....."

And, at the end of the verse, it admonishes them to remember all the blessings of Allah so that they do not make mischief in the earth and not to be ingratitude due to His bounties. The verse continues saying:

"... So remember Allah's bounties, and do not mischief in the earth, doing corruption."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 75 - 76

قَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُواْ مِن قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُواْ لِمَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا
مُّرْسَلٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قَالُواْ إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُواْ إِنَّا بِالَّذِيَ آمَنتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

75. "The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said to those who were considered weak -those of them who believed - 'Do you know that

Salih is sent by his Lord?' They said: 'Surely we believer in what he has been sent with'."

76. "Those who were arrogant said: 'We, indeed, disbelieve in that which you believe'."

We see again that the wealthy and notable group of those people, who had a good seeming outward but an evil inward, began to oppose with this great messenger of Allah. This group of notable arrogant persons from among the people of Salih told some believing oppressed ones of them asking whether they really knew that Salih was sent from the side of Allah to guide them.

"The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said to those who were considered weak -those of them who believed -'Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord?' ..."

Then, before long, they faced with their decisive and sharp answer, which indicated of their firm and strong decision. Their answer was that they said not only they knew that Salih was sent by Allah, but also they believed in what he had been missioned for and had invited people to it. The verse says:

".... They said: 'Surely we believer in what he has been sent with'."

These proud arrogant chiefs did not cease their enmity and, in order to weaken the spiritual strength of the believers, they said to them that they did not believe in what the believers believed.

The verse says:

"Those who were arrogant said: 'We, indeed, disbelieve in that which you believe'."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 77

فَعَقَرُواْ النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْاْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُواْ يَا صَالِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

77. "So they hamstrung the She-camel and revolted against their Lord's commandment, and they said: ' O' Salih! bring us that you promise us to, if you are of the messengers '."

The arrogant wealthy persons among Salih's people became despair of weakening the foundations of the Faith of masses of people who were faithful. On the other side, they saw that, with the existence of the 'she-camel' that was counted as - Salih's miracle, their hostile plots were remained useless.

Then, they decided to destroy the 'She-camel'. Before anything else, they hamstrung her and, disobeying Allah’s command, they killed her. The verse says:

"So they hamstrung the She-camel nd revolted against their Lord's commandment....."

They did not suffice to this vice, but they came to Salip and vividly told him to bring them Allah’s punishment as soon as possible, if he was the messenger of Allah.

"... and they said: ' O' SaIih! bring us that you promise us to, if you are of the messengers'."

This word, in fact, was making a kind of fight against Salih in order to weaken the spirit of both -Salih and the believers.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 78

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُواْ فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

78. "Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

In this verse, the destruction of the people of Thamud is stated that it was done by earthquake. And, in Surah Fussilat. No.41. verse No.17, and Surah Ath- Thariyat. No. 51. verse 44 it is said that it was done by rumbling:

"... so the rumbling overtook them while they were yet looking on."

Rumbling destroyed them while they were gazing. Therefore, there was a combination of two retributions in one moment upon them.

The Arabic term /jaθim/ is applied for a person who has fallen on his knees and is not capable to stand up.

Thus, the Wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) befalls all of a sudden. Beware! The verse says:

"Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

The promises of prophets are practically doable. So, take their warnings earnestly.

In the former verses, it was recited:

"... and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement seizes you.'[1]

This 'earthquake' is the same 'painful chastisement'.

There are many earthquakes and natural terrible events which themselves are the punishment of Allah.

"Then the earthquake seized them....."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 79

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِن لاَّ تُحِبُّونَ

79. "Then he turned away from them and said: ' O' my people! verily I have delivered to you the Message of my Lord, and advised you sincerely; but you do not like sincere advisers'."

The word of Salih to his people is probable to be fulfilled either before the descent of the chastisement in order to complete the argument, or after their destruction.

It can be in the same manner that the Messenger of Allah (S) also spoke to the dead bodies of disbelievers that were inside the Badr well. The audience asked him (S) whether they were alive, and the Prophet (S) said: "yes ".

However, the mission of prophets is to convey the Divine message accompanied with sympathy and benevolence. It is not only a dry, bare communication, like the communication of regulations and circulars in formal offices.

"...and advise you sincerely; ..."

Allah’s retributions are given after delivering the message and completing the argument.

"... verily I have delivered to you the Message of my Lord....."

By the way, we ought to like the advisers. He who dislikes those who work sympathetically, provides the means of the Wrath of Allah for himself.

"... and advised you sincerely; but you do not like sincere advisers '."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 80 - 81

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُم بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّن الْعَالَمِينَ

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّن دُونِ النِّسَاء بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ

80. "And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: 'What! Do you commit an indecency which none in the world has ever done before you? '

81. "Verily you come to men in lust instead of women! Nay, you are an extravagant people."

Prophet Lut (as) was from the family of Abraham (as). He was the only man who believed in him and migrated with him. Surah Al -' Ankabut No.29. Verse 26 says:

"And Lut believed in him ..."

Abraham (as) sent him to a zone where indecencies were circulated at that time.

It has been narrated that they committed the act of sodomy upon their guests so that people be afraid of being a guest. As the Qur'an points out, Prophet Lut suggested them to marry his daughters, but they did not accept.

There are some advantages in marriage that are absent in sodomy. A few of them are such as: 1) Affection, mercy, and intimate ease; 2) offspring; - forming a family organization; and 3) the subjects of humanity and naturalness existed in marriage.

Unfortunately, the world of the west has formally accepted the hideous act of sodomy, and in some European countries the action has become legal:

The Qur'anic phrase "their brother" has been used for Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb (Jethro) (as), but it has not been applied for Lut . Perhaps, this difference is for the sake that Lut (as) migrated from another zone for divine messenger ship.

Explanations

1- A great part of Lut's preaching was upon the struggle against the indecencies and sexual prohibitions, since the most important problem of his society was indecency.

2- Idol worshippers had the pretext of the belief of their ancestors in idolatry, but followers of indecency had not this pretext, either. They themselves initiated this crime and sin. The verse says:

"And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: 'What ! Do you commit an indecency which none in the world has ever done before you ' "

3- He who abandons the way of nature is counted as an extravagant person.

The verse says:

"Verily you come to men in lust instead of women! Nay, you are an extravagant people."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 82

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلاَّ أَن قَالُواْ أَخْرِجُوهُم مِّن قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أُنَاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ

82. "And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town; verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves) '."

This verse contains a hint to the illogical obstinate answer of those people of Lut. It implies that they had no answer in response to the invitation of this benevolent and sympathetic prophet, save that they angrily ordered their men to expel Lut and his followers from their town. What was their fault? Their fault was that they were some pure people who did not use to commit sin.

Those people of Lut accused these pure believers that they not only did not have the same opinion of theirs, but also made trouble for them.

The verse says:

"And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town; 'verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves) '."

Explanations

1- Sinners are illogical.

"And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town....."

2- Whenever corruption of a society increases, the purified and sincere persons will be deserted, and purity is counted a crime therein. It will be like the state that criminals maintain no right in the society for the pure ones.

"Expel them from your town....."

Thus, in the path of 'forbidding the wrong', we should be prepared to be banished, and for accepting other hardships.

3- At the same time when the people of Lut were accustomed to sins, they knew Lut and his followers as some purified persons.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 83

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلاَّ ا ْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

83. "So We delivered him and his family, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind (in the ashes of punishment)."

Regarding what was stated in the three above-mentioned holy verses, any just arbitrator can issue the command of condemnation of this mischievous nation.

That is why the Qur'an in this verse implies that since they did thus, Allah saved Lut and his true followers and his family, who were pious, except his wife, whom He left among the mischievous people, because, from the point of belief and creed, she was the same as the people of Lut were.

The verse says:

"So we delivered him and his family, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind (in the ashes of punishment)."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 84

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

84. "And We rained down on them a rain (of punishment). Consider then how the end of the guilty was!"

The destruction of the people of Lut was done by means of raining aerolites over them. They were some aerolites like clay that were marked with the Lord. Or, every stone was particularized to destroy a definite person. This meaning is taken from Surah Hud No.11. Verses 82-83 that say:

"... and rained down upon them stones, of what had been decreed, one after another." "Marked (for punishment) with your Lord ..."

The current verse itself is recited as follows:

"And We rained down on them a rain (of punishment). Consider then how the end of the guilty was! "

Besides committing sodomy, the people of Lut used to do some other indecencies. They used to gamble, to talk idle, to asperse, to throw stones at wayfarers, and to uncover the private parts before public eyes.[2]

Upon the philosophy of prohibition of sodomy, Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Sodomy decreases the family affection between wife and husband and ceases generation. It destroys the natural sexual intercourse and brings up many other corruptions."[3]

In Islam, the retribution of homosexuality and sodomy is execution, whether for the active sodomy or the passive sodomy. As a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes, at the moment of performing homosexuality the throne of Heaven shakes and on Resurrection Day its doer will be mustered in a state of major ritual impurity. The one will be involved in the Wrath of Allah and will be abide in Hell.[4].

The Messenger of Allah (S) said that the curse of Allah will be upon those men who make themselves like women and go to sensual men.[5]

Explanation

The Wrath of Allah is not particular only to one group of criminals, but all criminals must be careful.

"... Consider then how the end of the guilty was! "

Notes

1. The current Surah, Verse 73.
2. Safinat'-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 517
3. Was'a'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, P. 252
4. Was'a'il-ush-Shiah, Vol. 14, P. 249
5. Wasa'il-ush-Shiah, Vol. 14, P. 255

Section 11: The Ministry of Shu 'ayb

Shu'ayb exhorts his people to believe in and stick to the Unity of Allah - His rejection and the punishment.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 85

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَـهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءتْكُم بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُواْ الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلاَ تَبْخَسُواْ النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءهُمْ وَلاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلاَحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

85. "And (We sent) unto (the people of) Madyan their brother Shu'ayb. He said: 'O' my people! Serve Allah! You have no god other than Him. There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. Therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the earth after its improvement. This is better for you, if you are believers."

Jethro's Messengership in Madyan

Jethro, whose genealogical tree, according to the history records, with several dynasties reaches Abraham, was missioned to go towards the inhabitants of Madyan. At that time, Madyan was one of the cities of Syria the people of which were mostly merchants.

Idolatry, short weighing, defraudation and falsification in social relationships were fully current among them. The explanation of the conflict and dispute between this great prophet (as) and the inhabitants of Madyan is stated in several Suras of the Qur'an, and in Surah Hud, No.11 and Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No.26, in particular.

In this current verse, the Qur'an says that Allah sent to the people of Madyan their brother Jethro.

The verse says:

"And (We sent) unto (the people of Madyan their brother Shu'ayb. ..."

Then the verse adds that Shu'ayb, like all other prophets, began his invitation with the subject of Monotheism and, as the Qur'an remarks:

"... He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah! You have no god other than Him. ..."

He emphasized that not only the mentioned ordinance was the command of wisdom, but also it was proved by the clear evidences that had come from their Lord for them. The verse says:

"... There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. ..."

Next to the invitation to monotheism, he tried to struggle against their social, economical, and ethical corruptions.

At first, he restrained them from defraudation, falsification in social relationships which they were polluted with, and told them now that the path of Allah was revealed to them they should pay the right measure and weight so that the due things of people might not be diminished. The verse says:

"... Therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things....."

Then, he points to one of other wrong actions of those people, and says:

"... and do not make mischief in the earth after its improvement. ..."

It is certain that none may make profit from making mischief, irrespective of ethical mischief, faithlessness, and insecurity. So, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"... This is better for you, if you are believers."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 86

وَلاَ تَقْعُدُواْ بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا
وَاذْكُرُواْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ قَلِيلاً فَكَثَّرَكُمْ وَانظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

86. "And do not sit in every path, threatening and hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, desiring to make it crooked. And remember when you were few, then He multiplied you; and consider how the end of the mischief makers was."

In this verse, the fourth advice of Shu'ayb has been pointed out, where it says:

"And do not sit in every path, threatening and hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, desiring to make it crooked. ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, the fifth advice of Jethro has been referred to. It reminds them the bounties of Allah in order to stimulate the feeling of gratitude and thanksgiving in them. The verse says:

"... And remember when you were few, then He multiplied you....."

It is understood from this phrase of the verse that, in most instances, multiplicity of persons can be the origin of power and greatness of the development of the society.

Finally, the Qur'an advises people to carefully observe the end of the mischief-mongers that how evil was their fate, and that they do not follow the way of makers of mischief.

"... and consider how the end of the mischief makers was."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 87

وَإِن كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنكُمْ آمَنُواْ بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ فَاصْبِرُواْ حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللّهُ
بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

87. "And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which I have been sent, and a party who do not believe, then wait with patience until Allah judges between us, and He is the best of the judges."

The opponents of Jethro scornfully asked him where the punishment of Allah was. On the other side, the adherents of the Faith were also waiting for the helps of Allah. The content of the verse is something in the middle, so that neither the disbelievers become proud nor the believers lose hope.

Thus, the history of the adherents of both right and wrong should be studied regarding the end of their fates.

However, in the school of thought and philosophy of prophets, the Faith in the goal and their way is important, not those persons themselves.

The verse says:

"And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which I have been sent, and a party who do not believe, then wait with patience until Allah judges between us, and He is the best of the judges."

The apparent seeming uniformity of the lives of this fleeting world of the disbelievers and believers should not disturb you. Do persevere, since the final judge is Allah (S.W.T.).

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 6

From Surah al-A’raf (7) verse 88 to Surah at-Tawbah (9)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur’an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *“An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an”* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 12
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 13
What is a 'Commentary'? 14
The Current Commentary 15
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 16
The Problems in Translating 16
Translators Note 17
Editor's Note 18
Notes 20
Acknowledgment 22
Notes 22
References 23
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 23
English Translations of Qur'an 23
Supporting Technical References 24
Phraseological and Philological Sources 24
A Presentation to Muslims 26
In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful 26
Notes 27
Surah al-'Araf, Chapter 7, Section 11 cont 28
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 88 28
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 89 28
Surah al-'Araf , Verses 90-91 29
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 92 30
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 93 30
Section 12: Warning With the Punishment 32
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 94 32
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 95 32
Surah al-'Araf, Verse 96 33
Surah al-'Araf, Verses 97-98 34
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 99 34
Notes 35
Section 13: The Ministry of Moses 36
Surah al-'Araf , Verse 100 36
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 101 36
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 102 37
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 103 37
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 104 38
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 105 38
Surah al-'Araf - Verses 106-107 39
The Definition of a Miracle 39
Section 14: Pharaoh and His Magicians Defeated 41
Surah al-'Araf - Verses 108-109 41
Surah al-'Araf - Verse 110 41
Surah al-'Araf - Verses 111-112 41
Surah al-'Araf - Verses 113-114 42
Surah al-'Araf - Verses 115-116 42

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 117 43
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 118-120 43
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 121-122 44
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 123 44
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 124-125 45
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 126 45
Section 15: Persecution of the Israelites 47
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 127 47
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 128 47
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 129 48
Section 16: The Delivery of the Israelites 49
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 130 49
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 131 49
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 132 49
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 133 50
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 134-135 51
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 136 51
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 137 52
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 138 52
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 139 53
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 140-141 53
Notes 54
Section 17: The Physical Eyes Can Never See Allah 55
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 142 55
The Tradition of Rank 56
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 143 57
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 144 58
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 145 58
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 146 59
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 147 60
Notes 60
Section 18: The Israelites Started Calf Worshipping 61
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 148 61
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 149 61
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 150 61
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 151 62
Section 19: Mercy Promised to Those Who Accept the Apostle (Muhammad) 64
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 152 64
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 153 64
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 154 64
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 155 65
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 156 66
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 157 66
Some Traditions 68
Notes 68
Section 20: The Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Apostle Unto the Whole Mankind 69

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 158 69
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 159 70
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 160 70
Some Explanations..... 71
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 161 71
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 162 72
Notes 73
Section 21: Punishment For Transgressing the Limits 74
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 163 74
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 164 74
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 165-166 75
Who Were Delivered? 75
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 167 76
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 168 76
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 169 77
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 170 78
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 171 78
Notes 79
Section 22: The Progeny of Adam Will Bear Witness Against Itself .. 80
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 172 80
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 173-174 80
Admonition..... 81
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 175 81
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 176 82
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 177-178 83
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 179 84
The Signs of Hellish People 84
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 180 85
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 181 86
Notes 86
Section 23: The Resurrection 87
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 182-183 87
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 184 87
Occasion of Revelation 88
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 185 88
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 186 89
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 187 89
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 188 90
Occasion of Revelation 90
Only Allah Knows the Unseen 90
Notes 91
Section 24: The Conclusive Warnings Against Polytheism..... 92
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 189 92
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 190-191 92
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 192-193 93
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 194 93
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 195 94
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 196 94

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 197-198 94
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 199 95
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 200 96
Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 201-202 96
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 203 97
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 204 98
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 205 98
Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 206 99
Surah Al-Anfal, Chapter 8 100
No. 8 (75 verses) 100
The Virtue of Recitation of the Surah 100
Section 1: The Battle of Badr 101
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 1 101
Explanations 101
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 2-3 103
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 4 103
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 5 104
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 6 104
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 7 105
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 8 106
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 9 106
Explanations 107
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 10 107
Explanations 107
Notes 108
Section 2: The Battle of Badr 109
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 11 109
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 12 109
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 13-14 110
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 15 110
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 16 111
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 17 111
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 18 112
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 19 112
Notes 113
Section 3: Obedience to Allah and His Messenger 114
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 20-21 114
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 22 114
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 23 115
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 24 116
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 25 117
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 26 118
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 27 118
Occasion of Revelation 118
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 28 119
Notes 120
Section 4: The Guardianship of the Sacred Mosque 121
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 29 121

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 30 121
Occasion of Revelation 121
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 31 122
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 32 123
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 33 123
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 34 124
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 35 125
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 36 125
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 37 126
Notes 127
Section 5: The Battle of Badr a Proof of the Messenger's Truthfulness 128
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 38 128
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 39 128
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 40 129
The End of Part Nine 129
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 41 129
Explanations 130
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 42 131
A Review over the Battle of Badr 132
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 43 133
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 44 133
Notes 134
Section 6: Steadfastness and Unity Enjoined 135
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 45 135
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 46 135
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 47 135
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 48 136
Section 7: Enemy Weakened by Allah 138
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 49 138
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 50-51 138
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 52 139
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 53 140
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 54 140
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 55 141
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 56 141
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 57 142
Notes 142
Section 8: Muslims Should be Prepared to Meet the Enemy in Any Number 143
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 58-59 143
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 60 143
Increase of War Power and Its Aim! 143
Explanations 145
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 61 145
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 62 146
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 63 146
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 64 147

Notes 147
Section 9: Muslims Should be Prepared For All Eventualities 148
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 65 148
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 66 148
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 67 149
Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 68-69 150
Section 10: Captives of War 152
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 70 152
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 71 153
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 72 153
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 73 154
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 74 154
Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 75 155
Notes 155
Surah At-Tawbah, Chapter 9 156
Surah At-Tawbah or Surah Barā'at, ... 156
No. 9 (129 verses) 156
The Feature of Surah At-Tawbah 156
Section 1: Immunity Declared 157
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 1 157
Some Points Necessary to Be Noted 157
Some Details Upon These Verses 157
Explanations 159
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 2 159
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 3 160
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 4 161
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 5 161
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 6 162
Notes 162
Section 2: The Immunity - Its Reason Explained 164
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 7 164
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 8 164
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 9 165
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 10 165
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 11 166
Explanations 166
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 12 167
Explanations 167
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 13 167
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 14 168
Explanations 168
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 15 169
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 16 169
Notes 170
Section 3: Service of the Sacred Mosque, and the Idolaters 171
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 17 171
Explanations 171
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 18 171

Explanations 172
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 19 172
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 20 173
Explanations 173
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 21 173
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 22 174
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 23 174
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 24 175
Notes 176
Section 4: Allah's Help at Hunayn 177
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 25 177
The Feature of the Battle of Hunayn 177
Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 26-27 178
Explanations 179
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 28 179
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 29 180
What is Jizyah? 181
Notes 181
Section 5: The Polytheism of the Jews and the Christians 182
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 30 182
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 31 182
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 32 183
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 33 183
The Qur'ān and the reappearance of Mahdi (as) 184
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 34 185
How much of Wealth Is Counted Treasure? 186
Traditions upon Alms 186
Abu Dharr and This Verse 187
Explanations 187
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 35 188
The Retribution of Amassers of Wealth 188
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 36 188
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 37 189
Notes 190
Section 6: The Tabuk Expedition 191
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 38 191
Occasion of Revelation 191
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 39 192
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 40 192
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 41 193
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 42 194
Notes 195
Section 7: The Hypocrites 196
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 43 196
Try to Recognize Hypocrites 196
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 44 196
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 45 197
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 46 198

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 47 198
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 48 199
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 49 200
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 50 200
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 51 201
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 52 201
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 53 202
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 54 202
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 55 203
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 56 203
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 57 204
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 58 204
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 59 205
Notes 205
Section 8: The Hypocrites 207
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 60 207
The Effects of Poor-tax in the Society 208
Poor-rate and Traditions 210
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 61 211
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 62 212
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 63 212
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 64 213
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 65 213
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 66 214
Notes 215
Section 9: Allah's Curse for the Hypocrites 216
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 67 216
The Signs of the Hypocrites 216
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 68 216
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 69 217
An Admonition and a Warning 217
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 70 218
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 71 218
The Signs of the True Believers 219
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 42 219
Section 10: The Hypocrites Shall Not Attain Their Object 221
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 73 221
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 74 221
Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 75-78 222
Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 79-80 224
Notes 225
Section 11: Connections Severed With the Hypocrites 226
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 81 226
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 82 226
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 83 226
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 84 227
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 85 227
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 86 228

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 87 228
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 88 229
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 89 229
Section 12: The Deserters 231
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 90 231
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 91 231
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 92 232
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 93 232
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 94 233
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 95 234
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 96 234
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 97 235
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 98 235
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 99 236
Notes 237
Section 13: The Hypocrites Among the Bedouins 238
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 100 238
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 101 239
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 102 239
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 103 240
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 104 241
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 105 242
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 106 242
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 107 243
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 108 244
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 109 245
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 110 245
Notes 246
Section 14: The True Believers 247
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 111 247
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 112 248
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 113 249
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 114 249
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 115 250
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 116 251
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 117 251
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 118 252
Notes 253
Section 15: To Be Always With the Truthful Ones 254
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 119 254
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 120 254
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 121 255
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 122 256
Section 16: Effects of the Guidance Revealed 258
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 123 258
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 124 258
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 125 259
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 126 259

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 127 260
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 128 260
Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 129 261

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, *1412* (*1370* H. / *1991*), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of *verses 11*-16 from Surah 'Abasa *No. 80*, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95

20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-‘Araf, Chapter 7, Section 11 cont

Surah al-‘Araf , Verse 88

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَا شُعَيْبُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَكَ مِن قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كَارِهِينَ

88. “The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said: ‘We will surely expel you, O Shu‘ayb,

and those who believe with you from our town, unless you return into our creed.’ He (Shu‘ayb) said: ‘what, even though we dislike (it)?’”

All prophets have been threatened to be expelled and banished. This is the logic of force. Surah ’Ibrāhim, *No. 14*, *verse 14* says:

“And those who disbelieved said to their apostles: ‘We will most certainly drive you forth from our land, so else you shall come back into our religion…”

The chiefs of the arrogant have always been the first enemies of prophets. The verse says:

“The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said…”

The method of prophets is logic and reasoning, but the style of disbelievers is force and threat.

The preachers of religion should not be afraid of the opponents’ threads, since there have always been threat and banishment in this way. The disbelievers told their prophet:

“…’We will surely expel you, O Shu‘ayb…”

Yet, be careful to use a kind word, politely and wisely, when you confront the ignorances of disbelievers. Shu‘ayb answered them:

“…He (Shu‘ayb) said: ‘what, even though we dislike (it)?’”

Surah al-‘Araf , Verse 89

قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللّهِ كَذِباً إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَآ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَآءَ اللهُ رَبنا وَسِعَ رَبنا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْماً عَلَى اللّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ

89. “We should have forged a lie against Allah if we returned into your creed after Allah delivered us from it. It is not for us to return into it, unless Allah, our Lord, (so) will. Our Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge. In Allah we have put our trust. Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth, and You are the best of deciders.”

The Qur’ānic term /millat/ has sometimes been used with the meaning of religion and creed.

Since the followers of Shu‘ayb had accepted their religion based upon reasoning and proof, (not upon desires), then they would not abandon it. Allah never commands upon returning to infidelity and paganism.

He who returns from His command, surely the amount of his deed is so little that the one regrets from his action, while Allah is not like that and He never reviews the religion. The verse says:

“We should have forged a lie against Allah if we returned into your creed after Allah delivered us from it…”

The Qur'ānic term /fath/ and /fātih/, in these aspects, mean: 'judgement and arbitration'.

The final word is said by Allah, in order that they might be delivered from this blind, and the path be paved.

Therefore, opposite to the evil suggestions of the enemies, we must trust on Allah and show our conclusiveness.

Never a believer is ready to collude on his beliefs, and he never returns from the Truth. Turing back and retrogression is forbidden for a true Muslims. The verse says:

"…It is not for us to return into it, unless Allah, our Lord, (so) will…"

It is for this reason that we must submit the command of Allah and obey it.

Do not forget to observe discipline and courtesy in speech. Instead of curse, invoke Allah the just arbitration.

"…Our Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge. In Allah we have put our trust. Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth…"

In supplication, the relationship between the demand and the Divine Names should be considered.

We are in need of triumph and, therefore, we call Him saying:

"…and You are the best of deciders."

Surah al-'Araf , Verses 90-91

وَقَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْباً إِنَّكُمْ إِذاً لَخَاسِرُونَ

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

90. "And the chiefs of those who disbelied from among his people said: 'If you follow Shu'ayb, you will indeed be losers'."

91. "Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

In this verse, the term /rajfah/ (earthquake) has been used for the punishment of those people, while in Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 94 the word /sayhah/ (rumbling) has been applied, and in Surah Ash-Shu'arā, No. 26, verse 189 the phrase "…the punishment of the day of cloud…", which is a covering produced by an annihilating cloud, is mentioned as their torment.

This shows that the earthquake of their chastisement had been accompanied with rumbling and an annihilating dark cloud.

The Arabic term /jāθm/is derived from /jaθm/ which means: to sit upon the knee and to stay in one place. As if, the punishment seized them at night when they were asleep. They woke up, but they had neither enough time to save themselves nor any ability to escape. So, they were destroyed while they were in the state of half-raised.

Most of the opponents of divine prophets were from the kind of rich notables.

"And the chiefs of those who disbelied from among his people said…"

One of the methods of disbelievers is threat by means of economical siege.

"…'If you follow Shu'ayb, you will indeed be losers'."

When they became like that, they increased their own aberration by persisting on leading others astray. There was no hope that they might believe. Therefore, basing on the decree of the law of effacing the effects of corruption, the divine punishment fell upon them. The verse says:

"Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

Surah al-'Araf , Verse 92

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْباً كَأَن لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْباً كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ

92. "Those who belied Shu'ayb became (perished) as if they had never dwelt therein. Those who belied Shu'ayb were themselves the losers."

The Arabic term /yaqnau/, used in this verse, is derived from /qinā / which means: 'to dwell in a place'.

The great loss belongs to the idolaters. Instead of belief in one God, they ascribe partners, and instead of accepting the guidance of the immaculates, they refer to others supposing to be led.

Therefore, instead of a secured life, they will be destroyed of everything; and instead of being admitted into Heaven, they will enter Hell Fire, since, instead of Allah's pleasure, they have incurred His Wrath.

Thus, the plots of the people of Shu'ayb, who were the followers of falsehood, were of no avail. They wanted to expel Shu'ayb from their town, but they themselves were destroyed in their own houses.

That is why that sometimes it happens that the places of refuge change to places of massacre. (The town of the people of Shu'ayb, for example, was a pleasant place for them and also it was used as a means of threat against Shu'ayb by them. But that town was ruined upon them and became a means of their destruction.

It is at the time of incurring the Wrath of Allah that the real losers are recognized. The above verse is its Qur'ānic evidence. It says:

"Those who belied Shu'ayb became (perished) as if they had never dwelt therein. Those who belied Shu'ayb were themselves the losers."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 93

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالاَتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ ءَاسَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ

93. "So he turned away from them, and said: 'O' my people! I have delivered to you the messages of my Lord, and advised you sincerely; so how shall I then grieve for a disbelieving people?'"

Again, for a more intensive emphasis, it says that those who belied Shu'ayb were the losers, not those who believed in him. Thus, such people are addressed in the holy verse as follows:

"So he turned away from them, and said: 'O' my people! I have delivered to you the messages of my Lord, and advised you sincerely…"

When Shu'ayb saw them in the threshold of chastisement and destruction, he hopelessly turned away from them, and told them that he had

conveyed the messages of Allah to them and had advised them, but refusing his words, they did not hearken to him.

That is, that punishment was very hard and painful, but they were deserve to incur it as a result of the crimes they had committed.

"…So how shall I then grieve for a disbelieving people?'"

Then Suh'ayb, in a positive interrogation with a negative sense, said why he should grieve for a people who disbelieved and incurred the punishment of Allah for themselves. This statement means that he said he did not grieve for them.

Thus Shu'ayb consoles himself, because he had made his best and applied all the necessary efforts to guide aright those people. But, alas, they disobeyed arrogantly and that torment was their recompense.

Section 12: Warning With the Punishment

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 94

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلاَّ أَخَذْنَآ أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ

94. “And We did not send a prophet in any town but We vertook its people with distress and affliction hat they might humble themselves.”

The Qur’ānic term /ba’sā’/ means some calamities which reach the soul, like death; while the term /darrā’/ means: financial damages. [1]

As an Allah’s way of treatment, there are some bitter events and calamities for all nations.

It is noteworthy that difficulties and hardships are usually some functional factors in removing neglectfulness and in training man. Also, calamities are not always the Wrath of Allah. They are sometimes the grace of Allah in the form of misfortunes.

(Like some iron which, as a result of being heated in the furnace, becomes soft and changeable into different shapes. Afflictions cause man to be mild, too.) Difficulties also make Man humiliate and supplicate.

The verse says:

“And We did not send a prophet in any town but We overtook its people with distress and affliction that they might humble themselves.”[2]

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

“Allah, Almighty and Glorious, said: ‘When the one who has known Me disobeys Me, I will set up, as an absolute master over him, the one who has not known Me’.” [3]

Hadrat abul-Hassan-il-Hādi, the tenth Imam (as) has said:

“Verily Allah has a caller who calls every day and night ‘O’ servants of Allah! Stop! stop sinning Allah! If there were not grazing animals, milking babies, and (in prayer) bowing aged ones, there would be showered a punishment over you by which you might be severely bruised’.”[4]

Surah al-‘Araf , Verse 95

ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّىٰ عَفَوا وَّقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

95. “Then We altered the ill (circumstances) to good, until they multiplied, and said: ‘Distress and happiness did indeed touch our fathers’. So We seized them suddenly while they did not perceive.”

The Arabic term /‘afau/, mentioned in this verse, means ‘the abundance of wealth and children’. The grace of Allah reached to be full unto them, but they did not become aware nor did they take an example.

A nearly similar meaning to this statement is recited in Surah Al-’An‘ām, *No. 6*, *verse 44*, where it says:

“Then, when they forgot that which they had been admonished to, We opened the doors of all things (of enjoyments), until when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly when, behold, they were in utter dispair.”

The case is similar to the condition of a sick person whose physician becomes disappointed of him to be healed. Then he tells the people around him that they let him eat everything he wishes, because it is indifferent for the diseased person, and he is passing away.

However, as some commentators have said, there may also be another meaning for this verse. That meaning is that, after the removal of difficulties, the following generation said that bitter events were for their fathers and these offsprings were in security.

They were neglectful that Allah's way of treatment in seizing people encompasses all generations, and such negligences are the secret of the Wrath of Allah.

Therefore, passing by the bitter and sweet incidents heedlessly, and taking no example of them, brings forth the Wrath of Allah thereafter. This status is a sign of unawareness in such people.

"…while they did not perceive."

Not every kind of welfare and happiness is a sign of the Grace of Allah. They may sometimes prepare the field for the Wrath of Allah. The verse says:

"Then We altered the ill (circumstances) to good, until they multiplied…"

Sometimes it happens that the welfare of a person causes his neglectfulness and his disobedience from the command of Allah (s.w.t).

"…and said: 'Distress and happiness did indeed touch our fathers'…"

Most of those who fail in the Divine trials are the rich and the people who are in welfare, not the deprived ones.

It should also be noted that the Wrath of Allah does not inform men when it has to come, but it comes suddenly.

The verse says:

"…So We seized them suddenly while they did not perceive."

Surah al-'Araf, Verse 96

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالاَرْضِ وَلَـكِن كَذَّبُوا فَاَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

96. "And if the people of the towns had believed and kept from evil, We would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they belied; so We seized them for what they used to earn."

The Arabic term /barakāt/ is the plural form of /barakah/. It is applied for the fix and continual favours. On the contrary, there are some fleeting things in the senses of blessing, plurality of good and its multiplication. Blessings include both material and spiritual bounties, like blessings in lifetimes, in knowledge, and in books.

The verse says:

"And if the people of the towns had believed and kept from evil, We would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth…"

It implies that if the people of the towns, who were destroyed because of denial and disobedience, had testified the Divine prophets and had avoided

polytheism and sinning, Allah would have bestowed upon them the increasing blessings from the heaven and the earth by means of rain and abundance of plants and fruits.

Noah also promised his people if they believed, the blessings of heaven would be sent down unto them.

Some commentators say that blessings of the heaven, mentioned in this holy verse, refer to the supplications which are answered, and the blessings of the earth are the fulfilment of the requests.

The verse continues saying:

"…but they belied; so We seized them for what they used to earn."

That is, they rejected the divine prophets, and Allah punished them for the recompense of their disobediences, oppositions, and belying the prophets by ceasing rain from them, and, consequently, the blessings of the earth were restrained from them.

Surah al-'Araf, Verses 97-98

أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتاً وَهُمْ نَآئِمُونَ

أَوَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

97. "What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them by night while they are sleeping?"

98. "What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them in daylight while they are playing?"

It questions whether the people of towns, who reject the prophets, are secure from the punishment of Allah when it comes down upon them while they are asleep at night, the same as it befell upon the former people.

The verse says:

"What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them by night while they are sleeping?"

Again, it questions whether the people of towns are secure from the punishment of Allah when it seizes them at the day time while they are busy doing some vain affairs.

The verse says:

"What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming upon them in daylight while they are playing?"

It is evident that whoever is busy with the mere affairs of this world and does not heed the affairs of Hereafter is in vain and, as if, he is playing around.

The purpose of the Qur'ānic phrase 'the people of the towns' is any group of people who are busy with some useless affairs, and who reject divine prophets, and they refrain worshipping One God.

The occasion of revelation of these two verses, of course, was the obstinacies of the pagans of Mecca.

Surah al-'Araf , Verse 99

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللّه فَلا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللّه إِلاَّ الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

99. "What! Do they then feel secure from Allah's plan (sudden punishment)? But none feels secure from Allah's plan save the people (who are) losers."

The verse begins thus:

"what! do they then feel secure from Allah's plan (sudden punishment)?…"

The verse implies whether these disbelieving people are secure when the divine punishment befalls them so that they do not understand.

The reason that the divine punishment is called here 'plan' is that it seizes them in a way that they do not know it and they do not understand it.

A plan, or plot, usually attacks the opposite party unawares.

The verse continues saying:

"…But none feels secure from Allah's plan save the people (who are) losers."

That is, except the people who are losers, and they do not know it, no one feels secure from the plan of Allah.

The purpose of this verse is to attract the attention of the responsible ones to be careful and attentive that they should be afraid of Allah's punishment, and they should obey Him. Never should they promise themselves security from that punishment, otherwise they will be involved in chastisement both in this world and Hereafter.

Notes

1. Tafsīr-i-Furqān
2. For more details upon the meaning of the Qur'ānic terms /ba'sā'/ and /darrā'/, refer to the commentary of Surah Al-'An'ām, No. 6, verse 42, vol. 5, p. 124 the current English version series of commentary of the Holy Qur'ān.
3. 'Usūl-i-Kāfi, part 3, p. 378
4. 'Usūl al-Kāfi, part 3, p. 378

Section 13: The Ministry of Moses

Surah al-‘Araf , Verse 100

أَوَ لَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الاَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَآ أَنْ لَوْ نَشَآءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لايَسْمَعُونَ

100. “Does He not guide (thereby) those who inherit the earth after its (former) residents that if We please We will destroy them (too) for their sins and set a seal on their hearts so that they do not hear (the truth)?”

Once more in this verse, in order to awaken the neglectful minds of the present people, and making them attentive of the instructive lessons which had existed in the lives of the former nations, the Qur’ān inquires whether those who inherit the earth next to the possessors of it did not take admonition from the study of the situation of the former nations.

They should understand that if Allah pleases, He is able to destroy them, too, for their faults, and inflicts them with the same evil end that the former sinners suffered.

The verse says:

“Does He not guide (thereby) those who inherit the earth after its (former) residents that if We please We will destroy them (too) for their sins…”

Allah is also able to leave them alive, while, because of their committing sins and corruptions, He seals their hearts and let them not perceive and recognize the truth, so that they never hear the truth and do not accept any advice. Such people will be wandering in the life bewildered. The verse says:

“…and set a seal on their hearts so that they do not hear (the truth)?”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 101

تِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُص عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَائِهَا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِن قَبْلُ كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ

101. “These are the towns some of whose tidings We recount unto you; and certainly their Messengers came to them with manifest proofs, but they would not believe in what they had belied from before. Thus does Allah set a seal on the hearts of the infidels.”

In this verse, as well as the next one, the emphasis is again on the lessons which can be taken from the explanation of the former people’s events. But, here, the addressee is the Prophet (S), although the objective is indeed all human beings.

At first, it says:

“These are the towns some of whose tidings We recount unto you...”

Then, the verse implies that it was not such that they became unnihilated without completing the argument, but surely their divine prophets went to them with clear evidences and those prophets tried their utmost effort to guide them. The holy verse continues saying:

“…and certainly their Messengers came to them with manifest proofs…”

But they steadily showed opposition against the continuous preaches and repeated invitations of their prophets and persisted on their own saying. They were not ready to accept and believe in that which they had belied before. Here is what the verse says:

"…but they would not believe in what they had belied from before…"

The cause of this obstinacy has been stated in the next sentence of the holy verse, as follows:

"…Thus does Allah set a seal on the hearts of the infidels."

That is, those who step in the path of wrong, as a result of repetition and continuation of action, some corruptions such as perversion, infidelity, and impurity settle in their hearts so deeply that they remain fixed therein like the curvings upon a coin. This is from the kind of effect and property of action which has been attributed to Allah, since it is He Who is the Cause of all causes.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 102

وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لاَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وإِنْ وَجَدْنَآ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ

102. "And, We did not find in most of them any (firm) covenant, and verily We found most of them to be wrong-doers."

The objective meaning of the word ''ahd', (covenant), mentioned in the verse, is either the relation between Allah and the sound innate disposition of people, or the invitation and laws of prophets, or the special covenants which sometimes people made with prophets saying that, for example, if the prophet performed so and so as a miracle or solved a particular difficulty of theirs, they would believe.

One of the evidences of this kind in the Qur'ān is Surah'A'rāf, *No. 7*, verses *134* and *135* which say:

"And when the plague fell upon them, they said: 'O' Moses! invoke your Lord for us by the covenant He has made with you. If you remove the plague from us, we will certainly believe in you, and we will certainly send with you the Children of Israel'."

"But when We removed the plague from them until a term which they should reach, behold, they broke (their promise again)."

Allah has made manifest some facts for human beings through both innate disposition and prophets in order that they may have confederation and submission unto them. But most people neglect the cry of innate dispostion and prophets, and going out of the path of the truth, they become wrong-doers. The verse says:

"And, We did not find in most of them any (firm) covenant…"

Thus, the secret of the destruction of the former nations was breach of promise and disobedience.

"…and verily We found most of them to be wrong-doers."

Allah has praised the faithful and blamed the breachers of promise.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 103

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَى بِاَيَاتِنَآ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَظَلَمُوا بِها فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

103. "Then, after them, We sent Moses with Our Signs unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they wronged (and disbelieved) in them. Consider then how the end of the mischief makers was! "

The name of Moses (as) has been repeated more than *130* times in the Qur'ān. No other name has been mentioned therein as numerous as his name. As it is cited in Al-Mizān, the, the Qur'ān has referred to the divine miracles concerning no prophet as many as it has mentioned for Moses (as).

The story of Moses (as), mentioned in the Qur'ān, can be staged into five steps:

1) The birth and childhood of Moses.

2) His escape from the city of Madyan and living with Shuaib (Jethro).

3) His mission and his problems with Pharaoh.

4) His own deliverance and that of his people from Pharaoh, and returning to Palestine.

5) His conflicts with the Children of Israel.

This Surah, Al-'A'rāf, is the first Meccan Surah which has referred to the story of Moses (as).

One of the philosophies of the mission of prophets is standing against false deities. For general improvement of a society, the chiefs and great members of that society should be referred to first, because water must be purified from its head-source, as the verse says:

"Then, after them, We sent Moses with Our Signs unto Pharaoh and his chiefs…"

People's faith in the truth usually causes their society to be improved, while disbelief and heresy draw it towards corruption. The verse continues saying:

"…but they wronged (and disbelieved) in them. Consider then how the end of the mischief makers was! "

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 104

وَقَالَ مُوسَى يَافِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

104. "And Moses said: 'O Pharaoh! Verily I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds'."

Prophets claimed nothing but their prophecy and invitation to the Truth. In the way of their invitation, they used to address the false deities of their time bravely and without any fear and opposed them.

" And Moses said: 'O Pharaoh! Verily I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds'."

To improve the society which has a regular system, it is better to begin from the chiefs of that society.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 105

حَقِيقٌ عَلَى اَنْ لاَ اَقُولَ عَلَى اللّه إِلاَّ الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ

105. "(I am) worthy of saying nothing about Allah except the truth. Indeed I have come to you with a clear Sign (a miracle) from your Lord; so send forth with me the Children of Israel."

Prophets are infallible, and they say nothing but the truth. From the tongue of Moses, the verse says:

"(I am) worthy of saying nothing about Allah except the truth…"

Prophets should have miracles to prove their prophecy, as the verse refers to it and says:

"…Indeed I have come to you with a clear Sign (a miracle) from your Lord..."

To provide the freedom of human beings is among the first aims of prophets. Except them, whoever takes the rein of the government in a society, drags those people into servitude of false deities.

As long as people are not delivered from the ties of false deities, it is not possible to offer them a complete cultural program to guide them. That was why Moses (as) said to Pharaoh:

"…so send forth with me the Children of Israel."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 106-107

قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَآ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ

106. "He (Pharaoh) said: 'If you have come with a Sign (a miracle), then bring it, if you are of the truthful ones'."

107. "So he threw his rod, then behold! it was a clear serpent."

The Definition of a Miracle

The Arabic term /mu'jizah/ is derived from the root /'ajaza/ which means an action that those who have not the capacity and genius of prophethood or imamate are unable to do it, such as the act of Moses by his Rod, or the act of Jesus in raising men from the dead, and so on. The verse says:

"He (Pharaoh) said: 'If you have come with a Sign (a miracle), then bring it, if you are of the truthful ones'."

In Surah Ash-Shu'arā, *No. 26*, *verse 45* we recite:

"Then Moses cast down his staff, and lo! It swallowed that which they falsely displayed."

There were also some more miracles appeared from that Rod. It was struck the water of the sea when it dried up. Surah Ash-Shu'arā, *No. 26*, *verse 63* says:

"Strike the sea with your staff…"

Or, it was struck the rock and fountains of water gushed forth from it. Surah Al-Baqarah, *No. 2*, *verse 60* says:

"…Strike the rock with your staff.'…"

It should be explained that at the presence of Moses (as) the Rod changed to be a small snake, as Surah An-Naml, *No. 27*, *verse 10* says:

"And cast down your staff, so when he saw it in motion as if it was a serpent…"

At the presence of people it seemed an ordinary snake. Surah Tāhā, *No. 20*, *verse 20* says:

"Then he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent running."

But, at the presence of Pharaoh, it became a great clear snake, as the verse under discussion says:

"So he threw his rod, then behold! it was a clear serpent."

However, a miracle should be clear for all, so that no doubt remains. The verse says:

"…then behold! it was a clear serpent."

Section 14: Pharaoh and His Magicians Defeated

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 108-109

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

108. “Then he drew out his hand, and behold! It was white to the beholders.”

109. “The chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Verily this indeed is a knowing sorcerer’.”

Besides warnings and changing the Rod as a serpent, Moses showed white hand, too. But the opponents of the prophets used to spoil the rank of the prophets. The verse says:

“Then he drew out his hand, and behold! it was white to the beholders.”

Therefore, the adherents and the chiefs of wrong-doers around false deities are also shared with them in their crimes. The verse says:

“The chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Verily this indeed is a knowing sorcerer’.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 110

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ

110. “‘He (Moses) intends to expel you from your land. Then what do you advise?’”

In order to pervert the common opinions, Pharaoh tried to denigrate Moses (as). From the point of belief, he called Moses (as) a sorcerer, and from the social and political points of view, he introduced him as a seditious and quarrelsome person. One of the weapons of the opponents is to denigrate the men of the Truth. The verse, from the tongue of Pharaoh, says:

“‘He (Moses) intends to expel you from your land…”

False deities are often tyrannical, but sometimes they become helpless to consult in difficulties with some others around them.

“…Then what do you advise?’”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 111-112

قَالُوا أَرْجِهِ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ

111. “They said (unto Pharaoh): ‘Keep him and his brother in suspense (for a while); and send men to the cities to collect (sorcerers),”

112. “To bring you every knowing (expert) sorcerer’.”

In their consultation, however, the attitude of all of them was that they told him to keep Moses and Aaron (as) in suspense in order to collect sorcerers. The verse says as follows:

“They said (unto Pharaoh): ‘Keep him and his brother in suspense (for a while); and send men to the cities to collect (sorcerers),”

This device was for the reason that they would call all knowledgeable skillful experts of the time in sorcery to be gathered and to be brought to the presence of Pharaoh. The verse says:

"To bring you every knowing (expert) sorcerer'."

Since haste in slaying Moses and Aaron, regarding Moses' two surprising miracles, would cause the attraction of the attention of many people to him, and the feature of his 'prophethood' might be strengthened with the feature of 'martyrdom and being oppressed', at first they thought that they would frustrate his deeds by means of some extraordinary actions of their sorcerers, and defame him.

After that, they should slay him so that the story of Moses and Aaron could disappear from the minds of people forever.

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 113-114

وَجَآءَ الْسَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنا لاَجْراً إِنْ كُنّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ

قَالَ نَعَمْ وإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

113. "And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh, they said: 'Verily there will be a reward for us if we are victors'."

114. "He said: 'Yes! and you will surely be of the near-stationed (to me)'."

From this verse on, the words are upon the entanglement of Moses with the sorcerers and the end of his struggle therein.

The verse implies that, by the invitation of Pharaoh, sorcerers went to him, and the first thing that they told him was that whether they would have a large reward if they could overcome the enemy. Here is the verse:

"And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh, they said: 'verily there will be a reward for us if we are victors'."

Immediately after that, Pharaoh also gave them a favorable promise, and said that not only he would give them a good financial reward but also they would be of the near-stationed to him. The verse says:

"He said: 'Yes! and you will surely be of the near-stationed (to me)'."

Thus, Pharaoh promised them both the reward of wealth and the reward of high rank.

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 115-116

قَالُوا يَامُوسَى إِمَّآ أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّآ أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ

قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمّآ أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَآءُو بِسِحْرٍ عَظِيمٍ

115. "They (the sorcerers) said: 'O' Moses! Will you throw, or shall we be the (first) throwers?'"

116. "He (Moses) said: 'Throw (yours) !' So when they threw, they bewitched the people's eyes and terrified them and produced a great magic."

Finally, a proper time was appointed for the meeting of Moses (as) and the sorcerers to have their attempts. So all people were invited to come and see the event.

When the appointed day came, the sorcerers were completely ready with all their tools for the action. They had supplied some ropes and staffs which,

it seemed, they had been filled with some special chemical materials. These materials could be changed into the form of some light gases before sunshine which could move those ropes and hollow staffs.

It was a wonderful scene. Moses, standing before people and the sorcerers, was alone. Only his brother, Aaron, was with him. The sorcerers told Moses either he would begin the action and cast his means first, or they might start and cast their own means. The verse in this regard says:

"They (the sorcerers) said: 'O' Moses! Will you throw, or shall we be the (first) throwers?'"

Moses, with a particular coolness, answered them that they could begin first. The verse says:

"He (Moses) said: 'Throw (yours)!…'

When the sorcerers threw down their ropes and other means on the ground, they fascinated people and, by their deceitful deeds and exaggerative statements, they cast a sudden fear and terror upon people, and caused a great sorcery to be produced before them. The verse says:

"…So when they threw, they bewitched the people's eyes and terrified them and produced a great magic."

The Arabic term /sihr/ means: 'deceit, imposture, dexterity, and jugglery'. Sometimes it also means: 'whatever the cause and motive of which is invisible'. The verse says:

"…and produced a great magic."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 117

وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

117. "And We revealed to Moses: 'Throw down your rod!' And behold, it swallowed (all) that they falsely had invented."

At the moment when all people were excited, and happy shouts were heard from every side, Pharaoh and his by-standers were watching the scene of activities of sorcerers, while they were smiling contently and their eyes were glittering with joy.

Then suddenly the Divine revelation came unto Moses (as), biding him to throw down the staff. It caused the scene to be changed wholly. The faces of audience lost their colour, and instability overtook Pharaoh and his adherents.

In this verse, the Qur'ān refers to the very fact. It implies that Allah revealed to Moses (as) to throw down his Rod. It became as a huge serpent which quickly and precisely gathered all false snakes and artificial means of the sorcerers. The holy verse says:

"And We revealed to Moses: 'Throw down your rod!' And behold, it swallowed (all) that they falsely had invented."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 118-120

فَوَقَعَ الْحَق وَبَطَلَ مَاكَانُوا َعْمَلُونَ

فَغُلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَاغِرِينَ

وَأُلْقِيَ الْسَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ

118. "So the truth was established and what they were doing was made vain."

119. "Thus were they there defeated and brought low."

120."And the sorcerers fell down in prostration."

It was thus that the truth was manifested and the acts of sorcerers, which were baseless and improper, were nollified. The verse says:

"So the truth was established and what they were doing was made vain."

The reason of this incident was that the deed of Moses (as) was a reality while the sorcerers' deeds were some deceits, trickeries, dissimulations, juggleries and delusions.

This was the first stroke which was struck upon the foundation of the power of Pharaoh, the arrogant.

In verse *119*, the Qur'ān implies that, thereafter, the signs of failure were seen in them, and all of them became low and helpless.

The verse says:

"Thus were they there defeated and brought low."

The more important stroke happened when the scene of struggle of sorcerers against Moses (as) was totally changed, and suddenly all the sorcerers fell down prostrating for the greatness of Allah. The verse says:

"And the sorcerers fell down in prostration."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 121-122

قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ

121. "They said: 'We have believed in the Lord of the worlds."

122. "The Lord of Moses and Aaron'."

The sorcerers shouted that they believed in the Lord of the worlds, Who was the Lord of Moses and Aaron. The verses say:

"They said: 'We have believed in the Lord of the worlds."

"The Lord of Moses and Aaron'."

This happening was something which could never be foresighted by Pharaoh and his men.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 123

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكَرْتُمُوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا

مِنْهَآ أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

123. "Pharaoh said: 'Did you believe in him before I should give you permission? Surely this is a plot you have plotted in the city that you may expel its people from it, but soon you shall know (the consequences)!"

When a new stroke was struck upon the bases and pillars of the power and authority of Pharaoh because of the victory of Moses (as) over the sorcerers and that they believed in Moses (as), Pharaoh was frightened and got excited. That was why he applied two plots as follows:

The first was his accusation against the sorcerers which perhaps was admired by common people. The verse says:

"Pharaoh said: 'Did you believe in him before I should give you permission?…"

This is the worst form of colonialism that a nation be taken as slaves and captives so that they may not have even the right of thinking, contemplating, and heartily believing in a person or a religion.

This is the very plan which, in the present age, is pursued under the title of 'New colonialism', too.

Then, Pharaoh added:

"…Surely this is a plot you have plotted in the city that you may expel its people from it…"

This accusation was so unfounded and infamous that none could accept, except some perfectly unaware persons among common people.

After that, Pharaoh threatened them ambiguously, but it was said intensively and firmly. He said:

"…but soon you shall know (the consequences)!"

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 124-125

لأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلاَفٍ ثُمَّ لأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

قَالُوا إِنَّآ إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ

124. "Surely I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, then I will certainly crucify you all'."

125. "They said: 'Verily unto our Lord we return'."

The ambiguous threat of Pharaoh, which was referred to in the previous verse, is clearly stated in the verse under discussion. Here, Pharaoh takes an oath that he cuts off their hands and feet on opposite sides, i.e. the right hand and the left foot, or the left hand and the right foot. The verse says:

"Surely I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, then I will certainly crucify you all'."

What Pharaoh undertook here against the sorcerers, who had believed in Moses (as), was a general behaviour that usually the tyrannical rulers have in their cowardly oppositions against the adherents of the Truth.

On one side, they use the weapon of accusation against the demandant of the Truth to weaken them and their position both in the view of common people. And, on the other side, they rely on force, power, and threat to slaughter and destruction in order to break down their authority and will.

None of the two weapons of Pharaoh could defeat the decision of the sorcerers. In their answer, they heartily and decidedly refused him, as follows:

"They said: 'Verily unto our Lord we return'."

They said this statement with the meaning that if the Pharaoh's threat could be done, they finally would become martyrs. In that case, not only the event might not harm them or decrease anything from them, but also it could be considered as an honour and a happiness for them.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 126

وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّآ إِلاَّ أَنْ ءَامَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَآءَتْنَا رَبَّنَآ أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْراً وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

126. "And you do not take revenge upon us except because we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us.' 'Our Lord! Pour out upon us patience, and cause us to die in submission'."

Then, in order to respond the accusation of Pharaoh, and to make the truth clear for the audience of the concerning scene, and, also, to prove their own sinlessness, the sorcerers said:

"And you do not take revenge upon us except because we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us.'…"

At that time, they turned their faces from Pharaoh and, being attentive to Allah, they invoked Him to bestow upon them the highest degree of patience and perseverance. They knew that they could not tolerate those terrible threats without His help and His support. So, they said:

"…'Our Lord! Pour out upon us patience, and cause us to die in submission'."

As it has been recorded in the Islamic traditions, as well as the history, finally the sorcerers resisted on their idea so much so that Pharaoh fulfilled what he had threatened, and he hung their mutilated bodies on some tall palm trees by the bank of Nile River.

Yes, if belief and full awareness combine with together, the income of such a spiritual love will be some perseverance and devotion which will not be surprising in that way.

Section 15: Persecution of the Israelites

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 127

وَقَالَ الْمَلأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَذَرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الأَرْضِ وَيَذَرَكَ وءَالِهَتَكَ قَالَ سَنُقَتِّلُ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَآءَهُمْ وإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ

127. “And the chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Will you leave Moses and his people to make mischief in the land, and to desert you and your gods?’ He said: ‘Soon we will kill their sons and spare their women, and surely we are in power over them’.”

After seeing the belief of the sorcerers, in order to move Pharaoh, the chiefs of his people told him whether he left Moses and his followers alive to oppose him and make other people oppose and, consequently, to take the control of government from Pharaoh and to make mischief in the country. They would also leave out both him and his gods. The verse says:

“And the chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Will you leave Moses and his people to make mischief in the land, and to desert you and your gods?’…”

Pharaoh answered them that he would kill their sons who were the encouragement of those people and whom they were making ready for fighting, while he would leave their daughters alive because they could do nothing against him. Pharaoh said that he could make of their females servants so that they became lowing and miserable. The holy verse continues saying:

“…He said: ‘Soon we will kill their sons and spare their women…”

It is understood from this sentence that Pharaoh did not expect to kill Moses (as) and his followers since he had recognized their power unfailing. Therefore, he decided to attack the defendless children and to destroy them. The verse ends thus:

“…and surely we are in power over them’.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 128

قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللّه وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الأَرْضَ لِلّه يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

128. “Moses said to his people: ‘Seek help from Allah and endure. Verily the earthbelongs to Allah; He grants its inheritance to whomever He pleases of His servants, and the end is (best) for the pious ones.”

There are two commandments accompanied with two glad tidings referred to in this holy verse. The commandments are:

‘seeking help from Allah’ and ‘endurance’; and the glad tidings are ‘the inheritance of the earth’ and ‘the good end of the pious’.

It also indicates that seeking help from Allah and having confidence in Allah together with perseverance and piety are among the factors of the final victory and protection against threats. This means that we must both seek help from Allah and endure ourselves. The verse says:

“Moses said to his people: ‘Seek help from Allah and endure…”

Another matter is that, at the sensitive times, a leader must console the community and make them hopeful, because the hope to a clear future is the promise of all religions including Islam. Moreover, the pious people, not only have a good end in this world, but also are victorious in the next world.

"…Verily the earth belongs to Allah; He grants its inheritance to whomever He pleases of His servants, and the end is (best) for the pious ones."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 129

قَالُوا اُوذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

129. "They said: 'We have been hurt before you came to us and (also) after you came to us.' He said: 'Maybe that your Lord will destroy your enemy and will make you successors in the earth, then He observes how you act."

The Children of Israel expected all the affairs be promptly corrected in one night after the raise of Moses (as), and the country of Egypt, with all its facilities, could be in their authority, and the Pharaonic people would be annihilated. That was why they claimed that the raise of Moses (as) did not bring confort for them.

The reply of Allah (s.w.t.) is that triumph needs some conditions, such as patience, struggle, and reliance. When these conditions are supplied, there is a hope to the help of Allah.

It was thus that the divine leaders were sometimes criticized by some friends who were of little capacity and of little tolerance. The verse says:

"They said: 'We have been hurt before you came to us and (also) after you came to us.'…"

Most of people imagine that happiness and felicity is found in comfort and tranquility. They suppose that the lack of them is as a failure to obtain their desires. They are neglectful that the Divine religions have come to correct the ways of lives, not to efface their difficulties.

A leader should hearken to critics and send some hope-giving messages. The verse continues saying:

"…He said: 'Maybe that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the earth…"

An Islamic government is a means of trial not a means of seeking pleasure. Then, the verse concludes as follows:

"…then He observes how you act."

Section 16: The Delivery of the Israelites

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 130

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَآ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الثَّـمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

130. “And certainly We afflicted the clan of Pharaoh with drought and scarcity of fruits, so that they may take admonition.”

The Arabic word /sinin/ is the plural form of /sanah/ which means ‘year’; but when it is used with the term /’axŏ/ in the Arabic contexts, it often means: ‘to afflict with drought and famine’. The Qur’ān implies that Allah afflicted Pharaoh and his clan with drought and famine because of the indecent manner that they committed. The verse says:

“And certainly We afflicted the clan of Pharaoh with drought…”

It also implies that besides famine and drought, Allah afflicted them with scarcity of fruits in order that they be in awe and to become monotheists, but they did not change their way. The verse continues saying:

“…and scarcity of fruits, so that they may take admonition.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 131

فإِذَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَلآ إِنَّمَا طَآئِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللّه وَلـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

131. “So, when any good came to them, they said: ‘This is our due’; and if any evil afflicted them, they took it bad omens due to Moses and those with him. Be it known! Surely the cause of their bad omens is with Allah,but most of them do not know.”

Whenever they obtained abundance of good, they said that it was for their own due that there had continuously been bounties in their cities, and, therefore, they did not thank Allah. The verse says:

“So, when any good came to them, they said: ‘This is our due’...”

But when they afflicted famine and starvation, they took Moses and his followers bad omens and said that it was due to them. In this regard, the verse says:

“…and if any evil afflicted them, they took it bad omens due to Moses and those with him…”

Their real misfortune was as a result of their own sins and evil deeds. Such things cause the punishment of Allah for them both in this world and the Hereafter. The verse says:

“…Be it known! Surely the cause of their bad omens is with Allah…”

But most of them do not know it, and do not contemplate to know this fact. The verse ends as follows:

“…but most of them do not know.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 132

وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ لِتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

132. “And they said: ‘Whatever sign you may bring to us to charm us with it, we will not believe in you’.”

The enemies knew that the job of Moses was not magic and also knew that it was a Divine Sign, but they arrogantly and obstinately did not believe.

But, when the sorcerers, who were expert in their job, understood that the accomplishment of Moses (as) was not a magic, they believed.

Perhaps, the manner of the people of Pharaoh, that they called the accomplishment of Moses 'a sign', had been done mockingly.

The verse says:

"And they said: 'Whatever sign you may bring to us to charm us with it, we will not believe in you'."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 133

فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ ءَايَاتٍ مُفَصَّلاَتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْماً مُجْرِمِينَ

133. "So We sent against them the flood and the locusts and the vermin and the frogs and the blood as distinct signs, yet they acted proudly and they were a guilty people."

The Arabic term /tūfān/ in the Persian language means: 'hurricane', but in the Arabic language it has been used with the sense of: 'a violate flood'. In Mufradāt-i-Rāqib, it is cited that the word /tūfān/ is applied for any common event which is horrible.

The Arabic word /qummal/ means: some small insects, such as: lice, ants, aphis, and a kind of insects.

'Blood', which was among the divine signs and a punishment for the opponents of the people of Moses (as), means: the change of water(s) into blood, or a common bleeding of people.

The attack of locusts, flood, and 'water being altered into blood' were ordained only against the people of Pharaoh, while the Children of Israel were in security.

The explanation of these punishments have been mentioned in the Turah, too. Some evidences are as follows:

1- The river turned into blood…. Exodus, *Chapter 7*, *verse 20*

2- Swarm of flies…. Exodus, *Chapter 8*, *verse 21* and *verse 24*

3- The plague of hail…. Exodus, *Chapter 9*, *verse 24* and *verse 25*

4- The attack of locusts…. Exodus, *Chapter 10*, *verses 12* and 14

After Allah's warning and people's heedlessness, it is the turn of some grievous retributions to come forth.

The verse says:

"So We sent against them the flood and the locusts and the vermin and the frogs and the blood as distinct signs…"

Living creatures are the agents of Allah. Their mission is sometimes to bring mercy, like the spider's web at the doorway of the cave for the protection of the Messenger of Allah (S). And, it is sometimes a chastisement mission, like that of the swallows, and, in this verse, the mission of frogs and locusts.

However, many calamities are often for training. In any retribution, there is a respite for people to contemplate and repent and return to the Straight

Path. Therefore, the Divine retributions come after completing the argument.

They saw the divine sign and punishment, yet they acted arrogantly. The verse says:

"…yet they acted proudly and they were a guilty people."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 134-135

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْزَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَالِغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ

134. "And when the plague fell upon them, they said: 'O' Moses! invoke your Lord for us by the covenant He has made with you. If you remove the plague from us, we will certainly believe in you, and we will certainly send with you the Children of Israel'."

135. "But when We removed the plague from them until a term which they should reach, behold, they broke (their promise again)."

The Arabic term /nakθ/ originally means: 'to untwist a rope', but later it has been used in the sense of 'breaking a covenant', or 'violating an oath'. The verse says:

"And when the plague fell upon them, they said: 'O' Moses! invoke your Lord for us by the covenant He has made with you. If you remove the plague from us, we will certainly believe in you, and we will certainly send with you the Children of Israel'."

The Qur'ānic term /'ajal/, in this verse, may be the time which Moses (as) appointed for the removal of a calamity, saying that, for example, it would be removed on so and so day or at so and so hour, in order that they might understand that it was a divine retribution and not an accidental happening.

The purpose also maybe that those obstinate people would finally meet the unavoidable Wrath of Allah, but until the appearance of that time and being drowned in the sea, the punishment was temporarily removed.

The verse says:

"But when We removed the plague from them until a term which they should reach, behold, they broke (their promise again)."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 136

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

136. "So We took vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea, because they belied Our Signs and were heedless of them."

The Arabic term /'intiqām/ with the meaning of 'vengeance', in this verse, means 'punishment', and it does not mean 'grudge' or 'rancour' here.

The word /yam/ in the old Egyptian language was used for a sea or a river. Since the story here refers to Egypt, the same old word has been used in this verse of the Qur'ān.[1]

However, it should be noted that Allah is also 'taker of vengeance'. The verse says:

"So We took vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea, because they belied Our Signs…"

Another point is that the main source of misfortunes and calamities is inside the entities of ourselves, and negligence brings a heavy compensation for us. The holy verse continues saying:

"…and were heedless of them."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 137

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَّرْنَا مَاكَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ

137. "And We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it which We had blessed therein, and the good word of your Lord about the Children of Israel was fulfilled for what they endured patiently, and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had built and what they used to erect."

The region that the Children of Israel inherited included of Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and present Palestine. Those lands contained both material bounties and spiritual bounties, where the great prophets raised and were buried.

The lands which were under the control of Pharaoh and his people were so vast that there were different horizons and with different hours of risings and settings of the sun therein.

From the points of industry, agriculture, and interesting buildings of their time, the people of Pharaoh were very developed. The verse says:

"And We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it which We had blessed therein, and the good word of your Lord about the Children of Israel was fulfilled for what they endured patiently, and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had built and what they used to erect."

Yet, since the governments of divine prophets have been the governments of the oppressed, and Allah fulfills His promises, those oppressed people who show patience and perseverance can become the inheritors of the earth, as the verse indicates:

"…We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it…"

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 138

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَامُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَآ إِلَهاً كَمَا لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ

138. "And We made the Children of Israel to pass the sea; then they came upon a people cleaving to idols they had. They said: 'O' Moses! make for us a god, as they have gods'. He (Moses) said: 'Verily you are a people behaving ignorantly'."

Those expert sorcerers of Pharaoh, who were dealing with sorcery and magic during all their lives, became such good believers by seeing a miracle that Pharaoh's terrible threats could not change their decision.

But, some of the followers of Moses, who saw all those great miracles, were so weak that they even asked him (as) for an idol, and the observation of a deviated scene of idolatry drew them toward perversity.

The verse says:

"And We made the Children of Israel to pass the sea; then they came upon a people cleaving to idols they had. They said: 'O' Moses! make for us a god, as they have gods'. He (Moses) said: 'Verily you are a people behaving ignorantly'."

Therefore, as long as a group of people have not become strong enough in their true belief and faith, they should not migrate unto some perverted and dangerous regions, because invironments may affect on them, and communities are always exposed to the danger of aberration.

Also, sometimes it happens that watching an unappropriate view (of a film, a picture, or a society) spoils all the training efforts of the leaders.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 139

إِنَّ هَؤُلاَءِ مُتَبَّرٌ مَاهُمْ فِيهِ وَبَاطِلٌ مَاكَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

139. "(Moses said:) Surely this they are engaged upon shall be perished, and what they are doing are in vain."

The Qur'ānic term /mutabbarun/ is derived from the word /tabār/ with the meaning of 'destruction'.

The holy verse maybe points to the glad tidings of Moses (as) to the people, saying that by their presence in that region, polytheism and perversion would be effaced. (narrated from Marāqi, commentary). Here is the verse:

"(Moses said:) Surely this they are engaged upon shall be perished, and what they are doing are in vain."

Therefore, both the mental and practical perversions are perishable. The end of them all is destruction.

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 140-141

قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلَهاً وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُقَتِّلُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ

نِسَآءَكُمْ وَفِي ذلِكُمْ بَلاَءٌ مِن رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

140. "He said: 'Shall I find for you a god other than Allah, while He has preferred you above all creatures?'"

141. "And (remember) when We delivered you from Pharaoh's clan who were afflicting you with evil torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing your women, and in that was a great trial from your Lord."

Then, for an emphasis, the Qur'ān adds that Moses said to them whether he should find a god other than Allah for them; the same Lord Who preferred them over all people of their time. Here is the statement of the verse:

"He said: 'Shall I find for you a god other than Allah, while He has preferred you above all creatures?'"

In the next verse, Allah points to one of His great bounties bestowed upon the Children of Israel, so that by attending to that great bounty the sense of gratitude could be moved in them, and they knew that only His Pure Essence is eligible to be adored, worshipped and submitted.

At first it says:

"And (remember) when We delivered you from Pharaoh's clan who were afflicting you with evil torment…"

Then, this ceaseless torment is explained as follows:

"…slaughtering your sons and sparing your women…"

The explanation of the verse implies that in that event there lies a great trial upon them from the side of Allah. The verse says:

"…and in that was a great trial from your Lord."

Notes

1. Narrated from Mu'jam-ul-Kabir.

Section 17: The Physical Eyes Can Never See Allah

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 142

وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلاَثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى لاَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلاتَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

142. “And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights, and completed them with ten (more),so the appointed time of his Lord was completed forty nights. And (before going there) Moses said to his brother Aaron: ‘Be my successor among people, and set the (people’s) affairs right and do not follow the way of mischief-makers’.”

In Surah Al-Baqarah, <u>No. 2</u>, <u>verse 50</u>, the statement denotes that Allah (s.w.t.) appointed forty nights for Moses (as): “And (remember) when We appointed forty nights for Moses…”, but here, in this verse, the appointment is thirty nights added with ten more nights.

As Imam Bāqir (as) said:

“The philosophy of that manner was to try the Children of Israel”.[1]

The length of this time has been forty nights and days, yet the reason that the verse says ‘forty nights’, maybe, is that supplications are often performed at night. Or, perhaps, its reason is that in old times the formation of calendar was based on the appearance of the moon at night. The number of nights has also been used in counting days. The verse says:

“And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights, and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed time of his Lord was completed forty nights…”

There are some secrets hidden in this figure, i.e. ‘forty’. This figure has a special position in the cultures of different religions. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S), was appointed to prophethood when he was forty years old. He kept aloof from Khadijah for forty nights in order that the heavenly food to be sent down and the preparation of the birth of Hazrat Zahrā (as) to be supplied.

The descent of Divine revelation unto the Holy Prophet (S) was ceased for forty days.

The people of Moses (as) were wandering bewildered in the deserts for forty years.

At the time of Noah, it rained for forty days.

To learn forty Islamic traditions by heart causes this person to be raised among the experts of Muslim law in Hereafter.

The preparation of spiritual perfection of man develops until the person becomes forty years old. After that the affairs are more difficult and the accounts are more delicate.

The recitation of Surah Al-Hamd done for forty times unto a sick person can be effective in his healing.

Whoever drinks wine, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days, though the one must establish those prayers.

Allah may forgive a person upon whose dead body forty believers testify that he has been a good person.[2]

However, the explanation of forty nights of the appointed tryst of Moses is referred to in the Turah, Exedus.

Some Islamic literature denotes that thirty nights out of this forty nights were the whole nights of Zilqa'dah, and the added ten nights happened at the beginning nights of Zil-Hajjah.[3]

In any case, the event of the tryst of Moses (as) was as follows:

"…And (before going there) Moses said to his brother Aaron: 'Be my successor among people, and set the (people's) affairs right and do not follow the way of mischief-makers'."

The Tradition of Rank

A large number of commentators from both great Islamic sects have referred to the known 'Tradition of Rank' when explaining the verse under discussion. There is a difference, of course, that Shi'ite commentators have taken it as one of the reputable proofs for the immediate vicegerency of Ali (as).

The text of the tradition denotes that many of the companions of the Prophet (S) have detailed the process of the Battle of Tabūk as follows:

The Prophet (S) set out towards Tabūk when he appointed Ali-ibn-Abitālib (as) in his place. Ali (as) said to the Porphet (S) whether he left him among children and women (and did not let him go with him (S) to the battle-field to struggle).

The Messenger of Allah (S) answered him whether he was not content to be in the same rank to him (S) as Aaron was to Moses except that there would be no prophet after him.

It was not only in the Battle of Tabūk that the Prophet (S) expressed this meaning, but also in several occasions, other than that, this statement was heard from him, (S) including the followings:

1- One day, the Prophet (S) told 'Umm-us-Salamah:

"O' 'Umm-us-Salamah! Ali's tissue is the same as my tissue and, his blood is the same as my blood. The example of him unto me is like the example of Aaron unto Moses."

2- Ibn-'Abbas says that one day 'Umar-ibn-Khattāb said that once he was in the presence of the Prophet (S) accompanied with Abū-Bakr and some of the companions of the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) was leaning on Ali (as) when he touched Ali's shoulder and said:

"O" Ali! you are the first man who believed (in Allah) and you are the first person who accepted Islam."

Then he (S) said:

"The example of you unto me is like the example of Aaron unto Moses ".

However, if we impartially examine the above-mentioned tradition, it can be understood from it that Ali (as) had been given all the positions that Aaron had unto Moses (as) and among the Children of Israel, except prophethood.

This meaning mentioned about the Tradition of Rank has been cited in the Sunnite sources such as: Sahih-i-Bukhāri, vol. 6, p. 3; Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 4, p. *187*; Sunan-i-Ibn-i-Mājid, vol. 1, p. 42; Musnad-i-Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. 1, pp. *173*, *175*, *177*, *179*, *182*.

But the very tradition, ‘the Tradition of Rank’, is widely transmitted with Shi‘ites and it is available in the authentic books of traditions, including:

1) ‘Abaqāt, in book of Muhammad and Ali’.
2) The tradition of Thaqalayn, by Najmiddin ‘Askary, pp. *105*-*127*;
3) Safinat-ul-Bihār, vol. 21, p. *209*;
4) Bihār-ul-’Anwār, vol. 37, p. *254*;
5) Kanz-ul-Kirāchi, pp. *282*,*283*;
6) An-Nihāyah, vol. 2, p. *172*;
7) Kashf-ul-Qummah, p. 44;
8) Manāqib, Ibn-Abi-Tālib;
9) Al-Yaghin;
10) Al-Kharā’ij-wal-Jarāyih;
11) Kāmil-ut-Tawārikh, by Ibn-’Athir;
12) At-Tarā’if.

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 143

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَانِي وَلَكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمّا تَجَلّى رَبهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكّاً وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقاً فَلَمّآ اَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَاَنَاْ اَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

143. “And when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord spoke with him, he said: ‘My Lord, show me (Yourself), that I may look towards You!’ He (Allah) said: ‘Never shall you see Me, but look towards the mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me.’ So when his Lord manifested (His) glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down, and Moses fell down senseless. Then when he recovered, he said: ‘Glory be to You! I turn to You (repentant), and I am the first of the believers’.”

The Qur’ānic word /dakkah/ means ‘a level land’, and, therefore, in this verse the text means that the mountain was turned into dust so that it became level as the land.

That Divine Power, whatever it was, pounded the mountain into dust. Was it the great atomic power, or the power of waves, or some other mystic power? It is unknown.

There were two times that observing Allah was asked for. One time Moses (as) himself asked Allah to see His True Essense. Then, in answer to him (as), this very current verse was revealed and manifested that Moses (as) had not its capacity. The verse says:

“And when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord spoke with him, he said: ‘My Lord, show me (Yourself), that I may look towards You!’ He (Allah) said: ‘Never shall you see Me, but look towards the mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me.’ So when his Lord manifested (His) glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down, and Moses fell down senseless. Then when he recovered, he said: ‘Glory be to You! I turn to You (repentant), and I am the first of the believers’.”

Another time was when the Children of Israel were seeking the pretext, and ignorantly asked Moses to see Allah by the eyes of head. This meaning

has been referred to in verse No. 155 of the current Surah, which will be explained later.

This fact should be noted that Allah can never be seen by the outword eyes, neither in this world nor in the Hereafter. As the verse says:

"…'Never shall you see Me,'…"

But He must be known by means of His effects, where His manifestations can be looked at. The verse says:

"…so when his Lord manifested (His) glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down…"

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 144

قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالاَتِي وَبِكَلاَمِي فَخُذْ مَآ ءَاتَيْتُكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

144. "He said: 'O' Moses! verily I have chosen you above the people by My Messages and by My speaking (unto you). So take what I have given you, and be of the grateful ones'."

Moses is Allah's chosen servant. So, different demands, to become senseless, repentence and the like of them do not hinder him to be chosen. The verse says:

"He said: 'O' Moses! verily I have chosen you above the people by My Messages and by My speaking (unto you)…"

Imam Sādiq (as) says:

"Allah told Moses (as): 'Do you know why did I choose you? It was because your humbleness and submission was matchless. Whenever you established prayer, you put your cheeks on the soil'."[4]

After the removal of Tāqūt (deity) and formation of a godly society, the turn is for the execution of law and divine ordinances. Allah commands Moses:

"…So take what I have given you…"

The bounties of Allah must be thanked for. The godly leading and religious responsibilities are amongst the bounties of Allah, for which we must thank. The verse says:

"…and be of the grateful ones'."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 145

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الاَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلاً لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا بِاَحْسَنِهَا سَأُوْرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

145. "And We wrote for him in the Tablets of everything an admonition, and the explanation of all things; so, (O' Moses!) take hold of them with firmness and bid your people to take hold of the best of them. Soon I will show you the abode of the transgressors."

The verse indicates that, in the Tablets, Allah explained of everything some advices and admonitions sufficiently for Moses (as), and He detailed the necessary affairs of the life and religion needed for individuals and the society of his time. The verse says:

"And We wrote for him in the Tablets of everything an admonition, and the explanation of all things..."

Then, He commanded Moses to take those commandments with utmost effort and with a strong and earnest will. The verse says:

"…so, (O' Moses!) take hold of them with firmness…"

Moses (as) was also ordered to bid his people to act according to the best of them. The verse continues saying:

"…and bid your people to take hold of the best of them…"

Alongside this subject, Moses (as) was commanded to warn his people that opposing those commandments, and escaping from responsibilities and fulfilling the duties, would bring a dreadful result and, finally, Hell for them. Therefore, at the end of the verse, Allah says:

"…Soon I will show you the abode of the transgressors."

It is understood from the holy phrase: "…of every thing an admonition…" that there were not mentioned all the admonitions, advices, and necessary subjects in the Tablets of Moses. At that time, the divine ordinances were revealed according to the capacity and talents of those people.

But, when the people of the world reached the last stage of the prophets' training, the last command, which enveloped the whole material and spiritual necessities of human beings, was revealed unto the Prophet of Islam (S).

The apparent meaning of the phrase: "…Soon I will show you the abode of the transgressors." is that the abode of those who have gone out from the obedience of Allah in doing their duties is Hell.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 146

سَاَصْرِفُ عَنْ ءَايَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وإِن يَرَوْا كُلَّ ءَايَةٍ لاَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرشْدِلاَ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلاً وإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلاً ذَلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِاَيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

146. "Soon I will (allow to) turn away from My signs those who are arrogant in the earth unjustly; while (even) if they see any sign, they will not believe in it, and if they see the way of rectitude they do not take it for a way, and if they see the way of perverseness they take it for a way. This is because they belied Our signs and were heedless of them."

The statements, which have formed this verse and the verse after it, are indeed a conclusion drawn from the previous verses upon the fate of Pharaoh and his people, and also the arrogant persons of the Children of Israel. At first, the verse says:

"Soon I will (allow to) turn away from My signs those who are arrogant in the earth unjustly..."

Then the Qur'ān points to three parts of the qualities of these proud and arrogant people and that how they were dispossessed of the success of the truth. It says:

"…while (even) if they see any sign, they will not believe in it…"

And, also, if they see the straight path and the right way, they do not choose it as their own way. The verse says:

"…and if they see the way of rectitude they do not take it for a way…"

After mentioning these three qualities, all of which denote to their arrogance against the truth, the Qur'ān points to the reason of them and says:

"…This is because they belied Our signs and were heedless of them."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 147

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَآءِ الآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ مَاكَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

147. "And those who belie Our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, their (good) deeds are null. Shall they be recompensed except for what they used to do?"

This verse refers to the punishment of such arrogant people. It says:

"And those who belie Our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, their (good) deeds are null…"

And at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān implies that this fate is not as a vengeance for them. It is the fruit of their own deeds, or it is the embodiment of their exact deeds that has been encarnated before them. Thus, the verse says:

"…Shall they be recompensed except for what they used to do?"

This holy verse is one of the verses which are taken as the evidence for proving the embodiment of actions, and the presence of the deeds themselves, good and evil, in the Hereafter.

Notes

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary, vol. 2, p. 61.
2. Safinat-ul-Bihār, vol. 1, p. 505
3. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary
4. Tafsir-us-Sāfi, and'Usūl-i-Kāfi

Section 18: The Israelites Started Calf Worshipping

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 148

وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِن بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهُ خُوَارٌ ۚ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا ۘ اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ

148. “And the people of Moses made of their ornaments a calf after him, a (mere) body that lowed. Did they not see that it did not speak to them, nor did it guide them to any way? They took it (for worship) and they were unjust.”

Through these verses one of the lamentable and surprising events has been referred to. It happened among the Children of Israel after going Moses (as) to the tryst. That event was their worshipping Calf, which was arranged by a person called ‘Sāmiri’ and by means of some golden ornaments offered by the Children of Israel.

The verse implies that after going Moses to the tryst, his people made a calf out of their ornaments which was only a lifeless body with the mooing sound of a cow which they worshipped. At first, it says:

“And the people of Moses made of their ornaments a calf after him, a (mere) body that lowed…”

Then the Qur’ān, scorning them, says:

“…Did they not see that it did not speak to them, nor did it guide them to any way?…”

The objective meaning of this question is that a true deity should recognize the right and wrong and be able to guide his followers. He should save the ability of speaking with his worshippers and guide them to the straight way, and teach them the way of worship.

In fact, they were unjust to their own selves. That is why the verse says:

“…They took it (for worship) and they were unjust.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 149

وَلَمَّا سُقِطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

149. “And when they smote their hands and saw that they had gone astray, they said: ‘Should our Lord have not mercy on us and forgive us (not), we shall certainly be of the losers’,”

When Moses (as) came back from the mountain, the Children of Israel realized that they had made mistake and were of the losers. The verse says:

“And when they smote their hands and saw that they had gone astray, they said: ‘Should our Lord have not mercy on us and forgive us (not), we shall certainly be of the losers’,”

Some of the commentators believe that Sāmeri, with the information he had, had set some special pipes in the breast of a golden calf through which some pressed air could pass out and a sound, similar to the sound of a cow, was heard from the mouth of that calf.

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 150

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِن بَعْدِي أَعَجِلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضْعَفُونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

150. "And when Moses returned (from the Mountain) unto his people, wrathful (and) grieved, he said: 'Evil it is that you have done in my place after me. Did you hasten on the bidding of your Lord?' And, he dropped the Tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him toward himself. He (Aaron) said: 'O son of my mother! verily the people judged me weak and had well-nigh slain me. So do not let the enemies gloat over me, and do not count me among the unjust people."

In this verse and the verse after it, the event of the conflict of Moses (as) with calf-worshippers, when he returned from the tryst, has been explained. This event was only hinted out in the previous verse.

This is an explanation upon the hideous and hateful scene of the calf-worshipping of the people of Moses who had spoilt his religion when Moses came back from the Mountain. The verse says:

"And when Moses returned (from the Mountain) unto his people, wrathful (and) grieved, he said: 'Evil it is that you have done in my place after me…"

Then, Moses (as) added telling them:

"…Did you hasten on the bidding of your Lord?'…"

The objective meaning of this phrase is that, due to the command of Allah concerning the length of the appointment of Moses (as) from thirty nights to forty nights, the people of Moses hastened and judged over it hurriedly.

They took the absence of Moses (as) as a reason for his death or breach of promises. In that circumstance, Moses had to manifest an intensive wrath, otherwise their return to the truth was not easily possible.

The harsh reaction of Moses against this scene and in that moment has been stated by the Qur'ān as follows:

"…And, he dropped the Tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him toward himself…"

In fact, this reaction illustrated, on one side, the inward conditions of Moses (as) and his intensive annoyance for the idolatry and aberration of those people, and, on the other side, it was an effective means for moving the minds of the Children of Israel and making them attentive to the extraordinary obscenity of their deeds.

Then, the Qur'ān, referring to the manner of Aaron for exciting the sympathy of Moses (as) and stating his sinlessness, says:

"…He (Aaron) said: 'O son of my mother! verily the people judged me weak and had well-nigh slain me. So do not let the enemies gloat over me, and do not count me among the unjust people."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 151

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِأَخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

151. "He (Moses) said (praying): 'O' Lord! forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your Mercy, and You are the most merciful of the merciful ones'."

When the fire of the wrath of Moses (as) was rather quenched, he refuged to Allah (s.w.t.) and invoked Him as follows:

"He (Moses) said (praying): 'O' Lord! forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your Mercy, and You are the most merciful of the merciful ones'."

Moses (as) asked Allah to forgive him and his brother not for the sake that they had committed any sin, but it was a kind of humility and submission unto Allah for returning to Him and in order to express his hatred upon the hideous actions of the idol-worshippers.

It is also a lesson for others to learn and contemplate where Moses and his brother (as), who had no perversion, asked Allah for such a remission, they must certainly be aware of their own reckonings.

Section 19: Mercy Promised to Those Who Accept the Apostle (Muhammad)

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 152

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِن رَبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا وَكَذلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ

152. “Verily those who adopted (worshipping) the Calf soon shall reach them a wrath from their Lord and abasement in the life of the world. And thus do We recompense the forgers of lies.”

Finally, that intensive harsh reaction of Moses (as) brought forth its own effect and the calf-worshippers from the Children of Israel, who formed the majority of the people of Moses, showed regret for their treatment. But, in order that none consider that this mere regret and remorse was enough for their repentance from such a great fault, the Qur’ān adds the statement as follows:

“Verily those who adopted (worshipping) the Calf soon shall reach them a wrath from their Lord and abasement in the life of the world…”

Again, in order that none imagine that this law is allocated only to those people, it is added at the end of the verse:

“…And thus do We recompense the forgers of lies.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 153

وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِهَا وءَامَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

153. “And those who commit evil deeds, then repent thereafter and believe, verily, after that (repentance), your Lord is certainly Forgiving, Merciful. ”

This verse has completed the previous meaning. As a general rule, it implies that those who do some wrong actions and, under the presence of all conditions of repentance, repent thereafter and renew their belief in Allah, so that they return from any polytheism and disobedience, after that the Lord will forgive them, for Allah (s.w.t.) is Forgiving, Merciful. The holy verse says:

“And those who commit evil deeds, then repent thereafter and believe, verily, after that (repentance), your Lord is certainly Forgiving, Merciful. ”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 154

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَن مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الأَلْوَاحَ وَفِي نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ

154. “And when Moses’ anger calmed, he took up the Tablets, and in the inscriptions of them was guidance and mercy for those who are in awe of their Lord. ”

In this verse, the Qur’ān informs that when the fire of the anger of Moses (as) quenched and he got the result he expected, he stretched his hand and took up the Tablets from the ground. The records of those Tablets were wholly guidance and mercy. That very guidance and mercy was for those

who felt responsibility and were in awe of Allah and submitted to His command.

The verse says:

"And when Moses' anger calmed, he took up the Tablets, and in the inscriptions of them was guidance and mercy for those who are in awe of their Lord. "

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 155

وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلاً لِمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّآ أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِن قَبْلُ وَإِيَّايَ أَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السفَهَآءُ مِنَّآ إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِل بِهَا مَن تَشَآءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَآءُ أَنْتَ وَلِينَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ

155. "And Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our tryst, and when the earthquake overtook them, he said: 'O' Lord! had You pleased, You could have destroyed them and me before. Will You destroy us because of what the fools of us have done? It is naught but Your trial, whereby You cause to stray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish. You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of the forgivers."

Once more, in this verse and the next one, the Qur'ān refers to a part of the story of Moses (as) when he, accompanying with a group of the Children of Israel, went to the tryst of Tūr.

At first, the Qur'ān says:

"And Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our tryst…"

But when those men of the Children of Israel heard the word of the Lord, they demanded Moses (as) to ask Allah to show Himself. At that time a great earthquake occurred and caused those people to pass away and Moses (as) fell down senseless. When he recovered his senses he said to the Lord that if He had wished He could have destroyed them and him before that. The verse says:

"…and when the earthquake overtook them, he said: 'O' Lord! had You pleased, You could have destroyed them and me before.

That is, Moses (as) meant how could he answer his people whose representatives became like that?

Then he said to the Lord that that undue request was the utterance of some fools of those people. Then he questioned Allah whether He destroyed them for what their fools had done. The verse says:

"…Will You destroy us because of what the fools of us have done?…"

Next to this supplication and request, he said to Him:

"…It is naught but Your trial, whereby You cause to stray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish…"

And the statement of Moses (as) to the Lord, mentioned at the end of the verse, continued as follows:

"…You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of the forgivers."

From the totality of the verses of the Qur'ān and the Islamic traditions, it is understood that, at last, the people who were destroyed thereby were restored to life again and returned to the Children of Israel with Moses (as).

They detailed for them what they had seen and began preaching those unaware people.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 156

وَاكْتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَآ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَآءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَاَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

156. "And prescribe goodness for us in this world and in the Hereafter, (for) verily we have come back to You (repentantly). He (the Lord) said: 'My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, but My mercy embraces all things. Soon I shall prescribe it for those who keep from evil and pay the alms and those who believe in Our signs."

Following to the request of Moses (as) from Allah and the completion of the subject of repentance, which was referred to through the previous verse, in this verse, the continuation of supplication of Moses (as) to the Lord (s.w.t.) is announced as follows:

"And prescribe goodness for us in this world and in the Hereafter…"

Then, he states the reason of this request unto Allah and that he has asked forgiveness for the undue words that those fools had said. Here is his reason:

"…(for) verily we have come back to You (repentantly)…"

At last, Allah answered the invocation of Moses (as) and accepted his repentance, but with some conditions which are stated at the end of this very verse. The verse says:

"…He (the Lord) said: 'My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, but My mercy embraces all things…"

But, in order that some persons do not imagine that the acceptance of repentance, together with the vast mercy of Allah and its generality, is not given undue and with no condition, at the end of the verse, He adds that His mercy is prescribed for those who fulfil the following three things. The verse says:

"…Soon I shall prescribe it for those who keep from evil and pay the alms and those who believe in Our signs."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 157

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوباً عِندَهُمْ فِي التَّورَاةِ وَالإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِل لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَآئِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالاَغْلاَلَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

157. "(And also for) those who follow the Messenger, the unschooled Prophet, whose explanation they find written with them in the Turah and the Evangel. He enjoins on them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and he makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the corrupt things; and he removes from them their burden and the bondages that were upon them. Then, those who believe in him, and

honour him, and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these are they that are the prosperous ones'."

The Arabic word /'ummi/ is derived from /'Umm/ which means 'mother'. It is also used for a person who has not learnt to read and write. In this regard, he is like a new born child.

Some commentators have said that the term /'ummi/ means a person who is from among the ummah and common people, not from among notables. Some other commentators of the Qur'ān consider that the word is related to the term /'umm-ul-qurā/ which is an appellation for Mecca, and it, therefore, means Meccan.

Basing on some evidences, we count the existing Turah and the Bible perverted. Yet, there are some hints and glad tidings in both of them about the Prophet of Islam (S) which indicate that the People of the Book knew the Prophet of Allah so much so that a father knows his child.

Some of these references are as follows: the Turah, Genesis, *Chapter 17*, *verses 18*,20 and 21; Genesis, *Chapter 49*, *verse 10*: the Bible, John, *Chapter 14*, *verse 15*; and *Chapter 15*, *verse 26*.

At the time of the advent of Islam, there were only 17 men and one woman in Mecca who could read and write. Thus, if the Prophet (S) had studied and learnt even one word before a person, he could not be called /'ummi/ among those people.[1]

The verse says:

"(And also for) those who follow the Messenger, the unschooled Prophet, whose explanation they find written with them in the Turah and the Evangel…"

The Qur'ānic term /'aqlāl/ (chains), used in this verse, had been applied for the false notions, superstitions, idolatry, and some troublesome customs mainly remained from the Age of Ignorance.

Therefore, false customs and habits are as chains on the thoughts of people. Thus human beings who do not believe in any prophet are always dependant and they live as captives. The verse says:

"…He enjoins on them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and he makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the corrupt things; and he removes from them their burden and the bondages that were upon them…"

A mere belief in the Prophet (S) of Islam is not enough, helping him and supporting him is also necessary. The holy verse says:

"…Then, those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him…"

However, we must know that the Qur'ān is a light which enlightens the hearts and thoughts of its believers. The verse continues saying:

"…and follow the light which has been sent down with him…"

The help and respect to the Prophet (S), like belief in him, is not allocated to a particular time. Therefore, honouring the grave of the Prophet (S) and his effects is also the extention of that help and respect.

In any case, felicity comes into being under the shade of following the prophets. The verse concludes:

"…Then, those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these are they that are the prosperous ones'."

Some Traditions

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who enjoins right and prohibits wrong is the vicegerent of both Allah and His Messenger on the earth."[2]

Imam Bāqir (as) said:

"Verily, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is the way of prophets and the method of good doers. It is such a great obligatory deed (wājib) by which other obligatory deeds can survive, other creeds can be saved, bargains are lawful, injustices are warded off, and prosperity can be filled in the earth…"[3]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The firmness of the religion is due to enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and observing the limits of Allah."[4]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said to Imam al-Hassan and Imam al-Husayn (as) when Ibn-Muljam (the curse of Allah be upon him) struck him (fatally with a sword):

"…Fear Allah (and again) fear Allah in the matter of Jihād, (struggle for the Holy War), with the help of your property, lives and speech in the way of Allah…"

"Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then (in that case) when you pray, your invocations will not be granted to you…"[5]

Notes

1. Narrated from Futūh-ul-Baladān Bilāthari, p. 459.
2. Mustadrak-ul-Wasā'il, vol. 12, p. 179
3. Al-Kāfi, vol. 5, p. 56
4. Qurar-ul-Hikam, p. 236
5. Nahjul-Balaqah, Letter 47, p. 422

Section 20: The Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Apostle Unto the Whole Mankind

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 158

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعاً الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ يُحيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

158. “Say: ‘O mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He. He gives life. And makes to die’. Believe then in Allah and His Messenger, the unschooled prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided.”

Some of orientalists have said that the Prophet of Islam (S) was thinking only for the people of his own region, but when he succeeded he thought to preach other people of the world, too.

In answer to this statement, it should be said that there are some different verses of the Qur’ān containing such words as: ‘you all’, [1] ‘the whole of mankind’ [2] ‘whoever it reaches’ [3] ‘unto the worlds’.[4]

These Qur’ānic evidences prove that his prophethood was worldly. He was commissioned to be a prophet over all people of the world when he was in Mecca and before gaining his success. It was not so, as those orientalists say, that later he decided to invite all the people of the world.

Imam Hassan Mujtabā (as), the second Imam, has said:

“Once some of the Jewish people came to the Messenger of Allah and said: ‘Do you suppose that you are a prophet the same as Moses was?’ After a while of keeping silence, he answered:

‘Yes. I am the master of the (whole) children of Adam, but I do not boast of it. I am the seal of prophets, the leader of the pious, and the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.’

They asked: ‘Whom have you been sent to? To Arabs, or to non-Arabs, or to us?’ Then the above verse was revealed with the meaning that he was sent as a Messenger to the whole mankind.”[5]

The repetition of the Qur’ānic word /’Ummi/ in this holy verse and in the sixth verse before this, is an indication to its importance.

However, the prophethood of Mohammad (S) is surely worldly, and a worldly Divine religion needs a worldly leader.

Like any project, his Messengership, of course, progressed stage by stage. At first, the invitation of the Prophet (S) was to the family members, then to the people of’Umm-ul-Qur’ā, Mecca, and, finally, to the whole humankind. The verse says:

“Say: ‘O mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He. He gives life. And makes to die’…”

Another matter is that prophethood is something necessary for Theism and Resurrection. Since Allah (s.w.t.) is the only possessor of the world of existence thoroughly, and life and death are under His control, then the leadership and guidance of human beings should be authorized by Him, too. The holy verse says:

"…Believe then in Allah and His Messenger, the unschooled prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided."

Belief in Allah and His Messenger, together with obedience from the Holy Prophet (S), is the secret of guidance, for which the Qur'ān, the Prophet's rules and practice (Sunnah) must be followed.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 159

وَمِن قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ

159. "And of the people of Moses there is a group who guide by the truth and establish justice thereby."

Guiding by the truth is a sign of the absence of bigotry, and also an indication of gratitude and following the truth itself. So, this recent group, whom are referred to in this verse, were separate from the pertinacious ones who used to seek pretexts. The holy verse says:

"And of the people of Moses there is a group who guide by the truth…"

Perhaps, the objective meaning referred to this group is those people among the Jews who accepted the invitation of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Therefore, in confronting the minorities, justice should particularly be observed, and their sincere services and accomplishments must not be neglected.

The verse ends as follows:

"…and establish justice thereby."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 160

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمُ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطاً أُمَماً وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَى مُوسَى إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ أَنِ اضْرِب بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْناً قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُ أُنَاسٍ مَشْرَبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَارَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلكِن كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

160. "And We divided them into twelve tribal communities; and We revealed unto Moses, when his people asked him for water, (saying): 'Strike the rock with your rod.' So twelve fountains gushed forth from it. Each tribe, indeed, came to know its drinking-place. And We outspread the cloud to overshadow them, and We sent down manna and quails upon them, (saying): 'Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you.' And they did no harm to Us but they were doing injustice to their own selves."

Several kinds of Allah's bounties upon the Children of Israel are referred to in this verse. At first, the Qur'ān says that Allah divided them into twelve groups, each of which were a branch of the progeny of Israel. He assigned a just order among them which was far from harsh conflicts.

The verse says:

"And We divided them into twelve tribal communities..."

The next bounty was at the time when the people of Moses (as) were traveling toward Jerusalem in the hot desert where they entangled with a horrible blazing thirst. They asked him for water and Allah revealed him to strike the rock with his Rod, and he did so. After that twelve springs gushed forth from the rock.

The verse says:

"…and We revealed unto Moses, when his people asked him for water, (saying): 'Strike the rock with your rod.' So twelve fountains gushed forth from it…"

The water of these fountains were divided among them so regularly that each group knew their own spring very well. The verse says:

"…Each tribe, indeed, came to know its drinking-place…"

Another bounty came to them in that blazing desert, where there was no shelter nor any shadow. The Lord outspread the cloud to overshadow them with the cloud. The verse continues saying:

"… And We outspread the cloud to overshadow them…"

Finally, the fourth bounty was that Allah sent down manna and quails as some delicious and nutritious food for them to eat. The verse says:

"…(saying): 'Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you.'…"

But they ate the food and showed ungratitude. By that manner, they did no harm to Allah (s.w.t.), but they committed injustice to themselves. The verse ends as follows:

"…And they did not harm to Us but they were doing injustice to their own selves."

Some Explanations

The Arabic term /asbāt/ is the plural form of /sibt/ which is used for the children, grandsons, and sub-branches of a family. Every tribe of the Children of Israel were the progenies of one of the children of Jacob.

The Qur'ānic term /manna/ means a kind of food like honey and some herbal expressed juice such as tamarix mannifera, and 'salwa' (a quail) is a bird lawful to be eaten, resembling pigeon and partridge.

During a short moment there, several miracles took place: striking the rock by the Rod, plenty water being gushed forth, the number of fountains as many as the number of the tribes, and so on.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 161

وإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّداً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَاتِكُمْ سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

161. "And (remember) when it was said to them: 'Dwell in this town (Jerusalem) and eat of it wherever you desire, and ask forgiveness, and enter prostrating at the gate. We shall forgive you your faults. Soon We will give more (the portion of) the doers of good'."

The Qur'ānic term /hittah/ philologically means: 'the descent of something from upward.' There are some other derivations from this term, too. It is used in the sense of request for divine mercy and remission (of sins).

The commandment was that the Children of Israel should ask forgiveness from Allah by means of this word, /hittah/, on their arrival into the holy land of Jerusalem. (But with the thought of mockery, they changed the word.) The verse says:

"And (remember) when it was said to them: 'Dwell in this town (Jerusalem) and eat of it wherever you desire, and ask forgiveness, and enter prostrating at the gate…"

A meaning similar to the content of this verse, with a little difference, has been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, *No. 2*, through *verses 58* and 59, too.

In Islamic literature, there are some traditions narrated from the Immaculate Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as) who have clearly said:

"We are the gate of your 'hittah' (forgiveness)."

That is, if you enter inside the orb of our government and mastership, mercy will be bestowed upon you.

By the way, there is a good tidings in this verse which indicates Allah may provide all the material and spiritual needs of humankind in this world nad the next world. So, in order that they can be eligible to enjoy some bounties such as: housing, food, forgiveness, and mercy, He commands them to supplicate, to ask forgiveness, and to prostrate.

Also, with a sincere repentance, Allah forgives a great deal of faults. In this verse He says:

"…We shall forgive you your faults…"

To obtain the divine remission, both supplication and practice are necessary. The verse says:

"…and ask forgiveness, and enter prostrating at the gate…"

However, there should be a difference between a good doer and a wrong doer. In the rank where evildoers can be forgiven, the good doers must be given a higher and a better grace. The verse says:

"…Soon We will give more (the portion of) the doers of good."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 162

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزاً مِنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ

162. "But those of them who were unjust changed a saying other than that which had been spoken unto them; so We sent upon them a torment from heaven for they had been doing injustice."

Sometimes perversion and changing the meanings are made manifestly, as the change of an utterance; and sometimes the frame of an utterance is preserved, but the content and spirit of that subject is changed. The example of the latter is the trick of the Children of Israel for catching fish on the Sabbath, (which will be dealt with in the next verse).

The verse says:

"But those of them who were unjust changed a saying other than that which had been spoken unto them…"

The Qur'ān refers to three kinds of perversion which were performed in the Law of Allah:

1) A pertinacious perversion, like the manner of the Children of Israel who, instead of saying /hittah/ (seeking for forgiveness and remission), said /hintah/ (wheat).

2) A change done deceitfully, like the action accomplished by the Children of Israel when they made some pools in the bank of the sea wherein fish came on the Sabbath,

3) and they hunted them on Sunday. They said they had

4) not hunted fish on the Sabbath. But regarding this subject, Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 65 says:

"And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits on the Sabbath…"

5) A change for their own benefit, like postponing the sacred months in the Age of Ignorance in order to carry on their fight. Since they did not like to cease fighting because of adapting with sacred months, they postponed the months. Then, the verse was revealed, saying

"Verily the postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition unto infidelity…" (Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 37)

Thus, the punishment of changing the commandments of Allah is His Wrath and chastisement. The verse says:

"…so We sent upon them a torment from heaven…"

And we should know that the fates of human beings are in their own authority, and that these punishments are the fruit of their own sins and transgressions. The verse continues says:

"…for they had been doing injustice."

Notes

1. The verse under discussion
2. Surah Sabā', No. 34, verse 28
3. Surah Al-'An'ām, No. 6, verse 19
4. Surah Furqān, No. 25, verse 1
5. Tafsir-us-Sāfi

Section 21: Punishment For Transgressing the Limits

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 163

وَسْأَلْهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَّعاً وَيَوْمَ لاَيَسْبِتُونَ لاَتَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

163. “And (O Muhammad) ask them about the town that was by the sea, when they exceeded (the limits) of the Sabbath when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath,

appearing on the surface of the water; but on the day they did not keep Sabbath, they (the fish) did not come unto them. Thus did We try them for the transgressions they used to commit.”

By the command of Allah, hunting fish on the Sabbath was forbidden for this group of the Children of Israel who were living on the bank of the sea. (Maybe, it was the Red Sea, beside the land of Palestine, which is known’Ilāf Harbour today).

But, on that very day, fish were seen with a more tremendous amount, so that people’s mouths watered. This circumstance was a divine trial for them.

Those people exceeded the law of Allah deceitfully, and, by making pools on the bank of the sea and banning the way of the fish therein, they captured them in those pools on Saturdays, the which were easily hunted on Sundays. Then, they claimed that, according to the commandment, they had not hunted them on the Sabbath.

The verse says:

“And (O Muhammad) ask them about the town that was by the sea, when they exceeded (the limits) of the Sabbath when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water; but on the day they did not keep Sabbath, they (the fish) did not come unto them. Thus did We try them for the transgressions they used to commit.”

Therefore, by legal tricks and deceit, the real feature of sins may not be changed, (like making pools on the seaside for hunting fish on the following day).

In one of his sermons, Hadrat Ali (as) has intensively criticized the justification of sins, and the justification of ‘wine’ with ‘date liquor’ (nabith), ‘bribery’ with present, and ‘usury’ with ‘transaction’.[1]

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 164

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْماً الله مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَاباً شَدِيداً قَالُوا مَعْذِرَةً إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

164. “And (remember) when a group of them said: ‘Why do you admonish a people whom Allah will destroy or punish with a severe punishment?’ They said: ‘In order to have an excuse before your Lord, and that they may keep from evil’.”

It seems that, from the point of behaviour, the Children of Israel were divided into three groups. One group, who formed the majority, were the violators of Divine Law. The second group were the sympathetic admonishers.

The third group were those who were inattentive to the social evil affairs. The latter ones told the sympathetic admonishers not to make themselves tired, for their preach would not affect the mischief makers and, in any case, the corruptors should be the dwellers of Hell.

But those who enjoined right and forbade wrong said that their action was not useless. They said the least thing was that they were excused with Allah.

Yes, the members of societies are usually found in the category of these three groups.

In Surah Al-Mursalāt, *No. 77*, *verses 5* and 6, we recite:

"And by those who reveal the (Divine) Reminder," "to justify or to warn."

It should be noted that 'forbidding wrong' is necessary for completing the statement and having excuse with Allah. The verse says:

"…They said: 'In order to have an excuse before your Lord…"

We must not justify our faults with 'Divine will'. The verse says:

"And (remember) when a group of them said: 'Why do you admonish a people whom Allah will destroy or punish with a severe punishment?'…"

Unfortunately, those who are inattentive to the evil affairs, instead of protesting against the corruptors, protest against those who enjoin the right. But, even if we do not probable a good effect, we must forbid the wrong in order to complete the statement and to have excuse before Allah.

However, godly people are not hopeless of improving the society. The verse concludes:

"…and that they may keep from evil."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 165-166

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَاذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَن مَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

165. "So when they forgot what they were reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and seized those who were unjust with a dreadful punishment for the transgressions they used to commit."

166. "So when they defied what they had been forbidden from, We said to them: 'Be you apes scouted'."

In this verse, the Qur'ān implies that finally mammonism overwhelmed them and they forgot the command of Allah (s.w.t.), therefore they confronted the bitter moment of punishment.

The verse says:

"So when they forgot what they were reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and seized those who were unjust with a dreadful punishment for the transgressions they used to commit."

Who Were Delivered?

From those three groups of people: (the sinners, the inattentive ones, and the admonishers), only the third group were secured from the punishment of Allah. As the Islamic traditions indicate, when this group, the third group,

saw that their admonishments were not effective in the wrong doers, they became worried and said that they would go out of the city.

They left the city at night and went into the desert. Accidentally, by that very night, the retribution of Allah befell upon the couple of the abovementioned groups who were inside the city.

The sort of their retribution is explained in the second verse of the above verses as follows:

"So when they defied what they had been forbidden from, We said to them: 'Be you apes scouted'."

It is clear that the commandment saying 'Be you', here, is a genetic command, which means they changed immediately in the shape of 'apes'.

According to some Islamic literature, of course, those who were transformed continued to live only for a few days, and then they died, so that there could appear no generation from them later.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 167

وإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَن يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

167. "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed that He would surely send against them, until the Day of Resurrection, those who would inflict on them a grievous punishment. Verily your Lord is certainly quick to requite (evil), and verily He is Forgiving, Merciful."

This verse and the verse after it point to a part of the worldly retributions of those Jewish people who stood against the commandments of Allah and trod on the truth, justice, and honesty.

At first, the verse says:

"And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed that He would surely send against them, until the Day of Resurrection, those who would inflict on them a grievous punishment…"

It is understood from this verse that this rebellious group will never meet a complete calmness, although they establish a government for themselves.

Then, at the end of the verse, it adds that Allah is both quick in punishing those who deserve punishment, and forgiving, Merciful unto those wrong doers who repent. The verse says:

"…Verily your Lord is certainly quick to requite (evil), and verily He is Forgiving, Merciful."

This Qur'ānic phrase indicates that Allah has left the way wide open for them to return in order that no one imagines that a compulsory fate with adversity, retribution, and chastisement has been assigned for them.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 168

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ أُمَماً مِنْهُمُ الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَوْنَاهُم بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

168. "And We dispersed them into communities on the earth, some of them being righteous, and some of them otherwise, and We tried them with good things and bad things that they might return."

It was ordained that for a length of time the Children of Israel visited honour and power, in order that maybe they might become thankful. And, for another length of time, they were involved in calamities that might the sense of repentance and humiliation be renewed in them.

Some of them were virtuous and believed in Islam, while some others pursued corruption, and insisted on their own mammonism and stubbornness.

The verse says:

"And We dispersed them into communities on the earth, some of them being righteous, and some of them otherwise, and We tried them with good things and bad things that they might return."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 169

فَخَلَفَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الاَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا
وَإِن يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلُهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ اَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ اَن لاَ َقُولُوا عَلَى اللّه إِلاَّ الْحَقَّ
وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالدَّارُ الاَخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ َتَّقُونَ أَفَلا تَعْقِلُونَ

169. "Then there succeeded after them (an evil) posterity (who) inherited the Book (Turah), taking the transitory goods of this lower world, and saying: 'It will be forgiven us'. And if similar transitory goods were to come to them (again), they would take them, too. Was not the covenant of the Book taken with them that they should not attribute anything to Allah except the truth? And they have studied what is in it, while the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who keep from evil. Have you then no sense?"

In former verses, the words were about the ancestors of the Jews, but in this verse, the statement is upon the children and descendants of them.

At first, the Qur'ān remarks that their descendants inherited the Turah, but they used to prefer the material of this low world to the obedience of Allah. [2] The verse says:

"Then there succeeded after them (an evil) posterity (who) inherited the Book (Turah), taking the transitory goods of this lower world…"

Then, the verse implies that when they are hesitating between the struggle of conscience, on one side, and their worldly interests, on the other side, they appeal to some false hopes and say that they do obtain this existing interest, which is in cash, whether it is lawful or unlawful, and since the Lord is Merciful, Forgiving, He will forgive them.

"…and saying: 'It will be forgiven us'…"

This phrase shows that after committing such an action, they assumed a kind of fleeting regret and a state of extrinsic repentance. But, as the Qur'ān says, this regret and remorse of theirs had no root in them. And that was why if they found another material benefit like that, they would take it, too. [3] The verse says:

"…And if similar transitory goods were to come to them (again), they would take them, too…"

However, this part of the verse points to the bribery of some of the Jews and perverting the heavenly verses of the Turah thereby, and also forsaking

the ordinances of Allah because of the contrast of those laws with their benefits.

Therefore, next to that, the verse says:

"…Was not the covenant of the Book taken with them that they should not attribute anything to Allah except the truth?…"

If they were not acquainted with the divine verses (of the Turah) and committed such wrong actions, they might have an excuse for themselves. But, the difficulty of the event is in this fact that they had frequently seen the verses of the Turah and had understood them, yet they spoilt them and defied the command of Allah by setting them aside. The verse says:

"…And they have studied what is in it…"

At the end of the verse, the Qur'ān implies that they make mistake, and such actions and these goods will not be useful for them. The fact is that the abode of Hereafter is better for the pious. The verse says:

"…while the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who keep from evil…"

Then the Qur'ān questions them whether they have not any sense to perceive those facts that are so clear. Here is the words of the Qur'ān:

"…Have you then no sense?"

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 170

وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاَةَ إِنَّا لانُضِيعُ اَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ

170. "And those who hold fast to the Book and establish the prayer, verily We do not waste the reward of the reformers."

This verse points to another group, opposite to the above-mentioned perverted group, who not only avoid any perversion and concealing the Divine verses, but also take hold of them and practice them minutely. The Qur'ān has called this group 'the reformers' of the world, and maintains an important reward for them. Concerning them, it says that surely Allah does not waste the great reward that they will have with Him. The verse says:

"And those who hold fast to the Book and establish the prayer, verily We do not waste the reward of the reformers."

The above-mentioned verse clearly indicates that, without taking hold of the Heavenly Books and Divine commandments, the fulfilment of the true reforms in the world is impossible. This meaning emphasizes this fact, once more, that religion is not something only related to the world of super nature or to the next world.

Religion is effective in the spirit of life for all human beings. It protects the interests of all humankind and it is alongside the execution of the principles of justice, peace, tranquility and any concepts which are gathered in the vast meaning of the term 'reform'.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 171

وَإِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنوا َنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

171. "And (remember) when We plucked the mountain (and held it) above them as if it were a canopy, and they supposed it was about to fall

on them (when We told them:) 'Hold you firmly what We gave you and remember what is in it, that you may keep from evil'."

This is the last verse in this Surah which is upon the life of the Children of Israel. In this verse, the Qur'ān reminds the community of the Jews another happening. The event is both a lesson of admonition and an evidence of giving a covenant. It says:

"And (remember) when We plucked the mountain (and held it) above them as if it were a canopy…"

It was so that they imagined the mountain was nigh to fall down over them. Therefore, a shaking horror and anxiety encompassed them, thoroughly their entity, and they began weeping with supplication. The verse says:

"…and they supposed it was about to fall on them…"

It was at the same time that they were in that condition and they were told to hold firm what Allah gave them. The verse continues saying:

"…(when we told them:) 'Hold you firmly what We gave you…"

They ought to be in awe of Allah's punishment and fulfil their duty according to the covenants He has taken from them in it. The verse says:

"…and remember what is in it, that you may keep from evil'."

This means that the entire messengership of Moses (as) and other prophets, and their constant struggles and hard conflicts, as well as the grievous anxieties and laborious hardships that they tolerated, all were for the sake that the command of Allah and the principles of the truth, justice, purity, and piety be executed rather perfectly among all human beings.

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balāghah, Sermon No. 156
2. The Arabic word /xalf/ is applied for an 'impious child ', while the Arabic word /xalaf/ is applied for a ' pious child '. (Narrated from Majma'-ul-Bayān)
3. The Arabic term /'arad/ means any capital or property, but the term /'ard/ means only the money which is in cush.

Section 22: The Progeny of Adam Will Bear Witness Against Itself

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 172

وإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبكَ مِن بَنِي ءَادَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلى شَهِدْنَآ أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

172. “And (remember) when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves, (and said): ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes! We do bear witness.’ (This We did) lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Verily we were unaware of this’.”

The Qur’ānic term /ŏurriyah/ means small children, but it is often used for all the children of a person.

The circumstance of Allah’s taking covenant from the children of Adam has not been stated in this verse.

As some Islamic traditions indicate, after the creation of Adam, all his progenies came out from his back in the form of some intelligent particles and were addressed by the Lord.

They confessed to the Lordship of Allah. Then, all of them returned back to the loin and soil of Adam, in order to come into this world gradually and naturally. This world is called the world of ‘Tharr’ and that covenant is called the ‘covenant of ‘Alast’ or ‘the world of pre-existence’.

The purpose of the world of ‘Tharr’, maybe, is the same world of talents, and the covenant of innate disposition and creation.

That is, at the time of departure of Adam’s children from the loins of fathers into the wombs of mothers in the shape of sperm, which are not more than some minutes, Allah sets the talent and nature of monotheism and seeking truth in their constitution and this divine secret, as an innate sense, is settled in the institution and natural disposition of everybody.

The help of Allah reflects in their intellect in the form of a self-cognizance fact. Allah has asked them through the tongue of creation, and they have answered through the same tongue, too.

We should know that Allah has established monotheism in the innate disposition and constitution of humankind.

The verse says:

“And (remember) when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves, (and said): ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes! We do bear witness.’ (This We did) lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Verily we were unaware of this’.”

Thus, human beings can observe the sense of theism in the depth of their own selves, since they have confessed it in the world of pre-existence.

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 173-174

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَآ أَشْرَكَ ءَابَآؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِن بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ
وَكَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الاَيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

173. "Or lest you should say: 'Verily our fathers were idolaters from before and we were descendants after them (following them). Will You then destroy us for what the vain-doers did?'"

174. "And thus do We explain the Signs, and that they may return."

In this verse, the Qur'ān has pointed to another aim of this covenant. It implies that Allah has taken this covenant for the sake that they do not say that their fathers were idol-worshippers before them and when they were some children.

So, they could do nothing but following them. Therefore, they said, they should not be punished for the sins committed by some vain-doers. Here is what the verse says:

"Or lest you should say: 'Verily our fathers were idolaters from before and we were descendants after them (following them). Will You then destroy us for what the vain-doers did?'"

Admonition

A great part of the Qur'ān, which consists of many verses in different suras of it, is about the incidents happened among the early nations; such as: the events of Adam and the children of Adam, those of the people of Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Abraham, Lot, Yusuf (Joseph), Jacob, Jethro, Moses, Pharaoh and the like of them.

The aim of stating them has not been simply for referring to the history or telling some stories. They have been stated for the admonition of the servants of Allah and advising them through some exhortations in order that they become aware that how graceful and merciful Allah has been with the believers and the pious, so that He has saved them from destructions and calamities, while the people of idolatry, blasphemy, injustice and corruption have faced with many difficulties and destructions.

Thus, regarding this meaning, in the second verse of the holy verses mentioned in the above, the Qur'ān says:

"And thus do We explain the Signs, and that they may return."

The verse means that as Allah stated these verses for you, they are stated and explained for other nations, too, in order that all people reason the Truth by them and return from falsehood towards the Truth.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 175

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ

175. "And recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our signs, but he withdrew (himself) from them, and Satan pursued him, and he became one of the perverse."

The verse refers to the story of a man from the Children of Israel. At first, that man was among the believers and those who practically carried out the divine verses and sciences, but later, as a result of Satan's temptation, he went astray. In the concerning religious sources, the name of this person has been recorded 'Bal'am Bā'ūrā'.

As it has been narrated from Ali-ibn-Mūs-ar-Ridā, the eighth Imam (as), that Bal'am knew 'the Greatest Name of Allah', by which his supplication used to be answered. But finally he went to the court of Pharaoh and turned

to be an infidel, while, before that, he was one of the studious preachers of the religion of Moses (as).

The Qur'ān does not directly point out his name in the text, but it mentions his action. Imam Bāqir (as) says that his circumstance adapts to any one who prefers the low desire to the truth.[1]

Such people are found in any time and the subject is not allocated to Bal'am only. The story of Bal'am has been cited in the Turah, too.

Therefore, an aware leader should usually warn people of unexpected dangers. The verse says:

"And recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our signs…"

Whatever high a person promotes he should not become proud, since there is a probability of falling. Usually, the final result of the end of the work is important, not the beginning of it. The higher a situation is, the more dangerous it can be. The verse continues saying:

"…but he withdrew (himself) from them…"

Yes, the one who takes detached from Allah, will become the prey of Satan. The verse ends as follows:

"…and Satan pursued him, and he became one of the perverse."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 176

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ اَخْلَدَ إِلَى الاَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِاَيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

176. "And had We willed, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he clung to the earth and followed his lust. So his parable is like the parable of a dog; if you attack it, it lulls out its tongue, or if you leave it, it lulls out its tongue. Such is the parable of the people who belied Our Signs. Therefore, relate (unto them) the stories, that they may ponder."

The previous subject has been completed in this expressive verse. It implies that if Allah had wished, He could have forcedly kept him alongside the path of right with an exalted rank, by the way of those holy verses and practical sciences. The verse says:

"And had We willed, We would certainly have exalted him thereby…"

But it is certain that forcedly keeping persons alongside the path of truth does not agree with Allah's way of treatment, which is the custom of choice and free will, and it is not the sign of personality and greatness of a person. So, immediately next to it, the Qur'ān, implying that Allah left him to himself, adds:

"…but he clung to the earth and followed his lust."

Then, the Qur'ān resembles this person to a dog which, like some thirsty animals, often draws its tongue out of its mouth. The verse says:

"…So his parable is like the parable of a dog; if you attack it, it lulls out its tongue…"

As a result of attaching the intense lust and clanging to the pleasures of the material world, such a person may get a state of unlimited and endless thirst that he always goes after mammonism. This state, in him, is like the

state of a rabid dog that, because of its sickness, it has a false thirst and it never drinks to satiety.

Then, the Qur'ān implies that this parable is not allocated to this particular person, but it is for all those who reject the verses of Allah. The verse says:

"…Such is the parable of the people who belied Our Signs…"

This story should be told for them, maybe they think about it and then they take a correct way for themselves. The verse continues saying:

"…Therefore, relate (unto them) the stories, that they may ponder."

Bal'am Ba'ura, a Mammonish Scholar, Gone Astray!

A great deal of Islamic narrations and statements, as was pointed out before, indicate that the person referred to in this verse had been a man by the name of Bal'am-Bā'ūrā who lived at the time of Moses (as).

He was counted as one of the well known scholars of the Children of Israel, so that Moses used of him as an effective and strong preacher. He became so exalted in this way that his prayers before Allah were answered.

But, as a result of accepting the promises of Pharaoh and inclining to him, he went astray, thus far that he joined the camp of the opponents of Moses (as), and therefore, he lost all his spiritual ranks.

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 177-178

سَآءَ مَثَلاً الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ

مَن يَهْدِ اللهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

177. "How evil is the parable of the people who belied Our Signs, but they were doing injustice to themselves."

178. "Whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leads astray, these are the losers."

Through these two holy verses, in fact, the Qur'ān has concluded a general and common result from the story of Bal'am and other mammonish scholars. The verse says:

"How evil is the parable of the people who belied Our Signs…"

They did not do any injustice to Allah, but they used to do injustice to themselves. The verse says:

"…but they were doing injustice to themselves."

What injustice is greater than this that they gave their spiritual capitals and scientific informations, which could cause the honour of them and their societies, to the possessors of wealth and power, selling them for a little price.

But, beware that delivering from these kinds of faults and satanic ways is not possible except with the Divine assistance. Therefore, the one whom Allah guides and makes His aid the companion of his way, is the real guided one. The verse says:

"Whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided…"

And those whom Allah, as a result of their own evil deeds, leads astray, or gives them victory and success for their satanic temptations, are the real losers. The verse continues saying:

"…and whomever He leads astray, these are the losers."

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 179

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيراً مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لاَ يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لاَ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ ءَاذَانٌ لاَ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَآ أُوْلَئِكَ كَالأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَل أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

179. “Indeed We have created for Hell many jinn and humans; they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. They are as cattle, rather they are more astray. These are the heedless ones.”

The Signs of Hellish People

Through this verse and the next couple of verses, where the qualities of each group are hinted out, People have been divided into two groups. These two groups are: the hellish people, and the inhabitants of Paradise.

At first, with oath and emphasis, the Qur’ān states about the inhabitants of Hell as follows:

“Indeed We have created for Hell many jinn and humans...”

Allah has created all human beings pure and sinless, but, by means of their own evil deeds, some groups of them make themselves candidates for Hell. The end of these people is dark and inauspicious. There are some other people who make themselves candidate for Paradise. The end of such people is happiness and felicity.

After that, the verse summarizes the qualities of the hellish group in three phrases. The first quality is that:

“…they have hearts with which they do not understand…”

Their second quality is that they have clear eyes for seeing the truth but they do not observe the feature of the facts and pass by them like some blind persons. The verse says:

“…and they have eyes with which they do not see…”

Their third quality is that they have safe and sound ears, but they do not hearken to the truth and right words, and, like the deaf, they deprive themselves from hearing the divine truth. The verse says:

“…and they have ears with which they do not hear…”

In fact, they are like cattle, because the privilege of man to animals lies in vigilant thought, clear-insightedness, and the hearing ears that, unfortunately, these hellish people have lost all of them. The verse says:

“…they are as cattle…”

They are, of course, worse than cattle and more astray. The verse continues saying:

“…rather they are more astray…”

Cattle have not the talents and possibilities that human beings have. Men, with the intellect, clear-insightedness, and the hearing ears that they have, can gain all kinds of progress and development.

But, as a result of sensuality and tending toward mean things, they may leave these faculties and talents in vain. Such people are some neglectful persons, and therefore, they wander in the deviated path of life. The verse finally says:

“…These are the heedless ones.”

They are nigh to the fountain of water of life, but they are crying of thirst. The gates of felicity are open to them, but they do not even look at them.

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 180

وَلِلّهِ الاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَآئِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

180. "And to Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them, and leave those who blaspheme His names. Soon they shall be requited for what they were doing."

The Qur'ānic phrase /'asmā'ul husnā/ has been mentioned three times in the whole Qur'ān, which are: the verse under discussion, Surah Al-'Isrā', *No. 17*, *verse 11*. and Surah Tāhā, *No. 20*, *verse 8*.

All the names of Allah are beautiful, and He possesses all the Virtues and Names. Yet, in Islamic literature, emphasis has been laid on 99 Names. It has been narrated that whoever calls on Allah by these names, his prayer will be answered, if it be the will of Allah (s.w.t.).

In this holy verse, the Qur'ān points to the situation of the inhabitants of Heaven and explains their qualities.

In order that people come out of the row of the hellish persons, at first it invites them to pay a careful attention to the Beautiful Names of Allah, when it says:

"And to Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them…"

The purpose of 'the beautiful names' is the attributes of Allah which are wholly good and wholly 'beautiful'.

The objective meaning of 'calling on Allah' by the Beautiful Names is not only to utter those names simply by the tongue, and to say, for example, O' knower of the Unseen, O' Almighty, and O' the Most Merciful of all merciful, but, in fact, the purpose is that we try to settle these qualities in our selves as much as possible.

In other words, we should have His attributes and make our manner similar to that of Allah with our limited attempt.

Upon the commentary of this verse, there has been cited a tradition from Imam Sādiq (as) who has said:

"By Allah, we are the beautiful names."

This statement points to the fact that there is a strong ray from those divine attributes reflected in their beings, and that the cognition of them helps to the cognition of His Pure Essence.

Then the Qur'ān warns people to avoid perverting the Names of Allah and to leave those who blaspheme them. It says:

"…and leave those who blaspheme His names. Soon they shall be requited for what they were doing."

The objective meaning of 'blaspheming His Names', here, is that we do not pervert their pronunciations and their concepts. We also should not qualify Him with the attributes which are not suitable to Him, like the action

of the Christians who believe in Trinity, or that we adapt His attributes to His creatures.

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 181

وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَآ اُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ

181. “And of those (whom) We have created are a people who guide (others) by the Truth and establish justice therewith.”

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /’ummah/ (community), mentioned in this holy verse, is the people of Muhammad (S), who are the best community among all communities. It is also cited in the Islamic traditions, recorded by the Sunnis, that the objective meaning of the word is the adherents of Ali-ibn-Abitālib (as).

Some Islamic traditions indicate that Muslim believers will be divided into seventy three groups that only one group of them are the blessed.[2]

Therefore, the pivot of guidance and government should be but the Truth, even though the number of the advocators of the Truth and guidance may be small. The verse says:

“And of those (whom) We have created are a people who guide (others) by the Truth...”

And we must also know that those persons are worthy that, besides accepting guidance, try to establish a system of Truth. Mere cognition of the Truth is not enough, but practice and distribution is important, too. The above holy verse concludes as follows:

“…and establish justice therewith.”

Notes

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary.
2. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary; and Tafsir-ul-Burhān

Section 23: The Resurrection

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 182-183

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ

182. “And those who belie Our Signs, soon, step by step, We will draw them on from where they do not know.”

183. “And I will grant them respite. Verily My devising is strong.”

In these couple of holy verses, one of the punishments of Allah (s.w.t) about many of the arrogant sinners has been stated which will be done upon them in the form of a ‘gradual punishment’.

The derivation of the Arabic term /’istidrāj/ (consign to a gradual punishment) has been used in the Qur’ān in two verses. One of them is the verse under discussion, and the other is in Surah Al-Qalam, *No. 68*, *verse 44*, both of which are about the deniers of the Divine verses. Through the first verse, concerning the punishment of these beliers, whose lives will be interlaced, Allah says:

“And those who belie Our Signs, soon, step by step, We will draw them on from where they do not know.”

The same meaning is emphasized in the second verse. It implies that it is not such that Allah punishes these people at once and with precipitation. But He respites them sufficiently for admonishment and awareness.

And, when they do not attend it, He will entangle them with some difficulties, because only those haste that are powerless and fear that they miss opportunities. The verse says:

“And I will grant them respite…”

But, Allah’s plots and punishments are so strong and exact that none is able to flee from them. The verse says:

“…Verily My devising is indeed strong.”

This verse warns all sinners that they should take the postponement of Divine punishment as a reason neither for their own sanctity and uprightness, nor for the weakness and inability of Allah.

They should not consider that the bounties and favours they enjoy are the signs of their nearness to Allah. It may happen that these bounties and victories that they receive become the preparation of the gradual punishment of Allah.

The Lord grants them abundant favours and, by respiting them, He promotes them, but finally, He leaves them to fall down so intensively that there remains no trace from them and their whole entity and their history will be completely interlaced.

It is narrated from Imam Sādiq (as) who, upon the commentary of this verse, said:

“The purpose of this verse is a sinful person whom Allah gives a bounty and he counts it for his goodness, while it causes him to be neglectful of seeking forgiveness for the sin he has committed.”[1]

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 184

اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِم مِن جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

184. "Have they not reflected that there is no madness in their companion (the Prophet of Islam)? He is naught but a plain warner."

Occasion of Revelation

The Islamic commentators have mentioned the following meanings upon the occasion of revelation of this verse in their commentary books:

When the Prophet (S) was living in Mecca, one night he went upon Safā Mountain and invited people to monotheism. He called to all people, and to the whole tribes of Quraysh in particular, and told them to beware the punishment of Allah.

He continued speaking until late at night. The local idol-worshppers of Mecca said that their companion had become mad since he was shouting the whole night until morning. At that moment the above-mentioned verse was revealed and gave them a knockdown answer.[2]

In this verse, at first, Allah answers the vain statement of the idol-worshippers by which they said the Prophet (S) was mad. The Qur'ān says whether they did not contemplate to know that their companion (the Prophet) had no sign of madness. Here is the answer of Allah:

"Have they not reflected that there is no madness in their companion (the Prophet of Islam)?…"

He (Muhammad) (S) had been living among them for more than forty years. They were acquainted with his thought, intellect, and management. Then, how did they suddenly accused him like that? Then, following to that, the Qur'ān says that he (S) is only a plain warner that advises his society to beware the dangers they are faced with. The verse says:

"He is naught but a plain warner."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 185

أَوَ لَمْ يَنظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ الله مِن شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَن يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

185. "Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever Allah has created, and that maybe their term has already drawn near? Then in what other words after this will they believe?"

In order to complete the previous statement, this verse invites them to study the world of existence, including the heavens and the earth. The verse says:

"Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever Allah has created…"

This contemplation is for that they know that this vast world of existence, with its amazing systematic order, has not been created in vain. There has surely been a certain goal in it, and the invitation of the Prophet (S), in fact, has been in pursuance of the same goal of creation, i.e., the development and training of humankind.

Then, for the sake that they be awakened from the sleep of negligence, the Qur'ān implies whether they have not ponder on this matter that the end of their lives might be near.

So, if they do not believe today, and do not accept the invitation of this Messenger to the revealed Qur'ān with those numerous clear signs, which words will there be after this that they believe in? The verse says:

"…and that maybe their term has already drawn near? Then in what other words after this will they believe?"

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 186

مَن يُضْلِلِ الله فَلا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

186. "Whomever Allah leads astray there is no guide for him, and He will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."

At last, the statement upon the sinners is concluded in this verse as such that those whom Allah leads astray they will have no guide and Allah leaves such people bewildered in their transgression. This is the result of their continuous indecent deeds. The verse says:

"Whomever Allah leads astray there is no guide for him, and He will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."

Such kind of meanings has been stated particularly upon the group of sinners who zealously and arrogantly show obstinacy against the rights and facts. They treat such, as if a curtain has fallen over their eyes, ears, and hearts. These dark curtains are the result of their own deeds, and this is the meaning of the phrase 'Allah leads astray'.

يَسْئَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ اَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِندَ رَبِّي لا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَآ إِلاَّ هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ لاَ تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلاَّ بَغْتَةً يَسْئَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّه وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 187

187. "They ask you about the Hour (of Resurrection) when it will set in. Say: 'Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly'. They ask you, as if you were well-informed of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with Allah, but most people do not know'."

The infidels of Quraysh sent a number of persons to the scholars of the Jews in order to learn some difficult questions so that when they would ask them from the Prophet (S) he could not give any answer to them and they might condemn him. One of these questions was that they asked about the exact time of the occurrence of Resurrection.

The Qur'ānic term /'ayyān/, mentioned in this verse, has been used for asking the time. The Arabic word /assā'ah/ refers to the beginning of Resurrection, while the word /al-qiyāmah/ means the time of reckoning in Hereafter when the rewards and retributions will be given.[3]

The Arabic term /mursā/ means 'that which is fixed with regard to time or place'. Thus the Qur'ānic phrase /jibāl-un-rāsiyāt/ means: 'fixed and firm mountains'.

The word /haffiyy/, used in the verse, means a constant researcher. This epithet, concerning to the Prophet (S), means as if he (S) had completely researched the time of the occurrence of Resurrection Day and had asked it from Allah and knew it well.

The idea of the heaviness of the Hereafter in 'the heavens and the earth', maybe, refers to the destruction of celestial globes, darkening of the sun, revolution of the earth, etc.

However, the lack of knowledge about the features and details of Hereafter does not harm the principal of the belief in Resurrection. No one is aware of the time and the place of his death, but this situation can not be taken as a reason for denying the principal of death. The verse says:

"They ask you about the Hour (of Resurrection) when it will set in. Say: 'Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly'. They ask you, as if you were well-informed of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with Allah, but most people do not know'."

Once the Holy Prophet (S) was asked about the reappearance and coming out of Hadrat Ghā'im (as). He answered:

"His example is like the time (of Resurrection)."

This statement means that the time of his reappearance resembles the time of Resurrection. Then, he (S) recited this verse:

"…None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly'…"[4]

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 188

قُل لاَ اَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعاً وَلا ضَرّاً إِلاَّ مَا شَآءَ الله وَلَوْ كُنتُ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لاَسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السوءُ إِنْ اَنَاء إِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

188. "Say: 'I own for my self neither any benefit nor harm except what Allah may please; and had I known the Unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no evil would have touched me. I am not but a warner and a giver of glad tidings for a people who believe'."

Occasion of Revelation

It happened that one day some people of Mecca came to the Prophet (S) and said that if he had communication with the Lord, would He inform him of the future expensiveness and cheapness of goods so that thereby he could supply whatever was beneficial and ward off whatever was harmful; or would He aware him of drought or of different regions with abundant water so that he could move from dry provinces into blissful lands? At this time, the verse was revealed and answered them.

Only Allah Knows the Unseen

In the previous verse, it was said that no one knows the time of Resurrection but Allah (s.w.t.). Through this verse, now, the lack of knowledge of Unseen among persons, in general, is referred to.[5]

By the first sentence of the verse, Allah commands His Messenger, Muhammad (S), thus:

"Say: 'I own for my self neither any benefit nor harm except what Allah may please..."

All powers existed in the world come from the source of Allah, the Exalted, and no person has originally any power from his own self. It is He Who has granted these abilities to human beings.

After stating this matter, the Qur'ān points to another important question which was under the demand of a group of people. Allah commands His Messenger (S) to say that he was not cognizant of the Unseen and its secrets. In this regard, the verse continues saying:

"…and had I known the Unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no evil would have touched me…"

Then, the real position of the Prophet (S) and his Messengership has been pointed out through a short and explicit sentence, as follows:

"…I am not but a warner and a giver of glad tidings for a people who believe'."

Notes

1. Tafsir-us-Sāfi, p. 256
2. Tafsir-us-Sāfi, p. 257
3. Tafsir-i-Marāqi.
4. Narrated by Imam Ridā (as), cited in Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn.
5. The commentators of the Qur'ān has cited a great deal of matters about both this verse and ' the knowledge of Unseen ' in their commentary books.

Section 24: The Conclusive Warnings Against Polytheism

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 189

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِن نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلاً خَفِيفاً فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّآ اَثْقَلَت دَعَوَا اللَّه رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ ءَاتَيْتَنَا صَالِحاً لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

189. “He it is Who created you from a single soul, and of the same (kind) did He make his mate, that he might take rest in her. So when he covered her, she bore a light burden and passed (sometime) with it. Then when she grew heavy, they both invoked Allah, their Lord: ‘If you give us a righteous son, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones’.”

Another part of the circumstances of the pagans and the way of their thinking and the answer to their mistakes are hinted to here. And, since the former verses referred to the Unity of Divine Acts, the substitutive verses are counted as their complement. At first, it says:

“He it is Who created you from a single soul, and of the same (kind) did He make his mate, that he might take rest in her…”

The couple had a pleasant life with each other, but when the spouse had sexual intercourse with his wife, she bore a light burden such that, at the beginning, that burden did not bother her and she could easily continue performing her affairs. The verse says:

“…So when he covered her, she bore a light burden and passed (sometime) with it…”

Later, by passing some days and nights, her burden gradually grew heavier. When she became heavy, the couple expected a child and hoped that Allah would grant them a righteous child. The verse says:

“…Then when she grew heavy, they both invoked Allah, their Lord…”

Therefore, they both invoked their Lord as follows:

“…‘If you give us a righteous son, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones’.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 190-191

فَلَمَّآ ءَاتَاهُمَا صَالِحاً جَعَلاَ لَهُ شُرَكَآءَ فِيمَآ ءَاتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى الله عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

اَيُشْرِكُونَ مَالا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

190. “But when He gave them a righteous son, they (Adam’s children) ascribed partners to Him in what He had given them. But Exalted is Allah above any partners that they ascribe (to Him).”

191. “Do they ascribe (to Him) partners that create nothing and themselves are created?”

Allah gave Adam and Eve the safe and sound child that they had asked for, but thereafter the children of Adam and Eve ascribed partners to Allah. The Qur’ānic phrase ‘they ascribed partners to Him’ means ‘the children of the couple ascribed partners to Him’. The verse says:

“But when He gave them a righteous son, they (Adam’s children) ascribed partners to Him in what He had given them. But Exalted is Allah above any partners that they ascribe (to Him).”

Then, the second verse questions whether they ascribe some creatures as partners to Allah that not only they cannot create anything but also they themselves are created, since the fact is that the worshippers have produced those partners, therefore, they are more incapable and incompetent than the worshippers. The verse says:

"Do they ascribe (to Him) partners that create nothing and themselves are created?"

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 192-193

وَلا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْراً وَلآ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنصُرُونَ

وإِن تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لا يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدَعَوْتُمُوهُمْ اَمْ أَنتُمْ صَامِتُونَ

192. "And they can neither help them nor help themselves."

193. "And if you invite them unto guidance, they will not follow you; it is the same to you whether you invite them or whether you are silent."

These created things are able to help neither the worshippers nor themselves to ward off the evil events that happen against them. This verse continues the meaning of the previous verse by saying:

"And they can neither help them nor help themselves."

Thus, if you invite the objects of worship to what is useful for their guidance, or you ask them to guide you, they will not pursue your purpose and they do not answer you as Allah answers you. The verse says:

"And if you invite them unto guidance, they will not follow you..."

Whether you invite them or you be silent for inviting them, it is the same to you, because there is not any rescue and felicity for them, and they are unable to do anything. It says:

"…it is the same to you whether you invite them or whether you are silent."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 194

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّه عِبَادٌ اَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

194. "Verily those whom you call upon other than Allah are creatures like your own selves. So call on them, then they should answer you if you are truthful."

The objective meaning of the Arabic term /'ibād/ (worshipping creatures) may be the creatures or men who are taken as deities, like Jesus (as) or the angels. Or, the purpose may be the very idols which the idol-worshippers imagine as 'gods'.

Therefore, worshipping needs both reason and privilege. Worshipping creatures or human beings, like our own selves, has neither any reason nor any privilege. The verse says:

"Verily those whom you call upon other than Allah are creatures like your own selves…"

Another matter is the silence of deities which itself is the sign of their inability and incompetence.

Besides, a deity must promote its servant, not to stop him. The verse continues saying:

"…So call on them, then they should answer you if you are truthful."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 195

اَلَهُمْ اَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَآ اَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَآ اَمْ لَهُمْ اَعْيُنٌ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَآ اَمْ لَهُمْ ءَاذَانٌ
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلِ ادْعُوا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُونِ فَلاَ تُنظِرُونِ

195. "Have they feet with which they walk? Or, have they hands with which they hold (firmly)? Or, have they eyes with which they see? Or, have they ears with which they hear? Say (O' Prophet!): 'Call your associates, then contrive against me and give me no respite'."

The Arabic term /yabtiŝūn/ is derived from /bataŝa/ which means 'to take or seize by force'.

This meaning has been used as a reprimand upon the pagans who take some partners for Allah. These partners are more incapable than they themselves, since they can walk, see, hear and act, but those lifeless statues do not have these abilities, and if they were wished to do something they would be unable. So, why do the idol-worshippers, as a notion, adore them?

Strange to say, pagans do not accept the Prophet (S) since he says he is a human as they are, but they are convinced with idols which are not like them even, or they are lower than them. The verse says:

"Have they feet with which they walk? Or, have they hands with which they hold (firmly)? Or, have they eyes with which they see? Or, have they ears with which they hear? Say (O' Prophet!): 'Call your associates, then contrive against me and give me no respite'."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 196

إِنَّ وَلِيِّيَ الله الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلّى الصَّالِحِينَ

196. "Verily my guardian is Allah Who sent down the Book, and He guards the righteous."

Following the former verse which, addressing pagans, said they themselves and their idols could not harm the Prophet (S) the least thing, this verse refers to its reason, and says:

"Verily my guardian is Allah Who sent down the Book…"

It is not only the Prophet's self that He guards but He also supports and guards all the good doers and the righteous, and His grace and favour encompass them. The verse concludes as follows:

"…and He guards the righteous."

Surah al-'Araf - Verses 197-198

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لاَيَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلاَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنصُرُونَ
وإِن تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لايَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لا يُبْصِرُونَ

197. "And those whom you call upon other than Him can neither help you, nor help themselves."

198. "And if you call them to guidance, they do not hear; and you see them looking towards you, but they do not see."

The verse implies that the idols and deities of pagans are not able to help them or defend them. They are also incapable even to help their own selves.

This meaning has been repeated here again, because in previous verse, the purpose was to premand the idol-worshippers, while here the purpose is to discriminate between Allah (s.w.t.) and something which is not adorable.

It seems that the Prophet of Islam (S) says that his Deity helps him but their deities help neither them nor their own selves. The verse says:

"And those whom you call upon other than Him can neither help you, nor help themselves."

The second verse indicates that if you call the idols to guidance and rectitude, they do not hear your invitation. That is, if you call idolaters to the upright religion, they do not hear you to follow. The verse says:

"And if you call them to guidance, they do not hear..."

The verse, addressing idol worshippers, implies that they have made the idols in a shape that they gaze them, but they do not see anything. This looking, of course, is metaphorical, since an inanimate thing cannot look at something. The verse continues saying:

"…and you see them looking towards you, but they do not see."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 199

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

199. "Keep to forgiveness and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant."

Here, the Qur'ān, in a very short and interesting way, states the circumstances of leadership, preaching, and guiding people. It also corresponds with the previous verses which referred to the theme of the propagation of pagans.

At first, addressing the Prophet (S), the verse points to three parts of the duties of leaders and preachers. It begins telling the Holy Prophet (S) not to be strict with people and to accept their excuses; and to avoid demanding them anything beyond their ability. However, he should conciliate people. The verse says:

"Keep to forgiveness…"

The second command is that he (S) should enjoin people to do good deeds and what wisdom approves as worthy achievements, and Allah has introduced them as good things. The verse says:

"…and enjoin kindness…"

In the third stage, it commands him to have patience and endurance against the ignorant people without having any dispute with them. The verse says:

"…and turn away from the ignorant."

In the course of their activities, the leaders and preachers may face with some fanatic, obstinate, ignorant and unaware persons, or some people whose level of thought and morals are very low. Such people might abuse them, accuse them, and put them into trouble.

Therefore, the way of solving this difficulty is not disputing with such ignorant people. The best way is to tolerate them with patience and ignoring these kinds of actions of theirs. Experience has shown that this way is better to be paved for awakening the ignorant and quenching the fire of their anger, envy, and bigotry.

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 200

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

200. “And if a temptation from Satan afflicts you, then seek refuge in Allah; surely He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

There is another command in this verse which forms the fourth duty of the Islamic leaders and preachers. They should be careful that on their way usually the satanic temptations, in the form of social position, wealth, lust and the like of them, attract their attention. The command of the Qur’ān is as follows:

“And if a temptation from Satan afflicts you, then seek refuge in Allah; surely He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verses 201-202

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُم مُبْصِرُونَ

وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدونَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لا يُقْصِرُونَ

201. “Verily, those who keep from evil, when a visitation from Satan afflicts them they become mindful. Then behold, they see (aright).”

202. “And their brethren draw them into perverseness, and they do not stop short.”

Predominance upon the temptations of Satan is stated in this verse. It implies that when the satanic temptations surround the pious ones, they remember Allah, the All-Mighty and the Glorious, and His endless bounties, and that committing sin brings forth some inauspicious results for them with the painful retributions of Allah.

At this time, the dark clouds of evil temptations will get apart from their hearts (minds) and they clearly see the path of truth, and then they choose it. The verse says:

“Verily, those who keep from evil, when a visitation from Satan afflicts them they become mindful. Then behold, they see (aright).”

As the above verse points out, the pious ones can relieve themselves from the grasps of the temptations of Satan under the light of the remembrance of Allah. But, those who are stained with sin, and are counted as brethren of Satan, are captured in his net.

In this regard, the second verse mentioned in the above, implies that the brethren of Satans ceaselessly draw the immoral persons forward into aberration and they not only do not stop doing that, but also constantly continue their cruel attacks. The verse says:

“And their brethren draw them into perverseness, and they do not stop short.”

Yes, Satans follow the track of the believing persons and the pious ones. They do not stop turning round them in order to delude them.

The satanic temptations and mental suggestions go everywhere, and like microbes, which seek for the weak bodies they also seek for those whose faiths are weak to influence in them.

“…when a visitation from Satan afflicts them…”

The temptations of Satans sometimes act from a distance. Surah Tāhā, *No. 20*, verse *120* says:

"But Satan whispered unto him…".

It is sometimes done through penetrating into men's soul and spirit. Surah An-Nās, No. *114*, *verse 5* says:

"Who whispers into the breasts (hearts) of the people."

It sometimes works by means of companionship. Surah Az-Zukhruf, *No. 43*, *verse 36* says:

"…and he shall be his close companion."

And, sometimes it is by means of turning round and affliction. This case is referred to in the current verse where it says:

"…when a visitation from Satan afflicts them…".

It may happens that sometimes the religious scholars, trainees, and those who try to make peace might be suspiciously visited with the purpose that a particular line of thought be inspired upon them. Therefore, they must be careful not to incline toward the desires of the enemy, and they should refuge Allah.

The remembrance of Allah gives insight to man and keeps him safe from evil temptations. The verse says:

"…They become mindful…"

Correct belief is very important. If a society becomes pure and pious from the point of morals, politics, economy, and army, the communications and hauntings of satanic persons can not affect them.

Allah takes the pious ones and the good doers under His guardianship, but the impious persons will be encompassed with the satanic brotherhood.

"And their brethren…"

The final word of the verse is that there is no finite or limitation for the way of perversion, and Satan has no pity in casting aberration upon the believers. The verse says:

"And their brethren draw them into perverseness, and they do not stop short."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 203

وإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِم بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَتَّبِعُ مَايُوحَى إِلَيَّ مِن رَبِّي هَذَا بَصَآئِرُ مِن رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

203. "And when you do not bring them a sign, they say: 'Why do you not choose one?' Say: 'I follow only what is revealed to me from my Lord. This (Qur'ān) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe'."

The Arabic word /'ijtibā'/ is derived from the root /jibāyat/ which originally means 'to store water in a pound'. This term is also used for 'collecting taxes'. Therefore, any gathering of chosen things has been called /'ijtibā'/, in the Arabic language.

It happened that, as a result of delay in revelation, the recitation was ceased for several days. Some of the disbelievers told the Prophet (S) why he had not chosen a verse to proclaim. Or, maybe the meaning of the verse is that they said why he did not choose the miracle they had asked him to bring and that he brought another miracle which was not according to their taste.

However, infidels are often the seekers of pretexts. They considered the verses of the Qur'ān which were revealed to the Prophet (S) as some chosen material, not the Divine revelations.

The verse says:

"And when you do not bring them a sign, they say: 'Why do you not choose one?' Say: 'I follow only what is revealed to me from my Lord…"

A godly leader should not be affected by some pretexts or undue wants, but he must express his subject matter clearly and decisively.

Leadership and guidance should be based upon insight. Therefore, the Qur'ān is a Book of both mental knowledge and insight, and also a guidance of practical movement. But only the possessors of Faith can enjoy this kind of guidance, and those blind-hearted people who are aloof from the insight and guidance of Allah, are also deprived from His mercy.

The verse continues saying:

"…This (Qur'ān) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe'."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 204

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْءَانُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

204. "And when the Qur'ān is recited, then listen to it and be silent, so that mercy may be shown to you."

The Islamic jurisprudents do not give decree upon the act of keeping silence to be absolutely obligatory, except in prayer. This verse emphasizes that when the Qur'ān is being recited, from the point of courtesy, the audience ought to keep silence and listen to the recitation of the verses.

It happened that Hazrat Ali (as) was establishing prayers and a hypocrite began reciting the Qur'ān loudly. Ali (as) kept silence and after that he continued reciting the rest of the Surah.

The Arabic term /'insāt/ philologically means to be silent in order to listen.

Thus, the Qur'ān, which is a means of insight and mercy, should be politely listened to when it is being recited. The verse says:

"And when the Qur'ān is recited, then listen to it and be silent…"

The sound of the recitation of the Qur'ān should pass through the ears and affects on the heart (mind). In this case the person may be shown the divine mercy to. The verse concludes as follows:

"…so that mercy may be shown to you."

Surah al-'Araf - Verse 205

وَاذْكُر رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرعاً وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ والآصَالِ وَلا تَكُن مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

205. "And remember your Lord within your self in humility and awe; without being loud of voice, in the morning and the evening, and do not be of the heedless ones."

The discipline of the recitation of the Qur'ān was referred to in the previous verse. Now, here in this verse, the discipline of the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.) and supplication is dealt with.

The Arabic term /’āsāl/ is the plural form of the term /’asil/, which means ‘around the time of sunset, or evening’.

Some of the commentators have rendered the holy term /ðikr/ (remembrance), mentioned here in this verse, into the statutory prayers’.

The Qur’ān admires not only the verbal remembrance of Allah(s.w.t.), but also the heartily and innate remembrance of His Essence.

The Lordship of Allah is permanent, then His remembrance should be maintained ceaselessly, too. The verse says:

“And remember your Lord within your self…”

That remembrance is spiritually helpful for the believers which is performed amorously and touchingly every morning and evening. In this concern, the verse says:

“…in humility and awe...”

This meaning should be noted that the divine prophets must also ceaselessly remember Allah, still less the others.

The phrase ‘in the morning and the evening’ means ‘at the beginning of an action and at the time of making decision’ and also when we come to a conclusion, we ought to remember Allah.

“…in the morning and the evening…”

The remembrance of Allah removes negligence when it is done without any pretence and shouting, otherwise it will become itself a kind of amusement and negligence. The verse says:

“…without being loud of voice, in the morning and the evening, and do not be of the heedless ones.”

Surah al-‘Araf - Verse 206

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لاَيَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ

206. “Verily those who are (stationed) near your Lord do not disdain to worship Him, and they glorify Him and prostrate for Him.”

It is probable that the phrase “…those who are (stationed) near your Lord…” encompasses both the angels and the pious servants of Allah who connect His Essence and feel themselves at His presence.

Be not proud of your worship, for Allah has some angels that are always in the state of worshipping.

“Verily those who are (stationed) near your Lord…”

The worst kind of arrogance is ‘disobedience and arrogance before Allah’ by abandoning His worship.

It is certain that an arrogant person will never reach the rank of being stationed near to Allah. We must be humble before Allah (s.w.t.), and we ought to be attentive to His purification, too. We must specialize our prostrations for Him alone. The verse continues saying:

“…do not disdain to worship Him, and they glorify Him and prostrate for Him.”

Surah Al-Anfal, Chapter 8

No. 8 (75 verses)

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Anfal contains seventy five verses. This Surah has been revealed in Medina, (except its six verses). Its revelation occurred after the revelation of Surah Al-Baqarah.

There are some lessons in this Surah concerning the history of Divine prophets and their followers, and also the manner of the Prophet of Islam (S) in relation with Muslims.

There are several subjects referred to in this Surah, such as: Treasury of the Muslims, things taken as spoils of war, the Battle of Badr, the ordinances of Holy Struggle, the night when the Prophet (S) was decided to be snabed in his bed and Ali (as) laid in the couch of him (Laylat-ul-Mabit), and the qualities of the true believers.

Most of the verses of this Surah are about the Battle of Badr. It was the first war of Muslims against the disbelievers. This war happened after thirteen years of Muslims' patience. In this war they enjoyed the Divine helps and victory. That is why this Surah has also been entitled 'Surah Badr'.

Besides stating the affairs of the Battle of Badr, some specialties of the virtuous soldiers against the enemies of Truth are stated in this holy Surah.

The Virtue of Recitation of the Surah

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"The one who recites Surah Al-'Anfal and Surah Al- Barā'at (with attention to their meanings and their warnings) every month, will he not be involved with hypocrisy at all and will be among the true followers of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as)…"

Section 1: The Battle of Badr

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِن كُنتُم مؤْمِنِينَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "They ask you about 'Anfal'. Say: 'Anfal', belong to Allah and the Messenger; so be in awe of Allah, and set aright the relations between yourselves, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you do believe'."

The Arabic word /su' al (question) and its derivations have been mentioned about *130* times in the Qur'an, where the Arabic phrase /yas' alunaka/ (they ask you) is found in its 15 occurrences.

The Arabic term /' anfal/ is the plural form of /nafl/ with the sense of 'excessive' and 'remission'. A gracious man who remits very much is called in Arabic /nufil/.The progeny which was remitted to Abraham (as) has been counted as a superervogation. The Qur'an says:

"And We gave him Isac, and Jacob, as a further gift…" (Surah Al-'Anbiya, No. 21, verse 72).

In technical terminology of the Islamic jurisprudence, the meaning of the Arabic word 'anfal' encompasses: natural resources' public wealth, the spoils of war, the wealth whose owner is unknown, like a land whose owner has left it out, the properties of the heirless dead, forests, valleys, reed-beds, unprofitable lands, mines, and so on.

According to what the history denotes, when the Battle of Badr was ended, there remained some spoils of war for the Muslims. The opinions were divided that what should be done with the spoils, to whom they belonged, and who were the first that had precedence.

Then, the Prophet of Allah (S) himself began dividing the spoils of the war. He gave them to all concerning persons justly and equally in order to remove the undue discriminations of the Age of Ignorance, and to support the oppressed, though some individuals were annoyed of that equality.

Since the Surah is wholly about the Battle of Badr, this verse refers to the spoils of war, too, but it does not exclusively belong to it.[1]

Explanations

1- Public wealth should be in the authority of the most sacred and the most beloved persons.

"They ask you about 'Anfal'. Say: 'Anfal' belong to Allah and the Messenger..."

2- An Islamic system, or an Islamic government, needs an economical support, and 'Anfal' are considered as this support.

3- In an Islamic Community, the source of answering and stating all the public questions and economical affairs is the divine leader. In the societies before Islam, the method of dividing spoils of war was arranged upon the basis of some undue discrimination.

Therefore, in the Battle of Badr, which was the first occasion where the Muslims obtained some spoils of war, they asked this question from the Messenger of Allah (S).

4- In Islam, there are laws for everything, even for the unprofitable deserts.

5- Whatever the Messenger of Allah (S) spends is around the pivot of the divine aims:

"...the 'Anfal' belong to Allah and the Messenger..."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The share of Allah is spent under the control of the Messenger of Allah (S)."

6- The protection of public wealth needs Purity and piety. The verse continues saying:

"...so be in awe of Allah..."

7- To observe the unity and to make peace between people are obligatory for all believers. The Qur'an says:

"...and set aright the relations between yourselves..."

8- Belief not only exists in the heart, but also has an outward manifestation and practical obedience. The verse says:

"...and obey Allah and His Messenger if you do believe'."

9- Only taking part in fight is not the sign of Faith. It's necessary conditions are also to give up hope unto the spoils of war, and observing brotherhood and submission before the divine leader.

"...if you do believe."

10. Some persons may pass the examination of giving soul by attending the Holy Struggle, but sometimes they fail in the trial of spending wealth and in the trial of division of the spoils of war as well. For, the main principal in the Holy Struggle is the triumph of the Truth against the falsehood. Then, the question of 'the spoils of war' is of the secondary importance.

11- The person who wishes and intends to improve his society must himself be of the pious ones:

"...So be in awe of Allah and set aright..."

Basically, among the most important actions in Islam are reconciliation, creation of good relation, wiping out the annoyances and enmities and changing them into sincerity and friendship.

This subject has been taken so important in the Islamic teachings that it has been introduced as one of the most exalted practices.

When Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) was in the bed of martyrdom, as his last testaments to his children, he said:

"Verily I heard from your ancestor, the Prophet (S) who said: 'Reconciliation is better than the kinds of recommended prayer and fasting'."[2]

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the reward of reconciliation between people is much more than that of the recommended prayer and fasting. Imam Sadiq (as) told Mufaddal:

"If there happens a conflict between two persons of our followers, spend out of my wealth and produce reconciliation between them."[3]

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 2-3

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

2. "Verily believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His Signs are recited to them, it increases them in faith, and in their Lord (alone) do they trust."

3. "Those who keep up prayer, and spend (benevolently) out of what We have provided them."

The true believers are those who are in owe of Allah (s.w.t) because of His glorification and veneration. That is, when the speech is delivered upon Allah's justice, retribution, and power, they dread, and when the speech is about His bounties, kindnesses, graces, and rewards, they feel peace in themselves; as the Qur'an says:

"... now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28).

Thus, there is no contrast between these two verses, because fear relates to the remembrance of Allah's retribution and peace, but peace and rest relates to the remembrance of Allah's forgiveness and kindness.

Moreover, whenever a believer remembers the Divine bounties and forgiveness of Allah, he obtains a favorable opinion and he rests, but when he remembers his own sins, he becomes inconvenient and anxious. The verse says:

"Verily believers are only those who, when Allah is mention, their hearts quake..."

The Arabic term /wajila/ means 'to fear, apprehend' which is accompanied with sadness.

Then the verse continues saying:

"...and when His Signs are recited to them, it increases them in faith..."

In that circumstance, their faith and their certainty will be increased.

"...and in their Lord (alone) do they trust."

Such people trust in Allah in any conditions and they rely on Him for the affairs of their lives.

Again, believers are those who establish prayer (which is the manifestation of the relation with Allah) and spend in charity and benevolently out of what Allah has given them as their sustenance.

The phrase 'they keep up prayer' mentioned in the verse, instead of saying 'they recite prayer', points to this fact that not only they themselves keep up prayer but also they behave so that this firm relation with Allah will be kept always and everywhere. Here is the verse:

"Those who keep up prayer, and spend (benevolently) out of what We have provided them."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 4

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

4. "These are the believers in truth; they have ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness, and a noble sustenance."

Allah, the Exalted, implies that those who have such qualities are indeed eligible to be called 'believers'. The verse says:

"These are the believers in truth; they have ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness, and a noble sustenance."

That is, these persons have some high ranks and degrees of honor in Heaven, and the Lord will provide them with His forgiveness and a great and permanent sustenance. That is why some commentators have said that 'a noble sustenance' means a permanent sustenance which is vast and pure, and is given them without any reproach. In Hereafter, this noble sustenance will be the eternal Heaven.

By the way, it should be said that these qualities belong to some distinguished and notable believers, not to the totality of the believers. As if it wants to say that the distinguished and chosen believers are those who have these qualities.

Thus, there is no problem that believing persons be equal from the point of Faith, but different from the point of worship. The evidence of this meaning is that the heartily fear is not enjoined, but it is recommended.

The prayer and spending out of sustenance, mentioned in the previous holy verse, are irrespective of the obligatory and recommended ones. Then, it is clear that the verses refer to some distinguished and chosen believers, not to all of the believers.

However, Faith should be accompanied with love and piety; and a humble heart is the source of virtues. It is the heart which trembles and quakes first, and, thereafter, the increase of Faith, keeping up prayer and trusting in Allah come forth.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 5

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَارِهُونَ

5. "Just as your Lord caused you to go forth from your house with the truth, through a party of the believers were certainly averse (to it)."

As the scarcity of forces and possibilities caused some early Muslims to feel difficult and heavy to go to Holy War against the enemy, dividing the spoils of the Battle of Badr was heavy, too. These annoyances pass away, of course, The Messenger of Allah. However, must think of the real interests and the fulfillment of Allah's command, else, the dislike of this and that always exists.

The verse says:

"Just as your Lord caused you to go forth from your house with the truth, through a party of the believers were certainly averse (to it)."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 6

يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَمَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ

6. *"They dispute with you about the truth after it became clear, as if they see they are being driven unto death. "*

The dispute of a group of Muslims with the Prophet (S) was alongside the Battle of Badr. They said that since they had not enough possibilities

and troops, they could go out for taking possession of the properties of the merchants of Quraysh, not for fighting against the forces of Quraysh.

Some of them delivered some reasons for the lack of conflict, while some others, like Miqdad, said that they would not treat like the people of Moses (as), sitting and saying that you go for fighting, but they themselves were fighters and whatever the Prophet (S) commanded they would accept.

But, in this course, the coward persons, who were not ready to fight, disputed with the Prophet (S).

However, not the whole companions of the Prophet (S) were just and obedient to the command of the Prophet (S) as the verse says:

"They dispute with you about the truth after it became clear..."

In order to flee from taking part in fight, always the coward and self-indulgent persons attack to dispute and justification, and they seek for excuses.

Therefore, if the spirits end motives are not safe and sound, the march of such soldiers towards fight is not more than carrying corpse. The verse says:

"...as if they see they are being driven unto death."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 7

وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ

7. "And (remember) when Allah promised you one of the two parties should be yours, and you loved that the one unarmed should be yours; but Allah desires to verify the truth by His words and to cut off the roots of infidels."

The Arabic term /saukat/ means 'thorn and bayonet', and it is the symbol of an armed group. The objective of the Qur'anic phrase /qayra oati-sh-saukat/ is the very unarmed merchants. The verse says:

"And (remember) when Allah promised you one of the two parties should be yours, and you loved that the one unarmed should be yours..."

It happened that once Abu Sufyan, as the chief of a commercial caravan, set out to travel. Before that, tile pagans of Mecca had confiscated the properties of the immigrant Muslims. So in order to weaken the power of the pagans and to recompense that transgression, the Prophet (S) made some Muslims prepared to attack the commercial caravan.

Abu Sufyan was informed of the matter and immediately made the people of Mecca aware of it. There were gathered about one thousand equipped fighters to defend that commercial group which consisted of forty people.

In the desert, at a place located between Mecca and Medina, three groups met face to face, (Muslims, the pagan troops, and the merchants). In spite of the fact that Muslims had not come out with the aim of fighting and they had not any martial equipment with them, but Allah assisted them with some unseen helps and, finally, the Muslims won the battle.

In the Battle of Badr, which occurred on seventeenth of Ramadhan in the second year of Hijrat, the numbers of Muslims were *313* strivers while the number of pagans was thrice as much they were, where Abujahl and seventy

other pagans were killed, and, also, seventy pagans, together with him, were taken as captives.

Thus, sometimes the Divine Will may be fulfilled by the (hands of the believers, and the fact is that the remembrance of the divine helps can be a factor in strengthening the Faith.

We must also know that the victory of the truth over falsehood is more magnificent than the economical income, and triumph is not only that which comes forth with some fighters and war equipments, the main factor is Allah's Will.

So, the aim of Holy Struggle in Islam is the manifestation of the truth and destruction of falsehood. And, it also should be known that the manifestation of the truth can be done by means of the Divine Statements, the Divine saints, and Allah's laws, agents and ways of treatment.

Therefore, victory and honor may be obtained under the shade of Holy Struggle and (self -sacrifice, not with political discussions and collusions; which are performed by the help of deceits and trickeries. The verse says:

"...but Allah desires to verify the truth by His words and to cut off the roots of infidels."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 8

لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

8. "That He might verify the truth and bring vanity to naught, though the guilty were averse (to it)."

This verse works as the most important encouragement for Muslims. The Divine promises are not for the sake of personal material interests of the individuals, but they have been decreed for the verification of the truth and the destruction of falsehood. The verse says:

"That He might verify the truth and bring vanity to naught..."

You should not think of the hate and the wrath of the disbelieving enemy. Allah will verify His Will, although the sinners do not like it. The verse says:

"...though the guilty were averse (to it)."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 9

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ

9. "(Remember) when you were calling upon your Lord for succor, and He answered you (saying): 'I shall assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another'."

The Qur'anic term /murdif/, mentioned at the end of the verse, is derived from the Arabic term /'irdaf/ in the sense of 'row', and 'following one after another'. Here in this verse, it means that these helps are continued. These very helps are also referred to in Surah Al-i-'Imran, verse *124* as 'three thousand of angels' and in its following verse, the words about the Divine help are said:

"with five thousand of angels distinguished".

Perhaps, these divine helps had been bestowed upon them because of their perseverance. That is, the more Muslims persevered in that Battle, the more unseen helps were added for them.

As it was said before, (*verse 7* of the current Surah), the number of Muslim strivers in the Battle of Badr was one third of that of pagans. Moreover, their war-equipments as well as their spiritual preparation were very little. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (S) invoked, saying:

"O' Allah! do manifest whatever You promised me. O' Allah! If this group (of Muslims) be killed, You will not be worshipped in the earth."

Explanations

This holy verse attracts our attention to several points as follows:

1- Allah (s.w.t) is the key of answering supplications. The verse says:

"(Remember) when you were calling upon your Lord for succor, and He answered you…"

2- Allah may remit without any invocation, but invocation is one training way out of divine ways.

3- The supplications and invocations which are offered by strivers in the midst of battlefields are effective, because their invocations will be answered.

4- Do not forget the days of affliction and the helps of Allah (s.w.t), since; the remembrance of Allah's bounties elevates the spirit of thanksgiving in man. The verse concludes:

"… (saying): 'I shall assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another'."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 10

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

10. "And Allah did not appoint it, save as good tidings and that your hearts thereby might be at rest; and no victory is there save from Allah, surely Allah is the Mighty the Wise."

The descent of the assisting angels for helping the believers has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. Even at the time of death and giving soul, Allah sends an angel to protect the believers from the satanic temptations by inspiring the Truth to them.

There are two kinds of inspiration in the creation of Allah. One of them is from the side of Allah's angels, which inspires calmness, like the current Surah, *verse 12*, which says:

"(And remember) when your Lord revealed unto the angels, (saying): 'Verily I am with you, so confirm those who believe. I will cast fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve...'".

Another kind is the inspiration of dread which is done by Satan. For example, the Quran says:

"It is only Satan that causes his friends to fear..." (Surah' Al-i- Imran, No. 3, verse 175).

Explanations

The assisting angels came down to increase spiritualities of the believers, not to destroy the pagans. The verse says:

"And Allah did not appoint it, save as good tidings..."

(Historically, it is clear who was killed and who was the killer of the slaughtered, but, in the Battle of Badr, the majority of the slaughtered among the pagans were killed by the sword of Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as)).

The victory of the believers in the Battle of Badr was obtained neither as a result of their originative faculty and martial design, nor for their arms, nor because of the angels, but it was only from the side of Allah. The verse says:

"and that your hearts thereby might be at rest; and no victory is there save from Allah, surely Allah is the Mighty the Wise."

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, the commentary.
2. Nahj-ul-Balaghah
3. Usul-I-Kafi, Chapter 'Reconciliation', tradition No.2

Section 2: The Battle of Badr

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 11

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ

11. (Remember) when He made the slumber fall upon you as a security from Him and sent down water from the sky upon you to purify you with it and take away from you the uncleanness of Satan and to fortify your hearts, and to steady (your) footsteps thereby.

When the Battle of Badr occurred, at first the wells of drinking water were under the control of the enemy and the Muslims were terrified. After that, it rained and the land under their feet became firm so that they would not slip, and it used them to be encouraged.

Maybe, the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: "to steady roar footsteps" is the very 'perseverance', not to steady feet on the land drenched by rain.

During the war, the ability of having a slumber for a striver is a great bounty of Allah. It both removes the occasional fatigue and does not let the enemy have the opportunity of a light attack.

By the help of Allah's Will, it is also possible for a striver to have a calm-giving sleep while confronting the mass of armed enemies. But, if He does not please, there will not be a comfortable sleep possible in the best gardens either, or the sleep may not be a calm-giving one.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 12

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ

12. "(And remember) when your Lord revealed unto the angels, (saying): 'Verily I am with you, so confirm those who believe. Soon I will cast fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore smite above the necks, and smite every finger of them'."

One of other divine bounties upon the Muslim strivers in the Battle of Badr was the horror that Allah cast into the hearts of the pagan enemies and terribly weakened their spirits. In this regard, the verse says:

"(And remember) when your Lord revealed unto the angels, (saying): 'Verily I am with you, so confirm those who believe..."

Allah said that soon He would cast fear and horror into the hearts of the infidels. The verse says:

"…Soon I will cast fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve…"

This fact was truly wonderful that the powerful troops of Quraysh were so frightened that some of them were in terrible horror to combat with the small number of Muslim strugglers in the Battle.

Then the verse reminds them the command that He had ordained upon the Muslims in the battle-field of the Battle of Badr by the way of the Prophet (S).

The command was that, at the time of fighting against those pagans, they should avoid striking some uneffective blows and not to spend their strength

in that state, but they should smite severely upon the entity of the opposite party, upon above their necks; that is, upon their brains and heads. The verse says:

"...Therefore smite above the necks..."

And, by smiting their fingers, they should cause the enemies' hands and feet to become inactive. The holy verse continues saying:

"...and smite every finger of them'."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 13-14

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

ذَٰلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ

13. "That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger; and whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, then verily Allah is severe in retribution."

14. "That (is your award), therefore taste it, and (know) that for the disbelievers is the chastisement of the (Hell) Fire."

They were deserving of that Punishment so that their heads and their fingers should be smited, because they had raised to fight against Allah (s.w.t) and His Messenger (S). The verse says:

"That is because they opposed Allah and His messenger..."

Then, the holy verse threatens the opponents of Allah and His Messenger, when it says:

"...and whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, then verily Allah is severe in retribution."

Those who stand to fight against Allah and His Messenger (S), will be destroyed in the world and, in Hereafter, they will abide in an eternal and severe chastisement.

Through the second verse, the Quran says Allah has provided the punishment of destruction and captivity for them to taste in this world. The verse says:

"That (is your award), therefore taste it..."

That is, this is the decree of Allah. Then, they should examine the taste of the decree of Allah in this world, and know that in other world both they and the totality of infidels will be involved with the divine painful punishment. The verse says:

"...and (know) that for the disbelievers is the chastisement of the (Hell) Fire."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 15

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ

15. "O' you who have Faith! when you meet those who disbelieve (to attack) in battle, then do not turn your backs to them."

The Arabic word /zahf/ means: 'to crawl, creep' and 'to drug on the ground. Since the movement and advance of a large army from the distance seems that it crawls and proceeds, it is called such.

The abundance of the forces of the enemy cannot be taken is an allowance to flee from the battle-field.

The verse says:

"O' you who have Faith! when you meet those who disbelieve (to attack) in battle, then do not turn your backs to them."

Imam Rida (as), upon the philosophy of the banning of escape (from the battle-field), in a tradition has said:

"Flight is the weakness of religion, contempt of the leader of the Truth, encouraging the enemy, and wiping out the school of law."[1]

Among the advantages that Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) had, and to which as an example he himself sometimes referred, was the very matter of flight from the battle-field. He has said:

"Verily I have never fled from (the abundance of enemy in) any battle (although I have participated in many battle-fields), and none combated me save that I satiated the earth from his blood."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 16

وَمَنْ يُوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

16. "And whoever turns his back to them on that day, unless withdrawing to fight again or removing to join another troop, he has incurred wrath from Allah, and his abode is Hell; and an evil destination it is."

In Islam, it is unlawful to flee from battle-fields, but there are two exceptions mentioned in this verse for it. One of them is that the escape is done with the purpose of renewing the equipments and the situation and the second is to remove in order to join another group of Muslims, so that they attack wholly with together.

In some commentary books, there have also been mentioned some other instances. For example: flight with the aim of giving information to Muslims, or protecting some more important entrenchments.[2]

These examples are also some extentions of the first aspect.

The Arabic term /mutuharrifan/, mentioned in the verse, is derived from /harrafa/ (to pervert), and means 'one who turns aside' in order to make the enemy tired and to pervert him and, then, to strike.

The Qur'anic word /mutuhayyizan/, also mentioned in this verse, means: 'one who goes aside' in order to join to another group of Muslim strivers when the striver feels lonely and is unable to continue fighting.

However, flight from the battle-field is one of the great sins for which Allah has warned His wrath and punishment.

The verse says:

"And whoever turns his back to them on that day, unless withdrawing to fight again or removing to join another troop, he has incurred wrath from Allah, and his abode is Hell; and an evil destination it is."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 17

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

17. "You did not slay them, but Allah slew them; and you (O' Muhammad) did not throw when you did throw, but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a gracious trial from Himself. Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In order that Muslims might not be proud of the victory in the Battle of Badr and that they would not rely on their own bodily power alone, but they should make their minds and spirits clear and encouraged with the remembrance of Allah and His helps, the Quran says:

"You did not slay them, but Allah slew them..."

Then, it addresses the Holy Prophet (S) saying that it was not he who threw dust and sand unto the faces of them in that battle, but Allah (s.w.t) threw. The verse immediately after that continues saying:

"...and you (O' Muhammad) did not throw when you did throw, but Allah threw."

In the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an points to another important matter. The fact is that the battle-field in the Battle of Badr was a trial place for Muslims from the side of Allah. The verse says:

"...that He might test the believers by a gracious trial from Himself..."

Then, the verse is concluded with this holy, phrase:

"...Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

That is, Allah has heard the invocations of the Prophet (S) and the believers, and He was aware of the truthfulness of their intention and of their sincerity. That was why that He bestowed His grace upon all of them and made them victorious over their enemy.

In future, too, Allah (s.w.t) will treat Muslim believers according to the intention and standard of the sincerity and level of perseverance that they will show.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 18

ذَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ

18. "That (was the grace of Allah) for you, and that Allah weakens the plan of disbelievers."

The beginning word of the verse /oalikum/ (that) points to the situation of the Muslims in the circumstances of the Battle of Badr. It reminds them the divine helps, which were sent from heaven to the earth, and the honor and victory bestowed upon the Prophet of Islam (S). As if, the holy verse would have said: 'That was the grace of Allah upon you'. The verse says:

"That (was the grace of Allah) for you..."

Thus, if the strivers act according to their duty in battle- fields against the enemy, and obey the divine leader, Allah will also nullify the enemy's plots against them. The verse continues saying:

"...and that Allah weakens the plan of disbelievers."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 19

إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

19. "(O' infidels!) If (Islam's) victory you are seeking, the victory has already come upon you, and if you desist, it will be better for you. But if you return, We (too) shall return, and your forces shall avail you nothing though they may be many, and (know) that Allah is with the believers."

The addressee of this verse may be either the pagans who were defeated in the Battle of Badr, or the Muslims who disputed upon the division of the spoils of war. The evidence for the first meaning is the connection of this verse with the previous one which says:

"...and that Allah weakens the plan of disbelievers..."

Also, it was the expression of Abujah, the commander of pagan troops, which he uttered when he was going to come out of Mecca. He held the curtain of Ka'ba, and said:

"O' God! make victorious of these two groups the one that is more guided."

When he said this sentence, he was sure of his own victory, but later he defeated.

And, if it addresses the Muslims, it is a warning to them, saying that after that victory they would leave put their protests. Therefore, if they had returned to their murmurs and protests, Allah would have also withheld His grace from them again. In that case, the enemies would be delivered and overcome them.

However, Allah's wrath and grace depend on our choice and our treatment. Allah has completed the argument and has shut all the doors of seeking excuses and pretexts. The verse says:

"(O' infidels!) If (Islam's) victory you are seeking, the victory has already come upon you, and if you desist, it will be better for you..."

The largeness of population has no role or function before Allah's wrath, and certainly Allah is with the believers. The verse says:

"...But if you return, We (too) shall return, and your forces shall avail you nothing though they maybe many, and (know) that Allah is with the believers."

Notes

1. Recorded in Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.
2. Narrated from the of Fi-zilal-il-Qur'an

Section 3: Obedience to Allah and His Messenger

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 20-21

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

20. "O' you who have Faith! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from him while you hear (him)."

21. "And be not like those who say: 'We heard', but they do not hear (indeed)."

In the Qur'an thoroughly, the commandment of the obedience from the Messenger of Allah (S) has occurred next to the obedience from Allah. In eleven occurrences the term /'ati'un/ (do obey) has been mentioned after the Qur'anic phrase:

"Be in awe of Allah".

In this verse, although both the obedience from Allah and the obedience from the Messenger are referred to, the objective is the disobedience from the Messenger, (not from Allah), especially in the Battle of Badr and his commands concerning the military affairs.

Therefore, for the continuation of the order of the truth, people should always be recommended to be obedient unto the Divine leader. The verse says:

"O' you who have Faith! Obey Allah and His Messenger…"

It should also be known that leaving the obedience from the Prophet (S) is the disobedience from Allah. The verse continues saying:

"…and do not turn away from him while you hear (him)."

In this obedience, the obedience from the Divine leader, truthfulness is the necessary condition, and only the act of 'hearing' is not enough. The verse says:

"And be not like those who say: 'We heard', but they do not hear (indeed)."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 22

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصم الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

22. "Verily the worst of animals in the sight of Allah are the deaf, the dumb, who do not understand."

The Arabic term /summ/, mentioned in the verse, is the plural form of /asamm/ which means 'deaf' ; and the Qur'anic term /bukm/ is the plural form of /'abkam/ which philologically means 'dumb'.

Those who do not accept the teachings of divine prophets are differently defined in the Qur'an.

Sometimes they are resembled to the dead, as it is recited in its two occurrences:

"Surely you do not make the dead to hear..." (Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 52); and (Surah An- Naml, No. 27, verse 80)

Sometimes they are resembled to beasts:

"...and eat as the beasts eat...". (Surah Muhammad, No. 47, verse 12)

Sometimes they are introduced worse than the beasts, as the Qur'an says:

"...they are as cattle, rather they are more astray..." (Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 179)

Sometimes they are considered as the worst creatures, as the verse under discussion says:

"Verily the worst of animals in the sight of Allah..."

Since 'the statements' which are not fulfilled accordingly and 'the hearings' which are uneffective in action are counted one of the greatest afflictions of the human societies, which can be the origin of kinds of misfortunes, again the Qur'an emphasizes on this subject once more in this very verse, and in a delicate and nice statement, it follows that meaning by saying:

"Verily the worst of animals in the sight of Allah are the deaf, the dumb, who do not understand."

Also, in view of the fact that the Qur'an is the Book of practice, and not merely a ceremonial book, thoroughly it lays emphasis on the consequences of deeds. In this verse, too, those who have safe ears but they do not pave the way of hearkening to the revelations of Allah, and do not follow the words of truth and the programs which lead to happiness, are considered as earless persons.

And, those who have a sound tongue but keep silence when they should defend the truth are considered as some deaf and dumb persons.

Such people neither struggle against injustice and mischief, nor do they lead the ignorant, nor do they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, nor do they invite others to the way of truth, but they apply this great bounty of Allah in the way of idle talks, backbiting, flatteries before the possessors of wealth and power, or they often make use of it for perverting the right and strengthening the falsehood.

The Qur'an counts those who have the bounties of intellect, talent, and capability, but do not contemplate properly, as some mad ones.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 23

وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ

23. "And if Allah had known any good in them, He would have made them hear; and (even) if He had made them hear, they would have turned away, swerving aside."

Obstinate persons are divided into several groups. Some of them are not ready even to listen to the truth. The revelation about them is recited:

"And those who disbelieved said: Do not listen to this Qur'an..." (Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 26)

Some of these obstinate persons listen and understand it, but they distort it.

Some others have not the ability of discrimination because of their innate extra attachments, envies, enmities and callous nesses. The verse says:

"And if Allah had known any good in them He would have made them hear; and (even) if He had made them hear, they would have turned away, swerving aside."

Therefore, we must seek for the facilities of enjoying of Allah's grace in ourselves.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 24

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

24. "O you who have Faith! Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life, and know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart, and that unto Him you shall be gathered."

There are different kinds of life:

1- Vegetal life:

"...Allah gives life to the earth after its death..." (Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 17)

2- Animal life:

"...the giver of life to the dead..." (Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 39)

3- Mental life:

"...who was dead then We raised him to life..." (Surah Al- An'am, No. 6, verse 122)

4- Eternal life:

"...O! would that I had sent before for (this) my life!" (Surah Al-Fajr, No. 89, verse 24)

The purpose of the life, which comes into being by the acceptance of the invitation of prophets, is not the animal life, since without the effects and affluence of prophets this sort of life exists, too. Then, the objective of this life is the mental, intellectual, and spiritual life.

The phrase: 'Allah intervenes between a man and his heart' indicates that Allah is aware and present everywhere, and He encompasses everything so that He is closer to us than our jugular vein is. All bounties and successes belong to Him, and the activities of intellect and soul are under His authority, too.

However, the acceptance of the Prophet's invitation is the same as the acceptance of Allah's invitation; and the real life of man lies in Faith and righteous deed, to which prophets have invited, too.

The verse says:

"O you have Faith! Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life..."

The ordinances of Islam gives spiritual life to the believers, the same as some medicine or surgery can be life-giving to a sick person.

Going alongside the way of Allah (s.w.t) and divine prophets (as) is the real life, while abandoning it is the death of humanity.

According to the Islamic literatures, one of the aspects of goodly life is the acceptance of the call of the Prophet of Islam (S) to the subject of mastership of Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).[1]

He who believes in Allah's omnipresence and omnipotence does not disobey the invitation of prophets. Therefore, as long as you are alive and you have respite, embrace the Truth. (According to this interpretation, the phrase '...Allah intervenes between a man and his heart', metaphorically, means death.)

"...and know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart..."

Among the aspects of the phrase: ‘Allah intervenes between a man and his heart’ there are: the effacement of infidelity and confirming Faith, the effacement of negligence and doubt and confirming recollection and certainty.[2]

All of you will be gathered on the Resurrection Day, then do respond to the invitation of prophets positively. The verse ends as follows:

“...and that unto Him you shall be gathered.”

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 25

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

25. “And keep from the evil of an affliction which shall not smite in particular those of you who committed injustice (but all of you); and know that Allah is severe in retribution.”

The content of the previous verse was upon the acceptance of the Prophet's invitation to ‘the goodly life’. Here, in this, verse, the Qur’an says if you do not accept his invitation you will be involved with an affliction whose fire encompasses everyone. The verse says:

“And keep from the evil of an affliction which shall not smite in particular those of you who committed injustice (but all of you)...”

The Arabic term /fitnah/ has been applied in the sense of idolatry, infidelity, trial, torture, and so on.

The former verse ordained to the obedience from the Prophet (S) while here, in this verse, the command is unto ‘being in awe of an affliction’. It is understood that the lack of obedience from the Prophet (S) is 'affliction'. Thus the concept of the verse is the same concept as the Surah, Al-i-‘Imran, *No. 3*, verse *103*, which is recited[3]:

“And hold fast by the cord of Allah all together, and do not separate…”

Mischief and indecency destroys the entity of a system, and its damage reaches everybody. One of the examples of this meaning was the mischief of the rulers of Umayyads. They put aside the mastership of ‘the leader of the truth’ and, consequently, they set the Muslims into abasement for centuries. When this verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) said:

“Whoever transgresses in Ali's vicegerency after my death, it is as if he has denied my messengership and the prophethood of the prophets before me.”[4]

Thus, the members of a society, besides their own duties, should feel responsibility for the deeds of others, since the reflections of everybody's evil actions may afflict the surrounding people, too. It is similar to the person who is inside a ship and makes a hole in it. By his action, he causes that all the people in the ship to be-drowned.

Therefore, neither you yourself make a mischief, nor adhere with the mischief makers, nor be silent when they make mischief: “And keep from the evil of an affliction”; and do know that being in awe of the evil of affliction is ‘awareness’, not ‘resignation’.

We must be aware not to be involved with the evil afflictions and disturbances when they come forth. Ali (as) says:

“During evil disturbances be like an adolescent camel that has neither a back strong enough for riding nor udders for milking.”[5]

The Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

"When seditions appear among the community, be with Ali, although he is alone." [6]

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 26

وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَآوَاكُمْ وَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

26. "And remember when you were few, deemed weak in the land, and were fearful that people would snatch you away, but He gave you refuge (in Medina), and strengthened you with His help, and provided you with the good things (of sustenance) in order that you might be thankful."

Once again the Quran assists Muslims to review their past history, and makes them understand both their former state and their present stage which they enjoy, so that they may catch well the concept of the lesson taught through the previous holy verses.

This verse implies that they should remember the time that they were few in number and could do nothing. They were captured in the grips of their enemies who had drawn them into weakness and incapability. It says:

"And remember when you were few, deemed weak in the land..."

They were in a state that they feared that both pagans and those who were their opponents might despoil them away. The verse says:

"...and were fearful that people would snatch you away..."

This meaning makes manifest the utmost weakness and fewness of the members of Muslims in front of pagans in Mecca before migration of the Prophet (S) to Medina, or after migration in front of the great powers of that time, like the forces of Iran and Rom.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"...but He gave you refuge (in Medina)..."

Then it adds:

"...and strengthened you with His help..."

"...and provided you with the good things (of sustenance)..."

"...in order that you might be thankful."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 27

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

27. "O you who have Faith! Do not betray Allah and the Messenger, and do not betray your trusts knowingly."

Occasion of Revelation

In the commentary books recorded by both great sects of Islam upon the occasion of revelation of this verse, it has been cited as follows:

When the Jewish tribe named Bani-Qurayzah were surrounded by the Muslim strivers under the command of the Prophet (S) the Jews suggested peace and started moving toward Syria.

But the Prophet (S) did not accept it, and he ordered Sa'd-ibn-Ma'ath to judge over their circumstance. The Jews consulted with 'Abul-Babah, one

of the Muslims who had had the background of friendship with them, about that judgment.

When, ‘Abul-Babah, by pointing to his throat, signed them that they would be killed totally if they accepted the arbitration of Sa'd-ibn-Ma'ath, Gabriel informed this signal to the Prophet (S). ‘Abul-Babah, who was ashamed of this treachery, roped himself to the pillar of the mosque and avoided eating anything for seven days and nights.

Finally, Allah accepted his repentance.[7]

There has also been cited another occasion of revelation upon this verse as follows in the Battle of Badr, one of the Muslims wrote a letter to Abu-Sufyan and informed him of the Prophet's plan Then, Abu-Sufyan asked for help from the pagans of Mecca, and they sent one thousand fighters to fight in the Battle of Badr.[8]

Now Allah commands the believers not to approach treachery. The holy verse, addressing the believing people, implies that they should not betray Allah (s.w.t) by means of abandoning His ordinances and His Messenger (S) by leaving his rules, because whoever leaves or spoils anything of the religion, he has betrayed Allah (s.w.t) and His Messenger (S). The verse says

“O you who have Faith! Do not betray Allah and the Messenger...”

Also, the believers should not be treacherous to the affairs upon which Allah has trusted them, and has given them the fulfillment of them that they accomplish them without any deficiency Thus, he who is treacherous to Allah and the Messenger of Islam (S), has been treacherous to his own deposits.

And you know that treachery is an ugly action which incurs punishment.

The verse says:

“...and do not betray your trusts knowingly.”

Therefore, treachery is basically ugly and condemned, especially those treacheries which are performed knowingly, and the manifestation of military secrets are uglier and more dangerous, for which, and of course the sinful person must repent very soon.

However, the spoils of war, alms, Khoms (one fifth levy), and all properties of others, which are with you, are deposits. Similarly, other bounties, such as: the school of religion, leadership, the Qur’an, children, and territorial of the country are the deposits of Allah.

And according to the tradition which Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, by Hakim Huskani, vol. 1, p. *205* has narrated from Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, vol. 14, p. *564* the progeny of the Prophet (S) are also the Divine deposits.

By obeying them and following them, we must protect these deposits.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 28

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

28. “And know that your wealth and your children are a (means of) trial, and that Allah - with Him is a great reward.”

Intensive love for wealth and children is the pivot of a lot of evil actions. It is the origin of many unlawful transactions, lies, monopolies, short weights, lack of payment of the alms- tax, to avoid giving Khoms (one fifth

levy) and poor-rates, greeds, hindering others' affairs, false oaths, wasting the people's rights, and the like of them.

The love of children may cause a person to escape from the battle-field and not to tolerate a short separation from the family.

Then, these are the factors of trial, as explained in the previous verse. This kind of love drew 'Abul-Babah into committing wrong and, in order to protect his wealth and children, he assisted the enemy of Islam.

Therefore, regarding the occasion of revelation of the previous verse, excessive love to wealth and children causes man to fall into sin and treachery. The verse under discussion says:

"And know that your wealth and your children are a (means of) trial..."

Also, wealth and children can be two fascinating traps on the way of human beings to which the Qur'an has repeatedly warned in different ways. For example, Surah Al-Munafiqun, *No. 63*, *verse 9* says:

"...let not your wealth, or your children, divert you from the remembrance of Allah..."

Being attentive to the great reward of Allah causes us to leave the love of the world and also to abandon treachery. The verse says:

"...and that Allah - with Him is a great reward."

Notes

1. Recorded in Tafsir-i-Furqan, by Manaqib Tarmathy
2. This meaning is recorded in Tafsir-i-Furqan, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as)
3. Al-Mizan.
4. Furqan, narrated from Shawahid- ut- Tanzil, by Huskani, vol. 1, p. 206.
5. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 1, p. 530, English version.
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 4, p. 534 (Arabic version) and Tafsir-ul-Burhan
7. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Tafsir-us-Safi
8. Al-Mizan, and Majma'-ul-Bayan

Section 4: The Guardianship of the Sacred Mosque

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 29

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

29. "O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah, He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

The current criterions of recognizing right from wrong are numerous. Among them are the followings:

A) Prophets and saints of Allah are criterions. An Islamic tradition says:

"He who leaves Ali (as) has really left Allah."[1]

B) The Book of Allah is a criterion. By adapting things with the Qur'an, the right can be recognized from wrong.

C) Piety is another criterion. When the storm of instincts, accompanied with love and enmity that are nourished from impiety, arrives, piety is dismissed and impiety hinders the recognition of facts:

The ability of the recognition between right and wrong is a knowledge given by Allah, and it does not merely depend on the ability of reading and writing or necessarily on the standard of knowledge.

The verse says:

"O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace."

Fakhr-i-Razi has explained: "The expiation of sins is concealment in this world, while 'forgiveness' is a deliverance from the punishment of Allah in Hereafter. According to the statements of some other commentators of the Qur'an 'expiation' is to wipe out the social and psychological effects of sins, while forgiveness is a remittance in respect to Hell."

Therefore, those who put aside the mental desires will recognize the truth, and their piety causes a proper insight to come forth in them and a great virtue and reward to be obtained.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 30

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

30. "And (remember) when those who-disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you. They devised and Allah devised, and Allah is the best devisers.

Occasion of Revelation

This verse is a hint to /laylat-ul-mabit/ (the night when Ali (as) laid himself in couch of the Prophet (S) and a reference unto the heathens' plot for killing the Messenger of Allah (S).

The Prophet (S) was informed of that plot by means of the Messenger Angel Gabriel, and then Ali- ibn-Abi- Talib (as) laid himself in the couch of

the Holy prophet (S) under his mantle-piece. So, the Holy Prophet (S) went out of his house by the same night and took shelter in the cave of Thur, from where he migrated to Medina.

There were three plots, mentioned in the verse under discussion, by either of them infidels wanted to work against the Prophet (S). Those plots were designed in the meeting that the elders of pagans held in Dar-un-Nudwah, where they finally approved the second plan.

By that plan they decided that a young man from each of the tribes be chosen and they would be prepared so that all of them together could attack to kill him, in order that the charge of the murder might be laid equally on each tribe and the relatives of the Prophet (S) might not be able to fight against all those tribes together and thus there would be left to them no other choice but to receive his blood-money.

The Arabic word /makr/ means: 'deceit and trick'. 'Azhari, a commentator, says: "People's deceit is recompensed by Allah's deceit and trickery."

There is a difference between the Arabic term s /qadr/ (treachery) and /makr/ (deceit). The meaning of the former is accompanied with breach of promise, while the meaning of the later is deceit in general.

The verse addresses the Prophet (S) to remember when pagans began devising and consulting with each other how to defeat him and to kill him. The verse says:

"And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you..."

They devised about him and Allah devised about them, too.

That is, some of them plotted so that he (S) could not understand, and Allah devised against them in a way that they did not know, and punished them. The verse says:

"...They devised and Allah devised..."

Allah is the best devisers, because He pays to nothing but what is true and right. This meaning lies in this fact that: He sends down the punishment upon those who deserve it. The verse ends as follows:

"...and Allah is the best devisers."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 31

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَٰذَا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

31. "And when Our signs are recited to them, they say: 'We have heard. If we like, we (too) can say the like of this (Qur'an). This is naught but the tales of the ancients'."

In the previous verse, the words were about the plot of the enemies of the Prophet (S) who wanted to kill him. Here, this holy verse refers to their decision that they decided to belittle the religion of Islam and the Qur'an. The verse says:

"And when Our signs are recited to them, they say: 'We have heard..."

The Arabic word /'asatir/ is the plural form of the Qur'anic term /'usturah/ with the sense of 'myths', and 'imaginary superstitious tales'.

Before the appointment of the Prophet (S) to his Divine mission, Nasr-ibn-i-Harith once had come to Iran and had learnt the Iranian story of

Rustam and Isfandiyar. When he returned back to Mecca and Medina, he said to the people of his own locality that he could also speak like Muhammad (S) and tell stories.[2]

Among the common weapons of enemies, of course, are demagogy, belittling, and disparaging. The verse continues saying:

"…If we like, we (too) can say the like of this (Qur'an)…"

This fact must also be known that enemies of Islam are usually some haughty persons. They claim, but in action, they are incapable to bring the like of the Qur'an. They said that those verses had not any important content in them and they were the myths of the ancient people. The verse says:

"...This is naught but the tales of the ancients'."

They said such a statement while they had repeatedly tried to challenge with the Qur'an, but they failed every time. So, they knew well that they could not oppose against the Qur'an or challenge with it.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 32

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوِ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

32. "And (remember) when they said: 'O Allah! if this (Quran) is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment'."

Such prayers of curses were either because of intense zeal and obstinacy that they considered their own way as a right way and the way of Islam wrong, or it was a kind of demagogy. They cursed themselves in order that some simple- hearted people might feel that Islam was wrong.

When the Prophet (S) under the command of Allah in Ghadir Khumm, appointed Ali (as) for Imamate, Nu'man- ibn-Harith, one of the hypocrites, came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"You ordered us to Unity, prophethood, Holy Struggle, Hajj, fasting, prayer and alms giving, and we accepted them all. Now have you appointed this lad as Imam over us?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"It was the command of Allah."

Then Nu'man, the hypocrite, cursed- himself, and in his curse he imitated this very verse.[3]

Therefore, an enemy may also expose himself to a curse in order to show himself true. The verse says:

"And (remember) when they said: "O Allah! if this (Qur'an) is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment'."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 33

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

33. "But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while they seek forgiveness."

The purpose of negation of punishment is removing the general punishment from Muslims because of the existence of the Prophet (S)

among them, as former nations were punished; else, in some particular cases, some persons may encounter the Divine punishments.

Some Islamic traditions denote that because of the existence of some purified persons and godly scholars or for the sake of those who seek forgiveness and really repent, Allah (s.w.t) removes His punishment from people among whom they live. The verse says:

"But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while they seek forgiveness."

In this regard, the existence of the Prophet (S) is a safety for the population of the earth: "...while you are among them..."; and, also, seeking forgiveness hinders calamities, as the above mentioned verse says:

"...while they seek forgiveness."

It is cited in Nahjul-Balagha that after the departure of the Prophet (S) Hazrat Ali (as) said:

"There were two sources of deliverance from Allah's punishment, one of which has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should therefore adhere to it..." (which is seeking forgiveness).[4]

In the supplication of Kumayl, there is a clause that points to the sins which cause afflictions to come down. It is recited as follows:

"O Allah! forgive me the sins which bring about tribulation."

Surah Hud, *No. 11*, verse *117* says:

"And it did not beseen your Lord to have destroyed the towns tyrannously, while their people acted well."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 34

وَمَا لَهُمْ أَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ إِنْ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

34. "And what (plea) have they that Allah should not chastise them, while they bar (people) from the Holy Mosque, and they are not guardians of it? Its guardians are not but only the pious ones, but most of them do not know."

The previous verse indicated that because of the existence of the Prophet (S) among his community and for the sake of their seeking forgiveness, Allah removed from them a punishnent like the punishment of the people of 'Ad and Thamud.

This verse refers to their punishment. The purpose of this punishment may be tile worldly punishment and fighting on the earth. It can also be said that they deserve divine punishment, but Allah does not punish them for the sake of the Prophet (S). Or it may mean that they will not be punished in tile present world, but they will be punished in the coming world.

However, those who hinder people to arrive into the Holy Mosque should expect the Divine punishment. The holy verse says:

"And what (plea) have they that Allah should not chastise them, while they bar (people) from the Holy Mosque, and they are not guardians of it?..."

They should also know that the custodianship of the Sacred House, which had been built by Abraham the Friend of Allah (as) and based upon

piety, must not be left under the control of some impious persons. The verse continues saying:

"...Its guardians are not but only the pious ones, but most of them do not know."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 35

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

35. "And their prayer at the (Sacred) House is naught but whistling and clapping. Therefore taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve."

The Arabic term /muka'/ means 'to whistle', and the Qur'anic word /tasdiyah/ means 'to clap'.

Their whistling might be for announcing their presence to the idols which were settled in Ka'bah.

In the length of the history of human beings, the religious ceremonies have been being distorted, so that sometimes the most sacred centers have become the pivot of the greatest superstitions.

The verse says:

"And their prayer at the (Sacred) House is naught but whistling and clapping..."

By the way, changing the recitation of Salawat into claps and whistles in the meetings of today is a sign for changing prayers into their clapping and whistling, which causes the descent of calamities and punishments. The denotation expansion of punishment in this verse is the defeat of pagans in the Battle of Badr.

In Islamic literature, it is recorded that during the time when the Prophet (S) was busy praying frequently, two men from the tribe of Bani- 'Abd-ud-Dar came and stood at his right side to whistle and two men stood at his left side to clap.

They did so in order to hinder him to establish his prayer easily. Later, the Prophet (S) killed all of them in the Battle of Badr. Now, this verse, addressing them and other members of Bani- 'Abd-ud-Dar, says:

"...Therefore taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve."

That is, as the retribution of their disbelief, they should taste the punishment of the sword of the Battle of Badr and the punishment of the Hereafter, too.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 36

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ

36. "Verily those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they hinder (men) from the way of Allah, and still they will spend it, (too), then it will be to them a cause of regret, then they will be overcome, and those who disbelieve will be mustered unto Hell."

It has been said that this verse was revealed upon the heavy treasury that the pagan of Mecca spent for the Battle of Badr. But the general meaning of

the verse includes all the treasuries which may be spent on opposition against Islam.

Disbelievers spend properties in charity for their evil aims, why do Muslims not spend for their sacred aims?

So, in this holy verse, it says that those who spend their wealth on the way of fighting against the Prophet (S) in order that they hinder people from the way and religion of Allah, will be regretful soon and they will understand that they will not be benefited from that, but it will be the cause of their misfortune.

The verse says:

"Verily those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they hinder (men) from the way of Allah, and still they will spend it, (too), then it will be to them a cause of regret, then they will be overcome…"

Thus, those who disbelieve, after being involved with regret as a result of their failure in this world, will also be sent into Hell in Hereafter. The verse says:

"…and those who disbelieve will be mustered unto Hell."

Why the phrase: "those who disbelieve" is repeated twice in this verse is for the reason that some of the disbelievers, who spent their wealth for the opposition of Islam, embraced Islam later, therefore the punishment of the Hereafter belongs to those persons who died before becoming Muslims.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 37

لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضَهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلَهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

37. "So that Allah may separate the corrupt from the good and place corrupt one another, and pile them up all together, and put them in Hell; those are the losers."

The Arabic term, /yarkumah/ means: 'to accumulate and to pile up together.' From among the results of oppositions, molestations and the fights between right and wrong is that spiritualities, motives, revenues, promises, and plots are usually made manifest, and the essence or substance of man will be shown.

To make separate the supporters of the right from wrong is one of Allah's ways of treatment, the verse says:

"So that Allah may separate the corrupt from the good and place corrupt one another..."

On Resurrection Day, Allah will gather the corrupt persons with together and send them wholly into Hell. The verse says:

"...and pile them up all together, and put them in Hell; those are the losers."

As some Islamic literature indicates, accumulation, pressure, and tightness of place are from the specialties of the people of Hell. These impious people are in narrowness there, though Hell is very vast and it repeatedly asks for more and more wrong-doers. It is like a large wall where

there are many points of place for a great deal of nails, but every nail is in pressure.

Notes

1. The index of Ihqaqul-Haqq, vol. 4, p.26.
2. Cited in some commentary books such as: the one compiled by ‘Alusi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Fi-Zilal-il-Qur'an.
3. Al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 239-266, narrated from 30 scholars of the Sunnites.
4. Nahjul Balagha, saying 88

Section 5: The Battle of Badr a Proof of the Messenger's Truthfulness

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 38

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

38. "Tell those who disbelieve, if they desist (from corruptions) what has past will be forgiven for them, but if they return (thereto), then what happened to the ancients has already passed."

In this verse, the Prophet (S) is commanded to tell the pagans if they repent and really leave corruptions, their former sins will be forgiven. The verse says:

"Tell those who disbelieve, if they desist (from corruptions) what has past will be forgiven for them,..."

And if they return to war again and persist on infidelity, Allah's way of treatment unto the former nations has been this that He has always helped the believers and has made the enemies of the religion confronted with disgrace and misfortune.

The verse says:

"...but if they return (thereto), then what happened to the ancients has already passed."

When the holy verse says: /sunnat-ul-'awwalin/ and refers 'Allah's way of treatment' to the ancient, it is for the reason that 'Allah's way of treatment' had always been executed upon them. In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"(This is Our) course with regard to those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you..." (Surah Al-'Isra' No. 17, verse 77).

Here, He attributes the way of treatment to His messengers, because Allah's way of treatment had been executed by them.

Therefore, in the same verse, He continues saying:

"...and I you shall not find a change in Our course."

Here, He attributes the way of treatment (course) to His Pure Essence, again, because, in fact, the real executor of 'the way of treatment' is Allah Himself.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 39

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

39. "And fight with them until there be no mischief and the religion be wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then verily Allah sees what they do."

The content meaning of this verse addresses the Prophet (S) and the Muslim believers. It commands that they should fight against pagans and root out the sedition of polytheism.

The objective meaning is that the fight against those pagans, who have not given covenant, should be continued until there will remain none of them. The reason of it is that a pagan, who has not covenant, may penetrate inside his tribe and try to invite them to his own creed and, thereby, he can create temptation in the religion of Allah. The verse says:

"...And fight with them until there be no mischief..."

In that case, both the people of right and the people of wrong will wholly him and attend in the religion of Truth and will have correct beliefs. In other words, as a result of assembling people in the true religion, the whole religion will be of Allah. The verse says:

"...and the religion be wholly for Allah..."

Zurarah, as well as some other commentators, has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The interpretation of this verse has not come forth yet. When our Gha'im raises, those who will be alive on the earth will see its interpretation and the religion of Muhammad (p.h.u.h.) will cover throughout the world. Then there will remain no polytheist therein."[1]

And Allah says:

"They shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me..." (Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 55).

In Islam, the aim of wars is not occupying lands and countries, but their aim is the expansion of the religion of Islam and opposing with mischief.

The Qur'anic term /fitnah/ (sedition) has a vast meaning. It includes any imposition of pressure, too. This word has also been used in the Qur'an with the meaning of 'polytheism'.

It is, maybe, for the fact that kinds of limitations and impositions of pressures are fulfilled over the minds, societies and truth- seekers from the side of polytheists. Or, since polytheism causes the eternal punishment to be incurred, imposing infidelity on believers and pure-nature humans is counted mischief, too.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 40

وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

40. "And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your guardian - an excellent Guardian, and an excellent Helper!"

You should know that Allah is your guardian even if they turn away. He is a very good Guardian and an excellent helper, and He assists the believers along the way of obedience, and He does not leave His friends to them.

The verse says:

"And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your guardian - an excellent Guardian, and an excellent Helper!"

The End of Part Nine

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 41

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

41. "And know that whatever thing you gain (of booties), a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near relatives (Ahlul-Bayt) and the orphans, and the needy and the way-farer, if you believe in Allah and what We sent down to Our servant on the day of distinction (of right

from wrong), the day when the two hosts encountered (the day of Battle of Badr), and surely Allah is All-powerful over everything."

According to some Islamic traditions that the Shi'ite believe, the meaning of the term /qanimat/ (booty) is not confined to the war spoils, but, besides that, it encompasses my kind of gain which is obtained from mains, diving, trade, and so on. Thus, the revelation of the verse concerning the battle of Badr is not evidence that its purpose is only 'war spoils'.

Through the first verse of this Surah, the Qur'an allocated all 'Anfal (the things gained) to Allah and the Messenger, while this verse says that 'a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger (Ahlul-Bayt)'.

If the objective meaning of the term /qanimat/ (booty) is only 'the spoils of war', it must be said that this verse refers to only one instance of Khums (one fifth) and other instances are discussed in some Islamic traditions.

As many traditions of the Shi'ite and also some traditions of the Sunnite indicate, the meaning of the Qur'anic term /oil qurba/ (near relatives) does not envelop all the relatives of the Prophet (S) but its purpose is the immaculate Imams (as) from Ahl-ul-Bayt who possess the rank of leadership.

So, the amount of Khoms (one fifth levy) belongs to the divine leader and the Islamic government, not to all the relatives of the Prophet (S).

Other usages of Khoms (one fifth levy) are for indigents, way-farers who are progenies of Bani-Hashim -since it is unlawful to give them alms, and their needs should be provided through Khoms.

Besides the Islamic traditions which consider the meaning of /oil qurba/ (near relatives) the immaculate Imams (as), the occurrence of the word recited in the same row. With Allah and the Messenger in the verse is a sign which implies /oil qurba/ are some persons who are along the way of Allah (s.w.t) and the Messenger of Allah (S).

Explanations

1- Now that, by the help of Allah, you are victorious in the Battle of Badr, do not evade paying Khoms (one fifth) of booties.

"And know that whatever thing you gain (of booties), a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near relatives (Ahlul-Bayt) and the orphans, and the needy and the way-farer, if you believe in Allah..."

2- 'Khoms' (a fifth of the gains) is for the sake of Messengership and the rank of government, not for a person.

3- Government and the leader need budget for propagation and messengership.

(...for Allah and for the Messenger...)

4- Khoms is obligatory, though the income and gains are scanty.

"...whatever thing you gain (of booties)..."

5- The deprive and the government are the owners of twenty percent of people's property.

"...a fifth of it is for Allah..."

6- Allah does not need to have a share. The remembrance of Allah's share is for the sovereignty of the mastership of the line of Allah (s.w.t) and the Messenger (S).

7- The share of Allah is spent for elevating the word of Allah, the Ka' bah, Islamic religious propagations, and the establishment of the Divine Law.

8- Among the Islamic duties is to wipe out deprivation from the Islamic society. Therefore, the income gained from the holy Struggle and the spoils of war should be spent for the benefit of the poor.

9- Allah's share is at the disposal of the Messenger (S), and the Messenger's share is at the disposal of Imam.[2]

10- It is Imam who can decide upon the quantity of the share how to be used for the instances mentioned in the verse.[3]

11- In order to honour the deprive, their name has been settled in the verse beside the name of Allah and the Messenger.

12- In the same manner that the vast meaning of the Arabic term /qaramat / (indemnity) includes any damage, not merely a damage of war, the meaning of the Qur'anic term /qanimat/ (spoils), which is referred to in this verse, also includes any gain, not merely a gain of war.[4]

13- The sign of a complete belief is a full submission before all Divine Laws totally, not only in worships and even in war.

14- The day of war is the day of distinction of the truthful ones from the people of lying.

"...on the day of distinction..."

15- In the Battle of Badr, the help of Allah made manifest the rightfulness of Islam.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an has pointed to the infinite power of Allah, Omnipotence, when it says:

"...and surely Allah is All-powerful over everything."

That is, though you were in minority from any point of view in the field of the Battle of Badr and, apparently, your enemy was in majority from any point of view, Allah, the Mighty, defeated them and helped you to be victorious.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 42

إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَىٰ وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَاخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَٰكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

42. "(Remember) when you were on the down side, and they were on the up side, while the caravan (of the enemy) was in below you; and had you agreed together on a tryst, you would have surely failed the tryst, but in order that Allah might bring about a matter which was to be done, that he who perishes may perish by a clear proof, and verily Allah is All; Hearing, All- knowing."

The Qur'anic term /'udwah/ is derived from /'aduw/ with the meaning of 'to transgress'. It is also used for the edge and surroundings of anything that has gone beyond the medium. In this verse, the objective meaning of the term /'udwah/ is 'the side and lower extremities'.

The Arabic word /dunya/ is derived from /dunuww/ in the sense of 'down side and nearer', while the Arabic word /quswa / means 'farther'.

In the Battle of Badr, the enemies not only had superiority from the points of arms, number of fighters, and preparation, but also they were preferable from the point of the site of settlement of their forces, because they could find a way at the bank of the Red Sea to escape.

But Allah caused the Muslims to encounter the pagans with the aim of confiscation of their properties, where they had no way but to fight. Yet, it was only the grace of Allah which brought triumph of that Battle for the Muslims.

A Review over the Battle of Badr

The illustration of the feature of the Battle of Badr by reviewing Surah Al-'Anfal from the beginning can show Allah's helps better.

1- They thought of confiscation of pagans' properties, but they were not ready for war:

"...and loved that the one unarmed should be yours..." (verse No. 7).

2- When the war began, they were worried:

"...a party of the believers was certainly averse (to it)," (verse No. 5).

3- They were afraid of death:

"...as if they were being driven unto death..." (verse No. 6).

4- They were disabled and were seeking their Lord for help:

"...when you were calling upon your Lord for succor..." (verse No. 9).

5- By the night of attack, Satan imposed them his uncleanness (jenabat) (major ritual impurity):

"...The uncleanness of Satan..." (verse No. 11).

6- They did not have complete obedience from the commander:

"...Those who say: 'We heard,' but they do not hear (indeed)" (verse No. 21).

7- They were small in number and they were fearful to be hunted by the enemy:

"...you were few,...and were fearful that people would snatch you away..." (verse No. 26).

8- Some of them had formerly committed treachery,[5]

9- Their leader was threatened and plotted against by disbelievers:

"...Those who disbelieved plotted against you..." (verse No. 30)

10- They were thirsty, and they fell in major ritual impurity while the sand under their feet was soft and Allah sent down water for them.

11- If the affairs were at their disposal, with those many difficulties they had, they would never come to agreement:

"...and had you agreed together one tryst, you would have surely failed the tryst…" (verse under discussion).

12- Wherever Allah pleases, He removes all the factors of weakness:

"... but in order that Allah might bring about a matter which was to be done…" (verse under discussion).

13- Having all these helps, whoever does not believe will knowingly be destroyed, and whoever believes will knowingly believe:

"…that he who perishes may perish by a clear proof and he who lives may live by a clear proof..."

14- Do not judge hurriedly. They did not like to fight, but, later, they found out its goodness.

15- Allah may change the ways and decisions, and, by this very way, Allah can be known.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 43

إِذْ يُرِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَاكَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَفَشِلْتُمْ وَلَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصدُورِ

43. "(Remember) when Allah showed them to you as few in your dream and had He shown them as many, you would have become disheartened and disputed about the matter; but Allah did save (you). Surely He is aware of what is in the breasts."

Following the explanation of some Allah's graces and His helps unto the Muslims, this verse speaks about the number of pagans which was shown few in the eyes of the Muslims. This was done in a few stages.

The first stage was that the Prophet (S) saw them as few in his dream, and, saying that to the Muslims, promoted their courage. The second stage was that He showed the number of the Muslims in the eyes of pagans so few that they would not call for further fresh forces from Mecca to help them.

It is principally true that prophets' dream is a glow of revelation, but that the Prophet of Islam (S) saw the large crowd of the pagans so few in his dream was an indication to the reality of the inward state of the pagans, which was fear, weakness and incapability. Surah Al-Hashr, *No. 59*, *verse 14* in this regard says:

"...you may think them united, but their hearts are disunited."

However, dream is one of the ways of communication, seeking help, and taking courage through Allah's succor. It should also be noted that, in the most terrible conditions, Allah may protect believers and crush their enemies.

The verse says:

"(Remember) when Allah showed them to you as few in your dream and had He shown them as many, you would have become disheartened and disputed about the matter; but Allah did save (you). Surely He is aware of what is in the breasts."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 44

وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ الْتَقَيْتُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

44. "And (remember) when He showed them to you, when you encountered (the enemy), as few in your eyes, and He made you few in their eyes in order that Allah may enact the matter which was destined to be done, and unto Allah all matters are returned."

When infidels saw the crowd of the Muslims, they appeared in their eyes so few that they said they would send their slaves to destroy the Muslims.[6] But when the war began and they were fighting, they saw the number of those Muslims two fold and they were afraid of them.[7]

Surah' Al-i-'Imran, *No. 3*, *verse 13* says:

"...they (infidels) saw twice as many as they were with the sight of the eye..."

Therefore, in order to help Muslims, Allah may utilize genetic authority and interference in the sights. The verse says:

"And (remember) when He showed them to you, when you encountered (the enemy), as few in your eyes..."

So, if the Will of Allah lies in an affair, He will remove all barriers. The verse continues saying:

"...and He made you few in their eyes in order that Allah may enact the matter which was destined to be done, and unto Allah all matters are returned."

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, p. 82, and Tafsir-us-Safi, p. 303
2. Tafsir-us-Safi.
3. Based upon the tradition of Imam Rida (as) recorded in Tafsir-us-Safi.
4. In the books of Lisan-ul-'Arab, Taj-ul-'Aroos, Ghamus, At-Tafsir-ul-Qurtubi, Fakhr-i- Razi, and 'Alui, there is not found any doubt in the generality of the meaning of the word. In the Quran itself, the word /qammat / has also been applied for the gains other than that of war. For example, Surah An-Nisa, No.4, verse 94 says:

   "...but with Allah are abundant spoils...".

   However, every one of these two words, /qaramat, qanimat/, has occurred six times in the Qur'an.
5. The event of 'Abul-Babah, described in verse No. 27.
6. Tafsir-us-Safi
7. lbid

Section 6: Steadfastness and Unity Enjoined

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 45

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

45. "O you who have Faith! when you encounter a host (in battle), then stand firm, and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous."

Now that Allah (s.w.t,) has commanded the Muslims to be steadfast in the battlefield, He says:

"O you who have Faith! when you encounter a host (in battle), then stand firm..."

That is, whenever you face with a group of infidels in war, stand firm for fighting against them, and do not escape. And, it is evident that believers generally do not fight save against hostile infidels.

Then the holy verse implies that, at the time of war, Muslims should seek help from Allah, the Mighty, so that not only they become victorious and successful in the present world but also they become prosperous in the coming world. The verse continues saying:

"...and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous."

Some commentators say that this part of the verse means that you should remember the promises of Allah, which He has given you about triumph, in order that your steadfastness might he increased.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 46

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

46. "And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, for you will become disheartened and your power will depart; and be patient, verily Allah is with the patient."

Believers should obey Allah and His Messenger, and when they encounter their enemy, they should be united and avoid disputing. Otherwise, they may fear and lose their hearts, and begin fighting while their courage and power vanish.

The verse says:

"And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, for you will become disheartened and your power will depart..."

Some commentators have said that they may lose victory and government as a result of it.

The Arabic term /rih/, mentioned here, is a hint to progression, influence, and reaching the aim.

Some other commentators have said that if Muslims show discord with each other, they will not find the breeze of triumph upon their lives.

Thus, they should be patient in the war against the enemy, since Allah is with the patient ones. The verse says:

"...and be patient, verily Allah is with the patient."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 47

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

47. "And do not be like those who got out from their homes boastfully and to show off to men and barring from Allah's way, and verily Allah encompasses what they do."

The verse addresses the believers, telling them not to be like the Quraysh who made up a group of mischievous drunkard persons to go out in order to protect their caravan. Intending ostentation and prohibiting others from the religion of Allah, i.e. Islam, they started from Mecca toward the land of Badr.

Their hypocritical act was that they wanted to pretend that they did not count Muslims so considerable and important that they would be fearful of them. But they should know that Allah is aware of their deeds and none of their acts is concealed to Him, the One Who gives them the retribution of their hypocritical deeds.

The verse says:

"And do not be like those who got out from their homes boastfully and to show off to men and barring from Allah's way, and verily Allah encompasses what they do."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 48

وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَتِ الْفِئَتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

48. "And (remember) when Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them and said: 'Today none of people shall overcome you, and I will be a protector for you.' But when the two hosts sighted each other, he turned upon his heels, and said: 'Indeed I am quit of you. Verily I see what you do not see. Surely I fear Allah, and Allah is severe in retribution'."

Here, in this verse, another scene of the Battle of Badr, which happened on the day of war, has been illustrated.

At first, it implies that on that day, Satan made their deeds Seem decorous to them, so that they would think of their actions optimistically and became encouraged by them. The verse says:

"And (remember) when Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them..."

Satan's decoration is such that, by the way of stimulating lusts, desires, and indecent qualities in him, he makes the feature of man's actions so fair seeming to his eyes that he will terribly be attracted to it. Satan tempts them that today they have so many fighters with a lot of arms, so much so that none of people can overcome them, and they are an undefeating army. The verse says:

"...and said: 'Today none of people shall overcome you..."

Then Satan adds that besides that, he is also their neighbor and so near to them that, at the necessary time, like a faithful sympathetic neighbor, he will withhold no support from them. The verse continues saying:,

"...and I will be a protector for you.'..."

But when the two armies encountered each other and the angels came to help the army of Unity, the infidels observed the power and steadfastness of the Muslims. Then, Satan turned back and shouted at them, saying that he hated them (the infidels). The verse says:

"...But when the two hosts sighted each other, he turned upon his heels, and said:, Indeed I am quit of you..."

Satan brought forth two reasons for his awful turning, back. The first reason was that he said:

"...Verily I see what you do not see..."

By this phrase, Satan meant that he saw the signs of triumph in the features of the believing Muslims, as well as the effects of Allah's support and angels' helps among them.

Satan added another thing, saying that he was afraid of the painful punishment of Allah in the scene which he saw very near. The verse says:

"...surely I fear Allah..."

Allah's punishment is not such a simple thing that anybody can resist before it, but it is certain that His retribution is sharp and severe. The verse says:

"...and Allah is severe in retribution '."

Section 7: Enemy Weakened by Allah

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 49

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ غَرَّ هَؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

49. "(Remember) when the hypocrites said, and those in whose hearts were a disease: 'Their religion has deluded them, But whoever puts his trust in Allah, then Allah is indeed the Mighty, the Wise."

The persons who apparently express that they have believed in Islam but inwardly they hesitate about it are those who carry a disease in their hearts. The verse says:

"(Remember) when the hypocrites said, and those in whose hearts was a disease:..."

Some commentators have said that there were several young men from Quraysh in Mecca who embraced Islam, and then, their fathers put them in prison. They were: Qays-ibn- Walid-ibn-Muqayrah, Ali-ibn-'Ummayit-ibn-Khalf, -ibn- Munbih, Harith-ibn-Zam'ah, and Abu-Qays-ibn-Fakihat-ibn-Muqayrah.

As soon as they saw the small number of the Muslims in war, they said that those people were proud of their religion and, disregard the large crowd of pagans there, they had been deceived by the Prophet (S) and they came to fight.

"...'Their religion has deluded them.'..."

Then Allah states the following phrase, meaning that they themselves were deluded. The verse says:

"...But whoever puts his trust in Allah, then Allah is indeed the Mighty, the Wise."

That is, whoever delivers his affairs to Allah (s.w.t) and, trusts in Him while he tries to please Him by his good behaviour, Allah (s.w.t) helps him and prepares the means of victory for him. The reason is that Allah is Mighty and Wise, and the one who refuges to Him will be secured by His mightness and wisdom.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 50-51

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

<u>50</u>. "And had you seen when the angles take away the souls of those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs (and saying): 'Taste the punishment of the burning'.

51. "This is for what your hands have sent ahead, and that Allah is not unjust unto the servants."

The verse indicates that were you to see when the angles take away the infidels, striking their faces and their backs, you would surprise. The objective meaning is the dead bodies of those who were killed in the Battle of Badr. The verse says:

"And had you seen when the angles take away the souls of those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs (and saying): 'Taste the punishment of the burning'."

It has been said that a man came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and said that he had seen a trace on the back of Abu Jahl which was like the trace of a horseshoe. The Prophet (S) said that it had been the trace of the smiting of the angles.

Mujahid had narrated that once a man told the Prophet (S) that as soon as he decided to smite one of the polytheists, he fell dead The Prophet (S) said that the angels had attacked the pagan before he started.

The angels tell the infidels that after this punishment there is another chastisement waiting them which is more burning and more blazing.

Some commentators have said that, on the day of the Battle of Badr, the angels had some arms made of iron when they struck them on the polytheists, a fire burned their wounds, and the purpose of the phrase 'taste the punishment of the burning' is this very meaning.

This retribution they are involved with is for the evil manner they showed from themselves in this life.

The reason why the verse says 'This is for what your, hands have sent ahead', is that most of actions are done by the hands. The purpose here is their crimes, faithlessness, and sins. The verse says

"This is for what your hands have sent ahead, and that Allah is not unjust unto the servants."

Allah (s.w.t) punishes the servants as much as they are deserving to, not more than that.

However, it is clearly understood from this verse that Allah does not punish anyone without having any sin, or for the sin another person has committed, because it is unjust So, Allah seriously negates cruelty and injustice from Himself, when He, says

"...and that Allah is not unjust unto the servants."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 52

كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

52. "(O' Prophet! the manner of pagans of your time is also) like the manner of Pharaoh's clan and those before them, they disbelieved in Allah's Signs, so Allah seized them for their sins. Verily Allah is strong, severe in retribution."

In this verse and it's following couple of verses, the Quran points to a constant Divine way of manner about clans and nations.

At first it addresses the Prophet (S) and implies that the style and the state of the pagans of Quraysh are like that of Pharaoh's clan and the people who were before them. Those people rejected the Signs of Allah, therefore He punished them for their sins. The verse says:

"(O' Prophet! the manner of pagans of your time is also) like the manner of Pharaoh's clan and those before them, they disbelieved in Allah's Signs, so Allah seized them for their sins..."

It is certain that Allah (s.w.t) is Mighty, Omnipotent, and His retribution is severe. The verse says:

"...Verily Allah is strong, severe in retribution."

Thus, there were not only the Quraysh and polytheists and idolaters of Mecca who rejected the signs of Allah and showed obstinacy before the Truth and disputed with the true leaders of humanity, and then they were involved with the retribution of their sins, but also this is a permanent Divine Law.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 53

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

53. "That is because Allah does not change a blessing He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own selves, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Then, by mentioning the basic root of the subject, the, Qur'an makes this matter more clear. It implies that all of these are for that Allah does not alter whatever blessing He bestows on a people unless those people themselves alter their own conditions, and, of course Allah is aware of everything. The verse says:

"That is because Allah does not change a blessing He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own selves, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In other words, the graces and blessings of Allah (s.w.t) are infinite, common, and general, but they reach people due to their eligibilities, suitability and competencies.

When people utilize the blessings of Allah (s.w.t) as a means for reaching unto their perfection, and show gratitude for them, which is the correct usage of them, Allah makes His blessings fixed and increased.

But, when these blessings are used as a means for disobedience, injustice, mischief, and ingratitude, He may take them back or changes them into some afflictions and calamities.

Thus, alteration of the bounties and blessings always depend on our own selves, else the blessings and merits of Allah are ceaseless.

An Islamic tradition indicates that nothing can change the Divine blessings like what injustice does, since Allah hears the complaints of the oppressed.[1]

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 54

كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلٌّ كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ

54. "Like the manner of Pharaoh's clan and those before them, they denied the Signs of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins, and We drowned pharaoh's 'clan, and all of them were unjust."

Following this aim, the Qur'an refers again to the state of some rich persons like the clan of Pharaoh and some groups of people from among former nations. It implies that the manner and worship of idolaters,

concerning the change of blessings and facing with the severe retributions, is like the manner and circumstances of the people of Pharaoh and the people before them. The verse says:

"Like the manner of Pharaoh's clan and those before them..."

They also rejected the Signs of their Lord which were sent down with the aim of their guidance, reinforcement, and felicity

"...they denied the Signs of their Lord...".

Therefore, the Lord destroyed them, too, for their own sins. The verse continues saying:

"...so We destroyed them for their sins..."

And Allah drowned Pharaoh's clan in the waves of the sea. The verse remarks:

"...and We drowned Pharaoh's clan..."

All of those people were unjust and cruel, both to themselves and to others. The verse concludes:

"...and all of them were unjust."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 55

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

55. "Verily the worst of animals in Allah's sight are those who disbelieve, so they will not have faith."

In verse *No. 22* from the current Surah, the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /sarr-ad-dawabb/ (the worst of animals) was introduced as 'those who do not contemplate', while here, in this verse, they are defined as 'those who disbelieve'. The verse says:

"Verily the worst of animals in Allah's sight are those who disbelieve, so they will not have faith."

So, the origin of infidelity is the absence of right intellect. The Qur'an considers the feature of humanity of man in wisdom and belief, so that if he does not contemplate or paves the way of infidelity, he will be out of the circle of humanity. Thus, a true human, indeed, is the one who is wise and has Faith.

It is possible that a disbeliever has a title and rank with the people of his society, but he is 'the worst of animals' in the sight of Allah.

It is cited in some commentary books that the referent of a concept of this verse is the Jews, but this idea does not harm the generality of the concept of the verse.

However, those who hear the call and invitation of prophets, and do not show any positive reflection to it, are 'the worst of animals'.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 56

الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ

56. "Those with whom you made a covenant, then they break their covenant every time, and they are not pious."

The agreement of the Jews with the Prophet (S) was that they should not help pagans and not try to hurt the Muslims. But those groups of the Jews broke their promise and for the Battle of Khandaq they helped pagans by selling them arms.

Therefore, breach of promise is not consistent with humanity.

But breach of promise is the style of infidels. Faithfulness and chivalry are necessary to piety. The verse says:

"Those with whom you made a covenant, then they break their covenant every time, and they are not pious."

Some Islamic traditions indicate that he who breaks promise is a hypocrite, although he establishes prayers and observes the fast.[2]

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 57

فَإِمَّا تَثْقَفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

57. "So, when you confront them in war, (by punishing them) scatter the ones behind them so that they might be admonished."

The Qur'anic term /taθqafannahum/ is derived from the Arabic word /θaqifa/ which means 'to understand something quickly and carefully'. Then the word mentioned in the above-mentioned verse means that 'when you encounter infidels in war, you should face them very vigilantly in order not to be seized unawares'.

The Arabic word /tasrid/ means 'to cause insecurity, anxiety' and 'to disperse'. Thus, the phrase means that you should attack the enemy in a manner and with a martial plan that their supporters out of the scene, and the forces behind them, become so terrified that they do not think of invasion and continuation of supporting them anymore.

The verse says:

"So, when you confront them in war, (by punishing them) scatter the ones behind them so that they might be admonished."

Islam is a religion of kindness and mercy, yet it does not tolerate treachery, breach of promise, and disturbance of the regularity and security. Then, infidels should be punished so violently that they relinquish attacking you again.

Notes

1. At- Tafsir-ul-Furqan
2. At- Tafsir-ul-Burhan

Section 8: Muslims Should be Prepared to Meet the Enemy in Any Number

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 58-59

وَإِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ

58. "And if you fear treachery from a people, break off (the covenant) with them in like manner. Verily Allah does not like the treacherous."

59. "And let not those who disbelieve suppose that they have excelled (the Muslims): verily they shall not weaken (you)."

The Qur'anic term /'anbio/is derived from /nabaoa/ which means 'to throw', here it means: 'then throw their covenant back to them'. That is, from before they should announce and cancel the covenant so that they would not be seized unawares and you, too, would not have acted cowardly.

The holy phrase /'ala sawa' /either means 'behaving correspondingly', viz. in the same manner that they think of plotting and breaching promise, you may cancel the covenant, too. Or, it means the clear canceling of the - covenant, or having a just behaviour toward the enemy.[1]

The verse is about the situation where there are some evidences upon the enemy's plot for invasion. So, in order to avoid it, precedence in canceling the covenant should be performed.

The performance of canceling the covenant is just when behaving correspondingly. The verse says:

"And if you fear treachery from a people, break off (the covenant) with them in like manner. Verily Allah does not like the treacherous."

And take the control of everything so vigorously that infidels do not think that they have preceded you. The verse; says:

"And let not those who disbelieve suppose that they, have excelled (the Muslims):..."

But, infidels cannot gain anything through treachery. The verse continues saying:

"...verily they shall not weaken (you)."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 60

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ

مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

60. "And prepare against them whatever you can of (military) power and of war-horses, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah, and your enemy, and others besides them, whom you do not know (but) Allah knows them. And whatever things you spend in the way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full, and you will not be dealt with unjustly."

Increase of War Power and Its Aim!

Adapting to the former instruction upon Islamic Struggle, in this verse the Qur'an points to an important principal which must be observed by

Muslims in different ages. This principal is the necessity of enough war preparation against the enemy.

At first, it says:

"And prepare against them whatever you can of (military) power and of war-horses..."

That is, do not wait until the enemy attacks you and then make yourselves prepare to fight. You should be prepared enough from before to stand against the probable attacks of the enemy. The concept of the verse is so vast that it quitely adapts to any time and any place.

If this great Islamic instruction which says: "And prepare against them whatever you can of (military) power..." is preached as a common motto everywhere and all Muslims apply it in their own lives, whether they are young or old, educated or uneducated, writer, or speaker, soldier or officer, farmer or merchant, it will be enough to make amends their retardation.

Practical life of the Prophet of Allah (S) as well as the great leaders of Islam, also shows that they never neglected any opportunity of fighting against their enemies.

They would not disregard any matter, small and great, about supplying arms and personals, encouraging their soldiers, choosing a suitable camping-place, deciding on a proper time for attacking the enemy, and utilizing all kinds of military methods.

Next to the statement of this instruction, the Qur'an points to the logical and manly aim of this subject. It implies that the aim is not that you mow the nations of the world, and even the people of your own community, by kinds of distinctive arms.

You should not spoil the towns and lands, or take in possession the properties and lands of others, or expand the principals of slavery and colonialism in the world. But, the aim is that by these means you frighten the enemy of Allah (s.w.t) and those who are the enemy of yours. The verse continues saying:

"...to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah, and your enemy,..."

The reason of it is that usually most of the enemies of the truth do not pay attention to the logical statements and human principals. They do not understand anything but the logic of force.

Then, the Qur'an adds that in addition to these enemies, whom you know, you have some other enemies whom you do not know, but Allah knows them, and with the increase of the military preparation in yourselves they may fear and return back. The verse says:

"...and others besides them, whom you do not know (but) Allah knows them..."

This statement contains an instruction for the Muslims of today, too. It implies that Muslims should not lay emphasis only on their known enemies and confine their preparation to the limit of struggling before them. They should also consider their probable enemies who are in potency, and prepare the utmost power and necessary forces they can.

Finally, the Qur'an points to another important matter. It implies that preparing power, forces, enough military; instruments and different means

of defense need a financial source. Therefore, it commands Muslims to supply this capital through a general cooperation.

They must know that whatever they spend in this way they have spent it in the way of Allah, and it will not be decreased. The verse says:

"...And whatever things you spend in the way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full..."

Equal to all that they give and, even more than that, will be repaid to them so that no injustice will be dealt with them. The verse ends as follows:

"...and you will not be dealt with unjustly."

Explanations

This verse is an instruction upon the Muslims to be prepared before the enemy from all points of view. They are commanded to supply any kind of arms and possibilities, to utilize all means and methods of propagation, even mottoes and poems that may cause the fright of infidels from the military power of Muslims.

When the Prophet (S) was informed that a new weapon had been made in Yemen, he sent someone to Yemen to supply it.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) that by means of an 'arrow' three persons will be sent into Paradise: its constructor, the one who prepares it, and the person who, throws (it toward the enemy of Allah).[2]

In Islam, financial winning and losing in the races of shooting, and horsemanship, have been counted permissible in order that military preparation might be supplied.

It is not such that everywhere logic and discussion are enough and effective, but sometimes enforcement and power should come in the scene, too.

That is why Muslims should always supply the most advanced military possibilities for the defense in such a manner that nothing may be neglected, whether they are of the kinds of political and material power, or the possibilities of propaganda and precautions.

In Islam, all people are soldiers and general mobilization is necessary. It is also necessary to cast terror into the hearts of; the enemies. A tradition indicates that even by tinging the beard do frighten the enemy, so that they do not say the Islamic troop is old.[3]

However, the war-horses are those horses which are kept ready and fed sufficiently in stables, not those which are left free.

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 61

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

61. "And if they incline to peace, then you (too) incline to it and put your trust in Allah; verily He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

This verse discusses about peace with the enemy and it makes this fact more clear. It says:

"And if they incline to peace, then you (too) incline to it…"

And, since, at the time of signing the treaty of peace, men often involve with doubts and hesitations, it commands the Prophet (S) that he does not hesitate in accepting the suggestion of peace when its conditions are logical,

wisely, and justly. He is ordered to trust in Allah, because He both hears their debates and is aware of their intentions.

The verse continues saying:

"...and put your trust in Allah; verily He is the All- Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 62

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

62. "And if they intend to deceive you, Allah is indeed sufficient for you. It is He Who strengthened you with His help and with (the support of) the believers."

If the leader of Muslims is certain of the enemy's trickery around the peace, the situation changes. But, in the case of the existence of probable of good intention, it should be vigilantly accepted.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that 'the Prophet's support performed by the believers' has been rendered into his support performed by Hadrat Ali (as)

Also Ibn-i- 'Asakir narrates from 'Abu-Hurayrah that, it is written on the 'Arsh:

"There is no good but I, (and) there is no partner for Me. Muhammad (S) is My servant and My Messenger. I supported him by Ali".

This is the same thing that Allah says in this verse.[4]

The verse says:

"And if they intend to deceive you, Allah is indeed sufficient for you. It is He who strengthened you with His help and with (the support of) the believers."

It is understood from this verse that Muslims should accept the suggestion of peace in order that they would not be introduced as 'the seekers of war', but they must be vigilant not to be deceived.

If we do our duties accordingly, we must not be afraid of difficulties, since Allah solves the difficulties.

"...It is He Who strengthened you with His help and with (the support of) the believers."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 63

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

63. "And He caused affection between their hearts. Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have caused affection between their hearts, but Allah caused affection between them; verily He is the Mighty, the Wise."

The verse, addressing the Prophet (S) implies that these sincere believers who have gathered around you, and refrain no sacrifice to offer you, formerly were some scattered people, enemy with each other.

Then Allah showered the light of guidance upon them and created love and affection between them so intensively that if you spent the whole wealth

from over the earth you could not wipe out the grudges of the Age of Ignorance from their hearts.

But, through the way of good device and by Islam, Allah created love and affection between them. The deeds of Allah are all done wisely and for common good.

This very thing is one of the great miracles that the Prophet of Allah (S) was sent to a people that, before Islam, if one of them was given a slap in the face, for its sake the fire of some fights would be lit and so much blood would be shed.

But, through the way of Faith, all those enmities and deeds done contumaciously disappeared and love and understanding substituted them. They became so faithful that they would not refuse killing father, son and brother for the sake of their Faith. Allah announces that He has done this work Himself.

The holy verse says:

"And He caused affection between their hearts. Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have caused affection between their hearts, but Allah caused affection between them; verily He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 64

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

64. "O Prophet! Allah suffices you, and the believers who follow you."

A group of the Jews of Bani-Qurayzah and Bani-Nadir falsely suggested to help the Prophet (S). The above holy verse was revealed saying that the believers were sufficient for him.

In 'Fada'il-us-Sahabah', a book written by Hafiz-'Abu- Na'im, a famous Muslim scholar, it is cited that the objective meaning of 'the believers', mentioned in this verse, is Ali- ibn-Abl-Talib (as)[5]

Allah, the Prophet (S) and the believers are wholly the basis of the Islamic system. In an Islamic society, the leader is appointed with the Divine criterions. His law is originated from revelation, and people are obedient to the leader and the law.

Obedience accompanied with Faith is a value, while obeying the leader without having Faith, or having Faith without following the leader is useless. The verse says:

"O Prophet! Allah suffices you, and the believers who follow you."

Notes

1. Al-Mizan
2. Tafsir-i-Furqan, narrated from Ad-Dur-ul-Manthur.
3. At- Tafsir-ul-Furqan, narrated from Man-la- Yahduruhul-Faqih
4. Tafsir-ul-Furqan, taken from Durr-ul-Manthur, vol. 3, p. 199
5. Al-Qadir, vol. 3, p. 51

Section 9: Muslims Should be Prepared For All Eventualities

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 65

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

65. "O Prophet! Urge on the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty patient (steadfast men), they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred (steadfast ones), they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, for they are a people who do not understand."

This verse negates the equilibrium of forces in figure. It emphasizes on the spirit, Faith and perseverance with patience, so, in order that no one supposes that the triumph of twenty fighters before two hundred ones is an exaggeration, it repeats that one hundred strivers may win one thousand fighters, if they are believers.

In the early battles of Islam, there has never been any statistic equilibrium. In the Battle of Badr, there were three hundred and thirteen believers in front of one thousand infidels. In Uhud, seven hundred Muslims fought against three thousand fighters.

In the Battle of Khandaq, three thousand strivers struggled before ten thousand enemies. In Mutah, there were ten thousand Muslims in front of one hundred thousand pagans.

One of the duties of an Islamic leader is to encourage people to Holy Struggle. The function of the statement of the commander before military activities is very effective.

Therefore, in wars and Holy Struggles, propagation is necessary. The verse says:

"O prophet! Urge on the believers to fight..."

The definite factor in the battlefields of Muslims is Faith and perseverance with patience, not the number of strivers alone.

That was why, at the beginning, under the command of Holy Struggle, the army of Islam, which was one tenth of that of the enemy, won the battle. The verse says:

"...If there be of you twenty patient (steadfast men), they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred (steadfast ones), they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve..."

The soldier of Islam should have these three qualities: Faith, patience, and vigilance. The Qur'an qualifies 'the believers' with patience, while about the disbelievers, the verse says:

"...for they are a people who do not understand."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 66

الْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

66. "Now Allah has lightened it for you, and He knows that there is weakness in you. So, if there be of you a hundred patient (steadfast men), they will overcome two hundred; and if there be of you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand by the leave of Allah; and Allah is with the patient (steadfast ones)."

The purpose of 'weakness', mentioned in the verse, is weakness in Faith and spiritualities, because the troops of Islam had not become decreased from the point of physical strength and number when they defeated.

In this verse, and the verse before it, the Qur'an points to three spiritual aspects which are the factors of victory, the absence of which is a preparation for defeat; they are: patience, Faith, and vigilance.

Thus, the main function in victory is by the leave and Will of Allah, else, in the Battle of Hunayn, where there were so many fighters Muslims defeated and ran away.

The verse says:

"Now Allah has lightened it for you, and He knows that there is weakness in you. So, If there be of you a hundred patient (steadfast men), they will overcome two hundred; and if there be of you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand by the leave of Allah..."

However, the patients are loved by Allah and they are in His refuge. The verse ends as follows:

"...and Allah is with the patient (steadfast ones)."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 67

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يُثْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

67. "It is not (fit) for any prophet to have captives unless he has thoroughly triumphed in the land. You desire the transitory world, while Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter; and Allah is the Mighty the Wise."

Allah has allowed no prophet to take the members of the enemy as captives and to keep them as pledge in order to take money from them, or hold them under obligation and let them go; unless that he exaggerates in killing the heathens an destroying them so that it becomes as a warning to others and that he gains authority. The verse says:

"It is not (fit) for any prophet to have captives unless he has thoroughly triumphed in the land..."

The next phrase of the verse addresses the Muslims, not the Prophet (S) because their desire was that they could take money from the captives and let them go. The purpose is that, in the first battle, i.e. the Battle of Badr, before gaining authority on the earth, they took ransom.

The Arabic phrase: /'arad-ad-dunya/ means the property of the world which is something vanishable. The verse continues saying:

"...you desire the transitory world..."

You pursue the wealth of the world while Allah desires the rewards of the Hereafter for you. The verse says:

"...while Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter..."

The helpers of Allah will never be defeated, and verily Allah acts wisely; then, do perform whatever He commands you, so that you enjoy the help of Allah. The verse ends:

"...and Allah is the Mighty the Wise."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verses 68-69

لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

68. "Had it not been for a prior ordinance from Allah, there would have fallen you a great chastisement for what you had taken to (improperly)."

69. "Eat then of what you have acquired in war as booty, (which is) lawful and good; and be in awe of Allah; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Once more in this verse the Qur'an reprimands and scorns those who put into danger the important social interests for their own fleeting financial gains. It says:

"Had it not been for a prior ordinance from Allah, there would have fallen you a great chastisement for what you had taken to (improperly)."

But, as it was mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an before, Allah's way of treatment is that, at first He explains the ordinances, then there will be His punishment for the disobedient of them.

In the second verse, the Qur'an refers to another ordinance of the ordinances concerning captives of war, and points to the question of ransom.

After the time when the Battle of Badr was ended and some captives were taken, a group of Ansar (the Helpers) told the Prophet (S) that they had killed seventy pagans and had kept seventy of them in captive, all of whom were from his tribe and, in fact, they were his captives.

They asked the Prophet (S) to remit those captives to them so that they could take ransom from them for their emancipation. When the Prophet (S) was waiting for the descent of revelation in this regard, the verse was revealed and the permission of taking 'ransom' for their emancipation was issued.

However, the verse lets Muslims use this spoil of the war, (i.e. the amount they used to take for emancipating captives). It says:

"Eat then of what you have acquired in war as booty, (which is) lawful and good..."

This sentence may have a vast meaning, and, besides the subject of 'ransom', it encompasses other booties, too.

Then, it commands them to be Godwary and to avoid disobeying Allah. The verse continues saying:

"...and be in awe of Allah;"

This meaning refers to the fact that these kinds of booties being lawful should not cause that the aim of strugglers in battlefields to be gathering spoils of war or taking some captives for ransom, and if formerly they had such disgraceful intentions in mind, they must leave them out now.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an promises remition and forgiveness about the past when it says:

"...verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Section 10: Captives of War

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 70

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَنْ فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنْ يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِمَّا أُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

70. "O Prophet! Say to the captives in your hands: 'If Allah knows any good in your hearts, He will give you better than what has been taken away from you, and He will forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In the occasion of revelation of the verse, it has been cited that 'Abbas,, Aqil, and Nufil were captured as captives of war in the Battle of Badr. By taking ransom, the Prophet (S) emancipated them, and they embraced Islam. Later, the money which was taken as their ransom was returned to them, too.[1]

(Most commentary books indicate that in the Battle of Badr some Muslims said that: for observing the respectability of the Prophet (S) 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, should not be taken ransom from.

The Prophet (S) said:

"By Allah, I do not renounce a dirham (a silver coin) of it."

Then, the Prophet (S) told his uncle:

"You are wealthy; then pay ransom for yourself and for your brother's son, Aqil."

'Abbas said:

"If I pay ransom, I will become empty of money."

The Prophet (S) answered:

"You can spend out of money you have in Mecca with your wife, 'Umm-ul- 'Fadl."

'Abbas said:

"None knew this matter. I understood that you are tru1y a prophet."

And, at once, he became a Muslim at his presence.)

In the Islamic system, there are three choices of designs for war captives:

1- Emancipating them without ransom; like what happened in the conquest of Mecca, where no captive was taken.

2- Emancipation of captives of war by taking ransom in cash, or by exchange of captives.

3- Keeping captives under the control of Muslims in order to hinder the enemy of Islam to be strengthened, and to teach Islam gradually to them both, maybe they be guided to it.

Choosing either of these three choices to be practically acted is in the authority of the Islamic judge.

Captives must be treated in such a manner that it prepares them to be guided. Thus, the aim of war is guiding people and defeating the legitimate ruler, not slaughtering, spoiling, taking captives d taking ransom.

That is why preaching and guiding captives is necessary.

The verse says:

"O Prophet! Say to the captives in your hands:..."

And, the true 'good' is Faith. The holy verse continues saying:

"...If Allah knows any good in your hearts, He will give you better than what has been taken away from you, and He will forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 71

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

71. "And if they intend to betray against you, then they have been betraying Allah from before, but He gave (you) power over them; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.!"

Muslims should neither treat the troops of the enemy with one hundred percent of suspicion, nor in a full favorable opinion. There should be neither a bare harshness nor a mere kindness, but they should be alert, confident in Allah, decisive, and merciful.

The manner of enemies is always treacherous. The verse says:

"And if they intend to betray against you, then they have been betraying Allah from before..."

But Allah is right and legitimate, and gives triumph to His adherents. The verse continues saying:

"...but He gave (you) power over them..."

Allah is aware of the enemies' intentions, and in the commandments Which He issues, He is the Wise and the Controller of common Interest.

The verse says:

"...and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 72

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

72. "Verily those who believed and migrated and strove with their properties and their selves in the way of Allah, and those who gave shelter and helped (the strivers), those are friends one of another. And those who believed but they did not migrate, you have not any friendship towards them until they migrate. Yet if they ask your help for (the sake of) religion, then it is your duty to help (them), save against a people with whom you have a treaty; and Allah sees all that you do."

Those who had Faith and, for the love of Allah and Messenger, separated from their homes and relations, i.e. they migrated from Mecca to Medina, and those who gave shelter to the Emigrants and helped them in war against their enemies, i.e. Ansar (the Helpers), inherit each other.

The Emigrants and the Helpers inherited from each other because of the brethren contract they concluded from the beginning with each other until the time when this matter was abrogated by Surah Al-'Anfal, *No. 8*, *verse 75*, which says:

"...and the blood relatives are nearer to each other...".

If the believers who did not migrate ask you to help them for the sake of the religion of Allah against infidels, you should help them, except for the group of infidels who have concluded the agreement of non-opposition with you. In this case you cannot help the Muslims in war against them. The verse says:

"Verily those who believed and migrated and strove with their properties and their selves in the way of Allah, and those who gave shelter and helped (the strivers), those are friends one of another. And those who believed but they did not migrate, you have not any friendship towards them until they migrate. Yet if they ask your help for (the sake of) religion, then it is your duty to help (them), save against a people with whom you have a treaty; and Allah sees all that you do."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 73

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ

73. "And (as for) those who disbelieve, they are friends one of another. If you do not so, there will be confusion in the earth and a greater mischief."

The meaning of this verse is that Muslims should refrain from being friends of infidels and helping them, though they may be their close relatives. They should leave out their guardianship, too.

If you do not do what Allah (s.w.t) has commanded you, there will appear a great confusion and a great mischief in the earth.

That is, if you do not settle a relation of brotherhood between yourselves, and some of you do not take one another as guardians, even by inheriting from each other, and do not prefer the connection of Islam to the connection of relationship, nor cut off the communication between you and pagans, you will confront a great confusion and mischief in the earth.

For, as long as Muslims are not untied before infidels, polytheism will remain and pagans will be bold upon Muslims and will call them towards infidelity.

The verse says:

"And (as for) those who disbelieve, they are friends one of another. If you do not so, there will be confusion in the earth and a greater mischief."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 74

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

74. "And (as for) those who believed and migrated and strove in the way of Allah, and those who gave shelter and helped, those are the believers truly; for them is forgiveness and a noble sustenance."

Then Allah refers again to the Emigrants and the Helpers (Ansar) and admires them. The verse says:

"And (as for) those who believed and migrated and strove in the way of Allah, and those who gave shelter and helped, those are the believers truly..."

The evidence of this statement is that they both emigrated, and helped the Muslims, and separated from their relatives, and also, by spending their properties for the sake of the religion of Allah, they proved their true Faith. The verse continues saying:

"...for them is forgiveness and a noble sustenance."

Surah Al-Anfal - Verse 75

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَأُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

75. "And those who believed afterwards and migrated and strove with you, they are of you, and the blood relations are nearer to each other, in the book of Allah; verily Allah knows everything."

The objective of the first part of the verse is those who believed after the first Emigration, and they migrated, too. The verse saying:

"And those who believed afterwards and migrated and strove with you..."

It is similar to the content of Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 10, which says:

"And those who came after them..."

The verse continues saying:

"…they are of you..."

This holy phrase means that they are like you and their judgment from the point of obligation of their friendship and helping them is the same as the Judgement of yours, although they believed and migrated after you.

"...and the blood relations are nearer to each other..."

That is, relatives are in precedence when they inherit. In (other words, when inheriting, some of them are more deserve from some others of the relatives.

This ordinance has been abrogated the heritage ordinance which had been issued because of Emigration and helping.

"...in the book of Allah..."

Some of the commentators have said that the holy phrase "in the book of Allah" means in the 'Protected Tablet', while some others have said that this holy phrase here means: 'in the Qur'an'. This holy verse can be taken as an evidence to the fact that whoever is nearer to the dead, from the point of relation, is more deserve to inheriting from him. The verse ends as follows:

"...verily Allah knows everything."

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth- Thaqalayn

Surah At-Tawbah, Chapter 9

Surah At-Tawbah or Surah Barā'at,

No. 9 (129 verses)

The Feature of Surah At-Tawbah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, which is the ninth Surah of the Qur'ān, contains *129* verses and has been revealed in the ninth year A.H. (anno Hejira). Some parts of the Surah were revealed before the Battle of Tabūk, some parts during the Battle, and other parts were revealed after it.

Regarding the Islamic literature, the most recorded known names of this Surah are 'At-Tawbah' and 'Al-Barā'at'. Since the subject of repentance of man and the return of the grace of Allah has repeatedly been referred to in this Surah, it has been called 'At-Tawbah', and for the fact that the Surah begins with the declaration of immunity towards idolaters, it has been named 'Al-Barā'at'.

The subject matters of this Surah are mostly related to the subject matters of Surah Al-'Anfāl. For this matter, some commentators, considering this Surah the continuation of that one, have said that, because of this circumstance, Surah At-Tawbah has not needed to have the holy phrase Bismillāh-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim.

But, according to Sh'iah's belief, the traditions which have been received from Ahlul-Bayt (as) denote that this Surah is independent and the absence of Bismillāh at its beginning is for its wrathful tone due to the idolaters. The holy phrase Bismillāh is an indication of mercy and security, while this Surah has been commenced with the declaration of immunity towards perjured idolaters.

For the importance of this Surah, the word of the Messenger of Allah (S) is sufficient when he said:

"The Suras Al-Barā't and Tauhid were revealed accompanied with seventy thousand rows of the angels."

Section 1: Immunity Declared

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 1

بَرَآءَةٌ مِنَ اللّه وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُم مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

1. "(This is a declaration of) immunity from Allah and His Messenger towards those of the polytheists with whom you made covenant."

Some Points Necessary to Be Noted

1- In the Islamic traditions, the name of this Surah has been introduced as 'Barā'at' and 'Tawbah'. This fact makes it clear that this Surah is not a part of Surah Al-'Anfāl, but it is an independent one.

2- The content of this Surah has a tone of indignation. For this reason it has begun without the holy phrase Bismillāh. By this sign we understand that the holy phrase Bismillāh-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim at the beginning of every Surah belongs to that very Surah and is a part of it. Thus, this holy phrase has not been located as a ceremonial phrase at the beginning of every Surah.

3- The declaration of Barā'at (immunity) was for the infidels' perjury which has been referred to in *verses 7* and 8 of the current Surah. In Islam, the general law is that promises should be fulfilled, and as long as the opposite party is faithful to the treaty, it should be kept, too.

Moreover, in that circumstance, it was for the reason of their weakness that the Muslims had to accept that treaty, else, the desire of the Muslims was the destruction of idolism as rapidly as possible.

Some Details Upon These Verses

In the eighth year A.H., Mecca was conquered, but the pagans still continued coming into Meccan to perform their worshipping rites which was, of course, a mixture of superstitions and aberrations.

Among their customs it was seen that they used to give in charity the clothing with which they had circumambulated. Once it happened that a woman desired to perform some more circumambulations after finishing her first circumambulation, but, since she had no more clothes with her, she had to circumambulate nakedly while people were watching her.

That circumstance was not tolerable for the Prophet (S) and the Muslims, who were in a very high degree of power. The Prophet (S) was waiting for the command of Allah until when this Surah was revealed in Medina.

The Messenger of Allah (S) commissioned Abū-Bakr to convey some verses of it unto the people of Mecca. The Prophet (S) chose him, maybe, for the reason that he was an old man and people were not sensitive to him.

But, after Abū-Bakr had left Medina towards Mecca, Angel Gobriel appeared to the Holy Prophet (S) and brought a Message from Allah denoting that the recital of those verses of the Qur'ān should be conveyed either by the Holy Prophet himself or by the one who is of him. As soon as the divine command was received, the Prophet (S) called Hadrat Ali (as) and instructed him to do it. He said:

"I am his and he is mine."

It was so that, in the midst of the way, Ali (as) took away the verses from him and went into Mecca where he recited them unto the pagans.

The details of the recitation of the verses of this Surah by Ali (as) are recorded in the books of the Sunnites, too. Some Prophet's companions such as: Abū-Bakr himself, Ali (as), Ibn-'Abbās, 'Anas-ibn-Mālik and Jābir-ibn-'Abdillah'Ansāri have narrated them and quoted them inside a lot of Islamic sources.[1]

Some of the Sunnite writers have tried to pretend this fact as an ordindary matter so that it would not be counted as a kind of privilege for Hadrat Ali (as).

They have considered the mission of recitation of the verses given to Ali (as) as a manner of complying with his request, not as a privilege for him; while for complying with any one's request, a safe mission might be given to him, not the recitation of the verses of declaration of Barā'at (immunity) from pagans, in the region of infidelity and by a person who had killed many of the idolaters in different wars and where a lot of the people were carrying his hatred in their hearts.

When Allah commanded Moses (as) to go toward Pharaoh in order to invite him to Unity, he (as) said:

"My Lord! Verily I killed one of them, so I fear lest they should slay me;".[2]

Then he asked Him to send his brother Aaron with him as an aider. But, Ali (as), who had killed a large number of the chiefs of pagans, went alone towards them and recited the verses of immunity unto them with the utmost calmness. This event happened in a sensitive place, i.e. Muna, where the site of the last lapidation was located near-by.

The subjects which were revealed and were announced unto pagans by Ali (as) were as follows:

1- Acquittal declared, and treaties cancelled.

2- The prohibition of pagans participating in Hajj from the following year.

3- The prohibition of circumambulation around the Ka'bah in the state of nakedness.

4- The prohibition of pagans entering the Sacred Mosque.

The holy phrase: "(This is a declaration of) immunity from Allah " indicates that this acquittal is from the side of Allah.

And the, phrase: "and His Messenger ", mentioned immediately after it, means that the strings of promises and treaties were cut off, respites were ended, and agreements were cancelled.

The addressee 'you' in the sentence: "towards those of the polytheists with whom you made covenant " is both the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Muslims. Thus, it means that they should declare immunity unto the polytheists between whom and them there was an agreement, because Allah (s.w.t.) and His Messenger (S) are quit of them.

The objective meaning here is that Allah (s.w.t.) and His Messenger (S) are quit of giving a promise to them and, after that, fulfilling it, because the polytheists who made covenants with them broke their promises.

If someone asks how it is permissible for the Prophet (S) to break his promise, the answer is that it is permissible for the Prophet (S) to break his promise by one of the following ways:

1) The fulfilment of the promise was conditioned that there would not come any other command from Allah, the Exalted, upon it, and since there came down a revelation instructing that there would remain no covenant thereafter, the Messenger of Allah (S) broke the covenant.

2) Since treachery and perjury was made manifest from the side of idolaters, Allah, the Exalted, instructed His Prophet (S) to break their covenant, too.

3) That covenant was not a permanent (and an absolute) treaty, but it was bound over a definite point of time and for a certain length of time, so that when its term was ended that covenant would be broken, either.

It has also been pointed out in some traditions that the Messenger of Allah (S) had conditioned the above mentioned matters with them in the treaty. It has also been narrated that the idolaters broke their promise or decided to break it.

Then, Allah, the Glorified, commanded His Prophet to break their covenant, too Next to that, through the following verse, Allah, the Glorified, addressing the idolaters, says:

"So go about in the earth…".

Explanations

1- Fulfilment the promise, yes; but surrending to plots, never. The verse says:

"(This is a declaration of) immunity from Allah and His Messenger towards those of the polytheists with whom you made covenant."

2- The legislator is Allah,[3] of course, but in conduct and action, Allah and the Messenger of Allah are mentioned beside each other:

"…from Allah and His Messenger…"

3- It is true that legally we have to be faithful to our treaties, but heartily immunity from polytheists and those who deviated from the straight path is a religious principle in Islam.[4]

4- If a treaty is cancelled because of fear from a plot and a treachery, it should be announced to the opposite party, in order that they might not be seized unawares.

5- Immunity is a sign of sharp conclusiveness and authority; while being silent before plots and breach of covenants is a sign of weakness and abasement.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 2

فَسِيحُوا فِي الاَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا اَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّه وَاَنَّ اللّه مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ

2. "So go about in the earth freely for four months, and know that you can not make futile Allah, and that Allah degrades the infidels."

The Qur'ānic phrase: "So go about in the earth freely…" addresses the pagans of Mecca meaning that they could go about freely, and with peace of mind, in the land of Mecca and, being in easy circumstances. They were allowed to supply their necessities during that time when they were in security from the swords of the Muslims.

Then, it continues saying: "…for four months…" which means when this time was ended and the pagans did not embrace Islam, the string of

their covenant would be broken and the security of life and wealth would be removed from them.

"…and know that you can not make futile Allah…"

That is, they should know that they could not escape from Allah, since wherever they might be they were under the Power and Command of Allah.

"…and that Allah degrades the infidels."

This part of the verse means that they should also know that Allah will bring disgrace to the unbelievers.

Regarding the question that which months were the four months that Allah respited the pagans, most commentators have said that this time had been from the beginning of Shawwāl until the end of Muharram, because these verses were revealed in Shawwāl.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 3

وَأَذَانٌ مِنَ اللّه وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الاَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللّه بَرِيءٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا نَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّه وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

3. "And (this) is proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allah and His Messenger are quit of the polytheists. Yet if you repent, that will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you can not make futile Allah; and inform those who disbelieve of a painful punishment."

Once more the Qur'ān announces the cancellation of the treaties of pagans with a stronger emphasis. It even assigns the date of its proclamation when the verse says:

"And this is proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allah and His Messenger are quit of the polytheists…"

In fact, by this public proclamation in the land of Mecca and on that great day, Allah has shut the enemies' ways of seeking pretext, and cut off the tongue of slanderers so that they might not say that they were seized unawares and were attacked unduely.

Then the verse addresses the pagans themselves and, through a kind of encouragement and warning, uses effort to guide them. At first, it implies that if they repent and return to Allah, with desisting from idolatry, it will be better for them. The verse says:

"…Yet if you repent, that will be better for you…"

That is, if they embrace Islam, the religion of Unity, it is good for their own selves both in this world and the next one. And, if they contemplate properly, they will understand that, under its ray, all disturbances will turn to peace and arrangement, and it is not so that their right belief brings any benefit for Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (S).

After that statement, the Qur'ān warns the zealous and stubborn opponents, saying that if they disobey this command, which supplies their own happiness, they should know that they can never weaken Allah, nor are they able to go outside of His Might. The verse continues saying:

"…and if you turn back, then know that you can not make futile Allah..."

Finally, the verse alarms those who resist obstinately not to believe, and says:

"…and inform those who disbelieve of a painful punishment."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 4

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئاً وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَداً فَأَتِمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَى مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّه يُحِب الْمُتَّقِينَ

4. "Except those of the polytheists with whom you made covenant, and who have not failed you in anything nor have supported anyone against you. Then fulfil their treaty with them until (the end of) their term; surely Allah loves the pious ones."

This unilateral cancellation of pagans' covenants related only to those pagans from whom some signs of perjury, or preparation of perjury, had been appeared. Therefore, in this holy verse, one group of the polytheists have been excepted. The Qur'ān says:

"Except those of the polytheists with whom you made covenant, and who have not failed you in anything nor have supported anyone against you…"

Thus, the command of Allah about conducting with this group is as follows:

"…Then fulfil their treaty with them until (the end of) their term..."

The reason of this exception is stated that Allah loves the pious ones, those who avoid any perjury and transgression.

It says:

"…surely Allah loves the pious ones."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 5

فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الاَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدتمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الْصَّلاَةَ وَءَاتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّه غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

5. "Then when the sacred months are drawn away, slay the polytheists wherever you find them, and seize them and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush. But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the poor-rate, (zakāt) then leave their way free to them; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this verse, the duty of Muslims towards pagans after their respite, which was four months, has been stated, where the most intensive instruction has been issued upon them. It says:

"Then when the sacred months are drawn away, slay the polytheists wherever you find them…"

Next to that, it continues saying:

"…and seize them…" in order to take them captives.

The verse, then adds that they must be put in the circle of besiege. It says:

"…and besiege them…"

After that, the verse extends the statement against them, and says:

"…and lie in wait for them in every ambush…"

This harshness of action is for the sake that Islam's plan is to root out idolatry from the whole points of the earth, since idolatry is not a creed or religion which could be respected.

But, this harshness and severity is not in the sense that the way of return is shut to them, but whenever and wherever they decide they can change their direction. That is why, immediately next to that, the Qur'ān adds:

"…But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the poor-rate, (zakāt) then leave their way free to them..."

As for the reason of this opportunity, it is said that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful, and He does not repel from Himself the one who returns to Him. The verse ends with the following phrase:

"…verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 6

وإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَاَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلاَمَ اللّه ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لاَ َعْلَمُونَ

6. "And if any of the polytheists seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the Word of Allah; then do convey him to his place of security; that is because they are a people who do not know."

This verse means that if after passing four months of respite one of the idolaters, against whom you were commanded to fight, comes to you and asks for security to hearken to your invitation and to the reasoning of the Qur'ān, do respite him and explain your aim to him. Then do respite him to listen to the Word of Allah and to contemplate over it. The verse says:

"And if any of the polytheists seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the Word of Allah..."

The manner in which the Qur'ān has appointed only the Word of Allah and has said: "…till he hears the word of Allah..." is for the reason that the most important proofs lie in the very Word of Allah.

Then the verse continues saying:

"…then do convey him to his place of security..."

This part of the verse means that if the one embraced Islam, he would obtain the goodness and prosperity of two worlds; and if the one did not embrace Islam, you should not kill him in order to avoid deceiving him, but you should send him to his own home where he has security of life and wealth.

The concluding phrase of the holy verse is as follows:

"…that is because they are a people who do not know."

This phrase means that this respite is for the sake that such people are some ones who do not know the Faith and the reasons of Islam. Then, you should respite them so that they hear, contemplate well and become cognizant.

Notes

1. Musnad Ahmad-I-Hanbal, vol. 3, pp. 213 and 283; and vol. 1 pp. 151 and 330 - Mustadrak Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 51 - Tafsir-i-Al-Manār, vol. 10, p. 57 - Tafsir-i-Tabari, vol. 10, p. 46 - Tafsir-i-Ibn-I-Kathir, vol. 2, pp. 322 and 333 - Ihghāgh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 5, p. 368

- Fadā'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 2, p. 342 - The names of 73 authors who have recorded this event in their commentary books, like Fakhr-i-Rāzi and 'Ālūsi, are mentioned in Al-Qadir, vol. 6, p. 338

2. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 33

3. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 26 says: "…and He does not make any one His associate in His Judgement."

4. This fact is current whether it is in the favour and grace, as in this Surah, verse No. 74 says: "… Allah and His Messenger enriched them out of His grace…"; or in allegiance the Qur'ān says: " Verily those who swear their fealty unto you do but swear fealty unto Allah…" (Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 10); or in obedience: "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…" (Surah An-Nisā', No. 4, verse 80); or in immunity, like this verse. (Tafsir-I-Atyab-ul-Bayān)

Section 2: The Immunity - Its Reason Explained

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 7

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِندَ اللّهِ وَعِندَ رَسُولِهِ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتمْ عِندَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِب الْمُتَّقِينَ

7. "How can there be a covenant for the polytheists with Allah and with His Messenger? Except those with whom you made covenant at the Holy Mosque; so long as they stand faithful to you, then be you (too) faithful to them; verily Allah loves the pious ones."

Through the previous verses, Allah (s.w.t.) commanded the covenants of the pagans to be cancelled. Here, in this verse, it explains that the reason of that commandment was the very perjury which appeared from them. But, concerning those pagans who were faithful to their covenants, the Qur'ān instructs to having perseverance with them. So, it says:

"How can there be a covenant for the polytheists with Allah and with His Messenger?…"

This phrase of the verse means how they may have the covenant of friendship while they have decided in their hearts to breach the covenant. This statement (of interrogation) is said either because of wonder, or as a positive interrogation with a negative sense.

Some commentators have said that this verse means how may Allah instruct that you desist from shedding the blood of pagans? Then, He has exceptioned the following group of pagans, and said:

"…Except those with whom you made covenant at the Holy Mosque..."

This part of the verse means that they have covenant with Allah, because they do not intend in their hearts to perform any perjury or treachery against you.

Then the verse continues saying:

"…so long as they stand faithful to you, then be you (too) faithful to them..."

That is, so long as they are faithful to their covenant and remain in the straight way with you upon their promise, you should act with the same manner, too.

And, the last phrase of the verse indicates that Allah loves the pious, the ones who avoid perjury. The verse says:

"…verily Allah loves the pious ones."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 8

كَيْفَ وإِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لاَيَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلاًّ وَلا ذِمَّةً يُرْضُونَكُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

8. "How (can it be?) For if they prevail against you, they will observe towards you neither ties of relationship nor treaty. They please you with their mouths while their hearts do not conscent, and most of them are ungodly."

The repetition of the word 'How' in this verse is for the reason that it seems improbable and rare that pagans stand faithful to their covenant.

Then, it's meaning (the verb of which has been omitted) is: how there may remain a covenant for them while if they acquire mastery and prevail upon you, knowing the background of your Faith and your covenants, they will observe neither any ties of relationship nor any promise and treaty. The verse says:

"How (can it be?) For if they prevail against you, they will observe towards you neither ties of relationship nor treaty…"

The Arabic word: /'ill/ means 'relationship' and it has also been used in the sense of 'oath'.

By the usage of the word / yardūnakum / (they please you) in the verse, Allah has qualified the state of pagans meaning that their inwards are opposite from their outwards. The verse says:

"…They please you with their mouths…"

Then, the verse has been continued implying that the grudges and enmities they have in their hearts are different from the nice words they utter through their mouths.

"…while their hearts do not conscent…"

Finally, in the continuation of qualifications of pagans, the verse denotes that most of them excess in infidelity and idolatry and do not have any virtue and manliness to prevent them from these affairs, while there are some pagans who usually show chastity in committing what is disgrace, and refrain from breaching promise and perjury. The verse ends as follows:

"…and most of them are ungodly."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 9

اشْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللّه ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً فَصَدوا عَن سَبِيلِهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَاكَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

9. "They have sold the signs of Allah for a small price, and have hindered (people) from His way. Surely evil was what they used to do."

In exchange for losing the signs of Allah, whatever they gain is naught. The verse says:

"They have sold the signs of Allah for a small price…"

Human beings are free in action and choosing the way, and all the Divine verses which refer to the bargains of human beings are the signs indicating to his freedom. The holy verse continues saying:

"…and have hindered (people) from His way…"

Therefore, selling the pleasure of Allah and the eternal Paradise for the corruptive fleeting world is the worst work, because the whole world, and whatever is found in it, in the face of favours of Allah bestowed to the believers, is a small thing. That is why the verse says:

"…Surely evil was what they used to do."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 10

لايَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلاًّ وَلاَ ذِمَّةً وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ

10. "They observe towards a believer neither ties of relationship nor treaty, and these are they who are the transgressors."

This verse is again upon the statement of Allah's Wisdom due to His severe command instructing to quitting pagans.

In the previous couple of verses, the meaning was about the lack of observing treaty towards the Muslims; "…they will not observe towards you any ties of relationship or treaty…", while, here, the meaning of: "They observe towards a believer neither ties of relationship nor Treaty…" has been pointed out, which is a statement of their quarrelsomeness towards any believer.

Thus, pagans have enmity against the believers, then, never be in any doubt that you should struggle severely against them. In the opinion of infidels, the greatest fault of Muslims is the very Faith they have in Allah, and the same thing is the pretext of their hostility towards them. The verse says:

"They observe towards a believer neither ties of relationship nor treaty…"

However, perjury is the same as transgression. So the verse says:

"…and these are they who are the transgressors."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 11

فإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَءَاتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَنُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

11. "But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the alms (zakāt), then they are your brethren in faith; and We explain the signs for the people who know."

In the former verses of this Surah, Allah's commandment was: "…But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the alms, then leave their way free to them..." (verse 5), while in this verse, He instructs that not only you should not bother them, but also do forget the past and treat them as if they are your brothers. The verse says:

"But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the alms (zakāt), then they are your brethren in faith; and We explain the signs for the people who know."

Explanations

1. In confronting them, observe the style of graduality and proceed step by step. At first, there is the lack of opposition: "…then leave their way free to them…" and then:

"…they are your brethren in faith…".

2. A true repentance is accompanied with action:

"…they repent and perform the prayer…"

3. Those who do not perform the prayer and do not pay the alms are not our brethren in faith, as the verse says:

"…if… perform… and pay… then they are your brethren in faith..."

4. The basis of a Muslim's relations, and love and enmity, is the religion, as in the verse next to the above mentioned verse, it is said:

"…if they break their oaths… then fight…"

5. The condition of entering into the circle of 'brethren in faith' is prayer and alms.

6. You should have a brotherly treatment with a repenter.

"…if they repent… then they are your brethren…"

7. Those who were deserving death formerly, now, under the light of repentance, prayer, and alms are equal in rights with Muslims.

"…then they are your brethren in faith..."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 12

وَإِن نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُم مِن بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لاَ أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنتَهُونَ

12. "But if they break their oaths after their covenant and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of infidelity. Verily there is no oath for them, so that they may desist."

Once Ali-ibn-Abi Tālib (as) was asked why the fugitives of the Battle of Seffin were persued, but in the Battle of Camel the fugitives were left free.

He (as) said that in Seffin the leader of infidelity was alive and the fugitives would gather around him. And, after being formed, they might attack. But in the Battle of Camel, where their leader was killed, there was not any pivot around which they could be formed and organized again.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever makes sarcastic remarks to your religion, he will surely become infidel." Then he (as) recited this verse.[1]

Explanations

1. Since the origin of perjury and deriding the religion is often from the side of the chiefs of infidelity, then struggle hard against them. The verse says:

"But if they break their oaths after their covenant and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of infidelity…"

2. The Islamic Holy Struggle is for the defend of the religion. The verse says:

"…they break their oath… and revile your religion, then fight…"

3. Apostasy is one of the kinds of perjury and deriding the religion.

4. Oppose seriously against those who blaspheme.

5. When striving for the religion, make inquires of the chiefs of plotters, the central office of commanders, and organization, and destroy them.

"…the leaders of infidelity…"

6. Not any oath should beguile you; the oaths of the breachers of covenant are invalid. The verse says:

"…Verily there is no oath for them…"

7. The aim of the Islamic Holy Struggle is to prevent the enemy's plot. The verse says:

"…so that they may desist."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 13

أَلاَ تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْماً نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُم بَدَءُوكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَاللهُ أَحَقُّ أَن تَخْشَوْهُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

13. "Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Messenger, and they did attack you first? Do you fear them? But Allah is most deserving that you should fear Him, if you are believers."

In order to encourage Muslims and to banish any kind of listlessness, fear, and hesitation concerning this vital affair from their minds and their selves, the Qur'ān says:

"Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Messenger…"

You were not the beginners of attack and perjury to be worried and anxious about it, but the fight and perjury was started form their own side. The verse says:

"…and they did attack you first?…"

So, if some of you hesitate fighting against them because of fear, this fright is quietly improper. The verse continues saying:

"…Do you fear them? But Allah is most deserving that you should fear Him, if you are believers."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 14

قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ

14. "Fight them, (and) Allah will punish them at your hands and degrade them, and He will help you (to victory) over them and heal the (injured) breasts of a people (who) believe."

There may be asked how it is that here, in this holy verse, the statement is upon the chastisement of people while in Surah Al-'Anfāl, *No. 8*, *verse 32* the Qur'ān, addressing the Prophet (S) says:

"But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them…".

The answer of this question is that the objective meaning of that verse is the heavenly chastisements which are destructive, like the chastisements of the People of 'Ād and Thamūd. In this verse, the words are about the hardship and punishment of fight. The verse says:

"Fight them, (and) Allah will punish them at your hands and degrade them, and He will help you (to victory) over them and heal the (injured)breasts of a people (who) believe."

Explanations

1- Presence in the scene and Holy Struggle should be shown from your side, and then help and assistance come from Allah.

"Fight them, (and) Allah will punish them at your hands and degrade them, and He will help you…"

2- Strivers of Holy Struggles are Allah's arms and His executive factors.

"…And Allah will punish them at your hands…"

3- The normatic customs of Allah are executed through the natural ways, causes and means.

"…at your hands…"

4- Next to the martial defeat of the enemy, there comes the turn of a spiritual and political knock.

"…will punish them and degrade them…"

5- The aim of an Islamic war is to efface infidelity, to disgrace infidels, and to bring peace for the believers.

"… He will punish them and degrade them… and heal the (injured) hearts of a people (who) believe."

6- It is necessary to have encouragement and preaching before war.

7- It is true that in war there will some people be martyred and some others become remorseful, but the Islamic community will continue to live in peace and honour.

8- In social affairs, the fate of the believers relates to each other. Thus, your victory is the remedy of the injured hearts of other believers.

"…He will help you (to victory) over them and heal the (injured) hearts of a people (who) believe."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 15

وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ الله عَلَى مَن يَشَآءُ وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

15. "And He removes the rage of their hearts, and Allah turns (mercifully) to whomever He pleases, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Finally, in the conflict between right and wrong, after bearing the bitterness of troubles, the sweetness of triumph is for the believers. The verse says:

"And He removes the rage of their hearts…"

After gaining victory, you ought to receive those who come to you to join you, and you should not tell them where they were until then. The abovementioned verse, in this regard, says:

"…and Allah turns (mercifully) to whomever He pleases…"

You must never repel those who come to you because of the fear of their plot. Allah is aware of the true repentance or a hypocritic one but, according to the Divine Wisdom, with keeping the principles of security, whoever expresses Islam it should be accepted from him.

"…and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 16

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ الله الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِ اللّه وَلا رَسُولِهِ وَلا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً وَالله خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

16. "Or did you think (only with claim of Faith) you would be left (in peace) while Allah has not yet known those of you who have struggled hard and have not taken any one as an intimate friend besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers? And Allah is aware of what you do."

In this verse, the Muslims are encouraged to the Holy Struggle in another way. It attracts their attention to their heavy responsibility that they have in this regard.

It implies that they must not consider that only by claiming Faith everything will be arranged all right, but the truthfulness of their intention and the uprightness of their speech, and the reality of their belief will be made manifest when they confront the enemies, confronting them sincerely and free from any hypocrisy.

At first, the Qur'ān inquires whether they imagine that they will be left in peace and they will not be put in the course of examination. It is in this case that their strivers, and those of them who have not taken any one as confidant except Allah and the Prophet (S) and the believers, have not yet been known. The verse says:

"Or did you think (only with claim of Faith) you would be left (in peace) while Allah has not yet known those of you who have struggled hard and have not taken any one as an intimate friend besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers?…"

In fact, the abovementioned part of the verse reminds Muslims two subjects. These subjects are as that only with the bare claim of Faith the work is not completed, and the personality of people will not be made clear, but they will be examined by two means:

The first is Holly Struggle in the way of Allah with the purpose of effacing the effects of paganism and idolatry. And the second is the abandonment of any relation and cooporation with hypocrites. The former dismisses the foreign enemies, and the latter expels the internal enemies.

Then, as a warning and emphasis, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…And Allah is aware of what you do."

Notes

1. Tafsir-Nr-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 3: Service of the Sacred Mosque, and the Idolaters

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 17

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَن يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللّه شَاهِدِينَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِم بِالْكُفْرِ أُوْلَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ

17. "It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah, while they bear witness to unbelief against themselves. These it is whose deeds are null, and in the Fire shall they abide forever."

It is true that the occasion of revelation of this verse is about the Sacred Mosque, yet its command concerns all mosques and, for the same reason, the word of 'mosques' has been applied in it, not the phrase of Sacred Mosque.

One of the items that was announced by Ali (as) in immunity from pagans was that the Sacred Mosque was not permitted to be mended by idolaters. They should not even enter it. This meaning has been pointed out in verse *No. 27* of the current Surah. The above verse says:

"It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah, while they bear witness to unbelief against themselves. These it is whose deeds are null, and in the Fire shall they abide forever."

Explanations

1. Infidels are not permissible to interfere building mosques and also in foundations belonging to the culture and religion of Muslims.

2. Neither ever income is lawful, nor ever association is worthy. Be aware that because of the love of mosques in you infidels can penetrate in your religious affairs. The verse says:

"It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah…"

3. Those who pretend to impiety are not rightful to interfere in the religious affairs. The verse says:

"…while they bear witness to unbelief against themselves…"

4. In building and running the sacred centers and foundations, do not take the money of impious ones, so that they can not boast, interfere and expect any thing.

5. An action alone is not so important, but its intention has the essential function. The verse says:

"It is not for the polytheists to maintain…"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 18

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللّه مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلاَةَ وءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلاَّ اللّه فَعَسَى أُوْلَئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

18. "Only he shall maintain the mosques of Allah who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and performs the prayer, and pays the alms (zakāt), and fears none but Allah. They, hopefully, will be among the guided."

Mosques are the important centers of Muslims' worship and social activities. Therefore, both their custodians should be pure and pious and

their programs must be constructive and educative. Also, their budget should be lawful, and those who haunt there must be godly and pious.

Otherwise, when the producers of mosques are some tyrants and aggressive rulers, and their prayer-leaders are some illiterate coward persons, mosques will naturally remain far off from their main aim which is to be spiritually populated, not constructionally.

As the late Feyz-i-Kāshāni has pointed out in his commentary book entitled: At-Tafsir-us-Sāfi, maintaining a mosque includes: mending, cleanliness, pavement, light, teaching, and preaching.[1]

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: "When you see a man haunts a mosque, then testify to his Faith."

Explanations

1. Maintaining a mosque and its custodianship needs some conditions:

From the point of belief, Faith in Origin and End is necessary.

From the point of practice, establishing prayers and paying alms are obligatory.

From the point of spirit, bravity and impenetrability are demanded.

2. If the custodians of mosques be brave enough, the mosques will be the center of helpful activities against transgression.

3. The duty of the custodians of godly mosques and the maintainers of them is helping the deprive. Therefore, they should be the givers of alms. The verse says:

"…and performs the prayer, and pays the alms (zakāt), and fears none but Allah…" [2]

4. Faith is not aloof from practice; prayer is not separate from alms; and a mosque is not empty from revolution and struggle against injustice. The verse says:

"Only he shall maintain the mosques of Allah who believes in Allah and the last Day, and performs the prayer, and pays the alms (zakāt) and fears none but Allah. They, hopefully will be among the guided." [3]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 19

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَآجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الاَخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه لاَيَسْتَوُونَ عِندَ اللّه وَالله لا َهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

19. "Do you make the giving of water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque equal to someone who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the way of Allah? They are not equal with Allah, and Allah does not guide the unjust people."

Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, and Shaybah, the custodian of Ka'bah, were boasting to each other. Abbas boasted of his job which was supplying water for the pilgrimages of the Sacred House, and Shaybah boasted of being the custodian of the Ka'bah.

Ali (as) said that he gloried in the fact that they embraced Islam with the help of his struggle and his sword. Abbas was annoyed and complained of Ali (as) before the Prophet (S). Then, this verse was revealed.

For his precedence, Ali (as) repeatedly called to witness by this verse, because Faith and Holy Struggle were superior to the services done in the age of idolatry which did not bring them spiritual worth. The verse says:

"Do you make the giving of water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque equal to someone who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the way of Allah?…"

Therefore, a deed without being accompanied by faith is something hollow. It is like a mirage, or as a body without soul.

This fact must be remarked here that sincere strivers are superior to others, although the latter are helpful in a lot of services through some other jobs.

That is why if the true Faithful strivers be compared as equivalent with others, it will be counted as one of the social injustices.

The verse continues saying:

"…They are not equal with Allah, and Allah does not guide the unjust people."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 20

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِندَ اللَّهِ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ

20. "Those who believed and emigrated, and strove in Allah's way with their properties and their selves, have a greater rank with Allah, and these they are the triumphant."

As an emphasis and a more explanation, the Qur'ān in this verse indicates that those who believed and embraced Islam and migrated (to Medina) and struggled with their possessions and their selves in the way of Allah, are the highest in rank in the view of Allah, and they are the achievers of salvation. The verse says:

"Those who believed and emigrated, and strove in Allah's way with their properties and their selves, have a greater rank with Allah, and these they are the triumphant."

Explanations

1. In Islam, Faith, migration, and Holy Struggle, like piety, are located at the top of values.

"…have a greater rank…"

2. With some people, the criterion is their tribal and racial relationships, while in the divine reckons, Faith, migration, and Holy Straggle are criterions of values,

(…with Allah…).

If all Muslims and the Prophet's companions could gather and sit in a row, the one who believed first (sooner than any other man), and spent the longest time in the battlefields of Islam, where he suffered the strokes, would not be any one save Ali-ibn-i-'Abi Tālib (as).

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 21

يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ

21. "Their Lord gives them good news of Mercy from Himself and (His) good pleasure, and of gardens wherein for them are lasting bounties."

The Qur'ān announces that for these three significant deeds (Faith, migration, and Holy Struggle) Allah will give them three great merits:

1. Their Lord bestows them glad tidings of the vast Mercy from Himself, and makes them enjoy it.

The verse says:

"Their Lord gives them good news of Mercy from Himself…"

2. The Lord will endow them His good pleasure. The verse continues saying:

"…and (His) good pleasure…"

3. In addition to them, He will let them enjoy of gardens in Heaven, and of the bounties which are perpetual and eternal. The verse says:

"…and of gardens wherein for them are lasting bounties."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 22

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَداً إِنَّ اللَّه عِندَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

22. "Therein they will abide for ever, verily Allah has a great reward with Him."

In order to lay a more emphasis on the previous meaning, the Qur'ān adds:

"Therein they will abide for ever…"

Then, the reason of it is stated that there are some great rewards with Allah which He will remit His servants instead of their good deeds. The verse says:

"…verily Allah has a great reward with Him."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 23

يَآ َ هَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَآءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الإِيمَانِ وَمَن َ تَوَلَّهُم مِنكُمْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

23. "O' you who have Faith! Do not take your fathers and your brothers for guardians if they prefer unbelief to belief, and whoever of you takes them for a guardian, those - they are the unjust."

The last temptation and pretext that might be appear among a group of Muslims in front of the command of war against idol-worshipers was that they thought if they fought against the idolaters, they should renounce their relatives and tribes.

On the other side, their capitals and commerce was mostly in the hands of idolaters. By means of their intercourse into Mecca, the briskness of their market would increase.

On the third side, this group of Muslims had some good and comfortable houses in Mecca which might be destroyed if they fought against idolaters.

This holy verse clearly and decisively answers such persons. At first, it says:

"O' you who have Faith! Do not take your fathers and your brothers for guardians if they prefer unbelief to belief…"

Then, as an emphasis, it adss:

"…and whoever of you takes them for a guardian, those - they are the unjust."

What an injustice is greater than this that a person, by making friends with disbelivers and joining to the camp of foreigners and the enemies of the Truth, does unjustice both to himself, and to the society which he belongs to, and to the Messenger of Allah (S)?

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 24

قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِنَ اللّه وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي
سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللّه بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللّه لا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

24. "Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command; and Allah does not guide the transgressing people."

In this verse, for the extraordinary importance of the subject, the matter under discussion has been stated with a more explanation, emphasis, and threat. It addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command..."

Since the preference of these things to the good pleasure of Allah and Holy Struggle is a kind of disobedience and a manifest transgression, and also having the love of the dazzling glare of the material life is not eligible for the Divine guidance, then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān adds:

"…and Allah does not guide the transgressing people."

Whatever is cited in these verses does not mean cutting off the strings of love and friendship with relatives, neglecting the economical properties and abilities, and going toward the abandance of humane affections.

But, the objective meaning is that when it is difficult for a person to decide, the love of wife, child, wealth, rank, home and family should not hinder the execution of Allah's command and tending toward Holy Struggle, so that it detains him from his sacred aim.

Therefore, if the person can decide and choose the way, it is necessary for him to observe both of them.

However, these verses should be taught as a motto to all the Muslims' children, in order that the spirit of self-sacrifice, devotion and Faith servive in them, and they can guard the religion of Allah and their own heritages.

Thus, Holy Struggle is one of the pillars of Islam which is enjoined beside Unity and prophethood.

"…than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way…"

Everything should be devoted in the path of the love for Allah and Holy Struggle in His way. And, detestation of wife and children or the appearance

of the disturbance in the circumstances of life, can not be taken as a hinder for the fulfilment of the duty of Holy Struggle.

Notes

1. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, vol. 3, p. 219
2. In the Qur'ān, the practice of ' alms ' has been mentioned 32 times, 28 of which are recited with the commandment of ' prayer '.

3. For those who haunt mosques, there are many merits mentioned in the Islamic traditions. Among them are: finding friends and brethrens in Faith, useful information, guidance and avoiding sins, obtaining the divine favours and the grace of Allah. (Durr-ul-Manthūr, vol. 2, p. 16)

Section 4: Allah's Help at Hunayn

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 25

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ الله فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئاً وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الاَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُدْبِرِينَ

25. "Certainly Allah has helped you on many fields, and on the day of Hunayn, when your multitude made you vain, but it availed you nothing and the earth, in spite of its breadth, became strait to you; then you turned back in retreat."

In the previous holy verses, the words were upon the encouragement to Holy Struggle and some warnings due to dependences. Here, the verse recounts a few helps and graces of Allah in order to strengthen the motive of Holy Struggle in Muslims.

As Tafsir Marāqi, a commentary upon the Qur'ān, says, the total battles of the Prophet (S) were numbered 80.

"Certainly Allah has helped you on many fields…"

It has been narrated that once Mutuwakkil-i-'Abbāsi became sick. He vowed he would remit many silver coins (derham) if he healed. After that, when he gained his health, it was discussed how many coins the amount of 'many silver coins' was. They asked the question from Imam Hādi (as) and, relying upon this verse, he said:

"He must remit eighty derhams (silver coins)."[1]

The Feature of the Battle of Hunayn

The Battle of Hunayn happened between the Muslims and a tribe named 'Hawāzin' in a land near Tā'if. That was why that this battle was also called 'the Battle of Hawāzin'.

The people of that locality had planned to attack the Muslims, but to stand against that plot, the Prophet (S) set out the troops of Islam containing two thousand fresh Muslims added to those ten thousand strivers who had formerly conquered Mecca, towards them in 8 A.H.

It was after morning prayer when the Muslims were attacked unawares by the fighters of Hawāzin. Therefore, most of the Muslim strivers run away and the regularity of the army of Islam disturbed.

The verse says:

"…then you turned back in retreat."

But a group of them resisted very hard and finally, by the Prophet's call, the fugitives returned and, together with them, their attack began again. Then, by the help of Allah, one hundred pagans were killed and the rest of them surrendered. At last, the Battle of Hunayn ended in favour of the Muslims and they gained a great deal of booties.

"…on the day of Hunayn…"

Concerning to the Battle of Hunayn, there are many things to be said upon the number of captives, the quantity of booties and the quality of their division, the happenings that occurred there, and the consequences of this battle, which can be studied in the related history books and the books compiled about the Battles of Islam.

Thus, sometimes the abundance of persons and material possibilities cause proud and negligence in men, while in all conditions, whether in weakness or strength, the need to the helps of Allah exists. In the Battle of Badr, the Muslims were small in number but they enjoyed the help of Allah.

But, at the beginning of the Battle of Hunayn, where the Muslims were large in number, they defeated and it was after that event when the help of Allah came to them and they, finally, won the battle.

"Certainly Allah has helped you on many fields, and on the day of Hunayn, when your multitude made you vain but it availed you nothing and the earth, in spite of its breadth, became strait to you; then you turned back in retreat."

This fact should be noticed, too, that without the Will of Allah, the material means are ineffective, ("…it availed you nothing…"), and restructs them spiritually.

"…then you turned back in retreat."

"Then Allah sent down His tranquility…"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 26-27

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ الله سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُوداً لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَآءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ الله مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَن يَشَآءُ وَالله غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

26. "Then Allah sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent down hosts which you did not see, and He punished those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the infidels."

27. "Then, after that (escape), Allah turns towards whomever He pleases, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Arabic word /sakinah/ (tranquallity) has been applied in six occurrences of the Qur'ān, five of which relate to battles.

In the Battle of Hunayn, there came four kinds of Divine grace upon the believers from the side of Allah. They were: tranquality, unseen troops, divine violence against pagans, and accepting the repentance of the fugitives (which is mentioned in the following verse).

Some of the pagan captives asked the Muslims:

"Where are those white clothed troops who killed a number of us?"

This meaning points to the angels who appeared in white clothing, in the eyes of the pagans.[2]

However, the unseen helps were the secret of the Muslims' victory. And, in addition to that, generally, a good spirituality, and having the confidence which is emerged from Faith, are among the main factors of triumph in battles.

Tranquillity and confidence are necessary both for the leader and for the followers. The verse says:

"Then Allah sent down His tranquality upon His Messenger and upon the believers…"

The belief in the presence of the angels and the Divine missions for helping the believers in that battle, is a Qur'ānic belief. And, no doubt, for the person who believes in 'origin and end,' being killed in the way of Allah

(s.w.t.) is an honour, but for disbelievers it is a torment. The holy verse continues saying.

"…And sent down hosts which you did not see, and He punished those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the infidels."

Upon the commentary of *verse 27*, it can be said that the gates of repentance are always open to all persons, even for fugitives and captives. In this course, those sinners will be involved in the forgiveness of Allah who truly feel sorry. It is in this case that Allah not only covers their sins but also loves them. The verse says:

"Then, after that (escape), Allah turns towards whomever He pleases, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

By the way, it should be noticed that the acceptance of repentance is not obligatory for Allah, but it is an excellence which relates to His Own Wisdom.

Explanations

There are some probabilities expressed upon the meaning of the repentance which is mentioned in the verse. They are as follows:

1.Repenting from the sin of escaping from battle-field.

2.Repenting from idolatry.

3.Repenting from pride, and from reliance on the immensity of persons.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 28

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِن شَآءَ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

28. "O' you who have Faith! The polytheists are indeed unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year, and if you fear poverty, then Allah will enrich you out of His grace if He pleases; verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

One of the four commandments that Ali (as) conveyed to the people of Mecca in the rites of Hajj (pilgrimage) in the ninth year A.H. was that from the year followed no pagan was allowed to enter the Holy Mosque and to circumambulate the Ka'bah. This verse has pointed to this matter and its philosophy. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! The polytheists are indeed unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year…"

Then, in response to those shortsighted persons who said with the absence of pagans in the Sacred Mosque their business and trading would decline and they would become poor and miserable, the Qur'ān says:

"…and if you fear poverty, then Allah will enrich you out of His grace if He pleases..."

And He did enrich them in the best form and, at the age of the Prophet (S) with the spread of Islam, the crowds of pilgrims to the Sacred Mosque started to come toward Mecca, and this circumstance has been being continued up to the present time.

Consequently, Mecca, which was located in a place surrounded by some dry mountains, has been changed into a very much inhabited city and an important center of bargains and tradings.

Finally, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān adds that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise; and whatever instruction He commands is according to His Wisdom, and He is perfectly aware of its results. The verse says:

"…verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 29

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَلا بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَاحَرَّمَ الله وَرَسُولُهُ وَلا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

29. "Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor do they prohibit, what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of Truth, out of those who have been given the Book until they pay the (Jizyah) tributory tax with their hand and they remain subjected."

The words in the former verses were about the duty of the Muslims before idolaters. This verse, and several verses next to it, make manifest the Muslims' duty before 'the People of the Book'.

In these verses, in fact, Islam has assigned a series of moderate ordinances to be followed by both the Muslims and disbelievers. From the point of following a heavenly religion, 'the People of the Book' are resembled to Muslims, but from another point of view, they are resembled to pagans.

For this very reason, Islam does not permit that they should be killed, while it issued this permission about the idolaters who insisted on their belief, because the program of Islam has been to root out idolatry from the whole earth.

Islam lets Muslims come to terms with the People of the Book in the case that they agree to have a peaceful life beside Muslims in the form of a safe minority religion, to respect Islam without committing any oppositions and any evil propagation against Muslims and Islam.

One of other signs of their accepting this peaceful life is that they agree to pay Jizyah (capitation tax), which is a kind of poll-tax, and they deliver it to Islamic Government every year.

Otherwise, Islam issues the command of struggling and fighting against them. The reason of this violence is made manifest through three phrases in the verse under discussion.

At first, it says:

"Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day…"

How can it be that the People of the Book, such as the Jews and the Christians, do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, while outwardly we see that they believe in God and the Resurrection both. This is for the sake that their belief is mixed with a great deal of superstitions and so many groundless matters.

Then, the verse points to their second weakness, indicating that they do not accept the prohibitions of Allah. They are polluted with: drinking wines, usury, consuming the flesh of swine, and committing a lot of acts of sexual libertinages. The verse says:

"…nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited…"

Finally, the verse refers to their third fault, when it says:

"…nor follow the religion of Truth…"

That is, their religions have been deviated from their essential ways, many of the facts have been forgotten and a mass of superstitions have been substituted in their places.

After mentioning these three qualities, which are, in fact, considered as the permission of fighting against them, the verse continues saying:

"…out of those who have been given the Book…"

Then, the Qur'ān, in a single sentence, states the difference between idolaters and pagans. It says:

"…until they pay the (Jizyah) tributary tax with their hand and they remain subjected."

What is Jizyah?

It is a kind of Islamic poll-tax which is upon persons, not upon properties and lands. In other words, Jizyah is a yearly poll-tax.

The main philosophy of this tax is that the defence for integrity, independece, and security of a country is the duty of all members of that country.

Therefore, if a group of people in such a society practically undertake and fulfil that duty, while some others, because of being busy in their own occupations, can not take part in the rows of soldiers, the duty of the second group is that they pay the expenses of the strivers and protectors of the security in the form of a poll-tax every year.

Thus, a poll-tax is simply a kind of financial support which is paid by the People of the Book instead of the responsibility that Muslims undertake with the purpose of supplying security for their lives and properties.

Notes

1. Atyab-ul-Bayān
2. At-Tafsir-us-Sāfi

Section 5: The Polytheism of the Jews and the Christians

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 30

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

30. *"And the Jews say: 'Ezra is the son of God'; and the Christians say: 'The Messiah is the son of God'. That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the saying of those who disbelieved before. May Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!"*

The term /'uzayr/, mentioned in the verse, is the Arabic form of /'uzrā'/, in the same manner that /'isā/ is the Arabic form of /yasū'/, and /yahyā/ is the Arabicized form of /yūhanna/.

One of the great scholars of the Jews was called 'Uzayr. He later was entitled 'the Jew', the Deliverer. It happened that after the occurrence of people's general massacre by Nebuchadnezzar, and destruction of temples, burnt of the Turah, captivity of women and conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, 'Uzayr went to Cyrus and asked him to equip the Jews with home and means of life.

This verse is a sort of explanation upon the previous verse, which implies that the 'People of the Book' do not believe in Allah and the Last Day.

The similarity of 'the People of the Book' to the idolaters was that idolaters considered idols as the partners of God. This verse points to that similarity:

"…conforming…".

The Jews of the present day, of course, do not believe in 'Uzayr as the son of Allah, but at the time of the Prophet of Islam (S), they had such a notion. They could offer no answer to the Prophet's question when he asked them why they did not believe in Moses as God's son, the rank of whom was higher. The verse says:

"And the Jews say: 'Ezra is the son of God'; and the Christians say: 'the Messiah is the son of God'. That is the utterance of their mouths…"

The creeds of the Jews and the Christians are mixed with superstitions, the root of which is found in the creeds of the ancient pagans. The verse says:

"…conforming with the saying of those who disbelieved before…"

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…May Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 31

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَاباً مِن دُونِ اللّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَآ أُمِرُوا إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهاً وَاحِداً لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

31. "They have taken their rabbis and their monks and Messiah, son of Mary, as (their) lords apart from Allah, while they were commanded to

worship but One God; there is no god but He; Pure is He and Exalted is He from what they associate (with Him).”

The Qur’ānic term /’ahbār/ is the plural form of /hibr/ which means ‘scholar, learned’; and the Arabic term /ruhbān/ is the plural form of /rāhib/ with the meaning of ‘monk’. These people, with all their saintliness, are servants and worshippers of God, not objects of worship.

Unconditioned obedience from Jewish rabbis and Christian monks is a kind of worship done by the Jews and the Christians. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Whoever obeys a person in sinning Allah; he has worshipped him.”[1]

The verse says:

“They have taken their rabbis and their monks and Messiah, son of Mary, as (their) lords apart from Allah, while they were commanded to worship but One God; there is no god but He...”

Thus, obeying other than Allah unconditionally is a sort of serving other than Allah.

To worship the prophets, exaggerating about them, and considering them as son(s) of God is attributing partners to God. The verse continues saying:

“…Pure is He and Exalted is He from what they associate (with Him).”

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 32

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللّه بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى الله إِلاَّ أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

32. “They intend that they extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it.”

For the vain and useless efforts of the Jews and the Christians, or all the opponents of Islam, among whom are polytheists, there has come an interesting resemblance in this verse. It says:

“They intend that they extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light…”

Inspite of their wish, Allah intends to spread this Divine Light and to complete it more and more, so that it covers throughout the world and in a manner that all the people of the world enjoy it, although the disbelievers do not like it. The verse continues saying:

“…though the infidels detest it.”

There is no meaning seemed more expressive than this to illustrate the degradation and contempt of their attempts. In fact, there will be no result for the efforts of a feable creature before the endless Will and infinite Power of Allah other than this.

For extinguishing a small light, people used to usually blow with their mouths, while a puff of mouth has no effect in extinguishing strong lights. In order to state the weakness of their ability and to break their personality, the Qur’ān has applied “…with their mouths…” which is of no avail for the strong lights to be extinguished.

The purpose is that these miserable people intend to extinguish the light of Allah with the blow of their mouth, like a person who tries to extinguish the sun with a puff.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 33

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

33. "He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it."

At last, by the means of this verse, the Muslims have been given the glad tidings of the spread of Islam through the world. In this way, the Qur'ān has completed the content of the previous verse indicating that the efforts of the opponents of Islam result nothing for them. It explicitly says:

"He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it."

The purpose of 'guidance', mentioned in the verse, is the clear reasoning and manifest evidences which exist in the religion of Islam; and the purpose of the phrase 'religion of Truth' is the same religion of Islam whose both principles and positive laws are right and, in general, its history, evidences, proofs, consequences and concepts are totally right, too.

Thus, no doubt, the religion whose both contents and documents, reasoning, and history are clear, should finally overcome all former creeds.

With the past of time and development of knowledge, together with the facility of communications, the facts will reveal their true features from behind the curtains of poisonous propaganda and they will remove the hinders that the opponents of the Truth create in its path.

It is in this way that the religion of Truth and the government of Truth will dominate everywhere, though the enemies of the Truth detest it, because their effort is something opposite to the nature of history and against the statutes of creation.

The Qur'ān and the reappearance of Mahdi (as)

The words of the abovementioned verse have exactly been repeated in Surah As-Saff, *No. 61*, *verse 9*, and, with a little difference, have occurred in Surah Al-Fath, *No. 48*, *verse 28*. The verse informs of a significant happening, the importance of which has caused its repetition. It predicts that Islam will become a worldly religion and it will be practiced everywhere all over the world.

The concept of this verse is the complete triumph of Islam over all the religions in the world. This phrase means that Islam will finally cover the whole earth and will prevail throughout the world.

Upon the commentary of this verse, it has been narrated from Imam Sādiq (as) who said:

"By Allah, the content meaning of this verse has not happened yet and it will not happen until when the 'Ghā'im' (as) reappears. When he reappears there will remain no one to deny Allah, the Great, (throughout the world)."[2]

It is also narrated from Imam Bāqir (as) who said:

"Verily whatever (promise) there lies in this verse will happen at the time of the reappearance of Mahdi (as) when there will be no one (on the earth) but confesses the rightfulness of Muhammad (S)."

However, the question of Mahdi (as) and his worldly reappearance has been mentioned in a lot of traditions recorded in the books of both great sects of Islam, so that it is considered as one example among the presuppositions of conviction.

It is narrated from Ali-ibn-i-'Abi Tālib (as) that, at the time of reappearance of Mahdi (as), there will be no house and no town but Islam will arrive into it, whether they like or dislike, and the sound of 'prayer call' will be heard in any town.[3]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 34

يَآ َ هَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيراً مِنَ الاَحْبَارِ وَالرهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّه وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلا يُنفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

34. "O' you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah's way. And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement."

The contents of the former verses were mostly upon the heathenish deeds of the Jews and Christians who believed in a kind of diety for their religious scholars.

This verse implies that not only they have not the rank of diety, but also they have not the eligibility of leading people. The best evidence for this idea is their committing different offenses. The Qur'ān addresses the Muslims and says:

"O' you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah's way.

These rabbis and monks used to devour the people's properties falsely in different forms and without having a lawful permission, as follows:

One of those forms was that they used to conceal some of the facts of the religion of Messiah (as) and Moses (as) in order that people would not convert to the new religion (Islam), which put their interests in danger and caused their presents to be ceased.

Another thing was that, by bribery from people, they invalidated the right and confirmed falsehood in place of right, and thus they judged falsely in benefit of the cruel and the strong.

One of other ways of gaining their unlawful incomes was that, under the name of 'selling Paradise' or 'forgiving sins', they took a great deal of money from people.

They used to bar people from Allah's way by perverting the Divine revelations or concealing them in order to preserve their unlawful gains.

Fitting to the discussion of mammonism of the leaders of both the Jews and the Christians, the Qur'ān mentions a general law due to those who treasure up wealth. It states:

"…And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement."

The abovementioned holy verse has clearly prohibited treasuring up wealth, and commands Muslims to utilize their properties actively in the way of Allah and in a profitable path for Allah's servants. They should severely avoid treasuring and storing them in a corner so that their wealth would not be applied in the current bargains; otherwise, they must wait for a painful punishment.

This painful punishment is not only the violent retribution of the Resurrection Day, but also it encompasses the hard chastisements of this world which comes forth as a result of disturbing the economical harmony of the society and causing a larger gap between the rich and the poor.

How much of Wealth Is Counted Treasure?

According to many traditions, that which is obligatory to be paid is yearly alms tax, not other than that. Thus, if a person obtains some considerable wealth and regularly pays its Islamic tax, i.e. alms and also its one fifth levy, (khoms), the one will not be included of the meaning of the verse under discussion.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that when this verse was revealed the circumstance became difficult for the Muslims. They said that by this command none of them could keep anything for the future of their children. Finally, they asked the matter from the Prophet (S), and he said:

"Allah has not enjoined alms-tax save for that the rest of your properties becomes pure for you. So, the law of heritage has been legislated upon the properties which remain after you."

This statement means that if treasuring up wealth were absolutely prohibited, the law of heritage would be meaningless.

Considering the totality of the concerning traditions upon this subject and together with the holy verse itself, it is understood that in ordinary conditions, viz. at periods that society is not in an unpleasant or dangerous circumstance and people enjoy an ordinary life, paying alms tax is usually sufficient for the poor and the remaining wealth of such people is not counted 'treasure'.

But at the time of extraordinary conditions, and when it requires that the interests of the Islamic society to be protected, the Islamic government can assign some limitations for treasuring up wealth, or may demand all the stored properties of people to protect the existence of the Islamic society.

Traditions upon Alms

Imam Sādiq (as) said:

"Allah has given you these extra properties in order that you spend them alongside His pleasure, not to hoard up and treasure it up."[4]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Allah has enjoined Alms in the wealth of the rich Muslims as much as to sufficient the poor. Verily Allah will severely reckon and punish them if they do not fulfil their duty."[5]

According to some traditions, when the Expected Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent) reappears, he will control treasures in order to use them all for the miserable people and his religious strives.[6]

Abu Dharr and This Verse

To make a protest against the manner of Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Uthmān, and the authorities of the government in gathering and treasuring up gold and silver, Abu Dharr, who was one of the close companions of the Prophet (S), repeatedly recited this verse aloud before Mu‘āwiyah and then in front of ‘Uthmān every morning and evening.

He said that this verse was not allocated only to those who hinder Alms tax, but it encompasses everyone who treasures up wealth.

One of the excellencies of Abu Dharr in his life was that when confronting the governers of his time he used to enjoin right and forbid wrong concerning their vain expenses. His conflict with ‘Uthmān was not due to his wealth and position, but it was a protest to a social indecency ‘Uthman was committing.

Abu Dharr was frequently exiled because he opposed the wrong style of the government of his time and shouted against the financial method of ‘Uthman, Mu‘āwiyah’s treasuring up unlawful properties, and justifications of Ka‘b-ul-’Akhbār.

The details of this meaning are found in the history books of both great sects of Muslims, including: Al-Qadir, vol. 8, p. *335*; Al-Minār, the commentary, vol. 10; Tafsir-i-Nūr,vol. 5, p. 46, and so on.

Explanations

1. Not all the scholars and clergies are wicked. The holy verse says:

“O’ you who have Faith! Verily many of the rabbis and monks consume the properties of the people in vanity…”

It should be noted that this matter refers to many of them, not all of them. This statement means that there are also some ones among them who do not commit these indecencies. This very idea, that the Qur’ān announces, is a very good evidence that the judgements of the Qur’ān are just. That is why in Surah Al-Mā’idah, *No. 5*, *verse 82*, the Qur’ān has admired a group of them.

2. To misuse opportunities and ranks is religiously unlawful, and the greatest danger for clergymen is a financial mischief.

“…Consume the properties of the people in vanity and bar (them) from Allah’s way…”

3. The mammonism of the scholars and the treasuring up wealth done by the rich causes the wrath of Allah. The verse says:

“…And those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah; inform them of a painful chastisement.”

4. Treasuring up gold, silver and money, and restraining from spending them in charity is a capital sin, because it has been promised punishment for.

5. In Islam, there is no limitation for having a considerable capital, but in gaining it, there are some conditions which should be observed. To spend wealth in a bad way is also unlawful in Islam.

6. Treasuring up wealth is a social calamity, and worse than that is greed, while worse than this is concealing and storing wealth, since it produces a lot of difficulties for the society.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 35

يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لاَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَاكُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ

35. "On the Day (of Judgment) they (the coins) shall be heated in the Fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded, (the angels will tell them): 'This is what you have treasured up for yourselves, therefore taste you now what you were treasuring!'"

The Retribution of Amassers of Wealth

This holy verse points to one of the chastisements of such people in the next world, where it says:

"On the Day (of Judgment) they (the coins) shall be heated in the Fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded…"

It is in that situation that the angels of punishment will tell them that is the same thing that they amassed for themselves in the form of treasures and did not spend it for the deprived in the way of Allah. The verse says:

"…(the angels will tell them): 'This is what you have treasured up for yourselves…"

As a result of their deed, they should taste what they used to treasure and find the evil consequence of it. The verse continues saying:

"…therefore taste you now what you were treasuring!'"

Once more this verse emphasizes on this fact that the deeds of human beings will not vanish. The deeds of persons will remain for the next world where they will incarnate in front of every one and cause his happiness or his toil.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 36

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشهُورِ عِندَ اللّه اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْراً فِي كِتَابِ اللّه يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَآفَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَآفَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللّه مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

36. "Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the Book of Allah, (since) the day He created the heavens and the earth, four of them are sacred. That is the established religion. So be you not unjust unto your selves during them. And fight polytheists totally even as they fight you totally, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

In view of the fact that in this Surah there have occurred several discussions about fighting against pagans, the Qur'ān refers to one of the rules of an Islamic fight and the Holy Struggle through this verse and the verse after it. It is to hold the Sacred Months in respect. It says:

"Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the Book of Allah, (since) the day He created the heavens and the earth…"

Since the day the solar system was formed in the present shape, there have existed year and month. A year is a complete course of the rotation of

the earth around the sun; and a month is a complete course of the rotation of the moon around the earth which happens twelve times in a year.

Then the Qur'ān adds that four months out of these twelve months are sacred, in which any fight and battle are religiously unlawful. It says:

"…four of them are sacred…"

Next to this statement, in order to emphasize on the matter, it says that this religion is fixed and unchangeable. It is not like the wrong customs which Arabs had and, whenever they wished, they would change the place of them. The verse continues saying:

"…That is the established religion…"

It is understood from some Islamic literature that the prohibition of war during these four months were enjoined not only in the divine creed of Abraham (as), but also in the godly religions of the Jews and Christ, as well as the other heavenly religions.

Then the verse implies that during these four months you should not be unjust to your selves and incur the retributions of this world and the punishments of the Hereafter. It says:

"…So be you not unjust unto your selves during them…"

But, since the prohibition of Holy Struggle during these four months might be misused by the enemies of Islam and it would make them bold in attacking the Muslims, through the next phrase, it adds:

"…And fight polytheists totally even as they fight you totally…"

That is, they are infidels, and infidelity and idolatry is the origin of dispersion, yet they fight against you in one single line. It is more eligible for you, the monotheists, to be united against the enemies of Islam and stand firm in a line, like an iron wall, in front of them.

At last, the verse implies that Muslims should know that if they keep from evil and exactly excecute the teachings of Islam, Allah vouches their victory, because Allah is with the pious ones. The verse says:

"…and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 37

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضَل بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحِلونَهُ عَاماً وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَاماً لِيُوَاطِئُوا عِدَّةَ مَاحَرَّمَ الله فَيُحِلوا مَا حَرَّمَ الله زُيِّنَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَالله لا َهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

37. "Verily postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition unto infidelity whereby the infidels go astray; they allow it (fight) one year and forbid it another year, that they may adjust the number of months Allah has forbidden, thus they allow what Allah has forbidden. The evil of their deeds has been made fair seeming to them. And Allah does not guide the unbelieving people."

In this verse, the Qur'ān points to a wrong custom which was usually accomplished at the Age of Ignorance. It was customary among them to change the place of sacred months, about which this verse says:

"Verily postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition unto infidelity…" [7]

The reason of this meaning is that, besides their disbelief and ‘creedal infidelity’, by ignoring this commandment, they also committed ‘practical infidelity’, and by means of this action, the faithless persons might incure a greater aberration. The verse continues saying:

“…whereby the infidels go astray...”

Then, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur’ān implies that they considered one month in a year lawful and in another year they forbade the same month. They did so in order that, as they imagined, they adapted it with the months Allah had assigned. The verse says:

“…they allow it (fight) one year and forbid it another year, that they may adjust the number of months Allah has forbidden…”

That is, when they omitted one month of the Sacred Months, they substituted another month in its place, so that the figure ‘four’ became full.

But, by this ridiculous and hideous action of theirs, they utterly wasted the philosophy of the prohibition of Sacred Months and toyed with the ordinance of Allah for their low desires. Strange! They were very happy and pleased with their own action, because:

“…The evil of their deeds has been made fair seeming to them…”

They used to say that the long peaceful time between two wars, decreased the war skillfulness, therefore, they should light the fire of war.

Allah also leaves to themselves those people who are not worthy to be guided, and does not guide them. The verse says:

“…And Allah does not guide the unbelieving people.”

Notes

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary
2. ‘Ikmāl-ud-Din, by Sadūq
3. Tafsir-us-Sāfi.
4. Tafsir-us-Sāfi
5. Tafsir-us-Sāfi
6. Muntakhab-ul-‘Āthār, Usūl-I-Kāfi, vol. 4, p. 61; and many other traditions which are recorded in the books of both great sects of Muslims, such as: Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, Sahih Bukhāri, the books entitled: Manlā Yahzuruhul-Faghih, Wasā’il-ush-Shi‘ah, and ‘Amāli by Shaykh-i-Tūsi

7. Lexicologists has rendered the Arabic term /nasi’/ into the sense of ‘changing the place’, or ‘ postponing’. As they say, this word is used for postponing the menstruation of women from its time, or postponing the death of a person, and postponing the months wherein fight is unlawful. (Lisān-ul-Arab, vol. 1, p. 166; and Majma‘-ul-Bayān, vol. 5, p. 44)

Section 6: The Tabuk Expedition

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 38

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمُ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه اثَّاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الاَرْضِ أَرَضِيتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا مِنَ الاَخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا فِي الأَخِرَةِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ

38. "O' you who have Faith! What (excuse) have you that when it is said to you: 'Go forth in Allah's way', you should incline heavily to the ground? Are you contented with the life of this world instead of the Hereafter? But the enjoyment of the life of this world, compared with the Hereafter, is but little."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been narrated by Ibn-'Abbās, as well as some others, that this verse and the verse after it have been sent down about the 'Battle of Tabūk'.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that the Prophet of Islam (S) usually did not make manifest the war decisions and his final aims concerning them for Muslims before the beginning of war in order that the Islamic martial secrets would not be handed to the enemy.

But, the situation was different about 'the Battle of Tabūk, where in advance he announced clearly that they were going to fight against the Romans. That fight against the Emperor of Eastern Byzantine, of course was not a simple matter, and Muslims should be completely prepared for that great war.

In addition to that, the distance between Medina and the country of the Romans was very long and, all things apart, it was summer, the hot season, and the time of harvest for both corns and fruits.

All these affairs with together made the problem of going toward the battlefield extraordinary difficult for the Muslims, so much so that some of them showed hesitation in accepting the Prophet's invitation.

It was in those circumstances that these couple of verses were sent down and, with a very sharp and decisive tone, warned Muslims to be aware of danger, and made them ready to participate in that great war.

As it was cited in the occasions of revelation, the abovementioned verse is about the circumstance of the Battle of Tabūk.

Tabuk is a region between Medina and Syria where the bound of Sa'ūdi Arabia is located now, and, at that time, it was close to the lands of the Emperor of Eastern Byzantine, which was dominated over Syria. This event happened in the ninth A.H. viz. about one year after the occurrence of Mecca Conquest.

With the most intensive manner, the Qur'ān invites people unto Holy Struggle. Sometimes it applies some encouraging words, and sometimes some scorning words, and sometimes it threatens them. It addresses people differently and through various ways in order to make them ready. Here, in this verse, at first it says:

"O' you who have Faith! What (excuse) have you that when it is said to you. 'Go forth in Allah's way', you should incline heavily to the ground?…"

Then, with a reproaching tone, and, referring to the life of this fleeting world and also the vast eternal life in the coming world, it says:

"…Are you contented with the life of this world instead of the Hereafter?…"

Did you do it while the advantages and the amount of the life of this world in comparison with the life in Hereafter is very little? The verse says:

"…But the enjoyment of the life of this world, compared with the Hereafter, is but little."

How might a wise person submit such a detrimental exchange? And how does he lose an extraordinary worthy thing for reaching to a worthless little thing?

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 39

إِلاَّ تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْماً غَيْرَكُمْ وَلا تَضُرُوهُ شَيْئاً وَالله عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

39. "If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement, and He will substitute in your place a people other than you, and you will not harm Him anything, for Allah is All-Powerful over everything."

Then, the Qur'ān promotes the reproaching tone higher into an earnest form of threat and implies that if Muslims do not move towards the battlefields of Holy Struggle, Allah will punish them with a painful punishment. The verse says:

"If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement…"

So, if they think that by their going aside and turning their backs to the battlefields the wheels of the development of Islam may stop and the light of the religion of Allah will tend to be extinguished, they are in a tremendous error, because Allah can substitute a group of people other than them who will be faithful, decided, and obedient to the command of Allah. The verse says:

"…and He will substitute in your place a people other than you…"

These people will be a group of persons who are different from them from any point of view. They will be different from them not only from the view point of personality, but also from the view points of faith, decision, courage, and obedience.

Some commentators believe that this holy phrase is an indication to Iranians or people of Yemen.[1]

Then the verse adds that, by this way, they can not harm anything unto Allah and His pure religion. The verse continues saying:

"…and you will not harm Him anything, for Allah is All-Powerful over everything."

This is a reality, not an imaginary utterance, nor an afar hope, because Allah (s.w.t.) is powerful over everything and whenever He will upon the triumph of His pure religion, no doubt, it will happen. The verse ends:

"…for Allah is All-Powerful over everything."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 40

إِلاَّ تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ الله إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لاتَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللّه مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ الله سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ يَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السفْلى وَكَلِمَةُ اللّه هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَالله عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

40. "If you do not help him, yet Allah has helped him already, when those who disbelieved expelled him, he was the second of the two, when they both were in the cave, when he said unto his companion: 'Do not grieve, surely Allah is with us'. Then Allah sent down on him His tranquillity and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and He made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest; and the word of Allah is the highest, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

This verse contains a hint to the dangerous plan of polytheists for slaying the Prophet (S). In the event of the Night fixed for the execution of the Conspiracy, every tribe sent a vigorous person ready to stab at him.

They decided to attack at night and slay the Prophet (S). He put Ali-ibn-Abi Tālib (as) in bed instead of himself and, by night, he went towards the Cave of Thūr accompanied with Abū-Bakr.

The pagans chased the Prophet (S) as far as the threshould of the Cave, but, seeing the spider's webs at the gate of the Cave, they changed their mind and returned.

Thus, after three days staying there, the Prophet (S) left for Medina. During that time, Abū-Bakr's slave, 'Āmir-ibn-Fahrah, brought food for them. At the same time, Ali (as) was preparing the necessities of traveling to Medina.

After three days, three camels were supplied ready at the Cave and the Prophet (S), Abū-Bakr, and a guide started for Medina.[2]

Therefore, Allah's helps in the past are some admonitions for today; and if they do not help the religion of Allah, He helps His Messenger even by sending spider's webs. The verse says:

"If you do not help him, yet Allah has helped him already, when those who disbelieved expelled him, he was the second of the two, when they both were in the cave, when he said unto his companion: 'Do not grieve, surely Allah is with us'. Then Allah sent down on him His tranquillity and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see…"

Of course, the Will of Allah is superior to and higher than any decisions and desires. The verse says:

"…and the word of Allah is the highest…"

And, the transgressive forces, with all their specializations and possibilities, will be impotent before the true believers who have tranquillity and certainty. The holy verse says:

"…and He made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest; and the word of Allah is the highest, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 41

انفِرُوا خِفَافاً وَثِقَالاً وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

41. "Go forth light and heavy! and strive in Allah's way with your possessions and your selves, this is better for you if you know."

The objective meaning of the Arabic couple of words: /xifāf/ and /θiqāl /, mentioned in the verse, is either of the following opposite terms: 'light and heavy', 'bachelor and married', 'poor and rich', 'on horseback and on foot', 'young and old', 'to have a large family and to have a small family', 'of ease and of discomfort' and 'trade and farming'.

It is cited in Fi-Zilāl, a commentary of the Qur'ān, that when some old persons such as: 'Abū-'Ayyūb'Ansāri, Miqdād, and Abū-Talhah, who became ready to go towards the battle-fields, were told that they were too old to go to fight, they often recited the abovementioned verse.

However, when the command of general mobilization for battlefield is issued, do not pretext any barrier. The verse says:

"Go forth light and heavy!…"

And do know that everything should be devoted to the religion, including wealth and life, not only either of them. The verse continues saying:

"…And strive in Allah's way with your possessions and your selves, this is better for you if you know."

Therefore, striving with life for the poor and striving with both wealth and life for the rich is obligatory.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 42

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضاً قَرِيباً وَسَفَراً قَاصِداً لاَتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَـكِن بَعُدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشقَّةُ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّه

لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَالله يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

42. "Had there been a near gain, and an easy journey, certainly they would have followed you, but the distance was too far to them; yet they will swear by Allah: 'Had we been able, we would certainly have gone out with you', they destroy themselves. And Allah knows that verily they are liars."

The Qur'ān refers this meaning to the lazy persons who are weak in faith and resort to kinds of pretext in order to refrain from attending in this great course.

The Qur'ān says to the Prophet (S) that if there was an available booty and the journey was short they would accept his invitation and hasten to sit at that prepared table, so that they could reach the worldly material. It says:

"Had there been a near gain, and an easy journey, certainly they would have followed you…"

But, now that the way is very far and difficult for them, they act listlessly and seek pretexts. The verse continues saying:

"…but the distance was too far to them..."

It is surprising that they did not suffice to pretexts, but they would come to the Prophet (S) and swear by Allah that if they could they would certainly had gone out with the Prophet (S). Therefore, they expressed that the reason that they did not come forth was their incapability and lack of power. The holy verse continues saying:

"…yet they will swear by Allah: 'Had we been able, we would certainly have gone out with you'…"

In fact, by means of these deeds and telling those lies, they destroyed themselves. The verse says:

"…they destroy themselves…"

But Allah knows well that they are not truthful. The verse says:

"…And Allah knows that verily they are liars."

They are completely capable to act but since the table is not so rich and there is a difficult program in front of them, they resort to false oaths.

This circumstance was not confined to the Battle of Tabūk and the age of the Prophet (S). In any society, there are often some lazy, or 'hypocritic and greedy' persons who are always waiting for the moments of victory and efficacious opportunities to come.

At that time, they often substitute themselves deceitfully in the first line and shout to introduce themselves to others that they are the first strivers, the best strugglers, and the most sympathetic people, in order that they enjoy the consequences of the existing triumph without incurring any trouble.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayān.
2. Narrated from Durr-ul-Manthūr

Section 7: The Hypocrites

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 43

عَفَا الله عَنكَ لِمَ أَذِنتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

43. "May Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave before you had found out those who spoke the truth and before you had known the liars?"

Try to Recognize Hypocrites

It is understood from the tone and style of these verses that some hypocrites came to the Prophet (S) and, after expressing some excuses, and even taking oaths, they asked him permission that they would not take part in the battlefield of Tabūk. So, the Prophet (S) gave permission to that group.

In this verse, Allah addresses His Messenger kindly, in a manner that, before severity in statement, His words are about remittal and forgiveness. Then the Qur'ān implies why he did not permit that those who spoke the truth be recognized from the liars and he would distinguish them. The verse says:

"May Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave before you had found out those who spoke the truth and before you had known the liars?"

Is the abovementioned reproof and blame, which has been combined with the announcement of Allah's forgiveness, an evidence for that the Prophet's permission had been an offense, or it had been only a 'leaving the better'?

This question may be answered that the mentioned 'reproof and blame' has a metaphorical form and there has not been even a 'leaving the better' in the course, and the purpose has been to state the hypocritical spirit of the hypocrites in a delicate and metaphorical statement.

This meaning can be made clear by mentioning an explicit example.

Suppose a cruel person intends to beat your son, but at the same time one of your friends stops him of doing that action. Regarding that, not only you will not be inconvenient but also you will become happy.

Yet, to prove the inward indecency of that person, you may tell your friend, in a form of reproof and blame, why he did not let him beat and all people around there would recognize that cruel hypocritical person. Your aim from this statement is only to prove his cruelty and hypocrisy which has been appeared in the guize of 'reproof and blame' unto your friend and your advocate.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 44

لا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالله وَالْيَوْمِ الاَخِرِ أَن يُجَاهِدُوا بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَالله عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ

44. "Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day do not ask you for leave, (to be exempt) from striving with their possessions and their selves; and Allah is All-Knowing of the pious ones."

A true believer, who loves Holy Struggle and martyrdom, has no fear from death. Therefore, he does not go after taking permission to get a leave.

Sometimes it happened that some Muslims persistently asked the Prophet (S) to send them to fight, but he had not the necessary possibilities, and, therefore, they wept. [1]

In going to Tabūk, when the Messenger of Allah (S) left Ali (as) in Medina as his substitute, he (as) did not feel at home. The Prophet (S) conforted him and told him that he (as) was, in situation to him (S), as Aaron was to Moses (as).

Thus, the true believers and true strivers do not flee from labour and tasks concerning Holy Struggle, and they devote both with their wealth and selves.

Therefore, a believer is always prepared and ready to obey the Divine commandment. He does not seek for pretexts. So the faith in 'origin and end' is the main factor of piety, love of martyrdom, and attending in Holy Struggles. The holy verse says:

"Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day do not ask you for leave, (to be exempt) from striving with their possessions and their selves..."

Then, it is by means of this manner that a pious person can be recognized at the time of war and in battlefields, not at home and during the time of peace. The verse continues saying:

"…and Allah is All-knowing of the pious ones."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 45

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لاَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الاَخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ

45. "Only those ask leave from you who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day and their hearts are in doubt, so they waver in their doubt."

Those who, in the course of the Battle of Tabūk, came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to stay at home, were the very hypocrites and some Muslims of a weak faith, else those believers whose faith was safe and complete and did believe in Allah and the Resurrection Day never asked permission from the Prophet (S) to offend upon the subject of Holy Struggle.

It is understood from this verse that such believers were so obedient to the Prophet's command that they would never say anything against the question of Holy Struggle and participated in it by their properties and selves without any hesitation, and Allah was aware of the circumstances of those pious ones.

Only those disputed upon the question of Holy Struggle who were weak in their belief, or were hypocrites, and had not a proper faith in Allah and the Resurrection Day.

Such people came to the Prophet (S) and, by some vain excuses and pretexts, they asked permission from Him not to take part in the Holy Struggle. Concerning these people, the Qur'ān announces that their hearts are in doubt and they have not reached to a conclusive belief, then they are bewildered in their own doubt and hesitation. The verse says:

"Only those ask leave from you who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day and their hearts are in doubt, so they waver in their doubt."

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his sayings has cited:

"…and he who waves in doubt, Satans trample him under their feet." [2]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 46

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لأَعَدوا لَهُ عُدَّةً وَلَـكِن كَرِهَ الله انْبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ

46. "And if they had intended to go forth, they would have certainly provided equipment for it, but Allah was averse to their going forth, so He withheld them and it was said (to them): 'Sit you with the sedentary!'"

These very hypocrites, who came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to give them permission not to participate in the Holy Struggle, had formerly decided not to go to the Holy Struggle and that asking permission was an external action which was done formally, since whether the Prophet (S) gave them permission or not, they would not go to fight.

The same matter, from their situation, is stated through this verse. It says:

"And if they had intended to go forth, they would have certainly provided equipment for it…"

They never provided any preliminary preparations for their going out, and the very thing indicated that they were not decided to go forth.

After that, the verse points to an important matter denoting that, as a result of their intention and their action, Allah basically was not pleased with their participation in the Holy Struggle. So, He cast this idea into their hearts that they would stay at home and refrain going forth.

Therefore, they were told to remain in Medina with those who had not taken part in the Holy Struggle such as children, women, and the sick. The verse says:

"…but Allah was averse to their going forth, so He withheld them and it was said (to them): 'Sit you with the sedentary!'"

However, the averse of Allah to their going forth toward Holy Struggle is a negation of Divine succor, not a practical prohibition.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 47

لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلاَّ خَبَالاً وَلأَوْضَعُوا خِلاَلَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمُ الْفِتْنَةَ وَفِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ وَالله عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

47. "Had they gone forth among you, they would not have increased to you aught save corruption, and they would have certainly hurried about (to and fro) amidst you, seeking to stir up sedition between you; and some of you would listen to them; and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust."

In this holy verse, the Qur'ān explains that if they came out with you and took part in the Holy Struggle they would be a boaring for you and they would do naught but corruption and sedition.

They might penetrate inside your rows and substitute themselves deceitfully amongst you being busy with disturbances; and there are some persons among you who follow them and hearken to their seditious statements.

Therefore, if they had come they would have created sedition and disturbance in the groups of the Muslims. The holy verse says:

"Had they gone forth among you, they would not have increased to you aught save corruption, and they would have certainly hurried about (to and fro) amidst you, seeking to stir up sedition between you; and some of you would listen to them..."

By means of their evil speeches, they would pervert the weak Muslims from the straight path and would create a gap and separation in the troops of Islam, so that the troops' spirit could be weakened. Then, the verse continues saying that Allah is aware of the unjust; i.e. He knows all their plots. The verse says:

"…and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 48

لَقَدِ ابْتَغَوُا الْفِتْنَةَ مِن قَبْلُ وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَآءَ الْحَق وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللّه وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ

48. "They certainly sought to stir up sedition already before, and turned matters upside down for you, until the truth came and Allah's command appeared though they were averse."

These hypocrites had given their examination before. They had cast sedition among the Muslims.

Therefore, the Qur'ān refers to the course of the Battle of 'Uhud where the hypocrites, under the leadership of 'Abdullah-ibn-'Ubay, struck the Muslims very violently and hindered a large group of them from participating in the Holy Struggle.

They not only did not go to war themselves, but also caused some Muslim tribes to become doubtful about it. These tribes were such as Banū-Muslimah, and Banū-Harithah. They, as a result of the hypocrites' preachings, hesitated to go to fight in the Holy Struggle, but soon they overcame to their doubt and participated in the Holy Struggle.

The following holy verse from Surah'Āl-i-'Imrān is a hint to that very circumstance. It says:

"When two parties of you had decided to flinch but Allah was the protector of them both (and helped them to change their thought); so in Allah (alone) should the believers trust." [3]

It is for this reason that, in the verse under discussion, the Qur'ān states that the hypocrites had decided from before to stir up sedition and they tried to turn the matters upside down for the Prophet (S) in order that he might make mistake in making his decisions.

But the truth came and Allah's command was manifested while they were not pleased. That is, in that very Battle of'Uhud that they applied their seditions, the Muslims, after incurring a failure, finally overcame the enemy, and Islam obtained a better situation and it was fixed. The hypocrites, of course, did not like that circumstance. The verse says:

"They certainly sought to stir up sedition already before, and turned matters upside down for you, until the truth came and Allah's command appeared though they were averse."

Yes, hypocrites' hearts never submit to the Islamic system, "…they were averse.", but as it was actually proved, the helps of Allah destroy the plans of the hypocrites:

"…the truth came and Allah's command appeared…".

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 49

وَمِنْهُم مَن يَقُولُ ائْذَن لِي وَلا تَفْتِنِّي أَلاَ فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا وإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

49. "And among them there is he who says: 'Give me leave and do not tempt me.' Surely into temptation have they already fallen; and verily Hell encompasses the infidels."

One of the chiefs of the tribe Bany Salamah, who was one of the hypocrites, asked the Messenger of Allah (S) not to attend in the Battle of Tabūk. His pretext was that if he saw the Roman women, he would be enamoured of them and would commit sins.

The Holy Prophet (S) allowed him so. Then, this verse was revealed and counted him sinful and fallen in temptation for the sake of not participating in the battlefield. The Prophet (S) resigned him from his rank, the presidency of the tribe, and appointed Bushr-ibn-Bur'ā', a generous and good tempered man, in his place.

However, for believers, a battlefield is the site of temptation and examination, and those who are worried about the temptation of war and avoid going toward Holy Struggle, will fall into a greater temptation. The verse says:

"And among them there is he who says: 'Give me leave and do not tempt me.' Surely into temptation have they already fallen..."

To deceive the believers, some of hypocrites abuse the religious matters and ordinances and, under the name of, for example, 'looking at the Roman girls', disobey the command of Allah and the Messenger.

It should be noted that escape from the Divine trial is impossible; and encompassment of Hell upon infidels and hypocrites is for the encompassment of Hell upon infidels and hypocrites is for the encompassment of sin upon their entity. The verse continues saying:

"…and verily Hell encompasses the infidels."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 50

إِن تُصِبْكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِن تُصِبْكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَآ أَمْرَنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ

50. "If (any) good befalls you, it vexes them; but if an affliction visits you, they say: 'We had taken care of our affair in advance', and they turn away, rejoicing."

In this verse, the Qur'ān refers to one of other particular epithets of the hypocrites. This epithet in them is that if a goodness befalls the Prophet (S) and Muslims, they will be annoyed of it. They will be inconvenient if the Prophet (S) overcomes the enemy in the war or obtains some booties.

They do not like the goodness and happiness of the Muslims, but if an affliction befalls the Muslims, that they meet with failure or be killed, for example, they will be glad and they say that they had observed the necessary precautions from before and they did not visit that affliction. In such a way, they speak ironically of Muslims. The verse says:

"If (any) good befalls you, it vexes them; but if an affliction visits you, they say: 'We had taken care of our affair in advance', and they turn away, rejoicing."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 51

قُل لَن يُصِيبَنَآ إِلاَّ مَا كَتَبَ الله لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلاَنَا وَعَلى الله فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

51. "Say: 'Never shall afflict us (anything) save what Allah has prescribed for us; He is our Master; and on Allah should the believers rely'."

The leader of a community and the community itself are partners with each other in sorrows and joys.

We are commissioned to our duties, not sureties to their results. We go forth in Holy Struggle, but determinations are with Allah. The verse says:

"Say: 'Never shall afflict us (anything) save what Allah has prescribed for us..."

Whatever Allah prescribes for a believing servant is good, since never does a master prescribe some bad things for his servant.

A believer lives under the mastership of Allah (s.w.t.); and the highest peak of monotheism is to run alongside the orbit of Divine Law, and also leaving the fate to the Will of Allah, the Wise. It says:

"…He is our Master..."

On Allah (s.w.t.) alone should a believer rely, because the condition of Faith is relying on Allah. The verse says:

"…and on Allah should the believers rely'."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 52

قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَآ إِلاَّ إِحْدَى الْحُسْنَيَيْنِ وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَن يُصِيبَكُمُ الله بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِندِهِ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا فَتَرَبَّصُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَبِّصُونَ

52. "Say: 'Do you await for us but one of the two excellences? And we await for you that Allah will afflict you with punishment from Himself or by our hands. So await; we (too) are awaiting with you'."

This verse addresses the Prophet (S) to convey this answer to them, too, that whether they expect to reach Muslims one of the two goodnesses, victory or martyrdom. The verse says:

"Say: 'Do you await for us but one of the two excellences?…"

Muslims either defeat the enemy in the war and come out from the battlefield victoriously, or they will be killed and drink the glass of martyrdom honestly. Whatever comes forth welcomes, and it is the cause of their honour and the light of Muslims' eyes. There will be, however, no failure in their policy.

But, on the contrary, concerning the opponents, Muslims await for them one of the two afflictions. Either they meet the punishment from Allah both in this world and the next world, or Muslims make them contemptible and destroy them by their hands.

The verse says:

"…And we await for you that Allah will afflict you with punishment from Himself or by our hands…"

Now that the status is like that, both parties may await with each other. The verse continues saying:

"…So await; we (too) are awaiting with you'."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 53

قُلْ أَنفِقُوا طَوْعاً أَوْ كَرْهاً لَن تُتَقَبَّلَ مِنكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ قَوْماً فَاسِقِينَ

53. "Say: 'Spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall never be accepted from you; (for) verily you have ever been an ungodly people."

Those hypocrites who did not participate in the Battle of Tabūk, desired to share the Battle in its victory by means of their financial helps.

But, the condition of deeds to be accepted by Allah is piety and sincerity, because the political and social affairs and divine services are all related to each other. Thus the spirits, innates, and intentions of persons are effective in the value of their deeds.

That hypocrite who is inconvenient of triumph for Muslims and is happy when an affliction reaches them, his deeds are worthless with this polluted innate. So, such hypocrites, who instead of going forth to battlefields intend to expend financially, are told that their action, done willingly or unwillingly, is of no avail. The verse says:

"Say: 'Spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall never be accepted from you; (for) verily you have ever been an ungodly people."

Charity, of course, is not limited to the act of satiating people with food, the improvement of minds and spiritual growth is also the goal of Islam.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 54

وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَن تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَاتُهُمْ إِلاَّ أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَلا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلاَةَ إِلاَّ وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلا يُنفِقُونَ إِلاَّ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ

54. "And naught prevented that their spendings should be accepted from them, save that they have disbelieved in Allah and in his Messenger, and they do not perform the prayer but while they are sluggish, and they do not spend but while they are averse."

In this verse, the Qur'ān explains once more the reason of refusing the expenses of the hypocrites. It says:

"And naught prevented that their spendings should be accepted from them, save that they have disbelieved in Allah and in his Messenger…"

Then, any action, which is not done with the belief in Allah, will not be accepted with Him.

Thus, the incomes of an Islamic government, comparing with the incomes of other governments, such as Khoms (one fifth levy), alms, and charities, which believing people pay heartily and with a great deal of sincerity, have some peculiarities and privileges as follows:

1. They pay it willingly, based on their own choice and upon their religious conscience.

2. They pay it with no fear, but accompanied by intention with divine motive.

3. They count the financial expendings as some provisions for the Hereafter.

4. They choose a just scholar among jurisprudents to give him their wealth.

5. They usually know how that spending is used and they often control it.

6. The condition of the simple life of the taker of it is considered by them. So, they usually kiss his hand and thank Allah (s.w.t.).

The verse, after mentioning the refusal of the hypocrites' financial expendings, refers to the situation of their worships. It says:

"…and they do not perform the prayer but while they are sluggish…"

This is the state of their prayer, then, similar to that, their spending is also done forcedly and with aversion. The verse continues saying:

"…and they do not spend but while they are averse."

In fact, their spendings are not accepted for two reasons. One reason is that their action is performed with infidelity and lack of faith; and the second reason is that it is done forcedly and with aversion.

Also, their prayer is not accepted for two reasons: the first is their infidelity, and the second is that it is performed sluggishly.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 55

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّما يُرِيدُ الله لِيُعَذِّبَهُم بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ

55. "So let not their possessions and their issues astonish you; verily Allah only desires thereby to chastise them in the life of (this) world, and that their souls depart while they are infidels."

Some of the hypocrites had both a great deal of wealth, and many children. This status caused the surprise of some Muslims. They might think with themselves how those hypocrites, that did not believe in Allah, had enjoyed so many bounties.

In this verse, it is said to the Prophet (S) and all the Muslims that they would not surprise of the abundance of the hypocrites' wealth and children. That is, they should not imagine that those bounties might cause happiness and comfort for them.

But, on the contrary, those properties and children caused them affliction and punishment. Therefore, the hypocrites and infidels, because of absence of belief in Allah (s.w.t.), which is the origin of the ease of hearts, can not apply those bounties with a pleasure.

Sometimes these bounties are the sources of worriment, anxiety, and spiritual torments for them. For the sake of possessing some more possibilities, they think they are free from want. This very imagination causes them to disobey most of divine commandments and take distance more and more from Allah (s.w.t.) and from believing in Him.

The verse says:

"So let not their possessions and their issues astonish you; verily Allah only desires thereby to chastise them in the life of (this) world, and that their souls depart while they are infidels."

Therefore, if wealth and children are purified and righteous, they are some good merits which cause happiness, comfort, and ease. But if the wealth is not purified and the children are impious, they will be a painful torment for their holders.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 56

وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنكُمْ وَمَا هُم مِنكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرَقُونَ

56. "And they swear by Allah that they are most surely of you, while they are not of you. But they are a people that are afraid."

The Arabic term /yafraqūn/, used in the abovementioned verse, means the intense of fear. As if their hearts burst from fear.

One of the means of hypocrites, which they applied frequently, was 'a false oath'. That is why we should not haste in accepting the repentance of a hypocrite and believing his claims, because hypocrites are liars. The verse says:

"And they swear by Allah that they are most surely of you, while they are not of you. But they are a people that are afraid."

However, heartily fear and terror are among the signs of hypocrites.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 57

لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغَارَاتٍ أَوْ مُدَّخَلاً لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ

57. "If they (the hypocrites) could find a refuge, or caves or a place to enter therein, they would certainly turn thereto, running away in all haste."

The Arabic word /malja'/, mentioned in this verse, means 'refuge', and the term /maqārāt/ is the plural form of /maqārah/ which means 'cave'. The word /madxal/ in Arabic is rendered as 'a hidden way like a tunnel under the ground'.

The Qur'ānic term /yajmahūn/ is derived from /jimāh/ in the sense of 'a swift running which can not be stopped'. In Arabic, a vicious horse is also called /jamūh/.

Hypocrites express faith either because of fear or because of coveting wealth and rank. The abovementioned verse refers to the first group.

A hypocrite is often frightened and seeks for opportunity to escape from the existing situation.

The life of hypocrites is always scattered and roaming about. They lead a compulsory life with the Muslims, since they are in fear from their own deed. The verse says:

"If they (the hypocrites) could find a refuge, or caves or a place to enter therein, they would certainly turn thereto, running away in all haste."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 58

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِن لَمْ يُعْطَوْا مِنْهَآ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَطُونَ

58. "And some of them find fault with you regarding to the (distribution of) alms; so if they are given from them, they are pleased, and if they are not given from them, they are enraged."

The Qur'ānic term /lumaz / means 'to find fault in front of a person', while the term /humaz/ means 'to find fault at the back of a person'.

That person who later became the leader of Kharijites (Khawārij) and the apostates (Māriqin), when the booties of the Battle of Hunayn were being distributed, he protested the Prophet (S) and told him to behave justly.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Who is better in justice than I?"

At that time 'Umar was going to kill the man for that undue insolence. But the Prophet (S) said that they let him go, and added that he would have some followers who would have such worships that the audience, comparing their worships with them, might count theirs naught. (This statement was a hint to their dry worships without mastership.)

With those plenty of worships, they exceeded the religion and went out of the bounds of Islam, like an arrow when it goes out of the bow. That person was killed in the Battle of Nahrawān by the sword of Hazrat Ali (as).

However, hypocrites look only at their own interests. Then, if they are given a share of bounties, they will be pleased and happy, and count the distributer a just person even though they do not deserve it.

But, if they are given naught from those interests, they will become angry, and accuse the distributer to injustice. The verse says:

"And some of them find fault with you regarding to the (distribution of) alms; so if they are given from them, they are pleased, and if they are not given from them, they are enraged."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 59

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَآ ءَاتَاهُمُ الله وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا الله سَيُؤْتِينَا الله مِن فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّآ إِلَى الله رَاغِبُونَ

59. "And if they were content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us; Allah will soon give us (more) out of His grace, and His Messenger too. Verily unto Allah do we eagerly turn'."

There are four stages referred to in this verse:

1) Being content with the Decree of Allah and submitted to it.

"And if they were content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them…"

2) Oral Expression of content uttered by the tongue of the person.

"…and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us..."

3) Being hopeful of the grace, bounteousness and beneficence of Allah.

"…Allah will soon give us (more) out of His grace, and His Messenger too…"

4) Being heedless to the world, and having the love of Allah (s.w.t.).

"…Verily unto Allah do we eagerly turn'."

Hypocrites are never content with Allah's predestinations, but the goodness of man lies in his satisfaction and contentment.

Mere straitened circumstances should not be noted. Patience generally brings forth a better future for the servants. Moreover, we are not in a situation to ask Him to give our claims. Whatever He bestows upon us is from His Own bounteousness; and His graces come to us by the way of prophets and the saints.

The bitterness of worldly deprivations will become sweet by the help of Allah's promises to the believers, and the bounties of Heaven.

Notes

1. Surah At-Tawbah, No. 9, verse 92

2. Nahjul-Balāghah, saying No. 31, p. 550 (English version)
3. Surah ‘Al-i-‘Imrān, No. 3, verse 122

Section 8: The Hypocrites

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 60

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللّه وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

60. "Verily alms are for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives, and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarer. (This is) a duty ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The words /sadaqah/ (alms) and /sidāq/ (dowry) are derived from the words /sidq/ (truthfulness). Giving alms is a sign of truthfulness in the Faith to Allah, and dowry (or nuptial gift) is a sign of love to the wife.

The Arabic term /faqir/ is derived from /faqr/ (poverty). It is rendered to a person whose indigence is going to crash his bones. The Qur'ānic term /miskin/ (indigent) refers to a person who, because of indigency, sits at home, and is called 'a stay-at-home one'.

According to some Islamic narrations, /faqir/ (a poor person) is a needy person who usually does not ask people for help; but a /miskin/ (an indigent one) is a person who, because of intensity of indigency, in general, asks others to give him money.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that if the rich paid their alms tax to the deserving needy persons of the society, there would not exist any poor person.

A tradition cited in Wasā'il-ush-Shi'ah says:

"Verily Allah has fixed, in the wealth of the rich, some amount for the poor to solve their difficulties. And if He knew it was not sufficient for them, He would increase it.… And if people paid the poor's rights to them, they could live very well."

The Purpose of 'Alms' Is 'Poor-rates'

Poor-tax is one of the certain necessary duties of the religion of Islam. That is why the Qur'ān in the above verse says that it is 'a duty ordained by Allah'. This phrase means that poor-tax is a certain obligatory commandment of Allah.

So, according to this holy verse, this poor-tax must be spent in the same eight positions which are said in the verse, and in other sites it is not permissible. Full majority of Islamic jurisprudents, of course, believe that poor-rates can be spent for all the eight mentioned instances, and it is not obligatory to divide it among them.

But, from one point of view, spending it in these eight instances depends on the social necessities, and from another point of view, it depends on the attitude of the Islamic government. These eight sites are as follows:

1. The poor;
2. The indigent (the needy);
3. The officials appointed over them;
4. Those whose hearts are to be reconciled;
5. To free the captives;

www.alhassanain.org/english

6. The debtors,
7. For the cause of Allah;
8. and the wayfarer.

The explanation of the first and the second group (the poor and the indigent) has been referred to before. The third group, the officials appointed over them, are all those persons who take trouble for: collecting alms, protecting them, distributing and accounting them. Therefore, their rage is paid from alms-tax itself.

The fourth group are those people who are not eager to embrace Islam. Then, by spending a portion of alm-tax, their hearts can be absorbed.

The payment of alms-tax for absorbing the hearts is not in the sense of their embracing Islam for money, but it is for creating a preparation in them that they obtain some understanding, and then they may have Faith.

The fifth aspect is to spend it in the way of freeing the captives and striving against the act of enslavement.

The sixth aspect of spending alms-tax is for the debtors. There are some debtors who have innocently contracted some debts, like those who have last all their properties in a fire accident, in a flood, and in other natural events. Such persons are counted in this item.

Imam Sādiq (as) said:

"Any believer or Muslim who dies and leaves a debt, which is not based on corruption and immoderation, it is upon Imam to pay that debt."

The seventh site is for the cause of Allah which encompasses any godly efforts of the faithful, such as: religious preachings, Holy Struggle, services of comfort of life, and solving the difficulties of the Muslims.

The eighth aspect is the wayfarer. A wayfarer is a person who is rich in his own town but, in the course of travel, accidentally, he has no money and is helpless.

The Effects of Poor-tax in the Society

1. Poor-tax is a factor of wealth adjustment.
2. Poor-tax is a practical thank for the things that Allah has given to that person.
3. Poor-tax decreases the class divisions of the society, and wipes out the rancour between the poor and the rich.
4. Poor-tax survives the spirit of generosity and grace in man, and decreases mammonism and material dependence in him.
5. Poor-tax is a support for social securing of the deprive. It tells the poor not to be worried, and advises the bankrupt to try again. It says to the traveler not to be afraid of the lack of money in the way. It tells the employed that his share is preserved. It gives promise of freedom to the captives. It furnishes the field of godly services, and attracts the hearts of others to Islam.
6. But, multiplication of wealth causes some ungodly things, such as: negligence from the remembrance of Allah, exploitation from people, hard-heartedness, disobedience, and revelry, the remedy of which is poor-tax.
7. Besides wiping deprivation, poor-tax has some more merits. It increases attraction to Islam, or, at least, it causes persons not to cooperate with the enemies of Islam.

8. Some ordinary people believe that Islam has limited the increase of wealth and income for Muslims, while from the point of Islam's view, human beings must be relatively free so that they enjoy the nature by effort and originative faculty and they develop. But paying tax is also necessary.

9. From the arrangement and order of the sites of spending alms tax, and that the poor and indigents are mentioned prior to other aspects; perhaps, it can be said that wiping poverty from the society is in precedence.

10. The existence of the law of alms tax in Islam does not mean that Islam wishes to have always some poor Muslims who take poor-tax and some rich ones to pay it; but it is a way by which an outward real problem of the society can be solved.

Sometimes, the rich also face with some afflicting events such as: theft of property, fire accident, traffic accident, war, and captivity. Therefore, in an Islamic system, there should exist a financial source for social security.

11. The ordinance of alms-tax was revealed in Mecca, but because of scarcity of the Muslims and the money of alms-tax, people paid it themselves.

But, later, after the formation of an Islamic government in Medina, the idea of taking alms-tax from people with the purpose of paying to the treasury of the Muslims, and its centrality by the Islamic ruler, came into being. One of its evidences in the Qur'ān is recited:

"Take alms out of their property…" (Surah At-Tawbah, No. 9, verse 103)

12. It is not necessary that the alms-tax be divided equally among all the eight aspects, but it can be divided under the control of the Islamic judge and as much as it is needed and according to the necessity of the circumstances.

13. The person who does not pay alms-tax and is in the opposition of the Islamic government thereby, can be fought against.

14. It is unlawful (harām) for a sayyid (a descendant of the Prophet) to take alms-tax, save that the giver and the taker of it are both sayyed.

15. The condition of consuming alms-tax in the way of Allah is not only being in the state of poverty, but wherever it helps the sovereignty of Islam it can be spent.

16*. Alms-tax can be spent for the rescue of the society from the vice of the vicious persons. This meaning concerns to the phrase: "…and those whose hearts are to be reconciled…" mentioned in the verse.*

17. If a blood-money is proved upon a person and he is not able to pay it, the case is included in the phrase:

"and the debtors…"

18. Maybe, the phrase: "…and to free the captives…" encompasses the usage of alms-tax for emancipation of prisoners or supplying their expenses.

19. In the Qur'ān, the concept of 'alms-tax' has often accompanied with 'prayer'; and according to the Islamic literature, the condition of prayer to be accepted is the payment of alms-tax. This status denotes to the relation of the connection with Allah and the connection with people.

However, none of the obligations of the religion has occurred in the Qur'ān so close to 'prayer' that alms-tax has. As for the evidence, some verses are mentioned in the following:

A) "And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakāt), and bow down in prayer with those who bow down (in congragation)," (Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 43).

B) "And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates…"(Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 110).

C) "Verily, verily your guardian (waliyy) is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who establish the prayer and pay the poor-rate while bowing down (in prayer)." (Surah Al-Mā'idah, No. 5, verse 55).

The consensus of the commentators of both great sects of Islam have cited that the objective meaning of this verse is Ali-ibn-Abitālib, Ali (as) as its occasion of revelation denotes, too. [1]

D) "…and Allah said: 'Verily I am with you, if you keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and believe in My messengers and assist them…" (Surah Al-Mā'idah, No. 5, verse 12).

E) "…But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the poor-rate, then leave their way free to them..."(Surah At-Tawbah, No. 9, verse 5).

F) "…Therefore, keep up the prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah..." (Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78).

G) "…and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms, and Us (alone) did they serve." (Surah Al-'Anbiyā, No. 21, verse 73)

H) "…and the keeping up of the prayer and the giving of the poor-rate…" (Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 37.

I) "…and He has enjoined on me the prayer and the poor-rate so long as I live." (Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 32)

J) "And he enjoined on his family the prayer and the alms giving…" (Surah Maryam, No. 9,verse 55).

In addition to the above evidences, there are some more verses in this regard recited in the Qur'ān.

It should also be noted that alms giving has not been enjoined only in Islam, but as it was pointed out in the explanations of the previous verses, it has been ordained in the former religions, too.

The law of poor-rate, which illustrates an outline from the Islamic system, provides the following traces:

Social justice, effacing poverty, providing personels and employees, international popularity, the emancipation of slaves and prisoners, string the powers and faculties, preserving the creed and honour of the Muslims, expansion of social services.

Poor-rate and Traditions

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"No group of people restrain(ed) the poor-rate but Allah restrains the rain from them." [2]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever spends in charity (the poor-rate), there will be (appointed) for him from the bliss of the Heaven as much as the Mount of'Uhud for every coin (he has given)."[3]

3. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Protect your properties by almsgiving."[4]

4. Imam Sādiq (as) narrating from his ancestors, said that the Holy Prophet (S) had said:

"The most generous (person among people) is the one who pays the poor-rate of his wealth; and the most niggardly (person among people) is the one who is stingy to what Allah has enjoyed on him."[5]

5. Imam Sādiq (as) said:

"If people pay the poor-rate of their properties, there will remain no poor, needy Muslim."[6]

6. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"If you desire that Allah increases your wealth, then do pay its poor-rate."[7]

7. Imam Bāqir (as) said:

"The poor-rate increases in the sustenance."[8]

8. Imam Sādiq (as) said:

"When the poor-rate is restrained, the earth withholds its bounties."[9]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 61

وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ اُذُنٌ قُلْ اُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّه وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللّه لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

61. "And there are among them those who hurt the Prophet and say: 'He is an ear!' Say: 'An ear that is good for you; he believes in Allah, and believes the believers, and he is a mercy to those of you who believe. And those who hurt the messenger of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them'."

Some of the hypocrites said that the Prophet (S) was a simple and whimsical person, and he accepts whatever everybody says. Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) became inconvenient of them. At that time this verse was revealed and answered them. It says:

"And there are among them those who hurt the Prophet and say: 'He is an ear!'…"

In fact, they demonstrated one of the advantages of the Prophet (S) in the form of his disadvantage, the existence of which is necessary in a leader.

That is why the Qur'ān, immediately after that, adds this idea in the verse implying that if the Prophet, as you imagine, is an ear and listens to your statements and accepts your excuse; it is useful for you. It says:

"…say: 'An ear that is good for you..."

It is benefitable for you because, in this way, he protects your credit, and he does not waste your personality, and he does not hurt your feelings. Through this way, he employs his effort so that he preserves your affection, concord, and unity. But, if he uncovered the curtains and publicly disgraced the liars, there would arise a lot of troubles for you.

Then, in order that the criticizers do not misuse this statement and do not take it as a document, the verse continues implying that the Prophet (S) believes in Allah and his commandments, hearkens to the words of the true believers, and accepts them, and observes them. The verse adds:

"…he believes in Allah and believes the believers…"

That is, the Prophet (S), in fact, has two stages of treatment. One stage is conservation of the outward and hindering from betraying secrets, and the other is the stage of action. In the first stage, he listens to the statements of people, and, apparently, he does not reject them.

But, when the time of action comes forth, his attention is only to the commandments of Allah and to the suggestions which are uttered by the true believers. Thus, a leader, who tries to find the truth, should treat like that; and supplying the interests of a society is not possible save through this way. Hence, the Qur'ān, immediately after that, states:

"…and he is a mercy to those of you who believe…"

The only thing that should be added here is that those who hurt the Prophet (S) with such words, and find faults from him, should not think that they will be left without punishment. So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…And those who hurt the messenger of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them'."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 62

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّه لَكُمْ لِيُرْضُوكُمْ وَالله وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَق أَن يُرْضُوهُ إِن كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

62. "They swear to you by Allah, to please you; but Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should please Him if they are believers."

A hypocrite always lives in fear and terror. He tries to attract the attention of others by oaths and affectation. For this reason, not every oath should be accepted, since sometimes the holy things are misused by some impious persons. The verse says:

"They swear to you by Allah, to please you..."

Allah's pleasure is the main principal for a believer, not the consent of common people. The pleasure of the Messenger (S) is the same as the pleasure of Allah. The verse continues saying:

"…but Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should please Him if they are believers."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 63

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَن يُحَادِدِ اللّه وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِداً فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ

63. "Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger verily for him is the fire of Hell to abide therein? That is the great abasement."

The Qur'ānic phrase /yuhādidillāh/ (whoever opposes Allah) / means the limitation of the Power of Allah, as if Allah is limited in His deed of wrath unto them, though they considered that Allah's hands are closed. The verse says:

"Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah…"

Fakhr-i-Rāzi believes that this word is derived from the Arabic term /hadid/ with the sense of ‘obstinacy’. He has cited that the Arabic term /muhaddah/ means either ‘to violate the law of Allah’, or ‘to think oneself on one side and Allah on another side’.

Therefore, opposing the Islamic leader is an opposition against Allah; and the fruit of obstinacy before Allah is the eternal Hell. The verse says:

“…whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger verily for him is the fire of Hell to abide therein? That is the great abasement.”

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 64

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ اَن تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِءُوا إِنَّ اللَّه مُخْرِجٌ مَاتَحْذَرُونَ

64. “The hypocrites fear lest a ‘Surah’ should be sent down against them apprising them of what is in their hearts. Say: ‘Mock on! Verily Allah will expose what you fear of ”

It has been said in the occasion of the revelation of this verse that a group of hypocrites made decision to startle the Prophet’s camel in a neck of land when he was returning from the Battle of Tabūk, in a way that the Prophet (S) would be killed.

The Messenger of Allah was informed of their evil decision by means of revelation. ‘Ammār and Khuthayfah were guarding from forward and backward. When they (the Prophet (S) and the strivers) reached the neck of land, the hypocrites attacked them.

The Prophet (S) recognized them and told their names to Khuthayfah. He asked the Prophet (S) why he did not order that they should be killed, and the Messenger of Allah answered:

“I do not want that others say when Muhammad became powerful he killed the Muslims.”

At the absence of the Prophet (S), the hypocrite mockingly said that he wanted to occupy the castles of Syria. The revelation was sent down denoting that they might mock whatever much they desired, and Allah would make manifest their plans. The verse says:

“The hypocrites fear lest a ‘Surah’ should be sent down against them apprising them of what is in their hearts…”

The Qur’ānic term /sūrah/ means the totality of the Divine verses. In technical terminology, this term has been applied for the whole *114* Suras of the Qur’ān.

The hypocrites were constantly in scare because of manifestation of their own real feature and their deviations. They had understood that the Messenger of Allah (S) was aware of their affairs by means of revelation, yet they mocked him.

But the way of treatment of Allah, and His promise upon the hypocrites, is that He divulges their secrets. So, you should not be worried of their stings. The help of Allah is always with you. The verse continues saying:

“…Say: ‘Mock on! Verily Allah will expose what you fear of ”

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 65

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللّه وءَايَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

65. "And if you question them (regarding their mockery), they will certainly say: 'We were only discoursing and sporting.' Say: "Were you mocking Allah, His signs, and His Messenger?"

The Arabic term /xaud/ means 'to step in mud', but it is used in the Qur'ān with the meaning of 'starting some indecent actions.'

This verse, again, concerns the Battle of Tabūk when the hypocrites intended to kill the Prophet (S) in his return from that battle. One of those hypocrites had said what they would do if their plot was divulged. Another of them said that they could pretend it was a jesting. Their statement was a clamsy excuse.[10]

Now, the question is whether it is possible to joke anything, even Allah, the Prophet, and the verses of the Qur'ān.

Was the subject of startling the Prophet's camel and his fall from that dangerous neck of land something that could be covered under the mask of jesting?

The verse says:

"And if you question them (regarding their mockery), they will certainly say: 'We were only discoursing and sporting.' Say: 'Were you mocking Allah, His signs, and His Messenger?'

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 66

لاتَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِن نَعْفُ عَن طَآئِفَةٍ مِنكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَآئِفَةً بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

66. "Do not make excuses. You have disbelieved after your believing. If We forgive a party of you (because of repentance), We will chastise (another) party for that they have been sinners."

Every time that the plot of the hypocrites was divulged and their secrets were manifested for the Muslims, they offered some excuses, including the very excuse mentioned in this verse. They said they did not intend seriously, but it was only an amusement and a play. The Qur'ān does not accept their excuse, and says:

"Do not make excuses. You have disbelieved after your believing…"

That is, after the expression of Faith, which was not true of course, they did some actions by which their apparent belief became invalid and their infidelity was made manifest to the Muslims.

In the continuation of the verse, the Qur'ān says:

"…If We forgive a party of you (because of repentance), We will chastise (another) party for that they have been sinners."

The purpose of the verse is that those members of the hypocrites who repent and really return toward Islam, will be forgiven; but those hypocrites who remain in their own disbelief and hypocrisy will be punished.

Besides the chastisement of the Hereafter, this punishment occurred in this very life upon them. The Prophet (S) disgraced that party of the hypocrites who resisted on their hypocrisy. The example of it was the Mosque of Dirār, the chargers of which were openly criticized.

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Bahr-ul-Muhit, vol. 3, p. 513; Tafsir-i-Fath-ul-Qadir, vol. 2, p. 53; Ehqāq-ul-Haqq, vol. 2, p. 400; and Kanz-ul-‘Ummāl, vol. 6, p. 391.
2. Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, p.9
3. Roudat-ul-Wā‘izin, p.418
4. Tuhaf-ul-‘Uqūl, p.113; and Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol.93, p. 13
5. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, vol.93, p.11
6. Al-Imam-as-Sādiq (as), Asad Heydar, vol.4, p.360
7. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, vol.93, p.23
8. Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol.75, p.83
9. Al-Muhajjat-ul-Baydā’, vol.2, p.66
10. Majma‘-ul-Bayān, the commentary.

Section 9: Allah's Curse for the Hypocrites

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 67

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُم مِن بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

67. "The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women are as one another; they enjoin evil and forbid good, and they keep their hands shut. They have forsaken Allah, so He has forsaken them, (too). The hypocrites are indeed the transgressors."

The Signs of the Hypocrites

In this verse, the Qur'ān points to a general matter. It implies that the spirit of hypocrisy may appear in different shapes, and the form of ostentation in particular. The spirit of hypocrisy may be different in a man and in a woman, but the variety of the features of hypocrisy among hypocrites should not deceive us.

Therefore, the verse says:

"The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women are as one another…"

After mentioning that meaning, the verse refers to five epithets out of the hypocrite's qualities as follows:

The first and the second epithets of the hypocrites are that they usually encourage people to evil and restrain them from good.

That is, contrast to the program of the true believers who ceaselessly, through enjoining good and forbidding evil, try to improve the society and to purify it from pollution and corruption, the hypocrites always try to expand corruption everywhere and to dismiss goodness from the society. The verse says:

"…they enjoin evil and forbid good…"

Their third epithet is that they neither spend in the way of Allah, nor do they help the deprive, nor do they financially assist their relatives and those who are familiar with them. The verse says:

"…and they keep their hands shut…"

The fourth quality of the hypocrites is that all their deeds, statements, and behaviours denote that they have forgotten the Lord, and also the situation of their lives indicates that the Lord has deprived them from some of His bounties, successes, and merits, too. The signs of these two abandonments are vividly reflected in their lives. The verse continues saying:

"…They have forsaken Allah, so He has forsaken them, (too)…"

The fifth quality of theirs is that they are impious and they live outside the circle of the obedience of Allah, i.e. not only they are mischievous, but also they are disobedient. The verse concludes as follows:

"…The hypocrites are indeed the transgressors."

Whatever was said in this verse about the qualifications of the hypocrites is seen in such people in any age.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 68

وَعَدَ الله الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَهُمُ الله وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ

68. "Allah has promised the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the infidels, the Fire of Hell, to abide in it forever. That is enough for them, Allah has cursed them, and for them is a lasting chastisement."

The promise of Hell, stated in the abovementioned holy verse, is decreed at first for the hypocrites and secondly for the disbelievers.

Whatever more apparently fitting the hypocrites settle themselves in the row of the believers in this world, it is of no vail and they will be in the row of disbelievers in Hereafter.

The verse says:

"Allah has promised the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the infidels, the Fire of Hell, to abide in it forever…"

And since Hell is the collection of any pain, affliction and tribution, then it is enough for the hypocrites and infidels both. The verse continues saying:

"…That is enough for them, Allah has cursed them, and for them is a lasting chastisement."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 69

كَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالاً وَأَوْلاَداً فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلاقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلاَقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُم بِخَلاَقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا أُوْلَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

69. "(O' hypocrites! You are) like those who were before you, they were stronger than you I power and more abundant in wealth and children; so they enjoyed their portion; thus do you enjoy your portion as those before you did enjoy their portion; and you indulge in vain discourses as they indulged. These are those whose works are null in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the losers."

An Admonition and a Warning

In order to awaken this group of the hypocrites, the abovementioned holy verse puts the mirror of the history before them and, comparing them with the former stubborn hypocrites, it teaches them the most instructive lessons.

It implies that they are like the former hypocrites and they follow the same path, the same program, and the same evil fate of theirs. The verse says:

"(O' hypocrites! You are) like those who were before you…"

Those very hypocrites of old were stronger and more abundant both from the point of strength and from the point of properties and children than these ones. The verse says:

"…they were stronger than you in power and more abundant in wealth and children…"

They enjoyed their share of the bounties of this world in the way of lusts, pollutions, sins, mischief, and corruption. These hypocrites of this community also enjoyed their own share in the same way that the former hypocrites had enjoyed.

"…so they enjoyed their portion…"

Then, the Qur'ān adds in the verse:

"…thus do you enjoy your portion as those before you did enjoy their portion; and you indulge in vain discourses as they indulged…"

For an admonition and a warning to the group of hypocrites contemporary with the Prophet (S) and all the hypocrites of the world, the Qur'ān, through two phrases, remarks the end of the former hypocrites.

The first phrase is recited:

"…These are those whose works are null in this world and the Hereafter…"

And the second phrase says:

"…and those are the losers."

Such hypocrites may enjoy some temporary and limited benefits from their hypocritical deeds in this life, but if the circumstance be observed carefully, it can be made manifest that, they enjoy of real benefits neither in this world nor in the next world.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 70

أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ
وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

70. "Has not the news of those before them came to them, of the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd, and the people of Abraham and the dwellers of Madyan and the subverted cities? Their Messengers came to them with clear arguments, so it was not Allah to do injustice unto them, but they unto themselves used to be unjust."

In this holy verse, the Qur'ān addresses the Prophet (S) and, as a positive interrogation with a negative sense, says:

"Has not the news of those before them came to them, of the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd, and the people of Abraham and the dwellers of Madyan and the subverted cities?…"

These are some shaking events the study and searching of which moves any person with the least feeling in his heart.

Yet, Allah did not deprive them from His grace, which was His guidance and, as the verse says:

"…Their Messengers came to them with clear arguments…"

But they did hearken to none of those godly prophets and did not consider worthy their laborious troubles in the way of guiding the servants of Allah. Thus, never did Allah injustice unto them, but they unto themselves did injustice. The verse says:

"…so it was not Allah to do injustice unto them, but they unto themselves used to be unjust."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 71

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُوْلَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمْ اللهُ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

71. "And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another; they enjoin good and forbid evil and they perform the prayer and they pay the alms (zakāt), and they obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they on whom Allah will bestow His Mercy. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The Signs of the True Believers

The signs of true believers, men and women, have been mentioned in the verse under discussion. These signs are also figured five here:

The verse beings as follows:

"And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another;

After referring to this general principle, the revelation pays to the explanation of the details of the epithets of the believers.

1- At first, it implies that they invite people to good. The verse continues saying:

"…they enjoin good…"

2- They also restrain people from vices, wickednesses, and unlawful things:

"…and forbid evil…"

3- Contrast to the hypocrites, who usually forget Allah, the believers always establish prayer; keep the remembrance of Allah, and, consequently, by this remembrance and the Name of Allah, they cause their hearts to be light and their minds to be aware. The holy verse says:

"…and they perform the prayer…"

4- Again, contrast to the hypocrites who are some niggardly persons, the believers pay a part of their wealth as the alms (zakāt) in the way of Allah and for Allah and for supporting the servants of Allah (s.w.t.), in order to improve their society. The verse says:

"…and they pay the alms (zakāt)…"

5- The hypocrites are mischievous, and disobedient, and they behave outside of the circle of the commandment of Allah; but believers obey the command of Allah and His Messenger. The verse says:

"…and they obey Allah and His Messenger…"

At the end of this verse, the Qur'ān points to the first privilege of the believers from the point of their fate and their reward. It says:

"…It is they on whom Allah will bestow His Mercy…"

No doubt the promise of mercy to the believers is from the side of Allah. This promise is conclusive and assured from any point of view, because:

"…Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Neither does He promise without any cause, nor does He fail its fulfilment when He promises.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 42

وَعَدَ اللهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ
طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

72. "Allah has promised the believer men and the believer women gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever, and

goodly dwellings in garden of perpetual abode, yet Allah's good pleasure is greater (than all these); that is the great success."

In this holy verse, the very believers whose epithets were pointed out before, are promised some excellent things, the most important of which is the bounty of His good pleasure. What state can be greater than the good pleasure of Allah for a believer? The verse says:

"Allah has promised the believer men and the believer women gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever, and goodly dwellings in garden of perpetual abode, yet Allah's good pleasure is greater (than all these); that is the great success."

The garden which Allah will bestow on the believers has been qualified differently in the Qur'ān. They are such as: /jannāt-i-'adnin/ (gardens of perpetual abode), /jannat-ul-ma'wā/ (the garden, the abode), and /jannat-ul-xuld/ (garden of eternity).

The purpose of the first qualification, mentioned here, is the statement of eternity of Paradise. It has been said that this garden is located in the middle of Paradise, or it is the best place of Paradise. A tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) denotes that, it is the situation of the place of prophets, veracious believers, and martyrs.

Of course, entering into Paradise and enjoying its bounties can be a good goal for the believers, but greater than that is gaining the good pleasure of Allah. This is the main goal of any believer who has settled the love of Allah in his heart, and has considerably climbed towards the climax of the cognition of Allah (s.w.t.).

Section 10: The Hypocrites Shall Not Attain Their Object

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 73

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

73. "O' Prophet! strive hard against the infidels and the hypocrites, and be harsh with them, and their abode shall be Hell, and an evil destination it is."

As long as the hypocrites have not initiated war and have not plotted against Islam, similar to the enemy alien nonbelievers, holy struggle upon them should be done only by tongue. [1]

Before the revelation of the abovementioned verse, the Prophet (S) treated the hypocrites gently and nobly, but after the revelation of this verse his treatment became severe toward them.[2]

Thus, the Prophet (S), who is the source of mercy, is commissioned to severity because of infidelity and hypocrisy of the enemies of Islam. The verse says:

"…And be harsh with them…"

Therefore, an Islamic leader must be decisive and sharp before the arrogance. He must strive against both the manifest foreign enemies and the interior hidden enemies. However, the Holy Struggle should be led under the command and attitude of the leader of the Muslims, who is, indeed, the commander-in-chief of the army in the Islamic system of government. The verse says:

"O' Prophet! strive hard against the infidels and the hypocrites, and be harsh with them, and their abode shall be Hell, and an evil destination it is."

This fact should also be noted that Holy Struggle against infidels and hypocrites is the recompense of these unbelieving people in this world, and their retribution in the coming world will be Hell.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 74

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّهِ مَاقَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلاَمِهِمْ وَهَمُّوا بِمَا لَمْ يَنَالُوا وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلاَّ أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ فَإِن يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَإِن يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللهُ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً فِي الْدُنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلانَصِيرٍ

74. "They swear by Allah that they have said nothing, but they certainly have said the word of infidelity and disbelieved after their Islam, and they determined upon what they never attained to, and they did not find fault except because Allah and His Messenger enriched them out of His grace. Therefore if they repent, it will be better for them; and if they turn away, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they shall not have on the earth any guardian or any helper."

This holy verse includes all the plots that the hypocrites designed and acted against the Holy Prophet (S) and Islam, but most of the commentary books compiled by the Shi'ite and the Sunnite commentators have

concerned it to the plot which is known as the 'Laylatul-'Aqabah' (the Night of 'Aqabah) where the hypocrites waited in ambush in a neck of land in order to cause the murder of the Prophet (S) by startling his camel. But their plot was found out and they failed. The verse says:

"They swear by Allah that they have said nothing, but they certainly have said the word of infidelity and disbelieved after their Islam, and they determined upon what they never attained to…"

It has been cited that when the Prophet (S) was speaking for the audience in Tabūk, a hypocrite, by the name of Hallās, uttered a blasphemous ugly word. One of the Prophet's companions ('Āmir-ibn-Qays) informed that insolence to the Prophet (S).

He summoned Hallās, but he denied the matter. 'Āmir said that he told a lie and repeated that word. Then, by the command of the Prophet (S) both of them went near the pulpit of the mosque and swore. 'Āmir asked Allah to send down a verse and to disgrace the hypocrite publicly. This holy verse was revealed containing the phrase saying:

"They swear by Allah that they have said nothing, but they certainly have said the word of infidelity and disbelieved after their Islam, and they determined upon what they never attained to…"

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān denotes that if the hypocrites repent and really embrace Islam it is better for them, viz, Allah will forgive them. But if they turn away and remain in their hypocrisy, they must know that Allah will punish them severely both in this world and the coming world, and they will not have any friend or helper on the earth. The verse continues saying:

"…and they did not find fault except because Allah and His Messenger enriched them out of His grace. Therefore if they repent, it will be better for them; and if they turn away, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they shall not have on the earth any guardian or any helper."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 75-78

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّه لَئِنْ ءَاتَانَا مِن فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْصَّالِحِينَ

فَلَمَّآ ءَاتَاهُم مِن فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ

فَاَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقاً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَآ أَخْلَفُوا اللَّه مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا اَنَّ اللَّه يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ وَاَنَّ اللَّه عَلاَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ

75. "And of them are those who have made a covenant with Allah: 'If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms (zakāt) and we will certainly be of the righteous'."

76. "But when He gave them out of His Grace, they were niggardly of it and they turned away, swerving aside."

77. "So as a consequence He put hypocrisy into their hearts until the day they will meet Him, because they failed to fulfil unto Allah what they had promised Him and because of what they used to lie."

78. "Do they not know that Allah knows their hidden (thought) and their secret whisperings, and that Allah is the knower of all unseen (things).

The first verse of the abovementioned group of verses is about some of the hypocrites who made a covenant with Allah and then they broke it. It has also been said that the verse has been revealed concerning 'Tha'labat-ibn Hātab' who was a poor man.

He asked the Prophet (S) that he would pray for him in this regard. He said if the Prophet (S) prayed and he became rich, he would remit considerably in the way of Allah, and he would become one of the benevolent persons.

The Prophet (S) prayed for him and he became rich enough, but he stinted. He also did not participated in 'Friday Prayer', and thereupon he made his hypocrisy manifest.

Whatever the sign of the revelation of the verse might be, however, it is about some persons who have always existed and are existed in the societies.

When such people have not wealth and facilities, they may make covenant with Allah that if Allah bestowed upon them properties and they became rich they would pay in charity in His way and would become righteous and of the good servants of Allah.

But they often do not do like that when He causes them to be wealthy. They scant and usually avoid doing good things. The verse says:

"And of them are those who have made a covenant with Allah: 'If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms (zakāt) and we will certainly be of the righteous'."

An important matter, regarding this subject mentioned in the second verse, is that this breach of covenant and becoming stingy causes hypocrisy to come into existence in their hearts.

When a person behaves like that, he has to clasp to justification of himself and has to say something through his tongue which he does not believe in his inward. It is similar to the manner of the hypocrites who, in order to protect themselves, expressed Islam falsely and said something that they did not believe. The verse says:

"But when He gave them out of His Grace, they were niggardly of it and they turned away, swerving aside."

The one who makes covenant, but he breaches it, or promises something but he fails, he has somehow the same status of hypocrisy and duplicity. Therefore, in this verse, the Qur'ān remarks that the appearance of the state of hypocrisy in such persons originates from where they have breached their promise and have told a lie. The verse says:

"So as a consequence He put hypocrisy into their hearts until the day they will meet Him, because they failed to fulfil unto Allah what they had promised Him and because of what they used to lie."

Thus, according to this verse, breach of promise and falsehood are two signs for hypocrisy. This meaning is also referred to in a tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) who said:

"There are three signs for a hypocrite: when he speaks he tells a lie; when he promises he fails; and when he is trusted he proves treacherous."

In the next verse, the Qur'ān states about these hypocrites as follows:

"Do they not know that Allah knows their hidden (thought) and their secret whisperings, and that Allah is the knower of all unseen (things).

That is, Allah is aware of all their secrets whether those ones that they tell each other as mysteries, and those secrets which they whisper.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verses 79-80

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الْصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لا يَجِدُونَ إِلاَّ جُهْدَهُمْ
فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ الله مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لاتَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِن تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَن َغْفِرَ الله لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوا بِاللّه وَرَسُولِهِ وَالله لا َهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

79. "Those who find fault with the voluntary givers of alms from among the believers, and those who find nothing (to give) but (to the extent of) their endeavour, and they scoff at them, Allah will scoff at them, and for them shall be a painful chastisement."

80. "Whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them; this is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger; and Allah does not guide the ungodly people."

In view of the fact that the foundation of the behaviour of the hypocrites was opposing the Muslims and finding fault with them, they often cavilled at the Muslims' affairs and mocked them. Among them was that some of the rich Muslims remitted their wealth in the way of Allah more than the amount which they were enjoined upon. Those rich believers did it eagerly and at pleasure in order that Islam could glitter more and more. Their main aim was that they might obtain some divine spiritual rewards.

There were also some Muslims who did not possess plenty of properties, but with difficultly they provided some money and spent it. These two parties of the Muslims were mocked and were found fault by the hypocrites.

The hypocrites smiled scornly at them meaning why those Muslims lost their own wealth. The hypocrites did not believe in the Divine rewards of Hereafter. They imagined that remitting wealth to others was as squandering it, and it was a kind of folly.

The Qur'ān refers to this ignorantly manner of the hypocrites and says:

"Those who find fault with the voluntary givers of alms from among the believers, and those who find nothing (to give) but (to the extent of) their endeavour, and they scoff at them, Allah will scoff at them, and for them shall be a painful chastisement."

The Qur'ānic phrase which says: "Allah will scoff at them " means that Allah will give them the retribution of their scoffing, and, in the Hereafter, He will arrange a situation wherein these hypocrites will be mocked by the Muslims. At that circumstance, the believers will scoff at them and laugh at them.

The number ‘seventy’ here is a code for multiplication and it is not the statement of a definite calculation. In other words, it indicates whatever more you seek forgiveness for them, it will be uneffective. So, it does not mean that if you seek forgiveness seventy one times, for example, they will be forgiven.

Some Islamic literature indicates that the Holy Prophet (S) in this regard has said:

“If I knew seeking forgiveness more than seventy times could save them, I would seek forgiveness.” [3]

Man may reach a point in aberration where nothing can save him; like a patient whom no physician is able to help when the soul separates from him. The verse says:

“Whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them; this is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger; and Allah does not guide the ungodly people.”

Notes

1. The of Al-Minār
2. Tafsir-i-Fi-Zilāl-il-Qur’ān
3. Majma‘-ul-Bayān, the commentary

Section 11: Connections Severed With the Hypocrites

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 81

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلاَفَ رَسُولِ اللّه وَكَرِهُوا أَن يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَقَالُوا لاتَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَد حَرّاً لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ

81. "Those who were left behind were glad on account of their sitting behind against (the command of) the Messenger of Allah, and were averse from striving with their possessions and their selves in the way of Allah, and said: 'Do not go forth in the heat'. Say: 'The Fire of Hell is much severe in heat, if only they could understand'."

The hypocrites were happy that they had not participated in the Holy Struggle, because they did not like to strive in the way of Allah by their properties and their lives. They not only did not participate themselves in the Holy Struggle but also prevented some others to take part in it. The verse in this regard says:

"Those who were left behind were glad on account of their sitting behind against (the command of) the Messenger of Allah, and were averse from striving with their possessions and their selves in the way of Allah…"

The Battle of Tabūk happened in a season when the weather was very hot and blazing then the hypocrites prohibited people not to go forth in that hot weather. Therefore, Allah answers them that the Fire of Hell is more blazing if they understand. The verse continues saying:

"…and said: 'Do not go forth in the heat'. Say: 'The Fire of Hell is much severe in heat, if only they could understand."

That is, they were afraid of the heat of the weather while the blazing Fire of Hell is waiting for them.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 82

فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلاً وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيراً جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

82. "Therefore they shall laugh a little and weep much (as) a recompense for what they used to earn."

If the hypocrites knew what kind of rewards they have lost and how great opportunities and bounties they have rejected because of abandonment of the participation in the Holy Struggle, they should make merry little and weep very much. Yet, comparing the long time weepings in the Hereafter, that they will have before them, the weeping during their life-time is naught.

The verse says:

"Therefore they shall laugh a little and weep much (as) a recompense for what they used to earn."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 83

فإِن رَجَعَكَ الله إِلَى طَآئِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُل لَن تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَداً وَلَن تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوّاً إِنَّكُم رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ

83. "So if Allah brings you back to a party of them and they ask your permission to go forth, say: 'You shall never go forth with me and you

shall never fight an enemy with me; surely you were pleased to sit (idle) the first time, then sit (now also idle) with those who stay behind'."

Whoever repents sincerely and truthfully, it will be accepted by Allah, but the hypocrites asked permission to go to fight hypocritically and affectedly.

The Qur'ānic term /xālif/ means both 'the one who violates going fight', and 'an antagonist'.

Do not trust upon the hypocrites' request for attending in the Holy Struggle. The verse says:

"So if Allah brings you back to a party of them and they ask your permission to go forth, say…"

And do fear from those who escaped from going to fight yesterday but they are candidates to attend in the battle-field today. The verse continues saying:

"...'You shall never go forth with me and you shall never fight an enemy with me…"

Therefore, hypocrites must be despised and deserted. The holy verse concludes as follows:

"…surely you were pleased to sit (idle) the first time, then sit (now also idle) with those who stay behind."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 84

وَلا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْهُم مَاتَ أَبَداً وَلا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللّه وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

84. "And never pray over any one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. They indeed disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and died while they were ungodly."

The way of the Prophet's life (S) was so that he used to attend in the funeral and burial ceremonies of Muslims' deads. He prayed for them and established funeral prayer over their corpses. But Allah has prohibited His Messenger to attend in the ceremonies of the dead bodies of the hypocrites. The verse says:

"And never pray over any one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. They indeed disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and died while they were ungodly."

Thus, the dead body of a hypocrite is also despised when Muslims ought not to attend their funerals nor stand by their graves. Establishing funeral prayer and visitation of tombs is as a sign of a reverence and an esteem to the body of a Muslim believer; and since a hypocrite deserves no reverence, then the verse says:

"…never pray over any one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave…"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 85

وَلاَ تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلاَدُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الله أَن يُعَذِّبَهُم بِهَا فِي الْدنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ

85. "And let not their possessions and their children astonish you; verily Allah only desires thereby to chastise them in this world, and that their souls depart while they are infidels."

A similar statement to this verse, with a little difference in recitation, was referred to in holy verse *No. 55* of the current Surah.

However, sometimes it happens that, instead of welfare and happiness, wealth and children are the cause of affliction and chastisement for a group of people. That is why the verse says:

"And let not their possessions and their children astonish you; verily Allah only desires thereby to chastise them in this world, and that their souls depart while they are infidels."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 86

وإِذَآ أُنْزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِاللّه وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أُولُوا الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُن مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ

86. "And whenever a Surah is sent down, saying 'Believe in Allah and strive hard along with His Messenger', those with abundant means among them ask leave of you, and they say: 'Let us be with those who sit back."

Sometimes it happened that a Surah or a verse of the Qur'ān concerning the believers was revealed and invited them to be firm in Faith and to strive in the way of Allah beside the Prophet (S).

Such revelations caused the believers to become spiritually encouraged, firm, and steadfast; but those Divine revelations caused the hypocrites to become inconvenient and despondent. So, they (the hypocrites) sometimes came to the Prophet (S) and uttered some materials which clearly indicated their hypocrisy.

This verse denotes that when a Surah was revealed wherein people were enjoined to belief in Allah and Holy Struggle beside the Prophet (S), some of the rich hypocrites came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and asked permission not to participate in the Holy Struggle.

They said that they might be allowed to stay at home with those who could stay at home, and not to take part in the Holy Struggle. The verse says:

"And whenever a Surah is sent down, saying 'Believe in Allah and strive hard along with His Messenger', those with abundant means among them ask leave of you, and they say: 'Let us be with those who sit back."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 87

رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لا يَفْقَهُونَ

87. "They were content that they should be with those who stay behind, and a seal has been set upon their hearts, so they do not understand."

The matter discussed in the previous verse is continued in this verse, saying that the hypocrites became happy to stay with those who stay behind and, like women, children, and patients, who do not take part in Holy Struggle, and to remain at home.

It is clear that he who has no Faith in Allah will certainly refuse to go to fight in His way, because he does not believe in the excellent rewards that

Allah has promised for the godly strivers. Therefore, a hypocrite considers that participation in such a war is a fall into danger and it is a kind of self murder.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān adds that the hearts of the hypocrites are sealed. Therefore, they do not conceive the Truth, for there have been drawn a curtain before their eyes and ears. It is their infidelity that has caused them to be incapable to understand the facts.

The verse says:

"They were content that they should be with those who stay behind, and a seal has been set upon their hearts, so they do not understand."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 88

لكِنِ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

88. "But the Messenger, and those who believe with him, strive hard with their possessions and their selves, and these it is who shall have good things and these it is who shall be successful."

In the verse before this verse, the Qur'ān denoted that the hypocrites usually refuse to participate in Holy Struggle in the way of Allah and they like to stay at home at the time of war like women, little children, and sick persons.

Now, in this verse, those persons are referred to whose manner is just opposite to that of the hypocrites. They consist in the Prophet (S) and the believers who are ever ready to participate in Holy Struggle with all their possibilities.

The verse says:

"But the Messenger, and those who believe with him, strive hard with their possessions and their selves, and these it is who shall have good things and these it is who shall be successful."

This ending part of the verse means that Allah will give them some good rewards, and they will reach to the happiness of both this world and the Hereafter.

In this world, they gain happiness by overcoming the enemies and strengthening the foundation of their own society toward ever-increasing progression. And in the Hereafter, they will be rewarded by being enjoyed of the Divine bounties.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 89

أَعَدَّ اللهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

89. "Allah has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever. That is the great success."

In this verse, the statement is upon the great rewards that Allah will bestow on the believers. It remarks that, for such believers who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and selves, Allah has prepared gardens that rivers flow under their trees and, more important than that is that, they will eternally abide therein.

Then the Qur'ān adds that this circumstance is that very great success. The verse says:

"Allah has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever. That is the great success."

There are also some more rewards promised for the strivers which have been mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'ān. One of them is that Allah guides those who strive in His way unto His ways.

That is, He will bestow on them a sort of recognition that they can be informed of the facts of the world of existence and enjoy the special and particular guidance of Allah, so that they may not be involved with misunderstanding. Surah 'Ankabūt, *No. 29*, *verse 69* says:

"And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways…"

Section 12: The Deserters

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 90

وَجَآءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الاَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّه وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

90. "And the dwellers of the desert came with their excuses, that permission might be given to them (to stay back), and those who lied to Allah and His Messenger sat (at home). Soon a painful chastisement shall afflict those of them who disbelieved."

Some of those People who did not take part in the Holy Struggle had true excuses for which they obtained leave, while some others did not participated in the Holy Struggle without having any exemption, and the abovementioned chastisement is for the second group.

The term /'a'rāb/, mentioned here, has been applied for some Bedouins who lived in deserts and were far from the city civilization.

However, Holy Struggle is something concerned to Islamic government and it is not a personal affair. That is why both attending in it and leaving it should be done with the permission of the leader of the Muslims. The verse says:

"And the dwellers of the desert came with their excuses, that permission might be given to them, (to stay back)…"

By the way, those who are heedless to the obligatory rule of Holy Struggle and try to escape from it, are liars in their belief. They must know that the seekers of exemption, who try to run away from performing their duty, will be punished and a painful chastisement is waiting for them. The verse continues saying:

"…and those who lied to Allah and His Messenger sat (at home). Soon a painful chastisement shall afflict those of them who disbelieved."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 91

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضعَفَآءِ وَلا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لايَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلّه وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى اَلْمُـحْسِنِينَ مِن سَبِيلٍ وَالله غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

91. "There is no fault in the weak and the sick and those who find nothing to spend, so long as they are true to Allah and to His Messenger. There is no way (to blame) against the good-doers and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

A blind old man came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"I have nobody to take my hand and to lead me to the battle-field. I am old and feable. Is my excuse accepted?"

The Prophet (S) kept silence for a while until the abovementioned verse was revealed.

In these recent couple of verses, and the following one, in order to make clear the situation of all groups from the point of being exempted or not in regard to participation in Holy Struggle, there have been defined some proper degrees. At first, it says:

"There is no fault in the weak and the sick and those who find nothing to spend…"

These three groups are excused in any law, and intellect and logic also prove their being exempted. It is certain that in no instance Islamic laws are separate from intellect and logic.

After that, the Qur'ān has stated an important condition for the commandment of their being excused. It implies that this is in the condition that they refrain no sincere benediction unto Allah and His Messenger.

"…so long as they are true to Allah and to His Messenger…"

They should encourage the strivers through their own words and behaviour toward Holy Struggle, and to weaken the enemies' spirit so that they prepare the elementary factors of their failure.

Later, in order to state the reason of this subject, it says that such people are some benevolent men, and there is no way for blaming, scorning, punishing and taking to task the good-doers. The verse says:

"…There is no way (to blame) against the good-doers…"

At the end of the verse, as another reason for these three groups being exempted, the Qur'ān points to Allah's two great attributes by saying:

"…Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 92

وَلا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لآ أَجِدُ مَآ أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَناً أَلاَّ يَجِدُوا مَا يُنفِقُونَ

92. "Nor (is the task) on those unto whom, when they come unto you to provide them with mounts, you said: 'I do not find means to carry you,' they turned back and their eyes overflowed with tears of sorrow, for they did not find that which they should spend."

In this verse, the Qur'ān refers to the fourth group of those who were also exempted from the Holy Struggle. This group had no means to ride on and to participate in the Holy Struggle.

They went to the Prophet (S) to obtain it, but he did not have any mount to give them for carrying them. They had to come back from him while their eyes were full of tears. This tear was for the sorrow which originated from the lack of means to spend it in the way of Allah. The holy verse says:

"Nor (is the task) on those unto whom, when they come unto you to provide them with mounts, you said: 'I do not find means to carry you,' they turned back and their eyes overflowed with tears of sorrow, for they did not find that which they should spend."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 93

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَآءُ رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

93. "Verily the way (to blame) is only against those who ask you permission (to stay behind) while they are rich. They are content to be with those who stay back, and Allah has set a seal on their hearts, thus they do not know (what they have missed)."

In this verse, the Qur'ān explains the fifth group, i.e. those who have never been excused with Allah, and will not be excused in the future either.

It implies that the way of blame and punishment is open only to those who ask you permission not to participate in the Holy Struggle while they are rich and are in welfare. They possess enough possibilities and necessary means for this affair. The verse says:

"Verily the way (to blame) is only against those who ask you permission (to stay behind) while they are rich…"

Then it adds that this disgrace is enough for them that they contented to stay back in Medina with the persons who were feeble, sick, and handicapped and to be deprived from the honour of participation in the battle-field. It says:

"…They are content to be with those who stay back…"

And also this retribution is enough for them that, because of their own ugly deeds, Allah has ceased them from the ability of contemplation and comprehension by sealing their hearts. Therefore, they do not know what kind of excellent ranks they have lost. The verse continues saying:

"…and Allah has set a seal on their hearts, thus they do not know (what they have missed)."

The strong and exalted spirits of the strivers of Islam are vividly made clear from this verse. It illustrates how they preferred and preceded the honour of attending in the battlefield and the honour of martyrdom to any other honours.

This very fact makes manifest one of the important factors of the rapid expansion of Islam at that time and our retardation in this age.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 94

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لاتَعْتَذِرُوا لَن نُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَّأَنَا الله مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى الله عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدونَ إِلَى عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

94. "They will offer you excuses when you return to them. Say: 'Do not make excuses. We will never believe you. Allah has informed us of tidings about you. And, Allah and His Messenger will see your work, then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the visible, and He will inform you of what you used to do'."

The hypocrites, who, at any rate, did not participate in the Battle of Tabūk, ceaselessly brought excuses and pretexts to the Prophet of Islam (S). This verse, rejecting their seeking for excuses, indicates that when the Muslims would return from the war, the hypocrites would come to them and bring some excuses.

The Muslims should say to them not to make not to excuse, since they would not believe them and Allah had informed them of their circumstance. The verse says:

"They will offer you excuses when you return to them. Say: 'Do not make excuses. We will never believe you. Allah has informed us of tidings about you…"

This meaning is a hint to the fact that, by means of the verses of the Qur'ān and revelation, Allah (s.w.t.) discovered the plots and secrets of the

hypocrites and He informed His Messenger (S) of their actions, so that the Prophet (S) knew that those excuses were made only to confuse the matter.

They did not have a proper and safe belief in Allah and the religion. And their absence in the Holy Struggle was for the same reason.

Then, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'ān says:

"…And, Allah and His Messenger will see your work, then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the visible, and He will inform you of what you used to do'."

That moment of the return to the Knower, which is mentioned in the verse, is the time of death, when the curtains will be utterly removed and human beings will understand the facts.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 95

سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّه لَكُمْ إِذَا انقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

95. "They will swear to you by Allah, when you turn back unto them that you renounce them (their sin). So renounce them, for they are indeed filth and their abode is Hell, a recompense for what they used to earn."

After the occurrence of the Battle of Tabūk, when the Muslims returned to Medina, those hypocrites who had not participated in that Battle, in order to justify their action, came to them swearing that they had plausible excuse. This oath was for that the Muslims might not blame them.

The Qur'ān informs the Muslims in this verse that when they return from the Holy Struggle, the hypocrites come to them and swear by Allah to justify their deed in order that the Muslims renounce them their sin and do not blame them.

But Muslims are commanded to turn away from them, i.e. as a protest to their ugly work, they must avoid speaking with them. Then the Qur'ān states its reason such that, as a result of their own action, their abode is Hell.

However, renouncement is often fulfilled either upon nobility and connivance, or upon wrath and heedlessness. In this verse, it has been used in both senses. The hypocrites asked for remittal and pardoning their fault, and Allah had commanded the Muslims to have a wrathful renouncement unto them.

When the Messenger of Allah (S) returned from the Battle of Tabūk, he told the Muslims not to associate with the hypocrites who abandoned going to the Battle.[1]

But some commentators have said that renouncement is based on remittal and pardoning, without blaming them or scorning them. It should be done in a manner that you do not attest them in what they bring excuse, but by silence and negation you do reject them, because they are filthy and it appropriates that you do not approach them. So, their abode is Hell for what they have done.[2]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 96

يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فإِنَّ اللَّه لا يَرْضَى عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

96. "They swear to you that you may be pleased with them. But even if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allah will not be pleased with the transgressing people."

In this verse, the Qur'ān continues the subject matter of the previous verse. It says that the hypocrites swear so that the Muslims may be pleased with them. But they must be aware that even if they are pleased with them, Allah will not be pleased with the mischievous ones. The verse says:

"They swear to you that you may be pleased with them. But even if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allah will not be pleased with the transgressing people."

This statement means that even when you become pleased with such hypocrites, it does not benefit them in their state, because Allah is not pleased with them.

However, this meaning is a warning, indicating that when Allah is not pleased with a person, a believer should not be pleased with him either, and he must cease his communication with him.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 97

الاَعْرَابُ أَشَد كُفْراً وَنِفَاقاً وَأَجْدَرُ أَلاَّ يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَآ أَنْزَلَ الله عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

97. "The Bedouins are more hard in disbelief and hypocrisy, and more apt not to know the limits of what Allah has sent down to His Messenger, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

This verse attracts the believers' attention to this matter that the hypocrites of the Bedouins, who lived in deserts and outside of Medina, were more intense than the hypocrites of the citizens settled inside Medina, from the point of disbelief and hypocrisy.

They were also in a lower standard from the point of understanding and perceiving the ordinances and the limits of Allah which had been revealed to the Prophet (S). That was why they opposed more to embrace Islam. The verse says:

"The Bedouins are more hard in disbelief and hypocrisy, and more apt not to know the limits of what Allah has sent down to His Messenger…"

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān adds that 'Allah is All-Knowing', viz., He is aware of the reality of the state of everyone; and He is 'All-Wise', viz., the revelations He sends down are all formed upon wisdom and cognizance. It says:

"…and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 98

وَمِنَ الاَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَماً وَيَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمُ الدَّوَآئِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَالله سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

98. "And of the Bedouins are those who take what they spend to be a loss, and they wait for calamities against you, on them shall be an evil calamity; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In this verse, the Qur'ān states that some of the Bedouins consider that what they spend in charity is as a kind of loss and a damage. They are

hypocrites, of course, and they do not spend believably. They spend for protecting the outward aspect and in the form of hypocritical acts, so they know it as a loss for themselves. They do not believe in the rewards of the Hereafter.

"And of the Bedouins are those who take what they spend to be a loss…"

Moreover, those hypocrites who lived at the time of the Prophet (S) waited for arriving some horrible calamities against the Muslims. They awaited the death of the Prophet (S) momentally, or that the Muslims be defeated and scattered so that they could make their inward aims manifest freely.

This fact was proved after the departure of the Prophet of Islam (S) when some parties of those hypocrites turned away from Islam and apostatized. The verse continues saying:

"…and they wait for calamities against you…"

The holy verse, after mentioning the expectation of the hypocrites, curses them and says:

"…on them shall be an evil calamity…"

Then it also continues saying:

"…and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

That is, Allah hears all their words, and He (s.w.t.) is aware of all their secrets.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 99

وَمِنَ الاَعْرَابِ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّه وَالْيَوْمِ الاَخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَايُنفِقُ قُرُبَاتٍ عِندَ اللّه وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ أَلآ إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَهُمْ سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الله فِي رَحْمَتِهِ إِنَّ اللّه غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

99. "And of the Bedouins are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and take what they spend to be (means of) the nearness to Allah and the prayers (blessings) of the Messenger. Look! Surely they are means of nearness for them. Soon Allah will admit them into His mercy. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Opposite to those Bedouins of Arab who were hypocrites, the Qur'ān refers to another group of the Bedouins who had a true Faith in Allah and the Day of Resurrection. This reference is for the reason that no one considers that all of the Bedouins were always totally hypocrites and disbelievers. The verse says:

"And of the Bedouins are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day…"

As a result of the Faith they had in Allah, this group of Bedouins of Arabs spent their wealth in charity in the way of Allah. So, whatever they spent in charity they assumed it as a means of nearness to Allah and, also, an attraction of the prayers of the Prophet (S). The verse continues saying:

"…and take what they spend to be (means of) the nearness to Allah and the prayers (blessings) of the Messenger…"

These Bedouins believed that spending properties in the way of Allah caused both the nearness to Allah and that the Prophet (S) would pray for them; since the Prophet (S) used to pray for any one of the believers who

spent in charity in the way of Allah, and therefore, he encouraged him thereby.

The behaviour of these faithful Bedouins can be compared with that of the hypocritical Bedouins. These considered what they spent in charity as a means of nearness to Allah, while the former group, as was explained in the previous verses, considered their charities a kind of loss, since they did not believe in Allah's rewards.

Therefore, in the continuation of the holy verse, the Qur'ān says:

"…Look! Surely they are means of nearness for them…"

There is no distance, of course, between Man and the Lord. Then the purpose of this 'nearness' is 'a spiritual nearness', and that a faithful person ought to create the epithets of Allah inside himself.

It is in this case that he may be involved in the mercy and favour of Allah (s.w.t.), and can enjoy His rewards. We see that in this holy very verse, after confirming that their charities cause the nearness to Him, the Qur'ān immediately says:

"…Soon Allah will admit them into His mercy…"

And, by this phrase, the Qur'ān states the fruit of the nearness to Allah. So, the verse concludes as follows:

"…Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Notes

1. Books of by Imam Fakhr-i-Rāzi, Marāqi, Majma'-ul-Bayān, Al-Minār, Fi-Zilāl, Atyab-ul-Bayān, Al- Muharrir- ul-Wajiz

2. Tafsir-i-Qarā'ib-ul-Qur'ān, As-Sāfi, Jawāmi'-ul-Jāmi', Al-Mizān, and Manhaj-us-Sādiqin

Section 13: The Hypocrites Among the Bedouins

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 100

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الاَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالاَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ الله عَنْهُمْ
وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا الاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدَاً ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيم

100. "And the foremost, the first of the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever. That is the great success."

Following the content meaning of the former holy verse which was upon the circumstances of the disbelievers and hypocrites, this verse refers to the true believers of the Muslims, and divides them into three definite groups.

1. The first group are those who were the foremost and the first in Islam, who emigrated. The verse says:

"And the foremost, the first of the Emigrants…"

2. Those who were first in helping both the Prophet (S) and his companions of the Emigrants.

"…and the Helpers…"

3. The third group are mentioned those who followed them from the point of goodness, and by their good deeds and embracing Islam, Emigration, and helping the Prophet's religion, they joined them.

"…and those who followed them in goodness…"

It is interesting that all the Islamic scholars have unanimously said that the first person of women who embraced Islam was Khadijah, the faithful and devoted wife of the Prophet (S).

And, as for men, all the scholars and commentators of the Shi'ites together, and a large number of the Sunnite scholars have confirmed that Ali-ibn-Abi Tālib (as) was the first one who accepted the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) [1]

After mentioning these three groups, the Qur'ān says:

"…Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him…"

The pleasure of Allah from them is for their Faith and the good deeds they have done; and that they are well-pleased with Allah is for the extraordinary various important rewards He has bestowed upon them.

This sentence contains all the devine merits, (the material and spiritual merits of body and soul) yet, as an emphasis and statement of expansion after epitome, it adds:

"…and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow…"

Among the privileges of this Divine bounty is that it is eternal, as the verse itself says:

"…wherein shall they abide forever…"

This condition is a great triumph for a person. The holy verse continues saying:

"…That is the great success."

What a success can be better than this that man, a mortal, feels that his Lord, the Exalted, his worshiped, and his Master is well-pleased with him and has accepted the whole deeds he has done?

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 101

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِنَ الاَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُم مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدونَ إِلَى عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

101. "And among the Bedouins around you there are hypocrites, and from among the people of Medina (there are also some who) have grown bold in hypocrisy. You do not know them, (but) We know them. Soon We will punish them twice, then they will be turned back to a grievous chastisement."

The Qur'ān turns the discussion again unto the deeds of the hypocrites and their mischievous groups. It says:

"And among the Bedouins around you there are hypocrites…"

This phrase means that you should be aware and watch the hypocrites who are outside your city and be careful of their dangerous activities.

Then, it adds that, in Medina itself, and from among the people of this city, there are also some persons who have stretched hypocrisy as far as the limit of disobedience, and they are severely steadfast unto it so that they are experienced in it. The verse says:

"…and from among the people of Medina (there are also some who) have grown bold in hypocrisy…"

This meaning, which is seen in the abovementioned verse about the hypocrites of 'inside' and those of 'outside', maybe refers to this aspect that the inside hypocrites are more experienced, and naturally more dangerous, in their job than the outside hypocrites. Therefore, the Muslims must intensively be careful of them, although they should not neglect the outside hypocrites either.

That is why, immediately after that, Allah says:

"…You do not know them, (but) We know them…"

This indication, of course, is to the ordinary and common knowledge of the Prophet (S), but there is no contrust that he (S) becomes utterly aware of their secrets through Divine revelation and by His teaching.

At the end of the verse, the Qurān announces the grievous punishment of this group as follows:

"…Soon We will punish them twice, then they will be turned back to grievous chastisement…"

Twice in punishment is, at first, their disgraces among people, and the other is to give up their lives with hardship which includes both their spiritual and bodily chastisements.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 102

وءَاخَرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلاً صَالِحاً وءَاخَرَ سَيِّئاً عَسَى الله أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّه غَفُورٌرَحِيمٌ

102. "And (there are) othes who have confessed to their sins. They have mixed a righteous deed and an evil one. Maybe Allah will turn

(mercifully) to them (and accept their repentance). Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Several persons from among the companions of the Prophet (S) refrained from taking part in the Battle of Tabūk, not hypocritically, of course, but for the sake of loving life.

When the concerning critical verses were revealed, they regreted and, as a sign of repentance, they had fastened themselves on a pillar in the Prophet's Mosque.

They kept on being in that state until when Allah accepted their repentance and the Messenger of Allah (S) unfastened the ropes from them and they were forgiven. The verse says:

"And (there are) othes who have confessed to their sins. They have mixed a righteous deed and an evil one. Maybe Allah will turn (mercifully) to them (and accept their repentance). Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

After that, as gratitude for this matter, they offered all their properties to the Prophet (S), but he took a part of the properties to spend upon the expediencies of the Muslims, and returned the rest to them.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 103

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِم بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَالله سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

103. "Take alms out of their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them, surely your prayers are a comfort for them, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

This holy verse points to one of the important Islamic ordinances, viz. alms. As a general rule, it tells the Prophet (S) to take alms tax from their properties. The verse says:

"Take alms out of their possessions…"

The Divine command is a clear evidence for that the chief of the Islamic government can take 'the alms tax' from people. It is not in a manner that he must wait until if they wish they pay it by themselves, and, otherwise, they do not pay it.

Then, the Qur'ān refers to two parts of the psychological, ethical, and social philosophy of almsgiving. It says:

"…to cleanse them and purify them thereby…"

Almsgiving cleanse them from the bad qualities, purifies them from mammunism and stinginess, and grows the plant of philanthropy, generosity and attentiveness to people's rights in them.

Moreover, by the fulfilment of this divine commandment, you may wipe out the imputies and mischieves which come into being inside the society because of poverty, class division, and the deprivation of some groups therein. Thus, you may clean the scene of the society from these vices.

Then, it implies that when they pay alms tax, you do pray for them and send blessing unto them. The verse says:

"…and pray for them…"

This situation indicates that even for the fulfilment of the obligatory duties, people should be thanked and admired. They should be specially encouraged mentally and spiritually. Some Islamic traditions denote that when people brought alms tax to the presence of the Prophet (S), he used to pray for them by saying:

"O' Allah! Give them peace."

Then the Qur'ān adds:

"…surely your prayers are a comfort for them…"

It is by the glow of this prayer that the grace and blessing of Allah will be sent down over their selves and spirits, in a form that they may feel it. So, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān says:

"…and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

That is, Allah both hears the prayers of the Prophet (S) and is aware of the intentions of the givers of alms tax.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 104

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الْصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

104. "Do they not know that Allah is He Who accepts the repentance from His servants and takes the alms and that Allah is He Who is Oft-Pardoning, Merciful?"

In view of the fact that some sinners, like the hypocrites concerning the Battle of Tabūk, urged the Prophet (pbuh) to accept their repentance, in this verse the Qur'ān points to this subject indicating that the acceptance of repentance is not something that the Prophet (S) does by himself. The verse says:

"Do they not know that Allah is He Who accepts the repentance from His servants…"

Allah not only accepts the repentances but also takes the alms or the charities which are given to Allah as the atonement of sins and for nearness to Him. The verse continues saying:

"…and takes the alms…"

There is no doubt that the takers of alms and charities are either the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as), who are the leaders of the Muslims, or the needy and deserving persons.

But, since the hands of the Prophet (S) and those of the true leaders and the hands of deserving persons are counted as the hand of Allah (s.w.t), it seems that Allah (s.w.t) takes these alms.

In a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S), we recite:

"Verily the alms will reach to the hand of Allah before it reaches to the beggar's hand." [2]

Moreover, in an Islamic tradition, it has been announced that the angels receive all the deeds of man, except alms which directly reach to the hand of Allah.

At the end of the verse, as an emphasis, the Qurān says:

"…and that Allah is He Who is Oft-Pardoning, Merciful?"

From the content of this holy verse, it is so understood that the forgiveness of the faults and accepting the repentance is only up to Allah (s.w.t.). Thus, even the Prophet (S) is not rightful to accept repentances,

much less are the monks and the authorities of churches. This rank belongs only to Allah (s.w.t.).

"…Allah is He Who accepts the repentance…"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 105

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى الله عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدونَ إِلَى عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

105. "And say: 'Act you (as you will)! Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers, then soon you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the visible, and He will inform you of what you used to do'."

This verse announces that Allah, His Messenger and the believers are cognizant of what we do. It states the very belief of the Shi'ite in 'presenting deeds' to the saints of Allah. This presentation may be performed daily, weekly, or monthly.

So, if our deeds are good, the saints of Allah will be happy with us; and if they are bad, they will become worried and sad. Belief in this 'presentation of deeds' is effective in creating piety and modesty in us, and contains an extraordinary educative role.

The verse says:

"And say: 'Act you (as you will)! Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers, then soon you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the visible, and He will inform you of what you used to do'."

Imam Sādiq (as) said:

"O people! Do not annoy the Messenger of Allah by your sin! "

As some Islamic traditions indicate the objective meaning of /mu'm'nūn/ (the believers), mentioned in this verse, is the Immacate Imams whom Allah makes aware of our deeds. [3]

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 106

وءَاخَرُونَ مُرْجَوْنَ لأَمْرِ اللّه إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

106. "And (there are) others expecting Allah's decree: either He shall chastise them, or turn to them (mercifully), and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The Qur'ānic term /murjūn/ is derived from /'irjā'/ in the sense of 'delay and stop', a delay which is acompanied with 'hope and expectation'. The verse says:

"And (there are) others expecting Allah's decree…"

According to the Islamic literature, the verse is concerning to the murderers of Hadrat-i-Hamzah, or Ja'far-i-Tayyār, who were remorsed from their actions against these two. Or it refers to those persons who did not participate in the Battle of Tabūk and simply regretted and did not confess it by their tongues.

However, Allah is capable to either forgive the sinners or punish them. The verse continues saying:

"…either He shall chastise them, or turn to them (mercifully)…"

The wrath or grace of Allah is based on knowledge and wisdom, not upon vengeance. The verse concludes:

"…and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 107

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِداً ضِرَاراً وَكُفْراً وَتَفْرِيقاً بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وإِرْصَاداً لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّه
وَرَسُولَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَآ إِلاَّ الْحُسْنَى وَالله يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

107. "And those who built a mosque to cause harm (to Islam) and for unbelief, and to divide the believers, and (as) an ambush for those who fought Allah and His Messenger aforetime; and they will surely swear: 'We purposed naught save good,' but Allah testifies that verily they are liars."

In this verse, the Qur'ān has made manifest one of the great plots of the hypocrites of Medina. The event was as follows:

Twelve persons from among those hypocrites built a place under the title of 'a mosque'. They built it with the recommendation of Abū-'Āmir-Rāhib who was a harsh enemy of Islam from before. He lived in Syria.

In order to make that mosque formal, the hypocrites went to the Prophet (S) and asked him to come into that mosque and pray therein. They said that they had built the mosque for those Muslims who were weak and could not attend the Prophet's Mosque or Quba Mosque from some far places to pray; so they could pray in that mosque.

At that time, the Prophet (S) was going to travel for the Battle of Tabūk and had not time enough to go there. Therefore, he told them to wait until he would come back from his journey and then he might establish prayer in that mosque.

When the Prophet (S) returned from the Battle of Tabūk, they had made that mosque ready. So, they came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to pray in that mosque. It was at the same time that these very holy verses were sent down and made their plot manifest.

The revelations made it evident that those hypocrites aimed to harm the religion of Islam under the name of the mosque. That was why the Prophet of Allah (S) sent several of his companions to ruin and burn that mosque.

They were Mālik-ibn-Dikhsham, Mu'an-ibn-'Āmir-ibn-Sakn, and Wahshi. The command of the Prophet (S) was obeyed, and later the site of that mosque was used as a place of rubbishes in that locality.

In this verse, the Qur'ān indicates that the hypocrites pursued four aims by building that mosque:

1. To cause harm to Islam and the Muslims.

2. To create disbelief in Allah and His Messenger (S) among people, and that the foundations of infidelity to be strengthened in that mosque.

3. To disperse the Muslims. The Muslims usually attended in one mosque, and there was a unity among them.

4. To supply a lurking-place for the one who was fighting against Allah and His Prophet, viz. 'Abū-'Āmir-i-Rāhib. [4] He was a man who became a Christian in the Age of Ignorance and obtained a high rank there.

When the Prophet of Islam (S) migrated to Medina, as a result of his envy,'Abū-'Āmir always applied his hostility against him (S), and finally he ran away toward the polytheists of Mecca.

He accompanied them in the Battle of'Uhud, and, at last, he escaped to Syria in order to attract the help of Roman army and to fight against the Prophet of Islam (S).

The hypocrites of Medina had built that mosque with Abū-'Āmir's recommendation and were waiting for him to come with the Roman troops and to use that mosque as his station for invadiny the Muslims. The verse says:

"And those who built a mosque to cause harm (to Islam) and for unbelief, and to divide the believers, and (as) an ambush for those who fought Allah and His Messenger aforetime…"

In order to deceive the Muslims, the hypocrites swore that they desired nothing but good for them, and that their aim was to help and serve the Muslims. But, by narrating their saying, the Qur'ān says:

"…and they will surely swear: 'We purposed naught save good,' but Allah testifies that verily they are liars."

In this way and by sending down these verses, Allah made their great plot manifest, and futiled the evil plan of those hypocrites.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 108

لاَتَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَداً لَمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَق أَن تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبونَ أَن يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَالله يُحِب الْمُطَّهِّرِينَ

108. "Never do stand therein (to pray). Certainly a mosque founded on piety from the first day is worthier that you stand in it (for prayer). Therein are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves the purified ones."

The Prophet (S) is commanded in this holy verse not to stand in that mosque at all, i.e. he should not establish prayer there. The holy verse says:

"Never do stand therein (to pray)…"

Then the Qur'ān compares this mosque with the Prophet's Mosque or Qubā Mosque, and says:

"…Certainly a mosque founded on piety from the first day is worthier that you stand in it (for prayer)…"

The objective meaning of this mosque was either Qubā Mosque, or the Prophet's Mosque, or any mosque which had been founded on the basis of piety and belief in Allah (s.w.t.); and the purpose of the phrase 'the first day' was that, from the first day, the aim of its founders had been Allah.

The Qur'ān adds that, in this mosque, which has been established on the basis of piety, there are some men who desire to purify themselves, and Allah likes the purified ones.

The purpose of this purification is a spiritual purification which has been rendered into being far from sins and being studious in doing divine obligations. It also envelops the purification of both clothes and body.

The verse continues saying:

"…Therein are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves the purified ones."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 109

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنَ اللّه وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَم مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَالله لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

109. "Is he, therefore, better who has laid his foundation on fear of Allah and (His) good pleasure, or he who has laid his foundation on the brink of a crumbling hollowed bank that tumbles with him into the Fire of Hell? And Allah does not guide the unjust people."

After explaining the story of the mosque of dissension, the Qur'ān compares between those two groups: a group who built Qubā Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque, and the group who built the mosque of dissension.

The foundation of the work of the first group was on piety and the pleasure of Allah, while the result of the work of the second group was blazing Fire and falling into Hell.

The basis of the work of the first group is piety and obtaining the pleasure of Allah, and they have no other aim from it. Are these people better or the second group whose basis of work is upon the brink of a crumbling hollowed bank?

They will fall into the Fire of Hell by the building they have built. In other words, the building, which they have established, is at the edge of the precipice of the Fire of Hell which will suddenly ruins into it.

The verse says:

"Is he, therefore, better who has laid his foundation on fear of Allah and (His) good pleasure, or he who has laid his foundation on the brink of a crumbling hollowed bank that tumbles with him into the Fire of Hell? And Allah does not guide the unjust people."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 110

لا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلاَّ أَن تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالله عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

110. "The building which they built will not cease to be (a source of) disquiet in their hearts unless their hearts be cut into pieces, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

By this holy verse, the Qur'ān implies that the building which the hypocrites have built is always a source of suspicion in their hearts. This suspicion is with them until their hearts be cut into pieces, viz. when they die.

The purpose is that the instruction of the Prophet (S) that the mosque of dissension to be ruined has increased in the hatred of their hearts. This hatred or rancoure and disquiet towards the ordinances of Islam will be with them until the time they die and their hearts be cut into pieces.

This meaning denotes that they will never believe in the Truth and will die with the same state of hypocrisy and disbelief.

The verse says:

"The building which they built will not cease to be (a source of) disquiet in their hearts unless their hearts be cut into pieces…"

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān mentions two attributes of Allah. They are: All-Knowing, All-Wise, which means Allah is aware of their status and the command He has ordained about the mosque of dissension has been done wisely. The verse says:

"…and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Notes

1. Al-Qadir, vol. 3, pp. 220 to 243; Ihqāq-ul-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 114 to 120; Tafsir-ul-Qurtubi, vol. 5, p. 3075 (narrated from Mustadrak-I-Hākim), and some other books.
2. Tafsir-us_Sāfi and Tafsir-ul-Burhān (under the holy verse).
3. Tafsir-ul-Burhān, and Tafsir-us-Sāfi (under the holy verse), 'Usūl-i-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 171, and Bihār-ul-'Anwār, by 'Allāmah Majlisi.
4. 'Abū-'Āmir was the father of Hanzalah

Section 14: The True Believers

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 111

إِنَّ اللّه اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُم بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه
فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْداً عَلَيْهِ حَقّاً فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَالإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْءانِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللّه
فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَا َعْتُم بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

111. "Verily Allah has bought from the believers their souls and their Properties for Paradise to be theirs: they fight in the way of Allah, so they slay and they are slain, (this is) a promise binding on Him in the Turah, and the Evangel and the Qur'ān. And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice then in your bargain that you have made; and that is the great success."

In many occurrences of the Qur'ān, whenever it says something concerning the infidels, or polytheists, or hypocrites, immediately next to that, it refers to the believers in order that a comparison between these two groups be performed.

Here, after delivering some explanations about the hypocrites and their evil conspiracies, the Qur'ān refers to the believers and their specialties.

In this verse, by applying a delicate similie, the Qur'ān points to the intensive love of the believers to Holy Struggle in the way of Allah. It similizes their deed to a transaction and a bargain. Usually, there are four essential elements in every bargain.

These four factors are: seller, customer, the ware to be transactioned, and price. In this splendid spiritual transaction, the seller is a believer, the customer is Allah, the ware to be transactioned is the soul and the wealth of the believers, and its price is the etetrnal Paradise.

These believers fight in the way of Allah where they slay and are slain. Whether they defeat the enemy or they suffer martyrdom, both are counted felicity for them, and both of them are sought by a belirver. The verse says:

"Verily Allah has bought from the believers their souls and their properties for Paradise to be theirs: they fight in the way of Allah, so they slay and they are slain…"

Imam Sādiq (as) in a tradition says that there is no price for your bodies save Pradise. Then you should not sell your selves for less than Paradise.[1]

Next to that, the Qur'ān introduces the document of this transaction, where it says:

"…(this is) a promise binding on Him in the Turah, and the Evangel and the Qur'ān…"

In all these Heavenly Books, believers have been promised Paradise, and the texts of these Divine Books are counted as a document for the believers in this bargain. [2]

Then, as a further emphasis, the Qur'ān asks:

"…And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah?…"

Therefore, regarding that you have transactioned the best bargain and with the most faithful One, Who is Allah, you must be very happy with this transaction, and this is the great felicity. The verse says:

"…Rejoice then in your bargain that you have made; and that is the great success."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 112

التَّآئِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الأَمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللّه وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

112. "(The believing strivers are those who) turn repentant (to Allah), worship (Him), make a journey, bow, prostrate (in prayer), bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, and keep the limits of Allah, and give good news to the believers."

Besides the aforementioned attribute, i.e. striving in the way of Allah, the Qur'ān defines nine epithets for such believers, who have bargained with their Lord. Thus, counting that one, they will be totally ten attributes. These nine epithets are as follows.

1. "(The believing strivers are those who) turn repentant (to Allah)…"

Whenever they commit a fault, they immediately regret and turn to Allah and repent.

2. "…worship (Him)…"

They always worship the Lord and assume worshipping as an obligatory manner upon themselves. Worshipping Allah is a sign of good Faith in a high level. It trains the soul of man and furnishes his heart and spirit with a peculiar serenity and luminosity.

3. "…praise (Him)…"

They always praise Allah for the bounties He has bestowed upon them, and they do perform His praise and tribute.

4. "…make a journey…"

That is, in the way of Allah and for fulfilling their religions duties, they are always busy moving and endeavouring. For instance, they pave a distance to go into a mosque to establish their prayer, or, in order to settle reconciliation between two Muslims, they go to their houses. Or, even for taking an example from the traces of the ancient people, they make a journey.

It must also be noted that some of the commentators have taken the Qur'ānic word /sā'ihūn/ in the sense of 'fasting'.

5. "…bow…"

They bow down in the prayer before Allah. It is such as bowing, humility, and veneration.

6. "…Prostrate (in prayer)…"

They put their foreheads on the ground of abjectness before Allah, and this is the utmost humiliation in front of Him. The Qur'ān has referred to only these two acts from the whole acts of prayer, because the most distinguished actions in prayer are 'bowing and prostration'.

7. "…bid what is right…"

Besides that they themselves are generally good, they invite others to goodness, too. They are always the encouragers of others in doing good deeds.

8. "…and forbid what is wrong…"

They not only themselves do not approach committing sins, but also dissude others from perpetration of vices and becoming polluted with wrong actions.

9. "…and keep the limits of Allah…"

They ceaselessly try to protect the limits of the ordinances of Allah and not to transgress them. This epithet is one of the important qualities of a believer.

He must be careful of his own deeds and treatment, so that never he violates the religious laws and that the limits of religion not to be broken. This subject is of great importance, and it has been referred to in the Qur'ān, too. For example, Surah At-Talāq, *No. 67*, *verse 1* says:

"…and whoever goes beyond the limits of Allah, he indeed does injustice to his own soul…"

Therefore, in order to protect the limits of Allah, we must both fight against the outward enemy and struggle for effacing the inward corruptions.

However, the first six epithets, out of the nine epithets mentioned in this verse, relate to the personal private life of a believer, which he ought to individually create in himself. Two epithets concern the social life of a believer; and the last epithet envelops all the duties of a believer, whether they are personal and social, including giving the obligatory rights.

Next to mentioning these nine epithets, in order to make the believers happy, the Qur'ān implies that such believers are always in goodness and felicity, and they have a good end. They will enter Paradise in the Hereafter. The verse continues saying:

"…and give good news to the believers."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 113

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَن يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُوْلِي قُرْبَى مِن بَعْدِ مَاتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ
َنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

113. "It is not (fit) for the Prophet and those who believe to seek forgiveness for the polytheists, after it has become clear to them that they are the inmates of Hell, even though they be (their) relatives."

At the beginning of the current Surah, the Qur'ān announced the immunity towards the polytheists. Then, there were some verses revealed upon the strictness and severity in action towards the polytheists. Now, the verse remarks that it is the same that the polytheists be alive or dead.

The verse says:

"It is not (fit) for the Prophet and those who believe to seek forgiveness for the polytheists, after it has become clear to them that they are the inmates of Hell, even though they be (their) relatives."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 114

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ َنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ
مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ

114. "And Abraham's seeking forgiveness for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. So when it became clear to him

that he was an enemy of Allah, he declared himself quit of him. Verily Abraham was tenderhearted and forbearing."

The previous verse denoted that the Prophet (S) and the true believers have not any pray for the polytheists, even though they are from their relatives. This verse answers to a doubious thing that why Abraham (as) gave his uncle a promise of asking for forgiveness, saying

"…I will pray to my Lord forgive you…" (Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47).

The abovementioned verse indicates that Abraham's promise was with the hope that he might be guided, but when he saw that his uncle was in the state of disbelief, Abraham left asking forgiveness for him. The verse says:

"And Abraham's seeking forgiveness for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. So when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he declared himself quit of him. Verily Abraham was tenderhearted and forbearing."

Another question is why Abraham prayed for him after his death, and he said:

"O' our Lord! Forgive me and my parents…" (Surah'Ibrāhim, No. 14, verse 41).

The answer to this question is that the Arabic word /wālid / is applied in the sense of the real father, while the term /'ab / is used in the sense of either father, teacher, father-in-law, and grand father.

This supplication of Abraham was for his real father, not for his uncle who was a polytheist. So, the Qur'ān in its eleven verses refers to Abraham's uncle by using the word /'ab / in order that it makes clear that Abraham (as) had been under the guardianship of what kind of a person, but he had not been affected.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 115

وَمَا كَانَ الله لِيُضِلَّ قَوْماً بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُم مَا تَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّه بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

115. "Nor is it Allah to lead a people astray after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them what they should beware of; verily Allah is aware of all thins."

This verse is about those persons who embraced Islam. But, before that all the ordinances of the religion would be sent down, they died. For instance, they prayed towards the first direction of Qiblah; or they asked forgiveness for their fathers while they were polytheists, and the ordinance upon these subjects had not been sent down in the time when they were living. The verse says:

"Nor is it Allah to lead a people astray after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them what they should beware of…"

The purpose of the holy phrase: 'to lead astray', here, means 'to chastise' and to take them into Hell. Therefore, they would not be chastised for the lack of performing those ordinances as long as they were not conveyed to them.

The reason of it is that they have believed in Islam and were not informed of those laws. So, punishing a person for the sake of the

ordinances which were issued after them, is far from Allah's justice; and, as 'theoreticians in law' say, chastisement without statement is not permissible.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'ān implies that Allah knows every thing. That is, He knows that He ought not to take to task a person for the crime he has not committed. The verse says:

"…verily Allah is aware of all things…"

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 116

إِنَّ اللّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُم مِن دُونِ اللّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلا نَصِيرٍ

116. "Verily to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes to die, and, besides Allah, you have not any guardian or any helper.

The words in this verse are upon the sovereignty and Power of Allah. The Qur'ān implies that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is Allah's. It is He Who gives life and causes to die, and you have not any friend, or any helper, save Allah.

Therefore, you should not rely on anybody besides Allah, and do not take the enemies of Allah as your shelter and your guardians, or that you be interested in them.

The verse says:

"Verily to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes to die, and, besides Allah, you have not any guardian or any helper.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 117

لَقَد تَابَ الله عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالاَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِن بَعْدِمَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

117. "Allah has turned (mercifully) towards the Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of difficulty, after the hearts of a part of them were about to swerve. Then He turned towards them (mercifully). Verily He is Full of pity, Merciful to them."

The process of the Battle of Tabūk was very hard and tiresome for the Prophet (S) and the Muslims. It was a difficult circumstance for them. On one side, the weather was terribly hot and, on the other side, it was the season of picking off the fruits.

The Muslims, who had laboured for one year, had to leave off their crops because they had not opportunity to gather them. And, on the other side, they were quietly poor, so that they had not enough food to eat.

An Islamic tradition denotes that they had not even enough water, and sometimes it happened that several of them only tasted a single date. In such hard and difficult circumstances, the Prophet (S) and the Emigrants and the Helpers (Ansār) went to Holy Struggle in the way of Allah.

In this verse, the Qur'ān has spoken of the grace, favour, regard and attentiveness of Allah upon the Muslims who went forth for Holy Struggle in that difficult situation. It says:

"Allah has turned (mercifully) towards the Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of difficulty…"

The circumstance was so hard that some of the Muslims were incapable to bear it any longer and intended to return. But Allah promoted their spirit and they could tolerate and remained.

That is why the Qur'ān implies that this matter happened after that the hearts of some of them were nearly to swerve; but Allah caused them to succeed to repent, and He accepted their repentance since He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

The verse continues saying:

"…after the hearts of a part of them were about to swerve. Then He turned towards them (mercifully). Verily He is Full of pity, Merciful to them."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 118

وَعَلَى الثَّلاَثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الاَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنوا أَن لامَلْجَاَ مِنَ اللّه إِلاّ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللّه هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

118. "And to the three who were left behind, until when the earth, with all its expanse, became narrow for them, and their own souls were straitened for them and they knew that there was no refuge from Allah save toward Him, then He turned towards them (mercifully) that they might turn (repentant unto Him). Verily Allah is Oft-Pardoning, the Merciful."

As it was said before, in the course of the Battle of Tabūk, there were some hard and difficult conditions for Muslims, the most considerable of them was the heat of the weather and the approach of the time of harvest, specially fruits.

The hypocrites did not take part in this Battle, but the true Muslims, in any way they could, participated in the expedition of Tabūk, except those who were really excused. There were three persons among the Muslims who were absent from the expedition of the battle-field.

They were: ka'b-ibn-Mālik, Marārat-ibn-Rabi', and Hilāl-ibn-'Umayya. They wanted to take part in the Holy Struggle, but they procrastinated and acted listlessly until when, at last, the Battle of Tabūk ended and the Prophet of Allah (S), acceompanied with the Muslims, returned to Medina.

These three persons immediately presented themselves to the Prophet (S) and, after greeting, they asked about his health. But the Prophet (S) turned his face from them and did not speak with them.

When the Prophet (S) behaved like that, all the Muslims ceased communication with them and did not reply their questions and, as the Prophet (S) commanded, their wives also got separated from them.

Therefore, they felt themselves completely deserted and alone. This general strike against those three men caused that they were put in a tight straitened circumstance. In order to follow the command of the Prophet (S), they themselves did not speak even with each other either.

It has been said that this news reached the Romans. They secretly sent someone to those three persons and wanted them to go to Byzantine and live peacefully under the security of the government of Byzantine.

But those men, who were really Muslims, rejected that suggestion. They became very inconvenient of that happening by which the disbelievers expected them like that. So, they left the habitation in the city and stationed themselves in the wilderness inside the far deserts and mountains, and used to pray weeping and crying to Allah, asking Him to accept their repentance.

There passed fifty days in that state and, finally, their repentance was accepted. Allah announced that those three persons, who had disobeyed, were forgiven, and their instructive story became eternal in this verse.

A part of difficulties that they tolerated are stated in this revelation. It says:

"And to the three who were left behind, until when the earth, with all its expanse, became narrow for them, and their own souls were straitened for them and they knew that there was no refuge from Allah save toward Him, then He turned towards them (mercifully) that they might turn (repentant unto Him). Verily Allah is Oft-Pardoning, the Merciful."

This event shows that if the people of a society be good, no vicious persons have any room in that society. They have to improve themselves. Thus, the action that the Muslims performed was the best style for improving the polluted minority, and a general strike against the vicious may make them improved.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayān, the Commentary

2. Strivers, Holy Struggle, and martyrdom have been counted worthy not only in Islam but also mentioned in the Turah and the Evangel: "…in the Turah and Evangel." Now, if this meaning is not found clearly in these two present Holy Books, it shows some distortations in them.

Section 15: To Be Always With the Truthful Ones

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 119

يَآ َ هَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّه وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

119. "O you who have Faith! Be in awe of Allah and be (always) with the truthful ones."

This verse addresses the believers and commands them to be in awe of Allah and to be pious. They should be always with the truthful ones, too.

Thus, the believers are commanded in this verse to do two things. The first is that they should be in awe of Allah, and it is evident that the state of being Godwary is very effective in man from the point of training. When a person is Godwary, he not only avoids committing disgrace actions, but also performs his duties.

The second is that they ought to be with the truthful ones, and to make friends with some ones who are generally truthful. They should, therefore, avoid making friends with the liars.

The verse says:

"O you who have Faith! Be in awe of Allah and be (always) with the truthful ones."

Accompaniment and agreement with truthful ones has an important function in the spiritual progression and the elevation of man. It makes him familiar with spiritual and ethical values, so far that the one himself will habitually become one of the truthful ones.

Some Islamic narrations denote that the objective meaning of 'the truthful ones' is Muhammad and his Ahlul-Bayt (S), and the immaculate Imams (as). It is certain that they were the top of the truthful ones, and the Islamic community, as a duty, ought to follow them.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 120

مَاكَانَ لاَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُم مِنَ الاَعْرَابِ أَن َتَخَلَّفُوا عَن رَسُولِ اللّه وَلا يَرْغَبُوا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ عَن نَفْسِهِ ذَلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ لاَ يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلا نَصَبٌ وَلاَ مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه وَلا َطَأُونَ مَوْطِئاً يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلا َنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ نَيْلاً إِلاَّ كُتِبَ لَهُم بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللّه لايُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

120. "It is not for the people of Medina and the Bedouins around them to offend against the (command of) the Messenger of Allah, and to prefer their own lives to his life. That is because there afflicts them neither thirst, nor fatigue, nor hunger in the way of Allah, nor do they receive (any thing) from the enemy but a righteous deed is written for them on its account. Verily Allah does not waste the reward of the good-doers."

The content of this verse is a kind of proclamation of general mobilization, and encouraging the Muslims toward participation in Holy Struggle and defending the life of the Prophet (S).

Through this verse, the Qur'ān warns the Muslims habitated in Medina and around it that they should not offend against the command of going to Holy Struggle beside the Prophet of Islam (S).

They must not think of their own lives dearer than the life of the Prophet (S) but they must defend his life before the enemy by their own lives.

It is evident that in battles the protection of the life of the commander is an important duty upon the army, since if the commander be killed the army may be defeated. In the battles that the Prophet (S) participated, he himself undertook the rank of a commander, and then, it was necessary for the Muslims to prefer his life to their own lives and to protect it from any danger.

Participation in Holy Struggle, of course, is a sufficient necessity, and when sufficient men, who can afford the defense and war, attend in the scene, it is not necessary for the rest to participate.

But, when the Prophet (S) or the Imam (as) invites a particular person to Holy Struggle, it will become an individual duty for him to obey, and its offense is not permissible.

At the advent of Islam, the number of Muslims was small, and when a war happened, the Holy Prophet (S) invited all those Muslims who had the ability of fighting to the battle- field and he proclaimed a general mobilization thereby.

Therefore, all of them should take part in the battle and no offending was allowed. This verse, which concerns to that very period, warns the people of Medina and its Bedouins; who were the only power of Islam, not to offend from the Holy Struggle beside the Prophet (S). The holy verse says:

"It is not for the people of Medina and the Bedouins around them to offend against the (command of) the Messenger of Allah, and to prefer their own lives to his life…"

Next to expressing this meaning, in the continuation of the verse, and in relation to the troops of Islam, the Qur'ān points out that Allah gives the strivers in His way some good rewards for the hardships they tolerate. It says:

"…That is because there afflicts them neither thirst, nor fatigue, nor hunger in the way of Allah, nor do they receive (any thing) from the enemy but a righteous deed is written for them on its account. Verily Allah does not waste the reward of the good-doers."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 121

وَلا يُنفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلا كَبِيرَةً وَلا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِياً إِلاَّ كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ الله أَحْسَنَ مَاكَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

121. "And neither do they expend anything (in the way of Holy Struggle), small or great, nor do they cross any land, but it is recorded for them, so that Allah may reward them with better than what they used to do."

There is no expense, whether it be small or large, that the Muslims spend in charity, nor do they cross any desert, but it is recorded for them, in order that Allah will recompense them with something better than that which they have done. The verse says:

"And neither do they expend anything (in the way of Holy Struggle), small or great, nor do they cross any land, but it is recorded for them, so that Allah may reward them with better than what they used to do."

When we refer to the history of the Battles of the advent of Islam, we realize that the Muslims were confronted with a great deal of hardships and difficulties in many of those Battles. They suffered much pain because of scarcity of possibilities, martial means and equipments, provisions, and ammunitions.

They had to tolerate both thirst and hunger. Whatever they had they spent in the way of Allah. They were surrounded by some insupportable problems. They became wounded, they were slain, but they bore all of these hardships in order to protect the life of the Prophet (S) and to cause Islam victorious.

According to this verse, Allah will reward all of these pains and hardships, and He will not waste the wage of the righteous.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 122

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً فَلَوْلا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

122. "And it is not for the believers to go out (to fight) totally; why should not then a group from every party of them go forth to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them. So that they may beware?"

In the previous verses, the Muslims were emphatically called toward Holy Struggle, and those who offended that commandment were severely criticized. Now, this verse attracts the attention of the Muslims toward another important duty that they have. This matter is not less significant than Holy Struggle from the point of importance, because the ordinances of Allah can be learnt.

With the emphasis which was laid on Holy Struggle, the believers attached importance to Holy Struggle, and whenever a fight came forth, the Muslims wholly attended in its expedition, even though the Prophet himself (S) would not take part in that Holy Struggle, and no one offended from it.

In that circumstance, the Prophet (S) was alone and there was not anybody of those Muslims to take the ordinances of Islam from him.

This verse indicates that the entire of the believers should not go to fight, but a group of them ought to remain in Medina in order to learn the religious teachings and to be learned in religion, so that when the strivers came back to them, they could teach them what they had learnt, and could warn them and preach them, perhaps, they would be in awe of Allah and would observe the limits of the religion.

It is indisputable that the conditions are often different. Sometimes the enemy is powerful and dangerous and all Muslims must be mobilized for war, like what happened in the Battle of Tabūk where the Muslims were against the powerful army of Byzantine.

And, sometimes it happens that the enemy is less powerful and it is not necessary that the Muslims totally participate in war.

When the Prophet (S) was alive, it was in such circumstances that a group of the Muslims should go to fight and another group would remain at the presence of the Prophet (S) busy learning the subjects of the religion.

For, at any moment, the revelation might be sent down and an ordinance or a new subject be announced by the Prophet (S). So, there should be present some believers to receive it and to learn it, and when their brethren would return from Holy Struggle, they could teach it to them, too.

In that manner, the strivers could also be in the current of that revelation which would firm their Faith and might create a higher standard of piety and God-fearing in them.

The verse says:

"And it is not for the believers to go out (to fight) totally; why should not then a group from every party of them go forth to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them. So that they may beware?"

This holy verse clearly indicates to the importance of knowledge in Islam. It is found out that the value of learning and teaching is not less than the value of Holy Struggle. Then, when a party of faithful people go to Holy Struggle and fight against the enemy of Islam, another party should also remain in the intrenchment of knowledge and acquaintance in order to obtain it.

The verse under discussion can also be rendered into another form. The content meaning of the verse can be considered as some facts related to the Muslims who lived in other cities and the tribes who were far from Medina.

In this case, we may say that the verse indicates that there were some Muslims who lived in some other places and they should not go to fight totally, but a party of them ought to travel to Medina and attend the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) in order to learn the ordinances of the religion.

After that, they could return to their people and preach them those ordinances.

There seems another probability denoting that basically the verse is not related to Holy Struggle, since there is not any word mentioned in the verse concerning Holy Struggle. It only implies that the whole believers should not go out, but a group from every party of them would travel and learn the lessons of religion.

Perhaps, the objective meaning is that, at the time of the Prophet (S) and after the expansion of Islam among different tribes, whoever embraced Islam wished to meet the Prophet (S) and to learn Islam directly from him, which caused a trouble.

So, the verse commands such believers that they did not need to go totally to Medina to attend the presence of the Prophet (S), but a group of them were sufficient to come and learn the lessons of the religion and return to their people in order to teach those lessons to them.

Section 16: Effects of the Guidance Revealed

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 123

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُم مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

123. "O' you who have Faith! Fight those of the infidels who are near to you, and let them find severity in you, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

In the life of the Prophet of Islam, the Muslims had many enemies. Some of those enemies lived in a long distance from the Muslims, like the Romans who were in Syria, Palestine, and Tabūk. But, some of other enemies of the Muslims were not so far from the center of Islam.

For, example, the tribes of Hawāzin and Thaqif were in a little distance from the Muslims and they were a danger in ambush. It was necessary that at first the near enemies should be crushed, and then the far distanced enemies might be dealt with, because their danger was greater and they could be aware of the secrets and martial abilities of the Muslims.

In this holy verse, the Qur'ān notifies to the Muslims of this very matter. It says:

"O' you who have Faith! Fight those of the infidels who are near to you, and let them find severity in you, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

To show violence of action in front of an enemy the strivers may make him both frightened and disappointed. He understands that the Muslims are not penetrable, and they may not be deceived by some mere promises, nor that they can get the martial secrets from them.

A believer should have the ultimate humility and modesty in front of his religious brethren, but he must be severe, firm and violent in front of enemies, as the Qur'ān says:

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves…" (Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 29)

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 124

وَإِذَا مَآ أُنْزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُم مَن يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَاناً فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَاناً وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

124. "And whenever a Surah is sent down, there are some of them (the hypocrites) who say: 'Which of you did this increase in belief?'. As for those who have Faith, it increases them in belief and they rejoice."

The hypocrites always and in any opportunity tried to weaken the spirit of the Muslims. One of their methods was that they used to mock the verses of the Qur'ān in order to both disturb their sacredness and hurt the Muslims.

This verse states the indecent reaction of the hypocrites at the time of the revelation of a Surah of the Qur'ān. Whenever a Surah was revealed, some of them mockingly asked some others whether that Surah increased in belief

of either of them. By that manner, they wanted to mock the Muslims among themselves.

After narrating this meaning, the Qur'ān gives them a suitable answer, which is recited in the next verse.

Whenever a Surah of the Qur'ān was sent down, there were created two reactions in the believers and two other reactions in the hypocrites. Every couple of those reactions were just opposite to each other. The reaction of the believers before the revelation of a Surah of the Qur'ān was two things:

The first was that it increased in the belief of them and made their Faith firm.

This statement indicates that belief can be both decreased and increased, and the revelation of the Qur'ān causes the belief to be increased in the receptive believing hearts.

The second was that it made them happy. When they heard the verses of the Qur'ān, and they were aware of the great rewards which were mentioned in them for the believers, they rejoiced and they became hopeful that they would be included in the favours of Allah.

The verse says:

"And whenever a Surah is sent down, there are some of them (the hypocrites) who say: 'which of you did this increase in belief?'. As for those who have Faith, it increases them in belief and they rejoice."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 125

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْساً إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ

125. "And as for those in whose hearts is a sickness, it (only) adds filth to their filth, and they die while they are infidels."

If a corpse falls inside a pool, whatever much rain it rains upon it, it will become more malodorous. This bad smell is not because of the rain, but it is because of that corpse.

When there is the mood of obstinacy and haughtiness in a person, it causes that, by the revelation of the verses of the Qur'ān, those in whose hearts is disease will become more haughty, and will show a more amount of obstinacy, bigotry and enmity from themselves.

This status is a kind of sickness in them like the sicknesses of the body. If we do not think of a remedy for it, it will expand so much so that may it destroy the person.

The verse says:

"And as for those in whose hearts is a sickness, it (only) adds filth to their filth, and they die while they are infidels."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 126

أَوَلا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لاَ يَتُوبُونَ وَلاَ هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

126. "Do they not see that they are tried once or twice every year? Yet they neither repent, nor do they take admonition."

These blind-hearted hypocrites take no counsel and take an example of nothing. They are always faced with trials, and some calamities and disasters fall upon them, but they do not come to themselves and do not take counsel.

In this holy verse, if fact, the Qur'ān criticizes their inattentiveness and their unawareness. It says:

"Do they not see that they are tried once or twice every year? Yet they neither repent, nor do they take admonition."

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 127

وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرَاكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُم بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ

127. "And whenever a Surah is sent down, they look at one another, (saying): 'Does anyone see you?' Then they turn away. Allah has turned away their hearts because they are a people who do not understand."

When the hypocrites were at the presence of the Prophet (S) and the believers, and, at the same time a Surah was revealed, they looked at each other and, by their glances and signals, they said to one another whether anyone saw them.

That is, if the Prophet (S) and the believers did not watch them, and they were neglectful of them the hypocrites might go out of that meeting in order not to listen to the recitation of the Surah.

They feared that the Surah would be about them, and it might say something of their secrets. Therefore, they wanted to leave the meeting in any way they could, and when they found the opportunity for it, they would flee. The above holy verse says:

"And whenever a Surah is sent down, they look at one another, (saying): 'Does anyone see you?'…"

After mentioning these matters in this verse, the Qur'ān implies that Allah has turned away their hearts. That is, their hearts have turned away from the truth. The reason of this status is that they are a group of people who do not apprehend the reality and do not think correctly.

Thus, it is their own difficulty that as a result of enmity with the truth, they have brought forth such a situation for themselves, and Allah (s.w.t.) has turned away their hearts because of their own deeds. The verse says:

"…Then they turn away. Allah has turned away their hearts because they are a people who do not understand."

As if the hypocrites do not take any admonishment from the holy verses of the Qur'ān. They are, for example, like a consumed lamp that whatever it be contacted to electricity it does not work.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 128

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

128. "There has indeed come to you a messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is whatever afflicts you; he is full of concern for you (your guidance), and most kind and merciful to the believers."

These holy verses are very important from the point of sympathy, because they express several significant specialties concerning the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

In the first verse, which addresses all Muslims, the Qur'ān refers to four attractive epithets of the Prophet of Islam.

1. It says that this Prophet is from among yourselves. He is not of the kind of angels, but he is of your kind and, like you, he eats, sleeps, and lives.

He is not a prince or a person born in a wealthy family who can not perceive your toils and pains. He is from among you and has grown up in the same lanes and quarters where you have familiar intercourse.

2. Whatever afflicts you is grievous to him, too. That is, the hardships and afflictions that reach you, he takes them upon him, and he knows your sadness as his own sadness. Therefore, he becomes offended when you are annoyed, because he thinks of you as ones from himself and vice versa.

3. He is found of you and he is compassionate to you. He desires that you obtain the felicity of both this world and the next, so that whatever goodness exists becomes yours. He is desirous for your success and happiness.

4. He is very kind and merciful to the believers, and loves those believers who have truly embraced his religion.

As it was said in the above, these epithets are all attractive and move the feelings. They inform of the deep relation and immense attachment of the Prophet of Islam (S) toward his community, (ummah).

Thus, as the Qur'ān denotes, the Prophet (S) is the best example for you, then Muslims must have the same relations and attachments among themselves and think of themselves as the share of the sorrows and happinesses of each other.

It should be noted that the Prophet (S) has been introduced in this verse as a 'kind and merciful' messenger. These two epithets are among the attributes of Allah, with a difference that the Prophet (S) is 'kind and merciful' to the believers, while Allah is kind and merciful to all human beings. The Qur'ān says:

"…verily Allah is to mankind Most Affectionate, Most Merciful." (Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 143)

Allah has based the foundation of creation on kindness and mery, and, originally, He is kind to all mankind. The evidence of this meaning is the vast possibilities which He has bestowed upon His servants in order that they, enjoying the present bounties, pave the path of Allah and follow the religion of prophets.

But, if a person turns away from Allah and His prophets, in fact he has turned away himself from the vast mercy of Allah. But, from the very beginning, the kindness and mercy of the Prophet (S) have been attached to the believers, and he who is not in the straight way does not accept it from the very beginning.

Surah At-Tawbah - Verse 129

فإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ الله لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَب الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

129. "So if they turn away, say: 'Allah is sufficient for me. There is no god but He. In Him I have put my trust and He is the Lord of the great 'Arsh."

The Lord Who controls the great system of existence, can hold man, a little creature, under His Own compassions, too.

People's arrogance and desistance must not affect your Faith and spiritualities, because whoever is with Allah has everything.

It is recited in the supplication of 'Arafah that Imam Hussayn (as), addressing Allah, says:

"O' Lord! He who did find You, what did he miss, and he who is in lack of You, what does he have?"

Therefore, the secret of solving problems is confidence in Allah. In this verse, Allah says to His Prophet (S):

"So if they turn away, say: 'Allah is sufficient for me. There is no god but He. In Him I have put my trust and He is the Lord of the great 'Arsh."

The Prophet (S) said these phrases from the depth of his heart (soul). It was by this high spirit that he conquered the highest peaks of dignity, and possessed the greatest rank that a godly human being can ever obtain.

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 7

From Surah Yunus (10) to Surah Yusuf (12)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 13
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 14
What is a 'Commentary'? 15
The Current Commentary 16
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 17
The Problems in Translating 17
It Was Only By His Merciful Will! 18
Translators Note 18
Editor's Note 19
Notes 21
Acknowledgment 23
Notes 23
References 24
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 24
English Translations of Qur'an 24
Supporting Technical References 25
Phraseological and Philological Sources 25
A Presentation to Muslims 27
Notes 28
Surah Yunus, Chapter 10 29
Surah Yunus (Jonah) 29
No. 10 (Revealed in Mecca) 29
109 verses in 11 sections 29
The Contents of Surah Yunus 29
Note 29
Section 1: The Qur'an Contains Signs From the All-Wise 30
Surah Yunus - Verse 1 30
Surah Yunus - Verse 2 30
Surah Yunus - Verse 3 31
Surah Yunus - Verse 4 32
Surah Yunus - Verse 5 32
Surah Yunus - Verse 7 33
Surah Yunus - Verses 7 - 8 34
Surah Yunus - Verse 9 35
Surah Yunus - Verse 10 35
Explanations 36
Notes 36
Section 2: Ingratitude of Men 37
Surah Yunus - Verse 11 37
Surah Yunus - Verse 12 37
Surah Yunus - Verse 13 38
Surah Yunus - Verse 14 38
Surah Yunus - Verse 15 39
The Occasion of the Revelation 39
Surah Yunus - Verse 16 40
Surah Yunus - Verse 17 40
Surah Yunus - Verse 18 41

Surah Yunus - Verse 19 41
Surah Yunus - Verse 20 42
Notes 43
Section 3: The Divine Mercy 44
Surah Yunus - Verse 21 44
Surah Yunus - Verse 22 44
Surah Yunus - Verse 23 45
Surah Yunus - Verse 24 46
Surah Yunus - Verse 25 47
Surah Yunus - Verse 26 47
Surah Yunus - Verse 27 48
Surah Yunus - Verse 28 49
Surah Yunus - Verse 29 50
Surah Yunus - Verse 30 50
Notes 51
Section 4: The Divine Gifts 52
Surah Yunus - Verse 31 52
Surah Yunus - Verse 32 53
Surah Yunus - Verse 33 53
Surah Yunus - Verse 34 54
Surah Yunus - Verse 35 54
Surah Yunus - Verse 36 55
Surah Yunus - Verse 37 55
Surah Yunus - Verse 38 56
Surah Yunus - Verse 39 57
Surah Yunus - Verse 40 58
Notes 58
Section 5: Every People Had an Apostle from Allah 59
Surah Yunus - Verse 41 59
Surah Yunus - Verse 42 59
Surah Yunus - Verse 43 59
Surah Yunus - Verse 44 60
Surah Yunus - Verse 45 60
Surah Yunus - Verse 46 61
Surah Yunus - Verse 47 61
Surah Yunus - Verse 48 61
Surah Yunus - Verse 49 62
Surah Yunus - Verse 50 62
Surah Yunus - Verse 51 63
Surah Yunus - Verse 52 63
Surah Yunus - Verse 53 64
Section 6: The Divine Mercy Precedes the Wrath 65
Surah Yunus - Verse 54 65
Surah Yunus - Verse 55 65
Surah Yunus - Verse 56 66
Surah Yunus - Verse 57 66
Surah Yunus - Verse 58 67
Surah Yunus - Verse 59 68

Surah Yunus - Verse 60 68
Notes 69
Section 7: No Fear or Grief for the Friends of Allah 70
Surah Yunus - Verse 61 70
Surah Yunus - Verses 62 - 64 71
Surah Yunus - Verse 65 72
Surah Yunus - Verse 66 72
Surah Yunus - Verse 67 73
Surah Yunus - Verse 68 74
Surah Yunus - Verses 69 - 70 74
Notes 75
Section 8: The Ministries of Noah and Moses Referred to 76
Surah Yunus - Verse 71 76
Surah Yunus - Verse 72 77
Surah Yunus - Verse 73 77
Surah Yunus - Verse 74 78
Surah Yunus - Verse 75 78
Surah Yunus - Verse 76 79
Surah Yunus - Verse 77 79
Surah Yunus - Verse 78 80
Surah Yunus - Verse 79 80
Surah Yunus - Verse 80 81
Surah Yunus - Verses 81 - 82 81
Section 9: Moses Takes Away the Children of Israel 83
Surah Yunus - Verse 83 83
Surah Yunus - Verse 84 83
Surah Yunus - Verse 85 84
Surah Yunus - Verse 86 84
Surah Yunus - Verse 87 84
Surah Yunus - Verse 88 85
Surah Yunus - Verse 89 85
Surah Yunus - Verse 90 86
Surah Yunus - Verse 91 86
Surah Yunus - Verse 92 87
Section 10: Jonah's People 88
Surah Yunus - Verse 93 88
Surah Yunus - Verse 94 88
Surah Yunus - Verse 95 89
Surah Yunus - Verses 96 - 97 90
Surah Yunus - Verse 98 90
Surah Yunus - Verse 99 91
Surah Yunus - Verse 100 92
Surah Yunus - Verse 101 92
Surah Yunus - Verse 102 93
Surah Yunus - Verse 103 93
Notes 94
Section 11: Profit or Loss Caused by Allah - Unavoidable by Anyone 95
Surah Yunus - Verse 104 95

Surah Yunus - Verses 105 - 106 95
Surah Yunus - Verse 107 96
Surah Yunus - Verse 108 96
Surah Yunus - Verse 109 97
Surah Hud, Chapter 11 98
Surah Hud (Hud) 98
No.11 (Revealed in Mecca) 98
123 verses in 10 sections 98
The Contents of Surah Hud 98
Section 1: Repentance Earns Pardon and the Bounties from Allah ... 99
Surah Hud - Verse 1 99
Surah Hud - Verse 2 99
Surah Hud - Verse 3 100
Surah Hud - Verse 4 101
Surah Hud - Verse 5 101
Surah Hud - Verse 6 102
Surah Hud - Verse 7 103
Surah Hud - Verse 8 104
Explanations 105
Notes 105
Section 2: Patience and Good Deeds Earn Pardon from Allah 106
Surah Hud - Verse 9 106
Surah Hud - Verse 10 106
Surah Hud - Verse 11 106
Surah Hud - Verse 12 107
Surah Hud - Verse 13 108
Surah Hud - Verse 14 109
Surah Hud - Verses 15 - 16 110
Surah Hud - Verse 17 111
Surah Hud - Verse 18 112
Surah Hud - Verse 19 113
Surah Hud - Verse 20 114
Surah Hud - Verses 21 - 22 114
Surah Hud - Verse 23 115
Surah Hud - Verse 24 115
Notes 116
Section 3: The Ministry of Noah 117
Surah Hud - Verses 25 - 26 117
Surah Hud - Verse 27 117
Surah Hud - Verse 28 118
Surah Hud - Verse 29 119
Surah Hud - Verse 30 119
Surah Hud - Verse 31 119
Surah Hud - Verse 32 121
Surah Hud - Verse 33 122
Surah Hud - Verse 34 122
Surah Hud - Verse 35 122
Notes 123

Section 4: The Fate of Those Who Disbelieved Noah 124
Surah Hud - Verse 36 124
Surah Hud - Verse 37 124
Surah Hud - Verse 38 125
Surah Hud - Verse 39 125
Noah's Ark 126
Surah Hud - Verse 40 126
The Onset of the Flood 126
Surah Hud - Verse 41 127
Surah Hud - Verse 42 127
Surah Hud - Verse 43 128
The Educational implications of Noah's Flood 128
Surah Hud - Verse 44 130
The End of an Adventure 130
Surah Hud - Verse 45 131
The Tragic Story of Noah's Son 131
Surah Hud - Verse 46 131
Surah Hud - Verse 47 132
Surah Hud - Verse 48 132
Surah Hud - Verse 49 133
The Feature of Noah in the Qur'an 134
The Story of Noah (as) 134
Notes 135
Section 5: The Ministry of Hud 136
Surah Hud - Verse 50 136
Surah Hud - Verse 51 136
Surah Hud - Verse 52 137
Surah Hud - Verse 53 138
Surah Hud - Verse 54 138
Surah Hud - Verse 55 139
Surah Hud - Verse 56 139
Surah Hud - Verse 57 139
Surah Hud - Verse 58 140
Surah Hud - Verse 59 140
Surah Hud - Verse 60 141
Section 6: The Ministry of Salih 143
Surah Hud - Verse 61 143
Surah Hud - Verse 62 144
Surah Hud - Verse 63 144
Surah Hud - Verse 64 145
Surah Hud - Verse 65 145
Surah Hud - Verse 66 146
Surah Hud - Verse 67 - 68 146
Notes 147
Section 7: Ministry of Lot 148
Surah Hud - Verse 69 148
Surah Hud - Verse 70 148
Surah Hud - Verse 71 149

Surah Hud - Verse 72 149
Surah Hud - Verse 73 149
Surah Hud - Verse 74 150
Surah Hud - Verses 75 - 76 151
Surah Hud - Verse 77 152
Surah Hud - Verse 78 153
Explanations 153
Surah Hud - Verses 79 - 80 154
The Sin of Sodomy in the Qur'an and Traditions 154
Surah Hud - Verse 81 155
Surah Hud - Verses 82-83 156
Explanations 157
Notes 157
Section 8: The Ministry of Shu'ayb 158
Surah Hud - Verse 84 158
Surah Hud - Verse 85 159
Surah Hud - Verse 86 159
Surah Hud - Verse 87 160
Surah Hud - Verse 88 161
Surah Hud - Verse 89 161
Surah Hud - Verse 90 162
Surah Hud - Verse 91 162
Surah Hud - Verse 92 163
Surah Hud - Verse 93 164
Surah Hud - Verses 94 - 95 164
Notes 165
Section 9: The Ministry of Moses 166
Surah Hud - Verses 96 - 97 166
The Champion Against Pharaoh 166
Surah Hud - Verse 98 166
Surah Hud - Verse 99 167
Surah Hud - Verse 100 167
Surah Hud - Verse 101 168
Surah Hud - Verse 102 168
Surah Hud - Verses 103 - 104 168
Surah Hud - Verses 105 - 107 169
Surah Hud - Verse 108 170
The Means of Happiness and Wretchedness 171
Surah Hud - Verse 109 172
Notes 173
Section 10: Exhortation to Shun Evil 174
Surah Hud - Verse 110 174
Surah Hud - Verse 111 174
Surah Hud - Verse 112 175
The Command of Steadfastness 175
Surah Hud - Verse 113 176
Reliance upon the Unjust! 176
Explanation 177

Surah Hud - Verses 114 - 115 177
Prayer and Steadfastness 177
The Extraordinary Importance of Prayers 178
Surah Hud - Verse 116 180
Surah Hud - Verse 117 181
Surah Hud - Verse 118 182
Surah Hud - Verse 119 183
Surah Hud - Verse 120 183
Surah Hud - Verses 121 - 122 184
Surah Hud - Verse 123 184
The End of Surah Hud 185
Notes 185
Surah Yusuf, Chapter 12 186
Surah Yusuf (Joseph), ... 186
No. 12 (Revealed in Mecca) 186
111 verses in 12 Sections 186
The Magnitude and Glory of the Qur'an 186
The Content of the Surah 187
Section 1: Yusuf Suffers 189
Surah Yusuf - Verse 1 189
A General Note 189
Surah Yusuf - Verse 2 189
Surah Yusuf - Verse 3 190
Surah Yusuf - Verse 4 191
A Wonderful Dream and Difficulties Lead to Victory 192
Surah Yusuf - Verse 5 194
Explanations 195
Surah Yusuf - Verse 6 195
Notes 196
Section 2: Yusuf Suffers the Treatment of His Brothers 197
Surah Yusuf - Verse 7 197
Surah Yusuf - Verse 8 198
Explanations 198
Surah Yusuf - Verse 9 199
Explanations 200
Surah Yusuf - Verse 10 200
Surah Yusuf - Verses 11 - 12 202
Points to Note 203
Surah Yusuf - Verses 13 - 14 203
Outstanding Points 204
Surah Yusuf - Verse 15 204
Surah Yusuf - Verse 16 206
Surah Yusuf - Verse 17 207
Traditions upon Lie 207
Surah Yusuf - Verse 18 208
An Answer to the Question 208
Explanations 209
Surah Yusuf - Verse 19 210

Surah Yusuf - Verse 20 211
Notes 211
Section 3: Yusuf's Firmness in Piety Against the Great Temptation . 213
Surah Yusuf - Verse 21 213
Surah Yusuf - Verse 22 213
Surah Yusuf - Verse 23 214
Surah Yusuf - Verse 24 216
Solemnity in Statement 218
Surah Yusuf - Verse 25 218
Surah Yusuf - Verse 26 219
Surah Yusuf - Verse 27 220
Surah Yusuf - Verse 28 220
Surah Yusuf - Verse 29 221
Some Explanations 221
Notes 222
Section 4: Yusuf Prefers Prison Against the Temptation 223
Surah Yusuf - Verse 30 223
Surah Yusuf - Verse 31 223
Explanations 224
Surah Yusuf - Verse 32 224
Surah Yusuf - Verse 33 225
Surah Yusuf - Verse 34 229
Surah Yusuf - Verse 35 229
From Palace to Prison 229
Explanations 230
Notes 230
Section 5: Yusuf Preaches Unity of Allah in the Prison 231
Surah Yusuf - Verse 36 231
Surah Yusuf - Verse 37 231
Surah Yusuf - Verse 38 233
Surah Yusuf - Verse 39 234
Explanations 235
Surah Yusuf - Verse 40 235
Surah Yusuf - Verse 41 236
Surah Yusuf - Verse 42 237
Notes 239
Section 6: The King's Dream - Yusuf's Interpretation 240
Surah Yusuf - Verse 43 240
Explanations 240
Surah Yusuf - Verse 44 241
Explanations 241
Surah Yusuf - Verse 45 241
Surah Yusuf - Verse 46 242
Surah Yusuf - Verse 47 242
Explanations 243
Surah Yusuf - Verses 48 - 49 243
Notes 244
Section 7: Yusuf Cleared of the False Charge 245

Surah Yusuf - Verse 50 245
Explanations 246
Surah Yusuf - Verse 51 246
Explanations 247
Surah Yusuf - Verse 52 247
Explanations 247
Surah Yusuf - Verse 53 248
Explanations 248
Surah Yusuf - Verse 54 249
Explanations 249
Surah Yusuf - Verse 55 250
Explanations 252
Surah Yusuf - Verses 56 - 57 253
Notes 253
Section 8: Yusuf Measures Out Corn to His Brothers 255
Surah Yusuf - Verse 58 255
Surah Yusuf - Verse 59 255
Surah Yusuf - Verse 60 256
Surah Yusuf - Verse 61 257
Surah Yusuf - Verse 62 257
Surah Yusuf - Verse 63 257
Surah Yusuf - Verse 64 258
Surah Yusuf - Verse 65 259
Surah Yusuf - Verse 66 259
Surah Yusuf - Verse 67 260
Surah Yusuf - Verse 68 260
Explanations 261
Section 9: Yusuf Meets His Brother 262
Surah Yusuf - Verse 69 262
Explanations 262
Surah Yusuf - Verse 70 262
Explanations 263
Surah Yusuf - Verses 71 - 72 264
Surah Yusuf - Verse 73 264
Explanations 264
Surah Yusuf - Verse 74 265
Surah Yusuf - Verse 75 265
Surah Yusuf - Verse 76 266
Surah Yusuf - Verse 77 267
Surah Yusuf - Verse 78 267
Surah Yusuf - Verse 79 268
Explanations 268
Notes 268
Section 10: Yusuf Discloses His Identity 269
Surah Yusuf - Verse 80 269
Explanations 269
Surah Yusuf - Verse 81 270
Surah Yusuf - Verse 82 270

Surah Yusuf - Verse 83 271
Explanations 271
Surah Yusuf - Verse 84 272
Surah Yusuf - Verse 85 273
Explanations 273
Surah Yusuf - Verse 86 273
Surah Yusuf - Verse 87 274
Surah Yusuf - Verse 88 275
Surah Yusuf - Verse 89 276
Surah Yusuf - Verse 90 276
Explanations 277
Surah Yusuf - Verse 91 277
Surah Yusuf - Verse 92 278
Explanations 278
Surah Yusuf - Verse 93 279
Explanations 280
Notes 280
Section 11: Jacob Goes to Yusuf 281
Surah Yusuf - Verse 94 281
Explanations 281
Surah Yusuf - Verse 95 281
Surah Yusuf - Verse 96 282
Explanations 282
Surah Yusuf - Verse 97 283
Surah Yusuf - Verse 98 283
Surah Yusuf - Verse 99 284
The End of Yusuf and His Brothers 284
Explanations 284
Surah Yusuf - Verse 100 285
Explanations 286
Surah Yusuf - Verse 101 286
Explanations 287
1- Is Prostration Allowed to Other Than Allah? 288
2- Social Security is a Great Blessing from Allah 288
3- The Important Position of Knowledge 289
4- Man Can Undergo a Great Deal of Changes Throughout His Lifetime 289
5- Did Yusuf's Mother Come to Egypt? 289
Surah Yusuf - Verse 102 289
Surah Yusuf - Verse 103 290
Surah Yusuf - Verse 104 290
Notes 291
Section 12: Histories of the Ancient People Serve as a Lesson 292
Surah Yusuf - Verse 105 292
Explanations 292
Surah Yusuf - Verse 106 292
Surah Yusuf - Verse 107 293
Surah Yusuf - Verse 108 294

Explanations 295
Surah Yusuf - Verse 109 295
Explanations 296
Surah Yusuf - Verse 110 296
Surah Yusuf - Verse 111 297
Notes 299

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered

the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13]**.**

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95

20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-
ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ ا ً وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Yunus, Chapter 10

Surah Yunus (Jonah)

No. 10 (Revealed in Mecca)

109 verses in 11 sections

The Contents of Surah Yunus

بِسْمِ ا ّ ِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah Yunus is the tenth Surah of the Holy Qur'an which was revealed during the early days of the Prophet's appointment in Mecca.

This Surah contains 109 verses, and its main topics are about monotheism, the authenticity of the Qur'an, answers to those who deny revelation, inspiring fear in the unbelievers, exposing the glory and magnitude of the act of creation and of the Creator, the lack of permanence of the world as well as calling the attentions of all peoples to the world after death.

The former Surah, that is "Repentance", dealt with the acts of the hypocrites as well as their punishment, while this Surah refers to the acts of polytheists.

As to the rewards accounted for reciting and reading this Surah, there have been cited some traditions among which is the tradition narrated by Imam Sadiq (as) who said: He who recites Surah Yunus every two or three months may not be of the ignorant and will be of the near-stationed on the Day of Resurrection. [1]

Note

1. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsi-i-Burhan

Section 1: The Qur’an Contains Signs From the All-Wise

Surah Yunus - Verse 1

بِسْمِ ا ّ ِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

1. “Alif ‘A’, Lam ‘L’, Ra ‘R’. These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom.”

It is noteworthy that six consecutive suras of the Qur’an begin with abbreviated letters which are recited: Alif, Lam, Ra. These Suras are: Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ar-Ra‘d (with an exception, of course), ’Ibrahim, and Al-Hijr. Each of these letters is an indication to the Names of Allah or to some other things which have been explained at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah.

The Arabic word /tilka/ refers to the verses that are found in this Surah.

The objective meaning of the Qur’anic phrase /al kitab il hakim/ is the “Protected Tablet” or the Qur’an. Since it contains wisdom and teaches by means of wisdom, it is therefore Wise.

In other words; the Qur’an has a high rank, because the Holy Book itself is Wise. Simultaneously, while it contains both teachings of wisdom and is wise in content, it is a judge and an arbitrator as well. It remains intact from hostile elements and history and the passage of time can leave no impact upon it. It is “the Book of Wisdom”.

Surah Yunus - Verse 2

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَباً أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ مُبِينٌ

2. “Was it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves that he should warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they have before their Lord the rank of Truth? (While) the unbelievers say: ‘This is indeed an evident sorcerer!’”

The verses of wisdom of the Qur’an are composed of the same letters and sounds that are just like Alif, Lam, and Ra.

Their differences with other statements lie in the fact that they are intermingled with divine wisdom, the sort of which is so encompassing that it exposes the truth, and drags mankind to guidance, but the people do not believe this fact that a man, selected from among themselves, can receive revelations from Allah.

This matter is not surprising, since the aim of revelation is to warn the people and give glad tidings to the believers notifying them of the high esteem in which they are being held with their Creator. If they believe firmly in Him, He guides them and rewards them accordingly[1]!

The verse says:

"Was it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves that he should warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they have before their Lord the rank of Truth?…"

The idolaters, however, said that "this man" (meaning the Prophet (S), must have obviously been a sorcerer and a magician since he brought something that could not be brought by others.

The verse continues saying:

"…(While) the unbelievers say: 'This is indeed an evident sorcerer!'"

The disbelievers considered prophecy as sorcery and, because of their short sightedness, dark heartedness, and lack of understanding, they could mostly not grasp the truth and distinguish the difference between miracles and the work of magicians.

Surah Yunus - Verse 3

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الاَمْرَ مَا مِن شَفِيعٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

3. "Verily, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the Earth in six Days. Then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne), directing the affair. No intercessor can there be except after (obtaining) His leave. This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore worship you: will you not remember?"

The objective meaning of 'Six Days' is six periods of time in the course of creation.

The 'throne' ('arsh) alludes to power and omnipotence. When one says someone was enthroned or overthrown, he implies that he was elevated in power or stripped of his power. Allah's comprehensive authority extends all over existence both before the creation of the earth and the heavens and after their creation.

The Qur'an says:

"And His 'Arsh (throne) was over the water."[2]

Even next to the end of the world and during the Resurrection, Allah's omnipotence over all existence will remain intact, too.

The Qur'an says:

"…and above them eight shall bear on that Day your Lord's 'Arsh (throne)."[3]

Messages

1. Acquiring knowledge about Allah (s.w.t.) should precede worshipping Him.

2. Worship must be kept exclusively for Him Who has the power to create and administer all the affairs of creation and to no one else.

3. The creation of the world has been accomplished according to a plan and an arranged program, (in six days). When there are pre-ordaining plans for all beings in the system of creation, how can one think of human beings, who are the outstanding achievements of the creative process, to be without any planned destiny?

The verse says:

"Verily, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the Earth in six Days. Then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne), directing the affair. ..."

4. Allah has created the entire existence and is in full command, administering it with wisdom while leaving no one in charge of any part without His prior approval.

5. Any effort at mediation by any being must meet with His approval. Thus one, such as idols, cannot be unduly appointed as an intercessor.

The verse says:

"…No intercessor can there be except after (obtaining) His leave..."

6. Extremists might try to introduce the Creator as Allah, nevertheless they consider themselves as competent policy-makers and able to separate religion from politics.

It says:

"…This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore worship you:…"

Man believes in his Creator. He only needs to be reminded.

The verse concludes:

"…will you not remember?"

7. Deity is not separate from Lordship.

Surah Yunus - Verse 4

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعاً وَعْدَ ا ِّ حَقّاً إِنَّهُ يَبْدَؤُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

4. "To Him will be your return, all together. The promise of Allah is true. Verily He originates the (process of) creation, then He causes it to return, that He may reward with justice those who believe and do righteous deeds; but those who disbelieve, for them shall be a drink from the boiling fluids and a painful chastisement for what they used to reject."

This verse puts forth both the principle of Resurrection (to Him will be your return), and its probability,

(…He originates the (process of) creation, then He causes it to return…).

This meaning is just like verse 19 of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7 which states:

"…As He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you return."

And it also refers to the aim of Resurrection which involves punishment and reward.

The verse continues saying:

"…that He may reward with justice those who believe and do righteous deeds; but those who disbelieve, for them shall be a drink from the boiling fluids and a painful chastisement for what they used to reject."

Therefore, those who are believers and have done good deeds will be rewarded in a just manner, leading them to Paradise. The share of the unbelievers will be a burning liquid made of boiling water that will torture them painfully and they will be kept in Hell forever.

Surah Yunus - Verse 5

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُوراً وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ ا ُّ ذَلِكَ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الاَيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

5. "He it is Who made the sun a radiation and the moon a light, and determined it by stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (of time). Allah did not create that save in truth. (Thus) does He explain the Signs in detail, for a people who know."

There are words used in the Qur'an for the sun, such as /siraj/ and /diya'/, which signify a strong and intensive light. As for the moon, the words used are /nur/ and /munir/ which signify even dim light as well.

From among the tokens of Allah's designs in the world of existence and His absolute command over the universe, one can name the wise order spread throughout the entire cosmos. Do you not behold what a heat and what a light He has given to the sun?

They change with the changes of the sun in the morning and during the day, and manifest themselves in the variety of the seasons of the year. It varies at dawn and midday, not exceeding the limits at any extreme.

If the sun's heat exceeds what it already is, all the earth would be incinerated, and if it decreases from its present temperature, the earth and what ever is in it will freeze, and in both cases, life will terminate in its totality.

If the light of the sun was extinguished you would no longer be able to see the moon for it borrows its light from the sun. It spreads its light at nighttime over the earth, residing temporarily in its different stages: as the full moon, as a crescent and occasionally disappearing altogether.

Through observing the regularity of these changes mankind can keep track of their days, months and years, organize their work and make plans with a schedule.

That is, it is an accurate natural calendar that can benefit both the sage and the illiterate for keeping track of the rhythm of their work in their daily-lives. This privilege of the moon is besides the light that it gives us.

The verse says:

"He it is Who made the sun a radiation and the moon a light, and determined it by stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (of time)..."

Then the Qur'an implies that this process of creation and the revolution and rotation of the sun and the moon are not to be dismissed as trivial matters.

The verse continues saying:

"…Allah did not create that save in truth..."

The cloud and the wind, the moon and the sun move in the sky that you may earn your bread, and you should not eat it without being aware of your Provider.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an emphasizes that Allah explains His verses for those who comprehend them although those who are ill-sighted and unaware overlook all these verses, not understanding the slightest thing from them.

It says:

"…(Thus) does He explain the Signs in detail, for a people who know."

Surah Yunus - Verse 7

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلاَفِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ ا ُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ

6. "Verily, in the alternation of night and day, and all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are signs for a people who keep from evil."

Allah has designed the universe in keeping with His Own magnificence and wisdom, the cycle of night and day, the overarching heavens, the fixed and moving stars, the animals, plants, inanimate objects, and all the rest of provisions and bounties provided in the earth are proofs and evidences upon His Oneness and Glory for those people who avoid committing sins and disobeying Allah for the fear of His punishment.

The fact that He only mentions the pious as those who reflect upon His Signs is an indication that it is only such people who take lessons by observing the worldly phenomena. The rest of mankind are blinded by their own negligence and ignorance; no phenomenon can affect on their hearts; thus, they cannot grasp the objectives of creation.

Incidentally, the word 'alternation' /'ixtilaf/, mentioned in the holy verse, signifies coming and going as well as variation. Thus the night and the day are different in some respects:

A. They alternatively substitute for each other. Allah says:

"… The sign of the night have We made to pass away and have We the sign of the day manifest..."[4]

B. Night is pre-ordained for tranquility and the day for the hustle and bustle of struggle.

Allah says:

"And We made the night as a covering,"

"And We made the day for (seeking) livelihood."[5]

C. The decrease and increase in the number of daylight hours in the different seasons of the year.

D. The change in the hours of the day and the night in various regions of the world.

The verse says:

"Verily, in the alternation of night and day, and all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are signs for a people who keep from evil."

Question: Why is it that some scientists are atheists?

Answer: In itself, science is not sufficient. The approach to truth must stem from intentional and purposeful people and the motive must originate from those who honestly seek the truth and reality. Thus sins and pollutions from sin leave a negative impact upon one's analysis and cognition.

Surah Yunus - Verses 7 - 8

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ ءَايَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

7. "Verily those who do not expect the meeting with Us, but are pleased with the life of this world and are satisfied with it, and those who are neglectful of Our Signs,"

8. "These! Their abode is the Fire for what they used to earn."

From this verse on, there is also a description concerning the Resurrection and the destiny of people in the Hereafter.

At first, the verse says:

"Verily those who do not expect on the meeting with Us, but are pleased with the life of this world and are satisfied with it..."

Then it refers to those who are neglectful of the revelations of Allah and do not meditate upon them so as to be thoroughly awakened and feel responsibility. The verse continues saying:

"…and those who are neglectful of Our Signs,"

Both of these two groups will have their abode in the Fire for the evil actions they have committed. The verse says:

"Their abode is the Fire for what they used to earn."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"He who loves meeting Allah, Allah also loves meeting him." [6]

In fact, the direct result of the lack of belief in the Resurrection is this very love unto this limited life, of worldly position and a confidence and reliance upon it.

Also, negligence from the revelations of Allah, is the origin of separation from Allah which in turn is the origin of the lack of sympathy and, consequently, falling into pollution, mischief, and sin whose ultimate result cannot be aught but Fire.

Surah Yunus - Verse 9

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

9. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith: beneath them rivers flow in gardens of bliss."

Then the Qur'an refers to the state of another group who behave opposite of the two groups mentioned before.

The holy verse says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith:..."

This beam of light of Divine guidance which has its origins in their faith enlightens every aspect within the entire horizons of their lives. They are so enlightened by that light that they will never submit themselves to the falsity of the materialist schools, satanic fancies or the false glamour associated with sin, wealth and power, and they never pave the path of astray.

As for the Hereafter, the Creator (s.w.t.) establishes them in palaces and Gardens underneath which Rivers flow.

The verse continues saying:

"…beneath them rivers flow in gardens of bliss."

Surah Yunus - Verse 10

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلاَمٌ وءَاخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ ِ رَبّ الْعَالَمِينَ

10. "Their cry therein (will be): 'Glory be to You, O Allah!' and 'Peace' will be their greeting therein. And the close of their cry (will be): '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'."

The faithful will lead their lives in an environment full of peace, kindness, love unto the Lord, and blessings of various kinds. Whenever they contemplate these things and reflect upon His Essence and qualities, in their speech and prayers in Paradise they will invoke their Lord, and as the verse says:

"Their cry therein (will be): 'Glory be to You, O Allah!'…"

And whenever they encounter each other, their talk will be of peace and friendliness. Their greetings are exclusively /salam/.

The verse continues saying:

"…and 'Peace' will be their greeting therein..."

And finally, whenever they enjoy the various blessings of Allah in Paradise, they will start thanking Him, and end their words with gratitude.

The verse says:

"…And the close of their cry (will be): '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'."

Explanations

"Peace" is the word uttered by the people in Paradise and the atmosphere of Paradise is filled with /salam/ (peace). It comes from different sources, such as from Allah:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord"[7],

and which comes from the angels saying:

"Peace be upon you, you shall be happy;"[8].

It also is uttered by all those who reside in Paradise.

"Only the saying: 'Peace, Peace'."[9]

The holy phrase "(All) praise is (only) Allah's" is the saying of the prophets and saints. Hadrat Noah (as), after being released from the unjust people uttered these words, and 'Ibrahim (as) also, saying them, thanked Allah in his old age for He had bestowed him Ishmael and Ishaq.

Some Islamic tradition indicate that the People of Paradise, by uttering /subhaanaka 'allahumma/ will call up the hosts of Paradise, who in turn show up immediately and fulfill their wishes. [10]

Notes

1. In Islamic quotations, whether those of the Sunnis or those of the Shia'h, the Prophet of Islam (S) has been known as the Propagator of Truth. (See the of Qurtubi and Al-Borhan).
2. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 7
3. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verse 17
4. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 12
5. Surah Naba', No. 78, verses 10, 11
6. Tafsir-ul-Furqan
7. Surah Yaseen, No. 36, verse 58
8. Surah Az-Zumae, No. 39, verse 73
9. Surah Al-Waqi'ah, No. 56, verse 26
10. The Manhaj-us-Sadiqin

Section 2: Ingratitude of Men

Surah Yunus - Verse 11

وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ ا ُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُم بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلُهُمْ فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لا يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

11. "And if Allah were to hasten on for men the ill (they have earned) as they would hasten on the good, surely their term would already be decreed unto them. But We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their contumacy, wandering blindly."

This verse also deals with the subject of punishment and reward meted out to the evildoers. First, the Qur'an implies if Allah punished the evil-doers swiftly in this world and hastened on their punishment at the same speed in which they are after the good things of this world and their own interests, that would be the end of the world and no traces of them would remain.

The verse says:

"And if Allah were to hasten on for men the ill (they have earned) as they would hasten on the good, Surely their term would already be decreed unto them..."

However, as Allah's grace encompasses all His servants, even the evildoers, idol worshippers, and non-believers, He does not hasten on their punishment lest they wake-up and repent and be lead straight.

At the end of the verse, He says that punishment is for those who do not believe in the Resurrection and the Meeting with Him; they are left alone so that they may stray and remain in confusion, not knowing the truth from "untruth" and the right path from the wrong.

The verse says:

"…But We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their contumacy, wandering blindly."

Surah Yunus - Verse 12

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِداً أَوْ قَآئِماً فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ُ ّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَمْ يَدْعُنَآ إِلَى ُ ٍّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

12. "And when an affliction touches a man, he calls Us (while reclining) on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We remove from him his affliction, he passes on, as if he never called Us to an affliction that touched him. Thus is made fair seeming to the extravagant that which they have been doing."

Then the Qur'an refers to the existence of the light of monotheism in man, which emanates from the depth of his soul. It indicates that when man suffers from the loss of something, and he is helpless on all sides, he seeks Allah's help by stretching his hands towards Him, calling Him in whatever state he is whether lying on his side, sitting or standing.

The verse says:

"And when an affliction touches a man, he calls Us (while reclining) on his side, or sitting, or standing..."

Yes, the positive aspect of the difficulties and painful incidents is that they unveil the true character of human beings and, though it may last merely for a while, the light of monotheism eventually shines forth.

Then the Qur'an implies that these people, however, are so in capacious and unwise that as soon as their troubles are removed they once more become so immersed in oblivion that it is as if they had made no supplications at all, and He had not given them any assistance.

The verse says:

"…But when We remove from him his affliction, he passes on, as if he never called Us to an affliction that touched him. Thus is made fair seeming to the extravagant that which they have been doing."

It is this very ingratitude and negligence that has made the indecent acts of the mischief makers seemingly beautiful for them.

Surah Yunus - Verse 13

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُـجْرِمِينَ

13. "And certainly We destroyed the generations before you when they were unjust, and their messengers came to them with clear arguments and they would not believe. Thus do We recompense the guilty people. "

In this holy verse, Allah informs us of the calamities which were inflicted upon previous nations and warns the present nations against the descent of those calamities which may fall upon them.

The Qur'an announces that Allah exterminated former nations by means of kinds of punishment when they inflicted injustice upon themselves by revolting, becoming disobedient, and after sending prophets to them with obvious miracles and clear proofs.

The verse says:

"And certainly We destroyed the generations before you when they were unjust, and their messengers came to them with clear arguments and they would not believe..."

This verse carries this message that the secret of their eradication was that if they had been to remain existent, they definitely would not have believed in their prophets and the Books. Which were sent to them.

In the future, too, Allah will inflict calamities upon those unbelieving people who do not reform themselves in spite of offering them proofs for completing arguments, and with the full understanding that they are well-informed as to the consequences and that they will not believe.

The verse continues saying:

"…Thus do We recompense the guilty people. "

Surah Yunus - Verse 14

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلآئِفَ فِي الأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

14. "Then We made you successors in the earth after them to see how you behave."

Allah expresses more explicitly the matter in this verse, implying that, after destroying them, He substituted you on the earth in their place so that He may observe the way you behave.

The verse says:

"Then We made you successors in the earth after them to see how you behave."

From the sentence "and they would not believe:", mentioned in the previous verse, it is understood that Allah exterminates only those whose situation leaves no hope that they will even be probable believers in the future, for those who may become believers in the future are not involved in this category for such punishments.

Surah Yunus - Verse 15

وإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْءَانٍ غَيْرِ هَذَآ أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ
قُلْ مَايَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِن تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلاَّ مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي
عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

15. "And when Our Clear Signs are recited unto them, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, say: 'Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or alter it.' Say: 'It is not for me to alter it of my own accord, I follow naught but what is revealed unto me; verily, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord the Penalty of a Great Day (to come).'"

The Occasion of the Revelation

This holy verse and the next two verses had been revealed concerning several idol-worshippers when they came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"Whatever this Qur'an says about abandoning the worship of our great idols namely Lat, Uzza, Manat, Hubal and its disrespect of them is not acceptable and bearable to us. If you want us to follow you, get us another Qur'an which is free of this criticism, or, at least change such ideas in this present Qur'an."

These holy verses, following the previous verses, are all concerned with 'Origin and End'.

First, The Qur'an alludes to one of the great mistakes of the idol-worshippers.

It says:

"And when Our Clear Signs are recited unto them, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, say: 'Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or alter it.'..."

These ignorant people did not want the Prophet (S) to guide them as a leader; they rather invited him to follow in the footsteps of their own superstitious conjectures.

The Qur'an explicitly enlightens them regarding their grave mistake, ordering the Prophet (S) to tell them that it is impossible for him to alter the Divine revelation by himself.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'It is not for me to alter it of my own accord..."

Then, to articulate further, he should add that he would only follow what was revealed to him, and that not only he could not make any alterations in that heavenly Revelation, but, also he feared the punishment of that Great Day (Resurrection) if he would disobey the Command of the Lord.

The holy verse says:

"…I follow naught but what is revealed unto me; verily, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord the Penalty of a Great Day (to come).'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 16

قُل لَوْ شَآءَ ا ّ ُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلاَ أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُراً مِن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

16. "Say: 'Had Allah so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you. Indeed I have lived amongst you a lifetime before it. Have you then no sense?'"

In this verse the Qur'an brings a reason for the Divine order by commanding the Prophet to say that his ideas do not have the slightest role in this Holy Book, and had Allah wanted, he would not have read the Qur'an to them and they would not have been made aware of it.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Had Allah so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you..."

I have lived among you a long time before this. It provides reason for what I claim, for you have never heard me saying such things before.

If the verses had come from me, you should have heard me saying them during the past forty years as they would have been at the tip of my tongue, or at least parts of it might have been heard by someone in the past. How can you not notice such an obvious matter?

The verse continues saying:

"…Indeed I have lived amongst you a lifetime before it. Have you then no sense?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 17

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي ا ّ ِ كَذِباً أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِايَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لا يُفْلِحُ الْمُـجْرِمُونَ

17. "Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or belies His Signs? Verily the guilty ones will never prosper."

In order to emphasize the point, the Prophet (S) adds that, being well aware that the worst kind of evil is that someone falsely attributes a lie to Allah, how could he then commit such a sin on the earth?

The verse says:

"Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or belies His Signs?..."

And he who denies the Divine verses, his action is also the most cruel and unjust of all actions. If the unbelievers are unaware of the scope and volume of the severity and greatness of the sin of forging a lie to the Divine verses, the Prophet, on the contrary, is not so unaware. At any event, this action of theirs is a grave offence and those who perpetrate it will never be saved.

The verse says:

"…Verily the guilty ones will never prosper."

Surah Yunus - Verse 18

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ا ّ ِ مَا لا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلآءِ شُفَعَآؤُنَا عِندَ ا ّ ِ قُلْ
اَتُنَبِّؤُنَ ا ّ َ بِمَا لا يَعلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلا فِي الأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

18. "And they worship, besides Allah, what can neither hurt them nor profit them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say: 'Will you inform Allah of what He knows not either in the heavens or in the earth?' Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

The issue of monotheism is also continued in this verse by negating the claim that these idols are associated with divinity, and it has been proved as groundless by offering clear reasons. They used to worship icons and idols which neither did any harm to them nor any good.

They were neither feared by the idol worshippers nor did the idols provide them with any profit so that they were worshipped for gaining benefit thereof.

The verse says:

"And they worship, besides Allah, what can neither hurt them nor profit them..."

The Qur'an deals with the groundless and unfounded claims of the idol worshippers when it implies that they claim that these idols serve as mediators between them and Allah which was one of the motives for worshipping them.

The verse says:

"…and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah.'…"

The Qur'an, in response to such a way of thinking, tells the Prophet (S) to ask them a question, as follows:

"…Say: 'Will you inform Allah of what He knows not either in the heavens or in the earth?'..."

Allusion is here made to the fact that if the Almighty had such mediators who would protect them, and wherever on the earth or in the skies they might have existed, He would have been well aware of their existence.

At the end of the verse it stresses emphatically on the fact that Allah is pure and superior to those partners whom they envisage for Him.

The verse says:

"…Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

Surah Yunus - Verse 19

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلاّ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا وَلَوْلاَ كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ

19. "And mankind were only one community, then they differed, and had not a Word already gone forth from your Lord, their differences would have been judged between them."

This verse refers to the monotheistic nature of all human beings, alluding in part to the previous verse in connection with negating unbelief and idol worshipping. It implies that in the beginning, all human beings were of a single nation, and, with no exception, all were monotheists.

The verse says:

"And mankind were only one community..."

This monotheistic nature, that was untouched at the beginning, because of shortsightedness and some satanic attitudes, underwent changes. With the passage of time, some went astray from the monotheistic path and became the adherents of polytheism. Thus the human society spitted into two groups: Monotheists and Polytheists.

The verse continues saying:

"…then they differed..."

Therefore, polytheism is in fact a deviation from what is innate in human nature, and its roots lie in some baseless ideas and conjectures.

One might raise the issue at this point as to why the Almighty does not hasten to eradicate the origin of such differences by the speedy punishment of the polytheists?

The Qur'an immediately gives an answer to this question implying that if Allah's command in regard to the absence of their speedy punishment had not been already issued, arbitration would have been administered and their differences would have been judged, then all of them would meet their painful fate.

The verse says:

"…and had not a Word already gone forth from your Lord, their differences would have been judged between them."

Surah Yunus - Verse 20

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَةٌ مِن رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

20. "And they say: 'Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?' Say then: ' Verily the Unseen is only for Allah (to know). Wait you then, verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait'."

Once again, the Qur'an deals with the pretexts of the polytheists for evading belief and faith in Islam. It indicates that the disbelievers complain about a miracle not being sent down from Allah to the Prophet (S).

The verse in this regard says:

"And they say: 'Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?'..."

They meant, of course, that any time they demanded a miracle they desired, the Prophet (S) should have acted immediately and accordingly [1] to fulfill their demands. It was forthwith revealed to the Prophet (S) that the invisible world and supernatural affairs, (miracles relating to the invisible and metaphysical world), belong to Allah alone.

The verse says:

"…Say then: ' Verily the Unseen is only for Allah (to know)..."

Therefore the Prophet (S) should tell them he could not perform miracles according to their wishes, which they would later deny and which would not

convince them to become believers. In the final analysis, they refrained from believing regardless of the pretext.

At the end of the verse, from his tongue, the Qur'an, in a threatening tone implies that if they did not stop being obstinate, they should expect divine punishment whilst, on the other hand, the Prophet (S) should expect victory.

The verse says:

"…Wait you then, verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait'."

Notes

1. Some commentators state that Allah is aware of the world of Unseen and whatever stands in the way of divine miracles to be sent down is itself invisible, none is aware but Allah.

Section 3: The Divine Mercy

Surah Yunus - Verse 21

وإِذَآ أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِن بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُم مَكْرٌ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْراً إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَاتَمْكُرُونَ

21. "And when We make mankind taste of (Our) mercy after adversity hath touched them, behold! they have a device concerning Our Signs! Say: 'Allah is quicker at devising. Verily, Our messengers record what you devise'."

The previous verse alluded to the pretexts of those who used to ask why no new signs were revealed. Here Allah refers to their obstinacy and to the fact that they played dirty tricks after a new verse was revealed instead of appreciating it.

The verse says:

"And when We make mankind taste of (Our) mercy after adversity hath touched them, behold! they have a device concerning Our Signs!..."

As for the occasion of revelation of this verse, it has been said that there occurred a drought and famine in Mecca. The Almighty (s.w.t.) made it rain for the blessing of His Prophet (S). The polytheists claimed, however, that the reason for the rain was because of the idols. [1]

One of the measures and tricky devices employed by his enemies was character assassination of the Prophet (S), ridiculing the divine verses, and degrading the blessings of Allah.

At any rate, man misuses God-given blessings and makes mischief instead of giving thanks and we must know that he who plays dirty tricks, will ultimately be involved with the device and the punishment of Allah.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'Allah is quicker at devising..."

Then, He warns them not to think that such conspiracies and plans will be forgotten. His messengers, (that is, His angels responsible for recording human actions) will take note of all those plans which disbelievers arrange for extinguishing the light of the truth. And they must prepare themselves for the Judgment and the punishment in the world here-after.

The verse says:

"…Verily, Our messengers record what you devise'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّي إِذَا كُنتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِم بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَآءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَآءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدّينَ لَئِنْ أَنجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

22. "He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and sea; so that you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat. Then there comes upon them a stormy wind and the waves come on them from all sides, and they think that they are encompassed therewith, they call upon Allah, making their faith pure for

Him, (saying): 'If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the grateful ones'."

In this verse the Qur'an appeals to the depths of human nature, explaining to them the monotheism which is embedded in their very being, describing to them how man once in great difficulty and danger, tends to forget everything but Allah.

First, He says that He is the One Who enables you to traverse through the land and the sea. And, when you go on board a ship, He makes you eventually get, you and your ship, to your destination with the help of the appropriate winds that gladden every heart.

Then when a horrible thunderstorm blows and waves buffet them from all sides, it makes them realize that death is near, and they lose their hopes of survival.

The verse says:

"He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and sea; so that you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat. Then there comes upon them a stormy wind and the waves come on them from all sides, and they think that they are encompassed therewith..."

At just about that time, they are reminded of Allah and call upon Him sincerely, their thoughts stripped of all sorts of polytheism and idol worship.

The verse continues saying:

"…they call upon Allah, making their faith pure for Him…"

They start praying at this time, saying that if Allah save them from this plight, they will thank Him while they shall neither oppress others nor turn to others for help save Him.

The verse says:

"…(saying): 'If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the grateful ones'."

Although this temporary awakening will often have no remarkable educational effect upon extraordinarily wicked people, yet He completes the process of reasoning to the end to them, and it will serve as their eventual condemnation.

In such incidents, those individuals, who are only slightly polluted, are usually awakened and tend to reform themselves.

Surah Yunus - Verse 23

فَلَمَّآ أَنجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي الاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقّ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلَي أَنفُسِكُم
مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

23. "But when He delivers them, behold! They rebel in the earth unjustly. O mankind! Your rebellion is against your own selves, an enjoyment of the life of this world. Then to Us is your return, and We shall inform you of what you used to do."

But such neglectful people usually start bothering others and oppressing them on the earth, as soon as Allah saves them and leads them to safe shores.

The verse says:

"But when He delivers them, behold! They rebel in the earth unjustly. ..."

Yet, the Qur'an advises people to know that whatever oppression they commit and whatever sort of deviation they have made from the right path, they themselves will pay its price.

The verse says:

"…O mankind! Your rebellion is against your own selves…"

The only thing that they may be able to do is to enjoy the life in this world for merely a few days, and finally their eventual return will be towards Allah. It is at that time that they shall be informed of whatever they did in the world.

The verse says:

"…an enjoyment of the life of this world. Then to Us is your return, and We shall inform you of what you used to do."

Surah Yunus - Verse 24

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالاَنْعَامُ حَتَّي إِذَآ أَخَذَتِ الأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَآ أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَآ أَتَاهَآ أَمْرُنَا لَيْلاً أَوْ نَهَاراً فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيداً كَاَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالاَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الاَيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

24. "The likeness of the life of this world is just as the water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it whereof men and cattle eat, till when the earth takes its ornament and is embellished, and its people imagine that they have power over it, (but suddenly) Our command reaches it by night or by day, and We make it stubble, as if it had not flourished the day before! Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for a people who reflect.

In the foregoing verses allusion had been made to the lack of permanence in this worldly life. In this holy verse this grave reality is depicted with an interesting example so that He may remove the curtain of arrogance and negligence from the eyes of those who are neglectful and unjust.

The verse says:

"The likeness of the life of this world is just as the water which We send down from the sky..."

These life-providing drops fall on cultivable soil, making it possible for various plants to grow, some of which are useful for man, and others that are useful for birds and beasts.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the plants of the earth mingle with it whereof men and cattle eat..."

These plants, besides the nutritional qualities that they contain for living creatures, cover the earth's surface and decorate it so that the earth finds its utmost beauty in it.

It is at this time that the blossoms decorate the branches and the flowers bloom. Nutritious grains and fruits show up gradually, dramatically depicting the full meaning of the scene of life, thus rendering people's hearts hopeful and their eyes full of joy.

This is done to the extent that people on the earth become certain that they can benefit from the blessings of the plants and fruits as well as from their life-inducing grains.

The verse says:

"…till when the earth takes its ornament and is embellished, and its people imagine that they have power over it..."

All of a sudden, Allah's command reaches them, ordering excessive cold, unexpected heavy rains or strong thunderstorms to overwhelm and eradicate them all as if they never existed.

The verse continues saying:

"…(but suddenly) Our command reaches it by night or by day, and We make it stubble, as if it had not flourished the day before!..."

Towards the end of the verse, in order to emphasize further, Allah declares:

"…Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for a people who reflect.

Surah Yunus - Verse 25

وَا ۖ يَدْعُواْ إِلَي دَارِ السَّلاَمِ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

25. "And Allah doth call mankind to the Abode of Peace and He guides whomever He Pleases unto the Straight path."

The Arabic appellation /dar-us-Salam/ is one of the names of Paradise within which nobody bears any grudge against another and where no quarrel, war, and exploitation takes place.

The verse says:

"And Allah doth call mankind to the Abode of Peace and He guides whomever He Pleases unto the Straight path."

The holy word "Peace" is Allah's name, and "the Abode of Peace" signifies the proximity of the divine blessings. It is the place where everyone's words and greetings consist of "peace", and unto whom Allah also sends peace.

The Qur'an says:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord." (Surah Yasin, verse 58)

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the way leads to the mastership (wilayat) of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) and the Immaculate Imams, has been stated as the best example for the 'Straight Path'.[2]

We must note that the divine call is the symbol of His special favour towards His servants. It embodies the safe passage of man in this world and the Hereafter, the first stage of which is transient while the second stage is permanent.

Incidentally, the Straight Path is one which creates 'peace' for man not only in the Hereafter, but also creates peace for him in this world.

Surah Yunus - Verse 26

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَي وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلاَ يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلاَ ذِلَّةٌ أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

26. "For those who do good, is a goodly (reward), and more (than this). Neither dust nor abasement shall over spread their faces. They are Companions of the Garden; they will abide therein forever."

The Arabic term /rahiqa/ signifies covering by force and the word /qatar/ means 'dust', 'smoke' and 'ashes'.

Bestowing incremental and extra rewards on the believers has repeatedly been mentioned in the Qur'an by the words /ziyadah/, /zi'f/ and /'az'af/.

Among them are the following verses:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like..."[3]

"…He will pay them their rewards fully and with bestow upon them more out of His Grace."[4]

In addition to the complete reward, Allah also bestows upon them more for partaking of his own virtue, there is a seven hundred-fold reward for giving charity for Allah's sake.

"The likeness of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."[5]

Imam Sadiq (as) declares:

"Every thing has its own system of measurement except tears, a drop of which extinguishes fires".

Then he (as) said:

"He who sheds tears for the sake of Allah, his face will never confront darkness and humiliation,"

and he recited:

"Neither dust nor abasement shall overspread their face."[6]

Fadil-bin-Yasar, has narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that the Messenger of Allah (S) declared;

"There are no eyes which are soaked with tears for the fear of Allah except that Allah forbids that body to be in the Fire of Hell. Were he to shed tears, his face would not be covered by the dust and abasement".[7]

At any rate, those who turn to other than Allah, have no excuses to make as Allah (s.w.t.) simultaneously extends His invitation to man and, at the same time, leads him; He not only rewards but also rewards more and more.

The verse says:

"For those who do good, is a goodly (reward), and more (than this). Neither dust nor abasement shall over spread their faces. They are Companions of the Garden; they will abide therein forever."

Surah Yunus - Verse 27

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَآءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَا لَهُم مِنَ ا ۖ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَآ
أُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطَعاً مِنَ الَّيْلِ مَظْلِماً أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

27. "And those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil; and the dust of ignominy will cover them. No defender will they have from (the wrath of) Allah: as if their faces had been covered with pieces from the darkness of night. They are Companions of the Fire: they will abide therein forever!"

And those who have committed evil acts and sins will be punished accordingly in proportion to their acts. They will be punished to the extent they deserve, not more, for punishment beyond that which a person deserves is something inequitable (which is far from the Divine Providence).

On the other hand, the reward for good deeds exceeds what one deserves and it is good to emanate from Allah. Therefore, the objective meaning of the word "like", in this verse, is nothing more and nothing less than one's due.

The verse says:

"And those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil;..."

The Qur'anic phrase /wa tar haqahum ðillah/ signifies that such sinners will be humiliated and become debased, for punishment is coupled with degradation.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the dust of ignominy will cover them..."

Then the verse implies that there are no guards and obstacles to hinder the punishment of Allah from them.

It says:

"…No defender will they have from (the wrath of) Allah:…"

The obscurity reflected on their faces would be to such an extent that one would imagine that parts of the darkness of the night had cast their shadow, one after another, over them.

The verse says:

"…as if their faces had been covered with pieces from the darkness of night..."

They shall be coupled with the Hell Fire and will eternally remain within its flames.

The verse concludes saying:

"…They are Companions of the Fire: they will abide therein forever!"

Surah Yunus - Verse 28

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَآؤُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَآؤُهُم مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ

28. "And the Day We shall muster them all, then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us): 'Get you to your place! You and your associates', then We shall set a space between them, and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!'"

This verse also follows the previous discussions on the issue of the origin of existence and the Resurrection and the situation of the polytheists.

At first, the Qur'an warns all to remember the Day when Allah will assemble all His subjects and make them rise from the dead.

The verse says:

"And the Day We shall muster them all..."

Then He will declare unto the polytheists to stay in their place together with their idols so that He may examine their account.

It continues saying:

"…then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us):..."

The Qur'an informs that Allah will separate these two groups from each other; i.e. the worshippers and the worshipped ones, and He will question each individual separately, as it is usual with all courts that they investigate each person separately.

The verse says:

"…'Get you to your place! You and your associates', then We shall set a space between them..."

Allah may ask the idol-worshippers why they worshipped idols along with Allah (s.w.t.), and He will also ask the idols why they permitted such an act to occur, that they allowed the polytheists to worship them.

It is at this time that those things that were worshipped as idols will speak, saying to them that they never worshipped idols. In actual fact, they worshipped the creation of their own imaginations, whims and passions.

The verse says:

"…and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 29

فَكَفَى بِا ً ِ شَهِيداً بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

29. "Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you: we certainly were Unaware of your worship (of us)."

In the previous verse, those things worshipped were saying that the polytheists did not worship them. Here, they declare that they were unaware of their worship.

The verse says:

"Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you: we certainly were Unaware of your worship (of us)."

Consequently, whatever act of worship is performed without the knowledge of the worshipped is null and void.

Incidentally, there are numerous allusions made to the hatred and disavowal of those objects worshipped from the polytheists and their deeds in the Qur'an, i.e., Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 17, and Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 63.

Surah Yunus - Verse 30

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَآ أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوا إِلَي ا ً ِ مَوْلاَهُمُ الْحَقّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

30. "There will every soul realize (the reward of) the deeds it sent aforetime, and they will be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and that which they used to fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them."

The Day of Resurrection is the day on which the worldly test results are received.

The verse says:

"There will every soul realize (the reward of) the deeds it sent aforetime..."

The true Lord is Allah and any other than Him, whatever it may be, is absurd.

The verse says:

"…and they will be brought back to Allah, their true Lord..."

The Resurrection pertains to all men. And the false effects of the worshipped will be wiped out.

The verse continues saying:

"…and that which they used to fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them."

All existence has its origin in Him, and the final destination will be towards Him, too.

Notes

1. The commentary of As-Safi, Fi-Zalal-il-Qur'an and Fakhr-i-Razi
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan
3. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160
4. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 173
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the
7. Majma' ul-Bayan

Section 4: The Divine Gifts

Surah Yunus - Verse 31

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالاَبْصَارَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيّتَ مِنَ الْحَيّ وَمَن يُدَبّرُ الاَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ ا ّ فَقُلْ أَفَلا تَتَّقُونَ

31. "Say: "Who provides you (sustenance) from the sky and from the earth? Or who possesses hearing and sight? And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living? And, who administrates (every) affair? They will soon say: 'Allah'. Then, say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

There have been said same examples of Allah's bringing forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, among which one might cite the case of the human sperm leading to human beings and human seed from human beings, the chicken from the egg and egg from the chicken, plants from seeds, and seeds from plants; socially - righteous children from corrupt parents and corrupt children from worthy parents.

In this verse there are hints regarding the existence of the Lord and His right of being worshipped.

At first, the holy Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) implying to tell those polytheists and idol-worshippers, that who are going astray, who is it that provides nourishment for you in the sky and on the earth?

The verse says:

"Say: "Who provides you (sustenance) from the sky and from the earth?..."

Definitely, the earth provides nourishment for the roots of plants by means of its nutritious substances. It is probably for this reason that the above verse refers to the nourishing substances coming from the sky and later from the earth.

Later, the verse refers to two of man's most important senses, namely seeing and hearing, without which man's acquisition of knowledge would have been impossible. It tells him to ask them who is He Who is the Creator of their eyes and ears and reinforces these two senses of theirs.

The verse says:

"…Or who possesses hearing and sight?..."

Then it brings up the two phenomena of death and life which are the most peculiar ones in the realm of creation.

It says:

"…And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the deed from the living?..."

This is the very issue confronted by scientists and the learned men of the natural sciences as well as biologists, amazing them that how living creatures spring from inanimate objects.

The meaning of the above verse includes material as well as spiritual death and life, for one can see intelligent, honest and faithful men sometimes born to parents who are corrupt and faithless, and vice versa.

Then it adds implying that Who is He who rules and regulates all worldly affairs?

The verse says:

"…And, who administrates (every) affair?..."

In fact, the verse at first talks about the creation of the blessings and then it speaks about the guardian and administrator of these blessings.

After putting forth these three questions, the holy Qur'an immediately declares that they will soon answer in reply that it is Allah.

The verse says:

"…They will soon say: 'Allah'..."

One may infer from the above sentence that even the polytheists, infidels and idol-worshippers during the "Age of Ignorance" considered Allah as the sole Creator, Sustainer, Giver of Life as well as the Administrator and Maintainer of the world of existence.

And at the end of the verse the Prophet (S) has been commanded to ask them: why they did not take the path of virtue. It says:

"…Then, say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 32

فَذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلاَّ الضَّلاَلُ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ

32. "Such then is Allah, your true Lord; and what is apart from the Truth but error? How then are you turned away?"

After explaining some of the symbols of the signs of the magnitude and the prudence of Allah (s.w.t.) in the heavens and the earth, and through this, appealing to the conscience and intellect of the opponents by which they confessed to it, He decisively declares in this verse that this is Allah, your true Creator, not the idols or other beings you have considered as partners with Allah for the sake of worship in front of which you bow down.

The verse says:

"Such then is Allah, your true Lord; and what is apart from the Truth but error?..."

Concluding these remarks, the Qur'an implies: now that you have come to clearly know the truth, do you not realize that you are certain of being misled if you take any path other than the truth?

How can you turn away from worshipping Allah despite your knowledge that there is no one else worthy to be worshipped?

The verse says:

"…How then are you turned away?"

This verse in fact, offers us a clear logical way for knowing the wrong and abandoning it. This way is that: one must first try to know the truth by way of his own conscience and reasoning.

After the cognition of the truth, one must abandon whatever is contrary to the truth or other than the truth, because they are those things that mislead.

Surah Yunus - Verse 33

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَي الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

33. "Thus is the Word of your Lord proved true against those who did wrong, that they will not believe."

Breaking the laws of Allah and committing sins provide the grounds for infidelity and in this way man makes Allah's wrath upon himself inevitable.

The verse says:

"Thus is the Word of your Lord proved true against those who did wrong..."

This is the direct result of their continuous indecency which may darken their hearts and pollute their spirits to the extent that they cannot see the enlightening state of the truth, and thus they go astray.

The verse continues saying:

"…that they will not believe."

Surah Yunus - Verse 34

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَآئِكُم مَن يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ قُلِ ا ۖ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَاَنَّي تُؤْفَكُونَ

34. "Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one (that) can originate creation, then bring it back again?' Say: '(Only) Allah originates creation, then brings it back again; then how are you turned away (from the Truth)?'"

The Qur'an asks whether those whom you consider as Allah's partners are able to create and then annihilate that creation and recreate it again in the same way that Allah is able to do. The polytheists know that creation is solely in Allah's Power. Then, why is it that they again weave false stories and lie?

The verse declares:

"Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one (that) can originate creation, then bring it back again?' Say: '(Only) Allah originates creation, then brings it back again; then how are you turned away (from the Truth)?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 35

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَائِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ ا ۖ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

35. "Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that leads towards the Truth? Say: '(Only) Allah leads unto the Truth. Is then He Who leads unto the Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who does not go aright (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How do you judge?'"

The Qur'an asks once again implying that who provides the living with life and leads them while managing their material and spiritual lives, it self Is He your sole Allah, or are the idols?

The verse says:

"Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that leads towards The Truth?..."

Then, the Qur'an, answers that it is the Creator Who guides us and has bestowed on us intellect, ears and eyes, providing the living with instincts which help them manage their affairs in their own interests.

Thus, despite all this: Is it appropriate for us to submit ourselves to idols which cannot lead us? How is it that the worshippers of idols submit and surrender to such things which are neither able to guide anyone nor have they the potentiality of being led?

The verse continues saying:

"…Say: '(Only) Allah leads unto The Truth. Is then He Who leads unto the Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who does not go aright (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How do you judge?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 36

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلاَّ ظَنّاً إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئاً إِنَّ ا ّ َ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

36. "And most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly, conjecture can be of no avail against the Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of what they do."

Thus the reason for their being misled and misguided is that they follow their own conjectures and their own corrupt speculations. Conjectures will never lead us to the Truth and to Reality. Following conjectures only results in the doing of indecencies.

The verse says:

"And most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly, conjecture can be of no avail against The Truth..."

What is of real value is "knowledge". Sound conjecture and confidence, if based on proper solid grounds is valuable, i.e. those conjectures deducted from the apparent words of the holy verses (and quotations) derived from the Allah's commandments which are practiced by Islamic jurisprudents (Fuqaha') in even the minute details of problems.

The verse says:

"…Verily Allah is well aware of what they do."

However, conjectures in the realm of ideas, if they are rooted in pursuing the vain way of one's ancestors or fanaticism based on ignorance are groundless, and hence, are of no avail.

Surah Yunus - Verse 37

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانُ أَن يُفْتَرَي مِن دُونِ ا ّ ِ وَلَكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِن رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

37. "And this Qur'an is not such as to be produced by other than Allah; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a (clear) explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds."

The comprehensive nature of the Qur'an and its contents are such that any kind of unsound allegation ascribed to it and relating it to other than Allah (s.w.t.) is unreasonable.

The holy verse says:

"And this Qur'an is not such as to be produced by other than Allah; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it..."

All heavenly Books confirm each other; their differences lie only in the conciseness and detail of their contents.

The verse continues saying:

"…and a (clear) explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds."

Surah Yunus - Verse 38

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

38. "Or they say, 'He has forged it.' Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if you are truthful!'"

The Qur'an has reiterated on several occasions that the words of Allah (the Qur'an) are miracles because of the inability of man and jinn to present something similar, and it has presented this challenge to both of them.

Among the verses that testify to this fact, one may cite verse 13 of the Surah Hud. Despite the fact that Islam has had millions of opponents throughout history and still has such enemies, and they have striven to weaken the Qur'an and defeat Islam, carrying out intensive activities in the process, yet this confident challenge of the Qur'an has been left unanswered and will continue to be so until the Day of Resurrection.

Since we are dealing with setting the dimensions and the definition of the Qur'an, we will now point out some aspects of this divine miracle.

1. It distills extensive and profound wisdom into concise words. For instance, regarding the relationship of man and woman, it comments:

"They (your wives) are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them."[1]

To explain the fragility and vulnerability of the non-divine powers, it likens them to a spider's web or declares that they are unable to create even a gnat.

It says:

"…verily those whom you call upon besides Allah cannot create a gnat..."[2]

2. Its profundity and the sweetness of words do not render it monotonous even if it may be read over and again for more than thousand times; on the contrary, each time it is studied it presents new messages.

3. Its harmony of words is especially outstanding and if a Qur'anic verse is placed among other Arabic texts or passages it can be easily distinguished from them.

4. The comprehensive nature of the Qur'an: It includes reasoning and demonstration to citing examples from worldly affairs to the life in hereafter, and also the facts concerning family problems, legal, political, military, ethical, historical teachings etc.

5. Its realism: Its contents are not based upon conjecture; even its stories are documented and real.

6. The universal and all-embracing nature of the Qur'an: All people will benefit from it at all levels and in all places regardless of whenever or wherever they are; it is not a Book particular to a special time, place, or people.

7. The eternal effect of the Qur'an: The older the age of humanity and the more the sciences progress the more of its secrets are discovered.

8. Its ever-increasing and its everlasting development: Despite having an increasing number of enemies and the growing number of attacks launched against it during its history, it has not only survived but also it has secured the highest station.

9. It is an ever-existing miracle by itself. A miracle that is available to all and is composed of the kind of words that put it at everyone's disposal.

10. It is both a miracle and a Book of commandments and legal codes.

11. It is a token from an illiterate man from a region deprived of literacy.

12. Nothing has been added to it or deducted from it and it has been kept intact from distortion. The Qur'an puts forth the simplest challenge, of calling people to present a Surah like it, to prove its being miraculous.

It declares:

"Or they say, 'He has forged it.' Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it..."

The Qur'an is a miracle not only in its entirety but also every one of its suras proves the same. This challenge of the Qur'an is not confined to a specific time and place. It will stand unanswered all over the globe until the end of the life of mankind and the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'an's challenge is not only issued to the common people, on the contrary, it is issued to all of mankind, including: jurisconsults, men of letters, and geniuses.

It continues saying:

"…and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if you are truthful!'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 39

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ

39. "Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it, which whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Even thus did belie those before them, see then what was the end of the unjust ones."

The opponents of the prophets have often had two reasons for their dissidence throughout history, one of which was due to their ignorance and the other to their lack of knowledge and intellectual appreciation of the glorious Qur'an as well as the other heavenly Books.

It says:

"Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it, which whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Even thus did belie those before them..."

They rejected the Qur'an before they knew the truth about it and had not grasped command of its interpretation and meaning; because it was fundamentally against their ancestral religion. Hence, as to the eventual fate of the oppressors, the verse continues saying:

"…see then what was the end of the unjust ones."

Surah Yunus - Verse 40

وَمِنْهُم مَّن يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَن لا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

40. "And some of them believe in it and some of them do not believe in it; and your Lord knows best the mischief makers."

A leader must not expect everyone to believe in his way. He must lead them on to the Right Path and if they do not follow, he can only let them wait for the divine punishment.

The verse says:

"And some of them believe in it and some of them do not believe in it; and your Lord knows best the mischief makers."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 187
2. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 73

Section 5: Every People Had an Apostle from Allah

Surah Yunus - Verse 41

وَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُل لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنتُم بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّآ أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَاْ بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

41. "And if they belie you, say: 'For me is my work and for you is your work. You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do'."

A leader must prepare himself for a party of the people to oppose him, and he must not feel defeated when he is confronted the rejecters because he will benefit from the guidance he provides them under every circumstance. Opponents also will meet their fate, resulting from their rejection and obstinacy. The winner in this scene will be the one who provides guidance.

The verse says:

"And if they belie you, say: 'For me is my work and for you is your work..."

Incidentally, Islam is the religion of reason and ethics; it is not a religion of reconciliation with the idolaters. Were they not to answer the call of Allah (s.w.t.), you should express your abhorrence towards their ideas and behaviour.

The verse continues saying:

"…You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 42

وَمِنْهُم مَن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يَعْقِلُونَ

42. "And (when you recite the Qur'an) some of them (pretend to) listen to you, but can you make the deaf to hear, even though they are without understanding?"

The Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) and implies that when you are reading the Qur'an and teaching the Divine commandments, there are some people who listen to you but do not accept what you have to say and do not reflect upon them.

And there are some people who look toward you and take your guidance, contemplating and paying more attention to the symbols of your appointment to prophecy, yet they do not testify them.

The verse says:

"And (when you recite the Qur'an) some of them (pretend to) listen to you..."

Then the verse implies whether he is able to make himself be heard when he as faced with those who are deaf, especially, when in addition to being deaf reason does not prevail. For a deaf wise man may sometimes pay attention to reasoning.

The verse continues saying:

"…but can you make the deaf to hear, even though they are without understanding?"

Surah Yunus - Verse 43

وَمِنْهُم مَن يَنظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنتَ تَهْدِي الْعُميَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يُبْصِرُونَ

43. "And some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind even though they will not see (inwardly)?"

Not all kinds of observation always take place with insight and not every observer is attracted by the truth. Even the prophets could not affect those who were blind-hearted. That is why the Qur'an inquires whether he wish to be able to guide a blind man who is not only blind but also is lacking in insight; in addition to his blindness.

The verse says:

"And some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind even though they will not see (inwardly)?"

The objective of this question is that such people lack wisdom and insight like the deaf and the blind from the point of view of their obstinacy in accepting the truth and adhering to it.

Surah Yunus - Verse 44

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئاً وَلَـكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

44. "Verily Allah does not any injustice to people but people to their own selves do injustice."

Allah has sent the best school, the best Book and the best leader for the people. If they do not accept them, they in fact inflict oppression upon themselves. That is, Allah does not hinder anyone from benefiting from the Qur'an and other divine proofs.

However, it is the people themselves who allow themselves to be oppressed because of abandoning their reason, and therefore, they make themselves deserving for retribution.

The verse says:

"Verily Allah does not any injustice to people but people to their own selves do injustice."

Surah Yunus - Verse 45

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلاَّ سَاعَةً مِنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

45. "And on the Day He will muster them, as if they had tarried but an hour of the day, they will recognize each other. Those will verily have perished who denied the meeting with Allah and were not guided a right."

The greatness of the Day of Judgment is such that ones entire life prior to it will seem as if it lasted only a short time.

The Qur'an commands us to remember the Day when Allah will make them all rise from the dead and assemble them and they will have a feeling that their entire lives in this world had not exceeded more than one single day, so much that they would get to see and to know one another.

The verse in this regard says:

"And on the Day He will muster them, as if they had tarried but an hour of the day, they will recognize each other..."

Therefore, the real losers are those people whose negation of the Resurrection deprives them from the eternal benefits of the life of Hereafter,

and are content with worldly pleasures. On the contrary, the believers enjoy both worldly divine blessings and a share in the Hereafter as well.

The verse continues saying:

"…Those will verily have perished who denied the meeting with Allah and were not guided a right."

Surah Yunus - Verse 46

وإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ ا ّ ُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَي مَا يَفْعَلُونَ

46. "Whether We show you (realized in your lifetime) some part of what We promise them, or We take your soul, to Us is their return. Then Allah is witness to (all) what they do."

The punishment of some of the infidels took place during the Badr, Hunayn, Ahzab and the conquest of Mecca. After the death of the Prophet (S), Allah's Power is extended to apply punishment upon those who deserve it.

Therefore, Allah takes note of the acts of the disbelievers and punishes them, whether at the present time or at other times. Hence, Muslims need not despair because of the delay in the Divine Judgment concerning these people.

The verse says:

"Whether We show you (realized in your lifetime) some part of what We promise them, or We take your soul..."

At any rate, the return of all beings terminates in Him and nobody is able to flee the divine court of justice.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…to Us is their return. Then Allah is witness to (all) what they do."

Surah Yunus - Verse 47

وَلِكُلّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَآءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِي بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

47. "And for every people there is a Messenger. Then when their Messenger comes, (on the Day of Judgment), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

That is, for every group which follows a prescribed Path and has a common religion, like the nation (ummah) of Muhammad (S), the nation of Moses (as) and that of Jesus (as), there is a messenger and a prophet, whom Allah (s.w.t.) has appointed for them and has commissioned them to convey His message.

And when their prophet came and successfully conveyed His message, some denied him and others accepted him, and those who denied and refuted Him met their destruction and those who were believers were saved.

The verse says:

"And for every people there is a Messenger. Then when their Messenger comes, (on the Day of Judgment), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

Surah Yunus - Verse 48

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَي هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

48. "They say: 'When will this promise be, if you are truthful?'"

The idolaters, ridiculing the prophets (as), used to ask them that if they were right, when the time would come for Allah's punishment. This humiliating way of asking questions was a sort of reinforcement for those individuals who might be affected by them. However, in order to realize that an action will occur, should one necessarily know its timing.

The verse says:

"They say: 'When will this promise be, if you are truthful?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 49

قُل لاَ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ً ّاً وَلا نَفْعاً إِلاَّ مَا شَآءَ ا ّ ُ لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَلاَ يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلايَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

49. "Say: 'I do not possess any harm or profit for myself except as Allah wills. To every people is a term appointed. When their term comes, then they shall neither put (it) off an hour, nor hasten (it).'"

Facing this question, Allah orders His Prophet to provide them with an answer in several ways. The first step is that he should tell them that the timing for such a thing is not at his disposal. He is not the author or proprietor of any profit or loss for himself (much less for them) except those ordained or predetermined by Him.

The verse says:

"Say: 'I do not possess any harm or profit for myself except as Allah wills..."

Muhammad (S) should announce that he is His sole and only Messenger and Prophet. It is He who fixes the timing of the punishment which is within His power.

The above sentence alludes to the unity of actions which pre-supposes that all and every thing in this world eventually returns to Him, and when deviators are being punished with His justice, it is He Who sets the course of action.

Obviously, this does not contradict the stipulation that Allah has bestowed upon us powers and abilities by which we are entitled to partly gain or lose and to be able to make decisions regarding our own destiny.

Then, the Qur'an, referring to another issue, declares that each community and every tribe has a predetermined time of death and a point of its termination, which, when it comes, there will be no delay or advancement in its occurrence.

The verse continues saying:

"…To every people is a term appointed. When their term comes, then they shall neither put (it) off an hour, nor hasten (it).'"

In fact, the Qur'an warns the polytheists not to hasten and jump unduly to conclusions. When the timing of their death comes no delays or advances will happen.

Surah Yunus - Verse 50

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ بَيَاتاً أَوْ نَهَاراً مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

50. "Say: 'Have you considered? If His punishment comes upon you by night or by day, what portion of it will the sinners wish to hasten?'"

The Qur'an raises the third answer in this verse. It orders the Prophet (S) to tell the infidels that it is not improbable for Allah's punishment to come to them during the day-time or at night. Then, are they in a position to repel such a sudden punishment from themselves?

The verse says:

"Say: 'Have you considered? If His punishment comes upon you by night or by day, what portion of it will the sinners wish to hasten?'"

In this case, under what pretexts do the culprits and sinners make haste.

Upon this meaning, Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 71 says:

"And they say: 'when will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 51

أَثُمَّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ ءَامَنتُم بِهِ ءَآلآنَ وَقَدْ كُنتُم بِهِ تَستَعْجِلُونَ

51. "Is it when it (the punishment) comes to pass, you will believe in it? Ah! Now? And you wanted (aforetime) to hasten it on?"

The Qur'an provides the fourth answer for them in this noble verse, asking them whether they intend to believe in Him once the punishment emerges. (Faith established under such circumstances is fruitless).

They would be told implying that: 'Now, that the punishment has come, you have faith and supplicate and you repent while before this you were ridiculing and were hastily asking for the punishment.'

The verse says:

"Is it when it (the punishment) comes to pass, you will believe in it? Ah! Now? And you wanted (aforetime) to hasten it on?"

Surah Yunus - Verse 52

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

52. "Then it will be said to those who were unjust: 'Taste you the enduring punishment! Are you requited aught save what you used to earn?'"

Those who have oppressed themselves will be told on the Day of Resurrection that they should suffer eternal punishment in the Hereafter following their sufferings afflictions in the world.

The verse declares:

"Then it will be said to those who were unjust: 'Taste you the enduring punishment! Are you requited aught save what you used to earn?'"

It signifies that they have been called to accept the truth and they have been guided, after firm proofs were offered to them, removing all their pretexts and excuses.

They will be told that: they kept on insisting upon their infidelity and denial, and not abandoning their misleading course. Now, it is time for they to receive punishment for their acts.

The reason why the term "taste" has been employed in connection with suffering punishment is that this sense has a stronger effect on man than the other senses.

Surah Yunus - Verse 53

وَيَسْتَنْبِئُونَكَ أَحَقٌّ هُوَ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

53. "And they ask you to inform them saying: 'Is that true?' Say: 'You! by my Lord! Verily it is the truth; and you cannot frustrate (Him)'."

The words in the foregoing holy verses were about the punishment and suffering of the wrongdoers both in this world and in the world hereafter. This verse also follows that same topic.

At first, the Qur'an implies that the wrongdoers and the idolaters regard the Prophet (S) with astonishment as to whether the promise of the divine punishment in this world and the Hereafter is true.

The verse says:

"And they ask you to inform them saying: 'Is that true?'…"

Allah commands His Prophet (S) to answer them emphatically saying that his answer is positive and he swears by his Lord that this is a reality and there is no doubt about it.

And if they think, they can escape the divine punishment, they have committed a grave mistake, for they will never be able (to prevent it) and make Him unable to act.

The verse continues saying:

"…Say: 'You! by my Lord! Verily it is the truth; and you cannot frustrate (Him)'."

Section 6: The Divine Mercy Precedes the Wrath

Surah Yunus - Verse 54

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الأَرْضِ لافْتَدَتْ بِهِ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

54. "And if every soul that has done injustice had all that is on earth, he would assuredly give it in ransom, and they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty. But the judgment between them will be with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

The proper magnitude of this punishment is particularly emphasized in this verse concerning the Day of Judgment, where it implies that the divine punishment is so awe-inspiring and horrible that if each of the oppressors owned the entire wealth of the world, he would have paid all of it so as to be relieved from the harsh punishment awaiting him.

The verse says:

"And if every soul that has done injustice had all that is on earth, he would assuredly give it in ransom..."

In fact they are ready to offer the greatest bribes imaginable in order to relieve themselves from the divine chastisement and to diminish the slightest possible portion of His punishment. However, it will never be accepted from them.

Some of these Divine punishments are particularly spiritual in nature; that is, when they behold the punishment, they would declare their regret[1].

The verse continues saying:

"…and they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty..."

Then the Qur'an stresses that despite everything, justice will prevail and will be administered fairly among them and no oppression will be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

"…But the judgment between them will be with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

Surah Yunus - Verse 55

أَلاَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ والأَرْضِ أَلاَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

55. "Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Behold! Verily, Allah's promise is true, but most of them do not know."

Then for the reason that people may consider these Divine promises and threats seriously and know that Allah is not unable to do such things, the Qur'an says that whatsoever is in the heavens and on the earth are His, His Lordship and His realm of administration encompasses the world of existence in its entirety and no one can be excluded from His zone of jurisdiction.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth..."

And again, beware that Allah's promise (concerning punishment of the wrongdoers) is just, though many people (whose unconscious ignorance has darkened their souls) do not know this fact.

The verse continues saying:

"…Behold! Verily, Allah's promise is true, but most of them do not know."

Surah Yunus - Verse 56

هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

56. "He (it is Who) gives life and causes to die, and to Him you shall be returned."

This verse also lays again an emphasis upon the problematic issue of life. It indicates that it is Allah Who enlivens and makes one die.

Therefore, He is able to cause death unto the servants as well as having the power to enliven them on the Day of Resurrection for the Court of Judgment.

The verse says:

"He (it is Who) gives life and causes to die..."

And ultimately, all of you will return to Him in order to receive the reward of all your deeds there.

The verse continues saying:

"…and to Him you shall be returned."

And you will receive the rewards for all the deeds you have done then and there.

Surah Yunus - Verse 57

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُم مَوْعِظَةٌ مِن رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

57. "O mankind! There hath come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in your hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers."

The Arabic term /mau'izah/ (preaching) means to restrain intermingled with warning and awakening. The Arabic phrase /šifa'-is-Sudur/ refers to the purification of spirit and heart from spiritual evils. The spiritual defects are more grievous than the diseases of the body. The Qur'an's advantage lies in this very healing the spiritual diseases.

The verse says:

"O mankind! There hath come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in your hearts..."

The verse seems to allude to the four kinds of stages that shape education and development, that is:

1. The preaching stage against visible acts.
2. The purification stage for purging the soul from ethical and social evils.
3. The self-guiding stage towards those objectives which signify worldly happiness and the happiness and prosperity in the Hereafter.

4. The stage of receiving divine blessings which is forgiveness and Paradise. In the meantime, the Qur'an is wholly preaching on a general level, however, only those groups that seek will be covered by the divine blessings.

The verse says:

"…and a guidance and a mercy for the believers."

Finally, the cure for all pains must be sought after in the school of the Qur'an; not from the schools of the East and West.

"…and a healing for what is in your hearts..."

This is the reason why, Allah's Prophet (S) in a tradition states:

"When afflictions, like a dark and terrible night, invade you, seek refuge in the Qur'an." It is simultaneously full of preaching as well as being a remedy, a source of illumination and blessing all at the same time."

Surah Yunus - Verse 58

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

58. "Say: 'In the grace of Allah, and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than that which they hoard'."

What is apparently revealed in this verse, if we consider the previous verse about the Qur'an as a source of healing and preaching, is the appeal to the Qur'an which is the purpose of Allah's grace and mercy. As Imam Ali (as) says:

"On the Day of Resurrection, a voice will be heard that every farmer will be busy with some kind of pest except those who had sowed in the field of the Qur'an. Thus, sow your seeds in the field of the Qur'an."[2]

The Prophet (S) said:

"He who has been honoured by Allah to be introduced to the blessings of Islam and the understanding of the Qur'an, but feels miserable is miserable indeed, and will be labeled so until the Day of Resurrection", then he recited this verse.[3]

This is meant to say that once a person benefits from the blessings of Islam and the Qur'an, he is no longer poor and he enjoys the greatest wealth. Likewise, it has been narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Refer to the Qur'an so that your life becomes enriched like the lives of happy people and your death becomes similar to those of the martyrs and you are saved from the terror on the Day of Resurrection.

For the Qur'an, is surely the word of the Compassionate (Allah) which guards against Satan, and favourably balances one's acts during the Day of Judgment"[4]

Incidentally, 'grace' and 'mercy' mentioned in the Qur'an have been interpreted as prophethood and Imamate.[5] Also the former has sometimes been interpreted as the general divine blessings and the latter has been interpreted as His specific blessings.

According to an Islamic tradition, divine grace has been pointed out as Islam and His mercy is the Qur'an. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Divine grace consists of /salawat/ and His mercy is Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as)."[6]

The verse says:

"Say: 'In the grace of Allah, and in His mercy..."

Finally, we must be happy for all the divine blessings, especially the fact that He has blessed us with prophethood of Muhammad (S) and Imamate of the Immaculate Imams (as) and we must know that spiritual blessings are superior to all the material ones.

The verse continues saying:

"…in that let them rejoice, it is better than that which they hoard'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 59

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُم مَآ أَنزَلَ ا ّ ُ لَكُم مِن رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَاماً وَحَلاَلاً قُلْ ءَآ ّ ُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَي ا ّ ِ تَفْتَرُونَ

59. "Say: 'Have you considered what (things) Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you made some of it unlawful, and (some of it) lawful?' Say: 'Has Allah permitted you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?'"

There have been mentioned in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 103 some examples of those unreasonable prohibitions which the polytheists invented. They used to lay aside part of their crops for their idols and idol-temples, thus making it forbidden for them.

They also used to forbid whatever was in the wombs of animals for women while making them lawful for the use of men. The Qur'an completely rejects all these superstitions.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Have you considered what (things) Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you made some of it unlawful, and (some of it) lawful?' Say: 'Has Allah permitted you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?'"

The main general principle upon the edible things is that they are lawful to be eaten, except those whose being unlawful is proved by religion.

We should also know that divine legislation is particular to Allah, the legislator, and no one is right to precede the lawgiver. Similar to the case no divine unlawful thing can be changed into a lawful one, the lawful things cannot be counted unlawful either.

However, to legislate an innovative law is a crime, and to forge it against Allah is another crime.

Surah Yunus - Verse 60

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي ا ّ ِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ ا ّ َ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَي النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

60. "And what imagine those who forge lies against Allah, on the Day of Resurrection? Verily Allah is the Lord of bounty to mankind, but most of them are not thankful."

In the previous verse, the act of certain prohibitions done by some people was criticized. In this verse we encounter Allah's superiority and His uncountable Divine favors that deserve our gratitude, and at the same time,

we are also criticized in all those cases where thanksgiving is lacking and false accusations are directed towards Allah.

The verse says:

"And what imagine those who forge lies against Allah, on the Day of Resurrection? Verily Allah is the Lord of bounty to mankind..."

To ascribe false accusations towards Allah (s.w.t.) is a sin deserving of punishment. One must not make light the chance and respite that Allah has provided man in this world; neither must we forget and be oblivious to the Court of Justice which will be established on the Day of Judgment.

Prohibition of Divine blessings is a repulsive act and leads one to deprivation in this world and brings shame and devastating consequences on the Day of Resurrection.

Almighty Allah has done the utmost in being forgiving and kind towards man, though most people turn a blind eye to all those favors. They rarely engage in thanksgiving, thus paving the way for the utter denial and refutation of the fact that it is He who has provided all those favors.

The verse says:

"…but most of them are not thankful."

Notes

1. Some of the commentators have translated the Qur'anic word /'asarru/, mentioned in the verse under discussion, by its first lexical meaning which is: 'To conceal', while referring to the explanations of the Arabic Dictionary: Mufradat by Raqib, and also Lisan-ul-'Arab, it is realized that this word has opposite meanings: 'to conceal' as well as 'to express, declare and appear'. Keeping the whole verses of the Qur'an in mind, this fact is clear that on the Day of Hereafter everything is manifest and no one will be able to conceal a thing from others, (here, their regret), or to behave so that he can escape from the reality. That is why the latter meaning has been chosen for the word /'asarru/ in this verse.
2. Nahjul-Balaghah, Sermon 17.
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the
4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 89, p. 19
5. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 2, p. 187
6. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 2, p. 407

Section 7: No Fear or Grief for the Friends of Allah

Surah Yunus - Verse 61

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُواْ مِنْهُ مِن قُرْءَانٍ وَلا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلاَّ كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوداً إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَن رَبِّكَ مِن مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلآ أَصْغَرَ مِن ذَلِكَ وَلآ أَكْبَرَ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

61. "And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite any part from the Qur'an, and nor any deed you (mankind) may be doing, but We are Witnesses over you when you enter into it. Nor is there hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in the heaven, not anything lesser than that or greater but are (recorded) in a Clear Book."

The "Clear Book" is the 'Preserved Tablet' or Allah's Comprehensive Knowledge which covers the entire cosmos including not only the actions of human beings but also the smallest details of everything in the heavens and the earth.

With the utmost subtlety and eloquence, this verse announces that Allah is not only fully aware of the minutest facts in the heavens and the earth but He is also fully aware of the minutest details of the actions of his subjects.

Whatever the mood or state of meditation or an important affair you might be in, whatever part of the Qur'an you might be engaged in reciting, and whatever action you begin, you can do nothing which cannot be seen or noticed by Allah when you start it.

The verse says:

"And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite any part from the Qur'an, and nor any deed you (mankind) may be doing, but We are Witnesses over you when you enter into it..."

Then more emphatically, it continues by saying that not slightest thing in the heavens and on earth, even that of an insignificant particle or greater than it can be hidden from Allah. All of these are recorded and registered in the Preserved Tablet and in the Open Book of Allah.

It continues saying:

"…Nor is there hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in the heaven, not anything lesser than that or greater but are (recorded) in a Clear Book."

All Muslims are taught a great lesson by this verse, which can place them on the right track, leading them toward the Truth and preventing them from going astray.

It calls our attention to the fact that not only does the Almighty comprehend our every thought, word and deed, but His angels are also carefully watching every step we take, every word we utter, every thought we entertain in our heads, wherever we cast our eyes, and in whatever state we are in.

It is not without proper grounds that Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

"The Prophet of Islam (S) whenever reading this verse, used to weep greatly".

If the Prophet of Islam (S), with all his sincerity and gratitude, with all the services he had rendered human beings, and with all his unparalleled worship of the Creator could be so concerned about his imperfections before Allah, how then, can we determine our state?

Surah Yunus - Verses 62 - 64

أَلآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ ا ّ ِ لاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَي فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الاَخِرَةِ لا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ ا ّ ِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

62. "Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve;"

63. "Those who believe and constantly keep from evil."

64. "For them are Glad Tidings in this world's life and in the Hereafter. There is no change in the Words of Allah. That is the great success."

In the previous verses, some of the characteristics of the polytheists and non-believers were explained, from now on, the characteristics of the true believers and those who struggle and strive, who constantly guard against evil and who are the exact opposite of the first group will be described.

The verse attracts the attentions implying that there is no fear among the men of Allah and they will have no sorrows.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve;"

Here sorrows and fears are those that relate to worldly matters for Allah's worshippers are imbued with the owe of Him. This kind of fear is concerned with one's failure to carry out ones duties and responsibilities and that kind of sorrow which one feels towards his lack of achievements during the course of his life.

Here fear and sorrow have spiritual connotations, which help in man's perfection and development. This is quite contrary to the fear and sorrow that have a material basis and is the source of degradation and deviations.

The friends of Allah are those whose position requires no boundaries between them and their Lord and they are not distant from Him. Their hearts are open and unveiled and they see Him with all their hearts through the light of knowledge, faith, and good deeds which leaves them with perfect sincerity.

It is because of such an acquaintance with Allah that, in their views, anything else other than Him is insignificant, of little value, and ephemeral.

The verse says:

"Those who believe and constantly keep from evil."

They are those who have become believers, continuously strive after virtue and make continence their habit.

For them there is good news both in this world and in the Hereafter, because there are no changes in the Divine words and promises, for Allah always fulfils the promises He has made to His friends. This is a great victory and happiness for the person concerned.

The verse says:

"For them are Glad Tidings in this world's life and in the Hereafter. There is no change in the Words of Allah. That is the great success."

Surah Yunus - Verse 65

وَلا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ ِ جَمِيعاً هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

65. "And let not their speech grieve you. Verily the glory is wholly Allah's; He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

As a good end awaits those who observe continence, the attainment of this goal requires one to pass through some great difficulties. Among them is that one can cite the struggle which the faithful experience within their hearts in the process of overthrowing and revising their aspirations.

This can tend to make them feel hopeless, giving them the impression that the oppressors can overcome them. But this is not so, Allah, the Exalted in Majesty informs us that we must not let the oppressors make us sorrowful. The Majesty is entirely His.

It is He Who is All-Hearing and Omniscient. This good news only applies to those whose existence embodies the characteristics of the friends of Allah.

The verse says:

"And let not their speech grieve you. Verily the glory is wholly Allah's; He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In the Islamic texts one reads that:

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as) once was asked about the meaning of Allah's words when He says: "Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve", and who the friends of Allah were.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen answered:

"The friends of Allah are those who are sincere in their worship, they are cognizant of the depth of those matters that are of the world, whereas others attach importance to the outward appearance of the world. These believe in the idea of the permanent character of the world while the others do not believe in its lack of permanence..."[1]

It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that it is written in Imam Sajjad's (as), book concerning the friends of Allah that they are those who accomplish their religious obligations, and act according to the practice of Allah's Messenger (S).

They are those who abstain from all that is forbidden, and have let the transient world go by, while they are only interested in what is dear to Allah. They make a living in accordance with the laws which consider these ways of earning a livelihood lawful.

They abhor arrogance, shun the hoarding of wealth and pay all the obligatory religious dues. Allah has blessed them all for what they earn, and He has also fixed a great reward for what they have saved in advance for their life in Hereafter.

Surah Yunus - Verse 66

أَلا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاء إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَخْرُصُونَ

66. "Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, and they do not follow any associates, who call on others besides Allah, they do not follow (anything) but conjectures, and they only lie."

Be aware that whosoever is in the heavens and on the earth belongs to Allah and is under His domination. The use of word /man/, mentioned in this holy verse (and we translated it as whoever), signifies wise and intelligent men.

That is, those who have been provided with intelligence and live in the heavens and on the earth are all under Allah's power and control. When the rule is that all intelligent people, as individuals among His creation, must belong to Him, it follows that other existing beings should also follow the rule and they also belong to Allah.

The fact that He specializes "the intelligent" as a separate category signifies their elevation and magnification in that position.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth..."

Those who follow idols are those who consider them as partners with Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they do not follow any associates, who call on others besides Allah..."

Those who select partners for Allah, follow nothing but their own conjectures simply following their forefathers in this case or it is because of mistake they have made thinking that they approach Allah therewith. If they think they can elevate themselves and approach Allah in this way, they do nothing but lie.

The verse says:

"…they do not follow (anything) but conjectures, and they only lie."

Surah Yunus - Verse 67

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِراً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

67. "He it is Who appointed for you the night that you rest in it, and the day giving light. Verily there are signs in it for people who hearken."

After rejecting all the partners of the polytheists, in calling the polytheists' attention to His magnitude and His blessings, the Qur'an implies that Allah made the night dark and the day illuminated so that they may find silence and comfort during the night and make their living and earn their sustenance during the day.

The verse says:

"He it is Who appointed for you the night that you rest in it, and the day giving light..."

Truly, these are clear proofs and reasons attesting to the Unity of Allah, the Glorified, for no one else is able to do all this.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily there are signs in it for people who hearken."

Surah Yunus - Verse 68

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَداً سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ إِنْ عِندَكُم مِن سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَآ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ مَا لا تَعْلَمُونَ

68. "They say, 'Allah has begotten a son!' Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient! His is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth! No warrant have you for this! Do you say about Allah what you do not know?'"

'To beget a son' signifies 'to be the father of someone, which differs from giving birth and having children. The polytheists considered the angels as the daughters of Allah, and the Jews took "Ezra" as an offspring of Allah, while the Christians called Jesus the Son of Allah.

Allah is neither afraid of being lonely so as to want to adopt an offspring, nor does He need any heir to adopt a son. He also does not need any help so that He chooses an assistant, nor does He need to ensure the survival of His species, so He does not need a son. The verse says:

"They say, 'Allah has begotten a son!' Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient!..."

This phrase, means that Allah is absolutely self sufficient and He is absolutely far from what they say, because whatever is in the heavens and on the earth are His and fall under His command.

The verse says:

"…His is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth!..."

Thus He absolutely does not need to have a son, for begetting offspring is to relieve oneself from one's lack of ability and weakness or to enrich oneself and get rid of poverty, but Allah is free from all this. If it is impossible for Him to have a real son, it is also impossible for Him to adopt a stepson and there are no reasons to support the authenticity of this claim.

It says:

"…No warrant have you for this! Do you say about Allah what you do not know?'"

If one wants to know about Allah, these words are to be regarded as blame, a censure and a threat from Allah, the Magnificent, to those who have made these unsanctioned and atrocious claims.

Surah Yunus - Verses 69 - 70

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لا يُفْلِحُونَ

مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

69. "Say: 'Verily those who forge a lie against Allah will not prosper.'"

70. "(They have) a little enjoyment in this world, then to Us will be their return, then shall We make them taste the severe penalty because they used to disbelieve."

Here the Holy Qur'an mentions the ultimate disastrous end for all those who ascribe belies and false concepts to Allah. He addresses His Prophet (S)

that he should tell those who make false ascriptions to Him and those who make them only lie that they will not be saved.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Verily those who forge a lie against Allah will not prosper.'"

They might be able to attain worldly wealth through lies and false claims for a few days, but it is only a passing phenomenon in this world.[2] They will eventually return to Allah and He will punish them vigorously for their disbelief and their associating partners with Him.

The verse says:

"(They have) a little enjoyment in this world, then to Us will be their return, then shall We make them taste the severe penalty because they used to disbelieve."

Notes

1. The of Al-Mizan, the explanation upon the verse
2. The Arabic words /mata'/ and /mut'ah/ are employed for short-term use. As man's use of the world and its blessings are short-lived, the Qur'an then applies the word /mata'/cornering worldly affairs.

Section 8: The Ministries of Noah and Moses Referred to

Surah Yunus - Verse 71

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَاقَوْمِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُم مَقَامِي وَتَذْكِيرِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلا تُنظِرُونِ

71. "And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people: 'O my people! if my stay (with you) and my reminding you of the Signs of Allah is grievous to you, yet I have put my trust in Allah, so resolve on your affair, with your partners, so that your affair be not dubious to you. Then make decision on me, and give me no respite.'"

Allah the Exalted had commissioned His prophet that he should relate the news of the people of Noah to them, because this verse indicates that Noah (as) used to receive support and encouragement from Divine sources, which made him not fear the threats and strategies of the enemy.

Noah announces if listening to his useful instructions and advice with demonstrations and reasoning concerning the authenticity of Monotheism, Justice, prophethood and Resurrection are difficult and unbearable for them, and thus they have decided to kill him or they intend to cast him out, he does put all his hopes and trust in Allah, in which case, he will leave his fate in His will, with the conviction that He will save him from their wickedness and vice.

The verse says:

"And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people: 'O my people! if my stay (with you) and my reminding you of the Signs of Allah is grievous to you, yet I have put my trust in Allah..."

Hadrat Noah then threw out a powerful challenge saying that they should collect their thoughts and invite their idols to participate in their decision-making so that nothing should be left hidden from them, there should be no ambiguity remaining in their plans, they should make the appropriate decisions and come up with the best stratagem concerning him.

The verse continues saying:

"…so resolve on your affair, with your partners, so that your affair be not dubious to you..."

Noah (as) added telling them if they were able, they should go ahead and put an end to his life, and not spare him a single moment. Here is his statement:

"…Then make decision on me, and give me no respite.'"

It has been narrated that before noon on the Day of Ashura Imam Hussein (as) also recited this very verse to the Kufan army.

This is a lesson for all Islamic leaders who might feel daunted when confronted by a multitude of enemies, rather; they must, by taking recourse to Allah and appealing to Him, with utmost decisiveness challenge them and humiliate them their power which would reinforce the morale of their followers and lower that of their enemies.

Surah Yunus - Verse 72

فإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُم مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي ا ّ ِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

72. "But if you turn back, I have not asked you for any recompense, my recompense is only upon Allah, and I am commanded to be of those (who) surrender (unto Him)."

Anxieties often revolve around either one's life or one's wealth. In the foregoing verse, the issue in question centers on the conspiracy of their enemies with regard to the lives of the prophets. The issue dealt with in this verse relates to the prophets' lack of expectations for reward and wealth from the side of people.

Noah (as) in this verse announced that if the unbelievers were to turn away from the truth, not accepting or following it, he did not expect any rewards for bringing them the message. This was his mission, so they should not balk at acceptance for fear of feeling that they would end up owing him something, which would be burdensome to them.

The verse says:

"But if you turn back, I have not asked you for any recompense, my recompense is only upon Allah..."

The verse also implies that if they turn away from accepting his words, he would not be at a disadvantage for he was not after their wealth (he did not covet) so that their turning away would put him at a loss, on the contrary, their rejection would turn out to be at their own disadvantage.

He emphasized that his reward for the prophetic mission and its accomplishment lay with Allah alone.

And Allah, the Gracious, had commissioned Noah (as) to be among those who had submitted themselves to His commandments for, indeed, the best of what the servants of Allah can practice is to obey and submit to Him.

The verse continues as follows:

"…and I am commanded to be of those (who) surrender (unto Him)."

Surah Yunus - Verse 73

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَمَن مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلآئِفَ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

73. "But they rejected him (Noah), So We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark, and We made them successors (in the earth), and We overwhelmed those who rejected Our Signs. Then see what was the end of the warned ones."

The Holy Qur'an presents the final destiny of Noah's enemies and veracity of his prediction in the following way. The enemies refuted Noah while Allah saved him and all those who were with him in the Ark. Not only did He save them but He also replaced the oppressors by them and drowned all those who had denied His Signs.

The verse says:

"But they rejected him (Noah), So We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark, and We made them successors (in the earth), and We overwhelmed those who rejected Our Signs..."

Turning to the Prophet (S), Allah finally commands him that he should consider the ultimate destiny of those who did not heed the divine warning and threats and were swept away.

The verse says:

"…Then see what was the end of the warned ones."

Noah's companions were only eighty in number whilst the numbers of the unbelievers were manifold, however, by the grace of Allah, the Almighty, the unbelievers were annihilated and the faithful became the inheritors of the earth.

Surah Yunus - Verse 74

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ رُسُلاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِن قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَي قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

74. "Then, after him, We sent messengers to their people; they brought them the clear evidences, but they would not believe in what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors."

In these verses, Allah, the Gracious, recounts the stories of those prophets who had been appointed after Noah (as).

After Noah and the annihilation of his people, several prophets were dispatched to their peoples who, as a result of marriage and reproduction, had multiplied by that time. The purpose here is prophets 'Ibrahim, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shu'ayb (Jethro).

These prophets went to those people with clear proofs and miracles that testified to their prophecy and provided reasons for their truthfulness.

The verse says:

"Then, after him, We sent messengers to their People; they brought them the clear evidences..."

However, none of them any longer believed in what their divinely guided forefathers had believed. Just like the idol worshippers before them, they were also rebellious and stood in opposition to Divine guidance.

The verse continues saying:

"…but they would not believe in what they had already rejected beforehand..."

The holy phrase saying: 'Thus do We seal the hearts of the transgressors' means that Allah (s.w.t.) impresses the symbol of infidelity upon the hearts of those who do injustice against themselves and violate the Divine limits and laws laid down by the Almighty, so that they become condemned to reprimand, and are recognized by the angels.

The verse says:

"…Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors."

Surah Yunus - Verse 75

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِم مُوسَي وَهَارُونَ إِلَي فِرْعَوْنَ وَملإِيْهِ بِاَيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْماً مُجْرِمِينَ

75. "Then, after them, We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our Signs, but they were arrogant, and they were a guilty people."

The meaning of the Arabic word /mala'/ is the eye-caching splendour of the courtiers and palace residents who were among the Pharaoh's entourage.

Pharaoh had divided the society into two categories: The Coptic palace-dwellers and the Sebti paupers. He had enslaved one group and the other group resided in wealth and luxury.

The primary crime of Pharaoh was his claim to being a god, and of putting innocent boys to death and letting the girls live.

Fighting against arrogant autocrats has been a major activity of the prophets, for they fight the causes of corruption not only what is caused by it.

The verse says:

"Then, after them, We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our Signs, but they were arrogant, and they were a guilty people."

Surah Yunus - Verse 76

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

76. "So when the truth came to them from Us, they said: 'Verily, this is a manifest sorcery.'"

The Essence of Allah, the prophets, the divine laws, miracles and whatever is attributed to Him are all true and real.

People do not always go after the truth. The adherents of the truth must sometimes go after the people.

The Prophets entertain a direct link with the Lord and their miracles as well as their program have their origins in the Divine nature.

However, accusing someone to be a magician is the shrewdest, simplest and the most prevalent of the accusations leveled against the prophets. It is for this reason that Moses (as) was personally accused of being a sorcerer.

The verse says:

"So when the truth came to them from Us, they said: 'Verily, this is a manifest sorcery.'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 77

قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَكُمْ أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلاَ يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ

77. "Said Moses: 'Do you say (this) about the Truth when it hath actually reached you? Is this sorcery? But sorcerers do not prosper.'"

Moses asked the disbelievers why it was that when the Signs of truth reached them they kept claiming it was sorcery. Moses rejects the allegations that the Signs accompanying him were the products of sorcery, for sorcery is not like this, these were Signs of the Truth and independent investigation could vouch for that.

The verse says:

"Said Moses: 'Do you say (this) about the Truth when it hath actually reached you? Is this sorcery?..."

However, they did not want to submit to the Truth, even if this truth had reached them from Allah. They claimed that the proofs that Moses brought was sorcery and simple-hearted people did not discriminate between sorcery and prophecy since both involved elements contrary to nature and habit. It was for this reason that they became confused, mixing the two which led many astray.

In such a case, people must be armed with knowledge so as to be able to distinguish miracle from magic and not to be so dominated by the confusion that sorcerers cause and reject the issue of prophecy. However this is a fact that sorcerers do not succeed.

The verse says:

"…But sorcerers do not prosper.'"

Surah Yunus - Verse 78

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَا وَتَكُونَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

78. "They said: '(O' Moses) have you come to turn us away from what we found our fathers upon, and that the greatness in the land may be for you two? But we shall not believe you two."

The people of Pharaoh continued their accusations against Moses, explicitly accusing him and Aaron of wanting them to abandon the ways of their ancestors.

They brought up the issues of ancestral traditions, and their fabulous glory to influence public opinion against Moses and Aaron, implying that they wanted to belittle and ridicule the sacred objects and symbols of their society and country.

They maintained then that Moses' call to Allah's religion and divinely inspired way was nothing but a lie. They claimed all of them were simply part of a stratagem of Moses and Aaron to seize power over the land and to put the reins of domination in their hands.

In fact, as they themselves made every effort to rule the earth oppressively, using all kinds of underhanded ways of seizing power, they ended up thinking of others as they thought of themselves, which included the struggles of the reformists and prophets.

The verse says:

"They said: '(O' Moses) have you come to turn us away from what we found our fathers upon, and that the greatness in the land may be for you two?..."

For this reason they said that they were never going to believe in Moses for they thought his message and proofs were only but the act of sorcery in the service of a wider scheme for political aggrandizement. This was the first stage of their struggle against Moses (as).

The verse continues saying:

"…But we shall not believe you two."

Surah Yunus - Verse 79

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ

79. "And Pharaoh said: 'Bring unto me every knowing (expert) sorcerer'."

In witnessing the miracles of Moses (as), he had been rendered wretched and helpless in trying to find a way to remove them, Pharaoh, addressing his people, put the call out that all the best sorcerers in the land should come to him in order to get them to help him nullify Moses' miracles.

The verse says:

"And Pharaoh said: 'Bring unto me every knowing (expert) sorcerer'."

Of course, Pharaoh did so in order that the sorcerers could help him in dismissing the achievement of Moses (as), and thus he called on all of them because he did not want any craft of magic or sorcery to remain hidden from him which might be of potential use in combating what he perceived to be the powerful sorcery of Moses, little knowing that the Signs that Moses manifested were not the effects of sorcery and magic but miracles originating from Allah.

Surah Yunus - Verse 80

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنتُم مُلْقُونَ

80. "When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them: 'Throw what you have to throw!'"

Pharaoh wanted to render the divine movement of Moses inactive with the help of those expert sorcerers. They carried instruments and devices like ropes, wood etc, which by being mixed with some particular materials moved when the sunshine affected them.

On the day when it was appointed for this historical challenge and a common invitation had also issued, a great crowd gathered. Then Moses addressed the sorcerers and told them to cast what they could cast.

The verse says:

"When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them: 'Throw what you have to throw!'"

Surah Yunus - Verses 81 - 82

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُم بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيُبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

81. "So when they had thrown, Moses said: 'What you have brought is sorcery. Allah will surely make it naught, verily Allah does not set right the work of mischief makers."

82. "And Allah proves the Truth by His Words though the sinners be averse (to it)."

Falsehood may have a parade and flaunt for a short time, but, at last, it is condemned to extinction. Allah does not support and improve the affairs of the mischief-makers. A sorcerer is a mischief-maker, and sorcery is a corruption. Therefore, it must be opposed with.

The verse says:

"So when they had thrown, Moses said: 'What you have brought is sorcery. Allah will surely make it naught, verily Allah does not set right the work of mischief makers."

Then Allah proclaims in the verse that Moses told them that he would definitely triumph in that quarrel and combat, for Allah had promised to unveil the truth and, through decisive logic and the astounding miracles of His prophets, He would expose the scandals of those who incite corruption even though some of the evil-doers, such as Pharaoh and his supporters, would dislike that.

The verse says:

"And Allah proves the Truth by His Words though the sinners be averse (to it)."

Section 9: Moses Takes Away the Children of Israel

Surah Yunus - Verse 83

فَمَآ ءَامَنَ لِمُوسَي إِلاَّ ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِن قَوْمِهِ عَلَي خَوْفٍ مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَملإِيْهِمْ أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

83. "But none believed in Moses save some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, that they would torment them; and verily, Pharaoh was mighty on the earth, and verily, he was of the extravagant."

In the beginning, the Qur'an describes the situation of the first group of those who believed in Moses, saying that after this (event) no one believed in Moses except a group of his own offspring. This tiny group, which becomes apparent by use of the Qur'anic word /ðurriyah/ (children), was formed mostly from among the youth and young adolescents.

They were under tremendous pressure from the side of Pharaoh and his associates, and feared the Pharaohnic system which, by putting pressure upon the believers tried to dissuade them, and make them quit the religion of Moses.

The verse says:

"But none believed in Moses save some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, that they would torment them;..."

Pharaoh was an arrogant man in that land, indulgent and violent, and he recognized no boundaries and limits.

The verse continues saying:

"…and verily, Pharaoh was mighty on the earth, and verily, he was of the extravagant."

Surah Yunus - Verse 84

وَقَالَ مُوسَي يَاقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامَنتُم بِا ـَ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُم مُسْلِمِينَ

84. "And Moses said: "O my people! If you have (really) believed in Allah, then put trust in Him (alone) if you have surrendered (unto Him)."

To comfort them and alleviate their pain in their souls, Moses, soothingly and affectionately said to them, that if they believed in Allah they should staunchly stand by their words, have faith, and submit to Him by putting all their hopes and trust in Him.

They ought not to be fearful of the waves and the storm of afflictions, for Faith cannot be separated from trust in Allah (s.w.t.).

The real meaning of "trust", here, is leaving one's tasks in His hands and selecting Him as one's only true help in the times of adversity.

The significance of trust does not imply abandoning one's struggle, rather, it means that once man has done his utmost in struggling and has not been able to solve his difficulty, he must not be upset. He must rely upon Allah's favor, support, and seek help from His pure Essence. He must have fortitude and continue on in his everlasting struggle.

The above holy verse says:

"And Moses said: "O my people! If you have (really) believed in Allah, then put trust in Him (alone) if you have surrendered (unto Him)."

Surah Yunus - Verse 85

فَقَالُوا عَلَي ا ً تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

85. "Then they said: 'In Allah (alone) we have put our trust. 'Our Lord! Make us not (subject) to a trial for the unjust people'."

These truthful believers accepted Moses' call to trust in Allah. They said that only in Allah they put their hopes and trust.

The verse says:

"Then they said: 'In Allah (alone) we have put our trust…."

Then, they supplicated Him to relieve them from the wickedness and vices of their enemies as well as the pressure they were imposing upon them. They invocated Him not to set them to become rebellious like the oppressors nor put them under their control and influence.

The above holy verse continues saying:

"…'Our Lord! Make us not (subject) to a trial for the unjust people'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 86

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

86. "And deliver us by your Mercy from the disbelieving people."

They supplicated that Allah (s.w.t.) might relieve them, by His Own Grace, from the grips of the infidels, i.e. Pharaonic nation who had been enslaving them, allocating hard work and imposing mean jobs upon them.

The verse says:

"And deliver us by your Mercy from the disbelieving people."

Surah Yunus - Verse 87

وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي مُوسَي وَأَخِيهِ أَن تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتاً وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

87. "And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: 'Provide houses for your people in Egypt, make your houses into places of worship, and keep up prayer: and give glad tidings to the believers'."

Another stage of the uprising and revolution of Moses (as), Harun (as), and the Children of Israel against the Pharaonids is portrayed here.

First, Allah says that He revealed to Moses and his brother that his nation should build houses in the land of Egypt. Particularly, they were to build these houses next to one another and facing them.

The verse says:

"And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: 'Provide houses for your people in Egypt, make your houses into places of worship..."

Then, they were to pay proper attention to spiritual self-actualization through regular prayers, thus purifying and strengthening themselves.

The verse says:

"…and keep up prayer:..."

In order to remove the effects of fear and terror from their hearts, and thus regain their spiritual and revolutionary power, He orders them to give these tidings to the faithful, as to their eventual victory, and the bestowal of Allah's favour and grace upon them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and give glad tidings to the believers'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 88

وَقَالَ مُوسَي رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ ءَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلأَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالاً فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَن
سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَي أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّي يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الاَلِيمَ

88. "And Moses said: 'Our Lord! Verily You have given to Pharaoh and his chiefs adornment and wealth in the life of this world, Our Lord! so that they mislead (men) from Your Path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts, so they will not believe until they see the painful penalty'."

The Qur'an then refers to one of the reasons for the rebellion of the Pharaoh and his adherents, by mentioning the statement of Moses to his Lord where he talks about the wealth and luxury that Pharaoh and his followers had in the world. This wealth and luxury had the effect of seducing the people away from the true Path.

The verse says:

"And Moses said: 'Our Lord! Verily You have given to Pharaoh and his chiefs adornment and wealth in the life of this world, Our Lord! so that they mislead (men) from Your Path..."

Thus Moses (as) asked Allah to destroy their belongings so that they could not benefit from them, and to take their power away from them that they might be able to reflect and meditate upon the reality of existence.

The verse says:

"…Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts..."

By losing these two capitals, they would quickly degenerate and move a step closer to annihilation, thus making it more possible for the Children of Israel to inflict the last blow upon them. This prayer was not because of revenge or retaliation but it was because they did not have the slightest preparedness for accepting faith.

The verse says:

"…so they will not believe until they see the painful penalty'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 89

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلاَ تَتَّبِعَآنِّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

89. "He (Allah) said: 'The prayer of you both has been accepted, so stand straight and follow not the path of those who know not'."

Allah said to Moses and his brother that now that they were ready to educate and shape the people of Israel, their prayers regarding their enemies were accepted.

The verse says:

"He (Allah) said: 'The prayer of you both has been accepted…"

Then they should finally stand, resist, be decisive and do not be afraid of the difficulties on the way. Never should they submit to the suggestions of the unwise and the ignorant and nor follow the way of those who do not know.

The verse continues saying:

"…so stand straight and follow not the path of those who know not'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 90

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْياً وَعَدْواً حَتَّي إِذَآ أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ
قَالَ ءَامَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ الَّذِي ءَامَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُوا إِسْرَآئِيلَ وَأَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

90. "And We made the Children of Israel to pass through the sea; then Pharaoh and his hosts chased them in insolence and hostility, until when the drowning overtook him, he said: 'I believe that there is no Allah but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those that surrender'."

The last phase of the struggle of the Children of Israel with the followers of Pharaoh and their destiny has been depicted in a concise yet accurate and transparent manner here.

The verse implies that Allah let the Children of Israel pass through the sea when confronted with the army of Pharaoh while were being pressured and chased by them.

The verse says:

"And We made the Children of Israel to pass through the sea;..."

Pharaoh and his army chased them there in order to oppress and eliminate them though they were soon drowned in the midst of the stormy waves of the sea.

The verse continues saying:

"…then Pharaoh and his hosts chased them in insolence and hostility, until when the drowning overtook him..."

This course went on until the abyss surrounded Pharaoh who started floating on the waves and it was then that his blindness, arrogance and unconsciousness came to an end and the innate light of monotheism started shining.

He shouted he believed in Him Whom the Children of Israel believed in, and he confessed that there is no one to be worshipped except Him and he resigned himself to Him.

The verse says:

"…he said: 'I believe that there is no Allah but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those that surrender'."

In fact when the prophecies of Moses proved to be true one after another, and Pharaoh realized the truthfulness of the words of this great prophet over and again, on witnessing this final power, he had no excuse but to believe, maybe hoping that the Lord of the Children of Israel would save him the same way He had saved the Children of Israel from the mountainous waves.

Obviously, such a faith which is attained in the face of calamities, when one is caught in the jaws of death, is in fact a kind of "faith for emergencies", which every criminal claims when he is captured, and is of no value.

Surah Yunus - Verse 91

ءَآلآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

91. "What! Now! (when facing death?) while hitherto you have rebelled and been of the mischief-makers?"

It was for this reason that Allah, addressing him, informed him that he did become a believer, while before that he used to rebel, disobey and used to commit sin; lining up alongside villains and those who were corrupt on the earth.

The verse says:

"What! Now! (when facing death?) while hitherto you have rebelled and been of the mischief-makers?"

At any rate, repenting while one is dying is of no benefit. One must repent while there is still a chance of life and of being saved.

Surah Yunus - Verse 92

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ ءَايَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ ءَايَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ

92. "So this day We shall save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those after you! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."

Allah through the Qur'an announces that He saves Pharaoh's body from being lost in the sea today so that we can provide an instructive lesson for future generations for arrogant rulers, and for all oppressors and those enticing others into corruption as well as for the oppressed.

The verse says:

"So this day We shall save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those after you!..."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an indicates that many people still remain ignorant of our verses and symbols and of all those instructive lessons which have been recorded over and over again in the history of man, and despite those clues which prove Our omnipotence?

The verse continues saying:

"…But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."

It is narrated from Imam Rida (as) in the commentary, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn and As-Safi that Pharaoh was armoured from head to toe which must have pulled him down deep under the sea drowning him but the waves drove the heavy body ashore atop a lofty rock. This itself was a divine miracle.

Section 10: Jonah's People

Surah Yunus - Verse 93

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مُبَوَّأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّي جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

93. "And certainly We lodged the Children of Israel a goodly lodging, and provided them with good things, so they did not differ but after the knowledge came to them, Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which they used to differ."

The ultimate victory of the Children of Israel and their eventual return to the Holy Land after their liberation from the men of Pharaoh, are explained in this verse as follows:

"And certainly We lodged the Children of Israel a goodly lodging..."

The objective meaning of the phrase /mubawwa'a sidqin/ (a goodly lodging) can be considered as alluding to the land of Egypt or the lands of Syria and Palestine.

Then the Qur'an adds that Allah provided them with the good things to eat but they did not appreciate the real value of this blessing. Contrarily, they sowed the seeds of discord and quarreled with each other, and this they did not until the knowledge was made available to them.

The verse says:

"…and provided them with good things, so they did not differ but after the knowledge came to them..."

Eventually, Allah will arbitrate among them as to what they disagreed upon on the Day of Resurrection. If they do not experience the punishment for their discord today, they will experience it in the future.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which they used to differ."

Surah Yunus - Verse 94

فَإِن كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّآ أَنْزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَآءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

94. "So if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who read the book (sent) before you. The Truth hath indeed come to you from your Lord, so be not of the doubters."

How is it that the Qur'an implies: O! Prophet, if you have any doubts about the Qur'an, ask the People of the Book, despite the fact that he (S) had never had any shadow of a doubt in this respect? Reason does not admit that a prophet might doubt the revelation sent to him.

However, its meaning can be gathered in the same Surah, verse 104. Here Allah, the Exalted, has addressed the Prophet (S) while this meaning addresses the whole people. The implication of it is that if the people are hesitating, they must ask those who have read the Qur'an.

To support this argument, there is a verse at the end of the current Surah in which Allah, the Gracious, addressing the people from the tongue of the Prophet (S), says:

"O you people if you are in doubt as to my religion."

With this verse, Allah, the Gracious, made it transparent that the Prophet (S) had not been skeptical and His objective in addressing the Prophet (S) is really intended for other people.

Likewise, there are other verses that apparently address the Prophet (S) although, in reality, the addressees are people other than the Prophet (S) as well.

The verse says:

"So if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who read the book (sent) before you..."

Incidentally, some of the great commentators of the Qur'an have stated that this doubt is of the type which is based upon supposition and probability and not upon certainty and through defining rules, like the verse which says:

"If the Beneficent (Allah) had a son..."[1].

Although the verse, "He begets not, nor is He begotten…", categorically rules out the issue of Allah having a child. This proposition is in fact a conditional proposition.

That is, were you to have the slightest doubt in this respect, you should ask those knowledgeable People of the Book, because they are sure that you tell the Truth.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated who said that Hadrat Muhammad (S) never doubted and never asked the People of the Book.

And finally, besides the explanation offered in the above, the verse demonstrates the fact that the reasons for the appointment of the Prophet (S) and whatever is revealed to him are not confined to his call to prophecy and his offering of miracles.

There are allusions made to him in the Books of the preceding prophets and though those books are misrepresented and their authenticity questionable, there are numerous tidings here and there, amounting to sixty cases which are available to the People of the Book.

The holy sentence which says: "…The Truth has indeed come to you from your Lord..." signifies: by means of the revelations and exhaustive proofs it has been proved to you that what has been passed to you is an authentic and genuine truth which leaves no room for any sort of skepticism.

Thus, be firm in your beliefs in which case you should have no doubts, not refuting and denying the Divine verses, and continue your course. The verse continues saying:

"…The Truth hath indeed come to you from your Lord, so be not of the doubters."

Surah Yunus - Verse 95

وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ ا ً فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

95. "Nor be of those who belied the Signs of Allah, (for) then you shall be of the losers."

The previous holy verse advised against maintaining any skepticism about the Qur'an. This noble verse addresses itself to refutation of the verses.

Many a time if skepticism remains unchallenged, it will lead to refutation. The verse says:

"Nor be of those who belied the Signs of Allah, (for) then you shall be of the losers."

All investigation and analysis that had been applied to skepticism in the previous verse, may equally propound here as well, for refutation is worse than skepticism. There have been numerous verses and traditions which inform of the certainty the Prophet (S) possessed.

Therefore, the target and the addressees of such warnings are mankind, and not the Prophet (S) in person. How can someone, who has led others to believe in something with certainty, be himself a skeptic, or refute that same thing?

Surah Yunus - Verses 96 - 97

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَوْ جَآءَتْهُم كُلُّ ءَايَةٍ حَتَّي يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الاَلِيمَ

96. "Verily those against whom the Word of your Lord has proved true will not believe,"

97. "Even if every Sign come unto them, until they see the painful chastisement."

Allah tells the Prophet (S), here, that there is a group among his opponents who are fanatic and obstinate and who cannot be expected to become believers.

They have become so brainwashed in their thinking, and have been led astray to such an extent that they have lost their human consciences, becoming individuals who may not be impressed or influenced.

However, explaining the subject with this connotation, the Qur'an says that Allah's commandment had been proven and was unequivocal to them, though they will not become believers.

The verse says:

"Verily those against whom the Word of your Lord has proved true will not believe,"

Even if all Allah's verses and symbols had dawned upon them, they would not become believers unless they witnessed the Divine Punishment with their own eyes, at which time, their faith would be of no avail.

The verse says:

"Even if every Sign come unto them, until they see the painful chastisement."

Surah Yunus - Verse 98

فَلَوْلاَ كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهآ إِيمَانُهَآ إِلاَّ قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّآ ءَامَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَي حِينٍ

98. "Why was there not a township which believed, so that their belief should have profited them, except the people of Jonah (Yunus)? When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the world, and gave them enjoyment for a while."

Allah, the Gracious, had said in the previous verses, Pharaoh's repentance when he witnessed the Punishment was not accepted.

In line with this account, the Qur'an recounts the story of the nation of Jonah before the Punishment was imposed, asking the question why is it that the people of every settlement do not become believers when their faith would bring them dividends and is to their advantage?

Allah, the Gracious, likewise has declared that accepting faith at the time when the punishment is imposed and death is near is of no avail. However, when the nation of Jonah witnessed the early signs of the Punishment they started to believe, and Allah relieved them from it, and allowed them to enjoy their lives until the end of their lifetimes, and reap the fruits of His blessings.

The verse says:

"Why was there not a township which believed, so that their belief should have profited them, except the people of Jonah (Yunus)? When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the world, and gave them enjoyment for a while."

According to Hadrat Sadiq (as), Hadrat Jonah (as) had been preaching for 33 years, starting at the age of 30 until the age of 63. However, he only was successful in converting two people to the religion of monotheism. He then cursed the people for their recalcitrance.

One of these two believers was a sage and philosopher. When he noticed the prophet's cursing the people and his departure, he went up to them and warned them in a loud voice.

The people who were impressed, under his guidance, left the town distancing themselves from their children, and they cried and repented before Allah until they were forgiven. On his return, Jonah (as) had noticed that township had not been annihilated. He asked the reason and was told the story.[2]

Therefore, faith and repentance in sufficient time removes Divine Punishment, while prayer and supplication both removes the Punishment and generates success and happiness. (Regarding the occasion of revelation)

Surah Yunus - Verse 99

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لأَمَنَ مَنْ فِي الأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَميعاً أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّي يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

99. "And if your Lord had willed, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Will thou then compel the people till they become believers?"

Man is free and faith is based upon one's voluntary choice; it is not to be accepted under compulsion or by imposition.

Allah is Omnipotent and Omniscient, employing His power in such a way that it does not run contrary to His Knowledge. And as His omniscience requires mankind to be free, He never compels them to accept faith by force.

The Prophet (S) has compassionately insisted that people accept the faith on the basis of voluntary acceptance and not through compulsion.

The verse says:

"And if your Lord had willed, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Will thou then compel the people till they become believers?"

Surah Yunus - Verse 100

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَن تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ ا ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

100. "And it is not for a soul to believe except by the Will of Allah, and He appoints uncleanness (of infidelity) on those who do not ponder."

People are neither compelled to accept the faith (according to the previous verse) nor can they succeed in accepting the faith without His guidance and Divine Providence.

The verse says:

"And it is not for a soul to believe except by the Will of Allah..."

Divine favor and Divine Providence shine their light upon the sage and those people who use their reasoning and he who does not meditate and reason under his own volition, will suffer His Punishment and will abide in wretchedness.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He appoints uncleanness (of infidelity) on those who do not ponder."

Sound reasoning provides the basis for faith and having no faith exhibits ignorant and irrational behavior.

Surah Yunus - Verse 101

قُلِ انْظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَن قَوْمٍ لاَّ يُؤْمِنُونَ

101. "Say: 'Observe you what is in the heavens and the earth! But neither Signs nor warnings avail a people who do not believe'."

In the previous verses the issue in question was that faith is a voluntary matter; it is not a matter that springs up in emergency situations, nor is it compulsory. It is for this reason that the means of acquiring faith is shown in this verse.

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an implies that he should say to the unbelievers to carefully observe the wonderful, profound system at work in the skies and on the earth each part of which exhibits the magnitude, power, knowledge and wisdom of Allah.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Observe you what is in the heavens and the earth!…"

The above sentence explicitly rules out the issue of fatalism and the lack of freedom of will. It indicates that accepting faith is consequential upon studying the world of existence which is a task left entirely in our hands.

The Qur'an adds, however, that despite all these verses and clues to the Truth, is it not surprising that some groups do not become believers, for those verses and clues, warnings and admonishments not only are of no

benefit to those who lack preparedness for embracing the Truth, but they are not useful for those obstinate people who will not become believers either.

The verse continues saying:

"…But neither Signs nor warnings avail a people who do not believe'."

Surah Yunus - Verse 102

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلاَّ مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ

102. "Do they then expect (anything) but the like of the days of those who passed away before them? Say: 'Wait you then, verily I also with you, will be of those who wait'."

This verse is in the form of a question with a threatening tone. It declares that obstinate and faithless people expect to see a destiny other than that of former nations which suffered the painful Divine Punishment; the doom of Pharaohs, the Nimrods, Shaddads, and their assistants and advocates.

The verse says:

"Do they then expect (anything) but the like of the days of those who passed away before them?..."

Towards the end of the verse, in order to warn them, Allah commands the Prophet (S) to tell them that now they are on such a track, and are not ready to reconsider their fate, that they should wait and look out for it as he was.

The verse continues saying:

"…Say: 'Wait you then, verily I also with you, will be of those who wait'."

They wait in order to avoid and deny Allah's call, and we wait for the evil and painful destiny which awaits them like that of the former oppressive nations of the past.

Surah Yunus - Verse 103

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقّاً عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

103. "Then (when Our wrath fell) We deliver Our messengers and those who believe. Thus it is binding on Us (that) We deliver the believers."

Our common sense tells us and we witness the fact that the good and evil are sometimes placed in the same category indiscriminately.

The Qur'an warns us also in verse 25 of Surah Al-Anfal that we must fear the calamities which not only are inflicted upon the oppressors but also upon the faithful as well. How is it, then, that this verse states that Allah saves the faithful in time of trouble?

The verse says:

"Then (when Our wrath fell) We deliver Our messengers and those who believe..."

The answer to this verse is that if the faithful remain silent when they are among the disbelievers and the guilty, Allah's punishment will encompass all of them. However, if the believers act according to their divine duty, which is forbidding the wrong, Allah may save them in time of trouble.

The verse continues saying:

"…Thus it is binding on Us (that) We deliver the believers."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 81
2. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and As-Safi.

Section 11: Profit or Loss Caused by Allah - Unavoidable by Anyone

Surah Yunus - Verse 104

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ دِينِي فَلآ أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ا ّ ِ وَلَكِنْ أَعْبُدُ ا ّ َ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

104. "Say: "O you people! If you are in doubt as to my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah! But I worship Allah Who causes you to die and I have been commanded that I should be of the believers'."

Do not allow the skepticism of others to influence you. Decisiveness is the primary condition for leadership.

Any reconciliation and agreement with the unbelievers is prohibited. You must expel the unbelieving front from among yourselves, making them despair. Beware that the enemy envies the leaders of Islam.

You must declare your ostracism and position of differentiation from the unbelievers. Allah Who is in command of life and death is more suitable to be worshipped than idols, oppressors, and insignificant powers and puppets. Therefore, the holy Prophet (S) and, by extension, the believers have been commanded to be faithful and testify to monotheism.

The verse says:

"Say: "O you people! If you are in doubt as to my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah! But I worship Allah Who causes you to die and I have been commanded that I should be of the believers'."

Surah Yunus - Verses 105 - 106

وَأَنْ أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدّينِ حَنِيفاً وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

وَلا تَدْعُ مِن دُونِ ا ّ ِ مَا لاَ يَنفَعُكَ وَلاَ يَضُرُّكَ فَإِن فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذاً مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

105. "And (I have also been commanded) that 'Set your face towards the Religion uprightly, and never be of the polytheists.'"

106. "And do not call other than Allah on that which will neither profit you nor hurt you: for if you do, then verily you will on that case be of the unjust."

In the last verses of this Surah, Allah, the Supreme, has designated the responsibilities of the Messenger (the Prophet) as to what he must do in case the people did not follow him or hesitated in accepting his mission.

The verse says:

"And (I have also been commanded) that 'Set your face towards the Religion uprightly, and never be of the polytheists.'"

The Prophet's responsibility is to get the people to desist from the worship of self-styled gods and induce the sincere worship of the one Allah, "Allah", to inculcate an honest faith in Him and to execute His Commandments whether apparent or hidden.

They should not worship other gods and man-made idols, for by doing this they would be oppressing themselves because these false deities are of

no advantage or disadvantage to them. He Who is really the only source of benefit and loss is no one but "Allah".

The verse says:

"And do not call other than Allah on that which will neither profit you nor hurt you: for if you do, then verily you will on that case be of the unjust."

Man's submission to idols and those manufactured deities he has made as partners with the Creator, is injustice to himself. If he does this, he will lose his identity which is one of the most precious endowments he is blessed with, and if he tries to persuade others to follow this road this can also be considered as oppressing the people by misleading them in their thinking.

Though this speech is addressed to the Prophet, in reality it is targeted at the people.

Surah Yunus - Verse 107

وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ ا ّ ُ بِضُرٍّ فَلاَ كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَإِن يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلاَ رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

107. "And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favor. He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

If Allah causes you pain in cases of calamities or brings you hardships or sufferings, no one but He is able to release you by removing them, and if He gives you well-being in matters of health, blessings or affluence and so forth, no one can hinder Him or block His way.

The verse says:

"And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favor..."

Allah's beneficence, which is always appropriate, extends in different circumstances for whom He pleases from among His servants and according to His wise Judgment and realistic evaluation. He is forgiving of the sins committed by his servants and He is compassionate towards them.

The verse says:

"…He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Surah Yunus - Verse 108

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَي فإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَآ أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُم بِوَكِيلٍ

108. "Say: 'O mankind! (Now) the Truth has come to you from your Lord. Therefore, whoever is guided, he is guided for (the good of) his own self, and whoever strays, he strays only against it; and I am not a warden over you'."

This verse and the one following it are admonishments to mankind in general and to the Prophet (S) in particular. They complement the commandments that Allah has explained throughout this Surah and with that, the Surah of Yunus comes to an end.

At first, as a general instruction, Allah commands the Prophet (S) to say to mankind that the Truth has now reached them from their Lord.

These instructions, this Heavenly Book, this program and this Prophet along with his miracles are all true and the evidence of their truthfulness is explicit and obvious.

The verse declares:

"Say: 'O mankind! (Now) the Truth has come to you from your Lord..."

In the light of this reality, he who is led by the light of this truth has been guided and will reap his own advantages while he who refuses and fails to submit himself when facing truth would have taken steps towards his own destruction.

The verse continues saying:

"…Therefore, whoever is guided, he is guided for (the good of) his own self, and whoever strays he strays only against it;..."

The Prophet (S) is instructed to say that he is not their agent; he does not act on their behalf as an advocate, nor is he their guardian.

The verse says:

"…and I am not a warden over you'."

That is, neither is he commissioned to force them to accept the truth for accepting faith under compulsion is meaningless not could he save them from the Divine Punishment in case they did not accept the Truth.

His duty is to call them to Islam, to bring Allah's message to them, to guide them on the Straight Path, to lead them, and to serve them as their leader.

Surah Yunus - Verse 109

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

109. "And follow (only) what is revealed unto you, and be patient till Allah judges, and He is the best of the judges."

In this noble verse, Allah sums up the duties of the Prophet (S) in two sentences: the first one says that he should act according to what has been revealed unto him.

The verse says:

"And follow (only) what is revealed unto you..."

The direction or his path has been fixed by what Allah has revealed to him and he is not allowed to make the slightest deviation from it.

Secondly there are numerous trials and tribulations facing him on this path and he must not let himself be distracted by these difficulties.

He must wait, practice fortitude, and maintain his position until Allah issues His verdict concerning his success over his enemies, for Allah is the Best of those who decide because His decision is identical with the Truth, His wisdom is based on justice and His promise is never to be broken. The verse continues saying:

"…and be patient till Allah judges, and He is the best of the judges."

The End of Surah Yunus.

Surah Hud, Chapter 11

Surah Hud (Hud)

No.11 (Revealed in Mecca)

123 verses in 10 sections

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Contents of Surah Hud

This holy Surah was revealed during the last years of the Prophet's stay in Mecca, during which the Muslims were experiencing very hard times because of the passing away of Hadrat Abu-Talib and Hadrat Khadijah.

The blessed Prophet (S) once said: "Surah Hud made me age", for the verse recommending perseverance and persistence has been revealed within this Surah. It says:

"Persevere and persist as you have been ordered and your followers with you. "

However, the impatience and lack of perseverance of the companions of the Prophet (S) annoyed him.

The contents of this Surah, which comprises 123 verses, deal with the history of the prophets; in particular, the story of Hadrat Noah (as). It also focuses upon economic problems.

Attention is devoted to the history of the prophets, presenting their message as a continuous historical process, and not as some isolated affairs. It insists on the fact that the history of the prophets is governed by laws, the study of which reveals the secrets of the rise and fall, the glorification and degradation of nations.

This indicates that religion is not separate from society, and society's destiny depends entirely upon people's religion and way of life.

The name of Hadrat Hud (as) has been repeated five times in this Surah which equals the number of its recurrence throughout the rest of the Qur'an.

As for the virtues implied in this Surah, there is a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) who has said:

"He who recites this Surah, will reap rewards, the size of which would equal the number of all those who believed in Hud and the other prophets as well as those who refuted them, and he will be elevated in rank equal to those of the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection, and thus everything would be easy for him."

Obviously, a mere cursory reading of the Surah would have not such a result; rather reading, meditating upon it and later combining it with practice, would place man along with the former believers and distance him from the rejecters of the prophets.

Section 1: Repentance Earns Pardon and the Bounties from Allah

Surah Hud - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ ءَايَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِن لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. (This is) a Book whose verses are set firmly, then explained in detail, from One All-Wise, All-Aware."

The Qur'an is made up of those very same alphabetical letters that are found in every Arabic text available for all. However, Allah has created a book out of these simple letters, the equivalent of which no one can produce.

Just as man makes bricks and ceramics out of soil, Allah creates thousands of flowers and plants, fruits and animals as well as man, out of the same materials. Of course just as we can notice Allah's omnipotence in the system of creation, we can observe His omnipotence in the Book of Divine legislation as well.

There are some further explanations about the abbreviated letters mentioned at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 which need not to be repeated here.

The Qur'an is a decisive Book, containing one fundamental spirit; that is, the spirit of monotheism; besides all its stories, exhortations, Divine commandments, and its verses are the explanations of this very line.

The Qur'an is a decisive book which has not been distorted nor is it to be doubted.

It is not based on conjecture and presupposition, and so all its contents are irrevocable with sound foundations.

The foundations of the Qur'an are decisively firm and nothing will be able to penetrate or cause disruption in it. The further science advances, the more the secrets of this book are revealed and discovered.

The Qur'an is both demonstrative and irrevocable, while at the same time, encompassing all the dimensions of this worldly life and the life hereafter. The Qur'an has been revealed to the Prophet (S) in its totality, after which, it has been extensively explained. And as Allah is Wise, His Book is decisive, and as He is All-Aware, He has dealt with the details of all needs.

The verse says:

"'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. (This is) a Book whose verses are set firmly, then explained in detail, from One All-Wise, All-Aware."

Surah Hud - Verse 2

أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ ا ّ َ إِنَّنِي لَكُم مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ

2. "(It teaches) that you should worship none but Allah. Verily, I am for you from Him, a warner and a bearer of glad tidings."

This verse takes up the most important and the most fundamental issue of the Qur'an, which is monotheism by explaining the campaign against polytheism as follows:

Allah's first and foremost call to mankind is that he should stop worshipping everything else but the Almighty.

The verse says:

"(It teaches) that you should worship none but Allah..."

Secondly, the Divine call concerns the matter that the Prophet (S) is surely acting on Allah's behalf, as a messenger of warning and glad tidings.

The duty of the Prophet (S) is that he warns people against disobeying Allah, injustice, corruption, polytheism and infidelity.

He informs them of Divine punishment as a result of their evil actions, and give them glad tidings of a happy fate for their obedience, piety and virtuousness.

The holy verse continued saying:

"…Verily, I am for you from Him, a warner and a bearer of glad tidings."

Surah Hud - Verse 3

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُم مَتَاعاً حَسَناً إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمّيً وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ

3. "And that you seek the forgiveness of Allah and turn unto Him in repentance so that He may provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term, and bestow His abounding grace on everyone endowed with grace. But if you turn away (from serving Him), then I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day."

His third call is that people should repent from their sins, and purify themselves from all types of pollution.

His fourth call for them is that they should turn to Him after purifying themselves from their sins by repentance, thus decorating themselves with Divine characteristics. This means that returning to Him means nothing more than acquiring those qualities that are associated with Him.

Afterwards, the holy Qur'an recounts that the practical results which ensue from acceptance or rejection of the four commandments, mentioned in the above, are as follows: Whenever you act according to this schedule, Allah grants you a whole happy life-time of enjoyment in your worldly life.

The verse says:

"And that you seek the forgiveness of Allah and turn unto Him in repentance so that He may provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term..."

Therefore, before enabling one to reap the fruits of his deeds in the After-Life, religion and religious ideologies tend to produce their fruits in this world.

Moreover, the fact that everyone is rewarded according to his deeds in this world, and people's individual differences are never overlooked, it is amazing how they can all act in accordance with those four principles mentioned above.

Allah measures each in his virtue and every individual's merit for whatever He bestows upon him.

The verse continues saying:

"…and bestow His abounding grace on everyone endowed with grace..."

However, if you turn against these principles, disobeying these ideological and practical commandments, I fear for you the punishment of a Great Day, when you must stand in that great court of Justice for the Divine Judgment.

The verse says:

"…But if you turn away (from serving Him), then I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day."

Surah Hud - Verse 4

إِلَي ا ۖ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

4. "To Allah is your return and He is All-Powerful over everything."

At any rate, one should beware that regardless of who he is and whatever rank or position he may occupy, that ultimately, the one will return to Him.

The verse says:

"To Allah is your return..."

The above sentence points to the fifth principle of the fundamental principles of the Qur'an, that is, the Resurrection.

You should never think that your power is significant compared to the power of Allah, or you are able to disobey His orders, and escape His Court of Justice. Never give yourselves the benefit of a doubt that He would be unable to assemble your degenerated bones after death, providing them with a new life, because He is Omnipotent and has the power over all things.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He is All-Powerful over everything."

Surah Hud - Verse 5

أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ يَثْنُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنْهُ أَلَا حِينَ يَسْتَغْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

5. "Behold! They fold up their breasts to hide them from him (the Prophet)! Behold! Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal: Verily He is aware of what is in the hearts."

This verse, in general, makes allusions to one of the foolish behaviors of the Prophet's (S) enemies who, by using their subterfuge and hypocritical manner, i.e., distancing themselves from the Truth, sought to conceal their true nature from the public so as not to lend their ears to the words of truth.

Thus, the holy Qur'an implies that the unbelievers would approach each other in a very intimate manner, and draw alongside one another so as to conceal themselves and their words from the Prophet (S).

The verse says:

"Behold! They fold up their breasts to hide them from him (the Prophet)!..."

The interpretation of /yanun/ probably refers to whatever act of concealment, whether apparent or hidden, that was performed by the enemies of the Prophet (S).

1- The Arabic verb /yanun/ means placing two things next to each other. The word /'inan/ means 'two', which also signifies bearing a grudge against someone. Therefore, the Qur'anic phrase: (yanuna sudurahum/ either means that the unbelievers converge and ally themselves for secret objectives and conspiracies against the prophets or that they bear grudges against them.

Therefore, the holy Qur'an hastens to add that we should beware of those who conceal themselves in their places, however they are not hidden from Allah as He has knowledge of all secrets whether open or hidden.

The verse also says:

"…Behold! Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal: Verily He is aware of what is in the hearts."

Surah Hud - Verse 6

وَمَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ فِي الاَرْضِ إِلاَّ عَلَي ا ً ِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

6. "And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is on Allah, and He knows its resting place and its depository. All is (recorded) in a clear Book."

The Arabic word /dabbah/, derived from the word /dabib/ signifies 'walking slowly' and 'taking short steps.' However it also refers to every moving creature.

The Qur'anic word /rizq/ signifies the continuous bestowal of bounties, whether material or spiritual. Hence, we call to Allah in our prayers:

"O Allah! Bestow upon me knowledge that is useful."

Whatever of sustenance He bestows is suitable for the relevant creature. For instance, the food that babies utilize, while still unborn, alters according to their needs after birth which changes into delicious milk, otherwise, how could a human being feed a baby in the womb of its mother? Or, how could a newly born baby receive its food?

In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"And how many a living creature that does not carry it's sustenance: Allah sustains it and yourselves."[1]

Hadrat Ali (as) says in his will to Imam Hasan (as):

"Sustenance, /rizq/, is of two kinds: One kind is to be obtained through your own endeavor and struggle; the other kind is that which comes to you by itself, whether it be natural, such as sunlight and rain, or whether it be a potentiality in man such as intelligence and memory."

Thus, the verse does not tell us to sit around and wait for food to descend from Heaven; rather it tells us to struggle and to endeavor, as well as to consider whatever we obtain as Allah-given and is a bestowal from Him.

He takes care of all creatures which necessitates the existence of a very accurate system to be permanently at work so as to keep track of all allotted portions and needs. That is, He must be aware of the numbers and places of all men, animals, marine animals, birds, and desert animals as well as creatures great or small with their various specifications and needs.

The verse says:

"And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is on Allah, and He knows its resting place and its depository. All is (recorded) in a clear Book."

If all knowledge is contained in the Holy Book, it follows that he who has a good command of the Book knows everything. We recite in the last verse of Surah Ar-Ra'd:

"…Say: 'Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and the one with whom is the knowledge of the Book."[2]

Both Shi'ah and the Sunni quotations reaffirm the fact that the man in question in the foregoing sentence is Hadrat Ali (as).

Concerning the provision bestowed upon the creatures, Allah's way of treatment is of two kinds. One is providing them directly with those necessities for their existence and the other is providing for them through making the means and devices available which would enable them to meet their needs.

Thus, obtaining one's share is not incompatible with the laws governing one's endeavor in obtaining what he needs.

In other words, one must not rely upon others for his needs, abandoning his own struggle. At the same time we must admit that our share is in Allah's control, for He has made available to us both the resources of our provisions as well as the reasons and means for the exploitation, discovery, and acquisition of those resources.

Surah Hud - Verse 7

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَي الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً وَلَئِن قُلْتَ إِنَّكُم مَبْعُوثُونَ مِن بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَآ إِلا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

7. "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth within Six Days (periods), and His Throne was over the water so that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. And, if you were to say to them: 'Verily you shall be raised up after death', the unbelievers would surely say: 'This is (not) but a manifest sorcery'."

There are three principal issues discussed in this noble verse: First, the creation of the world of existence which represents a display of Allah's Omnipotence, specially the initiation of creation which signifies His Power, as well as the reasons for His glory.

The verse says:

"And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth within Six Days (periods)..."

The word 'Days' here means epochs, whether long or short.

Then it adds:

"…and His Throne was over the Water..."

Some of the scientists believe that at very early time of creation, the world of existence was in the form of some molten materials, (or some extra ordinary pressed gases which had the form of some liquid materials).

Then, some great bursts happened inside this very liquid substance and parts of its outside surface were continuously separated off which, finally, formed the stars and germs of the systems in the sky.

Therefore, the world of existence, maybe, at first was located on this great material, the liquid like.

The second issue hinted at in this verse, is the objective of the creation of the cosmos, the main aim of which refers to the supreme fruit of the process of creation, namely man. Man who must be subjected to educational processes, thus evolving and approaching the Almighty even further.

It says:

"…so that He might try you which of you is best in conduct..."

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Good conduct refers to that kind of conduct which is coupled with knowledge, sincerity and virtue, not a mere action which is practiced in abundance. Therefore, the heavens and the earth have been created for good deeds and not for the sake of happiness, pleasure-seeking, and negligence."

Definitely, those who deny the Day of Resurrection have no reasoning for their claim and they only take recourse to accusations of sorcery and hallucinations.

The verse says:

"…And, if you were to say to them: 'Verily you shall be raised up after death', the unbelievers would surely say: 'This is (not) but a manifest sorcery'."

Surah Hud - Verse 8

وَلَئِنْ أَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَي أُمَّةٍ مَعْدُودَةٍ لَيَقُولُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهُ أَلاَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفاً عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

8. "And if We postpone the penalty from them until a limited period of time, they will surely say: 'What prevents it?' Beware! On the day it will come to them it shall not be turned aside from them, and they will be encompassed by that which they used to mock at."

The word /'ummah/ refers to a group which has a common aim and also means women. The aim in this verse is a definite period of time as we also recite in Surah Yusuf /waŏkur ba'da 'ummatin/ which means that the freed prisoner was reminded of Yusuf after the passage of a length of time.

At any rate, Allah, the Gracious, remarks that if He postponed the tormenting punishment of these unbelievers for a certain period of time, delaying its certain arrival, they would sarcastically cry: If these punishments are certain to come, what has kept them back?

In response, the Qur'an implies that they should beware of the punishment whose late arrival they mocked about, for when He decides to let it come, no one would be able to reverse it, and when He wishes it to happen, no one can stop it, and they would be eradicated by the very punishment which they so mockingly despised.

The verse says:

"And if We postpone the penalty from them until a limited period of time, they will surely say: 'What prevents it?' Beware! On the day it will come to them it shall not be turned aside from them, and they will be encompassed by that which they used to mock at."

Explanations

1- The postponement of the Divine punishment has a number of implications, namely, providing a chance for the sinners to repent, the birth of faithful children from deviant parents, etc. Moreover, the existence of honest people and their prayers also delay the occurrence of Divine punishment.

2- Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) have been quoted in a tradition as saying that the holy phrase: /'ummatin ma'dudah/ in the verse refers to a limited group of like minded people, alludes to the friends of Hadrat Mahdi (as), whose number equals no more than 313, equivalent in size to the circle of Companions at Badr, who assembled like autumn clouds over the sea.

3- Other interpretations have been made for the phrase /'ummatin ma'dudah/ with documentations from the Qur'anic verses and the sayings of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) which also exist in Sunni interpretations and we will not deal with them here for the sake of brevity.

Notes

1. Surah 'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 60
2. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 43

Section 2: Patience and Good Deeds Earn Pardon from Allah

Surah Hud - Verse 9

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَئُوسٌ كَفُورٌ

9. "If We make man taste mercy from Ourselves, (and) then take it off from him, verily he is despairing ungrateful."

Allah's blessings do not always reflect His compassion; nor does usually the withdrawal of His blessings signify His punishment and anger. Many a time, they could mean that He might be putting someone through a special test.

The verse says:

"If We make man taste mercy from Ourselves, (and) then take it off from him, verily he is despairing ungrateful."

As man does not understand the Divine wisdom and his own good, he tends to jump to conclusions, feels desperate and becomes ungrateful.

However faith in Him is not based upon what we perceive to be our happiness in life. Allah's blessings are the consequences of His judgment and His grace, not the results of our merit. Therefore, despair of Allah's blessings leads to ungratefulness.

In this regard, the verse says:

"…verily he is despairing ungrateful."

Surah Hud - Verse 10

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ

10. "And if We make him taste (Our) favors after adversity has afflicted him, he will say, 'The evils have departed from me'. Verily he is joyous, boastful."

All the blessings which are handed down to man after hardships and sufferings must serve as a source of thanksgiving and remembering Allah (s.w.t.) and not as a means of arrogance, boasting and self satisfaction.

There are two risks to one's joy, one is making a wrong analysis of events, and the other is that this joy would result in a person's arrogance.

Worldly affairs do not always take the same path, on the contrary, as some Islamic traditions testify to, they have two sides to them; sometimes they run in your favor, at other times, they run against you.

Once they are in your favor, you must not become arrogant, and once they are otherwise, you must keep your patience because, at any rate, you are the focus of the Divine attention, and you are in the course of Allah's trial.

The verse says:

"And if We make him taste (Our) favors after adversity has afflicted him, he will say, 'The evils have departed from me'. Verily he is joyous, boastful."

Surah Hud - Verse 11

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُم مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

11. "Except those who are patient and constant, and do deeds of righteousness; for them is forgiveness and a great reward."

All cases dealt with in the Qur'an concerning good conduct are mentioned along with faith except in this verse which, says:

"Except those who are patient and constant".

In this verse, too, 'the patient' refers to the true believers compared with those who behave with intolerance.

Patience is not confined only to cases of frustration and bitter events. On the contrary, in cases of abundant welfare and happiness, one must keep patience, otherwise, it will lead man to unruliness as the Children of Israel were when they were liberated from the yoke of Pharaoh and gained a more comfortable life and independence they went the path of aberration.

They then started worshipping cows and when confronted by the protests of Harun, they went so far in their rudeness that they were about to kill their prophet.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"Verily the people judged me weak and had well nigh slain me."[1]

Therefore, being patient in times of joy and sorrow is one of the best examples of good conduct. A true believer is an integrated person who never despairs, neither is he blasphemous, happy-go lucky, nor arrogant. On the contrary, he is patient and persevering.

Surah Hud - Verse 12

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكُ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَي إِلَيْكَ وَضَآئِقُ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَن يَقُولُوا لَوْلآ أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ نَذِيرٌ وَا ۭ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

12. "So perhaps you may (be inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed unto thee, and your breast becomes straitened by it lest they say, 'Why has not a treasure been sent down unto him or an angel not come with him?' Verily you are only a warner, and Allah is custodian over everything."

Once the unbelievers asked the Prophet (S) to turn the mountains of Mecca into gold through a miracle or they wished that an angel come to him, thus confirming him. Others, on the contrary, owing to their grudge and hatred, wanted him to say something related to Hadrat Ali (as) and whenever he would say something, they would reject all of it.

Therefore, the Prophet (S) felt a strain in his heart, and consequently, he delayed conveying the messages. Incidentally, his delay did not intrude upon his infallibility nor was it incompatible with it, for at that time, there was no urgency to convey Allah's message.

Thus, owing to considerations which were not personal but based upon expediency, he could postpone conveying the verses. With the revelation of this verse, those considerations were set aside and the message had now to be conveyed without delay.

The verse says:

"So perhaps you may (be inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed unto thee, and your breast becomes straitened by it lest they say, 'Why has

not a treasure been sent down unto him or an angel not come with him?'...”

Perhaps, the delay in conveying the revelations had been confined solely to a few obstinate people, of whose guidance the Prophet (S) had despaired. However, Allah ordered that although they might not become believers, it was the duty of the Prophet (S) not to abandon them.

The verse continues saying:

“…Verily you are only a warner, and Allah is custodian over everything.”

Therefore, a leader and an authority in propagating the message of Islam must be always decisive in propagating and conveying the word of Allah, remaining undaunted by the people's words and pretexts, for Allah is the guarantor of a prophet's duty and prophets are not responsible for the consequences. They must act according to their duty and leave the rest to the Almighty.

The unbelievers used to put pressure upon the Prophet (S) under various pretexts. It was in addition to the physical tortures that they used to inflict upon him.

Surah Hud - Verse 13

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرَيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُم مِن دُونِ ا ّ ِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

13. “Or do they say: 'He has forged it'? Say, 'Bring you then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful!'”

The Qur'an is not only a miracle of eloquence in itself, it is also a miracle from the view point of its wisdom and ideology, its admonitions, its reasoning, the news it gives of the invisible world and its legislations.

The sentence, “and call to your aid whomsoever you can” is a call addressed to everyone, and not only to those Arabs who could comprehend the eloquence and the fluency of the noble Qur'an.

In this regard He elsewhere reiterates:

“Were men and jinn to combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it...”[2]

The miraculous nature of the Qur'an is multi-faceted. It is found in the sweetness of its words when read, the harmony of its content, etc. Although it had been revealed over a period of 23 years, it had revealed scientific knowledge which had been non-existent at that time.

It foretold affairs that eventually took place in the future. It provided information concerning the nations of antiquity which had left no trace from themselves. It stated comprehensive laws governing all dimensions of the individual and social life of man. And it has remained intact throughout the ages free of all distortions, changes, and of becoming out-dated and forgotten.

Despite making it easy for them and all these challenges, mankind is still rendered impotent.

The Qur'an elsewhere says:

"…to bring the like of this Qur'an…".[3]

In the verse under discussion, it says:

"Bring you then ten suras forged like unto it".

In another place it makes it even easier by saying:

"…then bring one Surah the like thereof...".[4]

In addition to this, the Qur'an issues thought-provoking challenges.

Elsewhere it says:

"Were men and jinn to combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an."[5]

Elsewhere it implies that if they call on all the think-tanks of the whole globe; they cannot produce anything like the Qur'an.

Here is the text:

"…they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others."[6]

History has also clearly proven that enemies have waged numerous wars against Islam, they have planned conspiracies and yet they have never been able to produce even one Surah like that of the Qur'an. Can any miracle performed be better than this?

However, instead of using their reason, the unbelievers, accused the Prophet (S) of fabricating the Qur'an, saying that it is not the word of Allah, while the Qur'an is the eternal miracle of history.

The verse says:

"Or do they say: 'He has forged it'? Say, 'Bring you then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful!'"

Surah Hud - Verse 14

فإن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَآ أُنزِلَ بِعِلْمِ ا ۙ وَأَن لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُسْلِمُونَ

14. "If then they do not answer your (call), know that it is sent down by the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no Allah but He! Will you then submit (to Islam)?"

The unbelievers accused the Prophet (S) of having learned the Qur'an from someone. The Qur'an answers them that the source of this Book is Divine Knowledge and nothing other than that. Sometimes they also said that he had written the Qur'an while receiving help from others. This verse provides a firm answer to all those accusations.

It says:

"If then they do not answer your (call), know that it is sent down by the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no Allah but He! Will you then submit (to Islam)?"

The noble Qur'an is not a product of man's conjectural suppositions, imaginations, or contemplations, it is based upon Allah's Omniscience, recognizing no spatial, temporal, or racial boundaries and is not specific to only one particular generation for it is based on Allah's Knowledge.

Similar to the infinite knowledge of Allah, the secrets of the Qur'an are infinite. Therefore, we must not waver in our opinion concerning the authenticity of the holy Qur'an and in monotheism with regards to Allah because of infidelity and hesitation of disbelievers.

Surah Hud - Verses 15 - 16

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لا يُبْخَسُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الأَخِرَةِ إِلاَّ النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

15. "Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full (the recompense for) their deeds therein, and they will not be defrauded therein."

16. "(But) these are they for whom there is naught in the hereafter but the Fire: and what they have wrought in it shall fail, and vain shall be what they were doing."

Their reward for their good conduct will be delivered to them without any diminution in this world and they will be amply rewarded, which is healthy and favours gifted to them, but there would be no rewards for them in the Afterlife, for they had no intention of meriting Allah's approbation in their deeds and expected no compensation in the Hereafter.

They had only intended to have what they gain in this world and this they have obtained.

The verse says:

"Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full (the recompense for) their deeds therein, and they will not be defrauded therein."

The foregoing holy verses present adequate proofs to the unbelievers and deniers by mentioning the reasons for the miracle of the Qur'an.

After the truth has been well-expounded and made crystal clear, some people abstain from submitting to it for their own material benefits. The Qur'an refers to the fate of such people in this verse and in the one following by saying that those whose aims are simply to have a good and luxurious life are given their complete reward in this world without losing anything.

However, if their intention is to please Allah, they will be rewarded abundantly both in this world and in the next.

One could easily find examples of the above facts in his environment. The Western world, in its unceasing efforts, has split the unknown secrets of many sciences, thus controlling and dominating various forces in nature.

It has attained affluence as a result of its unity and its continuous struggle and resistance against difficulties. Thus, they will evidently reap the fruits of their labor and attain the fruits of victory. However, as their aim is solely confined to the worldly life, the natural consequences of such acts will be only limited to the provisions of this material world.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an explicitly states that whatever they have done in this world (which are rewarded here) will be obliterated in the next world and they will get no rewards for whatever they have performed for all they have done for other than Allah will become null and void.

The verse says:

"(But) these are they for whom there is naught in the hereafter but the Fire: and what they have wrought in it shall fail, and vain shall be what they were doing."

Surah Hud - Verse 17

أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَي بَيّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِنْهُ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَي إِمَاماً وَرَحْمَةً أُوْلَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَن يَكْفُرْبِهِ مِنَ الاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ فَلا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبّكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

17. "Is he then (like unto him) who has a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness from Him, and before it (is) the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)? These believe in it; but whoever of the (different) parties disbelieves in it, the (Hell) Fire is the promised place; so be you not in doubt of it; verily it (the Qur'an) is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe."

Allah has offered more than adequate reasons as to why people must be believers. The Qur'an is a miracle on its own and, at the same time, a person like Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as), is also a witness which testifies to its authenticity. Moreover, the Torah had also provided good tidings as to the emergence of the Qur'an long before it was revealed.

Therefore, the Qur'an inquires whether he who brings clear evidence from his Lord, who is supported by a testifying witness, who is commissioned by Allah, and before whom the Book of Moses (Torah) had come bringing revelations as the forerunner of future blessings to come and heralding his magnitude to be regarded as equal to those who lack all these qualities, signs, and proofs.

The verse says:

"Is he then (like unto him) who has a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness from Him, and before it (is) the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)?…"

He is no one but the Prophet Muhammad (S) and /bayyinah/ or the clear evidence he offers, is the glorious Qur'an, and his witness, who testifies as to the truthfulness of his prophecy amongst the believers is none other than that righteous believer, Ali (as), whose signs and characteristics had been depicted in the Torah long before his historical appearance. Therefore, the authenticity of his mission has been verified in three ways:

First, the Qur'an which is a clear evidence in his hands.

Secondly, the previous holy Books which have precisely explained his signs, and whose adherents were very familiar with those signs during the era of the Prophet (S).

Thirdly, faithful followers, the leading figure of whom is Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as.) who testifies as to the truthfulness of his call and his words.

Can one still doubt the authenticity of his call or compare him with others who claim to be 'prophets'?

Then, it makes an allusion to truth-seeking individuals and calls on them to become believers, telling them to adhere to such a prophet who carries so many clear proofs.

It says:

"…These believe in it;..."

Following this statement, the Qur'an mentions the fate of the unbelievers saying whichever of the various groups denies him, will meet the Fire of the Inferno, as there is its meeting place.

It continues saying:

"…but whoever of the (different) parties disbelieves in it, the (Hell) Fire is the promised place;..."

As is the case with the style of the holy Qur'an in most situations, it addresses the people through addressing the Prophet (S), at the end of the verse as a general lesson it teaches that since the circumstances are as such and the authenticity of his call has been confirmed by so many witnesses, there should not be the least shadow of doubt cast as far as his mission is concerned, for this is a truthful word on the part of Allah though many people, because of their ignorance, fanaticism and ego-centrism would remain unbelievers in his mission.

The verse says:

"…so be you not in doubt of it; verily it (the Qur'an) is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe."

In summary, the verse refers to the privileges of Islam and the Muslims, the righteous ones, and their reliance upon sound reasoning for choosing this divine school of thought, while, simultaneously, it also explains the wicked and evil destiny of the arrogant unbelievers.

Surah Hud - Verse 18

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي ا ً كَذِباً أُوْلَئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَي رَبّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ الاَشْهَادُ هَؤُلآءِ الَّذِين كَذَبُوا عَلَي رَبّهِمْ أَلاَ لَعْنَةُ ا ً عَلَي الظَّالِمِينَ

18. "And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah? (On the Day of Resurrection) these will be presented before their Lord and the witnesses (the prophets and angels) will say: 'These are those who lied against their Lord!' Beware! the curse of Allah is on the unjust."

The Court of the Resurrection contains many witnesses:

A) The Lord who is a witness to all of our conduct:

"Verily, Allah is a witness for everything."[7]

B) The Blessed Prophet (S):

"How will it be then when We bring from every People a witness, and We bring you a witness over those witnesses? [8]

C) The Immaculate Imams (as)

"And thus have We made you an Ummah of middling stand that you may be witnesses over mankind…"[9]

According to some Islamic traditions, what is meant by Ummah (nation) here are the Immaculate Imams, for other individuals in the nation are not eligible for serving as witnesses on that Day owing to their lack of knowledge and their not being infallible.

D) The Angels,

"And every soul shall come forth, with each will be a driver, and a witness." [10]

On the Day of Resurrection every person will be accompanied with two angels; one of them drives him and the other is a witness over him.

E) The Earth:

"On that Day, she (the earth) will recount (all) her news."[11]

F) Conscience:

"Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day."[12]

G) One's Bodily Organs:

"On the Day (of Resurrection), their tongue, and their hands, and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they used to do." [13]

H) Time: Imam Sajjad (as) states in the sixth prayer of the Sahifa that:

"Today (on the Day of Resurrection) is a new day which will testify as to the kind of conduct we have had."

I) Performance:

"…and what they had done they shall find present (there)…"[14]

Question: The Qur'an has employed the word /'azlamu/ when referring to many sins while the utmost oppression must be one and not more than one. Why is it so?

Answer: This inference is used in [15] cases, all of which are concerned with spiritual mental deviations irrespective of polytheism, false accusations, covering up the truth and withholding it, and obstruction of the way and of the remembrance of Allah. Therefore, the most important of the oppressions is intellectual, cultural, and ideological.

The Qur'an in this verse, as well as in a few verses which come later, explains the situation, profile, and the fate of those who falsely accuse Allah as follows:

The most oppressive individual is he who is deprived of Divine favors, denies the Day of Resurrection, distorts facts, obstructs the way of Allah and is neither able to escape Allah's domination in this world nor to seek assistance on the Day of Resurrection.

He is the one whose punishment is multi-fold, his life has gone with the wind, his endeavors have become null and void, and his life and soul have become lost.

Therefore, false accusations against Allah are the greatest of the unjust. Writers and preachers of religion must be on guard against wrong words and their writings and keep in mind the fact that there are many witnesses who will testify as to what they have said and written on the Day of Resurrection.

The verse says:

"And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah? (On the Day of Resurrection) these will be presented before their Lord and the witnesses (the prophets and angels) will say: 'These are those who lied against their Lord!' Beware! the curse of Allah is on the unjust."

Surah Hud - Verse 19

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ا ۖ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجاً وَهُمْ بِالأَخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

19. "Those who hinder (people) from the path of Allah and seek to make it crooked, and they are themselves unbelievers as to the hereafter."

Enemies obstruct the Path of Allah through various methods including heresy, false accusations, personal interpretations, forging traditions, provoking skepticism, emptying mosques, abandoning and neglecting the

teaching of Ahl-ul-Bayt, standing in the way of good conduct, fabricating pretexts to justify immoral entertainment, setting forth insignificant issues of hero worship, recommending and propagating falsehood, humiliating faithful believers, forbidding what has been allowed by religion, giving undue appreciation and recommendation of what is not appropriate, glorifying despots, etc.

Among the clear examples of obstruction of Allah's Path, one may cite closing the gate of the 'House of Allah', closing the 'House of the men of Allah,' and the 'House of the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet (S)' as well as that of the immaculate and just leaders.

The enemy obstructs the Path first, and if he is unable to do so, he diverts the course leading to the Path.

The verse says:

"Those who hinder (people) from the path of Allah and seek to make it crooked, and they are themselves unbelievers as to the hereafter."

Surah Hud - Verse 20

أُوْلَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِن دُونِ ا ً مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ

20. "They will in no wise frustrate (His design) on the earth, nor shall there be for them any protectors besides Allah! The penalty will be doubled for them. They could not bear to hear (the truth), and they used not to see (it)."

How can one reconcile the issue of the manifestation and multiplication of Allah's punishment with Divine justice which seem to be incompatible with each other?

Answer: He who misleads others, owing to his power and position, naturally must be held responsible for their faults.

Thus, the sin committed by knowledgeable people, because of their social function, is manifold when compared to that committed by ordinary people and this is identical with justice. Any way, the oppressors are under the yoke of the Divine wrath and power, and will meet their own doom.

The holy verse says:

"They will in no wise frustrate (His design) on the earth, nor shall there be for them any protectors besides Allah! The penalty will be doubled for them. They could not bear to hear (the truth), and they used not to see (it)."

Those who make false accusations must forget and give up the idea that being the support of despots and being among their entourage will save them.

Surah Hud - Verses 21 - 22

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ
لا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ هُمُ الأَخْسَرُونَ

21. "These are they who have lost their own selves, and that which they used to invent has failed them."

22. "Assuredly, they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter."

In Islamic culture, the world is compared to a marketplace where people are salesmen and the purchasing group consists of Allah, the Satan, one's passionate self, etc., the number of which is numerous.

The merchandise is the soul, property and performance. This merchandise is on offer at an expensive or cheap price. Hence the words /'ajr/ (recompense), /awab/ (reward), /di'f/ and /'id'af/, are used frequently in the Qur'an to mean recompense; while the terms /xusr/ (loss) and /xusranun mubin/ (manifest loss) and /axsarin/ (the most losers) are used about damage.

The important warning is that we know that every loss can be compensated except the passage of one's lifetime which cannot be redeemed.

The holy verse says:

"These are they who have lost their own selves, and that which they used to invent has failed them."

Sometimes, wealth and property, position and power or one's social status are lost. At other times, man himself and his humanity are lost which is the greatest of all losses.

Therefore, worldly losses can be compensated but losses incurred in the Hereafter cannot be replaced.

The verse says:

"Assuredly, they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter."

Surah Hud - Verse 23

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَخْبَتُوا إِلَي رَبِّهِمْ أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

23. "Verily those who believe and work righteousness, and humble themselves before their Lord, they will be Companions of the Garden, (paradise), they will abide therein for ever."

The Qur'anic word /axbatu/, is derived from /xabt/ which means both submission and humility as well as comfort and confidence.

Reward and encourage have also been mentioned along with warnings and threats.

Following the aforementioned verses which explained the fate of those who are involved in giving false accusations, this verse exposes the profile of those involved in righteous deeds.

It implies that those who believe and perform righteous acts and behave well, who submit themselves before Allah and are confident of His promises, will be among the Companions of Paradise, remaining there forever.

The verse says:

"Verily those who believe and work righteousness, and humble themselves before their Lord, they will be Companions of the Garden, (paradise), they will abide therein for ever."

Surah Hud - Verse 24

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالاَعْمَي وَالاَصَمّ وَالْبَصيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلاً أَفَلا تَذَكَّرُونَ

24. "The similitude the two parties is like the blind and the deaf, and the seeing (ones) and the hearing (ones). Are they equal in likeness? Will you not then admonish?"

As one's body has eyes and ears, one's heart also has eyes and ears and as the blind and the deaf do not perceive the sensations of the world and do not enjoy them, obstinate individuals also stop enjoying the Divine acquaintance and do not enjoy it.

Therefore, the Qur'an inquires whether the deaf and the blind are equal to the hearing and the seeing in the eyes of a wise man. And as they are not equal, the faithful and the unbeliever are not identical either. Do you not meditate in this matter so as to attain to the truth?

The verse says:

"The similitude the two parties is like the blind and the deaf, and the seeing (ones) and the hearing (ones). Are they equal in likeness? Will you not then admonish?"

Notes

1. Surah 'A'raf, No. 7, verse 150
2. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
3. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 23
5. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
6. Ibid
7. Surah Hajj, No. 22, verse 17
8. Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 41
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 143
10. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 21
11. Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verse 4
12. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 14
13. Surah Nur, No. 24, verse 24
14. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49

Section 3: The Ministry of Noah

Surah Hud - Verses 25 - 26

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحاً إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

25. "And verily, We sent Noah to his people, (saying:) 'I am a plain warner for you'."

26. "That you serve none but Allah; verily, I do fear for you the penalty of a painful day."

Hadrat Noah is the first prophet among those possessors of determination /'ulul 'azm/ i.e., among the major prophets, who stood up against polytheism and idol worship, and as the human generation traces its genealogy back to him after the drowning of the unbelievers, he is addressed as the second Adam and, since his life-time was longest comparing that of other prophets, he is called Master of the Prophets.

Allah, the Gracious, has told the story of the prophets of the past to warn the unbelievers and to soothe the Prophet (S). Taking up the story of Noah, the Qur'an says that he was sent to his people so as to warn them against worshipping other than Allah.

The verse says:

"And verily, We sent Noah to his people, (saying:) 'I am a plain warner for you'."

He started His call in a sincere manner inviting them to accept monotheism because it was the most supreme ideal, for no other act of worship would be accepted before the All-knowing Allah, the sole and only Creator of the world.

The verse says:

"That you serve none but Allah; verily, I do fear for you the penalty of a painful day."

Surah Hud - Verse 27

فَقَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلاَّ بَشَراً مِّثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ

أَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَي لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

27. "Then the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: 'We do not see (in) you but a man like ourselves, nor do we see that any follow you but those who are the meanest among us, at first thought, nor do we see (in) you any excellence over us; nay, we think you are liars!'"

The opponents of the truth sometimes belittle and endeavor to weaken the Divine leaders. They claim that prophets are men like others and not superior to them.

The verse says:

"Then the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: 'We do not see (in) you but a man like ourselves..."

At other times, humiliating the prophets' followers, they claim that they are some unimportant and insignificant people.

The verse continues saying:

"…nor do we see that any follow you but those who are the meanest among us, at first thought..."

At other times, they despise the entire school claiming that the adherents of this school are naive and superficial who lack any depth of vision.

The verse says:

"…nor do we see (in) you any excellence over us; nay, we think you are liars!'"

Arrogant people often detest being equal with the masses, especially with those who are deprived. Usually, the aristocrats have always allied themselves with the opponents of the prophets but those who take less interest in worldly affairs, become believers more quickly and are more decent.

Therefore, the opponents of the prophets lack reasoning and whatever they claim is based on conjecture, speculation and on hallucinations.

Surah Hud - Verse 28

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَي بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبِّي وءَاتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِندِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنُلْزِمُكُمُوهَا وَأَنتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ

28. "He said: "O my People! Bethink you, if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has grant me mercy from His Presence, but has been obscured for you; shall we compel you to (accept) it while you are averse to it?"

This holy verse provides answers to two objections of the unbelievers which were raised in the foregoing verse.

The unbelievers used to say that Noah (as) was a man like themselves. This verse answers that although in appearance the prophets are like the unbelievers, they have merited Allah's particular approbation since they receive revelations and perform miracles.

The unbelievers would say that the followers of Hadrat Noah (as) were some simple minded, short sighted, and naive people. The verse answers that such was not the case, although apparently they were weaker than the unbelievers, they had become believers through witnessing the proofs shown to them by their prophet. Their conviction, indeed, was not baseless and without reason.

Despite all the false accusations and groundless protests, the prophets have always displayed a tolerant attitude towards their foes and they still took recourse to logic, reasoning and appeal to their emotions.

Of all the things required of the prophets, offering proofs to the people and performing miracles combined with decisive reasoning leave no room for any excuses. Nothing must withhold people from exercising their free choice. Once they stick to their beliefs, they will prosper and once they refuse to do so they will be tormented. There is no compulsion in that.

The verse says:

"He said: "O my People! Bethink you, if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has grant me mercy from His Presence, but has been

obscured for you; shall we compel you to (accept) it while you are averse to it?"

Surah Hud - Verse 29

وَيَا قَوْمِ لاَ أَسْأَلُكُم عَلَيْهِ مَالاً إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي ا ّ ِ وَمَا أَنَاْ بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُم مُلاَقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْماً تَجْهَلُونَ

29. "And O' my People! I ask you no wealth for it. My reward is only upon Allah, and I will not drive away those who believe, (for) verily they shall meet their Lord, but I see you are an ignorant people."

The secret of a preacher's success is his lack of over expectation with regard to people and not letting himself be stymied by the objections of the wealthy corrupt classes.

If the prophets were seeking illegitimate profits, they would call on the aristocrats and not the poor, on the princes not on the paupers. The followers of the prophets are the oppressed people and they never neglect them.

The prophets are never greedy for the people's property. Their sole purpose, according to their mission is to save the people from their ignorance and from the Divine punishment.

The verse says:

"And O' my People! I ask you no wealth for it. My reward is only upon Allah, and I will not drive away those who believe, (for) verily they shall meet their Lord, but I see you are an ignorant people."

Surah Hud - Verse 30

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَن يَنصُرُنِي مِنَ ا ّ ِ إِن طَرَدتُّهُمْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

30. "And O my people! Who will help me against Allah if I drove them away? Will you not then reflect?"

The Qur'an further explains the situation in this verse, and from the tongue of the prophet to his people, it implies that if he cast out this group, who in this world can come to his assistance in that great Court of Justice?

The verse says:

"And O my people! Who will help me against Allah if I drove them away?..."

Driving out the righteous and faithful believers is no easy matter. They can bear witness against the prophet on the Day of Resurrection and no one will be able to defend him then, while, at the same time, the Divine punishment might also face him in this world. And contemplating this would lead to knowledge that whatever the prophet said was identical with the truth.

The verse says:

"…Will you not then reflect?"

Surah Hud - Verse 31

وَلاَ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَآئِنُ ا ّ ِ وَلاَ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلاَ أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلاَ أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَن يُؤْتِيَهُمُ ا ّ ُ خَيْراً ا ّ ُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذاً لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

31. "And I do not say to you (that) Allah's treasures are with me; nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel; nor do I say, about those whom your eyes do despise, (that) Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is well aware of what is in their hearts; (for) verily then I should be of the unjust."

Knowledge of Unseen, regarding anything and every condition, is absolutely with Allah. The Qur'an says: "And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them..."[1] which means that the keys to the invisible world are in His Own authority.

However, due to Divine Providence and according to the Divine Will, men of Allah will sometimes find windows opened up for them. The Qur'an in regard to this fact says:

"These are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you..."[2]

Therefore, Allah's prophets are knowledgeable about the invisible world as the Qur'an states:

"The Knower of the Unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any,"
"Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle…"[3].

This verse means that He is knowledgeable about the invisible world, and no one is aware of this knowledge of the invisible except those whom He has selected from among His prophets.

Not only the knowledge of the invisible world is His own prerogative but the power to perform extraordinary works also rests with Him, though Allah can and will bestow something of whatever aspect of His power which He deems worthy upon anyone He chooses and to the extent that He wishes. For example, it is mentioned in the Qur'an that death and life are in His Power:

"Verily, it is He who makes one die and live".[4]

However, the Qur'an also says that Hadrat 'Isa (as) made the dead live with His permission;

"I make the dead live with His permission."[5]

Although Allah takes lives "Allah takes the souls…"[6] yet angels take lives with His permission:

"The angel of death shall cause you to die..."[7]

And although He is the sole Creator of all, "Allah is the Creator of every thing..."[8], But Hadrat 'Isa creates, however, with His permission:

"…and when you did make of clay a thing like the shape of a bird, by My leave..."[9]

Theological research has shown that no one individual existing among the jinn and mankind can have access to the science of the invisible world apart from a limited amount of it which depends upon their potentialities.

This type of knowledge in relation to them is not a science of the invisible after it is bestowed on them although it might be so for others. On the other hand, Allah has made the prophets and the Imams knowledgeable about the invisible world and aware of the past and future.

For example, the blessed Prophet (S) had foretold the news of the 'Imamat' of twelve persons, the sufferings inflicted on them, the intentional disappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as) and his reappearance, the events occurring during the last days, the establishment of his government, and the

resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment, other similar matters have also been passed down to us from the other Imams (as).

Without doubt whatever has not been given to us in this respect is due to the lack of capacity on the part of the average man or has been withheld for reasons known only to Allah.[10]

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an goes back to the subject of oppressed believers, emphasizing that the prophet cannot say that those whom the disbelievers despise will not be rewarded by Allah.

On the contrary, the blessings of this world and those of the next belong to the oppressed even though they are empty handed in this world. It is the wrongdoers who in their infatuation with the world consider goodness to be confined to wealth, position, youth, and the like, demonstrating their lack of knowledge of the truth and its true meaning.

Even if one assumes that the oppressors are right and that the oppressed are indeed wretches, still Allah is more aware than us of what is in their minds, for we know nothing about them except what is indicative of their good faith and sincerity, and thus we are obliged to accept them.

I am only required to judge and relate with men based on their outward behavior, judging a man on the basis of his inward nature belongs to Allah alone, and if I act otherwise, I will certainly be among the oppressors.

The verse says:

"And I do not say to you (that) Allah's treasures are with me; nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel; nor do I say, about those whom your eyes do despise, (that) Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is well aware of what is in their hearts; (for) verily then I should be of the unjust."

Surah Hud - Verse 32

قَالُوا يَانُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

32. "They said: 'O' Noah! You have disputed with us and multiplied disputation with us. Bring us then what you have promised us (of divine punishment), if you are truthful.'"

Disputes are only valuable whenever they are honestly in pursuit of the truth and done in a respectful and polite manner; as the Qur'an says:

"…and argue with them in the best manner."[11]

If the dispute is based on what is wrong, it is of no value, as the holy Qur'an says:

"…and they disputed by means of the falsehood in order to stamp out the truth thereby..."[12]

Thus, as the unbelievers did not have logic on their side and accepted no logical arguments, they sought to bring the debate to and end by telling him to bring unto them what he had promised.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' Noah! You have disputed with us and multiplied disputation with us. Bring us then what you have promised us (of divine punishment), if you are truthful.'"

Therefore Hadrat Noah (as) cursed them after they had made their declaration that they wanted him to send down their destruction.

Surah Hud - Verse 33

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُم بِهِ اللَّهُ إِن شَآءَ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

33. "He said: 'Verily Allah will bring it to you, if He wills, and you will not be able to frustrate (it).'"

Noah replies that the realization of the punishment for their heedlessness and obstinacy is not up to him but it is dependent upon the Will of Allah. He himself is only a messenger and a sincere servant of the Almighty.

They should beware, however, that when the command for the punishment is issued they cannot escape His power for they are at His mercy and they will not be able to take refuge anywhere.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Verily Allah will bring it to you, if He wills, and you will not be able to frustrate (it).'"

Surah Hud - Verse 34

وَلاَ يَنفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُّ أَنْ أَنصَحَ لَكُمْ إِن كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَن يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

34. "And my advice will not profit you, should I intend to give you advice, if Allah wills to lead you astray. He is your Lord and unto Him you will be returned."

Noah said that his advice would have been of no use to them even though he sincerely wished to counsel them.

The punishment and retribution of the evildoers is up to Allah, and prophets are nothing but agents for conveying the Divine message and admonishing the people.

There is no way for man to resist or escape Divine justice and punishment, for Allah's Will overcomes all other wills. Even if one is not punished in this world, Allah will deal with him on the Day of Resurrection, and then he will see the final result of his deeds.

However, the Arabic word /nush/ refers to the saying or deed by which sincere reformation is achieved, and the Arabic word /qayy/is called to that kind of ignorance which has its roots in corrupt and evil convictions.

The difference between /'idlal/ and /'iqwa/ is that the doer of the former knows the destination but he has lost the way, while with respect to /'iqwa/ the aim and intention are both unknown.

Attributing the actions of /'idlal/ and /'iqwa/ to Allah is in the way of punishing those who are misled because of the obstinacy and corruption of their character. It does not mean that from the beginning and without prior premise Allah goes on leading one astray.

Surah Hud - Verse 35

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَيَّ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَاْ بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُجْرِمُونَ

35. "Or they say: 'He has forged it.' Say: 'If I have forged it, upon me is my sin, and I am quit of the sins you commit'."

Some of the unbelievers among the Quraysh claimed that these stories of the prophets had been fabricated by the Prophet himself (S) which he then attributed to Allah.

The Almighty instructs him to tell them that if he had fabricated them, it would be he alone who would suffer the consequences and they would not be held responsible, but the converse is also true with respect to their transgressions, that he is just as free of responsibility for their sins and offences.

His duty is only to convey the message and nothing else, whether or not they accepted or rejected it.

The verse says:

"Or they say: 'He has forged it.' Say: 'If I have forged it, upon me is my sin, and I am quit of the sins you commit'."

Apparently because of the Qur'anic word /qul/, which means 'say', and owing to the news about the unbelievers of Mecca and the Prophet of Islam, the verse relates to the Apostle of Islam (S).

Anyway, he who commits an act will only be held responsible and it is no one else's fault. The Prophet (S) will not be involved in their sins either.

The fact that they did not accept the faith and attributed false accusations to the Qur'an, calling the Prophet a liar, all together resulted in grievous consequences while on his part, he had performed his mission in admonishing and conveying the message to them.

The Arabic term /'ijram/ and /jurm/ mean the picking of unripe fruits and which thereafter have been referred to whatever indecent behavior or offence or sin.

Notes

1. Surah Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 59
2. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 49
3. Surah The Jinn, No. 72, verses 26, 27
4. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 44
5. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 49
6. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 42
7. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 11
8. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 16
9. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 110
10. Refer to Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol.35 p.420, 'Usul ul Kafi, vol.1, p.225 Yanabi' ul Mawaddah, vol.1, p.605; Kashf-ul Ghumma, vol.3, p.340, Safinat-ul-Bihar 'Uyun Akhbar-ur-Rida, vol.2, p.237; Kitab al Sirat ul Haqq, vol.3 p.340, 'Uyun-i-Akhbar-ur-Rida, vol.2, Nahjul Balaqah and Haqayiq by Ibn Shahr-'Ashub, and other books regarding the 'Knowledge of the Imams.
11. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 125
12. Surah Ghafir, No. 40, verse 5

Section 4: The Fate of Those Who Disbelieved Noah

Surah Hud - Verse 36

وَأُوحِيَ إِلَى نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَن يُؤْمِنَ مِن قَوْمِكَ إِلاَّ مَن قَدْ ءَامَنَ فَلاَ تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

36. "And it was revealed unto Noah: 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed, so do not grieve as to what they used to do'."

The previous holy verses thoroughly covered the stage of inviting the people to the religion on Divine unity and Noah's indefatigable propagation and dissemination of the Divine message which he accomplished using all the devices he had available. This verse deals with the second stage of the campaign; the final stage of the propagation phase.

Here, the second phase of the campaign has not been dealt with, it is the end of the propagation stage, and the second stage is the preparation for the Divine purge.

At first, we read that it was revealed to Noah that no one else except those who had already adhered to him would become believers.

The verse says:

"And it was revealed unto Noah: 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed..."

Reference is here made to the fact that alignments had already been made and finalized and no further call or reformation would have been useful, hence a state of readiness for the upheaval and the purge must be declared.

Towards the end of the verse, consoling Noah, the Qur'an implies that he should not despair at all despite whatever wrongful deeds they used to do.

The verse says:

"…so do not grieve as to what they used to do'."

In the meantime, one can infer from this verse that Allah made those aspects of the knowledge of the secrets of the Unseen that He had deemed necessary, accessible so that His prophet should know.

Surah Hud - Verse 37

وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ

37. "And make you the Ark under Our eyes, and as We reveal; and address Me not about those who are unjust; verily they shall be drowned."

At any rate, this unruly and obstinate group must be punished with the kind of punishment that would remove their polluting existence from the entire world, thus liberating the faithful believers from their yoke.

At first, the Qur'an implies that Allah commanded Noah to build an Ark according to His order and in His presence.

The verse says:

"And make you the Ark under Our eyes, and as We reveal;..."

Towards the end of the verse, Noah is warned against any form of mediation on behalf of the oppressors. Saying to him that he should not ask for any amnesty or clemency for they are certainly condemned to chastisement and to be drowned as soon as they are convicted.

The verse says:

"…and address Me not about those who are unjust; verily they shall be drowned."

One can very easily infer from this sentence that taking up the act of mediation requires certain preconditions which, when they are lacking in someone, even Allah's prophet is not rightful to mediate on his behalf.

Surah Hud - Verse 38

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلأٌ مِن قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قَالَ إِن تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنكُم كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ

38. "And he began making the Ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him they scoffed at him. He said: 'If you scoff at us, we (too) shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff '."

Let us briefly discuss the situation of Noah's People. Instead of taking Noah's call seriously for a moment, and allowing some room for accepting the probability of the truth of his repeated calls which might have had their origins in Divine Providence and that the subject of punishment through storms might be serious, Noah's people went on mocking and ridiculing as is the case with all arrogant and vainglorious people, however he went on building the Ark.

Whenever some of his people passed by him they would watch Noah and his companions struggle to prepare the timber, nails and other ship-building instruments, and they would laugh and ridicule them. The verse says:

"And he began making the Ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him they scoffed at him..."

However, Noah pursued his goal with an extraordinary persistence whose origins lay in his faith, and paying no attention to what they said, he made rapid progress in his efforts. Day after day, the structure of the ship came closer and closer to completion. Noah would sometimes raise his head, and told them this short out expressive statement:

"You ridicule us today, but we will surely do the same thing to you soon, the day when you are caught, lost and wandering in the storm, terrified, running in all directions with no shelter, crying in the midst of the waves, begging for mercy, the believers then and there will laugh at your negligence, and ignorance."

The verse says:

"…He said: 'If you scoff at us, we (too) shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff '."

Surah Hud - Verse 39

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ

39. "So you shall know soon to whom a Penalty (that) will confound him comes, and upon whom there shall fall a lasting Penalty."

The meaning of the punishment which is modified by the term /yuxzihi/ is the devastating worldly punishment, i.e. their being drowned which would humiliate and belittle them, whilst the meaning of the term /'aŏabun muqim/ is the punishment to be imposed on the Day of Resurrection.

The verse says:

"So you shall know soon to whom a Penalty (that) will confound him comes, and upon whom there shall fall a lasting Penalty."

In some Islamic narrations, one reads that forty years prior to the appearance of the storm, a type of disease had spread among the women of the People of Noah which had prevented them from giving birth to children. This event, in fact, marked the beginning of their punishment.

Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark, undoubtedly, was not an ordinary ship and its manufacture in those days with the technology of the time was not easily accomplished. It was a large vessel which, in addition to the believers, accommodated pairs of an extremely wide variety of animals, it also carried a large amount of food supplies for the human passengers, as well as food for the animals which was unprecedented for that time.

In particular, this ship had to be safely navigated through a sea that covered the entire world with mountain-sized waves and still remain intact. In their commentaries, some Qur'an commentators have expressed their admiration for the magnitude of the ship. Refer to the comments of Majma'-ul-Bayan for further information.

Surah Hud - Verse 40

حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِن كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمَآ ءَامَنَ مَعَهُ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ

40. "(Thus it was) till, when Our Command came, and the oven gushed forth (water)! We said: "Embark therein, of each kind a pair, and your family (apart from your wife and a son) - except for those him against whom the Word has already passed - and whoever believed. But there believed not with him but a few."

The Onset of the Flood

In the previous verses, we noted how Noah and the true believers became occupied in building the Ark of Salvation and, while subjected to all kinds of difficulties and sarcasms of the arrogant unbelieving majority, they prepared themselves for the flood.

Here, the Qur'an expounds upon the third highlight or the climax of the story which relates to the punishment inflicted upon this oppressive nation.

First of all, it says that this situation continued until Allah's command was issued and the dawning of the divine punishment appeared, and waters of the earth gushed forth. The verse says:

"(Thus it was) till, when Our Command came, and the oven gushed forth (water)!..."

Those people who were inattentive and unaware probably noticed the bubbling water in their wells, but, as usual, they did not heed these Divine warnings much less try to understand their meaning. They probably did not pay any attention to it at all to see if a cataclysm was about to occur, and maybe to at least entertain the possibility that Noah's warnings might be real.

At this time, the Command was issued to Noah that he should put a pair of each animal on the Ark so that they would not be exterminated in the

flood. And that he, his family, except those for whom word had already had been marked for their punishment, and the believers should board the Ark of Salvation. However few were those who had believed in him.

The verse says:

"…We said: "Embark therein, of each kind a pair, and your family (apart from your wife and a son) - except for those him against whom the Word has already passed - and whoever believed. But there believed not with him but a few."

This verse, on the one hand, refers to the wife of Noah and his son 'Kan'an', who, deviating from the path of belief and being in collaboration with the sinners, had broken off their relationship with Noah and were not entitled to embark on the Ark.

On the other hand, it refers to the limited success that Noah (as) had had in persuading people to follow his way of life during his long years of continuous struggle that had resulted in getting only a small number of believers.

Surah Hud - Verse 41

وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ ا ّ ِ مَجْرِيهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

41. "And he (Noah) said: 'Embark in it! In Allah's Name shall be its sailing and its berthing. Verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

Noah assembled his relatives and companions quickly and as the time of the devastating storm and the striking Punishment approached, he ordered them to embark in the name of Allah and to remember Allah both when the Ark was in motion or standing still for He is the All Forgiving, the All Compassionate.

The verse says:

"And he (Noah) said: 'Embark in it! In Allah's Name shall be its sailing and its berthing. Verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

Owing to His blessings, Allah had made these instruments available to you, His faithful servants, and because of His forgiveness, He may pardon your offences.

Surah Hud - Verse 42

وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ فِي مَعْزِلٍ يَا بُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلاَ تَكُن مَعَ الكَافِرِينَ

42. "So, it sailed with them amid waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son and he was aloof: 'O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers.'"

At long last, the final moment arrived and the Command for the punishment of this unruly nation was issued. Dark and ominous clouds darker than the darkest night covered the entire sky, massing on top of each other in an unprecedented manner. There was the terrible clap of thunder and the flash of lightning ceaselessly filled up the sky. They informed of a great disaster mounting in magnitude and terrible in character.

It started raining. The droplets grew bigger and bigger in size. The level of underground water rose and gushing fountains emerged everywhere.

The surface of the earth was soon turned into an ocean, and with the wind howling, mountain-like waves raged over this ocean, rising over each other, to come crashing down upon the surface of the stormy sea. Noah's Ark parted the mountain-like waves and made headway.

The verse says:

"So, it sailed with them amid waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son and he was aloof:..."

Addressing his son, who was standing on the side and not far from him, Noah shouted:

"...'O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers."

However, his son's companionship and association with evil company had overtaken him to such an extent that his father's compassion against annihilation made no impact upon him.

Surah Hud - Verse 43

قَالَ سَآوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَآءِ قَالَ لاَ عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ ا ً إِلاَّ مَن رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِينَ

43. "He said: 'I will take refuge in a mountain; it will save me from the water.' Said he (Noah): 'Today, there is no protector from Allah's decree but (of whom) He has mercy.' And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned."

This obstinate and shortsighted son, thinking that he could escape Allah's anger, shouted implying that his father should not be worried about him. He would take to the mountain which could never be overtaken by flood-waters, and it would shelter him.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I will take refuge in a mountain; it will save me from the water.'..."

Noah still did not despair. He advised his son once more, so as to lead him onto the True Path and overcome his son's shortsightedness and arrogance. He said to him that no power was able to save anyone from Allah's command. The only hope of being saved remained for him who was covered by Allah's blessing.

The verse says:

"…Said he (Noah): 'Today, there is no protector from Allah's decree but (of whom) He has mercy.'..."

At this time, a wave, coming between them, overwhelmed his son, uprooting him as if he was a straw, and placed him among the drowned ones.

The verse continues saying:

"…And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned."

The Educational implications of Noah's Flood

As we notice, the main aim of the Qur'an is to teach us lessons by recounting the didactic teachings of past history, from which one can draw the following inferences:

1- Purging the Face of the Earth

It is true that Allah is Compassionate and Kind. However, one must not forget that He is at the same time Wise. Whenever a nation becomes corrupt and does not answer the call of His messengers He judges it appropriate that that nation has no right to continue to live. Ultimately, their system will be overthrown through some natural or social revolutions.

This has not been confined to the Noah's nation, nor has it been confined to a particular time and place. As a result of the Divine Providence this has taken place throughout all ages and among all nations up to our time. The first and the second World Wars might be regarded as examples of such a purge.

2- Why Punishment Was Inflicted by a Flood

It is true that a corrupt nation must be exterminated, but their means of annihilation can vary. The holy verses of the Qur'an provide evidence that punishments are commensurate with sins of the nations punished.

The Pharaoh relied on the River Nile which was the backbone of his power, and, interestingly, it became the source of his annihilation.

The People of Noah was an agricultural and a livestock-breeding nation. That ungodly nation had relied upon rainfall for everything, and ultimately that very nation was wiped out by rainfall.

If we notice that our contemporary fellow human beings are being devastated with their most modern arms and ammunitions, we must not be surprised, for the advanced industries which they relied upon for the exploitation of oppressed nations, would be eventually used for their own destruction.

3- Unreliable Shelters of Straw

It is usual for everyone to take shelter to something when in need. Some take refuge in their wealth, some find shelter in their position, some rely upon their bodily strength, and finally, some rely upon their power of thinking.

However, as the above verses show, and as history has demonstrated for us, none of these can resist the command of the Almighty, and they will easily disappear just like a spider's web standing in the storms.

The ignorant and stiff-necked son of the prophet Noah committed the same fault. He thought that the mountains could protect him from Allah's Wrath. But, what a grave mistake! The sweep of a wave put an end to his life.

4- The Ark of Salvation

As it has been quoted from the blessed Prophet (S) which is found in Shi'ah and Sunni books, the Prophet's family, which are the Imams and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), as well as the content of the school of Islam, have been designated as 'the Ark of Salvation'.

That is, when tremendous changes occur in the mental, ideological, and social spheres of the Islamic community, the only means of salvation is to take refuge in the School of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

The tradition which talks about this 'Ark of Salvation', the tradition of /safinah/ (ship) has been generally accepted by the consensus of the Imamiah scholars and by more than 100 Sunni scholars as well. It has been narrated as follows:

"Abuthar, the great companion of the Prophet (S), while holding the knob of the door of the Ka'bah, said with a loud voice:

'O you people! I heard the Prophet (S) saying with my own ears, that the Prophet (S) said 'The similitude of my Ahl-ul-Bayt (family) is like Noah's Ark; he who embarks upon it is rescued, and he who distances himself from it, will perish.'

Certainly, other great personalities at the dawn of Islam like Abu Sa'id Khedri, Ibn Abbas, Abdullah-Ibn Zubayr, and Anas Ibn-Malik have also quoted this tradition of the Prophet (S) which has been mentioned in the known books of the Ahl al Sunna.[1]

If we place this sequential 'Hadith" (tradition) alongside another sequential 'Hadith' which says: "The Muslims will be divided into 73 sects, out of which only one will be saved," it would become evident that the Prophet (S) himself considered this sect to be the one that follows the Ahl-ul-Bayt, (as) and where he says 'He who embarks upon it will be saved,' he means the same term /najiyah/ (saved).

Surah Hud - Verse 44

وَقِيلَ يَآ أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَآءَكِ وَيَا سَمَآءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَآءُ وَقُضِيَ الأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلِي الْجُودِيّ وَقِيلَ بُعْداً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

44. "And it was said: 'O earth! Swallow down your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain)!' And the water abated, and the matter was ended, and it (the Ark) rested on the (Mount) Judi, and it was said: 'Away with the unjust people!'"

The End of an Adventure

Noah left the ship up to Allah to take the rudder in His own hands. The waves had taken the ship in an undesignated direction. It has been quoted that the ship drifted for six months, passing by various places, including Mecca and the area surrounding the House of the Ka'ba.

Eventually, the decree ending the punishment and the return of the earth to its original state was issued. This verse explains the details and the conditions as well as the ensuing consequences in a concise, and at the same time, extraordinarily beautiful and eloquent manner in a few sentences.

The earth was commanded to absorb all its water and the sky was ordered to stop raining; the water subsisted and the work was accomplished.

The verse says:

"And it was said: 'O earth! Swallow down your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain)!' And the water abated, and the matter was ended..."

The ship came to rest on the slopes of Mount Judi, which is a famous mountain near Mosul and it was at this time that it was proclaimed that off with the oppressors!

The verse says:

"…and it (the Ark) rested on the (Mount) Judi, and it was said: 'Away with the unjust people!'"

According to a number of Arab men of knowledge this verse is counted as the most eloquent and the most fluent of the Qur'anic verses.

According to the narrations and the books of Islamic history it is said that some unbelievers of the Quraysh, starting a campaign against the Qur'an, decided to fabricate verses like those of the Holy Book.

Their supporters provided them with the best food and drink for forty days including the kernel of a particular type of wheat, mutton, and old wine, so that their minds would be free of every kind of anxiety in order to compose the verses.

However, when they arrived at the above verse, they were so moved by it that they gazed at one another in surprise, saying:

"These are words unsurpassed and unequalled by all means, and they do not resemble those made by human beings."

Saying this, they abandoned their decision and dispersed in despair.

Surah Hud - Verse 45

وَنَادَىٰ نُوحٌ رَّبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

45. "And Noah called unto his Lord, and said: "O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family, and certainly Your promise is true and You are the Most just of Judges."

The Tragic Story of Noah's Son

In the foregoing verses, we noted that Noah's son did not listen to his father's advice, and did not stop being obstinate and stiff-necked to the last moment.

Another part of this same story is being dealt with here. That is, when Noah noticed his son buffeted by the waves, his fatherly emotions were provoked and he was reminded of Allah's promise that his family would be saved.

Facing Allah's sanctuary, he cried: that his son was a member of his family and He had promised him that He would save his family from the storm and His promises are always true. Allah is superior to all rulers, and He is a staunch keeper of His promise.

This promise refers to the same subject that was discussed in the fortieth verse of this Surah.

The verse says:

"And Noah called unto his Lord, and said: "O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family, and certainly Your promise is true and You are the Most just of Judges."

Surah Hud - Verse 46

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَن تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

46. "He (Allah) said: 'O' Noah! Verily he is not of your family. Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous. So do not ask of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you should be among the ignorant.'"

However, the thought provoking answer was provided, recalling a stern reality and the secondary status of the family relationship as separated from religious school of thought.

Allah tells Noah that he was not of his kind, on the contrary, he was an evil doer; a man of misdemeanor, whose family relationship was of no value and kinship of no avail owing to the fact that he was cut off from Noah's school of thought, as such Noah should not make any requests about which he had no knowledge and therefore he should not be among the ignorant.

The verse says:

"He (Allah) said: 'O' Noah! Verily he is not of your family. Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous. So do not ask of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you should be among the ignorant.'"

Imam Rida (as) has been quoted as saying that one day he asked his friends:

"How do the common folk comment on this verse, which says:
'…Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous.'…"

One person from among the audience replied:

"Some believe that it means that he who is referred to as Noah's son, that is, Kan'an was not his real son."

The Imam (as) said:

"No it is not so, he was his real son, though Allah refused him his kinship when he committed sins and disobeyed, leading himself astray. Those who also belong to our school but refuse to obey Allah should not be considered as of us."

Surah Hud - Verse 47

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَإِلاَّ تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُن مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

47. "He (Noah) said: 'O my Lord! Verily I seek refuge in You, lest I should ask You (for) that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have Mercy on me I should be of the losers'."

Noah discovered that his request for Allah's sanctuary had been out of the question, and that he should have never considered the salvation of such a son as being covered by Allah's promise to save his family members.

Therefore, turning to Him, he said that he would do seek refuge in Him for whatever good and evil he had no knowledge of, and so of making wrong requests. And unless He forgive him for having made such a request, and pardon him, he would be among the losers, indeed.

The verse says:

"He (Noah) said: 'O my Lord! Verily I seek refuge in You, lest I should ask You (for) that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have Mercy on me I should be of the losers'."

Surah Hud - Verse 48

قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلاَمٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَي أُمَمٍ مِمَّن مَعَكَ وَأُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُم مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

48. "It was said: 'O Noah! Debark in peace from Us, and blessings upon you and on the nations of those with you; and nations whom We

shall afford provision, then there shall afflict them from Us a painful chastisement'."

Noah disembarked from the Ark safely. In this verse allusions are made to Noah's disembarkation, as well as to the regeneration of the earth.

Firstly, the holy Qur'an implies that Noah was addressed saying: that he should disembark from the Ark safely with Blessings from Allah to him and to those with him.

The verse says:

"It was said: 'O Noah! Debark in peace from Us, and blessings upon you and on the nations of those with you;…"

Obviously, the storm had devastated all signs of life, it destroyed cultivated lands, green pastures, and the orchards that had once flourished, and everything had been rendered infertile and arid.

At this time, Noah and his companions were in grave narrowness as far as their lives and nutrition were concerned. However, Allah reassured this group of believers that the Divine blessings would not be withheld from them and therefore, they should stop worrying about their livelihood because an appropriate and a blissful environment awaited them.

Then it adds that there would descend from this faithful group, nations of people on whom We Allah would bestow different kinds of Blessings although some of them would become arrogant and negligent, and consequently a grave punishment would be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

"…and nations whom We shall afford provision, then there shall afflict them from Us a painful chastisement'."

Surah Hud - Verse 49

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهآ إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ أَنتَ وَلاَ قَوْمُكَ مِن قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

49. "(O Prophet!) these are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you. Before this, neither you nor your people knew them. Therefore, be you patient, verily the end is for the pious ones."

This verse, by which ends the story of Noah in this Surah, sums up what had been covered previously. It implies that all this comes from the world beyond your powers of perception that Allah has revealed to the Prophet which neither he nor his people knew of before.

The verse says:

"(O Prophet!) these are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you. Before this, neither you nor your people knew them..."

The gist of what was revealed to the Prophet (S) about Noah was that amidst all those difficulties he had encountered in the course of his calling, still he persevered. The Prophet too, should persevere because the final victory is reserved for those who are pious.

The verse says:

"…Therefore, be you patient, verily the end is for the pious ones."

One can infer from this verse that contrary to what some people think, the prophets were aware of the invisible world with condition that their

knowledge had its source in the Divine will, and was confined to the extent that Allah wanted.

We shall now leave the story of Noah at this point, despite all the wonders and didactic lessons that can be drawn from it, and take up another great prophet, that is Hud, in whose name this Surah has been entitled.

The Feature of Noah in the Qur'an

The story of Noah (as) is mentioned in six of the suras of the Qur'an: Al-A'raf, Hud, Mu'minun, Shu'ara, Qamar, and Nuh but, it is most extensively discussed in the current Surah, Hud.

The appointment of Noah to prophecy was made after Adam (as) and during the time of the spread of unbelief, idol worship and oppression, his agenda consisted of enforcing and spreading monotheism and the daily prayers, encouraging people to decent conduct, dissuading them from committing the forbidden, and preaching justice, honesty and remaining faithful to one's own words.

The duration of Noah's prophecy extended for 950 years. When, at the end of his period, Allah told him that no one would accept his faith, he was discouraged and cursed the people. As a result, his wife and son, who did not belong to his school of thought, were drowned along with the other unbelievers.

He was the first prophet with a universal mission, a Book and a shari'ah (a specific religious law). The story of Noah (as) has also been mentioned in the Torah, as well in the Books of the Chaldeans, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Greeks and the Zoroastrians.

They have all regarded the Flood of Noah as a sign of Allah's anger because of people's oppression and corruption.

Noah's mission was universal. As the planet earth cannot remain without a savior, the drowning of all the people was due to Noah's (as) curse when he said:

"…My Lord! Leave not upon the earth any dweller from among the unbelievers." [2]**.**

The holy Qur'an testifies to the fact that the flood did occur. On the other hand, if that great man's mission had been regional and the area where the flood occurred was also limited to that region, there would have been no need for putting a pair of each animal onto the Ark in order to preserve generations of the animal kingdom on the earth.

The Story of Noah (as)

Noah's story is that of a life spanning a one thousand year history embodying the story of a world-devastating flood, the account of the extermination of an entire generation of man and the beginning of a new chapter in human history on this earth.

It reflects the victory of truth against 'untruth' and Allah's acceptance of the prophets' curses. It is an example of how the relationship between a father and son can be broken for ideological reasons and it is a sign of the submission of existence in its entirety with respect to Allah's command.

It shows the importance of the conservation and preservation of animal life and also indicates the extent to which man may be so despicable that he

may not be moved by the admonitions of the prophets, on the contrary, he can disrespect their followers as villains, and think he could escape Allah's wrath by taking refuge in physical structures like mountains.

Notes

1. Refer to Tabari's Al Mu'jam al Kabir, Hakim Neyshaburi in Al-Mustadrak, Ibn-Kathir in his Commentaries; Suyuti's Tarikh-ul-Khulafa; Ibn Qutayba's Uyun-ul Akhbar; Tabari's Zakha`ir-ul 'Uqba, Khatib ul Baghdadi in Tarikh ul Baghdad, Abu Na'im in Hilyat ul 'Auliya'; Ibn Abil Hadid in Sharh Nahj ul Balaqah, 'Alusi in Ruh ul Ma'ani; and other detailed books which have been mentioned in Ihqaq ul Haqq (vol.9) from P. 270 onwards. See also Nafahat ul Azhar fi Khulasah 'Abaqat ul Anwar, Part 4 P. 370.

2. Surah Nuh, No. 71, verse 26

Section 5: The Ministry of Hud

Surah Hud - Verse 50

وإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوداً قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا ا ّ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ مُفْتَرُونَ

50. "And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud; he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He. You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

Hud (as) succeeded Noah (as) as a prophet. The story of this prophet of Allah is recorded in verses 65 to 72 of the Surah Al-A'raf.

At first, the Qur'an recounts:

"And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud;..."

There is a point worth further clarification here. It provides us with the connotation, 'brother,' in the case of Hud, which reflects the fact that Arabs refer to all the individuals of a tribe as 'brothers'.

Another connotation signifies that the behavior of Hud had been very much like that of a brother in keeping with the other prophets' relationships with their fellow tribesmen. They did not behave as 'emirs', as commanders or as fathers with respect to their children, but they related just like brothers irrespective of every privilege and superiority.

Hud's first call was like that of all the other prophets, it was the call to monotheism and the negation of idol worship in all its respects. Hud called inviting them to worship Allah since there is no other worth worshipping except Him.

The verse says:

"…he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He..."

He told them that in worshipping the idols and believing in them, they were wrong. They only attributed falsity to Allah and claimed that those idols were His partners.

The verse continues saying:

"…You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

These idols should neither have been considered His partners nor could they have been sources of good or evil. They were of no use. No false accusation could have been more humiliating than considering such worthless things as significant!

Surah Hud - Verse 51

يَاقَوْمِ لاَ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

51. "(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

Hud (as) declared to his people that he did not expect any compensation for his call from them. He did not demand any rewards from them so that they might think that his appeals and his supplications were for the acquisition of wealth and position or whatever else.

It declares:

"(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

The only compensation and reward for me is from Him Who has created me.

He Who has bestowed upon me my soul and my body, and to Whom I owe everything; that is my Creator and it is He Who provides for my needs.

In principle, if I take any steps in the direction of your guidance and happiness, it is for the sake of being obedient to His commandments and therefore I expect Him to provide me with my sustenance, not you.

Surah Hud - Verse 52

وَيَاقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم مِدْرَاراً وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَي قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

52. "And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant. He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain, increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (from the Truth) as sinners."

Eventually, to encourage them and utilize all possible means of awakening the truth - seeking spirit of this misled people, he takes recourse to offering those material rewards that are conditional upon faith which Allah makes available to the faithful in this world; Hud said to his people to ask the Lord for forgiveness for having committed sins, thus repenting and returning to Him.

The verse says:

"And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant..."

By doing so, (you will notice that) He will order the skies to provide you with enlivening rain in on a regular basis.

The verse continues saying:

"…He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain..."

He will do all this so that your cultivated lands and your gardens would not fall into the grip of drought and would always remain green. Moreover because of your faith, virtue, abstinence from sin and returning to Him, your power would be increased.

The verse says:

"…increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (from the Truth) as sinners."

Imam Hasan (as) has been quoted as saying that he once went to Mu'awiyah. On his return, one of Mu'awiyah's gatemen told him that he had a great deal of wealth but he could not father a son. Then he asked the Imam to instruct him in a prayer so that He might enable him to have a child.

The Imam (as) answered:

"Make repentance one of your primary goals."

That man repented over and over again, sometimes repenting seven hundred times a day. Then Allah bestowed upon him a son. On hearing the news, Mu'awiyah asked the man why he had not asked the Imam as to why repentance carries such a tremendous influence. The next time he

encountered the Imam, he thus made this query to which the Imam (as) responded:

"Have you not heard that Allah says in the story of Hud:

"…and increasing strength upon your strength..."""

The Qur'anic term /quwwah/ has been interpreted as property (wealth), children, and energy. In the story of Noah, verse 12, the Qur'an implies that if you repent and apologize, He will add to your prestige with children and property.

One should not think that faith in Allah and focusing on Him signifies distancing oneself from wealth and property.

Were we to accept the faith, not only we would not lose anything, but also our wealth and property will be multiplied. If the Islamic state aspires towards economic expansion, it must seek a strategy for expanding the spiritual state of its society.

At any rate, turning away from the prophets and neglecting them is a grave sin.

Surah Hud - Verse 53

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي ءَالِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

53. "They said: 'O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for your word, nor are we believers in you!'"

Those who worship idols of stone and wood, and offer no solid reasons for their deeds, question the prophets whose way of life is to prove the truth of their claims by performing miracles and offering clear evidence.

Disbelievers' main response was that they would not abandon their idols for the sake of Hud's words. They did not mention anything regarding lack of evidence as they were not after reasoning.

They reiterated:

"They said: 'O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for your word, nor are we believers in you!'"

The prophets met with fierce resistance from the idol worshippers in the first stage of their call, but they never neglected their duty in propagating Allah's message.

Surah Hud - Verse 54

إِن نَّقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ ءَالِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ ا ّ َ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

54. "We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: 'Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah)."

The Arabic term /'i'tira/ means protest and cursing. Ascribing insanity to the prophets, as well as to revolutionaries, and community reformists, who have risen up against superstition, is nothing new.

On the contrary, declaring their distance from and abhorrence of idol-worshipping and idol worshippers has always been in keeping with the spirit of all the Divine prophets which itself provides us with an example confirming that one must stand decisively against superstition.

The verse says:

"We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: 'Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah)."

The resistance and challenging spirit of Hud (as) provides the reason for his legitimacy and the decisiveness of his path. It exhibits the fact that prophets fear Allah only and are not frightened by any other power.

Surah Hud - Verse 55

مِن دُونِهِ فَكِيدُونِي جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ لا تُنْظِرُونِ

55. "Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite."

Hud further goes on to say that not only they are unable to be of any use to you, but also you, with such a large population still lack the power to do anything even with the aid of those whom you worship other than Him.

So I dare all of you to unite and plan any kind of conspiracies you can against me, give me no chances, you cannot do anything against me.

The verse says:

"Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite."

Surah Hud - Verse 56

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَي ا ّ ِ رَبِّي وَرَبّكُم مَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ إِلاَّ هُوَ ءَاخِذُ بِنَاصِيَتِهَآ إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

56. "Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path."

By relying on Allah, one can stand up against the entire world, for Allah is in full command of everything and besides being All-Powerful, He is also Just. Therefore one must rely on him who, besides having power, is just, too; such as Allah, the prophet and immaculate Imams.

The verse says:

"Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path."

One can speak of Divine anger and the Divine system of justice being at work when the issue involved is the enmity and obstinacy of the idol worshippers, so that they may be transformed and become believers.

Surah Hud - Verse 57

فإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُم مَآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبّي قَوْماً غَيْرَكُمْ وَلا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئاً إِنَّ رَبّي عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ

57. "But if you turn away (from my call), I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything."

Eventually, Hud's last words to them are as that is they turn away from the Right Path, it is not he who will be at a loss as he has completed his mission which is conveying Allah's message.

The verse says:

"But if you turn away (from my call), I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you..."

He means that they should not think that if his call had not been well received it would be a defeat for him. No, he completed his mission, and thus he had been the successful.

Then he warns them of the Divine punishment as the idol worshippers were threatened, saying that if they do not heed Allah's call, the Lord will soon exterminate them, replacing them with another people, and He will not suffer any loss.

The verse says:

"…and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least..."

This is the law of creation, which is, if a nation is not eligible to receive Allah's blessings, it will be removed and will be replaced by another more deserving nation.

Also, they should beware, that Allah is the Guardian of everything and keeps a record of all accounts. He never misses a chance, He never forgets nor does He leave the prophets and His friends in the sea of oblivion. On the contrary, He is aware of everything and is in full command.

The verse says:

"…Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything."

Surah Hud - Verse 58

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوداً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُم مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

58. "And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement."

Just as inflicting punishment takes place according to Allah's decree, being rescued from it also is in His hands and the prophets and their companions are exempt from Allah's penalty, because they obey His guidance.

The verse says:

"And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement."

Merely having faith in the prophets is not enough, following them and supporting them is also necessary.

We must also take note that the main source of all blessings is He, but His anger, estrangement and outrage have their roots in our conduct.

Surah Hud - Verse 59

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِايَاتِ رَبّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلّ جَبَّارٍ عَنيد

59. "And this was (the people of) 'Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, and disobeyed His Messengers, and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant."

He summarizes the sins of the 'Ad into three areas in this verse. First, He says the people of 'Ad denied the Signs of their Lord obstinately, denying every sign sent as evidence of the authenticity of their prophet.

The verse says:

"And this was (the people of) 'Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord..."

Secondly, they opposed the prophets, with a roguish behavior and in an unruly manner. The verse continues:

"…and disobeyed His Messengers..."

Thirdly, they abandoned Allah's decree and followed the order of any despot instead.

"…and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant."

What a greater sin can be found that they abandoned faith, opposed their prophets and followed the obstinate tyrants.

The Arabic word /jabbar/ is a term used to denote a person who furiously strikes, kills, and destroys and does not follow the rule of reason. And the term /'anid/ refers to someone who is extraordinarily hostile towards the truth and never acknowledges it.

These two characteristics describe the profiles of despots and tyrants who, in every epoch, are noted for never lending their ears to the truth, and whenever they face an opponent they mercilessly torture and eradicate him.

Surah Hud - Verse 60

وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلاَ إِنَّ عَاداً كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ

60. "And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord: so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

In this verse which ends the story of Hud and the tribe of 'Ad, the Qur'an explains the consequences of their evil acts and falsehood saying that they were damned and cursed in this world for their evil deeds and were made infamous with a notorious history after their death.

The verse says:

"And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord:..."

It will be said on the Day of Resurrection:

"Let it be known on the Day of Resurrection that the people of 'Ad refused to recognize their Lord and lost His favor upon them."

Although the term 'Ad is adequate for describing and introducing these people, the phrase "the people of Hud" has also been mentioned in the above verse which emphasizes and makes allusion to the fact that this group of people is the same one which annoyed their compassionate prophet so much and hence, distanced themselves from Allah's favor.

The verse continues saying:

"…so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

www.alhassanain.org/english

Verses number 50 to 60 of this Surah relate to the people of ‘Ad. They were of the Arab race and resided in the Jazirat ul Arab or the Arabian Peninsula, but the name of this group of people is not mentioned in the present Torah.

They were a people who enjoyed a high standard of living and lived in the magnificent towns according to the suras Al-Qamar, Al Haqqa, Al-A‘raf, Al-Sajdah, and Ash-Shu‘ara those people were tall, vigorous and had a unique civilization.

As far as their system of belief was concerned, they worshipped idols and followed tyrants. Hud invited them to worship the One and only God, and become monotheist. However, they did not submit and met their doom with Allah’s anger which was manifested in the form of furious, burning storms.

The people of ‘Ad consisted of two groups; the first ‘Ad and the second ‘Ad. The latter used to live in Ahqaf (a region in the Hijaz) or in the Yemen until seven hundred B.C.

Section 6: The Ministry of Salih

Surah Hud - Verse 61

وإِلَي ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحاً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا ا ۖ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِنَ الأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

61. "And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih, He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He. It is He Who produced you from the earth and settled you therein: so ask forgiveness of Him, and turn unto Him in repentance: surely my Lord is Nigh, Responsive'."

Salih (as) is the third prophet who succeeds Noah and Hud (as) in the Divine mission.

The Qur'anic story of the people of 'Ad ended with all of its instructive lessons and now it is the turn of the people of Thamud, the people, who, according to historical narrations, lived then in the land of "Wadi al Qurra" which was located between Medina and Damascus.

Here again we note that the Qur'an, when mentioning their prophet, terms Salih as a brother, a compassionate person who had no other aim except wishing his people well.

The noble verse says:

"And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih..."

The verse also continues:

"…He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He..."

Afterwards, in order to elevate their sense of appreciation and their sense of gratitude, he refers to an example of Allah's favor which, from the point of view of their existence itself, they would not able to deny, he says:

"…It is He Who produced you from the earth..."

After referring to the blessings of creation, the verse reminds them of all the favors which Allah had bestowed upon them in being enriched in the earth, and implies that Allah is He who has left the development of the earth to you and has empowered you with the means of its exploitation.

The verse says:

"…and settled you therein:..."

It is to be noted here that the Qur'an does not claim that Allah developed the earth and made it available to them, on the contrary, it says that He left the development of the earth to them. Allusion is here made to the fact that all the means of exploitation had been readily available from all points of view, however, it is up to men to develop the land with their own toil, and obtain its resources.

And they would not be able to claim any share of it without working and making the required effort.

Since such is the case, they should seek repentance from their sins and return to Him for Allah is always near to His subjects and accepts their requests.

The verse concludes:

"…so ask forgiveness of Him, and turn unto Him in repentance: surely my Lord is Nigh, Responsive'."

Surah Hud - Verse 62

قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ قَدْ كُنتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوّاً قَبْلَ هَذَآ أَتَنْهَانَآ أَن نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا وَإِنَّنَا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَآ إِلَيْه مُرِيبٍ

62. "They said: 'O Salih! You have hitherto been a source of hope among us. Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? Truly we are in disquieting doubt as to that unto which you invite us'."

The idol worshippers told Salih (as) that before he used to be their source of hope and pride and because of this they loved him. They said this so that he might be encouraged to try to preserve the good relationship they used to have, and give up his calling to them towards monotheism.

They told him that he was their source of hope in the past and they used to appeal to him asking his counsel, they used to have faith in his wisdom, insight, and in his intelligence, and they never cast any shadow of a doubt upon his benevolence and compassion.

However, they told him that unfortunately, you made us lose hope in you with your opposition against our way of life which is the worship of idols and icons according to the way of our ancestors.

This has been our source of pride and thus indicates that you do not have the slightest respect for our leaders, nor do you have any faith in our wisdom and intelligence nor do you defend our traditions.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O Salih! You have hitherto been a source of hope among us..."

Do you actually want to dissuade us from worshipping what our fathers used to worship?

They declared:

"…Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?..."

The fact of the matter is that we are in doubt as to the way of life to which you are calling us (that is monotheism) and, at the same time, we are also pessimistic about it.

They said:

"…Truly we are in disquieting doubt as to that unto which you invite us'."

Surah Hud - Verse 63

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَي بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبِّي وءَاتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَن يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ ا ـَ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ

63. "He (Salih) said: 'O' my people! Bethink you if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord and He hath sent Mercy unto me from Himself, who will then help me against Allah if I (were to) disobey Him? So you do not add to me other than loss."

Metaphysically orientated religions and Divinely appointed prophets call on people to adopt monotheism and the worship of Allah by providing sound reasoning and miracles, and not by force, threats and ignorance.

The position of being appointed as a prophet is a special favor and a privilege accorded to certain individuals by Allah.

One should never abandon Allah's way by imaginary and wishful thinking about popular support. We should take note of the fact that deviant people will add nothing to others except to their losses, for opposing truth itself is something very detrimental for man.

The verse says:

"He (Salih) said: 'O' my people! Bethink you if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord and He hath sent Mercy unto me from Himself, who will then help me against Allah if I (were to) disobey Him? So you do not add to me other than loss."

Surah Hud - Verse 64

وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ ءَايَةً فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ

64. "O my People! This she - camel of Allah is a Sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a swift chastisement will seize you!"

The story of Salih's she-camel has also been reiterated in suras Ash-Shu'ara and Al-Qamar as well.[1]

Salih (as) said to the people that he would ask their idols something and they also should ask something from His Lord. Whoever, provides the right answer, could be the object of his and their worship. The idol worshippers accepted and their request was for a pregnant she-camel to come out of the mountain just then and there. Allah accepted their request and a camel, meeting all those requirements, came out of the mountain.

This she-camel of Salih was extraordinary in many respects.

1. It came out of the innermost part of the mountain.
2. It was pregnant without having any contact with a male camel.
3. For one full day, she had drunk of the water of that village.
4. It provided a daily supply of milk that was sufficient for meeting the needs of the people of the area.
5. The people had no responsibilities towards her.
6. It served as a reason and as a miracle which was quite tangible and understandable for the people.

Surah Hud - Verse 65

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوبٍ

65. "So they hamstrung her. Then he said: 'Enjoy yourselves in your abode for three days, (then will be your ruin). That is a promise not to be belied.""

Through traditional narrations we are informed that only one person had killed the she-camel. Despite this, the Qur'an says: /'aqaruha/ which means

that all of them killed her. This indication signifies that there had been a consensus of opinion among them about the killing.

From the Islamic point of view, the ideological bond between individuals causes them to be responsible for the sins of single individuals within the context of that ideology.

Question: What is the underlying philosophy of a three-day grace period?

Firstly: So as to give them a chance to repent.

Secondly: To provide a means for spiritual pressure and augmentation of the penalty. If a person is told that he will be killed within three days, this very news will serve as the greatest blow upon him psychologically speaking.

Thirdly: It provided another good proof for the legitimacy of the Divine prophet since fixing a dead line results from having access to news from the invisible world.

However, one should never take Divine warnings as jokes or lies as scorning them will cause the infliction of Divine penalties.

Surah Hud - Verse 66

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحاً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ

66. "And when Our Decree came (to pass), We saved Salih and those who believed with him by a Mercy from Us, and (delivered them) from the ignominy of that day. Verily, your Lord is the All-strong, the All-mighty."

The Arabic term /xizy/, applied in this holy verse, means a kind of defect of deformity, the appearance of which causes man embarrassment and loss of prestige.

Natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods or dangerous epidemics may happen to both to the faithful as well as to idol worshippers, just like carelessness, which may be seen in one man, but the effects of which can be felt by all.

However, when the issue in question is the Divine punishment, the faithful are secure and safe unless they have merited punishment owing to their lack of action, their condescension to oppression, or their ceasing to dissuade others from what has been forbidden.

The verse says:

"And when Our Decree came (to pass), We saved Salih and those who believed with him by a Mercy from Us, and (delivered them) from the ignominy of that day. Verily, your Lord is the All-strong, the All-mighty."

Surah Hud - Verse 67 - 68

وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

كَأَن لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَآ أَلآ إِنَّ ثَمُودَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِّـمُودَ

67. "And the (mighty) Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless corpses in their abodes."

68. "As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Verily Thamud rejected their Lord. Behold! away with Thamud!"

The Arabic term, /jaimin/ is derived from /jaama/ which means sitting on one's knees or falling on face, like the state in which one has received an electric shock which renders one immobile, making that person lose the power to escape.

The Qur'anic term /yaqnau/ is derived from /qiniy/ which means staying in one place.

The record of these obstinate and oppressive people of Thamud comes to a close in this verse.

Salih (as) is one of the Arab prophets, and the tribe of Thamud is an ancient tribe belonging to prehistoric period, which resided in Wadi-al-Qura, located between Medina and Damascus. They were a nation of farmers and used to engage in horticulture. The name of Salih has been mentioned in the Books of the Divine prophets.

The annihilation of the people of Salih by the mighty blast has been likened to and resembles that of the supersonic jets of today which break the sound barrier when their speed exceeds that of sound.

The terrifying sound caused, shatters glass windows, can cause abortions in pregnant women, and hasten heart attacks. As a result of the mighty blast, the Thamud people also were annihilated. The verse says:

"And the (mighty) Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless corpses in their abodes."

The end of time will also be associated with a Divine mighty blast which will exterminate everything. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 49 says:

"They will not have to wait for anything but a single Blast: it will seize them while they are yet disputing (among themselves)."

Again, Surah Yasin, No. 36, verses 29, 32, say:

"It was naught but a single (mighty) Blast, and behold! They were (like ashes) quenched and silent."

"And all of them shall surely be brought before Us."

The raising up of the dead on the Day of Resurrection will also be made manifest in the same way.

However, the Divine punishment inflicted upon the oppressors takes a similar course as a result of their injustice and cruelty. It must be noted that Allah's retributions are not given only in the Hereafter, but injustice and cruelty will be rewarded even in this very world, too.

The verse says:

"As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Verily Thamud rejected their Lord. Behold! away with Thamud!"

Notes

1. Surah Ash-Shu'ara No. 26, verses 155-158, and Surah Al-Qamar No. 54, verses 27-31.

Section 7: Ministry of Lot

Surah Hud - Verse 69

وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَآ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَي قَالُوا سَلاَماً قَالَ سَلاَمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَن جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ

69. "And certainly Our messengers (the angels) came to Abraham with glad tidings. They said 'Peace!' He answered 'Peace!' and he did not delay to bring a roasted calf."

Now is time to focus on one of the highlights of the life of Abraham, the iconoclastic champion. Of course, only that part of his story, which deals with the story of the people of Lot and punishment of this unruly people is being discussed here.

The Qur'an says that Allah's messengers (angels) came to Abraham, bearing good tidings, though they had come to deliver a message to Abraham (as) before.

The verse says:

"And certainly Our messengers (the angels) came to Abraham with glad tidings..."

There are two hypotheses incompatible with each other, as to what message those angels were carrying:

First; the message relates to tidings regarding the birth of Ismail and Isaac which were great good tidings for him.

Secondly, Abraham, who was tired of the unruliness and corruption of the people of Lot, became happy on hearing of the mission of the angels to destroy them.

When the messengers arrived they gave him the greetings of 'Peace' and he answered them likewise. Before long he had brought them a roasted calf.

The verse says:

"…They said 'Peace!' He answered 'Peace!' and he did not delay to bring a roasted calf."

The inference drawn from the sentence is that one of the rules of hosting a guest is that a meal should be prepared for him at the earliest possible time, after his arrival, for he can be both tired and hungry, especially when he is a traveler.

Surah Hud - Verse 70

فَلَمَّا رَءَآ أَيْدِيَهُمْ لاَ تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لا تَخَفْ إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ إِلَي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

70. "But when he saw their hands extended not towards it, he mistrusted them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: 'Fear not; we have been sent against the people of Lot'."

Abraham's (as) fear is different from the kind of fear and weakness found in ordinary men when facing problematic situations, for he was the archetypical iconoclast in history who was never afraid of anything. Nevertheless focusing one's attention on possible dangers and on being a possible target is another matter.

The verse says:

"But when he saw their hands extended not towards it, he mistrusted them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: 'Fear not; we have been sent against the people of Lot'."

At any rate, since Lot (as) and his tribe was one of the groups under Abraham's command, he had to be briefed before their annihilation.

Surah Hud - Verse 71

وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِن وَرَآءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ

71. "And his wife was standing (by) and she laughed when We gave her the glad tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob."

There are several possibilities mentioned as to the reasons for the standing by of Abraham's wife; when the verse says:

"And his wife was standing (by) and she laughed when We gave her the glad tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob."

a- for worshipping

b- for serving the guests

c- for witnessing the comings and goings of individuals and the discussions.

Her laughter was either because she understood that their abstinence from eating was not a sign of danger for Abraham, or, as has been pointed out in some commentaries, Sarah, Abraham's wife, was an elderly woman who had long passed her child bearing days when she suddenly heard this unbelievable news.

However, while in this mood, she realized that the Divine Will was that she would have a child.

However, each group of the Divine angels were commissioned to accomplish a particular affair. These group of angels followed two objectives. One of which was the extermination of the corrupt people of Lot, and the other was to give the good tidings of a child to be bestowed upon Abraham (as) and Sarah.

Surah Hud - Verse 72

قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَى ءَأَلِدُ وَأَنَاْ عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخاً إِنَّ هَذَا لَ ۡ ءٌ عَجِيبٌ

72. "She said: 'Voe is me! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman, and this my husband is an old man? Verily this is a wonderful thing!'"

Sarah, who had given up hope of having children, with a tone of tremendous wonder, exclaimed implying that alas for her. Might she give birth to a child despite her old age and despite the fact that her husband too was old? That was a truly amazing matter.

The verse itself says:

"She said: 'Voe is me! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman, and this my husband is an old man? Verily this is a wonderful thing!'"

That same Allah Who had made the fire cold for Abraham (as) and had made him win over the idol-worshippers, is definitely able to make an infertile old woman fertile and an old man sire a child.

Surah Hud - Verse 73

قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

73. "They said: "Do you wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O people of the House! Verily He is Praise worthy, Glorious. "

One day, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) gave greetings to a group of people which returned his greetings, saying:

"Our greetings to you and may Allah's favor and blessings be with you, the Ahl-ul-Bayt, and may His forgiveness and His paradise also be upon you as well."

Ali (as) said:

"Do not add anything to what the angels said to Abraham (as), therefore, the phrase 'And may Allah's favour and blessings be with you' would suffice."

The verse says:

"They said: "Do you wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O people of the House! Verily He is Praise worthy, Glorious. "

Question: Considering the fact that in the above verse, the angels addressed Abraham's wife using the phrase Ahl-ul-Bayt, and since, naturally, everyone's wife is considered as part of one's household, why is it then that in the verse of Tathir in the Surah Al Ahzab, No. 33, verse 33,[1] the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (S) are not included in his household?

Answer: Regarding only the literal meaning of the word, it would be natural for the word Ahl-ul-Bayt to include reference to one's wife.

However, we have firm grounds regarding the fact that someone can be excluded from this denotation even when normally they would be included in its purview, like in the verse saying: "Verily he is not of your household"[2] where Noah's son is not counted as a member in Noah's household.

Sometimes it also happens that there could be a reason to include someone who would normally not be considered as a member of the household, as has been said of Salman:

"Salman belongs to our household (Ahl-ul-Bayt)"

There are numerous narrations concerning the verse of Tathir which say that the blessed Prophet (S) had taken certain people under his cloak calling them his Ahl-ul-Bayt, while he did not allow his wife, the pious Umm-us-Salamah, to enter.

This Divine favor and blessings were not confined to that time and place. It has continued in this family, too. What Divine blessing can be superior to that bestowed upon the Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (as) who have emerged from this household?

Surah Hud - Verse 74

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

74. "So when fear had passed from Abraham and the glad tidings reached him, he began disputing with Us concerning the people of Lot."

Perhaps Abraham's (as) plea is the same one mentioned in Surah 'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 31, where, in addressing the angels, he asked how they would overturn the land when Lot (as) still remained among them.

They answered that they were well aware of their status, so they would save Lot and his followers. The verse says:

"So when fear had passed from Abraham and the glad tidings reached him, he began disputing with Us concerning the people of Lot."

The angels removed his anxiety and in directly addressing Sarah they reinforced the good tidings of them being graced with progeny. Concern and anxiety in the face of possible danger are safety-orientated issues while having children has an emotional dimension. Safety issues relate to society as a whole and children are related to the household.

Surah Hud - Verses 75 - 76

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ

يَآ إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَآ إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَآءَ أَمْرُ رَبّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ ءَاتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ

75. "Verily Abraham was indeed for bearing, tender-hearted, penitent."

76. "O Abraham! Forsake this! Indeed the decree of your Lord has come to pass and surely there is coming (upon) them an irreversible chastisement."

Patience is a highly praised characteristic that enables someone to forbear any infliction in times of crisis and not try to avenge it. This is why Abraham wished to haply remove the punishment from the people of Lot.

This good quality is very prominent in prophets, godly benevolent authorities, and knowledgeable people, for were it not to exist, they would not be able to tolerate the difficulties and troubles of their people, and therefore, they would not be able to achieve their objectives which would include guidance.

The Qur'anic term /'awwah/ means supplication and humility before Allah, along with crying and weeping.

The verse says:

"Verily Abraham was indeed for bearing, tender-hearted, penitent."

Here, Abraham shows compassion for the people of Lot, who are rather inextricably entangled with having to suffer this awesome penalty.

The Qur'anic term /munib/, mentioned in the first verse, denotes repentance and returning, and at the same time concentrating on Allah, for Abraham appealed to Him to forgive and not to condemn the people of Lot.

However, Allah, the Blissful and Glorious, is so perfectly patient, forgiving, indulgent and compassionate that His servants can not even remotely conceive its extent. The crucial determining factor in all this, however, is that it all depends upon the suitability of the servant in point, which, when lacking in suitability sparing them is of no avail.

Once the limits are exceeded, the mercy changes to rigor and this must be so of necessity, for mercy from the point of view of the sharp teeth that Allah gave to a panther is the other side of oppression from the point of view of the sheep in its jaws.

The people of Lot had no more potential to be guided, and if they were left to continue, their evil acts would have permeated other spheres as well, just like a corrupt organ which, if not excised, would affect other organs, thus spreading the infection further. Therefore, in response, the angels said:

"O Abraham! Forsake this! Indeed the decree of your Lord has come to pass and surely there is coming (upon) them an irreversible chastisement."

At that point Abraham realized that there was no more room for mercy, he gave up pleading for them and the angels of death went forth to do their work executing the Divine order and exterminating the people of Lot.

Surah Hud - Verse 77

وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطاً سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعاً وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ

77. "And when Our messengers (the angels) came to Lot, he was grieved for them and felt straitened to protect them. He said: 'This is a distressful day'."

When the angels came, Lot was engaged in farming outside the town. He noticed some handsome, well-dressed young men arrived. He became afraid that his people might take to them when they entered the town.

He thought that it would be best to invite them to his house, which he did, and his invitation was accepted. As he was taking them home, he was worried that his people might pass by and notice them. He wanted them to go back where they came from, saying:

"You should know that you are going to a despicable and evil people".

At this point, Gabriel said:

"That's one".

The reason why Gabriel said this was that Allah had told the angels that they should not hasten to destroy the people of Lot until Lot himself had testified to their evil three times. As they kept on going, for the second time Lot told them:

"Really, you are going towards an evil people."

Gabriel this time said:

"That's the second time".

As Lot arrived at the gate of the town, he said for the third time:

"You are going among an evil people from among Allah's creatures."

Gabriel said:

"That's the third time".

Lot entered the town followed by his guests. One by one they entered the house, and when Lot's wife noticed their handsomeness she wanted to call the people and tell them about it. She climbed up on the roof of the house and lit a fire. When the evil people of the town came, she told them that there were some very handsome young men in the house.

Lot was at his wits end trying to find a way to get rid of these people, to save his guests from being the objects of their evil intentions and to protect his honor. He was having a hard time, because he was in a quandary as to what he should do. He murmured:

"This is a very difficult day."

On the one hand, how could he protect his guests from the wretchedness and evil of those people? On the other hand, how could he eradicate the evil that they had caused? And finally, what should he do about the spy on the inside, his wife, who was willing to reveal anything secret in his house to the enemy outside?

As the Qur'an says:

"Allah sets forth an example to the Unbelievers, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them nothing before Allah on their account, but were told: 'Enter you both the Fire along with (others) that enter!'"[3]

Surah Hud - Verse 78

وَجَآءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ هَؤُلَآءِ بَنَا هُنَّ
أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا ا ۖ وَلا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ

78. "And his people came rushing towards him, And aforetime they had been practicing abominations. He said: 'O my people, here are my daughters they are purer for you. So fear Allah, and do no degrade me with my guests! Is there not among you one upright man?'"

The Arabic term /yuhra'un/ derived from /'ihra'/ means intensive driving. That is, the uninhibited passion of this rebellious people goaded them on towards Lot's (as) guests.

The meaning of the term /at-har/, in this verse, is not that sodomy has something pure about it but that marriage is purer. It means that for the sinner who is pursuing the gratification his sexual instincts, it is preferable to get married than to commit sin.

It is worthy to note that one's potentialities can flourish when caught in the midst of anxieties and difficulties. If the Divine angels would have introduced themselves to Lot (as) on their arrival, there would have been no need for moaning, sighing, crying for help and appealing to the emotions of the public, nor would there have been any need to offer a marriage proposal.

The verse says:

"And his people came rushing towards him, And aforetime they had been practicing abominations. He said: 'O my people, here are my daughters they are purer for you. So fear Allah, and do no degrade me with my guests! Is there not among you one upright man?'"

Question: Why would a prophet propose his daughter for marriage to an unbelieving idol worshipper?

Answer: Perhaps he might suggest that conversion be a condition for the marriage so that the marriage could facilitate and strengthen the belief in Allah.

Maybe the meaning of the term /banati'/ is 'people's daughters' as the prophet is considered the father of the nation and is speaking on their behalf. Or maybe, at that time, such marriages were common for the sake of convenience and expediency.

Explanations

1-Sometimes the norms of human society degenerate to such an extent that people hasten towards committing sins being seduced by their unruly lower selves.

2- To prevent people from doing what is forbidden, we must at first open up and show the true path to them so that they do not seek pleasure by committing sins.

3- The meaning of the term ‘chastity’ is not isolation. On the contrary, it means purity in normal social intercourse.

4- Marriage is the sole and only correct context for sexual gratification, other methods are unclean and sinful.

5- Considering sin as a commonplace matter does not exempt man from his responsibility in dissuading others from performing forbidden acts.

6- Showing hospitality is such an important matter that the noblest of men have tolerated a tremendous degree of suffering for its sake.

7- Homosexuality has been forbidden, considered abominable, and has been rejected in previous religions and is incompatible with one’s manliness, development and chastity.

Surah Hud - Verses 79 - 80

قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَالَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ ءَاوِي إِلَي رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

79. “They said: ‘You know we have no right to your daughters, and verily you know well what we desire’.”

80. “He said: ‘Would that I had the power against you or I might take refuge in a strong support’.”

One’s deviation from the right path leads man to the point where he considers the forbidden act of sodomy as a correct and virtuous act and the religiously acceptable act of marriage as a vice and as wrong conduct.

In other words, man is transformed as a consequence of sin, where the most natural way for him may seem to be the ugliest and the most vicious way becomes the most attractive.

The verse, concerning the people of Lot, says:

“They said: ‘You know we have no right to your daughters, and verily you know well what we desire’.”

In our holy religion, homosexuality is considered as one of the capital sins that require religious punishment. It consists of lashes, execution or both commensurate with the act, and is to be applied upon those who have committed the act according to the testimony of just witnesses.

Muslim leaders and those in positions of responsibility must prevent it by all means. This is why Lot (as) says that if he had faithful companions, he would have fought against those mean people, to defend his guests, or at least he would have taken them to a safe place to shelter them.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Would that I had the power against you or I might take refuge in a strong support’.”

The Sin of Sodomy in the Qur’an and Traditions

There are many accounts in the Glorious Qur'an about the vicious and detestable act of this deviant people, all of which exhibit the magnitude and intensity of the sin. [4]

The Islamic literature highlights the grievous consequences for such behavior revealing how serious a sin it is in the religion of Islam. For example, it is said that if an adolescent commits or is the object of the act of sodomy, Allah's heavens start trembling and He will not speak to those involved on the Day of Resurrection.

Imam Sadiq (as) has said that if someone can to be stoned to death twice, that person would be he who had committed the act of sodomy. We can also find in another Islamic from Imam Sadiq (as) quoting the Prophet (S) who said:

"He who performs a sexual act with an adolescent, will enter the Day of Judgment in a state of uncleanness, Allah will be outraged, the perpetrator will be deprived of His favor and He will prepare a place in Hell for such a person and what an awful place it is!"

Again he said:

"If a male is involved in sex with another male, Allah's heavens will tremble." [5]

Numerous narrations severely denounce transvestites, i.e. men and women who make themselves up to look like the opposite sex which predisposes them to the act of sodomy.

Surah Hud - Verse 81

قَالُوا يَا لُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَن يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلاَّ امْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَآ أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ

81. "They (the guests) said: 'O Lot! Verily we are messengers of your Lord! Never shall they reach you! So travel with your family in a part of the night, and let none of you look back, but your wife. Surely she shall be smitten by that which smites them. Verily their appointed time is the morning: Is not the morning nigh?'"

The Arabic term /'asri/ is derived from /'isra'/ which means 'movement by night'.

The phrase /'illamra'ataka/ (but your wife) has been exceptioned, either is derived from /ahlika/ which means: 'Do move your whole family by night except your wife,' or it has been exceptioned from /la yaltafit/ meaning that none of them should look behind or pay attention to what was going on behind them except his wife, who, while leaving with him was worried about those corrupt people and would end up lingering behind and, consequently, became a victim of the Divine punishment.

When the divine angels noticed Lot's anxiety under the tormenting conditions he was in, they unveiled the secret telling him that they were messengers from Allah, that he should stop worrying and know that those people would not be able to bother him any more.

The verse says:

"They (the guests) said: 'O Lot! Verily we are messengers of your Lord! Never shall they reach you !..."

Becoming aware as to who his guests were and what their mission was, provided him with the utmost comfort and ease of mind, he then realized that his time of troubles was about to be over and he would be free from association with the depravity of this vicious and scandalous tribe, the time for rejoicing was at hand.

The guests ordered Lot to take his family that night and leave that land immediately, for good. However, they were told to be careful not to look back. The only person who violated this order was Lot's wife, who, guilty of inclination towards the corrupt ones disregarded the order and was dealt the same punishment as the Sodomites.

The verse says:

"…So travel with your family in a part of the night, and let none of you look back, but your wife. Surely she shall be smitten by that which smites them..."

The angels last words to him were that the time for imposing the penalty will be in the morning. As the last hours of the night approached, they told them to get up and depart from the town as soon as they can, because the morning time was near.

The verse says:

"…Verily their appointed time is the morning: Is not the morning nigh?'"

Surah Hud - Verses 82-83

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِن سِجِّيلٍ مَنْضُود

مُسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ

82. "When Our command came, We turned it (their township) upside down, and rained on it stones of baked clay, layer on layer."

83. "Marked with your Lord, and it is not far off from the unjust ones."

The Arabic term /sijjil/ means a piece of baked clay which is neither as soft as clay nor as hard as stone.

The Arabic word /mandud/ means one on top of the other in succession. The objective of stones being marked either is that every piece of stone was meant for a particular person, or it means that those stones were different from the ones on the earth.

This holy verse explains the end result of the people of Lot.

The people of Lot used to live during the time of Abraham (a.s), and Lot (as), their prophet, was sent among them to propagate and disseminate the same religion of monotheism. Accompanying Abraham (as) he went to Palestine then to a land called 'Mu'tafikat', where the people used to worship idols and openly sodomize.

Lot (as) started struggling against this corruption and social pathology. The more he struggled, the less he met with success until he was threatened with expulsion if he did not stop preaching.[6] Thereafter the angels of Divine punishment and death came down and after informing Abraham and Lot (as), completed their mission turning the land of this corrupt tribe upside down.

According to verse 13 of the Surah Al-Hijr, a blast occurred and overwhelmed the people of Lot.

Perhaps, it was this horrible blast which turned the region upside down, stones were thrown out from within the earth and fell upon their heads similar to volcanic eruptions and the subsequent explosions which occur.[7]

Explanations

1. The punishment of those who go against human nature is the overturning of their cities and environment.

The verse says:

"When Our command came, We turned it (their township) upside down..."

2. Oppressive people cannot escape Divine punishment as Allah's anger can turn rain into stones and pelt them to death.

The verse says:

"…and rained on it stones of baked clay, layer on layer."

Those nations who have a permissive attitude towards homosexuality such as is found in the West, must expect Allah's punishment and the upturning of the region where this corruption takes place.

The verse says:

"Marked with your Lord, and it is not far off from the unjust ones."

Notes

1. It says: "…Verily Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."

2. Surah Hud No. 11, verse 46

3. Surah At-Tahrim, No. 66, verse 10

4. Refer to Surah Al-A'raf, verses 79-80-83, Surah Hud verse 82, Surah Al-'Anbiya verse 74, Surah An-Naml verse 54.

5. Refer to Usul-i-Kafi, Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Bihar ul 'Anwar, Nahj ul Balaqah

6. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 167

7. Al-Mizan, the

Section 8: The Ministry of Shu‘ayb

Surah Hud - Verse 84

وإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْباً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا ا ّ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ
وَالْمِ َانَ إِنِّي أَرَاكُم بِخَيْرٍ وإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ

84. “And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu‘ayb. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah than He. And do not give short measure and weight. Verily I see you in prosperity and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day’.”

Madyan whose name today is Ma‘an, is a town to the east of the Gulf of ‘Aqaba. In the Torah its name is mentioned as Madyan. Its inhabitants were among the descendents of Ismail (as) and they enjoyed good commercial ties with Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. Some people regard the term ‘Madyan’ as the name of a tribe that used to live around Mount Sinai.

The types of corruption that were practiced by the different nations mentioned in the Qur’an vary, and this very fact should be of note.

The corruption of the people of Lot had been sexual deviation, and the corruption of the people of Shu‘ayb (as) in this case was economic corruption, i.e. use of short weights; weighing less than what they were assumed to sell or measuring less and claiming to deliver the value of the goods exactly as their clients had ordered.

In keeping with the ways of the other prophets (as), this compassionate and brotherly prophet at first called them to believe in monotheism, the Unity of Allah, the most fundamental pillar of religion, exhorting his people to worship the one and only God.

The verse says:

“And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu‘ayb. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah than He...”

Then he turned his attention to the economic corruption of the people whose roots were found in the idol worship itself which was prevalent among the people of Madyan at the time. He said that they should not weigh out their goods less than their value by using the wrong scales in their commercial transactions.

The verse says:

“…And do not give short measure and weight...”

This great prophet’s words can be interpreted as two reasons for them. At first he seems to be saying that by accepting this advice the gates of commerce will develop, prices will deflate, and peace and tranquility will prevail which will attract Allah’s grace upon the community.

It is also possible to interpret this sentence to mean that Shu‘ayb sees them having affluence and tremendous wealth; thus, there is no reason for them to infringe upon people’s rights, by selling them less goods and charging them the same price.

The second matter is that he also fears their insistence upon idol worship, and abusing Allah’s blessings will lead to their punishment on the Day of Judgment.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily I see you in prosperity and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day'."

Surah Hud - Verse 85

وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلا تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

85. "And O my people! Fill up the measure and the balance in justice, and do not diminish the people their things: and do not mischief in the land, working corruption."

The Qur'anic phrase /la tabxasu/ is derived from the article /baxasa/ signifying 'not to reduce'; while the Arabic phrase /la ta'au/ means 'not to commit evil or mischief'.

Compromising people's rights in economic matters is a prominent example of corruption, for ailing economies always lead communities to corruption. All economic transactions should be strictly supervised.

Shu'ayb insisted upon the establishment of a just economic system in this verse and along with dissuading his people from cheating others in economic transactions, he also called upon them to consider the rights of others, saying that they should use scales and weighing devices with fairness.

But this verse says:

"And O my people! Fill up the measure and the balance in justice..."

The establishment of justice and safeguarding everyone's due rights are principles that must be administered throughout all of society. Taking this one step further, he said that they should not falsely ascribe faults and defects to other people's goods, thus reducing the value of their goods, properties and belongings.

It continues saying:

"…and do not diminish the people their things:..."

Towards the end of the verse, going even further, he added that they should not corrupt the earth by committing mischief.

It says:

"…and do not mischief in the land, working corruption."

The above two verses strongly indicate that next to the belief in monotheism, a healthy economy is of primary importance. It also shows that anarchy in an economic system can be a major source of corruption in any society.

Surah Hud - Verse 86

بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَآ أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

86. "(The lawful wealth) which is left by Allah is better for you, if you be believers. And I am not a guardian over you."

The Qur'anic term /baqiyatullah/, mentioned in this verse, refers to the dividends which one can obtain through a godly and allowed capital, and it is certainly a hundred percent clean.

However, according to the Islamic narrations, it refers to everything Divinely sanctioned that is left for humanity as a whole. One example of this are the faithful soldiers who return victoriously from a holy war, for they have remained alive by the Divine will.

It refers also to the contemporary Imam, Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his auspicious advent), who is also known as /baqiyatullah/ since that noble person has been retained and stored for the guidance of mankind by the Divine Will.

Some Islamic narrations denote that one of the names of this honorable man (Hadrat Mahdi) is /baqiyatullah/[1] whom we greet with this name saying: /'assalamu 'alayka ya baqiatullah fi 'ardeh/.

When he appears in Mecca, he will recite the above verse in a loud voice and say:

"I am that promised Godly being kept by Allah.[2]

Certainly the other immaculate Imams (as) have been also entitled as: /baqiatullah/.

Surah Hud - Verse 87

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَن نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ابَآؤُنَآ أَوْ أَن نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَآءُ إِنَّكَ لاَنتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ

87. "They said: 'O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should leave off that our fathers worshipped, or we (should forsake to do) what we like with our property? Truly you are the forbearing, the right minded'."

Now let us look at how this obstinate people reacted in face of this Divinely reformist voice.

Those who idol-worshippers regarded their idols as symbols of their ancestral tradition and an emblem of their cultural identity, and who gained profit through fraudulent activity in their transactions, asked Shu'ayb if it was his religion of prayer that ordered him to encourage them to abandon the worship of that which their fathers had worshipped, and interfere in their transactions to make them lose their freedom in dealing with their own property.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should leave off that our fathers worshipped, or we (should forsake to do) what we like with our property?..."

The people of Shu'ayb wrongly thought that no one should set the minimum limits for proprietors, rights, regarding domination in their properties, when in fact financial affairs should always be governed by correct criteria. Such criteria are clearly elucidated by the Divine prophets otherwise society would see a great degree of corruption.

They wanted to know how could such a forbearing, patient and understanding man, have said such a thing.

They said:

"…Truly you are the forbearing, the right minded'."

Perhaps they thought that the particular movements and words of prayer would have had a negative effect on them, but if they truly meditated they would have found that prayer enlivens man's sense of responsibility, virtue, abstinence, piety, and gratitude, and makes him remember Allah and His Court of Justice.

For these reasons, man would be kept away from idol worship, blind obedience, short selling goods, and all types of fraud under the light of prayer.

Surah Hud - Verse 88

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَي بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقاً حَسَناً وَمَآ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَي مَآ أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلاَّ الإِصْلاَحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلاَّ بِا ـ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

88. "He said: 'O My people! Bethink you' If I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has provided me with fair sustenance from Him? And I desire not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you from it. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My success is only with Allah. On Him do I rely and unto Him I turn (repentant)'."

In the previous verse, the idol worshippers protested as to why they could not be free to dispose of their own property for good or, in this case, for evil. Shu'ayb (as) answered that if he had kept them from doing this, it would have been for the good of their own lives and their community, and it was not because of such things as hostility, envy, short sightedness or other things.

Individual interests must not be detrimental to the public interest.

The verse says:

"He said: 'O My people! Bethink you' If I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has provided me with fair sustenance from Him? And I desire not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you from it. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able..."

They had to stop thinking that a comfortable life could only be gained through crooked dealings and sinful activity, and Allah's prophets are an example that one could live a decent life without being polluted by these sins.

We must keep in mind that he who commands others to what is good and dissuades others from what is bad must be a man of practice himself. The prophets themselves were not only planners and leaders; they themselves were the best examples of men of practice.

Shu'ayb continues saying:

"…My success is only with Allah. On Him do I rely and unto Him I turn (repentant)'."

Surah Hud - Verse 89

وَيَا قَوْمِ لاَ يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَن يُصِيبَكُم مِثْلُ مَآ أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنكُم بِبَعِيدٍ

89. "And O My people! Let not (your) breach with me cause you to sin, lest befalls you the like of what befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hud or the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you."

Shu'ayb advises his opponents that they should not burn their bridges behind themselves, i.e., because of their hostility to one person they should not destroy the destiny and happiness of themselves and their society.

They should stop thinking that the tragic stories of their ancestors were simplistic and parochial in nature. The histories of many people are similar and correspond with each other.

We must note that Allah's hands are always capable of meting out punishment. He can annihilate any nation anywhere regardless of what form they might take any time He wants.

Just as He drowned the people of Noah (as), swept away the people of Hud by storm, blasted the people of Salih (as) to extermination, and annihilated the tribe of Lot (as) by assailing them with stones and overturning the land with them.

The verse says:

"And O My people! Let not (your) breach with me cause you to sin, lest befalls you the like of what befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hud or the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you."

Surah Hud - Verse 90

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ

90. "(Then come) and ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him (in repentance): Verily my Lord is Merciful, Loving."

The dissidents and unbelievers must not only be warned and informed of the punishment to come, but they must also be shown the method by which they can reform themselves and the course of action that may attract Divine mercy.

They must be notified that in order to receive Allah's favor and friendship[3], they must follow the path of the prophets and the leadership of the Sinless Ones. If they repent and reconstruct their lives, they will receive positive answers from Allah.

The verse says:

"(Then come) and ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him (in repentance):..."

Allah's (s.w.t.) favor is not a passing affair, rather it is a continuous process and possesses numerous signs and characteristics, He does not only accept repentance, but He also loves those who repent.

It says:

"…Verily my Lord is Merciful, Loving."

Surah Hud - Verse 91

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيراً مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفاً وَلَوْلاَ رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَآ أَنتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ

91. "They said: 'O Shu'ayb! We do not understand much of what you say; and most surely we see you weak among us. Were it not for your family, we would certainly stone you; and you are not mighty against us'."

The prophets and the divine preachers have had to bear the utmost contempt and humiliation in the course of their mission in leading mankind on to the Right Path. Shu'ayb (as) is one of those examples, for they did both to him.

They ridiculed and belittled his words and saw him as someone weak and insignificant. They denigrated his family, threatened him with death, and did not give due regard to his honor.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O Shu'ayb! We do not understand much of what you say; and most surely we see you weak among us. Were it not for your family, we would certainly stone you; and you are not mighty against us'."

The idol worshippers told Shu'ayb (as) that they did not grasp the meaning of his words. But what was his speech about which they claimed they did not understand? Was it not but the following?

1- I am empowered to perform miracles and to offer you valid proofs.

"If I be upon a clear proof..."

2- I have no financial difficulties and I am not in need of your assistance.

3- I practice what I preach.

4- I intend to reform the society.

"I desire naught save reform..."

5- I struggle with all my might.

"…so far as I am able…"

6- I put all my hopes and trust in Allah.

"…On Him do I rely..."

7- I warn you of the consequences at the end of time and the actions of past generations.

"…The like of what befell the people of Noah..."

Surah Hud - Verse 92

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُم مِنَ ا ۖ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَاءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيّاً إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

92. "He said: 'O my people! Is then my family more esteemed with you than Allah? And you cast Him behind your back, with neglect. Verily my Lord encompasses what you do'."

We should not give priority to the rights of the people, or of groups, parties, or even of international law over Divine rights. We must stop excluding Allah's role in the political and social domains and not let it be dominated by any other matter.

According to the verse, these people refrained from doing harm to Shu'ayb because of the fear of retaliation from his tribe.

The verse says:

"He said: 'O my people! Is then my family more esteemed with you than Allah?..."

Shu‘ayb’s response was why could they not accept his words simply for Allah’s sake? Given that Allah was infinitely more powerful than his tribe, they did not give any importance to Him at all ignoring Him and violating His commandments.

It continues:

“…And you cast Him behind your back, with neglect...”

In fact they should stop thinking that Allah was not seeing what they did and did not hear what they said, for one can be sure, that the Lord is aware of all of our deeds.

The verse concludes:

“…Verily my Lord encompasses what you do’.”

Surah Hud - Verse 93

وَيَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَي مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ

93. “And O my people! Act according to your ability. I will do (my part). Soon you will know on whom comes the Penalty disgracing him, and who it is a liar. And watch you; Verily I (too) am watching with you.”

As the disbelievers of the people of Shu‘ayb threatened to stone him to death while giving him their last words, Shu‘ayb, declaring his stand in the face of these threats did not flinch from the threat and issued a challenge to them, instead he said that they would do whatever they could, and might not spare anything. He should do what is in his power as well.

The verse says:

“And O my people! Act according to your ability. I will do (my part)...”

However, you will soon realize who will be the one suffering a humiliating punishment, and who is a liar. So, wait and see and I will do the same.

The verse continues saying:

“…Soon you will know on whom comes the Penalty disgracing him, and who it is a liar...”

You try to win me over with your power, numbers, wealth, and your influence and I shall also wait and see how the Divine punishment will soon entangle you and your misguided population, exterminating you from the face of the earth.

The verse says:

“…And watch you; Verily I (too) am watching with you.”

Surah Hud - Verses 94 - 95

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْباً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

كَأَن لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَآ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُودُ

94. “And when Our Command came, We saved Shu‘ayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the (heavenly) Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they become motionless corpses in their abodes.”

95. "As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Away with (people of) Madyan, even as were cast away (the people of) Thamud."

Ultimately, the final stage did come. The Qur'an implies that when Allah's Command for the punishment of this misguided, oppressing and obstinate people was issued, after Shu'ayb and those who believed with him were saved by Divine favor and blessings, the terrible sound from the skies and the great death-dealing blast came over the people of Madyan and took them all by the throat.

The verse says:

"And when Our Command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the (heavenly) Blast overtook those who were unjust..."

In the aftermath of the blast, the Qur'an indicates that the people of Shu'ayb lay face down on the earth, they had died in their houses as a result of this great blast, and their corpses were left there to provide others with didactic lessons. Their lives were terminated in such a way that it was as if they had never existed there before.

The verse continues saying:

"…so they become motionless corpses in their abodes."

The Divine outrage is far superior in destruction than any other form of devastation, in the case of bombardment, for example, some people may have the chance to escape more or less unharmed, and some would remain alive after the event.

However, when the time for Allah's anger and punishment comes, it wipes the evildoers away in such a way that it is as if no one had ever lived there.

The verse says:

"As if they had never dwelt there..."

Eventually, as was explained at the end of the stories of the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud, Allah's favor and blessings were removed from the people of Madyan as they had been removed from the people of Thamud.

It says:

"…Behold! Away with (people of) Madyan, even as were cast away (the people of) Thamud."

Notes

1. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 46, p. 259
2. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 2, p. 468
3. The term /wadud/ refers to that kind of friendship which is everlasting.

Section 9: The Ministry of Moses

Surah Hud - Verses 96 - 97

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَإِيْهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَآ أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ

96. "And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority,"

97. "Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs; but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided."

The Champion Against Pharaoh

After finishing the story of Shu'ayb (as) and the people of Madyan, the Qur'an turns to part of the story of Musa bin Imran and his campaign against Pharaoh, which is the seventh story of the prophets referred to in this Surah.

The story of Moses (as) is more frequently mentioned in the Qur'an than that of any other prophet. In over thirty suras, the adventures of Moses, the Pharaoh and the Children of Israel have been mentioned more than one hundred times.

The special aspect of the story of Moses, when compared to that of the other prophets, is that while the other prophets launched their campaigns against misguided and seduced people, Moses, apart from campaigning against them, also had to fight against the Pharaonic system, the oppressive, as well.

However, we must keep in mind that in this part of the story, we focus on one aspect of Moses' story, which, though small, yet carries an important lesson for all mankind.

At first, the verse implies that Allah (s.w.t.) sent Moses (as) empowering him with the performance of miracles and endowing him with a powerful argument.

The verse says:

"And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority,"

Moses was sent armed with impressive miracles and a powerful argument to Pharaoh and his people. However, the followers of Pharaoh, who felt that their illegitimate interests were being jeopardized, were not ready to submit themselves to him, and accept his miracles and his logic.

Thus, they followed Pharaoh's command. However, Pharaoh's command could never have guaranteed their happiness and was not conducive to their development and their salvation.

The verse says:

"Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs; but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided."

Surah Hud - Verse 98

يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ

98. "He shall go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and lead them into the Fire, and evil is the place (they will be) led to."

The Arabic term /wird/ means ‘the water which one enters into’. Originally it referred to movement towards water and approaching it. However, gradually, it came to mean ‘to enter’ in all cases.

At any rate, those who are leaders or Imams in this world would be pioneers by leading others towards Paradise or Hell in the Hereafter. A just Imam or an enlightened leader leads people towards Paradise, and the person leading others in the direction of injustice, leads others towards the Hell Fire.

The verse says:

“He shall go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and lead them into the Fire, and evil is the place (they will be) led to.”

Surah Hud - Verse 99

وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ

99. “And they are followed by a curse in this world and on the Day of Judgment, and woeful is the gift which shall be given (them).”

Those who become followers of Pharaohs and despots are always associated with infamy and curses and their notorious names are always recorded in the books of history as people seduced by evil.

Thus they will be at a loss both in this world and in the next, and what a bad gift (i.e. the curse of Allah and being distanced from Him) is that which is going to be their share.

The verse says:

“And they are followed by a curse in this world and on the Day of Judgment, and woeful is the gift which shall be given (them).”

Surah Hud - Verse 100

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْقُرَي نَقُصُّهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَآئِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ

100. “(O’ Our Apostle!) This is of the tidings of the towns (which) We relate to you; some of them are still standing and some have been mown down.”

The act of telling didactic stories which are correct and documented is often a divinely inspired act which we must not ignore. Qur’anic stories are the most truthful and the most correct of stories for their story teller is Allah.

The holy verse says:

“(O’ Our Apostle!) This is of the tidings of the towns (which) We relate to you; some of them are still standing and some have been mown down.”

Incidentally, in some cases, Allah recounts that He had exterminated those disobedient people leaving only their traces behind. However, in other cases, He mentions that He had wiped out those evil doers completely together with all their effects.

However, story telling in the Qur’an has an important role and carries with it significant repercussions.

First of all the stories are impressive and attractive.

Secondly it paves the way for accepting the influence of rational and demonstrative reasoning.

Thirdly, it offers another proof of the miraculous nature of the Prophet (S) as an uninstructed individual who brings such news.

And fourthly, it offers instructive lessons for its audience.

Surah Hud - Verse 101

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِن ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَمَآ أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ ءَالِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ا ۖ
مِن شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَمَا زَادُوهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيبٍ

101. "And We did no injustice unto them, but they were unjust unto themselves. When the decree of your Lord came, their gods, whom they invoked other than Allah, availed them not anything and they increased them naught but perdition."

The Arabic term /tatbib/ is derived from /tabb/ which means 'sequential loss and gradual death and destruction'.

To punish the oppressor is not called oppression. On the contrary, it is identical with justice. One's own destiny lies in his own hands, which is his own willful conduct.

No one can be man's savior but Allah.

None is able to stand against the Will of Allah.

The verse says:

"And We did no injustice unto them, but they were unjust unto themselves. When the decree of your Lord came, their gods, whom they invoked other than Allah, availed them not anything and they increased them naught but perdition."

Surah Hud - Verse 102

وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَي وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخْذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ

102. "And such is the grasp (of punishment) of your Lord when He grasps the townships that are unjust. Verily His grasp (punishment) is painful, severe."

It is certain that Allah's punishment is quite hard and painful.

The verse says:

"And such is the grasp (of punishment) of your Lord when He grasps the townships that are unjust. Verily His grasp (punishment) is painful, severe."

This is a general Divine law and an eternal tradition which says that every nation inflicts oppression, violates Divinely established limits, and ignores the leadership, admonitions and guidance of Allah's prophets, it will be eventually arrested and annihilated by Divine punishment.

Surah Hud - Verses 103 - 104

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الأَخِرَةِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَجْمُوعٌ لَهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَشْهُودٌ
وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهُ إِلاَّ لأَجَلٍ مَعْدُودٍ

103. "Surely in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement in the Hereafter, that is a Day (when) mankind are to be gathered to, and that Day witnessed (by all)."

104. "And We do not postpone it, but to an appointed term."

In the previous noble verses, it was explicitly stated that as a general rule those who deny the truth will be dealt with accordingly, and will receive their deserved punishment.

This subtle verse of the holy Qur'an also states that these instructive accounts and the awful, painful events which our predecessors experienced, are some signs toward the path of truth for those who fear the punishments of the Hereafter to seek the truth and follow Divine guidance.

The verse says:

"Surely in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement in the Hereafter..."

In every aspect, this fleeting world is very insignificant as compared to the Hereafter even in punishment and reprisal. The next world is much more expansive in extent, and those who believe in the Resurrection will be trembling when they confront these worldly Signs.

Towards the end of the verse, the Qur'an refers to two characteristics of the Day of Resurrection, by saying that it is the Day which is going to be witnessed by all, in such a way that all human beings will be present and see it for themselves.

The verse says:

"…that is a Day (when) mankind are to be gathered to, and that Day witnessed (by all)."

In view of the fact that some persons may claim that such a Day is a remote probability and it is not clear as to when it will arrive, so the Qur'an hastens to add that that Day will not be postponed except for a limited amount of time.

This will be only done for the sake of expediency so that the people of the world may apprehend those scenes elucidated in the Qur'an for their education and that the programs of the prophets can be implemented as far as possible.

The verse says:

"And We do not postpone it, but to an appointed term."

Surah Hud - Verses 105 - 107

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ إِلاَّ مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

105. "The day (when) it comes, no soul shall speak but by His leave. Then some of them shall be wretched, and some happy."

106. "Then as for those who are wretched (they) shall be in the Fire, for them therein will be moaning and sighing."

107. "They will abide therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases. Verily your Lord is the (Mighty) Doer of what He intends."

On the Day of Resurrection, the Reckoning Day, silence will prevail everywhere except for those who are permitted to speak.

In the foregoing verses, allusion was made to the Day of Resurrection and the general assembly of people in that great Court. Here, the Qur'an informs us of a part of the fate of people on the Day of the Judgment.

At first it implies that when the Day comes, no one can speak without Allah's permission.

The verse says:

"The day (when) it comes, no soul shall speak but by His leave..."

On that Day, people will go through various stages, each one having its own specifications. In some stages no questions are to be asked, even our mouths will remain shut, only those organs which have been involved and have been imprinted by the performance of their owners would bear testimony by a mute tonge.

However, in other stages, the silence imposed upon the mouths would be removed and mankind will start speaking with Allah's permission, confessing their sins. The guilty will blame each other, and try to attribute their own sins to others, holding them responsible for their deeds.

Towards the end of the verse, the Qur'an divides all people into two categories, saying that some people are stone hearted and some are soft hearted, some are happy while others are unhappy.

The verse continues saying:

"…Then some of them shall be wretched, and some happy."

This toughness and stone heartedness, on the one hand, and the contentment and happiness on the other, are no more than the consequences of individual behaviors, words, deeds and intentions in this world.

It then expounds upon the state of the wicked, stone hearted and vicious as well as the state of those prosperous and happy individuals in a concise, self explanatory sentence by saying that those who became wicked and stone hearted will be in agony, moaning and crying all the time.

These reflect the conditions of those who are deeply regretful, the kind of crying which saturates them to the point that shows their utmost discomfort because of the severity of their punishment.

The verse says:

"Then as for those who are wretched (they) shall be in the Fire, for them therein will be moaning and sighing."

It adds further that they will permanently stay in the Hell Fire until the heavens and the earth endure or unless Allah wishes otherwise, for Allah does whatever He wishes.

The verse says:

"They will abide therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases. Verily your Lord is the (Mighty) Doer of what He intends."

Surah Hud - Verse 108

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ إِلاَّ ما شَآءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوذٍ

108. "And as for those who are happy, they shall be in Paradise, abiding therein, so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases: a gift without a break.1"

The Means of Happiness and Wretchedness

Happiness, which is considered as a lost paradise for man, results from the provision of the means of development for an individual or a community. The opposite of it is wretchedness in which the conditions conducive to progress, development and victory are unfavorable.

However, one must keep in mind that the primary source of happiness and prosperity as well as wretchedness lies in man's own will. It is he who can provide the means necessary for his own self actualization as well as that of his community. And it is he who can fight the causes of wretchedness or submit to it completely.

The logic of the prophets proclaims that the two are not inherent in man's nature and even the shortcomings of environment, family and heredity can be transformed through one's own determination.

If, on the other hand, we deny the principle of man's free will and take a deterministic approach in our attitude towards him, we will have to consider his happiness and wretchedness as inherent in him or as the effects of determinism which is definitely condemned in the literature of the prophets as well as in the school of rationalism.

Interestingly, in narrations attributed to the holy Prophet (S) and the Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), one reads that the means which provide grounds for one's happiness or wretchedness have been indicated.

The study of these Islamic narrations leads man to contemplate the Islamic way of thinking about this important problem, and gives him guidelines to help him seek objective realities and the true means of happiness instead of taking recourse in superstitious beliefs and wrong traditions.

Imam Sadiq (as), quoting his great grandfather, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) says:

"The truth of the matter regarding prosperity is that the last stage of man's life ends with righteous deeds, and the fact of the matter concerning wretchedness is that the last stage of one's life comes to an end with a vicious act."[2]

And again the Prophet (S) declares:

"Four conditions, if fulfilled, result in happiness and four conditions pave the way for wretchedness. The former consists of a wife with decent conduct, a spacious home, a worthy neighbor, and a good horse, while wretchedness consists of an evil doing wife, a bad neighbor, an awfully small house and a bad horse."[3]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Perfect happiness comes about when one's whole life is spent serving Allah."[4]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The faithful who are wise are the happiest ones (on the earth)."[5]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The most fortunate of people are those who associate with brave godly men.[6]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"A good temper is one of the prime sources of one's happiness."[7]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) remarks that one's happiness lies in his attaining religion and the practice of it for the Hereafter.[8]

The Prophet of Allah (S) says:

"Verily a Muslim man's happiness lies in his child resembling him, having a beautiful and God-fearing wife, a large house and a good horse (to ride)."[9]

As for wretchedness, Imam Rida (as) in a tradition says:

"Allah has allocated wretchedness for liars and culprits."[10]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once was asked:

"Who is the worst villain and the most vicious person?"

To which he answered:

"He who exchanges his religion for another person's worldly life."[11]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Shall I not tell you who the most vicious villain is?"

They answered:

"Yes, O' Prophet of Allah!".

He said:

"He who is empty handed in this world together with the punishment of the Hereafter."[12]

We would like to take refuge in Allah from such a villain age.

Comparing the paths shown towards one's happiness and wretchedness in the above quotations and their objectivity, with the superstitious beliefs which still attract large numbers of people in this era of the atom and space travel, one is led right away to the reality that Islamic instructions are quite logical and extremely well calculated.

And what a great number of people have there been who have become entangled in the complications arising from such superstitions preventing them from effectively living their daily lives bringing them only misfortune and pain.

Regarding happiness and wretchedness, Islam obliterates all superstitious beliefs, and guides us in everything that we do strengthening and clarifying our ethical responsibilities, attitudes, conduct, and way of thinking.

Surah Hud - Verse 109

فَلا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِمَّا يَعْبُدُ هَؤُلآءِ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ كَمَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابآؤُهُم مِن قَبْلُ وَإِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنقُوصٍ

109. "So be not then in doubt as to what these (men) worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before (them), and verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion undiminished."

One result which can be inferred from the stories of the previous generations is that the prophets and those following them, those who were truly faithful, should not fear the abundance of the enemies and with no

hesitation try to defeat the unjust idol worshippers they are confronted because the helps of Allah are certain.

Therefore, He says to His Prophet that he should not have the shadow of a doubt as to what these people worship for they only follow in the footsteps of their ancestors and do not, in fact, really worship anything at all.

Thus their destiny is no better than that of their forefathers. They shall be compensated in full and Allah will not give them short of what is their due (of punishment). And were they to return to the true path, their share of Allah's reward will be preserved.

The verse says:

"So be not then in doubt as to what these (men) worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before (them), and verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion undiminished."

In actual fact, this verse depicts that whatever we have read about past generations had not been fairy tales or myths and their realities have not been confined to only the previous generations. They constitute eternal examples for all men, past, present, and future, though they may take place in different circumstances and with different forms.

In the meantime, though this sublime verse is addressed to the Prophet (S), it targets the people so that they may not be in doubt or be hesitant.

Notes

1. Although Allah's Will has no limits even to expel the people in paradise, if we focus our attention on the climactic highlight of the last verse and the promises given in other verses, we can conclude that He would not do such a thing and when one enters Paradise he will remain there permanently.
2. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 68, p. 364
3. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 104, p. 98
4. Nahj ul Fasahah, p. 375
5. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 2, p. 397
6. Madinat ul Balaqah, vol. 2, p. 462
7. Nahj ul Fasahah, p. 57
8. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 4, p. 144
9. Bihar, vol. 73 p. 149
10. Bihar, vol. 5, p. 154
11. Bihar, vol. 72, p. 270
12. Bihar, vol. 100, p. 70

Section 10: Exhortation to Shun Evil

Surah Hud - Verse 110

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلاَ كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَبّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

110. "And We certainly gave Moses the Book, then variance was (created) in it, and had not a Word gone forth before from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them: but they are in grave doubt concerning it."

To console the Prophet (S), the Qur'an adds that if his people raised objections and fabricated pretexts concerning the Qur'an, he should not worry, for Allah had also provided Moses with a Celestial Book (the Torah) and it became then an object for their differences, some accepted it while others rejected it.

The verse says:

"And We certainly gave Moses the Book, then variance was (created) in it..."

Allah is not hasty in punishing His enemies; it is for the sake of expediency and pragmatism in their education which requires such a course of action.

And if pragmatism in such a case did not allow for it, and the program which Allah had preordained for the Prophet in this respect did not require further delays, judgment would have been passed upon them and the punishment would have been inflicted upon them.

Nevertheless, they had not yet believed in the Truth, everything about which they entertained with suspicion and viewed with pessimism.

The verse continues saying:

"…and had not a Word gone forth before from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them: but they are in grave doubt concerning it."

Surah Hud - Verse 111

وَإِنَّ كُلاًّ لَمَّا لَيُوَفّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

111. "And certainly, to all will your Lord recompense them their deeds in full; verily He is aware of what they do."

In stressing the matter further, the Qur'an adds in this verse that Allah will remunerate both groups, the faithful as well as the idol worshippers, without any failing or shortcoming, in lieu of the kind of conduct they had been engaged in.

The verse says:

"And certainly, to all will your Lord recompense them their deeds in full;..."

This does not create any difficulties for Allah, for He is well aware of everything and of what they do.

It continues saying:

"…verily He is aware of what they do."

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an says that Allah will return to them (the recompense of) their deeds. This is another allusion to the subject of the embodiment of deeds and that the reward and retribution of man, indeed, are his own deeds which will change in form and reach him.

Anyway, in the Divine system of belief, no deed will be left unanswered and uncompensated for; if it is good, it will be rewarded with good and if it is evil it will be compensated for with the same.

Surah Hud - Verse 112

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ وَمَن تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلاَ تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

112. "Therefore stand firm (O Prophet) as you are commanded, and (also) he who has turned (unto Allah) with you, and (O' men) do not transgress (from the Path); verily He sees well what you do."

The Command of Steadfastness

After recounting the lives of the prophets and former tribes and the reasons for their success, and after reinforcing the will of the Prophet (S), thereby in this verse He commands him (S) the most important duty, saying that he must stand firm as he had been commanded.

The verse says:

"Therefore stand firm (O Prophet) as you are commanded..."

He must stand firm in propagation and guidance, in his struggles and battles, in carrying out Allah's orders, and in implementing the instructions of the Qur'an.

However, this stance must not be for the sake of pleasing others, nor should it be for bigotry, nor for the acquisition of titles, nor for acquiring wealth, position, success and power. It must be for the execution of Allah's command as he had been instructed.

However, this order does not concern the Prophet (S) only, it also instructs those who are following in his footsteps for approaching Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and (also) he who has turned (unto Allah) with you…"

The Qur'an advises the kind of persistence which avoids both extremes, neither more nor less, and the order not to be unruly, signifies the kind of persistence which avoids all kinds of transgression, for Allah is well aware of every action which we do. No cessation of movement or pause, and word or schedule remains hidden from Him.

It says:

"…and (O' men) do not transgress (from the Path); verily He sees well what you do."

This is a sensitive yet disturbing verse. There is a hadith from Ibn Abbas which says: "There is no verse revealed more severe and more difficult for the Prophet (S) than this verse. Therefore, when the companions of the Prophet (S) asked him why his hair had turned gray so soon, and the signs of age prematurely appeared on his face, he said:

"The Surah Al-Waqi'ah and the Surah Hud made me age."

Some other traditions indicate that when the above verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) said:

"Fasten your belts! Fasten your belts (as it is time for struggling and working)"; and since that time, he was never seen smiling.

The reason is clear, for there are four commands in this verse, each of which imposes a heavy duty upon man.

Today, our responsibilities as Muslim leaders can also be summarized as: persistence, sincerity, leadership of the believers, abstinence from unruliness, and non-violence.

Victory over our enemies, who have been surrounding us from all sides, exploiting us in all cultural, political, economic, social, and military spheres, might not be possible without the implementation of the four principles mentioned above.

Surah Hud - Verse 113

وَلاَ تَرْكَنُوا إِلَي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمْ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِن دُونِ ا ً مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لاَ تُنصَرُونَ

113. "And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you; and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall you be helped.

Reliance upon the Unjust!

This verse explains one of the most fundamental programs in the realm of social, political, military, and ideological spheres of activity.

It addresses all Muslims, putting forward a decisive duty, it implies that we should not seek support from oppressors, and never rely upon them for such an act for it causes us to be surrounded by the Fire of Hell and we have no one from whom to expect support but Allah.

The verse says:

"And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you; and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall you be helped.

In which matters must one not rely upon the transgressors?

In the first instance, obviously, we must not share in the atrocities they commit and seek support from them in this regard.

Secondly, reliance upon them must stop where the Muslim community stands to be weakened, and its independence and self sufficiency jeopardized, this type of dependency will bear no fruit but frustration and loss of independence on the part of Islamic communities.

As to the idea that Muslims should establish commercial or scientific relations with non Muslim communities on the basis of protecting Muslim interests and independence as well as their security is not unprecedented in the history of Islam nor is it forbidden in Islam and it does not fit into the meaning of seeking assistance from the oppressors.

During the era of the Prophet (S) and after him such relationships with non Muslims had also existed. However, one must not, at the same time, obey the oppressors or put his hope in them, for we read in the narrations that friendship with the unjust and obedience to them are examples of submission to tyranny.

In a narration, it has been said:

"Do not put your hope in an oppressor even if he is a member of your family or a friend."

In Al-Kafi, there is also a narration which says:

"Allah has forbidden you to spare even one minute when an oppressor is to be hanged, for, in such a case, you would have supported him."

Refer to Tafsir al Burhan-As-Safi, Usul Al-Kafi, and the Bihar-ul-'Anwar for further information.

Explanation

1- Every kind of dependence on internal and external oppressors is prohibited.

2- Oppression and assisting the oppressors or even relying upon them constitute capital sins and those affiliated with it are subversives. (Every sin which Allah has spoken of as being punishable with the Fire is considered as a capital sin)

3- Relying upon and trusting the oppressor will lead to Allah's Hell. Therefore, how is the situation of the oppressor himself going to be?

4- Instead of taking recourse to the unjust, put your trust in Allah.

5- The result of relying upon tyrants is isolation and estrangement.

6- As the obedience from /ulul-'amr/ (the political and religions chiefs appointed to issue decrees on behalf of Allah), is obligatory and, on the other hand, since relying upon and seeking the support of the unjust is forbidden, therefore the /ulul-'amr/ cannot be unjust, they must necessarily be "immaculate", too, because sin is considered an example of injustice.

(And do not incline to those who are unjust...)

Surah Hud - Verses 114 - 115

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفاً مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَي لِلذ
اكِرِينَ
وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ ا ّ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

114. "And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night; verily the good deeds remove evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful."

115. "And be patient (and steadfast); for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous (ones)."

Prayer and Steadfastness

These two verses point to two of the most important Islamic instructions that embody the spirit of Islam and shape its foundation. At first, the Qur'an commands us to establish the prayers, declaring that we must keep our prayers at both ends of the day and at the time of nightfall.

The apparent meaning of the phrase /tarafay-in-nahar/ (on both sides of the day) is the morning and evening prayers and /zulaf/ is in keeping with the /'iša'/ (the prayer of nightfall).

In the meantime, as the midday prayer and the afternoon prayer have been explained in other verses, they have not been repeated here. However, according to one quotation, they are also mentioned in this verse as well, though this verse does not aim at explaining all the daily prayers.

The verse says:

"And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night;..."

Afterwards, to specifically stress the importance of the daily prayers, and other rituals, acts of worship and the performance of good deeds in general, it declares that good conduct nullifies evil acts.

The verse continues saying:

"…verily the good deeds remove evil deeds..."

This is a reminder for those who try to lend ears to such matters. It says:

"…That is a reminder for the mindful."

The above verse, like some other Qur'anic verses, illustrates the influence of good deeds in removing the evil effect of evil deeds. Good deeds, which have their origin in Divine motives, bestow purity and beauty upon the human spirit which may wipe out the effects of sin from it, turning the darkness of sins into light.

The Extraordinary Importance of Prayers

In the numerous narrations from the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as) which concern the above verse, one easily finds interpretations which unveil the extraordinary importance of prayers in Islam.

Ali (as) is quoted as saying:

"The Prophet (S) and I were waiting for our prayers inside the mosque when a man stood up saying: "O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a sin." The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him.

When the prayers ended, the same man stood up and repeated the same sentence. The Prophet (S) said: "Have you not joined us in prayer? And have you not done your ablutions well for it ?" The man answered: "Yes". He said: "This is an atonement for your sin."[1]

The sublime Prophet (S) said:

"At the times of prayer, an angel is certain to say: 'O people! Stand up and put out the Fire you have lit (against your selves), by means of your prayers.'"

And the Prophet (S) also said:

"The five daily prayers are like a stream running in front of your houses. Once you wash yourselves five times a day in that stream, you will be clean of all pollution. (It is the same as cleaning your soul from all kinds of pollution by establishing your five daily prayers.)"

Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) said:

"Whenever man is in the state of prayer, his body, clothes, and whatever is found around him engage in giving glory of Allah."[2]

However, prayer insures man who has committed sinful acts, by wiping his heart clean of the dust of sin.

Prayer enables one's potentialities to flourish in the depths of his soul. It also strengthens one's will, purifies his heart and cleans up his spirit.

Prayer in this way can be a superior school of education, provided that it is not just treated as a series of rituals in form without substance.

Following the human shaping schedule of prayer, and the description concerning the impact of the virtues upon the vices, the Qur'an commands

perseverance in this verse, saying that we should stay patient, for Allah does not spoil the rewards of those who act with righteousness.

The verse says:

"And be patient (and steadfast); for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous (ones)."

All of this means that performing decent acts is not possible without patience and perseverance.

The Qur'anic term /sabr/ includes all aspects of forbearance against difficulties, oppositions, harms, emotions, outrage and disasters.

Patience and perseverance is a fundamental general principle which is sometimes coupled in the Qur'an with prayers. It is perhaps for the reason that prayer enables man to move and it ordains him to have patience and perseverance.

And these two, that is 'movement' and resistance, when coupled with each other, are the main factors for victory. Finally, let us focus upon the most hopeful of the verses of the Qur'an:

Hadrat Ali (as) coming upon a group in discussion asked them:

"Do you know which is the most hopeful of the verses of the Qur'an?"

In response, everyone named one verse which suited his own mood.

Some suggested the verse, which says: "Verily Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that..."[3] means that Allah forgives all sins except idol worship.

Others were of the opinion that the verse in question is the one which says:

"And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his own self, then seeks forgiveness of Allah, shall find Allah forgiving, Merciful"[4].

This verse means that he who is a wrongdoer and a tyrant, if he asks for forgiveness, and apologizes, he will find Allah compassionate and merciful.

Still others cited the holy verse declaring:

"Say: 'O My servants who have acted extravagantly against their own selves! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."[5]

Others were of the opinion that it was the verse saying:

"And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their selves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who forgives the sins except Allah? - And they (the pious) do not knowingly persist in what they have committed."[6]

Meaning that those who have committed an evil act, oppressing themselves, think of Allah and ask forgiveness from Him, and who is there to forgive sins except Allah?

After hearing all those views, Hadrat Ali said:

"I heard from my dear one, the Prophet of Allah (S), who said: "I hope to a verse in the Book of Allah, which says: "And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night; verily the good deeds remove evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful."

Then the Prophet (S) continued: 'O Ali! By the One Who appointed me as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner towards people. Whenever a person

makes ablution for prayer, his sins will fall off; and when he turns toward Qiblah he will become purified.

O' Ali! The example of the daily prayers resembles one who washes himself in a stream in front of his house, fives times every day."[7]

Surah Hud - Verse 116

فَلَوْلاَ كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُواْ بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الأَرْضِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَآ أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

116. "But why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed understanding (and authority), prohibiting (people) from mischief in the earth, except a few whom We saved from among them? And those who were unjust pursued what they were made to enjoy and they were guilty."

The Arabic term /baqiyyah/ means 'remainder', but it usually refers to 'virtue' and 'power' in Arabic, maybe because one stores his precious belongings with himself and preserves them to remain; or perhaps because some people who have more power stay on the scene. The holy word /baqiyyah/ has been employed three times in the Qur'an.

In this verse, Allah has criticized a group of believers as to why they do not equip themselves with knowledge and power so as to warn the society. This warning, which has repeatedly been used in the Qur'an, is accompanied with the word /laula/.

At any rate, in this holy verse and the previous one, a fundamental social principle, which stands out in saving human societies from corruption and self-destruction, has been mentioned.

That is, in every society where there is a group of conscious learned and dutiful people who are committed to not remain silent in the face of corruption, who launch campaigns against it, and who lead in developing the ideological awareness of the people, that society will not suffer from self-destruction.

But, when indifference and silence is the rule of the game everywhere, and then society is made defenseless against the elements of corruption, self-destruction will surely be its eventual outcome.

Therefore, while referring to the previous peoples which had been the target of all kinds of disasters, the Qur'an asks why it is that in the previous centuries, there were no righteous people of knowledge and power to prevent all kinds of corruption on the earth.

The verse says:

"But why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed understanding (and authority), prohibiting (people) from mischief in the earth..."

The role of /'ulu baqiyyah/ (those possessed understanding and authority) in the survival of society, is so sensitive that one must say that without them the right of societies to survive will be removed from them. This is what the above verse implies.

To make an exception to this rule, the Qur'an says:

"…except a few whom We saved from among them?..."

Despite the fact that this small group observed the rules of persuading others to perform what was good and dissuading them from what was evil, their number was so limited that they could not have any success in reforming the society.

This is reflected in examples like Lot and his small family, Noah and his limited number of believers, Salih and his few followers. The oppressors of these societies, who constituted the majority, pursued their extravagant way of life and were so proud and saturated with pleasures that they committed all kinds of sin.

The verse says:

"…And those who were unjust pursued what they were made to enjoy and they were guilty."

Such unrestricted affluence and hedonism are the sources of all kinds of deviations and usually originate among affluent families, as their carefree state hinders them from comprehending social realities and covers them with sin, leaving them no chance for becoming familiar with real human values.

Whereas verse 114 deals with prayers, this verse is concerned with dissuading others from doing evil deeds. It is appropriate to mention here some of the verses of the Glorious Qur'an which deal with the subject of prayers together with persuading others to engage in decent acts and dissuading others from committing evil deeds.

Such verses are as follows:

A. "…Verily prayer restrains from indecency and evil…"[8]

B. "…Verily the good deeds remove the evil deeds,..."[9]

C. "…Keep up prayer, enjoin the good and forbid evil…"[10]

D. "Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong;..."[11]

The utmost responsibility thus lies with those who are knowledgeable and powerful, and the result of reformers' sympathy and reformation in society is salvation from Allah's anger and benefiting from His compassion.

The key to the downfall of former generations has been their indifference and failure to dissuade others from doing wrong, hedonism, and criminal activity, the vicious triangle of destruction.

We hope that Allah may save us, our children, and our coming generations from these dangers and deviations.

Surah Hud - Verse 117

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَي بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُونَ

117. "Nor would your Lord destroy the townships unjustly while their people acted well."

Allah (s.w.t.) removes His wrath from societies because of the presence of benevolent and righteous individuals who mend their society.

Incidentally, simply being righteous is not sufficient, one must be encouraging others to be righteous as well. Therefore, to emphasize this reality, the Qur'an implies that the reason why Allah eradicated these peoples was because there were no righteous reformists among them.

It was not the case that the Almighty oppressively sought the destruction of established communities despite attempts being made to purify them of all impurities. The verse says:

"Nor would your Lord destroy the townships unjustly while their people acted well."

Whenever a society was oppressive as a whole but had rediscovered itself, and was about to reform and alter itself, there would be reason for it to remain, while if it remained oppressive and did not try to reform, and purge itself of its evil ways, there would be no reason for it to survive.

Surah Hud - Verse 118

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

118. "And had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind a single people: yet they cease not differing."

Allah's way of treatment in creation of men is based on liberty, and freedom in choosing their own ideas and beliefs. Man's choice and freedom to choose his way of life and ideas has been frequently referred to in the Glorious Qur'an.

That is, although Allah leads man towards Himself, He does not impose His will upon him by force, and He has not commanded the sublime Prophet (S) to compel people, He has only demanded him to remind people of their duty, and show them the right path.

The holy Qur'an in this regard says:

"Therefore do thou give admonition, for you are one to admonish".

"Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs." [12]

Thus, Allah reveals the virtuous path in such a way that human nature, discriminating between good and evil, recognizes them from within itself, and for this reason, from out ward, He sends the prophets (as) to guide mankind.

It is the man himself who must fully and voluntarily select his own way, the Path of Truth or the path of evil and wrongdoing. Therefore, He has alluded to one of the prominent traditions in the course of creation which is the basis of other affairs that relates to human beings.

It is the individual differences relating to the mind, the body, personal views, zeal and love as well as the issue of man's freedom of will.

The Qur'an remarks that if Allah wanted He could have created a single nation out of mankind (but He did not do such a thing) and human beings have always had differences to settle.

This is emphasized in order to show that His insistence for obeying His commands does not reflect a lack of ability to put everyone on one track and on one predetermined path. It stands to reason that such a faith would be of no use.

Nor would such a homogeneous, unified and compulsory faith based upon involuntary motives lead anywhere, it would reflect no personality distinctions, no means of development and growth, and have no basis for rewarding the good.

Man's supreme value essentially lies in his freedom of will which differentiates him from other existing beings. Different tastes, different

ways of thinking, indeed, differences of personality and intellectual makeup all form parts of one society, providing multiple aspects of those dimensions that make man who he is and it is that which gives him a distinct status.

It is also natural that once freedom of will comes in the scene, differences regarding ideas and schools of thought must exist.

Surah Hud - Verse 119

إِلاَّ مَن رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لأَمْلأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

119. "Except those on whom your Lord has Mercy; and for that (mercy) did He create them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled: 'Certainly I will fill Hell with jinn and the mankind together'."

In this verse the Qur'an indicates that the people disagree with each other in their acceptance of the Truth except those upon whom is Allah's Mercy.

The verse says:

"Except those on whom your Lord has Mercy;..."

However, this Divine blessing is not confined to a certain group, but all humankind can benefit from it if they want.

Those who wish to come under Allah's favor will find an open gate for His all inclusive Mercy and Grace which are made available to mankind through their own reasoning, the guidance of the prophets, and heavenly Books which have been revealed to them.

The verse says:

"…and for that (mercy) did He create them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled:..."

Once they utilize these favors and blessings the gates of Paradise and eternal bliss will be opened for them, otherwise, the command of Allah has been issued that He will fill Hell with the disobedient and arrogant ones from among the Jinn and men.

The verse continues saying:

"…'Certainly I will fill Hell with jinn and the mankind together'."

Surah Hud - Verse 120

وَكُلاًّ نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَآءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَي لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

120. "And all that We relate to you of the account of the messengers is something in order that with it We make firm your heart and in this there has come to you the Truth, and an admonition and a reminder to the believers."

In this verse and in the verses that follow, with which Surah Hud ends, there is a general conclusion which sums up the issues discussed thus far.

As the main part of this Surah dealt with the didactic stories of the prophets and the former generations of mankind, the Qur'an summarizes the precious results of these stories under four topics by saying that the stories of each of the prophets have been mentioned to reinforce the heart of the Prophet (S) in order to strengthen his will.

The verse says:

"And all that We relate to you of the account of the messengers is something in order that with it We make firm your heart..."

Afterwards, referring to the second most important result of those stories, the Qur'an implies that it brings to light the facts and realities concerning life and death, the victories and defeats, and the factors concerning the success and failure of communities.

It continues saying:

"…and in this there has come to you the Truth..."

The third and the fourth consequences are that they provide the faithful with exhortations, and reminders of the results of good or bad conduct.

It says:

"…and an admonition and a reminder to the believers."

This verse stresses once again that the historical facts which have been revealed by the Qur'an must not be taken lightly or used for amusing audiences, for they form the best instructional guidelines in all aspects of life for all people in all times.

Surah Hud - Verses 121 - 122

وَقُل لِّلَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ اعْمَلُوا عَلَي مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ

وَانْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ

121. "And say to those who do not believe: 'Act according to your ability; we shall do (our part)';"

122. "And wait you! We too are surely waiting."

Allah commands the Prophet (S) when confronting their stiff-neckedness and obstinacy to do the same as the previous prophets did and say what they said, that the disbelievers should do all that is in their power and do not spare in their efforts, and the Prophet and the believers will do likewise.

The verse says:

"And say to those who do not believe: 'Act according to your ability; we shall do (our part)';"

He also should tell the unbelievers to wait and see and the believers too, will wait and see, for one side will win and the other will be defeated.

The verse says:

"And wait you! We too are surely waiting."

The unbelievers seek the defeat of the believers but the latter will wait for the real Divine punishment which the unbelievers will receive either by means of the hands of the believers or directly from the side of Allah.

Surah Hud - Verse 123

وَ ِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ

عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

123. "And to Allah (alone) belong the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him the whole affairs will be returned; Then worship Him, and put (all) your trust in Him, and your Lord is not heedless of what you do."

The last verse of this Surah deals with monotheism: (the monotheistic nature of knowledge, the monotheistic view of acts, and also the

monotheistic way of worship), just as the beginning verses of the Surah that had dealt with knowledge of monotheism.

In fact, three sub sections of monotheism are indicated here. First, it refers to the monotheistic nature of Allah's knowledge saying that the knowledge of the hidden realities of the heavens and the earth belongs only to Him, and it is only He Who is aware of all secrets hidden and revealed.

The verse says:

"And to Allah (alone) belong the Unseen of the heavens and the earth..."

The knowledge of everyone besides Him is confined and limited and even this very limited knowledge is received from the Divine source. Therefore, omniscience, the essential knowledge, regarding the whole things throughout the entire universe, is particular to Him alone.

On the other hand, referring to the monotheistic nature of acts, the Qur'an says that it is He Who is in command of all acts, and all things will be returned to Him.

It continues saying:

"…and to Him the whole affairs will be returned;..."

The third point is said as a conclusion to these statements which is that unlimited knowledge and endless power belong solely to Him and everything will eventually return to Him, therefore we should worship Him alone and trust only in Him.

It says:

"…Then worship Him, and put (all) your trust in Him..."

This stage of monotheism is the stage of worship and abstinence from all unruly behaviour, misconduct, rebellion, and sin, for Allah is not unaware of all that we do.

It continues saying:

"…and your Lord is not heedless of what you do."

The End of Surah Hud

Notes

1. The commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan, concerning this verse.
2. Bihar, vol. 82, p. 213
3. Surah An-Nisa, No. 4, verse 48
4. Ibid, verse 110
5. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 53
6. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran verse 135
7. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the commentary, and Kanz-ud-Daqayiq.
8. Surah Ankabut, No. 29, verse 45
9. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 114
10. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 17
11. Surah Hajj No. 22, verse 41
12. Surah Al-Ghashiyah, No. 88, verses 21& 22

Surah Yusuf, Chapter 12

Surah Yusuf (Joseph),

No. 12 (Revealed in Mecca)

111 verses in 12 Sections

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Magnitude and Glory of the Qur'an

The Qur'an, which is a reflection of the magnificence and glory of Allah and is an eternal and everlasting miracle in itself, presents clear evidence and accurately foretells events. As a witness to these events, it presents true historical facts backed by strong logic and penetrating insight.

It is the repository of a superior kind of grace and is a boundless ocean of merits. It offers strategies, it encourages while at the same time gives warnings, and it gives accounts of man's past while also predicting the future.

It is unique in that it is as accessible to the common people as well as to the elite among the scholars. It contains material from the invisible world as well as from the physical world. It illustrates the causes for the enhancement one's honour and the factors which bring about one's wretchedness.

It enlightens one's thinking, reasoning, and way of meditation and logic while we are alive and at the same time it provides companionship during our solitary confinement in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'an is a repository of all knowledge and every science, and is the only celestial Book which has not been distorted. The more science develops the more its secrets unveil.

Its parables, metaphors and its similes are never wearisome and its repetitions often convey a wide variety of meanings. The Qur'an can be used as a criterion for verifying the words of the men of Allah.

We have been told that whenever we hear words attributed to those holy men we should compare them to the Qur'an and if they do not conform to it, then we should reject them.

The Qur'an is considered as the "Greater Weighty Thing" and the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) are considered by the believers as "The Lesser Weighty Thing". In this regard, the Prophet (S) reiterated several times:

"I have left two great gifts amongst you (Muslims) which will never be separated until the Day of Resurrection when they will join me at the Pool of Kauthar."

Even now the Ahl-ul-Bayt, in the person of Hadrat Mahdi, (may Allah hasten his advent) is still coupled with the Book of Allah, and any commentary written on the Qur'an which ignores well documented narrations that originate from them are invalid and misguiding, for the holy Prophet (S) said:

"If you take recourse to these two; the Book and my Ahl-ul-Bayt, you will never lose your way."

Certainly, taking recourse to the one and neglecting the other will lead to misguidance.

The Content of the Surah

Before beginning our discussion of the verses of this Surah, it is necessary to point out a number of points:

1 - All of the verses of this Surah, except a few, concern the beautiful, instructive biography of Hadrat Yusuf (as) and this is the reason why this Surah is called “Yusuf”.

And, it is also for this reason that out of the 27 times that the name of Yusuf has been mentioned in the Qur’an, 25 of them are found in this Surah. The other two suras in which his name has been mentioned are in verse 34 of Surah Al-Ghafir, and in verse 84 of Surah Al-’An‘am.

The content of this Surah is well integrated in one reading and it presents different highlights of a single story expressed in ten sections through an extraordinarily fluent, concise, interesting, and attractive manner.

Ignorant story tellers or those who have questionable objectives in mind, have sought to present this story as an exciting love story for the whimsical, they try to change everything around sexuality and present it as if it was a Hollywood romance, providing a distorted picture of the true Yusuf and his real biography.

The Qur’an, whose everything is paradigm, narrates the story revealing sublime lessons in chastity, abstemiousness, virtue, faith, and domination over individual selfishness. This has been so carefully arranged that if someone was to read it several times, he would still be involuntarily drawn by its powerful attraction.

It is for this reason that the Qur’an has called it the Best of Stories /ahsanul qasas/ and the Surah has presented instructive lessons for contemplation.

2 - Focusing our attention on the verses of this Surah reveals the fact that the holy Qur’an is a miracle in all its dimensions, and the champions it presents in its stories are real, not imaginary and unique in their class.

There is Abraham, the iconoclastic champion who, with his sublime and unconquerable spirit stood alone opposing powerful despots.

There is Moses, the hero who taught an obstinate people to go against a recalcitrant oppressor.

And then there is Yusuf (Joseph) (as), the champion who embodied righteousness, purity and virtue versus a passionate, beautiful and conniving woman.

On reading this Surah we cannot help but be struck with wonderment at the revelation of the Qur’an and its ability to relate a story of such subtlety and profundity.

Among the many subjects covered by this Surah, the story of Yusuf also deals with the sensitive issue of love, the Qur’an does not overlook or bypass these issues, indeed, it speaks of them in great detail but in such a way that no undesirable or negative effect would be left on the reader.

It delves deeply into every issue and proposition but one would find that powerful rays of virtue may dominate the discussion at all times.

3 - The story of Yusuf before and after Islam: Undoubtedly, the story of Yusuf had been known before Islam. This story has been extensively mentioned in 14 chapters (37 to 50) in the Book of Genesis. A careful reading of these 14 chapters shows that what is found in the Torah is quite different from what is in the Qur'an.

A comparison of the two accounts reveals the extent to which the Qur'anic version is void of all the superstitions found in the Torah.

And the fact that the Qur'an says to the Prophet: "Before this, thou too was among those who knew it not", is a reference made to the Prophet's lack of prior awareness of the story and the sheer truth of this instructive biography. Indeed, whatever the prophets possess is God-given.

After the dawn of Islam, historians also wrote accounts and interpretations of the story. In Persian poetry and literature, the first story told about Yusuf and Zulaykha is ascribed to Ferdowsi.

Then the poems composed by Shahabuddin 'Am'aq and Mas'udi Ghomi, and later, we find the famous poetry entitled 'Yusuf and Zulaykha' composed by 'Abdurahman Jami, the famous poet of the 9th century A.H.

4- Why is the story of Yusuf, unlike that of the other prophets, expounded in one place? One of the characteristics of this story is that, unlike the story of the other prophets, it is discussed as a whole in one format.

This is different from that of the stories of the other prophet which have been recounted in separate sections in various suras of the Qur'an. The reason for this is that separation of the climaxes of this story destroys its integrity and in order to arrive at the proper and necessary conclusions, it must be offered as an integrated whole.

Another specification of this holy Surah is that whereas the stories of the other prophets recounted in the Qur'an, usually deal with the issue of their struggles and campaigns against unruly and rebellious peoples, but the story of Yusuf makes no mention of such matters.

On the contrary, it revolves around the life of Yusuf himself and his passage through difficult stages of life which eventually culminates with him becoming a powerful man in the Egyptian government.

5- The virtues of Surah Yusuf: The Islamic narrations cite numerous virtues for reciting this Surah, among which one can find a tradition by Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Whoever recites this Surah every day or every night, Allah will enable him to be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection having a beauty equal to that of the beauty of Yusuf, he will have no difficulties on that Day and he will be among the righteous subjects of Allah."

We have already pointed out repeatedly that the narrations that have come down to us concerning the virtues of reading the suras of the Qur'an do not mean a superficial reading of the text without meditating and acting upon them. On the contrary, it means a careful reading that would encourage one to think and in turn lead to a practical application of the text.

Section 1: Yusuf Suffers

Surah Yusuf - Verse 1

بِسْمِ ا ّ ِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. These are the verses of the Book (which makes the truth) Manifest."

A General Note

Everything is dependent upon Allah, and every person lives with Him.

Every type of evolution and progress is initiated in His name and will be realized by executing the programs He has ordained by means of prophets, the personal development of prophets has been fulfilled in the Name of Allah, for had there not been any trust put in Him, the prophets could not have overcome the difficulties of the life which had confronted them.

This Surah also begins with the abbreviated letters of alif, lam, and ra' which exhibit the magnificence of the Qur'an and the synthesizing of profound and meaningful verses out of simple letters of the Arabic alphabet.

Perhaps, it is for this reason that after mentioning the abbreviated letters, Allah (s.w.t.) immediately refers to the magnificence of the Qur'an by saying:

"…These are the verses of the Book (which makes the truth) manifest."

Incidentally, concerning the magnitude of the holy phrase /bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ and the abbreviated letters with which the suras begin, please refer to the beginning of the suras Al-Hamd, and Al-Baqarah, and to the detailed narrations discussed under them.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 2

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

2. "Verily We have sent it down - an Arabic Qur'an - that you may understand. "

No matter in what language the Qur'an had been revealed, other people would have had to become acquainted with that language. However, the revelation of the Qur'an in the Arabic language has several advantages, among which are the following:

A - The Arabic language has a very great capacity for word formation and has so fixed grammatical rules that cannot be easily found in any other language.

B - According to some narrations, Arabic is the language spoken in Paradise.

C - The region in which the Qur'an was revealed was an Arabic speaking region, and it was apparently impossible for the Holy Book to be revealed into any other language.

Regarding the revelation of the Qur'an, Allah (s.w.t.) has employed the word descend /nuzul/ the same word He has used for the falling of rain.

In any rate, the aim of the Qur'an is not merely reading, chanting, browsing through, or barely reciting it for blessedness. The main aim is understanding it, that kind of understanding which is comprehensive and goes deep into its meaning and encourages man to put what he reads into practice.

The indication, occurred in ten suras, to the fact that the Qur'an has been revealed in Arabic is an answer to the accusation that the holy Prophet (S) had learned it from a non Arab and that its content was an imported way of thinking, and not a revelation originated from Allah.

In the meantime, all Muslims must try to learn Arabic as a second language, for it is the language of Divine revelation and the key to understanding the holy Qur'an and Islamic knowledge.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 3

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِن قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

3. "We relate unto you the best of stories, by that We have revealed to you this Qur'an; though before this, you were of those who did it not know."

The Arabic term /qasas/ means both a story, and the telling of a story. Stories and tales play an important role in man's education, for they depict the life of a nation and provide practical examples of an Ummah.

History is a mirror that reflects the deeds of nations and the more we are acquainted with the story of our predecessors, the more we acquire the feeling of having lived their lives.

Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) in a letter to his son, Imam Hassan, implied that he had studied the lives of the former nations in a manner that as if he had lived with them and did it as long as their lifetimes.

Perhaps one of the reasons why stories and tales leave such a great impact upon man is because he has an inherent love for stories.

Usually, books on history, epics and myths have been successful throughout man's cultural history, and understandable for the majority of people, while issues requiring rational proofs and intellectual matters have been the concern of only a small group among them.

The Qur'an calls the story of Hadrat Yusuf the 'best of stories'. However, some narrations tell us that the entire Qur'an is also called /ahsanul qasas/ (the best of stories) and certainly, it is not incompatible with the previous definition of the Qur'an, that the Qur'an is the best among all the Holy Books, and the story of Yusuf is the best among the stories of the Qur'an.

At any rate, the story of Hadrat Yusuf is the best of stories for the following reasons:

A) It is the most relevant to our experience.

B) It deals with the struggle against one's innermost self which is the greatest of struggles.

C) The hero of the story is Hadrat Yusuf, a youth who possesses all human virtues in himself (patience, faith, piety, modesty, wisdom, trustfulness, forgiveness and kindness).

D) All persons of the story have a happy ending. For example Yusuf attains a high political position, the brothers repent, his father regains his lost sight, the famine stricken country is saved; complains and envies are converted into the full gratification of love.

There are a number of opposites juxtaposed in this story: Departure and reunion, sorrow and joy, famine and plenty, loyalty and disloyalty, proprietor and tenant; palace and hovel, poverty and needlessness or wealth, servitude and domination; blindness and sight, chastity and making false accusations.

In conclusion, these points illustrate that the Qur'an, as far as telling stories and historical narratives, has utilized the best manner to educate man. Not only the Divine stories, but all the things of Allah are also the best /ahsan/, because:

1 - He is the Best Creator.

2 - He has sent down the Best of Books.

3 - He has produced the best of features.

4 - He has the best of religions.

5 - He provides the best of rewards.

6 - And finally, having such a background, He has demanded the best of actions from man.

Thus, ignorance is mentioned in the Qur'an signified by three forms:

A- The disagreeable ignorance, like what the verse says:

"But verily many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."[1]

B- The bearable type of ignorance and unawareness which has been referred to here:

"Verily those who accuse chaste believing women unaware (of the evil) are cursed in this world and the Hereafter…"[2]

Meaning: Those who accuse pure and innocent women, who are unaware of fornication or adultery, are damned in this world and the next.

C- Natural ignorance like being uninformed about something, for example in this verse:

The Qur'an says:

"…though before this, you were of those who did it not know."

Meaning that before We told you this story, you were not informed about it nor had you heard it from anyone.[3]

Or, similar to the verse which says:

"…You did not know what the Book was, nor (what) the Faith (was)…"[4]

Surah Yusuf - Verse 4

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لأَبِيهِ يَآ أَبَتِ إِنّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَباً وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ

4. "When, Yusuf said to his father: 'O my father! Verily I did see (dreamt) eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves unto me'."

A Wonderful Dream and Difficulties Lead to Victory

This Holy Surah cites the profound and guiding role of extraordinary and meaningful Yusuf's dream which herald the beginning of worldly difficulties and the inevitability of his eventual victory.

The Qur'an starts the story of Yusuf with an extraordinary and meaningful dream. This dream is, in fact the first in a number of important episodes that had far reaching effects in the epic life of Hadrat Yusuf.

One early morning when he was still very young, Yusuf excitedly went to his father to tell him about an experience, which, although on the surface did not seem very important, nevertheless seemed too vivid and extraordinary to keep to himself.

Yusuf told his father that he had had a dream where eleven stars descended from the sky, followed by the sun and the moon and all lay prostrate before him.

The verse says:

"When, Yusuf said to his father: 'O my father! Verily I did see (dreamt) eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves unto me'."

According to Ibn Abbas, the famous Islamic commentator, Yusuf had this dream the night before Friday which coincides with (Laylat-ul-Qadr) the night when destinies are determined.

It is evident, of course, that the objective meaning of 'prostration' here is 'humility and modesty', else, prostration of people in the ordinary form unto sun and moon and stars is meaningless.

According to the Late 'Allamah Tabataba'i in Al-Mizan, his commentary of the Qur'an, the story of Yusuf begins with a dream which brings him good tidings and gives him hope about the future, thus enabling him to pursue a divine course with patience and perseverance.

Yusuf is the eleventh child of Hadrat Ya'qub born after Benjamin. With the exception of Benjamin, his other brothers were born from a different mother. Hadrat Ya'qub was the son of 'Is-haq who was the son of 'Ibrahim.

The Prophet (S) has been narrated who said:

"Al-karim ibn-il-karim-ibn-il-karim, Yusuf ibn Ya'qub-ibn-'Ishaq-ibn-'Ibrahim."

This is:

'A noble man, the son of a noble man; Yusuf the son of Ya'qub, the son of 'Is-haq, the son of 'Ibrahim.'

The dreams of the men of Allah are of different types. Sometimes they require interpretation, like that of Hadrat Yusuf, and at other times they require no interpretation being identical with reality, like the dream of Hadrat 'Ibrahim who was ordered to sacrifice 'Isma'il.

The sublime Prophet (S) says about dreams and dreaming:

"Dreams are of three types: They are either tidings from Allah or they are sorrows from Satan, or they are composed of the daily concerns that man dreams about."

The Late ‘Allamah in his Tafsir Al-Mizan says that there are three worlds: The natural or physical world, the world of symbols or ideas, and the intellectual world.

The human spirit, because of its subjective and non material nature, can communicate with the two other worlds in the dream and, according to the level of its capacity and potentiality, it may perceive some facts.

If the spirit is perfected, it comprehends reality in a pure and translucent context. If it has not reached the final stages of perfection, the reality would present itself to soul’s consciousness clothed in different forms.

For example a lion would come to symbolize courage, a fox would mean fraudulence and a mountain could mean exaltedness in our dreams, knowledge would be presented as a light, marriage in the form of clothing and ignorance as darkness.

Those who see things in their dream are divided into three groups:

The first group comprises those who possess perfected souls which are completely detached from the material world and, after their physical senses go to sleep, they enter a relationship with the world of the intellect where they apprehend realities which they perceive from the other world.

(A somewhat relevant example is like that of a television whose antennae receive broadcast signals from far distant places from atop mountains and hills). Such dreams are received directly and are not clothed in symbolism, thus they require no interpretation.

The second group are those who are in an intermediate spiritual state, their dreams also depict reality, but they are accompanied by imagined accumulations and resemblances which require a commentator to explain and clarify the subject of the dream.

The dreams of the third group are the dreams of those whose souls are so upset and unstable that their dreams make no sense. Such dreams cannot be interpreted, for they have no relationship with reality. In the Qur’an, such dreams are regarded as /adqau ’ahlam/ ‘confused dreams’.

The Qur’an has named some dreams as those which have proven to be true and became fulfilled; as follow:

A- The dream of Hadrat Yusuf (as) regarding the prostration of eleven stars, the sun and the moon which was interpreted as his rise to power and the reverence with which his brothers and his parents would treat him.

B- The dream of the two prisoners who were companion inmates with Yusuf, that later one of whom was freed and the other was executed.

C- The dream of the Egyptian king of a fat cow being eaten by a thin one which was interpreted as the occurrence of famine and drought after affluence.

D- The dream of the Prophet of Islam (S) about the small number of pagans in the Battle of Badr which was interpreted as the defeat of the pagans at the hands of the Islamic army.

The Qur’an in this regard says:

“(Remember) when Allah showed them to you as few in your dream...”[5]

E- The dream of the Prophet of Islam (S) about the entry of the Muslims into the Masjid ul Haram with shaved heads, which was interpreted as the

conquest of Mecca by the Muslims and their pilgrimage to the House of Allah.

Concerning it, the Qur'an says:

"Certainly Allah had shown to his Apostle the dream with truth;…"[6]

F- The dream of the mother of Hadrat Moses who had placed her infant in a box and cast it into the water.

The Qur'an says:

"When We revealed to your mother what was revealed;"

"Saying: 'put him into a chest, then cast it into the river…"[7]

The Islamic quotations confirm the view that the word 'revelation' in this verse signifies "dream".

G- Hadrat 'Ibrahim's dream of sacrificing of his son 'Isma'il[8] which says:

"…he said: 'O my son! Verily I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you..."

So, as was mentioned earlier, the Qur'an begins the story of Yusuf by narrating his extraordinary and meaningful dream, for this wonderful dream is considered the first highlight of his adventurous life.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 5

قَالَ يَابُنَيَّ لاَ تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَي إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْداً إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلإِنسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

5. "He (Jacob) said: 'O my (little) son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise a plot against you: for Satan is to man a manifest enemy'."

One of the principles of life is keeping other people's secrets. If the Muslims had put into practice what has been implied in this verse, our vast capital and potentialities, our manuscripts and scientific works, our works of art and antique objects would not have been found in foreign museums.

Foreigners would not be spying on us under the cover of being experts, diplomats and tourists, and they would not have become aware of our resources and assets. Our naivety could not have been so easily used by their treachery to make our secrets easily available to those who are constantly ready to play dirty tricks against us.

Hadrat Yusuf (as) told his father his dream away from the presence of his brothers. This behavior shows a remarkable perceptiveness on Yusuf's part which definitely did not escape Ya'qub.

The sun, the moon and eleven stars in prostration before his son, what did it all mean? Ya'qub briefly pondered over the vision and then it became clear to him. Certainly, the moon and the sun represented Yusuf's mother and himself, and the eleven stars represented his brothers.

The dream foretold that his son's prestige and position would be so elevated that the stars in the sky, the sun and the moon will bow to kiss his threshold. He will be so exalted in rank and position that celestial beings will be subservient to him. It was a fantastic, fabulous, and interesting dream!

Therefore with a mixed feeling of anxiety and happiness, he responded his son not to tell his brothers about his dream for they would scheme dangerous stratagems against him.

The verse says:

"He (Jacob) said: 'O my (little) son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise a plot against you: for Satan is to man a manifest enemy'."

I know that Satan is an open enemy to man. He is looking for a pretext to start playing his dirty tricks to win him over, inciting him to envy and avarice and even entangle brothers in quarrels."

Explanations

1. It is necessary that parents be knowledgeable about the likes and dislikes as well as attitudes of their children so that they may be able to guide them effectively.

2. In order to make a sound prediction about cases, which have significant problems or sensitivities, voicing one's suspicions or fears or unveiling certain characteristics, may prove useful.

All data and information must be categorized and confidential data should be separated from none confidential ones. Do not tell everyone everything. Do not provide grounds for envy, for the envy of the brothers prepared the way for the realization of Satan's hostility towards Yusuf.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 6

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَي ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَآ أَتَمَّهَا عَلَي أَبَوَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

6. "And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings (dreams), and perfect His favor to you and to the posterity of Jacob, even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! Verily your Lord is All-knowing, All-wise."

Prophets are the appointees of Allah, and their selection is based upon Divine knowledge. The positions of prophecy and divinely guided government carry a great deal of blessings.

Interpreting dreams imply the deciphering and realization of their meanings. The Arabic term /ahadi/ is the plural of /hadi/ which means narrating an event. As man recounts his dream for others, the word /ahadi/ is also applied to dreams as well. Therefore, /ta`wil-ul-ahadi/ denotes 'the interpretation of dreams'.

Hadrat Ya'qub (as) interprets his son's dream for him in this verse, foretelling his future.

However, this wonderful dream was not merely telling the magnitude of Yusuf's position in an apparent and material sense.

It also indicated that he would attain the rank of prophecy and an elevated celestial position in the future as well, as indicated in the prostration of the celestial beings to him.

Thus, his father Ya'qub said: as follows:

"And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings (dreams), and perfect His favor to you and to the posterity of

Jacob, even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! Verily your Lord is All-knowing, All-wise."

Among the lessons drawn from these verses is the lesson concerning keeping particular secrets which must be observed even sometimes against brothers. There are always instances of secrets in man's life which, when unveiled, may disrupt his future or endanger his society.

Therefore, refraining from divulging secrets is one of the signs of fortitude and will power of a person. In a tradition attributed to Imam Sadiq (as) we read:

"Your secrets are just like your blood which must only be circulated within your own veins."

Notes

1. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 92.
2. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 23.
3. The verse under discussion
4. Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 52
5. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 43
6. Surah Fath, No. 48, verse 27
7. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 38, 39
8. mentioned in Surah As-Safat, No. 37, verse 102.

Section 2: Yusuf Suffers the Treatment of His Brothers

Surah Yusuf - Verse 7

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ ءَايَاتٌ لِلسَّآئِلِينَ

7. "Certainly there are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers."

There are numerous signs of Allah's omnipotence at work in the life history of Hadrat Yusuf, each of which is an advice and a didactic lesson for the seeker of Truth. Among these Signs we can cite:

1. Hadrat Yusuf's very sophisticated dream.
2. The science of the interpretation of dreams.
3. Ya'qub's awareness of the future of his son.
4. Yusuf's remaining safe at the bottom of the well.
5. Becoming blind and then regaining sight.
6. From being abandoned at the bottom of a well and becoming high, exalted.
7. Being put in prison and finally to acceding power and government.
8. Being cleared off all accusations and hearing accusations of corruption.
9. Parting and reunion.
10. Servitude and accession to power.
11. Choosing prison over being polluted with sin.
12. Having the upper hand yet impelled to forgive wrong done to oneself.

Along with the above signs, there are certain questions which can be raised, the answers to which illustrate the way to a decent life:

How does man's envy lead him to fratricide?

How can ten individuals engage in a conspiracy for treason?

How does Yusuf spare punishing his criminal brothers while having the upper hand?

How man can prefer prison to pollution by sin and the pleasures of committing sin, when thinking of Allah?

This Surah was revealed when the sublime Prophet (S) was economically and socially besieged and this story provided great comfort for him.

It meant that if some of his relatives did not believe and support him, he should not have worried for the brothers of Yusuf had thrown him down a well. The most important verses of this Surah are those which deal with the domination of the Divine power over man-made conspiracies.

They threw Yusuf into the well in order to become dearer to their father but they became hated. Doors were closed in order to pollute him with sin, but his chastity and innocence were well demonstrated in this trying circumstance.

Neither did the well, servitude, prison, palace life, or any of these conspiracies exert the slightest influence on Allah's Will.

At any rate, it is from here that the entanglement of the brothers with Yusuf first starts, and didactic lessons can be gleaned from the story.

It says:

"Certainly there are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers."

What lesson might be more instructive than this? One finds a group of powerful individuals with well calculated strategies, through envy trying their utmost to kill a seemingly weak person.

In the end all their plans turn against them making it possible for him to be elevated to a position of influence, governing a vast territory with everyone bowing before him instead! This shows that when Allah's will is at work, His plans may be implemented by even the opponents of those plans.

This denotes that a truly faithful believer is never left alone and even if the whole world were to unite for his extermination, he would not even suffer the slightest injury if the will of Allah does not desire such.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 8

إِذْ قَالُوا لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَي اَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفي ضَلالٍ مُّبِينٍ

8. "When they said: 'Verily, Yusuf and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are a (strong) group. Verily, our father is in manifest error'."

Hadrat Ya'qub had 12 sons, two of whom (Yusuf and Benjamin) were of the same mother and the rest from another mother. Ya'qub's interest in Yusuf (because of his young age or because of his virtues) made his brothers envy him.

They not only envied him but also by saying: /wa nahnu 'usbatun/ "while we are a (strong) group" made it clear that they were arrogant in spirit and, because of this, they accused their father of being mistaken and deviated in his focus of affection.

The verse says:

"When they said: 'Verily, Yusuf and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are a (strong) group. ..."

Many of those who are at comparatively lower rungs of position and rank in society try to degrade those who rank higher in society in order to compensate for their own shortcomings.

There are differences between the words, discrimination and differentiation, the former implies attaching importance to someone over others for no justified reason and the latter refers to distinguishing on the basis of ones abilities and conditions.

For example, a physician's prescriptions or a teacher's marks differ since they must vary in accordance with the rules which are not of an oppressive nature. However, Yusuf's brothers considered Ya'qub's love as one that had no good reason.

Explanations

1. If the children feel that they are discriminated against, their envy will be aroused.

2. Discrimination among one's children will decrease their love towards their parents

3. The exercise of power does not engender love.

4. Envy crossed the frontiers of fatherhood and prophecy hence the brothers attributed deviation and injustice to their father who was, at the same time, their prophet.

The above verse says:

"…Verily, our father is in manifest error'."

5. To be loved is an inherent need of man. Lack of love and affection of others is one of the greatest sufferings of man.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 9

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضاً يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن بَعْدِهِ قَوْماً صَالِحِينَ

9. "Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father's attention may be given on you (exclusively), and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people."

With respect to Divine favors, man has four options: to be jealous, to be stingy, to be self - sacrificing, and to be envious of others.

If he enjoys a blessing and is happy that others do not enjoy it as well, this is a case of stingy, this is also the case if he does not enjoy a blessing and is glad that others do not enjoy it as well which is jealousy.

If he lets others benefit from a blessing he enjoys and is not concerned whether he would be deprived of it in the process, this is a case of self-sacrifice. If he thinks that others enjoy a blessing and he doesn't and he wishes that he enjoys that blessing too, this is envy.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"I sometimes express my affection towards some of my children, seating them on my lap even though they do not merit all that love, so that they do not become envious of my other children, and the adventures of Yusuf be repeated once more."[1]

The feeling of envy, however, eventually led the brothers to conspire with each other. They proposed two schemes, either to kill Yusuf or to send him off to a far distant land so that the love and attention of their father would be evenly distributed among them.

The verse says:

"Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father's attention may be given on you (exclusively)..."

It is true that they might have trouble with their consciences having condescended to committing such a crime against their brother. However, they thought that it might be possible to compensate for this sin and repent afterwards.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people."

This sentence reveals the fact that they had feelings of guilt for having committed such a barbarous act and were afraid of Allah at the bottom of their hearts.

However, the important problem in question lies in the fact that discussing repentance before the commission of a sin is in actual fact a satanic strategy to cheat one's own conscience and keep a channel open with Allah, hence, the person in question is not really repenting and by no means it is a reason for his regret.

Explanations

1. Dangerous thoughts lead man to perform dangerous acts and jealousy leads man to such great sin that he will even be prepared to commit fratricide.

2. Man seeks popularity and affection, the lack of which leads to the most dangerous kinds of behaviors and deviations.

3. Although the holy Qur'an makes the acquisition of popularity and affection upon having faith and righteous conduct, Satan makes it the reward for killing one's brothers.

4. The jealous person thinks that if others are killed or removed, all the blessings will be given to him.

5. Satan, by holding out the probable possibility of future repentance, opens up the gate for man to commit sin in the present.

6. Being knowledgeable and being aware does not always imply that one has distanced him from deviation.

Despite the fact that Yusuf's brothers knew and believed that killing their brother was an evil act it did not stop them from committing it.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 10

قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لاَ تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

10. "Said a speaker among them: 'Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up'."

The Arabic term /jubb/ means a kind of well in which stones have not been used in its construction. The word /qayabat/ also refers to a platform on the wall of a well near the water which cannot be seen from above the wall.

Among his brothers, there was one who was more intelligent and had a conscience that was superior to that of the others. He opposed the conspiracy to murder Yusuf and the plan to send him into exile to a far distant land, as there was the fear that he might die in the process.

He offered another contingency plan suggesting that they should not kill Yusuf, but put him down a well in such a way as to leave him in safety, which would enable travelers, passing by in their caravans to pick him up and take him with them, thus putting a distance between him and themselves and from the eyes of their father.

The verse says:

"Said a speaker among them: 'Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up'."

Another important lesson drawn from this story is how a man's jealousy can provide him with ways of entangling himself in very serious problems, and how, if this outrageous feeling is not controlled, it would involve not only oneself but others as well.

It is for this very reason that in Islamic traditions various ways and techniques have been suggested to fight this abhorrent evil. Here are some examples:

The Prophet (S) has been quoted who said:

"Allah dissuaded Musa Ibn Imran from being jealous, saying to him: 'The jealous person is furious about the blessings I have bestowed upon My servants and hinders the distribution of those shares which I have allocated for My servants. He who does so does not belong to Me nor do I belong to him'."

And a tradition quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The faithful may be envious but are never jealous. However, a hypocrite exhibits his jealousy but does not envy."

This part of the story teaches us that parents should be extraordinarily vigilant as to how they express affection towards their children, for it sometimes happens that a simple expression of love towards one child can create such an inferiority complex in another that it would incite him to engage in all kinds of ill conduct.

The other child could feel so intensively rejected that he would be ready to assassinate his brother's character, not recognizing any kind of boundary.

Even if he is not in a position to show the appropriate reaction, he would keep all his troubles to himself, blaming himself inwardly, which can contribute to the occurrence of mental problems.

Some Traditions Concerning Jealousy

1) The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Do not be jealous, do not perform acts of hostility, do not back-bite or gossip, stay as Allah's sheep, and act in a brotherly manner towards each other." [2]

2) Also, he (S) said:

"The only thing which I am most afraid of about my Ummah is the multiplication of wealth, for people will become jealous and consequently kill each other." [3]

3) The holy Prophet (S) told his companions one day:

"Beware that the disease of the former nations has afflicted you. That disease is jealousy which does not wipe out the hair, but it can make one lose his religion."[4]

4) Ali (as) said:

"A jealous person is always in discomfort and pain, even though his body may be healthy."[5]

5) Ali (as) also said:

"Remove jealousy from your heart for jealousy is an exhausting and exasperating disease."[6]

6) Amir ul Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"Jealousy is the worst of diseases."[7]

7) Ali (as) said:

"Stop being jealous and stop bearing grudges for they disrupt one's religion and bring man to destruction".

8) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Be in awe of Allah and do not feel jealous of one another."[8]

9) Ali (as) said:

"Jealousy makes one's life bitter and dark."[9]

10) Amir ul Mu'minin Ali (as) in a Tradition said:

"Jealousy is a cureless disease which will not disappear except with the annihilation of the jealous person or when the one of whom others are jealous has passed away."[10]

11) Ali (as) said:

"The misfortunes of this world and the next is a consequence of one's jealousy."[11]

12) Amir ul M'uminin Ali (as) said:

"The faithful will neither do flatter nor is jealous, save when they are seeking knowledge."[12]

13) Imam Sadiq (as) quoting his father, said:

"A man who has stinginess, jealousy and fear within him is not a faithful believer."[13]

14) Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying:

"Jealousy wears away one's faith the same way as fire consumes wood."[14]

Surah Yusuf - Verses 11 - 12

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا مَالَكَ لاَ تَأْمَنَّا عَلَي يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ

أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدَاً يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

11. "They said: 'O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?'"

12. "Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him."

Jealousy makes one commit such sins as lying and playing dirty tricks even upon the most favorite of one's kin. After they had agreed on the final plot to throw him into the well, the brothers fell to thinking about how to separate Yusuf from his father.

They came up with another idea. They came to their father, disguising their true intentions on their faces, and with an innocent tone of voice, they told him why he did not temporarily separate himself from Yusuf, and let him be with them instead. They inquired why Jacob did not trust them with Yusuf to look after their little brother.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?'"

Yusuf's brothers urged the father to send the young boy with them to take him outside the town to play and to take benefit of the fresh air and fruits there. They also mentioned that they would take care of him.

The verse says:

"Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him."

The father was put in an awkward position; if he refused their suggestion, it would make his secret distrust of the brothers public. On the other hand,

Yusuf was attracted by the idea of going out for the recreation and excitement outside the town.

Points to Note

Man needs recreation and exercise, and, as one notices in this verse, the strongest argument which persuaded Ya‘qub to submit to the wishes of his children, was that Yusuf needed recreation.

It is mentioned in the Islamic narrations that the believer must allocate a certain period for recreation so that he would be able to succeed in his other affairs.[15] Therefore, recreation and healthy sports are not only allowable in Islam, but they are also highly recommended.

However, the enemies of Allah in the past, present and in the future, seek to deviate recreation and sports from their healthy role and separate the youth from their true objectives. Thus, the youth take sports too seriously regarding something recreational as a serious competitive matter, consuming energies that could be put to better and more creative use.

Worldly oppressors and plot makers not only misuse sports, but also under any other agreeable and acceptable subject, they always pursue their evil aims. With the name of diplomat, they send the most dangerous spies to different countries.

Under the title of military consolers, they plot and obtain the military secrets. By the name of human’s rights, they support their hired patrons. With the excuse of medicine, they send arms for their supporters, and so on.

Surah Yusuf - Verses 13 - 14

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَن تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَن يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّآ إِذاً لَخَاسِرُونَ

13. “He said: ‘Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him’.”

14. “They said: ‘If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers’.”

The father was aware of his children’s jealousy and this was why he told Yusuf that he should not recount his dream to his brothers. However Jacob (as) did not make any mention of their jealousy, on the contrary, he raised the issue of the wolf and their probable neglect of Yusuf as a pretext.

Therefore, in response to their suggestions and without accusing them of any possible wrong doing, he said that he would be saddened if they took him with them, because in the surrounding area there might be fierce wolves, which might probably attack and eat his son while they might be busy having fun, and neglect him.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him’.”

Certainly, the brothers had no clear answer for the first reason which their father had given, for Yusuf’s departure was such a sorrowful event to the father that they could not compensate by any means.

It is quite possible that this statement might have enflamed their jealousy even more.

On the other hand, the father's answer, from a different perspective, indicated that eventually a child had to be separated from his father for the sake of his own development.

They could not and did not give an answer to the first reason, instead. They focused their attention on the second reason which was more important to their plans.

They said that they were a powerful group, and it would be they who would be at a disadvantage if a wolf had attacked him, because the wolf would have to eat them first, therefore, this could never happen.

In other words, they were never going to allow wolves to eat any of their brothers and sit by and watch such a thing happen. At any rate, they made their father submit to their demand through playing all kinds of tricks and getting Yusuf excited about going by emphasizing the fun he would have.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers'."

It is interesting to note that just as Yusuf's brothers utilized his inherent interest in recreation in order to achieve their objectives, the enemies of truth and justice also try to employ sports and recreation to poison the thinking of the new generation.

We must guard ourselves against those evil plots which the wolf-like superpowers employ under the guise of recreational activities for the youth.

Outstanding Points

Give your children independence.

1- The paternal affection unto the child and defending him against probable dangers are two principles, but the child's independence is also another principle.

2- A lie must be avoided to be suggested because people may misuse it.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Do not suggest a lie and do not open the way of pretext for lying."

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, it says that Ya'qub feared that the brothers might kill him though he did not say this directly. He referred to them metaphorically as wolves, for he had dreamed that wolves had attacked Yusuf.

When Ya'qub had mentioned the word "wolves" it occurred to them to use this as an excuse for their crime. The lesson here is that one should be careful not to make it easy for others to misuse our words and actions.

The Arabic word /'usbah/ refers to a strong united group, and they protect each other on this basis.

Sometimes grown people become disconcerted in the face of danger, but the youth are proud of their strength and do not take danger seriously: /wa nahnu 'usbatun/. While the father was anxious, the children were proud of their strength.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 15

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَن يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُم بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

15. "So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well, and We revealed unto him: 'You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know (you) not'."

At the sensitive times, Allah's help comes unto the saints of Allah. The best means of calmness for Yusuf, when he was at the bottom of well, was Allah's inspiration due to his bright future and his deliverance.

The brothers had gone to sleep that night, confident that their plot would go according to their plan the following day. Their only anxiety was that their father might rue, and reverse his saying.

The next morning they went to their father and he entrusted Yusuf to their care giving them advice on how they should take care of their little brother. They expressed their appreciation for the advice and, taking him up gently and respectfully in front of their father, set off with Yusuf.

It is said that the father escorted them to the gates of the town and held Yusuf for the last time, embracing him while drops of tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he deposited him in their care and departed with a sorrowful heart.

As long as they were in sight of Jacob, they would fondle and caress Yusuf, pretending that they really cared for him. But when they were out of sight of their father, they began beating and kicking him, showing their true colors and jealousy of the little innocent boy. He implored the protection of one brother from the other, but all were of one cruel mind.[16]

In one narration it is said that when Yusuf was crying during their mistreatment of him or when they were about to throw him into the well, he suddenly started laughing to his brothers' astonishment.

Then he manifested the secret of this laughter and taught then a great lesson when he said:

"I shall never forget that once I used to be happy to look at you, my powerful brothers with strong arms and extraordinary bodily strength. I used to say to myself that I had no reason to worry about anything when I had so many powerful companions to rely on.

I was then sure of your protection and confident in your support. Now, I am at your mercy, while I am being maltreated by you I am seeking the protection of each you from the other and none of you may give me any support.

Allah has taught me the lesson that I must not rely upon anyone except Him alone."

At any rate, the Qur'an says that they unanimously agreed to throw him into the well and before this they inflicted as much tyranny and cruelty on him as was possible. It says:

"So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well..."

To console him, it was revealed to Yusuf that he should not grieve for a day would come when he would make them all aware of their evil designs while they did not recognize him.

That was not a Divine revelation revealed as a prophet's revelation, but it was an aspiration to the heart of Yusuf. It was for Yusuf to know that he was not alone and that he had guardians who took care of him. This

revelation shone the light of peace and hope on his heart, expelling the darkness of frustration and despair from his soul.

The verse says:

"…and We revealed unto him: 'You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know (you) not'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 16

وَجَآءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَآءً يَبْكُونَ

16. "And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping."

Crying is not always sincere nor a sign of honesty. Do not trust every type of crying and weeping.

Conspirators do not neglect to take into consideration the role of feelings and timing.

Yusuf's brothers had executed their plot flawlessly as they had planned and desired against him. Now, they had to think about their return, their father's questions and how to make him believe their lies.

The lie they cooked up, which we will see later on in the commentary on the next verse, was the very same fear which their father had expressed and predicted, proclaiming that Yusuf was eaten by wolves.

The Qur'an says that the brothers went to their father at night, crying. This kind of crying is deceiving and pretentious which shows us that someone might cry without a valid and honest reason and therefore we cannot conclude that someone is in trouble simply by looking at the tears in his eyes.

The verse says:

"And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping."

There are four types of weeping in the Qur'an:

1- The tears shed out of joy: Some Christians, when listening to the chanting of the Qur'an used to shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the Truth..."[17]

2- The tears shed out of sorrow: For example, when some Muslims heard that it was not possible for them to join the advance forces of the army of the Sublime Prophet (S), they shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"…and their eyes overflowed with tears of sorrow, for they did not find that which they should spend." [18]

3- The tears shed out of fear: For example, whenever certain verses of the Qur'an were read to the men of Allah, they would fall in prostration and cry.

"…When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."[19]

In another occurrence the Qur'an says:

"And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility."[20]

4- Tears shed to deceive and mislead: An example of this is reflected in Yusuf's brothers coming to Ya'qub, in tears, to try to falsely prove and convince him that a wolf had torn apart the body of their brother.

"…Weeping."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 17

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَآ إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِندَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ

17. "They said: 'O' our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him. But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful'."

The brothers told three consecutive lies to justify their fault. They said they had gone tracing; they left Yusuf with their things and a wolf devoured him.

Waiting impatiently to receive his beloved son, the father was struck with fear and concern on seeing them return without Yusuf, he was afraid that his worst fears had been realized. Naturally, Ya'qub asked them why Yusuf had not returned with them.

They said that they had gone racing (horse-riding and the like) and since Yusuf was too young and could not participate, they left him with their belongings. They were so occupied with racing that they forgot about everything else, even their younger brother whom they had left looking after their things. It was at that time that the vicious wolf came and tore him apart.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him..."

This was the truth of the matter they said, but, they told their father that he would never believe them, because Jacob had already predicted such a thing would happen, and thus he might regard their claims as a pretext.

The verse says:

"…But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful'."

To explain Yusuf's absence, as it was referred at the beginning, the brothers told three consecutive lies: They left Yusuf with their belongings, they went off to race with each other, and the wolf came and ate him.

Traditions upon Lie

There are numerous Islamic traditions about lying, a few of which are listed below:

1) Imam Rida (as) said:

"Keep away from major sins, which consist of: Killing someone the shedding of whose blood is forbidden, fornication, theft, lying, arrogance and extravagance."[21]

2) It is narrated from Allah's Prophet (S) who said:

"Abstain from lying for it seduces (man) to commit sins which in turn lead him to Hellfire."[22]

3) Imam Hasan 'Askari (as) has been quoted to have said:

"All corruptions are assembled in one house, the key of which is lying"[23].

That is, man's lying leads him to commit other sins.

4) The sublime Prophet told Abuthar Ghaffari:

"O' Abuthar! Woe be unto him who tells lies in order to make others laugh! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him!"[24]

5) Imam Sadiq (as) has been narrated who said:

"Allah's Prophet (S) said: 'The worst type of quotation is quoting a lie'."[25]

6) Ali (as) has said:

"The end of telling a lie is self-blame and feeling sorry for oneself."[26]

7) The sublime Prophet (S) said to Ali (as):

"O Ali! Abstain from lying, for it brings shame. Then one would be reported as a liar to Allah."[27]

8) The holy Prophet (S) remarked:

"He who bears false witness against a Muslim or the person sheltered by Islam, or an individual in the society, would be hanged by his tongue on the Day of Resurrection, and would be cast along with the hypocrites into the lowest level of Hell." [28]

9) Ali (as) said:

"The consequence of lying is meanness in this world and torment in the Hereafter."[29]

10) The sublime Prophet (S) said:

"Lying is one of the gateways to hypocrisy."[30]

Surah Yusuf - Verse 18

وَجَآءُوا عَلَي قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَا ۖ
الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَي مَاتَصِفُونَ

18. "And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: 'No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you. (For me) patience is good; and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe'."

Patience for Allah's determinations is good. But how is it good that one has to keep his patience in a situation where cruelty has been inflicted upon an innocent child, when Jacob says:

"for me patience is good"?

An Answer to the Question

First, Ya'qub knew that Yusuf was still alive, because he knew this fact through revelation.

Secondly, if he behaved differently, he might have made them more suspicious and they might then rush back to the hiding place, the well, and kill the little boy.

The third point is that one should not act in such a way as to obstruct another's way to repentance, even if that person is as cruel as those brothers were.

They brought Yusuf's shirt to him, stained with false blood to prove that he was killed.

However, as liars have poor memories, they had been neglectful to tear the shirt apart in several places at least as would have been the case if he had been really attacked by a wolf. They had simply taken it off and brought it to him.

Ya'qub was quite a perceptive and experienced man; he took one look at the shirt and understood that the whole story had been made up. He bluntly told them that they were lying, that their selfish and egoistic passions had put them up to doing such a satanic and dreadful deed.

The verse says:

"And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: 'No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you..."

In some narrations we read that he took the shirt and turned it inside out and asked:

"Why is it that I do not see any traces of the wolf's teeth and claws on it?"

According to another narration, he took the shirt and covered his face with it and while he was weeping, he said:

"What kind of wolf was it that had eaten up my son but did not do any damage to his shirt?"

Then he lost consciousness and fell to the ground like a dry piece of wood. Until late at night when the cold breeze of midnight caused him to recover his senses.

Although he felt the burning anguish of the loss of his son at the bottom of his heart, he never uttered a single word of ingratitude towards Allah. Instead he said he would wait patiently, with the kind of patience that was beautiful and rely upon Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…(For me) patience is good;..."

The hearts of the men of Allah are centers of compassion and it is not surprising that when he separated from his son Ya'qub shed abundant tears for him which is natural. Nevertheless, despite his emotional distress, he did not lose his self control, and did not say anything against the consent of Allah.

Then Jacob remarked that he would ask Allah to help him for what they said and he would seek Him to give him more ability so that he could stand firm in front of that terrible storm and not to lose his self-control and not to pollute his tongue with any improper word. The verse in this regard says:

"…and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe'."

Explanations

1- The best type of patience is that in which, despite one's profound sorrow and ardent yearning, one does not forget Allah and relies upon Divine assistance.

2- Satan, as well as the despotic soul, may present sin as something attractive to man and provide a justification for him to commit that sin.

3- Do not be duped by the deceptive pretensions of people. Ya‘qub did not let himself be fooled by Yusuf’s blood-stained shirt and his brothers’ tears, rather he said:

“No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you.”

4- Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying that when Yusuf was thrown down the well, Gabriel came to him and said:

“What are you doing here?”

He answered:

“My brothers have thrown me down this well.”

Gabriel asked:

“Do you want to be saved from the well?”

He answered:

“It is Allah Who will take me out if He wishes.”

He said:

“Your Lord has commanded that you recite this prayer, and you get out.”

He asked:

“What prayer?”

He answered:

“Say: O’ Allah: I ask You Whose is all praise, and there is no god but You; You are the bestower of blessings (upon Your servants), the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Owner of Glory and Benevolence. I ask You to send Your blessings upon Muhammad and his descendents and appoint the wherewithal for me to be saved from the plight I am in.”

However, as soon as a caravan of camels arrived, Yusuf was rescued from the well.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 19

وَجَآءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَي دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَي هَذَا غُلَامٌ وَأَسَرُّوهُ بِضَاعَةً وَا ۖ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

19. “Then there came a caravan (of travelers). They sent their water-drawer (for water) and he let down his bucket. He said: ‘O’ good news! This is a youth.’ So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do.”

Allah never leaves his sincere servants alone and saves them whenever they are entangled in hardships. He guided Noah to safety on the surface of water, he rescued Yunus from underneath the water, and He rescued Yusuf from the bottom of the well, the same way He saved ’Ibrahim from within the fire.

He guided Moses to safety through the middle of the sea, He protected Muhammad (S) in the cave, and Ali (as) during the night fixed for the execution of the conspiracy (Laylat-ul-Mabit), when he slept in place of the Prophet (S).

Whenever Allah wills, He acts and it is without the consent of man.

For instance, Hadrat Musa (as) went to fetch a fire, and returned with prophetic revelations. The caravan also went to draw water to replenish their supply, in the process they saved Yusuf and returned with him.

Due to Allah's will, the ropes became a means for Yusuf to climb up from the bottom of the well and ascend the throne. From this one should heed the things that can happen through the rope of Allah.

When those near to one do not provide the support needed, Allah provides that support using others. His brothers abandoned him, but a caravan of strangers arrived and gave him help.

Yusuf had a hard time down there at the bottom of the well in that terrible darkness, but his faith in Allah and the peace and comfort, which that faith provided, gave him a ray of hope that made him tolerate that awful loneliness and thus remain unshaken throughout the ordeal.

Allah knows how many days passed after this event, however, a caravan arrived and stopped there to draw water, a primary need for the caravan in that arid climate.

They sent the man responsible for maintaining their water supplies to get the water and he let his bucket down the well with a rope. From the bottom of the well Yusuf saw the bucket with the rope coming down rapidly towards him, he seized this Divine opportunity and clung to the rope.

The verse says:

"Then there came a caravan (of travelers). They sent their water-drawer (for water) and he let down his bucket..."

The water-carrier felt his bucket over weighted and quickly hauled it up. As soon as he brought it up, his eyes fell upon a handsome little boy. He exclaimed: "Good tidings," instead of water, it was a beautiful boy.

Some members of the caravan also took note but hid the news from the others in order to sell the boy as a slave in Egypt. They said that that beautiful boy was given by the owner of the well in order that they could sell him as a merchandise in Egypt. But Allah was well aware of what they were doing.

The verse continues saying:

"…He said: 'O' good news! This is a youth.' So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 20

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

20. "And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out, and in him they had no interest."

They sold Yusuf cheap, for a few dirhams. This is not so surprising, for a common rule among thieves, or those who underhandedly acquire a valuable property, is to promptly sell their easily gotten merchandise usually quickly, for the fear that others may become aware and apprehend them.

The verse says:

"And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out..."

Naturally, when someone intends to sell something in a hurry, he cannot obtain a fair price for his goods.

At the end of the verse Allah says:

"…and in him they had no interest."

Notes

1. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 78.

2. Majmu‘ah Warram, p. 81.
3. Mahjjat ul Bayda’, vol. 5, p. 326.
4. Bihar ul-’Anwar, vol. 70, p. 253.
5. Mustadrak ul Wasa’il vol. 2 p. 328.
6. Ibid
7. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, P. 15
8. Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251.
9. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol.2, p.328
10. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, p. 79.
11. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol.2, p.328
12. Tuhaf ul ‘Uqul, p. 928.
13. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251
14. Ibid
15. Hikmat 390, Nahjul Balaqah.
16. Majma‘-ul-Bayan
17. Surah Al-Ma`idah, No. 5, verse 83.
18. Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 92.
19. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 58.
20. Surah Al-Isra’, No. 17, verse 109
21. Uyun ’Akhbar ul-Riza, vol. 2, p.137.
22. Mustdrak-ul-wasael , vol.2 , p.100.
23. Bihar ul ’Anwar , vol. 72 , p.263.
24. Makarim al Akhlaq, p.47.
25. Bihar ul Anwar, vol.72 , p.259.
26. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol.4 , p.363.
27. Bihar al Anwar , vol.77, p.67.
28. Wasa`il al Shia , vol.18, p.237, hadith 6.
29. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 3, p. 332
30. Majmu‘at ul-Warram , vol.1 , p.113.

Section 3: Yusuf's Firmness in Piety Against the Great Temptation

Surah Yusuf - Verse 21

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِن مِصْرَ لِإِمْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَي أَن يَنفَعَنَآ أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَداً وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الاَحَادِيثِ وَا ۗ غَالِبٌ عَلَي أَمْرِهِ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

21. "And he of Egypt who bought him said to his wife: 'Receive him honorably, maybe he will profit us, or we shall adopt him as a son.' Thus did We establish Yusuf in the land, and that We might teach him the interpretation of tales (dreams). And Allah is predominant over His affair; but most people do not know."

The adventurous story of Yusuf and his brothers, which culminated in them throwing him down the bottom of the well, came to an end and a new chapter in the life of this small boy began in Egypt.

Yusuf was eventually taken to Egypt and, according to the usual procedure, he was put up for sale. Evidently he was seen as a valuable piece of property and was sold to the 'Aziz (the Great One) of Egypt who enjoyed a high rank in the Pharaoh's court, very much like the position of Prime Minister today.

The holy Qur'an implies that the 'Aziz of Egypt, who had bought him, told his wife to receive Yusuf honorably and not treat him as a slave for he might be useful to them or else they could adopt him as their son.

It says:

"And he of Egypt who bought him said to his wife: 'Receive him honorably, maybe he will profit us, or we shall adopt him as a son.'..."

One can conclude from this sentence that the 'Aziz had no children and aspired to have one. As soon as his eyes fell upon the beautiful and dignified boy, he was immediately attracted to him and thought that he could fill the role of a son for him.

Then the Qur'an in this holy verse continues saying:

"…Thus did We establish Yusuf in the land..."

After that, the verse also adds that this opportunity was made available in order to teach him the interpretation of tales. It says:

"…and that We might teach him the interpretation of tales (dreams)..."

The "interpretation of tales" here signifies the art of interpreting dreams through which Yusuf could have access to any important secret of the future.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…And Allah is predominant over His affair; but most people do not know."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 22

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْماً وَعِلْماً وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

22. "And when he reached his prime (maturity), We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good."

The Arabic term /ašudda/ is derived from /šadd/ meaning a firm knot which, in this verse, denotes bodily and spiritual development. This word is also sometimes used in the Qur'an to mean maturity, as in verse 34 of the Surah Al 'Isra', No. 17 which says:

"Do not approach the orphan's property until he attains his maturity...".

Sometimes, the term is used to mean attaining the age of forty as in verse 15 of the Surah Al Ahqaf No. 46 where it says:

"…until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years…"

Sometimes it refers to the peak of one's development and strength before old age as in verse 67 in Surah Ghafir No. 40 The Qur'an says:

"…then He brings you forth as a child, then that you may attain your maturity, then that you may be old..."

Gradually Yusuf became acquainted with the problems besetting this new environment which was in fact an important political center of Egypt.

On the one hand, he would notice the fabulous palaces of the Egyptian aristocracy with their unlimited wealth, and on the other, the misery of the slave market and the suffering imposed upon the common people.

At the same time he was engaged in self-actualization and purification of his soul. The Qur'an implies that Allah gave Yusuf wisdom and knowledge.

The verse says:

"And when he reached his prime (maturity), We gave him wisdom and knowledge..."

The purpose of employing the words /hukman wa 'ilma/ (wisdom and knowledge), in the above verse, is that Allah had bestowed the rank of prophecy upon Yusuf as soon as he had developed physically and spiritually.

His physical maturity was crowned by the gift of /hukm/wisdom, understanding, and the power of correct discrimination which is free of egoistic influences and mistakes. The term 'knowledge' is employed here to mean the awareness which is associated with wisdom.

The gifts of "hukm" and "'ilm" were two valuable Divine favors which were bestowed upon Yusuf for his virtue, patience, righteousness, and trust, since those sincere believers who can control their restive desires in the field of struggle of soul are divinely given some merits out of knowledge and sciences which are far beyond any material criteria.

The verse continues saying:

"…And thus do We reward the doers of good."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 23

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

23. "And the woman, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his self and she closed the doors and said: 'Come here'. He said 'I seek refuge in Allah! Verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode. Verily the unjust do not prosper'."

Two possibilities have been advanced for the interpretation of the Qur'anic phrase: /'innahu rabbi 'ahsana mawaya/ (verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode).

A- It is the Almighty, my Lord, Who has honored my position and I seek refuge in Him.

B- The 'Aziz is my lord who has honored me as his guest and he told you about me to give me a good abode, and I will not betray him.

Both possibilities have their own advocates which they support with their own documentations.

We are of the opinion that the first theory is more acceptable, for Yusuf did not commit sin because of his Divinely bestowed virtue, and not simply because he was staying in the palace of 'Aziz and that being indebted to him, he could not violate the wife of 'Aziz.

Such a scenario requires much less virtue that that required for the fear of Allah. Certainly, we see allusions made several times to the word /rabbika/ in this Surah which refers to the 'Aziz. However, the use of the term /rabbi/, which is used in this sentence refers to Allah.

Moreover, it is not in consonance with Yusuf's position and character to lower himself to such an extent to call the 'Aziz /rabbi/ "my lord".

Not only had Yusuf attracted the 'Aziz to himself with his Divine beauty and conduct, but he had also completely conquered the heart of his wife, Zulaykha, as well. With the passage of time, her love for him grew to great heights but Yusuf, who was righteous and self-abstaining, thought of no one but Allah, and his heart was always filled with the love of Allah.

Other factors also helped to inflame Zulaykha's burning desire for him.

On the one hand, she was childless and lived a luxurious and aristocratic life, and on the other hand, she had no domestic conflicts or problems in her life which left her with ample time to engage in fantasy and plan schemes.

Her weak faith and lack of ethical virtues left her in the grip of her satanic lust and passions which eventually led her to decide to take action in order to realize the pleasure she was seeking.

So, to obtain her wish and reaching her aim, she applied all means and methods she could. By asking and requesting him, she tried to gain his heart and make him agree, as the Qur'an says:

"And the woman in whose house he was, sought, to seduce him from his self..."

Finally, it came to her one day to entrap him in a secluded place in the house. She used every possible means to tempt and excite him, putting on the most attractive clothing, make up and the best scented perfumes. She set the scene so that to bring Yusuf to his knees.

The Qur'an says that she locked all the doors securely, telling him to come and take her. The verse says:

"…and she closed the doors and said: 'Come here.'..."

Here was this very attractive woman, alone with him in a locked room, with no one else aware of what was going on. Or so she thought that, by this circumstance, she might make him understand that no one was able to penetrate into inside and he would not be worry.

Yusuf saw the whole thing was wrong and sinful from the beginning, he was trapped, it seemed that he had no other option open to him. To her insistent demands, when all seemed lost, he simply replied,

"I seek refuge in Allah."

By saying this he both confessed to the oneness of Allah, and to the practical aspect of this belief. All things being equal, how could he possibly have submitted to such a request, while he was still living in the house of the 'Aziz and eating from his generous pocket, and who provided him with many favors regarding him in great esteem?

The verse says:

"…Verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode..."

Yusuf continues saying whether that was not a manifest injustice and a treachery and certainly the unjust will not be prosperous.

The verse says:

"…Verily the unjust do not prosper."

Messages

1. Do not leave young men alone in the houses where there are forbidden women who are not virtuous, since the situation may result in a passionate involvement with each other.
2. Capital sins first begin gradually with lax rules of social intercourse and free association. Therefore, shun association between forbidden men and women in secluded places as it paves the way for sinful behavior.
3. The sin of adultery has been established as a sin throughout history, and it was for this reason that Zulaykha securely fastened all the doors to the room.
4. The best kind of Islamic virtue is to keep oneself from committing sin for the sake of the favor, affection and right of Allah, and not because of the fear of scandal in this world or out of the fear of Hell Fire in the Hereafter.
5. Every door might often be closed but the door for those seeking shelter with Allah always remains open.
6. Keeping Allah in mind is a factor that hinders us from committing sin and error.
7. Adultery, fornication and conspiring against innocent youth are considered as tyranny against oneself, one's own spouse and the members of society.
8. One must not obey any authority of any rank if it orders us to commit sins, because the immaculate Imam (as) said:

"Do not obey a created (man) in disobeying the Creator."[1]

9. One moment's sin puts a great distance between man and salvation.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 24

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلاَ أَن رَءَا بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَآءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُـخْلَصِينَ

24. "And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord. Thus (it was) that We turned away from him evil and indecency. Verily he was (one) of Our chosen servants, (sincere and purified)."

Imam Sadiq (as) has said that /burhanu rabbi/ (a Sign from my Lord), is identical with the light of knowledge, certainty and wisdom which Allah has said in a phrase of the previous verses:

"We gave him wisdom and knowledge" and whatever has been mentioned in some narrations which claim that the "Sign from his Lord" means his witnessing the face of his father or that of Gabriel does not have a firm chain of transmission.

At any rate, if Divine assistance is absent, everyone is liable to commit mistakes. However, Allah protects His sincere subjects.

The incident with the wife of the 'Aziz is a very sensitive issue. The holy Qur'an indicates her powerful sensuality and attractiveness when it says that she was about to seduce him and had it not been for Allah's evidence which Yusuf had noticed, he would have fallen into her arms.

The verse says:

"And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord..."

Yusuf was a young man and not yet married, and he was confronting an extremely exciting sexual situation for the first time, with all these frailties he would have succumbed and given in, had it not been for the sake of Allah's evidence.

That is, had it not been for Allah's evidence, which means the essence of faith, piety, training, and, finally, the rank of inerrancy, it seems that he would have succumbed to the temptation despite his core of faith, virtue and chastity.

This interpretation has been concisely expressed in a noble narration from Imam Rida (as) where Ma'mun, the Abbasid caliph, asked the Imam:

"Aren't you one who believes that the prophets are immaculate?"

He answered:

"Yes".

Then Ma'mun asked:

"Then what is the interpretation of this Qur'anic verse, which says:

"And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord..."

The Imam (as) answered:

"The wife of the 'Aziz decided to gratify her desire with Yusuf and were it not for the evidence of Allah which Yusuf witnessed, he would also have decided the same way she had decided.

However, he was an immaculate person and such a person never intends to commit sin and never seeks to engage in sinful acts.[2]

Ma'mun said:

"Well done O 'Abul Hassan!"

Let us turn to the commentary of the rest of the verse. The Glorious Qur'an implies that Allah (s.w.t.) showed Yusuf His evidence in order to divert him from evil and indecency, for he was one of His sincere and purified servants.

The verse says:

"…Thus (it was) that We turned away from him evil and indecency..."

The reason for this was, as Allah says, that:

"…Verily he was (one) of Our chosen servants, (sincere and purified)."

In this verse, allusion is made to the fact that He had sent invisible Divine assistance to rescue him from falling into evil and sin. This kind of Divine assistance, which comes during moments of trouble and crisis, is not confined to the prophets, such as Yusuf. They can also cover those sincere servants of Allah among ordinary people as well, who also deserve such favors.

Solemnity in Statement

One of the amazing things about the Qur'an, which is also one of its miracles, is its solemnity and its use of respectable language. That is, it never uses indecent words or concepts.

It's speech is never in keeping with the ordinary and illiterate individuals, in the environment of ignorance, but at the same time, it is accessible to all, using a language that the ordinary men and the intellectual can understand.

Among all the biographies mentioned in the Qur'an, there is only one real love story which is the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha.

This story explains the ardent love of a beautiful sensual woman unto a handsome youth, but pure.

However, the Qur'an has beautifully combined precision in expression with solemnity and chastity, and despite the fact that it talks about affairs of the heart, it has utilized the principles of piety, morals and respect without being paralysed in the process.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 25

وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِن دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَي الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءاً إِلاَّ أَن يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

25. "And they both raced to the door and she tore his shirt form the back. They both found her husband by the door. She said: 'What is the punishment for him who intends evil to your wife save he be imprisoned or a painful chastisement?'"

The Arabic word /'istibaq/ means one or several persons racing with each other; and the term /qadda/ signifies to be torn apart lengthwise. The word /lafa'/ refers to the sudden finding of something.

Yusuf's firm resistance almost made Zulaykha lose hope. But Yusuf, who had won against the restive low desires in the course of confrontation with that beautiful woman who burned with desire for him, felt he would not be out of danger if he remained in that situation, so he bolted for the door.

Zulaykha, not to be outmaneuvered, took off after him, as the verse indicates, they both raced towards the door, and not being able to catch up to him, she reached out for his shirt to pull him back and tore it from the back. Yusuf did eventually make it to the door, and, on opening it, they came face to face with the 'Aziz.

The verse says:

"And they both raced to the door and she tore his shirt form the back. They both found her husband by the door..."

The need to protect herself from scandal and the desire to punish Yusuf for rejecting her advances flooded her thoughts. Putting on a specious face, she looked at her husband with a straight face and accused Yusuf of having evil designs against her, and sought his punishment by prison or a grievous chastisement.

The verse says:

"…She said: 'What is the punishment for him who intends evil to your wife save he be imprisoned or a painful chastisement?'"

Surah Yusuf - Verse 26

قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَن نَّفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَآ إِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

26. "He said: 'She (it was who) sought to seduce me from my (pure) self,' and a witness from her own family bore witness, 'If it be that his shirt is torn from the front, then she speaks the truth and he is of the liars'."

Some narrations say that the witness was a child who, like Jesus (as), spoke from inside the cradle, but since this report is not well documented it cannot be disregarded.

It might be better to think of the witness as one of the counselors of the 'Aziz who was a relative of his wife and who was fairly intelligent that, like 'Aziz, saw the situation.

This "witness" however, did not actually witness the main event, because if he did himself, he would not have used the conditional sentence and circumstantial evidence to make a judgment, therefore the word "witness" is used to describe him as a referee.

At first, Yusuf said nothing, and perhaps if the wife of the 'Aziz did not speak out accusing him with a flagrant lie, her reputation would not have been damaged by the saying:

"She it was (who) sought to seduce me…"

However, once she had made her accusations, Yusuf did not see any wisdom in continuing to hold his tongue, he had to defend himself which meant disclosing the truth where she was concerned, so he said that it was she who was the one who was doing the seducing.

The verse says:

"He said: 'She (it was who) sought to seduce me from my (pure) self,' and a witness from her own family bore witness..."

Obviously, it is hard to believe at first that the unmarried male slave in the prime of his young manhood would be the one who was innocent and the older married woman who was apparently noble, would be the one with the sinful character. Thus, there would have been a greater tendency to accuse Yusuf in this connection than the wife of the 'Aziz.

As Allah is always an advocate of those who are upright and good, He would not allow this pious abstemious man to be the object of false accusations.

Thus, as the Qur'an says a witness from among her very own household suggested that the true culprit would be determined by looking at the way

the shirt was torn, that if it were torn from the front, it would indicate that she was right and he would be the liar.

The verse says:

"…'If it be that his shirt is torn from the front, then she speaks the truth and he is of the liars'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 27

وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

27. "And if his shirt is torn from the back, then she tells a lie, and he is of the truthful (ones)."

In the story of Yusuf, his shirt plays a decisive role. In one part of the story, his shirt, being torn from behind, provides good evidence to prove his innocence and leads to the establishment of Zulaykha's guilt.

This incident is a good example of the application of criminological investigation in establishing guilt. In another part of the story the shirt also plays a pivotal role, the fact that it was not torn apart by a wolf indicated to the father that the brothers had played foul with Yusuf and had fabricated a lie to cover it up.

At the end of the story, the shirt once more plays a major part, becoming the means whereby the father regains his eyesight.

However, generally the application of the proper methods of recognition of crime is necessary for finding the crime and the criminal.

That was why the witness said:

"And if his shirt is torn from the back, then she tells a lie, and he is of the truthful (ones)."

The witness was one of the relatives of the wife of the 'Aziz, as indicated by the phrase /min ahliha/. He was a wise, knowledgeable and intelligent man, and it is said that he had been one of the counselors and consultants of the 'Aziz, who was accompanying 'Aziz at that moment.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 28

فَلَمَّا رَءَا قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِن كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

28. "So when he (the 'Aziz) saw his shirt was torn from behind, he said: 'Verily it is of the guile of you women! Truly, your guile is great'."

The Qur'anic terms /kayda kunna/ (your guile) here means: 'to accuse some guiltless people while hiding one's own guilt and swiftly dissociating it from oneself without having the slightest anxiety'.

The Qur'an regards the Satan's tricks as weak, but the guile of women have been mentioned as great in this verse. According to the 'Tafsir-us-Safi', it is because the satanic guile is momentary, invisible and acted in a subtle way, whereas the guile of women is acted along with delicacy, and affection, which are both focused and continuous.

Allah sometimes accomplishes major tasks by means of some small things.

For example: 'Abraha was defeated by the birds of 'Ababil; the life of the Prophet of Islam (S) was saved because of a spider's web; a crow was used to instruct a human being (Cain) on how to bury a human being (Abel); the chastity of Mary was made manifest through the infant's talk, Yusuf's

innocence was proved by the tear in his shirt; the faith of a country's people was known through the messages of a bird (Hoopoe); and finally, the People of the Cave were recognized through the kind of their money.

All of these incidents are examples of great occurrences divinely fulfilled through objects and incidents that are otherwise seen as commonplace or insignificant.

The 'Aziz accepted the method proposed by the "witness" and gazed at Yusuf's shirt. He noticed that the shirt had been torn from the back, and he remembered that he had never heard Yusuf tell a lie, even once, he turned to his wife and said that this act was part of the guile of women, that their guile is indeed, very powerful.

The verse says:

"So when he (the 'Aziz) saw his shirt was torn from behind, he said: 'Verily is of the guile of you women! Truly, your guile is great'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 29

يُوسُفُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ

29. "O Yusuf! Overlook this matter; and you, (O my wife), ask forgiveness for your sin, for surely you are of the wrong-doers."

At this moment, owing to his fear that the embarrassing event might come to light and damage his prestige, the 'Aziz saw it convenient to put an end to the whole affair by keeping it quiet. Turning to Yusuf, he told him to forget about it, and turning to his wife, he told her to repent and ask forgiveness for her sin, for she had definitely been the one who did wrong.

The verse says:

"O Yusuf! Overlook this matter; and you, (O my wife), ask forgiveness for your sin, for surely you are of the wrong-doers."

Another great lesson that this part of the story of Yusuf teaches us is that very support of Allah, Who assists man in the most difficult states. According to His statement which says:

"…whoever is in awe of Allah, He will make for him an outlet," "And give him sustenance from whence he thinks not;…"[3],

Allah caused Yusuf to be proved innocent by means of existence of the tear in his shirt as an evidence.

Yusuf's shirt was also the same thing that one day manifested the lie of Yusuf's brothers before their father because of lack of tear in it, and again his shirt was put over the face of Jacob when he regained his eye sight, and it was brought from Egypt to Kan'an and gave the glad tidings to Jacob.

However, Allah has some secret favours of which no one is aware. When the breeze of this favour blows the affairs may change in a way that it is not predictable for any one, even for the most intelligent members.

Some Explanations

1. The 'Aziz of Egypt wanted to cover up the incident, but the people of the world in all centuries came to know about it in order for Yusuf's innocence to be maintained.

2. The 'Aziz, typical for those among the affluent classes, had a lenient attitude towards matters regarding chastity, and refrained from seriously chastising his wife.

3. Non-godly leaders are usually not able to take a decisive stand towards their own impure wives.

A woman’s sexual relationship with any man other than her husband is illegitimate and indecent.

Notes

1. Bihar ul-’Anwar, vol.10 p.227
2. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.2, p.421
3. Surah At-Talaq, No. 65, verses 62 and 63

Section 4: Yusuf Prefers Prison Against the Temptation

Surah Yusuf - Verse 30

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

30. "And some women in the city said: 'The wife of the 'Aziz has sought to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; he has affected her with love. Verily we see her in manifest error'."

The term /šaqaf/ refers to the complications of the upper part of the heart, or of the pericardium. It is said that the Qur'anic phrase /šaqafaha hubban/ means that someone's love has intermingled with the heart of the beloved which, in turn, increases the intensity of the love.

The incident between the wife of the 'Aziz and Yusuf was a private affair, which the 'Aziz had sought to cover up, but such affairs do not remain undisclosed for long, especially when they occur in the palaces of kinds and dwellings of wealthy aristocrats where rumor and hearsay abound.

So finally the secret leaked out of the palace. Some of the women of the city spread the rumor that the wife of 'Aziz had tried to seduce her slave, and that her love for him had overcome her to the extent that it had conquered her entire heart.

The verse says:

"And some women in the city said: 'The wife of the 'Aziz has sought to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; he has affected her with love..."

So they laid the blame squarely at her door, saying:

"…Verily we see her in manifest error'."

Those women, who said this statement and blamed Zulaykha therewith, were a group of Egyptian aristocratical women that, from the point of sensuality, were not so far from her.

Since they had not have Yusuf, idiomatically, they were hypocritically prudish and, because of that love, considered the wife of 'Aziz in manifest error.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 31

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَءَاتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ سِكِّيناً وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ ِ ً مَا هَذَا بَشَراً إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

31. "So when she heard about their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a repast for them. Then she gave each one of them a knife, and said to him (Yusuf): 'Come forth to them.' When they saw him, they extolled him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands and said (exclaimed): 'Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is not other than a noble angel!'"

When the wife of 'Aziz became aware of the intrigue of the Egyptian women, she became very angry. Then she came up with an idea. She invited

them to an elaborate party which she had organized for them and gave each person a sharp knife to peel the fruit served.

The verse says:

"So when she heard about their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a repast for them. Then she gave each one of them a knife..."

From the sequence of events, one can readily infer that she did not care much for her husband and was not afraid of him, so she had not learnt anything from the previous scandal.

She then ordered Yusuf to come into the hall so that they could see his beauty for themselves and stop blaming her for what she did.

The verse says:

"…and said to him (Yusuf): 'Come forth to them.'..."

According to several narrations, when the eyes of the Egyptian women fell upon him they were captivated by his unearthly beautiful stature and shining face.

The verse says:

"…When they saw him, they extolled him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands..."

They were so overwhelmed that they fell head over heels in love with him, which profoundly embarrassed him.

As soon as they saw how abstinent and chaste he was, and his attractive eyes in his innocent face which had blushed from modesty and shame clearly illustrated these facts, they all exclaimed that that young man had never done anything wrong in his life, he was not an ordinary man, but was a sublime heavenly angel.

The verse continues saying:

"…and said (exclaimed): 'Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is not other than a noble angel!'"

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /haša/ means: 'excepting, with the exception'. It was a custom in that time that when they wanted to know a person exempted from an indecency, at first they exempted Allah and then that person.

2. The wife of 'Aziz was quite politically astute, through the banquet she had arranged she caught the women unawares and was able to expose the vulnerabilities of the rivals in that locality.

3. Talking about other people's problems is not always a show of compassion. It can be the result of jealousy, or part of a plot against them.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 32

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدتُّهُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَآ ءَامُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُوناً مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

32. "She said: 'This is before you he about whom you did blame me! And indeed I sought to seduce him from his (pure) self, but he proved continent. And (now), if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and will certainly be of the humiliated!'"

At this moment, the wife of the 'Aziz turned to those women who used to criticize her for her intense love for Yusuf and said that although they had

not seen him before, only getting a first glimpse of him caused them to lose their hearts.

How could they possibly have blamed her, when she was exposed to looking at that beautiful face frequently day and night? She also admitted that he was innocent indicating that she was the one who did the seducing.

The verse says:

"She said: 'This is before you he about whom you did blame me! And indeed I sought to seduce him from his (pure) self..."

Thus while she was justifying her behavior, she explicitly confessed her culpability saying that she was the one who invited him to engage in an illicit act which he had refused to do.

The verse continues saying:

"…but he proved continent..."

However, without expressing her remorse, she threatened him with imprisonment and humiliation if he did not acquiesce to her demands.

She said:

"…And (now), if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and will certainly be of the humiliated!""

Highlights

1- Psychological and social conditions influence individual morality. When 'Aziz' wife was afraid of exposing her evil actions, she closed the doors to the room. However, when she found the Egyptian women on her side, she openly stated that:

"And indeed I sought to seduce him from his self"

The same case applies to society. When people are no longer sensitive to evildoing, it becomes easier to commit sin.

It may be for this very reason that we invocate in the supplication of Kumayl: "O Allah! Forgive me for all the sins which prevent me from being chaste and break my abstinence", for at first, committing sins is difficult for man, but as soon as the barriers are broken, it becomes easy.

2- The liar is always exposed and scandalized. The one who claimed that Yusuf wanted to seduce her yesterday, and had had evil intentions towards him, today openly confesses that she herself had had the intention of gratifying her sexual desires towards him.

3- It is true, that at times the enemy also testifies to the honesty of the person he opposes.

4- Residing in palaces paves the way for the loss of one's chastity.

(Although the 'Aziz realized that his wife had betrayed him and he asked her to repent of her guilt, they did not become alienated from each other and he did not distance between his wife and Yusuf.)

Surah Yusuf - Verse 33

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلاَّ تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَ وَأَكُن مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

33. "He said: 'My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if You turn not their guile from me, I may incline towards them and become of the ignorant ones'."

Interestingly, some commentators have narrated an astonishing subject and have said that some of the Egyptian women in the gathering supported the wife of the ‘Aziz and, giving right to her, defended her behavior.

They surrounded Yusuf and every one of them tried in her own way to persuade him to submit to the desires of the wife of ‘Aziz or to her own, in other words, they all had the same intentions as Zulaykha had.

It is in the face of this overwhelming temptation that Yusuf cries out to his Lord that he would welcome a life prison than the corruption to which those women were inviting him.

In a tradition attributed to Abu Hamzah al Thumali, it is narrated that Imam Ali-ibn-il-Hussein (as) said that as soon as those women had parted company with Zulaykha, each one of them sent someone in private to Yusuf and requested an audience with him.

Yusuf had been surrounded by a series of difficulties from all sides. However, being already prepared for any mishap that might befall, he turned to Allah immediately without entering into any relationship with these passionate, promiscuous women and sought His help.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me;...”

He was in the prime of his youth, and naturally, the lower aspect of his soul could have inclined towards them and he would have found himself among the ignorant.

But, since he knew that in all cases, especially at the time of crises, there is no way to safety except relying on Allah, he trusted in Allah and asked Him help by saying:

“…and if You turn not their guile from me, I may incline towards them and become of the ignorant ones’.”

Points to Remember

1. Men of Allah prefer all the difficulties that come with a life of honor to a sinful life of luxury.

2. By seeking assistance from the Almighty, man can distance himself from any kind of sin and temptation under any kind of circumstance.

3. Hardship and suffering cannot provide man with the justification to commit sin.

4. Man’s character depends on his soul and not on his body. If man’s soul is free and he is in prison, it can be like a paradise for him. And if his soul is under pressure, even a palace may become a prison for him.

5. To please people at the expense of displeasing Allah is manifest ignorance.

6. As was said, the wife of ‘Aziz and the other women employed various means to achieve their objectives. They showed intense love and desire, total submission and later profuse promises of great rewards, finally, when all of that failed, they started threatening Yusuf with imprisonment.

This is the usual methodology that all dictators and despots resort to throughout the ages. It has even been experimented many times that they usually at first show excessive moderation and leniency towards men of Allah to make them acquiesce to their designs, putting on a smiling face on

one occasion, and, on the other, when they fail to achieve their objectives in this way, they resort to the cruelest of threats sometimes at the end of the same sitting that they had with together.

It never occurs to them that they show contradictions and double standards in their behavior, illustrating an abhorring lack of integrity which deserves the utmost humiliation and kinds of censure.

The reason for this is obvious. They are only after their own objectives, and the means are not important for them, because for them, the ends justify the means. The weak and foolish, in this course, may submit themselves sooner or later to these attempts and thus get caught in their trap forever.

But the men of Allah, who are enlightened by the light of faith, easily pass through all these trials showing their steadfastness and irreconcilability with evil. They go as far as courting their death, for victory is the ultimate aim.

Victory here does not only mean their own victory but it also denotes the victory of their school of thought based on principle rather than caprice.

7. There are always some people like the whimsical and promiscuous women of Egypt who regard themselves as innocent and clean when they are not principal players on the scene always pretending to be more virtuous and innocent than some others.

They would think the wife of the ‘Aziz to be vulgar and seductive. But, as soon as the tables are turned, they immediately lose their hearts and prove that whatever virtues they had claimed had been utterly meaningless.

Whereas Zulaykha had fallen in love with Yusuf after frequent meetings with him and after some years of life, these women fell into the very same situation, in the same meeting and after one glance at him, cutting their own hands with knives instead of the fruit they were supposed to cut.

8. When we are facing the attacks of powerful evil forces, and we find ourselves teetering on the edge of the abyss of destruction, we must turn to Allah for protection. We must seek His support, for if His assistance is not there, nothing can be done for us.

This is the lesson which the great Yusuf, the infallible one, has taught us. It is he who says to Allah if their evil plots are not averted from him, he would tend to incline towards them, and he would be left alone in his plight and will be no more. It is holy Allah Who is the Protector, not one’s abilities, powers, or mere virtues.

This state of absolute dependence on Allah (s.w.t.) does not only provide man with a power and perseverance which is unlimited, but it also makes it possible for him to enjoy the hidden Divine favors as well, favors which are impossible to explain and can be only witnessed and accepted. Such people are they who are sheltered by Allah both in this world and the Hereafter.

In one tradition, the Prophet of Islam (S) says that there are seven groups that will be sheltered by Allah on the Day when there will be no shade except His:

1. A just pioneer and leader.

2. A young man who has been trained in servitude unto Allah from the beginning of his life.

3. He whose heart is attached to mosques and places where Allah is worshipped and whenever he leaves those places, he ceaselessly thinks of the time when he can return thereto.

4. Those who work together in obeying Allah, and when they depart from one another, the spiritual bond of their unity remains firm.

5. Those who when they hear Allah's name mentioned, have tears in their eyes because of their sense of responsibility before Allah or for fear of their sins.

6. The man who says that he is in awe of Allah when he is invited to consort with a beautiful woman and he refuses to commit sin.

7. A man who assists those who are in need and provides charity for them in such a way that his left hand does not know what his right hand has done.

Some Narrations Regarding Fear of Allah

1. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"He who stops committing sins for the fear of Allah, He, the High, provides him with satisfaction on the Day of Judgment." [1]

2. Once Zayd ibn Suhan asked Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as):

"Which man is superior with Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious?" He answered: "He who is more in awe of Allah, more aware of piety and morality, and is less inclined to worldliness."[2]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The highest ranking man before Allah is he who is the most in awe of Allah." [3]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"How fortunate is he who finds it necessary to be Allah fearing and obeys Allah both in private and in public."[4]

5. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"How fortunate are those whose fear of Allah prevents them from fearing others."[5]

Some Narrations Regarding Treason

1. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"The believer accepts all inherent traits and characteristics, except treason and lying."[6].

2. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"Abstain from betraying others which is the most heinous of sins, and truly, a traitor will be caught in the torment and torture of the Fire because of his own treachery."[7]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"There are four characteristics, when each of which appears in a house it causes for the destruction of that house, and blessings do not make headway in that house because of those circumstances. They are; treason, theft, drinking alcoholic beverages, and fornication (or adultery)."[8]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"The ultimate in betrayal is betraying a friend and breaking vows and promises."[9]

5. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"It is certain that a true believer never betrays (anyone)." [10]

Surah Yusuf - Verse 34

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

34. "So his Lord answered him and He turned away from him their guile; verily He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."

According to the Divine promise, Allah always accepts the supplications of the pious. Those sincere fighters for a holy cause (whether it be against one's self, or an outward enemy) and those who assist others in goodness will always get a Divine response to their requests.

Yusuf was not left alone in such a dangerous situation. Allah answered his prayer. Indeed, as the Qur'an says, Allah is the Hearer, the Knower.

The verse says:

"So his Lord answered him and He turned away from him their guile; verily He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."

He hears the prayers and supplications of His subjects. He is completely aware of their inmost secrets, and He knows the solution to all their problems.

Some commentators reject that while Yusuf knew that Allah would protect him and return away their snare, why did he pray? The answer is that the prayer of Yusuf to Allah was that he could overcome their hearts so that they would dispense with their guile, and Allah answered him either.

As a result of his supplication, the women lost all hope in achieving their objectives and all the tricks that were within their means proved to be of no benefit to them, so, in despair, they stopped chasing him. It was then that Yusuf felt tranquility.

Zulaykha, after seeing the hopelessness of her attempts, was ready to send him to prison.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 35

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوُاْ الآيَاتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهُ حَتَّي حِينٍ

35. "Then it seemed to them, after they had seen the signs (of his innocence), to imprison him till a time."

From Palace to Prison

The strange meeting between the Egyptian women and Yusuf in the palace of the 'Aziz, with its particular tumult, ended. The fear of the increasing damage the sex scandal was causing to the prestige of his family.

In the view of people, it was becoming more and more every day. The 'Aziz and his advisors thought that the only way to rescue the situation was to remove Yusuf from the scene entirely, and the best way to do that was to send him to prison.

This would not only help the people forget about the situation, but would also make it seem that real culprit had been Yusuf himself.

The Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"Then it seemed to them, after they had seen the signs (of his innocence), to imprison him till a time."

In such morally decrepit environments, apparently freedom only belongs to those who are corrupt and so does everything else, whereas the pure and

God-fearing individuals, like Yusuf, must be isolated and imprisoned. However, such a situation never lasts forever.

Explanations

1. Only a person with a distracted mind would engage in a fruitless act causing trouble for everyone, like throwing an important needle into the bottom of a well which could not be found and taken out by a hundred wise men.

2. Love is such a distraction. A woman fell in love and although many men and high-ranking officials of a country joined together to solve the problems caused by that woman, they were unable to find a solution.

3. Trials and courts are held in default of a person aften as ceremonial gestures in palaces where despots and dictators live, assure the condemnation of the innocent.

4. Those people who dwell in luxurious palaces are usually reckless and brash. Despite all the reasons in his favour, Yusuf was still convicted and sent to prison.

Notes

1. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 67 p. 498
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 378
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 180
4. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 4, p. 239
5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 126
6. Kanz ul-'Ummal, vol. 3, p. 468
7. Ghurar ul-Hikam vol. 1, p. 150
8. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 76, p. 125, The Amali of Tusi
9. Ghurar ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 505
10. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 100, p. 175

Section 5: Yusuf Preaches Unity of Allah in the Prison

Surah Yusuf - Verse 36

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانِ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَآ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَعْصِرُ خَمْراً وَقَالَ الاَخَرُ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزاً تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

36. "And with him there entered into the prison two youths. One of them said (unto Yusuf): 'I saw (in dream) myself pressing wine' The other said: 'I saw (in my dream) myself carrying on my head bread from which the birds were eating.' Tell us its interpretations, verily we see you of the righteous ones'."

Among those who entered into prison with Yusuf, there were two young men, as the verse says:

"And with him there entered into the prison two youths..."

Man's other senses usually become more active in obtaining information when his direct channels of communication and direct access to information are obstructed. In such cases his dreams can provide him with an alternative means.

It is for this reason that it is said that the two men, one of whom was the man responsible for the ruler's buffet, and the other, for his catering services. They approached Yusuf in the prison to describe the wonderful dreams they had seen the previous night.

It is important to note that they were imprisoned because of the false accusations of their enemies who claimed that they were about to poison the king.

Each one of the two prisoners recalled his dream to Yusuf for his interpretation in a manner as the verse says:

"…One of them said (unto Yusuf): 'I saw (in dream) myself pressing wine' The other said: 'I saw (in my dream) myself carrying on my head bread from which the birds were eating.'..."

Then, they added to their statement unto Yusuf:

"…Tell us its interpretations, verily we see you of the righteous ones'."

Some Issues to Remember

1. An Islamic tradition denotes that the reason why they called Yusuf a truly righteous person was because he used to always take care of the sick and the needy in the prison and find accommodation for others.[1]

2. We must take dreams seriously, for there are secrets hidden in some of them.

3. Once the people have confidence in someone, they tend to share all their secrets with him.

4. Enlightened people also leave their impact and influence upon others even when they are confined in prison.

5. Even guilty people tend to have a high esteem for those who are truly righteous.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 37

قَالَ لاَ يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ إِلاَّ نَبَّأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِا ـ وَهُم بِالأَخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

37. "He said: 'There shall not come to you the food with which you are fed but I will inform you both of its interpretation before it comes to you. This is of what my Lord has taught me. Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter'."

In the first part of the verse, it is probable that the Qur'an is hinting that Yusuf said he also knew from the side of Allah what kind of food that would be served to them, and that he could also interpret their dreams just as easily.

In this case, the implication would be that in addition to interpreting dreams, Yusuf also knew about other things as well, which he used to foretell. This ability is similar to that of Hadrat Isa (as) who used to read the minds of those around him regarding what they used to eat or what they had stored in their houses.

Question: Why did Hadrat Yusuf (as) not interpret their dreams then and there but postpone their interpretation for later?

Fakhr Razi provides the answer to this question as follows:

1. He wanted to make them wait so that he could advise, admonish, and convert them, perhaps that person might believe before his execution.

2. He wanted to build up their confidence by foretelling the kind of food before the food had been served.

3. He wanted to tantalize them so that they would lend their ears more carefully to what he had to say.

4. As the interpretation of one of the dreams was that that person was going to be executed, Yusuf was postponing the issue so that that person might not lose heart too suddenly.

At any rate, Yusuf, who would not miss any opportunity to provide guidance and counseling, made the most of the two prisoners' requests for the interpretation of their dreams, and used them as a means for introducing and explaining important facts which were helpful not only for their lives, but also for all human beings.

At first, in order to build their confidence, he told them that he would tell them the meanings of their dreams before their food had arrived.

The verse says:

"He said: 'There shall not come to you the food with which you are fed but I will inform you both of its interpretation before it comes to you..."

Then, the faithful and theistic Yusuf, whose whole entity was filled with Monotheism, made it quite clear that this knowledge of interpreting dreams was among those things taught him by Allah and that nothing could take place without His Will.

The verse continues saying:

"…This is of what my Lord has taught me..."

To counter any misconception that the Almighty would give anything to anyone without conditions, he added that he had abandoned the way of those who did not believe in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, alluding to

the idol worshipping people of Egypt and Kan‘an, and that it was this enlightening faith and virtue which made him deserve such a blessing.

The verse says:

“…Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter’.”

The Messages Conveyed in this Verse:

1. In order to impress others more deeply, it is sometimes necessary to show one’s scientific ability and knowledge and one’s perfections and virtues.

2. He who escapes the dark shadows of polytheism, arrives at the enlightenment of knowledge and Truth.

3. Belief in monotheism and resurrection along with other doctrines is a requirement in all religions.

4. The basis of faith rests upon distancing oneself from polytheism and unbelief /tabarri/ and reliance upon the saints of Allah, as is mentioned in the verse quoted above and the next verse, saying:

“…Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah...” “And I have followed the religion of my fathers, ’Ibrahim...”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 38

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ ءَابآءِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَن نُّشْرِكَ بِا ۖ مِن شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ
مِن فَضْلِ ا ۖ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَي النَّاسِ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَشْكُرُونَ

38. “And I have followed the religion of my fathers, ’Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya‘qub. And it beseems us not to associate aught with Allah. That is of Allah’s favor upon us and upon mankind, but most people do not give thanks.”

Since hereditary nobility plays an important role in the formation of the character of an individual, it also has a very important role when people are to accept a person.

Therefore, Hadrat Yusuf introduces himself by presenting his illustrious lineage of forefathers, all of whom were Divine prophets, confirming, at the same time, his sanctified message. This is exactly the same method which the Prophet (S) used to employ in introducing himself.

He used to say, that he was the same oft mentioned Prophet whose name had been mentioned in both the Torah and the Gospels.

Hadrat Sayyid-ush-Shuhada, Hussein ibn Ali (as) and Imam Sajjad (as) also introduced themselves to the people in Karbala and Syria as the children of Fatimat-az-Zahra (as), saying:

‘I am the son of Fatimat-az-Zahra’.

The Arabic term /millat/ has been applied in the Qur’an with the sense of religion. And in verse 78 of Surah Hajj, the profile of the religion of ’Ibrahim /millata ’Ibrahim/ has been depicted as:

“And strive hard in (the way of), such a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you, and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion - the faith of your father ’Ibrahim. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both

before and in this (revelation)…..So establish the regular prayer, do give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah!"

Turning ones back to the ways of divine prophets and adhering to polytheism is ingratitude due to the blessings of Allah. Therefore, we must dissociate ourselves from such ideas, as they go against the inherent good which is found in human nature. Abraham said:

"And I have followed the religion of my fathers, 'Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub..."

Hadrat Yusuf is not only a descendent by blood lineage, he is also an inheritor of a spiritual lineage as well, thus it does not behoove him to associate anyone with Allah, and this monotheistic pedigree goes back to the iconoclastic 'Ibrahim. This is one of the Divine blessings sent upon the family of 'Ibrahim and upon all people, for that matter.

The verse says:

"…And it beseems us not to associate aught with Allah. That is of Allah's favor upon us and upon mankind..."

Unfortunately, most people do not thank Allah for all these blessings and deviate from the Right Path. The verse says:

"…but most people do not give thanks."

Incidentally, it is worthy to note that these verses show that despite the fact that Yusuf (as) used to live among those idol - worshippers, Allah, the Magnificent, has nowhere mentioned that this respectable and worthy person ever called on the people to be monotheistic and worship the One God, except in this verse where he has extended the invitation to the two prisoners who were with him in prison.

It seems that he was not at all optimistic about the people of Egypt lending their ears to him, let alone accepting his message.

However, when he noticed that these two individuals took him as a righteous and decent man of good conduct, and they turned to him, a glimmer of hope and success appeared in his heart that they might probably listen to him and accept him.

As a result, he proceeded to call them to the worship of Allah and thus be converted to the faith of monotheism.

In the narrations it is said that these prisoners told Yusuf that as soon as they saw him, they had become interested in him and began to love him greatly.

Yusuf answered that they would better not love him or express any affection for him, for, according to him, the catastrophes that had been inflicted upon him was because of friendship, and whoever had loved him somehow caused him some sort of disaster.

His aunt had loved him and she accused him to theft. His father had loved him, and because of this, he was thrown down to the bottom of the well. The wife of the 'Aziz had loved him and because of that he was put in prison.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 39

يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَأَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ ا ّ ُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

39. "O my (two) mates of the prison! Are (many) diverse lords better, or Allah, the One, the All-Dominant?"

Men are of three different types: One group is flexible like the air which has no form or shape and is so volatile that it can naturally fill any container regardless of its size, shape, or structure.

The second group is inflexible and resistant in all its aspects, like iron and steel which can withstand all kinds of pressure from the outside. The third group is composed of leaders and pioneers who seek to convert everything into what Allah has ordained. Yusuf is an example of the third group, seeking to convert polytheists into monotheism even in the prison.

In different occurrences of the Sublime Qur'an, we find that it has employed the method of comparing ideas supporting true monotheism and unbelief, some examples of which, concerning Allah, we present below.

1) "It there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah that) can originate creation, then bring it back again?" [2]

2) "It there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one (that) leads towards the Truth?"[3]

3) "Shall I seek a lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of everything?"[4]

4) "Is Allah better, or what they associate (with Him)?"[5]

Explanations

1. Call people to the true faith with love and affection.

2. Use opportune places and times for the propagation of religion.

(As soon as Yusuf realizes that they require him to interpret their dreams, he takes the opportunity to propagate the faith.)

3. Queries and comparisons are often channels of both communication and guidance.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 40

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلاَّ أَسْمَآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوهَآ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُم مَّآ أَنزَلَ ا ّ ُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَانٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ ِ ّ أَمَرَ أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدّينُ الْقَيّمُ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

40. "You do not worship besides Him but (mere) names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. Judgment belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

Those who are worshipped other than Him are not the substantial and real objects of worship. On the contrary, they are the products of man's own imagination or that of his ancestors.

One's ideas must be either based upon rational demonstration or they must have the traditions as their firm foundation. Therefore, one must not bow to any command other than those issued from Divine sources, for issuing commands and decrees are the sole prerogatives of Allah.

All laws are legally unstable, except Divine laws.

Ignorance and the lack of knowledge pave the way for idol worship. Most people who are ignorant suffer from conscious ignorance and are

aware of their own lack of knowledge, or they suffer from unconscious ignorance thinking they know while in actual fact they do not know.

The honor and respect that we bestow upon powerful individuals and organizations, protocols, pomp meetings, supports, condemnations, and circumstance are nothing but fictitious titles and modern icons which we ourselves have created and have tried to relate to them instead of the Divinity as if they were realities.

In reality, however, this fact must be believed that "It is only He who is worthy of governing" so one must never surrender to icons and despots and bow to them. One must believe in monotheism in all its dimensions: in worship, in government, in culture, and in all things.

The verse says:

"You do not worship besides Him but (mere) names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. Judgment belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him..."

This is the direct and sustaining Divine way of life. However, most people are not aware of this and owing to this lack of awareness, they deviate from the right path, going astray in idol worship and surrendering to non - Divine governments.

Consequently, they suffer tortures, deprivations, and disasters as a result of their choice of the wrong path of life. The verse says:

"…That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 41

يَاصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَمَّآ أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْراً وَأَمَّا الأَخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِن رَّأْسِهِ قُضِيَ الأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ

41. "O' my (two) mates of the prison! as for one of you, he shall pour out wine for his lord to drink; whereas the other will be crucified and the birds shall eat on his head. The matter is decreed about which you do enquire."

The Arabic term /rabb/ is also applied for governor, as well as lord in the Arabic phrase: /rabbud dar/ which means: the lord of the house or the owner. Therefore, the phrase /fayasqi rabbahu xamra/ means: 'he gives wine to his lord.'

From here on, he begins interpreting the dreams of those two prisoners, but before this Yusuf had preached them Monotheism and then he expressed his miracle for them. He began with the interpretation of the butler.

It has been narrated that the first prisoner had also seen three bunches of grapes in his dream. Hadrat Yusuf said that they meant that that prisoner would remain in prison for three more days and he would return to his original profession on the fourth day.

The other prisoner on the other hand, who had been the King's cook, had seen three bags instead. Yusuf said that they also meant that he would stay in prison for three more days, but his end was much more gloomy. The king would take him out of the prison after that and had him hanged where the birds could eat on his head.

The verse from the tongue of Yusuf says:

"O' my (two) mates of the prison! as for one of you, he shall pour out wine for his lord to drink; whereas the other will be crucified and the birds shall eat on his head. The matter is decreed about which you do enquire."

It is said that the latter, on hearing the interpretation, said that he had not dreamed at all and he had been only joking. Yusuf (as) then told him that his fate had been decreed and what was said had to be fulfilled.

From these accounts it is evident that Yusuf (as) had received the news from the invisible world revealed to him; not as the dreams other people usually interpret.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 42

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي عِندَ رَبِّكَ فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ

42. "And he said to him whom he knew would be saved of the two: 'Mention me to your lord.' However, Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his lord, so he (Yusuf) remained in prison a few years."

The Arabic word /zann/ is employed with several different meanings. In certain circumstances it is used to mean 'belief' and 'knowledge', because Yusuf had explicitly and decisively foretold the forthcoming release of one prisoner, and the execution of the other. Therefore, the word /zann/ does not mean 'suspicion' in this verse, which is the usual meaning of the term.

The Arabic term /bid'/ refers to any number less than 10, which has led most commentators to believe that the number of years of Yusuf imprisonment had amounted to 7 years.

In some commentaries, the Qur'anic sentence /fa'ansah-uš-šaytanu/ has been interpreted to mean that Satan took Allah out of the mind of Yusuf when he took recourse to the king's cup bearer for assistance instead of turning to Allah and therefore, he had forgotten Allah, which was a 'leaving the better' for Yusuf and he had to stay in prison for several more years for that.

The verse says:

"And he said to him whom he knew would be saved of the two: 'Mention me to your lord.' However, Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his lord, so he (Yusuf) remained in prison a few years."

The writer of Al Mizan, however, writes that such narrations are in contradiction to the Qur'an for the Qur'an considers Yusuf as one of the 'sincere' and true believers whom Satan has no influence over.

Moreover, in the next two verses, we see that the person who had forgotten about Yusuf was finally reminded, thus it becomes clear that the question of forgetfulness concerned the cup-bearer and not Yusuf.

Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted to have said that Gabriel at the moment came up to Yusuf and said:

Who is it that made you the most beautiful of all people?

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel asked:

Who is it that made you the most favored among all your brothers with your father?

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel asked:

Who is it that sent the caravan of camels to rescue you from the bottom of the well?

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who is it that kept away the stone thrown at you?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who is it that took you out from the well?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who kept the lusts of those women which were targeted at you from reaching you?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Your Lord puts this question to you: 'Then what caused you to take your problem to a creature and not to Me, the Creator? In order for the retribution of the word you said and for what you have done, you must remain in the prison for several more years.'[6]

It is important, however, to note that in different kinds of circumstances, in order to repel the harms and avoiding some difficulties, it is permitted to take recourse to some mortals and it is not a vile.

On many occasions, this cannot be avoided, and sometimes it is even absolutely necessary, or it becomes compulsory.

Our Prophet (S) used to ask for assistance of the emigrants, and companions, as well as others in matters where he needed their help. If seeking assistance from other than Allah were not permissible and were a vile, he (S) would not have done it.

Thus if these narrations are correct, one must say that Yusuf's blameworthiness and the punishment imposed on him were due to the possibility that he might have abandoned that admirable habit he had which made him wait patiently for Allah's decree to manifest, and made him trust only in Allah, the Glorified, in all catastrophes and hardships.

This story teaches us to seek Allah's support and assistance when hardships and calamities befall us. We must seek to find shelter in Him alone, while at the same time it is permissible to seek the support of others in these circumstances knowing that it is because of His will others are there to help us.

Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted to have said that Gabriel taught Yusuf the following supplication to recite after he finished each set of prayers for his freedom from prison:

"O Allah, provide me with the means of relief and deliverance and provide me with my sustenance from where I know and where I do not know."

And Shu'ayb Aqarquti, quoting Imam Sadiq (as), says that when the period of Yusuf's imprisonment came to an end and the day of his freedom had arrived, he placed his cheeks on the ground (in humility) and said:

"O Allah! if my sins have besmeared my honour when I face You, so I call upon You by the combined honour of my meritorious ancestors, 'Ibrahim, Isma'il, Is-haq, and Ya'qub."

After this prayer, Allah provided him with the means for his freedom. Shu'ayb, the narrator of the tradition, asked the Imam if they could say the same prayer. The Imam replied:

You can also say something similar in this way; "O Allah, my sins have besmeared my honour when I face You, so I come to You and I call upon You by the combined honour of Your Prophet (S), Ali, Fatimah, Hassan, Hussayn, and the Imams (as)7."

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur-uth- Thaqalayn. Mizan ul Hikmah
2. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 34
3. Ibid, 35
4. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 164
5. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 59
6. Tafsir Abu Hamid Muhammad al Ghazali; Tafsir Majma'-ul-Bayan, Tafsir Burhan, Tafsir Safi.
7. Tafsirs: Majma' ul Bayan, vol. 5, p. 235 and Safi, vol. 3, p. 23 and Ia

Section 6: The King's Dream - Yusuf's Interpretation

Surah Yusuf - Verse 43

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ
يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِن كُنتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ

43. "And (once) the king (of Egypt) said: 'Verily I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows which seven lean cows were eating; and seven green ears of corn and other (seven) dry. O' chiefs (of my court)! Explain to me my dream, if you are able to interpret dreams'."

This Surah talks about three dreams: namely Yusuf's dream itself, the dream of his two fellow prisoners, and the dream of the king of Egypt.

In the Torah it is cited that the king dreamed these two subjects on two different occasions; on one occasion the lean cows were eating the fat ones, and on another separate occasion, the green ears of corn were alongside the dry ears.[1]

As for the speculation that the 'Aziz of Egypt was the same person as the king of Egypt or that the two individuals were different, there are a number of differences in opinion which do not concern us here for the issues involved do not have any role to play in our discussion.

In Roudat-ul-Kafi dreams are said to consist of three kinds: The first type of dreams are those that give good tidings from the Divine, the second type are terrible dreams from the Satan, and the third type are those dreams that are meaningless and disorganized.

Yusuf had remained forgotten within the confines of the prison walls for a number of years, busy perfecting himself and guiding the prisoners around him.

Life went on as usual until a seemingly minor matter changed not only his destiny but that of the entire people of Egypt and those of its around.

The king of Egypt, (called Walid-ibn-Rayyan), whose minister was the 'Aziz, had had an apparently confused dream. Next morning he summoned all the dream interpreters and his entourage and described the dream to them.

He said that he had a dream in which he saw seven lean cows attacked and devoured seven fat ones and seven green ears of corn with seven dry and withered ones spiraling around the former made them useless.

The verse says:

"And (once) the king (of Egypt) said: 'Verily I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows which seven lean cows were eating; and seven green ears of corn and other (seven) dry..."

He then turned to them and asked them for their opinion about this dream.

The verse says:

"…O' chiefs (of my court)! Explain to me my dream, if you are able to interpret dreams'."

Explanations

1. Allah (s.w.t.) saves a nation from famine by giving its oppressive and tyrannical king a dream on condition that its only interpreter be Yusuf.

2. The king of Egypt had had this astonishing dream several times.

3. The chiefs and the powerful people begin feeling threatened at the slightest unpleasant sign and clue lest their power might be lost and taken away from them.

4. To interpret dreams, one must turn to the right kind of people and one must not disclose it to anyone that is not properly qualified to interpret it.

(…if you are able to interpret dreams'.)

Surah Yusuf - Verse 44

قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلاَمٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الاَحْلامِ بِعَالِمِينَ

44. "They said: 'confused medley of dreams (they are), and we do not know the interpretation of (such confused) dreams'."

The Arabic term /'adqa/ is the plural form of /daq/ which means mixing; it also means a bundle of mixed sticks.

The Arabic word /ahlam/ is the plural form of /hulm/ which means a nightmarish dream, and /'adqau 'ahlam/ means dreams that are random, having no order and following no sequence so that an interpreter of dreams can not obtain any clues in order to interpret them.

The verse says:

"They said: 'confused medley of dreams (they are), and we do not know the interpretation of (such confused) dreams'."

Also, the ignorance of the official dream interpreters and their lack of knowledge was the cause for Yusuf's release from prison, because at that time the cup-bearer of the king suddenly remembered Yusuf.

He approached the king and kneeled before him and said that in the course of being imprisoned with the cook, they saw dreams in the prison. They said their dreams to a man there, and he interpreted them. There happened actually what the man had said.

Now, he asked the king to let him go unto that man and bring the interpretation of the king's dream to him.

Explanations

1. Do not try to justify your ignorance. When the dignitaries of the king's court did not have any knowledge of interpreting dreams accurately, they said that the dream was confused and lacked coherence.

2. Tasks that require skill must be left to those who are capable. An expert would interpret a dream correctly whereas the non expert would claim that the same dream is confused and non interpretable.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 45

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُم بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ

45. "And of the two (prisoners), he who had been released, remembered (Yusuf) after a time and said 'I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me (to Yusuf)'."

Although the word /'ummah/ means 'a community of people', in this context it refers to 'a number of days'.[2]

Good things reveal themselves sooner or later, and those who are knowledgeable must be introduced and eventually be called upon to solve problems in their field of experience.

Here, the cup-bearer of the king, who had gotten out of the prison, remembered the event of his dream in the prison interpreted by Yusuf.

The verse says:

"And of the two (prisoners), she who had been released, remembered (Yusuf) after a time and said 'I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me (to Yusuf)'."

This statement changed the status of the meeting. All the audience were gazing the cup-bearer. Then, finally, he was permitted to leave for it promptly.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 46

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصّدّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَي النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

46. "Yusuf, O truthful one! Expound to us regarding (the dream of) seven fat cows which seven lean ones were devouring, and seven green ears of corn and other (seven) dry, that I may go back to the people, that they may know."

The Arabic term /siddiq/ refers to someone whose words and deeds as well as his beliefs and behavior correspond to each other.

As his prison companion, the cup-bearer, had heard and seen Yusuf's words and deeds inside the prison, and he had himself actually experienced Yusuf's accuracy of interpretation regarding his own dream and that of his friend, this is why he addressed him with the epithet /siddiq/ or 'The Truthful One'.

Incidentally, the title /siddiq/ is one of the titles which the Prophet (S) accorded Hadrat Ali (as).[3]

And so the cup-bearer went to his old cellmate still inside the prison, the friend to whom he had been very untrustworthy to ask him about the interpretation of the dream that had been obsessing the king, with the full faith that the great Yusuf would forgive him and refrain from upbraiding him. The above verse says explains this meaning.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 47

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَباً فَمَا حَصَدتُّم فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ

47. "He said: 'You shall sow for seven consecutive years and that which you have harvested you leave it in its ear, except a little whereof you eat'."

Instead of criticizing his friend in prison for forgetting and neglecting him, and without setting any pre conditions for interpreting the king's dream, Yusuf immediately interpreted the dream, for when society is in times of crisis and need, it is not meritorious to withhold knowledge especially in regard to that knowledge which can alleviate the crisis.

Thus he said to his friend, that the people should cultivate in earnest for seven consecutive years, but put whatever they reap in storage, except for the small amount necessary for their personal needs. The verse says:

"He said: 'You shall sow for seven consecutive years and that which you have harvested you leave it in its ear, except a little whereof you eat'."

In a clear and thorough manner he outlined the strategy of preparing for the coming drought with a defined program of food rationing and stockpiling surplus production, showing that not only was he well versed in the science of dream interpretation, but that he was an authority in economic planning and administration as well.

Explanations

1. The men of Allah must always think of the people's welfare and have designs both in the long and short terms.

2. If grain is stored while it is still inside their husks, it naturally lasts longer. Therefore, at a time when there were no modern facilities for efficient grain storage, stockpiling had to take into consideration the options available and exploit them efficiently.

3. Getting prepared for all kinds of disasters such as famines, earthquakes, and floods through planning and taking appropriate measures for the future are not incompatible with trusting in Allah and submission to Allah's decree.

4. Not everything bitter is bad. This very famine resulted in Yusuf's rise in the government and encouraged the people to work hard. The stockpile which they made at that time led to a great degree of self sufficiency. Indulgence today leads to scarcity tomorrow.

5. Keeping an eye upon the future and long term planning are absolutely necessary for the administration of any country; and so is government control over production and distribution under situations of economic crisis.

6. The dreams of unbelievers can also prove to reflect hidden realities and can contain some instructions for the preservation of a society.

Surah Yusuf - Verses 48 - 49

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ

48. "Then after that seven years of hardship will come that (people) will consume what you have before hand laid up for them, except a little of what you will have preserved."

49. "Then there will come after that a year in which the people will have rain, and in it they will press (wine and oil)."

The Arabic phrase /yuqa-un-nas/ is either derived from /qau/ 'to help' in which case the verse could mean that Allah would help the people and the difficulties which they had over the past fourteen years will be over; or it could be derived from /qay/ which means to rain and thus the period of hardship would be brought to an end.[4]

Yusuf had indicated that the seven lean cows and the seven fat cows, the seven green ears and seven withered ears symbolized fourteen years of prosperity and famine.

The verse says:

"Then after that seven years of hardship will come that (people) will consume what you have before hand laid up for them, except a little of what you will have preserved."

He also predicted that the fifteenth year would be a year of abundant rain and affluence.

The verse says:

"Then there will come after that a year in which the people will have rain, and in it they will press (wine and oil)."

However, this was not simply dreamt by the king, this indicates that Yusuf included more news from the invisible in order to pave the way for the acceptance of his prophethood.

The interpretation which Yusuf had put forth for the dream was very precise and exact. Indeed, it indicates that he was no ordinary dream interpreter; in fact he was a leader inside a prison who was able to forge a countrywide program for the entire kingdom for the next fifteen years.

The interpretation and the plans proposed created the bases both for relieving the people of Egypt from the devastation of the famine and Yusuf's freedom from the confinement of prison. In the end, it resulted in changing a government of despots.

The conditions for an efficient administrative system in any given society are:

1-People's confidence,

2-Sincerity,

3-Wisdom and knowledge,

4-Correct prediction and forecasting, and

5-People's obedience.

Thus, the people of Egypt were saved from their plight because they obeyed Yusuf.

Notes

1. Tafsir Al-Mizan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, and Al-Mizan
3. Tafsir Atyab ul-Bayan and Tefsir ul-Kabir.
4. Tafsir Al-Mizan.

Section 7: Yusuf Cleared of the False Charge

Surah Yusuf - Verse 50

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ اللاَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ

50. "So the king said: 'Bring him to me.' Then, when the messenger came to him, he (Yusuf) said: 'Go back unto your lord and ask him: What was the case of the women who cut their own hands? Verily my Lord is aware of their guile'."

By interpreting the king's dream and proposing a precise program of dealing with the future impending famine without attaching any preconditions, Yusuf not only showed in prison that he was an extraordinary person, but he also indicated that he was a knowledgeable and wise man. The verse says:

"So the king said: 'Bring him to me.'..."

When the messenger came to him, Yusuf did not jump to seize his freedom, instead he requested a reevaluation of his past record, he would not leave the prison just by the king's permission and forgiveness; yet, he told him that he should go back to the king and ask him about the women who had been at the palace of the 'Aziz and had cut their hands.

He did not want his freedom to be the result of a royal amnesty. Yusuf wanted his innocence and chastity to be vindicated and get the king to understand that his entire regime was more corrupt and injustice more widespread that he could have imagined. Probably, because he held the 'Aziz in great respect, he did not mention his wife, and only mentioned the women as a group.

It is mentioned in an Islamic tradition that the blessed Prophet (S) said:

"I am astonished at the patience of Yusuf, whenever the king needed his dream interpreted, Yusuf did not say that he would not do such unless he was freed from prison, but when they wanted to free him, he did not come out until all the charges and accusations against him were refuted."

Therefore, when the messenger of the king came to Yusuf, instead of being happy that after years of imprisonment he was going to be free, he gave him a negative answer. The verse says:

Then, when the messenger came to him, he (Yusuf) said: 'Go back unto your lord and ask him: What was the case of the women who cut their own hands?..."

Yusuf did not want to accept the disgrace of the king's forgiveness, and after freeing from prison to live as a criminal, or at least as an accused one who had been included the royal amnesty. He wanted to perfectly prove his innocence and chastity and then get free honourably.

Then he added implying that if common people of Egypt, and even the people of the royal court, might not know how and by who the plan of his imprisonment was designed, but the Lord was aware of the guile of those women.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Verily my Lord is aware of their guile'."

Explanations

1. Freedom at any price is often of no value. To prove one's innocence is more important than one's freedom.

2. Yusuf (as) first removed all misconceptions from the people's minds regarding his role in the scandal, then later accepted his release.

3. It is a religious obligation for everyone to guard and defend his reputation.

4. Yusuf made it known to the king that after his release from the prison, he would not regard him as his Allah, or lord and would not consider himself as his slave. On the contrary, he would regard the Almighty as his Lord.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 51

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ رَاوَدتُّنَّ يُوسُفَ عَن نَّفْسِهِ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِن سُوءٍ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ الْآنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوَدتُّهُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

51. "He (the king) said (to the women): 'What was the matter with you women when you sought to seduce Yusuf from his (pure) self?' They answered: 'Allah Blameless! We know no evil of him.' The wife of the 'Aziz said: 'Now the truth has become manifest, I (it was who) sought to seduce him from his (pure) self, and verily he is of the truthful ones'."

The Arabic term /xatb/ means being called or invited for an important matter. The term /xatib/ refers to a person who calls the people or invites them for such a matter.

The Qur'anic term /has-hasa/, which means 'to come to light', is derived from the word /hissah/ with the sense of: share, part, and sorting out the 'true' from the 'untrue'.

When the special envoy returned to the king and frankly communicated Yusuf's proposal to him, he was even more astonished by his greatness of character and lofty aims. Therefore, he lost no time in contacting the women who had taken part in the affair. He had them brought before him and asked them about what happened when they had made their passes at Yusuf.

The verse says:

"He (the king) said (to the women): 'What was the matter with you women when you sought to seduce Yusuf from his (pure) self?'..."

Their dormant consciences were aroused and all of a sudden, because of the provocative question, they unanimously declared that Yusuf had not been guilty and testified to his chastity and flawless personality. The verse says:

"…They answered: 'Allah Blameless! We know no evil of him.'..."

The wife of the 'Aziz, who was attending there, felt the time ripe for her to confess her wrongdoing and reconcile her guilty conscience after several years.

She then bore testimony to Yusuf's chastity and confessed her guilt especially when she became aware of his greatness and magnitude which, as a result of his message to the king was becoming well known and he had mentioned nothing about her in his message except something secretly pointing to those women of Egypt.

Suddenly, as if a burst occurred in her inside, she exclaimed such the Qur'an says:

"…The wife of the 'Aziz said: 'Now the truth has become manifest, I (it was who) sought to seduce him from his (pure) self, and verily he is of the truthful ones'."

Explanations

1. Whenever there is a knotty and complicated problem, the person in charge should study the evidence himself and proceed to set up the mechanism to see that justice is done.
2. Accused persons should be invited to defend themselves. In the story even Zulaykha was present when the investigation was taking place.
3. Truth would not always remain hidden, guilty consciences will be aroused one day and they will of necessity, confess. Social pressure and the environmental influences can drive even the stiff-necked to confess. As soon as the wife of the 'Aziz was convinced that all the women had testified to Yusuf's innocence, she also accepted to confess.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 52

ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ ا ۙ لاَ يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ

52. "(Yusuf said): "That, so that he (the 'Aziz) may know that I have not betrayed him in secret, and that Allah does not guide the device of the treacherous.""

There are two views concerning this holy verse. Some commentators claim that it is a continuation of the speech of Zulaykha, the wife of 'Aziz. Others attribute these words to Yusuf (as).

However, when we explore the verse in depth, the latter view seems more likely to be correct, for what treason can be greater than sending an innocent man to prison for several years?

If these were the words of Zulaykha, it implies that her confession was made to remind Yusuf that she had not betrayed him in his absence and had not accused him for whatever had transpired. However, she did betray him and leveled untrue accusations against him in his presence.

If, on the other hand, these are the words of Yusuf, that he sent back the messenger of the king asking him to investigate the status of these Egyptian women, it was due to the fact that he wanted the king or the 'Aziz to know that he had never betrayed the latter in his absence concerning his wife; for Allah does not guide traitors when they engage in their double dealing.

The verse says:

"(Yusuf said): "That, so that he (the 'Aziz) may know that I have not betrayed him in secret, and that Allah does not guide the device of the treacherous.""

Explanations

1. A sublime person does not seek vengeance rather he searches for the truth and seeks to protect honor and respect.
2. The sign of true belief is abstaining from betraying others secretly.
3. Having evil intentions towards other people's spouses is considered as being treacherous to their husbands themselves.

4. A traitor does not achieve his objectives and his end is not easy. Of course, once we are pure and truthful Allah does not allow the wicked to damage our reputation.

5. Yusuf (as) endeavored to draw the king's attention to the fact that Allah's Will and Divine Providence always play a decisive role in occurrences and events.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 53

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلاَّ مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

53. "And I do not absolve myself, verily the (human) soul enjoins to evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy; verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

There are several descriptions throughout the Qur'an of the self or soul; some of them are pointed out here:

1) The despotic soul which leads one to commit evil and vicious acts. If it is not controlled by faith and reason, it results in man's sudden fall.

2) The reproaching soul. This self or ego is active when a guilty person blames and scolds himself. In this case, he tends to seek repentance and is apologetic for the sin or crime which he has committed.

3) The peaceful soul which is found in only the prophets, and those truly trained by them. Once they find themselves surrounded by unbridled passion and ignorance, they seek the help of Allah to be extricated from it. They owe everything to Allah who loves them very much.

Yusuf (as) sees Allah's grace and favor as the reason for his unscathed honor and the absence of treachery from his heart, since man with a human nature replete with frailties cannot excuse himself of the evil tendencies that are present in his soul.

The verse from the tongue of Yusuf says:

"And I do not absolve myself, verily the (human) soul enjoins to evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy; verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Many Islamic narrations have pointed out the dangerous qualities present in the soul, regarding giving excuses for its evil tendencies, self satisfaction and self gratification as the results of corrupt reasoning which are counted among the greatest of the traps laid by the Satan.

Explanations

1. One should never admire himself immaculate and free of blame, excusing oneself of faults.

2. Only Allah's grace is the source of salvation. Once man is left to himself, he will collapse.

3. The dangers that are engendered by the self are very grave, do not regard them as simple.

4. Despite all the dangers which may be surrounding you, do not despair of Allah's grace.

5. One of the conditions of perfection is that one should not consider himself perfect although everyone else might regard him as such.

In Hadrat Yusuf's (as) case, everybody bore witness to his perfection, they included his brothers, the wife of the 'Aziz, the king's witness, Satan,

as well as all the prisoners, nevertheless, Yusuf himself asserts that he was not perfect by saying:

"I do not absolve myself. ..."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 54

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ أَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ

54. "And the king said: 'Bring him to me. I will attach him to my person.' Then when he had spoken with him, he said: 'Verily today you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one'."

In Lisan-ul-Arab, an Arabic dictionary, it is said that once a person confides in another person and involves him in his affairs, he applies the phrase: /'istaxlis-hu/ i.e.

'I will attach him to my person, or take him into my confidence'.

When Yusuf was in prison, the prison had been depicted as: 'the grave of the living, the house of grief and sorrow, the place of trial for the friends, and the blow upon the faces of the foes.'[1]

As the king realized that Yusuf was reliable and sincere and found no treachery ascribable to him, he took him into his confidence.

The verse says:

"And the king said: 'Bring him to me. I will attach him to my person.'..."

Were Allah not to find any betrayal on the part of the servants, what would He do? Certainly, He would also bring him closer to Himself. That is why that the Qur'an contains such an interpretation and such references for the prophets such as:

"And I myself have chosen you..."[2]

or

"…Verily I have chosen you above the people by My messages and by My speaking…" [3]

By using the word /ladayna/ the king declared that Yusuf had a high position in the hierarchy of his administration requiring all other authorities to obey him. Therefore, if Allah wants to appoint yesterday's prisoner as today's commander He can do so.

The verse says:

"…Then when he had spoken with him, he said: 'Verily today you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one'."

Explanations

1. Private consultants in the hierarchy of the administration of every country must be men of virtue, good thinkers, able planners and reliable people. (All of which characterized Yusuf).

2. One's defects and vices, as well his virtues, remain secret until he opens his mouth.

3. It is often useful to conduct a personal interview in the selection for every type of job.

4. Give authorization to only those in whom you have confidence.

5. The unbelievers and polytheists are also equally bent on achieving kinds of spiritual perfection. Seeking perfection is an inherent value embedded in human nature.

Being authorized without the necessary qualifications is not possible, because the two are interdependent.

This is because, if one is reliable but is not given any authorization, he would be unable to do anything, while, on the other hand, if one has authorization but lacks honesty and reliability, the interests of the entire public will be jeopardized.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 55

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَآئِنِ الأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ

55. "He (Yusuf) said: 'Set me over the storehouses of the land. Verily I am a knowing guardian'."

The 'Aziz offered Yusuf (as) the choice of assuming any position in the government he should take the reins of the important affairs to improve them. Yusuf (as) proposed his appointment as the minister responsible for treasures of the country, because he was a trustworthy custodian since he knew that economic injustice was one of the major causes of social disruption.

The verse says:

"He (Yusuf) said: 'Set me over the storehouses of the land. Verily I am a knowing guardian'."

With political power in his hands to affect economic programming, Yusuf would be more able to manage the impending food shortage and could also help the oppressed by reducing their suffering as much as he could, he could reclaim their rights and put an end to the economic mismanagement and anarchy which prevailed in the country.

The Qur'anic sentence: 'Verily I am a knowing guardian', shows that administration and administrative ability should be accompanied with faithfulness, and also shows that mere purity and faithfulness are not enough for accepting a sensitive social post, but besides them knowledge, expertness and administrative ability are necessary, too.'

Here are some examples of questions and answers worth noting:

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) make a proposal for a governmental post?

Answer: He discovered that the dream of the king foretold that an imminent danger and hardship was facing the people and he knew that he would be able to prevent it, as well as the undesirable economic events, so he asked for the relevant governmental portfolio in order to carry out this task.

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) utter words of praise for himself? Does not the Qur'an say that one should not praise himself?

The Qur'an says:

"Do not praise yourself."[4]

Answer: Yusuf did not praise himself, he was simply mentioning his suitability for the immense task ahead, which was regulating the dreadful effects of famine and drought. It was not because of ambition or the vain desire to abuse public office.

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) cooperate with an infidel government? Is it not the case that this is forbidden in the Qur'an ?

Answer: Yusuf did not accept this responsibility for that end. On the contrary, he did it to relieve the people from the pressures associated with the period of the famine. He never praised or flattered the regime.

According to the Tafsir f i Zilal il Qur'an, in such hard times, politicians usually abandon their people and flee at the time of danger, but Yusuf stayed to protect the people. If one is unable to overthrow an oppressive regime, or reform it, one must stop degradation and oppression as far as he can, which might include being active in public affairs.

Observing the law of priority in both reason and religion is a basic principle. It might not be admissible to participate in the administrative hierarchy of a government of unbelievers; nevertheless, it is far more desirable if it is a means saving a nation from famine.

According to Tafsir Tibyan, Yusuf (as) did not accept this political position in order to assist an oppressor; neither did he accept a military post, which might make him shed blood illegitimately. He only accepted an economic post in order to rescue the nation from famine.

Imam Rida (as) said that when it was necessary for Yusuf to become the custodian of the treasure in Egypt, he proposed his readiness for the position himself. [5]

Ali ibn Yaqteen also became a minister in the court of the Abbasid Caliphate on the advice of Imam Kazim (as). The mere presence of such men of Allah can be a great haven for the oppressed. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The atonement for a governmental deed is to fulfil the needs of (religious) brothers".[6]

Imam Rida (as) was asked why he accepted to be a successor to the caliphate of Ma`mun. He replied that Yusuf (as), who was a prophet, joined a pagan administration, but the Imam himself, who was the successor to the Prophet (S), had joined the system of someone who claimed to be a Muslim.

His acceptance had been done under duress, while Yusuf's (as) was voluntary because of the importance of the matter.[7]

As soon as Yusuf (as) took office, he did not seek to see his parents, for visiting parents was an emotional matter while rescuing people from famine was a social responsibility.

Imam Sadiq (as) addressing a group of seemingly pious people called them to lead a life of abstemiousness, he said:

"Inform me as to what you think about Yusuf the prophet, who told the king of Egypt: "Set me over the storehouses of the land." His responsibility extended far and wide including as far as the Yemen… At the same time, we do not know of any one who found fault with this engagement of his."[8]

It has been narrated from Imam Rida (as) that Yusuf gathered and stored the wheat during the first seven years.

During the second seven years, when the famine happened, he gradually and carefully distributed them among people for their daily consumption saving the entire country of Egypt from a potential catastrophe in this way.

Throughout those seven years of famine, Yusuf never ate to his fill, lest he might forget those who were nearly starving.[9]

Both the Tafsirs, Majma‘ ul Bayan, and Al Mizan say that during the first year of the famine, Hadrat Yusuf (as) exchanged wheat for gold and silver. In the second year, he exchanged wheat for gems and jewels.

During its third year, he would exchange wheat for four footed animals, in the fourth year he would exchange wheat for slaves, in the fifth year he exchanged wheat for houses; in the sixth year he exchanged wheat for farms and fields and finally, in the seventh year he exchanged wheat for labor.

When the seventh year came to an end, he addressed the king of Egypt, saying:

“All the people’s properties are at my disposal. However, I call Allah to testify and you to bear witness that I liberated all the people and I shall return all their properties to them, I shall also give you back your palace, the throne and your seal. Holding this administrative position was a means for me to save the people and nothing more. You must deal with them with justice.”

On hearing these words, the king was so profoundly humbled in the face of such spiritual magnitude that he suddenly uttered the following words:

“I bear witness that there is no Allah but Allah and that you are His messenger. Verily, you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one.”

We must remember that the Qur’anic criteria in selecting individuals do not only include the attributes of guardianship and knowledge, but that we must also take into consideration such attributes as: Faith, when the Qur’an says:

“Is he then, who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.”[10]

Background: about which the Qur’an says:

“And the foremost are the foremost.” “These are they who are drown nigh (to Allah).”[11]

Migration: The Qur’an says:

“…and those who believed but they did not migrate, you have not any friendship towards them until they migrate.…”

Mental and bodily ability:

“And He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature”[12]

Nobility in lineage:

“…your father was not a bad man,”[13]

Holy struggle: the Qur’an states:

“Allah has raised the strivers with their wealth and lives in rank above those sitting back.” [14]

Explanations

1. One must volunteer for sensitive positions whenever it is necessary.

2. Eligibility and potential are not incompatible with trust in Allah, piety, and honesty.

3. Out of the attributes which the king used to describe Yusuf (as) saying: high standing, and ‘a trusted one’, and those two attributes which Yusuf uses to describe himself as ‘knowing’ ‘guardian’, one can deduce that these qualities are the main attributes of the eligible administrators.

They are: ability, reliability, guardianship, and specialization.

4. The position of prophecy practically is not separate from government and politics, because religion is not to be separated from politics.

5. Citizenship is not to be regarded as the principal criterion for governmental administration. Yusuf was not an Egyptian, however he was given the post of an administrator of Egypt, (nationalism of any kind is not acceptable).

6. We must plan ahead for consumption, and in supervision we must always economize and preserve the share belonging to future generations.

Surah Yusuf - Verses 56 - 57

وَكَذلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الأَرْضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُ وَلاَ نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

وَلأَجْرُ الأَخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

56. "And thus did We give power to Yusuf in the land, to make his dwelling there wherever he wished. We reach with Our mercy on whomsoever We please, and We do not waste the reward of the righteous."

57. "And certainly the reward of the Hereafter is (much) better for those who believe and are constant in keeping from evil."

In the above two verses, Yusuf (as) has been described as a righteous, pious and true believer.

Throughout this Surah the Divine Will is constantly juxtaposed against the will of man, the latter which, when it goes contrary to the Divine will, always fails in achieving its objective, for example, Yusuf's brothers had decided to humiliate him by throwing him into the well and getting him enslaved, however, the 'Aziz recommended that he be held in high esteem.

The wife of the 'Aziz intended to seduce him and make him commit sins, but Allah, on the contrary, kept him pure and unblemished. The aristocracy sought to break and destroy him, but Allah granted him a high position in the government of Egypt.

It is for this reason that the Qur'an says:

"And thus did We give power to Yusuf in the land, to make his dwelling there wherever he wished. We reach with Our mercy on whomsoever We please, and We do not waste the reward of the righteous."

Even if it might seem a long time, Allah will ultimately reward the righteous for He does not disregard any decent act nor allow it to slip into oblivion.

However, besides the reward of this world, the righteous will enjoy some better rewards in Hereafter.

The verse says:

"And certainly the reward of the Hereafter is (much) better for those who believe and are constant in keeping from evil."

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the
2. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 13
3. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 144
4. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 32.
5. Tafsir Nur-ul-Thaqalayn

6. Wasa’il ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 12, p. 139
7. Wasa’il ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 12, p. 146
8. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
9. Tafsirs: Majma‘ ul Bayan.
10. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 18.
11. Surah Al-Waqi‘ah, No. 56, verses 10-11
12. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 247.
13. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 28.
14. Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 95.

Section 8: Yusuf Measures Out Corn to His Brothers

Surah Yusuf - Verse 58

وَجَآءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُونَ

58. "And the brothers of Yusuf came and entered unto him, then he knew them but they did not recognize him."

Eventually, as had been predicted, during the first seven consecutive years, agriculture in Egypt thrived due to the abundance of rainfall and water in the Nile River.

After the harvests, Yusuf had ordered the people to reserve the required amount for their needs for themselves and sell the rest to the government, thus the grain stocks were high and the storehouses were filled with food supplies.

Those seven years of affluence and blessings went by, and then famine and drought reared their ugly heads.

The little rain that fell from the sky was not enough to quench the thirst of the palm trees, and the suffering of the people began grew greater and greater as their stockpiles began to run out.

At this point, Yusuf sold them grain on the basis of the schedule which he had preplanned for this emergency and in this way he adequately met all their food requirements.

This drought did not affect Egypt alone; it had affected the countries neighboring Egypt as well, devastating large areas. Thus the people of Palestine and the land of Kan'an northeast of Egypt, where the House of Ya'qub was established, were also affected by the drought.

It was for this reason that Ya'qub decided to send all his children to Egypt to purchase food supplies except Benjamin who stayed with his father. They joined a camel caravan going to Egypt and according to some sources, arrived there after 18 days of travel.

According to historians, foreigners who entered Egypt had to report to the authorities on their arrival, who would inform Yusuf about them. When they reported the arrival of a camel caravan from Palestine, Yusuf quickly recognized his brothers' names among the arrivals and ordered them summoned to his court without letting anyone know who they were.

The verse says:

"And the brothers of Yusuf came and entered unto him, then he knew them but they did not recognize him."

Thirty to forty years had passed since the time they had thrown him into well. The possibility of him remaining alive was remote, and the last time they had come to Egypt had also been forty yeas before. It is not surprising, therefore, that they would not have recognized their brother when they saw him. Moreover, they did not have the slightest idea that he had become a great 'Aziz of Egypt.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 59

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَّكُم مِنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَاْ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ

59. "And when he provided them with their provisions, he said: 'Bring unto me a brother of years from your father. Do you not see that I give full measure, and (that) I am the best of hosts?'"

Yusuf was very compassionate and kind towards his brothers. When he was speaking with them, they told him that they were ten brothers from a single father named Ya'qub, the grandson of 'Ibrahim al Khalil, the great prophet of Allah.

They told him that had he known their father, he would have had more respect for them, but their aged and venerable father was greatly saddened and depressed.

On asking them why their father had been so grief stricken, they replied that he had had a son whom he loved very much and who was the youngest of all his sons. This son had gone hunting and playing with them in the fields and when they had neglected him a wolf came upon him and killed him. Since then, their father had been weeping and grieving for him.

Some commentators have narrated that Yusuf was in the habit of not selling more than one camel load of grain per person, and as the brothers were ten, he sold them ten loads of grain.

On receiving the grain, they said that their father, because of intensive grief, could not travel, as well as a younger brother who had stayed with him to serve him and keep his company, so they asked for a share for those two as well.

Yusuf ordered his men to add to their share, then turning towards them he told them to bring along the younger brother with them as a sign the next time they came back.

The holy Qur'anic says:

"And when he provided them with their provisions, he said: 'Bring unto me a brother of years from your father..."

Then Yusuf added:

"…Do you not see that I give full measure, and (that) I am the best of hosts?'"

Surah Yusuf - Verse 60

فإِن لَمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي وَلاَ تَقْرَبُونِ

60. "But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no measure (of corn) from me nor shall you (even) come near me."

After words of encouragement and showing his affection and hospitality, he warns them of the consequences; if they did not bring their brother with them the next time, they would get no wheat from him and they would not even be able to get close to him, for bringing their brother would be a proof of good faith in their dealings.

The verse says:

"But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no measure (of corn) from me nor shall you (even) come near me."

This was the perfect pretext to get the brothers to bring Benjamin to him. Incidentally, these interpretations make it clear that the buying and selling of grain in Egypt was not commonly done by weight but by volume; and also this shows that Yusuf was, in all respects, a hospitable person.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 61

قَالُوا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ

61. "They said: 'We will seek to get him from his father; and verily we certainly will do (it)'."

In answer to him, the brothers of Yusuf replied him as follows:

"They said: 'We will seek to get him from his father; and verily we certainly will do (it)'."

They were assured that they could penetrate in father from this point of view and attract his agreement; and it should be so. While they were able to get Yusuf out of the hands of their father by persuasion and insistence, how would they not be able to separate Benjamin from him?

In this regard, they called on their father frequently, begging him and sought to deceive him.

However, the Arabic term /murawidah/ means: frequent referring to someone, accompanying with surge and plot.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 62

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

62. "And he told his servants to put their merchandise (with which they had bartered) into their saddle-bags, so that they may recognize it when they return to their family in order that they might come back (again)."

Hadrat Yusuf (as) whose name is synonymous with words such as honesty, generosity and sincerity, would definitely not have given money from the treasury to his father or his brothers. It is highly probable that he had given them back the money for the grain from of his own share and out of his own pocket.

He returned the money to them so that lack of money would not hinder them from coming back. In addition, returning the money was a sign of sincerity, of having no evil intentions with regard to bringing the brother to him, and placing the money among the goods might have been to protect them from theft or robbery and that action can be a sign of non-indebtedness.

Why did not Yusuf introduce himself to his brothers? What prevented him from introducing himself so that his brothers could recognize him more quickly and make it possible for him to return to his father sooner and relieve him of the grief and misery that he had suffered all those years?

Some commentators say that Allah did not allow Yusuf to do this because this separation was a trial for Ya'qub and he was compelled to successfully undergo this period as was ordained by Allah. Before the end of this test, Yusuf was not allowed to introduce himself.

Moreover, if he had immediately introduced himself to his brothers, undesirable reactions might have resulted, among them was that they might have become so fearful that they would not have come back at all presuming that he would take revenge upon them for the past.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 63

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَي أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَآ أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

63. "So, when they returned to their father, they said: 'O our father! The measure was denied to us, therefore send our brother with us that we may get our measure; and verily we will certainly guard him'."

Yusuf's brothers then returned to Kan'an rejoicing and well supplied although they were worried that if their father did not give his consent to send Benjamin back with them, the new 'Aziz (Yusuf), would not receive them and no share would be allocated to them.

Thus, on their return to Kan'an, they told their father that the condition for receiving future supplies of grain would be for him to send Benjamin with them to Egypt.

The above holy verse says:

"So, when they returned to their father, they said: 'O our father! The measure was denied to us, therefore send our brother with us that we may get our measure; and verily we will certainly guard him'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 64

قَالَ هَلْ ءَأَمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلاَّ كَمَآ أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَي أَخِيهِ مِن قَبْلُ فَا ۖ خَيْرٌ حَافِظاً وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

64. "He said: 'Shall I trust you with him save as I trusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

The father, who had never forgotten the memory of Yusuf (as), was overwhelmingly upset when he heard these words. Turning to them, he wanted to know whether he could have trusted them as he had trusted them before with Yusuf.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Shall I trust you with him save as I trusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

Question: In view of the bad record which Ya'qub's sons had, why did he agree to send Benjamin along with them?

Answer: Fakhr Razi has dealt with a number of different possibilities, each of which can eventually provide some kind of justification for Ya'qub's consent.

Firstly, the brothers had not achieved their primary objective which consisted of winning their father's favor.

Secondly, they were less jealous of Benjamin than of Yusuf.

Thirdly, perhaps drought and consequently famine had forced them to make another journey.

Fourthly, decades had passed since the affair with Yusuf and hence it was regarded as something forgotten.

Fifthly, Allah, the Almighty, had inspired Ya'qub with certainty regarding the safety and protection of his son.

And finally, trusting in Allah, Ya‘qub once again entrusted Benjamin to his brothers.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 65

وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي هَذِهِ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا وَنَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ

65. “And when they opened their baggage, they found their merchandise had been returned to them. They said: ‘O our father! What (more) can we desire? This is our merchandise (that) has been returned to us. We shall get provision for our family, and guard our brother. And we shall obtain an extra camel’s load. That is an easy measure’.”

The Arabic term /namiru/ is derived from the term /mir/ which means food supplies and the phrase /namiru ahlana/ means: ‘we provide our family with food’.

One can infer from the sentence “We shall obtain an extra camel’s load” that the share of each person had been limited to a camel load which would have been allocated to the person (Benjamin) only if he himself had been present.

Once the brothers unloaded their goods, they found that their capital had been returned to them, i.e., all of what they had paid the ‘Aziz, was found among their goods.

The verse says:

“And when they opened their baggage, they found their merchandise had been returned to them...”

Feeling that this discovery was decisive evidence to support their proposal, they used it to convince their father to send Benjamin with them, what else could they want? Their capital had been returned to them and the prospect of adding an extra camel load to their goods was an easy matter for the generous ‘Aziz.

The verse continues saying:

“…They said: ‘O our father! What (more) can we desire? This is our merchandise (that) has been returned to us. We shall get provision for our family, and guard our brother. And we shall obtain an extra camel’s load. That is an easy measure’.”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 66

قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقاً مِنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنَّنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّا آتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

66. “He said: ‘Never will I send him with you until you pledge a solemn covenant to me, in Allah’s name, that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded in (an evil accident).’ And when they had sworn their solemn pledge, he said: ‘Allah is Guardian over what we say’.”

The Arabic term /muiq/ here means that which generates reliability and wins the confidence of the opposite side, it might take the form of a commitment, making an oath or making a sacrifice.

Ya‘qub, despite all these incentives was not willing to send his son Benjamin along with them. But their insistence, which was coupled with sound logic, persuaded him to submit to their proposal.

So he finally gave his conditional approval to Benjamin going with them. But they had to swear in Allah’s name to return Benjamin to him unless they were rendered powerless in fulfilling their commitment due to death or other unforeseen events.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Never will I send him with you until you pledge a solemn covenant to me, in Allah’s name, that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded in (an evil accident).’...”

The purpose of this oath (a divine pledge) has been the very covenant and oath which invoked the Divine Name. Only then was he prepared to release Benjamin to them, for it now meant that Allah (s.w.t.) was Guardian and Witness to what they pledged.

The verse says:

“…And when they had sworn their solemn pledge, he said: ‘Allah is Guardian over what we say’.”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 67

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لاَ تَدْخُلُوا مِن بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَآ أُغْنِي عَنكُم مِنَ
ا ً مِن شَيْءٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ ً عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

67. “He also said: ‘O’ my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by separate gates. Yet I cannot avail you anything against Allah. Judgment belongs no one but Allah. In Him do I put my trust, and in Him let all that trust put their trust’.”

After winning the approval of their father, the brothers got ready to go to Egypt for the second time taking their younger brother along with them.

Ya‘qub advised them that they should not all enter by one gate to avoid drawing the attention of the jealous minded and those who did not wish them well, instead, they should enter Egypt through different gates, and thus be safer from the evil intentions of people.

The verse says:

“He also said: ‘O’ my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by separate gates...”

Nevertheless, he was quick to point out that in the final analysis, it was Allah that was the final Guarantor and Judge, and in Him and only Him should we put our trust, and from Him we must seek help, even when we take precautions.

The verse continues saying:

“…Yet I cannot avail you anything against Allah. Judgment belongs no one but Allah. In Him do I put my trust, and in Him let all that trust put their trust’.”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 68

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُم مَّا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُم مِنَ ا ً مِن شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ حَاجَةً فِي
نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُون

68. "And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined them, it availed them nothing against Allah; but (it was) a need in Jacob's soul which he so satisfied; and verily he was possessed of a knowledge for that We had taught him, but most people do not know."

The brothers set off from Kan'an and, after covering a long distance, they arrived in Egypt. On their arrival, they acted according to the instructions of their old father and entered through different gates.

The verse says:

"And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined them..."

This behavior, however, did not have any influence on the Divine will. The only effect mentioned here was that Ya'qub's wishes had been fulfilled.

The verse continues saying:

"…it availed them nothing against Allah; but (it was) a need in Jacob's soul which he so satisfied;..."

Allusion is made to the fact that its sole effect was that it provided comfort for father for he was far away and isolated from all of his sons. He was also concerned about those who would be jealous of them and those who harbored ill will towards them, and being confident that they would put his recommendations into practice, he felt more at ease.

The verse says:

"…and verily he was possessed of a knowledge for that We had taught him, but most people do not know."

Explanations

1. Bitter experiences educate man, and as a result, he is more inclined to take the words of great men seriously.
2. Even correct calculations and planning are only effective if they are in accordance with the Divine will, once they run contrary to the will of Allah they cannot come into effect.
3. Ya'qub was aware of some secrets and subjects which he did not deem fit to disclose.
4. The prayers of the men of Allah are always accepted and their needs fulfilled.
5. The knowledge of the prophets has its origin in the Divine knowledge.
6. Most people are only aware of the means and the causes of events and are ignorant of Allah's authority and the need for putting all their hopes and trust in Him.

Section 9: Yusuf Meets His Brother

Surah Yusuf - Verse 69

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَي يُوسُفَ ءَاوَي إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَاْ أَخُوكَ فَلاَ تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

69. "And, when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his (own) brother (Benyamin) with himself, saying: 'I am your brother; so do not grieve at what they were doing'."

According to the narrations, when Ya'qub's (as) sons arrived in Egypt, Yusuf hosted them and ordered a table full of various foods for every couple of them.

Benjamin remained seated alone, so Yusuf seated him near himself, then he allocated every two persons for one room and made Benjamin his roommate.

While together, Benjamin talked about the infidelities of the brothers and the crimes which they had committed the years before against their brother, Yusuf.

At this moment Yusuf, who had become impatient, exclaimed:

"Stop worrying! I am that very Yusuf!"

He uttered these words so emphatically "Indeed, I am your brother!" that it left no possibility of doubt in the truth of his words.

The verse says:

"And, when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his (own) brother (Benyamin) with himself, saying: 'I am your brother; so do not grieve at what they were doing'."

As for the concept of the sentence: "So do not grieve at what they were doing", there are two possibilities worth consideration.

The first is that Benjamin should stop getting depressed about the past conduct of his brothers.

The second is that it is probable that the plan which was to be put into practice by his slaves for Benjamin's own goods i.e., placing the cup among the loads in order for him to stay with him, should not be a reason for worry.

Explanations

1. The brothers who boasted of their power the previous day, claiming that they were a powerful group, had to undergo a significant amount of humiliation in order to secure their food supplies.

They practically had to kiss Yusuf's threshold in a humiliating manner.

2. When a blessing is obtain, the concerning former afflictions should be renounced

(Yusuf and Benjamin had a face to face meeting then they forgot their past sorrows.)

3. Before the execution of any plan and project, the innocent must be spiritually ready and must clearly know the justification for the action. Benjamin was told that he would be kept in Egypt under the pretext of being discovered as a thief to which he agreed.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 70

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ

70. "Then, when he provided them with their provisions, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then a herald shouted: 'O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves!'"

The Arabic term /siqayah/ refers to a container out of which one drinks water. The word /rahl/ means a pouch or saddle-bag which is loaded onto a camel. The term /'ir/ means: a caravan of camels which carries food supplies.

This incident is the fruit of one of two creative plans which Yusuf designed. In the first instance he hid the brothers' capital among the load of grain so that they might once again return. This time, he planted the precious cup in his brother's saddlebag in order to retain him in Egypt as a deposit. It says:

"Then, when he provided them with their provisions, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then a herald shouted: 'O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves!'"

Some Islamic narrations say that during the meeting between Benjamin and Yusuf, the latter asked Benjamin if he would like to stay with him. Benjamin said that he would, but he mentioned that his father had gotten his brothers to swear to return him to their father.

Yusuf replied that he would devise a plan for him to stay.

Question: Why were these innocent people accused of theft?

Answer: Benjamin, with full understanding, declared his approval of the scheme for him to stay with his brother Yusuf. Although his other brothers became them briefly upset and desperate because of the accusation, they were acquitted after an inspection.

In addition, Yusuf's agents were unaware that he had planted the cup in his brother's saddlebag, so they naturally proclaimed that the brothers were thieves.

Even if Yusuf had said that they were thieves, still there would have been no problem, since, according to Imam Sadiq (as), what they had stolen was not specified, and the meaning of thieves applied to them really meant that they had stolen Yusuf from his father.

In the story, no one said that they had stolen the cup, but that it was lost. Thus they were thieves, the thieves of Yusuf, not the thieves of the cup.[1]

The Prophet (S) has said: that he who tells a white lie in order to reform or to remove conflict between others is not counted as a lie. It was then that he recited this verse.[2]

Explanations

It is permitted to fabricate scenes in order to discover an offence[3], and for the sake of superior objectives it is also admissible to attribute theft to an innocent man who has agreed to play the role of the thief.[4]

If there is one wrongdoer in a group, people will often hold the whole group responsible.

"O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves."

Surah Yusuf - Verses 71 - 72

قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِم مَّاذَا تَفْقِدُونَ

قَالُوا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَن جَآءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَاْ بِهِ زَعِيمٌ

71. "They said, while turning to them: 'What is it that you have lost?'"

72. "They said: 'We have lost the king's cup, and whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel-load, and I guarantee it'."

The Arabic terms /suwa'/ and /siqayah/ are often used with same sense, meaning a vessel out of which water was drunk and which was also used to measure out quantities of wheat.[5] This term illustrates the efficiency, and enjoyment of a single device that encompasses a wide range of functions.

The Arabic word /himl/ means a load while /haml/ means a load that is hidden, such as rain which is hidden within the clouds or the child in its mother's womb.

The Qur'anic sentence saying: 'whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel's load', in the literature of Islamic jurisprudence, is known as /ju'alah/ or /ji'alah/ (wage) which has precedence in terms of legal credibility.

It says:

"They said, while turning to them: 'What is it that you have lost?'"

"They said: 'We have lost the king's cup, and whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel-load..."

The speaker of this statement, for a more emphasis, said:

"…and I guarantee it'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 73

قَالُوا تَا ۖ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُم مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ

73. "They said: 'By Allah! You know well (that) we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves'."

The brothers, disturbed by these words, were not aware of the roots of the problem. In their reply, they seem certain that the Egyptian authorities knew that they were not the type to steal.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! You know well (that) we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves'."

This statement of the brothers shows that probably the Egyptians had a record of their previous transactions; and now the travelers said that they had declared their readiness to return the capital that was hidden among their supplies on the previous trip.

So how could those who, returning from a remote country to give back the capital found amongst their supplies be guilty of stealing? Moreover, it is said that on their arrival in Egypt, they had firmly closed the mouths of their camels with bridles so that they would not graze on other's farms or do any damage to fields.

How would they commit such an ugly vice?

Explanations

1. Having a clean record is a powerful argument for exoneration from suspicion.

2. Burglary and theft are examples of corruption on the earth.

A country should monitor the arrival and departure of foreign travelers especially in times of crisis to be sure about their intentions.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 74

قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهُ إِن كُنتُم كَاذِبِينَ

74. "They said: 'What is the penalty thereof, if you are liars?'"

The punishment inflicted upon thieves has varied among different nations due to differences in their living standards.

Theft is a major crime that causes economic disruption and social insecurity; as such it has been always cited as a crime in all legal statutes and customs in all parts of the world. The penalty prescribed for theft has been as varied as the civilizations and cultures of the world.

In Egypt, which was very affluent at that time, the penalty for theft consisted of lashes and imprisonment. In Palestine, on the other hand, the penalty was that the thief would be put into bondage commensurate with the amount he had stolen, because theft was a transgression against the people's rights and had economical motives.

Thus the import of the question posed, i.e., the penalty if they were proven to be liars and had stolen the cup, is that the brothers would have to choose between the Egyptian and Palestinian penalties.

Anyway, it seems that the questioner was Hadrat Yusuf himself since he knew that the brothers would accept judgment according to the regulations and laws of Kan'an which is exactly what he had anticipated they would choose.

The verse says:

"They said: 'What is the penalty thereof, if you are liars?'"

Surah Yusuf - Verse 75

قَالُوا جَزَآؤُهُ مَن وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

75. "They said: 'The penalty thereof is that he in whose bag it is found shall himself be (held as bondsman) in penalty for it. Thus do we punish the unjust'."

Tribes in the past used to punish thieves by putting them into servitude.[6] And there is no exceptions or discrimination in law, whoever was found to be a thief would be enslaved. Of course, the retribution of a wrongdoer in a foreign country can often be decided according to the laws of his country.

Thus in Egypt the guilty could be judged by the laws of his land and not according to the laws of the host country. The Qur'an sees theft as an outstanding instance of oppression and thus in the noble verse it calls the thief an 'unjust' one.

The verse says:

"They said: 'The penalty thereof is that he in whose bag it is found shall himself be (held as bondsman) in penalty for it. Thus do we punish the unjust'."

Since the law in Kan‘an was that the thief must lose his freedom in servitude, the brothers said that his penalty was the same one in whose load it was found; i.e., the thief himself would be its penalty (prevention). Yusuf had achieved his objective which was to detain his brother.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 76

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِن وِعَآءِ أَخِيهِ كَذَٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ ۗ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَآءُ ۗ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

76. “And so he began (the search) with their bags before the bag of his brother. Then he drew it out from his brother’s bag. Thus did We contrive for Yusuf’s sake; for he could not take his brother in accordance with the king’s law, except that Allah willed. We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above everyone endued with knowledge, there is one more knowing.”

At this moment, Yusuf ordered everything to be unloaded and each load to be examined separately. However, in order not to make them suspicious, he examined the loads of the brothers before examining Benjamin’s load from which he produced the ‘stolen cup’.

The verse says:

“And so he began (the search) with their bags before the bag of his brother. Then he drew it out from his brother’s bag...”

As soon as the cup was discovered, the brothers were extremely astonished and a mountain of grief and despair overtook them. Their brother had apparently committed theft, which was a blow to their reputation, a matter which would jeopardize their standing with the ‘Aziz.

And what answer would they give their father? How could he believe that it was not their fault this time?

Then the Qur’an adds that this was how Allah contrived the matter for Yusuf’s sake in order that he would keep his brother with him in a manner that other brothers could not resist. The important problem was that Yusuf could not retain his brother by the law of the king except that Binyamin would be beaten and put in prison.

That was why he made the brothers confess what the retribution of theft was if one of them would commit it. They answered that according to the tradition of their land the thief himself would be kept.

The verse says:

“…Thus did We contrive for Yusuf’s sake; for he could not take his brother in accordance with the king’s law, except that Allah willed...”

This verse indicates that Yusuf’s actions according to the laws and traditions of his brothers’ own land, was performed according to the Divine command. This was a plan that protected his brother, provided a test for his father, Ya‘qub, and was an evaluation of his other brothers as well.

In the end, after every test, there is an elevation in rank for those who have the merit. This rank is achieved by going through tests just as Yusuf had successfully done.

Nevertheless, regardless of whatever rank we achieve, there will always be someone superior in knowledge comparing some others. In the hierarchy of knowledge, Allah is at the peak because His knowledge is infinite and is not confined.

The verse says:

"…We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above everyone endued with knowledge, there is one more knowing."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 77

قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَسَرَّهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَاناً وَا ۖ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

77. "They said: 'If he steals, a brother of his had stolen before.' But Yusuf kept it secret within his heart and did not reveal it to them. He said: 'You are in a worse situation, and Allah knows best (the truth) of what you state'."

The brothers eventually came to the conclusion that their brother Benjamin was a thief and his reputation would ruin their supposedly good relations with the 'Aziz.

Thus, in order to distance themselves from him, they attributed it to a family trait in so far that his brother Yusuf, like him, who was of the same mother, had also been a thief. They both, on the other hand, should be treated differently because they themselves were from another mother.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If he steals, a brother of his had stolen before.'..."

On hearing such words, Yusuf became very saddened but he kept it to himself and did not reveal his feelings or his opinion. Even though they had committed the great sin of false attribution and slander he did not answer them. He just went on to tell them in very subtle terms that they had sunk far lower than the brother they had so unjustly accused.

The verse says:

"…But Yusuf kept it secret within his heart and did not reveal it to them. He said: 'You are in a worse situation, and Allah knows best (the truth) of what you state'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 78

قَالُوا يَآ أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَباً شَيْخاً كَبِيراً فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

78. "They said: 'O' 'Aziz! He has a father, aged and advanced in years, so take one of us in his place; verily we see you of the doers of good'."

As they realized that in accord with the penalty to which they themselves had agreed, their younger brother Benjamin would have to stay with the 'Aziz and that they had made a pledge with their father to do their utmost to protect and return him safely to Ya'qub, they pleaded with Yusuf who was yet unknown to them to take one of them instead.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' 'Aziz! He has a father, aged and advanced in years, so take one of us in his place;..."

They explained the reason of their request that they had realized the ‘Aziz one of the righteous and that was not the first time that he showed them kindness, then it was better to complete his affection by according their request.

The verse says:

“…verily we see you of the doers of good’.”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 79

قَالَ مَعَاذَ ا ۖ أَن نَّأْخُذَ إِلاَّ مَن وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِندَهُ إِنَّآ إِذاً لَظَالِمُونَ

79. “He said: ‘Allah forbid that we take (anyone) other than him with whom we found our property. Indeed (if we did so) we would certainly be of the unjust ones’.”

Yusuf immediately turned down this proposal, implying that a just person will never punish an innocent man for an offence which had been committed by someone else. To do such a thing would make one an oppressor.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Allah forbid that we take (anyone) other than him with whom we found our property. Indeed (if we did so) we would certainly be of the unjust ones’.”

It is interesting to note that Yusuf never uses the word thief to refer to his brother, on the contrary, he says “him with whom we have found our property”. This is one of the signs indicating that he was careful to use no offensive language in all of his life.

Explanations

1. It is necessary for everyone to observe regulations and rules and breaking them is forbidden even for the ‘Aziz.

2. Breaking just laws is an act of oppression. One must not break laws at the behest of this and that person.

3. The innocent must not be held responsible and suffer the consequences for what someone else had done even when he consents to do so.

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn: This case is idiomatically referred to as /tauriyah/ (homonomy)which implies that the speaker has an objective in mind which differs from the aim of the addressee. That is if the object meaning of ‘the caller’ in the verse is Yusuf this ‘tauriyah’ is correct. And Allah alone knows.

2. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.

3. It is just like films and theatrical performances which show people as guilty and summoned to court and addressed as such. They however, accept to play the role as culprits with their own consent.

4. Tafsir Al Mizan vol. 11, p. 244

5. In Tafsir Atyab-ul-Bayan, it is asserted that it is a container the volume of which is equal to about 3 kg of wheat.

6. According to Majma‘ ul Bayan the term of servitude was for one year.

Section 10: Yusuf Discloses His Identity

Surah Yusuf - Verse 80

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْأَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيّاً قَالَ كَبِيرُهُم أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا اَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُم مَوْثِقاً مِنَ ا ّ ِ وَمِن قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الأَرْضَ حَتَّي يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ ا ّ ُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

80. "So when they despaired of (moving) him, they conferred in private. The eldest of them said: 'Don't you know that your father has taken a solemn covenant from you in Allah's name, and before that you failed to perform your duty with Yusuf? Therefore, I will never leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah decides for me; and He is the best of judges'."

The brothers were faced with the prospect of returning to their father in shame. They did their utmost to save Benjamin, however they found all roads leading to a solution blocked.

Therefore, they despaired from the 'Aziz, or from deliverance of the brother, and decided to return to kan'an and tell their father about the matter when they went off by themselves into a corner and conferred as to what next to do.

The verse says:

"So when they despaired of (moving) him, they conferred in private..."

However, in that private conference the elder brother told them whether they did not know that their father had taken an oath of Allah from them that they had to return Benjamin in any possible price, and that they were the same persons who formerly failed to fulfil their duty concerning Yusuf, and had a bad background with the Father.

The verse says:

"…The eldest of them said: 'Don't you know that your father has taken a solemn covenant from you in Allah's name, and before that you failed to perform your duty with Yusuf?..."

The older brother, who embarrassed and frustrated at their unreliability with their father, decided to stay in Egypt until his father permitted or until Allah (s.w.t.) decided.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Therefore, I will never leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah decides for me; and He is the best of judges'."

The decision of Allah means either until death overtook him or that Allah (s.w.t.) would make manifest a solution to this problem; or a plausible excuse which could decisively accepted by father.

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /xalasu/ means separating themselves away from others. The Qur'anic word /najiyyan/ means to enter into a whispered conversation with someone. Therefore, the phrase /xalasu najiyyan/ means that they gathered together apart from others, for a confidential meeting to decide on what to do.

2. Pleas and requests should not hinder one from executing Divine commands and implementing decisive plans in that respect.

3. In cases where one is a culprit in major disasters and unpleasant matters, the elders are more responsible and the more shameful they seem.

4. Treachery and crime hurt the conscience of good people throughout their lives.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 81

ارْجِعُوا إِلَي أَبِيكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَآ أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَآ إِلاَّ بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ

81. "Go back to your father and say: 'O' father! Verily your son has committed theft, and we did not bear witness except to what we knew, and we were not guardians of the Unseen'."

Then the elder brother told other brothers that they would return to the Father and say that his son (Benjamin) committed theft and that the testimony they would present to their father could only be based on the amount of the truth that they were aware of.

They saw the king's cup discovered and taken out from their brother's load which proved that he had committed theft. Nevertheless, they started to become aware that the hidden truth of the matter rested with Allah.

The verse says:

"Go back to your father and say: 'O' father! Verily your son has committed theft, and we did not bear witness except to what we knew, and we were not guardians of the Unseen'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 82

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

82. "And ask at the town in which we were and the caravan with which we travelled hither, and verily we are indeed truthful."

The Arabic term /qaryah/ does not only mean 'village ', but it also means 'a meeting place' and 'a residential area' as well, whether be it a town or a village.

Yusuf's brothers did not have any evidence to prove that he was killed by a wolf when they described the event for their father, but they provided two proofs to support their story in this situation. Firstly they had witnesses in the town, and secondly, they had witnesses in the caravan among which they were.

Besides that, in the former description they said: "…even though we be truthful"[1] where the Arabic word /lau/ is a sign of doubt, weakness, and anxiety, while here, in this verse, they say: "…verily we are indeed truthful" that, with the application of 'verily' and 'indeed', they claimed that they were really truthful.

Then, in order to make clear their father from any suspicion and to make him sure that the fact had been exactly that very thing they explained, they said:

"And ask at the town in which we were and the caravan with which we travelled hither..."

This statement means that there were naturally some people from Kan‘an among them whom Jacob knew and he could ask the true affair from them so that, however, he would become certain that they were telling nothing but the truth.

It says:

“…and verily we are indeed truthful.”

They were very confident in their position, they were sure that if the father were to investigate he would find that they were indeed telling the truth.

From the verse, we can also deduce that the news that Benjamin had stolen the king’s cup spread around the town and among the caravan.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 83

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَي ا ّ ُ أَن يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِم جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

83. “He (Ya‘qub) said: ‘No, but your (guilty) selves have made a matter fair for you, so patience is good. Maybe Allah will bring them to me all together; verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise’.”

The brothers departed from Egypt, leaving the youngest and the oldest behind, they returned to Kan‘an in frustration and shame. On this occasion, contrary to other times, their father found them deeply disturbed and depressed and that Benjamin and the oldest brother were not with them, thus he realized that something unpleasant had taken place.

In order to remove their father’s suspicions and increase his confidence in them, this time they told the truth of the matter as it had appeared to them, calling him to inquire from the people of Egypt and the caravan to verify their story.

Ya‘qub was not impressed, he became angry, and staring at them, he told them that it was their souls that had made something appealing to them that had led to this disaster.

The verse says:

“He (Ya‘qub) said: ‘No, but your (guilty) selves have made a matter fair for you...”

On his part Ya‘qub had no other choice than to take recourse in sweet patience and trust in Allah to return all his sons to him, if He willed, because He is aware of them inside of all as well as whatever happened and will happen. Moreover, He is Wise and never does anything undue.

The holy verse continues saying:

“…so patience is good. Maybe Allah will bring them to me all together; verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise’.”

Explanations

1- When the brothers, feigning sadness, brought Yusuf’s bloody shirt to their father, they said that Yusuf had been eaten by a wolf. Hadrat Ya‘qub (as) said that their souls had made up something which they had found attractive.

Now, with his next two sons taken away from him, he repeats the same sentence. Perhaps, this question may be raised that: in Yusuf’s affair the

brothers committed treason and planned conspiracies, while in the Benjamin's affair, such was not the case.

Then, why does Ya'qub say the same thing in both cases? Tafsir Al Mizan, provides the answer. 'Allamah Tabataba'i says that Ya'qub meant that the facts surrounding these two other brothers remaining in Egypt is an extension of their previous conduct with regard to Yusuf (as).

That is, all these occurrences, even though they were not directly responsible for the last one, were the consequences of their previous unethical behaviour.

It may be said that the purpose of Ya'qub was that even then they thought themselves as innocent and that they had acted well, however, they had still behaved unethically in the crisis.

Firstly why were they quick to assume that their brother was guilty once they saw the cup among his load? Couldn't it be possible that someone else had hidden it there?

Secondly, why did they return so quickly without any research? And thirdly, why did they choose servitude as a penalty of the thief?

2- One's selfish ego seeks to present evil acts as beautiful to itself in order to justify guilt.

3- Maintaining patience is a practice prevalent among the men of Allah and a good patience in a believer is the kind that one surrenders oneself to Allah without complaining about His Will.

4- One must never despair of Allah's omnipotence.

"Maybe Allah will bring them to me,"

5- Solving old and new problems are both alike once the issue in question is Allah's will. Allah is able to bring together in one place yesterday's Yusuf and today's brother after many years.

6- A devout believer regards bitter events as having their origin in Allah's Providence as well.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 84

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيم

84. "And he turned away from them and said: 'Alas for Yusuf!' And his eyes became white with the grief of that he repressed."

The Arabic word /'asaf/ philologically means grief and sorrow accompanied with wrath. Ya'qub constantly had some tear in his eyes, the word 'what a pity!' on his tongue, and grief in his heart.

Imam Baqir (as) has been narrated who said in a tradition that his father Ali-ibn-il-Husayn, even twenty years after the event of Karbala, used to weep upon any ground. Once he was asked why he wept such a great deal.

He answered:

"Ya'qub had eleven sons one of whom disappeared, although he was alive Ya'qub lost his eye-sight for him, while I saw by my own eyes that my father, my brothers and seventeen men from the house-hold of the Prophet (S) were slain as martyr before my eyes. How may I not weep?"

However, a deep sorrow and grief occupied throughout the entity of Ya'qub, and the absence of Benjamin, the same son who was a cause of solace for him, reminded him of his dear Yusuf.

The remembrance of the time this fair, intelligent, faithful, fair young son was close in his bosom and a moment of the smelling of whose smelt refreshed the father as new life for him.

But now, not only there was no sign of him, but also his substitute, Benjamin, had an important painful fate like him. It was at this moment that he showed reaction as follows:

"And he turned away from them and said: 'Alas for Yusuf!'..."

This double grief caused Ya'qub (as) to shed flood of tears involuntarily as much as that his eyes lost its sight.

The verse continues saying:

"…And his eyes became white with the grief of that he repressed."

He was very sad, yet he tried to control his grief and anger patiently, so that he would say nothing contrast to the Will of Allah.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 85

قَالُوا تَا ۖ تَفْتَؤُا تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّي تَكُونَ حَرَضاً أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ

85. "They said: 'By Allah! You will never cease to remember Yusuf until you are ill or (until) you are of the perished ones'."

The Arabic term /harad/ refers to a person who grieves to death out of love or sorrow.

The brothers, who were over whelmed by sorrow as a result of this sequence of events, had a troubled conscience because of Yusuf's affair and now they were finding themselves being tried anew with regard to Benjamin while they were profoundly hurt at the ever increasing sadness of their father.

With inconvenience they addressed the Father, and as the verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! You will never cease to remember Yusuf until you are ill or (until) you are of the perished ones'."

Explanations

1. The ideal love is spiritual and the heavenly sighs of grief which are of valuable import. The thinking of the men of Allah is identical with the thinking of Allah Himself.
2. The issue of paternal love is different from ordinary kinds of love.
3. Spiritual and psychic problems leave their impact on the body, among which one can name the separation from a loved one which might cause a nervous break-down or even death.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 86

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَي ا ۖ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ ا ۖ مَا لا تَعْلَمُونَ

86. "He said: 'I only complain of my anguish and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know'."

Ya'qub declared that he used to relate his grief, his need, his life problems and his difficulties to Allah in the dark of night and in private times; and some commentators have said that /ba/ means an expression of grief while the word /huzn/ signifies hiding and covering one's grief.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I only complain of my anguish and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know'."

The Prophet of Allah (S) has been narrated to have said that Gabriel came to visit Ya'qub and said:

"Allah sends His greetings to you and says that you should be of good cheer that He swears upon His Glory and Magnanimity that if those two sons were dead He would return their lives to them. Now you should prepare some food for the poor, those who are Allah's most favorite servants."

From then on, whenever Ya'qub wanted to have a meal, he would order someone to call any poor man outside his home that was hungry could come inside and share his meal with him.

And when he was fasting, he would order someone to proclaim outside his house that whoever was fasting could come in and join him in breaking his fast with him. This narration has been quoted by Hakim Abu 'Abdullah Hafiz in his Sahih.

The sentence "and I know from Allah that which you do not know", means that Ya'qub well knew that Yusuf's dream would come true, that he was alive and according to the dream he saw they would soon prostrate before him.

In the book entitled 'An-Nubuwwah' (The Prophethood) documented from Sadir Siyrafi, Imam Baqir (as) is narrated to have said that Ya'qub prayed for Allah to send the Angel of Death to him, and when the latter came to Ya'qub, the angel asked him what he could do for him. Ya'qub asked him if he had seen the spirit of Yusuf among those that he had taken.

He answered he had not, so Ya'qub realized that Yusuf was still alive.

Messages to Note

1. A monotheist shares his secrets and his hidden troubles only with Allah.

2. There are two vicious and heinous attributes regarding human beings: The silence which rules and reigns over one's heart and nerves, exerting pressure on them and jeopardizing one's health. The other one is crying and moaning in front of people which diminishes ones honor, and lowers the chances of success.

The best action in this regard is to take one's complaint to Allah.

3. There lies in a dialogue or a discussion with Allah such a great pleasure which cannot be understood by ordinary people.

4. Superficial people usually pass by events easily. However thoughtful people follow events until their outcome in the Hereafter.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 87

يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِن يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلا تَيْأَسُوا مِن رَّوْحِ ا ۖ إِنَّهُ لا يَيْأَسُ مِن رَوْحِ ا ۖ إِلاَّ الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

87. "O' my sons! Go and enquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never despair of Allah's Mercy. Verily none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people."

The Arabic term /tahassus/ means searching for something good by using one's senses, while the Arabic term /tajassus/ means to search for bad things.

According to Raqib, both the terms /rauh/ and /ruh/ mean spirit, but the word /rauh/ is used when there is a relief and favor in question. It seems, by the removal of difficulties a new and fresh spirit emerges in man.

In Tafsir-i-Tibyan it is said that the word /ruh/ (spirit) is derived from /rih/ (wind). As man feels comfortable when the wind blows, he feels happy once he has the Divine Grace.

The famine, however, continued to strike hard in Egypt and in the surrounding areas, including Kan'an. Once again Ya'qub ordered his sons to go to Egypt and procure the food supplies necessary; but this time, the search for Yusuf and his brother Benjamin were placed at the top of the list of priorities.

Jacob said:

"O' my sons! Go and enquire about Yusuf and his brother..."

The brothers were sure that Yusuf was no longer alive, so the advice of their old father astonished them greatly. He reminded them that they should never despair of Divine grace for that was a sign of unbelief. Allah's mercy can remove all difficulties.

Ya'qub continued saying:

"…and never despair of Allah's Mercy. Verily none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 88

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ

88. "Then, when they entered unto him (Yusuf), they said: 'O' 'Aziz! Affliction has visited us and our family, and we have brought scanty merchandise. So pay us full measure and bestow you charity on us; verily Allah will reward the charitable ones'."

So once again the sons of Ya'qub loaded up their goods and, for the third time, they headed for Egypt, a land that had been full of adventures for them.

The verse says:

"Then, when they entered unto him (Yusuf), they said: 'O' 'Aziz! Affliction has visited us and our family, and we have brought scanty merchandise. So pay us full measure and bestow you charity on us; verily Allah will reward the charitable ones'."

This time, however, they entered Egypt feeling embarrassed and ashamed, because, contrary to their other trips, their past record had been badly damaged with the 'Aziz and it is probable that some people now considered them as the thieves of Kan'an.

The only thing which was their source of comfort among the host of difficulties and their exasperating troubles was the advice their father gave them; that they should not despair of Allah's mercy, for solving any difficulty was an easy matter for Him.

The Arabic term /bida‘at/ refers to a property in the form of a price. The Qur’anic term /muzjat/ is derived from /’izja’/ with the sense of ‘casting out’. When salesmen return the money to the customer when it is less than the required amount, they call it: /bida‘tun muzjat/.

Some commentators have claimed that the meaning of “bestow you charity on us” is a request for Benjamin’s return, but most of the other commentators believe that it is a request for wheat itself.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 89

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُم مَّا فَعَلْتُم بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ

89. “He (Yusuf) said: ‘did you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant?’”

A question can be the product of many objectives which can be positive and constructive or negative and disturbing. Perhaps Yusuf’s objective in asking this question was to let them know that he knew the whole story. Another possible objective could be that he wanted them to know that they did wrong and that they had to repent.

In any rate, at that moment when the period of trial had ended, and Yusuf also seemed terribly anxious and restless, in order to introduce himself, turned to the brothers and began as follows:

“He (Yusuf) said: ‘did you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant?’”

Yusuf, the ‘Aziz, finished his speaking while he was smiling. His smile showed his beautiful teeth to his brothers quite manifestly. Once they noticed them, realized that they were amazingly similar to the teeth of their brother Yusuf.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 90

قَالُوا أَءِنَّكَ لأَنتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَاْ يُوسُفُ وَهَذَآ أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ ا ّ ُ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّهُ مَن يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ ا ّ َ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

90. “They said: ‘Are you indeed Yusuf?’ He said: ‘(Yes), I am Yusuf and this is my brother. Allah has been indeed gracious to us. Verily whoever keeps from evil and is patient (is always rewarded) for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous’.”

The more the time passed the more the brothers were astonished at why the ‘Aziz wept upon their father’s letter and how he knew the story of Yusuf. They thought his feature was very alike to that of Yusuf; perhaps he was the same Yusuf.

They decided to ask this question from him. If he was not Yusuf they would not be considered as mad; but if he was Yusuf what they could do with shame. Excitement had encompassed them thoroughly. At last, they broke their silence by asking whether he was Yusuf.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘Are you indeed Yusuf?’...”

What happened here in this scene? Which painter can draw in a painting the feature of shame, happiness, weeping, and embracing? Only Allah knows it and none else.

The conditions should be in a state that people ask, and the stimuli increase in them for development and guidance. The stimulus for research and questions ceaselessly increase in Yusuf's brothers. They said to themselves why he persisted on bringing Benjamin with them.

Why was the king's cup found in the loads? Why did he return their money first time they bought wheat? Where from did he know the story of Yusuf? Would he not give them wheat again? When this excitement went to its climax, they asked him whether he was Yusuf and he answered: 'Yes'.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There is indeed a course of Yusuf in Hadrat Gha'im (as)… People will not recognize him (as) until when Allah will allow him to introduce himself."[2]

Explanations

1. The length of time in history containing bitter and sweet events can change the relations and comprehensions and cognitions.
2. It is true that the people's obligation is bitter, but the obligation of Allah is sweet.
3. The men of Allah believe that all bounties belong to Him.
4. Patience and virtue pave the ground for one's honor.
5. Allah's grace is wisely distributed and is allocated according to the well established criteria.
6. That person is eligible for an administrative position and who must have passed the tests of crises, jealousies, titles, lusts, humiliations, imprisonments, and slander.
7. One must make use of sensitive periods to inform and propagate. Once the brothers' sense of shame was aroused because of their wrong deeds, they were most ready to accept Yusuf's remarks.
8. One of the Divine ways of treatment is the bestowal of power in government upon the righteous people.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 91

قَالُوا تَا ۖ لَقَدْ ءَاثَرَكَ ا ۖ عَلَيْنَا وَإِن كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ

91. "They said: 'By Allah! Allah has indeed preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty'."

The Arabic term /'iar/ means: 'accepting other people's superiority over oneself'. Because of their wrong way of thinking, such as saying "We are a (strong) group"[3], they did wrong things like throwing Yusuf down the well.

Allah made them so exasperated that they had to beg in order to fill their stomachs and only after this were they ready to confess that their plans were in ruins and they could see the reality of their wrong thinking.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! Allah has indeed preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty'."

The brothers had sworn on several occasions employing the holy phrase /tallah/. When the cup was discovered they swore to Allah that they had not come to that land to commit theft or any other kind of corruption.[4]

Swearing to Allah, they told their father that he was always repeating the name of Yusuf,[5] and by doing so he showed his extreme love towards him being in his ancient error.[6] Now they swore Yusuf was superior to them.[7]

Of course the brothers could not look Yusuf in the eyes because of their shame, and they were probably worried whether or not their crimes would be forgiven.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 92

قَالَ لاَ تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ ا ّ ُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

92. "He said: 'There is no reproach against you this day. Allah may forgive you; and He is the most Merciful of the merciful (ones)'."

The Arabic term /tarib/, mentioned in this verse, means 'to scorn, to count something sin, and as much blameworthy.'

At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the pagans had sought refuge in the Ka'bah. 'Umar on that occasion said:

"We shall take revenge today!"

However the Prophet (S) replied:

"Today is the day of blessings".

Then he asked the pagans what they thought. They said that they believed that all would be good, that the Prophet was their sublime brother. The Prophet (S) said that his words that day were the same as those of Yusuf.

Here is the word of Yusuf:

"He said: 'There is no reproach against you this day..."

'Umar then replied that he was ashamed of himself for what he said.[8]

Ali (as) said:

"When you gain power over your adversary pardon him by way of thanks for being able to overcome him."[9]

The traditions say that the heart of a youth is more lenient than that of an old person, and the immaculate Imam, narrating this verse has said that since Yusuf was young, he soon forgave his brothers.

Yusuf did not expect the shameful state of his brothers to continue at the time of his success in particular, and to reassure them, he immediately said that they would not be threatened or blamed on that day, and they would not feel grief or sorrow due to the past.

Not only did he declare that he had forgiven them but he also informed them that the right of Allah was forgivable, as well, by means of that regret and remorse.

He added:

"…Allah may forgive you; and He is the most Merciful of the merciful (ones)'."

This incident illustrates Yusuf's greatness for not only did he spare his own right, but as far as the Divine right was concerned, he reassured them that Allah was Compassionate and Merciful.

Explanations

1. Tolerance is an important instrument of administration.

2. One must learn from Yusuf's humanity and generosity for he not only overlooked his own right but he also went out of his way to secure Allah's pardon for his brothers.

3. Men of Allah are in the habit of pardoning once they are at the climax of their power and glory.

4. Allah's pardon can also extend to include those who had for years been giving trouble to two of His prophets, Yusuf and Ya'qub.

5. Once the servant of Allah forgives what can one expect Allah to do? He is the Most Forgiving of all!

6. To forgive those who are ashamed is the very habit of the Divine Being.

7. To attribute Allah as the Most Forgiving and as the Most Merciful of the merciful ones is the ritual for the process of prayer and repentance.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 93

اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَأَلْقُوهُ عَلَي وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيراً وَأْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

93. "Go with this shirt of mine and lay it on my father's face, he will (again) be able to see; and bring me your family all together."

This shirt has been mentioned in several occurrences of the story of Hadrat Yusuf.

A - At first the brothers had stained the shirt of Yusuf with fake blood and took it to his father, claiming that the wolf had eaten him.[10]

B - A shirt was torn from the back and was instrumental in identifying the offender.[11]

C - A shirt caused Ya'qub to regain his eyesight.

The verse says:

"Go with this shirt of mine and lay it on my father's face, he will (again) be able to see; and bring me your family all together."

We see that Yusuf's shirt on the face of a blind man can make him regain his sight, therefore, one can hope to be cured by whatever is in contact with the men of Allah, such as their mausoleums, courtyards, houses, doors, the earth, the walls, clothing, and anything else.

We have already been covering the stages in which Yusuf was recognized, their apologies to him, the pardon he granted and his request for Divine forgiveness; but the father's blindness, which had been a clue to the brothers' crime, was still outstanding. We have the solution to this problem in this verse.

Incidentally, the traditions say that Yusuf said:

"The person who takes my shirt to my father must be the same one who had taken my blood stained shirt to him, so that he may rejoice after having been saddened by it."

The traditions say that Yusuf seated all his brothers next to him every day and night for their meals and they always felt ashamed. So they sent him a message saying that they wanted to have their meals separately since looking at his face made them feel ashamed.

Yusuf answered:

"I take pride in sitting next to you and having my meals with you."

One could only say: 'Allah is the greatest' for such a magnitude of spirit.

Explanations

1. Taking recourse to objects, which are somehow associated with men of Allah, is permitted. Yusuf's shirt, for example, makes a blind man regain his eyesight.

2. He who fights against his carnal desires and passions, even his clothing becomes sacrosanct and sanctified.

3. There is no age limit for performing miracles and wonder workings by a saint.

4. Yusuf was knowledgeable about the invisible world, otherwise, how could he know that the shirt could cure his father's blindness?

5. Affluent children ought to provide for their less well to do relatives especially their elderly parents.

6. Social conditions leave their impact on the performance of one's duties.

7. One must take care of one's family, in Yusuf's case, he had to look after his family in order for them to come to Egypt. Attending to one's relatives is a necessity once one fully observes the rights of others.

8. Migration and changing one's residence have many effects, one of which is that it removes sad and bitter memories.

Notes

1. The current Surah, verse 17
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 12, p. 283
3. The current Surah, verses 8 and 14
4. Ibid, verse 73
5. Ibid, verse 85
6. Ibid, verse 95
7. Ibid, the verse under discussion
8. Tafsir-i-Qurtubi
9. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 11
10. The current Surah; verse 18
11. Ibid, verse 27

Section 11: Jacob Goes to Yusuf

Surah Yusuf - Verse 94

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلاَ أَن تُفَنِّدُونِ

94. "And when the caravan set out (from Egypt to Kan'an), their father said: 'Verily I perceive Yusuf's scent, unless you think me doting'."

Finally, Allah's grace became manifest. Beside them with joy, Ya'qub's sons took the shirt and headed for Kan'an. When the caravan departed from Egypt, their father said that he perceived Yusuf's scent while people around him would not believe him.

The verse says:

"And when the caravan set out (from Egypt to Kan'an), their father said: 'Verily I perceive Yusuf's scent, unless you think me doting'."

Explanations

The Qur'anic term /fasalat/ means 'distance' and /fasalati l'iru/ here means that the caravan distanced itself from Egypt. The term /tufannidun/ is derived from /fanida/ meaning the lack of ability to think and absence of wisdom.

Ya'qub was worry about the people around him who might attribute him silly, so he said: Perhaps the 'scent of Yusuf ' implies some fresh news from Yusuf. This issue is being discussed in scientific circles today as 'telepathy' which means the transfer of thought to others in far distant places.

That is, those who are closely related with each other, or who have extrasensory perception, can receive direct messages from someone else from a very long distance away.

Someone said to Imam Baqir (as):

"Sometimes, I feel terribly sorry for no reason in such a way that those around me perceive it."

The Imam responded:

"Muslims are all created out of the same core and nature, and when a serious accident occurs to one, someone else feels sorry in another land and place."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 95

قَالُوا تَا ۖ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلاَلِكَ الْقَدِيمِ

95. "They said: 'By Allah! you are in your ancient error'."

Those with Ya'qub, who normally were the spouses of his children, his grand sons and grand daughters, and other members of his extended family, had long since given up Yusuf for dead and thought this new assertion by Ya'qub was nothing but his refusal to face reality.

In fact they probably thought he was having delusions when he said that he perceived the scent of Yusuf. That was why, addressing him, they seriously and rudely said he was in his old error.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! you are in your ancient error'."

It becomes evident that ‘persisting in his old error’ does not mean error in belief. On the contrary, it means being in error in refusing to recognize what they perceived as the reality about Yusuf.

However these meanings show that they behaved unto that old great prophet very rudely and boldly. Once they remarked their father had been in a manifest aberration, and here they told him:

“…you are in your ancient error’.”

They were unaware of the intimacy and sincerity of the old man of Kan‘an, and regarded him as not being as enlightened and illuminated as them. They did not think that future events might be as clear to him as a reflection in a mirror.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 96

فَلَمَّآ أَن جَآءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَي وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيراً قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ اِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ ا ً مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

96. “Then, when the bearer of the good news came, he cast it (the shirt) on his (Jacob’s) face and (forthwith) he regained his sight. He said: ‘Did I not tell you I know from Allah what you do not know?’”

After a number of difficult nights and days, one day Ya‘qub heard a loud voice proclaiming that the caravan of Kan‘an had just arrived from Egypt. Unlike the previous occasion, the brothers arrived in joyous spirits and went straight to their father’s house.

Before anybody else, Bashir, ‘the bearer of good news’, came up to the old grieving man and placed the shirt over his face. Ya‘qub was unable to see the shirt, but just before it was placed on his face, he sensed the familiar scent of his Yusuf.

A wonderful excitement overwhelmed the old man, the scent intensified when the shirt fell on his face, and suddenly he felt his eyes were opened and he was able to see. The world, with all its beauties, was once again before his eyes; as the Qur’an says:

“Then, when the bearer of the good news came, he cast it (the shirt) on his (Jacob’s) face and (forthwith) he regained his sight...”

The brothers and their entourage burst into tears of joy and he, with a decisive tone, told them:

“…‘Did I not tell you I know from Allah what you do not know?’”

If the purpose of the Qur’an that says ‘his eyes turned white’ is a decrease and diminishing of the eyesight, then the term /basiran/ means illumination, and it indicates that sadness and joy both leave an impact on one’s sense of vision.

However, if the intent of the verse is a complete blindness, which can be inferred from the literal view of the verse, then the Qur’anic phrase which says ‘and (forthwith) he regained his sight’ would imply that the return of his eyesight was a miracle that the Qur’an proves it.

Explanations

1. The knowledge of the prophets has its origin in the Divine knowledge.
2. The prophets trust the promises of the Almighty as the Divine Will rules over all natural laws.

3. The clothing and the belongings of men of Allah can have an impact over some other beings.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 97

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ

97. "They said: 'O' our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, verily we were guilty'."

This amazing miracle made the brothers think deeply about their dark past. In so doing they regretted their past misdeeds and asked their father to seek forgiveness for their sins.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, verily we were guilty'."

This is a good lesson for us; that we must always think of reforming ourselves and compensate for our past mistakes. We are all sinners and offenders.

We should also take note that it is permissible to appeal to the men of Allah to ask forgiveness of one's sins.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 98

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

98. "He said: 'Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord; He is the Forgiving, the Merciful'."

The great old man, who possessed a magnanimous spirit and with immense generosity, refrained from blaming them; instead he promised them that he would soon ask forgiveness for them from Allah. The verse says:

"He said: 'Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord;..."

It has been mentioned in some Islamic traditions that Ya'qub's (as) aim was to postpone acting upon their request until dawn the next Friday when would have been a more appropriate time for the acceptance of prayers and repentance. Ya'qub hoped that Allah would accept their repentance and overlook their sins, for Allah is Compassionate and Kind as the verse states:

"…He is the Forgiving, the Merciful'."

This verse and the verse before it show that asking a third party to ask forgiveness from Allah for oneself not only is not incompatible with monotheism, but also provides a way to merit Allah's approbation. Otherwise, how would it be possible that prophet Ya'qub (as) could accept his sons' request to seek forgiveness for them from Allah? There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

These verses teach us that no matter how hard and painful one's difficulties might be, and how limited and insufficient the apparent means and the possibilities might seem, one must not feel removed from hope in Allah's grace and favor.

In this story, Allah made a blind man regain his eyesight with a shirt and made the smell of that shirt travel a long distance, He enabled someone lost to return home after long years of separation, and healed the wounds of broken hearts can also remove the grave pains and difficulties.

Yes, in this story and historical event, there lies the great lesson of Unity and theology proving that nothing is difficult and complicated for the Will of Allah.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 99

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَآءَ ا ۖ ءَامِنِينَ

99. "Then when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his parents with him and said: 'Enter Egypt, Allah willing, (all) in security'."

The End of Yusuf and His Brothers

The family, in response to Yusuf's invitation, and after much preparation, traveled to Egypt. Ya'qub was riding to the destination while his lips were busy calling Allah and thanking Him.

This journey, unlike the previous ones, was free from all kinds of troubles, and those troubles could not even be compared to the remarkable gains which awaited them at the end of the journey.

The very thought of joining Yusuf made the trip easy for them so much so that a painful thorny path would seem as if it had been paved with velvet. Soon when the oases of Egypt came into view, they were finally there.

Typical of the style of the Qur'an, it skips over the details which we fill in by means of the traditional narrations and by our own imagination, and simply says that they entered into the presence of Yusuf.

The verse says:

"Then when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his parents with him..."

When they arrived at his palace, and Yusuf embraced his parents, this was the sweetest moment in Ya'qub's life. It was a meeting that had come about after many years of separation.

Every moment of this meeting and embracing Ya'qub and Yusuf was so exciting that only Allah knows what happened and none else. In these sweet moments of reunion, then, only Allah knows the intensity of the bliss shared between the father and his beloved son.

Yusuf told every one to enter the land of Egypt and assured them that they would be safe and secure there.

The verse continues saying:

"…and said: 'Enter Egypt, Allah willing, (all) in security'."

One can conclude from this statement that Yusuf had come out of the gates of the town to welcome his parents. Perhaps the sentence 'they entered unto Yusuf' means that he had ordered tents to be erected there to receive and entertain preliminarily his parents before they entered the town.

Explanations

1. It is difficult, of course, to describe this part of the story. Yusuf had arranged some tents outside the city and waiting for his parents to come and that he would bring them respectfully into Egypt.

It was natural that in Kan'an, when Yusuf's parents and brothers were preparing themselves for the journey, people there had a very happy time.

They saw that by receiving the good news of Yusuf's safety, and in the case that Ya'qub had regained his eyesight, how joyful were the family setting off to meet Yusuf.

These people were also happy that Yusuf had become a treasurer and governor in Egypt and especially that, by sending wheat for them in the course of famine, he had supported them.

2. One can conclude from the Arabic term /abawayh/ (his parents), that Yusuf's mother had also been alive at the time.

Some narrations say that Ya'qub insisted and swore that Yusuf would recount his own story for him. As Yusuf began telling his story of how his brothers had taken him near the edge of the well and took off his shirt while threatening him, Ya'qub fainted.

When he recovered, he again asked him to continue, but Yusuf swore by Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac (as) and begged his father to spare him from telling it, and Ya'qub accepted.[1]

By the way, it is worthy to note that social posts and ranks should not cause us to be heedless of respecting our parents in any condition.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 100

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّداً وَقَالَ يَآ أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيايَ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبّي حَقّاً وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَني مِنَ السّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُم مّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِن بَعْدِ أَن نَّزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيني وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَآءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

100. "And he raised both his parents upon the throne, and they fell down prostrating before him, and he said: 'O' my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of aforetime! My Lord has made it come true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me out of the prison, and He brought you out of the desert (of Kan'an into Egypt) after Satan had made strife between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord is Benignant unto what He wills. Verily He is indeed the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'."

When he seated his parents on the throne, the magnitude of the Divine Grace and the profundity of such favors and blessings left such an impact upon his parents and brothers that they went into a state of prostration before him.

The verse says:

"And he raised both his parents upon the throne, and they fell down prostrating before him..."

Certainly prostration, implying worship, belongs only to Allah alone. Some Islamic traditions state that this prostration had been done as obedience and worship unto Allah as well as an act of respect towards Yusuf.

At this point he told his father that the meaning of his dream had now become clear, the dream of the sun, the moon and the eleven stars all prostrating before him were now represented by his parents and his eleven brothers prostrating before him.

The verse says:

"…and he said: 'O' my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of aforetime! My Lord has made it come true;..."

But even in the midst of triumph and glory, Yusuf never forgot Allah's mercy upon him; he recounted all of his troubles and how Allah had always helped him overcome them.

The verse says:

"…and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me out of the prison, and He brought you out of the desert (of Kan'an into Egypt) after Satan had made strife between me and my brothers..."

Interestingly enough, he did not mention his sojourn in the well; perhaps it was because he did not want to embarrass his brothers. All these favors and graces have their origin in Allah, for Allah is the source of Grace and He bestows his favors whenever and upon whosoever He wants.

He administers all the affairs of His subjects and helps them to solve their problems. He knows those who are in need and who merits his favor, for He is knowledgeable and wise.

The verse says:

"…Verily my Lord is Benignant unto what He wills. Verily He is indeed the All-knowing, the All-Wise'."

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /'arš/ lexically means the throne on which a sultan or ruler is seated. The term /xarru/ means throwing oneself upon the earth, while the term /badw/ means 'oasis, desert' and /nazaqa/ means 'initiating a task with intention of corruption'.

2. The Qur'anic term 'Latif' is one of Allah's names which implies that His power permeates into all complicated matters and its relevance to this verse is the fact that there were complications in Yusuf's life which could only have been solved by Allah's Power alone.

3. Yusuf became like the Ka'ba for them, and his parents and his brothers prostrated before him for the sake of Allah. Were this prostration for other than Allah (s.w.t.), it would have been an act of polytheism, however, Ya'qub (as) and Yusuf (as), who were two of Allah's prophets, would not support such a forbidden act.

Messages to Remember

1. No matter in what position you are in, you should regard your parents as superior to yourselves.

2. Men of Allah regard entering and leaving prison as a monotheistic circle and a theological gesture.

3. All bitter and sweet events take place in accordance with Divine Knowledge and Wisdom.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 101

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنتَ
وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

101. "O my Lord! You have given me to rule, and have taught me the interpretation of dreams. (O!) Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in the world and the Hereafter. Cause me die a Muslim (in submission (unto you) and join me with the righteous."

When they witness their own glory and power, the men of Allah are at once reminded of the Almighty. They are aware that everything that exists has its origin in Him.

Turning to the true Proprietor, the everlasting Benefactor, Yusuf gave thanks to Almighty Allah for bestowing upon him great political power, and the science of dream interpretation. This science had created tremendous changes in his life and that of the majority of His subjects and what a profound science it is!

The verse says:

"O my Lord! You have given me to rule, and have taught me the interpretation of dreams..."

It is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth and it is for this reason that everything is humble when facing Him; He is our Guardian and our Protector in this world and in the world Hereafter.

Yusuf continues his plea to Allah saying:

"…(O!) Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in the world and the Hereafter. Cause me die a Muslim (in submission (unto you) and join me with the righteous."

Explanations

1. It is a Divine prerogative to bestow sovereignty upon someone. Therefore, one should not consider one's sovereignty as a consequence of one's own initiative, thinking, power, allies, or one's own plan; on the contrary, the Divine will is the root and the main factor in one's rise to power.

2. Abu Hamzah has said that Ya'qub (as) lived for 147 years and he was 130 years of age when he called upon Yusuf in Egypt and stayed there for 17 years. Ibn Ishaq has said that when Ya'qub died, his body was placed in a casket made of Ebony wood and taken to the city of Bayt ul Muqaddas (Jerusalem).

After burying his father there, Yusuf returned to Egypt in accordance with the will of that great man. He lived for 23 years more after his father died. He was the first Messenger of the Children of Israel. He stated in his will that he would be buried near the grave of his fathers.

Some have said that he was buried in Egypt until Moses (as) brought his remains with him and buried them near the tomb of his father.

It is said that the position of prophecy was accorded to Robil after him and Yahuda acceded to the rank after the latter's term.

In the Book, An-Nubuwwah, Muhammad ibn Muslim, is quoted as saying:

"I asked Imam Baqir (as) who was /hujjah/, Allah's Authority on the earth at that time? Was it Ya'qub or Yusuf? He answered that Ya'qub (as) was, and Yusuf was the sovereign.

When Ya'qub passed away, Yusuf laid him in a casket, brought him to Damascus, and buried him in Bayt ul Muqaddas, and then Yusuf became the Authority of Allah after Ya'qub. I asked if Yusuf was a prophet and a messenger of Allah as well.

He answered: "Yes, have you not heard what Allah, the Glorious and the Magnanimous has said: meaning: 'Yusuf came to you previously along with evidences'?" [2]

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"When Yusuf went to prison, he was twelve years old. He remained in prison for 18 years and he lived for 80 years after his release from prison which amounts to a total of 110 years.

And as Allah the Almighty destined him to pass away in Egypt, he was put into a casket made of marble and was buried in the middle of the Nile River. The reason why he was buried in such a way was because the people of Egypt started to vie with each other to bury him in their own quarter of the city and hence benefit from the blessings of the presence of such a pure body among them.

Thus it was considered more appropriate to bury the body in the middle of the Nile River, making it possible for the river water to flow over it and allow all the inhabitants to benefit from it.

This tomb remained in the Nile River until the time of Moses (as) when he took it out of the Nile and out of Egypt with himself.

A closer look at a few of the previous verses would reveal the following points of note:

1- Is Prostration Allowed to Other Than Allah?

As we discussed a foretime, regarding issues relating to the prostration of the angels to Adam; prostration can signify worship which in this case is particular to Allah, and it is not allowed for anyone in any religion to worship any being other than Allah. The monotheism of worship is an important part of general monotheism about which all prophets had a similar message and outlook.

Therefore, from this particular point of view, prostration must only be for Allah the same Allah Who had accorded so many favors and sovereignty to Yusuf, and who removed all of Ya'qub's difficulties.

However, although prostration can be for Allah's sake, in the case of Yusuf it could also have been a sign of glorification and respect for Yusuf as well, because it had been performed in view of the grandeur of the favours which Allah had bestowed upon him.

From this point of view, the Arabic pronoun /lahu/ meaning 'before him' in the phrase: "and they fell down prostrating before him" which definitely refers to Yusuf is compatible with this meaning.

Another way of looking at it is that prostration in its broad meaning indicates humility or modesty, and is not always used according to its prevalent meaning as worship, rather it sometimes can refer to a very profound type of respect.

2- Social Security is a Great Blessing from Allah

Among all the merits and bounties of Egypt, Yusuf Pointed out the bounty of security. This shows that the bounty of security is the root of all merits.

It is indeed true because when security disappears other material and spiritual subjects of welfare will be in danger. When an environment is not

secured, is not possible to worship Allah, nor is life with honesty and free mind, nor struggle and effort and endeavour for progression and social aims.

This phrase may be; however, an illusion to this fact that Yusuf wanted to say that the land of Egypt, where he was governing, was not any more the former country of Pharaoh. Those despotic behaviours, crimes, exploitations, cruelties and tortures had been disappeared. It was a completely secured site.

3- The Important Position of Knowledge

At the end of the holy verse, Yusuf once again stresses the importance of the science of dream interpretation and compares it with the sovereignty bestowed upon him. He finally concludes that knowledge, even such a science as dream interpretation has a great impact even on such matters as political rule.

4- Man Can Undergo a Great Deal of Changes Throughout His Lifetime

However, the last years are the milestones in one's life, because it marks the conclusion of one's life, and the final judgment depends on it. Therefore, faithful and conscious people always ask Allah to illuminate the last years of their lives and Yusuf did as such saying:

"…Cause me die a Muslim (in submission unto You), and join me with the righteous!"

5- Did Yusuf's Mother Come to Egypt?

One can well conclude from the above verses that Yusuf's mother was still alive at that time and that she came to Egypt along with her husband and her sons. To compensate for this blessing she prostrated.

However, some commentators insist on the matter that his mother, Rail (Rahil), had already passed away and it was his aunt who came to Egypt and had substituted for his mother. Nevertheless, in the Torah it says that Rail passed away after giving birth to Benjamin.[3]

This conclusion can also be drawn from other narrations such as those narrated by Wahab ibn Bunyah and Ka'b ul Akhbar both of which have been apparently taken from the Torah.

Anyway, we cannot explain away or interpret the verses of the Qur'an at face value which say that Yusuf's mother was alive that day and this fact should not be overlooked without adequate justification.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 102

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ

102. "That is of the news of the Unseen (which) We reveal to you (O' Prophet); and you were not with them (the brothers of Joseph) when they agreed upon their plan and they were plotting."

After winding up the story of Yusuf, with all its didactic lessons and precious conclusions and without any extravagant and historical superstition, the Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), says that this information was news from the invisible world which Allah had revealed to him, because he was not there to witness the most secret and detailed

thoughts and behaviors that they had occurred, such as the secret plotting of the brothers against Yusuf and their attempts to deceive their father.

The verse says:

"That is of the news of the Unseen (which) We reveal to you (O' Prophet); and you were not with them (the brothers of Joseph) when they agreed upon their plan and they were plotting."

Therefore, it was only revelation of Allah which informed him of such important news.

This statement makes it clear that though the story of Yusuf has been mentioned in the Torah, and naturally the people of Arabia, more or less, knew something about it, but they never knew the whole event properly and in detail, even what was said in private meetings has not been free from additional matters and superstitions.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 103

وَمَآ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

103. "And most people will not believe, though you desire it."

The Arabic term (harasa) refers to an intense desire for something and the struggle to attain it.

The prophets were zealous, sympathetic, and eager in their efforts to guide others to the Right Path and the fact that people did not accept the faith does not imply that the prophets had failed or that they had any shortcomings.

This refusal is due to man's liberty and freedom of choice itself which he employs in his reluctance to accept the faith. Therefore, most people have been repeatedly criticized by the Qur'an from the ideological and religious perspective.

The verse says:

"And most people will not believe, though you desire it."

However, receiving these clear signs revealed and hearing these divine admonitions all people must believe and return to the right path, but in spite of the desist of the Prophet, most of them do not believe.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 104

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِين

104. "And you do not ask them for any reward for it; it (the Qur'an) is no other than a reminder for all mankind."

In this verse the Qur'an refers to the fact that mankind has excuse and no real reason to reject the call of the Prophet because of the obviousness of the message, he also does not require any reward for delivering it to them, which indicates that he has no personal ulterior motives and there is no heed for him to fabricate the text of his message.

The verse says:

"And you do not ask them for any reward for it;..."

This is a universal call and a reminder to the people of the world, at the same time, it is a table spread for princes and the paupers alike, indeed for all human beings.

The verse says:

"…it (the Qur'an) is no other than a reminder for all mankind."

Generosity is one of the signs of a sincere believer. He expects no reward or thanks from anyone.

Certainly, the Qur'an is a reminder because:

1. It reminds one of His blessings and attributes.
2. It reminds one of his past and his future.
3. It reminds one of the fall, the collapse, as well as the glory of human societies.
4. It reminds one of the Day of Resurrection and its stages.
5. It reminds one of the magnitudes of existence.
6. It reminds one of the lives of historical personages.

The Qur'anic sciences and its ordinances are facts which must be learned and always kept in mind, because the Qur'anic term /ðikr/ is called to a knowledge which exists in mind and one does not neglect it.

Notes

1. Majma' ul Bayan.
2. Surah Ghafir, No. 40 verse 34.
3. The Torah, Genesis, Chapter 35, No. 18 says: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Section 12: Histories of the Ancient People Serve as a Lesson

Surah Yusuf - Verse 105

وَكَأَيِّن مِنْ ءَايَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

105. "And how many a sign there is in the heavens and on the earth which they pass by while they turn away from it."

They have been misled for their eyes are not open and their ears do not hear. Thus they disregard and turn away from the many signs of Allah which are in the heavens and on the earth as if they were nonexistent.

They do not realize the Divine implications associated with all those events which they experience in their everyday lives and see with their own eyes, such as the profound system at work in the sunrise and the sunset, the dynamism of the everyday lives of plants, birds, insects, and human beings, the flow of streams and rivers, the submission of all of creation to laws and commands, and finally, the universal plan and purpose inherent in the entirety of existence, written, as it were merely drawings on its doors and walls.

This verse was probably revealed to the Prophet (S) in order to soothe him. Every authentic leader and Imam would naturally be concerned and saddened if his call to the people was ignored.

Such needless people always see the signs of Allah's power and wisdom in nature and in creation and are not mindful about them for one minute. They witness earthquakes, solar and lunar eclipses, thunder and lightning, the revolution of the stars and the galaxies, and still pay no attention to them in their minds.

The verse says:

"And how many a sign there is in the heavens and on the earth which they pass by while they turn away from it."

Explanations

1. The purpose of man "passing by" the Divine signs is for him to observe them.

2. The objective of man 'passing by' the signs is the motion of the Earth which makes it possible for man to observe astronomical phenomena in the skies.

3. Some verses have indirectly predicted that man would bring outer space under his control.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 106

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِا ّ ِ إِلاَّ وَهُم مُشْرِكُونَ

106. "And most of them do not believe in Allah except that they associate others (with him)."

This verse indicates that most of those who claim to be believers in Allah in fact associate others with Him, their faith is not pure but mixed with the worship of and reliance upon others.

Imam Rida (as) has said that polytheism in this verse does not mean blasphemy and the worship of idols. Rather, it means focusing one's attention on anything other than Allah.[1]

Also Imam Sadiq (as) has said that polytheism in man is more hidden and latent than the movement of black ants on a black stone at night."[2]

And, in a tradition, Imam Baqir (as) has said that people are monotheistic in their worship but in their obedience to other than Allah they enter into polytheism.[3]

In some other narrations, we read that the purpose of polytheism mentioned in this verse is polytheism in regard to favours: for example, when one says that someone else has accomplished his task for him and were it not for his sake, he would have perished; and the like of it.[4]

A pure monotheist is one who does not have anyone or any object upon which he depends and which occupies a central role in his life, and worship except Allah. His words are for Allah's sake, his deeds are for Allah, whatever he does, he does it having Allah in mind, and he recognizes no laws except the laws of Allah.

To sum up, faith is hierarchical, and pure faith is that which allows no room for polytheism.

The Signs of a Sincere Believer

1. He who does not expect a reward or thanks from any one when he spends out something to someone.

"…no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks."[5]

2. In worship: he will only be subservient to Allah and to no one else.

"…and make none sharer to the worship due unto his Lord." [6]

3. In propagation of the faith he will not receive rewards from any other than Allah.

"…my reward is only with Allah…"[7]

4. In matrimony, he will not fear poverty, and he will marry being confident that Allah is true to His promises.

"…if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of his grace..."[8]

In his communication with people he will surely be more concerned about satisfying Allah (s.w.t.) than satisfying others.

"…Say Allah; then leave them sporting…"[9]

In fighting the enemy he will fear no one but Allah.

"…and do not fear any one but Allah;..."[10]

In love and affection, he will love no one as much as he loves Allah.

"…but for those who have faith, their love of Allah is more intensive."[11]

In business and commerce he will never forget Allah (s.w.t.).

"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah..."[12]

Surah Yusuf - Verse 107

أَفَاَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ ا ۖ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

107. "Do they then feel secure from the enveloping punishment coming upon them from Allah, or the coming of the Hour suddenly, while they are unaware?"

The Qur'anic noble term /qašiyah/ means a punishment that encompasses the entire society or each individual.

In this verse, Allah issues a warning to all those who have not yet accepted the faith, and who pass by clear Divine signs and heedlessly overlook it. Such people are polytheists in their deeds and should not consider themselves safe and secure from the all-encompassing Divine penalty which will suddenly be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

"Do they then feel secure from the enveloping punishment coming upon them from Allah..."

The Day of Judgment will suddenly arrive and the Divine great court of justice will be established in order to settle their accounts while they are unaware and ignorant about it. The Divine punishment is all encompassing and there is no possibility for escape, yet they behave as if they were secure from all this.

The verse continues saying:

"…or the coming of the Hour suddenly, while they are unaware?"

Surah Yusuf - Verse 108

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَي ا ً ِ عَلَي بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَاْ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ ا ً ِ وَمَآ أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

108. "Say (O' Our Apostle): 'This is my way. I invite to Allah with clear sight, I and whoever follows me; and glory be to Allah! And I am not (one) of the polytheists'."

The way of the Prophet of Islam (S) is clear and transparent to all those who want to seek guidance, and true guidance comes from Allah, thus his way is a call to Allah, the only true Reality. The verse says:

"Say (O' Our Apostle): 'This is my way. I invite to Allah with clear sight..."

Indeed, he does not follow this path without knowledge or by imitation; rather he and those who follow him traverse this path with full knowledge and insight. This verse implies that every Muslim who follows the Prophet (S) must show the Way of Allah to others in his words and deeds.

This is the path of pure monotheism, the path to Allah the One, Who is free of all defects and has no partners or companions.

The verse says:

"…I and whoever follows me; and glory be to Allah! And I am not (one) of the polytheists'."

Thus the believer in the One True God cannot and should not be considered as one of the polytheists.

This verse being located within the context of the Surah Yusuf itself indicates that the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad (S) is not differentiable from that of Yusuf, the great Divine prophet.

From the prison he used to call people to worship the One Allah, and regarded deities other than Him as merely fictitious names which when

called upon could not answer, for they are ignorantly worshipped only through imitation and superstition.

Explanations

1. The Prophet's way of life is visible and transparent and is the object of attention and concentration for all those who seek the truth.
2. A leader must have full insight into everything that is relevant to his position.
3. A leader's call must be directed towards Allah, not towards himself.
4. Religious propagators and preachers must be sincere and genuine and their propagation techniques must revolve around making the concept of Allah that is free of all symbols of polytheism and partnership.
5. Each and every one of the followers of the Prophet must be a propagator and preacher calling the people towards Allah with insight.

Incidentally, the basic pillar of Islam is monotheism and the negation of polytheism.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 109

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نُوحِي إِلَيْهِم مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَي أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ
فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الاَخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلا تَعْقِلُونَ

109. "And We did not send (apostles) before you but men from the people of the towns whom We did inspire with revelations. Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who came before them? And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious. Do you not understand?"

The opponents of the prophets always used to criticize them for being human and therefore not different to those who did not believe. This was also the case with the people who were the contemporaries of our Prophet (S).

They also used to raise such a criticism which this verse answers. The verse does not deny the humanity of the prophets, it affirms that they were men, but men upon whom descended Divine Revelation.

These men used to live in the same towns and villages as other human beings, and had social intercourse with them and were well aware of their pains, needs and difficulties.

The verse says:

"And We did not send (apostles) before you but men from the people of the towns whom We did inspire with revelations..."

All of the history of mankind is the history of sending prophets and their acceptance or rejection by the people to whom they were sent. In this regard the Qur'an challenges the skeptical to travel throughout the earth and see the end of those who rejected the truth.

The verse continues saying:

"…Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who came before them?..."

This investigation and research, because its subject is tangible and evident, provides the best instructive lesson that is available to all and can be experienced by everyone.

Compared to this passing and transient world, the Hereafter is more suited to the pious and is better than this world, it is free from troubles and is eternal, and man would come to this very conclusion if he utilized his intellect.

The verse says:

"…And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious. Do you not understand?"

Explanations

1. The prophets were human beings like other people in the fullest sense of the word and used to live among them. They were not angels, nor were they seeking after their own welfare.

2. All the prophets were men for the means of propagation and long arduous travel in its way can only be accomplished by men.

3. The knowledge of the prophets has been gained through revelation from the omniscience of Allah. Technically it has been 'inspired'.

4. The dispatch of the prophets (as) on their mission, the descent of the Divine revelation, and the uprooting of obstinate unbelievers are all examples of the traditional way of the Divine in history.

5. The polytheists, however, have nothing to gain from their opposition to the prophets. Even in this world they will be surrounded by punishment and pain. However, for the virtuous people in this world, the Hereafter would be much more than they could have imagined while being in this world.

6. Wisdom and meditation lead man directly towards the teachings of the prophets.

7. It is necessary, of course, to preserve historical relics and monuments for the experience and instruction of the future generations.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 110

حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْأَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّيَ مَن نَّشَآءُ وَلاَ يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُـجْرِمِينَ

110. "Till when the messengers despaired and they (disbelievers) thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and We delivered whom We pleased. But Our punishment will not be averted from the guilty people."

Whilst preaching the Divine message, incorrigible and obstinate elements would raise such a hue and cry and put up such an opposition that even the prophets began to despair of ever guiding such ungrateful and ignorant folk and became concerned that the people would take them to be liars.

It was at these low moments that Allah would send them His assistance and saved those whom He chose and punished whom He willed.

The verse says:

"Till when the messengers despaired and they (disbelievers) thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and We delivered whom We pleased..."

After insisting on doing their evil deeds, after actively resisting the Divine call, and after all the ultimatums delivered to him, when the

inveterate sinner is confronted with the Divine punishment, it is impossible for him to avert it by any power.

The verse says:

"…But Our punishment will not be averted from the guilty people."

Some Examples of the despair of the prophets throughout their call:

Only a few individuals accepted the faith after Noah had tried for very many years to call the people to the worship of the One True God.

Allah told him:

'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed.'[13]

Noah then, condemning those people which reveal his desperate situation says that no one except immoral, ungrateful children will be born from this generation.[14]

In the lives and call of the prophets Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, Musa, and 'Isa (as), one sees their despair when confronted by the recalcitrance of their enemies.

There are many examples where the people suspected the prophets of lying. We read in Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 27:

"…may we think you are liars."

And the Pharaoh told Musa (as):

"Truly, I think that you have been bewitched O Moses!"[15]

As for Allah's triumph in this state, the Qur'an also shows that during this state of despair Allah bestows victory over the unbelieving folk, which is a right that Allah has reserved for Himself.

In Surah Ar-Rum, Allah says:

"And helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."[16]

Elsewhere He says:

"We saved Hud and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and delivered them from a harsh punishment."[17]

With regard to the inexorability of Allah's punishment, we see in Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 11, which implies that when Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no averting it.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 111

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لأُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثاً يُفْتَرَي وَلَـكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

111. "Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for the possessors of intellect. It is not an invented tale, but a confirmation of what came before it, and a clear exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe."

The Arabic words /'ibrat/ and /ta'bir/ denote to pass, and the passing from one stage to another. When Yusuf says that this was the interpretation of his dream of old, it signifies the passing of his dream into reality.

And /'brat/ also means passing from what was capable of being seen and heard into a state where they are not capable of being seen or heard but exist nevertheless.

The Qur'anic term /qasasihim/ perhaps refers to the story of all the prophets or it probably focuses on the stories of Yusuf, Ya'qub, the brothers, the 'Aziz of Egypt, and the bitter and sweet events associated with them told in this story.

Anyway, the last verse of this Surah is comprehensive in content dealing with all the issues of this Surah in a concise manner. It tells us that all the stories of the holy Qur'an, including the story of Yusuf and his brothers as well as that of the prophets, the faithful and the unbelievers, are useful and instructive lessons for all those who are not afraid to use their minds.

These stories teach us about the causes of victory and defeat, success and frustration, happiness and misfortune, and elevation and degradation. Briefly put, they show us what should be of value or should lack value in our lives. However, it is only the /'ulil al bab/ (the people of understanding) that can learn from the instructive lessons that are taught.

The Qur'an says:

"Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for the possessors of intellect..."

These stories, the Qur'an adds, have not been fabricated or false. They have been revealed to the Prophet unveiling the true history of past generations which confirm the original books of the past prophets. The verse says:

"…It is not an invented tale, but a confirmation of what came before it..."

Whatever is needed by man and the identification of all those things that are the real bases of man's true happiness, have been elucidated in these verses.

For this reason the Qur'an is the source of all guidance for those who seek it and the source of blessings for all those who are believers. The verse continues saying:

"…and a clear exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe."

These stories, as instructive and heart rending as they are, are identical with the truth and there is not the slightest deviation in their authenticity or objectivity. They therefore carry an enormous impact for we know that fables, no matter how interesting they might be, are not as impressive as true stories.

Therefore, it becomes clear how the school of Yusuf, the fighter for holy causes, the abstinent, the champion of faith and virtue, the angel like man, the exemplar of benevolence and humanitarianism, the man of peace and reform and, finally, the representation of human perfection, is formed.

The godly school represented by this spiritual and political personality, does not only have a beneficial impact upon all social classes, but it can also provide valuable lessons for world leaders as well, saving the political world from lack of faith, mischief, lying, and aggression, leading them towards faith, humanitarianism and virtue, thus guaranteeing world peace and security for all.

We send warm greetings to you O' celestial and heavenly man from the lovers of truth and humanitarianism whose illustrious story has been the

center of attention of the entire world. Your life is a torch that leads and directs man towards his true happiness.

We who aspire to truth and justice send loving greetings to you, the champion of faith and virtue who did not surrender himself to the illegitimate tendencies of deviants, who was jailed for not having committed any crime, adding another page of pride to the history of enlightened people.

O Allah! bestow upon us open eyes, open ears, and zealous hearts so that we can benefit from the ways of our predecessors to find a path of salvation from the difficulties in which we are immersed.

O Allah! Make us so receptive and kin to be able to see the true end of the life of the former nations who, after victory, painfully defeated because of disunity and that we do not go along the way they went.

O Allah, provide us with such a sincere intention to be able to trample upon our egoistic selves and bestow upon us a wisdom which does not make us arrogant when we are victorious, and bestow upon us such tolerance which would enable us to leave others to undertake tasks which they are more capable of performing.

Once you bestow these on us, we shall then be able to overcome all difficulties and illuminate the world with the Everlasting Light which shines forth from Islam and the Qur'an. O Allah, the Almighty, illuminate our hearts with the light of the Qur'an and put us in a position to execute all the commands of the Qur'an.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 1, p. 697
3. Kafi vol. 2, p. 292
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn vol. 2, p. 475
5. Surah 'Insan, No. 96, verse 9
6. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 110.
7. Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 47.
8. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 32.
9. Surah Al-Ana'am, No. 6, verse 91.
10. Surah Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 40.
11. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 165.
12. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 37.
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 36.
14. Surah Noah, No. 71, verse 27.
15. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 101.
16. Surah Ar-Rum, No. 30, verse. 47.
17. Surah Hud, No. 11, verser. 58.

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 8

From Surah ar-Ra'ad (13) to Surah al-Isra' (Bani Isra'il) (17)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

www.alhassanain.org/english

Table of Contents

Introduction 16
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 17
What is a 'Commentary'? 18
The Current Commentary 19
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 20
The Problems in Translating 20
Translators Note 21
Editor's Note 22
Notes 24
Acknowledgment 25
Notes 25
References 26
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 26
English Translations of Qur'an 26
Supporting Technical References 27
Phraseological and Philological Sources 27
A Presentation to Muslims 29
Notes 30
Surah Ar-Ra‘d, Chapter 13 31
(The Thunder, No. 13) 31
(Revealed in Mecca) 31
43 verses in 6 sections 31
The Content of Surah Ar-Ra‘d 31
Section 1: Signs of Allah in Nature 32
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 1 32
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 2 32
Explanations 33
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 3 35
Explanations 37
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 4 37
Explanation 38
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 5 38
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 6 39
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 7 40
Notes 42
Section 2: Allah, the Almighty Creator of the Universe 43
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 8 43
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 9 43
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 10 44
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 11 44
The Alterations Must Have Their Onset in Ourselves 46
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 12 46
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 13 47
Explanations 48
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 14 49
Explanations 50
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 15 50

Explanations 51
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 16 51
Explanations 52
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 17 53
Illustration 54
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 18 55
A Discussion About the Call 56
Those Who Invite to the Truth 56
A: Prophets: 56
B: The Believers: 56
C: Jinn: 56
The Callers to Falsehood 56
Pioneers of paganism: 56
The Satan: 56
The Unbelievers: 56
The Subject of Invitation 56
Life: 57
Forgiveness: 57
Salvation: 57
Confronting the Dissidents 57
Accusations 57
Sorcerer: 57
Soothsayer: 57
Liar: 57
Oppressor: 57
Slaying: 57
Humiliation: 57
Skepticism: 57
The Motives and Factors for Lack of Acceptance 58
Imitation 58
Fanaticism 58
Arrogance 58
Sensual desire: 58
The Reward for Acceptance 58
Reward: 58
Life: 58
Happiness: 58
Notes 59
Section 3: The Faithful and the Unfaithful Compared 61
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 19 61
The Possessors of Intellect 61
The Wise in the Qur’an 61
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 20 62
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 21 63
Note the Following Points 63
A Few Quotations on Union of Kindred 64
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 22 65
Explanations 66

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 23 67
Explanations 68
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 24 68
Points Concerning Patience 69
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 25 70
Explanations 71
Messages 71
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 26 71
Explanations 72
Notes 73
Section 4: Remembrance of Allah Sets Hearts at Rest 75
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 27 75
A Discussion on Leading and Misleading 76
The Divine leadership concerns all mankind 76
Explanations 77
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 28 77
Factors of Encourage and Peace of Mind 79
Factors Which Generate Anxiety and Worries 80
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 29 81
Explanations 82
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 30 82
Explanations 83
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 31 83
The Occasion of the Revelation 83
Explanations 85
Notes 86
Section 5: Messengers of Allah Were Mocked At 87
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 32 87
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 33 87
How is it That You Align and Consider Allah as a Counterpart for the Idols? 87
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 34 89
Explanations 89
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 35 90
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 36 91
Notes 93
Section 6: The Two Witnesses of the Truth 94
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 38 94
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 39 94
Explanations 97
Some Traditions 97
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 40 99
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 41 99
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 42 100
Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 43 101
Notes 103
Surah ‘Ibrahim, Chapter 14 105
(Abraham) No. 14 105

(Revealed in Mecca) 105
52 verses in 7 sections 105
The Content of Surah ‘Ibrahim 105
Section 1: Qur’an Revealed to Lead Mankind to Light 106
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 1 106
Explanations 107
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 2 107
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 3 107
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 4 108
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 5 110
Explanations 110
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 6 111
Notes 111
Section 2: Moses’ Exhortation 112
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 7 112
Several Traditions Concerning Gratitude 113
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 8 113
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 9 114
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 10 115
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 11 117
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 12 118
Notes 119
Section 3: The Disbelievers Punished 120
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 13 120
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 14 121
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 15 121
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 16 122
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 17 122
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 18 123
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verses 19 - 20 124
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 21 125
Notes 126
Section 4: Disbelievers Shall Be Disappointed - Truth Shall Be Established 127
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 22 127
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 23 128
A- Streams of water 128
B- Streams of milk 128
C- Streams of wines with the nature of Paradise: 128
D- Streams of honey: 128
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 24 129
Some Traditions 129
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 25 130
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 26 130
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 27 131
Notes 133
Section 5: The Ingratitude of Men to Allah’s Bounties 134
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verses 28 - 29 134

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 30 135
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 31 135
Explanations 136
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 32 136
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 33 137
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 34 138
Notes 139
Section 6: Abraham’s Prayer 140
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 35 140
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 36 141
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 37 141
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 38 142
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 39 143
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verses 40 - 41 143
Messages to Note 144
Notes 144
Section 7: The Respite and the End 145
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 42 145
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 43 145
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 44 146
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 45 147
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 46 147
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 47 148
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 48 149
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verses 49 - 50 149
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 51 150
Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 52 150
Explanations 151
The End of Surah ‘Ibrahim 151
Notes 152
The Highly Adventurous Life of ‘Ibrahim, the Iconoclastic Prophet. 153
The Birthplace and Childhood of ‘Ibrahim 153
Campaigns Against Various Groups of Idol-worshippers 154
Logical Campaign Against the Idol-worshippers 154
Dialogue with ‘Azar 155
The Prophetic Mission of ‘Ibrahim 155
Practical Campaigns Against the Idol-worshippers 155
Dialogue with the Oppressive Ruler 155
The Exodus of ‘Ibrahim 156
The Last Stage of the Prophetic Mission of ‘Ibrahim 156
Notes 160
Surah Al-Hijr, Chapter 15 162
Surah Al-Hijr (The Rock) No. 15 162
Revealed in Mecca 162
99 verses in 6 sections 162
The Contents of Surah Al-Hijr 162
Section 1: The Qur’an Ever Protected by Allah 163
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 1-2 163

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 3 163
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 4 164
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 5 164
Notes to Be Considered 165
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 6 - 7 165
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 8 166
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 9 166
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 10 - 11 167
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 12 - 15 168
Notes 169
Section 2: Everything in the Universe Takes Place by Allah's Command 170
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 16 170
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 17 - 18 170
Explanations 171
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 19 - 21 171
Explanations 174
1 - What Are Allah's Treasures? 174
2 - Kinds of Descent 175
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 22 175
Explanations 176
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 23 - 25 176
Notes 177
Notes 177
Section 3: Man's Creation - Satan's Arrogance 178
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 26 - 27 178
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 28 - 31 178
Note Two Issues with Respect to This matter 179
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 32 - 35 179
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 36 - 38 180
The objective in mind when mentioning 181
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 39 - 40 181
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 41 - 42 182
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 43 - 44 183
Messages 183
Notes 184
Section 4: Reward for the Righteous - Angles Give Abraham the Tidings of a Son 185
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 45 - 48 185
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 49 - 50 186
Note 186
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 51 - 52 186
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 53 - 54 187
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 55 - 56 187
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 57 - 58 188
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 59 - 60 189
Explanations 190
Notes 190

Section 5: Lot and Shu‘ayb’s people 191
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 61 - 62 191
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 63 - 64 191
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 65 - 66 192
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 67 - 69 193
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 70 - 71 193
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 72 - 73 194
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 74 195
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 75 195
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 76 - 77 196
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 78 - 79 197
Notes 198
Section 6: The People of the Rock 199
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 80 - 81 199
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 82 - 84 199
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 85 - 86 200
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 87 201
Explanations 202
Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 88 202
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 89 - 91 203
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 92 - 93 204
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 94 - 96 205
Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 97 - 99 206
Notes 207
Surah An-Nahl, Chapter 16 208
Surah An-Nahl (The Bee)..... 208
No. 16 (Revealed in Mecca) 208
128 verses in 16 sections..... 208
Content of Surah An-Nahl 208
The Virtues of Reading This Surah..... 208
Note 208
Section 1: The Existence of Allah Proved by Nature 209
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 1 209
Explanation..... 209
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 2 209
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 3 210
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 4 211
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 5 211
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 6 211
Explanations 212
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 7 212
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 8 213
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 9 213
Notes 214
Section 2: Allah’s Unity Testified in Nature 215
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 10 215
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 11 215
Why Does He only Name Olives, Palm-trees and Grapes? 216

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 12 216
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 13 217
Reflection, Reasoning, Reminding 217
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 14 218
Explanations 219
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 15 219
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 16 220
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 17 220
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 18 221
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 19 222
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 20 222
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 21 222
Notes 223
Section 3: God of all is only One 224
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 22 224
Explanations 224
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 23 224
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 24 225
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 25 226
Note 226
Section 4: The Disgrace Which the Wicked Shall Have 227
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 26 227
Explanations 227
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 27 227
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 28 228
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 29 229
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 30 230
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 31 231
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 32 231
Traditions on the Qualifications of the Paradise and Hell 232
Some Traditions on the Attributes of Hell..... 232
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 33 233
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 34 234
Notes 235
Section 5: Every People Had the Guidance through an Apostle from Allah 236
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 35 236
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 36 236
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 37 238
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 38 238
Two Points 239
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 39 239
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 40 239
Notes 240
Section 6: To Seek Guidance from the People of the Qur'an..... 241
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 41 241
Occasion of Revelation 241
The Reward of the Emigrants..... 241

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 42 241
Some Traditions 242
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 43 242
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 44 243
Surah An-Nahl - Verses 45 - 47 244
Different Kinds of Punishment for Various Sins 245
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 48 246
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 49 247
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 50 247
Notes 248
Section 7: Polytheism Prohibited 249
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 51 249
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 52 249
Surah An-Nahl - Verses 53 - 54 250
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 55 251
Do you yet seek other people's assistance? 251
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 56 251
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 57 252
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 58 252
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 59 253
The Role of Islam in the Revival of the Position of Women 253
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 60 254
How are contradictions among them made possible? 254
Notes 255
Section 8: Qur'an, the Guidance and the Mercy 256
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 61 256
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 62 257
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 63 258
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 64 259
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 65 259
Notes 260
Section 9: Guidance from the Bounties of Allah for Man 261
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 66 261
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 67 262
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 68 263
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 69 264
Explanations 265
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 70 265
Notes 266
Section 10: The Faithful and the Unfaithful Ones Compared 267
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 71 267
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 72 268
Explanations 269
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 73 269
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 74 270
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 75 271
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 76 272
Notes 273

Section 11: The Hour of Judgment Shall Arrive Suddenly 274
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 77 274
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 78 274
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 79 275
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 80 276
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 81 277
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 82 278
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 83 278
Notes 279
Section 12: Apostle Muhammad a Witness Over All Witnesses 280
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 84 280
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 85 281
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 86 281
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 87 282
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 88 282
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 89 283
Notes 285
Section 13: To Keep up Covenants and Promises 286
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 90 286
Explanations 287
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 91 287
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 92 288
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 93 289
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 94 290
The Philosophy of Respect for Pledges 291
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 95 292
The Occasion of the Revelation 292
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 96 293
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 97 293
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 98 294
Explanations 295
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 99 295
Traditions 296
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 100 296
Notes 296
Section 14: Qur'an Brought Down by the Holy Spirit 297
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 101 297
The Occasion of the Revelation 297
Explanations 297
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 102 298
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 103 299
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 104 300
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 105 300
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 106 301
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 107 302
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 108 303
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 109 303
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 110 304

Notes 305
Section 15: Every Soul Shall Be Paid in Full What It Has Earned ... 306
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 111 306
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 112 306
Point to Remember 307
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 113 307
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 114 307
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 115 308
Explanations 309
Surah An-Nahl - Verses 116 - 117 310
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 118 311
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 119 311
Notes 312
Section 16: Abraham Praised - His Faith Made an Ideal 313
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 120 313
Surah An-Nahl - Verses 121 - 122 314
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 123 314
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 124 315
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 125 315
All Callings Must Be Divinely-Orientated 316
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 126 317
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 127 318
Surah An-Nahl - Verse 128 319
Last Words and Remarks on Surah An-Nahl 320
Notes 321
Surah 'Isra', Chapter 17 322
Surah 'Isra' or Surah Bani-'Israel (The Children of Israel), No. 17 . 322
(Revealed in Mecca) 322
111 verses in 12 sections 322
The Content of Surah 'Isra' 322
The Virtues of the Recitation of the Surah 322
Section 1: The Apostle Muhammad's Visit 323
Surah Isra' - Verse 1 323
Surah Isra' - Verse 2 324
Surah Isra' - Verse 3 325
Surah Isra' - Verse 4 325
Surah Isra' - Verse 5 326
Surah Isra' - Verse 6 326
Surah Isra' - Verse 7 327
Surah Isra' - Verse 8 329
Surah Isra' - Verse 9 329
Surah Isra' - Verse 10 330
Notes 330
Section 2: None Shall Bear the Burden of Others 331
Surah Isra' - Verse 11 331
Surah Isra' - Verse 12 332
Surah Isra' - Verse 13 333
Surah Isra' - Verse 14 333

Surah Isra' - Verse 15 334
Surah Isra' - Verse 16 335
Explanations 335
Surah Isra' - Verse 17 336
Surah Isra' - Verse 18 337
Surah Isra' - Verse 19 338
Surah Isra' - Verse 20 338
Surah Isra' - Verse 21 339
Are World and Hereafter Contrary to Each Other? 339
Surah Isra' - Verse 22 340
Notes 341
Section 3: Goodness and Submission to Parents Ordained 342
Surah Isra' - Verse 23 342
Surah Isra' - Verse 24 342
Surah Isra' - Verse 25 343
Quotations Concerning Respect for Parents in Islam 343
Surah Isra' - Verse 26 346
Explanations 346
Surah Isra' - Verse 27 347
Surah Isra' - Verse 28 348
Surah Isra' - Verse 29 349
Surah Isra' - Verse 30 350
Notes 351
Section 4: Moral Conduct 352
Surah Isra' - Verse 31 352
Surah Isra' - Verse 32 352
The Philosophy Underlying the Prohibition of Fornication 353
Surah Isra' - Verse 33 354
Explanations 355
Surah Isra' - Verse 34 356
Surah Isra' - Verse 35 358
Surah Isra' - Verse 36 359
Surah Isra' - Verse 37 360
Surah Isra' - Verse 38 361
Surah Isra' - Verse 39 361
Explanations 362
Surah Isra' - Verse 40 362
Notes 364
Section 5: Everything in the Heavens and in the Earth Glorifies Allah 365
Surah Isra' - Verse 41 365
Surah Isra' - Verse 42 365
Surah Isra' - Verse 43 366
Surah Isra' - Verse 44 366
Surah Isra' - Verse 45 368
Occasion of the Revelation 368
Surah Isra' - Verse 46 368
Surah Isra' - Verse 47 369

Surah Isra' - Verse 48 370
Occasion of the Revelation 370
Surah Isra' - Verses 49 - 50 371
Surah Isra' - Verse 51 371
Surah Isra' - Verse 52 372
Notes 373
Section 6: Gentleness in Dealing Enjoined 374
Surah Isra' - Verse 53 374
Surah Isra' - Verse 54 374
Surah Isra' - Verse 55 375
Surah Isra' - Verse 56 376
Surah Isra' - Verse 57 377
Surah Isra' - Verse 58 378
Surah Isra' - Verse 59 379
Miracles are of two types 379
Explanations 380
Surah Isra' - Verse 60 380
Allah Sought to Console Him 381
Explanations 382
Notes 383
Section 7: Satan's Pride against Man 384
Surah Isra' - Verse 61 384
Surah Isra' - Verse 62 384
Surah Isra' - Verse 63 385
Surah Isra' - Verse 64 385
Surah Isra' - Verse 65 387
Surah Isra' - Verse 66 387
Surah Isra' - Verse 67 388
Surah Isra' - Verse 68 388
Surah Isra' - Verse 69 389
Surah Isra' - Verse 70 390
Why Man Is the Most Superior of Allah's Creatures 390
Notes 392
Section 8: Every People Will Be Summoned with Their Own Imam . 393
Surah Isra' - Verse 71 393
The Role of Leadership in Islam..... 393
Surah Isra' - Verse 72 395
Explanations 396
Surah Isra' - Verse 73 396
Surah Isra' - Verses 74 - 75 397
Surah Isra' - Verse 76 399
Surah Isra' - Verse 77 400
Notes 400
Section 9: Times of Prayer and the Midnight Prayer 401
Surah Isra' - Verse 78 401
Surah Isra' - Verse 79 403
Surah Isra' - Verse 80 403
Surah Isra' - Verse 81 405

Explanations 405
What is a Praised Position? 409
Surah Isra' - Verse 82 411
The Qur'an, The Curing Prescription 411
The Differences Between Healing and Mercy 413
Why Is It that The Oppressors Get Negative Results? 414
Traditions Concerning the Magnitude of the Qur'an 414
Surah Isra' - Verses 83 - 84 415
Notes 417
Section 10: Qur'an Inimitable 418
Surah Isra' - Verse 85 418
The Authenticity and Independence of the Spirit 420
Surah Isra' - Verses 86 - 87 422
Surah Isra' - Verse 88 423
Surah Isra' - Verse 89 424
Surah Isra' - Verses 90 - 91 424
Surah Isra' - Verses 92 - 93 425
Notes 426
Section 11: No Cause for Anyone to Disbelieve Any Messenger of Allah 427
Surah Isra' - Verse 94 427
Surah Isra' - Verse 95 427
Surah Isra' - Verses 96 - 97 428
Surah Isra' - Verse 98 430
Surah Isra' - Verse 99 430
Surah Isra' - Verse 100 431
Notes 432
Section 12: Those Gifted with Knowledge - The Ministry of Moses .. 433
Surah Isra' - Verses 101 - 102 433
Two Points in Conclusion 434
Surah Isra' - Verses 103 - 104 435
What Land is the Objective of /'ard/ In These Verses? 436
Surah Isra' - Verse 105 436
Surah Isra' - Verse 106 437
Surah Isra' - Verses 107 - 109 438
Surah Isra' - Verse 110 439
Surah Isra' - Verse 111 441
In Conclusion: What is 'Takbir', or Glorification of Allah? 441
Notes 443

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Ar-Ra‘d, Chapter 13

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

(The Thunder, No. 13)

(Revealed in Mecca)

43 verses in 6 sections

The Content of Surah Ar-Ra‘d

As was mentioned aforetime, Meccan suras were revealed at the beginning of the call of the Prophet of Islam (S), when the hostile pagans seriously opposed to accept the Faith. Then these suras are mostly upon the issues of belief, specially invitation to Monotheism, struggling against idolatry, and proving the Resurrection.

While the Medinite suras, which were reveled after the expansion of Islam and the formation of the Islamic government, explain the Divine ordinances and religious social rules, according to the needs of the society.

This Surah, which is among the Meccan suras, also follows the same line. After making allusions to the legitimacy and greatness of the Qur’an, it refers to monotheism and states the secrets of creation which are the signs of the existence of the Pure Essence of Allah.

Then the Qur’an, in this Surah, discusses about Resurrection and the new life of mankind in Hereafter, as well as the Divine Court of Justice on the Reckoning Day. It completes this introduction of Monotheism and Resurrection by pointing to the responsibilities and duties of people.

Once again, it returns to the issue of Monotheism. Then it gives examples in order to make the right and wrong known. They are some manifest and sensible examples which are understandable for all.

In view of the fact that the ultimate worldly fruit of belief in Monotheism and Resurrection is the very constructive and practical programs, following these discussions, it invites people to; fulfilling the promise, union of kindred, patience and perseverance, spending out in charity secretly and openly, and leaving revenge.

And, finally, the content of this Surah guides people to search the depths of events in history through showing them the painful end of the disobedient nations in the past.

Thus, Surah Ar-Ra‘d begins with some verses concerning Faith and convictions, and ends with introducing the deeds and activities which are helpful in the formation of human character.

Section 1: Signs of Allah in Nature

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. “Alif ‘A’, Lam ‘L’, Mim ‘M’, Ra ‘R’. These are the verses of the Book; and that which has been revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth, but most people do not believe.”

At the beginning of this Holy Surah, again we have the abbreviated letters which are found in 29 suras of the Qur’an. The abbreviated letters here are a combination of ‘Alif ’, ‘Lam’, and ‘Mim’, which has occurred at the beginning of several suras, while ‘Alif’ ‘Lam’ and ‘Ra’ are mentioned at the beginning of some other suras.

Thus, in fact, this Surah is the only Surah that begins with ‘Alif, ‘Lam’, ‘Mim’, and ‘Ra’.

In view of the fact that the particular abbreviated letters at the beginning of every Surah seem to have a direct connection with the content of that Surah, it is probable that the present combination of the abbreviated letters at the beginning of Surah Ar-Ra‘d indicate that the content of this Surah consists of the contents of both group of suras which begin with ‘Alif, Lam, Mim’ and ‘Alif, Lam, Ra’. A careful attention over the contents of these suras also testifies this idea.

Since there have been talked upon the abbreviated letters of the Qur’an stated at the beginning of suras Al-Baqarah, ‘Al-i-‘Imran and Al-’A‘raf, their repetition is not so necessary here again.

The first verse, on the dignity of the Qur’an, says:

“…These are the verses of the Book; and that which has been revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth…”

There is no room for any doubt to be seen in it, because it is the statement of the objective facts of the world of creation, and its relation with humankind.

It is a truth that the Qur’an has not been mixed with falsehood. That is why the signs of its legitimacy is found even in its appearance so that there in no need of further reasoning.

Yet, the ignorant and empty-headed persons, who form the majority of people, do not believe in the revelations.

It says:

“…but most people do not believe.”

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 2

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَي عَلَي الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لأَجَلٍ مُسَمّي يُدَبِّرُ الأَمْرَ يُفَصّلُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُم بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ

2. "Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars which you (can) see, then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne of authority) and subjected the sun and the moon, each one runs unto an appointed term.

He directs the affair (of existence). He explains the signs (in detail) so that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord.

Here, in this verse, which is stated after the abbreviated letters, the Qur'an refers to an important part of the evidences of monotheism and the signs of Allah in the world of creation.

What a beautiful statement it is when it says:

"Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars which you (can) see…"

This verse unveils a scientific fact which was not manifest for anyone at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. At that time the Ptolemaic system governed over the scientific centers and the thoughts of people. According to it, the planets and heavens were considered as the layers of an onion which were located over each other, and the earth was in the center.

About one thousand years after the revelation of these verses, the knowledge of humankind realized that the mentioned theory was utterly wrong and the reality is that the celestial planets each rotates on a fix axis in its own position, suspending and also invariable, without having anything to lean against.

The only factor which supports them to be fix in their own particular rotations is the equilibrium resulted from the attractive and repelling forces.

This equilibrium of the attractive and repelling forces, as an unseen pillar, keeps the celestial planets fix in their positions and orbits.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne of authority)…"

Next to the statement of creation of the heavens, and the existence of Allah's authority over them all, it refers to the subjection of the sun and the moon which is under His control.

The verse says:

"…and subjected the sun and the moon…"

But the material system of the world is not eternal, and all the celestial bodies, such as the sun and the moon, will continue to rotate along their defined orbits until an appointed time.

The verse says:

"…each one runs unto an appointed term…"

Next to that, the Qur'an implies that these acts of to and fro are not undue and do not exist with no result, because it is Allah Who arranges everything. Then there is an account for every movement, and every account has been appointed for a particular aim.

The verse continues saying:

"…He directs the affair (of existence)…"

Then, it adds:

"…He explains the signs (in detail) so that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord."

Explanations

1. There are some verses in the Qur'an which indicate that Allah maintains the heavens and the earth. Among them are the followings:

A. "Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars which you (can) see…" (The above mentioned verse).

B. "Verily Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they come to naught; and if they come to naught none besides Him can hold them back…" (Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 41)

C. "…And He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth…"

In Tafsir Al-Mizan, 'Allamah Tabataba'i says that the purpose of the Qur'anic word /tafsil/ (explanation) is separation of the celestial planets and the earth from each other. The observation of this separation makes us aware of the separation of people in the Hereafter.

The Arabic word /'amad/ is the plural form of /'amūd/ which means 'pillar'. However, when we do not see something, it cannot be taken as a reason for its inexistence.

Imam Rida (as) said:

"There are some pillars, but you do not see them".[1]

There is a very attractive tradition in this field narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who has said:

"These stars, which are in the sky, are some cities like the cities on the earth, every one of which is connected with another by means of a pillar of light."[2]

Could there be found a more expressive and clearer meaning than 'invisible pillar' or 'a pillar of light' in the expansion of the literature of that time for mentioning the concept of 'attractive force' and its resulting equilibrium against the 'repelling force'?

D. The creation of the world with no Resurrection is a vain action. The reference for Resurrection is the same reasoning of theism. The same One Who creates and directs the affairs of existence, can accomplish the Resurrection and Hereafter, too.

"…so that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord."

Once Ali-ibn-Abi Talib (as) was asked how Allah reckons (the deeds of) all mankind in Hereafter. Then he answered:

"In the same way that He sustains all humankind."[3]

The Subjection of the Sun and the Moon:

The above-mentioned verse indicates that Allah (s.w.t.) has subjected the sun and the moon. There are also many other verses in the Qur'an which denote that the entire celestial stars, all beings on the earth, the day and the night, and the like of them are wholly subjected to mankind.

In one occurrence, it says:

"…and He has made the rivers subservient to you."[4]

By another statement in the same verse the holy Qur'an says:

"…and He has made the ships subservient to you…" [5]

In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"And He has made the night and the day, and the sun and the moon subservient to you…" [6]

In a holy verse, the Qur'an says:

"And He has made the constantly moving sun and the moon subservient to you…"[7]

The Qur'an also in another occurrence says:

"And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh meat from it…"[8]

In another occurrence, the Qur'an questions:

"Do you not see that Allah has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth…?"[9]

And, finally, somewhere else the Qur'an says:

"And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself…" [10]

From the totality of these verses, it is well understood that: Man is the most complete being in the world of creation, and, from the view of Islam, he is so worthy and respected that Allah has made all other beings subservient to him; i.e., it is the Man who is the representative of Allah, and whose heart is the place fit for the Light of Allah.

However, it is evident that the Qur'anic word /tasxir/ (subjection), referred to in these verses, does not mean that man can bring all these things under his own command, but it implies that they are alongside his benefit and service. For example, the celestial planets reflect the light for him, or have some other advantages for him, which he may utilize.

No school of thought, other than Islam, has considered so much worth and high rank for Man, and in no other doctrine and philosophy Man has such an exalted position and personality. These are the specialties of the ideology of Islam which promote the value of man high as such.

Knowing this fact has a deep moral effect in man; because, when he mediates that Allah has bestowed upon him so much grandeur in a state that every thing; such as: the sun, the moon, the celestial sphere and all other things, are at his service, he will not tend to negligence and meanness so that he becomes as captive to lusts, wealth, ranks, and ungodly forces.

Such a man is the one who removes all barriers and promotes high and higher.

How can one says that the sun and the moon are not at the service of man while they illuminate and warm the scene of his life by their lights? Without sunshine, there will be no movement and development on the earth.

Moreover, by its gravity, the sun causes the earth to rotate on its orbit, the moon causes the low tides and the high tides appear in the seas, which are the source of many blessings and benefits for man.

The ships on the seas, the rivers, the day and the night, and the like of them, each serves and helps man in a particular way. A careful observation and contemplation over them, and over the regular order they have, makes it clear that they are some manifest evidences unto the Greatness, Power and Wisdom of the Creator.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 3

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَاراً وَمِن كُلِّ الثَّـمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ
اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

3. "And He it is Who spread the earth and placed mountains and streams in it and inserted in it two pairs of the each kind of fruit. He covers the day with the night. Certainly, there are signs in these matters for a people who reflect."

This verse reveals the Divine signs in the upper universe and calls on man to meditate on the earth, the mountains, the streams the various kinds of fruits, and the dawn and sunset, saying that Allah spread the earth so as to make it ready for man to live in it and to grow plants and breed livestock in it.

The verse says:

"And He it is Who spread the earth…"

The Qur'an then goes on dealing with the issue of the emergence of mountains implying that Allah has placed mountains in the earth.

It continues saying:

"…and placed mountains and streams in it…"

These are the very same mountains which are referred to as /'aut ad/ meaning the nails of the earth.

Probably, it is because mountains are interconnected with each other from underneath and armour-like they have covered the face of the earth so as to counter-balance not only the internal pressure, which is being exerted from within the crust of the earth, but also to counteract the extraordinary gravity power of the moon and its ebb and tide from outside.

Therefore, they are meant to respond to the continuous earth tremors and earth quakes as well as the tensions which are brought about as a result of them, and to pave the way for calm and relaxation on the terrestrial globe for man to live in.

In the meantime, the verse, alluding to the rivers and the springs which are flowing on the earth, declares that there are streams placed therein.

The irrigation system of the earth supported by mountains and the interdependence of the mountains with the streams are noteworthy, for many of the mountains on the earth deposit water in the form of snow within the cracks of their valleys or on their tops.

This snow eventually and gradually melts and travels from higher altitude regions to the lower altitude regions owing to the natural law of gravitation. Sometimes also, there are lakes formed at the outskirts of the mountains.

Then, the Qur'an makes mention of foodstuffs and fruits which grow, as a result of the water and sunshine, from the earth and are best for human nutrition, implying that He has placed two pairs of each type of fruit in the earth. Here is allusion made to the fact that fruits are living beings that contain male and female cells which are fertilized through the process of cross - fertilization.

The verse says:

"…and inserted in it two pairs of the each kind of fruit…"

Although 'Linet', the Swedish famous botanist and scientist succeeded himself in the discovery of general and universal fertilization inside the world of plants in the mid eighteenth century, the Glorious Qur'an revealed this truth more than one thousand and four hundred years ago which can by

itself be considered as one of its miracles, showing the magnitude of this great celestial Book.

As man's life and that of all other beings, especially that of the plants and fruits, can not go on without an exact and an accurate system of the timing of the day and the night, the Qur'an refers to it in another part of the verse, indicating that He covers day with night and He veils it.

The verse says:

"…He covers the day with the night…"

The reason for this is that once the dark veil of night does not cover the light, continuous sunshine burns away all plants, and no trace of the fruits and, generally speaking, of living beings would be left on the face of the earth.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an points out that, in the foregoing discussions, there are signs for those who meditate.

The verse says:

"…Certainly, there are signs in these matters for a people who reflect."

Honestly speaking, those who contemplate can witness the power of the Omnipotence and unending Omniscience of the Creator very clearly.

Explanations

1. The previous verse dealt with the skies while this verse relates to the earth and earthly blessings.

2. The Arabic term /rawasi/ is the plural form of /rasiyah/ and it signifies 'firmness'. That is why, mountains are alluded to as /rawasi/. The terms /zauj/ and /zaujan/ both mean male and female.

3. The male and female in plants are often in one tree and sometimes in one blossom and sometimes in two trees or two blossoms.[11]

4. The Qur'anic phrase /madd al 'ard/ probably refers to the emerging of the earth from under the water which has been mentioned in Islamic quotations as /dahw ul 'ard/. This probability is consonant with and compatible with the views of the contemporary geologists who claim that the earth has been originally covered with water. (Allah knows the best.)

5. The world of creation is based on a 'pair system'.

The pairing system in plants:

"…and He puts for every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)." [12]

The pairing system in animals, where the Qur'an says:

"…He made mates for you from among yourself and mates of the cattle too…"[13]

Pairing in Human Beings:

"He created mates from your own kind for you." [14]

Pairing in everything:

"And of everything We have created pairs…"[15]

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 4

وَفِي الأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى
بِمَآءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَي بَعْضٍ فِي الأُكُلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

4. "And in the earth there are tracts, side by side, and gardens of (different) grapes and corn-fields and palm trees, like and unlike, watered

through one irrigation system, and We made some of them excel in taste than others. Verily, there are signs in this for a people who understand."

The Arabic term /sinw an/ contrary to its appearance, which is in the form of dual (referring to two), is the plural form of /sinw/ and means 'a branch which stems out of the principal tree'. It refers here to being similar or identical.

In this noble verse, we are confronted a series of interesting geological and botanical issues which are all the signs of a predetermined system of creation. The Qur'an first mentions that there are different tracts side by side in the earth, and there are gardens and trees which have different kinds of grapes and different plantations, and palm trees as well.

The verse says:

"And in the earth there are tracts, side by side, and gardens of (different) grapes and corn-fields and palm trees…"

The amazing thing is that these trees and their various kinds take their roots from one basic stem on some occasion, and at other times they have their roots from different stems. The verse continues saying:

"…like and unlike, watered through one irrigation system…"

This sentence probably provides clues as to the issue of the potentialities of trees for grafting which is occasionally based on the grafting of several parts on the original stem, each of which develop and consequently a special kind of fruit will be delivered.

What is more amazing is that they are all watered with one type of water.

"Watered through one irrigation system".

In spite of all this, Allah has excelled some of these trees over others in their type of fruit.

The verse says:

"…and We made some of them excel in taste than others…"

Does each of these clues not provide us with sufficient reasons as to the leadership which is unique in its origin and is knowledgeable in its system? It is here where, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an declares that there are signs in these matters as to the magnitude of Allah for those who contemplate.

The verse says:

"…Verily, there are signs in this for a people who understand."

Explanation

The variety of fruits as to the colour, taste and smell and their different forms all have their origin in the Divine power, and are consonant with Allah's will. Otherwise, one kind of water could not generate more than one type of fruit.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 5

وَإِن تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ أَءِذَا كُنَّا تُرَاباً أَءِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُوْلَئِكَ الأَغْلالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

5. "And if you do wonder, then wondrous is their sayings: ' What, when we turn into dust, Will we then surly be in a new creation?' They

are those who disbelieve in their Lord and these shall have chains on their necks, and they are the people of the Fire, abiding therein for ever.'"

Addressing the Prophet (S), this verse implies that he should not be amazed at the denial of the prophecy by the people, for they are also astonished at Allah's power in transforming the dead back into life and do not believe it.

The unbelievers in the Resurrection have not provided any proof for the impossibility of resurrection and they only consider its occurrence as remote. On the contrary, besides mentioning Allah's Justice and Wisdom, which necessitates the existence of the Hereafter, the Qur'an has reiterated on many occasions and has provided answers to this denial.

The verse says:

"And if you do wonder, then wondrous is their sayings: 'What, when we turn into dust, Will we then surly be in a new creation?' They are those who disbelieve in their Lord and these shall have chains on their necks, and they are the people of the Fire, abiding therein for ever.'"

On one occasion it implies that if they were in doubt as to the advent of the Hereafter, they would remember their original creation and as to how Allah created them out of earth and sperm.[16]

Elsewhere, it commands the Prophet (S) to tell his people that: He Who originally created them will also recreate them in the Resurrection Day, and there is no room for any astonishment.[17]

Therefore, the denial and refutation of resurrection means the negation of Allah's power, His Justice, as well as His Wisdom which implies profanity and paganism.

Such a person, who negates resurrection, will be involved with superstition and ignorance as his entire outlook centers around worldly aims and is entangled with material benefits and selfishness, and he will also be held in the chains of the Divine punishment in the Hereafter.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 6

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّـئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثُلاتُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَي ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنّ رَبَّكَ لَشَديدُ الْعِقَابِ

6. "And they ask you to hasten on the evil (the chastisement) before the good while there have been exemplary punishments before them. And verily, your Lord is full of forgiveness for people despite their injustice; and verily your Lord is strict in retribution."

The Arabic term /maul at/ is the plural form of /maulah/ which denotes punishment and penalty that man will be inflicted upon. Sometimes, enmity and obstinacy reaches the point where one is inclined to desire death and not to accept the truth.

There are allusions made in the Glorious Qur'an to the examples of such moods and feelings. Among them one is that the pagans used to say:

"O' Allah! It this (Qur'an) is indeed the Truth from You, then storm us with stone from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment…"[18]

Elsewhere, the Qur'an says:

"If We had sent down it to any of non-Arabs, and had he recited it to them, they would not have believed in it."[19]

Or the people of the Book would tell the pagans and idol worshippers:

"…These are better guided on the way than those who have believed (in Islam)."[20]

While, the people of the Book among the disbelievers are closer to Islam than the pagans. They were kept away from expressing the truth because of their obstinacy.

In the meantime, the haste shown by some people in the descending of the Divine punishment then may be due to the following reasons:

The ignorance and oblivion due to the history of the predecessors and the lack of belief in the Divine punishment and considering it as remote matter.

Jealousy towards the possessions of others. As it is recorded in history, upon the accession of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) to the Imamat, someone desired his own death for he could not tolerate the event. This event has been mentioned and alluded to on the occasion of the revelation of Surah Al-Ma' arij, verse No. 1.

The feelings of being cut off, depressed, and reaching complete deadlock.

Ridiculing and lack of acceptance, even at the expense of losing one's life.

Therefore, the verse indicates that: instead of asking for Allah's blessings, they requested hastening of His punishment.

The verse says:

"And they ask you to hasten on the evil (the chastisement) before the good while there have been exemplary punishments before them…"

Do they think that Allah's punishment is mere deception, despite the fact that there were divine penalties which were sent down upon the previous rogue and unruly nations the news of which have been recorded on the pages of history and in the heart of the earth?

Then the verse adds implication that the Lord is forgiving towards the people though they are committing cruelty, and,at the same time, He is capable of inflicting severe punishment as well.

The verse says:

"…And Verily, your Lord is full of forgiveness for people despite their injustice; and verily your Lord is strict in retribution."

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 7

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَةٌ مِن رَّبِّهِۦٓ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

7. "And those who disbelieve say: 'Why has there not been sent down a sign to him from his Lord? (O' Prophet!) You are only a Warner, and there is a guide for every people."

Ibn Abbas has been quoted to say that the blissful Prophet (S) putting his hand on his chest, said: /'anal munŏir/ (I am the Warner), and then alluding to Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as), he said:

"You are the guide, those who will be guided after me will be guided through you."[21]

Here, the holy verse deals with one of the criticisms of the obstinate pagans concerning the prophecy, saying that Allah did not send the Prophet (S) with miracles or signs.

The verse says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'Why has there not been sent down a sign to him from his Lord?…"

It goes without saying that one of the functions of the Prophet (S) is to present miracles as documentation for his legitimacy and his actual interconnection with the Divine revelation.

However, the opponents of the prophets have not always been entertaining sound intentions. That is, they did not seek miracles for the sake of discovering the truth but, to show their arrogance and disobedience against the Truth, every time they asked for an odd miracle.

So, when facing such individuals, the Prophet (S), without accepting their desires, used to say that performing miracles is in Allah's hands and it is by His commands that such things happen; then his duty was to guide and train people.

Therefore, in response to these vain requests, the Qur'an continues telling the Prophet (S) that he is only a Warner and to provide people with instructions and guidance.

The verse says:

"…(O' Prophet!) You are only a Warner…"

In actual fact, the Qur'an implies that these pagans have forgotten the primary objective of the prophet which is the issue of admonition and calling of people towards Allah. They have wrong thought that his primary function has been to perform miracles.

It is interesting to note that the difference between the Qur'anic terms /'inŏar/ and /hid ayat/ is that, the former relates to the leading of the misled to the right path and providing them with self-awareness, while the latter deals with guiding people and directing them forward after they have adjusted their way in the right direction.

Therefore, in various quotations from the Prophet (S) in the books of Shi'ite and Sunni people, it is quoted that he said: he provided admonitions and Ali was the leader, by whom the guided are guided.

We have it in 26 traditions that, the objective meaning of /h ad/ (guide) is the Immaculate Imams (as).

Notes

1. Bihar, vol. 60, p. 79, and Burhan, vol. 2, p. 278
2. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 574
3. Tafsir-ul-Kabir
4. Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 32
5. Ibid
6. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 12, and Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 33
7. Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 33
8. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 14
9. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 65
10. Surah Al-J athiyah, No. 45, verse 13
11. Tafsir-ul-Furqan
12. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 5
13. Surah Shur a, No. 42, verse 11
14. Surah Ar-Rūm, No. 30, verse 21
15. Surah Az-Zariyat, No. 51, verse 49
16. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 5 says:

“O’ people! If you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust, then from a small seed, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete, that We may make clear to you; and We cause what We please to stay in the wombs till an appointed time, then We bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain your maturity; and of you is he who is caused to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything; and you see the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage.”

17. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 79
18. Surah Al-’Anf al, No. 8, verse 32
19. Surah Ash-Shu‘ar a, No. 26, verses 198, 199
20. Surah An-Nis a, No. 4, verse 51
21. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, vol. 19, p. 14, ’Ihq aq-ul-Haqq, vol. 3, p.87

Section 2: Allah, the Almighty Creator of the Universe

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 8

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ اُنثَي وَمَا تَغِيضُ الاَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِندَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ

8. “Allah knows what every female carries (in her womb) and what the wombs absorb and (that) in which they increase, and there is a measure with Him of everything.”

At first, the verse deals with Allah’s knowledge as to the carrying by female of whatever it is pregnant with, whether it has got any womb like human beings or animals, or it has got no wombs like in animate objects or plants. Later, allusion is made to the beings which have got wombs.

The Arabic term /qayd/ means handling (of the sperm) into oneself or infiltration. That is, Allah is aware of that ‘water’ which is absorbed by the womb and which undergoes alterations and growth.

At any rate, one finds that the holy verse deals with the comprehensive knowledge of Allah namely, His knowledge of the system of creation and of His subjects’ behavior and, finally, of everything.

At first, the Qur’an implies that Allah is aware of what every female carries in her womb. Not only does He know of the gender and sexuality of the foetus, but He also is aware of all the characteristics, potentialities, interests, and his inherent potential powers as well.

And He also knows all the shortcomings of the wombs which they may throw away before the time is ripe.

The verse says:

“Allah knows what every female carries (in her womb) and what the wombs absorb and (that) in which they increase…”

And everything has got its measures with Allah, so that one may not think that all these extremes, whether less or more, are for no reason, as is the case with the parts of the foetus and womb’s blood which are accountable by all means.

The verse continues saying:

“…and there is a measure with Him of everything.”

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 9

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ

9. “He knows the unseen and the seen, He is the Great, the Most High.”

The seen and the unseen is an issue involved only in the finite man whose five senses are even more limited than those of many animals. However, such a matter does not sound meaningful for Allah Who is the Creator of the world of unseen and that of the seen.

The verse says:

“He knows the unseen and the seen, He is the Great, the Most High.”

Imam Sadiq (as) has declared on the first phrase of the above verse that:

The unseen signifies what has not existed and /šah adat/ (seen) signifies what has existed already.[1]

In the meantime, Allah (s.w.t.) is superior in every aspect of perfection and is cleared of whatever default and defect there might be.

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 10

سَوَآءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَن جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِالَّيْلِ وَسَارِبُ بِالنَّهَارِ

10. “It is alike (for Him) whether any of you conceals his speech or speaks openly, and whether he hides himself by night or he who exposes himself during day-time.

This noble verse, which is apparently an explanation of and complementary to the previous verse, is one of the many verses of the Qur’an which refers to Allah’s knowledge as to the small and big, open and hidden acts of man and even man’s thought and intentions.

If men believe in such knowledge by Allah, it can be the best factor in one’s modesty and virtue and the greatest means for one’s education for it can encourage the righteous and warn the evildoers.

It is interesting that, in this verse Allah has mentioned the fact of His knowledge unto the secret speech and hidden acts done at night before referring to open words and the manifest activities in the day.

The verse says:

“It is alike (for Him) whether any of you conceals his speech or speaks openly, and whether he hides himself by night or he who exposes himself during day-time.”

The Arabic term /s arib/ is derived from /sarib/ which originally means ‘running water’ though it also refers to the one who goes on with a job during the day.

At any rate, Allah’s knowledge is identical with respect to all things, unlike our knowledge and our awareness is relative with respect to the things, in some cases it is deeper while in other cases, it is less deep or at zero point in some cases.

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 11

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّي يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِاَنفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَآ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءاً فَلا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُم مِن دُونِهِ مِن وَالٍ

11. “There are (angels) in succession, before him and behind him, who protect him by Allah’s command. Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition. And if Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no turning it back; and they have, apart from Him, no protector.”

The Qur’anic term /mu‘aqqib at/ is the Arabic plural form of /mu‘aqqibah/ and the ending letter ‘t’, included in it, does not allude to its grammatical gender as feminine, rather, it implies exaggeration like the Arabic word /‘allamah/.

Therefore, the subject of the term /yahfazunahu/ is masculine. Certainly, the purpose in the Qur’anic term /mu‘aqqib at/ is not to be considered as chasing and hunting man so as to be regarded as incompatible with the phrase /bayna yadayh/ (before him and behind him). On the contrary, it

refers to succession and consecutive arrival of the angels during, day and night.

The Qur'anic phrase /'amrullah/, mentioned in this verse, does not imply the penalty and punishment of Allah, for it does not make any sense to say that the angels protect man from Divine punishment, but it implies that they protect man from dangers and natural accidents; since the nature has been created by Allah and whatever goes on in it, is done in accordance with His will.

Many verses of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions indicate that there are angels that guard and protect human beings from dangers and calamities and record their deeds. They protect them from those dangers which are not seriously ordained under the Will of Allah.

Based upon the Islamic narrations in conformity with the Will of Allah, on various occasions, the protecting angels are allowed to abandon their role and allow some harm to come to man in accordance with Divine wisdom.

Certainly, according to the inferences from quotations, as soon as the decisive Will of Allah arrives, the protecting angels abandon their protection mission and leave man to his doom and death which is certain to happen.

Thus there are two sides to Allah's commandments: those that are certain to happen and those that are not certain. The angels only save man from those accidents which are not certain to occur. It goes without saying that such a protection in fact does not relieve man of his duties and freedom of choice. The destinies of individuals and nations are always in their own hands.

The protection of angels is not confined to that of the lives of men but it also involves their acts as well as their faith and thought against deviations and satanic temptations as the Qur'anic term /yahfazūnahū/ includes both the soul and the body.

Imam Sajjad (as), alluding to this verse, said:

"The sins which alter blessings consist of: oppressing the people, ingratitude of Allah, abandoning of the good deeds which one is used to do."[2]

This holy verse deals with human societies and not with individuals one by one. That is, a decent righteous society is covered by Allah's blessings, and a deviant one will get entangled with the Divine punishment.

However, this formula does not adapt to the case of a righteous individual and an indecent one, for one may be righteous though he may, for divine trial or experimental purposes, get involved with difficulties; or one may be viscous though he may be momentarily left to himself for the respite given to him by Allah.

Any way, we read in the foregoing verse that because of the fact that 'He knows the Unseen and the Seen', Allah is aware of the visible as well as the invisible nature of men and is Omnipresent and Omnipotent.

The Qur'an adds in this verse that in addition to this, Allah is also the Protector and Guardian of His servants. There are agents commissioned for men to oversee things around man consecutively and to protect him from evil events.

The verse says:

"There are (angels) in succession, before him and behind him, who protect him by Allah's command…"

However, to enable one not to mix every thing that such a protection and guardianship is unconditional and one can throw oneself down the pit and get involved in random acts or commit every kind of sin which merits Divine penalties, still expecting Allah's angels to protect him, the Qur'an adds:

"…Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition…"

To avoid any misunderstandings as to the meaningfulness of Divine punishments despite the existence of Divine agents whose mission is to protect man, the Qur'an adds at the end of the verse that once Allah determines to inflict penalties on a nation or a population there is no reversal or defense for that nation, which will have no protector except Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…And if Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no turning it back; and they have, apart from Him, no protector."

It is for this reason that once Allah's decree is issued as to the punishment or annihilation of a nation, the guardians and the protectors distance themselves, submitting man to his doom.

The Alterations Must Have Their Onset in Ourselves

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change any alterations in the mood of any their own condition…"

which has been mentioned throughout the Qur'an on two occasions with a slight difference, reflects a general and universal law.

This Qur'anic principle, which explains one of the most important social programs of Islam, informs us that whatever external changes which occur rest on the internal changes of nations and tribes, and whatever victory or defeat is inflicted upon a nation usually has its origin in this principle.

Therefore, those who seek external factors for their self-acquittal are indeed mistaken, for if such infernal powers have not got any basis within a society, they are left crippled.

This Qur'anic principle implies that in order to put an end to all misfortunes and miseries, one must turn to a revolution from within, a revolution in thinking and in culture, a revolution in faith and in ethics.

In cases of miseries and deadlocks, one must immediately turn to the discovery of weak points in oneself and clear one's soul and self from them by reconstructing himself with repentance and returning to Allah in order to wash his soul and self and to have a rebirth and a renaissance and convert one's defeats and frustrations into success.

Thereby, we all know that Allah's Will stands as superior to all wills, and His protection extends as far as man does not spoil His blessings. Otherwise, one would be deprived of the Divine favour and would be left to him.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 12

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفاً وَطَمَعاً وَيُنشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ

12. "It is He Who shows you the lightning for fear and hope and produces heavy clouds."

The blissful Qur'an once again here deals with the monotheistic verses and the signs of Allah's magnitude and glory as well as the secrets of creation.

At first, it alludes to the lightning which emerges from within the pieces of clouds, and implies that it is Allah Who offers you the lightning which is a source of fear as well as of greed. The verse says:

"It is He Who shows you the lightning for fear and hope…"

On the one hand, its shining rays astound one's eyes and generate and incite terror in him.

On the other hand, as it is usually accompanied by raining which offers the thirsty desert pure water, and waters the trees and fields, it creates hope and incites greed in man, between which, he passes sensitive moments.

Then the Qur'an declares that it is He Who creates heavy clouds which are fully-loaded and which are capable of watering thirsty lands.

The verse continues saying:

"…and produces heavy clouds."

The main thing to remember is that although natural causes pave the way for the emergence of thunder and lightning, nevertheless, the true source and origin of all these factors is Allah. The discovery of the laws of physics and chemistry of the nature must not diminish in any way our faith in Allah, for the nature and its laws are themselves created by Allah.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 13

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ

13. "And The thunder glorifies Him with His praise, and the angels, too, in awe of Him; and He sends the thunderbolts so as to smite with them whomever He pleases, while they dispute about Allah, and He is mighty in wrath."

This noble verse deals with the thunderbolt which is never separable from lightning.

The verse says:

"And The thunder glorifies Him with His praise…"

Certainly, this vibrating echoing sound of the world of nature, which is coupled with the lightning phenomenon, both act towards one goal which is the glorification of Allah. In other words, the thunder is a vocal expression of lightning, which reveals the nature of the system of creation and the magnitude of the Creator.

Not only the sound of the thunder and other particles of the material world glorify and thank Him, but all the angels are also busy thanking praising Him because of their awe and fear.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the angels, too, in awe of Him…"

The divine angels are frightened that they might have had shortcomings and failures as to the execution of their duties and responsibilities assigned to them by Allah in the system of existence, thus facing Divine punishment.

We know well that the duties and responsibilities have always been awe-inspiring and frightening for those who feel responsible, that kind of constructive fear which derives and directs them to action.

In order to give a further explanation concerning thunder and lightning, the Qur'an alludes to thunderbolts, where it declares:

"…and He sends the thunderbolts so as to smite with them whomever He pleases…"

Despite all these and in spite of observing all signs of Allah's magnitude, comparing them to the inferiority of man with respect to catastrophes, even in the case of a celestial spark, there are some ignorant groups who go on disputing about Allah.

The verse says:

"…while they dispute about Allah…"

They dispute while Allah's powers know no limits and His punishment would be painful and He punishes severely.

The verse concludes:

"…and He is mighty in wrath."

Explanations

In the Qur'anic literature, the totality of existence is ever engaged in praising the glory of Allah; that kind of praising which is based on knowledge and cognition and free will.

What is interesting in this respect is that the Qur'an explains this subject in such a way that it attracts the attention of all, and obliterates all matters which give rise to disbelief and loss of faith, among which one may point to the following:

The application of such noble words as /sabbaha/ or /yusabbihu/ which explicitly express the meaning of praise and glorification.

The repetition of this subject in the various Suras of the Qur'an.

The raising of the issue of the glorification of Allah by all beings at the beginning of the Surah, and immediately after the holy phrase /bismill ah/.

The use of such words as the humility of the entire domain of existence:

"…all are obedient to him"[3].

The prostration of the stars and the plants:

"And the herbs and the trees do adore (Him)."[4]

The obedience of the skies and the earth:

"…they both said: 'We come willingly."[5]

The awareness that all beings are in a state of prayer and gratitude:

"…He knows the prayer of each and its glorification…"[6]

Addressing of man as to his lack of understanding of the expression of gratitude of other beings:

"…but you do not understand their glorification…"[7]

The Arabic term /mih al/ is derived from /hilah/ which means every kind of hidden and covert way of seeking a remedy, and since this process is interconnected with and interdependent on knowledge and power, therefore,

commentators have interpreted the Qur'anic holy phrase /šadidulmihal/ as 'mighty in power and punishment'.

In some Qur'anic verses, the acts of gratitude to Allah and glorifying Him have been mentioned with together:

"The thunder glorifies Him with His praise…"[8]

"and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise…"[9]

It is just like the bowing and prostration within which we say:

"Glorified is my Lord, the Exalted, and with His praise"

"Glorified is my Lord, the greatest, and with His praise".

It has been recorded in various Sunni traditions that the sublime Prophet (S) used to interrupt his speech and start praying as soon as he heard the sound of thunderbolts and he would encourage others to do the same.[10]

Thunderbolts and being thunder-stricken is not an accidental matter. On the contrary, it is in accordance with Allah's will and the laws of the Divine nature.

Thunderbolts are the Divine punishment which are inflicted on the sinful nations like the people of Thamūd:

"…So there seized them the thunderbolt of a disgracing chastisement for what they used to earn." [11]

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 14

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لاَ يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُم بِشَيْءٍ إِلاَّ كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دُعَآءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلاَّ فِي ضَلاَلٍ

14. "To Him (alone) is the call of Truth; and those to whom they call, besides Him, will answer them nothing, but like one who stretches his two hands towards the water so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it. And the prayer of disbelievers is only in error"

This holy verse refers to two points. The first is that: Allah's call belongs to Him alone. That is, He will accept us whenever we call Him. He is both well aware of the prayers of His servants and He also has the authority to fulfill their wishes.

The verse says:

"To Him (alone) is the call of Truth…"

Another point raised here is that calling the idols and requesting them is absurd and erroneous, for those whom the pagans call, other than Allah, and seek refuge in them for fulfilling their wishes, their call and their prayers will be left unanswered.

The verse continues saying:

"…and those to whom they call, besides Him, will answer them nothing…"

Then, as it is the case with the Qur'anic method, in order to visualize this rational subject, including the feeling of beauty and explicitness, the Qur'an brings a sensible and expressive similitude by declaring that:

Those who call on other than Allah are like the ones who stretch their hand-palms towards water so as to fetch water and take it to their mouth, but such a thing will never happen.

The verse says:

"…but like one who stretches his two hands towards the water so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it…"

Can one sit next to a well and stretch his hands and send it to his mouth instantly and just by pointing to it? Can one expect such a thing to happen by any other one than he who is foolish or lunatic?

To stress the issue further, the Qur'an at the end of the verse indicates that: the prayers of the pagans from their idols is nothing more than taking steps in the dark, and being misled.

The verse says:

"…And the prayer of disbelievers is only in error"

What a course of being misled can be worse than that man does his utmost to go astray which may lead him nowhere!

Explanations

Calling on people to worship the sole Allah and alienating oneself from the attention of others, and regarding Him as the only effective factor has been frequently referred to in the Qur'an, among which one may name the followings:

"I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me…"[12]

However, if he goes to others and calls on them for the fulfillment of his needs, he must beware that they do not hear and if they hear, they will not accept.

The Qur'an says:

"If you call on them they will not listen to your call, and even if they were to listen, they cannot answer you…"[13]

The confined man naturally requires a safe haven in the adventurous life of the world.

The divine prophets introduce Allah as the safe haven:

"To Him (alone) is the call of Truth…".

However, other people's help, such as the despots, are either for fooling him or for his exploitation or propagation and for their own protection of positions, etc. What is not worth consideration to them, is the 'man' himself.

Man is inherently truth seeking and thirsty for the Truth but he often loses his way to obtain it. Except for his faith in Allah and love of Him and that his prayers be directed to Him, nothing else will quench the thirst of man who infinitely aspires.

"…so that it may reach his mouth, while it does not reach it…"

For, anything inferior to Allah is a mirage and calling on others is of no avail.

Therefore, he who sincerely calls Allah will return not empty-handed. Returning empty-handed is because of focusing towards other than Him.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 15

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ طَوْعاً وَكَرْهاً وَظِلاَلُهُم بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالأَصَالِ

15. "And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates for Allah willingly or unwillingly, and (so do) their shadows in the mornings and the evenings."

In order to explain how the idol-worshippers have become separated from the mainstream of the world of existence and have been led stray one

by one, this verse proclaims that all those who are in the heavens and on the earth willingly or reluctantly obey and submit themselves and prostrate before Allah every morning and evening.

The verse says:

"And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates for Allah willingly or unwillingly, and (so do) their shadows in the mornings and the evenings."

What is the objective of prostration by the beings? In such cases, prostration signifies utmost modesty, humbleness, and submission. Nevertheless, the humility and prostration of some groups of creatures is done in the genetic form.

That is, they are only submissive in face of the laws of the world of existence and creation. However, some others do have religious prostration in addition to the genetic prostration, which means that they prostrate before Allah willingly and with their own free will.

The Arabic expression: /tau'an wa karhan/ (willingly and unwillingly) might point out to the fact that the believers willingly prostrate before Allah and exhibit their modesty, while the unbelievers, who are not ready to perform such a ritual, all the particles of their entity are submissive to Allah's commandments in accordance with the laws of creation, whether they want it or not.

Explanations

Perhaps the objective in mind as regards the prostration of the shadows is their manner in which they are being cast on the floor, which implies that the entire universe is obedient to and prostrates before Allah, and that this mode of existential prostration of all beings is a continuous process.

The Arabic term /'asal/ is the plural form of /'usul/, which itself is the plural of /'asil/, and is derived from /'asl/ which means 'the end of the day'.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 16

قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَاتَّخَذْتُم مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَآءَ لاَ يَمْلِكُونَ لأَنْـفُسِهِم نَفْعاً ولاَ ضَرّاً قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الاَعْمَي وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَآءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِم قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

16. "Say: 'Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?' Say: 'Allah'. (Then) say: 'Why is it that you have taken guardians other than Him who own no profit and loss for themselves?' Say: 'Are the blind and the eyed equal? Or are the darknesses and light identical? Or have they set up partners for Allah who have created (something) like His creation, so that creation is all alike to them?' Say: 'Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the All-Dominant'."

As there were numerous discussions as to the cognition of Allah's Existence in the previous holy verses, the Qur'an has devoted the discussion in this verse to the mistakes of the pagans and the worshippers of the idols. It follows this discussion on several fronts.

At first, the Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) and tells him to ask them about the creator and administrator of the heavens and the earth.

It declares:

"Say: 'Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?'…"

Then, before that the Prophet (S) waits for any answer from them, it immediately issues the decree to him (S) that he provides the best answer to this query, proclaiming that:

"…Say: 'Allah'…"

Then blaming them and reproaching them with this sentence the Qur'an issues another query for the Prophet (S) to ask them, saying whether they have designated any one other than Allah as their worshipping center and their supporting person, without considering the fact that these idols can be of no profit or loss even for themselves.

The verse says:

"…(Then) say: 'Why is it that you have taken guardians other than Him who own no profit and loss for themselves?'…"

Then, by providing two explicit and clear examples, the Qur'an differentiates between the position of the individuals who are 'monotheist' and that of 'pagans', stating:

"…Say: 'Are the blind and the eyed equal?…"

As the blind and the eyed people are not similar, therefore, the pagan and the faithful are not alike either, and one cannot designate the position of the idols alongside Allah.

The other point the verse remarks is that:

"…Or are the darknesses and light identical?…"

How would it be possible to align the idols, which are utter darkness, alongside Allah (s.w.t.) Who is the absolute light of existence?

Then, the Qur'an stresses further the rejection of the ideas of the pagans, asking whether they have aligned counterparts for Allah for the sake that they are engaged in the process of creation like Allah, and hence, such a creation has brought about for them a state of confusion.

The verse says:

"…Or have they set up partners for Allah who have created (something) like His creation, so that creation is all alike to them?'…"

However, even the idol worshippers are not of the same opinion about idols. They, too, regard Allah as the Creator of everything and consider the world of creation as a whole package in His Authority.

Therefore, the verse instantly adds:

"…Say: 'Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the All-Dominant'."

One can infer from the above verse that the process of creation is a continuous matter and Allah (s.w.t.) is continuously shedding rays of existence, in which case, every being is benefiting existence from His Pure Essence from moment to moment.

Therefore, the process of creation and administration of the world of existence are both in His Own Power, just like the onset of creation.

Explanations

Discussing issues in the form of 'question-and-answer' is one of the methods of propagation, and dissemination of information, and is an educational means, which has been notably used by the Qur'an.

"Say: 'Who is the Lord of heavens and the earth?'…"

Some pagans only accepted the creative nature of Allah and considered others as administrators.

Therefore, in Surah 'Ankabūt, No. 29, verse 61, the Qur'an proclaims:

"And if you ask them (these pagans) who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient, they will certainly say 'Allah'…"

Then how is it that they hasten to paganism, 'Deism', and ignorance after making such a confession?

Paganism in all its forms, according to some Islamic quotations, is more hidden and covert than the movement of an ant over a dark stone by night. An example of this is that one might say that this task was done under Allah's blessings and with the help of such a person.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 17

أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةُ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَداً رَابِياً وَمِمّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَآءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهُ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الأَرْضِ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأَمْثَالَ

17. "He sent down water from the sky, then rivers flew according to their capacity and the floodwater carried along a swelling foam, and from metals, which they melt with fire so as to make an ornament or goods, arises a foam similar to it. Thus does Allah illustrate the Truth and falsehood; then as for the foam passes away as a worthless thing, and what is beneficial for people remains on the earth. Thus Allah sets forth the parables."

As the method of the Qur'an relies heavily on objective issues as an educational book, in order to explain the complicated concepts, it points to the tangible examples which are interesting and beautiful in everyday life of the people.

It explains an explicit example for visualization of the facts referred to in the previous verses regarding monotheism, paganism, faith and blasphemy, the truth and the untruth.

At first the Qur'an says:

"He sent down water from the sky…"

It is the kind of water which is life-giving and creating, and it is also the source of development and movement. There are floodwaters which flow from every valley and every river, measured according to their capacity.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…then rivers flew according to their capacity…"

Small streams join one another, stream-lining into canals that join together to form huge torrents which flow down the mountains. Waters piling up carry whatever stand in their way, which strike over them. At this moment, foams emerge from between the layers of the wares.

As the Qur'an says:

"…and the floodwater carried along a swelling foam…"

The emergence of the foams is not confined to the coming of rain. There arises a foam out of what is being melted in the furnaces for obtaining

jewelry or home appliances, upon which they light fire to melt, so there are also foams appearing which are like the ones on water surface.

The Qur'an says:

"…and from metals, which they melt with fire so as to make an ornament or goods, arises a foam similar to it…"

After giving this example, the Holy Qur'an concludes by pointing out that Allah provides you with an example in this manner for the truth and the untruth.

The verse says:

"…Thus does Allah illustrate the Truth and falsehood…"

Afterwards, discussing it in detail, it declares, however, the seeming high foams, which are void in the process of flow of water, go away and the water, which is useful for people, stays on the earth.

The verse says:

"…then as for the foam passes away as a worthless thing, and what is beneficial for people remains on the earth…"

The truth is also always useful, just like pure water which is the source of life. However, the wrong and the untruth is useless and absurd, while the truth must always be flourishing and alive so as to expel the 'untruth'.

At the end of the verse, to stress further the point and to call all to study in depth and in a more exact way over this example, as well as other examples of the Qur'an, it says:

"…Thus Allah sets forth the parables."

Examples usually universalize cases. There are many scientific discussions which are only understandable for a selected few persons and the masses of people do not benefit from them very much. However, once they are accompanied with examples, they tend to become better understandable for the people of all echelons and all levels of knowledge.

Therefore, examples are best as a means of generalization of knowledge and culture, and they have some undeniable and numerous applications.

There are two examples introducing the falsehood in this verse. One is the foam which appears on the surface of water. The second is the foam which covers metals once they are in the melting pot.

The falsehood is like the foam for:

It is transient.

It appears as the shadow of the truth and under it.

It covers up the truth.

It has got looks but is worthless. It does neither quench the thirst of anyone, nor does any plant grow as a result of it.

It disappears once the conditions are normal.

It places itself on top though it is void and without any substance.

Illustration

Illustration makes rational problems tangible and paves the way for arriving at the objectives. It universalizes all subjects and tends to silence the obstinate. Therefore, the Qur'an has utilized this method extensively. Allah has provided three examples in this verse.

First, He has exemplified the revelation of the Qur'an to the water which is descended from the sky. He has also compared the hearts of the people to

the oases which attract the water to themselves according to their own capacity.

Those who make their utmost effort to understand the Qur'an will reap great rewards, like rivers and oases which are big; and those who are content with the Qur'an and make less effort in understanding its facts will reap less and take less advantages just like smaller oases and streams which obtain less shares.

Later, Allah compares the satanically whims and temptations to foam which appears on water surface. It goes without saying that the main cause of the foam is not water itself, but it is the land which does not have good soil.

Also, skepticisms and doubts as well as selfish whims do not have their origin in the truth, but they have their source in the people's selves. Allah, the Almighty, proclaims that as foam does not last long and what remains of it is pure and soft water, satanical whims will ultimately disappear and vanish while the real face of the truth reveals itself and remains forever.

The third example is that He (s.w.t.) has compared paganism to those nasty materials which are dark in colour and exemplified as such which melt while they are placed on metals and the simile goes on in the case of faith which is exemplified to a melted piece of metal which is pure.

And thus end the proverbs of the Qur'an here which are so instructive.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 18

لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّـهِمُ الْحُسْنَي وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُ لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لاَفْتَدَوْا بِهِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

18. "For those (people) who accepted their Lord, it is the best (reward). But those who did not accept Him, even if they were to have all that is on the earth and the like of it, they would certainly offer it as ransom. It is they for whom the reckoning will be terrible and their abode will be Hell and what an awful place it is!"

One can infer from the Holy Qur'an that there are several accounts kept for people on the Day of Judgment.

Some have an easy account.

"…by an easy reckoning"[14]

Some have their account inspected audited and settled in a hard and an exact way.

"…a severe account…"[15]

Some go to hell and there is no need for any settlement by court or trials.

"…and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight for them."[16]

Some go to the Paradise without having to settle any accounts.

"…only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure."[17]

According to the Islamic quotations and traditions, those who are forgiving and merciful towards people and treat them with favor, will have an easy time as far as their account is concerned; and those who are hard on others, their account will be hard to settle.

The unbelievers will go to Hell with no account, and those believers who are patient will go to Paradise without any worries for their settlement of account.

As the Qur'an confirms, acceptance is mutual. That is, if the people expect Allah to accept their call, they must also accept Allah's call.

"…Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life…"[18]

A Discussion About the Call

The issue of the invitation can be dealt with from different dimensions:

Those Who Invite to the Truth

A: Prophets:

"Say: '… I call to Allah…"[19]

Allah commands the Prophet (S) to tell the people that his way of life and that of his followers is this which leads and directs people towards Allah with insight.

"Remember when you were climbing (the hillside) and you paid no heed to any one, while the Messenger was calling you from your rear…"[20]

"And as one inviting to Allah by His leave, and as a light-giving torch."[21]

Meaning that you call on people directing them towards Allah with His permission, thus becoming the burning torch of the world.

B: The Believers:

"And there should be a party among you who invite (others) to good…"[22]

This means that from among you Muslims, those who are more knowledgeable and more virtuous must lead the people towards the good and righteousness.

C: Jinn:

"O' our people accept the caller of Allah (just as we did)…"[23]

The Callers to Falsehood

Pioneers of paganism:

"And We made them the pioneers (who) call to the Fire…"[24]

The Satan:

"…the Satan calls them to the chastisement…"[25]

That is: would they still follow the Satan's lead to hell regardless of the fact that he has called their fathers to Hell?

and:

"I did not have any authority over you, except that I called you and you responded me…"[26]

The Unbelievers:

"…those invite to the Fire…"[27]

That is the pagans call you to hell fire by way of ignorance and darkness.

The Subject of Invitation

Life:

"…he invites you to that which gives you life…"[28]

This verse means that Allah and your prophet call you to accept the faith so as to enable you to reach an eternal life.

The Straight path:

"And certainly you invite them to a straight path."[29]

Forgiveness:

"…Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness…"[30]

The Paradise:

"And Allah does call mankind to the Abode of Peace…"[31]

Salvation:

"I call you to the salvation…"[32]

Confronting the Dissidents

Accusations

Sorcerer:

"…Verily this indeed is a knowing sorcerer."[33]

A poet:

"…nay! he is a poet…"[34]

Soothsayer:

"…for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer…"[35]

In this verse the Prophet (S) is commanded to mention unto people that he speaks while he is blessed by revelation and prophecy from his Lord and there is no question of lunacy existing in him.

Crazy:

"…And they say: "Verily he is crazy."[36]

Liar:

"…verily we do think you to be of the liars."[37]

We guess you are from among the liars.

Oppressor:

"…who desires that he may have superiority over you…"[38]

This verse is about the people of Noah who, answering him, said to others that this person wants to achieve supremacy over you.

Threat:

"…we would certainly stone you…"[39]

Slaying:

"…And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you…"[40]

Humiliation:

"…Is this he who speaks of your gods?…"[41]

Skepticism:

Leaders and chieftains of the people of Salih, ridiculing the poor who became believers, said:

"Do you believe that Salih is sent by his Lord?…"[42]

Conspiracy and war:

"And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you…"[43]

The Motives and Factors for Lack of Acceptance

Imitation

Fanaticism

Arrogance

Sensual desire:

"But if they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their low desires…"[44]

The Reward for Acceptance

Reward:

"Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them out of His Grace…"[45]

Life:

"O' you who have Faith! Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life…"[46]

Happiness:

"For those who respond to their Lord is the best (reward)…"[47]

Any way, after depicting the profile of the 'truth' and the 'untruth' through an expressive example mentioned in the previous verse, here the Qur'an alludes to the fate of those who have accepted Allah's call and at the same time, it refers to the destiny of the ones who rejected the truth and turned to vices.

At first, it says:

"For those people who accepted their Lord, it is the best (reward)…"

Then the Qur'an further adds that as for those who do not accept this call of Allah (s.w.t.), their destiny is so wicked and relentless that even if they were in full possession of all of what is found on the earth or the like of it, they would be ready to dispense with them all so as to attain salvation.

However, all this would not be accepted from them.

The verse says:

"…But those who did not accept Him, even if they were to have all that is on the earth and the like of it, they would certainly offer it as ransom…"

To portray the grievousness of their punishment, there would be no interpretation more explicit than the one which assumes that supposedly one owns all of what is on the earth, rather doubling that amount, and dispenses all just to be relieved and receive salvation, yet it is of no vail.

This sentence refers, in fact, to one's ultimate desire that he wants to be the proprietor of all that exists on the earth. However, the intensity of the punishment of the oppressors and dissidents of the Allah's call is so much so that they are ready to sacrifice this ultimate worldly desire, and beyond it, and become relieved.

Following this catastrophe, abstention from accepting all that is on the earth for one's salvation, is an allusion made to their other misfortune which implies that they have got a hard and an awful account to settle, and ultimately, they will be located in the fire of the inferno.

The verse says:

"…It is they for whom the reckoning will be terrible and their abode will be Hell and what an awful place it is!"

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Burhan.
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 116
4. Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 6
5. Fussilat, No. 41, verse 11
6. An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 41
7. Surah 'Isr a', No. 17, verse 44
8. The verse under discussion
9. Surah 'Isr a', No. 17, verse 44
10. Durr-ul-Manthūr
11. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 71
12. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 186
13. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 14
14. Surah Al-'Inshiqaq, No. 84, verse 8
15. Surah At-Tal aq, No. 65, verse 8
16. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 105
17. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 16
18. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
19. Surah Yūsuf, No. 12, verse 108
20. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 153
21. Surah Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46
22. 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 104
23. Surah Al-'Ahqaf, No. 46, verse 31
24. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 41
25. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 21
26. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22
27. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 221
28. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
29. Surah Al-Mu'minūn, No. 23, verse 73
30. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 221
31. Surah Yūnus, No. 10, verse 25
32. Surah Al-Ghafir, No. 40, verse 41
33. Surah 'A'raf, No. 7, verse 109
34. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 5
35. Surah At-Tūr, No. 52, verse 29
36. Surah Al-Qalam, No. 68, verse 51
37. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 66
38. Surah Al-Mu'minūn, No. 23, verse 24

39. Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 21
40. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 30
41. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 36
42. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 75
43. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 30
44. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 50
45. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 173
46. Surah Al-Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
47. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 18

Section 3: The Faithful and the Unfaithful Compared

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 19

أَفَمَن يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَى إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الاَلْبَابِ

19. “Is he who knows that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth, like the one who is blind? Indeed, only the possessors of intellects take admonition,”

The Possessors of Intellect

We have picture and profile of the details of the programs of the proponents of the truth depicted in this verse which supplements the discussion of the previous verses. In the first instance, He poses the issue in a positive interrogation with negative sense, saying:

“Is he who knows that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth, like the one who is blind?…”

This type of interpretation is a delicate reference to the fact that the lack of knowledge of this reality is utterly impossible unless one’s deep insight has been entirely blocked.

Therefore, the Qur’an, towards the end of the verse adds:

“…Indeed, only the possessors of intellects take admonition,”

Anyway, we have allusions made to those who have accepted the life-giving call of the prophets (as) in the previous verse, while the impact of the acceptance of that call is being stated in this verse and in the following verses.

Everyone of: human nature, reason, and knowledge has got a core in one’s brain which may be dismantled as a result of habits, customs, superstitions, and instincts. Therefore, man must be constantly concentrating on that central nucleus and core.[1]

The Wise in the Qur’an

The Arabic term /’ulul-’alb ab/ has been mentioned in the Qur’an 16 times, every one of which has been stated accompanied with one accomplishment or an attribution, among them, we note:

They understand the secret of commandments:

“And in (the law of) retaliation there is (saving of life for you, O’ possessors of intellects…”[2]

They are future-oriented:

“…and make provision, but surely the best provision is the piety. So, have awe of Me, O’ possessors of intellect!”[3]

They regard the world as a passing stage and not a destination and residence point.

The possessors of intellect are those who:

“…mediate on the creation of the heavens and the earth, seriously saying): ‘Our Lord! You have not created (all) thin in vain!…”[4]

They receive instructive lessons from history:

“Indeed in their stories there is a lesson for the possessors of intellect…”[5]

They accept the best and the most superior logic of all:

“Those who listen to the saying, then follow the best of it…”[6]

They are of the worshipping and struggling lot who perform the night prayer:

"Is he who is obedient during hours of the night … only the possessors of intellect are mindful."[7]

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 20

الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلا يَنقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ

20. "Those who fulfill the covenant of Allah and do not break the pledge."

The Arabic phrase /'ahdillah/ includes both the innate and inherent promises such as 'love unto the Truth and justice', and rational promises like the comprehension of the facts of the world of existence including the issues of 'the origin and the end'.

They also refer to both the religious promises such as practicing all the required acts and rituals and abstention from all that is prohibited, and the commitments of promises which men keep with regard to one another and Allah has made their observation required.

According to the statements of some commentators,[8] one of the most important Divine covenants is the Imamate, 'leadership', of the celestial leaders. After that Hadrat 'Ibrahim (as) attained accession to the position of Imamate following numerous tests and trials, he requested Allah to enable his progeny to achieve that rank.

Instead of saying that the position of Imamate would not be bestowed on the cruel people, and to clarify the importance of this position, He said:

"My covenant does not include the unjust." [9]**,**

which itself is an evidence for the importance of the position and magnitude of Imamate.

Incidentally, the Arabic term /mi aq/ 'testament' refers to what is the source of confidence between one's heart and that thing. As the existence of a Divine leader provides comfort for men's heart and soul, therefore, this matter has been regarded as one of the examples of 'testament'.

Anyway, keeping one's promise, like respect for one's parents, and returning of the deposits, is not confined to the Islamic jurisprudence. On the other hand, it is included in human rights as well. Thus every wise and rational man must observe it.

In conclusion, religious testament is the kind of the commitment which the Prophet (S) has secured from the believing people so as to obey him and abstain from committing sins and overlooking the religious commandments and prohibitions.

Incidentally the reason why the term 'testament' or 'pledge' is repeated after the word 'covenant' is that none imagines that the objective is only the Divine promise and that of the people for all the commandments and the prohibitions are included in the meaning of 'covenant'.

It is for this reason that He informs us that the testament and covenant of the Prophet (S) and the people is as vigorously to be observed as that of Allah (s.w.t.) and the people.

The verse says:

"Those who fulfill the covenant of Allah and do not break the pledge."

Some commentators, however, believe that the aim of this repetition is merely emphasis.

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 21

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَآ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ

21. “And those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined and they fear their Lord and dread the terrible reckoning.”

Some Islamic quotations indicate that what Allah has ordained to be joined together is union of kindred. That is, conservation of family ties as well as the ideological ties which implies continuous and profound ties with the heavenly leaders and the following of the line of ‘Wilayat’ (leadership).[10]

The verse says:

“And those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined and they fear their Lord and dread the terrible reckoning.”

A simple and in-passing glance at our contemporary world will reveal that despite having utmost and the best capital, i.e., oil, beneath their feet, and enjoying, in front of them, the common point of unity and love of over one Billion Muslims, that is Ka‘bah, and despite benefiting from the best of schools and logic, some Muslims are constantly under all kinds of pressure from the super-powers for their lack of connection with the Divine leadership.

It is for this reason that in the verse 27 of Surah Al-Baqarah, after the sentence:

“…and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined…”[11]

there has been mentioned:

“…and they make corruption on the Earth…”,

for it goes without saying that the mere cutting off ties of relationship does not by itself cause corruption on the earth. On the contrary, it is giving up of the Divine leadership which leads to the entanglement in the confinement of the despots and spreading of corruption.

Note the Following Points

Union of Kindred: strengthening blood-kinship is not merely confined to the family visits and meetings. Provision of financial assistance also is one of the aspects of union of kindred.

Imam Sadiq (as) proclaims that in addition to Zakat (alms), there are also other dues to be paid and which are necessary. Then he recited this verse.[12]

The objective in mind of the Imam (as) probably has been ‘Khoms’ (one fifth) when mentioning other dues.

As for the importance of ‘union of kindred’, it is sufficient to be noted that Allah has made mention of it next to His name.

“…And be in awe of Allah through Whom you demand one of another, as well as any ties of kinship…”[13]

The meaning of ‘relatives’ is not confined to one’s family genealogical relatives, but, it refers to the great Muslim community in which all individuals of the nation are considered as brothers, where the Qur’an says:

“The believers are but brethren…”[14]

Their father is the Prophet of Islam (S) as well as Hadrat Ali (as). The Prophet (S) has remarked:

"Ali and I are to be regarded as fathers of this community."

Imam Sadiq (as), while on deathbed, ordered to hand on some gifts to those relatives who had been rude to him. When he was criticized for this act, he recited the above verse; and so did he teach us that the condition for union of kindred would not be their optimism, love and relationship with us.

To explain the Qur'anic phrases: 'they fear their Lord' and 'dread the terrible reckoning', one must say that though the Arabic words /xašiyat/ (fear) and /xauf/ (dread) have sometimes been used interchangeably and as synonyms, meaning one thing in mind, they are in fact different in an Arabic context.

The word /xašiyat/ refers to that kind of fear and impression which is left on someone as a result of respect he bears for a person. However, the term /xauf/ refers to a wider range of meaning and includes all kinds of fear and anxiety.

In other words, the term /xašiyat/ is never used for a damaging accident and one does not refer to cold and disease as having /xašiyat/ with respect to them, while the application of the word to /xauf/ holds in cases of cold, heat, disease and is prevalent.

Ultimately, since /xašiyat/ is based on one's knowledge as to the respect, magnitude and importance of the other person, one can say /xašiyat/ is peculiar to the learned men and /xauf/ is generally applicable for all.

As the Qur'an says:

"…those of His servants only who are knowledgeable fear Allah…"[15]

A Few Quotations on Union of Kindred

Jabir quoting Imam Baqir (as) said that the Prophet (S) said:

"Kindness towards one's parents and union of kindred facilitates one's settlement of his accounts."

Then, he (S) recited this very verse.[16]

The Messenger of Allah (S) remarked:

"He who cuts off his relationship with his kindred, will not enter Paradise."[17]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Cutting off of one's relationship with the relatives leads to poverty."[18]

Imam Sadiq (as) remarked:

"He who is disobedient with respect to his parents and he who cuts off his relationship with his relatives can never sense the smell and the flavor of Paradise" [19]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Cutting off one's relationship with his relatives, spoils all of (one's) blessings."[20]

A man, addressing the Prophet (S), asked:

"Which deed is considered as conducive to the utmost outrage before Allah?"

He answered:

"Attributing partners to Allah."

Then he asked:

"Which action comes next?"
He answered:
"Cutting off one's relationship with his relatives?"
Then he asked:
"Which action comes next?"
He answered:
"Bidding to indecency and forbidding right conduct."[21]

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 22

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرّاً وَعَلاَنِيَةً
وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّـئَةَ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَي الدَّارِ

22. "And those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord, and establish prayer, and spend of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, and they avert evil with good; theirs shall be the Ultimate abode"

And those who usually keep their patience in performing the commandments of Allah and do not lose their integrity in face of the diseases and evil consequences and abstain themselves from committing Allah's sins, and by keeping their patience, they mean to obtain rewards from Allah, the Almighty, because 'seeking the countenance of Allah' signifies 'asking for Allah' which in turn means asking for Allah's reward.

Once, in the Arabic language, Arabs want to glorify something, they say 'its countenance' and 'its self', and by 'the countenance of Allah' they mean the Glorious Essence of the Almighty. Nothing is greater than Allah and nothing is His counterpart. Some say that: the purpose of 'countenance' in here is reference made as to sincerity and repelling of bigotry and hypocrisy.

The verse says:

"And those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord…"

Then the verse continues explaining the qualities of the possessors of intellect by adding that they perform the prayer with keeping all its limits. In other words, they are always serious in performing their prayer rituals, and they share with others whatever Allah has bestowed on them whether be it in secret or openly. And through their obedience, they repel all sins.

The verse says:

"…and establish prayer, and spend of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, and they avert evil with good…"

Ibn-i-Abb as, regarding the last quality, has said that through the mean of decent and allowed action, they repel the indecent behavior.

It is quoted from the highly esteemed Prophet of Islam (S) who has told Ma' az-ibn-Jabal that:

Whenever he did an evil act, then he would perform an admirable deed so as to wipe it out.

Some commentators say one must be kind to those who have bad treatment to them and he would not try to retaliate it.

Some other commentators have claimed that the purpose is that once they are deprived, they go on giving away and once they are oppressed, they

forgive; and when they are isolated, they try to establish relationships once more. Ibn-i-Kisan says: it means that they try to remove the penalty for their sins by repentance.

The ending sentence of the verse says:

"…Theirs shall be the Ultimate abode."

It means that those whom We depicted their profiles of, will receive their reward of Paradise. In this holy sentence the objective meaning of /ad-dar/ is 'Paradise' and that of /'uqba/ is 'reward' which refers to the happy ending.

Explanations

'Patience' does not merely signify tolerating difficulties; rather, it mostly includes perseverance in worshipping, restraining from sins, toleration in case of calamities, submission in case of obedience, and lack of arrogance in case of affluence.

The Qur'anic phrase 'the countenance of their Lord' signifies attracting the attention, favour, and satisfaction of Allah.

Performing prayer is one of the examples of the Divine covenants, which was discussed in the previous verses. Some Islamic traditions also refer to it, saying:

"Prayer is the covenant of Allah."

Patience and prayers are two channels of communication with Allah, and charity and good acts are two channels of communication with people.

Giving in charity of one's wealth has got a hierarchy:

Step one:

Sharing of the things Allah has bestowed upon us.

"…spend (in alms) of that which We have provided for you…"[22]

Step two:

Giving in charity out of one's earnings through allowed business.

"O you who have faith! Spend (in charity) of the good things that you have earned…"[23]

Step three:

Giving away of what one likes most.

"You will never attain righteousness unless you spend out of what you love…"[24]

Step four:

Self-sacrifice:

"…and prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them…"[25]

According to Al-Mizan, the Arabic term /'uqbadd ar/ signifies happy ending in the world, though it may be considered as including both, this world and the Hereafter.

The meaning of returning the good in exchange for evil is that: if from among the faithful someone commits an evil act in connection with us, We ought to overlook it.

But we must not have the same pattern of action with the tyrants and the corrupt, for, concerning them, they must be paid in their own coins. Anyway, though Islam is a religion of ethics, compassion and forgiveness, it has also the following instruction in its place.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"(As for) the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day…"[26]

Islam is a comprehensive religion, and 'the possessors of intellect' are some perfect persons.

The existence of such Qur'anic words concerning them as: /yūfūn/, /yaxšaun/, /yax afūn/, /sabarū/, /'aq amū/, /'anfiqū/, and /yadra'ūn/ are signs to show that the perfect men not only are undertaking their promises, but also preserve all their proper communications, and they enjoy a superior state of virtuosity and they stay on the whole scenes of truth actively instead of creeping into isolation.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 23

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنْ ءَابَآئِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِم مِن كُلِّ بَابٍ

23. "Gardens of Eternity, they shall enter therein and also the righteous from among their fathers, their spouses, and their children, and unto whom the angels will enter from every gate'."

Out of 137 times that the Qur'anic words /jann at/ and /jannat/ have been repeated in the glorious Qur'an, only 12 times they have been mentioned under /jann atu 'adnin/. According to a tradition from 'Durr-ul-Manthūr', it signifies 'a special paradise'.[27]

The blissful Prophet (S) remarks:

"Whoever wants his life and death to be like those of mine, and enters the Gardens of Eden which is my Paradise, must designate Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as) and his Immaculate successors from among his descendents as his leaders and his Imam, who are most supreme in knowledge and wisdom over all human beings and they are guides for people towards right path."[28]

In the meantime, we have it in the Qur'an repeatedly that the righteous people of a family will also be nigh to each other when in Paradise and will be able to enjoy each other's company therein as they associate with each other.

Certainly, the mention of the titles of some individuals of the family like father, wife, and child in the above noble verse, does not specify any particular point, and it covers all the righteous members of the family, including the above mentioned ones, and as well as mothers, sisters and brothers, too.

Incidentally, perhaps the reason for the absence of the name 'mother' here is that the mother is the wife of one's father and is covered by the word of /'azwaj/ (spouses) as is the case with brothers and sisters who are regarded as paternal descendents, and uncles and aunts are considered as the descendents of one's ancestors.

Anyway, whatever of the conclusion we obtain from the Divine verses is that the angels, under all circumstances, whether in this world or in the world hereafter (purgatory or resurrection day), are in contact with man. They sometimes send him greetings,

"…sends His greeting on you, and (so do) His angels…"[29]

while on other occasions, they ask forgiveness for him:

"…and ask forgiveness for those who believe…"[30]

That is, the angels who carry the magnanimous heavens on top of their shoulders and those who are engaged in thanking and in worshipping are both faithful believers and ask for forgiveness for the faithful from Allah.

At other times, they utter invocation for him, saying:

"Our Lord! and make them enter the Gardens of Perpetuity…"[31]

That is, O' Allah! Give them all along with their parents, wives, and children access and abode in the Paradise of Eden. At the time of death and at the onset of the purgatory, the angels let them voice with the slogan chanting

"…'Fear not, nor be grieved…"[32]

And they take their lives with the sentence 'Greetings to you'.

The Qur'an says:

"Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: 'Peace be on you…"[33]

That is, those who, like angels, 'the agents of Allah's blessings', take their souls, address them saying that due to your good deeds performed in the world, you will thus enter the Eternal Paradise, and they would also go on greeting them from every corner.

The verse says:

"Gardens of Eternity, they shall enter therein and also the righteous from among their fathers, their spouses, and their children, and unto whom the angels will enter from every gate'."

Explanations

There are eight gateways mentioned for Paradise which correspond to the number of traits already mentioned for 'the possessors of intellect' counted in recent verses. Probably, each of the eight traits and characteristics leads man through one of the gateways of Paradise and is a leading path towards the eternal happiness for man.

Not every father and child, and every husband and wife, every descendent whether paternal or maternal will join one another in Paradise or will be placed side-by-side there, for in the Day of Resurrection, the relatives by blood and those kin by marriage, as a means, will be of no use.

On that Day, every body will be held responsible for his own self, in which case nothing, except one's own efforts and struggle, will have any effect:

Therefore, the entrance of some relatives, unto some others into Paradise, is only because of their competence and individual qualification.

A Paradise-deserving family is a family among whom there is sincerity and unity in pursuance of the path of the Truth, because the condition for entering Paradise is righteousness.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 24

سَلامٌ عَلَيْكُم بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَي الدَّارِ

24. "Peace (be) upon you (saying) that you persevered in patience! (And now) how excellent is the Ultimate Abode."

One of the unique advantages of the Qur'an is that it states the most meaningful matters in the most concise terms, among which reference may be made to the sentence 'Peace be upon you' which is a very concise yet very meaningful sentence. Its historical perspective goes back to the previous prophets like 'Ibrahim, Noah, and Adam (as)

"Peace be upon Noah among the nations."[34]

The Qur'anic term // (Peace) is one of Allah's names, and it is one of the ways of greetings of Allah to the prophets, the Divine congratulations on the people of Paradise, the whisper of the angles; the international saying of all the Muslims; the slogan of all the paradise-deserving in this world and in the other one; the common words of the Creator and the created; the voice heard on arrival and departure, and the beginning of every speech and of every letter which is said to both the living and the dead, and on the aged and the young.

Answering and returning it, however, is obligatory for a believer.

The message of /salam/ (peace) is a message of respect, congratulations, prayer and greetings from Allah.

"Peace; a word from a Merciful Lord."[35]

When we utter at the end of each of our prayers:

"Greetings 'peace' to us and to the righteous servants of Allah",

with this greeting /salam/ all the dividing lines in the realm of race, absurd privileges of senility, sexuality, property, position, language, and time will be obliterated and we can establish communications with all the righteous people to whom we send our greetings.

Some Islamic quotations denote that some people go to Paradise without having settled their accounts.

When the angels ask the reason, they will be answered:

"We used to keep waiting for obedience of Allah and used to keep our patience while we were struck by disasters and why suffering from difficulties."

By hearing this answer, the angels will welcome them by saying /salamun 'alykum/ (peace be on you). [36]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"We are among those who keep their patience though our Shi'ite followers are more patient than us, for our patience is upon what we know, but they are keeping their patience as to what they do not know." [37]

Points Concerning Patience

We must regard Allah as the source of all patience:

"…and your patience is not but by Allah…"[38]

We must consider the Divine consent as the main purpose and objective of our patience, not for the sake of fame or anything else:

"And for the sake of your Lord, be patient."[39]

Patience is one of the traits of the prophets and the key to Paradise:

"Or did you suppose you would enter Paradise untouched…"[40]

Patience, when kept in the face of the calamities and the Divine trials is the criterion for cognition of the true profile of those who are patient:

"And most certainly We will try you until We have known those among you who exert themselves hard, and the patient…"[41]

Patience leads one to receive Allah's blessings:

"Those are they on whom are blessings and Mercy from their Lord…"[42]

Perhaps one of the reasons for sending greetings to the Prophet (S) and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) is that they were among the most patient of the people.

Patience with regard to faith is just like the head as for the body.

The Prophet (S) remarks:

"Patience is a part of Faith, just like the head and the body."[43]

Patience categorizes the hierarchy of those who deserve Paradise:

"These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient…"[44]

"And He will reward them for their patience, with a garden and clothes of silk (in Heaven)."[45]

Patience has got a hierarchy; and we read in an Islamic tradition that patience in case of calamities has got 300 degrees; in case of religious worship has got 600 degrees, and with regard to restraining from sins has got 900 degrees.[46]

Throughout the Qur'an, one finds that only the reward for those who are patient is so vast and is indefinitely unlimited:

"…only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure."[47]

Alongside patience, the glorious Qur'an has also dealt with the issue of gratitude as well. It also alludes to the fact that difficulties also constitute blessings:

"…for every patient, grateful one."[48]

'Patience' is involved in the will of Imam Hussayn (as) passed down to his son, Hadrat Sajjad (as):

"O my son! Be patient with the Truth even if it is bitter!"[49]

Sometimes, there are several kinds of patience observed in one occasion; as in the case of Hadrat 'Ibrahim (as) in sacrificing Ishmael, in which case, patience with regard to obedience and submission to the will of Allah, as well as patience with regard to the calamity are involved and are required.

Patience, among all, stands at the top of all perfections and virtues.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 25

وَالَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَآ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

25. "And there are those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined, and make mischief in the earth; they, theirs shall be the curse and theirs shall be the evil abode."

In some former holy verses, the traits of the possessors of intellect were explained.

As the good and evil can well be differentiated once they are compared and juxtaposed against each other, the Qur'an recounts here some of the main traits of the ones who incite corruption and those who have lost their true sense of reasoning where it says:

"And there are those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined, and make mischief in the earth; they, theirs shall be the curse and theirs shall be the evil abode."

In fact, all of their ideological and scientific corruptions can be summarized in the following three categories:

Breaking of the Divine testaments which includes the inherent testaments, the rational testaments, and, finally, the religious testaments.

Cutting off relationships, the relationship with Allah, the relationship with Divine religious leaders, the relationship with people, and the relationship with one's own self.

The last part, which is the consequence of the above two, is the corruption on the earth.

Explanations

The Qur'an refers to a group who have the opposite of the attributes which characterize the good prominent traits of the possessors of intellect as in their keeping of their promise and relationships with whatever Allah has preordained.

That is, they break their promises and cut off the relationships which have been commended to be established. Thus, there are 'evil abodes' designated for them instead of 'Ultimate abodes'.

Corruption on the Earth: There are actions dealt with in the Qur'an which are attributed to individuals, among which the Pharaoh has been noted as an example of those who incite corruption.

The Qur'an concerning him says:

"…Verily he was one of the mischief-makers."[50]

Actions like homicide, destruction of tillage and generation, inciting and provoking differences, and murder are also among the corruption cases on the earth. [51]

The Qur'an considers 'execution' or amputation for punishing of the 'corrupt ones on the earth'. And as for those who have ambitions in their thinking for corruption, the Qur'an considers them as the ones who are deprived from the Divine blessings on the Day of Resurrection.

Imam Sajjad (as) writes in his will to his son:

"Abstain from association and avoid the company of those who cut off their relationship with their relatives, for I have found them cursed in the Qur'an". [52]

Messages

The separation of man from Allah is the turning point in the onset of deviations.

Cutting off of the relationship with one's kinds is one of the capital sins, for Allah (s.w.t.) has vowed as to their punishment.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 26

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الأَخِرَةِ إِلاَّ مَتَاعٌ

26. "Allah enlarges the sustenance for whomever he pleases and straitens (it for whomever He wishes) and they rejoice in the life of the world, while the life of the world beside the Hereafter is naught but a temporary enjoyment."

The amplification and the straitening of one's means of subsistence has been attributed to Allah in this verse, but it goes without saying that the acts of Allah, the Wise, are planned according to pragmatism and are philosophical, as some of its reasons can be seen explained in some verses of the Qur'an and in the Islamic quotations.

For instance, committing sin causes changes in the life and means of subsistence of many individuals.

We read in the supplication of Kumayl that:

"O' Allah: Forgive those sins of mine which change the course of the blessings which you have bestowed upon me."

At times, the differences, which exist in one's means of subsistence, are because of the trial of these individuals.

'Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 155' says:

"And We will surely test you (all) with something of fear and hanger and loss of property, lives and fruits; but give glad tidings to the (stead fast) patient."

At times, being deprived is due to the deprivation which is inflicted on other people from their rights, like the garden which burned under fire, which Surah Al-Qalam No. 68 has made allusion to. At other times, lack of concentration on the circumstances of orphans results in straitening of one's means of subsistence.

"Nay! But you honour not the orphans."[53]

What is important is the fact that we must not feel rude and arrogant once our means of subsistence is amplified, forgetting everything; nor must we become desperate of everything when our means of subsistence is at stake, for the Divine system is one which is based on His Wisdom and has got trial basis, and it is not based on luck, chance and good omens.

Anyway, usually those who are affluent in their means of subsistence and are given sustenance in abundant, tend to forget it and ignore the Hereafter, sticking to the mortal world and its beauty, while this worldly life is nothing else but limited in its scope and is a mortal one as compared to the Hereafter, for the latter is immortal.

The verse says:

"Allah enlarges the sustenance for whomever he pleases and straitens (it for whomever He wishes) and they rejoice in the life of the world, while the life of the world beside the Hereafter is naught but a temporary enjoyment."

Explanations

One's means of subsistence depends on Him alone. It is not dependent upon one's shrewdness, bigotry, breaking of testaments, and cutting off of those relationships which probably require disbursing and giving away.

Low scale for means of subsistence is also allocated according to a divine philosophical echelon which is predetermined already.

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Furqan
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 179
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 197
4. Surah ‘Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 191
5. Surah Yūsuf, No. 12, verse 111
6. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 18
7. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 9
8. In Tafsir-us-Safi, it is quoted from Hadrat Musa-ibn-Ja‘far (as) indicating that this verse is revealed with regard to the position of the household of Muhammad (S) and their guardianship. This is the covenant of Allah.
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 124
10. Tafsir-us-Safi
11. (/fasiqin/ transgressors are)

“Those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah had commanded to be joined, and they make corruption on the Earth;...”

12. Tafsir-us-Safi
13. Surah An-Nisa’, No. 4, verse 1
14. Surah Al-Hujur at, No. 49, verse 10
15. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 28
16. Tafsir Majma‘-ul-Bayan, vol. 13, p. 54
17. Bihar, vol. 71, p. 91
18. Bihar, vol. 71, p. 91
19. Safinah, vol. 1, p. 516
20. Ghurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 4, P. 509
21. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 516
22. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 154
23. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 267
24. Surah An-Nisa, No. 4, verse 92
25. Surah Hashr, No. 53, verse 9
26. Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 2
27. Tafsir-i-Forqh an
28. Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
29. Surah Al-’Ahz ab, No. 33, verse 43
30. Surah Ghafir, No. 40, verse 7
31. Surah Ghafir, No. 40, verse 8
32. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 30
33. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 32
34. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 79
35. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 58
36. Tafsir Qurtubi
37. Tafsir Safi
38. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 127
39. Surah Al-Mudathir No. 74, verse 7
40. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 214
41. Surah Muhammad, No. 47, verse 31
42. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 157
43. Bihar, vol. 9, p. 203
44. Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 75
45. Surah Insan, No. 76, verse 12
46. Bihar, vol. 71, p. 92
47. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 10
48. Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 5
49. Bihar, vol. 70, p. 184
50. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 4
51. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 205
52. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, vol. 74, p. 197
53. Surah Al-Fajr, No. 89, verse 17

www.alhassanain.org/english

Section 4: Remembrance of Allah Sets Hearts at Rest

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 27

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَةٌ مِن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنَابَ

27. “And those who disbelieve say: ‘Why has a sign not been sent down upon him from his Lord?’ Say: ‘Verily Allah leaves to stray whomever He wills and guides unto Himself whomever turns (to Him in repentance)’.”

As there are so many topics of discussion concerning monotheism, resurrection and the mission of prophecy of the Prophet (S) included in this Surah, this verse deals once again with the Prophet of Islam’s call, discussing one of the criticisms of those obstinate dissidents, saying that the pagans claim why it is that no miracle has been bestowed upon him from his Lord as they demanded.

The verse says:

“And those who disbelieve say: ‘Why has a sign not been sent down upon him from his Lord?’…”

They expect that the Prophet (S) sits in isolation as an extraordinary being while each one of them calls on him and asks him to perform a miracle he must bring it on their request. No sooner they ask for the miracle than he has performed. Even, not withstanding that, they do not accept the faith if they are willing to do so!

Responding them, the Qur’an answers that the Prophet should tell them that Allah lets whomever He wants go astray, and whoever returns to Him will be led by Him.

The verse continues saying:

“…Say: ‘Verily Allah leaves to stray whomever He wills and guides unto Himself whomever turns (to Him in repentance)’.”

Allusion is made to the fact that their deficiency is not a matter of miracles; rather that their deficiency is from within themselves. Their obstinacy, fanaticism, ignorance, and the sins which hinder and obstruct the road to success, cause them to disbelieve.

Anyway, every prophet must have a sign from his Lord to prove his claim of his prophetic mission, which is called ‘miracle’. This miracle is naturally in some particular and identical affairs.

But those obstinate persons who did not intend to accept the truth, asked the Prophet (S) for miracles on their own request based upon their whims. Were they to stop being obstinate, the Qur’an by itself would provide them with the greatest miracle.

Sometimes, food and water is detrimental to the sick. However, this harm does not imply that there is anything wrong with the food or water. On the contrary, it is for the sake of their illness.

Certainly, those who are mentally sick, in accepting the Divine and pure verses are upset like the ones whose body is ill, for they will be provoked as soon as they are confronting the truth, and they become obstinate immediately following its presentation, then they turn away from the Truth.

And this is the very meaning of /yudill/ (leaves to stray) mentioned in the verse.

A Discussion on Leading and Misleading

Divine leadership is of two kinds: the primary leadership and the supplementary leadership.

The Divine leadership concerns all mankind

The Qur'an says:

"Verily We showed him the Way…"[1]

However, supplementary leadership only concerns those who have already accepted the former general guidance. For instance, take the case of a teacher who offers his course in an identical and monotonous way to all his students. After sometime, he tends to do more favor to those of his students who are more strenuous and hard-working.

The Qur'an says:

"And (as for) those who follow the right direction, He increases them in guidance…"[2]

And there are those who refuse to accept all the Divine verses as the Qur'an says about them.

"And there never came unto them any sign from the signs of their Lord but they turned away from it…"[3]

"And had We sent down unto you a book, written on a paper, so that they touched it with their own hands, certainly (still) the disbelievers would have said: 'That is naught but a manifest sorcery'."[4]

"…And (even) if they witness a miracle, they will not believe in it…"[5]

Would there be any other way of dealing with them except restraining them from favors and stamping them with the discarding seal?

Anyway, Allah is Wise and Just and He does all according to:

"…He guides whomever He pleases…"[6]

and,

"…leaves to stray whomever He wills…"[7]

and

"…Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills…"[8]

and

"He will forgive him whom He wills"

and

"He will punish whom He wills…"[9]

and

"He creates whatever He pleases…"[10]

All the above are to be rendered into the basis of His Justice, Wisdom, Grace, and Favour.

That is, once He says:

"…He guides whomever He pleases…"

it does not imply that He leads, regardless of all criteria, whomever He wants.

As one can conclude, from other verses, on one occasion He considers 'Faith' as the condition for being led, saying:

"…and whomever believes in Allah, He guides aright his heart…"[11]

Elsewhere, securing of consent of Allah along with taking the right path are deemed necessary for being led.

It says:

"With it Allah guides whomever follows His pleasure into the ways of safety…"[12]

Or once He says:

"…He leaves to stray whomever He wills…"[13]**,**

in another verse, He considers immoderation, hesitation and skepticism as factors for such a case of being misled.

It says:

"…Allah misleads him who is extravagant, a doubter."[14]

Anyway, if the opening of a container faces the sky the rain will enter into it, but if the opening of it faces the earth, it will not be filled with any rain and snow. So is the case with the man whose soul aspires towards material things. It is obvious that such a person will not benefit from the Divine spirituality.

The Qur'an says:

"That (Divine wrath) is because they have preferred the worldly life over the Hereafter, and definitely Allah does not guide the infidel people."[15]

Explanations

The obstinate pagans often demand new miracles every moment. The issue in question is not an outstanding miracle. Rather, it is their inherent enmity.

"…Why has a sign not been sent down upon him…"

Allah's way of treatment is concerned with leading all people:

"Verily, it is incumbent on Us to lead (them)."[16]

However, if someone took to the deviant path, Allah would ascribe to him his punishment in the form of being misled.

"…Allah leaves to stray whomever He wills…".

Submission and humility in face of Allah is the key to one's salvation and guidance

"…and guides unto Himself whomever turns (to Him in repentance)."

Leading people is up to Allah, yet His leading will be confined to those who show their preparedness already for His leadership.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 28

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلاَ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

28. "(The guided are) those who believe and their hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah. Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."

Those who acknowledge the unity of Allah and accept His attributes and the prophetic mission of His Prophet (S) and embrace whatever has been revealed from Him, and their hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah, allow Allah to soothe their hearts regarding His blessings and rewards with the thought of Him, and of His grace and favors, for Allah's promise is decisive and nothing will soothe the anxious hearts better than his Divine truthful promises.

To remember Allah does not mean merely paying lip service to Him, though it is one of the clear examples of thinking of Him. For what counts is thinking of Allah in all circumstances, in particular, at the time of committing sin.

Thinking of Allah brings with it numerous blessings, including:

The remembrance of His blessings leads one to show his gratitude for Him.

The remembrance of His Power causes one of putting his trust in Him.

The remembrance of His favours serves as the source of our love for Him.

The remembrance of His Wrath and fury inspires awe of Him in us.

The remembrance of His magnitude and greatness causes one's humility and submission towards Him.

The remembrance of His Omniscience in the open and hidden serves as an impetus for our chastity.

The remembrance of His forgiveness and generosity serves as our source of hope and repentance.

The remembrance of His justice serves as an impetus for our austerity and piety.

Man is searching the extremes and he wants absolute perfection. However, as everything, except Allah, is finite and is accidental in itself, it cannot leave one's heart in rest. In contrast to those whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah, there are also some ones whose scope of mind and vision are limited and are content with so little in this world.

The prayers consist of the remembrance of Allah and are the source of one's comfort.

The Qur'an says:

"…establish prayer for My remembrance."[17]

The holy phrase:

"Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."

might mean that by Allah's remembering you, your hearts will be at peace. That is, once we know that Allah is remembering us and we are in His presence, our hearts will be at peace.

As Hadrat Noah (as) found peace of heart by means of the Divine words:

"And make you the Ark under Our eyes…"[18]

And, Imam Hussayn (as) found peace of mind while uttered it at the time of martyrdom of his son Ali Asqar, by expressing:

"It is easy over me for verily it is before Allah."

Or, it is cited in 'Arafah supplication:

"O Reminder of the reminders."

Query: This verse remarks that all minds, and that of a believer in particular, find their peace by the remembrance of Allah, but some other verses denote that whenever the faithful believer remembers Allah, his heart trembles.

Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 2 says:

"Verily believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts quake…"

Can this kind of trembling be compatible with one's peace of mind? What is the justification for that?

Answer: To imagine how the two incompatibles, that is the peace of mind and trembling of one's heart, can be present at the same time in one person, the following examples can be leading.

Firstly: Sometimes, one has peace of mind when he has made all kinds of preparations while, at the same time, he is anxious and fears the consequences as well. The example of it is a specialized surgeon who is confident of his knowledge and job though at the time of operation of a VIP he still has his anxieties.

Secondly: the children find their peace of mind once they are with their parents, while at the same time, they fear them too.

Thirdly: Sometimes, one is happy and has his peace of mind since he knows that whatever unpleasant happens is for his trial, development and promotion. However, he is going to be anxious for not being sure whether he will succeed in his duties or not.

Fourthly: Once the believers go on reading the Qur'anic verses of punishment, Hell or of the Divine outrage, they start trembling all over. However, once they read the holy verses concerning blessings, garden of Eden and paradise, they find a sweet kind of peace of mind which brings them warm feelings.

Imam Sajjad (as) says in Abu Hamzah Supplication:

"Whenever, I remember my sins (and Your justice and Your wrath), I cry, but when I consider Your grace and Your forgiveness, I regain hope."

As an evidence for this meaning, the writer of Al-Mizan, the Late, quotes the Qur'an to be its documentation:

"…whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah…"[19]

That is, one is anxious at first though he finds peace of mind gradually.

Fifthly: He who ignores the remembrance of Allah, does not have peace of mind, in which case life becomes troublesome for him.

The Qur'an says:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance, verily for him is a life straitened…"[20]

Factors of Encourage and Peace of Mind

There may be many different causes for one's certainty and peace of mind. However, at the top of all those factors stands specifically one's awareness and knowledge.

He who is aware of the fact that his slightest piece of work will be accounted for he is hopeful on his job properly and has peace of mind thereby.

Surah Az-Zilz al, No. 99, verse 7 says:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."

He who knows that he is created out of the Divine favor, wisdom, and blessings, he is calm and hopes for and confident of Allah's bounteousness.

The Qur'an says:

"(It will be said to some) O' you serene soul!"

"Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"[21]

This means that the addressing of the Beneficent comes, saying:

O' Heavenly confident and peaceful self, 'always remembering Allah'! Return, now, to your Lord as you are pleased with His eternal blessings and He is content with your good deeds. Return and stay in line alongside My particular servants and enter My Paradise and Garden of Eden.

It is for this reason and following His remarks in this noble verse that the faithful and intimate believers are always hopeful. As an example, one finds the Late Ayatullah-ul-'Uzma Imam Khomayni, (may he rest in peace in Paradise), remarks at the end of his very important will that:

"I am departing from you while having peace of mind, and I am confident in heart, while I am happy from within and while I am hopeful in spirit for Allah's grace and forgiveness."

He who knows that Allah is All-Wise and Omniscience, and He has not created anyone in vain, is optimistic.

He who knows that his leader and his Imam is a perfect man, elected by Allah, and is innocent of every deviance and error, will be having peace of mind.

"…Verily I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind…"[22]

He who knows that his way of life is obvious and his future is going to be better than before, is confident in his soul.

"While the world to come is better and more lasting."[23]

He who knows that Allah loves the righteous has warm feelings with regard to his righteous deed.

Factors Which Generate Anxiety and Worries

One of the most common diseases of the present century is worries and anxieties, for which various reasons have been mentioned. The symptoms of this disease include, isolation, depression, inferiority complexes and purposelessness.

A depressed person becomes so because of finding that nothing is in line with his wishes, while the one must not abandon altogether those few instances which might be in keeping with his wishes for the sake of not having obtained all that he has desired.

A depressed person thinks as to why all people do not love him while such a thing is impossible in the case that even Allah and Gabriel also have got enemies. Therefore, one must not expect that all love him.

A depressed person thinks that all people are bad, while it is not so, and Allah, addressing the angels who thought so, answered them negatively.

A depressed person thinks that all the unpleasant things come from outside his self, while the main causes of frustration have their origin in reactions generating from within ourselves.

An anxious person is worried at the onset of every activity and thus he feels lonely and scared.

For repelling such a mood, Hadrat Ali (as) says:

"When you are afraid of something, cast yourself in it."[24]

This means that you may make yourself involved in whatever you are scared of, for fear of everything exceeds its own limits.

An anxious person worries as what will occur in future. This case may be treated by trusting Allah and by one's own perseverance.

As one has been frustrated in some of his affairs, he may worry as to be frustrated in all circumstances.

As one relies on individuals and some powers which are not sustaining, one will be anxious and worried once those sources of power are shaken.

Briefly, and concisely, such cases as lack of gratitude for one's services by the people, feelings of guilt, fear of death, being brain-washed by the family as to the lack of one's power to cope with problems and his lack of knowledge of those things, and jumping to conclusions are some of the factors which cause anxieties and can be adequately dealt with by Allah's remembrance, His power, His amnesty, and His favor which all bring one's peace of mind.

The verse says:

"(The guided are) those who believe and their hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah. Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 29

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَأَبٍ

29. "Those who believe and do righteous deeds; joy is for them, and a goodly (final) return."

People are in four categories:

Believers:

Those who both believe and their acts are righteous.

Pagans:

Those who are neither believers nor their acts are decent.

The evil-doers:

Those who are believers but their acts are not righteous and decent.

The hypocrites:

Those who are not believers but their apparent acts are decent.

The Arabic term /tūb a/ is either an infinitive, or it is the feminine gender of /'atyab/ which means 'the best'. We have not got any example specific to this meaning in the verse to include all the utmost good ones.

Perhaps, we have it in a quotation that /tūb a/ is a tree which has its roots in the house of the Prophet (S) and that of Ali (as), and its branches cast their shadow over the faithful[25], in which case this serves as an allegory that all the good have their origin in pledge of and are somehow connected to the celestial leaders.

When some short-sighted persons criticized the Prophet (S) as to:

"Why you kiss Fatimah Zahra (as) so much?"

He (S) said:

"When I was taken to Paradise at the night of Mi'raj, I ate from the fruit of the 'Tūb a tree' out of which Fatimah (as) has been originated and appeared, and whenever I desire the scent of Paradise, I smell my daughter, Fatimah"[26].

The success of the unbelievers and those who are distanced from good acts is not profound.

As Hadrat Ali (as) says:

"There is no good in pleasures which are ensued by the Fire of Hell" [27]

Explanations

1. The sweet worldly life as well as the happy ending of the life in Hereafter will only be procured with faith and decent righteous behaviour.

2. Success in this world makes sense and is of value when coupled with happy ending of the life Hereafter. How happy they are and what a good happy ending awaits them.

The verse says:

"Those who believe and do righteous deeds; joy is for them, and a goodly (final) return."

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 30

كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهَآ أُمَمٌ لِّتَتْلُوَا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ

30. "Thus did We send you among a nation before whom (other) nations have (come and) passed away, in order that you might recite to them whatever We have revealed to you, whereas they reject the Beneficent (Allah). Say: 'He is my Lord, there is no god but He; on Him only I rely, and unto Him is my return."

We have already discussed about the Divine blessings which are conferred upon the people who are believers and the righteous and the rewards they deserve.

Now, Allah (s.w.t.) deals with the blessing of the prophetic mission bestowed on the highly-esteemed Prophet of Islam (S), implying that as We provided the believers and the righteous with the blessings of reward, We designated your Ummat with the utmost blessing of your celestial prophetic mission.

Some commentators have argued that this signifies that: As We commissioned prophets for previous nations, We thus also sent you for the nation of Islam. Your nation is not the first one. Before this nation, there have also been other nations and tribes as well.

The verse says:

"Thus did We send you among a nation before whom (other) nations have (come and) passed away…"

The main purpose and objective of your heavenly mission is to read to them the Qur'an, which is Our revelation revealed to you, so as to enable them to engage in meditation about its instructive contents and topics and learn admonitions and draw lessons from them.

However, the tribe of Quraysh are blasphemous about 'Rahman' (the Beneficent) and say that they know 'Allah', but they do not know Rahman (The Beneficent). The Prophet (S) was commanded to tell them that

'Rahman' (The Beneficent) is his Lord, the One Whom they deny and ignore, and Who is unique and peerless.

The Beneficent is his Creator and his administrator to whom he has left all his affairs to administer, and he has made allegiance to His obedience and submit to His verdict. And his return is towards Him and his repentance involves Him alone.

The verse continues saying:

"…in order that you might recite to them whatever We have revealed to you, whereas they reject the Beneficent (Allah). Say: 'He is my Lord, there is no god but He; on Him only I rely, and unto Him is my return."

Explanations

1- The prophetic mission of the blissful Prophet (S) has occurred among the nation of Arabs, yet other verses of the Qur'an are explicit in declaring that he is the prophet of all nations.

"And We have not sent you but to all mankind…"[28]

2- The prophetic mission of the godly prophets is a Divine tradition and it is based on His grace and His blessings. And the duty which is incumbent on the prophets is conveying the Divine revelations and ordinances to the people.

3- Reasons and rationale for our faith in Allah and the issues involved are: His Lordship (my Lord), His Unitarianism (there is no god but He), His provision of asylum for all (I rely only on Him), and our return is to Him (unto Him is my return).

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 31

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرءَاناً سُيِّـرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّـعَتْ بِهِ الأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّـمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتَي بِل لِلَّهِ الأَمْرُ جَمِيعاً
أَفَلَمْ يَيْأْسِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَن لَوْ يَشَآءُ اللَّهُ لَهَدَي النَّاسَ جَمِيعاً وَلاَ يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُم بِمَا
صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيباً مِن دَارِهِمْ حَتي يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

31. "And if there were a Qur'an by which the mountains were moved or the earth were cloven asunder with it, or the dead were made to speak thereby, (still they would not believe). But the affair is Allah's altogether. Have not those who believe yet known that if Allah had willed He would certainly have guided all the people? And (as for) those who disbelieve, there will not cause to afflict them because of what they do a calamity, or it will alight close to their habitation, until Allah's promise comes. Verily Allah will not fail the tryst."

The Occasion of the Revelation

Some great commentators have claimed that this holy verse has been revealed in response to a group of pagans of Mecca who were sitting next to the door of Ka'bah and had sent after the Prophet (S) who hoping to lead them, came to them.

They said that if he wanted them to follow him, he should remove back the mountains of Mecca by his Qur'an so that the tight and limited land there would become vast.

They told the Prophet (S) that he considered himself no less in rank than Dawūd for whose sake Allah had conquered the mountains; or he should

conquer wind for them as it was over dominated by Sulayman; or he should enliven his grandfather 'Qasiy' (the grandfather of Quraysh) because Jesus (as) used to make the dead alive, and he was no less than him.

At this time, the verse was revealed implying that what they said was because of their obstinacy and not for embracing the Faith.

As was already mentioned in the discussion of the occasion of revelation, this verse was revealed in response to the pagans' pretexts which were raised owing to their obstinacy and not for the sake of embracing the faith. They asked for performing extemporarily miracles from the Prophet (S).

Allah says:

"And if there were a Qur'an by which the mountains were moved or the earth were cloven asunder with it, or the dead were made to speak thereby, (still they would not believe). But the affair is Allah's altogether…"

However, all of these are at His disposal and thus He does whatever He deems fit.

Nevertheless, you are not seeking the truth and if you were, you could be content with the signs which have already been exposed to you by the Prophet (S).

Then, the Qur'an adds:

"…Have not those who believe yet known that if Allah had willed He would certainly have guided all the people?…"

But, He will never do so, because such a compulsory faith lacks any value and is devoid of all kinds of spirituality and development which man needs.

Then the verse implies that the pagans are always at the stake and mercy of the invasion from pounding calamities for their deeds, which are damaging and devastating to them in the form of the fights of the Islamic warriors.

The verse continues saying:

"…And (as for) those who disbelieve, there will not cause to afflict them because of what they do a calamity…"

And in case that such disasters are not inflicted upon them within their houses, they enter near their houses so as to provide lessons for them and be shaken in order to return to Allah.

The verse says:

"…or it will alight close to their habitation…"

And such warnings will continue ever more till the ultimate decree of Allah will be issued.

Such an order might concern and be an allusion to death or reference to the Day of Judgment, or, as some claim, it may be a hint to the 'Conquest of Mecca' which devastated the last bastion of the enemies.

The verse adds:

"…until Allah's promise comes…"

Anyway, Allah's promise is decisive and He will never break His promise or deviate from its conditions.

The verse concludes:

"…Verily Allah will not fail the tryst."

Explanations

This holy verse explains the utmost climax of the hostility and obstinacy of the pagans, just like verse 111 of Surah Al-'An'am which says:

"And even if We sent down the angels to them, and the dead spoke to them and We mustered all things before them, (even then) they would not believe…"

The Qur'an is a Book which has shaken what has been firmer than mountains and has enlivened those who have been deadlier than the mortally dead. It has provided life for the dead mind and souls and the stone-hearted ignorant Arab people, and if there were a Book to be able to move mountains, and rise the dead, it is this same Qur'an.

One may conclude from remarks made by Imam Kazim (as) that there are clues and secrets in the Qur'an by which one can conquer nature.

Incidentally, do not expect all to accept the Faith as hostility and obstinacy are both inherent incurable diseases of human societies. If one is seeking after the Truth, one miracle is more than enough for him to accept the Faith. But, if someone is obstinate, he may ignore even the most explicit miracle.

Miracles are under Allah's control and not to be incited on proposals and whims of obstinate people. In the meantime, Allah's Will is toward voluntary guidance of man, and it is not based on their compulsion and toward forceful scrutiny.

Pagans must expect strikes from Allah on their country and on their borders and the Divine warnings sometimes come to us directly and are directed toward us and sometimes they come indirectly and are directed to others and the regions in our neighboring.

"…And (as for) those who disbelieve, there will not cause to afflict them because of what they do a calamity…"

The pagan people are always in the course of devastating and pounding catastrophes and extensive accidents because of their paganism and their heinous deeds, namely wars, famine, massacre, entanglement, etc., so that they may witness the punishment of their evil and viscous deeds and be therefore warned against them.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'Ins an, No. 76, verse 3
2. Surah Muhammad, No. 47, verse 17
3. Surah Al-'An' am, No. 6, verse 4
4. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 7
5. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 25
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 142
7. verse under discussion
8. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 212
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 284
10. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 47
11. Surah At-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 11
12. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 16
13. The verse under discussion
14. Surah Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 34
15. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 107
16. Surah Al-Layl, No. 92, verse 12
17. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 14
18. Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 37
19. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 23
20. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 124
21. Surah Al-Fajr, No. 89, verses 27 and 28
22. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 124
23. Surah 'A'la, No. 87, verse 17
24. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 362
25. Bih ar, vol. 8, p. 117, 120
26. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 188
27. Bihar, vol. 41, p. 104
28. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 28

Section 5: Messengers of Allah Were Mocked At

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 32

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ

32. “And messengers before you were certainly mocked at, but I gave respite to those who disbelieved, then I seized them (in My Wrath); then (see) how was My retribution?”

Addressing the Prophet (S), He proclaims in this verse that you are not the only one who is confronted various requests and proposals for explicit miracles by this pagan group and who is mocked and ridiculed by them.

This matter has a long record in the history of the prophets and many of the prophets prior to you were also mocked and ridiculed. However, We did not punish those pagans immediately.

On the contrary, we provided them with a second chance so as to enable them to wake up and return to the path of the truth or, at least, to be provided with a sufficient ultimatum. For, though they are vicious and guilty, there is still room for Allah’s favor, grace, and wisdom.

The verse says:

“And messengers before you were certainly mocked at, but I gave respite to those who disbelieved…”

Anyway, this opportunity and delay does not mean that their punishment is a forgotten affair. Therefore, We then captured them after the expiry of the date of their respite. And so did you note or witness as to how our punishment was? This fate will also be the destiny awaiting your obstinate nation as well.

The verse continues saying:

“…then I seized them (in My Wrath); then (see) how was My retribution?”

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 33

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَآءَ قُلْ سَمُّوهُمْ أَمْ تُنَبِّـُٔونَهُ بِمَا لاَ يَعْلَمُ فِي الأَرْضِ أَم بِظَاهِرٍ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زُيِّـنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

33. “Is He then Who watches every soul as to what it earns (like the idols)? And yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say: ‘Name them! Do you inform Him of something (partners) He does not know in the earth, or is it (just) a show of words?’ Rather, to those who disbelieve their devising are made to appear fair seeming, and they are kept back from the (right) path; and whomever Allah leaves to stray, for him there will be no guide.”

How is it That You Align and Consider Allah as a Counterpart for the Idols?

The Qur’an then returns to the issue of monotheism and paganism in this verse. It addresses the people with this clear evidence and asks: Can one put Him on a parity? Is He Who overlooks all and is the protector and guardian of all, and witnesses the action of all equal with the one who lacks all the above characteristics?

The verse says:

"Is He then Who watches every soul as to what it earns (like the idols)?…"

To supplement His previous discussion and to present an introduction for the next discussion, He asserts:

"…And yet they ascribe partners to Allah…"

Allah provides answers for them using different methods immediately.

At first He commands:

"…Say: 'Name them!…"

That is, how would you consider as counterparts for Allah the Almighty, a number of anonymous beings which lack any title and value, and are ineffective?

Secondly, as about the issue which predisposes one to ask how such partners exist for Allah whom He is not aware of their existence despite His Omniscience.

The Qur'an inquires:

"…Do you inform Him of something (partners) He does not know in the earth…"

Thirdly, the fact is that you yourselves are not confident from the bottom of your heart that such a thing may exist, is evident from uttering the words 'shadowy appearance' in which there is no correct concept implied and you have sufficed to it.

The Qur'an continues saying:

"…or is it (just) a show of words?'…"

It is for this reason that these pagans call on Allah when they are caught in the hard entanglements of life, for they know clearly in their hearts that the idols are of no use.

Fourthly, as the pagans lack a correct understanding and as they imitate and follow blindly their whims, they are not able to judge rationally and correctly.

It is for this reason that they are misled and seduced in this manner. However, in the view of the pagans, their lies have been decorated (and as a result of their inner wickedness are of the opinion that their thinking is identical with reality).

The verse says:

"…Rather, to those who disbelieve their devising are made to appear fair seeming…"

And they have been obstructed from Allah's path.

And whomever Allah considers as seduced, that is, after delivering ultimatum on him, no other one can lead him and direct him to the right path.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they are kept back from the (right) path;"

'The Divine astray' signifies the reaction of one's own incorrect behaviour which are misleading for him, and as this trait and quality has been involved in such acts, they are being attributed to Allah.

The verse says:

"…and whomever Allah leaves to stray, for him there will be no guide."

Incidentally, the fact that Allah is 'the guardian of all' denotes that He administers all affairs, is the protector of everything, is qualified and capable for them, superintends, records and registers everything, and whoever departs from the knowledgeable, single, unique and protecting Allah, will be entangled in the abyss of paganism and polytheism.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 34

لَّهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُم مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَاقٍ

34. "There is chastisement for them in the life of the world, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and for them shall not be against (the Wrath of) Allah any protector."

The Qur'an makes allusions in this verse to the painful punishments which will face them in this world and the hereafter. These chastisements naturally include defeats, frustrations, misfortunes, damaging to one's reputation and so forth.

It implies that there are punishments for them in this world, and the punishment of the hereafter is harder and more intensive, for it is eternal, physical and spiritual, coupled with all kinds of discomfort.

The verse says:

"There is chastisement for them in the life of the world, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous…"

And if they think that there is any way out of these, or they contemplate on some means of defense, they are making a grave mistake, for, nothing will protect them from Allah's Wrath.

The verse continues saying:

"…and for them shall not be against (the Wrath of) Allah any protector."

Explanations

The punishment in the Hereafter is hard, for:

All means and devices will be cut in the Doomsday.

"…and their ties (between them) are cut asunder."[1]

Kinship will be of no use:

"…there shall be no ties of relationship between them on that day…"[2]

No sacrifices will be accepted.

A culprit is ready to sacrifice all his kin and even the entire world:

"…the guilty one would fain redeem…"[3]

Offering apologies is not useful:

"The Day on which the excuse of the unjust shall not benefit (them)…"[4]

One's friends mind their own business and abandon one another:

"And friend shall not ask friend."[5]

It is continuous and everlasting:

"Abiding therein forever, the torment shall not be lightened for them…"[6]

No alleviation would be condescended to:

"…the torment shall not be lightened for them…"[7]

It will be both bodily and spiritual:

"Taste you (this)! Verily you are Mighty, full of Honour!"[8]

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 35

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الاَنْهَارُ أُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا تِلْكَ عُقْبَي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَعُقْبَي الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ

35. "The likeness of the Garden (of bliss) which the pious are promised, (is such that) beneath it rivers flow, its fruits and its shades are everlasting. This is the End of those who keep from evil, and the End of the unbelievers is the Fire."

From among the methods of education in the Qur'an, one can cite comparison and evaluation among individual's cases and the end-result of the truth and the untruth.

Therefore, as the future of the pagans was already explained in the previous verse, the ultimate destiny of the men of virtue is being discussed in his verse so that one can select his own way of life with a more and better understanding when comparing the two.

Therefore, this noble verse deals with Resurrection and specifically with the blessings of Paradise and with the infernal punishments.

At first, it says:

"The likeness of the Garden (of bliss) which the pious are promised, (is such that) beneath it rivers flow…"

The second attribute relating to the Gardens of the Paradise is that their fruits are everlasting and perennial. They are not of the sort of this world in which case the fruits are seasonal and appear only in certain seasons, or under certain circumstances.

In this life, the fruits sometimes disappear altogether in some years because of pestilence and for unforeseen reasons. Their shadow is also eternal.

The verse says:

"…its fruits and its shades are everlasting…"

One can conclude from this sentence that the Gardens of the Paradise have no autumn and one may conclude still further that illumination of light, or similar to it, also exists in Paradise in its nature.

At the end of the holy verse, after recounting the three-fold characteristics of Paradise, the Qur'an implies: Such is the ultimate destiny of the devout and the pious, though the fate of the pagans is Fire and inferno.

The verse says:

"…This is the End of those who keep from evil…"

In this beautiful meaning, the blessings of Paradise have been explained in detail and with delicacy. However, with regard to the inhabitants of Hell, He remarks in a short, harsh, and rough tone:

"…and the End of the unbelievers is the Fire."

Anyway, Paradise is a compensation for one's virtuosity and it will not be offered to anyone undue.

The reward of the devout and self-abstaining from the worldly sins, is eternal happiness in Hereafter.

"…its fruits and its shades are everlasting."

And whatever one can make out of the Paradise is similar and like that one,

"the likeness of the Garden (of bliss)…".

Otherwise, the Paradise is not to be comprehended fully by some limited beings such as us.

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 36

وَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الأَحْزَابِ مَن يُنكِرُ بَعْضَهُ قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلاَ أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُوا وإِلَيْهِ مأَبِ

36. "And those people to whom We have given the Book will rejoice in what has been sent down to you. And of the clans are some who deny a part of it. Say: 'Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah and not to associate (aught) with Him. Unto Him (only) I invite (you), and unto Him is my return'."

Of course, accepting the verses is important, however, their acceptance and embracing of them eagerly and with joy is of more significance.

The different kinds of reactions of the people as to the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an have been alluded to in this verse. It illustrates how the truth-seeking individuals and the truth-loving ones embraced and submitted to whatever was revealed to the Prophet of Islam (S) while the hostile and obstinate individuals started their opposition to it.

It says:

"And those people to whom We have given the Book will rejoice in what has been sent down to you…"

That is, the Truth seekers from among the Jews and the Christians and the like of them are happy for the revelation of these verses to you, because, on the one hand, they witness that as consonant and harmonious with the signs and symbols which they have at their disposal, while, on the other hand, they are finding it as a source of freedom and salvation for themselves from the vices generated by the superstitions of seemingly scholars of Christian and Jewish and the like of them which have placed them under the yoke, and thus have deprived them of the intellectual freedom and human development.

Then the Qur'an implies that, however, some parties negate parts of the verses which have been revealed to you.

The verse says:

"…And of the clans are some who deny a part of it…"

The purpose in mind of these disbelieving groups has been the population of the Jews and of the Christians who were not submitting even to their own faith and in face of their own celestial Book because of their tribal and religious fanaticism which had dominated them. They were in fact some groups and parties which followed only their own line.

It might also concern those pagans who had no specific religion or way of life. Rather, they were groups and parties which were dispersed

originally, though their opposition to the Qur'an and Islam had made them united.

At the end of the holy verse, He commands the Prophet (S) that he must be headless with regard to this and that one's opposition and obstinacy.

On the contrary, he should stand in line with his original and direct path and state that he is only commissioned by Allah to worship the only Allah and does not associate any partners for Him; and that he calls and directs to Him and his return, and every one's return is to him.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah and not to associate (aught) with Him. Unto Him (only) I invite (you), and unto Him is my return'."

Here allusion is made to the fact that the true monotheist and real theist has no other lines and schedule to follow except submission to all of Allah's commandments.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنزَلْنَاهُ حُكْماً عَرَبِيّاً وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم بَعْدَ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَالَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ وَاقٍ

37. "And thus have We sent it (the Qur'an) (as a true) authority in the Arabic, and if you follow their low desires after what has come to you of knowledge, there shall not be for you against Allah any guardian or a protector."

The appointment of the prophets and the revelation of the celestial Books are the wise Divine way of treatment. Therefore, He implies in this verse that as We sent the people of the Book and the former prophets celestial Books, We also revealed this Qur'an to the Prophet of Islam (S) while it contains clear and obvious commandments.

The verse says:

"And thus have We sent it (the Qur'an) (as a true) authority in the Arabic…"

It is cited in the commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan: The reason as to why the Qur'an has been called commandments is that there are commandments in it as to what is allowed and what is prohibited.

And the reason why it is called Arabic is that its bearer has been an Arab prophet.

In other words, the application of the word /'arabiyyan/, mentioned in the verse, is a reference to the fact that the language of the Messenger of Allah (S) has been Arabic, for which reason Allah's way of treatment has been such that every prophet must communicate His Book through the language of his own people and, hence, He remarks in Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 4:

"We sent no prophet except the ones who communicated in the language of their own people."

And, in order that we know that Allah has no kinship with anyone, and even if the prophets supposedly go a wrong way, they will be faced with the Divine punishment, addressing the Prophet (S) with a threatening and decisive tone of voice, the Qur'an implies that: if he follows their whims

after having been briefed, he will receive Divine punishment and no body will be able to protect and preserve him as against Allah's power.

The verse says:

"…and if you follow their low desires after what has come to you of knowledge, there shall not be for you against Allah any guardian or a protector."

Although there was certainly no probability for the Prophet (S) to be deviant with such a stage of chastity, knowledge and awareness, this meaning makes it clear that Allah entertains no special relationship with any one. Even if the Prophet (S) enjoys an elevated position, it is because of his submission servitude, faith, and his perseverance.

It has been cited in the Majma'-ul-Bayan that although this meaning is addressed to the Prophet of Islam (S), the main objective is his followers.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 166
2. Surah Al-Mu'minūn, No. 23, verse 101
3. Surah Al-Ma' arij, No. 70, verses 11 to 16
4. Surah Al-Ghafir, No. 40, verse 52
5. Surah Al-Ma' arij, No. 70, verse 106
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 162
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 162
8. Surah Ad-Dukhan, No. 44, verse 49

Section 6: The Two Witnesses of the Truth

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 38

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلاً مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجاً وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

38. “And indeed We sent Messengers before you, and appointed for them wives and children; and it was not for any Messenger to bring a sign (miracle), but by Allah’s permission. For every term there is a book prescribed.”

The appointment of the prophets is one of the Divine ways of treatment, and performing of miracles is not achieved on request or upon the wishes of people. On the contrary, it occurs with Allah’s permission.

Incidentally, the prophets used to live like other people and they had wives and children. The verse says:

“And indeed We sent Messengers before you, and appointed for them wives and children…”

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“We are the children of Hadrat Muhammad (S) and our mother has been Fatimah (as). And Allah has given none of the prophets anything which has not been provided for Hadrat Mohammad (S).”

Then, he recited the above mentioned verse.[1]

And in another quotation, he (as) remarks:

“We are the descendents of the Messenger of Allah.”[2]

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an declares that there is a book for everything which Allah has ordained, therein everything is recorded like one’s life-span, death, and other affairs each of which is subject to the time when Allah has assigned according to His Own discretion.

The verse says:

“…and it was not for any Messenger to bring a sign (miracle), but by Allah’s permission. For every term there is a book prescribed.”

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 39

يَمْحُواْ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِندَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

39. “Allah effaces out whatever He pleases and He confirms (similarly), and with Him is the Mother (Basic Source) of the Book.”

The Qur’anic sentence:

“Allah effaces out whatever He pleases and He confirms (similarly)”

presents a universal law which has been alluded to in the various Islamic texts. It states that the actualization of the various beings and events in the world follows two stages:

The stage of decisiveness within which no changes may occur, (and it has been referred to in the verse as ‘the Mother of the Book’). The other stage or the second stage, within which changes may occur, is referred to, here, as the effacement and confirmation stage.

The verse says:

“Allah effaces out whatever He pleases and He confirms (similarly), and with Him is the Mother (Basic Source) of the Book.”

At times, these two stages are referred to as ‘the Preserved Table’ and ‘the Effacement and Confirmation Tablet.’ It seems as though no alteration can find its way in one of the above Tables and it is completely preserved, while the other Table is prone to undergo changes, something may be written on it and then can be wiped out or something else be written instead of it.

Imam Baqir (as) has been quoted as saying:

“There are some events which are certain to happen while there are others which are dependent on some conditions and circumstance with Allah, each of which He deems He precedes it and each of which He wills He effaces it and confirms the other, as He chooses.”[3]

Anyway, according to what is concluded from the verses of the Qur’an and quotations, all pre-ordained Divine acts are of two kinds.

Those matters which should be everlasting and thus their laws are also perennial like the verses which say:

“My word shall not be changed…”[4]

and where it says:

“every thing has its exact measurement before Allah.[5]

Or where it implies that Such pre-determined acts are kept recorded in the preserved table:

“In a guarded tablet…”[6]

and:

“It is a written Book,”

“Those who are drawn near (to Allah) shall witness it.”[7]

Those matters which are uncertain and their expediency depends on the people’s behaviour, such as people’s repentance from sin which is ensued by forgiveness as it is expedient, or donation to charity which is expedient for the repulsion of calamities, or oppression and cruelty which causes Divine punishment for the corruption which goes with it; that is, Allah is not confined in His administration of the universe as His infinite wisdom and His Omniscience and because of the change of conditions, He can introduce changes in His system of creation and laws.

It goes without saying that such changes are not signs of His ignorance or reconsideration or His regret, but they are based on His Wisdom and changes in conditions or the end of the cycle of that matter. The Glorious Qur’an has many examples for this meaning, among which are the following:

“…Call upon Me, I will answer you…”[8]

Man can obtain one’s interests with supplication calling and prayer and changes his own destiny.

“…Allah may after that bring about reunion.”[9]

The Divine law is not constantly the same everywhere. Probably, Allah introduces a new plan with the emergence of the necessary conditions.

“…every moment He is in a state (of glory).”[10]

That is, He tends to a particular task in completing His grace and blessings to people.

“…but when they turned aside, Allah made their hearts turn aside…”[11]

"And if the people of the towns had believed and kept from evil, We would have certainly opened up for them blessings…"[12]

Allah's wrath course will be diverted by His grace and blessings.

"Verily Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition…"[13]

Allah does not change the destiny of any nation unless they alter themselves.

"Except him who repents and believes and does good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones…"[14]

"…but if you revert (to your sins) We shall (also) revert (to Our punishment)…"[15]

Question: If the knowledge of Allah is identical with His Essence and it is unchangeable, then whatever there has been in His knowledge must be executed, otherwise, it is identical with ignorance.

Answer: Allah's knowledge is based on the system of means and devices. That is, He knows that if such an instrument is used it will result in a specific conclusion, and if the other one is used such a thing will ensue; and thus His knowledge is not apart from the knowledge of causes and devices. [16]

One of the criticisms, which is proposed by the Sunni people as against the Shiites, is that they claim: The Shi'ites regard /bida'/ (change in an earlier divine ruling, or heresy) for Allah, and they imagine that /bida'/ means change in the Divine knowledge and discovery of the offence for Allah.

While what the Shi'ites have in mind is not so and their objective is the appearance of something which we human beings imagined the reverse of it before.

The Arabic term /bida'/ in creation is like 'abrogation in law'. That is, as if we consider by the appearance of a regulation or a verdict that it is binding and continuous, while after sometime we notice that it has been changed.

Certainly, it does not follow that the law-maker has been regretting or he has been ignorant of it. Rather, the circumstances have led to these changes in the law, just like a prescription which the physician changes in accordance with the existing conditions of the sick.

However, as soon as the patient's mood changes, the physician issues a new prescription. Therefore, similar to the case of abrogation in the verses, which in fact is regarded as a kind of /bida'/, and is accepted by all of the Islamic sects, they must also accept /bida'/ in this very stated sense. Thus, /bida'/ signifies our ignorance and not of Allah's ignorance.

Some Examples of "bida'"

We thought that when Allah ordered Hadrat 'Ibrahim (as) to decapitate his son, He wanted Ishmael (as) to be killed and his blood be shed on the earth. But, it was later revealed that the Divine Will had been to put the father to the test and not to kill the son.

Concerning the issue of Allah's having a date with Hadrat Mūsa (as), we thought that the course of supplication and talking to Allah would take 30 nights:

"And made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights…",[17]

however, we found later that the course has been for forty nights from the beginning. At first 30 nights and later 10 nights were added.

We thought that the qiblah of the Muslims has been Bayt-ul-Muqaddas forever. However, the verses clarified for us the change of qiblah, telling us that our constant qiblah has been Ka'bah.

When the signs of Allah's wrath appeared, even Hadrat Yūnus (as) became confident that the Divine punishment was certain to come and that his infidel nation would perish. Thus, he went out from among the people, but the people accepted the faith and Allah's wrath was removed:

"…except the people of Jonah (Yūnus)? When they believed, We removed from them the penalty…"[18]

Anyway, the meaning of /bida'/ is not Allah's ignorance and changing of His knowledge, for Allah knew from the beginning that the blood of Ishmael would not be shed; or the course of Moses' supplication and talking to Allah would last for forty nights; the qiblah of the Muslims would be Ka'bah; and the nation of Yūnus would deserve being saved.

However, the apparent picture of the commandments and events were such that man had a different thought. Thus, no change has occurred in the Divine knowledge and it is we whose view has undergone changes.

In this stated sense /bida'/ has got numerous educational implications, among which is that man is hopeful for changes of conditions till the last minutes of his life. The spirit of trust enlivens in him and he will not fall into the trap of outward aspects.

Thus man's faith in the invisible world and Allah's power may increase; and by way of repentance, donations and prayers, he seeks to change the course of accidents and the Divine wrath.

Imam Sadiq (as) has remarked:

"Allah has pledged faith in /bida'/ accompanied with Unity from all prophets."

In another tradition, we are advised that whoever thinks that a new problem has been clarified for Allah which He did not know already, we should try to avoid him[19].

Explanations

Allah has open hands for changes in the system of creation and divine religion:

"Allah effaces out whatever He pleases…"

Allah has not left the creation process to itself.

"Allah effaces out whatever He pleases and He confirms (similarly)…"

The obliteration or reconfirmation of the laws, which govern the universe, are in His Own hands.

The effacement and the confirmation of the laws done by Allah are based on His Knowledge and Wisdom.

"…and with Him is the Mother (Basic source) of the Book."

The world of creation has a registry book in which all events are recorded.

Some Traditions

1- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has been quoted as having asked the Prophet (S) with regard to the above verse, and he (S) said:

"I illuminate your eyes with the interpretation of this verse and I also illuminate the eye of my Ummah after me by its interrelation: Charity given in its proper place, and kindness to one's parents and achieving any other good deeds, done in a correct manner, convert unhappiness into happiness, and prolong one's life, and prevent dangers." [20]

Allusion is made here to the fact that happiness or wretchedness is not an unavoidable matter. Even if man has done certain jobs which align him along the line of the wretched ones, he can still change his position and his destiny by turning to good things, especially helping and serving the people, since the room for these affairs is 'the Table of effacement and confirmation' and not 'the Mother of the Book'!

Imam Ali-Ibn-il-Hussayn, Zany-ul-' Abidin (as) has also been quoted as saying:

"If there were not one verse in the Qur'an, I would foretell for you all the events of the past and the future until the Day of Resurrection."

The one quoting the tradition says he asked which verse he (as) meant.

He answered:

"Allah said: 'Allah effaces out whatever He pleases and He confirms (similarly), and with Him is the Mother (Basic Source) of the Book'."

This tradition provides the reason that at least a part of the knowledge of the great leaders of the religion, regarding the different events, concerns 'the Table of effacement and confirmation', and 'the Preserved Table', with all its traits, is peculiar to Allah, and He instructs only those parts of it that He deems worthy to those special servants whom He considers as suitable.

2- Imam Baqir (as) has been quoted as saying:

"Some events are certain to happen and they do become realized. And there are some other events which are depended on conditions and are conditional before Allah; whichever He deems fit, He will give it the priority and whichever He pleases, He will efface out, and whichever He pleases, He will confirm." [21]

Therefore, we have it in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Allah, Almighty and Glorious, sent no prophets except that He took these three pledges from him: Confession as to be subservient and subject to Allah; negation of all kinds of paganism; and the acceptance of this creed that Allah gives priority to whatever He pleases and delays whatever He pleases." [22]

In fact, the first testament is concerned with obedience and submission to Allah, and the second one relates to the campaign against the paganism, and the third one relates to the subject of /bida'/, the result of which is that man's destiny is in his own hands and by changing the conditions, he can be covered by Allah's favor or by His punishment.

Finally, the Shi'ite scholars, basing their argument on the above, are of the opinion that when /bida'/ is attributed to Allah, it may be rendered as /'ibd a'/, that is, the appearance of something which was not apparent formerly and what would not be predicted.

As for attributing this matter to the Shi‘ites, that they believe that Allah sometimes regrets His Own acts or becomes aware about what He did not know already, is of the greatest crimes and is of the most unforgiving accusations.

Therefore, some of the Imams have been quoted as saying:

“He who believes that something will be revealed and exposed to Allah today which He was not aware of yesterday, then such a person must be abhorred and detested.” [23]

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 40

وإِن مَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلاغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

40. “And We will either let you see part of what We promise them or cause you to die, for your duty is only to make (the Message) reach them, while (calling them) to account is on Us.”

One must conclude of all that what is being observed of Allah’s favour on the Muslims and the Divine punishment over the pagans is only some partial actualization of the Divine promises.

Even the death of such individuals as the dear Prophet of Islam (S) cannot hinder the actualization of the Divine promises which will be realized at the time when predicted.

Therefore, in this verse, concerning the divine penalties which the Prophet (S) was promising and they were expecting them and even they criticized as to why his promises were not fulfilled, He says to him:

And if parts of what We have promised them would be shown to you in your life-time as of your victory and of their defeat as well as ‘the liberation of your followers and the capture of their followers’ or We would make you pass away before such promises are materialized, under all such circumstances your duty and mission has been to convey your prophetic mission’s message and the settlement of accounts with them is on Us.

The verse says:

“And We will either let you see part of what We promise them or cause you to die, for your duty is only to make (the Message) reach them, while (calling them) to account is on Us.”

In the meantime, one concludes from this verse that Islam will dominate all other religions, and within the Prophet’s lifetime and after his death, the roots of paganism will be eradicated.

And this meaning is reconfirmed by verse 33 of the Surah At-Taubah which says:

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it.”

Imam Baqir (as) said:

“This process goes on at the time of Hadrat-i-Mahdi (a.j.) when no one will remain on the earth unless he confesses to the prophetic mission of Mohammad (S).” [24]

Surah Ar-Ra‘d - Verse 41

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الأَرْضَ نَنقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لاَ مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

41. "Do they not see that We come unto the earth and reduce it from its sides? And (were) Allah commands, there is no reverser for His command, and He is swift in reckoning."

We read in various Islamic quotations that the objective of reducing the sides of the earth means the loss of lives of the great scholars. [25]

One must take lessons from the history and the ultimate end of the life of the predecessors, and thus not to be skeptic about the promises and the testaments of Allah.

The termination of governments and personalities depend on the Divine Will, and the theocracy and the commands of Allah are not vulnerable.

The verse says:

"Do they not see that We come unto the earth and reduce it from its sides? And (were) Allah commands, there is no reverser for His command…"

Incidentally, it is clear that the meaning of 'the earth' in here is the inhabitants of the earth. That is: 'Do they not notice the reality that the tribes, civilizations, and governments are constantly falling and are being annihilated?'

And this provides a warning to all people, including the good and the evil, even in cases of the scholars and the learned men of human communities in which once a member of them dies, the entire world may sometimes suffer from shortcomings, which case is self-explanatory and shaking.

Then the holy verse implies that the administration and the issuing of decrees are His Own monopolies and no one else is in a position to reject those commands or obstruct His decrees, and He is fast in setting accounts.

The verse says:

"…and He is swift in reckoning."

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 42

وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعاً يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفَّارُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

42. "And indeed those before them devised, but the devising altogether is Allah's; He knows what every soul earns, and the unbelievers soon will know for whom is the Ultimate abode."

The Qur'an closes ranks with whatever is other than Allah in order to enable all to concentrate on Him and on Him alone, despairing from others.

For instance, it says:

"…Verily the glory is wholly Allah's…" [26]

Once you appeal to others for the sake of acquiring prestige and good reputation, beware that all prestige and honour is for Him alone.

Elsewhere, the Holy Qur'an says:

"…that the Power is wholly Allah's…" [27]

All powers are His.

And in this verse, it says:

"but the devising altogether is Allah's",

in order that man would not tend to others for obtaining prestige, power, and politics.

One of the best examples of Allah's devising is His offering of a respite to the deviants in such a manner that they feel that they are on the right track. However, Allah has repeatedly said in the Qur'an that the pagans must not think that their respite signifies Allah's love unto them. On the contrary, He respites them to fill their pot to the fullest.

Anyway, the pagans who were before them, played tricks on the believers, mixing their paganism with tricks and they did all this to refute the prophets.

As Allah obliterated all their tricks, He will do the same with this lot as well.

The verse says:

"And indeed those before them devised, but the devising altogether is Allah's…"

Therefore, Allah returns their tricks to themselves and He will provide clear evidences for His servants. No one's traits are hidden from Allah whether they are good or bad, as he is knowledgeable unto all that there is to be known.

The verse continues saying:

"…He knows what every soul earns…"

That is, Allah is aware of all tricks which are played on the Prophet (S), and he obliterates them all, revealing His religion.

Here, Allah threatens them by saying that they will soon learn as whose will be the Paradise. And this happens when the believers will enter the Paradise and the pagans will be sent into Hell. That is, the pagans will realize whether the ultimate happy ending is yours or theirs, which case reveals when Allah makes His religion manifest.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the unbelievers soon will know for whom is the Ultimate abode."

Surah Ar-Ra'd - Verse 43

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلاً قُلْ كَفَي بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِندَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

43. "And those who disbelieve say: 'You are not a messenger'. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book."

We read in the first verse of this Surah that whatever is revealed to the Prophet (S) is identical with the Truth, though most people disbelieve it. We also read in this last verse of the Surah that the pagans refute the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S).

This indicates to the climax of the obstinacy and hostility of the seduced people as against the Divine Messenger and his words of truth. Therefore, it

implies in this noble verse that they use a new pretext everyday, and they demand a new miracle, and eventually they claim that he is not a prophet.

The verse says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'You are not a messenger'…"

Addressing them he should answer them: It was sufficient for them that two persons bear witness between them and him, one of whom was 'Allah' and the other one consists of those who have a full command of the knowledge of the Book, of the Qur'an.

Both parties are aware that I am His messenger: Allah as well as those who are knowledgeable about this Book, that is the Qur'an.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book'."

And this further stresses once again the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in its different aspects.

As for the sentence;

"…and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book",

we have got the news which are in proximity of sequential order that the objective in mind is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, and in some, that the objective in mind is the Immaculate Imams.

However, these quotations do not confirm a monopoly and as we have repeatedly said allusions to cases are made to perfect example or examples, and we claim that if the objective in mind is the glorious Qur'an, no one else is knowledgeable as to the apparent and the hidden and as to the interpretations of the Qur'an, having monopoly in such cases except the household of the prophet.

As He declares:

"…none knows its (hidden) interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge…"[28]

Abū Sa'id Khidary says:

"I asked the Prophet (S) about: the Qur'anic phrase:

'said he with whom was knowledge from the Book',

(which is found in the story of Solomon).

He answered:

'He was the inheritor of my brother Solomon and replaced him.'

I inquired:

'Whom is it (the above verse) talking about and to whom allusions are being made?'

He answered:

'He is my brother Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as)'." [29]

The author of Atyab-ul-Bayan claims that we may say the objective in mind of 'the knowledge of the Book' is the greatest Name of Allah, of which 'Asif-Ibn-Barkhya the inheritor of Hadrat Sulayman, only knew a faction and not more. And Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), as well as other Immaculate Imams (as), knew all in its entirety except what was kept by Allah for Himself.

Some Islamic traditions denote that the relationship of the Qur'anic phrase /min-al-kit ab/ to /'ilm-ul-kit ab/ is just like a drop with respect to a

green sea. Certainly, when one of the companions of Hadrat Sulayman, who had some partial knowledge of the Book, could at a glance revoke the throne of the queen of Saba before him, how mighty one might be if he possesses all the knowledge of that Book!

According to the quotations, as we said, the objective in mind about whom he has the knowledge of the entire Book is Hadrat Ali (as) and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

For further information about these quotations refer to Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Tafsir Burhan, Tafsir Safi, and Tafsir Kanz-ud-Daqa'iq.

O' Allah! Open the gates of your blessings to us and provide us with the knowledge of the Book, and engage our souls with the light of the Qur'an and provide our thoughts with such potentialities that we do not refer to other than You and not to regard anything as supreme once faced with Your Will.

Amin.

Notes

1. Bihar, vol. 24, p. 265
2. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, and 'Ayyashi
3. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 2
4. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 29
5. The current Surah, verse 8
6. Surah Al-Burūj, No. 85, verse 22
7. Surah Al-Mutaffifin, No. 83, verses 20 and 21
8. Surah Ghafir, No. 40, verse 60
9. Surah At-Tal aq, No. 65, verse 1
10. Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 29
11. Surah As-Saff, No. 61, verse 5
12. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 96
13. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 11
14. Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 70
15. Surah Al-'Isra, No. 17, verse 8
16. Shahid Mutahhari
17. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 143
18. Surah Yūnus, No. 10, verse 98
19. Safinat-ul-Bih ar, vol. 1, p. 61
20. Al-Mizan, vol. 11, p. 419
21. Al-Mizan, vol. 11, p. 419
22. 'Usūl-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 114 and Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 61
23. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol.1, p. 61
24. Tafsir-i-Majma'-ul-Bayan and Burhan
25. Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
26. Surah Yūnus, No. 10, verse 65
27. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 165
28. Surah Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 7

www.alhassanain.org/english

29. Al-Mizan

Surah ‘Ibrahim, Chapter 14

(Abraham) No. 14

(Revealed in Mecca)

52 verses in 7 sections

The Content of Surah ‘Ibrahim

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This holy Surah contains 52 verses which were revealed in Mecca, except the verses 28 and 29 that are about those killed in the Badre campaign and are revealed in Medina.

There are some matters in this Surah relating to the prophetic missions of the prophets, their admonitions, their tidings as well as the prayers of Hadrat-i-’Ibrahim (as). According to the commendation of quotations, reading this Surah has got blessings attached to it, among which one may name being secure and feeling of security from disasters, poverty and insanity.

This Surah, owing to its discussion about Hadrat-i-’Ibrahim (as), has been named as ‘Surah ‘Ibrahim’, and like its preceding Suras, such as: Yūnus, Hūd, and Yūsuf, it begins with Alif. Lam. Ra. The first verses of these holy Suras deal with the characteristics of the Qur’an .

Section 1: Qur'an Revealed to Lead Mankind to Light

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 1

الر كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَي النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّـهِمْ إِلَي صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

1. "Alif, 'A' Lam, 'L' Ra, 'R'. (This is) a Book which We have sent down to you so that, by their Lord's permission, you lead out the people from the darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith), into the way of the Mighty, the Praised (One)."

Similar to some of other suras of the Qur'an, this Surah begins with the abbreviated letters. What is worth mentioning here is that out of 29 Suras, which begin with abbreviated letters, in 24 of them the words next to them are about the Glorious Qur'an.

This indicates that there is a connection between these two, i.e. the abbreviated letters and the Qur'an the Lord is perhaps seeking to exhibit that this great celestial Book, with such great meaningful content, that tops in the leadership of all human beings, begins with simple letters of the alphabet, which by itself is a sign of the significance of this Divine miracle.

Anyway, after the mention of the letters Alif, Lam, Ra, He says:

"(This is) a Book which We have sent down to you so that, by their Lord's permission, you lead out the people from the darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith)…"

In fact, all the educational objectives, as well as spiritual and material aims of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an are condensed in this single sentence:

'leading the people from the darkness to the light',

which means directing them towards enlightenment from the state of utter darkness; or directing the people from the state of darkness of paganism towards the state of illumination of faith; from the state of the darkness of oppression and tyranny towards the state of the enlightenment of justice; from the state of corruption and injustice into the state of righteousness and justice; from sin to piety and virtuosity, and finally from the state of disunity and dispersion into the state of unify.

As the source of all good is the Pure Essence of Allah, and the main pre-condition of understanding of monotheism is focusing on this very reality, the Qur'an adds immediately that all of these are achieved in accordance with the permission of people's Lord:

"…by their Lord's permission…"

To clarify the issue further for the direction towards enlightenment, the Qur'an implies that this enlightenment of faith is in the path of the Lord, the Dear and the Praised One. The Lord Whose Glory is a sign of His Power; and His Praised state is a sign of His unlimited favours and blessings.

The verse says:

"…into the way of the Mighty, the Praised (One)."

Explanations

To bring people out of darkness into the light has been repeated several times in the Qur'an. At times, this act is attributed to Allah:

"…Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of the darkness into the light…"[1]

Sometimes, this is attributed to the prophets:

"…'Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light…"[2]

At other times, it is attributed to the Book, like the verse under discussion.

Using metaphors of profanity, disunity, ignorance and skepticism as well as paganism, described as "darkness", is for the sake that man in these cases is amazed, like the time when he is in darkness.

Light is the means for seeing, awakening, movement, guidance and development, as they are all included in the celestial Book and the way of Allah.

The Qur'an is not adequate in itself; the Divine leader is also necessary for guiding the people as well.

The philosophy underlying the revelation of the celestial Books, and the prophetic mission of the prophets are concerned with the salvation of mankind from the darknesses: from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge; from the darkness of profanity into the light of faith; from the darkness of disparity into the light of unity, and finally from the darkness of sin into the light of virtue.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 2

اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَوَيْلٌ لِّـلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ

2. "Allah, unto Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and woe to the unbelievers for severe chastisement."

In this verse, a lesson on monotheism is discussed as a way of introducing Allah, where He says:

"Allah, unto Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth…"

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an attracts the attentions, to the issue of Resurrection, after concentration on the original cause of the universe, it implies: woe unto the disbelievers for whom awaits the severe chastisement of the Doomsday.

The verse continues saying:

"…and woe to the unbelievers for severe chastisement."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 3

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَي الأَخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجاً أُوْلَئِكَ فِي ضَلالٍ بَعِيدٍ

3. "Those who prefer the life of the world to the Hereafter, and hinder (others) from the path of Allah, and seek to make it crooked. They are in far error."

To enjoy oneself in this world is permissible, but to prefer this world to the next is a dangerous thing, for ones adherence to this world, necessarily obstructs him from his worship, spending out of belongings, participating in the Holy War, obtaining the allowed profits, truthfulness, and the performance of religious duties.

And, eventually, seeking of worldly pleasures paves the way for paganism and is leading a campaign against religion which consequences aberration.

Therefore, the Qur'an tends to introduce the pagans in this verse, and it makes their position quite transparent by mentioning three parts of their characteristics so that everybody can recognize them at first sight.

At first, it says:

"Those who prefer the life of the world to the Hereafter…"

And they sacrifice every thing even their faith and the truth in face of the mean interests, passions, and their low desires.

Then the Qur'an implies that they are not even content with this, but, in addition to their own seduction, they seek to seduce others as well. They stand in the way of the people in order to obstruct them from the path of Allah. Or they even tend to introduce changes in it as well.

In fact, their job is to decorate the low desires and persuade the people to commit sins, frightening them of being honest and pure, while seeking to bring others in line with themselves. Through adding superstitions and all kinds of distortions to it as well as creating dirty and ugly traditions, they try to achieve their objectives.

The verse says:

"…and hinder (others) from the path of Allah, and seek to make it crooked…"

It is obvious that such people distance themselves from the true path in an extensive manner with such qualifications and overt behaviour. Such a state of being misled which makes it an impossibility for them to return to the point of the truth because of its remote distance. However all such conditions and states of mind are the product of their own behaviour.

The verse says:

"…They are in far error."

Incidentally, one must know that obstruction of Allah's path is not confined to one or two cases.

On the contrary, inappropriate propaganda, overt committing of sins, spread of the methods of corruption and of ways of negligence, inciting of skepticism, creating and spreading the means of discord, and spreading of seducing films and publications, misrepresenting the religion of the truth, introducing the wrong kind of people as the identification religious figures, are all among tens of examples of the obstruction of Allah's path.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 4

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّـنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

4. "And We never sent a messenger except with the language of his people, so that he might explain (Our Message) to them clearly; then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

The object in mind as of /lis an-i-qaum/ in this verse is not confined only to the language of the people, for it sometimes happens that a speaker speaks in the language of a people though they might not understand him properly.

As Allah remarks in other verses:

"So We have made it (the Qur'an) easy in your tongue…"[3]

Hadrat-i-Mūsa also asks Allah to release his tongue in such a manner that the people understand his words:

"And loose a knot from my tongue,"

"(That) they may understand my saying."[4]

The verse under discussion says:

"And We never sent a messenger except with the language of his people, so that he might explain (Our Message) to them clearly…"

In the meantime, the purpose of "Allah leads astray" is depriving of obstinate people from His grace. Otherwise if Allah wanted to mislead any one directly, He would neither send any Books, nor would He send any prophet.

In other verses we read that Allah misleads the unjust, transgressors, and the lavish persons. That is, man deprives himself from the divine guidance and paves the way for his own seduction by committing sins and acts of tyranny.

Some commentators have claimed that the subject of /yaš a'/ is the people and not Allah. That is, Allah misleads him who wishes himself to be misled and leads the one whom he wishes to be led. The verse says:

"…then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

He is Omnipotent under all circumstances and as a result of His Glory and Power though He will not mislead any one for no reason as a consequence of His wisdom. However, the first steps are voluntarily taken with their utmost freedom by the servants on the path of Allah (s.w.t.) and then the enlightening rays of guidance are cast and the grace of Allah covers them in their hearts.

Those who have alienated themselves from eligibility of meriting Allah's approbation because of their obstinacy and fanaticism, and their hostility against the truth and as a consequence of being immersed in the abyss of their passion or tyranny, are deprived from the favour of guidance and are lost in utter darkness.

As it can be seen, the origin and the source of guidance and seduction lay in our own hands.

Incidentally, one must keep in mind that the propagation of the truth by the Prophet (S), which has been done in the language of his local people, is not incompatible with the cosmopolitan and universal nature of the religion.

For, the content of the text or message does not have any particular medium of expression, and, on the recommendation of the Qur'an, some

groups must learn religious matters, whether by going on exodus or by giving up their special favours so as they can teach others.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 5

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَي بِاٰيَاتِنَآ أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَي النُّورِ وَذَكِّـرْهُم بِاَيَّامِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

5. “And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs (saying): ‘Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light and remind them of the days of Allah. Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one)’.”

Allah is alluding in this noble verse to one of the samples of the sending of the prophets as against their contemporary despots for getting them out of the darkness and directing them to light.

He says:

“And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs (saying): ‘Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light…”

Then, referring to one of the great missions of Moses (as), it remarks:

“... and remind them of the days of Allah. ...”

“The days of Allah”

are all those days which stand prominent in the history of mankind.

Each day which marks the beginning of a new chapter and provides an instructive lesson for man and has witnessed the emergence or the uprising of a prophet or has witnessed the downfall of an unruly despot or pharaoh, is considered as “the day of Allah”.

In short, on every day when one witnesses that justice is being achieved and an injustice or any innovation has been wiped out, all such days are among the days of Allah.

A tradition quoted from Imam Baqir (as) indicates that he remarked:

“The days of Allah refer to: the day on which the uprising of the promised Mahdi (as) takes place, and to the day of Return to life, as well as the Resurrection day.”

At the end of the verse the Qur’an remarks that: in these words and throughout all the days of Allah there are sings for each man and for every persevering, resisting and grateful individual.

The verse says:

“…Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one)’.”

Therefore, the faithful people will neither lose their way when they are having a hard time so that they submit to the events, nor do they become arrogant and negligent during the days of victory and affluence. All they often do is that they constantly show their gratitude towards Allah.

Explanations

1- Concentration on history leads to and paves the way for one’s patience and gratitude. The remembrance of the catastrophes and of the past bitter events and their removal, makes man grateful and thankful, and once his attention is focused on the resistance of the nations and on their eventual victory, this invites man to patience and perseverance.

“…Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one).

2- All days are the days of Allah (s.w.t.), though the day of the glorification of Allah's power is a different matter. (The glorification of His Power is seen through His punishment over the pagans, and the glorification of His favor over the believers is regarded as the days of Allah).

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 6

وإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَي لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنجَاكُم مِنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَآءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُم بَلآءٌ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

6. "And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'Remember Allah's favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people. They afflicted you with evil chastisement, slaughtering your sons, and sparing your women; and in this was a great trial from your Lord."

He alludes to one of those Divine days, in this verse, and to those eventful and illuminated days which existed in the history of the Children of Israel, and the mentioning of which provides an appropriate admonition for the Muslims.

The Qur'an, addressing them, implies that you should remember the time when Mūsa told his own nation that they would remember Allah's blessings and favor at the time when He liberated you from the hands of the Pharaoh's people.

Verily they were punishing you and inflicting the worst kind of chastisement on you, used to decapitate your sons before you and used to keep your wives alive for the sake of service to them.

The verse says:

"And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'Remember Allah's favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people. They afflicted you with evil chastisement, slaughtering your sons, and sparing your women…"

Such has been the case with every colonizing power throughout history that it has always sought to destroy and perish parts of the aggressive, active and resisting powers, or to render useless other sections of such powers, and finally, to weaken other segments so as to utilize them for the sake of and in line with their own interests.

The verse continues saying:

"…and in this was a great trial from your Lord."

Incidentally, such trial and test has not been the case only in connection with the Children of Israel, but it has also been the case with all the nations as well that the day of their liberation and independence from the hands of the despots, has been always remembered as the Divine days.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257
2. The current Surah, verse 5
3. Maryam, No. 19, verse 97
4. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verses 27-28

Section 2: Moses' Exhortation

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 7

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

7. "And (remember) when your Lord declared: 'If you be thankful I will certainly increase you (your blessings) and if you be ungrateful, verily My chastisement is indeed severe'."

Allah announces that if you are grateful for My favours, I shall augment your favors and if you deny them, My punishment covers all those who are ungrateful and deny them.

It says:

"And (remember) when your Lord declared: 'If you be thankful I will certainly increase you (your blessings) and if you be ungrateful, verily My chastisement is indeed severe'."

Imam Sadiq (as) has remarked:

"Whoever was given a favor and by his heart made confessions as to having that and thanked Allah with his speech, praising Him, no later would he have finished uttering his words than Allah would have commanded that his blessings be augmented."

This verse is the most important and the most explicit verse of the Qur'an in regard to thankfulness due to divine blessings or being ingratitude to them, which has been discussed after the verse concerning the blessings of freedom and the formation of the Divine government under the leadership of Hadrat-i-Mūsa.

This is the secret as to the fact that the Divine government and the godly leaders are the supreme blessings for mankind, and if thanksgiving is not performed for them, Allah will inflict a severe punishment on those who are not grateful.

There are various stages for thanksgiving:

A- Cordial thankfulness, in which case, man regards all the blessings from Allah.

B- Verbal thankfulness consists of uttering the words such as: "(All) praise belongs to Allah."

C- Practical gratitude, which comes about as a result of performing religious rituals and spending one's time along side gaining Allah's satisfaction and in the service of people.

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Avoiding sins is (a knid of) being grateful for the favours."

And he also said:

"Thanking for Allah's blessing is done once a person regards all blessings as originated from the part of Allah (and not from his own intelligence, wisdom, reasoning and one's own struggle or that of other people's), and that he is content with what Allah has given him, and does not use Allah's blessings as a means of committing sins, he is really thankful to Allah. Real gratitude consists of the utilization Allah's blessings for Allah's ends."[1]

Thankfulness for the Divine blessings is very tiny and unmentionable.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that Allah revealed to Moses:

"Thank Me as it is My due!"

Moses answered:

"It is an impossible act, for each word of thanks requires another word of thanks."

The revelation came:

"Your confession as to the fact that you are aware that whatever exists has its origin in Me, is the best way of thanking Me."[2]

Incidentally, if we use Allah's blessings in ways other than the path of Allah, we have practiced the act of ingratitude and paved the ground for disbelief and deserve chastisement.

The verse says:

"…and if you be ungrateful, verily My chastisement is indeed severe'."

Several Traditions Concerning Gratitude

1- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once said:

"Continue (the act of) thanksgiving so as your favour becomes continuous." [3]

2- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There are three things with which provide no harm: praying when one is in difficulty, asking for forgiveness when one is sinning, and showing gratitude when one is affluent." [4]

3- Imam Sadiq (as) also said:

"The gratitude for the blessings is avoiding the prohibitions, and the totality of thankfulness is that one says: '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'." [5]

4- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Thanking for the blessing causes it to be preserved from alteration and guarantees its sustenance." [6]

5- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The result of showing gratitude is the multiplication of the favours." [7]

6- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Any blessing for which gratitude is expressed does not terminate; and when ingratitude is shown, it will not last long." [8]

7- The holy Prophet (S) remarked:

"The quickest punishment for the sins is (that of) ingratitude of a blessing." [9]

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 8

وَقَالَ مُوسَي إِن تَكْفُرُوا أَنتُمْ وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

8. "And Moses said: 'If you be ungrateful, you and whoso is on the earth, all together, verily Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy"

Our faith or disbelief and our gratitude or our ingratitude will have not any impact on His Inherent Essence.

We must not hold Allah any indebtedness for our faith or acts since Allah is in no need of our deeds.

This holy verse is a confirmation and complementary to the discussion regarding the gratitude and ingratitude, which were referred to in the previous verse.

It is said from the tongue of Mūsa Ibn ‘Imran implying that he reminded the Children of Israel that if they and the entire people of the world become disbelievers, showing ingratitude towards the blessings of Allah there will be no harm to Him for He is in no need and is praise-worthy.

“And Moses said: ‘If you be ungrateful, you and whoso is on the earth, all together, verily Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy”

In fact, thanking Allah for His blessings, and accepting the faith are sources of increasing one’s blessings and one’s evolution and pride, otherwise Allah is needless and were all the existing beings to turn ungrateful, His kingdom would remain just intact as ever.

To define the Qur’anic term /qanyy/ many commentators have claimed that it means withdrawal of ones needs.

We have been of the opinion that it means “possession” and it includes the totality of Attributes of perfection of the Essence, qualities consisting of knowledge, power, life, sovereignty, splendour, magnitude, loftiness and so on and so forth.

They require withdrawal of needs and defects. And the term /hamid/ embraces the totality of attributes of action, which include all the Divine acts irrespective of creation, nourishment, death, revival, health, disease, blessings and catastrophe, reward, chastisement, needlessness, poverty, development, restraint, tightness, legislation of ordinances, sending prophets on their mission, substituting successors, allocation of duties, and His other acts are all consonant and in accordance with wisdom and expedience, that are correct, appropriate, and timely, all of which signify ‘Justice’ and are among the principles of the Shi‘ite doctrine.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 9

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُاْ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلاَّ اللّهُ جآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّـناتِ فَرَدّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَآ أُرْسِلْتُم بِهِ وإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَنَآ إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ

9. “Has not the account of those before you reach you of the people of Noah, and ‘ Ad, and Thamūd and those who (came) after them? None knows them but Allah. Their messengers came to them with clear signs (miracles) while they thrust their hands into their mouths, and they said: ‘Verily we disbelieve in (that) which you have been sent with, and verily we are in doubt about that unto which you invite us’.”

This verse is one of the examples of reminding and calling attention to the Divine days which was dealt with in the fifth verse of the current Surah, where it says:

“…and remind them of the days of Allah…”

According to Shaykh-i-Tūsi, (May his soul be sanctified) cited in Tafsir-i-Tibyan, there are differences between the Arabic words /šakk/ and /rayb/. The former means natural skepticism while the latter signifies that kind of skepticism which is mixed with suspicion and accusations.

A doubt, which may pave the ground for research and acceptance of the truth, is a constructive type and useful type of criticism; while that kind of skepticism which is expressed with regard to the Clear Evidences’, or with

regard to miracles is only of the obstinate and destructive kind of doubt which stands in the way of man for accepting the truth.

Incidentally, one can translate the Qur'anic holy sentence /faraddū 'aydiyahum fi afw ahihim/ in several ways:

A- The dissidents shut the mouth of those who were uttering the truth by putting their hands on their mouth.

B- The miracles and the reasons of the prophets were so strong as if they had taken people's hands and put them on their mouth; alluding metaphorically to the fact that the language of the people was obstructed because of the truth and they had no words to say.

C- The opponents of the prophets were so angry that they bit their fingers.

D- The opponents of the prophets, at the presence of their prophet, would put their hands on their mouth, metaphorically alluding to the fact that they silence themselves and stop preaching.

Anyway, here the Qur'an refers to the fate of some groups of previous nations in several verses. Those nations who took to the road of ingratitude as against Allah's blessings and went on opposing and disbelieving in face of the call of the Divine leaders and their logic. Eventually, the Qur'an explains their acts to be an emphasis on what was said in the former verse.

It says:

"Has not the account of those before you reach you of the people of Noah, and ' Ad, and Thamūd and those who (came) after them?…"

Then, it adds:

"…None knows them but Allah…"

This means that no one is aware of the news of them, except Him.

Then, as a further explanation about their biographies, it implies that their prophets called on them with clear evidences though they put their hands on their mouths because of their amazement and denial, saying:

We are ungrateful for whatever you are sent for, for we are skeptic as to what you call us for, and how would it be possible for us to accept your call despite such a doubt and skepticism?

The verse says:

"…Their messengers came to them with clear signs (miracles) while they thrust their hands into their mouths, and they said: 'Verily we disbelieve in (that) which you have been sent with, and verily we are in doubt about that unto which you invite us'."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 10

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُم مِن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمّي قَالُوا إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَصُدُّونَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا فَأْتُونَا بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

10. "Their messenger said: 'Is there any doubts about Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?' He calls you to forgive for you of your sins and respite you till an appointed term. They said: 'You are nothing but mortals like us; you intend that you turn us away from what our ancestors used to worship. Then bring us some clear authority'."

In the previous verse, the pagans told the prophets:

"You call us to the way of Allah."

However, in this verse, the prophets told them:

"Allah calls you."

That is, our call does not initiate from our side and is not directed towards us. On the contrary, it originates in Allah and terminates in Allah as well.

According to, Zamakhshari and Maraghi, the promises of the Qur'an concerning the faithful relate to the forgiveness of all of their sins, while concerning others the case is forgiveness of some of their sins:

"…to forgive for you of your sins…"

Anyway, as was explained in the previous verse with regard to the pagans and disbelievers and their lack of faith owing to their skepticism, immediately in this verse, He negates their skepticism with clear reasoning and in a concise statement, saying:

"Their messenger said: 'Is there any doubts about Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?'…"

Probably, the Arabic term /fatir/ (the Originator) refers to the splitting of the preliminary matter mass of the world which we are up-dated about in everyday life of the existing science we read that the totality of the world mass matter consisted of an integrated continuum which burst asunder, revealing and causing the emergence of the globes.

Anyway, here, as in other situations and cases, the Qur'an insists on the creation of the system the world of existence as well as the creation of the heavens and the earth for demonstrating Allah's Existence and His Attributes.

Then, it turns to answer the second criticism raised by the opponents whose criticism relates to the issue of the prophetic mission of the prophets. It implies that it is obvious that the Wise and Omniscient Creator of the world does not abandon His servants without a leader.

On the contrary, by sending you messengers, He calls you so as to remove your faults and pollutions and forgive your sins. And He gives you a limited amount of time in order that you go through your development process and make the most of your life.

The verse says:

"…He calls you to forgive for you of your sins and respite you till an appointed term…"

In fact, the call of the prophets has had two objectives in mind: The forgiveness of sins and the continuation of life till a pre-fixed date, both of which are in fact having a cause-and- effect for each other.

For, a society can continue to live which is on the whole pure from sins and injustice. However, despite all these, the obstinate disbelievers did not accept this enlivening call which was mixed with the evident logic of monotheism. They answered their prophets with the words which were loaded with obstinacy and non-submission of the truth.

The verse says:

"…They said: 'You are nothing but mortals like us…"

Moreover you want to keep us from worshipping what our ancestors worshipped. In addition to all these, you must provide us with clear evidences.

The verse continues saying:

"…you intend that you turn us away from what our ancestors used to worship. Then bring us some clear authority'."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 11

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِن نَّحْنُ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَي مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَن نَّأْتِيَكُم بِسُلْطَانٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَي اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

11. "Their messengers said (answering) them: 'We are nothing but mortals like you, but Allah bestows (His) favour on whomever He pleases of His servants; and it is not for us that we bring unto you any authority except by Allah's permission. And on Allah should the believers rely."

The Qur'an in this holy verse implies that Allah bestows (His) favours on whomever He pleases and appoints him as His prophet, yet, Allah, the Wise, knows who has the capacity and who is capable of performing such a great responsibility.

"…Allah knows best where to place His apostleship…"[10]

Incidentally, the disbelievers and the pagans had two claims to make with the prophets:

1- You are a man like all of us.

2- Perform the miracle which we propose for us.

The answer to these two claims has been provided in this verse. We do accept the fact that we are human beings just like you; but Allah granted us this favour and has provided us with revelations. And as for your claim saying that our miracles must be performed according to your request.

This cannot be achieved, for we reserve the right not to perform any miracles without Allah's permission.

Anyway, performing miracles is not our job, so that we tend to isolate ourselves sitting in a corner and perform extraordinary things with everyone requesting a different miracle as he wishes, thus making perform of extraordinary things into a useless affair, reducing it to a plaything matter. On the contrary, we cannot perform any miracles without the command of Allah.

The verse says:

"Their messengers said (answering) them: 'We are nothing but mortals like you, but Allah bestows (His) favour on whomever He pleases of His servants; and it is not for us that we bring unto you any authority except by Allah's permission…"

Moreover, every prophet does perform miraculous works without being requested by the people in order to prove his legitimacy.

Afterwards, in order to provide the pretenders with a decisive answer regarding their various threats, they clarified their position, saying that all faithful individuals must rely on Allah, the same Almighty to Whose Power all powers are insignificant and useless.

The verse says:

"…And on Allah should the believers rely."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 12

وَمَا لَنَآ أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَي مَآ ءَاذَيْتُمُونَا وَعَلَي اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

12. "And why should we not rely on Allah while He has guided us to our ways (of happiness)? And certainly we will bear patiently whatever hurt you inflict on us; and on Allah (alone) should the reliant rely."

The Arabic term /tawakkul/ signifies 'employing a lawyer or an advocate'. Such a person must have four attributes: perspicacity, honesty in keeping other's deposits, power, and affection. No one but Allah possesses all these attributes fully. Thus we must trust Him.

Imam Rida (as) said:

"The border of the trust is that, by belief in Allah, you be scared of none." [11]

Therefore, that Lord Who leads us will also protect us. Thus, we must solely trust Him.

Therefore, providing transparent justifications for the issue of trust, the prophets said as to why must they not trust Him and ask for His help in all circumstances? Why must they be frightened by the straw powers and threats while He has led them through the ways of happiness?

The verse says:

"And why should we not rely on Allah while He has guided us to our ways (of happiness)?…"

Then, they would continue saying that now that they rely solely on Allah, Who is not vulnerable and is supreme over all things definitely, they should stand against all of disbelievers' tortures and harms.

The verse says:

"…And certainly we will bear patiently whatever hurt you inflict on us…"

Then, finally, they ended up their speech with these words:

"…and on Allah (alone) should the reliant rely."

The objective of /tawakkul/ is to enable one not to have feelings of inferiority and weakness when facing with the greatness of difficulties, but by relying on the unending vast power of Allah, he should consider himself as conquering and victorious. Thus, surely such a trust is hope-inspiring and strengthening, and can increase our resistance.

Notes

1. ’Usūl-i-Kafi, section: Thanks giving
2. ’Usūl-i-Kafi, vol. 4, p 8
3. Jami‘-i-’Ahadith-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 13, p. 545
4. Bihar, vol. 75, p. 365
5. Kafi, vol. 3, p. 95
6. Ghurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 159
7. Nasikh-ut-Tawarikh, vol. 6, p. 145
8. Bihar, vol. 74, p. 420
9. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 710
10. Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 124
11. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 3: The Disbelievers Punished

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 13

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُم مِنْ أَرْضِنَآ أَوْ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا فَأَوْحي إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ

13. “And those who disbelieved told their messengers: ‘We will certainly expel you from our land, or else you return to our creed.’ Then their Lord revealed to them: ‘Certainly We will perish the unjust’.”

Question: Were the prophets pagan before the onset of their mission when they were requested by the pagans to return to the previous beliefs of pagans.

Answer: Firstly, perhaps the objective in mind of the disbelievers was the return of the prophets to be under to their own control. That is, they used to suggest supposedly you are believers, but you must not stand up against us and you, as well as your companions, deviate from our path.

Secondly, the Arabic word /‘aud/ when is followed with /’il a/ it means return to the prior condition. However, now that it is followed by /fi/, it denotes change and not returning to the previous condition, which implies change of ideas into their creed.

Thirdly, the idea of returning to paganism probably implies the return of the prophets’ companions and not of the prophets themselves.

Anyway, as is usually the case with the way of life of the illogical people, that they quit the course of reasoning when they become aware of their weaknesses in ideas and in words, abandoning reasoning, they rely on forces and powers.

Here, we notice when the prophets demonstrated their sound and explicit way of reasoning, which were discussed in the former verses, the obstinate and pretending pagans told their prophets that they would swear to drive them out of their lands unless they return to pagans’ way of life which was the worshipping of the idols.

The verse says:

“And those who disbelieved told their messengers: ‘We will certainly expel you from our land, or else you return to our creed.’…”

These unaware and arrogant people perhaps considered all of the lands as their own lands and they did not have any regards for their prophets, even they did not consider them as a compatriot, thus they used to say ‘our land’ while Allah has created the land and all its blessings for the sake of the righteous people.

Then the Qur’an implies that while at the same time, Allah expressed His compassion to the prophets and reassured them, revealing to them that the tyrants would be perished and, therefore, they should not be scared of such threats and no weakness must appear in the strength of their will.

The verse says:

“…Then their Lord revealed to them: ‘Certainly We will perish the unjust’.”

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 14

وَلَنُسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الأَرْضَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ

14. “And, certainly, We shall settle you in the land after them. This is for him who fears My Majesty and fears My threat.”

Allah, the Almighty, has promised that the oppressors will be perished and His saints would replace them, and since this promise has not been realized to the fullest possible way, it will be actualized at the time of the reappearance of Imam-i-Zaman (the Expected Mahdi) (‘aj.).

The blissful Qur’an has repeatedly promised that the saint of Allah (s.w.t.) will be ruling the earth and their enemies will be annihilated.

The Qur’an says:

“And, certainly, We shall settle you in the land after them. This is for him who fears My Majesty and fears My threat.”

We mention here only three cases regarding the verses concerning this Divine promise:

A- “And verily Our host will definitely prevail.”[1]

B- “And Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers;” “Most surely they shall be the assisted ones.” [2]

C- “…(as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.” [3]

Anyway, prevalence of the truth over the untruth and the formation of the Divine government by the saints of Allah are among the decisive and repeated promises of the Qur’an.

The Divine Essence is the source of all good and the blessings, and is lovely.

“…but for those who have faith, their love of Allah is more intensive…”[4]

What is to be feared is Allah’s position. Of course, if your friend is a judge and your case is taken to the court to him to be judged, you will he in awe of him about his court of justice and his position at the court, though he is your friend.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 15

وَاسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ

15. “And they (the prophets as well as the believers) sought victory, but every obstinate oppressor remained deprived.

Once all the prophets performed all their duties with regard to their nations, those who were supposed to become believers accepted the faith and the rest insisted on their paganism, and threatened frequently the prophets. It was at this time that they asked Allah for victory over the pagans.

The verse says:

“And they (the prophets as well as the believers) sought victory…”

Allah also accepted the prayer call of these true warriors for holy causes who were genuinely beseeching. And, eventually every deviant stiff-necked person became desperate and perished.

The verse says:

“…but every obstinate oppressor remained deprived.

All the prophets were expecting victory.

Noah called upon his Lord:

"…Verily I am overcome, so give help'."[5]

Other prophets also sought victory from Allah.

They used to say:

"…Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth, and You are the best of deciders."[6]

Thus the Qur'an, the blissful, through many verses deals with the victory of the prophets and the annihilation of the pagans as well as their punishment, declaring to the pagans decisively that the day of conquest will soon come and every spiteful oppressor will be punished by his own retribution.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 16

مِن وَرَآئِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَى مِن مَّآءٍ صَدِيدٍ

16. "Hell is before him, and he will be given to drink of festering fluid."

The Arabic term /war a'/ means the ultimate and the end of a course, as it is said in Persian, the end-result of this meal is becoming ill.

There are three kinds of drink in Hell:

1- A drink that consists of pussy fluid and blood, which comes out of a wound and is called 'Sadid'.

2- Something which flows out of the skin of the hell-dwelling people and is called 'Qassaq'.

3- The third drink is 'melted copper' which is called 'Hamim'.

The drinks of the hell-dwelling people is burning and not quenching one's thirst. A few Qur'anic verses in this regard are:

A: "…who are made to drink boiling water so it rends their bowels a sunder."[7]

B: "…They will be succoured with water like molten copper that shall scold the faces…" [8]

Of course, those who burned the hearts of the faithful and who slapped them on their faces, making blood-bath flow by their destructive weapons and chemical bombs, must not have any punishment other than what was said.

The verse says:

"Hell is before him, and he will be given to drink of festering fluid."

However, the Paradise-dwelling people will live by the side of delicious tasting water of the streams, feeding themselves on delicious tasting milk and honey provided with them by Allah, and will enjoy themselves from all the Divine blessings.

"…and their Lord will give them to drink of a Drink Pure and Holy."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 17

يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِيغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ وَمِن وَرَآئِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ

17. "He will drink it little by little which he can hardly swallow agreeably, and death will come to him from every side, while he will not be about to die, and there will be a vehement chastisement before him."

The punishment of the hell-dwelling people is depicted well in the profile in this verse.

A- The chastisement of such people is bit by bit, little by little and gradual so as to be tortured to the utmost.

The verse says:

"He will drink it little by little which he can hardly swallow agreeably…"

B- The different kinds of punishments take the dwellers of Hell as to the brink of their death-beds, though they will not die despite all these.

The verse continues saying:

"…and death will come to him from every side, while he will not be about to die…"

C- The chastisements are followed by graver consequences, which will be ever increasing as well.

The verse says:

"…and there will be a vehement chastisement before him."

The Qur'an contains several qualities for the chastisement of the Hereafter Day: 'painful, 'severe', 'great', 'vehement' all of which mean and make allusions to the intensity and the magnitude of the type of chastisement.

The Arabic word /'is aqah/ denotes drinking water with one's own will. The sentence mentioned in the verse signifies that one will never drink that water willingly. [9]

The blissful Prophet (S) remarked:

"Whoever drinks wine, his prayers will not be answered for forty days and it is appropriate for him that Allah makes him drink the stinking and infectious water of Hell."

The Arabic term /sadid/ means the festering fluid which comes out of a wound. And /tajarru'/: signifies sipping gradually and continuously. The Arabic term /'is aqah/ means making the drink flow through one's throat, and /'ištid ad/ means acceleration with all of one's power.

The Qur'anic word /' asif/ means a strong wind which blows during day-time, or it may mean the day in which blows a strong wind.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 18

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ لاَ يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَي شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلالُ الْبَعِيدُ

18. "The parable of those who disbelieve in their Lord, their deeds are like ashes on which the wind blows severely on a stormy day; they will have no power over any thing out of what they have earned; that is the very straying, far (and deep)."

The issue discussed in the previous verses concerned mostly with the loss and the disadvantage incurred by the obstinate oppressors and of their deprivations. Here, we have an explanation upon the same meaning.

Allah, the Almighty, converts the vices and the evils of the faithful into the good and the decent in case of their repentance, but the evil deeds of the disbelievers wipe out the impact of their good deeds.

Therefore, there is an explicit parable or example explained in this noble verse for the deeds of the unbelievers, which supplements the discussion of the previous verses as to the ultimate end of the pagans.

It says:

"The parable of those who disbelieve in their Lord, their deeds are like ashes on which the wind blows severely on a stormy day…"

The objective is all their deeds, even their apparently good deeds which are orientated from paganism and idolatry.

Just in the same way that ashes cannot stand in the way of a strong wind in a stormy day, even for one moment, and will spread immediately, and no one is able to assemble them, the same case is for the disbelievers in the truth who will be unable to gain any thing from the good deeds they have performed.

All will be lost and gone with the wind, leaving them empty-handed. Such is the case with being misguided to the utmost.

The verse says:

"…they will have no power over any thing out of what they have earned; that is the very straying, far (and deep)."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verses 19 - 20

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

19. "Did you not see that Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth? If He wills He will take you away and bring (in your place) a new creation."

20. "And this is not difficult for Allah."

The Qur'an has repeated on several occasions that Allah has not created the heavens and the earth for vain and for the sake of fun of it.

The Qur'an says:

"And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport."[10]

Elsewhere He remarks:

"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain, that is the opinion of those who disbelieve…" [11]

Of course, it is the disbelievers who presume that the creation of existence is aimless and out of question.

Now Allah declares that He has made man for the purpose of worshipping and of having faith and not for the sake of disbelieving and disobedience.

Hence, He says:

"Did you not see that Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth?…"

The Qur'anic term /ru'yat/ has been also employed in the sense of knowledge as well as its employment in the sense of 'perception' and

‘seeing’. The meaning implied in the first sense is in mind in this context. This statement is addressed to the Prophet (S), but the main aim is his ’Ummat.

Do you not know that Allah created the skies and the earth as His Own wisdom required, which was in the name of the truth or for the aim of the truth? The purpose of the aim of the truth is the religion and worshipping. That is, He created the world so as the people worship Him (s.w.t.) and they merit His rewards.

The commentators of the Qur’an have held the view that the truth signifies ‘being identical and harmonious’.

The structural system of the world of creation in here, as well as the skies and the earth, all show that there has been a great deal of wisdom, order, and aim involved in their creation. Neither Allah has been in need of their creation, nor would He feel any shortcomings brought about without them, for He is in no need of any thing.

Then, the Qur’an implies that the reason as to Him having no need to you and your believing is that when He determines He will take you, replacing you with a new generation of people.

The verse says:

“…If He wills He will take you away and bring (in your place) a new creation.”

A new generation of people who are all believers and who do not commit any of the indecent acts committed by you, for whoever is to be the author and the architect of some thing is also able to destroy it.

It is not impossible for Allah to annihilate you and create a new generation of people. The verse says:

“And this is not difficult for Allah.”

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 21

وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ جَمِيعاً فَقَالَ الضُّعَفَآءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعاً فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّغْنُونَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ مِن شَيءٍ قَالُوا لَو هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهَدَيْنَاكُمْ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ أَجَزِعْنَآ أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِن مَحِيصٍ

21. “And they shall come forth in front of Allah all together. Then the week shall say to those who were the arrogant: ‘Verily we were your followers (in the world). Can you avert from us any part of the chastisement of Allah? They would say: ‘If Allah had guided us we too would have definitely guided you. It is all the same to us whether we cry or we are patient; there is no way for us to escape.”

The Arabic term /burūz/ denotes ‘exit’, and the word /mub ariz/ refers to the person who comes forth out of the line of the army and who declares his intention and readiness for combating the enemy.

We had references made to the hard punishment and severe and painful chastisement of the obstinate disbelievers in some of the previous verses; the Qur’an follows this matter up and supplements it in this verse as well.

It first declares that all of them will appear in Allah’s court on the day of resurrection, (the oppressors, the pagans, the tyrants, including the ones who

were authors or those who were subordinate in positions, the ones who led or the ones who followed).

The verse says:

"And they shall come forth in front of Allah all together…"

At this moment, the oppressed ones, that is, those ignorant lot who misled themselves to the sphere of darkness because of their blind obedience and imitation, addressing the seduced oppressors say: We were your followers and have been fallen into this entanglement of disastrous plight because of your leadership. Are you then ready to bear part of our burden?

The verse says:

"…Then the week shall say to those who were the arrogant: 'Verily we were your followers (in the world). Can you avert from us any part of the chastisement of Allah?…"

But they immediately will answer them:

"…They would say: 'If Allah had guided us we too would have definitely guided you…"

Nevertheless, what a pity that there is no more room left for such complaints. It is all the same for us whether we become restless or go on crying; whether we are persevering or impatient as there is no way out of our plight for us.

The verse says:

"…It is all the same to us whether we cry or we are patient; there is no way for us to escape."

Notes

1. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 178
2. Ibid verses 171-172
3. Surah Al-'Anbiy a, No. 21, verse 105
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 165
5. Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 10
6. Surah Al-A'r af, No. 7, verse 89
7. Surah Muhammad, No. 47, verse 15
8. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 29
9. Tafsir Tibyan
10. Surah Ad-Dukhan, No. 44, verse 38
11. Surah S ad, No. 38, verse 27

Section 4: Disbelievers Shall Be Disappointed - Truth Shall Be Established

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 22

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدتُّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُم مِن سُلْطَانٍ إِلاَّ أَن دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلاَ تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنفُسَكُم مَّآ أَنَاْ بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّـي كَفَرْتُ بِمَآ أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِن قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

22. “And Satan says, when the affair is decided: ‘Verily Allah promised you the promise of truth; I also promised you but I failed to keep them to you, and I did not have any authority over you except that I called you and you responded me. Therefore, do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. Verily I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah from before. Verily the unjust, for them shall be a painful chastisement’.”

In the Hereafter, sinners seek to get others involved in their sins and they try to find fellow-conspirators so as to put the whole blame on them for the wrong they have committed. Sometimes the sinner will say: “Friends seduced me!”

At other times he says: “Corrupt leaders made me corrupt”. Some other times, he blames the Satan and regards him as the cause of his own seduction.

But, the Satan answers:

Do not put the blame on me, I did not have any role to play except wavering your opinion and calling you to it. It was you who decided to deviate and to become deviant.

The verse says:

“And Satan says, when the affair is decided: ‘Verily Allah promised you the promise of truth; I also promised you but I failed to keep them to you, and I did not have any authority over you except that I called you and you responded me…”

The fact that the Satan has no domination over man, not only is verified by Allah but also the Satan himself confesses it.

Addressing Satan, Allah says:

“Verily (as regards) My (devoted) servants, there is not for you over them any authority…”[1]

and in this verse, Satan says:

“…and I did not have any authority over you…”

However, in the continuation of the above verse, the Holy Qur’an says:

“…Therefore, do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. Verily I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah from before. Verily the unjust, for them shall be a painful chastisement’.”

Anyway, the Divine promises are all true and they are identical with the reality.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 23

وَأُدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّـهِمْ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلاَمٌ

23. “And those who believed and did righteous deeds will be admitted to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein shall they abide for ever by their Lord’s permission; their greetings therein is: ‘Peace!’.”

In the day of resurrection, the people of Paradise will hear the word ‘Peace’ from every direction. ‘Peace’ from Allah to those whose residence is Paradise.

“Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord.”[2]

Peace from the part of the angels to the faithful:

“…Peace be on you, you shall be happy; therefore enter it to abide.”[3]

‘Peace’ from the residents of Paradise to one another:

“…their greetings therein is: ‘Peace’.”[4]

Sometime one goes somewhere by his own will, and at other times, it happens that others come along and take him to a place with some respect and particular ceremonies.

Allah, the Almighty, remarks in this noble verse: /wa ’udxila/, that is, those who are dwelling in Paradise do not enter the Paradise in a simple and usual manner. On the contrary, they will be admitted to Paradise with particular respect and ceremonial gestures.

The verse says:

“And those who believed and did righteous deeds will be admitted to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein shall they abide forever by their Lord’s permission; their greetings therein is: ‘Peace!’.”

In the noble verse 73 of the blissful Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, the Qur’an He also declares:

“And those who are in awe of their Lord shall be conveyed to the Garden in companies until when they come to it, and its doors shall be opened, and the keepers of it shall say to them: ‘Peace be on you, you shall be happy; therefore enter it to abide’.”

As for those who are residents of Hell, we read that they direct them towards the chastisement while they are being tortured:

“Lay hold on him, then put a chain on him.”[5]

There are various streams running in Paradise:

A- Streams of water

“...In it are rivers of water incorruptible…”[6]

B- Streams of milk

“…rivers of milk of which the taste never changes…”[7]

C- Streams of wines with the nature of Paradise:

“…rivers of wine, a joy for the drinkers…”[8]

D- Streams of honey:

“…a river of honey, pure and clear…” [9]

The dwellers of Hell resent and detest one another and curse each other, while the dwellers of Paradise greet one another and will remain constantly

in the Paradise. Those paradise-dwellers are sincere and cordial with one another and they always say ‘Peace’ to each other. They are never involved in quarrelling nor in estrangement and ill terms.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 24

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ

24. “Have you not seen how Allah sets forth a parable? A good word is like a good tree, the roots of which are fixed and its branches are in heaven,”

A good tree and a tidy noble one has got several ensuing outcomes like: growing, bearing fruits abundantly, casting shadows and sustaining itself, and bearing fruits under all kinds of circumstances.

A monotheistic person is never stagnant and the signs of his faith constantly reveal themselves in his speech and his acts. His faith is continuous and not seasonal, and he always calls others to the faith, persuading them to act according what is allowed.

The verse says:

“Have you not seen how Allah sets forth a parable? A good word is like a good tree…”

In some Islamic quotations and in the commentaries of the Qur’an, several things as the examples of the Qur’anic term /tayyibah/ are referred to. Monotheism, faith, correct and sound ideas, heavenly leaders and their companions are among them. Of course, monotheism is a constantly- fixed principle which is inherently embedded in human nature.

“…the roots of which are fixed…”

It affects all the deeds and words as well as the thinking of man.

One can enjoy the fruits of faith at any time, anywhere, and in all of one’s ups and downs.

The verse says:

“…and its branches are in heaven,”

The tree of monotheism has got fixed roots. No threats, or conspiracies, no instigators and blame as well as the despots can uproot or eradicate it.

If we find that in quotations this tree has been rendered to the Prophet (S) and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), it is because of this very reason that the religion of Muhammad (S) and the path of his household widens ever more as against the background of all those enemies, and it will globalize one day.

Some Traditions

10

Mul a ‘Abd-ur-Rahman-ibn-‘Ūf has been quoted as saying: take from me the correct traditions of the Prophet (S) before they are distorted and mixed with lies. I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

‘I am the tree (of prophecy) (Tūb a) and Fatimah is its trunk, Ali is its seed, Hassan and Hussayn are its fruits. The Shi‘ites of us (our followers) are its leaves. The grass root of this tree is in the Garden of Eden, and the rest of it is in other Gardens (of Paradise).’ [11]

The Prophet (S) said:

“People are from different (roots of) a tree, and Ali and I are from (the roots of) a single tree.” [12]

The blissful Prophet (S) remarked:

"My Ahl-ul-Bayt and I are a tree in Paradise, the branches of which are in the world and whoever attached to us (took the tree by the branch), has taken a way unto his Lord." [13]

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 25

تُؤْتِي أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

25. "(The good tree) yields its fruits at all times by the permission of its Lord, and Allah sets forth parables for the people that they may reflect."

The tree of faith always bears good fruits and there are no seasons for the faithful as autumn and winter.

The verse says:

"(The good tree) yields its fruits at all times by the permission of its Lord…"

The use of allegories, similes and parables are methods of the Holy Qur'an for calling the attention of the people and of reminding them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and Allah sets forth parables for the people that they may reflect."

Therefore, all is mortal except Allah and the faith in Him. And whatever is mortal cannot bear fruits forever. However, whatever is godly by nature is eternal.[14] Of course, the colour of Allah is constant and other colours will vanish.

"…and who can give a better hue than Allah?…"[15]

The tree of faith always bears fruits and a believer is under all circumstances remembering Allah (s.w.t.) and is seeking to perform his duties, whether be it in welfare or in hardship, in happiness or in disaster, in poverty or in wealth, and in time of the threat of the oppressors he will resist until the end.

At the time of propagating religion, he does not expect any returns from others. When he is adamant, he will control himself for gaining Allah's consent.[16] At the time of marriage, he trusts in Him.[17]

At the time of worship and obedience, he has intention with divine motive.[18] At the time of poverty, he does not go to the rich and is not of the flattering lot.[19] In time of conquest or defeat, he is happy throughout his campaign for he is busy performing his duties.[20]

Of course, faith in Allah, the Almighty, is like a tree the fruits of which satisfies man both in the world, and in the intermediate world, and in the Hereafter.

However, man's property and position and his children as well as other blessings of this life are like a tree which bears fruits only for a few days and in a limited way, if such property, position, etc. might even bear no fruits at all, and, therefore, they become merely his own source of spiritual torture.

Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 55 says:

"So let not their possessions and their issues astonish you; verily Allah only desires thereby to chastise them in the life of (this) world…"

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 26

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِن فَوْقِ الأَرْضِ مَالَهَا مِن قَرَارٍ

26. "And the parable of an evil word is like an evil tree rooted upon the surface of the earth; it has naught of stability."

The Arabic word /'ijti a/ mostly signifies uprooting and eradication. The words, ideas and deviant individuals have neither got any roots, nor do they possess any fruits, flowers, beauty, perfume, perseverance, shade, and development. On the contrary, they are just thorns in the eyes of others.

At any rate, as comparative studies present one of the best ways for understanding problems, the opposite of the 'good tree', pops up in ones mind soon and is discussed as: 'the word evil and unclean' is like the evil and unclean tree which is without any roots which is up-rooted from the earth and which is thrown to one side when standing in the stormy weather and has got no stability.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an speaks in detail about 'the good tree' while, when talking about 'the evil tree', it describes it in one short sentence and passes by it.

The verse says:

"And the parable of an evil word is like an evil tree rooted upon the surface of the earth; it has naught of stability."

This method presents a delicate way of expression which encourages man to describe all qualification of the person once he is talking about the beloved one, whereas, when talking about the detested individual, he discusses it in a very concise manner.

Imam Baqir (as) is quoted as saying that the objective in mind with regard to /šajaratin xabiah/ (the evil tree) is the Umayyads. [21]

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 27

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الأَخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ

27. "Allah confirms those who believe by a firm saying in the life of the world and in the Hereafter, and Allah leaves the unjust to stray; and Allah does what He pleases."

That is, Allah provides stability for the believers, in this worldly life, because of their belief in the word monotheism and its sanctuary, so that they do not deviate and be misled from the path of the truth, making them staunch proponents lest they shall deviate from the right path in their worldly affairs which will also result in Hereafter.

Some commentators suggest: It means that Allah provides them with a living and settlement on earth, and He assists them to overcome their enemies and will place them in the Paradise in the Hereafter.

Ibn-i-'Abb as and Ibn-i-Mass'ūd and the majority of the commentators are of the belief that: This verse has been revealed to the question asked in the grave and the objective in mind is the grave once talking about the hereafter. That is, concerning the question of the grave, He fixes them over the issue of faith. Our dear Immaculate Imams have also been quoted as such.

Therefore, we read in various Islamic quotations that Allah keeps the believer stable on the line of faith once entering the grave at the time when angels ask questions regarding his identity.

This is the meaning of:

"Allah confirms those who believe by a firm saying in the life of the world and in the Hereafter…"

In some of these quotations, we have it explicitly stated the word /qabr/ (grave), while in some other quotations we read that the Satan calls on the faithful at the time of death and tries to seduce him from every direction and any side by his temptations. However, Allah does not permit him to mislead the faithful and this is the meaning of the abovementioned Qur'anic sentence.

Most of the commentators have accepted this commentary according to the quotation of the great commentator, Tabarsi, in Majma'-ul-Bayan. Perhaps, their reason is that the hereafter is no place for erroneous behaviour, nor is it a place for practice, but it is only a place for attaining the results.

However, at the time of the arrival of death, and even in the state of purgatory, which is the world that exists between this world and the Hereafter, there is the possibility of deviation more or less. It is in this circumstance that Allah's favour comes to the assistance of man in order to protect him and make him straightforward.

Anyway, in two explanatory examples in the previous verses, the state of 'faith' 'disbelief' 'a believer', 'a disbeliever' and, in general, the state of every 'clean' and 'untidy' were visualized. In this verse, the consequence of the job and the ultimate destiny of man are referred to.

First, it implies that Allah straightens and strengthens those who are believers, for their belief, their words and their ideas.

He confirms them and protects them in this world, in the purgatory where there is a possibility of deviation, and in the Hereafter, for their belief has not been a superficial one and a shaky one, and their personality has not been a hypocritical and a versatile one.

They will remain constant in their confrontation with difficulties and whims, and they will be kept clean of all scandalous flaws of character in here. Allah's endless blessings will be bestowed on them in the eternal life there.

Then, dealing with the opposite point, it says:

"…and Allah leaves the unjust to stray; and Allah does what He pleases."

We have repeatedly asserted that wherever, in the Qur'an, there is the question of leading and misleading and it is attributed to Allah, its first steps have been taken by man himself.

Allah's job is that very impact that has been created in every act, and also Allah's job is bestowal of blessings or withdrawal of blessings that are designated by Him as a consequence of a person's suitability or his lack of worth.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 42
2. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 58
3. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
4. The verse under discussion
5. Surah Alhaqah, No. 69, verse 30
6. Surah Muhammad, No. 47, verse 15
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Fad a'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 1 p. 172 from the Mustadrak-us-Sahihaynn, vol. p. 760
11. Fada'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 1, p. 172 take from Mustadrak-us-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 160
12. Fad a'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 1, p. 172, taken from Kanz-ul-Hagh a'igh, p. 155
13. Fad a'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 1, p. 172, taken from Thakh a'ir-ul-'Uqb a, p. 16
14. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 96
15. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 138
16. Surah ' Al-i-'Imr an, No. 3, verse 134
17. Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 32
18. Surah Al-'An' am, No. 6, verse 162
19. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 24
20. Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 52
21. Tafsir Majma'-ul-Bayan

Section 5: The Ingratitude of Men to Allah's Bounties

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verses 28 - 29

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْراً وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ

جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ

28. "Have you not seen those who changed Allah's favour for ingratitude, and caused their people to alight into the abode of perdition?"

29. "Hell! They shall enter into it; and (what) a bad place it is!"

It is the Prophet (S) who is being addressed in this verse and, in fact, it is a depiction of one of the aspects of 'evil tree' pointed out here.

At first, the Qur'an implies whether you did not see those who converted Allah's blessings and gratitude into ingratitude and sent themselves ultimately to the land of annihilation. Such people are the roots of the 'evil tree' and are the pioneers of paganism and deviation.

The verse says:

"Have you not seen those who changed Allah's favour for ingratitude, and caused their people to alight into the abode of perdition?"

Commentators have sometimes commented this blessing as the existence of the Prophet (S) and, at other times, they have considered it to be Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) and the ungrateful ones of this blessing to Umayyads, or to Bani Muqayrah and, at times, they have introduced all the unbelievers who were contemporaries of the Prophet (S).

Yet, definitely, the meaning of the verse is extensive and covers a wide range, thus one cannot confine it to a certain group. It embraces all of those who have been ungrateful with respect to one of the blessings of Allah and have misused it.

The pagans and the unbelievers converted the great blessings of Allah into a matter of ingratitude.

A- They took the option of paganism instead of the blessing of monotheism.

B- They abandoned the blessing of the clean and pure inherent nature and imitated their seduced ancestors.

C- They preferred superstitions to the Divine revelation.

D- They expressed their lack of gratitude in face of the blessing of the Divine leaders and followed the despots.

Many quotations indicate that the Imams (as) of Shi'ites have remarked:

"By Allah, we are the blessing of Allah that He bestowed upon His servants." [1]

In other words, it means: Swearing to Allah: the blessings which were converted were our existence. The folks abandoned us and went in search of other leaders. Thus, they changed the blessing of Allah.

The Qur'an, later, comments on the Qur'anic phrase: /d ar-ul-baw ar/ (a bad place) as: It is Hell in the flames of which they will immerse, and it is the worst of all places for someone to settle, for its ultimate end is annihilation.

In other word, they invite their people to oppose against the Prophet (S), throwing them into the Hell Fire, and what an evil abode is Hell.

The verse says:

"Hell! They shall enter into it; and (what) a bad place it is!"

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 30

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَندَاداً لِّيُضِلُّوا عَن سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَي النَّارِ

30. "And they set up (idols as) equals to Allah that they might mislead (the people) from His path. Say: 'Enjoy yourselves, for verily your journey's end will be the Fire'."

Some consider equal partners for Allah in the course of the creation of the world. Others consider equal partners for Allah in connection with His blessings. Such people consider enjoying good health, knowledge, power, splendour, and property as of the outcome of their own ability, and or as the result of different powers. Nonetheless, they soon find out that they have gone astray.

Therefore, the Qur'an alludes to one of the worst cases of ingratitude in this verse, and says:

"And they set up (idols as) equals to Allah that they might mislead (the people) from His path…"

They do all these things so as to make the people deviate from thinking about the true path and, as a result, they enjoy their material life, and presiding over and governing the people also for a few days.

Then the verse, addressing the Prophet (S), implies that he should tell them to enjoy themselves out of this worldly life which is worthless. However, they must know that the ultimate objective of their job will direct them towards the hell-fire.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'Enjoy yourselves, for verily your journey's end will be the Fire'."

Notwithstanding such a life is not a true life; it is rather a misery, and such a presidency and governorship is of no value, but, in its real sense, it is deceit, disaster, and affliction.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 31

قُل لِّعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَيُنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرّاً وَعَلاَنِيَةً مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لاَّ بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلا خِلاَلٌ

31. "O' Prophet! Say to My servants who have believed, to perform the prayers and to spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, before the coming of a Day in which there shall be neither bartering nor befriending."

Openly spending out of the wealth may encourage the present generation, and cause the encouragement of others, and self-acquittal from all accusations, while secretly spending out of the wealth is the cause of development and sincerity.

Some commentators, of course, have claimed that overt spend relates to the obligatory giving away of the wealth, like Khoms (one fifth) and alms, while secretly giving away of it relates to the recommended cases, such as: charity.

Although each of the open and in secret giving away of the wealth exerts some impacts on others, nonetheless, one can perhaps say that to give away part of the wealth in secret is better, for the Qur'anic term /sirran/ (secretly) precedes the word /'al anyatan/ (openly) in this verse.

Explanations

1- In order to command others, respect their personalities first. Serving as subservient to Allah provides the believers with a medal of honour.

The verse says:

"O' Prophet! Say to My servants…"

2- Having mere faith in the bottom of one's heart is not sufficient. Prayers, giving away of one's wealth, and good deeds are also necessary.

The verse says:

"…who have believed, to perform the prayers and to spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them…"

3- Islam is a comprehensive religion. One's relationship with Allah (s.w.t.), along with one's assistance to the deprived, are coupled with each other and are required for the acceptance of both.

"…to perform the prayers and to spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them…"

4- Spending out is not only confined to wealth alone. One must often share whatever he has with others, whether they are knowledge and wealth, or prestige and power.

5- Giving away of the wealth must be out of one's allowed earnings and wealth, and not out of whatever wealth we have.

Allah said:

"We have provided them"

and He did not say: "with you"

6- The act of spending out of the wealth must sometimes be done in secret and sometimes openly.

It says:

"…secretly and openly…"

7- One must take the opportunity.

The Qur'an remarks:

"…before the coming of a Day…"

8- If you wish to have good trade, try to barter and have transactions with Allah, for there will be no transactions carried out in the Day of Resurrection.

It continues saying:

"…in which there shall be neither bartering…"

9- One cannot get away from the punishment with bribing and his special relationships on in the Day of Resurrection.

The verse remarks:

"…there shall be neither bartering nor befriending."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 32

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّـمَرَاتِ رِزْقاً لَّكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الأَنْهَارَ

32. "Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down water from the sky; then brought forth fruits with it to be sustenance for you; and He has made the ships subservient to you that they might run through the sea by His command; and He has made the rivers subservient to you."

The issue of 'water' is being discussed in this noble verse from three dimensions:

1- Rain-water by which irrigation of the plants, source of their life, and purification of the weather are provided.

2- Sea-water which provides the water required for the life of the sea animals, and which also provides water ways for the passage of ships, and is the source of clouds and rain.

3- Canal waters which provide an irrigation system for regions lacking water.

In the previous verse, the Qur'an made allusions to prayers and sharing of one's wealth with others. In this verse, it asserts: Why are you so neglectful in connection with spend despite the fact that Allah has provided you with everything?

The holy verse says:

"Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down water from the sky; then brought forth fruits with it to be sustenance for you; and He has made the ships subservient to you that they might run through the sea by His command; and He has made the rivers subservient to you."

The Arabic term /tasxir/ denotes both utilization of all interests, such as the making subservient of the sun and the moon, and in the sense of man's full domination, such as making the ships and canals subservient to him.

In the end, cognition of Allah's blessings is the best method for theology which is coupled with general understanding and the public love, motives and worship. Among entire blessings of Allah, water is one of the most important of them.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 33

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَآئِبَيْنِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ

33. "And He has made the constantly moving sun and the moon subservient to you, and He has made the night and the day subservient to you."

The Qur'anic term /d a'ibin/ is derived from the word /da'b/ which means a 'continuous habit'. Maraghi has mentioned in his commentary that /d a'ibin/ means 'those continues in moving'.

Certainly, the sun is a great power house which functions constantly, as contrary to the man-made power plants which require repair every now and then and close down at times. Once the sun disappears for sometime, what will then happen?

How will man's life and the life of the plants and animals terminate or come to an end? In face of the existence of numerous microbes and lack of heat and steam, what kind of catastrophe would await the world?

Allah not only conquered and made the existing beings subservient to you but He also made the constantly moving sun and moon subservient to you.

The verse says:

"And He has made the constantly moving sun and the moon subservient to you…"

Allah not only made the existing beings of this world subservient to you but He also made their accidental states as submissive to you in the same way He did with the day and night.

From the Qur'an's point of view, man is so splendid that all these beings are made submissive to him by the command of Allah. That is, either they are directly at the service of man's interest, or they are running by man's control.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 34

وءَاتَاكُم مِن كُلّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لاَ تُحْصُوهَآ إِنَّ الإِنسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

34. "And He has given you whatever you have asked Him; and if you count Allah's blessings, you are unable to number them. Verily, man is very unjust, very ungrateful."

We read in verse 18 from Surah An-Nahl

"And if you count Allah's blessings, you are unable to number them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In the previous verses, we read that the corrupt leaders direct and lead people towards persons or objects other than Allah:

"And they set up (idols as) equals to Allah…"[2]

This verse proclaims: despite the fact that the ones other than Allah are unable to do anything, and whatever one possesses belongs to Allah alone, but man is usually heedless in these respects and is ungrateful in these connections.

In the meantime, the Arabic term /'add/ signifies counting, and the term /'ihs a'/ means 'to count accurately in such a way that nothing is left over in the process'. Anyway, if one decides to count Allah's blessings, he can never do that, for the material and spiritual blessings provided by Allah are so widespread throughout our lives, and our environment which can never be counted.

The verse says:

"And He has given you whatever you have asked Him; and if you count Allah's blessings, you are unable to number them. Verily, man is very unjust, very ungrateful."

Nonetheless, despite all those favours and Divine grace, mankind is still oppressive and ungrateful for Allah's blessings. The blessings which if utilized properly can turn the entire world into a paradise-like garden.

In fact the Qur'an implies: O' man! Everything is at your disposal in sufficient quantities but on condition that you are not ungrateful and oppressive, while you should try to remain content with your lot and with your own rights and do not violate the rights of other people.

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan
2. The current Surah, verse 30

Section 6: Abraham's Prayer

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 35

وإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ ءَامِناً وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَن نَّعْبُدَ الاَصْنَامَ

35. "And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this city secure and distance me and my children from worshipping the idols'."

This verse and the following verses exhibit a profile and the content of the prayers of 'Ibrahim (as) which reflect his burning desire for Allah and his greatness in spirit and, perhaps, this is the reason why this Surah has been named Surah 'Ibrahim.

'Ibrahim (as) prayed for Mecca on two occasions: The first instance was when he settled Ishmael and Hajar there and asked Allah to make that city secure.[1]

The verse says:

"And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this city secure…"

The second occasion that he prayed for Mecca was when a multitude of people came to Mecca to settle down there. 'Ibrahim (as) prayed saying:

"…'My Lord, make this a secure City…"[2]

Question: Are all of the people of the generation of 'Ibrahim monotheists because of this prayer?

Answer: Prayers present one factor and the will of the children provides another factor. Let us not forget the story of Noah's son.

Question: How is it that 'Ibrahim (a. s.) recalled Mecca as a town while he refers to it in the following verses "as a valley without cultivation?"[3]

Answer: The state of township of Mecca returns to the time when the tribes arrived in that region, in which case the prayer also relates to that time, or we might say that if a region is aRidand without cultivation, this would not make it incompatible with becoming a township. At the present moment, Mecca is also in a region which is arid in general.

Question: Notwithstanding the fact that Abraham (as) was a champion of monotheism, why is it that he prayed to Allah to distance him from paganism? The verse in this regard continues saying:

"…and distance me and my children from worshipping the idols."

Answer: The Prophet of Islam (S) also was constantly having his steps in the Straight Path and was heading in the straightforward direction. Nonetheless, he used to say in every prayer:

"Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path."

That is, if one is even sure that he is heading in the right direction, he must be scared of the dangers of deviation either and must seek Allah's assistance.

The objective in mind of 'to make security' is a law which guarantees the security of Mecca, and not to the matter that Mecca has always been safe and secure throughout its history. For, Mecca has been repeatedly invaded by hostile forces and immense blood has been shed there.

The Prophet of Islam (S) and his companions were also tortured there, and Imam Hussayn (as) abandoned the Hajj rituals because of lack of

security of Mecca. Nevertheless, the Divine law has designated it as a safe and secure region.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 36

رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَن تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّـي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

36. “My Lord, verily, they (idols) have misled many of the people. Then, whoever follows me, he is definitely of me, and whoever disobeys me; then verily you are Forgiving, Merciful.”

Question: How is it that the idols, which are statues of stone and wood, can mislead man?

Answer: Firstly, the idols are not always inanimate objects. Sometimes, men and those who are despots also become idols. Secondly, sometimes ignorance of a people causes stone and wood to be turned into valuable and precious commodities. Thirdly, the issue of the art involved in the jewelry, which was carried along with the idols, was attractive.

If we interpret this noble verse along with the previous one, we obtain desirable conclusions, for we had it in the previous verse that ‘Ibrahim (as) said:

“My Lord! … distance me and my children from worshipping the idols”.

In this verse he says:

“…whoever follows me, he is definitely of me…”

Therefore, all the monotheists of the world are the scholastic children of ‘Ibrahim by ideology.

The Qur’an says:

“…The faith of your father, ‘Ibrahim…” [4]

And as the blissful Prophet (S) said:

“Ali and I are the fathers of this Ummah.”

However, if a pagan is even the son of a prophet, he will also be addressed:

“…O’ Noah! Verily he is not of your family…”[5]

Hadrat Ali (as) remarks:

“Verily, the friend of Muhammad (S) is he who obeys Allah though he may be distanced by his blood. And verily the foe of Muhammad is he who disobeys Allah though he might be near to him (S) by his blood.” [6]

Incidentally, there is a scholastic and an ideological relationship between the celestial leaders and the faithful people. It is for this reason that the prophets (as) were even compassionate with their own opponents and they never disappointed them.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 37

رَبَّنَآ إِنِّـي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُـحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

37. “Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation near Your Sacred House, in order, Our Lord! that they may establish prayer; therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful.”

When Allah bestowed Ishmael to Abraham in his old age, He commanded him to settle that child with his mother in Mecca. Abraham obeyed the Divine order and then he prayed for them.

Some Islamic quotations denote that Imam Baqir (as) said:

"We are the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the remaining descendents of Abraham. That is why the people's hearts are inclined towards us."

Then, he recited this verse:

"Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation…"

The Ka'bah was located in a desert with no water and vegetation so that the people might be tried by it. As Hadrat-i-Ali (as) declared in the sermon of Ghasiyah:

"If the Ka'bah were situated in a place with a good climate, the people would not go on a pilgrimage toward it for the sake of Allah."

The call and prayers of the prophets (as) are accepted.

Abraham in this verse says:

"…and provide them with fruits…"

In another verse Allah says:

"…a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind shall be drawn?…"[7]

Imam Baqir (as) has stated:

"Whatever fruits are found in the east or in the west of the world can be found in Mecca".

However, Abraham (as) continued with his prayers and his invocation as follows:

"Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation near Your Sacred House, in order, Our Lord! that they may establish prayer…"

Afterwards, when Allah bestowed a son on Abraham from his female-slave, Hajar, and called him Isma'il, his first wife's jealousy, Sarah, was provoked and, she could not tolerate Hajar and her son. She asked Abraham to take that mother and child to another place, and Abraham submitted to this request which was in accordance with Allah's command.

Ishmael and his mother, Hajar, were taken by him to the land of Mecca which was then an arid land, lacking everything in those days. He left them there and said Good-bye to them.

Then Abraham continued his prayer to Allah implying that: Now that they have settled down in this extremely hot desert for the respect of Your great house, persuade some people to pay attention to them heartily, and have affection for them.

Let them enjoy all kinds of fruits, whether material or spiritual, perhaps they might be grateful to you.

The verse continues saying:

"…therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 38

رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَآءِ

38. "Our Lord! Verily, You know whatever we hide and whatever we manifest, and nothing in the earth nor anything in the heaven is hidden from Allah."

Now that everything is obvious for Allah (s.w.t.), and His knowledge encompasses everything and every affair of us, we, therefore, must not commit sin in His presence and not interfere in His creatures except with His satisfaction and His commands. We must remain sure that nothing will be hidden from Allah on the earth and in the skies.

The verse says:

"Our Lord! Verily, You know whatever we hide and whatever we manifest, and nothing in the earth nor anything in the heaven is hidden from Allah."

And Abraham invokes Allah declaring that once I am in distress for being parted from my son and wife, You know that well, and in case a drop of tears is shed from my eyes You notice.

And if at the time of my separation from my wife she tells me: "Whom do you appoint as my guardian?" You are aware of all these things, and the future of this land as well as the future of them, which are interwoven with one another, are all transparent and crystal clear before You and Your knowledge.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 39

الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَآءِ

39. "Praise be to Allah, Who has granted me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Verily my Lord is the Hearer of the petition;"

Ishmael and Isaac are among the specific blessings of Allah, for:

1- They were born because of the prayers of the prophet of Allah, 'Ibrahim.

2- They were born during the old age of their father.

3- They were both righteous children.

4- They headed their following chain of prophets.

Incidentally, what is important is the issue of having righteous children, whether they are born by a female slave or else. (Ismael was born by a female slave and Ishaq was born by a free woman.)

At any rate, one's children are gifts from Allah and nothing deters or serves as a hindrance for Allah's Will and the Divine power; therefore, senility did not obstruct him from having children.

The verse says:

"Praise be to Allah, Who has granted me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Verily my Lord is the Hearer of the petition;"

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verses 40 - 41

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلاَةِ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَآءِ

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

40. "My Lord! Make me a performer of the prayer, and of my offspring (too): Our Lord! and accept my petition"

41. "Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the Day when the reckoning shall come to pass."

Through the verses which we have discussed so far in this Surah, Abraham (as) has seven wishes from Allah (s.w.t.).

They consist of: the security of Mecca, remaining distant from worshipping idols, winning the heart of the faithful with regard to his children and his school of thought, benefiting of his offspring from the fruits and the dividends, the success in keeping up his prayers, acceptance of his call and his prayers, and finally, forgiveness of himself, his parents and all the faithful.

The Arabic term /w alid/ refers to one's real father, but the term /'ab/ has a wider sense and refers also to other than father, such as uncle and one's father-in- law as well. As the parents of Abraham (as) were believers, therefore, Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim (as) prays for them in this verse.

The verse says:

"My Lord! Make me a performer of the prayer, and of my offspring (too): Our Lord! and accept my petition"

Nonetheless, in other verses where the Arabic word /'ab/ is employed the objective in mind is 'Ibrahim's uncle. Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim deplored and abhorred him for his paganism.

Messages to Note

1- The repetition of the Qur'anic word /rabb/ at the beginning of the prayers of Abraham (as) is the sign of the impact of the acceptance of prayers, or it may also be regarded as one of the rituals belonging to it.

2- Establishing prayer is the center of Abraham's calls.

3- Keeping up prayers is a counterpart for leadership. Abraham employed the phrase /wa min ðuriyyati/ (and of my offspring) on two occasions: One is when there was the issue involved as of the prayers of his generation, and the other one concerned with the leadership of his generation.

Here he (as) says:

"Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the Day when the reckoning shall come to pass."

Notes

1. The verse under discussion
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 126
3. The current Surah, verse 37
4. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78
5. Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 46
6. Bih ar, vol. 67, P. 25
7. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 57

Section 7: The Respite and the End

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 42

وَلا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلاً عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الأَبْصَارُ

42. “And do not regard Allah to be heedless of what the unjust do. He only respite them (their punishment) to a day on which the eyes shall stare (of terror),”

The previous verses dealt with the issue of the day for settlement of accounts. For this reason, the Qur’an points out the case of the plight of the oppressors and the tyrants in this verse.

Incidentally, by means of the Qur’anic statement of this part of the discussions of resurrection, the sections on the issue of monotheism of the previous discussions are complemented.

At first, with a threatening tone of voice while addressing the oppressors and the tyrants, the Qur’an begins implying that the Prophet (S) should not rest assured that Allah is ignorant of whatever the oppressors do.

The verse says:

“And do not regard Allah to be heedless of what the unjust do…”

These are the words, in fact, uttered in answer to the query of those who say: If this world has got a Lord, a just Lord, so why the oppressors are left to themselves? The Qur’an answers this question by saying that Allah is never ignorant.

If He does not punish them instantly, it is for the fact that this world is a trial ground only and it is meant for the development of human beings, and achieving this objective is impossible without freedom.

Then the Qur’an implies that Allah postpones their punishment for one day when on that day all are stunned with their eyes amazed because of intensive fear and terror, and are fixed to one points remaining motionless.

The verse says:

“…He only respite them (their punishment) to a day on which the eyes shall stare (of terror),”

Moreover, He declares in other verses as such:

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened…”[1]

It is besides that Allah in another verse adds that such people will be afflicted in this world, too, where he says:

“And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought…” [2]

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 43

مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لاَ يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ هَوَآءٌ

43. “Hastening forward, their heads upraised, their eyes (and eyelids) not blinking and their hearts void.”

There are several meanings proposed for the Arabic term /muhti‘in/ which is derived from /’iht a‘/ in the sense of: upraising the head, to speed up, looking pleasurably, all of which meanings can be implied in this verse.

The chastisements of the Resurrection Day are so horrifying that these oppressors stiffen their necks, raising their heads towards the sky, they even may fix their eye-lids in a state of motionlessness, while their hearts are becoming void because of their intensive fear, distress, anxiety and despair.

The verse says:

"Hastening forward, their heads upraised, their eyes (and eyelids) not blinking and their hearts void."

Those persons who considered themselves as think tanks and considered others as stupid will lose their reasoning in such a way that their looks resemble not the lunatics but that of the dead. Their looks will be 'empty', indifferent, motionless and full of fear and horror.

Truly speaking, once the Qur'an decides to depict a scenario or a landscape, it depicts every thing in the most concise manner and provides the most comprehensive picture of everything, an example of which is shown in the above short verse.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 44

وَأَنذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَآ أَخِّرْنَآ إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نُّجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ وَنَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ أَوَلَمْ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُم مِن قَبْلُ مَا لَكُم مِن زَوَالٍ

44. "And warn the people as to the day when the chastisement comes to them; then those who did injustice will say: 'Our Lord, defer us to a near term, (that) we will answer Your call and follow the messengers'. (They will be told:) 'Did you not swear before that there would be no end for you?'"

The Qur'anic term /'inŏar/ (warning) is the antonym of /biš arat/ (glad tidings) both of which were the mission of the prophets who were the bearers of the good news as well as the warners.

They were bearer of the good news regarding faith, righteous acts, virtue, and being characterized by attributes which lead one to salvation, happiness, Divine blessings, and ushering one to Paradise.

And they were warners as to the cases of paganism, ingratitude, darkness, sins, and evil attributes and characteristics which lead one to wretchedness misery, Divine Wrath, and awful consequences and punishments in this world and in the Hereafter.

Then, in order not to give impression that the Divine punishments are confined to a specific group, as a general rule He commands His prophet to warn all people about the day when the painful chastisement of Allah will call on them.

The verse says:

"And warn the people as to the day when the chastisement comes to them…"

That is, when the tyrants notice the terrible consequences of their behaviour, they may regret and think of compensating for it.

The verse continues saying:

"…then those who did injustice will say: 'Our Lord, defer us to a near term, (that) we will answer Your call and follow the messengers'…"

The objective of this day is the day when some calamities and worldly chastisements will be descended, just like the punishments which were inflicted on the peoples of Lūt, and on ‘ Ad, and Thamūd people as well as on the Pharaoh people which exterminated them.

However, they are instantly held back and this shaking message is delivered to them that such a thing is impossible to happen. The course of action has come to an end. Were you not the ones who swore that there would be no end and perishing of your life and power?

The verse says:

“…(They will be told:) ‘Did you not swear before that there would be no end for you?’”

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 45

وَسَكَنتُمْ فِي مَسَاكِنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ الأَمْثَالَ

45. “And you dwelt in the abodes of those who did injustice to themselves oppression on yourself in the houses of those who preceded you, and it became clear for you how we did with them, and We set forth (may) parables for you.”

Many people do not take examples and instructions from those who preceded them and neglected everything though they are seating themselves in their seats.

Therefore, to warn and to blame them further, the Qur’an addresses them implying that you were such people who settled down in the lands of those who refuted the prophets and you knew as to how Allah had inflicted catastrophes on them and had exterminated them.

The verse says:

“And you dwelt in the abodes of those who did injustice to themselves oppression on yourself in the houses of those who preceded you, and it became clear for you how we did with them…”

Some are of the opinion that they were the people of ‘ Ad, and Thamūd, while others claim that they were those who were killed in the Battle of the Badr.

We provided you examples and made you acquainted with the characteristics of your predecessors so as to enable you to take example, but you did not draw lessons, and admonitions did not have any impacts on you.

The verse says:

“…and We set forth (may) parables for you.”

Some suggest that the objective of the parables which are mentioned is those matters which are dealt with in the Qur’an and demonstrate that Allah is Omnipotent in the world of creation as before, and is able to re-enliven all after their death, and to reckon their accounts.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 46

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ وَإِن كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ

46. "And indeed they have devised their devising, and their devising is with Allah, though their devising were such as to remove the mountains thereby."

Allah is both aware of their devices and tricks, and is all-powerful over them, and He shall provide all conspirators with commensurate chastisement. He can also diffuse and expel their tricks or return those tricks to themselves.

At any rate, do not worry, such conspiracies and plans will have no effect on you even if their strategies are such that enable them to remove mountains. For, no matter how powerful and forceful they may be, the oppressors will eventually be perished by Allah.

The verse says:

"And indeed they have devised their devising, and their devising is with Allah, though their devising were such as to remove the mountains thereby."

Some commentators have claimed that the objective in mind of 'the mountains' has been the Islamic religion and the Prophet (S) that have withstood all sorts of conspiracies and tricks of the enemies.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 47

فَلا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَه إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ

47. "So do not think that Allah will fail in His promise to His messengers. Verily Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

As a man takes revenge, he does it along with hatred and instinctive satisfaction. Nevertheless, what Allah does is based on justice and wisdom.

Therefore, addressing the prophet (S) once again, as to warn the oppressors and evildoers with a threatening voice, it implies that they should not imagine that Allah opposes His earlier promise and pledge which He has kept with the prophets.

For, that kind of person violates his promise who is either not able to keep his promise or he has not included such words in his vocabulary as punishment or vengeance. However, Allah is both able and can take vengeance.

The verse says:

"So do not think that Allah will fail in His promise to His messengers. Verily Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution."

This noble verse is in fact complementary to the verse which we already cited, saying:

"And do not regard Allah to be heedless of what the unjust do…"[3]

That is, if you notice that the oppressors have got a respite, it is not because of Allah's negligence and overlooking of their acts, and it is not for that Allah may violate His promise. Rather, all of their accounts will be settled and cleared in a day and their just chastisement will be given to them.

Incidentally, the respite given to the pagans and the oppressors is based on a practice and on wisdom, and it is not because of negligence and of going back on one's promises.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verse 48

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

48. “On the day when the earth shall be changed into other than the earth and (so will be) the heavens, and (all men) shall come forth before Allah, the One, the All-Dominant.”

The changing and the transformation of the earth on the Hereafter Day has been explained in a number of verses of the Qur’an. On that Day, a strong earthquake will take place; the mountains will be displaced and start moving and they will be softened like wool and cotton. It refers to the day when the earth will be turned into a soft piece of plain which is even.

As the Qur’an says:

“And they ask you (O Apostle) about the mountains (on that Day). Say: ‘My Lord will uproot them and scatter them (as dust),’”

“Then He will leave them as a plain, smooth level;”[4]

But, the transformation of the skies will take place with the setting off the sun and the rolling over of the skies. However, this existing system of existence has got a culmination point.

Anyway, after destruction, everything will be reborn and renewed on that Day and man will step forward with some new conditions of the world, the conditions of which differ from these of this world, as regards its vastness, its blessings, its chastisements.

And it is on that Day that one appears with all of his existence and with all of his possessions before the Allah Who is unique and Almighty.

The verse says:

“On the day when the earth shall be changed into other than the earth and (so will be) the heavens, and (all men) shall come forth before Allah, the One, the All-Dominant.”

Therefore, the attribute of Allah as ‘the All-Dominant’ signifies His domination over everything and His authority over what is inside and what exists in the outside of every single being.

Surah ‘Ibrahim - Verses 49 - 50

وَتَرَي الْمُـجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الأَصْفَادِ

سَرَابِيلُهُم مِن قَطِرَانٍ وَتَغْشَي وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ

49. “And you will see the guilty on that day bound together in chains.”

50. “Their robes (shall be) of pitch, and their faces covered with Fire,”

The person who is experiencing punishment and trouble will be ever more suffering if he hears other people crying, as the case is with those who are happy and rejoicing and their happiness and rejoicing will double if they find themselves beside others who are happy as well.

It is for this reason that the Qur’an declares that: Allah will bring together all those individuals who resemble one another in their line of thinking: the culprits in Hell and the good ones in Paradise.

And we also find that the Qur’an depicts the conditions of the offenders in a different way in this verse.

It says:

“And you will see the guilty on that day bound together in chains.”

These chains and yokes represent the mental and practical connections of the sinners who joined together and who were interwoven as in a line to help each other in this world.

Then, the Qur'an describes their dressing pattern which is in itself a great disaster for them. Their robes and dresses are made of tar (a stinking, malodorous, and inflammable material) and their faces are covered by flames of fire.

The verse says:

"Their robes (shall be) of pitch, and their faces covered with Fire,"

As such is the case, instead of proper clothing, their bodies are wrapped up in a kind of material which has four distinct awful defects as they are stinking, black, inflammable and burnable, for robes are put on for protection as well as for ornamental and cosmetic purposes. They are meant to protect one against heat and cold. Such robes, contrast all garments, are both ugly and inflammable.

The Arabic term /'asf ad/ is the plural form of /sufūd/ which means 'the bone of a tree', it was also used for attaching to the feet of prisoners.

The Arabic term /qatr an/ is a kind of material which is extracted from some trees after the boiling of which and after its solidification. It is used for curing the skin diseases of camels for its intensive burning. It is extremely stinking and inflammable.

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 51

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

51. "That Allah may requite everyone what he has earned, verily Allah is swift at reckoning."

None of the people will remain without compensation. And no action in the world will be left without any reactions. Thus, the Divine punishment and reward have their origin in our own practices.

The verse says:

"That Allah may requite everyone what he has earned…"

This means that Allah rewards or punishes everyone according to His own discretion for whatever he has done.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah is quick to discern and settle accounts.

The verse continues to say:

"…verily Allah is swift at reckoning."

Surah 'Ibrahim - Verse 52

هَذَا بَلاَغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ الأَلْبَابِ

52. "This is a clear message for mankind and that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that He is God (the only) One, and that those possessors of intellects may take admonition."

As we already noted, Surah 'Ibrahim began with depicting the sensitive role of the Qur'an in bringing out man from utter darkness of ignorance and paganism into the enlightenment of knowledge and of monotheism.

It ends by providing an exposition of the role of the Qur'an in warning all human kind and instruction of monotheism and that the possessors of intellects may take admonition.

The verse says:

"This is a clear message for mankind and that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that He is God (the only) One, and that those possessors of intellects may take admonition."

Such a beginning and such an end provide us with clues to the reality as to the fact that whatever we read about is already mentioned in the Qur'an, and as Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"The sources of all knowledge and the delight of the heart are in the Qur'an."[5]

One also has to look for the remedies of mental, ethical, social and political illnesses in the Qur'an. It has been said:

"Seek from it for the treatment of your diseases."[6]

This exposition provides us with sufficient reasons to believe that the Holy Qur'an is a Book which contains instructions for everyone throughout his life.

And 'finally' it is a Book which provides the learned man as well as the masses of people with the required instructions as they need. Once the Muslims have set aside this great celestial Book and turned to the deviant schools of thought of the east and west, they must be on the look out for the reasons of their weakness and their backwardness in here.

Explanations

1- The holy Qur'an provides the substance for religious propagation and the preachers must look to the Qur'an for the main substance of their propagation.

"This is a clear message…"

2- The Qur'an is the Book of monotheism and one must educate monotheistic people by it.

"…and that He is God (the only) One…"

3- It is not enough to communicate only, warning is also necessary. It does not suffice to know paying attention, and admonition is also required.

4- Association with the Qur'an provides us with both knowledge, cognition, and outlook as well as with admonitions which urge us to perform decent acts.

5- The Qur'an provides the general public with a mandate though only the men of wisdom take advice and instruction from it.

"…and that those possessors of intellects may take admonition."

Certainly, if we pay attention to the guidelines of the Qur'an heartily, we will become truly monotheistic individuals. Allah willing.

The End of Surah 'Ibrahim

You can read the biography of Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim in the following pages.

Notes

1. Surah T a H a, No. 20, verse 124
2. Surah Ash-Shur a, No. 42, verse 30
3. This Surah, verse 42
4. Surah T a H a, No. 20, verses 105-106
5. Nahj-ul-Bal aqah, sermon 176
6. Ibid

The Highly Adventurous Life of ‘Ibrahim, the Iconoclastic Prophet

This Surah is the only one which is named after ‘Ibrahim.

However, the biography of ‘Ibrahim is not covered only in this Surah.

On the other hand, as there are mentions of this great Divine prophet on various occasions in other Suras, we considered it appropriate to discuss the highly-esteemed biography of this champion of monotheism in a concise manner at the end of this Surah so that we shall be able to interpret and comment on the various verses which we come across in the future, as they require command of this prophet’s life.

We hope that this short discussion provides sufficient awareness for our dear readers and we shall be able to provide them with useful references.

One can distinguish the life of ‘Ibrahim into three distinct periods:

1- The Era prior to his prophetic Mission;

2- The Era of his prophetic Mission and his Campaign against the worshippers of idols in Babylon;

3- The Exodus Era from Babylon and his struggles and efforts in the Lands of Egypt, Palestine, and Mecca.

The Birthplace and Childhood of ‘Ibrahim

‘Ibrahim was born in the lard of Babylon which was an amazing land of the world and which had a powerful and, at the same time, an oppressive and a tyrannical government which was in full control of it. (Some historians have regarded his birthplace in ‘’Ur’, a city in the land of Babylon.

The Highly Adventurous Life of ‘Ibrahim (a. s.)

‘Ibrahim was born at the time when, Nimrod-ibn-Kan‘an, that oppressive and cruel king, was ruling Babylon and he used to present himself as the great god of Babylon. Certainly, the people of Babylon did not possess only this sole idol to worship, but, in the meantime, they had fabricated idols out of the various materials and used to worship them.

The dominant government of that land used to encourage vigorously the worshipping of idols as it considered the job as an effective means for stupefying and inciting hallucinations in people and regarded any kind of insult to the idols as a great crime and an unforgivable one.

Historians have recounted an amazing story about the birth of ‘Ibrahim, a summary of which is as follows:

Astrologers had predicted and had foretold that a person could be born who would stand up to the undivided and invincible power and authority of Nimrod. Then Nimrod sought to obstruct such a baby from being born, and once it was born, he did utmost to have him killed. Nonetheless, none of his plans was effective and the baby was born.

The mother of the baby tried her best and brought her child up in a cave near her birthplace so much so that she spent 13 years of her life in that place. And in such a situation, eventually, the child was brought up far from the scrutiny of the agents of Nimrūd.

He attained the age of puberty, and decided to leave that hiding-place forever, in order to go among the people, and explain the lessons of

monotheism to the people which he had received with inspirations from within himself supplemented by his mental studies.

Campaigns Against Various Groups of Idol-worshippers

At the time when the people of Babylon were worshipping such self-made idols, further, they were also worshipping such celestial beings as the sun, the moon and the stars.

'Ibrahim decided to awaken their dormant conscience by means of logic and clear and evident reasoning methods, thus drawing the dark curtains of the wrong suggestions down from the face of their clean inherent nature, so as to enable their enlightening nature to shine, in order that they might take several steps alongside of the path of monotheism.

'Ibrahim had done a great deal of studies concerning the creation of the universe, the skies and the earth as well as the power which was dominating and governing them and their amazing hierarchy, thus the light of certainty was being shed on his entire existence[1].

Logical Campaign Against the Idol-worshippers

At first, Abraham faced the worshippers of the stars, especially against those who used to worship Venus, which appears in the sky immediately after sunset, shining to the west of the horizon. They engaged in bowing and worshipping it.

Abraham shouted,

"This is my Lord."

This he did either wonderfully, using a positive interrogation with a negative sense to stress the issue, or he used this way of expression to provide an introduction for the demonstration of their mistakes, or just for the sake of reinforcing of harmony with the opposite side in order to bring them in line.

However, when it set, he remarked:

"I do not like those the setting ones."[2]

And when the moon split the widely-open horizon, inciting the moon-worshippers to begin their worship, joining them he shouted:

"This is my Lord!" But when it set, he said: 'If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray'."

When the sun split the darkness of night, shedding its golden rays over the mountains and plains, the sun-worshippers went on with their prayers.

Then, Abraham said:

"This is my Lord; this is the greatest! But when it set, he said: 'O' my people! Surely I am quit of that you associate (with Allah)'."

All these have got falls. They are at the mercy of change and are as puppets at the hands of creation and they have no feelings and will power of their own much less that they should be deemed as creator and administrator of this world:

"Verily I have turned my face (myself wholly) toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, being upright, and I am not of the idolaters."[3]

'Ibrahim left behind this stage of his campaign against the idol-worshippers in the most efficient way and could awaken some, while seeking to make others at least skeptic. He was soon subject of rumour in

that region as to whom he might be who can affect masses of people's hearts, leaving such an impact on them with such an explicit and straightforward logic.

Dialogue with 'Azar

Abraham got engaged in a conversation with his uncle at another stage, and by using explicit and far-reaching speech coupled with affection and, at times, with warnings regarding idol-worshipping, told him: Why do you worship something which can not hear, can not see, and can not solve any problems you have?

If you follow me, I shall lead you in the right path. I am scared that soon you may face the Divine punishment if you follow the Satan.

Even, at the time when his uncle threatened him to stone him to death when he was admonishing him, he used the sentence

"Peace be upon you! Saying: I shall ask my Lord to forgive you"[4]**,**

and he tried to find a way through his stone like heart.

The Prophetic Mission of 'Ibrahim

As for the age when Abraham attained to the position of the prophetic mission, we have no access to clear evidence. However, we can conclude from Surah Maryam, that he had attained to the rank of his prophetic mission when he engaged in the dialogue with his uncle, for we read in this Surah addressing the prophet (S):

"And mention in the Book; verily he was a truthful man, a prophet."

"When he said to his father (i.e. his uncle): 'O my father! Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor does avail you in aught?"[5]

We know that this adventure took place before an extensive entanglement with the idol-worshippers and his being was about to be burned by them. If we add what some historians have written saying that Abraham was only 16 years of age when setting of him a flame took place, it becomes clear that he was appointed to achieve his great mission even as early as his adolescence.

Practical Campaigns Against the Idol-worshippers

Anyway, 'Ibrahim's involvement with the idol-worshippers reached greater proportions day by day which, eventually, terminated in breaking of all the idols of temple of Babylon except the great idol.

Dialogue with the Oppressive Ruler

The affairs regarding the opposition and campaign of Abraham (as) with the idols finally reached Nimrūd. He summoned him so as to silence him by the way of advising, or by warning, or by threatening him. He, who was very advert in sophisticating, asked Abraham if he did not worship the idols, who was then his Lord?

He answered the same one whose life and death are in His own hands:

"…My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die.'…"

He shouted: O you unaware person! This is in my hands! Do you not see how I command the offender who is to be executed to be freed, and how I stop his execution or I order the execution of the prisoner who is not convicted to be executed?

‘Ibrahim, who was advert in giving extraordinary sharp answers, seeking assistance from his prophetic power, told him: It is not but the matters of death and life which are in His hands; all of the affairs of the world of existence are at His command.

Do you not see how the sun rises from the east every morning by His order and sets in the west? If you rule the entire world of existence, reverse the process, so that the sun rises in the west and sets in the east. Nimrūd was so astonished that he lost his ability to talk to him[6].

Undoubtedly, ‘Ibrahim knew that Nimrūd was playing with words as regards having power of life and death. However, his skill in reasoning did not permit the enemy side to win him over in his argument. Thus he abdicated that soon and stuck to a different method in which he got the enemy caught.

The Exodus of ‘Ibrahim

At long last, the government of Nimrūd, who felt that the youth was organizing a dangerous campaign threatening his despotic rule, by his clear logic and his expressive powerful tongue decided to put an end to the life of ‘Ibrahim by aggrandizement of the fanatical ignorance of the idol-worshippers.

He feared that the eloquent language and powerful thinking coupled with his sound logic would awaken the oppressed masses, and finally break up the chains of his exploitations.

He then organized certain ceremonies (which will be discussed later, in Surah ‘Anbiya) to burn him alive in an inferno of fire which was prepared by the help of the ignorance of the masses and the crime of the dominant system, in order to be delivered from him for ever.

However, as the fire was put off by the command of Allah and Abraham was saved from that scenario intact, Nimrūd’s system started trembling in such a way that Nimrūd lost his morale, as Abraham was no more an adventurous young man who was planting seeds of discord the labeling which Nimrūd had addressed him with.

Abraham was then regarded as a Divine leader and a brave champion who could by himself and single-handedly invade his powerful enemies and overcome them all.

It was for this reason that Nimrūd and his courtiers, who used to suck the blood of the poor people like leeches, decided to stand up against Abraham with all their powers to guarantee the safety of their regime and fight him to the end.

On the other hand, Abraham had secured his share from that group. That is, those who had receptive hearts had believed in him.

He found it more convenient to depart from the land of Babylon along with his companions and the population of the faithful and to spread the call of Allah to the people of Damascus, Palestine, and Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs. He could propagate the truth of monotheism in those regions and call numerous people to become faithful to the worshipping of Allah, the only One.

The Last Stage of the Prophetic Mission of ‘Ibrahim

‘Ibrahim spent a whole life-time campaigning against worshipping the idols in all its forms especially the ‘worshipping of man’ and could enlighten the ones who were ready with the light of monotheism and provide them with a new life, thus liberating numerous groups from the chains of the despots.

Now it was time to enter the last stage of Allah’s worshipping and servitude to Him and offering Him whatever he possessed with utmost sincerity, so that to pass successfully all the great Divine trials with a great leap forward in spiritual matters which would culminate in his ‘Imamate’ and leader-ship’ of men.

Simultaneous with this matter, he erected the pillars of the House of monotheism, ‘the House of Ka‘bah’ and turned it into a unique center for worshipping Allah. This he did to call all the believers to this great conference near this huge and fantastic as well as splendid ‘house of monotheism’.

His adventures about the jealousy of Sara, his first wife, with ‘Hajar’, the slave whom he had accepted as his wife and had given birth to a son called Ishmael, caused him to take the mother and infant child and depart them from the land of Palestine to the arid desert of Mecca, within those rugged mountains.

Upon Allah’s command, they went to a land where not even a drop of water was to be found, in order to pass a great test.

The discovery of the spring Zamzam, and the arrival of the tribe Jarham, who asked the permission of Hajar to dwell in that region, has got a lengthy history along with others, all of which led to the development of that land.

‘Ibrahim had asked Allah to make that area into a well-developed city and an affluent one, and attract the attention of the people on that spot where his family was residing.[7]

It is interesting to note that some historians have cited that when Abraham was locating the baby Ishmael and Hajar in the land of Mecca and wanted to return, calling him Hajar asked ‘Ibrahim as to who had commanded him to take them to a land where no vegetation was found and no milk-providing animals existed, and not a single drop of water was to be found, all of which took place with no storage of food and no companions.

‘Ibrahim answered her in a concise statement:

“My Lord Who has commanded me so!”

As soon as Hajar heard this response, she said:

“Now that such is the case, Allah will never leave us alone”.

Abraham repeatedly came from Palestine to Mecca to visit Ishmael and it was in the course of one of such trips during which he performed the Hajj pilgrimage rituals.

It was by the command of Allah that he took his son, who was in his teens as an extraordinary faithful and clean individual, to the sacrificing spot and got ready to sacrifice him, who was the best he had to offer Allah by his own hands.

When this most important trial was staged in its best form and he (as) went through all the processes to the end, Allah accepted the sacrifice and preserved Ishmael for him, sending him a sheep to replace his sacrifice[8].

Ultimately, after all the trials and out of all tests, ‘Ibrahim attained the highest rank which a perfect man can ever reach and thus received promotion and as the blissful Qur’an implies that Allah tried ‘Ibrahim with certain words and he got through with them all, after which He told him that he was appointed as the leader and ‘Imam’.

Transported with joy, ‘Ibrahim asked that this position be awarded to some of his children as well. His call was accepted but on condition that He would not bestow such a position on those who had been oppressors or had committed any atrocities.

The holy Qur’an says:

“And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he fulfilled, He said: ‘Verily I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind.” (Abraham) pleaded: ‘And of my offspring (as well)?’ He (Allah) said: ‘My covenant does not incline the unjust’.”

The Highly-esteemed Position of ‘Ibrahim in the Qur’an

A study of the holy verses of the Qur’an reveals the fact that Allah has appointed a very highly-esteemed position to Abraham, a rank which has been accorded to no other prophet. One can draw his conclusions as to this matter by considering the following expressions:

1- Allah has made mention of ‘Ibrahim as a ‘nation’ and praises his personality as a nation as well. [9]

2- Allah has accorded the position of ‘Divine friend’ to him.

“…And Allah took Abraham as a friend.”[10]

It is interesting to note that in some quotations we read as to the commentary of this verse that: Such a high position was bestowed on Abraham for he never asked anyone anything, and he never despaired anyone who requested him something[11].

3- He was from among:

the good ones: (Surah Sad, No. 38 verse 47),

the righteous ones: (Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 123),

the content ones: (Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 125),

the truthful ones: (Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 41),

the forbearing ones: (Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 114),

and the keepers of promises: (Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 37)

4- Abraham was very hospitable: (Surah Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verses 24-27);

as one finds in some quotations, he is referred to as:

‘The father or the lord of the guests’[12]

5- He was unique in trusting Allah, as far as he relied on no one but on Allah in everything and under all circumstances.

He would ask Him as to whatever he wanted, and he referred only to Him.[13]

The story of the angel’s proposals for his deliverance when the obstinate nation wanted to throw him into the fire and his lack of acceptance has been recorded in history books. He used to say:

“I am needy all over, but I am in need of assistance from the Creator, not from those who themselves are the created ones.[14]

6- He was unique in bravery and courage and he used to stand up against the challenging fanaticism of the idol-worshippers single-handedly, and would leave no room for the slightest fear and terror.

He used their idols as subjects of his ridicule and turned their temples into ruins, and addressed Nimrūd and his guards with a unique courage, each of which has been mentioned in several of the verses of the Qur'an.

7- 'Ibrahim had an extraordinary powerful logic. He used concise, firm, and reasonable language while addressing his seduced opponents. By his explicitly sound logic, he would bring these obstinate enemies down to earth, never losing ground to them.

He never became angry as a result of their intensive rudeness. Contrarily, he used to face them in cold blood which reflected his elevated spirit.

He used to hand them their condemnation papers with his solemn words and deeds which have been covered in the story of dispute of Abraham with Nimrūd and with his uncle and with the court trial of Babylon when they wanted to condemn him for his theistic belief and for breaking up of the idols.

Concentrate on the following verses which have been dealt with in Surah Al-'Anbiya:

When the judges asked him as to whether it was he who had done all those offences to their gods, breaking up of all their small and big idols, he answered:

"…surely (some doer) has done it; the chief of them is this, therefore ask them, if they can speak."[15]

This he said to corner them in an awful deadlock out of which they could not escape.

He placed his opponents in an awful situation by declaring this single sentence. For, if they answered that their idols were dumb and deaf and unable to speak, they would be feeling ashamed for such of mute and irresponsible god.

If they accepted that they were able to speak, they should ask and hear the answer from them. It was on this occasion that their dormant conscience was aroused and discovered themselves.

They would hear words from within themselves which shouted that they were oppressors, selfish and tyrants. That is, you are having neither any mercy on yourselves nor do you show any mercy on the community to which you belong.

Anyway, they had necessarily had to provide an answer.

Thus, they uttered these words while being humiliated with to utmost that:

"You well know that these idols cannot speak."

It was at this moment that the pounding words of Abraham struck them like thunderbolt.

He shouted:

"Woe unto you for worshipping any one but Allah. O' brainless people! Fie on you and on what you serve besides Allah; What! Do you not understand?"[16]

Ultimately, as they did not find the power to stand up against the strong logic of ‘Ibrahim in them, as is the case with all oppressors, they took to the logic of force and declared that he should be burned alive.

To fulfill their aim, they utilized the blind fanaticism of the worshippers of the idols and hastened to call them to help their gods.

“Burn him and help your gods, if you are going to do (anything)’.”[17]

This was an example of the explicit, reasonable, and decisive logic of ‘Ibrahim.

8- It is interesting to note that the Qur’an considers this as one of the sources of pride for the Muslims to be adherents of ‘Ibrahim. And it was he who called them by the name of ‘Muslims’.[18] Even, in order to encourage Muslims, the Qur’an calls to their minds that they must imitate ‘Ibrahim and his companions for achieving some of the important objectives.[19]

9- The rituals of the Hajj pilgrimage, with all its splendour, have been initiated by ‘Ibrahim and upon Allah’s command. Therefore, the name of ‘Ibrahim and the memory of ‘Ibrahim have been associated with Hajj. [20]

And man is reminded of this Divine prophet at any moment and with every part of the splendid ceremonies of Hajj, so that he feels the grandeur of this man in the bottom of his heart. In principle, the performance of the Hajj rituals is meaningless without the name of Abraham.

10- The personality of ‘Ibrahim was so elevated that every group sought to consider him as one of their own. The Jews and the Christians each stressed their relationship with him.

The Holy Qur’an, answering them, however, insisted that he (s.w.t.) was only a Muslim and a true monotheist. That is, he was subservient to all of Allah’s commandments and submissive to Him; he never thought of anyone but Him and he never would take any steps except in the path shown by Him. [21]

Notes

1. Surah Al-’An‘ am, No. 6, verse 76
2. Surah Al-’An‘ am, No. 6, verse 76
3. Ibid, verses 77-79
4. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47
5. Ibid, verses 41-42
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 258
7. Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verses 31-37
8. Surah As-S af at, No. 37, verses 104 to 107
9. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 120
10. Surah An-Nis a, No. 4, verse 125
11. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1. p. 74.
12. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1. p. 74
13. Surah Ash-Shu‘ara, No. 26 verses 78 to 82
14. Kamil-ibn-Athir, vol. 1, p. 99

15. Surah Al-’Anbiy a, No. 21, verse 63
16. Ibid, verse 67
17. Ibid, verse 68
18. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78
19. Surah Mumtahanah, No. 60, verse 4
20. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 27
21. Surah ‘Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 67

Surah Al-Hijr, Chapter 15

Surah Al-Hijr (The Rock) No. 15

Revealed in Mecca

99 verses in 6 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Contents of Surah Al-Hijr

This Surah contains 99 verses and is generally believed to be chronologically the fifty-second Surah. It was revealed to the Prophet (S) in Mecca prior to his Migration. The Arabic term ‘Hijr’ is the name of a town where the people of Hadrat Salih used to live.

The name of this Surah, Al-Hijr, is taken from the eightieth verse of it which deals with the people of Salih, saying:

“And indeed the inhabitants of Hijr (also) rejected the messengers.”

Most of the discussions in this noble Surah are about the accusations and scoffs of the pagans unto the Qur’an and the blissful Prophet (S), as well as some commandments to him to be patient and perseverant with forbearance towards them.

It provided some kind of comfort and soothing effect as against the pressure exerted by the invasion of the opponents after the death of Hadrat Khadijah and Hadrat Abu-Talib , both of whom were dear to the Prophet (S).

Some of the verses deal with the origin of the world of existence, and belief in Him which are brought about by the study of the secrets of creation. The story of man’s creation, and the disobedience of Iblis, as well as his ultimate destiny, are also exposed.

There are also allusions made to the biography of such tribes as the people of Lūt, the people of Salih, and the people of Shu‘ayb.

In the meantime, there are also some verses which are concerned with the issues of Resurrection and the retribution of evildoers, each of which will be explained.

Section 1: The Qur’an Ever Protected by Allah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 1-2

الر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْءَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

رُّبَمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

1. “Alif ‘A’, Lam ‘L’, Ra ‘R’. These are the verses of the Book and (of) a clear Qur’an (that makes things manifest).”

2. “Often will those who disbelieved wish that they were Muslims.”

We notice once again that this noble Surah begins with the abbreviated letters of Alif, Lam, Ra, which exhibit the combination of these great celestial words, that lead all men towards happiness, are made up of simple alphabetical letters, the same raw material which are at the disposal of all human beings even children aged 2 or 3 years.

This is the utmost kind of miraculous performance that such a unique feat should be produced out of such ordinary kinds of material.

Therefore, immediately next to them, it has been added:

“Alif ‘A’, Lam ‘L’, Ra ‘R’. These are the verses of the Book and (of) a clear Qur’an (that makes things manifest).”

That is: these are the verses of the celestial Book, revealed in the Qur’an, which express facts and which reveal the truth as distinguished from the untruth!

In Tafsir-i-Tabari and Majma‘ul-Bayan, there has been cited a tradition implying that in Hereafter the pagans tell those Muslims who are entangled in the inferno

“Did you also become hellish people like us, and, you were not saved by Islam?”

While the sinful Muslims will be saved after sometime being punished, but the pagans will be remaining in the Fire of Hell for ever, saying:

“We wish we were Muslims, too.”

It says:

“Often will those who disbelieved wish that they were Muslims.”

Although the holy Qur’an has got a very highly esteemed position, yet it is always available for all and everybody can have access to it. At the same time, it is written in a book format and is readable by all, ‘the Qur’an’.

It is for this reason that its discussions are explicit and they draw a line between right and wrong. It will be a source of credit for Islam in the future and, at the same time, it will be a source of regret for disbelievers.

Thus, those who are ridiculing Islam today, will regret tomorrow. Many a time, pagans aspire to embrace Islam, but they are involved in the affairs to the despots or entangled in their corrupt environment. Therefore, we have it in history that the Caesar of Rome decided to embrace Islam when he saw the letter of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), but he said:

“My life is in danger and my kingdom will be lost.”

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 3

ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

3. "Leave them (alone) so that they may eat and enjoy themselves, and that they may be bemused by hope for they will soon know."

One can conclude from the Qur'anic phrase /ŏarhum/ which means leaving the pagans alone because of their own disobedience, while Allah has never left anyone alone since the beginning of creation and has sent them prophets to guide them, and this matter has been repeatedly dealt with in the Qur'an.

Therefore, Allah, the Magnificent, with a pounding tone in this holy verse, advises the Prophet implying that he (S) leaves these pagans alone so as they feed-themselves like four-footed animals and enjoy themselves out of the pleasures of this fleeting world, and their aspirations make them ignorant of this grave reality though they will soon find out.

The verse says:

"Leave them (alone) so that they may eat and enjoy themselves, and that they may be bemused by hope for they will soon know."

They are like animals which do not understand anything except the stable and grass and the material life, and they do not move unless they are on the look out for such things.

They are so blindfolded because of their arrogance and negligence that they are distanced from reality and engaged in their daily routine affairs which all make them unable to comprehend the real truth.

They will only understand to what extent they have been at a loss and negligence, and they will be disillusioned once they are about to see their doom in the bed of death or they are about to rise in the resurrection plain.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 4

وَمَآ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ إِلاَّ وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

4. "And never did We destroy a township, but it had a known decree."

There will be an end to the joys and enjoyment of those who customarily rejoice themselves in this world, and once Allah wills, He is able to put an end to the pagans, perishing them at once.

However, it is Allah's way of treatment to provide all with as many respites as requires and postponement of the punishment. Therefore, we must not feel rest assured of the Divine respites thus provided for us.

"And never did We destroy a township, but it had a known decree."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 5

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

5. "No nation outstrips its term, nor can they postpone (it).

Allah's way of treatment has been such under all circumstances that He has sought to provide adequate respite for reconsideration by all and for their awakening.

He sends the means to inform all through causing painful disasters to happen, and enabling all to receive blessings one after the other. He does them both: He rewards, threatens, and He warns simultaneously so that each and everyone of the people is provided with the necessary ultimatum.

However, as soon as this duration of respite expires, the unavoidable and decisive doom awaits them all.

The verse says:

"No nation outstrips its term, nor can they postpone (it)."

Notes to Be Considered

One's fate and the calamities which ensue are of two kinds: those which are certain to happen, and those which are not so.

The deaths which are not certain to occur can be avoided by praying, giving away alms and spending in charity, and making donations as well as charitable acts. They can be altered. However, the deaths which are certain to occur are unchangeable.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 6 - 7

وَقَالُوا يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ

لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلآئِكَةِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

6. "And they (unbelievers) said: 'O' you to whom the (Divine) Reminder has been sent down, you are surely insane;"

7. "If you are of the truthful ones, why do you not bring to us the angels?"

The Arabic term /majnūn/ (insane) here does not signify 'irrational'. Rather, that means being overtaken by 'Jinns', as is the case with the word 'demoniac' which means possessed or influenced by demons or by the spirit of the demons.

During the age of Ignorance, there was a widespread common belief that poets could compose poems because of the relationship they had with the 'jinns' or 'fairies'.

In these two noble verses, cases of humiliation, ridicule, accusations, and hesitation or skepticism have been mentioned from the tongue of the pagans with respect to the Prophet (S). Employing the phrase 'O you to whom' instead of 'O Prophet!' exhibits a kind of humiliation.

The Arabic term /ðikr/ is some kind of ridicule when applied by the pagans considering the fact that they did not believe in revelations. The Arabic word /majnūn/ meaning 'lunatic', applied for the Prophet (S), implies accusation.

And the sentence:

"If you are of the truthful ones"

makes allusions to their skepticism regarding the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S). Moreover, the Arabic signs /'inna/ and 'Lam' in the sentence

"…you are surely insane"

as well as the Arabic structure of the 'nominative clause', all are kinds of emphasis in various ways of their speech and exhibit their deviant form of thinking.

The verse says:

"And they (unbelievers) said: 'O' you to whom the (Divine) Reminder has been sent down you are surely insane;"

"If you are of the truthful ones, why do you not bring to us the angels?"

Incidentally, the pagans regarded the descending of angels as the authenticity of the mission of the Prophet (S) though this was only a pretext, for, Allah elsewhere, in the Qur'an says:

"And even if We sent down the angels to them, and the dead spoke to them, and We mustered all things before them, (even then) they would not believe…"[1]

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 8

مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلآئِكَةَ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا إِذاً مُّنظَرِينَ

8. "We do not send angels but with the Truth, and then they would not be respited."

One can conclude from the verses of the Qur'an that whenever a miracle is performed by one of the prophets and people are heedless about that, the divine outrage may ensue. They may also be given a respite for sometime.

However, in the cases that the kind of miracle and the request for its performance is proposed by the people, such as the coming out of the she camel from inside the mountain which the disbelievers demanded from Hadrat Salih (as), or the descending of heavenly food which was requested from Jesus (as), the Divine outrage is certain to promptly happen when the people offend and they will be given no extra respite.

It says:

"We do not send angels but with the Truth, and then they would not be respited."

In the previous verse, the pagans demanded that the Prophet (S) should descend angels for them. This noble verse provides the answer that the descending of the angels is with the Truth, which requires that they descend on the qualified people.

The descent of the angels upon the indecent individuals is for no good reasons and Allah does not do anything but with the Truth.

In other words, performing of miracles is not to be regarded as a game or plaything. On the other hand, it is for proving the truth which is adequately demonstrated for those who are seeking the truth, for the Prophet of Islam (S) has demonstrated his prophetic mission with the Qur'an and other miracles.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 9

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

9. "Verily, We Ourself have sent down the Reminder (the Qur'an) and verily We, (Ourself) will be its Guardian".

According to verse 6, the unbelievers used to imply that it was not clear as to where the source of the Prophet's Reminder was.

In this noble verse, Allah says:

Stop hesitating! It is certainly We Who reveal the Qur'an and the Reminder upon him, and as the pagans used to stress the issue of insanity with regard to the Prophet (S), Allah (s.w.t.) attributes to His Own Sacred Essence the revelation of the Qur'an and its preservation.[2]

The verse says:

"Verily, We Ourself have sent down the Reminder (the Qur'an) and verily We, (Ourself) will be its Guardian".

According to the Allah's testimony and His pledge in this verse, no changes or distortions have occurred in the Qur'an.

In its other verses as well this meaning has been referred to, among which one may name Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 42:

"Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it…"

which signifies that: No untruth has any way into the Holy Qur'an.

In addition to Allah's pledge to the preservation of the Qur'an, Muslims have protected it from the beginning and have been earnest in its writing and preserving it.

They would even assign the instruction of the Qur'an as a dower for their wives, and designate it for a man's marriage as a pre-condition.

They used to recite or read it in their prayers, and there were a number of scribes who were the writers of the revelations, one of whom was Hadrat Ali (as).

The Imams, the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), used to call people to this very Qur'an which exists now. Moreover, the tradition of Thaqalayn, quoted from the Prophet (S), provides another proof for the authenticity of the Qur'an. Sincerely, can one claim that the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) is constant but his Book is alterable?

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 10 - 11

وَلَقَد أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ فِي شِيَعِ الأَوَّلِينَ

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

10. "And indeed, We sent (messengers) before you among the nations of the ancients."

11. "And there came no messenger to them, but they used to mock at him."

The Arabic term /šiya'/ signifies 'a nation' or 'a party' which are somehow bound and related to each other, whether be it a bound which is in the path of the truth, as Surah As-Saffat, No. 37 verse 83 says:

"And verily from his party was Abraham",

or be it in the path of the deviant, like Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 159 which says:

"Verily those who divided their religion and became parties…"

Here, the verse says:

"And indeed, We sent (messengers) before you among the nations of the ancients."

The aim was the ridiculing or the damaging of the prestige of the prophets so that the truth-seeking people might not assemble around them; or their aim was to compensate for their own weaknesses in face of the logic of the prophets.

The object of their ridicule was either the simple way of life of the prophets, or that of the deprived followers of them, or the breaking up of the superstitious traditions of the people.

The verse says:

"And there came no messenger to them, but they used to mock at him."

Anyway, ridicule and mockery has constantly been the way of the pagans as against the prophets, and such is the usual case that, whenever the weapon of logic is lacking, mockery will replace one's weapon.

Therefore, a preacher must never feel desperate when facing the ridicules of some people.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 12 - 15

كَذَلِكَ نَسْلُكُهُ فِي قُلُوبِ الْـمُجْرِمِينَ

لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الاَوَّلِينَ

وَلَوْ فَتَحْنا عَلَيْهِم بَاباً مِّـنَ السَّمآءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ

لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّـرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُورُونَ

12. "Thus do We make it to enter into the hearts of the guilty."

13. "(But) they do not believe in it and such has been the way of the ancients."

14. "And even if We opened to them a gate from the sky, so that they ascended into it all the while,"

15. "They would definitely say: "Indeed our eyes have been blindfolded, rather we are a people bewitched."

In a few verses before, we had that the pagans requested the blissful Prophet (S) to bring forth angels for them to see.

Here, verse 14 proclaims that even if Allah opens a gateway to them from the sky so that they will ascend it and they will see the angels and other things, they will not yet believe in the Truth, for their request for seeing angels is just a pretext, and an obstinate fellow may also deny his own ascent to the sky, too.

Here are the verses:

"Thus do We make it to enter into the hearts of the guilty."

"(But) they do not believe in it and such has been the way of the ancients."

"And even if We opened to them a gate from the sky, so that they ascended into it all the while,"

Another verse of the Qur'an says:

"And had We sent a book down to you, written on a paper, so that they touched it with their own hands, certainly (still) those who disbelieved would have said: 'This is naught but a manifest sorcery'."[3]

Anyway, such disbelievers are so immersed in the abyss of passions, insistence, and obstinacy with respect to the 'untruth' that they if any grounds are provided for them through which they can repeatedly ascend to the sky and descend from it, they still go on saying that they have been playing magic works on them and they claim that they are a group which has been under enchantment all over, and whatever they witness is never in anyway identical with reality.

The verse says:

"They would definitely say: "Indeed our eyes have been blindfolded, rather we are a people bewitched."

It is not surprising that man reaches such heights in proportions as regards hostilities and obstinacy. For man's inherent nature and his untouched inner self is able to receive the factual realities and observations of the true profiles of what is real.

As a result of committing sin, having ignorance and hostility against the Truth, he will gradually adhere to what is utter ignorance and darkness. Certainly, it is possible to wipe out everything in the first stages, though once it is embedded in one's nature, thus becoming habitual, it cannot be easily wiped out.

It is in this case that the profile of the Truth alters in man, as far as that the most rational arguments and the most explicit tangible reasons will have no impact on him, thus leading him to the denial of all the rational as well as tangible matters of life.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'An' am, No. 6, verse 111

2. In this short verse, there are two kinds of emphasis employed. A series of 5 emphasis are dealt with for the revelation of the Qur'an which appear in words /'in/, /n a/, /nahnu/, /nazzal/ /naδ-δikr/, and a series of 5 emphasis are found in the preservation of the Qur'an in such words as: /'in/, /n a/, /lahū/, /la/ and /h afizūn/, which are obvious in the Arabic literature.

2- As for the lack of distortions of the Qur'an , there are hundreds of books and essays as well as researches written on the absence of any distortions in the Qur'an . However, it is most unfortunate that the Shi'ites are unjustly held responsible for any idea of distortions, which is ascribed to them.

3- The tradition of Thaqalayn has been quoted from the blissful Prophet (S). That form which has been narrated by and among all of Islamic sects on various occasions is as follows:

"I am leaving behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things among you: The book of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an) and my progeny, my Ahl-ul-Bayt. Never these two get separated from each other, and once you take recourse to the two, you will never get astray."

4- The Qur'an is a Reminder: "…We have sent down the Reminder…", and turning away from the Reminder and the Qur'an will lead man astray, and, hence, causes him misfortunes:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened, …" (Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 124).

The Qur'an is a Remembrance and only by the remembrance of Allah all hearts will be comforted.

The Qur'an says:

"…Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28)

3. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 7

Section 2: Everything in the Universe Takes Place by Allah's Command

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوجاً وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

16. "And indeed, We have established constellations in the sky and We have decorated them for the beholders,"

The Arabic term /burūj/ originally signifies 'emergence', and a woman who shows off his ornaments in Arabic is said: /taburrajat-il-mar'ah/. The Arabic term /burj/ also refers to a palace, and those high-raised buildings which present special splendours. In this verse the celestial globes, or their locations, are likened to constellations.

As the earth rotates around the sun, an imaginary circle is formed which is called 'the Zodiac'. This circle is divided into twelve equal zones within either of which certain stars are located, according to the shape of that collection of stars, it has been named to it.

In Persian, they are called as Farvardin, Ordibehesht, khordad, … and in Arabic, they are called Hamal, Sour, Jowza, Sarat an, Asad, Sunbulah, Mizan, Aqrab, Qous, Judi, Dalw and Hūt. All of these phenomena represent the power and splendour of Allah.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 17 - 18

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَّجِيمٍ

إِلاَّ مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُّبِينٌ

17. "And We have guarded them against every accursed Satan."

18. "Save him who steals the hearing, so there pursues him a clear flame."

The Arabic word /'istir aq/ is derived from /sirqat/, and thus the Arabic phrase means: 'the stealing of words'.

The commentators have raised some issues with regard to this verse; among them one may name Fakhr-i-Razi and 'Alūsi who have said in their commentaries that the objective meaning, in talking about the sky, is this same apparent sky, and the objective in mind in talking about the meteor is this same celestial stone-like objects, which are thrown down and are set in flame.

However, some other commentators have suggested that here the objective in mind, when referring to the sky, is the 'invisible world', and the world of Truth, into which Satans have no way and permission to enter.

Here are the verses:

"And We have guarded them against every accursed Satan."

"Save him who steals the hearing, so there pursues him a clear flame."

And, regarding its meaning, perhaps one can say: We have located identification figures and leaders in the spaces of spirituality, thus protecting the truth from the temptations of Satan.

And whenever a person who has the qualities of Satan, is acting temptation, We will launch an attack on him, expelling and perishing all

sorts of innovation, and eclecticism, as well as other temptations, by sound reasoning and sound logic of the true believers.

Thus, one can find the relationship between the birth of Hadrat-i-Massiah (as) and further-more, the birth of Hadrat-i-Muhammad (S) and the casting off of such Satans from the skies.

Explanations

The Satan is not only Iblis, but there are Satans.

Eavesdropping and spying are both jobs of the Satan.

A spy must be dealt with quickly and in a revolutionary manner.

"…so there pursues him a clear flame."

Wherever a Satan-like individual was to be found, the enlightening people must chase and strike him with the torch of knowledge.

The response to the Satanic acts must be provided with utmost explicitness, openness, quickness and with the maximum straight forwardness.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 19 - 21

وَالاَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ

وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَن لَّسْتُمْ لَهُ بِرَازِقِينَ

وَإِن مّـِن شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهُ وَمَا نُنَزّلُهُ إِلاَّ بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

19. "And We have spread the earth, and We have cast therein firm mountains, and We have grown in it of every thing in due balance."

20. "And We have provided means of subsistence therein for you and for him whom you are not responsible for his sustenance."

21. "And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

To complement the previous discussion, the Qur'an brings here some Divine verses about the whole creation, and the symbols of Allah's splendour on the earth.

It begins with the earth at first, saying:

"And We have spread the earth…"

The Arabic term /madd/ originally means 'expansion and spreading', and most probably, it points to those parts of the land which emerged from under the water. For, as we know, the entire surface of the earth was covered hidden with water because of flood-like rains in the beginning.

Many years passed before those flood-like rains settled down in pitfalls of the earth, and parts of dry lands emerged gradually. This is the same thing which is referred to in Islamic literature as /dahw-ul-'ard/ (expansion of the earth).

And since the creation of mountains, with all the various advantages which carried with them, is considered as one of the signs of monotheism, the Qur'an refers to them, by adding:

"…and We have cast therein firm mountains…"

The Arabic term /'ilqa'/ means 'throwing or casting'. However, we know that mountains are the same ups and downs of the earth which have emerged

because of the gradual freezing of the cruse of the earth or owing to the eruption of the volcanoes.

It is possible that the term /'ilqa'/ has been applied to mean as to bring into existence in this context. In our daily life, we also say that we have, for instance, developed plans for such a land and have planned several rooms in it, in which case it means that we have built those rooms.

Anyway, in addition to the fact that such mountains are inter-connected with one another from the foundations and are protecting the earth against the pressures from within which cause earthquakes, and in addition to their function of obstructing the power of the storms and breaking them, thus controlling the blowing of winds and breezes in a very exact manner, they also constitute a good place for reservoirs of water, whether be it in the form of snow or of springs.

The emphasis has especially been laid on the Qur'anic word /rawasi/, the plural of /rasiyah/ which means: 'constant, and stationary or sustaining', which is a delicate reference to what we discussed above, indicating that not only they are all constant themselves but also they serve as a pillar for the constancy of the crust of the earth and human life.

Then, alluding to the most important factor in human life, as well as all living creatures, that is, the plants, the holy verse continues saying:

"…and We have grown in it of every thing in due balance."

What a beautiful and yet explicit interpretation it is to the Arabic term /mauzūn/ which is principally derived from the word /wazn/ (weight) which refers to the recognition of the quantity of everything.

It is cited in Mufrad at Raqib:

"Weight is the knowledge as to the quantity of the thing."

This Qur'anic word refers to the exact keeping of the wonderful accounts and the measurements which are appropriate to all parts of plants, each of which has its own particles as of stems, branches, leaves, layers, seeds, and fruits.

There are perhaps hundreds of thousands of plants with various qualifications and varieties of effects the knowledge of which provides us with an outlook into the cognition of Allah, and the foliage of each leaf opens up a new chapter and presents a new volume upon the knowledge unto the Creator.

This possibility has also been forwarded that the objective of mentioning growth in this phrase is in case of various mines in mountains, because Arabs also refer to mines as /'inbat/.

In some quotations, there are also allusions made to this very meaning. A tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) denotes:

"Someone asked him about the commentary of this verse, and he answered:

'The objective is that Allah has created the mines of gold, silver, jewels and other metals in mountains.'"[1]

This possibility also exists that the objective of /'inb at/ (to grow) is its meaning in its comprehensive form which encompasses all of those creatures which Allah has created on the earth.

In Surah Noah, from the tongue of that great prophet the Qur'an says that he told the people:

"And Allah made you grow like a plant from the earth."[2]

Anyway, there is no incompatibility found in case that this verse has a vast and comprehensive meaning which includes plants, human beings and mines or the like.

As the means of life and sustenance of human beings is not confined to the plants and mines, the Qur'an refers to all such blessings in the next verse, and implies that Allah has located all means of sustenance for you within the earth.

They are available not only for you but they are there also for all living creatures as well as those which you do not procure anything for their sustenance and which are beyond your reach. Of course, Allah has been providing for all of them their requirements.

The verse says:

"And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

The Arabic term /ma'ayiš/ is the plural form of /ma'išah/ which signifies one's means of sustenance after which one sometimes seeks and, at other times, they are made accessible to him.

Some commentators have interpreted the word /ma' ayiš/ into 'agriculture, plants, foods or drinks,' it seems, however, that the meaning of this word is quite comprehensive and it encompasses all means of life.

The commentators have presented two versions for the sentence 'for him whom you are not responsible for his sustenance' The first version suggests that, as we said in the above, Allah wants to explain all of His blessings with regard to the human beings as well as with regard to those animals and living beings which man cannot feed.

The other version suggests that Allah wants to make man aware of the fact that He does both, providing the means of sustenance for man, on the earth, and making available some living animals for him (like four-footed animals), which man can not feed.

It is He Who nourishes them though this job of nourishing is accomplished by him. However, we are of the opinion that the first version is more correct.

We can also base our confirmation as to the interpretation of this in a tradition adapted from the commentary book by Ali-Ibn-i-'Ibrahim, where concerning the meaning of the above mentioned sentence: he says:

"It means: 'We predetermined something for each of the animals'." [3]

In the last verse under discussion, the Qur'an deals with the answer to the query which is raised by many people. That is, why is it that Allah does not provide adequate means of sustenance with all the people so as to free them from all kinds of struggling?

Allah answers:

"And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

Therefore, such is not the case that Allah's power is limited and He should be terrified by the case of running short of supplies. However, the

stores and reservoirs as well as stocks of this world have got its proper book-keepings, and the means of sustenance are descended from His side in carefully measured and calculated proportions.

Elsewhere in the Qur'an we read:

"And if Allah should amplify the provision for His servants, they would certainly revolt in the earth; but He sends it down according to a measure as He pleases…" [4]

It is quite clear that struggling for survival not only distances man from laziness, slowness, and despondency, but it also provides for him with the means for engagement in sound ways of thinking and bodily activities. Were it not so, and were there everything placed at man's disposal without any calculations, it could not be predicted how the world would look like in that situation.

A dozen jobless men, in welfare and with no controls imposed on them, would create a terrible atmosphere. For we know that the people of this world are not of the sort of those in Paradise who are devoid of all passions, egoisms, arrogance, and deviations.

They are rather of the mixed type with good and evil attributes who must be placed in the melting pot of this world so as to be experienced and differentiated.

Therefore, as need and poverty often leads man towards deviation and misfortune, too much affluence also can be a cause of corruption and destruction.

Explanations

1 - What Are Allah's Treasures?

There are many verses in the Qur'an which denote that Allah has got treasures, the heavenly treasures and the earthly ones are all His. Or the Qur'an indicates that the treasures of everything are with Him.

The Arabic term /xaz a'in/ is the plural form of /xaz anah/ which signifies a place where one stores his wealth to be protected. It is originally derived from /xazan/ which means protecting and preserving something.

Obviously, one seeks to store and preserve something who has got limited power and when one is unable to procure whatever he wants in any time. Therefore, once he is able he stores in his treasury whatever he feels it is necessary for him in the future.

However, can one apply such concepts in case of Allah? Certainly not. That is why some commentators, like Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, Fakhr-i-Razi in Tafsir-i-Kabir and Raqib in Mufrad at, have interpreted the phrase /xaz a'inullah/ (the treasures of Allah) as 'the possibilities of Allah'.

That is, everything is assembled in Allah's treasury of power, and He can bring forth whatever of it is deemed necessary in His Wisdom.

However, some other great commentators have claimed that the application of 'Allah's treasures' refers to the entire affairs which exist in the world of existence and the material world, including the elements and the means for creating them.

In this collection, everything exists to an unlimited extent, but every single one of the products and particular beings of this world is created to a limited extent, without considering that the existence is exclusive to it. [5]

Such interpretation, though principally is an acceptable proposition, is less acceptable than the first one which interprets it 'with Us'.

Anyway, the application of such a sense like /xaz a'inullah/ which apparently does not hold true with its usual significance due to Allah, but it is such because Allah wants to speak to people through their own language. Once you are supposed to deal with a child, you will have to apply the language of children.

In conclusion, one finds it evident that the comments of some commentators who have considered the word /xaza'in/ as reservoirs of 'water and rain', and its confinement within this specified example, not only, is unsubstantiated but also it is not commensurate with the vast concept of the verse.

2 - Kinds of Descent

As it was stated earlier, descent does not always mean coming down from a high place. It also means descending in one's rank as well as in one's position. Thus, if some favour from a superior is bestowed on inferiors, it is meant as descent.

It is for this reason that this term has been applied also to Allah's blessings in the Glorious Qur'an: Whether they may be descended from the skies like rain, or they might be grown up on the earth, like animals, as verse 6 in Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39 says:

"…and He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs…" .

We also read concerning iron, in Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 25 that it says:

"…and We sent down iron…",

and the like.

Briefly speaking the Arabic words /nuzūl/ and /'inz al/ here signify 'existence, creation and origination'. Nonetheless, as it is achieved from the side of Allah towards His servants, such an interpretation has been ascribed to it.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 22

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَاحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَآ أَنتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ

22. "And We send winds fertilizing, and We send down water from the sky, so We give it to you to drink of, while you are not its treasurers."

The Arabic term /law aqih/ is derived from /liq ah/ which means: fertilizing of the clouds by joining together of the positive and negative pieces of cloud,[6] or it also refers to the fertilization of plants through the act of transferring of plant pollination.

Following the discussion about some of the secrets of creation and other kinds of the blessings of Allah in previous verses, the holy Qur'an alludes to the blow of the winds and their effective role in raining, when it implies that Allah sends down the winds while they are fertilizing. They join pieces of clouds together and fertilize them.

The verse says:

"And We send winds fertilizing…"

Then it continues following that Allah sends down rain, and by that He quenches the thirst of all of men, while they are unable to protect and preserve it.

The verse says:

"…and We send down water from the sky, so We give it to you to drink of, while you are not its treasurers."

That is, you are unable to collect and preserve rain in great quantities after raining. It is Allah Who by freezing it in the form of snow and ice, or through sending that to the depth of the earth, makes them come out and flow in the form of springs and wells. It is He Who collects and stores them.

Explanations

1- Man is often unable to preserve his most necessary requirements.

2- Man cannot store water within clouds for a long time. Nor can he store it on the surface of the earth. This cannot be done on the earth since it penetrates the earth, and it can not be done on stone and rocky valleys either as it evaporates.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 23 - 25

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

23. "And certainly We make alive and We cause to die and We are the (only) Heirs."

24. "And indeed We know those of you who have gone before and We are certainly aware of the succeeding ones."

25. "And verily, it is your Lord Who will gather them together, verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

The matters of death and life are solely in His authority. All are transient; therefore, it is appropriate for us to leave a good heritage for the Authentic Inheritor.

The verse says:

"And certainly We make alive and We cause to die and We are the (only) Heirs."

Thus, time also will leave no impact on the knowledge of Allah. His knowledge is identical as to the past, the present, and the future.

The verse says:

"And indeed We know those of you who have gone before and We are certainly aware of the succeeding ones."

The commentators have mentioned some examples for the Qur'anic terms: /mustaqdimin/ and /musta'xirin/, among which are the followings:

1- The predecessors and the survivors.

2- Those who overtake and lovers of the Holy War, etc.

3- Those who present themselves for prayers in the front line of congregation prayer, and those who queue up in the last line.

According to this meaning, some went as far as to queue up in the last line of congregation prayer so as to be able to look at women, who presented themselves for congregation prayer, with evil intentions as Allah says:

"We know ".

Some believers would go as far as to sell their houses to exchange it for buying a house close to the mosque so as to be able to arrive there for standing in the front line of the prayers. These are those whom the verse refers to and implies that Allah knows such people, too.

Anyway, the uprising of the Resurrection Day, and the provision of both punishment and reward are all the affairs concerned to the Ranks of the Sovereignty of Allah.

The verse says:

"And verily, it is your Lord Who will gather them together, verily He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

Notes

Those preceding and those succeeding will be mustered altogether in the Resurrection Day:

"…who will gather them together…"

And Allah is well aware of the performances of all as well as of the intentions and impacts of any individual.

The rationale behind the resurrection is His Wisdom. If all of the particles of dust become food, and all foods become sperms and all sperms transform into human beings and they turn into dust again with their death, while there might not be any record and accounts for them, this is not a wise job done.

Notes

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 6
2. Surah Noah, No. 71, verse 17
3. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 9
4. Surah Ash-Shaur a, No. 42, verse 27
5. Al-Mizan, vol. 12, p. 148
6. Surah Az-Zariyat, No. 51, verse 41 implies that the wind is at times of no use and causes no fertilization, while at other times, it is also serving as sources of blessings. Again Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 43 says:

"Do you not see that Allah directs the scattered clouds then He gathers them together and amasses them once again, and then you see the rain coming forth from their midst?..."

Section 3: Man's Creation - Satan's Arrogance

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 26 - 27

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَانَ مِن صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

وَالْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن قَبْلُ مِن نَّارِ السَّمُومِ

26. "And certainly We created man of raw clay, of black mud moulded."

27. "And the jinn We created before, of intensively burning fire."

The Arabic term /sals al/ refers to a dry and raw kind of clay in which once blown, the sound of whistling comes out of it. [1]

The Qur'anic term /hama'/ refers to dark mud, and the word /masnūn/ means varying and moulded. The Arabic word /sumūm/ refers to a hot wind which infiltrates into the depth of one's entity like poison.

This verse either makes allusions to the creation of the first man, namely Hadrat-i-Adam, or the objective is the process of creation of all human beings in which case, the materials within the earth are transformed through food and sperm into human beings.

As Qur'an in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 37, implies that man was first in the from of dust, then it was turned into semen (sperm-drop) and it was finally turned into a (complete) man.

In the Qur'anic literature, 'jinn' is a responsible being which has been addressed by Allah:

"O' assembly of the jinn and mankind!…"[2]

And Jinn understands the Qur'an:

"…a party of the jinn listened, and they said: Verily we have heard a wonderful Qur'an."[3]

Jinns also have passions like human beings.

According to this verse, the creation of jinn took place before man and it was created out of fire.

Allah says:

Iblis is also one of Jinns:

"…he was of the Jinn…"[4]

and Iblis will go into Hell like other evil Jinns.

"…Certainly I will fill Hell with the Jinn and the mankind together."[5]

In conclusion, the Qur'an implies that Allah has created man out of raw and dry clay (like tile or ceramic) which is extracted out of a kind of black clay. Prior to this, He had created Jinns out of hot and burning fire.

The verse says:

"And certainly We created man of raw clay, of black mud moulded."

"And the jinn We created before, of intensively burning fire."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 28 - 31

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَراً مِّن صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلآئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ

إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَي أَن يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ

28. "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: 'Verily, I am about to create man of raw clay, of black mud moulded'."

29. "So when I have completed him and I have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall you down, prostrating yourselves unto him.

30. "So the angels fell prostrate, all of them together,"

31. "Except 'Iblis; he refused to be with those who prostrated (in obedience)."

The statement of the Qur'an returns to the issue of creation of man once again and continues Allah's speaking with the angels which took place before the man's creation.

It says as follows:

"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: 'Verily, I am about to create man of raw clay, of black mud moulded'."

Addressing the Divine angels, He continues: And when I completed the creation process and I blow into him a noble, clean and splendid soul out of My Own, all and each one of you prostrate before him.

The verse says:

"So when I have completed him and I have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall you down, prostrating yourselves unto him."

The creation of man then was over and man was provided for with whatever of body and soul was required for him. Everything was accomplished: At this moment, all angels prostrated without any exceptions before him.

The Qur'an says:

"So the angels fell prostrate, all of them together,"

The only one who did not obey this order was 'Iblis. Therefore, it adds:

"Except 'Iblis; he refused to be with those who prostrated (in obedience)."

Note Two Issues with Respect to This matter

The objective meaning of the blowing of Allah's spirit into man is not the state of being alive and to breathe, for animals also do the same thing. However, the purpose is the bestowal of such qualifications as creativity, will, and knowledge from the part of Allah accorded to human beings.

The attributing of spirit to Allah is for the sake of elevation of the position of spirit, such as the words as /bayt-ul-lah/ (House of Allah) and /šahr-ul-lah/ (the month of Allah).

The prostration of the angels before man was not a ceremonial kind of prostration. It was meant to present the modesty of angels when confronting man himself and the human generations. That is, the angels are also at the service of man and submissive to him. [6]

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 32 - 35

قَالَ يَآ إِبْلِيسُ مَالَكَ اَلاَّ تَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ

قَالَ لَمْ أَكُن لاَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِن صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَأٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ

وإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَي يَوْمِ الدّينِ

32. "He said: 'O' Iblis! What is your reason for not being with those who prostrated (in obedience)?'"

33. "('Iblis) said: 'I am not such that I prostrate myself unto a man whom You have created of raw clay, of black mud moulded'."

34. "He said: 'Then get out of it, for verily you are driven away accursed'."

35. "And, verily, the curse will be on you until the Day of Judgment."

It was on this occasion that 'Iblis was interrogated, in the course of which he was addressed as follows:

"He said: 'O' Iblis! What is your reason for not being with those who prostrated (in obedience)?'"

'Iblis who was selfishly engaged in matters of pride and egoism, so much so that he had lost his wisdom, responded to the Lord in a rude way, as the verse says:

"('Iblis) said I am not such that I prostrate myself unto a man whom you have created of raw clay, of black mud moulded'."

He who had not been kept in touch with the secrets of creation due to his pride and egoism, and who fell down suddenly from the climax of his position, was no more eligible to be among the ranks of the angels.

Therefore, he was immediately addressed by Allah, as such:

"He said: 'Then get out of it, for verily you are driven away accursed'."

And Satan was warned to beware that his arrogance served as the source of his disbelief. This disbelief made his cast off for ever.

The verse says:

"And, verily, the curse will be on you until the Day of Judgment."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 36 - 38

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنظِرْنِي إِلَي يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ

إِلَي يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ

36. "('Iblis) said: 'O' Lord! Respite me then till the day when they are raised?"

37. "Said He: 'Then verily you are of the respited ones'."

38. "Till the day of the appointed time."

As 'Iblis found himself an outcast from the threshold of the Allah's court and felt that man's creation caused his misfortune, the flames of hatred started within him so as to take vengeance on the sons of Adam.

It was why, as the verse says:

"('Iblis) said: 'O' Lord! Respite me then till the day when they are raised?"

This the Satan asked not for the sake of repenting, or for the sake of regretting as to what he had done, seeking to compensate for everything, but rather in order to continue his obstinacy, hostility, and his stiff-neckedness.

So did Allah accept this request of 'Iblis.

The verse says:

"Said He: 'Then verily you are of the respited ones'."

However, this respite does not extend in time as far as the Day of Judgment on which all mankind will be raised, as 'Iblis requested, but for 'a definite time'.

The verse says:

"Till the day of the appointed time."

The objective in mind when mentioning

"Till the day of the appointed time.",

is the end of this world and the rolling up of the designated duration of the duties.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 39 - 40

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْـمُخْلَصِينَ

39. "('Iblis) said: 'O' Lord! because You have left me to stray, certainly I will adorn (evil) to them on the earth, and certainly I will cause them all to go astray'."

40. "Except Your chosen servants among them."

Here we find 'Iblis revealed and exposed his true hidden intention, though nothing was hidden from Him, when 'Iblis answered Allah implying that He refused him and it was this 'man' who paved the ground for his misfortunes, 'Iblis should be engaged from then on in attracting them to the material blessings of this world by decorating and vanishing them, thus seeking to make them engaged in them.

Therefore, ultimately, he would cause them all to be misled.

The verse says:

"('Iblis) said: 'O' Lord! because You have left me to stray, certainly I will adorn (evil) to them on the earth, and certainly I will cause them all to go astray'."

Nevertheless, he knew well that his mischief would never leave any impact on the devotee servants of Allah.

Therefore, he soon made an exception to his saying, and said:

"Except Your chosen servants among them."

These are those who have attained the highest levels of Faith and practice which have been brought about after going through a thorough educational curriculum and struggle against their 'egotistic selves'.

There are two points raised in here which are worth mentioning:

Allah never leads anyone astray. However, if someone seeks willingly to accept the deviant path, Allah may leave him alone. This abandoning is the utmost case of the Divine punishment and outrage. As 'Iblis also willingly selected the path of arrogance and obstinacy, Allah left him to his own means.

Then the objective in saying /'aqwaytani/ (you have left me to stray) is meant in the same sense. That is, now that You no longer locate me within the reach of Your blessings and You left me alone to my own devices for the sake of my obstinate behavior, I will then do this and that.

’Iblis knows that a group of people are among the Divine selected ones. (That is, he has also accepted the legitimacy of ‘Prophethood’ and ‘Imamate’ as one can conclude from the clause:

“O’ Lord! because You have left me to stray”

that he has also accepted Allah. And as one also concludes from his prayer to be given a second chance “…till the day when they are raised”, he has also accepted the principle of Resurrection.

Therefore, ’Iblis was right in his ideological principles. However, his main fault was his arrogance and his not having a spirit of submission and servitude.

Thus, it is not enough to embrace merely the Faith and to have knowledge of something; but also practice, submission to the Will of Allah, and servitude are necessary.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 41 - 42

قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلاَّ مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ

41. “Said He: ‘This is for Me a straight path (which I have undertaken)’.”

42. “Verily, (as regards) My (devoted) servants, there is not for you over them any authority, except those who follow you of the deviators.”

In the previous verse, ’Iblis announced that he would mislead all except the selected devotee individuals. In this verse, Allah remarks: The reason as to why ’Iblis does not have the power to dominate His servants is because of His Straight Path and His way of treatment.

That is, Allah’s way of treatment is such that He Himself guarantees their protection, and this does not imply that ’Iblis would have nothing to do with them. On the contrary, he might not be in a position to exercise any power over them.

The verse says:

“Said He: ‘This is for Me a straight path (which I have undertaken)’.”

Thus, the Satan has got no power over those who are devoted to Allah and are submissive to Him. If we can enter the circle of Allah’s servants through our worshipping and virtue, we may be insured and can be rest assure.

The verse says:

“Verily, (as regards) My (devoted) servants, there is not for you over them any authority, except those who follow you of the deviators.”

Incidentally, the Satan’s job is engaging man in mischief and not exercising or exerting his domination:

“…there is not for you over them any authority…”.

In the resurrection day, the Satan, answering the people’s protests, will say:

“I only invited you; I did not put you under any obligation or domination.”

Anyway, in order to despise the Satan and to reinforce the position of the truth-seeking individuals and those who are the followers of the path of

monotheism, He said that the straight path which He has undertaken is His usual way of treatment and that Satan will have no authority or domination over His servants except on those misled ones who may voluntarily follow his footsteps.

That is, it is not indeed Satan who is able to seduce people. Rather, it is the deviants who willingly accept Satan's call and follow his footsteps.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 43 - 44

وإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِّكُلِّ بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُومٌ

43. "And verily Hell is certainly the promised place of them all."

44. "It has seven gates, for every gate there shall be a (separate) party of them assigned."

Allah has directed His most explicit threats towards the followers of the Satan, saying:

"And verily Hell is certainly the promised place of them all."

Let them not conjecture that they can escape punishment or their accounts would not be scrutinized. It is the same Hell which has got seven gates, and each of which is allocated to one category of the followers of Satan.

The verse says:

"It has seven gates, for every gate there shall be a (separate) party of them assigned."

These are, in fact, the gates of the sins through which men will be led into Hell. As is the case with those categories of people who enter Paradise, having with them a bag back of righteous deeds and struggles, which qualify them for entering Paradise.

The seven gateways of the Hell probably signifies that the number of the factors for those going to Hell is abundant. That is, there are numerous ways which predispose one to go to Hell.

Like verse 27 of Surah Luqman No. 31 which says:

"And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end…"

This means that they cannot write out all Allah's words, and here an allusion is made to the fact that Allah's creatures are so enormous in quantity that they are not to be accounted.

Messages

Each of the Paradise and Hell has some doorways.

"It has seven gates…"

(We read in Nahj-ul-Balaghah that the strugglers in the path of Allah will have got a particular entrance to Paradise.)

Hell, just like Paradise, has also got different levels and grades, and each person will be punished in it according to his own offence.

Notes

1. Tafsir Al-Mizan
2. Surah Al-’An‘ am, No. 6, verse 130
3. Surah Al-Jinn, No. 72,verse 1
4. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 50
5. Surah Hūd, No. 11,verse 119
6. Tafsir Al-Mizan, vol. 12, p. 165

Section 4: Reward for the Righteous - Angles Give Abraham the Tidings of a Son

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 45 - 48

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلاَمٍ ءَامِنِينَ

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَاناً عَلَي سُرُرٍ مُتَقابِلِينَ

لاَ يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُم مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ

45. "Verily, the pious ones shall be amidst gardens and watersprings."

46. "(They will be addressed:) 'Enter you therein in peace, secure'."

47. "And We remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts. (They will be as) brothers upon coaches, face to face."

48. "No toil there shall afflict them in it, nor shall they be ever cast out of it."

Through these holy verses, Allah has stated eight heavenly rewards for the people of virtue. They are: gardens, springs, health, security, removal of all hatred, brotherhood, face to face coaches, being aloof from any kind of harm or toil, and immortality.

The Qur'an says:

"Verily, the pious ones shall be amidst gardens and watersprings."

"(They will be addressed:) 'Enter you therein in peace, secure'."

In the previous verse, we read that except those sincere believers selected by Allah, all people will be targeted by the Satan's temptations. In these verses the Qur'an implies that if man does not reach the heights already achieved by those who are devoted and selected, but attains the objectives for the hierarchy of virtues, he will still be covered by the kinds of Divine blessings.

The Qur'an says:

"And We remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts. (They will be as) brothers upon coaches, face to face."

What is of importance in this stage is the assembling of all blessings in one unit. In this world one finds gardens in one place, while there may be no springs therein, sometimes there are streams to be found there but there is no security over there; at times all are present with together, though there may not be authenticity or sincerity furnished there.

At times, it happens that all those blessings are coupled with different kinds of hardships and are tedious to obtain. At other times, when all blessings are brought together, one has to abdicate them all and leave them behind. However, what differentiates Hereafter from this world is that all material, spiritual, social and psychological blessings are eternal in Heaven.

The verse says:

"No toil there shall afflict them in it, nor shall they be ever cast out of it."

Attention: The Arabic term /qill/ mentioned in verse 47 signifies secret infiltration. Therefore, evil characteristics set in their roots secretly in human beings. The Qur'anic terms /surur/ amd /sarir/ are derived from the

word /surūr/ which means ‘throne’. One concludes that accession to the throne is pleasant and causes one’s rejoicing.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 49 - 50

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الأَلِيمُ

49. “(O Prophet!) Inform My servants (that) verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful,”

50. “And that My chastisement is the painful chastisement.”

Now, it may be possible that some sinners and deviant individuals sink in their own depression, saying:

“We wish we could also reap parts of such blessings.”

It is at this moment that Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, opens up the gateways of Paradise to them, but with some conditions.

Addressing affectionately and with utmost caressing His Prophet, He says:

“(O Prophet!) Inform My servants (that) verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful,”

Note

In these holy verses, the blissful Qur’an divides all people into 4 categories:

The devotees (prophets and the saints) over whom ’Iblis has no domination.

The pious ones who will be dwelling in Paradise.

The repenting sinners whom the Prophet (S) talks about their amnesty in this verse.

The disobedient sinners who have been warned as against their severe and painful chastisement.

The verse says:

“And that My chastisement is the painful chastisement.”

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 51 - 52

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَن ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلاَماً قَالَ إِنَّا مِنكُمْ وَجِلُونَ

51. “And inform them of the guests of Abraham.”

52. “When they entered upon him and said: ‘Peace’, he said: ‘Verily we are scared of you!’”

From this verse on, the Qur’an discusses some instructive parts of the history of great prophets and the disobedient nations as clear examples of the devotee servants and the followers of Satan.

It begins with the story of ‘Ibrahim’s guests, saying:

“And inform them of the guests of Abraham.”

These uninvited guests were the same angels who anonymously called on ‘Ibrahim first, and said /salam/ (peace) to him.

The verse says:

"When they entered upon him and said: 'Peace', he said: 'Verily we are scared of you!'"

'Ibrahim got ready to receive them, as is the case with a great and kind host, and prepared immediately a proper food for them. But when he spread the dinner table, the unknown guests did not stretch their hands to take food.

Abraham terrified by this act and, without concealing his terror, he explicitly told them that he was afraid of them:

"Verily we are scared of you.".

This kind of fear was because of a tradition prevalent at that time and at later times, even at the present among some nations that whenever someone eats out of someone else's bread and salt, he would feel safe from his side for he feels he owes him something.

It was for this reason that when the angels did not eat the food, 'Ibrahim reasoned it as the sign of having ill-intentions, rancour, and enmity with regard to him.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 53 - 54

قَالُوا لاَ تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشّـِرُكَ بِغُلاَمٍ عَلِيمٍ

قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُونِي عَلَى أَن مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشّـِرُونَ

53. "They said: 'Be not afraid! Verily we give you the good news of a son endowed with knowledge."

54. "He said: 'Do you give me such good news (of a son) while old age has touched me? Of what do you give me good news?"

One of the examples of the Divine blessings and Divine outrage is the story of prophet 'Ibrahim (as) in which we have the angels, on one hand, giving good news of a son to him, while on the other hand, we have their news concerning the annihilation of the people of Lot as well, when by the latter Abraham was worried.

However, before long the angels stopped 'Ibrahim from worrying, commending him not to be frightened, for they were giving him good news of fathering a wise son.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Be not afraid! Verily we give you the good news of a son endowed with knowledge."

However, Abraham knew that, from the point of the natural laws, the birth of such a child by him was a remote matter. Yet, there is nothing impossible for the Power of Allah. So, regarding the normal circumstances and natural laws, he said:

"He said: 'Do you give me such good news (of a son) while old age has touched me?…"

Then Abraham continued his statement by saying:

"…Of what do you give me good news?"

Is this news from Allah's side or is it you who are giving me the news by yourselves? State clearly so as I can be sure.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 55 - 56

قَالُوا بَشَّرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلاَ تَكُن مِّنَ الْقَانِطِينَ

قَالَ وَمَن يَقْنَطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّـهِ إِلاَّ الضَّآلُّونَ

55. "They (the guests) said: 'We give you good news of the Truth. Therefore, be you not of the despairing ones'."

56. "He said: 'And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord save those who are astray?'"

Let us take didactic lessons, sweet and bitter ones, from history. The best histories are the ones which concern the life of the prophets (as) and the best historians are the prophets themselves.

Sometimes the angels appear in the form of human beings by the Divine Will and get in touch with man, among which one may refer to this very story of Hadrat Abraham (as) in which the angels felt that Abraham became scared.

Therefore, the angels did not give any further chances to Abraham to wonder or hesitate more. They told him explicitly and decisively that they were carrying the news of the Truth to provide him with. The kind of good news coming from Allah, and by His order, is the Truth, and nothing but the truth, that is why it is identical with the Truth and is certain as well.

The verse says:

"They (the guests) said: 'We give you good news of the Truth…"

Following that and to stress further presuming 'Ibrahim having not been overtaken by any fear and depression, they declared: Now that such is the case, do not be among the desperate.

The verse continues saying:

"…Therefore, be you not of the despairing ones'."

Nonetheless, Abraham quickly alienated this thinking from their minds that he might be overtaken by hopelessness from the Divine grace. On the contrary, his sole astonishment concentrated on the issues of natural laws. Therefore, he explicitly stated in an interrogative sentence, implying who on earth despairs from Allah's grace except those who are misled?

The verse says:

"He said: 'And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord save those who are astray?'"

These are those seduced people who have not rightly come to know Allah and have not realized the dimensions of His indefinite powers.

That Lord Who creates such an amazing and smashing being called 'man' out of some tiny particles of dust, and brings into existence such a prestigious child out of insignificant semen. He Who turns and transforms burning fires into a rose-garden. Who can then doubt the ability of such a Lord or despair from His grace?

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 57 - 58

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

قَالُوا إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ

57. "He said: 'What is your business, then, O' you (Divine) messengers?'"

58. "They said: 'Verily we have been sent unto a guilty people (to annihilate them)',"

Before starting their mission, the angels used to brief the Divine leaders about their own missions.

Therefore, after hearing about this good news, Abraham (as) started thinking as to the fact that the angels, under those circumstances, had not merely come there to give him simply the news of having a son.

Definitely, they had come to achieve a more important mission, and the conveying of the good news could be regarded only as a part of that mission.

It was for this reason that he went on asking them:

"He said: 'What is your business, then, O' you (Divine) messengers?'"

The angels responded that they had been sent to a sinful nation to annihilate them.

The Qur'an announces their answer, as the verse says:

"They said: 'Verily we have been sent unto a guilty people (to annihilate them)',"

Thus they made him understand that they had come to destroy the sinful people of Lot, for the angels were not sent down to that nation but for their destruction.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 59 - 60

إِلآ ءَالَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلاَّ امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَّرْنَآ إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

59. "Save the family of Lot, We shall surely rescue them all."

60. "Except his wife, of whom we decreed that she should be among those who remain behind (in the chastisement)."

Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim (as) and Hadrat-i-Lot (as) did not recognize the angels in their first encounter.

Therefore, Abraham said:

"Verily we are scared of you!",[1]

and Lot said:

"Verily you are an unknown people."[2]

Certainly, these angels became as Lot's guests while appearing in the form of some handsome youths with smart and beautiful faces, and that prophet got worried about such guests because of the corruption which was prevalent in that society.

And it was for this reason that the angels, knowing about the curiosity of Abraham, especially in such matters and issues, would not be content with such a brief answer, instantly added that such an offensive nation is no other than the Lot's people.

They also remarked that they were sent on the mission to wipe out that evil-begotten and shameless villains, pounding them thoroughly and to exterminate them altogether, except Lot's family members whom they should rescue all.

The verse says:

"Save the family of Lot, We shall surely rescue them all."

However, as the Arabic phrase /' alalūt/ (the family of Lot) with an emphasis on /'ajma'in/ (them all), included all of his family members

encompassing even his misguided wife, who cooperated with the pagans, and perhaps with the awareness of ‘Ibrahim of the matter, the angels immediately made her an exception to the rule, and said:

“Except his wife, of whom we decreed that she should be among those who remain behind (in the chastisement).”

Explanations

The Arabic term /qabirin/ is the plural of /q abir/ which means; ‘the remaining ones’ and the remaining soil is called dust.

One may conclude from the concept of the noble verse that she (Lot’s wife) was among those who had got to stay in the town and was to be killed like other inhabitants of the town.

Notes

1. The current Surah, verse 52
2. Ibid, verse 62

Section 5: Lot and Shu‘ayb’s people

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 61 - 62

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ ءَالَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّنكَرُونَ

61. “So when the (Divine) messengers came unto the family of Lot.”

62. “He said: ‘Verily you are an unknown people’.”

As the angels called upon the household of Lot, the situation was such that Lot was busy with his agriculture in the land outside the town. He wanted to give them a reception. At the same time, he was terrified of his people, therefore, he brought them secretly and by night to the house.

The wife of Lot, on their arrival, went up on the top of the roof and, by burning fire, informed the people about what was going on. Those people, who were thus informed, assembled in that house and determined to commit that heinous and hideous act with them in which case Hadrat-i-Lot (as) was disturbed.

Hadrat-i-Lot told the angels that they were an unknown group of individuals to him as they had not been met before.

The Qur’an says:

“So when the (Divine) messengers came unto the family of Lot.”

“He said: ‘Verily you are an unknown people’.”

The angels introduced themselves saying that they were angels coming from Allah’s side to exterminate the nation and to save the household of Lot.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 63 - 64

قَالُوا بَلْ جِئْنَاكَ بِمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

وأَتَيْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

63. “They said: ‘Nay, but we have come to you with that in which they have been doubting’.”

64. “And we have come to you with the truth, and we are certainly truthful.”

The Qur’an has repeatedly raised this issue that the pagans used to request the prophets to accelerate the Divine outrage and punishment and used to say:

‘… then bring us what you promise us to, if you are of the truthful ones”.[1]

Meaning that if you are honest, show us the outrage and they used to ridicule and mock all the warnings. As for the Divine outrage, they were skeptic as to its occurrence whether in this world or in the next. Allah explains in these verses that the outrage, which is the object of skepticism of the pagans, will definitely come.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘Nay, but we have come to you with that in which they have been doubting’.”

Anyway, the angels did not leave Lot in expectation for a long time and they explicitly stated that they had brought him something which his people were in doubt about. That is, they were commissioned to inflict a painful and severe chastisement against them which Lot had repeatedly warned them about and they had never taken it seriously.

To emphasize, they implied that they had brought Lot an unequivocal and an obvious reality for him. That is, a certain and decisive chastisement for those unbelieving and deviant group.

The verse says:

"And we have come to you with the truth…"

To stress further, they added:

"…and we are certainly truthful."

That is, this group has destroyed all the bridges behind them and there is no room left for any type of mediation or discussion about them. They said such so as Lot would stop thinking about any mediation efforts and become aware of the fact that they were not in the least worthy of such steps to be taken for them.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 65 - 66

فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مّـِنَ الَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلاَ يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَامْضُوا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ

وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الاَمْرَ أَنَّ دَابِرَ هَؤُلآءِ مَقْطُوعٌ مُّصْبِحِينَ

65. "So set forth, you with your family, in a part of the night and do you go behind them and let not any one of you turn back, and go whither you are ordered."

66. "And We made known this decree to him that the roots of those (sinners) should be cut off by the morning."

Do not take the Divine warnings and threats as a joke, for the Divine punishments are always based on justice, the truth and what the culprits deserve.

And at the time of war or of exodus, the leader must move keeping abreast with the weakest of the people so as no believer would be left behind and no foes or pagans could join, and rest assured of Allah's grace in important circumstances, which will be herded down moment by moment and will be of assistance to him once he is in dire need.

The verse says:

"So set forth, you with your family…"

It will be shown to him as to when the exodus must take place, and with whom, by what means, and finally, towards what destination.

The verse continues saying:

"…in a part of the night and do you go behind them and let not any one of you turn back, and go whither you are ordered."

And as the small group of believers (the household of Lot except his wife) was to be rescued from such a campaign safely, Lot was provided with the necessary instructions.

He should take his family out of the town late at night when the sinners were in deep asleep or they were drunk or engaged in gratifying their sexual

desires. However, he should move behind them so that he might be sure that no one was left behind. In the meantime, none of them was allowed to look or turn back.

Then, the tone of the statement changes, where Allah says:

"And We made known this decree to him that the roots of those (sinners) should be cut off by the morning."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 67 - 69

وَجَآءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

قَالَ إِنَّ هؤُلآءِ ضَيْفِي فَلاَ تَفْضَحُونِ

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلاَ تُخْزُونِ

67. "And the inhabitants of the town came rejoicing."

68. "He said: 'Verily these are my guests, therefore do not disgrace me'."

69. "And be in awe of Allah and do not put me to shame."

Some authentic quotations indicate that the wife of Lot informed the sinners that there are guests arrived for Lot with beautiful faces and, following their evil intention, they headed for the Lot's house while giving one another the good news. However, Allah exterminated them all before proceeding to undertake any action. [2]

Anyway, they were busy thinking about their misleading and shameful acts, and they intended to commit as to the fact that they had then an easy prey at their disposal; beautiful and good-looking youths and at the Lot's house.

The verse says:

"And the inhabitants of the town came rejoicing."

Lot (as), who heard their fuss, got terrified in a state of astonishing terror and feared for his guests.

Therefore, he stood up against them, as the verse says:

"He said: 'Verily these are my guests, therefore do not disgrace me'."

Then he adds, implying: Fear Allah and do not make me shameful in front of my guests.

"And be in awe of Allah and do not put me to shame."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 70 - 71

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

قَالَ هَؤُلآءِ بَنَاتِي إِن كُنتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

70. "They said: 'Did we not dissuade you from (entertaining) people?"

71. "He (Lot) said: 'These are my daughters, (you may wed them) if you desire to do so."

The prophets' school of thought does not recommend the forbidding of pleasures and repressing of instincts. On the contrary, it offers guidance and mostly provides ways for their control. Therefore, Hadrat-i-Lot (as) offered them guidance and persuaded them to act decently.

Nonetheless, they were so rude and vulgar that they did not have any feelings of shame. On the contrary, they felt that Lot had also to be indebted to them as if he had committed a crime they went on raising objections.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Did we not dissuade you from (entertaining) people?"

Anyway, Lot, who noticed such rudeness and vulgarity, tried a different method so as to perhaps be able to awaken them from their state of negligence, drunkenness, deviation and scandal. Turning to them, he advised them:

Why do you take a deviant path? If your objective in mind is gratification of your sexual instincts why is it that you do not take the legitimate path and the correct marriage path? These are my daughters; (I am ready to give my consent for them marrying you). In case you decide to perform a correct and decent act, this is the right path.

The verse says:

"He (Lot) said: 'These are my daughters, (you may wed them) if you desire to do so."

Lot's aim was to complete the argument to them, saying that he was ready to preserve the prestige of his guests and to save them from the abyss of corruption by offering his daughters in marriage to them.

Question: Was Lot (as) able to offer his daughters in marriage to the pagans, when he offered such a proposal?

Answer: It may be that the aim of proposing the marriage issue was to make believers out of them; or that, among them, marriage with unbelievers was not legally prohibited at that time.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 72 - 73

لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِينَ

72. "By your life (O' Prophet), verily they were wandering on in their intoxication."

73. "So the (violent) blast overtook them at the sunrise."

The Arabic words /'umr/ and /'amr/ both have got an identical meaning, but, at the time of swearing, the term /'amr/ is employed. [3]

The Qur'anic term /ya'mahūn/ is derived from /'amaha/ which signifies 'astonishment'; and the Arabic word /mušriqin/ means 'entering into the illumination and the light which appears at dawn or sunrise.'

Nevertheless, woe unto those who are intoxicated by their passions, deviations, arrogance, and obstinacy.

If there were the slightest of human ethical values or human emotions embedded in them, it would be adequate to make them feel ashamed for having such a logic to return from the Lot's house at least and feel shameful. But, they were not only unaffected by that, but they became also more rude and tried to violate and rape Lot's guests as well.

It is why Allah, addressing the Prophet of Islam (S), says:

"By your life (O' Prophet), verily they were wandering on in their intoxication."

Finally, we find the Divine words and speech, concerning this nation, reaches its climax. Allah states in two concise, compact and short following verses the evil destiny of those people in a decisive and pounding form here which is also instructive as well.

The Qur'an says:

"So the (violent) blast overtook them at the sunrise."

Such a blast might have been caused by a huge thunderbolt or by a terrible earthquake.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 74

فَجَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِن سِجِّيلٍ

74. "Thus We turned that city upside down and rained upon them stones of hard clay."

Raining stones was probably for the extermination of those who had survived at the moment of the turning upside down of the town and were still alive, or for the total annihilation of the town.

Certainly, Allah's Will knows no limits for as He descends His blessings from the sky in the form of rain, He is also able to rain stones, and chastisement as well.

However, Allah did not stop at that, but He turned their cities entirely upside down, overthrowing all its upper part downwards and the lower part upwards.

The verse says:

"Thus We turned that city upside down…"

Such a chastisement was not enough for them either.

The verse continues saying:

"…and rained upon them stones of hard clay."

The descending of the three-fold kind of punishments (terrible blast, turning everything upside down, and raining stones) each was sufficient by itself to wipe out every nation.

However, for the intensity of the sin and in their submission to sinfulness and ill fame, and that others may take an example, Allah multiplied their punishment.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 75

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ

75. "Verily, in this there are signs for those who by tokens do understand."

The blissful Qur'an, here, draws ethical and educational conclusions. It implies that there are various signs for the wise in this didactic biography, for those who wisely draw their own conclusions from every single symbol, collect facts from every allusion made, and learn from every note what is to be learnt.

The Qur'an says:

"Verily, in this there are signs for those who by tokens do understand."

The Qur'anic term /mutawassimin/, mentioned in the verse, is derived from /wasama/ which means 'to affect' and it is applied to a person who is

smart and sharp in drawing conclusions once he has the tiniest clues at his disposal he comprehends the facts.

That is, he is clever and wise. Some Islamic quotations indicate that the objective of applying the term /mutawassimin/ is the Prophet (S) and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as). [4]

Somebody told Imam Sadiq (as) that he had got a question. The Imam answered:

"Do you want me to tell you what your question is before you ask your question?"

That person asked with astonishment:

"How do you know what is in my mind?"

The Imam answered:

"/bil-tawassum/ (by affection)."

Then he recited this verse. [5]

We are informed from the Immaculate Imams (as) who have said:

"We are the /mutavassimin/."

It is clear that the purpose here 'is the most complete denotation expansion', otherwise, there are a lot of intelligent people among the believers. Therefore, there are reliable information from the blissful Prophet (S) who stated:

"Be in virtue with the intelligence of the faithful, since he looks by the light of Allah."

He also reaffirmed:

"Verily Allah has some servants who recognize people by /tawassum/." [6]

This is the same light of faith which leaves its effect as a sign on a believer's heart; so it is said:

"Knowledge is a light (that) Allah casts it inside the heart of whomever He wills." [7]

And the Arabic term /wasm/ means the same sign, symbol, and emblem which is being forged on the Arabian horses. Man's soul also has got a special mark of 'belief' or 'disbelief', or of 'obedience' and of 'disobedience' toward Allah, each of which appears from his front view.

Thus, /mutawassimin/, those who by tokens do understand can observe or feel it and, therefore, know everyone.

And again, the Prophet of Islam (S) has said:

"There are certain Allah's servants who know people by tokens." [8]

Imam Sadiq (as) remarked:

"We are those who think and take instructive lessons. The path towards happiness has been designated and embedded in us. This path is the way towards Paradise." [9]

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 76 - 77

وإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيلٍ مُّقِيمٍ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِّـلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

76. "And verily it is on a way (yet) remaining."

77. "Verily, in this there is a sign for the believers."

The preservation of the monuments and relics of the past provide instructive lessons for the future generations.

Therefore, He implies in this noble verse: Do not presume that all their relics have been vanished. It is not so. Their relics and monuments have remained constant and fixed on the roads for caravans and those who pass over there.

As the city of Lot is located on the people's path and when they pass by them for meeting their daily needs, they draw lessons from them. For, the relics, which become focus of attention of the people there, are always constant, fixed and sustaining.

The verse says:

"And verily it is on a way (yet) remaining."

This city is called 'Sudūm'. Qatt adah says: The villages of the people of Lot are situated between Medina and Sham (Damascus).

As the author of Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan says: Perhaps, the meaning of the above verse is that the Divine outrage is not confined to the people of Lot only; rather, it is the method and the tradition which is constant and holds true for all the criminals of the history. It is also a warning for all those who commit such heinous and hideous acts that the people of Lot used to do.

Some Islamic traditions denote that he who commits the act committed by the people of Lot, will be suffering from the utmost punishment at the time when his soul is being taken out of his body. Further, some quotations indicate that this act has been rendered into the disbelief in Allah and the punishment of which is 'execution'.

As a further emphasis, and in order to call the faithful to meditate more over this instructive story, the Qur'an implies that there is a sign in this story for those who are believers, as the true believers are always full of insight and are quite intelligent.

The verse says:

"Verily, in this there is a sign for the believers."

How may one be a believer and yet reads this shaking biography and still does not draw instructive lessons from it?

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 78 - 79

وَإِن كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الأَيْكَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ

فَانتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ وإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ

78. "And verily, the inhabitants of 'Aykah were certainly unjust."

79. "So We inflicted retribution on them and they are both, indeed, on a roadway manifest (in front of your eyes)."

The Arabic word /'aykah/ means a small thick forest in which trees and their branches are often intertwined with one another. The objective of 'the inhabitants of 'Aykah' is the people of Hadrat Shu'ayb, who used to live in a region with moderate weather and full of trees, somewhere between Hij az and Sham (Syria).

A quotation from the blissful Prophet (S) indicates that ‘the people of Madyan’ and ‘the people of ’Aykah’ were two nations whose prophet was Shu‘ayb and both of them disbelieved.

The verse says:

“And verily, the inhabitants of ’Aykah were certainly unjust.”

However, each of these two nations received a different kind of Divine punishment.

The former was entangled in the punishment of ‘the Day of Shadow’ and the latter received ‘the punishment of Blast’.[10]

Incidentally, as Allah owes nothing to anyone, whatever we receive from Him must be considered as a gift. But, in case of the Divine punishment, as His chastisement is the consequence of our own faults and sins and what we deserve, the word retribution is usually employed.

The verse says:

“So We inflicted retribution on them and they are both, indeed, on a roadway manifest (in front of your eyes).”

The oppressors must know that their vice and tyranny will be depicted for others throughout history. Hence, we must design and plan roads in such a way as to try to expose historical sites within the reach of the eye-sight of the passengers.

Notes

1. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 70
2. Tafsir-i-Maraghi
3. Al-Mizan. The commentary
4. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
5. Tafsir-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
6. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 23
7. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 23
8. Tafsir-us-Safi, the details of the verse
9. Tafsir-ul-Burhan and Majma‘-ul-Bayan
10. Tafsir-ul-Furqan, taken from Durr-ul-Manthūr, vol. 4, p. 103

Section 6: The People of the Rock

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 80 - 81

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

وءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

80. "And indeed the inhabitants of Hijr (also) rejected the messengers."

81. "And We presented Our signs to them, but they turned away from them."

The Arabic word 'Al-Hijr' is the name of a town in which the nation of Thamūd used to live. It also generally refers to a dwelling place as well. The term /hijr/ also refers to the lap of the mother and Arabic phrase Hijr-i-'Ism a'il and /hujrah/ are the derivatives of the same word. [1]

Thus, the name of this Surah has been taken from this verse.

The verse says:

"And indeed the inhabitants of Hijr (also) rejected the messengers."

One can conclude from the Qur'anic term /mursalin/ (messengers) that 'the inhabitants of Hijr' had also some prophets other than Hadrat-i-Salih. Some commentators say as the rejection of one prophet is, in fact, the rejection of all prophets, hence the term /mursalin/ has been mentioned here in this verse.

Anyway, the Qur'an continues regarding 'the inhabitants of Hijr' by saying:

"And We presented Our signs to them, but they turned away from them."

The application of the sense 'turning away' in this verse indicates that they were not even ready to listen to the verses of Allah or to look at them.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 82 - 84

وَكَانُوا يَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتاً ءَامِنِينَ

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِينَ

فَمَآ أَغْنَي عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

82. "And they used to hew secure houses in the mountains."

83. "So the (violent) blast overtook them in the morning."

84. "And what they used to earn did not avail them."

Those people were quite heedless of theological issues and of religious matters, and paid no attention to such things. On the contrary, regarding their worldly life and livelihood, they were so earnest that they maximized the security of their houses by building and setting them up through cutting stones and rocks within the mountains.

The verse says:

"And they used to hew secure houses in the mountains."

It is astonishing that man maximized the security and whatever belongs to his fleeting worldly life so much, while he is extremely so negligent for his eternal and immortal life in the Hereafter that he sometimes is not even ready to listen to Allah's speech and is not predisposed to even to glance at His signs of communication.

After all, what can one expect from such a people? Expect for the 'Divine law of the survival of the fittest' and except for the abstinence from providing the right of continuing with one's life for those nations who are entirely corrupt and incite corruption. An exterminating catastrophe must be inflicted upon them and annihilate them altogether.

Therefore, the Holy Qur'an asserts:

"So the (violent) blast overtook them in the morning."

This blast was a death threatening thunderbolt which came down upon their houses and annihilated them. While they were inside those secured built houses.

The verse says:

"And what they used to earn did not avail them."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 85 - 86

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لآتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلاَّقُ الْعَلِيمُ

85. "And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but with truth; and verily the Hour (of resurrection) is surely coming; then pardon you, with a gracious pardoning."

86. "Verily your Lord, He is the Creator, the All-Knowing."

The Arabic term /safh/ is derived from /safhah/ which means 'face'. The Arabic phrase /fasfah-is-safh/ signifies 'turning one's face away from someone but not out of one's outrage but to do that for forgiving and overlooking in case of one's compassion and out of one's affections'.

Imam Rida (as) has commented upon the Qur'anic phrase /safh-in-jamil/ as 'forgiving without inquisition, or with no taking to task'.

As man's everlasting troubles and entanglements have their roots in his lack of ideology and correct system of beliefs and, briefly speaking, in his disbelief in the origin of existence and in the Resurrection Day, the Qur'an returns to the issues of 'monotheism' and of 'resurrection' after describing the situation of nations such as the people of Lot and the people of Shu'ayb and that of Salih, those who were entangled in all of those afflictions.

It has referred to the issues of monotheism and resurrection both in a single verse, saying:

"And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but with truth…"

This, He has said about monotheism; then He proclaims in connection with resurrection that everybody will be given his reward therein.

The verse says:

"…and verily the Hour (of resurrection) is surely coming…"

In pursuit of this goal, He commands His prophet to be lenient towards them when facing their obstinacies, ignorance, fanaticism, meddling and their intensive oppositions, and to overlook their sins and forgive them with a beautiful forgiveness which is not even coupled with any blame.

As you will not be in any need or require any violence in spite of the fact that you have got clear evidence for your call and messengership to which

you are given mission to accomplish. Moreover, violence against the ignorant people will usually lead to further violence and their further fanatic behavior. Therefore, leniency and forgiveness is the best.

The verse continues saying:

"…then pardon you, with a gracious pardoning."

In the end, in the following verse the Qur'an proclaims that He Who commands as to the forgiving, is the Lord Who is Educator, creative, and knowing.

He is aware that amnesty and forgiveness have a very great impact on the soul of the individuals and of the society, and have a tremendous impact on the attraction as well as on the development of the people. Therefore, putting into practice the commandment of /safh/ (remittal) should not appear as a burden to you.

It says:

"Verily your Lord, He is the Creator, the All-Knowing."

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 87

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعاً مِنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْءَانَ الْعَظِيمَ

87. "And indeed We have given you seven of the oft-repeated (verses) (Surah Al-Hamd) and the Grand Qur'an."

The Islamic quotations narrated by both Shi'ite and Sunni scholars indicate that the objective of the Qur'anic phrase /sab'an minal- ma ani/ (seven of the oft-repeated (verses)) is Surah Al-Hamd.

For this Surah is to be recited twice in every prayer, and it has been twice revealed. There has been mentioned in a quotation that Allah (s.w.t.) says He has separated Surah Al-Hamd into two parts between Himself and His servants. One part is in connection with Him, while the other part concerns His servants.

From the holy phrase /bismillah/ as far as /malik i yaumiddin/ is in connection with Allah, and from /'iyy aka na'bud/, which is the expression of obedience in worshipping, seeking assistance, and invocation, relates to the servants.

Also, some have claimed that the objective in mind in /ma ani/ is the Qur'an itself. In this case, the above mentioned Qur'anic phrase means 'seven verses from the Qur'an' which is necessarily the same Surah Al-Hamd.

The reason for this idea is the verse which says:

"Allah has revealed the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself (yet) repeating…"[2]

The Book the verses of which are similar, harmonious and repetitive.

The blissful Prophet (S) proclaimed:

"Whoever, upon whom Allah bestows the Qur'an, imagines such that another one has been bestowed something better than that, he has downgraded the magnificent (Qur'an) and has magnified a tiny (thing)."[3]

Anyway, Allah seeks to condole the Prophet (S) not to be terrified by the enemy's violence, their density of population and the immense capabilities which are at their disposal, for Allah has made some blessings available to him with which nothing will match equally.

The verse says:

"And indeed We have given you seven of the oft-repeated (verses) (Surah Al-Hamd) and the Grand Qur'an."

Allah explains to His Prophet (S) this reality that he possesses a great capital, a capital such as the Qur'an which is as great as the entire world of existence, in particular, the Surah Al-Hamd which embodies such magnificent content that it joins man with Allah instantly and makes his soul bow and submit before Him, as well as invoking Him for help.

In Tafsir-i-Borhan, under this noble verse there is cited a quotation from Imam Muhammad-i-Baqir (as) who said: We are the objective of /ma ani/ which Allah has bestowed on our prophet, and we are Allah's countenance on the earth known among the people and the Shi'ah followers.

He who has known us, he is certain to believe in the origin of existence, resurrection and paradise, and he who is ignorant as regards us, he will surely face the Hell and Divine chastisement.

Explanations

Legislation is solely the prerogative of the Creator, and the laws of religious edicts must be based on 'creation'.

The principle of repetition in educational issues is a fundamental matter.

The word 'Oft-repeated' refers to the repetition of the revelation of the verses, the repetition of words, the repetition of stories, the repetition of Divine attributes, the repetition of verses of chastisement and of resurrection, the repetition of the fate of nations, the repetition of Divine blessings, the repetition of commandments, and the repetition of reciting the Qur'an.

Surah Al-Hamd is equivalent with the Qur'an, though the number of its verses amounts to seven.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verse 88

لاَ تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَي مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجاً مِّنْهُمْ وَلاَ تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

88. "(O' prophet!) Do not strain your eyes after what we have given certain classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and lower your wing (of affection) unto the believers."

Warnings always do not follow the course of action. Rather, they sometimes precede and form as warning and preventive measures. The blissful Prophet (S) was never interested in the world of the unbelievers. Hence, Allah's dissuasion signifies warnings and serves as such, which causes dissuasion among other believers so as not to focus their eyes on the world of the pagans.

The blissful Prophet (S) has stated:

"He who focuses on what others hold or possess, his troubles increase and his distress will not be treated." [4]

One of the strict recommendations of the Qur'an to the Prophet (S) and the believers consists of recommendation as to leniency, mercifulness, and patience towards the faithful believers, among which one may name the

instance when they should be patience with those who always call on their Lord and be modest and affectionate unto the believers.

Incidentally, the Arabic word /'azwaj/ includes both men and women. Some claim that this word means /'asn af/ (classes). That is, do not focus on the blessings which we have provided the classes of pagans with and do not consider them great while thinking about them.

For, the blessings which We have bestowed upon you and your followers, namely, your prophetic mission, the Qur'an, Islam, the conquest etc, are so far more in quantity and worth that they exceed all their blessings.

The verse says:

"(O' prophet!) Do not strain your eyes after what we have given certain classes of them to enjoy…"

And if the Quraysh pagans do not become believers and, as a consequence, will receive chastisement, do not grieve for them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and do not grieve for them…"

At the end of the verse, He issues His third command to the prophet about modesty, humbleness, and leniency towards those who are believers, when He says:

"…and lower your wing (of affection) unto the believers."

This sense is a beautiful ambiguous metaphorical allusion to modesty, affection, and friendliness as in the case of birds when they want to show their affection towards their chickens they cover them under their wings, where they provide us with the most existing emotional scene as they try to protect them against all sorts of accidents and enemies.

Therefore, all these are intended to show that leaders and prophets must be modest and humble with regard to the believers so that they follow him.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 89 - 91

وَقُلْ إِنِّـي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ

كَمَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَي الْمُقْتَسِمِينَ

الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْءَانَ عِضِينَ

89. "And say: 'Verily I am the manifest Warner'."

90. "(We shall send them chastisement) as We sent down on the dividers."

91. "Those who made the Qur'an into shreds."

Similar to the case that leniency and affection with the believers and friends are necessary, being decisive against the opponents is also required, and decisiveness, threats and warnings are a necessity when one faces paganism.

Allah commanded the Prophet (S) to say if he warns them Allah has asserted the fact that He will send them that kind of chastisement which was sent to 'those who divided', the same ones who divided the Qur'an and the Divine verses into acceptable and none acceptable parts.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And say: 'Verily I am the manifest Warner'."

"(We shall send them chastisement) as We sent down on the dividers."

They took up the Qur'an and accepted from it whatever was to their advantage and discarded whatever was to their disadvantage. But the true believers do not impose any kind of analysis, divisions or discrimination as regards the Divine commandments.

The verse says:

"Those who made the Qur'an into shreds."

There are three meanings mentioned in the commentaries for the Qur'anic term /muqtasimin/:

There were some chiefs of the unbelievers who during the days of Hajj pilgrimage used to divide forces at the crossroads and entrance gates of Mecca in order to tell the travelers that a person called Muhammad (S) has got certain claims and they should not listen to him. They introduced him as a soothsayer, a sorcerer, and a lunatic.

The second meaning points to those who divided the Holy Qur'an among themselves so as to produce each a simulation form of the Qur'an.

The third meaning refers to those persons who took certain parts of the Qur'an for practice while leaving the other parts as unpractical.

The Arabic word /'idin/ is either the plural of /'idah/ in the sense of 'quarrel and disputation', or it is derived from the word /'udw/ which means 'cutting into pieces'.

Incidentally, the retribution of those who divide the Holy Book in that form is the Divine punishment. A believer is the one who accepts the Qur'an in its entirely, saying that whatever has been revealed has come from the side of Allah.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 92 - 93

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَسْأَلَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

92. "So, by your Lord, We shall surely question them all (in the Hereafter),"

93. "As to what they used to do."

Following their state of unbelief as to the Qur'an and their dividing it, the Qur'an implies that they shall see the punishment for this evil act of theirs and will be questioned about it.

O' Mohammad (S) by your Lord We shall question them about it and We mean by interrogating them warning and blaming of them, that is, to convey to them this message as to why they committed sin. What proofs have they got to offer for having committed sins? They will then be target of all scandals.

The Qur'an says:

"So, by your Lord, We shall surely question them all (in the Hereafter),"

In this verse, Allah swears to Himself, presenting Himself as the Lord of Muhammad so as to prove his splendid position to the people.

Then it continues saying:

"As to what they used to do."

Incidentally, the subject in question in this verse is: We ask them what they worshipped and what answer they would have to offer the prophets! They will have no answer!

And in general, the fact that attention is focused on interrogation and auditing of accounts in resurrection day and the fact that everybody is going to be asked questions regarding everything is itself one of the factors in the awakening process.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 94 - 96

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ

الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهاً ءَاخَرَ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

94. "Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden and turn you away from the polytheists."

95. "Verily We will suffice you against the scoffers,"

96. "Those who set up another god with Allah, so they will soon know (the truth)."

The Arabic term /sad'/ signifies splitting and exposing or exhibiting.

The blissful Prophet (S) engaged in propagation for three years in secret, and as the Qur'anic clause:

"Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden"

was revealed, he openly went on his invitation and he told the people if they accepted his call, their administrative government, and the splendor of this world and the world hereafter would be all theirs.

The verse says:

"Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden and turn you away from the polytheists."

However, they decided to be engaged in ridiculing and mocking that Divine Prophet and went to Abū-Talib , the uncle of the Prophet (S), to present their complaint.

They complained that Muhammad was seducing their youths. If Muhammad was after wealth, wife and high position, they were ready to provide him with them all. The Prophet (S) told his uncle:

"Dear uncle! My words are the Divine messages and I shall never give up preaching."

The pagans requested Abu-Talib to surrender Muhammad to them, but he did not condescend to the request. [5]

Anyway, Allah issues a decisive decree to the Prophet (S) in this noble verse, implying: you are here by instruction not only to stop letting any weakness, fear and numbness overtake you when facing the fuss and ado of the pagans, but you are also advised to openly declare your mission and what you are up to do, revealing the facts of the religion explicitly and turn away from the polytheists and remain headless with regard to them.

Afterwards, to provide reinforcement for the heart of the Prophet (S), Allah reassures him that He will back him up as against those who ridicule him. Allah implies: We shall remove the evil of those who ridicule you and We shall perish them.

The verse says:

"Verily We will suffice you against the scoffers,"

Allah then describes /mustahzi'in/ (those who ridicule), as: They are the ones who designate counterparts for Allah, but they will soon face the consequence of their evil behavior.

The verse says:

"Those who set up another god with Allah, so they will soon know (the truth)."

It may be that this meaning alludes to the fact that these are the ones whose thoughts and deeds are ridiculous by themselves, for they are so ignorant that they create god-like figures out of stones and wood as against Allah Who is the Creator of the world of existence, despite all of which they want to make an object of ridicule out of you.

Surah Al-Hijr - Verses 97 - 99

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّي يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

97. "And (O' prophet!) We certainly know your breast is straitened by what they say."

98. "Therefore, (to reinforce yourself), celebrate the praise of your Lord, and be of those who make prostration (unto Him)."

99. "And worship your Lord until the Certain comes to you."

Among the commentators it is well-known that the aim in mentioning /yaqin/ (certainty), in these verses, is the most certain of all that takes place with regard to man, that is, death. As it is also quoted from the tongue of the pagans in verses 46-47 of Surah Al-Muddaththir No. 74 saying that they used to reject the Day of Judgment till death overtook them.

The meaning of the Arabic word /yaqin/ is not death, of course, but death prepares the grounds for arriving at certainty, for at the time when death is forth coming, all curtains are drawn and man becomes certain of the realities.

Some deviants have made a pretext out of the verse and claim: if one arrives at the state of certainty, there is no more any need for worshipping, little knowing that it is the Prophet (S) who is being addressed and who had arrived at certainty from the earliest day and used to declare in face of inciting greed and threats of the pagans:

"If you place the moon into my one hand and the sun into another one, I shall not be stopped from performing my duty."

However, despite such a state of certainty, he used to worship till the last moments of his life.

Anyway, Allah adds as a console and as a reinforcement for elevating the spirit of the holy Prophet (S) in the noble verse:

"And (O' prophet!) We certainly know your breast is straitened by what they say."

Your delicate spirit and your very sensitive heart cannot withstand all those ill-intentioned words and blasphemous sentences, thus making you deeply depressed.

However, do not be disturbed; to remove the ill-effects of their nasty and inappropriate words, worship and praise your Lord, and remain one of those who prostrate.

The verse says:

"Therefore, (to reinforce yourself), celebrate the praise of your Lord, and be of those who make prostration (unto Him)."

For, such a gratitude shown towards Allah will remove the ill-effects of their words from the minds of the lovers of Allah. Moreover, it provides you with energy, ability, illumination and sincerity as well.

Some Islamic traditions denote that whenever the Prophet (S) became sad, he used to establish prayer by which he would wipe out the effects of that grief from his mind.

Therefore, The Lord gives him His last commandment in connection with this matter that he must not give up worshipping Allah throughout his life and he (S) must keep on worshipping and serving Him till his certain death occurs.

The holy verse says:

"And worship your Lord until the Certain comes to you."

It is cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan that if Allah would say only: 'worship the Lord' and would not confine it to a certain limit in time, it was sufficient for man to worship Allah once and prove his servitude to Him. However, with this meaning, He convinces man to worship Allah as long as he is alive.

In conclusion, worshipping Him is the highest level of education; it provokes one's thought and calls one's way of thinking towards the endless boundaries.

It wipes out and washes away all the dust of sinfulness and negligence from one's heart and soul, while inculcating supreme human values within him. It strengthens one's faith and awareness, and makes one responsible in his affairs.

It is for this reason that it would be impossible to imagine that man might be needless of this great educational school for even one moment. Those who think man may reach a stage where he will be no more in need of worshipping, either have regarded man's development as a limited process, or they have not grasped the full meaning of worshipping.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma'-ul Bayan
2. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 23
3. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daqh ayegh
4. Tafsir-us-Safi
5. Tafsir-Kanz-ud-Daqayiq

Surah An-Nahl, Chapter 16

Surah An-Nahl (The Bee)

No. 16 (Revealed in Mecca)

128 verses in 16 sections

Content of Surah An-Nahl

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The sixteenth Surah of the Glorious Qur'an which contains 128 verses is called 'Nahl' 'Bees' owing to allusions made in it to the creation of bees.

Notwithstanding the Qur'an is a Book of Divine legislation, but many of its Suras are named based on creation, such as An-Najm (star), 'Ash-Shams' (the sun), 'Al-Fil' (the elephant), 'Al-'Ankabūt' (spider), and 'An-Nahl' (the bee).

These names are clues as to the fact that all the creatures whether in the sky or on the earth, whether small or great, they are all equal to Him due to His Power, and the Book of legislation is based on the Book of nature, both of which have their sources in one origin.

One of the names of this Surah is 'the Surah of the Blessings' for there are the names of over 50 blessings mentioned in it.

The issues dealt with in this Surah are: the Divine blessings, reasons for monotheism and resurrection, ordinances concerning the Holy war, the threats against the pagans, the dissuasions of injustice, indecency, breaking of one's promises, innovations, and satanical temptations.

Incidentally, most of the commentators are of the opinion that it is understood from the occasions of the revelation of the verses of this Surah that the first forty verses of it have been revealed at the end of the Meccan era, while the remaining eighty eight were revealed during the early period of the migration to Medina. Therefore, this holy Surah is both Meccan as well as Medinite.

The Virtues of Reading This Surah

In some quotations narrated from the Prophet (S), it has been confirmed that he said:

"He who recites this Surah, Allah will not hold him accountable for the blessings which He has bestowed on him in this world."

All means will be made available to him to go to Paradise. [1]

Certainly, that kind of reading is meant hereby that is coupled with meditation and decision which leads one to practice and taking steps on the path of gratitude.

Note

1. Tafsir-i-Burhan

Section 1: The Existence of Allah Proved by Nature

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 1

أَتَي أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلاَ تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

1. "Allah's commandment has come, hence do not seek to hasten it. Glory be to Him and Exalted is He above every thing with which they associate Him."

A considerable part of the commencing verses of this Surah have been revealed in Mecca, during which time the Prophet (S) was intensively entangled with the pagans and idol-worshippers who used various pretexts every day for the liberating and life-saving call of Islam.

Among such pretexts one might name the Divine chastisement, which, whenever the Prophet (S) warned them against, some obstinate folks would declare.

"Why would such a chastisement which you claim, if truly said, do not come to be inflicted on us?"

They might sometimes add that if supposedly there was such a case impending, they should take recourse to their idols to serve as mediators with Allah (s.w.t.) to be rescued from punishment.

The first verse of this Surah drew an obliterating line over such imaginary claims by implying that they should stop making haste in that connection for Allah's commandment had definitely been issued already.

It says:

"Allah's commandment has come, hence do not seek to hasten it…"

If you think that the idols will be involved as mediators with Him, you are seriously mistaken, as Allah is far more intact and superior to being attached with associates.

The verse continues saying:

"…Glory be to Him and Exalted is He above every thing with which they associate Him."

Explanation

Notwithstanding the case in question in this verse is the pagans' impatience in their receiving of the Divine punishment, but the beginning sentence of the verse is not confined to the Divine punishment.

Rather, it includes all the Divine commandments such as that relating to waging of the Holy war, the commandment concerning the reappearance of the contemporary Imam (a.j.), the Return of the Immaculate Imams (as), and the commandment for the stepping up and staging of the resurrection day about which one must not make haste.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 2

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلآئِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَي مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنذِرُوا اَنَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلآ أَنَاْ فَاتَّقُونِ

2. "He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills as to warn (people) that there is no God but I, so be in awe of Me."

The Arabic term /rūh/ refers to one of the Divine near-stationed angels the name of which is mentioned separately in the Qur'an and has come beside the word 'the angels':

"The Day (on which) the spirit (Rūh) and the angels shall stand arrayed…"[1]

However, in the verse under discussion the letter /b/ (with) is employed between the two words used instead of the conjunction /wa/ (and). Perhaps, the meaning intended in this verse is not 'that angel' when dealing with /rūh/, but it may mean the literal sense of the word which is the spiritual life.

In this case the verse signifies: Allah sends down the angels along with the means of life to those servants whom He pleases; as is the case in verse 50 from Surah Ash-Shour a, where the word /rūh/ denotes the Qur'an which is the source of spiritual life.[2]

In any case, as no punishment and retribution will be inflicted on anyone without adequate explanation and without delivering a just ultimatum, the Qur'an implies that Allah sends down angels with the Divine spirit to those of His servants whom He wants, ordering them to awaken the people to the fact that there is no other one to be worshipped except Him.

Therefore, they should avoid any opposition to His commandments and feel responsible when confronting Him.

The verse says:

"He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills as to warn (people) that there is no God but I, so be in awe of Me."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 3

خَلَقَ السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

3. "He created the skies and the earth with the truth; Exalted is He above everything with which they associate Him."

Here, the Qur'an selects two ways for dealing with the issue of the eradication of paganism and focusing all people's attention on the One God.

First, He tackles the issue with rational reasoning regarding the magnificent order of creation and its system. Secondly, He tackles the issue through emotional ways and the explanation of the various blessings towards man and by instigating man's sense of gratitude.

At first, it says:

"He created the skies and the earth with the truth…"

The rightfulness of creation of the skies and the earth is evident both when one considers the amazing system of well-regulated creation, and the goal and the various interests which exist in it.

Are those idols whom they associate with Him able to bring about such a creation process, or can they create a small mosquito or create a particle of dust?

The verse says:

"…Exalted is He above everything with which they associate Him."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 4

خَلَقَ الإِنسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ

4. "He created man out of semen, yet behold! He is an open adversary."

After allusions made to the issue of the creation of the skies and the earth and their endless mysteries, He enters into the discussion of man himself; the man who is closer to Him than any other one.

The Qur'an in regard to man implies that: And eventually when he was a worthless sperm with no soul, he was made into a rational being as well as defendant, expressive of his own interior, and engaging in disputations with foes. (This meaning refers to the different stages of man's development process!)

The other meaning attributed to this verse is that man eventually turned into Allah's enemy, rejecting his own Creator. (This alludes to the retrogression and meanness of the sinful ones.)

The verse says:

"He created man out of semen, yet behold! He is an open adversary."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 5

وَالاَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

5. "And He created the cattle for you, therein is warmth and (other) advantages, and of them you eat."

There are many advantages in animals for man. Their meat and milk serve for his food; their skin and wool serve for making shoes and clothing; their back serves for loading, their feet are utilized for cultivation, and even their feces are used for fertilization. In spite of all the above advantages, they cause the least trouble for man.

The verse says:

"And He created the cattle for you, therein is warmth and (other) advantages, and of them you eat."

In Islamic quotations, next to agriculture, the best job proposed is breeding live-stock. This has been mentioned on condition that the job is coupled with the payment of one's religious dues of Zakat and with an eye on the deprived people.

Incidentally, focusing one's attention on the divine blessings enlivens the love unto the Creator as well as the spirit of His servitude in man.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 6

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ

6. "And there is beauty in them for you when you drive them (home in the evening), and when you send them forth to pasture (in the morning)."

The Qur'anic term /tasrahūn/ is derived from /saraha/ which signifies sending livestock to the pastureland; and the Arabic term /turihūn/, which is derived from /rauh/, means the time when the cattle return to their stable.

Allah, the Gracious, does not confine Himself to the mentioning of the ordinary advantages provided by the useful animals, but He also insists on the psychological benefits which can be drown out of them.

The verse says:

"And there is beauty in them for you when you drive them (home in the evening), and when you send them forth to pasture (in the morning)."

This, in fact, provides the beauty of the self-sufficiency for the society, as this is a way of the provision for the needs by a society which are to be fulfilled. In other words this provides a picture for the beauty laid out in the process for achieving economic independence as well as the stoppage of all source of dependence.

Explanations

The four-footed animals are (just like other creatures,) created for the sake of man.

Vegetarianism is not a value in itself. Allah recounts the eating of the meat of lawful animals as one of their advantages:

"…of them you eat."

Certainly, indulgence in consumption of meat is not recommended.

The perfection of the glory of a society resides in its independence, self-sufficiency, production and expanding of its livestock breeding industry.

'Beauty and decoration' is one of the natural needs of the individual and society.

The perfection in beauty of a society rests with the struggle, and not with stagnation and impasse; the struggle which is achieved through mass movement, and not through individualistic achievements.

Beauty in perfection requires being of service to the people; it is not attained through only filling up of one's own stomach.

That kind of beauty makes perfect in case of being under the umbrella of a shepherd which is coupled with one's own wisdom, and not being left alone and to oneself.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 7

وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَي بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بَالِغِيهِ إِلاَّ بِشِقِّ الاَنفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

7. "And they carry your heavy loads unto a land that you could not reach except with distress of (your) self. Verily your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful."

The Qur'an points out to another of the advantages of animals in this noble verse. It implies that animals carry your heavy loads on their back, going towards towns and regions which you could not reach without undergoing tremendous troubles.

The verse says:

"And they carry your heavy loads unto a land that you could not reach except with distress of (your) self…"

This is a sign of Mercy and compassion of Allah Who has created these four-footed animals with such tremendous strength, and has made them tamed and submissive to you.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful."

As one may note, these four-footed animals, firstly, provide man with means for covering him against cold and heat. In the second place, their milk products are used and, then, their meat. And, finally, they provide

those psychological effects which leave an impact on man's heart, and their use as a means of transportation.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 8

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

8. "And (He created) horses, and mules and donkeys that you may ride upon them, and for ornament, and He creates what you do not know."

The Qur'anic term /xayl/ means: 'pride, arrogance', but here, in this verse, the objective is 'horse', as if man feels a kind of pride and arrogance in horse riding.

The Arabic word /biq al/ signifies 'mule' which comes to being by a horse and a donkey; and the word /hamir/ is the plural from of /himar/ in the sense of 'ass'.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an points to some other animals which man uses for riding.

The verse says:

"And (He created) horses, and mules and donkeys that you may ride upon them, and for ornament…"

In conclusion, Allah points out to a more important issue and calls everybody's attention to the various means of transportation and mounts which will be made available to man in the future, and, which he can make better use of them.

And Allah will create other things that you know nothing about them, like the modern various means of transportation, whether be it cars, trains, or airplanes which are indeed Allah's creatures, not those of men.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He creates what you do not know."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 9

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَآئِرٌ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

9. "And upon Allah is to show the right way, and of them (the ways) are the deviating ones; and if He had willed He could have guided all of you."

From among the affairs which Allah regards them as His Own obligations is leading people and providing them with proper guidance, as He remarks:

"Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide,"[3]

and again in this verse the Holy Qur'an states:

"And upon Allah is to show the right way…"

Here, the Qur'anic term /qasd/ signifies moderation, and the aim in referring to /qasd-us-sabil/ is the in-between way or the 'straight way'.

Anyway, in pursuing the various blessings, which were discussed in the previous verses, the Qur'an points out here to one of the most important spiritual blessings of them, when it implies that it is up to Allah to show the right and straight path to the people, a path which has no deviation found in it.

The verse says:

"And upon Allah is to show the right way…"

As for this ‘straight path’ which alludes to either the ‘genetic’ or the ‘religious’ dimension, the commentators have offered various interpretations. However, their ideas are not incompatible with each other if they include both cases.

On the other hand, Allah has sent the prophets equipping them with revelations, adequate instructions and regulations required by man, so that, from the religious laws point of view be able to discriminate the good from the evil and, by means of kind of statements, to persuade man to cover the straight way and refrain him from the deviate paths.

Afterwards, as there are many deviating paths, He warns human beings, implying that some of these paths are deviating and have dead ends.

The verse says:

“…and of them (the ways) are the deviating ones…”

And since the blessings of freedom of choice and free will are among the most important factors in man’s perfection, the Qur’an refers to them with a short sentence and remarks in implication that if Allah wanted, He would lead all of you by compulsion to the straight path in such a way as you would not be able to deviate in the least from that path.

The verse continues saying:

“…and if He had willed He could have guided all of you.”

But, He did not do that, for compulsory guidance is neither something which makes one proud; nor is it a development for him.

Anyway, Allah has not deemed it appropriate to make people believers by compulsion; on the contrary, He has left man free to choose his own path.

Notes

1. Surah An-Naba’, No. 78, verse 38
2. “And thus did We reveal to you an inspired book by Our command.”
3. Surah Al-Layl, No. 92, verse 12

Section 2: Allah's Unity Testified in Nature

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 10

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَكُم مِّنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ

10. "He it is Who sends down water from the sky for you; from it you drink, and by it (grows) trees on which you pasture your cattle."

The Arabic term /tasimūn/ is derived from /'as amah/ and means letting animals graze in the pastureland; and the word /šajar/ in Arabic has a broad meaning which includes every type of plant, whether trees or bushes.

As Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 146, concerning pumpkins, says:

"And caused We to grow (to give shade) over him a plant of pumpkin.",

notwithstanding the fact that pumpkins have bushes and not trees.

At any rate, in this noble verse, the Qur'an again makes allusion to the material blessings so as to provoke men's sense of gratitude, to light the love of Allah in their hearts, and to call them to attain a wider cognition of the One Who has been granting them the blessings.

It says:

"He it is Who sends down water from the sky for you…"

It is the enlivening and freshening, pure, and transparent water which is free from all kinds of pollution and which is the source of drinking.

"…from it you drink…"

And there are plants and trees which grow out of it, and which forms pasturelands where you send your domestic animals for grazing. The verse continues saying:

"…and by it (grows) trees on which you pasture your cattle."

It is certain that the advantages of rainwater are not confined to drinking by man, enabling plants to grow and trees to flourish.

These advantages include the washing of the earth compounds, purification of the air, creating of the required moisture for freshness of man's skin, facilitating of one's breathing process, and the like. However, in view of the fact that the abovementioned two parts were of more importance, they have been emphasized far more than the other domains.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 11

يُنبِتُ لَكُم بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالاَعْنَابَ وَمِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

11. "Therewith He causes to grow for you herbage, and the olives, and the palm trees, and the grapes, and of all the fruits. Verily there is a sign in this for a people who reflect."

One must note that to make something grow is the job of Allah and not farming it; and all kinds of fruits are created for man. So we must keep in mind that all products and fruits have a passing effect and they are not to be regarded as ends in themselves; they are proper signs and symbols leading towards the destination and are not to be regarded as destinations themselves.

The verse says:

"Therewith He causes to grow for you herbage, and the olives, and the palm trees, and the grapes, and of all the fruits…"

Certainly, only to see and to know does not suffice; but thinking and taking the appropriate measures are also necessary.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily there is a sign in this for a people who reflect."

Why Does He only Name Olives, Palm-trees and Grapes?

Perhaps it seems such that if the Qur'an stresses on fruits as olives, dates and grapes, it is because of the fact that their location in the environment of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an has been conducive to the growth of such fruits.

However, considering the fact that the Holy Qur'an has been a universal and an eternal phenomenon and given note to the depth of its interpretation, it becomes obvious that the issue goes beyond such limits.

Nutrition scientists remark that there are few fruits the excellence of which can match nutritionally these three fruits. They also claim that olive oil can produce excellent fuel for bodily activities. Its quantity of calories is enormous for which it is regarded as energizing, and those who always seek to keep healthy, must become interested in this.

Olive oil is friendly towards one's liver; while, at the same time, it is effective in removing the ill conditions of kidneys, biliary stones, lithiasis, nephritic colic and hepatic colic, as well as removing of constipation syndromes.

With the progress of medical sciences and nutrition and food sciences, the pharmaceutical effects of dates have also been adequately proved.

There is calcium in dates which is the prime factor for the strengthening of bones, and there is also phosphorus in dates which is the principal source and element which constitutes brain and inhibits weakness of nerves and fatigue syndromes.

It also increases the power of one's eyesight. Dates also possess potassium, the absence of which in one's body results in stomach ulcer. It is very useful for one's muscles, and human body tissues.

The fact that dates prevent cancer is nowadays widely circulated among nutrition scientists.

As for the grapes, according to nutrition scientists, they are so effective in numerous ways that one can regard them as a naturally established pharmacy or pharmaceutical laboratory.[1] Grapes produce twice as much heat in one's body as meat.

Moreover, they counterattack poison and play a host of other roles as purifying ones blood, removing of rheumatism, goat, and the increase in urea in one's blood stream. Grapes polish one's stomach and intestines and are activating, and they remove one's depression. They reinforce one's nerves and strengthen man because of their various vitamins.

Therefore, the stress which the Qur'an lays on these three fruits is not groundless. Probably, some important parts of it have been unknown to the people at that time.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 12

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومُ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

12. "And He (has) made the night and the day, and the sun and the moon subservient for you, and the stars have been made subservient by His command. Verily there are signs in this for a people who understand."

The objective of the conquest of the sun and the moon is man's manipulation of them for his own advantage. Otherwise, man who is not able to create even a fly, how would he be able to conquer the sun. By His grace, Allah, the Almighty, has made them subservient for man.

At any rate, alluding to the blessings offered to man by Allah in man's conquest of the various beings in the world, the Qur'an remarks:

"And He (has) made the night and the day, and the sun and the moon subservient for you, and the stars have been made subservient by His command…"

Most certainly, there are signs and clues of the grandeur of Allah (s.w.t.) and the magnificence of creation for those who contemplate.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily there are signs in this for a people who understand."

In the meantime, the hierarchical order of the system of existence is solely attracting the attention and are the object of development of those individuals who are thinking as well as reasoning, and not for those with naively-thinking, and those who are simple-minded.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 13

وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الاَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفاً أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

13. "And (also) whatever He has produced for you on the earth of different colours; verily there is a sign in this for a people who take advice."

The varieties of hues in existence are nothing but signs of the Power and Wisdom of Allah. Of course, He has created them for humankind. Hence, Allah declares in this noble verse, implying that the creatures which He has created for you on the earth have also been made subservient to you as well, various creatures and of different coloring.

The verse says:

"And (also) whatever He has produced for you on the earth of different colours…"

They are from different coverings, foods, clean spouses, and well-fare means to different mines and underground useful sources as well as other over-ground ones plus other blessings.

In these, there are also signs which are evident for those who are reminded in these matters as well.

The verse says:

"…verily there is a sign in this for a people who take advice."

Reflection, Reasoning, Reminding

In the above verses, after calling people to three parts of the Divine blessings, He invites people to the act of reflection.

However, in one case He points out that ‘There are signs in these for those who reflect’. In another case He reiterates that there are signs for those who reason, while in the third case He declares that there are signs for those who remember.

Such a wide range of differences in senses does not certainly reflect some technical maneuvering in expression. Conversely, out of what we grasp from the methodology of the Qur’an, each has got a different point of reference.

Maybe, the note on such difference points out to the case of varieties of the existing blessings in the world are so obvious that the mere fact of mentioning may be sufficient.

However, in case of agriculture, olives, palm trees, grapes and the fruits in general, they require reflection so that one gets more acquainted with their nutritional and therapeutic qualities. Therefore, He makes allusion to reflection and points it out.

As for the conquest of the sun and the moon as well as stars along with the secrets of the day and night, there is need for further thinking. Thus, He refers to ‘reasoning’ which ranks higher in the hierarchy of the ladder of contemplation.

In any case, the Qur’an always addresses the enlightened, meditating, think tank individuals who have got highly sophisticated brains and reasoning despite the fact that the Qur’an has been appeared in an environment where ruled naught but ignorance.

One thus concludes the magnanimity of such meanings. In particular when facing those who negate the truly authentic religions altogether. Crossing them out who, because of some superstitious religions, claim that religions, in general, put one’s meditation channels out of work. They claim that having faith in Allah is the product of ignorance.

Such Qur’anic verses are almost found throughout all of the suras.

The Qur’an explicitly states that the truly authentic religion is the product of meditation, reflection, and reasoning, and Islam addresses the intellectuals, the reflecting people and the men of knowledge everywhere, and not those who are ignorant, superstitious or the seemingly enlightened ones who have got no solid logical framework.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 14

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْماً طَرِيّاً وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَي الْفُلْكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

14. “And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh meat from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.”

The sea has got an important role to play in man’s life. The seawater is the source of steam, clouds and rain.

The depth of the sea provides man with the most delicious food, fishes, and its surface provides the cheapest, and the most widespread lines of

transportation for cargo and passengers. All of the above advantages have been made possible through the policies and powers of the Almighty, and man has got no role to play in bringing them about.

The verse says:

"And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh meat from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful."

The Arabic term /mawaxir/ is the plural form of /m axirah/ which is derived from /maxr/ and it signifies splitting from all sides, the left side as well as the right side.

Explanations

The sea, with all its magnanimity and despite all its ebbs and flows, is subject and subservient to man and is at his disposal.

"And He it is Who has made the sea subservient…"

The seas provide the most important source of fresh and healthy meat.

"…that you may eat fresh meat from it…"

Allah provides man not only with the means of primary needs, such as water and food, but also He provides him even with ornamental materials as well; in a manner: So as you would be able to exploit the precious gems of the seas with deep-sea diving for the sake of your dressing as well as the dressing of your wives.

"…and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear…"

The seas provide man with the best of natural ornaments.

The general laws with regard to the sea animals are concerned with their categorization as being religiously 'lawful meat' for eating, unless there is a law as not being allowed for a specific reason.

Freshness of meat is a value in itself.

Although man ought to struggle for obtaining food, his sustenance depends on Allah.

"…and that you may seek of His bounty…"

All of one's success must be targeted in order that sense of gratitude may be awakened.

"…and that you may be grateful."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 15

وَأَلْقَى فِي الأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَاراً وَسُبُلاً لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

15. "And He has cast firm mountains in the earth that it does not quake with you, and streams and roads that you may be guided aright,"

Mountains provide sources of equilibrium and comfort for man. The Arabic term /mayd/ means 'movement towards the right and left directions, as well as tension'.

The Qur'anic sentence /'an tamida bikum/ (that it does not quake with you) signifies that mountains are the cause of one's peace of mind as well as preventing of earth quakes. Hadrat Ali (as), with regard to mountains, says:

"Allah rendered the earth in a sustaining form by fixing in it gigantic stones and firm mountains."[2]

The foundations of the mountains have penetrated in all of the ups and downs of the earth and are geared into its holes.

The verse says:

"And He has cast firm mountains in the earth that it does not quake with you, and streams and roads that you may be guided aright,"

As the tension of the earth requires gigantic mountains to keep it sustaining, the tension found among the inhabitants of the earth also requires up-straight and Godly figures so that they can serve as causes of peace of mind in the people of the society.

Some Islamic quotations indicate that Allah (s.w.t.) made the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet of Islam (as) as the pillars of the earth so as to rescue the inhabitants of the earth from anxiety and tension.[3]

In the meantime, mountains play an important role in man's life. They store the winter snow amidst their outskirts which serve as the sources of streams and canals in springtime and with their variety of shapes they can serve as the road signs for guiding the travelers. We can grasp this meaning once we suppose that the entire earth were flat and soft.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 16

وَعَلاَمَاتٍ وِبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

16. "And landmarks (too), and by the star they find the right way."

We need landmarks for moving in the deserts and finding our way. The natural signs guide us during day-time and the stars lead us by night, to both of which Allah makes allusions in this verse.

It says:

"And landmarks (too), and by the star they find the right way."

We do not only need signs for finding our right way from circumlocution roads which lead us astray, but we also need clear signs for knowing the right from wrong in the midst of our desires, instincts, and of the despotic methods of dictators.

The Prophet (S) has designated and assigned some symbols to know the truth after him when people need it and when they are wandering aimlessly by looking at them.

In many quotations from the immaculate Im ams (as) we have it that /najm/ (star) is interpreted as the Prophet (S) and /'al am at/ (symbols) is interpreted as the Imams, in which case we have reference made to the spiritual commentary of this verse of the Qur'an.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said:

"The 'star' reflects the Messenger of Allah, and 'symbols' alludes to the Imams (as)"

And Imam Sadiq (as) also states:

"We are the symbols".

One of the best examples and cases of those so-called 'symbols' are Hadrat Zahra, and Imam Husayn (as). [4]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 17

أَفَمَن يَخْلُقُ كَمَن لاَّ يَخْلُقُ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

17. "Is He then Who creates as he who does not create? Do you not then consider?"

From the onset of the Surah Nahl as far as here, the Qur'an has recounted the Divine blessings in 15 verses.

It draws a general conclusion in this verse and explains the issue in an interrogative form implying whether He then Who creates is on a par with or equal to those idols and despots who are lacking in power to create. Why is it that you search for them instead of turning to the Almighty?

The verse says:

"Is He then Who creates as he who does not create?…"

After the discussion of all those great blessings and the hidden graces of Allah, the Qur'an addresses the conscience of the human beings and states:

"Is He then Who creates as he who does not create? Do you not then consider?"

Should one prostrate before the Creator of all such blessings or should one prostrate before those beings which are only tiny creatures themselves and who have never created anything and are not creating anything at the present?

This is an effective educational method which the Qur'an has employed in various circumstances. It raises the issues in an interrogative form and leaves their answers to the awakened consciences while appealing to the sense of spontaneity of he people.

In conclusion, theology and the worship of the Almighty is embedded in the nature of all human beings; what is needed is reminding them of it.

"…Do you not then consider?"

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 18

وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لاَ تُحْصُوهَآ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

18. "And if you count Allah's blessings, you are unable to number them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Finally, in order to let no one think that the favors of Allah are confined to those things only, the Qur'an states:

"And if you count Allah's blessings, you are unable to number them…"

Now, this question arises as to how can we express our gratitude to Him which we owe Him? In this case, are we not among those who are ungrateful?

The Qur'an provides the answer to this question in the last sentence of this verse, saying:

"…Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Certainly, Allah is more compassionate and more lenient than you may think of Him to take actions in questioning or in punishing you for your inability to express your thanks for His blessings.

You would better know this much that you are head over heel intermingled in His Graces and you are unable to express due recognition for His favors, and you should pay Him the apology that you always owe Him for your shortcoming in order to fulfill your duty in thanking Him. It is in this case that you have performed your utmost thankfulness to Him.

Who is he the one who affords to express his gratitude adequately to Him. That servant does best who offers his apology to Him for the sins he has committed. Otherwise, what can best suit Him is utterly impossible to be performed by anyone.

However, all these obstacles cannot obstruct us or stand in our way to keep account of His bounties and graces as far as we can, and thus be grateful to Him.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 19

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ

19. "And Allah knows that which you conceal and that which you reveal."

Allah's knowledge as to all affairs, whether open or covert, is identical, and if we know that Allah is fully aware of whatever we do, we seek to lead a virtuous life. Definitely, Allah knows as to what our intentions and objectives might be.

The verse says:

"And Allah knows that which you conceal and that which you reveal."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 20

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

20. "And those they call on besides Allah do not create anything and they are themselves created."

The Holy Qur'an stresses the issue of creativity once again, implying: Those whom they worship other than Allah, not only they do not create anything but also they themselves are created ones.

The verse says:

"And those they call on besides Allah do not create anything and they are themselves created."

The issue in question has so far been that these are not the creators and for this reason they are not worth worshipping. Now the Qur'an declares that they are themselves created and needy as well.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 21

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَآءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

21. "(They are) dead, not alive, and they do not know when they will be raised."

As the worshippers of the idols used to manufacture idols in the shape of man, and they used to treat them as if they were conscious beings, therefore, Allah in this verse calls the idols as dead ones which are used for the conscious living beings.

All beings except Allah are regarded as dead, whether be it inanimate ones or human beings from the point of being worshipped.

The verse says:

"(They are) dead, not alive, and they do not know when they will be raised."

This is the fifth characteristic which the worshipped one must possess, and which the idols are lacking.

Idols and idolatry have got a wide range of meanings in the logic of the Qur'an. Whomever and whatever is juxtaposed as against Allah in respect to its leaning and supporting power and we imagine in whose hands our destiny is laid, that will be regarded as an idol for us.

It is for this reason that whatever is mentioned in the above verses are in connection with those who claim apparently seem to be worshippers of Allah, but they have lost the independence of a faithful and truthful believer, leaning on the support of some weak subjects on whom they count for their livelihood, they are the target of them.

Notes

1. The book entitled: 'The First Court and the Last Prophet', Chapter: Grapes and Dates.
2. Nahjul-Bal aqah, Sermon 91
3. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 44
4. Tafsir-ul-Burhan

Section 3: God of all is only One

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 22

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَالَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاَخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُم مُنكِرَةٌ وَهُم مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

22. "Your God is One God. Hence, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are repulsive, and they are arrogant."

Your Lord is One God, unique and no one else is able to be the creator of the blessings. Therefore, stick to the rules of His worship.

The verse says:

"Your God is One God…"

Those who disbelieve in the Hereafter, their hearts deny the truth and they refrain from accepting admonitions and advices. Such ones are those who are arrogant and refrain from submission to the truth. They go on disobeying it without having any grounds for what they do.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Hence, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are repulsive, and they are arrogant."

Explanations

The previous verses dealt with the ability of Allah and the inability of all others relating to the act of creation and lack of their awareness about the future. This verse stresses the fact that your real Lord is Allah, One God.

The Arabic term /kibr/ signifies 'megalomania' or regarding of one's own self as greater than what one is. The word /takabbur/ means putting into practice or implementation of the attributes of being megalomaniac.

The Arabic word /'istikb ar/ also denotes that one is not great in itself but wants to create and prove his grandeur and splendor by whatever means which are usually at his disposal.

Some Islamic quotations indicate that Imam Husayn (as) once was passing by a group of impoverished needy people who were having their meals. They invited him to join them.

The Imam (as) accepted their invitation and sat down next to them, engaging in eating, then he said:

"Allah does not love the arrogant."[1]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 23

لاَ جَرَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ

23. "Undoubtedly Allah does know that which they conceal and that which they reveal. Verily He does not love the arrogant."

The Arabic word /jarama/ means 'picking of and cutting fruits from the trees'. The term /l ajarama/ signifies that the issue in question is not to be 'cut', 'taken away' or such that one can be skeptic about. Conversely, it is something certain and decisive.

This verse serves two functions: It threatens the pagans warning them all as to the awareness of Allah of their performances, and, at the same time, it carries the good news unto the believers about the fact that Allah is aware of the situation of their enemies and can punish them as well.

This noble verse also stresses once again on Allah's knowledge of the invisible and His intuition of what is open and hidden, saying that Allah is definitely aware of what they make manifest as well as what they hide away. This sentence is in fact a threat against the pagans and the foes of the Truth about which Allah is never unaware.

The verse says:

"Undoubtedly Allah does know that which they conceal and that which they reveal…"

They are arrogant and Allah does not love the arrogant, for arrogance, when facing the Truth, is considered as the first sign of one's alienation from Allah.

The verse says:

"…Verily He does not love the arrogant."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 24

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُم مَّاذَآ أَنزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ

24. "And when they are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'The legends of the ancients'."

The Arabic term /'as atir/ is the plural form of /'ustūrah/ which signifies the stories and superstitious fables which have been turned into written forms.

Or, it may be the plural form of /'ast ar/ which means lines that have been copied in duplicated forms from the previous books. This word has been quoted nine times in the Qur'an from the pagan's tongue in all cases of which they have been accompanied by the word /'awwalin/ meaning the 'first one's'. That is, they would say:

"These words are nothing new; they are contrarily, those expressed or rather fabricated by the predecessors."

In the previous verse, the discussion concentrated on those who were arrogant. The usual logic of these disbelievers is reflected in this verse which implies that when they are asked as to what their Lord has revealed, they answer that these are not the Divine revelations; they are the same false stories of the predecessors.

The verse says:

"And when they are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'The legends of the ancients'."

It is interesting to note that the arrogant today usually mischievously appeal to this way of escaping the truth in order to mislead others. In some books concerning sociology, they have turned to even putting their deceptive ideas into a scientific framework and claim that 'religion' is the product of man's ignorance and religious interpretations are confined to 'fables' only.

However, they do not organize any campaigns against the superstitious and fabricated religions. Their opposition is only concentrated around true religions which seek to awaken people's minds, breaking up of the policies of colonialism and of obstructing the way of the expansionists and colonialists.

In conclusion, the sending of the prophets (as) and of the Celestial Books are among the Lordly acts for the education and guidance of the people.

But, the habit of the arrogant people is to despise and humiliate whether be it sometimes the school, at other times the leader, or the entire nation.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 25

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ أَلاَ سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ

25. "That they must bear their burdens entirely on the Day of Resurrection and (also) some of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge. Beware! Evil is it what they bear!"

This verse deals with the pioneers of paganism who, in this life, lead the people astray with their falsified propaganda. Therefore, in the Hereafter they must shoulder the burden of their own sins as well as those whom they have seduced and caused to deviate from the straight path.

As some Islamic quotations indicate: He who founds a deviating path, must share the punishment of all those who are deviants in it; and he who leads others in the right direction will also share in the rewards accorded to those who are seeking the truth without being at a disadvantage as far as his own share is concerned; and beware that the former are shouldering the worst kind of responsibilities.

The holy verse says:

"That they must bear their burdens entirely on the Day of Resurrection and (also) some of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge. Beware! Evil is it what they bear!"

The reason why this case happens is that their word will sometimes seduce thousands of people. How difficult it is that one adds to his own punishment by suffering not only for his own sins but also sharing in the sins of thousands of others.

Moreover, when their misleading words stay and serve as sources of the seduction of future generations, they will also have to suffer for their sins which are extra to those of their own.

Incidentally, the cause of most deviations is ignorance, and the enemy utilizes that ignorance to achieve his own goals. Nevertheless, ignorance cannot serve as an excuse and does not acquit one from the punishment for his guilt.

Note

1. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary, vol. 3, p. 47

Section 4: The Disgrace Which the Wicked Shall Have

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 26

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَي اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُم مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيثُ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

26. "Indeed, those who were before them (also) devised plans. So (the wrath of Allah) struck at the foundations of their buildings, and then the roof fell on them from above them, and the (Divine) punishment came to them from whence they never perceived."

This noble verse discusses the point that it is not the first occasion when the arrogant accuse the Divine leaders, and consider the Divine revelations as old fables. On the contrary, those who preceded them also devised such conspiracies. Nevertheless, Allah hit the foundations of their life, destroying it from the scratch and thus their roof fell on them from above.

The verse says:

"Indeed, those who were before them (also) devised plans. So (the wrath of Allah) struck at the foundations of their buildings, and then the roof fell on them from above them…"

And Allah's punishment came upon them from where they could never have the slightest idea.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and the (Divine) punishment came to them from whence they never perceived."

The total destruction of the foundations of the buildings and the falling down of the roofs might be taken as allusions made to the buildings and their apparent roofs which were pounded and devastated as a result of earthquakes and thunderbolts, falling over them.

It might just as well be reference metaphorically to their organizational hierarchy which was eradicated by Allah's command.

Incidentally, it is not incompatible that the verse refers to both meanings.

Explanations

To eradicate the entire mental and organizational system of the enemies, one must deal with them fundamentally and not superficially so that all of them might be vanished.

At times, it happens that a building, with very solid foundations, turns into one's own grave instead of serving as a place for his preservation.

In the meantime, this holy verse serves as a threat to the conspirators while serving as a way of providing calm and comfort for the Prophet (S).

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 27

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تُشَآقُّونَ فِيهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوءَ عَلَي الْكَافِرِينَ

27. "Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them and say: 'Where are My associates for whose sake you have been disputing?' Those who have been given the knowledge will say: 'Verily, the disgrace and scandal are this day upon the unbelievers."

Knowledge and ignorance have some broader meanings in the context of the Qur'an than the general meanings which are ascribed to them.

A knowledgeable person, in the Qur'anic context, is the one whose thinking and practice are based on the truth even though he may have no command of reading and writing. An ignorant fellow, on the other hand, is he whose actions are based on what is wrong even though he might have mastery of all the subjects of science.

The Qur'an regards the notion of paganism and worshipping of idols as utter ignorance, as it regards the root of the heinous act of the people of Lot as ignorance.

In this verse, also

"Those Who have been given knowledge"

addresses those who are facing against unbelief and paganism. That is, true knowledge leads and directs man to Monotheism and Faith.

In the meantime, what was mentioned about them in the previous verse was regarding their punishment in this world, which does not end at this point. Besides that, Allah will bring them disgrace, shame and scandal in the Resurrection Day.

The verse says:

"Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them…"

Addressing them, He puts this question to them asking: Where are those whom you fabricated as associates for Me, used to love them and you had hostile attitudes towards others for their sake?

It continues:

"…and say: 'Where are My associates for whose sake you have been disputing?'…"

Most definitely, they shall have no answers here for this question. Nevertheless, those who have been given knowledge, including the angels, prophets and the believers, open their mouth asserting: Shamefulness, scandal and ill-fate are to-day incumbent upon 'the unbelievers'.

(Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn and 'Atyab-ul-Bayan)

This itself will be a type of punishment and psychological chastisement for them.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 28

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنفُسِهِمْ فَأَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِن سُوءٍ بَلَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

28. "Those whom the angels take their lives while they are unjust to themselves. Then they would offer submission, (falsely saying:) 'We used not to commit any evil act'. 'Nay; Allah is definitely aware of what you used to do'."

The unbelievers do both at the time when angels are taking their life: They offer their submission and they deny their evil past. However, neither

that faith, to which they confess is of any kind of value, for it has its origin in ‘necessity’; nor is their denial acceptable from them, for Allah is always aware of everything.

This noble verse with its particular interpretation, which provides a thought-provoking instructive lesson for awakening the ignorant and those who are unaware, describes the pagan as follows:

“Those whom the angels of death take their lives, while they are unjust to themselves…”

For, whatever tyranny one inflicts on others, it will first of all start with himself, and he will ruin his own house before that of the others.

Nonetheless when man finds himself in his deathbed, and the curtains of his own arrogance and negligence are removed from before his eyes, he will immediately offer his submission, falsely claiming that he has not done anything wrong.

The verse says:

“…Then they would offer submission, (falsely saying:) ‘We used not to commit any evil act’…”

Are they telling lies because, as a result of their habitual repetition, lying has become their inherent characteristic? Or else, they want to say that they know such acts which they have committed have been mistakes. It is probable that the two cases might be involved and both hold true.

Nevertheless, they are soon reminded that they are liars and that they have committed many evil acts, saying that Allah is aware of whatever they have done as well as their intentions under all circumstances.

The verse says:

“…‘Nay; Allah is definitely aware of what you used to do’.”

Therefore, there is no room for them to deny or refute! And this ‘emergency faith’ of theirs, which is instantly expressed for pragmatic reasons, is of no use either.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 29

فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَي الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

29. “Therefore, enter through the gates of Hell, to abide therein. Thus, indeed, evil is the abode of the arrogant.”

Then, enter Hell through its gates where you will always be staying. Note what an awful place is the residence of the arrogant people.

They have not voluntarily entered the inferno! On the contrary, they have been made enter into it.

There are seven gates for the Hell according to the text of the Qur’an, each of which belongs to one category of the seven categories in the Hell.

The Qur’an says:

“It has seven gates, for every gate there shall be a (separate) party of them assigned.”[1]

This verse does not signify that they can enter through whichever gate they choose. On the contrary, it means that every class of those sinners can enter through one of the gates according to their intensity of: paganism, disbelief or profanity, opposition or hostility, their intensity of being misled, seductive ability, and oppression as well as the like of them.

For example: the Jews will enter through one gate while the Christians enter through another gate; the pagans enter through their own particular gate-way whereas the dissidents have their own gate; so on and so forth. The gateway of the seventh floor belongs to the hypocrites and those who were unjust unto the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Messenger (S).

The hell is incidentally the dark prison of Allah in which all kinds of punishments for chastising the evil doers are found, including: Fire, yoke, chains, vertical means of stabbing, lashes, 'Hamim' (boiling drink), Ghassaq (pus), Zaqqūm (bitter drink), and the like.

May Allah keep us away from these means of torture and punishment, and let us enter His Garden of Eden, Paradise; Amen.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 30

وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَآ أَنزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا خَيْراً لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَلَدَارُ الآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

30. "And (when) those who keep from evil are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'Good!' Goodness is for those who do 'good' in this world; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better, and excellent indeed is the abode of the pious."

In the early days of Islam, those who had heard the names of the Qur'an and the Prophet, when they entered Mecca, they would ask various people they confronted

"What has your Lord descended?"

In answer to them, the pagans would say: "The old legends", while the believers would answer them: "Good!", meaning He has descended whatever is the source of 'good' and 'happiness'.

We have noted in the previous verses the remarks made by the pagans about the Qur'an. We shall focus our attention here on the beliefs of the faithful along with the consequences of their faith.

At first, the Qur'an implies that when the pious were asked as to what their Lord has descended, they would answer 'The good and happiness.'

The verse says:

"And (when) those who keep from evil are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'Good!'…"

What an explicit, beautiful and comprehensive sense it is! 'The good' and, in particular, in its absolute concept of the word, the comprehensive meaning of which encompasses all the decent acts, happiness and successes, whether material or spiritual.

To sum up, as in the case of the pagans through previous verses which have explained their increasing punishment, spiritual, material, worldly and that of the Hereafter, the concluding remarks made by the believers are as follow in the verse in question:

where it says:

"…Goodness is for those who do 'good' in this world…"

It is worth noting that the Qur'anic term /hasanah/ is just like /xayr/ 'the good' which encompasses all kinds of 'decencies' as well as the 'blessings', which are found in this world.

Such are their worldly rewards. Moreover, it emphasizes the fact that: their abode in Hereafter is even better than their worldly life. What a nice place it is the residence of those who are pious.

The verse says:

"…and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better, and excellent indeed is the abode of the pious."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 31

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَآءُونَ كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

31. "Gardens of Eternity they shall enter, therein beneath (the trees of) which rivers flow, wherein they will have whatever they desire for. Thus Allah rewards the pious."

The reward for abstinence from the forbidden pleasures of this world is the unending success in the Hereafter.

In this noble verse, the residence of the pious, which was briefly alluded to before, is being discussed, saying that the residence of the pious are the eternal gardens of Paradise into which all enter, where flowing streams pass beneath its trees.

The verse says:

"Gardens of Eternity they shall enter, therein beneath (the trees of) which rivers flow…"

The issue in question is not merely the gardens and the trees, but for them there are all things which please them at their disposal.

The verse continues:

"…wherein they will have whatever they desire for…"

In conclusion, it states at the end of the verse:

"…Thus Allah rewards the pious."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 32

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

32. "Those whom the angels cause to die (while from polytheism and sin) are clean, saying (to them): 'Peace be upon you! Enter the Paradise because of what you used to do'."

The objective in using the Qur'anic term /tayyibin/, which was formerly used in the previous verses with regard to the pagans and the disbelievers, concerns those who have not already been of the polytheists and sinful ones, and it refers to those who are pious.

The term /tayyib/ alludes to those who are clean from all kinds of dirt and pollution or 'impurity' and are decorated with virtues and positive attributes.

In the previous holy verses, we read as to how the angels of death usually take the life of the arrogant pagans while they are oppressors.

Here, in this noble verse, we read as to how the angels would take the life of those who are clean of everything and are clear of all oppressions, arrogance, and every kind of sin.

In this verse, the angels, addressing them, say:

"peace be upon you!"

That kind of ‘peace’ which is uttered as a mark or a sign of respect, security, safety as a thorough peace of mind.

The verse says:

“Those whom the angels cause to die (while from polytheism and sin) are clean, saying (to them): ‘Peace be upon you!…”

Then, afterwards, the angels will add:

“…Enter the Paradise because of what you used to do’.”

Here, the Arabic phrase /tatawaff ahum/, meaning that ‘they will receive their soul’, signifies the fact that death does not mean ‘mortality’ and nothingness or the end of every thing. On the contrary, it is only a transit or a passing stage which paves the way for climbing up the ladder and going up to another stage.

Traditions on the Qualifications of the Paradise and Hell

1- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“All blessings are perishable except the ones which belong to those who reside in Paradise, and all depressions are temporary except the ones which belong to those who are the dwellers of Hell.” [2]

2- Ibn-Abbas (r.h.) says:

“Those in Paradise will go through an hour during which time they witness the sun and the moon and ask:

‘Did Allah not promise that we shall not see the sun and the moon in our residence in Paradise’?

To which an oracle will exclaim:

‘Your Lord has promised you truly that you would no more see the sun and the moon in Paradise. But, that light beam belongs to a man from among the followers of Ali-Ibn-i-Abi-Talib (as) who is going from one compartment into another one, and that which you have been exposed to has been (the rays of) the light out of his face.’” [3]

3- Abū-Sa‘id says:

“The Messenger of Allah (S) said: A man from the dwellers of Paradise, of high-ranking position, comes upon those residing in Paradise and illuminates the entire Paradise. It is as if his face brightens everywhere like a brilliant star.” [4]

4- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Verily the dwellers of Paradise will witness those compartment-dwellers from above their head just like you observing the morning star which has been left in the horizon to the east or to the west.” [5]

5- The Prophet of Islam (S) said:

“There are certain (blessings) in the Paradise which neither any eyes have seen nor anyone’s ears have heard; nor has it been revealed to any man’s heart.”

Some Traditions on the Attributes of Hell

6- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The least torment for the people of Hell on the day of resurrection will be to make them put on a pair of shoes made of fire which will cause their brains to boil because of the intensity of their heat.” [6]

7- It has been narrated from Amir-ul-Mu’mineen, Ali (as) who said:

"Be in owe of that kind of fire the heat of which is excessive, the depth of which is intensive, the ornament of which is of iron, and the drinks of it consist of warm sewage made up of blood mixed with puss." [7]

8- It has been quoted from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), in a tradition that the Hell has got seven gateways; through one of which our enemies and those who take up arms against us and humiliate us will enter. This gateway is most definitely the largest and the most burning of all gateways. [8]

9- It has also been quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Verily there exists a desert in the Hell for the arrogant which is named /saqar/. The excessive and intensive heat of it will be the main cause of their complaint when they will ask Allah to allow it to breathe, then He will allow it, so it will breathe and put the Hell on fire." [9]

10. 'Ayyashi quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who narrated from his father and his grandfather who have quoted in turn from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) saying:

"At the time when 'Zaqqūm' (a tree in Hell out of which the hell-dwelling people feed themselves) and 'Zari'' (a substance in hell which is bitter, stinking and burning) boils up in their stomach in Hell, those people will ask for a drink, then they will be provided with the drink of 'Ghassaq and Sadid', which are in turn made up of sewage secretions mixed with abscess secretion and blood.

They will thus be made to drink the dirty liquid consistently, which would not quench their thirst. They aspire towards death, though they will not die so as to be made to receive terrible punishment the fullest."

The Qur'an says:

"He will drink it little by little which he can hardly swallow agreeably, and death will come to him from every side, while he will not be about to die, and there will be a severe chastisement before him." [10]

11- The blissful Prophet (S) asked the people:

"Shall I not tell you about the people of Paradise?"

They answered:

"Of course, O', Messenger of Allah (S)."

He said:

"The people of Paradise are the ones whom the people in this world have regarded as weak ones and humiliated them. Were they to swear to Allah to anything, Allah would thereon take them into account."

Then he said:

"Shall I not tell you about the people of Hell?'

They said:

"Yes".

He said:

"They are the hostile, stupid, nonsensical, vociferous, uncharitable wealthy people, (who are) tyrants." [11]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 33

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَـكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

33. "Do they expect aught but the angels (of death) come to them, or the decree of your Lord comes (to pass)? Thus did those before them. And Allah was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves."

Were the warnings provided by the prophets not to awaken the people, the lashes of chastisement would surely do that job. However, to what effect will it be?

The descending of punishment after the delivering of an ultimatum, and sending prophets with Books, not only is not unjust but also is identical with the realization of justice in particular following the assigning of the prophets on their mission.

Once again, analyzing the attitudes and procedures of the pagans and oppressors, the Qur'an takes up the issue with a threatening vocabulary, and implies: What kind of expectations do they have?

Do they expect to receive any other things except that the death angels call upon them, while the 'gates' leading to repentance close up to their faces, their records be rolled up, and there remain no bridges for their return?

The verse says:

"Do they expect aught but the angels (of death) come to them…"

Or else, do they keep waiting for Allah's command to be issued as to their chastisement and then they seek repentance? Nonetheless, their repentance is untimely belated at that time and hence ineffective.

The verse continues saying:

"…or the decree of your Lord comes (to pass)?…"

Then, the Qur'an implies that those who undertake such acts are not confined to this group only. Contrarily, those who preceded them acted in just the same way.

It says:

"…Thus did those before them…"

It is not Allah Who did them injustice; however, it is they who did that to themselves, for they reap what they have sowed.

The verse says:

"…And Allah was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 34

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

34. "So the evil (consequences) of what they did afflicted them and that which they used to ridicule encompassed them."

The Qur'anic term /sayyi'ah/ signifies petty and minor sins as compared to the capital sins, like what Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 31 says:

"If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We remit from you your small sins…"

Therefore, whatever of chastisement is afflicted on man in this world is only the retribution of part of what has been due to him for his evil actions and the principal punishment will be saved for the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'anic phrase /haqa bihim/ is in the sense of /halla bihim/ which in fact signifies: 'whatever they mocked and ridiculed were reflected and returned upon themselves'.

In this noble verse, the Qur'an deals once again with the consequences of their performances, stating: The viciousness of their evil performances was returned to them.

The Qur'an says:

"So the evil (consequences) of what they did afflicted them…"

And the promises and pledges of the Divine chastisement were afflicted on them which were already the subject and the main issues of their mockery and ridicule. The verse continues saying:

"…and that which they used to ridicule encompassed them."

The above verse once again emphasizes the fact that it is man's own deeds, acts and performances which will entangle him, getting him involved both in this world and in the next and they will be reflected in various forms and shapes, and which will serve him as a source of trouble, harm, and torture, and not any other thing.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 44
2. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 474
3. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 149
4. Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 468
5. Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 475
6. Mahhaja-tul-Bayza', vol. 8, p. 356
7. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 206, from Nahj-ul-Balaqha
8. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 285
9. Mahajjat-ul-Bayda', vol. 8, p. 361
10. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 17
11. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2190

Section 5: Every People Had the Guidance through an Apostle from Allah

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 35

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِن دُونِهِ مِن شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَلآ ءَابَآؤُنَا وَلاَ حَرَّمْنَا مِن دُونِهِ مِن شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَي الرُّسُلِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَ غُ الْمُبِينُ

35. "And those who associate (other gods with Allah) say: 'If Allah had willed, we would not have worshipped aught besides Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything without (command from) Him.' Thus did those before them. Is aught for the Messengers, but to deliver the manifest message?"

The issue of determinism and fatalism is one of the unsound justifications of the polytheists who claimed that Allah has predetermined us to worship other than Him. Had He determined otherwise we would not have been pagans.

This issue has been discussed in verse 148 of Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6 and verse 2 of Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, also quoted from the pagans.

The verse says:

"And those who associate (other gods with Allah) say: 'If Allah had willed, we would not have worshipped aught besides Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything without (command from) Him.'…"

Question: Does it not reflect Allah's condescending and consent to and with the matter, as He does not obstruct people from deviation?

Answer: Definitely not, for Allah has simultaneously made adequate means for the guidance of the people. He has sent prophets and Books. Therefore, He has not decided that any one should deviate. At the same time, He has not compelled any one to embrace the faith, for compulsory faith is of no use.

However, what is more dangerous than paganism and disbelief is the justification provided for it and its ascription to Allah.

It is like the case with the deviants who tend to provide justification not only for their deeds but they also seek to justify those wrong acts of their ancestors as well as their collaborators. Such a mode of behavior, that is, providing justification, is the task incumbent upon all those who have been deviants throughout history.

The verse continues saying:

"…Thus did those before them. Is aught for the Messengers, but to deliver the manifest message?"

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 36

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَي اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلاَلَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذّبِينَ

36. "And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): 'Serve Allah and shun false gods.' Then, of them were some whom

Allah guided, and there were others against whom error was due. Hence, travel in the earth, then see what was the end of the rejecters."

The Arabic term /'ummah/ is a derivative of the word /'umm/ which signifies something which takes up something else on itself. Every group of people who has got something in common and are unified in a sense is called, /'ummah/.

The Arabic term /taqūt/ (dictator or despot) is employed when someone wants to exaggerate or overstress the act of 'unruliness'. In the Holy Qur'an, the Satan, the oppressors, the tyrants and the idols, who are unruly and disobedient in face of Allah's commandments, are called /taqūt/. This word has got no plural form; it is used both as singular, like:

"…whoever rejects false deity (taghūt)…",[1]

which is used as singular, and like:

"…their guardians are false deities (taghūt)…"[2]

which is used in plural meaning.

Allah has provided means of guidance for all the people.

The above verse says:

"And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): 'Serve Allah and shun false gods.'…"

Nevertheless, some groups accept the fact of the matter and will be guided aright, while others deny or reject it and, therefore, are misled. Thus, it is He Who guides us though it is us who are misled.

The verse continues saying:

"…Then, of them were some whom Allah guided, and there were others against whom error was due…"

An interesting example of this case might be the example of the earth which rotates around the sun during the rotation of which part of it faces the sun and is being enlightened while the other part of it, which is in behind, is darkened. Hence, one can say that every light beam which the earth possesses comes from the sun while every dark spot it has is of its own position.

Anyway, Allah does not ascribe misguidance to Himself, unless man personally paves the grounds for it.

In conclusion, at the end of the holy verse, He issues this general command for awakening of those who are misled and for the reinforcement of those who are already guided, where He implies that you may travel through the earth and examine the remains and relics of your predecessors which are on the surface of the earth or are buried under the earth and note for yourselves the ultimate destiny of those who have rejected Allah and their eventual fate.

The verse says:

"…Hence, travel in the earth, then see what was the end of the rejecters."

This meaning serves as a clear evidence for man's free will, for in case that the guidance and being misled were compulsory matters, there would certainly be no reasons for His commendation of traveling through the earth and the examination of the circumstances of the predecessors which would all be in vain.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 37

إِن تَحْرِصْ عَلَي هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَهْدِي مَن يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُم مِّـن نَّاصِرِينَ

37. "(O' Prophet!) Even if you desire for their guidance, yet verily Allah does not guide those whom He leads astray, nor shall they have any helpers."

In pursuance of the previous verse which ascertained that the deviation of a certain group is an irrevocable and an unequivocal matter owing to their paganism and rejection, this verse, addressing the Prophet (S), implies that he should not sympathize with them for his sympathy is ineffective as Allah has sealed their hearts because of their deviation and they would be no more having the capacity to be guided.

The verse says:

"(O' Prophet!) Even if you desire for their guidance, yet verily Allah does not guide those whom He leads astray, nor shall they have any helpers."

Sometimes, there is difficulty in people's eligibility for guidance which must not be attributed to the preacher. The Divine prophet is immaculate and he shows no weak-points while he has best quality ethics and is compassionate as well, yet some people do not approve.

Certainly, man sometimes reaches a point where he neither will be eligible to be guided in this world; nor will he have the capacity of being interceded and assisted in the next world.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 38

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لاَ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ بَلَي وَعْداً عَلَيْهِ حَقّاً وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

38. "And they swore by Allah with their most earnest oaths (that) Allah will not raise up him who dies. Yea! It (raising the dead) is a promise binding on Him in truth, but most people do not know."

It is quoted that a Muslim man, who was indebted to by a pagan, went to him to claim his due. The pagan acted evasively which made the Muslim man infuriated and made this oath in his speech:

"I swear to whatever I expect after death"

He meant the resurrection and Allah's account, to which the pagan replied: "I swear to God that He will raise no one from the dead." Upon this, the verse was revealed which embodied an answer to him and to the ones like him.

Allah, the Almighty, deals with another type of their deviation and ill ways of thinking, indicating that they swear to the Lord vehemently, exaggerating with utmost insistence that He does not raise any one from the dead, and meaning that generally no one will be enlivened and revived after death.

The holy verse says:

"And they swore by Allah with their most earnest oaths (that) Allah will not raise up him who dies…"

Here, Allah, rejecting their speech, implies that: of course, Allah will revive them and will reappoint them.

This is the unequivocal promise which Allah has given them, and it is incumbent on Him to fulfill all His promises because of His wisdom, for His promise is truthful and is irrevocable, as were there no Resurrection Day to be held, duties of men would be meaningless.

In other words, once duties are correctly in place that there are punishment and rewards designated for one's actions.

However, most people do not draw proper conclusions from this fact because of their paganism and rejection of the prophets. Some claim that those who do not follow the philosophy of the resurrection and rebirth of the dead, therefore they reject.

Two Points

One of the capital sins is swearing for false causes especially when the issue in question begins with the terms: /wallah/, /billah/ and /tallah/, which are the three terms for swearing.

According to the quotations which have been mentioned in the books of Roudah-Kafi, Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, and Tafsir-i-Burhan from Imam Sadiq (as) and Hadrat-i-Imam Baqir (as), it has been quoted that one of the examples of this verse is 'regression' or 'return' during the course of which, in this world, Allah enlivens some groups during the era of the revolution or uprising of Imam-i-Zaman (as) though the opponents of Shi'ites refute that.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 39

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَاذِبِينَ

39. "(They will be raised up) so that He may make clear to them that which they differed about, and that those who disbelieved might know that they (themselves) were liars."

The pagans were hesitant and disagreed on such issues as monotheism, legitimacy and authenticity of the prophets' mission, resurrection day, and the accountability of one's deeds.

This holy verse proclaims that all these issues will be clarified for them in the resurrection day and they will discover as to what untrue and unacceptable beliefs they were holding in the world. But to what effect will it be?

It is for this reason that Allah raises them from the dead so as to enable them to see for them what they rejected and disagreed on, for the doomsday makes them acquire positively decisive knowledge.

Another point is that the pagans become aware that they were lairs in this world and their claim as to the fact that Allah will not make the dead rise up after death was utter nonsense and groundless.

The verse says:

"(They will be raised up) so that He may make clear to them that which they differed about, and that those who disbelieved might know that they (themselves) were liars."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 40

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَآ أَرَدْنَاهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

40. "Verily, only Our word for a thing, when We intend it, is that We say: 'Be!', and it is."

Allah has remarked in this verse

"Verily, only Our word"

and in verse 82 of Surah Yasin No. 36, He has stated:

"Verily only His command"

while we find in verse 59 of 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, concerning the creation of Hadrat-i-'Issa, He says:

"…He said to him 'Be' and he 'was'.",

all of which lead us to the conclusion that His command and His speech are identical with His Will.

The Qur'anic word /kun/ signifies 'be' which is used for promoting our understanding of the proximity in our frame of mind. Otherwise, Allah does not require that either.

As man can imagine anything in his own mind whenever he intends to, which he can do without him needing anything. He can create everything. To excuse the similitude expressed here, Allah can also create everything though His creation is real and it is done only if He so wills.

Therefore, He takes up the issue in this verse that if they consider the return of man to life impossible, they must know that Allah's power is above everything else. Whenever He intends something to exist, He only says 'Be it', following which it will immediately exist.

The verse says:

"Verily, only Our word for a thing, when We intend it, is that We say: 'Be!', and it is."

Despite this all-embracing power which Allah possesses in creation every thing by intending it, how could one still be skeptical as to the Allah's power in matters regarding resurrection of the dead after their death?

The expression of /kun/ (Be) which is the imperative form of 'to be' is also due to the scarcity of the words and their lack of capacity for better expression, in which case there is no need even for uttering such a word either. His Will is more than adequate for the actualization of everything.

Therefore, how can one doubt as to the issue of resurrection despite the fact that Allah's Will is utterly sufficient to bring everything into existence.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 256
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257

Section 6: To Seek Guidance from the People of the Qur'an

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 41

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَأَجْرُ الآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

41. "And those who migrated in Allah's cause after they had been oppressed, undoubtedly We will give them a good abode in this world, and certainly the reward in the Hereafter is much greater, if they know (this);"

Occasion of Revelation

As for the occasion of the revelation of this verse and the following one, it is quoted that some groups of Muslims like 'Bilal', ''Ammar', 'Sahib' and 'Khab ab' fell under great pressure in Mecca after they embraced Islam, and after the migration of the Prophet (S), they went to Medina for the strengthening of Islam and for propagating their religion to others.

Among them Sahib, who was an elderly man, proposed to the pagans of Mecca to confiscate all of his property in exchange for allowing him to go to Medina, to which they agreed.

The above verse was revealed which reiterated the victory for him and for the ones like him in this world and the next.

The Reward of the Emigrants

In pursuance of the previous verses, which dealt with those who rejected the resurrection as well as the obstinate pagans, this verse deals with the true Emigrants, so as to make the situation of the two groups clear as compared to each other.

At first, He proclaims that those who went on exodus after being oppressed for the sake of Allah undoubtedly will be given a decent abode in this world, for they gave up everything they had with utmost sincerity for the propagation of Islam.

The verse says:

"And those who migrated in Allah's cause after they had been oppressed, undoubtedly We will give them a good abode in this world…"

This reward is given to them for this world; and if they know, they shall have greater rewards for the world to come.

The verse continues saying:

"…and certainly the reward in the Hereafter is much greater, if they know (this);"

At the end, migration, perseverance and trust are the codes of conduct for victory over the enemies, and one must rely on his own resistance, trust, and faith whenever confronting the oppressors and he should not rely on the powers and forces of external foreign sources.

Hence, those who give up their belongings and homeland and go on exodus while preserving their own lives for the propagation of religion, will benefit most.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 42

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَي رَبِّـهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

42. "Those who endured patiently and on their Lord did they rely."

The Qur'an describes these true, steadfast emigrants who are truly faithful with perseverance by two attributes in this noble verse, saying:

"Those who endured patiently and on their Lord did they rely."

Some Traditions

1. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Patience is of two categories: Patience upon calamities, which is good and beautiful; and the best of the two is the patience in avoiding of the prohibitions." [1]

2. The Prophet said:

"Patience is the best mount. Allah has not provided any servant with sustenance better and wider than patience." [2]

3. Ali (as) said:

"Patience is the best repeller of affliction."[3]

4. Also, Ali (as) said:

"O' people! Be patient, because he who has not patience has not religion."[4]

5. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who loves to be the most virtuous of the people, then he must rely on Allah." [5]

6. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The best of the servants with Allah is the one who mostly relies on Him and obeys Him." [6]

7. Imam Rida (as) was asked about the limit of reliance. He said:

"It is that you do not fear any one other than Allah."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 43

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُم لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

43. "And We did not send before you except men unto whom We revealed; So ask the people of 'Thikr' (the Qur'an) if you do not know,"

At this time, addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an asserts that Allah did not send anyone before him except those individuals from mankind whose hearts were illuminated with the light of Divine revelation. That is, they were just like him in divine messengership benefiting from revelation and in the capacity of being His own envoys.

This matter was raised in answer to the pagans of Mecca who rejected the prophetic mission of man. Allah points out that the prophet must be of the people's own equals so that they can see him and talk to him and, finally, understand his words. Therefore, in such a case, it is not appropriate that instead of a man, an angel be appointed as a messenger to carry out the prophetic mission.

The verse says:

"And We did not send before you except men unto whom We revealed; So ask the people of 'Thikr' (the Qur'an) if you do not know,"

In other words, He recounts in this verse: We did not send before you, O' Mohammad (S), anyone to any nation but the cases confirmed and equipped

with Our revelation, to which your people raise objections as to why it is that their prophet is not an angel who is from among the human kind.

Declare that they seek the truth out by referring to the Ahl-uth-Thikr, the knowledgeable people and the scientists of each nation, if they are unable to put questions concerning issues to all prophets who belong to the human kind.

According to Ibn Abbas, the object of 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' are the Christian and Jewish scholars in this context; that is: were they doubtful as to the truth of the matter, they would better refer to the people of Turat, and the nation of the Bible for the clarification of the issues.

These words are addressed to the pagans, for the news which the Jews and the Christians provided them with, out of their Books, were acceptable to them while rejecting the words of the Prophet (S), owing to their intensive hostility. Some, however, claim that 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' signifies the 'followers of the Qur'an,' because /thikr/ means 'the Qur'an'.

Jabir-Ibn-i-Yazid and Muhammad Ibn-i-Muslim, quoting Imam-Mohammad-i-Baqir (as) state that he has proclaimed:

"We are 'Ahl-uth-Thikr'."[7]

To sum up, this noble verse deals with a general universal principle which is acceptable by human reason, and it is referring of whatever one is not knowledgeable about to the experts in that field.

That is, for whatever you do not know, you may ask the knowledgeable ones. Certainly, the best example in religious issues is the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet (S) who can provide the point of reference.

There are numerous quotations as to the validity of this point in the Shi'ite as well as the Sunni literature which have been dealt with extensively in the third volume of Mulhaqat-i-'Ihq aq-ul-Haqq p.p. 482, onwards.

Tabari, Ibn-i-Kathir, and ' Allūsi have also pointed out that 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' is the same and identical with 'Ahl-ul-Bayt' in their commentaries beneath this verse. We also have it that H afiz Muhammad Ibn-i-Mu'min-i-ShiRazi has mentioned the same matter in 'Mustakhraj' when discussing the 'position' of the 'Ahl-ul-Bayt'.

Again, in vol. 23 of Bihar, pages 172 onwards, there have been quoted about 60 quotations concerning this issue, through some of which the Immaculate Imams have confirmed that:

"Swearing by Allah, it is we who are the 'Ahl-uth-Thikr', the responsible, (to whom the people must put their questions)."

Therefore, one must turn to the specialists in the Qur'anic sciences, namely, the Ahl-ul-Bayt for ones inquiry regarding his religious and ideological questions, who are experts in the field of the Qur'anic knowledge and not at random turn to whoever has got a superficial knowledge of Islam.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 44

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

44. "(We sent the prophets before you) with clear proofs (miracles) and (celestial) Books and We sent down to you the 'Thikr' (the Reminder,

Qur'an) that you may make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, that they may reflect."

The Arabic term /bayyin at/ signifies clear evidences of the prophetic mission and miracles; and the word /zubur/ is the plural form of /zabūr/ which means 'Celestial Book'. The verse probably refers to two kinds of revelation, one of which is the Qur'an, which belongs to all the people.

The other one is aimed at the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an, and which is particular and exclusive to the Prophet (S). It signifies that We sent you the 'Thikr', so as you explain the interpretation and commentary of the Qur'an which has been descended for the people.

Therefore, the prophets have had both miracles and Divine Book, so that the people do not get mixed up between right and wrong.

The verse says:

"(We sent the prophets before you) with clear proofs (miracles) and (celestial) Books…"

Therefore, Allah implies in the Qur'an that: If you are unaware, ask those who are knowledgeable about the clear evidences and the Books of the previous prophets.

It is in this way that the question of specialization has been recognized as having a sound basis in the Holy Qur'an. Furthermore, it has been the only way of acceptance or rejection in all fields, on the basis of which, all Muslims are required to have access to knowledgeable and learned people in all fields who are honest at all times and places for their reference.

Turning to the Prophet (S) later, He declares that We thus revealed to you this 'Thikr' (the Qur'an) so that you explain to them what is descended to the people, so that they meditate upon these verses and on their duties which are incumbent upon them.

The verse says:

"…and We sent down to you the 'Thikr' (the Reminder, Qur'an) that you may make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, that they may reflect."

In fact, your call and your mission are not in principle a novelty or an unprecedented matter. It is just in the same manner which We revealed the Books to the previous prophets so as to make the people acquainted with their duties towards Allah, their own selves, and the other people.

Just in the same way We also revealed this Qur'an to you so that you engage in the explanation of its didactic lessons, thus awakening mankind to meditate.

Therefore, it is the duty of the Prophet (S) to explain the Qur'an and it is the duty of the people to accept those explanations on the basis of their sound thinking, for the Qur'an is 'Thikr', 'reminder' and, at the same time, it is a way of mentioning and calling man's attention, while distancing him from the core of negligence, oblivion and erroneous behavior.

Surah An-Nahl - Verses 45 - 47

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّـئَاتِ أَن يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ
أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَي تَخَوُّفٍ فإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

45. "Do then those who devise evil (plots) feel secure (of this) that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up, or that the wrath will not come upon them from whence they do not perceive?"

46. "Or that He may not seize them during their movement, so that they shall not frustrate (Allah's wrath)."

47. "Or that He will not seize them in the state of fear, for verily your Lord is certainly Compassionate, Merciful."

Allah, the Almighty, in these noble verses, has mentioned four kinds of punishment for the conspirators against the religion:

Punishment on the earth:

"Allah will cause the earth to swallow them up."

Celestial punishment:

"The wrath will come upon them"

Sudden punishment:

"He may seize them during their movement."

Spiritual punishment:

"He will seize them in the state of fear."

He, the Mighty, has pointed out the above punishments so as to make the conspirators against religion aware that certainly their tricks become null and void when confronted the Divine power.

Different Kinds of Punishment for Various Sins

The Qur'an deals with the demonstrative materials and emotional questions, intermingling them in such a way that they make the utmost impact on the audience.

The previous verses dealt with a logical discussion regarding the issues of the prophetic mission and resurrection in connection with the pagans. In here, it concerns itself with the threatening of the oppressors and the tyrants as well as the obstinate sinners, and rather scares them with the different types of the Divine punishments.

At first, it raises the question whether those conspirators who tried to put out the light of the truth with their evil plans feel safe and secure from Allah's making the earth swallow them.

The verse says:

"Do then those who devise evil (plots) feel secure (of this) that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up…"

Is it a remote possibility that a terrible earthquake strikes the earth, splitting the crust of the earth, opening it up and swallowing them all with all their belongings, as was the case repeatedly with the previous nations?

Then, it adds: Or when they are in a negligent mood, the Divine punishment overtakes them from whence they never perceive?

The verse continues saying:

"…or that the wrath will not come upon them from whence they do not perceive?"

Or, as they struggle for accumulating more wealth and increasing more income, the Divine punishment strikes them hard, while they are unable to escape the consequences of their punishment?

The verse says:

"Or that He may not seize them during their movement, so that they shall not frustrate (Allah's wrath)."

Or else, the Divine punishment does not strike them all of a sudden; it strikes them on a gradual basis and along with consecutive warnings.

The verse says:

"Or that He will not seize them in the state of fear, for verily your Lord is certainly compassionate and Merciful."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 48

أَوَ لَم يَرَوْا إِلَي مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلاَلُهُ عَنِ الْيَـمِينِ وَالشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّداً لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ

48. "Have they not seen all things that Allah has created the shadows of which spread from right and left, prostrating (before Allah) while they are humble?"

The Arabic term /fi'/ refers to the shadow in the afternoon which is reversing; while the term /zill/ refers to any kinds of shadow.

The Qur'anic word /d axir/ signifies 'humble', and it is most probable that the aim in stating 'the right side' and 'the north side'; in the verse it refers to the two sides of the day, namely, morning and evening. Perhaps, because shadow spreads on the earth, the expression of prostration is applied for it, though from the point of creation, all beings are prostrating and humble before Allah.

At any rate, the Qur'an implies in this verse whether those pagans who reject the Oneness of Allah and refute His blessed Prophet (S) do not observe the trees, mountains, shadow-casting objects and buildings which are the created things of Allah and cast their shadows to their right and sometimes to their left-side?

For, at dawn, if man stands facing the 'qiblah' his shadow will be cast in front of him, after dawn, it falls to his right side and, in the late noon, his shadow will be reflected behind him, while at sunset, it falls on his left side.

This is the meaning of the shadows turning to one's right and to the one's left side. This interpretation belongs to Kalbi who remarks that when the Qur'an states that shadows prostrate before Allah, it means that shadows are in obeisance and obey the rules of Allah and their turnings and rotations are not achieved in accordance to their own will.

This verse is like verse 15, Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13 which says:

"And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates willingly or unwillingly, and (so do) their shadows in the mornings and the evenings."

So the Qur'anic phrase /wa hum d axirūn/ signifies that they are mean and humiliated.

The verse says:

"Have they not seen all things that Allah has created the shadows of which spread from right and left, prostrating (before Allah) while they are humble?"

Thus, Allah wants to make us understand that all beings, living and inanimate, are humble before Him because of their needs for their Omnipotent and Wise Creator. That is: because if He tends to be slow in affairs, all 'frames and modes of behavior' will collapse and perish. Therefore, all beings, just like mankind, are prostrating and humble before Him.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 49

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الاَرْضِ مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَالْمَلآئِكَةُ وَهُمْ لاَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

49. "And whatever is in the skies and whatever is in the earth, whether (moving) creatures and angels, prostrate before Allah (only) and they do not pride."

The Arabic term /dabbah/ refers to that living being which moves from a place to another place. This word is used in the cases of 'man', 'animals' and 'jinns'. However, it is not used for 'angels'.

The aim in stating the prostration of all beings, earthly or celestial, is either their genetic humbleness before the laws of existence, or it might be a prostration emanating from their consciousness and understanding, in which case, the latter interpretation is apparently intended, though it is beyond our understanding.

In other words, all beings which are in the skies and all those which are on the earth, prostrate before Allah. The intention in stating /min dabbah/ (whatever moves) is those earthly beings which move or come and go on the surface of the earth.

The angels also prostrate before the magnanimity of Allah and worship Him. The Qur'an mentions the angels apart from other beings so as to glorify their position. Another point to be considered is that the word /dabbah/ is applied to those beings which move and which come and go. However, we must keep in mind that the angels have got wings and can fly as well.

The verse says:

"And whatever is in the skies and whatever is in the earth, whether (moving) creatures and angels, prostrate before Allah (only) and they do not pride."

The Qur'anic sentence /wa hum l a yastakbirūn/ signifies that the angels do never abstain from the worshipping of Allah and they never show an arrogant attitude. This sentence qualifies the angels, for it is the angels who do not show the least arrogance in humbleness and prostration before Allah.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 50

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُم مِّن فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

50. "They fear their Lord (supreme) from above them, and they do what they are commanded."

The angels are utterly subservient towards Allah. Our fear of Allah is because of the sins which we have committed. However, the fear of the angels of Allah has its roots in the magnitude and splendor of Allah.

It is for this reason that the Qur'an says in this verse:

"They fear their Lord (supreme) from above them, and they do what they are commanded."

The reason why the Qur'anic phrase /min fauqihim/ 'from above them' has been used is for two aspects:

One side to this issue is that they fear the punishment of Allah, which, in such cases, is mostly inflicted from above one's head.

Allah is qualified as being superior and being above everything else in power and perfection, and He all-encompasses in Guardianship and in 'Omnipotence' over all celestial and earthly possible beings. Therefore, the above-mentioned interpretation is suitable.

One can, therefore, conclude from this holy verse that there are two signs for the negation of oppression: Fear when confronting responsibilities, and the execution of Allah's commandments without any questioning.

Therefore, if all beings, like angels, are humble and God-fearing, and prostrate before Allah, why should we human beings not prostrate before Him and go on oppressing others?

Notes

1. Usūl-i-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 148
2. Musakkin-ul-Fu'ad, pp. 47, 48 and 50
3. Ghurar-ul-Hikam
4. Ghurar-ul-Hikam
5. Mishkat-ul-'Anwar, p. 50
6. Majmū'ah Warram, vol. 3, p. 288
7. Tafsir-i-Burhan

Section 7: Polytheism Prohibited

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 51

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لاَ تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ

51. "And Allah has said: 'Do not take two gods. Verily, He is only One God; hence, fear Me (and Me alone)."

The objective in declaring here that you must not designate for yourselves two gods is not the fact that you must and you are allowed to designate three gods. On the other hand, firstly, the total and the least negation imply the utmost negation in it as well.

Secondly, the objective of this verse, perhaps is the ideas of those pagans who used to say: We have got One God Who is the Creator, and one who is administrator, and we must direct our worshipping towards the later one. [1]

As for the query of the pagans who raised this issue in some previous verses that: if Allah so wanted, we would not become pagans, this verse states that Allah has dissuaded you from paganism, hence, how can He have intended you to become pagans? Therefore, Allah has ordained you not to designate two gods for yourselves.

The verse says:

"And Allah has said: 'Do not take two gods. Verily, He is only One God…"

The unity in the system of creation and the unity governing its laws and procedures are themselves clues as to the unity of Allah. Such being the case, He declares: Fear My punishment only and fear opposition to My commandments and nothing else.

The verse continues saying:

"…hence, fear Me (and Me alone)."

The fact that the Qur'anic word /'iyyaya/, which proceeds, is the proof for its confinements and limitations, which implies only and solely fear opposition to Me and My punishment. Another example of this form is:

"You (alone) do we worship and of you (only) do we seek help." [2]

The great commentator, the Late Tabarsi quotes a delicate sentence from some philosophers under this verse, saying:

"Allah has commanded you not to worship two gods, but you fabricated so many gods for yourself. Your unruly self is one idol, your whims and passions are regarded as other idols, and the world and your material objectives are your other idols. You even prostrate before other human beings; so how can you be a monotheist?!"

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 52

وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصِباً أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ

52. "Unto Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and to Him should obedience be (rendered) constantly. Then are you in awe of other than Allah?"

The Qur'anic term /din/ mentioned in this verse denotes 'worshipping' and 'servitude' which are the requirements of the embracing of Faith and of the school of Truth.

The Arabic word /wasib/ signifies ‘constantly’ and ‘intensively’, as verse 9 of Surah As-Saffat, No. 37 says:

“…and for them is a perpetual chastisement.”

In sharp contrast to those superstitious ideas by which they used to suppose god for every type of beings, Allah is only One for whatever is found in the Heavens and on the earth.

So, religious framework for laws and religious legislations are the sole rights of the One Who possesses the entire process of genesis and creation.

The verse says:

“Unto Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and to Him should obedience be (rendered) constantly…”

Towards the end of this verse, the Qur’an declares that despite the fact that all laws, religion, and obedience belongs to Allah, do you still fear other than Allah and abstain from other than Him?

The verse continues saying:

“…Then are you in awe of other than Allah?”

Can the idols do any harm against you or bestow on you any blessings the opposition of which scares you and you consider their worship as a requirement?

Surah An-Nahl - Verses 53 - 54

وَمَا بِكُم مِّن نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْأَرُونَ

ثُمَّ إِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنكُم بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

53. “And whatever of favour is (bestowed) on you, it is from Allah; then whenever any calamity afflicts upon you, unto Him you cry (for assistance).

54. “Then when He remove the affliction from you, behold! A group of you associate others with their Lord.”

The Arabic term /durr/ refers to that kind of anxiety which results from the absence of blessings, and the Qur’anic term /taj’arūn/ signifies ‘crying’ and ‘appealing’.

The content of this verse has also been repeated in some other verses of the Qur’an as is the case in verse 67 of Surah ‘Isra’ which proclaims:

“And when affliction touches you in the sea, away will go those on whom you call except Him; but as He delivers you to the land, you turn away (from Him), and man is very ungrateful.”

However, once He embarks you safely, you will turn away from Him and you start betraying His favours and blessings.

The verse says:

“And whatever of favour is (bestowed) on you, it is from Allah; then whenever any calamity afflicts upon you, unto Him you cry (for assistance).

Certainly, hearing your call for help, Allah answers your call and solves your difficulties. Afterwards, as He removed your troubles and saved you from your losses, some of you designate associates and counterparts for Him and turn to the idols.

The verse says:

"Then when He remove the affliction from you, behold! A group of you associate others with their Lord."

In fact, the Holy Qur'an alludes to this minute point that monotheism, as an inherent trait, is embedded in everybody's nature, but in normal circumstances, it is obscured by one's negligence, arrogance ignorance, fanaticism and superstition.

Anyway, do not regard Allah's blessings as the consequences of your own struggle, education and your own administrative ability or as a result of your luck or chances. By contrast, regard whatever of blessings given to you, even the most insignificant ones in your eyes, as what Allah has given you.

The blissful Prophet (S) remarks:

"He who regards the blessings of Allah as only food and clothing, has failed both in performing his duties, and he has approached Allah's punishment." [3]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 55

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

55. "So that they may show ingratitude for whatever (of blessings and removing hardships) We have given them; then enjoy yourselves for soon will you know."

A glance at previous verses up to this moment depicts the manner of the Divine invitation and the Divine provision for education!

He is the sole and only Allah:

"…verily He is only One God…" [4]

"Unto Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth…" [5]

He possesses everything:

"Unto Him belongs whatever is."

It is He Who provides all with instruction:

"To Him should obedience be…". [6]

He is benevolent, providing all with blessings:

"And whatever of favour is (bestowed) on you, it is from Allah…" [7]

He answers all calls:

"…then whenever any calamity afflicts upon you, unto Him you cry for assistance." [8]

Do you yet seek other people's assistance?

The end-result of paganism leads to blasphemy, and disregarding of His blessings brings the Divine chastisement.

Therefore, there, after naming the above logical reasoning and making the facts transparent, He implies with a threatening tone: Let them spare the blessings which We have given them, and let them enjoy worldly materials temporarily; they will soon find out the conclusive results of their performance.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 56

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِمَا لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيباً مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ تَاللَّهِ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ

56. "And they assign a share out of that which We have provided them with, for what they do not know. By Allah, you will certainly be questioned for that which you used to forge."

Following the former well-justified discussions concerning the rejection of paganism and worshipping of the idols, the Qur'an points to the three parts of the innovations and evil habits of the pagans, implying that they appropriate a certain portion of what Allah has allocated to them for the idols which provide no advantages or losses for them.

The verse says:

"And they assign a share out of that which We have provided them with, for what they do not know…"

This share consisted of a number of camels and other four-footed animals and part of it comprised of agricultural products which have been alluded to in the Surah Al-An'am, verse 136. they were regarded by the pagans as the proper share of the idols and which were dispensed within their path.

Then, later, the Qur'an, swearing to Allah, announces that in the Court of Justice of the Resurrection Day, they all will be interrogated about in connection with these lies, slanders, and accusations or perjuries.

The verse says:

"…By Allah, you will certainly be questioned for that which you used to forge."

Therefore, their vicious and evil acts contains both the losses which they incur in this world, for parts of their capitals are perished in this way, and the punishment which they will meet in the Hereafter.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 57

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَلَهُم مَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

57. "And they ascribe daughters to Allah, glory be to Him; and for themselves (they ascribe sons) what they desire."

The second evil innovation of the pagans which they entertained in their imagination was the assigning of daughters to Allah. He is clear of everything and of having children, and Allah is pure of all material things.

However, they ascribe for themselves whatever they desire.

The verse says:

"And they ascribe daughters to Allah, glory be to Him; and for themselves (they ascribe sons) what they desire."

That is, they were never ready to ascribe those daughters whom they ascribed to God for themselves, too. In principle, having daughters was regarded as a kind of scandal, and a shame in their culture.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 58

وإِذَا بُشِّـرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالأُنثَي ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدّاً وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

58. "And when one of them is given the news of having a daughter his face becomes black while he is wroth inwardly."

This verse refers to the third hideous evil habit of the pagans for the sake of complementing the above discussion. It implies that when one of them is informed of the good tidings of having been provided a daughter by Allah,

he will be so infuriated with anger that his face changes altogether and becomes blackened while being full of wrath.

The noble verse says:

"And when one of them is given the news of having a daughter his face becomes black while he is wroth inwardly."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 59

يَتَوَارَي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِن سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَي هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلاَ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

59. "He hides him from the people for the evil of the news which has been given to him, (asking himself): shall he keep her with disgrace or bury her (alive) in the dust? Beware! (How) evil is what they judge!"

It is true that the birth of a child is considered as a good tiding, but superstitions regard such good tidings as disgrace and humiliation. This noble verse declares that all does not end to this and he, in order to save himself from such scandal which, to his incorrect belief, has overtaken him, he escapes from his people, going into hiding for this evil announcement made to him.

The verse says:

"He hides him from the people for the evil of the news which has been given to him…"

He goes on immersed in this thought constantly as to whether he should take upon himself the scandal of this disgrace by keeping the daughter or bury her alive under the earth.

The verse says:

"…(asking himself): shall he! keep her with disgrace or bury her (alive) in the dust?…"

Condemning this tyrannical and inhumane verdict in an evermore-explicit manner, the Holy Qur'an declares as to what a bad and an evil judgment they pass on such matters.

The verse continues saying:

"…Beware! (How) evil is what they judge!"

Certainly, they do pass a bad judgment on the matter, for they used to bury alive girls while they had the right to stay alive just in the same way as the boys had, and perhaps a girl might have been better than a boy.

Ibn-i-Abb as has quoted as saying that if Allah wanted to consider the wishes of those people in the process of creation, no girls would be born, because no one desired to have a daughter; and if all children were born as sons, the human generation would be exterminated.

The Role of Islam in the Revival of the Position of Women

The humiliation and the damaging of the personality of women were not confined to the Ignorant Arabs of that time, women had an insignificant position among some other nations, too, any perhaps even among the most civilized nations of that time and, usually, a woman was regarded as a commodity and not as a human being.

However, the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance did their utmost in denouncing and in humiliating women in some more heinous and terrible forms.

Nevertheless, since the dawn of Islam, this superstition was fought out hard in all its dimensions. The Prophet of Islam himself (S) showed such a high esteem for his daughter, Fatimah Zahra (as), the Islamic Lady (as), that the people wondered.

He used to kiss her hands despite his high position, and he would visit her immediately upon the return from his trips, and the first person to visit was his daughter, Fatimah.

In a tradition from the Prophet (S) we read that he says:

"What a nice child a person's daughter is! She is affectionate and of great help; she is one's companion and she is clean while cleaning at the same time!"

In fact, such respect shown towards the personality of women has served as a cause for their liberation in the society and has put an end to the era of servitude and slavery of women.

However, it is most unfortunate that in some Islamic societies, there are still those forms of 'ignorant' thought prevalent, and there are still a good number of families who rejoice in having sons born to them and are disturbed by having daughters.

Even in the case of the Western Societies which imagine that they have high regards for the personality of women, we notice in practice that women are so greatly humiliated and are treated as puppets or as a means for extinguishing the fire of passion of men and / or as an instrument for the dissemination of information with regard to a certain merchandise.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 60

لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاَخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الاَعْلَي وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

60. "For those who do not believe in the hereafter, is an evil attribute, and Allah's is the sublime attributes, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Those who do not believe in the Hereafter and consider Allah as having children possess an evil and nasty attribute, which consist of shamefulness and being sorrowful. But, there are outstanding qualities for Allah such as domination and might.

Some commentators suggest that this means that they are having defective traits, like: ignorance, blasphemy, being misled, contingency, weakness, powerlessness, needing sons and murdering of daughters; and there are certain qualifications of Lordship for Allah (s.w.t.) such as: having no need for companionship, spouse, children, and having the attributes of Lordship, authenticity and monotheistic nature.

Question: In this holy verse, He declares:

"…Allah's is the sublime attributes,"

Elsewhere He says:

"…do not coin any similitude for Allah".[9]

How are contradictions among them made possible?

Answer: The aim in declaring /'am al/ is using 'similes'. That is, do not exemplify Allah for something else; and the purpose of /maal-ul-'A'la/ is

the qualification of /'A'la/ 'the highest' or the 'most elevated' and which signifies being essential in essence and not accidental; being Eternal, All-powerful, Omniscient, Alive, Unique etc.

Some commentators claim that the objective of /maal-ul-'A'la/ is examples which are used correctly; and the objective of the latter phrase is 'those examples which are incorrectly employed.'

The verse says:

"For those who do not believe in the hereafter, is an evil attribute, and Allah's is the sublime attributes…"

And, the last sentence of the verse means that Omnipotent Allah is He out of Whose domain, nothing exists, and He is the Wise One Who places everything in its proper place according to His Wisdom.

The verse says:

"…and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

One can infer from this verse that one must not attribute low traits to Allah, for He has criticized of the pagans who attributed to Him what they did not like for themselves. Once man abhors being attributed an evil thing, how is it that he seeks to attribute that hideous thing or the like of it to Allah?

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan
2. Surah Al-Fatihah, No. 1, verse 5
3. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3
4. The current Surah, verse 51
5. The current Surah, verse 52
6. Ibid
7. The current Surah, verse 53
8. Ibid
9. The current Surah, verse 74

Section 8: Qur'an, the Guidance and the Mercy

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 61

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِم مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَلَـكِن يُؤَخِّـرُهُمْ إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمّي
فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لاَيَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلاَ يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

61. "And if Allah were to take people to task for their inequity, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving being, but He respites them until an appointed time; so, when their term comes, they can not delay (it) an hour nor (yet) can they advance (it)."

The general rule of Allah is the postponement of the punishment, but it sometimes happens that He teaches the oppressors a lesson so as to provide instruction for others such as whatever happened to the nation of Lot, Noah, and Thamūd.

This respite provided by Allah is for the sake of repentance and compensation for one's sins and is based on His favour. Hence, do not become arrogant because of it.

Anyway, after discussing about the terrible crimes of the Arab pagans through previous verses in connection with the evil innovations they committed and the crime of burying alive of their own daughters, some may raise this question as to why is it that Allah does not immediately punish the culprit subjects with all these oppressions, and abhor-able crimes?

This very verse in question seeks to provide an answer to this question implying: If Allah were to punish people for the oppressive offences which they commit, no moving object will survive throughout the earth.

The verse says:

"And if Allah were to take people to task for their inequity, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving being…"

The Arabic term /dabbah/ refers to whatever moving and living animal there is. It may, here, allude to 'human beings' metaphorically by procuring the symmetrical dimensions to it which in this case is /'al a zulmihim/ (for their inequity). That is, were Allah to question human beings with regard to their tyranny, there would remain no mankind throughout the earth.

This possibility also exists that by this, all moving objects is meant, for, we know that such beings are generally created for the sake of human beings, as the Qur'an says:

"It is He Who has created for you all that is in the earth."[1]

Once mankind is perished altogether, the rationale for the existence of other living objects on the earth will also be nonexistent, and their entire generation will be exterminated.

This question may be raised in here that if we look closely at the generalization and at the comprehensiveness of the significance of the verse, the result will be that no one exists on the earth except those who are oppressors and everybody has had his share of committing cruelties.

So if the punishment is to be administered rapidly, no one will be excluded. Nevertheless, we know that not only the prophets and the Imams who are immaculate and thus not subjected to such punishments, for this rule does not apply to them, but also there are certain devout people and

people of true faith whose good deeds surely excel as compared to their petty sins, thus they do certainly not fall into this category of fitting for the extermination as a way of being punished.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that the verse provides a typical verdict which is not to be regarded as a universal or general verdict.

The proof for such an exception is provided in verse 32 of Surah Fatir, No. 35 which declares:

"Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants; but of them is he who makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's permission; this is the great excellence."

According to this verse, the people are divided into 3 groups: The oppressive group, the moderate group, who have committed light sins, and the group who are counted good people; that is, those who are categorized as pioneers of whatever is good and acceptable.

Certainly, out of these three groups only the first one is subject to the rule expressed in the verse under discussion and neither the second nor the third ones can be categorized and included. And, since the first group usually constitutes the majority of the people of the societies, making mention of such a generalization is not surprising at all.

Then the Qur'an makes mention of this point that Allah provides all oppressors with a respite for a certain amount of time until their nominal death (certain limited time), thus delaying their death time.

However, as their death approaches, no advancing nor delaying for the least time will occur. By contrast, their death will take place at that exact date which will neither come in advance nor in retardation.

The verse says:

"…but He respites them until an appointed time; so, when their term comes, they can not delay (it) an hour nor (yet) can they advance (it)."

As for the significance of the phrase: /'ajalin musamm a/ (an appointed time), the commentators have expressed various ideas.

However, with regard to other verses of the Qur'an, including verse 2 of the Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6 and verse 34 of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7 it seems that the purpose is to be the arrival of death itself.

That is, Allah respites people until the end of their lifetime in order to complete the argument, so that haply the oppressors try to reform themselves, reconstructing their life experiences, and thus returning to Allah, the truth and justice.

When this respite expires, the order as to their death will be issued, and just from that very moment their punishments and retributions start.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 62

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَتَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَى لاَ جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُم مُفْرَطُونَ

62. "And they assign unto Allah what they (themselves) dislike and their tongues assert the falsehood that the better (portion) will be theirs. Inevitably the Fire is theirs and they will be the foremost (to it)."

The Qur'an condemns once again the ugly innovations and superstitions which the Ignorant Arabs entertained concerning the hatred towards their daughters with a novel expression. It also condemns their belief saying that the angels are daughters of Allah.

The verse says:

"And they assign unto Allah what they (themselves) dislike…"

This is an astonishing contradiction. If the angels are daughters of Allah, then it becomes obvious that girls are 'good things', why then are you unhappy for having daughters born to your own families? In case it is a bad thing to have daughters, then why do you consider it for Allah?

Nevertheless, they falsely claim that the ultimate good result and good reward belongs to them. How can they expect such a reward and with what good performance? Do they expect it by burying alive their innocent daughters who are defenseless, or by perjury with regard to the holy presence of Allah? By which deeds do they expect it?

The verse says:

"…and their tongues assert the falsehood that the better (portion) will be theirs. Inevitably the Fire is theirs and they will be the foremost (to it)."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 63

تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَي أُمَمٍ مِّـن قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

63. "By Allah, We verily sent (messengers) unto the nations before you, but the Satan made their (abominable) acts fair-seeming to them. Then he (the Satan) is their guardian today, and they will have a painful punishment."

The objective of this holy verse is to console the Prophet of Islam (S) as not to be worried for the sake of the people's remaining heedless and being negligent, since all prophets used to confront such individuals.

In view of the fact that those people who may raise this question after listening to the stories of the pre-Islamic Arabs how one can be so cruel as to bury alive his own daughter and how can such a thing be practical, the Qur'an apparently seems to be providing an answer to the question, saying:

"By Allah, We verily sent (messengers) unto the nations before you, but the Satan made their (abominable) acts fair-seeming to them…"

Certainly, the Satan is so advert in his own whimsical acts that he makes the worst and the most abominable acts as nice that even one imagines such acts as a source of pride for himself, just in the same way that the 'pre-Islamic Arab' was proud of burying alive his own daughter(s) and praised that as protecting his chastity and saving the prestige of his own tribe. He would proudly say:

"I buried my daughter with my own hands so as not to let the enemy capture her in a battle later."

While the most shameful behavior is made possible under the guise of the most favored masks owing to the Satan's temptations, the rest of the matter is clearly evident. We nowadays witness such seemingly good-looking acts in many cases of theft, robberies, and crimes which are provided with proper justifications and under enticing pretexts.

Then the Qur'an adds that the present-day pagans follow the same deviant programs of the previous nations to whom the Satan presented their acts as nice, and the present-day Satan is their guardian, and they are being inspired by him.

The verse says:

"…Then he (the Satan) is their guardian today…"

It is for this very reason that the painful Divine punishment is awaiting them.

"…and they will have a painful punishment."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 64

وَمَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلاَّ لِتُبَيِّـنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

64. "And We have not sent down unto you the Book (the Qur'an), except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ; and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."

This verse explains the objective of the prophetic mission of the messengers of Allah, so as to clarify that if nations and tribes put aside their passions and whims and personal tastes, and take recourse to the prophets, there will not be any of such superstitions, disagreements, and contradictory acts left.

He says to the Prophet (S) that We have not revealed to you the Qur'an except that you make transparent to them the issues about which they disagree. And this Book is a source of guidance and mercy for those who embrace the Faith.

The verse says:

"And We have not sent down unto you the Book (the Qur'an), except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ; and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."

And it also polishes all Satanical temptations from their heart as well as the enticing layers of one's despotic soul.

It also derives away the mischievous curtains from mixing up the facts and, at the same time, reveals and exposes the superstitions and crimes which are covered under the enticing guise. It removes all disagreements which have their roots in the passions and low desires and puts an end to all cruelties and oppressions. It sheds the light of guidance and mercy all over.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 65

وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَآ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

65. "And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and therewith given life to the earth after its death. Verily, in that is a sign for a people who listen (to the words of truth whole-heartedly)."

The previous verse dealt with the revelation of the ‘Book’, which serves as a source of enlivening of the hearts. In the current verse, the process of descending of rain is being discussed which provides life for the earth.

Therefore, He returns once again to the issue of the explanation of the various blessings and the favors which serve both as an emphasis concerning the issue of monotheism and cognition of Allah, and alludes to the issue of resurrection in that passing. Moreover, by stressing these graces, He incites the sense of gratitude of the servants, thus enabling them to approach Allah more and more.

At first, it says:

“And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and therewith given life to the earth after its death…”

There are clear signs for those who lend their ears as to the magnanimity of Allah while furnishing clues for all regarding His power and splendor.

There are also justifications provided for the coming of the resurrection day while exhibiting one of the numerous blessings of Allah. Nevertheless, the sinful man has been so deafened and become out of touch with realities that he can neither hear nor understand.

The verse continues saying:

“…Verily, in that is a sign for a people who listen (to the words of truth whole-heartedly).”

But as for those who do not hearken by their hearts, they are the ones who relate these issues to nature, and we have proclaimed repeatedly that such people are overtaken by blasphemy, paganism, dissidence, and sinfulness, and their rational souls are not moralized and they are the examples of the people who: “do not understand,” “do not see”, “do not listen”, and “do not know”.

As for those who have managed to elevate their souls by the light of faith and moral values, the examples of the following hold true in their cases: to be said: “they understand”, “they listen”, “they see”, and “they know”.

The first category is addressed as:

“They are a cattle, rather they are more astray…”[2]

For they had the power to discriminate the vices from the virtues though they did not implement their sense of discrimination. They are those who took no notice of Allah, the Resurrection Day, and the ultimate aim of their existence, forsaking them for the worldly, matters.

The second category comprises of the examples of: Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 19 which signifies that only the sage and men of wisdom are considerate with regard to this.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 29
2. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 179

Section 9: Guidance from the Bounties of Allah for Man

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 66

وإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُم مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِن بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَّبَناً خَالِصاً سَآئِغاً لِلشَّارِبِينَ

66. "And verily there is a lesson laid out for you in the cattle; We give you to drink of what is in their bellies from between the digested food and the blood, pure milk, palatable for the drinkers."

The Almighty does not only let down water from the clouds which is the source of life, but He also extracts milk which is the source of life out of the insides of the animals as well. The Arabic term /far/ means digested food within the stomach, and the term /'ibrat/ refers to that which enables one to pass through the stage of ignorance towards cognition.

Although the Arabic term /'An'am/ is plural, yet the pronoun in the word /butūnihi/ is singular. For, the purpose is every single one of the four-footed animals and not all of them.

Milk is a complete food serving which functions both as water and food while having all nutritional values, thus meeting all bodily needs.

In quotations, we read that milk enhances one's wisdom, purifies one's mind, enlightens one's eyes, reinforces one's heart, strengthens one's back and diminishes one's oblivion.

The four-footed animals are not only the sources of provision for our needs, but also they can serve us as a means for our spiritual development and the growth in our faith.

Can the Lord not bring out and reassemble man out of the earth in the resurrection day, He Who extracts milk out of grass? The Almighty, Who provides us with pure milk from between the digested food and blood of animals, will He not be able to differentiate good deeds from evil ones?

The conversion of grass into milk requires a purification system, disinfecting process, the elimination of detrimental substances, some sweetening processing unites, heating systems, lubricating materials, coloration techniques, and installing of piping systems within the bodies of animals.

How then is it feasible that an oil engineer is required for the refining of oil while refining of milk does not require a creator?

The verse says:

"And verily there is a lesson laid out for you in the cattle…"

Refined and purified human beings are the ones who go through different ups and downs of the stages of life, political issues and ideologies as well as various friends and yet are not affected by them or by their motives.

The verse continues saying:

"…We give you to drink of what is in their bellies from between the digested food and the blood…"

The prime condition for a drink to be agreeable to the taste, is its purification. It is certainly the case with drinkable waters.

The verse says:

"…pure milk, palatable for the drinkers."

Being agreeable to the taste must be confirmed by all consumers, and not only human beings. Therefore, we note that the verse has not mentioned 'palatable for you', but it has remarked:

"palatable for the drinkers."

In our civilized contemporary world, it is said and heard that some civilized countries dispatch all those materials, the expiry date of which has been passed, to be consumed by displaced people i.e. the refugees etc.

Consumption of milk by man reveals the fact that He Who has created the animal and has provided milk within its bodily built-up, is the One Who has created us and Who has been aware of our needs.

Hadrat-i-Ali (as), addressing the collector of the religious dues, 'Zakat', in the 25th letter of Nahj-ul-Balaqah, declares:

When you are being sent for the collection of 'Zakat', you must observe certain principles, among which is leaving part of the milk of the animal in its breast so as its offspring might not be left without a proper amount of nourishment.

Do not separate the animal from its offspring; let the tired animals relax for a while along side the way, and finally, do not stop them from grazing and drinking water on the whole.

Beating animals, milking cattle with long nails, exploitation and requiring over-working by animals, and every other kind of oppression towards animals is forbidden.

We understand from the Qur'an that Hadrat-i-Sulayman was compassionate towards animals in spite of all his glory and despite the fact that he had dominated all mankind and the 'Jinns' (fairies), he used to touch their neck and feet with his blessed hands.

It says:

"…so he began to slash their legs and necks."[1]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 67

وَمِن ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالاَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَراً وَرِزْقاً حَسَناً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

67. "And of the fruits of the palm and the vines, you get out therefrom (drinks of) intoxication and (also) goodly sustenance. Verily there is a sign in that for a people who understand."

The Arabic term /sukr/ signifies 'losing one's mind' and the word /sakar/ refers to its origin.

In the past two verses, the issues in question were water and milk both of which are natural and direct drinks. This verse deals with those drinks which are obtained by extraction.

Once Allah Himself is in action, there is always grace and blessings involved, namely, rainwater and pure milk. But, once man is involved, one finds that at times, provisions are good and at times the issue involved is intoxicating drinks which are the source of devastation and corruption.

Therefore, following the discussion of the animals and their milk, this noble verse refers to a part of the merits of plants, implying that Allah provided you with a kind of blessed nutrition for you out of the fruits of palm-trees and vines which you sometimes turn into detrimental forms and use it in the form of intoxicating substances and liquids, and sometimes use it in their tidy and clean forms. There is an evident clue in it for those who ponder.

The verse says:

"And of the fruits of the palm and the vines, you get out therefrom (drinks of) intoxication and (also) goodly sustenance. Verily there is a sign in that for a people who understand."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 68

وَأَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتاً وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ

68. "And your Lord revealed to the Bee (an instinctive revelation) to build cells in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build."

The Arabic term /wahy/ signifies allusion and rapid and secret transfer that besides the Divine revelation to the prophets, includes both instincts, like this verse, and the divine inspiration, like Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 7 which says:

"And We revealed to Moses' mother…"

It also includes satanical temptations, as in the verse which says:

"…and verily the Satans inspire unto their friends…"[2]

The Qur'anic tune alters amazingly in this verse. While continuing previous discussions regarding the various Divine blessings and the statement of the secrets of creation, the Qur'an switches the discussion to 'bees' and later to the issue of 'honey' in the final analysis. However, it is named as /wahy/ (revelation) which implies a form of Divine mission and a form of 'mysterious revelation'.

At first, it says:

"And your Lord revealed to the Bee (an instinctive revelation) to build cells in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build."

The Qur'anic term /wahy/ here denotes that same instinctive command and motives and that unconscious revelation which Allah has created in different animals and living objects.

The first mission of the bees, in this verse, is concerned with building hives. The reason for this is probably the fact that having a proper residence is the first condition for living, following which other activities are being made possible.

Incidentally, according to Tafsir-i-'Atyab-ul-Bayan, there are explicit allusions in the Qur'an as to the fact that all beings, including the inanimate objects, plants and animals have got a certain understanding of His Divinity, the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) and the mastership 'Wilayat' of the immaculate and infallible Imams such as:

"The seven heavens and the earth and every being therein celebrate His glory…"[3]

and like the verse which says:

"…O mountains sing praises with him, and the birds…"[4]

and so on and so forth. We have it in certain Islamic narrations that 'Wilayat' of the Imams has been offered to the mountains, waters, trees, and animals.

There is sequential news as to the fact that numerous animals have petitioned their grievances with them. Therefore, it is not astounding that the 'bees' receive revelations and be commissioned for completing certain missions.

Moreover, it is astonishing that the houses of the bees, that is: 'beehives', are built in hexagonal form on top of each other without having any angels, which case has astonished all architectural engineers despite being set upon lofty mountainous regions and high-altitude trees, high places and roofs.

Certainly, this struggle by bees and the movement of animals for the selection of the houses, especially of bees, is based on their instinct embedded in their nature by Allah.

Incidentally, the best kind of honey is the one that is made by bees in the mountains that they feed on flowers therein and not those which are fed by artificial sugary substances.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 69

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخرجُ مِن بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

69. "Then eat out of all the fruits, and pave the ways of your Lord sincerely. There comes forth out of their bellies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men. Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect."

There are two allusions made by Allah in this verse and in the previous verses to the two sources of vital drinks which are provided by animals: one is milk and the other one is honey. We have seen in the last two holy verses that man makes intoxicating substances or liquids out of fruits, while bees make honey from plants which is healing substance.

In the targeted significant and philosophical Divine system, negligence and idleness is a shunned extremely.

Therefore, wherever in the Qur'an, there is reference made to eating, there is also stated a responsibility alongside that, among which are the following:

"…eat of the good things and do righteousness."[5]

"…eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy."[6]

"…eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah…"[7]

"…eat of its fruit … and do not act extravagantly…"[8]

In this verse, Allah commands the bees to eat, but that kind of eating which is coupled with a goal and a responsibility. Men of Allah are like bees. They shun low lands and select lofty high lands. They follow the Divine path in a humble manner by the help of Divine knowledge. Such people utter what is based on wisdom and spiritual flavors.

The verse says:

"Then eat out of all the fruits, and pave the ways of your Lord sincerely. There comes forth out of their bellies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men. Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect."

Explanations

Animal behavior is all predetermined according to the Divine command, which is instinctively performed by them.

Honey consists of the juice of all fruits.

"Then eat out of all fruits…"

Not only the selection of residence and the food of animals are guided by the Divine Will, but also all their acts are something pre-determined by Him.

"…and pave the ways of your Lord…"

The movement of animals and their direction is done alongside the path which Allah has set for them and it is a humble one.

The miracle of creation: There is a honey-producing factory within the belly of such a small animal, the bee.

"…there comes forth out of their bellies, a drink of varying colours…"

Natural honey is in different colours. (The colours white, yellow, red. Perhaps such differences in colours are based on the differences of colours in flowers.)

There are various healing effects in honey by which many diseases may be cured.

"…wherein is healing for men…"

It goes without saying that honey is not a cure for all diseases. However, it has been mentioned in the form of indeterminate noun, /šifa'un/.

House-building, mummification, and honey-producing alongside toxic-producing functions are being all done by such a small animal, like the bee. This reveals the sign of Allah's Might and Power.

All instructive lessons are only aimed and targeted for those who meditate,

"…Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect."

Otherwise, there are the bulk of individuals who utilize honey throughout their lifetime but are not predisposed to allocate even several minutes to thinking about it.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 70

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنكُم مَن يُرَدُّ إِلَي أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَي لاَ يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

70. "And Allah has created you, then He will cause you to die, and some of you will be kept back unto lowest state of the age, so that after knowing somewhat, they may know nothing. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful."

The Arabic term /'arŏal/ is derived from the word /raŏl/ which means, 'mean' and without any value. The meanest part of one's life is often that period during which weakness and forgetfulness will reach its peak.

The oblivion of the period of senility belongs to the ordinary people, otherwise, men of Allah, such as Hadrat-i-Noah (as) and Hadrat-i-Mahdi (as), who live long for carrying out their missions, will never be entangled with problems of weakness or negligence.

Therefore, by all means, the verse follows the line for proving the existence of the sole Allah, which is done by introducing changes in blessings, matters which are beyond the limits of man's power, and which exhibit the fact that they are determined from another origin.

At first, it says:

"And Allah has created you, then He will cause you to die…"

Both issues are determined by Him: Life and death, so that you may know that it is not you who determine your own life and death. Nor is your life span decided by you. Some die while they are still young, while others die when reaching old age. However, some of you reach the worst and the utmost years of your life which is the extreme senility period.

The end-result of such a long-lasting life is that, after acquiring the full command of all learning, they would know nothing and all their knowledge would be last in oblivion.

The verse says:

"…and some of you will be kept back unto lowest state of the age, so that after knowing somewhat, they may know nothing…"

It is just like the beginning of the life and the onset of childhood during which they knew nothing and they were unaware and oblivious. Certainly, Allah is aware and has all potentialities.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful."

All power is His and He will bestow that power whenever He feels appropriate and He will take back whenever He feels fit.

Notes

1. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 33
2. Surah Al-'An' am, No. 6, verse 12
3. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 44
4. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 10
5. Surah Al-Mu'mineen, No. 23, verse 51
6. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 28
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 172
8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 141

Section 10: The Faithful and the Unfaithful Ones Compared

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 71

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا بِرَادِّي رِزْقِهِمْ عَلَي مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَآءٌ أَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

71. "And Allah has made some of you excel others in the (means of) sustenance. So those who have been made to excel do not give their (means of) sustenance to those whom their right hands possess, so that they may be equal therein. Do they then deny Allah's bounty?"

And Allah has made some of you excel in means of sustenance over others. This blessing is allocated to man by Allah and through one's own effort, either because of his purity of soul, or for testing of others by him being made an example such as the cases of knowledge, health, and security.

However, those who have been made to excel, (owing to their own narrow-sightedness and narrow vision) are not predisposed to part with a portion of their share for the sake of their subjects so as to enable them to be on equal footing with them.

The verse says:

"And Allah has made some of you excel others in the (means of) sustenance. So those who have been made to excel do not give their (means of) sustenance to those whom their right hands possess, so that they may be equal therein…"

One may conclude that Muslims must not feel privileged or at an advantage when facing those who are in an inferior position with respect to them in their families.

Such differences in the amount of incomes have their origin in the abilities and talents of individuals which in turn are also from Allah's gifts. In certain cases, they may be acquired in some aspects, though in other cases they are definitely not acquired.

Therefore, even in a healthy sound environment from the economics point of view, one finds widespread gaps in incomes, which is undeniable. At any rate and despite all this, what lays the main foundations of one's successes is one's own struggle.

People's differences in their means of sustenance is one of the Divine wise programs, for if all people were to enjoy equal benefits, their spiritual peaks of perfection would not be demonstrated. For instance, generosity, perseverance, self-sacrifice, protection, compassion, modesty and the like usually exhibit their significance whenever there are some differences among men.

Certainly, justice does not prevail only when Allah sets up all on an equal footing from the point of view of their abilities and conditions, for if all were to enjoy an equal amount of blessings, the issues of employment and cooperation, which are required for social life, would lose sense.

Nevertheless, individual differences in talents, abilities and incomes should not result in misuse of the potentialities with regard to the social strata.

It is for this reason that He proclaims at the end of the verse that:

"…Do they then deny Allah's bounty?"

Here, He makes an allusion to the fact that such differences in their original natural forms (and not in their artificial and oppressive sense) are also among Allah's blessings which have been brought forth to protect the human society and for the development of their different potentialities.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 72

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ

72. "And Allah has designated wives for you from among your own selves and has designated children and grandchildren for you from your wives and sustained you of clean means. Do they (still) believe in the falsehood and they disbelieve in the bounty of Allah?"

We read in Tafsir-i-Tabari that the Arabic term /hafadah/ refers to the son-in-law, child, grandchild and even the companions and servants, as well as the children who are born to the wife from a different husband. In Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, it is cited that /hafadah/ is the plural form of /h afid/ and means 'rapidity in action' and as those near-of-kin are quicker in assisting the parents, they are called /hafadah/.

Anyway, this verse, which like the above two verses, begins with the term 'Allah' and discusses Allah's blessings, makes allusions to the graces from the humanitarian point of view, the aids, as well as to the social workers and clean means of sustenance. This verse complements the three-fold circle of blessings which are mentioned in these three verses.

That is, it begins with the life and death system, then it explains the 'variety in life style' by referring to the differences in means of sustenance and their abilities. The verse in question, which superintends the reproductive system of mankind, ends with clean means of sustenance.

It says:

"And Allah has designated wives for you from among your own selves…"

He has designated for you such wives who are the sources of both comfort for your soul and body, and the survival of generations.

Therefore, He hastens to add:

"…and has designated children and grandchildren for you from your wives…"

Then the Qur'an says:

"…and sustained you of clean means…"

And at the end of the discussion, the Qur'an declares this as a general conclusion: Do they still call on the idols despite all the splendor and power which they observe and despite all these graces which have been made available to them by Allah? Do they embrace the wrong and believe in it, and neglect the blessings of Allah?

The verse says:

"…Do they (still) believe in the falsehood and they disbelieve in the bounty of Allah?"

What a judgment is it? And what a wrong and an untrue schedule this consists of that man has forgotten about the source of all blessings and has taken to those beings which lack even the least of all effects and which serve as an example of all the 'untruth' in all its dimensions.

Explanations

One's spouse and children are all among the Divine blessings. One's spouse is the source of comfort and one's children are the sources of hope.

Matching between husband and wife is one of the favors of Allah and of the Divine wisdom, and marriage is a deliberate Divine program for man.

"And Allah has designated wives for you from your own selves…"

Allah makes provisions for both one's spiritual needs and one's material needs.

Separation of oneself from matrimonial links, preventing oneself from having children and abstaining oneself from what is allowed by Allah are all the examples of adhering to wrong principles and are signs of ingratitude for Allah's blessings.

To fornicate or to commit adultery despite having wives and having allowed means of sustenance, present cases of disregarding Allah's favours.

Tafsir-i-Safi and Jawami'-ul-Jami' indicate that the objective of 'Allah's favours', mentioned in the verse, is the blissful Prophet (S), the Qur'an, and Islam which the unbelievers used to reject.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 73

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لاَ يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقاً مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

73. "And they worship other than Allah that has no power to provide them, of sustenance, anything from the heavens and the earth and can do nothing."

Following the previous discussions on monotheism, this verse deals with the issue of paganism and, taking a stern and blaming tone, declares that they worship idols other than Allah which do not have at their disposal any means of sustenance in the skies and on the earth.

They are not only the proprietors of anything in this regard, but they also have no capabilities to create and have access to the means of sustenance.

The verses says:

"And they worship other than Allah that has no power to provide them, of sustenance, anything from the heavens and the earth and can do nothing."

This style of meaning makes allusion to the matter that the pagans believed in and worshipped idols for they considered them as an impact in their destiny, their profits and their losses, while the worshipped one must be both provider of means of sustenance and mighty.

However, the partners whom they designate for Allah are neither able to make provisions now nor in the future.

Their imaginary objects of worship are neither able to pour rains from the sky nor are they able to grow plants on the earth.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 74

فَلاَ تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الاَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

74. "Therefore do not coin any similitudes for Allah. Verily, Allah knows and you do not know."

The pagans regarded Allah as a king and considered idols as His ministers. This holy verse declares that an end must be put to such similes, and you should not designate equals for Him when worshipping Allah for He has not got any equals or counterparts who may deserve being worshipped.

The verse says:

"Therefore do not coin any similitudes for Allah. Verily, Allah knows and you do not know."

Some commentators have claimed that the first sentence of the verse which says:

"Therefore do not coin any similitudes for Allah…"

refers to the logic of the pagans during the 'Age of Ignorance', (the exact replica of which can also be found among some of contemporary pagans).

They used to claim that the reason why they would call on the idols was that they were not worthy for worshipping Allah, so they had to take idols because these were the near-stationed ones to the Lord. Allah is like a great king who grants audience only to ministers and his exclusive entourage.

However, the masses of the people who cannot have access to Him, will call on those who are exclusively received by Him.

Such groundless and unjustified kinds of logic which are sometimes depicted in the form of a deviating parable, are the most dangerous of all kinds of logic.

To answer such a claim, the Qur'an asserts that you should not use allegories in case of Allah; that is, allegories which suit limited scopes of thought and fit in the category of those whose existence is probable and which is full of defects and flaws.

If you were aware of the All-Encompassing attribute of Allah with regard to all beings and you knew about His grace and favour which is unlimited, and His proximity towards yourself, in which case makes Him approach you closer than your own 'self', you would never turn to other means for securing Allah's attention.

That Lord Who has invited you to be in direct touch with Him in prayers, and has left the doors of His house wide-open to you day and night, He must not be likened to an oppressive king who has slipped into his palace and does not let anyone in there, except a few.

In our discussion of concerning Allah's attributes, we have particularly pointed out the fact that one of the sliding slopes which exists in the way of understanding the attributes of Allah is that of the land-slide of using similes.

That is, comparing Allah's attributes with those of man and considering them as similarities, because Allah is an infinite and boundless being in every respect and other beings are the ones which are finite and within

limits and any comparison made in here causes one to remain aloof from knowing Him.

Even in cases where we are bound to do so, and to compare His Holy Essence to light and the like, we must note that such similes and metaphorical applications have got shortcomings and fail to achieve our purpose, and they might be only acceptable in part and not as a whole.

While most people are heedless of this fact, they are often thrown down the bottom of the slopes of the valley seemingly of simile and syllogism, when making their comparisons. They are then distanced from the truth of monotheism.

Thus, the Qur'an warns us repeatedly and attracts our attention to this fact; sometimes with the sentence:

"And there is none like unto Him."[1]

and sometimes it also uses the sentence:

"Nothing is similar to Him."[2]

At other times, the Qur'an calls our attention by using the first sentence of the abovementioned verse.

And, perhaps, the last sentence of the verse, by saying:

"Verily, Allah knows and you do not know"

explains this same subject that usually people are unaware of the secrets of the attributes of Allah.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 75

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً عَبْداً مَّمْلُوكاً لاَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَي شَيْءٍ وَمَن رَّزَقْنَاهُ مِنَّا رِزْقاً حَسَناً فَهُوَ يُنفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرّاً وَجَهْراً هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

75. "Allah sets forth a parable of a bonded slave, having no power over anything, and one whom We have provided with good means of sustenance from Us, then he spends from it secretly and openly. Are they equal? Praise belongs to Allah! But most of them do not know."

Allah has discussed the fact as to how the pagans are being misled, saying:

"Allah sets forth a parable of a bonded slave, having no power over anything…"

Allah here sets forth a parable to clarify His intention by it and thereby approaches the concept to the audience. The parable is: 'the slave who is a bonded one and has authority over nothing;' that is, he has got no options.

And a free man whom Allah has provided with means of sustenance, possesses property and blessings, gives away out of his belongings openly and in secret and without any fear.

The verse says:

"…and one whom We have provided with good means of sustenance from Us, then he spends from it secretly and openly…"

As for the sentence: /hal yastawūn/ signifies:

"Are they equal?",

some commentators claim that this allegory relates to the believers and the disbelievers, since a disbeliever has not got involved in anything 'good ', while a believer acquires the 'good'.

Thus Allah has explained the difference between the believer and the disbeliever, hence, He has persuaded people to choose the path of the believers and dissuade them from taking the path of the disbelievers.

The holy phrase:

"Praise belongs to Allah!"

signifies that one must thank Allah for His blessings. This meaning refers to all of Allah's blessings. That is, say that the act of worship only deserves Him Who leads us towards monotheism, theology (the sciences of Divinities), and gratitude, and shows us the road to Paradise.

However, most people, that is the pagans, do not know that it is He Who deserves being worshipped, and all blessings belong to Him.

The verse says:

"…Are they equal? Praise belongs to Allah! But most of them do not know."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 76

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَآ أَبْكَمُ لاَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَي شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَي مَوْلاَهُ أَيْنَمَا
يُوَجِّهْهُ لاَ يَأْتِ بِخَيرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَن يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَي صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

76. "And Allah sets forth a parable of two men, one of whom is dumb having authority over nothing, and he is a burden upon his master, wherever he sends him he brings no good. Is he then equal to him who enjoins justice and he (himself) is on the straight path?"

You who do not consider the master and the slave as equals, how can you equalize the creator with the creature?

Thus, we find Him using another parable for the slaves of the idols and the true believers, likening them to a deaf-mute born person who is at the same time a disabled slave, and a free man who is always engaged in calling the people to be just and fair and who is on the right path.

The Qur'an says:

"And Allah sets forth a parable of two men, one of whom is dumb having authority over nothing, and he is a burden upon his master…"

That is why he usually does not perform well whatever he is sent to. In this manner, this man has got four negative attributes: being a dumb by birth, absolute disability, being a burden to his lord, and, finally, procuring no useful outcome for whatever is referred to him.

Is such a man equal to the one who is eloquent in his speech, always calling people to be just, and following the right path? Of course, it is not so.

The verse says:

"…wherever he sends him he brings no good. Is he then equal to him who enjoins justice and he (himself) is on the straight path?"

Allah has set two allegories in this holy verse and in the previous verse inciting the people to condescend to the fact that all know that neither of these two groups are equal.

That is, as the two sides of either of these two parables can not be considered as equal, Allah can not be considered equal to the inanimate idols (which are incapable of doing any harm or benefit) despite all His

favours and graces as well as all the religious blessings of this world and of the next which He has accorded to mankind.

Some have claimed that this allegory has been used by Allah to differentiate the believer from the unbeliever. The goal in using a dumb man is the pagan while the aim in mind in the case of mentioning he who resorts to preaching justice, is a believer who are not equal.

Notes

1. Surah Tauhid, No. 112, verse 4
2. Surah Shura, No. 42, verse 11

Section 11: The Hour of Judgment Shall Arrive Suddenly

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 77

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَمَآ أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلاَّ كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

77. "And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth; and the matter of the Hour (of Doom) is but as a twinkling of the eye, or it is nearer still. Verily Allah is All-powerful over everything."

The Qur'anic term /qayb/ (unseen) when facing intuition, is a relative matter. That is, something may be invisible to someone while the same thing may be present and visible to someone else.

The Arabic phrase /'amr-us-s a'ah/ (the matter of the Hour) signifies the advent of the resurrection day which is an important example of /qayb/, the 'invisible world', and which is one of the blessings of Allah when the timing of which has been kept secret from us.

As we have frequently seen, the Qur'an usually mixes the issues concerning monotheism with those relating to paganism, resurrection day, and the great court in Hereafter, here, after our discussion in passing about monotheism and polytheism, it touches upon the issue of resurrection and answering a part of the pagans' objections, who said: the dust particles of us scatter all over the places, who will be aware of their location to reassemble them, so that to be able to evaluate their record, it implies at first:

It is exclusive to Allah the unseen and the invisible world of the skies and the earth. And he knows them all.

The verse says:

"And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth…"

Then, it adds:

"…and the matter of the Hour (of Doom) is but as a twinkling of the eye or it is nearer still…"

These two sentences are self-explanatory and live allusions to the infinite Divine Power (s.w.t.), especially in such areas as of resurrection and the rising from the dead of men. Thus, at the end it says:

"…Verily Allah is All-powerful over everything."

That is, Allah can create resurrection day or everything else, as He is Omnipotent.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 78

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئاً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالاَبْصَارَ وَالاَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

78. "And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts; that perhaps you may give thanks."

The Holy Qur'an, once again, refers to another lesson in monotheism and theology as well as the different bounties of Allah.

In this section of the issue of blessings, it devotes its first part to the blessings of science and learning as well as the means leading to knowledge.

The Qur'an declares:

"And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing…"

Certainly, in such a confined environment which lacked openness, such an ignorance was tolerable.

However, in this vast universe, that sort of ignorance was impossible to be continued, therefore, from among the devices for the cognition of the world, that is, eyes, ears, and reason were placed at your disposal, so that you understand the facts of life and these great blessings and your sense of gratitude be motivated as in face of such benevolent Creator in order, perhaps, to give Him His due gratitude.

The verse says:

"…and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts; that perhaps you may give thanks."

One way of expressing one's thanks for something, is its correct application, for the Qur'an criticizes those who have got eyes, yet they do not see, and they have got ears, yet they do not hear and they are not ready to hearken the truth.

The true way of expressing one's gratitude for having eyes and ears, is the acquisition of knowledge, for the verse, at first, says that you did not know; it was Allah Who gave you eyes and ears to thank; that is, to devote your life to learning.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 79

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَي الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ السَّمَآءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

79. "Do they not look at the birds, constrained in the middle of the sky? Naught holds them but Allah; verily there are signs in that for a people who believe."

As was said before, the content of this Surah provides us with acquaintance about the blessings and focuses attention on their creator.

Up until now, we have noted Him mentioning such blessings as rainwater, milk, fruits, honey, the blessings of having wife and children. In this verse, and the next one, the blessings of birds, skin, wool of the four-footed animals, and the ways of utilization of mountains are being discussed.

The flight of birds, alone or in flocks, sometimes regulated and sometimes without any proper order, at times for escaping and at other times all take place for food.

Every bird flies with the right kind of wings commensurate with its weight and needs, all of which must focus the attention of the wise on Allah. Thus, Allah wants us to meditate on those creatures, and then He criticizes the ones who do not so. Birds are all, in all cases and everywhere, dominated by Him.

The verse says:

"Do they not look at the birds, constrained in the middle of the sky?…"

In modern warfare, some planes fly outside the range of anti-aircraft guns. However, birds are all within Allah's area of power wherever they go.

I was once in an airplane when the airhostess declared, we would soon land in a few minutes at airport. I asked her why she did not mention the words, 'Allah-willing'. She said:

"There is no need for saying 'Allah-willing' as the plane computer has set all such as: timing, distance and everything."

I told her all those planes which crash in the air in the east and west of the world do have such equipments. Allah's will does not wait for your computers. She then thought for a while. Returning, she proclaimed that we would, Allah-willing, land after a few moments. I also thanked her by offering her a gift.

We must not forget about Allah because of having access to equipments, energy and being able to utilize instinctive, experimental and scientific laws as it says:

"…Naught holds them but Allah…"

It is only Allah Who protects them from falling to the ground. It is just like swimmers who swim inside water and they are protected by water. Birds are 'hanging' also in the air or 'floating' in the air and the air, which itself is a created being by Allah, preserves them, like water which keeps man alive. In fact, it is Allah Who keeps the air underneath their body.

Briefly speaking, one must look out at the birds so that he may become aware of the fact that they have got an on-looker Who looks after them and manages everything and Who is Omnipotent. He is Who has created such beings so as to enable people to take lessons and to receive their share of rewards by obeying the truth.

The verse says:

"…verily there are signs in that for a people who believe."

That is to say: There are abundant reasoning involved in this matter for the believers as to the unity and potentialities of Allah. Obviously, it is only the believers who benefit from such dear evidences.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 80

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّن بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَناً وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِن جُلُودِ الأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتاً تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا
يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَافِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَآ أَثَاثاً وَمَتَاعاً إِلَى حِينٍ

80. "And Allah appointed a place of rest for you of your houses, and He appointed tents for you of the skins of the cattle, which you find light (to carry) on the day of your departure and on the day of your dwelling; and of their wool and their fur and their hair, (He designated for you) household stuff and a provision for a time."

The issue of the discussion about the blessings of Allah is being continued in this verse as well.

The Qur'an proclaims:

"And Allah appointed a place of rest for you of your houses…"

Truly speaking, the blessing of having somewhere as a dwelling place, is of utmost importance, without which other blessings do not find their real place.

Following His discussion of the ‘stationary houses’, He begins His discussion with regard to the itinerant houses, saying:

“…and He appointed tents for you of the skins of the cattle…”

They are houses which are very light in weight and you can remove them easily from place to place.

The holy verse continues saying:

“…which you find light (to carry) on the day of your departure and on the day of your dwelling…”

Moreover, in addition to these, He allocated to you for a fixed period of time, goods and utensils and various life appliances out of the wool, woven-wool and hair of the four-footed animals.

It says:

“…and of their wool and their fur and their hair, (He designated for you)household stuff and a provision for a time.”

The mentioning of two words /’a aan/ and /mat a‘an/ in a successive way, may be an allusion made to the fact that you are able to provide numerous means for your life out of the wool, woven wool and the hair of the four-footed animals, and utilize them.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 81

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلاَلاً وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَاناً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُم بَأْسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ

81. “And Allah appointed shadows for you, out of what He has created, and appointed shelters for you of the mountains; and He appointed garments for you to protect you from heat (and cold), and garments to protect you from your (other) violence. Even so does He complete His favours upon you; that haply you will surrender (to Him).”

The Arabic term /’akn an/ is the plural form of /kinn/ which refers to an object that is the means for covering something. The objective in this verse is the caves and the tunnels which run under the mountains.

In the previous verse, Allah dealt with the blessing of a dwelling place for the inhabitants of the town and the blessing of tent for the moving tribes and their removable dwelling places. In this verse, He deals with the blessings of the caves for the cave-dwelling people.

The verse says:

“And Allah appointed shadows for you, out of what He has created, and appointed shelters for you of the mountains; and He appointed garments for you to protect you from heat (and cold)…”

From among the garments the name /sar abil/ signifies ‘shirts’ which are sorts of usual clothing for women, men, children as well as adults in all cases and for all circumstances and which can cover the whole body.

Here, the Holy Qur’an mentions only the ‘protection from heat’ while garments are mostly used for protection from cold and not merely from heat.

The reason is that whatever protects people from heat it will protect them from cold as well.

Moreover, in their locality the Arabs were facing more with heat than with cold. Thus, they needed something to protect them from heat. In addition, by talking about one of two things, the Arabs overlook the second for the second goes without saying.

The verse continues saying:

"…and garments to protect you from your (other) violence…"

This may refer to the meaning that He has provided you with 'iron-garments' 'armours' so as to protect you from being beaten by bullets, blades, and the hostile arrows.

Such is the way by which Allah has completed His worldly favours for you. You may perhaps know, O' the inhabitants of Mecca, that no one else but Allah is able to perform such acts, then worship Him alone and believe in His Prophet (S).

The verse says:

"…Even so does He complete His favours upon you; that haply you will surrender (to Him)."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 82

فإِن تَوَلَّوْا فإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

82. "So (O' Prophet!) if they turn away, then on you is (incumbent) only the clear conveyance (of the message)."

To provide the blessed Prophet of Islam (S) with comfort, He implies that if they turn away and disbelieve in you, and / or do not meditate upon Our blessings, thus not take an example, you are not to be blamed, because you are not commissioned to perform any other duty than delivering the message, and you have performed this duty well.

The holy verse says:

"So (O' Prophet!) if they turn away, then on you is (incumbent) only the clear conveyance (of the message)."

Incidentally, if a man does not possess a sound mind, the most transparent messages from the most virtuous individuals, i.e. prophets, will have no impact on him.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 83

يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

83. "They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it, and most of them are ungrateful."

To complete the discussion, the Holy Qur'an asserts that they know the blessings of Allah and are familiar with their dimensions while delving into their depth. Nevertheless, they deny them.

The verse says:

"They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it…"

Therefore, one must not be on the look out for the reason of this paganism in their lack of awareness. On the contrary, one must be searching this factor of paganism in their other vicious attributes which have

obstructed them in their pursuit of faith, which comprise their selfishness and in their hostile attitude towards religion.

It is perhaps for this reason that He concludes the verse by saying:

"…and most of them are ungrateful."

The Qur'an has repeatedly raised the issue of the deliberate and obstinate denial of the disbelievers.

At times it says:

"And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their souls had been convinced with them…"[1]

At other times, it says:

"…they recognize him (the Prophet) as they recognize their sons…"[2]

At other times, He says:

"…but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)…"[3]

And, Finally, He declares:

"…when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved in it…" [4]

Imam Sadiq (as) remarks:

Once: Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as) was in the stage of bowing in his prayer rituals in the Prophet's mosque, when he offered his ring to a poor man, upon which occasion the 55th verse of Surah Al-Ma'idah was revealed indicating that your guardians are Allah, the Prophet, and he who spends out while bowing in his prayer rituals.[5]

Some found out about their guardian yet rejected him.

Then, this verse was revealed saying:

"They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it…"

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Swearing to Allah, we are the blessings which Allah has accorded His servants, and only under the auspices of us the people will be salvaged."[6]

Notes

1. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 14
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 146
3. Ibid
4. Surah Al-Bqarah, No. 2, verse 89
5. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 72
6. Ibid

Section 12: Apostle Muhammad a Witness Over All Witnesses

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 84

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيداً ثُمَّ لاَ يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلاَ هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

84. "And (remember) the Day We will raise up a witness from every nation. Then, shall no permission be given to those who disbelieved, nor shall they be allowed to make amends."

The issue of the witnesses of the Day of Resurrection has been repeatedly proposed in the Qur'an. The prophets, angles, Allah's saints, the earth as well as one's bodily organs are among the witnesses on that Day.

Imam Sadiq (as) has remarked:

"There is an 'Imam' a 'leader' for every nation and for every period with whom people will be mustered."

Imam Baqir (as) has mentioned concerning the verse:

"We are verily the witnesses of this nation."

Although the Almighty is Omnipresent and Omniscient as to everything, the fact that numerous witnesses are there to testify and bear witness will lead to the emergence of men of virtue and abstinence for the faithful, and will lead to the exposing of the scandals of the culprits.

The necessary pre-requisite for bearing witness is one's knowledge. Therefore, Allah's saints, who will bear testimony for us in the day of resurrection, must have an observation over our performances in this world.

This is in line with our belief which, according to numerous Islamic quotations, and in accordance with the noble verse that says:

"…Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messengers and the believers…"[1],

all records of our performances are being reported to Imam-i-Zaman (as) every week. If we exclude this belief, the verses about the issue of bearing witness on the Day of Resurrection are not justifiable. How can one who is not aware of our performances or is not just, bear witness as to our acts on the Day of Resurrection?

The Arabic term /'isti'tab/ is derived from //itab/ which means a guilty person asks the owner of the right to blame him so as to quell his anger thereby and then condescend as to his forgiveness.

One is able both to repent of his sins, and apologize for his guilts, and compensate for his wrongdoings in this world. However, in the Resurrection Day, there is no room for justification; nor would any apologies be accepted; nor one can compensate.

Yet, the act of justification is to be dismissed, for when some hell-dwellers tell others:

"…Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been believers"[2],

they will be addressed in this way:

"…Nay, you (yourselves) were not believers."[3]

However, to make up for a sin is out of the question, for when they ask Allah, saying:

"…therefore send us back, we will do good…"[4],

this will be the answer:

"…By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks…" [5]

which signifies: The case is not so for he utters such words verbally but he will be acting just in the same way if he be returned to his previous position in the world.

As for offering apologies it is also out of the question, for the Qur'an says:

"They will not be allowed to put forth excuses."[6]

As the issues involved in the Divine Court are keeping account and record of everything, as well as bearing testimony and witnesses, there will be no rooms left for apologizing, rationalizing or securing the other side's consent.

The verse says:

"And (remember) the Day We will raise up a witness from every nation. Then, shall no permission be given to those who disbelieved, nor shall they be allowed to make amends."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 85

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

85. "And when those who were unjust behold the chastisement, it shall not be lightened for them nor will they be respited."

We had it in the previous verse that in the Hereafter there will be no permission for rationalization; nor any possibility securing the consent of others. However, He proclaims in this holy verse that the Divine punishment on that day recognizes no alleviation nor postponement.

Therefore, as soon as the pagans noticed the Hell Fire, and were subjected to the Divine punishment, there would be no alleviation involved for their chastisement, and no respite will be given to them, and their torment will be perpetual, because the time of regretting and repenting has passed.

The noble verse says:

"And when those who were unjust behold the chastisement, it shall not be lightened for them nor will they be respited."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 86

وَإِذَا رَأَي الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَآءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلآءِ شُرَكَآؤُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُواْ مِن دُونِكَ فَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

86. "And when those who associated (others with Allah) behold their associates, they shall say: 'Our Lord! these are our associates whom we called besides You;' But they (the gods) throwing back the saying at them, (will answer) 'Verily you are truly lairs!'"

According to the Islamic quotations received, there are several stages in Hereafter in some of which lips remain closed when hands and foot bear witness. In other stages one hears crying and supplications. In another stage, one does his best to put all blames for his sins on others. For instance, he would say to the Satan:

It is you who made me pagan, to which the Satan answers:

"…verily I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah from before…"[7]

Sometimes, they hold the idols responsible, while the idols, too, acquit themselves.[8]

Even, Allah, addressing Issa, says:

"…O' Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' He (Jesus) says: 'Glory be to You! It was not mine to utter what I had no right to (say)…"[9]

And, in the verse in question, those beings which have been objects of worship along with Allah seek self-acquittal, denying them, telling the idol-worshippers: You were in fact worshipping your own imagination.

The verse says:

"And when those who associated (others with Allah) behold their associates, for Allah they shall say: 'Our Lord! these are our associates whom we called besides You;' But they (the gods) throwing back the saying at them, (will answer) 'Verily you are truly, lairs!'"

In the meantime, the resurrection terror causes one to put blame on other's shoulders for delivering himself, but to no good effects.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 87

وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَي اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذِ السَّلَمَ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

87. "And they will tender submission to Allah on that day, and what they used to forge shall depart from them."

If we do not surrender today we shall surrender tomorrow, on the Day of Resurrection.

However, to what avail can it be? All fantasies will come to an end on that Day, and all attempts to find mediators, reconciliation efforts, and hoping for glory and seeking support from any one but Allah will be out of question.

Some commentators claim that the pagans will lose their arrogance of the Age of Ignorance and will present their submission before Allah, the Almighty, without any deliberation, and whatever they rejected regarding monotheism will disappear from their minds, and those false and empty desires which they cherished regarding the idols will be obliterated altogether, enabling them to understand that the idols are of no use.

On the contrary, they themselves become pillars of Hell Fire, attacking their own worshippers.

The verse says:

"And they will tender submission to Allah on that day, and what they used to forge shall depart from them."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 88

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَاباً فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ

88. "Those who disbelieved and hindered (people) from the path of Allah, We added punishment to punishment for that they used to spread mischief."

All corruptions have their origin in paganism, as is the case with all decent acts which take their roots from Faith. Those pioneers of paganism,

who obstruct the people from the path of Allah by their pen, expression and other means, will have to settle a different kind of account from those of ordinary people.

Up till now, we were involved in our discussion of those misled pagans who were caught in their paganism and deviation without calling others to their path. Later, the cases of those are exposed who are not only misled themselves but they also seek to mislead others as well.

The verse says:

"Those who disbelieved and hindered (people) from the path of Allah, We added punishment to punishment for that they used to spread mischief."

A well known tradition says:

"Everyone who establishes a good practice, will be rewarded the reward of those who do it accordingly, without diminishing anything from their reward; and he who lays the foundation of an evil act, will be held responsible for the sin of all those who commit that sin, without decreasing anything from their sin."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 89

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيداً عَلَيْهِم مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيداً عَلَي هَؤُلآءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَاناً لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَي لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

89. "And (remember) the day when We raise up a witness from every people against them from among themselves, and We shall bring you as a witness against these. And We have sent down the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and as a guidance, and glad tidings for Muslims."

The objective of 'a witness', is the prophet who has been sent to them, or their 'contemporary leader' who serves as the proof of Allah, and We appoint you as a witness of the people, O' Muhammad! This Book, the Qur'an, is an explicit and eloquent Book for all religious affairs.

The verse says:

"And (remember) the day when We raise up a witness from every people against them from among themselves, and We shall bring you as a witness against these. And We have sent down the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and as a guidance, and glad tidings for Muslims."

There are no religious matters which are not concerned within the Qur'an or not explicitly expressed in it or which are not leading man to the sources of knowledge, i.e., to the blissful Prophet (S) and to his true successors or to the consensus of the Ummah.

Therefore, all religious edicts are direct inferences from the Qur'an, as was explained in the foregoing fifth verse which revealed allusions made to the witnesses of the nations.

This is one of our decisive beliefs that every nation will have a witness on the Day of Resurrection and the Prophet of Islam (S) will bear witness over this nation as well as over the witnesses of other nations.

The important point in here is that the testimony of men of Allah must be based on the senses, seeing and knowledge, and they must be innocent of

any error or falsehood so as their testimony should be regarded as a kind of ultimatum on that sensitive occasion upon all people.

It is evident that there is no one to be aware of the deeds of people whether present or absent, apparent or hidden, and whose words will be accepted by all nations and Allah in Hereafter, except for prophets and those 'Immaculate Imams' who have full command of the deeds, words, and behavior as well as the minds of all people owing to their invisible lines of communication.

It has been narrated in Tafsir-i-Safi from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"By Allah! we are knowledgeable about everything which is in the skies and on the earth, and whatever is between them, as well as what is in Paradise or in Hell."

Then the Imam (as) recited the above verse three times.

Imam Baqir (as) remarked:

"Whatever is needed by the Ummah has already been mentioned in the Qur'an, and whatever you hear from me, I shall provide its Qur'anic documentation if you ask." [10]

Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"Whatever news about you, as well as the history of the past nations, the future generations, the skies and the earth all have been stated in the Qur'an." [11]

Imam Rida (as) said to the chief men of some religions in a session that among the miracles of the Messenger of Islam is one which reveals a poor orphan who has been an illiterate shepherd, being in possession of a Book 'the explanation of every thing' and that all news of the past and future until the Hereafter be recorded in it. [12]

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"In Allah's Book, there is a solution for every dispute between two parties though the people's wisdom may not catch it." [13]

The Qur'an expresses everything though everyone may not understand. Hadrat Ali (as) says: For the common people, the Qur'an provides apparent sentences; for some sophisticated individuals, it provides mysterious allusions; and for the saints of Allah, it reveals delicate divine nuances, while for the prophets it presents 'facts'.

Such a trait of being 'explanatory of everything' is either in a direct manner or by means of verses which contain some principles that are leading for us, such as in the Qur'an it says:

"…and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back…"[14]

And as in the verse which says:

"…That you may make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them…"[15]

Notes

1. Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 105
2. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 31
3. Surah As-S af at, No. 37, verse 29
4. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 34, verse 12
5. Surah Al-Mu’minūn, No. 23, verse 100
6. Surah Al-Mursal at, No. 77, verse 36
7. Surah ‘Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22
8. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 14
9. Surah Al-Ma’idah, No. 5, verse 116
10. Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq, under the verse
11. Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq, under the verse
12. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, under the verse
13. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 75
14. Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 7
15. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 44

Section 13: To Keep up Covenants and Promises

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 90

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَآءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَي وَيَنْهَي عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

90. "Verily, Allah enjoins justice and kindness (to others) and giving (the right of) the kindred, and forbids lewdness, and evil and insolence; He admonishes you so that you might remember."

This verse provides a thorough explanation and the most comprehensive picture of the Islamic teachings in the spheres of social problems, the humanitarian issues, and the ethical matters. At first, the Qur'an implies that Allah commands all to involve themselves in justice and to be generous and forgiving with regard to one's family members and those who are around them.

The verse says:

"Verily, Allah enjoins justice and kindness (to others) and giving (the right of) the kindred…"

Justice is that universal law around the axis of which the totality of the system of creation runs. In the true sense of the word, it implies that everything takes its own proper place. Therefore, whatever deviation, excess and defect, extremism to the right or left, and violation of other people's rights run contrary to the principle of justice.

However, as justice, despite all its splendour, power, and its deep impact is not workable in times of crises and in exceptional circumstances, the Qur'an brings the command of kindness with regard to generosity and forgiveness immediately next to it.

In a tradition, Ali (as) says:

"Justice is achieved once you provide people with their due rights, and kindness is applied when you do them a favour." [1]

After completing these three positive principles, the Qur'an refers to three negative principles which the people must be dissuaded from. It says:

"…and forbids lewdness, and evil and insolence…"

'Lewdness' alludes to latent and secret sins, /munkar/ (abominable acts) refers to overt and open sinful acts, and /baqy/ (insolence) refers to whatever violation of one's own rights, and oppression and self-admiration with regards to others.

At the end of the verse, to re-emphasize once again the above six principles, the Qur'an says:

"…He admonishes you so that you might remember."

The revival and revitalization of the three principles of: justice, generosity and provision of the due rights of one's next of kinds, as well as campaigning against the three-fold deviations of lewdness, forbidden matters, and oppression, at the world level, provide sufficient grounds for creating a well-developed kind of world quiet and devoid of all calamities and corruption.

Once we find the famous Companion, Ibn-i-Mas'ūd, has been quoted as saying:

"This verse is the most comprehensive of all the Qur'anic verses regarding the good and the evil," it is not to be regarded as an exaggeration.

Explanations

This verse is the universal investiture charter of Islam and the bill of rights which Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) used to recite in his sermons during the Friday Prayer rituals; and according to Tafsir-us-Safi:

Were there only this single verse to be found in the Qur'an we had sufficient grounds to declare that the Qur'an is explanatory Book for everything. The commandments as well as the forbidden matters of this verse have been included in all religions and have never been abrogated.

Walid-Ibn-Muqayrah was so attracted and magnetized by this verse that he declared: The sweetness, beauty, and the content of this verse is such that it can not be regarded as an expression uttered by any human being.

Othman Ibn Maz'ūn says:

"Upon hearing this verse, Islam exerted such a deep impact on me that I embraced it whole-heartedly."

'Justice' /'adl/, refers to the cases where the concerning equalization process is comprehended with insight, while /'idl/ signifies that case during which its equalization process is perceived through the senses.

The concept of /'adl/ (justice) indicates 'equality which exists in parts', while /'ihsan/ (kindness or 'generosity') refers to multiplication or 'increase' in the amount of reward.

The Arabic term /'adl/ also implies distancing oneself from both excess and defect with regard to creeds as well as to the personal behavior and the social ones. Thus, the recommendation of this verse encompasses both the individuals as well as governments.

Justice, in the realm of creation, is the secret of its resistance, while in the realm of religious affairs it crowns itself on top of all the prophets' mission.

The Arabic term /'ihsan/ (benevolence) refers to a blessed word which includes financial, mental, cultural, and emotional services rendered generously. The Qur'anic term /fahša'/ (lewdness) refers to a sin which is a capital one and is coupled with a scandal.

The term /munkar/ 'forbidden' signifies that act which is rejected by reason, runs contrary to inherent human nature and is refused by religious laws.

According to 'Tafsir-Fi-Zalal', once the despotic rulers, introducing corrupt procedures of propaganda, seek to present sinful acts as insignificant in the eyes of the people thus make people insensitive regarding sins, the ultimate criterion for differentiating 'right' from 'wrong' are religious laws.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 91

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدتُّمْ وَلاَ تَنقُضُوا الأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَاتَفْعَلُونَ

91. "And fulfill you the covenant of Allah, when you make covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast, for you have appointed Allah over you a surety. Verily, Allah knows what you do."

In Islamic quotations that the term /‘ahd/ (covenant), mentioned in the verse, has been regarded as the covenant of people made with the Divine leaders.

If people stick to their pledges faithfully, Allah will also fulfill the promises which He has made, as the Qur’an says:

“…fulfill My covenant and I shall fulfill your covenant…”[2]

In those days of the advent of Islam when the population of the Muslims was scanty and they had numerous enemies, and there was a strong possibility that because of this very fact, some believers might break their pledges which they had made with the Prophet (S) thus backing him down and withholding their support for him, the verse was thus revealed and they were, hence, warned about the dire consequences of their behavior.

They were told that the strength of their oaths was the proof of their faith.

Thus, the Qur’an has dealt with another one of the most important teachings of Islam in this verse, when it says:

“And fulfill you the covenant of Allah, when you make covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast…”

You have sworn in the name of Allah and you have designated Allah as your surety and sponsor for your oath, it is because He is aware of all your acts.

The verse continues saying:

“…for you have appointed Allah over you a surety. Verily, Allah knows what you do.”

The issue of /’aym an/, the plural of /yamin/ meaning oath, which is mentioned in the above holy verse, has got a comprehensive meaning which includes, both the pledges made by man with Allah as well as those oaths which he makes in the name of Allah with the people.

In other words, every kind of commitment which is made under the name of Allah and by swearing His name, is included in this statement.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 92

وَلاَ تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنكَاثاً تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلاً بَيْنَكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَى مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّما يَبْلُوكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَلَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

92. “And do not be like the woman who unravels her yarn, disintegrating it into pieces after having spun it tightly, by taking your oaths to be means of deceit between you, (imagining that) one group is more numerous than (another) group. Verily Allah only puts you on trial thereby and He will most certainly make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection that wherein you differed.”

As the issue of keeping to ones words and pledges is one of the main backbones of the perseverance of any society, the Qur’an, in this verse, pursues the discussion concerning the subject in question with a tone of voice coupled with some kind of blame and scorn, saying:

“And do not be like the woman who unravels her yarn, disintegrating it into pieces after having spun it tightly…”

The allusion here refers to a woman from the Quraysh tribe called ‘Ra’itih’ during the age of Ignorance, who used to weave the wool and the yarn which she had at her disposal along with her woman slaves. She would then order all to be disintegrated into pieces after having been spun. It was for this reason that she was known as the ‘stupid woman’, among the Arabs.

Then, the Qur’an adds implying that you use your oath and pledges as a means of deceit and corruption, imagining one group exceeds another one in number, thus using the increase in number of the enemies as a pretext for breaking pledges of support which you had with the Prophet (S).

The verse says:

“…by taking your oaths to be means of deceit between you, (imagining that) one group is more numerous than (another) group…”

Beware you! That Allah is thus putting you in a trial situation in this way, and, anyway, Allah will reveal to you the consequences of such a trial in the Day of Resurrection, unveiling the secrets in the bottom of all people’s hearts, and hence, everyone will reap what he has sown.

The verse says:

“…Verily Allah only puts you on trial thereby and He will most certainly make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection that wherein you differed.”

There has been cited in Tafsir-i-Furqan that: Hadrat-i-Fatimah Zahra (as) in her sermon gave in Medina Mosque against her contemporary rulers, recited this verse, indicating that they resembled that woman who disintegrated what she had spun for their breaking of pledges which they had kept with Ali-Ibn-i-’Abi Talib (as) at Ghadir Khumm.

The allegories, parables, and the proverbs of the Qur’an are such that they hold their natural entity, their freshness, and transparency everywhere and at all times, and from the primary school kid upward as far as the philosophers of the world will quench their thirst by it.

One of the means for experiments is keeping to one’s commitments, and the recall of the resurrection and the dooms day are the factors which lead one to be virtuous and pay attention to whatever he has pledged.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 93

وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَـكِن يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ وَلَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

93. “And if Allah had willed, He would have made you (all) one nation; but He leaves straying whom He pleases, and He guides whom He pleases; and you will definitely be questioned of what you used to do.”

Allah leads all people inherently. However, the people, based on their authority and will, are mainly divided into two categories: The ones who select the wrong path contrary to their inherent nature and intellect and are not repenting.

Allah leaves such people to themselves. However, another category select what is inherently embedded of goodness in their nature. Allah then assists them and leads them. Therefore, what is meant through leading and misleading by Allah comes a stage after the man’s selection.

For instance, a teacher intends, from the first day of his teaching, to cover all students in his instruction, though some struggle to understand to whom the teacher also allocates extra time for teaching, while the mischievous child is often left to himself by the teacher.

Incidentally, if the issue of leading man and of his being misled were not voluntary matters, Allah would not proclaim:

"You will definitely be questioned".

Therefore, Allah's question in this connection is a sign of our free will, for the man under compulsion, would not be held responsible.

Anyway, Allah is free in imposing obligations on people, though His way of treatment and programs only include leaving people free.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 94

وَلاَ تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلاً بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا السُّوءَ بِمَا صَدَدتُّمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

94. "And do not make your oaths a means of deceit among you, lest any foot might slip after its stability and you should taste evil for that you hindered (people) from the path of Allah, and for you there will be a great torment."

According to Raqib, the Qur'anic term /sadadtum/ signifies both 'being kept away from' and 'keeping others away', and the Arabic word /daxal/ equates in rhyming and meaning as /daqal/ which means 'deceit'.

A sinful act certainly leads to other sins, paving the way for them. Breaking of one's words paves the ground for evil ending which itself would make preparation for being kept away and keeping others away from the path of Allah.

Anyway, to stress the importance of keeping one's words and of standing up to performing one's pledges, which are important in social stability, He declares:

"And do not make your oaths a means of deceit among you…"

The reason of it is that there are two main disadvantages attached to it: Firstly, it causes your firm steps in Faith to be shaky, for once you pledge to do something, and make an oath, while you do not intend to keep to it, and you repeat such a cycle, people's confidence will be eroded and some believers may become weak in their faith.

Such circumstances lead them to believe that they have stood on firm grounds at first but they have found the grounds slippery afterwards.

Another disadvantage stated is that you will feel the dire consequences of such an act, which is hindering people from the path of Allah, in this world while the Great Divine Chastisement awaits you in the Hereafter.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…lest any foot might slip after its stability and you should taste evil for that you hindered (people) from the path of Allah…"

In fact, breaking of one's promises and violation of swearing for pledges, on the one hand, would lead people to be pessimistic and would cause people to abhor the way of the truth.

It will also disintegrate the united front of the people and would lead to the loss of confidence among them as far as making people lose their interest in embracing Islam and in case they have made a commitment with you, they would not feel obligated or obliged to fulfill their promise, which would in turn lead to numerous complications, defeat and failures in the world.

On the other hand, it would bring forth the Divine punishment for you in the Hereafter.

The verse concludes:

"…and for you there will be a great torment."

Incidentally, Hadrat Imam Baqir (as) and Hadrat Imam Sadiq (as) have been quoted in the following commentaries as saying:

"This noble verse is about the 'mastership' of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as), and allegiance with him, and when it was revealed, the Prophet (S) addressing the people, declared: "Convey your greetings to Ali (as) as the leader of the believers."[3]

The Philosophy of Respect for Pledges

We know that the most important capital of a society is the reciprocal confidence of the individuals with respect to one another.

Principally, what causes firm coherence among the members of a society, who are in a disintegrated and separate group of individuals, thus making them into coherent unity, is this same mutual confidence which backs up and supports the harmonious activities and cooperation at a broader level in the society.

Pledging, committing and swearing all stress upon the preservation of this solidarity and mutual confidence. However, the day when promises are broken one after another, there will be nothing left out of such public confidence which is a great investment by itself, and the seemingly-integrated society will be disintegrated into individual units which lacks power.

It is for this reason that we find repeated and wide-spread talk of keeping of one's promises in the Qur'an as well as in traditions of Islam, the breaking up of which is considered as once of the capital sins.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has made allusions in his command to 'Malik-i-'Ashtar' as to the importance of such issue in Islam and during 'the Age of Ignorance', regarding it as one of the prime importance and the most general issues, emphasizing that even the pagans had been aware of its significance, sticking to it for they had found out about the painful consequences of breaking of promises. [4]

We have it in the Islamic War Commandments that when even one ordinary soldier gives respite of security to one or a group of the enemy army it must be observed by all Muslims.

Historians and commentators are of the opinion that among reasons which caused groups of people to embrace the Great Divine way, was the Muslims' keeping to their promises and having regards for their oaths.

This went as far as we read in quotations from Salman-i-Farsi (R.A.) who said:

"The extermination of this nation might be only brought about because of their breach of treaties."[5]

That is, as keeping of one's promise will bring about power, splendor and progress, breaking of one's promises will also result in his weakness, inability and his self-annihilation.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 95

وَلاَ تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً إِنَّمَا عِندَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

95. "And do not sell Allah's covenant for a meagre price; for verily that which is with Allah is better for you, if you only know."

The Occasion of the Revelation

As for the occasion of the revelation of this noble verse and the two consecutive verses, it has been reported that: a man from among the inhabitants of 'Hadar-Maut' came up to the Prophet (S) and said:

O' Messenger of Allah! I have got a neighbour called 'Imra'-ul-Qays who has usurped part of my land.

Summoning 'Imra'-ul-Qays, the Prophet (S) questioned him about the subject and made him go through the process of oath taking when he denied everything.

As soon as he stood up to deliver his oath, the Prophet (S), respiting him, reminded him of thinking about the oath at first and then swearing. The two then returned and it was then that the verse was revealed.

He warned them against the dire consequences of the wrong and false taking of oaths. When the Prophet (S) recited these two verses for them, 'Imra'-ul-Qays said:

"It is true. I have usurped part of his land though I do not know the exact scale of usurpation. Such being the case, he can have it back, and besides that he may take the equal of it for the use I have made during the period of usurpation.

It was at this time that verse 97 was revealed and gave good tidings of /hay at-i-tayyibah/ (good life) for those whose good acts are coupled with their faith."

Following the previous verses in connection with the nasty and evil act of breaking one's promise and of lying by oath, this verse stresses the same subject.

The only difference being that the motive for breaking promise and swearing falsely was being threatened as against the majority in terms of numerical matters, while, in here, the issue is the motive of insignificant and scanty material benefits.

Therefore, the Holy Qur'an implies that you should not exchange Allah's covenant for an insignificant price; that is, whatever of pricing you name is unmatched and insignificant in comparison with the worth of one moment in fulfilling the pledges which you have made with Allah even if all the world were to be given to you.

The verse says:

"And do not sell Allah's covenant for a meagre price…"

To offer further proofs, the Qur'an adds implying that whatever is with Allah, is best for you if you know, that is, if you are aware of the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

The verse continues saying:

"…for verily that which is with Allah is better for you, if you only know."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 96

مَا عِندَكُمْ يَنفَدُ وَمَا عِندَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُو يَعْمَلُونَ

96. "What is with you comes to an end, and what is with Allah will endure, and certainly We will pay those who were (patiently) steadfast a recompense in proportion to the best they used to do."

In this noble verse, the Qur'an explains the reason for the superiority as such: what is with you is perishable, but what is with Allah is everlasting and enduring; and those who keep their perseverance would be rewarded with the best of what they did.

The Qur'an offers the criterion for the excellence in this verse, saying: What is with you is ultimately mortal and would perish, whereas what is with Allah will be everlasting and eternal.

Therefore, come and put to use all your capital for Allah and in His path and for the sake of attaining His consent so that it becomes an example and a symbol of 'with Allah' and consonant with.

'Whatever is with Allah will last'.

The verse says:

"What is with you comes to an end, and what is with Allah will endure…"

Then the holy verse implies that Allah shall reward them as the best of their acts, all those who keep their patience and resistance in the process of realization of His commandments in the face of oaths and promises.

The verse says:

"…and certainly We will pay those who were (patiently) steadfast a recompense in proportion to the best they used to do."

The reason why the term 'best' is used in this connection, is that all of a person's good deeds are not identical; some are good; some others are better, nevertheless Allah places all as the best and rewards them accordingly which case is the utmost kind of generosity on His part.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 97

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً مِن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَي وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

97. "Whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall certainly give him to live a goodly pure life and, definitely, We will pay them a recompense in proportion to the reward for the best of what they used to do."

'A goodly pure life' is that a person has a restful heart, and a faithful spirit. Such a believer whose insight is furnished by the light of Allah, he

will be in composed by the prayers of the angels, and he will receive the favours of Allah. The people of this kind will have neither fear nor grieve.

This verse states, as a general rule, that the result of the righteous deeds of every believer and in any form that they be performed will be rewarded with the best scale of good deeds.

The verse says:

"Whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall certainly give him to live a goodly pure life and, definitely, We will pay them a recompense in proportion to the reward for the best of what they used to do."

Thus, the criterion here is 'faith' and the righteous acts emerged from it, and, therefore, there is no other condition for it from any point of view: neither from the point of race, gender, nor from the point of position, and social rank.

The Qur'anic phrase /hay at-i-tayyibah/ meaning 'a goodly pure life' signifies a 'clean' life from every point of view; clean from all pollutions, cruelties, treasons, hostilities, capturing meanness and all sorts of anxieties including all of those things which turn the wholesome length of one's life into a disagreeable one.

In the end, one infers from this verse that a man without faith and without good deeds is just regarded as dead.

"…and We shall certainly give him to live a goodly pure life…"

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 98

فإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْءَانَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

98. "So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from (the vices of) the Satan, the accursed."

This noble verse explains the ways for making use of the Glorious Qur'an and that how it ought to be recited, for the fact that the Qur'an has got a rich content is not adequate by itself; the obstacles must also be removed from our entire existence, as well as form the thought and environment of our thought and entity, if we are to discover the true meaning of that rich content.

Therefore, at first it says:

"So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from (the vices of) the Satan, the accursed."

Certainly, the aim is not merely to recite the sentence "I refuge with Allah from (the vices of) the Satan, the accursed", but one must turn the term 'mentioning' into 'thinking' so that this thinking becomes a pre-requisite for the realization of that state in the self and soul within which man turns to Allah and distances himself from the whims and violent passions which hinder man's correct understanding, thus seeking refuge with Allah at the time of reciting every single verse.

This makes it possible for us to be kept away from the satanical temptations which stand between us and Allah's enlivening words. Unless such a state of mind is not achieved, one cannot have a true understanding of the facts of the Holy Qur'an.

A Persian poem says:

The beauty of our sweetheart is not veiled and covered all over; dust off yourself so as you may be able to see it. Unless one's self-hood is not kept intact from all of what is forbidden; one's heart will not be turned into a mirror for reflecting the Divine rays of light.

Explanations

Every good deed might also be accompanied by certain defects, as is the case with 'glory' the counter-acting agent of which might be 'pride'; and 'serving people' the counter-acting of which might be indebtedness.

The reciting of the Qur'an may also have certain counter-acting factors attached to it, such as exposing of oneself and exhibitionism, the acquisition of wealth, negative competitions, deceiving people, wrong understanding, and interpreting it according to one's own criterion which serves one's own purpose against all of which one must safe-guard himself by seeking refuge with Allah.

Imam Sadiq (as) has remarked:

"The recitation of the Qur'an requires three pre-conditions to be fulfilled: a humble heart, a void body, a vacant situation, which refers to a state of mind in which there is no prejudice involved."[6]

Were the Qur'an to be accompanied by an interpretation, the views of the Immaculate Imams (as), and were it to be presented to the tender minds, it would serve as a means of guidance and one's development, and increasing of one's faith and knowledge.

As the Qur'an proclaims:

"(O' Prophet!) And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a hidden barrier."[7]

The Islamic quotations indicate that the blessed Prophet (S) at time of reciting the Qur'an, used to recite the sentence:

"I seek refuge with Allah from (the vices of) the Satan, the accursed." [8]

At the end, seeking refuge with Allah implies that a lower-ranking person seeks refuge with a person of higher echelon to refuge him and to defend him against the enemy. In the meantime, this process is coupled with expression of humbleness, that is, one must seek refuge with Allah while reciting the Qur'an from the satanic temptations so that one can remain immune from all errors.

The process of seeking refuge in Allah is a recommended act while one is reciting the Qur'an, whether be it at the prayer times or at other times.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 99

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

99. "Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord."

One's faith serves as a citadel which protects man from all kinds of vulnerabilities. Therefore, the Satan has no control over those who believe in Allah and trust Him. That is, he cannot compel them to be pagans and to commit sins.

The verse says:

"Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord."

Traditions

1. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Rely on Allah, Glory be to Him, since He has guaranteed the sufficiency of those who rely (on Him)."

2. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"He who trusts in Allah, He will suffice him and make him independent."[9]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 100

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

100. "His authority is only over those who befriend him, (following him), and those who associate others with Him."

Real monotheists are insured. However, he who looks for other than Allah can receive and is liable to receive wrong influences. Thus, in this noble verse, the Qur'an declares that the Satan's domination extends over only all those who admire him and his leadership, and they have selected him as to supervise and guide them.

The Satan also has a domineering role for those who have placed him as a partner for Allah in obeying and in serving him, and those who consider his commandments as a 'must' instead of the commandments of Allah.

The holy verse says:

"His authority is only over those who befriend him, (following him), and those who associate others with Him."

Thus, the Satanically domination over men is not a compulsory and an unconscious matter. On the other hand, it is human beings who pave the way for Satan's entry into their realm of life.

Notes

1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 231; and Mizan-al-Hikmah, p. 3496
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 40
3. The commentaries: Furqan, Burhan, Majma'-ul-Bayan and Atyab-ul-Bayan
4. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, letter No. 53
5. See Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the verse in question
6. Tafsir-i-Furqan
7. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 45
8. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daqa'iq
9. Mu'jam Qurar, vol. 3, p. 3167

Section 14: Qur’an Brought Down by the Holy Spirit

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 101

وإِذَا بَدَّلْنَآ ءَايَةً مَّكَانَ ءَايَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ مُفْتَرٍ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

101. “And when We exchange a verse in the place of another verse, and Allah is well aware of what He sends down, they say: ‘You are only a forger.’ Nay, most of them do not know.”

The Occasion of the Revelation

Ibn-i-‘Abbas says:

The pretext seeking pagans used to claim that Muhammad (S) had made an object of ridicule out of his companions, whenever a verse was revealed and contained some harsh commandments in it and at other time another verse was revealed and a more lenient decree was involved in it, they used to say:

Today he decrees one thing while tomorrow he forbids that same order, all of which exhibits the fact that Muhammad (S) claims everything by himself and not from the sphere of Allah. It was at this time that the verse was revealed and provided them with the appropriate answer.

This verse explains the objections which the pagans had with regard to the Divine verses.

Firstly, the Holy Qur’an implies that when Allah (s.w.t.) converts a verse into another one (thus abrogating a decree), that is, He replaces one verse with another one, pagans say: You are involved in accusations.

However, most of them do not know the truth, for Allah is knowledgeable about the commandments which He sends. Therefore, He sends orders according to those circumstances which are required.

The verse says:

“And when We exchange a verse in the place of another verse, and Allah is well aware of what He sends down, they say: ‘You are only a forger.’ Nay, most of them do not know.”

They do not know that the Qur’an is seeking to set up the human society which is pioneering in every respect and with a superior kind of spirituality. Despite all these, it is obvious that this Divine prescription sometimes required some changes and conversions from the side of Allah.

Certainly, they are unaware of these facts and know nothing about the conditions which have brought about the revelation of the Holy Qur’an, otherwise, they knew that the discarding of certain commandments and verses of the Qur’an is a pre-determined well-calculated and exact procedure of Islam for educational purposes without which the ultimate attainment of the evolutionary process can not be achieved and can not be regarded as reasons allegedly for contradictory statements by the Prophet (S) or false accusations to Allah:

“Nay, most of them do not know.”

Nevertheless, most of them do not know that this abrogation is done by Him alone or they are unaware that such a process is allowed, or what is the reason that a commandment alters.

Explanations

Sometimes a physician changes his prescription for his patient. This kind of change is found in the verses and commandments by the Wise, the Omniscient, which is called ‘abrogation’.

The religion has got two sets of rules: constant and changeable, both of which cases are ordained by Him.

Certainly, all the Divine rules are holding true at their own time and conditions.

The changes of the Divine rules are not the signs of skepticism or regret, or because of scientific development, or experimental development and, finally, due to the weaknesses in the legislation system. On the contrary, they exhibit the fact that they are caused by precautionary measures taken and wisdom, as well as having the environmental conditions in mind. Allah knows.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 102

قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

102. “Say: ‘The Holy Spirit has brought it down (unto you) from your Lord with the truth, in order to confirm those who believe, and to be a guidance and good news for the Muslims’.”

This noble verse, following the course set by the previous issue, emphasizes on ordering the Prophet (S) to do as follows:

“Say: ‘The Holy Spirit has brought it down (unto you) from your Lord with the truth…”

The ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Rūh-ul-Ghudus’, mentioned here, is the same messenger of the Divine revelations or ‘Gabriel, the Confident’. It is he who upon the Divine command reveals the verses to the Prophet (S), whether they are abrogative or abrogated, they are verses which are all with the truth and are for the training of Man.

It is for this reason that following it the Qur’an proclaims in implication that the aim is to enable the believers to stand on firmer grounds in their course of action and to provide guidance and good news for the general Muslims.

The verse continues saying:

“…in order to confirm those who believe, and to be a guidance and good news for the Muslims’.”

Anyway, in order to strengthen the people’s power of faith and to cover the road to guidance and good news, sometimes, there is no other means provided except short-term schedules and temporary programs which will later be replaced by final and constant procedures. Such is the way which constitutes the secret of the existence of the ‘abrogative’ and the ‘abrogated’ in the Divine verses.

In the final analysis, the alterations introduced in the entire content of the Qur’an, as well as each of the rules, are authentic in their own particular circumstances are right, and the pre-condition for receiving guidance and good news is having a healthy spirit and being submitted.

Incidentally, concerning the revelation of the Qur’an both the Qur’anic phrase /’anzaln a/ has been employed in the course of the revelation as in

“We have sent it down by the Grand Night”[1],

and

"We have sent it down gradually in portions."[2]

It is because the Qur'an has got two methods of revelation: one is when it has been instantly revealed to the Prophet (S) on the Night of 'Qadr'. The other method is the one which has been gradually achieved and revealed in the course of 23 years.[3]

The difference between the Arabic term /tanzil/ and /'inzal/ is that the former implies 'bring down gradually' and the latter means 'bringing down all at once'. This difference, which is seen in the verses of the Qur'an, can be taken as an indication to the above kinds of descent.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 103

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ

103. "And certainly We know that they say: 'Only a mortal teaches him'. The language of him at whom they hint is outlandish, while this (Qur'an) is clear Arabic."

It seems apparently there was a non-Arab person living in Mecca and the pagans accused the blissful Prophet (S) of receiving the Qur'anic instructions from him and he ascribed them to Allah, while one may raise the issue as how could a person teach the other if they did not know each other's language?

And how is it that no one claimed at that time that he had been the instructor of the Prophet? And how is it that the words which were revealed in the course of 23 years and under various circumstances did not contradict one another?

And why is it that the said instructor himself did not claim to be a prophet himself? And how is it that no one has answered the challenge of the Qur'an that were even one Surah to be produced by anyone, the Qur'an would take its claim back?

And how is it that words uttered during the 'Age of Ignorance' have not been even partially discovered and their secrets revealed by the scientists even to-day? And how is it that a Book, a Surah of which has not even been produced by the dissident Arabs, could have been brought forward and taught by a non-Arab?

At any rate, this noble verse refers indirectly and in a correct way to the pretexts for accusations set forth by the opponents to the Prophet (S) of Islam, saying that Allah knows that they claim a man instructs these verses to him.

The Holy Qur'an obliterates all these unfounded and groundless accusations and claims with a decisive response, implying that they are heedless of the fact that: the language of him to whom they ascribe the Qur'an is not Arabic, while this Qur'an is revealed through the Arabic language which is eloquent and explicit.

The verse says:

"And certainly We know that they say: 'Only a mortal teaches him'. The language of him at whom they hint is outlandish, while this (Qur'an) is clear Arabic."

One can infer from this verse that the miracle performed by the Qur'an is not confined to its content. On the contrary, the words employed by the Qur'an are also reaching the heights of miracle, while attraction, sweetness, and particular harmony are to be found in its words and structural forms of sentences are beyond the power of men.

To sum up, the Arabic term /yalhadūn/ is derived from /'ilh ad/ which signifies deviation of the right toward what is wrong, and sometimes it refers to all kinds of deviation. In this context, it alludes to the fact that professional accusers and liars sought to ascribe the Qur'an to a man and considered him to be the teacher of the Prophet (S).

The Qur'anic terms /'i'jam/ and /'ajmah/ originally means ambiguity and /'a'jami/ refers to the person who has shortcoming in his expression, whether an Arab or a non-Arab. As the Arabs were faced with lack of information from the part of non-Arabs, they used to call others as /'ajam/.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 104

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَهْدِيهِمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

104. "Verily, those who do not believe in the signs of Allah, Allah will not guide them and they will have a painful punishment."

With a threatening tone, the Qur'an deals in this verse with the fact that such accusations and deviations are all caused by their lack of faith which has penetrated all their selves.

"Verily, those who do not believe in the signs of Allah, Allah will not guide them…"

That is, they will be lead neither to the right path, nor to the road leading to Paradise and eternal happiness, and a painful chastisement awaits them. For they are so entangled with fanaticism, obstinacy and hostility when facing the truth that they have lost the eligibility of being guided, and they are not prepared but for a painful punishment.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they will have a painful punishment."

It is for this reason that those, whom Allah knows not to be believers, are not guided by Him. That is, His grace does not involve them and they would be left to their own.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 105

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

105. "Only they forge falsehood who do not believe in Allah's signs, and they themselves are liars."

In the last two verses, the pagans used to claim among their accusations to the blissful Prophet (S) that these verses were taught to him by a man and he falsely ascribed them to Allah.

In answer to them the Qur'an, through previous verse, implied that that man is not an Arab instructor; furthermore, Allah will not teach all of the Qur'anic sciences to a pagan. Now, it implies in this verse that: The prophet

is not the one who ascribes the words of others to Allah; this is the job of those who are not believers.

Thus the Qur'an says:

"Only they forge falsehood who do not believe in Allah's signs and they themselves are liars."

And what a lie is greater than accusing men of the truth, and causing other obstacles to stand in the path of them and those who are thirsty for the truth?

The above verse is one of the shaking verses which concern the ugliness of falsehood. It equates liars with the pagans and with those who reject the Divine verses.

In principle, there is a great deal of importance attached to the issue of telling the truth and campaigning against lying and falsehood in Islamic teachings in so far as lying has been equated with the key to all sins, and telling the truth as the bill or the ticket to enter the Paradise.

The blissful Qur'an proclaims:

"And if he had fabricated against Us some of the sayings,"

"Then We would certainly have cut off his aorta."[4]

In Tafsir-i-Durr-ul-Manthūr and Al-Mizan, it has been quoted from the blissful Prophet (S) that a believer may be involved in fornication or in theft, but he will never tell lies. Then he recited this verse.

Ali (as) says:

"Telling lie is disgrace in the world and will cause the punishment of Fire in the Hereafter." [5]

And also, Imam 'Askari (as) proclaims:

"All evil and nasty things are placed in a room, the key to which is 'telling lies'." [6]

In another quotation from Ali (as) we read:

"One can not be blessed with faith unless he abandons lying whether it is in the form of a joke or is seriously said." [7]

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 106

مَن كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلاَّ مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالإِيمَانِ وَلَـكِن مَّن شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْراً فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

106. "He who disbelieves in Allah after believing in Him; not he who has been compelled, while his heart is still content with the faith, but he who opens (his) breast to disbelief, upon them shall rest wrath from Allah and for them shall be a great chastisement."

In the early days of Islam, the pagans of Mecca martyred the parents of 'Ammar Yasir, a true believer, while torturing them for embracing Islam. As soon as it was 'Ammar's turn to be tortured, he declared those words which the pagans wanted him to utter and saved his life.

'Ammar was then blamed for having abandoned Islam by some persons. He called on the blissful Prophet (S) while crying. The Prophet caressed him, saying:

"If your life is at stake again, utter these words and save yourself; you are faithful all over." [8]

This procedure is called /taqqiyah/ in Islam which requires certain rules. However, we must know that there are certain cases of ‘Taqiyyah’.

At times, it is compulsory while at other times, one must stand up to the end and utter his words, and not engage in Taqiyyah, like what the sorcerers of Pharaoh did.

They embraced the faith as soon as they noticed the miracle of Moses (as) not fearing the threats of Pharaoh and telling him to do what he wanted, and that they would not abandon their faith. Pharaoh martyred them all, the resistance of whom has been praised by the Qur’an.

Certainly, the act of Taqiyyah (concealing of faith) is not a sign of excommunication, weakness, fear, retreat, loss of faith, and submission. On the contrary, it is a kind of cover-up and a strategy for the preservation of powers and programs.

In Islamic quotations, it has been likened to a shield and ‘guarding’ against ‘something’ and ‘boundaries’.

Thus, in this noble verse, the Qur’an implies that he who disbelieves in Allah and abandons Islam, embracing paganism will be entangled with Allah’s outrage and there is a great punishment awaiting him; unless he is compelled to utter words of blasphemy while feeling heartily in a different way, in which case, he will not be held responsible.

The verse says:

“He who disbelieves in Allah after believing in Him; not he who has been compelled, while his heart is still content with the faith, but he who opens (his) breast to disbelief, upon them shall rest wrath from Allah and for them shall be a great chastisement.”

In fact, there are here allusions made to two groups of people who turn their back to Islam after embracing it.

The first group are those who become entangled with illogical enemies under whose pressure and torture, they declare their apostasy with Islam and their loyalty in paganism, while whatever they proclaim is with their tongue and they are heartily faithful.

Such a group is certainly pardoned. However we must note that they have not committed any sin to start with. This is an example of allowed ‘Taqyyah’ which has been permissible for the sake of the protection of lives and for the conservation of powers for further services to the causes of Allah and of Islam.

The second group consists of those who truly leave their ‘selves’ to paganism and disbelief and change their ideological system of thought altogether.

Such people are both targeted by Allah’s wrath and His great chastisement, for such an act causes the disintegration of the Islamic society, thus constituting some kind of revolt against the Islamic government. Such an act is often a source of evil intentions and causes the secrets of Islamic society to fall into the hands of the enemies.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 107

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمُ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَي الاَخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

107. "That (Divine wrath) is because they have preferred the worldly life over the Hereafter, and definitely Allah does not guide the infidel people.

Sticking to the material world and giving preference to it over the Hereafter paves the ground for one's loss of faith and one's entanglement with the Divine punishment.

Therefore, the causes for their apostasy are cited in this holy verse as follows:

"That (Divine wrath) is because they have preferred the worldly life over the Hereafter…"

It is for this reason that they take once again the path to paganism, and Allah does not lead the pagan group who insist on rejection and blasphemy.

The verse continues saying:

"…and definitely Allah does not guide the infidel people."

To sum up, once they embraced Islam, some of their material benefits were being jeopardized and as they loved the worldly life they regretted having embraced the faith and once again, they returned to paganism.

It is obvious that such a group, who are not attracted in the faith from within their selves, will not be covered in the Divine guidance, for the love of worldly life, welfare-loving sense, and giving its priority to the Hereafter pave the way for the abandoning of one's faith, the growth of apostasy, and, consequently, entanglement in the Divine outrage.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 108

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

108. "They are those on whose hearts, and their ears and eyes Allah has set a seal, and these are the heedless ones."

The rationale for not guiding them has been explained in this holy verse. It implies that they are the ones on whose hearts, ears and eyes Allah has set a seal in so far as they are deprived of seeing, hearing and understanding the truth.

The verse says:

"They are those on whose hearts, and their ears and eyes Allah has set a seal…"

It is evident that such people, losing all of the tools for their cognition, are the true inconsiderate ones, because their offensive acts and kinds of sin have left some wrong and evil impacts on their sense of understanding which eventually leads them to be obstructed from grasping all facts.

The holy verse concludes:

"…and these are the heedless ones."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 109

لاَ جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

109. "Undoubtedly, they are the losers in the Hereafter."

He who deliberately prefers the world to the Hereafter, on the Reckoning Day he will realize that he is of the losers and he has vainly lost the capital of his growth.

The consequences of the work of such people have been depicted in this noble verse, as:

"Undoubtedly, they are the losers in the Hereafter."

They are definitely and unequivocally the losers in the Hereafter. What kind of a loss may be worse than this that man remains heedless of all the necessary potentialities for his own guidance and eternal happiness and loses all of those merits because of his whimsical desire!

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 110

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوا ثُمَّ جَاهَدُوا وَصَبَرُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

110. "Definitely, your Lord unto those who have migrated after being persecuted, then they struggled and patiently persevered; verily your Lord, after that, is forgiving Merciful."

Looking through the previous verses, we find that Muslims were categorized into several groups:

The group who lost their lives while being tortured by the pagans and did not utter a single blasphemous word; such as the parents of 'Ammar.

The group who had heartily faith but they engaged in simulation, like 'Ammar.

The group who did apostate, so to speak, after becoming believers.

The group who sought to preserve the faith when entangled in rebellions, and deviations, by going on exodus and fighting a holy war, while they persevered patiently, repented and protected their faith.

There is another group, referred to in this verse, which consists of those who have been cheated and are placed between the abovementioned two groups, i.e., those who uttered blasphemous words in the form of 'Taqyyah' (simulation), and those who returned to paganism whole-heartedly.

This verse, referring to such people states implying that Allah is forgiving and merciful towards those who returned to their faith after being cheated and went on exodus or took part in a Holy War, resisting all kinds of pressure in Allah's path. They are all covered by His grace.

The verse says:

"Definitely, your Lord unto those who have migrated after being persecuted, then they struggled and Patiently persevered; verily your Lord, after that, is forgiving Merciful."

Incidentally, this holy verse provides clear evidence for the acceptance of the repentance of the 'nationally apostate'.

Certainly, apostate is of two categories:

The 'innate apostate' which refers to the person who is born of Muslim parents and, after embracing Islam, has returned to paganism. His punishment consists of being executed and his wealth confiscated while his repentance is not accepted for the blows which have been stricken to the Islamic society and against the creed of people by his apostasy.

As for the second category which consists of 'nationally apostate' and which refers to the one who is born of non-Muslim parents at the time of the

coagulation of his sperm, then he has become a convert into Islam and, later, he has again become a pagan. The repentance of such a person is acceptable.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Qadr, No. 97, verse
2. Surah Al-’Isr a’, No. 17, verse 107
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 97
4. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verses 44 and 46
5. Ghurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 31
6. Bihar, vol. 69, p. 263
7. Bihar, vol. 72, p. 249, and Ad-Durrat-ul-B ahirah, p. 43
8. Tafsir Qurtubi, Safi, Burhan and Majma‘-ul-Bayan and the books of Muslim scholars concerning the issue of concealing of faith.

Section 15: Every Soul Shall Be Paid in Full What It Has Earned

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 111

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَن نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

111. "The day (that) everyone will come disputing in his own behalf; and everyone will be rewarded in full (for) what he has done, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

The resurrection scene is so dangerous that the culprit and the sinful utter something at every moment. Sometimes, he says:

"Swearing to Allah, we were not pagans."

At other times, he says:

"It was they who misled us."

Sometimes he says:

"If you were not there, we would be believers."

Ultimately, this noble verse expresses as a general warning, implying: Remember the day when every one is thinking only about himself and stands up only to defend himself so that he can relieve himself from the painful punishment.

The verse says:

"The day (that) everyone will come disputing in his own behalf…"

However, this struggle of theirs is entirely useless as the consequences of every body's action will be made available to him and they will not be oppressed.

The verse says:

"…and everyone will be rewarded in full (for) what he has done, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 112

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَداً مِن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ

112. "And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest, its sustenance coming to it in abundance from every side; then it was ungrateful for the favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the garment of hunger and of fear because of what they used to do."

Those who became ungrateful and were entangled. We have repeatedly said that this noble Surah is the 'Surah of blessings', whether spiritual and material. We note the consequences of ungratefulness of the Divine blessings in the form of an objective allegory in this verse.

At first, the Qur'an implies that Allah sets forth a parable for those who are ungrateful; a developed area which enjoyed utmost safety and security. It was such that its inhabitants were confident in their life and were never compelled to go on an exodus or emigrate.

In addition to its blessings concerning safety and security, its means of sustenance were also coming to it from all places in abundance. However, the inhabitants of that village ultimately became ungrateful for the blessings,

and Allah inflicted hunger and fear upon them so as to punish them for their deeds.

The verse says:

"And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest, its sustenance coming to it in abundance from every side; then it was ungrateful for the favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the garment of hunger and of fear because of what they used to do."

Indeed, as the safety and security as well as welfare had covered them from the onset, in the end those blessings were replaced by poverty and insecurity.

Point to Remember

Allusions made here to the term 'garment' in the cases of 'hunger' and 'fear' probably reflects the fact that the two serve as clothing, covering them all over, as is the case with the term 'tasting' which refers to the pangs of hunger and fear felt deeply within their selves.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 113

وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

113. "And certainly there came to them a messenger from amongst them, but they rejected him; so the punishment overtook them while they were unjust."

This blissful verse, following the previous one, suggests that: The ungrateful people not only showed ingratitude due to the material blessings but they also rejected and denounced the most important spiritual blessing which was ever conferred upon them by Allah, that is, the Divine prophets as well, the consequence of which was the Divine punishment that covered them all over in the midst of their oppression.

The verse, pointing to this meaning, says:

"And certainly there came to them a messenger from amongst them, but they rejected him; so the punishment overtook them while they were unjust."

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 114

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلاَلاً طَيِّباً وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُم إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

114. "Therefore, eat out of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and give you thanks for Allah's bounty if (only) Him do you worship."

Islam only allows one to eat what is both 'clean' and 'allowed by the religion'. Those things such as wine and pork are forbidden in Islam, for they are inherently nasty and unclean, as well as those eating stuffs which are bought with usurped money even if they are 'clean' by themselves.

They are bought in exchange for the money which does not belong to the person himself, thus they are unlawful and forbidden.

Now that being ingratitude towards the divine favours and their rejection of the prophets will lead to the Divine outrage and punishment, therefore, instead of ungratefulness and infidelity, we should always necessarily

benefit from the allowed favors and consume them in the ‘allowed way’, remaining thankful to Him if we truly worship Him.

The noble verse says:

“Therefore, eat out of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and give you thanks for Allah’s bounty if (only) Him do you worship.”

This verse, as well as the previous one, probably refers to a group of the Children of Israel who used to live in a developed region and were caught in the entanglement of famine and insecurity because of their ingratitude for the blessings.

The proof for this claim is provided by a ‘tradition’ which has been quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who declared:

“A group of the Children of Israel used to enjoy such an affluent life that they used to build small statues out of the food-stuffs and, at times, they used to clean their bodies with them.

Consequently, they were led to the point where they were compelled to eat out of those spoiled unclean food-stuffs, which is the case that Allah referred to in the Qur’an, saying:

“And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest…””[1]

This parable serves as a warning to all those individuals and nations which are encompassed fully by the Divine blessings so that they may abstain from any kinds of wasteful prodigality, extravagance, and spoiling of the blessings which would lead to certain heavy compensation from their part.

This example also serves as a warning to those who throw away half of their additional meal to the dustbins, while at the same time, it serves as a warning to those who hoard the food-stuffs in their houses storage area for their personal consumption and for selling them at a dearer price whereas, they become spoiled and become out of use.

Nevertheless, despite knowing this, they are not ready to make them available to others at a cheaper rate.

Certainly, all of such acts are punishable by the Divine Will, the least punishment of which is withholding of such blessings by Allah.

And a comprehensive religion has also got comprehensive and all-encompassing rules and regulations. It has got a set of rules for both the ‘apparent cleanliness’ of things which are pre-requisites for their consumption, as well as their inherent and ‘legal cleanliness’.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 115

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلاَ عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌرَحِيمٌ

115. “Verily He has forbidden for you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name), than Allah’s, been invoked upon it. But whoever is forced (to eat them by necessity), not desiring, nor (willfully) transgressing (the limit), then Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

As the previous holy verses dealt with the good Divine blessings and the gratitude which is due and outstanding for them, this verse refers to the truly forbidden cases of blessings and the untrue forbidden ones which had been brought about in the religion of Allah through innovation owning to certain heretical views, all of which is done to complement the circle.

Firstly, the Qur'an says:

"Verily He has forbidden for you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name), than Allah's, been invoked upon it…"

However, the infection generated by the first three cases nowadays is not unknown to the public today. The corpses of animals are the sources of all kinds of microbes, and one's blood is more prone to the activities of the microbes than other parts of the body, while pork is a factor in itself for several dangerous diseases.

As for those animals which are slaughtered in the names of other than 'Allah', their philosophy for being forbidden does not concern sanitary reasons, but there are ethical and spiritual considerations involved, for, on the one hand, they constitute a campaign against paganism and the worshipping of the idols and, on the other hand, they form the basis for focusing one's attention to the Almighty, the Creator of such blessings.

Incidentally, summing up the content of this verse and the following verses, we can infer this point that Islam opts for moderation with regard to the consumption of meat.

It neither rejects this source of nutrition altogether as in the case of vegetarians; nor does it commend it outright in the case of the people of the Age of Ignorance or in the case of some of our so-called civilized contemporaries who approve of all kinds of meat (including even the meat of crocodiles and crabs as well as worms).

In conclusion, as is the case with the Qur'anic method in many aspects, it explains the exceptional circumstances, saying that but those who are obliged (that is, they are required to eat certain forbidden meat to stay alive while in danger in a desert) if they do not exceed the limits in eating, Allah will forgive them for He is Compassionate and Merciful.

The verse says:

"…But whoever is forced (to eat them by necessity), not desiring, nor (willfully) transgressing (the limit), then Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Explanations

The contents of this noble verse are also repeated in Suras of Al-'An'am and An-Nahl, which are Meccan, and in Suras of Al-Baqarah and Al-Ma'idah which are Medinan.

The Arabic term /'ihlal/, derived from /hil al/ means raising one's voice when seeing the crescent of the moon. As the pagans, when slaughtering animals, used to invoke the name of the idols with a loud voice, this action of theirs has been termed /'ihlal/.

Certain foodstuffs have been banned in this verse, but they are not confined to these only. On the contrary, there are certain other cases named by the blissful Prophet (S) which we must take into consideration according to the recommendation of the Qur'an itself.

Banning certain things are only in His Own authority and no one is entitled to ban or to make lawful (halal) anything by himself or on the basis of superstitions and hallucinations.

The rationale for banning certain foodstuffs is not based solely on the sanitation and material issues; but, distancing oneself from the spiritual vices, like paganism, is also another criterion.

Surah An-Nahl - Verses 116 - 117

وَلاَ تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلاَلٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوا عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لاَ يُفْلِحُونَ
مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

116. "And do not utter whatever lie your tongues describe (saying): 'This is lawful and this is forbidden' in order to forge falsehood against Allah. Verily those who forge falsehood against Allah will not prosper."

117. "A brief enjoyment (will be theirs) while for them is a painful punishment (in Hereafter)."

These two noble verses condemn whatever analysis or bans which are not based on the Divine law, considering it to be attributing false words to Allah in order to arrive at the insignificant petty worldly goods.

Therefore, this verse describes explicitly the issue which the pagans had raised with regard to their baseless bans which were already implicitly discussed, saying: Stop saying such a thing is allowed and the other one is forbidden by religion, charging Allah with false accusations.

The verse says:

"And do not utter whatever lie your tongues describe (saying): 'This is lawful and this is forbidden' in order to forge falsehood against Allah…"

That is, this is a clear lie which has only been uttered by your mouth. You falsely ban certain things and forbid certain other things by yourselves. Allusion is here being made to the four-footed animals some of which were marked as allowed while others were considered as forbidden by them, and others were allocated to the idols.

Has Allah entitled you to legislate in such a way? Or else, your superstitious beliefs and blind obedience have led you to hold such innovations?

To issue a serious warning, the Qur'an declares at the end of the verse:

"…Verily those who forge falsehood against Allah will not prosper."

In principle, lying and false accusations and allegations are the sources of misfortune and of not being salvaged, no matter who is concerned, lest the one in question should be Allah, the Almighty.

Thus, in the second holy verse, He explains the reasons for the lack of salvation as: It is a meagre advantage which is allocated to them in this world, while they must be prepared for a painful punishment which is awaiting them.

The verse says:

"A brief enjoyment (will be theirs) while for them is a painful punishment (in Hereafter)."

As for the meagre advantage referred to might be an allusion to the dead animals in the wombs which they regarded as ‘allowed’ (Halal) and the meat of which was used by them.

At any rate, to exceed the limits of what is ‘allowed’ or ‘forbidden’ will be followed by both the wretchedness of this world and the painful punishment of the Hereafter.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 118

وَعَلي الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

118. “And for those who were Jews, We prohibited what We have already related to you. And We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.

A question may be raised in here as to why, besides the above-mentioned four things, other forbidden things from animals were also prohibited for the Jewish nation?

This verse, dealing apparently with this issue, proclaims:

“And for those who were Jews, We prohibited what We have already related to you…”

Here is allusion made to verse 146 of Surah Al-An‘am which implies that Allah prohibited every nailed animal for the Jews (allusion is here made to those animals like horses which possess single all-spreading bars in their palm of their feet such as horse), and Allah prohibited them from eating the fat of cows and sheep except all the fat which they carry on their back, or that which is found in-between their stomach intestines, their lateral sides or is mixed with their bones.

Allah did that for the punishment of their cruel behavior and He is true.[2]

In fact, such prohibitions, which are additional, are for the sake of punishing the Jews in exchange for their cruelties.

Thus, He adds at the end of the verse saying:

“…And We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.

There are two sorts of prohibitions in Islam: One is permanent and is for all people; the other one is temporary prohibitions which are concerned with a selected group, like the group from among the Jewish nation which were banned from using certain things for their role in committing oppression.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 119

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

119. “Yet verily your Lord, unto those who do an evil act in ignorance and afterward they repent and amend, your Lord after that will definitely be Forgiving, Merciful.”

Islam experiences no deadlocks and there is always room for reconstruction for man and the way is left open. The acceptance of repentance is a matter of Divinity and is among the methods of education.

Certainly, true repentance is achieved when it is coupled with reformation and making up for the wrongdoings. Those sins which come about as a result of the domination of passions, and are not caused by rejection and out of enmity, are more within the acceptance range. Incidentally, Allah is more compassionate towards the repentant after and on top of accepting one's repentance.

The verse says:

"Yet verily your Lord, unto those who do an evil act in ignorance and afterward they repent and amend, your Lord after that will definitely be Forgiving, Merciful."

To conclude, one must confirm that 'ignorance' signifies not knowing; nonetheless it is also applied to the cases in which man usually knows the right kind of behavior, but is overwhelmed by his passion. In verse 54 of Surah Al-'An'am, and verse 17 from the Surah An-Nisa', ignorance is applied in this sense as well.

Notes

1. The current Surah, verse 112
2. This verse (146) in the Qur'an says:

"And those who were Jews We forbade every (animal) having claws, and of oxen and sheep unto them the fat of both, save what is upon their backs or the entrails or what is mixed with bones. This (prohibition) We recompensed them for their rebellion, and verily we are truthful."

Section 16: Abraham Praised - His Faith Made an Ideal

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 120

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتاً لِلَّهِ حَنِيفاً وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

120. "Verily, Abraham was a nation (by himself) obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not of the polytheists,"

Allah has taken 'Ibrahim to be an entire nation by himself in this holy verse and each and every commentator has presented his own version and interpretation for this sentence, among them we may select the following:

As 'Ibrahim belonged to a school to which no one else belonged, therefore, he was an entire nation by himself[1].

He possessed the good qualities and the perfection which one may expect all the individuals of a nation to possess; that is, in him alone one might find the good traits which might belong to each of the diverse righteous individuals[2].

The Arabic term /'ummat/ sometimes signifies the instructor of the good; thus it signifies that he was the instructor of all the good things[3].

The Arabic term /'ummat/ sometimes means, 'leader' and hence, it targets the leading figure, 'the Imam' of all the worshippers of Allah[4].

The personality and the spectrum of his unique existence measured up to the scope of a nation, as he was one of the pillars of the strength of the whole nation[5].

As he (as) was knowledgeable, he would lead an entire nation, as he is required to do so.

As he initiated a movement, he did what an entire nation was supposed to do, without having any companions, he rose alone and all by himself.

It is certain that the number and the quantity is not so important; rather it is the quality which counts and the initiation of the movement is what matters.

Therefore, this holy verse deals with a perfect example of a thankful servant of Allah, i.e. 'Ibr ahim' who is the champion of monotheism. This is particularly important for the Muslims, in general, and for the Arabs, in particular, and it is also inspiring for them who regard him to be their leader and their earliest object of identification figure.

From among the outstanding characteristics of this great man, one may cite four attributes in this verse:

At first, the Qur'an says:

"Verily Abraham was a nation (by himself)…"

Certainly, 'Ibrahim was 'a nation', a great leader, a nation-building man; and in those days when no one spoke of monotheism, he was the champion of monotheism.

Another attribute of 'Ibrahim was that he was the obedient servant of Allah.

"…obedient to Allah…"

He was constantly following the 'straight path of Allah' and the 'path of the truth':

"…Upright…"

He was never in the path of the polytheists, and his entire existence and all points of his heart were filled only with the light of Allah.

"…and he was not of the polytheists,"

Surah An-Nahl - Verses 121 - 122

شَاكِراً لاَنْعُمِهِ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ فِي الاَخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

121. "(He was) thankful for His blessings; He selected him and He guided him to a straight way."

122. "And We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he will definitely be among the righteous."

Allah has cited five types of perfection for 'Ibrahim in these verses, and then He offers him five favours and positions:

He was a 'nation'.

He was obedient (to the Lord).

He was not among the polytheists.

He was 'upright' and was clear of all involvements in deviation matters.

He was grateful.

As for the five kinds of grace and positions which Allah had accorded him, they were as follows:

Allah selected 'Ibrahim for His prophetic mission and for the conveying of His message.

"(He was) thankful for His blessings; He selected Him…"

Allah led him to the right path and protected him from all types of misdemeanor and deviation.

"…and He guided him to a straight way."

"And We gave him good in this world…"

which in its broadest sense signifies all of what is good, including a wide range of meaning in connection with the prophetic mission as far as the 'House of Ka'bah and a long-lasting life, alongside the acceptance of his call by Allah, enormous wealth, decent sons, as well as a host of other blessings.

"…and in the Hereafter he will definitely be among the righteous."

The Prophet of Islam (S) was ordered to follow his way of life.

The Arabic term /'ijtaba/ is derived from /jababah/, which signifies 'collecting' and 'assembling'. 'Allah's collecting' means that Allah assembles individuals from a diversified range of different approaches, protecting and purifying them for Himself.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 123

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ أَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفاً وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

123. "So We revealed to you that you follow the creed of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists."

Certainly the methods and the conditions of the prophets have not been identical, yet the path of the prophets has been similar and they were commissioned to follow the foregoing prophets and to preach monotheism.

The frequent praising and eulogizing with the same interpretations alongside verses aligned with one another, reflect the utmost sincerity and the position of ‘Ibrahim.

Thus, in this last verse, the latest privilege which was accorded to ‘Ibrahim by Allah because of those prominent attributes, was the fact that his school was not only to be set up and flourishing during his own time but also it was destined to be for people at all times, especially for the nation of Islam as an inspiring school, as the Qur’an says:

“So We revealed to you that you follow the creed of Abraham, the upright one…”

In this noble verse, He again reemphasizes that:

‘Ibrahim was not from among the polytheists.

“…and he was not of the polytheists.”

This refutation sentence is meant mostly for the ‘Quraysh polytheists’ who used to trace back their ancestral line to ‘Ibrahim despite their paganism and worshipping of the idols.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 124

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

124. “The Sabbath was appointed only for those who differed about it, and verily your Lord definitely will judge between them on the Day of Judgment in what they used to differ about.”

The Jews were repeatedly punished for their obstinacy and hostility by Allah, one of which was proclaimed in verse 118 of this Surah, stating:

“And for those who were Jews, We prohibited what We have already related to you…”

The designation of the Sabbath as a holiday, which is explained in this verse, is also another punishment, in which case, certainly, some groups have expressed their appreciation and others have been ungrateful, resorting to dirty tricks, for which they got entangled to harsh cases of punishment.

The verse says:

“The Sabbath was appointed only for those who differed about it…”

Considering the previous verse, the meaning of this verse might be: O’ Prophet! Follow the path of the nation of ‘Ibrahim; holidays on the Sabbath were designated as exclusive to the Jews, which was a type of punishment for them. Nonetheless, the Jews even differed on this day which was selected by themselves.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur’an says:

“…and verily your Lord definitely will judge between them on the Day of Judgment in what they used to differ about.”

However, there are some Islamic traditions which denote Friday is a great day for Muslims, and it is also a festival and holiday for them.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 125

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

125. "(O' Prophet!) Call (mankind) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way. Verily your Lord knows better of him who has gone astray from His path, and He knows best those who are guided."

There are ten interesting ethical decrees issued from this verse to the end of the Surah for social association with others.

This holy verse provides a comprehensive order for all those responsible instructors, professors as well as religious scholars, which calls them to be well-equipped with the various methods to be successful when confronting their different audiences, for one can not invite all those addressed with a single method.

Every body has got a delicate way which must be addressed with a certain capacity through the medium of which he must be communicated with.

The elect ones, who require exclusive ways of handling and reasoning, must be dealt with in their own way, while the common folks should be addressed with some acceptable exhortations. The dissidents should also be addressed with more convenient ways of disputations.

A good advice is the one that the preacher acts and practices according to what he says, and acceptable disputations are those ones in which wrong provocation of feelings and insulting do not permeate:

Therefore, the first duty of the prophets is their 'Calling'.

"(O' Prophet!) call (mankind)…"

All Callings Must Be Divinely-Orientated

"…to the path of your Lord…"

Every single invitation has got a hierarchy. (Wisdom, preaching, and acceptable disputation, in which case wisdom provides the rational method and preaching paves the emotional way.)

"…with wisdom and good admonition…"

Preaching must be done in a friendly manner; however, disputation must be carried out in a friendlier manner, that is, it must be friendly both in its content and form as well as in its methods of expression.

"…and dispute with them in the better way…"

The exposition of the impacts and blessings of what is good, as well as the statement of the pathological effects and dangers of whatever is evil, are included as methods of the calling. (Wisdom signifies being acquainted with the good and the evil of matters by the means of knowledge and reasoning.)

You are liable to perform your duties and you are not responsible for the consequences of whatever happens.

Wisdom and demonstration are always decent means for convincing other people. Nevertheless, preaching and disputation might be done either with the good method or with the bad one. (The terms 'good' and 'better' are not used in case of wisdom.)

Islam offers its followers both mental nourishment (with wisdom), and 'spiritual enrichment' (good admonition) while it entertains logical methods when encountering the opponents.

‘Virtue’, in its broadest sense, including facing the opponents, means when one is facing the enemy he must observe the principles of the Islamic ethics.

“…and dispute with them in the better way…”

Generosity and goodness are the two basic methods in all campaigns if shown at the right time and proper place.

In conclusion, these ten-fold duties and important ethical and rational decrees can be employed as tactical principles in every campaign against the opponents of Islam, and may be used as a general rule in whatever kind of circumstances and under whatever conditions and times.

Were Muslims to implement such programs which are comprehensive, we should probably witness the glory of Islam as widespread throughout the world today, or at least in the main parts of it.

The verse concludes:

“…Verily your Lord knows better of him who has gone astray from His path, and He knows best those who are guided.”

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 126

وإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُم بِهِ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

126. “And if you punish then punish as you were punished with; but if you are patient, decisively, it will be best for the patient ones.”

Up till now, the issue in question dealt with the matter as to how one must engage in a logical dialogue or an emotional or rational disputation with the opponents.

Nonetheless, if the worst comes to worst and there is an entanglement involved, and they take up arms and invade, the Holy Qur’an orders in implication that If you are supposed to retaliate, your retaliation must be with what you have suffered and not more than that.

However, if you do not lose patience and have a forgiving attitude, this would be best for those who are patient.

The verse says:

“And if you punish then punish as you were punished with; but if you are patient, decisively, it will be best for the patient ones.”

In some quotations, we have it that this verse was revealed during the ’Uhud Battle’ when the Prophet (S) witnessed the painful plight of the martyrdom of his uncle Hamzat-ibn-Abdul-Muttalib, in which case, the enemy was not content with killing him.

They tore up apart his chest and side with utmost atrocity, taking out his liver or heart, and cut off his nose and ears, which made him (S) quite upset.

Then he said:

“O’ My Lord! You are worthy of praise and I take up my case to you and you are my help and of assistance in whatever I notice.”

According to the comments made in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, Burhan, Safi etc, the Muslims, witnessing the scenario, declared:

“If we get access to them, we shall amputate them all.”

Nonetheless, in other commentaries like: ‘Ayyashi, Durr-ul-manthūr, and other commentaries, this quotation has been attributed to the Prophet (S)

himself. At this moment the revelation of the above verse took place, upon which occasion, the Prophet (S) declared:

"O' Lord! I shall be patient, I shall be patient."

This was, perhaps, the most painful moments in the life of the prophet, he controlled his nerves once again, selecting the second way which consisted of "forgiving."

And as we note in the history of the conquest of Mecca, the day when the Prophet (S) overcame those stone-hearted people, he declared a general amnesty to them and kept to his words in the Battle of 'Uhud.

Truly speaking, if one wants to witness superior examples of manhood and those of humane affections, he should try to put the story of 'Uhud alongside that of the Conquest of Mecca and make a comparative study of the two.

It is probable that no other nations in a conquering position, has ever treated the conquered one which the Prophet (S) did after the Muslims conquest of the pagans of Mecca considering the situation where retaliation and hatred were the rule of the game within the fabrics of the society and of the social order.

In such a situation, hatred and hostilities were passed down from one generation to the next and a stop to the will to taking revenge was considered as a great defect.

As a result of all this magnanimity in character, amnesty and forgiveness, such a backwardly illiterate and obstinate nation was so moved and then awakened where, according to the Qur'an, groups after groups embraced Islam, the religion of Allah.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 127

وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ وَلاَ تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّـمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

127. "And (O' Prophet!) be you patient and your patience is not but by (the assistant of) Allah, nor grieve over them and do not distress yourself at what they devise."

Such an amnesty, forgiveness, and patience will only take effect decisively when no returns are expected.

That is, they are all done for Allah's sake, and, therefore, the Qur'an adds:

"And (O' Prophet!) be you patient and your patience is not but by (the assistant of) Allah…"

Can man indeed resist when confronting all such heart-breaking scenarios, which dominate him all over, without having the Divine assistance and without benefiting from a spiritual motive while entertaining within himself all the discomfort and pain and yet not lose his patience? It is, of course, possible in case that all is done for Allah and with the benefit of His succour.

Once all efforts in the domain of the propagation of faith and calling towards Him in connection with forgiveness and perseverance did not take effect, one should not yet feel depressed, losing patience with a far outcry. On the contrary, the process of propagation must go on patiently and in a state of calmness.

Therefore, towards the end of the holy verse, He declares:

"…nor grieve over them and do not distress yourself at what they devise."

Such a sorrow and grief are due to their lack of faith and can cause one of the following two phenomena to occur: either it makes one depressed for ever and altogether, or it may make one impatient and cry all the time.

Therefore, to dissuade one from having grief and getting depressed or feeling in distress has its origin in both cases; that is, once you are calling towards Allah, you should neither be upset nor should you feel hopeless.

Despite all the foregoing qualifications, the obstinate enemy might yet not stop planning his conspiracies and might go on with his dangerous strategies.

In such cases, the true strategy to be adopted is what the Qur'an proclaims:

"Do not distress yourself at what they devise."

No matter how well calculated and widespread such conspiracies might be while being dangerous, you must not let yourself down and be driven out.

Do not imagine you are cornered and surrounded or entrenched, for your support is Allah, in which case, you are able to counteract and nullify all the conspiracies and undo them altogether by provoking the forces of Faith, persistence, wisdom and insight.

Surah An-Nahl - Verse 128

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُم مُحْسِنُونَ

128. "Verily Allah is with those who keep from evil, and those who are good-doers."

Allah is with those who lead a life of virtue. "Virtue" here signifies the performance of one's obligatory rituals and the distancing one-self from all those which are prohibited by the religious laws.

Nonetheless, the Qur'anic term 'virtue', in all its dimensions and in its broadest sense, includes in the sense of being of virtuous even when one is confronting the opponents.

This means that even against one's enemies, one must adopt the Islamic ethics; treat with the prisoners and captives according to the rites of Islam; do justice with those who are deviants and in a polite manner; to abstain oneself from lying and falsely accusing of others.

Even in wartime situations and in battlefields, one must observe the principles of wartime, instructions available in Islam and Islamic criteria.

One must avoid attacking the defenseless ones; one must not engage in violating the children and disabled old people; even the four-footed animals must not be hurt, while fields of agriculture must not be destroyed; water supply must not be cut off from the enemy and, in the final analysis, virtue must be observed and principles of justice must be applied to both the friends and enemies in general.

The verse says:

"Verily Allah is with those who keep from evil…"

As the Qur'an says in other verses, at times, one must return and show a positive reaction in exchange for an evil act, by which one can make the enemy shameful about what he has done. This procedure may turn the most hostile of the enemies into kind friends.

Generosity and kindness can serve as the best techniques for conducting a warfare campaign if achieved correctly, and the Islamic history provides plenty of examples in this connection.

The conduct of the Prophet (S) with the pagans of Mecca after its conquest, the way he dealt with Wahshi, the murderer of Hamzah; his conduct with the prisoners of the Battle of Badr, his ways of dealing with those Jews who hurt him in all kinds of way, as well as similar treatments in the biographies of Ali (as) and other religious leader reflect the methods included in the Islamic commandments with regard to this.

Interestingly, we read in Nahj-ul-Balaqah, through the famous sermon of 'Hammam' who was a pious, devout, and intelligent man, asking Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) for a comprehensive decree with regard to the attributes of the devout people, the Imam confined himself to citing only this verse, saying:

Lead a life of virtue, and act in a decent way for Allah is with those who are pious and act decently.

Although this interrogator was such a truth-loving that was not fully satisfied with this short answer and the Imam was necessarily required to provide a more detailed account and offered the most comprehensive speech concerning the attributes of the pious people, which exceeds a hundred qualities, one may infer from the Imam's first short answer that this verse reflects, in fact, all the attributes of the pious people.

In conclusion, we know that the calling through wisdom, preaching, and good disputation is no easy matter, for some are being obstinate and do not accept the call, while others engage in conspiracies, and a third group get involved in the counter activities, and, to achieve their vicious goals they do not stop doing any thing short of false accusations, ridiculing, threatening, fabricating rival factions, economic embargo, wars, as well as all kinds of torture and hurt.

Thus, these two verses provide a kind of comfort, compassion and guidelines which the blissful Prophet (S) had so as not to be obstructed by any obstacles in his mission.

Last Words and Remarks on Surah An-Nahl

As we pointed out from the beginning of the Surah, what stands outstanding from among all the verses of the Surah is the explanation of the various blessings, irrespective of the material and spiritual ones; the apparent and the latent ones; and those which are individual and social. The fact that the name of the Surah is selected as the 'Surah of blessings' is for this very reason.

A careful study of the verses of the Surah indicates that approximately forty blessings, including the great and the small ones, as well as the spiritual and material ones, have been cited throughout the verses of this Surah.

The objectives of this Surah have been: first, to provide instructions concerning lessons on monotheism and the splendor of the Creator. Secondly, to reinforce the love of the human beings with regard to the Creator of such blessings and the provocation of their sense of gratitude towards Him.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Safi
2. Tafsir-i-Mar aghi
3. Tafsir-i-Tabari
4. Tafsir-i-Forq an
5. Tafsir-i-Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘ and Majma‘-ul-Bayan

Surah ‘Isra’, Chapter 17

Surah ‘Isra’ or Surah Bani-’Israel (The Children of Israel), No. 17

(Revealed in Mecca)

111 verses in 12 sections

The Content of Surah ‘Isra’

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah ‘Isra’ contains 111 verses, and it is widely known to be a Meccan Surah. However, some are of the opinion that verses 26, 32, 33, 57, and 58 of it were originally revealed in Medina.

This Surah has been named as ‘Subhan’ for its first word; it has also been named Surah ‘Isra’ for the sake of referring to the adventure of ascension of the Prophet (S), and has also been named ‘Surah Bani ‘Isra’il’ for recounting of the story of Bani-Israel.

As in the case of other ‘Meccan Suras’, this Surah deals with such issues as ‘monotheism’ ‘resurrection’ beneficial pieces of advice, and struggle against all sorts of paganism, injustice and deviation, traditions and rules, whether individual and social in historical perspective, the story of Adam and ’Iblis, the Prophet of Islam (S) and his position in Mecca.

The main point in question in this Holy Surah is the ‘Ascension of the Messenger (S)’.

The Surah starts with ‘Glorification of Allah’ and ends up with Praising and worshipping Him.

The Virtues of the Recitation of the Surah

There are numerous rewards mentioned in various Islamic quotations for those who recite or read this Surah among which one may name the quotation from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“Whoever reads Surah Bani Israel on each night preceding Fridays will unequivocally grasp the presence of Hadrat-i-Qa’im (as), before his death and will be included among his companions.”

We have reiterated over and again that such rewards and gains are not to be attained merely just by reading; on the contrary, they will be brought about when the recitation is coupled with and backed up by meditation, reflection and, consequently, by the obtaining of clues for practical purposes.

Section 1: The Apostle Muhammad's Visit

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah Isra' - Verse 1

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَي بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَي الْمَسْجِدِ الاَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ ءَايَاتِنَآ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

1. "Glory be to Him Who took his servant by night from Masjid-ul-Har am to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa the precincts of which We have blessed that We show him (some) of Our signs. Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

The ascension of the Prophet (S) to Heavens is the most sacred of the journeys throughout history.

The first verse of this Surah discusses the issue of the journey by night of the Prophet (S) from Masjid-ul-Haram (The Sacred Mosque) to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa (Bayt-ul-Muqaddas) which has been a precursor for /Mi'raj/, the most sacred trip.

This trip took place within one night and for a short time. Such a trip could have never been in the least possible given the conditions of the time and through ordinary means which were available in those days, in which case, the miraculous and extraordinary nature of it was obvious.

At first, the verse says:

"Glory be to Him Who took his servant by night from Masjid-ul-Har am to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa the precincts of which We have blessed…"

By using the phrase /masjidul'Aqsa/ here meant Bayt-ul-Muqaddas which is the farthest Mosque, for, at that time, no other mosque existed farther than that. We had blessed its entire surroundings with material, spiritual, worldly, and religious blessings.

For, that was the place of worship of the highly-esteemed prophets as well as the place for the descending of the revelation which was a sacred point, with flowing streams surrounded by fully fruit-bearing trees.

Nonetheless, it is with deepest regret that as a result of the crimes of Israel and America as well as the entire over-oppressive enemies of Islam and their betraying mercenaries, demolitions have been carried out around that sacred place and deadly fire-arms cause thousands of crimes everyday there.

Their beautiful landscapes, which are natural, are turned into semi-burned ruins and heaps of corpses of oppressed human beings, who are killed in cold blood, are to be found there everywhere.

The Holy Qur'an implies that Allah's objective in this extraordinary night trip was to expose to him His sings of power, and wonders of creation.

His sight-seeing tour from Mecca to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa during a single night, as well as his elevation to the skies and his witnessing of the prophets and, finally, his eventual access to the Bayt-ul-Ma'mūr, and Sidrat-ul-Muntah a, as well as a host of other things are all the signs of Allah's Omnipotence.

The Prophet (S) had formerly acquired full knowledge of Allah's magnitude, yet this tour of the skies tended to widen the scope of his observation as to those explicit signs which, in turn, enabled him further to guide human beings.

The verse says:

"…that We show him (some) of Our signs…"

Definitely, it is widely known in the Islamic circle of scholars that the Prophet (S), while in Mecca, was taken by the power of Allah on a night from Masjid-ul-Har am to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa in Bayt-ul-Muqaddas from where he ascended to the skies to note the signs of the magnitude of Allah in the wide open spaces, and then he returned to Mecca on the same night.

It is also widely believed among the Muslim scholars that he performed such a sightseeing tour of the earth and the skies with both body and soul coupled with each other.

We shall, Allah willing, discuss further the issue of "Mi'raj" following our discussion of Surah An-Najm.

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

Allusion is here made to the fact that if Allah selected His prophet for such a glorification, it was not undue, for his words and deeds were so decent and deserving that such a mission was well in line with his aptitude. The Almighty had thus seen and heard him and approved him for such an assignment.

Surah Isra' - Verse 2

وَءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًي لِّبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ أَلاَّ تَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِي وَكِيلاً

2. "And We gave Moses the Book, and made him a Guide for the Children of Israel, (saying:) 'Do not take other than Me a guardian'."

As the first verse of this Surah dealt with the grandeur of the Prophet (S), and as such issues were rejected mainly by pagans and dissidents basing their argument on the subject that how might it be possible for a prophet to be selected from among us with so many distinctions, thus the Qur'an alludes here to the call of Moses (as) and his Divine Book so as to make it clear that such a prophetic mission is not new and entirely a novelty.

Moreover, such an obstinate type of opposition and biased dissidence of the pagans against the Prophet of Islam (S) had not been unprecedented throughout history in general and throughout the history of The Children of Israel in particular.

The verse declares:

"And We gave Moses the Book, and made him a Guide for the Children of Israel…"

It is unequivocal that the objective of naming of the 'Book' in this verse is the 'Torah' which Allah provided Moses (as) for the guidance of the Children of Israel.

Afterwards, the Qur'an refers to the main objective of the mission of the prophets, including Musa, to whom He has commanded:

"…(saying:) 'Do not take other than Me a guardian'."

This issue raises one of the main branches of monotheism, that is, 'practical monotheism' which in turn indicates to 'monotheism in ideology'. He, who considers the 'Prime Cause' of the entire world of existence to be only Allah, will necessarily not rely on anyone else. And those who rely on and count on others do so because of their weakness in their monotheistic ideology.

The supreme outcome of the illumination by celestial Books is the enlightenment of the light of monotheism which they bring about in people's hearts and will consequently lead to one's cutting off of all, and his eventual reliance on Him.

Surah Isra' - Verse 3

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْداً شَكُوراً

3. "(O' you!) the offspring of those whom We embarked along with Noah (on the Ark). Verily, he was a grateful servant."

Noah (as) has been called as the 'second father' of man, for, in the Storm of Noah, all people were drowned except those who were in the ship alongside Noah. It is for this reason that the meaning of the first phrase of the verse:

"(O' you!) The offspring of those whom We embarked"

is identical with the phrase

'O' Children of Adam!'.[1]

The verse says:

"(O' you!) the offspring of those whom We embarked along with Noah (on the Ark). Verily, he was a grateful servant."

Noah (as) lived longer than all of the prophets and remained always the target of attack and teasing of the pagans, unbelievers, and the obstinate.

Nevertheless, he was a grateful servant of Allah and thus he enjoyed a differential treatment, to whom Allah conveys His particular greetings, by saying:

"Peace be on Noah in (all) the Worlds!"[2]

Surah Isra' - Verse 4

وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلَي بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الاَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوّاً كَبِيراً

4. "And We declared unto the Children of Israel in the Book (the Torah, saying): "Certainly you will make mischief on the earth twice, and certainly you will seek self-superiority with great arrogance'."

Alluding to parts of the adventurous history of the Children of Israel in this verse, He says:

"And We declared unto the Children of Israel in the Book (the Torah, saying): "Certainly you will make mischief on the earth twice, and certainly you will seek self-superiority with great arrogance'."

The Qur'anic word, /'al 'ard/ (the land), symmetrical to the subsequent verse, is meant the Holy land of Palestine where Masjid-ul-'Aqsa is located.

The issue of 'making mischief on the earth twice' might probably be related to the two occasions of the Children of Israel: Once to the martyrdom of Sho'aia and the opposition of Armia, and the second occasion is concerned with the murder of Zakaryya and Yahya.

There are, of cause, other possibilities also mentioned in connection with the subject which will be referred to in the discussions following the ensuing verses.

Paradise will belong to those who abstain from arrogance, and distance themselves from every kind of insolence; it does not pertain to the ones who regard themselves as superior to others.

Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 83 says:

"That is the abode of the Hereafter…"

Surah Isra' - Verse 5

فإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ أُولاَهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَاداً لَنَآ أُوْلِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلاَلَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْداً مَّفْعُولاً

5. "So when the promise for the first of the two came to pass, We raised against you some of powerful servants of Ours, given to terrible warfare, so it was they searched inside the houses thoroughly; and a promise to be fulfilled."

The extermination of the unruly oppressors is one of Allah's ways of treatment.

The Qur'an says:

"So when the promise for the first of the two came to pass, We raised against you some of powerful servants of Ours…"

Certainly, there is always somebody who has the upper hand. The Children of Israel initiated a rebellion; the Almighty made other groups dominate them who were superior to them.

To provide power to put down the unruly ones and the rebellions, as well as the withdrawal of security from them, is a decent performance even if a house-to-house search might be required. Thus, all the Divine prophecies will definitely be accomplished fully.

The verse says:

"…given to terrible warfare, so it was they searched inside the houses thoroughly; and a promise to be fulfilled."

Therefore, dealing in the previous noble verse with these two great vices and the ensuing happenings which are the consequences of them as the Divine chastisement, He proclaims:

When the occasion for the first promise arrives and you engage in corruption, bloodshed, tyranny and crime, We shall send over to you a powerful group, combatant, and belligerent so as to pound you, hence, punishing you for your behavior.

This belligerent people invade you in such a manner that for finding even a single one of you, they undertake a house-to-house search mission. And this promise is a decisive one which would be unavoidable and not to be broken.

Surah Isra' - Verse 6

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُم بِأَمْوالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيراً

6. "Then We gave you back the turn to prevail against them, and We assisted you with wealth and children and We made you a numerous host."

Providing sinful people with a respite and re-examination through procurement of their capital and children is one of Allah's ways of treatment. Allah's grace will cover both those sinners who are repentant, and the sinful people who have already been punished. Therefore, Allah's favours will be forthcoming once again and He will enable you to dominate that invading nation.

The verse says:

"Then We gave you back the turn to prevail against them…"

And Allah shall assist you by providing you with wealth, and affluent belongings as well as with children and He shall outnumber you as against your enemy.

The verse says:

"…and We assisted you with wealth and children and We made you a numerous host."

Surah Isra' - Verse 7

إِنْ أَحْسَنتُمْ أَحْسَنتُمْ لاَنفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الاَخِرَةِ لِيَسوءُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّـرُوا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرا

7. "If you do good, you do it for your own selves; and if you commit evil, it is (in like manner) for your own selves. Hence, when the promise of the second came to pass, (We permitted the mighty fighters) to disfigure your (military) faces, and that they may enter the Mosque as they entered it the first time, and to destroy extensively whatever they conquered."

Such Divine favours will cover you. Maybe, you will once discover your own selves and try to reform yourselves, thus distancing yourselves from all evil acts, you may turn to good ones, for when one does good, he has done it to his own self and if he commits evil, it will eventually turn to him, too.

The verse says:

"If you do good, you do it for your own selves; and if you commit evil, it is (in like manner) for your own selves…"

This is a general and everlasting rule that all good and evil will eventually return to one's own self.

However, it is with deep regret that neither that punishment of Allah may awaken you, nor this favour and renewed Divine grace, for you turn to rebellion once again, following the path of tyranny, oppression and violation, inciting a grave corruption on the earth and exceeding the limits in arrogance and self superiority.

Then, there comes the second Divine promise, and when it arrives, some warriors and combatants overcome you in such a way that the pains and calamities inflicted upon you by them make you grieve to the extent that signs of sorrow and despair appear on your faces.

The verse says:

"…Hence, when the promise of the second came to pass, (We permitted the mighty fighters) to disfigure your (military) faces…"

They even capture your great temple of Bayt-ul-Muqaddas (Jerusalem), then they enter Masjid-ul-'Aqsa in much the same way that they did in the first instance.

The verse says:

"…and that they may enter the Mosque as they entered it the first time…"

They do not even suffice to this matter and they devastate whatever they dominate and capture.

The verse continues saying:

"…and to destroy extensively whatever they conquered."

In the end, whatever is of importance in historical events, which leads to development, can be their didactic lessons derived from them, and not the details of the incidents.

The adventures of the wandering of the oppressive Jews, which were brought about by the godly believing people, and which have been dealt with in the last two verses, are meant to demonstrate the fact that oppression and paganism will not be left unanswered.

Since this very general and educative fact has been targeted, therefore, the verse has not dealt with the issues of the details of the entanglement, number, and weaponry.

The case is just in the same way that in the biography of Hadrat-i-Yusuf (as), details of the story and even the name of Zulaykh a has not been even mentioned because of the educational nature of the objectives and instructions with regard to the matters of chastity.

In the meantime, some commentaries have pointed out the corruption of the Jews and their eradication on two occasions by individuals in distant past or recent past, and Masjid-ul-Aqsa has born witness to many bitter memories during several thousand years, yet, according to some verses and Islamic quotations, perhaps we must be expecting further violations and oppressions from the side of the Israelis and their eventual extermination by the righteous servants of Allah.

As it is understood from the apparent of verses 5 and 6, there has not come yet such a widespread corruption on the earth to be brought about by the Children of Israel and such an important devastation and extermination has not been fulfilled by men of Allah.

Nowadays, we are witnessing, on the one hand, the widespread violation by Israel and its plot for the conquest of the lands from the Nile to the Euphrates as well as the expulsion of the Muslims from their homeland, the bringing of espionage networks into existence in the world, taking over of the propaganda machinery, assembling of manpower from the east and the west, and other measures which are conducive to corruption.

On the other hand, we are also watching the emergence of the Islamic Revolution and the appearance of the godly sincere youths in Palestine who invade Israel and try to recapture and repossess Masjid-ul-'Aqsa, in which case, maybe the noble verse alludes to these aspects. Only Allah is the Most Aware.

Incidentally, according to the numerous Islamic quotations, which are recorded under this verse in various commentaries, some consider the

occurrence of the extermination of the violating Jews by the faithful revolutionaries before the uprising of Hadrat-i-Mahdi (as), those who take up their swords (arms) and who go forth as far as their martyrdom.

They will in turn pave the way for the universal government of Hadrat-e-Mahdi (a.j.). Some regard this occurrence to take place within the period of the reappearance of Imam-i-Zaman, in which case the invading Jews will be exterminated.

Concluding this statement, we must keep in mind that the Mosques have constantly been the bases for the force of the religions and as a symbol of power. Hence, liberating the mosques from the domination of pagans has constantly been the duty of the believers.

To combat the violating Jews, men of Allah will enter Bayt-ul-Muqaddas in the same way that the Muslims did in entering Masjid-ul-Har am at the time of the conquest of Mecca.

Surah Isra' - Verse 8

عَسَي رَبُّكُمْ أَن يَرْحَمَكُمْ وَإِنْ عُدتُّمْ عُدْنَا وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيراً

8. "It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if you revert (to your sins), We shall (also) revert (to Our punishment), and We have made Hell a prison for the unbelievers."

The Arabic term /hasir/ is derived from the term /hasr/ which signifies being entrenched and surrounded in an awful place. Carpets made out of straws are called by this name /hasir/ as they are interwoven in like manner.

It is not permissible for anyone to be desperate from the grace of Allah and to lose hope, as Allah has also left the way of return open even for those who are corrupt.

Incidentally, in methods of guidance, we first must start everything with a compassionate tone of voice.

Afterwards, we should employ other means as threats or warnings, similar to the noble verse which, at first, begins with "mercy on you," and then it uses warning and threat in the case of corruption and concludes the statement, when it implies that the gates for repentance and return to Him are not closed; hopefully, your Lord will have mercy on you; but in the case of returning to sin, His punishment is intensive for what you do.

The verse says:

"It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if you revert (to your sins), We shall (also) revert (to Our punishment), and We have made Hell a prison for the unbelievers."

Surah Isra' - Verse 9

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّـرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْراً كَبِيراً

9. "Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is the most upright, and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they shall have a great reward."

The Holy Qur'an is the only Book which contains constant and eternal laws.

In the previous noble verses our discussion was about the Children of Israel and their celestial Book, the Torah, as well as their deviation from this Divine program and their various punishments with respect to the matter. Parts of this discussion have been transferred to the 'Glorious Qur'an' which is the Holy Book of the Muslims, the last ring in the chain of the circle of the celestial Books.

It says:

"Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is the most upright…"

That is, the Qur'an leads the people to the most upright, to the purest and the most sustainable of the ways. The purest and the most direct way in here applies to the ideas it presents. It implies the fact that it has achieved coherence between the overt and the hidden, the idea and practice, and thinking and scheduling, all of which eventually invites and leads one to 'Allah'.

Once reference is made to the point meaning, 'the purest and the most direct', it implies that from the point of view of social, economic, and political organization, which is governing human societies, it offers the purest and the most direct codes of humane conduct with respect to these and, eventually, it encompasses administrative system of government which establishes justice while pounding on the tyrants and the oppressors.

Then, as the stands taken by people in face of this direct Divine program are different, it refers to two distinguished positions and their consequences, implying that this Qur'an bears good tidings for those believers who perform good deeds, which constitute great rewards for them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they shall have a great reward."

Surah Isra' - Verse 10

وَاَنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاَخِرَةِ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً

10. "And that (as for) those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful chastisement."

The Divine punishment all depends on our own deeds, and, hence, that kind of corruption which is not followed by repenting, will lead to disbelief.

Therefore, the Qur'an in this verse indicates that those who do not believe in the Hereafter and its great court of justice, and thus may not engage in performing decent and righteous acts, it unveils the fact that a painful chastisement has been prepared for them.

The verse says:

"And that (as for) those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful chastisement."

Notes

1. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verses 26, 27, 31, 35 and Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 60
2. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 79

Section 2: None Shall Bear the Burden of Others

Surah Isra' - Verse 11

وَيَدْعُ الإِنسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَآءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الإِنْسَانُ عَجُولاً

11. "And man prays for evil as he prays for the good; and man is ever hasty."

There are frequent references made to the haste by man and his aspiration for the evil in the Qur'an.

The Prophet (S) is addressed in a verse:

"And they ask you to hasten on the evil (the Chastisement) before the good…"[1]

The verse signifies that: They expect quick punishment to be administered from him.

In another verse, quoting the unbelievers, it says:

"…then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment."[2]

This kind of 'haste' has its origin in ignorance, hostility, and fanaticism.

At any rate, we find in this noble verse and in line with the previous discussions that one of the main causes of disbelief is lack of adequate study into the matters, and it is so because man is instinctively hasty.

Alluding to the matter, it declares:

"And man prays for evil as he prays for the good; and man is ever hasty."

In fact, the man's haste has its origin in his aspiration for acquiring greater amounts of benefits, and his haste for the acquisition of the 'good' and the 'benefits' causes him not to take into consideration the entire perspective and dimensions of the issues.

It so happens that such haste does not lead him to the point where he would be able to differentiate what is truly 'good' and 'beneficial' for him. On the other hand, his passions and low desires will turn and expose differently the true face of reality in his eyes, therefore, he paves the way to aspire and follow what is evil.

It is in this case that man aspires for the evil much in the same way that he aspires for the good, and it is owing to his misconception about what is good and what is evil.

It also applies in the same manner that one struggles to obtain what is evil and to follow what is evil as if he struggles to attain what is good. It is a foregone conclusion that such a great calamity exists for humankind and it is an amazing obstacle which obstructs the path of happiness which in turn results in regret and in damages.

In an Islamic tradition quoted from the Messenger of Allah (S), he says:

"Haste brings forth the people's destruction; if the people did their jobs with deliberation, no one would annihilate."

Certainly, in Islamic quotations, we have a chapter on the issue of 'speed' and 'agility' with respect to the good deeds, among which one can cite a tradition by the blissful Prophet (S) saying:

"Allah admires that good act which is hastened to be performed."

At any rate, ‘haste’ is a demising attribute when one might engage in his study and verification of the dimension of a certain thing. Nevertheless, speedy action is required in case the necessary process of decision-making has been achieved, and any sort of delays in that case is detrimental. Therefore, it is for this reason that we read in Islamic quotations:

“Speed up in doing decent jobs.”

That is, once it is certain and proven that a task is good to be performed, there is no room left for any delays.

Generally speaking, haste is inherent in human nature, but one must first recognize where to use it properly.

Surah Isra’ - Verse 12

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ءَايَتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَآ ءَايَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ ءَايَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلاً مِن رَبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلاً

12. “And We have appointed the night and the day two signs (of Our power); then We took away the sign of the night (the moon light), and We made the sign of the day sight-giving that you may seek grace from your Lord and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning and We have explained everything very distinctly.”

The underlying reason behind why the term night has usually preceded the term ‘day’ in the Qur’an might be due to the fact that the ‘darkness’ of the earth emanates from itself while its ‘light’ has its origin in the sun.

The revolving movement of the earth around itself and the emergence of the day and the night and their alterations go according to the Divine providence and will, and they are not circumstantial or accidental.

The verse says:

“And We have appointed the night and the day two signs (of Our power); then We took away the sign of the night (the moon light), and We made the sign of the day sight-giving that you may seek grace from your Lord…”

Paving the ground for the acquisition of the means of sustenance is the function of the Divine providence. However, despite the fact that His grace and favor are both in action, we must also go on with our struggle, never to take pride in our cleverness or audacity.

“…you may seek grace from your Lord…”

The night and the day form a natural calendar which is perennial, universal, easy to use, understandable, means of establishing order, and planning, knowing the number of years and keeping account of the affairs.

The holy verse continues saying:

“…and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning…”

Incidentally, the measures for the organization of the system of creation are not unintended or without due causes. They are all having man as their main axis.

In the hierarchy of existence, everything is well organized, based on universal laws, and distinctly separated so as to avoid any collision, interference, and collapse.

The verse, in this regard, says:

"…and We have explained everything very distinctly."

Surah Isra' - Verse 13

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَآئِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَاباً يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُوراً

13. "And every man's record of action have We fastened to his neck; and on the Day of Judgment, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open."

The Arabic term /t a'ir/, mentioned in this holy verse, alludes metaphorically to man's action, for man's actions are like birds which fly in order to reach man himself. Everybody's record of action, whether good or bad, will be hung up around his neck.

We have frequent references made in the Qur'an to man's record of action and there are various points dealt with in different verses, among which are the followings:

1) Man's record of action is universal.

The above verse says:

"And every man's record of action have We fastened to his neck…"

2) Nothing is left out of that record.

"…it leaves out nothing, small or great…"[3]

3) The culprits are intimidated by it.

"…and you see the guilty fearful at what is in it…" [4]

4) Man himself is in a position to arbitrate about his own course of action.

"Read your book, your own self suffices today…"[5]

5) Those who are salvaged will be given their books to their right hand and the ones who are supposed to go to Hell will be given their books to their left hand.

"Then as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say: 'Lo! Read my book." "And as for him who is given his book in his left hand he shall say: 'O would that my book had never been given me'."[6]

Accounts are kept for all and there are no exceptions. And, finally, all human beings will attend in the gathering place of Resurrection with their record of actions.

All people's actions are evident for Allah; the hanging up of the record of one's actions upon the neck is destined for his own understanding.

The registration of one's record of actions is not a tangible process for man in this world, yet everything will be made transparent and clear for him in the Hereafter.

Surah Isra' - Verse 14

اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيباً

14. "(It will be said to him): 'Read your book; your own self suffices today as a reckoner against you'."

Man will be told to read his own book of records on the Day of the Hereafter. Those people, who did not know how to read in this world, will be enabled to read then and there.

The verse says:

"(It will be said to him): 'Read your book; your own self suffices today as a reckoner against you'."

In a tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) is quoted as saying:

"On that day, will one remember all of what he has done and is registered in his record. It seems as if he has done all those in just the same moment. Therefore, the culprits, voice is being heard loud and clear as to what type of letter of record it is in which no minor offences are missed just in the same way that the major ones are not missed."

Fakhre-Razi is of the opinion that the objective by 'the book of record' is here the 'spiritual scroll' on which man's acts leave an impact, and by 'reading' is here meant the comprehension and understanding of it[7]. In Tafsir Al-Mizan, 'book' has been commented upon as 'the acts in themselves'.

In numerous quotations, man is recommended that before the Resurrection he had better see to his own accounts and records.

For example:

"Reckon your own account before you will be reckoned."[8]

Such calculations pave the ground for man's awakening, and the lack of them are often signs of his own negligence. An Islamic tradition indicates that he who keeps record of his own deeds in this world will be at ease with his records in the Hereafter.

Therefore, one must read his own record of actions in this world in order to reform, amend, wipe out his weaknesses or compensate for them, repent and add up to his scroll of decent acts.[9]

Surah Isra' - Verse 15

مَّنِ اهْتَدَي فإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن ضَلَّ فإِنَّما يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلاَ تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ اُخْرَي وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّي نَبْعَثَ رَسُولاً

15. "Whoever gets guided aright, has only got guided aright to his own gain, and whoever goes astray, it is only to his own loss; and no one laden bears the burden of another, nor do We punish (anyone) until We raise a messenger."

Keeping the contents of verses 25 of Al-An'am, 13 of Al-'Ankabūt, as well as Islamic quotations under consideration, one may conclude that the main pioneers of paganism and seduction must shoulder the burden of the mounting guilt of their followers as well as that of their own without decreasing anything from the guilt of the followers, for they have provided their means of seduction.

Man is free to select his own way. Accepting guidance, of course, is to his own advantage, while infidelity and rejection are to his own detriment. They are of no benefits or losses to Allah.

At any rate, this noble verse provides four fundamental and principal commandments in connection with Reckoning and compensations for one's performances:

1) At first, it implies that he who is led straight on, has been guided to his own advantage and the consequences of his actions will benefit his own self solely.

"Whoever gets guided aright, has only got guided aright to his own gain…"

2) He who is misled, is seduced to his own detriment, and will eventually suffer the consequences of his own actions.

The verse continues saying:

"…and whoever goes astray, it is only to his own loss…"

3) And no one will ever shoulder the burden of the guilt of someone else and no one will be held responsible for the crime or the offences which are committed by another person.

The verse says:

"…and no one laden bears the burden of another…"

Certainly, this general rule, which states that no one will shoulder the burden of the guilt of someone else, has got no discrepancy with the verse in Surah An-Nahl which indicates that the seducers will also have to bear the burden of the responsibility of those whom they have misled,[10] for their act of seduction of others will frame them as the performers of those evil acts and, in fact, it is their own sins which they are shouldering.

4) The fourth commandment is eventually stated that Allah shall not punish any person or any nation unless He has sent a prophet to them so as to explain to them their duties in detail and to complete the argument.

The verse says:

"…nor do We punish (anyone) until We raise a messenger."

Surah Isra' - Verse 16

وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَآ أَن نُّهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيراً

16. "And once We determine to exterminate a town, We command its luxurious people (to obey Us), but they transgress therein, thus the word proves true against it, then We destroy it with utter destruction."

The Qur'anic sentence: /'amran a mutrafih a/ signifies that Allah commands the great men of the nation to obey orders, for We must keep in mind the fact that the Almighty will never issue orders as for the commitment of sins and offences.

On the contrary, He always issues orders for the establishment of justice and benevolent acts. Allah's way of extermination consists of issuing orders for obedience. The affluent, who lack conscience, will oppose and the common people also follow them. It is then that the Divine wrath will be decisively actualized and the Divine chastisement and furry will be incumbent.

The verse says:

"And once We determine to exterminate a town, We command its luxurious people (to obey Us), but they transgress therein, thus the word proves true against it, then We destroy it with utter destruction."

The will to execute by the All-Knowing Allah is based upon the sinful grounds which we provide and the negative attributes which we exhibit, otherwise the compassionate Allah will never seek to exterminate any nation unduely. According to a statement issued by Imam Rida (as), the Divine Will in this verse is conditional upon our sin.[11]

Explanations

One of the manners by which the Divine chastisement and Wrath is achieved is ‘affluence’ and being immersed in Allah’s blessings.

The existence of a luxurious class in every society paves the ground for the Divine Wrath.

The moral and social decadence of every society is initiated by and is mainly on the hands of that society’s luxurious chiefs.

The affluent who are indifferent stand up to the call of the prophets before all others, for corruption usually has its origins in affluence.

Let us take the Divine threats seriously and reform us, for the executive force behind the Divine threats has its roots in our own performances, and the Divine outrage and chastisement are utterly severe.

“…then we destroy it with utter destruction.”

Surah Isra’ - Verse 17

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن بَعْدِ نُوحٍ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيراً بَصِيراً

17. “And what a great number (of people) We did exterminate after Noah! And your Lord is sufficient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to the sins of His servants.”

This noble verse, which recounts the extermination of a generation of mankind and the beginning of a new world order in human life, depicts the fact that the era of Noah (as) has been recorded as a turning point in the history of mankind.

The life preceding Noah (as) had been an extremely simple life in nature with a very limited population and was lacking in an adventurous type of history. Moreover, the continuity of the generation of human kind had been made possible with the few believers who were inside the ship with Noah (as).

The verse, while warning the ignorant and the negligent and while being instructive for the people, provides a source of comfort for the Prophet (S), exclaiming that if the pagans do not stop hurting and teasing him, they will face the Divine Wrath.

After Noah’s people, the nations of ‘Ad, Thamūd, Lūt, as well as the companions of Madyan, Pharaoh, Haman, Karun, and the companions of Phil also were entangled with the Divine Wrath.

The verse says:

“And what a great number (of people) We did exterminate after Noah!…”

The nations who throughout history were entangled with the Divine Wrath and fury are numerous, and the Divine Wrath is not exclusive to the Day of Judgment only. It also may take place in this world as well.

This noble verse presents examples of the above issues as a general principle, stating that: What a numerous groups of people who lived after Noah who, according to this way of treatment, were annihilated by Allah.

Then, The Qur’an adds that such is not the case that oppressions and tyranny, or sinfulness of an individual or a group remain hidden from the sharp sight of Allah. This much is adequate that Allah is well aware of the sins of His servants and He has got careful eyes on them.

The verse says:

"…And your Lord is sufficient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to the sins of His servants."

The fact that the era succeeding Noah has been stressed here, might probably be for the sake that man's life before Noah had been very simple and so many differences were usually non-existent, in particular the division of the society into the 'affluent' and the 'oppressed' and, therefore, the people in those societies were hardly entangled with the Divine punishment.

Surah Isra' - Verse 18

مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَن نُّرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلاَهَا مَذْمُوماً مَّدْحُوراً

18. "Whoever desires this (transient worldly) life, We hasten for him therein what We please for whomever We desire; then We appoint Hell for him into which he will enter disgraced, rejected."

As the previous holy verses dealt with the opposition by the still-necked dissidents in face of the Divine orders and their later extermination, this verse alludes to the true causes of such a disobedience and unruliness which is brought about by the love of the world, saying:

"Whoever desires this (transient worldly) life, We hasten for him therein what We please for whomever We desire…"

It is worthy to note that the Qur'an does not say that he, who seeks after the world, will obtain what he wishes. But, it sets two conditions for it: the first refers to that He bestows upon him only part of what he wants, or, in other words, he reaches the very extent to which We will.

The second one refers to the matter that all individuals do not obtain access to this much either.

On the contrary, only some of them will be provided with access to part of the worldly goods; those people whom We deem right:

"…for whomever We desire…"

Therefore, neither do all worldly lovers attain to their wishes, nor those who have their aspirations fulfilled will reach the whole of what they desire completely.

Our daily life also explicitly unveils the truth regarding this matter. How large is the number of those people who seek after wealth day and night successively and reach nowhere, obtaining very little for their tremendous effort, and what a large number of people exist there who have great ambitions in this world and who attain a limited number of their wishes.

Here is an important point of view revealing itself in that, this group, while having been designated to burn in Hell-Fire, are also qualified with two attributes of 'disgraced' and 'rejected' which being applied in their case, each of which is separately being stressed.

The verse continues saying:

"…then We appoint Hell for him into which he will enter disgraced, rejected."

In fact, the Hell-Fire will be their physical punishment designated, and being blamed and distanced are their spiritual punishment which are allocated for them, for one must keep in mind that Resurrection is both

'physical' as well as 'spiritual' and its reward and punishment also encompass both.

Surah Isra' - Verse 19

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الآخِرَةَ وَسَعَي لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُوْلَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُم مَّشْكُوراً

19. "And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive, and he is a believer, (as for) these, their striving shall be thanked."

He who desires for the good of Hereafter and the blessing of Paradise, and struggles along these lines; that is, he who obeys Allah (s.w.t.) and distances himself from the sins while believing in monotheism and the prophetic mission of the prophets, his struggle will be acknowledged and his worship will be acceptable.

The verse says:

"And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive, and he is a believer, (as for) these, their striving shall be thanked."

Therefore, in order to achieve eternal happiness, there are three conditions pending:

1) Man's will, that is, the kind of will which relates to the eternal life, and does not appertain to the passing whims, pleasures, blessings and purely material gains and goals.

2) Such a 'will' must not be in a weak form and lack in strength in the spheres of thinking and spirit. Contrarily, it must call on all the particles of human existence and set them in motion and employ all his means and struggles to this end.

3) All of these must be coupled with faith; that kind of faith which is constant and steady, for one's decision and his struggle will yield results only when they have got their roots in correct and proper motives and those kinds of motives can not be anything other than faith to Allah.

Surah Isra' - Verse 20

كُلاًّ نُّمِدُّ هَؤُلآءِ وَهَؤُلآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوراً

20. "All We succour, these and those, from the bounty of your Lord; and the bounty of your Lord is not closed (to anyone)."

Allah has created all men free and, by placing at their disposal all the means, He has put them to the test so that their way of acting and choice becomes evident, in a manner that those who deal with Allah are parted from the rest. It is just like 'the organization of water and electricity, which makes these two blessings available to all houses so that the individuals, by their own choice, use them in a good or a bad way.

Therefore, it is Allah's way of treatment to make all the blessings and helps available to all so that every body can exhibit his positive and negative attributes.

The verse says:

"All We succour, these and those, from the bounty of your Lord…"

Certainly, having faith in Allah and seeking the Hereafter have not any discrepancy with enjoying the material means.

Incidentally, Allah's favours cover us and are encompassing us owing to His Lordship and His Own benevolence; otherwise, He does not owe us anything.

The verse says:

"…and the bounty of your Lord is not closed (to anyone)."

Surah Isra' - Verse 21

انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ وَلَلاَخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلاً

21. "Behold how We have preferred some of them over others; and, definitely, the Hereafter is greater in ranks and greater in excellence."

The superiority of individuals over one another consists of two types: At times, man is endowed over his equals in his aptitude, interest, thinking, family conditions, geographical conditions etc, in which case all are Allah's grace and are for one's testing and are coupled with responsibilities.

This verse alludes to these kinds of superiorities. At other times, such superiorities have their bases in oppression, exploitation and in colonization, which must be considered separately.

The Prophet (S) said:

"The hierarchy of Paradise is accorded to each individuals according to the reasoning and power of wisdom of the dwellers of Paradise." [12]

Therefore, the Qur'an recounts this very basic principle in this verse. As differences in struggles in this world result in differential reaping of the results, this rule also applies in all the transactions in the Hereafter as well. The only difference is that this world is limited and its differences also are confined, whereas the Hereafter is unlimited and its variations also are unlimited.

The verse says:

"Behold how We have preferred some of them over others…"

Note as to how, We made some excel others because of the differences in their struggle: however, the hierarchical order of the here-after excels others and is far more precious.

The verse continues saying:

"…and, definitely, the Hereafter is greater in ranks and greater in excellence."

Are World and Hereafter Contrary to Each Other?

In numerous verses, there are great appraisals made for the world along with its material benefits. However, inspire of the entire importance given to the material merits and blessings, one finds numerous meanings with regard to the humiliation and demising of those blessings of the world in the Qur'anic verses. Such dual meanings are also objectively found in Islamic quotations as well.

The answer to this query can be found in the Qur'an itself that the blessings of the material world, which are also the favours of Allah, and certainly are regarded as necessary in the system of creation, if used as a means for the spiritual development and happiness of man, they are to be appreciated as well and by all means.

However, if they are used only as a goal and as an end in themselves, aloof from humane and spiritual values, they naturally lead to the man's

arrogance, negligence, unruliness, tyranny and oppression, and, hence, they are to be regarded as a curse and worthy of all kinds of condemnation.

How beautifully has this been stated by Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in that speech of his which is concise and expressive:

"He who looks at it with insight, (regarding it as a means of vision), it will bestow him sight; and he who regards it as an end in itself, then it will blind him." [13]

In fact, the difference between the blamed world and the admired world is the same thing which is understood from the Qur'anic terms /'ilayh a/ which denotes to the 'aim' and /bih a/ which refers to the 'means'.

Ali (as), regarding this world and the Reckoning Day, says:

"Beware! Surely this world is a place from which protection cannot be sought except (while one is) in it."[14]

Surah Isra' - Verse 22

لاَ تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهاً ءَاخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُوماً مَّخْذُولاً

22. "Do not associate with Allah any other god, lest you will sit reproved, despised."

The blissful Prophet (S) is being addressed in this verse, but the verse is meant for the public who are under the leadership of him.

Man's flourishing nature as well as his glory, rest with monotheism and his paganism and worship of any other being is degradation to him and makes him despised and mean.

Therefore, this noble verse begins with the statement of the issue of monotheism and faith, that kind of monotheism which is the core of all positive activities and good deeds of man as well as his constructive deeds.

At first, the Qur'an says:

"Do not associate with Allah any other god…"

It does not state do not worship any other god along with Allah, but it says: 'Do not associate', so as to present a wider scope of meaning; that is, neither in ideas, nor in practice, nor in prayers, desires, nor in worshipping associate any other god along with Allah.

Then, alluding to the devastating effect of paganism, the verse implies that if you associate with Him any other god, you will be demised, despised and will be neglected (isolated).

It says:

"…lest you will sit reproved, despised."

One can conclude from the above sentence that paganism has got three formidable disgraceful effects on man:

1) Paganism leads to, and is a source of, weakness, disability, and humiliation.

2) Paganism is the source of demise and blame, for it depicts a deviating line and method in face of logic, rationality, and it is an obvious neglect of Allah's blessings.

3) Paganism will cause Allah to abandon the pagan to his self-made gods and stop protecting him.

Consequently, the 'neglected one' is he who has got no helpful companions and is blamed by Allah, the angels, the believers, and the

awakened conscience of the enlightened people as well as the wise men of the world.

Notes

1. Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 6
2. Surah Al-’Anf al, No. 6, verse 32
3. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 49
4. Ibid
5. The current Surah, verse 14
6. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verses 19 and 25
7. Tafsir-ul-Kabir
8. Bih ar, vol. 7, p. 73
9. Tafsir-i-Kashf-ul-’Asr ar
10. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 25
11. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daqayiq
12. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
13. Nahj-ul-Balaghah, sermon 82
14. Nahj-ul-Balaghah, sermon 62

Section 3: Goodness and Submission to Parents Ordained

Surah Isra' - Verse 23

وَقَضَي رَبُّكَ اَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَآ أَوْ كِلاَهُمَا فَلاَ تَقُل لَهُمَآ اُفٍّ وَلاَ تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَهُمَا قَوْلاً كَرِيماً

23. "And your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him and (to show) kindness to parents; if one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them 'fie', nor repulse them, and speak to them a gracious word."

Next to the principle of monotheism, the Qur'an alludes to one of the most fundamental instructions of the prophets with regard to mankind, stating that:

"And your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him and (to show) kindness to parents…"

Placing Unity, monotheism, which is the most fundamental principles of Islam, alongside with being kind and good towards one's parents, is a further emphasis laid on this important Islamic commandment.

Later, it refers to one of the clear examples for kindness to one's parents, implying that whenever one of them or both reach old age while living with you, that is when they need your constant care, do not spare them any act of kindness and do not despise them or scorn them by insulting them the least. That is, even stop uttering the slightest despising murmuring sound.

Do not shout at them, but speak to them in a calculated kind and highly esteemed manner.

The noble verse continues saying:

"…if one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them 'fie', nor repulse them, and speak to them a gracious word."

Surah Isra' - Verse 24

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيراً

24. "And out of compassion, lower unto them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they cherished me when I was little."

In words and in deeds, try your best to be humble towards your parents. The objective in mind by the Qur'anic term /ðull/ is not meant to denote humility, but, it means 'gentleness and humbleness.'

By the phrase: 'lower unto them the wing of humility', which is literally mentioned in the above verse, is the simile which refers to making oneself in the utmost sense of submissive gentleness towards one's parents. It makes one recall a bird which opens up its wings to provide shelter for its offspring.

The Almighty thus proclaims to cover your parents gently under your love and generosity by providing them with shelter and care as they provided you with shelter and care when you were little.

The verse says:

"And out of compassion, lower unto them the wing of humility…"

Imam Sadiq (as) in this regard said:

"That is, do not look at them except with compassion and kindness; do not raise your voice when talking to them above their voice; and do not raise your hand above theirs, and do not go before them when walking."

Therefore, pray for them and ask Allah to allocate His blessings and forgiveness to them before and after their death, for they have brought you up as a child. This very recent one is in case that they are both believers.

The verse says:

"…and say: 'My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they cherished me when I was little."

One can infer from this verse that the praying of children for their parents who are dead is acceptable by Allah (s.w.t.), otherwise, there would be no use in saying:

"pray for them."

Surah Isra' - Verse 25

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِن تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلأَوَّابِينَ غَفُوراً

25. "Your Lord is well aware about what is in your selves. If you be righteous, then verily He is for the repentant forgiving."

Among the Divine powers and Divinity of the Almighty is His Omniscience, and every kind of service rendered to one's parents, is carried out under His supervision.

The verse, in this respect, says:

"Your Lord is well aware about what is in your selves…"

If one is ignorantly having an unsuitable relationship or approach towards one's parents, one can call Allah's grace to the matter by repenting of his sins.

As it may sometimes happen that with regard to one's relationship with his parents and respect for them and gentle submissiveness concerning them, there might be deviancies occurred which one might unconsciously or deliberately perform, the Qur'an in this holy verse implies that your Lord is better aware of what is in your mind than you.

For, His knowledge in all fields is intuitively direct, constant, original, eternal, everlasting and lacks all errors, while your knowledge does not possess such characteristics.

Therefore, if you, with no intention of disobeying against Allah, get involved in an erroneous behavior with regard to respect and goodness concerning your parents, and you regret it immediately, initiating compensation you will definitely be covered by His amnesty.

The verse says:

"…If you be righteous, then verily He is for the repentant forgiving."

Quotations Concerning Respect for Parents in Islam

Islam has stressed respect for parents to the extend that one can find such respect for few other matters. As examples, some traditions are cited here in this connection:

1) In four of the Suras of the Glorious Qur'an, goodness towards one's parents immediately follows the subject of monotheism. Treating the matter

in the same row, and equal basis with monotheism, exhibits the fact that to what extend it regards, for one's parents is considered important in Islam.

2) This issue is so important that both the Holy Qur'an and Islamic quotations have explicitly recommended that even if one's parents are pagans, respect for them is a 'must'.

3) Thanking parents, in the Glorious Qur'an, is placed on an identical basis with thanking Allah for His blessings. [1]

4) The Qur'an has not allowed the slightest kind of lack of respect for the parents.

"…do not say to them 'fie'…"[2]

5) A tradition from Imam Kazim (as) declares:

"Some one called on the Prophet (S) and asked him about the rights of parents. He answered: 'One must not call them by name. (They must be addressed as: My Father…!) He should not go in front of them when walking; and should not seat himself before his parent.

One must not be acting in such a way as to be blamed for his parents. He must not behave such a manner that people say: 'Hoping that Allah does not forgive your father for having done such a job'." [3]

6) The Prophet (S) has said:

"Let his nose be rubbed against the ground! Let his nose be rubbed against the ground! Let his nose be rubbed against the ground!"

Then he was asked:

"Whose nose O' Messenger of Allah?"

So he answered:

"The one who does not do a good job to enter the Paradise once his parents reach old age!"

This quotation has been cited by Moslem in his 'Sahih'.[4]

7) Abū-Sayyid-'Ans ari has said:

"Once we were with the blissful Prophet. A man from the Bani-Salmah came and said:

'O!' Messenger of Allah! Is there any thing good that I can do for them after the death of my parents? And is there any generous act which I can do for them?'

He answered:

'O', Yes. You can do them good by performing the prayer rituals for them; and asking forgiveness on their behalf from Allah; and keeping to the words and to their commitments and making payments for their debts as well as respecting their friends." [5]

8) In some of the quotations received, assisting and doing 'good' to one's parents have been greatly recommended and doing them harm has been discarded. For instances, the reward for looking with compassion at one's own parents has been equated with an accepted 'Hajj'.

Their consent is identical with the consent of Allah and their outrage is on an equal footing with that by Allah. Kindness and generosity towards one's parents prolongs one's lifetime and causes our children to be kind and generous towards us.

We have it in quotations that: If you were even beaten by them, do not utter a low word; do not stare at them; do not raise up your hand against

them; do not walk in front of them; do not call them by name; do not do what might lead the people to curse them or insult them; do not seat yourselves before them, assist them before being asked by them for assistance. [6]

9) Generosity and kindness to one's parents are among the attributes of the prophets as is explained about Hadrat-i-'Issa (as)

"And (He has made me) kind to my mother…"[7]

and is also said about Hadrat-i-Yahya (as)

"And kindness to his parents…"[8]

10) Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has remarked:

"Kindness to the parents is the greatest (and the most important) of the Divine duties."[9]

11) Imam Sadiq (as) has stated:

"The best of the deeds are: Prayer rituals which are performed at their appropriate time; Kindness and goodness towards one's parents, Fighting a holy war for the sake of Allah. [10]

12) The prophet of Allah (S) has stated:

"Whoever obeys Allah's command with regard to his parents, two of the gates of the Paradise will be laid wide open to Him; and if he obeys one (of them), one (of the gate-ways of the Paradise will be left open for him)." [11]

13) The blissful Prophet (S) has stated:

"The person who obeys his parents and his Lord, will be assigned a highly-elevated position in Paradise." [12]

14) The Messenger of Allah (S) remarked:

"He who wishes his life be prolonged and his means of sustenance be made abundant, must treat his parents with kindness and observe the union of kindred." [13]

15) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"A man turned up before the Prophet (S) and asked:

'O' Messenger of Allah! Whom should I do kindness to?'

He answered:

'To your mother!'

Again, he asked:

'Next to my mother, to whom (should I be kind)?'

He answered:

'To your mother!'

Again, that man asked:

'After her, to whom (should I do good)?'

He answered again:

'To your mother.'

And, finally, he asked:

'Following my mother, to whom (should I do good next)?'

He replied:

'To your father.'" [14]

16) The Messenger of Allah (S) remarked:

"Do your fathers good so as your children also do you good. Turn your eyes away from the wives of others so that others turn away their eyes from your wives." [15]

One must keep in mind the fact that one's parents are not regarded as only parents. In some quotations the blissful Prophet (S) and Amir-ul-mu'mineen (as) are considered as the 'fathers of nation'. The Prophet (S) said:

"Ali and I are the fathers of this Ummat."

In conclusion, once the parents focus their attention on the fact that they stand in importance next to the principle of monotheism of Islam, they will be motivated strongly to call their children to adopt monotheism and Islam still further.

Surah Isra' - Verse 26

وَءَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَي حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلاَ تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيراً

26. "And give to the near of kin his due, and (to) the needy, and the wayfarer; and do not squander wastefully."

In this noble verse, the Qur'an explains still further another chapter from the interrelated fundamental principles of Islam regarding the rights of relatives and the needy as well as the wayfarer and, generally speaking, the issue of spending one's wealth, without immoderation and extravagance.

At first, the verse says:

"And give to the near of kin his due…"

This holy phrase signifies broadly and covers all of one's relatives, though the 'Ahl-ul-Bayt' of the holy Prophet (S) are the most clear examples of it, and the Prophet himself (S) is being clearly and straightly addressed in this verse.

Moreover, the verse continues saying:

"…and (to) the needy, and the wayfarer; and do not squander wastefully."

In the meantime, the Qur'an recommends all not to engage in wasting or spoiling and do not exceed the limits, giving them away more than what they merit.

Concerning the issue of immoderation and extravagance and concentration on this matter is so highly recommended that we read in quotations: The prophet (S) was walking once on a road. One of his companions called Sa'd was engaged in performing the ritual ablution for praying, and he was using a lot of water.

He (S) asked:

"Why is it that you are wasting so such water, O' Sa'd?"

He said:

"Is there any immoderation in the water of ablution?"

He replied:

"Yes. Even once you find yourself by a flowing stream."

Explanations

The Arabic term /tabŏir/ which is derived from /baŏr/ signifies 'squandering', like preparing [10] meals for two guests. In other words, that means spreading one's wealth all over by means of wasting it.

Imam Sadiq (as) has stated:

"He who consumes something in ways other than the path of obedience of Allah, is a 'squanderer'." [16]

Answering a query concerning the issue of spending in allowed cases, he has ascertained

"Yes, for, he who overspends in almsgiving and gives away out of his wealth, leaving nothing for himself, he has extravagated in using lawful properly." [17]

After the revelation of this verse, the blissful Prophet (S) was searching for the aim of Allah by the phrase /ðil qurba/ (near of kin) when Allah revealed to him to give 'Fadak' to Fatimah (as) and he did accordingly.

However, later Fadak was illegitimately taken back from the Ahl-ul-Bayt, who tended to document their claim by this verse. Therefore, by the relatives, the objective of /ðawil qurba/ (near of kin) are: Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Hossayn (as).

The Shi'ite commentators as well as Sunni commentators like Tabari, deducing from the quotations, write:

"When arriving at Sham along with other prisoners, Imam Sajjad (as) for demonstrating to their capturers as to why they considered the Ahl-ul-Bayt as aliens and non-Muslims, documented his speech with this verse, saying: "/ðawil qurba/ (relatives) which is mentioned in this verse, directly refers to us and are intended for demonstrating our case." [18]

Some quotations consider this verse as relating to 'khums' (one-fifth), while some others regard the verse as speaking of matters higher than material issues. They have said that this verse commands the Prophet (S) to pay what is due to Ali-Ibn-'Abi-Talib by appointing him as his successor in his will.

Imam Sadiq (as) has mentioned with respect to this verse:

"The right of Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as) which has been due to him, has been succession to the Messenger of Allah (S) and having the prophetic sciences." [19]

The objective in mind when mentioning the term /tabðir/ in the verse, which has been cited and which prohibits Muslims from engaging themselves in is /quluww/ (exaggerations). [20]

Fadak was a large farm which was placed at the disposal of the Prophet (S) without any fighting.

That the Prophet in turn left it at the disposal of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) for reasons of their popularity, chastity, devotion, trustfulness, and on order to support them economically in the line of propagation and removing the poverty of the Muslim Ummah.

However, after the passing away of the Prophet (S), Abū-Bakr re-occupied it, which was later returned to them by 'Umar-Ibn-i-Abdul 'Aziz. They again usurped it and it was returned to them during the era of Ma'mūn Abbasi. Once again they got furious.

There is an extensive literature on the discussions about the historical, legal, and political issues involved which is mentioned the commentaries concerning this verse, which we avoid stating them all in here.

Surah Isra' - Verse 27

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُوراً

27. "Verily, the squanderers are the brethrens (accomplices) of the Satans and the Satan was very ungrateful to his Lord."

This verse provides a firm justification and emphasizes once again the negation of squandering.

It implies that those who engage in over consumption are accomplices to the Satan, for they tend to spoil Allah's blessings, and 'the Satan' was most ungrateful to Allah, for Allah had bestowed upon him an exceptional potentiality intelligence, as well as extraordinary capability, which he utilized for objectives other than what all of them were destined for, that is, he employed all towards seduction of the people.

The verse says:

"Verily, the squanderers are the brethrens (accomplices) of the Satans and the Satan was very ungrateful to his Lord."

Incidentally, the term /'ax/ in Arabic often denotes both 'brother', as well as one's 'companion', and one's company, as in the case of /'ixwassafar/ which refers to the person who is constantly engaged in traveling and in the case of /'ixwal karam/ which refers to the person who is 'generous'.

'Brotherhood' is sometimes a hereditary issue which is established as a result of one's familial relationship and at times it is the consequence of one's political affiliation. The squanderers are thus, in a sense, the politically affiliated brothers of the Satan, that is, they are those who follow in the track of the Satan and keep his company.

There are frequent references made in the Qur'an to the 'Satanical temptations' or his mastership over individuals. But, the only occasion on which the phrase /'ixw an-uš-šay atin/ has been used is this verse, which means the squanderers are as the 'collaborators' of the Satan, and not under his domination.

As can be seen, one has here not only been overtaken by his temptations, but he has arrived at a stage of collaboration and assistance of the Satan.

The act of 'squander' is mostly used in the sphere of financial matters. However, it might also refer to other blessings such as 'wasting of one's youth', or of his 'life-time' or utilizing of one's thinking, eyes, ears and tongue in incorrect ways, assigning of responsibilities to indecent people, acceptance of responsibilities without having the proper qualifications and over and above one's capacities and limitations, instructing and learning of unessential and useless matters, etc. [21]

Surah Isra' - Verse 28

وَإِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَآءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُل لَّهُمْ قَوْلاً مَّيْسُوراً

28. "And if you turn away from them seeking mercy from your Lord, which you are hopeful for, then speak unto them a gentle word."

The Qur'an declares that whenever you are unable to do them good because of your lack of means and funds and you are about to ask Allah for help, hoping to get His help so as to assist them in fulfilling their needs, pledge to aid them in a good manner and use soft words as far as you can.

The verse says:

"And if you turn away from them seeking mercy from your Lord, which you are hopeful for, then speak unto them a gentle word."

Therefore, this noble verse deals with adopting a decent approach towards the people. That was why, while waiting for Allah's grace and assistance for providing him with the necessary means and funds, the blissful Prophet (S) would pray for him who might turn to him for help when and if he lacked the means and the fund, saying:

"May Allah provide the means for you and I out of His Grace!" [22]

Fatimah Zahra (as) once asked the Prophet (S) for a maid to help her with her chores. He answered:

"There are four hundred in the mosque who have no food and clothing. Were the case not so, I would appoint a maid servant for you."

He then taught her the 'hymms' known as 'Tasbihy at' which are called as: 'Tasbih at-i-Hadrat-i-Zahra'. [23]

The blissful Qur'an contains instructions concerning the ways of talking with people, among them one may name the gentleness, leniency, easiness, firmness, idiomatic and eloquent ways with which one must commence his speaking. The verse 3, Taha; 44, 4, 'Isra'; 23, 5, 9, 6, 8, 7, and 63 Nisa confirm the above points.

Surah Isra' - Verse 29

وَلاَ تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَي عُنُقِكَ وَلاَ تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُوماً مَّحْسُوراً

29. "And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it to the utmost (limit) of its stretching, so that you should sit down blamed, empty-handed."

As observing the issue of moderation in everything in life, even in cases of sharing one's wealth with others, is a prime factor, the Qur'an stresses this matter in this noble verse, saying:

"And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck…"

This expression provides a delicate allusion to the fact that one must be generous and not be a miser as those who behave in such a way as if their hands are both in chains and tied up to their necks, thus unable to give away anything to anyone.

This verse also recommends all not to be overgenerous and open-handed so as not to be blamed and get stuck with your job.

The verse continues saying:

"…nor stretch it to the utmost (limit) of its stretching, so that you should sit down blamed, empty-handed."

Imam Sadiq (as) remarked:

"The Qur'anic term /mahsūr/ here is meant envy, poverty, and empty-handedness. Some also claim that 'blame' concerns with the beginning of the verse which refers to 'miserliness' while the term 'empty-handed' alludes to 'lavishness' in spending and is related to the end of the verse."

A woman once sent down her son to the Prophet (S) and asked his shirt for sanctification purposes of blessings. The Prophet (S) gave away his only shirt and as he had no other one to put on, he did not get out of the house for attending his prayers. This holy verse was revealed indicating that generosity does not imply that one gives away his only single shirt.

We have it in another quotation, saying: Some gold was brought and handed down to the Prophet (S) and he gave the whole of it away to the poor instantly. On the following day, a beggar came up to the Prophet (S), asked for something. He had nothing left to give him. The beggar insulted him.

As the Prophet (S) had nothing to give him, was saddened upon which occasion when this verse was revealed. [24]

Surah Isra' - Verse 30

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيراً بَصِيراً

30. "Verily, your Lord extends the sustenance for whomever He pleases; and straitens (it for whom He pleases), verily He is, of His servants, All-Aware, All-Seeing."

Allah's coffers are plentiful and well expanded, though as a matter of expediency, He sometimes widens the scope for the means of sustenance for some people, while, at other times, He tightens up and makes the means of it meager.

He is truly knowledgeable as to what is good for the servant, and He is all-seeing with regard to their advantage. Hence, while one's scope of sustenance is broadened, another person's sphere is tightened as He deems what is worthy for them.

Therefore, He (s.w.t.) examines some by enabling them to accumulate wealth while He does the same by leaving them in a state of empty-handedness and poverty. It is on the basis of this point that we find Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) state in Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 91, that:

The Almighty has predetermined people's means of sustenance by augmenting in case of some and decreasing in case of others so that He would be please to examine whomever He wants by putting him on trial, thus selecting the rich and the poor by their gratitude and perseverance which they express.

Moreover, a great many people start rebelling against everything as soon as they feel self-sufficient. Thus, they would better stay at a certain level of living which will neither make them stay in a state of dire poverty nor in a state of rebellion.

Concluding these mentioned remarks, one must proclaim that affluence or lack of it, are both characteristics of the Lordship of Allah and are required for the development and training as well as for the testing of human beings.

The verse says:

"Verily, your Lord extends the sustenance for whomever He pleases; and straitens (it for whom He pleases), verily He is, of His servants, All-Aware, All-Seeing."

Notes

1. Surah Luqman
2. The current Surah, verse 23
3. Usul-i-Kafi and Tafsir-us-Safi
4. Cited in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Tafsir-us-Safi
5. Tafsir-i-Majma‘-ul-Bayan
6. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Usul-i-Kafi, Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Tafsir-us-Safi
7. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 32
8. Ibid, verse 14
9. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, vol. 10
10. Bihar, vol. 74, p. 85
11. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 467
12. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, P. 467
13. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 467
14. Bihar, vol. 74, p. 49
15. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 466
16. Bihar, vol. 75, p.302
17. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
18. ’Ihtij aj-i-Tabarsi, vol. 2, p.33, Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
19. Kafi, vol. 1, p. 294
20. Tafsir-i-Furqan
21. Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan, and Furqan.
22. Tafsir-i-Lahiji
23. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth- Thaqalayn
24. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 4: Moral Conduct

Surah Isra' - Verse 31

وَلاَ تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلاَدَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلاَقٍ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئاً كَبِيراً

31. "And do not kill your offspring for fear of poverty. We sustain them as well as you. Verily killing them is a capital sin."

The Arabic term /'iml aq/ signifies poverty and empty-handedness. The provision of the means of sustenance is of the power of Allah and the greatness in quantity and number of population is irrelevant. Therefore, having a larger number of offspring is not a factor in a family's poverty.

Following the former various sections of the Islamic commandments which were discussed in the previous sections, the Holy Qur'an deals in here with an other part of these commandments and explains six important commandments within five verses in concise, meaningful, and interesting statements.

At first, He alludes to one of the viscous practices of the 'Age of Ignorance' which was among the most heinous of the crimes, saying:

"And do not kill your offspring for fear of poverty…"

It is not you who provide them with nourishment; it is We Who provide them as well as you with means of sustenance. Killing them is and has been a capital sin.

The verse says:

"…We sustain them as well as you. Verily killing them is a capital sin."

This verse provides us with clues regarding the economic situation of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance which has been so gruesome that they used to kill their dear offspring whether boys or girls for fear of lack of financial resources, hence getting rid of them.

This case of crimes, of course, is obviously presented to us in another form during our times and in our so-called most progressive types of societies. It shows itself in the form of getting rid of pregnancies in a most widespread form for the sake of preventing over population and avoiding economic insufficiencies.

To conclude this statement, we must note that a child is entitled to live and parents cannot take away this right from him. Sometimes, it so happens that our very means of sustenance depends on our children's means of sustenance, therefore, killing one's own child and terminating one's pregnancy (aborting) are both capital sins and an offence of immense proportions.

Surah Isra' - Verse 32

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَي إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَآءَ سَبِيلاً

32. "And do not approach fornication, verily it is an indecency and an evil way."

Illegitimate sexual relationship (fornication) paves the way for numerous individual, social, and familial corruptions which follow the act and, therefore, it is forbidden in Islam, and in the Qur'an it has been mentioned alongside such capital sins as paganism, murder, and theft.

It is for this very reason that this noble verse refers to fornication as an indecent behaviour and recommends not to approach the act of fornication which is a heinous act and an evil way." It does not state:

"Do not fornicate"

but it says:

"Do not approach fornication."

Here is a delicate allusion made to the fact that involvement in the heinous act of fornication usually requires certain pre-requisites which predispose one for the act in a gradual manner.

The verse says:

"And do not approach fornication, verily it is an indecency and an evil way."

The act of 'voyeurism' is one of such pre-requisites. 'Nudity' and 'unveiling' of oneself are other steps preceding the act. The prevalence of counter-didactic books, misleading films, corruption-inciting publications and also centers for corruption, are all serving as the preliminary steps for such an act.

Moreover, associating of men and women in private, that is, of those who are not bound to be together by lawful marriage is another factor leading to the act of fornication.

And finally, distancing of the young from marriage as well as imposing of severe unreasonable demands by the two sides in connection with marriage both provide the grounds for 'approximation to fornication', which has been dissuaded in a concise sentence in the above verse. In Islamic quotations, each also has separately been dissuaded.

In the meantime, other issues which are at stake in fornication consist of absence of commitment and duty with regard to the survival of generations, lack of education for the children, and absence of fatherly love and motherly affection for the child, which totally disappear.

Fornication also wipes out and disrupts the foundations of the laws of inheritance, the consequences of which make it impossible to locate the true inheritors.

The Philosophy Underlying the Prohibition of Fornication

1) The emergence of anarchy in the family institution and the disappearance of the relationships of parents and children are the consequences of fornication the lack of which leads to the cognition of the society and also serve as a backbone for the full protection of children.

In the society where there is an increase in the number of illegitimate children and of single mothers, the social relationship, which is based upon family relationship, will seriously be stumbling and, finally, disrupted.

Moreover the society will be further deprived of the element of affection which is the determining factor in controlling the crimes and atrocities, and the human society will be fully turned into an animal type of gathering which is constantly coupled with all types of atrocities.

2) Experience reveals and science has also proven the fact that such an act leads to the spread of all kinds of infections. Despite all organizations which have been established for combating the consequences of the impact

of this act today, the statistics again indicate to what extent individuals have suffered in losing their happiness thereby.

3) One must not overlook the fact that the goal in marriage is not solely the gratification of one's sexual instinct.

On the contrary, participation in family life and one's spiritual association as well as one's peace of mind along with the education of children and cooperation in all spheres of life constitute all-in-all the end-result of marriage, which all are impossible to bring about without the union in marriage of men and women and along with the prohibition of 'fornication'.

4) Fornication provides the basis for numerous kinds of entanglements, suicides, escaping from family life and homes, the rise of fatherless illegitimate children, infections diseases, and anxiety for respectable families.

5) Fornication has been regarded as a heinous, and indecent act throughout history and has also been prohibited in other religions as well.

Islam has been quick to present preventive measures against heinous act of fornication, among which one may name the following:

1) Prohibition of association of men with unallowed women in some private places.

2) Prohibition of private relationship of a man with an unallowed woman.

3) Prohibition of women's wearing make-up for unallowed men or in their presence.

4) Prohibition of looking of unallowed women and men at each other, and abstention from thinking of fornication, or of watching seducing photographs.

5) One must not only avoid the act of fornication but he must also abstain from the acts which precede fornication. Sometimes, a look, a telephone call, a letter or a contact may pave the way for illegitimate relationships.

6) Severe punishments issued for those who engage in fornication.

7) Recommendation for marriage and lowering of the level of 'dower' at the time of marriage.

8) Blaming of the act of marriage which has long been overdue.

9) Sanctification of the institution of marriage, and struggling for having a family life.

In conclusion, Imam-Ali-Ibn-i-Abi-Talib (as) has been quoted who has said:

"I heard from the blissful Prophet who stated: 'There are six negative impacts in the act of fornication, three of which belong to this world and the other three belong to the Hereafter.

As for those which exist in this world are the fact that it removes sincerity and illumination from one's life, cuts off one's means of sustenance, and accelerates human beings process of extermination.

The three (negative) effects which come about in the Hereafter are: The Wrath of the Almighty, severity in the settlement of one's account and the initiation into the Fire of Hell'." [1]

Surah Isra' - Verse 33

وَلاَ تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَن قُتِلَ مُظْلُوماً فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَاناً فَلا يُسْرِف فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنصُوراً

33. "And do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, save for just cause, and whoever is killed unjustly We have appointed to his heir authority (to demand blood compensation or retaliation), thus he must not exceed limits in slaying; verily he is (justly) assisted (by Allah)."

To protect the oppressed is one of Allah's ways of treatment. The issue dealt with in this verse is respect for human blood and the utter prohibition of 'murder'.

He says:

"And do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, save for just cause…"

Not only murder is punishable from the point of view of Islam but also the slightest harm done to a human being is punishable as well, and one can proclaim that this viewpoint of Islam in protecting and respecting human beings' blood, soul and prestige is unequalled and unsurpassed in other religions.

There are, of course, certain cases where respect for human blood is missing as in cases of those who have committed murders or parallel crimes. Therefore, He makes an exception to the rule by the phrase 'save for just cause'.

Certainly, respect for human blood is not only a matter exclusive to the Muslims as a category. On the contrary, non-Muslims who are not at war with Muslims and they are coexisting with the Muslims in a peaceful manner, are also being covered by this rule. Their life, wealth and wives are thus protected and any violation of their rights in this respect is prohibited.

Then the Holy Qur'an alludes to the right of retaliation which has been accorded to the heirs of the shed blood, saying:

"…and whoever is killed unjustly We have appointed to his heir authority (to demand blood compensation or retaliation)…"

However, such a person must not exceed beyond the limits of his rights, and overdo in retaliation for the murder, for he is fully supported.

The verse continues saying:

"…thus he must not exceed limits in slaying; verily he is (justly) assisted (by Allah)."

Certainly, the heirs of the murdered are supported by Allah as long as they observe Islamic limits and do not exceed those codes.

This sentence makes allusion to the ways of the behaviour which were prevalent during the Age of Ignorance and, nowadays also sometimes takes place in case some innocent victims are being probably murdered who are defenseless in retaliation for the killing of one single person and in addition to the killing of the murderer himself.

Explanations

The Qur'anic sentence:

'Thus he must not exceed limits in slaying'

signifies that when the issue of retaliation is involved, do not kill other than the murderer and do not amputate him which has a common practice during the 'Age of Ignorance'.

Murder and killing is among the capital sins. He who kills any one in cases other than those of retaliation or of causes of corruption, seems to have killed all the people.

"…whoever slays a human being for other than man slaughter or mischief in the earth, it is as he had slain mankind as a whole…"[2]

The punishment for such a murder is suffering eternal pains of the hell.

"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell wherein shall he abide forever…"[3]

Such a punishment holds constant for the person who uses arms and threatens to kill and is known as inciting corruption, and as waging war against Allah.

In quotations, we have it that one of the examples of the heir of the blood is Hadrat-i-Mahdi (a.j.) who will take his vengeance of his grandfather Imam Hussayn (as)

"We have appointed to his heir authority (to demand blood compensation or retaliation).[4]***"***

As a preventive measure the Divine support of the oppressed and the according of the right of one's heir to retaliation and the consignment of such a right to the heir are noteworthy. It is also a preventive measure for preventing over retaliation.

Surah Isra' - Verse 34

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلاَّ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّي يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْؤولاً

34. "And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner (to his advantage); until he reaches his maturity, and keep the promise, verily every promise will be questioned about."

The Arabic term /'ašudd/ refers to a tightly knit knot, and it refers in here to the stage of the development of an orphan when he is physically and spiritually in a firm position to defend his properties and belongings.

The blissful Qur'an has made frequent recommendations about the protection of the orphan's rights and considerations with regard to his state and overall care for their affairs.

However, as there is the possibility of stumbling in financial matters and misuse of belongings and properties of the orphans, then more warnings are required in which case even approaching them has been forbidden, and any oppressive intrusion into them has been equated with swallowing of Fire.

Thus, He has dealt with this issue in this verse, addressing all in a tone of voice similar to the one used in case of unchaste act, the verse says:

"And do not approach the property of the orphan…"

The Qur'an declares that all must not only abstain from using orphans' belongings and properties, but they must also respect quietly its sanctuary.

However, as such a decree might be used as a pretext by certain individuals lacking insight who always take into account the negative aspect

of things, thus causing the properties and belongings of the orphans to be neglected and spoiled, and be left at the mercy of the circumstances, then the Qur'an immediately makes a clear exception to this rule and stresses by saying:

"…except in the best manner (to his advantage)…"

Therefore, every type of intrusion into the wealth of the orphans, which is fulfilled targeted at the protection, betterment, multiplication and increase in the wealth, is allowed.

It is obvious that such a situation will continue as long as the orphan reaches the stage of mental and economic maturity where the Qur'an makes mention of following its discussion concerning the issue in the question, saying:

"…until he reaches his maturity…"

In the meantime, when this verse was revealed, Muslims abstained from attending the meals served by orphans and kept them in isolation. Then another verse was revealed the aim of which was not condemnation of approaching the orphans.

On the contrary, it confirmed the fact that the righteous must not abandon the orphans under the pretext of observing their devotion and of being virtuous. The verse went on saying that if such people mixed their lives with theirs it did not meet with any obstacle, reaffirming the fact that they were their religious brethren and thus they had to treat them in a brotherly way.

Allah differentiates those who incite corruption from those who are righteous. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 220 says:

"…and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren…"

It is for this reason that in a tradition the blissful Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever takes three orphans under his protection is like the person who has spent a life-time in prayers at night, has continued on fasting all days and has continued waging a holy war with his unshielded sword for Allah and he and I would be just two brothers in Paradise like these two fingers." [5]

And again, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen-Ali (as), at the time of his death, said in his will:

"Appealing to you in Allah's name again and again, concerning the issue of the orphans, lest they should feel hungry on and off, and lest they should die for your not attending to them." [6]

We have him again saying:

"Be kind towards the orphans; treat the beggars in a gentle way and get along well with them, and, finally, be kind and compassionate with the weak."

In another tradition he has said:

"The best way of being good is showing kindness towards the orphans." [7]

In 'Nahj-ul-Balaqah, letter 47, he (as) has commended further taking into consideration of the rights of those who are hired to do a job, the farmers, women, and the orphans.

Then, discussing the issue of keeping one's promise in this verse, the verse states:

"…and keep the promise, verily every promise will be questioned about."

It is so owing to the fact that most of the social relationships and the channels of economic system as well as political issues all revolve around the axis of pledges and promises. If and when there is a stumbling block found in them, the social system will instantly collapse.

Therefore, We must stick to our words, keeping them whatever they might be and with whomever they might be.

In the meantime, some Islamic traditions denote that one of the examples of pledges and promises which are in question, is compassion affection, and obedience with respect to Ali (as). [8]

Surah Isra' - Verse 35

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلاً

35. "And give the full measure when you measure out and weigh you with the right balance, that is good and better in the end."

The Arabic term /qist as/ is made up of two words: /qist/, which signifies justice, and /t as/ which means the pan of a balance. [9]

Some Islamic traditions denote: The Immaculate Imam (as) is an example and a paradigm of /qist as ul mustaqim/ (right balance) in Islam. [10]

The issues relating to the people's transactions and respect for other people's rights are so important that the Qur'an has frequently stressed it and the lengthiest verse of the Qur'an, that is, 'verse 282 of Surah Al-Baqarah' concerns this matter, and Surah Al-Mutaffifin, (the Defrauders), has been named as such to exhibit the importance of the decent ways of carrying out transactions.

The first invitation of some prophets, like Shu'ayb, was to abandon short weight.[11]

Therefore, the Muslim markets must severely be free from fraudulent activities, and defrauding, and the salesperson must be trustworthy, accurate, honest, and keep accurate accounts of everything.

The verse says:

"And give the full measure when you measure out and weigh you with the right balance…"

Measuring in full with the right kind of balance are both examples of the sticking to one's pledges, which was discussed in the previous verse, because transactions are forms of one's commitments.

Balances and measuring devices as well as commercial calculation instruments must be accurate and intact. Accuracy in balances, weighing and calculations are sources of good and blessings, and defrauding will tighten the sphere of one's blessings.

The consequences of right transactions and respect for the rights of people produce dividends for the person involved, for they create a confidence-building environment among people, while defrauding and inaccuracies in balancing and calculating lead to financial corruptions and make all lose confidence. Thus, a happy ending requires honesty.

In principle, justice, regulations, and accuracy are vital principles in all spheres of life. It is a principle which governs all the universe. All kinds of

deviation from this principle are dangerous and lead to evil endings, especially; defrauding disrupts and wipes out confidence, which is essential in transactions, thus leading the economic system to collapse.

The verse concludes:

"…that is good and better in the end."

Surah Isra' - Verse 36

وَلاَ تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ الْسَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ كُلُّ أُوْلَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْؤُولاً

36. "And do not follow that of which you have not knowledge; verily the hearing and the sight and the heart, all these will be questioned about it."

The mention of eyes, ears and heart in this verse is perhaps used as examples, for in the day of resurrection, besides man himself, one's organs such as his hands, feet, and other bodily organs will be questioned, too, in which case they will burst out speaking and make confessions.

Throughout history, most of the rebellions, and quarrels, have been the consequences of hastily set-up trial procedures and judgments, undocumented words, and views which have not been backed up by research.

Putting into practice the content of this verse will provide protection for the individuals as well as the society against all fraudulent activities and erroneous behaviors, for undue optimism, simple-mindedness in believing others, and accepting rumors turn the society into a chaotic state and submissive towards the enemy.

Blind obedience, pursuance of habits and hallucinations, following the order of one's ancestors, acceptance of the baseless foretellings, and dreams, conjectures, surmises, judgments which are unfounded, bearing testimonies without knowledge, taking sides, appraisal or criticism without prior knowledge, baseless interpretation and analysis, issuing verdicts without knowledge, quoting of groundless rumors, ascribing something wrong to Allah, and religion without authorization, decision-making in cases of emotional tensions and crisis, relying on swearing and crocodile tears of others without due reasons, all are examples of the sentence and are absolutely forbidden, where it says:

"And do not follow that of which you have not knowledge…"

In accordance with the circumstances of sequential and credible quotations, following knowledge implies the pursuing of decisive, religious principles such as the verdicts of a 'Mujtahid' or that type of knowledge which is acquired with reassurances which approach the level of certainty.

It is just like the case in which people gain knowledge about their illness and rely on the prescription of a compassionate physician who is a specialist, just in the same way one tends to have access to Allah's commandments by inquiring about the verdict of an all-embracing devout 'Mujtahid'.

Therefore, this stage of awareness will be enough for the moment though there is a hierarchy for knowledge which comprises other deeper categories, namely: 'Ilm-ul-Yaqin' meaning knowledge with certainty, 'Ayn-ul-Yaqin' which signifies knowledge which is equated with certainty in itself or

intuition, and ‘Haq-ul-Yaqin’ meaning knowledge which is identical with the truth.

In conclusion, the Immaculate Imams (as) used to make their companions abstain from listening to and saying of different kinds of vain words, recommending them to guard of themselves against letting everything enter their hearts and ears. They used to allude to this noble verse in connection with this matter.

As Imam Sadiq (as) recited this verse when instructing the person who would stay over time when using the toilette so as to be able to listen to the music and songs of his neighbour, He said:

“Ears, eyes, and hearts will be questioned for having listened, having seen, and for having kept memories.”

Imam Sajjad (as) also stated:

“Man is not entitled to say what he wants.”[12]

Therefore, one’s life must be based on correct knowledge and information as well as logic and insight. We must not spread rumors making a fuss about them and damage the prestige of the innocent individuals and violate their rights.

The blissful Qur’an disrupts the entire population of the sorcerers, magicians, and fortune-tellers who used to assemble simple-minded individuals around themselves.

One’s faith in the Reckoning Day and clearing of accounts provides the basis for his being of virtuous; and one is also going to be questioned with regard to his hidden intentions in the Resurrection Day.

Surah Isra’ - Verse 37

وَلاَ تَمْشِ فِي الاَرْضِ مَرَحاً إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ الاَرْضَ وَلَن تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولاً

37. “And do not walk around exultantly on the earth; certainly you will never rend the earth; nor attain the mountains in height.”

Islam does not only provide rules and regulations for ideological, political, military and economic issues, but it also offers commandments with regard to such minor matters such as going and coming to the house as well, owing to its encompassing and all-inclusiveness inherent in it.

Thus, it launches a campaign in this noble verse against arrogance and, while clearly dissuading the believers, it addresses the Prophet (S) saying:

“And do not walk around exultantly on the earth; certainly you will never rend the earth; nor attain the mountains in height.”

Here, in this holy verse, there is an explicit allusion made to those proud and arrogant people who take their steps with pride, pounding them on the ground so as to make people aware of their comings and goings, and stay with their necks up so as, base on their imagination, to prove their superiority to others.

The objective of the Qur’an is to denounce arrogance in all its forms in general; not only in its apparent aspects as i.e. in the case of walking which is a particular aspect of it, but also in all of its aspects, for arrogance is the source of all kinds of alienation from Allah, from oneself, as well as errors in one’s judgment, losing of one’s way in his truth-seeking effort, joining the ranks of the Satan, and pollution with all kinds of sin.

The practical program offered by the pioneers of Islam can serve as the most instructive paradigm for each and every true Muslim in this regard.

We have it in the biography of the Prophet (S) that he would never allow others to walk while he was riding on the back of a horse. We also have it that the Prophet (S) used to squat on the earth and he used to have a simple meal just like that of the slaves; he also used to milk the sheep, and used to ride on the back of a donkey with no saddles.

We also have it in the biography of Hadrat-Ali (as) that he used to carry over water for the house and he used to sweep the house occasionally.

We have it in the biography of Imam Mujtab a (as) that in spite of having and owning numerous animals for riding, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca twenty times on foot, saying:

"I practice this way out of sheer modesty for the Lord's sake."

Surah Isra' - Verse 38

كُلُّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّـئُهُ عِندَ رَبِّـكَ مَكْرُوهاً

38. "All of that, the sin of it, is hateful in the sight of your Lord."

This noble verse re-emphasizes all of the afore mentioned divine commandments regarding the prohibition of paganism, homicide, adultery, the killing of one's own offspring, usurping of the orphan's belongings and property, and harming of one's parents and the like. It proclaims: The sins committed with respect to all of these are abominable before Allah.

The verse says:

"All of that, the sin of it, is hateful in the sight of your Lord."

One can deduce from this meaning that, contrary to the opinion of the followers of the school of determinism, the Lord has never decided that one should commit sin, for had He determined such a thing, it would have been incompatible with the hatred and inconvenience which is stressed in this verse.

In other words, one infers from this verse that the ideas of the fatalists are wrong, for, according to this verse, the Lord despises the evils and the wrong-doings of the people and, once He shuns such acts, how would He, then, compel people to commit these acts.

Obviously, one issue cannot be, at the same time, both considered as decent and indecent simultaneously by the Lord. It becomes, in the meantime, transparent that the term /makrūh/ 'abominable' in the Qur'anic literature is also applied in the case of the greatest of one's sins.

In conclusion, we must note that the evil character of one's deeds is a constant matter in all of the Divine religions, and man's inherent characteristics tend to leave their impacts on his own behaviour.

Surah Isra' - Verse 39

ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَي إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلاَ تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهاً ءَاخَرَ فَتُلْقَي فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوماً مَّدْحُوراً

39. "That (commandment) is of the wisdom (that) your Lord has revealed to you, and do not associate with Allah any other god for you will be thrown into the Hell, blamed, cast away."

Some commentators of the Holy Qur'an are of the opinion that by 'of the wisdom' in here is meant those constant commandments which have been mentioned in the previous verses and which have been outstanding in other Divine religions as well and it will never be abrogated.

In holy verse No. 22, the first among the wise sayings, was prohibition of paganism, and, the discussion of paganism in this verse, concludes all wise sayings, too.

To stress once again the point that such wise commandments are all having their origin in Divine revelation, the holy Qur'an says:

"That (commandment) is of the wisdom (that) your Lord has revealed to you…"

Allusion as to the fact that the commandments have been both proven through rational philosophy as well as through the method of the Divine revelation, and the principles underlying all of the Divine commandments have common grounds though one can not recognize their details under the weak light of the intellect itself, has been here made.

It is only through the power of revelation which one can obtain an understanding of such issues.

As was the case with the beginning of these commandments which concerned the prohibition of paganism, He concludes them with the same issue, implying that you shall never associate any other god with 'Allah' and should not place any other god for the purpose of worshipping alongside the Lord, 'Allah', for you will be thrown down into Hell, blamed and outcast from the Lord.

The verse says:

"…and do not associate with Allah any other god for you will be thrown into the Hell, blamed, cast away."

In fact, paganism and dualism in some matters of worship provide the basic substance for deviations, crimes, and sins. Therefore, these chains of fundamental commandments in Islam began with paganism and ended with it, too.

Incidentally, sometimes, the Lord, addressing His Prophet, in an adamant manner, in fact issues warnings to the pagans to abandon hope in the Prophet (S), who are targeted in actual fact.

Explanations

Intellect and innate disposition do not make man free from the need in revelation. On the contrary, man is in need of revelation.

All schools of thought and methods, other than the school of revelation and the Divine laws, are out of the question and lead man astray, the following of which would lead one to total deprivation, blaming, and the opening of one's way to the 'inferno'.

Surah Isra' - Verse 40

أَفَأَصْفَاكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلآئِكَةِ إِنَاثاً إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلاً عَظِيماً

40. "Has your Lord then distinguished you by giving you sons, and has taken daughters (for Himself) from among the angels? Verily, you are uttering a grievous saying.

From among the deviant ideas which pagans held, there was one concerning the fact that they claimed angels to be the daughters of Allah, and the Qur'an has repeatedly dealt with this matter, regarding it to be a great lie and a false accusation.

The following verses may then be referred to as examples:

"Or has He daughters while you have sons?"[13]

"What! For you the males and for Him the females!"[14]

The first verse means:

"Are there daughters for Him and sons for you?"

The second one means:

"Are there sons for you and daughters for Him?"

Certainly, the belief regarding Allah's having offspring, has long been held both by the Jews and by the Christians. However, the belief held in Allah's having daughters, has been exclusive to the idol-worshippers.

Therefore, this noble verse makes allusion to one of the superstitious beliefs of the pagans, thus making transparent the logical basis of their thinking by this means. Many of them used to hold the view that angels were daughters of Allah, they were shameful of even listening to or hearing the word 'girl' and felt uneasy and unfortunate for having a daughter born to their household.

Documenting its claims by their own logic, the Qur'an affirms:

"Has your Lord then distinguished you by giving you sons, and has taken daughters (for Himself) from among the angels?…"

Undoubtedly, daughters just in the same way as sons are surely both from among the Divine blessings and there is no difference between them in value from humankind point of view.

However, the Holy Qur'an seeks to condemn them with their own logic, questioning them as to how ignorant they are by attributing to their Lord what they would themselves be ashamed of having in their own possession.

Later, at the end of the holy verse, as a decisive verdict, the Qur'an declares:

"…Verily, you are uttering a grievous saying."

This is a statement which is incompatible with all kinds of logical reasoning and it is without solid foundations on several grounds, for:

1) Your belief in Him having a child is a grave insult to His sanctuary, because He is neither composed of matter; nor does He require any physical provisions; nor does He require the survival of His generation.

2) Why is it that you regard all of Allah's children as being daughters while you consider girls as having the lowest possible status?

3) Moreover, this belief is also regarded as an insult to the status of the Divine angels who are the followers of the truth and the near-stationed of His presence. You get furious upon hearing the name 'girls' while you regard girls as close associates of the Divine domain.

Notes

1. Man-la Yahduruhul Faqih, Khis al, Safi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan
2. Surah Al-Ma’idah, No. 5, verse 32
3. Surah An-Nisa’, No. 4, verse 93
4. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
5. Kanz-ul-’Ummal, vol. 15, p. 178
6. Kanz-ul-’Ummal, vol. 15, p. 177
7. Ghurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 6
8. Bihar, vol. 24, p. 187
9. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan
10. Bihar, vol. 24, p. 187
11. Surah Ash-Shu’ara, No. 26, verses 181-183
12. Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
13. Surah Al-Tūr, No. 52, verse 39
14. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 21

Section 5: Everything in the Heavens and in the Earth Glorifies Allah

Surah Isra' - Verse 41

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلاَّ نُفُوراً

41. "And certainly We have explained (the facts in various ways) in this Qur'an so that they may receive admonition, but it does not add to them save aversion."

The Qur'anic phrase /sarrafn a/ (We have explained) refers to the varied explanation and different reiterations of it for the clarification of the issue in question.

Man is searching for variations by nature; whether in the natural sphere or in the domain of the Divine Book and, hence, this is the secret of some repetitions and variations of the statements in the Qur'an.

As raining over an infected corpse produces foul odour and a stinking smell, the introduction of the Divine verses into the realm of the arrogant and some obstinate people who are so habituated, leads to their further detestation.

Therefore, the holy verse implies that Allah has thus far reiterated His proofs in the noble Qur'an, citing in detail, their significance and proverbial sayings and whatever else has been instructive and wise so that they can contemplate and make sure of their truthfulness.

The verse says:

"And certainly We have explained (the facts in various ways) in this Qur'an so that they may receive admonition…"

However, those pagans do not benefit from these instructive matters and they always add up to their abomination and hatred unto the truth.

The verse says:

"…but it does not add to them save aversion."

One can, in the meantime, draw up this conclusion with regard to educational objectives that there is not necessarily a limited number of ways to gain the better educational aims.

On the contrary, there exist various means and methods which can be utilized, for there are individuals differences in interests and in abilities which must be taken into account and one must infiltrate in a different manner in each of the cases.

This point is also one of the methods of eloquence employed in expression.

Surah Isra' - Verse 42

قُل لَّوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ ءَالِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذاً لاَبْتَغَوْا إِلَي ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلاً

42. "Say: 'If there were (other) gods with Him as they (the pagans) claim, then, they would certainly have sought a way unto the Lord of the 'Arsh."

The pagans believed in the Lord and regarded 'Allah' as the creator of the world of existence.

Nevertheless, they used to consider the icons as their intercessors or as the Lord's partners. This verse refutes the existence of such a relationship between the Lord and the icons, for the idols can neither grasp the power from the hands of the great Almighty; nor can they find the means for their own reinforcement.

The hierarchy of the system of creation proves best the monotheistic nature of Allah. Were there other gods besides the Almighty, that would certainly require competition, in which case, there would necessarily be disruptions appearing in the entire system.

Therefore, this noble verse alludes to one of the evidences for monotheism, which, in the context of literature of the scientists and the philosophers, has been referred to as 'the mutual hindrance proof'.

This means that type of the anarchical world run by 'dualism' the nature of which requires the existence of various gods, centered around all kinds of disruptions[1].

It is for this reason that the Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) to tell them that if there were other gods alongside the Almighty, as they claim, then these gods would certainly try to seek their way through to the great Lord of the heavens and thus dominate Him, for it is natural that every powerful person wishes to add up to his power, extending his sphere of influence further.

If there were other gods, truly speaking, such a kind of struggle and incompatibility over the extension of their power would result in anarchy and disruptions in all spheres of life.

The verse says:

"Say: 'If there were (other) gods with Him as they (the pagans) claim, then, they would certainly have sought a way unto the Lord of the 'Arsh."

Surah Isra' - Verse 43

سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوّاً كَبِيراً

43. "Glory be to Him and Exalted is He far above from what they say! He is High, the Great."

And, now, the Lord differentiates Himself and distances Himself from having got partners. The Qur'an implies that the Almighty is so far superior to what they say and excels in everything for which no limits can be set.

The verse says:

"Glory be to Him and Exalted is He far above from what they say! He is High, the Great."

The objective in mentioning superiority in this connection, is excellence in the Lord's attributes which are unmatched by any means and unequalled for any one else, because none is more omnipotent and omniscient than Him. In other words, the Lord is far superior and pure to what they claim.

Surah Isra' - Verse 44

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ وَإِن مِن شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِن لاَّ تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيماً غَفُوراً

44. "The seven heavens and the earth, and every being therein, celebrate His glory, and there is not single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise, but you do not understand their glorification; verily He is Forbearing, Forgiving."

This noble verse proclaims that all the cosmic order has its own way of glorification, prostration, and individual prayer for the Lord (s.w.t.). Some commentators claim that this type of glorification is of a genetic kind.

That is, the structural part of the existence of every particle in the world, is a sign and a symbol of the Lord's Will, Wisdom, Knowledge, and of His Justice.

Others are of the opinion that the world of existence has its own kind of consciousness and knowledge, and all are glorifying at all times though our ears are incapable of hearing their voice. This latter view is more consonant with the apparent form of the verses. Vocalization of the things is not impossibility, for such a process will actualize in the Hereafter.

"…they shall say: 'Allah', Who makes everything speak, has made us speak…"[2]

Even stones have got and possess sensibilities and feel frightened, and, for fear of the Lord, they fall down from the mountains.

"…and others tumble down through fear of Allah…"[3]

Solomon (as) could understand the medium of expression used by ants and was in full command of the expression symbols used by birds. A kind of bird called 'Hud Hud' used to inspect and recognize the deviation shown by some people and came to report it to Solomon.

The Lord, in many cases of the revelations, used to address the mountains.

For example, He tells them to pray along with Dawūd, saying:

"…O' mountains! Sing praises with him…"[4]

There are frequent allusions made to the glorification by all beings, besides the above cases, in the Qur'an.

We also have it in quotations that bees glorify Allah. [5]

A small pebble which was in the hands of the Prophet (S), testified as to the legitimacy of the Prophet's mission (S). [6]

The shrill voices of the birds are their way of glorification of Allah[7].

All the above Islamic quotations refer to the real cases of glorification and they do not include their non-verbal language.

A Persian poetry says:

"Every one is using one way for You glorification and thankfulness to You. A nightingale goes on twittering sonnets while 'qomri' sings common songs."

"The entire particles of the world are addressing You during day and night and in private."

"They say: We are all-eyes all-ears, and all well-aware though we remain voiceless when we are with you."

Later, to prove the magnitude of the position of the Lord and that it is aside from the imagination of the pagans, the Qur'an refers to the glorification of the beings of the world in the presence of His Sacred Essence, when it says:

"The seven heavens and the earth, and every being therein, celebrate His glory, and there is not single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise…"

The profoundly deep universe of such magnitude with its amazing system and with all those secrets along with its breath-taking art all glorify and thank Him.

Nevertheless, He is forbearing and forgiving, at the same time, and you will not be immediately interrogated and questioned for your paganism and disbelief. Contrarily, He will provide you with an adequate respite while He will be leaving the gates of repentance open to you so as to complete the argument to you.

The verse says:

"…but you do not understand their glorification; verily He is Forbearing, Forgiving."

Surah Isra' - Verse 45

وإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْءَانَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاَخِرَةِ حِجَاباً مَسْتُوراً

45. "And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier."

Occasion of the Revelation

This noble verse has been descended with regard to a group of pagans who used to do harm to the Prophet (S) while he used to read the Qur'an at night within a corner of the House of Ka'bah. They used to throw stone at him and they also used to obstruct or stand in the way of him to invite people to embrace Islam.

The Lord, through His grace, made it impossible for them to hurt him. Perhaps, it was owing to the awe and fear which He inspired in them from the Prophet (S).

Pursuing our discussion of the previous holy verses, this question may be raised for some as to how it is that the pagans avoid accepting the reality of the issue of monotheism despite its self-explanatory nature which is widely accepted by all beings of the world and testified by them.

Why is it that they hear the eloquently expressed and explicit verses of the Qur'an and do not wake up?

The Lord proclaims to the Prophet:

"And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier."

This 'veil' or 'barrier' was that same obstinacy, tenacity, egotism, arrogance and ignorance which used to hinder them from having access to the Qur'anic facts, putting them at a dead end in their mental and rational quest for knowledge, and would not permit them to grasp or acquire an understanding of such obvious facts as monotheism, resurrection, and the authenticity of the call of the Prophet (S) and the like.

It is for this reason that we declare that if somebody intends to follow the straight path of the truth, remaining secure from deviations and seductions, he must, first of all, seek to reform and reconstruct his own self.

Surah Isra' - Verse 46

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَي قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْراً وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَي أَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُوراً

46. "And We have placed coverings on their hearts lest they should understand it (the Qur'an) and in their ears a heaviness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion."

The Arabic term /'akinnah/ is the plural form of /kan an/ or /kann/, which signifies some means of covering.

The Qur'anic term /waqr/ means 'partial deafness'. We have verses similar to this one in other Suras as well!

We have over a thousand times the term monotheism, reiterated in the Qur'an, though, it is unfortunate that the blind-hearted ones are deprive and are being at an unease when hearing those verses regarding monotheism. However, they are pleased to hear words of praise for paganism and absurd materials.

Nowadays, whenever the issue monotheism is discussed, some detest it, though they are being attracted to the remarks made by the Eastern or the Western agents.

The Qur'an says:

"And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink, and when those besides Him are mentioned, lo! They are joyful."[8]

The blissful Qur'an has compared such escapist groups from the truth to the donkeys which flee from the lions.[9]

Certainly, a confined soul and a dead heart does not receive the true spirit of the knowledge and wisdom which are offered by the Qur'an, for hearing and simple understanding of the facts of the Qur'an is different from the understanding in depth of them and the ensuing pleasure which one obtains this way.

The verse says:

"And We have placed coverings on their hearts lest they should understand it (the Qur'an) and in their ears a heaviness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion."

Surah Isra' - Verse 47

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَي إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ رَجُلاً مَسْحُوراً

47. "We are well-aware of what they listen to when they are listening to you, and when they are whispering (with each other), when the unjust say (unto the believers)! 'You are thus following none but a man bewitched'."

We have it in commentaries that each one of the chiefs of pagans used to attend behind the house of the Prophet secretly and without informing each other so that, in the darkness of night, they could hear the voice of the Qur'an and thereupon analyze it.

They would bump into each other at times in the darkness and recognized one another, and thus, blamed themselves, reaffirming the fact that while they could not dispense with the voice of Muhammad (S), how could then they expect the common folk to behave in this respect.

This noble verse sympathizes with the Messenger of Allah, recommending him not to despair because of the lack of respect which the pagans showed towards him, for everything is clear before Him.

It is for this reason that He says:

"We are well-aware of what they listen to when they are listening to you, and when they are whispering (with each other), when the unjust say (unto the believers)! 'You are thus following none but a man bewitched'."

The main aim is that We are aware of their mood while they are listening to the Qur'an and once they leave you, engage themselves in praying, some call you a sorcerer, others regard you as a poet, and, as they notice the respect of people to the Divine leaders, they hit them by false accusations.

Surah Isra' - Verse 48

انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلاً

48. "(O' Prophet!) Behold how they strike similitudes for you, so they have gone astray, therefore, they cannot find the way (to truth)."

Occasion of the Revelation

Ibn Abbas asserts that: Abū Sufyan, Abu Jahl, and the like sometimes came to call on the Prophet (S) and listened to his words. One day, one of them told others:

"I have not got any idea as to what Muhammad (S) says. I only notice that his lips move."

However, Abu Sufyan answered:

"I am of the opinion that some of his words are truthful."

Abū Jahl suggested:

"He is crazy",

while Abū Lahab added:

"He is a soothsayer."

The other one said:

"He is a poet,"

under which circumstances of futile speech and inconvenient accusations, the verse was revealed.

In this noble verse, again addressing the Prophet (S), He declares in a short statement, which is a pounding answer and a blow to this seduced group, implying: Watch carefully as to how they are setting examples in your case.

One is calling you a sorcerer while the other one calls you as someone bewitched; one calls you a soothsayer while the other ones call you insane and, therefore, they are all being seduced and, hence, unable to discover the truth for themselves.

The verse says:

"(O' Prophet!) Behold how they strike similitudes for you, so they have gone astray, therefore, they cannot find the way (to truth)."

This does not imply that the path leading towards the truth is not transparent and the profile of the truth remains hidden. On the contrary, they have not got the right kind of eyes to see, and, hence, they have lost their rational attitude because of their tenacity, ignorance, fanaticism, and obstinacy which have all put their sense of reasoning out of work.

Surah Isra' - Verses 49 - 50

وَقَالُوا أَءِذَا كُنَّا عِظَاماً وَرُفَاتاً أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقاً جَدِيداً

قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيداً

49. "And they say: 'What! When we are bones and (scattered) dust, shall we then certainly be raised up into a new creation'?"

50. "Say: '(Nay!) be you stones or iron,"

The Arabic term /ruf at/ signifies shredded clay (Mufrad at Raqib). In the verses of the Qur'an, no reason has been stated by the disbelievers for their rejection due to resurrection. All one finds in them consist of astonishments, questionings and remoteness everywhere. By putting forth some queries in this connection, they seek to incite skepticism in others.

The Qur'an, in answer to them, relies on knowledge as well as Allah's power and Wisdom in the process of creation. There are also examples offered from nature and historical records as well as, from man, himself which were non-existent at first and emerged later on. Therefore, the Lord is able to re-create all beings after death.

Thus, in the previous verses, the issue dealt with concerned 'monotheism' itself as well as campaign against paganism. Nonetheless, the great issue involved in here relates to the Resurrection, which tends to supplement the significant issue of monotheism and which provides the answers to the three queries raised by disbelievers of resurrection.

They asked: Once we are spread around as decayed bones, shall we be surely raised up again; thus recreated once again?

Such a statement exhibits the fact that the Prophet (S) always tended of discuss the significant issue of the 'physical resurrection', asserting the fact that one's body will be reassembled after being scattered, otherwise, if the issue involved related to the matter of "spiritual resurrection", the objections raised by the opponents would, by no means, make any sense at all.

In the interpretation of the ensuing verse, while facing the challenges of the pagans who asked as to how they would be enlivened and mustered in the Hereafter, in which case they would be nothing except remaining bones and dust, the Lord, addressing the Prophet, responds: O' Muhammad (S)!

Say to them! The bones are peanuts while if you were made up of stones and iron He could re-enliven you, returning to you the joy and freshness of life as well.

The verse says:

"And they say: 'What! When we are bones and (scattered) dust, shall we then certainly be raised up into a new creation'?"

"Say: '(Nay!) be you stones or iron,"

Surah Isra' - Verse 51

أَوْ خَلْقاً مِّـمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَن يُعِيدُنَا قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُؤُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هُوَ قُلْ عَسَى أَن يَكُونَ قَرِيباً

51. "Or any (other) creature harder in your minds!' They will immediately say: 'Who will return us?' Say: 'He Who created you the first time.' Then, they will shake their heads at you, and say: 'When will it be? Say: 'Maybe it will be nigh'."

Man will be dismembered and turned into dust after death, but the earth is the source of everything which provides man with life. Plants grow out of soil and living beings flourish on the soil.

Therefore, to re-enliven the dead out of soil is not to be considered as an ordeal by the Lord, given the fact that you have such materials as iron and stone even creatures in mind which are harder than soil and which are far more remote from life than soil, the Lord is, hence, capable of re-enlivening and re-invigorating them as well as everything.

The verse says:

"Or any (other) creature harder in your minds!'…"

The rejecters of Resurrection have got no reason for denying it. The only question relating to the fact as to when and how are we going to be enliven, and by who? The answer provided by the Qur'an is that that same Lord Who has created you in the first place, has also got the power to re-create you as well. The timing of this is not at all far away; maybe it is coming soon.

The verse continues saying:

"…They will immediately say: 'Who will return us?'…"

Ultimately, to their astonishment, they shake their heads at you, asking you when this resurrection occurs and has its timing?

The verse adds:

"…Say: 'He Who created you the first time.' Then, they will shake their heads at you, and say: 'When will it be?…"

By raising this objection, in fact, they wanted to unveil this matter that supposing this 'earthly matter' is convertible into human shape and supposing we accept the power of Allah with respect to this, this issue is a long-term promise which is far from clear as to when that will take place.

The Qur'an, answers them:

"…Say: 'Maybe it will be nigh'."

Certainly, it is approaching soon, for the entire life-span of this world is very short and is just a passing moment when compared to the endless life in the Hereafter.

Moreover, if the resurrection was to be regarded as far away by our small and limited criteria, the threshold of the resurrection day, which is death, is not far away, for your death is 'a minor resurrection day' as compared to the 'major resurrection' when it is time for the evaluation of the acts of human beings.

Surah Isra' - Verse 52

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

52. "A day when He will call you forth, then you shall answer with His praise, yet thinking that you have tarried but a little while (in the world or in the purgatory)."

Without mentioning any accurate date for the resurrection day, the Qur'an mentions some of the characteristics of it in this noble verse, implying that: This return to life is that same day on which you will be called forth from your tombs, and you will accept the call while praising the Lord.

The holy verse says:

"A day when He will call you forth, then you shall answer with His praise…"

It is the same day when the distance between death and resurrection, that is, the purgatory, will be regarded as a short time by you. You will then realize that you have only paused for a moment in the purgatory.

The verse in this regard says:

"…yet thinking that you have tarried but a little while (in the world or in the purgatory)."

Some of the commentators of the glorious Qur'an are of the belief that this verse is being addressed to the believers, for, it is they who will answer the Lord while praise Him, and it is they who regard their stay in the purgatory as short, for, they have had a happy time in their graves and have received no punishment therein. Obviously, the days of joy and happiness are short.

Notes

1. Refer to Jawami'-ul-Jami', and other 'Books on Theology' for further information.
2. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 21
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 74
4. Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 10
5. Bihar, vol. 95, p. 372
6. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan
7. Bihar, vol. 64, p. 27
8. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 45
9. Surah Al-Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 50

Section 6: Gentleness in Dealing Enjoined

Surah Isra' - Verse 53

وَقُل لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلإِنسَانِ عَدُوّاً مُبِيناً

53. "And say to My servants to speak what is best. Verily, the Satan sows dissensions among them. Verily the Satan unto man is an open enemy."

As the discussion in the foregoing verses centered around the issues of the origin and the resurrection and the proofs regarding these two main ideological beliefs, here the Qur'an instructs the manner of conducting a dialogue and disputation with the dissidents, especially the pagans, for, no matter how elevated in rank the school might be, the powerful logic will also be rendered useless, but if it is not coupled with correct methods, discussion and disputations, and instead of affection and favour harshness and rudeness prevail, it will be fruitless.

Therefore, the verse proclaims:

"And say to My servants to speak what is best…"

The best, in here, signifies what is most appropriate from the view point of content, eloquence, and that which is best in terms of ethical virtues and humanitarian methods, for, if one distances himself from what is best speech, and tends to rudeness and quarrelsomeness in his words, it recalls the Satan's interference and inciting corruption amongst them.

The verse says:

"…Verily, the Satan sows dissensions among them…"

Do not remain heedless of the fact that the Satan does not remain idle. The Satan is always round the corner, for he has always been an open enemy of mankind.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Verily the Satan unto man is an open enemy."

Sometimes, the believers who had recently accepted the faith, following their previous ancient habits, used to provoke aggression against those who opposed them.

Moreover, those humiliating expressions of the dissidents towards the Prophet (S), some of which were mentioned in the previous verses, such as: sorcerer, insane, soothsayer, poet, etc… sometimes caused the believers to lose control of themselves and raise up against the opponents in a verbal attack, saying whatever they wanted.

The Qur'an seeks to hinder them from such things, persuading them to call with leniency and selection of softest words so as to prevent the Satan from inciting corruption.

Surah Isra' - Verse 54

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِن يَشَأْ يَرْحَمْكُمْ أَوْ إِن يَشَأْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلاً

54. "Your Lord is more knowledgeable about you than yourself. He will have mercy on you if He pleases, or He will punish you (for your

behaviour) if He pleases, and We have not sent you as a warden over them."

In the previous verse, the stress was based on one's manner of speech with soft words. In this verse, there are some of its aspects explained as follows: One must not regard himself as superior to others.

One must not humiliate others, not even calling the pagans as 'hell-inhabitants' while declaring oneself to be one of those who go to the Paradise, for such a manner leads to rebellion and sedition. Moreover, how on earth do we know about the happy ending of each of us? Allah is more knowledgeable; He excuses if He pleases and punishes if He pleases.

The verse says:

"Your Lord is more knowledgeable about you than yourself. He will have mercy on you if He pleases, or He will punish you (for your behaviour) if He pleases…"

In the end, concluding the verse, He addresses the Prophet (S) and, in order to console him for the extraordinary unease which he had suffered at the hands of the pagans as a result of their lack of faith, He says:

"…and We have not sent you as a warden over them."

So that you feel as the advocate of the people which compels you to make them definitely embrace the faith. It is your duty to openly take the message to them, and call them earnestly to the truth. If they embrace the faith, so much the better for them; otherwise, no harm will be done to you.

Surah Isra' - Verse 55

وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَي بَعْضٍ وءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُوراً

55. "And your Lord is more knowledgeable than any one who is in the heavens and the earth; and, certainly, We have made some of the prophets excel others, and to David We gave 'Zabūr'."

In the previous verse, the issue in question involved the knowledge of Allah in connection with man. In this verse, the issue in question relates to His knowledge over all the beings whether the celestial or earthly ones.

The verse says:

"And your Lord is more knowledgeable than any one who is in the heavens and the earth…"

In other words, in this verse the meaning is beyond that, implying that Allah is aware not only of your status but also of that of all those who are in the skies and on the earth and He is the most aware of every one and knows their value better.

Then whoever He elects from among the angels and the prophets for a matter is not undue that merely He pleases it, but since He is aware of the true innate value of them and knows them eligible for the job, He elects them.

Then He adds:

"…and, certainly, We have made some of the prophets excel others…"

By saying:

'We have made some prophets excel others',

here is meant the ‘’Ulul‘azm’, ‘prophets of the Book’.

We have it in traditions that there have been one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets, some of whom have been appointed for all the people and possess ‘celestial Books’. some, also, were commissioned for a particular region or over a certain group of people and were under the command of a greater prophet, carrying out his mission.

In other words, although prophets were placed at he highest echelon of virtues, there was a hierarchy for them which ranked them at various levels, excelling some over the others.

This sentence is, in fact, an answer to one of the objections of the pagans, who used to claim in a humiliating tone of voice that: Had the Lord not any one else other than the orphan Muhammad (S) to appoint as a prophet? Moreover, what made him be the leading figure among all the prophets and the ‘Seal of the Prophets’?

The Qur’an implies that it is not astonishing that Allah is aware of the human values of every single individual and, hence, He has selected His prophets from among the bulk of the people. He has bestowed one with the title of “khalil-ullah” (the friend of Allah).

He has conferred the title of “Rūh-ullah” on another one of His prophets. He has selected the Prophet of Islam (S) as “Habib-ullah” (the friend of Allah).

Briefly speaking, He has made some superior to others in His blessings in accordance with the criteria which He himself deems fit and His Wisdom so deems worthy of.

Although Dawood was in charge of a vast territory, the Lord does not regard this matter as his prime object of pride.

On the contrary, He regards the Book of ‘Zabūr’ as what he must take pride in so that the pagans become aware of the fact that the glory of man does not depend on his wealth or property or his authority or his apparent domination. At the same time, being an orphan or being stripped off all of one’s belongings will not indicate to the blame of him.

The verse concludes:

“…and to David We gave ‘Zabūr’.”

Surah Isra’ - Verse 56

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِن دُونِهِ فَلاَ يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنكُمْ وَلاَ تَحْوِيلاً

56. “Say: Call on those whom you asserted (to be your god) besides Him; so they shall neither have the ability of removing the affliction from you, nor to change (it).”

To call on any one other than the Lord, and to put one’s hope into this matter, is merely a daydream, for no one else but Allah is able to remove the dangers or transfer them to another one or, to convert or to reduce them by any means.

Incidentally, one’s belief in intercession occurring by Allah’s saints of removing the difficulties and chastisement takes place by Allah’s permission, and is a different matter.

This verse, once again, deals with the pagans and, pursuing past discussions, the Qur’an addresses the Prophet (S) and declares:

"Say: Call on those whom you asserted (to be your god) besides Him; so they shall neither have the ability of removing the affliction from you, nor to change (it)."

In fact, this verse, as many of other verses of the Qur'an, obliterates the logic of the pagans in this way which holds that the worship of the idols is either for the sake of acquiring benefits or for the sake of repelling harms; but, they have got no power of their own to solve difficulties, nor would they be able to displace any of them.

The application of the Arabic pronoun /'allaðina/ in this verse explains the point that the objective in here does not exclude all the worshipping objects other than 'Allah', but the aim expressed here refers to such objects of worship like angels, Hadrat Massih (as) and the like.

Surah Isra' - Verse 57

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَى رَبِّـهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّـكَ كَانَ مَحْذُوراً

57. "Those whom they call upon, themselves search for means of approaching their Lord which of them is nearer, and they hope for His mercy, and fear His punishment. Verily, the punishment of your Lord is to be dreaded of."

Some commentators are of the opinion that the prophets who call the people to the path of the truth, they themselves seek some means of support, especially the ones who can make them nigh to Allah closer and in a speedier manner, or the mediation of every prophet who is in closer proximity to Allah.

In numerous quotations, we have it under this verse that the two sides of the balance between fear and hope must be paralleled, otherwise, the person who is being involved, will either become desperate or arrogant (as a result of being unduly hopeful).

Anyway, this verse in fact provides justification for what was mentioned in the previous verse. It implies whether you know why they are unable to solve your problem without the Lord's permission. The reason why they do such a thing is that they invocate to the Lord for solving their own difficulties. They try to approach His Pure Essence, asking Him for whatever they wish.

The verse says:

"Those whom they call upon, themselves search for means of approaching their Lord…"

"…which of them is nearer…"

"…and they hope for His mercy…"

"…and fear His punishment…"

The reason why it is so is that the punishment inflicted by Him is so grave in intensity that it is always to be avoided.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily, the punishment of your Lord is to be dreaded of."

In other words, the verse means: those prophets and angels, whom you call gods, try to find access to Allah through praying and worshipping to be

might to Allah so that it becomes transparent that whose position would be ranked as higher before the Lord.

That is, when the prophets, with the high rank and honour that they have with Him and are nearer to Him than you do not worship any one but Allah, and seek for a mean to approach Him, then why should you not be as such, you that are not nearer to Allah?

Therefore, the worship of the Lord alone, and the abandoning of polytheism and dualism in matters of worship are all more indispensable for you. Thus, the Lord seeks to urge the people to imitate the prophets.

Some, however, claim that the angels and Hadrat Massih etc, whom you are regarding as god, are only subservient to the Lord themselves and seek to approach Him and come into closer proximity to Allah through their acts of worship, thus coming into closer contact with His Mercy. Or else, they yearn to know which of them is in closer proximity to the Allah's grace.

Nevertheless, they try to seek forgiveness from the Lord, hoping for His mercy and grace through their obedience, and fearing His reappraisals because of unruly. Just like all of the servants of Allah, they, too, follow the path of worship.

Yes, the punishment of your Lord is too hard for you to bear, and all must avoid it.

Surah Isra' - Verse 58

وَإِن مِن قَرْيَةٍ إِلاَّ نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَاباً شَدِيداً كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُوراً

58. "And there is not a town but We shall annihilate it before the Day of Resurrection or chastise it with a severe chastisement. That is written in the Book, (the Protected Table)."

The Arabic term /qaryah/ refers to the gathering place of people, whether it is a town or a village. The objective of the Qur'anic term /'al kit ab/ here is either the 'Protected Tablet' or the Qur'an in which the reasons for the fall and annihilation of the nations are explained.

Therefore, following our discussion about the pagans, which we noted concerning monotheism and resurrection in the foregoing verses, this noble verse, with an awakening tone, advises them and illustrates the end and the annihilation of this world in face of their rational vision, so that they may know that this world is a mortal one and the eternal world remains elsewhere, thus preparing themselves for the consequences of their behaviour.

The verse says:

"And there is not a town but We shall annihilate it before the Day of Resurrection or chastise it with a severe chastisement…"

Those who engage in evil acts and are oppressive, and the stiff-necked unruly, are to be wiped out by Allah's punishment, and the rest will be annihilated by death due to the natural causes or by common accidents.

Eventually, this world will end and all will pave the path of annihilation. This is a decisively obvious principal which is registered in the Divine Book, (the 'Protected Table').

The verse remarks:

"…That is written in the Book, (the Protected Table)."

Surah Isra' - Verse 59

وَمَا مَنَعَنَآ أَن نُرْسِلَ بِالآيَاتِ إِلاَّ أَن كَذَّبَ بِهَا الاَوَّلُونَ وءَاتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالآيَاتِ إِلاَّ تَخْوِيفاً

59. "And nothing prevented Us that We should send the signs (requested by the people) save that the former nations rejected them; and We gave to Thamūd the She-Camel, a manifest sign, but they did injustice unto her; and We do not send signs (requested) but to warn."

The pretext seeking pagans of Mecca used to ask the Prophet (S) for miracles frequently, among which was that they wanted him to turn some of the mountains of Mecca (the Saf a Mountain) into gold, or to displace mountains and agricultural land be made available in their place.

The Lord declares that, according to the historical experiences, the obstinate pagans would not embrace the faith by witnessing such signs either, and the system of creation will not be made subservient to the obstinate individuals.

If a miracle is performed according to the request of the people, and they still remain disbelievers, their worldly chastisement is certain to take place.

A camel is an animal. However, the Lord, with respect to the camel of Salih, says: /naqatullah/, (the She-Camel of Allah).

Since whatever relates to the Lord in some ways possesses sanctity. Even for the name of Abu-Lahab, because it is in the Qur'an, one can not touch it before making ritual ablution.

Miracles are of two types

Some miracles are such that, without them, one cannot acquire cognition of the prophecy. Obviously, such miracles must take place, whether the people embrace the faith or they do not.

Others are because of Allah's grace, and may lead to the increase in one's faith. These miracles are done by the grace of the Lord.

Those miracles which are outside the category of the two, are not shown by the Lord. Thus, He implies: We do not send Our verses for the fact that your forefathers had requested such verses to become believer and once We sent them, they refused to embrace the faith. You, too, follow their path, and will refuse to believe as they did.

The verse says:

"And nothing prevented Us that We should send the signs (requested by the people) save that the former nations rejected them…"

Then, the Qur'an points the finger to a clear example of the issue by saying:

"…and We gave to Thamūd the She-Camel, a manifest sign…"

It was the same camel which came out of the mountain upon Allah's command, for they had requested such a miracle: an illuminating miracle. Nonetheless, they refused to become believers, so they did harm to that she-camel, and killed her.

The verse says:

"…but they did injustice unto her…"

In principle, it is not Allah's procedure that everyone who requests a miracle, the prophet submits to his request, and He does not send the verses and the miracles except for inspiring awe in people and delivering an ultimatum to them.

The verse says:

"…and We do not send signs (requested) but to warn."

In other words, Allah (s.w.t.) makes His verses and miracles apparent through the prophets so that, by witnessing them, the people receive instructions, fearing Allah's punishment and embrace the faith.

Explanations

The prophets were always entangled with obstinate individuals despite having various miracles.

"…save that the former notions rejected them…"

Allah is all-powerful in every situation, though His procedure is based upon wisdom, and not that of the gratification of the people's desires.

Sacrilege and the denial of the miracles will lead to the Divine fury and chastisement.

"…and We gave to Thamūd the She-Camel, a manifest sign, but they did injustice unto her…"

Miracles serve as the means for the people's cognition, enlightenment, and as warning for them.

"…but to warn."

Surah Isra' - Verse 60

وإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلاَّ فِتْنَةً لّـِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلاَّ طُغْيَاناً كَبِيراً

60. "And (remember) when We said to you: 'Verily your Lord encompasses the people;' and we did not make the dream which We showed you and the cursed tree in the Qur'an, save (as) a trial for the people; and We cause them to fear, but it only increases them in great insolence."

Now, the Lord, addressing His Prophet (S), states that he should remember the time when He told him: his Lord is knowledgeable about the state of the people and their good and bad deeds, and He knows who merits rewards and who deserves punishments.

He is All-powerful for the punishment and reward of the people. Therefore, all are within the range and scope of His power, and no one is capable of exceeding the limits of His Will and Providence.

The holy verse says:

"And (remember) when We said to you: 'Verily your Lord encompasses the people;'…"

Thus, Allah encourages the Prophet (S) to go on with his process of propagation, and He promises him that He will save him from the harm of the people, and, eventually, He will conquer Mecca for him.

Incidentally, the issue involved in the previous holy verse concerned the killing of Salih's she-camel, and in this verse, the issue in question deals

with the whole damned lot who were the murderers of ‘Ahl-ul-Bayt’, the ‘Prophet’s household’.

The verse continues saying:

“…and we did not make the dream which We showed you and the cursed tree in the Qur’an, save (as) a trial for the people…”

We have it in the quotations that the Ahl-ul-Bayt remarked:

“We are no less in position than the Salih’s she-camel. Any insult to us would lead to annihilation.”[1]

In the blissful Qur’an, there are several dreams cited for the Prophet of Islam (S), one of which has been cited at the time of the outbreak of the ‘Battle of Badr’, in which, the Lord degraded and minimized the enemies in the sight of the Prophet (S) so that the Muslims would not lose courage. [2]

Another dream came upon him when he dreamed about the victorious arrival into Masjid-ul-Har am. [3]

A third dream was the one which is referred to in this verse. The first two dreams took place after the Hejrah and in Medina, while this third one came about in Mecca. Of course, some ascribe the dream in relation to ‘Mi‘raj’ (Muhammad’s ascension to Heaven) while the ‘Mi‘raj’ took place in full awakening state but dreams come about while one is asleep.

That dream and the state of that cursed lot (the cursed tree) are the same and identical, for their end-result is one and the same. That is, they both provide the roots of evil for the people.

The Lord indicated this ‘cursed tree’ and their acts in dream to the Prophet (S) while he was asleep, saying that this is the cause of the evil of your people, and with the holy sentence:

“…‘Verily your Lord encompasses the people;’…”

Allah Sought to Console Him

The Arabic term /šajarah/ signifies both ‘a tree’ as well as whatever else has got branches and offshoots. Therefore, it also refers to ‘a tribe’. The Prophet (S) also remarked:

“Ali and I are both from one tribe (the same ‘pedigree’ and ‘line’).”[4]

This term also points to the chain of blood relations and race as in the case of ‘family pedigree’ which is called ‘genealogical tree’. Therefore, the idiomatic expression ‘the cursed tree’, signify a whole lot of ‘branches’ and a well-rooted tribe which has got off-shoots as well, and which is cursed.

At the end of this verse, we have it that the Divine warning as for this ‘cursed lot’, or cursed tree, has brought no results except an increase in their viciousness and rebellion.

The holy verse says:

“…and We cause them to fear, but it only increases them in great insolence.”

The phrase: /tuqy anan kabir/ “great insolence”, has only been mentioned once in the Qur’an and only in this verse. Therefore, one must look out for a “cursed lot” and a tribe in the Qur’an which has been Muslim in appearance but dissident and rebellious inwardly and in the real sense with a kind of hypocrisy which causes the trial and sedition for people.

There are numerous causes of condemnation and cursing in the Qur'an such as: the Satan, the Jews, the hypocrites, the pagans, and the scholars who cover-up the truth as well as those who inflict harm on the Prophet (S).

However, it is only the hypocrites who accompany the Muslims and cause them the maximum injury by their hypocrisy, for the Satan, the people of the Book, and the pagans indicate clearly what they are, while the hypocrites, apparently Muslims, have always been the agents for sedition. [5]

Some have held the opinion that the 'cursed tree' consist of the 'tree of Zaqqūm' which, in Hell, is the means of the Divine chastisement.

But there are also other things which have been used as the Divine punishment as well, and they do not provide sings for the condemnation of those means, like the River Nile, which drowned Pharaoh, or the angels who inflicted punishment on certain peoples, or the believers who served as the arms of Allah in punishment and annihilation of the pagans.

"Fight them (and) Allah will punish them at your hands…"[6]

Alameh Tabataba'i (q.s.), in his discussion dealing with the quotations concerning 'Surah Al-Qadr, No. 97', quotes from some outstanding of Sunni sources such as: Khatib Baqd adi, Turmathi, Ibn-Jarir, Tabar ani, Bihaqi, Ibn Mardooyah, as well as Shi'ah sources such as Kafi, etc, that the blissful Prophet (S) dreamed of panthers climbing his pulpit and it saddened him greatly.

Gabriel descended when the Prophet (S) recounted his dream for him.

Gabriel ascended to the heaven, and, on his return, He brought along with him the following verses:

"Have you then considered if We let them enjoy themselves for years."
"Then there comes to them that with which they are threatened,"
"That which they were made to enjoy shall not avail them?"[7]

This dream also caused the descending of Surah 'Al-Qadr' so as to comfort the Prophet (S) that if the 'Umayyads' ruled for a thousand months, We provided you with the Night of 'Qadr' in exchange, which is better than a thousand months.

The issue concerning the dreaming about the panthers, which overtook the government and were climbing the pulpit of the Prophet (S), has also been quoted from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (as) [8]

The Sunni and Shi'ah commentators regard the 'Umayyads' as the 'coursed tree'.

Imam Sajjad (as) remarked: Gabriel adapted the panthers to the Umayyads. The Prophet (S) asked:

"Does this event take place during my era?"[9]

From among the Umayyads, the person who was most rebellious, and caused the advent of Karbala to come about, was 'Yazid', and this calamity was the greatest rebellion throughout history.

Explanations

The Lord uses the dreams at times to reveal some facts to the prophets and others.

Every event, even interpretation of dreams, can be used as a means for the testing of the people.

Those tribes and groups who incite deviations are the 'cursed tree'

"…and the cursed tree in the Qur'an save (as) a trial for the people…"

Issuing warnings to the people, even to the cursed tribes and the 'cursed families' is among Allah's ways of treatment.

Warnings will have no impact on the tenacious people who are obstinate. 'An iron nail will not penetrate stones'.

"…but it only increase them in great insolence."

Notes

1. Bihar, vol. 28, p. 205, and vol. 50, p. 192
2. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 43
3. Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 27
4. Bihar, vol. 38, p. 309
5. Tafsir-Al-Mizan, under this verse.
6. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 14
7. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verses 205-207
8. Tafsir-i-Tibyan
9. Tafsir-i-Lahiji

Section 7: Satan's Pride against Man

Surah Isra' - Verse 61

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ ءَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيناً

61. "And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate unto Adam'; so they (all) did prostrate except 'Iblis who said: 'Am I to prostrate to the one You have created of clay?'"

Here, the Qur'an alludes to the unruliness of 'Iblis with regard to the Allah's command, concerning the issue of prostration to Adam, and the viscous fate awaiting him, sums up the story.

Dealing with this issue, following the previous discussions about the obstinate pagans, indeed, reveals the fact that the complete and the total picture of arrogance, paganism, and unruliness has been the Satan. The Qur'an points out as to how his fate ended; hence, the followers of the Satan will meet their doom in just the same way.

At first, He says:

"And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate unto Adam'; so they (all) did prostrate except 'Iblis…"

This prostration is some kind of modesty and humbleness for the sake of the glorification of the creation of man and his excellence over other beings or else it has been of the sort that has been performed, facing Allah for the creation of such an amazing creature.

The Satan which had been overwhelmed by arrogance and pride, and his egotism and conceit had covered a curtain over his intelligence, and thinking that 'the earth', which is the source of all blessings and the origin of all beings, is inferior to fire, addressing his objections to the Lord, the verse says about him:

"…who said: 'Am I to prostrate to the one You have created of clay?'"

Therefore, we repeatedly face the issue of the prostration of the angels in the Qur'an, and the unruliness of the Satan in this connection.

'Iblis is of the 'Jinn' lot,

"…he was of the jinn…"[1]

and has got an army:

"And the host of 'Iblis, all."[2]

and has also got infantry battalions as well as a mounting army:

"…and collect your cavalry and infantry against them…"[3]

and is the cause of all deviations and, finally, his abstinence from prostration, provides a comparison between the earth and fire, where he said:

"…You created me of fire while you created him of clay'."[4]

Surah Isra' - Verse 62

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أَخَّرْتَنِ إِلَي يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

62. "He (the Satan) said: 'Tell me, is this he whom you have honoured above me? If You respite me till the Day of Resurrection, I will certainly master his progeny, save a few."

When the Satan noticed that, as a consequence of his arrogance and unruliness in face of the Lord's command, he has become an outcast from the Lord's holy sanctuary for ever, said humbly:

Were I to be given a respite till the resurrection day by You, I shall seduce all the progenitors of this human being, make them perish altogether starting from the scratch, seducing them all except a few of them.

The verse says:

"He (the Satan) said: 'Tell me, is this he whom you have honoured above me? If You respite me till the Day of Resurrection, I will certainly master his progeny, save a few."

The Arabic term /'ahtanikanna/ which is derived from the term /'ihtin ak/ means 'eradicating' something or 'uprooting'. Thus, when locusts perish an entire agricultural land, the Arabs say: "locusts eradicated the farming." This Qur'anic expression, therefore, refers to the point that: I will uproot all of the children of Adam from the path of obedience, except a few of them.

There is the possibility that the Arabic term /'ihtanikanna/ is a derivation of /hanak/, meaning: 'beneath the throat'.

When the rope or the bridle is placed around the neck of an animal, the Arabs often use the expression /hanatk-ad-dabbah/, meaning that 'the animal was bridled'. In fact, the Satan wants to claim that he will put the bridle of temptation around the neck of all human beings thus leading them toward the wrong path.

Surah Isra' - Verse 63

قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوراً

63. "(Addressing the Satan), He said: 'Depart! But whoever of them follows you, then verily Hell will be your recompense, a recompense in full!'"

Man is free in his acceptance of the path of the Lord and/or in pursuing the Satan.

The Lord's punishment is all-encompassing; the guilty will be provided with both the divine chastisement which is due to their own sins, and the punishment for misleading others in their entirety either.

Incidentally, in order to realize an experimental field for all, and proper means for the education of the true devout believers, which all tend to shape man in the melting pot, and in order to become strong against the enemy, the Satan was provided with the means for survival and activities:

the verse says:

"(Addressing the Satan), He said: 'Depart! But whoever of them follows you, then verily Hell will be your recompense, a recompense in full!'"

It is by means of this nature that He declares the method of testing and explains the ultimate aim of victory and defeat in this grand Divine trial.

Surah Isra' - Verse 64

وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُم بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الاَمْوَالِ وَالاَوْلاَدِ وَعِدْهُمْ وَمَايَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلاَّ غُرُوراً

64. "And startle whomever of them you can with your voice, and collect your cavalry and infantry against them; and share with them in wealth and children and make promises to them; and the Satan makes no promises to them except delusion."

The Satan, at first, removes man's instinct for monotheism by means of persuasion. Later, he seeks to invade him with his ammunitions and armies.

The Arabic term /'istifz az/ here signifies 'stumbling' or 'slipping' with speed and adeptness as well as by way of pushing.

The Satan does not just select one way for deceiving man. On the contrary, he usually entrenches man from all sides, accompanied by a number of other ways using all forms of persuasions, dissuasions, promises, aspirations, temptations, and enticements, which are as its mounting forces and its foot-soldiers, and in this course some people follow him.

We have it in quotations that he who has no fear of anyone in what he says and in what he does, or what he is said about; committing sins or back-biting openly, is a partner to the Satan.[5]

Other cases of forming partnership with the Satan, consist of: having forbidden sources of income, living on illegal money, adultery, raising corrupt and deviant offspring [6]

And he who regards the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) of the Prophet (S) as enemies, has allowed the Satan to enter into partnership with him.[7]

Unhealthy production and consumption, hoarding wealth, investment of foreign companies and foreign corporations, creation of scientific, cultural, and artistic centers as well as international games, which are colonial, are kinds of partnership with the Satan.

Anyway, explaining in an interesting and explicit fashion, He exposes the ways and means through which the Satan employs in his temptations. The Qur'an, addressing him, implies: you can provoke them each with your voice, and you can dispatch your mounting and infantry army units against them.

The verse says:

"And startle whomever of them you can with your voice, and collect your cavalry and infantry against them…"

The Satan possesses numerous aids and assistants who are of his own kind as well as from among mankind who help the Satan in seducing people. Some who are more powerful and speedier in act just like the mounting army; others are weaker and slower in action and behave just like infantry.

The verse, addressing the Satan, continues saying:

"…and share with them in wealth and children and make promises to them…"

Then the Qur'an warns that the Satan does not do anything else except deceiving them.

The verse says:

"…and the Satan makes no promises to them except delusion."

Surah Isra' - Verse 65

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلاً

65. "Verily (as for) My servants, you have not any authority over them; and your Lord suffices (as their) Guardian."

Notwithstanding the fact that all people are the servants of Allah, the Lord, out of respect, has ascribed some to Himself by saying "My servants", as He has also used such a term for proximity concerning the inanimate objects as well as in the case of /bayti/ (My house).

'The servants of Allah', have also been introduced with specifications of 'faith' and 'trust' in another verse, those who are by no means dominated by the Satan. [8]

Certainly, the Satan carries out its temptation; establishes contacts, but they become constantly mindful and go on with their resistance. [9]

We have it in quotations that 'prayer call' and 'prayers' are two ways of expelling the Satan. [10]

Therefore, serving and worshipping the Lord provides one with insurance against satanic persuasions, temptations and Satanic deployments, for he who joins the Infinite Power, will become impenetrable.

The verse says:

"Verily (as for) My servants, you have not any authority over them; and your Lord suffices (as their) Guardian."

Anyway, he who becomes the servant of Allah, He will take care of him as his advocate, as his guardian, and as his superintendent.

Surah Isra' - Verse 66

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِي يُزْجِي لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيماً

66. "Your Lord is He Who makes the ship go for you through the sea that you may seek of His grace; verily He is ever Merciful to you."

This verse pursues the discussions which we had before about monotheism and about the campaigns against paganism. It enters this discussion through two different ways: by reasoning, and through the way of conscience and the inside or internal system.

At first, the Holy Qur'an alludes to the monotheism through reasoning, saying:

"Your Lord is He Who makes the ship go for you through the sea…"

Obviously, there are numerous benefits for transportation available by sea-routes, including cheapness of traveling, their suitability for being used at all the times by all the general public and for transportation of goods passengers and fishing.

The role of the seas in the field of providing oxygen, production of water vapor, clouds, and rain; developing beds for fishery industries and wanders of material, plants and animals are remarkable. The amazing surprises they present in matters relating to the inanimate objects, plant and animal life are abundant.

We read in the 'Joushan Kabir' supplication:

"O! The One Whose wonders of creation are found in abundance at sea!"

Then the Qur'an adds that the aim of all these preparations are that you benefit from His blessings in matters relating to your travels, to the transportation of your goods, merchandise, and to whatever else which is of help to your religion as well as to your worldly life, for the Lord is kind to you.

The holy verse says:

"…that you may seek of His grace; verily He is ever Merciful to you."

Surah Isra' - Verse 67

وإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاكُمْ إِلَي الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الإِنسَانُ كَفُوراً

67. "And when affliction touches you in the sea, away will go those on whom you call except him; but as He delivers you to the land, you turn away (from Him); and man is very ungrateful."

One of the reasons as to why monotheism is inherent in human nature is the fact that man turns to an invisible point to save him when he is caught in distress and despair.

A man, who was an atheist, once asked Imam Sadiq (as) to provide him with a proof for proving the existence of the Lord.

The Imam asked him:

"Have you ever embarked a ship which has been wrecked?"

"Yes,"

He answered:

"Only once. We were once ship wrecked and I used a piece of wood."

The Imam (as) then asked:

"Were you then focusing on a power to save you?"

He answered:

"Yes,"

He (as) continued:

"That very invisible power is the Lord, the Almighty."

Therefore, when at loss in a sea and winds stop blowing or the sea waves threaten you, etc, all your objects of worship will be forgotten, except the only Lord. in such a circumstance, it is Allah Who can save you, to Whom you appeal and you call on no one else.

However, as you were saved by Him from drowning; and felt safe, you will turn away from Him and refuse to believe in Him and to obey Him being ungrateful, and man does this too often.

The verse says:

"And when affliction touches you in the sea, away will go those on whom you call except him; but as He delivers you to the land, you turn away (from Him)…"

Certainly, worldly interests are so enticing that man tends to forget everything shortly, after being saved of the affliction and neglecting Allah after being saved is an explicit example of ungratefulness.

The verse continues saying:

"…and man is very ungrateful."

Surah Isra' - Verse 68

أَفَاَمِنتُمْ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِباً ثُمَّ لاَ تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكِيلاً

68. "Do you then feel secure that He will not cause the shore to swallow you up, or send on you squall of pebbles? Then, you will not find protector for yourselves."

The annihilation of the former nations has been completed in various ways. The Lord has made the earth bury some of the violators and enemies, while He has made others drown at sea. Some have been stoned in landslip, and others have been perished in thunderbolts.

Therefore, the Lord is evermore capable of annihilation of the pagans. If today you are saved from a ship-wreck at sea, landing safely, do not feel to be safe in other circumstances, or that you are secure from future punishments.

This same feeling of security from chastisement provides grounds for our negligence and unruliness. Man is at Allah's power whenever and wherever he is; whether be it at sea or on a dry land; makes no difference for Allah.

The verse says:

"Do you then feel secure that He will not cause the shore to swallow you up, or send on you squall of pebbles?…"

Therefore, Do you think that Allah is unable to inflict severe punishment on you, whether at sea or on land? Do you then feel safe if there is a tornado in which you get caught, stoning you to death? Such a chastisement is harsher than being drowned at sea.

Thus, why do you not look out for a protector to guard you off all dangers?

The verse concludes:

"…Then, you will not find protector for yourselves."

Surah Isra' - Verse 69

أَمْ أَمِنتُمْ أَن يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً أُخْرَي فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفاً مِنَ الرِّيحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُم بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ثُمَّ لاَ تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ تَبِيعاً

69. "Or do you feel secure that He will (not) send you back into it (the sea) another time, and then send on you a fierce gale then drown you for your disbelief; then you will find no prosecutor for you against Us?"

The Arabic term /hasib/ refers to a storm in land and the Qur'anic word /q asif/ here refers to a sea-hurricane, and it is a tornado with a severe sound as if the things are broken up.

The Qur'anic term /tabi'/ which is a derivative of /taba'/, refers to the person who seeks for blood-price and retribution, and follows up his appeal processes for lawsuit. Thus, He implies in this noble verse that:

You the oblivious! Are you of the opinion that this was the last time that you went on a sea journey? Or do you feel safe and secure if going on such a journey next time and a pounding tornado will not be sent to you to inflict punishment on you for your lack of gratefulness? Then, you shall find no savior facing Us?

The verse says:

"Or do you feel secure that He will (not) send you back into it (the sea) another time, and then send on you a fierce gale then drown you for your disbelief; then you will find no prosecutor for you against Us?"

Thus, we must not feel proud when having temporary comfort. The danger is always near us. By being saved from an affliction, the danger is not done with for good forever. Neglecting Allah after being saved serves as a good example of ungratefulness towards Him. No power can face the Lord, and Allah is not responsible to anyone.

Surah Isra' - Verse 70

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي ءَادَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَي كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلاً

70. "And, indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, and We carried them on the land and the sea; and We provided them with sustenance of the good things; and We preferred them greatly over many of those We created."

As attaching importance to the personality of individuals is one way of educating and guiding them, following its discussion concerning pagans and deviants in the previous verses, here the glorious Qur'an deals with the highly valued personality of humankind and Allah's blessings regarding them.

So that, noting this extraordinary high value, he should, not spoil such a precious material easily, selling it at a cheap rate.

The noble verse says:

"And, indeed, We have honored the children of Adam…"

Afterwards, the Holy Qur'an refers to the three aspects of Allah's blessings to man, implying that He transported them at sea and on land by the different means of transportation which He made available to them.

The verse says:

"…and We carries them on the land and sea…"

And, the other one is that:

"…and We provided them with sustenance of the good things…"

It continues saying:

"…and We preferred them greatly over many of those We created."

Why Man Is the Most Superior of Allah's Creatures

The answer is not very complicated for we know that man is the only being that is formed of different potentialities, whether material and spiritual, bodily and mentally, and he can grow up within contradictions. Man is unlimited from the point of capacity and development.

There is a famous tradition quoted from Hadrat Ali (as) which is a clear evidence for this claim, where he says:

"Allah has created all creatures into 3 different categories: Angels, Animals and Human Beings. The angels have got reasoning without any passion or fury but without intellect. The animals are collections of passions and fury. But, man is a collection unity of both; one of which must prevail. If his reason overcomes his passion, he will be superior to

the angels, and if his passions dominate his reason, he will be just inferior to animals."[11]

As for the human dignity, which is at times spiritual and acquired and is with Allah, such as that kind of dignity (or honour) which is exclusive to the men of virtue.

The Qur'an says:

"Verily the most honourable of you with Allah is the most virtuous one."[12]

At other times, human dignity (or honour) is found in the process of creation, like:

"…in the best make."[13]

which has been mentioned about the creation of man.

The objective of /karramn a/ in this verse, perhaps, is the second aspect of it. Man's dignity is both in his creation, intelligence, intellect, and talents, and in having the Divine laws, the leadership of the 'immaculate' and of being prostrated to by the angels.

Incidentally, though man has been excelled to all creatures by Allah, even to the angels, his failure in selecting the right path, and his indecent acts bring him down to the lowest possible positions:

"…the lowest of the low"[14]**,**

which equates those of the animals and even lower than them.

"…is as the likeness of the donkey…"[15]

The examples are:

"…so his parable is like the parable of a dog…"[16]

and

"…they are as cattle, rather they are more astray…"[17]**,**

or

"…as stone or even worse…"[18]

This verse refers to both dignity (or honour) and virtues. The differences of the two may consist of:

Honour: can be considered as advantages which are lacking in others, while, virtues, consist of positive points which are also found in others.

Honour refers to the Allah-given blessings which exist within man with no struggles, while, virtues concern the blessings which have been gained by the effort of man accompanied with the Divine succor.

Honour concerns the material blessings, while virtue relates to spiritual blessings.

In conclusion, traveling is one of the necessities of human life for meeting his needs and acquiring of experiences, which the Lord has provided for man in land and at sea, calling it as one of His graces.

Then, there are the 'good things' which are of several kinds: The 'clean life', the 'clean offspring', the 'clean sustenance'.

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"The clean sustenance is the same useful knowledge." [19]

Notes

1. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 50
2. Surah Ash-Shu‘ar a, No. 26, verse 95
3. Surah ’Isr a’, No. 17, verse 64
4. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 18, verse 12
5. Tafsir-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
6. Bihar, vol. 101, p. 136
7. Kafi, vol. 5, p. 502
8. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 99
9. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 201
10. Bihar, vol. 63, p. 268
11. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 188
12. Surah Al-Hujur at, No. 49, verse 13
13. Surah At-Teen, No. 99, verse 4
14. Surah Al-Hujur at, No. 95, verse 5
15. Surah Al-Jumu‘ah, No. 62, verse 5
16. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 176
17. Ibid, verse 179
18. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 74
19. Tafsir-Kanz-uld-Daqayiq

Section 8: Every People Will Be Summoned with Their Own Imam

Surah Isra' - Verse 71

يَـوْمَ نَـدْعُواْ كُـلَّ أُنَـاسٍ بِإِمَـامِهِمْ فَمَـنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَـهُ بِيَمِينِـهِ فَأُوْلَئِـكَ يَقْـرَءُونَ كِتَـابَهُمْ وَلاَ يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلاً

71. "On the Day We shall call every people with their Imam (leader); then whoever is given his book in his right hand; then these will read their book (joyfully); and they will not be treated unjustly in the least.

This holy verse makes allusions to one of the other Divine blessings given to man, and then it refers to the heavy responsibilities which run parallel to these blessings and are upon him. At first, the Holy Qur'an points to the 'issue of leadership' and its role in the course of human destiny, implying that on the Hereafter Day He shall call each people along with their 'Imams' 'Leaders'.

The verse says:

"On the Day We shall call every people with their Imam (leader)…"

That is, those people who, in any age, accepted the call of their contemporary prophets and their emissaries, will be with their leaders, while those who bowed to the leadership of the Satan or the Imams of aberration or tyrannical rulers and pioneers, will be accompanied by them.

This exposition, while reflecting one of the means of the development of man, serves as a dire warning to all the human beings that they should show maximum vigilance in the course of the selection of leaders, not allowing just anyone to take their lead.

The Role of Leadership in Islam

It is narrated in a famous quotation from Imam Baqir (as), that whenever he discussed upon the 'principal pillars' of Islam, he used to place the 'leadership issue' (Wilayah) as the fifth, and the most important of the pillars, while, placing the 'daily prayers', which is meant to establish one's personal relationship with the Creator, and 'fasting', which is the secret of campaign against passions, and paying of the poor-dues (Zakat), which is a relationship of people with people, and, finally, 'Hajj', which relates to the social aspects of Islam, consist of the other four pillars.

The 'Imam' (as), then, goes on to say:

"Nothing is as important as the issue of leadership (Wilayah)",

for the execution of other four principles depends, entirely, on the issue of leadership and can be realized solely in the light of this principle.

It is also for this reason that we have in another famous quotation from the Prophet (S) in a famous traditions he said:

"He who passes away without having an 'Imam', a 'leader', his death belongs to the category of 'paganism'."

There are numerous examples throughout history when a nation has gained the first row in the world in rank and position under the guidance of a great and an eligible leader, while, the same nation has suffered a

devastating blow, and its eventual down fall has been brought about as a result of a weak and incapable leadership that may be beyond recognition.

In interpretation of this verse in Islamic sources, there are numerous quotations introduced, all of which enlighten thoroughly the meaning of the verse, indicating that the purpose of this verse is 'Imamat', 'leadership', as follows:

1) In an authentic documented tradition, quoted from Imam Ali-Ibn-MūsarRida (as) by Shi'ah as well as Sunni sources, we read that, the 'Imam' (as), quoting from the prophet (S), narrated by his forefathers, upon the commentary of this verse, said:

"On that Day, every nation will be called along with its contemporary Imam, 'leader', and the Book of their Lord, as well as the course of practice of their prophet." [1]

2) And, we have it also quoted by Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Do you not express your praise and gratitude to Allah? When the resurrection day comes, the Lord will call every nation along with the one whose leadership it has accepted. We will be called along with the Prophet (S) and you will be along with us. Where do you think you will be taken to then? By the Lord of Ka'bah to Paradise."

The Imam reiterated the last sentence three times.

3) Hadrat-i-Rida has said in a detailed tradition:

"The issue of 'Imamat' (leadership) exhibits the position of the prophets and is a heritage of the forerunners. It tackles with the issue of substitution of Allah and the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) as well as the position of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) along with the replacement by Imam Hassan, as well as Imam Hussayn (as)."

Then he said:

"The Imam introduces those issues which are as 'allowed' by Allah as they are, and the ones which are regarded 'forbidden' by the Lord as such.

The Imam seeks to establish the limits which are ordained by Allah and he defends the Lord's religion, and invites (the people) to the path of Allah through wisdom, good admonitions, and self-explanatory proofs. And, finally, the Imam is the rein and head of the religion, order of Muslims, the benefit to the believers in the world and their glory."

Again, he remarked:

"The 'Imam' is the flourishing root of Islam and the 'prime branch' of it. The 'Imam' is an honest friend, a kind and friendly father, a truly-loyal brother and a companion, just like an affectionate and honest mother towards her young child, and a refuge for Allah's servants."

Then, he said:

"The 'Imam' is the Lord's trustee on the earth and among His people. He is the Lord's proof for His servants and is His substitute in the cities. He calls (the people) to Allah and defends His sanctuaries." [2]

4) Quoting Ibn Abbas, Muj ahid says:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) has remarked: 'As the day of resurrection comes about, the Lord commands Gabriel to sit down at the gate of the

Paradise, and do not let any one in unless he possesses the admission card and passage of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as)'."[3]

There are two types of leaders mentioned in the Qur'an. The first one includes the leaders of 'light' and 'guidance'; while the latter comprises of leaders who lead to the Fire and misguidance. The second group compel people to follow their lead by force, threats, allurement, and humiliation.

5) Abū Basir once told Imam Sadiq (as):

"I witness that verily you are my Imam."

The Imam replied:

"Every group will be mustered with their own Imam in the Hereafter."[4]

6) And, again, the same Imam remarked:

"He who rejects or refuses to accept one of the living 'Imams', he has certainly rejected the 'Imams' (and 'leaders') of the past." [5]

Incidentally, the issue of 'Imamat', (leadership) and 'Wilayat' (mastership) are the subject-core of life, and are within the context of one's very life, and it is not to be regarded as a marginal or merely an ideological issue side-lined by others.

The issue of 'leadership' may make people either happy or wretched. Therefore, the result of selection of a leader and obedience to him is a burning one till the threshold of the Hereafter.

The Hereafter is not only the tribunal for individuals, but it is also the great court set-up for nations, peoples, parties, schools of thought, and for governments.

Then, the verse implies that the people will be categorized into two different groups in the doomsday. Those whose record of deeds is delivered to their right hand, and this is done with their pride, joy, and pleasure when they read it joyfully, and no cruelty is done to them.

And, he, who has not found a way to be saved in the world and who has not been led well, he will not seek his way out into the Paradise in the hereafter.

The verse says:

"…then whoever is given his book in his right hand; then these will read their book (joyfully)…"

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the Arabic term /fati/ signifies a thin noodle which is spilt within a date-stone and which here implies an 'insignificant' amount.

Therefore, the chastisement in the resurrection day is a hundred percent just and fair, for, on that Day one receives punishment and reward commensurate with his amount of sin or decent act he has undertaken to perform, even it is very insignificant.

The verse says:

"…and they will not be treated unjustly in the least."

Surah Isra' - Verse 72

وَمَن كَانَ فِي هذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلاً

72. "And, whoever is blind in this (life), he will (also) be blind in the Hereafter and (even) more erring from the way."

Those who have turned a blind eye to the face of the truth in this world, will be likewise and even more misled in the Hereafter.

They will neither be led in this world to the way of guidance, nor do they find the way to Heaven and prosperity in Hereafter, for they have turned a blind eye to all the realities, thus they have deprived themselves from all of the blessings which the Lord had bestowed upon them.

As the world Hereafter is a grand reflection of this world, it would by no means be astonishing to find that such blind-folded people enter the doomsday scene in their like manner.

The verse says:

"And, whoever is blind in this (life), he will (also) be blind in the Hereafter and (even) more erring from the way."

Explanations

In addition to those who rise up from death as deaf and dumb in the resurrection day, there will also be seen scenes where people are as blind, which case has its roots in their ' inwardly blindness' in this world.

Some Islamic quotations denote that whoever is required to go on a 'Hajj pilgrimage' but he does not perform the ceremonies on site, or he who reads the Qur'an but he does not practice accordingly, will be mustered blind in Hereafter.[6]

Being inwardly blind is a worse situation than being a really blind by eyes. As Hadrat Ali (as) remarks:

"The worst kind of blindness, is the blindness at heart."

He (as) has also stated:

"The worst (and the hardest form) of blindness is (when) someone is blind unto our excellence."[7]

Cases of blindness on the resurrection day, have also been reiterated in other verses as well, among which one may refer to verse 97, of the Surah 'Isra' which says:

"We shall muster them on the Day of Resurrection upon their faces, blind, dumb, and deaf whose dwelling shall be Hell…".

And again verse 125 of Surah TaHa, No. 20, indicates the rising blind from the dead on the resurrection day as the consequence of being inwardly blind and neglectful to the Divine verses in this world and turning away form accepting the truth.

Imam Baqir (as) remarks:

"Whoever does not acquire the true spiritual benefit by witnessing the creation, is far worse blinded in the Hereafter which he has not witnessed." [8]

Question: We have it in some verses that on Hereafter Day the sinners are commanded to read their record. How would that be feasible and compatible despite such verses with regard to their conditions of blindness?

Answer: Their case of blindness is confined to one of the passing stages of the resurrection day; they will regain their eye-sight in other phases, witnessing clearly those cases and facts which they have failed to grasp in the world.

Surah Isra' - Verse 73

وَإِن كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذاً لاَتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلاً

73. "And verily they were about to tempt you away from what We revealed to you so that you would ascribe against Us other than that, and then they would certainly have taken you as a friend."

Referring to the issues involved in previous holy verses regarding paganism and the pagans, here, He issues a dire warning to the blissful Prophet (S) to be on his guard against this group and their temptations, lest the slightest weakness permeates his beliefs in his campaign against paganism and idolatry, which are to be ensued decisively to the end.

The verse says:

"And verily they were about to tempt you away from what We revealed to you so that you would ascribe against Us other than that, and then they would certainly have taken you as a friend."

In some quotations, we read that the pagans wanted the Prophet (S) to pay his respect to the idols or they asked for a one-year respite for their pursuit of their worship of the idols, in which case, the prophet (S) was about to condescend to their request.

However, the Almighty protected him. Nevertheless, such quotations are discarded and they are incompatible with the principle of infallibility and decisiveness of the Prophet (S) which has been mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an and which is his usual course in his life.[9]

The author of Tafsir Atyab-ul-Bayan states that: As we have it in the verse: /'an-il-laði 'auhayn a/

"…from what We revealed…"

instead of /'amm a 'auhayn a/, this indicates that attempts made by the pagans for changing the view of the Prophet (S), relates to his diversion of attention from a particular person and not to the revealed matters. However, who has it been the fellow whom Allah has sent His revelations about?

There is a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir and Imam Kazim (as) concerning the issue of 'Wilayat' (Succession) of Hadrat Ali (as), in which, the Lord has made certain recommendations to the Prophet (S) through revelations.

The Lord has revealed this verse in order to make the Prophet (S) remain heedless of the jealousy of the people and their rejection as well as their intolerant attitudes, and to invalidate the attempts of the pagans for making the Prophet (S) exceed the limits.

Surah Isra' - Verses 74 - 75

وَلَوْلاَ أَن ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئاً قَلِيلاً

إِذاً لاَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لاَ تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيراً

74. "And had it not been that We had established you already, you would certainly have been near to incline towards them a little."

75. "In that case, We would certainly have made you taste a double (punishment) in this life and a double (punishment) after death, then you would not have found any helper for you against Us."

If such were not the case that We had protected you by bestowing upon you the power of infallibility and of Our grace, you were almost about to

approach them, showing your inclination, thus putting into practice some of their wishes.

The verse says:

"And had it not been that We had established you already, you would certainly have been near to incline towards them a little."

In such a case, We would make you taste twice the penalty of the world and the Hereafter. That is, whatever amount of punishment We have procured for the sinners in this world and in the hereafter, and after their death, We would similarly double it for you.

This statement provides justifications for the evil and grand nature of the sin as well as that of the position of the sinner. That is, the greater the position of the sinner, the greater the sin and, hence, the greater its punishment would be.

The verse says:

"In that case, We would certainly have made you taste a double (punishment) in this life and a double (punishment) after death, then you would not have found any helper for you against Us."

Imam Rida (as) and Ibn Abbas have both been quoted as saying that the Messenger of Allah (S) enjoyed the 'position of infallibility' and was 'immune against all sins'[10].

Nevertheless, this verse, which is addressed to the Prophet (S), aims at dissuading the faithful from showing the slightest inclination towards the pagans in all commandments of Allah.

In the meantime, this verse is not incompatible in any way with the Prophet's (S) infallibility.

The sentence,

"you would certainly have been near to incline toward them"

does not imply committing sin.

Moreover, the sentence:

"…Had We not established…",

is conditional. That is, if We had not provided protection, perhaps you were going to be inclined. However, as that protection was provided that inclination was non-existent.

In other cases also conditionality 'if' does not imply decisiveness in fulfilling the action, as in verses 44 to 46 of Surah Al-Haqqah which mean if he falsely attributes, We cut off his main vein.

Other similar case includes verse 65 of Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39 which says:

"…surely if you associate (with Allah), your work will certainly come to naught…"

which implies that the act has not been performed.

Thus, the slightest backing down from divine principals and values is not allowed, since that will be regarded as a victory for the enemies.

In Islamic sources, we read:

"When the above three verses were revealed, the Prophet (S) invoked:

"O' Lord! Do not leave me on my own even within the space of one blinking of eyes!"

This very meaningful prayer of the Prophet (S) provides an important lesson for all of us, showing that all must seek refuge to Allah and rely on His grace while one notes that even ‘Immaculate prophets’ have not been able to resist slipping and stumbling, much less in our case in face of all satanical temptations.

Surah Isra’ - Verse 76

وَإِن كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّونَكَ مِنَ الاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وإِذاً لاَّ يَلْبَثُونَ خِلاَفَكَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

76. “And verily they were about to startling you from the land so as to expel you from it; and then, they would not have tarried after you but a little.”

It is said that this verse and the following one have been revealed about the people of Mecca who gathered and decided to expel the Prophet (S) from Mecca.

After that, this decision was seconded and changed into the verdict for the execution of the Prophet (S) in Mecca, then the house of the Prophet (S) was surrounded in all directions. As we know the Prophet (S) was miraculously saved and started to Medina, which marks the beginning of Hijrah (the Exodus).

In the previous verses, of course, we noted that the pagans wanted to influence the prophet (S), making him deviate from the right path, when Allah’s grace came to his help, disrupting their plans.

But, following that, they embraced on a new plan to thwart his call. They planned to oust him to a distant spot which was out of reach. This plan was also thwarted.

The verse says:

“And verily they were about to startling you from the land so as to expel you from it…”

The noble verse implies that you were about to be ousted skillfully according to their well-calculated plan from this land.

Then the Qur’an issues a dire warning to them meaning that if they succeeded they would have entangled themselves in a severe Divine punishment. Thus, they would not remain there much longer after you.

The verse says:

“…and then, they would not have tarried after you but a little.”

For this was a very great sin, whereby people might seek to oust and expel their compassionate leader and their savior from their city, thereby, showing their ungratefulness towards the greatest blessing of Allah.

Such a people are not entitled to live and a devastating penalty would, therefore, call on them. This event happened for soon, after a short time, in the ‘Battle of Badr’, many of them were killed, while a few of them were able to escape or to embrace the faith.

Thus, one notes that the mere presence of the Prophet (S) among the people may obstruct the Divine punishment. In case they oust him from amongst themselves, or distance him, they are certain to perish instantly.

The blissful Qur’an does two things simultaneously. While it informs us about the invisible world, it also provides the Prophet (S) with information

with respect to the frustrations and failures of the conspiracies of his enemies, hence, condoling him.

Surah Isra' - Verse 77

سُنَّةَ مَن قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَا وَلاَ تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلاً

77. "(This was Our) way with those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, and you shall not find any change in Our way."

Providing support for the prophets as well as extermination of the pagans and oppressors, have been among the courses of treatment of the Lord.

It has been mentioned in verse 13, of Surah 'Ibrahim, saying:

"And those who disbelieved told their Messengers: 'We will certainly expel you from our land, or else you return to our creed.' Then their Lord revealed to them: 'Certainly We will perish the unjust'."

Therefore, He announces that this punishment is not solely exclusive to the Arab pagans; this procedure of Ours has been in action with regard to the prophets who were sent before you as well, and no changes have taken place with regard to this course of action.

The verse says:

"(This was Our) way with those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, and you shall not find any change in Our way."

This course of action stems from a clear source of logic, whereby, such an ungrateful people who break up their source of guiding light they, in fact, ruin their own safeguard fortresses.

Certainly such a nation is not worthy of the Divine grace, and they will be encompassed by the due chastisement. We know that the Lord does not discriminate unjustly between his servants, and He gives similar punishments for equal set of acts in equal conditions. And, such is the significance of unchanged ability of Allah's way of treatment.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan and Safi
2. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, and 'Athar-ul-Sadiqin, Harf-ul-Alaf
3. Manaqib Ibn Maqazili, p. 131
4. Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
5. Bihar, vol. 23, p. 95 and 'Ikm al-ud-Din
6. Tafsir Kanz-ud-Daqayiq
7. Tafsir Kanz-ud-Daqayiq
8. Tauhid Sadūq
9. Tafsir Al-Mizan
10. Jamaul Jam'a, Tafsir Safi

Section 9: Times of Prayer and the Midnight Prayer

Surah Isra' - Verse 78

أَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَي غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوداً

78. "Perform the prayer (rituals) from the declension of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recitation (of prayer) at the morn, verily the recitation (of prayer) at the morn is witnessed (by the angels)."

Pursuing the previous verses which concentrated on the issues of monotheism and paganism and, later, discussed the conspiracies, plots and temptations of the pagans, in this verse the Qur'an deals with such issues as prayers and the focusing of one's attention on the Lord, which serves as an effective means for campaigning against paganism, as well as a means for expelling the satanical temptations from one's heart and soul.

Undoubtedly, it is the prayer which makes man remember the Lord, wiping away the dust of sin from him all over and expelling the satanical temptations from him.

The verse, at first, says:

"Perform the prayer (rituals) from the declension of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recitation (of prayer) at the morn, verily the recitation (of prayer) at the morn is witnessed (by the angels)."

The declining time of the sun signifies the declining or fading away of the sunshine from the meridian circle which is the noon-time on.

The Arabic term /dulūk/ is derived originally from the term /dalaka/, meaning 'rubbing', for, at that time, and in sunny lands in particular, man usually tends to rub his eyes because of the strength of the sunshine.

Or, it might be derived from the Arabic term /dalk/, meaning becoming inclined, for the sun, at this time, becomes inclined from the meridian circle towards the west. It might also signify the fact that man tends to guard off against the sunshine by keeping his hand between his eyes and the sunshine as if he removes its lights from his eyes, thus reclining it.

Anyway, according to the quotations received from the sources of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), the Qur'anic term /dulūk/, mentioned in this verse, has been commented upon as signifying the 'declining of the sun'.

A quotation from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that 'Ubayd-Ibn-i-Zararah questioned the Imam (as) as to the comments of this holy verse, who answered:

"The Almighty has enjoined Muslims to establish four prayers, the beginning of which starts at the declining of the sun, 'at moon', and which ends at 'midnight'." [1]

In another quotation, we have it from Imam Baqir (as) in the commentary upon this very verse when asked by Zar arah, the great Shi'ite traditionist, he (as) answered:

"The declining of the sun signifies its fading away (from the meridian circle), and the Arabic phrase /qasaq-ul-layl/ denotes 'midnight'. These are the four set of prayers which the Prophet (S) designated for people, confirming the time, and the Qur'anic phrase /Qur'an-ul-fajr/ refers to the morning prayer." [2]

Certainly, some commentators have offered other probable hypotheses with regard to the meaning of /dulūk/ which cannot be considered as remarkable.

As for the meaning of the Arabic phrase /qusaq-ul-layl/, one might claim that as the term /qasaq/ signifies the intensive darkness of the night, and such a darkness reaches its peak at midnight, and is utmost in its density, this phrase altogether signifies ‘midnight’.

The Arabic term ‘Qur’an’ refers to that which is ‘read’ and the phrase /Qur’an-ul-fajr/, altogether refers to the ‘prayer at dawn’.

It is for this reason that the above verse is among the ones which briefly refer to the five-time daily prayers and, alongside with the other verses regarding the prayer times, as well as the numerous quotations received in this connection, the five times for daily prayers are exactly distinguished.

Certainly, one must keep in mind the fact that some of the verses of the Qur’an refer to one prayer only, like:

“Guard your prayers, and (especially) the middle prayer…”[3]

in which case, the ‘middle prayer’, according to the authentic commentaries, is that same ‘midday prayer’.

Occasionally, those verses allude to the three times for prayers out of the five-time daily prayers, like:

“And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night…”[4]

in which case, /tarafay-in-nah ar/ makes allusions to the morning and evening (Maqrib) prayers, and the phrase /zulafan min-al-layl/ alludes to the night prayer (‘Isha’ prayer).

At times, all of the five-time prayers are briefly referred to, as in the verse in question. (We have already explained in minute details in this connection in commentary, upon verse 114 of Surah Hūd, No. 11)

At any rate, undoubtedly the details as for the five-times daily prayers have not been explained in full in these verses; on the contrary, as is the case with other Islamic commandments, the explanations are confined to the general rules, and their fuller explanations are left to the practice of the Prophet (S) and the true Imams.

Another point which remains outstanding in here is that the above verse says that the ‘morning prayer is being witnessed’. Now this question arises as by whom is it being witnessed?

According to the Islamic quotations received through the commentaries upon this verse suggest that ‘They are witnessed by both the angels of night and day’, for, ‘night angels’, who are on guard by night, are replaced by day angels at dawn and as morning prayer is performed at dawn, both groups of angels observe and bear testimony to that.

These quotations are quoted by both the Shi‘ah and Sunni scholars, among whom, (according to Tafsir-Rūh-ul-Ma‘ani), Ahmad and Nisa’i, Ibn Majid, Tarmuzi, and Hakim have quoted the Prophet (S) who stated in his commentary upon this sentence:

“Both the day and the night angels watch him5.”

The famous scholars of Hadith of the Sunnis, Bukh ari and Muslim have also quoted this meaning in their ‘Sahih’.

For further information regarding the traditions of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) upon this meaning refer to Tafsir-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, under the verse in question.

The transparency provided in this commentary explains that the best time for performing the morning prayer rituals is the moments coinciding with the onset of the dawn.

Surah Isra' - Verse 79

وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَي أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَاماً مَّحْمُوداً

79. "And some part of the night keep vigil for it as an additional prayer for you; maybe that your Lord will raise you up to a praised position."

Pursuing the aforegoing theme of the five-time compulsory daily prayers, the Qur'an adds as follows:

"And some part of the night keep vigil for it…"

The well-known Islamic commentators regard these holy words as allusions made to 'the supererogation of the night' when quotations are innumerable as to their virtues, though the holy verse does not explicitly refer to it as such. Nevertheless, considering all the circumstantial evidences which are usually available, this interpretation seems transparent.

Then the Qur'an implies that this is an additional program. In addition to the compulsory daily prayers this schedule has also been designated for you.

The verse says:

"…as an additional prayer for you…"

There are many who believe that this sentence provides evidence as to the fact that 'night prayers' were required for the Prophet (S) for the Arabic term /Nafilah/ meaning, 'intensive', alludes to the fact that this additional obligation is required of the Prophet (S).

Others claim that 'night prayers' were required to be performed by the Prophet (S) long before this occasion, in reference to the verses of Surah Al-Muzzamil. Later on, the above verse has discarded that obligation, thus making it into a 'recommended' act instead of an 'obligatory' one.

At any rate, the Qur'an concludes this spiritual and heart-transforming Divine program as: Maybe in the light of this act, the Lord elevates you in rank to the position of the 'eligible' and 'well-praised' one.

The verse continues saying:

"…maybe that your Lord will raise you up to a praised position."

There is no doubt that such a position is an outstanding one which is praiseworthy, because this Qur'anic term is expressed in absolute case. Probably, this is a reference made to the fact that you are being praised universally from the time immemorial to the end.

Islamic quotations, whether those of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) as well as those quoted by the Sunni scholars have regarded the 'eligible' or 'praiseworthy' rank as a position for 'the Great Intercession', since the Prophet (S) is the greatest of the intercessors in the Hereafter. Those who merit this intercession will be covered by such an act of the Great Intercession.

Surah Isra' - Verse 80

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَاجْعَل لِي مِن لَدُنكَ سُلْطَاناً نَصِيراً

80. "And say: 'My Lord! cause me to enter a goodly entrance and cause me to go out (of) a goodly exit, and grant me from Your part a (powerful) authority to assist (me)'."

This verse alludes to one of the fundamental commandments of Islam which has its roots in the spirit of faith and monotheism. One should ask the Lord to enable him to initiate every job in an honest way.

The verse says:

"And say: 'My Lord! cause me to enter a goodly entrance…"

Let us not initiate any individual or social act without honesty and sincerity, and, at the same time, let us not end any program except in a truthful manner. Honesty and sincerity as well as righteousness and keeping of others belongings must be our principal line to follow in all works and we begin and end everything with them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and cause me to go out (of) a goodly exit…"

Some of the commentators have occasionally attempted to confine the broad meaning of this verse to certain limited cases and examples, such as the entrance and arrival at Medina and the departure from it for destination to Mecca; or one's entrance to the grave and one's exit from it on the Resurrection Day, or so forth, but it is quite obvious that the above comprehensive interpretation is not in any way confined to limited cases; rather, it is concerned with the initiation of all kinds of decent activities in an honest manner and its eventual termination in everything, every job and every schedule.

In fact, the main reason for one's success lies in this very point and the Divinely-selected prophets and men of Allah have also followed this very same course of action that their thoughts, words, and deeds have been clean of all frauds, defaults and tricks and distanced from whatever is contrary to the truth and honesty.

In principle, most of the misfortunes, which we witness with our own eyes nowadays, and which entangle individuals and groups as well as nations, have their roots in deviation from this very point.

Their very job is occasionally based on falsehood, fraud and malevolence, and, at times, when they initiate their acts with honesty, they often do not keep to their principle to the end which causes their failure.

The second principle which, from one point of view, is the outcome of monotheism, and from another point of view, is the fruit of the honest initiation and ending of every job. This is that very thing which is referred to at the end of the verse.

It says:

"…and grant me from Your part a (powerful) authority to assist (me)'."

For, I am lonely and one cannot do any job by himself! I shall not succeed, in any way, in my difficulties just by reliance on my own power! Assist me, and designate some assisting individuals for me.

Provide me with a powerful reasoning; unequivocal, challenging proofs against my foes, devoted friends, a strong will, an illuminated mind, a sound

reason all of which will serve me and come to my aid and, certainly, no one else but You are to provide me with these.

Surah Isra' - Verse 81

وَقُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقاً

81. "And say: 'The truth has come and the 'falsehood' has vanished away; verily, the 'falsehood' is (something) vanishing'."

The 'Truth' is one of the names of the Lord which is in the sense of 'constant and everlasting'. Therefore, the Lord and whatever emanates from Him is identical with the truth.

The Arabic term /zahūq/, mentioned here, signifies 'going away'. The phrase /zahaqa nafsahū/ means that 'the soul went out of his body'.

The verse says:

"And say: 'The truth has come and the 'falsehood' has vanished away; verily, the 'falsehood' is (something) vanishing'."

There are many extensions cited for this verse, such as: the emergence of Islam, arrival at Medina, the conquest of Mecca, and the breaking of the idols, in all of the cases of which, the 'untruth' has met with its own destruction. However, the verse has got a broader meaning which provides us with a sense of the destruction of the 'untruth' as well as the survival of the truth.

As in pursuance of 'honesty' and 'trust' which have been referred to in the previous verse, hoping for a decisive victory is another cause for success. The Lord tells His Prophet in the last verse in question to say that the truth has come and the untruth will vanish away.

In principle, it is within the inherent nature of the untruth to be perishable. So, as it was said, the Arabic term /zahaqa/ is derived from /zahūq/, rhyming in weight with the Arabic term /qabūl/ and also equal in syllables, means extermination and, because of its form of exaggeration, it expresses the utmost condition, signifying something which is perishable in its entirety.

The 'untruth' has got a certain period of maneuvering, though that period will not last long, and, eventually, the victory will be forth coming for the advocates and followers of the truth.

Explanations

1. 'Night prayers' are great spiritual worshipping acts. The tumult of daily life may attract the attention of every one, taking his imagination to the extremes of various points in such a way that one's mind is rarely at ease, and his thoughts collected with his heart are not fully placed in order.

However, in the midst of night and before dawn, when the fuss of material life is pretty well-settled, and one's a little amount of asleep has put one's soul and body in order, man feels a unique sense of being refreshed all over.

Certainly, in this calm sort of situation, away from all kinds of hypocrisy, bigotry, egoism, and coupled with one's heartily attention, one is certain to focus in such a way his attention which is extremely reinforcing for his heart and tends to bring forth stages in the process of perfection.

It is for this reason that the ‘friends of Allah’ have always strengthened themselves, through their end-of-the night prayers, with the purging of their souls, reinforcement of their heart and of their will, and complementing of their sincerity.

At the dawn of Islam, the Prophet (S), too, sought to develop the spiritual programming of the Muslims, elevating their personality so much that as if they were no more their own former ‘selves’.

That is, he created ‘new men’ out of their former selves: decisive, brave, faithful, clean and sincere, and, perhaps, ‘the praised position’, which is alluded to in the former verses, might be so owing to this reason.

A survey of the quotations in the Islamic sources regarding the virtues of the ‘night prayers’, makes the issue more transparent. The following quotations are as some examples:

1. The Prophet (S) says:

“The best among you are the ones who are polite in their speech; who feed the hungry; and who perform prayers deep into the night, when all people are asleep.”[6]

2. Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) says:

“Getting up at night for prayers will enhance one’s health of body, will please Allah, Almighly and Glorious, and will attract His favour, and, finally, will (enable one to) follow in the ethical course of the prophets.” [7]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) told one of his disciples:

“Never stop getting up at night for prayers; he who is deprived of the getting up at night for prayers and for worship, is the one who is aggrieved.”

4. The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

“He who performs ‘the night prayers’, his face (as well as his soul) will turn good on the following day.”

Even, we have it in some quotations that such acts of worship are so important that no one else, except the ‘pure’ and the ‘righteous’ can achieve it with success.

5. A man, calling on Amir-ul-Mo’mineen Ali (as), said:

“I was deprived from performing the night prayers.”

Ali (as) answered:

“You are the one whose sins have held him captive.” [8]

6. In another quotation from Imam Sadiq (as), we read:

“Man sometimes tells lies and this causes him to be deprived of the night prayers. Once, he is deprived in such a manner, he would also be deprived from sustenance, (the material and spiritual blessing which will ensue).” [9]

7. Notwithstanding we know that such a person like Ali (as) never gave up the night prayers, the core of the importance of the matter is such that the Prophet (S) recommended to him in his testament as:

“I am recommending you to perform certain acts; keep them well in mind.”

Then he said:

“O’ Lord: Assist him in performing these duties.”

Then he went as far as saying:

"Never keep away or forget about the night prayers! Never keep away or forget about the night prayers!" [10]

8. The Prophet of Islam (S) told Gabriel:

"Give me some pieces of advice"

Gabriel said:

"'O' Muhammad! Go on living as long as you may, but beware that you will eventually die; love whatever you wish to, but let it be known to you that you will finally separate from it (your object of love)!

Perform every kind of act which pleases you, but do know that you will get the end-result of your action. And, finally, beware that a believer is honored by having his night prayers performed, while, his glory rests with abstinence from damaging the reputation of other people."[11]

Such heavenly pieces of advice of Gabriel, which are all well-calculated, exhibit the fact that the prayers performed in the depth of the night alter and shape one's personality, education, spirituality and faith to such an extent that it would serve as one's source of prestige and honor as would be the case with abstinence from causing harms to other people, which by itself, will be one's source of pride.

9. Imam Sadiq (as) states:

"There are three points which serve as (a source of) pride for the believers and would be as an ornamental gift in this world and the next: Prayers in the depth of the night, being heedless of what is in the hands of other people, and, 'the Wilayat', (love and leadership) of the Imam from among the progeny of the Prophet (S). [12]

10. That 'Imam' has also been quoted as saying:

"Whatever of good acts performed by a believer has been mentioned with its reward explicitly in the Qur'an, except that of the night prayers which Allah has not mentioned in a transparent way because of the extraordinary importance of it. He has only stated that:

'They forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord in fear and hope. And they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.'[13]

Nonetheless, no one knows as to what kind of reward Allah has in mind for their remuneration for their acts which causes their eyes to be enlightened."[14]

11. The highly-esteemed Prophet of Islam (S) has said:

"The best of the prayers, next to the compulsory prayers, are the ones (which one performs) deep into the night." [15]

12. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

"The two-unit-prayer which the child of Adam performs in the midst of late night is better for him than the world and what is in it. Were it not causing difficulties for my herd 'people', certainly I would have made it compulsory for them (to perform)."[16]

13. Imam Rida (as) has said:

"Beware of the late-night prayers! There is no servant, who gets up late of night and does perform prayers in eight units, and Shaf' prayer into two units, and the 'Watr' prayer in one unit, seeking forgiveness of Allah

seventy times in his 'Qunūt', save that Allah will spare him the chastisement of the grave and that of the Fire, prolong his lifetime for him, and will provide a wider range of means in his sustenance."

Afterwards, the Imam (as) said:

"Verily the houses in which such night prayers are performed their light will illuminate for the residents of heaven in the same manner that the starts shine and shed light for the inhabitants of the earth."[17]

14. The blissful Prophet said:

"The late-night prayers will serve as a pleasant source for the Lord, the friendship of the angels, the practice of the prophets, the light of the gnosis (of Allah), the roots of faith, a cause for providing calmness of the body, provoking the disgust of the Satan, spearheading against the foes, a means of acceptance for one's invocation, acceptance of one's deeds, and blessings for one's means of sustenance.

The late-night prayers also serve as an intercessor between the performer of the prayers and the Angel of Death, as a light for his grave, as a carpet under him, as a respondent for the 'Nakir and Munkar', an associate and a visitor for man deep in his grave till the Day of Resurrection."[18]

15. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"When a man commits sin, he will be deprived of performing his late-night prayers. Truly, an evil act, 'a sin', serves as a sharper means on the person involved than a knife cutting meat."[19]

16. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

"When a person gets up from his pleasure-providing bed while he has got his eyes full of sleep, in order to please his Lord, Glory be to His Mighty, by his late-night prayers, the Lord takes pride by it to the angels: saying:

'Do you not watch this My servant, who has got up from his pleasant bed to perform the prayers which I have not compelled him to do? Do bear witness that, verily, I have pardoned him'."[20]

17. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There is no good that a servant does but there has been stated a reward for it in the Qur'an, except for late-night prayers which Allah has not defined its reward because of its importance with Him."[21]

18. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"He has told a lie who thinks he will starve in spite of having performed late-night prayers, for verily the late-night prayers guarantee the means of sustenance of the day."[22]

Certainly, such prayers have got their own many manners. We shall but present their simplest form in here so that the admirers of such a spiritual act can benefit further from it. The late-night prayers have got 11 units which are divided into three sections as follows:

a) Four set of prayers each divided into two units, which total 8 units, called: 'Nafilah' (supererogation) of the night.

b) One set of prayers, consisting of two units which is called 'Nafilah Shaf'. (even supererogation).

c) One set of prayers, consisting of one unit which is called 'Nafilah Watr'. The rituals of which are just the same as the morning prayers though

there are no ‘prayer call’ and Iqamah. (The declaration of prayer). When the Watr prayer is being performed, the longer the Qunūt the better.

What is a Praised Position?

As it is obvious from its apparent form, the position of the ‘highly praised one’ has got an extensive meaning which includes every type of high position and rank which is worthy and eligible for appraisal, though, certainly here, it refers to the outstanding and extraordinary place which has been attained by the Prophet (S), as a result of his nightly vigilance for worshipping and praying.

As was said earlier, this rank, the Praised Position, according to the commentators, is widely known to be the position of ‘the Great Intercession’ of the Prophet (S).

This comment has been introduced in numerous quotations as well. In ‘Ayyashi’s commentaries, we have it quoted from Imam Baqir (as) or Imam Sadiq (as) who, commenting on the last sentence of verse 79 from the current Surah said:

“It is intercession.”

Some commentators have sought to infer this fact from the very meaning of the verse. They are of the opinion that the Qur’anic sentence: /‘as a ’an yab‘aaka/provides justification as to the fact that such a position ‘will be accorded to you by Allah in the future’.

This is a rank which will be the object of universal appreciation, for it will be of benefit to the whole people, (for the Qur’anic term /mahmūd/ ‘highly praised’, mentioned in the above sentence, refers to the absolute sense of the word and is not subject to any kind of conditions).

Moreover, praise and glory takes place in the case of a voluntary action, and that which embraces all of these worthy attributes, can be nothing else but the ‘universal intercession’ of the Prophet (S).[23]

This is also probable that the ‘highly praised position’ is the utmost proximity towards the Lord, one of the consequences of which embraces the ‘Great Intercession’.

The addressee in this holy verse is apparently the Prophet (S), yet, from one point of view, one may generalize the verdict to include all those believing individuals who perform the Divine spiritual program of reciting the late-night prayers, saying they, too, will have a share of the ‘praised position’, and will find their way for proximity towards the Lord’s sanctuary as a result of and just to their depth of faith and their practices.

They will be able, then, to intercede and assist the wretched people with the same scale, for we know that every believer will enjoy this rank of intercession, by the leave of Allah, according to the amount of his faith, though the brilliant and utmost complete example of this verse is the very Prophet (S) himself.

3: Three Factors underlying Success: It is usual with respect to the campaign of the truth against ‘the untruth’, that the latter excels the former in number and in power, while, the former, despite its lack of resources, and number, enjoys eye-catching victories.

The examples of such cases are witnessed over and again in the Islamic Wars of Badr and ’Ahz ab as well as in Hunayn and the like. In our

contemporary world, we also notice the conquest by oppressed nations over the oppressor powers. This is because the advocates of the truth enjoy specific spiritual powers which sometimes turn one ‘man’ into one ‘nation’.

We have noted allusions made to the three factors leading to victory in the above-mentioned verses; the factors from which the contemporary Muslims have distanced themselves and therefore, they witness successive defeats at the hands of their opponents.

These three factors consist of: honest and sincere initiation in the course of actions as well as the pursuit of such a course through to the end.

Reliance upon the power of the Lord, self-reliance, and renouncement from every sort of reliance on others are other factors.

Thus, no policies can prove more efficient than honesty and sincerity in the course of action, and no point of reference and support can be worthier than that of independence, negation of interdependence, and trust in Allah.

How can on earth the Muslims drive their present enemies out of their occupied and usurped lands, who are looting and plundering their resources, while they are heavily dependent on them militarily, economically and politically?

Can we ever overcome our enemies by using those same weapons which we have bought form them? What a stupid idea!

4: The Truth will Prevail and the ‘Untruth’ will Die out. We encounter one more general and fundamental principle as well as one everlasting Allah’s way of treatment in the previous verses, which provide us with a source of hope for all the truth-seeking individuals which pinpoints to the ultimate victory of the truth and the right over ‘the wrong’ and which drives out the ‘wrong’ in its entirety.

The ‘wrong’ has got a certain period of prosperity and strength; it initiates blasting temporarily; it shows itself off though its life cycle is short and limited, and its eventual destiny is annihilation. Or, according to the Qur’an, like foam on water, it winks, making a fuss, and dies out, and water, which provides life, will prevail.[24]

The reason for such a case is hidden in the word ‘untruth’ itself, for it is that kind of thing which is inconsistent with the world of creation and has got no share in actual reality and the truth.

‘Untruth’ is fabricated and artificial; it is fake, rootless, void from within, and, thus, those things which are normally in possession of such attributes cannot last long.

The truth-seeking individuals rely on the force of their faith, logic and keeping their words, the authenticity of their character, self-denials, and preparedness for sacrificing their lives as far as the point of martyrdom.

They are those who are enlightened in their hearts and fear no one but ‘Allah’, relying on no one else except Him, hence, this provides the clue to their victory.

5: This Verse, and the Uprising of Mahdi (as): In some quotations, the Qur’anic sentence:

“The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished away”

refers to the uprising of Hadrat Mahdi (as) as commented upon. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The meaning of these Divine words is that: 'Once the living Imam (as) rises up, the fake administration will be up-rooted'."[25]

Certainly, the meaning of these traditions do not confine the significance of the extensive meaning of the verse to this example only, but the uprising of Mahdi (as) is the most notable example of it, the eventuality of which consists of the ultimate victory of the truth over the untruth throughout the entire world.

We have it in the biography of the blissful Prophet (S) that on the day of the conquest of Mecca, he entered the 'Sacred Mosque', overthrowing 360 idols which were placed round the Ka'bah by the Arab tribes, and breaking them one after another by his stick, he was reciting this noble verse continuously.

Briefly speaking, this very Divine universal law, and this unequivocal law of creation, have got examples in every epoch.

The uprising of the Prophet (S) and his conquest over the army of paganism and idol-worshippers, as well as the uprising of Mahdi (as) (May our souls be sacrificed for him) against the tyrants and oppressors of the world are cases of the evident examples of depicting this universal law.

It is that same Divine law which provides the truth-seeking people with incentives as against the difficulties, making them more hopeful and strong in resistance, and they reinforce and refresh us in our Islamic efforts.

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah pounds the truth over the 'untruth', hence uprooting it, in which case, the untruth will perish. Thus, the truth must invade the untruth powerfully, pounding it.

It is in the Divine law and His way of treatment that the truth must survive and the wrong must perish and be wiped out, and this process must take place in actual fact and not in an incidental way or in imagination, though the quantitative number of the followers of the truth might be small and the number of the followers of the wrong might be great, for the truth, like water, will be prevalent and the wrong will be wiped out like the foam over the water.

Surah Isra' - Verse 82

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلاَ يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلاَّ خَسَاراً

82. "And We send down (stage by stage), of the Qur'an, that which is healing and mercy to the believers, and it adds not to the unjust except in loss."

The Qur'an, The Curing Prescription

As the previous noble verses, dealt with the issues of monotheism and the right of organizing campaigns against paganism and the wrong, this verse, takes up the issue of the extraordinary role of the Qur'an and its constructive impact with respect to this, saying:

"And We send down (stage by stage), of the Qur'an, that which is healing and mercy to the believers…"

The blissful Qur'an is a curing prescription for setting all in order and the betterment of the individuals and the society from all kinds of ethical and social diseases. The holy verse continues saying:

"…and it adds not to the unjust except in loss."

Incidentally, the Arabic word /min/ does not imply in here ‘some’ which might substantiate the belief in the fact that ‘some parts of the Qur’an are healing’. Contrarily, it suggests that whatever is descended from the Qur’an is healing in itself.

Thus, the term /min/ is an explanatory statement; and, although the Qur’an is a guide for all; only those are provided with the light of its guidance who open the window of their soul to receive its revelations, alienating themselves from obstinacy and enmity and are ready to receive it with a sound mind.

Thus, the obstinate people, who have ill intentions, can gain nothing except additional disadvantage. It is like the rain, which, when falling on a swamp, makes stinking smell, though it is pure and clean in nature. Anyway, the reasoning of the Qur’an heals mental stagnation.

The admonition of the Qur’an treats well the callousness. The history of the Qur’an makes one disillusioned. Its beauty of harmony and its eloquence attracts the fleeing soul. Its ordinances and commands uproot superstitious beliefs, and its recitation and contemplation in it cure negligence. Recourse to it, cures bodily diseases, and its guidelines illuminate all kinds of darkness.

The Qur’anic healings make a difference when compared with material remedies. They do not have any side-effects and are not outdated. The Qur’anic remedies do not have any expiry date. He, who is cured by the Qur’an, will serve as a cause for curing others.

There are no errors or blunders in the prescription cure of the Qur’an. It is always readily available for all. The physician of this medicine not only knows us well but also loves us and, His prescription is for all ages. His prescription and drugs are not generic medicines to have duplicates.

Imam Ali (as) remarks:

“Verily the Qur’an consists a cure for the greatest ailments, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt, and seductions.”[26]

The Qur’an is Allah’s words and the Lord’s Book. It is the Divine shining light, and the site of manifestation of Allah. It exhibits Allah’s way; it is the Divine firmly fitted bond, the Divine laws, the curing prescription and a sign of Allah’s favour to human beings.

It is a sign of the magnitude of Allah and His eternal miracle. It is the saving flag, a didactic book and an instructive one, and an explicit statement. It is a book of glad tidings, warnings, monotheism, preaching, consciousness and ethics.

The Qur’an is a light without darkness, a guide without aberration, and an endless treasure. It is a book of knowledge, ordinances, history as well as historical analysis. It is a book of politics and administration, consciousness, reflection, and contemplation.

It is a book of peace and holy war, a book of the origin and the end. It is a book of faith and belief. The Qur’an is a company to man in the darkness of ignorance and a guiding leader for him in the labyrinths of life. The Qur’an is a book of measurement, justice, fairness, the truth, certainty, the right path, and the straight way.

It recounts the state of the past generations for the admonition of the future ones.

The Qur'an promises the righteous believers who practice it, salvation and victory, as well as glory and high esteem. It is a book of invitation, development, virtue, expediency, life and eternity. It is a book of the world of appearances and the innate world; a book of the worldly affairs and that of the Hereafter.

It is the book of nature as well as that of metaphysics; the book of the visible as well as that of the invisible; it is the book of Allah and of the people. It provides the examples of good deeds, decent acts, and persuading the people to perform what is good and of dissuading them from what is bad. It is instructive and, it provides credit.

The Qur'an shows the way of Paradise and dissuades one from taking the road to the Hell. It is the firmest path which Allah calls the people to. It is the book of religion and Allah's permanent ways of treatment. It is the Book of ethics, Gnosticism, Islamic jurisprudence and laws.

The Qur'an is the Book of eloquence, fluency, wisdom, and administration. The Qur'an is the Book of education for 'Man'. It shows the route to the world of spiritual realities. It is the companion to man in his loneliness and keeps him company when in a state of terror.

Certainly, tens of other topics only exhibit parts of the glory and depth of the instructions and the concepts of this Holy Book, which is an ever-lasting miracle of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Briefly speaking, this Divine Book and the Qur'anic verses of it provide reasoning and statements for the public, while, serving as a guide and admonition for the virtuous Muslims.

The Qur'an says:

"This is an explanation for mankind, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones."[27]

Hoping to receive the Divine success so that by reciting, reading, instructing, acquiring cognition of it, its understanding, and practice of this heavenly Book, we may follow the track and the course leading to our happiness and virtue.

The Differences Between Healing and Mercy

We are aware of the fact that 'healing' is usually employed as against diseases, defects and deficiencies. Therefore, the first effect that the Qur'an can affect the souls of men is the cleansing of them from all kinds of mental and ethical illnesses of both the individuals and the society.

It is, therefore, from this point onward that the phase of 'favour' arrives which is characterized by the inculcation of Divine morality and the flourishing of human virtues which are embedded in those people who have received the Qur'anic education.

In other words, the Qur'anic term 'healing' is an allusion made to the 'purification', while 'favour' refers to 'reconstruction'. Or in philosophical and mystical terms, the former refers to the process of 'catharsis'[28], and the latter alludes to the process of 'beautification'[29].

Therefore, whatever emanates from the source of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, is a favour for the believers; and the Lord has

required doing favors from His part[30], and He has appointed His Prophet to the world as a favour[31], while the Muslims proceed with doing favour to one another[32] and His Book also equals favour[33].

As the Qur'an comes from Allah's side, Who is the Creator of man and his nature, its laws are also corresponding to his nature, and are salvaging, and are the means of happiness and grace.

Why Is It that The Oppressors Get Negative Results?

Not only in this verse but also in other verses of the Qur'an we read that the enemies of the truth, instead of being enlightened whole-heartedly by the illumination of the verses, removing these dark spots, they usually add up to their ignorance and wretchedness.

This is due to the fact that the very essence of their existence has transformed into another form because of their paganism and their dissidence. Thus, wherever they behold the light of the truth they stand up against it. This opposition against the truth adds to their 'nasty' state, thus reinforcing their spirit of rebellion.

In other words, as the disbelievers actually do not observe and practice the 'commandments' and 'Prohibitions' of the Qur'an, the revelation of each decree adds up to their crime and offence, and, adds up to their disadvantages.

The verses of the Qur'an are like the proverb saying that they are like the raindrops, enlivening, which make tulips grow in gardens and make thorns grow in the wilderness.

The verse says:

"…and it adds not to the unjust except in loss."

Anyway, the Qur'an equals cure and mercy for those who are suffering from the love of the world, dependence on material things, and unconditional surrender in face of the passions.

And again the Qur'an provides prescription for cure and mercy for the world in every corner of which the flames of war are burning, bowing under the burden of arms race, and which is throwing all its important capital and human resources at the feet of the monster of war and arms.

And, eventually, the Qur'an is a curing prescription for those whose path for Allah's proximity has been obstructed because of their dark curtains of passions.

Traditions Concerning the Magnitude of the Qur'an

1. The blissful Prophet (S) has remarked:

"I have left two (important) things among you so as not to get astray when grabbing the two. One is the Qur'an, the other one is my family household."[34]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The Qur'an's excellence over other words and speeches is like the Lord's superiority over all creatures."[35]

3. The Prophet of Allah (S) has said:

"The Qur'an is the best and excels every thing but the Lord. He who respects the Qur'an, has respected the Lord and he who does not honour the Qur'an, has committed acts of insolence towards the Lord." [36]

4. Hadrat-Imam Rida (as) has quoted Imam-Mūsa Kazim (as) who said:

"Someone asked Imam Sadiq (as):

'How is it that the more the Qur'an has been read and publicized, the more its refreshing aspect is being added to?'

Imam Sadiq (as) answered:

'It is because the Lord has not appointed it for a particular time and a certain people. Thus, it is ever fresh and new for every nation in every new epoch until the day of resurrection'."[37]

5. The great Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"Keep always yourselves reminiscent of the Qur'an, for the Qur'an is a 'useful cure', a 'blissful remedy', and guards off him who appeals to it; and it salvages him who follows it."[38]

6. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

"Those involved in the Qur'an's matters excel the highest human position next to the prophets and the Divine envoys. Thus, do not overlook and downplay (them and) their rights, for they are valued greatly before Allah." [39]

7. The dear Prophet (S) said:

"The best ones among you are those who learn and teach the Qur'an."[40]

8. Imam Sadiq (as): has remarked:

"The believer who reads the Qur'an and practices it in his youth, the Qur'an is mixed with his flesh and bones (and blood), and the Lord places him alongside the great envoys (the prophets and the Imams) and the benevolent people, and, the Qur'an acts as his advocating defendant in the doomsday." [41]

9. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"It is appropriate for a believer not to die before learning the Qur'an or being engaged in learning it." [42]

10. The blissful Prophet (S) said:

"Read the Qur'an and practice accordingly. Do not distance yourselves from it; do not exaggerate over it, do not earn a living by it; and, do not seek superiority through it." [43]

It is necessary to conclude this statement also that this prescription is only effective once one acts according to its content; otherwise, one must not expect any results. Therefore, the blissful Prophet (S) has said:

"He who reads the Qur'an and does not act accordingly, the Almighty will muster him blind and tormented on the day of resurrection." [44]

Surah Isra' - Verses 83 - 84

وإِذَآ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَي الإِنسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأي بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوساً

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَي شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَي سَبِيلاً

83. "And when We bestow favour on man, he turns away and (proudly) withdraws aside; and when any evil afflicts him, he is in despair."

84. "Say: 'Every one acts according to his own mould, but your Lord knows best as who is best guided to the way."

When We bestow Our blessings on man, he turns a blind eye to them as if it were not him who has prayed and appealed to Us, distancing himself from performing what is his due in face of Our blessings and is not grateful to Us , and he also turns away from the bounty of the Qur'an. Muj ahid says that it means: he alienates himself from Us, hence, he gets involved in arrogance and egotism.

The verse says:

"And when We bestow favour on man, he turns away and (proudly) withdraws aside…"

But, as soon as he is caught in the midst of poverty and sorrow, he loses his patience and becomes desperate, while, a believer is not so, for he is always in a state of hope and activity. Hence, the verse refers to those who are not believers though it appears to be general.

The reason as to why such diseases and calamities are called 'evil' is that these are regarded as evil from the viewpoint of a pagan, for a pagan does not expect any reward in exchange for them.

Moreover, the human nature detests them. Otherwise, such diseases and catastrophes are, in fact, expediencies, and appropriate in their own context. Thus, the Qur'an declares in the next verse that: O! Muhammad: Tell them: A believer and a pagan both act according to their own disposition and manner.

The believers who seek cures from the Qur'anic verses and attain blessings are on the opposite side of those oppressors who do not obtain anything from it except losses.

There are also some incapacious ones who are arrogant once they are affluent, but become desperate when they are in difficulties. They all act according to their own characteristics which have been formed in them as a result of their education and habitual training, thus directing man's activities.

The verse says:

"…and when any evil afflicts him, he is in despair."

"Say: 'Every one acts according to his own mould…"

In the midst of all this, the Lord is observant of the state of everyone. Certainly, your Lord knows best those whose paths are better and from the point of guidance are more fruitful.

The verse says:

"…but your Lord knows best as who is best guided to the way."

Let us turn to two concluding points:

The Qur'anic phrase /na' abij anibihi/ signifies following one's own egotistic desires who is self-centered and turns his shoulder round.

The Arabic term /šakilihi/ means shaping and forming of one's spiritual state which comes about as a result of one's heredity, education and social culture.

Notes

1. Wasa'il, vol. 3, p. 115
2. According to the consensus of the scholars of two great sects of Islam mentioned in their books, the Qur'an ic phrase /Qur'an -ul-fajr/ signifies: 'Morning Prayer', some of their books are: Tafsir Rauh-ul-Ma' ani, by ' Alūsi Baqd adi, vol. 15, p. 136; Tafsir-ul-K ashif, vol. 5, p. 75; Tafsir-ul-Bahr-ul-Muhit, vol. 6, p. 68; Tafsir-Ibn-i-Kathir, vol. 3, p. 54; Tafsir-Jami'-'Ahk am-ul-Qur'an , by Qirtabi, vol. 5, p. 309; Tafsir Rūh-ul-Bayan, vol. 5, p. 191; Tafsir Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the verse in question; etc. (Tafsir-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 115)
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 238
4. Surah Hūd, No. 11, verse 114
5. Tafsir-Ruh-ul-Ma' ani, vol. 15, p. 126
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, pp. 142-148
7. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 144
8. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 142
9. Bihar, vol. 87
10. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 268
11. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 269
12. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 140
13. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 16
14. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 140
15. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 21397.7
16. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 21405.7
17. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 161
18. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 161
19. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, vol. 5, p. 10467
20. Bihar, vol. 87, p. 156
21. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 5, p. 281
22. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 87, p. 159
23. Al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 178
24. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 18
25. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vo. 3, pp. 212-213
26. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 176
27. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 138
28. Catharsis signifies purification of one's soul from the viscous attributes and hidden evils.
29. Replenishing of one's inside with decent and spiritual attributes.
30. Surah Al-'An' am, No. 6, verse 12
31. Surah Al-'Anby a, No. 21, verse 107
32. Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 29
33. The verse under discussion
34. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 94
35. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 182
36. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar
37. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar Wal-'Athar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 169
38. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 432
39. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 1, p. 180
40. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 2, p. 286
41. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 92, p. 187
42. Bihar, vol. 92, p. 189
43. Nahj-ul-Fisahah, p. 80
44. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 409

Section 10: Qur'an Inimitable

Surah Isra' - Verse 85

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

85. "And they ask you about the spirit, say: 'The spirit is of the command of my Lord, and you are not given of the knowledge but a little'."

The Arabic term /rūh/ (spirit) has been mentioned 21 times in the Qur'an and used in certain cases. Anyway, man's spirit is a complicated matter, unknown and a Divine blow which has got celestial dimensions, and only Allah knows it.

Imam Baqir (as) has commented upon the Arabic term /qalil/ in the sense of 'few individuals'. That is, full knowledge has been only provided for only a select group of people and these are they who are exclusively aware of the soul.

Anyway, in this noble verse, pursuing previous verses, the Qur'an deals with some of the important questions of the pagans, or of the people of the Book, saying:

"And they ask you about the spirit, say: 'The spirit is of the command of my Lord, and you are not given of the knowledge but a little'."

Great commentators have been incessantly speaking about the commentaries of this verse, and we shall first deal with the meaning of 'soul', then its various forms of usage in the Qur'an and, afterwards, we shall deal with the comments of the verse and quotations in this regard.

1. The Arabic term /rūh/ (spirit), philologically signifies 'breath' and 'running'. Some declare that this word and the Arabic term /rih/, meaning 'wind', are both derived from the same root.

If we find /rūh/ the spirit, which is an abstract and independent 'gem' called this way, it is because, from the viewpoint of mobility and creative form as well as its invisibility, it is like breath and wind. So much is for the meaning the word.

2. There are various usages for it in the Qur'an: At times, it refers to 'the Holy Spirit' who has assisted the prophets in their missions like, verse 253 of Surah Al-Baqarah, which says:

"And We made Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit…"

At other times, it refers to the Divine spiritual power which reinforces and invigorates the believers, like verse 22 of Surah Al-Mujadalah, No. 58, which says:

"…these are they into whose hearts He has impressed the faith, and whom He has confirmed with a spirit from Himself…"

Occasionally, it has been named as the 'exclusive angel of revelation' and has been characterized as 'Amin' (truthful) as in the verses 193-194 of Surah Ash-Shu'ara', No. 26, saying:

"The Faithful spirit has descended with it,"

"Upon your heart that you may be of the warners,"

At other times, it has been applied as one of the great angels of the ‘exclusive Divine angels’ or ‘a creature superior to the angels’, as in verse 4 of Surah Al-Qadr, No. 97, which says:

“The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair.”

We also read in verse 38 of Surah An-Naba’, No. 78:

“The Day (on which) the Spirit and the angels shall stood arrayed…”

On the day of the resurrection, the spirits and the angels stand up alongside one another forming one queue.

On other occasions, it has been regarded as the Qur’an or the Divine revelation like in verse 52 of Surah Ash-Shur a, that says:

“And thus did we reveal to you; an inspired Book by our command…”

And, finally, we find its venue used as human spirit, as we read in verses concerning the creation of man, saying:

“Then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of His spirit.”[1]

And He also reiterates:

“So when I have completed him and I have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall you down, prostrating yourselves unto him.”[2]

3. The issue in question now is what is meant by ‘the spirit’ in the verse under discussion? Which spirit is it that a group of curious people have inquired about it and the Prophet (S) answered in response to them implying that the issue of spirit is among those which solely concern my Lord and you know but little about it.

Out of the totality of the existing references in the verse, as well as out of it, one can infer that those investigating ones were inquiring about the gist of the truth about human soul; this very splendid spirit which differentiates us from animals, and which is our utmost superior quality that causes our nobility, whence all our power and activities originate from, by the aid of which we turn the skies and the earth into our spheres of influence.

With its assistance, we tend to split the secrets of the sciences, delving into the core of the existence of all beings.

They sought to know what is this prodigy of the world of creation. And, as the soul is different in its structure with the matter which is subject to the principles governing the matter and its physical and chemical attributes, the Prophet (S) is commissioned to utter this concise and meaningful sentence:

“The spirit is of the command of my Lord.”

that is, its creation process is complicated and mysterious.

Then, to stop them being stunned, the verse continues saying:

“And they ask you about the spirit, say: ‘The spirit is of the command of my Lord, and you are not given of the knowledge but a little’.”

Thus, it is not at all surprising that you do not acquire the mysteries embodied in ‘spirit’, though they might be more intimate to you than all other things.

In the commentary of ‘Ayyashi, there are quotations from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) who commenting on /yas’alūnaka ‘an-ir-rūh/ said:

"One of Allah's creatures is 'Spirit' that has got senses of vision, power, and force as well. The Lord locates the spirit in the hearts of the prophets and of the believers"[3].

In another quotation, one of the two great Imams has been quoted as saying:

"Spirit is of invisible world and emanates from Allah."[4]

In numerous quotations from the Shiite and Sunni sources, we have it that the Quraysh pagans, getting this question from the savants of the People of the Book, wanted to put the Prophet (S) to the test thereby.

They were told that in case Muhammad provided them with a great deal of information in this connection, this would be the reason for his dishonesty. Hence, the Prophet's (S) concise and meaningful statement was surprising and miraculous for them.

However, in quotations received through Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) regarding the commentary of the above verse, we note that 'spirit' has been considered as a created being introduced as superior to Gabriel and Michael, who has always remained with the Prophet (S) and the Imams, and who has kept them all, in their godly line, from every kind of deviation.

These quotations not only are not incompatible with the comments which we made about the verse, but they are also consistent with them in their entirety, since man's spirit has got a specific hierarchy.

That phase of the spirit which is found in prophets and in Imams, is surely an extraordinarily elevated stage, one of the consequences of which, is its infallibility and state of 'flawlessness' from deviations and sin as well as its full cognition state and its extraordinary state of knowledge. It is certain that such a phase of spirit excels all angelic stages, including those of Gabriel and Michael.

The Authenticity and Independence of the Spirit

The issue of the spirit and its structural forms along with its mysterious specifications has always been the focus of attention of the scientists since the recorded human history was begun, and every scientist has tried his share to delve and explore, as far as he can the mysterious environment of the spirit.

It is just for this very reason that the views expressed by men of knowledge are so widespread and various. Probably, our present knowledge, and even the knowledge of the future generations, for the recognition of the entire secrets of the mysterious nature of soul prove to be insufficient, though our spirit is in closer contact with us than anything else in this world.

However, we must not be caught by surprise, when we are incapable to understand the depth of this miracle of creation which is beyond matter, for the basic substance of the soul varies tremendously with whatever we have ever been associated with and got used to in this world.

This state of the spirit must not hinder us to explore its landscape by our sharp insight of our intellect, becoming aware of its underlying general principles and orders which are governing it.

The most important principle which must be recognized here is the issue of authenticity and independence of 'spirit' as against opposition raised by the materialistic schools which regard the spirit as something of material,

considering it to be of the properties of the brain matter and the nerve cells, beyond which they believe in nothing to exist.

Our focus of discussion in here centers about this very issue, for all discussion of the ‘survival of the spirit’ and the issue of absolute abstraction or ‘purgatory abstraction’ relies heavily on it.

Before entering this discussion, however, we must point out to the fact that the interdependence of the spirit on the body as some have believed, is not a kind of interdependence like that of the introduction or, for instance, of the blowing of the wind into a bag pipe.

Contrarily, it is some kind of relationship and interdependence based on the administration and control of the spirit over the body and its domination and governance, that some have resembled it to the interdependence of ‘meaning’ to the utterance.

Certainly, this issue will best be clearly explained in the discussion of ‘the independence of the soul’. Now, we shall turn to our principal discourse.

There is no doubt as to the fact that man is different from stone and wood which are lacking in spirit, for, we well feel different with respect to the inanimate objects, even with plants. We understand, imagine, decide, determine, love, hate, etc.

However, plants and stones lack in all these aspects in this form. Thus, there is an original difference between them, and us which is that of possessing human soul. Neither the materialists nor any other factions deny or reject the principle of the existence of the ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’, and, it is for this reason that all consider psychology and psychoanalysis as a positive science.

Although both of these two sciences are in their infancy, they are those branches of knowledge which are pursued by professors and researchers at great world universities. As we shall see ‘the soul’ and the ‘spirit’ are not, in fact, separate from each other; but they are different phases of the same reality.

As far as the issue involved is that of the relationship of the spirit with the body and their mutual interdependence, we call it the ‘soul’, and, while, spiritual phenomena are being discussed away from the body, we tend to call it the ‘spirit’.

Briefly speaking, no one rejects the fact that there exists an entity which is called the ‘spirit’ and the ‘soul’ within us.

It now remains to be seen that the all-encompassing conflicts between the materialists, on the one hand, and the metaphysicians and spiritualists, on the other hand, are being waged in which domain?

The answer is that the theologians and the philosophers who are metaphysician believe that in addition to the substances which form the body of man, there is another entity or gem hidden in him which is not made of the matter, though man’s body is under its direct impact.

In other words, the spirit is a metaphysical entity, the structural form and activity of which is other than the structure and activity of the material world. It is true that it is constantly in contact with the material world, but it is not ‘matter’ or properly of matter.

On the opposite side, the materialist philosophers are aligned who say: We do not know of any independent being different from matter under the name of the spirit or under any other name; whatever exists is this material body or its physical or chemical effects.

We possess a system called the brain or nerve system which does an important part of our essential activities for us and which perform their functions like other bodily systems, acting under material laws.

Certainly, scientists reject this line of reasoning which is propounded by the material philosophers, declaring it is null and void. For further information, refer to Tafsir-Nemūnah, vol. 12, under the same verse.

To conclude this statement, the word /rūh/ (spirit) has been repeated 21 times in the Qur'an, and the reality of the 'spirit' is beyond the understanding of man's knowledge which lies as one of the Divine secrets. Man's knowledge, with respect to it, is limited and very minimal.

Surah Isra' - Verses 86 - 87

وَلَئِن شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لاَ تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلاً
إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّـكَ إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيراً

86. "And if We please, We would certainly take away whatever We have revealed unto you; then you would find no one thereover to defend you against Us,"

87. "Save the mercy from your Lord, verily His favour to you is great."

Whatever you possess emanates from His Grace. The issue in question concerned the Holy Qur'an itself in several of the previous verses. He once again takes up the discussion on this subject.

At first, He says:

"And if We please, We would certainly take away whatever We have revealed unto you; then you would find no one thereover to defend you against Us,"

So, it is We Who has bestowed these sciences upon you so as to enable you to be the leader of the people and it is We Who will take back whatever We deem expedient, and there will be no interference allowed by anyone in this respect.

Therefore, this noble verse takes up a threatening attitude towards the holy Prophet (S) declaring that the Lord takes back those merits if He wishes in much the same way that he has bestowed.

The subsequent verse has got a soft and encouraging tone. In other words, the Qur'an, the revelations, prophetic mission, being the seal of Prophets, and intercession all are among Allah's favors towards the holy Prophet (S), and they all originate from the position of Allah's Lordship, and He will not take back all He has bestowed on him, though He is capable with firm power, and He can perfectly do that.

The holy verse says:

"Save the mercy from your Lord…"

However, as Allah is great with utmost superiority, His favor is also just as great, and His immense kindness is peculiar to the Prophet (S).

Thus the verse continues to say:

"…verily His favour to you is great."

Allah's great kindness is immense with regard to you, for He has selected you as His prophet, and granted the Qur'an to you so as to open up new gateways of knowledge facing you, and to make you aware of the secrets of human guidance, and, finally, to protect you from all errors, enabling you to serve as an example for all the people till the end of the world.

Surah Isra' - Verse 88

قُل لَّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَي أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ لاَ يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيراً

88. "Say: 'If (the whole) mankind and the Jinn were to gather together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it though some of them be helpers of others'."

The Arabic term /zahir/ is derived from /zahr/ meaning 'backing up' and 'advocate'.

The verse is an answer to the pagans who used to say: We, too, can bring the like of the Qur'an if we want to.

This call of the Qur'an for challenging, and bringing an example like that, has remained unanswered for centuries and, up till now, the Arabic-speaking enemies from among the people of the Book as well as the atheistic schools, have been unable to bring the like of the Qur'an despite their hostility towards Islam and despite the support which they have enjoyed from the various sources of power.

Anyway, here the Almighty, addressing the Prophet (S), announces:

"Say: 'If (the whole) mankind and the Jinn were to gather together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it though some of them be helpers of others'."

This verse explicitly challenges all the beings of the world, including the small and the great, Arabs and non-Arabs, human beings as well as even intelligent non-human beings, scientists, philosophers, literary figures, historians, the genius and the non-genius, briefly speaking, all without exceptions throughout the centuries to face the challenge of producing the like of the holy Qur'an, proclaiming:

If you think that the Qur'an is not the word of the Lord and it is man's own fabrication, you are also a man and you can fabricate one like that. And, whenever you felt unable, after struggling hard, while combining your efforts, this provides you with the best reason for the miraculous nature of the Qur'an.

This call for challenging with the Qur'an, which is in the vocabulary of the scholars, expert in theology, known as /tahaddi/, (challenge) is one of the pillars of every miracle and wherever such a meaning is in force concerning a subject, we find transparency as to the miraculous nature of that issue in question.

Incidentally, the unique specifications of the Holy Qur'an consist of being both miraculous while, at the same time, it is eloquent and varying; it foretells the future while containing the best of stories; it provides the best method of calling while it is expressive of all problems, whether social and

individual needs, worldly and after-life requirements in all fields and at all times.

Surah Isra' - Verse 89

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَي أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلاَّ كُفُوراً

89. "And We have explainer for the people, in this Qur'an, every (kind of) similitude, but incline not most of the people save denying."

By means of the verses of the Qur'an, Allah has completed the argument to people. This verse, in fact, is the statement of one of the aspects of miracle and the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an, i.e. its comprehensiveness.

It implies that, in this noble Qur'an, Allah has displayed unto the people examples of everything so that all sorts of knowledge are gathered in it; yet most of the people refused to do anything but denying.

The verse says:

"And We have explainer for the people, in this Qur'an, every (kind of) similitude, but incline not most of the people save denying."

Verily, this variety of the contents of the Qur'an, and emerging from an illiterate person in particular, is amazing. This heavenly Book contains both the firm rational reasoning together with its special elaborateness in the field of creeds, and the statement of the ever-sure ordinances based on the necessities of people in any grounds.

The Qur'anic discussions upon historical subjects are unique in their kind. They are exciting, awakening, interesting, shaking, and free from any kinds of superstition. Its ethical matters affect on the prepared hearts in the same manner that the rain of the spring does upon the dead lands.

The scientific points which are propounded in the Qur'an have made manifest some facts which, at least in that time, were not known to any scientist.

Precisely speaking, whatever fields the Qur'an arrives, it offers the best. That is why if the Jinn and humankind come to help each other in order to bring the like of it, they will not be able to do so.

Surah Isra' - Verses 90 - 91

وَقَالُوا لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّي تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الاَرْضِ يَنْبُوعاً

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِن نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الاَنْهَارَ خِلاَلَهَا تَفْجِيراً

90. "And they said: "We shall never believe in you till you make a spring to gush forth from the earth for us,"

91. "Or till you should have a garden of date-palms and grapes in the midst of which you cause streams to flow forth,"

The Arabic term /yanbū'/ refers to a fountain which will never dry up and which will always gush.

The pagans, who rejected the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, made their embracing the belief conditional upon attainment of some material gains, asking the holy Prophet (S) for some undue expectations.

They neglected the fact that the prophets would perform miracles so as to justify their prophetic mission. This is done not for meeting the whimsical

demands of the obstinate people or for the sake of their entertainment or escaping from effort and endeavour.

In fact, undue expectation, callousness, obstinacy, seeking pretexts, unawareness of the aims, and rudeness, all intermingled with one another so as to put illogical requests to the Prophet (S), like a fountain, gardens, rivers, collapse and fall of the skies, summoning of the Lord and of the angels, golden houses, flight into skies, and a private letter from the Lord.

Anyway, the pagans of Mecca stated:

We do not confirm your prophetic mission unless you split the ground of Mecca which is scarce in water resources and make a fountain emerge out of it, which gashes.

The verse says:

"And they said: "We shall never believe in you till you make a spring to gush forth from the earth for us,"

Or they demanded from him a garden which had got plenty of date-palms and grape trees, covered by them, amidst which streams flow so as to water trees beneath them, little knowing that the goal of the prophets had been people's guidance and leading them to monotheism, though some groups thought of gardens, gold and silver while such requests and expectations were not logical.

The verse says:

"Or till you should have a garden of date-palms and grapes in the midst of which you cause streams to flow forth,"

Surah Isra' - Verses 92 - 93

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفاً أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلآئِكَةِ قَبِيلاً

أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِن زُخْرُفٍ أَوْ تَرْ َ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلَن نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّي تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا

كِتَاباً نَّقْرَؤُهُ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنتُ إِلاَّ بَشَراً رَسُولاً

92. "Or you cause the heaven, as you think, to fall in pieces upon us, or bring Allah and the angels face to face with us,"

93. "Or there be for you a house of gold, or you should be flying in to the sky, and never will we believe in your ascending unless you bring down to us a book which we may read. Say: 'Glory be to my Lord! Am I aught but a mortal messenger?'"

Miracles are among the exclusive characters of the Divinity of the Lord and have their origin in the Divine will and Wisdom. From among the conditions of miracles is that they must not be aimless, useless and utterly improbable.

The demands of the pagan from the Prophet (S) are worthless. Making the skies collapse will exterminate all and every thing, leaving no one alive to become a believer. Summoning of the Lord and the angels is also an utter impossibility, for they are not 'bodies' which can be summoned for us so as we witness them with our eyes.

Therefore, in this verse, the obstinate pagans reiterated that you thought you were a prophet and you possessed miracles, therefore, turn the sky into pieces, shredding everything and making them fall over us. Or you bring forth[5] the Lord and the angels before[6] us so as we can see them with our

own eyes and witness that you are authentic and legitimate, your call being valid.

The verse says:

"Or you cause the heaven, as you think, to fall in pieces upon us, or bring Allah and the angels face to face with us,"

In the subsequent verse, the Qur'an says:

"Or there be for you a house of gold…"

Or you ascend to the sky. Even if we witness with our own eyes, doing that, we are not to believe, unless you fetch us each a book from Allah testifying to your prophetic mission, which we shall read.

The verse continues saying:

"…or you should be flying in to the sky, and never will we believe in your ascending unless you bring down to us a book which we may read…"[7]

We read at the end of these verses that Allah commands His prophet, culminating these contradictory and paradoxical proposals, to say to them that He is clean and pure of all these imaginary conjectures; that is, He is distant from performing miracles according to your wishes.

Thus, the holy Prophet (S), addressing them, said: I am also like other prophets. I am a human being. Those prophets used to perform miracles for their nations which were actualized by Allah.

This is not a matter of concern to me and up to me to do what I wish. It is up to Him alone, Who is aware of what is expedient. Thus, there is no reason as to why you demand such things from me.

The verse continues saying:

"…Say: 'Glory be to my Lord! Am I aught but a mortal messenger?'"

Notes

1. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 9
2. Surah Al-Hijr, No, 15, verse 29
3. Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 216
4. Ibid, p. 215
5. The Arabic phrase /kama za'amtum/ is an allusion made to the threats and the pledges of chastisement which the Prophet (S) states in Surah Saba', verse 9.
6. The Qur'an ic term /qabil/ refers to what is placed before man and what he is confronted with.
7. The Arabic term /zukhruf/ denotes originally some kind of ornament, like gold which is one of the precious metals, and is used as ornament. This term is also applied for houses with paintings and decorations.

Section 11: No Cause for Anyone to Disbelieve Any Messenger of Allah

Surah Isra' - Verse 94

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدَي إِلاَّ أَن قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَراً رَسُولاً

94. "And nothing prevented the people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: 'Has Allah raised up a mortal as Messenger?'"

The only reason as to why the pagans were kept away from embracing the belief in the Qur'an and the command of the Prophet (S), was the fact that they could not accept the prophetic mission of a man from the side of Allah.

The noble verse says:

"And nothing prevented the people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: 'Has Allah raised up a mortal as Messenger?'"

Therefore, the pagan people did not submit themselves to the reasons for obvious miracles, for they would say as to how could the Lord appoint a man for prophecy? The Lord's envoy must be raised from among the divine angels.

This groundless paradox hindered them from believing in the holy Prophet (S). As was about the worship of the unitary essence of Allah, in which case, they proclaimed that:

"Our worship of Allah is not worthy of Him."

Hence, they succumbed to the worship of the idols, and to their thinking, by this act they tried to glorify the Lord, while this act is not an act of glorification to Him. On the contrary, it is being heedless of the pure essence of Allah, the Glorified.

Certainly, those who do not possess a sound reasoning and rationale, regard a strong point as a weak one. The fact that the Prophet (S) was a human being is a strong point in him and not a weak one, for having instincts and motives as well as difficulties will cause him to grasp best the sufferings of men, and can provide a practical paradigm as well as a useful prescription.

Surah Isra' - Verse 95

قُل لَوْ كَانَ فِي الاَرْضِ مَلآئِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَلَكاً رَسُولاً

95. "Say: 'Had there been in the earth angels walking at peace, We would certainly have sent down an angel from heaven to them as messenger'."

This noble verse refuses the attitude of those who raised objections to the fact that the Prophet (S) was selected from among the human beings, and implies that: The sending of the prophet is Allah's way of treatment and a religious necessity.

Even if all the inhabitants of the earth were angels, and there were no quarrels and rows among them, and all of them were in perfect health and enjoying welfare, there would be some envoy from their progeny and gender

coming from the side of Allah, for the mission of the prophets consists of enduing perfection and spiritual development as well as the provision of paradigms, and not merely the removal of hostilities from among them.

The Qur'an says:

"Say: 'Had there been in the earth angels walking at peace, We would certainly have sent down an angel from heaven to them as messenger'."

Incidentally the homogeneousness of the leaders with that of the people is a necessity for their education and their imitation of their identification figures. Mankind for mankind, and angels for angels can serve as best paradigms.

The reason for such a homogeneity of the leader and of the followers is clear, for, on the one hand, the most important part of the propaganda section of a leader is his practical side, that is, serving as a paradigm and an identification figure which is only made possible when the leader possesses the human instincts and feelings and the same bodily structural forms and spiritual ones.

On the other hand, a leader must understand well all the pains and sufferings, needs and demands of his followers so that he can produce remedies for them and respond to them. It is for this reason that the prophets have risen up, and emerged from among the bulk of the people, while the accession to the position of the prophet is from the side of the Lord and it is not an elective office.

Surah Isra' - Verses 96 - 97

قُلْ كَفَي بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيراً بَصِيراً

وَمَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِهِ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

عَلَي وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمْياً وَبُكْماً وَصُمّاً مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيراً

96. "Say: 'Allah suffices as a witness between me and you; verily He, of his servants, is All-Aware, All-Seeing."

97. "And whomever Allah guides, then he is guided aright, and whomever He leaves to stray, you will never find for him guardians other than Him; and We shall muster them on the Day of Resurrection upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf whose dwelling shall be Hell; whenever it abates, We shall increase for them the blaze."

Pursuing the previous discussions, which centered around monotheism and prophetic mission as well as discourses with the opponents, here, in this verse, there is a sort of declaration of the termination of the current discussion, at this stage, and providing conclusion.

At first the Qur'an implies that if they do not accept your reasoning concerning monotheism, prophecy and resurrection, proclaim upon them, saying: It suffices for me that the Lord is an intermediary and a witness between you and I, for, He is aware of the feelings of His servants and He is All-seeing unto their works.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Allah suffices as a witness between me and you; verily He, of his servants, is All-Aware, All-Seeing."

In fact, there are two objectives in view in making this statement. The first one relates to the fact that the obstinate, and fanatic opponents receive a threat that the Lord is aware and All-seeing while He is witnessing all our deeds and all your acts. Do not imagine that you can escape His sphere of power or part of your acts remains hidden from Him.

The other objective is that the Prophet (S) should exhibit decisively his firm conviction as to what he has stated, for the speaker's decisiveness in his speech leaves a great impact on the listener.

Maybe, this expression, which is firm and decisive coupled with a sort of mild threat, leaves its impact on them, shaking them in their hearts, and awakening them, calling them to the right path.

Afterwards, the Qur'an adds:

"And whomever Allah guides, then he is guided aright, and whomever He leaves to stray, you will never find for him guardians other than Him…"

The only way they have is to return to Him once again and seek the light of guidance from Him.

These two sentences, in fact, are allusions to the fact that the mere pounding reasoning is not sufficient for embracing the faith. On the contrary, before gaining the Divine success and proper eligibility of Allah's guidance, it is impossible for him to embrace the faith.

A Persian poem indicates:

It is the clean sperm necessary to become worthy of receiving favour; Otherwise every pebble or piece of clay will never turn into shining stones or pearls.

Then, the Qur'an illustrates for them one of the scenes of the resurrection day as a challenging and pounding threat, which is the certain consequences of their actions, proclaiming that:

"…and We shall muster them on the Day of Resurrection upon their faces…"

Instead of them walking in an upright and erect standing position, the angels of punishment draw them on their faces, or they will be crawling over their faces and chests like reptiles. They will be entering into that great court in a state of blindness, deafness, and dumbness.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…blind, dumb and deaf…"

There are different stages and stop phases for the day of resurrection, in some of which the sinners are blind, deaf, and dumb, though in other platforms they regain their eyesight, their sense of hearing, and their tongues open up so as to enable them to witness scenes of punishment, listen to the blaming of others, and cry for help, expressing their weakness, which itself is one way for punishing them.

The culprits also are deprived from seeing what is the source of delight, and from hearing what is joyful, and from saying whatever is directed towards salvation; on the contrary, they only see, hear, and say what is a source of discomfort.

In the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an implies that their eternal abode is Hell, but you must not imagine that its Fire will eventually be extinguished, like the worldly fire. Nay!

"Whenever it is about to fade away, We shall rekindle new flames to it."[1]

The verse says:

"…whose dwelling shall be Hell; whenever it abates, We shall increase for them the blaze."

Surah Isra' - Verse 98

ذَلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُم بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا أَءِذَا كُنَّا عِظَاماً وَرُفَاتاً أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقاً جَدِيداً

98. "That is their recompense, for they disbelieved in Our signs and said: 'What! When we become (mere) bones and decayed dust, shall we, then, indeed be raised, into a new creation?'"

The Arabic term /ruf at/ refers to straw particles which are so shredded into pieces which cannot be broken further.

In the previous verses we noted as to how an evil fate awaits in the world hereafter for the sinners; a destiny which makes every sane person to think and contemplate. Here, the Qur'an explains the reason of this matter in a different way.

It says:

"That is their recompense, for they disbelieved in Our signs and Said: 'What! When we become (mere) bones and decayed dust, shall we, then, indeed be raised, into a new creation?'"

Certainly, the disbelievers have got no reasons for rejecting the resurrection, and whatever they utter is said as mockery and ridicule or is because of their astonishment, or considering as impossible.

Surah Isra' - Verse 99

أَوَلَم يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَي أَن يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلاً لاَّ رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَاَبَي الظَّالِمُونَ إِلاَّ كُفُوراً

99. "Have they not consider that Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth is able to create the like of them? And He has appointed for them a term in which there is no doubt; but the unjust refuse aught save disbelieve."

The Holy Qur'an has repeatedly sought to remove all doubts concerning resurrection by pointing out to the creation of the heavens and the earth as well as to the enormity of the system of creation along with the Divine domination over the creation process. The Holy Qur'an implies whether the process of your creation is harder or the creation of the heavens which He has undertaken.

The verse says:

"Have they not consider that Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth is able to create the like of them?…"

That is, the best reason for establishing the possibility of something which is there, is its very existence and its very accidence.

In the doomsday, the decayed bones are the same worldly bones and the spirit to which it has joined is that same spirit. However, the Qur'an states /milahum/ (like those), it is just like the 'raw bricks' which, when pounded, it is possible to manufacture once again bricks of the same proportion and quality.

In this case, people say: These bricks are like the former ones, and not identical with them, or they say that the materials which have gone into them are the same.[2]

The best rationale to prove the resurrection is focusing our attention on the Divine power in nature.

Therefore, He remarks in this noble verse asking: Do those who regard resurrection as impossible, not know that Allah, Who has had the ability to create the heavens and the earth, can create like of them in the doomsday, for the creation of them is not harder than the creation of the heavens and the earth.

As the Qur'an says:

"Are you the harder to create or the creation of the heaven He made it?"[3]

The Lord designated for them a decisive destiny that the goal of which is death or the resurrection. However, these oppressors abstained from accepting the truth, and they added up to their rejections though the evidences were quite clear for them.

The verse says:

"…And He has appointed for them a term in which there is no doubt; but the unjust refuse aught save disbelieve."

Surah Isra' - Verse 100

قُل لَوْ أَنتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذاً لاَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الإِنفَاقِ وَكَانَ الإِنسَانُ قَتُوراً

100. "Say: 'If you possessed the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, then you would definitely withhold (them) for fear of spending, and man is ever niggardly."

The Arabic term /qatūr/ is derived from the word /qitr/, meaning: miserliness and avarice or withholding from sharing with others of one's wealth.

As they insisted on the idea that the prophet must not be of the same genus as mankind, apparently some kind of jealousy and avarice stopped them from believing that, perhaps, Allah has bestowed this blessing on a human being.

Thus, He says in this verse:

"Say: 'If you possessed the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, then you would definitely withhold (them) for fear of spending, and man is ever niggardly."

These last three verses are the most obvious of the verses which provide justifications for the resurrection of the body, for the pagans astonishment concerned as to how the Lord can return to life once again those decayed bones which have turned into dust.

The Qur’an’s answer also covers this very point, implying: That Lord Who created the heaven and the earth, has also the potentiality to assemble all scattered human particles and to provide them with life.

Incidentally, one of the reasons stressed by the Holy Qur’an repeatedly for establishing the issue of resurrection, is the its taking recourse to the generalization of the Lord’s Omnipotence.

Notes

1. The Arabic term /xabat/ refers to the flame which is fading, and the word /sa‘ir/ means ‘to flame the fire’, and it is one of the names of Hell.
2. Tafsir Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
3. An-Nazi‘at, No. 79, verse 27

Section 12: Those Gifted with Knowledge - The Ministry of Moses

Surah Isra' - Verses 101 - 102

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي تِسْعَ ءَايَاتٍ بَيِّـنَاتِ فَسْأَلْ بَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ إِذْ جَآءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنّـِي لاَظُنُّكَ يَا مُوسَي مَسْحُوراً

قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَآ أَنزَلَ هؤُلآءِ إِلاَّ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ بَصَآئِرَ وإِنّـِي لاَظُنُّكَ يَا فِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُوراً

101. "And indeed We give Moses nine clear signs, so ask the Children of Israel when he came to them, and, Pharaoh said to him: 'O' Mūsa! Verily I think you are bewitched'."

102. "He said: 'Indeed you know that none has sent these (miracles) down save the Lord of the heavens and the earth (as) clear proofs, and I think you lost, O' Pharaoh!'"

In several of the foregoing verses, we noted as to what peculiar demands the pagans used to put to the Prophet (S). We, here, find Him, in fact, exposing one of the examples of such scenes in preceding generations as to how they witnessed extraordinary events and miracles and they, yet, looked for pretexts, rejecting everything.

At first, He says:

"And indeed We give Moses nine clear signs…"

These divine signs consist of: The stick, the white hand, the storm, locusts, one kind of plant-pest called /qummal/, the over-increase in the number of frogs, blood, drought, and deficiencies.

Later, in order to stress this point further, He adds in implication to Moses that if your opponents even reject this matter outright, in order to deliver an ultimatum to them, tell them to ask the sons of Israel as to how they were when these verses came down to them.

Notwithstanding these, not only they did not subject themselves to the acceptance of the fact, but also they accused Moses of being a sorcerer, and of being crazy.

The verse continues saying:

"…so ask the Children of Israel when he came to them, and, Pharaoh said to him: 'O' Mūsa! Verily I think you are bewitched'."

This is the case with all the arrogant people who used to accuse the godly men of sorcery or insanity for their innovations and their movement against the treatment of corrupt communities and their exhibition of extraordinary behaviour, so as to be able to influence naive people, scattering them from around the prophets.

Thus verse 102 shows Moses (as) did not keep quiet in face of all this under accusation, affirming categorically, where it declares:

"He said: 'Indeed you know that none has sent these (miracles) down save the Lord of the heavens and the earth (as) clear proofs, and I think you lost, O' Pharaoh!'"

Therefore, O pharaoh!, you reject the facts while having full knowledge of the facts and while you are cognizant of them. I believe you, Pharaoh, will eventually perish.

Two Points in Conclusion

The first point: In the Glorious Qur'an, there are numerous verses and miracles mentioned concerning Moses, among which one might refer to the following:

1. Conversion of the stick into a giant snake and the act of swallowing of the tools of the sorcerers.[1]

2. The white hand or the shining of the hands of Mūsa (as) like a source of light.[2]

3. The pounding storms.[3]

4. 'Locusts' which dominated their farms and their trees, and served as a nuisance for their flourishing agriculture. [4]

5. One plant-pest agent which exterminates cereals, called /qummal/[5]

6. The frogs which emerged from the Nile River and reproduced to such an extent that they made people's lives miserable and full of difficulties.[6]

7. 'Nose-bleeding' or 'blood' which signifies the universal counteraction of nose bleeding or the turning of the Nile into the colour of the blood which made the river water neither good for drinking nor fit for agriculture. [7]

8. The splitting of the sea in such a way that the Children of Israel could pass through it.[8]

9. The descending of /mann/ and /salwa/ which was explained under verse 57, of Surah Al-Baqarah.

10. The gushing of the springs from stone.[9]

11. The splitting away of part of the mountain and its placement as a canopy over them.[10]

12) Famine and draught as well as shortage of fruits.[11]

13. Returning to life of a murdered individual whose death instigated intensive opposition among the Children of Israel.[12]

14. Use of the cloud shadows as canopy which protected them in a miraculous way in intense desert heat. [13]

The issue in question in here is: What is the objective of 'the nine verses', which have been alluded to in the verses under discussion?

The expressions utilized in these verses reveal the fact that they signify miracles which were mentioned in connection with Pharaoh and the adherents of Pharaoh, and not the ones which were involved with the Children of Israel themselves, like the descending of 'Mann and Salwa', and the emergence of the spring from a stone, and the like.

Considering this point, one can claim that the five topics which are dealt with in verse 133 of Surah Al-'A'raf, are among these nine signs: Storm, plant-pest, locusts, over reproduction of frogs, and blood.

Undoubtedly, the two famous miracles of Mūsa (as), that is, the issue of the 'stick', and the 'white hand' are among the nine signs, specially, it is noteworthy that we find verses 10 to 12 of Surah An-Nahl the same expression of the 'nine signs', which are mentioned after the statement of these two great miracles.

These all make up the seven supernatural or ‘extraordinary events’. Now, let us turn to the other two verses. Undoubtedly, the drowning of the people of Pharaoh, and the like, cannot be included among these signs, for the goal of explaining of the signs is to guide the people of the Pharaoh and not those which caused their destruction and extermination.

Concentrating on Surah Al-’A‘raf, in which we find many of these verses, exhibits the fact that the objective in mind of the other two signs have been the ‘draught’ and ‘the shortage of all kinds of fruits’, for after the miracle of the stick and the ‘white hand’ and before the mentioning of the five signs of the storm and the locust, the holy verse says:

“And certainly We afflicted the clan of Pharaoh with drought and scarcity of fruits, so that they may take admonition.”[14]

The second point: who is the one questioning the Prophet (S)?

Apparently, the verses show that the Prophet (S) was commissioned to investigate from the Children of Israel about the nine signs which were revealed to Moses (as), asking them about how the people of the Pharaoh rejected the authenticity of the call of Moses (as) despite all those clear signs under so many different pretexts.

But, as such a person like the Prophet (S) did not require putting to them such a query despite all his knowledge and wisdom; some commentators have still regarded other addressees as the agents who have put the question to them.

However, taking into consideration that the question raised was not the one put by the Prophet (S) for himself, rather, it was put for the acceptance by the pagans, it does not matter that the investigator be the Prophet (S) himself so that the pagans should know that if the Prophet (S) did not accept to give in the various proposals of the pagans, it was because such proposals did not have any motives for the sake of seeking the truth.

On the contrary, their attitude was based on obstinacy, fanaticism and hostility, and their story was like the one we read about in the story of Moses (as) and Pharaoh.

Surah Isra’ - Verses 103 - 104

فَأَرَادَ أَن يَسْتَفِزَّهُم مِنَ الأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْناهُ وَمَن مَعَهُ جَمِيعاً

وَقُلْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الأَرْضَ فإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفاً

103. “So he (Pharaoh) decided to scare them from that land; but We drowned him and those with him, all together.”

104. “And, after that, We said to the Children of Israel: ‘Settle in the land and when the promise of the Hereafter comes to pass, We shall bring you (all) assemble together.”

The Arabic term /’istifz az/ signifies ‘expelling by force’. The Qur’an has repeatedly made allusions to these methods of oppression towards the men of Allah and their eventual frustration. They put ‘Ibrahim within fire, the Lord turned the fire cold.

They threw Yusuf down the well, the Lord elevated him to the rank of ‘Aziz in Egypt. They expelled the Prophet (S) from Mecca, Allah bestowed on him the government of the entire world of Islam. Such is the Divine way

of treatment and the rule of Allah, Who has got suitable contrivance against the dirty tricks of the evildoers.

Therefore, the Qur'an implies in this verse that since the Pharaoh was not able to resist against the pounding reasoning and rationales of Mūsa, he took recourse to the same tricks employed by all oppressors who are illogical throughout the ages, as the verse says:

"So he (Pharaoh) decided to scare them from that land; but We drowned him and those with him, all together."

And, thus, He implies: We told the Children of Israel, to settle down in the lands of Egypt, Damascus and Bayt-ul-Muqaddas.

However, when the time of after-life arrives, We shall make you assemble, appearing in the Court of Justice altogether.

The verse says:

"And, after that, We said to the Children of Israel: 'Settle in the land and when the promise of the Hereafter comes to pass, We shall bring you (all) assemble together."

The Arabic term /lafif/ means interrelated large groups.

What Land is the Objective of /'ard/ In These Verses?

We read in the previous verses that the Lord told the Children of Israel that now that you have conquered the enemy, you must settle down in the 'promised land'. Does this signify the land of Egypt?

(This same word, which has been stated in the previous verse that says Pharaoh wanted to expel them from that land, is mentioned in this sense with the same meaning; other verses of the Qur'an also affirm the fact that the Children of Israel became the heirs and the inheritors of them)

Or else, this is an allusion made to the 'Holy Land' of Palestine, for the Children of Israel went to the land of Palestine after this event and were commissioned to enter it.

However, we do not consider it as a remote possibility that both lands have been the objective of it, for the Children of Israel became both the inheritors of the lands of the Pharaohs, as testified by the Qur'an, and they became the proprietors of the land of Palestine.

In the meantime, does the Qur'anic phrase /wa'd-ul-' axirah/ signify the Hereafter? The answer to this question is apparently positive, for the sentence:

"…We shall bring you (all) assemble together"

provides us with the corresponding meaning. Some commentators have also voiced another possibility.

Surah Isra' - Verse 105

وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّـراً وَنَذِيراً

105. "And, with the truth have We sent it (the Qur'an) down and with the truth it has come down; and We have not sent you except as a Bearer of glad tidings and as a warner."

The authenticity of the Qur'an has been guaranteed from distortions. The Qur'an has been verily revealed in truth, and the Divine revelation has also been received its destination safely, while, at the same time, the Satans have been unable to do it any harm.

Therefore, once again, the Qur'an calls on the grandeur and glory of this heavenly Book, providing answers to the objections and pretexts of the dissidents.

At first, it says:

"And, with the truth have We sent it (the Qur'an) down…"

At times, one may start doing something, but, because he is limited in his power, he may not be able to finish it up to the end.

However, one who has knowledge of everything, and is capable to fulfill everything he does while he is correctly positioned and ends everything in the right fashion, thus actualizing it to the fullest. For instance, man might sometimes let water out of a spring while it is pure though it might reach the consumption point quite impure for he is unable to preserve it through.

However, he who has command of his job quite well in all respects, he can fill everyone's jar who is thirsty with pure water.

The Qur'an is just such a Book which has been descended with the truth from the Lord, and He has guarded and protected it in its courses from any point of view, whether be it the stage that Gabriel was the means of revelation and where the recipient has been the Prophet (S) and has been preserved quite well in such a way that the passage of time has even not caused any distortions in it, and will never be distorted, for the Lord has undertaken Himself its preservation.

Thus, this source of 'pure water' of the Divine revelation, will remain untouched through to the end of the world.

The verse continues saying:

"…and with the truth it has come down…"

Concluding His statement, He says:

"…and We have not sent you except as a Bearer of glad tidings and as a warner."

And you have got no right to introduce any changes in the context of the Qur'an.

Surah Isra' - Verse 106

وَقُرْءَاناً فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَي النَّاسِ عَلَي مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلاً

106. "And (it is) Qur'an which We have divided (in sections) so that you may read it to the people at a slow pace and We have sent it down gradually in portions."

One of the objections of the pagans related to the fact as to why the Qur'an has not been revealed as a whole in one part, when they said:

"…why has not the Qur'an been revealed to him all at once?…"[15]

The verse under discussion is in response to their objection.

As the verses of the Qur'an relate to different events, and they are meant to meet the requirements of all classes of the people throughout history, they are revealed in sections so as to correspond to the various events, thus becoming more pleasant for the audience.

Would that ever be possible to collect all the events of 23 years in one single day so that the problems raised therein be revealed in the Qur'an instantly?

The verses says:

"And (it is) Qur'an which We have divided (in sections) so that you may read it to the people at a slow pace and We have sent it down gradually in portions."

Incidentally, the gradual revelation implies the continuous relationship of the holy Prophet (S) with the source of revelation. However, instant revelation would not guarantee such a relationship more than once.

Moreover, an instructor and a reformer must have a long term program in mind and must not be unaware of the new needs.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an does not contain only instructive aspects but it also possesses some practical aspects as well, which must be gradually implemented, and such an implementation of hundreds of commandments in a society which has got hundreds of sorts of corruption, at once, is an impossibility.

Surah Isra' - Verses 107 - 109

قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لاَ تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِن قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلاَذْقَانِ سُجَّداً

وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَآ إِن كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولاً

وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلاَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعاً

107. "Say: 'Believe in it or believe not, (it makes no difference to Allah), verily, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is read to them, they fall down prostrate on their faces, adoring."

108. "And they say: "Glory be to our Lord! Verily, our Lord's promise is to be fulfilled."

109. "And they fall down (in prostration) weeping and it adds up to their humility."

In this noble verse, and in the following one, the Lord has commanded His prophet to remain rather heedless of such people who are companions of paganism and 'Ignorance'.

Whether they embrace the faith or they reject it altogether it does not matter, for a better stock which includes those who are knowledgeable and who have studied the heavenly Books, and have practiced according to the Divine religions, have asserted their belief, confirming that he is the prophet who has been promised to emerge in their authentic religious books, and whenever the Lord's verses are read to them, they fall to the ground, prostrating in face of all the Lord's glory and for implementing what is promised in their Divine Books that He appoints Muhammad (S) as His Prophet and sends down the Book to him.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Believe in it or believe not, (it makes no difference to Allah), verily, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is read to them, they fall down prostrate on their faces, adoring."

This is what is intended by the promise mentioned in the verse which says:

"And they say: "Glory be to our Lord! Verily, our Lord's promise is to be fulfilled."

By this, they mean: Our Lord's promise is to be fulfilled. They express this way their utmost commitment and faith towards the Divinity of the Lord and His pure Attributes as well as to the promises He has kept.

This is a speech within which, both, faith in monotheism as well as the attributes of the Lord and His justice are included while the prophecy of the Prophet (S) and belief in resurrection are contained. Thus, they assemble all the religious principles in one concise sentence.

Again in verse 109, to stress further the point, and the impact of those Divine verses as well as of this loving prostration, the Qur'an implies that they fall into a state of prostration (involuntarily) and start crying, and the reading of these verses always adds up to their modesty.

They never stay in one state or mood, rather they try to climb up toward the peak of development, and continuously their modesty increases. 'Modesty', is the state of humbleness and the physical and spiritual politeness, in which case one bows to the command of Allah and His obedience.

The verse says:

"And they fall down (in prostration) weeping and it adds up to their humility."

Incidentally, the Qur'anic term / yaxirrūna/ is derived from /xarir/ in the sense of the whispering of the sound of water which is flowing downward from up. This also refers to those who, losing their control, fall into a state of prostration before Allah, worship Him in their fairly loud voices.

The Arabic term /'aŏq an/ is the plural form of /ŏaqan/ which means 'chin', it signifies having absolute modesty, in which case, not only one's forehead but his face and chin also touch the floor as well.

In conclusion, another clear lesson drawn from the above verses relates to the interrelationship of science with Faith.

The Qur'an implies whether you accept these Divine verses or not, men of knowledge will not only accept them believing in them but they also tend to fall into a state of prostration for the love of Allah which is like a burning desire within them, letting their tears be shed in abundance from their eyes.

Their modesty and humbleness is then being augmented while, at the same time, their polite behaviour and their respect increases unto these verses.

It is only those ignorant mean individuals who sometimes disregard heedlessly, and at times ridicule, when confronting the facts: and even if such individuals happen to be attracted to the faith, their belief would be weak, fleeting, and void of love, activity and of any warmth.

Moreover, this meaning reflects a further emphasis on the obliteration of the empty hypothesis of those who believe that religion has got a correlation with the ignorance of mankind.

The glorious Qur'an, in contradiction with this claim, repeatedly stresses the fact that science and religion are always associated with each other in various circumstances. A deep and sustaining devotion in faith can only be attained in having a deep knowledge, and knowledge borrows its weight in higher echelons from faith. 'Remember'

Surah Isra' - Verse 110

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَانَ أَيّاً مَا تَدْعُواْ فَلَهُ الاَسْمآءُ الْحُسْنَي وَلاَ تَجْهَرْ بِصَلاَتِكَ وَلاَ تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبيلاً

110. "Say: 'Call upon Allah, or call upon the Beneficent; whichever you call upon; then the best names belong to Him; and do not utter your prayer too aloud nor be silent with regard to it, and seek a way between that'."

In some of the commentaries, we have it that once the holy Prophet (S) was praying in Masjid-ul-Haram, and was saying:

"O' Allah! O' Rahman!"

Some people thought he was calling two Gods one of whom was 'Allah' and the other one was (Rahman' (Compassionate). The verse was revealed and wiped out that paradox.[16]

In other words, the pagans and the polytheists used to ask as to why the prophet called the Lord by various names while he was claiming to be monotheist.

The Qur'an, answering them, says:

"Say: 'Call upon Allah, or call upon the Beneficent; whichever you call upon…"

Whichever you choose, it makes no difference; He has got to have various good names:

"…then the best names belong to Him…"

Those blindfolded individuals, at times, call a person or a place by different names, each of which presents one part or a portion of its existence.

Is it, therefore, surprising that the Lord, whose Essence is infinite in every respect and Who is the source of all perfections, bounties, and goodness, be called by one specific name for whatever He does with respect to that job and whatever virtue His Holy Essence Possesses?

At the end of the holy verse, calling the attention to the discussion of the pagans in Mecca who used to ask with regard to the prayers of the Prophet (S) as to why he used to recite his prayers with a loud voice, disturbing them, He commands the Prophet (S):

"…and do not utter your prayer too aloud nor be silent with regard to it, and seek between, that'."

The noble verse implies: Neither recite it with a loud voice, shouting it; nor in a state of whispering it, in which case your lips might be moving and no voice heard.

Incidentally, we have it in the Shi'ah and Sunni quotations that; The Lord has got 99 names, and whoever calls Him by one of them, will succeed and will be saved. [17]

However, we must know that when speaking of numerating of these names, it does not mean that we utter them so as to enter the Paradise or become the one whose prayers are accepted.

On the contrary, they are intended for us to be inculcated with the values attached to them and implementing of those values relating to the names such as: Wise, Compassionate, Merciful, Generous, and Blissful in

ourselves so as to make us both worthy of the Paradise and make our prayers acceptable in all cases.

Surah Isra' - Verse 111

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَداً وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيراً

111. "And say: '(All) Praise is Allah's, Who has not taken unto Him a son; nor has He got any partner in the Sovereignty; and there is not for Him any helper out of humbleness.' And magnify Him with all magnificence."

We finally arrive at the last verse of this Surah, the verse which ends with the praise of Allah just as it started with the praising of His pure existence. In fact, this holy verse is a conclusion, culminating all of the monotheistic issues of this Surah and the content of all those monotheistic concepts.

Addressing the Prophet (S), He says:

"And say: '(All) Praise is Allah's, Who has not taken unto Him a son; nor has He got any partner in the Sovereignty; and there is not for Him any helper out of humbleness.'…"

Such a Lord, with those attributes, stands far too superior to whatever you conjecture. Thus, glorify Him and get to know His immensely boundless magnitude.

The verse concludes:

"…And magnify Him with all magnificence."

The above verse negates all assistance and generic like being for Allah whether be it of a lower grade (like a son) or some counterpart for Him, (like a partner), or that one who stands as superior, (like a guardian).

The Late Tabarsi quotes from some commentators (in Majma'-ul-Bayan) that this verse provides the refutation of the belief of three groups:

First, that of the Christians and the Jews who regarded Allah as having a son; the secondly that of the Arab pagans who regarded Him as having a partner; thirdly, that of those star-worshippers and the Zoroastrians who regarded Allah as having a guardian and an assistant.

In Conclusion: What is 'Takbir', or Glorification of Allah?

Here, the blissful Qur'an commands the Prophet (S) emphatically to glorify Allah. This does not merely imply that one must believe in the glory of the Lord just by saying the words 'Allah is the greatest'.

This point is also worth considering that the belief in the glory of the Lord does not imply that we regard Him as greater when comparing Him to other beings. Such a comparison is by far irrelevant in principle and by definition.

We must regard Him as greater than in comparative terms, as Imam Sadiq (as) has said in a concise and meaningful speech. An Islamic tradition declares: Someone called on that Imam, saying:

'Allah is the greatest!'

The Imam asked him:

"Of what is He greater or the greatest?

He answered:

"Of all things."

The Imam (as) explained:

"You confined Allah by saying that, as you made a comparison between Him and other beings, then considering Him as superior."

That man asked:

"Then, what must I say?"

He answered:

"Say: Allah is far too superior to what one can characterize."[18]

A Persian poet declares:

O' You Who are superior to all imaginations, comparisons, conjectures, and hallucinations:

And also excelling in whatever we have seen, written, or heard.

Our audience came to an end and our life is over, nevertheless, we are stuck in the first phases of our attempt at our depicting of your profile.

Incidentally, some quotations from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) indicates that the reading of this verse has been considered as effective in removing of one's dues, removing of passing whims and passions, discarding of poverty, and expelling of diseases.[19]

O' Lord! Replenish our heart and soul with the illumination of the lights of knowledge and faith so that we can remain humble before Your grandeur, staying faithful to Your promises and obeying fully Your commands, worshipping no one but You and relying on no one except on You.

O' Lord! Bestow upon us the means of success not to violate the frontiers of justice and moderation, avoiding all sorts of extremism.

O' Lord! We thank You; consider You as One; glorify You beyond what can be explicable. You, too, provide us with forgiveness, make our determination ever stronger and help us prevail over the enemies who have surrounded us from interior and from exterior.

Help us to join our victories to those ultimate victories of the uprising of the promised Mahdi (as), and provide us with the means for completing this commentary as it would be pleasing to You.

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and bestow on us from Your mercy, for You are, indeed, the Ever-Bestower. [20]

Notes

1. TaHa, 20
2. TaHa, 22
3. Al-’A‘raf, 133
4. Al-’A‘raf, 133
5. Al-’A‘raf, 133
6. Al-’A‘raf, 133
7. Al-’A‘raf, 133
8. Al-’A‘raf, 133
9. Al-Baqarah, verse 60
10. Al-’A‘raf, 171
11. Al-’A‘raf, 130
12. Al-Baqarah, 73
13. Al-Baqarah, 57
14. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 130
15. Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 32
16. Tafsir-Tibyan and Forqan
17. Tafsir-i-Tabari, Al-Mizan, and Majma‘-ul-Bayan
18. Tafsir-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn vol. 3, p. 239
19. Tafsir Borhan
20. ‘Al-i-‘Imran, verse 8

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 9

From Surah al-Kahf (18) to Surah Ta Ha (20)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 10
What is a 'Commentary'? 11
The Current Commentary 12
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 13
The Problems in Translating 13
Translators Note 14
Editor's Note 15
Notes 17
Acknowledgment 18
Notes 18
References 19
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 19
English Translations of Qur'an 19
Supporting Technical References 20
Phraseological and Philological Sources 20
A Presentation to Muslims 22
Notes 23
Surah Al-Kahf, Chapter 18 24
Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave) 24
No.18 24
110 verses in 12 sections 24
The Feature of the Surah 24
The Virtue of the Recitation of This Surah 24
Notes 24
Section 1 25
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 1 - 3 25
Explanations 26
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 4 - 5 27
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 6 27
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 7 - 8 28
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 9 - 10 29
Occasion of Revelation 29
Explanations 30
Notes 30
Section 2: The Companions of the Cave 31
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 11 - 13 31
Explanations 31
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 14 - 16 32
Explanations 33
Notes 34
Section 3: The Sure Coming of the Resurrection Proved 35
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 17 - 18 35
Explanations 36
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 19 - 20 36
Wakefulness After a Long Sleep! 37
Explanations 38

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 21 38
The End of the Adventure of the Cave 38
Explanations 40
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 22 40
Explanations 41
Section 4:To Always Depend Upon Allah's Will 42
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 23 - 24 42
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 25 - 26 43
The Sleep of the Companions of the Cave 44
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 27 45
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 28 46
Occasion of Revelation 46
Explanations 47
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 29 47
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 30 - 31 49
Explanations 49
Two Final Points 50
1. The Ornamental Clothings in Hereafter!..... 50
2. Another point..... 51
Notes 51
Section 5: The Parable of an Ungrateful and a Grateful Man 52
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 32 - 36 52
Note 53
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 37 - 41 54
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 42 - 44 56
Notes 59
Section 6: Wealth and Children, Only Passing Shows 60
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 45 60
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 46 60
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 47 - 48 61
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 49 63
Some Traditions..... 65
Notes 65
Section 7: Satan and His Tribe..... 66
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 50 66
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 51 67
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 52 - 53 67
Notes 68
Section 8: Allah is Forgiving and the Lord of Mercy 69
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 54 - 55 69
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 56 70
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 57 70
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 58 - 59 72
Notes 73
Section 9: Moses' Search for Higher Knowledge..... 74
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 60 - 61 74
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 62 - 63 75
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 64 - 65 76

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 66 - 67 77
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 68 - 69 78
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 70 79
Notes 79
Section 10: Moses Following the One Gifted with Knowledge of Allah 80
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 71 - 72 80
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 73 - 74 80
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 75 - 76 81
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 77 - 78 82
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 79 83
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 80 - 81 84
Explanations 84
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 82 84
The Story of Moses and Khidr and Its Facts 85
Notes 87
Section 11: Zulqarnayn, The Gog and the Magog, The Barrier 88
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 83 88
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 84 - 85 89
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 86 90
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 87 - 88 90
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 89 - 91 91
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 92 - 93 92
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 94 93
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 95 - 97 93
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 98 94
Who Were Gog and Magog? 96
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 99 - 101 96
Who Are Disbelievers & Why Do They Have Such a Fate? 97
Notes 97
Section 12 : The Words of Allah Inexhaustible 98
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 102 98
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 103 - 104 98
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 105 - 106 99
Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 107 - 108 100
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 109 100
Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 110 102
Notes 104
Surah Maryam, Chapter 19 105
Surah Maryam, (Mary) 105
(Revealed in Mecca) 105
No. 19 105
98 verses in 6 sections 105
Introduction to the Surah 105
Notes 105
Section 1: Zachariah and John 106
Surah Maryam - Verses 1 - 3 106
Surah Maryam - Verses 4 - 5 107
Explanations 107

Surah Maryam - Verses 6 - 8 107
Surah Maryam - Verses 9 - 10 109
Surah Maryam - Verse 11 111
Some Traditions 111
Surah Maryam - Verses 12 - 13 111
Surah Maryam - Verses 14 - 15 112
Some Points Upon John's Martyrdom 113
Notes 114
Section 2: Mary and Jesus 115
Surah Maryam - Verses 16 - 17 115
Surah Maryam - Verses 18 - 20 116
Surah Maryam - Verses 21 - 23 117
Surah Maryam - Verses 24 - 25 119
Surah Maryam - Verse 26 121
Some Points 121
Surah Maryam - Verses 27 - 28 124
Jesus Speaks in Cradle! 124
Some Verses and Traditions About Calumny 124
Surah Maryam - Verses 29 - 30 125
Surah Maryam - Verses 31 - 32 126
A Few Traditions About Prayer, Almsgiving, and Kindness to Parents 127
A. Prayer 127
B. Almsgiving 127
C. Kindness to the Parents 127
Surah Maryam - Verse 33 127
Surah Maryam - Verses 34 - 35 128
Explanations 128
A. The Epithets of Jesus Christ 128
B. Two Accomplishments 129
The Qur'an and the Christ 129
Surah Maryam - Verse 36 130
Surah Maryam - Verses 37 - 38 131
Surah Maryam - Verses 39 - 40 132
Notes 133
Section 3: Abraham Preaches Unity of Allah 135
Surah Maryam - Verse 41 135
Surah Maryam - Verse 42 135
Explanations 136
Surah Maryam - Verses 43 - 44 136
Surah Maryam - Verse 45 137
Note 137
Surah Maryam - Verse 46 138
Surah Maryam - Verse 47 138
Surah Maryam - Verse 48 139
Explanations 139
Surah Maryam - Verse 49 140
The Feature of Abraham 140

Surah Maryam - Verse 50 141
Notes 142
Section 4: References to the Other Prominent Apostles of Allah 144
Surah Maryam - Verse 51 144
Explanations 144
Surah Maryam - Verses 52 - 53 144
Explanations 145
Surah Maryam - Verses 54 - 55 146
Surah Maryam - Verses 56 - 57 147
Surah Maryam - Verse 58 148
Surah Maryam - Verses 59 - 60 149
Repentance and the Qur'an 150
Surah Maryam - Verses 61 - 63 151
Surah Maryam - Verse 64 153
Occasions of Revelation 153
Surah Maryam - Verse 65 154
Notes 154
Section 5: The Resurrection Certain 156
Surah Maryam - Verses 66 - 67 156
Occasions of Revelation 156
Surah Maryam - Verses 68 - 70 157
Surah Maryam - Verses 71 - 72 158
Some Islamic Traditions 158
Surah Maryam - Verses 73 - 74 160
Explanations 160
Surah Maryam - Verse 75 161
Surah Maryam - Verse 76 162
Surah Maryam - Verses 77 - 80 162
Surah Maryam - Verses 81 - 82 164
Notes 165
Section 6: Intercession 166
Surah Maryam - Verses 83 - 84 166
Surah Maryam - Verses 85 - 86 166
Some Traditions Upon Paradise and Hell, and Their People 167
Surah Maryam - Verse 87 169
Surah Maryam - Verses 88 - 89 169
Surah Maryam - Verses 90 - 92 170
Surah Maryam - Verse 93 171
Surah Maryam - Verses 94 - 95 171
Surah Maryam - Verse 96 172
Surah Maryam - Verse 97 174
Surah Maryam - Verse 98 174
Notes 175
Surah Ta Ha, Chapter 20 177
Surah Ta Ha 177
(Revealed in Macca) 177
No. 20 177
135 verses in 8 sections 177

Introduction to the Surah 177
Note 177
Section 1: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship 178
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 1 - 4 178
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 5 - 7 179
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 8 181
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 9 - 12 183
Explanations 184
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 13 - 14 185
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 15 - 16 185
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 17 - 18 186
Moses' Rod and White Hand! 186
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 19 - 21 187
Explanations 187
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 22 - 23 188
Explanations 188
Notes 189
Section 2: The Ministry of Moses 190
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 24 - 28 190
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 29 - 32 191
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 33 - 35 193
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 36 - 37 194
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 38 - 39 194
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 40 196
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 41 - 44 197
Explanations 199
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 45 - 46 199
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 47 - 48 200
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 49 - 52 201
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 53 202
Notes 202
Section 3: Moses' Encounter with Pharaoh 203
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 54 - 55 203
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 56 - 57 203
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 58 - 60 204
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 61 - 62 205
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 63 - 64 206
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 65 - 67 207
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 68 - 70 208
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 71 209
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 72 - 73 210
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 74 - 76 212
Notes 213
Section 4: The Children of Israel Follow Moses 214
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 77 - 79 214
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 80 215
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 81 216
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 82 216

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 83 - 85 218
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 86 219
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 87 220
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 88 - 89 220
Notes 221
Section 5: Children of Israel Deceived by Samiri 222
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 90 - 91 222
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 92 - 94 223
Explanations 224
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 95 - 97 224
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 98 - 99 226
Explanations 227
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 100 - 103 227
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 104 228
Notes 229
Section 6: Intercession 230
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 105 - 107 230
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 108 230
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 109 231
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 110 - 111 232
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 112 233
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 113 234
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 114 234
Notes 235
Section 7: Satan, a Declared Enemy of Mankind..... 237
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 115 - 116 237
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 117 - 119 238
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 120 - 121 238
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 122 - 123 239
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 124 - 125 240
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 126 - 127 241
Surah Ta Ha - Verses 128 - 129 242
Notes 243
Section 8: The Times of the Daily Prayers 244
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 130 244
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 131 244
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 132 245
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 133 246
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 134 246
Surah Ta Ha - Verse 135 247
Notes 248

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-
ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi
1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi
By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Al-Kahf, Chapter 18

Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave)

No.18

110 verses in 12 sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah contains one hundred and ten verses, all of which were revealed in Mecca, except verse 28. In this holy Surah, the story of the Companions of the Cave (Kahf), the story of Moses and Khidr (a.s), the story of Zulqarnayn, and some awakening materials about Origin and End have been discussed.

The pagans of Quraysh sent some persons from Mecca to Medina to ask the reality of the event of the advent of Hadrat Muhammad Mustaf a (S) and the signs of his truthfulness from the scholars of the Jews who were living there.

The Jewish scholars told those persons, who were sent by the pagans, that they would ask him (S) about three subjects. The Jewish scholars said if Muhammad (S) answered two subjects and restrained from answering the third one, he would be True. Those subjects were about: the Companions of the Cave, Zulqarnayn, and the Soul.

They said: if Muhammad (S) could answer the questions of ‘the Companions of the Cave’ and ‘Zulqarnayn’, but he did not answer the question about the Soul, he was a Divine Prophet.1

The Virtue of the Recitation of This Surah

There are many traditions recorded upon the virtue of this Surah and the effects of its recitation. Among them is that: whoever recites this Surah by the night before Friday, it causes his sins to be forgiven, and he will be involved in Allah’s Mercy.

Of course, as it has been repeatedly said, recitation of the holy verses of the Qur’an accompanied with understanding and fulfilling them accordingly, is the secret of obtaining the blessings of the Qur’an.

Notes

1. Durr-ul-Manthūr

Section 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 1 - 3

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ عَلَي عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَل لَّهُ عِوَجَا

قَيِّـماً لِّـيُنذِرَ بَأْساً شَدِيداً مِن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّـرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ َعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْراً حَسَناً

مَاكِثِينَ فِيهِ أَبَداً

1. "(All) praise is (only) Allah's, Who sent down upon His servant the Book (the Qur'an) and did not make in it any crookedness."

2. "(A Book which is, over other heavenly Books,) guardian, to give warning of a severe punishment from Him, and to give good tidings unto the believers who do righteous deeds, that there will be for them a goodly reward."

3. "Where in they will abide forever."

At the beginning of this Surah, Allah, the Pure, has taught His servants how to praise Him for His greatest bounty. He has pointed out that His most important bounty is the very Qur'an which He has revealed to His Messenger, and it is the only cause of their salvation.

As well as some other Suras of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf has begun with Allah's praise; and since praise and thanksgiving is usually for an important quality and a praiseworthy thing, here, the holy verse has stated it for the revelation of the Qur'an which is far from any crookedness and obliquity.

The verse says:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's, Who sent down upon His servant the Book (the Qur'an) and did not make in it any crookedness."

Then, the next verse adds, implying that it is fixed, straight, and guardian over other heavenly Books:

"(A Book which is, over other heavenly Books,) guardian…"

This word, /qayyiman/, which has been applied as an epithet for the Qur'an, is both an emphasis on the straightness and temperance of the Qur'an which is free from any contradiction, and a hint to the eternity of this great Book.

It is also an example for: the protection of authenticities, the improvement of obliquities, guarding the Divine ordinances and human beings' justice and excellence.

This epithet, /qayyim/(guardian), is, in fact, a derivation of the guardianship of Allah by which He is the protector and guardian of all existing things of the world.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…to give warning of a severe punishment from Him…"

Immediately after that meaning, the verse indicates that this Book gives glad tidings unto those true believers who always do praiseworthy and righteous deeds for which they will be recompensed a good reward.

It says:

"…and to give good tidings unto the believers who do righteous deeds, that there will be for them a goodly reward."

This reward will be the eternal Paradise, wherein they will dwell forever.

Here is the statement of the verse:

"Wherein they will abide forever."

Explanations

1. Among all the suras of the Qur'an only the following suras begin with the holy phrase:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's)";

in three of which the speech is upon the creation of the world of existence:

Al-Hamd, Al-'An'am, Saba, Fatir, and Al-Kahf. In Surah Al-Hamd, training is spoken of, while here, in this verse, the words are upon the heavenly Book. As if, existence and creation accompanied with 'the Book of Law' are two wings for training the human beings.

2. The Arabic word /'i'wijaj/ in context means: 'deviation, and crookedness'. In Arabic, the term /'awaja/ is used for physical phenomena while the term /'iwaja/ is applied for non-physical phenomena. The author of Tibyan, a book of , has applied the term /'awaja/ for human beings and the term /'iwaja/ for other than human beings.

In this course, the Qur'anic term /qayyim/has been used in the sense of: 'an erector, and arranger'.

3. The previous Surah has begun with the holy phrase:

"Glory be to Him Who…",

and this Surah with the holy phrase:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's…".

Glorification and praise are usually mentioned beside each other.

4. Wherever the word /'abdahu/ is mentioned absolutely in the Qur'an, it means the holy Prophet (S).

Its example are such as: Surah Al-Furqan, No.25, verse one, where it says:

"…Who sent down the Furqan upon His servant…";

Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 10, where it says:

"And He revealed to His servant…";

Surah Al-Hadid, No.57, verse 9, which says:

"…Who sends upon His servant…";

and Surah Az- Zumar, No.39, verse 36 says:

"Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?…"

5. The bounty of 'the Book and Law' is so important that Allah has praised Himself for it.

6. The Qur'an is the guardian of other heavenly Books and it contains all the necessary expedients of the servants. There is no contradiction, excess and defect, and deviation in it. It invites both to raising and has raised to invite, (qayyiman).

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 4 - 5

وَيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَداً

مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلاَ لِاٰبَآئِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِن يَقُولُونَ إِلاَّ كَذِباً

4. "And to warn those who say: 'Allah has taken (to Himself) a son'."

5. "They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers, Grievous is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak naught but a lie."

There was mentioned a warning in the previous holy verse, yet because of the importance of the deviation of polytheists concerning the idea that 'Allah has taken (to Himself) a son', the warning has been repeated again in this verse.

Regarding other verses of the Qur'an, too, the accusation of taking son unto Allah had been counted a great slender which was spread about among polytheists. The Christians spoke of: 'the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost', too.

The Jews also considered Ezra as God's son. Polytheists thought of the angels as the daughters of God, while this belief adapts neither with reality nor with logic and wisdom.

However, in this holy verse, the Qur'an has referred to one of the common deviations of the opponents of Islam, among these opponents are the Christians, the Jews and polytheists, where it says:

"And to warn those who say: 'Allah has taken (to Himself) a son'."

This verse warns both the Christians for the belief that Messiah is the son of God, and the Jews for having the belief that Ezra is God's son, and polytheists for that they consider the angels as God's daughters.

Then, in order to make futile such baseless and false claims, the Qur'an pays to a basic principle, and says:

"They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers…"

They say this meaning, while by which they utter a great vain thing without having any knowledge.

The verse continues saying:

"…Grievous is the word that comes out of their mouths..."

Allah, and being a body? Allah, and having a son? Allah and having material needs? Allah, and being limited? How terrible words they are!

Yes, it is such that:

"…They speak naught but a lie."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَي ءَاثَارِهِم إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفاً

6. "Then maybe you will fret yourself to death with grief, following after them, if they do not believe in this Message (the Qur'an)."

The Arabic term /asaf/ indicates to a stage of sorrow more intensive than grief.

This verse refers to the utmost sympathy of the prophets. It seems that the Prophet (S) has been resembled to a person who observes that his most beloved members are separating from him and he is looking at them with sigh from behind their backs.

Sympathy and regret upon other's aberration is a value, and the Prophet (S) is always the most compassionate one among people.

A leader should be mindful of the improvement of the believes and deeds of people and he ought not to cease looking after them.

Therefore, the verse says:

"Then maybe you will fret yourself to death with grief, following after them, if they do not believe in this Message (the Qur'an)."

That is why, in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that he (S) must not be grievous, because the world is the place of trial for them.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 7 - 8

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَي الاَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيداً جُرُزاً

7. "Verily We have appointed whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it, so that We may try them: which of them is best in conduct."

8. "And (at the end) We will surely make whatever is on it (as) barren ground."

The Arabic word /sa'id/ has been applied for soil and whatever absolutely is on the ground. The Qur'anic holy term /juruz/ means 'a land without any plant'.

Allah has settled the phrase /liyabluwakum/, which relates to the trial of people, between the term /ja'alna/ (We have appointed) and the term /ja'ilun/ (will surely make).

One of these two words relates to the prosperity of the earth and the other relates to its barrenness, to be a hint that people's trial is located amongst prosperity, freshness, barrenness and sorrows. But, what is important in this course is the deed of man and his success.

It is narrated in a tradition that the purpose of the phrase /'ahsanu 'amala/ (best in conduct) is a wisely action accompanied with piety which should have been reserved for Hereafter, too. [1]

The apparent reason of disbelief of the infidels is often their neglectful entire attention to the beauties of the world.

The verse says:

"Verily We have appointed whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it…"

Whatever is found on the earth, such as: gardens, flowers, fruits, animals, water sources, mains, colours, and good smells are all ornaments for the earth. But, for the developed and pious people, Faith and piety are their main ornaments.

Ornaments are the means of trial in order to be determined who amongst people has been deluded and sells himself, and who, by means of continence and piety, uses these ornaments as a preparation for his righteous deeds.

Thus, the holy verse continues saying:

"…so that We may try them: which of them is best in conduct."

This part of the verse is a warning to all humankind and to all Muslims that, in the course of this trial, they should not be deceived by some dazzling

glares and the abundance of their deeds, but they ought to try to be regardful of goodness of deeds.

The beauty of flowers and the nature itself is perishable, but a good deed is fixed and remaining. These different bounties, these ranks and social positions, and the like of them, are not perpetual either.

There will come a day when there will remain but a dry and silent graveyard from these societies. This fact is a great instructive lesson.

The verse says:

"And (at the end) We will surely make whatever is on it (as) barren ground."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 9 - 10

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ ءَايَاتِنَا عَجَباً

إِذْ أَوَي الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَي الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّـئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَداً

9. "Or do you think that the people of the Cave and of the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?"

10. "When the youths sought refuge unto the Cave, then they said: 'Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Your Presence, and provide for us in our affair a right course'."

Occasion of Revelation

Several chiefs of Quraysh sent two friends of theirs toward the Jewish scholars in Medina in order to investigate about the invitation of the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and to know whether there had been anything recorded in the former Books concerning his advent.

The couple of men went to Medina and communicated with the Jewish scholars therein. Those scholars told them to go to Muhammad (S) and ask him three questions. If he could answer two of them, he was a true prophet from the side of the Lord, otherwise he was a liar and they could decide about him whatever they wished.

They were told to ask what the story of the youths was, who, in ancient times, separated from their tribe, because they had a wonderful adventure.

Also, they should ask him (S) who the man was who traveled round the world and reached the East and the West of the earth, and what his story was.

They would also ask about the reality of the soul.

Those two men went to the Prophet (S) and asked him their questions.

The Prophet (S) told them that he might answer them the next day, while he did not mention the holy phrase: 'If Allah wills'. It passed fifteen days and nights that there revealed no revelation from the side of Allah unto the Prophet (S).

That circumstance was heavy upon him (S). But, finally, Gabriel appeared and brought Surah Al-Kahf from Allah, wherein there was the explanation of the story of those youths and also the story of that traveller around the world.

Besides that, Gabriel brought him (S) the verse saying:

"They ask you concerning the spirit; say 'The spirit is of the command of my Lord…'"[2]

In the former verses, there was delivered an illustration of the life in this world and the circumstance of men's trial in the course of their lives.

In view of the fact that the Qur'an often illustrates the general sensitive matters with a similitude or parables, or some examples from the history of the past, here, too, at first it refers to the adventure of the Companions of the Cave, and mentions them as an example and as a goodly pattern.

A group of clever and faithful youths, who were living in a splendid, comfortable and welfare life with kinds of bounties and facilities, in order to protect their godly belief and to challenge with the illegitimate ruler of their time, left all of those merits and sought refuge to a cave of a mountain which was empty of every thing.

By this way, they proved their straightness and their steadfastness in the path of Faith.

The Qur'an says at first:

"Or do you think that the people of the Cave and of the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?"

Allah implies that He has some more wonderful signs in the heaven and the earth, each of which is a sample of the glory and greatness of creation. There are also so many wonderful signs in this great heavenly Book of yours, and certainly the story of the Companions of the Cave is not more wonderful than them.

Then the Qur'an says:

"When the youths sought refuge unto the Cave…"

They become helpless and could do nothing.

So, they called Allah:

"…then they said: 'Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Your Presence, and provide for us in our affair a right course'."

They asked their Lord to provide a way for them that they could deliver from that straitened circumstance and that it would lead them to goodness and happiness, so that they could perform their duties.

Explanations

1. The Qur'anic term /raqim/ here means: 'an inscription or a tablet on which the story of the Companions of the Cave is written and their names figured in it'. The Arabic term /kahf/ means: 'a large cave'.

2. The Arabic word /fityah/ is the plural form of /fata/ which means 'youth'. Imam Sadiq (as) has said that a faithful person is called 'youth', because though they were aged, Allah has introduced them 'youth' because of their Faith. [3]

3. The Qur'anic term /rušd/ has been rendered in the sense of: 'growth, salvation, and Allah's pleasure'. [4]

In this Surah, the term has been applied in three occurrences.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
2. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 85
3. Al-Kafi, vol.8, p.398, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary

Section 2: The Companions of the Cave

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 11 - 13

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَي ءَاذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَداً

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أي الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَي لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَداً

نَحْنُ نَقُص عَلَيْكَ نَبَاَهُم بِالْحَقّ إِنَّهمْ فِتْيَةٌ ءَامَنُوا بِرَبّـِهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًي

11. "Then We set over their ears (a curtain of sleep) in the Cave for a number of years."

12. "Afterwards We raised them up in order to test which of the two parties would better calculate the time they had tarried."

13. "We relate to you their story with the truth; verily they were youths who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance."

Then Allah accepted the prayer of 'the Companions of the Cave' and covered a veil of sleep over their ears in the Cave so that they slept for a number of years. Then, He roused them in order to test and make it clear which of those two parties was best at calculating the term of years they had slept.

Here are the statements of the Qur'an:

"Then We set over their ears (a curtain of sleep) in the Cave for a number of years."

"Afterwards We raised them up in order to test which of the two parties would better calculate the time they had tarried."

Next to a short statement of this story, the Qur'an refers to it by detailed explanation through fourteen verses, and begins explaining it as follows:

"We relate to you their story with the truth…"

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"…verily they were youths who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance."

It is understood precisely from the Qur'an and vastly from the history that the Companions of the Cave were living in an environment and at a time that idolatry and polytheism had surrounded them.

A tyrannical government, which was the protector and the guardian of paganism, infidelity, ignorance, and offence committed against those people, had cast an inauspicious shadow upon them.

But this group of youths, who had enjoyed an enough spiritual intelligence and truthfulness, realized the corruption of that creed and decided to rise against it, or, if they could not afford to stand against it, they would emigrate from that polluted environment.

Explanations

People are divided into three groups in connection with corruption which is done in a polluted society:

1. A part of people may assume the corruption of the society. These are those who do not migrate, and have not a complete Faith, either.

2. There are some people who are inside a polluted society but they try to protect themselves from pollution, (like the Companions of the Cave).

3. There are also a group of people who change others and improve their polluted society into a good one, (like prophets and saints).

However, there are some Islamic traditions which indicate that the Companions of the Cave will be amongst the friends and helpers of Hadrat Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent). [1]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 14 - 16

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبنَا رَب السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ لَن نَدْعُوَاْ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَهاً لَقَدْ قُلْنَآ إِذاً شَطَطاً

هَؤُلآءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّوْلاَ يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيّـِنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً

وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُـمُوهُمْ وَمَا َعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ فَأْووا إِلَي الْكَهْفِ يَنشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبكُم مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيّءْ لَكُم مِن أَمْرِكُم مِرْفَقاً

14. "And We strengthened their hearts, when they stood up and said: 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; never will we call upon any god besides Him, for then we should have uttered extravagantly'."

15. "These our people have taken gods other than Him; why do they not bring any clear authority regarding them? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah?"

16. "And when you withdraw from them and what they worship save Allah, then seek refuge in the Cave, (and) your Lord will shower on you of His mercy, and furnish you with a gentle issue of your affair."

Following the former discussion, the Qur'an implies that their hearts were given strength when they stood up and said that their Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and that they would never call upon any god other than Him, since if they did so, they would indeed had uttered an extravagance.

The verse says:

"And We strengthened their hearts, when they stood up and said: 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; never will we call upon any god besides Him, for then we should have uttered extravagantly'."

In fact, those faithful youths, in order to prove Unity and negate any gods attached a manifest proof and said that they saw clearly that the heavens and the earth had a Lord, and the existence of the regulation of creation was a reason for their existence, and they were a part of that existence.

Therefore, they said that their Lord was also the same Lord of the heavens and of the earth.

Then, they attached to another reasoning and said that their people had taken some gods for worship other than Him.

The verse says:

"These our people have taken gods other than Him…"

Can a belief exist without having any proof and reasoning? Then, why did they not bring a clear proof for the deity of those gods?

The verse continues saying:

"…why do they not bring any clear authority regarding them?…"

Can an imagination or illusion or a blindly imitation be taken as a proof for such a belief? What a manifest injustice and a great aberration it is!

Therefore, the verse says:

"…Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah?"

This 'calumny' is an injustice both unto him himself and unto the society wherein he announces this falsehood and he deviates it. Also, it can be considered as an injustice unto the Pure Essence of the Lord, as well as a disdain unto his Exalted Rank.

Those youths, the monotheists, tried to do their best to wipe out the rust of polytheism from the hearts, and to grow the twig of Unity in their place, but the shout of idolatry was so load in that environment that their melodies of Unity were lost in their throats.

Then, in order to deliver themselves from that corruptive environment, and to find a quieter place, they could not help deciding to migrate.

Thus, they began consulting with each other. They said among themselves that when they turned away from those idolaters and that which they worshipped besides Allah, and separated their own account from theirs, they should seek refuge in the Cave.

The verse says:

"And when you withdraw from them and what they worship save Allah, then seek refuge in the Cave…"

It was in that case that their Lord would unfold to them of His mercy and might open to them a way from their difficulty towards calmness, easiness, and happiness.

Then the verse continues saying:

"…(and) your Lord will shower on you of His mercy, and furnish you with a gentle issue of your affair."

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /šatata/ means: 'extravagant separation from truth, and saying a falsehood which by no means is acceptable'.

2. The term /'iftira/ (calumny) involves with the meaning of 'lie', yet the word /kaðiba/ has again been applied in the verse. This application, maybe, is for the fact that there are two kinds of 'calumny'.

In one kind, there is sometimes the probability of this attribution, but, sometimes, there is not any probability of it either. And polytheism is of the second kind, because attributing partners to 'The Infinite Power and Knowledge' is impossible.

3. This holy verse is from the tongue of the leader of the Companions of the Cave, which makes the youths accompanied with him hopeful of the mercy of the Lord and that He provides them with a gentle issue of their affair. A true monotheist both leaves out idols, and separates from idol-worshippers.

Being a Cave-dweller with the atmosphere of Divine Unity is better than being a citizen in the atmosphere of paganism.

Its example is Yusuf, the Prophet (as), who preferred being in the prison to living in the castle, and he said:

"…My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me…"[2]

Notes

1. Muntakhab-ul-'Athar, p.485
2. Surah Yusuf, No.12, verse 33

Section 3: The Sure Coming of the Resurrection Proved

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 17 - 18

وَتَرَي الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَت تَزَاوَرُ عَن كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَـمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَت تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّـمالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيّاً مُرْشِداً

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظاً وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَـمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّـمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَاراً وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْباً

17. "And (had you been there) you might have seen the sun when it rose, declining from their Cave towards the right, and when it set, leaving them away unto the left, and they were in a wide space thereof. This is of the Signs of Allah, whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leaves to stray, you shall never find for him any guiding friend."

18. "And you might think them awake while they were asleep, and We turned them unto the right and unto the left (sides), and their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold. If you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight and you would certainly be filled with terror of them."

Through these holy couple of verses, the Qur'an has referred to the details of the wonderful life of the Companions of the Cave where it has mentioned six specialties:

1. The doorway of the Cave was set toward the north, and since its location had certainly been in the northern hemisphere, the sun did not shine directly inside the Cave, as the holy verse says:

"And (had you been there) you might have seen the sun when it rose, declining from their Cave towards the right, and when it set, leaving them away unto the left…"

Thus, the direct sunshine, whose continuation might cause their bodies to decay, did not meet them, but there was enough indirect light there from the sun.

2. The verse continues saying:

"…and they were in a wide space thereof..."

This part of the verse is an indication that the arrival of the Cave, which is usually strait, was not their dwelling-place, but they had chosen the middle parts of the Cave to be both out of sight and out of direct shining of the sun.

Here, the Qur'an ceases the thread of the current speech and pays to a spiritual conclusion, because it is the main aim of the statement of all these events.

It says:

"…This is of the Signs of Allah, whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leaves to stray, you shall never find for him any guiding friend."

Yes, those who step in the way of Allah and struggle for Him, Allah will help them with His Grace in every single of their steps. It is not only for the basis of their work, but His Grace encompasses them in all their affairs, too.

3. Their sleep was not an ordinary sleep, because if you looked at them you might think that they were awake, but they had been sleeping.

The verse says:

"And you might think them awake while they were asleep…"

This exceptional case, perhaps, had been for the sake that harmful animals would not approach them, or for the sake that their view might become so dreadful that none would dare approach them, in a manner that this circumstance could work as a protective shield for them.

4. In order that their bodies would not decay as a result of passing a long time of years when they were in their sleep, they were turned unto the right and unto the left sides, so that their bodies could remain sound.

They were turned this side and that side for that the blood of their bodies might not concentrate in one point of the body, and the pressure and the height, which were on those muscles that were on the ground for a long time, would not affect on the body harmfully.

The verse continues saying:

"…and We turned them unto the right and unto the left (sides)…"

5. Their dog had stretched forth his two fore-legs on the threshold of the Cave, guarding them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold..."

6. Another fact about them was that they had a dreadful sight, so that:

"…If you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight and you would certainly be filled with terror of them."

Explanations

1. The cave of the Companions of the Cave geographically was neither toward the East nor toward the West, but it was toward the North-eastern, where the sun would not shine into the depth of it in any season.

The ideas are divided upon the sight of the Cave. Some commentators say that it had been in the mountains around Syria which is now known as 'the cave of the Companions of the Cave'.

Some others believe that it had been located around Omman, the capital of Jordan, where several ancient graves are found and an engraving of a dog is carved on the wall, upon which there is an old monastery, and Muslims have built a mosque thereabout, too.

However, the peculiarities of the Cave are some examples of the grace of Allah which were promised to in the previous verse

2. The Divine protection is not always seen in the form of a miracle, but sometimes the natural factors work as a means of protection.

3. The succour of Faith, leaving the people of polytheism, and taking refuge to a Cave, with those peculiarities, may not happen save by the guidance of Allah.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 19 - 20

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَآءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْماً أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ
قَالُوا رَبكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُم بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَي الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنظُرْ أَيُّهَآ أَزْكَي طَعَاماً
فَلْيَأْتِكُم بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلاَ يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَداً
إِنَّهُمْ إِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَن تُفْلِحُوا إِذاً أَبَداً

19. "And in like manner We did raise them that they might question among themselves. One of them said: 'How long have you tarried?' They said: 'We have tarried a day, or part of a day'. (Finally) they said: 'Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried. Therefore send one of you with this money of yours to the city and let him see which of them has purest food, and bring you provision from it, and let him behave with (care and) gentleness, and let him not inform any one about you."

20. "For verily if they prevail against you, they will stone you, or turn you back to their religion, and then never will you succeed."

Wakefulness After a Long Sleep!

When explaining the commentary of the coming verse, we will detail that the Companions of the Cave's sleep prolonged so much that it took about 309 years. Thus, it was a sleep like death, and its wakefulness was rather similar to Resurrection.

Therefore, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"And in like manner We did raise them…"

This statement means that in like manner that Allah was able to put them in such a long sleep, He returned them to wakefulness again.

The verse continues saying:

"…that they might question among themselves. One of them said: 'How long have you tarried?'…"

Then, the verse adds:

"…They said: 'We have tarried a day, or part of a day'..."

But, finally, since they could not know precisely the length of their sleep, they expressed as follows:

"…(Finally) they said: 'Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried..."

However, they felt a serious hunger and they needed to eat food, because what they had in reserve in their bodies were consumed.

Therefore, their first suggestion was that they would give the silver coins they had in their possession to one of their own members and send him to the city to see which of the sellers of that city had the purest food to bring them some of it enough for their provision.

The verse says:

"…Therefore send one of you with this money of yours to the city and let him see which of them has purest food, and bring you provision from it…"

Immediately after that, the verse adds:

"…and let him behave with (care and) gentleness, and let him not inform any one about you."

The reason of that precaution was that they thought if the people of the city were informed of their position, and found them, they would stone them and might bring them back to their own creed, (the creed of idolatry).

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /wariq/, mentioned in the verse, had been called to the silver coins which had the design of the king of that time on them.

2. The Qur'anic phrase /walyatalattaf/ has been occurred exactly in the middle of the Qur'an. It means: 'conciliation and spiritual intelligence accompanied with kindness', which itself is a grace that the middle-word of the holy Qur'an has spiritually been made up of conciliation, mercy, and kindness.

3. The wakefulness of the Companions of the Cave had two results. One of them was for themselves that they asked question,

"…that they might question…",

and the other was for others that they were an illustration of Resurrection and raising in Hereafter.

4. No one should surprise upon the subject of Resurrection and being raised, because every single wakefulness of men from sleep is a kind of raising and Resurrection.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 21

وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاَنَ السَّاعَةَ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهَآ إِذْيَتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَاناً رَبهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَيأَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِداً

21. "And in like manner We did make (the people) to get knowledge of them that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that, as for the Hour (of Judgment), there is no doubt about it. When they disputed among themselves of their affair then they said: 'Build a building (monument) over them; their Lord best knows of them.' Those who prevailed over their affair said: 'We will build over them a place of worship'."

The End of the Adventure of the Cave

It did not take so long that the story of the migration of those godly gentlemen, the youths of that locality, spread everywhere, and the tyrannical king of the country became very angry of the event.

Therefore, he ordered his men that some special functionaries should search for them all the places, so that if they found any trace of them, they would pursue them until they could capture them and punish them. But the more they searched the less they found.

Now, we may trace the man who was commissioned to buy some food and see what happened to him.

As soon as he entered the city, he terribly surprised, because the shape of the buildings had utterly been changed, the features of people he saw were all unfamiliar to him, their clothes had been altered into some new models.

Even the method of their speaking, customs, and rules of civility were not as before. The ruins of yesterday had given their places to castles, and the castles of yesterday had been changed into ruins.

He still thought that their sleep in the cave lasted one day or half of a day. In that case, he wondered why there were so many changes in the city!

His wonder reached its climax when he put his hand in to his pocket to pay the price of the food he had bought. The seller was watching a coin which belonged to more than three hundred years before that time.

Perhaps, the name of Decianus, the tyrannical king of old time, was seen on it. When the seller asked him to explain about that coin, the man answered that he had obtained it not long ago.

Then, the man himself found out to what a deep and long sleep he and his companions had gone.

This question became known in the city and the people of everywhere told that story one another. A group of those people could not believe that a man could be quickened again after his death. But the adventure of the sleep of the Companions of the Cave became a firm reasoning for those who were the adherents of the belief of resurrection of the body.

Therefore, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"And in like manner We did make (the people) to get knowledge of them that they might know that the promise of Allah is true…"

And there is no doubt about the end of the world and the occurrence of the Hereafter.

The verse continues saying:

"…and that, as for the Hour (of Judgment), there is no doubt about it..."

This sleep and wakefulness, from some points of view, was more wonderful than death and returning to life again, because there passed hundreds of years upon them and their bodies did not decay, while they neither ate any food nor did they drink any water.

Is not this event a proof to the Power of Allah (s.w.t.) upon everything and every deed? Taking such an event in mind, the life after death is certainly possible.

The man sent for buying food quickly returned to the Cave, and informed his companions of the fact. All of them surprised deeply. It was hard and difficult for them to bear that kind of life. They asked Allah that they would forsake this world and transfer unto the neighbourhood of the mercy of Allah, and it happened soon.

They passed away and their bodies were inside the Cave when the people went to see them.

At that circumstance, there occurred a dispute between the adherents of the belief of the resurrection of the bodies and their opponents. The opponents tried that the problem of the sleep and wakefulness of the Companions of the Cave to be forgotten and to take that firm proof from the hands of its adherents.

The Qur'an in this regard implies that when they were disputing upon their affair among themselves, some of them said that they should build a

monument over them so that they might disappear from the eyes and that they spoke about them no longer, for their Lord is better aware of their condition.

The verse says:

"…When they disputed among themselves of their affair then they said: 'Build a building (monument) over them; their Lord best knows of them.'…"

But those who became aware of their secret, and found it as a reasoning for Resurrection, suggested that they would build a mosque beside their graves, in order that their memory could not be forgotten.

The verse says:

"…Those who prevailed over their affair said: 'We will build over them a place of worship'."

This meaning shows that building a tomb and a place of worship in reverence of the graves of the saints of the religion not only is not unlawful (haram) but also it is a worthy action with Allah (s.w.t.).

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /'i'ar/ is applied for an occasional information which is obtained with no searching. In this event, people, without any trouble, became cognizant of the important secret of the Age of the Companions of the Cave by means of their silver coin.

2. In the story of the Companions of the Cave these subjects are referred to:

The Will and Power of Allah, brevity, forsaking the world, migration, concealing of faith, Allah's succours, and lawful feeding (pure food).

3. None of Allah's deeds is vain.

4. That ability which can keep those men alive for more than three centuries without any food, is powerful to restore the dead to life, too.

5. Sometimes human beings simply pass by some historical events while they are neglectful of the training effects of those events. The Companions of the Cave passed away after that their adventure was revealed, but, in stead of taking a lesson from it, people were thinking of building a monument over there.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 22

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلاَثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْماً بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِم مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ فَلاَ تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلاَّ مِرَاءً ظَاهِراً وَلاَ تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِم مِنْهُمْ أَحَداً

22. "Soon they will say: '(They were) three, the fourth of them was their dog'; and (some) say: 'Five, the sixth of them was their dog', guessing at the unseen, and (yet the others) say: 'Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog'. Say: 'My Lord knows best their number, none knows them but a few'. So do not dispute with them, except in outward disputation, and do not ask any one for a pronouncement about them."

This verse points to some different ideas which exist among people about the Companions of the Cave. Among them is the idea about the number of them.

The holy verse in this concern says:

"Soon they will say: '(They were) three, the fourth of them was their dog'…"

Here is the belief of another group of the people:

"…and (some) say: 'Five, the sixth of them was their dog', guessing at the unseen, and (yet the others) say: 'Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog'..."

The verse of the Qur'an implies that all of these words are some unreasonable statements that they say, and, save a small number of people, no one knows their correct number.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'My Lord knows best their number, none knows them but a few'..."

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…So do not dispute with them, except in outward disputation…"

That is, you should speak with them so logically and reasonably that your logic be manifested. And you should ask no one of the people of the Book about the number of the Companions of the Cave.

The verse says:

"…and do not ask any one for a pronouncement about them."

Explanations

1. In the text of the verse the conjunction 'and' has not been mentioned upon the phrases "fourth of them" and "sixth of them", but with the phrase "the eighth of them" the conjunction 'and' has been mentioned.

It is, perhaps, for the reason that the attitude of their number being 'three' or 'five' had been offered by some ungodly people that Allah has rendered it into: "guessing at the unseen". But the attitude of their number being 'seven' is from the side of the believers, the people of attention.

(This recent meaning is narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) by the way of Ibn-'Abbas).

That is why for these groups of people the Qur'an does not say "gussing at the unseen", but, in order to respect them, between the number of: 'the Companions of the Cave' and 'their dog' there has occurred the conjunction 'and' in order to separate them from each other.

2. If the activities be valuable and human beings be with aim, their dependents and their belongings, even the animals accompanied them, should be counted, too, since being an animal and being unclean (najis) is not a reason for them to be counted valueless.

In this verse, the word 'dog' has been mentioned in three occurrences. The positive function of the 'dog' of the Companions of the Cave has been referred to in verse No.18 of the current Surah.

Section 4:To Always Depend Upon Allah's Will

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 23 - 24

وَلاَ تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَداً

إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَىٰ أَن يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشَدًا

23. "And do not say, regarding anything, 'I will do that tomorrow,'"

24. "Save (say): 'If Allah pleases', and remember your Lord when you forget, and say: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me to a nearer way to the right than this'."

Allah (s.w.t.) prohibits His Prophet (S) in this holy verse to say that he does so and so the following day unless he depends that affair to the Will of Allah and he says:

'If Allah pleases'.

Thus, Allah desires to train people and He teaches them that whenever they say something about an affair concerning the future, they ought to say this holy phrase, in order that if the affair had not been done the servant would not have said a falsehood.

The reason of this statement lies in the fact that man's power is limited and it is not right and logical for him to decisively inform of something when the appearance of some barriers against it is probable, and many a time the information happens falsehood, save that it be followed by the phrase 'Allah Willing'.

Saying the holy phrase 'Allah Wiling', which indicates to the belief in 'The Power and Will of Allah', was a phrase used by Allah's saints for 'resting upon' in their conversation. For instance, this meaning has also been narrated in the Qur'an from the tongue of prophets.

In Surah Yusuf, No.12, verse 99, Jacob says to his children:

"…Enter safe into Egypt If Allah please".

In the current Surah (Al-Kahf), verse 69, Moses says to Khidr:

"…Allah Willing, you shall find me patient…".

In Surah Al-Qasas, No.28, verse 27, Hadrat Shu'ayb says to Hadrat Moses:

"…If Allah please, you will find me one of the righteous."

In Surah As-Saffat, no.37, verse 102, Ishmael (as) tells his father Abraham (as):

"…If Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones."

Of course, the purpose of saying "Allah Willing", or "If Allah please", and "I take refuge in Allah" and the like of them are not some things to be uttered unintentionally and barely by tongue, but the purpose of it for a servant is to have such a belief and such a knowledge in mind (heart) and in all dimensions of his life.

Imam Sadiq (as) recommended us not to forget to write 'If Allah pleases' even in our writings. One day he told someone to write a letter.

When he (as) observed that the letter was not involved with the phrase: 'Allah Willing', he said:

"How do you hope that this work will be completed?"[1]

Wherever the Prophet of Islam (S) entered a graveyard, he used to say:

"If Allah please, we will join you",
while death is sure to happen.[2]

A human being is free and has choice, but he is not absolutely independent. It is not so that all affairs to be given him in a manner that he can perform them without the Will of Allah (s.w.t.). In other words, human beings are neither in compulsion nor the free will of all affairs has been offered to them, but human's freedom is conditioned to Allah's Will.

The verse says:

"Save (say): 'If Allah pleases'…"

Then, next to this sentence, the Qur'an says:

"…and remember your Lord when you forget…"

This statement denotes to this meaning that if you forget to add the holy phrase 'If Allah please' to the news that you inform of the events related to the future, whenever later you remember it immediately make amends it and recite 'If Allah pleases', because this action will compensate the past.

Besides that, you should say that you are hopeful that your Lord may show you a way more clear than this.

The verse continues saying:

"…and say: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me to a nearer way to the right than this'."

Finally, Sayyid Murtada, who is the most learned one amongst the scholars of Shi'ah, on the commentary of this part of the verse which is recited:

"…and say: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me to a nearer way to the right than this"

says: that he ought to say it may be that Allah will bestow on The Prophet (S) some miracles and evidences to prove his prophethood that will be stronger and more expressive than the story of the Companions of the Cave.

Hence, Allah, the Exalted, bestowed some evidences and miracles more effective on His Prophet. Allah informed His Messenger (S) of all unseen sciences and details about the lives and deeds of the whole prophets. Those facts were some proofs which were more clear and stronger than the story of the Companions of the Cave.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 25 - 26

وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلاَثَ مِأْئَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعاً

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُم مِن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَداً

25. "And they remained in their Cave three hundred years, and (to that also) they added nine more."

26. "Say: 'Allah knows best how long they remained. To Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. How clear of sight is He and keen of hearing! There is none to be a guardian for them besides Him; and He makes none to share in His Sovereignty"

The Sleep of the Companions of the Cave

The frame of references existed in the former holy verses denoted that the sleep of the Companions of the Cave was a very long sleep. This matter moves the sense of curiosity of every listener. He may desire to know how many years precisely they remained in their long sleep.

This holy verse removes the doubt of the listener when it says:

"And they remained in their Cave three hundred years, and (to that also) they added nine more."

Therefore, the total years that they remained and slept in the Cave counted three hundred and nine years.

The Jews asked Hadrat Ali (as) about the length of the time that the Companions of the Cave remained in the Cave. He (as) answered them it was 309 years. They said that it had been mentioned 300 years in their Book. Hadrat Ali (as) said that nine years was the difference between the solar year and lunar year.[3], [4]

In Maraqi's it is cited that this nine years is counted as a miracle of the Qur'an which has considered the difference between solar years and lunar years so precisely.

It may be said that the number of the years had been the same 300 years to which later people added nine years where the Qur'an says:

"…and (to that also) they added nine more."

So, in answer to that, Allah says:

"Say: 'Allah knows best how long they remained..."

It is evident that the purpose of Allah, the Exalted, by this verse is reasoning to His wonderful and great Power. This reasoning can be right when the length of their sleep is clear.

Thus, the objective meaning of the holy words:

"Say: 'Allah knows best how long they remained..."

after stating the length of the time of their sleep, is for invalidating the saying of the people of the Book who had differed in this matter. Then, the objective meaning of the Qur'an is:

'O Muhammad! Say that Allah is more aware of the time of their sleep that He has informed it'.

Do accept whatever Allah says and leave out the sayings of the people of the Book, because Allah is more aware of this matter.

In other words, in order to put an end to the different debates of people in this concern, He commands His Messenger (S) as follows:

"Say: 'Allah knows best how long they remained..."

Then, the reason of this statement comes forth, when the verse continues saying:

"…To Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth..."

He Who is aware of what is concealed and what is manifest in the whole world of existence, how may it be that He remains unaware of the length of the time of the stop of the Companions of the Cave?

The verse says:

"…How clear of sight is He and keen of hearing!…"

That is why they (the dwellers of the heavens and the earth) have no guardian save Him. The verse says:

"…There is none to be a guardian for them besides Him…"

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…and He makes none to share in His Sovereignty"

In fact, this part of the verse is an emphasis on the absolute guardianship of Allah.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 27

وَاتْلُ مَآ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِن كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لاَ مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَن تَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَداً

27 "And recite that which has been revealed unto you of the Book of your Lord; none shall change His words, and you shall not find any refuge besides Him."

In this holy verse, the Qur'an addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"And recite that which has been revealed unto you of the Book of your Lord…"

That is, he should not pay attention to the talks of this and that. They might speak some baseless matters mixed with falsehoods and superstitions. In discussions about those matters, his reliance should always be only upon the Divine revelation, because nothing may change His statements.

The verse says:

"…none shall change His words…"

There is no room for diversity to enter into His Words and Knowledge. His Speech and His Knowledge is not like the speech and knowledge of human beings which, as a result of a new invention or information, has to be changed.

It is upon these facts that, at the end of the verse, the holy Qur'an says:

"…and you shall not find any refuge besides Him."

This historical wonderful adventure, which the Qur'an has explained without any superstition and baseless inventions, as all other stories of the Qur'an, contains so many constructive and training points. Some of them are as follows:

A. The first lesson of this story is the very breaking the barrier of imitation from aberration and separation from the corruption of that environment. Basically, man should be constructive in the society, not putting up with mischiefs of it, which some feeble-minded people do.

Those who have true Faith, and are possessors of an independent thought, say that a godly servant should never follow the majority when they are misguided.

B. Migration from the polluted surroundings is another lesson taken from this wonderful event.

C. Precautionary dissimulation, in its constructive meaning, is another lesson taught by this story. And we know that precautionary dissimulation is not anything save that the person conceals his main subject where divulgence of facts is fruitless, and he protects his power for the time of struggle and striking against the enemy.

D. The lack of difference among persons in the way of Allah, and sitting a minister beside a shepherd, and even the guarding dog that paves their

way, is another lesson in this field, in order to be manifested that the privileges of this material world.

Then its different ranks have no effect along the side of separating the rows of the followers of the path of truth which is the path of Unity and the path of Unity is the path of oneness and unicity of all human beings.

E. The wonderful helps of Allah (s.w.t.) at the time of the appearance of crises is another income which the circumstance of the event teaches us.

F. In this story, even in the most grievous circumstances, they taught us the purity of food. The nutrition of the body has a deep effect on man's spirit, thought and heart. And pollution, resulted from unlawful (haram) foods, makes man afar from the path of Allah and the path of piety.

G. Seeking help from His grace, and saying the holy phrase 'If Allah please' in informing about the future affairs, is another lessen.

H. Another instructive lesson of this story is how we confront the opponents.

I. Finally, the possibility of resurrection of the body, and that human beings will return to a new life at the time of Resurrection, is another lesson that this event teaches us.

However, the aim here is not telling a story as a hobby. The aim of the Qur'an is to bring up some steadfast, faithful, aware and brave men. One of its way is to introduce the noble samples of them through the length of history.

At the end, one of the pretexts of the Prophet's opponents was that they asked the Prophet (S) to change the Qur'an.

They said:

"…Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or change this."[5]

In answer to such arrogant people, the Prophet (S) used to say that it was not of his own accord to change it. The change of the Qur'an is only up to Allah.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 28

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلاَ تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا وَلاَ تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطاً

28 "And keep yourself content with those who call unto their Lord morning and evening seeking His pleasure, and let not your eyes turn away from them desiring the adornment of the life of the world, and do not obey him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and he follows his own low desires, and his affair has become all excess."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of arrogant conceited rich Arabs came to the Prophet (S) and, pointing to some faithful Muslims, such as: Salman,'Abuthar, Ṣuhayb, Khabab and the like of them, said:

"O'Muhammad! If you sit in the seat of honor, and send away these fellows from around yourself, (so that your meeting becomes apt for notables and personalities), we will approach you. But, with the presence and existence of these people, the meeting is not a suitable place for us."

At this time, the verse was revealed and commanded the Prophet of Islam (S) not to surrender to those hollow deceptive statements, and he should always receive the faithful, sincere-hearted ones, such as those who are like Salman and'Abuthar.

The Prophet (S) told them (his true followers) that he praised Allah for that he (S) did not die until when He ordered him such a commandment that he would be with them and the like of them.

He (S) said:

"Yes, life with you, and also death with you, is pleased."

One of the lessons which the story of the Companions of the Cave taught us was that the criterion of men's value is not the apparent rank, social position, and their wealth. In fact, this verse pursues this very important subject, and commands the Prophet (S) as follows:

"And keep yourself content with those who call unto their Lord morning and evening seeking His pleasure…"

Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The objective meaning of calling Allah in the morning and in the evening is 'to perform the prayer'." [6]

Then, as an emphasis, the Qur'an continues saying:

"…and let not your eyes turn away from them desiring the adornment of the life of the world…"

Again, for a more emphasis, it adds:

"…and do not obey him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and he follows his own low desires…"

Such people are always out of normal method, so that their manner has become all excess. Since, concerning the material lusts, the nature of man is always toward the mood of demanding more and more, a mortal ceaselessly steps in the direction of excess so far that he perishes himself.

The holy verse says:

"…and his affair has become all excess."

Explanations

1. A leader should not be heedless of the deprived, but he must be sympathetic unto them.
2. Do not turn away from the poor in order to obtain the material world and the consent of the rich.
3. The worst thing is the circumstance that people pay attention to Allah, but their leader pays to the world.
4. He who follows the low desires and the world, will go out of the path of godly ones.
5. The danger of mammonism is so much that Allah has warned His prophets of it.
6. The value of the remembrance of Allah depends on that its root to be deep in the heart and the soul. Otherwise, a man falls down step by step. The first step is negligence, then lust, and, finally, the path of aberration.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 29

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَاراً
أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِن يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقاً

29 "And say: 'The truth is from your Lord; so whoever will, let him believe, and whoever will, let him disbelieve.' Verily We have prepared for the unjust a Fire, the curtains of which encompass them, and if they call for succour, they will be succoured with water like molten copper that shall scald the faces; (how) evil the drink and (how) ill the resting-place!"

The importance of the previous verse is so much so that the Qur'an, in this verse, explicitly says to the Prophet (S) to say that it is a program from Allah and a reality from the Lord. Then let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject it.

"And say: 'The truth is from your Lord; so whoever will, let him believe, and whoever will, let him disbelieve.'…"

But, everybody should be defined that those unjust mam-monish persons who, with their welfare lives of dazzling glare and its adornments, mockingly laugh at the woolen clothes of the Muslims, will have a dark and evil end, because the verse says:

"…Verily We have prepared for the unjust a Fire, the curtains of which encompass them…"

Yes, such people, in the life of this world, whenever they became thirsty, used to order their servants to prepare them kinds of drinks before them. But, in Hell, when they call for water they will be granted water like melted brass which, if it be brought near the face, will scald the face. How dreadful the drink! And how uncomfortable the dwelling of Hell is!

The verse says:

"…and if they call for succour, they will be succoured with water like molten copper that shall scald the faces; (how) evil the drink and (how) ill the resting-place!"

Here, in this life and in their tents, there exist kinds of drinks. As soon as they call the cupbearers, they bring them different cups of various drinks. In Hell, too, they will have cupbearers to bring them cups of drink.

But what a drink! A drink like molten brass! A drink as hot as the tear of the orphans, and as blazing as the sighs of the poor. Yes, whatever exists there, it is the embodiment of that which they have produced here, in this world.

However, at the end, people are free to choose either belief or disbelief, yet they should know that the end of disbelief is the blazing Fire of the Hereafter.

The Arabic word /suradiq/ means 'curtain' which has been mentioned only once in the Qur'an, and it is about the people of Hell.

By the way, there has been recorded a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) in the commentary books of Al-Burhan, As-Safy, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn which indicates that the purpose of the holy phrase:

"And say: 'The truth is from your Lord…"

is the mastership of Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as). It means that the Prophet (S) should state the truth about the mastership and Imamate of Ali-i-Abitalib (as) from the side of the Lord.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 30 - 31

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لاَ نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلاً
أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الاَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ
وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَاباً خُضْراً مِن سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَي الاَرَآئِكِ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ
مُرْتَفَقاً

30. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, surely We do not waste the recompense of him who does a good work."

31. "These, for them are gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow, they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green robes of fine silk, and thick brocade, reclining therein on raised coaches. O, how excellent a reward! and how fair a resting-place!"

In view of the fact that the style of the holy Qur'an is a constructive and comparative style, in this group of verses, after the statement of the qualities and retributions of the arrogant mammonish people, it refers to the statement of the situation of the true believers and their excellent extraordinary rewards.

At first, it expressively says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, surely We do not waste the recompense of him who does a good work."

Whether this recompense is little or much, general or particular from everyone in every age and year, and in any condition, Allah will not waste it.

Then, the Qur'an explains the rewards of the doers of righteous deeds.

It says:

"These, for them are gardens of eternity…"

These rewards are a lot of gardens in Paradise under whose trees and castles some rivers flow. They live in those gardens while they are ornamented with golden bracelets.

The verse says:

"…beneath which rivers flow, they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold…"

The verse continues explaining their rewards and that they will be among a group of good companions in Heaven, where it says:

"…and they shall wear green robes of fine silk, and thick brocade, reclining therein on raised coaches. O, how excellent a reward! and how fair a resting-place!"

Explanations

1. The Qur'anic term /'adn/ means: 'a perpetual abode'. The term /'asawir/ is the plural form of /'aswirah/ which means 'a bracelet'. The Arabic word /sundus/ means 'silk', and /'istabraq/ is applied for 'silk of a thick texture, brocade'; and the term /'ara'ik/ is the plural form of /'arikah/ which is called to a royal throne which is covered with a veil.

2. For the people of Paradise, there are all kinds of clothing and with any material and of any colour there at their disposal, but the green robes, in

particular, maybe refers to their formal and common clothing by which they decorate themselves at the time when they recline on raised coaches.

3. Keeping off from the unlawful ornaments of this life is the secret of reaching to the eternal ornaments in Hereafter as a reward.

4. Resurrection is both the spiritual resurrection and the resurrection of the body, since if it were merely a spiritual resurrection it would not need any gold, silk, and throne.

Two Final Points

1. The Ornamental Clothings in Hereafter!

There may arise this question for many persons that, in the Qur'an, Allah has reprimanded the dazzling glare of the world, but He has promised these things to the believers in the next world. They are some adornments such as gold, silken clothes: whether thin and thick, thrones, beautiful coaches, and the like of them.

In answer to this question, preliminarily, it is necessary for us to attract attentions to this matter that we comment the verses of the Qur'an as some other commentators do. They take all these words as some metaphorical ones for the spiritual concepts.

We have learnt from the holy Qur'an itself that Resurrection will be both bodily and spiritual. Thus, the pleasures of the next world must be in both forms. Of course, there is no doubt that its spiritual pleasures are not comparable with its bodily pleasures.

But, in the meantime, this fact cannot be concealed that, as for the bounties of the next world, we may see only a shade of them from a long distance, and we hear some words as an indication to them, because the parable of the coming world, compared with this world, is like the parable of this world with respect to the mother's womb, and the embryo's case.

If mother can communicate with her embryo, she is not able to state the beauties of this world, such as: illuminating sun, bright moon, springs, gardens, flowers, and the like of them, for the baby she has in her womb save by signs.

Similarly, it is impossible for us, the encompassed persons in the womb of the world, to understand or even to state the spiritual and material bounties of the Hereafter.

Now that this fact became clear, we return to the answer of the question. Allah has reprimanded the dazzling glare of this world for the sake that the limitation of this world causes the preparation of such life to be accompanied with kinds of injustice and cruelty, and taking benefit from it will be done with negligence and ignorance.

The unjust discriminations, which come into being in this course, will be the cause of grudges, jealousies, enmities, and, at last, bloodsheds, and fights.

But in that world, whose all things are vast and plenty, neither the earning of these ornaments creates any difficulty, nor it causes any unjust discrimination and deprivation. They neither produce any grudge and enmity in any one, nor, in that environment full of spiritualities, they cause man to become neglectful of the Lord.

Those ornaments neither need to be protected and guarded nor create any jealousy in others. They are neither the source of arrogance and pride, nor are they the factor of separation from the servants of Allah and Allah Himself (s.w.t.).

Why should the people of Paradise be deprived of such a bounty which is a bodily pleasure beside the great spiritual merits with no unpleasant reaction.

2. Another point

2. Another point that this verse teaches us is that we must not avoid of guiding that group because of their wealth, or for that they have a welfare life, and do not approach them. But, what is blameworthy is that we approach them in order to take benefit from their worldly material circumstances and, as the Qur'an says, become of the extension of those who:

"desire the adornment of the life of the world".[7]

Thus, if the aim is their guidance, and taking benefit from their wealth and possibilities is along the path of positive and valuable social activities, approaching them not only is not blameworthy but also is necessary and incumbent.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
2. The Commentary of Kashf-ul-'Asrar
3. It should be noted that a solar year lasts 365 days while a lunar year lasts 354 days.
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
5. Surah Yunus, No.10 verse 15
6. The Commentaries of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, As-Safy, and Burhan
7. The current Surah, verse 28

Section 5: The Parable of an Ungrateful and a Grateful Man

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 32 - 36

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَثَلاً رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لاَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعاً

كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ ءَاتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِم مِنْهُ شَيْئاً وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلاَلَهُمَا نَهَراً

وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَاْ أَكْثَرُ مِنكَ مَالاً وَأَعَزُ نَفَراً

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَداً

وَمَآ أَظُنُ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً وَلَئِن رُدِدتُ إِلَى رَبِّي لاَجِدَنَّ خَيْراً مِنْهَا مُنقَلَباً

32. "And (O' Prophet!) coin for them a parable: Two men, We made for one of them two gardens of vines and We surrounded them with date-palms and We placed between them tillage."

33. "Both of the gardens gave their fruits and withheld naught thereof: and We caused a river to gush forth in their midst."

34. "And he had fruits (in abundance), so he said to his companion, as he was conversing with him: 'I have greater wealth than you, and am mightier in respect of men'."

35. "And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said: 'I do not think that this will ever perish,"

36. "And I do not think that the Hour (of Resurrection) will come, and even if I am returned unto my Lord, I shall surely find a better than this a resort'."

From this verse on, Allah, the Exalted, tells a story that by hearing it people may come to themselves and obey Allah, and desist committing sins and ingratitude.

For this very purpose, He addresses His Prophet (S) and says:

"And (O' Prophet!) coin for them a parable: Two men, We made for one of them two gardens of vines and We surrounded them with date-palms and We placed between them tillage."

It was a fertile field with two gardens of vines and dates in addition to farms of wheat and kinds of corn, so that everything was complete in it.

These two gardens, from the point of agricultural products, were matured and the fruits of their trees were wholly in full maturation and their farmings were going to be harvested, in a manner that nothing was withheld therein.

The holy verse says:

"Both of the gardens gave their fruits and withheld naught thereof…"

Most important of all was water, the cause of the life of every thing, and in gardens and farmings there, in particular, it was available enough, since, as the verse says:

"…and We caused a river to gush forth in their midst."

Thus, the possessor of those couple of gardens and farming had got many kinds of fruit and so much income.

The holy verse says:

"And he had fruits (in abundance)…"

But, since the world was in his favour, and those who are of little capacity and are in lack of personality, when everything is in their favour, they become proud and begin disobedience, the first stage of which is self-admiration and arrogance upon others, the owner of those couple of gardens started speaking with his friend.

The verse continues saying:

"…so he said to his companion, as he was conversing with him: 'I have greater wealth than you, and am mightier in respect of men'."

Therefore, he told his friend that, in comparison with him, he had many men in his authority and also he had both abundance of wealth, and social position and influence. Then he asked his companion what he could say and what he had to utter.

Little by title, as it is usual, these thoughts went on to be upper and upper in him, so much so that he considered the world was eternal and his wealth and honour were perpetual for him. So, he proudly entered his garden.

He looked round unto the green trees therein, the branches of which had come down unto the ground because of the height of the fruits, and unto the ears of corn, which were spread clinging every side, when he was listening to the sound of the river which was flowing forward, watering the trees, he neglectfully said that he did not think that destruction and mortality could fall over it.

The verse says:

"And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said: 'I do not think that this will ever perish,"

He went even further than that and, since the eternity of this world contrasts the fulfillment of Resurrection, he thought of the denial of Hereafter and said:

"And I do not think that the Hour (of Resurrection) will come…"

He thought that these ideas are some things that a group of people had invented to please themselves.

Then, he imagined if there were a resurrection in the course he would have a high rank and personality, and he added:

"…and even if I am returned unto my Lord, I shall surely find a better than this a resort'."

He was wandering in these useless imaginations, and every moment he added some new vain words to his former undue words. Then his faithful friend began speaking and rejected his vain statements, which will be dealt with in the following discussions.

Note

The Arabic term /'ukul/ means some products and fruits which are edible while the term /amar/ is applied for kinds of fruit, and sorts of wealth and properties; it is even called to 'trees', too.

These verses can lead us to some principles of planting and keeping typical and attractive gardens. These leadings are as follows:

A. The low and short trees may be planted in the middle, (vines), and the tall trees around the garden, (date-palms).

B. Gardens may be arranged separate with each other, so that there can be left a distance between them, (and We put between them).

C. The lands of the distance between gardens should be formed, (between them tillage).

D. Water ought to be gushed forth in the midst of the gardens, (and We cause a river to gush forth in their midst).

E. Gardens must not be hollow, weak and calamitous, (and withheld naught thereof).

Therefore, the best views of the gardens are the vine gardens with various grapes, and those that have vines and date-palms with together, and kinds of farming (tillage) are in between the gardens (and We Surrounded them) and that streams flow beneath the trees and beside the farms, (and We caused a river to gush forth in their midst).

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 37 - 41

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاكَ رَجُلاً

لَكِنَّ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلاَ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَداً

وَلَوْلاَ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ لاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَاْ أَقَلَّ مِنكَ مَالاً وَوَلَداً

فَعَسَي رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِ خَيْراً مِن جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَاناً مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيداً زَلَقاً

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْراً فَلَن تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَباً

37. "His companion said to him, as he was conversing with him; 'Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then He fashioned you a (complete) man?"

38. "But, as for me He, Allah, is my Lord, and none do I associate with my Lord."

39. "And why did you not say when you entered your garden: 'As Allah will, there is no power except in Allah'? If you see me less than you in wealth and children."

40. "Yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden, and will send on it (your garden) a thunderbolt from heaven so that it becomes an even slippery ground without plant."

41. "Or its water will be sunk (into the earth), so that you will never be able to seek it out."

These holy verses are upon the rejections of the baseless utterances of that faithless, proud, and conceited rich man that are heard from the tongue of his faithful companion. He waited silently and was listening to the words of that haughty man in order that he would say whatever he had in his inside.

Then he answered him all the same time, as the verse says:

"His companion said to him, as he was conversing with him; 'Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then He fashioned you a (complete) man?"

In other words, this the Lord Who, at first, created man from soil. He caused the nutritious material existed in the soil to be absorbed by the roots

of the trees. The trees in turn became the food of animals, and man consumed from the plant as well as the meat of the animals.

His life-germ was made up of them. In the womb of the mother, the life-germ developed its different stages of perfection until it became a complete man. A human being that is superior to all the existing things of the earth.

He can contemplate, think, make decision, and subject rather everything under his control. Yes, the change of worthless dust into such a wonderful being, with those different complicated organs of his body and soul, is one of the great reasonings of Unity.

Then, in order to break the infidelity and pride of his companion, the faithful man said that he boasted and was proud of his belief that Allah was his Lord.

The verse, from the tongue of the faithful man, says:

"But, as for me He, Allah, is my Lord, and none do I associate with my Lord."

He told his faithless friend who boasted that he had garden, farming, fruit and water in abundance, that he was honoured that his Lord, his Creator, and his Sustainer was Allah.

He added that his companion glorified the life this world while he glorified his belief, faith, and monotheism, as the holy verse continues saying:

"…and none do I associate with my Lord."

After pointing to the subject of Unity and infidelity which are the most important subjects in the fate of man, again he reproached his faithless companion, and said:

"And why did you not say when you entered your garden: 'As Allah will…"

Why did you not consider all of these from the side of Allah and you did not thank for His bounties? And why did you not say that there is no power and ability save from the source of Allah?

The verse in this regard says:

"…there is no power except in Allah'?…"

You have ploughed the earth, scattered the seed, planted the shoot, guarded the trees, and provided every necessary thing for them on time in a manner that they grew like that. All of these activities have been done by means of the usage of the abilities, possibilities, and means that Allah has given you. You have nothing of yourself, and without Him you are naught.

Then, he added that it did not matter:

"…If you see me less than you in wealth and children."

"Yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden…"

My Lord not only will give me a better garden than yours, but also He will send a thunderbolt from heaven on your garden and, in a short time, He will change this green land into a plantless, slippery even plain.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and will send on it (your garden) a thunderbolt from heaven so that it becomes an even slippery ground without plant."

Or He may order the land to move so that this spring and gushing water should sink down into the earth and you will never be able to find it.

The verse says:

"Or its water will be sunk (into the earth), so that you will never be able to seek it out."

The Arabic term /husban/, used in this holy verse, originally is derived from /hisab/ (calculation); then it has been used in the sense of the arrows which are counted at the time of shooting. It has also been applied with the meaning of 'the punishment which comes upon persons on reckoning', and the purpose in the abovementioned verse is this very meaning.

The Qur'anic word /sa'id/ means 'the sand, or dust on the surface of the earth' It is originally taken from /sa'ud/ (a calamity).

The Arabic term /zalaq/ means an even land without any plant so that the foot may slip on it. (It is interesting that today, in order to fix the running sands and prevent the towns to be buried under the storms of sand, people try to grow some plants and trees on such lands so that they can control them, and deliver them from the state of being slippery.

Indeed, that faithful and monotheist man warned his proud companion that he could not attach and depend on those bounties, because none of them was reliable.

In fact he says that he has seen with his own eyes or, at least, has heard with his own ears that sometimes the heavenly thunderbolt, in a short moment, turns gardens, houses, and farms into a heap of soil, or a dry land without any water and any grass.

And also you may have heard or seen that sometimes a sharp earthquake may ruin the irrigation systems and make springs dry so that they cannot be mended.

When you know these clear facts, what is this pride and haughtiness for? You who have seen these events, why do you attach to them? Why do you say that you do not believe that these bounties will perish? But they will be eternal. What an ignorance and stupidity!

The Prophet of Islam (S) said that if a servant says 'that which Allah pleases' and 'There is no power except in Allah', when He bestows on him wealth and children, Allah may repel his calamities and disquiet from him so that he obtains his (good) wishes. Then he (S) recited this verse.[1]

Some Islamic traditions denote that the recitation of the holy phrase

"There is neither might nor strength but in Allah"

causes afflictions to be repelled and bounties to last long, and it is a treasure out of the treasures of Heaven.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 42 - 44

وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَداً

وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَنصُرُونَهُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِراً

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلاَيَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَاباً وَخَيْرٌ عُقْباً

42. "And his fruits were enwrapped (into destruction), so he began wringing his hands for what he had expended in it, and it was fallen down

upon its trellises, and he was saying: 'Alas me! Would I had not associated with my Lord any one!'"

43. "And he had no troop to help him as against (the wrath of) Allah, nor could he help himself."

44. "Thereover protection belongs only to Allah, the True; He is best rewarding, and best for consequence."

Finally, the debate of those two men ended and the faithful man had got no penetration in the depth of the soul of that proud, faithless rich man who, with the same spirituality and doctrine, went back home.

He was unaware that the command of Allah had been issued that his green gardens and cultivations to be perished. He should receive the retribution of his pride and infidelity in this very world, in order that his end would become as a gazing-stock and a warning to others.

Perhaps it was at the same moment that the darkness of night had covered everywhere when the punishment of Allah, in the form of a destructive thunderbolt, or a terrible violate storm, or a horrible ruinous earthquake, in a short time, destroyed whatever there were in those pleasant gardens which contained so many fruitful tall trees, and fructified cultivations.

The verse says:

"And his fruits were enwrapped (into destruction)…"

The Arabic term /'uhit/ is from the root /'ihatah/ which, in such instances, means 'an encompassing punishment', the result of which is a complete destruction.

In the next morning, when the owner of the garden, with a series of desires and imaginations, went toward his garden in order to visit it and enjoy its products, approaching it, he encountered a dreadful scene, so terrible that his mouth dried because of wonder and his eyes became dim and motionless.

He could not know that he was observing that scene in dream or in vigilance. The trees had utterly dropped on the ground, the cultivations had became upside down, and there was seen little of life therein.

As if there were no pleasant garden and green tillage there. The doleful moans of owls were heard in its ruins. The man's heart started its palpitation sharply, and his face grew pale. The saliva dried in his mouth, and whatever of pride and arrogance was in his heart and his mind suddenly dispersed.

As if he had got up from a long and deep sleep. He was thinking of the heavy expenses he had earned from every side in his lifetime and had expended in it.

The verse says:

"…so he began wringing his hands for what he had expended in it, and it was fallen down upon its trellises…"

It was just in the same time that he regreted from his false and futile statements and thoughts.

The verse continues saying:

"…and he was saying: 'Alas me! Would I had not associated with my Lord any one!'"

More lamentable than this it was that, at the time of confronting this calamity, he was perfectly alone and had no one to help him for this great damage and grievous affliction.

The verse says:

"And he had no troop to help him as against (the wrath of) Allah…"

He had not anything to substitute that, which was his whole capital.

The verse continues saying:

"…nor could he help himself."

In fact, in this event all his arrogant imaginations disturbed and proved to be nonsensical. On one side, he used to say that he never believed that his great capital and abundant wealth would have an annihilation, but he saw its annihilation with his own eyes.

On the other side, he arrogantly boasted to his faithful monotheistic companion and said that he was more powerful than him from the point of wealth and men. But, after this event, he observed that none was his helper.

On the third side, he depended on his own power and considered his ability illimitable. But, after that he became in lack of everything in that event, he comprehended his great mistake, because he had nothing in his disposal to compensate a part of that great damage.

Principally, those companions who, like flies around a candy, come nigh to a person because of his property and wealth whom the person considers as a support for his days of misfortune, will scatter when that bounty vanishes, because their friendship has not formed as a spiritual approach, but it has been based on material support. When it vanishes, that friendship vanishes, too.

However, it was too late for him to be remorseful. This kind of compulsory vigilance, which appears at the time of befalling some grievous calamities upon a person, even for the Pharaohs, is worthless and, therefore, it is not useful for him, either.

Yes, it was at the same time that he stated the phrase:

"Would I had not associated with my Lord any one!'"

by his own tongue. It was the same phrase that his faithful companion had said before, but he said it when he was in safety, and this man said it at the time of misfortune.

It was at that moment that this fact was proved once again that protection, guardianship and Power belong to Allah, the Lord Who is the Truth Himself.

The verse says:

"Thereover protection belongs only to Allah, the True…"

Yes, here it was made perfectly clear that all bounties belong to Him, and whatever He wills, it will be done. So, there will be performed nothing save by relying on His grace. Verily, it is only He Who has the best rewards and provides the best end and fate for the obedient.

The verse continues saying:

"…He is best rewarding, and best for consequence."

Thus, if a person wants to attach some and to rely on him and to be hopeful to his reward, it is better for him that his support to be Allah, and his attachment and his hope to be unto the grace and kindness of the Lord.

But, O' Man! How do you want to be the best in the world, while you tread the clearest laws of the world of creation; allocate all merits to yourself, and devour the right of others?

Notes

1. Dur-rul-Manthur, the Commentary

Section 6: Wealth and Children, Only Passing Shows

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 45

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاَرْضِ فَاَصْبَحَ هَشِيماً تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِراً

45. "And coin for them the similitude of the life of the world as water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it, and then becomes dry twigs that the winds scatter; and Allah is omnipotent over everything."

The containing words of this verse are upon the plants and pleasantness of the earth, and, then, the appearance of the Divine Wrath which caused them to be burnt into ashes. This statement has been said in order that it becomes a warning for haughty people who are neglectful of Allah.

Verily, the world is like a rootless plant which grows with a little rain and dries with a slight wind. In this course, whatever remains, of course, is the man's righteous deeds. Addressing human beings, in a tradition narrated from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), he says:

"O' he who the world has made busy to itself! Beware that the long various wishes of the world have made you proud."

Therefore, Allah commands His Messenger in this verse to set forth to the people a parable in order that he attracts their attention from the world to the Hereafter.

The verse says:

"And coin for them the similitude of the life of the world as water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it, and then becomes dry twigs that the winds scatter…"

The fine scenery of the green plants and their leaves and branches, which grow pleasantly, enamours man to itself and takes him out into the fields in order that he watches the beautiful nature in the spring. But the green plants and flowers of the spring do not last long. Finally they become pale and dry and winds scatter their dust and straws here and there. The world is also like that.

Then the Qur'an implies that Allah prevails over all things and no one is able to stand against His Power and His Will.

It says:

"…and Allah is omnipotent over everything."

A similar meaning to this verse, with some more details, is recited in SuraYunus, No. 10, verse 24, and Surah Al-Hadeed, No.57, verse 20, too.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 46

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّـكَ ثَواباً وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلاً

46. "Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world, and the everlasting good works are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation."

In Islamic traditions recorded by both the Sunnite and the Shi'it, it is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S), and by the Shi'it again narrated

from the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as), that the purpose of ‘the everlasting good works’ is the four-hymns, i.e.:

“Glory be to Allah, and praise belongs to Allah, and there is no god save Allah, and Allah is the greatest.”

And, in some other traditions, it is said that the objective meaning of this holy phrase is ‘The five statutory prayers’, while some others denote that it is ‘the night prayer’, while some other traditions indicate that the purpose of it is ‘the love of Ahl-ul-Bayt’.[1]

Therefore, in this holy verse, Allah has defined the position of the wealth and the power of man, which are two main pillars of the life in this world.

The verse says:

“Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world…”

These ornaments are as blossoms which appear over the branches of this tree. They are fleeting and do not last long. If they do not take to themselves the colour of eternality by being on the path of Allah, they are much invalid.

In this holy verse, in fact, two parts of the most important capitals of this world have been referred to, the rest of which are some dependants to these two. These two parts are the economical ability and human ability.

Then, it adds:

“…and the everlasting good works are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation.”

The concept of the phrase ‘the everlasting good works’ is so vast that it envelops any thought, idea, speech, and deed which is righteous and praiseworthy.

And, naturally, this effort remains and its effects and favours reach the members of societies, such as science, industry, good children, the buildings of a mosque, hospital, and school, and also religious and useful publications like: the commentary of the Qur’an, the traditions of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), and so on.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 47 - 48

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّـرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَي الاَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَداً

وَعُرِضُوا عَلَي رَبِّـكَ صَفّاً لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ لَّن نَّجْعَلَ لَكُم مَوْعِداً

47. “And (remember) the day We shall set the mountains in motion, and you will see the earth a leveled plain and We muster them nor shall We leave out any one of them.”

48. “And they shall be presented before your Lord in ranks, (and Allah says:) ‘You have come to Us, as We created you upon the first time. But you thought that We should not appoint a tryst for you’.”

In order that the life of the world would not be loved, the remembrance of the Day of Judgment is necessary. This Day is forevery body and there is no exception for any one.

The words in the previous holy verses were upon a selfish proud man who, because of his haughtiness and pride, denied Resurrection. Here, following that subject, the Qur’an explains three stages concerning Hereafter. The first stage is before the resurrection of human beings. The

second stage is the Resurrection itself. And the third stage is related to some events after Resurrection.

At first, the holy Qur'an implies that we should remember the Day when the system of the world of existence, as a preparation for a new system, will be disturbed and the mountains will be set in motion so that all the barriers of the surface of the earth will be removed and the land will be leveled in a shape that every thing can clearly be seen.

The verse says:

"And (remember) the day We shall set the mountains in motion, and you will see the earth a leveled plain…"

These current verses of the Qur'an point to the events which will happen at the threshold of Resurrection. Such events are a lot, and some of them are particularly pointed out in the short suras at the end of the Qur'an. These events are called as 'the signs of Hereafter' /'ašrat us sa'ah/.

After that, the verse finally implies that at this time Allah will gather them all, so that even a single person will not be left out.

The verse continues saying:

"…and We muster them nor shall We leave out any one of them."

The abovementioned sentence is an emphasis upon this fact that Resurrection is a general commandment and none will be exception from it.

In the second verse, the Qur'an refers to the circumstances of the resurrection and humankind. It says:

"And they shall be presented before your Lord in ranks…"

This expression may be an indication to the case that every group of people, who have the same belief or similar deeds, will be categorized in one row. Or, all of them, without any difference or privilege, will be set in a single row; like the mass of soldiers in front of the commander-in-chief of the army, where they are wholly seen.

However, standing in a row is a sign of order and tidiness. It is the secret of discipline and modesty. In the Qur'an, for the statement of the qualifications of the strugglers, and also angels, the expression of 'row and rank' has been used. Two suras of the Qur'an are also entitled 'As-Saff' (the Ranks, the Row) and 'As-Saffat' (the Rangers).

In the world, sometimes, the military army are presented to the chiefs in a particular order, while, in Hereafter, all human beings will automatically and regularly be presented to the Lord.

There, they will be told:

"...'You have come to Us, as We created you upon the first time. But you thought that We should not appoint a tryst for you'."

In Hereafter, there will be for them, no property, nor privileges and material ranks, nor any helpers. They will be in the same state that they were created at first.

But, they imagined that Allah would never appoint a time for them. This status was at the time when the pride of material facilities deluded them, and the love of the world, which they imagined to be eternal, caused them to be neglectful of the thought of the Hereafter, which is inside the nature of everybody.

But it is certain that the faithful persons, who are seekers of the truth and have enough capacity, will never fall in such ugly epithet when they reach to a social rank or some wealth. They not only will not be proud, but also no change will appear in their daily programs from this point of view.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) that in Hereafter there will arrange one hundred and twenty thousand rows. Eighty thousand of them will be the Prophet's community, from the beginning of his embassy until the end of resurrection, and the former communities will be only forty thousand rows. [2]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 49

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَي الْمُـجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَاوَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لاَ
ُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلاَ كَبِيرَةً إِلاَّأَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِراً وَلاَ يِظْلِمُ رَبكَ أَحَداً

49. "And the Book (of deeds) is placed, and you see the guilty fearful at what is in it, and saying: 'Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?' And they will find all that they did confronting them; and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"On the Day of Hereafter, when the man's record of deeds will be given to him, he looks at it and sees that all his moments, words, movements and deeds are recorded in it; then he remembers them wholly such that as if he has done them just one hour before."[3]

Therefore, the holy verse implies that on Hereafter, there is the Book of deeds of all human beings which will be placed before them. When the sinners are informed of its content, they will be so frightened that the signs of fear will clearly be seen in their faces.

The verse says:

"And the Book (of deeds) is placed, and you see the guilty fearful at what is in it…"

At this moment, the guilty will astonishingly cry loudly for what they see, and, as the verse states:

"…and saying: 'Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?'…"

They will say that it is a Book that every thing has been minutely recorded and reckoned in it so that nothing has been left out.

Verily, what a terrible circumstance it is! They say that they have forgotten all those deeds of theirs in a manner that sometimes they thought they had committed no wrong, but today they see that their responsibility is heavier than what they considered and their fate is very dark.

Besides that recorded document, principally they will see all their deeds present before them. They will find the embodiment of their all good and evil actions, injustices and justices, vices and treacheries, all in all, in front of them.

The verse continues saying:

"…And they will find all that they did confronting them…"

In fact, they are entangled with the fruit of their own actions and the Lord is just to every one. Whatever they will be involved in Hereafter is the deeds they have done in this world. Thus, whom can they complain of, save of themselves?

The verse concludes:

"…and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice."

At the end, it is understood from the verses of the Qur'an that there will be three kinds of Book for human beings in the Hereafter. The first is a single Book which will be placed there for the reckoning of the deeds of all.

The second is the Book that every community has, in which the deeds of every community are recorded, as it is recited in Surah Al-Jathiyah, No.45, verse 28:

"…every nation shall be called to its book…"

The third is the Book which exists forevery person separately, as Surah Al-'Isra', No.17, verse 13 says:

"And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the Resurrection Day a book which will be found wide open."

It is evident that there is no inconsistency between the content of these verses, because it does not matter that the man's deeds may be recorded in different books.

The similar form of it can also be seen in programs of the present world where, for proper systematizing organizations of a country, there will be formed a regulation and calculation forevery unit, and then those units will have a new situation in the greater units.

But, this fact should be noted that the men's book of deeds in Hereafter is not like the ordinary notebook or book in this world. It is an expressive and undeniable collection, which, perhaps, is the natural consequence of the man's deeds themselves.

However, the verses under discussion indicate that, besides the man's deeds being recorded in a special book, the deeds themselves will also incarnate and attend there,[4] as the verse points out:

(…And they will find all that they confronting them…).

The deeds which have disappeared in the form of scattered energy from the sights in this world, in fact, have not been annihilated. (The modern science has proved that no material and energy will vanish, but it always changes into another form.)

On That Day, these energies, which have been lost, will be changed into matter, by the command of Allah, and will incarnate in some suitable shapes. The righteous deeds will appear in some beautiful and interesting forms, while the evil actions will appear in some ugly and hateful features, and they will remain with us.

It is for this reason that, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice",

because the rewards and the retributions are the fruit of the deeds of themselves.

Some of commentators, of course, have considered the holy phrase:

"…and they will find all that they did confronting them"

as an emphasis on the subject of 'the Book (of deeds)'. They have said that the meaning of the sentence is that they will find all their own deeds present and recorded in that Book. [5]

However, in the commentary of 'Ayyashi, under the holy verse:

"…Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?' And they will find all that they did confronting them; and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice."

There is a tradition narrated from Khalid-ibn-Najib who has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"When the Day of Justice occurs, the man's book will be given to him and he will be ordered to read it."

Khalid says that he asked Imam (as):

"Will he recognize what he reads?"

Imam (as) answered:

"He will remember all. There will be no moment, no glance, no word, no step, and no other actions that he has fulfilled but he will remember entirely by reading that book, in a manner as if he has performed it at that very moment. Therefore, he will say: 'Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?'"[6]

Some Traditions

1. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"…What will then be your position when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down (to throw out the deed)? There shall every soul realize what it has sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and what they did fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them."[7]

2. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"Did you not see those who engaged in long-reaching desires, built strong buildings, amassed much wealth but their houses turned to graves and their collections turned into ruin? Their property devolved on the successors and their spouses on those who came after them.

They cannot (now) add to their good acts nor invoke (Allah's) mercy in respect to evil acts. Therefore, whoever makes his heart habituated to fear Allah achieves a forward position and his action is successful."[8]

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Majma'-ul-Bayan
2. Kafi, Bihar-ul-Anwar, Tafsir-us-Safi, and Atyab-ul-Bayan
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.3, p.267
4. Like what is seen in televisions and satellites today. Thus, Allah Who is the creator of man is powerful to make present his deeds and show them in Hereafter.
5. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi, and Tafsir-ul-Jami', by Qurtubi
6. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, and As-Safi. The content meaning of this tradition has also been narrated by men of tradition and community.
7. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon 226
8. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon 132

Section 7: Satan and His Tribe

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 50

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لادَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِرَبّهِ
أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلاً

50. "And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate to Adam,' So they (all) prostrated except Iblis; he was of the jinn, and he rebelled against his Lord's command. Will you then choose him and his seed as your protecting friends instead of Me, when they are enemies to you? Evil would be the exchange for the unjust!"

Prostration is of three definite categories. The first is the prostration of worship which is only for Allah (s.w.t.), like the prostration in prayer. The second is the prostration of obedience like the prostration of angels to Adam which was for the sake of the obedience of the command of Allah. The third is the prostration of honouring and grandeur, like Jacob's prostration to Yusuf.

Of course, the story of the creation of Adam and the angels' prostration to him and disobedience of Satan has repeatedly been stated in the different verses of the Qur'an, but, as we have formerly pointed out, these repetitions contain some different points, so that each of which refers to a particular matter.

And in view of the fact that in the former explanations, the circumstance of the tyrant haughty rich people before the poor, the oppressed, and their end, had been illustrated, here, in this verse, the words are upon the Satan's disobedience from prostrating to Adam in order that we know the fact that, from very beginning, pride has been the cause of infidelity and insolence.

In addition to that subject, this story defines that aberrations usually originate from satanic temptations.

At first, the Qur'an says:

"And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate to Adam,' So they (all) prostrated except Iblis…"

This exception may bring this misconception into being that Iblis was among the kind of angels, while the angels are immaculate, and then how did Iblis pave the path of disobedience and infidelity?

That is why, immediately after that, the Qur'an adds:

"…he was of the jinn, and he rebelled against his Lord's command..."

Satan was not of the kind of the angles, but because of servitude, submission and proximity to Allah, he was placed in the row of angels, so respectfully that, perhaps, he was even as a teacher of them. But, as a result of haughtiness and pride, he became the most accursed and hatred creature of divine portal.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…Will you then choose him and his seed as your protecting friends instead of Me, when they are enemies to you?…"

They are your harsh enemies who have made an oath to be against you, and have decided to lead all of you astray and make you miserable.

Obeying Satan and his progeny, instead of obeying Allah, is an evil exchange for the wrong doers.

The verse says:

"…Evil would be the exchange for the unjust!"

How a wise person may choose an enemy, who has taken a decision to destroy him and has sworn upon this enmity, as his guardian, leader, and support?

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 51

مَّآ أَشْهَدتهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَلاَ خَلْقَ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلّينَ عَضُداً

51. "I did not make them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their selves, nor choose I misleaders for (My) helpers."

Allah is absolutely free from any want and He needs no helper even in creation. Then, if He (s.w.t.) refers some affairs to others, like referring the subject of guardianship to the angels, it is not because of powerlessness, but it is because of wisdom, and it is alongside the path of teaching and development of humankind.

Thus, He announces in this verse that for the creation of the heavens and the earth and the creation of Iblis and his progeny, He did not summon them and He did not want them to come to help. Therefore, His power is complete and He is not in need of the help of Satans, and none should obey Satans instead of Allah.

The verse says:

"I did not make them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their selves…"

Never Allah calls Satans, who are the misleaders of human beings, to help Him, nor does He take them as His assistants.

The verse continues saying:

"…nor choose I misleaders for (My) helpers."

It has been narrated that Hadrat Ali (as) was told that until the settlement of his government he might keep Mu'awiyah fix in office and, after becoming powerful, he could dismiss him. Then, in answer to them, he (as) said:

"And I do not choose misleaders for (my) helpers."[1]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 52 - 53

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّوْبِقاً

وَرَأَي الْمُـجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنوا أَنَّهُم موَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفاً

52. "And (remember) the Day (of Judgment) when He will say (to the polytheists): 'Call on those whom you considered to be My partners.' So they shall call on them, but they will not answer them, and We will cause between them a valley of perdition."

53. "And the evildoers will see the Fire, then apprehend that they are falling into it, and will find no escape from it."

Those who separate from Allah will wander and resort to everything. They appeal to men down to matters and animals, from sun and moon in the sky down to cow and calf on the earth, from immaculate angles down to the evil Satans. But whatever the more they call, the less they hear an answer, while if they call Allah (s.w.t.) they will surely be answered.

Therefore, this verse warns them again, saying:

"And (remember) the Day (of Judgment) when He will say (to the polytheists): 'Call on those whom you considered to be My partners.'…"

You were boasting of them for a lifetime. You used to prostrate before them. Now that the waves of punishment and retribution have surrounded you from every side, you may call on them to help you at least for an hour.

It seems that they have still the kind of thoughts of this world in mind, so they call on them, but these imaginary deities do not even respond to their call, much less they haste to help them. Therefore, Allah makes a place of perdition between these two groups.

The verse says:

"…So they shall call on them, but they will not answer them, and We will cause between them a valley of perdition."

The end of the followers of Satan and polytheists is stated in the verse, as follows:

"And the evildoers will see the Fire…"

The Fire, which they had never believed, will appear before their eyes. It is in this condition that they comprehend their mistake in the past.

So the verse says:

"…then apprehend that they are falling into it…"

And they shall also apprehend in certainty that they will find no way of escape from that blazing Fire.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and will find no escape from it."

Neither do their simulated deities come to help them, nor are the intercession of the intercessors useful for them, nor can they relieve from the grasp of the Fire of Hell, the blazing Fire which their own deeds have lighted by means of telling lies and falsehood, and by having recourse to wealth and force in this world.

Then, at the end of the verse, the holy Qur'an implies that the sinners will not have any chance of escape from the punishment in Hereafter, because deliverance is either under the shade of correct belief, or because of the Divine forgiveness based upon repentance and righteous deeds, which are not available for them; or because of intercession which their idols are not able to obtain. Thus, Hell is certain for them.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.3, p. 268

Section 8: Allah is Forgiving and the Lord of Mercy

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 54 - 55

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ لِلنَّاسِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الإِنسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلاً

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدَي وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الاَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلاً

54. "And indeed We have explained in this Qur'an every kind of similitude for mankind, but man, of most things, is contentious."

55. "And naught prevented men from believing when the guidance came unto them, and seeking their Lord's forgiveness, except that the wont of the ancients should come upon them, or that the chastisement should come face to face with them."

The Qur'anic term /sarrafna/, in this verse, means that 'We have spoken to them in different statements and through any style and logic which may affect on them'.

The Arabic word /jidal/ means 'dispute' in a form of conflict and demand of preference.

Beside the positive qualities the man has, like having a divine spirit, being superior to the angels with their prostration unto him, having the ability of penetration and subjecting the existence to himself, and the like of them, he has also many negative epithets, such as disputation, which have been referred to in the verses of the Qur'an.

Then, in this holy verse: the Qur'an deduces a kind of conclusion from the last discussions, and it also hints to the coming discussions.

At first, it says:

"And indeed We have explained in this Qur'an every kind of similitude for mankind…"

These explanations include the shaking history of the old nations and the painful events of their lives, and that what happened before. They were described for the people whether they were sweet or bitter. The affairs were so much detailed that those hearts which were receptive and eager to receive the truth, might grasp the truth, and there remained no room for obscurity.

Yet, some rebellious arrogant people never believed, because man, more than anything else, tends to dispute.

The verse says:

"…but man, of most things, is contentious."

Then, in the next verse, it implies that with these many different examples and through some shaking statements and various logical reasoning, which must absorb any receptive person, again a great group of people did not believe.

Of course, nothing restrained them that when the Divine guidance came to them they would believe and seek forgiveness from their Lord, save that they acted obstinately as if they wanted the fate of the ancient to come for them, too, or the divine punishment should come in front of them and they see it by their own eyes.

The verse says:

"And naught prevented men from believing when the guidance came unto them, and seeking their Lord's forgiveness, except that the wont of the ancients should come upon them, or that the chastisement should come face to face with them."

In fact, the abovementioned verse points to this fact that this arrogant and obstinate group will never believe with their willing and decision. They may believe only in two circumstances. The first is at the time when the painful punishments, which seized the ancient nations, surround them.

The second circumstance is that they do see the divine punishment with their own eyes. This constrained faith, of course, will be worthless.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 56

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّـرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا ءَايَاتِي وَمَآ أُنذِرُوا هُزُواً

56. "And We do not send the messengers save as bearers of good tidings and warners, but those who disbelieve dispute with falsehood in order to refute the Truth thereby; and they have taken My signs, and what they are warned of, in mockery."

The prophets' mission is to give glad tidings to the believers and to warn the disobedient, but with no compulsion upon people to accept the Truth. It is by the prophets (as) that Allah completes the argument to humankind.

By the way, awareness of Allah's way of treatment and the prophets' messengership, the reaction of people, and the end of the arrogant nations, is a kind of consolation for the Prophet (S). Therefore, in order to comfort the Prophet (S) against the arrogance and obstinacy of the opponents, the Qur'an says that his duty is only to give good tidings and to warn.

The verse says:

"And We do not send the messengers save as bearers of good tidings and warners…"

Then the verse implies that this is not a new matter that such people oppose the Truth and mock it, but disbelievers always dispute with falsehood. They imagine that they can refute the Truth with it and, therefore, they take Allah's revelations and His punishments, which they are promised to, in mockery.

The verse says:

"…but those who disbelieve dispute with falsehood in order to refute the Truth thereby; and they have taken My signs, and what they are warned of, in mockery."

In fact, their dispute on the way of proving the falsehood was to force the Prophet (S) to bring some verses and miracles alongside their desires, so that if he did not do as they wished, they would take it as a proof and introduce his Book, the Qur'an, invalid. Thus, the disbelievers used to apply the Qur'an, the Resurrection, and the Fire of Hell as a means of mockery.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 57

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَي
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْراً وَإِن تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَي الْهُدَي فَلَن يَهْتَدُوا إِذاً أَبَداً

57. "And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the sings of his Lord, then he turns away from them and forgets what his hands have forwarded? Verily We have laid veils on their hearts lest they understand it, and a heaviness in their ears: and if you call them unto guidance, even then will they never get guided in that case at all."

Being heedless to the divine revelations, and having no contemplation on them, is the greatest injustice.

So, in this holy verse, the Qur'an says:

"And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the sings of his Lord, then he turns away from them and forgets what his hands have forwarded?…"

The application of the term /ðukkira/ (is reminded) in the verse, perhaps, is an indication to this meaning that the prophets' teachings are of the remembrance of the facts which have existed naturally in the depths of man's soul. The mission of prophets is to make these facts manifest.

In this regard, Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), qualifying the divine prophets, says:

"…Allah sent His prophets toward them (people) to get them fulfill the pledges of His creation, to recall to them His bounties..."[1]

It is interesting that, in this verse, the Qur'an teaches the lesson of awareness to these inwardly blind persons in three ways. The first is that these facts are quietly acquainted with their nature and conscience.

The second is that they have come from the side of their Lord. And the third is that they should not forget that they have committed some faults in their lives, and the mission of the divine prophets is to wash them out from them.

But these arrogant people, with all these indications and implications, will never believe, because the veil of sin has been laid on their hearts, and the veil of heaviness of crime has been laid on their ears and, therefore, they do not hear the sound of the Truth.

Similar to this meaning, Surah Luqman, No. 31, through verse 7 says:

"And when Our revelations are recited to him, he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them…"

In other wards, it is like that the veils of lust, imitation from their fathers, and the temptations of Satans and men, have fallen on their hearts and, consequently, they have lost their wisdom so that they never understand and they never regret from their indecent actions and, therefore, never they renounce them.

They show that, as a deaf person, they have not heard it. Such people have lost the eligibility of being guided and have plunged in aberration.

It is in this case that Allah informs His Messenger (S) that if he invites them to the guidance and felicity, they will never be guided and they will never believe that this information has been proved. So they finally passed away with infidelity.

The verse says:

"…Verily We have laid veils on their hearts lest they understand it, and a heaviness in their ears: and if you call them unto guidance, even then will they never get guided in that case at all."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 58 - 59

وَرَبكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُم بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَل لَهُم مَوْعِدٌ لَّن يَجِدُوا مِن دُونِهِ مَوْئِلاً

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَي أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِم مَوْعِداً

58. "And your Lord is Forgiving, the Lord of Mercy. Were He to seize them (to task) for what they earn, surely He would hasten for them the chastisement; but for them is an appointed term, never shall they find, besides it, a refuge."

59. "And (as for the people of) these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong and We appointed a time for their destruction."

The Qur'anic term /mu'il/ means: 'a refuge, and a means of safety'. Allah (s.w.t.) is both just and All-Forgiving. His justice requires that the sinners must be punished, but, because of His Forgiveness, He respites man to repent. Then if he does not repent, He will treat him with His justice.

Thus; the manner of Allah (s.w.t.) in training men is that He respites them up to the last stage and, unlike to the arrogant people of the world, He never punishes them promptly, but His All-embracing Mercy always requires that He gives the evil-doers the maximum respite.

In this verse, the Qur'an says:

"And your Lord is Forgiving, the Lord of Mercy. Were He to seize them (to task) for what they earn, surely He would hasten for them the chastisement…"

Allah's remission necessitates that He forgives the repentant, and His Mercy requires that He does not hasten in the punishment of other than them, maybe they may join the group of repentant ones, while His justice also requires that when their insolence and disobedience reached its last degree, He might clear their account.

The verse continues saying:

"…but for them is an appointed term, never shall they find, besides it, a refuge."

Then, finally, in the next verse, for the last admonition and warning in these series of verses, the Qur'an has pointed to the bitter and painful fate of the former disobedient transgressors.

It implies that these are cities the ruins of which are before their eyes, and when they committed cruelty and inequity, Allah destroyed them, while He did not make haste in their punishment but He (s.w.t.) fixed an appointed time for their destruction.

The verse says:

"And (as for the people of) these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong and We appointed a time for their destruction."

However, the objective meaning of the words 'these towns', mentioned in the verse, is the people of the towns of 'Ad and Thamud, and the like of

them, who were destroyed as the result of their rejecting the prophets and their denying the Divine revelations.

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon One, Allah chooses His Prophets

Section 9: Moses' Search for Higher Knowledge

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 60 - 61

وإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَي لِفَتَاهُ لآ أَبْرَحُ حَتَّي أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُباً

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَباً

60. "And (remember) when Moses said to his young companion: 'I will not cease until I reach the Junction of the two Seas, though I go on for years.

61. "Then when they reached the Junction, they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the sea, going away."

The appellation 'Moses' has been repeated in the Qur'an for 136 times all of which means the same prophet Moses, the possessor of determination /'ulul'azm/.[1]

The application of the word /fata/ in this verse, which means 'young' and 'gallant', is used in the sense of 'lad' and 'page', and it is a sign of courtesy, kindness and 'good name'. The purpose of the Arabic word /fatah/, hear in this verse, is Joshua-ibn-Nun, who was the companion and attendant of Moses (as) in that journey.[2]

The verse says:

"And (remember) when Moses said to his young companion: 'I will not cease until I reach the Junction of the two Seas, though I go on for years."

The Arabic term /huqb/ means years and years, seventy to eighty years.

The story of Moses and Khidr (as) has been recorded in commentary books and history sources. For instance, in some Sahih-i-Bukhari, it has been narrated from Ibn-'Abbas, from'Ubayy-ibn-Ka'b that once the Prophet (S) said that one day, when Moses was orating, he was asked by one of the children of Israel that who the most learned person was.

Moses (as) said:

'I am'.

Allah addressed Moses saying why he did not say that Allah knows best, and Khidr was more aware than Moses. Moses (as) asked where Khidr was.

Then he was addressed that Khidr was in the site of 'Junction of the Seas', and its sign and mystery was that he was to take a fish with him in a basket and he would go forth. The place where Moses was to meet Khidr would be indicated by the fact that the fish would disappear when he got to that place.[3]

The holy verse says:

"Then when they reached the Junction, they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the sea, going away."

Moses (as) put the fish in the basket and told his attendant that wherever he did not find the fish in the basket he would inform the matter to Moses. Moses and his attendant started to go forward as far as they reached the sea, where they stayed beside a stone to rest.

While Moses (as) was sleeping, his attendant, who was awake, saw that the fish escaped into the sea. The attendant of Moses did not awaken him

from his sleep to tell him the matter, and later, when Moses woke up, he forgot to inform him of the matter either, and they both continued their way.

After one day and night that they walked, Moses said that they became tired from that travel and told his attendant to bring the food for them to eat. He informed Moses that the fish had become alive and jumped into the sea. Moses (as) said that they had to return to the same place that the fish had jumped into the water because their meeting-place was there.

Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (a.s) both said:

"The attendant of Moses brought the salted fish by the sea to wash it. The fish moved in his hand and escaped into the sea."[4]

Some commentators have rendered the 'Junction of the Seas' into the meeting of the two seas of prophethood, (Moses and Khidr). Moses, they believe, was the outward sea of knowledge, and Khidr was the inward sea of knowledge.

In view of the fact that prophets have been inerrant and do not forget, the purpose of 'forgetting the fish', mentioned in the verse, is that they put the fish aside and left it. It is like the verses which attribute forgetfulness to Allah. For example, Surah Al-Jathiyah, No.45, verse 34 says:

"…Today We forsake you…",

and Surah As-Sijdah, No.32, verse 14 says:

"…surely We forsake you…".

Moreover, those two did not absolutely forget the fish but they had taken it with themselves, and as it was said in the above, the attendant of Moses did not want to awaken Moses and waited. Then, after his wakefulness, he forgot to tell him the event, too.

The Qur'an has repeatedly pointed to the animals as a sign, and an inspiring factor, or an informer, such as the inspiration that the crow led how Abel to be buried, the hoopoe informed of the infidelity of he people of Sheba, the event of the fish in the explanation of the meeting of these two prophets, the function of spider in the protection of the holy Prophet (S) in the Cave, and the function of the dog for 'the Companions of the Cave'.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 62 - 63

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ ءَاتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِن سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَباً

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَآ إِلَي الصَّخْرَةِ فإِنّـِي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَآ أَنْسَانِيهُ إِلاَّ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن أَذْكُرَهُ

وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَباً

62. "Then when they had passed (the seaside), Moses said unto his young companion: 'Bring us our morning meal. Indeed we have met from this our journey weariness'."

63. "He said: 'Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock? Then verily I forgot (to tell you the jump of) the fish and nothing made me forget to mention of it but the Satan; and it took its way into the sea in a marvelous manner!'"

In Arabic, the morning meal is called /qada'/, and the evening meal is called /'iša'/.

When Moses (as) and his attendant passed on that place, the length of their travel and the fatigue of the way caused hunger to overcome them.

Moses (as) remembered that they had got a food with them. Then he told his attendant to bring their food because they had got tired from their travel.

The verse says:

"Then when they had passed (the seaside), Moses said unto his young companion: 'Bring us our morning meal. Indeed we have met from this our journey weariness'."

At this time, the attendant of Moses (as) told him whether he remembered the time when they took refuge on the rock to rest there. In that place he forgot to inform him the event of the fish, and it was Satan that made him forget to mention it, and that the fish jumped into the sea and went away.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock? Then verily I forgot (to tell you the jump of) the fish and nothing made me forget to mention of it but the Satan; and it took its way into the sea in a marvelous manner!'"

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 64 - 65

قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ ءَاثَارِهِمَا قَصَصاً

فَوَجَدَا عَبْداً مِنْ عِبَادِنَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْماً

64. "He (Moses) said: 'That was what we were seeking for!' So they returned, retracing their footsteps."

65. "Then they found one of Our servants unto whom We had given mercy from Us, and We had taught him knowledge from Our presence."

In view of the fact that the subject was as a sign for Moses (as) in connection with finding that great-learned man, Moses said:

"He (Moses) said: 'That was what we were seeking for!' So they returned, retracing their footsteps."

When Moses and his attendant returned to the first place they had started their way, i.e. beside the rock and near 'the Junction of the Seas', suddenly they found one of Allah's servants to whom He had bestowed His mercy and whom He had taught a considerable amount of knowledge.

The verse says:

"Then they found one of Our servants unto whom We had given mercy from Us, and We had taught him knowledge from Our presence."

The application of the word /wajada/, in the verse, shows that they had been seeking after the knowledgeable man, and finally they found him.

And the Qur'anic phrase /'abdan min 'ibadina/ (one of Our servants) indicates that the highest honour of a man is that he would be a true servant of Allah, and this very rank of servitude causes man to be bestowed the mercy of the Lord and the windows of the science to be opened to his heart, (mind).

Again the Qur'anic phrase /min ladunna 'ilma/ (We had taught him knowledge from Our presence) also denotes that the knowledge of that learned man (Khidr) was not an ordinary knowledge, but he was aware of a part of the secrets of this world and of the mysteries of the events which only Allah knows.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Moses was more learned than Khidr in religious prudence, but Khidr was more aware of a branch and a mission other than that."[5]

However the objective meaning of /'abd/ (servant), in this verse, is Khidr (as) who was a prophet reasoned by the following evidences:

1. He who becomes the teacher of a prophet, like Moses (as), is surely a prophet.

2. Some Arabic terms, such as: /'abdina/ (our servant), /'abdahu/ (His servant), and /'ibadana/ (Our servants), mentioned in the Qur'an, have often been used for divine prophets.

3. Khidr told Moses that all extra-ordinary actions that he saw from him and did not have patience with him were done by the command of Allah and he did not do any thing of his own accord. Khidr (as) said:

"…I did it not of my own accord…"[6]

4. Moses promised Khidr that he would not do anything other than he taught him, and the person whom an'Ulul-'azm prophet absolutely obeys, is certainly inerrant and is surely a Divine prophet.

5. Intuitive knowledge is particularized to Divine prophets.

Allah said about Khidr:

"We had taught him knowledge from Our presence."

6. Some commentators say that the term 'mercy' here means 'prophethood'.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 66 - 67

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَن تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْداً

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْراً

66. "Moses said to him (Khidr): 'Shall I follow you so that you teach me right conduct of what you have been taught?'"

67. "He said: 'Verily you will not be able to bear with me patiently'."

The holy Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"At the time when Moses met Khidr, in front of them a bird took a drop of water from the see by its beak and poured it on the ground. Khidr asked Moses whether he knew the secret of the deed of that bird. It teaches us that our knowledge comparing with Allah's knowledge is like a drop before an infinite sea."

Moses said to (Khidr) whether he might follow him so that he would teach Moses a knowledge which causes him to grow.[7] (Conversance of metaphysical theology causes the growth and development of man.)

The verse says:

"Moses said to him (Khidr): 'shall I follow you so that you teach me right conduct of what you have been taught?'"

Bare knowledge is not the aim. It must be the source of growth and absorbs man to the righteous deeds and modesty, not to vanity and disputation.

After his prayers, invoking Allah (s.w.t.), the holy Prophet (S) used to recite:

"I take refuge with you from the knowledge which is of no benefit."[8]

In answer to Moses, the knowledgeable man (Khidr) said there was no ability in Moses to be patient with him in following him and bearing his teachings. He meant such patience was difficult for Moses to bear. The reason was that Moses looked the outward of the affairs, but Khidr noted to their inward case. Therefore, bearing patience was hard for Moses (as).

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 68 - 69

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَي مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْراً

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ صَابِراً وَلآ أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْراً

68. "And how can you be patient about what you have not got any comprehensive knowledge?"

69. "He (Moses) said: 'Allah willing, you shall find me patient, and I shall not disobey you in any matter'."

Khidr continued answering Moses when he told him how he would be patient upon an action that seemed apparently wrong to him, and while he was not aware of its innate and its reality.

The verse says:

"And how can you be patient about what you have not got any comprehensive knowledge?"

It is understood from this holy phrase that the purpose is not to prove that Moses (as) was absolutely impatient. But the purpose is that since Moses was unaware of the innate of the affairs that Khidr did, he could not be patient.

Thus, this holy verse indicates that the capacity of persons, concerning information, is different. Even Moses (as) cannot bear the things Khidr does. Therefore, in giving the cultural responsibilities to individuals, competencies should be known and weaknesses must be notified of.

Then, in the next verse, Moses (as), in answer to Khidr (as), said that he would find him truly patient if it be the will of Allah, and he should not disobey him in any thing.

The verse says:

"He (Moses) said: 'Allah willing, you shall find me patient, and I shall not disobey you in any matter'."

Thus, it is possible that, with the help of Allah and by means of patience, the necessary growth and development can be obtained, and also we must not forget the will of Allah for what we are going to do in future, and we should say: 'If it be the will of Allah'.

However, some of the commentators have said that the effort of Moses (as) for earning knowledge shows that no one should refrain from earning knowledge even if he were a prophet and had reached the high standard of knowledge. Another matter is that no one must refrain from humility before the one who is more learned than him.

Moses (as) conditioned his patience to the Will of Allah, because he thought he might bear patience and in the meantime he did probable he could not be patient. Therefore, he conditioned his patience to the Will of Allah, so that if he had not been able to be patient, he would not have said a falsehood.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 70

قَالَ فإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلاَ تَسْأَلْنِي عَن شَيْءٍ حَتَّي اُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْراً

70. "He (Khidr) said: 'If you follow me. Then do not question me of any thing until I myself speak to you about it'."

In view of the fact that patience upon the apparently indecent events, which a person is not aware of their secrets, is not so easy to bear, once more that the learned man (Khidr) made Moses undertake his promise. He warned him that if he wished to follow him, he had to be absolutely silent and would not ask him concerning any thing until, on its time, Khidr might tell him about it.

The verse says:

"He (Khidr) said: 'If you follow me. Then do not question me of any thing until I myself speak to you about it'."

Moses (as) undertook this promise again and proceeded companying 'that great Teacher'.

Notes

1. These 'Ulul'azm prophets are Noah, Abraham, Moses, 'Isa and Muhammad who had Book and whose religion was preached by the prophets after them until the next 'Ulul'azm prophet came.
2. Nur-uth-thaqalayn, the commentary.
3. 'Allamah Sha'rani, in Tafsir-i-Futuh recites that the place of meeting was about Syria and Palestine.
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
5. Tafsir Al-Mizan
6. (Surah Al-Kahf, No.18, verse 82)
7. Growth here is the religious knowledge which guides man toward the Truth.
8. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 86, p. 18

Section 10: Moses Following the One Gifted with Knowledge of Allah

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 71 - 72

فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً إِمْراً

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْراً

71. "So they twain departed; until, when they embarked upon the ship, he made a hole in it. He (Moses) said: 'Have you made a hole therein to drown its inmates? You have indeed done a grievous thing'."

72. "He said: 'Did I not say that you could never bear with me patiently?'"

The Arabic term /xaraqa/ is used here, in this holy verse, with the meaning of 'tearing something mischievously and without consideration.'

The Qur'anic word /'imr/ is applied for 'an important and strange work, or a very indecent one'.

Both of them (Moses and the godly learned man) proceeded and went on their way until when they embarked on a ship. Khidr made a hole in the ship.

Since, on one side, Moses was a great prophet of Allah and he had to protect the lives and properties of people, and he had to enjoin right and forbid wrong; and on the other side, his conscious did not let him keep silence for such a wrong action, therefore, he neglected the promise he had with Khidr (as) and protested him.

The verse says:

"So they twain departed; until, when they embarked upon the ship, he made a hole in it. He (Moses) said: 'Have you made a hole therein to drown its inmates? You have indeed done a grievous thing'."

At this time, that godly learned man (Khidr), with a special firmness, looked at Moses and spoke:

"He said: 'Did I not say that you could never bear with me patiently?'"

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 73 - 74

قَالَ لاَ تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلاَ تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْراً

فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلاَماً فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْساً زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً نكْراً

73. "He said: 'Do not take me to task that I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair'."

74. "So they twain departed; until, when they met a lad, he (Khidr) slew him. He (Moses) said: 'Slew you an innocent person who had slain none? You have indeed done a horrible thing'."

The Arabic term /'irhaq/ from the root /rahiqa/ means both 'to encompass forcefully', and 'to impose a difficult task on any one'.

Moses (as), who regretted for his haste, which was naturally for the importance of the event, remembered his promise and tried to excuse.

He turned to the godly teacher and said:

"He said: 'Do not take me to task that I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair'."

The voyage of those two (Moses and Khidr) ended and they got out of the ship. They continued their way on the land. In their way, occasionally they met a young boy whom that learned man (Khidr) suddenly killed.

The holy verse in this regard says:

"So they twain departed; until, when they met a lad, he (Khidr) slew him.

Here, Moses (as) became inconvenient again. He saw the horrible scene of killing an innocent young boy, which had no legal permission. As if a curtain of sorrow and discontentment had fallen upon his eyes. It was so hard for him that he forgot his promise again and began protesting against that action.

The verse says:

"…He (Moses) said: 'Slew you an innocent person who had slain none? You have indeed done a horrible thing'."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 75 - 76

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْراً

قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلاَ تُصَاحِبْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَدُنِّي عُذْراً

75. "He (Khidr) said: 'Did I not say that you could never bear with me patiently?'"

76. "He (Moses) said: 'If I question you on anything after this, then keep me company no more; you have received an excuse from me'."

That great godly learned man repeated the former sentence with the same coolness particular to himself.

The holy verse says:

"He (Khidr) said: 'Did I not say that you could never bear with me patiently?'"

Moses (as) remembered his own promise to him. It was an attention accompanied with shame, because he had broken his promise twice, although forgetfully. Little by little, Moses (as) felt the teacher might be right.

Therefore, he began asking forgiveness again and told Khidr to renounce him his forgetfulness that time, too. But if thereafter he (Moses) wanted him (Khidr) any explanation concerning his affairs, and objected to him upon his deeds, he would keep him company no more, since Khidr had received an excuse from Moses (as).

The verse says:

"He (Moses) said: 'If I question you on anything after this, then keep me company no more; you have received an excuse from me'."

This holy phrase of the Qur'an leads us to the utmost justice and far-sightedness of Moses (as), and it also shows that he accepted the reality even if it had been bitter.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the holy Prophet of Islam (S) recited this verse and said that Moses, the prophet of Allah, ashamed. If he had

waited and bore patience, he would have seen thousand wonderful actions from Khidr.[1]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 77 - 78

فَانطَلَقَا حتَّي إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَن يُضَيِّـفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَاراً
يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً
قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّـئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً

77. "So they twain departed; until, when they reached the people of a town. They asked its people for food, but they refused to make them guests. Then they found in it a wall about to fall, and he (Khidr) set it up. He (Moses) said: 'If you had wished you could have taken a wage for it!'"

78. "He (Khidr) said: 'This is the separation between me and you. Now I will inform you of the interpretation of what you could not bear patiently'."

Allah's saints are not malicious and revengeful. Khidr (as) served the people of the town, although they did not make the twain guests.

The verse says:

"So they twain departed; until, when they reached the people of a town. They asked its people for food, but they refused to make them guests..."

The objective meaning of the Arabic term /qaryah/ here is Nasirriyah, a city, or'Ilah, a harbour.

However, what happened upon Moses and his Teacher in that town leads us to comprehend that the people of it were niggardly and of inferior quality.

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition concerning them said:

"They had been some mean and of low quality."

Then, the Qur'an continues speaking about the twain who mended a wall there in order not to fall.

The verse says:

"…Then they found in it a wall about to fall, and he (Khidr) set it up..."

When Moses (as) saw that, in spite of the disgrace of those people, Khidr mended the wall that was going to fall, as if Khidr wanted to give the recompense of their disgrace to them, Moses thought it had better the teacher did that work for a wage so that they could provide a food by it.

Then Moses utterly forgot his promise once more, and began objecting to it, but this time with a protest milder than before.

The verse, in this regard, says:

"…He (Moses) said: 'If you had wished you could have taken a wage for it!'"

In fact, Moses (as) thought that the action of Khidr was far from justice that a person might sacrifice like that for a group of people who were so mean.

It was at that time that the learned man said his last word to Moses, since, from the total events which happened, he was convinced that Moses could not patiently bear the deeds he accomplished. Therefore, he announced their separation.

The verse says:

"He (Khidr) said: 'This is the separation between me and you. Now I will inform you of the interpretation of what you could not bear patiently'."

The announcement of that separation seemed as a sledge stricken over the heart of Moses (as) - a separation from a teacher who had with him a great amount of secrets! Yes, it was very painful for Moses to separate from such a leader, but it was a bitter reality that Moses had to tolerate.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 79

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُم مَّلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْباً

79. "As for the ship, it belonged to (some) poor people working on the sea, and I intended to damage it, for there was after them a king who seized every (safe) ship by force."

The Arabic term /wara'/, used here, is called to any hidden or concealed place whether that place is located in front of a person or behind him.

What a person sees is the apparent feature of the affairs while there may be some hidden features for them, too. The apparent view of Khidr's affairs seemed wrong to Moses (as), but there was a secret, mystery and reality hidden in those affairs.

The verse says:

"As for the ship, it belonged to (some) poor people working on the sea, and I intended to damage it, for there was after them a king who seized every (safe) ship by force."

Of course, Khidr did not make a hole in the ship in a way that water could arrive in it and caused it to be drowned, but he made it only defective.

There are sometimes so many defects and faults wherein lie some common good. Khidr (as) made the ship damaged in order that it could not be taken by that oppressive king and its miserable owners would not become more miserable. In fact, he repelled a worse state by a bad one.

This work is not the job of everyone, and the recognition of the difference between an important thing in religion and a more important one is the job of the expert theologians.

Ahlul-Bayt, (the Prophet's progeny) (p.b.u.t.), sometimes reprimanded some of their sincere friends in front of others in order that they might not be suspicioned by the tyrannical government of the time, and their lives could be saved.

For instance, Imam Sadiq (as) once openly criticized Zurarah, so that he would remain safe from the trouble of the Abbassides.

After that, he (as) sent a message for him saying that he did such to protect his life, and then the Imam (as) recited the abovementioned verse, and said that Zurarah was the best ship of that sea whom the illegitimate ruler was seeking for and watching after.[2]

Only those can enter the world of mysteries, and may be aware of the innate of the things, who have passed the stage of the apparent of the things;

like Moses who knew the laws of the religion and practised accordingly, but by accompanying Khidr in a course, he learned the innate secrets, too.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 80 - 81

وَأَمَّا الْغُلاَمُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَآ أَن يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَاناً وَكُفْراً

فَأَرَدْنَآ أَن يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبهُمَا خَيْراً مِّنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْماً

80. "And as for the lad, his parents were believers, and we were afraid he would impose on them insolence and disbelief."

81. "So we did intend that their Lord should change him for them for one better in purity and nearer in affection."

In this verse, the Qur'an refers to the secret of the second event, i.e., the murder of the lad. It says:

"And as for the lad, his parents were believers, and we were afraid he would impose on them insolence and disbelief."

However, that learned man killed a young boy and reasoned his action that if that boy had been continuing his life, he would have created a disgrace event for his faithful parents.

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"So we did intend that their Lord should change him for them for one better in purity and nearer in affection."

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /'irhaq/ means: 'to impose a difficult task to anyone'.

2. An Islamic tradition indicates that, instead of that boy, Allah bestowed those couple of believers a daughter from whose progeny seventy prophets came into being.[3]

3. Sometimes it happens that a child causes his parents to go astray and to pave the way of infidelity. On the contrary, sometimes the parents also drag the pure and godly nature of their child towards infidelity and deviated notions.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Every child naturally believes in One God, except that his parents change him."[4]

4. A wise man does not do a vain, and his deed is based on wisdom and common good, although it may seem apparently wrong.

5. The saints of Allah both have responsibility and think about the future of people.

6. The substitution of the pious child in the place of that impious boy, is a manifestation of the Lordship of Allah.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 82

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلاَمَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحاً فَأَرَادَ رَبكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً

82. "And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and beneath it there was a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man, so your Lord willed that they should attain their maturity

and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord, and I did not do it of my own accord. This is the interpretation of what you could not bear patiently."

In this holy verse the learned man (Khidr) uncovers the secret of his third action, i.e., mending the wall, and said as follows:

"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and beneath it there was a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man, so your Lord willed that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord…"

That is, Khidr was commissioned to mend that wall for the righteousness of the parents of these two orphan boys, otherwise it might fall and, appearing its treasure, it might be exposed to danger.

At the end of the verse, in order to remove any doubt from Moses (as), and that he assuredly knew that all those deeds were fulfilled upon a special plan and commandment, Khidr added that he did not perform them of his own accord, but it was the command of Allah that he followed. Yes, this was the mystery of the affairs that Moses (as) could not bear patiently.

The verse continues saying:

"…and I did not do it of my own accord. This is the interpretation of what you could not bear patiently."

The Story of Moses and Khidr and Its Facts

1. Finding a learned leader and taking benefits from his knowledge is of so importance that even a great prophet such as Moses paves a long way to find him. This is an example for all human beings in whatever condition and standard of knowledge and age they may be.

2. The essence of the divine knowledge (the metaphysical theology) can be obtain from the servitude and submission to Allah.

3. Knowledge should ever be learnt for practice, as Moses says to his learned teacher that he teaches him a knowledge that leads him to the aim, the right conduct. He means that he does not want the knowledge only for itself, but he wants it to use as a means to reach the aim.

4. We must not haste in some affairs because there are some things which need an appropriate opportunity.

5. The Apparent and the Innate Features of Affairs:

This is another important matter that this story teaches us. We ought not make haste in judging about the unpleasant happenings which come forth in our lives. There are many events in our lives that we are not pleased with them, but later we understand that they have been from the secret divine favours.

This is the same thing which the Qur'an points out in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 122.

6. Confessing the Reality:

When Moses (as) unwillingly broke his promise against his learned friend (Khidr) for three times, he did not persist on this bitter reality and gave justly the right to that learned man. Moses (as) kindly separated from him and continued his own affairs.

A person should not be always busy experimenting himself until his life-time ends, and must not turn his living into a laboratory for the future,

which will never come. After he examined a matter for several times, he must usually accept its result.

7. The Results of the Parents' Faith for their Children:

Khidr, for the sake of a righteous father, undertook the support of his children in that part that he could. That is, under the light of the faith and trust of the father, a child can become prosperous, and its good consequence reaches his offspring, too.

8. Lifetime Shortens because of Hurting the Parents:

Where a child, for the sake that he may hurt his parents in future with his disobedience and ingratitude, or causes them to come out of the way of Allah, deserves death, how is the state of a child who is busy committing this sin now? What is the circumstance of such persons before Allah?

9. People May Become Enemy because of What They Do not Know:

Many times it happens that a person do good upon us but, since we are not aware of the innate of the affairs, we consider it enmity, and sometimes we may become disturbed in mind and impatient, concerning what we do not know. But, the abovementioned story teaches us that we should not haste in judgment. We must verify every matter from different points of view.

10. The Courtesy of a Student Before a Teacher:

In conversation between Moses and that learned man (Khidr) some interesting points around the courtesy of a student before his teacher attract the attention; among them are:

A. Moses (as) introduced himself as a follower of Khidr (as) when he said:

"Shall I follow you…?"[5]

B. In the rank of humility, Moses (as) announced that the knowledge of Khidr was abundant, and he said that he desired to learn a part of his knowledge.

Moses said:

"…So that you teach me right conduct of what you have been taught?"

11. The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"That treasure was the wise words which were written on a golden tablet. Its content was: 'It is surprising why a person who believes in Allah's decree becomes grievous'.

'It is amazing why a person who is sure of the death, is happy; who is certain of Reckoning, is neglectful; who is certain of sustenance, troubles himself more than the common; and who is assured of the change of the world but he trusts in it'."[6]

12. According to the Islamic literature, the grace of Allah is not limited to the direct children of a person, but it affects on the later generations, too; so that the righteousness of ancestors causes Allah to have favour upon their progenies.[7]

13. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah revealed Moses (that) He rewards Children for the righteousness of fathers." Then, he (as) added: "If you are treacherous to the honour of people, others will be treacherous to your honour, too." [8]

14. In one occasion, in the story, the child is slain for the protection of the Faith of the parents, and in another one, a prophet works, as a labourer, for the sake of a righteous father, in order that the capital under the wall reaches the child.

15. When some people protested Imam Hassan (as) for making peace with Mu‘awiyah, he (as) said:

“Do you not know that Khidr made a hole in the ship, and killed a lad and his actions caused the anger of Moses? O people! If I did not accept peace, all the Shi‘ite on the earth would be vanished.” [9]

By the way, in Arabic, the terms /qaryah/ and /madinah/ have been used with the same meaning but, as one of the scholars said, if we work with the Qur’an we will see that ‘Madinah’ is used wherein the light of guidance is found, and wherever the light of guidance is not found it is called /qaryah/.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Tabary; and Tafsir-i-Abul-Futuh
2. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thqalayn
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Bihar-ul-’anwar, vol.3, p.282
5. Verse 66
6. Majma‘-ul-Bayan
7. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
9. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 11: Zulqarnayn, The Gog and the Magog, The Barrier

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 83

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَن ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُم مِنْهُ ذِكْراً

83. "And they ask you about Zulqarnayn. Say: 'I will recite unto you a remembrance of him'."

The Arabic term /qarn/ has two meanings: 'a long time' and 'the animal horn'. Zulqarnayn was called by this appellation because: either he ruled for a very long time, or two handles of his hair were braided like two horns on his head, or there were two horns on his hat.

The objective meaning of the term /qarnayn/ may also be the east and the west of the world, (as the Arabs often say 'qarni-ash-Shams' which means 'two horns of the sun' intending the east and the west of the world). Then, since he had occupied the lands of the east and the west of the world of his time, he was called 'Zul-Qarnayn'.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Zul-Qarnayn was not a prophet, but he was a righteous man whom Allah loved. He enjoined his people to piety. It happened that people knocked on one side of his head. After that, he disappeared for a length of time.

Then he returned and repeated his invitation again. People struck another knock on the other side of his head. Therefore, because of those two knocks, he had been known as Zul-Qarnayn." [1]

Regarding the statements of two Greek historians, and some points from the Turah (Book of Isaiah, Chapter 46, No.11 and so on), and the discovery of the statue of Cyrus in the nineteenth century A.D. which had a crown with two horns on its head, Tafsir-i-Nemunah adapts Zul-Qarnayn with Cyrus.

But, the late Sha'rani has said that Zul-Qarnayn and Eskandar Maqduni had been the same, and he had been the student of Aristotle from the time when he was thirteen years old. The author of Al-mizan believes that he was Cyrus.

However, it is not definitely known that how long Zul-Qarnayn ruled, what his real name was, how long he lived, whether he was a human or an angel, a prophet or a righteous servant, whether he was Alexander or Cyrus, why his name was Zul-Qarnayn, how much possibilities and forces he had, what part of the land he ruled, how long was the length and the width of the dam he built, what age it was, whether this dam is the Wall in China or not.

Concerning these ideas, opinions are divided, and there have been cited many statements and discussions upon these matters which are not of avail to be mentioned here. The aim should be looked for, not the insignificant matters which produce no guidance.

Therefore, this verse says:

"And they ask you about Zulqarnayn. Say: 'I will recite unto you a remembrance of him'."

The beginning phrase of this verse shows that the story of Zul-qarnyn had been being discussed among people before they came to the Prophet (S) and asked their differences and ambiguities from him.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 84 - 85

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الأَرْضِ وءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَباً

فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَباً

84. "Verily We did make him mighty in the earth, and We granted him the means (of access) to every thing.

85. "So he followed a course."

Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) taught a young man from Balkh a supplication, the Mashlul Supplication, wherein he says:

"O He Who helped Zul-Qarnayn against the tyrannical kings (to overcome them)!"

Again, a tradition from him (as) denotes that Zul-Qarnayn is the one who has the sign of kingdom and prophecy, and who is aware of every thing so that he recognizes the right from wrong; and Allah caused the cities and hearts to be submitted to him.[2]

Zul-Qarnayn and Solayman (Solomon) were two believers who governed the earth, and Nebuchadnezzar (Bukht-un-Nasr) and Namrood were two disbelievers who governed the earth, too.[3]

The power which Allah (s.w.t.) gives to His saints, (such as Solayman, Yusuf, and some believers) is for using it in Allah's way.

Concerning the good servants of Allah, the Qur'an says:

"(They are) those who if We establish them in the land, keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and enjoin right and forbid wrong…"[4]

The holy Qur'an also criticizes those who use their power alongside the way of evil, where it says:

"Have they not considered how many a generation We destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth…?"

They used to misuse their power and governnment. [5]

The verse itself says:

"Verily We did make him mighty in the earth, and We granted him the means (of access) to every thing.

Upon the commentary of the second verse mentioned in the above, it has been cited that Allah gave Zul-Qarnayn both power and government in the earth, and he tried to improve the earth. It has been narrated from Hadrat Ali (as) who said:

"Allah made clouds timid for him in a manner that he could ride on it; and He granted him the means of everything; and He made everywhere bright for him so that the night and the day became the same for him. This is the meaning of making him mighty in the earth."[6]

Thus, the verse means that Allah also gave him a knowledge to perform any affair by means of its course in order to obtain his aim. And, he followed the courses that Allah had taught him to reach the aim, including that he took the way of West to pave.

The verse says:

"So he followed a course."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 86

حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِندَهَا قَوْماً قُلْنَا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّآ أَن تُعَذِّبَ وإِمَّآ أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْناً

86. "Until when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring and he found by it a people. We said: 'O' Zul-Qarnayn! Either you chastise them or you take a way of kindness among them?"

In this holy verse, the Qur'an implies that Zul-Qarnayn went on his journey as far as the end of the habitable places where there was not any more flourished land after that. This does not mean that he reached the site of setting the sun, because none reaches there.

In that place, he felt that the sun was setting in a muddy and dark spring, although, in fact, it was hiding behind that spring, since the sun does not set in water, it is in the sky. If a person is in the seashore or on the sea when the sun is setting, he feels that the sun is setting in the water of the sea, but neither of them is true.

The purpose of the Arabic phrase /'aynin hami'ah/ is 'a muddy spring' while the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /'aynin hamiyah/ is 'a spring of hot water'. However, the Qur'anic term /hami'ah/ is used for 'some bad smelling mud' and 'Some hot mud'.

Ka'b has said that he recited in the Turah that the sun was setting in the mud and water.

The verse says:

"Until when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring and he found by it a people. We said: 'O' Zul-Qarnayn! Either you chastise them or you take a way of kindness among them?"

This part of the holy verse indicates that the people whom Zul-Qarnayn saw by that spring were heathens, therefore the Lord orders him to kill them, or to take them captives and train them.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 87 - 88

قَالَ أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَد إِلَى رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَاباً نكْراً

وَأَمَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلَهُ جَزَآءً الْحُسْنَى وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْراً

87. "He said: 'As for him who is unjust we will chastise him, then he shall be returned to his Lord and He will chastise him with a grievous chastisement'."

88. "But as for him who believes and does righteousness, for him shall be a goodly reward, and we will assign easiness for him by our command."

The duty of a godly leader and governor is execution of justice, and struggling against injustice, and making the social regulations easy.

That was why Zul-Qarnayn warned people in such a manner that the verse says:

"He said: 'As for him who is unjust we will chastise him, then he shall be returned to his Lord and He will chastise him with a grievous chastisement'."

Such cruel and tyrannical people taste both the punishment of this world and the chastisement of the next world.

The person who believes and does righteous deeds, will be given a good reward. He will be faced with kindness and pleasant words, then his duties will not be hard and heavy, and he will not be forced to give heavy taxes.

It seems that the purpose of Zul-Qarnayn from this statement is a hint to this meaning that people, regarding his invitation to Unity and Faith, which is standing against injustice and corruption, will be divided into two groups. Those who accept that godly and constructive program will surely be rewarded a good recompense, and will live in a state of security and ease.

But, those who reject that invitation with enmity, and continue their faithlessness, injustice, and corruption, will be punished.

The verse says:

"But as for him who believes and does righteousness, for him shall be a goodly reward, and we will assign easiness for him by our command."

However, the Qur'anic term /man zalama/ (he who is unjust), which has occurred in contrast with the holy phrase /man'amana wa 'amila salihan/ (he who believes and does righteousness), indicates that the word /zulm/ in this verse means 'infidelity' and also means 'impious deed', which is amongst the bitter fruits of the evil tree of 'disbelief'.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 89 - 91

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَباً

حَتَّي إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَي قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُم مِن دُونِهَا سِتْراً

كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْراً

89. "Then he followed (another) course."

90. "Until when he reached the rising-place of the sun, he found it rising upon a people for whom We had appointed no shelter therefrom.

91. "So (it was), and We encompassed in knowledge whatever was with him."

After his journey to the West and establishing a just religious system there among the inhabitants of the seaside, Zul-Qarnayn made a journey toward the East, too.

The holy verse says:

"Then he followed (another) course."

Zul-Qarnayn continued his journey until when he reached the last flourishing point of that land, where there was no mountain, no tree, and no building.

When the sun rose there, the existing people of that place did refuge into depths of water and places of refuge, and when the sun set, they came out and began working. The purpose of the sentence saying 'they had not any canopy save the sun', is that they lived with passing their lives primitively and without facilities.

As Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) said, they did not know how to build a house, nor did they how to sew. The sun was shining upon them directly and without any barrier, in a manner that their faces had become black. [7]

The verse says:

"Until when he reached the rising-place of the sun, he found it rising upon a people for whom We had appointed no shelter therefrom.

Yes, it was such the affair of Zul-Qarnayn, and Allah was well aware of the means he had for the progression of his aims, and the forces, the arms and the troops Zul-Qarnayn possessed.

The verse says:

"So (it was), and We encompassed in knowledge whatever was with him."

In other words, Allah (s.w.t.) was aware of the works of Zul-Qarnayn, and, before he could do anything and reach any place, Allah knew his fate and taught him and lead him what to do. Thus, Allah admires the actions of Zul-Qarnayn and He shows that He is pleased with his deeds.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 92 - 93

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَباً

حَتَّي إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْماً لاَّ يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلاً

92. "Then he followed (another) course."

93. "Until when he reached between the two barriers (of mountains) he found on the hither side of the two (mountains) a people scarcely able to understand a saying."

The leader of people should inspect every place and be aware of the circumstances of the affairs of those people under his leadership.

The needs and the facts will not be recognized for a person unless there is struggle and research.

And, fundamentally, serving the deprived is a value with Allah, whether they are civilized or not.

In this verse, the Qur'an points to another journey of the journeys of Zul-Qarnayn and implies that after that event, he utilized the important mean he had in his possession.

The verse says:

"Then he followed (another) course."

Zul-Qarnayn continued his way until he reached between two mountains. In that place he found a group of people who were different from those formerly couple of groups. These very people could not speak and understand any word.

The verse says:

"Until when he reached between the two barriers (of mountains) he found on the hither side of the two (mountains) a people scarcely able to understand a saying."

This meaning denotes that he reached a hilly region where he met a group of people who were in a very low level from the point of civilization, because one of the clearest signs of civilization is language.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 94

قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجاً عَلَي أَن تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدّاً

94. "They said: 'O' Zul-Qarnayn! Verily Gog and Magog make mischief in the earth, so may we assign to you a tribute so that you set up a barrier between us and between them?'"

The Arabic word /xiraj/ means 'the thing which come out of the earth', and /xarj/ is applied for 'what comes out of the wealth'.

The commentators and historians, attaching to the existing relationships, say that the objective meaning of Gog and Magog is the very tribes of Mogul and TaTar.[8]

An Islamic tradition, narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'Mineen Ali (as), denotes that he said Zul-Qarnayn found a people who told him:

"The Gog and Magog tribe are behind this mountain. They attack at the season of harvest and plunder all the corns and fruits or destroy them. Shall we assign a yearly tribute in order that you might erect a barrier?"[9]

This communication of theirs with Zul-Qarnayn might be done through some signs, nods, winks or any other mute sign, because, at least, they did not understand the language of Zul-Qarnayn.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' Zul-Qarnayn! Verily Gog and Magog make mischief in the earth, so may we assign to you a tribute so that you set up a barrier between us and between them?'"

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 95 - 97

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَاَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْماً

ءاتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّي إِذَا سَاوَي بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انفُخُوا حَتَّي إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَاراً قَالَ ءَاتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْراً

فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا أَن يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْباً

95. "He said: '(the power) in which my Lord has established me is better (than your tribute), so help me with strength (of men). I will make a barrier between you and between them'."

96. "'Bring me pieces of iron'. Until, when he had leveled up (the gap) between the two cliffs, he said: 'Blow!' Until, when he had made it (as) fire, he said: 'Bring me molten copper to pour thereon'."

97. "So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to scale it nor could they make a hole in it."

The Arabic word /radm/ is used for 'closing a gap'; the term /sadaf/ means: 'side, edge'; the molten copper in Arabic is called /qitr/; and the Qur'anic term /zubur/ means: 'some large pieces of iron'.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Precautionary dissimulation can be a barrier between you and your opponents which is not climbable, or penetrable."[10]

But, in answer to them, Zul-Qarnayn said such like:

"He said: '(the power) in which my Lord has established me is better (than your tribute), so help me with strength (of men). I will make a barrier between you and between them'."

Then, Zul-Qarnayn ordered them as follows:

"'Bring me pieces of iron'..."

When the pieces of iron were made ready, he issued the order of arranging them over each other.

The verse continues saying:

"…Until, when he had leveled up (the gap) between the two cliffs…"

The third order Zul-Qarnayn issued was that they should bring some material from wood and the like of it to be burnt, and put them in both sides of the barrier, and by means of what they had with them, they would blow in the fire, so that the pieces of iron became red and rather melted.

The verse, concerning Zul-Qarnayn's order, says:

"…he said: 'Blow!' Until, when he had made it (as) fire…"

By that way, in fact, Zul-Qarnayn wanted to join the pieces of iron into each other in order to make a solid barrier. By that amazing design, he did the same thing that is practically done today by welding.

Finally, he issued the last order as follows:

"…he said: 'Bring me molten copper to pour thereon'."

Thus, he overlaid that iron collection, the barrier, with a cover of copper in order to protect it from penetration of weather and decay. He made such a barrier, at last, that the Gog and Magog could not climb and they were not able to make a hole in it either.

The verse says:

"So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to scale it nor could they make a hole in it."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 98

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقّاً

98. "He said: 'This is mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it level (with the ground), and the promise of my Lord is ever true'."

Godly men believe that their successes are because of the Mercy of Allah, and they never become proud. Of course, the Mercy and Lordship of Allah are connected to each other. Saintliness of work and effort, stability of the action, people's cooperation, administratorship and industry, and high goals are all a collection of Divine Favours.

Thus, here, Zul-Qarnayn, who was a godly man and had fulfilled a very important accomplishment, did not boast of his action nor did he hold those people under obligation in the same way that the tyrant usually do, but with the utmost courtesy he treated, and:

"He said: 'This is mercy from my Lord..."

Zul-Qarnayn implied that if he had such a knowledge by which he could perform an important action like that, it was from the side of Allah, and his power as well as effectiveness of his word, were from Him, too.

Then he added this meaning that they should not think that their barrier was eternal, but when the promise of Allah comes, it will be made level

with the ground and He will change it into an even land, because the promise of Allah is always true.

The verse say:

"…But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it level (with the ground), and the promise of my Lord is ever true'."

In this statement, Zul-Qarnayn points to the distraction of the world and its disturbance at the threshold of Resurrection.

There are many instructive points in this story, the which, in fact, form the essential aim of the Qur'an. Some of them are as follows:

1. The first lesson that this story teaches us is that no work is possible to be fully done in this world without its means. Therefore, Allah gave the means of success to Zul-Qarnayn.

2. No government can embrace the victory but with encouraging the helpful people and punishing the evildoers. This is the very principal which Zul-Qarnayn utilized. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), in his famous command to Malik-i-Ashtar, which is a consistent instruction for action in governing a country, says:

"…The virtuous and the vicious should not be in equal position before you, because this means dissuasion of the virtuous from virtue and persuasion of the vicious to vice."[11]

3. A difficult duty is never fit for a godly just government, and it was for this very reason that Zul-Qarnayn, after declaring that he would punish the unjust and reward the righteous a good recompense, he added:

"…we will assign easiness for him by our command",

so that the righteous could be able to do it willingly and eagerly.

4. A vast just government cannot be heedless unto the differences and varieties of the life of people and their different conditions.

5. Zul-Qarnayn did not leave out even the group of people who, as the Qur'an says, could not understand a saying, and by any possible means, he listened to them and removed their difficulty.

6. Security is the first and the most important condition of a safe social life. It was for the same reason that Zul-Qarnayn undertook the most labourous works to provide it with them.

7. Another lesson which can be learnt from this historical event, is that the main owners of social pain must take part in performing their own affairs, because their effort will surely be affective.

Principally, an action which proceeds with the participation of the essential owners of the pain both helps the innate talents to be appeared and they value the resulting consequence and try to protect it, for they have tolerated much trouble in its construction.

However, it makes clear that even a nation in the state of being retarded can practically prove such an important and marvelous development when they apply a right design and administratorship.

8. A godly leader must be disrespectful to wealth and material things and be content with what Allah has bestowed upon him. One of the concepts which is found frequently in the Qur'an is that one of most basic statements of the divine prophets is that they demand no wage or wealth from people for their invitation to truth.

9. To secure the affairs from any point of view is another lesson of this Qur'anic story.

10. Howsoever powerful, vigorous, clever, wealthy and authoritative a person may be, and can afford great works, he must never boast and become proud. This is also another lesson that Zul-Qarnayn taught.

11. Every thing will be vanished, and the firmest and strongest buildings of this world will finally be destroyed even though they are built from some massive iron and steel.

This is the last lesson of this event, a lesson for all those who imagine that this world is eternal, and practically try to amass wealth and earn ranks so unconditioned and greedily that as if there is no death and destruction.

Who Were Gog and Magog?

Gog and Magog are mentioned in two suras of the Qur'an. One of them is in the Surah under discussion, and the second is in Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 96.

The verse of the Qur'an clearly shows that these two appellations had belonged to two wild, cruel tribes, who were very troublesome for the people who lived around the center of their living place. For more explanation about them, please refer to: commentary books of Atyab-ul-Bayan, Tafsir-i-Nemunah, Tafsir-i-Kabir, Qara'ib-ul-Qur'an, and Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan.

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 99 - 101

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ مَوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعَاً

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضاً

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَآءٍ عَن ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعاً

99. "And on that day, We shall leave some of them (people) surge against others, and the Trumpet will be blown, then We shall gather them (all) together."

100. "And on that day, We shall present Hell to the disbelievers exposed (to their view)."

101. "Those whose eyes were under a cover from My remembrance, and they could not bear to hear (the Truth)."

Adapting to the discussion of the perfect destruction of Zul-Qarnayn's barrier at the threshold of Resurrection which was mentioned before, here, the Qur'an continues explaining the Day of Hereafter and says:

"And on that day, We shall leave some of them (people) surge against others…"

The usage of the term /yamuj/ (surge) in the verse is either because of the abundance of people in that scene, or for the anxiety and horror that invade the entity of human beings on that day. It seems that their bodies surge like the waves of water.

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"…and the Trumpet will be blown, then We shall gather them (all) together."

From the totality of the verses of the holy Qur'an it is understood that at the end of this world and at the beginning of the coming world, there will happen two great revolutionary events. The first event is the destruction of all human beings and the living creatures in a sudden happening.

The second event is the resurrection of the dead in another sudden occurrence. This event is not known how long after the first happening will occur. These two happenings are referred to in the Qur'an as /nafx-i-sur/ (blown of Trumpet).

After that, the holy Qur'an states the situation of the disbelievers, both the fate of their deeds and the qualities which cause that fate.

It says as follows:

"And on that day, We shall present Hell to the disbelievers exposed (to their view)."

The Hell, with its various chastisements and different painful punishments, appears before them completely clear. This very manifestation of Hell before them and their observation itself is a dreadful punishment for them, still less that they be involved in it.

Who Are Disbelievers & Why Do They Have Such a Fate?

The holy Qur'an introduces the disbelieves in a very short sentence as follows:

"Those whose eyes were under a cover from My remembrance, and they could not bear to hear (the Truth)."

In fact, they had made unserviceable the most important means of truth-seeking, recognition of facts, and whatever causes the factor of happiness and wretchedness of man.

Yes, the feature of Truth is manifest and all the things of this world speak with man through mute tongue, but only there should exist a hearing ear and a seeing eye in him.

Upon the commentary of the holy phrase:

"…whose eyes were under a cover from My remembrance…",

it has been narrated that Imam Rida (as) told Ma'mun:

"The objective meaning of the word /ŏikr/ in this verse is Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as)"[12]

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thqalayn, the commentary, and Kamal-ud-Din-i-Saduq
2. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Surah Al-Hajj, No.22, verse 41
5. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 6
6. (Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 15, P. 119)
7. Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
8. Tatary
9. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
10. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
11. Nahjul-Balaqah, letter No. 53
12. Tafsir-i-Lahiji

Section 12 : The Words of Allah Inexhaustible

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 102

أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَن يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِن دُونِي أَوْلِيَآءَ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلاً

102. "Do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants as guardians besides Me? Verily We have prepared Hell for the infidels to be entertained (therein)."

This holy verse has pointed to a mental deviation of those people. It had been the main origin of their other aberrations.

It says:

"Do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants as guardians besides Me?…"

Have these servants, such as Messiah (as) and the angels, who were worshipped, howsoever much their ranks may be high, any thing from themselves that can support others?

Or, on the contrary, whatever they had were given them from the side of Allah. They themselves needed to be guided by the guidance of Allah, too. This is a fact that those people forgot and, therefore, sunk into disbelief.

For a further emphasis, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily We have prepared Hell for the infidels to be entertained (therein)."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 103 - 104

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم بِالاَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالاً

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعاً

103. "Say: 'Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?"

104. "Those whose effort is lost in this world's life, while they think that they are working good deeds."

This verse, as well as the other verses up to the end of Surah Al-Kahf, not only is an explanation upon the qualities of the faithless persons, but also is a kind of summary for all the subjects which were discussed in this Surah. They are especially the matters concerning the story of the Companions of the Cave, Moses, Khidr, Zul-Qarnayn and their efforts and struggles against their opponents.

At first, it refers to the greatest losers, the most wretched persons among all mankind. But, in order to move the sense of curiosity of the hearers upon such an important subject, the Qur'an propounds it in the form of a question, and commands the Prophet of Islam (S) as follows:

"Say: 'Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?"

Then, immediately after this question, the Qur'an itself answers it, so that the hearer does not spend a long time wandered, and it implies that the greatest losers are:

"Those whose effort is lost in this world's life, while they think that they are working good deeds."

Certainly the meaning of ‘to lose’ in this text is not only that a person loses some profits, but the real loss is that he loses the main capital, too. What a capital can be higher and worthier than intellect, talent, God-given-powers, lifetime, youth, and health.

These very things, which produce our deeds and our actions, are the fruit of our powers and abilities. When these powers turn into some destructive and vain deeds, it seems all of them have lost and vanished.

The true and double loss is where a man loses his own material and spiritual capitals on a wrong and deviated way, and he imagines that he has done a good action. Such a person has neither obtained any useful result from these efforts, nor has he learnt a lesson from that loss, nor is he secured from the repetition of that event.

However, the Islamic traditions denote that this verse has been rendered into the denier of the leadership of Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) and those who postpone the fulfillment of Hajj from today to tomorrow.[1]

Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said the referent of a concept of this verse were the people of the Book, who were legitimate at first, then they brought some innovations in religion while they were working good deeds. Then he (as) added the people of Nahrawan were not less than them.[2]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 105 - 106

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَآيَاتِ رَبِّـهِمْ وَلِقَآئِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزْناً

ذَلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَاتَّخَذُوا ءَايَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُواً

105. “They are those who disbelieved in the signs of their Lord and meeting Him (in Hereafter) so their deeds became null, and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight for them.”

106. “Thus Hell is their recompense for what they disbelieved and took My Signs and My messengers in mockery.”

The Arabic term /habt/ philologically means: the belly of an animal swallowed because of eating some poisonous plants and the animal exposes to death. Whoever sees such an animal thinks that it is safe and sound with plenty of meat, while its belly is full of wind and the flesh of its body is poisonous.

Some deeds of men which are considered vain are called /habt/ because those deeds have been poisoned by committing sins, and, therefore, they are empty and have been exposed to destruction.

Thus, the Qur’an in this verse implies that the disbelievers denied the divine revelations and His reasons, as well as the reward and retribution of Allah, and they spoiled their deeds thereby. They performed those actions in a way that Allah had not enjoined.

Therefore, such people will not be worthy and respectable with Allah on the Day of Resurrection. He will not heed them, and by punishing them, He will despise them and abase them.

In Arabic language, when it is said that a thing has not weight, it means that the thing is worthless. In other words, since they have not any action which can be worthy and measurable, then there will not be set a scale for them on the Day of Hereafter to weigh their deeds. Yes, they will not have

anything to be weighed and, therefore, there will be no need of preparing a scale.

A well-known tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) denotes:

"On the Day of Reckoning, the fat and heavy men of this life will bring a body in the court of Allah the weight of which is not as heavy as the wing of a fly."

The reason of it is that their deeds, thoughts, and personalities have utterly been empty and vain in this world.

The verse says:

"They are those who disbelieved in the signs of their Lord and meeting Him (in Hereafter) so their deeds became null, and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight for them."

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that the disbelievers denied three basic principles of the religious belief: (Origin and End and the prophethood of the prophets), or farther than denial, they took them in mockery.

The verse says:

"Thus Hell is their recompense for what they disbelieved and took My Signs and My messengers in mockery."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verses 107 - 108

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلاً

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلاً

107. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds there is for them Gardens of Paradise for their entertainment."

108. "Abiding therein forever, they desire no removal therefrom."

The qualities of disbelievers, the greatest losers among people, and their fate was rather widely defined. Now, the Qur'an, as a frame of reference before the disbelievers, refers to believers and their fate, so that the situation of both parties becomes quietly clear and distinguished.

In this regard, the holy Qur'an says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds there is for them Gardens of Paradise for their entertainment."

The Qur'anic term /firdaus/ is a garden which contains all the bounties and the whole necessary merits. Thus, it is the best and the most privileged gardens of Paradise.

The holy Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"Paradise has one hundred degrees, the best of which is 'Firdaus'. Whenever you supplicate, ask 'Firdaus' from Allah."[3]

In view of the fact that the perfection of a bounty is that it does not face with extinction, immediately after that, the Qur'an adds:

"Abiding therein forever…"

The fastidious and desirous nature of man constantly asks for variety and changing, yet the inhabitants of 'Firdaus' will never demand removal from it, for whatever they wish they find there, even variety and perfection.

The verse continues saying:

"…they desire no removal therefrom."

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 109

قُل لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَاداً لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّـي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَن تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّـي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَداً

109. "Say: 'If the sea became ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, the sea would certainly be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even though We brought the like of it to help'."

The Arabic term /midad/ is applied for the ink which is poured into an inkpot and is used as a means of drawing the pen on the paper.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /kalimat-i-rabb/ is either the divine promises and the created things, or the godly philosophies and conceptions, or Divine revelations and whatever has a sign from Allah. Thus, every particle, every atom, and every cell is one of the Words of Allah.

However, in the occasions of revelation of this verse it is said that when the Jews heard this sentence from the Prophet of Islam (S) saying:

"…and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little."[4]

They said how such a matter could be right while the Jews were given the Turah, and whoever has been given the Turah indeed has been given abundant good. Then the abovementioned verse was revealed and illustrated the infinite knowledge of Allah and that man's little knowledge is aught before it.

Some other commentators believe that the Jews told the Prophet (S) that Allah had given him wisdom and

"…whoever has been given wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good"[5]***,***

but when they asked him (S) about the spirit, he replied them an ambiguous answer. Then the abovementioned verse was revealed and declared that however much a man may be learned his knowledge is aught before the knowledge of Allah.[6]

Therefore, this verse and the verse after it are concerned to the whole subjects of this Surah. As if the Qur'an intends to say that the information of the events of the Companions of the Cave, Moses, Khidr, and Zul-Qarnayn are not so important when the infinite knowledge of Allah is considered.

The holy Qur'an, addressing the holy Prophet of Islam (S), says:

"Say: 'If the sea became ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, the sea would certainly be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even though We brought the like of it to help'."

In this verse, indeed, the Qur'an attracts the attentions to this fact that you should not think that the world of existence is confined to what you see, or to what you know, or to what you feel.

But it is so great and vast that if the water of the seas became ink for writing the names, qualities, specialties, secrets and mysteries of it, the seas would be used up before the whole of the creatures of the existing world could be counted.

It is noteworthy that the abovementioned verse, not only illustrates the infinite vastness of the world of existence in the past, present, and future, but also it is an illustration of the infinite knowledge of Allah, because we know that Allah has encompassed in His knowledge whatever exists, and

whatever will come into being, in the expanse of existence. Even more, His knowledge is not separate from the existence of these creatures.

Then, in other words, it can be said that if all the oceans throughout of the world became ink and all the trees became pens they are never sufficiently able to record the number of whatever exists in the knowledge of Allah.

At the end, there is a tradition cited in the commentary book of Ali-ibn-Ibrahim Qummi, and in the commentary book of Al-Burhan, narrated from Abi-Basir, from Imam Sadiq (as) who, concerning the commentary of this verse, said:

"I inform you that the Word of Allah has neither an end, nor has it finite, nor does it cause to eternity."[7]

Surah Al-Kahf - Verse 110

قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَي إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلاً صَالِحاً وَلا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَداً

110. "Say: 'I am only a mortal like you. It is revealed unto me that your God is (only) One God. Therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord (in Hereafter) let him do righteousness, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord."

This holy verse, which is the last verse of Surah Al-Kahf, contains a collection of fundamental principles of the religious beliefs, such as, Unity, Resurrection, and the prophethood of the holy Prophet (S). This is, in fact, the same as what the beginning of the Surah Al-Kahf has begun with.

Since the subject of prophethood among common people has always been accompanied with kinds of exaggeration and extravagance in the length of its history, the Qur'an states it as follows:

"Say: 'I am only a mortal like you..."

Thus, by this meaning, he nullified all the imaginary polytheistic privileges which promoted the divine prophets from the rank of human to the rank of divinity, and said that the only his privilege was that it was revealed unto him.

Then, among all the subjects which are revealed, he emphasizes on the subject of Unity and says:

"…It is revealed unto me that your God is (only) One God..."

In this part of the verse, only the subject of Unity has been pointed out, because Unity is not merely a principle out of the fundamentals of belief, but it is the essence of all fundamental principles and the positive laws of Islam.

If, through a simple example, we similarize the Islamic teachings, containing the fundamental principles and positive laws of the religion to the jewelly beads of a jewelry, Unity should be similarized to the string that has joined these beads to each other and has formed, from all of them, a worthy beautiful necklace.

That is why that some Islamic traditions indicate that the holy phrase /la'ilaha'illallah/ (There is not god save Allah) is a firm fortress, and whoever enters it will be safe from the punishment of Allah.

The third sentence of this verse points to the subject of Resurrection, which is connected to the subject of Unity with the Arabic conjunction /f/, where it says:

"…Therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord (in Here-after) let him do righteousness…"

Meeting the Lord, which is the innate observation of His Pure Essence by the eye of the heart and the inside spiritual insight, is also possible for the true believers in this world, too. But in Hereafter, because of observing more effects with more clear manifestation of Him, it will become general for the common.

The reality of the righteous deed is referred to through a short statement in the last sentence of the verse.

It says:

"…and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord."

In another more clear statement, an action will not be counted 'a righteous deed' unless the reality of purity and sincerity accompanies it. In fact, the righteous deed which has originated from a godly motive and sincerity, and has mixed with it, is the passport unto the meeting of Allah.

The righteous deed is so important in Islam that the Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

"The person who performs his deeds with sincerity for forty days, Allah will flow the springs of wisdom and knowledge from his heart to his tongue."

It can be concluded that this holy verse has referred to both Unity (only One God), and prophethood (It is revealed unto me), and Resurrection (to meet his Lord in Hereafter), and hope to the mercy of Allah (whoever hopes), and effort and endeavour to reach it (let him do righteousness), and purity in action (and make none sharer).

That was why the Prophet (S) said:

"If only the last verse of Surah Al-Kahf were revealed to my community, it would be sufficient for them."[8]

Finally, upon the content of this verse, there have been narrated many traditions concerning the importance of sincerity and the danger of hypocrisy and hidden polytheism. Some of them are as follows:

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Allah, the Exalted, will not accept any action in which there is a tiny amount of hypocrisy." [9]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) in a tradition said:

"Verily Allah has forbidden the Paradise forevery hypocrite, man and woman; and piety is not (found) in beauty of face and clothing, but piety is (found) in serenity and solemnity." [10]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The Fire (of Hell) and its people will cry because of the punishment of hypocrites".

Then he (S) was asked:

"O Prophet! How (and why) does the Fire (of Hell) cry?"

He answered:

"Because of (the intense of) the heat of the Fire by which they (the hypocrites) will be punished."[11]

4. It is narrated by'Abi-Basir who said:

"I heard'Aba-'Abdillah (Imam Sadiq) (as) said:

'On the Day of Hereafter, the servant, who had established prayer, will be brought and he says: 'O Lord! I have prayed for your pleasure'.

He will be answered:

'But you prayed in order to be said what a good prayer so and so has established. Take him unto the Fire.'

Then, he said:

'The same manner will be treated with the one who has struggled, has recited the Qur'an, and has given alms'."[12]

5. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Verily, more than anything else, I fear about you for the minor polytheism'.

He was asked:

'O' Messenger of Allah! What is the minor polytheism?'

He answered:

'Hypocrisy'.

Then he said:

'On the Day of Hereafter, when Allah, Almighty and Glorious, recompenses the deeds of the servants, He will tell the hypocrites: 'Go unto those for whom you used to act hypocritically in the world, and see whether you find the recompense of your actions with them'." [13]

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, and Abul-Futuh
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. Tafsir-i-Majma'-ul-Bayan
4. Surah Al-'Isra, No. 17, verse 85
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 269
6. Tafsir Qurtubi, pp. 4107 and 4108, and Tafsir-us- Safi, Surah Al-'Isra, No. 17, verse 85
7. Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn 'Ibrahim, vol. 2, p.46, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 2, p. 496
8. Tafsir-i-Dur-ul-Mamthur
9. Jami'-i-'Ahadith-ush-Shi'ah, vol.1, p. 368
10. Jami'-i-'Ahadith-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 370
11. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p.500, and Jami'-i-'Ahadith-ush-Shi'ah, vol.1, p. 369
12. Jami'-i-'Ahadith-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 368
13. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 499

Surah Maryam, Chapter 19

Surah Maryam, (Mary)

(Revealed in Mecca)

No. 19

98 verses in 6 sections

Introduction to the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Maryam, as arranged in the Book, is the nineteenth Surah of the holy Quran. It contains 98 verses which have been revealed in Mecca.

Similar to other Meccan Suras, the content of this Surah is mostly about matters concerning the Hereafter, the end of the evil-doers, the rewards of the good-doers, and part of the account of the lives of Zakariyya (Zachariah), Mary, Jesus, Yahya (John), Abraham, Ishmael and Idris (Enoch).

It is recorded in Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan that, in the last few verses of Surah Maryam, Allah says that the purpose of revealing this Surah is to give ‘glad tidings and warnings’, and this aim has been followed in the beautiful form of the story of the prophets’ lives.

Allah has mentioned no woman in the Qur’an directly by her proper name except Mary, and the name ‘Mary’ occurs 34 times in the Qur’an. The only Surah, which has been entitled by the name of a woman in the Qur’an, is this very Surah, Surah Mary.

For the virtue of studying this Surah, it has been cited that whoever continues reciting this Surah (whenever he can), he will not die save that Allah will suffice him in life, wealth and children.[1]

There is no doubt, of course, that the one will make himself free from want from others by means of practicing the contents of this Surah.

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan

Section 1: Zachariah and John

Surah Maryam - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

كهيعص

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّآ

إِذْ نَادَي رَبَّهُ نِدَآءً خَفِيّاً

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Kaf'k',Ha'h',Ya'y','Ain ''A',Sad's'."

2. (This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord unto His servant Zachariah."

3. "When he called upon his Lord in secret."

The mentioned letters are among the 'Abbreviated Letters' of the Qur'an in which some mysteries and secrets are hidden. Some Islamic traditions indicate that each of these letters is a sign of one of the great names of Allah (The Names Most Beautiful). Kaf 'K' refers to /kafi/ (The Sufficient); Ha 'H' refers to /hadi/ (The Guide); Ya 'Y' refers to /waliyy/ (The Friend, The Protector, The Surety, The Patron); 'Ain 'A' refers to /'alim/ (The Knower); and Sad 'S' refers to /sadiq-ul-wa'd/ (The One Who is Truthful in His promises). Sometimes, in some supplications, Allah (s.w.t.) is invoked through these abbreviated letters, in this manner:

"O Lord! by Ka, Ha, Ya, 'Ain, Sad."

In a supplication, for instance, Hadrat Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"O Allah! We ask you, O'Kaf, Ha, Ya, 'Ain, Sad!"[1]

Some Islamic traditions state that these abbreviated letters indicate the event of the uprising of Imam Hussayn in Karbala, as follows: Kaf refers to 'Karbala', Ha refers to 'Halak' (the slaughter of the Prophet's progeny), Ya refers to 'Yazid', 'Ain refers to the subject of 'Atash (thirst), and Sad refers to 'Sabr' (the patience and steadfastness of Imam Hussayn and his self-sacrificing supporters).

It should be noted, of course, that the verses of the Qur'an have the capacity to have different meanings but despite the variety of meanings, they do not conflict with each other.

After the abbreviated letters at the beginning of Surah Maryam, the first verse concerning the story of Zachariah begins.

It says:

"(This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord unto His servant Zachariah."

This event occurred at the time when Zachariah was very worried and sad because he did not have a child, and he, worshipping Him, called upon his Lord secretly.

The verse says:

"When he called upon his Lord in secret."

The Arabic term /nida/ means 'to call with a loud voice', and the Qur'anic word /xafiyya/ means 'in secret' not in a low voice, since such a call cannot be performed 'silently', but it can be done secretly.

Perhaps, the invocation of Zachariah, done in secret, was for the reason that his people would not scoff at him by saying why that old man wished Allah for a son.

Some Islamic literature indicates that the best supplication is that which is asked in secret, and the best provision is that which is sufficient. [2]

Surah Maryam - Verses 4 - 5

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْباً وَلَمْ أَكُن بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيّاً

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِن وَرَآءِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِراً فَهَبْ لِي مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيّاً

4. "He said: 'My Lord! verily my bones are weakened and my head is all aflame with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never been unblessed in prayer to You."

5. "And verily I fear my kindred after I am gone, and my wife is barren. So grant me from your presence a successor (a child)."

Zachariah invoked Allah saying that his bones, the pillars of his body and its most solid parts, were weakened and his head was all aflame with hoariness. By this statement, Zachariah might have wanted to say that the harbinger of death had been placed on his head and he had to get ready for death.

Here is the verse:

"He said: 'My Lord! verily my bones are weakened and my head is all aflame with hoariness…"

Then, immediately after that statement, he adds that he had been accustomed to the acceptance of his supplications by his Lord and that He had never withheld His blessings from him. Now that he was old and feeble, he was more in need of answers to his prayers, and that he would not be unblessed.

The verse continues saying:

"…and, my Lord! I have never been unblessed in prayer to You."

After that, he explained his supplication to Allah, as follows:

"And verily I fear my kindred after I am gone, and my wife is barren. So grant me from your presence a successor (a child)."

Explanations

The Arabic word /'aqir/ is applied for a man or a woman that cannot produce offspring.

The term /'išti'al/ means: 'the blaze of a fire when it flames and spreads'. Thus, the holy phrase 'and my head is all aflame with hoariness' means that the whiteness of the hair on my head blazed like fire and has spread.

Some of the commentators have said that the objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /waliyy/, mentioned in this holy verse, is 'a righteous son who succeeds the father'. Imam Sadiq (as) said that Zachariah's anxiety was about his uncle and his cousins.[3]

Surah Maryam - Verses 6 - 8

يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيّاً

يَا زَكَرِيَّآ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلاَمٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَي لَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ مِن قَبْلُ سَمِيّاً

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلاَمٌ وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِراً وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيّاً

6. "(One that) shall be my inheritor and the inheritor of the posterity of Jacob; and make him, my Lord, well-pleasing."

7. (His prayer was answered:) O' Zakariyya! verily We give you good tidings of a son whose name is Yahya (John). We have given the same name to none before (him)."

8. "He said: 'My Lord! How shall there be for me a son while my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age?'"

Zachariah, the prophet, in his prayer, invoked Allah to grant him a successor to be the inheritor of him and the posterity of Jacob, and He would make him well-pleasing.

The verse says:

"(One that) shall be my inheritor and the inheritor of the posterity of Jacob; and make him, my Lord, well-pleasing."

The purpose of the phrase 'to inherit', here, has been rendered differently by the Islamic commentators. Some of them believe that 'heritage' in this verse is heritage in properties, while some others have said that it refers to the rank of prophethood.

A group of the commentators have also thought that the objective meaning of it is an inclusive concept which probably envelops both of them.

Many of the Shi'ite scholars have taken the first interpretation, while some Sunnite scholars have seized the second meaning, and some others, among Islamic scholars, such as: Sayyid-i-Qutb in Fi-Zilal and'Alusi in Rouh-ul-Ma'ani, have chosen the third idea.

Those who have taken it, confined to the inheritance of property, have reasoned to the existence of the word /yariu/ (inheritor) in this sense. For, when this word is used apart from other evidences, it means 'the inheritance of the wealth'.

But when it is used in the sense of spiritual affairs, it is usually for the sake of the existence of some evidence in that verse; like Surah Fatir, No 95, verse 32 which says:

"Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants…"

Moreover, the wife of Zachariah, who was from the progeny of Solayman-ibn-Dawood, regarding the very good condition of Solayman and Dawood's wealth, had inherited some considerable properties.

Zachariah was afraid that those properties would be obtained by some impious persons who might amass them, or use them in a false way, which itself could be the source of a corruption in the society.

That was why he asked his Lord to grant him a righteous child so that this offspring might protect those properties and spend them in the best way.

It is narrated in a tradition that Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as), the pure daughter of the Prophet of Islam (S), reasoned to defend her claim to Fadak. This incident is another evidence upon the above idea.

The Late Tabarsi, in his book'Ihtijaj, has said regarding this issue concerning the Lady of Islam (as), as follows:

When some people had decided to withhold Fadak from Fatimah (as), and she was informed of it, she said:

"Is there in the Book of Allah that you inherit from your father and I do not inherit from my father? Verily you have done a very indecent thing.4 Did you deliberately leave out from the Book of Allah where, in the story of Yahya-ibn-Zakariyya, it says: 'O Lord! Grant me from Your presence a successor (a child); (One that) shall be my inheritor and the inheritor of the posterity of Jacob?'"

For more information on the idea of 'inheritance' as something spiritual, or both spiritual and material you may refer to Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan, as well as other great commentaries of Islamic scholars.

However, the Arabic word /radiyy/ means both: 'being well-pleased with Allah' and 'being loved by people'. The rank of Allah being well-pleased with a person, and vice versa, is the best rank, a great salvation.

The subsequent verse states that the prayer of Zachariah was accepted in the presence of Allah, an acceptance with full grace and particular favour.

The words of Allah in the verse are recited as follows:

"(His prayer was answered:) O' Zakariyya! Verily We give you good tidings of a son whose name is Yahya (John). We have given the same name to none before (him)."

The Qur'anic phrase 'the same name to none before (him)' means either that the name 'Yahya' had not been used before him, or that such personal qualities were not found in any one before him.

Zachariah, who did not see the relevant preconditions to assist in gaining what he desired, asked Allah to explain the circumstance for him.

The verse says:

"He said: 'My Lord! How shall there be for me a son while my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age?'"

Zachariah, saying:

"How shall there be for me a son…?"

means whether he and his wife would become young again, or they would have a child in the same state of old age.[5]

Yes, even the prophets' knowledge is limited, and their surprise about something does not contrast with the rank of their prophethood.

However, the Qur'anic word /'itiyya/ means 'to go beyond the limit' which is usually said upon a person whose body has lost its elasticity as a result of old age.

Imam Baqir (as) said that five years elapsed between the time when the glad tidings was given and when the birth of Yahya occurred.[6]

Surah Maryam - Verses 9 - 10

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئاً

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَل لّي ءَايَةً قَالَ ءَايَتُكَ أَلاَّ تُكَلّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلاَثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيّاً

9. "He said: 'So (it will be)'. Your Lord says: 'It is easy for Me, for indeed I created you aforetime when you were nothing'."

10. "He (Zachariah) said: 'My Lord! appoint for me a sign.' Said He: 'Your sign is that you shall not be able to speak to the people for three nights, though sound (in health)."

Allah (s.w.t.) is able to do every thing and every work is easy for Him, as in this verse, He says:

"It is easy for Me".

In Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 22 and in Surah At-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 7, the words are recited:

"…that is easy to Allah";

and in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verses 20 and 106, it is recited:

"…Allah is All-powerful over everything";

and in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 45 the Qur'an says:

"…Allah is omnipotent over everything".

Therefore, Zachariah asked Allah how that matter could happen, and He said:

"So (it will be)"

and Allah (s.w.t.) can strengthen his power in old age to give him offspring.

In other words, Allah is the One Who is able to create all things from aught, and then it is not surprising that He bestows a child upon Zachariah in his old age and in those conditions.

The verse says:

"He said: 'So (it will be)'. Your Lord says: 'It is easy for Me, for indeed I created you aforetime when you were nothing'."

By hearing the abovementioned hope-inspiring statement, Zachariah became very happy and encouraged and the light of hopefulness illuminated his entire being, however, since that message was very magnificent and constructive for him, he asked Allah for a sign, as follows:

"He (Zachariah) said: 'My Lord! appoint for me a sign.'…"

No doubt Zachariah believed in Allah's promise, but, in order to be more assured, he asked Him for such a sign. This was similar to Abraham's, way who was certain of the Resurrection, yet he asked to see an aspect of the resurrection in this world in order that his heart would become more certain.

Then Zachariah (as) received this answer:

"…Said He: 'Your sign is that you shall not be able to speak to the people for three nights, though sound (in health)."

During those three days and nights Zachariah's tongue (as) could move only for prayers to Allah (s.w.t.) as well as in supplicating unto Him.

This was a clear sign, of course, in that a person would not able to speak with people while his tongue and his body were utterly sound and he could pray and worship to Allah fluently.

In the books of commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan, of At-Tabari, and Al-Mizan, it has been said that, at the time of recitation of the Divine communications and the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.), Zachariah's tongue could utter words fluently and correctly, but when he wanted to use his tongue to speak with people, his tongue remained silent.

Of course, Zachariah (as) asked Allah (s.w.t.) for a sign to recognize between right and wrong, and between the divine revelations and satanic delusions.[7]

This itself is an evidence to the fact that all our actions are under the Will and device of Allah, so that if He let not we are not able to speak even when we are in a complete health.

Surah Maryam - Verse 11

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيّاً

11. "Then he went out (of the sanctuary) unto his people and made signs unto them that they should glorify (Allah) morning and evening."

The Qur'anic word /bukrah/ is used for the length of time between the dawn until the sunrise.

The term /mihrab/ (sanctuary) is called such since it is a fighting-place against Satan and the temptations which hinder man's concentration of thought. Perhaps, the sanctuaries of the Children of Israel had been the same places of prayer which people had chosen for their Divine service and they worshipped therein.

According to what Tabarsi and Fakhr-i-Razi have said, the purpose of /tasbih/ (to glorify), used in this verse, is 'prayer', because 'prayer' contains 'glorification'. After this glad tidings and that clear Sign, Zachariah came out of his prayer niche and went unto his people.

Then he signed to them that they should glorify Allah every morning and evening. For, the result of the great bounty, which Allah had bestowed Zachariah, would encompass all those people and could be effective in their fate totally.

The verse says:

"Then he went out (of the sanctuary) unto his people and made signs unto them that they should glorify (Allah) morning and evening."

Moreover, this bounty, which was counted a miracle, could firm the foundations of belief in their hearts.

Some Traditions

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The most beloved sayings with Allah, the Glorious, is that the servant says: 'Glory be to my Lord and praise be to Him'."[8]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever glorifies Allah thirty times every day, Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, may remove seventy afflictions from him, the least of which is poverty."[9]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The hymns of Fatimatuz-Zahra, after every prayer, is more beloved with me than one thousand units (rak'ah) of prayer in a day."[10]

Surah Maryam - Verses 12 - 13

يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيّاً

وَحَنَاناً مِن لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيّاً

12. "'O' Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might.' And We gave him wisdom (apostleship) while yet a child."

13. "And (also) compassion from Us and piety and he was God-fearing."

The Qur'anic term /hukm/ means: 'knowledge and understanding.'[11] It has also been applied in the sense of 'ability and judgment'[12], while it is cited in Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan that the objective meaning of /hukm/, in this verse, is: 'knowledge unto the Divine sciences and the removal of the curtain of Unseen'.

Three persons became prophets in childhood. They were Solomon, Jesus, and John (as). There were also three persons who became Imam in their childhood: Imam Jawad (the ninth Imam), Imam Hadi (the tenth Imam) and Imam Mahdi (the twelfth Imam), peace be upon them all, because the rank of prophethood and Imamate is granted by Allah.

Moreover, Divine prophets and the Immaculate Imams were bestowed upon all virtues and sciences in the same World of Light. Therefore they could speak and solve the problems even when they were in the wombs of their mothers, in their cradles, and at the moment of their birth.

There are recorded many Islamic traditions in this regard in which it is also said that even Siddighah-Tahirah, who was neither a prophet nor an Imam, had this quality, too.[13]

However, former verses denoted that Allah bestowed on Zachariah a son named Yahya (John) when he was in old age.

Following that matter, in this verse, the great commandment of Allah unto John is recited, as follows:

"'O' Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might.'…"

The objective meaning of 'the Book' here is Turah, and the purpose of 'taking hold of the Book with might' is that he should carry through its content with an intensive sharp conclusiveness, and should act accordingly, so that he could enjoy any material and spiritual power, whether personal and social, in the way of its expansion and generalization.

Next to this commandment, the Qur'an points to the merits that Allah had granted to John, or he had obtained them with the grace of Allah, where it says:

"…And We gave him wisdom (apostleship) while yet a child."

1. Allah gave him the command of prophethood, wisdom, talent and perspicacity in childhood.

2. And he was also given mercy and compassion in respect to people from the side of Allah:

"And also compassion from Us…"

3. And Allah gave him piety and purity of soul, spirit, and action:

"…piety…"

4. And he avoided whatever was other than the command of Allah:

"…and he was God-fearing."

By the way, the Qur'anic term /hanan/ means 'compassion, kindness'. Thus, it was the compassion of Allah to John and John's love to Allah, which caused the kindness of people to John and John's affection unto people, all of which were from the Grace of Allah and His Mercy.

Surah Maryam - Verses 14 - 15

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُن جَبَّاراً عَصِيّاً

وَسَلاَمٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيّاً

14. "And kindness to his parents, and (unto the people) he was neither insolent (nor) disobedient."

15. "And peace on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive!"

Hadrat Yahya (John) was very kind to his parents and obeyed them. He tried to make them happy, because obeying parents is obligatory, and opposing them is forbidden. He also did not commit any sin, transgression, and was never proud. He hurt no one.

The verse says:

"And kindness to his parents, and (unto the people) he was neither insolent (nor) disobedient."

Therefore, since Yahya (as) was qualified with all prominent epithets and great honours, then peace upon him, as the verse says:

"And peace on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive!"

Some commentators have said that the most horrible states of a person may appear in three circumstances:

1) The day when he comes out from the mother's womb and enters into the world.

2) The day he dies and finds himself among the people whom he has not seen.

3) The day when he will be raised alive and finds himself in a great place of gathering. Allah favoured John by His Grace and endowed security on him in these three circumstances. Thus, Yahya (John) passed all the narrow passages successfully with the safety of religion and belief in Allah.

To hold dear the annual birthday, and remembrance of the annual day of death of the saints of Allah, of course, is a Qur'anic matter.

Some Points Upon John's Martyrdom

Not only was the birth of John marvelous, but so was his death from some points of view. Most Muslim historians, as well as some famous Christian sources, have recorded the event of this martyrdom, (with slight differences), as follows:

Yahya (John) was sacrificed because of the liaison one of the tyrants of his age had with a woman related to him within the forbidden degrees. Herod, the sensual king of Palestine, was in love with Herodias, his niece, whose beauty had captured his heart in the fire of love. Therefore, he decided to marry her.

When Yahya (John), the great prophet of Allah (as), was informed of this he promptly announced there and then that their marriage was unlawful and it was contrary to the laws of the Torah and that Yahya (John) would struggle against it.

This news was spread throughout the city and the woman, Herodias, became aware of it. She, considered Yahya (John) the greatest barrier on her way, and decided to take revenge upon him at the most suitable opportunity, and remove this obstruction in her way.

She intensified her relation with her uncle and made her beauty as a trap for him. She had such a deep influence that one day Herod told her to ask him whatever desire she had and she could be certain that her demand would assuredly be performed.

Horodias said that she wanted nothing but the head of Yahya, because Yahya had defamed both of them, and all people found fault concerning them. She replied if Herod wanted to comfort her heart and make her happy, he should do that accomplishment.

Herod, who was madly in love of that lady, inattentive to the end of that action, submitted and very soon the head of John was presented to that wicked woman. But, finally, the painful results of that hideous action encompassed her.[14]

Some Islamic traditions indicate that Imam Hussayn (as) the Great Martyr, said;

"From among the mean aspects of this world is that the head of Yahya-ibn-Zachariah was brought as a present to a wicked woman from the Children of Israel."

This statement means that, from this point of view, the conditions of Yahya and those of Imam Hussayn (as) were alike, because one of the aims of his rising was standing against the evil deeds of the tyrant of his time, Yazid.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
2. Tafsir-i-Majma'-ul-Bayan
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
4. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 27
5. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 176
7. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan
8. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 466
9. Amali by Sadugh, p. 55
10. Muhajjat-ul-Bayda', vol. 2, p. 348
11. Lisan-ul-'Arab
12. Qamus-ul-Qur'an
13. Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan, and Reyhanatun-Nabiyy, p. 60
14. Some Evangels and some religious literatures denote that Herod married his brother's wife, which was forbidden in the laws of the Turah. Yahya scorned him for that action. Them that woman, by misusing the beauty of her daughter, caused Herod to kill Yahya (John). (The Gospel according to ST. Matthew, Chapter 14; and accrding to ST. Mark, Chapter 6, No. 17 on)

Section 2: Mary and Jesus

Surah Maryam - Verses 16 - 17

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَاناً شَرْقِيّاً

فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِن دُونِهِمْ حِجَاباً فَأَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَراً سَوِيّاً

16. "And mention in the Book about Mary when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place."

17. "So she took a veil (to screen herself) apart from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said that Mary was one of the four typical godly women.

The Arabic term /nabaŏa/ means: 'to throw away something inattentively', while the Qur'anic word /'intibaŏ/ is used for 'seeking retirement from people'. Since Mary was dedicated to 'The Remote Mosque', she had chosen a corner in the east of the mosque for herself.

After the statement of the explanation about Yahya (John), through these holy verses, the Qur'an refers to the story of Jesus (as) and his mother's fate, because there is a close connection between these two occurrences.

The birth of Yahya (John) to an aged father and a barren mother was a wonderful thing, but the birth of Jesus, from a mother without a father, was something even more marvelous.

It is surprising, of course, for a person be given wisdom and prophethood in childhood, but it is more surprising than that that he, as a baby, speaks in cradle concerning the Book and prophecy.

However, both of them are signs of the Power of Allah, the Exalted, and, they both concerned people who had a very close blood relationship with each other, because John's mother was Mary's maternal aunt both of whom were barren and longed for a righteous child.

The verse says:

"And mention in the Book about Mary when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place."

In fact she humbly and anonymously withdrew from her family and went to a place in the temple free from any disturbance in order to pray and to tell her secrets to Allah.

At this time, Mary put a veil between herself and those people to screen herself away from them so that her private place could be suitable for worship and away from the prying eyes of people.

The verse says:

"So she took a veil (to screen herself) apart from them..."

Then one of the great angels (Holy Spirit), in the form of a perfect handsome man, without any defect, presented himself to Mary and, by the might of Allah, fulfilled his mission.

It was just as Allah, the Most High, in the Qur'an says:

"Blessed be He in Whose hand is Domination; and He is All-Powerful over everything."[1]

The verse under discussion continues saying:

"…Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man."

Surah Maryam - Verses 18 - 20

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنكَ إِن كُنتَ تَقِيّاً

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلاَماً زَكِيّاً

قَالَتْ َنَّي يَكُونُ لِي غُلامٌ وَلَمْ َمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيّاً

18. "She said: 'Verily I take refuge in the Beneficent (Allah) from you! if you are God-fearing."

19. "He (the angel) said: 'Verily I am only a messenger of your Lord that I bestow on you a pure son'."

20. "She said: 'How shall there be for me a son while no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste."

One of the recommendations of Allah to His Messengers is that they should take refuge in Allah. Therefore, this state has been the moral life of the prophets and the saints of Allah, and that is why when the pious persons feel the probability of committing sin, they tremble in fear and take refuge in Allah, The Beneficent.

It is evident that, at that time, a great fear overcame her when this pious woman saw that a handsome foreigner had entered her sanctuary, therefore, she immediately said:

"'Verily I take refuge in the Beneficent (Allah) from you! if you are God-fearing."

Her Mentioning the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, and qualifying Him by His general mercy, on the one hand and encouraging the man to piety and being God-fearing, on the other, were all intended to deter that unfamiliar man if he had intended something evil.

By saying these words, Mary was expecting a reaction from the stranger, an expectation laden with fear and abundant anxiety.

But this situation did not last very long, and the stranger spoke and stated his great mission:

"He (the angel) said: 'Verily I am only a messenger of your Lord…"

This statement comforted Mary's pure heart, as if water was poured over a fire.

But this relief did not last long, because immediately after that he added that he had come to bestow on her a son who would be pure from the point of temper, manner, body, and spirit.

The verse continues saying:

"…that I bestow on you a pure son'."

However, the term /zakiyy/, used in the verse, is derived from /zakat/ in the sense of: 'purity, growth, and blessing', while the word /baqyan/, here, means 'a prostitute'.

In this Surah the subject of being granted a child from Allah has been mentioned several times: the bestowal of Jesus to Mary in verse 19; that of Isaac and Jacob to Abraham in verse 49. Moreover the remittal of Aaron to Moses in verse 53; and the glad tidings of a child to Zachariah in verse 7 are among them.

Having a child is something of great value, but greater than this is the purity of the child.

By hearing these word, Mary was seized with a severe trembling and again she became very worried.

In that situation, and only thinking about the natural means of having a child, she wondered and:

"She said: 'How shall there be for me a son while no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste."

Surah Maryam - Verses 21 - 23

قَالَ كَذَلِكِ قَالَ رَبكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيّـِنٌ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ ءَايَةً لّـِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مّـِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْراً مقْضِيّاً

فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانتَبَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَاناً قَصِيّاً

فَاَجَآءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَي جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنتُ نَسْياً مَنْسِيّاً

21. "He said: 'So (it will be)'. Your Lord says: 'It is easy for Me, and that We will make him a Sign (miracle) unto the people and a Mercy from Us, and it is a matter decreed.

22. "So she conceived him (Jesus) and withdrew with him to a distance place."

23. "And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said: 'Would I had died ere this, and had been a thing forgotten'."

The Divine angel, in the guise of a man, appeared before Mary and blew on her so that she became pregnant. Then, Mary went to a distant place for she was worried about the accusation of people who did not know of the matter, or because a pregnant woman needs comfort and a quiet environment.

The opinions recorded in most commentaries are divided and abundant about the place and that how Mary became pregnant, or who was the first person that was informed of the matter, but since the Qur'an has not stated anything in this regard, we, too, do not offer any discussion concerning these subjects, because they are not so functional in the development of our understanding.

Some of the difficulties and hardships that Mary tolerated are as follows:

A. The accusation and suspicion of people.

B. Pregnancy and childbirth in solitude and isolation.

C. The lack of a resting place and taking refuge beside a palm tree.

D. Maintaining a child with no father and being among some people who looked at her with revulsion.

However, when the angel saw Mary's surprise at hearing that glad tidings, he told her that Allah's command was exactly what he had said to her, and that her Lord announced that creating a child out of a virgin was not difficult for Him.

Allah intended for that extraordinary occurrence to be evidence of the child's prophethood and a proof of the immunity of his mother, and that it might also be a bounty from Him upon mankind for their guidance by means of this prophet.

The verse says:

"He said: 'So (it will be)'. Your Lord says: 'It is easy for Me, and that We will make him a Sign (miracle) unto the people and a Mercy from Us, and it is a matter decreed."

The creation of Jesus with no father, of course, is a special event that occurred by the Will of Allah. Finally, at the higest spiritual point Mary experienced the most intense experience of the divine in her life, to receive the spirit of a prophet in her womb.

Mary conceived and that promised child was settled in her pure womb. Most of the commentators have said that Gabriel blew into her collar and at the same moment she felt the stirrings of pregnancy.

It has also been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that Gabriel blew into Mary's collar and at the same moment Jesus existed in mother's womb,[2] while, in the wombs of other women, the creation and growth of a child usually extends to about nine months.

Mary came out with her abdomen grown big and heavy, and when her maternal aunt saw her, she became quite upset, seeing her niece in that status. Mary was always bashful and deferential with her maternal aunt, so because of this, and the fear of being accused of immoral conduct, she chose not to stay among the people and went to a far off place.

She spent in seclusion relying on hope in her Lord, with a state of anxiety, mixed with happiness. It was her Lord Who had wrought this great miracle upon her, and only He could silence the accusing fingers and voices that could not accept that a woman could conceive without a man. What could she do with that accusation?

But, in the other hand, she felt that this child was the promised Divine prophet, a great heavenly gift. She thought how the Lord, Who had given her the glad tidings of that child, and had created him with that miraculous quality, would leave her alone?

Accounts vary concerning the length of Mary's pregnancy. Some have said that it lasted one hour, while some others believe that it took a longer time. Ibn 'Abbas says that one hour after that she went to that distant place, the child was born, because Allah has not mentioned any length of time for between Mary's departure for that place and the birth of the child.

It is said that when Mary was ten years old, she became pregnant in one hour, and the body of the child was formed in that very hour, and in that very hour the child was born. The birth of the child occurred when the sun was setting in the horizon.

It has also been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that Mary's pregnancy lasted nine hours.[3]

Whatever the duration of her pregnancy was, the time come for the birth of the child. Women, in such a state, usually seek the help and refuge of their kindred that they might help them in the birth of their child. But Mary's situation was an exceptional one, she did not want anyone to witness her delivery, and as soon as the pain began, she set out toward the desert.

The verse says:

"So she conceived him (Jesus) and withdrew with him to a distance place."

In this regard the Qur'an implies that the pain of childbirth drove her to the stump of a withered palm-tree from which only that trunk had remained; i.e. it was a dry tree.

The verse says:

"And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree..."

In that condition, a storm of sadness and grief came over her pure being.

This storm was so turbulent, and the burden on her shoulder was so heavy, that, as the verse says:

"…She said: 'Would I had died ere this, and had been a thing forgotten'."

It is evident that it was not only the fear of future accusations that was pressing upon Mary's heart, there were also other problems such as delivering a child alone in the desert with no midwife or friend as a helper.

There was no place to rest, nor water to drink, there was no food to eat, nor any means to take care of the child with what was available in the environment. These were all the discomforts that Mary had to tolerate.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The best clothing of the religion is modesty."[4]

Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"Verily modesty and chastity are among the specialties of Faith, and both of them are the epithets of the noble and the method of the righteous."[5]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The modesty of a man with himself is the fruit of Faith."[6]

Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"Modesty is from Allah, the Pure, it protects (one) from the punishment of Hell Fire."[7]

Surah Maryam - Verses 24 - 25

فَنَادَاهَا مِن تَحْتِهَآ اَلاَّ تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيّاً

وَهُزّي إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسَاقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَباً جَنِيّاً

24. "Then (a voice) called out unto her from beneath her: 'Grieve not! Verily your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you'."

25. "And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards yourself. It will drop on you fresh ripe dates."

The Qur'anic word /sariyya/ means 'a small stream'; and the term /janiyya/ is applied for 'a fruit which is ripe and ready to be picked off'.

Some commentators have said that the caller unto Mary has been Gabriel; but the context of the verses shows that the caller has been Jesus, in a manner that the mother hears his words and believes what he says, and, later with a calm mind, she tells people to ask about her chastity from the child in the cradle.

At the time of delivery and after it, women usually need tranquility, water and appropriate food, the things which have been mentioned in these verses.

The food which has been recommended in the Qur'an and by some Islamic tradition for the woman who has already delivered, is fresh ripe dates.

Also, the Prophet (S) said:

"The first food for the women who have already delivered, should be fresh dates".[8]

Hadrat Ali (as) says:

"The best food for the pregnant woman is fresh dates, and there is no medical treatment for her better than dates".[9]

This is a Divine trial. The day when Mary was sound, a heavenly food was sent down for her, but today, when she is pregnant and has no assistant, she must shake the palm-tree to get some food.

However, the verse says:

"Then (a voice) called out unto her from beneath her: 'Grieve not! Verily your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you'."

Some commentators have said that the caller has been Jesus Himself (as), who, from beneath her, called out that she should not be grieved (Grieve not!), and she should not ask for death.

She ought to be sure that Allah would protect her from accusation and, by the miracles of Jesus (as), He removes all accusations from her. One of those miracles was that very spring which was found by one step of Gabriel or that of Jesus, from which she both drunk and expurgated herself.

Another miracle of Jesus (as) was that he called unto her to shake the trunk of the palm-tree, which had been dead for years, in order to become green alive again and give her fresh dates. Mary started at once and found that tree. She shook it when some fresh dates fell down for her.

The verse says:

"And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards yourself. It will drop on you fresh ripe dates."

It seemed that Allah intended to show her that the similitude of her and Jesus was the similitude of that palm-tree and the dates; meaning that Allah is powerful to cause the fresh dates to fall from a dry dead palm-tree, to gash water from a plain land, and He is powerful to bring a complete human out of the womb of a husbandless woman during a few hours.

This fact was made quietly manifest to Mary that that child was the great sign of Allah and also His condescension unto her, but she was amazed what to say to people so that it could remove the accusation from her. Then, the command of Allah came to her that 'she should eat and drink'.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the best things which must be given to the ladies who have already conceived is dates and the dates produced in Medina in particular, but if it is not available, the fresh dates from other places might be given to them, or at least, some ordinary dates.[10]

Mary was also commanded to drink the wholesome water of that spring, and to refresh her eyes by looking at that newborn child. What a refreshment of the eye can be better than this that Allah grants her a child with the rank of prophethood.

A child who spoke at the beginning time of his birthday, and who had great miracles such as restoring to life the dead, healing the blind, and the like of them.[11]

Surah Maryam - Verse 26

فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْناً فَإِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَداً فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَانِ صَوْماً فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنسِيّاً

26. "So eat and drink and refresh your eye; and if you meet any mortal, say: 'Verily I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent (God), so never shall I speak today with any human being'."

Mary's keeping silence fasting before people was either for that they had not the capacity of her answer, or speaking with them would result a negative consequence, or in continuation of their questions and that Mary gave them their answers, they might suggest some other questions and new pretexts.

Imam Sadiq (as) said that fasting was not only an abstinence from eating and drinking, and then he recited the verse under discussion.

In this holy verse, Allah, the Pure, commands Mary to eat from that delicious and nutritive food and to drink from that wholesome water.

The verse says:

"So eat and drink…"

She was also commanded to refresh her eye by that newly born child and not to be worried about the future; and if anybody asked her regarding it, she would say by sign that she had kept fasting (a silence fasting) for Allah, the Beneficent, and that was why she could speak with no one.

The verse continues saying:

"…and refresh your eye; and if you meet any mortal, say: 'Verily I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent (God), so never shall I speak today with any human being'."

Therefore, she should have peace of mind from any points of view and should not let herself be grievous and sad.

From the text of the verse, it is understood that the fast of silence was something familiar to that community, so they did not object to it however this kind of fasting is not sanctioned in the religion of Islam.

It is narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as) who said:

"A fast of Silence is prohibited."

Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) has narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"The first thing that a woman may eat after her delivery must be fresh dates."

Some Islamic traditions denote that the best food for a pregnant woman, and her drug, is fresh dates.

Some Points

1. The hardships and inconveniences that Mary experienced during that short time, and the wonderful things that occurred to her, by the grace of Allah, trained her and made her prepared for fostering one of the Arch-

prophets of Allah, so that she could afford her maternal duty in performing this great task very well.

The process of events led her up to the last stage of difficulties, which was so exacting that she did not see the distance between life and death to be more than one step. But suddenly the state of affairs changed.

Everyone hastened to help her, and she was assured a calm atmosphere. The command to shake the palm-tree to enjoy its fruit, teaches her, as well as all other human beings, this lesson that effort and endeavour should not be abandoned even in the most difficult moments of life.

This statement is an answer to those who think there should not have been any necessity for Mary, who had just given birth, to stand up and shake the palm-tree.

This view states that it would have been better if the same Lord, by Whose command the spring had gushed forth in front of her, and by Whose order the dry tree had yielded fruit, had sent a breeze to shake the branch of the tree so that the dates would fall.

They say that when Mary was healthy, heavenly fruits were sent to her sanctuary, and now when she was in dire physical and emotional difficulties, she had to shake the tree and pick up the fruit herself.

The commandment is far from without wisdom, to recapitulate, it shows that there is no bounty unless we use effort. In other words, when the difficulties come forth, everybody must apply his utmost effort, and that which is beyond his ability, he ought to seek it from Allah.

2. Why Mary hoped for Death? There is no doubt that hoping for death is not a proper thing to do, but sometimes calamities and terrible events occur in the course of a person's life when the taste of life becomes utterly bitter for him, especially when his own honour and sacred aims are in danger and he does not have the ability to defend them. In such circumstances he hopes for death in order to free himself of his spiritual tortures.

What was on Mary's mind from the beginning was that the birth of this child could make her lose all her respect and honour in the eyes of those mindless people, so she hoped for death and that she would be forgotten. This itself is a proof of the fact that she valued chastity and piety more than her very life, and would rather die that live without honour.

These kinds of thoughts, however, bothered her only for a short time. When she contemplated these couple of miracles of Allah, (gashing water and fructification of the dry palm-tree), all her fears and anxieties, disappeared and the light of certainty and tranquility filled her whole heart.

3. An Answer to a Question: Some sceptics say if miracles are only particular to prophets and Immaculate Imams, how could have those miracles appeared for Mary?

To solve this problem, some commentators count these miracles as those wrought by Jesus, and say that they were done as miracles preliminary to prophethood, which in Arabic are called: /'irhadat/'.

But such questions need not be answered with answers such as these, because it is possible for supernatural events to occur in connection with people other than prophets and the Immaculate Imams. This is exactly what

we call /kiramat/ ‘extraordinary act’, whereas a miracle is accompanied with /tahaddi/ ‘a challenge’ for it serves a proof for a prophet or an Imam.

4. The Fast of Silence: The verses under discussion show that Mary was held to a vow of silence and, by the command of Allah, she refrained from speaking to the people for a particular duration until her child, Jesus, began speaking and defended her chastity. This state was more appropriate and effective from all respects.

The verse indicates that the vow of silence was a familiar habit for those people and as such they did not object to it from her.

This kind of fasting, however, is not lawful in the religion of Islam.

It is narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as) that he said:

“The fast of silence is prohibited”.[12]

And this prohibition reflects the difference between the conditions prevailing at that time and those at the time of the advent of Islam.

Nevertheless, one of the etiquettes of a perfect fast in Islam, of course, is that, when fasting the believer should protect his tongue from committing sins and doing what is disapproved and restrain his eyes from looking at any corruption.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said:

“Verily fasting is not merely to restrain oneself from eating and drinking alone. Surely Mary said:

‘Verily I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent (God)’, i.e. the silence.

Therefore (when you are in fasting) protect your tongue, restrain your eyes from whatever is sin, be not envious of each other, and do not get into conflict.”[13]

5. A Nutritive Food: The verses under discussion clearly say that Allah sent fresh dates for Mary’s food at the time of childbirth. With this in mind, commentators have said that the best food for women after their childbirth is fresh dates.

This idea has been explicitly indicated as such in the Islamic literature as well. Imam Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) has narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

“The first thing a woman is to eat after childbirth should be fresh dates, since Allah told Mary:

‘And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards yourself. It will drop on you fresh ripe dates’.”[14]

The explanation in some commentaries that cite this tradition implies that eating this food is not only useful for the mother, but will also affect her milk.

Again, it is understood from some Islamic traditions that the best food for a pregnant woman, as well as her medicine, is fresh dates,[15] and, if it is not available, ordinary dates can be used. But, moderation must be observed in everything, even in this matter.

Some scientists and food specialists say that dates are abundant in nutrition and have one of the healthiest sugars which can be used even by some diabetic patients.

The same scientists say that there are 13 vital substances and five kinds of vitamins found in dates, all of which make it a rich source of food.[16]

It is also well known that in such a state, women are intensely in need of some nutritive food which are full of vitamins.

With the progress of medical science, the importance of dates as a medicine has been proved.

Calcium is found in dates which is an important substance in strengthening bones and teeth. There is also phosphorus which is one of the main elements that make up man's brain. It hinders neurasthenia and fatigue. Dates contain potassium, the lack of which causes ulcers in the stomach.

Surah Maryam - Verses 27 - 28

فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَامَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئاً فَرِيّاً

يَااُخْتَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ اُمكِ بَغِيّاً

27. "Then she brought the child to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: 'Verily you have done a very indecent thing'."

28. "O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman."

The Arabic term /fariyya/ means 'an indecency, a great sin'.

Jesus Speaks in Cradle!

At last, Mary brought her child to her people, carrying him in her arms. When those people saw a new-born- child in her bosom, they wondered so that their mouths remained half open.

The verse says:

"Then she brought the child to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: 'Verily you have done a very indecent thing'."

Some of them, who were hasty in judgment, said about Mary that it was a pity with that glorious background and this pollution! And a thousand pities her pure family who became so disgraced like that.

Then, as the verse says, they encountered her as follows:

"…They said: 'Verily you have done a very indecent thing'."

Some others, addressing Mary, told her:

"O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman."

They addressed Mary by the phrase 'O sister of Aaron', because Aaron was a pure and pious man, and he was so well known among the Children of Israel for his piety that whenever they wanted to show how pious and righteous a person was, they would address the one as a brother or sister of Aaron.

Some Verses and Traditions About Calumny

Allah, the Almighty, says:

"And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses an innocent person of it, he has burdened (himself) with a calumny and a manifest sin."[17]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"When a believer accuses his brethren, faith will dissolve way from his heart like salt is dissolved in water."[18]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"(The sin of) calumny charged against the pious is heavier than the skies."[19]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Calumny against the pious is heavier than firm, (steady) mountains."[20]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"A (true) believer does not deceive his brethren, is not treacherous to him, does not abase him, does not denigrate him, and does not tell him he hates him."[21]

Imam Rida (as) narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"He who belies a believing man or a believing woman, or says something about him which is not in him, on the Day of Judgment Allah will make him stand on a heap of Fire until he comes out of what he had said against him."[22]

Surah Maryam - Verses 29 - 30

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيّاً

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ءَاتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيّاً

29. "Then Mary pointed to him. They said: 'How shall we speak to one who is (yet) a child in the cradle?'"

30. "He (miraculously) said: 'Verily I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet'."

Since Mary had observed a silence fasting, in order to fulfill her vow, she signed instead of speaking.

The verse says:

"Then Mary pointed to him. They said: 'How shall we speak to one who is (yet) a child in the cradle?'"

The first word of Jesus (as) was about servitude unto Allah, but his followers exaggerated and considered Jesus as God or God's son.

Once Imam Baqir (as) was asked whether Hadrat Jesus (as) was also the witness of Allah when Jesus was in cradle. Imam (as) said Jesus (as) was a prophet then, but he was not a Messenger until when he was seven years old. It was in that year that the rank of Messengership was bestowed on him.[23]

By a short sentence, Jesus (as) both banished the accusation from his mother, and spoke about his own future, and pointed to the future duty of people.

The verse in this regard says:

"He (miraculously) said: 'Verily I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet'."

However, the Qur'an in the first verse says that Mary was silent to obey the command of Allah. The only thing she did was that she pointed to her new-born-child, Jesus, when her action caused the people's astonishment more than before.

They told her:

"How shall we speak to one who is (yet) a child in the cradle?"

According to some other commentary books, they said to each other that the mockery and ridicule of Mary was harder and heavier to them than her deviation from the path of chastity.

But this situation did not last so long, because that new-born-child started speaking, and said:

"Verily I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet."

Surah Maryam - Verses 31 - 32

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكاً أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلاَةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَادُمْتُ حَيّاً

وَبَرّاً بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّاراً شَقِيّاً

31. "And He has made me blessed wherever I may be and He has enjoined on me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live."

32. "And (He has made me) kind to my mother, and He has not made me arrogant unblessed."

The existence of Jesus (as) was a blessed thing in which there were a lot of interests, education of others, and its continuation. Hadrat Jesus (as) both lives a long blessed life which lasts until after the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (as), and his followers are abundant and are victorious against the infidels.

The origin of good things and blessings are mainly intentions, aims, and innate modes and virtues.

Therefore, some people are blessed wherever they may be, as the verse, concerning Jesus, says:

"And He has made me blessed wherever I may be…"

But, some others, because of their spiritual difficulties and their separation from spirituality, are faced with their own evil qualities, and usually they are not useful for others wherever they may be.

By mentioning the word 'mother', Jesus (as) has pointed to the chastity of his mother, Mary, and his lack of father, when he says:

"And (He has made me) kind to my mother…"

Also, the Qur'an, from the tongue of Jesus, in this verse implies that Allah has made him a blessed being, or a useful being for people, wherever he may be, and He has enjoined him to prayer and almsgiving so long as he is alive.

The verse, in this regard, continues saying:

"…and He has enjoined on me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live."

And, by the next verse, Jesus after implaying that Allah made him kind, benevolent, and appreciative unto his mother, adds that He did not make him arrogant and damned.

The verse continues saying;

"…and He has not made me arrogant unblessed."

An Islamic tradition indicates that Jesus (as) has said:

"My heart is mild and I humble myself to my self."

This statement is an indication to this fact that the opposite state of 'being arrogant and unblessed' is these two epithets.

A Few Traditions About Prayer, Almsgiving, and Kindness to Parents

A. Prayer

1. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Islam has been founded on five things: prayer, almsgiving, Hajj, fasting and the mastership (of Ahl-ul-Bayt)."[24]

2. The Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"The most beloved things with Allah are prayer at its time, then kindness to parents, then Holy Struggle in the way of Allah."[25]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The one who takes his prayer lightly is not of me. No, by Allah, such a person will not reach me by the Houd, the pool of abundance."[26]

B. Almsgiving

1. It is narrated from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) who said:

"The pillars of Islam are three, none of which is useful without the other two. They are: Prayer, almsgiving, and the guardianship (of the Ahl-ul-Bayt)."[27]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Cure your patients by means of charity (sadaghah), and protect your property by the alms tax (Zakat)."

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who restrains paying as much as a Qirat (about 2 grams) of the (obligatory) alms tax (Zakat), will die as a Jew or a Christian."[28]

4. Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (as) said:

"Verily the Alms tax has been assigned as a provision for the poor and as a means for the increase of their wealth."[29]

However, communication with Allah (prayer) is not separate from communication with the deprived (almsgiving).

C. Kindness to the Parents

1. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best deeds are: prayer in its time, kindness to parents, and Holy Struggle in the way of Allah."[30]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"One who obeys the command of Allah regarding parents, two doors of the Paradise will be opened for him; and if he obeys (the command of Allah regarding) one of them, then one door will be opened (to him)."[31]

3. The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

"He who obeys his parents and His Lord, will be in the highest position (of Heaven in Hereafter)."[32]

4. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The person who pleases his parents, has pleased Allah; and the one who discontents his parents, has discontented Allah."[33]

5. The Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"The person who likes his lifetime to be prolonged and his sustenance to be increased, then he should be kind to his parents and visit his kin."[34]

Surah Maryam - Verse 33

وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدت وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيّاً

33. "And peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive."

Then, finally, from the tongue of this newborn Child (Hadrat Messiah) the verse says:

"And peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive."

This statement has occurred both about Yahya (John)[35] (as) and about Jesus Christ (as).

Hadrat Imam Rida (as) said:

"The most horrible days of a man are three days: the birth day, the day of death, and the Day of Hereafter."[36]

Surah Maryam - Verses 34 - 35

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ مِن وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَى أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

34. "This is Jesus, son of Mary, a statement of truth, concerning which they doubt."

35. "It is not befitting to Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a thing, He only says unto it: 'Be', and it is."

Formerly the Qur'an illustrated clearly the event of the birth of Jesus through previous verses. Now, it refers to the negation of the superstitions and the polytheistic words that they have said about Jesus (as).

It says:

"This is Jesus, son of Mary…"

The Qur'an emphasizes on the fact that Jesus is the son of Mary, in order to negate his being as the son of God, and then, it adds:

"…a statement of truth, concerning which they doubt."

Then, in the next verse, it explicitly says:

"It is not befitting to Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him!…"

But, if He intends something and commands, He says to it 'Be' and it will come into being, too.

The verse continues saying:

"…When He decrees a thing, He only says unto it: 'Be', and it is."

This statement indicates that having son for Allah, in the form that the Christians imagine it unto Him, does not fit the sanctity of the Rank of Allah. On one side, its requisite is the existence of body, and on the other side, there should be considered a limitation for Him, and on the third side, Allah does not need anything.

The expression saying "'Be' and it is" is a very lively illustration unto the vast power of Allah and His domination and sovereignty over the subject of creation.

Explanations

Jesus Christ (as) has been introduced through the afore mentioned verses by seven outstanding epithets and two accomplishments.

A. The Epithets of Jesus Christ

1. To be a servant of Allah:

"Verily am a servant of Allah."

2. To bring a heavenly Book:

"…He has given me the Book."

3. To be a prophet:

"…and made me a prophet."

4. To be blessed:

"And He has made me blessed."

5. To be kind unto the mother:

"And (He has made me) kind to my mother."

6. Not to be arrogant and unblessed:

"He not made me arrogant and unblessed."

7. To be humble, gratitude, and prosperous:

"And peace be on me."

B. Two Accomplishments

One of them is prayer and the other is almsgiving (zakat). The above mentioned verse says that the truth about Jesus is just what Allah said:

"This is Jesus, son of Mary".

In the holy Qur'an, the Christians have been repeatedly mentioned as deviated whose belief about Christ, as the son of God, is wrong.

For example, in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 73, it says:

"certainly they disbelieve who say: 'Verily Allah is the third of the three'…"

And, in Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 30, it says:

"…and the Christians say: 'The Messiah is the son of God'…".

But, this verse shows the correct argument in response to these erroneous claims regarding the characteristics of Jesus.

There is no need to say that the Will of Allah comes into being, even without the expression of 'Be', but Allah has described His Will for us in this manner so that we could understand it.

Allah is Omnipotent, and He is not in need of anything or any means in creating, His infinite Power is a reason why He is far exalted from powerlessness and from begetting a son.

The Qur'an and the Christ

As a result of the stiff pressure that the pagans of Mecca put upon the followers of the Prophet of Islam (S), a group of Muslims, accompanied by Ja'far-ibn-Abitalib, by the order of the Prophet (S), migrated to Ethiopia (Abyssinia).

The pagans of the Quraysh thought that if the Muslims could become powerful there and form a government, they would be able to root out the idolatry that the polytheists practiced.

They sent'Amru'as and with a delegation to Ethiopia bearing presents for the ministers of Najashi, the king of Abyssinia. Those ministers took the presents from them to put Najashi to motion against the emigrant Muslims.

But Najashi decided to personally summon the Muslims and hearken to their sayings. Ja'far, who was the representative of the Muslims, began speaking at the presence of the king of Ethiopia.

He said his words about the wrongdoings of idolatry, superstitions and transgressions of the Age of Ignorance. He informed Najashi of the advent of Islam and luminosity of the religion of Hadrat Muhammad (S). Ja‘far spoke so influentially that Najashi wept and sent the pagans’ presents back to them.

He said:

“The Lord, Who gave me power, did not take bribery from me. Why should I take bribery from you?”

That meeting ended with the benefit of Muslims and the loss of infidels. After this defeat, ‘Amru‘as contemplated and, on the following day, offered the king a new suggestion. In order to excite the religious zeal of Najashi, he told him that Muslims had some notions which were against his belief. Najashi summoned Muslims once more and asked them their belief about Messiah (as).

In answer to him, Ja‘far Tayyar recited some verses of the Qur’an from Surah Maryam up to the verse which says:

“This is Jesus, son of Mary, a statement of truth, concerning which they doubt.”.

By hearing the verses of the Qur’an, Najashi shed tears and said:

“This is the truth”.

After this second defeat, when ‘Amru‘as wanted to start another new effort, Najashi raised his hand and gave him a sharp slap in his face.[37]

Surah Maryam - Verse 36

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

36. “And verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship (only) Him. This is a straight path.”

The persistence of Messiah (as) on Monotheism, and his emphasis that the straight path is only this one, is an answer to the adherents of trinity as well as others.

(A similar text to the abovementioned holy verse has also occurred in Surah’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 51, and Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 64).

Through introducing himself, Jesus (as) said he was a servant of Allah:

“…Verily I am servant of Allah…”[38]***.***

Then, the first command he received was about prayer and worship:

“…and He has enjoined on me prayer…”[39]***,***

and the first program he announced was worshipping Allah:

“…So worship (only) Him…”.

Thus taking Jesus as a Son of God is an alteration in religion which causes blasphemy.

However, this verse implies that the last word of Jesus, after introducing himself with the qualities which were previously referred to, is the subject of Monotheism, specially on the field of worship, on which he emphasized more.

By this verse, Jesus (as) says:

“And verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship (only) Him. This is a straight path.”

Thus, from very beginning of his life, Messiah (as) struggled against any blasphemy, and worshipping gods of dualism and polytheism, because monotheism, and worshipping Allah, is the straight path, while the rest paths are some deviated paths. (In the Qur'an, the path of Allah and His Messenger, accompanied with worshipping Him, has been introduced as the 'straight path'.)

Surah Maryam - Verses 37 - 38

فَاخْتَلَفَ الاَحْزَابُ مِن بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لّـِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

أَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصِرْ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَكِنِ الظَّالِمُونَ الْيَوْمَ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مبِينٍ

37. "Then the sects did differ among themselves; and woe to those who disbelieved because of presence on the great day."

38. "How well they will hear and see on the day they come to Us! But the unjust (even) this day are in manifest straying."

'A party' is a group of people working with together and who have some particular goals and position which are usually united.

The Arabic word /mašhad/ means either the site of the attendance of people, or the place of bearing witness, because, on the Day of Judgment both people attend there, and a lot of witnesses from angels and prophets will testify upon the deeds of man.

Some people believed in Jesus as God, like the group of Ya'qhubiyyah; some others said that he was son of God, like the group of Nasturiyyah, while some other people believed in trinity, like Israilliyyah. But, on the Day of Resurrection, all of these groups will testify to the falsehood of their beliefs.[40]

Despite all the emphasis Jesus placed upon the subject of monotheism and the worship of the One God, yet, after him, some groups among his followers differed and expressed different ideas about the Messiah.

Referring to this the verse says:

"Then the sects did differ among themselves; and woe to those who disbelieved because of presence on the great day."

The history of Christianity is also good evidence proving that after the Christ, they differed greatly about him and about the subject of monotheism.

Some of them said:

"He is God who has come down on earth and has brought a group of people to life and has caused others to die, then He ascended to heaven."

Others said:

"He is the son of God",

while others said:

"He is one of the three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Yet others said:

"He is the third of the three. God is the object of worship, Jesus is also an object of worship, and his mother also is an object of worship."

Finally, some his followers said that he was the servant of Allah and His Messenger.

Since deviation from the principle of Monotheism is counted as the greatest deviation of the Christians, at the end of the verse they are severely warned.

In the next verse, the Qur'an describes their state when they are present at the gathering-place of resurrection.

It says:

"How well they will hear and see on the day they come to Us!…"

But, now that they are in this life, these cruel people are in a manifest aberration busy with their transgression.

The verse continues saying:

"…But the unjust (even) this day are in manifest straying."

In principal, the observation of that court in Hereafter and the effects of the deeds, remove the sleep of negligence from the eyes and the ears so that the blind-hearted ones will become aware and wise. But, what a pity! This awareness will be of no avail to them.

Surah Maryam - Verses 39 - 40

وَأَنذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الاَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الاَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ

39. "And ware them of the Day of Regret, when the matter shall have been decreed while they are (now) in negligence and they do not believe."

40. "Verily We inherit the earth and all that are upon it and unto Us they shall be returned."

The gate of all misfortunes is negligence: negligence from the Lord, negligence from Hereafter, negligence from sins, negligence from plots, negligence from the poor and the deprived, negligence from the history and its courses, and negligence from adolescence, abilities, talents and preparednesses of development.

One of the names of Hereafter is 'the Day of Regret', regret for the missed opportunities and for the lost capitals. Death of a man in the state of negligence and faithlessness, is a source of regret.

Therefore, this verse addresses the Prophet (S) and commands him to warn the pagans of Mecca from the Day when the sinners will regret why they had not done some more good deeds. This Day is the Day of Resurrection. Some commentators say that in that Day only those who deserve punishment will regret.

In Sahih-i-Muslim there has been narrated by Abu-Sa'id-i-Khidri that the Prophet of Islam said:

"When the people of Heaven will enter Paradise and the people of Hell will enter the Hell Fire, all of them will be called and, thus, their attentions will be attracted. Then, the death will be shown to them and they will be told: 'Do you know death?'

They will say: 'This is the death', while they all know it. Then, the death will be perished and the people of Paradise will be said to that there will be no death and they are eternal; and the people of Hell will also be said to that there will be no death and they are eternal. This is the meaning of 'And warn them of the Day of Regret'."

The believers in Imamate have narrated this tradition from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) who had added at its end that:

"The people of Paradise will become so happy that if there were death there, all of them would die because of inconvenience."[41]

The verse continues saying:

"…when the matter shall have been decreed…"

On that Day, the affairs will become one-sided. A group of people go into Paradise while another group will be sent into Hell. Some commentators say that it means that the life of this world has ended and no one will come back to this world to recompense the events of the last; and on that Day all people will be treated justly.

"…while they are (now) in negligence and they do not believe."

In this world, people are busy with some vain affairs and often forget the Hereafter.

In the next verse, Allah says that He will take up the inhabitants of the earth from the earth and He will inherit the earth and those who are on it, because there will remain no one on the earth to claim ownership or to be able interfere in it. The return of them all, after death, shall be to Him and none will govern them but Allah.

The verse says:

"Verily We inherit the earth and all that are upon it and unto Us they shall be returned."

Notes

1. Surah Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 1
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Al-Burhan, As-Safi, and some other commentaries
3. The Commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan, as well as Al-Burhan and As-Safi
4. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 398
5. Muntakhab-ul-Qurar, p. 159
6. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 386
7. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 143
8. Al-Kafi, vol. 6, p. 22
9. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Khisal by Saduq, p. 637
10. Tafsir-i-'Atyab-ul-Bayan, and Majma'-ul-Bayan
11. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
12. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 7, p. 390
13. Man-layahduruhul-Faghih, adapted from Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 332
14. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 330
15. Ibid
16. The First University and the Last Prophet, vol. 7, p. 65
17. Surah-An-Nisa', No.4 verse 112
18. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 3058
19. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 3, p. 102
20. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 72, p.194
21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daghayegh
24. Bihar, vol. 82, p. 234
25. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol.7, tradition No.18897
26. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol.82, p. 224
27. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 68, p.386
28. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, p. 186
29. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 6 p. 4
30. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 85

31. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 467
32. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 6, p. 468
33. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 470
34. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 475
35. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 15
36. ‘Uyun’Akhbar-ir-Rida, vol. 1, p. 257
37. Furugh-i-’Abadiyyat, vil.1, p.253 narrated from Kamil-i-Ibn-i-’Athir, vol.2, p.54 & Bihar-ul-’Anwar, vol.18, p. 415
38. Surah Maryam, No.19, verse 30
39. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 31
40. Tafsir-i-’Atyab-ul-Bayan
41. The commentary of As-Safi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Al-Burhan

Section 3: Abraham Preaches Unity of Allah

Surah Maryam - Verse 41

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقاً نَّبِيّاً

41. "And mention Abraham in the Book; verily he was a truthful man, a prophet."

The Arabic term /siddiq/ is applied for both the person who verifies the truth very much, and the person whose all words and deeds are based upon truthfulness. Such a person acts according to what he says, and speaks according to what he acts.

This holy verse uncovers a part of the life of the hero of Monotheism, Abraham the Friend of God, and emphasizes that the invitation of this great prophet, as that of other Divine prophets, has begun from the point of Monotheism.

The verse implies that Abraham should be mentioned in this Book, the Qur'an, because he was a man of truth and an attester of the Divine teachings and commandments. He was a prophet of Allah, too.

The verse says:

"And mention Abraham in the Book; verily he was a truthful man, a prophet."

In fact, this meaning is the most evident epithet of the godly prophets and the bringers of the Divine revelations that they do convey the command of Allah to the servants of God completely.

Surah Maryam - Verse 42

إِذْ قَالَ لأَبِيهِ يَآ أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لاَ يَسْمَعُ وَلاَ يُبْصِرُ وَلاَ يُغْنِي عَنكَ شَيْئاً

42. "When he said to his father: 'O my father! Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor does avail you in aught?"

When Abraham was preaching as a prophet, his father had died, and the man whom has been introduced in the Qur'an as his father was his guardian, his uncle'Azar, or his mother's husband.[1]

Some Islamic traditions also denote that Abraham's father was a monotheist, and the objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /'ab/, here, is his uncle. In Arabic language the term /'ab/ has a vast meaning. It is also applied for the teacher, the trainee, and even for the father-in-law.

There is also a tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"I and Ali are the fathers of this Ummah (Muslim community)."

Then, the verse points to the debate of Abraham and his father,'Azar. (Father here is referred to the uncle).

It says:

"When he said to his father: 'O my father! Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor does avail you in aught?"

This short and expressive statement is one of the best evidences of the negation of polytheism and idolatry. One of the man's motives alongside knowing Allah is the motive of benefit and loss. Abraham says to'Azar why he relies on a deity which neither removes a difficulty from him, nor it is able to hear and see.

Explanations

1. The disputations of Abraham and his uncle are worthy of mentioning and magnifying.

"When he said…"

2. In 'forbidding of wrong', you should begin from your own kin.

(…O my father…)

3. There is no age limitation for forbidding of wrong. (A son can forbid the grand members of the family from doing evils, but he must observe their respect and protect it.)

4. Perfection of persons does not always relate to their age. Sometimes it happens that the child of a family understand the facts better than the elders of that family.

5. In forbidding of wrong, it is better to begin from the creedal indecencies. (Unfortunately we are often busy in the ethical and social vices).

6. The path of truth should not be sacrificed for affections. Relationship ought not to hinder the act of forbidding of wrong.

Surah Maryam - Verses 43 - 44

يَآ أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَآءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطاً سَوِيّاً

يَآ أَبَتِ لاَ تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمنِ عَصِيّاً

43. "O' my father! There has come unto me of knowledge which has not come unto you, so follow me, I will guide you on a right path."

44. "O' my father! Serve not Satan. Verily Satan is disobedient unto the Beneficent (Allah)."

After that, Abraham (as) invites'Azar, with a clear logic in order that he follows him (as) in that matter.

He (as) says:

"O my father! There has come unto me of knowledge which has not come unto you, so follow me, I will guide you on a right path."

That is, I have got a lot of knowledge by means of revelation, and I can say with certainty that I will not go on a wrong way, so I will never invite you unto a wrong way. I desire your felicity and your happiness, then accept my invitation to become prosperous, and, by paving this straight path, to reach the ideal destination.

Then, in the next verse, Abraham combines this positive aspect with the negative aspect, and the consequences that the opposition with this invitation produces, and says:

"O' my father! Serve not Satan. Verily Satan is disobedient unto the Beneficent (Allah)."

The objective meaning of "Serve not Satan" is the same as obeying and following Satan which causes man to become its servant and slave.

Of course, it is evident that the purpose of service, here, is not a service in the sense of prostration, prayer, and fasting performed for Satan, but it is in the sense of obeying and following the command of Satan which itself is counted a kind of service.

The meaning of ‘worship, or service’ is so vast that it encompasses even the listening to the sayings of a person with the intention of acting accordingly, and also putting the rule of a person to order, is counted a kind of worshipping him.

It has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

“He who listens to a speaker (willingly), he has worshipped him. Then, if the speaker speaks from the side of Allah, the one has worshipped Allah, and if the speaker speaks from the side of Iblis, the one has worshipped Iblis.”[2]

However, Abraham wants to teach this fact to his father (uncle) that no one can live without having a path, a policy. It may be either the path of Allah and the straight way, or the path of Satan, the disobedient, the astray. In this course, man should think correctly, take a decision for himself, and, far from bigotries and blindly followings, choose his good and benefit.

Surah Maryam - Verse 45

يَآ أَبَتِ إِنّـِي أَخَافُ أَن يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيّاً

45. “O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah) so that you become a friend to Satan.”

Through this holy verses once more Abraham attracts the attention of’Azar to the evil sequels of polytheism and idolatry, when he says:

“O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah) so that you become a friend to Satan.”

The statement of Abraham, here, before his uncle,’Azar, is very attractive. On one side, he frequently addresses him with the phrase: ‘O my father’ which is a sign of respect and courtesy. On the other side, the holy phrase ‘I fear lest a chastisement afflict you…’ indicates that Abraham is worried that any disquiet reaches’Azar.

And on the third side, the phrase ‘a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah)’ points to this matter that due to his polytheism and idolatry,’Azar’s state has reached a point that Allah, whose general compassion has encompassed everybody, becomes angry with him and punishes him.

’Azar has to note what a horrible thing he does! And, on the fourth said, his deed is an action of which is to go under the shade of the friendship of Satan.

Note

1. Allah (s.w.t.) says:

“And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing.”[3]

2. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“…and We seized those who were unjust with a dreadful punishment for the transgressions they used to commit.”[4]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Whoever causes the most grievous torture for people in this life, he will have the most grievous punishment with Allah on the Day of Hereafter.”[5]

Surah Maryam - Verse 46

قَالَ أَرَاغِبٌ أَنتَ عَنْ ءَالِهَتِي يَآ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ لأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيّاً

46. "He said: 'Do you dislike my gods O' Abraham? If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you. Be gone from me for a long time'."

In the former verses, the logical words of Abraham (as) alongside the guidance of'Azar which were mixed with a particular compassion and kindness, were referred to. Now, the turn is for the answers of'Azar to those words, so that, by comparing them both, the fact may become manifest.

The Qur'an implies that, not only the sympathetic and helpful statements of Abraham did not affect on'Azar's heart, but also, by hearing them, he became very angry and said to Abraham whether he hated his gods.

"He said: 'Do you dislike my gods O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you. Be gone from me for a long time'."

It is interesting that, firstly,'Azar was not even willing to hear the denial upon the idols, or to utter any opposition and ill-speaking against them, but he only said:

"Do you dislike my gods?"

lest the idols be aspersed. Secondly, when'Azar wanted to threaten Abraham, he threatened him to stoning, and he emphasized on his action by the word 'certainly'; and we know that stoning is one of the worst kind of slaying. Thirdly, he did not suffice to this conditioned threat, but, at the same time, he considered Abraham as an unbearable being when he told him:

'Be gone from me for a long time'.

This is a very aspersive meaning that sometimes some angry persons use against their opponents.

The Arabic term /maliyya/ is derived from /'imla'/ in the sense of 'to respite a long time'.

Surah Maryam - Verse 47

قَالَ سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيّاً

47. "He said: 'Peace be upon you: I will ask my Lord to forgive you: for verily He is ever affectionate to me'."

The word /haqq/ is applied for the person who regards the complete goodness and benevolence unto another person;[6] and sometimes it is used in the sense of 'a scholar'.

In these verses, the spiritual conditions of a believer and those of a disbeliever are clearly seen in their disputes.

1. Abraham speaks affectionately, while his uncle speaks roughly. Abraham addresses his uncle four times with the phrase "O my father!" but his idolatrous uncle, even once, did not call him 'O my son'.

2. Abraham (as) speaks reasonably, while'Azar speaks without reasonless.

Abraham says:

"Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees…?",[7]

but'Azar says

"my gods"[8]

3. Abraham (as) speaks sympathetically, but'Azar answers with threat.

4. Abraham (as) greets his uncle, but'Azar orders him to get distance with him by saying:

"Be gone from me for a long time."[9]

But, like all other divine prophets and leaders, Abraham controlled his nervousness and, in spite of'Azar's intensive harshness, he, with utmost magnanimity, said:

"He said: 'Peace be upon you…"

This salutation may be for farewell, by which and together with some other words, Abraham left'Azar; or it may be a salutation which is said for the end of disputation.

Then Abraham added:

"…I will ask my Lord to forgive you: for verily He is ever affectionate to me'."

Abraham (as) asked forgiveness for his idolatrous uncle for the sake that he probabled that'Azar would be guided, but, as soon as he became disappointed from his uncle's guidance, he repudiated him.

Surah Maryam - Verse 48

وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَي اَلاّ أَكُونَ بِدُعَآءِ رَبِّي شَقِيّاً

48. "And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord: may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord."

In this holy verse, Allah, the Exalted, states the words of Abraham (as) as follows:

"And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord: may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord."

This verse, in one side, indicates the courtesy of Abraham unto his uncle,'Azar, that when he said:

"Be gone from me",

Abraham accepted; and, on the other side, it defines his conclusiveness in his belief. Abraham impliedly says that his separation from him ('Azar) is not for the reason that he has renounced his firm belief in Monotheism, but it is for the lack of preparation in'Azar unto accepting the truth.

However, Abraham announces that if he calls upon his Lord, He answers him, but how miserable they are that they call upon some more miserable ones than themselves who never answer their prayer, nor they even hear them.

Explanations

Those young people who live among some deluded families, should follow the line of Abraham:

1. Invitation together with courtesy:

"O my father."

2. Sympathy accompanied with logic:

"Why do you worship".

3. Warning followed by prayer:

"I fear…I will seek forgiveness for you".

Greeting together with seeking forgiveness:

"Peace be upon you. I will ask my Lord to forgive you…".

And, at the end, separation:

"I will withdraw from you…".

4. Among the last stages of 'forbidding from doing evils' there is breaking a communication:

"And I will withdraw from you…".

If we are not able to change the defective environment, at least, we must leave it.

5. One of the fundamental principals of the godly schools is repudiation from infidels, since repudiation is before mastership. At first, we must separate from infidelity, false deity, and corruption, then we may join the truth.

Surah Maryam - Verse 49

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلاًّ جَعَلْنَا نَبِيّاً

49. "So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob and each (of them) We made a prophet."

A godly action performed by a grandfather may bring the bounty of Allah for a generation.

Abraham (as) kept his word and persisted fully on his own promise with resistance. He was always the caller of Monotheism even though all the members of the heretic society of that time raised against him, but, finally, he did not remain alone.

A great many people became his followers during all centuries so that all the theists of the world are proud of him. The Qur'an implies when he withdrew from all the things they worshipped other than Allah, the Lord bestowed on him Isaac and after Isaac his son Jacob, each of whom were made a great prophet by Allah.

The verse says:

"So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob and each (of them) We made a prophet."

This great bounty was the fruit of that resistance which Abraham showed from himself in the way of struggling against idols and withdrawing from that false creed.

The Feature of Abraham

Abraham desisted from stars, moon, and sun, and won Allah's favour.

He said:

"…I do not like the setting ones."[10]

He (as) left his deviated uncle and, consequently, became the father of all people:

"…the faith of your father Abraham…"[11]

His uncle was in ill terms with him by saying:

"Be gone from me for a long time"[12]***,***

but Allah favoured him because Abraham said:

"…for verily He is ever affectionate to me."[13]

Abraham withdrew from them for the sake of Allah and said:

"I will withdraw from you"[14]**,**

then he became famous in the world:

"…and assigned unto them a high and true renown".[15]

He run away from the temple of idols and he became the builder of the House of Monotheism:

"And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House…"[16]**.**

He sacrificed his life in the path of Allah, and, as a result of it, the fire became safe and sound for him:

"We said: 'O fire be a comfort and peace to Abraham"[17]**.**

He prepared his son to be devouted as a sacrifice:

"…he threw him down upon his forehead"[18]**,**

and Allah ransomed him with a great sacrifice which later became obligatory in that place.

Abraham lived childless until nearly the end of his life but he was content with it, so prophethood was assigned in his progeny.

He built the Ka'bah in the most deserted place, but it became the most attractive places all over the earth.

He was all alone in the desert when he called out, then there arrived answers from throughout the world:

"And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage."[19]

He left out his thirsty little child there by the command of Allah, then the water of Zamzam gushed and flowed forever.

He greeted before the threat of his idolatrous uncle:

"He said: 'Peace be upon you…".[20]

Then Allah sent greeting to him when He said:

"Peace be on Abraham"[21]

Abraham was a single person, but today all the heavenly schools relate themselves to Abraham, in a manner that some pagans, the Jews, and the Christians say that Abraham belongs to them.

The people of his time were his enemy, while Allah chose him as His friend.

The Qur'an says:

"And Allah took Abraham as a Friend."[22]

Surah Maryam - Verse 50

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِن رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيّاً

50. "And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and assigned unto them a high and true renown."

A righteous child is the reward of the godly efforts of the parents, and more important than that is the child's spiritual rank.

When Abraham (as) withdrew from those arrogant idol worshippers and went toward the Holy Land, Allah bestowed on him Isaac as his son, and Jacoob as his grandson, and He comforted him from the pain and of separation of his relatives by bestowing children on him and ornamenting them with the rank of prophethood.

Besides children and prophethood, Allah also bestowed on him some other bounties and caused them to be honoured among people so that their good names were mentioned respectfully by all people. The adherents of all religions love Abraham and his progeny so that they pray for them and consider them the followers of their own religion.

Some commentators say that the meaning of 'high renown' about them is that Muhammad (S) and his community continue mentioning their good name until the Day of Resurrection.[23]

The application of /lisan/ in such contexts means a remembrance of a person mentioned among people; and when it is added with the term /sidq/ it means 'a good remembrance and fame among people'; and when it is added with the term /'aliyan/, which means 'high, outstanding', their concept is that a very good thought and remembrance of a person remains among people.

The verse says:

"And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and assigned unto them a high and true renown."

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition says:

"A good renown for a person which Allah assigns for him among people is better than the (abundant) wealth which he consumes and devises"[24]

In principle, apart from the spiritual aspects, sometimes, good fame among people can work as a great capital for a person and his children, the examples of which have been seen frequently in the society.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"When Allah loves a servant, He may inspire uprightness in him."[25]

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
2. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 115
3. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 49
4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 165
5. Nahj-ul-Fasahah, p. 59; & Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol.3, p. 500
6. Lesan-ul-'Arab, an Arabic Dictionary
7. The current Surah, verse 42
8. The current Surah, verse 46
9. Ibid
10. Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 76
11. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78
12. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 46
13. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47
14. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 48
15. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 50
16. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 127
17. Surah Al-'Anbiya, No. 21, verse 69
18. Surah As-Saffat, No.37, verse 103
19. Surah Al-Hajj
20. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47
21. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 109
22. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 125
23. Majma'-ul-Bayan
24. Usul-i-Kafi, acoording to the record of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary, vol. 3, p.339.

www.alhassanain.org/english

25. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 3, p. 161

Section 4: References to the Other Prominent Apostles of Allah

Surah Maryam - Verse 51

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصاً وَكَانَ رَسُولاً نَّبِيّاً

51. "And mention Moses in the Book; for verily he was one purified, and he was an apostle, a prophet."

This verse and the next couple of verses have a short explanation about Moses (as), a progeny from the descent of Abraham.

At first, the Qur'an addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"And mention Moses in the Book…"

Then the Qur'an continues numerating five Divine merits given to this great prophet, Moses, in these holy verses.

The abovementioned verse says:

"…for verily he was one purified, and he was an apostle, a prophet."

Explanations

The Arabic term /muxlis/ is applied for the person who works sincerely for Allah only, but it is possible that Satan influences in him and drags him toward polytheism. There are many persons who are sincere at the time of agony, but after relief they tend to infidelity.

But the Qur'anic word /muxlas/ refers to those chosen persons in whom Satan cannot penetrate:

"Except Your chosen servants among them."[1]

As Kashshaf cites, /muxlis/ is a person who works for Allah, and /muxlas/ is a person whom Allah has made sincere and has chosen him for Himself, and nothing may affect him but Allah.

Moses being chosen is recited in some other verses of the Qur'an.

For example, Allah (s.w.t.) says:

"and I have chosen you…"[2]***;***

and somewhere else He says:

"And I have chosen you for Myself."[3]

Moses (as) was both a Messenger and a prophet:

"…he was an apostle, a prophet".

A prophet hears the sound of the angel but he does not see the angel, while a Messenger, besides hearing the sound of the angel, sees him.[4]

Surah Maryam - Verses 52 - 53

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِن جَانِبِ الطورِ الاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيّاً

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِن رَّحْمَتِنَآ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ نَبِيّاً

52. "And We called him from the right side of (the Mount) Sinai and made him draw nigh (unto Us) for a converse in secret."

53. "And We granted unto him, out of Our Mercy, his brother Aaron a prophet."

There is a mountain by the name of 'Tur' in Syria. Some ones have said it is located between Egypt and Madyan.[5] Allah called Moses from the right side of the mountain.

That is, when he was coming from Madyan and saw a fire in the tree, Allah called him and said:

"…O Moses! Verily I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds."[6]

Then Allah made him nigh to Himself and spoke with him.

Ibn-i-'Abbas says:

"Allah made him a near-stationed one and spoke with him."

The purpose of this 'nearness' is that He caused His word to reach him. In other words, Allah promoted his rank and gave him glory. It is like a servant who approaches his master and sits with him.

Thus, the objective meaning of nearness, here, is respect and glorification, not in the sense that he has become nigh to Allah from the point of distance and place, because Allah has no place so that a person approaches that place or gets distance from it, or another person becomes nearer to that place.

The verse says:

"And We called him from the right side of (the Mount) Sinai and made him draw nigh (unto Us) for a converse in secret."

However, Moses (as) prayed to Allah, saying:

"And give me an aider from my family."[7]

Then Allah accepted his prayer and bestowed on him gracefully his brother Aaron and gave him the rank of prophethood to be an aid for his brother.

The verse says:

"And We granted unto him, out of Our Mercy, his brother Aaron a prophet."

Explanations

1. The debate and communication of Moses with Allah has been referred to in the Qur'an both by the sense of 'speaking', where it says:

"…and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech."[8]***,***

and by the sense of 'calling', used in the abovementioned verse:

"And We called him…",

and by the sense of

'a secret converse'.

2. Step by step, Allah makes prophets nigh to Himself by His Grace and affection.

3. Allah has whispered some matters secretly with the prophets. Therefore, the rank of nearness of 'a secret converse' is the highest rank.

That is why Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"When the people of Heaven are enjoying the (bounties of) the Heaven, the people of Allah are busy with Allah (and are prattling to Him)."[9]

4. The Arabic word /najiyy/ is used in the sense of its subjective case which means 'the person who whispers secretly with another one'. Here, at first Allah called Moses from a long distance, and when he came near, He began whispering with him.

(It is evident that Allah has neither, tongue nor a place, but He creates waves in the atmosphere and speaks with a mortal such as Moses). However, the call of Allah was an endowment unto Moses (as), and His

speaking with him was another bounty, which was counted the greatest honour for Moses and the sweetest moment in his life.

5. The Difference between a Messenger and a Prophet:

A ‘Messenger’ originally means a person on whom has been given a mission and a message to convey; while a ‘prophet’ is a person who is aware of Divine revelation and informs of it.

But, in view of the Qur’anic meanings, and according to what the Islamic traditions indicate, some commentators believe that ‘a Messenger’ is the person who has been given a religion and is commissioned to convey it; i.e., he receives the revelation of Allah and conveys it to people; while a prophet receives the divine revelation but his duty is not to convey it.

That revelation is only for performing his own duty, or if he is asked of it, he answers it.

In other words a prophet is like a skilful physician who is waiting in his office for the patients to receive them. He does not go after the patients, but if a patient refers to him, he does treat him.

But, a Messenger is like an itinerant physician who travels here and there. Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said about the Prophet of Islam (S) that he was a roaming physician[10]

That is, he used to go to every place (to cities, villages, mountains, plains, and deserts) in order to find the sick and treat them. The Prophet (S) was as a spring who sought for the thirsty ones.

At the end, for more research, please refer to Usul-i-Kafi, by the Late Kulayni.[11]

Surah Maryam - Verses 54 - 55

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْماعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولاً نَّبِيّاً

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلاَةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِندَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيّاً

54. “And mention’Isma‘il in the Book, verily he was (ever) true to (his) promise, and he was an apostle, a prophet.”

55. “And he used to enjoin on his family prayer and almsgiving, and he was well pleased in the sight of his Lord.”

The appellation Ism’il, mentioned in this holy verse, refers either to Abraham’s son, or another prophet from the prophets of the Children of Israel, by the name of Isma’il-ibn-Hizqil (Ishmael the son of Ezekiel).

The verse says:

“And mention Ismail in the Book, verily he was (ever) true to (his) promise, and he was an apostle, a prophet.”

It has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who says:

“He (Isma’il) used to invite people to Monotheism. His people stood against him so hard that they scalped him out of his head and face. Allah made him optional for their punishment or forgiveness. Isma’il also left their affair to Allah whether He would punish them or forgive them.[12]

All prophets were loyal in promise, but the appearance of this quality had been more manifest in Isma’il. Being true to promise is a Divine attribute.

The Qur’an says:

“Verily Allah never fails (His) promise”[13]***,***

because breach of promise is a sign of hypocrisy.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that there are three signs for hypocrite: abuse of confidence, falsehood in speech, and breach in promise.[14]

The second verse implies that, at last, Ismail enjoined his family, or his people, to perform prayer, almsgiving, night prayer, charity and fast, so that Allah was well pleased of his manner, because he did nothing but obeying Allah and never committed any vice.

The verse says:

"And he used to enjoin on his family prayer and almsgiving, and he was well pleased in the sight of his Lord."

Some commentators have said that the term /mardiyy/, used in this verse, means: 'righteous, pious, and worthy'. It was for the sake of these very qualities that he gained a great honour with Allah, since the rank of Divine pleasure had been the greatest desire and goal of the prophets.

Some Islamic traditions denote that when the people of Paradise settle in Paradise, there comes a call saying:

"Do you want anything else?"

They will say:

"Our Lord, we wish Your pleasure!'[15]

Surah Maryam - Verses 56 - 57

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدّيقاً نَّبِيّاً

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَاناً عَلِيّاً

56. "And mention Idris in the Book; verily he was a truthful one, a prophet."

57. "And We raised him to a lofty station."

In the first holy verse of the abovementioned couple of verses, the holy Prophet (S) is addressed, saying:

"And mention Idris in the Book; verily he was a truthful one, a prophet."

The Qur'anic term /siddiq/ is used in the sense of 'a very truthful person who verifies the revelations of Allah and who is submitted to the truth'.

Then, in the second verse, Allah, referring to Idris' high rank, says:

"And We raised him to a lofty station."

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: 'a lofty station' is either a high spiritual rank, or the process of ascent to the heavens, because Allah took four prophets to the heavens: Idris, Jesus, Khidr, and Elias (Elija).[16]

However, the Qur'anic arrangement of the words 'a truthful one, a prophet' in the verse, where the term 'a truthful one' has been preceeded to 'a prophet', denotes that 'truthfulness' is a sign of 'prophethood'.

The Feature of Idris (as)

Hadrat Idris (as) is one of the ancestors of Hadrat Noah (as). He was named Idris, in Arabic, for the reason that he had been very busy with study[17], or for the sake that he had been the first person who wrote with pen.[18]

His holy appellation, Idris, has been mentioned in the Qur'an twice, and he has been glorified by the qualities of: /siddiq/ (truthful), /sabir/ (patient), and /nabiyy/ (prophet).

An Islamic tradition indicates that the house of'Idris was in Sahlah Mosque, around Najaf in Iraq.[19]

The first person who knew astronomy and arithmetic was Idris,[20] and he was the first one who taught tailoring to men.[21]

Idris lived for 365 years, and then he was taken to heavens. He is alive now, and will appear at the time of the reappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as).[22]

By the way, upon the descent of Jesus (as) to the earth at the time of the reappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as) and Messiah's keeping up prayer behind Hadrat Mahdi, there are recorded many traditions in the books of traditions by written the Sunnite and the Shi'ite, including: Yanabi'-ul-Mawaddah, p. 422, Tathkirat-ul-Khawas, p.377, Sahib-i-Muslim, vol. 1, p. 63, published in Egypt, 1348Ah, the book: Miftah-i-Kunuz-us-Sunnah, by Bukhari, Muslim; Nisa'i; Ahmad; Ibn-i-Majeh; Abi-Dawood; Altiyalisi; and the book: Al-Mahdi 'Inda-Ahlis-Sunnah; and Mutakhab-ul-Athar Fi-Imam-uth-Thani-'Ashar.

Surah Maryam - Verse 58

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِن ذُرِّيَّةِ ءَادَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وإِسْرَآئِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَ ْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَروا سُجَّداً وَبُكِيّاً

58. "Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah showed favour of the seed of Adam, and of those We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and of those We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."

Through the previous verse, the names of ten prophets were pointed out: Zakariyya (Zachariah), Yahya (John); 'Isa (Jesus);'Ibrahim (Abraham); Ishaq (Isaac); Jacob; Moses; Aaron; Ishmael;'Idris (Enoch).

Now, in this holy verse, the Qur'an, referring to them, says:

"Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah showed favour of the seed of Adam…"

This group of prophets are the same ones whose way we ask in our prayers ten times everyday from Allah to pave, not the way of those inflicted with the wrath of Allah and astray, when we say:

"Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path",

"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your bounties, nor (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."

The purpose of the phrase 'the seed of Adam' is Idris (Enoch); and the purpose of the phrase: 'of those We carried (in the Ark) with Noah' is Hadrat'Ibrahim (Abraham) (as) who is Noah's grandson, and the purpose of the phrase 'of the seed of Abraham' is Isaac, Ishmael and Jacob; and the purpose of the progeny of 'Israel' is Moses, Aaron, Zachariah, John, and Jesus (as).[23]

The verse continues saying:

"…Adam, and of those We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and of those We guided and chose..."

Some Islamic traditions indicate that, at the time of the recitation of the Qur'an, believers ought to be in the state of grief and cry, or treat as if they are crying.[24]

The holy verse continues saying:

"…When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."

This part of the verse means that from among those Allah guided and chose, there are some ones that when they hear the recitation of the revelations of Allah they fell down prostrating and weeping.

Of course, the best referent of a concept of the divine chosen ones, who had long prostrations accompanied with tears, were the Prophet of Islam (S) and his Immaculate Ahl-ul-Bayt (as). There are some evidences for their abundant weeping in prostrations at the time of supplications in the month of Ramadan and in 'Arafah.

It has been narrated from Hadrat Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn who said:

"We are the objective-meaning of this verse."[25]

Yes, with all greatness and glory they had, they used to prostrate and weep for the remembrance of Allah, but the negligent and haughty people, with all pollutions they have, refrain from weeping.

Surah Maryam - Verses 59 - 60

فَخَلَفَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيّاً

إِلاَّ مَن تَابَ وءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَأُوْلَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلاَ ُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئاً

59. "Then there succeeded them a later generation who ruined prayers and followed lusts. Soon, then, they shall meet perdition."

60. "Except him who repents, and believes, and does a righteous deed, then these shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way."

It sometimes happens that the offsprings and descendants of a person waste the efforts and endeavours of their ancestors and, thus, there may appear a wicked generation from some people who themselves had been good doers.

The Arabic term /xalaf/ is used for a righteous child, while the term /xalf/ is applied for an impious child.

The Qur'anic word /qayy/, used at the end of the first abovementioned verse, means 'destruction, perdition and error' and it is an antonym to the Arabic word /rušd/ which means: 'rectitude, growth, and development'.

The verse says:

"Then there succeeded them a later generation who ruined prayers and followed lusts. Soon, then, they shall meet perdition."

This sentence, in this holy verse, may refer to a group of the Children of Israel who paved the path of aberration. They forsook the Lord, preferred lusts to the remembrance of God and prayer, made mischief in the world, and, finally, they faced the fruit of their evil deeds in this life and they will be punished in the coming world, too.

However, wasting prayer is different from not establishing it or forsaking it. He who keeps up prayer, but without observing its conditions, or with delay, has wasted the prayer and has belittled it.[26]

Why the Qur'an, among all Divine services, emphasizes on prayer here? Its reason may be the fact that prayer is a barrier between man and sins. When this barrier is removed, it certainly results to man's being drowned in the lusts.

In other words, as the divine prophets began their ranks to be promoted by the remembrance of Allah, and when the Divine revelations were recited to them they fell down prostrating and weeping, the aberration of these impious people began by forsaking the remembrance of Allah.

By the way, there is a tradition also recorded in many books of the scholars of the Sunnite which denotes: when the Prophet (S) recited the first verse of the abovementioned couple of verses, he said:

"After sixty years, there will come on the scene some people who recite the Qur'an pompously but it (their recitation) will not ascend higher than their shoulders."

(Since it is done neither sincerely nor for contemplation and reflection in action, but it is done hypocritically and affectedly, or there are satisfied with its mere verbal utterances and, therefore, their deeds do not ascend to the rank of proximity of Allah.)[27]

It is worthy of attention that if we count sixty years from the migration of the Prophet (S), it will exactly adapt to the time when Yazid took the rein of government and Imam Hussayn (as) and his companions drank the drink of martyrdom.

After that, the rest of the course of Ummayyads and the course of Abbasides came forth who had been contented with Islam by a bare name and with the Qur'an by a mere verbal utterance.

We refuge to Allah (s.w.t.) that we may be among such an impious group.

However, since the manner of the Qur'an, everywhere is that it let the path of return to Faith and the truth be open, here, too, after the statement of the fate of the impious generations, through verse 60, it says:

"Except him who repents, and believes, and does a righteous deed, then these shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way."

Thus, it is not such that if a person goes astray in the lusts for a day, he must be disappointed forever from the mercy of Allah, but, until the last moments of the life in this world, he may return and repent.

Repentance and the Qur'an

Next to the verses of punishment the Qur'an often mentions the phrase:

"Except those who repent"

or the phrase:

"Except him who repents"

in order to say that the gate of penitence and reform is not closed to any one.

1. Repentance is a necessary duty, because it is a divine commandment.

Surah At-Tahrim, No. 66, verse 8 says:

"…Turn to Allah".

2. The acceptance of repentance is really certain, because it cannot be believed that we repent by His commandment, but He does not accept it.

Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 25 says:

"And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants…"

3. Allah (s.w.t.) not only accepts repentance but also likes those who repent very much.

The Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 222 says:

"…Verily Allah loves those who turn much (to Him)…".

4. Repentance should be followed with good actions and amends of sins.

Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 71 says:

"And whoever repents and does righteously…"

5. Repentance is the secret of felicity.

Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 31 says:

"…and turn to Allah all of you, O' believers! so that you may be successful".

6. Repentance causes the rain to fall.

Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 52 says:

"…turn to Him, He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain…"

7. Repentance causes a good sustenance.

Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 3 says:

"…Then turn to Him; He will provide you with a goodly provision…"

8. Delaying repentance until seeing the signs of death, is not accepted. Besides accepting repentance, Allah has also a special grace. In these verses, close to the subject of repentance, the Qur'an has referred to the grace, mercy and love of Allah, too.

Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 90 says:

"…Turn to Him; surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving-kind."

9. The Qur'an has counted the absence of repentance an injustice.

Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 11 says:

"…and whoever does not repent, these it is that are the unjust.".

10. However, the condition of felicity, and entering into heaven, is repentance, Faith, and righteous deeds.

The abovementioned verse says:

"…him who repents, and believes, and does a righteous deed, then these shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way."

Surah Maryam - Verses 61 - 63

جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيّاً

لاَّ يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْواً إِلاَّ سَلاَماً وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيّاً

تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَن كَانَ تَقِيّاً

61. "Gardens of Eternity that the Beneficent (Allah) has promised to His servants in the Unseen; verily His promise shall come to pass."

62. "There they shall hear no idle talk, but only 'Peace'. Therein they shall have their sustenance (every) morning and evening."

63. "This is the Garden (Paradise) which We shall cause those of Our servants to inherit who are pious."

Through the preceding verse the word /jannat/ (garden, Paradise) was used in its singular form:

"…These shall enter Paradise…",

while in this verse the plural form of the term, /jannat/, is used:

"Gardens of Eternity…".

This shows that the garden of the people of Heaven is a collection of numerous gardens. This sense may be for the sake that every one of the people of Heaven has four gardens.

This matter has been pointed out in Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verses 46 and 62, where the Qur'an says:

"And for him who fears (to stand before) his Lord are two gardens",

"And besides these two are two (other) gardens".

These gardens, with together, are four gardens, the latter couple of which are either nearer, or have a lower level than the former couple; or because of the different ranks of the people of Heaven the kind of gardens are different.[28]

The Qur'an has repeatedly referred to the fulfillment of Allah's promise, and among them, it has said:

"…And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah?"[29]

The phrase upon Paradise, saying that there is no idle talk therein, refers both to our life today that we should avoid idle talks, and to the fact that there will be therein nothing of the idle talks of disbelievers and the vain speech by which they used to hurt the believers in the world.

In the Qur'anic phrase which says:

"…which We shall cause those of Our servants to inherit who are pious",

the Qur'an points to both piety, which is the key of Paradise, and contains the sense of 'inheritance' which hints to a wealth and bounty gained with no pain and trouble. It is true that piety is the key of Paradise, but those plenty of rewards are the inheritance of Allah unto us for our deeds. In fact, our rewards are some heritage which we gain from the side of Allah without any pain.

There is an Islamic tradition which says: every person has a proper place both in Paradise and Hell. If the person enters Paradise, his place in Hell will be inherited by same Hellish people. And if he enters Hell, his place in Paradise will be inherited by the people of Paradise.[30]

In this holy verse, the Qur'an describes Heaven and its bounties. At first, it qualifies the promised Paradise where there are some eternal gardens which Allah has promised to His servants. They have not seen them, but they believe in them. In other words, the purpose of 'in the Unseen' is that neither any eyes have seen that Paradise nor any ears have heard of its description.

The verse says:

"Gardens of Eternity that the Beneficent (Allah) has promised to His servants in the Unseen; verily His promise shall come to pass."

After that, the Qur'an has pointed to one of the greatest bounties in Heaven.

It says:

"There they shall hear no idle talk…"

In Heaven, they hear neither any falsehood, nor any abuse, slander, sarcasm, and any ridicule, nor even a vain word; and there is no statement there, but "peace", a greeting which is the sign of a secure place. It is a gathering place full of sincerity, purity, piety, peace and calmness.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…but only 'Peace'..."

And, next to mentioning this bounty, the Qur'an points to another bounty, when it says:

"…Therein they shall have their sustenance (every) morning and evening."

An Islamic tradition indicates that a person went to Imam Sadiq (as) and complained of his stomachache. The Imam (as) advised him to eat food two times a day: morning and evening, and to avoid eating food between them, which might cause the body to become rotten.

Then he (as) recited this verse:

"They shall have their sustenance (every) morning and evening."[31]

After a description about Paradise and its material and spiritual bounties, the Qur'an, in a short sentence, introduce the people of Paradise.

It says:

"This is the Garden (Paradise) which We shall cause those of Our servants to inherit who are pious."

Thus, the key of the door of Paradise, with all those bounties, is nothing but 'piety'.

Surah Maryam - Verse 64

وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ إِلاَّ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبكَ نَسِيّاً

64. "And we (angels) do not descend but by the command of your Lord; to Him belongs whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these (two)! And your Lord is not forgetful."

Occasions of Revelation

Upon the preceding verse, a group of commentators have said that the descent of the revelations of Allah was discontinued for a few days, Gabriel, the harbinger of divine revelation, did not come to the Prophet (S). After this period, when Gabriel came to the Prophet (S) he asked him why he delayed and he (the Prophet) was anxious to see him.

Gabriel said:

"I am more anxious (to see you), but I am a commissioned servant. When I am commanded to come, I come; and when I am not commanded, I restrain (to come)."[32]

For these verses, of course, there is a particular occasion of revelation, which was referred to in the above, but this matter does not hinder that there be a logical connection and relation between them and the former verses.

This is an emphasis on the fact that whatever verses Gabriel has brought are utterly from the side of Allah and nothing is said from himself.

The first verse, from the tongue of the harbinger of revelation, says:

"And we (angels) do not descend but by the command of your Lord…"

Every thing belongs to Him and we (angels) are some servants all submitted, because:

"…to Him belongs whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these (two)!…"

In short, the future and the past and present, here and there and everywhere, this world and Hereafter and the intermediate world all belong to the Pure Essence of Allah.

And, you should also do know that your Lord has not been, and is not, forgetful.

The verse says:

"…And your Lord is not forgetful."

Surah Maryam - Verse 65

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيّاً

65. "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them; so worship Him (alone), and be steadfast in His worship! Do you know any one equal to Him?"

This Qur'anic phrase which says whether you know any one equal to Him, means whether you know any god, except Allah, who can be the Lord, the creator, the sustainer, the life giver, the one who causes to die, and is able to give retribution and reward, so that you worship him. If you do not know any one except Him, then worship Him, and do not abandon His adoration.

This interrogation is in the sense of negation, i.e., you do not know any one who can be called Allah.

The verse says:

"The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them; so worship Him (alone), and be steadfast in His worship! Do you know any one equal to Him?"

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), in a tradition Upon the meaning of this phrase, said:

"None has been named by the appellation of Allah". [33]

However, there have been recorded several meanings for the Arabic term /samiyy/, including: 'partner', 'similar', 'namesake', and 'offspring'.

The existence of the term /rabbika/ (your Lord) in the previous verse, and the term /rabb-us-samawat-i-wal-'ard/ (the Lord of the heavens and the earth) in this verse is an indication to the Unity of administrationship in running the life of man with the whole universal being.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 40
2. Surah Taha, No.20, verse 13
3. Surah Taha, No.20, verse 41
4. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, and Nur-uth -Thaqalayn
5. Kashef-ul-'Asrar, the commentary.

6. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 30
7. Surah Taha, No.20, verse 29
8. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 164
9. Atyab-ul-Bayan, the commentary
10. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 108
11. Section: the difference between the prophets and Messengers
12. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
13. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 9
14. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
15. The commentary of'Atyab-ul-Bayan
16. The Commentary of Atyab-ul-Bayan
17. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
18. The commentary of Nemunah, vol.13, p.102
19. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
20. Atyab-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
21. the Commentaryof Nemunah, vol. 13, p.103
22. Atyab-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
23. Majma'-ul-Bayan
24. Tafsir-us-Safi
25. The commentary of As-Safi, and Burhan
26. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 11, p. 72
27. Commentary of Al-Mizan, vol. 14, p. 80 (Arabic version)
28. Tafsir-i-Kashf-ul-'Asrar
29. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 111
30. Nur-uth-thaqalayn, vol. 2, p. 31
31. The commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
32. The Commentary of Qurtabi, vol. 6, p.4168, and Majma'-ul-Bayan
33. Tauhid, by Sadugh, p. 263

Section 5: The Resurrection Certain

Surah Maryam - Verses 66 - 67

وَيَقُولُ الإِنسَانُ أَءِذَا مَا مِت لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيّاً

أَوَلاَ يَذْكُرُ الإِنسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئاً

66. "And man says: 'When I am dead shall I be raised up alive?'"

67. "Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?"

Occasions of Revelation

According to the attitude of a group of commentators, the first holy verse mentioned in the above has been revealed concerning'Ubay-ibn-i-Khalaf, or Walid-ibn-i-Muqayrah, who had taken a piece of a rotten bone in the hand, crashing it with the hand, they scattered it in the wind so that every particle of it spread in a corner, and they said:

"Look at Muhammad! He thinks that, after dying and decaying our bones, like this bone, Allah will restore us to life again. Never such thing is possible!"

Then, these verses were revealed and gave them a sever answer, an answer which is helpful and instructive for all human beings in all centuries and ages.

Through former holy verses, a considerable discussion was mentioned upon Resurrection, Paradise, and Hell. The verses under discussion refer to the same matter, too.

In the first holy verse, the words of the hostile rejectors are restated as follows:

"And man says: 'When I am dead shall I be raised up alive?'"

This interrogation, of course, is a positive interrogation with a negative sense, which means: 'such thing will never be possible'.

Immediately after that, the Qur'an, with the same tone and meaning, answers this question, saying that whether man does not remember this fact that Allah created him before, and he was nothing at all.

The verse says:

"Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?"

The application of the word 'man', here, may point to this meaning that a person, with natural talent and intellect, should not remain silent in front of such a question. He himself ought to answer it by remembering the first creation, otherwise he has not utilized the reality of his own humanness.

These holy verses, similar to many other verses related to Resurrection, emphasize on resurrection of the body. Else, if it were assigned that only spirit to remain and the return of body to new life were not propounded, neither that question would have any room, nor this answer.

Once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the meaning of:

"…We created him before, when he was nothing",

and he answered:

"It means that neither in the stage of predestination nor in the stage of creation he was anything."

Then he (as) was asked about the meaning of /lamyakun šay'an maðkura/ (when he was a thing not worth mentioning),[1] and Imam (as) said:

"That is, it was predestinated, but there was not any name of it in the course."[2]

Thus, these two verses speak about a couple of stages before the creation of man.

Another tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) indicates that upon the commentary of 'before', he said:

"There was no word about him either in the book or in the knowledge."[3]

Surah Maryam - Verses 68 - 70

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيّاً

ثُمَّ لَنَنزِعَنَّ مِن كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَي الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيّاً

ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَي بِهَا صِلِيّاً

68. "So by your Lord, We shall surely muster them, and the Satans (with them), then We shall cause them to be present round Hell on their knees."

69. "Then shall We pick out from every group whichever of them was more intensely rebellious against the Beneficent (Allah)."

70. "Again We do know best those who deserve most to be burnt therein."

In the first holy verse, the Qur'an, with a very sharp tone, threatens the deniers of Resurrection and faithless sinners, when it says:

"So by your Lord, We shall surely muster them, and the Satans (with them)…"

In many occurrences of the Qur'an, Allah has sworn to His creatures, but, for the Resurrection, He has sworn to His Holy Essence.

Then, in this very verse the Qur'an continues saying:

"…then We shall cause them to be present round Hell on their knees."

This verse denotes that the court of faithless persons and that of the sinners are nigh to Hell.

The Arabic term /jiiyya/ (regarding the fact that /jiiyy/ is the plural form of /jai/ which means a person who has sat on his knees) may refer to their weakness, disability, disgrace, and despicableness.

As if they have not ability to stand on their feet. This term, of course, has some other meanings, too. Among them is that some commentators have rendered the term /jiiyy/ into people 'in crowds', and some others have meant it into 'masses', and to be 'heaped up', like some soil and stones. But the first meaning is more fitting and more famous.

Since in that court of justice priorities are regarded, by the next verse the Qur'an implies that the most rebellious ones will be picked out first.

The verse says:

"Then shall We pick out from every group whichever of them was more intensely rebellious against the Beneficent (Allah)."

The same impudent ones, that even forgot the merits of the Beneficent Allah, began rebelling and acting rudely before their Benefactor. Yes, such people are the most deserved ones to the Fire of Hell.

This meaning has been emphasize on again in the next holy verse, where it says:

"Again We do know best those who deserve most to be burnt therein."

The Qur'an indicates that Allah (s.w.t.) will pick out them properly and no mistake may happen in this picking out.

The Qur'anic word /siliyy/ means both 'to lighten a fire', and 'the thing which is burnt by means of fire'.

Surah Maryam - Verses 71 - 72

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلاَّ وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَي رَبِّكَ حَتْماً مَقْضِيّاً

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيّاً

71. "And (there is) not one of you but shall come to it (Hell). This is, with your Lord, a fixed decree."

72. "Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the unjust therein on their knees."

The couple of verses mentioned in the above, also continue the discussion about the specialties of Resurrection and the people's rewards and retributions.

At first, it has pointed to a matter about which most people may surprise to hear.

It says:

"And (there is) not one of you but shall come to it (Hell)..."

This is a certain matter and a decisive command with your Lord Who has decreed it.

The verse says:

"…This is, with your Lord, a fixed decree."

"Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the unjust therein on their knees."

Commenting on these two verses, it must be remarked that all human beings, with no exception, will enter Hell, whether they are good doers or evildoers, but Hell will be cold and safe for the good-doers, in the same manner that the fire of Numrud was for Abraham.

The reason of it is that Fire of Hell does not have any general resemblance to them. It seems the Fire gets away from them and runs away, and wherever they are, it dies out. But, the people of Hell, who correlate to Hell-fire, like an inflammable material when reaches a fire, will immediately inflame.

In fact, seeing Hell and its chastisements will be a preparation for believers that they enjoy the utmost pleasure from the bounties of Heaven, and on the contrary, the people of Hell, by seeing the safety of the people of Heaven, feel their punishment more painful.

Some Islamic Traditions

1. It has been narrated that some one asked Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah'Ansari about the meaning of this verse. He pointed with his two fingers to his two ears and said:

"I heard a matter from the Prophet (S) by these ears of mine both of which may become deaf if I tell a lie. He (S) said: '/wariduha/ (come to it (Hell)) means 'enter into it'. There will be no good doer and no evildoer but he will enter into it (Hell).

Then it (Fire) will be cold and safe for the believers, the same as it was for Abraham; so that 'Fire' or 'Hell' (Jabir was doubtful) will cry because of its coldness. Then Allah will rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the unjust therein on their knees'."[4]

But, the compiler of the commentary of Atyab-ul-Bayan, upon the commentary of this verse, says:

It seems, and there are many Islamic tradition on it, and is among the self-evident knowledge of the religion that the question of 'Sirat' (path, way) is the 'bridge' of Hell, through which the people of Heaven must pass. Coming to this path is the same as entering into Hell and passing from it is a rescue. Thus, the meaning of

"And (there is) not one of you but shall come to it (Hell)"

is 'entering on the Path'.

There is an expressive saying upon the bridge of the Path (Sirat) in Islamic traditions which denotes there is a bridge over Hell leading to Paradise which is thinner than a hair, sharper than the blade of a sword.

This meaning is another evidence for this commentary, and it has been verified and supported by a lot of the commentators of two great sects of Islam.[5]

2. Another tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that he said:

"On the Day of Judgment, Hell-Fire will tell the believer 'Pass quickly, O' believer! Verily your light has extinguished my flame'."[6]

3. It has been cited in Tafsir-i-Tabari:

"One day, when 'Abdullah-ibn-Rawahah was sick, he was crying and his wife, seeing him, began weeping. 'Abdullah asked her why she was weeping. She answered it was because of his weeping. 'Abdullah said that he was crying for this word of Allah Who said:

'And (there is) not one of you but shall come to it (Hell)'.

Our arrival is certain, but 'Abdullah does not know whether he will rescue or not."[7]

4. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"On the Day of Hereafter, all human being (good and evil) will enter Hell, but Fire will not harm the believers, like Abraham for whom the fire became cold."

Therefore, the verse under discussion, which announces that the arrival of all into Hell is certain, does not contrast the verses which indicate believers are far from Hell, because, on one side they enter Hell, and, on another side, by the grace of Allah, no harm reaches them.

Moreover, Allamah Tabatabaie cites in Al-Mizan: there will be none of the righteous and the unjust but soon will be on the edge and precipice of

Fire, then Allah will rescue the pious ones and will let the unjust remain in it.

O' Allah! By Your Grace and Mercy, and by the grandeur of the rank of the Prophet (S) and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) with You, count us not among the people of Hell, and assign no Fire upon us, but by Your beneficence and Your forgiveness count us among the people of Paradise!

Surah Maryam - Verses 73 - 74

وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّـنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَاماً وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيّاً

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِن قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثاً وَرِءْياً

73. "And when Our clear revelations are recited unto them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: 'Which of the two parties is better in station and fairer in assembly'?"

74. "And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who were better in equipment and outward appearance!"

The Arabic term /nadiyy/ is applied for any assembly, or for the assembly of consultation, derived from which is /dar-un-nudwah/ with the meaning of 'a deliberative assembly'.

Following the discussion about the faithless unjust people, mentioned in the former verses, here the verse refers to a part of their logic and their fate.

It is known that the first group who believed in the Prophet of Islam (S) were the pure-hearted oppressed people who were poor.

Since the criterion of value in the ignorant society of that time, like any other ignorant society, was wealth and force, money and rank, and the outside appearance, the cruel rich persons prided themselves to the poor believers.

They told them that the sign of their own personality was with them, and the sign of the believers, which was their poverty and deprivation, was with them, too. That itself, they said, was the evidence to their rightfulness and the lack of rightfulness of the poor ones.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"And when Our clear revelations are recited unto them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: 'Which of the two parties is better in station and fairer in assembly'?"

But the Qur'an, with a complete reasonable statement, and in the meantime, with a decisive and mighty tone, answers them as follows that as if they have forgotten the past history of human.

It says:

"And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who were better in equipment and outward appearance!"

Could their money, their plenty of wealth, their glorious assemblies, their costly clothing, and their fine appearances hinder the divine punishment?

Explanations

1. The Arabic word /'aa/ means 'furniture' and the possibilities and comforts of life. The word /ri'ya/ is used for 'that which pleases the eye'.

The Qur'anic term /qarn/ is applied for 'a group of people who live for a long time with together'.

2. The historical changes have been based on the ordinances that Allah has assigned.

3. The material possibilities are neither the sign of happiness nor hinder the wrath of Allah.

4. Wealth and possibilities are often the factor of pride, negligence, inordinacy, and, finally, perdition.

Surah Maryam - Verse 75

قُلْ مَن كَانَ فِي الضَّلاَلَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدّاً حَتَّي إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَاناً وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْداً

75. "Say: 'Whoever goes astray, the Beneficent (Allah) will prolong his span of life until, when they see what they were promised, whether it be the chastisement (in this world), or the Hour (of Doom), then they will know who is worse in position and weaker in hosts'."

The Arabic terms /madd/ and /'imdad/ are used with the same sense, but, as Raqib says, the term /'imdad/ is usually used for some praiseworthy and pleasing actions, and the term /madd/ is usually used for some disagreeable and indecent deeds.

Allah respites all those who choose a vice and go astray. This respite is for the sake that they may repent, or some righteous offspring from them come into being. But some misguided people misuse this respite and commit some more vice by which they increase their own punishment. However, Allah respites them and prolongs their lifetime.

The structure of this sentence in Arabic in imperative form denotes to the certainty of the performance of the affair.

The sentence has been stated in an imperative form in order that there remains no pretext for the misguided one, since he has been given a length of lifetime during which he might think of a way.

The imperative verb may be taken in the sense of invocation in which he has asked Allah to give him a respite, or He may let him live in the world as long as he desires, because his lifetime is of no avail for him.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Whoever goes astray, the Beneficent (Allah) will prolong his span of life…"

Allah will prolong the life of such people in order that they see with their own eyes what they have been promised.

His promise may either be the chastisement of this world: that the Muslims overcome them and, by killing them or capturing them, punish them, or that they be involved with the chastisements of Hereafter.

At that time, they will realize that they have considered wrongly, i.e. their position is worse and their troop is weaker than that they thought, and they used to say that they would have a higher position and a better assembly.

The verse continues saying:

"…until, when they see what they were promised, whether it be the chastisement (in this world), or the Hour (of Doom), then they will know who is worse in position and weaker in hosts'."

Abu-Basir narrates a tradition upon the phrase:

"…until when they see what they were promised…"

from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"It is the promise of the advent of Hadrat Gha'im (as), and 'worse in position' means that on the day of the raise of Gha'im it will be known who in an indecent and weak position is."[8]

Surah Maryam - Verse 76

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدي وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَاباً وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدّاً

76. "And Allah increases in guidance those who are guided aright, and the everlasting good deeds are better with your Lord in reward, and better in return."

The Arabic word /awab/ means the recompense of man's deed which returns to him, whether it is good or evil, but it is often used for a good deed.[9]

The previous verse referred to the fate of the oppressors and those who were deluded by the dazzling glare and lusts of the world, while this verse refers to situation of the believers and those who are guided.

It says:

"And Allah increases in guidance those who are guided aright…"

It is evident that guidance has some degrees. When the beginning degrees of guidance are practiced by a person, Allah may help him to gain some higher and higher degrees of it. Similar to a fruitful tree, which develops to a new stage of growth and perfection every day, these guided ones, too, in the light of their Faith and good deeds, promote to some higher stages every day.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an gives an answer to those who have relied on their fleeting ornaments in this life and have taken it as a means of boasting to others. It implies that the end and the value of the righteous deeds is better with the Lord.[10]

The verse says:

"…and the everlasting good deeds are better with your Lord in reward, and better in return."

However, some Islamic traditions indicate that the purpose of the phrase:

'the everlasting good deeds'

is the invocation saying:

"Glory be to Allah; Praise belongs to Allah; and there is no god save Allah. Allah is the greatest."[11]

Surah Maryam - Verses 77 - 80

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لأُوتَيَنَّ مَالاً وَوَلَداً

أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِندَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْداً

كَلاَّ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا َقُولُ وَنَمُد لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدّاً

وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْداً

77. "Have you seen him who disbelieves in Our revelations and says: 'I shall surely be given wealth and children (abundantly)?"

78. "Has he got the (knowledge of) Unseen, or has taken from the Beneficent (Allah) a promise?"

79. "No, We will write down what he says and We will prolong for him the chastisement."

80. "And We will inherit what he talks of, and he shall come unto Us all alone."

Leaving hold of Allah and refuging to wealth and children is a false and superstitious cogitation.

Some people think that faith, sincerity, and piety are not favourable to them and they cause the world to set them a side, and when they live without Faith and piety the world will look upon them with favor so that their wealth will increase.

This imagination, whether it can be as a result of simple-mindedness and following superstitions, or as a cover for fleeing from religious responsibilities and promises, whatever it may be, is a dangerous consideration.

Sometimes it happens that these superstitious persons have based the wealth of some faithless people and the poverty of a group of believers as an evidence to prove this superstition.

But, we know that neither the properties gained by means of transgression, disbelief, and abandoning the foundations of piety are the source of honour, nor is the Faith, piety, and virtuousness a hinder on the way of legitimate and lawful activities.

However, at the time of the Prophet (S), like our time, there were some ignorant people who had such a consideration or, at least, they pretended to have that sort of consideration.

In connection with the former discussion, stated about the fate of the disbelievers and transgressors, in these verses the Qur'an points to this kind of imagination and its end.

In the first verse, it says:

"Have you seen him who disbelieves in Our revelations and says: 'I shall surely be given wealth and children (abundantly)?"

Then, the Qur'an answers them as follows:

"Has he got the (knowledge of) Unseen, or has taken from the Beneficent (Allah) a promise?"

Only the one who has the knowledge of Unseen can predict such a thing and may introduce a relation between infidelity and having property and children, because we do not see any relation between these two. Or, that the one would have taken a promise from Allah in this regard. Such a statement is also meaningless.

Then, with a serious and decisive tone, the Qur'an implies that it is not such, and never disbelief and infidelity causes the wealth and children of a person to be increased.

The verse says:

"No, We will write down what he says…"

Yes, these baseless sayings, which may cause some simple-minded persons to go astray, will all be recorded in their file of deeds.

The verse continues saying:

"…and We will prolong for him the chastisement."

This part of the verse may be a hint to the continuous eternal chastisement of Hereafter. It may also be a hint to the punishments which encompass them in this world as a result of infidelity and faithlessness. This probability is also notable that the wealth and children, which are the source of their pride and aberration, may themselves be a continual punishment for them.

The verse says:

"And We will inherit what he talks of, and he shall come unto Us all alone."

Yes, at last, he will leave all these material facilities and pass away, and he will attend in that Divine court of Justice without any righteous work with him, while his book of deeds is recorded with sins wholly. It is in that place that he will see the fruit of his baseless sayings in the world.

Surah Maryam - Verses 81 - 82

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزّاً

كَلاَّ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدّاً

81. "And they have taken gods besides Allah that they might be for them a glory."

82. "No, soon they (gods) shall deny their worship, and become adversaries against them."

This verse points to another motive of the idolaters in worshipping idols when it says:

"And they have taken gods besides Allah that they might be for them a glory."

They worship idols in order that they intercede for them with Allah and help them in their difficulties; but what a vain and wrong imagination!

Never it is such that they imagined. The idols not only do not create honour for them but also cause their disgrace and painful punishment, and soon, i.e. in Hereafter, these idols will deny their worship and repudiate them, and they will be some enemies against them.

The holy verse says:

"No, soon they (gods) shall deny their worship, and become adversaries against them."

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said:

"On Hereafter Day the gods, which they had taken besides Allah, will be against them and will repudiate them and their worships."

That is, these idols, by the command of Allah, will be able to speak on the Day of Judgment and will repudiate from pagans and the worshippers of them. It is interesting that there has been cited a short and expressive sentence below this tradition about the reality of worship.

It says:

"Worship is not (only) prostration and bowing, but the reality of worship is to obey men. Whoever obeys a mortal in disobedience to Allah, he has obeyed him."

(And, therefore, his fate will be the same as the fate of pagans and idolaters.)[12]

Notes

1. Surah Insan, No. 76, verse 1
2. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 147
3. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 84
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 353
5. At-Tafsir-ul-Munir, p. 145; Zad-ul-Masir, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 256; Rauh-ul-Ma'ani by 'Alusi, vol. 16, p. 133; Tafsir-i-Safi, p. 290, Tafsir-i-Jami'-ul-Bayan, p. 110, Tafsir-i-Mazhari, vol. 6, p. 112; Tafsir-i-Jawami'-ul-Jami', narrated by Ibn-Mas'ud, Hassan Basri, and Ibn-Abbas, Tafsir-i-Tha'alibi, vol. 3, p. 17;
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 353 and vol. 5, p.572
7. Recorded in the most commentary books of the Sunnite
8. At-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 3, p. 20; Tafsir-us-Safi, vol.3 p. 291; Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 431
9. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
10. The Arabic word 'marad' is either 'an infinitive' with the sense of 'to pass, to return', or it is a 'noun of place' with the sense of 'the site of return', which here means Paradise.
11. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalatn; and Tafsir-i-Burhan
12. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 357, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Tafsir-us-Safi

Section 6: Intercession

Surah Maryam - Verses 83 - 84

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَي الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤُزُهُمْ أَزّاً

فَلاَ تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعُد لَهُمْ عَدّاً

83. "Have you not seen (how) We sent the Satans unto the disbelievers to incite them with an incitement?"

84. "So make no haste against them, for We but count out to them a number (of days)."

Here, this fact is referred to that idols not only did not cause their honour but also disgraced them.

The Qur'an by this holy verse says:

"Have you not seen (how) We sent the Satans unto the disbelievers to incite them with an incitement?"

The incitement of Satans upon men is not an obligatory and unknown incitement, but it is the men themselves who let Satans arrive inside their hearts and souls.

In this holy verse, the Prophet (S) is addressed being told that he should not haste against them, because Allah will minutely count their deeds and record them for the Day when the Divine court of Justice will be held in Hereafter.

The verse says:

"So make no haste against them, for We but count out to them a number (of days)."

Upon the commentary of the verse there is also this probability that the purpose of the phrase:

"count out to them a number (of days)"

is the counting the days of lifetime, or the number of their breaths, which means that the length of their life is very short so that the number the breaths of it can be counted.

However, the Arabic term /'azz/, used in the verse, means 'to incite severely'.

Surah Maryam - Verses 85 - 86

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَي الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْداً

وَنَسُوقُ الْـمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَي جَهَنَّمَ وِرْداً

85. "On the day We muster the pious unto the Beneficent (Allah) (like the guest) of honour."

86. "And We shall drive the sinners unto Hell thirsty."

The Arabic term /wafd/ is used for 'a group of people who have just arrived mounted for a pilgrimage or seeking something'. The Arabic word /wird/ means 'thirst'.

In this verse, the course of 'the pious' and 'the sinners' is stated through some short and expressive sentences.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"On the day We muster the pious unto the Beneficent (Allah) (like the guest) of honour."

Again, the Arabic word /wafd/ originally is used in the sense of 'a mission' or 'a group' who go to some nobles in order to solve their problems where they will be respected and honoured.

Thus, this word implicitly contains the meaning of 'esteem', and, perhaps, it is for the same reason that some Islamic traditions denote that the pious will ride on some easy-paced mounts and enter into Paradise with much respect.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Ali (as) asked the commentary of this verse from the Prophet (S), and he answered:

'O' Ali! 'Al-wafd' is surely said about those who ride on a mount. These are they who are in awe of Allah, Almighty and Glorious. He loved them and specialized them for Himself, and was pleased with their deeds and named them 'the pious'."

It is cited in Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-Ebrahim Qummi that Hadrat Imam Sadiq (as) said that Ali (as) asked the Prophet (S) who they were, (the pious), and he (S) answered:

"O' Ali! They are your sincere followers, and you are their Imam."[1]

Then in the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"And We shall drive the sinners unto Hell thirsty."

The sinners will be driven toward Hell in the same manner that some thirsty camels are driven unto the drinking place, but, here, there is no water, there is Fire.

It should be noted that the Qur'anic term /wird/ means a 'group of people or animals who enter a drinking place', and since such a group are certainly thirsty, some of the commentators have taken the word, hare, in the sense of 'those parched with thirst'.

How long is the distance between those whom are lead to the Beneficent Allah respectfully and with esteem in a circumstance that the angels come to receive them and greet them, and the group whom are driven unto Hell Fire like some thirsty animals, while they are bend there heads because of shame, disgrace and worthlessness?

Some Traditions Upon Paradise and Hell, and Their People

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Never will enter Paradise, but the one is a Muslim."[2]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Verily, in Heaven, (there are some things that), no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no heart has received."[3]

3. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) told me 'You are the first person who enters Paradise'. Then I said: 'O' Messenger of Allah! Do I enter it even before you?' He said: 'Yes, For you are my standard in Hereafter, the same as you are my standard in the world, and the standard is always placed before'."[4]

4. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"There is no price for your selves save Paradise, then, do not sell your self but for it."[5]

5. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"He who sells his self for other than Paradise, he has made his affliction grievous"[6]

6. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Promise upon six things for me, then I will promise (and guarantee) Paradise for you: Whenever one of you speaks, he should not tell a lie; and when he is trusted, he should not be treacherous; and when he promises, he should not breach; and lower your eyes (from forbidden things); and hold your hands (from wrong); and guard your modesty."[7]

7. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Paradise is enclosed by pains and difficulties, and (falling in) Hell is enclosed by lusts."[8]

8. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) was speaking and he said:

"Verily the people of Heaven look unto the houses (and places) of our followers, as a person looks at the stars."[9]

9. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"A span from Paradise (in comparison) is better than the world and whatever is in it."[10]

10. 'Abdillah-ibn-Zayd-Mazini has narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"There is a garden from the gardens of Paradise between my house and my pulpit."[11]

11. 'Abu-Hurayrah narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"There is a garden from the gardens of Paradise between my house and my pulpit, and my pulpit is upon my Houd." These two traditions may indicate to the place of Hadrat Fatimah's grave.[12]

12. Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious, said:

"Surely Hell lies in ambush",

"For the transgressors a destination".[13]

13. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"Hell is a Fire whose flame does not subside, whose capture does not release and whose break does not close. Its heat is terrible, its depth is far, and its water is pus."[14]

14. Again, Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"Avoid the Fire whose heat is terrible, whose depth is far, and whose ornament is iron."[15]

15. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Avoid the Fire whose roar is forthcoming, whose flame is terrible, and whose chastisement is fresh."

16. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"How may I be patient of (Hell) Fire that if it casts a parcel unto the earth, it will burn all its plants, and if a person refuges to a mountain its heat will cook him thereon? Which is better for Ali: that he becomes nigh stationed with Allah, or, because of his sins, he, entangled in Fire, becomes far from the Mercy of Allah, driven away and inflicted with His Wrath?"[16]

17. It is cited in Majma‘-ul-Bayan that one of the Immaculate ones (as) upon the commentary of the Qur’anic phrase:

“And when they are cast into a narrow place in it…”[17]

said:

“By the One in Whose hand is my life, the people of Hell will be so pressed in Fire as a nail is pressed in the wall.”[18]

18. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The first person who will enter Hell-Fire is a dominant ruler who does not administer justice, and the rich person who does not give the due of his wealth, and the poor who is proud.”[19]

Thus, the key of Paradise is piety to Allah (s.w.t.), and the key of Hell is sin, vice, and opposition against Allah and His Messenger.

Surah Maryam - Verse 87

لاَّ يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلاَّ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِندَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْداً

87. “They shall not own any intercession, save he who has taken a promise with the Beneficent (Allah).”

On the Day of Resurrection, the wicked people are not able to intercede any one, and also none my intercede them. On the contrary, the believers will intercede each other and their intercession will be accepted.

The verse says:

“They shall not own any intercession, save he who has taken a promise with the Beneficent (Allah).”

The Qur’an introduces some conditions for intercession and it is not so that every body can take everything or everybody he desires as his intercessor. In Hereafter, the infidels will try their best and ask refuge from everybody, but they will be refused and they will receive negative responds from them.

The objective meaning of the Arabic term /‘ahd/ (promise), mentioned in the verse, may be the same promise of servitude unto Allah and separation from Satan which the Qur’an refers to, where it says:

“Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy”,

“And that you should worship Me, this is the Straight Path.”[20]

And in another occasion it says:

“…shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent (Allah) allows and whose word He is pleased with.”[21]

The Qur’anic term /‘ahd/ has been rendered into several meanings in the Islamic literatures, including the following:

1. Promise to the mastership of Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) and the immaculate Imams after him.[22]

2. Making testament at the time of death, that a mortal gathers others around him and says that he is charged to believe that ‘there is no god but Allah’, ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah’, and the rightfulness of Paradise and Hell.[23]

3. Engagement and protection to the statutory prayers.[24]

Surah Maryam - Verses 88 - 89

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَداً
لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئاً إِدّاً

88. "And they say: 'The Beneficent (Allah) has taken (unto Himself) a son'."

89. "Indeed you have put forth something hideous!"

This verse refers to many groups of people in relation to their belief, including the followings:

A. Polytheists: those who believed in angels as God's daughters.

The Qur'an says:

"…and (for Himself) taken daughters from among the angels…"[25]

B. The Jews: those who imagined Ezra ('Uzayr) as God's son.

The Qur'an says:

"And the Jews say: 'Ezra is the son of God'…"[26]

C. The Christians: those who considered Messiah as God's Child.

The Qur'an says:

"…and the Christians say: 'The Messiah is the son of God'..."[27]

Therefore, at the end of this discussion, the Qur'an points to one the subdivisions of polytheism, i.e., the belief in the existence of offspring for Allah, and emphasizes on this statement with the utmost emphasis.

It says:

"And they say: 'The Beneficent (Allah) has taken (unto Himself) a son'."

Not only the Christians believed that Jesus (as) was the real child of Allah, but also the Jews believed like that about Ezra, and polytheists had such an idea about the angels and believed in angels as Allah's daughters.

Then, the Qur'an, with a beating tone, says:

"Indeed you have put forth something hideous!"

However, the Arabic term /'idd/ originally means an ugly noise which is usually heard from a camel as a result of the sharp turning sound in its throat. Then it has been applied for the ugly and horrible deeds.

Surah Maryam - Verses 90 - 92

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنشَقُ الأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدّاً
أَن دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَداً
وَمَا يَنبَغِي لِلرَّحْمنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَداً

90. "At it the skies are about to burst, and the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down crashing."

91. "That they attributed a son to the Beneficent (Allah)."

92. "When it is not worthy of the Beneficent (Allah) that He should take (to Himself) a son."

The Arabic term /hadd/ means 'to fall down'.

Since the attribution of polytheism is a disagreeable attribution which contrasts to the principle of theism, it seems that the whole world of existence, which has been founded on the basis of theism, sinks into a horror and anxiety because of this undue attribution.

Therefore, the Qur'an announces:

"At it the skies are about to burst, and the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down crashing."

The horrible effect of this statement, that Allah has a child, is so great that it causes the mountains to fall down.

Again, for a more emphasis, and stating the importance of the matter, the Qur'an says:

"That they attributed a son to the Beneficent (Allah)."

In fact, they have never known Allah; else they would have known that it is not consonant with the majesty of the Most Gracious that He should beget a son.

The verse says:

"When it is not worthy of the Beneficent (Allah) that He should take (to Himself) a son."

A person may desire to have one or some children for one of the following things:

It is either for the sake that the one needs to have reproduction for the duration of his seed; or he seeks for an assistant; or he is afraid of loneliness. But none of these concepts is meaningful about Allah. Neither His Power is limited; nor His life ends; nor any weakness or feebleness befalls Him, nor He feels loneliness and need.

Surah Maryam - Verse 93

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِلاَّ ءَاتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْداً

93. "There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Beneficent (Allah) as a servant."

All the world of existence and its creatures are wholly under the command of Allah, and they are His servants. Why do you consider the servant of Allah as His child?

It is for this reason that the Qur'an, concerning the matter, in this holy verse, says:

"There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Beneficent (Allah) as a servant."

These servants obey Him, but in the meantime He does not need their obedience. It is those creatures who are totally in need of Him.

Surah Maryam - Verses 94 - 95

لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدّاً

وَكُلُّهُمْ ءَاتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْداً

94. "Certainly He has counted them, and He has numbered them exactly."

95. "And every one of them shall come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, all alone."

He knows the exact number of all parts of the world of existence entirely.

The knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) encompasses not only the universals, but He also knows the details of the matters.

The verse says:

"Certainly He has counted them, and He has numbered them exactly."

That is, never think that with the existence of all these servants, how He may know the account of them wholly.

Therefore, in the second holy verse, mentioned in the above, the Qur'an says:

"And every one of them shall come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, all alone."

Thus, both Jesus, and Ezra, and angels, and all human beings are involved in this general commandment. Yet, how disgrace is the consideration of belief of a child for Him, and how low do we bring His Pure Essence from the climax of Dignity and Grandeur!

Surah Maryam - Verse 96

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدّاً

96. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, soon the Beneficent (Allah) will appoint love for them."

The words in this verse, as well as the next couple of verses, are about the faithful believers and also about the faithless cruel unjust. The contents of these verses are also upon the Qur'an and its glad tidings and warnings.

At first, it says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, soon the Beneficent (Allah) will appoint love for them."

Faith and righteous deed has a reflection as vast as the world of existence, and the ray of love emerged from it can cover the whole expansion of creation. Allah, the Pure Essence, loves such believing people. They are beloved with all those who are in the skies. This affection will brighten the hearts of men who are on the earth.

To be beloved is a divine bounty which may be given to the believers and the righteous, as the Qur'an says:

"…soon the Beneficent (Allah) will appoint love for them."

Yes, the one who loves only Allah will be loved heartily by all people with the help of Allah. In general, he who remembers Allah, He will have His favor upon him. The Qur'an says:

"Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you…"[28]

It is interesting that the Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

"When the Lord loves one of His servants, He says to His great angel, Gabriel, that He loves so and so, then do love him. Gabriel will love him and, then, he calls in the skies that Allah loves so and so, then do love him; and thereafter, all those who are in the skies will love him, and then the acceptance of this affection will reflect in the earth.

And when the Lord hates a person, He tells Gabriel to hate him, and Gabriel hates him. After that he calls out among those who are in the skies that Allah hates him, then do hate him. Thus, all those who are in the skies will hate him, and afterward, the reflection of this hatred will be found in the earth."

This tradition has been recorded in many Islamic traditional sources as well as in many commentary books, but this is a tradition of the text recorded in The Commentary of Fi-Zalal, vol. 5, p. 454 which is adopted from Ahmad, Muslim, and Bukhari.

Verily, what a pleasure is better than this that a person feels that he is beloved by all the pure and the righteous of the world of existence? And how painful is that a person feels that the earth, the skies, the angels and the believing people all hate him?

However, besides the books of Shi‘ah, there are numerous traditions recorded in the books of tradition and commentary compiled by the scholars of the Sunnite upon the occasion of revelation of the verse under discussion, narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S), which denote that this verse has been revealed mostly in regard to Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as).

Among them are: Zamakhshari in Kashshaf; Sebtayn-ul-Jauzi in Tathkirah; Ganji Shafi‘i; Qurtabi his famous book; Mu‘jab-ud-Din Tabari in Zakha’ir-ul-‘Ughba; Neyshaburi in his well-known commentary book;’Ibn-i-Sabbaq Maliki in Fusul-ul-Muhimmah, Suyuti in Durr-ul-Manthur; Heythami in Sawa‘igh-ul-Muhraghah; and’Alusi in Rouh-ul-Ma‘ani.

Some of these traditions are as follows:

1. Tha‘labi, in his commentary book, narrates from Bara’-ibn-‘Azib:

“The Messenger of Allah (S) told Ali (as): ‘Say: O’ Allah! Appoint a covenant for me with yourself, and set my love in the hearts of the believers’. Then this verse was reveled.”[29]

This very statement exactly, or with a little difference, has been cited in many other Islamic books.

2. In a lot of Islamic sources it has been narrated from’Ibn-‘Abbas who said:

“The verse:

‘Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, soon the Beneficent (Allah) will appoint love for them.’

has been revealed in regard to Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), which means that Allah appoints his love in the hearts of the believers.”[30]

3. Upon the commentary of this verse, it is cited in the book entitled ‘Sawa’igh’ that Muhammad-ibn-Hanafiyyah said:

“There is no faithful believer but there is love of Ali and his Ahl-ul-Bayt in his heart.”[31]

4. Maybe, for the same reason it has been cited in a correct and authentic tradition narrated from Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) who said:

“Even if I strike the nose of a believer with this, my sword, for hating me, he will not hate me, and even if I pile all the wealth of the world before a hypocrite in order that he loves me, he will not love me. This is because it is a verdict pronounced by the tongue of the unschooled Prophet (S) as he said: ‘O’ Ali! a believer will never hate you and a hypocrite will never love you’.”32

5. Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

“The Prophet (S) in his last prayer invocated in regard to Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) so loudly that people could hear, saying: ‘O Allah! Bestow the love of Ali upon the hearts of the believers, and appoint his awe and greatness in the hearts of the hypocrites’. Then this verse and the verse next to it were revealed.”[33]

It has also been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The love of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) is a reward that Allah gives to the believers who have righteous deed." A similar meaning to this tradition has been narrated from the holy Prophet (S) in regard to the love and affection of the believers unto Ali (as).[34]

However, as it was said in the commentary explanations of the abovementioned verses, the revelation of this verse upon Ali, as a complete example, does not contrast the generality of the meaning upon the believers wholly, with a hierarchical order, of course.

Surah Maryam - Verse 97

فإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّـرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْماً لدّاً

97. "So We have made it (The Qur'an) easy in your tongue that you may give glad tidings thereby to the pious ones, and warn thereby stubborn people."

Here, the verse has referred to the Qur'an, which is a source of training, Faith, and righteous deed.

Allah (s.w.t.) in this verse says:

"So We have made it (The Qur'an) easy in your tongue that you may give glad tidings thereby to the pious ones, and warn thereby stubborn people."

The term /yassarnah/, mentioned in the verse, is derived from the Arabic infinitive /taysir/ in the sense of facilitation. This facilitation may be from the different points of view:

1. It may be in this point of view that the Qur'an has been revealed in Arabic, eloquent and perspicuous, whose tone is pleasant in the ears, and whose recitation is easy for the tongues.

2. It may be from this view that Allah had given such a domination over the verses of the Qur'an to His Prophet (S) that he could apply it easily everywhere and for removing any difficulty, and he used to recite them to the believers munificently.

3. It may be from the point of the content of the Qur'an which, with its deep meanings, is easy to understand. Basically, those many great and outstanding facts which have been arranged in the frame of limited mere verbal utterances whose meanings can be understood easily, itself is an evidence for what is recited in the abovementioned verse and the act of which has been performed by the help of Allah.

In several verses of Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, including verse 17, this phrase has been repeated:

"And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind?"

The Arabic word /ludd/ is the plural form of /'alad/ which means 'an enemy with intensive hostility', and it is used for those who are fanatic, obstinate, and irrational in enmity.

Surah Maryam - Verse 98

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِن قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِس مِنْهُم مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزَاً

98. "And how many a generation before have We destroyed! Do you find any one of them or hear a sound of them?"

This is the last verse of Surah Maryam. This Surah was revealed in Mecca at the time when Muslims were in a hard pressure. Keeping this matter in mind, the verse was both as a comfort for the Prophet (S) and the believers, and as a threat and warning against all hostile and obstinate enemies of Islam.

It says:

"And how many a generation before have We destroyed! Do you find any one of them or hear a sound of them?"

The Arabic term /rikz/ means 'a faint sound, a whisper', and, therefore, the things which are hidden under the ground, (as ore), in Arabic are called /rikaz/. Thus, the verse means that these cruel nations and the hard enemies of the truth were so destroyed that even no faint sound is heard from them now.

Imam Sadiq (as), in answer to Jabir concerning this verse, said:

"The destroyed generation is Umayyads. You may find none of them in the state of being hopeful or free from fear and horror."

Jabir has said that he asked whether that state could take place, and the Imam replied:

"It will happen very soon."[35]

Supplication:

O' Lord! Brighten our hearts with the light of Faith, and fill the entire of our entity with light of righteous deeds. Appoint us, please, among the lovers of the believers and the righteous, specially the prior of the pious, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), and cast the love of us into the hearts of all believers.

O' Allah! Our large Islamic society, with those abundant people and plenty of material and spiritual abilities, is captured in the grips of enemies and, because of disunity and separation of their rows, has become feeble. Please gather them all around the torch of Faith and righteous deed!

O' Lord! As You destroyed and annihilated the former tyrannical generations so that no faint sound is heard from them, annihilate the most powerful unjust forces of our time, too. Remove their vice from the oppressed communities and make the raise of believers against the oppressors victorious! Amen. O' Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary, vol. 3, p. 259, and Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-Ebrahin, under the verse.
2. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 79
3. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 645
4. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol.8, p. 6
5. Tauhid-i-Sadug, p.29
6. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1
7. Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 894
8. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2174
9. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 148
10. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 148 Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 456
11. Sahih-i-Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 77
12. Sahih-i-Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 77
13. Surah An-Naba', No. 78, verses 21 and 22
14. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, No. 44225

15. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 2619
16. 'Amali-us-Sadug, vol. 7, p. 496
17. Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 13
18. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, p. 8 tradition 27
19. 'Uyun'Akhbar-ir-Rida, vol. 2, p. 28, tradition 20
20. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verses 60 and 61
21. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 109
22. The Commentary of Al-Mizan, Safi, Burhan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
23. Majma'-ul-Bayan
24. The Commentary of Al-Mizan
25. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 40
26. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 30
27. Ibid
28. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 152
29. Ihghagh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 3, p.p.83-86
30. According to'Ihghagh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 3, pp.83-86
31. Ihghagh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 3, pp. 83-86
32. Rauh-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 16, p. 130; Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 6, p. 533; and Nahaj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 45
33. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 363
34. Al-Kafi vol. 1, p. 431, Tafsir-i-Furat, p. 247
35. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 46, p.30

Surah Ta Ha, Chapter 20

Surah Ta Ha

(Revealed in Macca)

No. 20

135 verses in 8 sections

Introduction to the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Taha, which is one of the Meccan suras, contains 135 verses and its content, like other Meccan suras, is mostly about 'Origin and End'.

This holy Surah is the first Surah of the Qur'an which has explained the Story of Moses (as) in details, and about 80 verses of it have been stated in this regard.

A part of the Surah is upon the greatness of the Qur'an and the attributes of Allah, while another part of it relates to the story of Adam and Eve and the temptations of Satan. And, finally, there have been stated some awakening advices in this holy Surah.

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who continues reciting Surah 'Ta Ha' will be loved by Allah (s.w.t.) and, on the Day of Resurrection, his book of deeds will be given to his right hand…"[1]

Note

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 367

Section 1: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 1 - 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

طه

مَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْءَانَ لِتَشْقَي

إِلاَّ تَذْكِرَةً لِمَن يَخْشَي

تَنزِيلاً مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الاَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاوَاتِ الْعُلَي

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Ta Ha"

2. "We did not send down the Qur'an to you that you distress yourself."

3. "But only as an admonition to him who fears (Allah)."

4. "It has been sent down from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens."

At the beginning of this Surah, again we are confronted the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an, which excite the reader's sense of curiosity.

It says:

"Ta Ha"

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that 'Ta Ha' is one of the names of holy Prophet (S), and it means: 'O seeker of the truth and the leader unto it'.

'Ta Ha' consists of two mystic letters, so that 'Ta' refers to the sense of 'seeker of Truth' and 'Ha' indicates the meaning of 'the leader unto it'. It is well known that the usage of mystic letters, and abbreviations has been very common since the old times, and they are abundantly used nowadays in particular.

The term "Ta Ha", similar to 'Yasin', in the course of time, has gradually been applied as a proper name for the Prophet of Islam (S), so far that the family of the Prophet (S) is called ''Al-i-Ta-Ha' (the family of Ta Ha). Also, in 'Supplication of Nudbah', Hadrat Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent) has been rendered into 'Yabna-Ta-Ha'.

From the time of the descent of the Qur'an and its Divine revelation on, the Prophet (S) used to worship very much. He specially accomplished his worshipping in a 'standing state'. He stood so much so that his feet often were inflated. Then the verse was revealed, telling the Prophet (S) that he should not impose upon himself so much trouble.

The verse says:

"We did not send down the Qur'an to you that you distress yourself."

It is true that worship is the best actions, but every thing must have a limit. The Prophet (S) must not bear the task so much that his feet inflate, and his power decreases too much for preaching and Holy Struggle.

In the next verse, the goal of the descent of the Qur'an is explained, as follows:

"But only as an admonition to him who fears (Allah)."

The expression /man yaxša/ (to him who fears Allah), denotes that a person does not accept the facts unless there is a kind of feeling of responsibility in him (that he fears).

Then the verse pays to introduce the Lord, the One Who has sent down the Qur'an, so that, by means of knowing Him, the greatness of the Qur'an would be made manifest more.

Concerning the Qur'an, it says:

"It has been sent down from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens."

In fact, this explanation is an indication to both the beginning and the end of the descent of the Qur'an, whose end is the earth and its beginning is heavens.

However, the Arabic word /tanzil/ means 'a gradual descent'. That is, the Qur'an was revealed during 23 years, in different occasions and for various incidents. This meaning does not contrast to the revelation of the Qur'an upon the holy heart of the Prophet (S) at once on the Night of Qadr.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 5 - 7

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَي الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَي

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَرَي

وإِن تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ َعْلَمُ السّرَّ وَأَخْفَي

5. "The Beneficent (Allah Who) dominates on the 'Arsh (the Throne of existence)."

6. "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and whatever is between them, and whatever is beneath the ground."

7. "And if you utter aloud (or whisper, it is no matter): for verily He knows the secret (of yours) and (that which is yet) more hidden."

In these few verses, four main attributes of Allah are referred to. They are as follows:

1. His Creative Power (Divinity), where it says:

"…Who created the earth and the high heavens."

2. His Sovereignty, where it says:

"…dominates on 'Arsh (the Throne of existence)."

3. His Ownership, where it says:

"To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth…".

4. His Omniscience, where it says:

"…He knows the secret (of yours) and (that which is yet) more hidden."

The Sovereignty of Allah over 'Arsh, which has been mentioned in some other occurrences of the Qur'an with the phrase recited:

"…He mounted the Throne (of authority)",

denotes to Allah's authority over the world of existence. As an instance, when it is said that so and so set on the throne, or so and so was taken down from the throne, it means that he gained an authority, or his authority was taken from him.

The Qur'anic phrase:

"…He mounted the throne (of authority)"

and the like of it, is usually followed with sentence which interprets it. For example, in Surah'A'raf, No. 7, verse 54, it says:

"…Then He mounted the Throne (of authority). He covers the day with the night…".

Or like Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 3 which says:

"…Then He established Himself on the Throne regulating all things…".

Or like Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 4, which says:

"…Then He established Himself on the Throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it…".

And like Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 4, where it says:

"…Then He established Himself on the Throne. You have none besides Him to protect or intercede (for you)…".

And in the verse under discussion, the Qur'an implies: the same Beneficent Who dominates on the 'Arsh (the Throne of existence).

The verse says:

"The Beneficent (Allah Who) dominates on the 'Arsh (the Throne of existence)."

The Arabic term /ara/ originally means 'wet soil', and since the low level of the ground is often wet in Arabic it is called /ara/. Thus the meaning of the phrase: /matahtaara/ (whatever is beneath the ground) envelops all dead bodies, treasures, and whatever thing is hidden in the depth of the ground.

Then, next to the Sovereignty of Allah over the world of existence, the Qur'an refers to His Ownership.

It says:

"To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and whatever is between them, and whatever is beneath the ground."

Up to here, three main attributes of Allah have been explained: the first epithet is His Creative Power, the second epithet, is His Sovereignty, and the third epithet is His Ownership.

In the next verse, the fourth epithet, His Omniscience, has been pointed out. It implies that His knowledge is so vast that it encompasses every thing you say manifestly or whatever you keep hidden, and He also knows even the more secret than the secret.

The verse says:

"And if you utter aloud (or whisper, it is no matter): for verily He knows the secret (of yours) and (that which is yet) more hidden."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The secret (thing) is what you hide in your heart, and more secret than that is that which has passed from your mouth but you have forgotten it. That is, not only it is hidden for others but you yourself have neglected it."

Allah knows everything:

"He knows the secret (of yours) and (that which is yet) more hidden."[1]

He knows the things which are not seen in the heavens and in the earth:

"…I know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth…".[2]

He knows what is in the womb of every female:

"Allah knows what every female bears…".[3]

He knows the aim and meaning of glances:

"He knows the stealthy looks..".[4]

He knows what passes in the hearts:

"…Allah knows what is in your hearts…".[5]

And there falls no leaf of a tree but He knows it:

"…and no leaf (of a tree) drops down but He knows it…".[6]

However, the domination of Allah over the world of existence is accomplished mercifully, not mightily. And the revelation of the Qur'an has been a sign of His Beneficence and His Authority upon the existence.

So, His Sovereignty over the whole existence is alike. He is both the Creator of the world of existence and the Protector and Ruler of it. He has also knowledge about whatever is visible and invisible and has absolute ownership over all things.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 8

اللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ لَهُ الاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَي

8. "Allah, there is no god but He. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."

Through the contents of the abovementioned verses an epitome of knowledge about the Sender of the Qur'an was delivered by referring to Allah's four attributes. They are: His Creative Power, His Sovereignty, His Ownership, and His Omniscience.

And, perhaps, it is for the same reason that the Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"Allah, there is no god but He. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."

The objective meaning of 'the Most beautiful Names' is the different attributes of Allah (s.w.t.) all of which are good and are beautiful.

We know that Allah is: The Knower, The Powerful, The Sustainer, The Just, The Benevolent, The Generous, and The Merciful. Besides them, He has also many more good epithets similar to them.

The purpose of calling Allah by these Names is not only that we utter them simply by the tongue, and we say, for example, O The knower, O The Powerful, O The Most Merciful of all merciful, but, in fact, we must settle these epithets in our selves as much as we can.

We must try to obtain a ray from His Knowledge, a reflection from His Power, and a piece of His All-Embracing Mercy and practice them in ourselves and our society.

In other words, we ought to be endowed with His Attributes and be characterized by His character, so that, under the light of this knowledge and power, and this justice and mercy, we can drive out ourselves and the society wherein we live from the row of infernal people.

However, there are some details about 'the Most Beautiful Names' recorded in the books of tradition and commentary, compiled by both Sunnites and Shi'ites, a substance of which will be offered here, as follows:

No doubt the phrase ‘the Most Beautiful Names’ means ‘good names’, and we know that all the names of Allah contain some good meanings, therefore all His Names are the Most Beautiful Names.

They are irrespective of those which are the affirmed qualities of His Pure Essence, like: The Knower, The Powerful; or those which are negative qualities of His Holy Essence, like: The Most Holy; and those which are the attributes of acts each of which denotes to one of His acts, like: The Creator, The All-Forgiving, The Beneficent, and The Merciful.

On the other hand, no doubt the attributes of Allah are not countable, because His accomplishments are infinite. For each of His accomplishments a Name and an Attribute can be chosen.

But, as it is understood from Some Islamic traditions, some of His attributes are more significant than the others, and, perhaps, the phrase ‘the Most Beautiful Names’ is an indication to this particular group.

Among the traditions we have received from the Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (Ahlul-Bayt) (as) this meaning has repeatedly been said that there are 99 Names for Allah and whoever calls Him by these Names his prayer will be answered, and whoever counts them will enter Paradise.

An example of the abovementioned traditions is the one that Sadugh has narrated in his book, entitled Tauhid, from Imam Sadiq (as) from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) from the Prophet (S) who said:

“Verily there are ninety nine Names for Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. He who counts them will enter Paradise”.[7]

Again, in the book of Tauhid, it is narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Musa-r-Rida (as), from his fathers, from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) who said:

“Verily there are ninety nine Names for Allah, Almighty and Glorious. He who invocates by them it will be answered from him, and he who counts them will enter Paradise”.[8]

In the books of Bukhari, Muslim, Tarmathi, and some other sources of traditions compiled by the Sunnite scholars, this very meaning has also been cited about the Names of Allah, saying that whoever calls Allah by these ninety-nine Names his prayer will be answered, and whoever counts them will enter Paradise.[9]

Some Islamic traditions denote that these ninety-nine Names are found in the Qur’an. For example, a tradition narrated by Ibn-Abbas indicates that the Prophet (S) said:

“There are ninety nine Names for Allah. Whoever counts them will enter Paradise, and they are in the Qur’an.”[10]

Therefore, some of the Islamic scholars have tried to extract these Names and Attributes from the Qur’an, but the Names of Allah mentioned in the Qur’an are more than ninety nine Names. So, the Most Beautiful Names may be among them, and thus, there are more than ninety nine Names in the Qur’an concerning Allah.

Whatever is more important here, and we must be specially careful of it, is that the purpose of calling Allah by these Names, or counting the most Beautiful Names of Allah, is not that whoever utters these Names by the tongue, and with no attention to their contents and concepts, he merely

pronounces them will be successful and prosperous, or his invocation will be answered.

But the aim is that the person believes in these Names and Attributes, and then he tries to reflect a ray of their meanings in his self; i.e., he should settle in himself some parts of the concepts of the Attributes: The Knower, the Powerful, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Clement, All-Forgiving, the Strong, the Everlasting, the Self-Sufficient, The Sustainer, and the like of them.

It is sure that such a person both will enter Paradise and his invocation will be answered and will gain any goodness.

However, whatever was said makes it manifest that if, besides these Names, some more Names are mentioned for Allah in some traditions or in supplications, and even in some supplications[11] the number of His Names has reached to one thousand, it does not contrast to what was explained in the above, because the Names of Allah are infinite and, like the unending accomplishments of His Essence, they are unlimited, although a number of these Names and Attributes have a kind of preference.

And, also, when we recite in some traditions, like the one recorded in Usul-i-Kafi, Imam Sadiq (as), commenting on the verse under discussion, has said:

"By Allah, we are the Most Beautiful Names (of Allah)",[12]

it shows that a strong ray of these divine epithets has reflected in their selves, and their knowledge helps them to the knowing of His Pure Essence.

Also, some Islamic literatures indicate that all the Most Beautiful Names are summarized in 'pure monotheism'. This is because all His attributes return to His Pure Essence, The One.

Fakhr-i-Razi, in his commentary book, points to a matter which, in one respect, is important. He says that all the Attributes of Allah return to two facts: either to His Omniscience, or the need of others to His Pure Essence.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 9 - 12

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَي

إِذْ رَأَي نَاراً فَقَالَ لاِهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْا إِنّـِي ءَانَسْتُ نَاراً لَّعَلّـِي ءَاتِيكُم مّـِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجِدُ عَلَي

النَّارِ هُدًي

فَلَمَّآ أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَامُوسَي

إِنّـِي أَنَاْ رَبكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًي

9. "And has the story of Moses reached you?"

10. "When he saw a fire, then he said to his family: 'Wait (a little)! Verily I perceive a fire; perhaps I can bring you a brand from it, or may find some guidance at the fire'."

11. "Then when he came to the fire, he was called: 'O Moses!"

12. "Verily I am your Lord! Therefore take off your shoes! Verily you are in the holy valley of Tuwa'."

The Arabic term /qabas/ means: a piece of fire apart from another.

Somewhere in the current Surah, a few points of the story of Moses (as) have been stated in details. Among them are the followings:

1. The choice of Moses (as) for Messengership.
2. The invitation of Moses (as) from Pharaoh to accepting the Truth.
3. Moses' coming out from Egypt and Pharaoh's being drowned.
4. Calf worshipping of the Children of Israel.

Moses (as), accompanied with his pregnant wife, went on a trip, and they lost their way in the desert. In the rainy, dark and cold desert, they needed a fire for both its heat and light to find the way.

Then suddenly a fire was seen from the distance. In order to get the fire to comfort his family, Moses (as) went toward the fire, where there came a voice by which Allah elected Moses (as) as an apostle.[13]

Yes, in order to save himself and his family, Moses (as) went toward the fire, but Allah opened the path of saving others to him. Moses was seeking for the road on the ground, while Allah showed him the spiritual way and the path of happiness. He was looking for his personal way, where Allah endowed him the way of guidance of the community.

In relation to this matter, the Qur'an, addressing the holy Prophet (S), says:

"And has the story of Moses reached you?"

"When he saw a fire, then he said to his family: 'Wait (a little)! Verily I perceive a fire; perhaps I can bring you a brand from it, or may find some guidance at the fire'."

"Then when he came to the fire, he was called: 'O Moses!"

"Verily I am your Lord! Therefore take off your shoes! Verily you are in the holy valley of Tuwa'."

By hearing that enlivening sound, addressing him:

"Verily I am your Lord!"

Moses (as) got very excited and an indescribable pleaure encompassed him thoroughly.

He was commissioned to take off his shoes, because he had entered into a holy land: a land wherein the light of Allah was seen, the Message of Allah was heard, and he was to accept the responsibility of Apostleship. He ought to step on this land with utmost humility and modesty. That was why he should take off his shoes.

Explanations

1. The appellation of Moses has been mentioned in 20 suras of the Qur'an for 136 times. The story of Moses is the longest stories of the Qur'an, because around nine hundred verses of the Qur'an concern to it.

2. The term /rabb/ (the Lord), which is one of 'the Most Beautiful Names' of Allah, has occurred more than 970 times in the Qur'an, and in His first manifestation to Moses (as), Allah introduced Himself by this Name, saying:

"Verily I am your Lord!".

And, since Moses' prophethood began with the word of Allah,[14] he was entitled /kalimullah/ (the Interlocutor of Allah).

3. The phrase /wad-il-muqaddas/ (the holy valley) is used fore a place far from defect and vice; and the word /tuwa/ means something or somewhere which is blessed.

4. An Islamic tradition denotes that the purpose of ‘taking the shoes’ is detaching the heart from two anxieties: one of his anxieties was about the situation of his wife in that cold desert; and his second anxiety was about the evil of Pharaoh.[15]

Some commentators also believe that this holy Qur’anic phrase points to the wife and child, or to the love of the world and Hereafter.

The phrase under discussion has also occurred in the present Turah with the same form of meaning.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 13 - 14

وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَي

إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنَاْ فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ لِذِكْرِي

13. “And I myself have chosen you; therefore hearken unto what is revealed.”

14. “Verily I, I(alone), am Allah. There is no god save Me. So worship (only) Me, and establish prayer for My remembrance.”

Divine prophets have been appointed to prophethood by Allah, not by people. Therefore, the words of revelation, sent to them, should be heard and followed with whole the entity and heartily.

In this holy verse, Allah says that He Himself has chosen him to Messengership, then he should hear His word and be steadfast on it. This is the Divine revelation that he was commanded to hear.

The verse says:

“And I myself have chosen you; therefore hearken unto what is revealed.”

Regarding Unity and sincere religion, Allah commanded him in this verse as follows:

“Verily I, I(alone), am Allah. There is no god save Me. So worship (only) Me, and establish prayer for My remembrance.”

In this verse Allah enjoins him to worship Him and to associate none in worshipping unto Him and to establish prayer in order that in His remembrance he glorifies and praises Him since prayer exists not save for the remembrance of Allah.

Or the purpose of the content meaning in this holy verse is that he should establish prayer so that He (s.w.t.) also remembers him in praising.

In other words, in this holy verse, next to the statement of the most importart principle of the prophets’ invitation, which is Unity, the subject of worshipping the One God, as a fruit for the tree of Faith and Unity, has been referred to.

And, immediately after it, He has enjoined prayer; i.e., the greatest worship and the most important link between the servants and the Creator, as well as the most effective means for that His Pure Essence might not be forgotten.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 15 - 16

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَي كُل نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَي

فَلاَ يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَن لاَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَي

15. "Verily the Hour (of Doom) is coming, (but) I will to keep it hidden so that every soul may be rewarded for its endeavour."

16. "Therefore let him who believes not in it and follows his own vain desires turn you away from it, lest you perish."

Monotheism and Resurrection are at the top of Allah's Messages for humankind. None is aware of the time of the event of Hereafter, save Allah.

The occurrence of Resurrection is certain, but its time is hidden. In Hereafter, the execution of Divine Law, and the accomplishment of rewards and retributions, is the same for all.

After mentioning Unity and its explanation in the previous verse, here, in this verse, the second basic principle, which is resurrection, is referred to.

It says:

"Verily the Hour (of Doom) is coming, (but) I will to keep it hidden so that every soul may be rewarded for its endeavour."

According to this verse, the reason of keeping the exact time of Resurrection hidden is cited that Allah wishes 'to reward every person for his effort and endeavour', so that a freedom of action comes into being for all human beings.

The next verse has pointed to a fundamental principle, which is a surety of execution of all religious and training programs, where it says:

"Therefore let him who believes not in it and follows his own vain desires turn you away from it, lest you perish."

The prophet must stand firm before the faithless people and their evil temptations. He must afraid neither of the large number of the opponents nor be worried of their plots, nor be doubtful about the rightfulness of his invitation and mobility of this Divine school.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 17 - 18

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَامُوسَي

قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُش بِهَا عَلَي غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَارِبُ أُخْرَي

17. "And (Allah said) what is that in your right hand O Moses?"

18. "He (Moses)said: 'It is my rod: I lean on it, and I beat down leaves with it for my sheep, and there are (also) other uses therein for me'."

To show His power, Allah makes use of even the nearest and simplest means of ordinary life.

Moses' Rod and White Hand!

No doubt the divine prophets need miracles to prove their communication with Allah (s.w.t.), else everybody may claim prophethood.

Moses (as), after getting the command of prophethood, should receive its divine proof, too. Therefore, in the same adventurous night, he received two great miracles from the side of Allah (s.w.t.).

The Qur'an explains this event as follows:

"And (Allah said) what is that in your right hand O Moses?"

In answer to this question, Moses (as) said:

"…'It is my rod…"

And, since Moses wished to continue his speech with his beloved Lord, Who for the first time had opened that door to him, and also since maybe he

thought saying merely ‘It is my rod’ was not enough and the purpose was to explain its usage, he added:

“…I lean on it, and I beat down leaves with it for my sheep, and there are (also) other uses therein for me’.”

Moses (as) had gone in a deep astonishment that what a question it was and what sort of reply he was answering!

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 19 - 21

قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَا مُوسَي

فَأَلْقَاهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَي

قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلاَ تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الأُولَي

19. “Said He: ‘Cast it down O Moses!”

20. “Then he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent gliding.”

21. “Said He: ‘Take it, and fear not, We will restore it to its first state’.”

In the first couple of holy verses, mentioned in the above, Moses is commanded to throw down his rod and he immediately, and without wasting any moment, threw his rod down, when suddenly it became a great snake and began moving.

Here are the verses:

“Said He: ‘Cast it down O Moses!”

“Then he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent gliding.”

The Arabic term /tas‘a/ is derived from /sa‘y/ in the sense of ‘to walk swiftly’, so that it does not reach to the state of running.

In the next holy verse, He told Moses to take the rod.

Here is the verse:

“Said He: ‘Take it, and fear not, We will restore it to its first state’.”

Then, as soon as Allah, the Glorified, told him to take it and fear not, his fear went away so that Moses (as) put his hand into the mouth of the serpent and seized its neck; so the serpent changed into its first state, i.e., a rod.[16]

It is cited in Majma‘-ul-Bayan that this rod was made of a heavenly piece of wood which the former prophets had inherited from Adam, and Shu‘ayb (Jethro) had given it to Moses (as).

Explanations

1. Human beings naturally are afraid of dangers and the causes of vice and harm, and they avoid them. It is evident that Moses (as), who is a man, also fears. What is criticized, and even disgraceful, here, is heartily fear and anxiety from other than Allah, which is against bravery and it is one of the evil qualities for the true believers, and Moses (as), of course, had been far from it.

2. The fear of Moses (as), perhaps, was for the reason that he had considered the command of ‘cast it down’, respectful, like the command of ‘take off your shoes’, but when it changed into a serpent, he surprised.

Intrinsically, this very fear is itself an evidence that that happening was a miracle, otherwise, a sorcerer who himself knows that his sorcery is not a fact, naturally is not afraid of his own magic.

3. In any moment, Allah gives life to millions of lifeless things, or He takes the life of millions of living creatures. Here, He also gave life to the lifeless rod and then He took it back from it when it became a rod again. Keeping this event in mind, the question is: can He not cause a living person to die, and then He restores him to his first state?[17]

Verily, when Allah's view changes a rod into a serpent, then what happens if He puts a graceful view upon us? And, when the favoured thing of Allah can swallow all the magic of the sorcerers, will His favour toward our hearts not swallow all the evil temptations?

4. At the first onset of the adventure of Moses, there happened two miracles for him. The first was that his rod turned to be a serpent; and the second was that the serpent was restored to its first state.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 22 - 23

وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ ءَايَةً أُخْرَي

لِنُرِيَكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِنَا الْكُبْرِي

22. "And place your hand under your armpit, it will come forth white (shining) without harm, (and this also is) another sign (miracle),"

23. "That We may show you of Our greater signs."

Another miracle of Moses (as) was the 'White Hand', which has been mentioned in three occurrences of the Qur'an.

One of them is where it says:

"Enter your hand into the opening of your bosom…"[18]

Another one is the verse which says:

"And enter your hand into the opening of your bosom…"[19]

And the third one is the abovementioned verse which says:

"And place your hand under your armpit…"

The meaning of these three verses can be gathered in a statement, saying: 'Enter your hand into the opening of your bosom as far as under your armpit', so that it comes out white and in perfect condition. This is another Sign of Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…it will come forth white (shining) without harm, (and this also is) another sign (miracle),"

However, Allah is All-Mighty and whenever and by any means that He intends He can manifest His Power. The miracles of the prophets can also be counted as a part of His Signs and His Power.

Therefore, in the next verse, as a conclusion of the contents of the previous verses, it implies that Allah gave these things to Moses in order to show him His great signs.

In this regard, the verse says:

"That We may show you of Our greater signs."

The objective meaning of the phrase: 'greater signs, is those very important miracles which were mentioned in the above.

Explanations

1. In order to improve a society, the sources and the origins of sedition and mischief should be rooted out.

2. The first struggle of prophets is standing against the illegitimate rulers of their time.

3. Religion is not separate from policy. Moses (as) started improving the government.

"Go to Pharaoh…"

4. Struggling against the illegitimate rulers is a Divine duty, not a demonstration.

Notes

1. Tafsir Safi
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 33
3. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 8
4. Surah Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 19
5. Surah Al-'Ahzab, No. 33, verse 51
6. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 59
7. The Commentary of Al-Mizan, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
8. The Commentary of Al-Mizan, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
9. Al-Mizan, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
10. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
11. Such as the supplication of Joushan-Kabir
12. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 2, p. 103
13. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the commentary
14. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 164 says:
    "…and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech".
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalaym
16. The Commentary of Jawami'-ul-Jami'
17. The Commentary of Fi Zilal-il-Qur'an
18. Surah Al-Qsas, No. 28, verse 32
19. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 12

Section 2: The Ministry of Moses

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 24 - 28

اذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى
قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي
وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي
وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِن لِسَانِي
يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

24. "Go to Pharaoh! Verily he has transgressed (the bounds)."
25. "(Moses) said: 'My Lord! Expand me my breast!"
26. "And make easy for me my task,"
27. "And loose a knot from my tongue,"
28. "(That) they may understand my saying."

From this verse on, the content of the verses indicate that the command of Messengership of Moses is issued, a great and heavy messengership, a messengership which begins with conveying the command of Allah to the most powerful, and the most dangerous person of the people of the society of his time, Pharaoh.

It says:

"Go to Pharaoh! Verily he has transgressed (the bounds)."

Transgression (tuqyan) means: 'violating the bounds of all dimensions of life'; therefore, such a person in Arabic is called /taqut/.

Yes, for improving a corrupt environment and creating a perfect revelation, we must begin with the most mischievous ones and the leaders of disbelievers, those who have control over the functions of all essential elements of the society.

Moses not only did not fear such heavy commission, and did not ask Allah for the least alleviation, but also he embraced it eagerly to follow; and he wished Allah (s.w.t.) to give him the necessary means of succession in this commission.

And in view of the fact that the first means of victory is a great spirit, a high thought, and an effective intellect, or, in other words, the 'expansion of breast', the verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'My Lord! Expand me my breast!"

And since there are some difficulties along this way, which cannot be removed save by the grace of Allah, in the second stage he asked Allah to make the affairs easy for him and to remove all the barriers from his way.

He said:

"And make easy for me my task,"

Then, Moses (as) requested Allah to give him a better ability of speech. He also expressed specially the reason of this request. He said:

"And loose a knot from my tongue,"
"(That) they may understand my saying."

This phrase, in fact, is an interpretation unto the previous verse. It means that he asked to be able to speak so clear, elegant, and expressive that every hearer could understand him.

In other words, as soon as Moses (as) was commissioned to the Divine Messengership, he demanded four things from Allah:

1. The expansion of breast:

"My Lord! Expand me my breast!"

2. A preparation for the conditions:

"And make easy for me my task,"

3. A fluent speech:

"And loose a knot from my tongue,"

4. Having an assistant:

"And appoint for me an assistant…"

And since Moses (as) had been commissioned to different subjects, such as: worshipping, political, revolutionary, social, ethical, personal, and congregational affairs, and paying to every one of them naturally causes man to neglect some others, therefore, the expansion of breast is utterly necessary for obtaining them all.

The expansion of breast is necessary both for the person himself and for fulfilling the responsibility, and Moses asked them all from Allah.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 29 - 32

وَاجْعَل لِي وَزِيراً مِنْ أَهْلِي

هَارُونَ أَخِي

اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي

وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي

29. "And appoint for me an assistant from my family,"

30. "Aaron, my brother;"

31. "Strengthen my back by him,"

32. "And associate him (with me) in my affair."

Since carrying on the heavy responsibility of prophethood toward the final point needs someone to aid so that it is impossible to afford it alone, then the fourth request of Moses (as) from Allah was that he said:

"And appoint for me an assistant from my family,"

Then he mentioned his brother in particular, and said:

"Aaron, my brother;"

Aaron was the elder brother of Moses. He was three years older than Moses, with a tall stature and a well-proportioned body, and with a very eloquent tongue and an excellent apprehension. He passed away three years before the death of Moses.

Aaron was one of the appointed messengers whom Allah bestowed on Moses (as) in a way of His Mercy.

Then Moses stated his purpose why he asked Allah to appoint Aaron as his minister and assistant.

He said:

"Strengthen my back by him,"

And, in order to complete this meaning, he continued saying:

"And associate him (with me) in my affair."

Moses asked Allah that Aaron associated him both in the rank of Messengership and in accomplishing that great mission. Thus, Moses did not ask Allah, only for the ministry of Aaron, but he also requested for his prophethood. Yet, in all respects, Aaron was a follower of Moses in all affairs, and Moses was his leader.

The reason why it is said in the verse 'minister' is that a minister carries out the heavy affairs and duties of the guardian of the affairs. The Arabic word /wazir/ (minister) is derived from the word /wizr/ in the sense of 'a heavy load', and it is called to a person who carries the burden of other's responsibility on his back; and the Arabic term /'azri/ also means 'back'.

However, it has been cited in many commentary books that the Prophet of Islam (S) repeatedly recited these verses and said:

"My Lord! Like Moses, I also ask for an assistant from my family"[1]

Allamah Tabataba'i in The Commentary of Al-Mizan says:

"In the tradition of Rank, the holy Prophet (S) told Ali-ibn-Abitalib:

'O Ali! You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, save that there is no prophet after me'.

This tradition has been narrated in one hundred ways by the Sunnites and in seventy ways by the Shi'ite."

Again, some of the traditions recorded in the books compiled by the scholars of the Sunnite and the Shi'ite denote that the Prophet of Islam (S) asked Allah the same things that Moses had asked for the succession in his mission, with a difference that instead of Aaron he (S) mentioned the name of Ali (as) and said as follows:

"O Allah! I ask You the same thing that my brother Moses asked You that You expand my breast, and make easy for me my task, and loose a knot from my tongue that they may understand my saying, and appoint for me an assistant from my family, Ali, my brother.

My Lord! Strengthen my back by him, and associate him (with me) in my affair, so that we glorify You much, and remember You abundantly; verily You are ever seeing of us."

This tradition has been recorded in The Commentary of Durr-ul-Manthur, by Suyuti; in Majma'-ul-Bayan by the Late Tabarsi; and a great deal of the great scholars of the Sunnite and the Shi'ite have also narrated it with some differences, of curse.

Similar to this tradition is the tradition of Rank; wherein the Prophet (S) has said to Ali (as):

"Are you not content with (this fact) that you are to me as Aaron was to Moses, save that there is no prophet after me?"

This tradition, which has been cited in the first level books of the Sunnites, and as Mohaddith Bahrani has said in his book entitled 'Qayat-ul-Maram', it has been narrated in one hundred ways by the Sunnites and in seventy ways by the Shi'ite, is so authentic and valid that there is no room for any denial or rejection against it.

However, another tradition in respect of the rank and position of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) may be considered, too, wherein the Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

"Verily Ali is from me and I am from him; and he is the master of every believer after me."

(This statement is an indication to the rank of mastership and Imamate of Ali (as).)

This tradition has been authorized by many Islamic scholars, such as: Ibn-abi-'Asim, No. 1187; Al-Baqawi in Mu'jam-us-Sahabah, No. 20-q; Ibn-'Asakir, vol. 12, p. 108; Al-Juweyni, in Fara'id-us-Samtayn, vol. 1, p. 15; Fada'il-ul-Khamsah, vol. 1, p. 342; 'Abdu-r-Razzaq, in 'Amali, q-12: 1; At-Tayalisi, p. 829; Ahmad, vol. 4, p.p. 437-438; Al-Fada'il, p. 1035; Al-Quti'i in Ziyadatih, N. 1104; Ibn-ul-Maqazili, in Manaqib-i-Ali (as), pp. 221, 23, 224, and 230.

This very tradition in which the Prophet (S) says:

"Verily Ali is from me and I am from him, and he is the master of every believer after me"

is also recorded in Jami'ah, vol. 13, p. 164 and vol. 5, p.296, No. 3796, published in Al-Madinah by Tarmathi; Hilyat-ul-'Auliya', vol. 6, p. 294; Manaqib-ul-Kharazmi, p. 92; Jami'-ul-'Usul, vol. 9, p. 470; Asad-ul-Qayah, vol. 4, p. 27; Zakha'ir-ul-'Ughba, p. 68; Al-'Isabah, vol. 2, p. 503; Ash-Shajari-Fil-'Amali, vol. 1, p. 134;'Ihghagh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 4, pp. 37 and 210, and in some other volumes of it. Al-Qadir, by 'Allamah'Amini, vol. 1, p.376 and some other volumes of it; Tara'if, p. 65, by Sayyid-ibn-Tawus; Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 38, p. 296

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 33 - 35

كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيراً
وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيراً
إِنَّكَ كُنتَ بِنَا بَصِيراً

33. "So that we glorify You much,"

34. "And remember You abundantly"

35. "Verily You are ever seeing of us."

At first, we mention that Allah is Pure from any blemish and imperfection, then we glorify Him and thank Him in the same manner that the great prophets did as a duty. They purified Allah from any polytheistic matters, fancies, and superstitions.

The philosophy of government and power in a society is establishing spirituality in that society and promoting it there. Therefore, the true glorification of Allah is our struggling against the mischievous rulers.

Of course, that struggle is worthy that continues and is usually accompanied with much glorification and remembrance of Allah in all the times; else every one remembers the Lord at the time of danger and hardships.

Thus, Moses (as) states his words as follows:

"So that we glorify You much,"

"And remember You abundantly"

"Verily You are ever seeing of us."

Prophets always saw themselves at the presence of Allah, and they were content with His Will and His Expediency.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 36 - 37

قَالَ قَدْ اُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَامُوسَي

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً اُخْرَي

36. "Said He: 'You are granted your request, O Moses."

37. "And indeed We have conferred a favour on you another time."

Since in his sincere demands Moses (as) did not intend anything but to deliver a better and more complete service, Allah answered his requests promptly at the same time, and, as the verse remarks:

"Said He: 'You are granted your request, O Moses."

When Allah informed Moses that He had granted him his requests, then following to it, in the next verse, He mentions the Divine bounties given to Moses. It implies that this is not the first time that Allah has bestowed His fovours on him, but he has always been under the attentiveness and providence of Allah, and another time, in his childhood, he was conferred a favour, too.

The verse says:

"And indeed We have conferred a favour on you another time."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 38 - 39

إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي اُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَي

أَنِ اقْذِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْذِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَم بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَهُ

وَاَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَي عَيْنِي

38. "When We inspired in your mother what must be inspired."

39. "(Saying) that: 'Cast him into a chest, then cast it into the sea, then the sea shall cast him up on the bank; there shall take him one (who is an) enemy to Me and an enemy to him.' And I cast down upon you love from Me (that every one may love you), in order that you might be brought up (and trained) in My sight."

In this verse, the revelation attracts the attention of Moses to the following facts.

It says:

"When We inspired in your mother what must be inspired."

This holy verse indicates that all the ways, which were ended to the deliverance of Moses (as) from the rips of Pharaohs in that age, were wholly taught to his mother.

Upon the meaning of this verse, in Jawami'-ul-Jami', the commentary, it is cited that: at the time when We inspired your mother whatever was inspirable; that inspiration caused your deliverance from being killed; or that We sent an angel to her, in the same manner as We sent it to Mary.

The purpose of 'inspiration' here is to inspire something to the heart, not the idiomatic term of revelation which is specially adapted for Divine

prophets, since Messengership is particular to men, as Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 109 says:

"And We have not sent before you but men from (among) the people of the towns, to whom We sent revelations..."

There was predicted for the people of Pharaoh that a child from the Children of Israel would come into existence who could destroy the kingdom of Pharaoh. In order to prevent that happening, Pharaoh had ordered his men to kill the sons of the Children of Israel and to keep their daughters alive to work as slave-maids and serving wenches for them.

However, Moses' mother felt that the life of her newborn child was in danger. At that moment the Lord, Who had appointed that child for a great raise, inspired in her heart as follows:

"(Saying) that: 'Cast him into a chest, then cast it into the sea…"

The Arabic term /tabut/ means a wooden chest. It does not always mean, as some people think, the coffin wherein the dead bodies are put.

Next to it, the Qur'an adds implying that the sea is commissioned to cast it up over the bank so that, at last, the one who is the enemy of Allah and the enemy of him takes him and fosters him in his lap. The verse continues saying:

"…then the sea shall cast him up on the bank; there shall take him one (who is an) enemy to Me and an enemy to him.'…"

And, in view of the fact that Moses (as) should be kept in a protective circle to be safe for the way he had in front of him full of ascent and descent, Allah cast a ray of His affection on Moses so that whoever saw him loved him in a manner that not only the one would not be willing to Kill him but also he might not accept that any harm should hurt him.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"…And I cast down upon you love from Me (that every one may love you)…"

It has been said that the midwife of Moses (as) was one of the people of Pharaoh. She wanted to report his birth to the cruel men of the government.

But, for the first time, as soon as her eyes cast on the eyes of the newly born child, it seemed a light glittered from the baby's eyes which brightened the depth of the heart of the midwife so that she loved him in a way that all kinds of evil thought departed from her mind.

At the end of this holy verse, the Qur'an refers to the aim of the event.

It says:

"…in order that you might be brought up (and trained) in My sight."

By the way, this verse leads us to the concept that whenever Allah intends an action to be done, He also provides its necessary means. Here, in order to protect Moses (as), He inspires in his mother that she casts her child into the sea.

Then He commands to the sea that it takes the chest carrying the child on the bank. He casts into the enemy's heart that he keeps him and He puts affection of the child in his heart.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Allah put such a love of Moses in people's hearts that whoever saw him (as) was interested in him."[2]

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 40

إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلكُمْ عَلَي مَن يَكْفُلُهُ فَرَجَعْناكَ إِلَي أُمّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلا تَحْزَنَ وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْساً فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُوناً فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَي قَدَرٍ يَا مُوسَي

40. "When your sister goes forth to say: 'Shall I direct you to one who will nurse him?' So We returned you to your mother that her eye be refreshed and she should not grieve. And you did slay a man (of Pharaohic ones) but We delivered you from grief, and We tried you with various trials; then you did tarry a number of years among the people of Midian, then you came hither as ordained, O Moses!"

There were a few women who had a fundamental function in the history of the life and struggles of Moses (as). They were: Moses' mother, the sister of Moses, his wife, and the wife of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's castle had been built by the Nile River. While Pharaoh and his wife were beside the water watching the waves, suddenly a mysterious chest attracted their attention to itself. He ordered his men to take the chest from the water. When they opened the door of the chest, surprisingly, found a beautiful newly born child in it, something that, perhaps, they would not think of.

Pharaoh realized that the child must be from the Israelites who, being afraid of his officials, had chosen that fate for him. Therefore, he ordered his men to kill him. But his wife, who was barren, loved him very much, and the mysterious ray, which glittered from the baby's eyes, penetrated into the whole parts of the lady's heart, and attracted her to himself.

She appealed to Pharaoh for help and mercy and, calling the baby the delight of eyes, asked him to dispense with killing him; and, at last, she succeeded to make him agreeable with her request.

But, on the other hand, the child had become hungry. He was crying and shedding tears, while he suck milk from the nipple of none of the nurses that they brought for him.

Now the rest of the story is said by the Qur'an. After mentioning that Moses might be formed and trained in Allah's sight, it implies that: at the time when Moses' sister, with the command of the mother, was walking near by the Pharaoh's castle, and watching the circumstances thereabout, and the baby's fate in particular, she approached them to give them a suggestion.

The verse says:

"When your sister goes forth to say…"

She told the men of Pharaoh whether she introduced a woman to them who was able to nurse the baby.

The verse continues saying:

"…'Shall I direct you to one who will nurse him?'…"

Maybe, she added that this woman had a pure milk so that she was sure that the child would accept it.

The agents of Pharaoh became happy by that statement and began going with her toward that lady.

Moses' sister, who showed herself as an unacquainted person and a stranger, informed the mother of the matter. The mother also, without losing her coolness, went into the court of Pharaoh.

As soon as the child was put inside the lap of mother and smelt the smell of his mother, an acquainted smell, he took the nipple of the mother eagerly and sucking milk with a great love and interest. The sound of joy and happiness was heard from the audience, and the signs of pleasure and delight appeared in the eyes of Pharaoh's wife.

Pharaoh trusted the child with her, and his wife emphasized very much on the care and protection from the child, and she ordered her that the child should be brought to her in short distances of time to see him.

It is in this condition that Qur'an says:

"…So We returned you to your mother that her eye be refreshed and she should not grieve..."

Several years passed and Moses (as) fostered in a circle of Divine Mercy and love and inside a secure and safe Place, until he gradually became a lad.

One day, he was walking along a road where he saw two men who were quarrelling with each other. One of them was from among the Children of Israel and the other was a Coptic (one of the Egyptians who were the adherents of Pharaoh).

Moses (as) went to help the oppressed one who was from the Children of Israel, and, in order to defy him, bruised a sharp knock on the body of the Coptic man. This defense from the oppressed, with that very single knock, caused the Coptic man to die.

As some friends of Moses recommended him, he came out privately from Egypt and went unto Madyan and found a safe and sound shelter with Shu'ayb (Jethro), the prophet, explanation of which will be detailed in the commentary of Surah Al-QasasNo. 28, Allah Willing.

It is in this point that, addressing Moses (as), the Qur'an says:

"…And you did slay a man (of Pharaohic ones) but We delivered you from grief…"

"…and We tried you with various trials…"

And, after paving this long path and being bodily and spiritually prepared, because of those events and trials that he passed successfully and with eminence, Moses (as) was addressed as follows:

"…then you did tarry a number of years among the people of Midian, then you came hither as ordained, O Moses!"

However, passing the hard stages of trials was a preparation for reaching the rank of Messengership from the side of Allah and the spiritual state.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 41 - 44

وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي

اذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِايَاتِي وَلاَ تَنِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي

اذْهَبَآ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَي

فَقُولاَ لَهُ قَوْلاً لَّيِّناً لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَي

41. "And I have (prepared and) chosen you for Myself."

42. "Go you and your brother, with My signs (miracles), and be not remiss in remembrance of Me."

43. "Go, you both, unto Pharaoh! verily he has transgressed (the bounds)."

44. "Yet speak gently to him, perhaps he may get admonished or fear (Allah)."

Allah, in this holy verse, informs Moses that He has chosen him for His revelation and Messengership and that he should be a medium between Him and people. He has chosen him for the heavy duty of receiving Divine revelation, for achieving the Messengership, and for guiding and leading His servants.

He trained Moses and tried him in the currents of difficult events and gave him power and ability in order that he became apt from any point of view so that he could afford that great mission successfully.

The verse says:

"And I have (prepared and) chosen you for Myself."

The Arabic term /'istina'/ is derived from /sana'a/ in the sense of 'emphasizing and insisting on taking necessary action for improving something.'

As Raqib has cited in his Arabic dictionary by the name of Mufradat, the Qur'anic phrase means: 'We have improved you from any point of view as if I want you for Myself'; and this is the most affectionate statement that Allah has said upon this great prophet.

Then, in the next verse, it implies: now that everything has been prepared, and all necessary means have been provided with Moses, addressing both him and his brother, Allah (s.w.t.) says:

"Go you and your brother, with My signs (miracles)…"

These Divine signs, which encompass both the two great miracles of Moses, and other signs of Allah, and the Divine teachings and programs themselves are also denotations to the rightfulness and legitimacy of his invitation.

So, in order to strengthen their spirits and that they increase in their effort and endeavour, He adds:

"…and be not remiss in remembrance of Me."

Since remission and abandoning sharp conclusiveness may destroy the result of all efforts, therefore, they must stand firmly and fear of no adventure. They must not relax their efforts before any power, either.

After that, the main aim of this task and the point toward which they should direct their struggle has been defined.

It says:

"Go, you both, unto Pharaoh! verily he has transgressed (the bounds)."

The factor of all afflictions of that vast country was, Pharaoh, because the cause of progression or retardation, happiness or wretchedness, of a nation, before anything else, is the leaders and authorities of that nation.

Then, at the beginning, the style of confronting Pharaoh which can be effective, and that they might influence fruitfully in him, is stated as follows:

"Yet speak gently to him, perhaps he may get admonished or fear (Allah)."

Explanations

1. The secret of a person's success has lied in a full and permanent attention to Allah.

2. The first stage is self-improvement, and then the improvement of the society comes forth.

3. A preacher or an emissary should be brave, decided, and impenetrable so that the palace, power, and dignity of the cruel ruler do not make him terrified in accomplishing his mission, or that, in negligence from the remembrance of Allah, he leaves out the necessary explicitness.

4. The first step in enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and guiding the society, is a gentle speech. Even in facing with the most tyrannical ones, at first, the words should be clement and kind. Never must we be despair of the guidance of others.

5. If a person is sent for an action as a manager, it must be tried that his spirit be filled with love and feeling of pride and encouragement.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 45 - 46

قَالاَ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّنَا نَخَافُ أَن يَفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَآ أَوْ أَن يَطْغَي

قَالَ لاَ تَخَافَا إِنَّنِي مَعَكُمَآ أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَي

45. "They (Moses and Aaron) said: 'Our Lord! Verily we fear that he may exceed against us, or that he may wax insolent."

46. "Said He: 'Fear not. Verily I am with you both, hearing and seeing'."

The Arabic word /faruta/ means: 'to precede, to be extravagantly reproachful or insolent'. Therefore the phrase mentioned in the verse means: 'we are afraid that Pharaoh, before our reasoning and bringing miracles, precedes us and increases his insolence against the Children of Israel'.

The verse says:

"They (Moses and Aaron) said: 'Our Lord! Verily we fear that he may exceed against us, or that he may wax insolent."

The thing, which is blameworthy for the prophets, is heartily fear from other than Allah; else, natural fear is necessary for nature of those nobles and for all human beings. Every person, of course has this fear before dangers.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that they should not fear, because not only Allah is with them, but also He helps them and guards them.

The verse says:

"Said He: 'Fear not. Verily I am with you both, hearing and seeing'."

Whatever Pharaoh asked them, He hears and reveals its answer to them; and whatever he decides against them, He sees and defends them.

Similar to this meaning is mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 35, where it says:

"…and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you…".

At the end, it is necessary to note that although all humankind are under the grace and mercy of Allah, yet His grace is more for the prophets.

Thus, having faith for the believers that they are at the presence of Allah, and being certain that the Divine helps are the factors of their bravery and spirits, as the current verse says:

"…verily I am with you both…"

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 47 - 48

فَأْتِيَاهُ فَقُولاَ إِنَّا رَسُولاَ رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِل مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ وَلاَ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلَى مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى

إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَآ أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَى مَن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

47. "So go you both unto him and say: '(O Pharaoh!) Verily we are Messengers from your Lord. Send forth, therefore, the Children of Israel with us and do not chastise them. We have brought you a sign (a miracle) from your Lord, And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance!"

48. "Verily it has been revealed unto us that the chastisement will be upon him who rejects (the Divine Signs) and turns away."

Since teaching and guidance of cruel leaders to the right way had been an important and very hard task, Allah has repeated the command of going toward Pharaoh.

Allah has stated for them the method of their invitation at the presence of Pharaoh in five short, conclusive, and expressive sentences.

One of them concerns the main mission; the second states the content of the mission; the third mentions the reason and the evidence of their mission; the fourth is the encouragement of those who accept the invitation; and the fifth is a threat against the opponents of it.

At first it says:

"So go you both unto him and say: '(O Pharaoh!) Verily we are Messengers from your Lord..."

Then it continues saying:

"…Send forth, therefore, the Children of Israel with us and do not chastise them..."

After that, the revelation points to their evidence by saying:

"…We have brought you a sign (a miracle) from your Lord…"

Therefore, as intellect directs, it is necessary that you ponder over our words and if they are right, you ought to accept them.

Then, as an encouragement of the believers, it adds:

"…And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance!"

This phrase may point to another meaning, too. It may say that safety and prosperity both in this world and the Hereafter belongs to those who follow the godly guidance. They will be free from disquiets, offences, Divine painful punishments, and social and personal difficulties of life. This is, in fact, the result of Moses' invitation.

At last, in the next verse, Moses and Aaron are told to say to Pharaoh the evil end of his disobedience from this invitation, by saying:

"Verily it has been revealed unto us that the chastisement will be upon him who rejects (the Divine Signs) and turns away."

This is a fact that ought to be said to Pharaoh manifestly.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 49 - 52

قَالَ فَمَن رَبكُمَا يَا مُوسَي

قَالَ رَبنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَي

قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الأُولَي

قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِندَ رَبّـِي فِي كِتَابٍ لاَّ يَضِل رَبّـِي وَلاَ يَنسَي

49. "He (Pharaoh) said: 'Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?'"

50. "He said: 'Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation. Then guided (it) aright'."

51. "(Pharaoh) said: 'What then is the state of the former generations?'"

52. "He said: 'The knowledge of them is with my Lord in a Book. My Lord neither errs, nor does He forget'."

Here, the Holy Qur'an directly refers to the sayings of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. When Moses was faced with Pharaoh, he repeated the proper and effective sentences that Allah (s.w.t.) had taught him at the time of the command of Messengership. These verses have been explained formerly.

When Pharaoh heard these words, his first reaction was that:

"He (Pharaoh) said: 'Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?'"

It is wonderful that Pharaoh, who was proud and conceited, did not agree even to say 'Who is my Lord that you claim?', but he said:

'Who then is the Lord of you…?'

Moses (as) at once offered a very inclusive but short introduction about the Lord, as follows:

"He said: 'Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation. Then guided (it) aright'."

In this short saying, Moses (as) pointed to two fundamental principals of creation and existence, each of which is some independent and clear evidence unto the recognition of Allah.

Moses (as) intends to make Pharaoh understand that this world of existence is limited neither to him, nor to the land of Egypt; neither is it restricted to the present nor to the past. This vast world has an old and future age when neither he nor Pharaoh had been or will be living.

Then, two main problems are outstanding in this world: providing the necessities, and applying the powers and possibilities alongside the path of progression of the beings. These can make Pharaoh acquainted with the Lord very well.

When Pharaoh heard this interesting inclusive answer, he asked another question, and said if the situation was like that what about the former people of them?

The verse says:

"(Pharaoh) said: 'What then is the state of the former generations?'"

In answer to this question of Pharaoh concerning the whole specifications of the former generations, Moses' reply was as follows:

"He said: 'The knowledge of them is with my Lord in a Book. My Lord neither errs, nor does He forget'."

Thus, their account is preserved and, finally, they will receive the fruit of their deeds, whether they are good rewards or dreadful retributions.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 53

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ مَهْداً وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلاً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجاً مِن نَبَاتٍ شَتَّى

53. "'He Who made the earth for you a cradle, and made for you therein paths, and sent down water from the sky'. Then, thereby, We brought forth kinds of diverse pairs of plants."

The Qur'anic phrase which says: /salaka lakum/ can be rendered into two forms: 1) Those roads and ways that Allah has arranged on the ground for men along which they may pass. 2) The ways of gaining incomes.

In introducing Allah (s.w.t.) to Pharaoh, Moses (as) said that his Lord is He Who gave every thing its creation, and then guided it aright. Now, through these verses, he points to some species of the Divine guidance in the nature.

The abovementioned holy verse says:

"'He Who made the earth for you a cradle, and made for you therein paths, and sent down water from the sky'. Then, thereby, We brought forth kinds of diverse pairs of plants."

However, the statement of Moses (as) was around the subject of Monotheism and knowing Allah. Therefore, in this verse, the revelation has pointed to four parts of the great bounties of Allah which form the precedence of man's life.

Before anything else, the place of residence and having peace is necessary. Then, next to it, communication paths come forth. After that water and different agricultural products are important. So, the creation of the earth and its conditions are not aimless; they are for human kind.

By the way, mentioning the law of conjugality in plants is one of the scientific miracles of the Qur'an, which has been remarked in this verse.

Notes

1. The Commentary books of Durr-ul-Manthur and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 77

Section 3: Moses' Encounter with Pharaoh

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 54 - 55

كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لأُولِي النهَي

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَي

54. "Eat (for yourselves) and pasture your cattle; verily in this there are signs for men of thought."

55. "From it (the earth) We created you, and into it will We return you, and from it will We bring you forth a second time."

This verse has referred to the fifth and the last bounty of this group of Divine bounties where, implying the vegetables, it says:

"Eat (for yourselves) and pasture your cattle…"

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an, pointing to all these bounties, says:

"…verily in this there are signs for men of thought."

That is, the responsible intellects and dutiful minds can comprehend this fact.

The Arabic term /nuha/ is the plural form of /nahiyah/ derived from /nahy/ which means 'to prohibit'; and /'ulinnuha/ means: 'the people endued with understanding and intellect'. The wisdom in Arabic is called /nuhiyah/ because it prohibits man from following low desires.[1]

Once the holy Prophet (S) was asked:

"Who are /'ulinnuha/?"

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"They have a good character, and they are kind unto the mothers and fathers; they help the poor, the (needy) neighbours, and the orphans; they feed (the hungry ones with) food. They spread peace and comfort in the world; and they establish prayer while people are sleeping and unaware."[2]

Then, in the next verse, concerning the statement of Unity in these verses, and the creation of the earth and its bounties, Resurrection has also been pointed out.

It says:

"From it (the earth) We created you, and into it will We return you, and from it will We bring you forth a second time."

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has considered the secret of the couple of prostrations in each unit (rak'at) of prayer and said:

"The first prostration means: 'O Allah! At first I was from this soil'. When you raise your head from the ground, it means that: 'You have brought me out from this soil'. The second prostration means that: 'You will return me unto this soil'; and when you raise your head from the second prostration, it means that: 'You will raise me up again from the soil in Hereafter'."[3]

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 56 - 57

وَلَقَدْ أَرَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَي

قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا مُوسَي

56. "And indeed We showed him (Pharaoh) Our signs, all of them, but he rejected and refused."

57. "Said he: 'Have you come to us to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses?'"

In this holy verse, another stage of the dispute of Moses (as) and Pharaoh has been reflected. The Holy Qur'an begins this part of the incident with the following statement implying that all the Divine signs were shown to Pharaoh but none of them affected in his dark heart.

The verse says:

"And indeed We showed him (Pharaoh) Our signs, all of them, but he rejected and refused."

This meaning refers to the miracles that, at the beginning of his invitation, Moses (as) showed Pharaoh. They were the miracles of the Rod and the White Hand and the inclusive content of his heavenly invitation.

Now we may note to what Pharaoh, the tyrant, the proud, and the obstinate, answered in front of Moses and his miracles, and, as it is the custom of all unreasonable rulers, how he accused that Messenger.

The verse says:

"Said he: 'Have you come to us to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses?'"

This statement, as Pharaoh declared, is an indication to this meaning that they know that the subject of prophethood and invitation to Monotheism, accompanied with these miracles, are all some plots to overcome their government and that Moses wanted to expel them and the captains from the habitable land of their ancestors.

This accusation is just the same weapon that all the unreasonable rulers and colonialists have had and applied throughout the history.

Wherever they found themselves in a danger, in order to defy people alongside their own benefits, they propounded the subject of the danger which threatened the country. Country, in that circumstance, meant the government of those tyrannical rulers, and its existence meant the existence of theirs.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 58 - 60

فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ فَاجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِداً لاَّ نُخْلِفُهُ نَحْنُ وَلاَ أَنتَ مَكَاناً سُوًى

قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ الزِّينَةِ وَأَن يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى

فَتَوَلَّى فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَتَى

58. "(Pharaoh continued,) 'Then we too will surely bring you sorcery the like of it; therefore appoint a tryst between us and you which neither we nor you shall fail to keep, in a place alike for both'."

59. "(Moses) said: 'Your tryst shall be the day of festival, and let the people gather together at the high noon'."

60. "So Pharaoh turned his back and gathered his plan (fully), then (on the appointed tryst) he came again."

As this holy verse implies, Pharaoh added that Moses should not suppose that they were not able to bring some magic similar to those of his, but certainly he would bring it soon.

The verse says:

"(Pharaoh continued,) 'Then we too will surely bring you sorcery the like of it…"

And in order to show a sharper conclusiveness, Pharaoh wanted Moses to appoint its date.

The verse says:

"…therefore appoint a tryst between us and you which neither we nor you shall fail to keep, in a place alike for both'."

But Moses, without losing his coolness, nor feeling any terror in himself, clearly and decisively responded him that he was ready, too, to define the day and the hour of the meeting just then.

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'Your tryst shall be the day of festival, and let the people gather together at the high noon'."

However, after observing the wonderful miracles of Moses and the psychological effect of those astonishing miracles on his companions, Pharaoh decided, by the help of his sorcerers, to challenge. Therefore, he appointed a proper tryst with Moses (as) and left that meeting. He gathered all his plots and plans then and brought them wholly available on the appointed day.

The verse says:

"So Pharaoh turned his back and gathered his plan (fully), then (on the appointed tryst) he came again."

The logical and free discussions, of course, should be performed at the presence of people, while the factors of 'time' and 'place' must not be neglected, either. Thus, one of the best arrangements that Moses (as) made was that he utilized the national day.

He gathered, on that day, an assembly which became fruitful and supreme. On that day, he behaved with such a manner that, when the sorcerers saw his miracles, they all changed their mind and their belief.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 61 - 62

قَالَ لَهُمْ موسَي وَيْلَكُمْ لاَ تَفْتَرُوا عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً فَيُسْحِتَكُم بِعَذَابٍ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنِ افْتَرَي

فَتَنَازَعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسَروا النَّجْوَي

61. "Moses said to them: 'Woe to you! Do not forge a lie against Allah, lest He destroy you with a chastisement, and indeed he who forges (a lie) fails."

62. "Then they disputed upon their affair among themselves and kept the discourse secret."

At last, the appointed day came. Moses (as) was standing in front of the crowd of people. A crowd among which there were some sorcerers, the number of them, as some commentators have said, was seventy two men. Some other commentators have said that they were four hundred magicians, or more than that.

Another group of that crowd were companions of Pharaoh and Pharaoh himself. And, finally, the third group of them, which formed the majority of the crowd, was the ordinary people who had come to watch the event.

At this time, Moses turned his face toward the sorcerers, or the companions of Pharaoh and sorcerers, and, as the verse says:

"Moses said to them: 'Woe to you! Do not forge a lie against Allah, lest He destroy you with a chastisement, and indeed he who forges (a lie) fails."

The purpose of Moses (as) from saying:

"Do not forge a lie against Allah"

was something or someone that was considered as a partner of Allah; or that they attributed sorcery to the Miracles of the Messenger of Allah and accepted Pharaoh as their god.

This very decisive word of Moses, whose tone was the tone of the invitation of all true prophets and had no similarity to the word of the sorcerers, affected on the minds of some people and produced a kind of divergence between the beliefs of the crowd.

Some of them demanded the gravity of action, while some others fell in doubt and uncertainty, and probabled that Moses was a great prophet of Allah and his warnings might be actual; in particular that his plain clothes and the clothing of his brother, Aaron, were the same simple clothing of a shepherd.

In spite of their loneliness, there was not seen any faint or weakness in their decided faces. This was counted as another evidence for the nobility of their sayings and programs.

Therefore, the Qur'an says:

"Then they disputed upon their affair among themselves and kept the discourse secret."

Thus, you ought to enjoin good and forbid evil, then if it does not affect on some people at least, in some others may create doubt.

However, considering the divine miracles as sorcery, is a forging against Allah; and a calumniator against Allah both fails in this world and will be punished in the next world. Before bringing a miracle, of course, teaching people and warning them is necessary.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 63 - 64

قَالُوا إِنْ هَذَانِ لَسَاحِرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَن يُخْرِجَاكُم مِنْ أَرْضِكُم بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثْلَى

فَأَجْمِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوا صَفّاً وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنِ اسْتَعْلَى

63. "They said: 'These two are certainly two sorcerers who intend to drive you out from your land by their sorcery and wipe out your superior way."

64. "Therefore gather your plan (fully); then come in (an orderly) line, and whoever today is uppermost will be indeed successful."

Authorities and rulers have an important function in the convictions of people. In the same manner that Pharaoh told Moses that he had come to them to drive them out of their land with his magic,[4] his adherents, too, declared the same thing in this verse about Aaron and Moses.

The verse says:

"They said: 'These two are certainly two sorcerers…"

Therefore, the sorcerers were told that they should not fear to combat with those two, because these were the most outstanding and the greatest magicians of that large country.

Another matter that the sorcerers were told was that the two wanted to drive them out from their land by their sorcery, the land which was very dear for them as their souls, to which they belonged and it belonged to them.

The verse says:

"…who intend to drive you out from your land by their sorcery…"

Moreover, they added that those two did not suffice to drive them out from their country, but they wanted to play with their sacred things and to vanish their superior school and rightful religion.

The verse continues saying:

"…and wipe out your superior way."

Then, the sorcerers were recommended that they would never doubt in coming united into the scene of struggle and in one row, and:

"Therefore gather your plan (fully); then come in (an orderly) line…"

The reason and secret of the victory in that significant combat was stated for them that it was in their unity.

And, finally, the success and prosperity would be of that group on that day that could prove its superiority over the opposite group.

The verse continues saying:

"…and whoever today is uppermost will be indeed successful."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 65 - 67

قَالُوا يَامُوسَي إِمَّآ أَن تُلْقِيَ وإِمَّآ أَن نَّكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَي

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِن سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّها تَسْعَي

فَاَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً موسَي

65. "They (the sorcerers) said: 'O' Moses! Will you throw, or shall we be the first who throw?'"

66. "He (Moses) said: 'Nay, do you throw (yours)!' Then behold, their ropes and their rods seemed to him, by their sorcery, as if they were sliding."

67. "Then Moses felt in himself a fear."

The Arabic word /hibal/ is the plural form of /habl/ which means 'rope, string', and the Arabic term /'isiyy/ is the plural form of /'asa/ (rod, stick).

The Qur'anic term /'aujasa/ is derived from /wajasa/ in the sense of 'a hidden sound' and thus the word /'ijas/ is applied for the things which are hidden in inward.

Amir-ul-mu'mineen Ali (as) in Nahjulbalaqah, concerning The Commentary of the last verse of the verses mentioned in the above, says:

"The fear of Moses (as) was for the effect of sorcery on the ignorant people."[5]

However, the sorcerers untied and made decision to stand against Moses and challenge with him.

When they entered into the concerning arena, they began saying as follows:

"They (the sorcerers) said: 'O' Moses! Will you throw, or shall we be the first who throw?'"

But Moses (as), who was completely assured of his final victory, did not make any haste; and apart from it, in such circumstances winner is usually he who does not take the lead.

Therefore, he responded them like this:

"He (Moses) said: 'Nay, do you throw (yours)!'…"

The sorcerers accepted it and whatever means, such as ropes and rods, they had brought with them they cast wholly on the land of arena. And, if we accept the narration which indicates they were one thousand sorcerers, that means that, in a moment, thousands of ropes and rods, in which some special material had been stored, were thrown in the middle of arena in front of the crowd.

Then, suddenly, as a result of their sorcery, their ropes and rods seemed to the people and Moses (as) as if they were moving.

The verse continues saying:

"…Then behold, their ropes and their rods seemed to him, by their sorcery, as if they were sliding."

Yes, those ropes ands rods, in the form of some small and big snakes, in different colours and kinds, began sliding on the ground.

It was a wonderful scene. The sorcerers, who not only were numerous but also knew well the style of using the mysterious physical and chemical peculiarities of the materials and the like of them. It could penetrate in the thoughts of the audience so amazingly that they imagined that those lifeless various things were animated.

The people of Pharaoh made a happy clamor. Some of them, because of horror, cried and withdrew themselves.

It was at this moment that Moses (as) was nearly frightened at the situation, thinking that people might be so seriously charmed by that event that it was not easy for him to return them and their thoughts back to the reality.

The verse says:

"Then Moses felt in himself a fear."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 68 - 70

قُلْنَا لاَ تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الأَعْلَي

وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدُ سَاحِرٍ وَلاَ يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَي

فَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّداً قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَي

68. "Said We: 'Fear not! Verily you are the uppermost."

69. "And throw down what is in your right hand! It will swallow up, what they have made. Verily what they have made is but a plan of a sorcerer, and the sorcerer will not be successful wherever he goes'."

70. "Then the sorcerers fell down in prostration, saying: 'We believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses!'"

With no condition Allah (s.w.t.) promises His Messenger to promote him. But He promises the believers to promote them upon the condition that they believe and keep their loyalty to Faith.[6]

The reason of it is that prophets are loyal, but the believers may leave out their loyalty. Therefore, Allah says that they are the uppermost if they are faithful.

However, at this time, the divine help and assistance came to Moses and the revealed command of Allah defined his duty, as the Qur'an says:

"Said We: 'Fear not! Verily you are the uppermost."

Thus, Moses (as), who had lost his courage for a short moment, took heart again.

For the second time Moses (as) was addressed and he was commanded:

"And throw down what is in your right hand! It will swallow up, what they have made. Verily what they have made is but a plan of a sorcerer…"

Since the act of a sorcerer depends on the man's limited ability while a Divine miracle originates from the infinite power of Allah, therefore a sorcerer can perform only the things which he has practiced formerly.

That is why the verse continues saying:

"…and the sorcerer will not be successful wherever he goes'."

It is interesting that the revelation does not say: 'Throw down your rod', but it says:

"Throw down what is in your right hand!"

This meaning may be as a heedlessness to the rod and an indication to the fact that 'rod' itself is not an important thing, but the thing, which is important, is the Will and command of Allah wherewith the less significant thing than the rod can work as it did.

When Moses (as) was ordered to throw down his Rod and he threw it down, the Rod changed into a huge snake and swallowed all the means and tools of sorcerers' magic. A great uproar and tumult appeared among those people. Pharaoh was very terrified, and his companions attending there were also terribly surprised.

The sorcerers, who recognized sorcery from other than sorcery, convinced themselves that it was nothing save the Divine miracle and that Moses (as) was certainly a messenger from the side of Allah.

Therefore, as the verse says:

"Then the sorcerers fell down in prostration, saying: 'We believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses!'"

However, as soon as the sorcerers understood that the act of Moses (as) was not a sorcery, they involuntarily fell down in prostration and, those who were infidels in the morning, joined the group of witnesses of the way of Allah in that very evening, and by saying:

"We believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses",

they confessed that their action they performed had been wrong.

They applied the word of 'Lord' in their sentence:

'The Lord of Aaron and Moses'

since Pharaoh had considered himself the Lord of those people. If they had used only the name of Moses in their statement and said simply 'the Lord of Moses', Pharaoh might have said: that he had trained Aaron. That was why the sorcerers, next to the word 'Lord', at first mentioned Aaron and then added the appellation of Moses (as).7

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 71

قَالَ آمَنتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُم مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي جُذُوعِ النَّخْلِ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَىٰ

71. "Said (Pharaoh): 'Did you believe in him before I should give you permission? Verily he is the chief of you who has taught you sorcery, so I will certainly cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will certainly crucify you upon the trunks of palm-trees, and you shall certainly know which of us is more severe and more lasting in punishment'."

Pharaoh had gathered all the skilful and expert persons in order to annihilate the truth, but they entirely were guided to uprightness by Moses (as).

It is evident that that deed of the sorcerers was a sharp stroke over the entity of Pharaoh and his arrogant, egoistic, and tyrannical government, so that it quivered all the pillars of it. Therefore, he had no way save shouting angrily, threatening violently, and showing his might and honour apparently.

Then he addressed the sorcerers and behaved as follows:

"Said (Pharaoh): 'Did you believe in him before I should give you permission?…"

This arrogant tyrant, not only claimed that he governed over the lives and bodies of people, but also he desired to say that their hearts were at his disposal and belonged to him; so that they should decide with his permission.

Pharaoh did not suffice even to that, and at once he accused the sorcerers with an accusation, claming that they had plotted that plan from before, he said:

"…Verily he is the chief of you who has taught you sorcery…"

Undoubtedly Pharaoh knew and was certain that his saying was a lie, but it is known that the arrogant and unreasonable rulers usually do not care any false or accusation when they feel their illegitimate position is in danger.

Moreover, he did not suffice only to that vice, either. He threatened the sorcerers to death with the most violent tone, when he said:

"…so I will certainly cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will certainly crucify you upon the trunks of palm-trees, and you shall certainly know which of us is more severe and more lasting in punishment'."

However, prophets work on the spirits of men, but the tyrannical rulers take vengeance by hurting on their bodies. They are neglectful that conventions and beliefs of people cannot be changed by torturing and killing them.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 72 - 73

قَالُوا لَن نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَٰذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَايَانَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

72. "They said: 'Never will we prefer you (O Pharaoh) to the clear proofs (miracles) that have come to us, and to Him Who created us! Decree then whatever you desire to decree, for you may decree only about the life of this world."

73. "Verily we have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our faults, and the sorcery to which you did compel us. Allah is better and more lasting."

Faith gives man both power and daring. Now, it is worthy to see what the reaction of the sorcerers was before the intensive threats of Pharaoh. They not only were not terrified and did not decamp, but also proved their presence in the scene more decisively.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Never will we prefer you (O Pharaoh) to the clear proofs (miracles) that have come to us, and to Him Who created us!…"

They told Pharaoh to command whatever he desired, but he should know that he could command only in the life of this world and, in Hereafter, where they are successful, he will be involved with the worst punishments.

The verse continues saying:

"…Decree then whatever you desire to decree, for you may decree only about the life of this world."

Then, the sorcerers added this meaning to their statement, saying:

"Verily we have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our faults, and the sorcery to which you did compel us. Allah is better and more lasting."

In this way, briefly they implied that their goal was to be forgiven and to be purified from their former sins including opposing against the true Messenger of Allah.

The Arabic term /xataya/ is the plural form of /xati'ah/ which is called to the deliberate faults.[8]

The Qur'anic phrase which is recited: /ma'akrahtana'alayhi min-as-sihr/ means 'We ask Allah to forgive us our faults and sorcery to which you did compel us'. And the objective meaning of /'ikrah min-as-sihr/ is the summoning of the sorcerers and the act of their sorcery.

He who risks his own life in the path of Allah, grows in right conduct more and more at any moment.

In these holy verses, the sorcerers stated three meanings concerning Allah (s.w.t.).

They said:

'To Him Who created us';

'We have believed in our Lord';

and

'Allah is better and more lasting'.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said:

"Whoever counts himself better than others is a tyrant".

He was asked then, whether those good doers who count themselves better than evildoers are tyrants. Imam said the explanation of the belief of the sorcerers, indicating that a person may change his mind in some

moments; therefore, they should not count themselves better since they are not aware of the end.[9]

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 74 - 76

إِنَّهُ مَن يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِماً فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لاَ يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلاَ يَحْيَى

وَمَن يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِناً قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَى

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَآءُ مَن تَزَكَّى

74. "Verily he who comes guilty to his Lord, then for him is Hell, wherein he shall neither die (to deliver) nor live (easily)."

75. "And whoever comes to Him a believer (and) he has done righteous deeds, for such are the most sublime degrees."

76. "(And) Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever and this is the reward of him who purifies himself (from evil)."

After that sorcerers believed, they told Pharaoh that his deeds of torture and murder were only for the life of this world while the wrath and Grace of Allah is permanent. The Fire of Hell for the people of Hell is eternal, and the people of Paradise abide in Paradise forever.

The place of a believer, in Hereafter, is Heaven, but gaining a higher degree therein depends on the amount of his purification for which he must struggle and purify himself from pollutions and corruptions in the world from any point of view.

Among them are: refinement of the soul from deviated beliefs, purification of character from vices, purification of body from treachery and perfidy, and purification of deeds and behaviour from indecent acts.

Thus, the Qur'an in these verses implies that the sorcerers told Pharaoh that the reason that they believed in Truth was clear, because:

"Verily he who comes guilty to his Lord, then for him is Hell…"

And the great inflection of such a person in Hell is that neither he dies therein to deliver from chastisement, nor does he live easily, but he permanently flounces between death and life, a life which is more bitter and difficult than death.

The verse continues saying:

"…wherein he shall neither die (to deliver) nor live (easily)."

And, on the contrary, there is the state of the believers.

The verse says:

"And whoever comes to Him a believer (and) he has done righteous deeds, for such are the most sublime degrees."

"(And) Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers flow wherein shall they abide forever and this is the reward of him who purifies himself (from evil)."

How well those sorcerers purified themselves! When they decided to embrace the Truth and to be heartily steadfast in its path, then they believed firmly and frankly, so that, as the great commentator, the Late Tabarsi, has said:

"They were sorcerers and infidels in the morning but, in that very evening, they became the righteous witnesses of the path of the Truth."

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. adopted from Al-Mizan, the Commentary
2. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. Bihar-ul-‘Anwar, vol. 85, p. 132
4. The current Surah, verse 57
5. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 6
6. Verse 76 from the current Surah
7. The commentary of Maraqi
8. The dictionary of Lisan-ul-‘Arab
9. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 328

Section 4: The Children of Israel Follow Moses

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 77 - 79

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي مُوسَي أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقاً فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَساً لاَّ تَخَافُ دَرَكاً وَلاَ تَخْشَي

فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ فَغَشِيَهُم مِنَ الْيَمّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ

وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَي

77. "And We indeed revealed unto Moses (saying:): 'Take away My servants by night, and strike for them a dry path in the sea, with no fear of being overtaken (by Pharaoh) nor you be afraid (of being drowned)."

78. "Then Pharaoh pursued them with his armies so (the bellows) of the sea covered them, as they were covered (completely drowned)."

79. "And Pharaoh led his people astray and he did not guide them (aright)."

When the sorcerers and the people of Egypt believed in Moses (as) and did not fear from the threats of Pharaoh, the gate of the helps of Allah were opened to them and, after that Moses (as) was ordered to take people out of Egypt by night, and that Allah made the sea dry for them and secured them from the harm of Pharaoh.[1]

The verse says:

"And We indeed revealed unto Moses (saying:): 'Take away My servants by night…"

Thus, the Children of Israel became ready to set out toward the Promised Land (Palestine), but when they reached the shores of the Nile, the men of Pharaoh were informed of the event and, therefore, Pharaoh, accompanied with a large army, pursued them. New, the Children of Israel found themselves surrounded by the sea and the enemy.

At this time Allah commanded Moses as follows:

"…and strike for them a dry path in the sea…"

The revelation, pointing to the dry path in the sea, informs Moses that it is a path that when you step on it, you will be faced:

"…with no fear of being overtaken (by Pharaoh) nor you be afraid (of being drowned)."

Therefore, Moses and the Children of Israel arrived to some paths which, by going water aside, appeared inside the sea. At this time, Pharaoh and his army reached beside the sea and were confronted such an amazing and unexpectedly scene.

The verse says:

"Then Pharaoh pursued them with his armies…"

From one end, the last figure of the Pharaoh's army entered the sea, and, on the other end, the last figure of the Children of Israel went out of the sea. At this moment, the pillars of water in the sea were commanded to return to their first state. The walls of water waved and, like an old building the base of which is broken, fell down all of a sudden.

The verse says:

"…so (the bellows) of the sea covered them, as they were covered (completely drowned)."

And, in this way, an unjust cruel power together with its powerful forces were wholly covered by the masses of water in the sea and were swallowed by the fish of that sea in the form of a ready made food.

Yes, it is true that the verse says:

"And Pharaoh led his people astray and he did not guide them (aright)."

However, the Arabic word /'isra'/ means 'to travel by night'. The word /yabas/ is called to a place where it has become dry now. The term /darak/ means the losses which encompasses a person. And, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /'ibadi/, mentioned in this holy verse, is the Children of Israel.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 80

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ قَدْ أَنجَيْنَاكُم مِنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوَاعَدْنَاكُمْ جَانِبَ الطورِ الاَيْمَنَ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَي

80. "O Children of Israel! We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a covenant with you on the right side of Tur (the Mount Sinai), and We sent down unto you Manna and quails."

The subject of the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the cruelty of Pharaoh, and the descent of Manna and the quails for them when they were wandering in the desert, have been mentioned in the Qur'an several times.

The Arabic term /manna/ apparently means: 'honey and hedysarum', while /salwa/ means 'quails', a kind of bird the meat of which is delicious and lawful for eating.

The phrase:

"and We made a covenant with you on the right side of Tur",

mentioned in the verse, is an indication to the event of the tryst of Tur, the Mount Sinai, where Moses, accompanied with a group of the Children of Israel, went. There, Allah sent down the Tablets of Turah to Moses (as). Law is usually the most important necessity of a community after dismissing the tyrannical ruler and formation of a government.

This holy verse addresses the Children of Israel and, in general, all human being in any time, and reminds them the great bounties that Allah has bestowed on them and leads them to the path of salvation.

At first it says:

"O Children of Israel! We delivered you from your enemy…"

Then, the verse points to one of the spiritual bounties, when it says:

"…and We made a covenant with you on the right side of Tur (the Mount Sinai)…"

As it was said in the above, this part of the verse points to the tryst when Moses and some of the Children of Israel went to the Tur Mount. It was in this very tryst that Allah sent down the Tablets of Moses and spoke with him and all of them saw the special manifestation of Allah.

And, finally, the verse points to an important material bounty which originated from the peculiar graces of Allah unto the Children of Israel.

It says:

"…and We sent down unto you Manna and quails."

They were wandering in a desert where they had no suitable food. Then the grace of Allah helped them and He gave them some delightful and delicious food to use, as much as they needed.

However, the spiritual bounty is prior to the material bounty.

At first He said:

"We made a covenant with you on the right side of Tur",

which refers to the descent of the Turah. Next to that He said:

"and We sent down unto you Manna and quails",

which refers to the food of the body.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 81

كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلاَ تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي وَمَن يَحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوَي

81. "Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest My Wrath should descend on you, and on whomever My Wrath does descend, he is lost indeed."

After mentioning those three valuable bounties, this verse addresses them and says:

"Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest My Wrath should descend on you…"

Insolence, concerning the Divine bounties, is that a person, instead of using them in the path of obedience of Allah and the path of his own felicity, uses them as a means of sinning, ingratitude, disbelief, obstinacy, and prodigality, as the Children of Israel did in the like manner.

And, following that matter, the verse continues saying:

"…and on whomever My Wrath does descend, he is lost indeed."

The Qur'anic term /hawa/ originally means: 'to fall from a height down', the result of which is usually destruction. Moreover, here the term also indicates to the fall of spiritual rank: separation from nearness of Allah, and being sent away from His presence.

Yet, the real fall for a man is to be involved in the Wrath of Allah, such as political failure, economical bankruptcy, and the like of them.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 82

وإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِمَن تَابَ وءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً ثُمَّ اهْتَدَي

82. "And verily I am the most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does righteous deed, and at last is guided."

Next to the previous verse, which ended with a warning, this verse consists of the glad tidings of Allah, the good tidings to accepting repentance and forgiveness. This style is seen in all occurrences of the Qur'an concerning those occasions which are similar to this one.

Of course, repentance from any sin and fault should be proportional to that very sin and fault. For example, the repentance of a person who has not

established a statutory prayer is that he should fulfill that prayer; the repentance of hurting people is apology; the repentance of concealment of a fact is its announcement; the repentance of polytheism is belief in Allah; and the repentance of consuming people's wealth is to return the wealth to its owner(s).

And since warnings and threats should be followed by encouragement and glad tidings, in order to equally remove the potential fear and hope, which are the main factors of development, and to open the doors of return to the repentant, in this verse, He says:

"And verily I am the most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does righteous deed, and at last is guided."

The application of the word /qaffar/ (The most forgiving) in this verse is an indication to the fact that Allah forgives such people not only once but also for many times.

Some Islamic traditions denote that the purpose of the word /'ihtada/, mentioned in this verse, has also been rendered into the guidance toward the mastership of Ahlul-Bayt (as) (the immaculate Imams).[2]

The reason of this idea is that Faith and righteous deeds, without the acceptance of the guidance of the Divine leaders, are not enough. (Yes, When there are both Faith and righteous deeds in one believer but he does not pave the path of guidance of the Divine leaders, he will become the prey of others, such as Samiri and Bal'am Ba'ura.)

Thus, the phrase "and at last is guided" is an indication to the necessity of the acceptance of mastership and obedience to the leadership of the Divine leaders.

That is, repentance, faith, and righteous deeds are accepted and cause felicity when they are under the light of the guidance of Divine leaders. Once this guidance was at the time Moses (as), and another time it was in the time of the Prophet of Islam (S); then it was at the time of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as); and today it relates to Hadrat Mahdi (as).

The reason of it is that one of the principals of religion is the acceptance of the invitation and the leadership of the Prophet (S) and then the acceptance of the leadership of his true successors.

The Late Tabarsi, concerning the commentary of this verse, narrates a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"The objective meaning of the phrase /ummahtada/ is the guidance unto the leadership of Ahlul-Bayt (as)"

Then he (as) added:

"By Allah, if a man spends all his lifetime in Divine service (close to the Ka'bah) between 'Rukn and Maqham (station of Abraham)', then he dies in the state that he has not accepted our mastership, Allah will throw him by face into the Fire (of Hell)."

Hakim Abul-Ghasim Huskani, The well-known scholar of hadith of the Sunnites, has also narrated this tradition in his book.[3]

There have been recorded many other traditions in this field narrated from Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin (as), Imam Sadiq (as), and the Prophet himself (S).

In order to know how deep the abandonment of this principal is destructive, it is enough to study the following verses and see how the Children of Israel were involved in worshipping the Calf, idolatry, and infidelity as the result of abandonment of the mastership and leaving the line of following Moses (as) and his successor Aaron.

However, to be a believer, and to become a believer, is important, but remaining in Faith is more important.

"…and at last is guided."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 83 - 85

وَمَآ أَعْجَلَكَ عَن قَوْمِكَ يَا مُوسَي

قَالَ هُمْ أُوْلآءِ عَلَي أَثَرِي وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَي

قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِن بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِي

83. "And (Allah said): 'What caused you to hasten from your people, O' Moses?'"

84. "Said (Moses): 'They are upon my track, and I hastened unto You, my Lord, that You might be pleased'."

85. "Said He: 'Verily We have tested your people in your absence and the Samiri has led them astray'."

Upon the commentary of these verses, Imam Sadiq (as) has illustrated the feature of a lover as this:

"A lover thinks neither of food, clothing, and residence, nor does he have calmness and tranquility until he reaches what he is desirous to; as Moses, desirous to receive revelation from the Lord, did neither sleep nor feed, and he said to the Lord that he had come to Him sooner than his people in order that He became pleased."[4]

Then the Qur'an refers to another important part of the life of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel, which relates to the time when he (as), accompanied with a number of the representatives of the Children of Israel, went to the tryst of Tur Mount, and, in their absence, the Children of Israel committed Calf worship.

It was appointed that Moses (as) would go to Tur to take the laws of the Turah, and some of the Children of Israel might also accompany him along that way.

But, in view of the fact that the desire of conversation to Allah was flaming in the heart of Moses, he went alone to the tryst of the Lord before others.

Here, the revelation was sent down to him as follows:

"And (Allah said): 'What caused you to hasten from your people, O' Moses?'"

Then Moses immediately answered Him, as the verse says:

"Said (Moses): 'They are upon my track, and I hastened unto You, my Lord, that You might be pleased'."

Moses implied that not only the love of conversation to Him and listening to His statements had made him impatient, but also he had been desirous to take His Laws and ordinances as soon as possible to convey them to His servants, so that, by this manner, he could attract His pleasure

better. Yes, Moses was in love of Allah's pleasure and was also desirous to hear His command.

Yet, in this meeting, his tryst prolonged from thirty nights to forty nights, and different grounds of aberration, which had existed among the Children of Israel from before, manifested. Samiri, that heretic but clever man, by means of some materials made a Calf and invited people to worshipping it. Then, it was in the same tryst that Allah told Moses that his people did not pass their trial well.

The verse says:

"Said He: 'Verily We have tested your people in your absence and the Samiri has led them astray'."

With the presence of the leader in the society, the enemies cannot do any thing. The heretic persons usually misuse the absence of the Divine leader in the society.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 86

فَرَجَعَ مُوسَي إِلَي قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفاً قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبكُمْ وَعْداً حَسَناً أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدتمْ أَن يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَخْلَفْتُم مَّوْعِدِي

86. "Then Moses returned to his people angry and sad, saying: 'O my people! did not your Lord promise you a fair promise (the descent of the Turah)? Did then the time (of my absence) seem so long to you? Or did you desire that Wrath should descend from your Lord on you so that you failed in your tryst with me?'"

By hearing this matter, Moses became so angry that as if his whole entity burnt. Perhaps he was saying to himself that he had worked and tried studiously, confronted any danger and laboured for long years until when that community became acquainted with Monotheism, but alas! and alas again that because of a few days of his absence all his efforts were lost. That was why he immediately returned to those people.

The verse says:

"Then Moses returned to his people angry and sad…"

When Moses saw the hideous scenery of Calf worship, he shouted at them:

"…saying: 'O my people! did not your Lord promise you a fair promise (the descent of the Turah)?…"

This 'fair promise', mentioned in the verse, was either the promise that he had given to the Children of Israel upon the descent of the Turah and the statement of heavenly ordinances in it; or the promise of victory and delivering them from the people of Pharaoh and becoming the inheritor of the earth; or the promise of forgiveness for the repentant, or all of the abovementioned promises.

Then, Moses (as) added:

"…Did then the time (of my absence) seem so long to you?…"

Or, by means of this hideous action, they opposed him in their appointment in order to cause the chastisement of Allah to be descended on them.

The verse says:

"…Or did you desire that Wrath should descend from your Lord on you so that you failed in your tryst with me?'"

There are two points here which must be noted. In this verse, two promises have been referred to. One of them is the promise from the side of Allah, i.e., the descent of the Turah; and the other is the promise from the side of Moses (as) to his people that when he was absent they should obey his brother Aaron, but the people, by their Calf worship, ignored both them.

When Moses (as) was reprimanding them he questioned them, about their aberration. He questioned whether their aberration was done deliberately and they went toward the Wrath of Allah knowingly, or they did it neglectfully. He also asked them whether they went astray for the reason that his absence prolonged from thirty days to forty days.

In this verse, similar to the content of verse No. 81, the Wrath of Allah has been pointed out, with a difference that: in that verse the cause of the Wrath of Allah has been stated the disobedience of people, while here its reason has been mentioned the people's breach of promise. These are the factors in which the secret of the defeat of the Children of Israel is hidden.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 87

قَالُوا مَآ أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا وَلَـكِنَّا حُمِّـلْنَآ أَوْزَاراً مِن زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذَلِكَ أَلْقَي السَّامِرِي

87. "They said: 'We did not fail in our tryst with you of our own accord, but we were laden with burdens of ornaments of the people, then we cast them (in the fire), and thus did the Samiri suggest'."

In order to flee from punishment, sinners usually take refuge to some pretexts, such as compulsion, aversion, and outward coercion. A society, the Faith of which is feeble and it easily accepts an undue sovereignty, by means of an adroit trick, may lose every thing it has.

It was for this reason that when the Children of Israel found themselves before the intensive protest of Moses (as) and understood that they had done an indecent action, tried to bring some pretexts.

The verse says:

"They said: 'We did not fail in our tryst with you of our own accord…"

That is, in fact, we ourselves did not tend to Calf worship by our will, but it was Samiri who suggested it. The verse continues saying:

"…but we were laden with burdens of ornaments of the people, then we cast them (in the fire), and thus did the Samiri suggest'."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 88 - 89

فَاَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلاً جَسَداً لَّهُ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَي فَنَسِيَ

أَفَلاَ يَرَوْنَ أَلاَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلاً وَلاَ يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرّاً وَلاَ نَفْعاً

88. "Then he (Samiri) produced for them a (mere) body of a Calf that lowed. So they said: 'This is your god and the god of Moses', but he forgot (both the Lord and Moses' teachings)."

89. "Do they not see then that it (the Calf) returns to them no saying and possesses neither harm nor profit for them?"

One of the smartnesses of Samiri was that he did not show those people how he constructed the Calf, and the people, all of a sudden, were faced with a lowing Calf that Samiri had constructed.

The verse says:

"Then he (Samiri) produced for them a (mere) body of a Calf that lowed. So they said: "This is your god and the god of Moses', but he forgot (both the Lord and Moses' teachings)."

The Children of Israel did not contemplate that if that Calf were worthy of worship, Samiri himself, who was the constructor of it, would be more worthy of worship while they did not worship him.

However, as a blame and reprimand upon those idolaters, Allah says:

"Do they not see then that it (the Calf) returns to them no saying and possesses neither harm nor profit for them?"

A real deity should at least be able to answer the questions of the servants. Can the sound of lowing heard from the golden statue of a Calf alone be an acceptable and sufficient reason for people to worship it?

Moreover, can a thing, which is not the possessor of the harm and the profit of others, or even of itself, be an object of worship?

Besides, the intellect judges that the object of worship of a man should be able to attract profit for him and to repel harms from him.

Notes

1. The Commentary of Fi-Zilal-il-Qur'an
2. Commentary of Burhan; and Kafi, vol. 8, p. 393
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
4. As-Safi, the Commentary, the explanation about the verse

Section 5: Children of Israel Deceived by Samiri

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 90 - 91

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِن قَبْلُ يَاقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنتُم بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي

قَالُوا لَن نَّبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ حَتَّي يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَي

90. "And (yet) Aaron had aforetime said to them: 'O my people! Verily you are being tested therewith (the Calf), and verily your Lord is the Beneficent (Allah); therefore follow me and obey my order'."

91. "They said: 'Never will We cease worshipping it, until Moses returns unto us'."

At the time of appearing an innovation, the duty of a leader and his followers is that they should protest loudly and give an ultimatum.

That was why Aaron, the successor of Moses and the great prophet of Allah, did not leave out his prophetic mission and fulfilled the duty of struggling against aberration and corruption as much as he could.

As the Qur'an in this regard says:

"And (yet) Aaron had aforetime said to them: 'O my people! Verily you are being tested therewith (the Calf),..."

Therefore, they should be careful not to be deceived and not to go astray from the path of Monotheism.

Then, the Qur'an adds that their Lord is surely that very Beneficent Allah Who has bestowed on them all of these bounties.

The verse says:

"…and verily your Lord is the Beneficent (Allah)…"

This statements implies that formerly they were slaves and He made them free; they were captives, He delivered them; they were misguided, He guided them; they were in dispersion He gathered them and, under the light of the leadership of a godly man, united them; they were ignorant and immoral, He cast the light of knowledge over them, and He guided them unto the Straight Path of Monotheism.

The verse, addressing them, from the tongue of Aaron says:

"…therefore follow me and obey my order'."

It implies that whether they have forgotten that his brother, Moses, has introduced him as his successor and has made the obedience of Aaron (as) obligatory for them. Why have they committed breach of promise?

But the Children of Israel had so obstinately been attached to the Calf that the strong logic and the clear evidences of that godly man, that sympathetic leader, did not influence in them, and they manifestly opposed Aaron.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Never will We cease worshipping it, until Moses returns unto us'."

Thus, they refused both the firm order of intellect, and the command of the successor of their Divine leader.

But in any case, Aaron accompanied with a minority of the true believer, who were about ten thousand persons, separated from that community, while a majority of them, who were ignorant and obstinate, wanted to kill him.

They were neglectful that obedience from the successor and representative of the prophet was obligatory for them. They did not care that following the Divine leaders was the secret of immunity from seditions.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 92 - 94

قَالَ يَاهَارُونُ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلوا

أَلاَّ تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي

قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لاَ تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلاَ بِرَأْسِي إِنّـِي خَشِيتُ أَن تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرآئِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي

92. "(Moses) said: 'O Aaron! What hindered you when you saw them going astray,"

93. "So that you did not follow me? Did you then disobey my order?'"

94. "Said (Aaron): 'O son of my mother! Seize me neither by my beard nor by (the hair of) my head! Verily I feared lest you would say 'You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe my word!'"

When Moses (as) returned from Tur (Mount Sinaie) and found his people misguided, he interrogated three types of people:

1. His people, whom he asked:

"Did not your Lord promise you a fair promise (the descent of the Turah)?"[1]

2. Aaron, to whom he said:

"What hindered you…?"

3. Samiri, whom Moses addressed and said:

"What then was your object, O Samiri?"

As it is recorded in Atyab-ul-Bayan, the commentary, since Aaron was a prophet and was sinless, he had done his duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Therefore, the action of Moses (as) against Aaron can idiomatically be rendered into a 'sham quarrel', or he says: 'If the cap fits, wear it', and he addresses Aaron so that people might be careful of their own accountability.

But, there is a tradition recorded in At-Tafsir-us-Safi, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), which says that the reprimand of Moses (as) was this that why Aaron (as) did not immediately inform Moses of that circumstance when he saw it.

Concerning the methods of teaching, in order to move the common opinions, or to shake the lifeless body of a society, sometimes we must invent a new action, as Moses (as) behaved so harshly unto his own sinless successor, Aaron; or when Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) was preaching for people, in order to attract their attention, he slapped hardly in his own face.

However, at first Moses (as) turned his face to his brother Aaron, and said:

"O Aaron! What hindered you when you saw them going astray,"
"So that you did not follow me? Did you then disobey my order?'"
Did I not tell you:
"Be my successor among people, and set the (people's) affairs right and do not follow the way of mischief-makers"
when I wanted to leave for the tryst?
The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase which is recited: /'alla tattabi'ani/ is:
'Why did you not follow my style and my ordinances in severity of action concerning idolatry?'
Moses (as), with an intensive anger and violence, said these words to his brother shouting at him, while he was taking his hair and his head and dragging Aaron.
In order to sooth and to decrease his inflammation, Aaron called him as the son of his mother (in stead of his brother) and wanted him not to seize him by his beard and his head, since he though if he raised to struggle against them there would appear a great dispersion among the Children of Israel.
Also, he feared that at the time of his return, Moses might say that he had caused division among the Children of Israel and in his absence he had not observed his order and had not acted his instructions.
The verse says:
"Said (Aaron): 'O son of my mother! Seize me neither by my beard nor by (the hair of) my head! Verily I feared lest you would say 'You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe my word!'"
And, in this way, Aaron (as) proved his innocence.

Explanations

1. Leaders should be responsible for the aberrations of their people.
2. The silence and inattentiveness of the authorities is often reproachful.
3. A prophet can be an obedient to another prophet.
4. The Faith and religiousness is more important than family adherence.
5. Religious zeal is a requisite of prophethood.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 95 - 97

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَامِرِي

قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي

قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَن تَقُولَ لاَ مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِداً لَّن تُخْلَفَهُ وَانظُرْ إِلَى إِلَهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفاً لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفاً

95. "(Moses) said: 'What then was your object, O Samiri?'"
96. "He said: 'I perceived what they did not perceive, so I took a handful of dust from the messenger's track, then I threw it (into the Calf); thus my self prompted me'."
97. "(Moses) said: 'Depart then! Verily your share (of punishment) in this life will be that you will say: 'Touch (me) not'; and surely there is a

tryst for you (in Hereafter) which never will fail, and (now) look at your god to whose worship you kept (so long); we will certainly burn it, then we will certainly scatter (the ashes of) it broadcast in the sea'."

The Qur'anic phrase /basurtubih/ is usually used in the sense of the Arabic word /basirat/, the plural of which is /basa'ir/ with the meaning of 'perceive, understand', not in the sense of /basar/ (the eye) the plural of which is /absar/ (the eyes).[2]

It has been recorded in the book entitled ''Ihtijaj', by Tabarsi, that when Hadrat Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) opened the city of Basrah, people gathered around him in order to hear his words. Among those people Ali (as) saw Hassan Basri busy writing down something.

Imam Amir-ul-mu'mineen Ali (as), with a loud voice, addressed him and said:

"What are you doing?"

He answered he was writing down his statements so that he could repeat them for others. Imam Ali (as) said:

"O people! Beware that there is a Samiri in any nation, and you are, O Hassan! the Samiri of this community. You take the tracks of the Messenger of Allah from me and mix them with your carnal desire and your own interpretation of them by your personal opinion, then you will create a new school and invite people to it."[3]

According to the commentary books of Al-Mizan Al-Furqan, and Nimunah, the purpose of Samiri from saying /qabadtu qabdatan min'aar-ir-rasul/ is:

'I took some of the tracks of Moses (as) and believed in them, then I left them and built the Calf'.

Thus, the phrase recited. /basurtu bi ma lam yabsuru/ means: 'I found a design for fulfilling this accomplishment that others were neglectful of it.' This meaning is more fitting with the abovementioned tradition.

However, Moses (as), after finishing his debate with his brother, Aaron, and exonerating him, paid to summoning Samiri to judgment! He said to him why he performed that action and what his motive was.

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'What then was your object, O Samiri?'"

In answer to this question, the verse says:

"He said: 'I perceived what they did not perceive…"

Samiri added that he took something from the tracks of the messenger of Allah, Moses, and then he drew them toward the creed of idolatry.

The verse continues saying:

"…so I took a handful of dust from the messenger's track, then I threw it (into the Calf); thus my self prompted me'."

It is evident that the reply and excuse of Samiri in answer to Moses (as) was by no means acceptable. Therefore, Moses (as) issued the judgment of condemnation of Samiri in that court. He decreed three commandments upon him and his Calf.

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'De part then! Verily your share (of punishment) in this life will be that you will say: 'Touch (me) not'…"

Thus, by means of a decisive command, Moses (as) banished Samiri from the society and sent him to an absolute retreat.

The second punishment of Samiri was that Moses (as) notified him of his retribution in the Hereafter.

As the verse in this regard remarks, Moses (as) said:

"…and surely there is a tryst for you (in Hereafter) which never will fail…"

His third punishment was that: Moses (as) told Samiri:

"…and (now) look at your god to whose worship you kept (so long); we will certainly burn it, then we will certainly scatter (the ashes of) it broadcast in the sea'."

To conclude, there is a tradition cited in the commentary books of Majma'-ul-Bayan and Safi which indicates that Moses (as) had intended to get Samiri be killed, but Allah revealed him that since Samiri was a generous man he would relinquish killing him.

Therefore, by saying:

"Depart then!",

Moses (as) banished him from the society of the Children of Israel.

The Qur'anic term /la misas/ is used in the sense of 'to be involved in a disease that no one should touch him at all'. At last, Samiri got an infliction of a psychical disease so that he used to run away from people, and whenever a person went nigh to him, he often shouted 'Depart then!'[4]

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 98 - 99

إِنَّمَآ إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْماً

كَذَلِكَ نَقُص عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ وَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَاكَ مِن لَّدُنَّا ذِكْراً

98. "Verily your God is Allah; there is no god but He, (and) He embraces all things in (His) knowledge."

99. "(O Apostle) thus do We relate to you some of the news of what has gone before; and indeed We have given to you from Ourselves a Reminder (the Qur'an)."

Whenever you succeed to efface a wrong, do introduce a right instead of it.

That God is adorable Whose knowledge embraces every thing.

However, in this holy verse, with an intensive emphasis on the subject of Monotheism, Moses (as) defined the line of sovereignty of Allah, and said:

"Verily your God is Allah; there is no god but He, (and) He embraces all things in (His) knowledge."

It is not like the artificial idols which neither hear any words, nor do they deliver any answer, nor solve any problem, nor repel any harm.

Next to the explanations concerning the history of the adventurous life of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel, the Qur'an also concludes a general conclusion from it.

It, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"(O Apostle) thus do We relate to you some of the news of what has gone before…"

Then the verse implies that Allah has given the Apostle a Reminder, the Qur'an, which is full of lessons of warning, rational demonstrations, the instructive news of the former nations, and some awakening matters about the coming nations.

The verse continues saying:

"…and indeed We have given to you from Ourselves a Reminder (the Qur'an)."

Explanations

There are a lot of divine graces in detailing the history of the Apostles of Allah, among them are as follows:

1. Increase of knowledge and cognizance.
2. Gaining insight and finding the path of prosperity.
3. Warning people and reminding them.
4. Glad tidings for the believers, and encouraging them.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 100 - 103

مَّنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وِزْراً

خَالِدِينَ فِيهِ وَسَآءَ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حِمْلاً

يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُـجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقاً

يَتَخَافَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ عَشْراً

100. "Whoever turns away from it, verily he will bear, on the Day of Judgment, a burden."

101. "They will abide in this (burden of sin); and evil will the burden be for them on the Day of Judgment!"

102. "(On) the day when the Trumpet shall be blown, and We will muster the guilty, blear-eyed, on that day."

103. "They shall consult among themselves in a low voice (saying): 'You did tarry but ten (days)'."

The Arabic words /himl/ and /haml/ philologically are used in the same meaning, but the word /himl/ is usually applied for the outward burden while /haml/ is used for the inward burden, like a child in the mother's womb.

However, this holy verse speaks about those people who forget the facts of the Qur'an and the lessons of the history.

It says:

"Whoever turns away from it, verily he will bear, on the Day of Judgment, a burden."

Yes, turning one's back on the Qur'an drives him to some deviated paths and puts on his back the heavy burden of kinds of sins and mental and creedal aberrations.

Then the Qur'an adds:

"They will abide in this (burden of sin)…"

"…and evil will the burden be for them on the Day of Judgment!"

Then, explaining the day of Judgment and its beginning it says:

"(On) the day when the Trumpet shall be blown, and We will muster the guilty, blear-eyed, on that day."

It is in this circumstance that the sinners shall whisper with each other about the length of their stop in the intermediate world. Some of them say that they had tarried there for only ten days and they do not know how long it had been.

The verse says:

"They shall consult among themselves in a low voice (saying): 'You did tarry but ten (days)'."

This state of their speaking in a low voice may be for the great horror that they feel in themselves because of seeing the scenery of the Hereafter, or because of the intense of weakness and feebleness in them.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 104

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ يَوْماً

104. "We know best what they will say when their best in conduct will say: 'You tarried but a day'."

The greatness of Hereafter is so much so that, when people attend there, they consider the length of their life in this world as long as half a day, or one day, or at most ten days.

In this regard, the Qur'an, from the tongue of different groups of people, says as follows:

1. Ten days as the verse says:

"You did tarry but ten (days)."[5]

2. One day, about which the above verse says:

"You tarried but a day."

3. A part of a day, where the Qur'an says:

"…it will be as though they had not tarried but the latter part of a day or the early part of it."[6]

4. Some short moments, for which the guilty shall say:

"…they did not tarry but an hour…"[7]

5. A little time, about which the Qur'an says:

"…you did not tarry but a little…"[8]

It seems that this difference of attitudes, due to the length of the lifetime in the world, depends on the amount of insight existed in different persons. In this verse, for example, the Qur'an points to those people who are best in conduct. Such people count the lifetime in this world as much as 'one day', while, as the previous verse indicates, the sinners count it ten days.

Of course, it is evident that the limited lifetime in this world in comparison with the unlimited world of Hereafter is little and even less than little. Or, it is not possible to compare a finite and limited thing with an infinite and unlimited one.

Perhaps the secret of this fact that Allah refers the knowledge of the length of their stop in the world to Himself is the same matter. Allah knows best what they say and they imagine that they have tarried ten days in the world, but the best and the most truthful ones of them say that they have not tarried in the world more than one day.

The verse says:

"We know best what they will say when their best in conduct will say: 'You tarried but a day'."

To conclude, Allah in one expressive sentence says that He knows best what they say, whether they say it in a low voice or aloud.

Notes

1. The current Surah, verse 86
2. Mufradat-i-Raqib
3. The commentary of Nimunah, vol.13, p. 286
4. Tafsir-i-Nemuna, vol. 13, p. 288
5. The current Surah, verse 102
6. Surah An-Nazi‘at, No. 79, verse 46
7. Surah Ar-Room, No.30, verse 55
8. Surah Al-Mu’minoon, No.23, verse 114

Section 6: Intercession

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 105 - 107

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفاً

فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعاً صَفْصَفاً

لاَّ تَرَي فِيهَا عِوَجاً وَلآ أَمْتاً

105. "And they ask you (O Apostle) about the mountains (on that Day). Say: 'My Lord will uproot them and scatter them (as dust),"

106. "Then He will leave them (as) a plain, smooth level;"

107. "Wherein you will see no crookedness neither any curving'."

The Arabic term /nasafa/ means: 'to destroy from the foundations, uproot', while the word /qa'a/ means: 'a level plain'; and the Qur'anic term /safsaf/ means: 'a level land, so that all parts of it are in one row and a line'. The Arabic words /'iwaj/ and /'amat/ are used in the sense of: 'downs and ups'.

And, in view of the fact that in the former verses the words were about the events concerning to the end of this world and the beginning of the Hereafter, here, in these verses, the same subject is followed, too.

The first verse of the abovementioned verses leads us to this meaning that people had asked the Prophet of Islam (S) about the fate of the mountains at the time when this world will end.

Therefore, the revelation says:

"And they ask you (O Apostle) about the mountains (on that Day). Say: 'My Lord will uproot them and scatter them (as dust),"

As for the fate of the mountains, it is understood from the totality of the verses of the Qur'an that they will pass different stages at the threshold of Resurrection.

At first, they will quake, and then they will move.

In the third stage, they will be burst into a pile of sand, and, at last, in their final stage, winds and storms will scatter them around so violently that they seem as 'loosened wool'.[1]

Then, after destruction of the mountains and their dust being scattered, by the next verses, the Qur'an says:

"Then He will leave them (as) a plain, smooth level;"

"Wherein you will see no crookedness neither any curving'."

However, the destruction of the mountains and bringing forth the Hereafter is a manifestation of the Lordship of Allah.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 108

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لاَ عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الاَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلاَ تَسْمَعُ إِلاَّ هَمْساً

108. "On that day they will follow the caller in whom is no crookedness, and the voices shall be low before (the grandeur of) the Beneficent (Allah), so that you hear not but a faint murmur."

There are some persons in the world who turn their backs on the missionaries of Allah, but, on the Day of Hereafter, they cannot be helped but to follow.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an says:

"On that day they will follow the caller in whom is no crookedness…"

That is, all men will rise from their graves and no one will have any ability to oppose Him.

The order of this caller, whoever he may be, will be so operative that nobody can oppose it.

Concerning this time, the verse continues saying:

"…and the voices shall be low before (the grandeur of) the Beneficent (Allah), so that you hear not but a faint murmur."

This silence of voices will be either for the domination of the grandeur of Allah over the resurrection plain toward which everybody humble himself, or for the fear of reckoning and the result of the worldly deeds, or both of them.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 109

يَوْمَئِذٍ لاَّ تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلاً

109. "On that Day shall no intercession avail save (that of) him to whom the Beneficent (Allah) gives leave and whose word He is pleased with."

Since the denial of intercession contrasts the contents of the verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions, and it causes the despair of those believers who are sinful, and also accepting the unconditional and unrestrained intercession causes that the wrong doers become more daring, which is opposite to Allah's justice, then the Qur'an has assigned some control and prescriptions for intercession.

From the viewpoint of the Qur'an, intercession is a ray of hope for the sinners. It is a means of their communication with the saints of Allah and following them.

Intercession is done by the leave of Allah, and the persons who care to intercede are only those believers who are in the path of Monotheism and have a proper logic and rightful notions and whose statements are acceptable with Allah. Therefore, there is an exact process in intercession both for the intercessor and the person who will be interceded.

It is so that the Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"On that Day shall no intercession avail save (that of) him to whom the Beneficent (Allah) gives leave and whose word He is pleased with."

For this reason, the Qur'an counts the intercession of idols futile for the idolaters. Also, the intercession of Christ (as) in the sense of ransom, in order to purify the sins of his followers, or the martyrdom of Imam Hussayn for the sake of interceding his lovers and followers, is not acceptable, even though Imam Hussayn is one of the great intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, but it should be noted that his goal from martyrdom was not to intercede his advocators, but it was to protect the religion of Allah.

Upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The intercession of the Prophet (S) is only for those who are well-pleased (by Allah) from the point of action and speech, and they have lived with the love of Ahlul-Bayt (as) and have died with it."[2]

In the book entitled ‘Mahasin’, there is cited a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“The intercessors are the (immaculate) Imams (as), and the truthful ones among the believers.” [3]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“There will be no intercession for the doubtful ones, the disbelievers, and the rejecters. But intercession is particular to the believers, the true confessors of Divine Unity.” [4]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

“There will be there groups who can intercede before Allah and whose intercessions are acceptable: the prophets, the scholars, and the martyrs.” [5]

The holy Prophet (S) also said:

“My intercession does not involve the one who does not mind (his) prayer and takes it light; and by Allah he will not arrive (near) me at the Pond of Abundance; and by Allah a drunkard is not of mine and will never arrive (near) me at the Pond.” [6]

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 110 - 111

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْماً

وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيومِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْماً

110. “He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they (people) do not comprehend Him in (their) knowledge.”

111. “And (on that Day, all) faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent (Allah), and whoever bears inequity will indeed be disappointed.”

The Arabic term /‘anat/ is derived from /‘nwah/ with the meaning of humility before wrath and sovereignty, and the Qur’anic word /qayyum/ is called to one who is subsisting to his own essence and is the protector of every thing and who has given the cause of consistence of every thing to that thing.

And the Arabic word /xaba/ is derived from /xaybah/ with the sense of ‘failure, despair’. Thus, the despair is of those who carried the burden of injustice on their backs.

Since the attendance of humankind in the resurrection plain for reckoning and retribution needs Allah’s awareness from their deeds, the Qur’an in this verse implies that Allah knows whatever the sinners will have in front of them and whatever they have done in the world and have passed in their behind.

He knows them all so that He is aware of their whole deeds, sayings, and intentions in the past, and knows the retribution they will confront in future; but they do not encompass His knowledge.

The verse says:

“He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they (people) do not comprehend Him in (their) knowledge.”

Thus the encompassment of the knowledge of Allah is unto both their deeds and their retributions (and rewards). These two in fact, are two principals of complete and just judgment.

The verse says:

"And (on that Day, all) faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent (Allah)…"

Choosing the attributes of 'the Ever-Living, and the Self-Subsistent', here, from among the attributes of Allah is for the suitability of these two epithets with the event of Resurrection which is the Day of new life and rise of all.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…and whoever bears inequity will indeed be disappointed."

As if, inequity is a great burden which weighs down on the back of a person and hinders him from going toward the bounties of Allah.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 112

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلاَ يَخَافُ ظُلْماً وَلاَ هَضماً

112. "And whoever does good works, and he is a believer (on that day) shall fear neither of injustice nor of (any) curtailment (of his wage)."

The Arabic term /hadm/ means: 'To decrease'. It is used for the absorption of food in the body, perhaps for the reason that the food apparently will be decreased therein when its remaining will be discharged.

And, since the style of the holy Qur'an is often to state the comparative statement of the affairs, after mentioning the fate of the unjust and the guilty on that Day, it refers to the state of the believers, and says:

"And whoever does good works, and he is a believer (on that day) shall fear neither of injustice nor of (any) curtailment (of his wage)."

Principally, in order that a righteous action can often be performed continuously and deeply, it should be originated from a pure Faith and a proper conviction.

In the recent ten verses of this Surah, the illustration of the feature of Hereafter has briefly been pointed out.

1. The Trumpet will be blown and the dead will be quickened.

"(On) the day when the Trumpet shall be blown…"[7]

2. The sinners will he mustered.

"…We will muster the guilty…"[8]

3. The mountains will be uprooted.

"…My Lord will uproot them and scatter them (as dust)."[9]

4. All people will obey the invitation of a divine missionary.

"…They will follow the caller…"[10]

5. Without the permission of Allah, no intercession will avail.

"…shall no intercession avail…"[11]

6. Allah, with His encompassing knowledge, will reckon all.

"He knows what is before them…"[12]

7. All people submit to the commandment of Allah.

"…(all) faces will humbled."[13]

8. Those who have committed injustice will be despaired.

"…whoever bears inequity will indeed be disappointed."[14]

9. The righteous believers will be in peace and ease.

"…a believer (on that day) shall fear neither of injustice nor of (any) curtailment (of his wage)."[15]

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 113

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَاناً عَرَبِيّاً وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْراً

113. "And thus We sent it down as a perspicuous Qur'an and explained therein certain warnings that they may keep from evil or that it may serve unto them a reminder."

In this verse, the Qur'an hints to the totality of the matters which were mentioned in the previous holy verses about the instructional subjects and divine promises concerning the Hereafter.

It says:

"And thus We sent it down as a perspicuous Qur'an and explained therein certain warnings that they may keep from evil or that it may serve unto them a reminder."

The Qur'anic term /'arabiyyan/, although means 'the Arabic language', here, it is an indication to the eloquence, and rhetoric of the Qur'an, as well as the clarity of its concepts.

The evidence for this meaning is that, as some linguistics of the world have said, Arabic language contains the most expressive words and its literature is the strongest one. Another fact is that the Qur'an expresses one subject in the frame of different statements.

For instance, as for the threat and punishment of the wrong doers, it sometimes states it in the form of the story of the former nations, sometimes in the form of addressing the audience, sometimes in the form of illustration of their status in the Resurrection plain, and sometimes in other shapes.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 114

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَق وَلاَ تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْءَانِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يُقْضَي إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُل رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْماً

114. "So high exalted is Allah, The Ture Sovereign; and do not make haste (O Apostle) with the Qur'an before its revelation is completed unto you, and say: 'My Lord! increase me in knowledge'."

Through the phrase:

"Do not make haste (O Apostle) with the Qur'an"

it can be deduced that the Prophet (S) had known the whole verses of the Qur'an from before its gradual revelation and had been acquainted with them. This itself is a clear evidence that the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet of Islam twice.

Once it was sent down to him in a lump, and the second revelation was in the form of a gradual revelation. Thus, the Prophet of Allah (S), who had received the whole Qur'an at once on the Night of Qadr, was acquainted with what was gradually being revealed to him before its revelation.

There is a fundamental difference between the act of haste /ta'jal/, on one side, and the Qur'anic term/ sari'u/ [16] (be quick) and /sabiqu/[17] (be you foremost) which have been divinely admired, on the other side. The

goodness of ‘being quick’ and ‘being foremost’ is in a circumstance where all the affairs have been considered and arranged.

Therefore, opportunities must be utilized. But ‘haste’ is used for the circumstance where the time of action has not come yet, or the matter needs to be searched and we do not observe it, then we have made haste.

The origin of ‘haste’ is sometimes the negative qualities, such as: impatience, pride and vanity. These qualities, of course, are blameworthy and they are aloof from the holy being of the Prophet (S).

And, sometimes, it is because of the intense love and interest for receiving a matter, and sympathy for protecting something. In this case, haste is counted a good thing. The haste of the Prophet (S) in receiving the revelation had been of this kind, i.e. an amorous reception, and an anxiety for the protection of revelation.

Therefore, this verse says:

“So high exalted is Allah, The Ture Sovereign; and do not make haste (O Apostle) with the Qur’an before its revelation is completed unto you, and say: ‘My Lord! increase me in knowledge’.”

When the Prophet (S), with that abundant knowledge and spiritually full of cognizance, is enjoined to seek increase of knowledge from Allah until the end of lifetime, the duty of others is completely clear.

In fact, from the view of Islam, there is no limitation for earning helpful knowledge. Amassing things, in many affairs, is blameworthy; while it is admirable concerning knowledge. Excess is bad, but excess in knowledge does not have any meaning.

However, Allah sent Moses (as) to Hadrat Khidr to be taught. So Moses (as) asked him for permission and said:

“Shall I follow you so that you teach me right conduct of what you have been taught?”[18]

But Allah Himself undertook teaching the Prophet (S) and told him to say:

“My Lord! Increase me in knowledge”.

The first teacher foreverything is Allah, the All-knowing, and the Omniscient.

The Qur’an says:

“He taught Adam all the names…”[19]

Also, it says:

“The Beneficent”

“It is He Who has taught the Qur’an.”

“He has taught him an intelligent speech.”[20]

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

“If a day passes in me wherein my knowledge is not increased, that day is not blessed for me.”[21]

Notes

1. Surah Al-Qari‘ah, No. 101, verse 5
2. Ta’wil-ul-’Ayat, p. 304
3. Tafsir-us-Safi, old version, p. 358
4. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, vol. 8, p. 58
5. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 34
6. Wafi, vol. 5, p. 9

www.alhassanain.org/english

7. Verse 102
8. Verse 102
9. Verse 105
10. Verse 108
11. Verse 109
12. Verse 110
13. Verse 111
14. Verse 111
15. Verse 112
16. Surah, ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 133
17. Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 21
18. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 66
19. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 31
20. Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verses 1,2,4
21. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 397

Section 7: Satan, a Declared Enemy of Mankind

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 115 - 116

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَآ إِلَي ءَادَمَ مِن قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْماً

وإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لاِدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَي

115. "And We had made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no constancy."

116. "And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate to Adam', they (all) prostrated except Iblis; he refused."

From the beginning of the Qur'an up to here, this is the sixth occurrence where we recite about the story of Adam and Iblis. Before this, there have also been some remarks mentioned in Suras Al-Baqarah, Al-'A'raf, Al-Hijr, Al-'Isra', and Al-Kahf.

The purpose of 'covenant', mentioned in this verse, is the command of Allah saying not to eat from that particular plant; and the objective meaning of 'forgot' is the lack of care in fulfilling the command of Allah (s.w.t.), otherwise, an absolute forgetfulness does not deserve warning and criticism.

The purpose of 'constancy', mentioned in the above, is 'a firm will' before the temptations of Iblis.

Imam Kazem (as) says:

"The command of prostration and then the disobedience of Satan is a kind of solace for the Prophet of Islam (S) meaning that if his command was not obeyed, he would not be worried since Iblis did not obey His command, either."[1]

As it was mentioned before, the struggle of 'right and wrong' is not limited to the present time and past time, or to Moses (as) and Pharaoh. It has existed since the time of the creation of Adam and it continues forever.

At first, the Qur'an refers to the convent of Adam with Allah.

It says:

"And We had made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no constancy."

The purpose of this covenant cited in the abovementioned verse, is the command of Allah meaning that they would not approach the prohibited tree.

No doubt Adam did not commit any sin, but what he did was 'leaving the better'. The course of dwelling Adam inside Heaven, in principle, was an experimental course for him to be prepared for the life of the present world and accepting the responsibility of duties.

Then, the Qur'an has pointed to another part of this story, when the verse says:

"And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate to Adam', they (all) prostrated except Iblis; he refused."

Here, by this statement, the great rank and position of Adam is made manifest, Adam whom all angels prostrated for. Moreover, the enmity of Iblis against him, from very beginning, is also manifested.

There is no doubt that prostration, in the sense of worship, is allocated to Allah (s.w.t.), and besides Allah no one and nothing can be worshipped.

Thus, the prostration of angels was done before Allah (s.w.t.), but for the sake of the creation of this great creature, Adam, who was eligible of the praise of that Creator.

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 117 - 119

فَقُلْنَا يَآ ادَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلاَ يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَي

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلاَّ تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلاَ تَعْرَي

وَ نَّكَ لاَ تَظْمَؤُا فِيهَا وَلاَ تَضْحَي

117. "Then We said: 'O Adam! Verily this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Therefore let him not expel you both from the Garden so that you come to toil."

118. "(For) verily you will be neither hungry therein, nor naked."

119. "And that you shall not be thirsty therein nor suffer (the beat of) the sun."

Here, Satan has been introduced as the enemy of Adam and Eve alone, but in some other occurrences of the Qur'an his enmity unto all humankind has been warned.

For example, Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 53 says:

"…Verily the Satan is an open enemy to man."

The objective meaning of the word /tašqa/ (you come to toil), mentioned here, is the toils of the material life, which is understood from the next verses, where it says that there is not any hanger or thirst or nakedness in Heaven. This statement means that if you be sent out from Heaven, you will surely be involved with toil.

However, this verse indicates that Adam (as) was warned by Allah (s.w.t.) to be careful of the enmity of Satan.

The holy verse says:

"Then We said: 'O Adam! Verily this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Therefore let him not expel you both from the Garden so that you come to toil."

Then Allah explains for Adam the comfort of Heaven and the toil and pain of the outside of it, as follows:

"(For) verily you will be neither hungry therein, nor naked."

"And that you shall not be thirsty therein nor suffer (the beat of) the sun."

In the abovementioned couple of verses, the Qur'an has pointed to four elementary and essential necessities of man, i.e. the necessity of food, water, clothing, and housing (a cover against the heat of the sun).

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 120 - 121

فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَآ ادَمُ هَلْ أَدُلكَ عَلَي شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لاَّ يَبْلَي

فَاَكَلاَ مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَي ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُ

فَغَوَي

120. "Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him, saying: 'O Adam! Shall I guide you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"

121. "So they both ate of it (the forbidden tree), then their shameful parts became exposed to them, and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden. And (thus) Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went astray."

Another name of Iblis is Satan, as the holy Qur'an says:

"…They all prostrated except Iblis…"

and

"Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him…"

It was before the rank of prophethood that Adam was whispered evil suggestions to. [2]

Sayyid-ibn-Tawus in a delicate statement says that, at first, Satan came to Adam with the claim of guidance and said:

"O Adam! Shall I guide you…?",

and then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit.[3]

Now, woe unto us! For, Satan comes to us from the beginning with the intention of deceiving us.

The Qur'an says:

"He said: 'Then by Your Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all".[4]

However, Satan had decided to be an enemy of Adam, therefore he did not sit still, and, as the verse says:

"Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him, saying: 'O Adam! Shall I guide you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"

In fact, Satan thought to what the willing of Adam was and he found that he wished an eternal life and reaching to an imperishable power. Therefore, in order to drive him to disobeying the command of Allah, he makes use of these two factors.

Finally, what should not be done was done.

The verse in this regard, and that why their heavenly clothes wholly collapsed, says:

"So they both ate of it (the forbidden tree), then their shameful parts became exposed to them…"

When Adam and Eve saw that event, they immediately made clothes for themselves out of the leaves of the trees of Heaven to cover the shameful parts of their bodies.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden..."

Yes, at last, Adam disobeyed his Lord and was deprived from His reward.

The verse says:

"…And (thus) Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went astray."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 122 - 123

ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَي

قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعاً بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِنّـِي هُدي فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلاَ يَضِل وَلاَ يَشْقَي

122. "Then his Lord chose him, so He turned unto him (mercifully) and guided him."

123. "(Allah) said: 'Get you down, both of you, all together, from it (the Garden), with enmity one to another. So if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then (be sure) whoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way nor fall into misery."

The Arabic term /'ijtiba'/ is derived from /jibayah/ in the sense of: 'picking out, selection, and choice'.

The Qur'anic word /taba/ means 'a person's penitence' when it is accompanied with /'ila/, like /tubtu'ilayka/ (I repented to you), but if it is said with /'ala/ it is considered the repentance and return of Allah, like what is recited in the abovementioned holy verse, which means 'Allah (s.w.t.) returned His Grace to the servant'.

But since Adam was essentially pure and faithful, and acted along the path of Allah's pleasure, and that this fault which encompassed him as a result of Satan's temptation was an exceptional happening, Allah did deprive him from His Grace forever; but after this event, Allah accepted his repentance and guided him.

The verse says:

"Then his Lord chose him, so He turned unto him (mercifully) and guided him."

Yes, the repentance of Adam was accepted, but he had performed something that his return to the early position was impossible. Therefore, Allah commanded him and Eve both to come down from Heaven on to the earth, together with Satan, while they would be enemy with each other.

The holy verse says:

"(Allah) said: 'Get you down, both of you, all together, from it (the Garden), with enmity one to another..."

Yet, they should know that the way of prosperity and salvation is always open to them.

Then Allah says:

"…So if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then (be sure) whoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way nor fall into misery."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 124 - 125

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنكاً وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَي

قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَي وَقَدْ كُنتُ بَصِيراً

124. "And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened, and the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind."

125. "He will say: 'My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?'"

The previous verse was a glad tidings to the followers of the Truth, while this verse is a warning to those who turn away from the Truth. This is

because dread and encouragement might be mentioned beside each other and become fruitful.

Some Islamic literatures indicate that leaving the path of mastership of Ahlul-Bayt (as), as well as leaving the duty of Hajj, have been counted as the denotation expansion of aversion the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.).[5]

The purpose of 'straits of life' is not lack of money and straitened circumstances, while many of the rich, because of greed, fear, and anxiety, live in hardship and straits.

And, in order to make clear the circumstance of those who neglect the command of Allah, too, the Qur'an adds:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened, and the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind."

In principle, the straits of life are often for the spiritual deficiencies and the absence of the soul's nutrition. This status is for the uncertainty of man due to the future and the fear of annihilation of the existing material potentialities, and too much dependence on the material world. Therefore, he who has faith in Allah, and is hopeful to His Pure Essence, is safe from all these anxieties.

In Hereafter, such a neglectful person may ask Allah this question, as the verse says:

"He will say: 'My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?'"

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 126 - 127

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ ءَايَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنسَي

وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِن بِاَيَاتِ رَبِّهِ وَلَعَذَابُ الاَخِرَةِ أَشَد وَأَبْقَي

126. "(Allah) will say: 'Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day'."

127. "And thus We recompense him who is prodigal and does not believe in the Signs of his Lord and certainly the chastisement of the Hereafter is more grievous and more lasting."

Prayer is one of the clear expansions of the remembrance of Allah.

Allah in the Qur'an says;

"…established prayer for My remembrance"[6],

and it is evident that whoever remembers Allah, He will remember him, too.

This is the promise of Allah Who says:

"…remember Me, and I will remember you"[7]

And, naturally, those who forget Allah, He may also leave them alone.

The verse says:

"(Allah) will say: 'Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day'."

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who recites the Qur'an and does not act accordingly, Allah will muster him blind. That servant may Ask Allah why he is raised blind, and then there comes a voice commanding the angels to take him into Hell".[8]

Concerning the Qur'anic phrase /'atatka'ayatuna/

"Even so, Our Signs came to you",

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"The Immaculate Imams are the signs of Allah and he who abandon them will be left in Fire on the Day of Hereafter".[9]

However, on the Day of Resurrection, a guilty person will say:

"…My Lord! Why have you raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?"

In answer to him, immediately it will be said to such a guilty person:

"Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day",

and your eye is blind to see the bounties of Allah and the station of His nearness.

Finally, as a conclusion, the Qur'an says:

"And thus We recompense him who is prodigal and does not believe in the Signs of his Lord and certainly the chastisement of the Hereafter is more grievous and more lasting."

Surah Ta Ha - Verses 128 - 129

أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لأُوْلِي النهَي

وَلَوْلاَ كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَاماً وَأَجَلٌ مُسَمًّي

128. "Does it not then guide such men (to call to mind) how many of the generations We did destroy before them, amid whose dwellings they (today) walk about? Verily there are signs in this for those (endowed) with understanding."

129. "And had there not been a decree that went forth before from your Lord and an appointed term, (their punishment) would necessarily have come."

The Arabic term /nuha/ is the plural form of /nuhyah/ which means something that prohibits man from doing some indecent things. In Arabic, the 'intellect' is called /nuhyah/ since it dissuades man from the low desires. Therefore, the true intellect, besides thinking and understanding, causes man to ward off some dangers and vices.

The Qur'anic word /qarn/ means a nation or a group of people who live in the same time. It is sometimes used for the time itself, too. The Arabic term /lizam/ means 'a necessary and firm affair'.

And, in view of the fact that in the previous verses several matters concerning the sinners were discussed, this verse has pointed to one of the best and the most effective ways of awareness, i.e. the careful study of the history of the former generations.

It says:

"Does it not then guide such men (to call to mind) how many of the generations We did destroy before them…"

Those men are the same people who were involved with the painful punishment of Allah and, now, these people haunt their ruined houses.

In their different travels to Yemen, travelers may see the houses of the people of 'Ad, and in their way to Syria they confront the ruined dwellings

of the people of Thamud, and in their voyage to Palestine they pass by the houses of the people of Lot, which had been destroyed upside down. They usually see their trucks but they do not take an example.

Yes, in this regard the verse says:

"…amid whose dwellings they (today) walk about? Verily there are signs in this for those (endowed) with understanding."

The matter of 'taking an example' from the history of the former nations is one of the subjects on which the Qur'an and Islamic traditions have emphasized very much.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that the Messenger of Allah said:

"The most neglectful people is he who takes no admonition from the change of the world."

And he does not contemplate on the turns of days and nights.

The next verse, indeed, is an answer to the question which may arise here, asking why Allah does not arrange the same thing upon this group of sinners that He arranged for the former sinners.

The holy Qur'an says:

"And had there not been a decree that went forth before from your Lord and an appointed term, (their punishment) would necessarily have come."

This 'Divine decree' is an indication to the command of creation containing the freedom of human kind.

Since, if any guilty person immediately and without any respite be punished, faith and righteous deeds may become nearly constrained and compelling, and they will often be done because of fear and terror of immediate punishment. Thus, in this case, it will not be a means of development, which is the main goal.

Moreover, if it were judged that all wrong doers should be punished at once, there would remain no one alive on the earth.[10]

Therefore, there should be a respite for the sinners until they might be aware and pave the path of improvement, and all the travelers of the path of truth also find an opportunity for self-improvement.

Notes

1. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 412
2. At-Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-Razi
3. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 22
4. Surah Suad, No. 38, verse 82
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
6. The current Surah, verse14
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 152
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 6, p. 184
9. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 436
10. Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 61

Section 8: The Times of the Daily Prayers

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 130

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَي مَا َقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ ِ َمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ ءَانَآئِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَي

130. "So be patient with what they say, and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and during (some) hours of the night also glorify (Him) and during parts of the day, that you may be pleased."

This verse, similar to verse No. 45 from Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, which says:

"And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer…",

invites the Prophet (S) to patience and praise of the Lord. Of course, the addressee of the verse is apparently the Prophet (S), but it is evident that the content of the verse is for all.

Allah has enjoined the Prophet (S) to patience in nineteen occurrences of the Qur'an.

According to some traditions and the viewpoint of some commentators, this verse adapts to the statutory prayers; and the objective meaning of 'during parts of the day', mentioned in the verse, is the daily supererogatory prayers.

However, the verse, addressing the Prophet of Islam (S), implies: now that these wrong doers are not to be punished at once, he should be patient with them.

The verse says:

"So be patient with what they say…"

So, in order to strengthen the spiritual conditions of the Prophet (S), and to comfort him, He commands him to glorify his Lord through prayers.

The verse continues saying:

"…and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and during (some) hours of the night also glorify (Him) and during parts of the day, that you may be pleased."

This commandment was for the sake that the Prophet's heart might not be worried because of their hurtful sayings. No doubt, this glorification and praising was a struggle against polytheism and idolatry, accompanied with patience before the ill-speaking and evil words of the polytheists.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 131

وَلاَ تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَي مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجاً مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَي

131. "And do not stretch your eyes to that thing which We have given parties of them to enjoy; (this is) the splendour of the life of the world that We may try them in it; and the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting."

There has been narrated a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Whoever longs for the people's help, his sorrow will prolong and his rage will remain."[1]

The Qur'an considers the wealth of the world as goodness, virtue, and adornment and counts the enjoyment of it lawful and permissible, yet it condemns intensive love unto it, because the life in this world is like a bud or a blossom, which has a short lifetime and, with a faint wind or breeze easily vanishes.

In this verse the Prophet (S) has been ordered some instructions which are completive to the statement of patience that was mentioned in the previous verse. These instructions, in fact, are for all Muslims.

At first, it says:

"And do not stretch your eyes to that thing which We have given parties of them to enjoy…"

Yes, these worldly bounties are temporary and unstable. They are blossoms of the life of this world, the blossoms which soon open, and fade soon and fall on the ground. They remain stable only for a few days.

The verse says:

"…(this is) the splendour of the life of the world…"

In the meantime, all these are for that they may be tried by them. The verse continues saying:

"…that We may try them in it…"

And, however, whatever Allah has provided as sustenance for you is better and is more lasting. The verse says:

"…and the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting."

Allah has bestowed on you kinds of bounties and graces, including: Faith and Islam, the Qur'an and Divine Signs, lawful and pure provisions, and finally, the permanent blessings of the Hereafter. These provisions are stable and everlasting.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 132

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلاَةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لاَ نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقاً نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَي

132. "And bid your family to pray and be constant therein. We do not ask you sustenance, (but) We give you sustenance, and the (good) end is for (the people of) righteousness."

A considerable number of Islamic traditions indicate that after the revelation of this verse, for several months the Prophet (S) used to knock at the door of the house of Ali (as) and Fatimah (as), and loudly said: /as-salat/ (prayer), then he began reciting the verse of sanctification.[2] [3],

Whenever the life of the Messenger of Allah (S) was straitened, he recited the above-mentioned verse and then he told his family members to establish prayer.[4]

The Qur'anic phrase /'istabir 'alayha/ (be constant therein) means that you should be severe and constant both on keeping prayer and bidding others to it.

In order to comfort the Prophet (S), and to strengthen his heart, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And bid your family to pray and be constant therein..."

The reason of it is that, this very prayer, for you and your household, is the source of sanctification, serenity of the heart (mind), strengthening of the spirit, and duration of the remembrance of Allah.

Then, the verse adds:

"…We do not ask you sustenance, (but) We give you sustenance…"

This prayer does not increase anything to the greatness of Allah, but it is a great capital for the development of men and a high training class for them.

And, at the end of the verse, it continues saying:

"…and the (good) end is for (the people of) righteousness."

That which that will remain with Allah (s.w.t.) and its end is useful, constructive, and enlivening is piety and righteousness. Finally, the pious people are victorious and impious ones are condemned to failure.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 133

وَقَالُوا لَوْلاَ يَأْتِينَا بِاَيَةٍ مِن رَّبِّـهِ أَوَ لَمْ تَأْتِهِم بَيِّـنَةُ مَا فِي الصحُفِ الأُولَي

133. "And they said: 'Why does he not bring us a sign (a miracle) from his Lord?' Has there not come to them a clear proof of what is in the former Books?"

This verse points to one of the pretexts of the disbelievers. They said why the Prophet (S) did not bring a miracle for them as they themselves liked.

It says:

"And they said: 'Why does he not bring us a sign (a miracle) from his Lord?'…"

Then, the holy Qur'an immediately answers this question, implying that whether the clear news of the former nations, which had been mentioned in the former Divine Books, did not come to them that they repeatedly did pretext and asked for bringing miracles, and after when they saw those miracles they continued their disbelief and rejections for which the grievous punishment of Allah encompassed them.

Do they not know that if they pave the same way they will confront the same fate?

The verse continues saying:

"…Has there not come to them a clear proof of what is in the former Books?"

Yes, there is the quality of the stubborn and proud persons that they put aside the clear existing proofs and miracles of the Qur'an and obstinately expect another miracle.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 134

وَلَوْ أَنَّآ أَهْلَكْنَاهُم بِعَذَابٍ مِن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلاَ أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولاً فَنَتَّبِعَ ءَايَاتِكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن نَذِلَّ وَنَخْزَي

134. "And had We destroyed them with a punishment before him (the Messenger), they would certainly have said: 'Our Lord! Why did You not send us a Messenger so that we might have followed Your Signs before that we were humiliated and disgraced."

The mission of the prophets to prophethood has been for completing the argument so that people may not pretext their own unawareness. Therefore, these seekers of pretexts are not some people who seek the Truth.

They are ceaselessly in the thought of seeking a new pretext, even in a state that, as Allah says:

"And had We destroyed them with a punishment before him (the Messenger), they would certainly have said: 'Our Lord! Why did You not send us a Messenger so that we might have followed Your Signs before that we were humiliated and disgraced."

But, now that this great holy Prophet (S) with this magnificent Book, the Qur'an, has come to them, every day they express a new vain statement and, in order to escape from the truth, they bring a new excuse.

Surah Ta Ha - Verse 135

قُلْ كُلٌّ مُتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَصْحَابُ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدَي

135. "Say: 'Each one (of us) is awaiting, therefore do await, then soon you will come to know who is the follower of the straight and even way, and who is guided'."

The holy Prophet (S) is a missionary of warning. Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an implies that he should tell them that all of you and us are waiting. We are awaiting for the promises of Allah about you, and you are awaiting that difficulties and calamities surround us.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Each one (of us) is awaiting…"

Now that the case is like that, the verse continues saying :

"…therefore do await…"

"…Then soon you will come to know who is the follower of the straight and even way, and who is guided'."

And, by this decisive and expressive sentence, he concludes his speaking here with these obstinate and disbelieving seekers of pretexts.

In short, since this Surah was sent down in Mecca, at the time when the Prophet of Islam (S) and the Muslims were under a harsh pressure from the side of the enemies of Islam, at the end of this Surah through some revelations Allah comforts them. Sometimes He says that the wealth and properties of the disbelievers, which are the fleeting capitals of this world and are given to them for their trial, should not attract your eyes to themselves.

Sometimes He orders them to establishing prayer and being constant in order to strengthen their spiritual power in front of the mass of their enemies.

And, at last, He gives glad tidings to the Muslims that if this group do not believe, such people will have an evil and dark fate, for which hey must wait.

However, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /'ashab-us-sirat-is-sawiy/ mentioned in the holy verse is the immaculate Imams and the purpose of the phrase /man-ihtada/ is their helpers.[5]

Imam Kazim (as), upon the commentary of the last part of the verse, said:

"The straight path is the path of our Qa'im (as), and the guided one is he who may be guided to obeying him."[6]

O' Lord! Set us among the guided ones and the people of the straight path!

O Lord! Do bestow on us that power and bravery that we be afraid of neither the mass of enemies nor do we fear from the dreadful events and difficulties!

O Lord! Make separate the spirit of obstinacy and seeking pretexts from us and bestow on us the succour of accepting the Truth.

Notes

1. The Commentary of Al-Mizan
2. Surah Al-Ahzah, No. 33, verse 33
3. The Commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, and the Commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan & Dur-rul-Manthur
4. Commentary of Al-Mizan
5. The Commentary of Furqan
6. Ta'wil-ul-'Ayat, p. 317, & Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 3, pp. 50, 51

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 10

From Surah al-Anbiya' (21) to Surah al-Hajj (22)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 8
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 9
What is a 'Commentary'? 10
The Current Commentary 11
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 12
The Problems in Translating 12
Translators Note 13
Editor's Note 14
Notes 16
Acknowledgment 17
Notes 17
References 18
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 18
English Translations of Qur'an 18
Supporting Technical References 19
Phraseological and Philological Sources 19
A Presentation to Muslims 21
Notes 22
Surah Al-'Anbiya', Chapter 21 23
(Revealed in Mecca) 23
No. 21 (112 verses in 7 sections) 23
The Content of the Surah 23
The Virtue of Recitation of the Surah 23
Notes 23
Section 1: Judgment Getting Nigh 24
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 1 24
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 2 - 4 24
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 5 25
Explanations 26
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 6 - 7 26
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 8 27
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 9 29
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 10 29
Explanations 30
Notes 30
Section 2: Everything in the universe belongs only to Allah 31
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 11 - 13 31
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 14 - 15 31
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 16 - 17 32
Explanations 33
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 18 33
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 19 - 20 34
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 22 34
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 23 35
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 24 36
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 25 37
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 26 - 27 37

Explanations 38
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 28 38
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 29 39
Notes 40
Section 3: Every Soul Shall Taste Death 41
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 30 41
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 31 43
Explanations 43
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 32 43
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 33 44
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 34 - 35 45
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 36 46
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 37 - 38 46
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 39 47
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 40 48
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 41 48
Notes 49
Section 4: The Divine Mercy 50
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 42 - 43 50
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 44 50
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 45 51
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 46 52
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 47 52
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 48 - 49 53
Explanations 53
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 50 54
Notes 54
Section 5: Abraham Argues Against Idolatry 55
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 51 - 52 55
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 53 - 54 55
A Few Traditions Upon Misguidance 56
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 55 - 56 57
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 57 57
A Few Traditions Concerning Pictures 59
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 58 - 60 59
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 61 - 63 60
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 64 - 65 61
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 66 - 68 62
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 69 - 70 63
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 71 64
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 72 65
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 73 65
Explanations 67
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 74 - 75 67
Notes 68
Section 6: The Apostle of Allah Delivered and Blessed 70
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 76 - 77 70
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 78 - 79 70

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 80 - 81 71
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 82 72
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 83 - 84 73
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 85 - 86 76
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 87 - 88 78
Some Explanations About the Life of Yunus 79
1. Yunus was busy preaching among his people 79
2. What Darkness Means Here? 79
3. What Was Yunus' Leaving the Better? 79
4. An Instructive Lesson 79
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 89 - 90 81
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 91 82
A Few Points About This Verse 82
Notes 83
Section 7: The Righteous Shall Inherit the Earth 85
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 92 - 94 85
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 95 - 97 87
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 98 - 100 90
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 101 91
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 102 92
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 103 92
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 104 93
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 105 94
A Few Traditions Upon Expecting For Mahdi 97
The First Philosophy, Personal Self-Improvement 100
The Second Philosophy, Social Succours 101
The Third Philosophy: True Expectants May Not Assume the Corruption of The Environment 101
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 106 103
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 107 103
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 108 - 109 104
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 110 - 111 107
Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 112 108
Notes 109
Surah Al-Hajj, Chapter 22 111
The Feature of Surah Al-Hajj 111
Surah Al-Hajj 111
(The Pilgrimage), ... 111
No. 22 111
The Contents of the Surah 111
The Virtue of Reciting the Surah 111
Notes 112
Section 1: The Awful Day of Judgment 113
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 1 - 2 113
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 3 113
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 4 114
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 5 114
Resurrection in the World of Fetus and Plants 115

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 6 - 7 116
Man's Seven Stages of Life 118
Resurrection of the Body 119
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 8 - 10 120
A Few Traditions 122
Notes 122
Section 2: The Weak in Faith 123
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 11 - 13 123
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 14 126
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 15 - 16 126
The Occasion of Revelation 127
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 17 128
Some Points 129
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 18 131
Some Points 132
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 19 133
The Occasion of Revelation 133
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 20 - 21 134
Some Traditions 134
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 22 135
Notes 135
Section 3: Believers Shall Be Rewarded 137
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 23 137
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 24 137
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 25 138
Some Points 139
Notes 141
Section 4: Pilgrimage to the Sacred House 143
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 26 143
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 27 144
The application of the Qur'anic phrase 145
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 28 145
Hajj as a Divine Worship 147
1- What Does 'the Appointed Days' Mean? 147
2- Mentioning Allah in Muna 148
3- The Philosophy and the Profound Secrets of Hajj 148
a. The Ethical Dimension of Hajj 149
b. The Political Dimension of Hajj 149
c. The Cultural Dimension of Hajj 150
d. The Economic Dimension of Hajj 151
e. The Meat of Sacrifices in Our Time 152
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 29 153
Why Has the Ka'bah Been Called: Bayt-ul-'Atiq (the Ancient House)? 155
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 30 156
What is False Speech? 157
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 31 158
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 32 160

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 33 161
Notes 162
Section 5: Regard for the Sign of Allah 164
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 34 164
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 35 165
Some Traditions 166
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 36 167
Spend Generously When Glorifying Symbols of Allah 167
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 37 169
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 38 170
Notes 171
Section 6: Fight in Self-Defence Permitted 172
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 39 172
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 40 173
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 41 175
A Few Points 176
1. The Philosophy of the Holy War 176
2. Whom Has Allah Promised to Help? 177
3. The Righteous, the Humble, and the Helpers of Allah 178
4. What is 'Right' and What is 'Wrong'? 178
5. The Importance of Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong 179
6. Does Enjoining Right Negate Freedom? 180
7. Does Enjoining Right Produce Anarchy? 180
Enjoining Right is Separate from Rudeness 181
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 42 - 44 182
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 45 183
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 46 184
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 47 186
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 48 187
Notes 187
Section 7: The Enticement by Satan 189
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 49 - 51 189
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 52 190
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 53 191
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 54 191
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 55 192
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 56 - 57 192
Notes 193
Section 8: Reward For Those Who Migrate in Allah's Cause 194
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 58 - 59 194
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 60 195
The Occasion of Revelation 195
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 61 - 62 196
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 63 - 64 198
Notes 200
Section 9: Allah's Will Alone is Done 201
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 65 - 66 201
Some Points 202

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 67 203
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 68 - 69 204
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 70 205
Some Traditions Concerning Knowledge 205
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 71 205
A Few Traditions Concerning Polytheism 206
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 72 207
Notes 208
Section 10: The Muslims, Chosen By Allah Himself 209
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 73 - 74 209
How far and different are those weak objects of worship and this Almighty Wise Creator! 209
A Point Concerning Theology 210
Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 75 - 76 211
The Occasion of Revelation 211
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 77 213
Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 78 213
Some Traditions About Holy Struggle 215
Supplication 218
Notes 218

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا َ هَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Al-'Anbiya', Chapter 21

(Revealed in Mecca)

No. 21 (112 verses in 7 sections)

The Content of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. This Surah, as its name indicates, is the Surah of prophets, since there are mentioned the names of sixteen Divine prophets in it, some of whom are referred to by several main points of their qualities, while some others are only hinted to here.

These divine prophets are: Moses, Aaron, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Solomon, Job, Idris (Inoch), Zul-Kifl, Yunus (Jonah), Zachariah, and Yahya (John).

2. The specialties of the Meccan Suras, the contents of which are upon the religious doctrine, and Origin and End in particular, are quitely seen in this Surah.

3. Another part of the Surah speaks about the triumph of 'right' upon 'wrong', Monotheism upon polytheism, and the troops of justice over the forces of 'Iblis.

The attractive matter is that this Surah has begun with some intensive warnings unto those mischievous people who are neglectful and unaware about the final reckoning and record, and its concluding part has also been completed with some other warnings in the same field.

The Virtue of Recitation of the Surah

A tradition has been narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-'Anbiya' Allah will take his reckoning easy, (and also On the Day of Hereafter He will not reckon his deeds strictly), and every prophet whose name has been mentioned in the Qur'an will greet him and shake his hands."[1]

It is clear that recitation is usually a preliminary stage for contemplation, and contemplation is a preliminary step for Faith and practice.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary, P. 412

Section 1: Judgment Getting Nigh

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ معْرِضُونَ

1. "Nigh unto mankind has drawn (the day) of their Reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness."

This Surah begins with a vigorous warning unto all people, a shaking and an awakening warning.

It says:

"Nigh unto mankind has drawn (the day) of their Reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness."

The people's daily action shows that this negligence has occupied their whole entity; else, how is it possible that a mortal believes in the fact that Reckoning is nigh, a reckoning done by an extraordinary exact Performer, and yet he takes all the matters perfunctorily so that he pollutes himself with any kind of vice?

The purpose of "nigh is the day of Reckoning and Hereafter' is that the remaining life of this world, in comparison with that which has passed, is a little time, therefore, Resurrection is nigh. It is a relative nearness, in particular that once the Prophet (S), pointing to his two fingers in one hand, said that his auspicious advent and the Day of Hereafter were like those two fingers.

There arises a question here that, regarding to the fact that 'Negligence' is 'to be inattentive to something', and /'i'rad/ (to turn away) is an action which is done with attention, then how is it that 'negligence' and 'turning away' are usually referred to beside each other?

The answer to this question is that negligence is of two kinds:

1) The negligence that the person may become aware by a warning.

2) The negligence which is a preparation for desertion. Such a negligent person does not desire to be aware; like a person who pretends to be asleep and does not open his eyes even when he is called.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 2 - 4

مَا يَأْتِيهِم مِن ذِكْرٍ مِن رَّبِّـهِم مُحْدَثٍ إِلاَّ اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

لاَهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسَروا النَّجْوَي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا هَلْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّـثْلُكُـمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السِّـحْرَ وَأَنتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ

قَالَ رَبِّـي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَالاَرْضِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

2. "Never comes to them a new reminder from their Lord, but they listen to it while they play."

3. "Their hearts trifling, and those who did wrong (to themselves) counsel together in secret (saying): 'Is this (man) other than a human being like yourselves? Will you then go to sorcery while you see (it)?"

4. "He said: 'My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heaven and the earth, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing'."

One of the signs of their turning back from the Truth has been pointed out in this verse, where it says:

"Never comes to them a new reminder from their Lord, but they listen to it while they play."

But, if, even for one time, they take it earnestly, the path of their life may change at the same time.

Again, for a more emphasis, the verse implies that their hearts have sunk in vanity and ignorance.

The verse says:

"Their hearts trifling…"

The reason of it is that they have outwardly taken all the earnest matters in play and joke; therefore, it is natural that such people will never find the way of felicity and prosperity.

Then, the Qur'an points to a part of their satanic plans, when the verse continues saying:

"…and those who did wrong (to themselves) counsel together in secret (saying): 'Is this (man) other than a human being like yourselves?…"

They say to each other now that he is not more than an ordinary human being, then these extraordinary actions that he does and the penetration of his speech cannot be any thing but sorcery. If so, do you go toward sorcery?

The verse says:

"…Will you then go to sorcery while you see (it)?'"

In their saying, the disbelievers emphasized on two things: the first was that the Prophet (S) was a human being, and the second matter was the accusation of sorcery. Besides them, they accused him with some other false things, too, which will be rejected by the Qur'an through later verses.

The Qur'an, from the tongue of the holy Prophet (S), answers them in a general form, as follows:

"He said: 'My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heaven and the earth, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing'."

They should not imagine that their hidden plans and their concealed words are not revealed to Allah. It is not such, but

"He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing".

Thus, He knows everything and is aware of all deeds. Not only He hears the words but also He is aware of the thoughts which pass through the minds and the decisions that are concealed in the hearts.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 5

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلاَمٍ بَلِ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَآ أُرْسِلَ الاَوَّلُونَ

5. "'Nay!', They say: '(These are) medleys of dreams! Nay! he has forged it! Nay! he is a poet! Let him then bring us a sign like the ones that were sent unto (the prophets) of old."

After referring to two pretexts of the opponents, the Qur'an points to four other subjects they used to apply. They said that whatever Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (S), had brought were not revelations, but they were some confused dreams that he considered as truth and reality.

The verse says:

"'Nay!', They say: '(These are) medleys of dreams!…"

Sometimes they change their saying and say that he is a liar who has forged these words to Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…Nay! He has forged it!…"

And sometimes they say that he is a poet, and those verses are some poetic imaginations made by him.

The verse says:

"…Nay! He is a poet!…"

And, finally they say that, passing by these things, if he is true, and he is a messenger of the Lord, he should bring a miracle for them as the former messengers had been sent with miracles.

The verse says:

"…Let him then bring us a sign like the ones that were sent unto (the prophets) of old."

Considering these contradictory attributions they attributed to the Prophet (S) it shows as a good reason that these people were not the seekers of the Truth. Their aim was to find pretexts in order to send the rival out of the scene in any rate and any form they could.

Explanations

The Arabic term /'adqa/ is the plural form of /diq/ in the sense of 'a group', or 'a collection'; and the Qur'anic word /'ahlam/ is the plural form of /hulm/ with the sense of 'dream'. Thus, the holy phrase /'adqau 'ahlam/ means 'a selection of confused dreams'.

Those disbelievers wanted the Prophet of Islam (S) to bring some miracles like those of Moses (as) and Isaac (as), but their real aim was to seek pretexts, because taking the sort of miracle depends on Divine Wisdom, not on the desires of people.

The enemy is not satisfied with striking one accusation. He attacks from every side by means of frequent accusations, and this is one of the main styles of the enemy.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 6 - 7

مَآ ءَامَنَتْ قَبْلَهُم مِن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَآ أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

6. "There did not believe before them any town which We destroyed; will these (now) believe?"

7. "And We sent none before you, but men to whom We made revelation. So ask the people of 'Thikr'(the Reminder) if you do not know."

Former verses denoted that the disbelievers said:

"Is this man other than a human being like yourselves?"

In this verse, the Qur'an implies that not only this Prophet (S) but also the former Divine prophets were human beings to whom the revelation was made. And this, the descent of revelation to them, does not contrast with being a human being.

In the previous holy verses, there were mentioned six contradictory pretexts that the opponents of Islam sought unto the holy Prophet (S). Here by this verse, the Qur'an answers them.

At first, it refers to the miracles that they demanded as their pretext, and that the people of the towns, whom were destroyed before them, sought for such miracles, but when their suggestions were fulfilled they did not believe.

The verse says:

"There did not believe before them any town which We destroyed; will these (now) believe?"

In the meantime, the holy verse warns the disbelievers that if their demand concerning the miracles are responded and they do not believe, their destruction is certain.

Then the Qur'an answers their first rejection about the Prophet (S) as a human being. It implies that all the Messengers sent before the Prophet of Islam (S) were totally human beings and from the sort of humankind.

The verse says:

"And We sent none before you, but men to whom We made revelation.…"

This is a clear historical reality with which everybody is acquainted. Therefore, if you do not know it, ask other people.

The verse continues saying:

"…So ask the people of the Reminder if you do not know."

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 8

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَداً لاَّ يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

8. "And We did not make them (such) bodies not eating the food, nor were they immortals."

Among the secrets of the succession of a leader is that he always lives among the people, and in the affairs of his natural life he is generally like them so that, by seeing him and by means of his conduct, people might be practically constructed properly.

From the point of material and human necessities, prophets are never different from other people. Therefore, no one should expect prophets, reformers and teachers to be some angels; because it is an undue expectation. That is why this verse gives a further explanation about the Divine prophets that they are of humankind.

It says:

"And We did not make them (such) bodies not eating the food, nor were they immortals."

The leader of a group should be from among those people themselves, with the same instincts, temperaments, emotions, feelings, necessities, and interests, so that he can feel their pains and problems.

It is in that case that, by being inspired with his instructions, he can choose the best way of healing them; and become an example and a good pattern for other human beings, too.

However, asking from the people of thikr (the reminder) and referring to the experts is a principle approved by wisdom. Some commentators have

said that the purpose of 'the people of the Reminder' is the scholars of the Jews and Christians.

But there are a great number of traditions, narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), which indicate 'the people of the Reminder' are the Immaculate Imams (as). One of them is the following tradition.

It is narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as) who, in answer to the question about the abovementioned verse, said:

"We are the people of Reminder, and we must be asked."[1]

Another tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) denotes, that, on the commentary of this verse, he said:

"The Qur'an is the Reminder, and the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet (S) are the people of the Reminder, and they must be asked."[2]

Some other traditions indicate that /ðikr/ (reminder) is the Prophet himself (S), and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) are 'the people of the Reminder'.[3]

There have been recorded many other traditions which, on the whole, announce the same meaning. In numerous books and commentaries compiled by the scholars of the Sunnites, too, we are faced with some traditions containing the same concepts, including in twelve well-known commentary books of the Sunnites.[4]

There has been narrated from Ibn-'Abbas who, upon the commentary of this verse, said:

"It (means) Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Husayn (as). They are the people of the Reminder, and intellect, and statement."

Again, a holy tradition has been recorded in the book of Tha'labi, narrated from Jabir-i-Ju'fi, who says:

As soon as this verse was revealed, Ali (as) said: 'We are the people of the Reminder'."[5]

This is not the first time that, in the traditions concerning the commentary of the verses of the Qur'an, we confront the statement of some definite extensions which never confine the vast concept of a verse.

As it was mentioned before, the Qur'anic term /ðikr/ is applies for any cognizance, remembrance, and information. Thus the phrase /ahl-uð-ðikr/ (the people of the Reminder) envelops all the aware and the informed persons in all fields.

But, in view of the fact that the Qur'an is the clear example of remembrance, knowledge and awareness, it has been called /ðikr/ (Reminder). The Prophet (S) himself is also the manifest extension of /ðikr/, and such are the Immaculate Imams (as) who are his Ahl-ul-Bayt and the heirs of his knowledge.

But, the acceptance of this matter does not oppose the generality of the concept of the verse and the occasion of its revelation which concerns the scholars of 'the People of the Book'.

It is for this reason that the scholars of theology, and the experts of Muslim law, attach to this verse when speaking about /'ijtihad/ (discretion), and that those who are unaware of the religious ordinances should follow a religious jurist.

However, the abovementioned holy verse expressed a fundamental Islamic principle, which covers all the material and spiritual subjects of the

life. It warns all the Muslims that they ought to ask the people of Reminder whatever they do not know, and they should not interfere in the fields they are not acquainted with.

Thus, not only in all religious laws and Islamic affairs the subject of specialism is formally accepted, but also it is emphasized on in all fields. It is such that all Muslims, in all ages, should have some expert and aware persons available in all subjects of life so that, if there are some people who do not know how to solve their own problems, they can easily refer to them.

It is also necessary to mention that we must refer to those experts and clear-sighted persons whose truthfulness and veracity have been proved and who are rather matchless. Do we ever refer to a physician who is specialist in his branch but we are not certain of his truthfulness and uprightness in that job which the physician has?

That is why, in connection with jurisprudence and following a religious leader, the epithet of 'justice' has been put beside both /'ijtihad/ (discretion) and /'a'lamiyyat/ (being the most learned). In other words, the imitated authority should not only be both knowledgeable and aware of the Islamic affairs, but he must also be pious and God-fearing.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 9

ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَاهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنجَيْنَاهُمْ وَمَن نَّشَآءُ وَأَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِينَ

9. "Then We fulfilled the promise unto them. So We delivered them and whomever We would, and We destroyed the extravagant ones."

Then, as a threat and a warning, the Qur'an says to the obstinate and pertinacious rejecters of the Truth that Allah had promised the prophets to relieve them from the grips of their enemies and make their enemies' plans futile.

It says:

"Then We fulfilled the promise unto them. So We delivered them and whomever We would, and We destroyed the extravagant ones."

Yes, alike the Allah's way of treatment, which was choosing prophets, the leaders of humankind, from among human beings, this was also the Allah's way of treatment that He would support His Messengers against the plots of their opponents.

And, if their frequent advices did not affect on them, He would clear out the surface of the ground from the dirt of their beings.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 10

لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَاباً فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

10. "We have sent down to you a Book wherein is your Reminder. Have you then no sense?"

This holy verse, in an expressive short sentence, again answers the majority of the objections of the polytheists.

It says:

"We have sent down to you a Book wherein is your Reminder. Have you then no sense?"

Whosoever studies the verses of this Holy Book, which are the means of reminding, awakening the hearts, exciting the thoughts, and purifying the

societies, he knows well that this Book, the Qur'an, is a clear and eternal miracle.

The signs of inimitability of the Qur'an are seen in it from different points of view: from the view point of extraordinary attraction, from the point of contents, such as ordinances and religious laws, beliefs, theology and so on. With the existence of this clear miracle, do they expect the appearance of another miracle?

The quality of being awakening of the Qur'an is not a compulsory aspect; but it is conditioned to man's will and that he opens the windows of his heart to it.

Explanations

The Qur'anic phrase /õikrukum/ means either 'the means of remembrance', or 'the cause of honour and dignity of your name'. In philology, the Arabic term /õikr/ has been meant into 'fame', and 'nobility and honour', too.[6]

Concerning the commentary of this holy verse, Imam Kazim (as) said:

"The purpose of the phrase 'wherein is your Reminder' is that: it is mentioned in the Book that the obedience, after the Prophet (S), should be paid to Imam; that is, your nobility and honour lies in the obedience from (immaculate) Imam after the Prophet."

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3 pp. 55 and 56
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. The objective meaning of 'twelve well-known commentary books of the Sunnites' is: the commentary books of 'Abu-Yusuf, Ibn-i-Hajar, Mughatil-ibn-i-Sulayman, Waki'-ibn-i-Jarrah, Yusuf-ibn-i-Musa, Ghutadah, Harbut-Ta'i, Suday, Mujahid, Mughatil-ibn-i-Hayyan, Abu-Salih, Muhammad-ibn-Musal-Shirazi.
5. 'Ihghagh-ul-Haghgh, vol. 3, p. 482
6. Ghamus-ul-Muhit

Section 2: Everything in the universe belongs only to Allah

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 11 - 13

وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَأَنشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْماً ءَاخَرِينَ

فَلَمَّآ أَحَسوا بَأْسَنَآ إِذَا هُم مِّنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ

لاَ تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَي مَآ أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسَاكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْأَلُونَ

11. "And how many a town We utterly destroyed (the people of) which were iniquitous, and We raised up after them another people."

12. "So when they felt (the coming of) Our punishment, behold, they (tried to) flee from it."

13. "(But it was said to them) 'Do not fly (now) and come back unto what you were made to lead easy lives in and unto your dwellings, haply you will be questioned."

Following the explanations about the obstinate polytheists and disbelievers, which were mentioned before, here, the Holy Qur'an refers to the fate of them in comparison with the end of former nations.

At first, it says:

"And how many a town We utterly destroyed (the people of) which were iniquitous, and We raised up after them another people."

Then, the Qur'an states their circumstance when the Divine chastisement is cast over their towns and they are helpless but confronting the punishment of Allah.

The Qur'an says:

"So when they felt (the coming of) Our punishment, behold, they (tried to) flee from it."

They tried to flee from the punishment of Allah exactly like a defeated army who see the blades of the swords of the enemy above their heads and they escape every side.

But, as a blame and scorn, they are told not to fly and return to the comfortable life they have made, to the beautiful splendid castles and ornamented dwellings they have produced, perhaps the beggars and the deprive come there and ask them something.

The verse says:

"(But it was said to them) 'Do not fly (now) and come back unto what you were made to lead easy lives in and unto your dwellings, haply you will be questioned."

This phrase may be a hint to the fact that when they were living in the world and were leading their easy comfortable lives, they used to send back the beggars who come to their dwellings and asked for some helps. Now, such people are told to return and repeat the same hateful and disgraceful actions they used to do. This is, in fact, a kind of derision and blame upon them.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 14 - 15

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

فَمَا زَالَتْ تِلْكَ دَعْوَاهُمْ حَتَّي جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيداً خَامِدِينَ

14. "They said: 'Oh woe to us! Verily we were unjust'."

15. "And this their crying ceased not till We made them as reaped corn, extinct."

In any case they may be, they will be informed and aware when they reach this period. Whatever they used to take joke formerly, they will see in the most serious form and reality in front of them, so that they shout and, as the verse says:

"They said: 'Oh woe to us! Verily we were unjust'."

But this compulsory wakefulness, which comes into being for everybody when they face with the earnest scenes of punishment, is worthless and is of no avail in changing their fate.

Therefore, the Qur'an adds through this verse:

"And this their crying ceased not till We made them as reaped corn, extinct."

However, the Qur'anic term /hasid/, in the sense of 'what is reaped', means 'harvested'.

The Arabic word /xamid/ means 'extinguished'.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 16 - 17

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لاَعِبِينَ

لَوْ أَرَدْنَآ أَن نَتَّخِذَ لَهواً لاَتَّخَذْنَاهُ مِن لَدُنَّآ إِن كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

16. "And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in play."

17. "Had We intended that We should take amusement we would certainly have taken it from before Ourselves, if We would do (such a thing)."

In view of the fact that the former verses illustrated this fact that the faithless transgressors did not consider any good for their creation except feasting and drinking, or, in fact, they imagined that the world might be aimless.

Here, in order to nullify this doctrine and to prove the existence of a worthy aim for the Divine creation of the whole world in general, and humankind in particular, the Qur'an says:

"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in play."

This vast land, this high sky, and these various and lively creatures that are found in them, show that there have been an important purpose for their creation. Yes, they have been created, on one side, to denote that there is a great Creator for them and they are simply some signs to His Grandeur.

And, on the other side, they have been created to work as a reason for Resurrection. Otherwise, all these things were meaningless to be created for a few days of life.

Now that it is certain that the creation of the world is not aimless, this fact is also certain that the aim of this creation has not been a hobby for Allah, because it will be an irrational hobby. The verse says:

"Had We intended that We should take amusement we would certainly have take it form before Ourselves, if We would do (such a thing)."

This holy verse conveys two facts. The first is that it is impossible that the aim of Allah to be a hobby and play. Then it implies, on the supposition that His aim were a play, the play should be apt to His Essence. It should be something out of the world of abstractions, not out of the world of the limited matter.

Explanations

In Arabic, the word /lau/ is used for an action which is impossible to be done, and since, here, /lahw/ (play) is impossible to be attributed to Allah, this word has been applied in this verse.

In these verses, at first Allah says:

"…We did not… in play",

and then He continues saying:

"Had We intended that We should take amusement…"

but He does not say:

"…that We should take play".

Thus, it makes clear the meaning that the essence of 'amusement' and 'play' is the same.

It has been recorded in Al-Mizan, the commentary, that a regulated action which is done by some imaginary aims, like some childish deeds, is called 'play', but as soon as these imaginary actions become earnest, so that they hinder man from the main affairs and change into the form of hobbies, they are called 'amusement' both of which are futile and meaningless when concerning Allah.

This subject has frequently emphasized on in the Qur'an that the world of existence is not a play, but has an aim. If, granting an impossibility, Allah intended an aim of play, He would not pay to creation of man; He might not put all those prophets into trouble; He would not bid and forbid anything; and He would not assign any reward and retribution for human beings.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 18

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَي الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ

18. "Nay! But We hurl the truth against falsehood so that it breaks out its brain, and behold, falsehood vanishes away. And yours will be woe for that which you ascribe (unto Allah)."

The, Arabic term /qaðafa/ means 'to throw from a long distance swiftly and powerfully'; and the Qur'anic term /damq/ is used for 'a stroke upon head so that its effect reaches the brain'.

The Qur'anic word /wayl/ here means 'punishment and destruction'. It is usually used for an instance which deserves 'destruction'.[1]

However, in order to futile the imaginations of those who consider the world aimless, or as a means of pleasure, the Qur'an, with a decisive tone, implies that this world is a collection of 'Truth' and 'reality'. It is not so that whose fundamental be based upon falsehood.

The verse says:

"Nay! But We hurl the truth against falsehood so that it breaks out its brain, and behold, falsehood vanishes away.…"

And, at the end of the abovementioned verse, the Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"…And yours will be woe for that which you ascribe (unto Allah)."

This concluding phrase means that Allah (s.w.t.) always sets some clear reasonable proofs and manifest miracles from Him against the vain imaginations of such people, in order that these illusions can be wretched in the view of the wise men and possessors of intellect.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 19 - 20

وَلَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِندَهُ لاَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلاَ يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ

يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لاَ يَفْتُرُونَ

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا ءَالِهَةً مِنَ الاَرْضِ هُمْ يُنشِرُونَ

19. "And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth; and those who are with Him are not proud to worship Him, nor do they get weary."

20. "They glorify (Him) by night and day; they never intermit."

21. "Or have they taken gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)?"

In figurative ownerships, the further man becomes near to Allah he fears less and, therefore, he sometimes commits a vice, too. But, in real ownerships, the nearer a man becomes to Allah, he worships Him more.

The words through the former verses were about this fact that the world of existence has a designed progressive aim for human beings.

Now, in view of the fact that there may appear this thought that: how Allah is in need of Faith and worship, then the Qur'an pays to answer this question, when it says:

"And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth; and those who are with Him are not proud to worship Him, nor do they get weary."

"They glorify (Him) by night and day; they never intermit."

In this case, how does He need to your obedience and your worship? Thus, His order of Faith, worship, righteous deed, and servitude upon you all are for your own interest and your benefit.

Next to the statement of negation of vanity and aimlessness of the world of existence expressed in former verses, in the following holy verse, the Qur'an refers to the Unity of the Worshipped Who is the Deviser of this World.

It says:

"Or have they taken gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)?"

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 22

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَآ ءَالِهَةٌ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

22. "If there were, in the heavens and the earth, (other) gods besides Allah, they would both certainly go to ruin. So glorified is Allah, the Lord of the 'Arsh, from what they attribute (unto Him)."

This verse is one of the clear reasons of the negation of any god as well as polytheists' gods. It says:

"If there were, in the heavens and the earth, (other) gods besides Allah, they would both certainly go to ruin.…"

In that case, the regulation of the world would disturb.

The verse continues saying:

"…So glorified is Allah, the Lord of the 'Arsh, from what they attribute (unto Him)."

These undue attributes unto Him, these false idols and imaginary gods are naught but some illusions, and the Essence of Allah, the Pure, therefore may not be polluted by these undue attributes.

The proof which has been mentioned in the verse under discussion upon Unity and negation of any god, besides being simple and clear, is one of the exact philosophical proofs in this field. The Islamic scholars call it 'a mutual hindering proof'.

This reasoning, briefly speaking, says that no doubt there is a single regularity dominated over this world. This harmony existed in the laws and order of the creation denotes that they have originated from a single source, because if the sources were different and the wills were various, this harmony and agreement would never exist; since each of them might have a separate requirement and would nullify the effect of the other, and, consequently, the world might finally go to destruction.

Husham-ibn-Hakam once asked Imam Sadiq (as) what the reason of Unity of Allah was. Imam (as) said:

"The continuation of devices (of the world) and the completion of creation, is the reason of His Unity…"[2]

This verse is an answer to those who used to believe in a separate god for every thing and every affair.

That is why the Qur'an says:

"The Lord of the 'Arsh"

which means Allah is the Lord of the whole world of existence.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 23

لاَ يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا َفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ

23. "He (Allah) will not be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned (for their deeds)."

After proving the Unity of the Controller of this world by the reasoning which was explained in the previous verse, the Qur'an in this verse implies that He has arranged the world so wisely that there is no room for any objection and talk upon it. Yes, no one can object Him and question Him, while others are not like that, because there may be many objections and questions upon their deeds.

The verse says:

"He (Allah) will not be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned (for their deeds)."

Questions are two kinds. One sort of question is that a person desires to know the main point and the real aim of an affair. This kind of question is permissible, even about the deeds of Allah, too.

The other kind of question is the protesting question. This sort of question implies that a performed action has been wrong or improper. It is

evident that this kind of question, concerning the deeds of Allah, the Wise, is meaningless. But there is room for asking this kind of question, if necessary, about the deeds of others.

This fact has also been mentioned that the Qur'an has repeatedly pointed out that men are responsible for their own actions, including the verse which says:

"So, by your Lord, We would most certainly question them all."[3]

And, in another verse of the Qur'an, we recite:

"And stop them, (for) they shall be questioned."[4]

However, on the Day of Judgment, people will surely be questioned about their thoughts and intentions, youth and lifetime, incomes and expenditures, choosing the leader, and obedience from dignitaries.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 24

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ هَذَا ذِكْرُ مَن مَعِيَ وَذِكْرُ مَن قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ فَهُم مُعْرِضُونَ

24. "Or have they taken other gods besides Him? Say: 'Bring your proof! This (Qur'an) is the remembrance of those who are with me, and the remembrance of those before me. But most of them do not know the truth, so they are averse'."

This verse contains two more reasons upon the negation of polytheism. These couple of evidences together with the previous evidence makes three proofs in that field.

At first it says:

"Or have they taken other gods besides Him? Say: 'Bring your proof!…"

This statement indicates that if you relinquish the previous reasoning upon the fact that the regulation of the world of existence is the evidence to Unity, there is at least, no reason to prove the deity of these gods. How then does a wise person accept something without any reason?

Then, the Qur'an points to the last reason here, where from the tongue of the Prophet (S) it implies that this is not only the word of mine and that of my companions', who talk upon Unity, but this is also the saying of the prophets before me.

The verse says:

"…This (Qur'an) is the remembrance of those who are with me, and the remembrance of those before me.…"

This reasoning is the same reasoning that the scholars of theology bring under the title of 'the consensus of prophets upon the Oneness of Allah'.

And, since sometimes it happens that the abundance of idle worshippers causes some persons not to accept Unity, the Qur'an continues as follows:

"…But most of them do not know the truth, so they are averse'."

The opposition of the majority of the ignorant people against the truth in many societies has always been an evidence taken by some unaware ones for their turning away. And, the Holy Qur'an has seriously condemned reliance on majority.

However, Ali (as) said:

"By the descent of the Qur'an to the Prophet (S), the knowledge of the former prophets, and the knowledge of Allah's saints, and the knowledge of whatever will happen until the Resurrection have been given to him (S)."

Then Imam Ali (as) recited the above-mentioned verse:

"This (Qur'an) is the remembrance of those who are with me, and the remembrance of those before me."

Therefore, the Qur'an continues the knowledge of whatever had been before and whatever exists now and whatever will be in future.[5]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 25

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنَاْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

25. "And We sent no Messenger before you but We revealed unto him that 'Verily there is no god but I; so worship Me (alone)'."

Allah has manifestly announced in the Holy Qur'an that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, is the seal of the Prophets, where it says:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the last of the prophets;…"[6]

Yet, it has referred to this meaning in different ways and by different occasions. Among them is the fact that more than 30 times the Qur'anic phrase: /min qablika/ (before you) has been repeated in various occurrences of the Qur'an while the phrase /min ba'dika/ (after you) has not occurred in the Qur'an even for one time.

And, since it is possible that some unaware persons say that they have prophets such as Isac (as) who has invited them to numerous gods, the Qur'an, with full explicitness, in this verse says:

"And We sent no Messenger before you but We revealed unto him that 'Verily there is no god but I; so worship Me (alone)'."

And, thus, it proves that, among Divine prophets, neither Isaac (as) nor other than him has invited people to polytheism at all, and these kinds of attributions are some slanders.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 26 - 27

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمنُ وَلَداً سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مكْرَمُونَ

لاَ يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُم بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ

26. "And they say: 'The Beneficent (Allah) has taken to Him a son.' Glory be to Him! Nay, but (angels) are (His) honoured servants."

27. "They do not precede Him in speech, and (only) according to His commandment do they act."

This idea that the angels are Allah's children, not only had been accepted by some polytheists, but also had been current among the Jews and the Christians.[7]

And since in the previous verse the words were about the Divine prophets and nullification of any kind of polytheism, this verse is upon the negation of angels as the children of Allah.

The explanation is that: many of the polytheists of Arab believed in angels as the children of Allah. The Qur'an has condemned this baseless superstitious belief and proves its falsehood through various reasonings.

At first, it says:

"And they say: 'The Beneficent (Allah) has taken to Him a son.'…"

If they mean that this son is a 'true son', the requisite of it is to be body; and if the son is adoption, which had been common amongst Arabs, that is also a proof for feebleness and inability.

But attributing a son to an Essence that is Eternal, non-body, and free from want from any point of view, is absolutely meaningless.

That is why, in order to negate Him from any blemish and defect, immediately after that, the verse continues saying:

"…Glory be to Him!…"

Then in some different statements it explains the qualities of the angels, which, on the whole, are some clear evidences for the lack of child attributed to Allah:

They are the servants of Allah:

"…(angels) are (His) honoured servants."

They are some honoured and worthy servants:

"…(His) honoured servants."

They are not like the disobedient servants who serve their master only under the pressure of that master. For the sake of the sincerity of these divine angels in their servitude, Allah has honoured them, too, and He has increased His bounties for them.

The verse says:

"…Nay, but (angels) are (His) honoured servants."

They are sincerely so polite and obedient unto Allah that they never precede Him in speech; and also from the point of action, they always act only according to His commandment. The verse says:

"They do not precede Him in speech, and (only) according to His commandment do they act."

Are these qualities the epithets of children or the qualities of the servants?

Explanations

1. Applying the Qur'anic term /mukramun/ (honoured) for the angels is for the reason that, firstly, they are the servants of Allah (s.w.t.), and, secondly, this servitude is accompanied with sincerity.

2. The holy word Beneficent used for Allah (s.w.t.) had been an acquainted name among the polytheists. The existing conditions, which dominate a person, affect on his beliefs and judgments. Since human beings have physical bodies and find themselves some needy ones, they also think of Allah, Who is free from corporeality and neediness, in the same way.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 28

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يَشْفَعُونَ إِلاَّ لِمَنِ ارْتَضَي وَهُم مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ

28. "He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they (angels) do not intercede except for him with whom He is well-pleased and they tremble in awe of Him."

The Arabic term /xauf/ usually means ‘to be afraid of sin’, while the Qur’anic word /xašyat/ means: ‘to be afraid of the Greatness of Allah’, a fear which is always accompanied with glorification and veneration.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the objective meaning of the Qur’anic phrase / man-ir-tada/, mentioned in the verse, is the one whose religion is consented (by Allah), although he is sinful. The reason of it is that a believer, for the repentance he shows after committing a sin, will be divinely favoured and will be interceded.

However, the holy verse, pointing to the Awareness of Allah unto the situation of the angels, implies that He knows both the present and the future deeds of the angels so that He (s.w.t.) is aware of their life in this world and the world to come. He is cognizant of the status of before their existence and after it.

The verse says:

“He knows what is before them and what is behind them…”

Certainly the angels do know that Allah (s.w.t.) has such an encompassing knowledge about them. This very cognition causes that they neither say anything before Him nor do they disobey His commandments.

Then the noble verse continues implying that, undoubtedly, the angels, who are the worthy and honourable servants of Allah, will intercede for those who are in need of it, but this fact must be noted that they will never intercede save for the one whom they know Allah is well-pleased of and He has given the permission of his intercession.

The verse says:

“…and they (angels) do not intercede except for him with whom He is well-pleased…”

The abovementioned sentence is an answer to those people who used to say that they worshipped the angels in order that they intercede for them with Allah. The Qur’an says that the angels cannot do anything from their own accord. Therefore, whatever you desire you may ask Him directly, even for the leave of intercession.

It is also for this very cognition that they fear only Him.

The verse says:

“…and they tremble in awe of Him.”

They do not fear that they have done a sin, but they are in awe of shortcoming in worship before Him and of leaving the better.

Surah Al-’Anbiya’ - Verse 29

وَمَن يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَٰهٌ مِن دُونِهِ فَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

29. “And whoever of them (the angels) says: ‘Verily I am a god besides Him, such a one We recompense with Hell, even so do We recompense the unjust.”

This holy verse may be of the kind to be said that others understand it. It means that people should know that whoever, even the honourable angels (the consideration of which is impossible concerning them), call others to polytheism, they must wait for the retribution of Hell.

It is quite evident, of course, that the divine angels, with those outstanding special qualifications, and the high rank of pure servitude they

have, will never claim deity. But if, supposedly, one of them says he is a god besides Allah (s.w.t.), He will recompense him with Hell.

The verse says:

"And whoever of them (the angels) says: 'Verily I am a god besides Him, such a one We recompense with Hell, even so do We recompense the unjust."

The probable claim of divinity, in fact, is a clear example of injustice to oneself and to the society and it is involved in the general law.

Notes

1. Lisan-ul-'Arab
2. Tauhid-i-Saduq, p. 250
3. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 92
4. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 24
5. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-i-Furat
6. Surah Al-'Ahzab, No. 33, verse 40
7. The Commentary of Furqan

Section 3: Every Soul Shall Taste Death

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 30

أَوَ لَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقاً فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

30. "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder, and We made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe?"

Here, there have been stated a few signs of Allah in the system of the world of existence and its regular order, which is an emphasis on the previous discussions regarding the reasons of Monotheism.

At first it says:

"Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder, and We made from water every living thing?…"

Then, the Qur'an questions that, after having seemed these clear signs, do they not believe yet?

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Will they not then believe?"

There are some different ideas offered by the commentators about the purpose of the words /ratq/ (joining) and /fatq/ (separation) mentioned in the above verse, which concern the heavens and the earth. Among them, three interpretations seem more appropriate, and, as it will be explained, all of them may be found in the concept of the verse.[1]

1. Attaching the heaven to the earth refers to the beginning of the creation.

According to the attitudes of some scientists, this world had been in the form of a single great unit of blazing vapor that, as a result of some different inward explosions and movements, it gradually divided into parts and the stars and planets, including the solar system and the earth, came to being, and still the world is expanding.

2. The purpose of this attachment is the monotony of the substances of the world so that all of them were gathered in one another and formed apparently a single matter. But, as the time passed, the substances separated from each other, and some new compounds appeared.

Thus many kinds of plants, animals, and other creatures existed in the heaven and the earth. These beings are in a condition that each of them has a special system and some effects and properties particular to itself. Every one of them is a sign for the infinite Knowledge, Glory and Might of Allah.[2]

3. The objective of the attachment of the heaven is that at first it did not rain, and the attachment of the earth is that at that time there grew no plant at all over it, but Allah started both of them. He caused to rain from heaven and He caused plants to grow on the earth.

There are numerous traditions narrated from the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) which refer to the latter meaning while some of them point to the first commentary.[3]

No doubt that the latter commentary is something which is visible by the eyes that how it rains and that the lands cleave asunder and plants grow. This is completely adapted with the sentence saying:

"Do not those who disbelieve see",

and it also harmonizes with the sentence declaring:

"…and We made from water every living thing".

But the first and the second above commentaries do not contradict the vast meaning of these sentences, because the word 'see' sometimes is in the sense of 'knowledge'. True is that this knowledge and cognizance is not available for all.

It is only the scientists who can give others some information about the past of the earth and the heaven and their attachment and, then, their separation, which may lead human beings throughout the whole centuries of the life.

It is for this reason that it has such a deep comprehensive content that can be applied by all groups of people in all times. And that is why we think there is no obstacle that this verse can embrace the whole three commentaries, each of which is correct and perfect in its own place.

We have frequently reiterated that the usage of one word, with more than one meaning, not only is not wrong but sometimes is also the reason for a high eloquence. So, some Islamic traditions indicate that the Qur'an has different layers of meaning. This may refer to this concept, too.

Concerning the Qur'anic meaningful idea, cited at the end of the abovementioned holy verse, indicating that all living things have been created from water, here we introduce two known commentaries:

1. The life of all living things, irrespective of plants and animals, depends on water; this very water that originates the descent of rain from the heaven.

Another matter is that the Arabic word /ma'/, mentioned here, refers to the drop of seed from which the living creatures are usually produced.

It is interesting that the scientists of today believe that the first gemma of life has been found in the depth of the seas, and that is why they think that the life has begun by means of water. And when we see that the Qur'an considers the creation of man out of /tin/ (mud), it is because this substance is a mixture of water and dust.

This subject is also noteworthy that the main part of man's body, as well as that of many animals, mostly consists of water, (about seventy percent).

Some have objected that the creation of the angels and jinn both is certainly not from water, though they are some living creatures. The answer of it is clear, because the purpose in this context is those living creatures which are tangible for us.

An Islamic tradition indicates that once a person asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the taste of water.

The Imam (as) at first said:

"Ask with the aim that you learn something, not with the purpose of seeking pretext."

Then he (as) added:

"The taste of water is the taste of life. Allah, Be He Glorified, has said: 'And We made from water every living thing'."[4]

In the summer, in particular, when a person, tolerating continued thirst, reaches some wholesome water in that hot weather, after drinking the first gulps of it, he feels that a spirit of life is blown into his body. The Imam, in fact intends to clarify the relation and dependence of life and water by this beautiful expression.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 31

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجاً سُبُلاً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

31. "And We set in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them (people), and We set therein broad high ways that they may be guided."

This holy verse has pointed to another part of the signs of Monotheism as well as the great bounties of Allah.

It says:

"And We set in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them (people)…"

As a shield, mountains have embraced the earth, and this causes that they prevent the intensive shakes of the earth on a large scale which appear as a result of the pressure of the inner gases of it.

Moreover, this very arrangement of the mountains usually decreases the movements of the crust of the earth against the low tides and high tides of the moon to the least.

On the other hand, if there were not any mountains, the surface of the earth would not have any peace because of the hurricanes, as it is seen in the dry hot deserts as well as salt deserts. Mountains are good places for preserving snow to store water in them for the summer.

They are often good and appropriate environments for the growth of plants and animals. The kinds of stone, which are used in buildings, are taken from mountains, and there are cited some other advantages counted among the benefits of the mountains.

Then the Qur'an points to another bounty, which is also one of the signs of the greatness of Allah, when it says:

"…and We set therein broad high ways that they may be guided."

Verily if these valleys and gaps were not, the great series of mountains existing on the crust of the earth, would so separate the different regions of the land that the joint of them was utterly broken, and this shows that all these phenomena have been arranged according to a proper program.

Explanations

1. The Arabic word /rawasi/ is the plural form of /rasiyah/ which means: 'fixed' and its objective in this holy verse is the 'steadfast mountains'. The term /fijaj/ is also called to the wide roads between two mountains, while the narrow roads between mountains, in Arabic, are often named: /šu'ab/.[5]

2. How can it be believed that Allah, the Wise, has set the mountains in order to prevent from numerous earthquakes, but He has not assigned the patient and powerful leaders to prevent mankind from slipping in events.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 32

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَآءَ سَقْفاً مَّحْفُوظاً وَهُمْ عَنْ ءَايَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

32. "And We set up the heaven as a roof well-protected, and yet they turn away from its signs."

In view of the fact that the mere stillness of the earth is not enough for the comfort of human's life and he must also be secured from the upward, in this verse the Qur'an adds:

"And We set up the heaven as a roof well-protected, and yet they turn away from its signs."

The objective of 'the heaven' here is the atmosphere which has encompassed the earth from every side. According to the researches of the concerning scientists, the depth of this atmosphere reaches to hundreds kilometers.

This depth of weather, which apparently is tender, is composed of oxygen and different gases, is so firm and strong that no disturbing thing that comes toward it can destroy it. It protects the earth against aerolites which continuously fall down, day and night, and are more dangerous than any bullet.

Moreover, the harmful parts of the sunrays are taken by it. Thus, it guards the earth against the fatal outside rays that comes towards it from cosmos.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 33

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

33. "And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit."

how do you say soul mate in farsi? This verse has referred to the creation of the night and the day as well as the creation of the sun and moon.

It says:

"And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit."

The commentators of the Qur'an have different opinions upon the interpretation of the sentence:

"They float, each in an orbit".

But what agrees with the conclusive researches of scholars is the fact that: the purpose of the motion of the sun, in the abovementioned verse, is either a circular motion rotating around itself, or the motion it has in the whole solar system.

It is also necessary to be mentioned that the Arabic word /kull/ (each), mentioned in the verse, may refer to the moon, the sun, and also the stars all together. This meaning is understood from the word /layl/ (the night) recited in this holy verse.

Some great commentators have also said that mentioning 'the night', 'the day', 'the sun', and 'the moon' in the verse may refer to the four seasons. For, the night, which is in fact the conical shadow of the earth, has also an orbit for itself.

If a person from outside of the atmosphere looks from a distance at it, he will see that this conical dark shadow is constantly running around the earth.

He will also see that the light of the sun, which shines upon the earth and produces the day, is like a cylinder that ceaselessly rotates around this glob. Therefore, the day and the night each has a line and place for itself.

Some others have said that the objective of the motion of the sun, here, is the motion created by our feeling, for, to the consideration of the observers of the earth, it seems that the sun and the moon both are moving.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 34 - 35

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِيْن مّـِتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ

كُل نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

34. "And We appointed immortality for no man before you. Then if you die, can they be immortal?"

35. "Every soul shall taste of death; and We try you with evil and good for a testing, and unto Us you shall be returned."

Through a part of the previous verses, we were acquainted with the fact that some polytheists objected about the Prophet (S) as why he was a human being. This verse refers to some other objections that they had. Sometimes they said that the fame that the Prophet (S), or as they called him 'that poet,' had got was not lasting and everything would be vanished by his death.[6]

Sometimes they thought such that since this man believes that he is the seal of the prophets, he should not die in order to protect his religion, and, therefore, his death in future will be the reason for the falseness of his claim.

The Qur'an answers them for their false imagination in a short sentence. It says:

"And We appointed immortality for no man before you.…"

This is the invariable law of creation that no one has an eternal life. Besides that, do these people, who are happy for your death just now, live immortally after your death?

The verse says:

"…Then if you die, can they be immortal?"

The duration of a religion, creed, and a sacred law does not need the ever permanence of its bringer. His successors may continue his line after him.

Then the Holy Qur'an states the general law of death for all souls, with no exception, as follows:

"Every soul shall taste of death;…"

After mentioning the general law of death, there will arise this question that: What is the aim of this ephemeral life, and what is the use of it?

In the continuation of this holy verse, the Qur'an states as follows:

"…and We try you with evil and good for a testing, and unto Us you shall be returned."

The Divine trial is harder when it is done by means of afflictions.

Your main abode has not been assigned in this world. It is somewhere else. You have come here only for taking examinations, and after the end of the examination and gaining the necessary development, you will go to your main abode, the world of the Hereafter.

By the way, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), concerning the Qur'anic sentence, saying:

"…and We try you with evil and good for a testing…",
said:
"Health and self-sufficiency is 'good', and sickness and poverty is 'evil' and both of them are for trial."[7]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 36

وَإِذَا رَءَاكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلاَّ هُزُواً أَهَذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَهُم بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

36. "And when those who disbelieve see you, they take you not but for mockery; (saying each other): 'Is this the one who makes mention of your gods?' And (while) they, at the mention of the Beneficent (Allah), are themselves disbelievers."

Blasphemy takes man to a point that he mocks the strong logic and the statement of the Immaculate Imam, while he is not ready to show the least disrespect to the piece of wood and stone, the idol.

Its example is that if there is a malodorous corpse in a pool, when it rains its putrefaction and fetid smell will increase. Blasphemy is like a corpse of carrion in man's soul. He brings forth some more obstinacy by seeing the Prophet (S).

So, in this verse, the Qur'an encounters the disbelievers in connection with their evil situation against the Prophet of Islam (S) which shows their wrong doctrine in some fundamental subjects. At first, the holy verse implies that they disrespectfully point to the Prophet (S) and say whether this man is the same who mentions their gods and idols maliciously.

The verse says:

"And when those who disbelieve see you, they take you not but for mockery; (saying each other): 'Is this the one who makes mention of your gods?' And (while) they, at the mention of the Beneficent (Allah), are themselves disbelievers."

It is surprising that when a person frankly says something disrespectfully about these idols, which are made of wood or stone, and tells the truth by saying that these are some soulless, senseless, and worthless beings, they wonder; but when a person denies the Merciful, Beneficent Allah, Whose impacts of favour have covered all the world, and everything is a reason for His Greatness and Mercy, it will not be wonderful for them.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 37 - 38

خُلِقَ الإِنسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأُوْرِيكُمْ ءَايَاتِي فَلاَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

37. "(The nature of mortals is such that as if) man has been created of haste; soon (enough) I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten (them) on."

38. "And they (the disbelievers) say: When will this promise (be fulfilled) if you are truthful?"

This holy verse points to one of the heinous and irrelevant deeds of those immethodical libertines.

It says:

"(The nature of mortals is such that as if) man has been created of haste;…"

There are various opinions cited upon this sentence, but it is clear that the purpose of 'man' here is the whole mankind, (those untrained people, of course, who are out of the realm of the leadership of the Divine leaders).

As it is also testified by the later holy verses, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /'ajal/, here, is 'haste' and 'precipitance'.

The Qur'an in another occurrence says:

"…and man is ever hasty."[8]

In fact, the sense of 'Man has been created of haste' is an emphasis, which means 'man' is so hasty that as if he has been created out of precipitancy and his whole entity has been made up out of it. And, truly, a great deal of common people are such.

They are hasty both in good deeds and evil acts, so that even when they are told if they pollute themselves with blasphemy and sin the Divine punishment will seize them, they say why it does not come soon.

Then, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…soon (enough) I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten (them) on."

The Qur'anic phrase 'My signs' here may refer to the verses and signs of punishment, calamities and chastisement by means of which the Prophet (S) threatened them. Yet, those empty-minded people repeatedly asked for the afflictions that the Prophet (S) had promised them.

The Qur'an, in this verse, says that they should not haste, because they will visit them soon.

This holy phrase may also refer to those miracles which prove the veracity of the Prophet (S). In this case, the phrase means that if you wait, sufficient miracles will be shown to you.

These two commentaries do not contradict each other, because the disbelievers were hasty for both of them, and, finally, Allah gave both of them to them. Yet, the first commentary seems closer to the concept of the verse and is more appropriate to the later verses.

Again, in the next verse, the Qur'an points to one of their requests that they hastily asked.

It says:

"And they (the disbelievers) say: When will this promise (be fulfilled) if you are truthful?"

They were impatiently waiting for the event of the Hereafter to happen. They were unaware of the fact that, as soon as the Hereafter happens their full helplessness and misfortune begin. But what can be done; the hasty man makes also haste even for his own misfortune and destruction.

The application of the phrase 'if you are truthful', which is in the plural form, though the Prophet of Islam (S) was the addressee, is for the reason that they addressed his true followers in this expression, too. They wanted to say that the absence of the Hereafter was the reason for that they all were liars.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 39

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لاَ يَكُفونَ عَن وُجُوهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَلاَ عَن ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

39. "If those who disbelieve but know the time when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces and from their backs, nor shall they be helped, (they would not hasten about the Resurrection)."

This holy verse points to one of the examples of the man's haste. The disbelievers repeatedly asked the Prophet (S) what time was the time of the promised Hereafter when they would be punished for their disbelief; and thereby they caused his annoyance.

Allah soothes the holy Prophet (S) by implying that if they were aware of the day when the Fire will encompass them not only from their fronts but also from their backs and they will have no way to run away, they would not haste to reach it. Yes, the haste of man is for his ignorance, since if he knew he would not make haste.

The abovementioned holy verse says:

"If those who disbelieve but know the time when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces and from their backs, nor shall they be helped, (they would not hasten about the Resurrection)."

The application of the words: 'faces' and 'backs' in the above holy verse refers to the fact that the Hell Fire is not in a state that it comes towards them from one side, but, on the contrary, it covers both the front parts of them and their backs, so that it seems they are in the middle of the Fire and they are buried in it.

And the Qur'anic sentence /walahum yunsarun/ (nor shall they be helped) refers to the fact that these idols, which they imagine they will intercede them and help them, can do nothing for them.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 40

بَلْ تَأْتِيهِم بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

40. "Nay, but it (the Fire) will come to them all of a sudden and make them confounded, so they will neither be able to repel it, nor will they be respited."

Through this holy verse, the noble Qur'an implies that this Divine punishment and the blazing Fire will come to them suddenly so that it will make them astonished.

The above holy verse says:

"Nay, but it (the Fire) will come to them all of a sudden and make them confounded…"

They will be so confused that they will have no power to repel their punishment. And, even if they ask for respite, in spite of their haste until then, they will not be respited.

The verse continues saying:

"…so they will neither be able to repel it, nor will they be respited."

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 41

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

41. "And indeed Messengers before you were (also) mocked, but that whereat they mocked encompassed those who scoffed at them."

In previous verses, it was said that the idolaters and disbelievers used to mock the holy Prophet of Islam (S). Then, in order to soothe the Prophet (S) and console him, this verse implies that it is not only you whom have been mocked at, but those prophets who were before you were also ridiculed.

The verse says:

"And indeed Messengers before you were (also) mocked,…"

Yet, finally, whatever of the Divine punishments they used to mock at visited them.

The verse continues saying:

"…but that whereat they mocked encompassed those who scoffed at them."

Therefore, O Prophet Muhammad! Do not be grievous, and these kinds of acts, which are ignorantly done, should not have the least impact on your soul, or influence in your strong will.

Notes

1. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi
2. Al-Mizan
3. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-i-Burhan, below the holy verse
5. Taken from Ghamus
6. Surah At-Tur, n. 52, verse 30
7. Mustadrak, vol. 2, p. 149
8. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 11

Section 4: The Divine Mercy

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 42 - 43

قُلْ مَن يَكْلَؤُكُم بِالَّلَيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ بَلْ هُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِم مُعْرِضُونَ

أَمْ لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُم مِن دُونِنَا لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلاَ هُم مِنَّا يُصْحَبُونَ

42. "Say: 'Who guards you by night and by day from (the Wrath of) the Beneficent (Allah)?' But (yet) they turn away from the remembrance of their Lord!"

43. "Or have they gods that can protect them from (the wrath of) Us? They are not able to help themselves nor can they be defended from Us."

The common powers cannot protect man from different gangers. Man is always in need of the protection and support of Allah, because protection is always of the dignity of Allah's Lordship. Thus, this holy verse implies that not only in the Hereafter no one defends you against the Divine punishment, but also in this world the case is the same.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Who guards you by night and by day from (the Wrath of) the Beneficent (Allah)?'…"

In fact, if the Lord of heaven had not set the atmosphere of the earth as a protective canopy for it, only this would have been sufficient that you had to be the target of the aerolites to be bombarded every day and night.

It is noteworthy that instead of the application of Allah, the holy word 'the Beneficent' has been used in this verse. This means that: you should see how much sin you have committed that you have caused the wrath of Allah, Who is the source of general Mercy and favour.

Then, it adds:

"…But (yet) they turn away from the remembrance of their Lord!"

They hearken neither to the advices of His prophets, nor do they let Allah's remembrance and His blessings move their hearts, nor may they use their contemplation in this way.

Again, as a question, the holy Qur'an asks: to what have these unjust and sinful disbelievers pleased themselves against the Divine retributions? Do they have gods who can defend them before the Wrath of Allah?

The verse says:

"Or have they gods that can protect them from (the wrath of) Us?…"

These artificial gods of theirs cannot even assist themselves nor can they defend themselves, nor does Allah help them by means of His Grace and spiritual power.

The verse continues saying:

"…They are not able to help themselves nor can they be defended from Us."

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 44

بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هَؤُلآءِ وءَابَآءَهُمْ حَتَّي طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ أَفَلاَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الاَرْضَ نَنقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَآ أَفَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

44. "Yet, We gave provision to these and their fathers until life grew long for them. Do they not see that We come to the land, curtailing it of its sides? Are they then the victors?"

This holy verse has pointed to one of the main reasons of the disobedience of the faithless persons.

It says:

"Yet, We gave provision to these and their fathers until life grew long for them.…"

But, this long life and abundant divine blessings did not move the sense of gratitude in them so that they might humble themselves in worshipping Him. On the contrary, those divine blessings caused their pride and disobedience.

Do they not see that this present world and its gifts are not durable? Do they not see that Allah is constantly watching the land, decreasing its sides and its inhabitants?

The verse says:

"…Do they not see that We come to the land, curtailing it of its sides?…"

They see that tribes and nations come and go one after another, in a manner that even the scientists, dignitaries, and scholars, who are the managers of the affairs of the earth, have passed away. Then, who is the victor, they or the Lord?

The verse continues:

"…Are they then the victors?"

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 45

قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أُنذِرُكُم بِالْوَحْيِ وَلاَ يَسْمَعُ الصم الدعَآءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ

45. "Say: 'Verily I warn you only by the revelation. But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned."

The glad tidings and warnings of Divine prophets are not based upon personal decisions, imaginations, conjectures and guesses, but they are wholly based on the Divine conclusive revelation.

Therefore, this fact is reiterated in this holy verse that the mission of the Prophet (S) is that he should warn people by the way of Divine revelation.

So, addressing the holy Prophet (S), it says:

"Say: 'Verily I warn you only by the revelation.…"

And, he should tell them he does not say anything from his own self, but if it does not affect their hard hearts, it is not so surprising, nor does it show any reason for the deficiency of the revelation. On the contrary, it is for the fact that when the warnings are said to the deaf persons, they cannot hear.

The verse says:

"…But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned."

They should have receptive ears so that they hearken the word of the Truth. The ears, which the different curtains of sin, negligence, and pride have covered, have utterly lost the ability of hearing the Truth.

Thus, those who do not utilize the divine blessings properly, it seems that they are deprived of those blessings.

That is, if a person has apparently ears, but he does not hear the Truth, or he has eyes but he does not see the facts, he is indeed deaf and blind. Sometimes, of course, preaching is not effective because individuals are not eligible and receptive; then it does not mean that there is a deficiency in the preacher or his style of preaching.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 46

وَلَئِن مَسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يَاوَيْلَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

46. "And if a blast of the punishment of your Lord touches them, they will certainly say: 'Woe unto us! Verily we were unjust'."

Those persons who do not awake by the warnings of divine prophets, will surely be awaken by the lashes of the divine punishment. By confronting the simplest danger, all claiming vanities will be destroyed and the sleeping consciences will awaken.

This holy verse implies that these unaware proud people, who never obeyed the Lord when they were in peace and affluence, will be so worried when a little punishment of Allah visit them that they cry that they were all oppressors and unjust.

The verse says:

"And if a blast of the punishment of your Lord touches them, they will certainly say: 'Woe unto us! Verily we were unjust'."

But, what is the use of it? This constrained awareness does not benefit them.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 47

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلاَ تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئاً وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَي بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ

47. "And We shall set up the balances of justice for the Resurrection Day, so that no soul shall be wronged anything; and even if there be (an action) of the weight of grain of mustard seed, We will bring it (into account), and sufficient are We (as) reckoners."

This holy verse points to the exact and just Reckoning of the deeds on the Resurrection Day and the precise and just rewards of the Hereafter in order that the disbelievers and oppressors know, supposing that the punishment of this world does not encompass them, the chastisement of the Hereafter is certain, and their entire acts will minutely be reckoned.

Allah in this holy verse says:

"And We shall set up the balances of justice for the Resurrection Day…"

The available Islamic traditions indicate that: on the Day of Resurrection, the scales of measurement of people's deeds are prophets (as), the immaculate Imams (as), the sanctified, and the righteous, those near stationed ones in whose record of deeds there is not any dark spot.

These scales of measurement are so exact and regular that as if they are the justice themselves. For this reason, the verse immediately adds:

"…so that no soul shall be wronged anything;…"

That is, neither the divine reward of the righteous will be decreased, nor the proper punishment of the wrong doers will be added to.

This negation of 'being wronged anything' does not mean that there will not be exactness in Reckoning. On the contrary, the case will be such that the least thing of good and bad will be made present and will be measured.

The verse continues saying:

"…and even if there be (an action) of the weight of grain of mustard seed, We will bring it (into account)…"

And, this alone is enough that Allah is the Reckoner of the deeds of the servants.

The verse says:

"…and sufficient are We (as) reckoners."

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 48 - 49

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَآءً وَذِكْراً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَهُم مِنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ

48. "And indeed We gave Moses and Aaron the Furqan (criterion) and a Light and a Reminder for the pious ones."

49. "Those who fear their Lord in secret and they dread the Hour (of doom)."

There are stated some outstanding points from the lives of the Divine prophets in this verse and the following ones, which have fairly been enlightened with some very instructive matters.

These explanations make more clear the former discussions upon the messengership of the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and his conflicts with the opponents, and with regard to the existing principals among them.

In this verse, it says:

"And indeed We gave Moses and Aaron the Furqan (criterion) and a Light and a Reminder for the pious ones."

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an introduces the pious as having the following qualities.

The verse says:

"Those who fear their Lord in secret and they dread the Hour (of doom)."

Their dread is a kind of fear which is mingled with respect and glorification to Him.

The pious, in fact, are very interested in the Resurrection Day, since it is the center of the reward and grace of Allah; yet they are also frightened of the Reckoning of the Lord.

Explanations

In the same way that the general aims of the prophets are alike, the qualities of their celestial Books are also similar. Those qualities which are mentioned in this verse about the Torah, in some other verses of the Qur'an, they are attributed to the Qur'an, too, such as Furqan, Light, Reminder.

1- Furqan:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan upon His servant…"[1]

The Qur'anic term /furqan/ is called to a news by which 'right' is recognized from 'wrong'.

2- Light: /diya'/

"…and We have sent down to you a manifest Light."[2]

3. The Reminder: /ŏikr/.

"Verily, We (Ourself) have sent down the Reminder (the Qur'an)…"[3]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 50

وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مبَارَكٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنتُمْ لَهُ مُنكِرُونَ

50. "And this (Qur'an) is a blessed Reminder which We have sent down (for you). Do you then deny it?"

Concerning the Qur'an being blessed, this is sufficient to know that, in a short time, it could turn many people from polytheism to monotheism, from separation to unity, from ignorance to knowledge, from wildness to civilization, from captivity to government, from pollution to purity, from poverty to richness, from stagnation to running, from superstitions to facts, from disgrace to glory, from following the false deities to obeying the immaculate Imams (as), from negligence to awareness, from instability to steadfastness, from disbelief to faith, and, concisely speaking, from darkness to light.

So, this holy verse, comparing the Qur'an with the former Divine Books, says:

"And this (Qur'an) is a blessed Reminder which We have sent down (for you). Do you then deny it?"

Is there any room for denying such a Book? The reasons of its legitimacy are found inside of it, its luminosity is manifest, and its followers are prosperous and victorious.

The sanctity of the Qur'an is not deniable; and it is such a Book that its admonitions can attract millions of hearts to itself in different ages and out of many generations.

To be acquainted with the extent that how much this holy Qur'an is the cause of cognizance and source of beatitude, it is quite enough to consider the status of the residents of Arabian Peninsula before the descent of the Qur'an when they used to live in wildness, ignorance, poverty, misery and dispersion, comparing with their status after the descent of the Qur'an, when they became an example for others.

We may also consider the condition of some nations before and after that the Qur'an went among them.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 1
2. Surah An-Nisa, No. 4, verse 174
3. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 9

Section 5: Abraham Argues Against Idolatry

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 51 - 52

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَآ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَالِمِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُم لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ

51. "And indeed We gave Abraham aforetime his rectitude, and We were aware of him (his eligibilities)."

52. "When he said to his father and his people: 'What are these images (and lifeless statues) unto which you pay devotion'?"

In previous verses, the statement was upon the Torah and the Qur'an, while in this verse Allah declares that sending prophets and celestial Books is not a new matter, and before this, at the time of Abraham (as), there was the subject of the invitation of the deluded people unto the Truth.

Therefore, an important part of the life and struggles of Abraham against idolaters is referred to here.

At first, it says:

"And indeed We gave Abraham aforetime his rectitude, and We were aware of him (his eligibilities)."

Then, the Holy Qur'an points to one of the most important programs of Abraham (as) where it says:

"When he said to his father and his people: 'What are these images (and lifeless statues) unto which you pay devotion'?"

The word 'father', mentioned in this verse, refers to his uncle, 'Azar, because in Arabic language sometimes 'uncle' is called /'ab/ (father), too.[1]

This Abraham's saying, in fact, is a clear reasoning for making the act of idol worshipping futile, because what is seen of the idols is their mere statues and the rest is delusion and conjecture.

The Arabic word /tamail/ is the plural form of /temal/ with the sense of 'lifeless statues'.

Having a glance over the history of idolatry shows that making statues had initially been used as a remembrance of the dignitary, which, later, became gradually as a state of sanctity and turned in the form of worship.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 53 - 54

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَآ ءَابَآءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنتُمْ أَنْتُم وءَابَآؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُبِينٍ

53. "They said: 'We found our fathers worshipping them'."

54. "He said: 'Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error'."

Abraham told the idol worshippers that both they and their fathers had been in manifest fault, while they had no proper answer to that clear logic. They only repelled the proposition from themselves and related it to their ancestors.

Thus they said that they had seen their fathers and ancestors that they had been worshipping those idols, and therefore, they were loyal to the traditional custom of their ancestors.

The abovementioned holy verse says:

"They said: 'We found our fathers worshipping them'."

Since there is no reason that ancestors might be wiser and more knowledgeable than the substituting generations, and in most cases the circumstances prove the reverse, because, with the past of time, sciences and knowledge develop, so Abraham immediately told them that not only they but their fathers also were certainly in aberration.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error'."

A Few Traditions Upon Misguidance

1- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"I fear about my Ummah for three (main things) after me: misguidance after guidance, the seditions which cause aberrations, and the vain desire of the belly and of pudendum."[2]

2- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Whoever seeks guidance other than Allah's guidance will go astray."[3]

3- Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Verily Allah, Almighty and Glorious, appointed Hadrat Ali (as) (to leadership) to be a sign between Him and His servants.

Then, whoever has known him (his right) is a believer, and whoever has rejected him is a disbeliever; and whoever has not known him gets astray, and whoever appoints another (leader) with him is a polytheist, and whoever has confessed his mastership will enter Paradise."[4]

4- Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The most polluted deeds is that which causes misguidance."[5]

5- Muhammad-ibn-Muslim said:

"I heard that Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition was saying: 'And do know O' Muhammad! Verily the leaders of injustice, as well as their followers, are far from the religion of Allah. Certainly they have gone astray and lead astray, and the deeds that they do

'… are like ashes on which the wind blows severely on a stormy day; they will have no power over any thing out of what they have earned; that is the very straying, far (and deep)'."[6] [7]

6- Zurarah once said:

"I heard that Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition was saying: 'O' Allah! Cause me know You for verily if You do not make me know You I will not know Your prophet.

O' Allah! Cause me know Your prophet, for verily if You do not make me know Your prophet, I will not know Your Hujjah. O' Allah! Cause me know Your Hujjah, for verily if I do not know Your Hujjah I will get astray from my religion (and will be misguided)."[8]

7- Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Whoever teaches a part of guidance (to any one) will have the like of the reward of those who act it and there will decrease nothing of the rewards of them; and whoever teaches a part of aberration (to any one) the sin of those who commit it will be for him without decreasing anything from their sins."[9]

8- Yazid-ibn-'Abdulmalik narrates that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Visit each other because your visit will cause your hearts to be enlivened and our sayings to be remembered, and our sayings may make you kind to each other.

Then if you practically take them (and do accordingly), you will develop and be prosperous; and if you abandon our sayings you will get astray and annihilate. Therefore, take them (and do accordingly), for I stand guarantor of your rescue and prosperity." [10]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 55 - 56

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنتَ مِنَ اللاَّعِبِينَ

قَالَ بَل رَبكُمْ رَب السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا عَلَي ذَلِكُم مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

55. "They said: 'Have you brought to us the truth, or are you one of the triflers'."

56. "He said: 'Nay! But your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth Who originated them, and I am unto this (fact) one of the witnesses'."

This statement of Abraham (as) which was accompanied with kinds of emphasis and was said in a perfect decisiveness, caused the idol worshippers to come a little to themselves and try to investigate and research about the truth. They turned to Abraham (as) and asked him implying whether he had brought them a true matter or he was joking.

The verse in this regard says:

"They said: 'Have you brought to us the truth, or are you one of the triflers'."

But, in answer to them, Abraham (as) explicitly said that what he said was serious and was the exact fact that: their Lord is the Lord of the heavens and that of the earth.

The above holy verse says:

"He said: 'Nay! But your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth Who originated them…"

Abraham (as) continued that this is the same Lord Who had created them and he was one of the witnesses of that notion.

The verse continues saying:

"…and I am unto this (fact) one of the witnesses'."

By this sharp statement, Abraham (as) showed that that One is eligible to be worshipped Who is the Creator of them and the Creator of the earth and all beings.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 57

وَتَاللَّهِ لاَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُم بَعْدَ أَن تُوَلوا مُدْبِرِ نَ

57. "And, by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols after you go away turning your backs'."

The commentators are divided in having the opinion that how Abraham (as) stated this sharp statement. Some of them, such as the authors of Tafsir-us-Safi and Al-Mizan, believe that this sentence was not stated openly and Abraham (as) said it in secret.

The reason for this is that they believe that the explicit claim of opposition against the small and big gods of a people, lonely and on the first day of the call, is opposite to precaution. But it seems that it is not so, because the accounts of the men of Allah are different from the ordinary accounts of ours, and nothing can prevent them to pave their clear way and to perform their Divine mission.

In the previous holy verses, we recited that Abraham (as) explicitly told his people:

"…Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error."[11]

Did Hadrat Zaynab (as) not say to Yazid, when she was as a captive in Sham, "I belittle you", and then she started criticizing earnestly upon him and his government?

Did the great man of Iran, Imam Khomiyni, not say "The king must go", when the king was in the peak of his tyrannical kingdom, and being fully equipped with kinds of arms, he was supported by all interior and exterior powers?

Did he not tell the king's substitute: "I will nock down this government"? Did he not say to the existing dominant worldly oppressor, America, that America could do no evil? Truly speaking, to what kind of current political circumspections and ordinary precautions do these sentences agree?

Some believe that for conflicting the factors of mischief, those factors they must be struggled against in a negative manner. For instance, at the time of the tyrannical king of Iran, when the cinemas of the country were a serious means of deviation of the young generation, one of the dignitaries said:

"If people decide not to go to cinemas, the cinemas will automatically be suspended".

But, the above-mentioned holy verse condemns this kind of thought, and it persists on the fact that the source of mischief must be eradicated. The example of it is the act of Moses (as) who burnt the golden Calf, and the Prophet of Islam (S) ruined the 'mosque of dissension' where was a base for the hypocrites.

Therefore, to prove that this proposition was one hundred percent earnest, and that he (as) was steadfast in his belief in a manner that he would accept heartily all its results and consequences in whatever form they might be, Abraham added:

"And, by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols after you go away turning your backs'."

Abraham's purpose was to make them understand that he would finally use an opportunity and break the idols entirely.

But, perhaps, the greatness and dignity of the idols in their minds was so high that they did not take this statement for serious, and they did not show any reaction.

They might think that it was not possible that a person let himself play with the sacred things of a people and a tribe whose government was supporting them, too. With what daring could he do that? By which power was he able to afford it?

A Few Traditions Concerning Pictures

1- The holy Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"The intensive punishment of the people on the Day of Hereafter belongs to the drawers of pictures."

(Perhaps, the purpose of it is: 'those who painted the pictures of gods'.)[12]

2- Abi Basir has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The Prophet (S) said: 'Gabriel came to me and said: 'Your Lord sends you regards and has prohibited you from 'Tazwiq' of the houses'."

Abu Basir said:

"Then I asked what 'Tazwiq of the houses' meant; when he (as) said: 'Painting pictures in the house'."

(It should be thought what kinds of picture there were on those days regarding that the people had the belief of idol worship in them and every picture must be considered as that.)[13]

Muhammad-ibn-Muslim said:

"I asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the drawing of the pictures of trees, sun, and moon. Then he (as) said: 'When there is not a thing (a face) of an animal, it does not matter'."[14]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 58 - 60

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذاً إِلاَّ كَبِيراً لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ

قَالُوا مَن فَعَلَ هَذَا بِآلِهَتِنَآ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

58. "So he broke them into pieces, (all) except the chief of them, that haply they may return to it."

59. "They said: 'Who has done this with our gods? Surely he is (one) of the unjust'."

60. "They said: 'We heard a youth making mention of them, who is called Abraham'."

However, without being afraid of the dangers of his action nor scaring from the harsh blow of the wrath of those people which could be considered as a result of his deed, in an appropriate opportunity, Abraham bravely took action and hastened fighting against those powerless gods which had so many fanatic ignorant advocators in their support.

The verse in this regard says:

"So he broke them into pieces, (all) except the chief of them…"

Abraham's aim of doing it was that, maybe, the idol worshippers might come to him and he would say whatever was to say.

The verse says:

"…that haply they may return to it."

It is true that by the word 'idolatry' we call in mind mostly the idols made of stone and wood, but from another point of view, the words idol and idolatry have a vast meaning which envelops every consideration to anything besides Allah, in any form and state it may be. According to an Islamic tradition,

"Whatever makes man busy to itself, in a way that it makes him far from Allah, it is his idol."

Finally, the idol worshippers entered the idol temple and encountered a scene that they could not imagine it. Instead of a tidy idol temple, they faced with an untidy scene, a heap of broken idols. They shouted asking who had done that wrong to their idols and that whoever had done it had certainly been one of the oppressors.

The holy verse says:

"They said: 'Who has done this with our gods? Surely he is (one) of the unjust'."

By this saying they indicated that the person who had done that action, in fact, had been unjust both to their gods, and to the society and to their party, and to himself.

But, a group of people who had the threats of Abraham due to the idols in mind, and knew this offensive behaviour of his to those artificial objects of worship, declared their opinion as follows:

"They said: 'We heard a youth making mention of them, who is called Abraham'."

According to some narrations, it happened at that time when Abraham was completely young, and he was probably about sixteen years old.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 61 - 63

قَالُوا فَأْتُوا بِهِ عَلَى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ

قَالُوا ءَأَنتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِالِهَتِنَا يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَسْأَلُوهُمْ إِن كَانُوا يَنطِقُونَ

61. "They said: 'Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness'."

62. "They said: 'Are you the man that did this with our gods, O Abraham?'"

63. "(Abraham) said: 'Nay, it was done by this, the chief of them! Ask them if they can speak'."

Principally, it is usual that when a crime is committed, in order to find the person who has committed it, the hostile connections with the matter are investigated about. Certainly, there was no other person in that locality but Abraham who was objecting to the idols.

Therefore, all attentions turned to him, and some groups of the idolaters suggested, now that the circumstance was such, Abraham might be brought in front of the people so that those who knew him and were acquainted with the proposition could testify to his being criminal.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness'."

The callers cried around the city that those who were aware of the enmity and ill-speaking of Abraham due to idols should attend to bear witness.

At last, the court started its job with the presence of the chiefs of the people. It has also been said that Namrud himself was attending the court.

The first question which was asked from Abraham was as follows:

"They said: 'Are you the man that did this with our gods, O Abraham'?"

Abraham answered them in such a way that they felt they were seriously surrounded, so that they could not save themselves from it.

Here is Abraham's response:

"(Abraham) said: 'Nay, it was done by this, the chief of them! Ask them if they can speak'."

The principals of the job of the specialists of felony indicate that the accused person is the one who has the effects of the crime with him. Here, the 'effects of the crime' is with the chief idol.

Abraham wanted to say why they went to him, and why did they not accuse the chief god of theirs? He inquired whether they did not think that the chief idol probably had considered that other idols were as its future rival and, therefore, had destroyed them totally.

Since this interpretation, from the view point of the commentators, did apparently not adapt to the reality, and in view of the fact that Abraham is a prophet and an immaculate person never tells a lie, there have been stated different matters upon this Qur'anic sentence.

What seems the best of all is that Abraham (as) decisively attributed this action to the great idol, but all references testified to the fact that he did not intended to say it earnestly. He wanted to make the baseless superstitious notions of the idol worshippers manifest to them.

He decided to make them understand that those soulless pieces of stone and wood were so feeble that they could not say even a sentence in order to ask help from their worshippers, much less they wanted them to solve their problems.

In our daily sayings there are many instances similar to this meaning when, in order to nullify the speech of the opposite party and to condemn him, we put his indisputable affairs in front of him in the form of an imperative, declarative, or interrogative sentence, and this is not a lie at all. A lie is something that has not a frame of reference with it.

There has been cited a tradition in the book of Kafi narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"He (Abraham) said this:

'Nay, it was done by this, the chief of them'

for he intended to improve their thoughts and to tell them the idols could not do such an action."

Then the Imam added:

"By Allah, the idols had not done it nor did Abraham tell a lie."[15]

However, some commentators also think that probably Abraham (as) uttered this subject in the form of a conditional sentence, implying that if the idols can speak, they have done such an action. Certainly the meaning was not contrary to the actuality, because neither did the idols speak, nor had they done such a job.

There is also a tradition close to this very commentary cited in Burhan, Safi, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 64 - 65

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَي أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

ثُمَّ نُكِسُوا عَلَي رُؤُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلآءِ يَنطِقُونَ

64. "So they turned to themselves and said: 'Verily, you yourselves are the unjust'."

65. "Then they were made to hang down their heads, (saying:) 'Very well indeed you know these (idols) do not speak'."

Arousing the inner senses, self finding, returning to one's self, and heeding the natural disposition of people are among the main aims of the divine prophets (as).

Therefore, the words of Abraham (as) moved the idol worshippers and aroused their sleeping conscience. As a storm which takes the abundant ash from over the flames of fire and makes its brightness clear, Abraham made manifest their monotheistic nature from behind the curtains of their bigotry and ignorance.

During a short and fleeting time, they awoke from that deep and death-like sleep and returned to their conscience and nature and told themselves that they were truly unjust to themselves. They were unjust not only to themselves, but also to the society to which they belonged, and also to the holy presence of Allah, the Bestower of the blessings.[16]

The verse says:

"So they turned to themselves and said: 'Verily, you yourselves are the unjust'."

But, the amount of the rust of their ignorance, bigotry and blindly imitation was more than that it could be completely wiped out and burnished by the call of this Champion of Monotheism.

Alas! That holy spiritual awakening state did not last long, and there appeared an opposition against this monotheistic light from the side of the evil powers, and because of ignorance existed in their dark polluted innate, everything returned to its first state.

What a beautiful and narrow sense the Qur'an has, where it says:

"Then they were made to hang down their heads…"

So, in order to bring an excuse for their deaf and dumb gods, they announced:

"…(saying:) 'Very well indeed you know these (idols) do not speak'."

They wanted to say that their idols are always silent and they never break the dignity of silence.

The idol worshippers, in fact, wanted to hide the weakness, vileness and abasement of the idols by this hollow excuse.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 66 - 68

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَالاَ يَنفَعُكُمْ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يَضُرُّكُمْ

أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا ءَالِهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

66. "(Abraham) said: 'Do you then worship, besides Allah, that which profits you nothing, neither hurts you?"

67. "Fie on you and on what you worship besides Allah! Have you then no sense?"

68. "They said: 'If you would do aught, burn him, and help your gods'."

The godly men generally always pursue their holy aims in whatever condition they may be, and they do not stop even for a while, although their struggles may seem to be fulfilled in different shapes.

Along the way of his messengership, at first, Abraham (as) goes toward his own uncle and relatives and invites them unto monotheism and Unity, but when he does not gain any positive result, for the second stage, he hastens to the idols and breaks them all.

After that, addressing their innate disposition, he tries to awaken them, and, finally, next to his advice and reprimand, he makes them contemplate.

He attacks them using his most violent words, and puts their minds under the frequent logical awakening blames, as the verse says:

"(Abraham) said: 'Do you then worship, besides Allah, that which profits you nothing, neither hurts you?"

Again, this teacher of monotheism goes on his own speech further than that, and by striking the whips of scorn upon their painless souls, he said to them:

"Fie on you and on what you worship besides Allah! Have you then no sense?"

However, in blaming and scorning them, Abraham did not leave clemency, lest they would become more obstinate.

Thus, by the practical and logical reasoning of Abraham, all of the idol worshippers were condemned, but their intense obstinacy and bigotry hindered them to accept the Truth, and that was why they made a very harsh and dangerous decision about Abraham (as).

As for the reaction of the crowd, the Qur'an says:

"They said: 'If you would do aught, burn him, and help your gods'."

Similar to that, they said many vain things about Abraham, and they incited people to revolt against him in a way that, instead of a few loads of wood which could be sufficient to burn several persons, the inhabitants piled thousands of loads of wood over there which made a mountainous heap of wood, and, consequently, an ocean of fire was provided.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 69 - 70

قُلْنَا يَانَارُ كُونِي بَرْداً وَسَلاَماً عَلَي إِبْرَاهِيمَ

وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْداً فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الاَخْسَرِ نَ

69. "We said: 'O fire! Be you cold and safety for Abraham!'"

70. "And they intended a device against him, but We made them the worse losers."

The men of Allah are so steadfast in their divine aims that they are ready to devote their souls. Burning alive a person is the most terrible kind of slaughter.

There are many matters cited in commentaries about the event of throwing of Abraham (as) into fire, among which is that: the polytheists, with the help and guidance of Satan, made a mangonel.

Abraham, with his matchless trust to Allah, did not ask any help from any of the angels, even from Gabriel, and, at that time, he was busy praying to Allah in solitude and supplicating to Muhammad (S) and his Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

At last, with cries of exultation of people and while they were shouting applauding, Abraham was thrown into the horrible flames of the prepared fire by means of a mangonel. They were shouting so happily that as if the breaker of the idols was destroyed for ever and turned to ash.

But Allah, Whose command is obeyed by everything, and Who had even taught the quality of burning to fire, and Who had taught the secret of love to mothers, decided to keep safe this sincere believing servant in the ocean of fire, and to add another proof to the evidences of his honour, as the Qur'an here says:

"We said: 'O fire! Be you cold and safety for Abraham!'"

Undoubtedly, the command of Allah (s.w.t.) was a genetic command, the same command that, in the world of existence, He issues for the sun, the moon, the earth, the heaven, the water, the fire, the plants, the birds and everything, and without that command no effect comes forth from any cause.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"When Allah commanded the fire, saying:

'Be you cold…',

because of the extreme cold (in the midst of Namrud's fire), the teeth of Abraham were shivering and hitting against each other, until the time it was told:

'… and safety'

when its coldness disappeared and caused safety for him."[17]

Then, to draw a conclusion, the Holy Qur'an, in a short sentence, concisely implies that the polytheists had decided to annihilate Abraham (as) by this evil plan, but Allah made them the worse losers of people.

The verse says:

"And they intended a device against him, but We made them the worse losers."

It is evident that by remaining Abraham safe in the middle of that fire, the scene changed entirely, the cries of joy fell down, and the mouths were wide open out of surprise, but still bigotry and obstinacy hindered them to accept the truth perfectly, although the alert hearts (minds) got their interest from this event and their faith unto the Lord of Abraham was increased.

However, the Arabic word /'axsarin/ has been applied in the Qur'an for those who do an indecent action while they think that their action is good, and therefore, they usually do not comprehend their loss to try to compensate it.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 71

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطاً إِلَي الاَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ

71. "And we delivered him, and Lot, unto the land which We have blessed for (all) peoples."

The enemy wanted to destroy Abraham (as):

"…they intended a device against him"[18]**,**

but Allah not only saved him but also endowed on him a blessed generation and made also all of them from among the righteous and eligible ones:

"…and We made them all righteous."[19]

The event of burning Abraham alive in the fire and the miraculous safety of his life from this dangerous stage caused the chiefs of the government of Namrud tremble.

They thought if he, in that state, remained in that city and in that country, with that eloquent language, that powerful logic, and his matchless manliness, certainly he was a source of danger for that tyrannical egoistic government.

On the other hand, Abraham, in fact, had done his mission in that region and had sown the seed of faith and awareness in that land.

He ought to migrate into another part of the land and declare his call there. Therefore, he decided to migrate from that country towards Sham (Syria) accompanied with Lut, (his brother's son), Sarah (his wife), and probably with a small group of the believers.

Thus, the Qur'an says:

"And we delivered him, and Lot, unto the land which We have blessed for (all) peoples."

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 72

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً وَكُلاًّ جَعَلْنَا صَالِحِينَ

72. "And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob as a further gift, and We made them all righteous."

This holy verse points to one of the most important merits that Allah had endowed upon Abraham (as). He (as) was having got not only a righteous child but also a fruitful and worthy generation.

The Qur'an says:

"And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob as a further gift…"

Then the holy verse adds that Allah made all of them some righteous, worthy, and useful men.

The verse says:

"…and We made them all righteous."

In this verse, the name of Isaac (as) was mentioned while the name of Ishmael (as), who was the first child of Abraham (as), was not referred to. It is, perhaps, for the attracting of the attentions to the extraordinary and wonderful birth of Isaac who, by the will of Allah, was born of a barren mother, i.e., Sarah, in her old age.

By the way, a child is a gift of Allah, but what is more important than a child is his being righteous.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 73

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلاَةِ وَإِيتَآءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ

73. "And We made them leaders guiding (the people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, and the establishing prayer, and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone)."

This verse in a general sense refers to the rank of Imamate and Leadership of these great prophets as well as a part of their important and valuable programs.

Here, on the whole, six specialties of these qualities are mentioned, to which if we add the specialty of being righteous, which was referred to in the previous verse, they will totally be seven specialties.

At first, it says:

"And We made them leaders…"

This means that, in addition to the rank of prophethood and messengership, Allah gave them the rank of Imamate, too. As it was also mentioned before, divine Imamate is the last stage of development course of man which means the absolute leadership of people; whether: material and spiritual, exoteric and esoteric, physical and mental.

The difference of prophethood and messengership with Imamate lies in this fact that the divine prophets in the rank of prophethood and messengership only receive the command of Allah and inform people of it in order to convey it to them, and this communication is often accompanied with glad tidings and warning.

While in the stage of Imamate, they put these divine programs into action, whether it is done by formation of just government or without it. In this stage they are trainees and they carry the Divine ordinances and programs into effect, and they foster men so that they provide a clean environment for them.

In fact, the rank of Imamate is the rank of proving all the Divine programs to true. In other words, it is the remittance of the quest as well as both the religious guidance and Divine guidance.

From this point of view, it is just like the sun which fosters the living creatures by its rays.

Then, next to that stage, the Qur'an reiterates the actuality and consequence of this rank.

It continues saying:

"…guiding (the people) by Our command…"

This guidance is not only in the sense of leading and showing the way, which exist in the rank of prophethood and messengership, but also in the sense of succour and gaining the aim (for those who are receptive and have competency, of courser).

There can be drawn a conclusion from the last part of the verse that Imam (the immaculate absolute leader of people) must be appointed from the side of Allah, because, firstly, Imamate is a kind of Divine covenant, and it is evident that such a person should be assigned by Allah Who is a side of the covenant.

Secondly: those who have somehow been unjust, and there is a dark point of injustice in their life, irrespective of injustice to themselves or injustice to others, or being idol worshipers even for a while, are not eligible

for the rank of Imamate. In other words, Imam should have been Immaculate in his whole lifetime.

Can any one, save Allah, be aware of the existence of such an epithet in a person?

So, if we intend to choose the successor of the Prophet (S) through this criterion there can be none but Amir-ul-Mumineen Ali (as).

It is interesting that the writer of Al-Manar narrates from Abi-Hanifah that he believed that caliphate was exclusively eligible to Alawites, and for that reason he thought rebellion against the contemporary government of that time, (Mansur-i-Abbasi), was permissible, therefore, he did not agree to accept the job of judgment in the government of Abbasides.

Then, the writer of Al-Manar adds that the four leaders of the Sunnites were totally antagonist to the governments of their times and did not assume them as eligible for leadership of the Muslims since they were some unjust cruel men.[20]

But it is wonderful that a great deal of our contemporary Sunnite scholars approve and support some unjust tyrannical governments whose communication with the enemies of Islam is certain and decisive, and whose injustice and mischief is not concealed to anyone, and they easily consider them as 'the people in authority' and 'those to be obeyed'.

Explanations

1. Similar to prophethood, Imamate should be assigned by Allah. The Qur'an says:

"And We made them leaders…"

2. If Imamate is gained by force and injustice, it is an invitation to Hell. The Qur'an says:

"…leaders (who) call to the fire…"[21]

But when Imamate is given by Allah, it is blessed and it is in the path of the Truth.

3. The guidance of prophets is neither from their own accord nor is it by their own personal tastes, but it is guidance by Allah's command:

"…guiding (the people) by Our Command…"

4. Ritual prayers and almsgiving (zakat) are two basic principles in all religions, since without prayer and Zakat none reaches the rank of servitude.

The verse says:

"…and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, and the establishing prayer, and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone)."

5. One can comprehend from this verse that religion is not separate from government.

"And We made them leaders, guiding (people) by Our Command…"

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 74 - 75

وَلُوطاً ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْماً وَعِلْماً وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبَآئِثَ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاسِقِينَ

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَآ إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

74. "And Lot, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which were doing abominations. Verily they were evil people, perverse,"

75. "And We admitted him into Our mercy; verily he was of the righteous."

In view of the fact that Lut was one of the close relatives of Abraham and was among the first persons who believed in him, next to the story of Abraham (as), the Qur'an refers to a part of the efforts and endeavours of Lut (as) in the way of conveying his prophethood and Allah's favours unto him.

The verse says:

"And Lot, We gave him wisdom and knowledge…"

Hadrat Lut was a great prophet who was contemporary with Abraham and who, accompanying him, migrated from Babylon to Palestine, and later, he separated from Abraham and went to Sodom, a city.

The people of this region were completely polluted with vice and sin, especially with sexual deviations and pollutions. He did his best and struggled very much to guide this aberrant group, but it affected the least on those blind-hearted people.

At last, the intensive Wrath and Punishment of Allah, seized them all, except Lut's family, with the exception of his wife, and destroyed them utterly.

Therefore, in the continuation of the holy verse, the Qur'an points to this favour which Allah bestowed on Lut when it says:

"…and We delivered him from the town which were doing abominations.…"

The reason of the punishment of those people is mentioned as that they were some bad people and had gone out of the circle of the obedience of Allah's command.

It continues saying:

"…Verily they were evil people, perverse,"

Then the Qur'an refers to the last Divine favour from this group of favours which were given to Lut, by saying:

"And We admitted him into Our mercy; verily he was of the righteous."

Thus, in this holy verse, four important favours of Allah, which were endowed on Lut (as), are pointed out. They are: wisdom, knowledge, deliverance and admitting him into Allah's mercy.

Notes

1. For a further explanation about Abraham's father, see Surah Maryam. No. 19, verse 42
2. Bihar, vol. 68, p. 269
3. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 461, and vol. 4, p. 228
4. Wasa'il, vol. 18, p. 567
5. Khisal, vol. 2, p. 264
6. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 18
7. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 184
8. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p.331
9. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 35
10. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 186
11. carrent Surah, verse 54

12. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1670
13. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 3, p. 560
14. Ibid, p. 563, and Mustadrak, vol. 9, p. 318
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn and Burhan, following of the verse
16. Some commentators have also probabled that the objective meaning of the sentence
    "So they turned to themselves"
    is that, as for this saying, they returned one another and blamed themselves.
17. Kafi, vol. 8, p. 318
18. Verse 70 of the current Surah
19. Verse 72 of the current Surah
20. Al-Manar, vol. 1, pp. 457-458
21. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 41

Section 6: The Apostle of Allah Delivered and Blessed

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 76 - 77

وَنُوحاً إِذْ نَادَي مِن قَبْلُ فَاستَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِايَاتِنَآ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

76. "And (remember) Noah, when he called (his Lord) before, then We answered him, and delivered him and his family from the great calamity."

77. "And We helped him against the people who rejected Our signs; verily they were an evil people, so We drowned them all together."

In this holy verse, after mentioning a part of the story of Abraham and Lut, the Qur'an refers to some explanations of the life of another great prophet, i.e., Noah (as). It says:

"And (remember) Noah, when he called (his Lord) before…"

Noah asked Him to deliver him from the grips of those deluded disbelievers.

This call of Noah is apparently a hint to the curse which has been stated in Surah Noah, No. 71, verses 26 and 27 where the Qur'an declares:

"And Noah said: 'My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers';"

"For verily if You leave them they will lead astray Your servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children)'."

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…Then We answered him, and delivered him and his family from the great calamity."

The Qur'anic word /'ahl/ has a vast meaning here which envelops both Noah's believing relatives and his special true friends.

And, in the next verse, the Qur'an also adds:

"And We helped him against the people who rejected Our signs; verily they were an evil people, so We drowned them all together."

This very last sentence is another emphasis on this fact that the Divine punishments are never done to be taken vengeance, but they are on the basis of choosing the better. In another sense, the right of life and using its blessings is for those who are on the line of development and journey to Allah (s.w.t.), or if one day they went astray, they would repent and improve themselves later.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 78 - 79

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَـانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ

فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمانَ وَكُلاًّ ءَاتَيْنَا حُكْماً وَعِلْماً وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

78. "And (remember) David and Solomon when they gave judgment concerning the field, when the sheep of the people pastured in it by night, and We were witnesses to their judgment."

79. "So We made Solomon to understand it, and unto each (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge. And with David We subdued the mountains to give glory, and the birds, and We were the doers (thereof)."

It is understood fairly well from some Islamic narrations and interpretations about the event which is mentioned in this holy verse that: it happens that one night some sheep go into someone's vineyard and ruin it.

The owner of the vine trees lodges a complaint to David (as). In order to compensate the damage, David judges that all these sheep should be delivered to the owner of that garden.

But his son, Solomon (as) suggests another way of solution for the problem to his father, saying that the sheep have to be given to the complainant so that he can take their benefits and the garden should be delivered to the owner of the sheep in order to amend it, and after compensating the damage caused by the sheep, each of the owners takes back his original property.[1]

The verse says:

"And (remember) David and Solomon when they gave judgment concerning the field, when the sheep of the people pastured in it by night, and We were witnesses to their judgment."

Evidently both of the Divine prophets tried to find a way to compensate the loss, but the father (David (as)) thought in the deliverance of the sheep, while the son (Solomon (as)) intended to provide it by means of the benefits of the sheep.

Allah in this verse says:

"So We made Solomon to understand it, and unto each (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge.…"

Meaning that though Allah gave both of them knowledge and wisdom but, in this case, the judgment of Solomon was better.

Then the Qur'an points to another merit and honour that Allah had bestowed on David, by saying:

"…And with David We subdued the mountains to give glory, and the birds…"

This sentence means that these deeds are not so important comparing Allah's power, and He says:

"…and We were the doers (thereof)."

However, an Islamic tradition indicates that whenever David (as) was busy reciting the heavenly Book (Zabur), there was no stone, mountain, and bird but, by hearing his voice, it also sang with him.[2]

The reason of this is that all beings, including mountains and birds, have got a kind of perception that they are often busy glorifying Allah.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 80 - 81

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُم مِن بَأْسِكُمْ فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَي الأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ

80. "And We taught him the art of making the coat of mail for you to protect you in your wars. Are you then thankful?"

81. "And for Solomon We (subdued) the wind blowing violent, that ran at his command unto the land where We had blessed; and of everything We are aware."

In the last verse of this group of verses, the Qur'an again points to one of the merits that Allah had granted to this great prophet.

It says:

"And We taught him the art of making the coat of mail for you to protect you in your wars. Are you then thankful?"

As the Late Tabarsi cites in Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Arabic word /labus/ means any kind of defensive and offensive weapon, such as: mail, sword, and spear.[3]

But, the frames of references which exist in the Qur'an show that the Qur'anic word /labus/, mentioned in this verse, means 'the coat of mail' which had been used as a means of protection in the battles.

The explanation of the fact that how Allah made iron as a soft and pulpy material for David, and taught him the art of making mail, will be said later under the verses 10 and 11 of Surah Saba', No. 34, Allah willing.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an refers to a violent wind which used to blow in the holy land of Syria; but, as it is understood from Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 36, Hadrat Sulayman (Solomon) (as) had gotten the power of domination and commanding upon the slow winds in other regions, too, where it says:

"Then We made the wind subservient to him; it made his command to run gently whenever he desired."

Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 12 refers to the length of the time and the distance that Solomon (as) could travel by the wind, where it says:

"And (We made) the wind (subservient) to Sulayman, which made a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening…".

It can be deduced from these matters that the friends of Allah are able to cause alteration in nature by Allah's leave; and that the winds have perception, too, and they perceive and execute the command of Allah and the commands of the friends of Allah.

However, in this holy verse, Allah says:

"And for Solomon We (subdued) the wind blowing violent, that ran at his command unto the land where We had blessed;…"

And this is not wonderful, because Allah is the knower of all things. The verse continues saying:

"…and of everything We are aware."

He is aware of not only the secrets of the world of existence and the rules and systems governing them, and knows how to make them subservient but also of the result and the end of this job, and, however, everything is humble and submissive before the Knowledge and Power of Allah.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 82

وَمِنَ الشَّيَاطِينِ مَن يَغُوصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلاً دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظِينَ

82. "And some of the Satans dived for him and did (also) other work besides that, and We were watching over them."

This verse reiterates another one of the exclusive merits of Solomon (as). It indicates that Allah made some Satans subservient to him to dive into the sea and bring out jewels and other precious things for him; they would do

some deeds for him other than these. He (s.w.t.) caused them not to disobey Solomon's command.

The verse says:

"And some of the Satans dived for him and did (also) other work besides that, and We were watching over them."

Whatever is referred to in this verse as 'Satan' has been stated is Surah Saba', No. 34, verses 12 and, 19, as 'jinn', and it is clear that these two verses do not contradict each other, for we know that 'Satans' are also of the kind of 'jinn'.

However, as it has been mentioned previously, jinn is a creature that possesses wisdom, sensation, talent and duty. We do not see jinn and that is why it is called by this name, meaning (concealed).

As it is understood from the verses of Surah Jinn, No. 72, Jinns are divided, as human beings, into two groups: righteous believers, and arrogant disbelievers. We have no evidence for the negation of their existence and, since the true informer (the Qur'an) has informed us of them, we accept it as a fact.

It is well understood from Surah Sad, No. 38, and Surah Saba', No. 34, as well as the verse under discussion, that this group of jinn, who were under the command of Solomon, were some intelligent, active, ingenious and skilled ones in different arts.

The sentence which says:

"…and did (also) other work besides that…"

is an epitome of what is widely explained in Surah Saba', No. 34, which indicates that they made some very beautiful, splendid sanctuaries and temples for him as well as various appliance of life and utensil including pots, cauldrons, very large plates, and the like of them.

Some other verses of the Qur'an, relating to Solomon (as) denote that there were some arrogant disobedient Satans, too, whom he (as) had made bound together in fetters and in chain, for the Qur'an says:

"And others fettered in chain."[4]

And, maybe the sentence:

"…and We were watching over them"

also points to this fact that He restrained that group of servants of Solomon (as) from arrogance and disobedience. Further explanation in this field will be discussed in the commentary detailed upon Surah Saba', No. 34, and Surah Sad, No. 38, Allah willing.

However, it seems necessary to be mentioned that there are many false or doubtful mythological matters about the life of Solomon and his forces which should never be mixed with what is stated in the Holy Qur'an, for they may become some pretexts for those who seek excuse.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 83 - 84

وَ يوبَ إِذْ نَادَي رَبَّهُ أَنّـِي مَسَّنِيَ الضر وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِن ضُرٍّ وءَاتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِندِنَا وَذِكْرَي لِلْعَابِدِينَ

83. "And (remember) Job when he called unto his Lord (saying:) 'Verily distress has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

84. "So We responded to him (his prayer) and We removed the distress that was upon him, and We restored his family to him, and the like of them with them; a mercy from Us and a reminder for the worshippers."

These two holy verses speak about one of other great prophets of Allah and his instructive biography, i.e. Job. He has a sad biography but, in the meantime, it is splendid and full of dignity. His patience was very wonderful, specially for bearing the unpleasant events, in a form that 'Job's patience' is an old proverb.

Through the verses under discussion, the Holy Qur'an particularly points to the stage of Job's rescue and overcoming the difficulties when he regains his lost merits, so that it may be a lesson for all the believers in any time and any place who involve in difficulties, and the Muslim believers of Mecca, in particular, who were seriously in the siege of the enemy at the time of the revelation of these verses.

The verse, addressing the Prophet (S), implies that he should remember Job when he called his Lord, saying: distress, pain, sickness and miseries had surrounded him, and that He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones.

The verse says:

"And (remember) Job when he called unto his Lord (saying:) 'Verily distress has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

The Arabic word /durr/, upon the rhythm of /hurr/, is applied to any calamity that visits the man's spirit or body, as well as mutilation, loss of wealth, the death of the dear persons, spoiling of prestige, and the like. As we will explain later, Job visited many of these calamities.

As other prophets, at the time of invocation for the removal of his exhausting difficulties, Job was very polite and humble before Allah. He did not say anything to be even like complaint. He only said that He might solve his problem because he knew that He is the Great and aware of the way of it.

Then in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that after Job's invocation, Allah accepted his prayer and removed his pain and calamity.

The verse says:

"So We responded to him (his prayer) and We removed the distress that was upon him…"

Then, it continues saying that He returned his family to him, and added to them the like of them, in order that it would be both a mercy from Him to them and a remembrance for all those who worship Allah.

The verse says:

"…and We restored his family to him, and the like of them with them; a mercy from Us and a reminder for the worshippers."

This fact has been stated here in order that the Muslims know that how plenty the difficulties are and how much the calamities may be, and how intense the enemies can be and their forces may be abundant, yet with a slight mercy of Allah all of these can be removed.

It is so that not only the losses will be amended, but also sometimes, as a reward for the steadfast patient, He adds to it the like of what has been lost. This is a lesson for all Muslims in general and particularly for the Muslims who were in the siege of the enemy and had so many problems at the time of the revelation of these verses.

A Few Points About Job (as)

1. A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that once a person asked him about the reason for which Job confronted that calamity.

Imam Sadiq (as) answered him in detail, the shortened of which is that the calamity of Job was not for the sake that he was unthankful of the divine blessings, on the contrary, it was for the thankfulness of the divine blessings to which 'Iblis envied and said to the presence of Allah:

"If Job thanked You so much it would be for the vast and comfortable life You have bestowed on him, and if You take the material merits of this world from him, he will never be gratitude to You. Let me dominate over him concerning his affairs of this world so that it may be known that the matter is the same."

In order that this event was an evidence for all the followers of the path of the truth, Allah gave this permission to him. Iblis came and destroyed his wealth and children one after another, but, not only these painful events did not decrease the state of thankfulness of Job, but his gratitude was increased.

Satan asked Allah that he would also dominate over his sheep and farming. This permission was given him. Then he burnt Job's farming utterly and destroyed his sheep, too. Again the thankfulness of Job was increased.

Finally, Satan asked Allah to dominate over the body of Job, and to cause him a terrible sickness. This happened in a manner that Job could not move because of intense of disease and suppuration, without the existence of the least infection in his intelligence and understanding.

Precisely speaking, the favours of Job were taken one after another, but parallel with it the rank of gratitude increased in him.

It happened that a group of monks came to visit him. They asked him what kind of great sin he had committed that he was in too much calamity. Thus, the scorn of people began and this case tolerated too much for Job.

He answered them that, by the Lord, he had never consumed a morsel but an orphan or a poor person was sitting at his food table; and there had came no worship of Allah to him but he had chosen its hardest form.

It was at this time that Job had passed successfully all his examinations in the rank of patience and gratitude. He began supplicating and, with a very polite manner, and free from any complaint, he asked his Lord to help him mercifully for solving his problems[5].

It was then when the doors of the Divine mercy started to be opened and very soon his difficulties swiftly disappeared and the divine favours came back to him more than what there were before.[6]

Yes, the thoughts and programs of men of Allah do not change with the change of favours. When they are in welfare or distress, freedom or prison, safety or sickness, power or weakness, and, on the whole, in all

circumstances their attentions are toward Allah and the alterations of life do not create any change in them.

Their soul is similar to the Pacific Ocean, the peach of which remains still even with the storms.

Also, they never lose hope because of bitter events. They stand firm and persevere until the doors of the Divine mercy would be opened. They do know that hard incidents are originally the Divine examinations that sometimes He provides them for some of His particular servants in order to make them more experience.

2. Among the commentators, the common commentary upon the sentence:

"…We restored his family to him and the like of them…"

is that Allah returned Job's children to their first life and in addition to them He gave him other children, too. Some Islamic narrations, including that of Imam Sadiq's, indicate that Allah restored him (as) not only the children who had been annihilated in that event but also the children who had died before that.[7]

Some commentators believe that Allah probably gave some new offspring and grand children to Job and they filled the empty place of the children whom he had lost.

3. It is cited in some unreliable narrations that as the result of an intensive sickness Job's body had got such an infection that people could not approach him. But this meaning has explicitly been negated in the traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

The intellect also proves the latter, because if a prophet possesses a hateful state or quality, it does not adapt to his prophetic mission. He must be in a situation that all people can meet him pleasantly and hear the words of Allah from him. A prophet has always attractions.

However, Ayyub (Job) is a prophet who has been honoured with the sign of patience in the Qur'an, where it says:

"…verily We found him patient; most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning (to Allah)."[8]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 85 - 86

وإِسْماعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِ نَ

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَآ إِنَّهُم مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

85. "And (remember) Ishmael and Idris, and Zul-kifl; all were of the patient."

86. "And We admitted them into Our Mercy; verily they were of the righteous."

Following to the instructive biography of Job (as) and his patience against the storm of calamities, these current verses refer to the rank of the patience of three other persons from among the divine prophets, where the Qur'an says:

"And (remember) Ishmael and Idris, and Zul-kifl; all were of the patient."

Every one of them patiently persevered before the enemies and laborious difficulties they had throughout their lifetime, and never kneed for those events, so that each of them was an example of steadfastness and perseverance.

Then the Holy Qur'an points to the greatest favour of Allah which came to them as a result of their patience and perseverance.

It states:

"And We admitted them into Our Mercy; verily they were of the righteous."

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an does not say Allah bestowed His mercy upon them, but it says He admitted them into His Mercy. As if they had dived into the Mercy of Allah with their whole body and soul in the same manner that they had dived into the ocean of difficulties aforetime.

As was explained before, 'Idris, the great prophet of Allah, according to many commentators, had been the ancestor of Noah. Enoch is the name which used in the Turah while in Arabic it is 'Idris, and some considered that it is derived from the Arabic word /dars/ because he was the first person who wrote by pen.

Besides having the rank of prophecy, Enoch (as) knew astronomy and arithmetic as well as configuration of elements, and it is said that he was the first one who taught tailoring to human beings.[9]

It is known among the commentators that Zul-kifl has been one of the Divine prophets, though some believe that he was one of the righteous men[10].

The apparent meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, in which he is mentioned in the row of the great prophets, indicate that he is one of the prophets, too, and it also seems that he had been one of the prophets of the Children of Israel.[11]

In Tafsir-i-Majma'-ul-Bayan, it is narrated from 'Abdul-'Azim Hasani who narrates from Imam Jawad (the ninth Imam) (as) that Allah has appointed one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets for guiding humankind among whom one hundred and thirteen are messengers and Zul-Kifl was one of those messengers.

The opinions are divided concerning the reason of naming Zul-Kifl by this appellation in regard that the Arabic word Kifl, (upon the rhythm of /fikr/), has been used in the meaning of both 'share' and 'surety'.

Some have said that since Allah had given him a great portion of rewards and mercy for the abundant good deeds and worships that he used to do he has been named as Zul-Kifl (meaning the possessor of much interest).

Some others have said since he had pledged to get up for worship by nights and to be fast on days, and never he was angry at the time of judgment, and he fulfilled his promise until the end, he was called Zul-Kifl.

Some also believe that 'Zul-Kifl' is the nickname of Elijah, Similar to 'Israel', which was the nickname of Jacob, and 'Massiah' as the nickname of Jesus, and Zannun the nickname of Yunus.[12]

By the way, Hadrat 'Isma'il, for the command of Allah saying that he must be killed by his father, was patient, and Hadrat Enoch also invited people to the religion of truth for 365 years but no one believed in him.[13]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 87 - 88

وَذَا النونِ اِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِباً فَظَنَّ أَن لَن نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَي فِي الظلُمَاتِ أَن لآ إِلَهَ إِلآ أَنتَ
سُبْحَانَكَ إِنّـِي كُنتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

87. "And (remember) Zan-Nun (Jonah) when he departed (his people) in anger and imagined that We would not straiten him; so he called out in the darkness: 'There is no god but You (O my Lord!). Glory be to You! Verily I was of the unjust ones'!"

88. "So We responded to him (his prayer) and delivered him from the grief; and thus do We deliver the believers."

These two holy verses are also about the life of Yunus (as), the great prophet of Allah. At first, it implies that you should remember Jonah when he went out angrily from among his people who were idolater and disobedient.

The verse says:

"And (remember) Zan-Nun (Jonah) when he departed (his people) in anger…"

The Arabic word /nun/ philologically means a huge fish, or, in another sense, it is a crocodile. Thus, the word Zan-Nun means 'the possessor of a crocodile'. Taking this name for Yunus is for the event which will be referred to later, Allah willing.

However, he thought Allah would not straiten the life for him. He imagined he had fulfilled his prophetic mission fully among his disobedient people and had not even left any better in this field.

So, now that he left them to themselves and went out from among them, there was nothing to him; while he would rather remain more than that among them and showed patience and perseverance haply they might be aware and turn toward Allah.

The verse says:

"…and imagined that We would not straiten him;…"

At last, for that very leaving the better, he was put in straits and a huge crocodile swallowed him when in that darkness he called Allah, his Lord, saying that he was unjust both to himself and to his people, because he should suffer the miseries and difficulties more than that and that he should accept all tortures so that they might improve themselves.

The verse continues saying:

"…so he called out in the darkness: 'There is no god but You (O my Lord!). Glory be to You! Verily I was of the unjust ones'!"

Finally, Allah accepted his prayer and made him free from affliction and grief. In such a way He, the Almighty, delivers the believers.

The verse says:

"So We responded to him (his prayer) and delivered him from the grief; and thus do We deliver the believers."

This program was not allocated to Yunus alone but every one of the believers who asks forgiveness from Allah for his shortcomings and asks

Him for help and mercy Allah accepts his prayer, and his grief will be removed.

Some Explanations About the Life of Yunus

1. Yunus was busy preaching among his people

1. Yunus was busy preaching among his people for years in Neynawa, located in the land of Iraq. He invited them to the religion of Allah, but the more he tried to guide them the less his guidance affected on their hearts. Once he became angry and, leaving that place, went to the shore of the sea.

He embarked a ship there, but in the way the sea became so wavy that it was about that all the people in the ship to be drowned. The captain of the ship, addressing the passengers, said he thought there was a runaway slave among them whom had to be thrown into the sea.

(Or he said the ship was too heavy and by drawing lots, one passenger should he thrown into the sea.) However, they cast lots for several times and every time Yunus was elected by lots. Yunus understood that there was a secret concealed in that, so he resigned himself to the events.

When he was thrown into the sea, a huge crocodile swallowed him, and Allah miraculously kept him alive.

When he finally realized that he had done a ‘leaving the better’, he turned to Allah and confessed his shortcoming and negligence. Allah accepted his prayer, too, and delivered him from that strait.[14]

There may be thought that this event, from the point of science, is impossible, but undoubtedly this matter is a supernatural event and not an intellective impossibility.

It is like the dead being quickened, which is considered but a supernatural event, and it is not impossible. In other words, the fulfilment of such a thing in ordinary ways is not possible, but, by asking the help and infinite power of Allah, there is no problem in it.

2. What Darkness Means Here?

This darkness may refer to the darkness of the sea and the depth of water there, or the darkness of the belly of the huge fish, or the darkness of the night. A tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) also verifies this meaning.[15]

3. What Was Yunus’ Leaving the Better?

No doubt the application of the Qur’anic phrase ‘in anger’ refers to the anger of Yunus due to his faithless people, and such an anger and inconvenience in that condition, that a sympathetic divine prophet tries hard during years for guiding a misguided people but they never respond him positively, is completely natural.

On the other side, in view of the fact that Yunus knew that the Divine punishment was coming over them, leaving that city and locality had not been a sin, but for a great prophet such as Yunus, it was better he remained there until the last moment after which the Divine punishment might come.

For this very reason and for this haste, as a leaving the better, Yunus was taken to task from the side of Allah.

4. An Instructive Lesson

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…and thus do We deliver the believers"

shows that Yunus' calamity and deliverance was not only a decree particular to him (as), but, observing the hierarchical order, it has a common and general state.

Many of the sad events, miseries and calamities are the consequences of our own sins. They are whips for awakening our unaware souls, or they are furnaces to purify the material of the man's soul. When a man notices the same three points that Yunus noticed, his deliverance will be certain.

1- Noting the reality of Monotheism, and that there is no god and no refuge but Allah.

2- Glorification and purification of Allah from any defect, deficiency, injustice, cruelty and any wrong imagination about His Pure Essence.

3- Confession to one's own fault.

The witness to this statement is the tradition which has been cited in Durr-ul-Manthur, narrated from the Prophet (S), who said:

"One of the names of Allah by which whoever calls Him he will be answered and whenever he asks something by it He will give him that thing, is the prayer of Yunus."

Once someone asked the Prophet (S) whether that was particular to Yunus alone or it can be used by all Muslim people. The Prophet (S) answered it was related to both Yunus and all the believers when they call Allah by it.

Then he said whether that person had not heard the word of Allah in the Qur'an where He says:

"…and thus do We deliver the believers."

This is a reference that whoever invokes such a prayer Allah has guaranteed its acceptance.[16]

It does not need to be mentioned that the purpose of calling Him is not only pronouncing the mere words, but its reality must be reflected on the inside and the man's soul; i.e. while reciting these words, the whole entity of man must be filled with their meanings in his practice.

This is also necessary to be mentioned here that the Divine punishments are of two kinds. One of them is the punishment of /'istisal/, viz. the Divine punishment which comes for the incorrigible people to annihilate them to which no prayer is beneficial at this time, because after vanishing the storm of the affliction, the same vices will be repeated.

The other kind of punishments is the punishments which are for training aspects. At these times and in these cases, as soon as the punishment affects and the concerning person comes out of his negligence, it will quickly disappear.

This fact makes it clear that one of the philosophies of the miseries, calamities, and inconvenient events is the same effect of vigilance and training.

The event of Yunus also warns all the leaders of the path of Truth in different fields that they should never consider that their mission has ended, nor do they think that any effort and endeavour is small in this way, since their responsibility is very grievous and heavy.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 89 - 90

وَزَكَرِيَّآ إِذْ نَادَي رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لاَ تَذَرْنِي فَرْداً وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ

فَاسْتَجَبْنا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَي وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَباً وَرَهَباً وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ

89. "And (remember) Zachariah, when he called unto his Lord: 'O my Lord! Leave me not alone (without a child); and You are the best of inheritors'."

90. "So We responded to him (his prayer) and bestowed upon him Yahya (John), and We set his wife right (of her barrenness) for him; verily they used to vie one with the other, hastening to good deeds, and called upon Us in yearning and awe; and were humbled before Us."

In these two verses the Holy Qur'an states a part of the biography of the personality of other two great prophets of Allah, Zachariah akarriya and Yahya (John).

At first, it says:

"And (remember) Zachariah, when he called unto his Lord: 'O my Lord! Leave me not alone (without a child); and You are the best of inheritors'."

There came many years to the age of Zachariah, and the snow of senescence covered his head, but he had no child yet. On the other hand he had a barren wife.

He (as) longed for a child who could pursue his divine programs. Then he heartily turned to the Lord and asked for a righteous and fruitful child.

Allah accepted this sincere invocation which was full of love to the Truth, and granted him what he desired, as He says:

"So We responded to him (his prayer) and bestowed upon him Yahya (John)…"

Then the verse implies that: in order that he (as) reaches this aim of his, Allah set the barrenness of wife right for him.

It says:

"…and We set his wife right (of her barrenness) for him;…"

Next to that, the Holy Qur'an points to three outstanding qualities of this family, when it says:

"…verily they used to vie one with the other, hastening to good deeds, and called upon Us in yearning and awe; and were humbled before Us."

They were always humble and that humility was mixed with respect, politeness, and awe, accompanied with the sense of responsibility.

The mentioning of these three qualities may be a hint to the fact that they did not become neglectful and proud at the time of reaching bounties. These are the epithets of the incapacious person and those people whose faith is weak when they gain some affluence.

However, Imam Sadiq (as), concerning the meaning of the Qur'anic words: /raqaban/ and /rahaban/ said that /raqbat/ (yearning) is that in which you set the palms of the hands towards the sky, and /rahbat/ (awe) is that in which you set the back of the hands toward the sky.[17]

Therefore, the speediness in doing good and benevolent deeds and prayer, accompanied with hope and awe, can be effective in the acceptance of supplication.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 91

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِن روحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَآ ءَايَةً لِّـلْعَالَمِينَ

91. "And (remember) her (Mary) who guarded her chastity so We breathed unto her from Our spirit and We appointed her and her son a sign for (all) people."

The main thing in the statement of the Qur'anic matters is the introduction of the human virtues and their examples. In this connection, there is no difference between the virtue of man and woman.

Chastity is one of the most outstanding virtues of a woman, and the chastity of mother can often promote both her and her children to the highest ranks.

The rank of a woman reaches a point where Allah praises her in the row of prophets and sets her as His sign among mankind,

"…We appointed her and her son a sign for (all) people."

So, in this verse, He has pointed to the rank, grandeur, and respect of Mary and her son, Hadrat Messiah (as).

Mentioning Mary in the row of the discussions about great prophets is either for the sake of her son, Hadrat Messiah, or for that her birth, from some points of view, was like the birth of Yahya the offspring of Zachariah, the explanation of which was described in the commentary of the holy verses of Surah Maryam, No. 19.

Or, it is for the sake that it makes clear that the grandeur of that rank is not limited only to the great men, but there have been some great women, too, whose history is the sign of their greatness, and they have been taken as examples and good patterns for the women of the worlds. The verse says:

"And (remember) her (Mary) who guarded her chastity…"

Then, Allah blew into her from His Own spirit and made her and her son a sign for all human beings.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…so We breathed unto her from Our spirit and We appointed her and her son a sign for (all) people."

A Few Points About This Verse

1. The Arabic word /farj/ philologically and originally means 'a distance' and 'a gap', and metaphorically it has been used in the sense of the genital organ of a woman.

But since the metaphorical meaning of it is not usually considered in the Persian Language, sometimes this question arises that why this word, which explicitly means the particular organ of a woman, has been applied in the Holy Qur'an. But if the state of the meaning which is metaphorical to be noted, the problem will be solved.

In other more clear words, if we want to actually render the metaphorical meaning properly, the equivalent meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: /'ahsanat farjaha/ is 'she kept her chastity safely', and thus this meaning is not sharp or biting in this context.

It is better to say, as some believe, there is not any word in the Arabic language to be used for the explicit meaning of genital organ or sexual association. Whatever is found of this kind has a metaphorical aspect.

For sexual association, for instance, there are some words such as: ‘to touch’, ‘to enter’, ‘to cover’, and ‘to go to the spouse’ that have been used in different verses of the Qur’an in this sense, and all of them are in the metaphorical forms.

However, for commenting upon this kind of words, which are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, the essential and original meaning of those words should be noted, in order that the metaphorical aspects of them can be recognized and any ambiguity be dismissed.

It is also necessary to be mentioned that the apparent sate of the abovementioned verse indicates that Mary protected her chastity from any sort of pollution.

But some commentators have offered another meaning for the holy verse saying that probably she restrained from any kind of assoiciation with a man (whether of the lawful or unlawful one).[18] This is the same thing which Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 20 refers to.

It says:

“She said: ‘How shall there be for me a son while no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste!’”

This holy statement is, in fact, a preparation for proving the miraculous birth of Jesus (as) and that his birth was a sign for humankind.

2. The objective of the Qur’anic word /ruhana/ (Our spirit), as has also been said before, is a hint to a great and supreme spirit, and this kind of sentence structure, in Arabic, is for the statement of the greatness of something when it is mentioned together with the name of Allah, like ‘the House of Allah’, and ‘the month of Allah’.

3. The abovementioned verse implies that Allah appointed Mary and her child as a sign for (all) human beings, and it does not say ‘two signs’, for Mary and her son were so close to each other in the verse that they were considered inseparable.

The birth of a child without father is equally so miraculous that pregnancy of a woman without having a husband. The miracles of Jesus (as) in his childhood, as well as in his aged years, are the remindful of the event of his mother.

These matters, each of which was a supernatural event and was contrary to the natural ordinary means, all denote the fact that there is a Power beyond the series of means that whenever it intends it can change their normal courses.

However, the situation of Messiah and his mother, Mary, has been unique throughout the history of man and similar condition to it has been seen neither before it nor after it.

Notes

1. Al-Faghih, vol. 3, p. 57
2. The commentaries of Safi and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the explanation under the verse
4. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 38

www.alhassanain.org/english

5. Verse 83
6. Al-Mizan, narrated from Tafsir-i-Qummi
7. Kafi, vol. 8, p. 253
8. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 44
9. Some other explanations can be studied in English under verse 56, from Surah Maryam, No. 19 (Book No. 9, p. 278)
10. Commentary, by Fakhr-i-Razi
11. The Commentary of Fi-Zilal
12. The commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi under the current verse, and the history of Kamil-i-Ibn-i-'Athir, vol. 1, p. 1036
13. Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 229
14. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the explanation upon the verse under discussion.
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, p. 336
16. Durr-ul-Manthur, according to the narration of Al-Mizan below the verses under discussion
17. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 497
18. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi

Section 7: The Righteous Shall Inherit the Earth

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 92 - 94

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَاْ رَبكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ كُلٌّ إِلَيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ

فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلاَ كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ

92. "Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord: so worship Me."

93. "And they split up their affair among them, (yet, finally,) will they all return unto Us."

94. "Therefore, whoever does deeds of righteousness and he is a believer, there shall not be any rejection of his effort, and verily We will write (it) down for him."

The whole Divine religions have the same aim and lead to the same destination, and Monotheism and unity of the word are the basis of them.

Those who always cause separation among people must prepare themselves to respond before the throne of Allah.

However, in view of the fact that the names of some divine prophets, as well as the name of Mary, the prototype woman, and a part of their biographies were mentioned in the former verses, in the verses under discussion, as drawing a general conclusion, it says:

"Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah…"

This holy verse implies that those great prophets, whom were mentioned formerly, were totally a single Ummah.

Their programs were the same and their final aim and destination were also the same, though they were in different periods and in separate environments, and their styles and manner of invitations, having some particular specialties, were various.

In the ultimate point, all of them were paving their way alongside one line. They all used to invite the people of the world to the way of monotheism and struggle against polytheism. They were wholly on the path of Unity, divine truth and justice.

This oneness and unity, which was in their programs and their aims, was for the sake that all of them were originated from one source, from the Will of Allah, the One.

Therefore, the Lord, immediately after that, says:

"…and I am your Lord: so worship Me."

In fact, the prophets' monotheism in ideology and deeds originates from the Oneness of the source of revelation.

This statement is similar to the words of Hadrat Ali (as) recorded in his testament to his son, Imam Mujtaba (as), who said:

"…know, O' my child, that if there had been a partner with your Lord, his messenger, too, should have come to you and you would have seen signs of his authority and power and you should have known his deeds and qualities.…"[1]

The Arabic word /ummah/, according to Mufradat by Raqib, means any group or nation that a common cause joins them to each other, such as being common in religion and creed, being in the same time or Age, and being in one definite place, whether this unity is optional or non-optional.

Some commentators have considered the phrase: 'single Ummah', mentioned here, as 'a single religion'.

Some others have said that the objective meaning of 'Ummah', in this verse, is the whole mankind in all ages and times.

In this case, it means: O' human beings! All of you are one Ummah, your Lord is One, and the final destination of all of you is a single destination. But the most appropriate meaning of all of them is that: this sentence is a hint to the prophets and messengers whose biographies were mentioned in the former verses.

Then, in the next holy verse, the Qur'an, pointing to the deviation of a large group of people from this single principle of Monotheism, says:

"And they split up their affair among them…"

Their affair reached a point that they stood against each other and every group used to curse another group, and repudiated that party. They did not suffice to that and they made use of weapon against each other and, consequently, many people were killed. And, that was the result of the deviation from the basic principle of monotheism and the religion of the truth.

The Arabic phrase /taqatta'u/ is derived from the word /qat'/ which means to separate some pieces of an inter-chained and connected subject; and regarding to the fact that the word in Arabic is in a construction that has been applied in the sense of acceptance, the sentence means: they surrendered in the fact of disunion and hypocrisy, and they accepted separation and alienation from each other.

They put an end to their natural and theistic union and, as a result of it, they encountered those abundant failures, miseries, and wretchedness.

So, at the end of the holy verse, it adds:

"…(yet, finally,) will they all return unto Us."

This separation, which is not substantial, will be removed and they all will go toward unity again in the Hereafter. This fact has repeatedly been emphasized in different verses of the Qur'an that one of the specialties of the Resurrection is the absence of dissension and being gathered in unity.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 48 says:

"…unto Allah is the return of you all, and then He shall inform you of that in which you used to differ."

This meaning is found in a lot of verses of the Holy Qur'an.[2]

In the last verse of the verses under discussion, the result of accompanying with the 'single Ummah' alongside the path of worshipping Allah, or deviation from it and paving the way of disunion, is said as follows:

"Therefore, whoever does deeds of righteousness and he is a believer, there shall not be any rejection of his effort…"

Then, in order to emphasize more on the matter, the Holy Qur'an adds:

"…and verily We will write (it) down for him."

It is worthy noting that in this verse, like many other verses of the Qur'an, Faith and righteous deeds have been mentioned as two essential principles for the prosperity of human beings; but by adding the Arabic preposition /min/ (of), which is used in Arabic for distinction, the verse adds this matter to it indicating that the accomplishment of all these righteous deeds is not the necessary condition, and if the believing individuals do even a part of the righteous deeds they will also be among the prosperous people while the degrees of persons are different.

In any rate, this verse, similar to many verses of the Qur'an, considers Faith as the condition of the acceptance of the righteous deeds.

The statement of the sentence:

"…there shall not be any rejection of his effort…"

is for the sake of mentioning the reward of such persons and it is a sense which is mingled with the utmost grace, love, and magnanimity, because Allah, in this verse, thanks and praises His servants when He approves their effort and endeavour.

This meaning is also similar to what is said in Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 19 where it says:

"And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive, and he is a believer, (as for) these, their striving shall be thanked."

The promise of reward, recompense, and wage has been pointed out in the Qur'an by different forms of meaning.

Once it says:

"…and We do not waste the reward of the righteous."[3]

In another occurrence it says:

"…(as for) these their striving shall be thanked."[4]

And also the Qur'an says that Allah is thankful:

"…then verily Allah is Grateful, All-knowing."[5]

Somewhere else, it says:

"…He will not diminish aught of your deeds;…"[6]

And, therefore, if you do a small amount of good you will see it.

The Qur'an says:

"So whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."[7]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 95 - 97

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَآ أَنَّهُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

حَتَّى إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُم مِن كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنسِلُونَ

وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقِ فَإِذا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَاوَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

95. "And there is a ban upon (the people of) the towns which We destroyed: that they shall not return."

96. "Until, when Gog and Magog are let through (the way), and they hasten forth from every elevation."

97. "And the true promise has drawn nigh; then behold, staring wide (in terror), the eyes of those who disbelieve! (They say:) 'Alas for us! We were heedless of this (Day); nay; we were unjust ones'."

In the explanation of the former verses, the words were about the righteous believers. Now, here, in the first holy verse mentioned in the above, the Qur'an points to those persons who are in the opposite side, those who go on their aberration and do mischief until the last moment of their life.

The first verse of this group of verses says:

"And there is a ban upon (the people of) the towns which We destroyed that they shall not return."

In fact, they are those who desire to come back to this world again to compensate their whole faults after that they have actually observed the Divine punishment, or after their destruction and going into the purgatory world, where the curtains of pride and negligence go aside from before their eyes.

But the Holy Qur'an explicitly announces that their return to this life again is absolutely forbidden, and there is no way or chance for them to make amends.

This meaning is just like that which we read in Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 99, which indicates that this situation of theirs continues until when their death comes and they ask Allah to return them back to the world in order that they do those righteous deeds that they had neglected to do; but they receive naught save a negative answer.

The verse says:

"Until, when death comes unto one of them, he says: 'My Lord! send me back again."

However, these unaware people are always in pride and negligence, and the continuation of this misfortune will last until the end of the world, as the Qur'an says:

"Until, when Gog and Magog are let through (the way), and they hasten forth from every elevation."

There have been mentioned some discussions in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, from verse 94 on about Gog and Magog, saying who and from what tribe they were, where they were living, and, finally, what they are doing and what they will do.

There have also been discussed in details there about the barrier which Zul-Qarnayn built in a narrow valley in order to prevent their influence.

Is the purpose of the phrase 'these two tribes being let through (the way)' as 'their barrier to be broken, and their influence into other lands of the world thereby'? Or that the objective meaning is their influence, in general, throughout the world and from every side?

The abovementioned holy verse has not explicitly stated anything regarding this matter. It only contains a hint to their spread scattering them in the globe as a sign of the end of the world and a preliminary event for the Resurrection and Hereafter.

However, the Late author of the Commentary of Atyab-ul-Bayan[8] cites as follows:

"This verse is one of the evidences of 'return to life', which is necessary in Shi'ism, and some widely transmitted narrations testify it.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that those who return to life of this world during the course of the second coming will be those believers who had been steadfast in their faith, and also those who had been steadfast in disbelief but had not been annihilated by the worldly chastisement.

This matter is for the reason that the believers benefit from Divine bounties at the presence of the immaculate Imams (as), and the disbelievers may be chastised by the worldly chastisements."

"In other words, this holy verse implies that those absolute disbelievers who will 'return to life' in the course of 'the second coming' are the disbelievers who were not annihilated by means of the Divine punishment but passed away by the natural death.

Thus those disbelievers who were annihilated by means of the Divine punishment, like the peoples of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lut, Shu'ayb, Pharaohs, and the like, will not return during the course of 'the second coming', because they had tasted the worldly chastisement. They will have their resurrection only on the Hereafter Day in order to be given the punishment of that world."[9]

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an immediately says:

"And the true promise has drawn nigh;…"

The disbelievers will be involve in such a horror that their eyes stop moving and will be gazing that scene.

The verse continues saying:

"…then behold, staring wide (in terror), the eyes of those who disbelieve!…"

At this time, the curtains of pride and negligence will go aside from before their eyes, and they will cry:

"…(They say:) 'Alas for us! We were heedless of this (Day);…"

And, since they cannot cover their sin with any pretext and acquit themselves, they will explicitly say:

"…nay; we were unjust ones."

In principle, how may it be possible that with the existence of these numerous Divine prophets and the heavenly Books they remain in negligence while there have been many shaking events for them and the life in this world has taught them different lessons as warnings? Whatever they have done is fault and injustice to them as well as to others.

The Qur'anic word /hadab/ means: the elevations which are surrounded by some low lands. It is also sometimes called to the outgrowth of the man's back.

The Arabic term /yansilun/ is derived from /nusul/ which is applied in the sense of 'going out swiftly'.

The Qur'anic sentence concerning Gog and Magog which says:

"…They hasten forth from every elevation"

refers to their extraordinary influence all over the earth.

The term /šaxisah/ is derived from /šuxus/ which originally means 'going out from home' or 'going out from a city toward another city'.

And, since at the time of surprise and gazing the man's eyes are in a state as if they are coming out from the pupil, this status is also called /šuxus/. This is the status that the sinners will have in the Hereafter. They will be

gazing so much that as if their eyes are about to come out from the pupil of the eyes.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 98 - 100

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنتُمْ لَهَا وَارِدُونَ
لَوْ كَانَ هَؤُلآءِ ءَالِهَةً مَّا وَرَدُوهَا وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لاَ يَسْمَعُونَ

98. "Verily you and what you worship besides Allah shall be the fuel of Hell; you shall go down to it."

99. "If these had been (real) gods, they would not have gone down thither, but all will abide therein."

100. "There shall be sighing for them therein, and they therein shall not hear (any answer)."

Following the discussions of the former verses which were about the fate of the oppressive disbelievers, here the Qur'an, addressing them, illustrates their future destiny and their gods as follows:

"Verily you and what you worship besides Allah shall be the fuel of Hell;…"

You yourselves and your artificial gods are the fuel of Hell and the material that forms its flames, and you will be thrown into Hell like some worthless pieces of wood.

Then, the verse adds:

"…you shall go down to it."

At first, the false gods will be thrown into the Fire, and then the polytheists, who used to worship them, will enter to them. It seems that their false gods entertain them by the fire which raises from their entity.

If this question arises inquiring what is the philosophy of throwing the idols into the Hell Fire, the answer of it can be this that when the idol-worshippers see that they are burning in the fire that comes from their idols, this circumstance is a kind of punishment for them. Besides, it can be also a humiliation for their thoughts that they used to refuge to such worthless beings.

In other words, the advantage of the fact that Allah has put the idol worshippers with their idols and has mentioned them with together is that the opposite case of their expectation has occurred here, because they had imagined that their false gods might intercede for them before the Lord but now, with the chastisement that Allah has assigned for them, the conditions are contrary to it.

Therefore, there will be nothing worse than these false gods for the idol worshippers then.

Question: This verse indicates both the idol worshippers and their idols shall be the fuel of Hell. Are some persons, such as Hadrat Messiah (as), who have been objects of worship, also counted in this formula, or are they exceptions?

Answer: These objects of worship have been counted as exceptions, for: firstly, the Qur'an has referred to the deities as some irrational beings where

it uses ‘what’ in the phrase which says: ‘what you worship’. Hence, the holy Messenger of Allah (S) in answer to the abovementioned question said:

“The Arab’s custom is that they use the word ‘what’ for irrational beings and (the phrase) ‘what you worship’ means the idols made of stone and wood.”[10]

Secondly: The addressees of this holy verse were the idol worshippers of Mecca who used to worship idols made of stone, wood, and so on. Thirdly: in some verses of this very holy Surah, which will orderly be commented later, this fact has been stipulated that those ones whom have been promised good by Allah (such as Hadrat Messiah (as)) are aloof from Hell.

Then, in the next verses, as a general conclusion, the Holy Qur’an concerning the idols announces as follows:

“If these had been (real) gods, they would not have gone down thither…”

But beware that the idol worshippers not only will enter the Hell but also will remain in it forever. The holy verse continues saying:

“…but all will abide therein.”

For further explanation about the painful situation of these ‘misguided worshippers’ who used to serve those worthless objects of worship, the Qur’an says:

“There shall be sighing for them therein…”

These sighs and sad moans may not be only related to those worshippers, but the Satans, whom were their objects of worship, also accompany them in this deed.

The next sentence refers to one of other painful punishments, they will have in Hell, where it says:

“…and they therein shall not hear (any answer).”

This sentence may point to this matter that they will not absolutely hear anything which causes them to become happy. They will be only the hearer of the wearing moans and the call of the angels of chastisement.

Some commentators have said that the purpose of it is that they will hear no voice of anyone at all, as if they are alone in punishment, which itself is the source of further chastisement upon them.

Surah Al-’Anbiya’ - Verse 101

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُم مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ

101. “Verily those for whom the good (promise) has already gone forth from Us, they will be kept far off from it (Hell).”

This holy verse reiterates the qualities of the true believers, as well as the believing men and women in order to compare them with each other and specify the situation of both of them.

At first, it says:

“Verily those for whom the good (promise) has already gone forth from Us, they will be kept far off from it (Hell).”

This meaning refers to the fact that Allah will fulfill all of the promises that He has promised the true believers in the life of this world, one of which is keeping them far off the Fire of the Hell.

In Tafsir-ul-Burhan, according to some narrations, there have been recorded a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The objective of the word /husna/, mentioned in the above verse, is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) and the followers of him."[11]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 102

لاَ يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ

102. "They will hear the slightest sound of it, and they, in what their souls desire, shall abide."

However in welfare a man may be in this world, desired or undesired, he may hear some unwholesome information and bitter news which decrease his pleasure and happiness. But in Hereafter, the people of Paradise will be far off of any bad news, coarse noises and the moans of those who are badly situated. They will be busy enjoying of full pleasure.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"…He has honoured their ears (the people of Paradise) so that the sound of Hell Fire may never reach them (nor the moans of the people of Hell)…"[12]

The Arabic word /hasis/ is used in the sense of a particular and sensible sound (from Fire).

However, this holy verse points to a couple of great Divine bounties bestowed on this prosperous group.

The first of them is that:

"They will hear the slightest sound of it…"

Since the true believers are far from Hell, they will never hear the horrible sounds of it. The next divine bounty is that: whatever they desire and wish to obtain they will enjoy of them eternally.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they, in what their souls desire, shall abide."

That is, in that world, there is not any limitation of the kind of this world for them. They can have any sort of material and spiritual bounties they desire without any exception. They are available for them not only for one or two days, but also for their eternal life.

In conclusion, there are different verses in the Qur'an concerning the quality and quantity of the divine blessings of Paradise.

In one verse, it says:

"…and therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (wherein) the eyes shall delight…"[13]

Here, in the current verse, it says:

"…and they, in what their souls desire, shall abide."

And somewhere else, the Qur'an describes it like this:

"So no soul knows what is hidden for them…"[14]

A tradition narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) denotes that neither has any ear heard nor has any eye witnessed the quality of the bounties of Paradise.[15]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 103

لاَ يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الاَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمُ الَّذِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

103. "The Great Terror (of that Day) shall not grieve them, and the angels shall receive them (saying): 'This is your day, which you were promised'."

Basing on some Islamic traditions, the addressees of this verse are those who, besides having correct notions, run along the path of the leaders who have been appointed by Allah and His Messenger. The Qur'anic phrase /faza'-i-'akbar/ means 'a Great terror' which refers to the horrors of the Day of Hereafter.[16]

Hence, this verse says:

"The Great Terror (of that Day) shall not grieve them…"

Some commentators have considered the meaning of the phrase 'the Great Terror', mentioned in this holy verse, as a hint to the horrors of the Hereafter Day, which is greater than any horror.

Finally, the last grace of Allah, relating to those whom have been referred to in the abovementioned verses, is that the angels of grace will haste to receive them and will say to them congratulation and good tidings.

The verse says:

"…and the angels shall receive them (saying): 'This is your day, which you were promised'."

In Nahjul-Balaqah we read that Ali (as) said:

"…you should therefore be quick in performance of (good) acts so that your way be with His neighbours in His abode, where He has set His messengers their friends, and made the angels to visit them. He has honoured their ears so that the sound of Hell Fire may never reach them."[17]

By the way, there have been recorded some narrations from the holy Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) in Tafsir-ul-Burhan and Safi under this verse indicating that this verse is about the rank of the holy Prophet (S), Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) and the followers of him.

There are also some narrations recorded in the book of 'Amali and Bisharat-ush-Shi'ah, with the same content.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 104

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَآءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَآ أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعْداً عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

104. "The Day when We will roll up the heaven as the rolling up of the scroll for writing; as We originated the first creation, (so) We shall get it return. (This is) a promise binding on Us; (and) surely We are to perform it."

We understood in the previous verse that the true believers will not be grievous because of the 'Great terror'. This verse describes 'that Day of terror', and in fact, it illustrates the cause of that horror.

Concerning the time of its occurrence, it says:

"The Day when We will roll up the heaven as the rolling up of the scroll for writing;…"

There is a delicate simile in this verse about the destruction and rolling up of the scroll of the world of existence at the end of the world. At the present time, this scroll has been opened and all its designs and lines can be read and each of them has been settled in a proper place.

But when the command of Resurrection comes, this scroll, with all its lines and designs, will be rolled up. Then the verse adds implying that there is no problem and hardship for the Great Power of Allah to return it and He will do it in the same way that He originated it at the beginning.

The verse says:

"…as We originated the first creation, (so) We shall get it return.…"

Then, at the end of the verse, Allah says:

"…(This is) a promise binding on Us; (and) surely We are to perform it."

However, some of the authentic Islamic narrations indicate that the objective meaning of 'return', in this verse, is the return of creation in its first form so that human beings will return to life, barefooted and naked, in the same shape that they were at the beginning of their creation; and this is one of the features of the return of creation in its initiating form.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Man will be raised bare in Resurrection"; and then he (as) recited this verse, which says:

"…as We originated the first creation, (so) We shall get it return."[18]

The Arabic word /sijill/ originally was applied for a piece of stone on which something was written; but later gradually it has been used for the sheets of paper on which some materials are written.

The sign of the appearance of Resurrection with the initial creation of the world has repeatedly referred to in the Holy Qur'an.

Once it says:

"…As He brought you forth in the beginning so shall you also return."[19]

In another verse it says:

"And He it is Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and it is easier to him;…"[20]

The objective of 'the heaven', mentioned in this verse, is all the heavens, because in another occurrence the Qur'an has said:

"…and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand;…"[21]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 105

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

105. "And We have written in the Psalms (Zabur), after the Reminder (the Torah), 'My righteous servants shall inherit the earth'."

The Qur'anic word /zabur/ in the Arabic language means: 'any writing and book'.

The noble Qur'an says:

"And everything they have done is in the writings"[22]**,**

but by the frame of reference of the verse which says:

"…and to David We gave 'Zabur'"[23]

it seems that the objective is the Book specialized to David (as), which contains the whole supplications, prayers, and advices of that prophet. This Book was sent down after the Torah; and the purpose of the holy word /ðikr/ (reminder), mentioned in the verse, is also the very Torah.

Its reference is the content of verse No. 48 of the current Surah which indicates that the Torah is /ðikr/ (reminder) where it says:

"And indeed We gave Moses and Aaron the Furqan (criterion) and a Light and a Reminder for the pious ones."

Some Islamic commentators have said that the purpose of mentioning /zabur/ in this verse is all the Divine Books and the objective of /ðikr/ is the Holy Qur'an, and the phrase /min ba'd/ also means 'in addition to'; then, in this case, the verse means: 'in addition to the Qur'an, We have written in all the heavenly Books that verily the inheritors of the earth will be My righteous servants'.

Therefore, in this verse, the Qur'an refers to one of the most clear worldly rewards of the righteous servants, which is the possession of 'the government of the earth'. The Qur'an has pointed to it, with a nice statement, where it says:

"And We have written in the Psalms (Zabur), after the Reminder (the Torah), 'My righteous servants shall inherit the earth'."

The Arabic word /'ard/ is called to the whole globe of the earth which envelops the world thoroughly.

Question: Who are the righteous servants of Allah when He says:

"My righteous servants"?

Answer: The Qur'anic word /salihun/ (the righteous), mentioned here, has a vast scope of meaning by which, besides faith and Monotheism, all eligibilities will be reminded: eligibility from the point of action and piety, eligibility from the point of knowledge and awareness, eligibility from the point of ability and power, and eligibility from the point of management, regularity, and social apprehension.

Some Islamic narrations have explicitly commented this verse upon the followers of Hadrat Mahdi (may Allah hasten his auspicious advent). This meaning is the statement of a high and clear aspect of it which does not confine the generality of the concept of the verse.

The system of creation is a manifest reference for the acceptance of a proper social system of the world of humanity in future. This meaning is the same thing which is understood from the verse under discussion and the traditions concerning the advent of 'the Worldly Great Reformer', Hadrat Mahdi, (may our souls be sacrificed to him).

Finally, once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the commentary of the Qur'anic words /zabur/ and /ðikr/ when he said:

"(The reality of) /ðikr/ is with Allah and /zabur/ is the Book sent down to David, and all the Books which have been sent down are with the people of knowledge, and they are we, the Ahl-ul-Bayt."[24]

As it was mentioned aforetime, there are many narrations which indicate that those righteous servants who will be the inheritors of the earth are the followers of Hadrat Mahdi (as).[25]

Also, some Islamic narrations denote that the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet of Islam (S) will be the inheritors of the earth and they will return to life again.[26]

Majma‘-ul-Bayan, concerning this verse, narrates a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) implying that those righteous servants, whom Allah points to in this verse as the inheritors of the earth, are the followers of Mahdi (as) in ‘the end of the Time’.

Again, upon the explanation of this holy verse, it is cited in Tafsir-i-Qummi that the objective meaning of the fact that the righteous servants of Allah will inherit the earth is Mahdi, the Qa’im, and his followers.

In addition to the abovementioned narrations, which are upon the commentary of this verse, there have been recorded a great many other traditions from the way of Shi‘iet and Sunni about Hadrat Mahdi (as) narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) all of which signify that at last the government of the world will be in the hand of the righteous ones.

Then, a man from the household of the Prophet (S) will rise and will establish justice throughout of the world after that it has been filled with injustice and cruelty.

Among them is this famous holy tradition, which has been narrated from the Prophet (S) recorded in most of the Islamic sources.

It says:

“If there is not remained from the (life of the) world but a day, Allah will prolong that day so that He raises a righteous man from my household by whom the earth will be filled with justice thoroughly the same as it has been filled with injustice and oppression.”[27]

This holy tradition, with the same meaning or with a little difference, has been mentioned in many books of Shi‘ah and Sunni.

It was said in the commentary of verse 33 from Surah Al-Taubah No. 9 that a group of outstanding scholars of Islam, whether from ancient and modern times, Shi‘ah and Sunni, have clearly certified in their books that the traditions concerning the rising of Mahdi (as) are nearly at the level of ‘wide scale’ so that his rising can never be deniable.

There are some reputable books available particularly written in this regard, including:

Abu-Na‘im in ‘’Akhbar-ul-Mahdi’; Ibn-Hajar-Heythami in ‘Al -Ghaul - ul -Mukhtasar -fi -‘Alamat -il -Mahdi -Al -Muntazar’; Showkani in ‘At-Taudih fi Tawatur-i-Ma-Ja’a fi-l-Muntazar wad-Dajjal wal-Masih’; ’Idris-i-‘Araqi Maqribi in the book of ‘Al-Mahdi’. And the news about Mahdi (as) narrated from the Prophet (S), which have been testified and witnessed by the Companions of the Prophet, have been mentioned in a lot of famous Islamic books as well as the main texts of traditions irrespective of ‘Sunan’, ‘Ma‘ajim’ and ‘Masanid’ among which we may point to: ‘Sunan - i - Abu - Dawood’, ‘Sunan - i - Tirmithi’, ‘Ibn - i - Majih’, Ibn - i - ‘Amr - id - Dawani, ‘Musnad - i -’Ahmad’, ‘Ibn - i - Ya‘la’, ‘Bazzaz’, ‘Mustadrak - i - Hakim-i-Neyshaburi’, ‘Ma‘ajim-i-Tabarani’ (the Great and the Moderate), ‘Ruyani’, ‘Dar-Ghutni’, and Abu-Na‘im in ‘Akhbar - ul - Mahdi’, Khatib in ‘Tarikh - i - Baqdad’, Ibn - i - ‘Asakir in ‘Tarikh - i - Damishgh’, and so on.

Again, the traditions concerning Mahdi (as) have been narrated by many of the companions of the Prophet, among them are: ‘Uthman - ibn - ‘Uffan, Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), Talhat-ibn-‘Ubayd-i-llah, ‘Abd-ur-Rahman-ibn-‘Uf, Qurrat-ibn-’Asas Mazni, ‘Abdullah - ibn - Harith, ’Abu - Hurayrih, Khuthayfat - ibn-Yaman, Jabir - ibn - ‘Abdillah, Abu -’Umamah, Jabir-ibn-Majid, ‘Abdillah - ibn-‘Umar, ’Anas-ibn-Malik, ‘Imran-ibn-Hasin, and ’Umm-as-Salamah.

These are twenty persons out of all those who have narrated the traditions about Mahdi (as). Therefore, there are so many others, besides them, who have narrated the traditions regarding him (as).

There are a lot of reliable statements recorded from the source of the companions of the Prophet themselves in which the discussion of the reappearance and advent of Hadrat Mahdi (as) is seen and which can also be set in the row of the Prophet’s traditions.

This subject is not among the subjects about which can be said some things by means of ‘individual reasoning’. (Therefore, naturally they have also heard this subject from the Prophet (S).)

Also, among those scholars who have declared explicitly that the traditions concerning Mahdi (as) are at the level of ‘wide scale’ are: As-Sakhawi in the book entitled ‘Fath-ul-Muqith’, Muhammad - ibn - Ahmad - Safawini in ‘Sharh - ul -‘Aghidah’, ’Abul - Hassan - il - Abari in ‘Manaqib - i-Sh-Shafi‘i, Ibn - Tayyimmiyah in his book of Fatawi ‘Pronouncements’, ‘Suyuti’ in Al-Hawi, Idris-i-‘Araqi in his book upon Mahdi (as), Showkani in the book named ‘At-Toudih - fi - Tawatur - i -Maja’a-fil-Muntazar’, Muhammad Ja‘far Kanani in ‘Nazm-ut-Tanathur’.

You may see the commentary books of Shi‘ah, upon the verses of the Qur’an where the narrations about Mahdi (as) are fully available, among them are: Tafsir - ul - Burhan, Safi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Atyab - ul - Bayan, Nur-uth - Thaqalayn, the books like Al - Kafi, Bihar, Tibyan, Muntakhab-ul-’Athar, Nur-ul-’Absar, and the like.

Thus, the belief in the advent of Mahdi (as) is incumbent (for every Muslim), and this is considered as a part of the doctrine of Men of Tradition and community, and the sect of twelve-Imam Shi‘ism.

A Few Traditions Upon Expecting For Mahdi

1. Someone once asked Imam Sadiq (as) about his opinion concerning the one who believes in guardianship (Wilayah) of the Imams (as), and expects the advent of the government of Justice while, in this case, he dies.

The Imam (as) said:

“He is like the one who is with the leader of this revolution in his camp, (his army group).”

Then, after a pause, he (as) said:

“He is like the one who is with the messenger of Allah (in his struggles).”[28]

This meaning, with a little difference, has been cited in many Islamic narrations.

2. In some narrations it has also been said:

“He is like a sword striker in the way of Allah.”

3. In some others, it has been said:

"He is like the one who strikes on the enemy's head by his sword with the Messenger of Allah."

4. Some other narrations say:

"He is like the one who is under the flag of Qa'im 'the Upholder'."

5. Some of them say:

"He is like a struggler who fights (in the cause of Allah) before the Messenger of Allah."

6. Some others say:

"He is like the one who suffers martyrdom with the Messenger of Allah."

These six similes, which have been narrated upon the expectation of the advent of Mahdi (as), make this fact clear that there is a kind of relation and similarity between the subject of 'expectation', on one side, and 'the Holy Struggle' which is combating against the enemy of Allah in its latest form, on the other side.

7. So many narrations indicate that having an expectation of such a government has been introduced as the most elevated worship. In some traditions, this meaning has been narrated from the Prophet (S) and in some others from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as).

In a tradition we read that the Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"The most excellent deeds of my Ummat is the expectation of deliverance from the side of Allah, Almighty and Glorious."[29]

Another tradition narrated from the Messenger of Islam (S) says:

"The most excellent deed is the expectation of deliverance."[30]

Whether, we consider 'the expectation of deliverance' in the sense of its vast meaning or in its peculiar meaning, i.e., in the sense of 'expecting for the advent of 'the great worldly reformer', this tradition makes the importance of the act of expectation clear regarding to our discussion.

These concise expressions wholly denote that having the expectation of such a revolution is always coupled with a vast and extensive Holy Struggle. Having this idea in mind, you may pay attention to the concept of expectation, and then we can conclude from all of them.

The state of 'expectation' is usually used for the one who is inconvenient from the existing condition and struggles for creating a better circumstance.

For example, the sick person who waits for becoming better, or a father who waits for his son to come back from abroad, both of them are worried, one from sickness and another from the separation of the child, and they try for a better situation.

Also, a merchant, who is worried about the bad state of the market and waits for the economic crises to become normal, has two moods: 'estrangement with the existing situation', and 'struggle for a better situation'.

Therefore, the subject of expectation (or waiting) for the government of justice and probity ruled by Mahdi (may Allah hasten his advent), and the rising of the worldly reformer, in fact, are defined in two categories: the negative element, and the positive element.

The negative element here is that very 'estrangement with the existing situation' and the positive element is 'the desire for a better situation'. If

these two aspects influence deeply in the soul of man, they will become the source of two branches of vast and extensive deeds.

These two branches of deeds consist in abandoning any competition and harmony with the factors of injustice, vice, mischief and even struggling against them all, from one side, and self-improvement, self-support, attracting the physical and mental preparations, as well as both material and spiritual preparations for the auspicious formation of that single worldly government, on the other side.

If we take care well we can see that both of those two branches of deeds not only are constructive, but also are the factors of movement, cognizance, and awareness.

Regarding the essential concept of this ‘expectation’, the meaning of the numerous narrations, which were mentioned in the above, about the reward and the result of those who ‘expect’, may be understood manifestly.

It is now that we understand why the true expectants sometimes have been counted as those who are in Mahdi’s tent or are under his flag, or like the one who fights in the cause of Allah, or his blood is poured, or has suffered martyrdom.

Do they not hint to the different stages and degrees of struggle in the way of truth and justice which are proportional to the quality of the preparation and the level of persons’ expectation!

That is, as the amount of self-sacrifice of the strugglers of the way of Allah and their functions are different with each other, expectation, self-improvement and preparation are also completely different in degrees, each of which from the point of preliminary situation and consequence has similarity with one of them.

Both of them are Holy struggles and both of them require preparation and self-improvement. The person who is in the camp of the leader of that kind of government, i.e. he is in the center of command of an army of a worldly government, cannot be a negligent and an unaware individual.

That position is not the place for any ordinary person. It is the place of some equipped persons who are really worthy of that significant position.

To be more and well acquainted with the true effects of the expectation for the reappearance of Mahdi (as), you may notice the following explanations:

Expectation Means ‘Full Prepared’

If I am unjust and oppressive, how can I be waiting for the one the prey of whose sword is the blood of the unjust?

If I am really polluted and impious, how can I wait for a revolution whose flame initially seizes the skirt of the polluted ones?

The army which is awaiting for a great Holy War, increases the preparation of its personnel, blows a spirit of revolution in them, and improves any weak point therein.

The reason of it is that the quality of ‘expectation’ may always proportionate to the goal and destination which we are expecting for:

The expectation of coming an ordinary traveler from the voyage.

The expectation of the return of a very dear friend when he is going to come back.

The expectation of the arrival of the season of harvest and picking up fruits from trees.

Every one of these expectations is allied with a kind of preparation. In one of them the house must be prepared and the means of entertaining must be made ready; in another one its necessary tools must be brought forth,…

Now you may think of those who are expecting for a great worldly reformer. They are, in fact, expecting a revolution, shifting, and transformation which is the vastest and the most fundamental revolution among the revolutions of humankind throughout the history of man.

It is a revolution which, contrast to the former revolutions, is not provincial. Not only it is common and general, but also involves all the affairs and necessities of the lives of human beings. It is a political, cultural, economical and ethical revolution.

Before anything else, such a revolution is in need of some prepared and eligible men who can carry the heavy load of that vast improvement of the world on their backs; and this, at first stage, needs that the level of thought, cognizance, and mental and spiritual preparation of people be promoted for the cooperation in actualization of that great program.

Insularities, narrow scope in minds, ill-thoughts, jealousies, childish and unwisely discords, and, in general, any kind of hypocrisy and dissension do not agree with the position of the true expectants of Mahdi (as).

The important matter is that the true expectant of that significant program can never have the role of a mere spectator. He must certainly join the row of revolutionists from just now.

The belief in the good results and the end of this shifting may never let him be in the row of the opponents of that revolution, and being in the row of the adherents of it needs having pure and pious deeds either, as well as leading a more pious soul with the possession of ‘courage’ and sufficient ‘awareness’.

If I am corruptible and vicious, how can I be waiting for a system of government in which the corruptible and vicious individuals have no function? They will be rejected and hated therein.

Is this expectation enough for purifying one’s soul and mind, and wiping out both the body and spirit from the dirt of pollutions in his life?

The army that waits for the Holy Struggle of liberty, will surely be in the state of being full ready and will equip itself with a weapon which is suitable for such a battle-field.

It will make the necessary fortresses ready, will elevate the epic preparation of its personnel, will strengthen their courage, and keep the flame of love and eager in the hearts of its soldiers alive, one by one, for such a struggle. The army, which lacks such a preparation, does not live in ‘expectation’, and if it demands it, it tells a lie.

The real expectation for a worldly reformer means a full mental, ethical, material and spiritual readiness in people for the improvement of the world entirely. You may consider how constructive such a preparation can be.

The First Philosophy, Personal Self-Improvement

The improvement of the world thoroughly, and putting an end to all injustices and ruins, is not so easy and it cannot be a simple job. The

preparation for such a great aim should be symmetrical with it, i.e., it must be similarly with the same expansion and depth that it is.

For actualizing such a revolution, some very great men, who are always decided, very powerful, without defeating, extraordinarily pure and liberal, completely prepared, and with deep insight, are needed.

Self-improvement for this aim requires the application of the best ethical, mental, and social programs. This is, in fact, the meaning of 'the true expectation'. Can anyone say that such an expectation is not constructive?

The Second Philosophy, Social Succours

At the same time, the true expectants are dutiful not only to be careful to their own selves, but they also must be careful of the circumstance of each other, and, besides improving their own selves, try to improve others, too.

The heavy and great program, which they are waiting for, is not a personal one; it is a program that all the elements of the revolution must take part in it. The job is encompassing and it must be accomplished by all members.

The efforts and endeavours must, indeed, become harmonized and the depth and expansion of this harmony must be as great as that worldly revolution which they are expecting for.

In a vast field, where a group of strivers are totally busy striving, usually no individual can remain neglectful of the circumstances of others.

On the contrary, he ought to amend any weak point that he sees somewhere, and he must improve any situation which may be damageable, and strengthen any weak and inconvenient part he finds.

For, without the active and harmonized participation of all the members of strivers, the actualization of such a program is impossible.

Thus, the true expectants, in addition that they always try to improve themselves, should consider their own duty to improve others, too.

This is another constructive effect of the expectation for the rising of a worldly reformer; and this is the philosophy of all those virtues which have been enumerated for the true expectants (of Mahdi).

The Third Philosophy: True Expectants May Not Assume the Corruption of The Environment

Another important effect that lays in the expectation for Mahdi (as) is the lack of being changed into the mischief of the environment and the absence of any submission to the pollutions.

Its explanation is that when corruption covers everywhere, and it gets the majority or a great many of the people of the society involved into that pollution, sometimes the pious ones may find themselves in a very narrow and difficult blind psychological status. It is a blind situation which originates from the despair of improvements.

Sometimes they think that the dice has been cast and there is no hope for its improvement, so the effort for keeping pure oneself is of no avail.

This hopelessness and despair may take them gradually toward corruption and being of the same nature of he environment in a manner that they cannot preserve themselves as a righteous minority contrast to an

impious majority; and think of not being alike the community as the cause of their defame.

The only thing that can blow hope in them and invite them to resistance and self-control, so that they do not assume the nature of the corruptive environment, is the hope to the final improvement.

It is only in this case that they do not abandon the effort and endeavour for preserving their own purity and improving others.

So, we see in the Islamic instruction that the despair of divine forgiveness has been considered as one of the greatest sins, and some unaware persons may surprise why despair from the mercy of Allah has been counted so important, even more important than many other faults, its philosophy is this very fact that the sinner who is despair of the mercy of Allah (s.w.t.) may find no reason to decide to recompense, or at least stops committing that sin.

His logic is: 'In for a penny, in for a pound'; 'Black will take no other hue'; 'It's end is Hell'; and the like of these logics.

But, as soon as the window of hope will be opened to him - the hope for Allah's forgiveness, the hope for the change of the existing situation - there can be a turning point in his life which invites him to stop committing sin and return towards piety and improvement.

It is for this very reason that 'hope' can be recognized as an effective factor in training the corrupt persons, as well as those good doers who are captured in the corrupt environment, and cannot protect themselves without hope.

The conclusion is that: the much impious and vicious the world becomes, the more the expectation of the advent of a reformer increases and it has an increasing spiritual positive effect in the believers. It guarantees them against the powerful waves of mischief.

They not only will not despair with the expansion of the range of mischief in the environment, but also behold nigh, in front of them, the approach of gaining the goal; and their effort for struggling against corruption or their self-protection will be pursued by an increasing desire and love.

From the totality of the aforementioned discussions, it can be concluded that if expectation, with its real meaning, be actualized in both the society and individuals, it will be an important factor from the point of training, self-improvement, and movement.

Among clear references which certify this subject is that, upon the commentary of the verse which says:

"Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth…"[31]**,**

there has been narrated from some great leaders of Islam that the purpose of this verse is 'Mahdi (as) and his followers'.[32]

Another tradition indicates that 'this verse has been sent down about Mahdi (as)'.[33]

In this recent verse he (as) and his followers have been introduced as 'those of you who believe and do righteous deeds'.

Thus, the actualization of this worldly revolution is impossible without a firm belief which repels any kind of weakness, despicableness, and feebleness, and without the righteous deeds that pave the way for the improvement of the world.

So, those who are waiting for such a program not only must increase the standard of their awareness and faith, but also ought to try to improve their actions.

These are only those who can give the glad tidings of association with his government to themselves, not those who are accomplice with injustice and cruelty, nor those who are far from Faith and righteous deeds.

Nor those coward and despicable persons who, as a result of the weakness of their Faith, have always scare from everything, even from their own shadow.

Nor those listless, idle, and inattentive persons who remain silent in front of the corruptions of their environment and their society, and show the least challenge and effort in the way of struggle against corruption. This is the constructive effect of the rising of Mahdi (as) in the Islamic society.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 106

إِنَّ فِي هَذَا لَبَلاَغاً لِقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ

106. "Verily in this is a (great) message for a people (who) worship."

We were acquainted by the previous verse that the heritage and the government of the righteous ones on the earth will, in fact, actualize with two conditions. One of them is the pure servitude before Allah, which was referred to with the word 'My servants'; and the second condition of it is earning the eligibility of being 'righteous'.

The abovementioned verse again implicitly emphasizes on the fact that the servants must receive this message that they must both become pure in servitude, and elevate themselves from the stage of general and common 'worshipping' to the stage of especial submission (My servant), and try to create eligibility in them.

The verse says:

"Verily in this is a (great) message for a people (who) worship."

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"(Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of the Qur'an. No one should excel you in acting upon it."[34]

Therefore, the good servants of Allah should receive the message of Allah before any other persons.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 107

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

107. "And We sent you not save a Mercy for (all) the worlds."

The government of the righteous servants of Allah over the earth is a merit reflected from the grace and mercy of Allah (s.w.t.) which can be received in the light of messengership. And whatever of the prophetic mercy will be bestowed upon the individuals both in this world and Hereafter is a ray from the Divine Mercy.

All of the Divine ordinances, even the Holy Struggle, fixed punishments for certain crimes, retaliation, and other retributions and the penal laws of Islam are also mercy for the Society of Human beings. Allah is 'The Lord of the worlds' and His Messenger is 'a Mercy for (all) the worlds'. That is, the true training is possible to occur under the shadow of the prophets' guidance.

In all ages, and in all localities, and for all human beings, the Prophet of Islam (S) is 'a mercy' and there is no need of any other prophet, as the abovementioned holy verse announces:

(… a Mercy for (all) the worlds).

So, in this holy verse, the Qur'an points to the general mercy of the personality of the Prophet (S), where it says:

"And We sent you not save a Mercy for (all) the worlds."

This statement means that all mankind in the world, believers and disbelievers in general, are totally in pawn of the Prophet's mercy, because he undertook the propagation of a religion which was the cause of deliverance of the whole.

The Prophet of Islam (S) is a mercy even for the divine near-stationed angels, too. In a tradition we read that Gabriel told the Prophet (S) that his mercy covered him (Gabriel), too.[35]

There is an interesting tradition cited here which verifies this generality of mercy. It says when this verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) asked Gabriel:

"Did anything of this mercy reach you?"

Gabriel in answer said:

"Yes. Verily I had frightened about the end of my affair, but because of the verse revealed to you I became certain, where Allah praised me with His word, (saying): "Gabriel is in a high position with Allah, the Creator of 'Arsh."[36]

However, in the world of today where kinds of mischief, corruption, oppression and injustice are seen everywhere, the fire of war is burning in every direction, and the claws of the cruel authorities are pressing the throats of the oppressed; in the world where ignorance, impiety, treachery, vice, injustice, despotism, and unjust discrimination have brought thousand kinds of distortions into existence; yes, in such a world, the concept of being 'a Mercy for (all) the worlds' is more clear due to the Prophet of Islam (S) than any other time.

What a mercy can be higher than this that he has brought a program whose practicing puts an end to all these failures, miseries, and ignominies.

Yes, he, his orders, his program and his manner all are mercy. A mercy for all, and in the meantime, the continuation of which will lead to the faithful righteous ones' government throughout the earth.

By the way, the Arabic word /'alamin/ (all the worlds) has such a vast meaning that its concept encompasses all human beings in all ages. That is why this holy verse has been considered for a hint to the Prophet of Islam (S) as a seal of the Divine prophets.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 108 - 109

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَي إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُسْلِمُونَ

فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ ءَاذَنتُكُمْ عَلَي سَوَآءٍ وإِنْ أَدْرِي أَقَرِيبٌ أَم بَعِيدٌ مَا تُوعَدُونَ

108. "Say: 'It is revealed to me that your God is One God; do you then surrender?'"

109. "Then if they turn back, say: 'I have warned you equally, and I know not whether nigh or far is that which you are promised'."

In view of the fact that the most important manifestation of mercy, and its firmest foundation is monotheism, by the above verse the Prophet (S) was commanded as follows:

"Say: 'It is revealed to me that your God is One God; do you then surrender?'"

The Prophet (S), addressing the idolaters, said in implication whether they were ready to surrender to this very principal, the monotheism, and to abandon idols.

There are stated, in fact, three fundamental points in this verse. The first is that the main basis of mercy is monotheism. Truly, the more we contemplate, the more will become the existence of this strong connection clear.

It is the monotheism in belief, the monotheism in action, the monotheism in the 'word', the monotheism in the rows, the monotheism in law, and the manifestation of monotheism in everything.

Another point is that in relation to the Qur'anic word /'innama/, which refers to the existence of restriction here, the whole invitations of prophets concentrate in the principle of monotheism.

Exact researches also show that the theological principles, and even the fundamental principles of ordinances, finally return to the principle of monotheism.

For this very reason, as we have also reiterated formerly, Monotheism is not a mere principle of the principles of Faith, but it is a strong string that joins the beads of a rosary to each other; or, in a more proper word, it is a soul blown in the body of the religion.

The last point is that the essential problem of all societies and nations is their pollution with polytheism in different forms, because the Qur'anic phrase which says: /fa hal 'antum muslimun/

(do you submit to this principle?)

indicates that the main difficulty is the act of coming out from polytheism and its manifestations and lacking in the action of breaking idols, not merely breaking the wooden and stone idols, but all kinds of idols and human deities in particular.

When Hadrat Imam Rida (as) was in the middle of thousands adherents in Neyshabur, in answer to the demand of the people, he stated his holy tradition known as 'Silsilat-uth-Thahab' implying that Monotheism is the firm fortress of Allah and whoever enters it will have immunity and will be safe completely.

Then he (as) added that the condition of this monotheism is the acceptance and subordination of the alive Imam.[37]

Then, in the next verse Allah recommends to the Prophet (S) that if, with all these matters, they do not pay attention to the Divine invitation and Message, and they turn back, he should tell them that he had warned them equally of the punishment of Allah.

The verse says:

"Then if they turn back, say: 'I have warned you equally…"

The Qur'anic word /'aðantu/ is derived from /'iðan/ in the sense of 'announcing coupled with threat', and sometimes it has been applied with the sense of 'declaration of war', too.

But, in view of the fact that this Surah was revealed in Mecca, where there was neither the preparation of the Holy War nor was the command of Holy War sent down, it seems very improbable that this phrase could here be in the sense of 'declaration of war'.

On the contrary, the apparent of the statement is that by this saying, the Prophet (S) intends to declare hatred and separation from them and to show that he has given up hope of them totally.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'ala siwa'/ (equally) is either a hint to the fact that due to the Divine punishment he warns them all equally, lest they would suppose that the people of Mecca or Quraysh were different from others and they had a privilege and superiority with Allah; or a hint to the fact that he has conveyed his message to all of them without any exception.

Then he (S) states this threat more clearly and says:

"…and I know not whether nigh or far is that which you are promised'."

Do not suppose that this promise is very far to happen; it may be nigh, and very nigh, either.

This punishment by which they have been warned here may be the punishment of the Hereafter, or the chastisement of the world, or both of them. In the first case, its knowledge is with Allah and no one is properly aware of the date of its happening, even the prophets of Allah.

And in the second and third case, it may refer to its details and its time, meaning that he (S) is not aware of its details, because the Prophet's knowledge upon these kinds of happenings has not always the aspect of action, but sometimes it has the voluntary aspect, that is, he does not know unless he wills.

Note the following question and answer:

Question: It is understood from many verses of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions that the Prophet of Islam (S) had a vast portion of the 'knowledge of hidden things'.

In Nudbah Supplication we recite:

"(O' Allah!) You taught him (The Prophet (S)) the knowledge of the past and the future of the world."

But in a few verses, like the above one, we encounter some sentences which show the lack of knowledge in the holy Prophet (S). Do these verses and traditions contrast each other? Or, is there a positive relation between them?

Answer: The knowledge of hidden things is of two kinds. A part of it belongs to the Pure Essence of Allah and there is no way for anyone into it, including the time of the occurrence of Hereafter.

We say in some supplications:

"O' Allah! We call You by the knowledge which You have specialized for Yourself."

But there is another part of it which Allah bestows upon His prophets, saints and whoever else He wills, like what is in the verse where He says:

"This is of the news of the Unseen which We reveal to you;…"[38]

Many of the Qur'anic matters are among the Unseen things, like the verse which says:

"The knower of the Unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any,"
"Except to him whom He chooses as a Messenger…"[39]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"…By Allah, if I wish, I can tell every one of you from where he has come, where he has to go, and all his affair, but I fear lest you abandon the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) in my favour. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from that fear…"[40]

In another tradition, also he (as) said:

"…O' people! A time will come to you when Islam would be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents.…"[41]

Again, Imam Ali (as) said:

"A time will come to you when there would be nothing concealed more than the truth and more manifest than the wrong, and more current than forging lies to Allah, the Exalted, and His Messenger (S)."[42]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verses 110 - 111

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ

وَإِنْ أَدْرِي لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ

110. "Verily He knows what is spoken aloud and He knows what you conceal."

111. "And I know not haply this (respite) may be a trial for you, and an enjoyment for a while."

In this holy verse the Qur'an implies that you should never think that if there is a delay in your punishment it is for that Allah is not aware of your deeds and words. Nay! He knows everything. He knows both your manifest statements and what you conceal.

The verse says:

"Verily He knows what is spoken aloud and He knows what you conceal."

In principle, the quality of being concealed and manifest is meaningful for you who are limited in knowledge. For Allah, Whose knowledge is infinite, both the Unseen and the visible are the same, and there is no difference between secret and manifest therein.

Then, the second holy verse implies that if you see that the Divine punishment does not meet you quickly, it is not for the reason that He is not aware of your affair.

So, the verse says:

"And I know not haply this (respite) may be a trial for you…"

He desires that you enjoy the pleasures of this world for a while and then He will seize you violently and punish you.

The verse continues saying:

"…and an enjoyment for a while."

In fact, there are two philosophies stated here for the delay of the Divine punishment. The first one is the subject of trial; for Allah does not haste in punishing wrong doers in order to test them enough and to complete the argument to them.

The second philosophy is that there are some people whose trial has ended and their punishment has been decided, but for the sake that they receive their chastisement fully, He spreads the bounties for them so that they become completely drowned in them, and just at the same time that they are busy enjoying themselves, He strikes the lash of punishment over them to be more painful for them, and they feel the pain of the deprived and oppressed well.

The Qur'an says:

"…We give respite to them only that they may increase in sin;…"[43]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' - Verse 112

قَالَ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَي مَا تَصِفُونَ

112. "He said: 'O my Lord! Judge You with truth! And our Lord is the Beneficent, Whose help is sought against that which you ascribe (unto Him)'."

In this verse, which is the last verse of Surah Al-'Anbiya', similar to the content of the first verse of this Surah, the words are upon the negligence of the unaware people.

As reiterating the statement of the Prophet (S), in a curse-like phrase, the Qur'an reflects his worriment from all those prides and negligence they had. After observing their whole aversion and turning back, the holy Prophet (S) invoked his Lord to judge over that disobedient group and punish them with justice.

The verse says:

"He said: 'O my Lord! Judge You with truth!…"

In the second sentence he (S) addresses the opponent of Islam and says:

"…And our Lord is the Beneficent, Whose help is sought against that which you ascribe (unto Him)'."

In fact, the verse, by the application of the Qur'anic word /rabbana/ (our Lord) attracts their attention to this fact that we all are creatures and are under His Lordship and He is the Creator and the Lord of us totally.

The usage of the Qur'anic holy word /'arrahman/ (the Beneficent) in the verse, which refers to the general Mercy of Allah, reminds them that the whole entity of their existence thoroughly is encompassed by the Divine

Mercy; then why do they not always contemplate about the creator of all these bounties and mercy?

And the Qur'anic holy phrase /'almusta'anu 'ala ma tasifun/

(… whose help is sought against that which you ascribe (unto Him))

warns them that they should not imagine that the Prophet (S) and the believers are alone before their opponents, and they should not consider that their whole accusations, lies and undue taunts fabricated against the Pure Essence of Allah and against Muslims will remain with no answer.

Nay! It will never be such, because He is the support of us all and He is able to defend the believers against any kind of lies and accusations.

O Lord! as You did not leave alone Your Messenger and his few companions before their mass of enemies, leave us not alone before the enemies in the East and in the West who have decided to abolish us!

O Lord! In this blessed Surah, You have specially stated Your particular mercy unto the prophets when they were at hard and difficult times and were involved in the crises of their lives. O Lord! At this time, too, we are involved in the same crises and we expect the same mercy and particular relief. Amin, O the Lord of the worlds!

The End of Surah Al-'Anbiya'

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balaqah, letter 31
2. Surah Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 55; and Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 164
3. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 56
4. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 19
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 158
6. Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 14
7. Surah Al-Zilzal, No. 99, verse 7
8. Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 242
9. Similar to this meaning is found in the commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan, Atyab-ul-Bayan, Tafsir-us-Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan following the verse.
10. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 9, p. 282
11. Burhan, vol. 3, p. 72
12. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 183
13. Surah Az-Zukhruf, No, 43, verse 71
14. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 17
15. Al-Faghih, vol. 1, p. 295
16. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan
17. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 183
18. Nahjul-Balagah, sermon 111
19. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 29
20. Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 27
21. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 67
22. Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 52
23. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 55, and Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 163
24. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 225
25. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
26. Tafsir-i-Qummi, vol. 2, p. 297
27. Sunan-i-Tirmathi, vol. 4, p. 505; Zakha'ir-ul-'Ughba, p. 136; Al-Bayan Gangi, Shafi'i, p. 141; Muntakhab-ul-'Athar fi Sharh-i-Hal-i-Imam-uth-Thani-'Ashar, p. 161
28. Mahasin Barghi, Narrated from Bihar, old edition, vol. 13, p. 136
29. Kafi, adapted from Bihar, vol. 13, p. 137
30. Ibid, p. 136
31. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 55

32. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, vol. 13, p. 14
33. Tafsir-us-Safi and Tafsir-i-Burhan, under the holy verse
34. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Letter No. 47
35. Tafsir-us-Safi, p. 359
36. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Tafsir-us-Safi, under the verse
37. Bihar, vol. 3, p. 7
38. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 44
39. Surah Al-Jinn, No. 72, verses 26 and 27
40. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 175
41. Ibid, sermon 103
42. Al-Kafi, No. 8, pp. 387, 586
43. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 178

Surah Al-Hajj, Chapter 22

The Feature of Surah Al-Hajj

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Hajj

(The Pilgrimage),

No. 22

This Holy Surah was revealed in Medina and contains 78 verses.

The Contents of the Surah

Since some verses of this Surah are about Hajj pilgrimage, it has been called Surah Al-Hajj.

In view of the fact that the commandment of Hajj pilgrimage accompanied with some of its details, as well as the command of Holy War, which were related to the circumstances of the Muslims in Medina, the verses of this Surah are somehow like the Medinan Suras.

From the point of the contents, the matters recited in this Surah can be divided into several parts:

Many verses of this Surah are about Resurrection and its logical reasoning. They also consist of some warnings upon those people who are negligent of the events of the Hereafter, and the like.

A considerable part of this Holy Surah speaks about the struggles against idolaters and polytheists.

Another part of it invites people to verify the instructive fate of those who passed away, and the painful Divine punishments which were sent down upon them.

And, another part of it is about the Hajj pilgrimage and its historical background.

Again, a part of it is rather about the struggles which were performed against the hostile invaders.

And, finally, a part of the Surah contains some advices upon different fields of life, and some encouragement to prayer, almsgiving, trust, and considering Allah.

The Virtue of Reciting the Surah

A tradition narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h) indicates that he said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-Hajj, Allah will reward him both the reward of pilgrimage and lesser pilgrimage of all those who have done them in the past and all those who will do them in the future."[1]

No doubt this great reward and virtue is not for a mere recitation of the Surah in expression, but it is a recitation which provides contemplation, and a contemplation which leads to action.

Also, Imam Sadiq (as) has been narrated who said:

"Whoever recites this Surah every three days, he will not go out of the year but he will be honored to go to the Sacred House."[2]

Notes

1. Tafsir-us-Safi, Burhan, and Majma‘-ul-Bayan
2. Tafsir-us-Safi-Burhan, and Majma‘-ul-Bayan

Section 1: The Awful Day of Judgment

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 1 - 2

يَآ َ هَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ

يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُل مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُل ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَي النَّاسَ

سُكَارَي وَمَاهُم بِسُكَارَي وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ

1. "O Mankind! Be in awe of your Lord! Verily the earthquake of the Hour (of doom) is a grievous thing."

2. "On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see the people (as) intoxicated, yet they are not intoxicated, but the chastisement of Allah is severe."

This Surah begins with two shaking and exciting verses concerning Resurrection and its preparations. These are verses that may take the reader involuntarily out from this material fleeting life and make him mindful of the dreadful future which he waits for.

At first, the Holy Qur'an addresses the whole human beings, with no exception, and says:

"O Mankind! Be in awe of your Lord! Verily the earthquake of the Hour (of doom) is a grievous thing."

The Qur'anic phrase /ya 'ayyuhannas/ (O mankind) is a clear evidence upon this fact that there is no exception and difference in this idea from the point of: races, languages, nations, tribes, ages, places, and geographical regions, whether they are believers, disbelievers, young, old, man and woman. All of them, who live at the present time and in the future, are addressed totally.

This verse has illustrated some examples of the great terror of the Day of Resurrection in a few sentences.

It implies that, on that Day, you will observe, by your own eyes, that every suckling mother shall forget her little child and every pregnant woman, who attends in that scene, shall face with abortion, because, as a result of the earthquake of the Resurrection, horror and fear will encompass all people thoroughly.

The verse says:

"On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden…"

The third illustration of the verses, which is visualized, is the circumstances that people shall be in it on That Day.

It says:

"…and you shall see the people (as) intoxicated, yet they are not intoxicated, but the chastisement of Allah is severe."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 3

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّرِيدٍ

3. "And among people there are such as dispute about Allah without knowledge, and follow every rebellious Satan."

Since, in the former verse, there was an illustration of the general fear of people which will occur at the time of the earthquake of the Resurrection, this verse speaks about the circumstances of some unaware group of people who are neglectful of such a great event, the Resurrection.

The verse in this regard says:

"And among people there are such as dispute about Allah without knowledge…"

Sometimes there are some people who dispute against the principle of monotheism, the Oneness of the Truth, and about the subject of polytheism, and sometimes they dispute about the Power of Allah in giving life to the dead and making them alive again for the Resurrection. In any case, they have no proof for their sayings.

Then, the verse adds that such people, who follow no logic and knowledge, obey every rebellious and disobedient Satan.

It says:

"…and follow every rebellious Satan."

They follow not only one Satan, but also they follow all Satans whether they are human or jinn, each of which have a different plan, program, plot, and device by itself.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 4

كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَن تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

4. "About whom (Satan) it is decreed that whosoever takes him for friend, then verily he will mislead him and will guide him unto the torment of the burning Fire."

The Arabic word /sa'ir/ is derived from /sa'ara/ which means 'flaming of fire', and here it refers to the Hell Fire which is more blazing than any fire.

Qur'anic term /hada/ has been used here in the sense of 'leading,' that is, Allah leads the servants to Paradise, happiness, and prosperity by means of sending down Books, messengers, and legitimate creeds so that they may have good deeds, admirable moral qualities, and proper faith, while the Satans, from among human and jinn, lead man to Hell and the Divine punishment by means of following the low desires, lust appetites, vicious qualities, and sinful deeds.

Thus, the noble Qur'an, in this verse, indicates that it has been considered and necessitated in 'the book of fate' that whoever loves Satan and chooses him as his leader, Satan will mislead him and will lead him to the punishment of Hell Fire.

The verse says:

"About whom (Satan) it is decreed that whosoever takes him for friend, then verily he will mislead him and will guide him unto the torment of the burning Fire."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 5

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِن مضْغَةٍ مخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّـنُبَيِّـنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِر فِي الاَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ إِلَي أَجَلٍ مسَمًّي ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلاً ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّي وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرَد إِلَي أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلاَ يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئاً وَتَرَي الاَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَآءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ

5. "O, people! if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (consider that) verily We created you from dust, then from sperm, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, that We may manifest (Our power) to you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, then We bring you out as babes, then that you may attain your maturity, and some of you are called to die, and some of you are kept back to the worst part of life so that they know nothing after having known (much), and you see the earth dried, dead, but when We send down the water on it, it stirs and swells and brings forth every kind of attractive herbage (in pairs)."

Resurrection in the World of Fetus and Plants

In view of the fact that the discussion in the previous verses was about the doubt of the opponent concerning the origin and the end (Resurrection), in this holy verse, the 'Resurrection of the body' has been reasoned and proved by two firm and logical evidence.

One of them is the transformations of embryo during its fetal course, and the other is proved through the way of earth transformations when the plants grow.

At first, the Holly Qur'an addresses all human beings and says:

"O, people! if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (consider that) verily we created you from dust, then from sperm, then from a clot, then from a lump of Flesh, partly formed and partly unformed…"

All these are for the sake that He makes it manifest to you that Allah is powerful over everything.

The verse continues saying:

"…that We may manifest (Our proper) to you.…"

Allah keeps the embryos that He wishes in the wombs of mothers until a fixed time in order that they pass their evolutionary periods, but He may cause some of them, which he desires, to fall from their circle in the midway. After that, a new revolutionary course begins and He brings it out in the form of a babe from mother's womb.

The verse says:

"…And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, then We bring you out as babes…"

Thus, the limited period and dependant course of your life in the mother's womb naturally ends and you arrive in a vast environment, full of light, serenity, and with much more potentialities.

Yet, the evolutionary wheels of your development do not pause. They ceaselessly continue going forth in this way.

The verse says:

"…then that you may attain your maturity…"

Here, the ignorance changes into wisdom, the weakness into strength, and the dependence into independence.

But this wheel of movement does not stop, though some of you, in this course, may die while some others may live a very long life that they reach the worst stage of life, so that they know nothing of what they knew.

The verse continues saying:

"…and some of you are called to die, and some of you are kept back to the worst part of life so that they know nothing after having known (much)…"

The weakness, disability, and melancholy are the reason for the appearance of the stage of a new transformation. This stage is like the stage that a fruit has when it becomes lose from the branch of the tree and which indicates that it has become ripe enough and must be separated from its position.

Then the Qur'an refers to the second statement, i.e., the life of the plants, where it says:

"…and you see the earth dried, dead, but when We send down the water on it, it stirs and swells and brings forth every kind of attractive herbage (in pairs)."

The Arabic word /hamidah/ is originally called to the fire which has been extinguished and also to the land the plants of which have dried and remained motionless. [1]

Some other Islamic commentators have said that /hamidah/ is applied for a state between life and death.[2]

The Arabic term /'ihtazzat/ is derived from /hazz/ in the sense of 'moved, aroused'.

The Arabic word /rabat/, here, is derived from /rubuww/ (rhymed with /'uluww/) in the sense of growth and increase, and the Arabic word /riba/ is also derived from the same root.

The Qur'anic word /bahij/ means: 'beautiful, attractive, and pleasurable.'

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 6 - 7

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَق وَ نَّهُ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتَي وَ نَّهُ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ لاَّ رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَن فِي الْقُبُورِ

6. "This is because verily Allah, He is the Truth, and because verily He gives life to the dead, and because verily He is All Powerful over everything."

7. "And verily the Hour (of Resurrection) is coming: There is no doubt therein and that verily Allah will raise up whoever is within the graves."

Through these couple of verses, as a general conclusion, the Qur'an explains the purpose of stating these two reasons in the form of five points. 1) At first, it implies that what was said in the previous concerning different stages of the life of man and the world of plants was for the sake that you should know that Allah is the Truth.

The verse says:

"This is because verily Allah, He is the Truth…"

And, since He is the Truth, then the system that He has created is the Truth, too. Therefore, it can not be aimless and be in vain, as in another occurrence of the Qur'an He says:

"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve…" [3]

And since this world is not aimless, and, on the other hand, we do not find the main aim inside of it, we will be certain that there is a resurrection in question.

2) This very system, dominating the world of life, tells us that it is He who causes the dead to be quickened.

The holy verse says:

"…and because verily He gives life to the dead…"

He is the One Who gives life to the dust, changes the worthless life-germ into a complete man, makes the dead lands alive, and gives a new life to the dead. Can we be doubtful yet in the occurrence of Resurrection with this constant program of life giving in this world?

3) Another aim is that we recognize this fact that Allah is powerful of doing everything and there is nothing to be considered for His Power to be impossible.

The verse says:

"…and because verily He is All-Powerful over everything."

The One Who is able to alter the lifeless soil into life- germ and causes the worthless sperm to go forth in different stages of life, covers it a new clothing of living every day, and causes the dry, lifeless lands so green and beautiful that the sound of life is heard from it thoroughly. Is such a One not able to return man to a new life after his death?

4) And, again, all of these are for that we know there is no doubt in the existence of the last hour of the life of this world and the beginning of the next world.

The verse says:

"And verily the Hour (of Resurrection) is coming: There is no doubt therein…"

5) And all these are as a preparation for the last result, and that fact is that Allah will bring to life all those who are within the graves.

The verse concludes:

"…and that verily Allah will raise up whoever is within the graves."

These five points, of course, which consist of different nature, are all complementation of each other and all of them end to one point. This factual point is the fact that not only the occurrence of Resurrection and raising of the dead is possible, but also it certainly will happen.

Those who are doubtful about the existence of life after death can observe its similar scene in the lives of men and plants which are always before their eyes and every year and even every day, they occur again and again.

If they are skeptic in the power of Allah, this is the thing that they can see its clear examples by their own eyes.

Was human not created from dust at the beginning? So, how may it be surprising that they raise again from the soil?

Are the dead lands not quickened every year before our eyes? How can it be wonderful that the dead, after many years, become alive and raise from the earth?

And, if they are skeptic in the occurrence of such a thing, they must know that the system governing over the creation of this world shows that there is an aim in it, else all things would be in vain. This fleeting life, which is filled with these masses of miseries and wretchedness, is not something to be worthy to form the final aim of the world of the creation.

Thus, there must be another world existing, a vast and eternal world, which is worthy to be counted as the aim of the creation.

Note the Following Points:

Man's Seven Stages of Life

In order to make clear the phenomenon of Resurrection and its possibility of occurrence, the afore-mentioned verses have explained the status of man in course of seven stages. The first stage is the time he was dust.

The purpose of dust mentioned here might be the dust from which man was created. It may also be a hint to this fact that, besides this, all men are from dust, because all the food staff and the nutritious materials, which form the life-germ, are wholly taken from soil.

No doubt, of course, a considerable part of man's body is formed of water, and a part of it from Oxygen and Carbon which are not taken from soil; but since the main part of the limbs of the body are formed from the materials taken from the earth, this meaning is completely true that man is originally from the earth.

The second stage is the stage of life- germ. Soil, which is apparently a simple and ordinary element, has not any sense, movement, and life, but it can be changed into life germ. Life- germ is formed mainly of some living things which are very little and mysterious.

In men, it is called 'sperm' and in women it is called 'ovule'. These floating tiny creatures are so little that there may exist some millions of sperm in a man's sperm drop.

It is interesting that, after birth, a babe has usually a slow and gradual development which is mostly in the form of quantitative evolution, while its development in the womb is accompanied with some quick transformations which are qualitative.

The consecutive and amazing transformations of embryo in the womb are so much wonderful that, for example, a simple small pin to be changed into an airplane after a few months.

Today, the branch of embryology has been expanded into a vast science, so that its concerning scholars have succeeded to study embryo in its different stages and to discover many secrets of this mysterious phenomenon of the world of existence and introduce a great deal of wonders about it.

In the third stage, the life germ reaches the state of congealed blood and its cells gather together beside each other in the shape of a berry of mulberry which technically is called 'mudola'.

After a short time, the division hole appears. This is the beginning of the division of the parts of embryo. The embryo has a particular name in this stage.

In the fourth stage, little by little the embryo gets the form of a lump of flesh to itself without that the different limbs of the body being distinguished in it.

Then, suddenly there appear some changes in the skin of the embryo, and its shape alters appropriate to the action it must do; and the limbs of the body gradually begin to be distinguished. But those embryos, which do not pass this stage and still remain unchanged in their former forms, may be aborted.

The Qur'anic phrase saying:

'partly formed and partly unformed'

may refer to this stage of embryo which means: 'completely formed' and 'un completely formed.'

It is interesting that, after mentioning these four stages, the Qur'an has stated the sentence saying that:

"We may manifest (our power) to you,"

indicating that these rapid and wonderful changes in which a little sperm drop develops into a complete man, is a manifest reason to the power of Allah (s.w.t.) over everything.

Then the Qur'an points to the three remaining stages of the embryo which happen after delivery or birth, consisting of the stage of childhood, the stage of puberty, and the stage of senility.

It is also necessary to be mentioned that birth of man originally from dust in the form of a living creature, itself is a great transformation; and the different stages of the embryo are all counted as successive transformations. Also, the birth of man from mother is itself a very important transformation. Thus, the stages of puberty and senility are considered as transformations, too.

The application of 'raise up' in the sense of Resurrection, used in the above mentioned verse, seems to be a hint to the concept of this very transformation which will also occur in Hereafter.

This point must also be noted that the explanation of the Qur'an about these different stages of the embryo, specially in those days when neither the science of embryology had come into being nor people had had any notable knowledge about man's courses of embryo, itself is a living evidence to the fact that this great book has originated from the world of revelation and from the world of beyond nature.

Resurrection of the Body

No doubt, whenever the Holy Qur'an has pointed to the resurrection and the return of men, it means the return of the humankind with both the spirit and the body to the next world.

So, those who have limited the occurrence of resurrection to only its spiritual aspect and believe in only the survival of the souls have never verified the whole verses of the Qur'an.

It is clear that, as an instance, they have not kept in mind the verses like the above one, which explicitly speak about the bodily resurrection, else

what similarity has the spiritual resurrection to the foetal course and bringing life to the dead lands by the growth of the plants?

The last sentence of the verse under discussion, in particular, as a conclusion proves clearly this matter, where it says:

"…and verily Allah will raise up whoever is within the graves."

We know that a grave is the place of the body, not that of the soul.

In principal, the entire astonishment of the disbelievers arises from this very problem that how a man, who has become dust, can return to life again, else, the survival of the soul not only was not a surprising thing, but also had been accepted by the people of ignorance, too.

What Does "the Worse Part of the Life" Mean?

The Arabic word /'arŏel/ is derived from /raŏl/ in the sense of 'a low' and 'unpleasant' thing. The objective of the Qur'anic phrase /'arŏal-il-'umur/ is the most unpleasant period of the man's lifetime when he reaches to the utmost point of senility, and as the Qur'an says, it is the time when he forgets all he had learnt and becomes just as a child from the point of having knowledge.

From the point of impudence, he is usually like a child, because like a child, he easily becomes worried by a slight thing and or becomes very happy and content by a small and an ordinary affair. He often loses his patience and sometimes his manner is rather childish.

There is a difference, of course, that people do not expect intelligible things from a child, but they usually expect them from him.

Moreover, in respect to the children, there is a hope that, by the growth of the bodies and spirits, all these deficiencies remove, but there is not such a hope in respect to the old and feeble individuals.

There is also another difference that; a child has not had anything to lose, but this aged man has lost all the vital capitals of his life.

Thus, the state of old men, in comparison with children, is much more pitiable and unwholesome.

In some Islamic narrations, the Qur'anic phrase /'arŏal-il-'umur/ has been rendered into the age of being one hundred years old, or more than that.

This condition may depend on the kind of persons. There are some persons, of course, who reach this stage of weakness and forgetfulness when they are less than one hundred years old, while there exist some people who are more than one hundred years old and are completely intelligent and aware.

In respect to the great scholars and scientists, in particular, who are always busy studying the scientific discussions, this status is rather rarely seen. However, for this part of the lifetime, we must refuge to Allah.

By the way, the remembrance of such years can be a factor to bring us out from pride and negligence and to make us contemplate what we were at the beginning, what we are just now, and what we will be in future.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 8 - 10

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلاَ هُدًى وَلاَ كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ

ثَانِيَ عِطْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُ فِي الدنْيَا خِزيٌ وَنُذِيقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِ قِ
ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاكَ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

8. "And among the people there is such a one that disputes about Allah without knowledge, without guidance and without any enlightening Book."

9. "Turning away in pride to lead (men) astray from the path of Allah: for him there is disgrace in this world and We shall make him to be on the Day of Judgment the punishment of the burning (Fire)."

10. "(And unto him it will be said): 'This is for that which your two hands have sent before, and that (verily) Allah is not unjust to His servants'."

If disputation is based on knowledge, it does not matter.

The discussion in these verses is upon some people who disputed about the origin and the end without having any fundamental knowledge.

At first, it says:

"And among the people there is such a one that disputes about Allah without knowledge, without guidance and without any enlightening Book."

The first sentence of this verse contains exactly the same meaning which was mentioned in the former verses, and its repetition here shows that the previous verse points to one group while this second one refers to another group.

Some Islamic commentators have considered the difference between these two groups in that former verse states the status of the followers of the unaware misleading group.[4]

The Qur'anic phrase /liyudilla 'an sabil-il-lah/ (to lead (men) astray from the path of Allah) shows that the program of this group is to mislead others and this is counted a clear frame of reference upon that difference.

This is exactly like the sentence which was recited in the former verse saying:

"…and follow every rebellious Satan."[5]

It speaks about the following of the Satans and which makes this meaning more clear, too.

In relation to the difference between the meanings of the terms 'knowledge', 'guidance', and 'enlightening Book', the commentators have also offered some discussions, among which the one that seems closer to the mind is: 'knowledge' refers to intellectual reasoning, 'guidance' refers to the leading and guiding of the Divine leaders, and 'enlightening Book' refers to the heavenly Books.

In a simpler style, it reiterates the same three known reasonings, consisting of: 'Book', Sunnah (practice), and 'intellect'; and regarding to the fact that according to the researches of the scholars, consensus returns to 'practice', all four evidences are gathered in this phrase.

Some other commentators also believe that 'guidance' may refer to the spiritual guidance which can be obtained under the light of self-improvement, virtue, and purification of the carnal soul. (This meaning, of course, can be gathered with what was said in the above.)

In fact, a scientific discussion or disputation can be useful when it is based on one of these reasonings: the reason of intellect, the reason of the Book, or the reason of Sunnah (practice).

Then, in the next verse, the Holly Qur'an refers to one of the causes of the aberration and mislead of the leaders of the misguidance in a short and expressive sentence, where it says:

"Turning away in pride to lead (men) astray from the path of Allah:…"

The Arabic term /ani/ is derived from /anaya/ in the sense of 'to turn'; and the word /'itf/ means 'side', so, 'turning the side' here is an implicit declaration of pride and their heedlessness, that they hinder people from the path of truth.

In any rate, the Qur'an explains their intensive retribution in this world and the Hereafter as follows:

"…for him there is disgrace in this world and We shall make him to be on the Day of Judgment the punishment of the burning (Fire)."

And then he will be told this is the consequence of what his hands have sent before for him.

The verse says:

"And unto him it will be said: 'This is for that which your two hands have sent before…"

It is in case that Allah is never unjust to the servants. He neither punishes anyone unduly, nor does He increase the chastisement of anyone unreasonably, and His manner is absolute justice and absolutely just.

This verse is one of the verses that not only negates the school of Fatalist, but also proves the principle of Justice with respect to Allah's deeds.

A Few Traditions

1- Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, Ali (as) said:

"Whoever seeks guidance other than the guidance of Allah, goes stray."[6]

2- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, Ali (as) said:

"Whoever obeys his Lord, fears his sin, is guided."[7]

3- Imam Ali (as) said:

"The guidance of Allah is the best guidance."

And he (as) also said:

"He who is in the clothing of religion is guided."[8]

Notes

1. Mufradat-i-Raqib
2. Tafsir-i-Fi-Dalal
3. Surah Sad, No. 38, Verse 27
4. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, and Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi, under the verse
5. Current Surah, verse 3
6. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 461, and vol. 4, p. 228
7. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 5, p. 193
8. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 6, p. 192 Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 6, p. 192

Section 2: The Weak in Faith

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 11 - 13

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَي حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انقَلَبَ
عَلَي وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ
يَدْعُواْ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لاَ يَضُرهُ وَمَا لاَ يَنفَعُهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلاَلُ الْبَعِيدُ
يَدْعُواْ لَمَن ضَرهُ أَقْرَبُ مِن نَّفْعِهِ لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَي وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ

11. "And among people there is such a one who worships Allah only by tongue, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face; he losses this world and (also) the Hereafter; that is indeed the manifest loss."

12. "He calls, besides Allah, upon that which does not harm him and that which does not profit him: that is indeed the far straying."

13. "He calls upon him whose harm is nearer than his profit; an evil protector indeed, he, an evil associate."

The faith of some people is seasonal and superficial so that the pleasant or bitter events can change it.

The situation of belief and the action based on logic is different from the situation of the material changes. We ought not seek for religion because of reaching to bread.

In previous verses, two groups were discussed about: the group of followers of aberration and the leaders of those who mislead others. In these verses, a third group is spoken about; they are those who are weak in faith.

In the explanation of this group, the Qur'an says that such people believe in Allah merely by expression, while their heartily belief is very weak and superficial.

The verse says:

"And among people there is such a one who worships Allah only by tongue…"

The Qur'anic phrase /'ala harfin/ may refer to this fact that their faith is rather on their tongue and there has not glowed in their hearts but a very weak light of faith.

It may refer to this fact that they are not settled in the center of faith and Islam, but they are in the edge of it.

One of the meanings of the Arabic term /harf/ is the verge of mountain and the side of things, and we know that those who are standing in the verge of something, are not fixed and steadfast and, with a slight shake, they may go out of the way. Such is the state of those whose Faith is weak, that with usually a tiny thing their faith vanishes.

Then, the Qur'an points the instability of their faith, where it implies that if the world turns to them and something good befalls them, they feel secure and satisfaction, and they take it as a proof for the legitimacy of Islam. But if they are tried by miseries, pests, and lack of some blessings, they alter inwardly and turn toward infidelity.

The verse says:

"…so that if good befalls him he is satisfied there with, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face;…"

As if they had accepted the religion and Faith as a means to reach to the material things, so that if this objection is gained, they consider the religion as rightful, otherwise they call it foundless.[1]

Upon the occasion of the revelation of this verse, Ibn-'Abbas and a group of the ancient commentators have said that: sometimes a group of Bedouins used to come to the Prophet (S) and then if they became bodily well, their horse brought a good colt, their wives delivered sons, and their properties and cattle increased, they would become happy and would believe in Islam and Messenger of Allah (S).

But if they became sick, their wives delivered daughters, and their wealth decreased, some satanic temptations would seize their heart and told them that all those miseries were for the sake of the religion they accepted, and, therefore they often turned away.[2]

It is noteworthy that, for turning the world with prosperity to them, the Qur'an has rendered it as 'good', and for turning back of the world, it has rendered it as 'a trial', not as 'an evil'. It indicates that these unwholesome events are not vice and evil, but they are some means for trial.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds implying that, thus, they have lost both the world and the Hereafter.

The holy verse says:

"…he losses this world and (also) the Hereafter;…"

And this is the most manifest loss when a person loses both his religion and his world.

The verse continues:

"…that is indeed the manifest loss."

Such people, in fact, behold the religion only through the window of their own material benefits, and for them, as they imagine, criterion of its rightfulness is the good lack of the world.

These people, whose number is not so small in our time and who are found in every society, have a faith polluted with polytheism and idolatry, but their idol is their wife, offspring, possession, wealth, and cattle. It is evident that such a faith and belief is certainly weaker than the spider's web.

Some commentators, of course, have considered this verse as about hypocrites.

Then, if the purpose is a hypocrite, who has never a faith in his heart, this is contrary to the apparent meaning of the verse, because the Qur'anic phrase:

"such a one who worships Allah",

"he is satisfied therewith"

and

"he turns back his face"

show that he had a weak faith before. And if the purpose is the hypocrites who have a very small share of faith, it does not contrast with what was said in the above and it is acceptable.

The next verse points to the polytheistic belief of this group particularly after deviation from monotheism and belief in Allah.

It says:

"He calls, besides Allah, upon that which does not harm him and that which does not profit him:…"

If he is truly interested in the material profits and avoids loss, and for the same reason considers the good and misery of the world as the legitimacy of religion, then why does he go to the idols which have neither any hope of profit nor any fear of loss in them.

They are some useless things which have no effect in the men's fate. Yes, this is a deep aberration, which is far from any prosperity.

The verse says:

"…that is indeed the manifest loss."

Its distance with the Straight Path is so far that there is little hope for their return to the Truth.

Again, the Qur'an goes further than this, when it says:

"He calls upon him whose harm is nearer than his profit;…"

It is for the reason that, in the world, these artificial objects of worship may turn their thought toward lowliness, meanness, superstitions, and in the Hereafter, they bring forth the Hell Fire for them; but, as Surah Al-'Anbiya, No 21, verse 98 indicates, these idols are themselves the fuel of Hell.

At the end of the verse, concerning those idols, the Holy Qur'an adds:

"…an evil protector indeed, he, an evil associate."

There arises this question here that: in the previous verse any profit and loss were negated from the side of the idols, while here, in this verse, it says that the harm of an idol is nearer than his profit. Do these two concepts agree with each other?

In answer to this clear question it must be said that in conversations it is usual that sometimes in one occasion something is counted useless, while after that, the same thing is introduced as the source of loss.

It is just like when we say: do not associate with so and so, since he is beneficial neither for your religion nor for your world; then we go further and say that he is also the cause of your wretchedness and disagree.

Moreover, the harm which has been negated is a harm to their enemies, because they are not able to cause a harm to the opponents; but the harm which has been proved positively is an automatic loss that reaches the devotees of them.

This commentary has been accepted by a group of great commentators, such as: Shaykh Tusi in 'Tibyan', and Tabarsi in 'Majma'-ul-Bayan'.

It is in the case that some other commentators, like Fakhr-i-Razi, have also added this probability in the commentary of the verse that either of these two verses refers to a separate group of idols.

The first verse refers to the wooden and stone idols which are inanimate, and the second verse points to false deities and idol-like men. The first group, have neither a profit nor a harm, and they are completely useless.

But the members of the second group, i.e. the leaders of misguidance, are harmful and there is no good in them. And supposing that there is a little good in them, their harm is certainly more than that good.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…an evil protector, he, and an evil associate"

has also been taken as evidence over this meaning, and, thus, there remains no contradiction.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 14

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ َفْعَلُ مَا يُرِ دُ

14. "Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow; verily Allah does what He intends."

Faith and hope in the promises of Allah is the greatest factor for leaving anything except Him (s.w.t.). Also, the Faith accompanied with action is the key to salvation; and neither of them alone is effective.

And, in view of the fact that the style of the Qur'an is that it states the good and evil things in comparison with each other in order that drawing a conclusion from it becomes more complete and clear, in this verse it says:

"Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow;…"

Their career is clear, their line of thought and action is recognized, their master is Allah (s.w.t.), and their companions in heaven will be prophets, martyrs, the righteous and the Divine angles.

Yes, whatever Allah intends, He does.

The verse continues saying:

"…verily Allah does what He intends."

These great rewards are easy for Him to give to the believers, and on the other side, punishing the obstinate polytheists and their misleading leaders is untroubled for Him, too.

In this comparison, in fact, those who have faith only by their tongue are in the edge of the religion and they may go astray by a little amount of temptation. Such people have not any righteous deeds either.

But the righteous believers are settled in the center of Island, and the most intensive storms of events cannot move them. The tree of their Faith has got strong roots and the fruits of their righteous deeds are manifest on its branches. This is from one side.

On the other side, the objects of worship of the first group not only are useless, but also their harm is more than their benefit. But, the master, and the guardian of the second group, is powerful over everything and He has provided the most superior blessings for them.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 15 - 16

مَن كَانَ َظُن أَن لَّن يَنصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَي السَّمآءِ ثُمَّ لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهُ مَايَغِيظُ

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنزَلْنَاهُ ءَايَاتٍ بَيّـِنَاتٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ َهْدِي مَن يُرِ دُ

15. "Whoever thinks that never will Allah help him (His Apostle) in this world and the Hereafter, let him stretch up a rope to heaven (to hang himself), then let him cut it off, then see if his device takes away that at which he is enraged."

16. "And thus have We sent it (The Qur'an) down, (as) clear signs, and that verily Allah guides whomsoever He intends."

The Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of the first verse in the above, some of the commentators have said as follows:

A number of people from the tribes of Bani Asad and Bani Qatfan, who had already covenanted with the Prophet of Islam (S) said that they were afraid that at last Allah would not assist Mohammad (S) and consequently their relation with their Jewish confederates might be ceased and they would not give them foodstuff any longer.

The abovementioned holy verse was revealed and warned them while it reproached them seriously.

Some other Islamic commentators have said that, a group of Muslims, as a result of their intensive anger against the disbelievers, were anxious and restless to follow the Prophet (S) and said why the promise of Allah in that ground did not occur. The verse was sent down and reproached them for their impatience.[3]

Since the words in the previous verses were about those whose faith is weak, in this verse too, another feature from them has been demonstrated, where it says:

"Whoever thinks that never will Allah help him (His Apostle) in this world and the Hereafter, let him stretch up a rope to heaven (to hang himself), then let him cut it off, then see if his device takes away that at which he is enraged."

A great many of the commentators have accepted this interpretation, or they have at least mentioned it as a notable probability.[4]

According to this interpretation, the pronoun mentioned in the phrase

"never will Allah help him"

returned to the Prophet (S).

The Arabic term /sama'/, in this verse, means 'the ceiling of the house', (since this term is applied for anything which is located in the upside). And, the holy phrase /li yaqta'/ means 'suffocation', ceasing of the breath, and going forth as far as being nigh to death.

There have been said some other probabilities upon the commentary of this verse, among which two commentaries are notable:

1. The objective of /sama'/ is this very sky. In this case the verse means:

"Such people who thinks that Allah will not help His Apostle, let them go to the sky and stretch a rope to it and hang themselves between the earth and the heaven until when their breaths will be ceased (or they cut off the rope by which they have hanged themselves so that they fall down), then see whether their wrath will quench."

2. The abovementioned pronoun returns to these persons themselves, not to the Prophet (S). In this case, the verse means:

"Those who think that never will Allah help them, and their sustenance will be ceased as a result of embracing the Faith, may do whatever thing they can. They may go to the sky and hang themselves by a rope, and then they may cut off this rope to fall down. Do these things quench their wrath?"

It is notable that all these interpretations refer to one psychological point in relation to those impatient and wrathful persons whose Faith is weak. Often when they apparently are helpless and cannot do anything, they immediately get excited in their job and they may make madly decision.

Sometimes they bruise against the walls vainly; sometimes they want to cleave the land and hide themselves inside of it, and finally, in order to quench the fire of their anger, they decide to commit suicide, while neither of these madly actions does solve their problem.

If they become a little cold, use patience and toleration, and try to struggle against the difficulties by means of the power of belief in Allah (s.w.t.), self-confidence, and steadfastness, the removal of their difficulties will certainly be possible.

For, the only means of peace is belief and trust in Allah, and any other device and program, without Allah's will, is in vain.

The next holy verse points to a general conclusion upon the former verses, where it says:

"Thus have We sent it (The Qur'an) down, (as) clear signs…"

There were mentioned some reasonings for the legitimacy of Resurrection, such as verifying the course of embryo of man, the growth of plants, the dead lands being quickened which make all acquaintance with the subject of Resurrection, and some reasonings like uselessness of idols, and mentioning the end of those who make use of religion as a means for obtaining material interests.

Yet, all these mere clear reasonings are not enough, but the fitness of the acceptance of the truth is necessary, too.

For this very reason, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and that verily Allah guides whomsoever He intends."

We have repeatedly said that the Will of Allah is not undue. He is Wise and all His deeds are done wisely. Whoever tries to struggle in His cause and heartily desires to be guided, Allah will guide him by means of His clear signs.

The Qur'an is a means of guidance, but guidance itself is the job of Allah and is done through His Grace.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 17

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَي وَالْمَـجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
َفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

17. "Verily those who believe (the Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associate (others with Allah), verily, Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection; verily Allah is witness over everything."

The right invitation to Islam and having good dispute is necessary, but do not expect that they discord between religions to be ended in this world. You should lead a peaceful life in this world and Allah will settle your affair by arbitration on the Hereafter Day.

So in the verse under discussion, the Qur'an has referred to six groups of the followers of different religions, one of whom is Muslim believers and the rest five groups are none-Muslims.

It says:

"Verily those who believe (the Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associate (others with Allah), verily, Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection;…"

On that Day, He will separate right from wrong. One of the names of Hereafter is 'the Day of Separating' or 'the Day of Decision'. Another name of it is /yaum-ul-buruz/ (the day of manifestation of the hidden things).

That Day is the time when all discords will finish. Yes, Allah will put an end to all of the disputes, because He is aware of all things.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…verily Allah is witness over everything."

Some Points

1- The connection between this verse and the former verses is in this fact that: in the previous verse the words were about the Divine guidance into the fitting hearts; but since all hearts are rarely receptive and usually bigotries, obstinacies and blindly imitations are some strong barriers against the acceptance of guidance, therefore the Qur'an implies that these differences and disputations among a part of people in various groups of religions will rather continue and remain until the advent of Hereafter, and it is on that Day when all the concealed things will be made manifest and discords will wholly disappear.

Moreover, in the former verses the discussion was about three groups, some of whom dispute unreasonably upon Allah and the Resurrection; some others try to tempt people, while the members of the third group are weak in faith and every time they are thrown from one side to another. The verse under discussion points out some examples from these groups who stand against the believers.

Besides them all, the discussion about Resurrection in the former verses propounded this question that: what is the goal of Resurrection? In the verse under discussion one of its goals, which is putting an end to the discords, has been stated.

2- Who Magians Are: The word /majus/ (Magians) is mentioned in the Qur'an only once, and it is in this very verse. Regarding the fact that they are mentioned opposite to polytheists and in the row of those having Heavenly religions, it is understood such that they had had a Divine Faith, Book and Prophet.

No doubt that today the followers of Zoroaster in Arabic are called /majus/, or at least, the followers of Zoroaster form an important part of them, while the history of Zoroaster himself is not clear at all.

It is so ambiguous that some have recorded his advent in the eleventh century B.C. and some others have said that it happened in sixth or seventh century B.C.[5]. This marvelous difference, viz. five centuries, indicates how dark and ambiguous the history of Zoroaster is.

It is known that he had a book by the name of, Awesta which was destroyed in the invasion of Alexander to Iran, and later it was written at the time of one of the Kings of Sasanian Dynasty.[6]

There have not been available so much matters from their belief, but what is more famous than all today is their belief in two origins of good and evil, or light and darkness. They consider the god of goodness and light as Ahura Mazda, and the god of evil and darkness as Ahriman.

They respect the four elements, and the fire in particular, so much so that they are called 'Fire Worshippers' and wherever they live there is also a fire-temple, large or small.

Some philologists believe that the term /majus/ (Magians) is derived from /mug/ which was used as a title for the leaders and clergymen of this religion, and the word /mu'bad/ which is now used for calling their clergymen had originally been derived from /mu'wad/.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that they had been the followers of one of the Divine prophets but later they deviated from the path of Monotheism and turned to some blasphemous beliefs.

We read in some Islamic narrations that the polytheists of Mecca asked the Prophet (S) to take capitation from them and let them to worship idols. The holy Prophet (S) answered them he would not take capitation from anyone except the people of the Book. The polytheists wrote in answer to him (S).

"How do you speak like that while you have taken capitation from the Magians inhabited the region of Hijr?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Magians had a prophet, who was killed, and a Book which was burnt."[7]

Another tradition from 'Asbaq-ibn-Nabatah denotes that once Imam Ali (as) went upon a pulpit and said:

"Ask me before you are in lack of me."

Then 'Ash'ath-ibn-Qays, a famous hypocrite, stood up and said: O' the commander of the believers? How is it that capitation is being taken from Magians while there has not been sent down any Divine Book for them and they had not had any prophet?

Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"Yes, O' 'Ash'ath! Allah has sent down a Book unto them, and has appointed a prophet for them."[8]

Imam Sajjad, Ali-ibn-il-Husayn (as) in a tradition said that the holy Prophet (S) said:

"Treat with them in the same manner that you treat with the People of the Book, and the purpose of the Messenger of Islam was Magians."[9]

By the way, it must be noted that the Qur'anic term /majus/ is a plural form and its singular form in Arabic is /majusi/.[10]

3- Who The Sabeans Are: It is understood compendiously from the above mentioned verse that they have also been the followers of some heavenly religion, in particular that their name has been located here between the names of the Jews and the Christians.

Some commentators consider them as the followers of Yahy-ibn-i-Zakarriya whom Christians call ‘John the Baptist.’ Some others believe that Sabeans had taken a part of the belief of the Jews and a part of that of the Christians and mixed them, thus they think that their religion is something between those two religions.

Sabeans consider a great importance for water in their belief and, therefore, many of them live by the great streams. It is said that they also respect a few stars, and that is why they have been accused as star worshippers, though the apparent of the verse indicates that they are not in the row of polytheists.

4- Those Deviated from Monotheism: In these verses, five groups of the deviated religions have been referred to whose arrangement here may be according to the amount of their practical deviation from the principle of Monotheism. The Jews have the least deviation in action from Monotheism comparing others, and the Sabeans, who are a moderate group between the Jews and the Christians, are in the second degree.

Then there come the Christians, who, with the acceptance of trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, have a further deviation and throughout the world of existence are located in the Fourth degree. Thus, the polytheists and the idolaters, who are involved with the utmost deviation, have been mentioned at the end.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 18

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَآبُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ وَمَن يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن مُكْرِمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ

18. “Have you not seen that to Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people?

But a great number are (also) such as unto whom the chastisement is justly due;

“…and whomsoever Allah abases, there is none for him to honor; verily Allah does whatever He pleases.”

1. There are certainly some conscious beings in the heaven, because the word ‘whosoever’, mentioned in this verse, is usually applied to those who posses consciousness.

2. The totality of the world of existence prostrates and shows humility for Allah, and consciousness is not located to human beings.

“…whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth…”

(If we do know that all of the beings in the world of existence are submitted to Allah, we never differ from them either. Polytheism and arrogance do not adapt with the system of existence.)

In view of the fact that, the speech in the former verses was about the subject of origin and the end, the verse under discussion completes this subject, by propounding the question of Monotheism and Theology.

The holy verse, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"Have you not seen that to Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people? But a great number are (also) such as unto whom the chastisement is justly due;…"

Then the Qur'an adds implying that these are abased with Allah, and whomever He abases none can make him honorable and cause him to be prosperous and gain rewards.

The verse continues saying:

"…and whomsoever Allah abases, there is none for him to honor;…"

Yes, whatever Allah (s.w.t.) pleases, and it is expediential, He does: He honors the believers and abases the rejecters.

The verse says:

"…verily Allah does whatever He pleases."

Some Points

In different verses of the holy Qur'an, there are statements about the general 'prostration' of the beings of the world, as well as 'glorification', 'praise', and 'prayer' (salat), and there has been emphasized that these four manifest adorations are not particular only to human beings, but also even all the apparently lifeless beings participate therein.

In the commentary upon Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 44 the general praise and glorification of the beings of the word have been vastly discussed, and also in Surah Ar-Ra'd No. 13, verse 15 the general prostration of the beings of the world has been spoken about, yet it is necessary here that this significant subject to be referred to again.

The verse under discussion indicates that the beings of the world have two kinds of prostration: the genetic prostration, and the religious prostration.

Their unconditional veneration and submission before Allah's Will, the laws of creation, and the system governing over this world are the same genetic prostration of theirs which envelops all the particles of the whole beings, even the cells of the brains of some persons such as Pharaoh, Nimrud, as well as the obstinate rejecters whose whole atoms of their selves are inside the circle of this genetic prostration.

As some groups of modern researchers in science say, all particles of the world have a kind of apprehension and intelligence, and according to it, in their own status, they praise and glorify Allah while they have prostration and prayer, too.

But, the act of religious prostration is the utmost veneration which is actualized by the possessors of wisdom, intellect, comprehension and knowledge before Allah, the Lord.

Here, there arises this question that: if the act of general prostration of all beings involves all human beings, too, why has it been specialized to a group of people in the above noble verse?

Regarding to the fact that the word 'prostration' has been used through an inclusive concept mentioned between its religious and genetic form the answer of this question becomes clear, because the objective of prostration

in respect to sun, moon, stars, mountains, trees, and animals is the sort of genetic prostration, which in respect of human beings it is ‘religious’.

Many people accomplish this prostration, but some groups of them disobey it, and these are the examples of

“unto whom the chastisement is justly due.”

And we know that the usage of a word in an inclusive and general concept, with protecting its different examples, does not matter, even with those who does not permit that a word to be used for more than one meaning, much less for us who let permissible that a common word be used in different meanings, (be careful).

No doubt that the angels are inside the meaning of the Qur’anic phrase:

“To Allah prostrates whosoever is in the heavens”,

but is their prostration of the kind of ‘genetic’ or that of religious?

Regarding to the fact that they have a kind of wisdom, intellect, knowledge and will, their prostration is of the sort of religious. That is, their adoration and veneration is of the kind which is done willingly and arbitrarily.

With respect to the angels, the Qur’an says:

“…they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and they do as they are commanded.”[11]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 19

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِن نَّارٍ يُصَبُّ مِن فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ

19. “These are, two adversaries who dispute about their Lord. But as for those who disbelieved, garments of Fire have been cut out, and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water.”

The Occasion of Revelation

A group of Islamic commentators, Sunnites and Shi‘ites, have recorded an occasion of Revelation for the above holy verse in their books, the abridgement of it is as follows:

On the day of the Battle of Badr, three men (consisting of Ali (as), Hamzah, and ‘Ubaydat-ibn-Harith-ibn-‘Abdul-Mutalib), from the Muslim troop came into the battlefield and, in the proper order they killed Walid-ibn-‘Atabah, ‘Atabat-ibn-Rabi‘, and Shaybat-ibn-Rabi‘ah. The abovementioned verse was revealed and stated the fate of these strugglers.

It has also been cited that Abuthar used to swear that this verse was revealed about the above men, but, it has repeatedly said, the existence of a particular occasion of revelation never hinders the generality of the concept of that verse.[12]

In previous verses, the whole believers and some different groups of disbelievers were already pointed out, and they were explained in six categories. Here, the Qur’an implies that these two opposite parties, believers and non-believers, disputed about their Lord.

The verse says:

“These are, two adversaries who dispute about their Lord…”

Those who disputed were the groups of disbelievers, who were divided in five classes, from one side, and the true believers, from another side. And, if we take care properly we see that the basis of the differences of all religions returns to their difference upon the Essence and attributes of Allah and its consequence may stretch to the question of prophecy and Resurrection.

Therefore, it is not necessary to suppose the word 'religion' unexpressed in the phrase and say that their adversary is about the 'religion' of their Lord, but, in fact, the main root of their adversaries return to Monotheism; and, principally, all deviated and false religions are involved in a kind of polytheism the effects of which appear in their beliefs.

Then the verse states a few sorts of chastisement of the disbelievers who knowingly and intelligently deny the truth.

At first, it begins from their garments, and says:

"…But as for those who disbelieved, garments of Fire have been cut out…"

This sentence may refer to the matter that there will really be cut out and sewed some pieces of Fire for them in the form of garments. Or it may be an allusion to the fact that the Hell Fire encompasses them from every side like garments.

Another sort of Divine chastisement for them is the blazing boiling water which will be poured from above over their head.

The verse says:

"…and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 20 - 21

يُصْهَرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ

وَلَهُم مَّقَامِعُ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ

20. "With it shall be melted what is in their bellies, and (their) skins (as well)."

21. "And for them are maces of iron."

The blazing boiling water of Hell which will be poured over the head of these disbelievers will penetrate into their bodies so deeply that it melts both their interiors and exteriors.

The verse says:

"With it shall be melted what is in their bellies, and (their) skins (as well)."

"And for them are maces of iron."

Some lashes or maces of blazing iron are prepared for them to be beaten on their heads so intensively that they go down to the bottom of the Hell, and the flames of Fire throw them up to the edge of the Hell, then again they will be beaten perpendicularly on their head and go down the Hell.

They will ceaselessly be going up and down from the surface of the Hell into its bottom. The narrations and traditions concerning the chastisements in Hell are in abundance.

Some Traditions

1. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Be in awe of the Fire whose heat is intensive, whose depths is much, whose ornament is iron, and whose drink is a festering fluid (blood mixed with pus)."[13]

2. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), who said:

"Verily there are gates for Hell Fire. From one gate there enter into it our enemies, those who fight against us, and those who disgrace us. This gate is surly the greatest one and is the most blazing gate."[14]

3. In Tafsir-i-'Ibrahim-ibn-Furat, documenting from Ali-ibn-Hussayn (as), there has been recorded a tradition as to where he says:

"When the Day of Hereafter occurs, Allah commands the guardians of Hell to deliver the keys of Hell to Ali (as), so that he lets enter it whomever he intends, cause to save whomever he intends."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 22

كُلَّمَآ أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

22. "Whenever they will intend to get away there from, from anguish, they shall be turned back into it, and (it will be said to them) 'Taste you the chastisement of burning'."

So, whenever the people of Hell intend to come out from the Hell and its grief, they will be sent back into it while they will be told that they should taste the punishment of blazing Fire.

The verse says:

"Whenever they will intend to get away there from, from anguish, they shall be turned back into it, and (it will be said to them) 'Taste you the chastisement of burning'."

Some verses of the Qur'an introduce this chastisement as /'aŏabin 'azim/ (a grievous chastisement),[15] some others as /muhin/ (humiliating),[16] and, here this verse qualifies it as /hariq/ (burning), because it is both painful, and very great, and humiliating and burning. We seek refuge in Allah from the Fire and from His wrath the Almighty.

It is for this reason, the people of the Hell struggle to rescue themselves from it, but their effect will be useless. Thus, more painful than the Hell Fire is the grieves and spiritual punishment therein.

Notes

1. The phrase /'inqalaba 'ala wajhihi/ (he turns back his face) may point to this fact that he wholly turns his back to the Faith and does not even look back as if he had ever been foreigner with Faith.
2. The commentary of Fakhr-Razi, vol. 23, P. 13; and Tafsir-i-Qartabi, vol. 6, P. 4409
3. Abul-Futuh Razi and also Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse under discussion.
4. See the commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan, Tibyan, Al-Mizan, Fakhr-i-Razi, Abul-Futuh, Tafsir-us-Safi, and Qurtabi following the verse.
5. 'A'lam-ul-Qur'an, p. 550
6. Al-Mizan, vol. 14, p. 392
7. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, chapter 49, p. 96
8. Ibid
9. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, chapter 49, p. 96
10. Al-Monjid
11. Surah At-Tahrim, No. 66, verse 6

12. This occasion of revelation has been cited by: Tabarsi in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Fakhr-i-Razi in Tafsir-ul-Kabir, ’Alusi in Ruh-ul-Bayan, Suyuti in ’Asbab-un-Nuzul, and also Qartabi in his commentary.
13. Bihar, vol. 8, P. 206 taken from Nahjul-Balaqah.
14. Ibid, p. 285
15. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 101
16. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 90

Section 3: Believers Shall Be Rewarded

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 23

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الاَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤاً وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِرٌ

23. "Verily, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow, they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk."

In these holy verses, by the usage of the style comparison, the Qur'an states the status of the righteous believers in order that the circumstances of both of them might be distinguished through the way of comparison. So, the Qur'an explains five sorts of reward for them here.

At first, it says:

"Verily, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow…"

The first group, i.e., the disbelievers, are qualified as being sent down into the burning Fire, while this group, the righteous believers, are said to be inside the gardens of Heaven, resting beside the flowing rivers.

Then, the Qur'an refers to their adornments and garments when it says:

"…they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk."[1]

Those two merits are their rewards in addition to others.

Thus, they will wear the most beautiful clothing which they were deprived of in the world, and they will also have bracelets of gold, decorated with jewelry.

If they were forbidden to use such garments and ornaments in this world, it was for the reason that they would be the origin of pride and negligence and caused the deprivation of another group. But in Heaven, where there is nothing of this kind, these prohibitions are also absent and those deprivations are compensated.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 24

وَهُدُوا إِلَي الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَهُدُوا إِلَي صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ

24. "And they are guided unto the purest of speeches, and they are guided to the Path (of Him who is) Worthy of (all) Praise."

The fourth and fifth merits which Allah bestows on them, the righteous believers, and which are merely in spiritual aspect, are that, firstly, they are guided toward the speech which is pure.

The verse says:

"And they are guided unto the purest of speeches…"

These are some enlivening speeches with some pleasant words and sentences; such words which are spiritual and full of serenity, bring the soul high up in the stages of perfection, and smooth the spirit and mind of man.

It also continues saying:

"…and they are guided to the Path (of Him who is) Worthy of (all) Praise."[2]

This is the path of knowing Allah (s.w.t.) and spiritually approaching Him, His nearness, which is the path of love and theosophy.

Yes, by guiding the true believers unto these spiritual meanings, Allah leads them to the utmost stage of spiritual pleasures.

The tradition, which has been cited by Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, the great Islamic commentator in his commentary, denotes that the purpose of the phrase: 'the purest of speech' is monotheism and sincerity; and the objective of the Qur'anic phrase: /sirat il hamid/ (the path (of Him Who is) Worthy of (all) Praise) is 'Wilayah' (mastership) and the acceptance of leadership and divine leaders. (This meaning, of course is one of the clear examples of the verse.)

However, the different interpretations expressed upon the abovementioned holy verses, as well as their occasions of revelation, lead us to the recognition that those heavy and grievous punishments are consequently for a particular group of disbelievers, those who hostilely dispute against Allah and try to mislead others.

Such persons are the leaders of infidelity, the example of them are those who fought against Ali (as), Hamzat-ibn-'Abd-ul-Mutalib, and 'Ubaydat-ibn-Harith.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 25

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ وَمَن يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

25. "Verily those who disbelieved, and hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah and the Sacred Mosque which We have made equally for all men, (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country, and whoever does intend to wrong therein unjustly, We will make him taste of a grievous chastisement."

In previous verse, the disbelievers were spoken about 'generally', which in the verse under discussion a particular group of them are referred to, those who have committed violate offences and faults concerning the Sacred Mosque (Masjid-ul-Haram) and the splendid rites of Hajj.

At first, it says:

"Verily those who disbelieved, and hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah…"

They also hinder the believing people from the Great Center of Monotheism, i.e. Masjid-ul-Haram (The Sacred Mosque). It is the same center that Allah appointed for all believers equally, irrespective of those who live in that land or those who come from a far distance unto it.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the Sacred Mosque which We have made equally for all men, (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country…"

Such people, who hinder them are deserving of a painful chastisement, because the Sacred Mosque is an international place which, like skies and oceans, is not allocated as a right specially to a person, a country and a government.

Therefore, the verse implies that whoever intends to deviate from the path of the truth and commits injustice and oppression, Allah will taste him of a painful punishment.

The verse says:

"…and whoever does intend to wrong therein unjustly, We will make him taste of a grievous chastisement."

In fact, these disbelievers, besides rejecting the Truth, have committed three great crimes:

1. Hindering people from the path of Allah, Faith, and obeying Him.
2. Hindering from the path of Allah and appointing a privilege for themselves.
3. In this Holy land, they commit injustice, sin, and heresy.

So, Allah will punish this group who deserve painful chastisement in the Hereafter.

By the way, Imam Sadiq (as) concerning this verse, said:

"Whoever worships other than Allah in the Sacred Mosque, or takes other than the saints of Allah as the administrator of this sacred site, then he has been involved in injustice and heresy."[3]

Some Points

1. In this verse, the disbelief of this group has been stated in 'past tense', but 'hindering (people) from the way of Allah' has been said in 'simple present tense'. This refers to the fact that their disbelief is ancient while their effort and endeavor for misleading people is habitual and continues.

In other words, the first phrase refers to their false belief, which is a fixed matter, and the second phrase refers to their action which is the repetition of:

"hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah."

2. The purpose of:

"hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah."

is any effort and endeavor that is done in order to hinder people from believing in the Truth and doing righteous deeds, as well as all the propaganda and activities which are performed for destroying their right beliefs and preventing them from the straight and pure ways, all of them are gathered in this vast concept.

3. All people are equal in this center of worship. The commentators have stated different ideas upon the Qur'anic phrase: /sawa'-ul-'akifu fihi wal bad/

(…(for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country,…).

Some of them have said that the purpose is that all people are equal in the ceremonies of worship in this center of Monotheism, and nobody is allowed to bother another one in the subject of Hajj and worshipping beside the Sacred Mosque.

But some other commentators have considered a vaster scope of meaning for this holy phrase. They have said that people are equal not only in the rites of worship but also in using the lands and houses around Mecca for their rest and other needs. That is why some of the jurisprudents have banned buying and selling the houses of Mecca according to the above verse as a reference.

Some Islamic narrations have emphasized that the pilgrims of the Holy Mosque should not be hindered to rest in the houses of Mecca.

Ali (as) in a letter to Qathm-ibn-'Abbas wrote:

"…Ask the people of Mecca not to charge rent from lodgers, because Allah, the Glorified, says:

'… alike; (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country,…'.

'The dweller' means he who is living there while /al-badi/ means he who is not among the people of Mecca and comes for Hajj from outside."[4]

In another holy tradition Imam Sadiq (as), upon the commentary of this very verse said:

"(At the beginning) the houses of Mecca had not any gate. Mu'awiyah was the first one who set a door for his house. And no one is suitable to hinder the pilgrims from dwelling in the houses of Mecca."[5]

Some Islamic narrations also indicate that the visitors of the Sacred Mosque can use the yards of the houses there until the end of the sacred rites of the pilgrimage. This ordinance, of course, considerably relates to the later discussion, saying that the purpose of 'Sacred Mosque', mentioned in this verse, is not limited to that mosque, or it envelops the whole region of Mecca.

If we accept the first speech, it does not encompass the houses of Mecca, but when we consider the whole territory of Mecca inside the content of the verse, the banning of buying and selling or renting the houses of Mecca for the pilgrims is propounded.

And since this matter is not so certain from the point of the sources of jurisprudence and Islamic narrations, to pass a judicial decree is difficult for this banning. But there is doubt that it is fit for the people of Mecca to prepare all facilities for the visitors of the Sacred Mosque and do not consider any priority or privilege for themselves with respect to them, even in relation to the houses.

The narrations cited in Nahj-ul-Balaqah and the like apparently all point to this very thing, too.

However, the decree of the abovementioned banning has not so many supporters among the jurisprudents of Shi'ah and Sunni.[6]

This meaning is also certain that no one has right to cause the least trouble for the pilgrims under the title of custodian of Ka'bah or other names; or that he would make it as particular center for his own propaganda and programs.

4. What does Sacred Mosque mean here? Some commentators have said that the objective is its apparent meaning, i.e. the House of Ka'bah and the whole Sacred Mosque, while some others consider it as a hint to the 'whole Mecca'.

This group take the first verse of Surah 'Isra', which is about the ascension of the Prophet (S), as an evidence upon it, because this holy verse declares that the beginning of that ascension was from the Sacred Mosque, while history says it began from Khadijah's home, or from Shi'b-i-Abi Talib, or from 'Ummi Hani's house. It shows that the objective of Sacred Mosque is the whole Mecca.[7]

But, in view of the fact that the beginning of the ascension of the Prophet (S) from outside of the Sacred Mosque is not certain, and it is probable that it started from the Mosque itself, we have not any proof to change the meaning of the verse under discussion from its apparent, therefore, the subject matter in this verse is the Sacred Mosque itself.

Through the abovementioned Islamic narrations we are acknowledged that for the equality of people in the houses of Mecca this verse had been taken as the evidence. This is for the reason that the said ordinance is apparently a preferential ordinance, and in a preferential ordinance the extension of the matter in respect of suitability is permissible.

5. What dose ''Ilhadin bi zulm' mean? The Arabic word /'ilhad/ philologically means: "to exceed the moderate limits." The word /lahad/ (a niche in the side of tomb) is called such because it is a whole located in the side of the grave and outside of its middle.

Therefore, the objective of the abovementioned phrase is those persons who exceed the limits by applying cruelty and injustice in order to commit wrong in that land.

But, some commentators have rendered the Qur'anic world /zulm/, here, only into the sense of 'disbelief' and some others into making lawful the unlawful things; while some other commentators have considered it with the vast meaning of the world, viz. they believe that its concept encompasses any sin, committing forbidden acts, and even using abuse and bad words against the inferiors.

So, they say that committing any sin in that Sacred land deserves a more intensive punishment.

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that once one of his students asked him about the commentary of this verse, and he (as) said:

"Any oppression that a person does against himself in the land of Mecca, irrespective of theft, injustice unto others, and any kind of oppression, is inside of this verse and I see it /'ilhad/, (the sins referred to in this verse)."

And, therefore, the Imam forbade people to choose Mecca as a place of living, (because the responsibility of committing sin in this land is heavier).[8]

There have also been cited other narrations with the same meaning which adopt the apparent of the verse.

That is why some jurisprudents, reasoning to the Qur'anic phrase:

"We will make him taste of grievous chastisement ",

have said if a person commits a sin in the Haram of Mecca which deserves a fixed penalty in Islam, he should also probably bear an arbitrary punishment besides that fixed penalty.[9]

What was said makes this fact manifest that those who have interpreted the above verse exclusively in the sense of prohibition of 'hoarding' or entering into the sacred territory without the pilgrim's garb have meant to state a clear example of it, else there is no reason available to limit the concept of the verse thereby.

Notes

1. The Arabic word /'asawir/ is the plural form of /'asvirah/ which in turn is the plural of /siwar/ in the sense of 'bracelet' and originally it has been a Persian word.

www.alhassanain.org/english

2. The Qur'anic term /hamid/ in the sense of /mahmud/ is used for a person who is worthy of praise, which here refers to Allah. Therefore the Qur'anic phrase /siratil hamid/ means the path unto the rank of nearness and pleasure of Allah.

3. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn; and Kafi, vol. 1, P. 337

4. Nahjul-Balaqah, letter 67

5. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, following the verse.

6. For further explanation see Jawahir-ul-Kalam, vol. 20, P. 48 on

7. Kanz-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, P. 335

8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, P. 482

9. Kanz-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, P. 335

Section 4: Pilgrimage to the Sacred House

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 26

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَن لاَّ تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئاً وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَالْقَآئِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السجُودِ

26. "And (remember) when We prepare for Abraham the place of the (holy) House, (saying): 'Do not associate with Me aught, and sanctify My House for those who make the round (thereof) and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves'."

The event of Ka'bah and Abraham is something which must not be forgotten.

In relation to the former discussion upon the previous verse concerning the Sacred Mosque and it's pilgrimage, in this verse, the Qur'an refers to the history of the construction of Ka'bah by 'Ibrahim (as).

At first, it begins from the reconstruction of Ka'bah, where it says:

"And (remember) when We prepare for Abraham the place of the (holy) House…"

The Qur'anic word /baww'a/ is originally derived from /bawa'/ which means the act of making level the parts of a place and its being plain, then it has been applied to any kind of preparing a place for building.

According to the Islamic narrations recorded in some commentary books, the purpose of this Qur'anic sentence in the abovementioned holy verse, is that Allah showed Abraham the place of the Sacred Mosque which had been built at the time Adam (as) and had been ruined in the Flood of Noah and its signs had been effaced.

A wind blew and brought away the dust over it so that, the basis of the House were made manifest. Or a piece of cloud came and cast a shadow over there; or by any other means, Allah showed and prepared the main place of the House for Abraham. Then he (as), with the help of his son, Ishmael, rebuilt it.

Then the Qur'an adds implying that when the House was ready, Allah ordered Abraham to make the House a center of Monotheism and:

"…(saying): 'Do not associate with Me aught, and sanctify My House for those who make the round (thereof) and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves'."

In fact, Abraham (as) was ordered to make clean the House of Ka'bah and its surroundings from any apparent and spiritual pollutions, in order that the servants of Allah would not think of anything but Allah in that pure place, and they could perform the most important worship of that land, i.e. circumambulation and prayer in a circumstance free from any kind of pollution.

Through the abovementioned verse, the Qur'an points to only three essential elements of a prayer, which, in turn, are: standing, bowing, and prostration, because the rest of them are counted in the shade. Yet, some of the commentators have rendered the Qur'anic word /qa'imin/, here, into 'the dwellers of Mecca'.

But regarding the rites of circumambulation, bowing, and prostration which have been mentioned before and after it, there is no doubt that the word ‘standing’, here, is in the sense of’ standing in prayer, and many of the Shi‘ah and Sunni commentators, have chosen this meaning, or they have narrated it as an interpretation for it.[1]

It should also be noted that the Arabic word /rukka‘a/ is the plural form of /raki‘/ (the one who bows), and the word /sujud/ is the plural form of /sajid/ (the one who prostrates), and that there has not been mentioned any linking letter, like /wa/, between them and it has been stated in the form of explanation, is because of nearness of these two worships to each other.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 27

وَأَذِّن فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالاً وَعَلَي كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

27. “And proclaim among men the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every lean beast, coming from every remote path.”

The present efforts of the saints of Allah will surely affect on behaviour of the coming generations.

After the time when the Sacred House of Ka‘bah was prepared for the worshippers, Allah commanded Abraham as follows:

“And proclaim among men the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every lean beast, coming from every remote path.”

The Qur’anic word /’aŏŏin/ is derived from /’aŏan/ meaning ‘proclaim’, and the Arabic word /rijal/ is the plural form of /rajil/ in the sense of ‘on foot’. The Arabic term /damir/ means ‘a thin animal’; and the term /fajj/ originally means ‘the distance between two mountains, and later it has been applied to vast roads, while the word /‘amiq/ here means ‘far’.

The narration which has been cited on the commentary of Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim indicates:

“When Abraham (as) received such a commandment, he said:

“O’ Allah! My voice does not reach the people.”

But Allah told him:

“You do proclaim and I will convey it to them (their ears).”

Then Abraham went up over the station (Maqam) and put his finger upon his ear and shouted loudly towards the East and the West, saying:

“O people! The pilgrim (Hajj) unto the Ancient House has been written (enjoined) for you; so accept the invitation of your Lord!”

Thus, Allah caused his voice to reach the ears of all men, even those who were in the back of fathers and in the womb of mothers; and they answered:

“Yes, we accept. O Allah! Yes, we accept.” And all those who will participate in the rites of Hajj pilgrimage until the Day of Resurrection are totally among those who have accepted the invitation of Abraham (as) on that day.[2]

Those who come on foot are mentioned in the verse before those who come riding on beast, because their rank before Allah is higher, since they suffer the toleration of this voyage more than the latter.

That is why a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that he who goes to Hajj on foot will get seven hundred rewards for each step he takes, while those who are mounted on animals will get seventy rewards.[3]

Or it is for the sake that it defines the importance of the pilgrim of the Sacred House that they should come toward it by any possible means and not to be ever waiting for a mount.

Using the term /damir/ (a lean animal) in this verse, points to this fact that this path is a way which causes animals to become lean since they pass the hot, dry and grassless deserts, and this is a warning unto us for bearing the difficulties of this way.

Or that they take some animals which are clever, quick, and tolerating. The animals that have become thin in the field of practice and have strong muscles are more suitable while the fat animals are not.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase

"coming from every remote path"

refers to this fact that they come to this destination not only from near paths but also from far and remote paths. (The usage of the Arabic word /kull/ here does not mean induction and encompassment, but it means 'multiplicity'.)

Abul-Futuh Razi, the well-known commentator, explains the interesting biography of a man named Abul-Qasim Bushr-ibn-Muhammad.

This man says:

"When circumambulating the Ka'bah, I saw a man who was completely old and weak whose face indicated the toil of a traveling that he had suffered. He was walking by the help of a rod when I approached him and asked him: 'Where do you come from?'

He answered: 'I come from a very far distance. I have been paving the way for fifty years to come, and now I am here. I have become old and weak because of the toil of traveling'. I said: 'By Allah this is a great hardship and, at the meantime, it is a good obedience and a sincere love at the presence of Allah.

Hearing my words, he became happy and he showed a pleasant smile to me. Then he recited a poem for me, the content of which meant: visit whom you love, though your house is far away and curtains cause separation between you and him.

Verily the far distance of the way should never hinder you from pilgrimage, because a lover must go to visit his beloved in any case.

Of course, the attraction of the Sacred House is so much so that attracts the hearts full of Faith towards it from all far and near points of the world. Old and young, small and adult, far and near, from any race and tribe the individual may be, he amorously comes towards Him murmuring the holy phrase:

"Yes, I accept. O' Lord! Yes, I accept'.

He comes to see, with his own eyes, the splendour and manifestations of His Pure Essence in that holy land and to feel His abundant Grace in his own soul.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 28

لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَى مَا رَزَقَهُم مِن بَهِيمَةِ الأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَآئِسَ الْفَقِيرَ

28. "That they may witness advantages for them and mention the name of Allah during the appointed days over what He has provided them of the cattle quadrupeds (for sacrifice), then eat of them and feed the wretched poor."

The advantages of Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca are so much and important that if people come from the furthest points of the world it is still worthy.

Imam Sadiq (as) has said that the objective of the word /manafi'/ (benefits), mentioned in this verse, is the benefits of both this world and Hereafter.[4]

In this verse, through a very short and expressive sentence, the Qur'an refers to the philosophies of Hajj, indicating that they come to this holy land to observe their benefits with their own eyes.

The verse says:

"That they may witness advantages for them…"

The explanation of the commentators upon the Qur'anic word /manafi'/ (benefits) in this verse are abundant, while it is quietly clear that there is no limitation in this word. It envelops all the spiritual blessings and benefits, as well as the material advantages. It encompasses not only the individual and social interests, but also all of the political, economical, and ethical philosophies.

Yes, the Muslims of all the rigions of the world, and from all levels of people, should go there to witness these benefits. What a beautiful meaning! To witness them; that is what they have heard of, they may see it with their eyes.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in Kitab-ul-Kafi, denotes that once Rabi'-ibn-Khuthiym asked him (as) about the commentary of this word, and he (as) answered:

"It envelops the benefits of both this world and the Hereafter."[5]

These various benefits will be explained in details later when commenting on the verse, Allah Willing.

Then the holy Qur'an adds:

"…and mention the name of Allah during the appointed days over what He has provided them of the cattle quadrupeds (for sacrifice)…"

Since the main attention in the rites of Hajj is to the aspects which relate to Allah, and reflect the spirit of this great worship, then, in the abovementioned verse, among the whole ceremonies of sacrifice only the subject of 'mentioning the name of Allah', which is one of ritual conditions, has been stated.

This meaning refers to the fact that, at the time of sacrifice, their entire attention is wholly unto Allah (s.w.t.) and His acceptance, and the usage of its meat comes in the second degree.

To sacrifice animals, in fact, is a secret for preparation to be sacrificed in the cause of Allah, as we are acquainted with the story of Abraham (as) and his sacrifice, Ishmael (as). By their action, they announced that they were ready to donate everything in His cause, even for offering the soul.

However, by this statement, the noble Qur'an negates the blasphemous custom of idolaters who used to mention the names of their idols at the time of sacrifice, and who had polluted this theistic ceremony to polytheism.

At the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an implies that you can both eat of the meat of the animals which you sacrifice and feed the distressed ones in want.

The verse says:

"…then eat of them and feed the wretched poor."

In the commentary upon the holly verse there is also this probability that the purpose of mentioning the name of Allah during the 'appointed days' is the act of saying "Allahu Akbar" and thanksgiving and praise of Allah during these days for His infinite blessings, especially for the cattle quadrupeds which He has provided as sustenance for human beings and that they benefit from all parts of their bodies in their life.

Hajj as a Divine Worship

1. Hajj is a general mobilization and the parade of monotheists.
2. Hajj is the beautiful feature of love and devotion.
3. Hajj is the survival of the memories and services of some divine prophets, such as Abraham (as), Ishmael (as) and Muhammad (S).
4. Hajj is the international center of the crowds of the Muslims.
5. Hajj is the center of communication for exchanging the news and information of the world of Islam.
6. Hajj is the economical support for the Muslims and the place of supplying jobs for thousands of Muslim individuals.
7. Hajj is the best time and opportunity for the Islamic propaganda, the divulgence of plots, advocating the oppressed, acquittance from polytheists, and creating fear and terror in their hearts.
8. Hajj is the best chance for repentance the remembrance of death and Resurrection, being ceased from everything, observing the desert of 'Arafat and Mash'ar, and waiting for the Promised Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent).

Note the following Points:

1- What Does 'the Appointed Days' Mean?

In the abovementioned verse, Allah (s.w.t.) commands us to remember Him during 'the appointed days'. This Divine commandment has occurred in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 203 in another form; it says:

"And mention Allah during the appointed days."

Upon the meaning of the phrase: 'the appointed days' and that whether this phrase has the same meaning which is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah or not, the commentators are divided and the Islamic narrations are also different in this regard.

According to some of the Islamic narrations, a group of the commentators believe that the purpose of 'the appointed days' is the beginning ten days of Zil-Hajjah, the days that enlighten all hearts.

But another group of them, according to some other Islamic narrations, have said that both of these two phrases refer to the days of 'Tashriq'. They

have taken such days as three days, and sometimes they also add the tenth day of the month to them, i.e. Feast of Sacrifice.

The Qur'anic sentence recited in Surah Al-Baqarah which says

"…but whoever hastens off within two days, it will be no sin on him…"

shows that the days of 'Tashriq' are not more than three days, because hastening in them causes that one day decreases and they turn to become two days.

But, regarding to the fact that after mentioning the phrase: 'the appointed days' in the verse under discussion, the act of sacrifice has been referred to, and we know that offering in sacrifice is usually done on the tenth day, this matter is verified that 'the appointed days' are the beginning ten days of Zil-Hajjah which ends on the tenth day, the day of 'Sacrifice'. Thus, the first interpretation, in which the duality of these two concepts is referred to, is strengthened.

Yet, with regard to the similarity of the phrases of these two verses, this matter is mostly understood that both of them refer to the same subject. The aim in both of them is the remembrance and mentioning the name of Allah during an appointed time which begins from the tenth of Zil-Hajjah and ends on the thirteenth day of the month.

One of the instances of the remembrance of the name of Allah, of course, is mentioning His sacred name at the time of sacrifice.

2- Mentioning Allah in Muna

A lot of Islamic narrations indicate that the objective of mentioning Allah during these days is a special Takbir which is said after the noon prayer on the day of Feast Sacrifice, and it will be continued for fifteen ritual prayers (i.e. it will end after the morning prayer of the thirteenth day of the month. It is as follows:

/'Allahu 'akbaru 'Allahu 'akbar. la 'ilaha 'illallahu wallahu 'akbar. 'Allahu 'akbar wa lillahil hamd. 'Allahu 'akbaru 'ala ma hadana, wallahu 'akbaru 'ala ma razaqna min bahimatil 'an'am/

By the way, some of the narrations clearly indicate that reciting Takbir in these fifteen times is particular to those who are in the land of Muna and during the days of Hajj, but those who are in other lands and cities will say these takbirat (magnifyings) only after ten ritual prayers.

(It begins after the noon prayer of Feast Sacrifice and ends after the morning prayer on the twelfth day of the month.

It is also noteworthy that the Islamic narrations concerning Takbir certify that the holy word /ðikr/ mentioned in the above verse is general and is not particular to the mentioning Allah at the time of offering sacrifice, though this general concept envelops that aspect, too. (Be careful)

3- The Philosophy and the Profound Secrets of Hajj

The rites of Hajj, as other worships, have a lot of blessings and effects upon individuals and the Islamic society. If they may be accomplished according to a proper program and beneficially used, they can annually be the source of a new transformation in the Islamic societies.

These great holy rites, in fact, contain four dimensions, each of which is more profound and more beneficial.

a. The Ethical Dimension of Hajj

The most important philosophy of Hajj is its ethical transformation that comes into being within some human beings.

The rites of 'the state of ritual consecration' totally bring man out of the material ceremonies, apparent privileges, colorful clothings and ornamentations; and by means of forbidding some pleasures for the sake of paying to self-improvement, which is among the duties of the person who is clothed in a pilgrim state, it separates him from the world of matter and takes him into a world full of Light, Spirituality, and serenity.

It causes those who, in ordinary status, feel the heavy burden of illusory privileges, degrees, and prize-medals on their shoulders; to be suddenly in lightness, ease, and peace of mind.

Then, the rites of Hajj will be done one after another. These rites may strengthen the spiritual interests of man with his Lord more and more every moment, and make his relation with Him closer and stronger. They will separate him from his dark and sinful past and link him to a clear, bright, and peaceful future.

Specially that the rites of Hajj, in every step, in fact, remind the memorials of Abraham, the iconoclast, his son, Ishmael, and Hajar, Ishmael's mother. They also illustrate their struggles, forbearances, and donations before the one's eyes every now and then.

Also paying attention to the fact that the region of Mecca, in general, and the Sacred Mosque, Ka'bah, and the place of circumambulation, in particular, remind the memorials of the Prophet of Islam (S), the great leaders of Islam, and the struggles of the Muslims in the advent of Islam, this ethical revolution seems to become deeper in him so that he spiritually sees the features of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), Ali (as) and other great leaders of Islam in every corner of the Sacred Mosque, and hears their voices by his heart.

Yes, all of these things with together prepare the ground of an ethical revolution in the receptive hearts, and indescribably change the face of the life of men in a manner that a new shape of living begins in his life.

It is not undue that some Islamic narrations denote that whoever performs the rites of Hajj completely comes out from his sins like the day when his mother brought him forth.

Yes, Hajj is a second birth for the Muslims; a birth that causes a new human life to begin.

Of course, it is not necessary to be mentioned that these blessings and effects, and those which will be referred to later, are not for those who suffice to the outward actions of Hajj and neglect the inward aspects of it; nor for those who have taken Hajj as a means of pleasure, traveling and sight-seeing, or for preference, hypocrisy, and supplying some personal material means, and have never been acquainted with the spirit of Hajj. Their share is merely that which they have obtained.

b. The Political Dimension of Hajj

As the statement of one the great jurisprudents indicates, the rites of Hajj, which deliver the sincerest and deepest worships, can be the most effective means for the settlement of the political aims of Islam.

Attending to Allah is the spirit of worship, and attending to the servants of Allah is the spirit of politics. In Hajj pilgrimage, these two are so mingled into each other that they will be one thing, and besides that, Hajj is an effective factor to unite the rows of Muslims.

Hajj is an effective fitting factor for struggling against the national bigotries and racialism and being limited inside the geographical boundaries.

Hajj, indeed, is a means for breaking some oppressions and annihilating the cruel treatments of some systems governing in Islamic countries.

Hajj is a means of communication for transferring the political news of Islamic countries from one point to another point. And, finally, Hajj is an effective factor for breaking the chains of captivity and colonialism in some societies to make the Muslims free.

That was why when some cruel governors, such as Umayyads and Abbasides, were ruling over the holy lands of Islam and controlled all communications between the groups of Muslim people to crush any movement for freedom, the advent of Hajj season was a gate open to freedom and communication of the members of the Islamic great society with each other and, also, exchanging the different political problems.

So, when the first Imam, Amir-ul-Mu‘mineen Ali (as), was enumerating the philosophy of different worships, in relation to Hajj, he said that Allah legitimated the rites of Hajj (pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque in Mecca) as a support for the religion of Islam.[6]

It is not undue that, one of the famous politicians who was non-Muslim, of course, in his lecture said:

“Woe to Muslims if they do not comprehend the meaning of Hajj, and woe to their enemies if they comprehend its meaning.”

Even in some Islamic narrations, Hajj has been considered as a Holy Struggle for the weak persons. It is a Holy Struggle in which, by their participation in its gathering, even the old men and feeble women can show the glory and grandeur of Islam, and cause the back of their enemies tremble by means of the rings of their prayer rows around Ka‘bah and showing their unity by the loud sound of Takbir.

c. The Cultural Dimension of Hajj

The sincere relation of different groups of people and levels during the days of Hajj pilgrimage can be the most effective factor of cultural exchange and communicating thoughts.

The great crowd of Hajj is, in particular, the natural and real representative of the different groups of Muslim peoples of the world. (There is no artificial factor effective in the decision of the pilgrims of the Ka‘bah to go towards it, and the pilgrims gathered in Mecca are from all groups and races of Muslims who speak in different languages.)

Therefore, some Islamic narrations indicate that one of the privileges of Hajj is the distribution of the news and signs of the Messenger of Allah unto all parts of the world.

Husham-ibn-Hakam, one of the knowledgeable companions of Imam Sadiq (as) says that once he asked him about the philosophy of Hajj and the circumambulation of Ka‘bah and he (as) said:

"Verily Allah created the people… and commanded them something for the obedience of the religion and their affairs of the world, and enjoined them of the gathering of the people of the east and west (in the rites of the Hajj) in order that they (the Muslims) know each other well (being acquainted with their state) and that every nation may use capital for merchant from one city to another… and for the purpose that the effects of the Messenger of Allah (S) and his news should be acknowledged and in order that people might mention them and do and they never forget them."[7]

For this very reason, in the periods of the tyrannical rulers, when the cruel Caliphs and the kings did not let the Muslims introduce and spread these ordinances, by taking benefit from this opportunity, they could solve their difficulties and, by contacting with the Imam (as) and the great scholars of Islam, they would unveil the Islamic laws and the Prophet's rules.

On the other side, Hajj can be turned into a great cultural gathering, and the wise and learned men of the world of Islam, during the time when they are in Mecca, can come together and exhibit their thoughts and originative faculties.

In principle, one of the great misfortunes is that the boundaries of the Islamic countries are one of the causes of their culture separation. The Muslim people of every country think only of themselves. In this case the connected Islamic society tears into pieces and then will be annihilated. Yes, Hajj can hinder this inauspicious fate to happen.

How interesting the statement of Imam Sadiq (as) is, at the end of the narration of Husham-ibn-Hakam, where he (as) says:

"If every nation speak only about its own country and cities and only think about the things therein, they will meet destruction and those countries will turn into ruins, their interests will fall and the true righteous persons will remain unknown."[8]

d. The Economic Dimension of Hajj

In spite of what a group may think, utilizing the great gathering of Hajj for strengthening the economic foundations of Islamic countries, not only does not contrast the spirit of Hajj, but also, according to the Islamic narrations, it forms one of its philosophies.

What may hinder Muslims that they lay the foundation of a great Islamic common Market in that great assembly? They can prepare the grounds of common commercial exchanges among themselves in a way that neither their rightful benefits be devoured by their enemies nor does their economy depend on foreigners, and this behaviour is not mamonism, but it is just a worship and Holy Struggle.

Therefore, Husham-ibn-Hakam in the same narration from Imam Sadiq (as), among the philosophies of Hajj, explicitly refers to this fact that one of the goals of Hajj was enforcing the commerce of the Muslims and preparing the facilities of economic relations.

In another tradition from the same Imam (as), upon the commentary of the abovementioned verse, he (as) says:

"The purpose of the verse which says:

'There shall be no sin for you to seek bounty from your Lord…'[9]
is obtaining sustenance.

Then when one comes out of the state of ritual consecration and fulfils the rites of Hajj in the same period of Hajj, he can sell and buy (things), (and this action not only is not a sin but also deserves rewards)."[10]

This very meaning has been narrated in a tradition from Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as) upon the philosophies of Hajj, at the end of which there has been said:

"That they may witness advantages for them."[11]

This statement denotes that this Qur'anic phrase envelops both the spiritual advantages and material advantages, all of which from one viewpoint are totally spiritual.

Shortly, if this magnificent worship be practiced correctly and completely, and in that period, when the pilgrims activity attend that holy land and their hearts are receptive, they utilize this grand opportunity for solving the different problems of the Islamic society by the formation of various gatherings for political, cultural and economical affairs, this worship can be useful from any point of view. And, perhaps, it is for the same reason that Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"As long as the Ka'bah exists the religion (of Islam) exists."[12]

Also Ali (as) said:

"(fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'bah). Do not leave it empty so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared."[13]

And, again, it is because of this matter that there has been introduced a large chapter in the Islamic narrations under this title, indicating that if it happens that Muslims decide to stop going to Hajj pilgrimage for one year, it is obligatory to the Islamic government to send some of them to Mecca by force.[14]

e. The Meat of Sacrifices in Our Time

It is clearly understood from the abovementioned verses that the purpose of offering sacrifice, in addition to the spiritual aspects and to be nigh to the presence of Allah, is that the meat of sacrifice should be used in necessary places of usage: a part of it may be used by the one who has offered the sacrifice, and the rest of it should be given to the needy poor people to use.

On the other side, the banning of immoderation is not some-thing to be concealed to anybody, since both the Qur'an, and Islamic narrations, and the reason of wisdom have proved it.

Thus, it can be conclude from all these statements that Muslims are not allowed to waste the meat of sacrifices in the land of Muna or let it be putrid or berried in the ground; and surely the obligation of offering sacrifice for the pilgrims to Mecca cannot be an evidence for such an action.

Therefore, if there is not any needy poor person in that day and in that locality, the meat of sacrifices can be carried to some other regions to be consumed.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that it is forbidden to take the meat of sacrifice out of the land of Muna or the sacred territory of Mecca. This idea relates to the times when there were enough consumers therein.[15]

That is why a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that once one of the companions of the Imam, regarding this matter, asked him and he (as) said:

"We used to say that nothing of it should be brought out (from Muna) because people were in need of it, but today, that the people (and their sacrifices) have been increased, taking it out does not matter."[16]

But, fortunately, at the present time, as a result of the awareness of the Muslims and their appropriate action in this regard, there have been supplied some modern means and they receive the available sacrifices irrespective of sheep, cow and camel, after that they are killed legitimately.

They will pack them hygienically in an excellent form, and maintain them in some equipped refrigerators to give them for the use of the poor and needy weak people.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 29

ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

29. "Then let them get cleaned (smarten themselves) and fulfil their rows, and let them circumambulate the Ancient House (the Ka'bah)."

In some worships, like prayer, hygiene and cleanliness is the condition to begin them, and in some others, like Hajj, it is a part of them, while in some instances, like studying or recitation of the Qur'an as well as while one keeps to the mosques, it is counted as the condition of its perfection.

However, the practice of cleaning off dirt and removing filth is a severe command, not a mere recommendation, as the verse implies that the pilgrims of the Sacred Mosque when they have offered sacrifice on the day of sacrifice they should get cleaned and smarten themselves.

By the way, the dirt and filth is from the person himself, but the advantages of Hajj are from the grace of Allah which He has appointed for him.

However, following the statements about the rites of Hajj, which were dealt with through the former verses, this holy verse refers to another part of the rites of Hajj.

At first, it says:

"Then let them get cleaned (smarten themselves) and fulfil their rows…"

After that, they must circumambulate the Ka'bah, the House which Allah has made secure from the evil of accidents and has made it free.

The verse continues saying:

"…and let them circumambulate the Ancient House (the Ka'bah)."

The Arabic word /tafth/, as many of the philologists and famous commentators have said, means: dirt and the extra things of the body, like nail and some of its hair. Some other commentators said: it is originally called to the dirt under the nail, and the like.[17]

In some Islamic narrations, this phrase has repeatedly been rendered into: 'paring the nails, cleaning the body, laying aside the pilgrim garment'. In other words, this phrase refers to the act of 'hair cut' which is one of the rites of Hajj. In some narrations, it has also been rendered into 'shaving the head' which is one of the way of 'hair cut'.

In Kanz-ul-‘Irfan, Ibn-‘Abbas has been narrated that upon the commentary of this verse, he said:

“The purpose of it is the accomplishment of all the rites of Hajj.”[18]

Thus, on the day of Feast Sacrifice and in the ground of Muna, beside Mecca, there are three obligatory acts for the pilgrims:

1. Throwing seven small pebbles toward the rank of Satan, this is called: “Stone-throwing”.

2. The act of sacrifice, which was formerly referred to in the explanation of the previous holy verse.

3. Shaving the head or cutting hair and nail, which have been mentioned in this holy verse as obligatory, and after that putting an end to wearing the pilgrim garment, on that day or the days follow, there comes the turn of fulfilment the circumambulation of pilgrimage in the Sacred Mosque and its prayer, and running between Safa and Marwah mountains, Nisa’ circumambulation (circumambulating of Ka‘bah) and its circumambulation prayer, all of which must be performed.

Some have narrated, of course, that the objective of the last phrase of the abovementioned verse is Nisa’ circumambulation after which the sexual intercourse with wives will become allowed.

This ritual circumambulation is done after the Hajj circumambulation, because after the Hajj circumambulation everything will become permissible except one’s wife, and after the performance of Nisa’ circumambulation one’s wife will become permissible, too.

It is interesting that in a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) he commented on the beginning phrase of this verse as ‘meeting Imam’; and when he (as) was asked for more explanation about that subject and on the commentary of the abovementioned verse in connection with paring the nails and the like, the Imam (as) added:

“The Qur’an has an exterior and an interior.”

That is, the question of ‘meeting Imam’, here, relates to the interior of the verse.[19]

This tradition may refer to a delicate point, indicating that pilgrim of the Sacred Mosque, as he cleanses the dirt of the body after performing the rites of Hajj, similarly he must remove the pollution of his soul and mind by meeting the Imam (as) who is his leader, in particular that during some long periods, the tyrannical Caliphs, in ordinary conditions, did not allow people to have such a meeting. Thus, the best opportunity for reaching this aim could be obtained in the rites of Hajj.

Concerning this subject, Imam Baqir (as), in a tradition, said:

“The completion of Hajj (for a person) is meeting the Imam.”[20]

In fact, both of them are of the kinds of cleanliness: one is purification of outside from dirt and pollutions, and the other is purification of interior from the dirt of negligence and ethical ungodliness.

The purpose of the phrase ‘fulfil their vows’ is that, at the advent of Islam, a great deal of people used to make a vow with the intention that if they succeeded to go to Mecca, in addition to the rites of Hajj, they would offer some extra sacrifices, and give some alms, or do some benevolence; and sometimes it happened that they forgot their vows when they reached

home. The Qur'an emphasizes that none should ever neglect to fulfil one's vows.

Why Has the Ka'bah Been Called: Bayt-ul-'Atiq (the Ancient House)?

The Arabic word /'atiq/ is derived from /rataqa/ which means to become free from the bond of captivity. The usage of this word for Ka'bah may be for this view that the Ka'bah is free from the bond of ownership of the mortals and in no time it had a possessor, save Allah, and it had ever been free from the domination of the tyrants, like 'Abraham.

Concerning Ka'bah, Imam Baqir (as) said:

"It has neither a dweller nor a possessor, but it is a Free House."[21]

One of the meanings of /'atiq/ is 'honored' and 'worthy'. This concept is clearly seen in the House of Ka'bah, too.

Another meaning of /'atiq/ is 'ancient'; as Raqib cites in Mufradat:

"'Atiq is something which is prior from the point of time, or place, or rank."

This is also clear that the Sacred Mosque is the oldest center of Monotheism, and as the Qur'an says, it is the first House which was set up for human beings as a guidance.

However, it is possible that this word used for the Sacred House is because of all these privileges that it has, though every one of the commentators has pointed to a part of them, or in each of different narrations some particular points have been referred to separately.

Upon the objective of the Arabic term /tawaf/, mentioned in the last sentence of the abovementioned verse, the opinions of the commentators are divided.

(We know that after the performance of sacrifice in Mecca, pilgrims must accomplish two circumambulations, one of which is usually known as the circumambulation of Hajj (pilgrimage), and the second one is called Nisa' circumambulation.)

Some of the jurisprudents and commentators believe that since there is no condition mentioned in the text of the verse, then its concept is general and envelops both the circumambulation of Hajj (pilgrimage) and Nisa' circumambulations and the circumambulation of 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage)[22]

It is in the case that some others believe that the objective of it is only the circumambulation of pilgrimage (Hajj) which will be obligatory after coming out from the pilgrim garment.

But as it was pointed out before, in the numerous holy narrations quoted from the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), there has been declared that the purpose of it is 'Nisa' circumambulation'.

Imam Sadiq (as) upon the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…and fulfil their vows, and let them circumambulate the ancient house (the Ka'bah)",

said:

"The purpose is Nisa' circumambulation".[23]

And this very meaning has been narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as), too[24]. This is the same circumambulation which the Sunnites called in Arabic /Tawaf-i-Wida‘/ (Farewell circumambulation).

However, according to the Islamic narrations, the last commentary seems stronger, specially that from the first phrase of the verse this may also understood that besides purifying the body from dirt and extra hairs, to complete it, some perfume should be used too.

And we know that using perfume in Hajj is allowed only after circumambulation running and pilgrimage; and naturally there remains no other obligatory circumambulation, in this situation, except Nisa’ circumambulation.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 30

ذَلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ الأَنْعَامُ إِلاَّ مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزورِ

30. “Such (is the pilgrimage); and whoever magnifies the sacred things of Allah, it is better for him with his Lord; and the cattle are made lawful for you save that which has been recited to you, therefore avoid the filth of the idols and avoid false speech.”

There have been cited many aspects for the Qur’anic Phrase /qaul-az-zur/(false speech) mentioned in the above verse, some of these denotation expansions are as lie, perjured witness and unlawful songs.

There have been mentioned some examples for the sanctities of Allah, such as: the law of Allah, the Book of Allah, and Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (as), the reverence of which is necessary to be kept.[25]

The act of perjured witness has been mentioned in the row of polytheism or disbelief in Allah, and the action of ‘false speech’ is one of the major sins.[26] A Tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that the objective of ‘false speech’ is unlawful singing.[27]

However, in this holy verse, as a conclusion, the Qur’an, pointing the former holy verses, implies that the program of Hajj and its rites are the same things which were mentioned before.[28]

Then, in order to emphasize the importance of the duties which were stated, the Qur’an adds implying that whoever takes the Divine programs magnificent and protects their reverence, it will be better for him with his Lord.

The above verse says:

“Such (is the pilgrimage); and whoever magnifies the sacred-things of Allah, it is better for him with his Lord;…”

It is clear that the Qur’anic term /hurumat/, here, refers to the deeds and rites of Hajj. It is possible that the respect of the House of Ka‘bah, in particular, and the sacred premises of Mecca, in general, may also be added to them.

Therefore, the interpretation of it into /muharramat/ which means whatever has been prohibited of, in general, or all of the obligations, contrast the apparent of the verse.

By the way, this is noteworthy that the Arabic word /hurumat/ is the plural form of the /hurmah/ which originally means something the respect of which must be kept and no disgrace should be shown to it.

Then, appropriating to the divine ordinances of pilgrim garment, the Qur'an refers to the lawfulness of the cattle, such as: camel, cow, and sheep.

The verse says:

"…and the cattle are made lawful for you save that which has been recited to you…"

The phrase:

"…save that which has been recited to you…"

may refer to the prohibition of hunting in the Sacred Zone which has been mentioned in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 95 that was revealed later, and says:

"O, you who have Faith! Kill no game while you are in pilgrim garb…"

Also, it may refer to the last sentence of the verse under discussion concerning the obligation of the sacrifices which used to be killed for idols, since we know the lawfulness of the animals is only when the name of Allah is recited to them at the moment of sacrifice, not the name of idols, nor any other names.

At the end of this verse, two more commandments have been stated in relation to the rites of Hajj and struggle against the traditions of the Age of Ignorance.

It says:

"…therefore avoid of the filth of the idols…"

The Arabic term /'auan/ is the plural form of /waan/ in the sense of the stones which were worshipped by the people in the Age of Ignorance. Here, the word /'auan/ is the qualification of the word /rijs/ (filth) which has occurred before it. Thus it says that 'filth' is the same as idols.

This matter is also noteworthy that the idol worshippers of the Age of Ignorance used to pour the blood of the animals they sacrificed over the heads and faces of their idols. This action caused the idols to get a very ugly, disgraceful and hateful scenery, and the abovementioned meaning may refer to that either.

The second commandment is that 'false speech' should be avoided of.

The verse says:

"…and avoid false speech."

What is False Speech?

Some commentators believe that it refers to the quality of the manner of the polytheists in the rites of Hajj in the Age of Ignorance when they were to recite /labbayk/, because they had distorted /labbayk/, which is the full reflection of Monotheism and worshipping God, so sharply that it included the most hideous and blasphemous meanings.

They used to say:

"Yes, we accepted Your invitation and came toward You. O, Lord! You have not any partner save the partner who is Yours. You are the possessor of him and what he possesses."[29]

This speech has certainly been a futile and vain statement and it is the extension of ‘False Speech’ which originally means a ‘False Speech’, and it is out of the limit of moderation.

Yet, the attention of the verse to the deeds of polytheists in the rites of Hajj in the Age of Ignorance does not hinder the generality of its concept which is avoiding of any kind of idol in any shape and form, and avoiding any false speech in any sort and quality.

So, in some of the Islamic narrations the Arabic term /’auan/ has been rendered into chess (a kind of gambling), and the phrase ‘False Speech’ has been rendered into ‘unlawful singing’ and ‘perjured witness’, that, in fact, as some commentators have said, this is general, not in the particular concept about these affairs.

A tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that one day it happened that he stood up and made a sermon among people, in which he said:

“False witness is equal to associating something with Allah.”

Then he (S) recited this holy verse:

“…therefore avoid the filth of the idols and avoid false speech.”[30]

This tradition is a hint to the vastness of the scope of the meaning of this holy verse.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 31

حُنَفَآءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ

31. “(Fulfil the rites of Hajj while) being true in Faith for Allah, not associating (anything) with Him, and whoever associates with Allah (anything), it is as though he had fallen from heaven and the birds snatch him away, or the wind carries him off to a far distant place.”

Pure Monotheism causes everything to be worthy while polytheism often causes the best beings to become worthless.

Hoopoe, which believed in the Lord of the world, became the factor of the guidance of the people an area because of the eager and interest that it had for the guidance of the idolaters,[31] but a human may fall, because of polytheism, so that he becomes the food of some animals.

Therefore, the end of attaching any power, except the power of Allah, is perdition, even that of the most powerful government.

In the discussions through the former verses, the emphasis was laid on the subject of monotheism and avoiding any kind of idol and idolatry.

The verses under discussion pursue the same important matter, where it says:

“(Fulfil the rites of Hajj while) being true in Faith for Allah, not associating (anything) with Him…”

The Qur’anic word /hunafa’/ is the plural form of /hanif/ which means a person who, avoiding aberration and deviation, tends to the straight forwardness and equilibrium and, in other words he paves the Straight Path, since the Arabic word /hanaf/ means ‘incline’ and incline from any aberration leads man to going on the straight path.

Thus, the abovementioned verse refers to the subject of sincerity and intention with divine motive as the main motive in Hajj and worships in general, because the spirit of worship is sincerity and sincerity is that fact in which there is no motive of polytheism and things other than Allah.

Imam Baqir (as), upon the commentary of the Qur'anic word /hanif/ in a tradition, said:

"Hanif is the same nature on which people are created, and there is no change in the creation of Allah."

Then he (as) added, saying:

"Allah has set Monotheism in the nature of man."[32]

The commentary mentioned in this tradition, in fact, is a hint to the main root of sincerity, i.e. the monotheistic nature, from which the intention with divine motive originates.

Then the Qur'an demonstrates the condition of polytheists very clearly and expressively which shows their fall, misery, and annihilation.

It continues saying:

"…and whoever associates with Allah (anything) , it is as though he had fallen from heaven and the birds snatch him away, or the wind carries him off to a far distant place."

In fact, heaven is an implicit declaration for 'monotheism' and polytheism causes the fall from this heaven. It is natural that the stars glow in this heaven and the Moon and the Sun illuminate therein. So happy is who is at least like a bright star in this heaven, if he is not like the Sun or the Moon.

When a person falls from this height, he will be involved in one of these two painful fates: either he will be the prey to the carrion-kite birds in the middle of the way; or, in other words, by losing this assured station, he will be captured in the claws of low desires and restive passions each of which snatches and destroys a part of his entity; or if he could escape from them safely, he will be taken by a fatal storm which throws him far away in a corner so harshly that his body will be scattered and every particle of it will be thrown here and there.

This storm seems to be indirectly Satan who always lies in ambush.

Admittedly, he who falls from heaven with the increasing speed his body naturally loses the ability of making decision and every moment he approaches annihilation and at last will perish.

Yes, he who loses the station of the heaven of the monotheism, will not be able to take therein of his Fate, and the further he goes forth, the more his speed of falling increases, and finally he loses his whole capital of his humanity.

Truly, there will not be found a parable more clear and lively than this parable for polytheism.

This matter is also noteworthy that it has been proved today that, in free falling (drop), man has no weight, and that is why for the space travelers to practice the state of weightlessness usually freefalling is applied. The state of extraordinary anxiety that a person feels at the time of falling, is because of this very weightlessness.

Yes, the person who goes from Faith toward Polytheism, and loses his firm support, will be left in such a state of weightlessness inside his own soul and, consequently, an extraordinary anxiety and worry illuminates his entity.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 32

ذَلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَآئِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَي الْقُلُوبِ

32. "That (is the command); and whoever holds in honour the rites of Allah, verily it is (the reflection) of the piety of the hearts."

In other verses the Qur'an has explicitly considered two rites of the rites of Hajj among the symbols of Allah. One is Safa and Marwah, and the other is the camel of sacrifice, but the symbols of Allah are not confined to these two, because all the processional worships, such as Friday prayer, congregation prayer, and the whole rites of Hajj are symbols of Allah.

Virtue is of the spiritual states, the existence of which can be recognized by some effects and signs, since there is not so much difference between sin and reward in the apparent affairs.

For instance, often apparently the sincere prayer and hypocritical prayer seem the same; and the thing which causes one person to be valuable and the other worthless, is that spirit and the innate of the matter which relate to the hearts.

Thus, the interior piety must have some exterior effects, too. Whoever is heedless to slogans, in fact, his heartily piety is little, and whoever magnifies the slogans of Allah and respects the signs of Divine religion and the flags of His obedience, this matter in him originates from 'the piety of the hearts'.

The verse says:

"That (is the command); and whoever holds in honour the rites of Allah, verily it is (the reflection) of the piety of the hearts."

The Qur'anic word /ša'a'ir/ is the plural form of /ša'irah/ which means (symbol). Thus, the phrase /ša'a'ir allah/ means the symbols of Allah which consist of the tittles of the Divine religion, general programs, and whatever is outstanding at the first facing with this religion, among which are the rites of Hajj which cause man to remember Allah (s.w.t.).

No doubt, the rites of Hajj are among the slogans that had been meant in this holy verse, specially the act of offering sacrifice which has explicitly been counted as a part of slogans in verse 36 of the current Surah.

But it is clear that the generality of the concept of the verse due to all Islamic symbols are still valid, and there is no evidence for the specialization of it to only sacrifice or the whole rites of Hajj, in particular that the Qur'an, concerning the sacrifice of Hajj with the help of /min/, which is used for distinction, reiterates that the sacrifice is one of those symbols, as Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 158, indicates that Safa and Marwah are from symbols of Allah (s.w.t.), where it says:

"Behold, Safa and Marwah are among the symbols (appointed by) Allah;…"

Shortly speaking, all of what have been recorded in the religious programs and cause man to remember Allah and His religion are symbols of Allah and dignifying them is the sign of piety of the hearts.

This matter is also notable that the purpose of 'to dignify', according to what some of the commentators have said, is not the physical bigness of the sacrifice and the like, but the reality of its veneration is meant which can promote the rank and situation of these divine symbols in the thoughts and minds, outwardly and inwardly, and fulfil what is fit for their respect and glorification.

The relation of this deed with the piety of the hearts is also clear, because, besides that glorification is a part of what we intend, it happens frequently that 'the pretending persons' or hypocrites pretend to the glorification of the symbols, but since it does not originate from the piety of their hearts, it is worthless.

The true glorification belongs to those who possess the piety of the hearts, and we know that piety and the soul of virtuousness and responsibility in the face of the Divine commandments is something that the center of which is heart, and from it is that the body is affected.

Therefore, it can be said that the reverence and glorification of the Divine symbols are from the signs of the piety of the hearts.

A tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) denotes that once he pointed to his chest and said:

"The reality of piety is here."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 33

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّي ثُمَّ مَحِلهَآ إِلَي الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

33. "You have benefits in them till an appointed time, then their place of sacrifice is by the Ancient House, (the ka'bah)."

Some Islamic narrations indicate that a group of people believed that when they appointed a camel, or one of other animals, as a sacrifice, and they brought it with them from a near or far distance toward the place of virtual consecration and from there toward Mecca, they should not ride on it, nor use its milk. They used to think that the animal was entirely separated from them.

The noble Qur'an negated this superstitious thought, where it implies that there are benefits in these animals of sacrifice for you until when the day of sacrifice comes.

The holy verse says:

"You have benefits in them till an appointed time…"

In an Islamic tradition we read that once, on the way to Mecca, the holy Prophet (S) passed by a man who was walking with much difficulty while he was leading a camel and no one was riding on it. The Prophet (S) told him to ride on it, and he answered the Messenger of Allah (S) that the camel was for sacrifice.

The Prophet (S) said:

"woe on you, ride on it!"[33]

In some narrations, which have been quoted from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), this meaning has also been emphasized on.

For example, Abubasir narrates from Imam Sadiq (as) who upon the commentary of this holy verse said:

"If (the owner of the animal) needs its riding, he can ride on it, but he must not put it in trouble, and if it (the animal) has milk, he can milk it, but not extremely."[34]

In fact, the abovementioned order is a moderate style which is between two excessive manners. On one side, some pilgrims did not observe the respect of the animals of sacrifice at all, and sometimes they killed them in their city and used their meat, which has been referred to in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 2, which says:

"…do not profane Allah's Monuments, nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the sacrificial animals with garlands…"

And, on the other side, some others treated so excessively that as soon as the name of sacrifice was called to an animal, they neither used its milk, nor did they ride on it, even though they were coming from a far place to Mecca. This situation has been counted permissible in the above verse.

However, at the end of the verse, regarding the fate of the sacrifice, the Qur'an says:

"…then their place of sacrifice is by the Ancient House, (the ka'bah)."

Thus, before that the sacrificial animal reaches the place of sacrifice, it can be taken benefit of, such as milking and riding, and after reaching there the duty of sacrificing must be done upon the animal.

According to what the jurisprudents have said, based on the Islamic evidences, if the sacrificial animal relates to Hajj, it must be slaughtered in Muna, but if it is for 'single minor Hajj' the animal must be slaughtered in Mecca.

So, since the verses under discussion are about the rites of Hajj, the Qur'anic phrase /bayt-ul-'atiq/ (the House of Ka'bah), here, must mean in the vast scope of the concept of the word, which envelops the suburb of Mecca (Muna), too.

Notes

1. The Commentaries: Al-Mizan, Fi Zilal, Tibyan, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Fakhr-i-Razi.
2. Extracted from Tafsir, by Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim according to the quotation of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, P. 488
3. Commentaries: Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and fakhr-i-Razi
4. Kitab-ul-Kafi
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, P. 488
6. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 252
7. Wasa'l-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 8, P. 9
8. Ibid
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 198
10. Tafsir Al-Mizan, vol. 2, P. 85 taken from Tafsir-i-'Ayyashi
11. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 99, P. 32
12. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 8, P. 14
13. Nahjul-Balaqah, Letter (will) 47
14. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 8, P. 15
15. But some Islamic outstanding scholars have said: since this mater is not of the kind of consensus, it is better, as a caution, this action to be done well.
16. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 10, P. 150
17. Adapted from Qamus-ul-Luqat, Kanzul-'Irfan, and Majma'ul-Bayan the commentary

18. Kanz-ul-‘Irfan, vol. 1, P. 270
19. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, Part 92
20. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 10, P. 255
21. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary.
22. Kanz-ul-‘Irfan, vol. 1, P. 271
23. wassa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 9, P. 390
24. wassa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 9, P. 390
25. The commentary of Kanz-ud-Daqayiq
26. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn; and Bihar, vol. 47, P. 216
27. Kafi, Vol. 6, P. 433
28. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 9, P. 390
29. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Tafsir-us-Safi
30. Tafsir-us-Safi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan
31. Surah Naml, No. 27, verse 28
32. Tauhid-i-Saduq, according to the quotation of Tafsir-us-Safi
33. Tafsir-i-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. 23, P. 33
34. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, P. 497

Section 5: Regard for the Sign of Allah

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 34

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنا مَنسَكاً لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَي مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِن بَهِيمَةِ الاَنْعَامِ فَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ

34. "And for every people We appointed a ritual that they may mention the name of Allah on what He has provided them of the cattle quadrupeds (as their sustenance) so your God is One God, therefore surrender unto Him, and give you glad tidings unto the humble,"

The Arabic term /mansak/ is either an infinitive, or noun of time, or noun of place. Therefore the meaning of the verse is such: We have appointed for every people a program of worship, or a time for sacrifice, or a place for it.

The Arabic word /muxbitin/ is derived from /xubat/ which means: a vast and plain land without any high and down; thus a calm and assured person is called /muxbit/ who is far and free from any polytheistic imagination.

In connection with the former noble verses and the divine commandment of sacrifice, there may come forth this question that what kind of a worship is this, legislated in Islam, that some animals must be slaughtered and offered as sacrifice for Allah and for attracting His attention?

Does Allah need any sacrifice? And was there this action in other religions, too, or it was special among polytheists?

In order to make this subject clear, the holy Qur'an implies that you are not the only nation whose duty is slaughtering sacrifice for the Lord, because Allah has appointed a place of sacrifice for every nation in order that, at the time of sacrifice, they mention the name of Allah over the cattle that Allah has provided them as their sustenance.

The verse says:

"And for every people We appointed a ritual that they may mention the name of Allah on what He has provided them of the cattle quadrupeds (as their sustenance)…"

So, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an implies that there is only one God and His program is also a single program.

The verse continues saying:

"…so your God is One God…"

Now that the fact is this, then do surrender before Him and His command.

"…therefore surrender unto Him…"

And the humble ones and those who surrender before the commandments of Allah should be given glad tidings.

The holy verse concludes:

"…and give you glad tidings unto the humble,"

Indeed, this sentence means: O Messenger of Allah (S)! you should give the glad tidings of happiness, prosperity, and safety of the chastisement as well as the wholesome life to those who have become humble and obedient to the commandment of Allah.

Raqib in his book, Mufradat, says: The Arabic word /nusk/ means ‘worship’, and /nasik/ means ‘worshipper’, and ‘manasik-i-Hajj’ means: the places wherein this worship is done; or it means ‘these rites themselves’.

But according to the commentary of Majma‘-ul-Bayan by Tabarsi, and Ruh-ul-Janan, by Abul-Futuh, the Arabic term /mansak/ probably means ‘offering sacrifice’, in particular, among all worships.

Therefore, though the term /mansak/ has a general concept, which encompasses other worships including specially rites of Hajj, but in the verse under discussion, with the context of the Qur’anic phrase /…liyaðkurusmallah…/

(that they may mention the name of Allah…),

it means special to sacrifice.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 35

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالصَّابِرِ نَ عَلَي مَآ أَصَابَهُمْ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلاَةِ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

35. “(To) those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, and those who are patient under that which afflicts them, and the establishers of prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them with.”

Mentioning the name of Allah is both tranquillizing for the faithful, and dreadful; like a child who, by the remembrance of his parents, becomes tranquil and is in awe of them both. Therefore the inner awe of Allah is a value, and in this verse the qualities of /muxbitin/ (the humble) are explained in four parts, two of which are spiritual and the other two are physical.

At the first, it says:

“(To) those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned…”

They do not fear of His Wrath unduly, nor do they have doubt in His Grace, but this fear is for the responsibilities they have and they, maybe, have rather neglected fulfilling them. This fright is for the recognition of the great rank of Allah that man is timid facing His grandeur.

Another quality of ‘the humble’ is that they are often patient when something evil and painful happens in their lives.

The holy verse says:

“…and those who are patient under that which afflicts them…”

Whatever the event is great and its harm is much and heavy, they do not knee before it. They usually do not lose their coldness and do not escape from the field. They do not lose hope, and do never blaspheme, and briefly speaking, they persevere. They continue going forth and, at last, they win.

The verse says:

“…and the establishers of prayer…”

Their third and fourth qualities are that they establish the prayer and spend in charity out of what Allah has bestowed upon them as sustenance.

The verse continues saying:

“…and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them with.”

From one side, their relation with Allah, the Creator of the world, is firm, and on the other side, they have a strong relation with people. This explanation makes the fact clear that the qualities of the believers, such as: love, surrender, and humility have not merely the inward aspect, but the effects of them must usually be appeared and manifested in their daily deeds and manners, too.

Some Traditions

1. Karajaki cites in Ma‘dan-ul-Javahir narrating from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) saying that the origin of every goodness, both in the world and Hereafter, is one thing and it is being in awe of Allah[1], the Almighty…

2. Once a man came to the Messenger of Allah, and said:

“Teach me something so that my Lord loves me…”

The Messenger of Allah said:

“Whenever you like that your Lord loves you, be in awe of Him.”[2]

3. Abubasir said:

“I told the Imam (Imam Sadiq) (as): ‘O’ May I be your ransom! Will your followers (shi‘ites) be with you (in Hereafter)?”

He (as) answered: “Yes, if they fear Allah and be careful of His orders; and they are in awe of Him, and obey Him (His commandment), and be afraid of the sins, and when they behave like that they will be with us in the degrees of the Hereafter.” [3]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“A servant can be called a believer when he fears Allah and is hopeful to Him.”[4]

5. Imam Rida (as) said:

“Whoever is in awe of Allah will be in security.” [5]

6. Imam Kazim (as) said:

“Allah does not give security to the timid persons as much as their fear, but according to His grace and generosity.”[6]

7.’Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“Be in awe of Allah and be hopeful of His grace so that He secures you from that which you are in awe of and He bestows on you what you are hopeful of.”[7]

8. Imam ’Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“Being in awe of Allah in this world causes the security of fear in the Hereafter.”[8]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

“The finite of knowledge is the fear of Allah.”[9]

10. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“None is the follower of Ja‘far (Imam Sadiq) (as) save he who restrains his tongue, and acts for his Creator, and hopes in his Master (Allah) and really fears Allah.”[10]

11. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The most elevated people with Allah is the one who is the most God-fearing.”[11]

12. The Messenger of Allah (S) also said:

“Whoever leaves committing a sin because of the fear of Allah, He will make him happy on the Day of Hereafter.”[12]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 36

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُم مِن شَعَآئِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَآفَّ
فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

36. "And (as for) the fat camels, We have made them for you of the symbols of Allah, therein is good for you. So mention Allah's Name on them, standing in a row; then, when they fall down (sacrificed) on their sides, eat of them and feed the contented (poor one) and such as beg with due humility; thus have We made them subservient to you that haply you may give thanks."

Spend Generously When Glorifying Symbols of Allah

The verses under discussion speak about: the rites of Hajj, the symbols of Allah, and the subject of sacrifice.

At first, it says:

"And (as for) the fat camels, We have made them for you of the symbols of Allah…"

From one side, they belong to people and, on the other side, they are among the symbols and signs of Allah (s.w.t.) in this great worship, because 'Sacrifice in Hajj' is one of the clear manifestations of this worship, the philosophy of which was referred to formerly.

The Arabic term /budn/ is the plural form of /badanah/ which means a big fat and fleshy camel, and in view of the fact that such an animal is the most appropriate for the ceremonies of sacrifice and feeding the poor and needy ones, it is specially emphasized here, else we know well that the fatness of the sacrificial animal is not among the obligatory conditions of it. It is enough for us to be careful that the animal should not be rather thin.

Then, the Qur'an adds:

"…therein is good for you.…"

From one side, you use its meat and feed others from it, and on the other side, because of this donation and that you worship Allah, you will enjoy its spiritual results and gain access to Allah.

Then the Qur'an states the quality of offering sacrifice in a short sentence, as follows:

"…So mention Allah's Name on them, standing in a row;…"

No doubt, mentioning the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering the animals, or immolation of a camel, does not need that a particular quality be observed, and mentioning any Name of Allah is enough.

The apparent of the holy verse also shows the same thing, but some narrations contain a special invocation of Allah to be mentioned for here which, in fact, is the statement of a complete one.

The commentators have quoted this invocation from Ibn-'Abbas, as this:

"Allahu Akbar-u-La'ilaha 'Illalah-u-wallahu Akbar. Allahumma minka wa laka".[13]

Yet, in a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) some more expressive sentences have been quoted. He (as) said:

"When you bought the sacrificial animal, do turn it toward Qiblah, and at the time of slaughtering, you should say:

‘I have turned my face (myself wholly) toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth being upright, and I am not of the idolaters. Verily my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

No associate (there is) for Him, and this (submission) I have been commanded to, and I am the first of the Muslims. O’ Allah! (this sacrifice) is Yours and it is for You. By the Name of Allah and to Allah, and Allah is the Great. O’ Allah! Accept it from me’.”[14]

The Qur’anic term /sawaff/ is the plural form of /saffah/ which means ‘standing in row’, and as some Islamic narrations denote, the objective of it is that the hands of the sacrificial camel must be tied together from the wrist to the knee while it is standing so that the camel does not move so much and does not run away at the time of slaughtering.

It is natural that when the body of the camel bleeds for a while, its hands grow weak and weaker and finally, the camel lies on the ground, therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur’an says:

“…then, when they fall down (sacrificed) on their sides, eat of them and feed the contented (poor one) and such as beg with due humility;…”

The difference between the Arabic words /qani‘/ and /mu‘tar/ is that the word /qani‘/ is applied to a person that when something is given to him, he is satisfied and becomes contented and happy. He shows no protest, objection and anger. But the word /mu‘tar/ is used for a person who comes to you, asks for something, and he is often not content with what you give him, and he protests.

The Arabic word /qani‘/ is derived from /qana‘ah/ while the Qur’anic word /mu‘tar/ is derived from /‘arr/, pronounced as /harr/, originally means ‘scab’ which is a mangy skin disease in human beings, then the word /mu‘tar/ has been used for a beggar who comes unto one and asks for help (and it usually happens that he protests).

The word /qani‘/ has been mentioned in the verse before the word /mu‘tar/. This matter shows that those groups of the deprived who are self-modest and self-possessed must be taken more under consideration.

This point is also noteworthy that the Qur’anic phrase /kulu minha/ (eat of them) apparently means that the pilgrims must eat something out of their own sacrifice as an obligation; and, perhaps, this is for the equality between them and the poor.

Finally, The Qur’an concludes the holy verse as fallows:

“…thus have We made them subservient to you that haply you may give thanks.”

This is amazing, indeed, that a big animal such as camel, with that power and strength that it has; is so subservient to us that it lets even a child ties his feet very firmly, and then it will be slaughtered. (The style of slaughtering a camel is that a knife is pushed in the hole of the neck of that camel and it begins bleeding, and soon the animal is sacrificed).

Sometimes, in order to show us the importance of this conquest, Allah (s.w.t.) takes the command of obedience and submission from this animal, and we have seen that an angry camel, which a little boy can take its rein

and leads it here and there in an ordinary case, turns to a dangerous being that several strong men cannot usually manage to control it.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 37

لَن يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلاَ دِمَآؤُهَا وَلَـكِن يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَي مِنكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّـرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَي مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَبَشِّـرِ الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

37. "There never reaches Allah their flesh nor their blood, but it is your piety (that) reaches Him. Thus has He made them subservient to you, that you might pronounce the greatness of Allah for what He has guided you aright, and give good tidings to the good doers."

The flesh of animals which is given as almsgiving, and the blood which is shed on the ground as the result of slaughtering camels are not things that can attract the pleasure of Allah, but the thing that attracts the content of Allah, the Almighty, is your piety, sincerity, and pure intention.

The verse says:

"There never reaches Allah their flesh nor their blood, but it is your piety (that) reaches Him.…"

It has been narrated that when the people of the Age of Ignorance wanted to slaughter their sacrificial animals, they polluted the Sacred House with blood. So, at the first time when the Muslims did pilgrimage, they wanted to do the same thing, and then Allah sent down this verse.

In this holy verse, after repeating the remembrance of the blessings as /tasxir/, Allah implies the purpose of making these blessings subservient to you is that since Allah has guided you, you should glorify Him and with the phrase:

"…that you might pronounce the greatness of Allah for what He has guided you aright.…"

you may proclaim His greatness.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Thus has He made them subservient to you, that you might pronounce the greatness of Allah for what He has guided you aright…"

Some other commentators have said that the concept of 'thanksgiving' is inside the holy phrase of Takbir (magnifying) which means: 'making these blessings subservient' is for the sake that by magnifying and ejaculation 'lailaha illalah', you thank the Lord Who has guided you to the religious treatments and the rites of His Hajj.

In other words, the ultimate goal is that you might be acquainted with the greatness of Allah, He Who has guided you in the way of legislation and creation.

On one side, He has taught you the rites of Hajj and the style of obedience and servitude; and on the other side, He has made these big and powerful animals subservient to you to obey you so that you can use them in the way of obedience of Allah, sacrificing, doing good to the needy people and providing your own life.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and give good tidings to the good doers."

This good news is for those who utilize these divine blessings in the path of obeying Him and they fulfil their duties in the best form, and specially do not show any shortcoming in spending out in the cause of Allah.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 38

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدَافِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُحِب كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ

38. "Verily Allah will defend those who believe; verily Allah does not love any treacherous ingrate."

The promise of Allah about His defending the believers is certain. Thus, the believers defend the limits of Allah and He defends the believers.

And, in view of the fact that resistance against the superstitions of polytheists, referred to in former holy verses, might lighten the fire of the wrath of this fanatic obstinate group, which can cause some conflicts, in this verse Allah (s.w.t.) encourages the believers to His succour; where the Qur'an says:

"Verily Allah will defend those who believe;…"

Let the Arab tribes, the Jews, the Christians, and the polytheists of Arabia altogether, and with the help of each other, try to put the believers under pressure in order to annihilate them, as they imagine; but Allah has promised to defend them, and it is a promise for the existence of Islam until the threshould of Resurrection.

This Divine promise is a commandment which goes on in all Ages and centuries. The magnificent thing is that we adapt to the meaning of, and as the expansion of, the Qur'anic phrase that says:

'… those who believe…',

after which the Divine defense is certain.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an makes the position of the polytheists and the like clear before Allah by a single sentence, where it says:

"…verily Allah does not love any treacherous ingrate."

These are those who associated partners with Allah, and even at the time of saying 'labbayk', declared the names of idols, therefore, they were involved in difficulties in this world and Hereafter.

But, as it was mentioned before, one of the promises and laws of Allah is the divine succour and defence for the believers, and He has enjoined this defence and support as a right upon Himself, when He says:

"…and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."[15]

The fact concerning divine defence and help, of course, is not always a defence and help at once and in a short period, but it envelops a defence for a long time, too, because in some other verses of the Qur'an He says:

"…and the end is (best) for the pious ones."[16]

Yes, it is possible that in a conflict or war the believers defeat apparently, but their doctrine and goal will surely be victorious.

Its example is that Ibn-i-Muljam killed Hadrat Ali (as), but whom did Allah support, Ibn-i-Muljam, or Ali (as)? Ali's name (as); Ali's offspring (as), Ali's book (as), Ali's supplication (as), Ali's honour (as), Ali's doctrine (as) and the followers (Shi'ah) of Ali (as) finally won.

The Qur'anic words /xawwan/ and /kafur/ mean someone whose manner and way of life is blasphemy and treachery.

Notes

1. Jami‘-i-’Ahadith-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 14, P. 163
2. Ibid
3. Ibid, P. 165
4. Mishkat-ul-’Anvar, P. 100
5. Bihar, vol. 75, P. 314
6. Ibid
7. Jami‘-i-’Ahadith-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 14, P. 162
8. Ibid, P. 638
9. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol. 2, P. 292
10. Jami‘-i-Ahadith-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 14, P. 169
11. Bihar, vol. 74, P. 180
12. Bihar, vol. 67, P. 398
13. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Ruh-ul-Ma‘ani, following the verse
14. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 10, P. 138
15. Surah Ar-Rum, No. 30, verse 47
16. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 128

Section 6: Fight in Self-Defence Permitted

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 39

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ

39. "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) for they have been oppressed, and verily Allah is well able to assist them."

Holy war is not permissible without the leave of Allah and the Messenger of Allah (S); and, thus, the oppressed are allowed to fight against their enemies, but with the leave of Allah and His Messenger (S).

When the Muslims were in Mecca, the polytheists always hurt them. So, some of the Muslims frequently came to the Prophet (S) while they had been beaten, and their heads were broken.

They complained of the circumstances (and asked for the permission of Holy Struggle), but the Prophet (S) told them to be patient, because he had not received the command of Holy Struggle yet.

Thereafter, the migration began and the Muslims came from Mecca to Medina when Allah sent down this verse containing the leave of Holy Struggle, which was the first verse revealed about the Holy War for the Muslim.

In the pervious verse it was mentioned that Allah promised to defend the believers.

In this verse, the Qur'an says:

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) for they have been oppressed…"

Then, the holy Qur'an has completed this permission by the promise of victory from the side of Allah, the Almighty, where it says:

"…and verily Allah is well able to assist them."

We must utilize what we have in our possession in this world where the means are used, as far as we can, and when our ability ends we may wait for the help of Allah. This was the same thing that the Prophet (S) used to apply in all his struggles and finally he was victorious.

There is a discussion among the commentators whether this verse was the first commandment for the beginning of the Holy Struggle. The majority of the commentators consider it as the first holy verse of the Holy Struggle, while some others believe that verse No. 190 from Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 was the first verse, which says:

"And fight in the cause of Allah (against) those who fight you…",

and some other Islamic commentators believe that verse 111 from Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9 was the first verse concerning the Holy Struggle, which says:

"Verily Allah has bought from the believers their souls and their properties…"[1]

But the tone of the above verse rather appropriates for this matter, because the Qur'anic word /'uŏina/ has explicitly been mentioned in the verse under discussion, while those two verses are lacked of it. In other words the expression of this verse is single in kind.

However, according to many Islamic narrations this verse has been rendered into the Holy Prophet (S) and Amir-al-Mu'mineen (as); and in some into the Imams (as); and, finally, in some into Hadrat Gha'm (as).

And, we have frequently said that the narrations denote to the commentary statement for the full denotation expansion and this very variation in narrations is a witness to this claim and does not contrast to the generality of the verse.[2]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 40

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِم بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلاَّ أَن يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلاَ دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيراً وَلَيَنصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

40. "(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes without right, except that they say: 'Our Lord is Allah'. And had Allah not repelled some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and the mosques in which Allah's name is much mentioned; and verily Allah will help him who helps Him (His cause); for verily Allah is Strong, Mighty."

Vagrancy from home is one of the clearest examples of being oppressed. Patriotism is the natural right of every human being, and expelling from one's home is deprivation of this right and it is a cause for injustice.

This verse explains more about these oppressed ones who have been given the permission of defence, and it makes the logic of Islam more clear regarding this part of the Holy Struggle.

The verse says:

"(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes without right, except that they say: 'Our Lord is Allah'…."

It is quite evident that the confession to monotheism and Oneness of Allah is an honour, not a sin. This confession was not something that might let the polytheists consider a right for themselves to expel them from their home and to force them to migrate from Mecca to Medina, but this is a tender expression which is usually used for condemning the opposite party in such instances.

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"This verse has been revealed about the emigrants and it is also applied about the progeny of Muhammad (S), because they were expelled from their home, too, and were frightened."[3]

Then, the Qur'an points to one of the philosophies of the religious aspect of Holy Struggle as follows:

"…And had Allah not repelled some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and the mosques in which Allah's name is much mentioned;…"

Yet, if the faithful and zealous persons remain heedless and simply watch the destructive activities of the tyrants, despots and faithless cruel persons, so that they find the scene without any opponent, there will remain no effect from the temples and centers of Divine worship.

These places are the sites of awareness and sanctuaries are as battlefields, and a mosque works as a fortress against the self-interested ones. In principle, any invitation unto the theism is against the arrogant individuals who desire that people may worship them in the same manner that they worship Allah. That is why if they find an opportunity to act they may ruin all these centers of Divine worship.

This is one of the goals of the religious aspect of Holy Struggle and the leave for fight.

The Islamic commentators have stated differently about the difference between the meanings of the Qur'anic words: /sawami'/ (cloisters), /biya'/ (churches), /salawat/ (synagogues) and /masajid/ (mosques). But that which seems more correct is that the Arabic word /sawami'/ is the plural form of /sauma'ah/ which means a place usually built outside the cities and far from populations for hermits, nuns, monks, and worshippers. This is called /deyr/ in Persian.

The Arabic word /biya'/ is the plural form of /biy'ah/ which means a Christian temple. It is also called /kanisah/ (a synagogue) or /kelisa/ (a church).

The Arabic word /salawat/ is the plural form /salat/ which means the temple of the Jews. Some lexicologists believe that it is the Arabicized form of the word /salua/ which in Hebrew means oratory.

The Qur'anic word /masajid/ is the plural form /masjid/ in the sense of Muslims' temple.

Therefore, the places of /sawami'/ and /biya'/ both belong to the Christians, yet one of these two is a public temple and the other is the name of the center of the hermits. Some of the philologists also believe that the word /biya'/ is a common word used for both the temples of the Jews and the churches of the Christians.

By the way, the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…in which Allah's name is much mentioned…"

apparently is a qualification particular to mosques since, regarding the five times prayers which are kept up during the days of the entire year, the Muslims' mosques are the most lively centers of worship in the world, while many other temples are used only one day in a week, or some days during the year.

At the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an reiterates the divine help once again, where it says:

"…and verily Allah will help him who helps Him (His cause);…"

No doubt, this promise of Allah will be fulfilled, because He is strong, mighty and never fails.

The verse says:

"…for verily Allah is Strong, Mighty."

Allah says this in order that the defenders of the line of Monotheism might not think that they are alone in the field of struggling right against wrong, and before the crowd of obstinate enemies.

It was under the light of this very Divine promise that the defenders in the cause of Allah, at the advent of Islam, frequently won the battle when they were fighting in the battle-fields against the enemies while, comparing

them with the number of their enemies, they were in minority from the point of soldiers, equipments, and other means of fighting.

They were so victorious that it cannot be explained save that we say it was done through the way of Allah's help and assistant.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 41

الَّذِينَ إِن مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلاَةَ وءَاتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الأُمُورِ

41. "Those who, if We establish them in the land, perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and enjoin good and forbid evil, and unto Allah belongs the end of (all) affairs."

If the righteous persons have the power and potentialities in their possession, they usually utilize them correctly, but if they are in the possession of some inept ones, they often misuse them.

Therefore, the means of the world and power are as some blessings for some groups of people, while they are the means of misery for others. So, the Qur'an refers to both of them.

It implies that if the believers gain power and ability, they will keep up prayer, pay the alms, enjoin good and forbid evil. But if the deviated and inept people become powerful, they disobey the truth:

"…Most surly man does transgress (all bounds)"[4]

and go along the way of destroying the economical sources of others as well as the annihilation of generations.

In this concern, the Qur'an, says:

"And when he turns back, he strives to cause mischief on the earth, and to destroy the tilth and the stock…"[5]**.**

And, finally, they cause people to enter into Hell Fire:

"…Imams (who) call to the Fire…".[6]

However, this verse is an interpretation upon the friends of Allah whom have been promised the help of Allah in the previous verse.

It says:

"Those who, if We establish them in the land, perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and enjoin good and forbid evil…"

After being victorious, such believers never make themselves busy with luxuries, and libidinous pleasures, as the arrogant oppressors do, nor do they dive in pride and vanity. On the contrary, they utilize their victories and successions as a ladder for their promotion in improving both themselves and their own society.

They never change into a tyrant after obtaining power. Their relation with Allah is firm as well as with the servants of Allah, since prayer is the sign of having a link with Allah, and almsgiving is an indication to having a link with peoples; and enjoining good and forbidding evil are counted as the basic foundations of constructing a safe and sound society.

These very four qualities alone are enough for introducing such people. It is under the light of them all that other worships, righteous deeds and specialties of a believing and faithful progressed society can be provided.

It should be noted that the Qur'anic word /makkanna/ is derived from /tamkin/ and this means 'to supply the means and equipments' irrespective of the necessary tools, sufficient knowledge and awareness, as well as the physical and mental abilities.

The Qur'anic word /ma'ruf/ means 'some good and right actions', while the word /munkar/ means 'ugly and wrong deeds'; since the former has been provided for any purified person and the latter is unknown. In other words, the first one is adapted to the man's nature, but the second is not.

Thus, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and unto Allah belongs the end of (all) affairs."

This phrase means: as the beginning of all powers and victories is from the side of Allah, the end of all things returns to Him, too;

"Verily we belong to Allah and certainly unto Him shall we return."[7]

A Few Points

1. The Philosophy of the Holy War

We have formerly discussed expressively about this important subject, but regarding that these verses are perhaps the first group of the verses by which the permission of Holy War was issued for Muslims, and their content points out to the philosophy of this commandment, it seems necessary that we speak again about it.

In these holy verses, two important dimensions of the philosophy of Holy War have been referred to.

The first is the Holy Struggle of the oppressed against the cruel oppressors. This is a certain natural right for them, and the intellect approves that they should not accept injustice, but they must rise and protest, equip themselves with weapon, remove the oppressors, and cut off their polluted hands from their rights.

Another kind is the Holy Struggle against false deities who intend to wipe out the name of Allah from the hearts and to destroy the temples which are among the centers of people's awareness.

This group should also be opposed so that they cannot efface the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.) from the minds and, consequently, they stupefy people in order to make them some slaves and servants for themselves.

This matter is also noteworthy that: destroying temples and mosques is not only this action that they ruin them down by means of destruction and machines, but it is possible that they work indirectly and prepare some evil amusing things and ill propagations that they cause to divert common people from temples and mosques and, thus, these sacred places may be practically turned into some ruins.

Therefore, by what was said in the above, the answer of some objectors is made clear, those who say: why has Islam allowed Muslims to gain their goals by attaching force and war? Why do they not work for the Islamic aims by applying logic?

Is it possible that merely by using reasoning and logical statements the oppressed stand against the cruel tyrants who expel them from their houses,

confiscate their properties, and observe no law and logic under the pretext that the oppressed say: 'There is no god but Allah'?

Can these mad and illogical oppressors be faced without the language of weapon?

This is just like that they say: "Why do you and Israel not sit at a table for agreement with Israel, the usurper?" The same Israel who has been heedless unto international laws and warnings, and unto the decisions of the worldly organizations which are accepted by all nations, as well as the whole religious and humane laws? Does such a one comprehend logic and negotiation?

Is Israel, under whose unjust fiery bombards thousands of thousand innocent children, old women and men, and even the sick persons of the hospitals turned into pieces and were burnt, such a one to whom must be spoken logically?

Also, there are some persons who do their best to destroy the temples and the mosques that are the causes of awareness and movement of people when they see they are against their unlawful interests. Are such persons suitable to discuss with through a peaceful way?

However, if we put the present realities of the human societies under consideration, we will convince ourselves that, in some instances, there is no way save attaching to gun and force.

This is not because of the disability of logic, but it is because of the absence of the preparedness of the tyrants for the acceptance of right logic. There is no doubt that wherever logic is effective the right of priority is to it there.

2. Whom Has Allah Promised to Help?

This is a wrong consideration that the promise of victory and Allah's help as well as the defence from the believers, mentioned in the above verses and other verses of the Qur'an, are outside the laws of life and the course of creation. Nay, it is not such. Allah has given this promise only to those who utilize all their abilities and are active in the scene.

That is why in interpretation of the abovementioned verses, the Qur'an says:

"…And were Allah not to repel by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief;…"[8]

Therefore, Allah does not repel the vice of the oppressors only by the unseen powers and the power of thunderbolt and earthquake (save some exceptional instances), but He repels their vice by the true believers, and only these are those whom Allah does support with His help.

Therefore, the promises of Allah not only should not cause the heedlessness of some individuals concerning the burden of responsibilities, but it must also be the source of further encouragements, movements and activities in them; and, of course, it is in this case that the victory has been guaranteed for them from the side of Allah.

By the way, these believers do not refer to Allah only before their victory, but they also make firm their relation to Him after their victory, and they use of the victory against the enemy as a means for the spread of right, justice and virtue, as the Qur'an says:

"Those who, if We establish them in the land, perform the prayer…"

In some Islamic narrations, the above holy verse has been rendered into Hadrat Mahdi (as) and his companions, or into Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) in general.

A tradition from Imam Baqir (as), upon the commentary of the holy phrase:

"Those who, if We establish them in the land…",

said:

"This verse, up to the end of it, belongs to the progeny of Muhammad (S) and Mahdi (as) and his companions. Allah will bestow them the East and the West of the earth (in their governmental authority) and will make religion manifest, and by Mahdi (as) and his companions He will annihilate innovation and falsehood, as evil ones had annihilated the truth, so much that there will not be seen any injustice (on the earth) for they enjoin the good and forbid the wrong."[9]

There are also some other traditions on this regard, but, as we have repeatedly said these traditions state some clear examples of the meaning of the verse and they do not hinder the generality of its concept. Thus, the vast meaning of the verse envelops all the believers, strivers, and challengers.

3. The Righteous, the Humble, and the Helpers of Allah

Through the abovementioned verses and the verses before them, somewhere He commands the Prophet (S) to give glad tidings to the righteous, the good doers (Muhsinin),[10] and then He introduces them as those who have Faith and are not treacherous and ungrateful.

Somewhere in the Qur'an He refers to the humble ones (Mukhbitin) and explains them as those who, when mentioning Allah, tremble heartily, and are patient under that which afflicts them and they establish prayer and spend in charity out of whatever good Allah has provided them with.[11]

Then, finally, the qualities of the helpers of Allah are explained, as that: at the time of victory they do not pave the way of disobedience, but they establish prayers and pay the alms, enjoin good and forbid evil.[12]

The totality of these verses shows that, from one side, the true believers, who are qualified with these attributes, are very strong in faith and in feeling responsibility, and, on the other side, they are very steadfast and practical from the point of action in the aspects of relation with Allah and the servants of Allah as well as struggling against corruption.

4. What is 'Right' and What is 'Wrong'?

The Arabic word /ma'ruf/ is derived from /'arafa/ and it philologically means 'known', while the term /munkar/ is derived from /'inkar/ and means 'unknown'.

Thus the 'good deeds' are some known things, while the wrong and indecent actions have been introduced as some unknown affairs, whereas the man's nature is acquainted with the first group and it is unacquainted with the second group.

Now, someone may ask:

"Is enjoining good an intellectual duty, or it is devotional?"

Some Islamic scholars believe that these two duties, as obligatory, have been proved only by traditional evidence, and intellect does not command

that a person hinders another one from doing an evil deed the harm of which returns only to the same one himself.

However, regarding the social relations and that no indecent deed in the society stops in a particular point, but on the contrary, whatever it may be, it can, like fire, reach other points harmfully, and thus these two duties are recognized as intellectual.

In other words, there is not anything found in the society under the title of 'personal harm', and every 'personal harm' may change into the form of 'a social harm'. That is why both logic and intellect allow the individuals of the society not to stop effort and endeavour in purifying their own environment from any pollution.

Some Islamic traditions have also pointed to this matter. It has been narrated from the holy Prophet (S), who said:

"The parable of a sinful person among people is like someone who embarks a ship with some others. So, when the ship is in the middle of the sea, he takes an ax and cuts a hole where he is sitting. Whenever he is protested, he answers that he is occupying his own share.

So, if others do not stop him of doing this dangerous deed, it does not take long that, by penetrating the sea water into the ship, everybody drowns in the sea."

By this interesting example, the holy Prophet (S) has illustrated the duty of enjoining right and forbidding wrong as being logical, and he has also counted the right of personal control over the society as a natural right which originates from the relationship of the fates.

5. The Importance of Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong

In addition to the numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an, there are many proper traditions recorded in Islamic sources concerning the importance of these two great social duties. They have pointed to the dangers and evil sequels that may appear in the society as the result of abandoning these two duties.

Here are some examples:

1. Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Verily the act of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong are (two) great commandments by which other divine commandments may be established and (by which) the ways can become secured and the transactions (of people) become lawful, and the rights of persons can be safeguarded, and the lands may become flourished, and the enemies may be revenged, and (under their shade) all affairs will become straightened."[13]

2. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever enjoins right and forbids wrong he is the viceroy of Allah on the earth, the viceroy of the messenger of Allah (S) and the viceroy of His Book."[14]

It is clearly understood from this tradition that this great commandment, before anything else, is a Divine program, and the appointment of the prophets and sending the heavenly Books are all parts of this program.

3. Once a man came to the Prophet (S), while he was sitting on the pulpit, and asked him:

"Who is the best of people?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"The one among them who enjoins right and forbids wrong more than others; and is of the most virtuous people and tries to gain the pleasure of Allah more than others."[15]

4. Another tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that he said:

"You should enjoin right and forbid wrong else Allah will dominate over you a cruel ruler who neither respects the old ones nor does he have mercy upon the children. Your righteous ones pray but it will not be answered, and they ask Allah for help but He will not help them; they even repent and Allah may not forgive their sins."[16]

These are all the natural reactions of the deeds of the people who do not fulfil this great social duty, for without a general control, the process of the affairs will not remain in the hand of the righteous ones and the vicious ones will occupy the social positions.

When the above holy tradition denotes that their repentance will not be accepted, it is because their repentance is usually accompanied with their silence before the corruptions therein, and it does not have a right concept, except that they reform their programs.

5. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"All virtuous deeds totally, including even the Holy war in the way of Allah, comparing with enjoining right and forbidding wrong, is like a small amount of saliva in a deep ocean."[17]

All these emphasizes are for the sake that these two great duties are, in fact, as a surety of execution of other individual and social duties and are considered as their soul, so that when they are absent all the commandments and ethical principles will lose their value.

6. Does Enjoining Right Negate Freedom?

In answer to this question, it should be said that social life certainly contains so many advantages and blessings, and even this kind of advantages have caused man to live socially, yet there are some limitations in it, too.

The harms of these few disadvantages of limitations comparing the abundant benefits of social life are so little that mankind accepted them for the social life from the early days.

And, in view of the fact that in the social life the fate of individuals relates to each other, and the members of a society affect the fates of others, the right of controlling others' deeds is a natural right and it is the peculiarity of social life.

This meaning was mentioned through the tradition which was formerly narrated from the Prophet (S). Thus, performing this obligatory duty not only does not contradict with personal freedom, but it is also a duty that individuals must observe mutually.

7. Does Enjoining Right Produce Anarchy?

Another question is that the interference of all people in the social affairs and controlling the deeds of each other causes disorder, confusion and

different conflicts in the society, which opposes the division of the duties and responsibilities in the society.

In answer to this problem we say that: through former discussions this fact was made clear that the process of enjoining right and forbidding wrong has two stages. The first stage, which has a general aspect, consists of a limited scope of action.

It is not more than beyond admonition, advice, protest, criticism, and the like. Admittedly, in a lively society all the members must have such a responsibility against the corruptions.

The second stage, which is peculiar to a particular group and is counted among the authorities of the Islamic government, has a very vast scope of power.

That is, in the circumstances necessitate some violence in action, and even retaliation and execution of punishments, this group has the authority of action under the view of Islamic judge and the responsible persons of the Islamic government.

Thus, regarding the different stages of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and their limits and rules, not only there will not appear any anarchy in the society, but also the society will change from a dead and listless state into a lively one.

Enjoining Right is Separate from Rudeness

At the end of this discussion, it is necessary to mention the fact that in doing this obligatory duty and invitation unto the right and striving against corruption, sympathy, piety in aim, and good opinion should not be neglected, and, except for some necessary instances, always the peaceful ways must be used. The performance of this duty should not be taken equal with rudeness.

But, unfortunately at the time of doing this duty, some persons act with harshness while it is not from the necessary instances, and sometimes they use some ugly and indecent words. So, we see that such kinds of enjoining right not only leave not a good effect, but also end to an opposite result.

The way of manner of the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as) shows that they mingled those two duties with much love and affection when they were executing them; and it was why the most obstinate ones submitted them soon.

The Commentary of Al-Manar, upon the interpretation of this verse narrates that:

Once a young man came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"O' Messenger of Allah! Do you let me adulterate?"

When he said this, people shouted and, from here and there, they protested him. But the Prophet (S) coldly and calmly said:

"Come nigh, O' man!"

The young man approached and sat in front of the holy Prophet (S) who kindly asked him whether he liked that his mother might be treated like that.

The young man answered:

"No. May I be your ransom!"

He (S) said:

"Similarly, people are not contented that their mother might be treated like that."

Again he (S) asked him whether he liked that his daughter might be treated like that, when he replied the same answer. Then he (S) said again that similarly people were not contented that their daughters might be treated like that.

The Prophet (S) asked him:

"What about your sister?"

The young man denied again (and he became utterly regretful of his question). Then, the Prophet (S) put his hand on the youth's chest and prayed for him.

He said:

"O' Allah! Purify his heart, forgive his sin, and keep him safe from being polluted with indecency."

From then on, the most hatred thing with that young man was adultery. And, this was the consequence of mildness and kindness of the Prophet (S) when forbidding the wrong.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 42 - 44

وَإِن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودُ

وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ

وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ وَكُذِّبَ مُوسَى فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

42. "And if they belie you (O' Prophet) then already before them did the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud belie (prophets),"

43. "And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot,"

44. "And the dwellers of Midian; and Moses was (also) belied, but I gave respite to the disbelievers, then I did seize them, so how (severe) will be My punishment (of them)."

The rejection of the enemies should not be taken as a barrier for the continuation of the right way.

The history of the nations must be used for admonition and discipline.

The verse under discussion, from one side, consoles the holy Prophet (S) and the believers, and, on the other side, makes the bad end of the disbelievers clear.

At first, in order to tell the Prophet (S) not to be sad, it says:

"And if they belie you (O' Prophet) then already before them did the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud belie (prophets),"

"And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot,"

Then, the Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"And the dwellers of Midian; and Moses was (also) belied…"

As these oppositions and rejections did not cause the great prophets to become weakened in their call unto Monotheism, right, and justice, they will certainly not affect your steadfast, pure soul, either.

In the meanwhile, these blind hearted disbelievers should not imagine that they can continue their shameful programs for ever. As the Qur'an implies, Allah did respite the rejecters in order that they would have enough

time to be examined, and the argument be completed to them, while they were enjoying blessings of Allah abundantly.

Then they were seized by the Divine punishment when they were in negligence. The verse continues implying that: you saw how severely Allah rejected their evil deeds and showed them the ugliness of their actions.

He took those blessings from them and gave them misery and wretchedness. He (s.w.t.) seized their life and gave them death instead; so how will be the punishment which is unknown and ambiguous to them and they cannot understand its depth?

The verse says:

"…but I gave respite to the disbelievers, then I did seize them, so how (severe) will be My punishment (of them)."[18]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 45

فَكَأَيِّن مِن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُعَطَّلَةٍ وَقَصْرٍ مَّشِيدٍ

45. "So how many of townships We did destroy while they were unjust, and (their walls) have fallen down over their roofs, and (how many a) well abandoned and (even) lofty castles (ruined)."

Allah's Wrath upon the unjust and oppressors is not an event, but it is a course. When the punishment of Allah comes forth, there will resist neither any ceilings nor any pillars in the buildings.

The Qur'anic word /xawiyah/ is derived from /xawa'/ which means 'to fall ruin'; and the word /mašid/ means both 'a lofty castle' and 'a stucco-plastered castle'.

In the previous verse, the punishment of Allah was referred to in a general manner. Now it has been explained widely in this verse.

It says:

"So how many of townships We did destroy while they were unjust, and (their walls) have fallen down over their roofs…"

This statement means that the intensity of the event was so serious that at first the roofs fell down and then the walls of the buildings fell down over the roofs.

Then, the verse continues implying that there were many good wells with enough water that remained useless and the owners of which were annihilated and their water sank into the earth. Neither their water was pulled out, nor could any thirsty one satiated with it.

It says:

"…and (how many a) well abandoned…"

And there were also so many splendid castles and very high buildings with beautiful stucco-plaster-ornaments which ruined, and their owners perished.

The holy verse, hinting this fact, continues saying:

"…and (even) lofty castles (ruined)."[19]

Thus, both their beautiful and firm residences remained ownerless, and the sources of water which caused their lands to be flourishing, vanished.

It is noteworthy that some Islamic traditions, narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), indicate that the phrase:

"…and (how many a) well abandoned…"

has been rendered into the scholars and learned men who have been left alone in the society and no one takes any benefit from their knowledge.

Imam Musa-ibn-Ja‘far (as), upon the commentary of the last sentence of the abovementioned verse, said that the ‘well abandoned’, which is not taken benefit from, is the silent Imam; and the ‘lofty castle’ is the ‘rational Imam’.

A tradition with the same content has also been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).[20]

This commentary, in fact, is a kind of simile, (as Hadrat Mahdi (as), and his worldly justice, has been liked to ‘a flowing water’), and it means that when Imam (as) is settled in the governmental position, he is like a firm high castle that attracts the eyes from near and far distances, and he is a shelter for all.

But, when he (as) is kept aloof from the position of government and people go far from around him, in a manner that some evil doers occupy his position, he is like a well full of water which has been left forgotten. Neither the thirsty people enjoy it, nor are the trees, plants and tilths watered by it.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 46

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَآ أَوْ ءَاذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لاَ تَعْمَي الاَبْصَارُ وَلَـكِن تَعْمَي الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصدُور

46. “Have they not traveled in the land so that they should have hearts wherewith to understand (the truth), or ears wherewith to hear (the truth)? For verily blind are not the eyes but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts.”

The experimental and scientific voyages are some worthy things which lead to the way of development of knowledge,

(“Have they not traveled…?”).

The reason is that the land and periods are like some classes of learning; so, those who do not take examples from them are worthy of being blamed.

Worse than the blindness of eyes is the blindness of hearts which do not obtain their insight by advice and admonition.

“…blind are the hearts…”.

Yes, persistence in obstinacy and hostility against the Truth naturally transforms man and takes him to a point where he can recognize the Truth neither by his intellect nor by his eyes and ears.

The words in former verses were about the unjust cruel people whom were punished Divinely for their wrong actions and their cities and dwellings were destroyed.

Now, in this verse, as an emphasis on this matter, the Qur’an says:

“Have they not traveled in the land so that they should have hearts wherewith to understand (the truth), or ears wherewith to hear (the truth)?…”

Yes, the ruined castles of the tyrants and destroyed houses of the oppressors, who once used to live in the highest degree of power, with their mute tongue, each delivers thousands of points while they are silent.

These ruins are some expressive and alive books which explain the history of these nations; the explanations about the consequences of their deeds, and about their shameful evil programs and, finally, about their painful chastisement.

These silent lands and the traces remained in the ruins, may cast such an exciting mood in the man's mind that, sometimes, the study of one of them teaches man some amount of matter as much as the study of a thick book, and, regarding the repetition of history, which is the fundamental principle of men's lives, illustrates the future before him.

Verily, the study of the works of the people of old makes the ears hearing and the eyes seeing. It may be for this very reason that, by numerous verses of the Qur'an, man has been commanded to travel in the world.

This traveling must be godly and ethical, so that whatever one sees causes him to awake him and he takes a lesson and new advices from those ancient traces, such as: 'Eywan-i-mada'in, the ruined palaces of the tyrant kings and the castles of Pharaohs.

Then, in order to make the reality of this speech more clear, the Qur'an implies that there are many persons who are not apparently blind or deaf, but they are indeed blind and deaf, because it is not the outward eyes which become blind but it is their hearts which lose their insight.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…For verily blind are not the eyes but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts."

In fact, those who lose their apparent eyes are not blind and sometimes they are some enlightened persons who are more aware than others. The true blind are those whose hearts are blind and do not perceive the Truth.

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"The worst blindness is the blindness of the heart."

And

"The utmost blindness of the blindness is the blindness of the heart." [21]

Another narration, recorded in the book entitled:

"Qawali-yul-La'ali", indicates that the Prophet (S) said:

"When Allah intends to do a favour to a servant, He causes the eye of his heart to open by which he can see whatever was concealed to him."[22]

We know that man's heart is merely a pump for the circulation of the blood; then how have the hearts in the breasts been attributed to comprehending the facts? The answer to this question has been explained vastly in Al-Mizan, vol. 14, pp. 392-393 and Tafsir-i-Nimunah, vol. 1, Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 7, the shortened of which is as follows:

One of the meanings of the Qur'anic word /qalb/ (heart) is 'wisdom', and one of the meanings of the Arabic word /sadr/ (chest) in the Qur'an is 'the essence and nature of man'.

Moreover, the heart is the symbol of man's affections, and whenever something of affections, which is often the origin of movement, appears in the spirit of man, its first effect affects on his very physical heart; the pulsation of the heart changes, the blood reaches all parts and particles of the body which gives it a new joy and power.

Therefore, when the spiritual moods are attributed to the heart, it is because their first place of appearance in the man's body is his heart.

It is interesting that in the abovementioned verse, all man's perceptions have been attributed to the heart (wisdom) and ears.

This implies that for comprehending the facts, there are only two ways; either man must have something from his own and in his own spirit by which he personally analyses the matters and gets the necessary results; or he should listen to the advice of the kind advisers, the guides of the way, the Divine prophets and the men of the truth, or he can utilize both of them to obtain the facts.[23]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 47

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَن يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ يَوْماً عِندَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدونَ

47. "And they demand of you to hasten on the punishment! While does never Allah fail His promise; and verily a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you number."

The Divine prophets (as) used to warn the disbelievers of the Divine punishment but they frequently asked the prophets what time would the punishment of Allah come? This verse answered them not to hasten, since the promise of Allah is certain. So, we should not consider the respite of Allah as a sign for His negligence or that we are delivered.

In this verse, the Qur'an makes manifest another feature of the ignorance and unawareness of the blind-hearted pagans.

It says:

"And they demand of you to hasten on the punishment! While does never Allah fail His promise;…"

The person who fears that he might lose the opportunity he has, and his potentialities end, usually hastens. But as for Allah, Who has been All-Powerful over everything since pre-eternity and will be the same until post-eternity, He is always able to fulfil His promises and haste is meaningless for Him.

There is no difference for Him whether time is one hour, one day or one year.

Its reason is mentioned in the verse, where it says:

"…and verily a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you number."

Thus, whether sincerely or mockingly the disbelievers reiterate this statement, saying: 'Why the Divine punishment does not come down over them', they should know that the Divine chastisement waits for them and, soon or late, it will come to them.

So, if there is a respite given to them, it is for that they may awake and improve themselves. Yet, they must be careful that after the punishment has been sent down, the doors to repentance and return are totally closed and there is no way to escape.

Concerning the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…verily a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you number",

besides the abovementioned commentary which indicates one day and a thousand days are indifferent for the Power of Allah, there have been mentioned some other commentaries, too.

Among them is that you may need one thousand years for doing something, but Allah's performance is in one day (or less than that). Hence, His punishment does not need so many premises.

Another matter is that: in comparison, one day in the Hereafter is like one thousand years in the world, (and its reward and retribution will also be increased with the same scale).

An Islamic narration indicates:

"Verily the poor will enter Paradise before the rich in half a day (which is) five hundred years."[24]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 48

وَكَأَيِّن مِن قَرْيَةٍ أَمْلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا وَإِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

48. "And how may of townships I did give a respite while (the people therein) were unjust, then I did seize them, and unto Me is the return (of all)."

One of Allah's ways of treatment is His respite given to the unjust. Thus, our haste is useless.

In this verse, the same subject which was emphasized on in the former verses is emphasized once again, and the obstinate pagans are warned as follows:

"And how may of townships I did give a respite while (the people therein) were unjust, then I did seize them…"

They also complained about the postponement of the Divine punishment, and mocked it. They counted it as a reason for the invalidity of the Prophets' promises, but, at last, they were seized by the punishment and their cries and wails remained in vain.

Yes, all of us return unto Him, and all lines end to Allah. All these properties and wealth will remain when the heir of all of them is Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and unto Me is the return (of all)."

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, vol. 14, P. 419
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Safi, Jawami'-ul-Jami', Fakhr-i-Razi, Atyab-ul-Bayan.
3. Tafsir-us-Safi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Burhan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Surah 'Alaq, No. 96, verse 6
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 205
6. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 41
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 156
8. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 251
9. Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 506
10. The Current Surah, verse 37
11. current Surah, verse 35
12. The verse under discussion
13. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, p. 395, tradition 6
14. Majma'-ul-Bayan, on the commentary of this verse.

www.alhassanain.org/english

15. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
16. Ibid
17. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 374
18. The Qur’anic word /nakir/ means /’inkar/ (denyance) and here it refers to the Divine punishment.
19. The Arabic word /mašid/ is derived from /šid/ which has two meanings. The first is ‘height’ and the second is ‘plaster’. Then, taking the first meaning, the verse means ‘lofty high castles’ and by the second meaning, it means: ‘some castles which are built very firm to be safe from events.’
20. Tafsir-Burhan, vol. 3, p. 30
21. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 508
22. Ibid, p. 509
23. Taken from Al-Mizan, the Commentary, vol. 14, p. 392
24. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse under discussion.

Section 7: The Enticement by Satan

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 49 - 51

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي ءَايَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

49. "Say: 'O people! I am only a plain warner unto you."

50. "Then those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is forgiveness and an honourable sustenance."

51. "And those who strive against Our signs (to reject them), they shall be the inhabitants of Hell."

The Divine prophets (as) do not say anything from their own accord.

In the previous verses, the words were about the haste of the pagans for the Divine punishment. This matter is something which depends on the Will of Allah, the Pure Essence, and even the prophets (as) have no authority in it.

The first verse of the above verses announces as follows:

"Say: 'O people! I am only a plain warner unto you."

But this does not relate to the Apostle that His punishment may come to you soon or late when you disobey His commandment.

No doubt, the Prophet (S) is both a warner and a bearer of glad tidings. But, the emphasis on the subject of 'warning' here and the absence of mentioning 'glad tidings' is because of the addressees of the verse under discussion, who were some obstinate pagans, those who used to mock even the Divine chastisement.

Through the next couple of verses, the Qur'an illustrates a feature from the subject of the glad tidings and the concept of 'warning', and since the All-Embracing Mercy of Allah always precedes His punishment, at first it speaks of glad tidings.

The verse says:

"Then those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is forgiveness and an honourable sustenance."

Such persons are washed and purified with the water of forgiveness, at first and, when they find a relaxed mind and a calm conscience in them from this point of view, they will be included in kinds of graces and favours of Allah.

Regarding the fact that the Arabic word /karim/ means every honourable and worthy being, the phrase /rizq-un-karim/ (an honourable sustenance) has a vast meaning which encompasses all the valuable blessings, irrespective of spiritual and material.

Yes, the Generous Lord in that generous world will bestow the kinds of generous blessings to His believing righteous servants.

Raqib in his book, Mufradat, says: the Arabic word: /karam/ is usually applied for some good and worthy things that are very considerable. Therefore, the small good actions are not called /karam/ (generosity).

Some commentators have meant the Qur'anic phrase: /rizqun karim/ as 'a ceaseless sustenance without blemish', and some others have said it means as 'a worthy sustenance' which all are inside that consistent and universal meaning, that is, the worthy and considerable things.

Then, in the next verse, the holy Qur'an adds implying that those who tried to ruin the verses of Allah or wanted to wipe them out, imagined that they could overcome the assured will of Allah, but they are dwellers of Hell-Fire.

The verse says:

"And those who strive against Our signs (to reject them), they shall be the inhabitants of Hell."

The Arabic word /sa'au/ is derived from /sa'y/ which originally means 'to run', and here it means effort and endeavour in the way of ruining and wasting the verses of Allah.

The Qur'anic word /mu'ajizin/ is derived from /'ijz/ which here means someone who wants to overcome the infinite Power of Allah.

The Qur'anic word /jahim/ is derived from /jahm/ which means the violence of the flame of fire. It is also applied for the violence of wrath. Thus, the term 'jahim' is somewhere which has a flaming fire, and, here, it means Hell.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 52

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ وَلاَ نَبِيٍّ إِلاَّ إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَي الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ ءَايَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

52. "And We did not send before you any messenger or a prophet but when he desired, the Satan threw (some vanity) into his desire; but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, then Allah does establish His signs, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

There are some believers with whom Satan contacts but they immediately understand it and banish him, while there are some others that Satan is always with them, as the Qur'an says:

"…for him a Satan, so he becomes his associate." [1]

In view of the fact that in the former verses the speech was about the effort and endeavour of the pagans to wipe out the religion of Allah and they used to mock and ridicule it, too, in the verses under discussion the Qur'an warns that these plots of the opponents are not something new and these satanic vain temptations have ever existed in the way of the prophets.

It says:

"And We did not send before you any messenger or a prophet but when he desired, the Satan threw (some vanity) into his desire;…"

But Allah never left His Messenger alone with the rush of these satanic vain temptations, and He vanished them all, and then, He strengthened His signs.

This deed is very easy for Allah to do, because He is All-Knowing, All-Wise, and He is completely aware of all these plots and plans, and He knows well how to nullify them.

The verse continues saying:

"…but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, then Allah does establish His signs, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 53

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

53. "So that He may make what the Satan casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard, and verily the unjust are in a deep opposition."

Satan's temptations are as a means for testing the hard-hearted and sick-hearted persons. The spiritual sickness and hard-heartedness are usually some suitable grounds for falling into the snare of seditions and temptations. These satanic plots of the opponents are always used for the examination of both the aware believers and the obstinate disbelievers.

That is why the Qur'an says:

"So that He may make what the Satan casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard…"

Then the Qur'an implies that the cruel oppressors have abided in a serious hostility and opposition while they are far from reality and the Truth.

The verse continues saying:

"…and verily the unjust are in a deep opposition."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 54

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

54. "And that those who have been given the knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, so they may believe in it and their hearts may be lowly before it, and verily, Allah guides those who believe unto a straight path."

The true knowledge is that which gives man the ability of recognizing right from wrong (and it must not be some imitative and superficial matters learnt by heart).

So, the Qur'an in this holy verse implies that the purpose of this event is that those who are aware and knowledgeable can recognize right from wrong and be able to separate the Divine programs from the satanic temptations and, comparing them with each other, know that the religion of Allah is the truth and has come from the side of your Lord, and, consequently, they believe in it and make their hearts humble before it.

The verse says:

"And that those who have been given the knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, so they may believe in it and their hearts may be lowly before it…"

Of course, when some dangerous thing come in the way of these believers who are truth seekers, Allah does not leave them alone, but He guides those who believe toward the straight way. In other words, because of their Faith, He guides them to Paradise which is that very straight path.

The verse says:

"…and verily, Allah guides those who believe unto a straight path."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 55

وَلاَ يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْهُ حَتَّي تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ

55. "And those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt concerning it (Qur'an) until the Hour (of Resurrection) overtakes them suddenly, or there comes to them the chastisement of a barren day."

Whoever accepted the line of disbelief and combating against the Truth, he will encounter any reality suspiciously and with doubt and hesitation.

So, following the discussion stated in the previous holy verses about the effort and endeavour of the opponents for wiping out the signs of Allah, here, this verse points to the continuation of the same kind of efforts which are from the side of some fanatic and stubborn persons.

This verse indicates that the disbelievers are always in doubt about the Qur'an and the monotheistic religion of the Prophet (S) until when the Day of Resurrection suddenly comes, or the punishment of the barren day comes upon them, the day when they cannot make amends their past.

The verse says:

"And those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt concerning it (Qur'an) until the Hour (of Resurrection) overtakes them suddenly, or there comes to them the chastisement of a barren day."

It is clear that the objective of mentioning: 'Those who disbelieve', here, is not all of them utterly, because many of them awoke in the continuation of the way and joined to the holy Prophet (S) and the firm rows of his followers. The purpose of it is their chiefs and those obstinate and extraordinary fanatic persons who hostilely never believed.

However, it has been cited in the commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan and also in the commentary of Jawami'-uj-Jami' that the purpose of 'a barren day' is the Day of Hereafter, and the reason why that Day has been counted as 'barren' is that no night will come after it.

The 'barren day', of course, has also been rendered into the 'day of the Battle of Badr'.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 56 - 57

الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِاَيَاتِنَا فَأُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

56. "On that Day the Sovereignty will be Allah's; He will judge between them; and those who believe and do righteous deeds will be in gardens of bliss."

57. "And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, these, for them, shall be a disgraceful chastisement."

The criterion of Allah's Judgment on the Day of Hereafter will be the belief and the disbelief of human beings. There, the retribution of those who arrogantly have not accepted the Truth will be a humiliating punishment.

Here, the holy Qur'an points to the absolute Sovereignty of Allah on the Resurrection Day, where it says:

"On that Day the Sovereignty will be Allah's;…"

This, of course, does not allocate to the Resurrection Day, but today and always the absolute Sovereignty belongs to Allah, yet, since there are some other kinds of owners and rulers in this world, too, (though the realm of their authority is very limited and weak with an apparent and formal aspect), there may arise this thought that there are some rulers and owners other than Allah; but on the Day of Hereafter, where all these matters are absent, this fact will be made manifest more than any other times, and all will understand that the Ruler and the Owner is Only the One, Allah.

In other words, here there are two kinds of sovereignty and ownership: the first is the true sovereignty which is the sovereignty of the Creator over the creatures, and the second is the nominal and conventional sovereignty, which is current among people.

These two both exist in this world while in the Hereafter all the nominal and conventional sovereignties will be dismissed and there will remain only the true sovereignty of the Creator of the worlds.[2]

However, since the true owner is Allah, He will be the true Ruler, too.

Therefore, He will govern over and judge between all human beings whether they are believers or disbelievers, the consequence of which is the same thing that the Qur'an has stated at the end of this very verse, where it says:

"…He will judge between them; and those who believe and do righteous deeds will be in gardens of bliss."

They will abide in some blessed gardens where all merits are found, and whatever goodness and blessing they desire they will find available therein.

Then, in the next verse, it says:

"And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, these, for them, shall be a disgraceful chastisement."

What an expressive and lively meaning it is! There will be disgraceful chastisement then for them as a result of those obstinacies, conceits and arrogances they wrongfully had against the servants of Allah.

These qualities cause them to fall to the lowest degree of degradation and humiliation; and we know that when, in different verses, the Qur'an qualifies the Divine punishment as to be: 'painful', 'great', and 'disgraceful', each of them is appropriate with the kind of the sin that such people have committed.

It is interesting that, when speaking of the believers, the Qur'an points to two things: the Faith and the righteous deed, and, on the contrary, when speaking of disbelievers, it points to two other things: 'disbelief ' and 'their rejection of the Divine verses, each of which, in fact, is a combination of their internal belief and their external practical effects, since the man's deeds often originate from a mental and ideological source.

Notes

1. Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 36
2. Al-Mizan, vol. 14, p. 433

Section 8: Reward For Those Who Migrate in Allah's Cause

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 58 - 59

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقاً حَسَناً وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُم مدْخَلاً يَرْضَوْنَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ

58. "And those who migrate in the cause of Allah and are then slain or die, certainly will Allah provide them with a goodly sustenance, and verily Allah is the best of providers."

59. "Certainly He will admit them into a place of entrance which they shall be well pleased with; and verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing."

An immigration, which is done for a certain goal and a good purpose, is a value.

The death of the emigrant persons is a kind of martyrdom. Death or martyrdom is not a matter of significance, what is important is that the one is on the path of Allah.

In the former holy verses, the Qur'an spoke about some emigrants whom were sent out from their home and houses because of the name of Allah and that they supported the Divine religion. Now, in this verse, they are considered as an excellent group.

The verse says:

"And those who migrate in the cause of Allah and are then slain or die, certainly will Allah provide them with a goodly sustenance, and verily Allah is the best of providers."

Some commentators have said that the Qur'anic phrase /rizqan hasana/ here refers to some blessings that attract the person when he sees them so that he cannot look at anything other than them, and it is only Allah who can give a man such a sustenance.

Some of the Islamic scholars have mentioned an occasion of revelation for this verse, the shortened of it is as follows:

At the advent of Islam when the Muslim emigrants came into Medina, some of them died with a natural death, while some others suffered martyrdom. At this time a group of the Muslim believers considered the virtue of martyrdom utterly for the martyrs; the above-mentioned holy verse was sent down and introduced both of them as the bearers of the best blessings of Allah.

That is why some of the commentators of the Qur'an, taking this meaning, have concluded that giving the life in the path of Allah is important, whether it is by the way of martyrdom or by the way of natural death. Then, whoever passes away for the cause of Allah and in the way of Allah will receive the reward appropriate for martyrs.

It has been said:

"Verily those who are slain in the way of Allah and those who die in the way of Allah (both) are martyrs."[1]

An example of this Divine ‘goodly sustenance’ has been mentioned in the next verse, where it says:

“Certainly He will admit them into a place of entrance which they shall be well pleased with;…”

In this present world, they were banished and sent out, with difficulty, from their home, then, in the next world, Allah will admit them into a place by which they will be pleased from any points of view, and thus their donation will be recompensed with the best form.

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an implies that Allah is All-Knowing and is aware of the deeds of His servants, and, in the meanwhile, He is the Most Forbearing and does not hasten in punishing and giving the retribution of the sinners so that the believers can be trained and experimented in this field of examination.

The verse says:

“…and verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.”

By the way, there is cited a narration in Tafsir-i-Burhan implying that Imam Sadiq (as) said this verse was revealed for the rank of Hadrat Ali (as). This does not contrast the general concept of the verse, and Hadrat Ali (as) is the most perfect example of it.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 60

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنصُرَنَّهُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ

60. “That (is so); and whoever retaliates with the like of that with which he has been wronged, and again he has been aggressed, most certainly Allah will aid him; verily Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving.”

The Occasion of Revelation

Some Islamic traditions indicate that once some of the pagans of Mecca faced with Muslims on a day when there remained only two nights from the month of Muharram.

The pagans told each other that the followers of Muhammad (S) would not fight in the month of Muharram, because they believed fighting was unlawful for them in that month, and that was why the pagans started their invasion.

The Muslims persistently asked them not to start fighting in that month, Muharram, but they did not accept it. Then they could not help it but taking action to defend them, and they fought bravely when Allah helped them to win the battle. (Then the above-mentioned verse was revealed).[2]

Defence is the natural right of every person, and Allah is the helper of the oppressed.

In the former verses, the words were about the immigrants in the way of Allah and the great rewards that they had been promised to be given by Allah on the Day of Hereafter.

In order not to be supposed that the Divine promise is particular only to the Hereafter, concerning their victory under the light of the Divine Grace in this life, it says:

“That (is so); and whoever retaliates with the like of that with which he has been wronged, and again he has been aggressed, most certainly Allah will aid him;…”

This means that defence and standing against injustice and cruelty is a natural right and everybody is allowed to act; yet the word /mil/ (the like of), used in this verse, is an emphasis on the fact that, in this course, he should not transgress the limits.

The Qur'anic phrase: /umma buqiya 'alayhi/

(and again he has been aggressed)

refers to this point that if a person has to defend himself under the pressure of injustice, Allah has promised him to help him. Thus, the one who keeps silent from the beginning and accepts to be unjustly treated and takes no action alongside his defence, Allah has not promised to help such a one.

Allah's promise is particular to those who do their best by using their power to defend themselves against the oppressors and tyrants and that they are still under unjust treatment of the enemy.

And since due retaliation and punishment must always be accompanied with forgiveness and mercy, so that those who have become regretful from their own wrong action and have submitted the truth can come under its cover, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…verily Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving."

This status is just like the state of the verses of retaliation which, from one side, let the avenger of blood to retaliate and, on the other side, the noble Qur'an suggests the command of forgiveness beside it as a virtue, (in the case of those who are eligible to be forgiven).

However, aiding the oppressed is not always accompanied by the annihilation of the oppressor. Allah helps the oppressed, but because of some reasons the oppressor may be forgiven by Him, too.

There is a narration cited in Burhan, the Commentary, from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said that the purpose of the sentence:

"…most certainly Allah will aid him;…"

is Hadrat Mahdi (as), the still-living one from Muhammad's progeny, who, by the aid of Allah, will take vengeance of the blood of his ancestor, Imam Husayn (as), and the rest of the oppressed of the world.[3]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 61 - 62

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

61. "That is because Allah merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night and that Allah is All-Hearing, All-seeing."

62. "That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and that what they call upon besides Him, it is falsehood; and because Allah, He is the High, the Great."

The Power and Knowledge of Allah in relation to changing day and night is a sign for His ability in helping the servants. The change of the day and the night is not casual; and the administration of the whole world has a wise and knowing administrator.

In view of the fact that the promise of aid and help is encouraging and effective when it is from the side of an almighty and powerful person, then,

a part of the infinite Power of Allah in the universe is mentioned through the first verse in the above.

It says:

"That is because Allah merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night…"

(He constantly decreases from one and, according to a certain system, He adds to another. This system is a fix and perfectly accurate one which has been running for thousands or millions of years.)

The Arabic term /yulij/ here is derived from /'ilaj/ and originally from /waluj/ which means 'admission'. As we said, this alteration refers to the gradual and perfectly regular and accurate changes of the day and the night during different seasons of the year in which one of them decreases and the other increases.

It is also probable that this refers to the sunrise and sunset that, because of the special circumstances of the atmosphere (the air surrounding the earth) this change does not occur suddenly.

From very early morning i.e. the onset of dawn, the rays of the sun shine the higher levels of the air and slowly transfer to the lower levels of the air. As if the day gradually enters into the night, and the forces of light prevail over the army of darkness.

On the contrary, at the time of sunset, at first the light begins to be vanished from the lower levels of the atmosphere and it becomes rather dim and gradually it will be dismissed from the higher and higher levels until when there will be no ray of the sun, and the army of darkness occupy everywhere.

If it were not such, the rising of the sun and sunset would happen in a fleeting moment, and the sudden transition of the night to the day, and the day to the night, would be spiritually and physically harmful for human beings, and this sudden and rapid change would also bring forth many difficulties in the social system.

There is no problem that the abovementioned holy verse refers to both of the interpretations.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and that Allah is All-Hearing, All-seeing."

This means that Allah hears the request of the believers for help, and He is always aware of their circumstances and, at the necessary time, His grace will hasten to help them, and in the same way, He is always aware of the deeds and intentions of the enemies of the Truth.

The next verse, in fact, is an evidence for what was said before.

It says:

"That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and that what they call upon besides Him, it is falsehood; and because Allah, He is the High, the Great."

You see that the army of the Truth becomes victorious.

The falsehood retreats, the grace of Allah hastens to help the believers and leaves the disbelievers alone; all these are for the sake that the latter ones are wrong and the former ones are right; those are against the system of

the world of existence and their end is destruction and annihilation, while these are in agreement with the laws of the world of existence.

In principle, Allah is the Truth and other than Him is futile; and all those human beings and other beings that contact with Allah are somehow right, and as much as they are aloof from Him they are wrong.

The Arabic word /‘aliyy/ is derived from /‘uluww/ which means ‘high ranked’. It is also applied for someone who is capable and almighty, and no one can resist before his will.

The word ‘great’ refers to the grandeur of the Knowledge and Power of Allah (s.w.t.), and He Who is qualified with these attributes can help His friends very well, and defeat the enemies violently. Thus, His friends must be encouraged with His promises.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 63 - 64

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَتُصْبِحُ الأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِي الْحَمِيدُ

63. “Have you not seen that Allah has sent down water from the heaven then the earth becomes green? Verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware.”

64. “To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and verily Allah, certainly He is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised.”

The study over the world of existence can be an effective background for the faith in Allah.

The words in the former verses were about the infinite Power of Allah (s.w.t.) and His legitimacy. The verses under discussion state some different signs of this vast Power and the absolute rightfulness.

At first, it says:

“Have you not seen that Allah has sent down water from the heaven then the earth becomes green?…”

The land which lacked any sign of life and had a frowning, dark, and ugly face, became alive again by the descent of the life-giving drops of rain and the signs of life appeared in it, and the smile of living was seen in its face.

Yes, the Lord, Who creates such life and living so simply, is All-Subtle, All-Aware. So, the verse says:

“…Verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware.”

The Arabic term /latif/ is derived from the word /lutf/ which means a very gentle and narrow thing; and it is because of this very gentleness that the special favours of Allah are sometimes called in Arabic /lutf/.

The Qur’anic word /xabir/ means: ‘he who is aware of the accurate things’.

This attribute of Allah, Who is All-Subtle, requires that He cherishes the worthless small seeds of the plants buried in the depth of the soil, and, in spite of the law of gravity, brings them out from inside of the dark land with the utmost beauty and delicacy, and puts them in the expose of sunlight and the blows of breeze, and finally they are turned into some fruitful plants or tall trees.

If He did not send the drops of rain and they did not make the land around the seed soft, mild and wet, those plants could never grow. But, by this rain, He caused the dry and rough land to become soft and prepared for the growth of the beautiful plants.

In the meanwhile, He is aware of the whole necessities of this weak seed from the beginning of its movement under the dust until when it comes out and grows up and becomes, for example, as a tall tree.

Allah, requiring to His grace, sends down the rain, and requiring His awareness, He measures it so that if its amount goes beyond the limit it will flows as a flood and causes some ruins, and if its amount is less than the normal limit there will come draught and famine. This is the meaning of /latif/ (All-Subtle) and /xabir/ (All-Aware).

There has been narrated a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as) which has been considered as a scientific miracle.

He said:

"When we say Allah is All-Subtle, it is for the sake that He has created some subtle creatures, and it is for the sake that He is aware of the things which are tender, smooth and concealed.

Do you not see the signs of His creation in the tender and rough plants, or in the creatures, small animals, little insects, and some things which are smaller than them? There are some living things that can never be seen by the eyes, and they are so little that their males and females, or their state being fresh or old can not be recognized.

When we observe such things and we contemplate about what are found in the oceans, inside the trees, deserts and farms, and that there are some living creatures which our eyes can not see, nor can we touch them by our hands, we understand that their Creator is All-Subtle."[4]

The abovementioned authentic tradition, which concerns the microbes and some atomic animals and has been stated some centuries before the birth of Pastor, the famous scientist, makes the interpretation of /latif/ (All-Subtle) clear.

Upon the commentary of this word, there is also another probability that says the purpose of /latif/ is that the Pure Essence of Allah is such that it can never be felt by the feeling of anyone. Thus, He is /latif/ (All-Subtle) because no one is aware of His Essence. He is All-Aware since He is Omniscient and is informed of everything.

In the next verse, the other sign that the Qur'an introduces for Infinite Power and rightfulness of the Pure Essence of Allah is that it says:

"To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and verily Allah, certainly He is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised."

He is the creator of all, and He is the owner of all, too; that is also why He is Almighty over every thing.

It is for this reason that He is the Only Self-Sufficient in the whole world of existence, and He is worthy of any kind of Praise and Glorification.

The connection of these two attributes, 'the Self-Sufficient' and 'the Praised', with together is a very accurate connection. Its explanation is that, firstly: there are many persons who are self-sufficient but they are some niggardly exploiters who have been encompassed with negligence and pride.

For this reason this attribution of Allah may sometimes recall those qualities, while His being Self-Sufficient is mingled with His Grace, clemency, and graciousness toward the servants, which make Him deserving of Praise and Glorification.

Secondly, other self-sufficient ones have this quality in apparent, and if they have any clemency and graciousness, in fact, they are not theirs, because it is Allah Who has given them these whole blessings and potentialities. The One Who is Self-Sufficient and is eligible for any Praise and Glorification is His Pure Essence.

Thirdly: when the ordinary self-sufficient persons happens to do something, at last they gain some benefits from their action, while the only One Who bestows things on His servants abundantly and gains no benefit is His Pure Essence, and for the same reason He is the most eligible of all to be praised and glorified.

Notes

1. The commentary by Qartabi, vol. 7, p. 4480
2. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Durr-ul-Manthur, following the verse
3. Tafsir-i-Burhan, vol. 3, p. 103; and Safi, vol. 3, p. 388; and Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim, following the verse.
4. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 93

Section 9: Allah's Will Alone is Done

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 65 - 66

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَآءَ أَن تَقَعَ عَلَي الاَرْضِ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الإِنسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ

65. "Have you not seen that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the earth and the ships running in the sea by His command, and He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth, save with His permission? Verily, Allah is, for mankind, Full of Pity, Merciful."

66. "And He it is Who gave you life, then He will cause you to die, and then will give you life (again). Verily man is ungrateful."

The study of divine creation produces both faith and love in the believers.

The subservience of the world of existence is in authority of Allah ***("…Allah has made subservient to you…").***

In this holy verse again the Qur'an has pointed to another example of this infinite Power concerning the subservience of the beings for humankind.

It says:

"Have you not seen that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the earth…"

He has let all the merits and potentialities of the world at your disposal in order that you utilize them in what manner you wish. Then the verse continues implying that He also made the ships subservient to you while they run in the seas, going forth on the water towards different destinations by the command of Allah.

The verse says:

"…and the ships running in the sea by His command…"

Besides that, He withholds the heavens in their positions not to fall on the earth save with His command.

From one side, He has caused that each of the celestial bodies rotates in its orb, and has adjusted the repelling force resulted from the 'centrifugal force' just equal to the gravity force therein, so that each of them moves in its orbit without that there happens any change in their proper distances or there occurs any crash between those globes.

On the other side, He has created the atmosphere of the each in such a way that it does not let the wandering aerolites hit the earth and cause some troubles and destructions for its habitants.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth, save with His permission?…"

Yes, it is His Grace, Mercy and Kindness towards the servants that have caused such a safe and secure cradle to be prepared for the humankind to live on it easily, calmly and comfortably without any danger. He has created the earth in a manner that neither any aerolite falls on it nor does any other globe crash it.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…Verily, Allah is, for mankind, Full of Pity, Merciful."

Finally, in the next verse, the Qur'an, after speaking about the Power of Allah, refers to the most important matter of the world of existence, i.e., the subject of life, where it implies that you were a lifeless dust when He covered you with the clothes of life, then after passing the course of life He causes you to die and He retunes you to the same dust from which you came into being.

It says:

"And He it is Who gave you life, then He will cause you to die…"

And again, in the Resurrection, He will give you a new life and you will come out from the dead soil and will attend the court of Reckoning and retribution.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and then will give you life (again).…"

Yet, this man is ungrateful in spite of these plenty of blessings that Allah has given him, both for his soul and his body, in the earth and the heaven, and he rejects His Pure Essence while he manifestly sees all these clear signs.

The verse concludes:

"…Verily man is ungrateful."

Some Points

The First Point: In these recent verses, there have been regularly mentioned fourteen parts of Allah's Attributes, (at the end of each verse two attributes), as follows:

"All-Knowing, Most Forbearing", "Pardoning, Forgiving", "All-Hearing, All-Seeing", "The High, The Great", "All-Subtle, All-Aware", "The Self-Sufficient, the Praised", "Full of Pity, Merciful".

Every part of these divine attributes agrees with and is complementary of each other in every couple. For example, Allah's forgiveness is complementary of His Pardoning, All-Hearing is complementary of All-Seeing, His being High agrees with His Greatness, His being All-Subtle adapts with His being All-Aware, His being the Self-Sufficient with His being Praised and, finally, His being Full of Pity with His being Merciful.

All of these attributes are in agreement and, in the meanwhile, they are just appropriate with the same subject which is stated in the concerning holy verse. Since we have explained them following each verse, their repetition is not necessary here.

The Second Point: The verses under discussion were both as an evidence for the Power of Allah and an emphasis on the promises of Divine help upon the believers and as a sign for the rightfulness of His Pure Essence, which have been referred to in the former verses.

They are also counted as a reasoning for Monotheism and as a reasoning for Resurrection, because the phenomena of the dead lands being quickened by having green plants and by means of rain, and also the life and the death of the first human being are some witnesses for the fact that He is capable to restore man again to life and this meaning has been taken in many verses of the noble Qur'an as a reasoning to the existence of Resurrection, too.

However, regarding that the Qur'anic word /kafur/, in Arabic, grammatically is a form of the word with the exaggeration meaning, the Qur'anic sentence:

"…Verily man is ungrateful"

points to the obstinate persons who, even with observing these signs of the grandeur of Allah, they pave the way of denyance. Or it points to the ungratefulness of such persons, those whose selves are surrounded by His blessings and yet neither do they try to thank Him nor recognize Him.

The Third Point: The subservience of the beings of the earth and the heaven:

As it has been pointed out, making these things subservient for man is from this viewpoint that Allah has assigned them as the servants of man so that they are along the way of the benefit of him.

Among all the benefits of the earth, the movement of the ships on the seas and oceans is particularly mentioned here, it is for the reason that these ships have been the most important means of communication and transportation for passengers and goods from one place to another place, so that no other vehicle could have succeeded to occupy the place of ships in this regard.

Admittedly if one day all ships stop moving on the seas and oceans, the life of men will be entirely disturbed, because the roads on land have not the potentiality of transportation of so much oil, as well as other loads, from one point to another.

Thus, the importance of ships, this divine blessing, becomes more manifest when we see more than ten thousand lorries cannot carry the oil that even one huge ship can sometimes carry; and transition of oil by the pipelines is also possible for only some limited places of the world.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 67

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكاً هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلاَ يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِي الاَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَي رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَي هُدًي مسْتَقِيمٍ

67. "To every nation have We appointed rites which they are to perform, therefore they should not dispute with you about the matter, and you do invite (the people) unto your Lord; verily, you are upon a straight guidance."

Allah does not leave any nation without any school of thought. A religion must be introduced from the side of Allah, and people should go on the path of Allah.

The prophets' duty is to guide their nations, and they must resist in this way.

Through former discussions, we stated some points about polytheists. The polytheists, in particular, and the opponents of Islam, in general, had some disputations with the Prophet of Islam (S) about the problems and the ordinances in the religions of old, and they considered them as a weak point for the religion of Islam, while those changes not only were not weaknesses, but also were counted as one of the programs of the development of religions.

So, the verse implies that there has been appointed a worship for every nation by which they would worship Him.

The verse says:

"To every nation have We appointed rites which they are to perform…"

The Arabic word /manasik/ is the plural form of /mansak/ in the sense of 'worship' absolutely. Here, it may envelop all religious and Divine programs. Therefore, the verse expresses this fact that each of the former nations had a separate program particular to them.

From the viewpoint of time, place and other respects in those circumstances, it had been the most complete program for them, but certainly with the change of conditions it was necessary that some new ordinances would substitute them.

That is why, following that statement, it adds:

"…therefore they should not dispute with you about the matter, and you do invite (the people) unto your Lord; verily, you are upon a straight guidance."

The Qur'anic word /hudan/ (guidance) which is qualified by /mustaqim/ (straight) is either for emphasis, or it may point to the fact that a 'guidance' toward a 'destination' may be performed in different ways. These ways can be: near, far, straight, and crooked; while the Divine guidance is toward the nearest and the straightest way.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 68 - 69

وإِن جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

68. "And if they dispute with you, say: 'Allah knows best what you do'."

69. "Allah will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which you used to differ."

The Divine prophets, with having those plenty miracles and logic, were still confronted with some obstinate persons. Then, this verse indicates that if they continue conflicting and disputing with the Prophet (S) and his words do not affect their hearts, he is to answer them that Allah knows best about the deeds they do.

The verse says:

"And if they dispute with you, say: 'Allah knows best what you do'."

Some of the commentators have said that it means that if they dispute with him (S) about sacrifice and cancellation of their religion, he should tell them that Allah knows best their rejection and He will give them their chastisement.

Then in the next verse, the Qur'an announces that Allah will judge between them about what they used to differ, and in Hereafter, where everything returns to unity and oneness and the differences will be removed, He will make the facts manifest for all of us. Thus, the Faith in the Hereafter is the best thing for bringing the disputations and differences under subjugation.

The verse says:

"Allah will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which you used to differ."

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 70

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

70. "Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and the earth? Verily this is (recorded) in a Book; verily this is easy for Allah."

Allah's Knowledge is the same with respect to all the world of existence; and since the judgment in Hereafter upon the deeds of the human beings and their discords needs a vast knowledge unto all of them, in this verse the Qur'an, hinting to the infinite knowledge of Allah, says:

"Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and the earth?…"

Yes, everything is recorded in a Book. This is the book of the infinite knowledge of Allah. It is the book of the world of existence and the world of 'cause and effect', a world wherein nothing will be lost or perished, but the things always change in forms, even the waves of the weak sound which a mortal did produce thousands of years ago have not been annihilated or extinguished completely and they exist in the atmosphere.

This is a very minute and consistent book in which everything has been recorded.

In other words, all these things are found in the 'Protected Tablet', the tablet of the knowledge of Allah, and all these beings with all their characteristics and details are present with Him.

That is why, in the last sentence of this verse, the Qur'an announces that this is easy for Allah (s.w.t.), because all beings entirely and with all their qualities attend before Him.

The verse says:

"…Verily this is (recorded) in a Book; verily this is easy for Allah."

Some Traditions Concerning Knowledge

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Having knowledge to Allah is the best of deeds; for knowing Him will benefit you whether the deed is scanty or abundant; and verily ignorance will not benefit you whether the deed is scanty or abundant."

2. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"The finite of knowledge (to Allah) is being in awe of Allah, the Pure."[1]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 71

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَاناً وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ

71. "And they worship, besides Allah, things for which He has sent no authority, and of which they have no knowledge, and for the unjust there shall be no helper."

The viewpoint of the pagans was that Allah had given the ability of contrivance and decision to some things and the idols while He is above all. They imagined that the world was under the control of gods and considered Allah as the Lord of lords. This verse implies that Allah has given no

authority to any of their gods and the world of existence is under the control of Allah, the One.

Appropriate to the content of the previous verses which were about Monotheism and polytheism, in this holy verse the words are again upon the polytheists and their wrong manner.

And, in view of the fact that one of the most manifest reasons of the invalidity of polytheism and idolatry is that there is no rational and traditional evidence to indicate to permissibility of this action; the abovementioned verse says:

"And they worship, besides Allah, things for which He has sent no authority…"

In fact, this verse is the nullification of the belief of idolaters who believed Allah had allowed them idolatry and those idols were some intercessors to Him.

Then the Qur'an adds:

"…and of which they have no knowledge…"

This means that neither by means of Allah's commandment nor by means of intellect they have absolutely any proof and evidence for their action.

It is evident that he who has no clear reason for his belief and deeds is unjust. He has been unjust both to himself and others, and when he inflicts in Divine punishment none can defend him.

Thus, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and for the unjust there shall be no helper."

Some of the commentators have said that the Qur'anic word /nasir/, mentioned here, means: 'reason and evidence', because the real helper is the same.[2]

There is another probability that says the objective of the word /nasir/ is a guide, and this is a complement for the previous discussion, that is, they have neither an evidence from Allah, nor a rational proof that they themselves have obtained it, nor a leader, a guide, and a teacher who can help them in this way, because they are unjust and do not submit the truth.

These three commentaries do not contrast each other, though the first commentary seems better.

A Few Traditions Concerning Polytheism

1- The Holy Prophet (S) told Ma'ath:

"Whoever dies while he has never associated anything with Allah, will enter Paradise."[3]

2- Jabir, May Allah be pleased with him, said:

"Once a man came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said:

'O' Messenger of Allah! What are the deeds which cause (a man) to enter Paradise or Hell?'

He (S) said:

'Whoever from among my Ummah dies and has not associated anything with Allah, will enter Paradise, and whoever dies while he has been associating things with Allah will enter Hell'."[4]

3- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Once a man said to the Holy Prophet:

‘O’ Messenger of Allah! Bequeath me!’

He (S) said:

‘I bequeath you that you never associate anything with Allah even if you are to be torn to pieces and to be burnt in fire; and that you should not repulse your parents (from yourself) either…’.”[5]

4- The holy Prophet (S) said:

“There are two bad qualities above which there is no other bad quality: associating something with Allah, and to cause damage against the servants of Allah.”[6]

5- Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“…you should know that even the smallest hypocrisy is like believing in more than one God, and keeping company of people who follow their low desires is the key to obliviousness from religion, and is the seat of Satan.’…”[7]

6- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The one who has associated a partner with Allah will be told to get his reward from whom he has acted for.”[8]

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 72

وإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّـنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنكَرَ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا قُلْ أَفَأُنَبِّـئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِن ذَلِكُمُ النَّارُ وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

72. “And when Our clear signs are recited unto them, you recognize repugnance in the faces of those who disbelieve; (so that) well-nigh they rush upon those who recite to them Our Signs. Say: ‘Shall I inform you of what is worse than this? The Fire, Allah has promised it to those who disbelieve; and an evil destination it is!”

In conflicts between paganism and Faith, pagans usually concentrate their harsh invasions upon the spiritual and cultural centers and personalities.

They sometimes take the temples and centers of worship as their target, which was referred to in verse 40 of the current Surah where it says:

“…certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches…”;

and sometimes they attack the preachers of the religion or their audience.

Through this holy verse, in a short sentence, the intensity, obstinacy and bigotry of the idolaters against the verses of Allah have been referred to.

It says:

“And when Our clear signs are recited unto them, you recognize repugnance in the faces of those who disbelieve;…”

In fact, when hearing these clear verses, the understanding of which is easy for any intellectual, there appears a contrast between the lively logic of the holy Qur’an and the ignorant bigotries of the disbelievers, and since they are not ready to accept the truth, involuntarily its signs are recognized in their faces in the form of rejection and repugnance.

Their manner is so that, not only the effect of inconvenience and repugnance is seen in their features, but also, as the result of their immense

bigotry and obstinacy, they are about to stand and attack those who recite the Divine verses to them.

The verse says:

"…(so that) well-nigh they rush upon those who recite to them Our Signs.…"

The Arabic word /yastun/ is derived from /satwat/ which means 'to lift one's hand to rush against the opposite party'. As Raqib cites in Mufradat, it originally means: 'the raise of a horse on its feet; and lifting its hands', and then, it has been used with the above meaning.

If a person habitually thinks logically, when he hears a wrong statement he will neither frown, nor does he answer it with tied fist; on the contrary, he may honestly reject it with logical statement. These wrong reactions of the disbelievers are themselves as clear evidences that they follow no reason and logic and only ignorance and bigotry dominate them, their entity.

It is not worthy that the Qur'anic phrase: /yakaduna yastuna/ is formed by two simple verbs in future tense which in Arabic work as the constancy of the action, and here they denote the existence of the status of rushing in them, and sometimes the circumstances required that they would practically make it appear, and when the circumstances did not allow, often the feeling of readiness for attack appeared in them and they displayed signs of uneasiness why they could not rush and beat.

As for these illogical persons, the Qur'an commands the holy Prophet (S) to do as follows:

"…Say: 'Shall I inform you of what is worse than this? The Fire…"

This means that if you think that these clear verses are some evils, since they do not agree with your wrong and deviated thoughts, I may introduce worse than them which is the Divine painful punishment that will finally encompass you for this obstinacy and enmity of yours. It is the same blazing Fire that Allah has promised to the disbelievers.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…Allah has promised it to those who disbelieve;…"

And the blazing Fire of Hell is the worst abode! The verse concludes:

"…and an evil destination it is!"

In fact, there is no response save the Hell Fire for these rude fiery persons inside whom the flames of bigotry and obstinacy is always enlightened. As a fact, the Divine chastisement is always closely appropriate to the quality of the same sin and disobedience that people commit.

Notes

1. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 10926
2. Al-Mizan and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
3. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 65
4. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 1, p. 94
5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 134, Al-Mizan, vol. 3, p.176
6. Tuhaf-ul-'Ughul, p. 34
7. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon 86
8. 'Ihya'-i-'Ulum, vol. 4, p. 2723

Section 10: The Muslims, Chosen By Allah Himself

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 73 - 74

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَن يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَاباً وَلَوِ
اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِن يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذبَابُ شَيْئاً لاَّ يَسْتَنقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ
مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

73. "O people! A parable is struck; so listen to it. Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah can never create (even) a fly, though they should all gather for it; and should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back from it. Feeble are (both) the seeker and the sought!"

74. "They have not estimated Allah with the estimation that is due to Him. Verily Allah is Strong, Mighty."

We must always take the parables of the Qur'an under careful consideration.

The person who is helpless when he confronts a single fly is not eligible to be worshipped.

This verse illustrates an interesting and lively picture of the situation of the artificial idols and deities and explains their weakness and inability. It makes manifest the falsehood of the pagans' belief very clearly.

It addresses the common people and says:

"O people! A parable is struck; so listen to it. Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah can never create (even) a fly, though they should all gather for it;…"

If all their idols, all the objects of their worship, and even all the scientists, the mindful ones, and inventors from among human beings gather with together and try to create a fly they will not be able to create it.

Thus, how can you consider them in a row with the Great Lord Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and thousands of thousand living creatures in the seas and on the lands, in forests, and in the depths of the ground; the Lord Who has assigned the life and living in different shapes and various kinds, each of which causes man to wonder and to admire them.

How far and different are those weak objects of worship and this Almighty Wise Creator!

Then the Qur'an adds that not only they are not able to create a fly, but also they are unable to stand against a fly, because as the verse says:

"…and should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back from it.…"

A weak and feeble being that fails even in standing against a fly, how is it worthy that they consider it as a manager of their fate and remover of their difficulties?

Yes, both 'the seekers', and the worshippers, and those objects of worship, 'the sought' are feeble!

The verse says:

"…Feeble are (both) the seeker and the sought!"

Some Islamic narrations indicate that the idolaters of Quraysh used to plaster the idols that they had gathered and arranged around the Ka‘bah, with musk, ambergris and saffron mixed with honey, and around them they used to loudly say some words similar to the term ‘labbayk’ (here am I) of the monotheists which indicated their polytheism and idolatry as well as the distortion of the saying of monotheists, and they used to imagine these worthless and low objects as the partners of Allah.

But flies came sitting on them, ate the honey, saffron, musk and ambergris thereover while the idolaters had not the power to take them back from the flies.

Taking this scenery as an example, the Qur’an reiterates the feebleness and inability of the idols and the weakness of the logic of the polytheists and implies that the idolaters can see carefully how their objects of worship are under the feet of flies and they are not able to show the least defence from themselves.

These are some worthless and incapable objects of worship that the polytheists demanded them to solve their various problems!

By the way, the objective of the Arabic words /talib/ (the seeker) and /matlub/ (the sought) is just the same thing which was said in the above: the former is the worshippers of the idols and the latter is the idols themselves both of which are weak and incapable.

Some commentators have also said that probably here the term /talib/ refers to ‘fly’ and /matlub/ refers to ‘idols’, (since the flies seek the idols in order to enjoy of the food stuff over them).

After stating the above lively parable, in the next verse the Qur’an concludes that they have not recognized Allah so that they must know Him.

The verse says:

“They have not estimated Allah with the estimation that is due to Him.…”

They are so weak and feeble in knowledge of Allah and theology that they degraded Allah, the Exalted, to the level of their weak and worthless objects of worship, those that they counted as partners of Allah.

If they had the least amount of knowledge about Him they would certainly laugh at their own comparison.

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an states:

“…Verily Allah is Strong, Mighty.”

Allah is not like the idols that are not able to create a small creature such as a fly, and they are not able even to defend themselves against a fly. Allah is powerful over everything, and none is able to resist before Him.

A Point Concerning Theology

If we deal with the books written about physiology of the living creatures and study carefully the biological activities of a small insect, such as a fly, we will see that the structure of the mind of a fly, its system of nerves, and its digestion organs are more complicated than the structure of the most equipped aeroplanes, or they can not be comparable with each other at all.

In principle, the problem of life and the senses and the motion of the living creatures, as well as their growth and procreation, have remained as a secret before the scientists; and the details and delicacy used in the structure

of these creatures are in turn some other secrets, the ones which have not been answered yet.

According to the statements of the scientists of natural science, the extraordinary small eyes of some of these insects are composed by about one hundred eyes. That is, the same eye that we can hardly see, and perhaps is as small as a needlepoint, is made up of several smaller eyes, the collection of which is called ‘a compound eye’.

Supposing that man can produce a living cell from some lifeless substance, who can arrange hundreds of small eyes, each of which in turn has a delicate camera, layers, and systems, beside each other and join their branches and lines of communication to the brain of the insect and transfer the outward information to the brain of the insect by them so that the insect can react unto the events happen around it?

If all human beings gather and assist, can they create such an apparently small being which is in fact very complicated and mysterious?

Again, if supposedly a man can solve all these problems, can this be called as creation? Or it is a combination of the existing means and tools in this very world of creation. Are those persons who mount the ready-made parts of a car called as inventors, and can their action be called invention?

Surah Al-Hajj - Verses 75 - 76

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلآئِكَةِ رُسُلاً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَإِلَي اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ

75. “Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among the men. Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

76. “He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and unto Allah are returned all affairs.”

The Occasion of Revelation

As some of the commentators have said: when the Prophet of Islam (S) was appointed, a group of pagans, such as ‘walid-ibn-Muqayrah’, (who was counted as their minded one), with wonder and denial said:

“Was the Reminder sent down to him (Muhammad, the poor and orphan one) from among us?”

Then the first abovementioned verse was revealed and answered them that choosing the prophets and angels for His messengership is based on their eligibility and spirituality.[1]

The Arabic term /’istafa/ is derived from /safwah/ which means: pure and noble, and choosing the pure and clear ones shows that some of persons and angels have the eligibility and they are pure and noble.

Regarding the fact that in the previous verses the speech was about monotheism, polytheism, and the imaginary deities of polytheists, and regarding the fact that there were some people who chose the angels and some of the prophets for worshipping, the Qur’an, through verses under discussion, implies that the Divine messengers entirely are the obedient servants of Allah.

Yet, as the verse says:

"Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among the men.…"

There are some messengers among the angels, like Gabriel, and there are some messengers from among human beings; like the great Divine messengers.

The application of the word /min/ (some) in this verse, indicates that the entire Divine angels were not the messengers toward humankind, but some of them were given this rank to. This meaning does not contrast the content of the verse which says:

"…Who made the angels messengers…",[2]

because the purpose in this verse is the statement of 'gender' not the statement of the generality of members.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."

This means that it is not such that, like human being, Allah is unaware of His Messengers in their absence, on the contrary, He is always aware of their circumstances, He hears their words and sees their deeds.

Then, in the next verse, the noble Qur'an points to the responsibility of the messengers in conveying their prophecy, from one side, and the Divine protections due to them, on the other side. The verse says:

"He knows what is before them and what is behind them…"

Allah is aware of both their future affairs and those of their past that they have put in behind.

Then, the verse continues:

"…and unto Allah are returned all affairs."

This fact has been stated in order that people know that the angels and Divine prophets are also some obedient servants who have responsibilities before Him, and they have nothing from their own selves except for what Allah has bestowed on them, and they should not be taken as gods and objects of worship besides Allah.

Therefore, the above sentence which says:

"He knows what is before them…"

in fact is an indication to the duty and responsibility of the Divine messengers and that their deeds will be controlled from the side of Allah. It is similar to what Surah Al-Jinn, No. 72, verses 27 and 28 say.

They announce:

"Except to him whom He chooses as a messenger, for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him,"

"So that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them…"

However, it became clear that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /mabayna 'aydihim/ is the future events, and the purpose of /maxalfahum/ is the past events, and, in any case, the knowledge of Allah does not increase or decrease. He has been aware of all the creatures and their deeds, whether they are exterior and interior.

The noble Qur'an, in this regard, says:

"…the Knower of the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you; not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him, in the heavens or in the earth, and neither less than that nor greater, but (all) is in a clear book,"[3]

Of course, the cognizance to this vast knowledge of Allah has an extraordinary educational effect in man. It warns him that whoever he may be and whatever rank and position the one may gain He knows, and He is aware of the belief we have in our minds and the intentions we bear in our hearts and whatever kind of manner we are qualified by.

All of these are manifest in His infinite knowledge. It is certain that taking note to this fact is very effective in man's training. These are some instructions that make man prepared for reaching the goal of creation and the law of development.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 77

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

77. "O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, and do good; that you may be prosperous."

The ritual acts of 'bowing' and 'prostration' are among the examples of worship, yet in this holy verse these two acts are mentioned beside the Qur'anic word /wa'budu/ (worship) which indicates both the importance of prayer and these two elements of prayer.

By the way, divine salvation or prosperity is the last stage of perfection of which we must be hopeful when we have fulfilled our duties of worships and benefactions.

This holy verse, addressing the believers, states some general and inclusive instructions which protect their religion, worldly affairs, and succession in all circumstances, and by this beauty of conclusion Surah Al-Hajj ends.

At first, the verse points to four important instructions by saying:

"O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, and do good; that you may be prosperous."

Stating the bowing and prostration, two elements from among all elements of prayer, is for the sake of their extraordinary importance in this great worship. The instruction of absolute servitude, which has been stated after these two elements, encompasses every worship and devotion.

The application of the word /rabbakum/ (your Lord) is, in fact, an indication to His eligibility for being worshipped and the lack of eligibility of other than Him, because He is the only Owner, Master and Lord.

The instruction of 'doing good' envelops any good deed without any condition and reservation. It has been narrated from Ibn-Abbas who said its objective is 'union of kindred' and 'nobility of character'.[4]

Tafsir-ul-Burhan narrated from Hadrat Musabn-i-Ja'far, the seventh Imam, who said that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /waf'al-ul-xayr/ (and do good) is the act of obedience from Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) next to the Prophet (S), and it is, indeed, the statement of a lively aspect from this general concept.

Surah Al-Hajj - Verse 78

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِّلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِن قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيداً عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَي النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وءَاتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلاَكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَي وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

78. "And strive hard in (the way of) Allah as you ought to strive for him. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father Abraham (is yours). He named you Muslims, both before and in this (Book), that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people; therefore establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah! He is your Guardian, how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper!"

We know that bearing witness needs awareness and justice, while the totality of people as a whole are neither just nor aware so that they can be witnesses over others.

Therefore, the purpose of Muslims being witness, mentioned in this holy verse, refers to some of the Muslims who not only are aware of the deeds and behaviour of people but also are both just and trust-worthy, and, as the Islamic traditions indicate, such persons can be the Prophet's Ahl-ul-Bayt, the Immaculate Imams, to whom our deeds and behaviour are exposed.

This verse issues a command in the field of Holy Struggle with the vast meaning of the word when it says:

"And strive hard in (the way of) Allah as you ought to strive for him.…"

The majority of the Islamic commentators have not taken the concept of Holy Struggle here in the particular sense of fighting with gun against the enemy.

On the contrary, as it is understood from the lexicographical concept of the word itself, they have considered it with the meaning of any struggle and effort in the way of Allah and doing benefactions, combating against low desires (the greater warfare), and striving against the cruel unjust enemies (the lesser warfare).

The Late Tabarsi, in Majma'-ul-Bayan, narrates from the majority of the commentators that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /haqqa jihadihi/ (as you ought to strive for Him) is the sincere intention and accomplishing the acts for the cause of Allah.

There is no doubt that the Qur'anic phrase /haqqa jihadihi/ has a vast meaning which envelops all the concepts from the viewpoint of quality, quantity, place, time and the like.

But since the stage of sincerity is the most difficult stage in struggling against one's self, the Qur'an has emphasized on this stage. The penetration of evil thoughts and motivations into man's heart (mind) and deeds are so hidden, narrow, and concealed that none can relieve him from them save the selected servants of Allah.

In these five instructions, in fact, the Qur'an has begun from the simple stage up to the last and highest stages of servitude. The beginning words are

about bowing and then, superior to it, about prostration, and next to it the statement is about any worship in general.

The fulfilment of good deeds, irrespective of worships and other than them, comes later, and in the last stage, the Qur'an refers to Holy Struggle and effort and endeavour, whether they are done individually or socially, interior or exterior and related to behaviour, speech, ethics, and intention.

This is a conclusive instruction which, no doubt, leads to salvation and prosperity as its consequence.

Some Traditions About Holy Struggle

1- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Now then, surely Holy Struggle is one of the doors of Paradise which Allah has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armour of Allah and His trustworthy shield.…"[5]

2- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Holy Struggle is the most superior things next to the canonical obligations."[6]

3- The same Imam (as) said:

"The alms (zakat) of the body is Holy Struggle and fasting."[7]

4- Again, he (as) said:

"The alms (zakat) of bravery is Holy Struggle in the way of Allah."[8]

5- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Holy Struggle accompanied with a just leader is obligatory."[9]

6- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The peak of Islam is Holy Struggle in the way of Allah which is not gained save by the best of them (Muslims)."[10]

7- The Messenger of Allah (S) also said:

"Fighting in the way of Allah is more beloved with me than forty Hajj pilgrimages."[11]

8- The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Holy Struggle in the way of Allah is of the best deeds of the believers."[12]

9- The Messenger of Allah (S) in his testament to Ali (as) said:

"O' Ali! The best Holy Struggle (for a striver) is that he spends the time while he does not try to be unjust to any one."[13]

10- The Messenger of Allah (S) again said:

"Verily a believer strives with his sword and his tongue."[14]

In view of the fact that there may arise this thought that how it is that these heavy commandments, each of which is vaster and more conclusive than the other, have been laid upon us, the weak servants, there are some other statements in the continuation of the verse which indicate that these things are some evidences for the Grace of Allah unto the believers, and also they are the signs of the grandeur of the rank of their personality, the believers, with Him.

The verse continues saying:

"…He has chosen you…"

If you were not chosen by Allah you would not be given so many responsibilities.

Then, in the next sentence, the Qur'an says:

"…and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion;…"

That is, if you think properly these commandments are not some hard duties. On the contrary, they adapt to your pure nature and are consistent to it, and principally, since they are as some means for your perfection and every one of them has a philosophy and some clear benefits which finally reach you, they will not be bitter in your soul's taste, and they are completely sweet and wholesome.

In the third stage of statement, it implies that this is the same religion of your father, Abraham.

The verse says:

"…the faith of your father Abraham (is yours)…."

The reason why Abraham has been called 'father' is either because the Arabs and Muslims of that day were mostly from the seed of Ishmael (as), or it is for the sake that they all considered Abraham very great and they respected him as a spiritual father, though his pure religion had been polluted by kinds of superstitions.

Then the Qur'an gives another idea in this field when it says:

"…He named you Muslims, both before and in this (Book)…"

And a Muslim is the one who has this honour that he is submissive to the whole commandments of Allah.

The commentators are divided in defining the antecedent of the Arabic pronoun /huwa/. Some of them have said that it returns to Allah. In this case it means that Allah has called you by this honourable name both in the former books and in the Qur'an.

Some others believe that it returns to Abraham, because we recite in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 128 that, after finishing the structure of Ka'bah, Abraham asked Allah for some things, including this:

"Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You…"

But the first interpretation seems more correct, because it adapts the words next to it in the verse, where it says:

"…He named you Muslims, both before and in this (Book)…",

and this meaning does not fit Abraham but it concerns Allah.[15]

At last, the fifth and the last encouraging meaning about the Muslims has been stated here, when it introduces them as the example and paradigm of nations.

It says:

"…that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people;…"

The Arabic word /šahid/, in the sense of witness, is derived from /šuhud/ with the meaning of 'cognizance accompanied with presence'.

This statement means that the Messenger (S) being witness over all Muslims refers to his cognizance about the deeds of his Ummah. This commentary quietly adapts to the Islamic narrations concerning the 'exposition of deeds', and some verses of the Qur'an which refer to it.

According to these narrations the deeds of all the members of Ummah are exposed to the Prophet (S) during every week, and his pure soul will be informed of all these things. Therefore, he is the witness over this Ummah.

And this Ummah being witness, according to some Islamic narrations, means the Immaculate ones of this Ummah, the Imams, who are also the witnesses over the deeds of people.

A tradition narrated from Ali-ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) indicates that he said:

"We are Allah's authorities among His servants and we are the witnesses of Allah and His signs among people."[16]

In fact, the addressee in the Qur'anic phrase /li takunu/ is apparently the whole Ummah, but, indeed, they are some of the chiefs and nobles of them. Addressing 'the whole' for a part of them is very common in the daily applications.

For example, we recite in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 20 that, Allah, counting His blessings upon the Children of Israel, addresses them:

"…and made you kings…"

while we know that only a few of them were bestowed on this rank.

The Arabic term /šuhud/ has also another meaning which is a 'practical witness'; viz. the criterion of measurement for the deeds of others is an example person's actions.

In this case all the true believing Muslims are of this kind, because they are an 'example Ummah', or a model, with the best religion, Islam, who can be a measure and an example for measuring the personality and virtue among all nations.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) indicates that Allah has bestowed several virtues and superiorities on the Ummah of Islam. One of them is that in each of the former nations, their prophet was a witness over his own people, but in Islam, He has appointed all the Ummah as a witness over people.

The verse says:

"…and you may be a witness over the people.…"

This means that: as the Prophet (S) is an example for his own Ummah, you are also examples for the people of the world.[17]

In the meanwhile, this commentary does not contradict the former interpretation. It is also possible that all Ummah to be witnesses and the Immaculate Imams to be some model and outstanding witnesses.

At the end of this verse again the five former duties, as an emphasis, are reiterated in three concise expressive sentences, where it implies: now that the case is as such, and you have these privileges and honours, you should keep up prayer and give alms (zakat) to the due people and hold fast the religion of truth under the grace of Allah, because He is your Master, your Guardian, and the One Who succours you.

The verse says:

"…therefore establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah! He is your Guardian…"

Then the Holy Qur'an adds:

"…how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper!"

In fact, the Qur'anic phrase which says:

"…how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper"

is a reason on the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…and hold fast to Allah! He is your Guardian…".

That is, you have been commanded to hold fast the truth only under the grace of Allah, and this is for the sake that He is the Supreme and the best Guardian, the worthiest Helper.

Concerning the phrase:

"…and hold fast to Allah…"

in another occurrence the Qur'an says:

"Then as for those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, shortly He will admit them to Mercy from Him and Grace; and will guide them toward Himself through a straight way".

There is a tradition narrated from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) who said:

"In all your affairs hold fast to Allah. It is in this case that you can protect yourself by Him, the Pure, through a Strong Power."[18]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) also said:

"Whoever holds fast to Allah, He will save him."[19]

Again, it is narrated from the same Imam (as) who said:

"Whoever holds fast to Allah, never can Satan harm him."[20]

Supplication

O' Lord! Give us success and felicity so that to be an example people by means of holding Your Pure Essence and associating with people in a manner that we can be considered as models and witnesses to others.

O' Lord! As You called us Muslims in the holy Qur'an and in Your former Heavenly Books, bestow on us success to be submissive to Your Command thoroughly.

O' Lord! Make us victorious over the enemies who, here and there, try to attack the Qur'an and Islam, and do set us among those who do not rely on the mere name of Islam and Muslim alone, but help us to guard this honour by establishing prayer, paying the poor-rate, Holy Struggle, and holding fast to You, because You are the Excellent Guardian, the Excellent Helper.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Qartabi, Tafsir-i-'Abul-Futuh-i-Razi, Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, and Tafsir-i-Rauh-ul-Ma'ani, following the verse
2. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 1
3. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 3
4. Jawami'-ul-Jami', following the verse; and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 3, following the verse.
5. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Sermon 27
6. Sahih-I-Muslim, No. 1910
7. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 5452
8. Ibid, 5455
9. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 11, p. 35
10. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 4, p. 298
11. Ibid, p. 304
12. Ibid, p. 286
13. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 6, p. 123
14. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 4, p. 357
15. In the Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 3 He has explicitly called this religion Islam, where it says:

"… and completed My favour on you, and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion, …"

www.alhassanain.org/english

16. Taken from the book by Kamal-ud-Din, Saduq, according to the quotation of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 526. There have also been narrated other narrations with the same content in this field.
17. Tafsir-i-Burhan, vol. 3, p. 105
18. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 2390
19. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 7826 and, Mizan-ul-Hikmah, vol. 8, p. 3802
20. Qurar-ul-Hikam, No. 8035, and Mizan,ul-Hikmah, vol. 8, p. 3803

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 11

From Surah al-Mu’minun (23) to Surah al-Furqan (25) verse 20

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur’an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *“An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an”* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 10
What is a 'Commentary'? 11
The Current Commentary 12
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 13
The Problems in Translating 13
Translators Note 14
Editor's Note 15
Notes 17
Acknowledgment 18
Notes 18
References 19
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 19
English Translations of Qur'an 19
Supporting Technical References 20
Phraseological and Philological Sources 20
A Presentation to Muslims 22
Notes 23
Surah al-Mu'minun, Chapter 23 24
Surah al-Mu'minun (The Believers) (23) 24
(Revealed in Mecca) 24
118 verses in 6 sections 24
The Virtues of the Recitation of Sura Al-Mu'minun 24
The Content of the Sura 24
The First Part 24
The Second Part 25
The Third Part 25
The Fourth Part 25
The Fifth Part 25
The Sixth Part 25
The Seventh Part 25
Notes 26
Section 1: The Faithful 27
Surah al-Mu'minun , Verses 1-2 27
Who Are the Successful? 28
Some Traditions On Success and Salvation 29
Some Points 30
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 3-4 30
Vanity in Deed and Speech 30
Some Tradition On Vanity 31
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 5-7 35
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 8 37
The Importance of Trust in Narrations 38
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 9 39
The Extraordinary Importance of the Ritual Prayers 39
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 10-11 40
Some Narrations on Paradise 41

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 12-13 42
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 14 43
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 15-16 46
Some Narrations On Death 46
Some Traditions Concerning the Day of Resurrection 47
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 17 48
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 18 49
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 19 50
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 20 51
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 21-22 52
Some Traditions Upon Milk 53
Notes 53
Section 2: Allah Saves Noah and His Followers 56
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 23 56
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 24 56
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 25-26 57
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 27 58
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 28-30 59
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 31-32 60
Notes 61
Section 3: Generations Raised After Noah's People 62
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 33 62
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 34-36 62
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 37-38 63
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 39-41 64
Prophets Only Rely On Allah 64
Points to Note 65
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 42-43 68
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 44 69
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 45-46 70
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 47-48 70
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 49 71
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 50 72
Notes 73
Section 4: The Religion (Islam) Is the Religion for All 74
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 51 74
Some Traditions On Lawfulness and Unlawfulness 75
Some Traditions On Unlawful Income and Business 76
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 52 77
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 53 78
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 54 79
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 55-56 79
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 57-59 80
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 60 81
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 61 82
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 62 82
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 63 83
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 64-65 84

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 66-67 85
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 68-70 86
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 71 88
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 72-73 88
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 74 89
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 75 91
Occasion of the Revelation 92
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 76 92
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 77 93
Notes 94
Section 5: Even the Disbelievers Helplessly Acknowledge the Glory of Allah 95
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 78-79 95
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 80 96
Some Traditions On the Intellect 96
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 81-83 97
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 84-87 98
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 88-90 99
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 91-92 101
Notes 103
Section 6: To Return Good For Evil and to Be Patient 105
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 93-95 105
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 96-98 106
Note to Some Points 107
Notes 108
Section 7: Afterlife 109
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 99-100 109
Note 109
Barzakh and Contact with the World of Spirits 114
Further Clarification of the Barzakh 114
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 101 116
Question 117
Answer 117
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 102-103 117
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 104-105 118
Some Traditions 121
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 106-108 122
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 109-110 123
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 111 123
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 112-114 124
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 115 125
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 116 126
Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 117-118 128
Notes 130
Sura An-Nur, Chapter 24 132
(Revealed in Medina) 132
64 verses in 9 sections 132
The Grand View of Sura An-Nur 132

Virtue of Sura An-Nur 133
Notes 133
Section 1: Punishment for Adultery Prescribed 134
Sura An-Nur - Verse 1 134
Sura An-Nur - Verse 2 135
Some Narrations On Evils of Fornication 137
Some Messages 138
Sura An-Nur - Verse 3 138
Some Matters to Study 140
1. The Cases of Fornication That Necessitates the Death Sentence . 140
2. Why Does the Word 'Fornicatress' Precede the Word 'Fornicator'? 140
3. Why is Punishment to Be Carried Out in a Gathering? 140
4. What Was the Prescribed Punishment of a Fornicator? 141
5. Going to Extremes in Executing the Prescribed Punishment is Forbidden! 141
6. How is Marriage with Fornicator and Fornicatress Illegalized? .. 142
7. Philosophy of Banning Fornication 142
Some Traditions On Fornication 143
Sura An-Nur - Verses 4-5 144
Some Traditions on Repentance 145
Pay Attention to Some Points 145
1. What Does the Word 'ramy' Mean Here? 145
2. Why Four Witnesses? 145
3. Important Condition of Repentance 146
Sura An-Nur - Verses 6-10 148
Occasion of Revelation 148
Some Matters to Be Mentioned 151
1. Why is Qathf Allocated to Spouses? 151
2. Li'an, a Special Program 151
Some Traditions On Calumny 152
Notes 152
Section 2: The Scandal Against Ayshah 154
Sura An-Nur - Verses 11-14 154
Sura An-Nur - Verses 15-18 156
Some Points About Tongue 158
Some Traditions On Tongue Maladies 158
Sura An-Nur - Verses 19-20 159
Pay Attention to Some Matters 161
1- What is Spreading Indecency? 161
2- The Calamity of Rumour-Mongering 162
3- Sin Should Not Be Counted Trifle 163
Notes 163
Section 3: Slandering Chaste Women 164
Sura An-Nur - Verse 21 164
Second step: attending their parties 164
Third step: thought of sin 164
Fourth step: committing questionable examples and errors 164

Fifth step: committing lesser sins 164
Sura An-Nur - Verse 22 165
Sura An-Nur - Verse 23 167
Sura An-Nur - Verse 24 168
Sura An-Nur - Verse 25 169
Sura An-Nur - Verse 26 170
Notes 171
Section 4: Control and Regulation of Morals 172
Sura An-Nur - Verse 27 172
Sura An-Nur - Verse 28 174
Sura An-Nur - Verse 29 174
Sura An-Nur - Verse 30 175
Occasion of Revelation 175
A Few Traditions Upon Gaze 177
Sura An-Nur - Verse 31 178
The Philosophy of Veil 181
Sura An-Nur - Verse 32 184
Sura An-Nur - Verse 33 186
Sura An-Nur - Verse 34 190
Notes 190
Section 5: Allah is Light 192
Sura An-Nur - Verse 35 192
Sura An-Nur - Verse 36 197
Some Points 198
Sura An-Nur - Verse 37 199
Some Notes to Be Studied 202
Sura An-Nur - Verse 38 202
Sura An-Nur - Verse 39 203
Sura An-Nur - Verse 40 204
Notes 206
Section 6: Everything In the Heavens and the Earth Glorifies Allah . 208
Sura An-Nur - Verses 41-42 208
Notes 208
Sixth: What is the purpose of/salat/ (prayer)? 209
Sura An-Nur - Verse 43 210
Sura An-Nur - Verse 44 212
Sura An-Nur - Verse 45 213
Some Points 213
Sura An-Nur - Verses 46-47 215
Occasion of Revelation 215
Sura An-Nur - Verse 48 216
Sura An-Nur - Verses 49-50 216
What is Hypocrisy? 217
Notes 218
Section 7: Establishment of Islamic Dominion Promised 219
Sura An-Nur - Verses 51-52 219
Sura An-Nur - Verse 53 220
Sura An-Nur - Verse 54 221

Some Points 222
Sura An-Nur - Verse 55 222
Occasion of Revelation 223
Some Points 224
1. The Commentary of the Qur'anic Sentence 224
2. To Whom Does Allah Promise? 225
3. The Final Aim is Sincere Worship 226
Sura An-Nur - Verse 56 227
Some Traditions On Ritual Prayer and Alms-Tax 228
Sura An-Nur - Verse 57 229
Notes 229
Section 8: Respect For Domestic and Personal Privacy 231
Sura An-Nur - Verse 58 231
With regard to the Qur'anic phrase 232
Sura An-Nur - Verse 59 232
Sura An-Nur - Verse 60 234
Sura An-Nur - Verse 61 236
Some Points 239
Notes 242
Section 9: Not to Act Without Apostle's Permission 244
Sura An-Nur - Verse 62 244
Occasion of Revelation 244
Sura An-Nur - Verse 63 246
Sura An-Nur - Verse 64 248
Supplication 249
Notes 249
Sura Al-Furqan, Chapter 25 250
(The Distinction) 250
(Revealed in Mecca) 250
77 verses in 6 sections 250
The Feature of Sura Al-Furqan 250
The Virtue of Reciting Al-Furqan 250
Note 250
Section 1: The Apostle Muhammad, A Warner to the Whole World 251
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 1 251
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 2 252
Some Points 253
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 3 255
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 4 257
Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 5-6 258
Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 7-8 259
Occasion of Revelation 260
Notes 261
Section 2: The Bounties Awaiting the Apostle 262
Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 9-10 262
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 11 265
Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 12-13 265
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 14 266

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 15-16 268
Some Points 268
Some Traditions About the Paradise 270
Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 17-18 270
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 19 271
Some Points 271
Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 20 272
Occasion of Revelation 272
Notes 274

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Mu’minun, Chapter 23

Surah al-Mu’minun (The Believers) (23)

(Revealed in Mecca)

118 verses in 6 sections

The Virtues of the Recitation of Sura Al-Mu’minun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

There are many virtues have been stated about this Sura in the recorded narrations quoted from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as).

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, for example, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“Frequent recitation of this Sura, especially on Fridays, brings bliss in this world and the Hereafter, and it also leads to the enjoyment of the company of the Divine prophets in the lofty Paradise.”[1]

In a tradition by the Prophet (S), we read:

“On the Day of Hereafter, the angels will give whoever recites Sura al-Mu’minun good tidings about the breath of life and a Garden of delight, and when the Angel of Death comes to take his soul, he will give him such good tidings that he will be delighted.”[2]

Imam Sadiq also said:

“Whoever reads Sura al-Mu’minun and continues reading it every Friday, Allah will render the end of his life blissful and his place will be raised high in Paradise alongside the prophets and the messengers.”[3]

It is necessary to reiterate this point that mentioning the virtues of reciting the Suras of the Qur’an never means reading them without pondering upon them and practicing them, for this heavenly Book is a book with a practical program for the training and education of man.

If someone really harmonizes his practical and doctrinal programs with the content of this Sura, or even with a few of the verses which are found at the beginning of it that refer to the attributes of the believers, on the Day of Judgment, all these glories will certainly be granted to him.

Thus, in some Islamic narrations we read that when the first verses of this Sura were revealed, the Prophet (S) said:

“Ten verses have been revealed to me (that) whoever puts them into practice will enter Paradise.”[4]

Using the Arabic word /’aqama/ (put into practice) instead of the word /qara’a/ (recite) refers to the same fact mentioned above, that the main aim is not only bare reading them but applying the meaning of these verses to everyday life.

The Content of the Sura

As the name of this Sura suggests, its content is mostly about the special attributes of the believers, and, at the end, it mentions some statements upon the beliefs and practice that complete these attributes.

The contents of this Sura can be divided into seven parts:

The First Part

Beginning with the noble verse:

"Successful indeed are the believers"

and continuing for several verses afterwards, this Sura mentions some of the attributes that lead to the salvation and deliverance of the believers. These practical attributes are so comprehensive and accurate that they also cover various aspects of social and personal life.

The Second Part

Since their essence is totally belief and monotheism, these verses proceed to mention the different signs of knowing Allah and His signs in the macrocosm and microcosm of the world of existence. It recounts some examples of the wonderful system of the world of creation, such as the sky, the earth, and the creation of man, plants and animals.

The Third Part

To complete the practical dimensions of the noble Sura, the verses here cite the instructive biography of some of the great prophets such as Noah, Hud, Moses, and Jesus (peace be on them) as a few examples by mentioning certain aspects of their lives.

The Fourth Part

This part addresses the arrogant, sometimes by appealing to their logical reason and sometimes by warning them in harsh tones in order to arouse the consciences of the receptive ones and find their way back to Allah.

The Fifth Part

This part contains some concise discussions on the subject of Resurrection.

The Sixth Part

It speaks about both Allah's Sovereignty over the world of existence and irresistibility of His command over the entire universe.

The Seventh Part

The Resurrection, the weighing of deeds, the reward for those who do right and the punishment for those who do wrong are again mentioned here, and the noble Sura ends by mentioning the aim of the creation of man.

Thus, the content of this holy Sura is a collection of some cognitive issues that encourages us to reflect, and the doctrinal and practical lessons, and from the beginning of the Sura to the end talk about the entire path the believers must pave.

As was mentioned before, this holy Sura was revealed in Mecca, yet some commentators of the holy Qur'an have said that some of its verses had been revealed in Medina. This is because it contains a verse that refers to the alms-tax (zakat).

Since the alms-tax was legislated for the first time in Medina, this fact has led them to think that the complete Sura could not have been revealed in Mecca, because it is known that alms-tax was at first legislated in Medina and after the revelation of the verse:

"...Take alms out of their possessions..."[5]**,**

the Prophet (S) ordered alms-tax collectors to go around and collect this tax from the people.

With respect to this issue we must be aware, however, that the alms-tax also has a general meaning that includes both obligatory and recommended alms-taxes. Its meaning is not limited to the obligatory alms-tax alone, for we see in the Islamic narrations that the ritual prayer and the payment of this tax have often been mentioned together.

A narration by Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Allah has made the alms-tax along with the ritual prayer obligatory."[6]

Moreover, some Islamic scholars believe that the alms-tax had, also been obligatory in Mecca, but it was general and undefined, meaning that every one was obliged to give some part of his possessions to the needy.

When the Islamic government was established in Medina, a precise system was devised for regulating, collecting and distributing the alms-tax along with specifying the minimum value of property upon which it should be levied and collected by the Prophet's agents.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan
2. Majma' ul-Bayan, The Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 98
3. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, p.98
4. Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, Vol. 18, p.2
5. Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 103
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol.93, p. 14; and Fru'-i-Kafi, Vol. 3, p. 496

Section 1: The Faithful

Surah al-Mu'minun , Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلاَتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

1. "Successful indeed are the believers, "

2. "Who are humble in their prayers, "

In The Holy Qur'an, there are eleven cases in which the Arabic word /falah/ (salvation) is used along with the word /la' alla/, (perhaps), and in only three cases the word /falah/ is mentioned without /la'alla/ in a sense implying certainty.

One of them is in this Sura, the other is in Sura Ash-Shams, No, 91, verse 9,

"He is indeed successful who purifies it"

and the third case is found in Sura Al-'A'la', No. 87, verse 14, where it says:

"Indeed, he will prosper who purifies himself."

By comparing these three cases, it becomes clear that faith and purification are one in essence.

The ultimate and supreme aim of every program in Islam is success and salvation. Many verses of the holy Qur'an that mention piety and religious decrees also aim to achieve piety:

"...so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)."[1]

whereas the categorical aim of piety is:

"...and be in awe of Allah; that you may be prosperous."

It is interesting that the most important and the ultimate definitive objective of the religion of Islam has manifestly been mentioned in its first testimony:

"Say there is no god but Allah, (so that) you will be successful."

As we said earlier, the choice of the title, "Al-Mu'minun" for this Sura is because of the beginning verses of the Sura that enumerate the attributes of the believers in some short, lively, significant and comprehensive phrases.

In addition, it is interesting that this Sura first mentions the delightful and glorious destiny of the believers before talking about their attributes in order to kindle the flames of love and enthusiasm in them for reaching this goal and great honour in their souls.

The Qur'an implies, having gained their final goal in all dimensions, the believers are prosperous.

It says:

"Successful indeed are the believers"

The Arabic term /aflaha/ is derived from the word /falaha/ and /falah/. It originally means 'cutting and splitting' and is then applied to every kind of victory and achievement that results in man's happiness and success.

In fact, the successful, prosperous and triumphant persons manage to overcome obstacles that lie in their way to reach the goal.

Of course, true success and salvation have such extended meanings that include both material and spiritual victories and both of them have also been considered with respect to the qualified believers.

Victory and success in the present world mean that man would live freely, independently, prosperously, and honorably and these good conditions are only achieved under the shadow of faith. Success in the Hereafter means to abide respectfully and prosperously under the mercy of Allah, showered by eternal blessings and having the company of purified and amenable friends.

Twenty times every day and night we say /hayya ‘alal-falah/ (Come to success!) in the call to prayer and in the prologue to the daily ritual prayers, clearly declaring this final aim so that we do not lose our path.

Islam says:

“Those who have faith and purify their souls are indeed successful”.

But Pharaoh uttered the blasphemy:

“...whoever is uppermost this day will be indeed successful”.[2]

The Arabic word /falah/ means to prosper. Maybe the reason that the farmer in Arabic is called a /fallah/ is because he makes the conditions ready for plants to grow and prosper. When a seed is placed in the soil, it rescues itself by 3 actions and reaches open space:

1) It plants its roots in the depths of the ground.

2) It absorbs the nutrients of the soil.

3) It moves the soil away from its path in its growth upward.

Like a seed, the human being must accomplish these three actions in order to free himself and reach the open space of monotheism delivering himself from false gods and the dark world of materialism:

1) He must fortify the roots of his beliefs through reasoning.

2) He must gain Allah-given potentialities as much as possible for spiritual development and perfection.

3) He ought to discard enemies and obstacles and pushes aside any deity other than Allah with the phrase ‘La ’ilaha ’ilia Llah’ (“There is no god save Allah”) in order to reach the open space of monotheism.

Who Are the Successful?

1- Worshippers:

“...and worship your Lord, and do good, that haply you may prosper.”[3]

2- Those whose deeds are valuable and heavy:

“...Then whoever’s scales be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous.”[4]

3- Those who avoid jealousy:

“...And whoso is saved from his own avarice such are who are successful.”[5]

4- Allah’s party:

“...Beware! Verily the party of Allah are the successful ones.”[6]

5- Those who remember Allah much:

“...and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous.”[7]

6- The God-fearing:

"...So be in awe of Allah, O' possessors of intellects, that you may be prosperous."[8]

7- Warriors for faith:

"...and strive hard in His way, that you may be prosperous."[9]

8- Penitents:

"...And turn unto Allah all together, O believers, in order that you may succeed."[10]

Some Traditions On Success and Salvation

1) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Anyone whose passions are overcome by (his reason and) his wisdom would be successful."[11]

2) He also said:

"Follow knowledge and disobey ignorance so that you may prosper."[12]

3) The Prophet (S) said:

"Successful is he who renders his soul sincere for faith, makes his heart clean and sound, makes his tongue veracious, makes his psyche calm, makes his morals fair, makes his ears heedful and makes his eyes watchful"[13]**.**

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

"O' People! Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissention and put off the crowns of pride. Prosperous is he who rises with wings, or he surrenders and finds peace."[14]

5) Qummi narrates a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"When Allah, the Mighty, created Paradise, He told it to speak. It said:

"Successful indeed are the believers."[15]

The next verse looks at the attributes of the believers, and in this context, at first and foremost, singles out the importance of the ritual prayer. It says:

"Who are humble in their prayers".

The Qur'anic term /xaši'un/ (who are humble) is from the word /xušu'/, meaning the state of spiritual and physical modesty, which is adopted outwardly by the body in man when in the presence of a great person or an important truth.

Here, the Holy Qur'an does not count merely performing the ritual prayer itself as a sign of the believers, but it considers 'humility' in the ritual prayer as one of their attributes. This refers to the fact that their prayers are not meaningless and some soulless words and movements.

When they perform the ritual prayer, they give their complete attention to Allah, detaching themselves from all other than Allah and thus achieving a meeting with Him.

They are so absorbed in contemplating and supplicating to the Divine presence that every particle of their beings is influenced by it. They see themselves as a mere atom in the presence of an Unlimited Being and as a drop in a Vast Ocean.

For the believer, every moment of this prayer is a lesson of self-development and training in being truly human and a means for refining the heart and soul.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) once saw a man playing with his beard while praying. The Prophet (S) said:

"If he was humble in his heart, limbs of his body would also be humble."[16]

This statement refers to the fact that humility is an inward state that affects one's exterior. The great spiritual leaders of Islam were so humble in their prayers that when they were in a state of prayer they became estranged from all other than Allah.

There is a tradition that says when the Prophet (S) was standing to perform the prayers, he would occasionally look up to the heavens, but when this verse was revealed, he began looking downwards from that time onwards and never raised his head while at prayer.

Some Points

1- The Prophet (S) said:

"One who is not humble in his ritual prayer, never receives its virtue."[17]

2- Allah, The Almighty, said to Christ:

"Shed tears for Me from your eyes and be humble (and modest) in your heart."[18]

3- Imam Ali (as) said:

"There is no goodness in a heart that is not humble, and in an eye that does not shed tears (out of fear of Allah) and in a deed that has no benefit."[19]

4- Amir ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Whoever is humble (and modest) before the grandeur of Allah (Glory be to Him), the disobedient will bow down before him and whoever takes Allah as a supporter his difficulties will be solved."[20]

5- The Prophet (S) was asked about humility. He said:

"It is humbleness (and modesty) at the time of the ritual prayer and that the servant (of Allah) focuses his whole heart upon Allah, the Almighty and Glorious."[21]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 3-4

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

3. "And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, "

4. "And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), "

Vanity in Deed and Speech

'Al Laghw' is an action or a speech that is vain.

Avoiding vanity and frivolousness is not only limited to Muslims, for, concerning the good people among the People of the Book, the holy Qur'an also says:

"And when they hear vanity they withdraw from it..."[22]

In the abovementioned noble verse, this second attribute of the believers is mentioned after the attribute of humility.

It says:

"And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, "

In fact, all of their movements and policies of life have a useful and constructive purpose, because uselessness means futility and ineffectiveness in action.

As a matter of fact, as great interpreters of the Qur'an have said, every action and speech that does not carry a significant benefit, is vain. Some of other interpreters have rendered vanity as nullity, and others have interpreted it as sins on the whole.

Some have interpreted it as cursing or using bad language, others as profane singing, frivolity and play, while yet others have interpreted it as polytheism. All of these mentioned interpretations are extensions of this general and comprehensive concept.

Of course, vanity does not only mean idle talk and deeds, but it also means idle, futile and baseless thoughts that result in neglecting Allah (s.w.t). It also prevents us from pondering upon good and constructive things. All of these characteristics mentioned above are summed up in the concept of one word, /laqw/ (vanity).

In actual fact, the believers are so trained that not only do they not get involved in frivolous and baseless thoughts and actions but, as the Holy Qur'an says, they also avoid them. In other words, a vain action is a deed that has no benefit. Vain actions, however, can be relative, for sometimes an action would be vain concerning one situation while worthwhile and useful in another.

However Allah, Glory be to Him, does not characterize the believers as those who abandon vain deeds absolutely, for man is a being that is on the verge of committing sins and making mistakes, He rather describes them as those who abstain from them, not its absolute abandonment.

Abstinence necessitates the existence of something that invites man to occupy himself with an action but heedlessly and not giving any value to it, he turns his back upon it and busies himself with something else. Someone who abstains from an action sees involving himself with that action as below his dignity and would rather pursue higher aims and more noble tasks.

Real faith calls on all of mankind to cultivate this attitude, too, for faith belongs to the realm of greatness and majesty, and is the source of glory, nobility and splendor. One who is faithful endeavors only to live for final prosperity and eternalsuccess.

He pursues activities that are considered great by Allah and he does not value the actions and conduct of the ignorant and ignoble. If the ignorant address the believers, they (the believers) answer them with kindness and when the believers see vain activity they deal with it with nobility and magnanimity.

This state of the believers makes it clear that, describing them with the quality of avoiding from 'what is vain', is a metaphorical meaning pointing to the high determination, dignity and nobility of their personality.

Some Tradition On Vanity

1) The Prophet (S) said:

"The most honorable of people are those who abandon what is useless."[23]

2) The Prophet (S) also said:

"Peace of self is achieved by abandoning vain affairs."[24]

3) Imam Baqir (as) said:

"You should act with justice and do not heel with the difficulties you face with (in this way), and abstain from what is vain."[25]

4) Imam Sadiq (as) said;

"Do refrain from doing what is vain, for you will become abject and despised."[26]

5) Imam Sadiq (as) said in a prayer:

"Oh Allah! Have mercy on me (to be able) to abandon sins totally while I am alive, and be merciful to me, so that I do not get into troubles because of what is vain."[27]

6) Imam Ali (as) in a latter wrote to Abdullah ibn Abbas:

"Then, follow what is beneficent and leave what is vain, for abandoning vain affairs causes you to gain useful actions."[28]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

"Do not bring the flames of the fire upon your faces by involving yourselves in vain activities."[29]

8) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Many a vain word speech and conduct that bring an evil."[30]

9) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Every speech in which there is no remembrance of Allah is vain."[31]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

"A good sign of a person's Islam, is the abandoning of what is vain."[32]

The Alms-Tax (Zakat)

The Arabic word /zakat/ in philology means purification, cleanliness, growth and development. In Islamic law and for the Muslims, it means a specific part of one's possessions that must be deducted, with particular conditions, and then spent upon the poor, the indigent, and for other good activities.

In other words, /zakat/ is subtracting a part of property from one's possessions and giving it to the needy so that those possessions which remain with the owner would grow by Divine grace and increase the owner's spiritual rank.

In addition, alms-tax (zakat) wipes away that which is unlawful from one's possessions and takes blameworthiness and bad attributes away from its owner. So we can say that since paying the alms-tax wipes away the qualities of mammonism, selfishness, stinginess, meanness, hardheartedness, and avarice from the human soul, it is called 'zakat'.

The alms-tax (zakat) is a very important religious duty and service. It is an Islamic obligation which is the third item of the fundamental principles of the religion, and, in other words, it has been counted as the second pillar of the religion.

In The Holy Qur'an and in the narrations attributed to the Infallible Imams, the alms-tax has a very high and important status. By carefully studying the verses of the Holy Qur'an, we find that the alms-tax and its importance are mentioned right after many verses concerning ritual prayers.

In a narration by the Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) we read that one who does not pay the smallest amount of alms-tax on his possessions, is counted not a believer or a Muslim.

In another tradition by the Prophet (S), we read that one day he (S) evicted five persons who did not pay their alms-tax and said to them:

"You who do not pay the alms-tax get out of our mosque and do not perform the ritual prayer in our mosque."

It has been mentioned in another narration that we should pay our alms-tax, so that our ritual prayers would be accepted.

Other narrations warn people that if they do not pay the alms-tax on their wealth, the ground would take away their blessings by Divine Commandment and they will be in the grip of destitution and famine.

We will read about more interesting explanations on this subject stated by the Infallible Imams in the following pages.

However, this verse refers to the third attribute of the true believers, which has a social and economic aspect.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), "

This Sura was revealed in Mecca, and at that time the law requiring the payment of the ordinary alms-tax had not been revealed. Thus, there are different interpretations stated upon this verse by commentators.

What seems more correct is that 'zakat' does not exclusively mean 'the obligatory legal alms-tax', because Islam has quite a number of 'recommended alms donations'. The alms tax, as an obligatory act, was revealed in Medina, but the payment of alms as a recommended good deed had also been achieved before that.

Some interpreters comment that 'zakat' in Mecca had probably been in the form of a religious obligation but without any limits and exact prescription, which means that Muslims had been under an obligation to give some amount of their wealth to the needy.

It was only after the establishment of the Islamic state and a public treasury that a well defined system of zakat payments was organized fixing the minimum value of property upon which the alms-tax was payable and dispatching zakat collectors were sent around the community on the command of the Prophet (S).

Some interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, such as Fakhr-i-Razi, Alusi in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and, Raqib in Mufradat, have said, however, that 'zakat' here means any kind of good act or purification of the soul and heart.

This is very improbable, for wherever the Glorious Qur'an mentions the ritual prayer along with the alms-tax, the alms-tax means to combat financial prodigality, and inferring other meanings would need a supporting context that does not exist here.

In the end, it is necessary to study some of the narrations and one verse on the alms-tax.

Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 12 says:

"...and Allah said: 'Verily! I am with you. If you keep up prayer and pay the poor due, and believe in My messengers and support them, and

lend unto Allah a kindly loan, I shall certainly remit your sins, and I shall certainly cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow...”

Some Narrations Upon Alms-Tax (Zakat)

1) Amir ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“I recommend you to pay the alms-tax, for I heard your Prophet, (Peace be on him and his household) saying: ‘The alms-tax is the bridge of Islam; then he who pays it will pass over the bridge and he who does not will fall off, and the payment of the alms-tax soothes Allah’s wrath’.”[33]

2) One narrator says that he heard Imam Ali (as) saying:

“The pillars of Islam are three that none of them is useful without accompanying the other two; they are the ritual prayer, the alms-tax, and guardianship (wilayat).”[34]

3) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“If people pay the alms-tax out of their possessions, there will be no poor and needy Muslim left.”[35]

4) The Prophet (S) said,

“No people had prevented the payment of the alms-tax without Allah taking away His rain (of mercy) from them.”[36]

5) Rufatah says that he heard Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

“Allah enjoins this people nothing more difficult than paying the alms-tax and when they refrain from paying it, many of them will perish.”[37]

6) The Prophet (S) said:

“I am ordered to struggle with the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am Allah’s Messenger, and (that) they perform the ritual prayer and pay the alms-tax.”[38]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

“Treat your sick ones by paying alms, and protect your possessions by paying the alms-tax.”[39]

8) Imam Musa-ibn-Ja‘far (as) said:

“The alms-tax has been established to be the food of the poor and the cause of the increase of their wealth.”[40]

9) Hadrat Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) in her sermon said:

“Allah established the Faith (’Iman) as the means to purify you from polytheism, the ritual prayer as the means for you to be distant from pride, and made the alms-tax obligatory for purifying the soul and heart and increasing provisions.”[41]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

“One who pays the alms-tax, for every dirham would be given him blessings in Paradise as great as the weight of Mount ’Uhud.”[42]

11) At the time of his departure from this world, Amir ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“My son! I bequeath that you perform the ritual prayer at its very time, and give the alms-tax to those who are entitled to have it and where it is entitled to be spent.”[43]

12) Narrating from his dignified ancestors, Imam Sadiq (as) said that the Prophet (S) had said:

"The most generous one of the people is he who pays the alms-tax out of his possessions, and the most stingy one of the people is he who is tight fisted with what Allah has enjoined upon him."[44]

13) Amir ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Save your faith by giving alms, insure your possessions by paying the alms-tax and ward off the waves of misfortune and troubles by supplication."[45]

14) Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The alms-tax increases provisions."[46]

15) Imam Ali (as) said:

"The meaning of/ma'un/ (in the Holy Qur'an) is the obligatory alms-tax. He who abstains from paying it is like a usurer, and he who does not pay the alms-tax out of his possessions is not a Muslim."[47]

16) The Prophet (S) said:

"When the payment of alms-tax is prevented, the earth restrains its blessings."[48]

17) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Thieves are of three kinds: Those who do not pay the alms-tax, those who count the dower (of the wives) as lawful and do not pay it, and one who borrows but does not intend to pay it back."[49]

18) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The Prophet (S) levied the alms-tax upon nine objects: wheat, barley, date, raisins, gold, silver, camels, cattle and sheep. And he excused everything else from it save for these (mentioned objects)."[50]

19) Suma'ah said that he asked Imam Sadiq (as) who was entitled to receive the alms. He said:

"I swear by Allah that the alms belongs to those who are mentioned in His Book (the Holy Qur'an): the poor, the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled (toward Islam by receiving it), and to free the captives, and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer. (This is) a duty (ordained) by Allah."[51]

20) The Prophet (S) said:

"The alms-tax is not lawful to be given to the rich, nor to the one who is wise and healthy, nor to the one who has a job." I asked: "What does this mean?" He said: "It is not lawful for one to receive the alms-tax when he is able not to use it."[52]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 5-7

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

إِلاَّ عَلَي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

فَمَنِ ابْتَغَي وَرَآءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

5. "And those who guard their private parts, "

6. "Save from their wives or the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, "

7. "But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors, "

Since the sexual instinct can be the one most likely to be misused, self-preservation against this needs piety, austerity and strong faith. In this verse emphasis is put on this subject.

The verse says:

"And those who guard their private parts, "

The verse implies that the fourth attribute of the believers is chastity, which is self-control and abstinence from every kind of sexual impropriety. It means that they guard themselves from lewdness and only have intercourse with their wives and slave women, in which there is no blame.

It says:

"Save from their wives of the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, "

In the seventh verse The Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors."

Using the phrase, 'guarding private parts' in this verse refers to the fact that if there is no constant and unflinching control over the tendencies towards sexual misconduct, there will be the danger that its deviations and excesses can overwhelm the individual and even the society.

The word 'wives' in the verse includes both permanent and temporary wives, although some Sunni interpreters have made a mistake here, while the concerning jurisprudents and the interpreters of the Qur'an have identified this mistake in their books of commentary and in the book on the legal issues of An-Nikah.

Using the Qur'anic phrase /qayra malumin/ (they are not blameworthy), most likely, refers to the wrong idea among the deviated Christians that consider every kind of sexual intercourse against human dignity and that its absolute abundance is a virtue.

They see any form of marriage to be inimical to reaching full spiritual realization to the extent that Catholic priests, monks and nuns remain celibate all their lives. They think marriage is something against this spiritual rank. (Though it is mostly in apparent and secret a group of them behave differently.)

At any rate, it is impossible to accept that Allah would create such a powerful instinct in man as part of the wisdom of creation and men prohibit it totally or count it as against the dignity of man. Indeed, the unnaturalness of this attitude has resulted in many members of these very Christian orders resorting to multifarious surreptitious ways to satisfy their sexual instincts.[53]

One does not need to be reminded that the legality of having sexual relations with a wife is circumscribed under some certain conditions such as menstruation and the like.

Furthermore, the legality of such relationships with slave-girls has numerous conditions that are mentioned in the books of jurisprudence. It is not the case that every slave-girl is lawful for her owner and the same conditions that apply to wives can also apply to them in some cases.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to some narrations regarding this issue:

1) Abdullah Sinan has narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Indeed woman is a collar you put around your neck and bind yourself by it. Thus, you should look at her closely and think carefully about who is going to take control of you and finally where she is going to lead you. Be aware that a bad woman cannot be compared with a good one for a good woman is more priceless than gold, silver or any precious gem, and a bad woman has no value at all, she is not even equal to the soil, for the soil is indeed better than her."[54]

2) Ibrahim Karkhy said,

"I told Imam Sadiq (as) that my wife, who was in agreement with me about the affairs of life, had died and that now I want to marry another woman. The Imam told me: 'Think well and see where you put your heart and soul and who will be your partner in your possessions and will be aware of your beliefs and secrets. If you intend to get married, select a maiden who is characterized by honour and good morals and who is from a family that you know is good, chaste, and honest."

3) Ali-ibn-Salim narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Certainly one whose punishment on the Day of Resurrection is more severe than others is a man who puts his seed in the womb of a woman who is unlawful for him."[55]

4) Zurarah has narrated that Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Allah is not worshipped by any prayer higher than protecting the stomach and private parts from what is unlawful."[56]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

"The cause that would send my people to Hell is mostly the two hollow limbs, one of which is the stomach and the other is the pudendum (meaning fornication and the lack of chastity)."[57]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 8

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

8. "And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, "

Another outstanding attribute of the believers here is safeguarding their trusts, with the vast meaning of the word. This includes keeping their promises and pledges both towards the Creator and towards mankind.

The broad concept of 'trust' covers the trusts of Allah and the prophets as well as that of people in general. Each one of Allah's various blessings is one of His trusts.

The religion of the Truth, the Heavenly Books, the teachings and practical instructions of the leaders of the Path of Truth, ones' possessions, offspring, the responsibilities to which one has been assigned and the social positions we have been given are all His trusts which the believers endeavor to fulfil and give their due.

The believers guard these trusts while they are alive, and when they are close to departing this world, they entrust them to the future generations they have trained to maintain them. All material, spiritual, and political blessings are Divine trusts.[58]

The concept of 'trust' is general, here, and its evidence is the vastness and absoluteness of the word trust, in addition to the existence of numerous narrations that interpret the meaning of trust. Trust is sometimes interpreted

as ‘the Imamate of the Infallible Imams’, which every Imam entrusts to the next Imam, and sometimes it is interpreted as their absolute guardianship and government.[59]

It is interesting that Zurarah, who was one of the greatest disciples of Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), says that the purpose of the sentence:

‘...that you restore deposits to their owners...’[60]

is to restore guardianship and government to its due people, i.e. those entitled to it.[61]

This shows that government is an important deposit that must be restored to its true owners.

The verse says:

“And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, ”

General meanigs for the concepts of covenant and promise can also be found in other verses of the Holy Qur’an, for example, one verse says:

“Fulfil you the covenant of Allah when you make covenant.”[62]

Interestingly, in some verses of the Holy Qur’an we find that the phrases ‘restoration of deposits’and ‘respecting trusts’ include both safeguarding them and restoring them to their owners.

Therefore, if the failure to protect something that is held in trust results in damaging it or placing it in danger, the trustee should make an effort to correct it. (So, there are three tasks to be done: restoration, protection, and correction.)

At any rate, being faithful to one’s covenants, protecting them and restoring deposits to their owners are important foundations of the social system of human beings. Without them disorder would occur in the society.

This is why even individuals and nations that have no Divine and religious beliefs, bind themselves to fulfilling these obligations, at least, in society in order to protect it against the disorder that would result from breaches of trusts and covenants.

The Importance of Trust in Narrations

1) During the last moments of his life in this world, the holy Prophet (S) told Imam Ali (as):

“Restore the deposit to its depositor (its owner), whether he is righteous or a wrongdoer, and whether it is valuable or worthless, even if it is a thread, a cloth or a sewn garment.”[63]

2) Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

“The supreme faith is trustworthiness, and the most indecent of morals is treachery.”[64]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Do not betray someone who has entrusted something to you, even though he has betrayed you. And do not make known his secrets, although he has revealed yours.”[65]

4) The Prophet (S) said:

“If someone commits a breach of trust in the world and does not restore the deposit to the depositor and then he dies, he has died as one disbelieves in my religion, and he will find Allah angry with him.”[66]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

"One who is negligent with his trusts and consequently damages the deposit is not one of us."[67]

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

"One who commits a breach of trust is not faithful."[68]

7) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah has appointed no prophet unless he is veracious and restores deposits to the good and the bad."[69]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَي صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

9. "And those who take care of their prayers, "

The most prominent characteristic and demeanour of the believers is the first thing mentioned in the Sura, their attitude to the ritual prayer, when it says that the believers are they:

"Who are humble in their prayer."

This attribute is again mentioned when it says:

"And those who take care of their prayers."

Thus the Sura emphasizes both the role and effect of the ritual prayer, which is as a sign for its importance, and the verse, as the last specialty of the believers, here, says:

"And those who take care of their prayers, "

It is interesting that the primary attribute of the believers is 'humility in ritual prayer' and their final attribute has been counted 'paying attention to their prayers'. Their attributes start with the ritual prayer and end with the ritual prayer, because the ritual prayer is the most important relation between the Creator and mankind.

The ritual prayer is the supreme school of training the self. It is the means towards awareness of the soul and heart and insures man against sin. In short, if ritual prayer is one with all its rites, it will be a certain ground for all goodness and righteous deeds.

It is also necessary to mention that the first holy verse concerning the believers' qualities and this very verse are different from each other from the point of the matter. That is why in the first verse 'Salat' (prayer) is used in the singular form and in this verse it is used in the plural form.

The first one refers to humility and a special inward attitude which is the spirit of ritual prayer and affects the whole entity. The recent verse focuses upon the discipline and the conditions for the performance of the prayers, which include the time, place, and the number of the ritual prayers.

Here, the true believers are recommended to observe all the disciplines and conditions necessary for all the ritual prayers.

The Extraordinary Importance of the Ritual Prayers

Numerous narrations have been narrated from the Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) recorded about these holy verses containing some expressive meanings that unveil the extraordinary importance of the ritual prayer in the religion of Islam.

Abu 'Uthman said:

"I was sitting with Salman Farsi under a tree, when he grasped a dry branch and shook it so that all the leaves on it fell off. Then he told me:

"You did not ask me why I did that." I asked him to tell me what his intention was for doing so. He said: "This was the same action the Prophet (S) performed when I was sitting beside him under a tree. There, the Prophet (S) asked me: 'Wouldn't you ask me why I did this, Salman?' I asked him to tell me why. He said: 'When a Muslim does his ritual ablutions and then performs the five ritual prayers, all his sins will fall away as the leaves of this branch'."[70]

In another tradition, Abu 'Umamah said:

"Once we were sitting with the Prophet (S) in a mosque, when a man came and said:'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed a sin, for which a fixed punishment is prescribed upon me. Please execute it on me.' The Prophet (S) said: 'Did you perform the ritual prayer with us?'.The man said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah'. The Prophet said: 'So Allah has forgiven your sin and removed your prescribed punishment'."[71]

Also it is narrated that Imam Ali (as) said:

"We were waiting with the Prophet (S) for the ritual prayer, when a man stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a sin.' The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him, and when the ritual prayer was finished, the same man stood up and repeated what he had said before. The Prophet (S) said: 'Did not you perform this ritual prayer along with us? Did you not perform its ritual ablution well?" He said: 'Yes.' The Prophet (S) said: 'This is the penance for your sin'."[72]

Again it has been narrated that Imam Ali (as) quoted from the Prophet (S) who said:

"The five ritual prayers for my Ummah are like a stream of flowing water placed in front of the door of each of your house. Suppose one of you has dirt on his body and takes a bath in it five times a day, would any dirt remain on his body? Of course not! The five ritual prayers are such for my Ummah (people)."[73]

There is no doubt, however, that when the ritual prayer is performed and its conditions are observed, it immerses man in a world of spirituality and devotion, which make his links with Allah so strong that all the impurities and effects of sins are washed away from the heart and the soul.

The ritual prayer insures man against sin and it removes the rust of sin from the mirror of the heart.

The ritual prayer causes the seeds of man's noble habits to germinate in the depths of his soul. The ritual prayer, indeed, strengthens the will, purifies the heart, and cleanses the soul. Thus, if the ritual prayer is not like a body without a soul, then it can be the supreme school of training the self.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 10-11

أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

10. "These, they are the heirs, "

11. "Those who will inherit the Paradise: Therein they will abide."

The Arabic word 'Firdaus', meaning garden, is the best place in Paradise.[74]

After mentioning the most distinguished attributes of the believers, the Qur'an implies that their destiny is that they will be the heirs who will inherit Paradise and abide there eternally.

The verse says:

"These, they are the heirs, "

However, 'Firdaus', as some philologists say, is a Roman word, while some others say it is Arabic, and some say that it is originally a Persian word meaning a garden. In this case, it is a special garden in which all the Divine blessings and favours are gathered. Hence it can be called 'the Lofty Paradise', which is the best and the most elevated gardens of Heaven.

Using the word 'inherit' may indicate that the believers gain it without difficulty, like how one gets an inheritance, in so far as man achieves this favour without any trouble or exertion.

Of course attaining the high stations of Paradise needs self-edification, purification and struggle, but the great recompense in comparison, makes these efforts look as if they were nothing, that the believer had achieved it without facing any pain.

It is necessary to note that the Prophet (S) has been quoted to have said:

"Every one of you, without exception, has two abodes, one in the Hell and other in Paradise. If a person dies and goes to Hell, his abode in Paradise will be inherited by the people of Paradise."

This tradition might explain the context in which the word 'inheritance' in the verse under discussion might apply.

Some interpreters are also of the opinion that it is not improbable that the use of the word 'inheritance' refers to the destiny of the believers, like heritage which finally accrues to the heir.

The literal meaning of the text indicates that this exalted station of Paradise is exclusive for the believers who possess the attributes enumerated above. Thus, the other people of Paradise dwell in lower stations.

Some Narrations on Paradise

1) The holy Prophet (S) says:

"Whoever longs for Paradise must endeavour to do good deeds."[75]

2) Imam Sajjad, Zayn-ul-'abidin, (as) said:

"Be aware that whoever is eager for Paradise hastens to do good and shuns sensual desires. And whoever fears the Fire repents of his sins before Allah's presence and shuns what is unlawful."[76]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Paradise is the best of goals."[77]

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Paradise is the destiny of those who are successful."[78]

5) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Paradise is the abode of peace (and comfort)."[79]

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Paradise is the recompense for those who obey (Allah's commandments)."[80]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

"If you promise to fulfil six virtuous acts I promise you will have Paradise: perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms-tax, restore deposits to

their owners, uphold the privity parts, and be careful about your language and your stomach."[81]

8) The Prophet (S) said:

"One who dies while he believes that Allah is True will enter Paradise."[82]

9) The Prophet (S) said:

"Never enters Paradise but the one who is Muslim."[83]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

"In Paradise there are things (blessings), that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and which have never occurred to the mind."[84]

11) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Only Paradise is your price and value, so sell yourself for nothing less than that ."[85]

12) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who recites 'La-'Ilaha Illa-Lah' sincerely will enter Paradise. And his sincerity means that this noble sentence dissuades one from committing the prohibited things of Allah."[86]

13) Imam Kazim (as) said:

"Three persons are barred from Paradise: the gossiper, the alcoholic, and the libertine, and he is a mischievous man."[87]

14) The Prophet (S) said:

"A deceiver and a betrayer will not enter Paradise."

And he also said:

"A cursed child and a drunkard will not enter Paradise."[88]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 12-13

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَانَ مِن سُلاَلَةٍ مِن طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ

12. "And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, "

13. "Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;"

The Arabic word /sulalah/ means an extract of something. The Qur'anic word /alaqah/ means clotted thick blood. The word /mudqah/ means a piece pf boneless meat.

After mentioning the characteristics of real believers and the vast and unique rewards in store for them through former verses, the faithful reader is motivated to join their ranks, but how is this possible?

These revelations and a part of the following holy verses illustrate one of the main ways of achieving faith and gnosis. First man is encouraged to discover and contemplate the wonders of the human body and its genesis.

Through some verses, which will be recited later, the Qur'an attracts the man's attention to outside secrets of the wonderful beings of the world of existence, the exterior world of the macrocosm. He must try to see the wonders of creation in the microcosm of his being, too. It says:

"And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, "

Thus, the first step is to meditate upon how man, the best and chosen of all creatures with all his greatness, talents and excellent characteristics had been created from the humble earth. The existence of man himself is a

testimony to Allah's awesome power for He created such a complex and amazing creature from such a simple substance.

The next verse, adds:

"Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;"

In fact, verse 12 speaks about the origin of all mankind as the offspring of Adam. Everyone has been created from wet earth and everyone returns to it in the end. This verse, however, speaks about the continuation of the human species through the process of insemination, which is the combination of the male and female seeds, and fetal development in the womb.

This subject is mentioned in other parts of the Qur'an, for example, in verses 7 and [8] of Sura As-Sajdah the Qur'an says:

"...He began the creation of man with clay, then made his progeny from a draught of despised fluid."

The verse under discussion describes the womb as /qararin makin/ (meaning a safe and a secure residence) and refers to the particular position of the womb in the human body.Indeed, the womb is located in one of the most secure places of the body.

It is fully protected on all sides with the spine and ribcage at the back and the pelvic bone embracing the front and two sides. In addition to this, layers of abdominal muscles, and hands as well, provide additional protection. Thus the womb provides a safe and nurturing place for the conception and development of a child.

However, mother has different kinds of movements, but her womb is a secure place for the child, yet all the stages of creation, of course, are under His control.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 14

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَاماً فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْماً ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقاً ءَاخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

14. "Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!"

This verse points out to the wonderful process of embryo gestation in the mother's womb and different states of creation which appear one after another in that secure place that up until very recently remained hidden from our eyes and beyond the reach of human interference.

It says:

"Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh..."

The stage of being a sperm and these four subsequent stages comprise five stages of development of the human embryo. Each stage itself is so wonderful that in the field of embryology it has been the subject of a great deal of research and opinion and many good books have been written about it.

What is even more amazing than the actual stages of the development of the fetus in the womb is the fact that the Holy Qur'an had mentioned these different stages and marvels of embryonic development when the science of embryology did not yet exist and intimate knowledge of the human body was primitive to say the least.

The verse mentions the last and the most important stage of human creation with a meaningful phrase:

"...thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!"

Blessed be that Unique Power that draws such an unprecedented and marvelous picture with a drop of liquid in the dark room of the womb.

Blessed be that Knowledge and Wisdom that creates all those talents, capabilities and potentials in such an apparently insignificant creature. Glorified be Him (s.w.t.) for His unique creation.

Also we must be aware that the Arabic word /xaliq/ is derived from the word /xalq/, which originally means measuring. When a piece of leather is measured for cutting, an Arab speaker would use the word /xalq/. Since in creation the issue of measurement is more important than anything else, the word /xalq/ has been used to refer to it.

The usage of the phrase 'the Best of the creators' raises the question: Is there another creator other than Allah?

Some of interpreters have offered different justifications for this verse, but these explanations are not necessary. The word /xalq/, meaning measurement and creation, is true for beings other than Allah, but Allah's creating is different from the creation accomplished by others in many respects.

Allah creates the substance and the form of things, while if man intends to create something, he can only give a new form to it using the existing materials of this world as its substance. For example, he can build a house with brick and wood and produce a car with iron and steel.

Another difference is that Allah's creations are unlimited in number;

"He is the Creator of all things..."[89]**,**

but man's creations are very limited. Man, as a creator, often exhibits his deficiencies and weaknesses in the things that he creates which must be corrected and completed during the course of their creation and action. Allah's creations, on the other hand, have no faults and deficiencies within their own parameters.

When man is able to create something, this ability is by Allah's permission and command, for without His permission no leaf can stir on a tree.

We read about Jesus (as) in Sura Al- Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 110:

"...and when you did make of clay (a thing) like the shape of a bird by My permission..."

The Following Points Should Be Noted:

1- The Arabic word /xalq/ is used to describe creation during the five stages of the embryonic development of man in the above mentioned verse. When the process has reached its last stage, however, and a complete and

independent being which the verse terms ‘another creation’ is formed, the Qur’anic word /ansha’a/ is used.

This word, as philologists have said, means ‘to create something along with providing its education and training.’ This word shows that the last stage is completely different from the previous stages. This is a consequential stage that the Holy Qur’an mentions generally and not in detail.

It says only:

“...thereafter We produced it as another creation...”

and immediately following it the Qur’an says:

“...So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators”.

This final stage is the most important one. This is the stage when the embryo becomes a fully formed human being and which becomes conscious and can move and feel. In Islamic narrations, this phase is called the phase of ‘emoulment’, that is the breathing of the soul into the body.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

“The purpose of /xalqan ’axar/ is the breathing of the soul into the body.”[90]

In this stage, man leaves vegetative life far behind and with a great movement steps into the world of animals and more importantly into the world of humanity. This stage is so far away from the previous one that using the Qur’anic phrase ‘thumma khalaqna’ would have been inadequate to comment on it, so the phrase ‘humma ansha’na’ was used.

It is in this stage that man is graced with a special structure that distinguishes him from the rest of creation in the world. It gives him the competence to be the vicegerent of Allah in the earth, a responsibility that the mountains and skies could not bear. Indeed Allah truly deserves the praise,

“...So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators.”

All of the realities of the macrocosm with all its wonders become reflected in the form and content of this ‘small body’ on its physical completion. In this context, Imam Ali (as) said:

“Do you suppose that you are only a small body, while the macrocosm is placed within you?”[91]

In other words, you are an exemplar of the world of existence.

2- The writer of the commentary ‘fi Zilal’ makes an interesting statement in interpreting this verse, he says:

“When the embryo passes the stages where it appears as a blood-clot and as a lump, many of its cells change into bony ones, then gradually they are covered by flesh and muscles. Therefore, the sentence:

“then clothed the bones with flesh”

is a scientific miracle of which no one in the age when the Qur’an was sent down was aware. The Holy Qur’an does not say: We changed the lump into bones and flesh, but it says:

“Then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh.”

This indicates that the lump is at first changed into bones and then it is covered by flesh. Therefore, man was ugly, exactly like a skeleton, and thus it became beautiful.

Furthermore, just as garments protect the body, muscles protect the bones.

If there were no muscles, blows landed on the body would constantly hurt the bones or they would easily break. Moreover, just like a garment protects the human body against heat and cold, the flesh protects the bones, the real pillars of body. These all show how precisely the Holy Qur'an chooses its sentences and phrases."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 15-16

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُم بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ

15. "Then verily after that you shall die."

16. "Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will beraised, (again)."

In these verses Allah shows us that death is certain and definite. Here it will be appropriate to mention a part of one of the sermons of Imam Ali (as) on this subject:

"If there was anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (as) who was given control over the jinn and men along with prophethood and a great position (before Allah).

But when he finished what was his due in sustenance (in this world) and exhausted his time, the bow of destruction shot him with the arrow of death."[92]

The previous holy verse had mentioned the stages of the development of man for which Allah admired Himself. These two verses talk about the final stages of perfection after death. After touching on the subject of monotheism and the origin of man, the issue of resurrection is mentioned in a very delicate and beautiful way.

The verse implies that man, with all his marvels and wonders, cannot live eternally in this world and a time must come when this marvelous structure will fall apart. So, the verse says:

"Then verily after that you shall die."

Some Narrations On Death

1) The Prophet (S) said:

"Death is like a bunch of fragrant flowers for the believer."[93]

2) The Prophet (S) said:

"How beneficial is death for those who have made faith and piety the practice of their hearts."[94]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Death is the cause of tranquility for the prosperous."[95]

4) Imam Hadi (as) said;

"Remember when you will be lying on the bed of death before your household and neither can any physician prevent your death nor can any friend help you."[96]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

"Unexpected death is a relief for the believers and a wrath for the unbelievers."[97]

The next verse means that death is not destruction but a stage of perfection. Therefore, in order to neutralize the idea that when a person dies, (and therefore, everything ends which would make the magnificence of his creation pointless,) Allah immediately says afterwards:

"Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised (again)."

It is interesting that in the above-mentioned verses, the same reason that is used to prove the veracity of the Resurrection as has been applied at the beginning of Holy Sura Al-Hajj No. 22, [98] is also used to prove the existence of Allah, His power and His grandeur.

They all begin with citing the various stages of human creation in the world of the embryo and after that they progress to the subject of the Resurrection.

Allah's grandeur can be acknowledged in the mystery of man's creation, his transformation in the hidden sanctuary of the womb, where he is given a form and shape as if a group of skilful painters, craftsmen and skilled geniuses sat around this drop of mingled sperm and egg water and worked day and night to ever so delicately, lead this tiny, insignificant particle through the various stages and passages of life in a very short time.

If we could film the entire process of an embryo's development, we might be able to understand what wonders and marvels are hidden in this phenomenon.

The extraordinary advancement of embryology in our age and the ever-increasing research of scientists upon this matter, plus their experiences in laboratories, have revealed many things. When man sees the result of these researches, he would involuntarily whisper the Qur'anic words which says:

"So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators."[99]

The successive creations, on the other hand, that come into existence and find new forms every day, and the creation of man from a small mingled drop of water all basically express Allah's power over the matter and support the fact of His power to resurrect man and bring him back to a new life.

Thus, by expressing one reason, two aims are achieved, proof for the divine power of Allah and proof for the existence of the Resurrection.

Some Traditions Concerning the Day of Resurrection

1) Once Imam Ali (as) went to the market of Basrah and saw that people were so engaged in transactions that it seemed that they had forgotten themselves and had ignored human goals. When he saw this, he was so deeply affected that he wept heavily.

Then, addressing those people said:

"O' slaves of the world and agents of the people of the world! you who are busy with business and swearing during the day and sleep at nights on your beds ignorantly and forgetting the Day of Resurrection and

Reckoning! when will you make yourselves prepared for the journey that is in the near future? Have you taken provisions for it? When do you ponder over the Day of Resurrection and think about the Hereafter?"[100]

2) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Verily the first things that a servant will be asked about before Allah (Glory be to His Majesty) on the Day of Resurrection are as follows:

1- The obligatory ritual prayers

2- The obligatory alms-tax on possessions

3- The obligatory fasts

4- The obligatory Hajj pilgrimage

5- The friendship and guardianship of us, Ahl-ul-Bayt (the Prophet's family)

If the servant acknowledges our guardianship at the time of his departure and dies while believing in our guardianship, his ritual prayer, alms-tax, fasting and pilgrimage will be accepted (of course, if they were done correctly)."[101]

3) Somebody asked Imam Ali (as) that how Allah reckons the deeds of people while they are so many?

He said:

"Just as He provides for them their sustenance in their numbers."[102]

4) The Prophet (S) said:

"Be aware that you are living in a day that is the day of deeds and not the Day of Reckoning. Wait for the day that is the Day of Reckoning and on that Day there will be no deed (that you can do)."[103]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 17

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ ۤ فِلِينَ

17. "And We have created above you seven paths, and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation."

Perhaps the objective of the Arabic word /tara'iq/ here is the paths of the angels or the paths and orbits of the planets. Maybe its purpose is the seven heavens that are linked to each other.

The previous verses brought up the creation of man while this verse is about the creation of the skies. After mentioning the signs in the microcosm, which are the signs of Allah's grandeur in the entities of our beings, the Holy Qur'an now proceeds to touch upon the signs in the macrocosm and reflects upon the grandeur of creation in the heavens and the earth.

First, it says:

"And We have created above you seven paths, .."

The Arabic word /tara'iq/ is the plural form of the word /tariqah/, which means a path or a level. If we take the first meaning into consideration, the content of the verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven paths.

Perhaps these paths are for the coming and going of the angels, or they are the orbits of the planets. If we take the second meaning into consideration, the holy verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven levels i.e., seven heavens.

We have already spoken at length on this topic. What is important to note here is that if we take the number seven as symbolic of numerousness, thus the noble verse will mean that there are countless universes, planets and stars above us.

We must not confuse the meaning of the word /tariqah/ as an orbit with the Ptolemaic system of the universe in which the planetary spheres lie above each other like the layers of an onion.

We must not imagine that the Holy Qur'an is based upon this wrong theory. Paths and levels indicate other worlds located within different distances away from our world, and in proportion to us, each one is located above the other, some are near and others far.

If we interpret the number seven literally, it would mean that with the exception of this universe (this realm of planets, stars and galaxies) that we can observe, there are six universes above it to which human knowledge has yet to attain.

When we look carefully at the map of the solar system and the location of the planets, we can find another interpretation for this verse.

Two of the nine planets orbiting the sun, that is, the orbits of the two planets, Mercury and Venus, are below the orbit of the earth, i.e., they are closer to the sun, while the orbits of the other six planets are above that of the earth and as such, they are like levels placed one above the other.

When we add the orbit of the moon around the earth to that number, the seven orbits or levels become complete.

The expanse and grandeur number of the heavenly bodies and their paths may give the illusion that Allah could never be aware of all of them, so immediately at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"...and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation."

The emphasis on the word 'creation' here indicates that creation is in itself an expression of Allah's knowledge and mindfulness. Can the Creator be possibly unmindful of His creation?

There is another probable interpretation of this verse and that is that He created many paths for the angels above us, He is not ignorant of us, and His angels also observe and watch our deeds.

Allah is both the Creator and the Observer. The universe is Allah's presence.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 18

وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً بِقَدَرٍ فَاَسْكَنَّاهُ فِي الاَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَي ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ

18. "And We sent down water from the sky in measure, and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away"

Allah is equally able to grant and remove His blessings. Like each item of His creation, every drop of rain has been determined and it is not an aimless natural phenomenon without a plan.

("...in measure...").

Rain is counted as one of the Divine blessings bestowed from sky upon the earth and is mentioned in this noble verse as another manifestation of Allah's power. The verse says:

"And We sent down water from the sky in measure, .."

The water of rain usually is not so abundant that it would cause floods, nor is it so scanty that it would not be able to adequately satisfy plants and animals.

After the heavens from which life giving water descends, the earth is the next source of life upon which all living creatures depend and is one of the most important blessings of Allah. Then, the verse refers to a more important issue in this connection which is the storage of water in the ground.

The verse continues saying:

"...and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away"

We know that the outward crust of the earth consists of two layers: the permeable and the impermeable. If all of the earth's crust were permeable, water from rains, even from thelong continued rains, would immediately seep into the depths of the earth and everywhere would remain dry.

If the entire crust were impermeable like mud or clay, all the water would remain on the surface of the earth and could become contaminated and malodorous, becoming a source of death and sickness instead of being a source of life.

However, the great and beneficent Allah has made the upper layer permeable and the lower layer impermeable, so that the water can go into the earth and be contained by the impermeable layer. Later the water, unpolluted and pure, would become available as springs, wells and subterranean canals.

The refreshing and wholesome water we obtain from deep wells and consume is possibly the result of rains that had fallen many years ago and had been saved underground without pollution for today's use.

However, He Who has created man to live on this earth and has simply made water the most important element for his survival, has also created many important means to collect and safeguard it even before the appearance of man.

Some of these reserves of water are on high mountains in the form of snow and ice. They melt every year and flow down as streams and rivers, and sometimes they remain for hundreds or thousands years on mountaintops until the commandment for them to descend is issued thus irrigating the dry lands.

However, the word 'fi' (within) in the Qur'anic phrase /fil'ard / (within the ground), points to the possibility that the verse indicates underground sources of water, not sources that are above the ground.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 19

فَأَنشَأْنَا لَكُم بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

19. "Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you and whereof you eat;"

Plants and trees are created for human use. Among the fruits, some of them, like the date and the grape are special. The Wise Allah, of cause, by providing us with fruits from the soil, has supplied man with his material needs.

Therefore, after mentioning rain, this abundant blessing, the Qur'an continues by enumerating the results of rainfall in this noble verse:

"Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you and whereof you eat;"

Dates and grapes are not the only products of cultivation for there are many other fruits and plants cultivated in gardens, but they are among the most valuable of them.

The Qur'anic sentence /wa minha ta'kulun/,

("...and whereof you eat;"),

probably indicates that the products of these gardens include fruits that are both edible, as a part of it, and other things that are inedible.

Plants (including palm gardens) have often manifold uses for human life; their leaves are used to make carpets and sometimes garments, or used for forage, their wood is used to build houses and for fuel, and the leaves, fruits and the roots of some of trees are used to make medicines.

Fakhr-i-Razi has said in his commentary that the probable purpose of the sentence 'minha ta'kulun' is that our lives and provisions are determined by these gardens, just as we say that such and such person lives by doing such and such a job.

It is also worth mentioning that in the verses above, the origin of man's life is the sperm drop and the origin of plant life is rain. In fact, these two distinguished examples of life are both originated from water. Allah's law is one and covers all things.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 20

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيْنَآءَ تَنبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّـلآكِلِينَ

20. "And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat."

Every climatic and geographical area is suitable for a special type of vegetation,

"...a tree springing out of Mount Sinai...".

Some places are spiritually and materially blessed. Mount Sinai, for example, is the place where Divine revelation had descended and where the olive tree grows, the oil of which is a Divine blessing.

The verse refers to a blessed tree, the olive that grows because of this very rain. It implies that in addition to gardens of date palm, grapevines and other fruits, Allah has created a tree that grows on Mount Sinai.

The verse says:

"And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat."

The interpreters of the Qur'an suggest two probabilities why Mount Sinai is mentioned:

1) It refers to Mount Sinai itself in the desert of Sinai. The Holy Qur'an has described the olive tree as a tree that grows on Mount Sinai because when the Arabs of Hijaz traveled through the dry deserts of this area going towards the north, the first area where they saw the olive tree laden with fruit was on Mount Sinai, which is in the south of the Sinai desert. Studying a map makes this matter quite obvious.

2) Mount Sinai (Tur) is a descriptive word meaning a ‘blessed, wooded or scenic mountain’ (for ‘Tur’ means mountain and ‘Sina’ means blessed, scenic and full of tree)

The Arabic word /sibq/ originally means colour, but since when man eats his bread with a sauce he usually makes it colourful, all kinds of loaves of bread eaten with sauce have been called /sibq/.

Anyway, the word /sibq/ may refer to the very olive oil that is eaten with bread and to all kinds of bread whose sauce is made from other plants.

The question that comes up here is why among all the various kinds of fruit the emphasis is especially placed on these three fruits: date, grape and olive?

When we look at the research done by nutritionists, we see that there are few fruits as beneficial and effective for the human body as these three fruits are.

Olive oil is very valuable for the metabolism of the body. It is high in calories and beneficial for the liver. It removes illnesses of the kidneys, is good for gallstones, and renal colic. It strengthens the nerves and is the elixir of health.

There are so many beneficial effects of the date that we can only mention some of them briefly here. Nutritionists say that the date is abundant in sugar, which is one of the healthiest sugars available.Eating dates can prevent cancer and scientists have discovered thirteen vital materials and five vitamins in it, which make it a very valuable source of nutrition.

In the opinion of some scientists the grape is a natural pharmacy. It has properties like those of milk, it produces twice as much heat in the body as meat. It refines the blood. It removes poisons from the body and its various vitamins give power and strength to the body.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 21-22

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُم مِّمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَي الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ

21. “And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat.”

22. “And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried.”

Quadrupeds are created for the use of man. They provide us with milk, meat, and transport. These benefits, which are a part of their effects, also encourage the development of dairy, leather, meat, weaving industries and also providing job opportunities for millions of people.

Thus, after mentioning the blessing of plants that grow because of the beneficial rain, Allah turns our attention to the animals that thrive because they feed on these plants as an important part of His blessings and favours to man, where it says:

“And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle...”

Then the Holy Qur’an explains this sentence, where it says:

“...We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies...”

Yes, refreshing milk! This perfect and strengthening food is produced from the body of an animal from its blood and the like. It is truly amazing how Allah could produce such a pleasant and wholesome drink from such a thing.

But the lesson and blessings of animals are not solely confined to milk, they have other benefits for human beings as well:

"...and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat."

In addition to meat, which, as a source of protein, is a major source of nutrition necessary for the body when used in moderation, animals also produce leather, which is used for making different kinds of garments and durable materials.

Various types of clothing, carpets and covers are made from wool. Some of the limbs of animals are sometimes used to make medicines. Even their feces are used to make fertilizers for trees and are important in farming.

In the next verse, animals are introduced as easy-paced vehicles of man for traveling on land just as ships are used for traveling on the sea. The verse says:

"And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried."

These are all the benefits and advantages of animals that accrue to man which are indeed a lesson for him to take heed. They make us become familiar with the Creator of all these blessings and encourage within us the sense of gratitude towards Him.

However, why did Allah put animals and ships on the same level? If we study this matter carefully its answer is clear: Man needs vehicles to travel everywhere on the earth. Beside those vehicles for land, Allah also mentions marine vehicles or ships. In actual fact, this sentence is like what was said about the blessings of the children of Adam in verse seven of Sura 'Isra':

"...We carried them on the land and the sea..."

Therefore, we must not trifle with the role of ships in transportation.

"...and on the ships you are carried".

Some Traditions Upon Milk

1. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Allah did not appoint any sickness but he appointed a healing for it. Then behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree."[104]

2. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree, and it is the healing of every sickness."[105]

3. The holy Prophet said:

"Behold of the milk of cow since verily it is a medicine and its oil is a healing, and avoid of its meat since it is sickness."[106]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The pap of milk (made of ground rice, milk and sugar) is a healing for every sickness save death."[107]

5. 'Isma'il-ibn-Muslim narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) prohibited mixing water with milk when selling it."[108]

Notes

1. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 183
2. Sura Ta Ha, No. 20, verse 64
3. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 77
4. Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 8
5. Sura Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 9
6. Sura Al-Mujadala, No. 58, verse 22
7. Sura Al-Anfal, No. 8, verse 45
8. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 100
9. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 35
10. Sura An-Nur, No. 24, verse 31
11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 8357, 2309
12. Ibid
13. Al-Durr-ul-Manthur, Vol. 2, p. 724
14. Nahj ul-Balaqah, sermon 5
15. Safi, The Commentary, Vol. 3, p.393
16. Safi and majma'-ul-Bayan, The Commentary
17. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, p. 526
18. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, p. 600
19. Muntakhab-ul-Qurar, p. 466
20. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 695
21. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 1, p. 10
22. Sura Al-Qassas, No. 28, verses 52-55
23. Saduq's Amali, 28, 4
24. Al-Bihar, 74, 167, 32
25. Al-'Ikhtisas, 230
26. Al-Bihar, 78, 204, 042
27. Al-Bihar, 92, 294, 6
28. Tuhaf ul-'Uqul, 218
29. Tanbih-ul-Khawatir, 116, 2
30. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 5290, 1982
31. Al-Bihar, 78, 92, 101
32. Saduq's 'Amaly, 4, 28
33. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407
34. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386
35. Kitab-ul-Imam-us-Sadiq, Asad Heydar, Vol. 44, p. 361
36. Al-Mustatraf, Vol. 1, p.9
37. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 15
38. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 6, p. 527, No. 16837
39. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 6
40. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 40
41. 'Ihtijaj, 99
42. Rawzat ul-Wa'izin, 418
43. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 14
44. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 11
45. Bihar, Vol. 96, p. 22
46. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 183
47. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 93, p. 14
48. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 14
49. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 4, p. 221
50. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 36
51. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 56
52. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 66
53. Refer to the famous history by Will Durant
54. Kafi, Ma'ani ul- Akhbar
55. Kafi, and Al-Mahasin
56. Kafi, Vol. 3
57. Kafi, Vol. 3

www.alhassanain.org/english

58. Imam Khomeyni, may his spirit be sanctified, has said that the Islamic Republic is a Divine trust
59. Burhan; the Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 380
60. Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 58
61. Burhan, the Commenyary, Vol. 1, p. 380
62. Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 91
63. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 273
64. Qurar ul-Hikam, 2905-2906
65. Al-Bihar, 77, 208, 1
66. 'Amali us-Saduq 350 / 1
67. Al-Bihar, 75, 172, 13
68. Qurar ul-Hikam, 7932, 1582, 4053, 2083
69. Kafi, Vol. 3
70. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 124, p. 141
71. Ibid
72. Ibid
73. Kanzul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition No. 18931, and Majma' ul-Bayan, following verse 14 of Sura Hud, No. 11
74. Durr ul Manthur, The Commentary
75. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 2, No. 2520
76. Yuhaf ul-'Uqul, 281, No. 2521
77. Qurar ul-Hikam, No. 2522
78. Ibid, No. 2523
79. Ibid, No. 2524
80. Ibid, No. 2525
81. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 893
82. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
83. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79
84. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 455
85. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
86. Tawhid Saduq, p. 27
87. Thwab ul'A'mal, Vol. 3, p. 262
88. Kanz ul-'Ummal, 43776-43777
89. Sura Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 16
90. Nur uth-Thaqalayn, The Commentary
91. Diwan, by Qutb-ud-Din Abul-Hassan Muhammad Beyhaqy Neyshabury Keydary, a scholar in the 6th century A.H His Diwan is translated by Dr. Abul-Qasim Imamy. P.236
92. Nahj ul Balaghah, Sermon 182
93. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42355
94. Ibid
95. Qurar ul-Hikam, p. 6502
96. Al-Bihar, 78/370/4
97. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42775
98. vs. 5-7
99. The current Sura, verse 14
100. Safinat ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, part: 'The Market'
101. Bihar, Vol. 83, p. 10
102. Bihar, Vol. 7, p. 271
103. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 127
104. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 10, p. 30
105. Ibid
106. Ibid
107. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, p. 63
108. Man la yahduruhul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 372

Section 2: Allah Saves Noah and His Followers

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 23

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

23. "And indeed We sent Noah unto his folk, and he said: 'O' my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "

In the previous verses, Allah spoke of the creation of man and what supplies his material needs. Now in these verses, He attends to the supply of man's intellectual and doctrinal food.

In other words, the previous noble verses mentioned monotheism, knowledge of Allah, and the reasons of His majesty in the world of creation. This matter has been told from the mouths of the great prophets and by using the events that have unfolded in their history in this verse and the ones that follow.

It first begins with Noah, an arch-prophet and the bearer of the news of monotheism, the verse says:

"And indeed We sent Noah unto his folk, and he said: 'O' my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "

To serve other than Allah is impiety and recklessness.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 24

فَقَالَ الْمَلاَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَآ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَن يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ لأَنزَلَ مَلآئِكَةً مَاسَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي ءَابَآئِنَا الاَوَّلِينَ

24. "But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: 'This is nothing but a mortal like you who intends to gain superiority over you. And if Allah had pleased (to send any prophet), He surely could have sent down angels. We have not heard of this (invitation) among our ancestors of old'."

The elite were the most intractable of those who opposed the prophets.

The prophets (as) had come to guide mankind but the unbelievers used to say that a heavenly messenger should not be a human being! Because of this the rich and conceited elite among Noah's folk, used to say: This is only a mortal like you who seeks to dominate you.

The verse says:

"But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: 'This is nothing but a mortal like you who intends to gain superiority over you..."

Thus, they saw Noah's humanity as a defect and accused him of self aggrandizement and that all he had said about Allah, about monotheism and religion, were merely plots to achieve this aim.

Then they added:

"...And if Allah had pleased (to send any prophet), He surely could have sent down angels…"

And, to complete this unfounded argument, they said:

"...We have not heard of this (invitation) among our ancestors of old'."

Of course, when facing correct logic, one must not rely on national culture and the imitation of one's ancestors to defend the existing situation, instead one must follow the Divine call of His prophet.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 25-26

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِهِ حَتَّي حِينٍ

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ

25. "He is just a man in whom is a madness, so bear with him for a while."

26. "He (Noah) said: 'My Lord! help me against what they Belie'."

Obstinacy and conceit lead some individuals to attribute madness to their prophet, the wisest of people. The elite among the blasphemers imagine the call of the prophets to be a mental aberration and ask others to wait until he ceases asserting his claims.

("...so bear with him for a while.")

These baseless words, however, did not affect the soul of this great prophet, and Noah continued his mission without the slightest sign of self aggrandizement in what was he doing.

When they saw that their accusations were not supported by reality they made another accusation, saying that he was insane, a charge that had been leveled upon all Divine prophets and veracious leaders in the course of history.

They said:

"He is just a man in whom is a madness, so bear with him for a while."

It is very interesting that they used the Arabic word /jinnatun/ (a kind of madness) in the accusation they leveled at this great arch-prophet, suppressing the fact that the life and speeches of this prophet were the best indicators of his knowledge and reasonableness.

In truth, they intended to say that, granted his behavior might be correct and sound, but madness could have many faces among which is that very appearance of reasonableness and knowledge.

The Qur'anic sentence /fa tarabbasu bihi hatta hin/

("...so bear with him for a while")

may refer to the possibility that they were anticipating Noah's death when they would get peace of mind; or it may mean that they were waiting until he was cured from the sickness of madness that they had attributed to him!

At any rate, they made three kinds of unfounded and paradoxical accusations, each of which they advanced as a reason to deny his prophecy:

1) The claim of prophecy by a human being is a lie! Such a phenomenon is unprecedented.

"...And if Allah had pleased, He surely could have sent down angels"

2) He is a man who seeks after self-aggrandizement and uses this claim to gain it.

3) He does not have sound reason and what he says is due to insanity.

Since the answer of these baseless accusations and objections is obvious, and is mentioned in other verses of the Holy Qur'an, no more is said by the Qur'an about it here.

It stands to reason that naturally a leader of human beings must himself be a human being, for he should existentially be cognizant of the needs, pains and problems of being human. Moreover, the prophets had always been human in their nature.

On the other hand, it is clearly understood from the lives of the prophets that brotherliness, humility, and the absence of any form of self aggrandizement have been of their most outstanding attributes, and their reason, intelligence and insight were not unknown to their foes for they acknowledged them in their own words.

Noah's enemies did not confine their molestation and annoyance to leveling unjust accusations against him. From other verses of the Qur'an it is understood that they put great pressure on him in other ways as well. Noah tried his best to guide and save them from the clutches of blasphemy and polytheism.

When he despaired in his efforts, he asked for Allah's help, as we read in the verse which says:

"He (Noah) said: 'My Lord! help me against what they belie'."

Of course, he asked Allah's help for the victory of faith over disbelief, not for the victory of himself as an individual over another. Therefore, he said: "Help me against what they belie" and he did not say help me against them.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 27

فَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ أَنِ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِن كُلّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلاَ تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ

27. "Then We revealed unto him: 'Build the Ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation. Then, when Our command comes and the oven gushes (water), take into it a pair of every kind (of animal) and (also) your family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth. And plead not with Me on behalf of those who are unjust, for verily they shall be drowned."

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Noah (as) called people to monotheism both secretly and openly for 950 years, until Allah told him:

'...None of your People will believe except those who have believed already...'[1]

Then Noah said:

'... they will mislead Your servants and will beget none save lewd ungrateful (children)'[2]."[3]

Then Allah issued the command for him to make the Ark and preparations were made to save Noah and his few companions and to destroy the obstinate polytheists. So He says:

"Then We revealed unto him: 'Build the Ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation..."

The Qur'anic phrase /bi 'a'yunina/ (before Our eyes) refers to the fact that Noah's effort and endeavor for this end was in the presence of Allah (s.w.t.) and He supported him, so Noah continued his task with a tranquil soul arid without being afraid of or concerned about anything.

The Arabic word /wahyina/ (Our revelation) shows that Noah learned the technique of making the Ark through the Divine revelation. Such a thing (as history shows) was unprecedented at that time. Consequently, Noah made the ship according to Allah's direction, so it did not fall short of perfection for his aim.

The verse continues saying:

"...Then, when Our command comes and the oven gushes (water), take into it a pair of every kind (of animal) and (also) your family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth..."

(This last sentence refers to Noah's wife and one of his children)

Then the Qur'an adds:

"...And plead not with Me on behalf of those who are unjust, for verily they shall be drowned."

Of course, this warning was because Noah could have been moved by human sentiments or fatherly affection that might lead him (as) to intercede on behalf of them while they no longer deserved intercession.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 28-30

فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنتَ وَمَن مَّعَكَ عَلَي الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّانَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَقُل رَبِّ أَنزِلْنِي مُنزَلاً مُّبَارَكاً وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنزِلِينَ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ وَإِن كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ

28."And when you, and those with you, are settled on the Ark, say: 'all praise belongs to Allah Who has delivered us from the unjust people!' "

29. "And say: 'My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land'."

30. "Verily in this there are signs; and indeed We put (men) to test."

First, we must be grateful to Allah for all His previous blessings then we ask Him for a new favour. The historical subjects of The Holy Qur'an are guiding signs and a cause for our development, they are not for the purposes of entertainment or for simple story telling.

In this noble verse, addressing Noah, Allah said:

"And when you, and those with you, are settled on the Ark, say: 'All praise belongs to Allah Who has delivered us from the unjust people!' "

Then in the second verse, Noah is told that after praising Allah for the first great blessing, that is being saved from the clutches of the oppressors, he should beseech Allah in this way:

"And say: 'My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land'."

The Arabic word /manzil/ perhaps here is a noun of place, that is to say that after the storm ended Allah would land Noah's ship on a land that was blessed with abundant favours, so that he could live on it comfortably.

It may also be an infinitive, that is to say that Allah would land Noah's Ark with a good way, because after that the storm ended, many dangers

would face the ship when it was about to land, such as the lack of a proper place to live, the shortage of food, and different kinds of diseases, so Noah asked Allah to land the ship with a blessed landing.

Finally, the last verse of this group of verses refers to the whole story in which Noah overcome the oppressors; and the severe punishment of these people is considered as a sign for the possessors of intellect.

The verse says:

"Verily in this there are signs; and indeed We put (men) to test."

The above sentence may indicate that Allah frequently tested the people of Noah and when they could not pass the test, He caused them to perish.

It may also point out that Allah tests all mankind in every age, and the verses above are not only peculiar to the people of Noah's age. Mankind is tested in various forms in all ages and, as a result of them, those who are thorns on the way of human development are removed, so that humanity would continue its journey of perfection unhindered.

It is interesting that in the verses above, only the making the Ark and the embarkation of Noah and his companions are mentioned. Details of what ultimately happened to the wrongdoers is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but by the Divine promise which says:

"...verily they shall be drowned"

It becomes certain that such a fate befell them, for Allah's promise is always fulfilled.

It is also necessary to mention that more information about the story of Noah and his struggle with the unbelieving people of his folk, as well as the events of making Ark, gushing water, the occurrence of the storm, and when Noah's son was drowned, there are much explanation which can be found in the books about the history of the prophets.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 31-32

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْناً ءَاخَرِينَ

فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِّنْهُمْ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

31. "Then, after them, We produced another generation;"

32. "And We sent among them a messenger from among themselves (saying): 'Worship Allah. You have no other god besides Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "

As His way of treatment, Allah has appointed a prophet for every nation.

The prophet must be from among the people themselves, so that they have a practiced and forbearing example among them. Thus, these verses discuss upon the nations that have come after Noah (as) and explain their gloomy fate. They also show that the logic of the unbelievers of later generations were similar to those of the former generations.

At first, it says:

"Then, after them, We produced another generation;"

The Arabic word /qarn/ is derived from the word /'iqtiran/, which means proximity, therefore the generation that lives in a particular single age is called a 'qarn'. Sometimes the time, characterized by a certain generation, in Arabic is called a 'qarn'.

The measurement of the length of a ‘qarn’ as 30 to 100 years is only a convention and is dependent upon the traditions of various nations.

Then the next holy verse implies that since man cannot be without a Divine leader, Allah sent a great prophet to them that he would teach them monotheism, the religion of Truth and justice, and would call people to them, as the verse says:

“And We sent among them a messenger from among themselves (saying): ’Worship Allah. You have no other god besides Him. Will you not keep from evil?’ ”

This is what has formed the basis of the call of all Divine prophets. Indeed it has been the call of monotheism that has formed the main substructure of all individual and social reformations.

Then the prophet asks the question whether they would not shun polytheism and idol worship, when they are called to monotheism:

(…Will you not keep from evil?)

The prophet and the nation, to which he had been sent, have not been identified in the Qur’an, but with regards to their identities in other verses of the Qur’an, there are two possibilities offered by the commentators:

1) It was the people of Thamud who used to live in an area located in the north of Hijaz, whose prophet was Salih, a great Divine prophet that was appointed to guide those people. They disbelieved in his message and rebelled and were finally destroyed by a heavenly cry (or a deadly thunderbolt).

The evidence of this interpretation is the punishment of the Cry which is mentioned at the end of the holy verses under consideration, and it is also found in Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 67 which clearly is about the people of Salih.

2) It was the people of ‘Aad whose prophet was Hud. Their story is told in other verses of the Holy Qur’an immediately after the story of Noah (as). This itself is a flame of evidence whereby it is possible to interpret the holy verse mentioned above in this way.

However, considering that this nation’s punishment was a very fierce wind that continued for seven nights and eight days destroying them, as verses 6 and 7 of Sura Al-Haqqah have mentioned, it becomes clear that the first interpretation is more correct.

Anyway, we see what the reaction of this obstinate nation was to this great prophet’s call of monotheism.

Notes

1. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 36
2. Sura Noah, No. 71, verse 27
3. Bihar, Vol. 11, p. 331

Section 3: Generations Raised After Noah's People

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 33

وَقَالَ الْمَلأَ مِن قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ الاَخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَآ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ

33.“The chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): 'This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.' ”

The call of the Divine prophets was based upon liberating people from the dominance of oppressors and aristocrats. Consequently, the aristocrats .opposed the prophets more than others did.

(“And the chiefs of his people... (said)...”)

The Qur'an in this holy verse implies that the affluent and conceited folk upon whom Allah had bestowed abundant blessings negated the One God, Allah, and denied the meeting of the Resurrection. They said: This is only a mortal like you, he eats what you eat and drinks what you drink.

The verse says:

“The chief of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): 'This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.'”

Yes, the Qur'an calls those affluent people /mala'/. This means that they were very attractive in their appearance but their hearts were darkened to the light of Truth.They started to struggle against the teachings of their prophet applying the same type of arguments that those who rejected Noah had done.

This they did because they saw the call of this great prophet as going against their low desires and a barrier to their unlawful interests, arrogance, and baseless social preeminence. It was because of the same affluence that they had been aloof from Allah and denied Resurrection. They disputed against the Truth with the same logic that the disbelievers of the people of Noah (as) did.

The very human nature of these Divine leaders, the normal ways in which they ate, drank and the simple ways in which they lived their lives were used as reasons to negate their prophetic missions.

The humanness of these great men, in fact, confirmed their missions for it made them more accessible and more sympathetic to the sufferings of the common people, something which the arrogant could not see, for as Imam Ali (as) says:

“Their jealousy made them say such words.”[1]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 34-36

وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُم بَشَراً مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذاً لَخَاسِرُونَ

أَيَعِدُكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنتُمْ تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً أَنَّكُم مُخْرَجُونَ

هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوعَدُون

34. "And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers."

35. "Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?"

36. "Far, very far is what you are promised!"

The unbelievers and polytheists believe that following the prophets bring loss to mankind. They would rather want that people submit to themselves and with the slogan of liberty drive people into slavery.

This is why they said:

"And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers."

These blind-hearted persons were probably not aware that they themselves expected the people to follow their evil ideas and united together to struggle against this prophet. They saw following someone guided by the Center of Revelation, whose heart was illuminated by the light of Divine knowledge as a defect and a flaw that stood against human freedom and liberty!

The next verse points to the fact that their real argument against religion was the denial of the Resurrection. They knew that if the Resurrection were accepted, it would prove ahindrance to the achievement of the goals of their appetites and of their social ambitions.

They said:

"Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?"

The third verse shows that the unbelievers did not accept the promises of their prophet in this regard. They were opposed to the possibility of returning back to life after complete annihilation in the earth. In fact, they believed that its occurrence was impossible.

"Far, very far is what you are promised!"

The Qur'anic word /hayhat/ is used in the Qur'an twice which is in this very verse. It shows that the elite among the unbelievers imagined that the Resurrection was a very remote possibility indeed.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 37-38

إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

37. "There is nothing but our life in this world: we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again"

38. "He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him."

Some of unbelievers believed in Allah, but they did not accept the Resurrection and prophecy.

They rejected the saints and friends of Allah as well as the Divine promises with the claim of 'preserving the sanctity of the Lord.'

In this noble verse, the other reason they employed to deny the Resurrection was by saying:

"There is nothing but our life in this world..."

They implied that there was nothing left of them after death one appeared out of nothing and returned to nothingness. One generation always dies and another generation takes its place.

The verse continues saying:

"...we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again."

Finally, in the next verse, their argument became personal and they attacked their prophet's character, when they said:

"He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him."

The unbelievers thought that no wise man would believe in that prophet for they denied his Divine mission nor did they believe in his promises about the Resurrection.

Sometimes a society can decline to such an extent that the real supporters of religion are introduced as liars and the conceited unbelievers are called as supporters of Allah's sanctuaries.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 39-41

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ

قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً فَبُعْداً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

39. " (Their prophet) said: 'My Lord! Help me against what they belie!'."

40. " (Allah) said: 'In a little while they will be remorseful'."

41. "Then the Blast overtook them with justice, and We made them into a scum. So away with the unjust people!"

Prophets Only Rely On Allah

("O my Lord...")

The word 'Rabb' is one of the best words to use in prayer and supplication. After the word Allah, the most frequent word applied in the Qur'an is 'Rabb'.

When the conceit and rebelliousness of the people of Thamud had exceeded its limit, they got more brazen in their unbelief and indecency attacking the character of the prophet himself and calling his prophetic arguments, miracles and revelations lies.

The Divine prophet invoked to Allah, as the verse says:

" (Their prophet) said: 'My Lord! Help me against what they belie!'"

He (as) invoked, indicating that they did and said whatever they could and they accused me in whatever they desired, but You, O' Lord, help me.

The next verse is an answer to him, it says:

" (Allah) said: 'In a little while they will be remorseful'."

They will become regretful when it would be of no benefit and there will be no way of return for them.

And this is what happened, as the next verse says:

"Then the Blast overtook them with justice..."

The deadly thunder descended with a terrible and horrible sound and destroyed everywhere. It piled up their corpses and it was so sudden and

devastating that they did not have even a chance to escape from their houses and so they were buried in them, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"...and We made them into a scum..."

So away with the wrongdoing lot! These are the people of the Thamud who had defied their prophet Salih, and killed the female camel that, as a miracle of their prophet, had come out of the middle of a mountain.

The verse concludes:

"...So away with the unjust people!"

Points to Note

1- What Does 'Sayhah' mean?

The Arabic word /sayhah/ (here, the Cry) philologically means a very loud noise that comes out of the mouth of a human or animal. This noise is however not particular to them and is applied to every loud noise.

We read in the Holy Qur'an that some sinful nations were destroyed by it. A few of them are the nations of Thamud, Lot[2]and Shu'ayb.[3]

It is understood from other verses of the Qur'an that the punishment of the people of Thamud was occurred by a thunderbolt.

For example, it says:

"But if they turn away, men say: 'I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderboltof 'Ad and Thamud."[4]

This verse shows that the meaning of 'sayhah' is the terrible sound of thunderbolt. Can the terrifying noise of thunderbolt kill a crowd of people?

The answer to this question is surely positive, for we know that if sound waves exceed a certain limit, they can break building glass, and even destroy some buildings and disable some organs of the human body.

When an airplane breaks the sound barrier some people fall unconscious or some women abort their fetuses, and it breaks all of the glass in buildings of the locality.

It is natural that if the intensity of acoustic waves increases to certain levels, it can easily cause deadly disorders in the nervous system, brain vessels and in the heart, and it can kill people.

Of course, according to the Holy Qur'an, the end of this world would be with such a Cry, where it says:

"They await but a single Cry, which will overtake them while they are disputing".[5]

It is similar to Resurrection which begins with an awakening Blast.

The Qur'an says:

"There would be naught but a single cry, when behold! They shall all be brought before Us."[6]

2. The Islamic narrations say that it was only one person who killed the camel, however, the Holy Qur'an attributes the crime to the entire unbelieving nation who were Salih's opponents and it uses plural pronoun, where it says:

"So they hamstrung her..."[7]

This is because the Qur'an counts inward contentment with an ideological affair and maintaining a relationship with it as participating in it. In fact, the plot to kill the animal did not have an individual aspect, for even

the person who had committed the offence did not only rely on his power, but he was encouraged by the power and support of the group.

Certainly, such a task is not individual but collective and communal.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once said:

"The Camel of Thamud was slaughtered by one person, but Allah punished all of the Thamud people, for they all were content with this offence."[8]

There are many narrations with the same meaning or like it from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) about this subject. They show the extraordinary importance that Islam gives to ideological commonality and support as well as acting in harmony with a program.

Here are a few of them:

The Prophet (S) said:

"Someone who watches and observes an activity but dislikes it, is like a person who is absent when that activity is being performed; and someone who was absent at the time an activity was being performed but was inwardly content with it, is like a person who was present at the time of that activity and had taken part in it."[9]

Imam Ali ibn Musa-ar-Rida (as) once said:

"Whenever someone is murdered in the east and another person in the west is satisfied with the murder of that individual, this person is an abettor of the murderer before Allah."[10]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"One who is satisfied with an activity of a group is like a person who has taken part in that activity, but someone who has taken a practical part in the activity has committed two sins, one is the sin of committing the activity and the other is the sin of being satisfied with it."[11]

Islam sees ideological and intellectual affinities as very profound and extensive to the extent that they are not limited by time and place. A close reading of this meaningful speech of Imam Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balaqah will be enough:

When Imam Ali (as) overcame the enemy in the War of Jamal, and his comrades were happy with the victory of Islam over ignorance and division, one of them said:

"I wish my brother had participated in this war, so he, too, would have seen what success and victory Allah had given you."

Imam Ali (as) replied:

"Tell me! Was your brother with us (in his heart)?"

The man said:

"Yes."

The Imam said:

"In that case, he was with us."

Then he (as) continued:

"Rather, in this army of ours, even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and wombs of women! Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them."[12]

3. There is a relationship between the Qur'anic word /'itraf/ (life of the aristocracy) and the infidelity that denies the meeting with Allah.

Verily, it is true. Usually those who live this type of life enjoy a larger degree of freedom to pursue whatever kinds of sensual gratification and animal pleasure they wish. Accepting the Divine guardianship and the Resurrection would be a barrier to this kind of life, disturbing both the consciences of these aristocrats and making people brave enough to stand up against them.

They, therefore, remove the yoke of Allah's servitude from their necks and deny the Origin and the Resurrection. As we read in the verses above, they insist that worldly, physical life is the only life and there is nothing after that, calling a liar whoever claims the contrary.

They believe that this is the only moment they have, and as such they must pick a flower from every garden and enjoy themselves on every occasion in these few days of life! In this manner, they justify their offenses and wrong actions.

Moreover, to live such luxurious lives without usurping others' rights is usually impossible. Thus, they had to deny the Resurrection and the mission of the prophets to maintain their position and their lifestyle.

We see in our daily lives that the majority of those who live luxurious lives turn their backs, and look down their noses at every one.

These miserable blind-hearted people, who are at the mercy of their whims and caprices, go out of Allah's shadow of obedience and grace whenever they wear the yoke of bondage to lusts and low desires, and open themselves up to becoming the slaves of other slaves.

Such persons, who are usually rich and corrupt, have dark hearts, unclean souls, and degenerate thoughts. Their grand view of life may seem interesting to some people, but when one looks closely, it appears terrible and ugly, for they are agitated and disturbed by the absence of the peace caused by sin, the fear of death, and the decline of blessings.

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, volume 5, page 168, Tabarsi narrates an interesting view of one of the interpreters of the Qur'an following verse 49 where saying:

"The worldly possessors of favour are led astray and perish, for verily ignorance and negligence overcome them and they care about nothing but this world and its pleasures."

This fact is discerned in rich and prosperous countries where most of them are ridden with corruption. They not only do not care for the oppressed of the world but also they make new plans every day to exploit them and their resources.

Consequently their blessings are temporarily removed by wars and painful events that Allah causes to awaken them.

4. What is Qutha' (scum)?

In the verses above, we read that the people of Thamud were made into /qua'/ (scum) by the thunderbolt. The Arabic term /qua'/ originally means dried plants in the form of an untidy pile of muck that float on floodwaters. In addition, the scum produced in a boiling pot is also called /qua/.

Likening their corpses to /qua/ indicates their extreme weakness, frailty, defeat, and worthlessness, because straws on the floodwater are lighter and

more trivial than anything there is. They have no choice and destination, for after the passing and subsiding of a flood no trace of them remains.

5. It is noteworthy that the last sentence of the verses above no longer particularize the issue to the people of Thamud, it now becomes generalized and Allah says:

"...So away with the unjust people!"

This is, in fact, the conclusion of all these verses, which means that what has been stated up to this point, the denial and negation of Divine signs and the denial of the Resurrection and their painful consequences, are not particular to a certain people, rather, all oppressors in the course of history share the same characteristics and the same fate.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 42-43

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُوناً ءَاخَرِينَ

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

42."Then after them We brought forth other generations."

43. "No nation may outstrip its term, nor do they postpone (it)."

Raising another generation when the previous one passes away is Allah's way.

("Then ... We brought forth...")

Historical change is under the sovereignty of Allah. Every society and nation has a wisely specified term and a defined end.

Do not become self-confidant when the Divine punishment is delayed, for Divine programs are not cancelled with the clamor of people, and historical changes are governed by the Divine discipline. History has some stable and well-established traditions.

Thus, in this noble verse, after the end of the story of the people of Thamud, the Holy Qur'an indicates that other nations were brought forth after them and before Moses (as).

The Qur'an says:

"Then after them We brought forth other generations."

It is Allah's grand rule and way of treatment that He does not terminate His constant outpouring of grace and emanation, and if a group of people becomes a barrier to human perfection, He will cause them to perish and will continue to lead this caravan on its way.

In the next verse Allah implies that each of these various nations and tribes had a fixed time, nations could neither hasten nor forestall their terms and whenever the decisive command for their extinction is issued, they will perish forthwith, neither sooner nor later.

The Arabic word /'ajal/ means the period and lifetime of an object, or it can sometimes mean an end or a termination. For example, we say that the due date ('ajal) of a particular debt is on such and such a day.

As we also said before, there are two kinds of /'ajal/ (termination):

A) Unavoidable: This is the fixed date of a person, a thing, or a people's extinction, and it cannot be changed.

B) Conditional or pending: This can be increased or decreased as circumstances change.

This verse obviously refers to ‘the unavoidable kind of /’ajal/’.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 44

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا كُلَّ مَا جَآءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَأَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُم بَعْضاً وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبُعْداً لِقَوْمٍ لاَّيُؤْمِنُونَ

44. “Then We sent Our messengers one after another. Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him, so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster) and We made them stories. So away with a people that do not believe!”

Sending prophets to various nations is one of the Ways of Allah. (Every society needs a leader. Thought and science alone do not suffice man, for there are many affairs that can only be realized through revelation). Allah decides historical transitions and the destruction of obstinate nations is a manifestation of His imprecation and curse.

(“...and We made them stories...”)

Therefore, this noble verse indicates the fact that the call of the prophets has never been terminated during the course of history.

The verse says:

“Then We sent Our messengers one after another...”

The Arabic word /tatra/ is derived from the word /watr/, meaning successively or one after another. And /tawatur-i-’axbar/ means bits of news that arrive one after the other by means of which one is convinced with certainly.

This word originally is derived from the word /watr/ which means ‘bowstring’, for it is attached to the ends of the bow at its sack and brings them closer together.

(From the point of view of the structure of the word, /tatra/ was originally/ watra/ but, in Arabic, its ‘w’ was changed to a ‘t’).

These heavenly teachers successively came and left but obstinate nations were still unbelieving in such a way that, as the Qur’an says:

“...Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him...”

When this denial, scandalizing and infidelity exceeded their limits and the final argument had been already presented,

“...so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster)...”

They were so completely exterminated that only their stories remained among people.

As He continues saying:

“...and We made them stories...”

Sometimes a generation becomes extinct, but some of its people survive, existing as sparse populations here and there. Sometimes, however, a generation is wiped out in such a way that only its name remains in the pages of history and in the conversations of people. Such has always been the case among those rebellious nations, the latter group.

At the end of the verse, like in the previous verses, the Qur’an adds:

“...So away with a people that do not believe!”

These painful and terrible fates were the results of their unbelief, and therefore they were not particular to just those nations mentioned in this verse. Every oppressing, obstinate, and atheistic group will taste such a fate and it will be so utterly destroyed that only its name will remain in history and among humanity.

They will be away from the grace of Allah not only in this world but also in the Hereafter, because the objective meaning of the verse is absolute and encompasses all.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 45-46

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَي وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِاٰيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

إِلَي فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْماً عَالِينَ

45. "Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, "

46. "Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently and they were an arrogant people."

The Arabic word /sultan/ is a synonym for an 'evidence', for someone can often dominate people's hearts with logic, reasoning, and rational and practical argument.

Up till now the subject was the nations that arose and disappeared before the time of Moses (as), Allah's arch-prophet, but here the Qur'an briefly refers to the uprising of Moses and Aaron themselves against the Pharaonic system and the destiny of this conceited nation.

The Qur'an says:

"Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, "

The objective of the Qur'anic word /'ayat/ (Signs) is the Torah and the miracles (the nine Signs) that Allah had bestowed upon Moses, the son of 'Imran.

And the objective of the Arabic phrase /sultanin mubin/ (manifest authority) is the strong logical argument Moses presented and the powerful reasons he gave against the claims of pharaonism.

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah sent Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh and his aristocrat and proud elites supported by these signs (miracles) and manifest authority.

The verse says:

"Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently..."

This verse indicates the fact that the root of all corruption was found with them and no nation could be reformed unless its elites and authorities change and reform.

Despite the compelling arguments and impressive miracles of Moses, Pharaoh and his companions became conceited and did not accept Allah's signs and the manifest authority and they continued to oppress the people.

The verse concludes saying:

"...and they were an arrogant people."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 47-48

فَقَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَابِدُونَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ

47. "And they said: 'Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?'"

48. "So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed."

Moses and Aaron (as) were from the generation of the Children of Israel, while the people of Pharaoh saw themselves as superior to the Children of Israel based upon the latter's enslavement.

That is why the Qur'an implies that one of the clear signs of their seeking superiority was that they said they should not believe in too human beings who were like themselves, [13] and whose tribe, the children of Israel, were their slaves. So, they believed that not only they should not accept them, but also that tribe had to be their servants for ever.

The verse says:

"And they said: 'Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?'"

They accused the prophets of self-aggrandizement when they themselves were the worst of supremacists, a fact that is clearly seen in their words. In their arrogance they dismissed the Truth and accused Moses (as) and Aaron (as) of being two liars and, because of this, they were destroyed and lost their empire and their rule.

The holy verse says:

"So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed."

Thus, finally, the most powerful obstacle to the call of Moses and the greatest enemy of the Children of Israel was destroyed and the period of Divine education and training for the Children of Israel began.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 49

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

49. "And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided."

The prophets support their own claims with their powerful reasoning and their miracles, whereas the unbelievers and illegitimate rulers assert theirs through subjugation and enslavement of people.

Allah (s.w.t.) sent the Turah to Moses (as) and called the Children of Israel to implement its Divine programs, as the noble verse says:

"And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided."

One should note that the previous holy verses usually mentioned both Moses and his brother in the dual tense during the phase of struggle with pharaonism, but in this verse we see that only Moses is named with regard to the revelation of the heavenly Book.

This is because he is an arch-prophet and is the recipient of a new revelation and a new religion. Moreover, at the time when the Turah was sent down to Moses (as) he was alone on Mount Sinai and his brother, Aaron, remained to represent him among the Children of Israel.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 50

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ ءَايَةً وَءَاوَيْنَاهُمَآ إِلَىٰ رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ

50. “And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The station of prophethood is the highest position among mankind and it is for this reason the name of Jesus precedes that of his mother,

(“...the son of Mary and his mother a sign...”)

In the explanation of the biography of Divine prophets, here at last the Qur’an shortly refers to Jesus (as) and his mother, Mary.

It says:

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign...”

The phrase, ‘the son of Mary’, instead of saying ‘Jesus’, draws our attention to the fact that he was conceived without the participation of a father which made his birth one of the great signs of Allah’s power.

Since this exceptional birth is related to both Jesus and his mother, both of them are counted as one Sign, for his mother herself had an exceptional birth and was also exceptionally pure. They were, in fact, one truth with two different aspects.

The verse then mentions some of the blessings and favours bestowed upon Jesus and his mother.

It says:

“...and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The Arabic word /rabwah/ is derived from the word /riba/, meaning excess and increase. Here it means a high land. The Qur’anic word /ma‘in/ derived from the word /ma‘n/ means the flow of water, thus /ma‘ in ma‘in/ means running water. Some have considered it to be derived from the word /‘ayn/, meaning water that is not hidden and can be discerned by eye.

This sentence conveys to us the safe, comfortable and peaceful place that Allah gave this mother and child so that they would be safe from the plots and machinations of their enemies and could fulfil their duties peacefully.

The opinions of interpreters are divided on the location of this site. Some believe that Nazareth (or Nasareh)[14] was the hometown of Jesus (as).

From the time of his birth, some of the enemies, that knew about his birth and his future role, plotted to murder him, so Allah (s.w.t.) saved him (as) and his mother by taking them away from Nazareth and sending them to this secure place, full of blessings.

Some say that it refers to Egypt, for Jesus and his mother had spent part of their lifetimes there.

Another viewpoint is that the site was in a desert in Palestine and Allah had made it peaceful and safe for the mother and the child by causing water to flow and provided them food from a dried-up date palm.

However, this verse shows that Allah constantly supports His messengers and those who support them. When we deserve the protection of Allah, it would not matter whether or not all of our enemies combine against us, they would not have any power to harm us if He does not will it.

The other point to be noted is that being isolated and lacking in physical support, or having only a few defenders, are no indicators of defeat.

Notes

1. Bihar, Vol. 32, p. 97
2. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 15, verse 73
3. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 94
4. Sura Fusslat, No. 41, verse 13
5. Sura Ya-sin, No. 36, verse 49
6. Ibid
7. Sura Hud, verse 65
8. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 1-2
9. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 11, p.409
10. Ibid. p. 410
11. Ibid p. 411
12. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 13
13. Man is called /basher/ because the face and the skin of his body is bare, contrast to the animals whose bodies are usually covered by a natural clothing. In fact, since they lack the ability of providing clothes Allah has naturally provided them with it, while for man, He relied it on his intelligence and talent.
14. It is a historic city of Lower Galilee, in northern Palestine. It is the largest Arab city in the country. In the New Testament Nazareth is associated with Jesus as his bodyhood

Section 4: The Religion (Islam) Is the Religion for All

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 51

يَآ أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحاً إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

51. "O messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Verily I know best what you do."

We should not forget two important principles, when we want to eat something:

1. Lawfulness

2. Purity and wholesomeness

All divinely revealed religions give great importance to the kinds of food we eat for they bring Divine succor in doing good deeds.

It is for this very reason that, addressing all the messengers, Allah says:

"O messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Verily I know best what you do."

The difference between prophets and other human beings is not that they do not have human needs such as the need for food rather they see special modes of nutrition as means towards perfection, therefore they eat pure and wholesome food.

The average person eats as an aim in itself, pursuing the satisfaction of his animal desires whether it is good or bad, he is not even concerned about the physical benefits of his diet not to mention the spiritual effects the foods might have upon him.

Regarding that the kind and quality of food is certainly effective on man's spiritualities, and different sorts of food consequence different moral manners, the relation between these two sentences are made clear when it says:

"...Eat of the good things"

and

"Act righteously..."

Some Islamic traditions say that eating unlawful food hinders our prayers and supplications to be accepted.

There is a famous tradition stated by the Prophet (S) which is the evidence of this claim:

A man once told the Prophet (S) that he would like his prayers to be answered.

The Prophet replied:

"Make your food wholesome and refrain from eating unlawful food!"[1]

Commenting on this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The meaning of /tayyib/ is lawfulness."[2]

In this context it is also necessary to note that the sentence:

"...verily I know best what you do, "

is itself an independent reason for doing good deeds, because when man knows that someone is always watching his deeds and nothing remains hidden from Him and Who carefully reckons his deeds, he will be careful to act correctly and reform his behaviour.

The phrases in the verse above would also be important in arousing in us the sense of thanksgiving for the pure blessings that Allah has given us. This would, in turn, exert a profound effect upon our conduct.

In summary, this verse identifies three ways to encourage the tendency to do good deeds:

A) The influence of pure and wholesome food on the purity of the heart.

B) Arousing the sense of thanksgiving in man.

C) Drawing attention to the fact that Allah watches and observes all our deeds.

As said before, the Qur'anic word /tayyib/ means anything that is clean and pure. It is the opposite of the word 'khabith', which means foul and dirty. In the book 'Mufradat', the author Raqib says:

"The word 'tayyib' originally meant any affair that is pleasant, whether man thinks that he experiences this pleasure through his soul or physical senses or not, in reality, it is experienced only in his soul. In religion, however, it means anything that is clean and lawful."

Many verses in the Holy Qur'an talk about doing good and enjoying what is pure.

Here, not only the prophets but all the believers are also ordered to eat good and lawful food:

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things We have provided you with..."[3]

Only good words and deeds are near to Allah.

"...Unto Him do good words ascend, and the pious deed does He exalt..."[4]

Enjoying good things is one of the great blessings bestowed upon man by Allah and it can also be seen as one of the signs of man's superiority over all other creatures.

Allah in the Qur'an says:

"And, indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, and We carried them on the land and the sea; and We provided them with sustenance of the good things; and We preferred them greatly over many of those We created."[5]

The Prophet (S) reiterates this in a short, meaningful tradition when he says:

"O people! Allah is clean (and pure) and accepts nothing save good (and pure) deeds."[6]

Some Traditions On Lawfulness and Unlawfulness

1. An Islamic tradition says:

"Allah does not accept the worship of someone who has eaten a single morsel of something unlawful."[7]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful (things) is the duty of every Muslim man and woman."[8]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Worship has 70 parts and the most superior of them is seeking the lawful (things)."[9]

4. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever travels for obtaining lawful sustenance is like a warrior in the Path of Allah."[10]

5. Salman Farsi was asked:

"Which deed is the best?"

He replied:

"To have faith in Allah and (to eat) lawful bread (i.e., to earn an honest living)."[11]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever earns his bread by his own hands, Allah will look at him with mercy and will never chastise him."[12]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever eats that which is lawful, an angel will overshadow him and will continue to ask Allah's pardon for him until he finishes eating."[13]

8. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful is struggle (jihad) in the cause of Allah."

[9]. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful (sustenance) is obligatory next to the obligatory (prayer)."[14]

10. The Prophet (S) said:

"It is the duty of every Muslim to try to obtain lawful (sustenance)."[15]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

"The best of deeds is to earn an income legally and honestly."[16]

Some Traditions On Unlawful Income and Business

12. The Prophet (S) said:

"When Allah makes something unlawful, its money becomes also unlawful."[17]

13. The sixth Imam (as) said:

"The result of unlawful income will become manifest in one's descendants."[18]

14. The Prophet (S) said:

"When an unlawful morsel enters a servant's body, all the angels in the heavens and the earth will curse him."[19]

15. The Prophet (S) said:

"Worshipping (Allah) with eating that which is unlawful is like a building on sand or some say like a building on water."[20]

16. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The truth is that if a man obtains some property unlawfully, his Hajj pilgrimage, If 'Umrah, and his observance of the ties of kinship will not be accepted, and even his chastity will be ruined in it."[21]

17. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah has made Paradise forbidden for a body which has been fed inward unlawfully."[22]

18. The Prophet (S) said:

"Abstaining from having one unlawful morsel (of food) is more liked by Allah (s.w.t.) than the performance of two thousand rak'ats of a recommended prayers."[23]

19. Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"A generous one is he who avoids from the unlawful things and keeps himself pure from defects."[24]

20. The Sixth Imam (as) said:

"Imam Ali (as) has said: 'Whoever devours a believer's property unlawfully is not our friend'."[25]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 52

وإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَاْ رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

52. "And verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord, so fear Me."

Both from the religious world-view and Divine perspectives, all nations, in fact, comprise one nation, The principles behind the call of all the Divine prophets reflect this fact, for the physical, spiritual, and innate needs of man are united in a common system of interrelationships.

This noble verse indicates that all the Divine prophets and their followers have been called to monotheism and piety.

The verse says:

"And verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah..."

They invite everyone to the unity and commonality of human society and invalidate all kinds of discrimination and separation. Since Allah is One, all of mankind are one nation.

The verse says:

"...and I am your Lord, so fear Me."

All nations must therefore follow one program, because their prophets invite people to one religion whose principles have been the same all over the world.

These principles include: monotheism, the knowledge of Truth, acknowledging the Resurrection and the perfectibility of the life of man, using good things, performing good and pure deeds, and supporting justice and the principles of humanity.

Some interpreters believe that the Qur'anic word 'ummat' here means 'religion', not people or nation, and the Qur'anic sentence /'ana rabukum/:

("...I am your Lord..."),

which is in plural form, is an evidence to it and indicates that the objective meaning of 'Ummat' here is this very community of people.

As a result, in all cases where the word 'ummat' is used in the Holy Qur'an, it means nation and group, except in some special contexts where it means religion in a figurative sense such as the verse:

"...Verily we found our fathers on a religion (ummat), and we are certainly followers of their footsteps."[26]

It is worthy to note that this subject is presented with a slight difference in verse 92 of Sura Al-'Anbiya:

"Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me."

Before this verse, the story of many prophets had been presented and, in fact, the Arabic word /haðihi/ refers to the communities of the previous prophets, all of whom were one Ummah from the view of the command of

Allah, and all were persuading one goal.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 53

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُراً كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

53. "But people have cut off their affair (of unity) between them, into sects: each party rejoicing in that which is with them."

Causing division is a great disaster which has a long history, therefore, following the invitation to unity and harmony in the former verse, mankind is now given a warning about conflict and disintegration with the phrase saying:

"But people have cut off their affair (of unity) between them, into sects..."

It is wonderful that 'every one of these parties rejoices in that which is with itself and discriminates against the other.

The verse continues saying:

"...each party rejoicing in that which is with them."

The Arabic word /zubur/ is the plural form of the word /zubrah/, meaning a part of the hair on the back of an animal that can be gathered together and separated from the rest. This word has then been applied to everything that can be separated from something else.

Thus, the sentence:

"But people have cut off their affair..."

refers to the division of nations into various groups.

Some say that the word 'zubur' is probably a plural form of the word /zabur/, meaning book. Thus the verse can mean that each of them followed a heavenly book and denied the heavenly books of others while they had also originated from the same Divine Source.

However, the sentence:

'...each party rejoicing in that which is with them'

strengthens the first interpretation, for it speaks of various parties and their biases in favour of their own claims.

At any rate, the above verse expresses an important social and psychic fact that the ignorant bias of groups that have chosen certain religious schools of thought results in them closing off their minds to any other expression of the Divine truth and blocking off the light of knowledge.

This state which arises from egotism and narcissism is the greatest enemy to arriving at the impartial ultimate truth and reaching to the unity of peoples.

Contentment and complacency in one's own tradition and the sense of alienation and hostility to other than that is often expressed when we hear something from a religion other than ours and we shut it out, dismiss it and run away, lest a truth apparently other than what we are used to, be disclosed to us.

As the Holy Qur'an says about the polytheists of Noah's age:

"And verily whenever I call unto them that you may pardon them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their garments, and persist (in their refusal) and magnify themselves with pride."[27]

When this state of prejudice persists, man becomes closed to the path of truth and instead he becomes obstinate and headstrong in his own view.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 54

فَذَرْهُمْ فِي غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّى حِينٍ

54. "But leave them in their overwhelming ignorance for a time."

The worst kind of misleading is when Allah leaves man to his own devices:

("But leave them...").

Disagreement and division lead to the abyss of perdition and bring down the anger of Allah and His Prophet (S).

But people have cut off their affair.

"But leave them in their overwhelming ignorance..."

The above verse implies that when such is the case, one should leave them be in their ignorance, negligence, and confusion until the time of their death approaches when they will see the truth or, on the Day of Judgment when they will face the Divine punishment, because such people have no fate other than this.

The Qur'anic word /hin/ may refer to the time of their death, or the time of their punishment, or both.

The Arabic word /qamrah/ is derived from the word /qamara/ which means to destroy the effect of something. Then the water that rushes ahead on its way like a flood has been called /qamar/ or /qamir/.

The meaning of this word has afterward been extended to the sense of ignorance and the troubles that overwhelm man. Thus in the verse, the word means ignorance, negligence, confusion and misguidance.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 55-56

أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِ مِن مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ

نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَل لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

55. "Do they think that what We aid them with wealth and children, "

56. "We are hasting unto them of good things? Nay, they do not perceive."

Evaluating oneself and others only on the basis of wealth and offspring indicates a lack of common sense.

("...Nay, they do not perceive.")

The previous verses talked about the danger of being doctrinally and ideologically obstinate and bigoted.

Those obstinate groups and parties who have these tendencies are obsessively attached to their ideas, get a great deal of pleasure from the thought of their ascription to their particular belief system and close their minds to any attempt at investigation and inquiry into other religions.

These latter two verses mention a part of other aspects of their self-conceit where the Qur'an says:

"Do they think that what We aid them with wealth and children, "

"We are hasting unto them of good things?..."

Do they think that having a great deal of property and offspring are proofs of the rightfulness of their belief and a sign of their spiritual greatness and closeness to Allah?

No, it is not like that, as the verse announces:

"...Nay, they do not perceive."

They are not aware that their very wealth and children are in fact a kind of punishment and chastisement or a means of trial and the beginning of the retribution for them. They are ignorant to the possibility that Allah might be giving them all kinds of blessings and favours in abundance so that the chastisement to come will be more painful for them.

It is a fact that if the doors of grace are closed to man, he will be more able to suffer troubles and deprivations, but this is not the case when he is used to a life of comfort and luxury for then the smallest deprivation can be very excruciating for him.

Moreover, this abundance of blessings usually thickens the veils of ignorance and conceit before the eyes of the evil and arrogant persons to the extent that they cannot return to the Path of Truth.

The Arabic word /numiddu/ is derived from the word /imdad/ and /madd/ which means to make the deficiency of something perfect, or to prevent something from ending.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 57-59

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُم مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّـهِم مُشْفِقُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِاَيَاتِ رَبِّـهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِرَبِّـهِمْ لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ

57. "Verily those, who from fear of their Lord are cautious, "

58. "And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord, "

59. "And those who do not associate (aught) with their Lord, "

Fear based on cognizant with a view to Allah's grandeur is a means towards development.

After negating the conjectures of those who are mostly self-conceited and ignorant, the Qur'an turns to the state of the believers and those who compete in doing good and then it describes their main characteristics.

At first, it says:

"Verily those, who from fear of their Lord are cautious, "

It is notable that the Qur'anic word /xašyat/ does not mean just any kind of fear, but the kind of fear that is associated with kindness and respect.

In view of the fact that 'khashyat' is related to the heart whereas 'ishfaq' is related to action, the reason why this type of cause and effect is mentioned in the verse will be made clear.

The verse in fact implies that the believers are those in whose hearts the fear based upon Allah's grandeur is found, and its effects become manifested in ftieir deeds and in their observance of the Divine commands.

In other words, the area where 'khashiyat' is perfected is the realm of 'ishfaq' wherekhashiyat influences behavior and disposes one to fulfil one's religious duties and refrain from sin.

The next verse says:

"And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord, "

This is to say, to have faith in the verses of Allah which is to believe in the Holy Qur'an. All of the Qur'an is the word of Allah from the 'ba' of the /bismillah/ of the first Sura to the 'seen' of 'an Nas', the last Sura totally have been sent to the Messenger of Allah (S), and all of its commandments must be obeyed.

The third verse indicates that the true believers affirm the sublimity and transcendence of Allah above any kind of similarity or association.

It says:

"And those who do not associate (aught) with their Lord, "

This means that they are pure monotheists. In fact, the negation of polytheism is a result and an effect of believing in the signs of Allah. In other words, having faith in the signs of Allah refers to the Divine positive characteristics and the negation of polytheism refers to His negative characteristics. Polytheism in this verse refers to any kind of polytheism whether hidden or open.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 60

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَآ ءَاتَوْا وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَي رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

60. "And those who give what they give (in charity) while their hearts are full of fear that they must (finally) return unto their Lord, "

The Arabic word /wajilah/ means worry and anxiety. The believer is afraid of Allah because he will have to stand before Him on the Day of Resurrection.

("...with hearts afraid...")

This verse mentions the stage of belief in the Resurrection and its effect upon the behaviour and the special attention of the true believers to Resurrection in practice when it occupies a central place in their thoughts.

The verse indicates that those who try their best to obey Allah in giving people their due and are aware that they will soon return to their Lord, feel guilt and fear that they might not have adequately performed their obligations.

The verse says:

"And those who give what they give (in charity) while their hearts are full of fear that they must (finally) return unto their Lord, "

They are not like those who lack foresight, have low ambition, and think that they are the favorites and are among the near stationed of Allah and fall in a surprising state of personality because of doing some small good deed, and think themselves better than others.

The true believers, on the contrary, when they do even the best of good deeds that might equal the worship of Jinn and man together, they say, as Imam Ali (as) said:

"Alas! Long is the journey of the Hereafter and small the supplies."

These verses indicate that man's spiritual perfection is realized in five stages:

1. The knowledge and gnosis which are the causes of fear:

("...who from fear of their Lord are cautious, ")[28]

2. Enduring and profound belief in that which Allah has revealed:

(“...who believe in...”) [29]

3. Avoidance of all kinds of polytheism, both the hidden and the apparent ones:

(“...who do not associate (aught) with their Lord...”)[30]

4. Charitableness in what Allah (s.w.t.) has bestowed upon a human being

(“...give what they give (in charity)...”) [31]

5. Lack of conceit and, in its stead, concern that whatever good one had done one might not have been adequately sincere, or that it might have been rejected by his Lord or that one’s duty might have been something else rendering him unable to answer Allah on the Day of Judgment

(“...while their hearts are full of fear...”)

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 61

أُوْلَئِكَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ

61. “These (are they who) hasten in good things and they are the foremost to (attain) them.”

Fear of Allah and the Hereafter makes us hasten to do good deeds.

In the commentary of verse 56, it was said that some people think that having wealth and offspring are the cause of happiness and would make them hasten in doing good deeds. However, this verse implies that haste in doing good comes from knowledge, faith, sincerity, and charity accompanied by apprehension, and not what they imagine.

Contrary to what those who are ignorant and conceited think, real happiness and prosperity are not things possessed by the wealthy and affluent. Goodness, prosperity and Divine favour belong to that group of believers who are qualified with the aforementioned specialties and are outstanding in their morals and beliefs and thus are pioneers in doing good deeds.

The verse says:

“These (are they who) hasten in good things and they are the foremost to (attain) them.”

These couple of verses have an obvious and interesting logical progression that describe the attributes of this special group of believers: First, it starts with the fear of Allah born out of respect for Him.

This is the motivating factor that makes them submit to Him and, negate all forms of polytheism. It ends with having faith in the Day of Resurrection and Allah’s Court of Justice, which causes us to do good deeds and to take responsibility for the quality of those deeds.

The Qur’anic word /yusari’una/ means outstripping others in speed. This interesting word expresses the state of believers who race in competing for a great and precious objective and indicates the relentlessness of the competitors in acts of goodness and righteous deeds.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 62

وَلاَ نُكَلِّفُ نَفْساً إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

62. "And We do not task a soul but to the extent of its ability, and with Us is Record which clearly speaks the truth, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

In Islamic jurisprudence there is a rule based on this verse called: 'the negation of distress and constriction', which governs all Islamic rulings and holds priority over them. It means that when an obligation causes intolerable hardship, that obligation becomes nullified.

The duties are not the same for all individuals. Everyone's obligations are related to his or her physical, intellectual, and resource capabilities. Allah does not expect the obligations of the poor to be the same as that of the rich.

The verse says:

"And We do not task a soul but to the extent of its ability, …"

The special attributes of the believers mentioned in the previous verses, that are the sources of all their good deeds, bring this question forth that not anyone can acquire such attributes nor all individuals have the ability of doing them.

The verse implies that Allah never obliges a person to do more than his power and strength but He expects everyone to do as much as his intelligence and capability can accomplish.

Divine duties and prescripts are in accordance with human strength and capability and whenever a duty exceeds one's power, one becomes exempt from that duty and as the scholars of methodology say, this method governs all Islamic ordinances and is prior to them.

It might be asked how will the deeds, big or small, of all human beings be reckoned?

The verse says:

"...and with Us is a Record which clearly speaks the truth, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

This refers to the Record in which all of man's deeds are recorded and stands before Allah. It seems that this Record can speak and tell the truth in such a way that it is not possible to deny.

Another probability is that this Record is the Protected Tablet (al Lawh ul Mahfuz); moreover, the Qur'anic phrase /ladayna/ ('with Us') confirms the latter interpretation.

The verse, however, indicates the fact that every single deed of ours will be accurately recorded and none of them will be forgotten. Belief in this fact encourages the righteous to do good deeds and dissuades them from doing wrong.

The Qur'anic sentence 'which speaks the truth' shows that the Record of man's deeds is so plain and convincing that it does not need to be explained. As we have said before, it is as if the Record itself would speak and reiterate truths without the necessity of reading it.

The Qur'anic sentence:

'...they will not be dealt with unjustly.'

refers to the fact that there will be no injustice when people are punished or rewarded for their deeds which are recorded accurately.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 63

بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْمَالٌ مِن دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَامِلُونَ

63. "But their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance of this (Record), and they have, besides that, other deeds which they are doing;"

The previous verses spoke about the righteous, but this verse concerns the unbelievers, whose actions differ from those of the righteous, and the Arabic word /bal/ (but) at the beginning is for the transition of the matter.

The Arabic word /qamrah/ (here translated as 'in ignorance')means the water or the whirlpool mat engulfs man. Thus we get the impression that they are immersed in ignorance that penetrates their very souls.

Since the statement of truth only influences those who are some how awake and aware, the verse immediately adds implying that the hearts of this group of obstinate infidels have sank so deeply in ignorance that they are heedless of the Record of the deeds, on the Day of Reckoning and Retribution, and of whatever the Qur'an mentions about the Divine promise.

The verse says:

"But their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance of this (Record)..."

To be overwhelmed by ignorance and unawareness does not let them see these truths clearly which would have awoken their consciences and, perhaps, make them return to Allah.

Interpreters have various opinions about the meaning of the rest of the verse, which says:

"...and they have, besides that, other deeds which they are doing;"

Some say that it refers to the wrong deeds they do because of ignorance. (Thus the word /alika/ here, translated as 'that', refers to their ignorance.) The Arabic word /'a'mal/ (deeds) refers to the sins that they commit because of this very ignorance.

Other commentators say that the verse means that not only do they not believe in the true doctrine but that they are also from the point of action very corrupt. Yet others say that the verse means that the program and conduct of the unbelievers are completely different from those of the believers, so they follow two different paths.

In the final analysis, these apparently different interpretations are not inconsistent and can be reconciled with each other. What is important is that the source and cause of their evil deeds is the fact that their hearts are steeped in ignorance and unawareness.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 64-65

حَتَّى إِذَآ أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِم بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْأَرُونَ

لاَ تَجْأَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُم مِنَّا لاَ تُنصَرُونَ

64. "Until, when We seize the luxurious ones of them with punishment, behold, they groan."

65. " (It will be said to them:) 'Groan not this day! Surely you will not be helped by Us!"

The Qur'anic word /yaj'arun/ means the howl of a dog or wolf when the animal is hurt. The likening of the groans of the tranquil negligent ones to the howl of a dog is a sign of their abjectness because of their worldly intoxication.

No other means except the Divine Punishment can awaken this conceited proud and tranquil group that is drowning in the pleasures of the world. Until such a time they will remain ignorant and negligent wallowing in their wealth, power and comforts when they are punished, and at that time they will howl like beasts, and they groan because of the heaviness of the Divine chastisement.

The verse says:

"Until, when We seize the luxurious ones of them with punishment, behold, they groan."

The next verse, addressing them, implies: Groan not in supplication this day! Verily you will not be helped by Us!

It says;

" (It will be said to them:) 'Groan not this day! Surely you will not be helped by Us!"

Of course the wrongdoers are not limited to the 'mutrafin':

('...those who receive the good things of this world ...'),

who are mentioned here, it is either because they are the chiefs and leaders of ignorance and deviation, or it is because their punishment will be more painful and severe.

The punishment mentioned here may be the punishment in this world, in the Hereafter or in both, and when Allah punishes them in this world or in the Hereafter they will cry loudly and supplicate. But at that time the dice has already been cast and the chastisement has been decided, so they will not be able to return.

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Allah, The Blessed and The Exalted, has sworn that three groups have no place in Paradise: The group that rejects the commandments of Allah, the Almighty and Glorious; the group that does not obey the command of the leading Imam, and the group that does not give a believer his due."[32]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 66-67

قَدْ كَانَتْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَي عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُمْ عَلَي أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنكِصُون

مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَامِراً تَهْجُرُونَ

66. "Indeed My Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but you used to turn back on your heels, "

67. "In arrogance: talking nonsense about it (the Qur'an), discoursing foolishly by night."

Ignoring the prophets is not a sign of development and progress; rather it causes deterioration and regression. Divine rules and prescripts are essential to attaining perfection, and ignoring them causes our downfall,

("...you used to turn back on your heels.")

This holy verse actually tells us the primary cause of their ominous fate. It indicates that in former times Allah's Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but (instead of learning a lesson from them) you used to turn back on your heels.

The holy verse says:

"Indeed My Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but you used to turn back on your heels, "

The Qur'anic word /tankisun/ (here, turn back on ones heels) is derived from the word /nakas/ and means to regress or retreat. And the Arabic word /'a'qab/ is the plural form of /'aqib/ which means the heel of the foot. The whole sentence means that when some people hear something that they are abhorrent of, they get so disturbed that they turn back on their beefs and go back in retreat.

The next verse means that not only do they turned back by hearing the verses of Allah, but they also maintained an arrogant and dismissive attitude towards the object of their revulsion as well. Moreover, they used to hold their nightly gatherings and vilify the Prophet (S), The Holy Qur'an, and the believers.

The Qur'an continues saying:

"In arrogance: talking nonsense about it (the Qur'an), foolishly by night."

The Arabic word /samiran/ is derived from the word /samar/ which means a chat or conversation at night. Some interpreters have said that the actual meaning of this word is 'the reflection of the moon at night', in which darkness and light blend into each other.

This word is used for a nighttime conversation under the moonlight. It has been narrated that the Arab polytheists used to gather around the Ka'bah on moonlit nights and talk against the Prophet (S). In Arabic, a dark or wheat colored person is described as /samra'/, for whiteness and blackness is mixed in him.

The Arabic word /tahjurun/ (talking nonsense) is derived from the word /hajr/ which originally means 'to keep away from' or to desert. It also means the delirious speech of a sick person whose words are, in that state, unpleasant and cause others go away. The Arabic word /hujr/, which is also related to that word, means obscene language that makes others leave the speaker.

This latter meaning is meant in the above verse. It means they sat up until late at nights and, as sick ones, they talked in delivian and obscene language.

This is the way and method of the people who are weak, despicable, and lacking in intelligence. They do not choose to express their views in public in the light of day, and do not rely on their intellect and reason. Instead, they cowardly choose the darkness of the night when people are sleeping and cannot see them to vilify others, console each other and advance their evil aims.

The Holy Qur'an implies that the reason for their misery and punishment was that they were not brave enough to accept The Truth, refusing to submit to the Signs of Allah in humility and they did not treat the Prophet (S) with reason and respect. If they did they could find the path of the truth.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 68-70

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَآءَهُم مَّا لَمْ يَأْتِ ءَابَآءَهُمُ الاَوَّلِينَ

أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنكِرُونَ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَآءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ

68. "Have they not pondered over the statement (of the Qur'an), or has anything come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?"

69. "Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they reject him?"

70. "Or do they say: 'There is a madness in him'? Rather he has brought them the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth."

The first cause of a people's misfortune and misery is when they cease to think and reflect. Not only is the Holy Qur'an a book for recitation but it is a book for contemplation and reflection as well, and anyone who will ponder its words will discover its profound truths.

The former holy verses spoke about the excuses that the unbelievers made to justify their deeds, and the firm answer to them.

These verses concisely show five real reasons why the unbelievers shunned the truth:

First, the Qur'an says:

"Have they not pondered over the statement (of the Qur'an)..."

Following the previous verses which were about the unbelievers' opposition against the Prophet (S), the first cause of their misery is that they did not think and ponder over the content of the Prophet's call; were it the opposite, their problems would no longer have existed.

Secondly it says:

"...or has anything come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?"

This indicates that when the Prophet (S) had invited them to the belief in the Oneness of Allah, the belief in the Resurrection, and to good deeds and purity, they would make excuses that these were ideas too novel for them to accept, and that if they had been true, Allah Who is merciful to all human beings, would have revealed them to their ancestors.

However, when we consider the fact that the Prophet's message is the same in principle and origin as that of the previous prophets, this excuse becomes devoid of meaning.

The fourth reason that they proffered for shunning the truth is as the next verse says:

"Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they reject him?"

They behaved as if the Prophet (S) was someone unknown to them and thus they were rather reluctant to give credence to his message. But they had known him quite well, for he had been among them for his whole life and was so faithful to his covenants and word that he gained fame among them as 'the Trustworthy' in Arabic, 'Al Amin'.

They confessed to his knowledge and reason. His parents and his tribe were known for them. Again, this excuse lost its validity in the light of this verse.

The fifth excuse they advanced for rejecting the Prophet's message is mentioned in the verse which says:

"Or do they say: 'There is a madness in him'?..."

This means mat although they might have known him well, they did not have confidence in the soundness of his intellect.

It was possible that his words could have been produced by madness, for they did not accord with public opinion; and disregarding the traditions is itself a reason for madness.

The Holy Qur'an refutes all of these excuses of theirs by immediately saying:

"...Rather he has brought them the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth."

These are the words of wisdom but, because the wise words of the Qur'an were not in accord with their uncontrolled passions, they denied them and labeled them insane.

It is for this reason that the enemies of religion sully and scandalize the personalities of those close to Allah in order to preserve their corrupt ideologies. However, the truth must be proclaimed even though the majority of society might be averse to it.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 71

وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عن ذِكْرِهِم مُعْرِضُونَ

71. "And if the Truth had followed their low desires, certainly the heavens and the earth, and whoever therein would have perished! Rather, We have sent them their Reminder (the Qur'an), but they turn away from their Reminder."

If the Truth accorded with people's desires, the order of existence would be destroyed for people's desires, even the desires of one person, never remain constant in different points of time.

Therefore, this noble verse says:

"And if the Truth had followed their low desires, certainly the heavens and the earth, and whoever therein would have perished!..."

This situation is because reason is not the only factor that determines people's motivations and desires for, in many cases, people also follow their evil passions. If the rules of existence were in conformity with these deviant drives, chaos, anarchy and corruption would prevail over the whole world!

In order to emphasize more this matter, the verse says:

"...Rather, We have sent them their Reminder (the Qur'an), but they turn away from their Reminder."[33]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 72-73

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجاً فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

72. "Or is it that you ask them a recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is the best: He is the Best of the sustainers."

73. "And verily you call them unto the Straight Way."

The Arabic word /xarj/ means that which is consumed, however 'kharaj' means a fixed amount determined as a tax or rent on land.[34]

One must not ask for money to propagate religion. Allah is the One Who guarantees the sustenance of those who do that. This holy verse implies that whether the excuse of their escape from the truth was that the holy Prophet (S) might ask a recompense from them for his call, while the recompense of Allah would certainly be better, ands He is the Best for giving sustenance.

The verse says:

"Or is it that you ask them a recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is the best: He is the Best of the sustainers."

Undoubtedly if a spiritual leader asks people for material reward and recompense for his call, not only would he provide an excuse for some pretext seekers to avoid him because of not having the financial resources, but he could also be accused of using his call to the Truth as a business to earn a living.

Furthermore, what does this human being have to give to another? Is not all sustenance in the hands of Allah, the Provider and the All-Powerful? The previous verses, however, have already shown that the five major excuses that these blind-hearted people advanced to avoid yielding to the Truth and justified their opposition with only unfounded pretexts.

The Qur'an here illustrates the sincerity of the Prophet (S) and the truth of his call; it is that he does not seek any material gain from the people. If he did so, it would have provided one more excuse for the obstinate unbelievers to use against him.

As a general conclusion, the next verse says:

"And verily you call them unto the Straight Way."

It is 'the Straight Way' whose signs are obvious for those who do not blind themselves and soon it will be evident to those who are not minute.

We know that the Straight Way is the shortest distance between two points and is the only way, but there are endless divergent paths to its left and right.

In some narrations 'the Straight Way' has been interpreted to mean the guardianship of Imam Ali (as)[35], but as we have said may times such narrations are the statement of some of the clear examples of the original meaning and they never contrast the existence of other examples, such as: the Qur'an, belief in Allah, Resurrection, Holy war, and justice.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 74

وإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّـرَاطِ لَنَاكِبُونَ

74. "And verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter are deviating from the Way."

Having faith in the Resurrection keeps us upon the Straight Way, and the lack of faith in the Resurrection makes us deviate from it.

That is why, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"And verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter are deviating from the Way."

The Arabic word /nakib/ is derived from the words /nakab/ and /nakub/ meaning deviation and turning back the world.

It is clear that the purpose of 'the Way', mentioned in this verse, is 'the Straight Way' which was mentioned in the former verse.

Certainly he who deviates from 'the Straight Way' in this world will deviate from the way that leads to Paradise in the Hereafter and will fall into Hell, for whatever a person has in Hereafter are the direct results of his actions in the world.

The verse stresses the relation of lack of faith in the Hereafter to deviation from the Way of Truth. This is because man does not feel any sense of responsibility when he does not believe in the Resurrection.

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Allah has appointed us, (the religious leaders), as His gates (towards realizing His gnosis) and His path and His way by which (people can) reach Him. Thus, those who deviate from our guardianship or prefer others over us verily they are diverging from the Way of the Truth."[36]

Here are some characteristics and qualities of the religious leaders extracted from the former verses.

These Divine leaders were known for their goodness and their kindnesses.

If they were as unknown and mysterious, as the verse says:

"Or do they not recognize their messenger, that they reject him?"[37]

The hypocrites would have had an excuse to dismiss their known Divine call because they would have been unknown to them.

In the course of their missions, they have never yielded to the desires and whims of people, unlike today where leaders are expected to submit to public opinion. They remained steady in propagating the doctrine of the Truth, even though it might not have pleased a large number of people.

In addition, they did not ask for any material reward for their mission and bore all kinds of deprivation, for relying on others for their sustenance would have constricted their freedom of thought and language to present the Divine message.

So only the Prophet's Family (Ahl-ul-Bayt) (as) possess these noble qualities, therefore the Prophet (S) said:

"The likeness of my Ahl-ul-Bayt (progeny) is similar to Noah's Ark; those who embark upon this ship will be saved, and those who do not embark upon it will be drowned."

This tradition has been narrated by one hundred of great Sunni scholars, and among the Shi'ite scholars, it has gained the state of successive transmission. It has been mentioned in the following books: Al-Ghadir, Vol. 4, P. 177, Ihqaq ul-Haqq, part 9, P. 270, and Nafahat ul-'Azhar fi Khulasah 'Abaqat ul-'Anwar[38] part 4, P. 11.

In this context, there is another famous tradition that has been successively transmitted by Shi'ites and Sunnis: Jabir ibn 'Abdullah-i-'Ansari said:

"I said:

'O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulul-'Amr, those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abitalib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam)

Hussayn; then Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn; then Mohammad-ibn-Ali; known in the Turah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! when you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, - Ja'far-ibnMuhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im, whose name and sir-name is the same as mine.

He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants. He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (al-'Askari).

This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and the Wests of the worlds, and this is the very personality who will be absent from his followers and his lovers in which his mastership can not be proved by a statement of anyone except for the one whose heart Allah tests for Faith."

This tradition has been quoted in the Commentary of Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 59. Again[39], this tradition has been narrated in Manhaj us-Sadiqin, The Great Commentary, and other commentaries such as Safi, Majma' ul-Bayan, Burhan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Jawami'-ul-Jami', and so on. Moreover Sunnis have also narrated this tradition: you can refer to Ihqaq ul-Haqq, Vol. 3, P. 425, and Fakhr-i-Razi's commentary after the above-mentioned verse, Yanabi' ul Mawaddah, P. 117, Faraid us-Samtayn by Hamwini, Vol. 1, P. 312 Al-Ghadir by the Late Amini, 'Abaqat ul-'Anwar, and other books by Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Also we read in Yanabi'-ul-Mawaddah narrated from the book Mawaddat al-Qurba by Sayyid Ali Hamadani Shafe'i that Abuthar Ghaffari said that the Prophet (S) said:

"Ali is the gate of my knowledge. After me he will tell my people what has been sent to me. After me, loving him is to have faith, being hostile towards him will be hypocrisy, and looking at him with affection will be worship."

This tradition has been narrated by Daylami in Firdaus al-Akhbar, Hamwini in Fara'id-us-Samtayn, and Ibn Maghazili Shafi'i in Manaqib.

It has been cited in the Book of Wasilah, and Nuzul-us-Sa'rin fi Ahadith Sayyid-ul-Mursalin from Umm-us-Salamah, the Prophet's wife who said that the Prophet (S) said:

"Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and his Shiites will be successful on the Day of Resurrection"

This tradition has been narrated by Hamwini Shafi'i in Fara'id us-Samtayn, chapter 21 and Manawi in Kunuz-ul-Haqa'iq, in the margin of Jami'-us-Saqir, Vol. 2, P. 21 by Suyuti, and Sibt ibn Jawzi in Tathkirah Khawas ul-'A'immah, P. 31, and Kharazmi in Manaqib, P. 66, have narrated it from Umm-us-Salamah. It has also been narrated in the book The Explanation of Jami'-us-Saqir and the book Suyuti, Vol. 2, P. 21

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 75

وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِم مِن ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّواْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

75. "If We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, blindly wandering on."

Occasion of the Revelation

In the books of commentary on titled: Kanz ul-Daqa'iq and Ruh ul-Bayan, we read that once there had been a famine in Mecca and Abu Sufyan asked the Prophet (S) to pray. The Prophet (S) prayed and because of this the famine ended, then this verse was revealed.

Wealth and comfort are manifestations of Divine mercy, but unbelieving men misuse their opportunities and respites.

The Qur'an says:

("...those who believe not in the Hereafter... would obstinately persist in their transgression.")

The previous verses spoke of the various excuses that the deniers of the Truth made to disobey the call of the prophets. In these verses Allah talks about awakening them and giving them the final argument.

The verse indicates that first of all Allah bestows blessings upon them to awake. Then it implies that even if Allah showers blessings upon them and keeps away waves of disaster from them, they are so impure that they persist in their disobedience and they remain wandered in this field.

The verse says:

"If We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, blindly wandering on."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 76

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

76. "And indeed We inflicted chastisement on them, but they were not submissive unto their Lord, nor do they humble themselves, "

An Islamic tradition says that the Arabic word /'istikanat/ means 'to humble oneself', and the word /tadarru'/ means 'to raise the hands in supplication'.

The previous verse was about the obstinate unbelievers, indicating that if Allah had mercy on them they would obstinate and do not improve themselves. It indicates Allah grasped them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves unto their Lord, because: there is often no use in preaching to a black hearted one.

The verse also implies that sometimes they were taught a lesson through calamities to be on their guard but they had no effect upon them.

The verse says:

"And indeed We inflicted chastisement on them, but they were not submissive unto their Lord, nor do they humble themselves, "

The Qur'anic word /tadarru'/ is derived from the Arabic word /dara'a/, which means to grasp an udder, and the word /tadarru'/ means the one who milks. This word has been extended to mean the yielding associated with humility.

Thus the verse implies that these catastrophic events did not remove them from the state of conceit and transgression and they did not submit the truth.

If some narrations say that the word /tadarru‘/ means raising the hands at the time of prayer and supplication, this is actually expressing one of the extensions of this vast meaning.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 77

حَتَّى إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَاباً ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

77. “Until, when We open against them a gate of severe chastisement, behold! They will get into despair at it.”

The Arabic word /mublis/ is derived from the word /iblas/, which means the grief and sorrow that overcomes man after a severely traumatic and bitter event that usually makes him silent, astonished and full of despair. Of course, the gates of Divine chastisement are closed to us, but our obstinacy and stubbornness towards the Truth cause Allah to open these gates to us.

The following principles are observed in all the stages of education to which Allah subjects man:

1. He behaves kindly and gracefully with him.
2. He punishes him in order to admonish him.
3. He often inflicts ultimate punishment upon him causing misery and helplessness

(“...a severe chastisement...”)

That is why the Qur’an in this verse indicates that Allah continues giving them these favours, blessings and awakening chastisements when they continue their disobedience and their obstinacy.

Until when, as the verse says:

“Until, when We open against them a gate of severe chastisement, behold! They will get into despair at it.”

In fact, Allah inflicts two kinds of punishment:

A) Punishments that teach

B) Punishments that obliterate and cause despair Punishments that teach put man into troubles so that he can experience his weakness and incapability and stop being conceited.

Punishments that obliterate are inflicted upon incorrigible people to root them out, for they have no right to live in this system. They are thorns in the path of human perfection and must be eliminated.

With regard to the objective of the Qur’anic phrase,

“...a gate of severe chastisement...”

there are different views among the commentators:

Some say that it is death and the punishment of the Day of Resurrection respectively.

Some others say that it refers to the severe famine that had afflicted the unbelievers for some years due to the Prophet’s (S) curse. Staple items of food became very scarce and the people had to eat things that none like to consume them in normal case.

Some say that it refers to the painful punishment particular to the incorrigible ones that the Muslim fighters inflicted upon the unbelievers in War of Badr.

Another possibility is that it does not refer to any special group, but is a general rule governing Divine punishments that start with mercy and are then followed by punishments that educate people and, finally, ending up with punishments that obliterate.

Notes

1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 4. Abwab ud Du'a'. Bab 67, tradition 4
2. Bihar Vol. 11, p. 58
3. Sura Al- Baqara, No. 2, verse 172
4. Sura Fatir, No. 35, verse 10
5. Sura 'Isra', No. 17, verse 70
6. The commentary of Qurtuby, Vol. 7, following this verse
7. Maraqy, the commentary
8. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
9. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Halal', p. 298
10. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 170
11. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 5
12. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
13. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Halal', p. 298
14. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
15. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
16. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
17. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
18. Furu' ul- Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 125
19. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Haram', p. 244
20. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 16
21. Safinah, p. 244, and Wasa'il, Vol. 6, p. 16
22. Majmueh Warram
23. Madynat ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2, p. 479
24. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, p. 60
25. Mishkat ul-'Anwar, p. 388
26. Sura Al-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 23
27. Sura Noah, No. 71, verse 7
28. verse 57
29. verse 58
30. verse 59
31. verse 60
32. Mizan ul-Hikmah, p. 806, narrated from Saduq's khisal
33. Using the Arabic phrase/ðikrihim/ can be interpreted as reminding them or awakening them. It may also mean their respect, honor, and their remembrance in human society.
34. Mufradat by Raqib
35. Nur-uth-Thaqalqyn, The commentary, Vol. 3, p. 548 and Safi, The commentary
36. 'Usul Kafi, narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, p. 549
37. The Current Sura, Verse 69
38. by Sayyid Ali Hussayni Milani
39. "O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority ('Ulu-l-'Amr) among you …"

Section 5: Even the Disbelievers Helplessly Acknowledge the Glory of Allah

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 78-79

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ وَالأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

78. "He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts (minds); (very) little it is what you give thanks."

79. "And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth, and unto Him you shall be mustered."

Remembrance of Divine Blessings often paves the way for gnosis and thanksgiving. Therefore, The Holy Qur'an tries to arouse this sense of thanksgiving by mentioning the Divine blessings.

The verse says:

"He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts (minds); (very) little it is what you give thanks."

The emphasis is put on these three things, 'hearing, sight and understanding', because they are the main means of gnosis. Physical phenomena are mostly perceived through the ear and eye. Mental issues are understood through the mind.

To comprehend how important the senses of vision and audition are, it will be enough to imagine the state that man would be in if these senses were lost, how limited his world would be, how empty of light and awareness!

By losing these senses, he might even lose other faculties under his control, such as the ability to speak, which is assisted in its function through audition and acts as a means of communicating with others. (Those who are congenitally deaf are usually always impaired of speech as a consequence.)

Thus, these two senses are the keys to the world of perceptible things. The mind, however, is the key to the metaphysical world, and it criticizes, concludes, generalizes, and analyzes the data provided by those two senses.

Should not those who do not thank Allah for these great means of knowledge be blamed and justly punished? Does not contemplating the intricacies of these three faculties suffice to make man familiar with his Creator?

It is obvious why the blessings of the ear and eye precede that of the understanding. But why does the blessing of the ear come before that of the eye? Scientific research has shown that the ear of a newborn starts to function before its eyes begin to do so.

This is because the environment of the womb is without light and the eyes can see nothing. The ear is not the same. The fetus can hear while in the womb and is familiar with the sound of its mother's heart and even her voice.

The mention of these three invaluable favours motivates us to seek knowledge of the One Who has granted them to us. Some of the scholars of religion say that such knowledge leads us to thanking Him for these gifts, which is the basis for the rational obligation of knowing Allah.

The next verse speaks of one of the most important signs of Allah, which is the creation of man from the earth:

"And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth..."

And, because the human being is made of earth, he will return to it, and will be raised up and then will be mustered unto Him.

The verse continues saying:

"...and unto Him you shall be mustered."

If we ponder over the fact that we are made of earth, it will be enough for us, the mortals, to know the Giver of Existence and understand the possibility of the Resurrection.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 80

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلاَفُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

80. "And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Monotheism is mainly achieved through contemplation and reflection.

(".. .Have you then no sense?")

After speaking about the proliferation of human beings, the Qur'an turns to the issue of life, death, and the alternation of day and night which are of the great signs of Allah.

It says:

"And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Thus, these recent three verses start with motivating us to know Allah and then end with mentioning some of the most important signs in the microcosm and the macrocosm. In other words, they mention man's journey from birth to death and his return to Allah, all of which, are at the mercy of Allah and decided by His will.

Note: The creation of life and death is juxtaposed with the creation of 'day' and 'night', for light and darkness in the world of existence are like death and life in the world of living creatures.

As the world of existence moves and functions under the rays of light and becomes still and motionless under the curtain of darkness, living creatures also begin their movement with the light of life and cease it and its function with the darkness of death. Moreover, both of them are gradual phenomena.

The alternation of day and night means that one of them takes the place of the other. It can also mean their gradual lengthening and contraction, which result in the four seasons of the year and are important factors in the life of the plants. These factors all serve to guide us to knowing and thanking Allah.

Thus, at the end of the verse it says:

"...Have you then no sense?"

Some Traditions On the Intellect

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Intellect is something by which Paradise will be detained and through which the pleasure of Allah is achieved."[1]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The intellect guides and ignorance misleads."[2]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Allah, the Glorified, has not distributed anything better than the intellect among His servants."[3]

4. Imam Hassan al-Mujtaba (as) said:

"By means of the intellect one can achieve both the goodness and reward of this world and the Hereafter and the one who has no intellect is deprived of the benefits and advantages of them all together."[4]

5. Imam Rida (as) said:

"The intellect is the friend of every man, and his enemy is his ignorance."[5]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

"One cannot overcome the world except by the power of the intellect."[6]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Man's religion is his intellect and whoever has no intellect has no religion."[7]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Pondering much on science (and knowledge) opens the gate of the intellect."[8]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Everything has a tool (and a support), and the believer's tool (and support) is the intellect. Everything has a vehicle and man's vehicle is the intellect. Everything has an end and the end of worship is the intellect.

Every nation has a guardian and the guardian of the worshippers is the intellect. Every merchant has a capital and the capital of the strivers is the intellect. Everything ruined is mended by something and the Hereafter is mended by the intellect. Every traveler has a tent in which he takes refuge and the tent of the Muslim is the intellect."[9]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 81-83

بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الاَوَّلُونَ

قَالُوا أءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَآؤُنَا هَذَا مِن قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ

81. "Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."

82. "They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"

83."Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

The Arabic word /'asatir/ is the plural form of /'usturah/, meaning a story or legend that is false. The word /'usturah/ itself is derived from the word 'satr', meaning line. Thus words that come one after the other can be said to line up.

The Qur'an mentions nine times from the tongue of the unbelievers this word to oppose the message of the prophets. They had no reasons or arguments to refute them; their only responses to the Truth were incredulity and denial,

("...shall we then be raised up again?...")

In the previous verses, those who denied the oneness of Allah and the Resurrection were called to ponder the world of existence and the signs in the microcosm and macrocosm. Now, as these verses indicate, they have abandoned intellectual thinking and simply, blindly imitate their ancestors, and have dismissed the Resurrection as tales of the ancients.

The verse says:

"Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."

But their argument about the denial of Resurrection is also the same thing that the ancients used to say. Then their exact words are reiterated in the next verse:

"They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"

This question of theirs shows that the unbelievers were rather ignorant, for if they had contemplated their creation in this world, that is, the possibility of their coming into existence from nonexistence, then they would have been able to conclude that their resurrection from the dead would have been just as possible and they would confess that Allah is their Creator.

In the next verse, they indicate that this is an unbelievable action. Such things have been promised to us and our forefathers before. They are nothing but fables of the men of old.

The verse says:

"Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

By this, they mean that their re-creation, the Reckoning, Paradise, and Hell are nothing but mere fancy.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 84-87

قُل لِمَنِ الاَرْضُ وَمن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

قُلْ مَن رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

84. "Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"

85. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"

86. "Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"

87. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

The Arabic word /rabb/ means an owner who intends to maintain and manage his estate. It also means educator and trainer. The Qur'anic word "Arsh'" is used here to mean the Throne of Allah, which is beyond the Seven Heavens. When this word is applied to Allah it means the totality of the world of existence, which is ruled by Allah.

"...His Throne includes the heavens and the earth..."[10]

Since the unbelievers and the polytheists were more afraid of the Resurrection than anything else, they consequently avoided it and their

responsibilities by making various kinds of excuses and using delicate tricks. The Holy Qur'an thus placed emphasis on the Resurrection and elaborately explained it.

Thus, in the verses under discussion, the Holy Qur'an refutes the faulty logic of the rejecters of Resurrection with three arguments:

1. Allah's ownership of the world of existence.
2. His Lordship.
3. His sovereignly over the whole world of existence.

The conclusion here is that from every aspect Allah is capable of causing the Resurrection and His justice and wisdom necessitate that the Hereafter must be a reality after the end of this world.

It is notable that in the answers to every one of the questions posed in the verses above, the unbelievers confess the reality of Allah (s.w.t.) as the Lord and Master, contradicting their very attitude and belief.

At first, the Qur'an announces:

"Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"

Here is their answer:

"They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"

This clear answer is based on their innate disposition that testifies to the belief in Allah, the Creator of the existence.

This answer, however, contradicts the egoistic claims that issue from their mouths and because of this the Qur'an replies to them:

"Will you not then remember?"

After such a clear and explicit confession, how could they think that a human being's resurrection after death would be unlikely and beyond Allah's all embracing power?

Through the next holy verse, the Qur'an orders that the unbelievers should be asked again:

"Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"

Once again, they answer, automatically out of their own innate monotheistic disposition and their belief in Allah, as the Creator of the whole existence.

The verse says:

"They will say: 'Allah's'..."

But in spite of this explicit confession, they still do not fear Allah and deny the Resurrection and the return of man to life again, so they are asked in response:

"...Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 88-90

قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلاَ يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

88. "Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (all), but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"

89. "They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah.' Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"

90. "Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

In the first holy verse here they are asked again about the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth.

The noble verse announces:

"Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (all), but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"

They know who the absolute sovereign is, for here is their answer:

"They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah.'..."

Nevertheless, they say something far from the truth their hearts claim and thus they are deluded.

"...Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"

These are the facts that they confess to at every stage. They acknowledge Him as the Owner of existence, and they confess that He is the Creator of all things and is the All Wise Manager and Ruler.

Can He Who has such power and ability, Whose dominion is so all pervasive not be able to gather together and reconstitute a human being who had passed away and had returned to dust, given that he had been made from dust in the beginning?

Why did they evade the facts? Why did they condemn the Prophet (S) as insane or as a sorcerer, when their hearts confessed that these facts were true? Indeed they belied with their egos what they believed in the core of their being.

The verse says:

"Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

This phrase implies that what had been sent to them through the Prophet (S) was not magic or anything else, it was the Truth but they refused to acknowledge it.

Allah and His prophets had left no stone unturned when they proclaimed the message. Those who have closed their eyes to it have deviated and, indeed, many of them stubbornly stick to their lies.

From the verses of The Holy Qur'an, it can be accurately inferred that the deniers of the Resurrection were mostly against the idea of a physical resurrection. They thought it is incredulous that a human being, who had disintegrated into dust, could be returned to life.

Because of this, many verses stress upon the power of Allah and show examples of it in the world of existence in order to eliminate this skepticism and their wonder.

In the verses above, this issue is addressed in three ways:

A) His power over the earth and its inhabitants.

B) The heavens and the Mighty Throne.

C) The power of His management over the world of creation.

These three ways can be placed under one heading; guiding and challenging the unbelievers while they are presented as responses to their various opinions.

There is another probability that each of these three issues refers to one of view points of the deniers of Resurrection. It implies that if their denial is

based on the idea that human beings that have been dead and gone would be outside Allah's power, they are wrong, for they acknowledge that Allah is the Lord of the earth and all that is within it.

If it is because resurrecting the dead requires a powerful Lord, they themselves call Him the Lord of the heavens and the 'Arsh.

If this denial is because they doubt the existence of an all powerful administrator of this world and the world to come or the giving of a new life to the dead, this denial would not be valid because they have acknowledged the power of His management over the entire world of existence and that He looks after the needs of all creatures. Thus, there is no room for their denial.

The concordance of the unbelievers' answers:

("They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah...")[11]

strengthens the first commentary.

It is interesting that the first, second, and third answers respectively appear in the following forms:

"...Will you not then remember?"[12]

"...Will you not then keep from evil?"[13]

"...How then are you bewitched?"[14]

These reproaches and reprimands, indeed, as the discourse progresses show a logical progression in educating and guiding the unbelievers. Condemning a person has three levels; first, a light upbraiding, then a firm reprimand, and finally a severe scolding.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 91-92

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذاً لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي

بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

91. "No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others. Glorified be Allah above what they describe!"

92. " (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible! So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Having belief in any kind of offspring for Allah is forbidden; (whether considering Jesus as the son of Allah or the angels or others).

In the previous verses, the subject of the Resurrection and Allah's ownership, sovefeignty and Lordship were discussed. The verses now under consideration criticize the ideological base of polytheism and state some of the deviations of the polytheists with their responses. The Qur'an answers them in these verses.

It says:

"No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him..."

The belief that Allah had begotten an offspring or some children was not limited to the Christians, who held that Jesus (as)was God's actual son. This belief was also current among some polytheists.

They thought that the angels were God's daughters and there is evidence to assume that, perhaps, the Christians had taken this concept from old

polytheists. Since offspring share in the nature of their parents, they assumed that Jesus, the angels, and the like also shared in the Divine nature of God which is one of the most common characteristics of polytheism.

The verse then mentions the reason why the concept of a plurality of gods should be rejected. It implies that if Allah had had partners and more than one god had ruled over the world, each of these gods would have managed and established his control over the realm of his own creations.

Consequently different parts of the universe would end up being managed under different laws and systems. This would have given rise to chaos and disorder in the universe and this does not accord with the unity of creation that we witness around us.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others..."

In the end, as a general conclusion, the verse says:

"...Glorified be Allah above what they describe!"

The result of this discourse is that we can discern a unified system of laws that governs the world of existence. These laws are the same everywhere in the heavens and the earth.

They are found, unchanged, regulating and governing the behaviour of the minutest sub atomic particle and the components of the solar system and other great galaxies. Indeed, if an atom is magnified, it will appear like a miniature solar system, and, on the contrary, if solar system is seen from afar it will look like an atom.

Modern researches conducted on .distant objects in space by experts from different disciplines also show that there is unity in the general order of the world.

On the other side, the idea of a multiplicity of gods necessitates the existence of differences and contrasts between them, for if two objects were alike in every aspect, they would become one object and the state of multiplicity between them would be meaningless.

If we suppose that the world of existence had numerous gods, this polycentrism would have an effect on the order of the universe. This would result in a lack of unity in the order of creation.

Furthermore, all beings seek to perfect themselves. This is true unless an entity is perfect in every aspect, in which case it would be meaningless for it to seek perfection.

The logical conclusion of a plurality of gods, each having separate sovereignties would be that, because of the limitation of their spheres of sovereignty, they would not be perfect and each of them would naturally seek to perfect itself.

Each one of them would want to bring the entire world of existence under its sovereignty, and thus they would compete with each other for dominance and plunge the order of existence into chaos and confusion.

One might counter this argument and say that if we assume that these gods were wise and merciful they would certainly be able to manage the universe cooperatively. In other words, the problem of chaos and disorder

could certainly be eliminated if these gods formed a council of themselves to manage the universe.

The answer to this question is not very complicated. Their wisdom does not negate their multiplicity. When we say they are multiple, it means that they are not similar to each other. Ifthey were similar in every aspect, they would have been one god.

Therefore, whenever there is multiplicity, differences and dissimilarities would certainly be found, and this would influence these gods in their actions and their managing of the universe which results chaos and confusion.

Concerning this subject there is a tradition that says:

One day Hisham ibn Hakam asked Imam Sadiq (as):

"What is the reason that Allah is unique and singular?"

The Imam answered:

"Because there is union and coherence in the management of the universe and the creation is perfect, as Allah, the Exalted, has said:

'If there were therein (other) gods besides Allah, they would both (the heavens and the earth) go to ruin...'[15]**"**[16]

The next verse gives another answer to these unbelievers who advance the absurdity of a multiplicity of gods.

It implies that He does not know any gods that unbelievers claim, where it says:

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!..."

Allah knows all things that exist both in the visible and invisible worlds. It is therefore impossible for these unbelievers to know about the existence of another god unknown to the Creator.

The content of this verse is similar to verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No. 10, where Allah says:

"...say: 'will you inform Allah of what He does not know either in the heavens or in the earth?..."

Finally, it reduces the superstitious imaginations of the polytheists to nothing:

"...So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Similarly, the end of this verse is just like that of verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No 10. It says:

"...Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

And it shows that both of the verses follow the same subject.

This sentence also threatens the polytheists, for it means that Allah is aware of both their hidden and manifest secrets. He knows these arguments very well and will judge and punish them in His Court when the time comes.

Concerning the phrase,

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!...",

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"What has not taken place is 'the Unseen' and what has taken place is 'the Visible'."

Notes

1. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 519
2. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 515
3. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 6, p. 80 and Vol. 2, p. 745
4. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 111
5. Al-kafi, Vol. 1, 11, 4
6. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 7
7. Nahj ul-Fasahah, p. 330
8. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 116
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 2, p. 286
10. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
11. Verse 89 in the above
12. verse 85
13. verse 87
14. verse 89
15. Sura Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 22
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 417 & 418 and Tawhid Sauq

Section 6: To Return Good For Evil and to Be Patient

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 93-95

قُل رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيَنِّـي مَا يُوعَدُونَ
رَبِّ فَلاَ تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ
وإِنَّا عَلَي أَن نُرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ

93. "Say: 'My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, '"

94."My Lord! Then set me, not among the unjust people."

95. "And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them."

These verses are addressed to the Prophet (S), but they have the same objective as the previous verses; that is, they threaten the unbelievers and polytheists with Divine punishment.

In the beginning, Allah commands His Prophet (S):

"Say: 'My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, '"

(Meaning their punishment in the War of Badr), then put me not among the wrongdoing folk. This means that when Allah decides to send down the punishment upon the unbelievers, He would separate the Prophet away from them so that by Allah's grace and mercy he would not be involved with the affliction of the oppressors at that time.

There is no doubt that the conduct and program of the Prophet (S) could not make him subject to Divine punishment. It is also a fact that the Divine law is not indiscriminate and would not suffer the good to be punished with the guilty. Even if there were one dutiful worshipper of Allah in a whole society of evildoers, Allah would save that individual.

The verse says:

"My Lord! Then set me not among the unjust people."

By this prayer of the Prophet (S) Allah intends to warn the unbelievers that the issue is so serious that by Divine command the great Prophet of Islam himself sought the protection of Allah from the consequences of their beliefs and actions, and secondly it is a lesson for the followers of this Prophet that they are not safe from Allah's punishment and must always seek His protection regardless of whatever state they might be in.

But what kind of punishment is it? Most interpreters believe that it refers to the worldly punishments that Allah had inflicted upon the polytheists, including the disastrous severe defeat they had suffered in the Battle of Badr.[1] There are other interpreters, however, that think that the verse probably includes the punishment both in this world and in the Hereafter.[2]

Bearing in mind that this Sura was revealed in Mecca when the believers were forced to undergo many hardships, these verses gave them much solace and comfort.

The next verse emphasizes the fact that Allah is Almighty, and removes any doubt and uncertainty about the victory of the believers over their enemies and gives them solace.

The verse says:

"And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them."

As history has ever shown, this power of Allah has been demonstrated over and over in different places and on different occasions after the Battle of Badr where a much smaller military force inflicted a major defeat upon a much larger and well equipped enemy by Allah's command.

Allah gave His Prophet solace by saying that He had the power to punish the unbelievers but He often postpones their punishment for various reasons some of which have been listed below:

1. They are given time and opportunity to repent.
2. They are given a final argument.
3. In their future generations some believers are going to be born.
4. For the sake of the Prophet (S) who is the cause of blessings and grace.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 96-98

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّـئَةَ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

وَقُل رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

96. "Repel evil with that which is best. We know best what they describe."

97. "And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, "

98. "And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me'."

The Prophet (S) has been taught by Allah and has been called upon to treat the enemies of Islam in the best manner.

Evil can be repelled with evil, but this method is not appropriate for a spiritual leader. Thus, the Prophet (S) has been explicitly ordered to behave with this group with moderation, compassion and justice, to repel their evil deeds with indulgence, forgiveness, and goodness, and to answer their unpleasant words with reason and intelligence.

The Noble Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"Repel evil with that which is best..."

"...We know best what they describe."

The verse means that Allah knows that they aggravated the Prophet (S) with inappropriate deeds, harsh words, and various kinds of persecutions, but he was not commissioned to reciprocate their violence and vilifications in like manner, rather he should respond to their evil deeds against him with good manner which is one of the best ways to awaken the ignorant and those who have been deceived.

In addition to this, the Prophet (S) should rely on Allah, as the verse suggests:

"And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, "

It means that not only should he (S) seek refuge in Allah from the suggestions of Devils, but he should also take refuge in Allah in order to prevent them from coming to him and taking part in his assemblies causing hurt and temptation by their presence.

So the next verse says:

"And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me'."

Note to Some Points

1) The Qur'anic word 'hamazat' is the plural form of the word 'humazah', meaning intense release, discharge, and stimulation. The Arabic letter 'hamzah' is called by the same name because it is articulated with force at the back of the throat.

Some interpreters are of the opinion that the Arabic words 'hamz', 'qamz' and 'ramz' have the same meaning, but 'ramaz' is light, 'qamaz' is stronger than 'ramaz', and 'hamaz' is even more so.

Regarding the fact that the Arabic word /šayatin/ is plural, it refers to all Satans whether manifest and concealed, man and jinn.

In the Commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim we read that the Imam (as) concerning the meaning of the verse:

"And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, "

said that it meant that which of the satanic suggestions that enter your heart.[3]

When the Prophet (S), who is infallible and divinely protected from sin and error, asks for such a thing from Allah, the Almighty, it becomes quite clear to others that this command is even more imperative for those who do not enjoy this infallibility.

All believers must seek the protection of Allah, their Owner and Lord, from the evil temptations of devils and that He should not leave them alone on their own. Not only must they not let themselves be tempted by evil suggestions, but also they must not take part in satanic gatherings and assemblies.

Thus, all those who want to follow the Truth must constantly avoid the satanic suggestions and always refuge in Him from this aspect.

2) One of the most effective ways of striving against obstinate and stubborn enemies is to reciprocate their evil with good. This may create an upheaval and revolution in their consciences and this matter causes the wrongdoers in many instances to end up being severely reproached and reprimanded, leading them to abandon their activities.

By studying the biographies of spiritual leaders and the practical method of the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as), we see that they used to reciprocate the worst offenses some persons committed against them with goodness and they showed kindness towards their oppressors.

This behaviour used to bring about a spiritual revolution and upheaval in the souls of their enemies and often led such wicked people back to the Path of Truth.

The Holy Qur'an reminds Muslims many times to keep this principle in mind when they find themselves confronted by wrongs done against them and the result of this action is that the severe enemies may become a warm friend.

For example, in verse 34 of Sura Fussilat, No. 41, it says:

"...Repel (an evil deed) with that which is better, then will he between whom and you there was enmity become as though he were a bosom friend."

However, it must be noted that this command refers to those instances that the enemy does not exploit and misuse it, or counts it as a weakness and becomes bolder because of this command.

The meaning of this sentence also is not to yield to the temptations of the enemy. Perhaps because of this very reason, after giving this command in the above verses, the Prophet (S) is immediately ordered to take refuge in Allah from the temptations of Satans and their attendance.

Notes

1. Majma‘ ul-Bayan, The Commentary, Al-Mizan, The Commentary, Abul ul-Futuh, the Commentary, and ruh ul-Ma‘ani
2. The great commentary of Fakhr Razi
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 552

Section 7: Afterlife

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 99-100

حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ

لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحاً فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلاَّ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَي يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

99. “Until, when death conies unto one of them, he says: ‘My Lord! Send me back again, ”

100. “That I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind!’ Nay! It is but a (mere) word that he says; and, behind them, is a partition until the Day when they shall be raised up.”

One day the deviant will awaken and ask to be returned to the world, but his request cannot be fulfilled.

The former verses spoke about the stubbornness of pagans and sinners in their wrong way. These verses depict the painful state of the unbelievers when they are on the threshold of death.

They continue their wrong way in the world until when death comes to them, as the verse says:

“Until, when death comes unto one of them...”

At the time when they are about to depart this world and enter the afterlife, the curtains of conceit and ignorance will be lifted from before their eyes and they will see the terrible fate ahead of them.

They will observe the lives they had led, the potentialities they had stifled, the duties they had neglected, and the dreadful consequences of the sins they had committed.

And at this time, such a person will cry out and:

“...he says: ‘My Lord! Send me back again, ”

Then, in the next verse, he continues saying:

“That I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind!’...”

But since the law of divine creation does not allow anyone, whether righteous or wrongdoer, to return, the answer to him will be:

“...Nay! It is but a (mere) word that he says...”

These are only words without thinking and sincerity. This is what many wrongdoers usually say when they are about to be punished and what every murderer says when his eyes fall upon the gallows, but when the impending disaster is removed, the guilty again continue along their previous paths.

This is similar to what we read in verse 28 of Sura Al-’An‘am, No. 6:

“...And even if they were returned they would revert to that which they were prohibited...”

Finally, the verse briefly and expressively refers to the mysterious intermediate world, the ‘Barzakh’, and says:

“...and, behind them, is a partition until the Day when they shall be raised up.”

Note

1) In the above verses, we read when the unbelievers are on the verge of death they will ask to be returned to the world, so that they can do good deeds in what they have left behind.

Some believe that the Qur'anic phrase, 'fi ma taraktu' (in that which I have left behind) here refers to the properties that are left behind from them as their legacy, which we usually call 'the estate of the deceased'.

There is a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), which corroborates this meaning.

He said:

"One who does not pay (even) the slightest amount of his alms-tax is neither a believer nor a Muslim, and the words of Allah, the Exalted, is (that he says):

'...My Lord! Send me back again, that I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind ...'."[1]

While some other commentators maintain that it has a more extensive meaning. They say that the Qur'anic phrase /ma taraktu/ refers to all the good deeds that one has abandoned.

Therefore, the verse means that they would ask Allah to return them to the world, so that they can make amends for those good deeds that have not been accomplished. The tradition that we have mentioned above is not contrary to this vast and conclusive commentary.

Considering that these persons are repentant because of all the chances they have lost and they intend to make amends for all of them, the second comment seems to be more correct.

The word 'la'alla' in the Qur'anic sentence /la'alla 'a'malu salihan/

("That I might do righteousness...")

probably indicates that these sinners are not absolutely sure about their future state. They know more or less that this newly found penitence and their being on the verge of death might have caused this regret but if they were returned, they might perhaps continue to behave the same way they had before.

2) The word /kalla/ is used in the Arabic language to indicate complete disagreement with the words of a speaker. It is, in fact, a word opposite to 'yes' which is used for acceptance. Some have said that the word 'kalla' indicates a categorical rejection of the claim of the sinners that they would do good if they were returned to the world.

Allah says:

".. .It is but a (mere) word that he says"

(This is an unfounded claim. If they are sent to the world, they will continue to behave as they used to.)

It is also necessary to note that although this verse in a literal sense talks about the desire of the polymeists to return to the world, it is not limited to them at all. When wrongdoers and oppressors, on the brink of death, see their painful destinies, they become regretful about their past and ask to be sent back to the world to undo what they had done, but they are all refused.

3) What is the intermediate world? What kind of world is it? Where is it? How can it be proved that such a world exists between this world and the Hereafter? Must all people enter this world or is it only for a special group of people to enter? Finally, what is the state and situation of believers, the righteous, the unbelievers, and the wrongdoers in the intermediate world?

These are the questions which exist in this field, and there are some hints to it in the verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions, and it is necessary to answer them as much as possible.

The Arabic word 'barzakh' originally means that which stands between two things, later, whatever stood between any two affairs came to be called a 'barzakh'. As a consequence, the world that exists between this world and the Hereafter is called the barzakh and is also sometimes called 'the world of the grave' or 'the world of spirits'.

The reason for the existence of this world is based upon traditional proofs, and there are numerous Qur'anic verses that explicitly or implicitly refer to the barzakh.

The verse:

"...and behind them is a partition until the Day when they are raised up"

apparently indicates the existence of such a world. Some scholars say that the word 'barzakh' is a barrier that prevents human beings from returning to this world after they die, while the phrase:

"...until the day when they are raised up"

indicates that this barrier is between this world and the Day of Judgment and is not between human beings and the world.

Among the verses that explicitly show the existence of such a world are those that speak about the life of the martyrs; such as the one which says:

"And do not say of those, who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are alive..."[2]

The Prophet (S) is addressed in this verse, but all the believers are addressed in verse 154 of Sura al-Baqarah, No. 2 which announces:

"And call not those who are slain in the way of Allah as "dead." Nay, they are living, only you perceive not."

The intermediate world not only exists for high-ranking believers such as the martyrs, but it also exists for the disobedient unbelievers such as Pharaoh and his associates.

The concept of 'Barzakh' is explicitly mentioned in verse 46 of Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40 where it says:

"In front of the Fire they will be brought (every) morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour is established (it will be said): Cast the people of Pharaoh into the most awful chastisement."

There are other verses that relate to this subject but they are not as explicit and clear as the verses mentioned above. What is important to be noted is that apart from the verses mentioned, which treat of the barzakh in the general sense, other verses discuss it exclusively with respect to the destiny of particular groups such as the martyrs or the people of Pharaoh.

It is obvious, however, that neither the people of Pharaoh nor the martyrs are unique inhabitants of the barzakh for there are many people similar to them. For example, the Holy Qur'an counts a group of the righteous and the elect as sharing the same high rank as the martyrs.

In verse 69 of Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, the Holy Qur'an puts the Prophets, the Sincere and the Righteous in the same category:

"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours, of the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs and the righteous..."

At the end of this discussion we will refer to the generality of barzakh, Allah willing.

There are many narrations in authoritative Sunni and Shi'ah sources about the barzakh, but they speak of it differently: and illustrate the world between this world and the world Hereafter, which occurs in the grave, with some utterly different explanations.

1. There is a related tradition among the aphorisms of Imam 'Ali in part 130 of the Nahj-ul-Balaqah. It says that once Imam Ali (as) was returning from the Battle of Siffin and arrived at a cemetery outside the city of Kufah.

The Imam (as) turned towards the graves and said:

"O Inhabitants of terrible houses, empty places and dark graves! O People of the earth! O Strangers! O you in Solitude! O you who are Terrified! You preceded us in going this way and we will join you.

If you ask us about the news of this world, we will tell you that others occupy your homes, others have married your wives, and your possessions have been distributed. These are some of the news we have, what news do you have?"

Then Imam Ali (as) addressed his companions and said:

"If they were given permission to speak, they would certainly have told you that the best supplies for this journey are piety and God-wariness."

It is obvious that all these words cannot be interpreted as allusions and metaphors. They all reveal the fact that when a human being dies, that person will experience a type of life in the intermediate world where he will be able to understand and think and if he were given permission to speak, he would do so.

2. There is another tradition narrated by 'Asbaq ibn Nabatah about Imam Ali (as):

One day Imam Ali left Kufah and arrived a place called Qaryy (Najaf) on his journey. 'Asbaq says that when they reached him (as) they saw the Imam lying on the ground.

Qanbar said:

"Would you like me to spread my cloak under your feet, O'Amir ul-Mu'mineen?"

He said:

"No, it is a place that has the soils of the believers (i.e., believers are buried in this place). You will bother them by your action."

'Asbaq said:

"I understand what you mean by the soils of the believers, but what does bothering them mean?"

He said:

"O son of Nabatah, if the curtains are pulled back from in front of your eyes, you will see the souls of believers sitting in circles, visiting each other and conversing. This is where the believers are, and Barahut[3] is where the souls of unbelievers reside."[4]

3. Imam Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) said:

"The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell."[5]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The barzakh (the intermediate world) is the grave itself, which is the punishment and the reward given between this world and the Hereafter. We swear by Allah that we only fear of the intermediate world for you!"[6]

5. There is a tradition in the book of al-Kafi which says that after mentioning the verse, the narrator asked the Imam:

"What is the 'barzakh' (the intermediate world)?"

The Imam said:

"The grave which spans the period from death until the Day of Resurrection."[7]

6. There is another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as). It says that one day a man came to him and said:

"It is said that the souls of believers after death will enter the chests of green birds that fly around Divine Throne."

The Imam said:

"No, that is not the case. The believer is more respectable in the eyes of Allah than to be confined within the chest of a bird. The souls of believers are rather clothed in bodies like their own bodies."[8]

This tradition refers to a substantial body that is somehow like this material body here, but it is as immaterial as the intermediate world.

7. There is another tradition cited in the book of Al-Kafi attributed to Imam Sadiq (as): The Imam was asked about the souls of believers.

He answered:

"They are in the chambers of Paradise, they eat the foods of Paradise and drink its drinks. And they say: 'O' Allah! Establish the Day of Resurrection and make the promises You have made to us come to pass.'"[9]

8. There is another tradition by the Imam in the same book where he says that when a believer passes away, the souls of other believers will gather around him and ask him about those who were in the world and whether they were alive or dead.

If he says that such and such a person had died but they do not see him among themselves, they will say that that person had certainly fallen (i.e. he has gone into Hell).[10]

Certainly, Paradise and Hell in the narrations mentioned above mean paradisaical or hellish states in the intermediate world, not those after the Day of Judgment, for they are very different from each other.

There are many narrations about the subject of the barzakh compiled under different categories and headings.

Some of them are as follows:

Many narrations that speak of the pressure and punishment of the grave and the questions put to its inhabitants.

Narrations about the contact of the souls of the dead with their families and observing the conditions they are in.

Some narrations mention of the incidents that had occurred to the Prophet on the night of his ascension, and his meeting with the souls of prophets and messengers.

Narrations that say the results of man's good and evil deeds will be manifest after he dies.[11]

Barzakh and Contact with the World of Spirits

Although many people who claim they communicate with the world of souls are either liars or deluded, researches now show that it is possible to communicate with the world of spirits. Some experts have investigated and experimented this phenomenon and have become aware that there is some truth in the claim that it is possible, thus proving that the world of intermediate exists.

This fact itself is a clear evidence upon the existence of the intermediate world and that it is a reality. It shows that after this world and the death of the body, and before the appearance of Hereafter, there exists another world.

Further Clarification of the Barzakh

Aside from details, and with few exceptions, there is broad consensus among Shi'ah and Sunni scholars of Islam, with some insignificant exceptions, concerning the barzakh and the punishments and rewards found there.

The reason for this agreement is obvious, for The Holy Qur'an explicitly mentions the existence of the world of barzakh and its punishments and blessings.

Concerning the martyrs, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Do not think of those who were killed in the way of Allah to be dead. Nay, they are alive, being provided sustenance with their Lord."

"They are happy with what Allah has given them out of His grace, and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them, no fear come shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."[12]

Not only is this group of believers blessed and rewarded there, but the worst of the wrongdoers and the disobedient are punished there as well, such as the people of Pharaoh as mentioned before.[13]

There are numerous reliable traditions from many sources with well-established chains of transmissions that confirm the existence of the barzakh. Therefore, the principle that the barzakh exists is without question an element of Islamic belief. The important matter is that we want to know how the life of the barzakh is.

We have different expressive illustrations, mentioned here, concerning life in the barzakh. One of them is that when a human being dies, his soul will be placed in a subtle body. This body is completely unlike the corporeal body for it is not subject to the accidents that affect the physical body in the world of matter.

Since this subtle body is in every other aspect like the worldly body, it is idiomatically called an atom-like body or form. It is neither completely non-material nor is it completely material, but it participates in a kind of immateriality of the intermediate world.

Some scholars have likened the state of the soul in the barzakh to the state of the soul when a human being is asleep. In the state of sleep, the soul may really experience pleasure and pain in an even sharper way than when in the physical state.

It can enjoy a pleasure so much or can get so upset by a painful experience that their effects can sometimes be seen on the body itself, the body will smile, cry, jerk in surprise or writhe in pain.

Some even believe that at the time of sleep, the soul really acts in the atom-like body and, more importantly, some believe that those who have powerful souls, when they are not asleep, can also be in the state of non-materiality of the intermediate world while being conscious.

This means that they can leave the body and travel in this atom-like body and be aware of their surroundings and their state and consciously witness events.[14]

Some even specify that an atom-like form exists in every human body, but when a person is going to die and begins the life of the intermediate world, the atom-like form leaves the body; and sometime, as we said, it is possible that in this very material life in this world, too, it separates from the body.

If, now, we do not accept these characteristics of the atom-like body, the main principle cannot be denied, i.e., the reality of the barzakh, for it is rationally possible and it is referred to in many narrations as well.

Thus, basing on what was said, the answer to this objection became clear that some critics say that the belief in the existence of the atom-like body would necessitate belief in metempsychosis, we assert that reincarnation is nothing but the transference of one soul into different bodies.

The Late Shaykh Baha'i, an Islamic scholar, in response to this criticism said very clearly that the reincarnation that all Muslims unanimously reject is the rebirth of the soul in another body in this world after the destruction of one's body.

But the soul's inhabitance of an atom-like body in the world of barzakh until the Day of Resurrection when it returns to the first body by Allah's commandment is by no means a reincarnation.

The belief in reincarnation requires the belief that the soul is pre eternal and eternally migrates from one body to another and seriously denies the resurrection of the body, and because it denies a fundamental tenet of faith, Muslims, who believe in eternality of souls and that they constantly transfer from one body to another, are considered outside the religion of Islam.[15]

Moreover, if, as some say, the atom-like body is in fact itself in the inner side of this very material (physical) body, the answer to the issue of reincarnation will become more obvious, for the soul would not leave its own form or body and enter another, however it could leave some of its forms and continue living in the intermediate world in another form.

Another issue that is brought up by reading some verses of the Holy Qur'an is that there is a group of people that does not live in the intermediate world. Verses 55 and 56 of Sura Al-Rum say:

"And on the day when the Hour will be established, the guilty will swear that they did not remain but for an hour thus were they used to

being deluded. But those to whom knowledge and faith are given will say: Indeed, you have tarried, by Allah's decree, until the Day of Resurrection. This is the Day of Resurrection, but you were not aware."

There are many narrations that answer this issue. They divide mankind into: real believers, real unbelievers, and those who are weak and mediocre in their belief and practice. The intermediate world is only for the first two groups, but the third group passes the barzakh in a state of ignorance and unconsciousness.[16]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 101

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلاَ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلاَ يَتَسآءَلُونَ

101. "And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another."

In the previous verses, the statement was upon the barzakh, and now this verse talks about the Day of Resurrection and a part of the state of the wrongdoers in that world.

It says:

"And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another."

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the Trumpet will be blown twice. The first blast heralds the death of the universe. After this blast everyone on the earth and in the heavens will die and death will descend over the universe.

The second blast of the Trumpet heralds the resurrection from the dead and all the human beings will return to a new life and mankind will begin to be assembled for the Great Reckoning.

The blowing of the trumpet is meant for every trumpet but here it has a special meaning and interpretation, and we will turn to it, Allah willing, in the commentary on verse 68 of Sura Az-Zumar.

The two aspects of the Day of Resurrection are mentioned in this verse. One aspect is that the ties of kinship and parentage are no longer effective.

Family relationships, in this world, are very important as a natural resource for help in solving various problems, and many sinful persons may escape of a lot of punishments by means of their tribal relationships.

But, on the Day of Resurrection, this avenue for help will be closed and similarly relationships with powerful families in society would be of no advantage to anyone.

People here usually ask their kin for help for solving their problems, while on the Day of Resurrection a person's only companion and friend would be his deeds, and no one, not even that person's brother, offspring or parent will be able to defend him or negate his punishment.

The second aspect is that, indeed, they will be too terrified by the Divine Reckoning and punishment to ask anything of each other.

The Day of Resurrection will be a day when a mother would ignore her suckling child, when brother will forget his brother, and when people will be seemed as if they were drunk in bewilderment but they are not drank.

It is a time when Allah's chastisement would be severe, as we read in the beginning of the Sura Al-Hajj:

"O Mankind! Be in awe of your Lord! Verily the earthquake of the Hour (of doom) is a grievous thing. On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see the people (as) intoxicated, yet they are not intoxicated, but the chastisement of Allah is severe."[17]

There is also another probable interpretation for the Qur'anic sentence /wa la yatasa'alun/:

("...nor will they ask of one another.")

that the purpose is that they will not ask each other for help, for they know that this request is not of any use. Some commentators have also said that the verse means that they will not ask each other about their lineage and parentage also and this has been emphasized on the preceding phrase: /fa la 'ansaba baynahum/

("..., there will be no relationship between them...")

The first commentary seems more probable although there is no contradiction and conflict between them for it is possible that the above sentence could refer to all of these meanings.

Question

In other verses of the Qur'an, we read that people have different questions to ask of each other, for example in this verse:

"And some of them draw near unto others, mutually questioning."[18]

Or, the inhabitants of Paradise will ask the inhabitants of Hell:

"What has brought you to this burning?"[19]

But why does this holy verse say,

"...nor will they ask of one another"?

Answer

These two matters do not contradict each other. The first instance of questioning mentioned above concerns the situation after Reckoning and it concerns the people of Paradise questioning the people of Hell.

But the verse in question:

("...nor will they ask of one another.")

concerns the onset of the Day of Resurrection and the phase before people are sent to Paradise or Hell.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 102-103

فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

102. "Then whoever' s scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."

103. "And whoever's scale be light, those are they who have ruined their souls, in Hell will they abide."

For every task there is a measure.

On Judgment Day, the first event is the evaluation of deeds according to a special measure which has been appointed for it. A group of people have some noble and righteous actions which will weigh heavy on that measure and they will be successful.

The verse says:

"Then whoever's scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."

The Arabic word /mawazin/ is the plural form of the word /mizan/ meaning 'a scale'. The concept of a scale is not meant here an ordinary scale and the like of it, used for measuring the things, and also it is not restricted to just the common means whereby physical quantities are measured, but includes non-material objects as well.

In other words, 'scale' has a vast meaning here which envelops all means of measurement. According to different narrations, the scales or criteria for measuring human beings, the actions of human and even humans themselves, are the great leaders and ideal human beings.

There is a tradition that says:

"Amir ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and the Imams among his descendants are the scales of measure."[20]

Thus, human beings and their deeds will be compared with the great prophets and their legatees. This comparison will make it clear to what extent they are on par with each other.

In this way good deeds and people can be distinguished from their bad deeds and good deeds worthy and unworthy, and heavy from light. The application of the word mawazin, which is in the plural form, is also made clear. The secret of this is that the great leaders who are the criteria of this measuring are numerous.

Another possibility is that all of the prophets, Imams and the elect of Allah were models and ideals in one or many different respects according to the conditions of their lives. Each one of them represented a shining example of one particular quality or other and will be the criterion by which that quality or deed will be measured in others.

The next verse implies that those whose scale of their deeds is light, because of lacking faith and righteous deeds, are the ones who have lost the capital of their own selves and are the real losers, because they will abide in Hell forever.

The verse says:

"And whoever's scale be light, those are they who have ruined their souls, in Hell will they abide."

The use of the sentence 'khasiru'anfusahum'

("...those who have lost their souls")

in the verse is a subtle reference to the fact that they have lost their greatest capital, that is, their existence in the marketplace of this world and did not obtain anything valuable for it.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 104-105

تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

104. "The Fire will burn their faces, and they are glum therein (with the.ir lips displaced)."

105. " (They will be told:) Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?"

The fire burns the faces of the inhabitants of the Hell continuously and without any respite.[21]

The unbelievers suffer both physically

("The Fire will burn their faces...")

and spiritually in their painful punishment and the verse mentions a part of them.

It says:

"The Fire will burn their faces, and they are glum therein (with their lips displaced)."

The Qur'anic word /talfahu/ is derived from the word 'lafh' and originally means the blow of a sword. Since the effect of a flame or the intense light of the sun, when they hit the human face, is like that of a sword, so this word is used as an allusion to this meaning.

The word /kalih'/ is derived from the word /kuluh/ means to become grim-faced or to grimace. Many commentators have interpreted the word in this way, because when the skin of the face feels the heat of fire, it becomes contorted in such a way that the lips would remain open.

We have already mentioned that the Divine punishment in the Hereafter, and even in this world, proportionately reflects the sins committed. It is not such that any kind of punishment would be inflicted upon any kind of wrongdoer.

In this verse, the burning inflicted upon faces by the flames of Hell will be so severe that these faces will be contorted and their lips will peel back as a punishment for those whose scales are light and are unbelievers.

When we reflect that most of them are those who had sneered derisively when they heard the Divine verses recited to them and who sometimes smiled in mockery at them, the proportionality of this punishment to their deeds becomes evident.

Those who are righteous and love Allah are vastly different to those whose balance is light. They have always shed tears and supplicated to Him (s.w.t.) as if they were people who had committed great sins.

The following narration provides an excellent insight into such a noble personality:

'Isma'i said:

"One moonlit night I was in Mecca. When I was circumambulating the Sacred House, a sad yet beautiful voice gently touched my ears. I looked for the person who possessed the voice and my eyes fell upon a tall, handsome youth whose face showed the signs of goodness.

With the curtain of the Sacred House in his hand, he was supplicating to Allah in the following way:

"O' my Master and my Lord! The eyes of Your servants are now closed by sleep and the stars of the sky (one by one) are going toward the west, (so the eyes can no longer perceive them). You, Allah, the Alive, the Eternal, neither slumber nor does sleep overtake You.

Now at this time, in the depths of the night, kings have the gates of their palaces closed and have assigned guardians to watch them, and friends are

visiting each other in privacy.The only door opened to the supplicants is the door of Your House.

Now I have come, a wrongdoer and needful, to the door of Your House. I have come hoping that You, The Merciful, will shower me with blessings. O The Generous, I have come begging Your grace."

Then the young man started reciting these lines of poetry:

O The One Who, in the darkness of the night, answers the prayers of those who are driven by necessities.

O The One Who removes and obliterates pains, disasters and sufferings.

Your guests are sleeping around Your House and will get up,

But Your eyes of generosity will never ever be overcome by sleep,

O The Eternal! If Your generosity and benevolence were only desired by the honorable ones around Your Throne,

Then to whose house must wrongdoers go and whose forgiveness should they desire?"

Then he turned his head toward the heavens and continued:

"My Lord, my Master! If I have worshipped You out of knowledge and awareness, praise will be to You and I am indebted to Your grace. And if I have committed sins out of ignorance, You have presented Your argument to me without any shortcomings..."

Then he again turned his head toward the heavens and said in a loud voice:

"O my Master and my Lord! Impure is the world in which there is no remembrance of You. Without Your pardon, the Hereafter is not pleasant. Without worshipping You, the days of life have no value. Impure are those hearts that show no affection for You. Blessings are unpleasant if there is none of Your forgiveness..."

'Isma'i said:

"The young man continued and recited some more astonishing and interesting poems in this content and he continued supplication until he fainted and fell on the ground.I went up to him and stared at his face.

I looked at him carefully and I recognized him, he was Hadrat Zayn ul-'Aabidin, Ali ibn al-Hussein, Imam Sajjad (as). I put his head on my lap and wept uncontrollably for his condition. One of my teardrops fell on his face and he opened his eyes and said:

'Who is it that has distracted me from remembering my Lord?'"

I said:

"My master, it is me, 'Isma'i. Why do you cry so much and why are you so restless? You are from the household of the Prophet (S). Has not the verse of purification been sent down concerning you?

Has not Allah said about you:

'...Allah's wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you with a thorough purification'?[22]

The Imam sat up and said:

"O 'Isma'i! How far! How far! Allah has created Paradise for those who obey Him, even if that person is an Ethiopian slave. He has also created Hell for those who disobey Him, even if that person is one of the nobles of the

tribe of Quraysh. Have not you read the Holy Qur'an and have not you heard this verse:

'And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another'."[23]

'Isma'i said:

"When I saw that this was the case, I went away and left him alone."[24]

Some Traditions

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Two (kinds of) eyes are saved from the Fire of Hell: one eye that weeps inside the night out of fear of Allah, and another that does not sleep in the way of Allah."[25]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"One who sheds tears out of fear of Allah will not be burnt by the Fire as milked milk does not return to the udder."[26]

3. Zayd ibn Suhan asked Imam Ali (as):

"Who is the best of people in the sight of Allah?

The Imam said:

"Whoever fears Allah and is acquainted with piety and austerity more than others and behaves abstinently more than others do."[27]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"He who is the best among mankind in the sight of Allah is the one who fears Allah the most."[28]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"When Allah gathers all of mankind together (in the gathering-place), a crier will speak in a loud voice among them:

'O' mankind! Today he is the favorite of Allah who had feared Allah the most.'"[29]

6. Imam Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) said:

"The top and source of any knowledge is the fear of Allah."[30]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"If you fear Allah as He deserves to be feared of, you will obtain a kind of knowledge where every thing will become clear to you and you will no longer be ignorant, and if you know Allah as He deserves to be known, you can move mountains by your prayers."[31]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"It is suitable for the believer to fear Allah to such an extent that it would be as if he were about to fall into Hell, and trust Allah to such an extent as if he were one of the people of Paradise."

The next verse mentions part of Allah's conversation with the unbelievers and He, addressing them scornfully, inquire them, as the verse says:

" (They will be told:) Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?"

It implies that even though Allah sent them enough signs and reasons through His prophets and gave them a strong argument they continued in their denial and rejection.

With regard to the Arabic verbs /tutla/, translated here as 'recited' and 'tukazzibun/, translated here as 'you used to belie', both of which are in the

future tense in the Arabic text, it makes the fact clear that the Divine verses were recited to them continually and they also continually denied them.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 106-108

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْماً ضَآلِّينَ

رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ

قَالَ اخْسَئُوا فِيهَا وَلاَ تُكَلِّمُونِ

106. "They will say: 'Our Lord! Our adversity conquered us, and we were a people gone astray."

107. "Our Lord! bring us forth out of it! Then if we return (to evil) then verily we shall be unjust."

108. "He will say: 'Be you driven into it, and speak not to Me."

Consciences of men will be awakened on the Resurrection Day and wrongdoers will confess their sins, but they will be humiliated and Allah will speak to them in the harsh terms.

It was mentioned in the previous verse that Allah would address them with reproach:

"Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?"

In this verse they will confess it and as the verse says:

"They will say: 'Our Lord! Our adversity conquered us, and we were a people gone astray."

The Arabic word /šiqwah/ and /šiqawat/ (misfortune) is the opposite of felicity and means the trouble, punishment and calamity prepared for a person. In other words, the wrongdoer will be overwhelmed by evils and disasters, while felicity, on the other hand, means the blessings and goodness in store for the person who does good.

In both cases, adversity and felicity, are only the consequences of our intentions, words, and deeds. The belief that felicity and adversity are realities in themselves with which someone is born is only a product of our imagination which goes against the call of all apostles and the efforts of all the great divine guides and teachers of mankind.

It is an idea proffered for those who want to avoid their responsibilities and a means whereby they can justify their evil actions or justify their ignorance.

The Hellish wrongdoers in the core of their being indeed confess that they are aware of Allah's ultimatum and that they were an erring people, but they themselves had prepared the ground for their misfortune.

In the next verse, they try to use their confession to attract Allah's blessings, so they immediately say implying that He would return them back to the world so that they do righteous deeds and that if they commit wrong again they are oppressors.

The verse says:

"Our Lord! bring us forth out of it! Then if we return (to evil) then verily we shall be unjust."

They make this request as if they were not aware of the fact that the Hereafter was a place where they would be confronted by the results of their

wrongdoings. Because they would not be able to return to the world, they could no longer act in it and thus they could not rectify their sinful deeds.

Thus in the third verse, Allah gives them a firm answer, this verse says:

"He will say: 'Be you driven into it, and speak not to Me."

The Arabic phrase /ikhsa'u/ (Be you driven into it) is an imperative verb meaning 'go away.' It is usually used to chase away a dog, and when it is told to a human being, it indicates the person's disgrace and that he deserves punishment.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 109-110

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّىٰٓ أَنسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنتُم مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ

109. "Verily there was a party among My servants who used to say: 'Our Lord! We believe, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for You are the Best of the mercifulness;"

110. "But you took them with ridicule, until they made you forget My remembrance and you were laughing at them!"

Faith is the beginning of forgiveness, and forgiveness is the beginning of Allah's mercy. The servants of Allah are always concerned about their shortcomings and ask for Divine pardon.

The verse says:

"Verily there was a party among My servants who used to say: 'Our Lord! We believe, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for You are the Best of the mercifulness;"

In the next verse, Allah says:

"But you took them with ridicule, until they made you forget My remembrance and you were laughing at them!"

In other words, you used to laugh at them and scorn them and their words, beliefs and behaviour.

Meanwhile it should be noted that there is a great difference between the Arabic words 'sukhriyan' (to take for a mockery) and 'sikhriyan' (to, put others under subjection andservice).

If the relations between members of society were based on sympathy, cooperation and mutual assistance, and they benefited from each other's skills, arts and labour, then society would develop, become stronger and most of its problems would be solved.

This concept is stated in the verse saying:

"...that some of them may take labour from others..."[32]

But if social relations are mainly based upon humiliation, disenfranchisement, discrimination and hopelessness, such a society will forget Allah (s.w.t.) and decline.

The verse under discussion indicates this concept by saying:

"But you took them with ridicule..."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 111

إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ

111. "Verily I have recompensed them this day for they were patient and steadfast, (that) they are indeed the triumphant."

The Arabic word /fauz/ means to achieve an aim.

Allah Himself will reward those who are patient. In this holy verse He therefore implies that, on the Day of Judgment, those who were patient before the unbelievers' ridicules and were steadfast in their divine programs will receive rewards from the side of Allah and will be prosperous.

The verse says:

"Verily I have recompensed them this day for they were patient and steadfast, (that) they are indeed the triumphant."

But on that very Day, the situation of the wrongdoers will be different. They will be in the worst condition they had ever experienced, suffering the most painful punishments with no one to help them, and they will always be in this condition because they deserve it.

Thus, in the recent four verses mentioned, the Qur'an clearly shows us the main causes for the suffering of the dwellers of Hell and the felicity of the dwellers of Paradise.

The people of Hell prepared the causes of their suffering themselves by mocking the people of Truth and ridiculing their pure beliefs. Yes, those who despised the believers in the world should suffer the worst despising.

The people of Paradise, however, achieved a greater victory in the sight of Allah, for they endured with exemplary patience the arrogance, complacency and irrationality of their enemies and held themselves on the path of "Allah".

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 112-114

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ

قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْماً أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْأَلِ الْعَآدِّينَ

قَالَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

112. "He will say: 'How many years did you tarry in the earth?'"

113. "They will say: 'We tarried but a day or part of a day; but ask those who keep account'."

114. "He will say: 'You tarried but a little if you had only known'."

It is very unfortunate that most of mankind buy Hell and eternal punishment in exchange for the fleeting pleasures and comforts of this world.

In view of the fact that previous verses referred to a part of the painful chastisement of the, people of Hell, these verses talk about their other kinds of mental punishments in the form of a Divine reproach.

At first, it says:

"He will say: 'How many years did you tarry in the earth?'"

The Arabic word /ard/ used in these verses shows that the purpose of this question is to compare the duration they had lived in this world with the higher reality of duration in the Hereafter.

This view would render unlikely the opinion of some commentators that the question refers to the duration of their stay in the intermediate world, although there is some little evidence for this notion in other verses.

An entire lifetime in this transient world would amount to no more than a day, or a part of a day, when compared to the eternality of the rewards and punishments in the Hereafter:

"They will say: 'We tarried but a day or part of a day..."

In fact, the long life-times in this world comparing the life in Hereafter, where not only the blessings of it are eternal but also the punishments of it are infinite, seem as some fleeting moments.

Then, as an emphasis on their own saying, or in order to deliver a more accurate answer, they say:

"...but ask those who keep account'."

Perhaps, the purpose of 'those who keep account' is the same angels that carefully count and record every instant of our lives and the deeds done in them, because they know the account of these things better than others.

To affirm the new sense of time they are experiencing and to reproach them, the Qur'an says:

"He will say: 'You tarried but a little if you had only known'."

On the Day of Resurrection, indeed, they will be aware that life in the world in comparison to life in the Hereafter lasts only a day or less, but when they were in this world their hearts and minds were sealed with negligence and arrogance so they behaved as if the world was eternal and considered the Hereafter as a figment of the imagination and an empty promise.

That is why the Qur'an implies that if they had known this reality that they understood in Hereafter, they would have recognized it in the world.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 115

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثاً وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لاَ تُرْجَعُونَ

115. "What! Do you then think that We created you aimlessly and that you shall not be returned to Us?"

Allah does nothing in vain and created man for a purpose. Without the Hereafter, the life of the world would be useless, and therefore the aim of the creation of man is not peculiar to or limited for this world. This verse thus reflects this truth and becomes a very effective and instructive means to awaken those who are centered upon this world alone.

It says:

"What! Do you then think that We created you aimlessly and that you shall not be returned to Us?"

This short, meaningful sentence gives a compelling reason for the reality of the Day of Judgment and the existence of Reckoning; which is that if the Day of Judgment were not a reality this worldly life would remain without purpose.

This life has many difficulties and hazards which Allah has prepared as preliminaries and conditions for the life to come. If this short life on the earth was all there had been, all our sufferings and struggles here would have been meaningless and vain. We will discuss this subject in greater detail later.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned some of the purposes for the creation of man:

1. Worship:

"I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me."

(And through this means they might become perfect and close to Allah).[33]

2. Trials:

"Who has created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct..."[34]

3. Receiving Divine Mercy:

"Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for that (mercy) did He create them .. ."[35]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"May Allah have mercy on him who is aware of his value."

(And knows from what place he has come, where he is now, and where he will go to).[36]

Imam Hussayn (as) said:

"Allah has not created his servants but to know Him, then when they knew Him they would worship Him, and when they worshipped Him they would no longer need to worship others."[37]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"The world is created for something else not for its own sake."[38]

(This world is a means to achieve the Hereafter).

Surly those who seek all of their goals in this world will become world-oriented and cling to the earth, as verse 176 of Sura Al-'A'raf says:

"...but he clung to the earth..."

There is a poem that says:

Every moment of this valuable life is a peerless treasure,

Oh, every moment we lose such a treasure.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 116

فَتَعَالَي اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ

116. "Therefore, high exalted is Allah, the King of the Truth! There is no god but He, the Lord of 'Arsh (the Throne) of Grace."

Sovereignty belongs only to Allah.

("...the King of the Truth...")

The entire universe is under His Divine lordship and administration.

Thus, this verse says:

"Therefore, high exalted is Allah, the King of the Truth! There is no god but He, the Lord of 'Arsh (the Throne) of Grace."

(He is above creating the universe in vain). One who does something in vain is ignorant, weak and powerless or is a vain and false entity in his essence. It is therefore impossible for Allah, the Ruler of the universe, Who is absolutely perfect, Who is the Truth and issues nothing save the Truth, to create something in vain and aimless.

If it is imagined that someone might be able to prevent Him from achieving His aim, by the sentence

"...There is no god but He..."

The Qur'an nullifies this idea.

Moreover, by emphasizing the divinity of Allah through the holy phrase:

"...the Lord of 'Arsh (the Throne) of Grace",

it indicates His Ownership from the point of view of His capacity as One Who rectifies, and more clearly shows the purposefulness of the universe.

In short, in addition to mentioning the word 'Allah', which itself generally refers to His all attributes of perfection, the verse specifies four of His attributes: His ownership and sovereignty, the truthfulness of His essence, the non existence of any partners with Him, and His lordship.

All of these attributes indicate that He never does anything in vain and He has not created man and the world for no end.

As already mentioned, the Arabic word /'arsh/ refers to the entire world of existence which, in fact, is under Allah's sovereignty, (because 'Arsh philologically means: Throne with long legs and the Throne of the rulers, and this is an implicit declaration to Allah's sovereignty).

This can be clearly seen in the verse that says:

"...then He mounted the Throne (of authority)..."[39]

which alludes to Allah's command of the heavens and the earth after He had created them. In other words, not only is Allah the Creator, but He is also the Sovereign and Manager of the world.

The Qur'anic word /'arsh/ is qualified by the adjective /karim/ (of Grace), this is because the word 'karim', in Arabic, originally means honorable, beneficial, and good. Since Allah's Throne has all these attributes, the adjective 'karim' has been used.

It should be noted that the attribute of 'karim' is not used only for an entity that possesses wisdom such as man or Allah, but in the Arabic language it is used for many other things, too.

Verse 50 of Sura Al-Hajj concerning the righteous believers says:

"...for them is forgiveness and an honourable (karim) provision;"

In Mufradat, Raqib says that this adjective is not used for small and trifle kindnesses, it is rather used in cases where these kindnesses are very important.

We would finally like to draw your attention to this matter: The study of the order and system of this world is one of the reasons used in the discussion of the Resurrection to confirm the existence of another world. In other words, the study upon this 'first creation' testifies that there is 'later creation' after it.[40]

Now it becomes necessary to explain further: We know that the world of creation is very ordered, vast, glorious and miraculous. Its ysteries are so numerous that great scientists confess that all of the knowledge of mankind compared to it is like a single page of a great book.

Each galaxy of this world comprises millions of stars. The number of galaxies and the distances between them are so astoundingly immense that even when we calculate them using the speed of light which travels at the speed of 300, 000 km per second they seem terrible.

The order and accuracy found in the structure of the smallest unit of this world is the same order found in the structures of its greatest units.

As far as we know, man is the most complete and the most sublime being in this material universe. At the same time, we know that with all his

sublimity and lofty reputation, man is confronted many difficulties and miseries in his short lifetime.

He has still barely graduated from his infancy with all its difficulties and problems when he comes up against his tumultuous youth with all its social and psychological storms. And not yet does he gain a foothold in adolescence when old age knocks at the door of his life with all its concomitant miseries.

Is it possible to believe that the purpose of this great system and man, this miracle of creation, is just to exist for a short time, passing these three periods of life with difficulty, eating a little food, wearing clothes, sleeping and waking up, and men passing away into nothingness?

If this were really the case would not creation be vain and useless? Would any wise being create this great system for such a small aim?

Suppose that humankind tarried in this world for millions of years and generations came and went one by one, and the material sciences advanced so much that man could avail himself to the best nutrition, garments and dwellings, would eating, drinking, dressing and sleeping be so valuable that they would be the sole purpose of his institutions and systems?

Thus, the study of this great world merely indicates that this life is an introduction to a greater, vaster, and eternal world. It is only the existence of such a world that makes our lives meaningful and purposeful.

Consequently, it is not strange that the materialistic philosophers, who do not believe in the Resurrection and the Hereafter, count this world as vain and aimless. In fact, if we did not believe in such a world, we would concur with them. This is why we say if death .were the end of everything, the creation of the world would be vain and purposeless.

We read in Sura Al-Waqi‘ah, No. 56, verse 62:

“And verily you know the first creation. Why, then, do you not take admonition?”

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 117-118

وَمَن يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهاً ءَاخَرَ لاَ بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ

وَقُل رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

117. “And whoever invokes with Allah another god, he has no proof there of; therefore his reckoning is only with his Lord. Verily, the disbelievers will not prosper.”

118. “And (O Muhammad) say: ‘My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, (for) You are the best of the merciful ones’.”

Polytheism, in whatever form it appears, is condemned. Man’s belief and conduct must be based on intellect and logical proof A pagan or polytheist has not any logic.

(... he has no proof...)

The previous verses emphasized the Day of Resurrection and Allah’s attributes. The above noble verse emphasizes monotheism and negates any kind of polytheism. Thus, it has completed the discussion up on the origin and the Resurrection.

It says:

"And whoever invokes with Allah another god, he has no proof there of; therefore his reckoning is only with his Lord..."

Indeed, polytheists only rely upon hollow claims and the reasons they advance for their beliefs include such things as the blind imitation of ancestors and various unfounded superstitions.

They deny the Day of Resurrection which is based upon very clear arguments and evidence while they accept polytheism which has not been founded upon similar sound reasoning and evidence.

Allah will certainly hold to account those who do not obey the command of reason, and consciously enter the deviated ways of unbelief. The verse ends with the sentence implying that the disbelievers will not be successful, and the consequence of their behaviour will be made clear in this Divine Reckoning.

The verse says:

"...verily, the disbelievers will not prosper."

It is interesting that this Sura begins with the sentence:

"Successful indeed are the believers."

and ends its discourse with the sentence:

"...verily the disbelievers will not prosper."

This, in summary, is the Qur'anic perspective on the life of the believers and unbelievers.

In the last verse of this Sura, the Prophet (S) is addressed and as a general conclusion it says:

"And (O Muhammad) say: 'My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, (for) You are the best of the merciful ones'."

The verse implies that some people are wandering on the path of polytheism and some are committing oppression and tyranny, the Prophet should rely on Allah's grace and favour and ask His pardon and forgiveness.

It is certain that this is a command for all the believers although the verse is ostensibly addressed to the holy Prophet (S).

A narration says that the verses of the beginning and the end of this Sura are among the treasures of Allah's Throne, and that anyone who puts the first three holy verses of this Sura into practice and learns advice from its last four verses will be successful.[41]

It is likely that the first three verses of this Sura are the first three verses that come after the sentence

"Successful indeed are the believers."

One of them invites the believers to humility in the ritual prayer, the second invites them to refrain from what is vain and useless, and the third exhorts them to pay the alms-tax.

The first verse concerns the relationship between man and Allah, the second concerns the relationship between man and himself, and the third concerns the relationship between man and society. The last four verses are those holy verses that come after verse 114.

They speak of the purposefulness of the creation of Allah, the issue of Resurrection, monotheism, devotion to Allah, and focusing our attention upon Him.

Oh Allah! By the believers who are promised success in this Sura and for whom the Prophet (S) and his family are the forerunners, place us in this group and make us successful!

Oh Allah! Bestow Your pardon and forgiveness upon us, for You are The Beneficent, The Merciful.

Oh Allah! Render our destinies blissful and save us from any kind of deviation and error. Indeed, You are All-Powerful over every thing.

Notes

1. Kafi, Thawab ul-'A'mal, and 'Man la Yahdurhul-Faqih' (according to nur-uth-THaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 553)
2. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 169
3. It is a very dry desert without vegetation and is very hot.
4. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 243
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 553
6. Ibid
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 554
8. Kafi, narrated from Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 268
9. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 268
10. Ibid
11. These narrations were written by Sayyid 'Abdullah Shubbar in the book, Tasliat ul-Fu'ad fi Bayan il-maut wal-Ma'ad.
12. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 169-170
13. Sura Al-Ghafir, No. 40, verse 26
14. While the deceased 'Allamah Majlisi mentions this matter in Bihar ul-'Anwar, he points out that likening the state of the intermediate world to the state of dreams and sleep has been mentioned in many narrations. It is even possible that some elevated and powerful souls have multiple atom-like forms, for there are narrations that say that the Imams will come to every one on the verge of death, and this does not need interpretations and apologies.
15. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 277
16. For more narrations concerning this issue, refer to volume 6 of Bihar ul-'Anwar, where the conditions of the intermediate world and the grave are discussed
17. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 22, verses 1-2
18. Sura As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 27; and Sura At-Tur, No. 52, verse 25
19. Sura Al-Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 42
20. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 7, p. 251, new edition
21. The word 'talfahu, ' in Arabic is a verb in future tense which indicates continuation of action.
22. Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 33
23. Sura Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 101
24. Bahr ul-Muhibbah, By Qazali, p. 41-44
25. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 141
26. Muhajjat ul-Bayda', Vol. 7, p. 28
27. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 74, p. 378
28. Ibid p. 180
29. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 75, p. 41
30. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 74, p. 386
31. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 142
32. Sura Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 32
33. Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 56
34. Sura Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 2
35. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 119
36. Qurar ul-Hikam
37. Bihar, Vol. 5, p. 312
38. Nahj ul-Balaqah, saying No. 463
39. Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 54

www.alhassanain.org/english

40. Sura Al-‘Ankabut, No. 29, verse 20
41. Fakhr-i-Razi’s, Commentary on the verse in question

Sura An-Nur, Chapter 24

(Revealed in Medina)

64 verses in 9 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Grand View of Sura An-Nur

This Sura contains 64 verses and it has been sent down in Medina.

The reason why it has been named An-Nur (light), is its thirty fifth verse in which Allah has been introduced as:

"the Light of the heavens and the earth".

Since this holy Sura has recommended all believers, and specially women to be virgin and chaste, Islamic narrations do give much prominence to teaching and reciting this Sura by women.

In fact, it can be considered as the Sura of virginity, chastity, and struggle against sexual defilements, because the main part of its commandments is about removing society from sexual defilements through different ways, and this aim has been set in several steps:

1) It is the statement of severe punishments of adulterers and adulteresses which is mentioned with full decisiveness in the second verse of this Sura.

2) Executing this severe prescribed punishment is not an easy issue, and from the view of Islamic judicial scales it has strict condition. If a man accuses his wife of adultery, the program 'Li'an' (Conjugal anathema) must be carried out, we will explain it later.

And if a person accuses someone of fornication, that person must present 4 witnesses. Even if someone accuses other person of fornication, but he cannot prove it in the court of Islamic judgment, he will be extremely punished (one forth of prescribed punishment of fornication), so that no one can easily think of Islamic punishment of others by accusing them, otherwise that penalty will be imposed on himself.

3) Then, in this connection, the famous tradition known as 'Ifk' and the accusation that was pinned on one of the wives of the Prophet (S) are mentioned.

The Holy Qur'an follows this issue, so that it becomes completely clear that how great the sin of inventing rumour about virtuous persons is.

4) In order to prevent this thought that Islam is only content with punishing wrongdoers, the Sura mentions one of the important ways of preventing sexual defilements.

It in details explains the issue of preventing men from gloating women and preventing women form casting amorous, coquettish, or lecherous glances at men, because one of the important factors of sexual deviations is voyeur and non-veiling of women.

And defilements would not be expunged unless these are eradicated.

5) Again, to prevent engaging in unchaste actions, the commandment of easy and simple marriage is issued, so that unlawfully satisfying sexual instinct will be struggled by its lawful way.

6) Some of the rules of etiquette and principles of training offspring, concerning parents, are mentioned; stating that there are some times when husband and wife may want to be alone and isolated, so that issues must not enter their rooms without permission, for offspring may deviate intellectually thereby.

For this end, it states some other rules of family life, though they may be unrelated to sexual matters.

7) Some of the discussions that are about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and resignation to the command of the Prophet (S) are mentioned before these discussions, because what support all practical and ethical programs are the very doctrinal issues and the belief in origin, resurrection, and rightfulness of prophecy.

There will not be any branch, leaf, flower, and fruit, if such a root does not exist.

Meanwhile, in connection with discussions about faith and righteous deed, the establishment of the worldly government by the believers is stated and some of other Islam commandments are brought up. On the whole, the Sura has formed a comprehensive collection.

Virtue of Sura An-Nur

The Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

"Whoever reads Sura An-Nur (and applies it in his life), for each faithful woman and man who were in the past and will be in the future Allah will give him 10 good acts as reward."

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Protect your property and preserve your chastity by reading Sura An-Nur and immunize your own wives against deviations through obeying its commandments, because whoever continues reading this Holy Sura in every day and night none of his family members will commit indecency as long as he lives."[1]

Paying attention to the content of the Sura which stands against immodesty through various ways of efficient struggles with factors of deviation from the path of chastity makes clear the main idea of the above-mentioned tradition as well as its practical concept.

Notes

1. Majma‘ ul-Bayan under the verse, the Thawab ul-’A‘mal by Saduq (As it is narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol. 3, p. 568)

Section 1: Punishment for Adultery Prescribed

Sura An-Nur - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

سُورَةٌ أَنزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنزَلْنَا فِيهَآ ءَايَاتٍ بَيِّـنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

1. " (This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent down clear signs, so that you might remember."

The Qur'anic word 'Sura' is an appellation taken by Allah for a collection of verses in the holy Qur'an. What we know is that the name of this Sura is Nur, and it is because of Nur verse, No. 35, which is one of the most conspicuous verses of the Sura.

Furthermore, the content of the Sura is especially luminous. It grants men and women in families and societies the light of chastity and virginity. It gives tongues and speeches the light of piety and veracity.

It gives hearts and souls the light of monotheism, theism, belief in the resurrection, and resignation to the godly invitation of the Prophet (S).

The first verse of the Sura concisely indicates all of the discussions in the Sura.

It says:

" (This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent down clear signs, so that you might remember."

The Arabic word /surah/ is derived from the word /sur/, meaning the height of a building. Then it was applied to the high walls that were built around cities for protecting against enemies' attacks.

And since these walls separated city from the surrounding regions, this word gradually has been applied to a section or a part of something, including a section or piece of the Qur'an separated from the rest of it.

Some philologists have also said that the word /surah/ is applied to high, beautiful, erected buildings as well as various parts of a big structure. With the same proportion, it is applied to the various, parts of the Qur'an which are separated from each other.[1]

Anyway, this sentence refers to the fact that all ordinances and subjects of this Sura, including rules, rites, and doctrines, are extraordinarily important, because all of them have been sent down by Allah.

Specially the sentence /faradnaha/

("...We have ... which We have enjoined...")

emphasizes this meaning, considering that the meaning of the word /farada/ is 'assertion'.

Using the holy phrase /'ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) may point to some facts about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and prophecy, which are presented in it. This phrase is for the clause /faradna/ (We enjoined) which points to the ordinances and commandments which are stated in this verse. In other words, one refers to 'beliefs' and the other one refers to 'religious ordinances'.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /'ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) is some reasons that are mentioned for the obligatory commandments that are presented in this Sura.

The sentence /la'allakum taðakkarun/

('...so that you might remember.')

again illustrates this fact in minds that all beliefs and doctrines and all practical programs of Islam are rooted in the very innate disposition of humans. Thus, their explanation is a kind of admonition and remembrance.

In this holy verse, there are three signs that indicate the magnificence of Sura An Nur:

A) The word 'Surah' that is in the beginning, is the sign of greatness.

B) The Arabic nunnation of the word 'Surah' is for greatness.

C) The Qur'anic word /'anzalna/ (We have sent down) has been mentioned twice in due verse.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 2

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلاَ تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

2. "The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes. And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

According to the conditions of persons, there are different judgments of fornication. In this verse, only one of its cases is referred to, the case that if a celibate man or woman commits fornication, each of them will be flogged with one hundred stripes.

But if a person who has spouse and commits adultery, the punishment is stoning to death. If someone who has spouse, but he or she can not reach him or her (for example the spouse is behind bars), and commits fornication, the judgment of stoning to death is changed to stripes.

The holy Qur'an counts fornication as an indecency and horrible deed and prohibits it where it says:

"And do not approach fornication..."[2]***,***

and it counts the abundance of fornication as a sign for the true servants of Allah, where it says:

"The (faithful) servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who.nor commit formation..."[3]***,***

and again it considers the avoidance of committing this sin as the condition for the allegiance with the Prophet (S) as, in another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"O Prophet! When believing women come unto thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they ...will neither steal nor commit (or fornication) adultery ..."[4]

After this general statement of the verse, the first decisive and determining ordinance about fornicatress and fornicator is presented.

It says:

"The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes..."

To emphasize more, the Qur'an adds:

"...And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day..."

Finally, at the end of the verse to conclude this Divine punishment, another matter is added, where it says:

"...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

As matter of fact, this verse contains [3] commandments:

1. The ordinance of punishing fornicatress and fornicator; (the purpose of fornication is unlawful sexual intercourse).

2. Emphasis on the matter of not being moved by compassion and sentiments at the time of executing divinely prescribed punishments. These sentiments and kindness yield as result only corruption and defilement in society.

But to deactivate the motivations of such sentiments, the Sura brings up the issue of belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment, because the sign of belie in origin and Resurrection is absolute resignation to Allah's commandment.

The belief in the Lord of the world, Who is All-Knowing, All-Wise, makes man know that each commandment is based on a philosophy and wisdom and is not legislated without any reason. Having faith in Resurrection causes man to feel responsibility for violations and transgressions.

Here, there is an interesting tradition that must be noted carefully:

The Prophet (S) says:

" (On the Day of Judgment) some of the rulers who have decreased one stripe from the divinely prescribed punishment will be fetched (to the place of gathering). They will be questioned why they had done such a thing.

They will answer:

'For having mercy on Your servants!

'Allah will say:

"Did you show more mercy to them than I did?"

The command of throwing him into Fire will be issued. Another person who has added one stripe to the divinely prescribed punishment will be brought (to the place). He will be asked why he did such an action.

He will answer:

'For preventing then from disobeying You.'

Allah will say:

'Were you wiser and more knowing than Me?'

Then the command will be issued of throwing him into Fire."[5]

3. The commandment of attendance of a group of believers in the place where the judgment of punishment is carried out. The aim is not only to make the wrongdoer learn lesson, the aim is that his punishment will work as an admonition for others.

In another word, considering the texture of man's social life, a person's ethical defilements are not limited to one person, but it influences society.

For cleaning, the punishment must be carried out in public, as wrong action has become manifest.

Thus, in this way, the answer to the question that why Islam allows a man's honour to be lost in the public becomes clear, because as far as the sin is not manifested and is not reported to the Islamic court, Allah, Who veils vices, does not will to unveil what is secret.

But after that the wrong action is proved, and its secret is uncovered, society is defiled and the sin decreases in importance, so punishment must be executed in a way that the negative effects of the sin may be deactivated and the magnitude of the sin can be reestablished.

Essentially, in a sound society, violation of law must be counted important. Surely if that violation is repeated, that importance will be broken. Its importance will be reset only through publicly punishing the offenders.

Moreover, we must pay attention to the fact that for many of people honour is more important than the issue of bodily punishment. This very publicizing of punishment suppresses their ungovernable low desires.

Some Narrations On Evils of Fornication

Some evils and harm of fornication are mentioned in one of the speeches of Imam Rida (as), including the followings:

1. Committing murder by abortion
2. Violation of structure of family and relationship
3. Abandonment of training issues
4. Ruin of criteria of heritage[6]

In the opinion of Ali (as), abandonment of fornication buttresses family (to be protected) and desertion of sodomy protects generation.[7]

The holy Prophet (S) says:

"Fornication enjoys harms both in this world and the other world. In this world, there are ruins of man's luminosity and beauty, untimely death, and termination of the portion of sustenance.

And in the other world, there will be helplessness at the time of resurrection's reckoning, and there are Allah's rage and eternal Hell."[8]

There have been narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h) who said:

1) "When fornication increases, sudden death increases, too."[9]

2) "Do not commit fornication, so that your wives do not get involve in fornication. Whoever violates another person's honour his honour will be violated. You will be treated as you treat others."[10]

3) "There are four things that if each of them exists in any house, that house will be desolate and void of blessing: A) Treachery B) Stealth C) Wine-Drinking D)Fornication."[11]

And:

"Fornication is one of the major sins."[12]

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Whenever people commit four sins, they will be involved in four disasters:

1. Whenever fornication prevails, earthquakes will occur.

2. Whenever people do not pay alms-tax, quadrupeds will be demolished and blessing will be taken from grains.

3. Whenever the judgment of judicial authorities is oppressive, there will be no rain.

4. Whenever breach of promise occurs, polytheists will get victory over Muslims."[13]

Some Messages

1. Sexual freedom and unlawful relations are forbidden.

2. The function of women in creating unlawful relations and preparing preliminaries of fornication is more considerable than that of men. On the contrary, in stealth, men have more function. Thus, in the verse, the Arabic word /zaniyah/ (fornicatress) precedes the word /zani/ (fornicator).

3. For correcting wrongdoer and protecting public chastity, bodily punishment is necessary.

("...scourge ... stripes")

4. In a liaison and intimacy, both parties must be punished equally.

("...each one of them...")

5. The amount of punishment must be measured by Allah.

("...a hundred stripes...")

6. In punishing wrongdoers, it is forbidden to be influenced by compassions and sentiments.

7. Compassion and kindness must be inside the range of religion.

("...And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence...")

8. Religion is not only fasting and performing ritual prayer, but Divinely imposed limits are of the essential elements of religion, too.

("...the sentence of Allah...")

9. By believing in origin and resurrection, rules can be carried out firmly and decisively.

10. Carrying out the prescribed punishments is the sign of belief in Allah.

("...if you believe in Allah...")

11. Punishment must be in a way that others take lesson. The verse says:

("...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.")

12. A person who commits fornication must be both bodily and psychically punished.

13. People's attendance is a lever to control both the judge and the executer.

14. Believers' attendance should be used for prohibition of committing evil.

15. Only Muslims are allowed to attend the occasion of execution of Divinely-prescribed punishment

Sura An-Nur - Verse 3

الزَّانِي لاَ يَنكِحُ إِلاَّ زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لاَ يَنكِحُهَآ إِلاَّ زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

3. "The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

The Muslim believers, men and women, must marry chaste and pure spouses.

Corrupted people are unwelcome in an Islamic society. Since the above-mentioned verse speaks about the punishment of fornicator and fornicatress, a question raises that how the lawful marriage with such persons is judged.

This verse answers this question in this way:

"The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

Upon the subject that this holy verse is the statement of a Divine ordinance or it mentions only a natural and external phenomenon, commentators discuss differently:

Some believe that this verse mentions only an objective reality or fact that defilers go after defilers or birds of a feather flock together, but believers and pure persons do not go along with such evils and do not marry impure spouses. Believers prohibit themselves from it. What confirms this interpretation is the very apparent of the verse which has been stated in a predictive form.

But some others believe that this holy sentence declares a religious and Divine ordinance, which specially intends to prevent Muslims from marrying those persons who commit fornication, because, like physical illnesses, ethical diseases are often infectious. Moreover, this is counted a shame and disgrace for pure persons.

What is more important is that the offspring who are bred by such skeptical and impure persons have an ambiguous destiny. Regarding these facts, Islam has prevented it.

This interpretation is confirmed by this sentence which consists of the sense of prohibition:

"...and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

There are many traditions stated by the Prophet (S) and other infallible Imams (as) in this regard that establish the validity of this interpretation indicating that this verse declares an ordinance.

Even some of great commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this verse:

"A Muslim man asked the Prophet's permission for marrying a woman called ''Umm-i-Mahzul' who, in the Age of Ignorance, was notorious for immodesty and even she had hanged a flag as a sign on the door of her house. At that time, this verse was sent down and the Prophet (S) answered him."[14]

Another tradition, narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), says:

"This verse is about those men and women who committed fornication at the age of the Prophet (S). Allah prohibited Muslims from marrying them. Right now this judgment covers all people. None should marry one

who commits this wrong action and is punished according to Divinely-prescribed measures until his or her repentance is declared."

This is a worth-mentioning matter that many of the divine ordinances are stated in the form of predicative sentence. To state Divine ordinances in the form of imperative and prohibitive sentence is not always necessary.

By the way it must be noted that connecting 'idolater' to 'fornicator' is in fact for stating the importance of the matter. It means that the sin of fornication is equal to idolatry, because in some narrations we read that when a person commits fornication, he has no faith.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Fornicator is not a believer when he commits fornication. Likewise a thief does not have faith at the time of stealing, because at the time of doing this action, his faith is taken away as shirt is taken off."[15]

Some Matters to Study

1. The Cases of Fornication That Necessitates the Death Sentence

What has been mentioned upon the fornication judgment in the above-mentioned noble verse is a common ordinance that has also some exceptional cases, including adultery whose prescribed punishment is death sentence if its conditions are confirmed.

The purpose of the Arabic word /muhsin/ concerning adultery is a man who has got wife and his wife is with him and /muhsinah/ is woman who has got husband and her husband is with her.

If a person who is provided with such a lawful way commits fornication, his Islam prescribed punishment is death sentence. How this sentence is carried out is explained in the books of Islamic jurisprudence.

The sentence that is issued about the one who commits incest is execution too. Rape is also a felony punishable by execution.

Of course, in some cases there are also some additional punishments other than flagging, such as exile and so on. For these punishments, we must read their explanation in the jurisprudence books.

2. Why Does the Word 'Fornicatress' Precede the Word 'Fornicator'?

Undoubtedly this unchaste act is ugly and bad for every one, but for women it is worse and uglier, because they are more modest and decorous. If this modesty and decorousness is ruined, it will be a reason for more violent disobedience.

Moreover, although its evil consequences affect both of them, women will be affected with more evil consequences. Another possibility is that this ugly matter is more tempted by women and in many cases women are the main factor and origin of temptation.

All of these reasons have caused unchaste women to be mentioned before impure men in the above verse, but chaste women and pure men are far from all these affairs.

3. Why is Punishment to Be Carried Out in a Gathering?

The above holy verse, which is in the form of imperative sentence, indicates that a group of believers must be present when the prescribed punishment of fornication is carried out.

But the holy Qur'an has not stipulated that this Islamic sentence must be carried out positively in public, but depending on conditions and interests, it may be changed; for example, only the presence of 3 or more persons is enough. It is important that the judge decides how many persons must attend the occasion.

The philosophy of this judgment is also obvious, , because as we said before:

First: It will be a lesson for all people and it will make society pure.

Second: The shame of the offender prevents committing the wrong action in the future.

Third: When the prescribed punishment is carried out before some persons, the judge and the executers of the punishment will not be accused of taking bribe, collusion, discrimination, torturing and such like.

Fourth: The attendance of people prevents self-interest and excess in carrying out the punishment.

Fifth: It is possible that, after the execution of punishment, the wrongdoer accuses and rumours about judge and executer, but the attendance of people makes his status clear and prevents his destructive activities in the future. And there are many other advantages.

4. What Was the Prescribed Punishment of a Fornicator?

It is understood from the 15th and 16th verses of Sura An-Nissa' that before the time that the ordinance of Sura An-Nur about adulterer and adulteress was sent down, their punishment had been life sentence (being imprisoned forever) if they were married and if they were not married they had to be punished and persecuted.

(".. .punish them both...")

The measure of this punishment is not clear, but the concerning verse specifies mat it must be one hundred stripes. Thus, the death sentence takes the place of life sentence (being imprisoned forever) for those who are married, and the sentence of one hundred stripes takes the place of the sentence of punishment and persecution for those who are not married.

5. Going to Extremes in Executing the Prescribed Punishment is Forbidden!

Without doubt, humane and sentimental issues demand ultimate attempt to save every innocent individual from being punished. Also as far as Divine ordinances allow indulgence and pardon, wrongdoers should be pardoned.

But when the crime or offence is proved and the prescribed punishment is decided, decisiveness and firmness of rule must be observed, and false sentiments, which harm the system of society, must be put away.

Specially in the concerned verse, the sentence /fi din-illah/

("...from enforcing the sentence of Allah...")

is used. It means that when it is Allah's ordinance, no one can exceed Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful.

Here, in this verse, the overcoming of affectionate sentiments is prohibited, because most people have such a mood. It is possible that these affectionate sentiments overcome them, but it cannot be denied that there is a minority that advocates more violation and severity.

The mentioned group is also, as we mentioned before, away from the path of Allah's ordinance and these people must control their sentiments and do not exceed Allah, because that deserves to be severely punished, too.

6. How is Marriage with Fornicator and Fornicatress Illegalized?

We have already said that the above-mentioned verses apparently illegalize marriage with fornicator and fornicatress. Of course, this ordinance is limited to men and women who were notorious for this action and have not repented.

Thus, if they are not notorious for this action, or if they have withdrawn from their former deeds and have decided to be pure and chaste and have shown that they are penitent, marriage with them is lawfully permitted.

In the second status, it is for the reason that the titles 'fornicator' and 'fornicatress' are not applied to them, because they are no longer in the previous condition. But in the first status, this stipulation is understood from the Islamic narrations and the occasion of the revelation of verse confirms it, too.

In a reputable tradition we read that Zurarah, a famous jurist, asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the commentary of the Qur'anic phrase:

"The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress...".

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"This verse refers to women and men who had been notorious for fornication and they were known for this evil act in the society. Today it is the same; it is not good to marry one who has been punished for fornication or is notorious for this ugly action, unless his or her repentance is declared."[16]

7. Philosophy of Banning Fornication

We do not think that nobody is aware of gloomy consequences that cover society and individual, but a little explanation in this field is necessary: Occurrence of this evil action and its prevalence unquestionably disorder the structure of family. It makes the relationship between father and son dark and gloomy.

It increases issues having no identity in the society, the issues who, according to experience, will become dangerous felons. This disgraceful action causes kinds of strife and quarrels between the sensual ones.

Moreover, every one knows that psychic and venereal diseases, murdering offspring, abortion, and suchlike crimes are its gloomy results. In brief, if offspring of adultery increases in a society, the social relationships, which are based on family relations, will terribly become shaky and unstable.

To find out how important this mater is, we must imagine for a moment that if fornication is to be permissible in man's society thoroughly and marriage is to be extinct, in this condition no one would take care of infants who are born with no identity, neither in their infanthood, nor in their adulthood.

Moreover these issues will be deprived of kindness and compassion, which plays an important role in struggling with violations and crimes, and

human society changes into a completely bestial society which is accompanied with violation in all aspects.

Of course, this disgraceful act causes kinds of individual and social conflicts and fights between those who are capricious. The stories that have been narrated about the interior conditions of the notorious places and centers of corruption indicate this fact that sometimes the worst crimes take place along with sexual deviations.

In addition to that, experience has informed us and science has proved that this deed causes and spreads kinds of diseases. Although many organizations are prepared for struggling against its consequences, figures show that how many persons have lost and will lose their health because of this act.

This action often causes abortion, murdering of issues, and termination of generation, because such women are not willing to look after such issues of theirs and essentially the existence of offspring is a big barrier against continuity of their gloomy actions, so they always try to put an end to them.

And this chimerical theory that such issues can be gathered in some institutions that are controlled by government is not obviously practicable. It has been proved that how many problems exist in breeding fatherless and motherless children. Even then these brutal issues are products of an inferior quality. They are uncivilized unscrupulous wrongdoers.

Even we must not forget that the purpose of marriage is not only satisfying sexual instinct, but participation in organizing a family, spiritual familiarity and mental tranquility, training issues, and cooperation in all affairs of life are the consequences of lawful marriage.

And these are not possible unless man and woman are limited and allocated to each other and that the banning of fornication should be observed.

Some Traditions On Fornication

1. Imam Ali ibn-Abitalib (as) in a tradition said:

"I heard the Prophet (S) say:

'There are six evil effects in fornication, three of them are in this world, and three of them in the other world. Those which are for this world are: A) It will take man's luminousness. B) It terminates provisions. C) It speeds up destruction of man. And those which are for the other world are: A) Allah's anger B) Severity of reckoning C) Entering into Fire or eternal abiding in Hell'."[17]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One of the sins that withhold sustenance is fornication."[18]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah's fury is severe and harsh toward those who commit fornication."[19]

4. Imam Ali (as) said:

"A fervent man never commits fornication."[20]

5. It has been narrated:

"Verily fornication brings blackness of face, causes poverty, shortens the lifetime, terminates the provision. It ruins beauty and glory and brings Allah's anger near and the doer of it is wretched and ashamed."[21]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"When fornication increases after me, sudden death does increase."[22]

7. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Verily a person who enters his sperm in an unlawful womb on the Hereafter Day will have severer punishment."[23]

8. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"When a man commits fornication, the spirit of faith abandons him."[24]

9. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"When fornication increases (in a society), many earthquakes occur."[25]

10. The Prophet (S) said:

"There are four things that if one of them enters a home, it will destroy it, and which will not be well set-up with blessing: stealth, treachery, wine-drinking, and fornication."[26]

11. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Do good to your fathers, so that your issues will do good to you. And abstain from people's wives, so that your wives will be chaste (and safe)."

Sura An-Nur - Verses 4-5

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُـحَصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلاَ تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَداً وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

4. "And those who accuse chaste women (with adultery) but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them (with) eighty stripes and do not (afterward) accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers, "

5. "Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Accusation is like shooting arrow to the honor and dignity of people and not observing it. And, the punishment of accusing married and chaste women is more severe.

Since the pervious verses consist of a heavy punishment for men and women who commit fornication, and it is possible that some impious malicious individuals accuse a few pure and chaste persons, thus immediately after mentioning of severe punishment of adulterers, the punishment of those who accuse others and intend to misuse this ordinance is declared, so that the honor and respect of chaste families can be saved from the threat of such persons, and no one dare denigrate people.

At first, it says:

"And those who accuse chaste women (with adultery) but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them (with) eighty stripes..."

After this heavy punishment, two more ordinances are added, where it says:

"...and do not (afterward) accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers, "

Thus, in this way, not only such persons are heavily punished, but also their testimony and speech is invalid and invaluable in a long term, so that

they cannot defame pure individuals. Moreover, the mark of impurity is set on them and they will be scandalized in the society.

This austereness in saving reputation of pure people is not limited to this case here, but it is also seen in many Islamic teachings. It indicates how extremely Islam values reputation of pure female and male believers.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"When a Muslim accuses his Muslim brother of a matter (that is not done by him), faith will vanish from his heart as salt melts in water."[27]

However, in view of the fact that Islam never closes the path of return to anyone, and it uses every opportunity to encourage wrongdoers to purify themselves and atone for the former errors and mistakes, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Therefore, according to the traditions narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) and other Imams (as), by repenting both their testimony is valid in the future and the judgment of being mischievous is abrogated of them in all fields, because a person who has repented and become just again, the title of being mischievous will be taken from him.

Some Traditions on Repentance

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"An individual who repents his sin is like a person who is sinless."[28]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Nothing is more liked before Allah than a faithful man and woman who regret about sin and then repent."[29]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Impart the pleasant odour of seeking forgiveness, so that the offensive smell of sins does not stigmatize you."[30]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The favorite servant before Allah is a well-doer who repents a lot."[31]

Pay Attention to Some Points

1. What Does the Word 'ramy' Mean Here?

The Arabic word /ramy/ basically means throwing stones or shooting arrows and like, and it is natural that in many cases it harms. Then this Arabic word has been used sarcastically in accusation of individuals, cursing, abusing and unfair imputation, because as if these words and speeches are like arrows that hit the body of a person and wound him.

Perhaps it is for this reason that this word has been used in an absolute form in the verses under discussion and later verses.

For example, it has not mentioned,

"Those who accuse chaste women of adultery",

because considering verbal contexts, the word 'fornication' has been omitted in the concept of the word /yarmuna/. Moreover, the lack of clearly expressing it, when chaste women are mentioned, is- considered as a kind of courtesy, respect, and chastity in words.

2. Why Four Witnesses?

We know that in Islam two just witnesses are usually enough for proving crimes and asserting rights. Even in the case of homicide when there are two witnesses, the crime is proved, but in the question of accusation to adultery four witnesses are especially necessary.

The reason that witness outweighs here is possibly the fact that many people accuse others very easily and they always mar reputation and honour of individuals suspiciously or not suspiciously. Islam is rather uncompromising in this respect so that people's honour can be saved. But in other issues, even homicide, individuals' tongue is not so defiled.

Moreover, in homicide there is only one party, i.e. the criminal is one, but in adultery two persons are charged with the crime, and if we require two witnesses for each of them, there will be four witnesses.

This statement is the content of a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as). Abu Hanifah, the famous Sunni jurist, says:

"I asked Imam Sadiq (as) that whether fornication is more condemnable than homicide.

He said:

'No, homicide is.'

Then I said:

'Why are two witnesses enough in proving homicide, but fornication requires 4 witnesses?'

He said:

'What do you say about this matter?'

Abu Hanifah could not answer explicitly.

Imam said:

"This is because there are two prescribed punishments in fornication, one of them is for man and the other one is for woman. So two witnesses are needed. But in homicide only one prescribed punishment is inflicted on murderer."[32]

Of course there are some cases of fornication for which prescribed punishment is inflicted on one party (e.g. rape and suchlike), but these are the exceptional instances. What is common and obvious is the one that is committed with mutual agreement, but we know that the philosophy of ordinances depends on prevailing individuals.

3. Important Condition of Repentance

We have reiterated this fact that repentance is not only asking Allah's forgiveness or feeling remorse about past deeds or even deciding to relinquish an evil act in the future, but in addition to all these things the wrongdoer must put his best foot forward to amend the past.

If he has really marred reputation and honour of a pure man or woman, he must, in order to make his repentance accepted, deny what he has said in the presence of those who have heard his accusation, so to speak, he must rehabilitate the disgraced person.

The Qur'anic holy phrase /wa 'aslahu/

("...who ... make amends...")

that has come after the phrase /tabu/

("...who repent...")

indicates this fact that such persons must repent from their sins and then must atone what wrong they have committed. This is not right that another one accuses a person of lying in public (or by means of press or mass media) and then, in his home, when he is alone, he asks Allah's forgiveness. Allah never accepts such repentance.

Therefore, there are some traditions narrated from the leaders of Islam as an answer to the question that whether the testimony of those who accuse someone of dishonour is accepted after they repent and are prescribedly punished; their answer is "Yes".

And when it was asked how his repentance is done, they said:

"He will come to Imam (or Islamic judge) and will say: 'I accused so and as and I repent of what I have said'."[33]

4. The Ordinances of 'qathf': (False Accusation of Unlawful Intercourse)

In the book entitled: "Hudud" (prescribed punishments), there is a chapter which is called:

"the prescribed punishment of Qathf".

The word 'Qathf' (on the rhythm of 'Hazf') means hurling something to a far away place. But in these cases, like the Arabic word /ramy/, it alludes to dishonouring accusation of an individual. In other words, it is scurrility and foul language related to these matters.

Whenever 'Qathf' is done explicitly and affirmatively in any language and in any form, its prescribed punishment is 80 stripes, as it was mentioned above.

If it is not explicit and affirmative, it is subject to the ordinance of discretionary punishment (the purpose of 'discretionary punishment' is those sins that have no definite prescribed punishment in religion, but it is up to the Islamic judge to decide the measure and the way of punishment in a certain case with regard to the characteristics of the criminal and the quality of crime as well as other conditions).

Even if a person accuses a group of people of such a crime, swears at them and accuses them one by one (singly), there will prescribed punishment of Qathf for each accusation separately.

But if he accuses them on the whole or altogether, and if they jointly and intemperately ask punishment for him, he will be inflicted with one prescribed punishment, but if they separately take legal action against him, for each accusation he will be imposed with one independent prescribed punishment.

This is so important that if a person is accused of such a crime and this person dies, his heirs can sue accuser and ask prescribed punishment for the accuser.

Of course, since this ordinance is among the personal rights, and if an entitled person forgives wrongdoer, his prescribed punishment will be canceled, unless this offence is repeated so many times that reputation and honour of society is threatened, in this case this crime will be treated differently.

If two persons use bad language about reputation of each other, there will be no prescribed punishment for both of them, but they will be imposed with discretionary punishment as judge decides. Thus, no Muslim has right

to answer back foul language, but he can only demand his rights through the judge of religion and asks for punishment of bad language user.

Anyway, the purpose of this Islamic ordinance is, first: saving men's honour and reputation, and second is, preventing ample social and moral corruptions which bedevil the society, because if corrupted persons are to be free, they will swear at and accuse every one unjustly and then they are saved from punishment.

In this condition, people's reputation and honour are always at risk and even these unjust accusations make a spouse cynical of other half. And father will be skeptical of his issue's legitimacy.

In short, the existence of family will be threatened, atmosphere of suspicion and skepticism prevails society, rumour-mongers drive a roaring line, and all chaste persons will be stained in the opinion of people.

Here, there will be the demand of decisiveness, the same decisiveness which Islam has presented to these bad language users.

Yes, they must be flogged with 80 stripes as penalty for their evil and accusing swearing, so that they will never fiddle with people's reputation and honour.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 6-10

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ إِلاَّ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ
وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ
وَيَدْرَؤُا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَن تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ
وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَآ إِن كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ
وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ

6. "And (as for) those who accuse their wives (with adultery), and have (in support) no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them (shall be taken) four times (swearing) by Allah that verily iie is of the truthful (ones);"

7. "And the fifth (oath to be) that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."

8. "And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is one of the liars, "

9. "And the fifth (oath) should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful (ones)."

10. "And had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (you would have been ruined and undone)."

Occasion of Revelation

Among some of the Companions, Sa'ad Ibn 'Ibadeh (the great of The Helpers) told the Prophet (S):

"O' Prophet of Allah! When accusing someone of this unchaste action has such a punishment that if an accuser can not prove it, he will be flogged

with 80 stripes, so what can I do when I enter my home and I do see that a miscreant man is having sexual intercourse with my wife?

If I wait for four persons to come and see and then testify, the time has passed and that evil man has done his job, and if I want to kill him, no one believes me without witnesses and I will be retaliated justly as a murderer; and if I tell what I have seen to judge, I will be flogged with 80 stripes."

Some minutes later his cousin (son of his uncle) by the name of Hilal-Ibn 'Umayyah entered to report to the Prophet (S) that he had seen a miscreant man with his wife at night.

He explicitly said:

"I have seen this fact with my own eyes and I heard their voice with my own ears."

At this time the Prophet (S) became so annoyed that the sign of his unhappiness appeared in his blessed face. Hilal said:

"I see by your face how annoyed you have become, but, by Allah, I tell the truth and I hope Allah Himself helps me."

At this time Gabriel came down and revealed this verse and its following four verses to the Prophet (S) and presented Muslims its real exact solution.

Here, the Holy Qur'an has excluded some cases from the judgment of Qathf (false accusation); if a husband accuses his wife of unchaste action and says that he has seen her while she was doing sexual intercourse with a strange man, Qathf judgment will not be imposed on this husband, and, on the other hand, the husband's claim about his wife will not be accepted without reason and witness.

Here, the holy Qur'an suggests a proposition that the problem will be solved justly and in a most excellent way. That proposition is that the husband must first testify four times for proving that his claim is true.

As the Qur'an says:

"And (as for) those who accuse their wives (with adultery), and have (in support) no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them (shall be taken) four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is of the truthful (ones);"

And in the next verse the Qur'an says:

"And the fifth (oath to be) that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."

Thus it implies that the husband repeats this sentences for four times, saying: he testifies by Allah that he is telling the truth in accusing his wife of adultery!

In the fifth time the husband says that: May he be cursed by Allah if he tells a lie.

Now the wife is facing a dilemma; if she confirms her husband's words or she does not agree to deny this accusation, according to the way that is mentioned in the next verse, she will decisively be imposed with prescribed punishment of fornication.

Thus in the next verse it says:

"And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is one of the liars, "

And the next verse mentions:

"And the fifth (oath) should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful (ones)."

Thus, the wife testifies five times that her husband's five-time-declared testimony that she has committed adultery is untrue.

Four times she repeats this sentence:

"I testify by Allah that he is telling untruth in his accusation of my adultery."

In the fifth time she declares an oath saying:

"Should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah upon herself if he (her accuser) is telling the truth."

The fulfilment of this Islamic custom in Arabic is called /li'an/ (conjugal anathema, or imprecation) because of the word /la'n/ (curse) mentioned in the above sentences. Doing /li'an/ leads to four certain judgments for these two spouses.

A) Without the formula of repudiation (divorce), they will immediately separate from each other.

B) This wife and husband will be perpetually unlawful to each other; and there will never be the chance of a new marriage between them.

C) There will be no Qathf punishment for this husband and the prescribed punishment of adultery for the wife.

D) The issue that is created through this phenomenon will not be related to husband, but the issue's affinity with wife remains.

Finally in the last one of the concerned verses, it says:

"And had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (you would have been ruined and undone)."

In fact this holy verse is as a compact indication that puts emphasis on the above judgments, because it shows that the custom of /li'an/ is a Divine bounteousness that solves the problem of relationship between wife and husband in a right way.

First, it does not compel husband to be silent when he saw his wife has committed a wrong action and to withdraw from instituting legal proceedings.

Second, as soon as the accusation takes place, it does not declare wife to the prescribed punishment of adultery and it grants wife the right to defend herself.

Third, it does not demand husband to go after four witnesses when he saw this scene and so lets the cat out of the bag.

Fourth, it divorces this wife and husband who are unable to continue their married life and even it does not allow them to be spouses with each other again in the future, because if this accusation is true, they can not psychically continue their married life and if it is a lie, wife's sentiment is so spoiled that returning to a new life becomes difficult, because the result of such affair is animosity and hostility not chilly detachment.

Fifth, it also settles the situation of the issue.

By using a delicate, measured, and just solution, Allah has cleared up this difficult problem. He has shown His bless, bounteousness, forgiveness, and intellect towards His servants.

If we contemplate this matter, we see that the main judgment that demands four witnesses is not totally cancelled, but in case of wife and husband each of these four ‘testimonies’ are substituted for one ‘witness’ and some of its judgments are taken into consideration.

Some Matters to Be Mentioned

1. Why is Qathf Allocated to Spouses?

The first question that is brought up here is that what characteristics do two spouses have that such an exceptional judgment has been declared about them?

The answer of this question can be, on one hand, found in the occasion of revelation of the verse, and that is when a man sees his wife with a strange man he can not be silent, if he possibly wants.

How does his jealousy allow him to show no reaction against infringement of his honour and reputation? If he wants to go to judge and say something, he will be imposed with Qathf punishment, because the judge does not know he is right, perhaps he tells a lie.

If he wants to go after 4 witnesses, it will be against his face and reputation; moreover, it is possible that the affair ends during finding of witnesses.

On the other hand, strange persons accuse each other of this evil action very soon, but wife and husband accuse each other less. Thus, having 4 witnesses is necessary for strange persons, otherwise Qathf punishment will be carried out, but it is not the same for wife and husband. Therefore, this judgment is because of their characteristics.

2. Li‘an, a Special Program

According to explanations that were given in the commentary of the verses, to annul Qathf punishment of man who accuses his wife of adultery, man must testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth.

As a matter of fact, in this special case, each of these four testimonies takes place of a witness. And in the fifth time he most heartedly and willingly wishes Allah’s curse, if he tells a lie.

Considering that these regulations are usually carried out along with religious obligations in an Islamic environment, and when one person sees that he must so decisively testify by Allah in the presence of an Islamic judge, and he must curse himself, most of times this bad action (accusation) is not committed. And this prevents man from untrue accusations.

The fact that the wife must testify four times by Allah that this accusation is untrue, is to equalize the testimony of wife and husband. And, since wife is the one who is accused of adultery, she defends herself in the fifth time with a more severe sentence than that of the men and she demands Allah’s wrath if the husband tells the truth.

We know that ‘La‘nat’ (curse)means not enjoying Allah’s mercy, but ‘Qadab’ (wrath) is something worse than being aloof of Allah’s mercy, because wrath demands a punishment that is more than cursing. Thus, in the commentary of Sura Al-Hamd, we said that ‘Maqdub-i- ‘Alayhim’

(“...not (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath”)

are persons who are worse than ‘Dallin’

(“... (those) gone astray.”),

though ‘Dallih’ or those who go astray do not certainly acquire Allah’s mercy.

Some Traditions On Calumny

1. Imam Rida (as) narrated from his fathers who said:

“The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

‘One who calumniates a faithful man or woman, or says something about her (or him) which is not in him (or her), in the Resurrection Day Allah, the Exalted, will set that calumniator on a heap of Fire so that what he has said about him or her comes out of him, (and he will be cleaned by suffering that chastisement).”[34]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

“A believer does not deceive his (religious) brother, nor does he betray him, nor does he disappoint him, nor does he slander him, nor does he says: ‘I hate you’.”[35]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

“The (sin of) culminating someone (who is clean and pure) is heavier than skies.”[36]

4. Imam Ali (as) said:

“No shamelessness is like culmination.”[37]

5. The Prophet (S) said:

“Whoever calumniates a Muslim in order to bother him, on the Day of Judgment Allah will keep him in the bile sludge of Hell-dwellers till He judges between people.”[38]

Notes

1. Lisan ul-‘Arab, Vol. 4, article ‘sur’
2. Sura ’Isra No. 17, verse 32
3. Sura Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 63 and 68
4. Sura Al-Mumtahanah, No. 60, verse 12
5. The commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 23, p. 148
6. Bihar, Vol. 79, p. 24
7. Nahj ul-Balaqah, Wisdom 252
8. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 58
9. Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 372
10. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 27
11. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 19
12. Ibid
13. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21
14. Majm‘ ul-Bayan and Qurtabi in his commentary has narrated this tradition
15. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p.26, as narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 571
16. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 14, p. 335
17. Majma‘ ul-Bayan, Vol. 6, p. 414
18. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 23
19. Nahj ul-Fisahah, p. 57
20. The explanation of Nahj ul-Balaqah, by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, Vol. 19, p. 311
21. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 28
22. Bihar, Vol. 70, p. 369 and Furu‘-i-Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 541
23. Wasa’il, Vol. 5, p. 47
24. Wasa’il, Vol. 6, p. 256
25. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21
26. Khisal, by Saduq, p. 182
27. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 269

www.alhassanain.org/english

28. Bihar, Vol. 6, p. 21
29. Safinah the article ‘repentance’
30. Bihar, Vol. 6, p. 22
31. Wasa’il, Vol. 6, p. 369
32. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 574
33. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, vol. 18, p. 283 (chapter of testimony, section 36, tradition 4)
34. Bihar, Vol. 27, p. 194
35. Bihar, Vol. 72, p. 194
36. Kanz ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 102
37. Qurar ul-Hikam; 10455
38. Kanz ul-‘Ummal, tradition No. 7925

Section 2: The Scandal Against Ayshah

Sura An-Nur - Verses 11-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَآءُوا بِالإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِنكُمْ لاَ تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرّاً لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلّ امْرِئٍ
مِنْهُم مَا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
لَوْلاَ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْراً وَقَالُوا هَذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ
لَوْلاَ جَآءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ عِندَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذبُونَ
وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَآ أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

11.“Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin; and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement.”

12. “Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: ’This is a manifest lie’?”

13. “Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah.”

14. “And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into.”

The Adventure of ’Ifk, (a Great Slander)

It is understood from all the verses 11-16 that an innocent person was accused of unchaste act at the descending of these verses, and this rumour was spread throughout the society.

When a group of hypocrites, who were apparently Muslim, also wanted to use this event maliciously for causing Islamic society harm and for the sake of their own interest and weakening the common reputation of the Prophet (S), these verses were sent down and so this incident was dealt with in an unprecedented resoluteness. And so the insulting astray-goers and sinister hypocrites were firmly suppressed.

The holy Qur’an, without mentioning the main phenomenon in this verse, says:

“Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you...”

Then it commiserates the believers who were very annoyed by accusing a pure person of such an evil act, by saying:

“...Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you...”

By means of it, the evil intentions of some of defeated enemies and undiscerning hypocrites were uncovered and

these outwardly good persons who were of a bad character, were disgraced. Possibly if this event had not occurred and they had still remained unknown, they would have attacked more severely and dangerously in the future.

This event taught the Muslims a lesson that following rumourmongers will cause them lose every thing. They must firmly resist this matter.

Then, two points are mentioned in the remaining part of the verse.

At first, it says:

"...Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin..."

It indicates that the great responsibility of those who led and found a sin would never prevent the responsibility of others, but every person is as responsible for a sin as he participates and shares in a conspiracy.

For the second step, the verse continues saying:

"...and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement."

Commentators say that this person was 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abi Maslul, who was the chief person of 'Ifk companions. Some others have also mentioned Mastah Ibn 'Ithamah and Hassan Ibn Thabit as the referent of this concept.

Anyway, the one who was more active than others and set off the flames of 'Ifk and is considered as the leader of the group will be imposed with a punishment as great as his sin is great.

Then, in the next verse, the believers who were deceived in this affair and were influenced by this group are severely reprimanded through a few verses.

At first, it says:

"Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: this is a manifest lie?"

It means those why believers did not think good of other believers, who are as their own selves, when they heard hypocrites' words about their faithful persons, and why they did not say that it was a great and manifest slander.

They knew the evil and notorious background of these hypocrites. They were certain out of various contexts that such an accusation was impossible. They were well aware of that accused person's chastity.

They knew the plots which were planned and were carried out against the Prophet (S). Nevertheless, they must be reprimanded that they heard such false rumours and they remained silent, the worse was when they consciously or unconsciously spread it!

It is interesting that instead of asking believers to think good of the one who is accused of this calumny, it says they must think well of themselves. This way of speaking means that believers are of one essence, and if one of them is accused, it is as though all of them were accused.

They are like the limbs of each other, if world brings harm to one of the limbs, the other limbs do not stay calm and indifferent. As one is to defend himself against accusations, one must defend his religious female and male brothers.

The use of the word /'anfus/, in such cases, also is seen in other verses of the holy Qur'an, including Sura Al-Hujurat No. 49, verse 12 which says:

"...and find not fault with your own selves...".

And that its emphasis is put on 'the believers, men and women' shows that Faith is a quality that can prevent evil thinking and suspicions.

Up to now those believers were spiritually and morally reprimanded and rebuked, because on the whole it was not its time for the believers to be

silent against that evil calumny or to be puppet of benighted rumourmongers.

Then, in this verse the subject is judicially paid attention, where it says:

"Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah."

This reprimand shows that the commandment of producing four witnesses as well as 'Qathf punishment', if witnesses are not produced, had been revealed before the verses of 'Ifck'.

But, why the Prophet (S) did not proceed to carry out this prescribed punishment is clearly answered. If people do not cooperate, the execution of such an affair is not possible, because tribal bigoted relationships sometimes make negative resistances to be temporarily brought about against carrying out some judgments. This event, as the history indicates, happened in the same way.

Finally, all these reprimands are concluded in the next holy verse, when it says:

"And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into."

With regard to the matter that the Qur'anic word /'afadtum/is derived from the word /'ifadah/, meaning pouring water out increasingly, and it is also sometimes used to mean sinking into water, it is understood froni this phrase that the rumour of such a calumny spread so much that it also enveloped all believers.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 15-18

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَ تَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُم مَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّناً وَهُوَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ

وَلَوْلآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ

يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَن تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَداً إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

15. "When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great."

16. "And why did you not, when you heard it, say: 'It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O' Lord)! This is a great calumny'?"

17. "Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."

18. "And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

As a matter of fact this holy verse explains the previous discussion that how they were carelessly involved in this great sin. It implies that you may remember the time when you welcomed this great lie and you used to receive this rumour from the tongues of each other; and you used to utter something with your mouths that you had not any knowledge about it.

You considered it a tiny thing while it is very great with Allah.

The verse says:

"When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great."

Actually this verse refers to their 3 great sins that were related to the affair:

First, they embraced and admitted this rumour by taking it from the tongues of each other.

Second, they spread this rumour and recited it for others, while they were not certain of it.

Third, they regarded it as an easy trifle act. It was not only about the reputation and honour of two Muslims, but also it involved the reputation of the Islamic society (thinking too little of rumour and using it as an amusing tool).

It is interesting that in one place the phrase

("...with your tongues...")

is used and in another place the phrase

("...with your mouths...")

is used. Although all words are uttered through tongue and mouth, the verse refers to the matter that neither their admission nor their distribution of this rumour was based on any reason. They only fell back on words that were nonsense, baseless and resulted from the movement of the tongue and the mouth.

Sines this event was a very important incident but a group of Muslims had considered it trifle, it is again in this verse emphasized, and they are once more faced with reprimand and their souls are scourged more firmly.

It says:

"And why did you not, when you heard it, say: 'It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O' Lord)! This is a great calumny'?"

In fact they were rebuked, because they did not regard the accused ones with a good consideration, but here it is said that not only they must regard them good, but also they must not have expressed such a calumny, let alone they themselves proceed to spread it.

They must have got wondered at such a great calumny. They must have remembered the pureness of Allah and have sought refuge to Him for being not involved in spreading this rumour of calumny.

Nevertheless, they took it lightly by saying it is easy to do it, and they touched off it, and became the puppet of rumour-mongering and conspiring hypocrites.

We will, if Allah wills, discuss the importance of sinful rumour-mongering and its motivations and how to struggle against it. We will also mention in detail some points in the commentary of later verses.

Since in the next verse the story of ''Ifk' is mentioned and the gloomy agonizing consequences of rumour-mongering and slandering reputation of pure persons are brought up, the Qur'an says:

"Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."

If an individual does not go after such great sins, it means this individual is faithful. As a matter of fact the above verse outlines one of the principles of repentance, because merely being regretful of the past is not enough, and decision for not repeating it in the future must be taken, too.

To give caution that these words are not some common or usual ones and it is Allah, the All-Knowing and Wise, Who has stated this to make some great facts clear.

The next verse explains some crucial truths:

"And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

Allah is aware of our needs, evil and good deeds as His knowledge demands and He modulates His commandments and ordinances to it as His Wisdom demands.

Some Points About Tongue

Tongue is the only limb that, because of speaking, does not ache and get tired during man's lifetime. Its form and size is small, but its crime and sin is great. There are many faithless persons who become Muslim and pure by saying one sentence (testifying that Allah is One and Unique).

And there are many Muslims who become faithless and impure by profaning Allah or denying religion ordinances. On one hand, tongue can bring peace and serenity by telling truth, repeating Allah's name, praying and advising others.

On the other hand, it can cause annoyance and resentment by irritating and biting others. Tongue is the key of intellect, the light of knowledge, and the simplest and the cheapest means of transmission of all sciences and experiments. Masters of ethics have written many books and papers about tongue.

Some Traditions On Tongue Maladies

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The salvation of the believer lies in controlling his tongue."[1]

2. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"One who does not keep his tongue does not protect his faith."[2]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Do not you get satisfied and pleased that you perform ritual prayers, pay amis-tax, and keep your tongue and then enter Paradise."[3]

4. Ibn Abbas said:

"The Messenger of Allah (p.b.uJi.) once said: 'May Allah bless one who keeps his tongue, knows circumstances of his era, and his way is a straight path'."[4]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The slip of the tongue is more painful than the harm of spearhead."[5]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The slip of the tongue is the severest perdition."[6]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"The worst person is the one of whose tongue people are afraid."[7]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) narrated from his great father, Imam Sajjad Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as), who said that his father, Imam Ali (as), retold that the Prophet (S) said:

"Tongue will be so chastised that no other limb will be punished (in that way).

Then the tongue will say:

'Oh Allah, you have punished me in a way that none of other limbs has been chastised so.'

Allah will say:

'You, tongue, have uttered words that have reached east and west and because of that many honorable bloods have been shed, people's properties are plundered, and people's reputation is marred. I swear by My Glory that I punish you in a way that I have not chastised other limbs'."[8]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Hell-dwellers are inspire because of tongue, and the dead will merit and deserve light because of tongue. Then keep your tongue and make it busy with uttering Allah's name."[9]

10. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The tongue is a beast of prey. If you release it, it attacks and bites."[10]

11. Imam Ali (as) said:

"There are many persons whose tongue caused them annihilation."[11]

12. 'Abi Bakr said:

"I heard the Prophet (S) said: 'Verily most of man's faults are caused by his tongue'."[12]

13. The Prophet (S) said:

"Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand people are saved, and believer is the one to whom people can entrust their blood and properties."[13]

Sura An-Nur - Verses 19-20

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

19. "Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know."

20. "And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (you would have been chastised)."

Interest in spreading indecency is sometimes materialized by tongue and pen and sometimes by setting up some centers of abomination and wickedness, encouraging others to commit sin, and providing others with facilities for doing wrong action and committing sin.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who hears or sees something about a believer and retells it for others is among the examples of this verse."[14]

There is a tradition that says one who gives publicity to an evil action is like the one who commits it.[15]

Therefore in this verse, for leaving no doubt, the words are changed from expressing a private phenomenon into statement of a general and comprehensive rule.

It says:

"Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter..."

It is worth-studying that the verse does not say: those who spread indecency, but it says:

"Verily those who love that indecency should be spread, "

and this is the ultimate emphasis on this field.

In other words, it says it must not be thought that such insistence and emphasis is just for the sake that the wife of the Prophet (S), or someone as important as her, is accused, but if such a thing happens to anyone and to every faithful person, this emphasis and insistence will be applied to that person, because other aspects will be added to it.

By the way, we must pay careful attention to the fact that spreading indecency is not allocated to only spreading false baseless accusation of a faithful man and woman and to accuse them of an unchaste action.

This is one of its examples and it is not limited to it. This phrase has got a wider concept that involves every kind of dissemination of corruption, spreading indecency and giving help to its development.

Of course, in the holy Qur'an, the Arabic word /fahišah/, or /fahša/, is mostly applied to sexual deviations and obscenity in honour, (defilements of honour), but philologically, as Raqib says in the book Mufradat, 'Fuhsh', 'Fahsha', and 'Fahishah' refer to any behaviour and speech that the obscenity of it is very bad and great.

And, in the holy Qur'an, it is sometimes used in the same vast meaning, such as the verse which says:

"And those who shun the great sins and indecencies..."[16]

Thus, the extent of the concept of the verse gets completely clear.

But, the sentence

"...theirs will be a painful punishment in the world..."

may refer to religiously prescribed punishments, social reactions, and individual gloomy consequences that in this very world will catch those who commit these actions. Moreover, their deprivation from the right of testimony and their condemnation to disgrace and iniquity are also its other worldly signs.

The agonizing punishment of the Hereafter is Hell Fire, Divine wrath and fury, and not enjoying Allah's bless.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"...and Allah knows, while you do not know."

Allah is well aware of the gloomy consequences and fatal results of spreading indecency both in the world and the Hereafter, but we are not aware of its different dimensions.

He does know in whose heart the interest and love of committing this sin lies. He knows those who carry out this evil action under beguiling names,

but we do not know them. He knows how to reveal His ordinances to prevent this wicked and indecent action.

In the last verse in question, that is the last verse which is about 'Ifk', 'struggling with indecency', and 'Qathf, again emphasis is put on the fact that: Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you, and if Allah were not Clement, Merciful on you, He would have sent such a great and painful chastisement upon you in this world that your life could be ruined.

The verse says:

"And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (you would have been chastised)."

Pay Attention to Some Matters

1- What is Spreading Indecency?

Since man is a social creature, the great community in which he lives, from one point of view, is like his home and its enclosure are counted as that of his home. The pureness of society helps his pureness and its defilement helps his defilement. Consequently, Islam is against anything that pollutes the atmosphere of the society and severely struggles with anything that defiles it.

If we see that backbiting is severely struggled with in Islam, one of its philosophies is that backbiting divulges secret faults and dishonours society.

If we see that it is commanded to hide faults, one of its reasons is to prevent sin from being common and widespread.

We see that open and seen sin is more important than hidden and covered sin. It is so important that Imam Rida (as) says:

"One who disseminates sin is rejected and one who hides sin is divinely forgiven."

If we see that in the above verses spreading indecency is severely reprimanded and condemned, is also because of this.

Essentially sin is like fire. When this fire is stirred in a part of society, it must be tried to put off the fire or at least to encircle it. But if we spread fire and move it from one part to the other part, fire will increase and no one can control it.

Moreover, the importance of sin in the opinion of people and saving the superficial aspect of society are great bars against corruption. Spreading slander and sin and pretending wickedness unbar it, belittle the sin and make being involved in it easy.

The Holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"One who disseminates a wickedness is like one who has first (committed and) established it."[17]

Also there is a tradition that says:

"One day a man came to Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (as) and said:

'May I lay down my life for you! One of brothers retold me something about a religious brother, the thing which I disliked. I asked him (that religious brother), but he denied it, while some of trustworthy persons narrated this.'

Imam said:

'When something bad is told about your brother, do not believe your eye and ear. Even if 50 persons take oath that he has done it and he says he has not done it, accept him. Do not disseminate anything that causes him disgrace and slander in society. If you do it, you will be one of those about whom Allah says:

'Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter...[18]***'.'***[19]

It is also necessary to mention that 'spreading indecency' has got different forms:

Sometimes there are centers that cause corruption and disseminate wickedness. Sometimes the case is in the form of providing people with means of sin, or encouraging people to commit wrong action.

Finally the result is being no more decent and modest and then they commit sin in public. All of these are examples of 'spreading indecency', because the concept of this phrase is vast and extensive.

2- The Calamity of Rumour-Mongering

Vamping and circulating false rumours is one of the main branches of conspirators' psychological warfare. When enemy cannot bring damage to the other party face to face, it resorts to spreading rumour.

In this way enemy worries public opinion and makes people self-busy, so people are diverted from their main and crucial issues.

Rumour vamping is one of the ruinous weapons to mar the reputation of pure and good persons and to scatter people who are around them.

In the concerning verses, according to the famous occasions of revelation, for weakening and marring the reputation of the Messenger of Allah (S), some hypocrites fabricated and circulated the most unfair rumour.

And, using a proper opportunity, they expressed doubts about pureness of some of the wives of the great Prophet of Islam (S). For a relatively long period, they upset Muslims so much that the real and steadfast believers twisted like the person who is bitten by a snake.

And then the divine revelation was sent down to help them and it castigated the hypocrites so much that others would take lessen.

Though in societies in which there is political repression, spreading rumour is considered a kind of campaigning, other motivations such as retaliation, settlement of personal accounts, ruining public trust, marring some great persons' notability, and deviating people from thinking about political issues are also counted as the main factors of mongering rumour.

This is not enough for us to know what motivation is the cause of fabricating rumour, but it is important to give warning to people to avoid being puppet of rumour-fabricators and the factor of its circulation, and so they do not get the means of society destruction provided.

People must be aware that when they hear a rumour, they must bury it immediately; otherwise we have made the enemy happy and successful. Moreover, we will be imposed with painful punishment of the world and the Hereafter, which has been mentioned in the above verses.

3- Sin Should Not Be Counted Trifle

One of the issues that were reprimanded in the above verses was that people commit a sin, such as spreading calumny and slander, while they consider it rather little.

Verily belittling sin is itself one of the sins.

A person who commits a sin, and then magnifies it and is upset by his action, tries to repent and make amends, but a person who belittles sin and even sometimes he says:

"How blessed I am, because I have only committed this sin",

is in a dangerous path and still he continues his sin.

Thus, Imam Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"The severest sin is the sin whose committer considers it light."[20]

Notes

1. 'Usul-i-Kafi, No. 3, p. 178
2. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 744
3. Al-Mahasin ul-Barqi, p. 166
4. Kanz ul-'A'mal, Vol. 6, p. 553
5. Nasikh ut-Tawarikh, Vol. 6, p. 205
6. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, p. 428
7. Bihar, Vol. 72, p. 281
8. Mostadrak ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 3, p. 174 & Wasa'il, Vol. 18, p. 10
9. Tuhaf ul-'Uqul, p. 118
10. Nahj ul-Balaqah, p. 1115
11. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 550
12. 'Ihyae 'Ulum, Vol. 3, p. 110
13. Sonane Nisa'i, Vol. 8, p. 105
14. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary
15. Ibid
16. Sura Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 37
17. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, Chapter 'At-Ta'bir'
18. Of course there are some exceptions including testimony in court or some cases of prohibition of doing evils which necessitates divulging what wicked things a person has done.
19. Thawab ul-A'amal, narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 2, p. 582
20. Nahj ul-Balaqah, Aphorisms, No. 328

Section 3: Slandering Chaste Women

Sura An-Nur - Verse 21

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَن يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَي مِنكُم مِن أَحَدٍ أَبَداً وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَآءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

21. "O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong. Had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

The Arabic word /xutuwat/ is the plural form of the word /xutwat/ that means 'step'. The holy Qur'an has used the phrase /xutuwatiš šaytan/ ('the footsteps of the Satan') when it is the matter of calumny and lust, in order to indicate that Satan encourages man step by step to do some sins.

Though these verses do not follow the subject of 'Ifk, they complete the content of that matter. It is a warning for all believers that evil thoughts and deeds sometimes penetrate gradually and invisibly.

If they are not controlled and hindered in their first steps, man will get alerted when the die is cast. Thus when the first temptations of spreading lewdness or any sin get manifest, they must be immediately withstood, so that defilement does not get prevalent.

In the first verse, addressing the believers, it says:

"O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong..."

If 'Shaytan' is interpreted into the vast meaning of the word, as any 'ruinous, felonious, cunning creature', the extensiveness of this warning in all dimensions of life becomes clear.

A pure and faithful man can never be all of a sudden involved in corruption, but it is done step by step:

First step: hobnobbing and getting familiar with wicked persons

Second step: attending their parties

Third step: thought of sin

Fourth step: committing questionable examples and errors

Fifth step: committing lesser sins

Finally he will do the worst sins and he is just like a person on whom an offender's yoke is laid and the offender leads him to precipice step by step, so that he falls down and will be ruined. Yes, these are 'the footsteps of the Satan'.[1]

Then the verse refers to one of the most important Divine favours and blessings which are bestowed on man in the path of guidance.

It says:

"...Had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Undoubtedly, Divine grace and bless rescue men from defilements, sins and deviations, because He has conferred, on one hand, the gift of intellect and, on the other hand, the grace of the existence of the Prophet (S) and ordinances that have been sent down by revelation.

Moreover, His special help, and supernatural aids that cover deserving, receptive, and apt men are the most important factors of purification and cleanness.

The Qur'anic holy phrase /manyaša'/, as we have said repeatedly, does not mean unreasonable will and desire, but Allah does not do any guidance and does not confer any grace, unless attempt and exertion is carried out by servants. One who has decided to go this path and tries, Allah will hold his hands, saves him from devils' temptations and so leads him to the destination.

In other words, Divine grace and bless has sometime religious aspect, that has come forth through mission of prophets, revelation of heavenly books, legalization of ordinances, glad tidings and warnings.

And it is sometime genetic or inherent, that comes forth through Divine spiritual helps. The verses in question (out of indication of the sentence 'man yasha') mostly concern the second section.

Meanwhile, we must pay attention that the words 'Zakat' and 'Tazkiyah' originally mean 'to grow' and 'to cause to grow', but in most cases they have been applied in the sense of: 'to become clean' and 'to clean something'. They may have one root, because no growth and development occurs when evils and corruptions are not got rid of.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 22

وَلاَ يَأْتَلِ أُولُواْ الْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَن يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَي وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلاَ تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

22. "And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah. And they should pardon and overlook. Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Arabic word /Safaha/ means to ignore, which is more important than forgiveness. Some have said that /safh/ is a forgiveness that is without rebuke and reproof.

Some commentators have narrated an occasion of revelation for this holy verse, which shows how this verse is related to the pervious verses.

They say that this holy verse was revealed about some Companions of the Prophet (S). After the event of 'Ifk, they took an oath to withdraw their financial helps from those who were involved in that event and spread this great calumny.

They decided to give them no generous succour, in anything. But this noble verse prevented them from this violation and harshness. It orders them to be forgiving and lenient.

This occasion of revelation has been quoted by Qurtabi in his commentary narrated from Ibn Abbas;and Dahhak, as well as the deceased Tabarsi, have narrated it from Ibn Abbas and other persons, and it is general.

But some Sunni commentators insist that this verse is revealed about Abu Bakr who terminated his financial help to Mastah Ibn 'Athathah, his maternal aunt's son or his sister's son, who helped to the circulation of 'Ifk.

However all pronouns that are used in the verse are plural. This matter shows that a group of Muslims decided to put an end to their helps unto these wrongdoers, and this verse prohibited them from this decision.

Anyway, we know that the verses of Qur'an are not limited to occasion of revelation, and they involve all believers till Doomsday. The holy verse implicitly recommends Muslims not to be influenced by hot vehement feelings and they should not make rough and excessive decisions against wrongdoers' errors and faults.

With regard to this occasion of revelation, we return to the commentary of the verse.

The holy Qur'an says:

"And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah..."

This way of saying shows that a group of those who were involved in 'Ifk were from among the Emigrants in the way of Allah. They were deceived by hypocrites and because of their past records Allah did not allow them to be ostracized from Islamic society and He did not let the Muslims decide some horrible things about them that were more than the limit they deserved.

Meanwhile the Qur'anic holy phrase /la ya'til/ is whether derived from the word /'iliyyah/ (on the rhythm of /'itiyyah/), meaning to take an oath, or from the word /'alw/ (on the rhythm of 'Dalw'), meaning to abandon and to shrink.

Thus, the verse, according to the first meaning, prohibits taking an oath to terminate such helps. And, according to the second meaning, the verse precludes withdrawal of such action.

Then to encourage Muslims to continue such good deeds, it adds:

"...And they should pardon and overlook..."

As we expect Allah's forgiveness, we must not forget to forgive others. The verse continues saying:

"...Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

It is interesting that, on one hand, the companions of 'Ifk were severely reprimanded, but, on the other hand, to prevent extremists from resorting to measures beyond the norm and to control their feelings, 3 sentences, each of which is more interesting and remarkable than the others, were used: first, it is ordered to be forgiving and condoning.

Then it says:

"...Do you not like that Allah should forgive you?...",

(so you must forgive). Finally, two of Allah's attributes that are 'Forgiving' and 'Merciful' are mentioned as an emphasis. It indicates that

they could not be more legalistic than Allah's commandment. Allah, Who Himself has issued this judgment, is Forgiving and Merciful. He enjoined them not to terminate the helps, so what did they want to say?

Undoubtedly, all Muslims who were involved in 'Ifk affair did not have a before-hand scheme, but some pseudo-Muslim hypocrites set it and a group of deceived Muslims followed them. Certainly all of them were on the wrong side of the law and were guilty, but there were a lot of differences between these two groups. They could not be treated alike.

Anyway, the above-mentioned holy verses are today and tomorrow a great lesson for Muslims and all future generations; when some persons commit a sin or make a mistake we must not exceed in the limits of punishment. They must be excluded from Islamic society and must not be barred from helps so that they resort to enemy and become one of foes.

The above verses, in fact, portray the balance of Islamic repulsion and attraction; the verses of 'Ifk and the severe punishment of those who made false statements about people's wives compose the great power of repulsion. The verse in question, that mentions Allah's mercifulness, forgiveness, and clemency, represents the attraction!

Sura An-Nur - Verse 23

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُـحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلاَتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

23. "Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement, "

Of course unbelievers, murderers, advocates of illegitimate rulers, hypocrites, mischief-makers, polytheists, the arrogant, oppressors, liars, perjurers, and those who disclaim the Truth have been cursed in the Qur'an, but the curse of the world and the Hereafter along with great punishment, covers only those who stigmatize pure persons.

Imam Sadiq (as) considers this verse as evidence for the fact that unjust accusation of pure and chaste women is one of the great sins.[2]

Thus, in this verse the Qur'an returns to the issue of Qathf and accusing chaste faithful women of unchaste action, and it decisively says:

"Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement, "

In fact, three attributes are mentioned for these women. Each of these attributes is a reason for the importance of the oppression that is imposed on them through calumny.

These attributes are: 'Mohsanat' ('virtuous women'), 'Qafilat' ('far from and unaware (of any pollution)'), and 'Mu'minat' ('believing women'). In this way it is indicated how oppressing and unfair is accusing these persons of inadmissible accusations and this action deserves a great punishment.[3]

By the way, the application of the Qur'anic word /qafilat/ is an interesting meaning. It specifies the ultimate of their pureness from any

deviation and unchasteness. It means that they are so heedless of sexual defilements that as if they are not at all aware of it.

For sometimes the attitude of a person toward sin is in a way that thought of sin goes out of his mind, as if there were not existed at all such an action. This is the supreme grade of piety.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /qafilat/ is the women who are not aware of the unjust accusations attributed to them; therefore, they do not defend themselves.

So, this verse mentions a new matter about such accusations, because the pervious verses referred to the calumniators who could be recognized and then would be punished, but, here, the rumour-fabricators, who have hidden themselves from punishment and religiously prescribed punishment, are brought up.

The Qur'an implies that they should not think that by this action they can escape from the Divine punishment forever. Allah, the Almighty, curses them in the world and, in the Hereafter, they will have an awful chastisement.

With regard to the fact that the above verse is placed after the story of 'Ifk, and it seems that its revelation had some relation with this affair, but like, many verses that are sent down for a special case and their content is general, this verse is also not limited to a certain case.

It is strange that some commentators such as Fakhr-i-Razi, in his book: 'Tafsir-i-Kabir' and some others insist that the content of this verse is limited to calumniation of the Prophet (S)'s wives. They mainly equal this sin to paganism and consider the word /lu'inu/ (cursed), mentioned in the verse, as reason for it.

Of course calumniation is a great sin and if it is about the wives of the Prophet (S), it is greater and more cardinal, yet it does not by itself bring paganism.

Thus, the Prophet (S) did not treat those who were involved in that affair as apostates, but, as we explained in the commentary of the holy successive verses, he recommended the Muslims to be being merciful toward them and not to be excessively violent toward them, which is not consistent with paganism.

The word /la'n/ is 'being away from Allah's bless', which is applied to pagans and those who commit cardinal sins. Therefore, in the verses that are about the punishment of Qathf (in the ordinances of /li'an/ (conjugal anathema)), the word /la'n/ has been applied two times about liars.

In Islamic narrations, the word /la'n/ (curse) is frequently applied to those who commit great sins. The tradition which says:

"Allah has cursed ten groups concerning wine..."[4]

is very famous.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 24

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

24. "On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do."

The issue of testimony of body's limbs is many times brought up in the Qur'an. Therefore in this verse it specifies how this group of calumniators will appear in Allah's great court.

It denotes that they will have an awful chastisement in Hereafter, when it says:

"On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do."

Their tongues will move, in spite of their reluctance, and they express the truth. These wrongdoers will confess their sin in spite of their willing when they see all Divine unquestionable evidences and reasons.

In spite of their inner willing, they will explicitly reveal everything, because they will see they can no longer disclaim. Their own hands and feet will also speak. According to the verses of the holy Qur'an, even their body's skin will start talking. It seems that they have been voice recorders that have recorded man's voices, and signs of sins are stored on them during lifetime.

Yes, on the Day of manifestation, all of these things will appear.

If we see that some of the verses of the holy Qur'an refer to the Day of Judgment and say,

"This day We seal up mouths, and hands speak out and feet bear witness as to what they used to earn"[5],

there will be no inconsistency with the concerned verse, because it is possible of first that tongues get disabled and other limbs testify and when testimony of hand and foot discovers truths and they say what they must say, then tongue moves and confesses the sins.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"This testimony of the limbs is not against the believers, but it is against someone whose punishment is inevitable."[6]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 25

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوَفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ

25. "On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

It is only in the Hereafter that retributions will be given in full.

The Arabic word /din/, mentioned in this holy verse means either retribution or religion. Therefore, the holy verse either implies that Allah fully pays people's retribution in hereafter, or that the real and true divine religion will be represented to people and all fantastic religion-founders will realize that Allah is the real deity Who is true, right, and obvious.[7]

Since full retribution cannot be materialized in this world for its limitations, for example, how we can in this world punish a pilot who has bombarded a city and has killed thousands of people. But there is no limitation in the Hereafter and a criminal can be burnt many times in the Hell and each time he will be alive again.

The verse says:

"On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

If today, in this world, they doubt in the rightfulness of Allah, or they lead people astray, in the resurrection day the signs of Allah's magnificence, power, and rightfulness are so obvious that will make the most stubborn people confess.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 26

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ
أُوْلَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُم مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

26. "Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women; such are innocent of that which they say: For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision."

This verse propounds a general principle and it does not imply that if a man or a woman is good, his or her spouse necessarily is also good, forgiven and is one of the people of the Heaven. For the Holy Qur'an counts faith, piety, and good deed as the criterion, therefore, in spite of the fact that Noah and Lut (as) were pure and faithful, their spouses were evil and Hellish.

The Arabic word /tayyib/ means pleasant and nice. In the Qur'an this word has been used in description of property, offspring, discourse, city, spouse, food and sustenance, home, angle, tree, and greeting. Its contrary word is the Qur'anic term /xabi/ with the sense of: malicious and evil. It has also been used in description of property, man, spouse, speech, deed, and tree.

This verse can be interpreted in different ways:

1. With regard to the previous verses that were about chaste women and the affair of 'Ifk and with regard to the sentence:

"...such are innocent of that which they say...",

the verse means that the evil words such as calumny and slander are appropriate for malicious people, and pure and nice words are suitable for pure persons.

2. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is intellectual, doctrinal, ethical conformity, so as to say that man and wife must be matching and soft-hued with each other. It means that every person naturally seeks an individual of the same wavelength. In other words, vile persons are after evil ones and on the contrary good persons are after good ones.

The verse says:

"Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women..."

3. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is stating a religious ordinance, meaning that marriage of good persons with malicious ones is unlawful.

It is like the third verse of this Sura, which says:

"The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress...".

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition confirms this meaning, too.[8]

Therefore, the words ‘Khabithat’ and ‘Khabithun’ refer to women and men who are unchaste and, on the contrary, the words ‘Tayyibat’ and ‘Tayyibun’ refer to chaste women and men, and the purpose of the verse is apparently this.[9]

In the end, the verse refers to the recent group that is pure men and women.

It is said:

“...such are innocent of that which they say...”

Therefore Divine pardon and forgiveness as well as valuable sustenance awaits them.

The verse concludes:

“...For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision.”

Notes

1. We have discussed about the difference about ‘(lewdness) in decency’ and ‘abominable acts’ in the commentary of verse 90 from Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, p. 511
2. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 9
3. Al-Mizan, Vol. 15, p. 122
4. Khisal, by Saduq, Chapter ‘Asharah
5. Sura ya-Sin, No. 36, verse 65
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, ’Usul-i-kafi, Vol.2 p. 32
7. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
8. Majma‘ ul-Bayan, and Wasa’il-ush-shi’ah, Vol. 14, p. 337
9. We read in the narrations concerning Nikah (marriage) that some of the companions of Imams sometimes asked about ‘KhabIthah’ and they were answered negatively. This itself shows that the word ‘khabithah’ refers to unchaste women, not evil ‘words’ or evil ‘deeds’.

Section 4: Control and Regulation of Morals

Sura An-Nur - Verse 27

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتاً غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّي تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَي أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

27. "O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them. That is better for you, so that you might be admonished."

The Arabic word /'istinas/ means to ask permission and to declare one's entrance or coming in. According to some Islamic narrations, entrance to a place can be stated by saying Allah's name, or by footfall, or by greeting calling hello, and the like.[1]

Some one asked the Prophet (S) whether he had to ask permission for entering his mother's house.

He said:

"Yes."

That man said:

"Except her no one lives in the house, and except me no servant she has!"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Do you like to see your mother nude?"

The man said:

"No."

Then the Prophet (S) said:

"So ask permission."

There is another narration in which the Prophet (S) prohibited men from entering the houses in which women's guardians are not present.[2]

In narrations we read that we must ask permission for three times so that those people in the house may have time enough to get ready. (Of course, permission is asked only for entering others' house. Man can enter his house without prior notice.) For saving a person who is sinking in the water, the oppressed and one who is trapped in fire no permission is needed.[3]

Whenever the Prophet (S) wanted to enter a house, he did not stand in front of its door for asking permission, but he stood either on the left or right so that his blessed look might not fall inside the house.[4]

In another authentic narration we read that when the Prophet (S) wanted to enter the house of his daughter, Fatimah (as), he put his hand on the door and then pushed it aside a little.

Then he said:

"Peace be upon you!"

Fatimah (as) answered her father.

Then the Prophet (S) said:

"May I enter?"

Fatimah (as) said:

"Yes, O' Messenger of Allah (S)!"

The Prophet (S) said:

"May my companion enter the house, too?"

Then she said:

"I have no veil on my head."

When she veiled herself in an Islamic way, the Prophet (S) made salutation again and Fatimah (as) answered. Again he (S) asked permission for himself. And after her agreement, he asked permission for his companion, Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah.

This tradition shows well how exactly the noble Prophet (S), who was a paragon for common Muslims, observed these matters.

Even in some narrations we read that 3 times we must ask permission. The first time for hearing the voice of the person who asks permission. The second one is for getting ready. The third one lets the household to issue permission or not.

Even some say that some time must be passed between each time of getting permission so that if landlord has not worn a proper clothing, or he is in a state that he does not like anyone to see, or sometimes room is messed up, or there are some secrets in the house that must not be discovered, he may have time to get ready.

And if he does not give permission, we must leave him without getting upset.

Anyway, we must always withdraw anything that may violate modesty or reverence.

Thus in this noble verse, some of proprieties and social orders of Islam that have a very close relation with the issues of saving common chastity are stated, and that is how to enter people's homes and how to ask permission for entrance.

The verse says:

"O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them..."

So, in this way the announcement of your decision to enter the house is expressed beforehand and the household's agreement is always achieved.

It is interesting that, here, the Arabic phrase /tasta'nisu/ has been used, not the word 'Tasta'ŏinu', because the second word only refers to asking permission, but the first word which is derived from the Arabic word /'uns/, implies a permission that is along with kindness, familiarity, and truthfulness.

It shows that even begging permission must be done politely, friendly and without any violation.

Thus if we split the sentence, many of customs that are related to this matter are summarized in it. It means not to cry, not to knock at the door hard, not to use harsh obscene words for begging permission, and also that when permission is given we must not enter the house without greeting, a salutation that is the sign of peace, tranquility, and messenger of kindness and friendship.

It is worth-studying that this ordinance, whose humane and sentimental aspect is clear, is accompanied with two sentences: /ŏalikum xayrun lakum/

("That is better for you"),

and /la'allakum taŏakkarun/

("...so that you might be admonished").

This way of statement indicates that such ordinances are rooted in humane sentiments, ration, and intellect. If man contemplates them, he will get aware that they are good for him.

The verse continues saying:

"...That is better for you, so that you might be admonished."

Anyway, purification and self-edification are achieved through observing people's rights and applying Islamic customs. When we want to enter common centers, we must remember Allah and we must know that Allah watches our thoughts and behaviour.

The Qur'an says:

"...and Allah knows what you proclaim reveal what you conceal."[5]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 28

فإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَآ أَحَداً فَلاَ تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّي يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِن قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَي لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

28. "And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you: 'Go back', then go back, for it is purer for you; and Allah is cognizant of what you do."

Entering people's house needs permission, whether the giver of permission is its owner or he is some legal person.

Thus, in this holy verse, it says:

"And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you..."

Maybe it implies that sometimes there are some persons at home, but someone who is in charge or someone who is the head of household is not present, in this case we are not allowed to enter the house.

Or there is not any person in the house. Or it is possible that the landlord is in neighbour's home or is near to his house, so when he hears our voice or our knocking at the door, he comes and allows us to enter.

In this case we can enter the house. Anyway, what is important is that we can not enter a house without permission.

Then the verse continues saying:

"...And if it is said to you: Go back, then go back, for it is purer for you..."

It refers to the matter that we must not get upset because of a negative answer. Maybe the landlord is in a condition that he does get displeased if we see him in that way. Or his home or his room is not ready for receiving any guest.

Since when we hear a negative answer, we become curious to know its reason and so we start thinking of looking from some hole or eavesdropping in order to find out some secrets from the inside of the house; at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and Allah is cognizant of what you do."

Sura An-Nur - Verse 29

لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتاً غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ

29. " (It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods, and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

Public places that have no special inhabitants, such as: hotels, caravanserais, shops, and baths which are open to all and people can enter and enjoy their advantages, are treated differently than personal homes and require no permission for entrance.

Therefore, in view of the fact that each ordinance has some exceptions through which problems and difficulties are solved rationally, in this verse it says:

" (It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods..."

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"...and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

The above phrase perhaps refers to this matter that some individuals may sometimes misuse this exception and enter uninhabited homes on the pretext of this ordinance to find out some secrets. Or they sometimes enter some inhabited houses on the excuse that they did not know they are inhabited.

But Allah (s.w.t.) is aware of all of these affairs and knows well about those who misuse. Thus, going to public centers while having no beneficial aim and only for wandering or meandering is often forbidden.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 30

قُل لِّـلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

30. "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That is purer for them, verily Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

Occasion of Revelation

In Kafi book there is a narration by Imam Baqir (as) about the occasion of revelation of this noble verse. A young man of The Helpers met a woman on his way while her veil was put behind her ears (naturally some part of her neck and breast was visible).

The woman's face attracted the young man and he gazed at her and when the woman passed by him he was still looking at her while she was going her own way. Then he entered a narrow alley, and still he was looking behind himself, when suddenly his face hit against the wall and the sharp point of a bone, or a piece of glass, that existed in the wall cut his face!

Then the woman went away when the young man came to his senses and saw that blood was pouring forth from his face and his clothes and chest were stained with blood. He became very displeased. He said to himself:

"I take oath by Allah that I will go to the Prophet (S) and retell him this event."

When the Prophet (S) saw him, he asked the young man what the matter was. The man told him the event. At this time Gabriel, the harbinger of Allah's revelation, came down and brought the above verse.[6]

Sin must be prevented from its origin and piety must be set out from eyes. Immodesty and ogling prevent man's spiritual development to grow up.

We said before that this Sura is in fact the Sura of chastity and purification from sexual deviations. So its discussions, from this point of view, have a clear coherency. The verses in question mat state the ordinances of looking, ogling, and veil are also related to this matter. Moreover, the relation of this discussion to the discussions that are about accusations of immodesty is known to everyone.

At first, the verse implies that the believing men should be told to lower their gaze from a woman who is related within forbidden degrees and from what is illegal to look at, and be modest.

The verse says:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty..."

The Arabic word /yaquddu/ is derived from the word 'Qazz', which originally means to decrease or to lessen. In many cases it is used in the sense of: to lower voice or to lessen looking. Thus the verse does not say that the believers must close their eyes, but it says that they must lessen or shorten their looking.

This is a delicate way of speaking, because if a man really wants to close his eyes when he sees a woman who is related within forbidden degrees, he can no -longer walk, but if he casts down his gaze and does not look at her face and her body, it is as though he has shortened his gaze and has totally deleted the scene, that is forbidden, from the scope of his eyes.

It is worth-studying that the holy Qur'an does not specify the thing that a person must cast down gaze from (so as to say complement of the verb is omitted), in order that it will be a general rule; that is, one must cast down gaze from whatsoever is unlawful to look at.

But, with regard to the context of these verses, specially the following verse that mentions veil, it will be clear that it means not looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees (or are marriageable). The occasion of revelation, mentioned at the beginning, confirms this matter, too.

From what was said this matter is understood that the verse does not signify that men must not gaze or stare at women's face so that some people misuse it and say that not staring look is permitted.

However, its purpose is that when a man looks or sees, the scope of his vision is vast, and at the time of entering a woman who is related within forbidden degrees in the scope of his vision, he must cast down his look in a way that the woman exits the scope.

It means he does not look at her, but he must see his way and path; and that it is said that the word /qacld/ has been applied with the sense of 'to decrease' means the same.[7]

The second command that is mentioned in the verse is to guard ones modesty and to be modest.

The Arabic word /farj/ in fact means a split or opening between two things, but in such cases it connotes pudendum. In Persian language, is used instead of it, for keeping its-connotative meaning.

The purpose of 'being modest', according to Islamic narrations, is covering the pudendum for not to be seen by others.

In a tradition by Imam Sadiq (as) we read:

"Every verse of the holy Qur'an that mentions 'guarding modesty' indicates warding of fornication, except this verse that means keeping it from others' look."[8]

Since sometimes it comes to mind that why Islam has prohibited this action that is in line with one's lust and wish, at the end of the verse it is added:

"...That is purer for them..."

Then those who look at women flirtatiously, amorously and consciously, and sometimes they consider it unintentional, are warned:

"...verily Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

In other words, Allah is aware of whatever kind of manner they have; whether they look openly or secretly, or other forms.

A Few Traditions Upon Gaze

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever supplies his eyes with what is unlawful, in Hereafter his eyes will be filled with fire, unless he repents."[9]

2. We read in a tradition that all the eyes will shed tear in Hereafter, except 3 groups of eyes: the eyes that have shed tears out of Allah's fear, the eyes that are closed to sins, and the eyes that are open for the sake of Allah.[10]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"If your look is cast on a woman (who is related within forbidden degrees) for the first time, there will be no problem, but if your looking is continued, (there will be problem, because) it causes disorder and temptation."[11]

4. We read in a tradition[12] that the Prophet (S) said:

"Do not sit on the way of people!"

The audience said:

"We have no choice."

The Prophet (S) said:

"Then honour what is true and right!"

They asked:

"What is the right?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Withdrawal from ogling and bothering people, answering others' salutation, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong."[13]

5. Hadrat 'Isa (as) said:

"Withdraw from looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees, because it plants the seed of lust in the heart and only this is enough to get man involved in seduction or temptation."[14]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The eye drags the heart."

"The eye is Satan's trap or snare."

(Guarding eyes is the best way for being away from lusts.)[15]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Evil look is one of Satan's fatal arrows. Whoever closes his eyes for the awe of Allah, Allah will bestow him a faith that he feels its sweetness and taste in his inward."[16]

8. Concerning permissible looking at a woman, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Looking at her face, palms, and front part of the feet is lawful (but purely and chastely)."[17]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah's wrath is very severe against a married woman whose eyes are filled with individuals other than her husband (and persons related in forbidden degrees) (looking deliberately and lustfully at a man who is not related within forbidden degrees).

When she does so, Allah, Almighty and Glorious, rejects and nullifies all good deeds and worships she has done.When she lies with a person other than her husband, Allah has right to burn her after He chastises her in the purgatory world."[18]

10. The Prophet (S) said:

"A man who funs a woman who is not related to him in any form of marriage contract, Allah will confine him in chastisement for a thousand years for every word that he has jested her."[19]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

"One who dominates neighbor's house and looks at a man's pudendum or a woman's hair or part of their body will be rightly and definitely gathered by Allah with hypocrites who intended to look at women's covered limbs.

And until Allah Almighty defaces him in the world he will not leave this world. Allah also will divulge all his sins and faults in the Hereafter and disgrace him before other men (therein)."[20]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 31

وَقُل لِّـلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلاَ يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلاَّ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَي جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلاَ يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلاَّ لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْإِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُوْلِي الإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّـفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَي عَوْرَاتِ النِّـسَآءِ وَلاَ يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

31. "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or their fathers or their husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess (their slaves), or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant, or the children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet (in walking) so as to reveal

what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah all together, O' believers, in order that you may succeed."

Allah has not mentioned the number of units (Rak'at) in ritual prayers and that of ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah and has charged the Prophet (S) with the task of stating the amount and measure of alms-tax and many other issues, but Allah has paid attention to minimum issues of family, upbringing, and moral corruptions.

By using female pronoun 25 times in this verse, Allah has paid attention to women.[21]

Thus, in this verse, the women's duties and responsibilities are mentioned; first, it refers to the ones that are like the men's responsibilities and duties when it says:

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty..."

Therefore ogling is forbidden to women as it is to men. As all men are obliged to veil their pudendum, all women are also obliged to veil their pudendum from the eye of other women and men.

Then in three sentences the issue of veil, which is the women's characteristics, is referred to:

1) "...and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it..."

Upon the purpose of the adornment which women must not display, as well as the visible adornment which women are allowed to display, mentioned in the verse, commentators have stated different ideas.

Some of them say that hidden adornment is the very natural adornment (women's beautiful body), whereas the Arabic word /zinat/ has rarely been applied in this sense.

Most of commentators have considered it as the place of adornment, because the display of adornment itself such as ear-rings, bracelet, and armlet is not forbidden. But displaying where they are used such as ears, neck, arms and hands is forbidden.

Therefore, women totally are not allowed to display their adornments that are usually hidden, although their limbs are not shown. Consequently showing special ornate clothes that women wear under their usual clothes or veil (chador) is not permitted, because the holy Qur'an prohibits the display of such adornments either.

In many traditions narrated from Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) we see the same matter that the interior adornment, in Arabic, is interpreted as 'Qalladah' (necklace), 'Dumlaj' (armlet), 'Khalkhal' (anklet).[22]

Moreover, since in many numerous Islamic narrations, the apparent adornment has been interpreted as ring, eyeliner, and so on, we see that the purpose of interior adornment is also the adornments that are hidden.

2) The second ordinance that is brought up in this verse is:

"...and to draw their veils over their bosoms..."

The Arabic word /xumur/ is the plural form of /ximar/, which originally means veil, but it is usually applied to the thing with which women veil their head (scarf).

The Arabic word /juyub/ is the plural form of the word /jayb/, that means the collar of a shirt which is rendered to the throat and it is sometimes applied to the upper part of the breast, because it is located near it.

It is understood from this verse that before the revelation of this verse, women wore their scarf in a way that they put their scarf behind their head so that their neck and a part of their breast were visible. The Holy Qur'an enjoined them to wear their scarf in a way that that part of their neck and breast that are visible to be veiled.

3) In the third ordinance both the cases in which women are allowed to unveil themselves and display their inward adornment are specified.

The verse says:

"...and not to reveal their adornment save to..."

They must not display their adornment except in twelve instances:

1. To their own husbands

("...their own husbands...")

2. To their fathers

("...or their fathers...")

3. To their husbands' fathers

("...or their husbands fathers...")

4. To their sons

("...or their sons...")

5.To their husbands' sons

("...or their husbands' sons...")

6. To their brothers

("...or their brothers...")

7. To their brothers' sons

("...or their brothers' sons...")

8. To their sisters' sons

("...or their sisters' sons...")

9. To their women

("...or their women...")

10. To their slaves

("...or those whom their right hands possess (their slaves)...")

11. To those who do not have desire for women

("...or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant...")

12. To kids who know nothing of pudendum

("...or the children who know naught of women's nakedness...")

4) Finally the fourth ordinance is stated in this way, saying:

"...And let them not stamp their feet (in walking) so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment..."

Women must be so exact and strict in observing chastity and avoiding affairs which kindle lust in men's heart and may cause deviation from the path of chastity that they must withdraw from letting strange men hear their anklet sound. This indicates how exact and precise Islam is in these affairs.

In the end of the verse, all the believers, irrespective of men and women, are invited to repent and return to Allah, where the Qur'an says:

"...And turn unto Allah all together, O' believers, in order that you may succeed."

If they have committed such sins, now that the facts of the ordinances of Islam are explained, they must repent their wrong actions and go to Allah for salvation and deliverance, because successfulness is found only with Him. On our way there are slippery slopes from which no one can be saved, and we must trust to Allah!

The Prophet (S) said about the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: /'ilia libu'ulatihinna/ (save to their own husbands):

"Allah has cursed those women who do not apply cosmetics to their hair and face for the sake of (their) husband or do not fulfil what the husband demands."[23]

The Philosophy of Veil

1. Undoubtedly in our age, which some persons have called the age of sexual liberty and nudism and Western exponents who regard women's promiscuity as part of women's liberty, speaking about veil is not welcomed by them and sometimes it is considered as legends of the past times!

But umpteen corruptions and increasing problems and difficulties that are caused by these unrestrained freedoms cause gradually some people to pay attention to such words.

The issue is that whether women (I ask your pardon) must be at the mercy of all men for abuses through various aural, visual, and physical means (save sexual intercourse), or they must be limited to their own husbands.

The question is that whether women must be engaged in a contest for showing their body and stirring men's lust and defiled low desires or whether these issues must be removed from the society and be confined to family environment and the life of man and wife.

Islam is in support of the second plan and veil is part of this plan, while western-fascinated persons are in favour of the first plan.

Islam says that sexual gratifications, including sexual intercourse and physical, visual, aural relishing, are only limited to spouses. Anything other than that will defile and corrupt the society.

The sentence /aŏka lahum/:

"...That is purer for them...",

mentioned in the previous verse, refers to this matter.

The philosophy of veil is not something hidden and invisible, because:

A) Women's nakedness that naturally has the consequences such as: applying cosmetics, coquettishness and the like, sets men, specially young ones, in a state of continual temptation (always tempts them), and that subjects them to tension and stress.

It causes nervous diseased excitements and sometimes it is the source of psychological abnormalities. How much can human bear such excitements? Do not all psychotherapists say that continual excitement is the cause of illness?

We must specially pay attention to this fact that sexual instinct is man's most powerful and deepest instinct and in the course of history it has sowed the seeds of fatal events and gruesome crimes and so it is said:

"No important event there is save a woman plays a role in it!"

Is not it playing with dynamite to stir this instinct through showing naked women? Is it a rational job?

Islam wants Muslim men and women to have a calm psyche, a sound nerve, and pure eye and ear. This is one of the philosophies of veil.

B) The documented figures show that divorce and separation in spousal relationships has constantly increased with the increase of nakedness in the world, because whatever eye sees heart often desires it. And whatever heart, that is unrestrained low desires, wants man pursues it at any price it may be, and so every day he is after one woman and says goodbye to the other one.

In a community that vile exists (and other Islamic conditions are observed) two spouses belong to each other and their sentiments, love and feelings are limited to each other.

However, in 'the open market of nakedness' in which women have been practically turned into common products (at least at the level of non-sexual intercourse), sacredness of marriage contract is no longer meaningful, and families will be quickly and easily destroyed, like spider web, and children will be without guardian.

C) Spreading indecency and the increase of illegitimate children are the sorest consequences of unveiling, which do not need any statistics and figures, we think. Its reasons are especially so fully visible in western countries that they need no explanation.

We do not say that the main factor of indecency and illegitimate children is only unveiling. We do not say that shameful colonialism and destructive political issues are not playing role in it, but we say that one of its most influential factors is nakedness and unveiling.

With regard to the fact that 'indecency' and worse than that 'illegitimate children' have been and are the source of kinds of crimes in human societies, the perilous dimensions of this issue will be made clearer.

D) The issue of 'woman's meanness' and her degradation is very important after all, which does not need statistics and figures, too. When society desires nakedness of woman, it is natural that every day it demands her more make-up and more ostentation and display.

When woman is used as a means for attracting tourists and sight-seers in waiting rooms and shops, because she is physically beautiful and attracting, woman's personality is degraded to a doll or a valueless product and her high humane values are totally forgotten.

And her only pride is her youth, beauty and display. Thus, she turns into a means for satisfying unrestrained desires of some wicked, deceiving, beastly men.

How can a woman with her moral characteristics achieve high status and show her knowledge in such a society?

It is really sorrowful that, in western countries and western-influenced countries, lewd and promiscuous women are most famous and acquire the highest earning and every thing is in favour of them, who are known as artist and actress.

Wherever they go, they are welcomed by organizers of defiled places, in which people fall over themselves for them. We had, of course, such a situation in Iran before Islamic Revolution.

We thank Allah that it is wound up in Iran and woman is changed from being just a doll, worthless product and wickedness into a personality who has found her status again. She veils herself, but she is not isolated from society. She has participated in all good and edifying activities and even in the holy defense she has appeared with veil.

This was a part of clear philosophies of veil in Islam, the philosophies that are appropriate to our discussion.

2. The commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: /'ulil 'irbat-i-min-ar-rijal/ (the male attendants void of sexual stimulant).

The Arabic word /'irbah/ is derived from the word /'arab/. As Raqib says in Mufradat: It means desperate need that man finds ways to gratify it. And it is sometime used as absolute need.

The purpose of the phrase /'ulil 'irbat-i-min-ar-rijal/ here is those persons who have sexual desire and need spouse. Therefore the Qur'anic phrase /qayr-i-'ulil 'irbah/ includes the ones who do not have such desire.

That to whom this sentence refers, is a matter of discussion between commentators:

Some of them say that it refers to the old men who have sexual desire no longer, such as /'al-qawa'idu min-an-nisa'/ (the women who are unsexed or the women who are beyond the conventional age for marrying).

Some other commentators say it refers to men who are castrated.

And some commentators say that its purpose is those who are neuter, that is: they have no sex organ at all.

However, what must be emphasized and it is mentioned in some valid traditions by Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) is that the purpose of this sentence is those insane men who have no sexual desire at all. These men are usually hired to do simple jobs and work as servants. The application of the Arabic word /'at-tabi'in/ also strengthens this meaning.[24]

Since this quality, that is the quality of the lack of sexual desire, is correct about a group of old men, it is possible that this verse can include such old men. Imam Kadhem (as) emphasized such group of old men in a tradition.

However, the verse does not imply that such men are like those who are unmarriageable. It is certain that veiling some part of head or some part of hand, and the like, before such men is not compulsory.

3. Which children are the exceptions of this ordinance?

We said that the 12th group before whom veil is not compulsory is children who have not yet enjoyed sexual desire.

The Qur'anic sentence /lam yazharu/ has sometimes been interpreted as /lam yatta li'u/ (are not aware), and sometimes as /lam yaqdiru/ (are not able), because this word has been used in both meanings and in the Holy Qur'an it is sometimes used to mean this and sometimes to mean that.

For example, in Sura Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 20 we read:

"...if they prevail against you, they, will stone you..."

And in verse 8 from Sura At-Taubah we recite:

"How (can be?) For if they prevail against you, they will observe towards you neither ties of relationship nor treaty..."

However this differentiation in the concerned holy verse has no significant influence on the conclusion of discussion. Its purpose is children who are neither perceptive nor potent because of lack of sexual desire.

Therefore ladies must veil themselves before those children who have reached an age in which such a desire and ability is dully developed.

4. Every kind of tempting factor is forbidden!

The last matter is that at the end of this verse the Qur'an implies that women should not walk in a manner that the sound of their anklet can be heard. This shows that Islam is so exact and fastidious in the issues concerning common chastity that even such a thing is not allowed.

Of course a fortiori, things that set youths' lust on fire, such as circulation of tempting pictures, blue movies, sexy novels and stories, are not permitted. Undoubtedly Islamic society must be free from such matters that lead people, girls and boys, to centers of corruption and wickedness.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 32

وَأَنكِحُوا الأَيَامَى مِنكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَآئِكُمْ إِن يَكُونُوا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

32. "And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is Ail-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Marriage is venerated and emphasized in Islam. Islamic society is responsible for marrying off those who are celibate. Parents who do not marry their offspring are partner in sin that their issues commit.

Thus, from the beginning of the Sura up to here various calculated ways have been brought up for preventing sexual defilements, the ways each of which are playing an influential role in preventing or struggling against these defilements.

In this verse, one of the most important ways of struggling against wickedness that is simple, easy, sincere, friendly marriage, is mentioned. Because it is obvious that in order to wind up the issue of sin the approach of satisfying and gratifying the instincts is applied. In other words, no 'negative struggling' is successful without 'positive struggling'.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female..."

The Arabic word /'ayama/ is the plural form of /'ayyim/, which originally means a woman who has no husband. Then it has also been applied to man who has no wife. Thus, the totality of all unmarried men and women, whether they are virgin or widower or widow, are included in this verse.

Although marriage is an optional affair and depends on the will of two parties, the general idea that is derived from the word /'ankihu/ (marry) is to prepare preliminaries of marriage by giving financial aids if necessary, finding a proper spouse, encouraging others to get married, and finally mediating for solving problems that will not be settled without intercession of others.

Summarily the concept of the verse is so extensive that it includes every word or action which is for this sake.

Without doubt, the principle of Islamic cooperation necessitates Muslims to help each other in all cases and fields, but emphasizing on this matter which is specified in marriage is for the reason that marriage is specially important.

This is so important that Imam Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"The best intercession is to mediate between two persons for the sake of marriage so that they get married."[25]

In a tradition by Imam Kazem Musa Ibn Ja'far (as) we read:

"There are three groups who are under protection of Allah's Throne in the Day of Resurrection, the day in which no protection exists save Allah's: the man who prepares the preliminaries of his Muslim bother's marriage; those who help another Muslim who needs help; those who hide other Muslim brother's secrets."[26]

The Prophet (S) said:

"For each step one takes and each word one says in this way the reward of one year worshiping that in its nights the one establishes prayers and in its days he fasts, will be recorded in one's book of deeds."[27]

Since an almost public pretext for escaping marriage is poverty and not being financially supported, the holy Qur'an answers them and implies that you should not be afraid of their poverty; because, as the verse says:

"...If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

And Allah is powerful to do such a thing, because He is so omnipotent that His power covers the entire universe and He is so omniscient that He is aware of every one's intentions; especially He is aware of the intention of those who decide to get married in order to save chastity and virginity. He blesses and favours all such ones.

Therefore, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Life will be prosperous by getting married."

Again Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who does not get married for fear of poverty is suspicious of Allah."

And the same Imam (as) said:

"Two unit (rak'at) prayers performed by a person who is married is better than 70 unit (rak'at) prayers which is performed by a person who is not married."[28]

There is a famous tradition by the Prophet (S) who said:

"Get married so that generations will be increased, because in the Day of Resurrection I will be glorified before other nations with increase of your population even with aborted children."[29]

In another tradition by the Prophet (S) we read:

"One who gets married has saved one half of his religion and must protect the other half."[30]

The Prophet (S) said:

"The worst of you is the one who is unmarried."[31]

The Prophet (S) said:

"After Islam no favour and blessing is better than having a Muslim wife and spouse, because when he looks at her he will be happy and when he enjoins her she obeys and when he is absent she protects his property and reputation."[32]

The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"Marry virgin girls because their mouth is sweet and charming and their uterus is more proper and they learn soon and their kindness is more stable."[33]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 33

وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحاً حَتَّي يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْراً وءَاتُوهُم مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي ءَاتَاكُمْ وَلاَ تُكْرِهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَي الْبِغَآءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّناً لِتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَن يُكْرِههُّنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِن بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

33. "And let those who do not find the means to marry keep (themselves) chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace. And those of your slaves who seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you; and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world; and whoever compels them, then (unto them), verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful."

Not having spouse will not give someone permission to commit sin, so one must be patient and chaste. In order to save public chastity and purity, both the youth must try to save themselves and government must get down at it and the rich must embark on it.

"...and give them of the wealth of Allah..."

Of course, authorities of the society and the rich must be first recommended to do something, and then unmarried individuals must be advised to be chaste and pure.

But since in spite of all attempts and endeavours carried out by individuals and others, marriage does not take place and one has to, willingly or unwillingly, remain single for a length of time, so this person must not think that he is permitted to be sexually defiled. Therefore in this holy verse the command of purity is issued though observing it may be difficult for them.

It says:

"And let those who do not find the means to marry keep (themselves) chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace..."

In this crucial and trial phase the unmarried ones should not get involved in this defilement and exempt ones' selves, because no excuse is accepted, but the power of faith, personality, and piety must be tested in this phase.

Today the issue of marriage gets so complicated that it is turned into an arduous or impassable path because of wrong customs and even

superstitions, yet marriage is, regardless of all these manly-added things, an innate matter and in line with the rule of creation.

Man needs a sound and healthy marriage for continuation of human generation, for tranquility of psyche and body, and for solving problems of life. And man must protect himself from any kind of pollution.

Then, in view of the fact that in any occasion that slaves are mentioned, Islam pays a special attention to their freedom, the verse turns from the discussion of marriage to the discussion of manumitting and freeing slaves, which is done through 'Mukatibah' (entering a written contract in which slaves work and pay their employer some money by installment and then they will be free).

It says:

"...And those of your slaves who seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you know any good in them..."

The purpose of the Qur'anic sentence /'alimtum fihim xayran/ (if you know any good in them) is that they (slaves) must have grown enough and be competent enough to carry out such a contract.

They must be able to live independently when the amount of money they promised to pay is shelled out completely. But if they cannot do it and on the whole this matter causes them losses and consequently they will be a burden to society, this matter should be delayed until the time that they are competent and able.

Then, in order to make no trouble for slaves when they pay this money by installment, it is said:

"...and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you..."

Commentators have different opinions upon the purpose of this 'wealth' that must be given to slaves:

Many commentators say: its purpose is to pay them a part of alms-tax, as it is said in verse 60 of Sura At-Taubah, so that they can pay their debt and then be free.

Some others say: its purpose is that the owner of the slave spares some of the debt and if he has received it he returns it to them so that they can afford more to get freed from slavery.

Another possibility is that at the beginning when slaves begin working and they do not have financial means, the owner must give them subsidy or some capital so that they can start a business and can manage their life and carry out their installments both.

Of course the above three comments are not inconsistent and it is possible that all of them to be included in the concept of the verse. The real purpose is to get Muslims help this poor and oppressed group so that they get freed sooner.

It is clear, of course, that the matter of slavery is a social phenomenon, which was prevalent before Islam and Islam did not develop it. Therefore Islam not only does not approve it, but also it sets various ways and methods to limit this phenomenon and wipe out this evil tree.

Islam first struggled against the interests of slavery. In the old times if a debtor could not afford his debts, he would become the salve of the leaner.

Islam barred this approach. In old times defeated soldiers became the salves of victorious army.

Islam freed those who were defeated in the Battle of Badr on the condition of teaching those who were illiterates and also Islam freed some through paying compensation. Then Islam paved grounds in Islamic society to make the path of getting free for slaves.

One of the uses of alms-tax is buying and freeing slaves. In Islam, if an owner wounds his slave, that salve is free. Breaking fast, accidental homicide and failing in performing an oath must be atoned and it is possible that a person frees some slaves as atonement.

One of the ways is ‘Mukatibah’ that is recommended in the above verse and it is advised that if there is some good in slave you may free him.Possibly this is its purpose that if there is benefit for the slave to be free you must answer his request positively.

There happen many times that this freedom is not good for him, and maybe it is because of this that Islam has struggled with slavery gradually.

The Arabic word ‘Mukatibah’ is derived from the word ‘Kitabat’ and the word ‘Kitabat’ is derived from the Arabic word ‘Kataba’, which means to gather. The act of writing in Arabic called ‘Kitabat’ because alphabets and words are gathered in a phrase.

And since in ‘Mukatibah’ a contract is usually written between the owner and a slave, it is called ‘Mukatibah’. Contractual enfranchisement is a contract that is between these two persons; wherein the slave is obliged to obtain some money through free business and pay to his owner by installment and so regains his freedom.

The payment must be in a way that the slave can afford. And it has been commanded that the sum of these successive payments must not be more than the value of the slave.

And if the slave cannot pay his debts for some reasons, his debts must be paid by allocating a part of ahns-tax (Zakat) as well as through Muslim public treasury. Even some Islamic jurists specify that if the owner is to pay alms-tax, he himself must substitute his slave’s debts for his ahns-tax that is to be paid.

Moreover, if Muslims are the victorious party of a war and take war prisoners, there are some different choices to treat these prisoners:

1 . To free all prisoners at once and in this case war begins again.

2 . To kill all of them and that is the sign of Muslims’ cruelty.

3 . To set up a camp for them and sustain them by using Muslim public treasury. In this way innocent people must pay the expense of the wrongdoers.

4. To sent them among Muslims so that they view Islam and Muslims morals. In this way they may gradually be influenced and become Muslim, and then we free them through various ways. This plan is the best and Islam's plan is the same.

Let us pass this matter, for the system of war was in this way at that time, that a prisoner was used as a slave and Islam reciprocated it. As today prisoners are kept in camps and we also must observe international rules of war to the extent that these rules are consistent with our religion.

Then one of the evil acts of some worldly persons toward slaves is mentioned in the verse, where it says:

"...and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world..."

Some of commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this phrase: Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy had six salve girls. He compelled them to sell their honour for earning money for him.

When the ordinance of Islam about struggling against unchaste acts (in this Sura) was issued, the slave girls came to the Prophet (S) and complained about this matter. Then, at this time, the above verse was revealed and prohibited this action.[34]

This verse shows that people were so much involved in immoral corruption and deviation in the Age of Ignorance that even after the advent of Islam some people used to continue their previous acts.

This status existed until the time when this verse was sent down and put an end to this condition. But unfortunately in our age, in some countries (that they advocate civilization and human rights,) this action is seen very easily.

Even in our country, when the previous regime was ruling, this matter was carried out terribly, where the innocent girls and ignorant women were deceived and led to the centers of wickedness, and they were forced to be unchaste by means of devilish schemes. They could not escape at all. In this way a lot of money was earned and explanation of this poignant matter cannot be done here.

Slavery does not apparently exist as before but, in this so-called civilized world, some crimes are committed which are worse than the age of slavery. May Allah save the people of the world from these pseudo-civilized men! We thank Allah that such shameful crimes have considerably been wound up in Iran after Islamic Revolution.

It is necessary to mention that the purpose of the Qur'anic sentence: /'in aradna tahassunan/

"...when they desire chastity..."

is not that if women themselves would like to do this evil act, there is no problem to force them. When there is compulsion to do something, willingness to do it is not meaningful. Reluctance is true when there is lack of willing or tendency, otherwise, being unchaste and encouraging others to be unchaste is a great sin, anyway.

This sentence is for the fact that if the owners of these salve girls had a little jealousy, their jealousy would be hurt. The concept of this verse is that these slave girls who were apparently at a lower social level would not like to be unchaste, why did they go along with this wickedness?

At the end of the verse, as it is the approach of the Holy Qur'an, the path of return is not closed to wrongdoers and they are encouraged to go back, repent and atone.

It continues saying:

"...and whoever compels them, then (unto them), verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful."

As we said before, this sentence may refer to the condition of the salve girls' owners who were penitent for their gloomy and evil past and they were ready to do repentance and edify themselves. Or it refers to the women who were compelled and forced to this unchaste action.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتٍ مُّبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلاً مِنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

34. "And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

This noble verse, as it is the method of the Qur'an, refers to the pervious discussions as a summery or conclusion, and says:

"And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

In other words, the addressee of this noble verse is all those who are fully capable from the time of descending of the Qur'an to the time of the universe destruction. What the holy Qur'an says is divided here into 3 parts:

First part: (clear verses). They are about the reasons of monotheism, stating the mission of prophets, the characteristics of Resurrection, stating the religious ordinances, whether they are obligatory or religiously prohibited or conventional, and fair virtues and other religious duties that are all clear and in line with wisdom and common good.

Second Part:It is about the life of past prophets and nations who gained their consequences as the result of Faith. It is also about those nations who were each chastised in a way because of corruption, polytheism, paganism, oppression, and denial of prophets.

Third part: It consists of some advise, admonition, and exhortation, but only the pious uses and get profit from them because they accept them. And wrongdoers will be chastised because of their deeds.

It is often of no avail to give advice to the dark hearted persons. Their likeness is the iron nail which naturally does not go into a stone.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
3. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi
4. Tafsir-i-Kabir, and Fi Zilal
5. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 99
6. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 139, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Al-Mizan, and Ruh ul-Ma'ani
7. Take care
8. 'Usul Kafi and the commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol.3, p. 587
9. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 76, p. 336 and Man layahdaroh ul-Faqih
10. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary
11. Ibid
12. recorded in Sahih Bokhari
13. Ruh ul-Bayan, the Commentary
14. Ibid
15. Urar ul-Hikam
16. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 104, p. 38

17. Kanz ud-Daqa’iq
18. Man Layahduruh ul-Faqih
19. Ibid
20. E’aqaab Al-A’amal
21. Qurtabi, Commentary
22. Ali-ibn-Ibrahim, the Commentary
23. Nur-uth-Thaqallyn, the commentary
24. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, chapter 124, Tradition 8
25. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 14, p. 27
26. Ibid
27. Ibid
28. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
29. Safinah-tul-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 561
30. Ibid
31. Majam‘ul-Bayan, under the verse
32. Man la Yahduruh ul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p 255
33. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 237
34. Majma‘ ul-Bayan and Qurtabi Commentary

Section 5: Allah is Light

Sura An-Nur - Verse 35

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لاَّ شَرْقِيَّـةٍ وَلاَ غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُّورٌ عَلَي نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

35. "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

'Light' is something that is itself bright and causes the brightness of other things. In Islamic culture, several things have been mentioned as 'light', including: The Holy Qur'an, tradition, knowledge, wisdom, faith, guidance, Islam, the holy Prophet (S), and the Infallible Imams (as).

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Nothing I saw unless I saw Allah before it, after it, and along with it."[1]

Concerning the Pure Essence of Allah a famous Persian poet says:

When I look at desert,
I see You.
When I look at sea,
I see You.
Whatever I look at, mountain and plain,
I see a sign of Your elegant stature.

For commenting on the above verse, there have been said many words, and commentators, philosophers, and Islamic mystics have discussed a lot.

The relation of this verse with the previous verses is in this way that in the former holy verses the discussion focused on chastity, struggling against indecency by means of various ways, and since what guarantees the execution of all Divine ordinances, especially controlling unrestrained instincts, more importantly sexual instinct, which is the most powerful one, can not be done without having 'faith' as support, finally the discussion is led to 'faith' and its powerful influence, when the verse begins saying:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..."

What a nice, interesting, and valuable sentence! Yes Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is the brightness and illuminator of all of them.

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Light' here as guider and leader[2]; and some of them have interpreted it as 'lighter' and some as 'beautifying'.

All these meanings are true, but the concept of the verse is still more inclusive.

In the Qur'an and Islamic Narrations some entities are called as 'light':

1. The Glorious Qur'an:

As Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 15 is recited:

"...indeed there has come to you light, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book."

Also recite in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 157:

"...Then those who... and follow the light which has been sent down with him: these are they that are the prosperous ones."

2. Faith:

We read in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

"Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of darkness into the light..."

3. Divine Guidance and clear-sightedness:

As it is mentioned in Sura Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 122:

"Is he who was dead (with ignorance and polytheism) and We gave him life (by Our guidance), and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the utter darkness (of ignorance and polytheism) whence he cannot come forth from them?..."

4. Islam Religion:

It is said in Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 32:

"...and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it."

5. The Prophet (S):

In Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46 we read about the Prophet (S):

"And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch."

6. Imams and the Infallible Leaders:

As we read in Ziyarat-i-Jami'ah:

"Allah created you (as) lights, then He set you encircled (His Throne)."

In the same Ziyarat we read:

"You are the light for the good ones and guiders of those who do good deeds."

7. Science and Knowledge:

This is also mentioned as light, as we read in a famous tradition:

"Knowledge is a light that Allah casts in any heart that He wills."[3]

The above mentioned matters are on one side and, on the other side, we must study carefully the special characteristics of light some of its properties and qualities are as follows:

a. Light is the most beautiful and delicate entity in the world of material. It is the source of all beauties and delicacies.

b. As scientists say, light has got the highest velocity in the world; 300, 000 kilometers per second. Light can circulate the earth 7 times in less than a second (in a wink), therefore, extraordinarily great astronomical distances are only measured by the speed of light per year. It means the extent that light, with its extraordinary speed, can go in a year.

c. Light is a means for making things comprehensible and for viewing different creatures of the world. Without it we cannot see anything, therefore, it is both visible and making visible.

d. The light of the sun, which is the most important light of our world, grows flowers and plants. It is in fact the secret of all living creatures' survival, and it is impossible for any one or any creature to continue to live without light (directly or indirectly).

e. Today, it has been proven that all the colours that we see are the result of sunlight or other similar lights, otherwise, creatures have no colour in absolute darkness.

f. All existing energies in our environment, except atomic energy, are resulted from sunlight. The movement of Winds, falling of rain, movement of rivers, floods, and waterfalls and, finally, the movement of all living creatures are derived from sunlight.

The source of warmness, heat and what warms creatures is the very sunlight. Even the heat of fire that is gained from wood of trees or coal or petroleum and its derivatives are from the heat of sun, because all of them go back, according to scientific researches, to plants and animals that have acquired heat from sun and have stored it in themselves.

Therefore, the movement of engines is because of it, too.

g. The light of sun kills kinds of microbes and harmful insects. And if there were not the shining of this blissful light, the earth would turn into a great hospital whose inhabitants would be coming to grips with death.

Shortly, as we look more and closely at this strange phenomenon of the world (light), its valuable benefits and blesses will be more obvious.

Now, with these two introductions, if we want to choose a parallel or comparison from among sensible creatures of this world for Allah's Pure Essence (although He, the Almighty, is higher than any comparison), can we select any word other than 'light'?

He is the same Lord Who is the Creator of all universe. He is the Lighter of the world of creation, all living creatures are alive because of His command, and all creatures are sustained by Him, so that if for a second He stops His blissful looking at creatures, all will be inexistent.

It is interesting that as much as any being is related to Him, it acquires luminousness with respect to it:

The Holy Qur'an is light, because it is His words.

Islam is light, because it is His religion.

The prophets are light, because they are His messengers.

Infallible Imams (as) are Divine lights, because they are guardians of His religion after the prophets.

Faith is light, because it is the secret of relationship with Him.

Knowledge is light, because it brings familiarity with Him. Therefore,

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..."

If we consider a wider meaning for light, that is: 'anything whose essence is obvious and apparent and clears other things', in this case applying the word 'light' to His Pure Essence is not likening, because nothing in the world of creation is more apparent and obvious than Him, and all other things than Him are apparent because of Him.

In the book named: Tauhid we read a tradition by Imam Ali Ibn Mus-ar-Rida (as).

That Imam was questioned about the interpretation of the verse,

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...",

and he said:

"He guides both the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens."

In fact, this is one of the qualities of the Divine Light, but it is certainly not limited to it. Thus, all the mentioned commentaries of this verse can be included in what was said. Each of them refers to one of the dimensions of this unique Light.

It is interesting that in the 47th part of Jushan Kabir supplication, which is a collection of Allah's attributes, we read:

"...Oh Light of lights! Oh Lighter of lights! Oh Creator of lights! Oh Administrator of light! Oh Measurer of light! Oh Light of all lights! Oh Light before any light! Oh Light after any light! Oh Light that is superior to any light! Oh Light that has no parallel!"

Therefore, all lights of universe come from His Light and return to the Light of His Pure Essence.

Mentioning the above fact, the holy Qur'an specifies the manner and the way of Divine Light by means of an exact and nice similitude.

It says:

"...The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

To explain this example, paying attention to some matters is necessary:

The Arabic word /mišk at/ is, in fact, a hole and a tiny place which was used to be created in a wall and old common lanterns were kept in it in order to be protected from wind and storm.

And sometimes a ledge was made in the room and the side of that part of the wall, toward the yard, was covered with glass. Thus, both inside of the room and the yard were lighted, meanwhile the lantern was saved from any wind and storm.

Again 'Mishkat' was also applied to the glass cases that were made in the form of cubic rectangle, which had a lid and on the top of it there was an opening for letting air out and it was used for putting light in it.

In short, 'Mishkat' is a case for protecting light against wind and storm and, since it was often made in wall, the light was focused and reflected.

The Arabic word /Zujajah/ means glass. In fact, it is applied to transparent stones and since glass is made of stone materials and it is transparent, it is also called /zujajah/. Here it means a bulb that is put on the lamp to protect its flame and to lead the movement of air from bottom to the top and to increase the lightness of the torch.

The Arabic word /misbah/ means a lamp that usually has a wick and a flammable oil material and the wick is burned.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"...lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West..."

refers to an energetic material which is particularly suitable for this lamp, because olive oil is pressed from a blissful and fruitful tree. It is one of the best oils for burning.

It comes from a tree that all its branches and stems must be equally exposed to sunlight and it must be neither located in the eastern part of the garden near wall nor in the western part of it, where one side of it is in expose of sunlight, otherwise, its fruits will be half ripe and half unripe nor its oil will be pure.

Now we realize that for having a full light of this lamp, we must have 4 factors: a lantern which protects the lamp completely, and focuses light without decreasing its light. A bulb that regulates the movement of air and it must be so transparent that does never prevent lighting.

A lamp that produces light by using wick. And, finally, an energetic material that is pure and clean and must be so flammable that as though it is going to be burnt without touch of fire.

All of these, on one side, show the reality of material and its appearance. On the other side, great Islamic commentators have different opinions about the concept of this likening; or, in other words, to what Divine Light it is likened:

Some say that its purpose is that guiding light that Allah casts in the heart of the believers; in other words, its purpose is 'faith' that is placed in the hearts of the believers.

Some say that it is the holy Qur'an that casts light in the heart of man.

Some say that the similitude refers to the noble Prophet (S).

Some say that it refers to the reasons of monotheism and Allah's justice.

Some commentators have interpreted it as the spirit of piety and obedience, which is the cause of goodness and prosperity.

In fact, all the extensions that are for the spiritual light in the holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations are mentioned here as commentary. The spirit and concept of all of them is, in fact, one thing and that is the light of 'guidance', which comes from the holy Qur'an, revelation, and prophets, and it develops by reasons of monotheism and its result is submitting to Allah's command and piety.

Note: The light of faith that is in the heart of the believers has all these 4 factors which exist in a lighting lamp.

"Misbah" is those very flames of faith that appear in the heart of the believer wherefrom the light of guidance comes.

"Zujajah" and bulb is the heart of the believer that controls faith in his entity. And "ieshkat" is the chest of the believer or, in another word, it is the collection of his personality, knowledge, sciences, and thoughts that saves his faith from mishaps.

The meaning of the Qur'anic phrase which says:

"...a blessed olive-tree..."

is the very Divine revelation whose essence is fully pure and sincere and the believers' faith is fruitful and flaming by it.

In fact, this is the Light of Allah, the light which illuminates the heavens and the earth, and it comes from the center of the believers' heart and lights all their entity and being.

The reasons that are gained through wisdom and intellect are mixed with the light of revelation and will be the extension of ‘light upon light’.

And it is by this that the receptive hearts are guided to the Divine light, and the concept of

“...Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases...”

is applied to them.

Therefore, for saving this Divine Light (the light of faith and guidance), a collection of Islamic teachings, knowledge, self-edification, and ethic is necessary to protect this “Misbah” as a “Mishkat” does.

It also needs an apt and receptive heart to regulate this program like ‘zujajah’. And help through revelation is needed to give energy to it, like the blessed olive tree.

And this light of revelation must be free from deviating money-oriented tendencies that are western and eastern and cause decay, evilness and darkness.

It must be so pure, and clear, free from deviation that it mobilizes all man’s powers without help of anything and becomes the extension of:

“...whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it...”

Any kind of interpretation by personal opinion, incorrect prejudice, personal tastes, imposed ideas, inclination to west and east, and any superstitions that defile the fruit of this blessed tree will decrease the luminosity of this lamp and sometimes put out the light.

This is the example that Allah has stated for His Light in this verse and He is All-Aware of all things.

We understand from the above matters that if we see in narrations by the infallible Imams that ‘Mishkat’ is interpreted as the heart of the Prophet (S), ‘Misbah’ as the light of knowledge, ‘Zujajah’' as Imam Ali (as), his successors, and ‘Shajaratin Mubarakah’ (the blessed tree) as ’Ibrahim Khalil who is the root of this family, and the Qur’anic sentence:

“neither of the East nor of the West”

as negation of inclination to Judaism and Christianity, these are in fact the other face of that light of guidance and faith and are the statement of a clear extension of them, but it is not limited to them only.

And also if some commentators have interpreted this Divine Light as the holy Qur’an or intellectual reasons, or the holy Prophet (S), it has a root in common with the commentary of the above verse, too.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 36

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالآصَالِ

36. “ (This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, ”

Up to now we behold the characteristics of this Divine Light, the light of guidance and faith, through likening it to a very luminous lamp, now we must see that where this lamp is located and how its place is. By specifying its place, all the things that are necessary for this will be clear.

Therefore, this verse implies that this lamp is found in the houses which Allah hath allowed its walls to be exalted so that enemies, devils, and the promiscuous ones can not reach it. They are houses that His name shall be remembered therein and the verses of the Qur'an and the facts of revelation are read in them.

The verse says:

" (This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein..."

Many commentators consider the above verse to be related to the pervious verse, as we have commented on it; but some say that it is related to the next sentence, the relation which does not seem very correct.

But that some say what effect the existence of such lamp in the houses whose characteristics are stated has, we must say that a house, whose walls are exalted and decisive alert men guard it, guarantees the protection of this luminous lamp. Moreover those who seek such source of light will be aware of its place and hasten to enjoy it.

But what is the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (Houses)? Its answer will be clear in the characteristics mentioned in the rest of the verse, where it says:

"...There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, "

Some Points

1. We read in Ziyarat Jami'ah, when we address the Imams (as) of Sh'iite:

"...and Allah has placed you in houses that Allah (s.w.t.) has permitted to be exalted..."

Therefore, the sanctuaries of the infallible Imams (as) are counted as one of the extensions of the Qur'anic phrase /fi buyutin/ (in houses) mentioned in this holy verse.

2. The Arabic word /turfa'/in the verse means the height of a place, too, such as the verse which says:

'And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House...'[4]

3. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Those houses are the houses of prophets, sages and the infallible Imams."[5]

Tha'labi says in his commentary that one day the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse when then Abubakr said:

"Is the house of Ali (as) and Fatimah (as) the extension of this verse?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Yes, it is the best extension of this verse."[6]

4. Imam Kazim (as) said:

"The purpose of the phrase

'...in the mornings and the evenings",

mentioned in the verse, is the punctual ritual prayers."[7]

5. In the Holy Qur'an, there are many cases in which 'glorification' is used instead of 'ritual prayer'. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 41:

"...and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning."

Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 130:

"...and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting..."

Sura An-Nur - Verse 37

رِجَالٌ لاَّ تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلاَ بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلاَةِ وَإِيتَآءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْماً تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالاَبْصَارُ

37. "Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;"

Men of Allah try their best for their worldly life while they are not ignorant of the Hereafter, because abandoning business is not a value, but if business is done along with remembrance of Allah, praying and giving alms-tax, then it will be respected high.

Therefore in this noble verse it is implied that those men who are not prevented from remembering of Allah, performing ritual prayer and paying alms-tax by neither business nor selling and buying, fear the day in which hearts and eyes will be capsized.

The verse says:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;"

These characteristics show that the aforementioned houses are the very centers that are fortified by Allah's commandment and Allah is remembered in them. In these centers Islam facts and Allah's ordinances are circulated.

In this extensive and comprehensive meaning, mosques are the houses of prophets and saints; especially the house of the Prophet (S) and the house of AM (as) are included.

There is no reason for the matter that some commentators in their commentaries have limited it only to the mosque or houses of prophets and such like.

And there are some narrations in which its clear extensions are mentioned:

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"This verse refers to the houses of prophets and the house of Imam Ali (as) is included in it, too."[8]

Another tradition indicates that when the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse he was asked:

"What is the purpose of/buyut/ (houses)?"

The Prophet said:

"The houses of prophets"

Again Abubakr asked:

"Is this house (pointing to the house of Fatimah (as) and Ali (as)) included in it, too?"

The Prophet said:

"Yes, it is the best of them."[9]

All of these denote the clear examples.

In another tradition upon the commentary of this verse by Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in the book Raudah Kafi, he has said:

"Verily Mishkat is the heart of Muhammad (S), and Misbah is the very light of knowledge (and guidance), and Zujajah is the heart of Ali (as) or his self, (in which Misbah was placed after departure of the Prophet (S)).[10]

Also in the book Tauhid, by Saduq, we read a tradition by Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"Verily Mishkat is the light of knowledge in the heart of the Prophet (S) and Zujajah is the heart of Ali (as)... And /nurun 'ala nur/ is Imams who are from the family of the Prophet (S) and they come one after the other.

These Imams are assisted by the light of knowledge and wisdom. And this trend has been since the creation of Adam and will continue to the end of the world. These are the very testamentary guardians who are appointed as caliphs by Allah in the earth.

There is not and there will be not any age or time that the earth can be empty of one of them. They are Allah's Authorities over His servants."[11]

In another tradition by Imam Sadiq (as), 'Mishkat' has been interpreted as Fatimah (as), 'Misbah' as Hassan (as), and 'Zujajah' as Hussayn (as).[12]

There is another authentic tradition by Imam Baqir (as), in which Ghattadah, a famous Islamic jurist from Basrah, had a conversation with Imam (as) and he expressed his heartily amazement concerning Imam's peculiar grandeur. Imam said to him whether he knew that where he was sitting; in front of those about whom Allah has said:

'(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has. allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, '

'Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of in prayer and paying the poor-rate...'.

Then Imam said:

"You are what you said (a jurist from Basrah), and we are what the holy Qur'an says."

In answer, Ghattadah said:

"You are true, may Allah make me your sacrifice! By Allah that the purpose is not stone and clay houses (but its purpose is the houses of revelation, faith, and guidance)."[13]

In another tradition it has been narrated about this group of Divine men who guard revelation and guidance:

"They are businessmen who are not ignorant of Allah's remembrance because of trading or doing business. When it is the time of prayer, they pay its due unto Allah therein (perform prayer)."[14]

This refers to the matter that while they are carrying out economic good activities, all of their actions are overshadowed by Allah's name and they consider nothing preceding it.

Yes, any place or center which is set by Allah's command and Allah's name is mentioned in it and every morning and evening some believing men, who do not forget Allah's remembrance because of worldly life, praise

Allah and perform prayer, is the center of Divine lights (Mishkat), faith and guidance.

In fact, this kind of house has some characteristics:

First, it is set by Allah's command.

Second, its bases and walls are so exalted and fortified that they protect it from the penetration of Satan.

Third, it is the center for remembering Allah.

Fourth, some men guard it who praise Allah every morning and every evening, and the worldly beguiling attractions do not make them ignore the Truth.

These houses with such characteristics are the sources of guidance and faith.

It is also important to mention the matter that in this verse both the Arabic word /tijarat/ (merchandise) and the word /bay'/ (sale) have been used. Although it seems that both of them mean one thing, the difference between them may be that /tijarat/ refers to a continuous job and /bay'/ refers to an impermanent action which is done for one time.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the matter that it does not say that 'they are men who do not do business or sale', but it says:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate..."

They always fear the day of Hereafter and Allah's justice court, in which hearts and eyes will be capsized because of its awe.

(The Arabic verb /yaxafun/ is a form of verb which in the Arabic language indicates the continuity of their fear of the resurrection day. It is a sort of fear that compels them to their duties and missions.)

Moreover, great commentators have different opinions about the Qur'anic phrase /nurun 'ala nur/

('Light upon light'):

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Tabarsi says: it refers to prophets who come one after another from one root and continue the path of guidance.

Fakhr-i-Razi says: it refers to gathering of light rays and their concentration, as it is said about believers:

'A believer has 4 positions. If he receives a favour or bless, he thanks Allah. If he receives a disaster, he is patient and withstands it. If he says a word, he tells the truth. If he judges, he seeks justice. He is like a living man among the dead when he is among ignorant people.

He moves among 5 lights: his saying is light. His deed is light. His place of arrival is light. His place of exit is light. His aim is the light of Allah in the Day of Hereafter.'

It is also probable that the first light in the verse refers to the light of Divine guidance through revelation, and the second light refers to His guidance by means of intellect. Or the first light is the light of religious guidance, and the second light is Divine guidance, therefore, it is

'light upon light'.

Thus, this holy phrase is sometimes interpreted as different sources of light (prophets), and sometimes as various kinds of light, and sometimes as

its various phases, while all of them are possible and can be included in the meaning of the verse and, therefore, its concept is vast.[15]

Some Notes to Be Studied

1. Some traditions indicate that the objective of the persons mentioned in this noble verse is those businessmen who stop working and get prepared to perform ritual prayer when they hear the call to prayer.[16]

2. Business is not the only factor that entertains man and prevents him from remembering Allah, but there are also other factors mentioned in the Qur'an, such as: multiplication of wealth, desires, bad friend and offspring.

3. Olive tree has been described as 'blessed tree' in the above verses. And if in that age the importance of this phrase was not clear when the Qur'an was descended, now we know it fully, for great scientists have spent many years to study the different properties of plants and they tell us that this tree produces a blessed fruit which contains one of the most useful and valuable oils and it plays an important role in the health of body.

Ibn 'Abbas says that all parts of this tree is valuable and good, even its ash has also got property and benefit. It is the first tree that after the Flood of Noah (as) grew, and prophets have uttered invocation prayed for it to be a blessed tree.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 38

لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

38. "That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace. And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Allah compensates all shortages of Allah's men's deeds and gives them full reward. This noble verse points to the great reward of these guardians of the light of guidance who are the lovers of truth and reality.

It says:

"That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace..."

There is nothing to get surprised at, because Allah's grace is not limited for those who deserve His Grace;

"...And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Upon the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase:

/ahsana ma 'amilu/ ('the best of what they did'),

mentioned in the verse, some say it refers to all good deeds, including recommended duties and compulsory ones, great or small.

Some others say it refers to the fact that Allah rewards a person who does a good deed tenfold, or sometimes 700 times or even more, as we read in Sura Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 160:

"Whosever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like..."

And in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261, we read:

"The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills..."

Upon the commentary of the above-mentioned phrase, there is also this probability that the purpose of it is that Allah will reward them all of their

deeds according to the measure of their best deeds. Even their insignificant and middle deeds will be rewarded in the row of their best deeds.

This manner is not beyond the grace of Allah, because when justice and punishment are in contemplation, equality is necessary, but when grace and generosity come in, bounties and remittal are without stint, since His Pure Essence is infinite and His bless is unlimited and His generosity is endless.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 39

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَآءً حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئاً وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ فَوَفّاهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

39. "And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account."

Since the previous verses spoke about Allah's light, the light of faith and guidance, the above verse speaks about obscurity of disbelief, ignorance, , faithlessness, dark-hearted pagans and hypocrites in order to complete the discussion and to make their position clear, and compare their status with others'.

The verse speaks about those whose entity is:

'layer upon layer of darkness';

in contrary to the believers whose life and thoughts are:

'light upon light'.

Here the word is about individuals who are after mirage instead of water in the dry and hot desert of life and then lose their life because of thirst, while the believers have found the clear spring of guidance under the auspices of faith and have settled beside it.

At first, the verse says:

"And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, ..."

Then it continues saying:

"...which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account."[17]

The Arabic word /sarab/ is derived from the word 'Saraba', which means: 'walking in a slope', and the word 'Sarb' means: 'an inclined way'. Therefore, 'Sarab' is applied to a shine that appears from a distance in deserts and slopes and it seems that there is water over there, while it is nothing but a reflection of sunlight.

The Arabic word /qi'ah/ means 'a vast area and ground that has no water and plant', and, in other words, it is applied to arid deserts in which mirage is often seen.

Commentators of the Qur'an and lexicologists consider this word singular and its plural form is /qi'an/ or /qi'at/.[18]

Physicists say that when the air gets warm, the layer of air, that is directly above the earth, gets less dense and becomes different than the adjacent layer, then the waves of light are broken and mirage is because of this.

An English dictionary defines a mirage as:

'It is caused by the refraction of light rays from the object through layers of air having different densities as the result of unequal temperature distribution.'

Sura An-Nur - Verse 40

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِن فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُوراً فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُورٍ

40. "Or (the Unbelievers' deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

Each deed that a believer does is light and each deed that a disbeliever does is darkness. Instead of opening way for them, disbelievers' deeds mislead them more and it will be veil upon veil.

Therefore, in this noble verse the Qur'an says:

"Or (the Unbelievers' deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it..."

Yes, the true light in men's life is only the light of faith, and life will be dark and obscure without it, but this light of faith comes only from Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"...And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

To understand this example fully, it is first necessary to pay attention to the meaning of the Arabic word /lujjiy/. It means: 'a vast and very deep sea', and, in fact, it is derived from the Arabic word /lijaj/ which means: 'to go after or insist on a job, (usually bad ones)'. Then it has been applied to the succession of waves of the sea and to their standing behind each other.

Since if a sea is deeper and vaster, its waves are more, this word is applied to the deep and vast seas.

Now, consider a wavy and rolling sea which is very deep, and we know that sunlight, the strongest light, penetrates into the sea to a certain level and its last ray will disappear in almost a depth of 700 meter, so that in deeper parts continual darkness and eternal night rule, for no light penetrates there.

We know also this fact that if water is clear and calm, light will be reflected better, but wavy water breaks light ray, and a little amount of it can go deep into water.

And if, above a wavy sea, a dark cloud stands, the resulting darkness from it will be very dense.

First the darkness of the depth of sea, second the darkness of wavy sea, and third the darkness of dark cloud are the layers of darkness that are placed on each other. It is obvious that in such a darkness the closest objects can not be seen, and even if man holds his hand close to his eye, he can not see it.

A disbeliever who has not the light of faith is like someone who is involved in such triple darkness. On the contrary, fair-minded believers are the extension of ‘light upon light’.

Some of commentators have said that this triple darkness in which faithless people are involved, is as follows: the darkness of incorrect belief, the darkness of wrong speech, and the darkness of bad behaviour.

In other words, the deeds of faithless people are dark both from the point of fundamental and from the view point of their reflection in their speech, and also because of their full harmony with their other evil deeds.

Some other commentators have said that this triple darkness is the phases of their ignorance: 1) They do not know. 2) They do not know that they do not know. 3) Nevertheless, they think that they do know. And this phase is that compound and multiplied ignorance.

Some other have said since the main factors of cognizance, according to the text of the Qur’an, are 3, that is: heart (in the sense of intellect), eye, and ear, as Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 78 says:

“And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts...”.

But disbelievers have lost both the light of heart, and the light of eye, and the light of ear and they are plunging in darkness.[19]

It is obvious that these 3 comments are in harmony and it is possible that the verse refers to all of them.

Anyway, we conclude from these couple of verses that the deeds of disbelievers are likened a false light that appears like mirage in a dry and hot desert, and not only does not it quench their thirst, but also their thirst increases because of running.

Then, after this false light, which is the faithless hypocrites’ specious deeds, there is the inward of these deeds, which is full of darkness and dense horrible obscurity. This awful inward deranges all man’s senses and the closest objects will be invisible to him, even he cannot see himself, let alone others.

It is obvious that in such a terrible darkness, man is totally lonely and ignorant. He can neither find the way, nor does he have any fellow traveler, nor does not know his status, and he does not have any means, because he has not enjoyed the source of light, that is Allah, and he has covered with the veil of ignorance and conceit.

If you do not forget, we have said that light is the source of beauties, luminosities, life, and movement, but darkness is the source of the ugliness, death, mortality, immobility and silence. Darkness is the center of fear and hate. It is accompanied with coolness and depression. This is the status of those who lose the light of faith and plunge in the darkness of disbelief.

Some Tradition About ‘Light’ and ‘Darkness’

1. Once Imam Sajjad (as) was asked:

“Why are those who stay awake during the night and make supplication to Allah facially the best?”

He said:

"Because they have private communion with Allah and Allah covers them with His light."[20]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Since I heard the Prophet (S) said: 'Night prayer is light.', I have not lost one night to perform night prayer."[21]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Prayer is light."[22]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who testifies rightly in order to restore a Muslim's right by it, his face will be luminous on the day of dooms and his face emit light as far as the eye can see and people know him by his name and family."[23]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"There is truth with any right matter and there is light with any right thing."[24]

6. A man said to the Prophet (S) that I would like to be mustered on the Day of Hereafter luminously. The Prophet (S) said:

"Do not commit oppression upon anyone (so that) you will be mustered in light on the Day."[25]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Be in awe of injustice, because it causes darkness in the Day of Hereafter."[26]

8. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

"Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and those who disbelieve, their guardians are false-deities (taqut). They bring them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

Notes

1. The Commentary book: 'Nur', following of the verse, and for more information, you may refer to Kitab ul-Wafi, Vol. 1, p. 382, and Tauhid-i-Saduq, chapter Ar-ru'yah, p. 107
2. Burhan and Safi commentary, because of this noble tradition by Imam Rida (a.s): "Allah guides all dwellers of the skies and the earth to what is their best"
3. Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 325; and Mizan ul-Hikmah, p. 6016
4. Sura Al- Baqarah, No. 2, verse 127
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
6. Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary
7. Bihar, Vol. 23, p. 326
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 607
9. Majma' ul-Bayan, following the verse
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 602 & 603
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Ibid, p. 602
14. Ibid, p. 609
15. Take care
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
17. Imam Ali (as) was asked about how Allah reckons all people together. He said:

"As He provides all sustenance in one time." (Majma' ul- Bayan)

18. Majma' ul-Bayan, Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary by Qurtabi, and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi
19. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
20. 'Ilal-ush-Sharayi', Vol. 1, p. 366
21. Bihar, Vol. 41, p. 71, and 'Allhar us-Sadiqin, Vol. 11, p. 91

www.alhassanain.org/english

22. At-Taqib wat-tarhib, Vol. 1, p. 156
23. Bihar, 104/311/9
24. Kafi, 2/54/04
25. Kanz ul-Abraham‘mal
26. ’Usul Kafi, Vol. 4, p. 17

Section 6: Everything In the Heavens and the Earth Glorifies Allah

Sura An-Nur - Verses 41-42

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صَافَّاتٍ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلاَتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِلَي اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

41. "Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."

42. "And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

In the previous verses, Allah's light, the light of guidance and faith, the dense darkness of disbelief and ignorance were mentioned, while the concerned verses mention the reasons of monotheism, which are the signs of Divine lights and means of guidance.

First the holy Prophet (S) is addressed when it says:

"Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."

Since this general praise of creatures is a reason for the creative power of Allah, and His creative power is the reason of His ownership of the whole world of existence, and it is also the reason of the fact that all creatures return to Him, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

Another possibility in the relation of this verse with the pervious verse is that in the last sentence of the pervious verse, Allah's awareness of deeds of all men and the glorification of creatures is mentioned, and this holy verse refers to His justice court in the next world, Allah's ownership of the heavens and the earth and His right to judge.

Notes

First: The meaning of the Qur'anic sentence /'alam tara/ means as it is translated, but it is probable that the subject of the Arabic verb /'alima/ (to be aware) is Allah, not creatures.

In this case the translation of the verse will be in this way:

"...Of each He knows verily the worship and the praise..."

Second: Many times the Qur'an has explicitly stated the praise, prayer, and prostration of creatures, and sometimes has said:

"...but you do not understand their glorification..."[1]

It is understood from these verses that knowledge and intelligence is not limited to men. Though some consider the glorification of the creatures of existence as genetic glorification and non-verbal language of creation, the apparent of the verses does not say this.

Third: in this noble verse, man is indirectly warned by Allah:

1) creatures of heavens and earth and birds are praising Allah, why is man neglectful of it?

2) Creatures' praise is done consciously, why does not man have presence of heart?

3) Birds glorify Allah and are praying when they are flying, but some men bombard others when they are in airplane and are in negligence and unawareness.

Forth: A tradition indicates that when Imam Sadiq (as) heard the sound of a sparrow, he said:

"This bird is busy praising and praying."[2]

Fifth: Why does the above verse put emphasis on only the praise of birds, while their wings are extended at the time of flying, and does not mention other creatures? The answer is that in addition to a lot of variety that birds have, they enjoy characteristics that attract every wise man.

These heavy things fly fast in the air and break the force of gravity, especially when their wings are extended fully and they do not move them and they ride waves of air. They go everywhere and turn every side without causing themselves any difficulty.

Their knowledge of anemometry issues, their profound knowing of geographical position of the earth at the time of traveling and migrating from a continent to another continent and even from the north polar areas to the south polar parts, and a strange system that guides them in this long journey, even when the sky is cloudy, are of surprising issues and of the obvious reasons of monotheism.

The special radar that, some birds have, helps them to find their way in the darkness of night, and even the fact that a kind of them targets a prey in the depth of water and can catch it very swiftly is the very surprising characteristic of these birds.

Anyway, there are secrets in birds that because of them Qur'an has specially put emphasis on them.

Sixth: What is the purpose of/salat/ (prayer)?

Some commentators of the Qur'an, such as the Late Tabarsi in "Majma'-ul-Bayan" and 'Alusi in "Ruh-ul-Bayan", have interpreted the word 'Salat', mentioned here, as supplication, which is its main concept in dictionary.

Thus, the creatures of heaven and earth pray Allah with gestures or with their own verbal language and ask Him grace and He, Who is absolutely gracious, bestows it on them, according to their potentialities, as they deserve.

But they primitively know what they need and what they must ask for and what kind of supplication they ought to pray.

Moreover, according to aforementioned verses, they are humble before His magnificent court and yield to the rules of creation. On the other hand they declare Allah's attributes of perfection with their whole entity and negate any shortcoming about Him. Thus, their four worships are completed by: praising, glorification, prayer, and prostration.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 43

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَاباً ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَاماً فَتَرَي الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلاَلِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِن جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِن بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَن مَّن يَشَآءُ يَكَادُ سَنَابَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالاَبْصَارِ

43. "Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them? And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases. The flash of its lightning well-nigh blinds the sight."

To study creation is the best way for knowing Allah which causes to have His love. All movements in the universe are done with Divine will and power and also for a wise aim.

Therefore, in this verse, we face a little part of the wonders of creation, and the science, wisdom and magnificence that are behind them. All of them are reasons of His Pure Essence and monotheism.

So the Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them?..."

The Arabic word /yuzji/ is derived from the word /'izja'/ which means 'to drive softly'. It is the driving that is used for arranging the scattered creatures, and this word is exactly true about clouds.

Every piece of clouds come from a place of the seas and then Allah drives them towards each other, links and condenses them.

The Arabic word /rukam/ means objects and things that are piled up.

The Qur'anic word /wadq/, as many commentators believe, means: 'drops of rain that come from clouds.' But, in Mufradat, Raqib says that it has another meaning and that is the tiny bits of water that are scattered in the air at the time of raining.

But, the first meaning is more proper here, for what shows Allah's magnificence more is those enlivening drops of rain, not those dust-like bits of rain. Moreover, wherever the holy Qur'an mentions clouds and descending of favours, it refers to the issue of rain.

Yes, it is the rain that enlivens dead grounds and the earth, basically and covers trees with life dress and waters both men and animals.

Then another wonderful phenomenon of sky and clouds is referred to.

It says:

"...And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases..."

When hail falls, the blossoms of trees, fruits, the products of farms, even some animals and men are usually not safe from its harm.

Yes, it is Allah Who sometimes sends down enlivening rain from cloud and sometimes with a little change in it, He converts it into harmful and even deadly hail. This shows the ultimate of His power and grandeur, where

He sets harm and benefit, as well as death and life of men beside each other and even He has interwoven them.

In the end of the verse, another heavenly phenomenon, that is the sign of monotheism, is mentioned:

"...The flash of its lightning well, nigh blinds the sight."

These clouds which are, in fact, made of water bits which emit such a fire when they become full of electricity that their lightning rivets eyes and their thunder sometimes shakes everything. Such great power that is among this delicate vapor is verily wonderful.

The only question that remains here is that: From which mountain of heaven do these hails fall and come down?

Here, commentators have different opinions:

1. Some say that the Arabic word /jibal/ (mountains) here has got ironical aspect, as we say 'mountain of trouble' or 'mountain of food'. Therefore, a huge amount or mountain of hail is created by clouds in the sky and part of it descends on cities, some on deserts, and even some of it may hit some individuals.

2. Some have said that the purpose of 'mountains' is huge masses of cloud that are dimensionally like mountains.

3. The writer of the commentary of Fi Zilal[3], says something else which seems more proper. He says that masses of cloud in the sky are truly like mountains.

Though when we look at them from the earth, we see them even, while those who fly with aircraft above them see that clouds seem like mountains and valleys that are on the earth In other words, looking from the above, the surface of clouds is never even and like the surface of the earth has got a lot of unevenness.

So, from this point of view, calling 'clouds like mountain' is proper.

Besides the above clear statement, the explanation of some scientists can be added here:

Hail is precipitation of balls or pieces of ice with a diameter of 5 mm to 10 cm (about 0.2 to 4 inches). Small hail (also called sleet, or ice pellets) has a diameter of less than 5 mm.

Because the formation of hail usually requires cumulonimbus or other convective clouds with strong updrafts, it often accompanies thunderstorms. Large hailstones are often characterized by alternating layers of clear and opaque ice, caused by irregular rates of freezing.

In areas where the temperature is not far below 0° C (32° F), freezing occurs slowly, allowing trapped air to escape and producing clear ice. When the hailstone then moves into a much colder area, freezing occurs quickly, trapping air and producing a layer of white ice.

Hail is extremely destructive to buildings and crops; if large enough, it may be dangerous to animals exposed to it. Hailstones about 15 cm (6 inches) in diameter have fallen during thunderstorms in the Middle Western United States.

Hailstorms are most common in the middle latitudes and usually last around 15 minutes. They ordinarily occur in middle to late afternoon.[4]

Regarding this matter, the scientific point that exists will be clearer, for huge hails are formed only when masses of cloud get very dense so that when storm throws frozen balls of hail into them, they absorb more water. And this is when masses of cloud are upwardly located like mountain and they will be a considerable source for forming hail.

There is another analysis by other writers, the summary of which is as follows:

"In the concerning verses, lofty clouds explicitly refer to mountains of ice, or, in other words, mountains in which there is a kind of ice, and this is very interesting.

For after invention of aircraft and the possibility of high flight, man's knowledge was developed and scientists found clouds that consist of icy pillars and so the appellation 'mountains of ice' is truly applied to them.

And it is again surprising that one of Russian scientists has used the phrase 'mountains of cloud' or 'mountains of snow' in describing stormy raining clouds. Thus, it is now obvious that there are really mountains of ice in the heaven.

This is the miracle of the holy Qur'an that, 14 centuries before, it said:

"...And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail..."

Sura An-Nur - Verse 44

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

44. "Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight."

The shift and change of night and day is not accidental, but it is based on an exact system.

A person of insight can learn lesson from all times and all places.

The phenomena of the universe provide us lessons, that we do ponder them.

In this noble verse, one of the signs of creation and Allah's grandeur, which is the creation of day and night, is mentioned.

It says:

"Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight."

Commenting this holy verse, there are stated different opinions about how this revolution is:

Some consider it as the coming and going of day and night; day comes and makes the night invisible and vice versa.

Some say that it means shortening of one of them and prolonging of the other one, which happens gradually, and the formation of seasons depends on it.

Finally, some say that it refers to the changes such as warmness, coldness, and other events that happen during the day and night.[5]

It must be mentioned that the above commentaries are not in conflict with each other, and it is possible that all of them are included in the Qur'anic phrase /yuqallibu/ ('alternates').

Undoubtedly, as it is scientifically proven, both coming and going of the day and night, and gradual changes of them, are vitally important for man and it is a lesson for ‘those with sight’.

Constant shining of sun increases temperature of the air, bums living creatures, and mentally wearies men, but when the darkness of night comes after this shining, it modifies it totally.

The gradual changes of day and night, which is the factor of formation of four seasons, play an important role in the growth of plants, the life of all living creatures, the descending of rain, and storing water in the ground.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 45

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِن مَآءٍ فَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

45. “And Allah has created every animal from water; so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a kind) that walks upon four. Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is Ail-Powerful over every thing.”

All of creatures are created by His will. In this noble verse, one of the main aspects of creation system, which is one of the most obvious reasons of monotheism, that is the issue of life with its various forms, reference has been made to.

It says:

“And Allah has created every animal from water...”

All of them are made of water, but they have different and wonderful forms;

“...so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a kind) that walks upon four...”

Yet this is not limited to these things and life has got extraordinarily various forms, including creatures that live in the sea, or insects that have thousands species and thousands faces.

Therefore in the end of the verse, the Qur’an says:

“...Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing.”

Some Points

First: There are different opinions about the matter that the verse under discussion refers to what kind of ‘water’. There are three commentaries on it:

A) The purpose of water is the drop of seed. Many of commentators have chosen this commentary and in some narrations it has been referred to, too.

The problem that this commentary faces with is that not all creatures are created from the drop of seed. For there are unicellular organisms and some other animals that are the extensions of animal and are created through cell division, an asexual reproduction, and it must be said that the above subject has got a typical aspect, not a common and general aspect.

B) The purpose of it is the creation of the first creature, for according to some Islamic narrations, the first creature that Allah created was water and men were created after water.

Moreover, according to the new scientific theories, the first sign of life appeared in the seas and this phenomenon ruled in the depth of seas or in the shallows of seas before it appeared anywhere else. (Of course, the power that created the living creature with all of its complexity in the first phase and then guided it in other phases was Allah's will, a supernatural force.)

C) The last commentary is that the purpose of the creation of living creatures from water is that now the main material that makes up them is water and the main part of their body is made of water and that without water no living creature can continue to live.

Of course, these commentaries are in line with each other, but the first and the second ones seem more correct.

Second: The question that raises here is that animals are not limited to these three groups (reptiles, bipeds, quadrupeds), but there are many creatures that have more than four legs?

The answer to this question lies in the verse itself, for it is said in the next sentence:

"...Allah creates what He pleases..."

Moreover, the most important animals that man is to deal with are these three groups. Besides, some believe that even some animals that have more than four feet rely mainly on four feet and the rest of feet functions as helping means.[6]

Third: Undoubtedly the strangest phenomenon of this world is life, the issue that is still an unsolved riddle for scientists.

All of them say that living creatures are created from lifeless materials of this world, but no one knows how and under what circumstances this mutation has happened, for in no laboratory the changing of lifeless materials to living creatures is observed, although thousands of scientists have thought about this and experimented a lot during very many years.

What is certain is that the secrets of life are so complex that the entire manly knowledge and sciences, with their whole development, are not able to discover and understand them yet.

In current condition of the world, living creatures are created from only living creatures and no living creature is created from a lifeless creature. Certainly it was not so in a long time ago and; in other words, life in the earth has got a history of creation that no one knows how its condition was and it is a riddle to man.

More strange than that is the species of life. There are completely various aspects of life; unicellular organisms that are seen only by means of microscope unto huge whales that are more than 30 meters long and they are mountain of floating meet.

From insects of which hundreds of thousand species are discovered to birds that are thousand and thousands species, each of which have a world full of secrets.

Zoology books that today constitute a great part of great libraries of the world show only a little of these secrets. Sea, that has always been full of secrets, specially its animals, is still unknown to us with all knowledge that we have about it.

Verily how magnificent is Allah Who has created these various animals and has bestowed them what they have needed. How great is His power and knowledge that He has bestowed them what is needed proportionate to their conditions. And it is strange that all of them at first were created from water, and some little of the simple materials of the earth.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 46-47

لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ ءَايَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَآ أُوْلَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

46. "Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory, and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way."

47. "And they say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (really) believers."

Occasion of Revelation

Commentators have mentioned 2 occasions of revelation for a part of these verses:

First: One of the hypocrites had some quarrel with one Jewish man. That Jewish man asked that apparently-Muslim hypocrite to go together to the Prophet (S) to have their quarrel settled down, but the hypocrite did not accept it and asked the Jewish man for going to Ka'b Ibn Ashraf Yahudi (a Jewish man) for issuing judgment.

(Even according to some narrations, the hypocrite said it was possible that Mohammad (S) might not judge between them justly.)

The above verses were sent down and reprimanded such persons very severely.

Second: An argument happened between Imam Ali (as) and Othman, (or according to a narration, between that Imam and Muqayrat-Ibn Wa'il). And it was for a land that he had bought from Imam Ali (as) and then some stones were found in it and the buyer wanted to cancel the bargain because of it.

Imam Ali (as) asked for the judgment of the holy Prophet (S) between them, but Hakam Ibn Abee Abil-'As, one of the hypocrites, said to the buyer not to do that for if he went to Ali's cousin, the Prophet (S), he would certainly judge between them in favour of him. The above verse was descended and rebuked him.[7]

Since the words in previous verses were about belief in Allah, the reasons of monotheism, and His signs in the world of creation, the concerned verses talk about the signs of faith, reflections of monotheism in man's life and his yielding to the Truth.

First it says:

"Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory..."

These are some verses that lighten the hearts by the light of faith and Unity. Of course, the existence of these 'explanatory revelations' paves the ground for faith, but the main role is played by Divine guidance, because:

"...and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way."

We know that Allah's will and providence is not undue, and the light of guidance is cast on those hearts that are receptive for accepting it; that is, they have started spiritual struggle and taken steps towards Him.

Then hypocrites, who have no faith and only speak about faith and faith cannot be cast on their hearts, are reprimanded.

The verse proclaims:

"And they say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (really) believers."

What kind of faith is it that it is only uttered by their tongue and it is not manifested in other fields of their deeds?

It is understood from this verse that if a person's faith remains only at the level of tongue and he does not really believe in Allah, he is not a believer, for if he were a believer his faith would not be rejected in this verse.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 48

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ

48. "And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

The sign of real faith is the acceptance of the Prophet's judgment (S), and the sign of hypocrisy is rejecting his judgment.

So, in this noble verse, as one obvious reason for their disbelief, the Qur'an implies that when they are invited to the Book of Allah and His ordinance and religion as well as to the judgment of His Messenger (S) so that he judges between them, a part of them turn away.

The holy verse in this regard says:

"And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

That the Holy Qur'an mentions the name of the Prophet (S) after the name of Allah is because of the fact that the Prophet's judgment is ordered by Allah and Allah's judgment and that of the Prophet (S) are the same.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 49-50

وإِن يَكُن لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ

أَفِي قُلُوبِهِم مَرَضٌ أَمِ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَن يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُ بَلْ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

49. "But if the truth be on their side, they come unto him willingly with submission."

50. "Is there in their hearts a disease, or do they doubt, or are they in fear that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

When hypocrites and pagans saw that they were not right and they themselves were guilty and sinful, they refused to go to the Prophet (S) for judgment, for they knew that the Prophet would judge between them justly and fairly, and truth is not welcomed to every one.

But if they found out that quarrel would end in favour of them, they would hasten to achieve what is their right and they would not be content with anything except with the Prophet's judgment, so that the right, that was proved to be on the shoulder of their opposite party, would be served to them.

The verse says:

"But if the truth be on their side, they come unto him willingly with submission."

Another point in this holy verse is that only a group of hypocrites refused to ask the judgment of the Prophet (S), perhaps, for the reason that another group was not so bold and impudent, for, hypocrisy has got various degrees and levels as faith has got.

Then in the next verse, the main factors and motivations of their unyielding to the judgment of the Prophet (S) are mentioned in three sentences.

First it says:

"Is there in their hearts a disease..."

This is one of the attributes of the hypocrites who declare to be faithful, but they never yield to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S), because they heartedly deviate from monotheism.

Or if they do not have the sickness of hypocrisy in their heart, they have doubts and it is natural that when a person has doubt in accepting a religion, he does not succumb to its concomitants.

The verse continues saying:

"...or do they doubt..."

And if they are not any of the above, they are believers, the verse says:

"...or are they in fear that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them?..."

This is an obvious paradox that a person who knows the Prophet (S) as the Messenger of Allah and His religion herald and considers his judgment as Allah's judgment, never thinks that he might do any oppression upon him.

Is it possible that Allah treats anyone unjustly? Is not oppression originating from ignorance, or need or conceit? Allah's holy realm is pure from all of them. The verse says:

"...Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

They did not want to be satisfied with what was their right, and because they knew the Prophet (S) would not grant any thing from others' rights to them, they would not succumb to his judgment.

What is Hypocrisy?

Hypocrisy is, in fact, a malady and deviation. A soundman has got only one face; his soul and body are in harmony; if he is a believer, his whole entity declares faith, and if he is a deviated person, both his appearance and inward declare his deviation.

But if his appearance professes faith and his inward declares paganism, this quality is a kind of disease, as Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 10 says:

"In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease..."

In view of the fact that these people do not deserve Allah's guidance and favour, because they are obstinate and stubborn in their deeds and plans, Allah leaves them to themselves so that their disease increases.

Verily, the most dangerous people of a society are often hypocrites, for we do not know what to do with them, they are really neither friend nor seem enemy. They use the believers' facilities, and are apparently saved from pagans' punishment, but their deeds are worse than pagans'.

As we know, because this inconsistency in appearance and inward can not be continued for ever, finally curtains are drawn and their defiled inward will be shown, as in the former verses and their occasion of revelation we saw that when a case of judgment was formed, the cat was let out of the bag and their inward malice appeared.

Another matter is that, the government of justice is only Allah's government, for if man tries as much as possible to be free from conceit, animosity, kindness, and selfishness, he may get unconsciously involved in them, unless he is infallible and immune from the side of Allah.

It is for this reason that we say the real and true legislator is only Allah, because not only He knows all needs of man with His unlimited knowledge and He knows the best way for satisfying them, but also He never gets deviated because of needs, kindness and animosity.

The fairest judgments are carried out by Allah, the Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams. And the judgment of those who follow them is a little like theirs.

But this selfish man does not accept these fair and just judgments, and does not acknowledge these evenhanded rules, and he goes after a law, a government and a judgment that satiate his greed, avarice and lust more.

And what an interesting sentence is in the above verse:

"...Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

Meanwhile, facing such events is often a touchstone for evaluating man's true faith so that every man who is not straightforward will be facially dark.

Notes

1. Sura Isra', No. 17, verse 44
2. The Commentary Fakhr-i-Razi and Ruh ul-Bayan
3. Vol. 6, P. 109
4. From Encyclopedia Britannica
5. The Commentary of: Fakhr-i-Razi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Ruh-ul-Ma'ani
6. The Commentary by Qurtabi, and Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
7. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Ruh-ul-Bayan, Tibyan, Qurtabi, Fakhr-i-Razi, Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

Section 7: Establishment of Islamic Dominion Promised

Sura An-Nur - Verses 51-52

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَن يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ

51. "The saying of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than that they say: 'We hear and we obey.' And those are they that are the successful."

52. "And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is in awe of Him: so these are that are the victorious."

How hypocrites actually treated the judgment of the Prophet (S) was depicted in the previous four verses. In this holy verse, how the real believers treated him (S) is depicted so that people look at themselves and see, from the view point effacing the ordinance of Allah, to what group they belong.

In the previous holy verses we saw how dark-hearted hypocrites, who were in the dense darkness, reacted to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S), and how they refused the just judgment of the Prophet (S), as though they feared that Allah and the Prophet (S) might tread on their right.

But the concerned verses describe its opposite case, that is, the believers' treatment with this Divine judgment.

At first, it says:

"The saying of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than that they say: 'We hear and we obey.'..."

What an interesting sentence,

"...We hear and we obey..."!

It is short and meaningful.

The Arabic word /'innama/ which is for limiting, indicates:

"...that they have nothing but this to say..."

They have only one word and verily the reality of Faith is this very meaning:

"...We hear and we obey..."

How can a person who knows Allah as the Omniscient, needing no one, the Compassionate, and the Merciful on all servants prefer others' judgment to His judgment? Also, how can that person show any action but listening to and obeying His command and judgments? What a good means it is for the believers' success and what great trial is for them!

Therefore in the end of the verse, it is added:

"...And those are they that are the successful."

The one who yields to Allah, and considers Him as the judge, is undoubtedly victorious in every thing, whether in the worldly life or in the spiritual one.

The second verse talks about the same fact, but more generally.

It proclaims:

"And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is in awe of Him: so these are that are the victorious."

In this holy verse, those who obey and those who fear Allah are described as 'the victorious'; while in the previous verse those who yield to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S) were described as 'the successful'.

As it is understood from the references of lexicon, the Arabic word /fauz/ and the word /falah/ both have almost one meaning. Raqib says in Mufradat:

"The word /fauz/ Means: 'victory and achieving a good affair accompanied with safety', and concerning the word /falah/ he says it means: 'victory and achieving the purpose and aim'."

(Of course, the word 'Falah' originally means: 'to split'. Since victorious people surmount obstacles that are on their way and split their way for going forth and reaching their aim, the word 'Falah' has been used in the sense of victory.)

And since the last holy verse talks about obedience absolutely and the previous verse talks about the yielding to Allah's judgment, one of them is general and the other one is particular, the result of both of them must be the same.

It is interesting that, in the last verse, three attributes are mentioned for those who are victorious: opeying Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (S), fear of Allah, and piety.

Some commentators say that 'obedience' is a general meaning and its inward branch is 'fear of Allah' and 'piety' is its outward branch. Thus, at first obedience is generally talked about, and then its inward branch and, after that, its outward one.

It is necessary to mention that there is a narration by Imam Baqir (as) about the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…And those are they that are the successful",

who said:

"The objective of this verse is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)."[1]

Undoubtedly, the most obvious extension of this verse is Imam Ali (as), and the purpose of the above tradition is this and it never rejects the commonness of its concept.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 53

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُل لاَّ تُقْسِمُوا طَاعَةٌ مَّعْرُوفَةٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

53. "They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths (that), if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: 'Do not swear; (better than this is) honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do'."

Do not trust any swear and oath, because hypocrites often abuse the sacred things, and prevent hypocrites' abuse by not accepting their oath and swear.

The occasion of revelation that is mentioned about this verse and the next one in some commentaries denotes that some hypocrites became very upset after the descending of the pervious verses and their severe reprimand.

They went to the Prophet (S) and swore their oath of obedience to his command, and then the holy Qur'an answered them decisively by saying:

"They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths (that), if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: 'Do not swear; (better than this is honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do'."

Many commentators think that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /layaxrujunna/:

("...they will certainly go forth...")

is going out for Holy Struggle, while some others think that it means: leaving one's house and family, or going with the holy Prophet (S) everywhere and to be at his service'.

Of course, the Arabic word /xuruj/ or its derivatives are used in the holy Qur'an in the sense of: both going out for Holy Struggle and leaving home, affairs, and family.

However, consistency with the previous holy verses, that mentioned the judgment of the Prophet (S) about the conflicting issues, necessitates that we accept the second commentary; meaning that: they came to the Prophet (S) and declared their yielding to his judgments and they swore that they not only would give a part of their property, but also they would leave all their property and family entirely, if command was issued.

Nevertheless, it causes no problem if both of the meanings are included in the verse, that is, they are ready both for leaving family and property with the command of the Prophet (S) and for going to Holy Struggle.

But, in view of the fact that those who are hypocritical sometimes change their appearance when they encounter unfavourable atmosphere of society and resort to very strong oaths and sometimes their oath itself indicates their falsehood, the holy Qur'an answers them explicitly, indicating that they need not swear, it is better they do sincere and frank obedience in action.

By the way, Allah is informed of what they have in their mind and He knows that whether they are swearing false oath or they have really changed their way.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 54

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّـلَ وَعَلَيْكُم مَا حُمِّـلْتُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَي الرَّسُولِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

54. "Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

The Prophet (S) is commissioned to call hypocrites for obedience;

"Say: Obey Allah...",

because obeying the commands and orders of the Prophet (S) is obligatory like obeying Allah's orders and commandment.

Therefore, in this noble verse, this concept is emphasized where it says:

"Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger..."

Then the Holy Qur'an implies that there are two positions against this command, when it continues saying:

"...But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

He was commissioned to convey Allah's commandment to all people, whether they accept it or not. Detriment and benefit of accepting or rejecting it would influence them. The Prophet (S) was not obligated to force and compel people to go on the right path and accept the call.

It is interesting that in the above verse, the duties are referred to as being 'heavy loads'; it is in fact so. Both the commission of the Prophet (S) and frankly obeying his call were a burden on the shoulder that had to be carried out and except sincere people no one could carry out this duty.

Therefore, we read in a narration by Imam Baqir (as), about the Prophet (p.b.u.h), who said:

"Oh those who recite the Holy Qur'an! Be in awe of Allah, Almighty. Be pious toward His Book that is a burden on your shoulder, because both you and I are responsible. I am responsible for conveying His message to you and you are responsible before Allah's Book and my practice (Sunnah) that are on your shoulder."

Some Points

1. The repetition of the Qur'anic phrase /'ati'u/ (Obey) indicates that the Prophet (S) has got two missions: one is declaration of revelation (Obey Allah) and the other one is declaring governmental rules (obey the Messenger).

2. In the holy Qur'an, we encounter some instances that contain two commandments from the side of Allah mentioned with together, and both of them must be carried out and doing one of them is not enough and is not acceptable, including:

A) Faith and deeds;

"...those who believe and do righteous deeds..."[2]

B) Ritual prayer and alms-tax;

"...And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (Zakat).. ."[3]

C) Expressing gratitude to Allah and parents;

"...Be grateful to Me and to both your parents ..."[4]

D) Obeying Allah and His Messenger;

"...Obey Allah and obey the Messenger ..."[5]

3. In the holy Qur'an, the sentence/wa 'in tawallau/ (But if you turn away) is used many times. In all cases it is used for sympathizing with the Prophet (S) so that he would not get discouraged about his mission concerning people's inattention and heedlessness.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 55

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْناً يَعْبُدُونَنِي لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئاً وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

55. "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."

Occasion of Revelation

Many commentators, including Suyuti in Asbab-ul-Nuzul, Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb in Fi-Zilal, and Qurtabi in his commentary, upon the occasion of revelation of this verse have said:

When the Prophet (S) and Muslims migrated to Medina and were warmly welcomed by Ansar (Helpers), all Arabs became their enemy and it was such that they were to carry a weapon when they went to bed and to be on the alert all the time.

The continuation of this state became difficult for the Muslims. Some of them declared their feeling explicitly:

"To what day would this state continue? Would a time come that we could rest calmly in the night and peace and tranquility rule over us and we fear no one but Allah?"

The above verse was sent down and gave them this good tiding that of course such a day would come.

Islam is a universal religion. In future victory belongs to the believers and pagans are doomed to be defeated. The key of achieving the Truth and authority of the world is 'Faith' and 'good deeds'. Those who believe and do good deeds glad tidings of victory are given to, not to those who are barely believers.

Religion is not separated from politics, but politics and government are for saving religion.

Since the previous holy verses talked about obeying the commandments of Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (p.b.u.h), the concerned verse continues this matter and mentions the result of this obedience which is the worldly government, and the Qur'an emphatically announces:

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me..."

It is certain that after the dominion of the government of Monotheism and settlement of the Divine religion when any kind of anxiety, insecurity and infidelity disappear, those who resist to be disbelievers are wrong-doers.

The verse continues saying:

"...and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."

However, the totality of the verse denotes that three things are promised by Allah to be bestowed on those Muslims who have faith and do good deeds:

1. Succession and authority over the earth.
2. Establishing the factual religion of Truth everywhere fundamentally, firmly, and deeply, (which is understood form the Qur'anic word 'Tamkin').
3. Abolishing all the factors that cause fear and insecurity.

The result of these abovementioned affairs will be worshipping Allah absolutely with utmost freedom, and obeying His commandments. There will be no partner for Him among people and pure monotheism will rule everywhere. Of course, we will explain that at what time this Divine promise has been fulfilled, or when it will be fulfilled.

Some Points

1. The Commentary of the Qur'anic Sentence

"...as He appointed successors those before them...":

Commentators have different opinions about the matter that to whom this sentence refers that they had got authority on the earth before Muslims.

Some say that it refers to Adam, David and Solomon, because in verse 30 of Sura Al-Baqarah we read about Adam:

"...'Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy'...".

And it is said about David in Sura Sad, No. 38, verse 26:

" (And it was said unto him): O' David! Verily We have set you a viceroy in the earth..."

And since Solomon was the heir of David's authority, he became caliphate on the earth;

"And Solomon was David's heir..."[6]

But some others, such as the great commentator 'Allamah Tabatba'i said in Al-Mizan that this concept is improbable, because he does not consider the sentence /'allaðina min qablihim/ (to those before them') to be proper for prophets.

For this sentence has not been used for prophets in the Qur'an, therefore it refers to nations that were faithful and did good deeds and became the rulers on the earth.

However, some others believe that this verse refers to the Children of Israel who achieved authority on the earth when Moses (as) appeared and Pharaoh was defeated, as it is mentioned in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 137:

"And We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it which We had blessed therein..."

It is also said about them (the believers of the Children of Israel):

"And to grant them power in the earth..."[7]

It is true that there were some wicked and insincere persons among the Children of Israel and even they might be pagan, but government was in the hand of the righteous believers, (therefore the fault that some commentators

find with this commentary is rejected,) and, thus, the third commentary seems more correct.

2. To Whom Does Allah Promise?

In this verse we read that Allah has promised the authority of the earth, establishment of the chosen religion and complete security to those who are believers and do righteous deeds, but commentators are of different opinions about the extension of these persons:

Some of them say that it refers to the Companions of the Prophet (S), who ruled the earth after Islam and defeated pagans at the time of the Prophet (S).

(Of course, the purpose of the word 'Ard' (the earth) is not all of the earth or all countries, but it is a concept that is true about a part and the whole both.)

Some say it refers to the first four caliphates' authority. And some consider its meaning so wide-ranging that it includes all Muslims who have such an attribute.

Some say that it refers to government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which includes western and eastern parts of the world and the religion of Truth will widespread. Fear and war will be abolished on the earth, and sincere worship will be materialized for all people of the world.

Undoubtedly this holy verse includes the first Muslims and certainly the full extension of this verse is the government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which according to the opinion of all Muslims, whether Shi'ite or Sunni, will make the earth peaceful and full of justice after oppression and tyranny rule the world.

However, it is not against the generality and extensiveness of the concept of the verse.

So, whenever Muslims are verily faithful and do righteous deeds whole-heartedly, they will consequently achieve a strong and influential authority.

Some say that the word /'ard/ is absolute and general which includes all of the earth, but this is only limited to the government of Mahdi (may we get sacrificed for him!) and it is not consistent with the Qur'anic sentence /kamastaxlafa/ (as He granted it), because the predecessors' government and authority did not certainly include all of the earth.

Moreover, the occasion of revelation of the verse indicates that at least an example of such government was achieved for Muslims at the time of the Prophet (S), although it was at the end of his life.

But we repeat again that the product of all prophets' struggles and attempts, their continual propagation and pursuit and complete example of monotheism sovereignty, complete security, and sincere worship with no polytheism will be materialized when Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), the offspring of the prophets and the progeny of the Prophet of Islam (S), will reappear.

The same person about whom all Muslims have narrated this tradition from the Prophet (S) who said:

"If only one day of the world's lifetime is remained, Allah will make that day so long that a man from my progeny, whose name is like my

name, will rule the earth and fill the earth with justice as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny."[8]

It is interesting that the Lale Tabarsi says about this verse that it is narrated from the household of the Prophet (S) (Ahl-ul-Bayt (as)) that:

"This verse is about Mahdi, who is from the family of the Prophet (S)."[9]

In Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and many other Shi'ite commentaries, upon the commentary of this verse, there has been narrated from Imam Sajjad (as) who said:

"By Allah, they are our Shi'ites (followers) (Ahl-ul-Bayt). Allah does this for them by the hand of a man who is from us and he is Mahdi (the guide) of the Ummah. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny. He is the man about whom the Prophet (S) said:

'If one day of the world's lifetime has remained...'"

As we said, these commentaries do not mean to limit the meaning of the verse, however, they are for stating its full extension, but because some commentators, such as 'Alusi who has not pay attention to this matter in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, have negated these traditions.

Qurtabi, the famous Sunni commentator, narrated from Miqdad-Ibn-'Aswad who heard from the Prophet (S), who said:

"No clay or stone house will remain unless Allah causes Islam enters that house (and faith and monotheism get widespread on the earth.)"[10]

For more explanation about the government of Mahdi (as) and its vast and proven documents in Sunni and Shi'ite books, you may refer to the book Muntakhab-ul-'Athar, PP. 247 on where they are taken especially from Sunni sources.

3. The Final Aim is Sincere Worship

The Qur'anic sentence /ya'budunani la yušrikuna bi šay'a/ (They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me) from the point of literature, whether its tense is present, or it is ultimate, its concept is that the final aim is establishing the government of Truth, embedding the religion of Truth, and spreading security and peace, which is the very fortifying the foundations of worshipping and monotheism, hi another verse of the Qur'an it is mentioned as the aim of creation, where it says:

"And I have not created the jinn and the humankind except that they should worship Me."[11]

A kind of worship which is the high education center of men that edifies their spirit and soul. The worship that Allah does not need but servants need it desperately for paving the path of perfection and development.

Therefore, Islamic insight, contrary to worldly approaches whose final aim is the extreme welfare of worldly life, does not follow such a thing as an aim, even the worldly life is valuable when it is used as a means for achieving that spiritual aim.

But we must pay attention to this matter that worshipping that lacks polytheism, and negates both none-divine laws and authority of low desires, is possible only by establishing a government of justice.

It is possible that you invite some persons to Truth by teaching, edification, and propagation, but for generalizing this matter in the society we must establish government of the righteous who are faithful.

That was why the great prophets attempted to do this, especially the Prophet of Islam (S), at the first possible opportunity, established such a government after migrating to Medina.

So it can also be concluded that all the attempts and struggles carried out for war and peace, and even educational, cultural, economic, military programs are planned in such a government are for the sake of worshipping Allah which is free from any polytheism.

It is also necessary to mention that the meaning of the righteous' government, obedience from the True religion and sincere worship is not a society that has no wrongdoer and sinner in it, but it means that the government is in the hand of the righteous believers and no public polytheism is seen in the society, otherwise, when man is free to choose his way and has got the freedom of will, it is possible to have deviated individuals in the man's best divine societies.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 56

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وءَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

56. "And establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you."

Ritual prayer, alms-tax, and obeying divine leader is an obvious example of faith and righteous deed of the believers to whom sovereignty of the earth was promised in the former verse:

("Allah hath promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds...")

In Islam worshipping issues (ritual prayer), financial issues (alms-tax), and political and governmental issues (obeying Allah's prophet) are not separated from each other. So, in this verse, people are mobilized for preparing the ground for such a government.

At first, it says:

"And establish prayer..."

The same ritual prayer that is the key of relation between the Creator and creatures, and it guarantees their continuous connection with Allah, and it is an obstacle between them and corruption and wrong action.

Then, after that, the verse continues saying:

"...and pay the poor-rate..."

It is the same alms-rate that is the sign of relationship with Allah's creatures and it is an effective means for decreasing the distance between them and causes their affectionate relations to be strengthened.

So, the verse continues:

"...and obey the Messenger..."

This obedience, which is general and indicates that we should be obedient unto the Messenger of Allah in all things, causes us to be among the righteous believers who deserve to have the authority of the earth.

It is in this case and under the shade of fulfilling these commandments that haply we may find mercy, and be among those righteous believers who are worthy of leading the government of justice.

The verse concludes:

"...so that mercy may be shown to you."

Some Traditions On Ritual Prayer and Alms-Tax

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"The first thing that Allah obligated upon my people to do was the five ritual prayers and the first deed of them that will ascend is the five ritual prayers, and the first thing that will be asked about is the very ritual prayers."[12]

2. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Islam is founded on five things: ritual prayer, amls-tax, ritual pilgrimage, fasting, and the guardianship (of Ahl-ul-Bayt)"[13]

3. Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

"The first thing that a servant will be reckoned of is ritual prayer, so if ritual prayer is accepted, other deeds will be accepted. If his ritual prayer is not accepted, the rest of his deeds will be rejected, too."

4. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"When our offspring become five years old, we enjoin them to perform ritual prayer, so when your issues get seven years old, tell them to keep up prayer."[14]

5. The Prophet (S) said:

"Never the time of ritual prayer comes unless an angle cries:

O' people stand up and put off the fires that you have kindled.'"[15]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

"When a person stands up to perform ritual prayer, Satan looks at him jealously, for he sees that Allah's mercy has covered him."[16]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"The five ritual prayers are like a pleasant stream that is before the door of your house. If someone washes oneself in it five times a day, no dirt will remain."

(A person who performs five ritual prayers per day will be cleaned from any spiritual deviations.)[17]

8. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah said:

'(Oh Prophet!) I enjoined your people five ritual prayers and I promised with Me to send to Paradise everyone who protects them in their proper times, and there will not be promised with Me for the one who does not protect (perform) them'."[18]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

"I advise you to pay alms-tax. I heard the Prophet (S) saying:

"Alms-tax is the bridge of Islam. So whoever pays it will cross the bridge and whoever does not pay it will fall down of it, and (payment of) alms-tax soothes Allah's wrath."[19]

10. The narrator of the tradition says that he heard Imam Ali (as) saying:

"The pillars of Islam are three, and none of them is useful without the other ones: ritual prayer, alms-tax and guardianship."[20]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

"Heal your patients with charity, and save (and insure) your property with alms-tax."[21]

12. Imam Musa-Ibn-Ja'far (as) said:

"Verily Alms-tax is set for being the food of the poor, and for increasing their wealth."[22]

13. The Prophet (S) said:

"When alms-tax is not paid the earth holds back its (favours and) blessings."[23]

14. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The Prophet (S) has set alms-tax for 9 things, (which are) wheat, barley, date, raisin, gold, silver, camel, cow, and sheep, and let off other ones."[24]

15. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Every Muslim is enjoined to pay alms (given on the festival of the end of Ramadan). One who does not pay it may expire."

Then Imam was asked:

"What does expire mean?"

He said:

"Death."[25]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 57

لاَ تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

57. "Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth, their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!"

Even if pagans are super powerful, they will be defeated against Allah's religion.

In other words, if you think that powerful stubborn foes may throw a spanner in the works and may prevent the fulfilment of Allah's promise, this is impossible, because their power is nothing comparing with Allan's power.

Therefore, the verse says:

"Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth..."

Not only they will not be in security from the punishment of Allah in this world but also, in the Hereafter, Fire is their abode.

The verse continues saying:

"...their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!"

The Arabic word /mu'jizin/ is the plural form the word /mu'jiz/, meaning to make unable. Since sometime one is after someone and he escapes him and he goes out of pursuer's territory and this matter makes him (the pursuer) unable, this word /mu'jiz/ is sometimes used in the same meaning.

The above verse refers to this very meaning and it implies that no one can go out of Allah's territory.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 616
2. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 25
3. Ibid, verse 43

4. Sura LuqmAn, No. 31, verse 14
5. The verse under discussion
6. Sura An-Naml, No. 27, verse 16
7. Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 6
8. In the book Muntakhab-ul-'Athar, 123 hadiths are mentioned about this matter and they are narrated from different Islamic references, especially from Sunni ones. Refer to this books from page 247 on.
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
10. The Commentary by Qurtabi, following the verse
11. Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 56
12. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18859
13. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 234
14. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 3, p. 12
15. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 209
16. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 207
17. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18931
18. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18872
19. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407
20. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386
21. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, p. 66
22. Ibid, p. 46
23. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, 146
24. Ibid, 34
25. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 109

Section 8: Respect For Domestic and Personal Privacy

Sura An-Nur - Verse 58

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلاَثَ مَرّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلاةِ الفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيابَكُمْ مِن الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِن بَعْدِ صَلاَةِ الْعِشَآءِ ثَلاَثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلاَ عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ طَوَّافُونَ عَلَيْكُم بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَليمٌ حَكِيمٌ

58. "O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times (for coming into your room): before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer. (These are) three times of privacy for you. It is no sin for you or for them (if) after those (three times), some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Faithful parents are responsible for teaching Divine religious ordinances to their children. The place where parents habitually sleep must be separate and far from the sight of the children, otherwise, there was no need for taking permission, as man must allocate some hours for his wife during 24 hours and issues must not disturb them.

Islam is a religion for life and it is completely comprehensive. It has programs and plans for both common trivial issues such as entrance of children in parent's room (mentioned in this verse) and important matters such as the establishment of universal government.

Anyway, as we said before, the most important issue that is comprehensively discussed in this Sura is the matter of public chastity and righting against any sexual deviation.

This verse also is about one of these affairs that relate this issue and it explains its characteristics; the matter is concerned to the mature and immature issues' taking permission when they want to enter the room which belongs to their parents.

At first, it says:

"O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times (for coming into your room): before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer..."

As Raqib says in his book, Mufradat, and Firuz'abadi in Qamus, the Arabic word /zahirat/ means midday and about noontime when people take off their outer clothes and man and wife may be together privately.

"... (These are) three times of privacy for you..."

The Arabic word /'aurat/ originally is derived from the word /'ar/ meaning shame and fault. Since showing genital organs is the cause of fault and shame, in Arabic language it is called /'aurat/. Sometimes the word /'aurat/ is also used to mean an opening and cut in wall and dress and the like.

Sometimes it means absolutely fault. Anyway, using this word for these three times is for the matter that people do not compel themselves to be veiled fully as in other times they do and they consider these times their privacy.

It is obvious that this command only involves parents who must force their issues to do this, for children have not come of age yet so that they are not obligated to carry out divine duties, therefore parents are addressed here.

Moreover, the verse is applied to both girls and boys, and the word /'allaðina/ (those) that is a masculine pronoun is not against generality of the concept of the verse, because in many cases this word is used for all people, as we read in the verse that obligates all Muslims to fast, in which the word /'allaðina/ is used to address all Muslims.[1]

It is necessary to mention that the verse is about children who can discern and comprehend sexual issues and genital organs, etc, because the matter of taking permission itself indicates that they at least understand what taking permission means. Using the phrase 'Thalatha 'aurat' (Three times of privacy) is another evidence for this meaning, too.

Whether this verse covers male slaves only or it covers female slaves, too, there are various narrations. The verse apparently involves all, that is, it refers to both groups, so the narrations that are in harmony with the appearance of the verse can be preferred.

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...It is no sin for you or for them (if) after those (three times), some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The Qur'anic word /tawwafun/ is originally derived from the word /tawaf/, meaning walking about or around something, and since it is used in the form of exaggeration, it means frequency of this matter.

With regard to the Qur'anic phrase

/ba'dukum 'ala ba'din/ (some of you ... upon others)

that has come after it, the concept of the sentence is that you are allowed to do each other favour and to go and to come in other than these three times.

As Fazil Mighdad says in Kanz-ul-'Irfan, this sentence indicates that there is no need for taking permission in other times, because if they want to come and go frequently and they have to take permission, every time it will become a difficult job[2].[3]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 59

وإِذَا بَلَغَ الاَطْفَالُ مِنكُمُ الحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّـنُ اللَّهُ لَـكُـمْ ءَايَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

59. "And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise."

Wet dream is a boundary of reaching the religious puberty.

The Arabic word /hulum/ and the word /'ihtilam/ means to see a wet dream when one is sleeping, and it is one of the signs of puberty. Of course,

the signs of puberty for girls and boys are various and they are mentioned in detail in the treatises of authorities of imitation.

In this holy verse the ordinance of those who have reached puberty is mentioned.

It says:

"And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. …"

The Arabic word /hulum/ means 'intellect' and implies puberty which is usually accompanied with an intellectual and mental mutation. It is sometimes said that the word /hulum/ means 'dream' and 'dreaming', and since, after puberty, the youth see some scenes in dream that cause them ejecting semen, this word has been used to mean puberty ironically.

Anyway, it is understood from this verse that the ordinance for those who have reached puberty is different from those who have not reached this status, because immature children are obligated to take permission only in three times, according to the previous verse, since their life is so mixed with their own parent's that if they want to take permission every time, it will cause them difficulty.

Moreover, their sexual feelings are still undeveloped, but according to this verse, which has obliged them to take permission absolutely, matured youth in any condition must take permission every time they go to their parents.

This ordinance is for the place where parents are taking rest, otherwise, entering public room (if there is such a room), especially when others are there and there is nothing to cause problem, needs no permission.

It is also important to mention that the Qur'anic sentence:

"...even as those before them used to ask it..."

refers to the adults who were obligated to take permission whenever they wanted to enter their parents' room and, in this verse, those who have just reached puberty are like the adults who were enjoined to ask permission.

In order to emphasize and attract the attentions, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise."

This is just like the sentence that was at the end of the previous verse, but in that holy verse the word /al'ayat/ (the revelations) was used and in this verse the word /'ayatihi/ (His revelations) is used. However, there is not much difference in their meanings.

Some Details About Philosophy of Taking Permission:

Only giving heed to executing fixed punishments and flogging wrongdoers is not enough to eradicate a social mischief such as immodest unchaste actions. Such a treatment does not produce a good result in any one of social issues.

In fact we must have a package which includes intellectual cultural teachings, which is along with ethical and sentimental rules and correct Islamic teachings, and we must also create a sound social environment and then punishment can be considered as a factor along with them.

Consequently, this holy Sura, which is the Sura of chastity, begins with the act of flogging and punishment of adulterer and adulteress, and covers the issues such as paving ground for a sound marriage, observing Islamic veiling, prohibiting ogling, banning the act of accusing people to unchaste pollution, and, finally, children's taking permission at the time of entering parents' room.

This shows that no subtle thing about chastity is ignored in Islam.

Servants must take permission when they want to enter a room in which wife and husband exist. Matured children must take permission when they want to enter such a room, even immature children, who are always with parents, are also taught not to enter the parents' room without permission at least at three special times, (before morning ritual prayer, after night prayer, and at noon time when parents are taking rest).

This is a kind of Islamic politeness which is unfortunately observed less today. Although the holy Qur'an has mentioned it explicitly in the above holy verses, we see that this Islamic ordinance and its philosophy is less discussed in lectures and writings and it is not clear that why this decisive ordinance of the holy Qur'an has been ignored.

Although the verse apparently obligates people to observe this ordinance, even if we suppose that this ordinance is recommended, it must be talked about and its details must be discussed.

Contrary to what some simple-minded individuals, who think that children do make nothing of these issues and servants do not pay attention to them, it is proven that children (let alone adults) are extraordinarily sensitive to this matter and sometime parents' carelessness and children looking at scenes that they must not see, are the source of ethical deviations and even psychical maladies.

We have experimented the individuals who themselves confessed that as a result of the carelessness of their parents to this matter and that they observed them busy having a sexual intercourse those individuals had reached such a stage of sexual stimulation and psychical complex that they felt the enmity of their parents in them, nigh to kill them or perhaps, nigh to commit self-murder.

It is here that the value and magnificent of this Islamic ordinance appears that the issues and matter that scientists have found today, Islam foresighted in its ordinances fourteen centuries ago.

It is also necessary to recommend parents to take these matters earnest and to make their children accustomed to taking permission of entrance. They also must avoid actions, such as sleeping together in a room discerning children sleep, which may excite children as much as possible. You must know that these affairs have got extraordinarily educational effect on children's fate.

It is interesting that there is a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Be careful that you do not have sexual intercourse while a child is looking at you from cradle."[4]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 60

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ اللاَّتِي لاَ يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحاً فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَ جُنَاحٌ أَن يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَن يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

60. "And (as for) women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their (outer) clothes in such a way as not to show adornment. And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Islam rules are in accord with realties, necessities, needs, and social abilities. Therefore we should slacken it for an old woman who does not have inclination for husband and does not apply cosmetics.

Thus in this verse an exception for the ordinance of the veil of women is mentioned by which exempts old women from this ordinance. It says:

"And (as for) women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their (outer) clothes in such a way as not to show adornment..."

In fact, there are two conditions for this exception:

1. Reaching an age in which there is usually no hope of marriage in them. In other words, they have lost any sexual attraction completely.

2. They should not have any cosmetics when they take away their veil.

It is clear that with these two conditions there will be no mischief when veil is discarded in them. For this reason Islam exempts them from this ordinance.

It is also obvious that its purpose is not to be naked and to take off all clothes, but it means to remove outer garments that in some narrations it has been interpreted into veil (chador) and scarf.

In a tradition Imam Sadiq (as) about this verse says:

"The purpose (of it) is veil (chador) and scarf."

The narrator says he asked Imam:

"Before every one?"

Imam said:

"Before every one, but she must not apply cosmetics and she must not wear adornments."[5]

Some other narrations with the same content are narrated from Imams, Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).[6]

It is added at the end of the verse implying that yet if they refrain and cover themselves it is better for them, because from the view point of Islam the more a woman observes her veiling and chastity, she will be more admirable, pious, and pure.

The verse says:

"...And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them..."

Since some old women may misuse this calculated and lawful freedom and so have possibly improper talking with men and have impure thoughts altogether, in the end of the verse, as a warning, it says:

"...and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

He hears what is told and He knows what is in the hearts and what is in minds.

In short, the matter of veiling is one of the stable and necessary ordinances of Islam, but the issues of how the veil should be is depended on the matter of not stirring sexual desires and saving chastity and modesty.

So, the principle that this group of women are excepted from the ordinance of veiling is not a matter of discussion among Islam scholars and learned people, because the text of the Qur'an expresses it, but there are some words about its characteristics, including: the age of these women, in what age the ordinance of 'women advanced in years' covers women.

In some Islamic narration, it has been interpreted as old women.[7] While in other narrations it has been interpreted as women retirement from marriage.[8] But some Islamic jurists and commentators think that it means the end of menstruation, the age of barrenness and people's reluctance to marry such women.[9]

Apparently, all of these meanings refer to one reality that women must get so old that no one would like to marry them, although some of such women may rarely get married.

Moreover, about the part of the body that these women can show, there are some different interpretations in Islamic Traditions, while the Holy Qur'an says vaguely that there is no problem for such women to take off their garments, of course, their outer clothes.

In some narrations we read the answer of this question that which garments can be taken off;

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Chador."[10]

While in other narration it has been interpreted as chador and scarf.[11]

Apparently, there is no inconsistency between these Islamic traditions. The purpose is that there is no problem for such women to uncover their head and to bare their hair, neck, and face. Even in some traditions and jurists' words, the wrist is exempted, but we have no reasons about more than this very extension for its exemption.

Anyway, all of these are for the time that such women do not apply cosmetics, and to cover their hidden adornments as others are enjoined to do. Also they must not wear garments that attract attentions and, in other words, they are permitted to go out without (chador) and scarf while wearing a simple garment and without applying cosmetics.

Yet, this ordinance is not obligatory, but if they do veil themselves as other women do, it is more preferred, as it is explicitly mentioned in the end of the verse, because there is the possibility of deviation and offence in such people, although very rarely.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 61

لَيْسَ عَلَي الاَعْمَ حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي الاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي أَنفُسِكُمْ
أَن تَأْكُلُوا مِن بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْبُيُوتِ ءَابَآئِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْبُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالاَتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا
مَلَكْتُم مَّفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعاً أَوْأَشْتَاتاً فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُم بُيُوتاً

فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَي أَنفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

61. "There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of your friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart. But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Before Islam the blind, the lame and the sick were not allowed to eat food with healthy people. This verse permitted them to eat food in group, with healthy people or if they wanted they could eat food lonely."[12]

Anyway, since the previous verses talked about taking permission at certain times or when entering special place of parents, the concerned verse is, in fact, an exception from this ordinance, indicating that a group can enter their relatives' home and the like in certain conditions and without taking permission, and they can even eat food without having permission.

At first, the verse says:

"There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses..."

According to some narrations, before converting to Islam, the people of Medina prevented the blind, the lame and the sick to eat with them at a table. They did not eat with those people and they hated such a matter.

And, on the contrary, after Islam some people thought that this kind of people must eat lonely, not because they hated eating with them, but maybe because they thought that the blind could not see the existing good food while they could and they ate, which was against ethics, and also the lame and the sick were not as fast in eating as healthy people were so they tarried.

Anyway, they did not eat food with such people for any reason they had , so the blind, the lame and the sick withdrew themselves, because it was possible that they caused others to worry and also thought that this was a sin.

This matter was presented to the Prophet (S) and this verse was sent down, indicating that there is no blame upon the blind, nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick, nor on yourselves that you eat food with together.[13]

The writer of Jawami'-ul-Jami' says: In the advent of Islam, some of believers brought the disabled and the afflicted persons to the houses of their wives, to the houses of their own offsprings, their relatives' houses, and their friends' houses, and they fed them.

Gradually these believers thought that this job might be counted a sin for them, and so they avoided this deed. Then this verse was sent down and indicated that this deed is not as sin.

The purpose of:

"There is no blame ... nor on yourselves..."

is that there is no heaviness and sin for you and for the believers who are like you.

Some have said that the sick and the poor did not eat and associate with other people, because they thought people might not like their company.

Some others have said that when Muslims wanted to go to war, they gave the key of their houses to the disabled so that these people could eat whatever they found in those houses. But they thought that this interference might be unlawful for them, then they avoided eating food of their houses. Then Allah said that there is no blame on them and you in this eating.

Then the holy Qur'an adds implying that there is not any blame on yourselves if you eat from these houses without permission: from your houses, (the objective is the children and wives which have been rendered into 'your houses').

The verse continues:

"...or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart..."

It seems that, at the advent of Islam, some Muslims avoided eating food lonely and if they could not find anyone as company for eating food, they would remain hungry for a time. Then the Qur'an taught them that eating lonely, or with other persons, is lawful.[14]

Some commentators have also said that some Arabs believed that, as a respect, the food of their guest must be served separately and they ought not to be with him during eating food (lest the guest might become shy or feel uneasy). This verse removed these considerations and taught them that this was not an admirable custom.[15]

Another group of commentators have said that some people believed that the poor must not eat with the rich, and class division must be observed even at the time of eating food. The holy Qur'an rejected this wrong and unjust custom with the above sentence.

There is no problem if this verse refers to all of above affairs. Then the verse refers to another ethical matter, where it says:

"...But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good..."

And finally it says:

"...Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

That which houses are the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (houses), some say that it refers to 11 houses that are mentioned in above.

Some others say it refers specially to mosques. But, as it is clear, the verse is unconditional and it embraces all houses, including those 11 ones which a person enters for eating food, or other houses such as: friends' houses and relatives' houses and so on, because there is no reason for limiting the vast concept of the verse.

There are some commentaries on the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /fa sallimu 'ala 'anfusikum/ 'saluting one another':

Some say that it means 'to salute one another' as in the story of the Children of Israel the holy Qur'an says /faqtulu 'anfusakum/:

"...and slay one another (the wrong doers)..."![16]

Some commentators say that , it means to greet to wife, issues and family, because they are considered as man himself and therefore, it is stated in the verse in the form of/'anfus/.

In the verse of mutual cursing (Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 61) we see such a meaning, and it shows that sometime when a person gets relationally closed to one another the word /'anfus/ (self, man himself) will be used, as Imam Ali's closeness to the Prophet (S) is stated in this way.

Some commentators say that this verse refers to the houses in which no one lives and when one wants to enter them one salutes himself with this sentence:

"Our greeting and peace will be from our Lord."

or

"Our peace be upon us and upon Allah's righteous servants, "

We think there is not any inconsistency between these commentaries; entering every home we must salute, believers must salute believers, household must salute each other, if there is no one we must salute ourselves, because all of these, in fact, refer to saluting oneself.

On the commentary of this verse, Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The purpose of saluting household at the time of entering home is that they will naturally answer him and returns peace and salutation on himself, and this is saluting oneself."[17]

Again, Imam Baqir (as) said:

"When a person enters his home and sees some one there so he must salute him (or her), and if there is no one there, he must say, peace be upon us from Allah, as Allah has said in the holy Qur'an:

'...a greeting from Allah, blessed and good...'"[18]

Some Points

1. Do we not need to take permission for eating others' food? As the above verse has mentioned, Allah has permitted man to eat food from close relatives' houses and some friends' houses and such like (on the whole these houses are 11).

In this verse taking permission was not mentioned as its condition and certainly it does not need taking permission, because when permission is taken we can eat everyone's food and it will not be limited to these 11 houses. But, is obtaining inward consent necessary as a condition because of intimacy and close acquaintance that is between two parties?

The holy verse apparently rejects this condition, too, and considers it enough if only he or she is likely consent.

But if the status of two parties is in a way that certainly there is no assent, although the verse apparently includes all cases from this viewpoint, it is not impossible that the verse excludes such a case, especially when such people are rare and general applications do not cover these rare people.

Therefore, the above verse particularizes, in a certain field, verses and narrations that limit using others' property to having permission from their owners save in a special boundary; but we repeat that this particularization is inside a certain field, such as eating food as it is necessary and without immoderation.

What was said above is well known among our Islamic jurists and some of it is mentioned explicitly in narrations from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

We read in an authentic narration that when Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the Qur'anic phrase /'a sadiqikum/ (or of a friend), he said:

"By Allah! Its purpose is that man enters his friend's (brother's) home and eats food without having permission."[19]

There are numerous narrations mentioned that have the same concept and in them it is said that taking permission is not necessary in these cases.

On 'lack of corruption and immoderation', some narrations have also mentioned it explicitly.[20]

The only thing that remains is a narration that is about this matter. It says:

"Only special nutritional materials can be eaten, not every food."

But since this narration is objected by Islamic jurists, its document would not be valid.

Some Islamic jurists have excepted some foods which are superior and special, and possibly the landlord has kept for himself or for an honored guest or for some particular times. It is not impossible that the verse excepts this case.[21]

2. The philosophy of this Islamic ordinance:

Comparing with other severe divine ordinances that prohibit usurpation, this ordinance may raise question how Islam permits such a thing while it is very exact and fastidious in the issue of usurping others' property.

We think that this question is proper for fully material environments, such as western societies, in which parents may force their children to go out of their house when they become a little old! And when parents get old and disable, they will be dismissed!

They do not want to be kind and gratitude towards them, because in those societies all affairs are based on economical and financial relationships and usually humane sentiments do not exist.

With regard to the Islamic culture and humane profound sentiments, especially between the members of the family, relatives and particular friends, which dominate this culture, there is nothing to get surprised at.

In fact, Islam considers close relationships of relatives and friends as being superior to these issues. This, in fact, indicates the ultimate friendship and peacefulness that must dominate an Islamic society, and conceits, exclusionisms, and selfishness must be wiped out from it.

Undoubtedly, the ordinances of usurpation exist in fields other than this, but in this special field Islam gives priority tosentimental issues and humane

relationships and it is, in fact, an example for other relations of relatives and friends.

3. Who does /sadiq/ mean?

Undoubtedly friendship and friendliness has got a vast meaning, and here its purpose is certainly those special and close friends that have very close relationship with each other and whose relation necessitates going to each other's house and to eat from their food.

In such cases, as we said before, there is no need for being sure about the consent of other party, if only someone is not sure about the discontentment of that one, this will be enough.

Thus some commentators have said about this phrase that the purpose is a friend who treats sincerely with you in his friendship. Some others say that the purpose is a friend that usually has outwardly and inwardly the same relation with you. Apparently, all of these statements refer to one matter.

Meanwhile, in short, it gets clear that those who are not in this extent generous and forgiving toward their friends, are not in fact friend.

It is appropriate here to mention a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who declared comprehensive conditions of friendship and its vast concept.

He (as) said:

"Friendship is materialized only when its conditions and terms are met. Count a person who has all of these terms, or some of them, as friend. And a person who has nothing of these terms is not a friend. (Conditions and terms of friendship)

A) His outward and inward are the same for you.

B) He considers your honour, reputation, and enhancement as his and he counts your fault and gracelessness as his.

C) His rank, wealth and status do not change his position toward you.

D) He does not withhold from you what he can do.

F) A person who has got all of the above attributes does not leave you alone when you are down on your luck."[22]

4. The commentary of /mamalaktum mafatihahu/ ('(from that) whereof you hold the keys'):

In some occasions of revelation we read that at the advent of Islam, when Muslims went to war, they sometimes gave the key of their house to the disabled who could not fight and even permitted them to eat whatever food was in the house, but they avoided eating food, because they thought that this might be sin.

According to this narration, the purpose of this phrase is

'the houses that you have become the owner of whose keys'[23]

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbass who said the purpose of this sentence is man's lawyer or agent due to his domestic animals, farming, ground, and water. Such person is permitted to eat fruit from the garden and to drink milk from the animals as much as he needs. Some others also have interpreted it as storekeeper who has the right to eat some of the foodstuff.

But, with regard to other groups that are mentioned in this verse, it seems that the purpose of the phrase is those who give the key of their house to other person for the sake of close relationship and trust. Their close

relationship has caused them to be like close relatives and friends, whether he is formally lawyer or not.

If we read in some narrations that this phrase has been interpreted as a lawyer who is responsible for someone's property, it is, indeed, only expressing the extension of the meaning and it is not limited to it.

5. Salutation and greeting:

As we said before, the Arabic word /tahiyat/ is derived from the word /hayat/ (life) and it means to pray for someone's health and life, whether this prayer is in the form of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' (peace on you), or 'As-Salamu 'Alayna' (Peace on us), or 'Hayyaka Allah' (Allah salutes you).

But usually every kind of expression of kindness that is done in the beginning of a meeting is called 'Tahiyyat'.

The purpose of the sentence:

"...a greeting from Allah, blessed and good..."

is to join greeting with Allah in a way, that is, the purpose of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' will be that 'Allah salutes you' or 'I ask Allah your health.", because in the opinion of a believer every prayer that is in this form is both full of blessings (Mubarak) and pure (Tayyib).

Some Islamic traditions on salutation and its importance and obligation to answer every kind of greeting:

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"The stingiest person is the one who is reluctant to salute (and to greet), and the most generous person is one who spends his wealth and his life in the path of Allah."[24]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Salutation is recommended and answering salutation is obligatory."[25]

3. Imam Hussayn (as) said:

"Salutation has got 70 good points of which 69 belong to one who begins salutation and one belongs to one who answers it."[26]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

" (This is the sign) of modesty that you salute to whom you meat."

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who starts saluting is more prior to (have the blessing and favour of) Allah and the Prophet (S)."

6. Imam Rida (as) said:

"One who salutes the poor in a way that is different from the way he salutes the rich will meet Allah, Almighty and Glorious, on the Day of Hereafter while He is angry at him."[27]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"The stingiest individual is one who meets other Muslim and does not salute him."[28]

8. Imam Ali (as) said:

"When someone salutes you, you salute him in a better way, and when someone confers you a blessing, you confer him a better blessing. But prior is the one who has started saluting and offering blessing."[29]

Notes

1. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 83
2. Kanz-ul-'Irfan, Vol. 2, P. 225

3. If we look one more time to this Sura from the beginning, we find that the policy of prevention from indecency is behind its verses. For example, adulterer and adulteress should be punished before others' eye (verse 1), their marriage is limited (verse 3), if without four witnesses false accusation is made, 80 stripes should be beaten (verse 4), those who falsely accuse the Prophet's wife will be severely chastised (verse 11), if you heard a false accusation, you must deal with it (verse 12), if one likes spreading indecency, he will be severely chastised in couple (verse 19), do not follow the steps of satan (verse 21) those who accuse pure women falsely will be roughly punished (verse 23), the foul language is uttered by the wicked persons not you (verse 26), do not enter others' house without taking permission and if they say you must return, you must accept and go back (verses 27-28), men and women must not gaze at the one who is within forbidden degrees (verses 30-31), women must not show their ornaments and must not dance everywhere and you must try for the marriage of those who are celibate and you must not fear from poverty (verse 32), and in this verse, your children and slaves must not enter your private room at times when you are at your ease and alone with your wife. Yes, all these commands are for preventing immodesty and immature puberty and saving face and decency.

4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 295

5. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, the book of An-Nikah, Vol. 14, p. 147, Ch. 110

6. For more explanation refer to the above book (the same reference)

7. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, the book of An-Nikah, C. 110, Tradition No. 4

8. The above book

9. Jawahir, Vol. 29, p. 85, and Kanz-ul-'Irfan, Vol. 2, p. 226

10. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, the book of An-Nikah, C. 110, Tradition No. 1

11. The above book, Traditions 2 & 3

12. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary

13. Dur-ul-Manthur and Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, following the verse. A part of other commentators also have mentioned this narration in their books such as: Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Fiyd in Tafsir-us-Safi, Fakhr-i-Razi in Tafsir-ul-Kabir, and Shaykh Tusi in Tibyan.

14. Tibyan, the Commentary, following the verse

15. Ibid

16. Sura Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 54

17. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, vol. 3, p. 627

18. Ibid

19. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 16, p. 434, the book of "At'imah wa Ashribah", chapters of 'Adab-ul-Ma'idah, C. 24, Tradition No. 1

20. Ibid

21. For more explation refer to the book Jawahir-ul-Kalam, Vol. 36, p. 406

22. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 467

23. Qurtabi, the Commentary, following the verse

24. Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 12

25. Ibid

26. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 471

27. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 5, p. 442

28. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 12

29. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Translated by Fiydul-Islam, p. 1114

Section 9: Not to Act Without Apostle's Permission

Sura An-Nur - Verse 62

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَي أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّي
يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ
فَأْذَن لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

62. "Only these are the (true) believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them, and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of Revelation

In commentaries there are many things mentioned about the occasion of revelation of this verse that we present to you some of them:

1. Some say that this verse is about Hanzaleh in whose wedding night the commandment of holy war was issued. He took permission from the Prophet (S) to go home for doing the ceremony of wedding night. Because of shortage of time, he went to battle-field without taking legal bath and then he became martyr.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Angles did bathe him."

After sleeping only that night with his wife, Allah gave Hanzaleh a child whose history is lengthy.[1]

2. Some other commentators say that this verse is about the hypocrites who performed ritual prayer when they were with people and if no one saw them and they were alone, they did not perform ritual prayer.[2]

3. A group of commentators say that this verse is about some persons who were ordered by the Prophet (S) to do a job, but they did their personal jobs.

4. Some say that this verse is about those Muslims who were busy digging a moat and took permission from the Prophet (S) for visiting their family.

Being with godly leader for helping him and solving problems is the sign of faith, and leaving him alone is the sign of hypocrisy and weakness of faith. In social life, the existence of a leader and following him is necessary.

How this verse is related to other previous verses, some commentators, including the deceased Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan and the writer of Fi Zilal, have said that because the previous verses talked about the way of association with friends and relatives, the current verse talks about the way of Muslims' association with their leader and puts emphasis on observing regulations before him so that they obey him in every thing, and, even in many important affairs, without his permission they should not leave the group.

Another probability is that: in some former verses the necessity of obeying Allah and the Prophet (S) was mentioned and one of its conditions was that without his permission Muslims should not do anything, therefore, the verse under discussion talks about this matter.

Anyway, in the beginning of the verse it says:

"Only these are the (true) believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him..."

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /'amrin jami'/ (some common errand) is any important affair that necessities gathering of people and their cooperation and help, whether this issue is a crucial matter of consultation or a matter of holy war and fighting with foe, or Friday prayer in very critical conditions, and such like.

Therefore, if we see that some commentators interpreted it as consultation about holy war or Friday prayer and feast prayer, we must say that they have referred to some part of the meaning of the verse, and the previous occasions of revelation are the extensions of this general ordinance.

This is in fact a disciplinary order or command that no united group or society can ignore it, because in such conditions, the absence of one person can cost a bomb and harms the ultimate aim, especially when the chief of the group is Allah's messenger and a sagacious, influential spiritual leader.

Paying attention to this matter is important that the purpose of taking permission is not that everyone takes permission superficially and goes after his own job, but he must really take permission; that is, if the leader sees that his absence is insignificant, he permits him to go, otherwise, he must not go and sometimes he must forfeit his personal and private job to a more important aim.

Thus, following this matter, the Qur'an adds implying that those who ask you permission and their belief in Allah and His Messenger is not a mere oral one, but they obey you and Allah's commandment with their soul and spirit, then give them leave.

The verse says:

"...Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them..."

It is clear that such faithful persons have gathered for an important affair and they would not take permission for a trivial matter; and the purpose of the holy phrase /ša'nihim/, mentioned in this verse, is some important and necessary jobs.

On the other hand, the will of the Prophet (S) does not mean he issued permission without considering conditions and consequence of individuals' absence, but this means that the leader is free to prevent people from going away if he thinks that their presence is vital.

The evidence of this matter is verse 43 of Sura At-Taubah, No.9 in which the holy Prophet (S) was reprimanded for giving permission to some persons, where it says:

"May Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave before you had found out those who spoke the truth and before you had known the liars?"

This verse shows that even the Prophet (S) must be careful in giving permission to individuals and he must count the cost and he is divinely responsible.

In the end of the verse, concerning when giving them permission, it says:

"...and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Now the question is that why forgiveness. Were they still wrongdoers while they asked the permission of the Prophet (S)?

There are two ways for answering this question: first, although they were allowed to their jobs, they gave more priority to their personal and private jobs than Muslims' common job and this was not free from a kind of leaving the better[3] and, therefore, they needed forgiveness (like asking forgiveness for a disapproved action).

Moreover, this matter shows that Muslims must not ask permission as much as possible and they must be altruistic and benevolent, because after taking permission their action is abandonment of what is primary, lest trivial matters are considered as excuses of leaving important jobs and works.

The other matter is that they deserve Allah's favour, because of their politeness toward their leader, and the Prophet (S) asks Allah's forgiveness as thanking them.[4]

Anyway these two answers are not inconsistent, and both of them may be the purpose of the verse.

Of course, these two very important Islamic disciplinary commands are not limited to the Prophet (S) and his companions, but this is true about all Divine leaders including prophet, Imam and the scholars who are their successors to observe them, for the issue of Muslims' destiny and Islamic society is under consideration in it.

Even, in addition to the commandment of the glorious Qur'an, it is based on reason and logic, for no organization and group remains without observing this principle, and correct management is impossible without it.

It is really strange that some famous Sunni commentators consider this holy verse as an evidence for exertion and leaving the judgment to religious jurist's opinion, but it must be said that the exertion that is mentioned in the discussions of fundamental dogmas and jurisprudence is about religious ordinances and not about subjects.

No one can reject exertion in subjects and the opinion of every commander and every chief and manager in deciding about executive issues is respected, but this does not mean that we can use independent reasoning in general ordinances of religion and reject or enact an ordinance according to the benefit and interest.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 63

لاَ تَجْعَلُوا دُعَآءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُم بَعْضاً قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ
مِنكُمْ لِوَاذاً فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

63. "Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another. Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

Divine leadership has got realm which must be respected and has got high status. Both his name must be called politely and his orders must be obeyed with whole entity, and his call must not be equaled to that of others.

Thus, in this verse, in connection with the commandments of the Prophet (S), it says:

"Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another..."

When he calls people for an issue, which is certainly divinely and religiously important, his call must be counted as vital and important and it must be always paid attention to. His invitations and calls must not be taken simply for his command is Allah's command and his call is Allah's.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"...Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

The Arabic word /yatasallalun/ is derived from the word /tasallul/ which originally means to draw something. Those who escape stealthily and secretly are called /mutasallilun/.

The Arabic word /liwaŏan/ is derived from the word /mulawaŏah/ which means concealment, and here it means to hide oneself behind someone else or behind a wall, and so to speak, they make others asleep and then escape. This was what hypocrites used to do when the Prophet (S) called people for holy war or an important job.

The holy Qur'an implies that if this hypocritical and hideous act of theirs is kept concealed from people, it will never remain concealed from Allah, and their oppositions against the command of the Prophet (S) call for a painful punishment both in this world and the Hereafter.

Commentators are of various opinions about the purpose of the Qur'anic word /fitnah/ (grief). Some Commentators say that it means murder, some say that it means aberration, some say that it means domination of an oppressing king, and some say that it means malady of hypocrisy that appears in the heart of men.

Another possibility is that it means social disorders, riots, defeat and other miseries that entangle society because of disobeying the leader's commandment. Anyway, the concept of /fitnah/ is so extensive that it includes all these affairs and many others, as 'a painful punishment' may include worldly punishment, or Hereafter chastisement, or both of them.

It is interesting that, besides what was said, there are mentioned two other possibilities in the commentary of the above verse. First, the purpose of the first sentence of the verse

("Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another")

is that the Prophet (S) must be called politely as his status and rank deserves, not to call him as others are called, because some persons, who

were not familiar with the Islamic politeness, came to the Prophet (S) and only called him among people, or alone, repeatedly in this way; Oh Muhammad!, Oh Muhammad!...

They behaved in a way that was not suitable for a great divine leader. The purpose was to call him in such ways (politely and reasonably): Oh Messenger of Allah! Oh Prophet of Allah!

In some narration this commentary is also mentioned, but, with regard to the previous verse and the rest of this verse, sentences that are about answering the call of the Prophet (S) and not leaving him without his permission, this commentary is not consistent with the appearance of the verse, unless we say that it indicates both matters and we add the first commentary to the concept of the verse.

The third commentary that has been mentioned for this verse, seems very weak. It indicates that they must not take the invocations and curses of the Prophet (S) like those of theirs[5], for his invocations and curses are surely calculated and are a divine plan that will certainly work.

But, since this commentary is not in line with the rest of the verse and there is no narration about it from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), therefore it cannot be accepted.

It is also necessary to mention that the scholars of theology understand from the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"...therefore let those who go against His order beware lest'..."

that the commands of the Prophet (S) contains an indication to obligation but this argument has got some problems that are referred to in theology.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 64

أَلآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

64. "Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. He does know what state you are upon; and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things."

Allah is surely the owner of all things and is aware of all intentions and thoughts; therefore, belief in Allah's awareness of man's deeds and thoughts prevents man from doing wrong actions.

In this noble verse a delicate and meaningful reference is made to the issue of Origin and Resurrection that is the motivation of obeying all divine orders. It, in fact guarantees the execution of all His orders and prohibitions, including those important ones that are mentioned throughout this Sura.

The verse says:

"Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth..."

He is the Lord Whose knowledge covers the entire world and, the verse continues saying:

"...He does know what state you are upon..."

All your deeds, your approach, your intention and opinion are known to Him.

All these matters are recorded on the page of knowledge.

The verse says:

"...and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things."

It is worthy noting that emphasis is thrice put on Allah's awareness of men's deeds and this is for the sake that when man feels that someone is watching him ceaselessly, and nothing out of all his concealed and manifest things is hidden from him, this belief and opinion has got a very extraordinarily effect on him and it guarantees man to control him against these sins and deviations.

Supplication

Oh Allah! May illuminate the lamp (Misbah) of our heart with the light of knowledge and faith and strengthen the niche (Mishkat) of our entity for protecting faith in us so that we may pave the straight path of Your prophets for the sake of Your consent and to be saved from any deviation under the aegis of Your favour as the extension of 'La Sharqiyyah Wa La Qarbiyyah'!

Oh Allah! May illuminate our eyes with the light of modesty, our heart with the light of cognition, our soul with the light of piety, and all our entity with the light of guidance and do save us from wandering around, ignorance, being entangled in the claws of Satan's temptations!

Oh Allah! May fortify fundaments of government of Islamic justice for executing Your prescribed punishments and protect our society from being immodest and indecent; and verily You are All-Powerful over everything.

Notes

1. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
2. Fakhr-i-Razi
3. The commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, Ruh-ul-Bayan, and Qurtabi, following the verse under discussion
4. Fakhr-i-Razi
5. If the letter 'L' is used after the word /du'a'/, it means pray and if the word /'ala/ is used after it, it means curse, and if there is none of them after it, it can mean both meanings.

Sura Al-Furqan, Chapter 25

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

(The Distinction)

(Revealed in Mecca)

77 verses in 6 sections

The Feature of Sura Al-Furqan

This Sura contains seventy seven verses and it has been sent down in Mecca.

In the first verses of this Sura, the Qur'an has rendered it into 'Furqan' which means the separator of right from wrong; and that is why this Sura has been called 'Furqan'.

This Sura consists of some verses about the pretexts of the pagans and the answers given to them.

They are also about the lives of the former peoples, such as; the people of Rass, and the people's regret in the Hereafter, the signs of Unity, the greatness of Allah in nature, and the comparison of believers with unbelievers; but the most important part of the verses of this holy Sura is about the qualities of /'ibad-ur-rahman/ (the servants of Allah) who are the true servants of Allah, which begins from verse 63 up to the end of the Sura.

We hope, by reciting these verses and contemplating on them, which results the improvement of our behaviour and manner basing on these qualities, we can pave the way of receiving the Divine grace and favours in the world and Hereafter and entering Paradise.

The Virtue of Reciting Al-Furqan

There is a tradition quoted from 'Ishaq-ibn-'Ammar from Hadrat 'Abul-Hassan Musa-ibn-Ja'far who told him:

"Do not abandon reading Sura /tabaraka/ (Al-Furqan) since if any (believer) reads it every night, He will not punish him at all and He will not reckon him and his abode will be in the Exalted Firdaus (Paradise)."[1]

Note

1. Thawab-ul-'A'mal, by Saduq, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 4, p. 2

Section 1: The Apostle Muhammad, A Warner to the Whole World

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَي عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيراً

1. "Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a Warner to the worlds;"

The Qur'anic word /tabaraka/ may be is derived from the word /baraka/ in the sense of 'stable' and 'fixed'. Or it is possible that it is derived from /barakat/ that means 'abundant goodness'.

It implies that He Who descended the Holy Qur'an is the source of many blessings and one of His blessings, as an example, is this very descending of the Qur'an. Yes, what blessing is more important than the divine law that has led milliards of people from darkness to the light of guidance in the course of history?

The Qur'anic word /nuzul/ means to send down at once and immediately, if it is in the form of the word /'anzalna/, and it means to send down gradually if it is in the form of the word /nazzala/.

But the holy Qur'an has enjoyed both kinds of descending; one time is in the Night of determination (Honour) in which Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (S) at one instance, about which, it says:

"Surely, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."[1]

And the other time is done gradually during 23 years.

The Qur'an says:

"And (it is) Qur'an which We have divided (in sections) so that you may read it to the people at a slow pace and We have sent it down gradually in portion."[2]

And in another occurrence it says:

"...He Who sent down the Furqan (the Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant..."[3]

Anyway, the Qur'an has come from a blessed source, thus, through the first verse, it says:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a Warner to the worlds;"

It is interesting that the blessedness of Allah's Essence is introduced by descending of Furqan, that is Qur'an, the separator of truth and falsehood. This shows that the best favour and blessing is that man has got a means for cognition, knowing the difference between truth and falsehood.

Another interesting thing is that the Qur'anic word Furqan has sometimes been used in the sense of Qur'an and sometimes it means the miracles that distinguish truth from falsehood. Sometimes it is applied to Torah, but here, with regard to the context of this verse and the other verses, it means the Qur'an.

In some narrations we read that when Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the difference between the Qur'an and Furqan, he said:

"The Qur'an refers to these celestial Books wholly, and Furqan refers to the clear verses."[4]

This noble narration is not in contrast with Furqan being distinguisher of all verses of the Qur'an and its purpose is that clear verses have got a clearer and more obvious extension of Furqan and distinguishing of truth from falsehood.

The blessing of 'distinguishing and knowing' is so important that the Glorious Qur'an has been introduced as the great reward of those who are pious, where it says:

"O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah, He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong) ..."[5]

Yes, distinguishing truth from falsehood is possible only through piety, for sins, love and hatred cover truth with a thick veil and they blind man's perception and insight.

Anyway, the Glorious Qur'an is the best Furqan. It is a means for distinguishing truth from falsehood in all life system of man. It is a means for knowing truth and falsehood during personal and social life and it is a criterion for thoughts, beliefs, laws, judgments, customs, rules and ethics.

This matter is also important that the verse says:

"...Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant..."

Yes, it is the sincere servitude and submission that makes a man deserving and worthy for receiving Furqan and accepting the criteria of knowing truth and falsehood.

Finally, the last matter mentioned in this verse is that the ultimate aim of Furqan is to warn people of the world, a warning that leads man to feel responsibility for duties and obligations that are put on his shoulder.

The Qur'anic phrase /lil 'alamin/, meaning: '(the peoples) of the worlds', shows that Islam religion is universal and is not limited to a certain region, race and tribe.

But some have used it for the Prophet (S) as being the seal of the prophets, for the word /'alamin/ not only is not limited to place, but also it is not chronologically limited to a special time and it includes all the future generations, too.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 2

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَداً وَلَمْ يَكُن لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيراً

2. "He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and He has not taken any son (unto Himself), nor has He any partner in His dominion, and He created everything, then ordered them in due proportions."

Polytheists, Jews, and Christians each believed in a way that Allah has got a partner or child, and the holy Qur'an has rejected these false beliefs many times, including this verse that describes Allah, Who has descended Furqan, with four attributes one of which is, in fact, the base and the rest are its results and branches.

First it says:

"He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth..."[6]

Yes, He is the ruler of all universe, the skies and the earth, and nothing is out of His sovereignty.

With regard to the matter that the Qur'anic word /lahu/ has come before the phrase /mulk-us-samawat/, and according to Arabic literature it is a reason for limitation and exclusivity, it is understood that the real domination and authority of the skies and the earth belongs to Him (s.w.t), for His rulership is general, perpetual and real, contrary to other rulerships that are unstable, insignificant, and, in the meantime, dependent on Him.

Then polytheists' beliefs are one by one rejected:

"...and He has not taken any son (unto Himself)..."

Basically needing child, as we said before, is whether for using his or her physical power, or for having him or her at the time of loneliness. Certainly none of the above needs are part of His Pure Essence.

In this way, the Christians' belief that Jesus Christ (as) is the Son of God and the belief of the Jews that Ezra is the Son of God both are rejected. Moreover, Arab polytheist's belief in this regard is rejected.

Then the verse continues saying:

"...nor has He any partner in His dominion..."

Arab polytheists believed in partner or partners which they considered as partner of Allah. When they wanted to worship, they turned to them for the sake of intercession and they asked their help for fulfilling their needs so that they explicitly uttered ugly and polytheistic words and sentences when they wanted to say 'Labbayk' (at your service) at the time the rites of Hajj, saying:

"I accepted Your call, oh Lord, Who has no partner except the partner that belongs to You and You are the Owner of this partner and You are the Owner of what he owns."

The holy Qur'an rejects all these vain imaginations. In the last sentence, it implies that not only Allah has created all things but also He has precisely defined their proportions and administrations.

The verse says:

"...and He created everything, then ordered them in due proportions."

The dualists' belief, which implies that part of the world creatures is created by Lord and the other part is created by Devil, is also rejected.

According to dualists, creation is divided between Lord and Devil, because they believe that the world is a collection of the bad and the good, while a real monotheist believes that except goodness there is nothing in the world, and if there is any bad it is relative or negative or it is the result of our deeds.

Some Points

1. Exact measurement of creatures: Not only the calculated stable system of the world is among the strong reasons of monotheism and knowing Allah (s.w.t.), but also its exact measurement is another clear reason.

We cannot consider measurement of various creatures of this world and its calculated quality and quantity as effect of accident. It is not in line with probability theory.

Scientists have studied about it, and uncovered some mysteries which cause the astonishment of man so much that he unintentionally begins to praise Allah's magnificence and might. Here we refer to some of them:

Scientists say that if the outer cover of the earth were 10 feet thicker, there would be no oxygen, a vital material of life.

Or if the depth of seas were several feet more than what is today, all oxygen and carbon of the earth would be absorbed and it would be impossible to have a vegetable or animal life on the earth, and when most probably the crust of the earth and the water of the seas would absorb the whole existing oxygen, and for his growth and man would have to wait for the growth of plants so that through them he could use needed oxygen.

According to studious researches, it gets clear that it may be possible to gain needed oxygen for human from various sources, but the important matter is that this amount of oxygen is as much as the amount that has scattered in the air for man's use.

If the earth atmosphere were a little thinner than what is today, heavenly bodies and shooting stars, that cannot reach the earth, would hit the earth million times a day.

These heavenly bodies move 6 to 40 miles per second and if they hit any place, that place will be burnt and destroyed. If their speed were less than what it is, and for example equal to the speed of a bullet, all of them would come to the earth and it is clear that they would destroy everything.

If man himself were placed on the way of one of the smallest heavenly bodies, the intensity of the heat of them, that move 90 times faster than a bullet, would rend and destroy him.

The density of the earth atmosphere is to the extent that it allows cosmic rays pass as much as the growth of plants needs. And all harmful microbes are destroyed in the atmosphere and beneficial vitamins are created by them.

While there are various vapors that have come out of the depth of the earth during many centuries, nevertheless, the air of the earth does not get polluted and it is always well balanced for the continuity of man's life.

The great machine that creates and keeps such strange balance is the very seas and oceans from which vital and nutritional materials, rain, moderation of air and plants and finally man himself originate. Every person who is able to understand must bow down before the sea and thank it for its favours.

2. Strange proportion and very exact balance that is between oxygen and carbonic acid gas, that is for creating animal and vegetable life, has attracted the attention of all thinkers and scientists and make them think about it.

The importance of carbonic acid gas is still uncovered to many people. It must also be mentioned that carbonic acid gas is the gas that is used for making fizzy drinks.

Carbonic acid gas is a heavy and dense gas that is fortunately near the surface of the earth. It separates from oxygen uneasily and with problem.

When a piece of wood is set on fire, wood, which includes oxygen, hydrogen and carbon, is analysed chemically and carbon will be mixed with oxygen very quickly and carbon acid gas is so created. Its hydrogen is quickly mixed with oxygen and water vapour will be created. Smoke is pure carbon which is not mixed up.

When man breathes, he inhales some oxygen. Blood takes it to all places of body. Oxygen burns food in various cells slowly and with a weak heat. Its vapour and carbonic acid gas goes out. Carbonic acid gas that is created by burning of food in cells returns to lung and with later breathings it goes out of the body. Thus all living creatures inhale oxygen and exhale carbonic acid gas.

3. How wonderful the way of controlling and balancing in this world is. Because of this natural balance, animals cannot dominate the world, no matter how much they are huge or brutal. Only man can change this natural balance and transfer animals and plants from one place to other places. By the way, he pays the fine of his impudence, because blights and pests cause him irretrievable harms.

The following story is a good example that shows how man must observe this balance for the sake of his life:

Some years ago in Australia a famous plant named Cactus was planted near farms fences and because no pest could harm it at that time it started to grow a lot strangely. Very soon it covered an area that was as big as England and people had to escape from villages and hamlets. It destroyed all their farms and made farming impossible.

The local inhabitants used whatever they had, but nothing they could do. Australia confronted the danger and threat of stubborn Cactus army.

Scientists and researchers started to find a solution for this dangerous problem. At last, they found out that there is an insect that only feeds on stem, leaf and root of Cactus and except this food it eats nothing. And it multiplies easily and no enemy it has in Australia.

In this case animal defeated plant and there is no danger of Cactus today. And when Cactus was destroyed, that insect also disappeared. Only some of them remained so that they control the growth of Cactus. Creation has set this balance in the nature and it is very beneficial, too.

What has happened that malaria mosquito has not spread all over the world and has not destroyed man generation, while common mosquitoes can also be found even in polar areas?

Or what happened when the mosquito of yellow fever came near New York but did not kill all people of the world? Or what has happened that tsetse fly is created in a way that can live only in equatorial areas and has not vanished the human generation throughout the world? (All of these have been prevented by a very calculated system.)

It is only enough to remember the fact that with what pests and maladies we have fought during many centuries. How wonderfully we were formerly protected against these maladies while we did not know any health matters![7]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 3

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لاَ يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلاَ يَمْلِكُونَ لاَنفُسِهِمْ ضَرّاً وَلاَ نَفْعاً وَلاَ يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتاً وَلاَحَيَاةً وَلاَ نُشُوراً

3. "Yet they have taken gods, besides Him, gods that do not create anything while they are themselves created and they do not own for

themselves any hurt or profit, nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection."

The reason of man's servitude is Allah's power in solving problems and knotty affairs, while idols cannot do such thing.

('They do not own')

This holy verse continues the previous discussion about struggling with polytheism, idol worshipping, and baseless claims of idol worshippers about their idols and then-accusations of the holy Qur'an and the Prophet (S) mentioned in former verses.

First, polytheists are in fact called to trial and, to pick then-conscience with a clear, simple, decisive logic, it says:

"Yet they have taken gods, besides Him, gods that do not create anything while they are themselves created..."

The real deity is the Creator of the universe, but they did not have such a claim about idols and they knew them as creatures of Allah.

But what was their motivation for worshipping idols? Idols that possess not hurt nor profit for themselves, and possess not death nor life, nor power to raise the dead (let alone others).

The verse in this regard says:

"...and they do not own for themselves any hurt or profit, nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection."

The principles that are important for man are as follows: profit, loss, death, life, and resurrection.

Does one who is the owner of these affairs deserve worshipping? But idols cannot do such things for themselves, let alone they want to protect and support their worshippers?

What a shameful logic is that man follows a creature and worships it, while it cannot even control itself let alone others. Neither does this idol solve a problem in this world nor can it do anything in the other world.

This sentence shows that this group of polytheists, who have been addressed in this verse, had accepted resurrection in a way (although not physical one but spiritual resurrection). Or the Qur'an was certain about their lack of belief in the resurrection and talked to them in a certain and decisive way.

This is usual that sometimes man faces one person who denies truth, but he expresses his own ideas and beliefs resolutely without paying attention to that person's thoughts. Especially when there is an implied reason for resurrection in the verse, because when a creator creates a creature and is the owner of creature's loss and benefit, he must have an aim for his creation.

And this aim concerning man is impossible without accepting the issue of resurrection, for if everything ended with the death of man, life would be nonsense and it would be a reason indicating that that creator was not wise.

Meanwhile if we see that the issue of loss has come before the issue of benefit, it is because man first fears loss and the sentence 'protection from loss is prior to the achievement of benefit' has turned into an intellectual rule.

And if 'loss', 'benefit', 'death', 'life', 'resurrection' have been mentioned indeterminately, it is for the fact that these idols are not

controlling benefit, loss, death, life, and resurrection even in one case, let alone all people.

And if the Qur'anic phrase /layamlikuna/ (they possess not) and /layaxluquna/ (they create naught) are mentioned in the masculine, plural, wise form (while stone and wooden idols have got no wisdom and sense), it is for the matter that these phrases are not only about wooden and stone idols, but also there was a group that worshipped Christ or angels and because sage and non-sage are all included in the meaning of the verse, all of them are mentioned as wise.

Or according to the opinion of the opposite party, it is said for showing their weakness and inability. It implies that they believed that these idols had intellect and sense, but these idols cannot protect themselves from loss and can not achieve any benefit!

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 4

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ ءَاخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جآءُوا ظُلْماً وَزُوراً

4. "And those who disbelieve say: 'This (Qur'an) is nothing but a lie which he (our Apostle) has forged, and other people have helped him at it; so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood."

The Arabic word /ifk/ means lie, and the word /zur/ means a false word[8]. In all of the Holy Qur'an only here the words /zulm/ (iniquity) and /zur/ have come together, because pagans prevented others from being guided by means of false accusation of the Prophet (S) and belying the heavenly Book.

So this noble verse is about pagans' analysis or, in better words, their pretext-seeking against the call of the Prophet (S) when it says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'This (Qur'an) is nothing but a lie which he (our Apostle) has forged, and other people have helped him at it..."

In fact, in order not to shoulder the Truth - as those who in the course of history decided to be against divine leaders - they first accused him to calumny and falsehood, and especially, in order to scorn the Holy Qur'an, they used the word /haŏa/ (this).

Then, in order to prove that he could not say such words by himself, because saying such meaningful words needs at least a lot of knowledge and they did not want to accept it, and in order to say that this was a calculated program, they said that he was not alone and others have helped him at it and that there was a conspiracy and they must stand against him.

Some of commentators have said that the purpose of/qaum un 'axarun/ (other people) is a group of Jews. And some others have said that the objective is three persons of the People of The Book, that is 'Adas', 'Yasar', and 'Hibr' (or 'Jibr').

Anyway, since such matters did not exist among the polytheists of Mecca and some part of it, such as: the story of the former prophets, was among Jews and the People of The Book, they had to drag the People of the Book into this accusation so that the people became less astonished and bewildered by hearing these verses.

But, in their answer here, the Holy Qur'an says only one sentence:

"...so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood."[9]

It is /zulm/ (a wrong action) because they, as well as some of the People of the Book, accused a trustworthy, veracious and pure man such as the Prophet (S) of giving a false impression of Allah and they did wrong action towards themselves and people.

It is false and invalid, because their words were completely baseless and the Prophet (S) had repeatedly called them to present some verses and Suras like those of the Holy Qur'an and, confronting this challenge of the Qur'an, they were somehow unable to achieve it.

This shows that these verses are not the product of man's mind, because if it were so, they could also present such verses with the help of the Jews and the People of the Book. Therefore, their inability to do it is the reason of their lie and their lie is the reason of their iniquity. So the short sentence saying:

"...so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood."

is a clear and expressive answer to their groundless claims.

The Arabic word /zur/ is in fact derived from a word that means the upper part of the chest. Then it was applied to whatever that inclines from the middle and, because lie deviates from truth and inclines toward falsehood, it is called /zur/.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 5-6

وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَ ُمْلَي عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً

قُلْ أَنزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُوراً رَّحِيماً

5. "And they say: '(Qur'an is) the stories of the ancients he has got them written, so they are dictated before him morning and evening'."

6. "Say: 'He sent it down Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth. Verily He is ever Forgiving, Merciful'."

Pagans both found fault with the content of the Holy Qur'an, that these are old fables, and expressed doubt about the holy Prophet (S), that he had made copy and they considered some unreal companions for him:

("...they are dictated to him...").

The purpose of 'old fables' is whether they believed that some persons wrote for him, or they said the Prophet (S) was literate and negated his being uneducated.

In these holy verses, one of their derivative analyses and meaningless pretexts about the holy Qur'an is talked about.

It says:

"And they say: '(Qur'an is) the stories of the ancients he has got them written..."

This means that he, in fact, has nothing by himself. He has no knowledge and innovation, let alone revelation and prophethood. Some persons have helped him to gather some old legends and named it heavenly book.

In order to achieve this aim, he is helped by others every day. The verse continues saying:

"...so they are dictated before him morning and evening'."

He is helped in the morning and evening when there are few people out.

This is, in fact, explanation of the false accusations that were mentioned in the previous verse.

By these short sentences, they intend to impose some weak points on the holy Qur'an: First, the holy Qur'an has got no new matter or subject and it is some old legends. Second, the Prophet (S) can not continue his job without others' help and every morning and evening matters must be read out to him and he writes them. Third, he can write and read and if he says that he is not educated, he is lying.

As a matter of fact, they intended to break up people who were with the Prophet (S), but all wise persons who had lived for a time in that society knew well that the Prophet (S) had not been educated by anybody and had nothing to do with the Jews and the People of the Book.

If he were inspired by others every day and night, how would it be possible to remain hidden from others? Moreover the verses of Qur'an were revealed to him in journey, among people, in solitude and in all conditions.

Additionally, the holy Qur'an was a collection of doctrinal teachings, religious ordinances, laws and some part of the story of the prophets. When all of the holy Qur'an was sent down, it was not like what was in Old and New Testaments as well as Arab superstitious legends.

If we compare both of them, we see what the truth is, because those scriptures were full of superstitions while these verses were free from any superstition.

Therefore, answering these groundless accusations, the last concerned verse says:

"Say: 'He sent it down Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth..."

It refers to this matter that the content of this Book and its various mysteries that are about sciences, the history of former nations, laws, man's needs, even some secrets of nature and news about the future, all indicate that it is not the product of man's mind and it is not compiled by the help of such and such persons.

It is in fact generated by One Who knows mysteries of heavens and the earth and nothing is out of His knowledge realm.

Nevertheless, the path of return is open to those who are liar and evil thinkers, and, in the end of the verse, it says:

"...Verily He is ever Forgiving, Merciful'."

In agreement with His Mercy, He has sent prophets and heavenly Books, and in agreement with His forgiveness, He pardons our countless sins in the light of faith and penance.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 7-8

وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلاَ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيراً

أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ رَجُلاً مَّسْحُوراً

7. "And they say: 'What sort of a Messenger is this that he eats food and he walks about in the markets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?"

8. "Or why has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he not a garden to eat of it?' And the unjust say: 'You follow none other than a man bewitched'."

Occasion of Revelation

Imam Hassan 'Askari (as) said that he asked his father, the tenth Imam, whether the Prophet (S) argued against seeking pretext and reproaches of the Jews and pagans. His father said:

"Yes, it happened many times, including the day when the Prophet (S) was sitting beside Allah's house and 'Abdullah Ibn Abi-Omayah Makhzumi came to him and, standing in front of him, said:

'Oh! Muhammad, you have made a great claim and are stating terrible words! You think that you are the messenger of the Lord of the peoples, but it is not appropriate for the Creator of all creatures and people to have a messenger like you, a human like us. You eat like us and walk in markets as we do!'

The Prophet (S) said:

'Oh Allah! You hear all words and speeches and know all things. You know what Your servants say. (You Yourself answer them.)'

At this time the above verses were revealed and their seeking pretext were answered."[10]

Since the former holy verses mentioned pagans' objections about the Glorious Qur'an and they were answered in them, the concerned verses bring about another part that is about the mission of the Prophet (S) and it is also answered.

The verse says:

"And they say: 'What sort of a Messenger is this that he eats food and he walks about in the markets?..."

They wanted to say that what a prophet he is. He needs food as other people need. He walks in markets for business and buying what he needs. This is neither the tradition of the messengers nor the custom of the kings, while he wants both to declare Divine invitation and to rule us!

They fundamentally believed that the outstanding persons must not go by themselves to market for buying what they need, but they must send servants and agents for this matter.

Then they said:

"...Why has not an angel been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?"

Very well! Suppose that a man can be a messenger of Allah, but why is he poor and destitute?

The verse says:

"Or why has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he not a garden to eat of it?'..."

They did not get satisfied only with these and finally they accused him of insanity.

In the end of the verse we read:

"...And the unjust say: 'You follow none other than a man bewitched'."

They believed that sorcerers can influence the intellect and intelligence of individuals and own the faculty of reasoning!

It is understood from the above holy verses that they found some illusive faults with the Prophet (S) and in every phase they retreated from their views.

They first believed that the messenger must be an angel. That he eats food and walks in markets shows that he is not an angel.

Then they said that if he is not an angel, an angel must be sent by Allah for helping him.

Again they took retrograde step and said that supposing Allah's prophet is a man, a treasure must be sent down to him from the heaven, so that it will be a reason for the matter that he is supported by Allah!

In the last phase they said supposing he has none of these, but he must be at least not a poor man. Like a wealthy farmer he must have a garden for marinating him. But he has none of these and still he is saying that he is a prophet.

As a conclusion, they said that his great claim in such conditions is the sign of insanity!!

Notes

1. Sura Al-Qadr, No. 97, verse 1
2. Sura Al-'Issra', No. 17, verse 106
3. The verse under discussion
4. Burhan, Vol. 3, p. 155
5. Sura Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 29
6. According to Raqib in Mufradat, the word /mulk/ means: 'To take something in one's authority and having dominion on it.'
7. Extracted from the book 'The Mystery of Man Creation', pages 33-449
8. Lisan-ul-'Arab
9. Thr word /ja'u/ means to come, but here it means to bring.
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 4, p. 6

Section 2: The Bounties Awaiting the Apostle

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 9-10

انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلاً

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِن شَآءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْراً مِّن ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَل لَّكَ قُصُوراً

9. "Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth)."

10. "Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces."

One will get misled, if logic, miracle, and accomplishments of the Prophet (S) are not paid attention to and wealth, posts, and seeking pretext get to be the aim.

('...but they have gone astray, ...')

Therefore in a short sentence, the Qur'an in this noble verse says:

"Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth)."

This sentence clearly illustrates this fact that against the call of Allah and the Qur'an, whose content is an expressive proof of its relationship with Allali, they fell back on some illusive words and they wanted to cover the face of the truth by these groundless words.

This is just like a person who resorts to some seeking pretext, being clearly baseless, in order to stand against our logical arguments and we do not answer what he has said separately, but we simply say you may see with what illusive words does he want to stand against the logical reason?

And verily all of their words in all of their parts were so, because:

First: Why must a prophet be one of angels? But intellect and knowledge say that a human must lead human beings, so that he knows and perceives all their pains, needs, problems, and life issues, so, he will be a paragon in all aspects and people can be inspired in all programs.

If an angel were sent down, certainly this aim would not be fulfilled and people would say:

"If he speaks about piety and paying no attention to the world, it is because he is an angel and needs nothing. If he speaks about modesty and calls to chastity, it is because he knows nothing of sexual desire."

And there are also many other matters.

Second: Is it necessary to send an angel to be the company of man for the sake of confirming him? Are not miracles, specially a great miracle such as the holy Qur'an, enough for understanding this reality?

Third: Eating food like other men and going to markets cause him to associate with people more and to know their life more deeply.It helps him to carry out his mission better. There is not only loss or harm in this, but it is a kind of help for him.

Forth: Eminence and personality of the Prophet (S) does not depend on treasure, wealth, and huge gardens full of fruits. This is the pagan's

deviating conception of personality and even nearness to Allah as being depended on wealth and money, while prophets have come to say that the value of man depends on his knowledge, faith and piety.

Fifth: According to what criterion did they call him insane and bewitched? According to history, his great revolution and his foundation of Islamic civilization were extraordinary, how can he be accused and given such ridiculous labels? Unless we say that breaking idols and not blindly following the ancestors is a reason of insanity!

According to what was said, it gets clear that the word /'amal/ (similitudes), here, especially with regard of the context, means groundless and meaningless words. Using this word is perhaps because of the matter that they uttered their words in the form of truth, similitude and like a logical reason, while it was not really so.

Another matter that we must pay attention to is that the foes of the Prophet (S) used to accuse him of being sorcerer and sometimes being bewitched, though some of the commentators say that 'being bewitched' perhaps means 'being sorcerer' (because in Arabic sometime past participle is used as subject), but apparently these two words are different.

If they called him sorcerer, it was because his words extraordinarily influenced hearts and they did not want to accept this fact and, therefore, they resorted to the accusation of being sorcerer.

Being bewitched means to be mentally and intellectually influenced by sorcerers and to have distorted senses. This accusation originated from this fact that he broke the tradition and swam against the stream ideologically and was against personal interests, superstitious habits and customs. But all these accusations are answered by the above words.

A question now arises that why it is said:

"...but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth)."

Its answer is that man can find the path of the truth if he wills and wants the truth. But the one, who has already made decision by wrong and deviating prejudgments that originate from ignorance and stubbornness, not only does not find the truth but also stands against it.

The next verse, similar to the previous one, addresses the Prophet (S) and says, with the intention of scorning their words and saying that they are unanswerable.

It says:

"Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces."

Except Allah, who is it that has given gardens and palaces to them? Basically, except Allah, who is it that has created all of these beauties and blessings? Cannot such a powerful and mighty Allah provide better than these for you?

But He does not want people to think that the personality of the Prophet (S) depends on wealth, money, garden, and palace. He wants the life of the Prophet (S) to be like the life of common people, the oppressed and the poor, so that he will be a sanctuary for all of them.

But, why it is said that gardens and palaces are better than what they wanted, for treasure by itself does not resolve all the problems and difficulties, but it must be changed to gardens and palaces by a lot of troubles.

Moreover, they said that the Prophet (S) must have a garden to sustain him, but the holy Qur'an says:

"...He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.",

(but the aim of the Prophet's mission is something else).

In a sermon called Qasi'ah, No. 192, by Imam Ali (as), we find this matter expressed very explicitly:

"When Musa, the son of 'Imran, went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said:

'Do you not wonder at these two men who guaranteed me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangels on their wrists?'

He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and belittled wool and wearing woolen garment.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His prophets, if He had wished to open for them the doors of treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He would have done so.

If he had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words would not have retained their meanings.

But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determinations and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness, and with the want that pains the ordinary eyes and ears.

If the prophets had possessed such authority that could not be assaulted, or honour that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity.

They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different.

Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger.[1]

Some say that the purpose of palace and garden is that of the other world, but this commentary is not in line with the appearance of the verse.

However, the Arabic word/tabaraka/ is derived either from /baraka/ with the sense of ‘fix’ and ‘ever lasting’, or from /barakat/ which means ‘abundant goodness’.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 11

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَن كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيراً

11. “But they deny the Hour (of Resurrection), and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour.”

The Arabic word /sa‘ir/ (blaze) means a burning and ablaze fire. The source of pagans’ pretexts is often disbelief in the Hereafter.

To continue the Qur’anic discussion of pagans’ deviation from monotheism and prophethood which was in the previous verses, this noble verse talks about another part of their deviations from the view of the issue of the resurrection.

In fact, with the statement of this part, it gets clear that they were utterly shaky and deviated in all principles of religion, both monotheism, and prophethood, and resurrection. Two of them have been mentioned in the former verses and now we turn to the third one.

The verse says:

“But they deny the Hour (of Resurrection)...”

By mentioning the Arabic word /bal/, the verse implies that what they say about monotheism and prophethood is just some pretexts that originate from denial of resurrection, because if one believes in such a great court and the divine reward and punishment, one neither boldly ridicules the truths nor rejects a prophet’s call for illusive reasons, nor bows down before idols that he has made by himself.

But, here, the holy Qur’an has not given them any argumentative answers, for they were not men of reason and argument, but the Qur’an warns and threatens them severely and harshly and illustrates their gloomy and painful future for them. Sometimes this logic is more effective for such people.

It continues saying:

“...and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour.”

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 12-13

إِذَا رَأَتْهُم مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغَيُّظاً وَزَفِيراً

وَإِذَآ أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَاناً ضَيِّقاً مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُوراً

12. “When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring.”

13. “And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction.’”

The Qur’anic word /taqayyuz/ means declaring one’s anger and intensity of wrath which is sometimes along with sound and voice. The Arabic word /zafir/ means the sound of breathing when the chest is constricted because of abundance of sorrow. The Qur’anic word /muqarranin/ means to fasten with fetter and chain. The word /ubur/ means to express woe and regret.

In this verse, a strange description is provided for this blazing fire. It says:

"When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring."

In this statement there are several clear meanings which show how severe the divine punishment is:

1. The verse does not say that they see the Fire from afar, but it says that Fire sees them, as if it has eye and ear and looks forward them and expects these wrongdoers!

2. It does not need that they come near it in order to be fermented, but it cries out of anger from a long distance. Some narrations say that the distance is as long as one year of walking.

3. The word /taqayyuz/ is used to describe this Fire, which is a status in which man expresses his fury by means of cry and clamour.

4. The word /zafir/ is used to describe the Fire. It is like the situation in which man inhales and the ribs come up, and this is usually when man is very angry.

All of the above explanations show that the blazing Fire is like a brutal beast that awaits its prey. This waiting drags this group, (we take refuge in Allah!)

That is the condition of Fire when it sees them from a long distance, but the next verse describes their condition when they are in the Hell Fire, by saying:

"And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction."

This is not because the Hell is small, since, according to the 30th verse of Sura Qaf, No. 50, the Qur'an says:

"On the Day (when) We say unto Hell: 'Are you filled up?' And it says: 'Are there any more?"

Thus, Hell is a very vast place but they are so confined in it that, in some narration we read that their entrance into the Hell is like entering a nail into a wall.[2]

Meanwhile, the Qur'anic word /ubur/ originally means 'decay and destruction'. When a man fears from something terrible or horrific, he cries: /wa abura/ which means: 'woe to me.'

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 14

لاَ تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُوراً وَاحِداً وَادْعُوا ثُبُوراً كَثِيراً

14. " (It will be said to them:) 'Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many destructions!"

This verse implies that they must not say /wa abura/ for one time, but they must say it many times. The verse says:

" (It will be said to them:) 'Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many destructions!"

Anyway, their cry and moaning does not have any result and there will be no death or destruction, but they must remain alive and experience painful chastisements.

This verse is in fact like the 16th verse of Sura At-Tur, No. 52, which says:

"Endure the heat thereof, and whether you are patient of it or impatient of it is all one for you. You are only being paid for what you used to do."

That who tells such words to pagans, the context shows that angels of chastisement do this, because they deal with pagans.

But why they are told that they must not say /wa ubura/ for one time, but they must say it many times, perhaps it is because their painful chastisement is not temporal that it ends with saying this phrase one time, but they must always repeat it during this period.

Moreover the divine punishment that is for these criminals is so miscellaneous that they face their death by experiencing each of these punishments and they cry /wa ubura/ each time. It seems that they die and become alive successively.

The Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

"The people of the Hell are under pressure like nail in wall."[3]

Its reason is that: ignoring Allah leads to desperate straits in this world and the other world. Concerning what they have in this world:

"...He makes his breast narrow and straitened..."[4]**,**

and:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance, verily for him is a life straitened..."[5]**,**

and in the other world:

"And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire...".[6]

On the contrary, paying attention to Allah and having faith in Him, is the cause of calmness and peacefulness both in this world:

"We would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth..."[7]

and the other world:

"...when they reach it, the gates thereof are opened...".[8]

In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"Is one who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who incurs wrath from Allah, and whose abode will be Hell? And an evil destination it is! "[9]

There has been narrated from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), who said:

"The Hell has got 7 gates. From one of them our enemies and those who fight and belittle us enter. Certainly this gate is the greatest and the most blazing one."[10]

The Prophet (S) says:

"The fire of this world is one part of the seventy parts of the Hell Fire. Each of those parts has got its own heat."[11]

Imam Ali (as) once says:

"One who enters the Hell is miserable for ever."[12]

The Prophet (S) says:

"The least punishment of the people of the Hell is wearing a blazing pair of shoes on the Day of Hereafter that are so hot that their brain begins to boil from them."[13]

Imam Ali (as) says:

"Fear the Fire the heat of which is too much, and its bottom is very deep and its ornament is iron, and its beverage is boiling fetid water (blood mixed with filth)."[14]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 15-16

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَآءً وَمَصِيراً

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَآءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَانَ عَلَي رَبِّكَ وَعْداً مَسْؤُولاً

15. "Say: 'Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That shall be a reward and a resort for them'."

16. "For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

The promise of Paradise is to be fulfilled certainly. The demands of the people of the Paradise are logical and wise as the demands of Allah are so.

It means that as:

"...Allah does what He will"[15]**,**

and He does it wisely, the believers have also got wise demands:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire...".

It will not be in a way that they want the people of the Hell to be freed or they want to have the rank of prophets, because such demands are not wise. Therefore, in this verse, the Prophet is addressed to call people to judge.

It says:

"Say: 'Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That shall be a reward and a resort for them'."

This is the promised Paradise where they will abide for ever, (khalidin).

And the next verse says:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

This question and asking for judgment is for the sake that about which no one has doubt. It is not for the matter that those painful and terrible punishments can be compared with those matchless blessings and favours, but these kinds of questions are for striking sleeping consciences and wakening people, so that they may be faced with a dilemma.

If they say that these blessings are better and superior (and certainly they must say so), they have condemned themselves since their wouldly deeds are against it. If they say that those punishments are better than these blessings, they have proved that they are insane.

This is like giving warning to a truant young man who has left school or university saying that those who escape from intellect and knowledge will go finally to jail, and asking them:

"Which is better, going to jail or gaining the high ranks?"

Some Points

1. In the above verses, one time it is said that Paradise is perpetual (khuld) as a quality for it, and one time it is said that the people of the Paradise are perpetual (khalidun). This is for stating this fact that both Paradise and its inhabitants are everlasting.

2. The sentence:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire..."

is the opposite point of what is said about the people of the Hell in the 54th verse of Sura Saba, which says:

"And a gulf is set between them and that which they desire..."

3. Using the Qur'anic word /masir/ (the place of return) occurring after the word /jaza/ (reward), concerning the Paradise is an emphasis on what is found in the concept of /jaza'/ (reward) and all of them are the opposite point of the people of the Hell that have been mentioned in the verses before it:

"...they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire..."

4. The sentence:

"...It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

refers to this matter that the believers have prayed Allah for Paradise with all its blessings.

They are seekers and Allah is sought of to provide, as we read in verse 194 of Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3:

"Our Lord! And give us what You have promised us through Your messengers..."

All believers ask Allah such a thing mutely, for everyone who obeys His commandment has such a mute appeal.

The angels also ask Allah such a thing for the believers; as we read in Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40, that they say about the believers:

"Our Lord! And make them enter the Gardens of Eden which you have promised them..."[16]

There is another commentary here indicating that the Qur'anic word /mas'ulan/ is an emphasis on certainty of Allah's promise. It implies that this promise is so bound to be fulfilled that believers can demand it from Allah. It is like the time that we promise a person and we also know his right to have a claim.

But there is no problem that the word /mas'ulan/ includes all these meanings.

5. With the regard to the Qur'anic sentence

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire..."

some persons ask this question that if we consider the extensive meaning of this sentence, its result is that if the people of the Paradise ask the rank of prophets and Allah's friends, they will be given what they have asked; or if they want that their sinful friends and relatives to be freed from the Hell (which they deserve), they will be freed. And there are things the like of them.

Regarding a matter its answer will be made clear there will be no curtains before the eyes of the Paradise inhabitants, they (curtains) will be put away.

They perceive the truths very well and see all proportions well. Such a thought that is to ask Allah such demands does never come to their mind. This is just like the time that in this life we ask a school boy to become a professor of university, or a criminal thief to become judge of court.

Do such thoughts come to the mind of a wise person here? In the Paradise it is so. Moreover, all their demands are overshadowed by Allah's will, and they desire what Allah desires.

Some Traditions About the Paradise

1. The Prophet (S) says:

"Everyone who dies while he believes that Allah is true, he enters Paradise."[17]

2. The Prophet (S) says;

"In the Paradise there are blessings (and favours) which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind has ever imagined."[18]

3. Imam Ali (as) says:

"Your price and value is nothing but the Paradise. Do not sell yourself but for the Paradise."[19]

4. The Prophet (S) says:

"Only Muslim will enter the Paradise."[20]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 17-18

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ أَأَنتُمْ أَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلاَءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنبَغِي لَنَا أَن نَّتَّخِذَ مِن دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَلَـكِن مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وءَابَآءَهُمْ حَتَّى نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمَاً بُوراً

17. "And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: 'Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?'"

18. "They will say: 'Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you; but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition'."

Pagans and their deities will be put to question in the resurrection.

Since the previous verses have talked about the fate of believers and pagans in the Hereafter and their reward and punishment, the concerned verses continue this subject in another way. The question that Allah asks pagans' deities in the resurrection and their answer are mentioned as warning.

It says:

"And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: 'Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?'"

But their answer will be as follows:

"They will say: 'Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you..."

Not only did we not call them to come to us, but also we confessed to Your guardianship and servitude and we did not take other man You as our deity for ourselves and for others.

The reason of their deviation was that, instead of thanking Allah for His blessings, they turned to low desires and their gratifications till they forgot the warning and, consequently they became lost folk.

The verse continues saying:

"...but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition'."

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 19

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوكُم بِمَا تَقُولُونَ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفاً وَلاَ نَصْراً وَمَن يَظْلِم مِنكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَاباً كَبِيراً

19. " (Allah will say to the idolaters:) 'So they shall indeed belie you of what you say, so you shall not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment."

A polytheist will be supported by no one in the Resurrection and cannot do any thing to rescue him.

Thus, in this noble verse Allah addresses polytheists:

" (Allah will say): to the idolaters:) 'So they shall indeed belie you of what you say..."

You said that they deviated you from the right path, but they count what you say as a lie.

And since the fact is such and they themselves committed their own deviation, therefore the verse says:

"...so you shall not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment."

Undoubtedly the Qur'anic word /zulm/ (oppression) has got an extensive concept. Though the subject of the verse is polytheism, which is one of the clear extensions of oppression, yet it does not abolish the generality of the concept of the verse.

Meanwhile the purpose of 'deities' is whether humane deities such as Christ, or devil deities such as jinn or angels, each of which had been selected by a group of pagans for worshipping. Since they have common sense and intellect, they can be questioned.

So, in order to complete the argument and to prove the falsehood of the statement of the polytheists, saying that these invited us to worship them, they are asked whether this speech is right, and they explicitly reject the polytheists' statement.

Some Points

1. The Motivation of Deviation from Monotheism:

Deities counted the main factor of this group of pagans' deviation as luxurious life.

They say:

".. but you did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition",

(instead of knowing blessings and thanking You for them, they have forgotten You).

Verily comfortable life is, on one hand, causing those who can not take welfare, and also their faith is weak, to feel conceited, for when they are given a lot of blessings, they get too big for their boots and forget Allah.

Even sometimes, like Pharaoh, they cry:

"I am the Lord".

On the other hand, such persons want to be as much as possible free and to face no boundary in gratification of their desires. They want that

limitations and restrictions such as lawfulness, unlawfulness, legality and illegality do not prevent them from achieving their aims, thus they do not want to obey any rule or law and to accept the Resurrection and Reckoning Day.

Also now there are not many adherents of Allah's religion and prophets' teachings among rich people, this is the poor people who are willful supporters and faithful friends of religion.

Of course, there are some exceptions in each group, but the majority members of each group are as we said.

Meanwhile the above verse does not only put emphasis on their own prosperity, but also it emphasizes their ancestors' prosperity, for when a child grows up in affluence and wealth, it is natural that he mostly discriminates against others and he will not easily get rid of his interestand comfortable life.

While sticking with Allah's commands and religion programs need sacrificing, sometimes migration, even holy war and martyrdom and sometimes accepting kinds of deprivations and refusing to surrender themselves to the enemy, which goes with temperament of rich people less, unless their personality is superior to their material life.

If one day everything is good, they thank Allah, and if it is not good, they do not get upset and unsteady. In other words, they dominate their material life and they are not its servant and slave.

2. The Qur'anic word /bur/ is derived from the word /bawar/, which originally means severity of stagnation of something. Since severity of stagnation causes corruption, this word is also applied to mean corruption and then to mean destruction. Since a land, which has no tree, flower, and plant, is in fact corrupted and dead, it is called /ba'ir/ (fallow).

Therefore, the sentence:

"...and they were a people in perdition"

refers to this matter that, because of luxurious life and forgetting Allah and Resurrection, this group has been corrupted and destructed. And, like a dried and fallow desert, the land of their heart gets empty of flowers of humane values and fruits of virtues and spiritual life.

Studying nations that are blessed with this world's goods and know nothing of Allah and other nations makes the vast meaning of this verse more clear that how they are wallowing in moral corruption, and humane virtues can no longer be found in weathered land of their entity.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 20

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الاَسْوَاقِ وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيراً

20. "And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We have made some of you a trial for the others: will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-Seeing."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have said that some chiefs of polytheists came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"Oh Muhammad (S)! What do you want us to do for you? If you want to be a chief, we make you our chief, if you like money and wealth, we will give you some of our wealth."

But when they saw that the Prophet (S) did not give up against their propositions, they started to cook up some pretexts and said:

"What a messenger of Lord are you that eat food and walk in the market?"

They rebuked the holy Prophet (S) for eating food, because they wanted him to be an angel. They criticized him for walking in markets, for they had seen Caesars and tyrannical kings who had never gone to market, while the Prophet (S) associated with and joined people and, at the same time, he declared divine bans and orders. The pretext-seekers criticized and said:

"He wants to be our ruler, while his custom and approach is different from kings' traditions."

The above verse was sent down and made clear that the method of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been the same as that of the former prophets.

In the past several holy verses, one of the pretexts of the polytheists that why the Prophet of Islam (S) eats food and walks in the market was mentioned and it was answered concisely. The concerned verse turns to that matter again and answers it more explicitly and in detail. It says:

"And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We ave made some of you a trial for the others..."

This trail may be in this way that prophets are to be human and selected from oppressed people and this is a great test, for some people refuse to obey and take order from their fellow creature, especially one who is financially at a low level, and they are from this viewpoint at high level or older or more famous in society.

Another possibility is that its purpose is to test people generally by each other, for disabled people, the sick, and orphans are a test for those who are rich and healthy, and, on the contrary, healthy and rich people are a test for the poor and the sick. Are the members of the second group contented by Allah's will? Do the first group shoulder the responsibility for caring the second group?

Since these two commentaries are in line with each other, it is possible that both of them are included in the extensive concept of the verse.

Then, next to this statement, all people are addressed and are asked:

"...will you bear patiently?..."

The most important pillar of victory and success in these trials is patience and resistance. Resisting unrestrained desires that prevent accepting the Truth, enduring difficulties that are faced at the time of doing duties and performing missions, and being patient with calamities and painful events, for man's life will not be empty of them.

In brief, in almost all cases it is only with the power of patience and endurance that one can succeed in passing this great test.

In the end of the verse under discussion, as a warning, the Qur'an says:

"...And your Lord is Ever-Seeing."

Never imagine that Allah sees none of your behaviors and deeds. His knowledge operates in minute detail and nothing is hidden from Him. He sees and knows everything precisely.

Notes

1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 192
2. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse
3. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the commentary, following the verse
4. Sura Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 125
5. Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 124
6. Sura Furqan, No. 25, verse 13
7. Sura Al-Abraham‘raf, No. 7, verse 96
8. Sura Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
9. Sura ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 162
10. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 261
11. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, 39477
12. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 10892
13. Muhajjat-ul-Bayza, Vol. 8, p. 356
14. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 208, taken from Nahj-ul-Balaqah
15. Sura ’Al-i-’Imran, No. 3, verse 40
16. Sura Al-Mu’min, No. 40, verse 8
17. Tauhid by Saduq, p. 29
18. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 455
19. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 645
20. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 12

From Surah al-Furqan (25) verse 21 to Surah ash-Shuara' (26)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 7
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 8
What is a 'Commentary'? 9
The Current Commentary 10
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 11
The Problems in Translating 11
Translators Note 12
Editor's Note 13
Notes 15
Acknowledgment 16
Notes 16
References 17
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 17
English Translations of Qur'an 17
Supporting Technical References 18
Phraseological and Philological Sources 18
A Presentation to Muslims 20
Notes 21
Surah al-Furqan, Section 3, The Qur'an Was Revealed Gradually ... 22
Surah al-Furqan, Chapter 25- Verse 21 22
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 22 23
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 23 24
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 24 26
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 25-26 27
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 27-29 29
Occasion of Revelation 29
A Bad Friend Deviated Me! 29
The Role of Friend in Man's Destiny..... 31
Some Traditions About Friendship in Islam..... 32
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 30 33
Some Points 34
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 31 35
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 32 35
Explanations 36
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 33 37
Explanations 37
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 34 37
Notes 38
Section 4: What Happened to the Disbeliever People in the Past 40
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 35 40
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 36 40
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 37 40
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 38-39 41
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 40 42
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 41 43
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 42 43
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 43 44

Note 45
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 44 47
Notes 48
Section 5: The Guidance Man Gets From the Working of Nature..... 50
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 45-46 50
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 47 51
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 48-49 52
Some Points 53
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 50 54
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 51-52 55
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 53 56
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 54 58
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 55 59
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 56 60
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 57 60
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 58 61
Whom Must We Trust? 62
Some Traditions On Trust 62
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 59 63
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 60 64
Notes 65
Section 6: Repentance, Belief and Good Deeds 66
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 61 66
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 62 66
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 63-64 68
('The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)'). 68
Some Traditions On Humbleness and Night Prayer 70
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 65-66 71
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 67 72
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 68 73
''Illa Bilhaqq' ('except for just cause')..... 73
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 69-70 75
Questions 75
Changing Evil Deeds to Good Deeds..... 76
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 71 77
Some Traditions On Repentance 78
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 72 78
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 73-74 80
Surah al-Furqan - Verses 75-76 82
Surah al-Furqan - Verse 77 83
Some Traditions On Praying..... 85
A): Parents' praying for their issue 85
B) Praying of the oppressed against the one who has oppressed him. 85
C) Praying of one who is performing greater and lesser pilgrimage until one returns home 85
Some Traditions On Patience 86
Notes 87
Surah Ash-Shu'ara, Chapter 26 90

(The Poets) 90
No. 26, (revealed at Mecca) 90
227 verses in 11 sections..... 90
The Feature of the Surah 90
The Virtue of the Surah..... 90
Note 90
Section 1: Qur'an, the Book Manifest 91
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 1-3..... 91
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 4-6..... 92
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 7-9..... 94
Notes 95
Section 2: Moses and Aaron Sent Towards Pharaoh 96
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 10-12 96
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 13-15 97
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 16-19 99
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 20..... 101
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 21..... 101
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 22..... 103
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 23-26 103
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 27-30 105
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 31..... 107
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 32-33 108
Notes 109
Section 3: Pharaoh's Sorcerers Embrace the Truth 110
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 34-35 110
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 36-37 111
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 38-39 112
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 40-42 112
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 43-44 113
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 45-48 114
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 49-51 116
Notes 118
Section 4: Moses Rescues the Children of Israel 119
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 52-53 119
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 54-56 120
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 57-60 121
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 61-62 122
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 63-64 123
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 65-66 124
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 67-68 124
Notes 125
Section 5: Abraham Exhorts His Father to Discard Idolatry 126
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 69-71 126
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 72-73 127
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 74-76 127
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 77..... 128
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 78-81 129
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 83..... 131

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 84-86 132
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 87-89 133
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 90-92 134
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 93-95 135
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 96-99 136
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 100-101 137
Some Traditions Upon Intercession 137
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 103-104 138
Notes 139
Section 6: Noah Exhorts the People to Worship the Only True God . 140
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 105-108 140
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 109-111 141
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 112-113 142
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 114-115 143
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 116-118 144
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 119-122 145
Notes 146
Section 7: Hud Exhorts His People to Guard Themselves Against Evil 147
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 123-126 147
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 128-131 148
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 132-135 150
A Tradition 151
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 136 152
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 137-140 152
Notes 153
Section 8: Salih Preaches Righteousness to the People of Thamud ... 154
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 141-145 154
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 146-150 155
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 151-152 156
Some Traditions Upon Extravagance and Corruption 157
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 153-154 158
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 155-157 159
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 158-159 160
Notes 161
Section 9: Lut Admonishes His People 162
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 160-164 162
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 165-167 163
Some Traditions 164
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 168-172 165
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 173-175 166
Notes 168
Section 10: Shu‘ayb’s Mission to the Dwellers of the Forest 169
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 176-180 169
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 181-183 170
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 184-186 172
Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 187-191 173
Notes 174

Section 11: The Spirit-Faithful, Descended with the Qur'an 176
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 192-196 176
A Few Traditions Upon the Qur'an 178
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 197-199 178
A Tradition 180
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 200-202 180
A Few Traditions Upon Bigotry 181
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 203-206 182
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 207-209 183
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 210-212 184
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 213 185
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 214-217 186
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 218-220 189
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 221-223 189
Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 224-227 190
Notes 193

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Furqan, Section 3, The Qur'an Was Revealed Gradually

Surah al-Furqan, Chapter 25- Verse 21

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءنَا لَوْلاَ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلاَئِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْ عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا

21. "And those who do not hope to meet Us (for Judgment) say: 'Why are not the angels sent down to us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?' Certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt."

The Arabic word /'utuww/ means the worst kind of oppression.[1] The day of Resurrection is called the day of /liqa'/ (meeting), because in that day all ignorance, negligence and obstacles will be removed fully and people can see Allah's magnificence.

("...and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth.")[2]

In order to relinquish duties and responsibilities that believing in Allah and Resurrection would put on polytheists' shoulder, they stated some pretexts, one of which was why the Prophet (S) eats like us and walks in markets, which we read its answer in the former verses.

The concerned verse completes two other parts of their pretexts and answers them.

It first says:

"And those who do not hope to meet Us (for Judgment) say: 'Why are not the angels sent down to us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?'..."

Their statement means that suppose it is accepted that the Prophet (S) can have a common life like other people, but it is not accepted that the bringer of revelation comes only to him and that it cannot be seen by other people. What is the problem if the angel appears and certifies his prophethood or retells some of his revelation while people are present?

What is the matter if man sees Allah by his own eye? If this happens, no doubt remains for him. These are the arouse questions which prevent them accepting the call of the Prophet (S).

It is important that the holy Qur'an introduces these pretext-seeking persons as:

"...those who do not expect the meeting with Us...".[3]

This shows that these baseless words originate from unbelief in resurrection and also the lack of undertaking responsibility to Allah.

In verse 7 of Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15 we read words like this, where they said:

"If you are of the truthful ones, why do you not bring to us the angels?"

In the beginning of this Surah also we read:

"...Why is not an angel been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?"[4]

But a person who seeks truth only demands reason for proving a matter and he does not care about the sort of reason whatever kind it may be. When

by performing miracles, including the holy Qur'an itself, the Prophet (S) has proved that his call and invitation is right, what do these pretexts mean?

The best reason that these words were not uttered for the sake of researching on the prophethood of the holy Prophet (S) is that they asked to see Allah and by this demand they reduced Him to a visible object. This groundless demand was asked by the Children of Israel and its decisive answer has been given them in the Qur'an which is explained in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 143.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an answers these demands in this way:

"...Certainly they are too proud highly of themselves and have revolted in great revolt."

The Arabic word /'utuww/ means to restrain to obey an order stubbornly and with enmity. The Qur'anic phrase /fi 'anfusihim/ may mean that they were proud of themselves and were also self-conceited, or it may mean that they concealed their conceit and pride in their own heart and proposed such demands and pretexts.

In our age there are also some persons who repeat the logic of former polytheists and say that they do not believe in Allah unless they see Allah in their laboratory and experiment the soul with Himself in surgery operation. The source of both is one thing: arrogance and delusion.

Basically, all the persons who know sense and experience as the only means of recognition implicitly repeat this very matter. All materialists and the money-minded ones do have the same opinion, while our sense can perceive only a small part of this world.

Anyway, all materialists count everything unspiritual and earthy and they try to see Allah with their own physical eyes and this is their great mistake.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 22

يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلاَئِكَةَ لاَ بُشْرَى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُجْرِمِينَ وَيَقُولُونَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

2. "On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no glad tidings that day for the guilty, and they (the angels) shall say: 'It (Paradise) is a forbidden (thing), totally prohibited'."

In the previous verse the arrogant that had no hope of resurrection and expected to see angels were mentioned, and the concerned verse wants to say that the angels will come to them but instead of conveying the light of revelation, they declare the severest threats to them. That day, as Imam Baqir (as) says, is the day of their death and Allah orders the Angel of death to take their life and when their soul is going to leave their body, some angels hit their back and face. Then Imam Baqir (as) recited this verse.[5]

The verse says:

"On the day when they shall see the angels..."

Therefore, in this noble verse the Qur'an implies as a threat that they want to see the angels and finally they will see them, but as the verse says:

"...there shall be no glad tidings that day for the guilty..."

Yes, on that day they do not get happy, but since they see the signs of punishment along with them, they fear so much that they will utter the same sentence that they used to say at the time of danger in this world:

"Grant grace to us and exempt us!"[6]

Certainly neither this sentence nor other sentences will have any effect on their doomed fate, for the fire they have started by themselves will burn them, and the evil deeds which they have done will be materialized then before them, The consequences of their misdeeds eventually come home to roost.

The verse continues saying:

"...and they (the angels) shall say: 'It (Paradise) is a forbidden (thing), totally prohibited'."

The Arabic word /hijr/ originally means an area that is furnished with stones and it becomes forbidden to enter. If we see that 'Hijr-i-Isma'il' is called /hijr/ it is because it prevents man from some evil actions, thus we read in verse 5 of Surah Al-Fajr, No. 89:

"Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

Also the companions of Hijr whose name is mentioned in Qur'an[7], has been used for the name of the people of Salih (as) who used to make fortified stone houses for themselves in mountains and were protected by these houses.

But the Qur'anic phrase /hijran mahjūra/ (A forbidding ban) is an expression that was used by Arabs when they met a person whom they feared. They used to say it for protecting themselves.

Specially it was Arab's tradition that in the sacred months that war was forbidden when they confronted someone and this tradition might get unobserved they repeated this phrase in order to be protected. By hearing this phrase that person protected them and made them calm. Thus the meaning of this holy phrase is that:

"I seek protection, which is stable and unchanging."

Meanwhile, it is understood from the above words that the persons who said these words are criminal. The proportion of existing verbs in the verse, the course of history, and the background of this phrase among Arabs demand this, though some say that it is possible that the speaker of these words will be the angels and their aim is to prevent polytheists from Allah's mercy.

Some have also said that these words are said by criminals to each other, but apparently the first meaning is correct, for many commentators have accepted it or have mentioned it as the first commentary.[8]

But what day do wrongdoers meet angels?

Some of the commentators say that it is at the time of death that man sees the angel of death, as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 97 says:

"Verily (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their own selves..."

Some other commentators say that its purpose is the day of Resurrection when wrongdoers encounter the Divine angels of punishment and observe them.

The second commentary seems more appropriate with regard to the next verses that talk about resurrection and especially with the word /yauma'iðin/ that refers to it.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 23

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَى مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاء مَّنثُورًا

23. "And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust."

The Arabic word /haba'/ means 'fine dust' and the word 'Manthūr' means 'scattered'.

In this noble verse the condition of wrongdoers' actions in Hereafter is imagined.

It says:

"And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust."

The Arabic word /'amal/, as Raqib in Mufradat says, in this verse means: every work or job done by intention. But the word /fi'l/ 'verb' is general and is applied to both jobs and works that are done whether intentionally or unintentionally.

The Qur'anic word /qadimna/ is derived from the word /qudūm/, which means to enter or to turn unto something.

Here, this word is for putting emphasis on the matter, that is to say they have certainly done all their actions intentionally and on purpose, though their deeds are apparently right and good. Thus, for their polytheism and paganism Allah shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes.

In narrations the extension of those whose deeds will be naught is the persons who perform ritual prayer and fast but do not refrain from unlawful food, or do hate and have enmity against Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) and his Shiites.

By the way, the Arabic word /haba'/ means some very tiny particles of dust that can not be seen in a natural way, unless sun light comes inside a dark room from an opening, so that these particles are clear and visible and, in this way, we can see them.

This sentence shows that their deeds will be so worthless and ineffective that it seems there were not any deeds at all, though they have tried and attempted many years.

This verse is like verse 18 of Surah 'Ibrahim No. 14, which says:

"...their deeds are as ashes on which the wind blows severely on a stormy day..."

Its logical reason is also clear, for what gives meaning and sense to man's deed is proper intention, motivation, and the final aim of that action. Faithful persons go after doing things with Divine motives and seek for pure sacred aims, and some sound and correct programs, while unfaithful persons are mostly proud, affecter, deceiver, and self-conceited, therefore, their deeds will be of no value.

As an example, there are mosques that have been built hundreds years before and the past of centuries of time had the least effect on them. On the contrary, we see some houses that after one month or year there appear some defects in them.

The former was built strongly and with the best construction materials and foreseeing all future events, because it had divine motivation, but as for the latter one, attention was paid only to the colour and appearance of it, for

its aim was acquiring wealth and money by means of deception and counterfeit.

Basically, according to Islam logic, righteous deeds have got some pests which must be definitely protected. Sometimes it is wrong from the beginning, like the deed which is done hypocritically. Sometimes man will get proud, self-conceited and self-admired while he is performing a deed and his deed will be worthless because of it.

And sometimes after doing a deed, its worth and value will get abolished because its doer does some actions that are contradictory and opposing to it, like a generous action or prodigality that is followed by reproach, or the righteous deeds that are followed by paganism and apostasy.

Even, according to some Islamic narrations, sometimes committing sins before doing a good deed will affect it, as about the person who drinks alcoholic drink we read that his righteous deeds done during 40 days will not be accepted by Allah[9].

Anyway, Islam has got a very strict, calculated and precise program about attributes of righteous deeds.

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"On the day of Resurrection Allah brings a group of people while there is a light in front of them, like brightening and white garments, (this is the light of their deeds). Then Allah orders those deeds to be scattered particles of dust. (Then all of them will disappear).

These are those who used to perform ritual prayer and fast, but when they were given something unlawful, they would take it; and when it was said something of the virtues of Imam Ali (as) to them they denied it."[10]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 24

أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا

24. "The companions of the Garden (Paradise) that day shall be in a better abode and a better resting-place."

There must be a kind of good tidings and encouragement along with warning and advice. Therefore, the holy Qur'an usually sets good and bad beside each other, so that by comparing, their situations will be clear. This verse speaks about the situation of those who live in the Paradise.

The verse says:

"The companions of the Garden (Paradise) that day shall be in a better abode and a better resting-place."

This verse does not imply that Hell-dwellers are in a good situation, and dwellers of Paradise are in a better situation. For example, we read in Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 40:

"...Is he who is hurled into the Fire better, or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection..."

The Arabic word /mustaqarr/ means 'residence' and the Qur'anic word /muqil/ means 'the pace of rest in the midday'.

(It is derived from the word /qaylūlah/ that means 'midday sleep'.)

Ibn Abbas said that the Prophet (S) said:

"When Allah created the Paradise, He put things in it that no one has seen and no mind has imagined. Then He ordered the Paradise to speak.

The Paradise began speaking and said:
'Successful indeed are the believers'."[11]

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 25-26

وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَاء بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلآئِكَةُ تَنزِيلًا

الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا

25. "And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds and the angels shall be sent down descending (in ranks)."

26. "The dominion that day in truth shall belong to the Beneficent Lord, and a hard day shall it be for the unbelievers."

Again, the discussion of Resurrection and the destiny of wrongdoers on that day continues where it says:

"And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds and the angels shall be sent down descending (in ranks)."

The Arabic word /qamam/ is derived from the word /qam/ that means to cover something. Because cloud covers sun, it is called 'Qamam'. Also the sorrow that covers heart is called 'Qam'.

This noble verse is in fact an answer to the polytheists' demand and one of their pretexts, for they expected that Allah and the angles who are among clouds, according to the old fables and legends, come to them to invite them to the Truth.

In the Jews' myths we also read that Allah sometimes appears among clouds.[12]

The holy Qur'an answers them, implying that a day (in which wrongdoers are punished and their meaningless words are finished) the angels (not Allah) will be sent down to them.

Now, what is the purpose of separation of the sky and heaven? Some say that it means intuition, rising of curtail of ignorance, and showing of the invisible world. That is on that day, man is bestowed a perceiving and viewing capacity that is different from today's. He sees angels who are descending from the above world.

Another commentary is that the sky and heaven means celestial bodies that explode one after the other one. The cloud that is created by these explosions and bursting of mountains, covers the sky. Thus the celestial bodies will burst asunder and in the same time their resulting clouds are with them.

Many verses of the holy Qur'an, especially those of the short Suras that are at the end of the Qur'an, express this truth that on the threshold of resurrection some great changes and a strange revolution and transformation happen throughout the universe; mountains will burst and scatter in air like dust, sun and stars will lose their light, even the existing distance between moon and sun will abolish, and a strange shake and earthquake will happen throughout the earth.

Yes, on such a day the bursting of heaven (celestial bodies) and covering sky with a dense cloud is a natural matter.

This very commentary can be said in another way:

The intensity of changes and explosion of stars and planets cause that the sky can be covered with a dense cloud, but there are sometimes some openings inside this cloud. Thus, the sky that in the ordinary state is seen with the natural eye will be separated with these clouds of great explosion.

Then one of the clearest characteristics of that day is referred to through the next verse, where it says:

"The dominion that day in truth shall belong to the Beneficent Lord..."

Even those who have some kind of transient, mortal limited, virtual sovereignty in this world will leave their apparent government, and sovereignty will belong to His pure essence from every aspect and dimension, and because of this, as the Qur'an says:

"...and a hard day shall it be for the unbelievers."

Yes, on that day that virtual powers will completely diminish and sovereignty will be particular to Allah, the disbelievers' shelters will be destructed, and the tyrannical powers will disappear, though they were also naught in this world before His Will, but here they were apparently powerful and important.

But in resurrection, where the fact will manifest and unfaithful persons' imaginations and dreams will blow out, to what they can resort when they face divine punishments. That is why that day will be very difficult for them, while believers will have an easy and comfortable day.

'Abū Sa'id Khidri says that when the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was reciting the verse saying:

"...in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years",[13]

which shows that the day of Resurrection is equal to 50 thousand years, he said:

"What a strange long day it is!"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I swear by The One in Whose hand my life is, that that Day will become light for the believer as short as the time is spent for performing one ritual prayer in this world."[14]

Carefully studying other verses of the holy Qur'an shows why that day is hard for pagans. On one side, we read in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 166:

"(On the day) when those who were followed disown those who followed (them), and they would see the torment, and their ties (between them) are cut asunder."

On the other side, we read in Surah AL-Lahab, No. 111, verse 2:

"His wealth avails him not, neither what he had earned."

And also we read in Surah Ad-Dukhan, No. 44, verse 41:

"The day on which a friend shall not avail (his) friend aught, nor shall they be helped."

Even intercession that is the only way of salvation is for those sinners that have some relationship with Allah and His friend:

"...Who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave?..."[15]

Also they will not be allowed to apologize on that day, let alone to the acceptance of their unreasonable excuses:

"Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuses."[16]

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 27-29

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا

يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنسَانِ خَذُولًا

27. "And on the day when the unjust one shall bite his hands, saying: 'Oh! Would that I had taken a way alone with the Messenger'!"

28. "Oh woe is me! Would that I had not taken such a one for a friend!"

29. "He indeed led me astray from the Message after it had come to me, and the Satan fails to aid man."

Occasion of Revelation

Commentators have narrated an occasion of revelation for these verses that we mention a summary of it:

At the time of the Prophet (S), there were two friends named 'Uqbah and 'Ubayy among polytheists. Whenever 'Uqbah returned from a journey, he prepared some food and invited wealthy people of his tribe to a party.

Meanwhile, he liked to go to the Prophet (S) and to be with him for a while, though he had not accepted Islam. One day he prepared some food as usual and invited his friends as well as the Prophet (S).

When food was ready to be served, the Prophet (S) told 'Uqbah:

"I will not eat your food unless you testify to unity of Allah and my mission."

'Uqbah testified that there is no god besides Allah and testified that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.

'Ubayy heard this news.

He said to his friend:

"You have deviated from your religion O' 'Uqbah!"

His friend said:

"No, by God I did not. But a man came to me who did not eat my food unless I testified to Allah's unity and his mission. I was ashamed that he was about to leave my home without eating any food, so I testified."

'Ubayy said:

"I will not be happy with you, unless you stand before him and insult him." 'Uqbah did this action and apostatized.

Finally he was killed with other pagans in the Battle of Badr. His friend 'Ubayy was also killed in the Battle of 'Uhud.[17]

The above holy verses were sent down and explained the destiny of the man who had a deviated friend and he caused him to go astray.

We have repeatedly said that though the occasions of revelation are particular and especial, they never limit the concept of holy verses and its generality includes all similar persons.

A Bad Friend Deviated Me!

The day of Resurrection has strange scenes, some of which are mentioned in the previous holy verses and in the concerned verses, here,

another part is brought up, and that issue is the extraordinary regret of oppressors about their past.

It first says:

"And on the day when the unjust one shall bite his hands, saying: 'Oh! Would that I had taken a way alone with the Messenger'!"

The Arabic word /ya'add/ is derived from the word /'add/ that means grip with teeth. This is usually used about the persons who are upset because of regret and sorrow, as in a Persian proverb it is said that that person grips finger of regret with teeth.

But in the Arabic language, instead of finger, hand is used, and perhaps it is more expressive, for man in such situations does not bite his finger, but he bites the back of his hand. In the Arabic language it is seen many times such as this verse that both hands are referred. In this way the intensity of regret and sorrow is expressed better.

This is perhaps for this matter that when such persons review their past and see that they themselves are responsible and guilty, they decide to revenge themselves so that they can somehow get calm and soothed.

Verily that Day must be called 'the Day of anguish', as in the holy Qur'an the day of Resurrection is called by this name[18], for wrongdoers see a perpetual life with the worst conditions before them, while they could change it to a happy and honorable life with some days of patience, struggling with appetitive soul, holy war and donation.

Even for doers of good deeds it is the day of regret. They will regret why they did not do more good deeds!

Then, in the next verse this oppressor, who is completely regretful, says:

"Oh woe is me! Would that I had not taken such a one for a friend!"

It is clear that the purpose of 'such a one' is the same person, whether an aberrant kinsman, or Satan or a deviated friend such as 'Ubayy, who deviated 'Uqbah, mentioned in the occasion of revelation.

In fact this verse and the previous verse set two positions of negation and verification against each other.

In a verse it says:

"Oh woe is me! Would that I had not taken such a one for a friend!"

(For all my misery is for leaving the Prophet (S) and choosing this deviated person as a friend.)

Again in this verse it is continued:

"He indeed led me astray from the Message after it had come to me..."

If he were very far away from perpetual happiness and faith, he would not regret so much, but he had been near it, there was only one step for being ever after happy. But that stubborn, biased, dark-hearted friend returned him thirsty from the spring of life water and took him to the whirlpool of misery.

The Qur'anic word /ðikr/ has got an extensive meaning in this verse and it includes all divine verses that are in the heavenly books. Moreover, it includes any thing that makes man awaken, alert, and informed.

In the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"...and the Satan fails to aid man."

For Satan misleads man and leads him to dangerous places. Then leaving him wandered, Satan goes after his own job.

We must note that the Arabic word /xaŏūl/ is an amplification form which means:

'The one who abundantly fails someone when most needed', and the reality of /xiŏlan/ (desertion) is that someone hopes for another person's help, but he deserts him just in the very sensitive moments.

Whether this last sentence of the verse saying:

"...and the Satan fails to aid man"

is said by Allah as a warning for all oppressors and the deviated persons, or it is the rest of the statement said by those who regret in the day of Resurrection, commentators have mentioned two commentaries, both of which are in line with the meaning of the verse, but being Allah's words is more consistent.

The Role of Friend in Man's Destiny

Undoubtedly the factors that form man's personality are different including his will and decision, and most importantly his friend and companion, for man is desirably or undesirably impressionable. Most of his thoughts and moral attributes are formed through his friends. This fact has scientifically and experimentally been proved.

From the view of Islam this impressionability is logical so much that we read in Islamic narrations that Solomon (as) has said:

"Do not judge someone, unless you see who are his friends, for man is known by his companions, friends, and fellows."[19]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"When you are doubtful about someone and you do not know his religion, find out who are his friends. If they are believers, he is a believer, too, and if they are not believers of the religion of Allah, he may be an unbeliever, too."[20]

Verily the role that a friend plays in happiness and misery of a person is sometimes more important than any other factors. Sometime a friend leads him to destruction and death and sometimes a friend leads him to the climax of success and prosperity.

The concerned verses and their occasion of revelation show well that how possibly man can approach happiness, but a devil temptation by a friend takes him back to darkness and prepares him a deadly fate so that he bites both of his hands on the day of Resurrection and cries:

"Oh Woe is me!"

In the book Al-'Ishrah (Roles of Association), there are many narrations about this matter. This shows how precise and exact Islam is in selecting a friend.

We finish this discussion with narrating two traditions.

Those who want to read more, please refer to Bihar-ul-' Anwar, Vol. 74.

Imam Muhammad Taqi, Al-Jawad (as) said:

"Avoid a bad companion, for he is like an unsheathed sword whose appearance is beautiful and whose effect is very ugly."[21]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"There are four things that bring death to man's heart: repetition of sin... and association with the dead."

A person asked him:

"Who are the dead?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"The wealthy people who are indulging in luxury."[22]

Some Traditions About Friendship in Islam

1. Imam Ali (as) said:

"A man's friend is the sign of his intellect and his speech is the sign of his virtue."[23]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who dies while he is a friend of the family of the Prophet (S) has died as a martyr."[24]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"The happiest man is one who associates with respected and dignified people."[25]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The most favoured brothers of mine are those who present me my defects (and to warn me of them).[26]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The best friend of yours is the one who makes you fond of the Hereafter and indifferent to the world and helps you in obeying Allah."[27]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"Avoid associating with bad companion, for you are known by him."[28]

7. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Associating with bad people causes mistrust unto good people."[29]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whenever Imam Ali (as) climbed the pulpit, he said:

"It is deserved that a Muslim avoids friendship of three persons: the impudent dissolute person, imbecile, and liar."[30]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Be kind towards your friend, though he disobeys you and have relationship with him, though he treats you harshly."[31]

10. The Prophet (S) was once asked about the best companion.

He said:

"The best one is the person whose meeting reminds Allah to you, and his words increases your knowledge, and his behaviour makes you remember the Hereafter."[32]

Islam has got many pieces of advice about friendship and selecting a friend. Islam encourages having friendship with some persons and prohibits friendship of some other persons, and this needs a special separate discussion.

Some subtitles of the subject of 'friend and friendship' are as follows: the ways of knowing a friend, boundaries of friendship, continuity of friendship, termination of friendship, proper motivations of friendship, and rules of association with friends and rights of friend, that for each of them there are a lot of verses and narrations.

We have only mentioned some part of it.

Also Imam Ali (as) said:

"Good friend is the best relative."[33]

There is a tradition that says test your friend with money, anger, wealth and journey. If he is successful in them, he is a good one. In poems there are also a great deal of references about friend and friendship and it is recommended to associate with good friends. Also association with bad friends is reproached.

Bad companion is likened to a beautiful snake that has a very deadly poison.

As a Persian poet says:

Escape bad companion as you can,
Bad companion is worse than a poisonous snake.
Poisonous snake threats only your life,
But bad companion threats your, life as well as your faith.

Or, bad friend is likened to a dark cloud that covers the magnificent sun:

Associate less with bad persons,
For bad persons' words make you impure, though you are pure.
Sun that is so great and huge,
Goes out of sight with a piece of cloud.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 30

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

30. "And the Messenger will say (that Day): 'O my Lord! Verily my people treated this Qur'an with neglect."

Oh Allah! People have deserted the holy Qur'an.

Since the previous verses mentioned the different kinds of pretext-seeking of some stubborn polytheists and unbelievers, this holy verse mentions complain and annoyance of the Prophet (S) about the incorrect behaviour of this group with the Qur'an, where it says:

"And the Messenger will say: 'O my Lord! Verily my people treated this Qur'an with neglect."

This complain of the Prophet (S) is still heard. He complains to Allah even about a large group of Muslims who have neglected the holy Qur'an which is the secret of life, means of salvation, the factor of victory, development and movement, and full of life programs. They have neglected this book and have begged others for their civil and criminal laws!

Now if you study the situation of the people of Islamic countries, especially those who are culturally under the control of Western and Eastern countries, you see that the holy Qur'an is changed into a ceremonial book among them.

Only its words are nicely broadcasted by a few speakers and are seen on glazed tiles of mosques as architecture. It is used for making new house blissful, or for protecting a traveler and healing patients, or at most it is recited for its reward.

Even when some persons argue by using the holy Qur'an, their aim is to prove their prejudgments by the help of its verses and their interpretation is according to their personal opinion.

In some Islamic countries, there are great schools that are named ‘Schools of Memorization of the Holy Qur’an’. In these schools girls and boys are memorizing the Qur’an, while their thoughts are sometimes influenced by Western and Eastern countries and their laws are borrowed from some none-Islamic countries and the Qur’an is applied only for covering their wrong actions.

Yes, today the Prophet (S) also cries:

“O my Lord! Verily my people treated this Qur’an with neglect.”

It is neglected from the aspects of content, thought, and reforming programs.

Some Points

1. This noble verse refers to the complaint of the Prophet (S) and, because he is ‘mercy for both worlds’, he does not cast curse.

2. Imam Rida (as) said:

“The reason that we read the holy Qur’an in ritual prayers is for paying attention to the Qur’an.”

3. An Islamic narration recommends to read 50 verses of the Qur’an everyday and your aim must not be reaching the end of Surah. Read slowly and strike your heart with reading the Qur’an. Whenever you are surrounded by temptations, as night engulfed you, resort to the Qur’an.[34]

4. It seems proper to mention a few confessions of some great persons about the holy Qur’an how it is neglected:

A) Mulla Sadra (may his spirit be sanctified!) says in the introduction of Surah Al-Waqi‘ah:

I read books of many philosophers so that I thought I knew all things and I became an important man, but when I began to perceive a little of the true nature of situations, I found out that I knew no real and true knowledge.

At the end of my lifetime, I embarked on pondering the Holy Qur’an and the narrations of the Prophet (S) and his family. I became certain that what I had done up to then was baseless, for during my life I was standing in shadow instead of being under light.

I became wholeheartedly sorrowful, and, then divine favour was bestowed on me and I became familiar with the secrets of the holy Qur’an and I began to comment on and ponder the Qur’an.

I knocked the door of revelation until curtains were taken away and doors were opened and I saw that angels say to me:

“...Peace be unto you! You are good, therefore enter it to dwell therein (forever [35].”[36]

B) Fiyz-i-Kashani (may his spirit be sanctified!) says:

I wrote books and treatises and I researched, but none of them was remedy for my pain and no water I found to quench my thirst. I got worried about myself, and I resorted to Allah and repented so that Allah led me by means of pondering the Qur’an and Islamic traditions.[37]

C) Imam Khomeini (may his spirit be sanctified!) says that he regrets that he has not spend all of his life for the holy Qur’an and he advised the students of universities and the students of seminaries to set the Qur’an and its various dimensions as ultimate aim in all courses, lest in the end of life they do not regret for youth days.[38]

D) The relationship of man and the heavenly book must be perpetual and in all aspects, for the word ‘Hijr’ is used when there is relationship between man and that thing.[39] So, we must try our best to pay attention to the holy Qur’an and set it our scientific and practical base in all dimensions of life so that the dear Prophet (S) gets satisfied.

E) Abandoning reading the Qur’an, preferring other books to the holy Qur’an, not setting it as pivot, not pondering it, not teaching it to others, and not applying it in practice are extensions of negligence of the Qur’an. Even one who learns the Qur’an, but does not pay attention to it, does not look at it, and does not feel responsible for it, has neglected the Qur’an.[40]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 31

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا

31 “And thus We appointed for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners, and sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and a Helper.”

The call that expresses and seeks truth has always been faced with opponents. In struggles of truth with falsehood, man needs two things; guidance and power. Of course, guidance and help are of dignities of Allah’s Lordship.

So in this noble verse, for sympathizing with the Prophet (S), who faced atrocious position of enemies, the Qur’an says:

“And thus We appointed for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners...”

(It is not only you who have faced severe animosity of this group, all prophets were in such positions that a group of wrongdoers stood against them.)

But the holy Prophet (S) is not alone and without supporter; as the verse continues saying:

“...and sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and a Helper.”

Neither can their temptations mislead the holy Prophet (S), for Allah guides him, nor their conspiracies can defeat him, for Allah is his supporter and helper, He Whose knowledge is the supreme and His power is above all others’.

In brief we must say:

If thousands of enemy intend to kill me,

I fear not enemy, for You are my Friend.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 32

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلاَ نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا

32. “And those who disbelieve say: ‘Why has not the Qur’an been sent down upon him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen your heart by it and We have rehearsed it to you in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually’.”

Pretext-seekers found new pretexts every moment. They sometimes said: Why is not revelation made to us? Sometimes they said: Why do not we see

angel of revelation? Why does not the Prophet have money, palace, and gold? And sometimes they said:

"Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?"

The Qur'an has got two kinds of revelation: A) Instant revelation on the heart of the Prophet (S) that occurred in the night of Power, when all of the Qur'an was sent down to the Prophet's heart. B) Gradual revelation that the Qur'an was sent down on special occasions during 23 years.

Any way, the word 'Kaðalika' (thus) is the answer of them, that is, the advantage and wisdom of gradual revelation of the Qur'an is to make the heart of the Prophet (S) stronger and to make memorization and keeping of the Qur'an easier.

Moreover, there are abrogating and abrogated verses in the Qur'an and every answer must be exactly for a question and these are not consistent with instant revelation of the Qur'an. In addition, the Prophet (S) was illiterate and he did not know writing and reading, so to make him understand the revelation, the Qur'an was sent down gradually, while Moses and Christ knew writing and reading.

Explanations

1. Gradual revelation of the Qur'an is the factor of continual and permanent relation of the Prophet (S) with the source of revelation and it makes him stable in his way. It shows that prophethood is not a temporal matter.

2. A religion that is comprehensive and enlivened has a strong relation with events and occasions. And events and occasions occur gradually, not instantly.

3. To obey all orders and to avoid prohibitions instantly was difficult for common people and it caused them distress and constriction.

4. Since each Surah and verse of the Qur'an was by itself, a miracle, its gradual revelation was as a continual miracle and each miracle soothed the heart of the Prophet (S) against enemies' oppression.

5. There is much difference between revelation of each verse according to special position and instant revelation of all verses regardless of situations.

6. Some verses are the answers of people's questions.

Therefore, a question must first be raised and then its answer be given. Some verses and judgments were descended for a certain period; so a verse must be sent down to annul them.

Slowly and Distinctly Reading of the Qur'an (Tartil)

The Prophet (S) said:

"Tartil is to recite the Qur'an distinctly (not like reading poem and prose). When you reach its wits, you stop and purify your Heart and spirit. Your aim of recitation must not be reaching the end of Surah."[41]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"The purpose of Tartil is to stop when it needs full stop and articulation of letters."[42]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Tartil is to recite the Qur'an beautifully and slowly. It is to stop and to resort to Allah, when reciting the verses that are about the Fire and

punishment. It is to pray and to ask Allah the Heaven, when verses about the Paradise are read."[43]

In the end, it is understood from all narrations and the words of commentators that Tartil is to recite the holy Qur'an slowly and in proper order.

Reading must be done verse by verse and they must not be mixed, so that the verses can enter the conscience of society and used by next generations. Therefore the future ages can use the light of its guidance and make dark places of their life lighted by it.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 33

وَلاَ يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلاَ جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ أَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

33. "And they shall not bring to you any similitude, but We bring to you the truth and the best explanation (of it)."

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an implies that whether the words of the opponents are false so Allah presents true words to the Prophet (S), or their words are true then Allah brings some better and more comprehensive words of the truth for the Prophet (S).

To put more emphasis on this answer, the Qur'an implies that they bring no similitude to him, or they mention no words to weaken his call, but Allah brings the Truth as against it, and better than their similitude as argument.

The verse says:

"And they shall not bring to you any similitude, but We bring to you the truth and the best explanation (of it)."

Explanations

1. The Qur'an is a comprehensive book which answers all faults that are found with it by the opponents.
2. Prophets were struggling with opponents and prophets treated them by means of reasonable argumentation.
3. Others' words and complains are to be answered with some better words.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 34

الَّذِينَ يُحْشَرُونَ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ أُوْلَـئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

34. "Those who shall be mustered upon their faces unto Hell, they are in a worse place and as to path, most astray."

The most misled person is the one who finds faults with prophets and makes difficulty for them. Therefore, in this noble verse, it is implied that after their finding faults, stubborn and biased foes had made inference that Muhammad and his followers, with this book and these programs, were the worst people of Allah (we seek Allah's protection!).

Since saying this matter was not consistent with the eloquent and decorous words of the Qur'an, Allah answers this without mentioning the matter.

It says:

"Those who shall be mustered upon their faces unto Hell, they are in a worse place and as to path, most astray."

Yes, the result of men's programs and deeds will be shown in the Hereafter; when some persons are as tall as cedar and their faces shine like moon. They go toward the Paradise with long steps and fast.

On the contrary, there are persons who are lying on the ground and angels of punishment are dragging them to the Hell. This different destiny shows who had been misled and evil and who had been guided and happy!

Moreover, commentators are of different opinions about the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase which says:

'...shall be mustered upon their faces...':

Some commentators have rendered as the verse means literally. They have said that the angels of punishment drag them to the Hell while their faces will be on the ground. On one hand, it shows how abject and wretched they are, for in the world they were very self-conceited and proud and they considered themselves better than other people.

On the other hand, it is an embodiment of their aberration in this world, for such a person that is dragged in this way can never see ahead and is unaware of what is happing around him.

But some other commentators have taken it with its ironical meaning; sometimes they say that this sentence ironically implies their inner longing for this world, that is, for the sake that their heart still longs for this world, they are dragged toward Hell.

1. The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"On the day of Resurrection, Fire speaks with three persons: ruler, singer, and the rich. It says to the ruler that Allah had bestowed you palace and sovereignty and you did not judge rightly and then the Fire swallows him as a bird swallows the sesame.

It says to the singer that you adorned yourself for people and struggled against Allah by committing sin and disobeying Him, and then it swallows him. It says to the rich that Allah had bestowed you a lot of blessings and wealth, and you did not lend poor and needy people who wanted a little money and then it swallows him, too."[44]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) has narrated from his ancestors that Imam Ali (as) said:

"In the Hell there is a mill that crushes five things into flour. Do not you ask what is its flour?"

Then he was asked what its flour was.

He said:

"It is the corrupted and evil scientists, evil and vice singers, tyrannical rulers, treacherous ministers, and lying Gnostics. Verily in the Hell there is a city that is called 'Hasinah'. Do not you ask me what is in that city?"

Someone asked:

"What is there in it O' Amir-al-Mu'minin?"

He said:

"There are hands of those who broke an oath of allegiance."[45]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Fear the Fire whose heat is severe and it is very deep. Its adornment is iron and its beverage is pus."[46]

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayān
2. Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 25
3. Surah Yūnus, No. 10, verse 7
4. The current Surah, verse 7
5. Bihār, Vol. 8, P. 317
6. Surah Qāfir, No. 40, verse 49
7. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 80
8. Al-Mīzān, Fhakr-i-Rāzī, Fī Zalāl, and Abulfutūh
9. Safīnat-ul-Bihār, Vol. 1, P. 227
10. The commentary of Ali ibn ’Ibrāhīm, narrated from Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 2, P. 9
11. Kanz-ul-’Umāl, Vol. 14, P. 645
12. Fī Zilāl, Vol. 6, P. 154
13. Surah Al-Ma‘ārij, No. 70, verse 4
14. The commentary of Qurtabī, Vol. 1, P. 4739
15. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
16. Surah Al-Mursalāt, No. 77, verse 36
17. Majma‘-ul-Bayān, the explanation upon the verse
18. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 39
19. Safīnat-ul-Bihār, Vol. 2, P. 27
20. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 197
21. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 198
22. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 195
23. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 3, P. 261
24. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 107, P. 111
25. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 187
26. ’Usūl-i-Kāfī, Vol. 4, P. 452
27. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 3, P. 436
28. Kanz-ul-‘Ummāl, Vol. 9, Had. 34844
29. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 191
30. ’Usūl-i-Kāfī, Vol. 4, P. 453
31. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 166
32. Bihār-ul-’Anwār, Vol. 74, P. 186
33. Qurar-ul-Hikam
34. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn
35. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
36. Introduction to the commentary on Surah Al-Wāqi‘ah
37. Risālāt-ul-’Insāf
38. Sahīfah Nūr, Vol. 20, P. 20
39. Mufradāt by Rāqib
40. Al-Munīr, the Commentary explained upon the verse
41. Majma‘-ul-Bayān and Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn P. 15
42. Kanz-ud-Daqāyiq and Manhāj-us-Sādiqīn
43. Majma‘-ul-Bahrayn, explanation about the word /rattala/
44. Bihār, Vol. 8, P. 285
45. Ibid P. 311
46. Ibid P. 206, taken from Nahj-ul-Balāqah

Section 4: What Happened to the Disbeliever People in the Past

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 35

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ وَزِيرًا

35. "And indeed We gave Moses the Book and We appointed His brother Aaron with him (as his) assistant."

This noble verse sympathizes on one hand with the Prophet (S) and the believers, and on the other hand it threats pretext-seeking polytheists the kind of whose words were somehow mentioned in the previous verses.

It also refers to the history of previous nations and their gloomy destiny and it specially puts emphasis on six nations (Pharaohs, Noah's nation, the people of 'Ad and Thamūd, the people of Lūt, and the people of the Ditch).

It concisely expresses lessons from the destiny of these nations.

It says:

"And indeed We gave Moses the Book and We appointed His brother Aaron with him (as his) assistant."

For these two had a difficult and important duty on their shoulder for struggling with Pharaoh people and they had to do this revolutionary job with the help of each other.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 36

فَقُلْنَا اذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَدَمَّرْنَاهُمْ تَدْمِيرًا

36. "And We said: 'Go you both unto the people who have rejected Our signs!' so We destroyed them with utter destruction."

Narrating the history and the explanation of the destiny of former pagans and the statement of their destruction, works as warning for today pagans and prohibiting them from what is unlawful.

Therefore, in this noble verse, Allah says:

"And We said: 'Go you both unto the people who have rejected Our signs!'..."

On one hand, they practically denied divine revelations and Allah's signs which exist in macrocosm and microcosm and the entire universe, and began to worship idols and to be polytheist. On the other hand, they neglected the teachings of the previous prophets and denied them.

In spite of Moses and his brother's attempts, and struggles and great and various miracles they observed, they stuck to their paganism and denial of the Truth, so they were destroyed.

The verse continues saying:

"...so We destroyed them with utter destruction."

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 37

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ لَمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ آيَةً وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

37. "And the people of Noah, when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and made them a sign for mankind; and We have prepared for the unjust a painful chastisement."

The Qur'an implies that when the people of Noah denied the Divine messengers Allah drowned them and made their fate as a lesson for human beings.

The verse says:

"And the people of Noah, when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and made them a sign for mankind..."

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an says:

"...they rejected the messengers (not only one messenger)..."

For, there is not any difference in principles between the call of messengers and prophets of Allah. If one of them is denied, it means that all of them are denied. Moreover, those people were basically against the call of all divine prophets and they denied all religions.

Anyway, the denial of prophets has got both worldly chastisement and the Hereafter punishment.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...and We have prepared for the unjust a painful chastisement."

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 38-39

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودَ وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ كَثِيرًا

وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيرًا

38. "And the (tribes of) 'Ad and Thamūd and the men of Ar-Rass, and many generations between them."

39. "And unto each of them We did give examples, and every one (of them) We did destroy with utter extermination."

The Arabic word /qurūn/ is the plural form of the word /qarn/ that, in fact, means a group of people who live together in a certain time. Also it is applied to 40 years up to 100 years. The Qur'anic word /tatbir/ means to lose dignity and respect and to get overthrown in a way that it leads to destruction.[1]

So, in this verse, it says:

"And the (tribes of) 'Ad and Thamūd and the men of Ar-Rass, and many generations between them."

The tribe of 'Ad is the people of Hūd, the Divine prophet, who was appointed in the land of 'Ahqaf, (Yemen). The tribe of Thamūd is the people of Salih, the Divine prophet, who was appointed in the land of Wad-il-Qura, a place between Medina and Damascus.

There are many things cited about the people of Ar-Rass in commentaries: they are people of Shuayb (Jethro). Ar Rass is a city in Yamameh. Or it is a place in 'Antakiyah, Al-Zakakih, or Aras River in Iran.

But in the book 'Uyūn-i-Akhbar ur-Rida we read:

Imam Rida (as) said:

"A person asked Imam Ali (as) about them.

And Imam Ali (as) said:

'After Noah Flood, a tree named 'Shah Drakht' (King Tree) was planted. People counted this tree holy and built 12 hamlets around it. The names of these hamlets were the names of Iranian months: Farwardin, Ordibihisht,

Khordad, Tir, Murdad, Shahriwar, Mihr, 'Aban, 'Azar, Day, Bahman, Isfand.

Each month they held festival in one of them. Of course the festival in hamlet of 'Isfand was more splendorous and more people gathered. In that festival, they put fire to a tree and when its smoke went up into air, they began to cry and shed tear.

Allah sent them a prophet who guided and advised them, but they denied him. Their prophet cast curse on them and that holy tree got dried. Then they dug a deep well and threw Allah's prophet into it, and in this way he was martyred.'" [2]

But it is understood from the 180th sermon of Nahj-ul- Balaqah that they did not have only one prophet, for the Imam (as) said:

"Where are the people of the cities of Ar-Rass who killed the prophets and suspended the traditions of the Divine messengers and revived the traditions of the despots?..."

The next verse implies that Allah did not punish them astonishingly: but it says:

"And unto each of them We did give examples..."

Allah answered their criticisms as was done about the criticisms upon the Prophet (S). Allah made divine ordinances clear for them and explained the truths of the religion. Allah warned them and retold them the stories and destiny of the former nations.

But when none of these was effective the status was as the verse says:

"...and every one (of them) We did destroy with utter extermination."

Yes the divine way of treatment is to send messengers for guiding people and to destruct their rejecters.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 40

وَلَقَدْ أَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي أُمْطِرَتْ مَطَرَ السَّوْءِ أَفَلَمْ يَكُونُوا يَرَوْنَهَا بَلْ كَانُوا لاَ يَرْجُونَ نُشُورًا

40. "And indeed they have passed by the town on which was rained an evil rain, did they not then see it? Nay! They did not hope to be raised again."

The purpose of 'the township whereon was rained the evil rain' is the town of the people of Lūt on which stone rained.

As Imam Baqir (as) says, it was an area that was called Sadūm[3]. Therefore, ancient places can provide people lesson (and narration of history and retelling the story of misled; persons can be a ground for propagation, training and prohibition of doing evil).

Finally ruins of cities of Lūt nation that have been on the way of people going from Hijaz to Damascus are mentioned in this verse. It is a live tableau that describes the painful destiny of these misled persons and polytheists.

It says:

"And indeed they have passed by the town on which was rained an evil rain, did they not then see it? Nay! They did not hope to be raised again."

They count death as the end of this life. If even they believe in the life after death, their belief will be so weak and baseless that it has no effect on their soul, and also, no effect on their life programs. Therefore, they belittle everything and think about nothing but passing their low desires.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 41

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلاَّ هُزُوًا أَهَذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا

41. "And when they see you, they take you for aught but a mockery; (saying:) 'Is this the one whom Allah has sent us a messenger?'"

Ridiculing and belittling prophets is the permanent method of pagans. One who is stubborn and conceited does not accept the Truth.

The verses under discussion mention another example of polytheists' logic and the quality of their treatment with the Prophet of Islam (S) and his true call.

It first says:

"And when they see you, they take you for aught but a mockery; (saying:) 'Is this the one whom Allah has sent us a messenger?'"

Polytheists say: what a great claim he makes! What strange words he says! It is really ridiculous.

But it must not be forgotten that the Prophet (S) was the person who had lived for forty years among them before he was appointed as prophet. He was famous for his intelligence in sight, trustworthiness, frankness and truthfulness, but when the chiefs of polytheists saw that their interests were threatened, they forgot all of them.

They ridiculed the call of the Prophet (S) and even they accused him of insanity, though he presented them clear reasons and evidences.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 42

إِن كَادَ لَيُضِلُّنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا لَوْلاَ أَن صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

42. "'He would have led us astray from our gods if we had not been staunch to them!' And soon they will know, when they see the chastisement, who is it that is most misled in path."

Patience and resistance is not always a value and merit.

Sometimes it is stubbornness and obstinacy such as resistance and patience in being misled and deviation.

So the Qur'an mentions the rest of pagans' words in this way:

"'He would have led us astray from our gods if we had not been staunch to them!'..."

But the Holy Qur'an answers them in some ways.

It first answers this group of people, who were not logical, with, a striking sentence:

"...And soon they will know, when they see the chastisement, who is it that is most misled in path."

This doom may refer to the punishment of the Hereafter, as some commentators, such as Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan, say. Or it is the

punishment of this world, such as the defeat in Badr war and such like, as Qurtabi in his famous commentary says. It also may refer to both of them.

It is interesting that this group of misled people presented contradictory words. On one hand, they ridiculed the Prophet (S) and his call. They wanted to say that the claim of the Prophet (S) was so baseless that it did not deserve strict handling.

On the other hand, they believed that if they did not stick to the traditions and religion of their ancestors, it would be possible that the words of the holy Prophet (S) deviated them from it. This shows that they counted the Prophet's words very effective, calculated, and serious. It is not impossible that those bewildered and obstinate people spoke so disturbingly.

Moreover, it has been seen many times that when deniers of the Truth confront divine leaders' logic, they use mockery as a technique for belittling them while innerly they do not have such a belief. And sometimes they count it serious and struggle with it by their soul and body.

Therefore Allah, the Mighty, says in this noble verse:

"...therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."[4]

In another verse He says:

"This is guidance. And those who disbelieve in the revelations of their Lord, for them there is a painful doom of wrath."[5]

Somewhere else He says:

"...and visited those who did wrong with dreadful punishment because they used to make mischief."[6]

The Prophet (S) says:

"One who oppresses people more in this world, will be punished before Allah (s.w.t.) more severely and harshly than any other person on the day of Resurrection."[7]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 43

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا

43. "Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god? Would you then be a guardian over him?"

Any god other than Allah is called 'Hawa' (low desire).[8]

The main root of idol-worshipping is doing low desires, too.

Therefore, Allah says in this noble verse:

"Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god? Would you then be a guardian over him?"

It means that if they ridiculed, stood against, and denied the call of the Prophet (S), it was not because that his logic was weak, his reasons were not conceiving and his religion could not be doubted, but it was because they did not obey intellect and reason, and their god was their low desires. Then, would he expect that such persons accept his call, or that he can affect them?

Great commentators have cited various opinions about the sentence:

"Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god?"

Some say, as was mentioned in above, they have one idol and that idol is their low desires from which all their deeds originate.

However, some believe that they do not observe any logic in choosing idols, but whenever they see a piece of stone and an interesting tree or something that motivates their low desire, they select it as their god, bow down before it, make sacrifice for it, and ask it to solve their problems.

There is a narration in the occasion of revelation of this holy verse, which confirms this meaning: one year, in Mecca, it happened that Quraysh were in a tight corner and they scattered here and there.

As soon as some of them saw a beautiful tree or an interesting stone, they worshipped it and if it was stone, they named it 'Stone of Happiness'. They made sacrifice for it and poured the blood of sacrifice on it. Even they asked it heal of their animals' maladies.

One day an Arab came and wanted to rub his camels against that stone and so to be blessed. But the camels did stampede and scattered in the desert. Then he said a poem whose content is that I came to 'Stone of Happiness' to unify our dispersion, but it scattered our gathering.

Then he said that what this Stone of Happiness is. It is only a piece of stone of that land. It neither leads nor misleads man.

Another Arab saw one of these pieces of stone, while a fox was discharging urine on it, he said:

"Is it a god on which a fox discharges urine? Certainly the one on which foxes discharge urine is abject."[9]

These two commentaries are consistent with each other.

The principle of idol-worshipping that is generated from some superstitions is a kind of worshipping low desires. Selecting various idols without any logic is also another branch of low desires.

Note

Undoubtedly there are various instincts and desires in man, all of which are necessary for continuance of his life: anger, fury, self-loving, being fond of wealth and earthy life, and such like. Certainly system of creation has created all of them for the sake of perfection.

What is important is that sometimes they do not cut their coat according to their cloth and exceed the limit. And they will be no longer the controlled means that are in the hand of mind and they begin to rebel and revolt. They imprison intellect and rule the whole entity of man and take him under their control.

This is the same thing that is called 'worshipping low desires' or 'sensuality', which is more dangerous than all kinds of idol-worshipping. Even idol-worshipping is also generated from it.

This is why the Prophet (S) has counted idol of low desire as the worst and supreme idol. He says:

"Under the sun and before Allah there is no greater idol than low desire that is worshipped."[10]

There is another tradition that says:

"The most disliked idol that is worshipped in the earth is the idol of low desire."

If we think well about this sentence, we find out that worshipping low desire is the source of unawareness and ignorance, as the holy Qur'an says:

"...and do not obey him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance, and he follows his own low desire and whose affair has become all excess."[11]

On the other hand worshipping low desires (sensuality) is the source of paganism and faithlessness, as the holy Qur'an says:

"Therefore, let him who believes not in it and follows his own vain desires turn you away from it, lest you perish."[12]

Moreover, worshipping low desires is the worst kind of misleading, as the holy Qur'an says:

"…And who goes farther astray than he who follows his lust without guidance from Allah..."[13]

Another matter is that worshipping low desires is the opposite of Truth-seeking and it deviates man from the path of Allah, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"...therefore judge between mankind with justice, and do not follow desire lest it should lead you astray from the way of Allah... "[14]

Furthermore, worshipping low desires prevents justice and pursuit of fairness, as the holy Qur'an says:

"...therefore do not follow any passion so that, you can deal justly... "[15]

Finally, if the system of heavens and the earth could be based on man's low desires, then entire universe would be corrupted:

"And if the Truth had followed their low desires, certainly the heavens and the earth and whoever therein would have perished!..."[16]

In Islamic narrations we see some striking sentences about this matter, too.

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Miserable is he who is deceived by his own low desires and pride."[17]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Worshipping low desires is the enemy of intellect."[18]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Worshipping low desires is the source of pains."[19]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Neither religion nor intellect can be along with worshipping low desires."[20]

In brief, when worshipping of low desires rules, there is neither religion nor intellect but pain, disaster and misery.

There will be only wretchedness, corruption and barbarity there.

Phenomena of our life and bitter experiences that we have about others and ourselves are live evidence of all points that were mentioned about worshipping of low desires in above holy verses and narrations. We see persons who suffer the consequences of one hour of worshipping low desires until, the end of their life.

We see young people who, as a result of following their low desires, have become addicted to drugs and have got sexually and morally deviated and so they have changed into a miserable worthless and disable creature. They have lost all their power and capitals.

In current age and past ages both, we see persons who slaughtered thousands and even millions of people out of their low desires and their shameful names will be remembered infamously up to the end of the world.

There is no exception to this principle. Even scientists and famous worshippers of Allah such as Bal‘am Ba‘ūra who were stripped of humane magnificence because of following low desires, and the Holy Qur’an says about them: they are like a dog which pants in any case.[21]

Therefore, it is not surprising that the Prophet (S) and Amir-ul-Mu’minin Ali (as) said:

“The most perilous precipice which is on the way of your happiness is worshipping low desires and ambitions, for following low desires prevents you from the truth and ambitions make man forget the Hereafter.”[22]

What are said in narrations and verses about not paying attention to low desires also show the importance of this issue in the viewpoint of Islam: so far that it considers being in awe of Allah and standing against the low desires as the key of Paradise.

The Qur’an says:

“But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from lust, verily the Garden will be his abode.”[23]

Imam Ali (as) says:

“The bravest person is one who overcomes his (or her) wishes.”[24]

There are many stories that are mentioned about spiritual state of some great men and the friends of Allah, who because of abandoning the low desires achieved spiritually high ranks which can not be achieved by usual ways.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 44

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلاَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

44. “Do you think that most of them do hear or understand? They are (nothing) but like the cattle; nay they are farther astray from the path.”

Criticizing pagans, the holy Qur’an uses the word ‘Akhtar’ (most) to differentiate those who will be guided from others.

The verse says:

“Do you think that most of them do hear or understand?...”

An animal has got no intellect to know goodness, badness, falsehood and truth, but deviated men act according to their low desires and do not follow intellect, although they have intellect.

To show the importance of the matter, this holy verse says:

“...They are (nothing) but like the cattle; nay, but they are farther astray from the path!”

Something like this meaning is mentioned in verse 179 of Surah Al-’A‘raf No. 7, which is about hell-dwellers who have got such a fate because of not using their eye, ear and intellect.

It says:

“...These are as the cattle, rather they are more astray...”

Though it is, in short, clear that they have gone astray, commentators have said interesting matters about this subject:

1. The reason that beasts can not know anything and do not have a heedful ear and a clear-sighted eye, is that they do not have such abilities, but man is more miserable than them, for he has been bestowed the essence of all talents. Allah has offered him so much talent that he can be His

vicegerent on the earth, but he will reach a state that he will be reduced to the level of a beast.

He has wasted all his merits and is reduced from the rank of being prostrated by the angels down to the abject rank of evils. This is really painful and it is a clear misleading.

2. Beasts will somehow not be reckoned and will not be divinely punished, while misled men must take the burden of all their deeds on their shoulder and be punished without any reduction.

3. Beasts provide men many services and do various jobs, but mutinous and disobedient men provide no services and even so they cause many disasters and destructions.

4. Beasts do not pose anyone threat and if they do, it is limited. But arrogant, wistful, and faithless man begins a war in which millions of people are murdered.

5. If beasts do not have any program and law, they follow the path that creation has determined for their instincts and they go that way only. But obstinate and disobedient men respect neither laws of creation nor divine legislation and count their wishes and desires as the ruler of everything.

6. Beasts never justify their actions. If they do a wrong action, it is a wrong action and if they follow their own way, that they do, it is the natural way. But it happens many times that an arrogant, tyrannical and wistful man justifies all his crimes as though he has done his humane and divine duties!

Therefore, no creature is more dangerous and harmful than a wistful, disobedient, faithless man, and because of this such a man is named ‘the worst of beasts’ in Surah Al-’Anfal, No .8, verse 22. What a proper name! So man, who is the vicegerent of Allah, will be worse than beast if he neglects his nature.

Notes

1. At-Tahqīq Fī Kalamāt il-Qur’ān
2. Kanz ud-Daqāyiq, the Commentary
3. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
4. Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 63
5. Al-Jāthiyah, No. 45, verse 11
6. Al-’A‘rāf, No. 7, verse 165
7. Kanz ul-‘Ummāl, Vol. 3, P. 500
8. Qurtabī, the commentary
9. Ali Ibn ’Ibrāhīm’s commentary, according to Nūr uth-Thaqalayn Vol. 4, P. 20
10. Dorr ul-Manthūr, following the concerning verse
11. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 28
12. Surah Tā-Hā, No. 20, verse 16
13. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 50
14. Surah Sād, No. 38, verse 26
15. Surah An-Nisā’, No. 4, verse 135
16. Surah Al-Mu’minūn, No. 23, verse 71
17. Nahj ul-Balāqah, Sermon 86
18. Qurar ul-Hikam, 265
19. Qurar ul-Hikam, 1048
20. Qurar ul-Hikam, 10541
21. Surah Al-’A‘rāf, No. 7, verse 176
22. Safīnat-ul-Bihār, Vol. 2, P. 728 and Nahj-ul-Balāqah, Sermon 38 and 42
23. Surah An-Nāzi‘āt, No. 79, verses 40 and 41
24. Safīnat ul-Bihār, Vol. 1, P. 689

Section 5: The Guidance Man Gets From the Working of Nature

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 45-46

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاء لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا

ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا

45. "Have you not seen (the might of) your Lord, how He extends the shadow? And if He had pleased He would certainly have made it stationary, then We have made the sun an indication of it;"

46. "Then We draw it in towards Ourselves, by an easy (gradual) contraction."

The best way of knowing Allah for all is to ponder the phenomena of existence, which are created according to divine wisdom. The rotation of the earth around itself and around the sun is not accidental. It is wisely and prudently.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The purpose of the extension of shadow in the verse is the shade that is between the dawn and rising of sun."[1]

Although some count the shade as the shade of night or afternoon, but with regard to the next sentence which says:

"...then We have made the sun an indication of it",

what Imam says is accepted.

Anyway, these two noble verses mention some of the main parts of divine blessings as the secrets of monotheism and knowledge of Allah. Deliberating on these affairs helps us to be more familiar with our Creator.

It first says:

"Have you not seen (the might of) your Lord, how He extends the shadow? And if He had pleased He would certainly have made it stationary..."

Certainly, this part of the verse refers to the importance of the blessing of vast and moving shades. These shades do not stay still but they move.

Commentators have various opinions about the purpose of the shade or which shade is meant by the verse:

Some say that this spread and vast shade is that one which covers the earth between the dawn and the rising of the sun which is the most pleasant shade and hours of the day. This pale shading light begins from the dawn and at the rising of the sun, sun's brightness replaces it.

Some have said that its purpose is all shade of night that begins from evening and ends with the rising of the sun, for we know that night is in fact the shade of the hemisphere of the earth that is in front of the sun. This shade is conical that expands in space in opposite side. That conical shade always moves. It ends in an area with the rising of the sun and it begins in another area.

Some others have also said that it is the shade of objects that forms in afternoon and it gradually expands.

Of course, if there were not the next sentences, we would understand an extensive meaning from this sentence that includes all shades, but other

indications that have come later show that the first commentary is more proper, for the verse continues:

"...then We have made the sun an indication of it;"

This refers to the fact that if there was not the sun, the concept of shade would not be clear. Basically, shade is formed by rays of the sun, for shade is usually partial darkness that happens for objects. It happens when light is cast on an impassible object and in front of it a shade will be formed.

Therefore, we must not only know shade by light according to the law 'know objects by their opposites', but also the existence of shade is caused by light.

In the next verse, Allah says:

"Then We draw it in towards Ourselves..."

We know that when sun rises, shades are gradually taken away until noontime that there will be no shade in some areas for the sun is above every creature, and in other areas it will be in its minimum size.

Therefore, shades neither appear instantly nor are taken away instantly. This is one of the wisdoms of Allah, for if this changing of light and darkness happened immediately, it would surely be harmful for all creatures. This gradual system of changing is in a way that it has the most benefits for all creatures without having any harm.

The Arabic word /yasira/ (gradual) refers to the gradual withdrawal of shades, or it refers to this matter that special system of light and darkness is a simple and easy thing comparing with the might of Allah.

The Qur'anic word /'ilayna/ also emphasizes this divine might.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...by an easy (gradual) contraction."

Anyway, there is no doubt that as man needs light in his life, he needs shade for modification and prevention of intense light. Continual light makes life deranged, as stable and permanent shade is fatal.

In the first case, all creatures would be burnt and in the second case all creatures would be frozen. This alternative system of light and shade makes life pleasant and possible for man.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 47

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا

47. "And He it is Who appointed the night for you to be a covering, and sleep as a rest, and He appointed the day a rising."

Alternation of day and night, calmness in the night and working in the day are the signs of Allah's lordship. Therefore, after mentioning the blessing of shades, the holy Qur'an brings up two other blessings that are very appropriate with it. In this way, a little of the secrets of the universe, which indicates the existence of the Essence of Allah, is mentioned.

It says:

"And He it is Who appointed the night for you to be a covering..."

What a beautiful and interesting sentence 'appointed the night for you to be a covering'! This dark curtain covers not only men but also all creatures of the earth. Like garment it protects them. It wraps man like a cover that he uses at the time of sleep for creating darkness and rest.

Then, it refers to the blessing of sleep when it continues saying:

"...and sleep as a rest..."

The Arabic word /subat/ is derived from the word /sabt/ that means 'to terminate'. Then it was used to mean to stop working for taking rest. That Saturday is called in Arabic language /yaum-us-sabt/ is because its appellation is taken from schedule of the Jews who set Saturday their holiday.

In fact, this word refers to the termination of all physical activities at the time of sleep, for we know that at the time of sleep most of the activities of body are terminated, and some other parts, such as heart and lung, lessen their usual work and continue more slowly so that tiredness will be removed and power will be back.

Well-timed and measured sleep revives all powers of body and it brings happiness and might. It is the best means for calming the nerves. On the contrary, termination of sleep for a long time is very harmful and even fatal. Therefore, one of the main tortures that torturers use is to terminate the sleep program and so to break man's resistance very soon.

In the end of the verse, the blessing of day is mentioned.

It says:

"...and He appointed the day a rising."

The Qur'anic word /nušūr/ is derived from the word /našr/ that means: 'to spread', which is the opposite of folding. This may refer to spreading of soul throughout the body when man awakes. It is like reviving after death. It may refer to men's participation in social activities and movement for various works of life on the earth.

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) used to state this sentence every morning:

"Praise belongs to Allah Who brings us to life after death and (finally) we will return to Him."[2]

Verily, the brightness of day causes movement in man bodily and spiritually, as darkness brings sleep and calmness.

In nature, the first ray of the sun brings great movement and ferment in all creatures. A resurrection happens among them and each of them follows its own program. Even plants grow when light is cast on them. When the sun sets and night comes, reveille is warbled throughout the entire universe: birds return to their nests and living creatures sleep and take rest.

Even plants go to some kind of sleep.

In the end, in the holy Qur'an, there are several things that are mentioned as garment:

Night:

"...appointed the night for you to be a covering... "[3]

Spouse:

"...They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them... "[4]

Piety:

"...and the raiment of piety, that is the best... "[5]

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 48-49

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء طَهُورًا

لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا

48. "And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings going before His Mercy (rain), and We send down pure water from the sky."

49. "That thereby We may give life to a dead land, and We give many beasts and men that We have created to drink thereof."

After mentioning these great blessings in the pervious holy verses, which are as the main principles of man's life, now another important blessing is mentioned.

It says:

"And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings going before His Mercy (rain), and We send down pure water from the sky."

The function of winds as herald of descending of divine blessing is not concealed to anyone, for if they did not exist, a drop of rain would never fall on dry land. It is true that the shining of the sun evaporates water of the seas and the condensing of vapors in cold layer of atmosphere forms rain clouds.

But if winds do not move these rain clouds from oceans to dry lands, once more clouds change into rain and falls on the seas.

In short, these heralds of blessing that move continually throughout the earth quench the thirst of dry lands, brings the enlivening rain, forms streams, springs, wells, and grows various kinds of plant.

Always some of these winds, that move in font of clouds and are mixed with mild moisture, create a pleasant breeze which emits the smell of rain. They are like givers of glad tidings that announce the coming of a dear traveler.

Using the Qur'anic word /riyah/ (winds) may refer to the various kinds of wind: some of them flow from the north, some flow from the south, some flow from east to west, and some flow from west to east. Consequently they spread clouds in all areas of the earth.

It is worth-considering that here the adjective 'pure' is attributed to 'water'. This is overstatement, therefore, its meaning is being pure and to purify. It means that water is both essentially clean and can purify defiled things. In addition to water, there are many objects that are clean, but they can never purify a defile object.

Anyway, besides being enlivener, water can purify. If there were not water, all of our life, body and soul would be defiled and dirty. Though water cannot kill microbes, it can dissolve and wash microbes. In this way, it is an effective help to man's health and it fights against many diseases.

Moreover, we know that for purification of soul we also perform ritual bathing and ablution. So this enlivening liquid purifies both soul and body.

However, this purifying characteristic of water is in the second rank, though it is important.

Therefore, in this noble verse, Allah adds:

"That thereby We may give life to a dead land, and We give many beasts and men that We have created to drink thereof."

Some Points

1. In this verse, 'many beasts and men' are mentioned, though all of animals and men use rainwater.

This is because it wants to refer to those who dwell in desert and nomads who do not have permanent water and use rainwater directly. They perceive this important blessing more than other people do.

When a piece of cloud appears in the sky and the rain falls, pits will be filled with clean water. Then their animals drink water from them and they themselves also use that water. They will perceive life and movement in themselves and their domestic animals.

2. The Arabic word /nusqih/ is derived from the word /'isqa'/. As Raqib, in Mufradat, and other commentators say, its difference from the word /saqiya/ is in that /'isqa'/ means to prepare water and to let man to drink it whenever he likes, while the word /saqiya/ means to give someone a container of water for drinking. In other words, the word /'isqa'/ has got more extensive meaning.

3. In this verse 'dead land' is mentioned first and then beasts and after that men are brought up. This is because when dead lands are not enlivened by rain, beasts do not have food and when beasts are not fed, men cannot use them as food.

4. Mentioning enlivenment of water after the issue of purification may refer to their close relationship.[6]

5. The Qur'anic word /tahūr/ is applied to something that is both very pure and purifier.

6. The Arabic word /bilad/ means land, whether it is city or village or farm, for the verse of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 58 says:

"And the good land, its vegetation comes forth (in abundance) by the leave of its Lord..."

It is clear that the growth of plant is not limited to city.

7. The Arabic word /'anasi/ is the plural form of the word /'insi/ which means man.

8. Since the meaning of the Arabic word 'Balad' is the same as the word 'Baldah, instead of the word 'Maytatan', the word 'Maytan' is used to describe it.[7]

9. In using water, agriculture ranks first, then there is the rank of animals, and then men are the last. Therefore, in the verse, first agriculture and revivification of land, then animals and finally men are mentioned.

10. Winds have got many benefits such as fining of weather, transferring of clouds, lessening of heat, and fecundation of plants.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 50

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلاَّ كُفُورًا

50. "And indeed We have distributed it amongst them so that they may remember (Allah), but most of mankind are averse (to aught) save ingratitude."

Remembrance of Divine blessings is to express gratitude for them and negligence of them is to express ingratitude and rejection for them.

In this noble verse, Allah refers to the holy Qur'an and says:

"And indeed We have distributed it amongst them so that they may remember (Allah), but most of mankind are averse (to aught) save ingratitude."

Although many of commentators such as the deceased Tabarsi and Shiykh Tūsi in Tibyan, and 'Allamah Tabataba'i in Al-Mizan have said that the pronoun of the word 'Sarrafnah' refers to rain, that in this case its concept is that Allah sends drops of rain in various directions and places and divides them among people for the sake of remembrance of this great blessing of Allah, but it is right to say that this pronoun refers to the Qur'an and its verses, for this kind of structure (past tense and present continuous tense) is used 10 times in the holy Qur'an and 9 of them explicitly refer to the verses of the Qur'an.

And in many cases the Qur'anic phrase /liyazzakkarū/ (that they may remember) is placed before them and so it seems impossible that only in this holy verse this phrase has got a different meaning.

Basically the Arabic word /tasrif/, which means to change and transform, is not very consistent with sending down rainwater, while it is more consistent with the verses of the Qur'an which are presented in various forms, sometimes in the form of promise, sometimes in the form of threat of punishment, sometimes in the form of prohibition, sometimes in the form of enjoinment order, and sometimes in the form of the life story of ancient people.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 51-52

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَذِيرًا

فَلاَ تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُم بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

51. "And if We had pleased certainly We would have raised up a warner in every town."

52. "So do not follow the infidels, and strive against them with it (the Qur'an) a strenuous strife."

This verse somehow speaks about the Prophet (S) as the seal of prophets and about the comprehensiveness of his religion, for it implies that no prophet was appointed anywhere with him, since he can control the entire society and no body else is needed. He has such a rank and state that prophethood is closed with his existence.

It is also possible that some polytheists used this pretext along with other ones that it was better that Allah appointed a prophet in every village and city.

But, in answer to them, the Qur'an says:

"And if We had pleased certainly We would have raised up a warner in every town."

Anyway, this verse is a reason for magnificence of the Prophet's rank and it shows also the necessity of unity of leadership and heaviness of his duty.

For this reason, in the next holy verse, two important commandments that are the main programs of prophets are stated.

So, addressing the Prophet (S), it says:

"So do not follow the infidels..."

Do not conciliate with the deviated persons in any step you take, for conciliation with them is the malady of the call to Allah. Stand fast against

them and try to reform them, but be careful not to yield to their low desires and superstitions.

The second commandment is as follows:

"...and strive against them with it (the Qur'an) a strenuous strife."

That is, his strife must be like magnificence of his mission and the magnificence of all former prophets' endeavour, an endeavour that includes all dimensions of people's soul and intellect, and it includes all spiritual and materialistic aspects.

Undoubtedly the purpose of Jihad (strife), here, is only intellectual, cultural, and propagation endeavour. Its purpose is not Holy war with weapon, for this Surah is a Meccan Surah and we know that the command of armed war was not issued in Mecca.

As the deceased Tabarsi says in Majma'ul-Bayan, this verse is a clear reason for this fact that the intellectual effort and the struggle of propagation against temptations of the deviated people and the enemies of the Truth is of the greatest Jihad (strife).

Even it is possible that the famous tradition of the Prophet (S) refers to this Jihad and the magnificence of the learned and scientists' job in propagation of religion, when he (S) says:

"We returned from small Jihad to the greater Jihad."

This shows the greatness of the rank of the Qur'an, too, for it is a means for the greater warfare and it is an effective weapon whose power of explanation and argumentation, deep effect and attraction is beyond men's imagination and power.

It is an effective means that is as shining as the sun, as brightening as the day, as canning as curtains of night, as motion-imparting as winds, as great as clouds, and as enlivening as drops of rain, the qualities of which were referred to in the previous verses.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 53

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

53. "And He it is Who had made the two seas join and flow together, one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction."

Again this noble verse argues on Allah's magnificence by mentioning His blessings in the system of creation. Consisting with mentioning descending of enlivening drops of rain in the previous verses, it refers to not mixing of sweet waters and salty ones, and says:

"And He it is Who had made the two seas join and flow together, one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction."

The Qur'anic word /maraja/ is derived from the word /maraj/ that means 'to mix or to send and to deliver free', and here it means to set salty water and sweet water beside each other.

The Arabic word /'aŏb/ means wholesome, pure and cool. And the word /furat/ means sweet and delicious. The Arabic word /milh/ means 'salty',

and the word /’ujaj/ means ‘bitter and warm’. So /‘aŏb/ and /furat/ are opposite in meaning with /milh/ and /’ujaj/. The word ‘Barzakh’ means a bar and partition between two things.

But the phrase ‘Hijran Mahjura’ (inviolable obstruction), as was said in the 22nd verse of the current Surah, is an expression that was used by Arabs when they met a person whom they feared. They said it for protecting themselves.

They wanted to say, ‘excuse and protect us and be away from us!’

Anyway, this noble verse depicts one of the wonderful manifestations of Allah's might in the world of creation, how an invisible veil and an undetectable bar is set between salty and sweet seas and it does not allow them to get mixed.

Of course, today we know that this undetectable bar is ‘the density difference of sweet and salty water’ or it is so-called ‘specific gravity’ of theirs which causes them not to be mixed for a long time.

Some commentators have tried to find out where such two salty and sweet seas are located on the earth that they do not mix.

But this problem has been solved for us, for we know that all great sweet rivers that empty into seas form a sea of sweet water in seashore and send salty water back and this situation continues for a long time. For the different degree of their density, they avoid mixing with each other and say to each other: ‘Hijran Mahjura’.

It is interesting that because of flow and ebb, water of seas comes up and goes down two times a day as the result of the moon’s gravitation. This sweet water, which forms a sea, goes forth into the land at the estuary of the same rivers and, the places around there.

Since ancient times, men have taken this matter into consideration and have dug canals in such places of sea and farmed many lands irrigated by this sweet water that spreads in vast areas by means of flow and ebb.

Just now, there are millions of palm trees in the south of Iran, which are irrigated in this way. They are located very far from the sea. When rain falls less, and the water of great rivers that empties into the sea decreases, and sometimes salty water increases, local farmers get worried, for they fear that it harms their farming.

Usually this is not so. This ‘pleasant and sweet’ water which is placed besides ‘salty and warm’ water does mix with it, and this is a great capital for them.

It needs not mentioning that the existence of natural reasons in such issues does not devaluate them. What is nature? It is nothing except Allah’s will and intention that has bestowed such attributes to these creatures.

It is interesting that whenever man flies over them with airplane, it is clearly seen that these two waters have got various colours and do not get mixed. This makes man remember this Qur’anic point.

Moreover, locating this verse among the verses that are about ‘faith’ and ‘faithlessness’ may refer to this matter that sometimes in a society or city, or even in a home, there are faithful persons who are like sweet and pleasant water along with unfaithful persons who are like salty and warm water.

They have two various ideas and opinions and they have pure deeds and impure deeds, but they do not get mixed.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 54

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا

54. "And He it is Who has created man from water, then He made him related in blood and in wedlock; and your Lord is ever Powerful."

The purpose of 'water' in this noble verse is the sperm of man, and the evidence of it is found in the following two verses:

"Did We not create you from a base fluid"[8]

"He is created from a gushing fluid."[9]

Since the previous verses talked about the falling of rain as well as the locating of the salty and sweet waters besides each other, now this verse mentions the creation of man from water,

It says:

"And He it is Who has created man from water..."

Verily carving on water and shaping such a novel figure on water is the reason for omnipotence of Allah. In fact, the former verses talked about the growth of plants because of rain water, but here it speaks about a higher level that is the creation of man from water.

Therefore, commentators say that the purpose of water here is sperm from which all men are generated by Allah's might. By sexual intercourse, man's sperm, which is floating in water, joins woman's ovum and the first blossom of man's life, that is the first living cell of man, will be created.

If man carefully studies the various phases of forming sperm from the beginning up to the end of fetal period, he sees a lot of signs of Allah's might and magnificence so that they will be enough to know His Pure Essence.

This commentary will be proved by the sentence that follows the verse and we will explain it.

Moreover, undoubtedly most of man's body consists of water; therefore we can say that the main material of every man is water. Consequently, man can very scarcely resist lack of water, while he can survive many days and weeks without eating food.

Of course, it is also possible that all of these meanings are included in the concept of the verse. That is, both the first man is created from water, and all human beings are created from (seaman) water, and water is the most important material of man's body. Water is the simplest material of the world, but how has it become the source of such wonderful creation? This is the reason for His might.

After mentioning the creation of man, the increase of generations is brought up.

It says:

"...then He made him related in blood and wedlock..."

The purpose of the Arabic word 'Nasab' (blood) is the relationship that is between men by way of reproductions and births, such as the relationship between father and offspring or relationship between brothers.

The purpose of the Qur'anic word /sihr/ (wedlock), which originally means 'groom', is the relationship that occurs through marriage between two families, such as the relation of man with the close relatives of his wife which is created in this way.

These two are what Islamic jurists say as 'the indirect cause' and 'lineage' in the subject of marriage.

In Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, seven of the unmarriageable ones (mother, daughter, sister of mother, sister of father, daughter of brother, and daughter of sister) that are created by lineage or parentage, and four cases of the indirect cause (daughter of wife, mother of wife, wife of issue, and wife of father) are mentioned.

Of course, there are other opinions about this sentence stated by commentators, but this one is stronger and clearer, including this one: some say that the word 'Nasab' means 'male offspring' and the word /sihr/ means 'female offspring', for blood relationships traditionally are counted depending on fathers not mothers.

But as we said in the commentary of the 61st verse of Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, it is a big mistake that is originated from customs and traditions that were before Islam. They thought that blood relationship has been originated only from father, and mother has no role.

But as it is specified by Islamic jurisprudence and all the Islam learned persons, all ordinances that are about lineally being unmarriageable are from both the father side and mother side.

It is interesting that there is a famous tradition which is recorded in Shi'ite and Sunni books.

According to this tradition, this verse is sent down about the Prophet (p.b.u.li.) and Imam Ali (as), for the Prophet (S) married his daughter, Fatimah (as), off to Ali (as), therefore, Ali (as) was both the cousin of the Prophet (S) and spouse of his daughter. This is the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase 'Nasaban Wa Sehran' (related in blood and in wedlock).[10]

As we have repeatedly said, these narrations are some clear extensions of the verse and they do not prevent generality of the meaning of the verse. This verse includes any relationship that is created by the way of blood and marriage and one of its clear extensions is the bilateral relationship of Ali (as) and Prophet (S).

At the end of the verse, in order to put emphasis on the former issues, the Qur'an says:

"...And your Lord is ever Powerful."

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 55

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لاَ يَنفَعُهُمْ وَلاَ يَضُرُّهُمْ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلَى رَبِّهِ ظَهِيرًا

55. "And they worship besides Allah (things) which neither profit them nor harm them; and the infidel is a helper (of aberration) against his Lord."

No reason and logic polytheists have got for worshipping their idols. Harm and benefit is only in the hand of Allah, not others.

Finally, in the above verse, the deviation of polytheists from the principle of monotheism, which is comparing the power of idols with Allah's power and some of which are mentioned in the previous verses, is brought up.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And they worship besides Allah (things) which neither profit them nor harm them..."

It is certain that benefit and harm can not be the only criterion of worshipping, but by mentioning this the Qur'an intends to say that they have no pretext for worshiping idols, for idols are some objects that have no value, no positive and negative effect.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"...and the infidel is a helper (of aberration) against his Lord."

They are not alone in their deviated path and they certainly help each other. The powers which must be mobilized for the sake of Allah, are organized against Allah, His Prophet (S), and the true believers.

If we see that some of commentators have interpreted the Qur'anic word /kafir/ (disbeliever) here as 'Abū Jahl, they want to mention a clear extension, otherwise, the Arabic word /kafir/ has got extensive meaning everywhere which includes all disbelievers.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 56

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

56. "And We did not sent you but a bearer of glad tidings and a warner."

In this short verse, both monotheism: ''Arsalna' (We have sent), and prophethood: 'Ka' (you, O' Muhammad!) and Resurrection (a bearer of glad tidings and a warner) are referred to.

Since the previous verses spoke about idol-worshippers' insistence on worshipping idols that had no benefit and harm, in this holy verse the duty of the Prophet (S) to stubborn disbelievers is mentioned.

It says:

"And We did not sent you but a bearer of glad tidings and a warner."

If they do not accept the call of the Prophet (S), there is no fault and responsibility on him; because he has done his duty that is to give good tidings and to warn, and he has called receptive persons to Allah.

This verse both specifies the duty of the Prophet (S) and sympathizes with him, and it is a kind of threat and heedlessness to these deviated persons.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 57

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلاَّ مَن شَاء أَن يَتَّخِذَ إِلَى رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

57. "Say: 'I do not ask you a wage for it (my ministry) except for him who wishes to choose a way unto his Lord'."

A successful leader is one who declares to people that he does not expect anything. Man gets the rank of sincerity when he does not want or demand any physical, positional, and verbal reward.

Thus, Allah commands the Prophet (S) to tell the people: he does not ask of them any reward for this Qur'an and conveying this heavenly religion, save that people will may choose a way unto their Lord.

The verse says:

"Say: 'I do not ask you a wage for it (my ministry) except for him who wishes to choose a way unto his Lord'."

It implies that the only reward and compensation of the Prophet (S) is people's guidance that has happened intentionally and willfully in them and not reluctantly and compulsorily. This is an interesting phrase that shows the maximum of kindness and benevolence of the holy Prophet (S) towards his followers, for he counts their happiness and bliss as his reward.

It is clear that guidance of the nation (Ummah) has got an extraordinarily spiritual reward for the Prophet (S), because whoever leads people to a good deed is like the one who does this deed.

There are also other possibilities about the commentary of this verse. Some say that the verse implies that the Prophet (S) does not want any reward from people, except they give some of their wealth to the poor for the sake of Allah, of course, if they will.

But the first commentary is more near to the meaning of the verse.

It is understood from what have been said above that the pronoun of the Qur'anic word /'alayh/ (for this) refers to the Qur'an and propagation of Islam religion, for it speaks about not wanting reward and compensation for this call.

This sentence both stops the pretexts of pagans and makes clear that acceptance of this divine call is easy and simple for anybody without any trouble and expenditure.

This testifies to truthfulness of the Prophet's call and purification of his thought and program, for false claimers do this certainly for the sake of some indirect or direct reward.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 58

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لاَ يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ وَكَفَى بِهِ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا

58. "And rely on the (Ever) living One Who dies not, and celebrate with His praise, and sufficient is He as being aware of the faults of His servants,"

The Arabic word /tawakkul/ as well as its derivatives are mentioned [70] times in the Qur'an. It means to rely on Allah and to use Him as lawyer in all affairs.

In the previous verse the holy Prophet (S) was commanded to tell people he would not demand reward from them. And now this verse implies that religious leaders do not expect anything from people for their own life and they must trust Allah.

Therefore, in this verse, the main reliance of the Prophet (S) is made clear; it says:

"And rely on the (Ever) living One Who dies not..."

By having such a Trust, Sanctuary, and Guardian Who is always alive and will be alive, the Prophet (S) does not need their reward and does not

fear harm, hurt, and their conspiracy. Now that this is so, 'hymn His praise', do glorify Him and praise Him for all His perfect Attributes.

The verse says:

"...and celebrate with His praise..."

In fact, this sentence can be counted as the etiology of the former sentence, for when He has no fault and weakness and has got all good things and is perfect, such a One is deserved to be trusted.

Then it is added: implying that he (S) should not be worried of the enemies' conspiracies for He suffices as the Knower of His bondmen's sins, and He reckons them when its time comes.

The verse continues saying:

"...and sufficient is He as being aware of the faults of His servants,"

Whom Must We Trust?

In the above verse, when the Prophet (S) is ordered to forget all creatures and to rely on the pure nature of Allah, He mentions some attributes for this pure nature, which are, in fact, the main qualifications of One Who can be the real and sure trust of people.

First, he must be alive, for a dead and unbeneficial creature, such as idols, cannot be someone's trust.

Second, he must be immortal, so that, those who trust him do not get worried and irresolute about his death.

Third, he must be omniscient. He must know both all the needs of those who trust in him and the plots and plans of foes.

Forth, he must be omnipotent. He must have no weakness and disability that weakens this reliance.

Fifth, he must manage and control all affairs. And we know that these attributes are only found in the pure nature of Allah, thus, He is the only One Whom can be trusted and does not have instability in all events and disasters.

Some Traditions On Trust

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"One who wants to be the most pious person of people has to trust Allah."[11]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Fearing only Allah and not fearing other than Allah is reliance."[12]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"The best servants with Allah are those who trust Allah more and obey His commandments."[13]

4. Imam Ali (as) said:

"This is sufficient for your trust that you know no one as your sustainer but Allah, the Glorious."[14]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Oh people! Trust and have confidence in Allah, for He will be sufficient for the affairs of those who trust (in Him)."[15]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"If one trusts Allah, He provides his provisions and livelihood from some ways that he has not thought. And Allah makes the world the trust of one who pins all his hopes on the world."[16]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 59

الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا

59. "(He) Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six Days, then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne of authority) the Beneficent (God)! Ask then (what you need) from Him Who is aware (of everything)."

This noble verse states the power of Allah in the entire universe and describes this assured trust in another way.

It says:

"(He) Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six Days, then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne of authority)..."

One who has such omnipotence can protect those trust Him from every danger and disaster. He both has created the world and the management, leadership and administration of it are in His authority.

Moreover, gradual creation of the world shows that Allah does not hurry in any job. If He does not punish wrongdoers very quickly, it is because He wants to give them opportunity and respite to improve them. Furthermore, someone who fears for the passage of time hurries, and this is not true about Allah, the Mighty.

In the commentary of the 54th verse of the Surah Al-'A'raf we talked about the creation of the universe in six days and we said that the purpose of 'days' in such cases is periods that each of which may last millions or milliards years.

We mentioned the evidences of this matter from Arabic literature and other languages. Also we specified all these 6 periods. The Qur'anic word /'arš/ has also been explained there.

In the end of the verse it is added:

"...the Beneficent (God)!..."

He is the One Whose encompassing mercy includes all creatures, and everyone who obeys Him, or everyone who disobeys Him, believers and disbelievers all enjoy His unconditional generosity.

Now that man has such a mighty and generous Lord, he must ask Him whatever he needs or he must ask Him Who knows everything.

The verse says:

"...Ask then (what you need) from Him Who is aware (of every thing)."

As a matter of fact this sentence is the result of the former discussion; it implies that the Prophet (S) must declare that he does not want any reward from them and they must trust Allah Who has all these attributes, that is.

He is both the Powerful, the Beneficent, and All-merciful, and All-aware, and the Omniscient. Thus man must ask Him whatever he wants.

Commentators have other opinions about this sentence and mostly they have interpreted the Qur'anic word /fas'al/ (ask), here, as to ask question or to question not to demand, and they say that the concept of this sentence is that if man wants to ask question about the creation and the power of Allah, he must ask Allah Himself, for He knows everything.

Some have not only interpreted 'ask' as ask question or to question, but also they say that the purpose of the Qur'anic word 'Khabir' is Gabriel or the Prophet of Islam (S), that, is if anyone has question about Allah's attributes, he must ask them.

Of course, the last commentary seems very unlikely and the commentary that is before the last one is not very consistent with the former verses. Thus, the meaning which says, to ask Allah whatever someone wants, seems more probable.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 60

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ أَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا

60. "And when it is said to them: 'Prostrate you to Rahman (The Beneficent Allah), they say: 'And what is Rahman (the Beneficent Allah)? Shall we prostrate to what you bid us?' And it increases them in aversion."

In this verse the Arabic word /ma/ (what), which is use for inanimate and solid bodies, is repeated two times. The pagans used this word to scorn the Holy Divine Essence.

Therefore, instead of saying 'Wa Man ir-Rahman' (and who is the Beneficent?), they said: 'Wa-Mar-Rahman' (And what is the Beneficent?), and instead of saying 'Liman Ta'muruna' (to whom you bid us), they said 'Lima Ta'muruna' (to what you bid us).

Since the previous verses spoke about both the might and magnificence of Allah and His encompassing mercy, this verse implies that when they are told adore the Beneficent Allah, Whose mercy encompasses soul and body of yours, they say out of pride and conceit, or for redacting, what the Beneficent Allah is.

The verse says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Prostrate you to Rahman (The Beneficent Allah), they say: 'And what is Rahman (the Beneficent Allah)?..."

They said that they did not basically know Rahman and his word had no clear sense for them.

They continued saying:

"...Shall we prostrate to what you bid us?'..."

We will not submit anybody and we are not the follower of the command of this and that.

They say this statement and, consequently, their hate and their distance from Allah will be increased.

Certainly the most proper name of Allah's names for calling people to adoration and worship in His presence is 'Rahman' (the Beneficent) with its extensive meaning of His mercy, but because of blind-heartedness and

stubbornness they not only presented no flexibility for this invitation, but also they embarked on scorning and mocking and they mockingly said:

"...what is Rahman (the Beneficent Allah)?"

As Pharaoh said in the opposition of Moses (as):

"And what is the Lord of the Worlds?"[17]***,***

they did not even say: 'and who is...?'

However, the root and the form of this word, 'Rahman' is Arabic, and the Prophet (S) always, at the beginning of each Surah of the Qur'an, said this name for them by the phrase:

'Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim' (In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful).

Therefore, their aim was nothing but mocking and pretext-seeking.

The next sentence also testifies to this fact, for they say implicitly:

'Are we to adore whatever you (Muhammad) bid us and prostrate by your command?'

But as a matter of fact, the propagation of divine leaders only has effect on those persons whose hearts are receptive and the blind-hearted stubborn persons not only do not enjoy it, but also their hatefumess increases, for the verses of the Qur'an are like enlivening drops of rain that grows flower and meadow in gardens and grows thorn in the brackish lands.

So it is not surprisingly that it says:

"...And it increases them in aversion."

Notes

1. Nūr uth-Thaqalayn
2. Qurtabī, Vol. 7, P. 4455
3. Surah Furqān, the verse under discussion
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 187
5. Surah Al-'A'rāf, No. 7, verse 26
6. We have spoken in detail about the effects of water enlivenment in Surah Al-Anbiyā, No. 21, verse 30.
7. Qurtabī, the Commentary
8. Surah Al- Mursalāt, verse 20
9. Surah At-Tāriq, verse 6
10. Majma' ul-Bayān and Rūh ul-Ma'ānī
11. Mishkāt ul-'Anwār, P. 50
12. Mishkāt ul-'Anwār, P. 56
13. Majmū'ah Warram, Vol. 2, P. 123
14. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 3, P. 402
15. Kanz ul-'Ummāl, Vol. 3, P. 703
16. Kanz ul-'Ummāl, Vol. 3, P. 103
17. Surah Ash-Shu'arā, No. 26, verse 23

Section 6: Repentance, Belief and Good Deeds

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 61

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُّنِيرًا

61. "Blessed is He Who has set in heaven constellations, and has set therein a lamp (the sun) and the moonilluminating."

The Qur'anic word /tabaraka/ is used only in past tense and it is repeated thee times in this Surah[1].

As it was said before, it is derived from whether the word 'Baraka' (stable and constant), or from the word 'Barakat' (abundant goodness).

This noble verse is in fact the answer of those who said what 'the Beneficent' is. Though they present this question mockingly, the Holy Qur'an answers them seriously.

It says:

"Blessed is He Who has set in the heaven constellations..."

The Arabic word /burūj/ is the plural form of the word 'Burj' which originally means 'appearance', therefore, that part of the wall that is around a city or camp of an army and is taller and more remarkable is called 'Burj'. Also when a woman shows her adornment, it will be said: "Tabarrajat il-Mar'ah'. This word is applied to tall palaces, too.

Anyway, heavenly mansions refer to special constellations before which each season and each time of year the sun and the moon pass, for example, it is said that the sun is in Aries-, which means the sun is in front of the constellation of Aries,: Or the moon is in Scorpios, that is the moon is in front of the constellation of Scorpios. (A constellation is a collection of stars which seems to us a special form.)[2]

Thus, the verse refers to the heavenly places of the sun and the moon and it says:

"...and has set therein a lamp (the sun) and the moon illuminating."

As a matter of fact, this verse states how precise and fixed the Orbits of the sun and the moon are in heaven. (Of course, these changes are in fact resulted from the movement of the earth around the sun).

It is a precise system that rules them for millions of year so that astronomers can forecast hundreds of year later. This system that rules over these great celestial bodies testifies to the existence of a Lord Who is the manager and administrator of the great universe.

Do not they (disbelievers) know Him with such clear signs and with such exact places of the sun and the moon and then they say what the Beneficent is?

Why is the sun called 'Siraj'? And why is the adjective 'Munir' used for the moon? It is probably because the word 'Siraj' means light and the lamp from which light comes out and this is consistent with the nature of the sun that according to scientific researches the light of the sun belongs to itself.

On the contrary, the light of the moon does not belong to itself and it comes from the sun, therefore, the adjective 'Munir' (giving light) is used for the moon, though its light is borrowed from somewhere else.[3]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 62

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا

62. "And He it is Who has made the night and the day to succeed each other for him who desires to reflect or desires to be thankful."

This noble verse still continues to introduce the Lord of the universe and states another part of the system of the existence.

It says:

"And He it is Who has made the night and the day to succeed each other for him who desires to reflect or desires to be thankful."

It is the regular system that rules the day and the night which alternatively substitute each other. This system is in work for millions of year. It is the system that if does not exist the life of man will be destroyed by intensity of heat and light or darkness, and this is an attractive reason for those who want to know Allah.

We know that the system of day and night is generated from the movement of the earth around itself. Its gradual and regular changes, that is continually the duration of one of them increases and the other one decreases, is because of its axle slope in regard to its orbit, which, during a year, causes the four seasons.

If the earth rotated faster or slower than its usual speed, in one case the nights would get so longer that all things would be frozen, and in other case the days would be so long that the sun would burn everything. Moreover, the centrifugal force could be so intense that the earthly creatures would be thrown out into the space.

In brief, on one hand, the study of this system awakes the theology nature in man. (Perhaps the application of the phrase 'desires to reflect' refers to this fact), and on the other hand, it awakes the thanking spirit in man and the phrase 'desires to be thankful' may refer to this matter.

It is worth-mentioning that in a narration whether belongs to the Prophet (S) or Infallible Imams (as) we read:

"Coming day and night in succession is for the matter that if man does dereliction of his duties in one of them, he recompenses it in another one."

This meaning may be the second commentary for the verse and, since the verses of the Qur'an has got levels of meaning, it is not inconsistent with the first commentary either.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

"Any worship and obedience that you missed to do in the night make up for it in the day, for Allah, the Mighty and the Blessed, says:

'Man must compensate the undone duties of night in day and compensate those of day in night.'"[4]

The same thing is narrated by Fakhr-i-Razi from the Prophet (S).

Conclusion:

To learn lessons from 'the system ruling the universe' depends on our will. How a lot are persons who spend their life for a phenomenon, but since they do not will to learn lesson, they do not profit by the example!

These persons are like one who sells mirror, the one who always looks at mirror, but does not straighten his garments, while a passenger may straight his collar by just one careful glance at mirror.

Therefore, a mere glance is not enough, but the will for reformation also is necessary. With this matter mentioned, it gets clear why some scientists do not know Allah, while they have spent their life for researching the nature, for they do not do anything for knowing Allah, as a carpenter makes many ladders, but he does not will to climb one of them.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 63-64

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلاَمًا

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

63. "And the servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth humbly; and when the ignorant address them, they answer; 'Peace'.

64. "And those who spend the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing."

The behaviour of each person shows his personality and character. The supreme reward and medal for man is the medal of servitude of Allah:

('The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)').

For being related to infinity makes man exalted.

Form this holy verse on, an interesting and comprehensive discussion about the attributes of Allah's special slaves is brought up under the title of *'The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)'*.

It, in fact, completes the former verses in which there has been mentioned that the obstinate polytheists said out of conceit and ridicule when the name of Allah, the Beneficent, has been mentioned:

"...what is the Beneficent?"

We saw that the holy Qur'an introduced Allah, the Beneficent, to them in two verses. Now it is time for introducing the Beneficent Allah to the special servants. When His servants are so dignified and lofty, the magnificence of Allah, the Beneficent, will be understood better.

In these two verses and the next verses, more than 10 attributes of theirs are mentioned, some of which are related to the creedal aspects, some are moral, some are social, some are personal, and some are collective. On the whole they are of the supreme humane values.

It first says:

"And the servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth humbly..."

In fact the first attribute introduced for 'The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)' is denial and negation of conceit, pride and self-admiration, which is seen in all deeds of man, even in his way of walking, for moral habits will appear in man's deeds, speech, and gestures, so that by studying the way of walking of a person we can find out many things about his morality.

Yes, they are humble and the key of faith is humbleness, while the key of unfaithfulness is conceit and pride. We have seen many times in everyday life and we have also read frequently in the holy Qur'an that the conceited arrogant have not been willing even to listen to the words of the divine leaders, and they have ridiculed the truths.

They do not see further than the end of their own nose. Is it possible to acquire faith with such mood of conceitedness?

Yes, these faithful persons are the servants of Allah, the Beneficent. The first sign of servitude is that humbleness, which penetrates all particles of their entity and even it can be detected in their way of walking.

Since the spirit of faith is humbleness, we see that one of the main commandments given to the Prophet (S) by Allah is:

"And do not walk around exultantly on the earth; certainly you will never rend the earth, nor attai the mountains in height."[5]

Verily if man knows himself and the universe minimally, he knows how small he is comparing with this great universe! Even if his neck gets as long as mountains, the highest mountains are less than the peel swells of sour orange in regard to the hugeness of the earth which is itself just a tiny particle in these great galaxies.

After all, is not pride and conceit the reason of absolute ignorance and lack of knowledge?

It is narrated that one day the Prophet (S) was passing through a lane where he saw some of people had gathered in a place. He asked them its reason. They said that a mad person was doing some mocking actions and people were therefore attracted by him.

The Prophet (S) called them and told them:

"Do you want to introduce you the real mad man?"

All people were silent and were listening to him carefully.

He said:

"A person who walks conceitedly, and he continually looks around himself. He moves his sides along with his shoulder, (he sees no one but himself and thinks about no one save himself). A person whom people expect no goodness and a person from whose mischief people are not safe. This is the real mad man. The person whom you saw is a patient."[6]

The second attribute of theirs is patience and forbearance, as the holy Qur'an says in this verse:

"...and when the ignorant address them, they answer: 'Peace';"

This 'peace' is the sign of heedlessness which is along with nobility and greatness, and it is not because of weakness.

It is the 'peace' that is the reason of lack of retaliation against the ignorant. It is to say farewell to their senseless words. This 'peace' is not a greeting which is the sign of kindness and friendship. It is the 'peace' that is the sign of patient and greatness.

Yes, one of the great spiritual phenomena of theirs is patience and forbearance, without which no man can pave the fluctuating path of Allah's servitude and bondage, especially in the societies in which there are a lot of corrupted, ignorant and wicked persons.

In the second verse, the third attribute of theirs, that is the sincere worshipping of Allah, is mentioned.

It says:

"And those who spend the night prostrating themselves before their Lord, and standing,"

In the darkness of night, when the eyes of the ignorant are sleeping and there is no place for hypocrisy and feigning, a believer deprives himself of pleasant sleep and does what is more pleasant, that is the remembrance of Allah and prostrating and standing before Him, the Magnificent.

He spends some part of night supplicating Him and illuminates his heart and soul with His name and remembrance.

Though the Qur'anic phrase /yabitūna/ ('who spend the night') indicates that they spend the night prostrating and standing before Him, it is clear that its purpose is considerable part of the night or if its purpose is all the night, sometimes it is so.

Meanwhile, coming the word 'prostrating' before the word 'standing' is because of its importance, though in prayer (salat) prostrating is practically after standing.

Some Traditions On Humbleness and Night Prayer

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Why do not I see the sweetness of worshipping in you?"

One said:

"What is the sweetness of worshipping?"

He said:

"Humility."[7]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Be humble and modest, for it is one of the greatest worships."[8]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Allah revealed to me to be humble so that no one boasts anyone and no one oppresses anyone."[9]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"Humbleness and modesty increases the rank and dignity of one who is humble, then be humble so that Allah exalts you."[10]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"No dignity and greatness is like humbleness, and no nobility is like knowledge and knowing."[11]

6. Imam Ali (as) once said:

"The fruit of knowledge is humility."[12]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Performing two rak'ats of prayer in the midnight is better than the world and what is in it. Verily, if it were not difficult for my nation, I would make this prayer compulsory for them."[13]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The dignity of a believer depends on his night prayer, and his greatness and glory depends on avoiding bothering people."[14]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"When man gets out of his pleasant bed and while his eyes are drowsy he tries to make his Lord pleased and happy by his night prayer, Allah takes pride in him and says:

"Do not you see My servant who gets out of his pleasant bed for a prayer that I did not make it a must on him? Be witness that I forgive him."[15]

10. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who does not perform night prayer is not of our Shiites."[16] [17]

11. Imam Rida (as) said:

"Do perform night prayer. There is no servant who gets up at the end of night and performs 8 rak'ats night prayer, 2 rak'ats even prayer, one rak'at odd prayer and asks pardon of Allah 70 times in personal prayer (qunūt), unless Allah protects him from the chastisement of grave and the chastisement of Fire, and prolongs his life and gives him his provisions generously."

Then Imam continues:

"Verily the homes in which night prayer is performed its light illuminates before the inhabitants of the heaven as stars glow for the people of the earth."[18]

12. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Night prayer makes man's face beautiful and fine, makes him morally good and agreeable and makes him smell pleasantly. It increases sustenance, causes the debt to be paid, takes sorrow away and makes man's vision strong."[19]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 65-66

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

65. "And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell, verily the torment of it is a lasting affliction;"

66. "Verily it is an evil abode and (an evil) station."

There are two ways for getting released from the Fire; worshipping and doing good deeds.

When Imam Ali (as) dedicated some properties to Allah, he wrote in act for the establishment:

"I dedicated this for saving myself from the Fire as well as getting the Fire away from me."[20]

In this noble verse, the fourth attribute of 'the servants of the Beneficent', which is the fear of divine chastisement, is mentioned.

It says:

"And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell, verily the torment of it is a lasting affliction;"

The Arabic word /qaram/ originally means: intense disaster and sorrow which always afflicts man. If creditor in Arabic is called /qarim/, it is because he is always following man for getting his money. The love and motivation that makes man do a job is also called /qaram/. This word has been applied to the Hell since the chastisement of the Hell is very grievous, lasting, and permanent.

Therefore, in the next verse it is said:

"Verily it is an evil abode and (an evil) station."

Although these servants of the Beneficent remember and worship Allah in the midnight and do their duties in the day, their heart is still full of the fear that their duties to be done rightly. It is that fear that is the powerful factor of doing duties more and better.

It functions as an inward powerful police that controls man and man does his duties in the best way, while no one observes and controls him and he still thinks that he is guilty before Allah.

The difference between the Arabic word /mustaqarr/ (abode) and the word /muqam/ (station) is that the Hell is a perpetual home for pagans and it is a temporal place for believers. So, to both groups who enter the Hell reference is made.

It is obvious that the Hell is a bad place and residence.

How can one be calm in the blazing Fire? Is there comfortableness and easiness in the killing flames?

It is also possible that both these words, 'Mustaqarr' (abode) and 'Muqam' (station), mean the same and they are for more emphasis on the perpetuity of the Hell chastisement.

It is the opposite of the Paradise about which we read in this Surah, verse 76:

"Abiding therein, how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."

Anyway, the special servants of Allah fear the Fire of the Hell more than that they desire the Paradise.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 67

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

67. "And those who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, and are stationed between the two (extremes)."

The Arabic word /qawam/ means moderation and the word /qiwam/ means something as a help for standing.

Imam Rida (as) announced that moderate prodigality and expenditure is the famous criterion that is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 236:

"...the rich according to his means, and the straitened according to his means, a provision in a fair manner."[21]

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"To spend for the sake of the falsehood is extravagance (though it is a little), and to be stingy in the path of the Truth is thrifty and frugal (/'iqtar/)."[22]

There is another verse that says:

"And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it to the utmost (limit) of its stretching, so that you should sit down blamed, empty-handed."[23]

In this holy verse, the fifth attribute of the servants of the Beneficent, which is moderation and avoiding any excess and defect in jobs and affairs, especially the issue of alms-giving, is mentioned.

It says:

"And those who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, and are stationed between the two (extremes)."

It is interesting that this verse speaks in a way that it takes the issue of spending something which is certain and exists, so that it does not need mentioning, for it is one of the given duties of any man.

Thus it talks about the way and manner of the spending. It indicates that they have a just spending and are neither prodigal nor grudging. They neither spend so much that their wife and offspring gets hungry, nor they are so economical that other persons do not get help from them, and there is ever a firm station between the two.

Commentators have various opinions about the Qur'anic words /'israf/ (extravagance) and /'iqtar/ (to be economical).

All these opinions say one matter that /'israf/ is to spend too much, undue, and for the sake of none-Allah, and /'iqtar/ is to be less than what is necessary and right.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 68

وَالَّذِينَ لاَ يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلاَ يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَلاَ يَزْنُونَ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا

68. "And those who do not call with Allah any other god, and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit fornication, and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin."

In this verse, polytheism, murder, and adultery, which are of the greatest sins in narrations, are mentioned.[24]

Homicide is of the greater sins, but the holy phrase:

''Illa Bilhaqq' ('except for just cause')

says that sometimes murder is necessary and right, including:

1. Retaliation of homicide
2. Incest
3. Adultery of a pagan with a Muslim woman
4. The adultery of the one who has spouse
5. One who claims prophethood
6. Vilifying and insulting the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as)
7. The adulterer who forces woman to do fornication
8. Muslim sorcerer
9. Corrupter and combatant who uses weapon for frightening people
10. Apostate
11. One who stands against and fights with just Imam of time
12. Polytheist

Anyway, the sixth attribute of the true servants of the Beneficent (Allah), that is mentioned in the verse under discussion, is sincere monotheism which is free from any polytheism and multi-worshipping.

It says:

"And those who do not call with Allah any other god..."

The light of monotheism has illuminated all of their heart and their personal social life, and the darkness and gloom of polytheism is no longer in the thought and soul of theirs.

Their seventh attribute is that they do not murder any innocent.

It says:

"...and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause..."

It is understood from this noble verse that all humans are basically honorable and respected. It is forbidden to murder them, unless a phenomenon occurs that overshadows this natural respect and provides permission of murder.

The 8th attribute of theirs is that their realm of chastity never gets polluted.

The verse says about them:

"...nor commit fornication..."

They choose faith when they face dilemma of faith and paganism, they choose security when they face dilemma of security and insecurity, they select purity when they face dilemma of purity and defilement, and they struggle to make an environment which is free from polytheism, insecurity, immodesty, and impurity.

In the end of the verse, to show more emphasis, it adds:

"...and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin."

The Arabic words /'im/ and /'aam/ originally means deeds that prevent man from achieving reward, then they have been applied to any sin, but here it means the punishment of wrong action. Some say that the word ''Ithm' means sin and the word ''Atham' means the chastisement of sin.[25]

If we see that some of commentators say that it means 'desert' or 'mountain' or 'a deep well in the Hell', these are, in fact, to state the kind of its extensions. In Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 33, we talked about the philosophy of prohibition of adultery in detail.

It is interesting that the above holy verse first talks about polytheism, then about homicide, and finally about adultery. It is understood from some narrations that the importance of these three sins is as they are mentioned sequentially in the verse.

Ibn Mas'ūd asked the Prophet (S):

"Which sin is greater than other sins?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"To consider a match for Allah while it is He Who has created you."

Then he asked the Prophet (S):

"Which sin comes next?"

He said:

"To kill your child for fearing that he may eat food with you."

Again he asked him (S):

"Which sin comes next?"

He said:

"To betray the spouse of your neighbour, and Allah sent down its confirmation in this verse by saying:

"And those who do not call with Allah any other god, and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit fornication, and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin."[26]

Though this narration speaks about a special kind of fornication and murder, with regard to generality of the concept of the verse, this ordinance is about all kinds of them, and this narration is a clear extension of it.

Anyway, the command of the holy Qur'an about avoiding polytheism, adultery, and homicide is not only a sermon, it is a rule that if it is

disobeyed, severe chastisement will be its compensation. Divine chastisements do not have any exception; anyone who commits wrong action will be punished.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 69-70

يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ مُهَانًا

إِلاَّ مَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلاً صَالِحًا فَأُوْلَـئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

69. "On the Day of Judgment, the chastisement will be doubled to him, and he shall abide therein in abasement."

70. "Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, then these are they who, Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones, And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Multiplication of wrongdoers' punishment which is cited in the phrase 'will be doubled' is not against divine justice, for double punishment happens when sin or wrong action has got multiplied evil and gloomy effects.

For example, an adulterer not only commits sin, but also he forces other one to commit sin, and an illegitimate issue may get born, who has negative tendencies. In homicide, a murderer kills someone, but some persons will get bereaved, orphaned and he makes society insecure.

Each of the above items has individually a separate punishment, as one who forms and creates a bad tradition or custom in society will be punished each time that someone practices this custom during the course of history and its fonder has a share of its sin.

Since all commentators believe that fornication by itself brings no perpetuity of chastisement in the Hell, therefore, only those polytheists who commit adultery will remain in the Hell forever. Yes, false and true belief and paganism and polytheism have effect on punishments.

Since these three sins (polytheism, homicide, and adultery) are extremely important, again this verse puts emphasis on them and says;

"On the Day of Judgment, the chastisement will be doubled to him, and he shall abide therein in abasement."

Questions

Here, there arise a few questions: Why is the punishment of theirs doubled? Why are not they punished as much as they have committed sin? Is this consistent with the principles of justice?

Another matter is that the verse speaks about perpetuity of chastisement and abiding in the Hell, while we know that abiding in the Hell is only for pagans. Only the first sin of three sins mentioned in the verse is paganism, and murder and adultery cannot bring perpetual chastisement.

About the first question, commentators have discussed a lot and what seems more correct is that the purpose of doubling of chastisement is that for each of these three sins there are separate punishments that on the whole the punishment gets doubled.

Moreover, sometimes a sin will be the source of other sins, such as paganism that causes the obligations to be left and commitment of illegal things to be done, and this makes the Divine punishment double.

Therefore, some of commentators say that this verse is the reason of this famous principle which says:

"As pagans are responsible for fundamentals of religion, they are responsible for positive laws, too."[27]

About the second question, we can say that some of sins are so great and bad that cause a person to die while having no faith, as we said about homicide in verse 93 of Surah An-Nisa'.

It may also be true about fornication especially when it is adultery.

Another possibility is that the Qur'anic word /xulūd/ (abide for ever) is about persons who commit all of these three sins (polytheism, homicide, fornication) together. The next verse testifies to this meaning.

It says:

"Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, .."

Thus there will be no problem. Some of commentators say that 'khulūd' here means to abide for a long time not perpetually, but the first and the second commentaries seem more correct.

It is interesting mat in addition to the issue of common and general punishment, there is another punishment which is to get offended and insulted and this is psychological. It also can be a commentary on the issue of punishment to be double, for they have both physical and spiritual punishments.

But, in view of the fact that the holy Qur'an does not close the path of return to the wrongdoers and invites and encourages them to repent their sins, it says in the next verse:

"Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, then these are they who, Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones, And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

As we said, three sins of the greatest sins were mentioned in the previous verse and opportunity is provided for returning and repenting of these persons, for every regretful wrongdoer can return to Allah on the condition that his repentance is real and its sign is doing righteous deeds which is brought up in the verse, otherwise, to merely repent verbally or having passing regret in the heart is not the reason of repentance.

The important issue about the above verse is how Allah changes their sins to good deeds.

Changing Evil Deeds to Good Deeds

Here are a few commentaries all of which can be acceptable:

1. When man repents and acquires faith in Allah, deep transformation happens throughout his whole entity. And because of this inward revolution, later all his evil deeds will change to good deeds.

If formerly he committed homicide in future defending the oppressed and fighting with oppressors would take its place. If he was adulterer, he would later become pure and modest. This divine aid and success is achieved under the light of faith and repentance.

2. Allah removes all his evil deeds out of His grace, favour, and bestowal, and replaces them by good deeds.

'Abūthar narrated that the Prophet (S) said that on the day of Resurrection some persons are called to come and Allah commands to remind him his small sins and to hide his greater sins. It is said to him that he has done such and such small sin that day. He will confess to it and his heart is frightened and shakes because of greater sins.

Here, if Allah wants to do him a favour, He commands to give him a good deed, in stead of each evil deed and he will say that he has some important sins which he does not see. Abūzar says that at this time the Prophet (S) smiled in a way that his teeth appeared.

Then he recited this verse:

"...Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones..."[28]

3. The third commentary is that the purpose of evil deeds is not the nature of deeds man does, but it is the gloomy effects that they have on the soul and spirit of man. When man repents and believes, these gloomy effects will be removed from his soul and they will be changed to good effects. This is the meaning of changing evil deeds to good deeds.

Of course, these three commentaries are not inconsistent and it is likely that all of them are included in the concept of the verse. Imam Rida (as) said that the Prophet (S) was told that that person was a miserable man, for he had done many sins.

The Prophet (S) said:

"It is not at all as you say, but he has been freed and his destiny has become good, his sins are vanished and changed to good deeds. For when he was passing a way, he saw a believer whose pudendum was visible but he was not aware of it, (it seems that he was sleeping). This person covered that believer's body and, for not making him ashamed, he did not tell him about this matter.

When the believer found out, he prayed for him in this way:

'May Allah bestow you a lot of reward and make your resurrection peaceful and get easy with your reckoning!'

Allah fulfilled his prayer about that person and made his destiny good."

When this good tiding of the Prophet (S) came to that wrongdoer, he repented of all his sins and became a worshipper of Allah. After one week a group of Islam enemies attacked Medina and the holy Prophet (S) issued the command of defense. That person went with other Muslims to holy war and when fighting he got martyred and his destiny became good and happy.[29]

Yes, real repentance changes man's deeds and reforms his improper behaviour. As in the world of creation Allah creates flowers from soil and manure, He changes man's evil deeds to good deeds.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 71

وَمَن تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا

71. "And whoever repents and does good, he verily repents toward Allah with true repentance."

Real repentance happens when it is along with good deeds. This noble verse explains the manner of correct repentance.

It says:

"And whoever repents and does good, he verily repents toward Allah with true repentance." (And gets his reward from Him)."

It means that not only repentance and abandonment of sin must be because of evilness of sin, but also its motivation must be to make intention sincere and to return to Allah. Therefore, for example, although stopping drinking wine or stopping lie for the harms that they have is good, the value of this stopping is when it has divine motivation.

Anyway, anyone who really and earnestly repents of his sins returns to Allah and to His countless rewards.

Some Traditions On Repentance

1. On a Friday the Prophet (S) delivered a sermon and said:

"O People! Before, you die, return to Allah and repent of your evil behaviour. And before you get involved in affairs of life, do righteous and good deeds and amend the affairs that are between you and Allah so that you get successful and happy. And pay alms a lot so that you are provided provisions."[30]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who does not repent of the sin he has done is not believer and will not be interceded."[31]

3. Imam Rida (as) said that the Prophet (S) said:

"The parable of a faithful person before Allah, is like the parable of a favorite angel, and the believer is really more preferred than this angel in the view of Allah. And before Allah nothing is more preferred and liked than a man or a woman who repents."[32]

4. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Although believer returns to Allah while he asks Allah forgiveness and repentance, Allah bestows repentance and forgives his sins, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. He accepts repentance and He forgives sins (and evil deeds), so be aware that you do not make believers hopeless of Allah's Mercy (and forgiveness)."[33]

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah gets happy when His faithful servant repents and returns to Him, as one of you gets happy when he finds something he has lost."[34]

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 72

وَالَّذِينَ لاَ يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

72. "And those who witness no falsehood, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly."

Not only committing sin is unlawful, but also attending a sinful gathering and viewing a sin is forbidden. To avoid attending a sinful gathering and being disrespectful to sinners is a kind of prohibition of sin.

Following the previous holy verses in which some of the attributes of the servant of the Beneficent are mentioned, this verse explains the 9th outstanding attribute of theirs and says:

"And those who witness no falsehood..."

Great commentators have cited two various commentaries on this verse: some say that the witness of (‘Zūr’) means ‘false testifying’, for the word ‘Zūr’ means deviation and inclination, and since lie, falsehood and oppression are some deviated affairs, they are called ‘Zūr’.

This phrase (Shahadat-uz-Zūr) is mentioned in the book ‘Shahadat’ of our jurisprudence. It is prohibited in various narrations, though in those narrations this verse has not been taken as an evidence.

Another commentary is that the purpose of ‘Shuhūd’ is ‘attending’ and ‘participation’, which means that the special servants of Allah do not attend false gatherings and parties.

In some narrations of Imams (as) this word has been interpreted as parties of profane singing, in which frivolous and deviating singers as well as playing musical instruments take place.

Undoubtedly the purpose of these narrations is not to limit the extensive concept of the Qur’anic word ‘Zūr’ to profane singing, but one of the clear extensions of it is profane singing.

It also includes all gatherings and parties in which wine is drunk, lie is told, backbiting happens, and such like.

Another possibility that does not seem unlikely is that both commentaries are truly applied to the meaning of the verse.

Thus, special servants of Allah, or the special servants of the Beneficent, neither bear false witness nor attend sinful and vain parties, for attending such parties is both confirming sin and preparation to defilement of soul and heart.

Then, the 10th attribute of theirs, which is having positive aim in life, is mentioned.

It continues saying:

“...and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly.”

In fact, they neither attend false and vain parties, nor do they get defiled with vanity and falseness.

With regard to the matter that the Qur’anic word /laqw/ includes any job that has no rational aim, it is clear that they have always a rational, useful, and good aim in their life and they dislike those who are after vain and futile matters.

If they face such vain affairs in their life, they avoid them in a way that their negligence shows that they are inwardly discontented with such deeds. They are so magnanimous that such defiled environments never affect them.

No doubt being heedless to such deeds happens when there is no better way to prohibit evil deeds and to struggle with corruption, otherwise they certainly stand against them and do their duties to the end.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says that the purpose of the Qur’anic word ‘Zūr’ in phrase:

‘La Yashhadūn az-Zūr’

is profane singing.[35]

In tafsir-i-Majma‘-ul-Bayan, we read that ‘passing by nobly’ is when such believers are helpless to mention the name of an evil thing, they say it ironically, as we read in a narration by Imam Baqir (as) that when they want to say pudendum, they say it implicitly.

Of course, this is one of the extensions of dignified behaviour. Imam Sadiq (as) said that Allah enjoined ear to avoid any unlawful things and then he (as) recited this verse.[36]

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 73-74

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

73. "And those who, when admonished with the Signs of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind."

74. "And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Grant us from our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us for the pious ones (their) Imams."

Acts of worship and having insight are attributes of the servants of the Beneficent. They knowingly follow religion. Therefore, this noble verse mentions the 11th attributes of theirs which is to have an ear that can hear and an eye that can see at the time effacing with Allah's revelations.

It says:

"And those who, when admonished with the Signs of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind."

Certainly it does not refer to the deed of pagans, for they do not even pay attention to Allah's verses, but it refers to hypocrites or those apparently Muslims who blindly and deafly follow Allah's verses, while they neither understand its reality and find its depth, nor they know Allah's purpose, nor they think about it, nor do they practically use it through inspiration in their life.

Of course, one can not pave the path of Allah blindly and deafly; before anything an ear that hears and an eye that sees are needed for this way. It needs an eye that can see inwardly and deeply and an ear that is sensitive and punctilious.

If we think correctly we see that the damage of this group, who blindly and deafly, as they imagine, pursue the divine verses, causes to religion of truth is not less than the damage that the enemies who knowingly cause to the foundation of the religion of truth, and sometimes it is more.

Basically, conscious perception of religion is the main source of resistance and forbearance, for those who have blind eye and deaf ear can be easily deceived and they can be deviated from the main path by distorting religion and they can be led to paganism and disbelief.

They are tools and puppies in the hands of foes and good victims for devils. Only insightful believers who see and listen carefully may remain stable and do not become puppies of this and that person.

When Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the commentary of this verse, he said:

"The purpose is the insightful ones that are not skeptic!"[37]

In the next verse, the 12th attribute of these real believers, which is paying special attention to training and education of their issue and family and for which they feel seriously responsible is mentioned.

The verse says:

"And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Grant us from our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes..."

It is clear that its purpose is not to sit in a corner and pray for them, but prayer is the reason of their inward love and fond for this affair and the main key is struggle and attempt.

Certainly such people leave no stone unturned in training their issues and wives, and they making them acquainted with the main principles and positive laws of Islam and paths of truth and justice, and when having no way and no choice, they ask Allah, the Merciful, and pray.

Basically each correct praying is so, man must try his best and when there is something out of his power, he must pray.

The Arabic phrase /qurrata 'ayn/ means the apple of one's eye, which means a person who is the cause of happiness and pride.

This is originally derived from the word /qurr/ which means coolness and coldness, and since it is said (and maney commentators specify this) that the tears of eagerness and happiness are always cool, and the sorrowful tears are always hot and burning, the phrase /qurrata 'ayn/ means something that causes the eye of man to get cool, that is: teats of happiness and eagerness are shed from his eyes and this implies happiness and joy.

The issue of training children and guiding wife and responsibility of parents for their children is of the most important issues on which the holy Qur'an puts emphasis. We will explain it in the commentary of verse 6 of Surah At-Tahrim, if Allah wills.

The 13th attributes of these outstanding sincere servants of Allah, which is from one aspect one of the most important ones, is that they never get satisfied by going the path of truth lonely, but they are so high-minded that they want to be the Imam and leader of the believers and to invite others to this upright path.

They do not do only all right for themselves like recluses but they try to save one who is sinking.

Therefore, it is said in the end of the verse that they are those who say:

"...and make us for the pious ones (their) Imams."

It must be noted that they do not pray for taking the place of great persons exorbitantly, but they acquire the means and qualifications of greatness and leadership in a way that all deserved attributes of a real leader are included in them and this is a very difficult job with severe conditions.

Certainly it is not forgotten that these verses do not state all the qualities of the believers but they define the specialties of a choice group of them who are at the top and are entitled as 'the servants of the Beneficent'.

Yes, they are special servants of Allah and as the general mercy of Allah includes all people, the mercy of servants of Allah is, from some aspects, general, too. Their knowledge, speech, thought, power, and writing all function for guiding people to the path of the Truth.

They are paragons and examples of the humane society.

They are counted as examples for pious persons. They are like guiding lights and lamps in deserts and seas, which call those who are lost to them and save them from falling down and sinking.

In many narrations we read that this verse is about Imam Ali (as) and family of the Prophet (S) and Imams (as). Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The purpose of this verse is us."[38]

Without doubt, Imams (as) are of the most obvious extensions of this verse, but this does not limit the concept of the verse that other believers can be imams and leaders of others in various degrees.

Some of commentators say that not only asking spiritual and divine leadership is not forbidden, but also it is preferred and good.[39]

Meanwhile, we must pay attention that though the Qur'anic word 'Imam' is singular, sometimes it is used in plural sense. In this verse it is so.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 75-76

أُوْلَـئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلاَمًا

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

75. "Those (servants of the Beneficent) shall be rewarded with the high stations (in Paradise) because they were patient, and they shall be met therein with welcome and salutations."

76. "Abiding therein; how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."

After completing these attributes, these special servants of Allah, with their attributes, are referred to and in a short conclusion their divine reward is brought up as follows:

"Those (servants of the Beneficent) shall be rewarded with the high stations (in Paradise) because they were patient…"

The Arabic word /qurfah/ means something that is picked up and consumed, such as water that man gets from spring for drinking. Then this word was applied to upper parts and stories of a building and houses. Here it implies the best places of the Paradise.

Since the servants of the Beneficent, with such attributes, are in the first row of other believers, their heavenly rank and position must be also the highest.

It must be noted that this high rank is given to them for they have been patient and tolerant for the sake of Allah. It maybe thought that this is another attribute of theirs, but it is not a new one, it guarantees the fulfilment of the previous attributes. Is it possible to worship Allah, to be humble and modest, to struggle with low desires and to stop vain witness without patience and perseverance?

This statement reminds one of the famous tradition stated by Imam Ali (as) who said:

"The relationship of patience and tolerance with faith is like the relationship of head with body."[40]

The survival of body depends on the existence of the head, for what controls all limbs is located in man's head.

Thus, the Qur'anic word /sabr/ (patience) has got an extensive concept which includes tolerance and resistance against difficulties being on the path of worshipping Allah, struggling with low desires and withstanding factors

of sin. If in some narrations we read that its purpose is only poverty and financial weakness, these are the extensions of it.

Then it says:

"...and they shall be met therein with welcome and salutations."

The dwellers of the Paradise welcome each other, and angels say hello to them and, more importantly, Allah says hello and welcomes them, as we read in verse 58 of Surah Ya- Sin:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord!"

In verses 23 and 24 of Surah Ar-Ra'd we read:

"...and unto whom the angels will enter from every gate,"

"Peace (be) upon you..."

Commentators have various opinions about the meaning of the Qur'anic words /tahiyyat/ and /salam/. The word /tahiyyat/ originally means to pray for life and the existence of other person. And the word 'Salam' is derived from the word 'Salamat (health) and it means to ask health for someone.

Thus the first word is for asking life and the second word is for making this life healthy and without danger, though they both can sometimes mean one thing.

Of course, in common language, the meaning of the world /tahiyyat/ is more extensive and it, envelops any word, which causes happiness and respect and kindness, said to someone at the time of entrance.

To emphasize more on this subject in a different style, the noble verse says:

"Abiding therein; how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 77

قُلْ مَا يَعْبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلاَ دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا

77. "Say (to the disbelievers:) 'My Lord would not esteem you at all were it not for your prayer (unto Him), but you: indeed have belied (the Truth), and soon you shall be (in) the grip (of the inevitable)."

The Arabic word /'iba'/ means weight and heaviness.The Qur'anic sentence /ma ya'ba'ū bikum rabbi/ means that Allah does not value and weigh you, unless under auspices of your worshipping and prayer.

This verse is the last verse of Surah Furqan. It is in fact the conclusion of all discussions of the Surah as well as the attributes of the servants of the Beneficent which were mentioned in the previous verses.

The Prophet (S) is addressed here, where the Qur'an says:

"Say (to the disbelievers:) 'My Lord would not esteem you at all were it not for your prayer (unto Him)..."

Though there are many probabilities about the meaning of the word /du'a/ (prayer) mentioned here, all of them have approximately one root and source.

Some say that it means to pray. Some say that it means faith. Some say that it means worshipping and monotheism.

Some say that it means thanking. Some say it means to call Allah at the time of difficulties and disasters. However the root of them is faith and paying attention to Allah.

Therefore, the verse implies that what makes one valuable and respected before Allah is having faith in Allah and His servitude.

Then it says:

"...but you: indeed have belied (the Truth), and soon you shall be (in) the grip (of the inevitable)."

It may be considered that there is no coherency and relationship between the beginning and the end of the verse.

But, by some careful study it gets clear that the main purpose is that formerly polytheists and pagans denied the revelations of Allah and His prophets, and if these people do not return to Allah and do not worship Him, no value and respect they will have before Him and the punishments of their denials will be certain.

One of the evidences that confirm this commentary is a tradition by Imam Baqir (as) who was asked whether too much recitation of the Qur'an is preferred or too much praying. He answered that too much praying is best and then Imam (as) recited this verse.[41]

We know that praying is much considered important in the verses of the holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations, and one of its examples was the above verse, but praying has got conditions:

A) To know One Whom man calls,

B) To purify heart and soul and to make spirit ready for asking Him, for when man wants to meet someone, man must be ready for someone's meeting,

C) To make One, Whom man wants to ask something, happy and contented, for without it, fulfilment of demand is unlikely.

D) To use all one's power and potentiality, to try one's best, then to ask Allah something beyond it, and to focus one's heart on Creator for fulfilment of praying.

It is specified in Islamic narrations that if man does not do a job that he can do by himself and he resorts to praying, his praying will not be fulfilled. Thus, praying is a means for both knowing Allah and His glorious and beautiful attributes and repenting of sins and purifying soul, and a factor for doing good deeds and a cause for struggling as much as possible.

Therefore, there are important words about praying, which can not be understood save through what was said.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Praying is the weapon of the believer, the pillar of religion and the light of the earth and the skies."[42]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Praying is the key of victory and success, and the best praying is one that comes from a clean chest and a pious heart."[43]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Praying is more penetrating than spearhead."[44]

Moreover, basically events take place in man's life, which disappoint him from the viewpoint of apparent means and factors, but praying can be a window to hope and success, and it is an effective means for struggling with disappointment and distress.

Therefore, praying at time of disasters makes man powerful, hopeful and calm. It has such a psychological effect that can not be denied.

Some Traditions On Praying

1. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"No group has prayed to Allah for a matter, unless they have scattered by fulfilment of their praying."[45]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Praying is fulfilled in some times: in odd prayer (in midnight), after dawn, and at the time of noon and sunset prayers, after and at the time of wedding and marriage ceremony, at the time of looking at the door of Ka'bah and parent's face, at the time of raining and recitation of the Qur'an."[46]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Do pray, for praying is the heel of every malady."[47]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah does not fulfil the praying that comes from a tough and hard heart."[48]

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah knows your need and your demand, and He also knows what you want from Him, but He likes that you retell your needs to Him."[49]

6. Imam Sadiq (as) said that Imam Ali (as) said:

"The job that Allah, Glorious and Majestical, likes best on the earth is praying and the best worship is modesty and chastity."

And Imam Sadiq (as) added:

"Imam Ali (as) was a man who prayed a lot."[50]

7. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There is a position and rank before Allah which can not be achieved save by asking and requesting Allah, and if a servant closes his mouth and does not ask what he needs, nothing will be given to him, then ask Allah, so that you are given what you like."[51]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Anyone who wants something from Allah must begin his praying with reciting ''Allahumma Sall-i 'Ala Muhammad wa 'Al-i Muhammad, then one must ask one's need. Finally one must also end one's praying with reciting ''Allahumma Sall-i 'Ala Muhammad wa 'Al-i Muhammad', for Allah, all Mighty, is more generous than accepting two ends of a praying and leaving what is in the middle. Reciting ''Allahumma Sall-i 'Ala Muhammad wa 'Al-i Muhammad' will not remain unanswered."[52]

9. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There are four persons whose praying will not be rejected and the doors of the heaven are open to them and their praying reaches 'Arsh, The Throne:

A): Parents' praying for their issue

B) Praying of the oppressed against the one who has oppressed him

C) Praying of one who is performing greater and lesser pilgrimage until one returns home

D) Praying of one who is fasting until when he breaks fast."[53]

10. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Praying turns away divine decree, though it has come down from heaven and is stabilized."[54]

O Allah! May set us one of Your special servants and bestow us the grace of achieving the attributes of 'the servants of the Beneficent'. O Allah! Open the doors of praying to us and make it factor of value before You.

Some Traditions On Patience

1. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Verily those who are patient enter the Paradise without Reckoning."[55]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Patience is a treasure out of the treasures of Paradise."[56]

3. The Prophet (S) was once asked about faith and he answered:

"Faith is patience and generosity."[57]

4. Hisham Ibn Hakam narrates from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"When the day of Resurrection comes, a group of people will go unto the door of Paradise and knock at it. They will be told who they are. They say that they are those who are patience. They will be asked with what they had patience.

They say that they had patience with worshipping Allah and abstaining from sins specified by Allah. Allah lets them enter the Paradise, and this is the meaning of Allah's words:

'...Verily the steadfast patient will be paid their wages without stint'[58] ***."***[59]

5. The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"One who has patience with disobeying Allah and committing sin is like one who goes to holy war for the sake of Allah."[60]

6. Imam Sadiq (as) was asked who the most honored before Allah is, and he said:

"One who thanks Allah when (favour and blessing) is bestowed on him and is patience when he is imposed with disaster."[61]

7. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The highest reward is the reward of patience and perseverance."[62]

8. Imam Ali (as) said:

"If you are patient with disasters and difficulties, you will achieve the rank and position of the righteous ones. If you have impatience with them, this impatience leads you to the Hell and Fire."[63]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Success and victory will be achieved by patience, and there will be ease at the end of suffering and difficulty.

'Verily with difficulty is ease'[64] ***."***[65]

10. Washsha' narrated Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"We are patient and our Shiites are more patient than us."

Washsha' said:

"May I be sacrificed for you! How is your Shiites' patience more than yours?"

Imam said:

"For we have patience with what we know but our Shiites have patience with what they do not know."[66]

11. Hassan Ibn Mahbūb said that Hassan Ibn Ali (as) said that Imam Kazim (as) said that Imam Baqir (as) said:

"On the day of Resurrection, a caller cries:

'Where are the patient?'

Then some people stand up. And he cries again:

'Where are the bearers of patience?'

Then some people stand up. Then he said may I be sacrificed for you, who those who are patient are.

He said:

"Those who are patient with doing what is obligated. And bearers of patience are those who have patience with abandonment of sins."[67]

12. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Any believer who is imposed with a disaster and he is patient, he will be given the reward which is equal to the reward of one thousand martyrs."[68]

13. 'Anas said that the Prophet (S) said that Allah, All-Mighty, said:

"When I impose a disaster on My servant's body, on his issue or on his property, and he welcomes it with beautiful patience, I will be ashamed to set him a scale for evaluating his deeds or to open a book for retelling his deeds on the Hereafter Day."[69]

14. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Paradise is covered inside difficulties and patience. One who is patient with unlawful low desires and difficulties will enter Paradise. And the Hell is covered inside low desires and lusts. One who is after low desires and lusts will enter the Hell."[70]

15. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Patience has got two kinds: patience with difficulty and disaster which is beautiful and good, and patience with unlawful matters which is better than that."[71]

16. Imam Ali (as) said that the Prophet (S) said:

"If four attributes are bestowed on a man, he will be given goodness of this world and the other world; a patient body, a tongue that utters Allah's name, a heart that thanks Allah, a good and righteous spouse."[72]

17. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Patience has got three kinds: Patience with affliction, patience with worship, patience with sins and wrong action."[73]

18. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"It is likely that one hour patience causes perpetual happiness and one hour pleasure causes long time sorrow."[74]

Notes

1. in verses 1, 10, and 61

2. Constellation (astronomy), any of 88 visible groupings of bright stars, named after religious or mythological characters, animals, or objects. The oldest known drawings of constellations are Sumerian, and constellations may have been developed as early as 4000 BC. The division of the zodiac into 12 equal signs was known around 450 BC by the Babylonians. The northern constellations known today are little different from those known to the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. At the end of the 16th century

AD, the first European explorers of the South Seas mapped the southern sky. Many constellations were proposed until astronomers finally settled on a list of 88. The

boundaries of constellations, however, remained a matter of discussion until 1930, when definitive boundaries were fixed by the International Astronomical Union. The

possessive forms of the names of constellations, preceded by a Greek letter, are used to

name about 1300 bright stars. The famous star Algol in the constellation Perseus, for example, is called Beta Persei.

3. Of course, we talked about this in detail in Surah Yūnus, No. 10, verses 5 and 6.
4. Man Lāyahzuruhl-Faghīh, as it is narrated in Nūr uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3
5. Surah 'Isrā', No. 17, verse 37
6. Safīnat-ul-Bihār, Vol. 1, P. 191
7. Bihār.Vol. 72, P. 119
8. Bihār, Vol. 72, P. 119
9. Kanz ul-'Ummāl, Vol. 2, P. 572
10. Bihār ul-'Anwār, Vol. 72, P. 119
11. Qisār ul-Hikam, P. 113
12. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 14
13. Kanz ul-'Ummāl, Vol. 7, P. 21405
14. Bihār ul-'Anwār, Vol. 87, P. 141
15. Bihār ul-'Anwār, Vol. 87, P. 156
16. Bihār ul-'Anwār, Vol. 87, P. 162
17. Sheikh Mufīd says: its purpose is that he is not of sincere Shiites, or it may mean that if he does not believe in night prayer, he is not of Shiites.
18. Bihār ul-'Anwār, Vol. 87, P. 161
19. Wasā'il ush-Shī'ah, Vol. 5, P. 272
20. Tafsīr-us-Sāfī, Vol. 3, P. 104
21. Kāfī, Vol. 4, P. 56
22. Sāfī
23. Surah 'Isrā, No. 17, verse 29
24. Kanz-ud-Daqā'iq, the Commentary
25. Fakhr-i-Rāzī
26. Sahīh Bukhārī and Muslem as it is written in Majma' ul-Bayān
27. Tafsīr-i-Nimūnah, Vol. 15, P. 158, and Vol. 4, P. 68
28. Nūr uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 33
29. Bihār, Vol. 5, P. 155
30. Bihār, Vol. 74, P. 176
31. Wasā'il, Vol. 6, P. 266
32. Muhajjat-ul-Baydā', Vol. 7, P. 24
33. Safīnat-ul-Bihār, Chapter Repentance
34. Muhajjat-ul-Baydā', Vol. 7, P. 8
35. Kāfī, Vol. 6, P. 433
36. Nūr uth-Thaqalayn
37. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 2, P.
38. Nūr uth-Thaqalayn, following the verse
39. Qurtabī and Fakhr-i-Rāzī, commentaries can be referred to
40. Bihār, Vol. 68, P. 92; and 'Usūl-i-Kāfī, Vol. 2, P. 87
41. Bihār, Vol. 3, P. 948
42. 'Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 2, Chapter 'Prayer'
43. 'Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 2, Chapter 'Prayer'
44. 'Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 2, Chapter 'Prayer'
45. Mir'āt-ul-'Uqūl, Vol. 12, P. 46
46. Raudat-ul-mottaqīn, Vol. 13, P. 38, Amally By Sadūq, P. 265, 'Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 4, P. 243, and Bihār, Vol. 103, P. 221
47. Mostadrak ul-Wasā'il, Vol. 1, P. 363
48. Al-Murāqibāt. P. 116
49. Mir'āt-ul-'Uqūl, Vol. 12, P. 32
50. Raudat-ul-Muttaqīn, Vol. 12, P. 32
51. Mir'āt-ul-'Uqūl, Vol. 12, P. 4, Tradition No. 3

52. ’Udat-ud-Dā‘ī, P. 154
53. Mir’āt-ul-‘Uqūl, Vol. 12, P. 173
54. Wasā’il-ush-Shī‘ah, Vol. 4, P. 1093
55. Safīnat-ul-Bihār. Vol. 2. P. 5
56. Muhajat ul-Baydā, Vol. 7, P. 107
57. Muhajat ul-Baydā? Vol. 7, P. 107, Explanation of Nahj ul-Balāqah, By Ibn Ab il-Hadīd. Vol. 20. P. 322, and ’Ihyā’-ul-’Ulūm, Vol. 3, P. 1775
58. Az-Zumar, No. 39 verse 10
59. ’Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 3, P. 123
60. Jami‘ ul-’Ahadīth-ush-Shī‘ah, Vol. 14, P. 253
61. Mishkāt ul-’Anwār, P. 60
62. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 3, P. 348
63. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 3, P. 4
64. Surah ’Inshirah, No. 95, verse 5
65. Mustadrak ul-Wasā’il, Vol. 2, P. 299
66. ’Usūl Kāfī, Vol. 3, P. 148
67. Bihār, Vol. 7, P. 181
68. Mishkāt ul-’Anwār, P. 66
69. Kanz ul-’Ummāl, Vol. 3, P. 282
70. 4 Muhajat ul-Baydā, Vol. 7, P. 18 and ’Usūl-i-Kāfī, Vol. 3, P. 145
71. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 88
72. Jami‘ ul-’Ahadīth-ush-Shī‘ah, Vol. 14, P. 251
73. Bihār, Vol. 75, P. 43
74. Bihār. Vol. 68, P. 91

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara, Chapter 26

(The Poets)

No. 26, (revealed at Mecca)

227 verses in 11 sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This holy Surah consists of two hundred and twenty seven verses. It has been revealed in Mecca and, next to Surah Al-Baqarah, and it contains the largest number of verses in comparison with other Suras of the Qur’an.

Through four verses at the end of this Surah, faithful poets have been admired while the poets who compose some vain poems have been reproached, and that is why this holy Surah has been entitled Shu‘ara’, and its other name is Ta Sin Mim.

There has come the biography of some prophets in this Surah, such as Moses, Abraham, Noah, Lut, Salih, Hud, and Shu‘ayb (Jethro), as well as the pertinacious conflicts of people against them.

At the end of each biography of these prophets, the Qur’an says:

“Verily in that there is a sign, but most of them do not believe.”

“And verily, your Lord certainly is He, the Mighty, the Merciful.”

And, therefore, this verse has been repeated eight times in order to sooth the Prophet of Islam (S)and to tell him not to be afraid of the pertinacity of the people of Mecca since all prophets had encountered some people like them.

Yes, historical events are the best means for strengthening the believers’ spirits, promoting the insight, tolerance, and a planning for struggling against the enemies’ threats in the future. That is why the leaders of the society must be aware of the history of the society.

The Virtue of the Surah

The holy Prophet of Islam (S) said:

“One who reads this Surah will not get sunk and his home will be save from burglary and fire; and one who writes this Surah on a paper and mixes it with water and drinks it, all his diseases may be healed by Allah.”[1]

Note

1. Majma‘ ul-Bayan, Fakhr-i-Razi, Qurtabi, Tibyan, and Ruh-ul-Ma‘ani

Section 1: Qur’an, the Book Manifest

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

طسم

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ أَلاَ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

1. “Ta. Sin. Mim.”

2. “These are verses of the Book (that makes the truth) clear.”

3. “Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief, for that they do not become Believers.”

Many words have been cited about abbreviated letters and maybe the best one is that Allah brings up these letters in the beginning of some Suras (29 cases) of the Holy Qur’an for stating this matter that the holy Qur’an is His perpetual miracle which is generated from these very letters and if anyone can write a similar book by these Arabic letters, he may bring it forth.

The verse says:

“Ta. Sin. Mim.”

A comprehensive religious school must have a strong, written, systematic, and decisive logic so that everyone can easily reach it.

The holy Qur’an has got a very high rank and whenever there is a deadlock and stop for you, the Qur’an functions as a guide.

This noble verse states the magnificence of the Holy Qur’an in this way:

“These are verses of the Book (that makes the truth) clear.”

Of course, the Arabic word /tilka/ refers to something far away and its meaning is ‘that’ or ‘those’. As we said before, in the Arabic and Persian languages sometimes it happens that we use demonstrative pronouns of fat distance to state the magnificence of something, that is, that subject is so important and crucial that it seems to be out of our reach and in the heavens.

It is worth paying attention that this holy verse is exactly mentioned in Suras Yusuf and Al-Qasas, too, and in all cases it has come after abbreviated letters. These occurrences show that these letters have a kind of direct relationship with the magnificence of the holy Qur’an.

Using the Arabic adjective /mubin/, which is in fact derived form the word /bayan/, for the Qur’an , refers to the obviousness of its magnificence and being a miracle that if the more attention man pays to its content, the more he will get familiar with its being a miracle.

Moreover, the holy Qur’an distinguishes the truth from the falsehood and it clarifies the way of happiness, victory and salvation from misleading.

Then, in the next noble verse, the Prophet (S) is sympathized with when it says:

“Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief, for that they do not become Believers.”

The Arabic word /baxi‘/ is derived from the word /bax‘/ that means: ‘kill oneself by sorrow and sadness’. This meaning shows how much the holy Prophet (S) of Islam was compassionate towards people and persevered in doing his mission.

He was worried and upset that some thirsting people were sitting beside the spring of the Qur’an and Islam and yet cried because of thirstiness.

He was saddened why the sane man goes in an astray path and falls in a pitfall while there are so many lamps and lights.

Yes, all divine prophets, especially the Prophet of Islam (S), were in the same way compassionate, and this sentence has been repeated about him (S) many times.

Some commentators say that the cause of the revelation of this verse was that: the Prophet (S) frequently called the people of Mecca to monotheism, but they did not achieve faith in Allah. The Prophet (S) became so worried that his face showed signs of his sadness and then the above verse wassent down to sympathize with him.[1]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 4-6

إِن نَّشَأْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِم مِّن السَّمَاء آيَةً فَظَلَّتْ أَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خَاضِعِينَ

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِم مِّن ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ مُحْدَثٍ إِلاَّ كَانُوا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِينَ

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا فَسَيَأْتِيهِمْ أَنبَاء مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُون

4. “If We please, We should send down upon them a sign from the heaven to which they would bend their necks in humility.”

5. “And never comes there to them a new reminder from the Beneficent (Allah), but they turn away from it.”

6. “So they have indeed rejected (it), therefore the news of that which they used to mock shall soon come to them.”

Allah’s way of treatment and law is to provide people choice, options and opportunities of respite. Faith must be voluntary and optional not compulsory.

In these verses three attributes of pagans are mentioned: aversion, denial, and derision. Yes, man gradually and step by step falls in pitfall; first he ignores and dislikes the Truth, then he denies it, and finally he scoffs at it. The worst attribute and mood of man is to ridicule the truth.

Therefore, this verse says:

“...the news of that which they used to mock shall soon come to them.”

And it does not say that they will be punished because of their denial and aversion.

Anyway, in order to prove that Allah is omnipotent, and even He can forces all people to believe in Him, through the first verse He says:

“If We please, We should send down upon them a sign from the heaven to which they would bend their necks in humility.”

The verse refers to this matter that Allah can present them a surprising miracle or impose a severe punishment on them so that they involuntarily bow down before Him and yield it, but this compulsory faith is worthless. What is important is that they yield to the Truth willingly, thoughtfully, intentionally and consciously.

It is clear that the purpose of ‘they would bend their necks in humility’ is that the owner of necks would bow down before it. But because the neck, which is /raqabah/ and /‘unuq/ in Arabic, is the most important limb of man's body is mentioned ironically as man himself.

Then, in the next holy verse the position of pagans and polytheists against the holy Qur’an is mentioned, where it says:

“And never comes there to them a new reminder from the Beneficent (Allah), but they turn away from it.”

Using the Qur’anic word /ðikr/ (reminder) refers to the fact that all verses and Suras of the holy Qur’an are striking man’s conscience and give him awareness, but this group turns away from vigilance and awareness.[2]

Using the Qur’anic word ‘Ar-Rahman’ (the Beneficent) refers to the matter that the verses are sent down out of His general mercy and He calls all people, without exception, to happiness and perfection.

It is also likely that it is for motivating people to thank Allah, for these words are said by Allah Whose blessings embrace people. How they turn away from Him, their Benefactor, and if He does not hurry to punish them, it is because of His mercy, too.

The Arabic word ‘Muhaddith’ (new and fresh) is used to refer to the matter that the verses of the holy Qur’an are sent down one after the other one and each of them has a new concept.

However, what benefit it has that they are against these fresh truths, as if they have had perpetual relationship with those superstitions of the ancestors and they do not want to say farewell to ignorance superstitions, and misleading at any price.

Essentially bias, stubborn, unwise persons are always against any new thing, though it may guide, inform, and save them.

In verse 68 of Surah Al-Muminun we read:

“Have they not pondered the statement (of the Qur’an), or has anything come to them that did not came to their fathers of old?”

(They struggle with it for it is new!)

Then in the next verse it adds implying that they do not get satisfied with aversion, and they begin to deny and then they start to do something worse than that which is scoffing at the revelations. It says:

“So they have indeed rejected (it), therefore the news of that which they used to mock shall soon come to them.”

The Qur’anic word /’anba’/ is the plural form of the word /naba’/ that means ‘important news’. Its purpose here is those severe punishments which will be imposed on them both in this world and the other world.

Although some commentators, such as Shaykh Tusi in the book Tibyan, believe that these punishments are limited to those in the Hereafter, and most of commentators believe that the concept of the verse is general and in fact this is true, for the verse is absolute and, moreover, paganism and denial of the truth has got an extensive terrible effect on the entire life of man. How can it be ignored?

Studying this verse and the former verse shows that when man is on deviated paths, he gets increasingly far away from the Truth. First it is the phase of aversion and turning away from the Truth and being heedless to it.

Then gradually man begins to deny and reject it and even he gets further than this stage and he starts to mock the Truth. Then divine punishment will come.[3]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 7-9

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الأَرْضِ كَمْ أَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

7. “Do they not look at the earth - how many of every noble kind We have caused to grow in it?”

8. “Verily in that there is a sign, but most of them do not believe.”

9. “And verily, your Lord certainly is He the Mighty, the Merciful.”

Studying the creatures of the universe and its beauties is the best way of theology and knowing Allah. Consequently, the holy Qur’an reprimands those who do not closely look at the universe.

Thus, the previous holy verses talked about the pagans’ aversion to divine religious verses, that is fhe Qur’an, and the concerned verses talk about their aversion to genetic verses and Allah’s portents in the universe. Not only did they pay no attention to the words of the Prophet (S), but also they deprived themselves of watching signs of the Truth around them.

It first says:

“Do they not look at the earth - how many of every noble kind We have caused to grow in it?”

Here, it is worthy to pay attention to the Arabic word /zauj/ concerning to the plants, though most of commentators say that this word means ‘kind’ and ‘type’ and the word /’azwaj/ means ‘types’ and ‘kinds’, it is no matter that we consider here the famous meaning of the word /zauj/, which comes to mind before any other meanings, and that is mate. So it may refer to the conjugality of plants!

In the ancient times men had somehow found out that some plants have female and male kinds, and pollination has been used to fecundate plants.

This matter about palm tree was perfectly known to man. For the first time Karl Linne (1707-1778), the Swedish botanist, could discover that the issue of sex in the world of plants is rather a general rule and plants are fertilized like most animals, that is by joining male semen with female seed and then they produce fruit.

However, many centuries before these scientists the holy Qur’an has frequently mentioned the subject of conjugality in plants.[4] And this is one of the scientific miracles of the holy Qur’an.

The Arabic word /karim/ (noble) means every thing that is valuable. It is sometimes applied to man, sometimes to plants, and sometimes it is used even to qualify a letter, such as the words of the Queen of Sheba concerning the letter of Solomon she said:

“...there has been thrown unto me a noble letter.”[5]

The purpose of a plant that is ‘Karim’ is the plants which are beneficial and good and, of course, each plant has got some benefits and by the development of science this fact gets more and more clear.

The second verse of the above verses, in order to specify and emphasize more, the Qur'an says:

"Verily in that there is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

Yes, paying attention to this fact that this apparently worthless soil, which has a certain and given structure, is the source of generation of various beautiful flowers, fruitful plants, colorful fruits with totally different properties, states the ultimate power of Allah, but these blind-hearted persons are so neglectful and unaware that they do not see the divine signs and are still uninformed, for paganism and stubbornness have penetrated into their hearts. Thus, in the end of the verse, it is said:

"...but most of them do not believe."

This faithlessness has become such as a perpetual attribute of theirs, and it is not surprising that they do not achieve anything from the divine verses, for receptivity of person is of the main conditions of the effect, as we read about the holy Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2:

"...a guidance to the pious ones."

In the last verse of the verses under discussion, through a phrase which is the sign of both threat and encouragement, and it is a dread and a hope both, it says:

"And verily, your Lord certainly is He the Mighty, the Merciful."

The Qur'anic word /'aziz/, means a powerful person who is not defeated. He has power both to present great verses and to beat those who deny verses, nevertheless, He is merciful and His encompassing mercy includes every creature and, a serious return to Him in a short moment is enough that He directs all His grace toward man and to forgive all his past sins.

It is likely that the attribute /'aziz/ which has preceded the attribute /rahim/ is for this matter that if the word 'Rahim' came before the word "Aziz', it would create a feeling that He is weak, but the word "Aziz' has come first to show that, in spite of being powerful, He is very merciful.

Notes

1. Abul Futuh-i-Razi, Vol. 8, the explanation of the verse
2. In some famous books, such as Irshad Mufid, Rauzah Kafi, Kamal Al-Din Saduq, and tafsir-i-Qummi, we read that Imam Sadiq (as) said about the commentary of verse 4:
"The purpose is the rebels of Umayyads who would yield when they see heavenly signs at the time of the rising of Imam Mahdi (as)."
(Al-Mizan and Nur uth-Thaqalayn)
It is clear that the purpose of these narrations is to state an extension of the extensive: concept of the verse, that finally when Imam Mahdi (as), the leader of universal government, comes, all tyrannical regimes which follow the approach of Umayyads, surrender and bow down before the power of Imam Mahdi (as) and his divine support.
3. The same matter is also mentioned in verses 4 and 5 of Surah Al-'An'am
4. in current verses, and also in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 4, Surah Luqman, verse 10, Surah Qaf, verse 7
5. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 29

Section 2: Moses and Aaron Sent Towards Pharaoh

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 10-12

وَإِذْ نَادَى رَبُّكَ مُوسَى أَنِ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَلاَ يَتَّقُونَ

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يُكَذِّبُونِ

10. “And when your Lord called out to Moses (saying): ‘Go to the unjust people,”

11. “The people of pharaoh; will they not fear (Allah)?’”

12. “Said (Moses): ‘O my Lord! Surely I fear that they will reject me?’”

Sending prophets to people is of Allah’s status. Struggling with false god is at the top of prophets’ programs.

(Go to the unjust people)

As we said before, this Surah states the life story of 7 great prophets as an instructive lesson for all Muslims, especially early ones.

It begins with Moses (as) and explains some parts of his life and struggles with Pharaohs until the time when this tyrannical nation sank.

Up to now many Suras of the holy Qur’an[1] have talked about Children of Israel, Moses (as) and the people of Pharaoh and in some of the next Suras there will be some discussions about them, too.

Of course, some of these discussions are apparently repeated, but studying them carefully shows that each of them emphasizes on a particular part of this event and it is for a special aim.

For example, the concerned verses were sent down when Muslims were so minor that they did not have any power and important position while their enemies were very powerful and mighty so that by no means they were equal.

Here, it is necessary for Allah to mention some similar life stories of the former nations in order to make them know this great power of foe and their apparent weakness would never bring about their defeat, and so their morale would be boosted and they could increase their resistance and insistence.

It is interesting that after each life story of these 7 prophets, these two verses are repeated:

“...but most of them do not believe.”

“And verily, your Lord is He the Mighty, the Merciful.”

It is exactly the same sentences that we read about the Prophet (S) in the beginning of this very Surah. This harmony is an active evidence of this fact that mentioning this part of the stories of prophets has been because of some special psychological and social conditions of Muslims in that particular part of time and age, and their similarity in other occasions.

At first it says:

“And when your Lord called out to Moses (saying): ‘Go to the unjust people,”

In the next verse the Qur’an adds:

“The people of pharaoh; will they not fear (Allah)?”

This point is worth-studying that here the only attribute of Pharaohs that is emphasized is /zulm/ (oppression).

We know that this word has got a comprehensive and extensive meaning, and polytheism is one of its manifest extensions:

("...verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity."[2])

Exploitation and slavery of the Children of Israel, with those harsh punishments and tortures, is its other extension. Moreover, before anybody else, they first oppressed themselves with their wrong actions; and so we can summarize the purpose of Divine prophets' call in struggling with oppression and tyranny in all aspects.

At this time Moses (as) tells Allah his great problems and difficulties and asks Him to strengthen and boost him more for carrying out this great mission.

Here is what the Qur'an says:

"Said (Moses): 'O my Lord! Surely I fear that they will reject me?'"

Thus, Moses implied that they would defeat him with their oppositions and denials before he could complete his mission and this mission could not get anywhere.

Moses (as) was totally right, for Pharaoh and his people had so much dominance over the conditions of the country, Egypt, that no one could struggle with and oppose them, and, thus, any little opposition would be harshly and tyrannically suppressed.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 13-15

وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلاَ يَنطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَى هَارُونَ

وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَن يَقْتُلُونِ

قَالَ كَلاَّ فَاذْهَبَا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّا مَعَكُم مُّسْتَمِعُونَ

13. "And my breast straitens, and my tongue is not eloquent, therefore sent for Aaron (to help me)."

14. "And they have a crime against me, therefore I fear that they may slay me."

15. "Said (Allah): 'By no means, so go you both with Our signs, surely We are with you, hearing'."

The purpose of Moses' wrong action, mentioned in verse 14, is an event that is referred to in Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 14. Before his prophethood, Moses (as) entered a city and saw that one of his adherents was fighting with one of the people of Pharaoh. Moses' adherent asked Moses' help, and Moses (as), supporting him, struck the Coptic enemy with his fist and he died.

This event sent a shock wave across the region and it forced Moses (as) to escape. Although this action of Moses was not done to kill that person, for it was done to support an oppressed person, it caused Moses (as) to be counted as a murderer in the view of the people of Pharaoh.

When Moses (as) was appointed as a prophet, he said to Allah that he feared the death of that Coptic man prevented him from his mission.

It is understood from the word ‘Kalla’ (nay) that the act of Moses (as) was not a deliberate murder, otherwise, Allah may not say to a willful murderer:

“...‘By no means so go you both with Our signs, surely We are with you, hearing.”

And therefore, Moses (as) implies that his breast straitens, and has: not enough capacity for the accomplishment of this mission.

Moses also added that his tongue was not eloquent enough and, therefore, he (as) asked Him to give his brother the messengership, too, so that they could struggle with together.

Moses (as) wanted to carry out this great commandment with the help of Aaron, his brother, in spite of those stubborn oppressors.

The verse says:

“And my breast straitens, and my tongue is not eloquent, therefore sent for Aaron (to help me).”

In the next verse Moses (as) implies that, further, they have a charge of crime against him, as they think, because he had killed one of those cruel Coptic people when the man was quarrelling with an oppressed person from the children of Israel.

The verse says:

“And they have a crime against me, therefore I fear that they may slay me.”

Moses (as) feared that the people of Pharaoh might kill him as retaliation for slaying one of them and this could put an end to that great mission.

As a matter of fact, Moses (as) encountered 4 problems on the way of carrying this great mission and he asked Allah to solve them, (the problem of denial, the problem of straitening of breast, the problem of retaliation, the problem of lack of eloquence).

Meanwhile, it gets clear that Moses (as) did not fear about his own life, but he feared that he might get killed before fulfilling his mission, and so he asked Allah to help him more, for succeeding in this struggle.

The kind of means that Moses (as) asked Allah in this connection is a clear evidence upon this fact. He asked expansion of breast (great and extensive soul), eloquence, and commissionership of his brother, Aaron, to participate in this great job.

This matter has been explained in details, in Surah Ta-Ha, where it says:

“(Moses) said: ‘My Lord expand me my breast!”
“And make easy for me my task,”
“And loose a knot from my tongue,”
“(That) they may understand my saying;”
“And appoint for me an assistant from my family,”
“Aaron, my brother;”
“Strengthen my back by him,”
“And associate him (with me) in my affair.”
“So that we glorify You much,”
“And remember You abundantly.”[3]

Through the next verse, Allah fulfilled this sincere demand of Moses, where the Qur’an says:

"Said (Allah): 'By no means, so go you both with Our signs, surely We are with you, hearing'."

This statement means that they can not kill you, your breast will not be straitened and you will be eloquent.

Allah also fulfilled Moses' praying about his brother and he was commissioned, too, to go to invite Pharaoh and his people to the truth.

Allah never left them alone and He helped them in tight conditions, and they paved the path of the Truth firmly and with assurance.

Thus, by three sentences Allah provided Moses (as) enough assurances of support and fulfilled his demand; by the word 'Kalla' (nay) Allah assured him that they could not kill him. Also he would have no problem in speaking and in his job.

And with the sentence /faðhaba bi 'ayatina/ (So go you both with Our signs), Allah sent his brother, Aaron, to help Moses (as). And finally, with the sentence /'inna ma'akum mustami'un/ (Surely We are with you, hearing), He promised them to support them anywhere on the earth.

It is considerable that, in the last sentence, the pronoun has been used in the plural form and it is said,

'We are with you'.

It is possible that this sentence refers to the matter that Allah is present in all meetings and gatherings that Moses (as) and his brother have with the people of Pharaoh and He hears all their words, and, thus, helps these two brothers to overcome those oppressors.

Some think that since the Arabic word /ma'a/ (with) indicates support and helps, and this help is not for the people of Pharaoh, they are wrong, but this word indicates the perpetual presence of Allah in all scenes and places. Even he is with wrongdoers and lifeless creatures and there is no place in which He is not present.

The application of a derivative of the word /'istima'/ that means: 'to listen carefully' puts emphasis on this fact, too.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 16-19

فَأْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولاَ إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

أَنْ أَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ

وَفَعَلْتَ فَعْلَتَكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

16. "So go to Pharaoh and say: 'Verily we (two) are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds!"

17. "Send you with us the Children of Israel'."

18. "Said (Pharaoh): 'Did we not cherish you as a child among us, and you tarried among us for (many) years of your life?"

19. "And you did that your deed which you did, and you are one of the ungrateful."

It is Allah's will to rear Moses (as) in the house of Pharaoh. Allah's friends do not get bound by ties of people's hospitality, and society and environment have no effect on them.

It is not right to leave someone who is good with us alone and to accept, or ignore, his faults. (Moses (as) was helped and brought up by Pharaoh but Moses (as) did not leave him alone.)

In the previous verses, the first phase of Moses' mission was stated, namely receiving revelation and asking means of achieving this great aim, ended.

Now, the second phase that is meeting Pharaoh and having a critical conversation with him is mentioned.

As an introduction, Allah, pointing to availability of everything for Moses and Aaron, commands them and says:

"So go to Pharaoh and say: 'Verily we (two) are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds!"

The Qur'anic phrase /fa'tiya/ (come together) shows that they must speak with Pharaoh himself at any price, and using the word /rasul/ (messenger) which is in the singular form, although they were two, refers to unity and oneness of their call, as if they were two souls in one body with one program and one aim.

After declaring their mission, they asked freedom of the Children of Israel, when they said:

"Send you with us the Children of Israel'."

It is obvious that the purpose of this statement is to set them free in order to go with Moses and Aaron (as), and its purpose is not at all that they have asked Pharaoh to send them by himself.

Here, Pharaoh began to speak and, with calculated and, at the same time, wicked words, tried to deny their mission.

First, he addressed Moses (as), as the Qur'an announces:

"Said (Pharaoh): 'Did we not cherish you as a child among us, and you tarried among us for (many) years of your life?"

Pharaoh wanted to say to Moses (as) that he rescued him from huge waves of Nile, called nut nurses for him, exempted him from the law of death sentence of the Children of Israel and reared him well in a secure, comfortable and luxurious environment, so that Moses (as) spent many years of his Life with them.

In the next verse Pharaoh found another fault with Moses, (as): (referring to killing one of the advocators of Pharaoh).

It says:

"And you did that your deed which you did, and you are one of the ungrateful."

Pharaoh implied that Moses (as) has been fed with the hand of him and now how Moses (as) wanted to bite that hand.

As a matter of fact, he wanted to condemn Moses (as) with this argumentation, as he supposed.

The purpose of Moses' wrong action mentioned in verse 14 is an event that is referred to in Surah Al-Qasas, verse 14 and it does not need that we repeat it.

Some commentators have said that the best form in the meaning of the verse is the content of the tradition of Imam Rida, the eighth Imam (as), who said Moses (as) had acted amphibological congruity.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 20

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذًا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

20. “Said (Moses): ‘I did it then, when I was (as you think) in error’.”

Sometimes confession is a value. After hearing the diabolic words of Pharaoh, Moses (as) answered the three faults that were mentioned, but he counted the second fault more important, when he answered it prior to the first one, (or basically the first fault was not worth answering, for rearing one is not a reason for not guiding the probably misled person who rears.)

However, here is his answer:

“Said (Moses): ‘I did it then, when I was (as you think) in Error’.”

In the commentary of Atyab-ul-Bayan, we read different commentaries about the Qur’anic phrase /min-ad-dallin/; some say that Moses (as) implied that he did not intend to kill and he did not know that it would lead to death.

Some say that Moses (as) implied that he had forgotten. Some say that murder was done by error. Some say that he had not been appointed to messengership when he did it. But all these are wrong, for we know that one of the conditions of prophets, messengers and saints is infallibility. They are far from sins, errors, mistakes, ignorance, and forgetfulness.

Moreover, before this event, Allah says:

“And when he reached his maturity and was full grown, We gave him wisdom and knowledge...”[4]

So attributing ignorance, forgetfulness, mistake and error to Moses (as) is wrong.

Moreover, Moses (as) knew that he would become prophet, for it was revealed to his mother:

“...verily We shall bring him back unto you and shall make him (one) of the Messengers.”[5]

The purpose of the Qur’anic word /dallin/ seems that, because the Coptic man wanted to kill another person and that person asked Moses (as) to help him, and also removing oppression of oppressor is necessary according to intellect and reason.

Then Moses (as) added he thought that helping the oppressed person makes Pharaoh happy and he would like what Moses (as) wanted to do. But after making Pharaoh angry, he escaped for Pharaoh wanted to kill Moses (as). And it got clear to Moses that what he (as) had done was wrong according to the opinion of Pharaoh.

Another commentary says that this word, /dall/, mentioned in the verse under discussion, refers to a practical deviation which is unintentional and it does not mar infallibility, or it means astonishment, like verse 7 of Surah Ad-Duha, No. 93 which says:

“And He found you wandering and guided (you).”[6]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 21

فَفَرَرْتُ مِنكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

21. “So I fled from you when I feared you, then my Lord granted me wisdom and made me of the messenger.”

In this noble verse Moses (as) tells the reason of his escape after that event.

He (as) says:

"So I fled from you when I feared you, then my Lord granted me wisdom and made me of the messenger."

The commentators are of different opinions about the purpose of the Qur'anic word /hukm/ in this verse. Is it the position of prophethood or knowledge and cognizance? But by paying attention to the rest of the verse which sets the position of prophethood in front of the position of wisdom, it gets clear that it is something other than prophethood and mission.

Another evidence for this subject is verse 79 of Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3:

"It is not for a human being that Allah should give him the Book, the judgment and the Prophethood, then he should say to people: 'Be my servants rather than Allah's..."

Basically the Arabic word 'Hukm' originally means to prevent for reforming, therefore snaffle is called 'Hakamah' in Arabic language. Then this word has been applied to saying something that is wisdom, and in this relation, knowledge and intellect have been called /hukm/, too.

There may be said that it is understood from verse 14 of Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28 that Moses (as) had achieved the position of wisdom and knowledge before this event; when it says:

"And when he reached his maturity and became full grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge..."

After this verse the affair of killing that man is mentioned through some verses next to it.

The answer to this question is that knowledge and wisdom has got various levels and Moses (as) had reached one level formerly and he reached a higher level of it at the time of appointing as prophet.

Imam Ali (as) was once asked that why, after the Prophet (S), did he not gain his due with the help of sword and why he did not fight with his former caliphates as he fought with Talhe, Zubayr, and Mu'awiyah.

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Sometimes it is necessary to be silent. Did not 'Ibrahim (as) say to people:

"And I shall withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah..."?[7]

Did not Aaron say:

"...verily the people judged me weak and had well-nigh slain me..."?[8]

Did not Yusuf (as) say:

"...'My Lord! The Prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me...?"[9]

Did not Moses (as) tell them:

"So I fled from you when I feared you..."?[10]

Did not Lut (as) say for the demand of the wrong-doers:

"...'Would that I had the power against you or I might take refuge in a strong support'?"[11]

Therefore other friends of Allah sometimes have to be silent or to be in reclusion."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 22

وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدتَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

22. "And is it a favour with which you reproach me that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?"

The reproaches and arrogance should be answered with harshness and severity.

To answer back the reproach of Pharaoh about rearing Moses (as) in his childhood, Moses (as) protested and decisively said:

"And is it a favour with which you reproach me that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?"

It is correct that the hand of events brought Moses (as) to the Palace of Pharaoh and he (as) was unwillingly brought up in his lap, and this shows the might of Allah, but one must see what the main factor of this affair was. Why was not Moses (as) brought up in his real home with his father and mother caring him?

Is not it true that Pharaoh held the Children of Israel captive and killed boys and let girls to live for being slave-girl?

This great oppression that Pharaoh committed caused Moses' mother to put her son in a wooden box and placed it in Nile River in order to protect her child. It was Allah's will that this small ship came near Pharaoh's palace.

Yes, it was Pharaoh's great oppression that made Moses (as) indebted to this reproach and deprived him of his clean parental home and placed him in Pharaoh defiled palace.

With this commentary, the relation of Moses (as) with Pharaoh's question gets clear.

Another possible commentary is that the purpose of Moses (as) was that his rearing by Pharaoh could be as a blessing compared with those tyranny and cruelties Pharaoh imposed on the Children of Israel, and it is understood that this blessing is a drop in the ocean. What blessing is it that Pharaoh points to, while he has done many oppressions and crimes beside it?

The third commentary that can be mentioned for the answer of Moses (as) to Pharaoh is that: if Moses (as) was brought up in Pharaoh's palace and enjoyed various blessings, it must not be forgotten that the real builders of that palace were the slaves taken from the nation of Moses (as) and the producers of those blessings were the prisoners of the Children of Israel.

How did Pharaoh reproach Moses (as) for enjoying his (Moses') own nation products?

These three above mentioned commentaries are not inconsistent with each other, but the first one seems clearer from some aspects.

By the way, the Qur'anic phrase /min-al-mursalin/ (used in the previous verse, refers to the fact that Moses (as) was not the only messenger of Allah, and before him there had come many prophets and Moses (as) was one of the divine prophets, and Pharaoh did forget all of these things.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 23-26

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنتُم مُّوقِنِينَ

قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلاَ تَسْتَمِعُونَ

قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الأَوَّلِينَ

23. "Pharaoh said: 'And what is the Lord of the woilds?'"

24. "He said: '(He is) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you have faith'."

25. "Pharaoh said to those around him: 'Do you not hear (what he says)?'"

26. "(Moses) said: 'Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of old'."

The Qur'an implies that Prophets' thesis against their opponents was around Allah's lordship, that is Allah's management and legislation and the necessity of the obedience of His orders, otherwise, prophets' opponents accepted Allah as the creator of the world.

Nowadays some people say that religion is separated from politics. This statement is like the words of those who say the creation of the world by Allah is something other than management of the world; (Allah creates it and we govern it).

According to the holy Qur'an and intellect, the right of lordship, obligating and being obeyed belongs only to the One who is Creator, not others. One who has created knows what law to be enacted.

Moses (as) implied that Pharaoh's question was not for understanding, but he was beating about the bush. If Pharaoh really sought the Truth, he would understand His unity and lordship by pondering over the current order and system of the creation.

Anyway, when Moses (as) answered Pharaoh's words very decisively and strongly and Pharaoh got hopeless from this aspect, he changed the course of conversation.

He questioned Moses (as) who had said: his Lord, the Lord of the worlds, appointed him (as) one of the messengers; as the Holy Qur'an declares:

"Pharaoh said: 'And what is the Lord of the worlds?'"

It seems very unlikely that Pharaoh has raised this question for understanding the matter, but it seems that he said it rather out of feigning ignorance and for the sake of scoffing.

In the second verse, like all aware and attentive discussers, Moses (as) had no way but to treat the matter earnestly and to answer it seriously.

In view of the fact that the Essence of Allah is out of reach of man's thoughts and perceptions, Moses (as) used His signs and effects that are everywhere in the universe and spoke about the extrovertive signs, as follows:

"He said: '(He is) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you have faith'."

The heavens with their greatness, the earth with its vastness and its various creatures, before which Pharaoh's kingdom is nothing, is the creation of the Lord of Moses (as). Such a Creator, Divisor and

administrator, namely Allah (s.w.t), deserves worshipping, not a weak and tiny creature like Pharaoh.

Paying attention to this matter is also necessary that idol-worshippers believed that each creature of the world had got a certain lord, and counted universe as a mixture of scattered systems, but Moses' words refer to the fact that this united single system that governs the universe is an evidence that it has ‘a single Lord’ unique Allah.

The Qur’anic sentence /’in kuntum muqinin/ (if you have; faith) probably refers to this matter that Moses (as) implicitly wanted to make Pharaoh and his companions understand that the aim of their question was not for understanding the Trauth, but if they were really seeking the Truth and were the owner of wisdom and intellect, that argument that he uttered would be enough.

Moses (as) implied they should open their eyes for some time and see His signs in the vast heavens and the expanded earth in order to know what they must know and correct their world-view.

But Pharaoh did not rouse from ignorance sleep with this strong speech of the heavenly great teacher and continued ridiculing and scoffing. He used the ancient method of the conceited tyrants and addressed his companions when he spoke, as the Qur’an says:

“Pharaoh said to those around him: ‘Do you not hear (what he says)?’”

It is obvious who were the companions of Pharaoh. They were like Pharaoh himself; they were some oppressors and wealthy people who supported tyranny.

Ibn ‘Abbas says that his companions, who were attending there, were 500 persons who were some special and important persons of his nation.[12]

Pharaoh’s aim was to render this logical and pleasant speech of Moses (as) ineffective on the dark heart of group, and to show that this speech was meaningless and its content was not understandable.

Then Moses (as) continued his logical and calculated words, while he feared no one:

“(Moses) said: ‘your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of Old’.”

As a matter of fact, Moses (as) who began with the extrovertive signs in the first stage, then in the second stage, he proceeded to introvertive signs and embarked on mysteries of creation in man himself and the signs of divine rearing and Allah's lordship in soul and body of man in order to make these ignorant conceited persons think about themselves and to know themselves a little and then to know their Lord.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 27-30

قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمُ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ

قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

قَالَ لَئِنِ اتَّخَذْتَ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لَاَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِينٍ

27. "(Pharaoh) said: 'Verily your messenger who has been sent unto you is a veritable madman'."

28. "(Moses) said: 'The Lord of the east and the west and what is between the two, if you have understanding'."

29. "(Pharaoh) said: 'If you take any god other than me, I will certainly make you one of the imprisoned'."

30. "(Moses) said: 'Even if I bring unto you something manifest?'"

Calumniations do not cause Allah's friends to depart from their divine aims. One of the strongest weapons of prophets' opponents is unfair imputation of insanity. Yes, those who can not offer reasonable argue, resort to false accusation and foul language.

Therefore, Pharaoh continued stubbornness. He exceeded the stage of scoffing and ridiculing him and imputed insanity to Moses (as).

The verse says:

"(Pharaoh) said: 'Verily your messenger who has been sent unto you is a veritable madman'."

It is the same imputation that all oppressors of the world used to charge divine reformers.

It is interesting that this conceited deceiver is not willing even to say 'our messenger' or 'unto us', but he says 'your messenger' and 'unto you', for the phrase 'your messenger' has got a ridiculing aspect.

It is a kind of ridiculing that is along with self-assertion, implying that he is so important that a godly prophet can not come, to call him. His aim of imputing insanity to Moses (as) was to negate the effect of the strong logic of Moses on his present companions.

However, this unfair accusation had no effect on the heavenly soul of Moses (as) and he continued the main path of monotheism by Allah's signs in the expanse of creation, microcosm and macrocosm.

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'The Lord of the east and the west and what is between the two, if you have understanding'."

If Pharaoh had an unreal government in a small region called Egypt, Allah's real government rules the East and the West and all that there are between them.

His signs are seen everywhere and in all creatures. Basically the very rising and downing of the sun in the east and the west and the system that works in it is the sign of His magnificence. But the problem is that such people do not ponder them and even they are not used to thinking.

(You must pay attention that the Qur'anic sentence /'in kuntum ta'qilun/ (if you have understanding) refers to this matter that if Pharaoh had used to thinking in the past and present, he would understand this fact).

In fact, Moses (as) answers this insanity accusation very nicely, saying that he is not insane and a person who does not see all these signs of Allah is mad and insane.

A Persian poem says:

In spite of these strange signs and things that are found on the wall of creation,

If one does not think about You, is a picture on the wall.

It is true that for the first time Moses (as) referred to management of heavens and the earth, but since the heaven is so high and the earth it so mysterious, therefore, at last he pointed out a matter that no one could deny it and man sees it every day. It is the system of rising and downing of the sun and the precise program it has and no one can claim that he is its designer.

The Qur'anic phrase /wa ma baynahuma/ (and what is between the two) refers to the unity and relation of the East and the West, as this meaning is also applied to the heavens and the earth. And the relation and unity of their generations have somehow been stated by the Qur'anic phrase which is recited:

"...'Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of old'." [13]

However, then this strong and top logic made Pharaoh very angry and he restored to the same weapon that all irrational oppressors use when they are defeated and hopeless.

The Qur'an says:

"(Pharaoh) said: 'If you take any god other than me, I will certainly make you one of the imprisoned'."

Pharaoh wanted to say he could not understand what Moses (as) said and the only thing he persisted on was that there was one great god to be worshipped and it was Pharaoh, and whoever would say something other than that he should be condemned to death or being sent to his helish prison.

Some commentators believe that since the Qur'anic word 'Al-Masjunin' in this verse has ''Alif' and 'Lam', it refers to a special prison into which if anyone was sent, one would remain in it until his corpse was brought out.[14]

As a matter of fact, Pharaoh wanted to suppress Moses (as) with these threatening and tough words and to make him silent, for the continuation of these discussions could make people awaken, and nothing is more dangerous for oppressors than alertness and cognizance of people.

In the previous verses we saw how Moses (as) maintained his logical superiority over Pharaoh, and showed the audience how much his religion depended on logic and intellect, and how Pharaoh's claim was baseless and senseless. Sometimes Pharaoh ridicules, sometimes he imputes insanity to Moses (as), and finally he resorts to power, force, and threatening to death and prison.

Now Moses (as) had to choose a new approach which made Pharaoh hopeless again. Resorting to Allah's might originated from a conspicuous miracle, he (as) addressed Pharaoh implying that if he (as) showed a manifest thing as a sign of his messengership, would he imprison him?

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'Even if I bring unto you something manifest?'"

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 31

قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

31. "(Pharaoh) said: 'Bring it then, if you are of the truthful ones'."

At this time Pharaoh reached a very difficult deadlock, for Moses (as) implicitly referred to an extraordinary program and attracted the attention of

the audience towards himself. If Pharaoh ignored his words, all persons would object him and would say that he must let Moses present his important job.

If Moses (as) could do it, it would get clear that he (as) could not be dealt with, otherwise, his bragging and idle talk would get obvious. Anyway, the words of Moses (as) could not be easily ignored.

Pharaoh unwillingly had to utter as follows:

"(Pharaoh) said: 'Bring it then, if you are of the truthful Ones'."

When logic does not work, miracle is a must, for prophets' miracle is real and true and people understand it easily.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 32-33

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاء لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

32. "So he cast down his rod, and behold, it was a clear serpent."

33. "And he drew out his hand, then behold, it was radiant white to the beholders!"

Prophets' miracles are clear and manifesting, not fantasy and imagination.Becoming staff a manifest serpent is repeated ten times in the holy Qur'an, and whitening of Moses hand is repeated five times. Of course, for making the true words effective, one must rightly use both hopeful and unhopeful or threatening methods.

Moses (as) threw the staff that he had in his hand and it changed into a great serpent by the command of Allah.

The verse says:

"So he cast down his rod, and behold, it was a clear serpent."

And then he put his hand in his cloth on his chest and took it out, it suddenly became white and brightening.

The verse says:

"And he drew out his hand, then behold, it was radiant white to the beholders!"

In fact, these two great miracles were signs of hope and fear. The first one was for warning and the second one was for good tidings. One is stating the divine punishment and the other one is light and the sign of mercy, for miracle must be in harmony with prophet's call.

The Arabic word /u'ban/ means a great serpent like a dragon. In the book Mufradat, Raqib says that this word is probably derived from the word /a'b/ that means the current of water, for the movement of this animal is like the streams that move in the shape of serpent form.

The Qur'anic word /mubin/ may refer to this fact that staff really changed into a great snake and no jugglery and cunning, like what sorcerers do, has happened.

It is necessary to mention that here the word /u'ban/ is used, in Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 10, and in Surah Al- Qasas, No. 28, verse 31 the word 'Jan' (small snakes that move fast and swiftly), and in Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 20, the word 'Hayyah' (that means 'snake' and is derived from the word 'Hayat') is used.

The application of these various words may raise question, but they are for stating one of the following matters:

They may refer to various statuses of that snake; first the staff changed into a thin and small snake and then it grew gradually and changed into a great dragon.

Or these three various words may refer to the different characteristics of that snake; the word /u‘ban/ refers to its greatness, the word ‘Jan’ refers to its swiftness and fastness, and the word ‘Hayyah’ refers to the life and liveliness of that snake.

Notes

1. Surah Al- Baqarah, Surah Al-Ma’idah, Surah Al-’A‘raf, Surah Yunus, Surah Al-’'Isra’, Surah Ta-Ha
2. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 13
3. Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verses 25-34
4. Surah Al-Qasas, No.28. verse 14
5. Ibid, verse 7
6. The commentary of Nur, Vol. 8, P. 301
7. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 48
8. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 150
9. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 33
10. The current verse
11. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 80
12. The commentary of Abul-Futuh Razi, the explanation of the verse
13. The current Surah, verse 26
14. The Commentaries of Al-Mizan, Fakhr-i-Razi, Ruh ul-Ma‘ani

Section 3: Pharaoh's Sorcerers Embrace the Truth

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 34-35

قَالَ لِلْمَلَإِ حَوْلَهُ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

يُرِيدُ أَن يُخْرِجَكُم مِّنْ أَرْضِكُم بِسِحْرِهِ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ

34. "(Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him: 'Verily this is a skilled sorcerer,"

35. "Who intends to drive you out of your land with his sorcery, what do you command?'"

In order to move and encourage the sorcerers to compete with Moses (as), Pharaoh called him 'a knowing sorcerer'.

Loving home and country and the motivation of ownership are among men's instincts which Pharaoh used as pretext for inciting people to fight Moses (as).

However, when the staff was changed into a great serpent by Moses hand, Pharaoh got astonished and feared a lot, but to keep his devilish power, which was really exposed to danger, because of Moses' acts, and also to maintain their belief, to have the confidence of his companions and to improve their moral, Pharaoh embarked on justification of Moses' miracles.

First he said to his companions that Moses (as) was a skilful and knowing wizard.

The verse says:

"(Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him: 'Verily this is a skilled sorcerer,"

The person who had been introduced as mad by Pharaoh was now called a learned one. This is the custom and method of oppressors that they change their opinion several times in one meeting or gathering and every time they resort to a new means to achieve their aim.

Since wizardry was common in that age, Pharaoh thought this accusation, after showing these miracles, is the best one that Moses (as) can be charged of.

Then, to mobilize the audience against Moses, Pharaoh continued:

"Who intends to drive you out of your land with his sorcery, what do you command?'"

This is that very Pharaoh who knew all territory of Egypt as his very own sovereignty and was saying:

"...Is not mine the sovereignty of Egypt and these rivers flowing under me? Can you not then discern?"[1]

Now that he saw his government was going to be overthrown, he totally forgot his exclusive rulership of this region and counted it as people's property and implied that their country was facing danger and they had to find a way to defend it.

Pharaoh who did not listen to anyone's words one hour ago and was always an unrestrained ruler and no one could oppose him, was now so miserable that he told his companions to provide a command! He demanded a humble and hopeless counseling!

It is understood from verse 110 of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7 that the companions started counseling and they were so panicky that they could not think and every one of them asked another one:

"...Now what do you command?"

Yes, this is the tradition of all oppressors in all ages that when they can control everything they count everything as their own property and everyone as their own slave, and their logic is only despotism.

However, when they see that their tyrannical kingdom is going to be subdued and in danger, they temporarily abandon despotism and resort to people and their opinions; they count country as people's country, everything as property of people and they respect people's opinions, but when storm abates, they return to their previous behaviour.

In our time and age we also saw in Iran the same kings and rulers who counted all country as their own property when everything was good and o.k., and even they ordered those who opposed him to leave country and said that Allah's land is vast and they could go anywhere.

The last king said:

"This is my order and no one can disobey it."

However, we saw that when revolution took place, they bowed down before people and repented their former sins and asked forgiveness, but this had no effect on people who knew them for a long time.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 36-37

قَالُوا أَرْجِهِ وَأَخَاهُ وَابْعَثْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَا ِ ينَ

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيمٍ

36. "They said: 'Give him (Moses) and his brother respite, and send heralds into the cities to collect',"

37. "(That) they bring to you all skilful sorcerers."

Since the age in which Pharaoh lived was the age of wizardry and sorcery, Pharaoh tried his best to call wizards to be at his service.

Of course, after much counseling, his close companions told Pharaoh not to haste in the affair of Moses and his brother but give then respite, and send some summoners into the cities of Egypt.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Give him (Moses) and his brother respite, and send heralds into the cities to collect',"[2]

As a matter of fact, Pharaoh's companions were either deceived or consciously accepted Pharaoh's accusation of Moses (as) and they planned that he was a sorcerer and they had to resort to better wizards to fight him.

They thought that fortunately there were a lot of skilful wizards in the vast country of Egypt and if Moses (as) was a wizard, they would gather so many skilful wizards that the secret of Moses (as) would be revealed.

The verse says:

"(That) they bring to you all skilful sorcerers."

The Arabic word /haširin/ is derived from the word /hašr/ that means to mobilize people for war or suchlike. Thus, now officers had to mobilize wizards at any price to fight Moses (as).

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 38-39

فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنتُم مُّجْتَمِعُونَ

38. “So the sorcerers were got together for the appointment of a day well-known.”

39. “And it was said to the people: ‘Will you assemble?’”

Attracting public opinion and having their presence in the scene is important to the illegitimate rulers.

Pharaoh asked people to attend a given place at a particular time, for this gathering and presence would make Moses (as) and Aaron (as) feel alone and might cause the wizards to feel morally boosted. It also would switch on his propaganda machine.

Finally, after the proposition of Pharaoh’s companions, some selected officers went to different cities of Egypt and sought everywhere for skilful wizards.

The verse says:

“So the sorcerers were got together for the appointment of a day well-known.”

In other words, they were already gathered and were made ready for such a day in order to fight Moses (as).

As it is understood from the verses of Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, the purpose of the Qur’anic phrase /yaumin ma‘lum/ is one of the feasts of Egyptians which was selected by Moses (as) for fighting, and his aim was to provide people opportunity to attend in that gathering, for he was sure that he would overcome Pharaoh and he wanted to show all people the power of divine signs and weakness of Pharaoh and his companions.

He (as) wanted the light of faith to shine in the hearts of more persons.

Then, the next holy verse implies that the people were also invited to attend this struggling, as it declares:

“And it was said to the people: ‘Will you assemble?’”

This statement shows that Pharaoh’s officers did their jobs very calculatedly and they knew that if they forced people to attend the gathering, they might react negatively, therefore, they declared that if they were willing to attend it, they could do it. Certainly such way of speaking attracted more people to that gathering.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 40-42

لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِن كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ

فَلَمَّا جَاء السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّ لَنَا لأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَّمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

40. “Haply we may follow the sorcerers if they are victors.”

41. “Then, when the sorcerers came, they said to Pharaoh: ‘Shall we have a reward if we should be the victors?’”

42. “(Pharaoh) said: ‘Yes, and surely you will then be among the near-stationed’.”

Moses (as) and Aaron were standing alone on one side, for they had faith, and Pharaoh, all rich people and the wizards were standing on the other side and were worried. Here the role of faith and its power gets clear.

Finally, they told the people that their aim was that if their sorcerers became victorious, whose victory was the victory of their gods, they would follow them, and they promised to treat so enthusiastically that the enemies of their gods would perish forever.

The verse says:

"Haply we may follow the sorcerers if they are victors."

Therefore, they wanted people to warm up the gathering so that the enemies of their gods would be defeated totally.

It is completely clear that the considerable presence of fans and supporters, who advocate one party, is both to boost morale and to provide hope and assurance. It also cause them to try their best. When they succeed, they can make such ado that their contending party will go to seclusion and they can frighten the opposite party from the beginning of the struggle, too.

Yes, imaging these aims, Pharaoh's officers wanted to call people to the gathering and Moses (as) also asked Allah such presence of people so that he could achieve his aim in the best way.

Apart from these, when the wizards came to Pharaoh and saw that he was in severe tight corner, they thought to use this opportunity best and to achieve some important advantages of him:

"Then, when the sorcerers came, they said to Pharaoh: 'Shall we have a reward if we should be the victors?'"

Pharaoh, who was in tight corner and hopeless, agreed to give them the best advantages and immediately answered them as follows:

"(Pharaoh) said: 'Yes, and surely you will then be among the near-stationed'."

In fact, Pharaoh wanted to tell them what they did want; it was whether property (wealth) or position and rank that all of these would be given to them.

This statement shows how important it was in that society and environment to be near to Pharaoh, which he mentioned as a great reward. In fact, for man no reward is higher than being near to his preferred power.

If those deviated persons counted nearness to Pharaoh as the best reward, the knowing worshippers of Allah count no reward higher than propinquity to Allah. Even they do not exchange Paradise with its all blessings for a manifestation of His Pure Essence.

Therefore, those who are martyred for the sake of Allah must achieve the best rewards for their great self-sacrifice. According to the holy Qur'an, they will achieve the reward of divine propinquity and the Qur'anic phrase /'inda rabbihim/ (with their Lord) indicates this reality.

Also, because of this fact, every pure-hearted believer only asks Allah's nearness when he worships.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 43-44

قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنتُم مُّلْقُونَ

فَأَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ

43. "Moses said to them: 'Cast what you are going to Cast'."

44. "So they cast down their ropes and their rods, and said: 'By Pharaoh's dignity we shall certainly be the victors'."

The men of Allah believe in the victory of divine truth and nothingness of wizardry and, when they are in such a condition, they speak calmly and powerfully not weakly and with fear.

When the wizards reached agreement with Pharaoh, who promised them the reward of nearness to him and they becam assured and hopeful, they went to make the necessary things ready. They gathered many ropes and staffs which apparently they hollowed out and filled with a special chemical material (such as mercury) which is liquid and light when the sun shines on it.

Finally the promised day came and a lot of people gathered in that place in order to witness that historical struggle. Pharaoh, his companions and the wizards were on one side and Moses (as) and his brother Aaron were on the other side.

But, as it is the custom of the holy Qur'an, these secondary matters, which are understood from later discussions, here are omitted, and it brings up the main subject.

Now it depicts this fateful scene as the Qur'an says:

"Moses said to them: 'Cast what you are going to cast'."

It is understood from verse 115 of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7 that Moses (as) said this sentence when the wizards told him:

"...'O Moses! Will you throw or shall we be the (first) throwers?'"

This proposition that Moses (as) offered originated from his self-assurance of victory and his calmness and indifference when he was before a lot of foes and Pharaoh exponents.

This was the first hit on the wizards and showed that Moses (as) was especially psychologically calm and, facing with the great mass of enemies and the obstinate advocator of Pharaoh, he was assured and hopeful.

The wizards, who were conceited and very proud, started their job.

As the verse says:

"So they cast down their ropes and their rods, and said: 'By Pharaoh's dignity we shall certainly be the victors'."

Yes, like all sycophants, they also started with the name of Pharaoh and relied on his unreal power. At this time, as the holy Qur'an has mentioned in other verses, the ropes and staffs moved like big and small snakes.[3]

They had intentionally selected some means of their own wizardry from staffs for they thought they could compete with the staff of Moses (as), and they added ropes to prove that they are stronger.

At this time, people cried joyfully and happily and Pharaoh and his companions became so hopeful that they could not contain themselves for joy. By looking at this pleasant scene, they got very happy.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 45-48

فَأَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

فَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ
قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ

45. "Then Moses cast down his rod, when, behold, it swallowed up that which they falsely displayed."

46. "Then the sorcerers were flung prostrate."

47. "They said: 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds'!"

48. "The Lord of Moses and Aaron'."

Under Allah's administration the universe is on the way of perfection.

As soon as the wizards saw that Moses' staff changed into a great serpent, they became faithful. It is narrated that when Imam Mahdi (as) appears, the western and eastern experts will believe in him, for they will understand the magnificence of his job better than others.

Anyway, we read in the previous verses that Pharaoh and the wizards got happy and satisfied by seeing their wizardly action.

In these verses, we read that Moses (as) did not give them much time to enjoy their action.

The Qur'an says:

"Then Moses cast down his rod, when, behold, it swallowed up that which they falsely displayed."

At that time, all people got silent and the mouths remained open and the eyes remained still out of astonishment, as if they were dried over there. But very soon terrible cries took place of silence, some people escaped, some stood to see what would finally happen, some cried unintentionally, and the wizards' mouth remained open surprisingly.

At that time, suddenly every thing changed; the wizards, who advocated Pharaoh and fought Moses (as) up that moment, came to their senses, for they knew all mysteries and skills of wizardry. They were assured that this issue was not certainly magic and it was a great divine miracle.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Then the sorcerers were flung prostrate."

It is interesting that the holy Qur'an uses the word /'ulqiya/ which philologically means to be thrown down. It refers to this matter that the wizards were so influenced by the miracle of Moses (as) that all of a sudden they spontaneously fell on the ground and prostrated.

Finally, the next verse implies that accompanied with this action, that was a clear proof for their faith, they also said by their tongues that they believed in the Lord of the worlds.

The verse says:

"They said: 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds'!"

Then to clarify any doubt and to prevent Pharaoh from interpreting this sentence according to his own will, they added:

"The Lord of Moses and Aaron'."

This shows that although Moses (as) did speak to the wizards and performed throwing the staff, his brother, Aaron, was accompanying him and was ready to help him in any way possible.

After this strange change that happened in the wizards' morale, they, in a short moment, came out of an absolute darkness and stepped into a dazzling brightness.

They turned their back on all the benefits and advantages they expected Pharaoh. It was easy for them to expose their life to danger, for they could differentiate the Truth from the falseness and they resorted to the Truth because of their new knowledge.

They did not pave the rest of the path by the foot of intellect, but they went on eagerly, mounting on the fine mount of 'Love'. They were so devoted that they could encounter any danger. We will see that, for this very reason, they heroically resisted all Pharaoh threats.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Every heart is at the mercy of Allah, the Beneficent. If He wills, He will guide it. And if He wills, He will mislead it."[4]

(It is clear that Allah's will in these two phases is derived from individuals' predisposition and readiness, and this divine success and lack of it is because of various situations of hearts, and it is not undue.)

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 49-51

قَالَ آمَنتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

لاَقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُم مِّنْ خِلاَفٍ وَلاُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

قَالُوا لاَ ضَيْرَ إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنقَلِبُونَ

إِنَّا نَطْمَعُ أَن يَغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا خَطَايَانَا أَن كُنَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

49. "(Pharaoh) said: 'You have believed in him before I give you leave. Verily, he is the chief of you who taught you the sorcery; so, soon shall you know! Certainly I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and certainly I will crucify you all'."

50. "They said: 'No matter! Verily we unto our Lord shall Return'."

51. "Verily we hope that our Lord will forgive us our faults, since we are the first of the believers'."

When the wizards saw Moses' (as) miracle, they fell on the ground and prostrated. At this time, Pharaoh embarked on an analysis to deceive common people. He said that it was a preplanned conspiracy. They are Moses' students and they planned this puppet show to overthrow him.

But those wizards were scattered and were gathered from all over the country and they could not meet Moses (as). Moreover they swore by Pharaoh dignity that they would defeat Moses (as).

Finally, on one hand, Pharaoh did not keep his end up and, on the other hand, he saw his all kingdom and entity exposed to danger. He knew especially what effect the wizards' belief in Allah would have on people's morale and it was possible that a great number of people, following the wizards, might prostrate.

Therefore, he planned a new method and addressing the wizards, he said:

"...'You have believed in him before I give you leave..."

Not only did Pharaoh, who ruled people tyrannically for many years, expect people to take permission for every thing, but also he expected to

have control over people's mind, intellect and heart. He wanted people not to think and decide unless he allowed them. This is the custom and tradition of oppressors.

This unrestrained conceited person did not even utter the name of Allah and Moses (as). He used only the pronoun /lahu/ (in him) which is here for scoffing.

However, Pharaoh did not get satisfied with this and said two other sentences in order to, according to his imagination, both stabilize his situation and to suppress people's awakened consciences. He first accused the wizards that this was a conspiracy done from before with the help of Moses (as). A conspiracy which was against all people of Egypt.

He said:

"...Verily, he is the chief of you who taught you the sorcery..."

He accused them that they had planned such a program to deceive the great people of Egypt and to dominate them. He imputed them that they wanted to expel the real owners of that country and to put slaves in their places.

He meant that he would not allow their conspiracy to be successful and he would nip it in the bud.

He continued:

"...so, soon shall you know! Certainly I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and certainly I will crucify you all'."

It means that not only would they be killed totally, but also their death would be along with torture and suffering, for cutting the right hand and the left leg or otherwise will prolong man's death and suffering and torture will be doubled. Pharaoh would kill them in the presence of people and on the top of tall palm trees.

This is the method and approach of the oppressors of any age, which first they usually accuse divine reforming men of conspiracy against people and then they use force and sword in order to weaken the position of those who seek the Truth and their public support and then they annihilate them.

However, Pharaoh did not understand the situation, for those who had been wizard a moment ago were now believers. Their heart was so lighted with the light of faith and was full of Allah's love that they decisively answered Pharaoh's threat in the presence of people and cooked his goose by nullifying his Satanic plan.

The Qur'an informs:

"They said: 'No matter! Verily we unto our Lord shall return'."

Not only did not Pharaoh decrease them anything by his action, but also he would cause them to reach their real and true Beloved and Deity. The day when such threats had effect on them, they did not know themselves and Allah, they had lost the path of the Truth and were wandering in the desert of life, but now they found what they had lost. Therefore, he would do what he desired.

They added implying that they had committed sins and in this scene they were the leader of struggle with Moses (as), Allah's righteous prophet, and they initiated fight with the Truth, but they hoped Allah's mercy.

The verse says:

"Verily we hope that our Lord will forgive us our faults, since we are the first of the believers'."

They no longer feared anything, neither Pharaoh's threats nor being in the bath of their blood.

They feared only their former sins and they hoped that they would be forgiven under the auspices of faith and Allah's mercy.

What power is it that when it comes in the heart of man, the biggest powers will be nothing in his view and he resists the severest tortures and is generous in sacrificing himself? It is the power of faith.

This is the light of the flame of love which makes martyr for the sake of Allah in man sweeter than honey, and reaching the Beloved the supreme aim.

This is the power from which the Prophet (S) gained help and support and with which he educated the first Muslims, whose history surprises the people of the world, and very quickly brought a back-held nation to pride of position.

Anyway, this event cost Pharaoh and his government dear, although, according to some narrations, he materialized some of his threats and martyred the wizards, not only did not it suppress people's feeling and their sentiments were initiated in favour of Moses (as), but also it exasperated them.

Everywhere people talked about the newly appeared prophet as well as the first faithful martyrs. In this way, some people, including the relatives of Pharaoh and even his wife, got believers.

The question that rises here is how those faithful and repentant wizards called themselves the first believers!

Was their purpose that they were the first believers in that event?

Or were they the first believers from among the supporters of Pharaoh?

Or were they the first believers who were martyred in that event?

All the above commentaries are likely while they are not inconsistent with each other.

These commentaries are true when we believe that before them some of the Children of Israel or other than them had believed in Moses (as), but if we say that they were told to meet directly Pharaoh and to plant the first blow on him after being appointed to prophecy, it is likely that this group of believers were really the first believers and it needs no other commentary.

Notes

1. Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 51
2. The Qur'anic word /'arjih/ is derived form the word /'irja'/ that means to postpone and not hasting in judgment.
3. Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 66
4. The commentary of Fi Zilal, Vol. 6, P. 208

Section 4: Moses Rescues the Children of Israel

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 52-53

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي إِنَّكُم مُّتَّبَعُونَ

فَأَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَا ِ ينَ

52. “And We revealed unto Moses (saying): ‘Go you forth with My servants by night, for verily you will be pursued’.”

53. “Then Pharaoh sent heralds into the cites.”

Since the Children of Israel had provided Pharaoh some benefits, he barred them from migration and Moses (as) was ordered to move them from Egypt at night.

In the previous holy verses we saw that Moses (as) was the victorious party in that day. Although Pharaoh and his supporters did not believe in him, this happening had some important consequences each of which were an important victory:

1. The Children of Israel achieved faith in their leader and they supported him by soul and body, for after years of misery, wretchedness and wandering they saw a divine prophet who both guaranteed their guidance and led their revolution, victory and freedom.

2. Moses (as) had gained a foothold among Egyptians and Coptic ones. Some had been under his influence, or, at least, they feared opposing him, and the sound of his call ringed out throughout Egypt.

3. More importantly from the view of both public opinion and fearing life exposing to danger, Pharaoh did not dare oppose a man who had such a staff and a very expressive language.

All of these affairs provided a proper ground for Moses (as) to remain among those people and to do propagation, call them after providing them proofs.

In this way many years passed, and Moses (as) presented them some other miracles, which were mentioned in the commentaries of verses 13-135 of Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7 along with logic and discussion. Even Allah imposed drought and famine on Egyptians for some years in order to make awake those who deserved to be awaken.

When Moses (as) provided them proof and reason and believers and disbelievers were distinguished, the Children of Israel were commanded to migrate. The concerned verses depict the scene first.

The Qur’an says:

“And We revealed unto Moses (saying): ‘Go you forth with My servants by night, for verily you will be pursued’.”

This was the divine plan for them to move at night then the people of Pharaoh could become aware of this plan, and So to pursue the Children of Israel.

In spite of the fact that the Qur’anic phrase /auhayna/ (we revealed) has come before the word /’ibadi/ (My servants), which is in plural form, this word, /‘ibadi/ is for showing the ultimate kindness of Allah towards His faithful servants.

Moses (as) obeyed this commandment and mobilized the Children of Israel by night in secret and issued the command of migration. He especially chose night, as Allah had ordered, to make his plan more exact and calculated.

It is clear that the movement of such a huge group of people could not be kept hidden for a long time. Pharaoh's spies did inform him very soon.

The holy Qur'an says:

"Then Pharaoh sent heralds into the cities."

Of course, in the conditions of that time delivering the message to all cities of Egypt needed considerable time, but it is natural that this message reached to near cities very fast, and the ready forces moved immediately and they formed a small army. Other forces also joined them gradually.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 54-56

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَائِظُونَ

وَإِنَّا لَجَمِيعٌ حَاذِرُونَ

54. "Verily these (Israelites) are only a small group,"

55. "And verily they have enraged us."

56. "And verily we are a host on our guard."

The Qur'anic word /šir immah/ means a limited group which is separated from the main.[1] Pharaoh propagated that his opponents were a small group. But in some commentaries we read that it is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that those who were with Moses (as) were about 600000 and Pharaoh called these many people as 'a little troop'.

He said:

"Verily these (Israelites) are only a small group,"

To make people psychologically ready for this general mobilization, Pharaoh ordered his own men to declare this announcement that his opponents were a small group. (He meant they are quantitatively less than Pharaoh's men and less powerful than them.)

So they said to themselves that, with their strong power, there was no problem and nothing to fear of and they could certainly be victorious.

In the next verse, they implicitly said that how much they could be patient, and in what extent they might conciliate with those rebellious slaves.

It says:

"And verily they have enraged us."

Pharaoh's men could not tolerate them (slaves) anymore, yet they said: Who would irrigate farms of Egypt the following days? Who would mend the houses of Pharaoh's men? Who would carry heavy things in this vast country? Who would be servant of the men of Pharaoh?

In the next verse it says:

"And verily we are a host on our guard."

They mean that they were ready to fight Moses' (as) people anytime and anywhere, for they feared the conspiracy of this group.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 57-60

فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُم مِّن جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ
وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ
كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
فَأَتْبَعُوهُم مُّشْرِقِينَ

57. “So We expelled them from the gardens and the springs,”
58. “And treasures and a goodly dwelling,”
59. “Thus (did We drown them) and We made the Children of Israel the inheritors to them.”
60. “Then they (Pharaoh’s host) pursued them at sunrise.”

One of Allah’s ways of treatment is to replace oppressors with the oppressed. Departure of Pharaoh and his men after the Children of Israel was a divine prudence to sink them. Consequently wealth, palaces and gardens of Pharaoh and his people turn into the possession of the Children of Israel.

In these noble verses, the destiny of Pharaohs is mentioned and the holy Qur’an concisely states the declination of Pharaoh and ruling of the Children of Israel.

It says:

“So We expelled them from the gardens and the springs,”
“And treasures and a goodly dwelling,”

Yes, thus were those things taken from them and Allah caused the Children of Israel to inherit them.

The verse says:

“Thus (did We drown them) and We made the Children of Israel the inheritors to them.”

Commentators have various opinions about the Qur’anic phrase /maqamin karim/ (a goodly dwelling). Some say that it means luxurious palaces and expensive houses. Some say that it means gatherings and meetings of the rulers which were encircled with some obedient officers.

Of course these two commentaries are consistent. It is likely that both of them are include in the concept of the verse; both their palaces and their power and positions were taken from them.

According to the above verse,

“Thus (did We drown them) and We made the Children of Israel the inheritors to them”,

some commentators believe that the Children of Israel came back to Egypt and ruled the country for some time.[2]

Of course the verses are apparently in line with this commentary, while some believe that after sinking of Pharaoh and his men they went to the holy lands, but, after a length of time, they returned to Egypt and established a government.[3]

The concerning Chapters of the current Torah are in line with this commentary.

Some say that probably the Children of Israel were divided into two groups. A group remained in Egypt and ruled, and a group went with Moses (as) to the holy lands.

However, as the last verse implies, Pharaoh sent his men to the cities of Egypt and gathered enough army and forces.

Some commentators say that he sent 600000 men as an advanced guard and he himself followed them with 1000000 soldiers. They moved fast at night and pursued them and they reached Moses (as) and his people when sun was rising, as the holy Qur'an says:

"Then they (Pharaoh's host) pursued them at sunrise."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 61-62

فَلَمَّا تَرَاءى الْجَمْعَانِ قَالَ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ

قَالَ كَلاَّ إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

61. "So when the two parties saw each other, the companions of Moses said: 'Indeed we are overtaken'!"

62. "(Moses) said: 'By no means! Verily my Lord is with me, soon will He gtiide me (to safety)'."

Heavenly leaders are calm and serene at the time of crises and cause others to be calm. Confronting foe (even when one is trapped between sea and foe), one must not get disappointed and must trust Allah and believe in divine promises.

However, to illustrate their situation, the Qur'an says:

"So when the two parties saw each other, the companions of Moses said: 'Indeed we are overtaken'!"

There was a wavy sea in front of them and there was a strong and tyrannical arm behind them. A very equipped troop who were angry with the Children of Israel and they had showed that they were blood thirsty with killing their issues during many years, and Pharaoh himself was also a stubborn and bloodthirsty tyrant.

Therefore, they would possibly surround them and would torture or arrest and kill them. And situations wholly showed that this was so.

At that time the Children of Israel suffered some painful moments, the bitter moments whose bitterness cannot be described. Perhaps some of them lost heart and their faith was shaken.

But, as the verse implies, Moses (as) was still calm and faithful and knew that Allah's promises about deliverance of the Children of Israel and the destruction of tyrannical people are not to be unfulfilled.

Therefore, believing and trusting in Allah, Moses (as) addressed the frightened Children of Israel and implicitly said that it was not so, and the foe could never overcome them because his Lord was with him and He would guide him.

The verse says:

"(Moses) said: 'By no means! Verily my Lord is with me, soon will He guide me (to safety)'."

This may refer to the same promise that Allah gave to Moses (as) and Aaron at the time of specifying their mission:

"He said: 'Fear not. Verily I am with you both, hearing and seeing."[4]

Thus, whether all of the Children of Israel returned to, Egypt and established a government, or some of them, obeying Moses' command, remained there and carried out this plan, otherwise, sending Pharaoh and his men out and making the Children of Israel inherit them, which is mentioned in the verses, has not a clear concept.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 63-64

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنِ اضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَأَزْلَفْنَا ثَمَّ الْآخَرِينَ

63. "Then We revealed to Moses: 'Strike the sea with your staff', then it clove asunder and each part became like a huge mountain."

64. "Then We made the other party approach thither."

It is always with Allah's will and divine revelations that all prophets do their jobs.

Allah does some jobs through His friends in order to make people pay attention to them and obey them. (Yes, the nature and its manifestations are fully, by Allah's will, at the mercy of His special servants and are over powered by them.)

It was why that the Qur'an says:

"Then We revealed to Moses: 'Strike the sea with your Staff'..."

The same staff that is the means of miracles and warning on one day, it is the sign of mercy and deliverance on the other day. Moses (as) did this and hit his staff against the sea and a very strange scene happened in a manner that the Children of Israel got very happy.

Suddenly the sea divided, its water separated into pieces, and each piece, like a huge mountain, was over another piece; and among them a road appeared.

The verse continues saying:

"...then it clove asunder and each part became like a huge mountain."

The Arabic word/'infalaqa/ is derived from the word /falq/ which means to get broken up. The word /firq/ is derived from the word /farq/ which means to separate, hi other words, (as Raqib says in Mufradat), the difference between /falq/ and /firq/ is that the first one refers to breaking and the second one refers to separating.

Thus, the Arabic words /firqih/ and /firq/ are applied to a piece or group that is separated from the rest.

The Arabic word /taud/ means a huge mountain and using an adjective in this verse which means 'huge' for it, is for the sake of emphasis.

Anyway, Allah, Who rules everything and if waters get wavy it is because of His command, if storms take place, it is by His order, and Who has created the universe, and water, wind, and soil are under His authority, commanded waves of the sea to pile. And then roads appeared between them and every group of the Children of Israel chose one of them to pass.

Pharaoh and his men got astonished by seeing this scene and such a clear miracle, but they did not stop being conceited and still pursued Moses (as)

and the Children of Israel and sought their final destiny, as the holy Qur'an says:

"Then We made the other party approach thither."

Therefore, unaware of the fact that they were going to die and the divine command of punishment would be soon issued, Pharaoh and his ignorant men entered the marine roads and ran arrogantly after their former slaves who had disobeyed them.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 65-66

وَأَنجَيْنَا مُوسَى وَمَن مَّعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

65. "And We saved Moses and those with him all together."

66. "Then We drownedthe others."

Deliverance and salvation can be gained only by following the Divine Prophets.

In the worst conditions, Allah saves His friends from dead locks.

The sea being cloven asunder and the Pharaohs being drowned are the signs of the power and the wrath of Allah which must be the cause of admonition. Also, Allah's way of treatment has been to assist 'the truth' and to destroy 'the wrong' throughout the history!

So, in this holy verse, the noble Qur'an says:

"And We saved Moses and those with him all together."

Just when the last member of the Children of Israel came out of the sea and the last member of the host of Pharaoh entered the sea, Allah ordered the water of the sea to return to the first state. The huge raging waves fell down and came together and took Pharaoh and his host, like some straw, with them here and there and destroyed them.

The Qur'an has stated this event in a short sentence when it says:

"Then We drowned the others."

Thus, in a very short moment, everything finished. Those captivated slaves easily became free; those proud tyrants were punished and annihilated; the history changed and the glorious palaces, which had been founded over the ruined housed of the oppressed, vanished; the period of those arrogant people ended and then the oppressed people inherited their land and their government.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 67-68

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

67. "Verily in this is a sign, yet most of them do not believe."

68. "And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

By explaining the history of some of the former nations, Allah soothes the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and teaches him patience.

Yes, it is true that the Qur'an says:

"Verily in this is a sign, yet most of them do not believe."

It seems that their eyes are close, their ears are deaf, and their hearts are asleep.

Where the people of Pharaoh, with those wonderful scenes and events, did not believe, the Prophet (S) should not surprise of this infidel people and he would not be worried of their disbelief because the history has contained many of them in it.

The application of the Arabic word /'akar/, mentioned in this noble verse, refers to this sense that some of the people of Pharaoh embraced the religion of Moses and joined his companions.

Not only 'Asiyah, Pharaohas wife, and Moses' faithful friend who is mentioned in the Qur'an as 'the believer of the people of Pharaoh', but also some others, such as the wizards, repented and joined Moses (as).

In the next verse, through a short and expressive sentence, the Qur'an refers to the unlimited power and mercy of Allah, where it says:

"And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

It is because of His 'Might' that whenever He wills He issues the command of the destruction of a rebellious nation, and for destroying a tyrannical group He does not need to send down the army of the angels from heaven, He may order the water, which is the cause of their life, to put them to death, and that very Nile River, which was the source of wealth and power for the people of Pharaoh, becomes the place of their dead bodies.

And, it is from His Mercy that He does not haste in issuing this command, but He respites them for years, sends miracles for them, and completes the argument, and it is also from His Mercy that He makes these oppressed slaves free from the grips of those cruel rulers.

This point is noteworthy that it is repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an that by the command of Allah Moses (as) made the Children of Israel pass the sea, /bahr/[5], and in a few occurrences the word /yam/ has been used for it.[6]

Now, what is the objective of the words /bahr/ and /yam/ used here? Do they refer to the vast and great river of Nile from which the whole freshness and liveliness of Egypt originate? Or they refer to the Red Sea.

There are some evidences which show the purpose is the great river of Nile, because the word /bahr/ in Arabic, as Raqib in Mufradat says, originally means 'vast and abundant water', and the word /yam/ means the same. Therefore applying these two words for Nile does not matter.

Notes

1. The commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan and Fhakhr-i-Razi
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan and Qurtabi, the explanations following the verses
3. Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, by 'Alusi, the explanations following the verses
4. Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 46
5. Suras Yunus, verse 9; Ta Ha, verse 77, Shu'ara, verse 69, Dukhan, verse 24
6. Suras Ta Ha, verse 78, Qasas, verse 40, and Thariyat, verse

Section 5: Abraham Exhorts His Father to Discard Idolatry

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 69-71

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ
قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عَاكِفِينَ

69. “And recite unto them the story of Abraham.”

70. “When he said to his father and his people: ‘What do you worship?’”

71. “They said: ‘We worship idols, and we are ever devoted unto them’.”

Next to Moses (as) whose name has been mentioned in the holy Qur’an more than 130 times, Abraham’s name has been reiterated in it more than the names of other divine prophets.

Basing on some Islamic narrations, the objective of the Arabic word /’ab/, mentioned in the above verse, is the name of ’Athar, Abraham’s uncle, because it is impossible that the father of a divine prophet, such as Abraham, could be a pagan. Philologically the Arabic word /'ab/ has also been applied for a trainee, grandfather, and father-in-law.

Anyhow, following the wonderful story of Moses (as) and Pharaoh, here the Qur’an refers to the expressive biography of Abraham and his struggles against polytheists. This explanation has started from Abraham’s debate with his uncle, ’Athar, and the misled people of his time.

It begins as follows:

“And recite unto them the story of Abraham.”

Among all the details and information concerning this great prophet, the Qur’an emphasizes on this matter, saying:

“When he said to his father and his people: ‘What do you worship?’”

Surely Abraham (as) knew what they were worshipping, but he meant to make them speak and confess their own fault. However, the application of, the Qur’anic word /ma/ (what thing), in the verse, reflects a kind of humiliation for them.

In answer to this question, they immediately said that they used to worship idols every day and they respected them while taking care of them.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘We worship idols, and we are ever devoted unto them’.”

This style of their speaking shows that not only they did not feel any shame for their action but also they were very proud of their deed, because after saying the phrase: /na‘budu ’asnaman/ (we worship idols), which was sufficient for indicating to their aim, they added /fanazallu laha ‘akifin/ (and we are ever devoted unto them).

The Arabic phrase /nazallu/ is applied for the things which are usually done during the day, and now that it has been used in the simple present form, it shows the continuity and permanence of the action.

The Qur'anic word /'akif/ is derived from /'akuf/ which means: 'paying attention to something and taking care of it Respectfully'. This is also a further emphasis on the former meaning.

The Arabic word /'asnam/ is the plural form of/sanam/ in the sense of a statue which had been made of gold, silver, wood, and the like, and the polytheists worshipped it while considering it the symbol of their venerable and sacred things.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 72-73

قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ

أَوْ يَنفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ

72. "Said (Abraham): 'Do they hear you when you call (them)?'"

73. "Or do they profit you, or harm?"

In the method of propagation, we should awaken the consciences by asking questions, because man, by nature, is worshipper, and if he does not adorn the right, he tends to wrong.

(When the Qur'an refers to some matters of history, it usually does not point to the number, name, time, and place of the event, but it states its instructive content and message.)

When you want to forbid someone from doing evil, you may begin from important evils. (Yes, the most important evil is to associate something with Allah.) Reasoning and logic is the first step of propagation.

The motivation of worshipping is either giving benevolence or removing vice, and idols have neither of them.

However, we must have some clear and understandable reasonings when confronting ordinary people.

The idolaters also believe in futility of the idols very well, they only follow their ancestors

"... but we found our fathers so doing".[1]

Anyway, through these two verses, Abraham, by hearing their words, protested them and condemned them by means of two severe logical sentences.

The Qur'an says:

"Said (Abraham): 'Do they hear you when you call (them)?'"

Then he (as) continued saying:

"Or do they profit you, or harm?"

The least thing that is necessary to be found in the object of worship is that the deity hears the call of its worshipper and hastens to help him in his difficulties, or there would be at least a kind of fear from opposition with its command.

But there is nothing seen in these idols to show that they have the slightest amount of understanding, or the least effect in the fate of men. They are some worthless pieces of metal, stone, and wood to which superstition and the power of delusion have given such situation.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 74-76

قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءنَا كَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ
أَنتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمُ الأَقْدَمُونَ

74. "They said: 'Nay, but we found our fathers so doing'."

75. "He said: 'Have you then considered what you have been worshipping?"

76. "You and your fathers before you?'"

Imitation from scientists and scholars is sometimes a means for integration, development and progression, while following common people is the cause of stubborn conservatism; because stable belief in vain social traditions and national and tribal manners cause the society to be narcotized which is a barrier in the way of new thoughts and a hinder for recognizing the truth.

So, in these holy verses, the Qur'an says that the zealous idolaters, in answer to this logical question that idols had no understanding, or any concept, reiterated their old and repeated response. They only answered that those issues were not so important, the important matter was that they had found their ancestors doing like that.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Nay, but we found our fathers so doing'."

This answer, which referred to their blindly imitation from their ignorant ancestors, according to Abraham's statement, was the only answer they could deliver.

It was an answer that the reason of its nullification was inside of it, because no wise person permits himself to follow others blindly, particularly that the experiences of the new generations are more than those of the old generations, and there is no reason for blindly imitation from them.

The Qur'anic phrase: /kaðalika yaf'alun/ (so doing) is another emphasis on the concept of their imitation.

It means that they said that whatever their ancestors had used to do they were doing, whether it was worshipping the idols or other things.

Then, in the next noble verses, the Qur'an implies that Abraham concentrated his attack on the idols and told them whether they had seen the thing that they were constantly worshipping.

"He said: 'Have you then considered what you have been worshipping?"

"You and your fathers before you?'"

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verse 77

فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّي إِلاَّ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

77. "Surely they are enemies to me, save the Lord of the Worlds,"

On the Day of Hereafter, idols will abhor the idolaters, and they will be in opposition with them and by this means their enmity will be made clear.[2]

Abraham says that verily they all are his enemies, and he is a severe foe of them forever.

It is noteworthy that Abraham says:

"Surely they are enemies to me..."

The necessity of this enmity is that Abraham should have enmity to them, too. But the existence of this meaning may be for the sake that worshipping idols might be the cause of the worshippers' wretchedness, and aberration, as well as their chastisement in this life and the next; and this will be counted as their enmity.

Moreover, there are a lot of verses in the Qur'an which indicate that, on the Day of Hereafter, idols will repudiate their worshippers and will show their enmity against them. By the command of Allah, they will speak and will utter their abhorrence.

The exception of 'the Lord of the worlds' is for the purpose of emphasis on the pure monotheism, though He was not among their gods.

The verse continues saying:

"...save the Lord of the Worlds,"

There is another probability, too, saying that there were some persons among them who, besides idols, also worshipped the Lord. For considering this matter, Abraham excepted the Lord of the Worlds Whom he loved.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 78-81

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ

وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ

وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَن يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

78. "Who created me, and Himself guides me,"

79. "And Himself feeds me and provides me to drink;"

80. "And whenever I am sick, then He heals me,"

81. "And Who caused me to die, then gives me life,"

82. "And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgment."

At first, the world and the Creator of the world must be regarded, and then one's self may be attended.

That He created us and guides us is a sign that He likes us, not the idols.

The bounty of His guidance (after creation) is the greatest bounty, because creation, in this sense, is for one time but guidance exists in every moment and for ever.

However, in these verses, Abraham describes the Lord of the Worlds and mentions some of His material and spiritual bounties, so that, by comparing with idols, who neither hear the demands of their worshippers nor have any benefit or loss for them, the matter may be made completely clear.

It begins with the bounties of creation and guidance where Abraham says about Allah:

"Who created me, and Himself guides me,"

Abraham implies that Allah has guided him both in the world of genesis and has provided the material and spiritual means available for him, and, in the world of religion, He has sent down revelation and heavenly Book to him.

Mentioning /f/ at the beginning of the Qur'anic phrase /fa huwa yahdin/ (and Himself guides me) which has occurred after the concept of creation, indicates that 'guidance' is not separate from 'creation' and they both go forth with together everywhere.

The Arabic word /yahdin/, that is in simple present tense, is an evidence to the continuity of guidance and the need of man to Him throughout his life.

It seems that, by this statement, Abraham implies that from the first point of his life and creation, he has always been with Him and He has also been with him so that he feels His presence in his life and living. He implies that He is a friend Who takes him wherever He desires.

Next to stating the first stage of Lordship, that is the stage of guidance after creation, Abraham pays to the material bounties and says:

"And Himself feeds me and provides me to drink;"

Yes, I see all bounties from Him; my whole entity, as well as my drink and my food all are from Him and because of His blessings.

Not only when I am sound and healthy I am involved in His blessings, but also when I become sick it is He Who heals me.

The verse says:

"And whenever I am sick, then He heals me,"

Sickness is sometimes from His side, too, but, observing etiquette in speech, Abraham attributes it to himself.

Then Abraham goes further than the stage of the life of this world and pays to the eternal life in hereafter in order to make clear that not only he enjoys favours in the present world but also in the next world and in all conditions he sits at the table of His bounties.

He says about Him:

"And Who caused me to die, then gives me life,"

Abraham indicates that both his death and his returning to life against are from His origin.

Then he (as) implies that when he arrives the scene of; gathering-place of Resurrection his hope is fixed only on Him, of Whom he seeks forgiveness.

The verse says:

"And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgment."

There is no doubt that prophets are sinless and they have no fault to be forgiven for; but as we have said formerly, sometimes the good deeds of the righteous are counted as the faults of the near-stationed ones and, therefore, in their high rank one good act is sometimes questionable against them, too, because it has hindered the accomplishment of a better action, and thus this is called 'leaving the better'.

Abraham never relies on his good deeds, because they are naught comparing the kindness of Allah, and they are not worthy of mentioning when His bounties are considered. His reliance is only on Allah's Grace, and this is the last stage of being hopeful to Him.

In the commentary of Atyab-ul-Bayan, where explaining this verse, it is asked whether the divine prophets and Imams are immaculate and they have not any fault.

Answer: Before the presence of Allah, the One, they know their deeds little, humble, and faulty in order that they should not have any shortcoming in worship, or they would not commit any ‘leaving the better’, or they would not achieve any shortcoming in disciplines. For instance, the holy Prophet (S) used to say to Allah:

“We have not known You as the due knowing of You.”[3]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu’minin (as) says:

“The praises have not been numerated for You as You have for Yourself.”[4]

And, by this statement, the problem of many narrations concerning the immaculate ones can be solved.

Shortly speaking, here in order to specify the real deity, Abraham first pays to the creative power of Allah, then he makes the rank of His Lordship in all stages clear.

The first is the stage of guidance; the second is the stage of material bounties, irrespective of producing suitable conditions and removing the barriers; and the final stage is the eternal life in the next world, where His Lordship will also be shown in ttie form of granting different merits and forgiving the sins.

Thus, Abraham nullifies the superstitious imagination of numerous gods and various deities and bows before Allah with glorification.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 83

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

83. “My Lord! Bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous!”

The Qur’anic word /hukm/, mentioned here, can be in the sense of government, guardianship, and the management of the affairs, or it can be used with the meaning of knowledge and cognition.

The word /hukm/, of course, has a meaning more than /hikmat/ (wisdom, theology), because /hikmat/ is only the power of recognition between right and wrong while /hukm/ is a cognizance accompanied with preparation for executing the right.

However, from this verse on the supplications of Abraham and his beseeching before the Presence of Allah begin.

It seems that after inviting that misguided people unto Allah and stating the manifestations of His Lordship in the world of existence, he becomes completely hopeless of them and turns to the Presence of Allah and asks Him whatever he wants, so that he shows those idolaters that whatever they desire for this life and the next they ought to ask Him.

By the way, this matter is another emphasis on the absolute Lordship of Allah.

Here is his first demand that he asks Him:

“My Lord! Bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous!”

Yes, before anything else, Abraham (as) asks Allah (s.w.t.) to give him a deep and correct cognizance coupled with jurisdiction, because no practical program is possible without such foundation.

Next to this demand, he (as) asks Allah to join him with the righteous ones. This request that Abraham asks refers to the practical aspects which

idiomatically is called ‘practical knowledge’ versus ‘theoretical science’ that was seen in his former demands.

Undoubtedly, Abraham (as) had both the rank of ‘wisdom’ and was among ‘the righteous ones’; then why does he ask Allah such a demand?

The answer to this question is that neither wisdom nor righteousness has a definite limit. He asks Allah that every day he gains the more and more levels of knowledge and practice. He (as), even as an arch prophet, is not satisfied with tbepe aspects.

Moreover, he knows that all these merits are from the side of Allah, and every moment they may be ceased as the result of a fault. Therefore, besides he asks Allah its continuation, as everyday we ask him in our ritual prayer to guide us into the ‘Straight way’ and demand the continuation and perfection of this way.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 84-86

وَاجْعَل لِّي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

وَاجْعَلْنِي مِن وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ

وَاغْفِرْ لِأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

84. “And ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity;”

85. “And make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss;”

86. “And forgive my father, verily, he is of those astray.”

In some Islamic narrations, the Qur’anic phrase: /lisani sidq/, mentioned here, has been rendered into the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and Hadrat Ali (as).

After these couple of demands, Abraham (as) asks Allah another important demand where he says:

“And ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity;”

He humbly asks Allah to treat with him in a way that his remembrance may remain in minds and his line and program would continue among the later generations. He wants Him to make him such an example that others follow him, and he should be the founder of a school by which people can learn the correct way and move on His line.

Allah accepted the supplication of Abraham, too, as He says in the Qur’an about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;

“...and say We assigned unto them a high and true renown.”[5]

It is not improbable that this demand contained the same thing that Abraham asked Allah after building the House of Ka‘bah when he said:

“Our Lord raise among them an Apostle of their own to recite unto them Your revelations, and to teaeh them the Book and the Wisdom, and to purify them...”[6]

And we know that this demand came into action when the Prophet of Islam (S) announced his call and by this way the good mention of Abraham (as) continued to be among this great nation.

Then, Abraham changes the scope of his seeing from the life of this world to the eternal life in Hereafter when he stars his fourth supplication by saying:

“And make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss;”

This garden of bliss is the Paradise wherein there are abundant material and spiritual blessings, the bounties which have neither any destruction nor any weariness and burden. They are some bounties that are not even understandable for us, the prisoners of this world.

Neither our ordinary minds could consider them, nor our eyes have seen them, nor our ears have heard them.

We have formerly said that the application of ‘heir’, concerning Paradise, is either for the sake that, according to the Islamic traditions, every person has a house in Paradise and a house in Hell. When he is sent to Hell, his house in Paradise will be given to others.

In his fifth supplication, Abraham (as) prays for his misguided uncle, and according to his saying that he had promised ’Athar to ask Allah forgiveness for him, in this holy verse he says:

“And forgive my father, verily, he is of those astray.”

Abraham had formerly promised his uncle to pray for him as the text of the Qur’an explicitly says:

“And Abraham’s seeking forgiveness for his father was only because of promise he had made to him...”[7]

Abraham’s aim was that by this way he could penetrate into his uncle's heart and drag him Faith.

Thus, he gave him such a promise and fulfilled this promise. As Ibn-‘Abbas in a narration says, Abraham sought forgiveness repeatedly for ’Athar, but when ’Athar died in his disbelief, and his enmity against the religion of truth was proved, Abraham ceased seeking forgiveness for him.

The abovementioned holy verse (No. 114) continues saying:

“…when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he declared himself quit of him...”

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 87-89

وَلاَ تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ

يَوْمَ لاَ يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلاَ بَنُونَ

إِلاَّ مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

87. “And abase me not on the Day when (men) will be raised up;”

88. “The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,”

89. “Except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart.”

Being abased and blamed in the Hereafter is the worst state of a person. Among all of the difficulties and problems of the Hereafter Day, Abraham points to ‘not being abased’ then.

In Hereafter, the worst punishment of the Hell is that a person becomes despised, abject, and disgraced.

Finally, Abraham expresses his sixth and last supplication unto the presence of Allah, which is also concerned to the Day of Resurrection, as follows:

“And abase me not on the Day when (men) will be raised up;”

The Qur’anic phrase /la tuxzini/ (do not abase me) is derived from the Arabic word /xizy/ and, as Raqib says In Mufradat, it means ‘spiritual failure’ which is either from the side of the person himself that appears in

the form of excessive shame, or it is from the side of others which is imposed upon the person.

This meaning expressed by Abraham, besides being a lesson and practice for others, is the sign of his ultimate feeling of responsibility and his trust on the Grace of Allah.

In the next verse, it says:

"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,"

In fact, these two important worldly capitals, properties and human abilities, will not have the least effect for their possessors. Thus, their other capitals of this world, which are located in a grade lower than these two, will not avail them either.

It is evident that the purpose of wealth and suns are not those properties and children that are applied in the way of gaining the pleasure of Allah, but the emphasis is on the material aspects of the subject.

The objective of it is that the material capitals will not solve any problem on that Day;but if they are used in the way of obeying Allah here they will not be counted material capitals, they will get the divine colour and then they will be counted as 'the everlasting good deeds'.[8]

Some Islamic narrations indicate that the charity given from the wealth, the voluntary alms that will remain, and the righteous child who prays for the parents will be useful for man in Hereafter.

Then, in the next noble verse, it implies that the worldly arrangements are not effective in Hereafter and, except the pure heart, nothing is useful there. In other words, this exception is for the one who comes before Allah while he has a sound heart (that is, it is sound from any polytheism, disbelief, and pollution of sin).

The verse says:

"Except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart."

A tradition says that the sound and pure heart is the heart in which there is no polytheism.[9]

Thus, the only capital for salvation in Hereafter is a pure heart. What an interesting meaning it is! It is a meaning wherein there exist both the pure faith and sincere intention, and any righteous deed, since such a pure heart has no fruit save pure action.

In other words, as the man's pure heart and spirit is effective in his deeds, his deeds have also a vast reflection in his heart and spirit, and change it into the same quality, irrespective of being godly or satanic.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 90-92

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ

وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ

90. "And the Paradise shall be brought near for the pious."

91. "And the Hell shall appear plainly to the erring ones,"

92. "And it shall be said to them: 'Where are those that you used to worship,"

The Qur'anic word: /'uzlifat/ means 'to approach', and the Arabic word /burrizat/, derived from /buruz/, means 'to appear', and the word /qawin/ which is derived from /qiwa'/ is called to 'a vice and ignorance' that originates from decadence of belief.

However, in these verses, the Qur'an has explained the status of Paradise and Hell.

It says:

"And the Paradise shall be brought near for the pious."

Then it says:

"And the Hell shall appear plainly to the erring ones,"

This explanation, in fact, is about the time before they enter into Paradise or Hell when each of these two groups will see their own abode in front of them. Then the believers will become happy and the misguided ones will terrify; and this is the first step of their reward and retribution.

It is interesting that it does not say: the pious will be made approach to Paradise, hut it says:

"...Paradise shall be brought near for the pious",

and this meaning points to their very great and worthy rank.

This point is also worthy to be noted that the application of the word /qawin/ (the erring ones) here is the same meaning which has been applied in the story of Satan after when he was sent away, where He says in the Qur'an:

"Verily, (as regards) My (devoted) servants, there is not for you over them any authority, except those who follow you of the deviators."[10]

Then the Qur'an pays to the scorning statement that, at this time, will be said to this deviated group, where it says:

"And it shall be said to them: 'Where are those that you used to worship,"

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 93-95

مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ هَلْ يَنصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنتَصِرُونَ

فَكُبْكِبُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوُونَ

وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ

93. "Besides Allah? Do they help you or help themselves?'"

94. " So they shall be thrown into it, - they and the erring ones,"

95. "And the hosts of 'Iblis, all together."

Reproach and blame is one of the spiritual chastisements of Hereafter.

On the Hereafter Day beliefs and thoughts of men will be questioned of. Therefore, this holy verse implies whether the deities, other than Allah, can then help the idolaters for the difficulties and calamities that they will be facing with.

Or can the idols invite someone to help the idolaters? Or even does anyone come to help the idols themselves? But they do not have any answer to give to these questions; and no one expects such a thing from them either.

The verse says:

"Besides Allah? Do they help you or help themselves?'"

At this time, the whole deities will be gathered and, all of them, accompanied with their worshippers, will be thrown into Hell Fire; and, according to the opinion of some of the commentators, every one of them will be thrown over the other.

The Qur'an says:

"So they shall be thrown into it, - they and the erring ones,"

"And the hosts of 'Iblis, all together."

In fact, these three groups: idols, the worshippers of the idols, and the hosts of Satan, who were the dealers of this sin and deviation, will be piled in the Hell, in this manner that they will be sent into Hell one after another.

The Qur'anic word /kubkibu/ originally is derived from /kub/ which means to throw something into a pit by face, and its repetition in /kubkibu/ indicates to the repetition of this fall.

This shows that when they are thrown into the Hell, they are, like a stone which is thrown from a height into a valley. At first, it falls in a place and then from that place it falls in another place until when it falls at the bottom of the valley.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 96-99

قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ

تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلاَّ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

96. "And they will say, when they are mutually quarrelling therein: "

97. "By Allah! We were certainly in manifest error,"

98. "When we made you equal to the Lord of the worlds."

99. "And none but the guilty ones led us astray."

Contrast to the environment of Paradise, which is entirely full of safety and peace, the Hell is always full of blame, enmity and curse: the curses of the followers to the mischief leaders, the blame of the sinners unto Satan, the hate of the worshipped (deities) unto the polytheists, and the act of quitting the criminals from each other.

There are many verses found in the Qur'an about these aspects, including these holy verses which illustrate the scene of the conflict and quarrel of those three Hellish groups. When they are in the Hell, they quarrel both with their deities and with each other.

The holy verse says:

"And they will say, when they are mutually quarrelling herein: "

Yes, the misguided worshippers will say:

"By Allah! We were certainly in manifest error,"

"When we made you equal to the Lord of the worlds."

But nobody misguided us but the sinners, those sinners who were the leaders and the chiefs of our society and, in order to protect their own benefits, they led us to this way and caused our misery.

There is this probability that the purpose of ‘the guilty ones’ is the criminals, Satans, or their aberrant ancestors who caused them to be in that way.

However, on the Hereafter Day everybody tries to lay his fault and blame on another’s shoulders.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 100-101

فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَافِعِينَ

وَلاَ صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ

فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

100. “Now, then we have no intercessors,”

101. “Nor a single intimate friend,”

102. “Now if we only had a chance of return, we would be of the believers.”

In Hereafter, the existence of intercession is certain, but a group of misguided people, such as polytheists, infidels, and some criminals, will not enjoy it, because the condition of being interceded is having Faith and righteous deeds.

There is a tradition recorded in Majma‘-ul-Bayan which indicates that the immaculate Imams (as) have made an oath that they will intercede for their true followers.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“On that Day, a believer may intercede for his family (members).”[11]

Again, once Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“By Allah! On the Hereafter Day, we will intercede for the (true) followers in such a way that the deviated ones will protest.”[12]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

“In the Hereafter, the Qur’an, the believer’s family, the Prophet, and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) will intercede.”[13]

However, as the Qur’an announces, the disbelievers and infidels will say:

“Now, then we have no intercessors,”

“Nor a single intimate friend,”

In short, then they will say neither do the deities come to intercede for them, as they imagined in the world, nor can their friends help them.

Some Traditions Upon Intercession

1- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Verily our intercession will not reach those who take the prayer light (and do not regard it important).”[14]

2- The Prophet (S) said:

“My intercession will not reach the one who takes his prayer light, and by Allah! He will not arrive to me by the fountain (of kauthar); and, by Allah! He who drinks (alcoholic) liquor is not of me (my follower) and will not arrive to me by the fountain (of kauthar).” [15]

3- The Holy Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Learn the Qur’an because that (holy) Book will intercede its followers (readers) on the Day of Hereafter.”[16]

4- The holy Prophet (S) said:

"There are three groups who will intercede unto Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and their intercession will be accepted: The prophets, the scholars, and the martyrs."[17]

5- It has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) in the book 'Mahasin', who said:

"The intercessors are the Imams (as) and the veracious ones among believes."[18]

6- Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"There has been appointed a (definite) prayer for every prophet to pray for his people by it (with Allah), and I have reserved my prayer as an intercession for my Ummah (nation) on the Hereafter Day."[19]

7- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"There are four groups for whom I will intercede on the Hereafter Day: The lovers of my Ahl-ul-Bayt (progeny), those who are the friends of their friends and are the enemies of their enemies, those who provide them what they need, and those who do their best to undertake one thing of their affairs."[20]

8- Mu'awiyat-ibn-Wahab says that he asked Imam Sadiq (as) about whom this statement of Allah was which says:

"...Who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave?..."[21]

The Imam (as) said:

"We (the Ahl-ul-Bayt) are those who will intercede by Allah's leave (on Hereafter Day)."[22]

Through the next verse, the Qur'an implies that soon they will understand this fact that neither any regret is helpful there, nor Hereafter is the place of action and compensation, that is why they desire to come back to this world, and they say:

"Now if we only had a chance of return, we would be of the believers."

It is true that they have got a belief in that world and on that Day, but this belief is a kind of compulsory belief. That belief is effective and constructive which is voluntary and it is in this world, a belief that becomes the source of guidance and righteous deeds.

Yet, this desire, however, does not solve any problem for them, and the Divine way of treatment does not let anyone come back to this world; and they themselves know this fact, too, and the Arabic word /lau/ (if) is its evidence.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 103-104

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

103. "Verily in this is a sign but most of them do not believe."

104. "And verily your Lord is He the Mighty, the Merciful."

If people do not accept the truth and be obstinate, the great signs of Allah are not effective, for their guidance.

The respite that Allah gives the wrong doers is not done because of weakness and powerlessness, but it is because of Mercy and Grace so that they may return.

Finally, in these verses, the Qur'an refers to the biography of Abraham (as), his speaking with the deviated people, his invocations before Allah, and his explanations about the situation of the Hereafter Day.

As a conclusion for all servants, Allah reiterates the same couple of holy verses, which were mentioned at the end of the story of Moses (as) and Pharaoh, and they are repeated at the end of other prophets' stories, too, in this Surah.

It says:

"Verily in this is a sign but most of them do not believe."

"And verily your Lord is He the Mighty, the Merciful."

The repetition of these sentences are counted some effective comfort for the Prophet (S) and the few believers of that time, and also for the believers who are in minority at any time so that they do not fear of the misguided majority and they be assured with the might and mercy of Allah.

It is also a threat for the deviated ones indicating that if they are given respite it is not because of weakness but it is because of His mercy.

Notes

1. The current Surah, verse 74
2. Tafsir-i-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 2, P. 46
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 68, chapter 61, P. 23
4. Mustadrak, Vol. 4, P. 321 and Bihar, Vol. 90, P. 158
5. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 50
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 129
7. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 114
8. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 76
9. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
10. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 42
11. Majma'-ul-Bayan
12. Al-Mizan, The Commentary
13. Kanz-ul-'Ummal
14. Wafi, Vol. 5, P. 9
15. Wafi, Vol. 5, P. 9
16. Musnad-i-Hanbal, Vol. 5, P. 251
17. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 8, P. 34
18. Tafsir-us-Safi, old edition, P. 358
19. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, P.391
20. Bihar, Vol. 56, P. 135
21. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
22. Mahasin-i-Barghy, P. 183

Section 6: Noah Exhorts the People to Worship the Only True God

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 105-108

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ
إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

105. “The people of Noah rejected the messengers,”

106. “When their brother Noah said to them: 'Will you not fear (Allah)?”

107. “Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger,”

108. “Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

Noah’s name has been repeated forty three times in the Qur’an and Allah has introduced Abraham as from among his party (Shi‘ah), where He says:

“And verily of his party was Abraham.”[1]

One of the suras of the Qur'an is entitled Noah. The salutation of Allah unto Noah is a private salutation.

He says:

“Peace be on Noah in (all) the worlds!”[2]

Allah has also sent salutation to Abraham, Moses and Aaron, but it does not contain the phrase /fil-‘alamin/ (in (all) the worlds). Studying the history of the Divine prophets causes man to like them and survives the spirit of patience and perseverance in him.

However, next to the end of the story of Abraham and his statements unto those misguided people, as another instructive event, the Holy Qur’an points to the people of Noah and, through a few verses, reiterates their obstinacy, persistence, and shamelessness which led to their painful destiny.

It first says:

“The people of Noah rejected the messengers,”

It is evident that the people of Noah rejected only Noah, but since the invitations of all prophets basically are the same, the rejection of Noah is counted as the rejection of all prophets; that is why the holy Qur’an says the people of Noah rejected ‘the messengers’.

It is also probable that principally the people of Noah used to deny all the religions and they rejected absolutely all the Divine prophets whether they were before the advent of Noah or after it.

Then the Qur’an refers to this part of Noah’s life which is rather similar to what was formerly mentioned about the life of Moses and Abraham.

It says:

“When their brother Noah said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

The application of ‘brother’ in this verse is a sense which shows the utmost affectionate relationship that is based upon equality. It means, without intending to have any priority over them, Noah invited them to piety with utmost purity and sincerity.

The concept of brotherhood not only has been used for Noah but also it has been applied for many other prophets, (such as Hud, Salih and Lut). This inspires all the leaders of the path of truth that they must observe the utmost love and sincerity in their call while they are far from any self-superiority, so that the annoyed hearts can be attracted by their religion, and no one feels heaviness.

Next to invitation to piety, which is the main factor of any guidance and salvation, he (as) adds:

"Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger,"

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

This statement shows that Noah (as) had a long and continued background of honesty among his people and they knew him with this very decent quality, so he says for this reason he is trustworthy in conveying the Divine mission and they would never see any treachery in it.

The Qur'anic phrase /'ittaqullah/ (be in awe of Allah) has occurred prior to /'ati'un/ (obey me) in order to say that there will not exist any obedience from the messenger of Allah unless there is faith and being in awe of Allah.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 109-111

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ الأَرْذَلُونَ

109. "And do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

110. "Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

111. "They said: 'Shall we believe in you while the meanest follow you?'"

Another time for another reason, Noah (as) resorts to his rightfulness, a reason which makes the tongues of the pretext-seekers blunt when he says:

"And do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

It is clear that the Divine motives are usually taken as the evidence for the truthfulness of the claimant of prophethood, while the material motives evidently show that the aim is gaining profit, and for the Arabs of that time, in particular, this matter was acquainted about the soothsayers and the like.

After this statement, Noah says the same sentence that he said following to the emphasis he laid on his prophecy and his trustworthiness, and said:

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

But when the obstinate pagans and the proud tyrants saw that they had no way to seek pretext, they clung to another matter, as the verse says:

"They said: 'Shall we believe in you while the meanest follow you?'"

The value of a leader can be recognized by his followers, and so to speak, a shrine is known by means of its visitors.

The pagans told Noah that whenever they looked at his followers they saw a group of unusual, poor, miserable, and roguish people, that had some weak and insignificant jobs, who were around him. In that case, how could

he expect that the rich, noble men, and famous people, who had some particular ranks and positions in the society, would obey him?

They added that they could never deal with such a group of people, because they had never sat with them at one table and had never gathered with them under one ceiling. What an irrational expectation he had!

It is true that they were right and correct in this matter that a leader can be known by means of his followers, but their great mistake was that they had lost the concept and criterion of personality.

For them, the criterion of measuring the values was property, wealth, beautiful costly clothing, houses, and mounts, and they were neglectful of purity, piety, rightfulness, and some high level standards of humane, which were found abundantly among the poor classes of their society and were very scarce among notable and noble ones.

The worst form of the thought of class division was ruling their ideas, therefore, they counted the poor class of their society 'the roguish level' or 'the meanest level'.

The Arabic word /'araðil/ is the plural form of /'arðul/ which is also the plural form of/raðl/ that means: 'low and mean'. If they came out of the prison of the social class division they might clearly understand that the belief of this group was the best evidence for the legitimacy and authenticity of the call of that prophet.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 112-113

قَالَ وَمَا عِلْمِي بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

إِنْ حِسَابُهُمْ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ

112. "He said: 'No knowledge have I of what they were doing;"

113. "Their reckoning is only on my Lord, if you could (but) perceive;"

In Islam, believers are to judge according to the apparent situation and if a person embraces Islam we would not have the right to say he has not faith in his heart.

The Qur'an says:

"...and do not say to the one who offers you peace: 'You are not a believer'..."[3]

In another verse, the Holy Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"And do not repel those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening seeking His countenance. Nothing of their account falls upon you nor anything of your account falls upon them, that you should repel them and thus become of the unjust." [4]

This verse indicates that Noah disarmed them by implying that his duty was to call people to the truth and to improve the society, and he did not know what they did in the past.

The verse says:

"He said: 'No knowledge have I of what they were doing;"

What they had done was done, the important thing was their condition at that time whether they answered the prophet's call positively and tried to improve themselves by delivering their heart and their entity to the truth, or not.

Therefore, they should understand that if those believers did a good or bad thing in the past, its reckoning is up to Allah.

The verse says:

"Their reckoning is only on my Lord, if you could (but) perceive;"

It is understood from this statement that, besides poverty, the pagans wanted to accuse that group of the believers to ethical and practical bad record, while corruption and pollution is found in the comfortable people of the society more than other levels. It is those who have all means of mischief in their possession and are proud of their wealth and rank and worship their Lord scarcely.

But, without quarrelling with them about this matter, Noah implies that he does not know anything bad about them, and if there is something, as you say, its account is with Allah.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 114-115

وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

إِنْ أَنَا إِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

114. "And I am not going to drive away the believers;"

115. "I am naught but a plain warner."

For judging about others, the present sincere faith and righteous deeds of them should be dealt with. The past actions of persons must not be shown to them.

The prophet's mission is to improve people and to invite them to Monotheism. They are not responsible for the deeds of individuals:

"Their reckoning is only on my Lord, if you could (but) perceive."[5]

Therefore, in this verse, Noah implies that his duty is to be humble for all the seekers of truth.

The verse says:

"And I am not going to drive away the believers;"

This statement is, in fact, an answer to the implicit demand of those wealthy proud people who had demanded Noah to repel and send away those poor people so that they would approach him.

Noah implicitly said that his only duty was to warn people.

The verse says:

"I am naught but a plain warner."

He who hears this warning of Noah's and turns back from the deviated path into the Straight Way is his follower, whoever he is and in whatever condition of finance and social conditions he might be.

It is noteworthy that not only Noah, who was an arch prophet, was found fault with this objection, but also the Prophet of Islam (S), who is the seal of the prophets, as well as other prophets were found this fault.

With dark opinion they had, they saw the scenery of those white garmented ones black, and they always demanded him to send them away and to repel them. They said that they disliked the Lord and the prophets who had such servants and followers.

How beautifully the Qur'an says to the Prophet of Islam (S) in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 28:

"And keep yourself content with those who call unto their Lord morning and evening seeking His pleasure, and let not your eyes turn, away from them desiring the adornment of the life of the world, and do not obey him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and he follows his own low desires, and his affair has become all excess."

Even in our time, this objection is also about the leaders of the Truth, saying that the majority of their adherents are formed by 'the oppressed' and 'the miserable'.

By this statement of theirs, they want to find fault, while unconsciously they praise them and, hereby, they approve their essentiality.

However, everybody must struggle decisively against the undue proposals and expectations of the arrogant ones.

Rejecting the faithful indigents is not permissible, because the criterion of value is faith, not the social and economical rank.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 116-118

قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ يَا نُوحُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي كَذَّبُونِ

فَافْتَحْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَنَجِّنِي وَمَن مَّعِي مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

116. "They said: 'If you desist not, O Noah! you shall surely be one of the stoned (to death)'."

117. "Said (Noah): 'My Lord! Verily my people have belied me,"

118. "Judge You, then, between me and them, and deliver me and the believers that are with me'."

One of the most important weapons of the prophets' opponents is threat,

(... you shall surely be one of the stoned (to death)).

The act of stoning is one of the oldest kinds of torture.

Noah's complaint was for people's rejecting the religion, not for the threat of stoning. However, in these holy verses, the Qur'an implies that the response of this misguided obstinate group to Noah (as) was the same thing that all the former tyrants of the world had.

They told Noah to stop his call and if he did not put an end to that kind of words and continued darkening the atmosphere of their society with his bitter speeches, they would certainly stone him to death.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If you desist not, O Noah! you shall surely be one of the stoned (to death)'."

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /minal marjumin/ shows that stoning their opponents had been common among them. In fact, they say to Noah that if he continues his call and inviting people to Monotheism and his religion, he will be surely faced with the same thing that their other opponents encountered, i.e. stoning, which is one of the worst kinds of slay.

The Arabic word /rajm/ means stoning someone in a way that he dies.

Noah (as) who sees that this constant sympathetic invitation with that clear logic and suffering patience for a long time has not affected them, except a few, finally he complains to the presence of Allah and, explaining

his situation, he asks Him for separation and deliverance from the inimical grips of those irrational cruel people.

The verse says:

"Said (Noah): 'My Lord! Verily my people have belied me,"

It is true that Allah is aware of everything, but at the time of complaint and as a preparation for his next request, Noah expressed that statement.

It is noteworthy that Noah did not complain about the afflictions and tragedies he had got, but he was inconvenient only for matter that those people had rejected him and had not accepted the message of Allah.

Then Noah implicitly asks Allah, now that there is no other way to guide this group of people, He may put a separation between him and those people, and then He may judge between them.

The verse says:

"Judge You, then, between me and them..."

The Arabic word /fath/, as some philologists have said, originally means: 'to open' and 'to adjudicate in a cause', and 'removing a shut', which has two forms.

Sometimes it has sensible aspect, like /fathul bab/ (opening the door), and sometimes it has spiritual aspect, like /fathul harnm/ (opening the sorrow and wiping sadness), /fathul mustaqlaq mind 'ulum/ which means revealing the secrets of science, and /fathul qadiyyah/ which means: to judge and put an end to a conflict.

Then Noah adds as follows:

"...and deliver me and the believers that are with me'."

This statement denotes that the believers are inside the prophet's pray, since prophets always pray that the problems of the people and society to be solved.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 119-122

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَمَن مَّعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ الْبَاقِينَ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

119. "So We delivered him, and those with him, in the laden Ark."

120. "Then We drowned the rest afterwards."

121. "Verily in that is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

122. "And verily your Lord, He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

The invocation of the prophets and that of the oppressed are accepted.

The story of the deliverance of Noah and his followers, while their opponents and disbelievers were drowned, is an example for Allah's way of treatment due to helping the right and defeating wrong.

The objective of the Qur'anic phrase /alfulkil mašhun/ is that Noah (as) put whatever was needed in the Ark.

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"/alfulkil mašhun/ is an equipped ship which is ready to start."

Ali (as) said:

"There were 90 places built in that ship (Noah's Ark) for the animals."[6]

However, the grace of Allah came to help Noah and, on the other hand, His painful punishment came to annihilate the rejecters, as the Qur'an says:

"So We delivered him, and those with him, in the laden Ark."

"Then We drowned the rest afterwards."

The Arabic word /mašhun/ is derived from /šahn/ which means 'to fill', and sometimes it has been used in the sense of 'to equip'. The Arabic word /šahna'/ is used for the means and tools which fill all parts of a person, and the purpose here is that the Ark was full of individuals and all means so that there was not any deficiency.

That is, when the Ark was completely ready to move, Allah sent the flood and there was no worriness for Noah and those who embarked the Ark with him. This was one of the favours of Allah over them.

At the end of this explanation, the Qur'an repeats the same words which were mentioned at the end of the stories of Moses (as) and Abraham (as). It implies that in the circumstance of the event of Noah and his constant invitation to the truth, his patience, and, finally, the destiny of his opponents who were drowned and destroyed, there is a sign for all mankind.

The verse says:

"Verily in that is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

Therefore, the Prophet (S) should not be upset from the aversion and obstinacy of the pagans among his people; he must persevere for his destiny and that of his companions for it is like the destiny of Noah and his followers, and the fate of the disbelievers is the same fate that those drowned people had.

Then, the verses says:

"And verily your Lord, He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

His Mercy requires that He gives them chance and respites them with enough time and completes the argument; and His Might causes you, at last, to be victorious and to make them encounter defeat.

Thus, if He gives respite to the disbelievers, it is because of His Mercy, not for the existence of any weakness.

Notes

1. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 83
2. Ibid, verse 79
3. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 94
4. Surah Al-'An'am, NO. 6, verse 52
5. The current Surah, verse 113
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary

Section 7: Hud Exhorts His People to Guard Themselves Against Evil

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 123-126

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

123. “The ‘Ad (people) belied the messengers.”

124. “When their brother Hud said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

125. “Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

126. “Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

127. “And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

‘Ad was the name of the great grandfather of the people of Hud, and that group of people were known by the name of their ancestor. ’Ad People were a tribe from Arabs who were living in the good climate land of Yaman located in a region near the sea by the name of ‘’Ahqaf’.

Their country was flourishing and habitable. Those people used to live in cities and Hud was their prophet. Their name has been mentioned in 24 occurrences of the Qur’an. In the Qur’an, there is a Surah called Al-Ahqaf and another Surah named Hud.

However, here on the words of the Qur’an are about the People of ‘Ad and their prophet Hud, a part of whose life, their destiny, and some instructive lessens involved in them, have been stated in eighteen verses.

As was mentioned before; the People of ‘Ad were a tribe who lived in ’Ahqaf, in the area of ‘Hidir Mut’, a part of Yemen, located in the south of Arabia. Those rebellious people rejected the messengers of Allah, as the Qur’an says:

“The ‘Ad (people) belied the messengers.”

They rejected only Hud, but since Hud’s call was the call of all Divine prophets, they had, in fact, rejected all of the prophets.

Next to this short statement, the holy Qur’an explains more about them, where it says:

“When their brother Hud said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

As a sympathetic brother, Hud used to kindly invite them to monotheism and piety, and that is why the word /’ax/ ‘brother’ has been applied about him in the verse.

Then Hud added:

“Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

He wanted to say that the background of his life among them was an evidence for this fact that he had never paved the path of treachery and he had never got anything but truth and truthfulness.

He emphasized again: now that the situation was like that and they were aware of it, too, they should be afraid of Allah and obey him, because obeying him was indeed obeying Allah.

The verse says:

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

If you think that I seek for wealth and these things are for earning money and rank, you may know that I do not demand you the least recompense for my call.

The verse says:

"And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 128-131

أَتَبْنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ

وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ

وَإِذَا بَطَشْتُم بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِينَ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

128. "Do you build a landmark on every height for vain delight?"

129. "And you get strong buildings in the hope of living therein for ever."

130. "When you assault, you assault like tyrants!"

131. "Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

The things which are attractive in the eye of the lovers of the world, are insignificant in viewpoint of the friends of Allah, and they rebuke people concerning them.

The criticism of the Qur'an is about the thought of revelry and dwellers of castles and, not the building of castle itself. Unfortunately, wealth, capital, and high glorious buildings are usually in possession of the deviated people and are used for satisfying lusts and low desires, while industry, invention, art, potentialities and human power must be used along the path of real needs. Concerning the life of Hud and the People of 'Ad, the Qur'an has referred to four parts of it.

At first, it points to the content of the call of Hud which is monotheism and piety, the subject that was explained through former verses, thea it refers to their faults and their wrong deeds, and reminds them three subjects.

In the form of a positive interrogation with a negative sense, the Qur'an addresses them and says:

"Do you build a landmark on every height for vain delight?"

The Arabic word /ri'/ originally means 'a height'.

The Qur'anic word /ta'baun/ is derived from /'aba/ which means an action in which no correct aim is pursued, and with regard to the word /'ayah/ which means 'sign', it makes clear that this rich tribe, for gaudiness and in order to boast to others, used to build some buildings (like fortress and the like) upon high mountains and heights that had got no correct aim but attracting others' attention to them and show their own power and authority to other people.

These buildings were probably the site of diversion and play and lusts, as at our time it is customary among tyrannical ones.

Then, in the next verse, the holy Qur'an criticizes them for another fault of theirs.

It says:

"And you get strong buildings in the hope of living therein for ever."

The Arabic word /masani'/ is the plural form of the word /masna'/ which means: 'a place and a beautiful strong building'.

Hud does not protest them why they had got some good and comfortable houses, but he says they have so engaged themselves with the world, and adorning themselves with building some useless strong castles and fortresses that they have neglected the Hereafter.

They have not considered the world as a sojourn but as a perpetual dwelling. Yes, such buildings which causes negligence and pride are certainly blameworthy. A tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) indicates that once he was passing a road when he saw a splendid building which was located on the way.

He asked:

"What is this?"

The companions said:

"It belongs to one of the Helpers (ansar)."

The Prophet (S) stopped for a while When its owner arrived and greeted, the Prophet (S) turned his face from him.

The man asked his friends about the matter and told them that, by Allah, he saw that the Prophet (S) was inconvenient with him and he did not know what had happened about him and what wrong he had done.

They answered him that the Prophet (S) had seen that splendid building of his and became inconvenient.

After that the man destroyed down that building. Later, one day when the Prophet (S) was passing there, he found no building over there. He questioned what happened to that building which was over there, and the companions explained the event for him.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Verily every building is a burden for its owner on the Hereafter Day, except that one that he has to have."[1]

This tradition, and other traditions like it, all make the view of Islam quietly clear that Islam does not agree with aristocratic buildings built extravagantly and cause negligence. Islam does not let Muslims build such buildings, like those of the proud oppressors, in particular that they are built in the places where the deprived are in dire need of dwelling.

It is interesting that the Messenger of Islam (S) did not resort to any force to reach this aim, and he did not order to ruin that building, but by means of a gentle ethical reaction, which was heedlessness, he provided the content of his aim.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an refers to the cruelty of the people of 'Ad in their quarrel and disputation.

It says:

"When you assault, you assault like tyrants!"

Someone may do something that deserves punishment, but no one must exceed the limits and he must not order a heavy penalty for a tiny crime, shed the blood of people when he is angry, and he must not treat like the tyrants and oppressors of the world.

The Arabic word /batš/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, means ‘to take something by force and superiority’.

In fact, Hud blamed these mammonists in three ways: First through the tokens they built proudly and gaudily on heights in order to boast of others.

Then he criticizes the strong buildings such as castles of the oppressors which are the sign of having long desires and negligence from this fact that the world is a sojourn, not a permanent dwelling.

At last, he criticizes their extravagance in punishments.

This shows that they were so engaged with the love of this world that they had gone out of the line of servitude, and had become so mammonish that they nearly demanded divinity. These things prove again this.fact that

“The love of the world is the top of all faults”.[2]

After stating these three critics, he invites them again to piety, when he says:

“Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 132-135

وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُم بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ

أَمَدَّكُم بِأَنْعَامٍ وَبَنِينَ

وَجَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

132. “And be in awe of Him Who has succoured you with what you know.”

133. “He has succoured you with cattle and Children,”

134. “And gardens and springs.”

135. “Verily I fear for you the chastisement of a Great Day.”

Piety is the best way of being gratitude to Allah. Everybody knows how much the grace of Allah has been bestowed on him.

If there is not any receptivity and competency in a person, the admonition of prophets is not effective.

The third part of the statement of Hud is referred to in these verses. He explains the divine blessings to the servants so that, in this way, he can stimulate the sense of thank giving; in them, haply they return toward Allah.

In this concern, he (as) uses the method of ‘epitome and expansion’ which is very helpful for making the discussions pleasant.

At first, addressing them, he says:

“And be in awe of Him Who has succoured you with what you know.”

You ought to be in awe of the Lord Who constantly and regularly gave the bounties you know in abundance to you.

Then, after this short statement, he explains it in detail, and he says:

“He has succoured you with cattle and Children,”

On one hand, He bestowed on you some material capitals, a great part of which, at that time in particular, was cattle, and, on the other hand, He gave you enough human power that you can protect, maintain and bring them up.

This meaning has been repeated in different verses of the Qur'an that at the time of numerating the material bounties, it first refers to properties and then it mentions the human power that is the protector, guardian and fosterer of the properties.

This seems a natural sequence, and it does not mean that properties are more significant than children.

In Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 6 Allah says:

"...and We assisted you with wealth and children and We made you a numerous host."

Then, the Qur'an adds:

"And gardens and springs."

This means Allah gave you green gardens and fountains full of flowing water, and, thus, He enriched your life both from the point of human power and agriculture, horticulture, breeding live-stock, and the means of transportation, in such a way that you did not feel any deficiency or inconvenience in your life.

But what happened that you forgot the Bestower of all these bounties; every day and night you sat at the table of His blessings but you did not recognize Him.

Then he states the last stage of his words and threatens and warns them with the Divine retribution, when he says:

"Verily I fear for you the chastisement of a Great Day."

It will be a Day when you will see by your own eyes the consequence of those cruelties, injustice, pride, arrogance, worshipping low desires, sexuality, and alienation with Allah.

The Qur'anic phrase /yaumin 'azim/ (a Great Day) is usually applied for the Hereafter Day which is great from any dimension, but it has sometimes used in the verses of the Qur'an for the harsh and terrible days that some nations had, as the story of Shu'ayb, mentioned in this very Surah, we are informed that Allah punished the people of Shu'ayb (with the lightning emerged from the piece of cloud) after they showed obstinacy for accepting the truth, and that day was a great day.

It says:

"...then there seized them the chastisement of the Day of shadow. Verily it was a chastisement of a grievous day."[3]

Therefore, the phrase /yaumin 'azim/ mentioned in this verse may refer to the day when the arrogant ones of the 'Ad People encountered the painful punishment of instructive wind. The evidence of this meaning is the statement of their retribution in a few verses later.

It may also refer to the retribution of Hereafter Day, or to both of those chastisements whose day is very great.

A Tradition

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"He who tortures people in the world severely, will have the worst punishment: among people with Allah on the Hereafter Day."[4]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 136

قَالُوا سَوَاء عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَظْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُن مِّنَ الْوَاعِظِينَ

136. “They said: 'It is the same to us whether you admonish or be not of the admonishers.”

The previous verses contained the expressive words of the sympathetic prophet Hud (as) with his rebellious people, ’Ad people.

Now the Qur’an refers to the irrational vicious answers of that group of people who told Hud that he would not put himself into trouble, because it was indifferent to them whether he admonished them or not and his admonition would not have any effect on their heart.

The verse says:

“They said: 'It is the same to us whether you admonish or be not of the admonishers.”

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 137-140

إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ خُلُقُ الأَوَّلِينَ

وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

137. “This (preaching) is naught but a custom of the ancients.”

138. “And we are not going to be punished.”

139. “So they belied him, then We destroyed them; verily in this is a sign; but most of them do not believe.”

140. “And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful.”

The ancestors’ deviation is a preparation for the deviation of the later generations, so the Qur’an in this verse announces that the people of Hud told him:

“This (preaching) is naught but a custom of the ancients.”

The people of Hud expressed that, contrast to the statement of Hud, they would be chastised neither in this world nor in Hereafter.

The verse says:

“And we are not going to be punished.”

The Arabic word /xuluq/ means: ‘habit, style, and manner’, and since this word has been used here in its singular form in the sense of character, temper, and characteristic custom, it refers to the deeds they used to commit, such as: idolatry, building beautiful strong buildings, boasting by means of constructing fortresses and castles on heights, and also being unjust in punishments and retributions.

This means that they said what they were doing was the same thing that their ancestors customarily did and it could not be a matter to be objected.

Some Islamic commentators have rendered it into lie and falsehood. In this case, it means that his words about the Lord and Resurrection were some lies that had been told from before.

Following this matter, the holy Qur’an explains the painful destiny of this group of people as follows:

"So they belied him, then We destroyed them..."

And, at the end of this event, the Qur'an repeats the same two expressive instructive sentences that were stated at the end of the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses.

It says:

"...verily in this is a sign; but most of them do not believe."

These concluding comprehensive sentences mean that in this event there is a clear sign concerning the Power of Allah, Prophets' perseverance, and the evil fate of the tyrants and oppressors, yet most of them did not believe.

"And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

This verse means that your Lord conciliates and respites enough, but at the time of punishment He is so strict that there remains no chance of flee for any body.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
2. The Commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
3. Surah Ash-Sh'ara', No. 26, verse 189
4. Nahj-ul-Fisahah, P. 59, and Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, P. 500

Section 8: Salih Preaches Righteousness to the People of Thamud

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 141-145

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ صَالِحٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

141. “The Thamud (people) belied the messengers.”

142. “When their brother Salih said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

143. “Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

144. “Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

145. “And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

The life stories of a few prophets have been told in this Surah, each of which begins with the word ‘Belied’. This is because in these stories the most important point is the subject of prophets being rejected by the ancient people and their destruction.

Yes, in writing and speaking, the important points must come first. Therefore, in these stories there have been stated nothing about the number of their people, the name of their places, the date of the events and other details, because what is a gazing-stock is to show the manifestations of right and wrong and to state the victory of divine truth and the defeat of wrong.

However, the fifth part of the story of the prophets, which has been mentioned in this Surah, is the story of the people of Thamud and their prophet Salih (as) which is told precisely and briefly.

They lived in a land called/wadiyul qura/, locateid between Medina and Syria, and they had a comfortable life, but as the result of disobedience and contumacy, they were so destroyed that there is no sign from them today.

This story beings from the people of ‘Ad and the people of Noah, and it shows how the events of history repeat.

The verse says:

“The Thamud (people) belied the messengers.”

The Divine prophets preached the same call, and when the people of Thamud belied their prophet, Salih, indeed they belied all the Divine messengers.

After mentioning this short explanation, the Qur’an talks in details, where it says:

“When their brother Salih said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

Salih (as) who, as a brother, was a kind leader and a guide for his people, had no superiority over them and no material benefits did he demand from them. Therefore, the Qur’an introduces him as their brother to them.

Like all prophets of Allah, Salih (as) begins his invitation with piety and feeling responsibility. Then he (as) implicitly refers to his good background among them as a reference for the veracity of his claim.

He says:

"Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger."

Therefore, Salih recommended them that they should be pious, be in awe of Allah, and obey him, because he wanted for them nothing but the pleasure of Allah, their goodness, and prosperity.

He said to them:

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

As a reason for the truthfulness of his statement, and that his struggle was for Allah, he added:

"And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 146-150

أَتُتْرَكُونَ فِي مَا هَاهُنَا آمِنِينَ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ

وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَارِهِينَ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

146. "Will you be left secure, in (the enjoyment of) all that you have here?"

147. "In the gardens and springs,"

148. "And cornfields and date palms with slender spathes?"

149. "And you hew houses (skillfully) out of the mountains exultingly."

150. "Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

When the bounties of security, finance, and welfare are not enriched with the obedience from the immaculate Imam, they work as a preparation for mischief and corruption.

Man is not free in front of Divine bounties, but he has responsibility before them. That is why in this verse the Qur'an refers to the sensitive points of their life. And, in a court procedure, through their inner sense, their prophet condemns them.

He asks them whether they imagine that they remain safe and sound fully in that security and affluence of bounties forever. Do they think that this material and negligent life is eternal and that they will not counter death, revenge, and retribution?

Then he explains his previous brief sentence in details when he asks them whether they think that they will live eternally in these gardens, springs, and fanning lands that produce ripe, sweet, and pleasant fruits.

The verse says:

"Will you be left secure, in (the enjoyment of) all that you have here?"

"In the gardens and springs,"

"And cornfields and date palms with slender spathes?"

Then it refers to their strong and comfortable houses, and says:

"And you hew houses (skillfully) out of the mountains exultingly."

The Arabic word /farih/ is derived from /farah/ originally in the sense of 'joy accompanied with unawareness and sensuality'. Sometimes it has also been used in the sense of skillfulness in doing an action. Although both meanings are in line with the above verse, regarding to the reproach and blame of Salih (as), the first meaning seems more appropriate.

Comparing these verses with the qualities mentioned in the former verses about the people of 'Ad, it is understood that the People of 'Ad mostly used to apply egotism, love of position, and ostentation, while the People of Thamud were mostly the captives of their belies, comfortable life, and affluence.

But they were alike each other in one evil thing, they both ignore the call of Divine prophets for coming out of the prison of egotism and reaching the rank of theism and, consequently, they were punished as the retribution of their deeds.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 151-152

وَلاَ تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ يُصْلِحُونَ

151. "And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant,"

152. "Those who make mischief in the earth, and amend not."

Immoderation is a kind of corruption, and a spendthrift is a mischief monger and a corrupter.

You must not expect any improvement from the painless persons who live in welfare, since improvement comes into being only under the light of the Divine prophets' school. So, these couple of verses imply that the extravagant should not be obeyed, and those who are corrupters must not be expected improvement from.

The verses say as follows:

"And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant,"

"Those who make mischief in the earth, and amend not."

Of course, we know that extravagance is the same as exceeding the limits of law, the law of creation and the law of religion. This is also clear for all that in a correct system any exceeding the limit causes corruption and destruction; and in other words, the origin of corruption is extravagance and the consequence of extravagance is mischief.

Of course, it should be noted that extravagance has a vast meaning. Sometimes it is used in simple issues like eating and drinking.[1]

Sometimes it is in spendthrift and too much remittal.[2]

Sometimes it is in judgment and judiciary arbitration which leads to falsehood.[3]

Sometimes it is in one's beliefs, which leads to doubt and skepticism, (as it is in Surah Al-Qafir, No. 40, verse 34, where /musrif/ (extravagant) and /murtab/ (doubter) have come with together).

Sometimes it has been used in the sense of self-superiority, arrogance, and exploitation, (as in Surah Ad-Dukhan, No. 44, verse 31 the Qur'an says about Pharaoh:

"...surely he was haughty, (and) one of the extravagant.")

And, finally, sometimes it has been applied to any sin and fault, (as in Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 53 the Qur'an says:

"Say: 'O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own selves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives the faults altogether, surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.")

Regarding to what was said, thus the relation between extravagance and corruption was made manifest well.

According to the statement of 'Allamah Tabataba'i in Al-Mizan, the world of existence is wholly order, righteousness, and benefit and, even with the contrast which may sometimes be seen in its parts, it contains so much agreement. This system is moving towards some righteous aims, and it arranges a particular path for each of its parts.

Now, if one of these parts deviates from its orbit and paves the path of corruption, there will arise a conflict between this part and other parts of this world. If this extravagant part can be returned to its main orbit, the better, otherwise they will destroy it so that the system can continue its own way.

Man, who is one of the parts of this world of existence, is not an exception from this general law.

If he goes forth according to his nature and be harmonious with the system of creation, he will attain the prosperous aim that has been determined for him, but if he exceeds his limits and steps in the path of corruption and mischief in the earth, at first Allah warns him by punishing him with grievous and painful events, as Surah Ar-Rum, No. 30, verse 41 says:

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return."

But if this could not be effective and corruption has influenced into the depth of his self, Allah will wipe out the face of the earth from the dirt of the existence of such a person by the punishment of 'Istisal.[4]

(It is the Divine punishment which comes for the incorrigible people to annihilate them to which no prayer is beneficial at this time)

Thus, it makes fairly clear that why Allah has mentioned 'extravagance' and 'corruption in the land' and the lack of improvement in the above mentioned verses in the same row.

Some Traditions Upon Extravagance and Corruption

1- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, Ali (as), said:

"Extravagance is blameworthy in all things, except in the righteous deeds."[5]

2- There is a tradition recorded in Al-Kafi and the Commentary of 'Ayyashi which is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said to a man:

"Be in awe of Allah and be not extravagant nor (take the life) strait (for yourself) and move between them; verily squandering is of the extravagances as Allah has said:

'...and do not squander wastefully'[6]***."***[7]

3- Imam Sadiq (as) once said:

"Verily, extravagance is accompanied with scanty of bounty."[8]

4- The Prophet (S) once passed by Sa‘d while he was making ablution, then he (S) told him:

“What is this extravagance (using too much water), O’ Sa‘d?”

He said:

“Is there extravagance even in ablution?”

The Prophet (S) answered:

“Yes, even if you are by a spring.”

5- Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

“The outside corruption originates from the inside corruption. Whoever improves his inside, Allah will improve his outside, and whoever proves treacherous with Allah in secret, Allah will make his secret manifest in outside.”[9]

6- Amir-ul-Mu’mineen, Ali (as) says:

“Being unjust to the servants of Allah causes the Hereafter to be corrupted.”[10]

7- The holy Prophet (S) said:

“How will be your situation when your wives are corrupted and your youths are mischievous and you do not enjoin what is good and do not forbid what is wrong?...”[11]

8- Imam Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“Avoid any speech and action that causes the corruption of (your) Hereafter and religion.”[12]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 153-154

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ

مَا أَنتَ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بِآيَةٍ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

153. “They said: ‘You are only of the bewitched ones’,”

154. “You are no more than a mortal, like us, so bring you a sign if you are one of the truthful.”

Prophets were denigrated in two things; sorcerer and being bewitched.

The former verses contained the benevolent and reasonable logic of Salih in the face of that deviated group of people. Now these holy verses deliver the logic of those people.

The verses declares:

“They said: ‘You are only of the bewitched ones’,”

Moreover, they used to say that their prophet was a human being like them and no intellect lets them follow and obey such a mortal; so they demanded him a proper sign.

Here is what they said:

“You are no more than a mortal, like us, so bring you a sign if you are one of the truthful.”

The Arabic word /musahhar/ is derived from the word /sihr/ and it means ‘the one who is bewitched’. They believed that the sorcerers sometimes cause the persons’ talent and intellect to become powerless or feeble by means of sorcery.

They not only used this denigration for Prophet Salih (as) but also a group of other prophets were accused of it. As Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25,

verse 8 indicates, the oppressors said to the believers that they followed a man who, as the result of being bewitched, has lost his intellect.

Yes, they considered intelligence in the manner that a man behaves according to his surrounding and does the same as others do in his environment, so that he adjust himself with all the vices over there.

If a godly and revolutionary man rose against the corrupted beliefs and a wrong system, according to this logic, they would call him mad, insane and bewitched.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 155-157

قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَّهَا ِ ْبٌ وَلَكُمْ ِ ْبُ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

وَلاَ تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا نَادِمِينَ

155. "He said: 'Here is a she-camel; she shall have her portion of water (one day), and you have your portion of water on an appointed day',"

156. "And do not touch her with evil, least the punishment of a grievous day should overtake you."

157. "Then they hamstrung her, and became regretful."

A miracle must be so manifest that all people, in every level they are, can understand its miraculous state. (Here is a she-camel)

Allah is omnipotent and easily can bring miracles into existence, whether it is the moon that did rend asunder, [13] or the water of the sea that clave asunder,[14] and the mountain that clave asunder and a she-camel came out of it; all of these are indifferent for Him, the Mighty.

Salih's She-camel was hamstrung by a single person, yet the Qur'an says:

"They hamstrung her",

namely a group hamstrung her, because those people were content with the deed of that person.

Imam Ali (as) says:

"Certainly the she-camel of Thamud was hamstrung by only one, but Allah held all of them in punishment because all of them joined him by their acquiescing in their consenting to it..."[15]

However, this disobedient group, not for understanding the right but for seeking pretext, asked Salih for a miracle. Since the argument should be completed to them, then Salih, by the command of Allah, spoke to them as follows:

"He said: 'Here is a she-camel; she shall have her portion of water (one day), and you have your portion of water on an appointed day',"

The Arabic word /naqah/ means a she-camel. The Qur'an has talked about the characteristics of this camel, which has had a miraculous situation, in brief and it has not mentioned its entire specialties, but we know that it had not been an ordinary camel.

As some commentators have said this she-camel, in a miraculous manner, came out from inside of a mountain. One of its qualities was that it specialized the water of the spring of the town every other day to itself and

drunk it, as it is said in the above verse and the 28th verse of Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54.

However, Salih (as) was commissioned to announce to them that they should leave that wonderful and extraordinary she-camel, which was as the sign of the unlimited Power of Allah, to itself, and he ordered that they should not hurt it the least.

Here is the command:

"And do not touch her with evil, least the punishment of a grievous day should over take you."

Of course, the disobedient people, who did not want that those deceived people became aware, and considered the people's awareness as a barrier for their interests, planned to kill the she-camel. Finally they attacked the camel and, by one strike or more, they killed it and then, when they saw the Divine punishment was nigh, they became regretful of what they had done.

The verse says:

"Then they hamstrung her, and became regretful."[16]

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 158-159

فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

158. "So the punishment overtook them; verily in this there is sign, but most of them do not believe."

159. "And verily your Lord, He is certainly the Mighty, the Merciful."

Sacrilege and blasphemy is so important that for killing an animal sometimes a group of people may be destroyed by Divine punishment.

(Then they hamstrung her... So the punishment overtook them)

The wrath and punishment of Allah is because of our own deed, else He is Merciful.

So, in this holy verse, the Qur'an implies that since their rebellion exceeded the limits and they actually showed that they would not accept the truth, the will of Allah, or the Divine providence, was to purify the face of the earth from the dirt of their existence and He annihilated them.

The verse says:

"So the punishment overtook them..."

As Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 78, and Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 67 briefly indicate, a severe earthquake did shake their land, and, when they woke up and were sitting on their knees, the event did not give them any respite, a fatal lightning, which was accompanied with earthquake, ruined the walls over them, and at the same time, they died in an astonishing horror.

At the end of the explanation of the event, the holy Qur'an repeats the same thing that was stated at the end of the explanation of the events of the people of Hud, the people of Noah, and the people of Abraham.

It says:

"...verily in this there is sign, but most of them do not believe."

This verse implies that with the effort and endeavour of this great prophet, Salih, and the sufferings that he tolerated while he had a clear logic,

those black hearted ungodly people obstinately showed their opposition with that awakening miracle and, consequently, they encountered an evil destiny which is an instructive lesson for others.

Yes, none can defeat the Power of Allah, as this great might is not a hinder for His mercy to be showered over His friends and even over His enemies.

The verse says:

"And verily your Lord, He is certainly the Mighty, the Merciful."

Thus, not only His mercy and favours are the signs of admonition, but also His wrath and punishment works as a sign:

"...verily in this there is a sign..."

Notes

1. as it is referred to in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 33
2. as it is mentioned in Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 67
3. as in Surah Al-Qafir, No. 40, verse 28 an extravagant person and a liar both are set in a row
4. Al-Mizan, Vol. 15, P. 333
5. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 83
6. Surah 'Asra', No. 17, verse 26
7. At-Tafsir-us-Safi, P. 283, old edition
8. Raudatul-Muttaqin, Vol. 3, P. 194
9. Tafsir-us-Safi, P. 373, old edition
10. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, P. 475
11. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 74, P. 153
12. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 142
13. Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 1
14. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 63
15. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 201
16. The Qur'anic phrase /'aqaruha/ is derived from the word /'uqr/ which originally means: 'root and the base of something'. It is sometimes used in the sense of 'to kill' and sometimes in the sense of 'to hamstrung' an animal', too.

Section 9: Lut Admonishes His People

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 160-164

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

160. “The Lut (people) belied the messengers.”

161. “When their brother Lut said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?’”

162. “Verily I am unto you a trustworthy, messenger.”

163. “Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

164. “And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

The rejection of one Divine prophet is always the same as rejecting all prophets.

(Although every nation had its own prophet whom they belied, since all Divine prophets have a single aim and program, belying one of them means belying all of them.)

However, the sixth prophet, a part of whose life story and his deviated people is mentioned in this Surah, is Hadrat Lut (as). Although he was living at the same time with Abraham (as), the statement of his life story has not been mentioned next to that of Abraham’s, for the Qur’an is not a history book that explains the events one after another.

It considers the whole aspects of training, education, and improving man which requires some other proportionalities, and here, the life story of Lut and his people is more consistent with the life stories of the prophets who were mentioned recently.

At first, it says:

“The Lut (people) belied the messengers.”

As it was mentioned formerly, too, the application of the Qur’anic word /mursalin/ (messengers), in the plural form, is either for the unity of the call of the prophets, that rejecting one of them is counted as the rejecting all of them; or, in fact, they believed in none of the former prophets, either.

Then the Qur’aan points to the call of Lut, which is in line with the quality of the call of other ancient prophets.

It says:

“When their brother Lut said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?’”

The tone of his speech and his deep and extraordinary sympathy shows that he speaks like a brother.

Then he added:

“Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

Have you seen any treachery from me? It is the same from now on, and I will certainly observe the deposit of Divine revelation and conveying the message of Allah to you.

If it is so, be pious, and be in awe of Allah, and obey me because I lead you to happiness and prosperity.

The noble verse says:

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

You may not think that this call is a means for obtaining the worldly wealth and that I pursue a material aim. No, it is not so, and I do not want you to give me the slightest wage.

My wage is only to the Lord of the worlds.

The verse says:

"And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 165-167

أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ

قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ يَا لُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ

165. "Of all the creatures in the world, do you come to the males?"

166. "And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people transgressing (the limits)"

167. "They said: 'If you desist not, O Lut! you shall surely be of those who are expelled'."

For the act of forbidding the wrong, the current sins and unlawful things of every kind and in any time must be recognized and people must earnestly be urged to desist from committing them.

One of the unlawful things is sodomy.

The punishment of the person who commits it is slaughter.This deed is so hideous and indecent that even if a person has sexual intercourse with an animal, the flesh of that animal is religiously forbidden to be consumed.

Sodomy is a very mean, ugly and indecent action and it is unlawful. So, these verses criticize those people's indecent deed and some of their immoral deviations, and since their most important deviation was sexual deviation and sodomy, Lut (as) emphasizes on this very issue and says:

"Of all the creatures in the world, do you come to the males?"

It means that although Allah has created so many members of the opposite sex for you and by a safe and right marriage you can have a pure and peaceful life, you have left this pure and natural bounty of Allah and you have polluted yourselves with this mean and indecent action.

Then Lut added:

"And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people transgressing (the limits)"

Lut wanted to tell them it was not a natural need, whether spiritual and bodily, that caused them to commit that deviated action, but it was disobedience and transgression that polluted them by such an indecency and shame.

Lut implicitly told them that their deed was like that man puts the good fruits, nutritious foods and safe natural things aside and goes to a poisonous, polluted, and fatal food. This is not a natural need, it is an insolence and inordinacy.

Then, the next noble verse implies that the people of Lut, who were engaged with lust, pride and haughtiness, instead of obeying this divine leader and following his advice eagerly and delivering themselves from that polluted pool, they stood against him.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If you desist not, O Lut! You shall surely be of those who are expelled'."

Those people told Lut that his words caused their thoughts to be confused and their peace to be disordered. They were not ready even to listen to him, and if he continued his job, his least punishment would be being expelled from his land.

In some other places of the Holy Qur'an we read that they fulfilled this threat and they ordered that Lut's family to be expelled out of the city, because they were clean and did not commit sin:

"...they said: 'Expel them from your town: verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves)'."[1]

The misguided and deviated people sometimes reach a point that having piety and chastity is a fault among them and impurity and immorality is an honour for them. This is the evil end of a society that goes hurriedly towards corruption.

It is understood from the Qur'anic sentence:

"...you shall surely be of those who are expelled"

that this mischievous group of people had formerly expelled some pure persons whom they saw as troublesome for their ugly deeds. They threatened Lut, too, and said if he continued his way, his fate would also be like them.

It is explicitly explained in some commentary books that they urged to send the chaste persons out of the city with a very bad manner.[2]

In some suras of the Qur'an, such as: Al-'A'ra, Had, Al-Hijr, Al-'Anbiya, An-Naml, and Al-'Ankabut, the explanation about the people of Lut and their hideous sin has been hinted to, but the content meaning of every one of them is different from that of the other. In fact, every one of them points to a different inauspicious dimension of this shameful deed.

Some Traditions

1- The holy Prophet of Islam in a tradition says:

"The odour of Paradise will not reach the one who is catamite."[3]

2- Ali (as) in a tradition introduces the act of sodomy nigh to infidelity.[4]

3- Upon the philosophy of the prohibition of sodomy, Ali ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) in a tradition says:

"The reason of the prohibition of men for men and women for women is that this is spite of the natural sate that Allah has set for man and woman (and opposition with this natural innate nature causes the deviation of man's soul and body) and it is for this reason that if men and

women pursue sodomy, man's generation will be ceased and the device of social life will become imperfect, and the world will be wasted."[5]

From the view point of Islam, this action is so ugly and shameful that its punishment in Islamic jurisprudence doubtlessly is death. Even for those who act some levels lower than sodomy there have been considered some intensive punishments.

For example, the Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

"Whoever kisses a boy lustfully, on the Day of Hereafter Allah will rein him with a rein from fire on his mouth."[6]

The punishment of the person who commits such an action is to be scourged 30 to 99 whips.

However, there is no doubt that sexual deviation is one of the most dangerous deviations that may appear in human societies, because its inauspicious effects can encompass all moral issues and drug man towards emotional deviation.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 168-172

قَالَ إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُم مِّنَ الْقَالِينَ

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلاَّ عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

168. "He said: 'I do detest your doings'."

169. "My Lord! deliver me and my family from (the vice of) what they do."

170. "So, We did deliver him and his family all."

171. "Except an old woman who remained behind."

172. "Then We destroyed the others."

The Qur'anic word /qalin/ is usually used for an intensive opposition and expression of anxiety which comes from the depth of soul.

The Divine prophets do not fear of enemies' threats and they convey their call.

When Lut was threatened to be expelled and being sent out of the city, he expressed his hatred because of their action.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I do detest your doings'."

Abhorring a bad thing should always be shown verbally and practically. Yes, bare anxiety is not enough. We must think of being delivered from the center of mischief.

However, by this verse, the Qur'an implies that, without heeding their threats, Lut continued his words that he abhorred their doings, namely he would go on his protests and they would do whatever they could, because he was not afraid of their threats in his struggle in the path of Allah against their indecencies.

The application of the Qur'an word /qalin/ in the holy verse shows that another group of the believers also supported Lut by their intense protest, although at last those disobedient people dismissed them from the scene.

It is interesting that Lut says he is the enemy of their doings; that is he had not any enmity with those people, but their deed was shameful; and if they left those actions he would be a sincere friend of them.

Finally, those admonitions and advice got no effect on them and finally corruption had enveloped their entire society thoroughly.

He had sufficiently completed the argument and Lut's mission had been fulfilled. Now he must rescue both him; and those who have believed in his call from this polluted region before the time when the fatal punishment of Allah comes to destroy those indecent people.

Lut as a supplication and invocation asked Allah to deliver him and his family from the vice of what they were doing.

He said:

"My Lord! deliver me and my family from (the vice of) what they do."

By the way, as a result of what was said, this fact became clear that Lut's prayer for his family was not done because of emotional aspects and relationship, but it was for their Faith.

Allah fulfilled this supplication, as He says:

"So, We did deliver him and his family all."

"Except an old woman who remained behind."

This old woman was but the wife of Lut who, from the point of belief and religion, was in line with those misguided people and she did not believe in Lut, so, at last, she faced with the same fate.

Yes, Allah delivered Lut and those few believers who were with him. By the command of Allah, they went out from that polluted land at night and left those mischievous people, who were drowned in corruption and indecency, to themselves.

Early in the morning the command of Allah came. A terrible earthquake covered their land.

It utterly destroyed their good cities, beautiful firm castles and their welfare life which was polluted with unchastity, as the holy Qur'an, in a short sentence points to it, and says:

"Then We destroyed the others."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 173-175

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا فَسَاء مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

173. "We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone), and evil is the rain of them that were warned."

174. "Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

175. "And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

The retribution of those who change the path of marriage into the path of sodomy is that the rain of Divine mercy changes into the rain of chastisement, and annihilates them.

Yes, the whole nature is at the service of the Divine Power. The same might which causes to send down the rain from the sky, can send down a shower of brimstone.

So, Allah says:

"We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone)..."

This rain was a rain of pebbles which wiped out even the ruins of their buildings.

The verse continues saying:

"...and evil is the rain of them that were warned."

What a horrible rain it was! The rain which overtook those threatened people.

The ordinary rains are refreshing and enlivening, but this rain was terrible, and destructive.

Verse No.82 from Surah Hud indicates that at first the cities of the people of Lut were destroyed, then a shower of pebbles, layer on layer, came down on them. As we mentioned in the commentary of that verse, the rain of stones was, perhaps, for this aim that their effects would be wiped out, too, and only a heap of stone and dust could be seen from those populated cities.

Were these stone taken from deserts, as the result of a great storm and they were poured over them? Or were they some wandering aerolites which, by the command of Allah, fell on them?

Or, as some say, was there a silent volcano near around there which, by the command of Allah, roared and sent a rain of stones over them? It is not known, but it is certain that this fatal shower left no sign of life in that land.

Again, at the end of this event we encounter the same couple of sentences that were mentioned at the end of the similar events in this Surah concerning other five great prophets of Allah. The Holy Qur'an implies that there is a sign and an instructive lesson in the story of this unjust and indecent people that had a fatal and unsuspicious end.

It says:

"Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

What a sign is more clear than that this event makes you acquainted with some important and helpful issues without that you need any personal experimentation.

Yes, the history of the ancient is an instructive lesson and a sign for the coming generations; it is not even an experience, because in experience one must bear some losses so that he obtains some results, but here we obtain the results from the losses of others.

"And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

What a mercy can be better than this that Allah does not immediately punish such polluted people and He gives them enough respite to be guided and to review their situation.

And also what mercy is superior to this fact that His punishment does not involve both right doers and wrong doers; it is so that if there is a faithful family among thousand misguided families, He rescues these believers.

What a glory and might is higher than this that in a short moment He destroys the dwellings of those polluted persons so severely that there remains no effect from them. The land, which must be as a comfortable

cradle for them, is commissioned for their death; and the enlivening rain is changed into the rain of fatal stones.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 82
2. The commentaries of Ruh-ul-Ma'ali and Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse under discussion
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 79, P. 67, New edition
4. Ibid
5. Ibid, P. 64
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 79, , P. 7

Section 10: Shu‘ayb’s Mission to the Dwellers of the Forest

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 176-180

كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الأَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

176. “The dwellers of the Forest belied the messengers.”

177. “When Shu‘ayb said to them: ‘Will you not fear (Allah)?”

178. “Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

179. “Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

180. “And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

This is the seventh and the last story of the stories of the prophets mentioned in this Surah. This story is about prophet Shu‘ayb and his disobedient people. This great prophet lived in a land called Madyan[1] and ’Aykah[2].

Verse 70 from Surah Al-Hijr indicates that ’Aykah had been located in the way of those people who used to go from Mecca and Medina toward Syria.

First the verse says:

“The dwellers of the Forest belied the messengers.”

They belied not only Shu‘ayb (as), the prophet who was divinely appointed for them but also all other prophets, because they said the same thing from the viewpoint of unity and call, or in principle, they had believed in no religion from among the Divine religions.

The Arabic word /’aykah/ originally means a place with condensed trees which usually called forest. The land which was near Madyan, because of having enough water and many trees, was named ‘’Aykah’. The frame of references shows that these people had a welfare life with abundant wealth, and perhaps it was for the same reason that they were in full pride and negligence.

Then, the Qur’an explains this concise meaning about those people, and says:

“When Shu‘ayb said to them: ‘Will you not fear Allah!?’”

In fact, the call of Shu‘ayb (as) began from the same point of ideology that other prophets (as) had begun. His call was an invitation to piety and being in the awe of Allah which the source of all programs of rectification, and ethical and social changes.

It is important to note that in this story the phrase ‘their brother’, which was used in the stories of Salih, Hud, Noah and Lut, has not been applied here.

This may be for the fact that Shu‘ayb was originally from Madyan and he was relative only with the people of that place, not with the people of ’Aykah.

That is why when in Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 84 the Qur’an refers to only Madyan, this phrase is used, where it says:

“And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu‘ayb...”,

but since the concerning verse speaks about the People of ’Aykah and they had no relation with Shu‘ayb, then this phrase has not been mentioned.

Then he (as) added:

“Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger.”

“Then be in awe of Allah and obey me.”

“And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

These sentences are the same form of well-calculated sentences which other prophets announced at the beginning of their call.

They are invitation to piety, emphasizing on their background of trustworthiness among people, and saying that their godly call has only spiritual motive and they demand no material wage for it from any one. This was for the sake that the pretext seekers and cynical ones might not misuse it.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 181-183

أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلاَ تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

وَلاَ تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءهُمْ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

181. “Fill up the measure, and be not of the cheaters,”

182. “And weigh (things) with a right balance,”

183. “And do not defraud people in their (due) goods, and do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief.”

The act of defrauding is unlawful, and observing the right of people is obligatory,

“Fill up the measure...”.

The Arabic word /kayl/ (measure) usually is used for liquid substances; the word /qistas/ (balance) is used for weights; and the word /’ašya’/ (goods), in this sense, is used for the things which are counted or bought and sold by the pieces.

In these holy verses, there are two divine enjoinments and two prohibitions which are complementary of each other: (Fill up - and be not), (weight - do not defraud)

It is mentioned in some Islamic narrations that the persons who do not tell the blemish or defect of their goods to the customer the angels will curse them, and those who deceive others with guile and plotting are the worst people.[3]

However, like other prophets a part of whose history was mentioned in this Surah before, Shu‘ayb, after his general and godly invitation to piety and the obedience to the command of Allah, emphasized on the ethical and

social deviations of that environment and criticized them in the second part of his teachings.

Since the most important deviation of those tranquil people was their economic disorders, manifest injustice, inequity and exploitation, Shu‘ayb emphasized on these subjects more.

At first, he says:

“Fill up the measure, and be not of the cheaters,”

“And weigh (things) with a right balance,”

“And do not defraud people in their (due) goods, and do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief.”

Fraud is one of the great sins and unlawful things of economy which brings all corruptions of unlawful food.

Fraud is not seen only in transaction, but there may also be some unjust persons who fraud people in teaching, medical profession, control, engineering and other affairs of life and do not give others their due right as they must do.

In these recent verses, in a few short calculated sentences Shu‘ayb commands these misguided people to follow five commandments.

Some commentators have thought that these commandments are mostly some emphasis on each other, while a sufficient care makes it clear that these five divine commandments, in fact, point to five basic different matters, or in others words, they are four commandments and a general conclusion.

In order that this difference can be clear, this fact must be noted that the people of Shu‘ayb (the inhabitants of ’Aykah and Madyan) were living in a sensitive commercial region which was located on the way of those caravans that traveled from Mecca and Medina to Syria and from Syria to Mecca and Medina as well as other regions.

We know that these caravans are in need of many things in this way and sometimes those people who are in the cities along those roads apply the utmost misuse and buy their goods for the lowest price and sell them for the dearest price. (It should be noted that, at that time, many bargains were done in the form of barters.)

Sometimes, they find many undue faults on the material they are going to buy, while they cammand very much for the thing they are going to sell; and at the time of weighing and measuring their own goods they measure it very exactly and sometimes they fraud, but they weigh and measure others’ goods carelessly and sometimes they take more than the due amount, and since the opposite party is dependent and needy he is helpless to acquiesce to all these matters.

However, the Qur’anic phrase /la tabxasu/ is derived from the word /baxs/ which originally means ‘to give the people’s right unjustly and less than their due’, and sometimes it means deceit, dishonesty and trickery which lead to wasting others’ rights.

Therefore, the abovementioned expressive holy phrase contains such a vast meaning that it envelops any kind of people's defraudation, dishonesty, deceit, cheat and trickery in transaction, as well as any heedlessness unto others’ right.

In regard to the fact that the Arabic word /muxsir/ means the person who exposes someone or something to loss and harm, the Qur'anic sentence: /latakunu minal muxsirin/ (be not of the cheaters), also has a vast meaning which, besides defraudation, encompasses any factor that in bargain causes the loss of the opposite party.

Thus, all abuses, injustices and vices in transaction, and any dishonesty, trickery and struggle that end to loss, whether in quality or quantity, are inside the above commandments.

And since the economic disorders are often the causes of destruction in social system, at the end of these great commandments, as a conclusion, it says:

"And do not defraud people in their (due) goods, and do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief."

These commandments not only were helpful for the rich and Unjust society of the time of Shu'ayb, but also they are useful in any age because they cause the economic justice.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 184-186

وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الأَوَّلِينَ

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ

وَمَا أَنتَ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَإِن نَّظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

184. "And fear Him Who created you and the former generations."

185. "They said: 'Verily you are only of those bewitched'."

186. "And you are naught but a mortal like us; and we think that you are of the liars."

Piety and Faith hinder corruptions in economy. He Who created you will sustain you, too, and you need not to be worried about your sustenance.

The corrupt customs and traditions of ancestors must not be relied on, because we all are Allah's creatures and we must obey Him.

So, in his last command here, Shu'ayb invites them again to piety, and says:

"And fear Him Who created you and the former generations."

You are not the only nation who have come to live on the earth; before you there were your fathers and other groups of people who came into being and passed away. Do not forget both the events of theirs in the past and yours in future.

The Arabic word /jibillah/ is derived from /jabal/ which means 'mountain'. It is applied for a large crowd of people which, from the point of hugeness, is like a mountain. Some commentators have said that the number of them was about ten thousand.

Also, the man's nature is called /jibillah/, because it is unchangeable and it is like mountain which cannot be moved from one place to another.

The abovementioned change may also refer to this fact that what he said about the abundance of transgression and giving the people's rights to them and observing justice has been inside the innate of man from the beginning and he has come to revive their pure nature.

But, unfortunately the words of this sympathetic prophet did not affect positively in them and they answered his logical statements with the same bitter and ugly label that the sinners and tyrants had ever used, as the Qur'an says:

"They said: 'Verily you are only of those bewitched'."

They told him that he did not say any logical word in his statements at all, and that he thought he could restrain them from their freedom in their deeds upon their properties.

Moreover, you are also a mortal like us, then how do you expect us to follow you? And what superiority do you have over us?

As the verse explains, they said:

"And you are naught but a mortal like us..."

The only consideration we have about you is that you are a lying person.

The verse continues saying:

"...and we think that you are of the liars."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 187-191

فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

قَالَ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

187. "Therefore cause a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are one of the truthful."

188. "He (Shu'ayb) said: 'My Lord knows best what you do'."

189. "But they belied him, then there seized them the chastisement of the Day of Shadow. Verily it was a chastisement of a grievous day."

190. "Verily there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe."

191. "And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

The Arabic word /kisaf/, which has been repeated for four times in the Qur'an, is the plural form of the word /kisafah/ in the sense of 'a piece' and here it means: 'a piece of cloud'.

The purpose of /'aŏaba yaum iz zullah/ (the chastisement of the Day of Shadow) is either the chastisement of the day when people sheltered under the shadow of the trees because of the severity of heat, or on a day a piece of cloud caused a shadow over them.

There are mentioned a few different sentences in the holy Qur'an concerning the chastisement of the people of Shu'ayb mentioned. Once it says it was an earthquake.[4] In another place it says they were punished by a (heavenly) blast.[5]

Here, in this verse it speaks about a piece of cloud. All the three subjects can combine with together.A piece of dark cloud may produce a thunder and a blast which causes them to tremble, or by creating an earthquake simultaneously, they might be destroyed.

Or perhaps the earthquake relates to the people of Madyan and the dark cloud relates to the people of ’Aykah, since Shu‘ayb had been the prophet appointed for both of them.

In Surah Al-’A‘raf, his messengership over the people of Madyan, who were destroyed by earthquake, is mentioned, while in this Surah his messengership over the people of ’Aykah is referred to.

However, after saying some contradictory statements that they sometimes called him a liar by which they meant he intended to be superior over them, and sometimes called him mad, their last word was as follows:

“Therefore cause a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are one of the truthful.”

They wanted to say that he would send the chastisement by which he threatened them so that he could understand that they might not afraid of those threats.

The only answer that Shu‘ayb (as) gave them for those inconvenient statements and their indecent words and that they asked for Divine punishment, was as follows:

“He (Shu‘ayb) said: ‘My Lord knows best what you do’.”

Shu‘ayb implicitly says that Allah knows best of what you deserve, whenever He finds that you deserve for a chastisement, he may send it down over you.

At last, the time of wiping the earth from these polluted ones came, and as the Qur’an says:

“But they belied him, then there seized them the chastisement of the Day of Shadow. Verily it was a chastisement of a grievous day.”

For seven days a blazing heat overtook their land and there existed no wind at all. Suddenly a piece of cloud appeared in the sky, and there blew a breeze. They hastily came out from their own houses and, since they were uncomfortable because of heat, they went under the shadow of the cloud.

At this time a fatal thunderbolt was created by the cloud. It was a thunderbolt accompanied with a very loud sound that followed by falling fire over them, and simultaneously an earthquake shook the earth when all of them were annihilated.

At the end of this story, the Qur’an reiterates the same things that were said at the end of the former six stories of the great prophets. The verse implies that there is a sign and an instructive lesson in the story of the people of ’Aykah and the kind call of their prophet, Shu‘ayb, and their stubbornnesses, obstinacies and rejections led to their destruction.

It says:

“Verily there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe.”

Yet, Allah, the Kind, the Merciful, gave respite to them sufficiently in order that they might change their way and improve themselves, but when they deserved punishment, He seized them with His Might.

The verse says:

“And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful.”

Notes

1. a city located in the south of Syria
2. a town near Madyan

3. Qurar-ul-Hikam
4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 89
5. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 94

Section 11: The Spirit-Faithful, Descended with the Qur'an

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 192-196

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الأَمِينُ

عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِينٍ

وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الأَوَّلِينَ

192. "And verily this (Qur'an) is from the Lord of the Worlds."

193. "The Faithful Spirit has descended with it."

194. "Upon your heart that you may be of the warners."

195. "In the perspicuous Arabic language."

196. "And verily it is (foretold) in the (heavenly) Books of the ancients."

Qur'an is Divine revelation, and it is not the Prophet's own sayings or out of what he has heard. And also the Qur'an has been sent down from the world of unseen to the world of manifest.

The One Who has sent revelation is the same One Who manages and cherishes the whole existence.

The heavenly laws are in line with the system of creation, therefore, in this verse, after the statement of seven stories of the events of the ancient prophets and the instructive lessons which were found in them, the Qur'an returns again to the same theme with which the Surah began, the theme of the greatness of the Qur'an and legitimacy of this Divine clear word.

The verse says:

"And verily this (Qur'an) is from the Lord of the Worlds."

In principle, stating the different parts of the life stories of the former prophets with so much care and narrowness that they are free from any superstition, false myths and fables, in a place where was the center of tales and fables of the ancients, and by a person who had not learnt lessons at all, are some reasons that this Book has been sent down from the side of the Lord of the worlds, and this by itself, is the sign of the miracle of the Qur'an.

Then, the Qur'an adds:

"The Faithful Spirit has descended with it."

If that angel of revelation, that 'trustful Spirit of Allah' had not brought it from the side of Allah, it would not have been so illuminating, pure, and free from being polluted with any superstitions and falsehoods.

It is worthy noting that the angel of revelation has been qualified here by two titles: the title of Ruh (Spirit) and the title of Faithful (Amin). It means the spirit that is the source of livelihood, and the thing which is the main condition of guidance and leadership.

Yes, this 'Faithful Spirit' brings down this Qur'an from the side of Allah to the heart of the Prophet (S) in order that he warns people and makes them

aware of the dangerous fate that they will have because of deviation from monotheism.

Its aim has not been to explain the history of the ancient people as a hobby and telling stories. Its aim is to create sense of responsibility and awareness. Its aim is to train men.

It says:

"Upon your heart that you may be of the warners."[1]

And, for the fact that there would remain no room for any pretext and excuse for any body, it says:

"In the perspicuous Arabic language."

This Qur'an has been sent down in the eloquent Arabic language and free from any ambiguity so that it could be clean enough for warning and awakening nations, especially in that locality where the people were very obstinate and pretext- seeking.

The Arabic language is a rather complete language which is enriched with a vast and full literature.

It is necessary to note that one of the meanings of the Arabic word /'arabi/ (Arabic) is eloquence and rhetoric apart from the quality of tongue, as Raqib says in Mufradat:

"Arabic is called to a clear eloquent speech."

The same meaning has been mentioned in Lisan-ul-'Arab, too.

In this case, the aim is not to emphasize on the Arabic language, but it is on the eloquence and clearness of the) concepts of its content. The verses which will be discussed later certify this meaning, too.

It is also said in Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 44:

"And if We had made it a Qur'an in a foreign tongue, they would certainly have said: 'Why have not) its verses been made clear?..."

(Here, the word /'a'jamiyy/ (foreign) means: 'not eloquent'.)

Then, the verse refers to another one of the reasons of the legitimacy of the Qur'an, indicating that the former Books had announced that it would come into being in future.

The verse says:

"And verily it is (foretold) in the (heavenly) Books of the ancients."

In Moses' Book, Turah, in particular, the qualities of this prophet (S) and this Book both have been referred to in such a clear way that the scholars of the Jews were quietly aware of it. It is even said that it was because of prophecies of the Jewish scholars about the advent of this prophet and this Divine Book that 'Aus and Khazraj, two tribes, believed in the Prophet of Islam (S)

We must not take the Qur'an insignificant, because:

1- Its origin is Rabb-ul'Alamin
(the Lord of the Worlds).

2- Its intermediary is Ruh-ul-'Amin
(the Faithful Spirit).

3- Its receiver is the pure heart of the Prophet (S)
(Upon your heart...)

4- Its aim is to warn and awaken people,
(of the warners).

5- Its language is Arabic, the eloquent,
(In the perspicuous Arabic language).
6- Its glad tidings can be found in ancient Divine Books,
(... in the (heavenly) Books of the ancients).

A Few Traditions Upon the Qur'an

1. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"The superiority of the Qur'an unto other words is like the superiority of Allah (s.w.t.) unto His creatures."[2]

2. The Messenger of Islam (S) said:

"Be aware of the Qur'an! Verily it is a useful healing, and an auspicious remedy; and it is the protector of the person who holds fast to it, and a rescue for the one who follows it."[3]

3. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"The noble ones of my Ummah are those who carry out the Qur'an, and keep a vigil in the night, too."[4]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."[5]

Also, Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) has eloquently pointed out this fact through his very inclusive statement in Nahj-ul- Balaqah, where he says:

"...Therefore, seek cure from it your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely unbelief hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance..."[6]

In another occurrence in Nahj-ul-Balaqah, he (as) says:

"Beware that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ailments and regulation for whatever is among you."[7]

And the same Imam (as), in another place of Nahj-ul-Balaqah, says:

"...You should adhere to the Book of Allah, because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, a protection for the adherent and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected.

Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward (in action)..."[8]

These expressive statements, that the like of them can abundantly be found in the teachings of the Prophet (S), and in other words of Hadrat Ali (as) and other Imams (as), clearly prove that the Qur'an is a prescription useful for arranging all disorders, a cure for both individuals and society from the kinds of ethical and social diseases.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 197-199

أَوَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ آيَةً أَن يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاء بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى بَعْضِ الأَعْجَمِينَ

فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ

197. "Is it not a sign to them that the learned of the Children of Israel know it (as true)?"

198. "And if We had sent it down to any of the non-Arabs,"

199. "And he had recited it to them, they would not have believed in it."

The scholars of the Children of Israel were aware of the truthfulness of the Qur'an.

The excuse of being ignorant is not accepted from the faulty ones. Those Jews who did not ask their scholars to know the truth deserve to be blamed and rebuked.

Is not the knowledge of the scholars of the Children of Israel unto the glad tidings concerning the appointment of the Prophet of Islam (S) recorded in the ancient Divine Books as a reason for the veracity of his prophethood?

The verse says:

"Is it not a sign to them that the learned of the Children of Israel know it (as true)?"

Those scholars of the Children of Israel who had believed in the holy Qur'an informed that the Prophet's name had been mentioned in their books, and the Jews and some Arab tribes had heard it from the learned ones of them and this very thing worked as their mean for 'Aus, and Khazraj to believe.

Ibn Abbas says that the objective of 'the learned of the Children of Israel' mentioned in the verse is 'Abdillah-ibn-Salam and his companions, such as: Ibn-i-Yamin, Tha'labah, 'Asad, 'Usayd and so on.

It is clear, of course, that it was not possible for the Qur'an to say such a great thing about itself in such an environment where there were so many scholars of the Children of Israel who were completely in association with pagans, because all of them could immediately deny it manifestly.

This itself shows that in the locality of the descent of the verses of the Qur'an, this issue was so clear and known that there was no room for any denial.

Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 89 says:

"When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them - and, from before, they had been praying for victory over those who rejected the truth - when there came to them that which they recognized (to be truth), they disbelieved in it."

All of these facts are clear evidences to the veracity of the statement of the Qur'an and the rightfulness of its call.

Then, the next verse implies that if the Qur'an was sent down unto some one who was not Arab and he recited it to the Arabs, they would not believe in it and restrained to follow it, but Allah sent the Qur'an down in the clear Arabic language to the most eloquent one of them who was from the noblest family among them in order that they would ponder and confirm it and follow it better.

The verse says:

"And if We had sent it down to any of the non-Arabs,"

It was also formerly said that the Arabic word /'arabi/ in context means 'a person who is from the Arab generation'. Sometimes it means 'eloquent speech'.

The Arabic word /‘ajami/ is in contrast with it and has two meanings: A) a non-Arab person, B) an ineloquent speech, and in the above mentioned verse both of them are probable, but it mostly seems that it refers to the first meaning.

This verse means that their racialism and tribal prejudice is so violent that if the Qur’an were sent down to a non-Arab, the waves of bigotries would hinder them to accept it.

Now that it has been sent down unto an honourable man from a noble family of Arabs in Arabic language and its glad tidings has also been mentioned in the former Divine Books and the learned ones of the Children of Israel have testified it, too, many of them did not believe; let alone if their prophet had not such conditions at all.

It was why in the next verse the Holy Qur’an says:

“And he had recited it to them, they would not have believed in it.”

A Tradition

Narrating from his father, Muhammad-ibn-Musa Ar-Razi said:

“One day Imam Rida (as) spoke about the Qur’an and he dignified the reason inside of it and stated about its wonderful order which is as a sign of miracle, and said:

‘The Qur’an is a firm rope of Allah, the strongest handle and the clear way of Allah which leads to the Paradise, and secures from the Fire, the past of time does not make it old and it is not tiresome for tongues, because it has not been appointed for a particular time but (in all times) it has been appointed as a reason and proof for all humankind.

‘Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; it is sent down from the Wise, the Praised One’.”[9][10]

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 200-202

كَذَلِكَ سَلَكْنَاهُ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ حَتَّى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الأَلِيمَ

فَيَأْتِيَهُم بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

200. “Thus We caused it passing into the hearts of the sinners,”

201. “(But) they will not believe in it until they see the painful punishment.”

202. “And it shall come upon them all of a sudden, while they are not aware.”

Allah completes the argument even with the pagans and exposes it to them and causes it to pass into their hearts, but if there is not any receptivity even the Qur’an is not effective.

Therefore, in this verse He says:

“Thus We caused it passing into the hearts of the sinners,”

Allah sent the Qur’an down with clear statements and in the language of their own people unto a man from among them who was acquainted with their customs, and its content had been confirmed by the former Divine Books.

In short, He sent it with all the conditions which made the acceptance of it easy for them in the hearts of those sinful people, but these diseased hearts denied accepting it. It is like the sound nutritious food that a sick stomach does not receive and rejects it.

The verse says:

"(But) they will not believe in it until they see the painful punishment."

The Arabic phrase /salaknahu/ is derived from the word /suluk/ which means 'passing a way', coming from one side and going out from another side.

Yes, they do not believe in it until the Divine punishment suddenly overtakes them while they do not perceive.

The verse says:

"And it shall come upon them all of a sudden, while they are not aware."

No doubt, the purpose of this Divine punishment which suddenly seizes them is the worldly chastisement and the destructive affliction which is called ''istisal', (the Divine punishment for the unchangeable sinners).

By the way, the ugly and beautiful rites and traditions, and in other words, racial bigotries work as a curtain of egotism and ignorance which covers the man's thought, apprehension and wisdom and bars that the correct judgment works.

This state of bigotry has a harsher form among some tribes, for example, a group of Arabs were known as zealous people, and they are referred to in the abovementioned verses.

The Arabic fanaticism of the Age of Ignorance was so vast that if the Qur'an were sent down to non-Arabs the Arabs would never believe in it.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in the Commentary by Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, concerning this verse, says:

"Had the Qur'an been sent down to any non-Arab, Arabs would not have believed, but the Qur'an was sent down to Arabs, and non-Arabs believed in it, and this is an excellence for non-Arabs."[11]

A Few Traditions Upon Bigotry

1. A tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) indicates that he said:

"Whoever has bigotry as much as a mustard seed in his heart, Allah will muster him with the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance on the Hereafter Day."[12]

2. In another tradition Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who has got fanaticism, or fanaticism is made for him, has removed the collar of faith from his neck."[13]

Hadrat Ali (as) has delivered a comprehensive and strict discussion in Qasi'ah sermon upon fanaticism a part of which is as follows:

"As for 'Iblis, he felt proud over Adam because of his origin and taunted at him about his creation, since he said:

'I am of fire while you are of clay'."

Then he (as) adds:

"In case you cannot avoid fanaticism, your fanaticism should be for good qualities, praiseworthy acts, and admirable matters…"[14]

Confirming this statement of Ali (as), once Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as) was asked about bigotry and he, in a tradition, said:

"The bigotry by which a person sins is that he considers the vicious ones of his tribe better than the good ones of other tribe, and it is not bigotry that he loves the people of his tribe; but bigotry is that he assists his tribe in injustice."[15]

Another meaning of bigotry, which is seen in the verses of the Qur'an and Islamic narrations, is /hamiyyat/ 'zealotry' or /hamiyyat-ij-Jahilliyah/, (i.e., the zealotry of (the days of) ignorance).

Though there are many words delivered in this field, we suffice to only two traditions here.

Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) once said:

"Verily Allah will punish six groups for six qualities: Arabs for fanaticism, stewards (the owners of lands and wealth) for pride, the guardians of the affairs for cruelty, the jurisprudents for jealousy, the merchants for treachery, and the villagers for gnorance."[16]

The Messenger of Allah (S) every day used to seek protection of Allah from six things: skepticism, paganism, zealotry, wrath, inequity, and jealousy.[17]

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 203-206

فَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنظَرُونَ

أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِن مَّتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ

ثُمَّ جَاءهُم مَّا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

203. "Then they will say: 'Shall we be respited?'"

204. "Do they then ask for Our Chastisement to be hastened on?"

205. "Have you then considered if We let them enjoy themselves for years,"

206. "Then there comes to them that (punishment) which they were promised?"

Allah's respite must not be the cause of our pride and heedlessness, because death and Divine punishment comes all of a sudden:

(And it shall come upon them all of a sudden)

Those who haste to see the Divine punishment, there will come a day when they will ask for respite concerning it.

But respite will not avail the wrong doers and the black-earted ones.

As soon as death seizes the criminals, their sigh and regret begins and they wish to return to this world. Their cries and unaccepted invocations will be useless in this regard.

There are many verses in the Qur'an which reflect this fact, the simplest of them can be recited in these verses.

The Qur'an announces:

"Then they will say: ''Shall we be respited?'"

"Do they then ask for Our Chastisement to be hastened on?"

This statement points to this fact that they had repeatedly asked their prophets derisively that they would bring the chastisement they had promised them, but when they are afflicted with it, they ask for respite to amend their past. Once they imagined that all of these and Divine punishment was a joke, but later they found that it was more earnest than the earnest.

The verse says:

"Have you then considered if We let them enjoy themselves for years, "

However, Allah's way of treatment is that He will not punish any nation unless He completes the argument and gives them enough respite. But, when the statements were completed and they enjoyed sufficient respite and they did not follow the truth, then they would have a chastisement that they cannot escape of or return from.

The verse says:

"Then there comes to them that (punishment) which they were promised?"

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 207-209

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يُمَتَّعُونَ

وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا لَهَا مُنذِرُونَ

ذِكْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

207. "That which they were made to enjoy shall not avail them."

208. "And We did not destroy any town but it had its warners,"

209. "To remind (them) and never are We unjust."

Allah's punishment comes after completing the argument.

By the way, the welfare of the opponents of religion should not make the Prophet (S) sad, because their welfare and affluence will be ceased one day. It is certain that at the time of Divine punishment all means of happiness will be useless.

That is why this verse says:

"That which they were made to enjoy shall not avail them."

Suppose they are given a new respite, which will not be given after completing the argument, and suppose they remain in this world for many other years and live with pride and negligence, do they have any thing but further enjoyment of material merits?

Do they try to amend their past? And, at the time of facing with punishment again, are they able to solve their problem, have a change in their fate? Certainly not, but, on the contrary, they increase their sins during this period of time and make their burden heavier.

Through next verse, the Qur'an implies that no town or city was destroyed except that they were warned and admonished by the divine prophets and completing the argument so that they might amend them.

When they were not changed by Divine intimidation, threat, and admonition and deserved chastisement because of persistence in disbelief and enmity, Allah would somehow destroy them without imposing them any injustice.

The Qur'an says:

"And We did not destroy any town but it had its warners,"
"To remind (them) and never are We unjust."

In this verse, Allah negates any injustice from Him and has rejected those who attribute any inequity and infidelity to Allah. This is injustice that Allah destroys a group who are not unjust, or He punishes the oppressors without completing the argument sufficiently.

Whatever has been mentioned in these verses is, in fact, the statement of the rational principle known as 'the principle of ugliness of chastisement without statement'.

Something similar to the content of this verse is mentioned in Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 15, indicating that Allah never punishes a group unless He sends a messenger among them to explain the facts for them, where it says:

"...nor do We punish (anyone) until We raise a messenger."

By the way, Allah destroys an individual or a group when He has warned them from before, otherwise retribution without warnings is injustice, and it is not in line with the rank of Allah.

The Qur'an has mentioned this fact in different verses:

A) Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 118:
"...And We did them no injustice..."
B) Surah Qafir, No. 40, verse 31:
"...and Allah does not desire injustice for (His) servants."
C) Surah Al-'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 40:
"...and it did not beseem Allah that He would be unjust to them..."
D) Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 124:
"...and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."
E) Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 60:
"…and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way."
F) Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 49:
"…and they shall not be wronged even the heir of a date-stone."
G) Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 40:
"Verily Allah does not do injustice even of the weight of an atom..."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 210-212

وَمَا تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ
وَمَا يَنبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْزُولُونَ

210."And the Satans have not bring it down."
211. "And it behooves them not, nor they can do (it)."
212. "Verily they are banished from hearing it."

Revelation is of two kinds:

A) The Divine revelation which is sent down to the Prophet's heart by the Faithful Spirit (Ruh-ul-'Amin). This kind of revelation is neither deserving for Jinn and Satens, nor can they receive and convey it.

B) Another kind of revelation is the satanic temptations and inspirations which Satans inspire unto their friends:

"...verily the Satans inspire unto their friends..."[18]

The Qur’an has got a firmness, a high rank of sanctity, and a particular protection, since it is Faithful Spirit. It is secured from any larceny, and its receiver is immaculate:

“Nor does he speak out of desire.”[19]

It has been guaranteed:

“Verily We Ourself have sent down the Reminder (the Qur’an) and verily We (Ourlself) will be its Guardian.”[20]

So, in this verse, it says:

“And the Satans have not bring it down.”

Yes, it is never appropriate for the Jinns and Satans to bring such verses down.

The verse says:

“And it behooves them not...”

That is, the content of this great Book, which is on the path of truth, invitation to purity, justice, piety and negation of any paganism, clearly shows that it never adapt to the Satanic considerations and evil inspirations, because Satans produce naught but vice and corruption.

This Book is goodness and righteousness, thus its clear content alone is the sign of its authenticity. Moreover, they are not able to do such a thing.

The verse continues saying:

“...nor they can do (it).”

If they had such a might, those who were in contact with them in the locality of the revelation of the Qur’an, such as some soothsayers or Satans (or, at least, the pagans whose communication with them was certain) could bring something like it (the Qur'an), but all of them were impotent and with their inability and frustration they proved that these verses were beyond their ability.

Moreover, the soothsayers confessed themselves that, after the birth of the Prophet (S) their communication with the Satans, who were in contact with them for the information of heavens, was ceased, and they were deposed from hearing the news of the skies, as the verse says:

“Verily they are banished from hearing it.”

Some of the verses of the Qur’an indicate that formerly the Satans used to go unto the skies and by eavesdropping they could take some matters, which were current between the angels, and occasionally transferred them to their friends.

But by the birth of the Prophet (S) and by his advent, the eavesdropping was absolutely ceased for them and that news communication was fully vanished. The pagans also knew this matter themselves, and suppose that the pagans did not know it, the Qur’an informed it.[21]

It is for this reason that, as an evidence, the Qur’an has emphasized on it in the abovementioned verses.

Thus, this accusation has been answered and rejected in three ways:

A) The lack of conspiracy of the content of the Qur’an with Satanic inspirations.

B) The lack of ability of Satans to do such a thing.

C) The prohibition of the Satans from eavesdropping.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verse 213

فَلاَ تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِينَ

213. "So call you not upon another god with Allah, lest you will be one of the chastised (ones)."

Allah prohibits the Prophet (S) from polytheism so that we learn; else, the Prophet (S) never sought other than Allah, even for a moment.

The leaders of monotheism must themselves be the first monotheists; and whatever and whoever is besides Allah is not worthy of worshipping. Going towards anything other than Allah brings misery and chastisement in its sequel. It has been the cause of destruction of the former nations.

Then, in this verse, before anything else, Allah invites the prophet (S) to having a firm belief in-Monotheism, a monotheism that formed the root and basis of the call of all prophets.

It says:

"So call you not upon another god with Allah, lest you will be one of the chastised (ones)."

The Prophet of Islam (S) was certainly the herald of Monotheism and there was no deviation from this principle considered in him, yet the importance of this issue was so much that, at first He addresses him concerning this matter, in order that other persons settle their account. Besides that, improving others must begin by means of self-actualization and self-improvement.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 214-217

وَأَنذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الأَقْرَبِينَ

وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ

214. "And warn your nearest relations,"

215. "And lower your wing (be humble) to the believer who follow you."

216. "But if they disobey you, then say: 'Verily I am quit of what you do'!"

217. "And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful,"

In the school of revelation, all people are equal before the law of Allah, and the close people to the Prophet (p.b.u.) are also warned. This warning to the nearest ones strengthens the sense of accepting the truth in others.

Therefore, in this verse, Allah commands the Prophet (S) implicitly that he warns even his nearest relatives and frightens them from pplytheism and disobeying the command of Allah.

It says:

"And warn your nearest relations,"[22]

In order to start a vast revolutionary program, it is evident that it must begin with smaller and more condensed rings.

It was better for the Prophet (S) to begin his first call with his relations, who knew both his pure background more than others, and the love of his close relation with them required that they hearkened to his word more than

others, because they, comparing with others, were farther from jealousies, enmities, and taking an antagonistic position.

By the way, according to what has been recorded in the Islamic histories, in the third year of his embassy, the Prophet of Islam (S) was commissioned to convey this call, for until then the call was being achieved hiddenly and only a few persons had embraced Islam.

But when the above verse, and the verse saying:

"Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden and turn you away from the polytheists"[23]

were sent down, the Prophet (S) was commissioned to announce his call manifestly and to begin it first with his own nearest relations.[24]

The manner of this conveying and warning was briefly as follows:

The holy Prophet invited his close relations to Abutalib's house. On that day, they were forty persons, and among the Prophet's uncles only Abutalib, Hamzah, and Abu Lahab attended the meeting.

After having the food, when the Prophet (S) wanted to fulfil his duty and convey his call, Abu Lahab took the initiative and disturbed the situation by his sayings. So the Prophet (S) invited them again for food on the following day.

After having the food, he (S) said:

"O the children of 'Abdul-Muttalib! I do not know any young man among Arabs who has brought for his tribe something better than what I have brought for you. I have brought the goodness of this world and Hereafter for you, and Allah has ordered me to invite you to this religion. Which one of you will assist me in this affair so that he can be my brother and my successor?"

The crowd totally rejected save Ali (as) who was the youngest among them.

He stood up and said:

"O the messenger of Allah! I will be your assistant in this way."

The holy Prophet (S) touched Ali's neck and said:

"Verily this is my brother and my Heir and my Caliph! Hear him and obey him!"

The crowd stood up while they had a smile of mockery on their lips and they told Abutalib that he ordered him to obey the command of his son.

This tradition has also been narrated by many of the sunni scholars, including: 'Ibn-'Abi-Jarirah, 'Ibn-i-'Abi Hatam, 'Ibn- i-Murduwayh, 'Abu-Na'im, Beyhaghi, Tha'labi, and Tabari. Ibn-i-'Athir has mentioned this meaning in the second volume of the book 'Kamil, as well as Abul-Qada' in the first volume of his history book, and so on.

This tradition shows how alone the Prophet (S) had been on that day, and that they had no response to his call save mockery and ridicule, and that how Ali (as) was beside the Prophet (S) as his assistance and defender from the first days of the call of the Prophet (S).

In another holy tradition we read that the Prophet (S) called every one of the members of Quraysh one by one, and warned them of the Fire.

Sometimes he said:

"O the children of Ka'b! deliver your selves from the Fire!"

Sometimes he said this very thing to the tribes of Bani ‘Abd-ush-Shams, Bani ‘Abd-i-Manaf, Bani Hashim, and Bani ‘Abd-ul-Muttalib. He told them to rescue their selves from Fire because he was not able to defend them in the case of being blasphemous.[25]

Then, in the next verse, a vaster scope is referred to, when it recommends the Prophet (S) to have love and humility for the believers who follow him, and says:

“And lower your wing (be humble) to the believers who follow you.”

This beautiful Divine meaning metaphorically indicates having humiliation accompanied with love, affection and mercy.

As when the birds want to show affection to their chicken, they stretch their wings, lower them, and hold their chicken under their wings, so that they can be secure both from the probable harmful events and being protected from any separation, the holy Prophet (S) is also divinely commissioned to gather the true believers under his own protection.

This expressive statement refers to some different delicate points concerning having love and kindness unto the believers which can be made clear with a little attention.

By the way, mentioning this sentence next to the subject of warning indicates this fact that: if once warning and severity is emphasized for the training issues, next to it immediately love, affection and sympathy are emphasized, too, in order that a suitable result comes into being with the combination of them both.

Then, the fourth divine commandment is mentioned, where it says:

“But if they disobey you, then say: ‘Verily I am quit of what you do’!”

The apparent form of the verse shows that the pronoun ‘you’ in the Qur’anic phrase: /‘asauka/ (they disobey you) refers to the close kinsmen of the Prophet (S).

This means: if they did not submit to the truth after your invitation and continued their paganism and adversary, you might define your position against them. As it will be explained later, this predict of the Qur’an happened and all of them, except Ali (as), denied to accept the invitation of the Prophet (S).

Some of them were silent there, while some others made their opposition manifest by the way of mockery and ridicule.

At last, through the fifth divine commandment, in order to complete the former programs, the holy Prophet of Islam (S) is ordered:

“And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful,”

These oppositions should not discourage you and that yoar friends and followers are scantly, must not affect your firm decision. You are not alone; you rely on your Lord Who is Mighty and Merciful.

Your Lord is the same One Whose attributes, as Mighty and Merciful, were mentioned at the end of the life stories of the ancient prophets.

He is the same Lord Who by His might vanished the oppression of the Pharaohs, the pride of the people of Namrud, arrogance and egoistic manner of the people of Noah (a.s), mammonism of the people ‘Ad, and sexuality of the peopte of Lut, and delivered these great divine prophets as well as their believing followers, who were in minority, and bestowed Mercy upon them.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 218-220

الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ

وَتَقَلُّبَكَ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

218. “He Who sees you when you stand up (in prayer),”

219. “And your movements among those who prostrate themselves.”

220. “Verily He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.”

The purpose of the Prophet's standing up in this holy verse is either to stand for prayer or to stand for warning and preaching.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

“The purpose is to rise for the subject of prophethood.”

And the same Imam (as) also said:

“The purpose of the sentence:

‘And your movement among those who prostrate themselves’

is that Allah has been aware of your movement in the loins of your theistic ancestors.”[26]

However, by remembrance of His supervision, Allah, the Mighty, consoles His prophet, and says:

“He Who sees you when you stand up (in prayer),”

“And your movements among those who prostrate themselves.”

“Verily He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.”

Thus, besides attributing Allah by the qualities of ‘the Mighty, the Merciful’ in former verses, in these holy verses there have been mentioned three other qualities of Allah (s.w.t.), each of which is more encouraging and hope-giving than the other.

He is Allah Who sees the efforts and endeavours of the Prophet (S), and is aware of his rising, his prostration, ad his movement.

He is the Lord Who hears his voice, and Who is aware of his desires and needs. Yes, such a Lord must be relied on and trusted on for all affairs.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 221-223

هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَى مَن تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ

تَنَزَّلُ عَلَى كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ

يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ كَاذِبُونَ

221. “Shall I inform you on whom the Satans come down?”

222. “They come down on every lying sinful one,”

223. “They listen (eagerly to the Satans), and most of them are liars.”

Since the pagans considered the descent of revelation as the descent of the Satans upon the Prophet (S), Allah decisively announces that Satans come down on the lying sinful ones, not on the immaculate prophet.

Therefore, there are two kinds of descent: one is the descent of revelation by means of a trustworthy angel, the other is the descent of Satans on polluted persons.

So, this verse says:

“Shall I inform you on whom the Satans come down?”

"They come down on every lying sinful one,"

Whatever the Satans heard they inspired unto their friends added with many lies.

The verse says:

"They listen (eagerly to the Satans), and most of them are liars."

We should know that the origin of any sins is falsehood, and it is even more dangerous than them. Thus, the heart which makes lie is the place where Satan comes down.

The verse says:

"They come down on every lying sinful one,"

There has been cited in Majma'-ul-Bayan that the Satans eavesdrop from the angels and they inspire unto soothsayers and sorcerers. This circumstance existed before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S); but after that and at the present time if a Satan intends to eavesdrop, it will encounter a fiery meteor.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 224-227

وَالشُّعَرَاء يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ

وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لاَ يَفْعَلُونَ

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانتَصَرُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنقَلَبٍ يَنقَلِبُونَ

224. "And the poets, follow them the erring ones,"

225. "Do you not see that they wander about be wildered in every valley?"

226. "And that they say that which they do not do."

227. "Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah much, and defend themselves after being wronged; and soon those who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back."

The Arabic word /qawun/ is derived from /qayy/ which is antonym of the word/rušd/ (guidance, right way), as in another occurrence the Qur'an says:

"...Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error..."[27]

Since the pagans thought that the Qur'an was made by illusion and counted the holy Prophet as a poet, these verses condemn them by saying that the adherent of the poets are those who are misguided but the adherents of the Prophet of Islam (S) are not misguided. Poets are mainly aimless and do not act according to their sayings, while the Prophet (S) is not so.

The behaviour of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), which has a full agreement with his speech, is a sign that he is not a poet.

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) who, upon the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"And the poets, follow them the erring ones"

said:

"Those who have learnt jurisprudence for an aim other than religion, or they have not learnt it deeply, not only are aberrant but also lead others astray, and the tellers of (vain) stories are included in this reproach."

Since the name of the aimless poets has been mentioned beside the liars on whom Satans come down, perhaps there can be found a relation between Satan, liars, and aimless prating poets.

It is said in Tafsir-i-Baydawi that since the poems of the Age of Ignorance had mostly been about some imaginations beautiful women, making love with each other, vain boasts or ill-speaking and disdainful words against others' honour, these verses have been sent down.

The verse says:

"And the poets, follow them the erring ones,"

The difference between a wise man and a poet is in this fact that a wise man at first considers the meanings and then uses the words, but a poet at first considers the frame of the words then utters the meanings.[28]

A good poem, which supports the Truth, is counted in Islamic narrations better than Holy War with sword, and it is praised.[29]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Some statements, are like magic and some poems are wisdom."[30]

The holy Prophet (S) once told a faithful poet by the name of Hissan:

"Ruh-ul-Ghudus is with you."[31]

In one of his trips, the Prophet (S) called in Hissan and told him to make poetry. He began reciting poetry and the Prophet (S) was listening. He (S) ordered that there would be left a proper place for Hissan in the mosque.[32]

Imam Sadiq (as) once told his companions:

"Make your children acquaint with the poetry of 'Abdi, because he is a good and religious poet."[33]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever says a line of poem upon our legitimacy, Allah will give him a house in Heaven."[34]

Also Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Reciting poetry is hateful for the one who is fast and the one who is in pilgrim garment or is; in the sacred premises of Mecca, and also reciting poetry on Friday or the night before Friday is disliked."[35]

An Islamic narration indicates that as soon as the above verse (No. 224) was revealed, some of the Muslim poets worried for themselves and came to the Prophet (S).

He (S) said:

"A believer struggles with both his sword and his tongue."[36]

However, if poetry and art do not come beside and along the Faith, they can be a helpful means and a level path for the movement of the deluded ones.

Then, next to the abovementioned verse, the Qur'an adds:

"Do you not see that they wander about be wildered in every valley?"

They are drowned in their own imaginations and poetic similes. Even when rhyming drags them this side and that side, they are wandering about bewildered.

They do not often observe logic and reasoning, and their poems emerge out of their excitements; and these excitements and imaginary leaps send them to another field every time.

When they are content and pleased with someone, they elevate him very high by their praises, although the one deserves to be in the depth of the ground, or they introduce him as a beautiful angel, though he is a cursed Satan.[37]

And when they are offended from someone, they vilify and satirizf him so much that as if .they want to put him into the lowest of the low, though he is a pure and heavenly creature.

Does the exact content of the Qur'an have any similarity, with the mental designs of poets, especially with the poets of that environment who did not do anything save describing wine, the face of the love, and praising the intended tribes, or satirizing the enemies.

Moreover, poets are usually men of joy rather than being the strivers of battlefield, they are men of speech, not men of action.

So, in the next verse, it adds:

"And that they say that which they do not do."

But the Prophet of Islam (S) is thoroughly man of practice; even his enemies admired him for his firm decision, his wonderful steadfastness, and giving prominence to practical issues. How different is the Prophet of Islam (S) and a poet!

It is understood from the structure of the above Qur'anic sentences that the Qur'an has stated three qualities for this group of poets:

1) Their followers often are the misguided people who escape from facts by using their own imaginary examples and paradigms.

2) They are usually some aimless people and their doctrine changes very soon. They easily vary their way under the effect of excitements.

3) They say sayings that they do not act accordingly, even where they state a fact they do not perform it.

But none of these three qualities adapts the Prophet of Islam (S); he is just in an opposite situation.

Yet, in view of the fact that there are some pure and purposeful poets who do the truth they say and are callers to truthfulness and purity. (Though there were scarcely found of this kind of poets in that society), in order that the right of these faithful artists and truthful strivers would not be wasted, the Qur'an separates them from others with an exception it says:

"Except those who believe and do righteous deeds…"

Those poets whose aim is not merely saying poems, but in their poems they follow some godly and humane aims. The poets who do not dive only in their poetry and do not neglect Allah, but they remember Him much and their poetry reminds people of Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"...and remember Allah much..."

When such poets are unjustly treated with, they use their own intellectual intuition for defending both themselves and the believers.

The verse says:

"...and defend themselves after being wronged..."

If they satirize a group by their poems it is because they want to defend the truth for the stacks against their poems.

Thus, there have been stated here four qualities for the poets who have aims: having Faith, doing righteous deed, much remembrance of Allah, standing severely against oppressions and getting help from the power of poetry for repelling it.

Since most of the verses of this Surah contain consolation to both the Prophet (S) and the scanty believers of that day in the face of the enemies, and since many verses of this Surah have been revealed to defend the Prophet (S) against the enemies' undue accusations, the Surah has been concluded with an expressive and intimidatory sentence unto these obstinate enemies.

It says:

"...and soon those who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back."[38]

Some commentators have tried to introduce this 'retuning' exclusively to that very Fire of Hell, but there is no reason and evidence to limit it.

On the contrary, there may be said that the consecutive failures that they suffered in the battles of Badr and the like, and the weakness, disgrace and degradation they, finally had in this world, besides the failure in the Hereafter are included in the concept of this threat.

However, in the above verses we studied that one of the qualities of the good poets is that they remember Allah very much. Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"The purpose of /ŏikrun kaIr/'...remember Allah much...' is the four-hymns of Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) which includes: proclaim His greatness, praise, the ejaculation /la 'ilaha 'illallah/ and glorification of Allah.[39]

The same Imam (as) in another tradition says:

"One of the most grievous and the most important thing that Allah has enjoined people is the remembrance of Allah."

Then he (as) said:

"I do not mean you say /subhanallah-i-wal-hamdu lillah-i-wala'ilaha 'illallahu wallahu 'akbar/, though this is a part of it, but I mean remembrance of Allah when one encounters lawful and unlawful things. If it is the obedience of Allah one must do it, and if it is committing sin, one must leave it."[40]

Notes

1. It is clear that the objective of 'heart' here is the pure spirit and mind of the Prophet (S), not the heart in man's chest which causes the blood to circulate in the body. The application of this word here denotes that the Prophet (S) received the Qur'an by his soul and spirit and this great heavenly miracle has a base as his pure heart.
2. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar, Kitab-ul-Qur'an, by Saduq, Vol. 1, P. 46 and Bihar, Vol. 89, P. 17
3. Jami'-ul-'Akhbar, Vol. 1, P. 432
4. v
5. Bihar, Vol. 92, P. 114, New edition
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 176
7. Ibid, sermon 158
8. Ibid, sermon 156
9. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 42
10. Bihar, Vol. 89, P. 14

11. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 165
12. ’’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2
13. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 232
14. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 192
15. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 233
16. Bihar, Vol. 73, P. 289
17. Ibid
18. Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 121
19. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 3
20. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 9
21. For mere explanation about the Satans’ prohibition from eavesdropping, you can refer to Vol. One of Sirah Ibn-i-Husham. P. 317 on
22. The Arabic word /‘aširah/ originally is derived from /‘ašarah/ (ten), and since the figure, in its limit, is considered as a complete figure, the close relatives, by whom a person forms a complete group, is called /‘aširah/.
23. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 94
24. Sirah Ibn-i-Husham, Vol. 1, P. 280
25. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Vol. 7, P. 4859
26. Bihar, Vol. 15, P. 3, and the Commentaries of Safi, Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Burhan, the explanation about the verse.
27. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 256
28. A persian dictionary by Dehkhuda
29. The commentary of Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq
30. Tafsir-ul-Munir
31. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq
32. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Ma‘ali
33. Tafsir-i-Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq
34. Bihar, Vol. 79, P. 291
35. Wasa’il, Vol. 7, P. 121
36. Tafsir Mawahib-ul-‘Alliyyah
37. Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq, the Commentary
38. A tradition indicates when the holy head of Imam Hussayn (as) was on the top of spear it recited this part of the verse. Imam Sadiq (as) said:
“The clear example of injustice is the injustice upon the progeny of Muhammad (S).
(The commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn)
39. Tafsir-us-Safi
40. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, P. 484, and Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, Vol. 5, P. 415

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 13

From Surah an-Naml (27) to Surah al- ‘Ankabut (29) verse 44

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur’an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *“An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an”* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 8
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 9
What is a 'Commentary'? 10
The Current Commentary 11
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 12
The Problems in Translating 12
Translators Note 13
Editor's Note 14
Notes 16
Acknowledgment 17
Notes 17
References 18
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 18
English Translations of Qur'an 18
Supporting Technical References 19
Phraseological and Philological Sources 19
A Presentation to Muslims 21
Notes 22
Surah An-Naml, Chapter 27 23
(The Ant) 23
No. 27 (Revealed at Mecca) 23
93 Verses in 7 Sections 23
The Feature of the Surah 23
The Virtue of the Surah 23
Note 23
Section 1: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship 24
Surah An-Naml - Verses 1-3 24
Surah An-Naml - Verses 4-5 25
Some Traditions Upon Losers 27
Surah An-Naml - Verse 6 27
Note 28
Surah An-Naml - Verses 7-9 29
Surah An-Naml - Verses 10-11 31
Surah An-Naml - Verses 12-13 33
Surah An-Naml - Verse 14 34
Notes 36
Section 2: Solomon Inherits From David 37
Surah An-Naml - Verse 15 37
Surah An-Naml - Verse 16 39
Some Points 41
1- The Relation Between Religion and Politics 41
2- The Divine Government and its Means 42
3- The Birds' Speech 42
4- The Explanation of a Tradition 43
Surah An-Naml - Verse 17 47
Surah An-Naml - Verse 18 48
Surah An-Naml - Verse 19 49

Surah An-Naml - Verses 20-22 50
Surah An-Naml - Verse 23-24 52
Surah An-Naml - Verses 25-26 53
Surah An-Naml - Verses 29-31 56
Notes 57
Section 3: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba 59
Surah An-Naml - Verses 32-33 59
Surah An-Naml - Verse 34 59
Surah An-Naml - Verse 35 60
Some Points On Letter Writing 61
Surah An-Naml - Verses 36-37 61
Some Points 63
Surah An-Naml - Verses 38-39 64
Surah An-Naml - Verse 40 65
Some Points 66
Surah An-Naml - Verse 41 69
Surah An-Naml - Verses 42-43 70
Surah An-Naml - Verse 44 71
Notes 73
Section 4: Saleh and Lot 75
Surah An-Naml - Verses 45-46 75
Surah An-Naml - Verse 47 76
Some Traditions Upon Bad Omen 78
Surah An-Naml - Verse 48 78
Surah An-Naml - Verse 49 78
Surah An-Naml - Verses 50-51 79
Surah An-Naml - Verses 52-53 80
Surah An-Naml - Verses 54-55 81
The End of Part 19 82
Surah An-Naml - Verse 56 83
Surah An-Naml - Verses 57-58 83
Notes 85
Section 5: Allah's Chosen Servants 86
Surah An-Naml - Verse 59 86
Surah An-Naml - Verse 60 86
Surah An-Naml - Verses 61-62 87
Surah An-Naml - Verse 63 90
Surah An-Naml - Verse 64 91
Surah An-Naml - Verses 65-66 92
Notes 94
Section 6: The Resurrection, Sure Everyone Shall Be Resurrected ... 95
Surah An-Naml - Verses 67-68 95
Surah An-Naml - Verses 69-70 95
Surah An-Naml - Verses 71-74 96
Surah An-Naml - Verse 75 98
Surah An-Naml - Verses 76-77 99
Surah An-Naml - Verses 78-79 100
Surah An-Naml - Verses 80-81 101

Surah An-Naml - Verse 82 104
Notes 107
Section 7: The Coming of the Day of Judgment 109
Surah An-Naml - Verses 83-84 109
A Few Traditions as Examples 112
Surah An-Naml - Verse 85 113
Surah An-Naml - Verse 86 113
Surah An-Naml - Verse 87 115
Surah An-Naml - Verse 88 116
Surah An-Naml - Verses 89-90 118
Surah An-Naml - Verse 91 120
Surah An-Naml - Verse 92 120
Surah An-Naml - Verse 93 121
Notes 122
Surah Al-Qasas, Chapter 28 124
(The Narratives) 124
No. 28 (Revealed at Mecca) 124
88 Verses in 9 Sections 124
The Virtue of Recitation of Surah Al-Qasas 124
Notes 124
Section 1: The Narrative of Moses 125
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 1-3 125
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 4 126
What Did He Want to Do By This Action of His? 128
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 5-6 129
Who The Oppressed and Oppressors Are 133
The General Style of All Oppressors 134
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 7 135
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 8 137
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 9 138
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 10-11 140
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 12 141
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 13 143
Notes 144
Section 2: Moses Saved By Allah From Being Murdered 146
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 14 146
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 15 146
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 16 148
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 17 149
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 18 152
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 19 152
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 20-21 153
Notes 154
Section 3: Moses Weds Laban's Daughter 156
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 22 156
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 23-24 156
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 25 158
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 26 160

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 27 160
Some Points 161
The Importance of Marriage 165
Choosing a Spouse 166
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 28 167
Notes 167
Section 4: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship 169
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 29 169
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 30 170
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 31 171
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 32-33 172
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 34-35 173
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 36 174
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 37 175
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 38 176
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 39 178
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 40 178
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 41-42 179
Notes 181
Section 5: Moses' Mission Referred to 182
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 43 182
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 44 182
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 45 183
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 46 184
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 47 185
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 48 186
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 49 186
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 50 187
Notes 188
Section 6: Guidance From Allah Had Been Continuous 189
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 51 189
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 52 189
Occasion of Revelation 189
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 53-54 190
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 55 191
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 56 192
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 57 195
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 58 195
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 59 196
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 60 197
Notes 198
Section 7: Unity of Allah 199
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 61 199
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 62-64 200
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 65-67 201
Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 68-70 203
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 71 204
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 72 205

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 73 206
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 74 206
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 75 207
Notes 208
Section 8: Korah's (Qarun) Ruin 209
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 76 209
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 77 210
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 78 212
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 79 215
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 80 216
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 81 217
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 82 219
Some points 220
Notes 222
Section 9: The Apostle (Muhammad) 223
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 83 223
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 84 224
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 85 225
The Occasion of Revelation 225
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 86 228
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 87 229
Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 88 230
Notes 233
Surah Al-'Ankabut, Chapter 29 234
(The Spider) 234
No. 29 (Revealed at Mecca) 234
69 Verses in 7 Sections 234
The Feature of Surah 234
The Virtue of Surah 'Ankabut 234
Section 1: Every Soul Shall Be Tried 235
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 1-3 235
The Occasion of Revelation 235
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 4-5 238
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 6 239
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 7 240
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 8 240
The Occasion of Revelation 241
Some Other Traditions 243
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 9 243
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 10 244
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 11 245
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 12 246
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 13 246
Notes 249
Section 2: Noah and Abraham's Mission 250
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 14-15 250
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 16 251
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 17 252

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 18 253
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 19 254
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 20 254
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verses 21-22 256
Notes 257
Section 3: Abraham and Lot 258
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 23 258
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 24 258
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 25 259
How was the choice of idols as the cause of love between the idolaters? 260
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 26 261
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 27 262
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verses 28-30 263
Some Traditions Upon Sodomy and its Punishment 266
Notes 266
Section 4: The Mission of Abraham, Lot, Shu‘ayb and Moses 268
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 31 268
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 32 268
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 33 270
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verses 34-35 271
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 36 272
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 37 273
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 38 274
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 39 275
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 40 276
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 41 277
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verses 42-43 279
Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 44 280
Notes 281
The End of Part (Juz') 20 282

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِ الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولو الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah An-Naml, Chapter 27

(The Ant)

No. 27 (Revealed at Mecca)

93 Verses in 7 Sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah contains 93 verses, and due to verse No. 18, which is about ants and Solomon (as), it is called An-Naml (The Ant); but it is also called Sulayman, and Ta, Seen.

The whole verses of this Surah were revealed in connection with different events and occasions, and the holy phrase: /bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ is repeated two times in it, one of them is at the beginning of the Surah and the other one is in verse No. 30 at the onset of Solomon's letter to Sheba, the Queen.

The struggles of four Divine prophets (Moses, Solomon, Salih, Lut) against different tribes of their times have been referred to in this Surah, the most detailed of them is that of Solomon which resulted to Sheba's faith in Monotheism.

Another portion of the verses of this holy Surah is about Solomon's speaking with the birds, such as hoopoe and some insects like ants, and the attendance of some jinns in the army and court of Solomon, and, finally, bringing the throne of Sheba from Yemen to Syria in a short moment.

The Virtue of the Surah

A tradition stated by Imam Sadiq (as) announces:

"Whoever recites the triple suras which begin with Ta Seen (Surah Ash-Shu'ara, An-Naml, and Qasas) in the night before Friday, he will be one of the friends of Allah and he will be nigh to Him and he will be involved in His Grace and support."

(If he fulfils his religions duties sincerely.)[1]

Note

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 74

Section 1: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship

Surah An-Naml - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

طس تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْقُرْءَانِ وَكِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

هُدي وَبُشْرَي لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُم بِالاَخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Ta, Seen. These are the verses of the Qur'an and the Book (that makes things) manifest,"

2. "A guidance and glad tidings for the believers,"

3. "Those who establish prayer and give Zakat (the poor-rate), and of the Hereafter, they are sure."

The Arabic word /mubin/ is derived from /'ibanah/ which is both intransitive and transitive and means 'clear' and 'to make clear' both.

One of Allah's way of treatment is that He lets revelation, with its superiority and high rank, available for human beings.

The Qur'anic word /zakat/ contains two main meanings; one of them is the proper meaning which is known 'as poor-rate', and the other is the general meaning which is 'helping the needy' in any form and manner it may be.

In this holy verse, the latter one is meant, because this Surah had been sent down in Medina, where the formal order of Zakat (alms) was issued.

However, at the beginning of the Surah we encounter the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an, and regarding to the fact that immediately next to that the magnificence of the Qur'an is referred to, it seems that one of its secrets is that this great Book and its clear verses are formed by the simple alphabetic letters.

It requires that such a Creator, Who has brought such a beautiful sacred relic into being out of such simple items, be praised. We have, of course, discussed in detail in this field at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, and Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7.

Next to the abbreviated letters: (Ta, Seen.), the verse continues, saying:

"…These are the verses of the Qur'an and the Book (that makes things) manifest,"

The application of the word /tilka/ in this verse is for stating the greatness of these heavenly verses; and the Qur'anic word /mubin/ used for the Qur'an, is an emphasis indicating that the Qur'an is both clear and makes the facts clear.

Some of the commentators have said that probably the words 'Qur'an' and 'Kitabin Mubin' (The Book Manifest) refer to two separate things and the latter indicates to /lauh-i-mahfuz/ (Protected Tablet), but the apparent of the verse shows that both of them speak of one thing: one of them in the form of utterances and recitation, and the other in the form of a 'written Book'.

In the second noble verse, there have been stated two other qualities for the Qur'an. It is the Holy Qur'an which causes 'guidance', and the means of good tidings for the believers.

It says:

"A guidance and glad tidings for the believers,"

"Those who establish prayer and give Zakat (the poor-rate), and of the Hereafter, they are sure."

Thus, their belief in both origin and resurrection is firm, and their link with Allah and His servants is strong. Therefore, the above qualities point to both their complete faith and their practical inclusive program.

There may arise a question here that if these believers have chosen a straight path from the point of basic doctrines and practice both, why is it necessary that the Qur'an comes for their guidance? Regarding to the fact that guidance consists of different stages, each of which is a preparation for the higher stage and higher stages, the answer of this question is made clear.

Moreover, the continuation of this guidance is itself an important matter.

It is the same thing that, by saying:

"Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path"

in our all daily prayers, we ask Allah that He makes us fix in this way and He continues it, because without His grace this continuation is impossible.

Besides that, taking the advantages of the verses of 'the Qur'an' and 'the Book manifest' is possible only for those who carry the soul of 'seeking the truth' in them, though they have not obtained the complete guidance yet.

If we see that, in one occurrence, the Qur'an has been introduced as the origin of the piety of the pious ones,[1] and in another one as the source of guidance for the Muslims[2], and here it is as the cause of guidance for the 'believers', one of its reasons is that a person will not go after the reality unless, at least, a stage of piety, submission, and belief in realities exists in his heart, and a disbeliever does not enjoy the light of this 'manifest Book' because the eligibility of place is also conditioned.

Besides all of these, the combination of 'guidance' and 'glad tidings' is possible only for 'the believers' and such a 'glad tidings' is not available for others.

This makes it clear that if in some verses of the Qur'an guidance has vastly and expansively been defined for all people, like Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 185 which says:

"…a guidance for mankind in",

its purpose is all those who have an appropriate ground in them for accepting the Truth, else, the arrogant, obstinate, and fanatic persons are some blind hearted ones that if, instead of one sun, thousand suns shine on them, they get the least advantage of them.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 4-5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ هُمُ الأَخْسَرُونَ

4. "Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming unto them, so they wander bewildered."

5. "These are those for whom shall be a grievous chastisement, and in the Hereafter they shall be the greatest losers."

These holy verses refer to the states of those who are not believers.

One of their most dangerous states is mentioned as follows:

"Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming unto them, so they wander bewildered."

In the view of such people, pollution is purity, indecency is beautiful, meanness is honour, and wretchedness and misery are considered happiness and victory by them.

Yes, such is the condition of those who go astray and persist on it. It is evident that when a person commits an ugly and wrong action, gradually its ugliness decreases in his view and he will fall into the habit of it. When he is accustomed to it, he brings forth some justifications for it.

Later that evil thing may appear as a beautiful thing, or even as a duty, in his view. There are many felonious and polluted persons who are really proud of their deeds and consider them as a positive fact.

This change in values, and the confusion of the criterions in one's view, the result of which is being bewildered and misguided in life, is the worst state that a person may receive.

It is interesting that this ornamentation of deeds has been attributed to Allah, and this is because He is the cause of all causes in the world of existence, and the effect of any thing relates to Allah.

Yes, Allah has put this peculiarity in the repetition of action, that one gradually falls into habit of it and his sense of discrimination varies, while his responsibility does not disappear, nor can it be counted as a rejection and deficiency for the Lord. (Be careful)

Then the Qur'an refers to the consequence of those evil deeds that are made fair-seening to them, and states the fate of such persons as follows:

"These are those for whom shall be a grievous chastisement…"

In this world, they will be hopeless and bewildered, and in the Hereafter they will encounter a terrible chastisement.

The verse continues saying:

"…and in the Hereafter they shall be the greatest losers."

The reason of that they are 'the greatest losers' is the same thing that is mentioned in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verses 103 and 104 which announce:

"Say: 'Shall We inform you of the greates losers in (their) deeds?"

"Those whose effort is lost in this world's life, while they think that they are working good deeds."

What a loss is greater than this that one considers his ugly deeds beautiful and does his best to commit them thinking that he is doing a positive task, but at the end he sees he has provided naught for him but misery and wretchedness.

By the way, the losers are of different groups:

1- 'Khasir'.

The one whose whole life and capitals are ruined:

"…Say: 'The losers surely are those who shall have lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection…"[3]

2- 'In Loss'.

The one who is not a true believer and does not do righteous deeds:

"By Time."

"Surely man is in loss,"

"Save those who believe and do good deeds…"[4]

3- 'Clear Loss'.

The one who worships Allah not earnestly:

"…so that if such a one who worships Allah only by tongue, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face; he loses this world and (also) the Hereafter; that is indeed the manifest loss."[5]

4- 'The Utmost Losers'.

Those who are deviated and think that they are on the right path:

"Those whose effort is lost in this world's life, while they think that they are working good deeds."[6]

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the losers are those who: do not pay alms (Zakat), persist on committing sins, and have the power of saying the right but they do not say it. These are the most unjust ones, because they want to improve their worldly life by spoiling the religion.

Some Traditions Upon Losers

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The loser is one whose yearning is for other than Allah."[7]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"A loser is he who neglects improving the affairs of (his) Resurrection."[8]

3. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"He who has reckoned his own self has gained, and he who has neglected it has lost."[9]

4. The same Imam (as) said:

"How much a loser is he who has no (good) share in Hereafter!"[10]

5. Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"The utmost loser among people is he who has ability of saying the Truth, but he does not say."[11]

6. Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) wrote a letter to Masqalat-ibn-Hubarat-ish-Shaybani, who was the Governor of Ardeshir Khurrah (Iran) from his side (as), as follows:

"I have come to know concerning you a matter which if you have done it you have displeased your Allah and disobeyed your Imam.

You are distributing among the Arabs (Bedouins) of your kin who tend towards you the property of the Muslims which they collected by dint of their spears and horses and on which their blood was shed. … and do not reform your world by ruining your religion, since then you will be among losers by the way of (your) deeds…"[12]

Surah An-Naml - Verse 6

وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّي الْقُرْءَانَ مِن لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ

6. "And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-Knowing."

The knowledge of the holy Prophet (S) is a divine and intuitive knowledge.

The receiver of the Divine revelation is the Messenger of Allah (S) and Qur'an is the sign of the knowledge and wisdom of Allah.

In the verse under discussion, as a complementary to the former explanations about the greatness of the content of the Qur'an, and a preparation for the stories of the prophets, which immediately begins after it, the Qur'an says:

"And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-Knowing."

The Qur'anic words /hakim/ and /'alim/ both refer to the awareness of Allah, but the word /hikmat/ (wisdom) usually states the practical aspects, while /'ilm/ (knowledge) points to the theoretical aspects.

In other words, the Qur'anic word /'alim/ refers to the infinite knowledge of Allah, and the application of the word /hakim/ informs of the view, order, and aim of creation of this world, as well as sending down the Qur'an.

Such Qur'an, which has been sent down from the side of such Lord, should be a manifest Book, makes things clear, works as a guidance and glad tidings for the believers, and its stories should be free from any superstition and distortion.

Note

The important true problem in man's life is that he must comprehend the facts as they really are and have an explicit proper position before them.

Imagination, predictions, wrong desires, and false likes and dislikes must not hinder man to see and understand the realities in their true form. So the most important definition which has been introduced for philosophy is: 'perceiving the facts of things as they are'.

That was why that one of the most important things that the immaculate ones used to ask for from Allah was that they said:

"O Allah! Show me (the facts of) the things as they are, (so that I can recognize the values of different things and treat them rightly."

This circumstance is not possible without having Faith, because restive low desires and egocentric wishes are the greatest barriers of this way, and removing the hinders is not possible save with piety and controlling the sensual desires.

It is for this reason that in these noble verses we recite:

"Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming unto them, so they wander bewildered."[13]

We can see the actual and manifest example of this meaning clearly in the life of a group of mammonists of our time. They are proud of some things, and consider them as a part of civilization that, indeed, are nothing but shame, pollution, and disgrace.

- They think of libertinism as a sign of freedom.
- They know the nakedness and indecency of women as a reason for civilization.
- They take part in the competition of luxury as a sign of 'personality'.

- Being polluted in kinds of corruptions is the epiphany of liberty for them.

-They consider murder, crime, and destruction as the evidence of power.

- They count destruction and usurpation of others' capitals, as they call, reestablishing those properties.

- They use the common communication means along side of the worst anti-ethical programs and call it as a reason for 'respecting the people's demand'.

- They tread on the rights of the deprived as a sign of 'honouring the human's rights'.

- They call captivity in the grips of addictions, lusts, disgraces, and indecencies 'a kind of liberty'.

- In their view, treachery, dishonesty, and gaining wealth, in any way that it can be, are considered as a reason for their talent and competency.

- In their culture, observing the principles of justice and respecting others' rights is the sign of inefficiency and lack of competency, while falsehood, perjury, hypocrisy, and deceit are the sign of policy.

Shortly speaking, their evil and shameful deeds seem so fair to them that not only they do not feel shame of them but also they boast for them. It is evident, then, that how the feature of such a society will be and what direction is the path which will end to it!

Surah An-Naml - Verses 7-9

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسي لاَهْلِهِ إِنّـِي ءَانَسْتُ نَاراً سَاَتِيكُم مّـِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ ءَاتِيكُم بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهَا نُودِيَ أَن بُورِكَ مَن فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

يَا مُوسَي إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

7. "(Remember) When Moses said unto his family: 'Verily I perceive a fire; soon will I bring you news of it, or I will bring you a flaming brand, that you warm yourselves."

8. "So when he came to it, a voice was heard: 'Blessed is whoever is in the fire and whoever is about it, and Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World."

9. "O' Moses! Verily, I am Allah, The Mighty, The Wise;"

The word 'Moses' has been mentioned in the Qur'an for 136 times and his story has been told in 24 suras. Thus, the explanation concerning the children of Israel is studied in about 900 verses of the Qur'an.

Moses accompanied with his wife who was pregnant, and they were going from Madyan towards Egypt. On one side, the darkness of the night in the cold stormy weather of the desert, and, on the other side, the childbirth of his wife, forced Moses to search. The verses under discussion are about this event.

Here it points to the most sensitive moments of Moses' life, that is when the first light of revelation enlightened his heart and he was acquainted with the message and the speech of Allah.

The verse says:

"(Remember) When Moses said unto his family: 'Verily I perceive a fire…"

"…soon will I bring you news of it, or I will bring you a flaming brand, that you warm yourselves."

This event happened by the same night when Moses was in a dark desert on the way toward Egypt, accompanied with his wife, Shu'ayb's daughter, and he lost the way. Then a terrible storm began to blow and at the same time his wife felt the pains of childbirth. Moses thought he severely needed to make a fire in order to use its warmth, but there was nothing in that desert for it.

As soon as he saw the light of a flame from distance, he became happy and took it as a sign of the existence of someone or some ones there. He told them that he would go and bring them either some news from it, or a burning firebrand so that they might warm themselves by it.

It is noteworthy that Moses says he brings 'them' news or a flaming band, (the pronoun of which plural). This may show that there had been a child or children with him too, because his marriage bad happened in Madyan ten years before that. Or it may be for the sake that, in that horrible desert, that idea could give some further calmness to his addressees.

In the next verse, the Qur'an indicates that Moses left his family there, and moved toward the place where he had seen a fire.

When he reached the fire he heard a voice, as the verse says:

"So when he came to it, a voice was heard: 'Blessed is whoever is in the fire and whoever is about it, and Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World."

The commentators of the Qur'an have delivered different ideas concerning who might be the person mentioned in the phrases:

"Whoever is in the fire"

and

"whoever is about it".

What seems more probable is that, the objective of 'the one in the fire' is Moses who was so close to the fire found inside the green tree that as if he were inside the tree; and the objective of 'the one about it' is the near-stationed angels of Allah who, at that particular moment, had surrounded that sacred land.

Or, on the contrary, the objective of those in the fire, is the Divine angels, and the objective of 'the one about it' is Moses (as).

However, some Islamic narrations indicate that when Moses (as) approached the fire, he stopped and watched it carefully. He saw that from the inside of a green branch of the tree a flaming brand was shining. Every moment the flame was becoming brighter and brighter and the tree was growing more green and more beautiful.

Neither the heat of the fire was to burn the tree, nor the moist of the tree caused the fire to die. He wondered. He bowed to take some fire with the small piece of wood he had in his hand, but the fire came toward him.

He terrified and went back. Sometimes he tried to go toward the fire and sometimes the fire itself came toward him. Suddenly a voice was heard, giving him the glad tidings of revelation.

The purpose is that Moses approached the fire so nigh that he was proportionate to the phrase

'whoever is in the fire'.

The third commentary which has been stated upon this phrase is that the purpose of

"whoever is in the fire"

is the Light of Allah which was shown by the burning firebrand; and the purpose of the phrase

"whoever is about it"

is Moses who was nigh to it.

However, in order that there would not appear here any misconception concerning materiality of Allah, at the end of the verse, the sentence:

"Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World"

makes it clear that He is free from any defect, deficiency, materiality and material accidents.

Again a voice was heard which addressed Moses, saying:

"O' Moses! Verily, I am Allah, The Mighty, The Wise;"

This sentence was for the sake that no doubt might remain in Moses' mind and he would know that it was the Lord of the Worlds Who was speaking with him, not the flaming brand, nor the tree, the Lord Who does not fail, Who is 'Mighty' and Who is the Possessor of Wisdom and Device.

This meaning, in fact, is a premise for the statement of the miracle which will be referred to in the next holy verse, since miracle originates from two attributes of Allah: 'Power' and 'Wisdom'. However, before discussing about the next verse, this question arises here that how did Moses understand and was assured that this voice was Allah's, not other than that?

In answer to this question, it can be said that this voice, being accompanied with a clear miracle, viz., glittering a fire from inside the branch of a green tree, was a manifest reason that it was a Divine matter.

Moreover, as we will find out by the next verse, after this voice Moses was ordered a command which contained the miracles of 'Rod and white hand', and these two miracles were two other evidences for the reality of this voice.

Besides all of these things, principally, the Divine voice must have a particular quality which makes it separate from any other voice, and when one hears it, it affects on his heart so deeply that he never doubts that it is the voice of Allah.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 10-11

وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَلَّىٰ مُدْبِراً وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لاَ تَخَفْ إِنِّي
لاَ يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ
إِلاَّ مَن ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْناً بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

10. "'And cast down your staff!' So when he saw it moving as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not return. (It was told him:) 'O' Moses! Fear not; surely the messengers shall not fear in My presence;"

11. "Save he who has been unjust, then he does good instead after evil, for verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful;"

In view of the fact that the mission of prophethood, especially before a cruel and unjust one like Pharaoh, needed the outward and inward power and might as well as a firm proof of legitimacy, here Moses was commanded to throw down his Rod to show it.

The verse says:

"'And cast down your staff!'…"

Moses (as) Threw down his Rod and suddenly it changed into a serpent.

The verse continues saying:

"…So when he saw it moving as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not return…"

This is also probable that, at the beginning, the staff changed into a small snake and, in later stages, it became a great serpent. Here, Moses was again addressed and he was told not to be afraid.

It says:

"…(It was told him:) 'O' Moses! Fear not; surely the messengers shall not fear in My presence;"

Moses should be aware that here is the position of nearness and Allah's secure sanctuary, the Mighty, the High; this rank is a place where there is not any fear or terror. That is, O' Moses! You are at the presence of Allah, the Most High, and His presence is with absolute security.

A similar meaning to this one is recited in Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 31 which says:

"…O' Moses! Come you forward and fear you not; for surely you are in security."

Through next verse the Qur'an has stated an exception for the holy phrase:

"…surely the messengers shall fear not in My presence"

when it says:

"Save he who has been unjust, then he does good instead after evil, for verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful;"

Allah accepts the penitence of those who repent and He gives them security, too.

Concerning the circumstance of this exception the Late Tabarsy, the writer of Majma'-ul-Bayan, says:

"But those people, except the prophets, who have done wrong and then repent remorsefully and decide not to return again, should know that He is the Forgiving, the Acceptor of repentance."

The reason why the prophets have been mentioned as an exception is that they never commit any wrong and, because of the rank of infallibility, they are far from any sins and evils.

Therefore, there they are not inside the exception, and prophets are like others only in the principle of doing duties. This kind of exception has also been referred to by Qurtabi in his commentary, Vol. 4, P. 8.

The author of Jawami'-ul-Jami', the commentary, Vol. 4, P. 450 concerning the meaning of this sentence says as follows:

"Whoever, except the prophets, does injustice, then he is remorseful of his ugly deeds and repents and decides not to repeat them any more, surely Allah will forgive his injustice and He is merciful to him."

Some other great commentators have said that there is not any retrenched matter in this verse and the fact is that those, other than the prophets, are not secured. Then there is an exception where it implicitly says: save those who, after their fault and sins, repent and improve, and such ones will be in the Divine security, too.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 12-13

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ ءَايَاتٍ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْماً فَاسِقِينَ

فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ ءَايَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

12. "And put your hand in your bosom, and it will come forth white (shining) without harm, (this miracle is) among the nine signs to Pharaoh and his people; verily they are a transgressing people."

13. "So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: 'This is a manifest sorcery'."

These nine signs or miracles are the miracles that Moses (as) brought before Pharaoh, else he (as) had some other miracles, too.

By the way his every miracle can be counted two miracles, because when his Rod became a serpent, it was one miracle, and when the serpent changed back into Rod, it was another miracle, but the Qur'an has considered one side of it a miracle.

Moses' nine miracles are as follows:

1- The white hand (or the shining of the hand of Moses).

2- Conversion of the Rod into a giant serpent.

3- The violent storm for the enemy.

4- Locust (which dominated their farms and their trees)

5- One plant-pest agent which exterminated cereals, called in Arabic /qummal/.

6. The forges which emerged from the Nile River and made people's lives miserable and full of difficulties.

7. Nose-bleeding or 'blood' which signifies the universal counteraction of nose bleeding or the turning of the Nile into the colour blood[14]

8. Famine and draught[15]

9. The splitting of the sea[16]

Other miracles of Moses (as) are: the gushing of 12 springs from stone[17], the descending of /mann/ and /salwa/[18]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The purpose of /min qayri su'/ (without harm) it that this whiteness of the hand was not because of sickness of leprosy.[19]

Anyhow, the second miracle of Moses (as) was given to him, as the verse says:

"And put your hand in your bosom, and it will come forth white (shining) without harm…"

This whiteness of hand which is an interesting shining and luminosity, and not as the result of leprosy, itself denotes to the existence of a miracle and an extraordinary event.

In order to grant some more grace to Moses and give further possibility to deviated persons to be guided, the Qur'an, implicitly says to Moses (as) that his miracles are not limited to these two ones, but:

"…(this miracle is) among the nine signs to Pharaoh and his people; verily they are a transgressing people."

You are sent to Pharaoh and his people equipped with these nine miracles, as well as other great ones, because they are a transgressing people and they need guidance.

From the apparent of this verse, it is understood that these two miracles have been among nine known miracles of Moses (as).

In commenting on Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 101 it was concluded before that there are seven other miracles for Moses, five of which are: storm, plant-pests, locusts, forges, and turning of the Nile water into the colour of blood.

When each of these events came to Pharaohs as a warning and they encountered with some difficulty, they used to come to Moses and asked him to remove the pest.

There were two more miracles: draught and scanty of fruits, which are mentioned in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 130.

It says:

"And certainly We afflicted the clan of Pharaoh with draught and scanty of fruits, so that they may take admonition."

At last, Moses was equipped with the strongest weapon of miracle and went towards Pharaoh and his people. He invited them to the religion of truth.

The Qur'an says:

"So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: 'This is a manifest sorcery'."

We know that this accusation was not charged only on Moses (as) but, in order to adjust their oppositions against prophets, and in order that they produce a barrier in the way of others, the arrogant fanatic people brought forth the accusation of sorcery for the prophets which itself is a clear sign for the greatness of their extraordinary work.

It is in the case that we know that prophets are some pure, pious and truth-seeking men, while sorcerers are some deviated and corrupted persons and are qualified with all qualities that a deceitful one may have.

Moreover, sorcerers had always been able to do some limited affairs, but prophets, whose customs and the content of their godly invitations made their legitimacy manifest, had no similarity to sorcerers.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 14

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَآ أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْماً وَعُلُوّاً فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

14. "And they denied them unjustly and proudly though their hearts acknowledged them; consider, then how was the end of the mischief-makers."

There are different sorts of infidelity and denial:

1- Disbelief may be as a result of following the fathers and customs and carnal desires. Most of disbelievers are of this kind.

2- Disbelief can be because of mere ignorance and conjectures:

"…but only fancies and mere conjectures."[20]

3- Disbelief may be hidden by hypocrisy for the one who is apparently Muslim but inwardly he is a disbeliever.

4- Disbelief may emerge out of apostasy. When a person turns back from Islam, or denies some principles of the religion, such as Hajj, prayer, Zakat, and other main ordinances of the religion, or produces an innovation in the religion, he is a disbeliever.

5- Disbelief of the denial kind can come into being for the person who heartily is assured in the legitimacy of the truth, but denies it arrogantly and because of enmity. The verse under discussion states this kind of disbelief.

So it indicates that those accusations that they brought against Moses (as) were not for the sake that they were really in doubt, but they denied the miracles unjustly and because of self-superiority.

The Qur'an says:

"And they denied them unjustly and proudly though their hearts acknowledged them…"

It is understood from this sentence that Faith has a reality besides knowledge and certainly, and blasphemy may exist because of denial and negation while there is knowledge and awareness.

In other words, the reality of the correct Faith is an 'outward and inward submission' before the truth. Thus, if a person is certain of something but he does not surrender to it inwardly or outwardly, he has not faith, but he is a disbeliever of the denial kind. This is a vast matter that now we suffice only to this short explanation here.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition, explaining five kinds of disbelief, counts one of them this kind of disbelief and that one of its branches is 'denial', and he said:

"That is something that one denies while he knows that it is surely the truth which has been proved with him",

then he recited this verse.[21]

It is interesting that the Qur'an considers the motivation of the denial of the people of Pharaoh in two things: injustice and pride.

Their 'injustice' may refer to usurpation of others' rights, and their pride refers to their self-superiority over the Children of Israel.

It means that they saw if they surrendered to the signs and miracles of Moses, they both would find their unlawful interests in danger and that they would stand in the same row with their slaves, the Children of Israel, and none of them were tolerable for them.

Or the purpose of the Qur'anic word 'unjustly' is the injustice they did to themselves or to the Divine verses, and, the purpose of the word 'proudly' is oppression over others, as Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 9 says:

"…for they used to be unjust unto Our Signs."

However, at the end of this verse, as a lesson and gazing-stock, with a short and very expressive sentence, the Qur'an points to the evil end of the people of Pharaoh that they were drowned and destructed, where it says:

"…consider, then how was the end of the mischief-makers."

The Qur'an does not uncover the matter here, because they had read the painful story of this disbelieving people in other verses of the Qur'an and by this short sentence they may understand what they must understand.

By the way, from among their ugly qualities entirely, the Qur'an has emphasized on 'making mischief' which has a comprehensive concept. It includes both mischief in belief, speech and action, and mischief in individual and society. In fact, all their evil deeds are gathered in the word 'mischief'.

Notes

1. Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2
2. An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 102
3. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 15
4. Surah Al-'Asr, No. 103, verses 1-3
5. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22 verse 11
6. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 104
7. Madinat-ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2, P. 492
8. Madinat-ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2 , P. 492
9. Qisar-ul-Hikam, No. 208, Al-Mu'jam
10. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, P. 746
11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 195
12. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Letter No. 43
13. Current Surah, verse No. 4
14. Al-'A'raf, 133
15. Al-'A'raf, 130
16. Al-Baqarah, 50
17. Al-Baqarah, 60
18. explained under Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 57
19. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
20. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 78
21. Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 287

Section 2: Solomon Inherits From David

Surah An-Naml - Verse 15

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَـانَ عِلْماً وَقَالاَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

15. "And certainly We gave David and Solomon knowledge and they both said: 'Praise belongs to Allah, Who has favoured us above many of His believing servants'."

The knowledge which has been given to David and Solomon may be the knowledge of Judgment; its reference is the verse which says:

"…and We gave him wisdom and a clear judgment",[1]

and also with reference to the verse which says:

"…and unto each (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge…"[2]

And it may be the knowledge of speaking with the birds, with reference to the verse which says:

"…We have been taught the language of the birds…"[3]**,**

or it may be the knowledge of making the coat of mail, as the Qur'an says:

"…And We taught him the art of making the coat of mail…"[4]

But it is better to render the Qur'anic word /'ilm/ in a general sense, that is the knowledge of administration of the country.

However, this verse speaks about two other great Divine prophets: David and Solomon. Of course, there is only a hint to David but Solomon is explained more.

Mentioning a part of the life story of these two prophets next to the story of Moses (as) is for the sake that these two prophets were from among the prophets of the Children of Israel, too.

The difference between their history and the history of other prophets is that these were more successful to establish a great government because of mental and social receptivity of the atmosphere of the Children of Israel, and they could expand the Divine religion by the help of their governmental power.

Therefore, the style of explanation of the life story of other prophets, who encountered the severe opposition of their nations and sometimes they were expelled from their home and city, is not seen here, and the explanations are totally different. This clearly shows to what extend the difficulties may be solved and the path can become level if the Divine callers succeed to form a government.

However, here the words are about knowledge, ability, power, and dignity. It speaks about the submission of the birds and other creatures and, finally, about the severe struggle against idolatry through the way of logical invitation and, then, enjoying the power of government. And these things are the qualities that separate the life story of these two prophets from that of other prophets.

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an here has begun the statement with the issue of the 'merit of knowledge' which is the foundation of a righteous and powerful government.

It says:

"And certainly We gave David and Solomon knowledge…"

A great deal of commentators have tried very much to find out what kind of knowledge it is that Allah bestowed on David and Solomon, and it is stated here ambiguously and not definitely, and as it was precisely said at the beginning of the commentary of the verse, some commentators, relying on some other verses of the Qur'an, have considered it 'the knowledge of judgment':

"…and We gave him wisdom and clear judgment."[5]

"…and unto each (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge…:[6]

And some commentators also with frame of reference to the verses under discussion, which speak of 'the language of the birds' have counted this knowledge as the knowledge of speaking with birds, while some others, with frame of reference to the verses that talk of the knowledge of 'making the coat mail', have specified this knowledge to it.

However, it is clear that 'knowledge', hare, has a vast meaning which includes the knowledge of monotheism, religious belief, religious laws, knowledge of judgment, and all knowledge and information which have been necessary for the formation of such extensive and powerful government.

Its reason is that the establishment of a divine government basing on justice which is an equipped and free government, is not possible without enjoying a complete knowledge. Thus, the Qur'an specifies the rank of knowledge in the human society and in establishment of government as the first stone of the foundation of this building.

And next to this sentence, from the tongue of David and Solomon, it continues saying:

"…and they both said: 'Praise belongs to Allah, Who has favoured us above many of His believing servants'."

It is interesting that immediately after stating the great merit of 'knowledge' it speaks of 'thanksgiving' in order to make it clear that there is a thanksgiving for every blessing, and the reality of thanksgiving is that every blessing should be used in the same way that it has been created for; and these two great prophets did their best from their knowledge in formation of a Divine government.

By the way, they introduced the criterion of their own superiority to others by having 'knowledge', not by having power and government, and they also applied thanksgiving for having knowledge not for other merits, because all values belong to 'knowledge' and all powers originate from 'knowledge'.

This point is also noteworthy that they did thank for governing over a faithful people, since governing over a corrupted group, who are disbelievers, is not an honour.

There arises a question here that why did they say in their thanksgiving that 'He had favoured them above many of His believing servants' and they did not say over all believing people, though they were prophets who were above all the people of their time?

Using this kind of meaning may be for observing the principles of discipline and humility that one, in any rank, must not think of oneself above all.

Or it is for the sake that they did not consider only a particular part of time but they considered the whole times, and we know that there have been some greater prophets than them during the history of man.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 16

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَـانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّـمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ

16. "And Solomon inherited David and he said: 'O people! We have been taught the language of the birds, and we have been granted of everything; verily this is the manifest favour'."

The purpose of the Arabic word /waria/ in this verse is to inherit both wealth and government, not the knowledge and prophethood, because prophethood is not something to be inherited, and the knowledge of prophets is not heritable either since it is not something to be acquired.

In this verse, at first it points to inheriting Solomon from his father David.

It says:

"And Solomon inherited David…"

Here, commentators have some different ideas as for the meaning of heritage and that what that is:

Some believe that it is only the heritage of knowledge because, according to their own thought, prophets do not leave any heritage of their own properties.

Some others have mentioned inheritance is confined to property and government, because this word recalls that concept to the mind, before anything else.

And same commentators have rendered it into the language of speaking with the birds.

But regarding to the fact that the verse is general and, in the later Qur'anic sentences the words are also about both knowledge and all other merits, there is no reason to limit the concept of the verse.

Thus, Solomon had been the heir of all merits of his father.

The traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) have reasoned to this verse before those who said that prophets do not leave any heritage and laid emphasis on the tradition which says:

"We prophets do not leave any heritage".

They have reasoned that since the said tradition contrasts to the Book of Allah, it is invalid.

We read in a tradition narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) that when 'Abubakr decided to take Fadak from Fatimah (as) she (as) heard of that decision and came to 'Abubakr and said:

"Is there any thing in the Book of Allah that you inherit from your father but I do not inherit from my father? This is a wonderful thing!

Have you forgotten the Book of Allah and put it behind you when it says:

'And Solomon inherited David'?"7"

Then the Qur'an in this verse adds:

"…and he said: 'O people! We have been taught the language of the birds, and we have been granted of everything; verily this is the manifest favour'."

Some claim that the application of 'language and speaking' for non-human beings is not correct save as metaphor; but if a non-human being also utters some sounds and words which are meaningful and indicate some matters, there is no evidence not to call it 'speaking', since 'speech' is often any words that communicate a truth and a concept.

Of course, we do not want to say that those special sounds that sometimes some animals produce because of anger, wrath, or pleasure and consent, or as the result of pain, or as a sign of affection unto their children are called language.

No, these are some sounds that they bring forth out of their mouth at the time of a special mood. But, as we see in the verses of the Qur'an, Solomon communicates some matters with hoopoe and he (as) sends a message by the hoopoe and then he asks its answer from this bird.

This shows that besides the sounds that they produce because of their moods, animals can speak in some particular conditions by the command of Allah. Another clear example is the explanation about the speech of the ant which will be mentioned later concerning the future verses of this Surah.

Of course, the vast concept of /nutq/ (speech) has been used in the Qur'an which, indeed, states the spirit and conclusion of it, and it is 'the statement of what is in mind', whether it is done by means of words and speech; or through other means, like the verse which says:

"This is Our Book that speaks against you with justice…"[8]

But we do not need to render the word /nutq/ in connection with the speech of Solomon and the birds into this sense; because according to the apparent of the above verses, Solomon was able to understand the special words that birds used for transferring their matters and he could speak with them.

Contrast to the limitations that some commentators have cited for the Qur'anic sentence:

"…we have been granted of every thing…",

it has a vast meaning and it concludes all physical and spiritual means which were necessary for the formation of that Divine government and, basically, without it this statement will be imperfect.

By the way, Allah has given some special knowledge to some particular persons and He has mentioned them in the Qur'an:

1- Adam had the knowledge of all things:

"And He taught Adam all the names…"[9]

2- Khidr knew the inward knowledge and interpretation (so that Moses could be his student:

"…'Shall I follow you that you teach me right conduct…"[10]

3- Yusuf was taught the knowledge of interpretation of dreams:

"…this is of what my Lord has taught me…"[11]

4- David was taught by Allah the knowledge of making the coat of mail:

"And We taught him the art of making the coat of mail…"[12]

5- Solomon knew the language of birds:

"…We have been taught the language of the birds…"[13]

6- 'Asif Burkhiya (Solomon's assistant) had the knowledge by which he could bring the royal throne (of the Queen of Sheba) from one country to another country:

"One with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book said…"[14]

7- Talut knew the knowledge of army:

"…'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature…"[15]

8- The holy Prophet (S) and other prophets had the knowledge of Unseen:

"…so He does not reveal His secrets to any,"

"Except to whom He chooses as an apostle…"[16]

It is for this reason that it has been said that the prophets' knowledge is 'an intuitive knowledge' and it is bestowed on them through inspiration by Allah.

Some Points

1- The Relation Between Religion and Politics

Contrast to what some short sighted persons think, religion is not only a collection of advice or affairs concerning to the private and personal life. Religion is a collection of some general and common laws of life and common programs which conclude the whole life of men and social issues in particular.

The appointment of prophets to their missions is for the settlement of justice and equity.[17]

Religion is for breaking the chains of captivity of men and providing the freedom of human beings.[18]

Religion is the cause of securing the oppressed from the grips of oppressors and tyrants, and putting an end to the course of their sovereignty.

Finally, religion is a collection of education, and training men along the path of purification and making them complete.[19]

It is evident that earning these great aims without having a government is impossible. Who can establish justice with mere ethical recommendations so that he stops the domination of the oppressors over the oppressed?

Who can break and take the chains of captivity from the hands and feet of those who are afflicted in it without being supported by a power?

In a society where the means of spreading culture and propagation are in the hands of the vicious and mischief-makers, who can settle the correct principles of education, and foster the morals in the hearts?

That is why we say that 'religion' and 'politics' are two inseparable elements. If religion separates from politics it totally loses its arm of execution, and if politics separates from religion it will be changed into a destructive element which moves along the path of its interests.

If the Prophet of Islam (S) succeeded to spread this Divine religion quickly in the world, it was because, at the first opportunity, he started to

form a government and by means of the Islamic government he pursued the divine aims.

Some other divine prophets who could do like that and succeeded, were able to spread the Divine call better, while some others of them who were in difficulties and the conditions did not let them to form a government, did not succeed to progress very much.

2- The Divine Government and its Means

It is interesting that in the life story of Solomon and David we clearly see that they succeeded to quickly root out the effects of polytheism and idolatry and to establish a government whose main means, according to the concerning verses, was knowledge and awareness in various fields.

It was a system that Allah's Name was at the top of its programs. This system used to apply all the eligible powers and used even the ability of a bird for reaching its aims.

It was a system that could control all devils and dominated over the oppressors.

And, finally, it was a system which had both enough military force and elements of information, and some persons who had sufficient awareness and skill in different fields, and it had gathered all of these elements under the camp of belief and Monotheism.

3- The Birds' Speech

In the above verse and the verses which will come later in the story of hoopoe and Solomon, the birds' speech and the kind of their sense and understanding are referred to explicitly.

No doubt that birds, like other animals, in different circumstances make some various sounds that, with careful observation, we can recognize their states and situations by the kind of that sound and say which sound indicates to their anger, which one to their content, which sound is the reason of their hunger, and which one shows their whining.

We can understand with which sound the animal calls its children and with which sound it warns them of coming a horrible event. This part of the birds' sound contains no doubt and all of us are, more or less, acquainted with it.

But the holy verses of this Surah apparently intend to say something beyond this matter. They talk about a kind of animal speaking in a secret way which carries some more minute subjects in it. They talk about understanding and a debate between birds and a human being.

This meaning is surprising for some persons, but regarding to the various matters that the scientists have written in their books and the personal observation, and experiences that some other persons had concerning birds, it is not so surprising.

We know some matters even more surprising than this in relation with the talent of animals, and birds in particular.

Some of them are so skilful in making houses and nests for them that they exceed our engineers.

Some of birds possess so much exact information about their future offspring and their needs and difficulties and they act so minutely concerning their salvation that is surprising for all of us.

Their foresight about the circumstance of weather, even from some months before, their awareness of earthquakes before they occur and even before that our seismographs record the slightest quakes are well known.

The training with which some animals are trained in our time, and the extraordinary jobs they do and many people have seen them in many circuses all denote to their wonderful intelligence. The marvelous acts of 'ants' and their wonderful civilization; the marvels of the life of bees and their amazing finding the traces are famous.

The recognition of the emigrating birds, which sometimes pave the distance between North Pole and South Pole, and their awareness of the circumstances of the ways along this extraordinary long traveling are wonderful.

The amazing information about Salmon-trout, when they emigrate in groups in deep sees, are generally some subjects that scientifically are certain and are reasons for the existence of an important stage of apprehension, or instinct, or whatever we may call, in these animals.

The existence of some extraordinary senses in animals, such as the system of radar in a bat, very strong sense of smell in some insects, the extraordinary extensive power of sight in some birds, and so on, are also some other evidences for the fact that they are not weaker than us in anything.

Keeping these things in mind, it does not seem wonderful that they have a special speech, too, and can speak with the person who is aware of the method of their talking.

In the verses of the Qur'an, there are also some different points which refer to this meaning.

For example, Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 38 says:

"And there is no creature (that walks) on the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but they are communities the like of you…"

In Islamic narrations there are a lot of traditions which refer to the animals' speech and that of the birds, and even for each of them there have been cited some popular statements whose explanation is very long.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a narration said that Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) once told Ibn-'Abbas:

"Verily Allah taught us the birds' speech as He taught Solomon, son of David, as well as the speech of every living creature in the land and sea."[20]

4- The Explanation of a Tradition

There has been recorded a tradition in some different books of Sunnites from the Prophet of Islam (S) which denotes:

"We prophets do not leave any heritage, and whatever we leave must be used as alms (in the way of Allah)."

Sometimes this very tradition has been cited in a form that its first sentence is omitted, like this:

"Whatever we leave must be used as alms (in the way of Allah)."

The document of this tradition in those books is often ended to Abubakr who took the rein of Muslims' affairs after the Prophet (S), and when Hadrat Fatimah (as) or some other wives of the Prophet (S) demanded Abubakr their inheritance, relying upon this narration, he did not give them any inheritance.

This tradition is recorded by 'Muslim' in his Sahih, Vol. 3, P. 13790, by Bukhari, in Kitab-ul-Fara'id, chapter 8, P. 185, and some others have recorded it in their own books.

It is worthy to note that in the latter document, through a tradition narrated by 'Ayishah, we read as follows:

"(After the death of the Prophet (S)), Fatimah and 'Abbas came to 'Abubakr and demanded their heritage remained from the Prophet (S). At that time they demanded their land in 'Fadak' and their share 'remained from Kheybar'.

'Abubakr said:

'I heard from the Messenger of Allah who said:

'We do not leave any heritage, and whatever we leave is alms'.'

When Fatimah heard this statement she angrily left 'Abubakr and she never spoke with him, even for one word, until the end of her life."[21]

This tradition, of course, from different dimensions is objectionable and can be investigated, but what can be said in short here is as follows:

1- This tradition is not consistent with the verses of the text of the Qur'an, and according to the laws and principles we have, every tradition which does not adapt to 'the Book of Allah' is invalid and it cannot be taken as the tradition originated from the Prophet (S) or other immaculate ones (as).

In the above-mentioned holy verse, we read that Solomon inheritance David, and the apparent of the verse is general and it concludes properties, too.

Concerning Yahya and Zechariah we read in the Qur'an:

"(One that) shall be my inheritor and the inheritor of the posterity of Jacob…"[22]

Especially in respect to Zechariah, many commentators have emphasized on financial aspects.

Moreover, the apparent of the verses about inheritance in the Qur'an is general and envelops all. Maybe, it was for the same reason that Qurtabi, the famous Sunnite Commentator, had to take the tradition as the strong verb and the most, not as a general one.

He has said that: this is like the sentence that Arabs say:

"We community of Arabs are the most hospital ones among people, (while it is not a general ordinance)."[23]

But it is clear that this statement nullifies the value of this tradition, because if we take this excuse for the case of Solomon and Yahya, other aspects that are concluded in it are not certain either.

2- The above mentioned tradition is in contrast with other narrations which show that 'Abubakr decided to return Fadak to Fatimah, but some others hindered it, as it is cited in Sirah Halabi:

"Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, came to 'Abubakr while he was on the pulpit.

She said:

"O 'Abubakr! Is the matter in the Book of Allah that your daughter inherits from you but I do not inherit from my father?"

'Abubakr wept and shed tears. Then he came down of the pulpit, and wrote a later indicating that Fadak was turned back to Fatimah (as).

At this time 'Umar entered and said:

"What is this?"

'Abubakr said:

"I wrote a letter to return the inheritance of Fatimah from her father to her.'

'Umar said:

"If you do this, where from do you obtain the expenditure of the fight with the enemies, now that Arabs have stood against you?"

Then 'Umar caught the letter and tore it."[24]

How could there be an explicit prohibition issued by the Prophet (S) and Abubakr would dare to oppose it? And why did 'Umar rely upon the needs of fight and did not rely on Prophet's tradition?

Careful studying the above-mentioned narration shows that the Prophet's prohibition was not in contemplation, the important thing, here, was the political issues of the time.

These are the things that remind one the statement of Ibn-'Abil-Hadid Mu'tazily who said:

"I asked my teacher, Ali-ibn-Fariqi,

'Was Fatimah (as) right in her claim?'

He answered:

'Yes.'

I said:

'Why did not 'Abubakr give Fadak to her while he counted her a truthful one?'

My teacher smiled with a very meaningful smile and expressed a beautiful smooth statement, though he did not customarily joke.

He said:

"If today he gave Fadak to her, she would come the following day and claimed the caliphate for her husband, and she would unsettle him of his position, and he had neither any excuse to say nor any thing to agree with."[25]

3- A Famous Tradition from the Prophet (S)

In many books of great sects of Islam, there is recorded a famous tradition which says:

"The scholars are the heirs of the prophets."[26]

It is also narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Verily the prophets did not leave any Dinar nor Dirham (drachma) as heritage."[27]

It seems from these two traditions that the main aim has been to make it clear that the capital and the honour of the Divine prophets had been their knowledge.

The most important thing that they left behind was the issue of guidance, and those who earned some larger share from this knowledge are the essential heirs of prophets, without that they seek for the properties remained from the prophets.

Later this tradition has been paraphrased and has been misused by corruption in transmission, and probably the Arabic phrase /mataraknahu sadaqatun/ (whatever we leave must be used as alms (in the way of Allah)), which had been understood from some narrations, has been added to it.

To shorten our discussion, we conclude this statement with an explanation from Fakhr-i-Razi, the famous commentator of Sunnites, who has cited about Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 11.

He says that one of the allotments that has been set for this verse (the verse of children's heritage) is what is the majority of the jurisprudents of Sunnites believe and it indicates that prophets (as) do not leave any thing as heritage, while Shi'ite have (generally) opposed this matter.

It has been narrated that when Fatimah (as) demanded her heritage, they deprived her from it attaching to the Prophet's tradition which says:

"We prophets do not leave any heritage, and whatever we leave must he used as alms (in the way of Allah)"

At this time Fatimah (as) reasoned to the generality of the above mentioned verse (the verse of children's heritage) as if she wanted to point to this fact that the whole Qur'an cannot be appropriated with a single narration."

Then, Fakhr-i-Razi adds:

"Shi'ites say that supposing that allotment of the Qur'an be permissible with a single narration, it is not permissible here because of following three reasons:

1. This contrasts the explicit text of the Qur'an which says that Zechariah asked Allah to give him a child who could inherit from him and the posterity of Jacob. And also the Qur'an says that Solomon inherited from David.

These verses cannot be rendered into the heritage of 'knowledge' and 'religion', since this is a kind of figurative heredity and these prophets taught knowledge and religion to their children, not that they took it from themselves and transferred it to them. The real heritage is considered only in wealth (that it be taken from one and be given to another).

2. Another matter is that how is it possible that 'Abubakr could be aware of this subject, which he did not need, but Fatimah (as), Abbas, and Ali (as), who were of the greatest virtuous and knowledgeable ones and were dealing with the issue of the Prophet's heritage, were not aware of it?

How could it be possible that the Prophet (S) taught this tradition to the one who did not need it and restrained it from the one who needed it?

3. The Arabic phrase /ma taraknahu sadaqah/ (whatever we leave must be used as alms (in the way of Allah) is next to the Arabic phrase /la nuwarri/ which means: the properties we have set apart for the purpose of alms do not come inside the circle of heritage, not other than that…"

Then, Fakhr-i-Razi gives a short answer to the above-mentioned known reasoning and says:

"After speaking with Abubakr, Fatimah (as) became content with that speaking. Besides, the consensus has reached to this that the word of Abubakr is right."[28]

But it is clear that the answer of Fakhr-i-Razi is not sufficient for the abovementioned reasoning, because, as was narrated from the Sunnite famous sources, Fatimah (as) not only was not contented but she was so angry that she did not speak even for a word with Abubakr until the end of her life.

Moreover, how could there be a consensus upon this subject while Ali, Fatimah (as) and Abbas, who had been trained in the center of revelation, had opposed it?

Surah An-Naml - Verse 17

وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَـانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنّ وَالإِنسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

17. "And gathered together unto Solomon his hosts of jinn and men and birds and they were kept in order and ranks."

In different occasions the Qur'an has talked about jinn and one of the suras of the Qur'an is also called Jinn.

Now, here, it refers to some of their qualities:

Jinn is a creature which has sensation and has been addressed by Allah, where the Qur'an says:

"O' assembly of the jinn and mankind!…"[29]

Some of Jinn are believers while some others of them are disbelievers. They are male and female and naturally they have venereal desire.

Some of them worked for Solomon as builders and divers, as the Qur'an says:

"And the Satans, (including) every builder and diver."[30]

It is understood from the verses of the current Surah and those of Surah Saba', No. 34, that the government of Solomon had not an ordinary circumstance but it was formed by some extraordinary events and various miracles, some of which are mentioned in this Surah (like Solomon's governing over Jinn and birds), recognition of the talk of ants, and speaking with 'Hoopoe', and another part of it has been mentioned in Surah Saba', No. 34.

In fact, Allah showed His Might in making appear this great government and the forces it possessed; and we know that, from the view point of a monotheist, these affairs are easy, simple and untroubled for Allah, the Mighty.

By this verse, the Qur'an says:

"And gathered together unto Solomon his hosts of jinn and men and birds…"

The number of his forces was so large that, in order to regulate the army, it was ordered that the primary rows of forces should stop until when the last rows could move and reach others.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they were kept in order and ranks."

The Qur'anic word /yuza'un/ is derived from /waza'a/ in the sense of 'to restrain, to hold back'. When this word is used in respect to army it means

that the first part of the army should be stopped until the ending part of it joins, and they would not be divided.

The Arabic word /waza‘/ is also applied in the sense of ‘avarice, and intensive interest’ so that it hinders man from other affairs.

It is understood from this application that the forces of Solomon were both abundant and they worked under a special order.

The Qur’anic word /hušira/ is derived from /hašr/ which means: ‘bringing out the crowd of army from the resting place’, and causing them to start toward the battle-field, and the like. It is understood from both this meaning and the meaning used in the next verse that Solomon had led an army to a place, but it is not quite clear that which one it is among Solomon’s military expeditions.

Taking the content of the next verse in mind, which speaks about reaching Solomon to the land of ants, some say that it had been a region near Ta’if, while some others have said it had been a land near Syria.

However, since the statement of this matter had not any effect from the point of ethical and educational aspects, it has not been spoken of.

By the way, some commentators have discussed whether the whole human beings, jinn, and birds were the army of Solomon, or a part of them formed his army. This discussion seems rather needless, because undoubtedly Solomon did not govern the whole earth and the realm of his government was Syria, Jerusalem, and probably some other lands around there.

It is also understood from the later verses that Solomon had not any dominion over Yemen at that time, and he gained his authority over there after the event of ‘hoopoe’ and the submission of the Queen of Sheba.

The Qur’anic phrase /tafaqqad-at-tayr/, mentioned in the coming verses, shows that among the birds, which were in the obedience of Solomon, there was a hoopoe that when Solomon did not see it over there he asked about it. If all birds were included and there were thousands of hoopoes among them, this meaning could not be correct. (Be careful)

Surah An-Naml - Verse 18

حَتَّي إِذَآ أَتَوْا عَلَي وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّـمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لاَ يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَـانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لاَيَشْعُرُونَ

18. “Until when they came to the Valley of Ants, an ant said: ‘O you ants! Get into your habitations, so that Solomon and his hosts may not crush you, being unaware’.”

The Arabic word /naml/ philologically means ‘creeping with small feet’. The Qur’anic word /namlatun/, because of its Arabic nunnation, can be meant ‘a big ant which is a commander’. In this case, there is commandership and administrationship in the life of ants.

This nunnation can be meant as the sign of uncertainty of the ant. In this case, the message of the verse is that if an undefined one gives a sympathetic warning that warning must be attended to.

However, Solomon with this great army started and went until they reached the valley of ants. Here, an ant, addressing other ants, said that they

should go into their dwellings, so that Solomon and his army might not crush them while they are unaware.

The verse says:

"Until when they came to the Valley of Ants, an ant said: 'O you ants! Get into your habitations, so that Solomon and his hosts may not crush you, being unaware'."

There are some explanations to say that how this ant became aware of the presence of Solomon and his hosts in that land, and how it announced this happening to other ants, which will be referred to later.

By the way, it is understood from this sentence that the justice of Solomon was made manifest to even the ants because the sentence implicitly means if the hosts are aware of the existence of the ants they will not tread that weak animal, then if they tread the ants it is because they do not know it.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 19

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكاً مِن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحاً تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

19. "Then he smiled, laughing at its words, and said: 'My Lord! Dispose me that I may be thankful for Your bounty, which You have bestowed on me and my parents, and that I may do righteousness such as You are pleased with, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants'."

One of the principles and conditions of leadership and administration is tolerance. Solomon (as) heard that the ant said about him and his troops that they were unaware, but he (as) did not show it and he only smiled.

Criticism and a right speech must be heard from any one and it must be received, because accepting criticism is a value. Solomon admired the word of the ant and smiled. Commentators are divided as for what was the cause of Solomon's smile.

It appears that the self of this event was a wonderful matter that an ant called other ants to beware of the great army of Solomon and that it attributed that army of being unaware.

This amazing affair caused Solomon's laugh, as the verse says:

"Then he smiled, laughing at its words…"

Some of commentators have said that this smile was a smile of joy, because Solomon understood that even ants confessed to the justice of Solomon and his troops and accepted their piety.

Some others have said that his joy was for the reason that Allah had given him such a power that at the time of the great anxiety and excitement of the army he was not neglectful of the sound of an ant either.

However, here Solomon turned to the presence of Allah and asked a few things as follows:

"…and said: 'My Lord! Dispose me that I may be thankful for Your bounty, which You have bestowed on me and my parents…"

Solomon asked Allah to teach him how he could thank for the great bounties that He had granted him and his parents to be able to use them in

the way that He had commanded and was the cause of His pleasure so that he would not deviate from the right path, since being thankful for those abundant favours is not possible save with His succour and aid.

The next thing he asked for was as follows:

"…and that I may do righteousness such as You are pleased with…"

This statement points to this matter that what was important for Solomon was not the remaining of that great army and his government with those vast organizations, it was important for him to do such righteous deeds that caused His pleasure.

And in view of the fact that the Arabic word /'a'mala/ is a verb in present tense, which is used in that language for the continuation of the action, it is an evidence that he asked Allah for the continuation of this succour.

Finally, the third thing he asked was that he said:

"…and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants'."

Surah An-Naml - Verses 20-22

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَالِيَ لاَ أَرَي الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِينَ

لأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَاباً شَدِيداً أَوْ لاَذبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنّـِي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِن سَبإٍ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ

20. "And he reviewed the birds; then he said: 'How is it with me that I do not see the hoopoe? Or is it that he is of the absentees?'"

21. "Certainly will I chastise him with a terrible chastisement, or will I slaughter him, or he brings me a clear reason (for his absence)."

22. "But the hoopoe tarried not long, then he (came and) said: 'I have comprehended that which you have not comprehended, and I have come to you from Sheba with a sure tiding'."

Through this group of verses, the Qur'an has pointed to another height of the amazing life of Solomon, and reiterates the event of hoopoe, and the Queen of Sheba. At first it speaks about Solomon (as) and hoopoe, whom he (as) sought after but he did not see it.

The verse says:

"And he reviewed the birds…"

This phrase clearly indicates that Solomon (as) was carefully observing the circumstances of the country and his government in a manner that even the absence of a bird was not concealed before his eyes.

No doubt that the purpose of the bird, here, is the hoopoe, since in the continuation of the statement the Qur'an adds:

"…then he said: 'How is it with me that I do not see the hoopoe?…"

"…Or is it that he is of the absentees?'"

Concerning the fact that how Solomon recognized that hoopoe was not present among the gathering of birds, some commentators have said: that it was for the sake that, at the time of his traveling, birds did cast a shadow over his head and, because of the existence of an opening (hole) in that vast canopy, he found out the absence of the hoopoe.

Some others have considered a mission for the hoopoe in his organizations and they have said that the hoopoe was commissioned to find

the places where there was water and when the bird had gone to search for water, he (as) found it absent.

However, this statement that at first he said:

"…I do not see the hoopoe…"

and then he added

"…Or is it that he is of the absentees…"

may point to this matter that whether the hoopoe is absent without having a plausible excuse or it has been absent with a plausible excuse.

An way, an organized, ordered, and powerful government has to put all movements, activities, and actions and reactions that happen in its country and realm under consideration; and it must not neglect even the presence and absence of a bird, an ordinary agent, and this is a great lesson.

Finally, some other commentators have said that the objective of hoopoe, here, is a particular 'Hoopoe'. Their reference is the existence of Alif and Lam at the beginning of the Arabic word, 'Al-Hudhud', as well as the hoopoe's power of anthropology and its theological ability. The explanation of this meaning will be offered later.[31]

Once Abuhanifah asked Imam Sadiq (as):

"Why did Solomon ask only about hoopoe among all birds?"

The Imam (as) said:

"Its reason is for the fact that a hoopoe sees the existence of water inside the earth, the same as we see oil in a crystal container."[32]

As for the punishment of the hoopoe, some commentators have mentioned a few examples; including separating it from its fellow, pulling off its feathers, putting it under sunshine, banishing it from Solomon's court, or putting it in the same cage with an enemy.[33]

One point, however, must be noted that reviewing and being kind to inferiors, visiting their work, and asking about their affairs are among the Islamic, ethical, social, educational, and administrative principles.

Then, in order not to judge in its absence, and in the mean-while the absence of the hoopoe does not affect other birds, still less the persons who undertook some sensitive and important jobs, Solomon added:

"Certainly will I chastise him with a terrible chastisement, or will I slaughter him, or he brings me a clear reason (for his absence)."

The purpose of the Arabic word /sultan/, here, is a reason which causes one's authority and ability to prove one's mind, and the Arabic word /mubin/ is an emphasis on the matter that this faulty one must certainly bring a clear reason for his own fault.

Solomon (as), in fact, without judging in its absence, threatened the offender by the necessary chastisement if the fault is proved. He even considered two stages for his threat in order that it could be proportional to the kind of the sin: the stage of punishment without execution, and the stage of execution.

By the way, he showed that he surrendered to proof and logic even in front of a weak bird and he would never rely on his power and abilities.

"But the hoopoe tarried not long…"

The hoopoe returned and, addressing Solomon, said that it had known something which he (as) did not know and it was an assured news from the land of Sheba.

The verse says:

"…then he (came and) said: 'I have comprehended that which you have not comprehended, and I have come to you from Sheba with a sure tiding'."

As if the hoopoe has seen the signs of anger in Solomon's face. Then, in order to remove his distress, the bird shortly and closely announced of an important matter that Solomon, even with his whole knowledge, was not aware of it. Then, when the anger of Solomon was lightened, Hoopoe began explaining it, which will be described through later verses.

It is worthy nothing that Solomon's troops, and even the birds that obeyed him, had felt such a freedom, security, and daring in Solomon's justice that, without any fear Hoopoe frankly and explicitly says:

"…'I have comprehended that which you have not comprehended…"

The Hoopoe's treatment with Solomon was not like the treatment of the flattering men of courts with the tyrannical kings, who, for communicating a fact at first flatter and make themselves so low before them as an insignificant atom.

Then they humbly state their aim inside many sorts of flatteries and never try to deliver a definite statement; so they always use some delicate allusions lest the king's feeling be a little injured.

Yes, the hoopoe clearly said that its absence was not unreasonable and he had brought Solomon some news that he was not aware of it.

By the way, this meaning is a great lesson for all human beings that there may be a small creature, like hoopoe, which knows a matter that the most knowledgeable man of the people of the time is unaware of it; and no one should be proud of his knowledge even he is Solomon with that vast knowledge of prophecy.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 23-24

إِنِّي وَجَدتُّ ا ْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ

وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْ َهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لاَيَهْتَدُونَ

23. "Verily I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given of everything, and she possesses a magnificent throne."

24. "I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made their deeds fair-seeming to them and he has barred them from the (right) way, so they are not guided aright."

However, Hoopoe explained the event of going to the land of Sheba and its Queen under the name of Bilqiys, as follows:

"Verily I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given of everything, and she possesses a magnificent throne."

By these three short sentences, the hoopoe told Solomon nearly all qualifications of the country of Sheba and that how it was governed. First of

all, it said that it was a habitable country with all kinds of merits and potentialities.

The next matter was that a woman was ruling over there who had a very glorious court, perhaps even more glorious than the organizations of Solomon, since though the hoopoe had certainly seen Solomon's throne it mentioned that of the Queen as 'a magnificent throne'.

By this speech, the hoopoe made Solomon understand that he should not think that the entire world was in the realm of his government and that the great throne and magnificence was allocated only to him.

By hearing this news, Solomon began contemplating, but the hoopoe did not give him time and added another amazing matter, when it said:

"I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah…"

The Hoopoe explains that Satan has dominated over them and has so ornamented their deeds to them that they boast of worshipping the sun, and thus Satan has hindered them from the right way and they have so engaged in idolatry that I do not believe they return easily from that way.

The verse continues saying:

"…and Satan has made their deeds fair-seeming to them and he has barred them from the (right) way, so they are not guided aright."

In this way, the hoopoe made clear the spiritual and religious situation of those people and announced that they had earnestly fallen in idolatry, and their government encouraged them to adorring the sun, so people usually follow the religion of their kings.

Their idol temples and their other circumstances show that they insist on paving this wrong way: they like it and they boast of it. In the conditions that both the whole people and government are wrongly on one line, their guidance is very improbable.

That marvellous story indicates that some animals possess a high understanding, such as hoopoe who understood and realized some concepts, like: man and woman, crown and throne, government and ownership, monotheism and idolatry, sun and prostration, Satan and his ornamentations, right and wrong, guidance and misguidance.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 25-26

أَلاَّ يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْءَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ

اللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

25. "So that they prostrate not themselves to Allah, Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth and knows what you hide and what you reveal."

26. "Allah, there is no god but He! Is the Lord of 'Arsh, the Mighty (throne of Supreme Authority)."

The Arabic word /xab'/ means 'concealed and hidden'.

Ali (as) Says:

"(The value of) man is hidden under his tongue."[34]

The growth of plants, as well as falling rains, are the clear examples of bringing forth those which are hidden in the heavens and the earth.

The ears (of corn) are hidden inside a corn and the Might of Allah brings it forth from inside of it. All the things that alter from potentiality to actuality are the extensions of this very verse.

However, it says:

"So that they prostrate not themselves to Allah, Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth and knows what you hide and what you reveal."

The Qur'anic word /xab'/, which means anything hidden and concealed, here points to the omnipotence of Allah's knowledge due to the unseen of heavens and earth.

Thus, the verse means why they do not prostrate themselves to the Lord Who knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth and the secrets hidden in them.

Some commentators have rendered it to rain (respecting the heavens) and plants (respecting the earth), this in fact, is from the kind of statement of a clear extension.

Alike them are those commentators who have commented this phrase upon 'bringing out the creatures from the unseen of nonexistence into existence'.

It is interesting that the holy verse firstly speaks of the knowledge of Allah unto 'the secrets hidden in the heavens and the earth', and then it refers to the secrets concealed in the hearts of people.

Why the hoopoe, among all attributes of Allah (s.w.t.), emphasized on the issue of His knowledge due to unseen and seen in the macrocosm and microcosm, it may be in relation to the fact that Solomon, with all his abilities and knowledge, was not aware of the country of Sheba and its qualities, and it says that we must seek the grace of the Lord for Whom nothing is concealed.

Or it is in relation to the known matter which is said that hoopoe has a special sense by which it can understand the existence of water inside the land that contains it. Then it speaks of Allah Who is aware of all the things which are concealed in the world of existence.

At last, the hoopoe concludes his saying with the following statement:

"Allah, there is no god but He! Is the Lord of 'Arsh, the Mighty (throne of Supreme Authority)."

Thus, the hoopoe emphasized on 'unity of worship' and 'Unity of Lordship' of Allah and the negation of any polytheism, and then put an end to his speech.

By the way, what is cited in this part of the verse contains a lot of points which can be effective in the life of all human beings and in the process of all governments.

1- The chief of a government, or an administrator, must be so careful and aware of the order of his organizations that he recognizes and realizes even the absence of an ordinary and insignificant member, and pursues its affairs.

2- He must be careful of the offence of a single member and, in order not to affect others, he must apply the necessary precautions.

3- No one should be judged in his absence, or to pass a judgment by default. The one should be allowed to defend himself if possible.

4- The amount of forfeit must proportionate to the crime. So, for every crime a suitable punishment must be decided, and hierarchy should be observed, too.

5- Everybody, even the greatest powers of the society, must submit to reason and logic though the reason is uttered by a very insignificant person.

6- There must exist so much freedom and explicitness in the atmosphere of the society that, at the necessary time, even an ordinary person can tell the chief of the government:

"I have comprehended that which you have not comprehended."[35]

7- Sometimes some ordinary persons or the smallest ones get information of something that the greatest scientists and the most powerful ones are unaware of it, and we must never be proud of our knowledge.

8- In the society of human beings, the reciprocal needs are so much so that sometimes some great men, such as Solomon, are dependant on a bird.

9- Though there are many eligibilities in women, and even this very story shows that the Queen of Sheba possessed an extraordinary understanding and perspicacity, the leadership of a government is not consistent with the situation of their spirit and body; so the hoopoe also surprised of it and said:

"Verily I found a woman ruling over them…"[36]

10- People often have the same religion that their rulers have.

Therefore, we read in this story that the hoopoe says:

"I found her and her people prostrating to the sun…"

(The words are first about the prostration of the Queen and then that of the people.)

قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

اذْهَب بِكِتَابِي هَذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ

27. "(Solomon, after hearing hoopoe's information,) said: 'Soon we will see whether you have told the truth or whether you are of the liars."

28. "Go you with this letter of mine, and throw it down unto them, then turn away from them, and (wait to) see what (answer) they return."

The Divine prophets' communication and writing letters to disbelievers and polytheists has a long background, and the Prophet of Islam (S) did it, too. He (S) wrote some letters to the rulers of several countries, such as Iran and Byzantine.

In order to reach to some leading and cultural aims, sending messages, advisors, cultural counselors, officers, and taking the lead in these affairs had been the conduct of the divine prophets.

Of course, when confronting some complicated systems and governments, we cannot encounter them simply, and, thus, recognizing them secretly and far from the eyes is the deepest kind of cognitions.

Therefore, Solomon carefully listened to the words of the hoopoe and began thinking. Solomon might mostly thought that that news was right, and there was no reason for it to be a lie so great.

But since it was not a simple issue and it related to the fate of a country and a great nation, he should not suffice only to the statement of a single informer, and he ought to investigate more about this sensitive subject.

Thus, the Qur'an announces:

"(Solomon, after hearing hoopoe's information,) said: 'Soon we will see whether you have told the truth or whether you are of the liars."

This statement clearly proves that for important matters, which relate to the fate of people, one must pay attention to the information received from a simple member and soon it must be sufficiently researched about.

Solomon did neither accuse nor condemn hoopoe, nor did he verify its speech without any proof, but he took it as the cause of a research.

He said:

"Go you with this letter of mine, and throw it down unto them, then turn away from them, and (wait to) see what (answer) they return."

Surah An-Naml - Verses 29-31

قَالَتْ يَآ أَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا إِنِّـي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ

إِنَّهُ مِن سُلَيْمَـانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلاَّ تَعْلُوا عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ

29. "(When the Queen of Sheba received the letter,) she said: 'O chiefs! Verily there has been thrown unto me a noble letter."

30. "Verily, it is from Solomon; and verily it is: 'In the Name of Allah. The Beneficent, the Merciful'."

31. "Exalt not yourselves against me, and come to me in submission."

Guidance and preaching must be delivered kindly and mercifully; beginning with the holy phrase:

'In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful'.

Solomon (as) wrote a very short and comprehensive letter and, giving it to the hoopoe, he told the bird to throw it down unto them and then return and wait in a corner to see what reaction they would have.

It is understood from the Qur'anic phrase "Throw it down unto them" that the hoopoe should throw it down when the Queen of Sheba was sitting in the gathering among her people so that there would remain no room for forsaking and denying it.

This also makes it clear that there is no proof for the commentary of some commentators who have said the hoopoe entered the castle of the Queen of Sheba and her room and threw the letter on her chest or her throat, though it is not so inconsistent with the sentence mentioned in the next verse which says:

"…Verily there has been thrown unto me a noble letter."

The Queen of Sheba opened the letter and was informed of its content. Since she had formerly heard of the fame of Solomon and the content of the letter indicated that he had taken a severe decision about the country of Sheba, she fell into a deep thought; and since she used to consult with the chiefs of her entourage, she invited them.

As the Qur'an says:

"(When the Queen of Sheba received the letter,) she said: 'O chiefs! Verily there has been thrown unto me a noble letter."

Had the Queen of Sheba truly not seen the bringer of the letter? But, with the content of the letter, she felt the nobility of the letter and she never thought that it might be a fabricated letter.

Or she saw the letter with her own eyes, and its surprising circumstance proved that there was a reality over there and it was not an ordinary thing. Whatever it was, she relied on the letter with certainty.

The matter that the Queen says that the letter is a noble and worthy one, may be for the magnificent content of it, or for its beginning which began with the name of Allah, and its ending was correctly signed and sealed;[37] or its sender had been a noble person, each of which has been guessed by the commentators.

Or all of them may be found in this consistent concept, because there is no contradictory between them.

It is true that they were sun-worshippers, but we know that many of the idolaters believed in Allah, too, and called Him as the Lord of lords. They counted His respect and glorification important.

Then, the Queen of Sheba referred to the content of the letter when she said:

"Verily, it is from Solomon; and verily it is: 'In the Name of Allah. The Beneficent, the Merciful'."

"Exalt not yourselves against me, and come to me in submission."

It is not probable that Solomon had written the letter with these very Arabic phrases; therefore the above-mentioned phrases can be paraphrased, or they are the summary of Solomon's letter that the Queen of Sheba reiterated for her people.

It is interesting that the content of this letter was indeed not more than three sentences: one sentence was the name of Allah, and the statement of His attributes of mercifulness and compassionateness.

The second sentence was a recommendation for controlling the low desire and abundance of self-superiority, which is the origin of many personal and social corruptions.

And the third one was to submit to the truth. And if we carefully notice them, there was nothing more which was necessary to be mentioned.

Notes

1. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 20
2. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 79
3. The Current Surah, verse 16
4. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 80
5. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 20
6. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 79
7. 'Ihtijaj by Tabarsi, Vol. 4, P. 75
8. Surah Al-Jathiyah, No. 45, verse 29
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 31
10. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 66
11. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 37
12. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 80
13. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 16
14. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 40
15. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 247
16. Surah Al-Jinn, No. 72, verses 26-27
17. Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 25
18. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 157
19. Surah Al-Jumu'ah, No. 62, verse 2
20. The commentaries of As-Safi, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the explanation of the verse

21. Sahih Bukhari, Part 8, P. 185
22. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 6
23. Tafsir Qurtabi, Vol. 7, P. 4880
24. Sirah Halabi, Vol. 3, P. 301
25. The explanation of Nahj-ul-Balaqah, by 'Ibn-'Abil-Hadid, Vol. 16, P. 284
26. Sahih Tarmathi, Chapter knowledge, Tradition No. 19; and Sunan Ibn-i-Majih, the introductory to tradition No. 17
27. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1 Chapter: 'The Attribute of knowledge', tradition No. 9
28. The Commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 9, P. 210
29. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 130, and Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 33
30. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 37
31. the commentary of Furqan, and Fi-Zilal
32. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
33. The commentaries of Ruh-ul-Bayan and Kanz-ud-Daqa'iq
34. Nahj-ul-Baqalah, saying No. 148
35. Current Surah, verse 22
36. Current Surah, verse 23
37. An Islamic tradition denotes that the seal of a letter shows its nobility. (The Qur'anic commentaries of Majma'-ul-Bayan, Al-Miza, and Qurtubi) Another tradition indicates when the Prophet of Islam (S) decided to write a letter to the king of Iran, he was told that they did not accept any letter without sealing. Then the holy Prophet (S) ordered that a ring should be made and on its bezel had to be carved "La 'ilaha 'illallah, Muhammad Rasul-ul-lah". Then he sealed the letter with it. (Qurtubi, the explanation of the verse)

Section 3: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

Surah An-Naml - Verses 32-33

قَالَتْ يَآ أَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْراً حَتَّي تَشْهَدُونِ

قَالُوا نَحْنُ أُولُواْ قُوَّةٍ وَأُولُواْ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ وَالأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ

32. "She said: 'O chiefs! Pronounce to me respecting my affair; no affair have I decided except in your presence'."

33. "They said: 'We possess force and we possess great might. The affair rests with you; so see what you will command."

The Queen of Sheba, Bilqiys, was a wise intelligent one and possessed a high standard of the ability of recognition. She had also some men and counselors with whom she used to propound the news and events of the locality.

Therefore, after being aware of the content of Solomon's letter and informing it to her people, she, addressing them, said as follows:

"She said: 'O chiefs! Pronounce to me respecting my affair; no affair have I decided except in your presence'."

By this action of hers, she wanted to attract their attentions to her and, thus, strengthen her situation among them. By the meantime, she wanted to estimate and study the amount of their agreement with her decisions.

The Arabic holy word /'aftuni/ is derived from /fatwa/ which originally means 'the proper and correct judgment in complicated affairs'. By this means, the Queen of Sheba both told them the complexity of the issue, and made them attentive to this matter that they should take care of expressing their views, so that they might not go a wrong way.

The Qur'anic word /tašhadun/ is derived from /šuhud/ in the sense of 'presence', a presence which is accompanied with cooperation and consultation.

Then, in the next verse it says:

"They said: 'We possess force and we possess great might. The affair rests with you; so see what you will command."

Thus, they not only showed their submission to her and to her commands, but also their willing to relying on power and their participation in the battlefield, since Bilqiys was the commander of the armed forces of her time.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 34

قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَآ أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

34. "She said: 'Verily the kings, when they enter a township, despoil it, and make the noblest of its inhabitants the meanest; and thus they (always) do'."

We should not rely only on our power; we must also keep the potentialities of others in mind.

Those who were around Bilqiys said:

"We possess force and we possess great might".

But Bilqiys warned them not to take the power of Solomon so little.

Then, when the Queen understood their willing for fighting, while she had not inwardly any inclination for this job, in order to quench this thirst and to encounter this matter calculatedly, she said as follows:

"She said: 'Verily the kings, when they enter a township, despoil it, and make the noblest of its inhabitants the meanest…"

This sentence means that the kings may kill a group of people, captivate another group, and finally they make others homeless, and they spoil their properties as much as they can.

Then for the sake of some further emphasis, she said:

"…and thus they (always) do'."

In fact, the Queen of Sheba, who was a king herself, knew the kings well that their program was summarized in too things: 'despoil', and 'making the noblest into meanest', because the kings used to think only over their own interests, not over the interests of nations and exalting them. These two things always contrast to each other.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 35

وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

35. "And verily I am going to send a present unto them, and (wait to) see with what (answer) the messengers return."

The tyrants and the kings knew that the Divine prophets did not seek for money, yet they tried to attract them and make them quiet thereby. So, the Queen of Sheba added implying that before anything else, they should test Solomon and those around him to see, indeed, what was their condition.

Was Solomon a king, or a prophet? Was he a destroyer, or a reformer? Did they use to drug nations to meanness, or to honour? So, for this aim they might use of some presents.

That was why she said:

"And verily I am going to send a present unto them, and (wait to) see with what (answer) the messengers return."

Kings are often interested in presents very much, and their weakness is found in this very point. They can be made submit by precious presents. The Queen announced if Solomon submit by these presents, it will be known that he is a 'king', and we will stand against him, applying our power, because we are powerful.

But if he shows heedlessness to us and insists on his statements and suggestions, it makes it clear that he is the messenger of Allah and we must treat him wisely.

The Qur'an has not mentioned anything about the kind of presents that the Queen of Sheba sent for Solomon; it has only shown their greatness by applying the word 'present' as an undefined noun, but commentators have mentioned many matters in this regard, some of which are not free from exaggeration and legend.

Some of the commentators have cited that she sent five hundred selected slaves and five hundred particular slave-maids for Solomon, while slave-men were clothed with beautiful dresses and having ear-rings in their ears with bracelets on their bands; and slave-girls were clothed with men clothing and ornamented with beautiful hats.

Then she had written in her letter addressing Solomon that if he was a prophet he would recognize slave-men and slave-girls from each other. She mounted them on worthy horses which were ornamented very heavily, and sent them accompanied with a considerable amount of jewelry.

By the way, she told her representative that if he observed that Solomon's look was wrathful to him as soon as he arrived, he should know that it was the manner of the kings; but if Solomon received him kindly and with good temper, he should know that Solomon was a prophet.

Some Points On Letter Writing

Whatever was said in the abovementioned verses about the content of Solomon's letter to the people of Sheba can be a sample for the style of letter writing, and this is sometimes of the important matters of life. This letter begins with the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, and the essential subject is said through two calculated sentences.

It is understood from Islamic history and narrations that our Islamic great leaders always emphasized that letters should be written shortly, free from useless matters, and completely calculated.

Through a circular, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, Ali (as) wrote to his employees and representatives that they should make their pen-points sharp and make the lines of their writings close (to each other), and avoid writing unnecessary matters in their letters, because the Muslim properties could not bear any loss.[1]

Making the pen-points sharp causes that the words be written in a small form, and the lines being close to each other, and omitting unnecessary things from the letter results not only economy in wealth and private properties but also saving the time of both writer and reader, and sometimes abundance causes that the main purpose of the letter be confused among the additional and ceremonial sentences so that both the writer and the reader of it may not obtain their goal.

Principally, someone's letter is a sign for showing his personality and it is like one's messenger.

Ali (as) says:

"Your messenger is the interpreter of your intelligence while your letter is more eloquent in expressing your true self."[2]

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"One's letter is an evidence for the standard of his wisdom and the situation of his insight, and his messenger is an indication to the level of his understanding and his intellect."[3]

This delicate point should also be noted that some Islamic narrations denote that the reply to a letter must be similar to the reply of a greeting.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

"Answering a letter is obligatory in the same manner that answering a salutation is obligatory."[4]

Surah An-Naml - Verses 36-37

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَيْمَـانَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَآ ءَاتَانِيَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّآ ءَاتَاكُمْ بَلْ أَنتُم بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ

ارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُم بِجُنُودٍ لا قِبَلَ لَهُم بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُم مِنْهَآ أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُون

36. "And when (the messenger of the Queen) came to Solomon, he (Solomon) said: 'What! Aid you me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Nay, it is you (and not I) who exult in your present'."

37. "Go back to them: so we will certainly come unto them with (such) hosts which they shall not be able to meet, and certainly will we expel them out therefrom in disgrace, while they will feel humbled."

The motive of the Divine prophets is not gaining worldly materials. The friends of Allah do not sell themselves for money. They are kin, alert and act decisively. They see the corruptible plans behind the presents and they avoid them while rebuking their senders.

However, the officials of the Queen of Sheba, carrying the caravan of presents, left Yemen toward Syria, where Solomon lived. They imagined that Solomon would become happy by seeing those abundant presents and might praise them.

But when they confronted Solomon, there appeared a surprising scene in front of them. Not only Solomon did not receive them well, but also he said whether they wanted to help him with their wealth, while wealth was nothing in comparison with knowledge, guidance and prophethood. He added it was worthy for them to become happy with presents, but it was worthless for him.

The verse says:

"And when (the messenger of the Queen) came to Solomon, he (Solomon) said: 'What! Aid you me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Nay, it is you (and not I) who exult in your present'."

Thus, Solomon (as) made the criterion of their values belittle, and manifested that there were other criterions for the values that comparing with which the criterions current among mammonists are very weak and worthless.

Then, in order to show his decisiveness in the issue of right and wrong, Solomon, (sending back the presents with them), told the special official of the Queen of Sheba as follows:

"Go back to them: so we will certainly come unto them with (such) hosts which they shall not be able to meet, and certainly will we expel them out therefrom in disgrace, while they will feel humbled."

The application of the word /'aðillah/ (in disgrace) is for the first case and the word /saqarun/ (humbled) is for the second case.

This indicates that not only they will be expelled from their land, but they also will be encountered it with humiliation and degradation, in a manner that they will lose all their castles, properties, and glorious ranks, because they, resorting to guiles, do not submit to the true religion.

This threat, of course, for the representatives who observed the Solomon's situation closely and visited his troops, was an earnest and considerable threat.

Regarding to what was said in previous verses by which Solomon wanted them two things: 'abandoning self superiority' and 'submitting to the truth'

and that they did not reply to these two great things and they resorted to sending presents as a reason for not accepting them, that was why he threatened them by military force.

If the Queen of Sheba and her entourage had demanded a proof, evidence, miracle and the like, Solomon would have considered them rightful to investigate more. But sending presents showed that they were in a denial position.

We surely know this fact, too, that the most important inconvenient thing that the hoopoe told Solomon (as) about this nation who lived in Yemen was that they had ignored the Mighty Lord Who dominates both the unseen and the seen of the skies and the earth and they were worshipping the sun, a worldly creature.

Solomon became inconvenient with this problem, and we know that idolatry is not something that the divine religion remains silent for it, or bears the idol worshippers as a religious minority. By applying force, he (as) may destroy the idol temples, if necessary, and vanishes idolatry and the polytheistic creed.

The abovementioned explanation makes it also clear that Solomon's threat does not contrast with the principle of

"There is no compulsion in religion", [5]

because idolatry is not a religion, but it is a superstition and deviation.

Some Points

1- It is worthy to note that, from the view point of Divine religions, 'virtue' does not mean that a person deprives himself from the wealth, property and material potentialities of the world, but the reality of 'virtue' is that one does not make himself captive to them but he must be a 'commander' over them.

By rejecting the precious presents that the Queen of Sheba had sent for Solomon, this great Divine prophet showed that he was a 'commander' not a 'captive'.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

"With Allah, and with His prophets and saints, the world is smaller than that they become happy for something of it or they become sad (for losing it). Thus, it is not suitable for any knowledgeable or intelligent one to be happy for the ephemeral material of the world." [6]

2- In this part of the life story of Solomon, there are some expressive lessons involved in the verses of the Qur'an:

A) The essential goal of sending army is not killing human beings; but its goal is that the enemy should consider in a weak situation for him and that the enemy does not find the power of fighting with them.

"…with (such) hosts which they shall not be able to meet…"

This meaning is similar to the same thing that the Muslims are ordered:

"And prepare against them whatever you can of (military) power and of war-horses, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah…" [7]

B) Solomon does not threaten his enemies to death, but he threatens them that they will be expelled from their castles with despise and humiliation; and this is worthy noting.

C) Solomon does not attack his enemies unexpectedly, but he informs them of his attack previously.

D) Solomon does not prospect to others' wealth, but he says whatever Allah has given him is better. He does not consider the merits of Allah only in material and financial power, but he is honoured with having knowledge, faith and spiritual merits.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 38-39

قَالَ يَآ أَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَاْ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ

38. "(Solomon) said: 'O chiefs!) which of you can bring to me her throne before they come to me in submission?'"

39. "One audacious among the jinn said: 'I will bring it to you before you rise up from your place; I have strength for it and I am trusty'."

There is a concept of 'violence' and 'strength' in the Arabic word /'ifrit/ here.

After returning the representatives of Bilqiys with their presents, and that the Queen of Sheba became aware that Solomon was not a king, she decided to come to him personally in order to see the circumstances closely. Solomon was informed of her decision and made himself ready to show his power.

Finally the representatives of the Queen of Sheba took their presents and other things and returned to their own country. They explained what happened in their mission for the Queen and the people around her.

They also stated about the greatness of the miraculous land and sovereignty of Solomon, each of which was an evidence that Solomon was not an ordinary person, or a king, and that he was really a messenger of Allah, because his government was also a godly government.

It was why the Queen of Sheba and a number of the chiefs of her people decided to come to Solomon and personally investigate this important problem and also to know what kind of religion Solomon had.

From any source it was, this news was given to Solomon. Then he decided to show his marvellous might to the Queen of Sheba and her companions before they could reach his land, so that they could become familiar with the reality of his miracle previously, and surrender to his call.

So, Solomon, addressing his entourage, stated as follows:

"(Solomon) said: 'O chiefs!) which of you can bring to me her throne before they come to me in submission?'"

Although some of the commentators have tried to find some reasons for bringing the throne of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, none of them are consistent with the contents of the verses of the Qur'an, and Solomon's aim for this program is clear.

He wanted to show them his might and an extraordinary action to be fulfilled so that the way of their unconditioned submission and their faith to the power of Allah might be leveled and there would not need to attend in battlefield for fighting and shedding tear.

He wanted to send faith into the depth of the entity of the Queen of Sheba and her entourage so that others would easily accept the invitation to faith and submission, too.

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that two persons of them announced their readiness for the aim. The suggestion of one of them was surprising and that of the other was more surprising.

The verse says:

"One audacious among the jinn said: 'I will bring it to you before you rise up from your place…"

He said he could do that action very easily and he would not commit any treachery in that valuable deposit.

The verse continues saying:

"…I have strength for it and I am trusty'."

However, the life story of Solomon is full of wonders and supernatural events; and it is not surprising that a jinn be able to do such an important action in a short time in front of Solomon where he (as) was sitting for judging between people, solving the affairs of his country, or for advice and guidance.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 40

قَالَ الَّذِي عِندَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ
مُسْتَقِرّاً عِندَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ

40. "One with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book said: 'I will bring it to you before your eye twinkles'. Then when he saw it settled before him, he said: 'this is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or am ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, verily he is grateful for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Bounteous."

It is narrated from Imam Hadi (as) that the one with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the Divine Book was 'Asif Burkhiya, Solomon's minister and his sister's son.[8]

Imam Baqir (as) said:

'The great name of the Allah contains seventy three letters and 'Asif-ibn-Burkhiya knew only one letter of it, by the power of which he did such a surprising thing."[9]

This verse indicates that the second person who demanded to bring Bilqiys' throne was a righteous man who had a considerable part of knowledge of the Divine Book, as the Qur'an says about him:

"One with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book said: 'I will bring it to you before your eye twinkles'…"

And when Solomon agreed with that matter, he brought the throne of the Queen of Sheba there, in front of Solomon, in a very short moment by using his spiritual power.

The verse continues saying about Solomon:

"…Then when he saw it settled before him, he said: 'this is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or am ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, verily he is grateful for his own soul…"

Then Solomon added:

"…and whoever is ungrateful, then my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Bounteous."

The Commentators have cited many things that who this person was, where from he obtained this wonderful power, and what the objective of the knowledge of Divine Book was.

But the apparent of the verse shows that this person was one of the specific faithful companions of Solomon whose name has often been introduced in history books as ''Asif Burkhiya' who was Solomon's minister and his sister's son.

The purpose of 'the knowledge of the Book' is having some information from the content of the Divine Book. It was a deep knowledge which made it possible for him to do such an extraordinary action.

Some believe that the purpose of it was 'Preserve Tablet', the same tablet of the knowledge of Allah that this person knew a part of it. It was by the same reason that he could bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba at the presence of Solomon in a very short moment.

Many of the commentators, and others, have thought that this faithful person had known 'the Exalted Name of Allah'; the same great name before which everything becomes humble and gives man an extraordinary power.

This point is necessary to be mentioned that, contrast to what many people think, knowing the Exalted Name of Allah does not mean that one says a proper word and gains those abundant wonderful effects; but the purpose is to be qualified with that qualification of that name.

That is, he must create the quality and meaning of that Divine Name inside his soul so that, from the point of knowledge, piety, faith, and morals, he develops and he himself becomes an example of that Name. This spiritual development, which is a ray from that Exalted Name of Allah, creates such an extraordinary power in man.[10]

Upon the Qur'anic sentence:

"I will bring it to you before your eye twinkles",

commentators have delivered different considerations. But, regarding to other verses of the Qur'an, its reality can be found out.

Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 43 says:

"…Their eyes (and eyelids) not blinking…"

which implies that on the Hereafter Day people will be so terrified that their eyes will be in a gazing state and even their eyelids do not blink.

Thus, the purpose of this Qur'anic sentence is that before Solomon had time enough to blink, that person could bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba before him.

Some Points

1) Among the questions arise in relation with these verses is that why Solomon, who was the prophet of Allah and had miracles, himself did not do this extraordinary action and 'Asif Burkhiya achieved it.

Answer: It might be for the sake that ’Asif was Solomon’s legate, and Solomon wanted to introduce him to all in that sensitive time. And, there is a detailed tradition narrated from the tenth Imam, Ali-ibn-Muhammad-il-Hadi, cited in the commentary of ‘Ayyashi, by which he (as) gave the same answer to Yahy-ibn-’Aktham.[11]

2) In the abovementioned verses, as well as in Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 26 the most important condition for a good worker is stated two things: A. Ability; B. Trust-worthiness. In other words, Power and trust are two important conditions.

Of course, sometimes there are some occasions that man’s mental and ethical fundaments require that he possesses this quality, (as it is said about Moses in Surah Al-Qasas); and sometimes the system of the society and righteous government requires that a jinn be necessarily qualified with these two qualifications.

However, no small or great affair of the society is doable without existing these two conditions, whether they originate from piety or from the legal system of the society.

3) The difference between ‘knowledge of a part of the Book’ and ‘the knowledge of the Book’.

In the verses under discussion the one, who brought the throne of the Queen of Sheba before Solomon in the shortest time, has been introduced as:

“One with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book”,

while in Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 43 the Qur’an says:

“…Say: ‘Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book.”

Abusa‘id Khidry narrates a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) and says:

“I asked him about the meaning of the ‘one with whom was some knowledge (of a part of the (Divine) Book’, (which is found in the story of Solomon).

He answered:

‘He was the inheritor of my brother Solayman-ibn-Dawud’.

I inquired:

“Whom is it about the one:

‘with whom is the knowledge of the Book’?”

He answered:

‘He is my brother Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib’ (as)”[12]

Paying attention to the difference between the meaning of the holy phrase:

“Some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book,”

which is used for a constituent knowledge, and the holy phrase:

“The knowledge of the Book’,

which refers to a universal knowledge, makes it clear that how far was the distance between the knowledge of ’Asif and the knowledge of Ali (as).

As it was said in the above, some Islamic narrations indicate that the Exalted Name of Allah contains seventy three letters one of which ’Asif-ibn-Burkhiya knew and he could do such an extraordinary action. There are

seventy two letters of it with the Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) and a letter is particular to the Pure Essence of Allah.[13]

4) When the haughty mammonists sit on the throne of power, they forget everything but themselves.

Like Qarun (Croesus) who used to say:

"Said he (Korah): 'I have been given this (wealth) only because of a knowledge that is in me,'…"[14]

They think that all the wealth and possibilities that they have obtained are absolutely from their own side, not from any other source.

But the proper servants of Allah, for every thing they gain, they say:

"This is of the grace of my Lord (to me)."[15]

It is interesting that Solomon said this sentence not only when he saw the throne of the Queen of Sheba in front of Him, but also he added:

"…that He may try me whether I am grateful or am ungrateful…"[16]

Formerly we reiterated in this very Surah that Solomon said all his merits and bounties are from Allah, and he humbly asks Him to grant him the chance of being gratitude for them and to give him success to be able to get His pleasure because of them.

Yes, this fact is the criterion of recognizing the sincere monotheists from haughty mammonists, and this is the manner of the noble persons with capacity and personality comparing those haughty ones who have no capacity.

It has become common that some apparently Muslims write only the Solomon's sentence:

"This is of the grace of my Lord"

at the top of the arrival door of their castles without having any belief in it and that it has any trace in their deeds. But it is important that this meaning could be seen not only at the top of their arrival door, but also in all aspects of their lives and in their hearts so that their behaviour shows that they consider them all from the grace of Allah and try to thank Him by their deeds.

The Virtues of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as)

The verse under discussion remarks:

"One with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the (Divine) Book said: 'I will bring it to you before your eye twinkles.'…",

but at the end of Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, Allah says to His Messenger (S):

"And those who disbelieve say: 'You are not a messenger'. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book."[17]

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the purpose of 'the one with whom is the (whole) knowledge of the Book' is Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as). When a person who knows a part of the Book brings the throne of Bilqiys to Solomon in a twinkling of eye, then how much power has, in his lifetime, the one who knows the knowledge of the whole Book?

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The knowledge of the one with whom was the knowledge of a part of the Book comparing Ali's knowledge is like the amount of water which is on the wing of a fly with respect to a sea."[18]

Another tradition indicates that Imam Sadiq (as), pointing to his chest, said:

"And with us, by Allah, is the knowledge of the Book utterly."[19]

Some Islamic traditions indicate that, disregard to time and place, Imams, the infallible, (as) can attend in some places. For example, Imam Jawad (as) at the moment of his father's martyrdom, went from Medina to Tus.

Imam Kazim (as) came out of his prison and presented in Medina. At the time of his captivity, Imam Sajjad (as) went to Karbala and buried his father's body, Imam Hussayn (as). Before his martyrdom, Imam Hussayn (as) took a handful of the soil of Karbala and gave it to Um-us-Salamah in Medina.

Therefore, folding of the earth miraculously and rapidly by Imams has happened and has some particular records.[20]

Surah An-Naml - Verse 41

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَهْتَدُونَ

41. "(Solomon) said: 'Disguise her throne for her, we will see whether she follows the right way or she is one of those who do not go aright'."

This verse points to another surprising scene of instructive event of Solomon (as) and the Queen of Sheba.

In order to test the level of wisdom, perspicacity and intelligence of the Queen of Sheba, and to prepare a ground for her faith to Allah, too, Solomon ordered that her throne, which had been brought there, should be altered in an unknown state for her in order that they see whether she could recognize it, or not.

The verse says:

"(Solomon) said: 'Disguise her throne for her, we will see whether she follows the right way or she is one of those who do not go aright'."

Though the coming of the Queen's throne from the country of Sheba to Syria was enough for her not to recognize it, yet Solomon ordered that some changes should be done on it. These changes may have been removing some signs or jewels of the throne, or changing some colours of it, or the like.

But there arises a question that what was the goal of Solomon in testing the wisdom, perspicacity, and intelligence of the Queen of Sheba?

The test might be done for the sake that he could know with which logic he ought to confront her, and what kind of reason should he bring for her to prove the ideological basic principles.

Or he had the thought of suggesting marriage to her in mind and he wanted to know whether she had really the competency of being his wife, or not. Or, indeed, Solomon (as) wanted to give her a responsibility after she believed in Truth. He must know how much she was capable to undertake the responsibilities.

For the Qur'anic sentence /'atahtadi/ (Does she follows the right way), there have also been mentioned two commentaries:

Some have said that the purpose was the recognition of her own throne, while some others have said that the objective was her being guided to the path of Allah by seeing this miracle. But the apparent of the verse leads to the first meaning, although the first meaning itself had been a premise for the second meaning.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 42-43

فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكِ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِن قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ

وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَت تَّعْبُدُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِن قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ

42. "So when she came, she was asked: 'Is your throne like this?' She said: 'It is as it were the same. And we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submitting'."

43. "And he barred her from the worship of others besides Allah, verily she was of the disbelieving people."

However, when the Queen of Sheba arrived, someone pointed to the throne and asked her whether her throne was like that.

The verse says:

"So when she came, she was asked: 'Is your throne like this?'…"

The apparent of the verse shows that the speaker of this statement was not Solomon himself, else it was not appropriate for the sentence to be said in a passive voice form, because the name of Solomon has been mentioned before and after it, and his words are expressed in an active form.

Moreover, it was not fit for the grandeur of Solomon that he speaks like that at the beginning of the arrival of Bilqiys.

However, the Queen of Sheba gave the most wisely and calculated answers, when she said:

"…'It is as it were the same…"

If she said it was like it, she would be wrong; and if she said it was exactly the same, she would have said something contrast to precaution, because, with that length of distance, it was impossible that her throne could be brought to the country of Solomon in an ordinary way, save that there had been done a miracle.

Moreover, it is recorded in history books that she had been protecting her precious throne in a safe place in her particular castle in a room with some firm and strong doors, which was being guarded by some watchful men. Yet, with all the changes which that throne had received, the Queen of Sheba could recognize it.

Then, immediately she added:

"…And we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submitting'."

This means that she implied if the purpose of Solomon by these deeds was that they comprehended his miracle, they had formerly been aware of his legitimacy by other signs, and even before observing this surprising supernatural event they had believed, and these things were not needed.

Thus, Solomon stopped her from worshipping what was besides Allah, although she was formerly one of the disbelievers.

The verse says:

"And he barred her from the worship of others besides Allah, verily she was of the disbelieving people."

Yes, by seeing these clear signs, she said farewell to her last dark position and entered into a new stage of life which was full of light of faith and certainty.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 44

قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَن سَاقَيْهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِن قَوَارِيرَ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

44. "It was said to her: 'Enter the palace,' but when she saw it she deemed it to be a great expanse of water and bared her legs. (Solomon) said: 'Verily this is but a palace smoothed of crystal'. She said: 'My Lord! Verily I have been unjust to myself, and I surrender with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'."

We must not encounter the wealthy ones in a way that they think 'Faith' means 'poverty'. The material potentialities should be at the service of propagation of religion. Industry and financial potentialities can be used in the path of Solomon-like goals for the guidance and leading others.

However, in this holy verse, another scene of this event is referred to. The explanation is about the act of entering the Queen of Sheba into the particular castle of Solomon.

Solomon had ordered that the yard of one of the castles should be built of crystal, and beneath it there would be flowing water. When the Queen of Sheba arrived there, she was told to enter the yard of the castle.[21]

When the Queen looked at it, she imagined it was a stream. So she bared her legs in order to pass it through, (while she had got surprised about the existence of a stream there).[22]

The verse says:

"It was said to her: 'Enter the palace,' but when she saw it she deemed it to be a great expanse of water and bared her legs. (Solomon) said: 'Verily this is but a palace smoothed of crystal'…"

There arises here a question that why Solomon, who was a Divine prophet, had such an extraordinary splendid palace. It is true that he was a ruler, but was it not possible that he also had a simple means of life like other prophets?

It did not matter to Solomon that for surrendering the Queen of Sheba, who considered all her power and greatness in her beautiful throne and her glorious castle and the like, he would show her that all her splendours were very little in his view, so that this action could become a turning point in her life for reviewing the standard of values and criterion of personality.

It does not matter that instead of a military expedition, which results to destruction and shedding tear, Solomon makes the mind and thought of the Queen of Sheba so overpowered that she does not think of it at all; in particular that she was a woman and gave prominence to such ceremonial issues.

Many commentators have specially cited that, before reaching the Queen of Sheba to Syria, Solomon ordered that such a castle should be built; and

his aim was exhibition of power for surrendering her. That action indicated that a great power, from the point of apparent military forces, was in the hand of Solomon that made him able to accomplish such things.

In other words, this expenditure for creating security and peace in a vast province, and accepting the true religion, and also preventing the large expenditure of war, was not a significant matter.

So, when the Queen of Sheba observed that scene, she expressed, as the verse says:

"…She said: 'My Lord! Verily I have been unjust to myself, and I surrender with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'."

She confessed that formerly she used to fall prostrate before the sun, worshipped idol, applied ornaments, and considered herself the most superior one in the world. But now, she understands that how little and insignificant her power is.

And basically, these ornaments and dazzling glares do not satiate one's soul. She repents of her past deeds and says that she has come to the Lord of the worlds accompanied with her leader, Solomon.

It is interesting that here she uses the word /ma'a/ (with Solomon) in order to clarify that, in paving the path of Allah, they are equal and brethren, not like the manner and custom of tyrants that some of them have power over some others and a group are involved as captives in the grips of another group.

Here there is not any one victorious and overcome, and, after accepting the Truth, all are in the same row.

It is true that the Queen of Sheba had announced her faith before that, too, and she said:

"…And we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submitting."

But here the submission of the Queen reaches its climax, and, therefore, she announces her faith to the Truth with emphasis.

She had seen a number of signs of the legitimacy of Solomon's invitation before, such as: coming of the hoopoe in that special condition; the lack of acceptance of those valuable presents which had been sent from the side of the Queen; bringing her throne from a long distance in a short moment; and, finally, observing the extraordinary power and greatness of Solomon while he had a particular manner which had no similarity with the behaviour of kings.

Some moods of Solomon, which are expressed in previous thirty verses and point to many different issues, were discussed.

Now some other parts of them are referred to in the following:

1) This story begins with the merit and vast knowledge that Allah has bestowed on Solomon; and it ends with monotheism and submitting to the command of Allah, a monotheism the base of which is also knowledge.

2) This story shows that sometimes the absence and an exceptional flight of a bird over a region may change the history of a nation and drag them from idolatry to Faith, and from corruption to righteousness. This is an example of the power of Allah, and the example of the legitimate government.

3) This story shows that the light of monotheism may illuminate all hearts, and even an apparently mute bird can inform of the depth of the secrets of monotheism.

4) In order to attract the attention of a person to his true value, and leading him unto Allah, at first his haughtiness must be broken in order that the dark curtains of vanity be removed from his eyes and he sees the fact. By achieving two things, Solomon broke the pride of the Queen of Sheba: bringing her throne, and causing her to make mistake when she confronted a part of the castle.

5) The ultimate goal in prophets' government is not conquest, but the aim is the same thing that was mentioned in the abovementioned verse, that the arrogant confess their sin and surrender to the Lord of the worlds. So, by mentioning this very point, the Qur'an puts an end to the above story.

6) The soul of Faith is submission. That was why not only Solomon emphasized on it in his letter, but also the Queen of Sheba did it at the end of the event.

7) Sometimes someone, who has the greatest possible power in his authority, may become in need of a small weak creature, like a bird. He takes help not only from its knowledge but also from its deed; and sometimes an ant, with that weakness and disability that it has, belittles him.

8) The revelation of these verses in Mecca, where Muslims were under serious pressure from the side of their enemies, and all the doors were shut to them, had a special concept. Its aim was to strengthen their spirits, sooth them, and make them hopeful of the grace of Allah and to the future victories.

By the way, at last the Queen of Sheba believed and gave the suggestion of marriage to Solomon, and said:

"…I surrender with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'."

Notes

1. Bihar, Vol. 76, P. 49
2. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 301
3. Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. 76, P.50
4. Wasa'il, Vol. 8, P. 437
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 256
6. The Commentary of Ruh-ul-Bayan, following the verse.
7. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 60
8. The commentary of Nur-Uth-Thaqalayn
9. Kafi, Vol. 1, P. 230
10. The discussion upon 'the Exalted Name of Allah' has been mentioned when commenting Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 180
11. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 91; Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 4, P. 67; and Burhan, Vol. 3, P. 20
12. Some of the commentators of Sunnites and the Sunnite scholars have narrated this tradition in this very form or similar to it. For more details you may refer to 'Ihghagh-ul-Haqq, Vol. 3, PP. 380-381
13. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 91; Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 4, P.67; and Burhan, Vol. 3, P. 202
14. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 78
15. The verse under discussion
16. Ibid
17. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 43

18. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
19. Ibid
20. Tafsir-i-Atyab-ul-Bayan
21. The Arabic word /sarh/ here means ‘the yard of the castle’.
22. The Arabic word /lujjah/ means: ‘depth of the sea’, and abundant water.

Section 4: Saleh and Lot

Surah An-Naml - Verses 45-46

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحاً أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلاَ تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

45. "And indeed We sent unto (the tribe of) Thamud their brother Saleh, saying: 'Worship you Allah!' but behold, they became two parties quarrelling with each other."

46. "He said: 'O my people! Why will you hasten on the evil before the good? Why do you not ask forgiveness of Allah so that you may be dealt with mercifully?"

Next to a part of life stories of Moses, David, and Solomon (as) mentioned in the previous verses, the fourth prophet, a part of whose life story is referred to in this Surah, is Hadrat Saleh, the prophet of Thamud people.

At first, it says:

"And indeed We sent unto (the tribe of) Thamud their brother Saleh, saying: 'Worship you Allah!'…"

As it was also said before, the application of the concept of 'their brother', which has been used in the story life of several prophets, is a hint to their ultimate love and affection unto their peoples. In addition to this, in some instances, it points to their relationship with those people, too.

However, the entire messengership and invitation of this prophet is summarized in the holy phrase:

"Worship you Allah!"

Yes, the servitude of Allah is the essence of all teachings of the messengers of Allah.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…but behold, they became two parties quarrelling with each other."

Those two groups, who quarrelled with each other, were the believers, from one side, and the obstinate disbelievers, from the other side.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"A group attested the invitation of Hadrat Salih but another group rejected it."[1]

These two groups are referred to in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 75 as:

'The arrogant'

and

'those who were considered weak'.

It says:

"The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said to those who were considered weak - those of them who believed - 'Do you know that Saleh is sent by his Lord?' they said surely we believe in what he has been sent with'."

"Those who were arrogant said: 'We, indeed, disbelieve in that which you believe'."[2]

Of course, this conflict of two groups of believers and disbelievers existed among the peoples of many prophets, although some of them were

deprived of even these adherents and nearly the totality of their people were rejecters of the truth.

Finally, in order to awaken them, Hadrat Saleh (as) began warning them, and made them aware of the painful chastisements of Allah. But not only they did not take counsel, but also took that very matter as a reason for their obstinacy, and persistently wanted him that they should be involved with the Divine punishment if he was truthful.[3]

But Saleh replied them as follows:

"He said: 'O my people! Why will you hasten on the evil before the good?…"

Why do you concentrate your thought on meeting the Divine punishment? If the Divine chastisement meets you, it will put an end to your life and there will not remain any time for you to believe. Let yourselves try the legitimacy of my statement by the grace and blessings of Allah which will embrace you as the result of Faith.

The verse continues saying:

"…Why do you not ask forgiveness of Allah so that you may be dealt with mercifully?"

Why do you seek for evils and the descent of punishment? What is this obstinacy and arrogance for?

Those who rejected the call of prophets and asked for the promised punishment were not limited to the people of Saleh, this matter is repeatedly seen in the Qur'an concerning other peoples, too, including the people of Nuh.[4]

In relation to the Prophet of Islam (S) and some fanatic and obstinate polytheists, the Qur'an says:

"And (remember) when they said: 'O Allah! If this (Qur'an) is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment'."[5]

This is, indeed, surprising that some persons want to try the truthfulness of the call of the prophet by the way of Divine destructive punishment, not by the way of asking for Divine mercy; while certainly they do verify the probable legitimacy of those prophets in their hearts, though they deny it by tongue.

This behaviour is like a person who claims he is a physician and says this medicine is curative and that one is fatal, and then, in order to test him, we use the fatal medicine, not the curative one.

This is the ultimate ignorance, folly and fanaticism, while ignorance has many fruits of this kind.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 47

قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَن مَّعَكَ قَالَ طَآئِرُكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ

47. "They said: 'Ill omen do we augur from you and those with you'. He said: 'Your ill omen is with Allah. Nay! You are a people who are being tried'."

The Arabic word /tatayyur/ is derived from /tayr/ which means 'a bird'. Some of Arabs used to leave a bird at the time when they wanted to travel.

If it went to the right direction they would start their traveling, and if it flew to the left (they augured ill and) they would suspend their traveling.[6] In Islam auguring ill has been considered disbelief. To augur ill leads to leaving the main reasons and going toward superstitions.

There are many occurrences in the Qur'an which indicate that the Divine prophets had been augured ill. The people of Pharaoh thought that their afflictions had come because of Moses (as).

The Qur'an says:

"…and if any evil afflicted them, they took it bad omens due to Moses…"[7]

Jesus (as) was told:

"…For us, we augur an evil omen from you…"[8]

In the above mentioned verse, the disbelievers told Saleh:

"…'Ill omen do we augur from you and those with you'…"

However, this arrogant nation, instead of listening to the sympathetic advice of their great prophet and applying it, they opposed him with some vain words and baseless conclusions, among them is their following statement:

"They said: 'Ill omen do we augur from you and those with you'…"

It seems that there was drought, and deficiency of crop and foodstuff for the people of Moses in that year. They said that all those afflictions and difficulties were because of unpleasant advent of Moses and his followers who brought them and their society misery and omen.

By resorting to the weapon of ill omen, which is often the weapon of arrogant and superstitious persons, they wanted to overcome the strong logic of Moses (as). But in answer to them, he said that their evil fortune was with Allah, and it was their own deeds that resulted such miseries and afflictions, as punishments. In fact, this was a great Divine trial for them.

The verse continues saying:

"…He said: 'Your ill omen is with Allah. Nay! You are a people who are being tried'."

These are some Divine trials. They are some warnings and awakening subjects for those who have some suitability and competency to awake from the sleep of negligence and, by going to the path of Allah, improve themselves.

There are also some people in some societies who do not believe in Allah, although they have earned some considerable good grades in knowledge and science but, in the meantime, they have some superstitions and similar vain beliefs in them and they still have a warm market for fortune-telling and soothsaying among them, so that the illusive subject of luck and horoscopy has many customers.

But the Qur'an through a short sentence says:

"Your ill omen is with Allah."

This means your luck, your victory, your defeat, and your success and failure all are with Allah, Who is Wise, and His favours are divided among men according to their competencies, those very competencies which are the reflection of their Faith, action, speech and behaviour.

Thus, the Qur'an drives out the followers of Islam from the valley of superstition to reality and from devious way toward straight Path.

Some Traditions Upon Bad Omen

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The atonement of ill omen is reliance in Allah."[9]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Ill omen is infidelity and it is not from us, but reliance in Allah abolishes it."[10]

3. There has been narrated that, in supplication, the Prophet (S) used to say:

"O Allah! There is no omen but Your omen, no goodness but Your goodness, and no god but You (Allah). O Allah! No one gives rewards but You, and no one wipes the faults but You, and there is no power except in Allah, the Exalted, the Great."[11]

Surah An-Naml - Verse 48

وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ يُصْلِحُونَ

48. "And there were in the city nine (groups of) persons who made mischief in the land and would not reform."

The Arabic word /raht/ is used for 'a group of people among whom there is a warm relation'.

This holy verse refers to another part of the life story of Saleh (as) which completes the previous part and concludes the story. It concerns the plot of nine groups of pagans and hypocrites who wanted to kill Saleh, but their evil plot failed.

The Qur'an says:

"And there were in the city nine (groups of) persons who made mischief in the land and would not reform."

Regarding to the fact that the Arabic word /raht/ in lexicon means a group of persons who are less than ten or less than forty members, makes it clear that these small groups, each of which had a separate line, were similar to each other in one thing and it was making mischief in the earth, disturbing the social system and the creedal and ethical principles.

The Qur'anic phrase /layuslihuna/ (would not reform) is an emphasis on this matter, because it sometimes happens that someone makes a mischief and later he regrets and tries to amend himself, but the real mischief mongers are not like that. They go on their corruption constantly and never try to rectify their wrong.

Paying attention to the Arabic conjugation of the verb /yufsidun/ (make mischief), which is in future and simple present tense form and indicates to the duration of the action, it shows that this action was their permanent deed and they used to commit it.

Each of these nine groups had a chief, and probably every one of them was from a separate tribe.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 49

قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

49. "They said: 'Swear a mutual oath by Allah that surely we will make a sudden attack on him and his family by night, then we will tell his heir, we were not present at the slaughter of his household, and verily we are truthful'."

The content of this holy verse is similar to the state of the pagans of Mecca who united by an oath and decided to surprise and kill the Prophet of Islam (S) in his bed while he was asleep, but the holy Prophet (S) asked Hadrat Ali (as) to sleep in his bed and thus the enemy's plot was nullified.

Certainly by the appearance of Saleh and his pure religion in the society, those groups were driven to extremities, and it was in that condition that, as the verse says:

"They said: 'Swear a mutual oath by Allah that surely we will make a sudden attack on him and his family by night, then we will tell his heir, we were not present at the slaughter of his household, and verily we are truthful'."

The Arabic word /taqasamu/ (swear a mutual oath), in an imperative verb form, means: 'everybody must participate in making an oath and promise to achieve this great plot', a promise in which there is no change or return.

It is interesting that they made an oath by Allah. It indicates that, besides worshipping idols, they believed in Allah, the Creator of the skies and the earth, too. Therefore, they used to make an oath to Him in relation to important matters.

It also shows that they were so proud that they did this great crime of theirs by mentioning their names; as if they wanted to worship, or to do a godly service. This is the custom of haughty misguided disbelievers.

The Qur'anic word /lanubayyitannahu/ (surely we will make a sudden attack on him) is derived from /tabyit/ which means 'to surprise and to attack suddenly by night'. The application of this meaning here shows that, in the meanwhile, they were afraid of the adherents of Saleh and his tribe.

Therefore, in order that they could reach their own goal and, in the meantime, they might not confront the anger of his followers, they designed the plot of a sudden attack at night and colluded that if Saleh's followers came to them, all of them with together take an oath that they had no role in that event absolutely, and even they were not present there nor had they witnessed it.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 50-51

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْراً وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْراً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَّا دَمَّرْنَاهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

50. "And they devised a device, and We devised a device (too), but they were not aware;"

51. "And behold, how was the end of their device! For We destroyed them and their people all together."

The means of annihilation of the people of Thamud has been referred to in several occurrences of the Qur'an with different explanations:

1) By earthquake:

"…Then the earthquake seized them…"[12]

2) By thunderbolt:

"…So the Thunderbolt seized them…"[13]

3) By Mighty Blast:

"And the (mighty) Blast overtook those who were unjust…"[14]

It does not matter, of course, that these three punishments might have occurred simultaneously.

One of the aspects of the device of Allah is giving respite and bounty to the sinners, so that they be busy with them, and when their time is over they are suddenly involved in the chastisement of Allah.

History announces that there was a mountain in a side of the city and it had a slit where the temple of Saleh was. Sometimes Saleh (as) went there at night in order to worship and prattle with Allah as two lovers.

They decided to lie in ambush there and when Saleh came over there they would kill him, and then, after his martyrdom, they would attack his home by the same night and kill his household, too, and return to their houses; and when they were questioned about it, they would say they knew nothing.

But Allah nullified their plots surprisingly and their plans remained invalid.

When they were lying in ambush in a corner of the mountain, some pieces of the mountain fall and a huge rock from upward of it came down over them and destroyed them in a short moment.

The verse says:

"And they devised a device, and We devised a device (too), but they were not aware;"

Then, the next verse implies that not only those people, but also their adherents were destroyed.

It says:

"And behold, how was the end of their device! For We destroyed them and their people all together."

As it has been mentioned formerly, the Qur'anic term /makr/, in the Arabic literature, means any 'application of a remedy', and it does not pertain exclusively to satanic and harmful plans that is used in the Persian language today. Thus, it is used in both harmful plans and good devices.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"/makr/ (device) is that which hinders one to reach his goal."

Therefore, when this word is used about Allah, it means: 'nullification of harmful plots'; and when it is used about mischief mongers, it means: 'impedimental acts against reproving programs'.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 52-53

فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَأَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

52. "So those are their houses in empty ruins for they were unjust. Verily there is in this a sign for a people who have knowledge."

53. "And We saved those who believed and used to keep from evil."

The Arabic word /xawiyah/ means ‘corruption, annihilation, and destruction’, and it is also used in the sense of ‘empty of dwellers’.

Chastisement is not limited to that of Hereafter, sometimes oppressors are punished in this world. This situation is also the same for the effects of faith and piety which is not particular to the Hereafter. The pious people observe the result of their deeds in this world, too.

However, regarding to their annihilation and final fate, the holy Qur’an says:

“So those are their houses in empty ruins for they were unjust…”

Their houses are utterly ruin and there is no people to have activities therein, and there have remained no sign of their glories, bounties and sinful gatherings.

Yes, the fire of cruelty and injustice caused them and all their belongings to be burnt and destroyed. This is a clear sign for the end of the act of those who are unjust.

The verse continues saying:

“…Verily there is in this a sign for a people who have knowledge.”

But in this event those who were not guilty were not burnt in the fire of the guilty ones and were not involved in the evil fate of wrongdoers.

The verse says:

“And We saved those who believed and used to keep from evil.”

Surah An-Naml - Verses 54-55

وَلُوطاً إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنتُمْ تبْصِرُونَ

أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِن دُونِ النِّسَآءِ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ

54. “And (We sent) Lot, when he said to his people: ‘Do you commit indecency while you see (its iniquity)?’”

55. “What! Do you approach men lustfully instead of women? No, you are a people that are ignorant.”

The people of Lot used to commit sodomy in their public meetings and before the eyes of each other. Surah Al-‘Ankabut, No. 29, verse 29 says:

“…and you commit dishonour in your assemblies?…”

In the above verse, the Qur’an also says:

“…while you see (its iniquity)?”

which means ‘you commit indecency before the eyes of each other, or you commit sin consciously and with insight.

Sodomy is one of the great and hideous sins, because the later verses of the Surah indicate that it consequently brings the chastisement of Allah.

Some other verses of the Qur’an refer to the fact that wife is necessary for calmness, educating and raising up generation, and cooperation in living; but, here, the Qur’an points only to the phenomenon of lust, because the people of Lot had not any aim of their shameful act but lust.

Next to mentioning parts of the life stories of Moses, David, Solomon, and Saleh and their peoples, the fifth prophet whom has been referred to in this Surah, is Lot, the great prophet of Allah.

This subject has repeatedly been referred to in the former Suras of the Qur'an, such as Al-Hijr, Hud, Ash-Shu'ara, and Al-'A'raf, where some matters have been mentioned in this ground.

This repetition, and the like of it, is for the fact that the Qur'an is not a book of history in which an event may be wholly explained for one time and it usually does not refer to that event again.

But Qur'an is a book of education for training good men, and we know that in educational themes sometimes the conditions require that an incident should be repeated again and again, in order that it could be reminded and be dealt with from different dimensions.

However, the story of the people of Lot, who are known in the world for their sexual deviation, Sodomy, and for other hideous deeds, as well as their fate at the end of their life, can be an example for those who are drowned in the cesspool of lusts; and the spread of this pollution among societies requires that this instructive event to be mentioned repeatedly.

Here the Qur'an says:

"And (We sent) Lot, when he said to his people: 'Do you commit indecency while you see (its iniquity)?'"

The Arabic word /fahišah/, as we have said aforetime, means some deeds that the indecency and ugliness of which is manifest, but here the purpose of it is the shameful act of Sodomy.

The Qur'anic phrase /'antum tubsirun/ (while you see) refers to this fact that you see the ugliness and the evil results of this hideous action with your eyes, and you observe that your society has wholly become polluted, so that even your own children are not secured. Why do you see, but yet you do not awake?

Then, in the next verse, it says:

"What! Do you approach men lustfully instead of women?…"

In fact, at first the Qur'an points to this action as an indecent action, /fahišah/, then it explains it more clearly so that there remains no ambiguity for anybody. This is one of the styles of decorum in order to state an important thing.

Then for making clear that the motive of this action is ignorance, it says:

"…No, you are a people that are ignorant."

This ignorance is the ignorance to Allah, the ignorance to the purpose of creation and laws of creation, and the ignorance to the evil effects of this important sin. If a person, contemplates deeply, he will understand that how much ignorantly this evil action is.

The reason why this sentence is stated in interrogative form is for the sake that they hear its answer from the inside of their own conscience so that it may be more effective.

The End of Part 19

Surah An-Naml - Verse 56

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلاَّ أَن قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوا ءَالَ لُوطٍ مِن قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أُنَاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ

56. "But the answer of his people was naught except that they said: 'Drive out the people of Lot from your city; verily they are people (who seek to be) pure."

Since the wrong doers have not any acceptable logic before the Divine prophets, they use force against them.

The former discussions with the strong logic of Lot, the Divine prophet, in front of those polluted people, explained that how he dissuaded them from the hideous act of Sodomy by his reasonable and eloquent statement, and he showed them that this act is the consequence of ignorance and being unaware of the law of creation and all human values.

Now, we see the answer of this polluted nation to the logical statement of Lot (as).

The holy Qur'an says:

"But the answer of his people was naught except that they said: 'Drive out the people of Lot from your city; verily they are people (who seek to be) pure."

This answer is an implication to the low level of their thought and the extraordinary fall of their ethical affairs.

Yes, in the environment of the polluted ones, chastity is a crime and a defect. The chaste and modest ones, like Yusuf, are put in prison, and the household of the divine prophet, because of their chastity and avoidance from pollution, are banished, while the persons like Zulaykha, are free and possess ranks.

Lot's household must be banished, but the people of Lot can live in peace in their city freely.

This is the clear example of the word of Qur'an where it says about the wrong doers that their hearts were sealed because of their deeds and their eyes were veiled and their ears had heaviness.[15]

It is also probable that because of their being sunk in corruption and being accustomed to pollution, concerning Lot's household, they said in mockery:

"…They are people (who seek to be) pure…".

These people implied that Lot's household imagined that their piety was chastity and the act of the people of Lot was impious. What a wonderful and ridiculous thing!

And it is not surprising that, as the result of getting accustomed to a shameful action, the sense of recognition of a person changes. The famous story of a tanner, who was constantly with the purified skins and his sense of smell had got accustomed to that bad smell, is well known.

When he was passing the market of perfume-sellers, he became unconscious, and the concerning doctor ordered that he should be brought into the market of tanners to 'recover his sense'. We have heard this story and it is an interesting sensible example for this logical matter.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 57-58

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلاَّ ا ْرَأَتَهُ قَدَّرْنَاهَا مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَراً فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

57. "So We saved him and his household, except his wife, We had decreed her to be of those that tarried."

58. "And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone), and evil was the shower of those who had been warned.

The Divine leaders are under the protection and support of Allah:

"So We saved him…"

The fruit of people's piety and virtue in this world is their being saved from the wrath of Allah.

The Arabic word /qabirin/, which means: 'those that tarried and were annihilated', has been used seven times in the Qur'an and all of them are about Lot's wife.

It has been cited in narrations that Lot taught those people for about thirty years but none believed in him except his household, (and among them even his wife had the creed of pagans).[16]

It is evident that such a group, who might not be improved, could not have a room for living in this world and they should be annihilated.

Therefore, this verse says:

"So We saved him and his household, except his wife, We had decreed her to be of those that tarried."

Then, when Lot and his family came out of the city at the appointed time, (in midnight of the night when the city was full of corruption and shame), a terrible earthquake turned their land completely upside down, and, in the morning, a shower of brimstone came over there.

The verse says:

"And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone), and evil was the shower of those who had been warned."

We had a detailed discussion about the people of Lot and their fate, as well as the evil effects of Sodomy, when explaining holy Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 77-83, which is not necessary to be repeated here again.

There is only one point, of course, that seems necessary to be mentioned here, as follows:

As a factor for duration of man's seed and the calmness of his soul, the law of creation has set the sexual attraction between two opposite sexes, and its change toward Sodomy disturbs both the spiritual calmness and the social peace. And since these social laws have a trace in man's nature, this change causes a kind of disorder in the system of the entity of man.

Lot, the great prophet of Allah, attracted the attention of that deviated nation to this natural trace and said to them:

"Do you commit indecency while you see (its iniquity)?"

This ignorance and unawareness of the law of life was in the sense of foolishness that drugged them towards this devious way.

It is not marvellous that other laws of creation may change due to this nation, too, and instead of a wholesome rain water, a shower of brimstone rains down over them, and their peaceful land turns over by an earthquake,

and, consequently, not only they are destroyed but also no trace remains from them.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. Al-'A'raf, verses 75-76
3. This meaning is explicitly expressed in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 77
4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 70
5. Sur Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 32
6. Tafsir-ul-Kashshaf
7. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 131
8. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 18
9. Nahaj by Ibn-Abil-Hadid, Vol. 20, P. 283
10. Sunan-i-Ibn-Majid, Vol. 2, P. 1170; and Sunan-i-'Abi Dawud, Vol. 2, P. 344
11. Safinah, Vol. 2, P. 102
12. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 78
13. Surah Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 44
14. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 67
15. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 46
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary, Vol. 2, P. 382

Section 5: Allah's Chosen Servants

Surah An-Naml - Verse 59

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلاَمٌ عَلَي عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَي ءَآللَّهُ خَيْرٌ أَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

59. "Say: 'Praise be to Allah, and peace be on His servants whom He has chosen. Is Allah better, or what they associate (with Him)?'"

Not only the punishment of the wrong doers, but also the deliverance and the salvation of the believers are because of Allah's Grace, which must be thanked.

"Say: 'Praise be to Allah…"

Both the praise of the servants of Allah and peace being on them are mentioned beside the praise of Allah.

"…Praise be to Allah, and peace be on His servants…"

However, next to the end of the explanation of the life stories of five Divine prophets, as well as the fate of their peoples, the verse under discussion addresses the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and, as drawing a conclusion from the former statements and as a premise for speaking with pagans, implies that all praise belongs to Allah Who annihilated the former disgraceful nations, such as the people of Lot, lest the kind of their corruption might spread all over the earth.

The verse announces:

"Say: 'Praise be to Allah…"

Praise belongs to the One Who sent the corruptors such as the people of Thamud and the arrogant people of Pharaoh to destruction so that their manner might not be continued as a tradition among others.

And, finally, the praise belongs to the One Who bestowed those plenty bounties and might on His faithful servants, like David and Solomon, and by which guided some misled ones like the people of Sheba.

Then, it adds:

"…and peace be on His servants whom He has chosen…"

Peace be on prophets, such as: Moses, Saleh, Lot, Solomon, and David (as), and peace be upon all Divine prophets and their true followers.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…Is Allah better, or what they associate (with Him)?'"

That is, which is better, the Lord Who has those infinite powers, strengths and bountiful merits, or the idols which idolaters associate to Allah (s.w.t.) and they absolutely affect nothing?

In the explanations of the life stories of the former prophets, we realized that idols could never help their worshippers at the time of coming misfortunes and afflictions, while Allah did not leave the believers alone in none of their difficulties and His merciful grace came to help them.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 60

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ وَأَنزَلَ لَكُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَنبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَآئِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَن تُنبِتُوا شَجَرَهَآ أَءِلَهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَعْدِلُونَ

60. "Or Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you water from the sky? Then We caused to grow thereby beautiful gardens; it

was not in your power that you grew the trees thereof. Is there any god with Allah? Nay! They are a people who deviate."

Contemplation about Divine creation is the best way for getting near to Allah.

Every tree or plant that grows is under the observation of Allah and by His Will. After explaining some outstanding parts of the life stories of five Divine prophets, there was an expressive question in the content of the previous verse implying whether Allah, with His infinite power, is better or the worthless idols which the idolaters produced.

The verses under discussion explain this meaning and, putting the pagans under trial, state the clearest reasons of Unity.

At first, it refers to the creation of the heavens and the earth, as well as the descent of rain and the bounties emerged from it, where it says:

"Or Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you water from the sky? Then We caused to grow thereby beautiful gardens…"

The Arabic word /hada'iq/ is the plural form of /hadiqah/ and, as many commentators have said, it means a garden which is surrounded with a wall and it is secured from any thing, like the pupil of eye which is protected among eyelids.

Raqib says in Mufradat:

"The word /hadiqah/ is originally used for a land where there is gathered some water, like the pupil of the eye that there is always water therein."

It can be concluded from these two statements that the Arabic word /hadiqah/ means a garden which has both a wall and enough water.

The Arabic word /bahjat/ means the beauty of colour and apparent goodness which causes the spectators to be full of joy.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an addresses the servants of Allah and says:

"…it was not in your power that you grew the trees thereof…"

You should only sow the seed and irrigate it, but He who has created life inside this seed and commands the sunlight, the life giving drops of rain, and the pieces of soil to grow this seed is only Allah.

These are some facts that none can deny, or attributes them to other than Allah. It is He Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is the sender of rain. He is the cause of all beauties and favours in the world.

Even paying attention to the colouring of a flower, the delicate and regular arrangement of leaves inside each other that have circulated around the central point of the flower and cry of the existence of life, are enough to acquaint man with the glory, power and knowledge of Allah. These are the facts which move the man's heart and call him toward Him.

In other words, Unity in creation (Unity of Creator) and Unity in Lordship (the Unity of the Deviser of this world) are counted as the basis of the Unity of the object of worship.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Is there any god with Allah? Nay! They are a people who deviate."

Surah An-Naml - Verses 61-62

أَمَّن جَعَلَ الاَرْضَ قَرَاراً وَجَعَلَ خِلاَلَهَآ أَنْهَاراً وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزاً أَءِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ الاَرْضِ أَءِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلاً مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

61. "Or Who made the earth a resting place, and made in it rivers, and placed firm mountains therein, and placed between the two seas a barrier. Is there any god with Allah? Nay! Most of them do not know."

62. "Or Who answers the distressed one when he calls on Him and removes the distress, and makes you successors in the earth. Is there any god with Allah? Little it is that you heed!"

This verse refers to the merit of peace and firmness of the earth as a resting place for human beings in this world, and compares the artificial idols of the idolaters with Allah.

It says:

"Or Who made the earth a resting place, and made in it rivers, and placed firm mountains therein, and placed between the two seas a barrier…"

Thus, there are four great bounties mentioned in this verse, three of which are about calmness.

The calmness of the earth itself which in the meantime that it rotates around itself and around the sun as well as its travel in the constellation of solar system, its movement is so monotonous and quiet that its habitants never feel it, as if it is standing fix in a point and has not any movement.

Another one is the existence of the mountains. As it was said before, they have surrounded the lands of the earth and their rots have clung to each other and have formed a strong armour against the inner pressures of the earth.

This armour resists against the outward movements created by flow and ebb resulted from the gravity of the moon, too, and it is also a barrier against the great storms that disturb the calmness of the earth.

Another one is the natural hinder which is between the two flows of a part of the sweet and salty water of some seas or oceans.

This unseen inviolable obstruction is not any thing but the difference of the density of the sweet water and that of the salt water which causes the water of the great rivers that comes into the sea does not mix with its salty water for a considerable length of time and, therefore, the flow and ebb of the sea bring it over a great part of the lands of the seashore whose farms are ready to be irrigated.

The explanation of this very meaning was cited in the commentary of Surah Furqan , No. 25, verse 53.

In the meanwhile, there are some sources of water inside the different layers of parts of the earth. The water of these sources is the origin of liveliness and greenness of cultivated farms and fruitful gardens. A part of the sources of such water is located in mountains and another part is inside the layers of the earth.

Can this system be the fruit of a deaf and blind cause and that of an origin with no intellect and knowledge?

Have idols any function in the creation of this wonderful system? Even the idolaters themselves do not claim such a thing.

So, at the end of the verse, this question is repeated, saying:

"…Is there any god with Allah?…"

And then it continues saying:

"…Nay! Most of them do not know."

In the next verse, the words are about solving difficulties, removing the distresses, and answering the supplications. It implies which is better, your worthless idols or Allah.

It says:

"Or Who answers the distressed one when he calls on Him and removes the distress…"

Yes, at the time when all the doors of the world of means are shut to a man and he is helpless from any point of view, the only one who can unlock the lock of difficulties, brings the light of hope into the hearts and opens the doors of mercy to the distressed ones is only His Pure Essence, not anyone else.

In view of the fact that this reality as a natural feeling is inside the soul of all human beings, idol worshippers also forget all their objects of worship when they entangle with the huge waves of the sea and refer to the Grace of Allah, as the Qur'an says:

"Then, if they embark on a boat, they call on Allah, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him…"[1]

Then the holy verse implies that not only He solves and removes the difficulties but also He makes you successors in the earth.

The verse says:

"…and makes you successors in the earth. Is there any god with Allah? Little it is that you heed!"

Invoking Allah and prattling with Him is a worthy and an indispensable act. Supplicating to the Presence of Allah, and asking Him for solving the difficulties, specially at the time of distress, is necessary for everybody.

Wherever our invocation is not answered, there is a reason for it, as follows:

1- Our invocation had not been for a good deed but we considered it as good.

2- The manner in invocation has not been earnest and accompanied with distress.

3- We have not been sincere in our invocation. That is, while we have turned to the presence of Allah, we have had some hope in others, too.

It is true, of course, that sometimes, instead of accepting our supplication, He gives us something similar to it, or sometimes, instead of our demand which is not expediential for us with Allah, He banishes a misfortune from us; and sometimes instead of answering our invocation in this world, He will compensate it in the Hereafter; and sometimes instead of doing a favour to us, He favours to our descendants.

All of these meanings have been mentioned in the Islamic narrations.

Of course, the condition of fulfilment of invocation, in general, is the existence of sincerity in one's invocation and having no hope in others. Allah is aware of those who ask Him for something in silence, but He likes that His servants ask their needs by their tongues.

It is interesting that in some Islamic narrations this verse has been rendered into the rising of Hadrat Mahdi (as).

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition says:

"By Allah, as if I see Mahdi (as) who has leaned against the Black Stone (of Ka'bah) and calls Allah by his legitimacy…"

Then he said:

"By Allah, he is the distressed one in the Book of Allah in the verse which says:

'Or Who answers the distressed one when he calls on Him, and removes the distress…'"[2]

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"This verse has been revealed concerning Mahdi from the progeny of Muhammad (S). By Allah he is the distressed one, when he keeps up two units prayer in the station of Abraham and offers a petition unto the presence of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, He answers him and removes the distress and makes him successor in the earth."[3]

No doubt, the purpose of this commentary, as we have seen many instances similar to it, is not confining the concept of the verse to the specious rank of Hadrat Mahdi (as), but the verse has a vast scope of meaning and one of its clear denotation expansions is Hadrat Mahdi (as).

That time is the time that corruption has covered everywhere, the doors of hope have been shut, everybody is helpless so that humankind is in an earnest blind alley, and the state of distress is seen throughout the world.

At that time, in the most sacred point on the earth, the Holy Mosque, he invokes Allah and asks for removing the distress.

Then Allah makes this invocation the outset of his worldly sacred revolution and, according to the holy phrase:

"…and makes you successors in the earth…",

He makes him and his followers the successors on the earth.

Concerning the importance of supplication, the conditions of the acceptance of invocation, and that why some prayers will not be answered, we have discussed in details when commenting on Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 186.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 63

أَمَّن يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَن يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَإِلَهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

63. "Or Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings of His Mercy? Is there any god with Allah? Exalted High is Allah above what they associate (with Him)."

The ‘guidance in the darkness of the land and the sea’ may be the guidance that comes through stars, because in another occurrence of the Qur’an we recite:

“…and by the stars they find the right way.”[4]

The best way of theology for us is to pay attention to the difficulties and problems of life and that there appear some ways by which those problems may be solved or there come some hopes to the grace of Allah.

If we use our conscious as a judge, we will find out that there is no god save Allah.

So, this holy verse refers to the subject of guidance when it implies asking which is better idols or Allah, and says:

“Or Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings of His Mercy?…”

There are some winds that indicate to the descent of rain. These winds, as special heralds of good tidings, come before falling rain. Their duty in fact, is also to guide people to the descent of rain.

The application of the Qur’anic word /bušra/ (heralds of glad tidings) concerning the winds, and the word /rahmat/ (Mercy), concerning the rain, both are interesting, because the winds carry the moisture of weather by pieces of cloud arising from seas and oceans, and bring them to the dry and thirsty lands and give them goodness by the descent of rain.

Also it is raining that causes the merit of life to be seen throughout the earthly globe. Wherever it comes down, it brings goodness, mercy, bounty and life.

The Qur’anic word /bušr/ is the abbreviated form of /bušur/ which is the plural form of /bašur/ that means ‘the heralds of glad tidings’.

(Some more details about the function of winds and rains is mentioned in the commentary of Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 57)

At the end of the above verse, the Qur’an, addressing the pagans again, says:

“…Is there any god with Allah?…”

Then, without waiting for any answer, it immediately says:

“…Exalted High is Allah above what they associate (with Him).”

Surah An-Naml - Verse 64

أَمَّن يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَمَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالاَرْضِ أَءِلَهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

64. “Or, Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and Who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth? Is there any god with Allah? Say: ‘Bring your proof if you are truthful’.”

From verse 60 of this Surah up to this verse, the holy phrase:

“Is there any god with Allah?”

has been repeated for five times, which is for the purpose of nullification of paganism and negation of false gods.

From the viewpoint of the Qur’an, no created phenomenon vanishes, but it is from the viewpoint of us that they disappear. Resurrection is not for

returning some vanished things so that some people imagine that it is an impossible job.

It is returning the creatures to their first form, after some changes that have occurred in their physical forms. In other words, the same power which created it at first, can return it again either.

Thus, this verse speaks about 'origin and end', and comparing their objects of worship with Allah, says:

"Or, Who originates the creation, then reproduces it…"

And He Who sustains you between this beginning and end, is Allah, it continues saying:

"…and Who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?…"

Yet, do you believe that there is a god with Allah?

"…Is there any god with Allah?…"

Tell them if they have such a creed, they should bring their proof if they are truthful.

The verse says:

"…Say: 'Bring your proof if you are truthful'."

In fact all of the former verses were about the origin and the signs of the greatness of Allah in the world of existence as well as His merits and bounties, but in this verse the Qur'an changes the discussion into a delicate passage unto the subject of Resurrection, because the initiation of creation is itself an evidence upon the end of it, and the ability of creation is counted as a clear reasoning for Resurrection.

By this explanation, the answer of the question of many commentators is made clear. They say those pagans, who are addressed by these verses, often did not believe in Resurrection (resurrection of the body), in this case, how is it possible that we ask them and want them to confess?

The answer to this question is accompanied with a reason which makes the opposite party confess, because when they confess that the initiation of the creation belongs to Him, and it is He Who gives these sustenance and merits, it is enough that they accept that there is a possibility of returning to life again in the Hereafter.

By the way, the purpose of 'the sustenance of the heaven' is rain, sunlight, and the like; and the purpose of 'The sustenance of the earth' is the plants and different foodstuff which grow directly from the earth or originate indirectly from it, like cattle, mines, various things that man gets from it and enjoys them in his life.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 65-66

قُل لاَّ يَعْلَمُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

بَلِ ادَّارَكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِي الاَخِرَةِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّـنْهَا بَلْ هُم مِنْهَا عَمُونَ

65. "Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen save Allah and they do not know when they shall, be raised'."

66. "Nay, but their knowledge falls as to the Hereafter; nay, they are in doubt about it; nay they are quite blind unto it."

Unseen is of several kinds and Allah teaches a kind of it to the prophets, as the Qur'an says:

"(O Prophet!) These are of the tidings of Unseen which We reveal unto you…"[5]

But another kind of it, such as the knowledge of the time of the occurrence of Hereafter, is particular to the Holy Essence of Allah.

The application of /man/ (who) in Arabic literature is for intellectual beings. Therefore, besides the angels, there may be some intellectual creatures in the heavens who, like human beings, will be raised up in Hereafter.

Since in the former verse the words were about Hereafter and Resurrection, these couple of verses refer to this subject from different points of view.

At first, it answers the question of those pagans who had repeatedly asked and said:

"When does Hereafter occur?",

it says:

"Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen save Allah and they do not know when they shall, be raised'."

No doubt the knowledge of Unseen, including the date of the happening of Hereafter, belongs to Allah, but it does not contrast to the fact that He gives a part of the knowledge of Unseen to some ones that He desires; as Surah Jinn, No. 72, verses 26 and 27 say:

"He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with His secrets."

"Except to him whom He chooses as a messenger…"

In other words, the knowledge of Unseen, essentially, independently, and illimitably, is particularized to Allah, and whatever others know is from His origin, but, in any case, the date of the occurrence of Hereafter is exceptional from this affair, and no one is aware of it.

Then the next holy verse refers to the lack of knowledge, unawareness and doubt of pagan about Hereafter.

It says:

"Nay, but their knowledge falls as to the Hereafter; nay, they are in doubt about it; nay they are quite blind unto it."

The Qur'anic word /'iddarak/ has originally been /tadaruk/ in the sense of 'arranged one after another'. Thus the concept of the sentence in this verse is that they used all their knowledge about Hereafter but they gained nothing.

That is why, next to it, the verse says:

"…Nay, they are in doubt about it, nay they are quite blind unto it."

The evidence of it is that the signs of Hereafter are seen in the life of this very world, including: the return of the dead land to life in summer, the trees that become fruitful after winter, and observing the greatness of Allah's power in whole creation.

All of these are some evidence for the life possible after death, but they pass by them as if they are blind. In other words, pagans do not know when they will be raised up and they are doubtful about it. Now the verse announces that they will understand its reality in Hereafter.

Their knowledge about Hereafter will become complete in Hereafter and they will find certainty about it, a certainty which will be in vain, while they are doubtful about it in this world.

Notes

1. Surah Al-‘Ankabut, No. 29, verse 65
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, The Commentary, Vol. 4, P. 94; and Safi, Burhan, …
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 94; and Safi, Burhan, …
4. Surah An-Nahl. No. 16, verse 16
5. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 49

Section 6: The Resurrection, Sure Everyone Shall Be Resurrected

Surah An-Naml - Verses 67-68

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَءِذَا كُنَّا تُرَاباً وءَابَآؤُنَآ أَءِنَّا لَمُـخْرَجُونَ

لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا هَذَا نَحْنُ وءَابَآؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ

67. "And those who disbelieve say: 'When we have become dust, and our fathers (too), shall we certainly be brought forth (again)?'"

68. "Indeed we had been promised this, we and our fathers before (too), (but) these are not but fables of the ancients."

One of the things that the enemies do is to create doubts in ideological subjects.

If we do not accept a fact, it is not a reason that it will not occur, or it does not exist.

This verse states the logic of the rejecters of Resurrection in one sentence, it says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'When we have become dust, and our fathers (too), shall we certainly be brought forth (again)?'"

They only sufficed to this matter that it is impossible that a man becomes dust and comes to life again, while they were dust at first and they came into being from dust. Is not it possible that they return to dust and then come forth for a new life?

It is interesting that there are eight instances in the Qur'an with the same meaning wherein, as soon as they come to imagination of impossibility of Hereafter, they have paved the path of denial.

Then they add:

"Indeed we had been promised this, we and our fathers before (too)…"

They say that they were promised it before but they found no sign of it, therefore, these promises are not anything but imaginations and superstitions.

The verse continues saying:

"…(but) these are not but fables of the ancients."

Thus, they begin from impossibility of the occurrence of Hereafter and, after that, they take it as the foundation of an absolute denial. It seemed that they expected Resurrection would happen very soon, and, since they did not see it in their own lifetime, they negated it. However, these statements are the sign of their pride and negligence.

By the way, through this wrong interpretation, they wanted to belittle the Prophet's word about the Hereafter and to say that this is one of the baseless old promises which others gave to their ancestors, too, and it was not a new matter for them to be dealt with.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 69-70

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُـجْرِمِينَ

وَلاَ تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ تَكُن فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

69. "Say: 'Travel in the earth and see how the end of the guilty (ones) has been'."

70. "And do not grieve for them nor be you straitened for what they devise."

Several times the Qur'an, by the Arabic phrase /siru/ (travel) or the phrase /'afalam yasiru/ (did you not travel), has encouraged people to travel in the earth, and in many of them the purpose has been for warning, awareness, and taking an example from the life of wrong doers.

Visiting the remained traces of the oppressors of history is one of the means of growth and training.

Former verses said about the fanatic pagans and their denial of Resurrection when they rejected it by their own derides and ridicules.

In this noble verse, the Qur'an addresses the holy Prophet (S) and says:

"Say: 'Travel in the earth and see how the end of the guilty (ones) has been'."

You say that these promises have also been given to your ancestors, and they did not give heed to them, too, nor they were damaged. But if you travel in the world and watch the traces of these criminal, sinful ones, the deniers of monotheism and Resurrection of the old, which are found in the locality of the land of Hijaz, your own land, you will understand that the fact is something else.

Do not hasten, your turn will come, too. If you do not amend yourselves, you will have the same evil fate, either.

The Qur'an has repeatedly invited people to travel in the earth and observe the traces of the old, the ruined lands of the nations who have been seized by the Divine punishment, the destroyed castles of the kings of the ancient, the scattered graves and the rotten bones of the oppressors, and the remaining ownerless properties of the haughty wealthy ones.

The Qur'an specially declares that studying these traces, which are the alive, expressive, and concrete history of the ancient people, in fact, makes the minds aware, and gives insight to them. Sometimes, visiting one of these effects creates such a storm of vigilance in the soul and spirit of man that studying several thick history books does not have it.

A rather detailed explanation in this regard has already been offered in Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 137.

It is worth noting that, in this verse, instead of applying the Qur'anic word /mukaðõibin/ (rejecters) the word /mujrimin/ (the guilty) has been used. This points to the fact that their denial was not because of their mistake in their research, but the origin of it was obstinacy, enmity, and being polluted by kinds of crimes.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 71-74

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُلْ عَسَي أَن يَكُونَ رَدِفَ لَكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَي النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

71. "And they say: 'When shall this promise (of chastisement) come to pass, if you are truthful?'"

72. "Say: 'May be that it is after you, a part of what you seek to hasten'."

73. "And verily your Lord is the Lord of grace unto the people, but most of them are not grateful."

74. "And verily your Lord well-knows what their breasts conceal and what they manifest."

Whenever the Divine prophets warned people concerning Hereafter and the punishment of Allah, some people asked about the time of the occurrence of Hereafter. But in view of the fact that none knows the time of Hereafter except Allah, the prophets did not answer them, and they only warned the people of the principle of the punishment of Allah, not its time.

The pagans, of course, in order to observe the Divine chastisement, had some haste with ridicule, and instead of taking counsel from the warning of their kind prophet and paying attention to their fate, they ridiculed them, as the verse indicates:

"And they say: 'When shall this promise (of chastisement) come to pass, if you are truthful?'"

This verse addresses the Prophet (S) but the matter is used in plural form, because the true believers also said the same thing that the Prophet (S) announced and naturally they are the addressees of the verse, too.

Through the next verse, the Qur'an, with a very truthful tone, answers this ridiculous statement of theirs, when it says:

"Say: 'May be that it is after you, a part of what you seek to hasten'."

Why do you hasten? Why do you consider the Divine punishment so little? Why do you not have pity to yourselves? Do know that chastisement is certainly earnest! Probably the punishment of Allah has come above you because of these very words of yours, and soon will fall over you and annihilate you. What is this ceaseless obstinacy for?

The Arabic word /ridf/ is derived from /radf/ which means 'to be set after each other'.

Concerning the objective of this punishment, some of the commentators have said that its purpose is the same sharp struck that these obstinate disbelievers received in the Battle of Badr, the first Battle of Muslims against pagans, in which seventy chiefs of the pagans were killed and seventy persons of them were taken captives.

There is also another probability that the purpose of it is the common painful punishment, but at last it was removed because of the existence of the Prophet (S) among them who was:

"…a Mercy for (all) the worlds"[1]

And Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 33 is an evidence upon this meaning.

It says:

"But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them…"

The application of the Arabic word /'asa/ (may be) in the verse is from the tongue of the Prophet (S) and it does not matter, and it is also in the word of Allah, though some commentators have considered something else. It points to the existence of premises required for something, though these

premises may be faced with some barriers and they do not lead to the ultimate result.

Then, in the next verse, it states the fact that if Allah does not hasten in punishing you, it is because of His grace and Mercy on you so that you may have enough time to amend yourselves and recompense your past.

It says:

"And verily your Lord is the Lord of grace unto the people, but most of them are not grateful."

By verse No. 74, it implies that if they imagine that the delay in their punishment is for the sake that Allah is not aware of the evil and ugly thought they have in their minds, they make a great mistake, because the Qur'an says:

"And verily your Lord well-knows what their breasts conceal and what they manifest."

He knows the secrets of their inward as much as He knows their outward deeds, and principally inward and outward, visible and invisible, all are the same for Him.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 75

وَمَا مِنْ غَآئِبَةٍ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَالاَرْضِ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

75. "And there is nothing hidden in the heavens and the earth but it is in a Manifest Book."

All the hidden affairs of mankind, intentions, the occurrence of Hereafter, the time when Divine mercy or chastisement come, and other secrets, are among the Unseen of the heavens and the earth.

The objective of the Qur'anic phrase: /kitabin mubin/ here may be the Protected tablet and the infinite knowledge of Allah.

However, this verse implies that not only Allah knows their inward and outward secrets, but His knowledge is also so vast that includes every thing.

The verse says:

"And there is nothing hidden in the heavens and the earth but it is in a Manifest Book."

It is clear that the Arabic word /qa'ibah/ has a vast scope of meaning which encompasses everything that is hidden from our senses, irrespective of the concealed deeds of the servants, their esoteric intentions, and the secrets that are also hidden in the heavens and the earth, as well as appearance of Resurrection, the descent of divine punishment and the like.

Then, there is no reason that, like some commentators, we comment it on only one of these affairs.

The objective of /kitabin/, as was said in the above, is the Protected Tablet, the same source of the infinite knowledge of Allah which has been referred to in Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 59.[2]

The contents of the former verses show that, in order to shirk believing in Resurrection and its responsibilities, the rejecters of Resurrection expressed their objections in three ways:

1- To return to life after becoming dust is improbable, because, as they believed, dust could not be the source of life.

2- This kind of belief belongs to the ancient, and it is not a new thing.

3- The lack of the descent of punishment for the rejecters of Resurrection, because, they said, if the rejecters must really be punished in this world, why does not this punishment seize them?

For the answer of the first and the second instances, the Qur'an has left it to their clearness, because we always see by our eyes that dust becomes the source of life. At first, we were dust and then we came into being as a living creature.

The state of a thing being old or belonging to the ancient does not decrease its importance, because the main laws of this world, from pre-eternity to future eternity, are wholly fix and unchangeable.

The fix principles in philosophical principles, mathematic problems, and other sciences are abundant. Is the Pythagoras' multiplication table invalid because it is old, or is its being ancient as a reason for its weakness?

Or if we see that justice is good and injustice is bad, and it is so and it will be so forever, is it a reason for its falseness? In principle, many times, the perpetuity of something proves its authenticity.

Concerning their third objection, the Qur'an answers that they should not hasten for meeting chastisement. It is the grace of Allah that He gives them respite and does not punish them promptly, but they must be careful that chastisement will come though it comes late.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 76-77

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ يَقُصُّ عَلَي بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

وَإِنَّهُ لَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّـلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

76. "Verily this Qur'an relates to the Children of Israel most of what they differ in."

77. "And verily it is a guidance and mercy for the believers."

This verse shows that at the time of the advent of the holy Prophet (S), the contents of the Torah and Evangel could not solve the differences of the People of the Book, and only the Qur'an, which is a dominant over the former heavenly Books, has the ability of solving the discords.

Yes, solving the deep doctrinal differences, also by an uninstructed prophet who could neither read nor write, is the sign of miracle and legitimacy of the Qur'an.

In previous holy verse, the words were about (both) Origin and End, while the verses under discussion, by pointing to the subject of prophethood and legitimacy of the Holy Qur'an, completes this discussion.

On the other side, the former verses pointed to the infinite knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.), and in these verses this subject is explained more.

Furthermore, in those verses the addressees were pagans, but here the words are about other disbelievers, such as the Jews and their differences.

At first, it says:

"Verily this Qur'an relates to the Children of Israel most of what they differ in."

The Children of Israel had discords among them in many things; like about Maryam, Jesus, the prophet whose glad tidings had been mentioned in

the Torah, and that who this prophet was, and in many ordinances and religious affairs.

The Qur'an came and said the true matter in this field. It said Jesus introduced himself explicitly and said he was a servant of Allah Who had given him a heavenly Book and assigned him a prophet,

"He (miraculously) said: 'Verily I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet'."[3]

The Qur'an also made it clear that Jesus was born only from mother and without father, and that was not an impossible affair for Allah, because He created Adam without parents from the dust:

"The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust…"[4]

Concerning the Divine prophet whose qualities are clearly mentioned in the Torah, the Qur'an considers that those qualifications adapt to the Prophet of Islam (S), because they adapt to none but him.

However, one of the missions of the Qur'an is to struggle against the differences which have come into being because of mixing the superstitions with the true teachings of the Divine prophets.

So, every prophet was commanded to put an end to the discord originated from distortions and confusions of right and wrong; and since the fulfilment of such an action is not possible to be done by an illiterate person in the environment of ignorance, it is clear that it is from the side of Allah.

In view of the fact that struggling against any discord is the cause of guidance and mercy, the next verse, as a general principle, says about the Qur'an:

"And verily it is a guidance and mercy for the believers."

Yes, it is guidance and mercy because the evidence of its truthfulness has lain in the magnificence of its content.

The Qur'an is guidance and mercy because it shows both the way and the style of paving the way.

The Qur'anic term /mu'minin/ (believers) mentioned specially in this verse, is for the sake that, as was pointed out before, a person cannot enjoy this Divine source unless he has a stage of faith in him, that is, he must have a receptive state for accepting the truth and submitting to Allah.

Surah An-Naml - Verses 78-79

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُم بِحُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ

فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ عَلَي الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ

78. "Verily your Lord will judge between them by His judgment, and He is the Mighty, the Knowing."

79. "Therefore rely on Allah, verily you are on the manifest truth."

Judgment is one of the dignities of the Lordship of Allah, because there is no ignorance, fear, instinct and happenings effective in Him, and his judgment is completely just.

The opponents of the holy Prophet (S) used to seek pretext while the way of Faith had no ambiguity.

It was why some of the Children of Israel resisted against the facts that the Qur'an had stated and did not submit to the truth.

This verse says:

"Verily your Lord will judge between them by His judgment, and He is the Mighty, the Knowing."

In this verse, this fact, that the final Judgment is on the Hereafter Day, is not explicitly mentioned, but considering the next two verses which exactly speak about the differences between the Children of Israel and the judgment of Allah, and that the Day of Judgment is clearly mentioned therein, it makes manifest that the objective in the verse under discussion is also the same.

Surah Al-Jathiyah, No. 45, verse 17 says:

"Verily the Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment as to those matters in which they set differences."

Something similar to this verse is also recited in Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 93.

Qualifying Allah (s.w.t.) to 'Mightly' and 'Knowing' is an indication to the couple of qualifications which are necessary for a judge who must be aware enough and be able to execute the judgment. Allah is the Most Mighty, the most Knowing.

Since these statements, besides expressing the greatness of the Qur'an and being a threat for the Children of Israel, are counted as a means for calmness and peace of mind of the Prophet (S), through the next verse the Qur'an says:

"Therefore rely on Allah…"

To rely on Allah Who is the Mighty, the Knowing, is relying on the One Who is invincible and Omniscient, and relying on Him Who has given you the Qur'an, with that magnificence.

The Prophet (S) is commanded to rely on Allah and does not afraid of the oppositions of the enemies, because the Qur'an says:

"…verily you are on the manifest truth."

Surah An-Naml - Verses 80-81

إِنَّكَ لاَ تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلاَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ

وَمَآ أَنتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمْيِ عَن ضَلاَلَتِهِمْ إِن تُسْمِعُ إِلاَّ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

80. "Verily you cannot make the dead to listen nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they turn away backward."

81. "Nor can you lead the blind against their straying; you can make none hear save those who believe in Our revelations and who have surrendered."

In the culture of the Holy Qur'an death and life have been used for both 'the natural death and life' and 'the spiritual death and life'.

Those who are not affected by the word of Truth are considered dead in the culture of the Qur'an, and vice versa. As in many occurrences of it the Qur'an says not to think of the martyr as dead, they are alive, happy, and being provided sustenance with their Lord.

Therefore, those obstinate, stone-hearted ones who are alive are really dead, and the martyr, who have passed away, are really alive. It is better to speak rather more clearly.

There are some stages for life:

1) The vegetal life, upon which the Qur'an says:

"…Who gives life to the earth after its death…"[5]

2) The animal life, about which the Qur'an says:

"…Who gives you life…"[6]

3) Spiritual life, as the Qur'an says:

"That it may give admonition to any (who are) alive…"[7]

That is, they are those who have safe intellect and nature.

It also says:

"…he invites you to that which gives you life…"[8]

4) The political and social life is for life, as the Qur'an says:

"And in (the law of) retaliation there is (saving) of life for you…"[9]

5) The life in the next word, as some mortals will say about it:

"…O' would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life."[10]

However, in this holy verse, the Qur'an implies that if they do not accept this 'clear truth' and your enthusiastic words do not affect in their cold hearts, it is not wonderful for:

"Verily you cannot make the dead to listen…"

Your addressees are the alive ones, those who have a lively, vigilant, and truth-seeking spirit, not those dead who seem alive but bigotry, obstinacy, and constant committing sin have suspended their thought and contemplation.

Therefore, the verse continues saying about those who are alive but their ears are spiritually deaf:

"…nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they turn away backward."

Then by the next verse, the Qur'an implies that if, instead of hearkening ears they had eyes with insight in such case, though the sound did not reach their ears, they might find the Straight Path by signs and marks, but it is a pity that they are blind, too, and as the verse says:

"Nor can you lead the blind against their straying…"

Thus, all the ways of conception the truth are shut to them: their hearts are dead, their ears are deaf, and their eyes are blind.

So, the Qur'an continues saying:

"…you can make none hear save those who believe in Our revelations and who have surrendered."

In fact these two verses refer to a clear collection of the factors of cognizance and the way of man's communication with outward world. The sense of discrimination and vigilant intellect is against despondency; a hearkening ear for attracting the words of Truth is against being heedless to them through the ear; and an eye with insight of observing the feature of right and wrong through the eye.

But obstinacy, contumacy, blindly imitation, and sin, make the truth seeking eyes of man blind, make his ear deaf to hear the truth, and also cause his intellect and heart (mind) not to work.

If all prophets, the saints, and the angels come to guide such persons, it will be in vain, because their communication with the outward world of their entity has utterly been ceased and they refer to only themselves.

In other words, he who is physically alive but is so engaged in lusts that he neither hears the cry of an oppressed, nor does he hear the sound of the seeker of the truth, nor does he sees the feature of an indigent, nor does he observe the effects of the greatness of Allah in the scene of creation, nor does he even contemplate about his past and future, such a person in the logic of the Qur'an is dead.

But those whose works are spread and used in the world after their death and whose thoughts, ways of manner, and conditions are introduced as guide, leader and example for others; such persons are spiritually alive forever.

However, we mention this point again that the purpose of Faith and submission is not in that he had accepted the facts of religion from before, so that it is actualization of what has already been actualized, but the aim is that man should have the mood of truth seeking state and humiliation before the command of Allah, else he will never hearken to the words of Divine prophets.

Yes, if the hearer is stone-hearted the true speech, even from a pure and eligible speaker, does not affect on him. It is like a consumed lamp which does not give light by connection with any electricity.

A weak sect from among Muslims have taken the verse:

"Verily you cannot make the dead to listen"

as a means for their deviated thought. They say that the Prophet of Islam (S) has passed away and he does not hear any word, therefore it is meaningless that we pilgrimage and, addressing him, state some matters.

The answer to this sect is that the verse is in the position of a simile.

It is like the simile of the heart of a cruel person from the point of effectiveness which is likened to stone, as the Qur'an says:

"Then your hearts hardened after that as stone…"[11]

Of course, it does not mean that for everything their hearts are like stone, because the Qur'an has accepted the purgatory life for the martyr and there are some narrations cited in the Sunnite and Shi'ite sources, as follows:

1- Muhammad-ibn-'Abdul-Wahhab in the book entitled: Al-Hidyat-us-Sunniyyah, P. 41, says:

"The prophet has a purgatory life after his death which is superior to the life of the martyr and he hears the greeting of those who greet him."

2- There are many traditions recorded in Shi'ite and Sunnite sources in this field that the Prophet (S) and Immaculate Imams (as) hear the words of those who salute them from near and far distances and answer them, and even the deeds of people are said to them.[12]

3- It is cited in Sahih Bukhari:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) spoke with the annihilated pagans of the Battle of Badr;"

and when he was asked by 'Umar, he (S) said:

"By Allah, in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, you are not a better hearer (than them)."[13]

4- At the end of the Battle of Jamal, Hadrat Ali (as) said:

"Make the corpse of Ka'b-ibn-Sur sit!"

Then he (as) told him, while he had been killed:

"Woe be to you that did not enjoy your knowledge and Satan caused you go astray and sent you to Hell."[14]

Surah An-Naml - Verse 82

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَآبَّةً مِنَ الاَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِاَيَاتِنَا لاَ يُوقِنُونَ

82. "And when the word is fulfilled against them We shall bring forth for them a moving creature from the earth that shall speak unto them, because people did not believe in Our revelations."

Some Islamic traditions announce that when human beings suspend the act of enjoining what is right and fulfil none of them, they will obligatory deserve the Divine displeasure, wrath and chastisement, and, at this time, a creature will come out from between Safa and Marwah in order to inform the believer that he is faithful and to inform the disbeliever that he is an infidel.[15]

It is then that the duty will be removed and no repentance will be accepted, and this is one of the signs of Hereafter.

However, the words in the former verses were about the pagans who hastened for meeting the Divine punishment or the occurrence of Hereafter and impatiently expected it to happen. They told the Prophet (S) why those punishments that they were promised did not come to them?

Why the Hereafter did not happen? The verse under discussion points to a part of the events that happen at the threshold of Resurrection, and depict the painful fate of these obstinate rejecters.

It says:

"And when the word is fulfilled against them We shall bring forth for them a moving creature from the earth that shall speak unto them, because people did not believe in Our revelations."

The objective of the Qur'anic phrase:

"…the word is fulfilled against them…"

is Allah's command which will be issued for the punishment they have been promised, or the occurrence of Resurrection and the manifestation of its sign.

These are the signs that by observing them every one will become humble and submissive, and he will be completely certain that the promises of Allah were true and the Hereafter is near. In that circumstance the doors of repentance will be closed, because the faith in that condition will be a constrained belief which is not accepted.

These two meanings are not separate from each other, because approaching the Day of Hereafter is accompanied with the punishment of the wrong doers.

Concerning this earthly creature and that what or who he is, and what program he will have, the Qur'an has stated ambiguously. It seems that the

Qur'an wanted to speak shortly about it, for sometime the effect of the word is in that the horrible matter should be said in curtain.

The Qur'an only implies that this is a creature that, at the threshold of Resurrection, Allah will bring it forth from the earth and this creature will speak with people, saying that the people do not believe in the verses of Allah. In other words, his job is to separate the rows from each other and to distinguish between the row of rejecters and hypocrites and the row of believers.

It is evident that, by seeing this scene, the rejecters will become regretful from their own dark past, but they will not have any way to return.

In Islamic narrations, the commentary books, and Shi'ite and Sunnite sources of traditions, there are many matters about the details of the Qur'anic phrase: /dabbatan min al 'ard/ (a moving creature from the earth) as well as its exact qualities and specifications, a short explanation of which is as follows:

The Arabic word /dabbah/ means 'a moving creature', and the word /'ard/ means 'earth', and in spite of the belief of some commentators, the word /dabbah/ is not applied only for moving creatures other than humankind, but it has a vast meaning and encompasses human beings, too.

We recite in Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 6:

"And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is on Allah…"

Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 61 says:

"And if Allah were to take people to task for their inequity, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving being…"

Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 22 says:

"Verily the worst of animals in the sight of Allah are the deaf, the dumb, who do not understand."

Concerning the adaptation of this term with its meaning, as it was already said in the above, the Qur'an has referred to it ambiguously, and the only quality that it has stated for it is that the creature speaks with people and compendiously defines the disbelievers.

But there are a lot of discussions in this regard in Islamic narrations and commentaries of the commentators all of which can be referred to in two commentaries:

1- A group of commentators of the Qur'an believe that it is an extraordinary living and moving creature which is not of the kind of human and has a wonderful shape. They have cited some wonders about it that are similar to the miracles of Divine prophets.

This moving creature will appear on 'the last day' and will speak about disbelief and Faith, and, by putting marks on the hypocrites, will make them infamous.

2- Another group, following numerous Islamic narrations recorded in this field, say that this moving creature is a man, an extraordinary man. He is a moving and active man, one of whose main actions is separating the rows of Muslims from hypocrites and putting marks on them.

Some narrations even indicate that the Rod of Moses and the Signer of Solomon will be with him; and we know that the Rod of Moses is the secret of power and miracle, and the Signer of Solomon is the secret of Divine government and domination. Thus he is a powerful man who divulges the facts.

Hathifah narrates a tradition from the Prophet (S) who, qualifying /dabbat-ul-'Ard/ (a moving creature from the earth), said:

"(He is so strong that) no one can reach him nor any one can flee from him. He puts a sign on the forehead of every believer and writes 'believer' between his eyes, and puts a sign on the forehead of every disbeliever and also writes 'disbeliever' between his eyes; and he has the Rod of Moses and the Signer of Solomon."[16]

Some narrations have adapted it to Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as). It is recorded in the commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ebrahim, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Once a man told 'Ammar Yasir that there is a verse in the Qur'an which has disturbed his mind and caused him to be doubtful.

'Ammar asked which verse it was and he answered the verse which says:

"And when the word is fulfilled against them We shall bring forth for them a moving creature from the earth that shall speak unto them, because people did not believe in Our revelations",

and he added which moving creature it was.

'Ammar said:

'By Allah! I do not sit on the ground, nor do I eat any food nor drink any water before I show you /dabbat-ul-'ard/.

Then he, accompanying with that man, came to Ali (as) while he was having food. When he (as) saw 'Ammar he told him to come in. 'Ammar came near, sat down and ate food with Ali (as).

That man seriously wondered, while he has watching that scene incredibly, because 'Ammar had promised him and had made an oath that he would not eat any food before fulfilling his promise, as if he had forgotten his promise and his oath!

When 'Ammar stood up and said good by to Ali (as), that man, addressing him, said he made an oath not to eat food nor drink water, nor sit on the ground unless he show the man /dabbat-ul-'ard/. 'Ammar answered him:

'Did I not show it to you if you understood?'"

A tradition similar to this one is narrated from 'Abuthar recorded in the commentary of 'Ayyashi.[17]

'Allamah Majlesi, with a valid document, has cited in Bihar-ul-'Anwar that Ali (as) was asleep in the mosque when the Prophet (S) came in there.

He (S) roused Ali (as) from sleep and said:

"Get up O' moving creature of Allah!".

One of the companions asked the Messenger of Allah (S) whether they are right to call each other by that name, and the Prophet (S) said:

"No. this name is specialized to Ali, and he is /dabbat-ul-'ard/ about whom Allah has said in the Qur'an:

'And when the word is fulfilled against them We shall bring forth for them a moving creature from the earth that shall speak unto them, because people did not believe in Our revelations'."

Then he (S) said:

"O' Ali! On the last day, Allah will restore you to life in the best form and there will be a means in your hand by which you will mark the enemies."[18]

According to this tradition, the abovementioned verse is about 'return to life', and it adapts to the next verse which is about 'return to life'.

The Late Abul-Futuh Razi records in his commentary book concerning the above verse:

"According to the information we received by the way of our Companions, the Qur'anic phrase /dabbatul 'ard/ is an implicit declaration to Hadrat Mahdi, the Lord of the age (as)."[19]

Keeping this tradition and the above traditions in mind, we can take a more general concept from the holy phrase /dabbat-ul-'ard/ and adapt it to each one of the great leaders who rises in 'the last day' and has an extraordinary movement by which he differentiates between right and wrong as well as believer and disbeliever.

This meaning involved in the narrations which indicate that the Rod of Moses and Signer of Solomon, which are the secrets of power, victory and government, will be with him, is a frame of reference that 'a moving creature from the earth' is a very active human.

And also the fact which is mentioned in the narrations that he will mark the believer and disbeliever and separate their rows, adapts to the meaning that the creature is a human.

The quality of 'speaking with people' which is mentioned in the text of the Qur'an is also appropriate to this very meaning.

On the other side, there are some other references in the above verse itself added to many traditions concerning the commentary of the verse, all show that the objective of /dabbat-ul-'ard/ here is a human with the qualities mentioned in the above.

He is a very active human being who specifies the right and wrong as well as the believer from unbeliever and hypocrite. It is a human being who will appear at the threshold of Resurrection and himself is one of the signs of the greatness of Allah.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'Anbiya, No. 21, verse 107
2. The current commentary, Vol. 5, P. 145
3. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 30
4. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 59
5. Surah Ar-Rum, No. 30, verse 19; and Surah Al-Hadid, No. 57, verse 17
6. Surah Al-Jathiyah, No. 45, verse 26
7. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 70
8. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 24
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 179
10. Surah Al-Fajr, No. 89, verse 24
11. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 74
12. Kashf-ul-'Irtiyab, P. 109
13. Sahih-Bukhari, Vol. 5, P. 97

14. Sharh-i-Nahjul-Balaqah, by Ibn-'Abil-Hadid, Vol. 1, P. 248
15. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Jawami'-ul-Jami', and Manhaj-us-Sadiqin. The commentary of the verse.
16. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and tafsir-us-Safi, the commentary of the verse
17. Majma'ul-Bayan, the commentary of the verse
18. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 53, P. 52
19. The Commentary of Abul-Futuh Razi, Vol. 8, P. 423

Section 7: The Coming of the Day of Judgment

Surah An-Naml - Verses 83-84

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجاً مِّمَّن يُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ يوزَعُونَ

حَتَّى إِذَا جَآءُوا قَالَ أَكَذَّبْتُم بِآيَاتِي وَلَمْ تُحِيطُوا بِهَا عِلْماً أَمَّاذَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

83. "And on the Day when We shall muster out of every nation a party from those who belied Our revelations, and they shall be kept in rank."

84. "Till when they come (before their Lord), He will say: 'Did you reject My revelations while you had no comprehensive knowledge of them? Or what was it you did?'"

This verse indicates that Allah shall muster only a part out of every nation, while in Hereafter all people will be mustered. This makes it clear that the above verse does not relate to Hereafter but it relates to /raj'at/ 'return to life' in which a group of men will be quickened before Resurrection.

So, this verse says:

"And on the Day when We shall muster out of every nation a party from those who belied Our revelations, and they shall be kept in rank."

The Arabic word /hašr/ means 'to cause to camp', and 'to send out a group from their place and to move them toward the battle-field, and the like'.

The Arabic word /fauj/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, means 'a group who travel speedily'.

The Qur'anic word /yuza'un/ means 'keeping a crowd of people in a manner that a group of them joins another' and this meaning is usually applied upon some tremendous crowds, the like of which was used for the troops of Solomon in this Surah.

Thus, the verse, on the whole, indicates that there will come a day when Allah will raise to life a group from any nation and will send them forth for the retribution of their deeds.

Many of the commentators have considered this holy verse as a reference for the subject of /raj'at/ 'return to life' and the return of some evil doers and good doers to this world at the threshold of the Hereafter, since if it was referring to the Resurrection and Hereafter the application of the holy phrase 'out of every nation a party' would not be correct, because in Hereafter all people will be mustered, as the Qur'an in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 47 says:

"…and We muster them nor shall We leave out any one of them."

Another reference is that before this verse the words were about the signs of Resurrection at the end of this world, and the coming verses also point to the same subject, therefore, it is not probable that the verses before and after it speak about the events which happen before Resurrection, but the middle verse speaks of the Resurrection.

The agreement of the verses requires that all of them speak about the events before the Resurrection.

There are also many narrations in this ground that we will point to them when commenting the meaning of /raj'at/ (return to life).

The concept of ‘Raj‘at’ is one of the famous creeds of Shi‘ah, the commentary of which, in a short sentence, is as follows. After the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (as) and at the threshold of Resurrection a group of ‘true sincere believers’ and a group of ‘very vicious disobedient infidels’ will return to this world.

The former group (true believers) will pass some degrees of development and the latter group will receive some harsh retributions.

The Late Sayyid Murtada, who is one of the dignitaries of Shi‘ah, says:

“After the advent of Hadrat Mahdi, Allah, the Exalted, will cause some of those who have passed away aforetime to return to this world in order that they take part in the rewards and honours of his victory and observe his government throughout the world, and He will cause a group of obstinate enemies to return to this world to punish them.”

Then, Sayyid Murtada adds:

“The reasoning of this sect is that no intellectual person can deny the power of Allah upon this thing, because it is not an impossible matter, while some of our opponents deny this subject so earnestly that it seems improbable and they count it impossible.”

Then he adds:

“The proof for the legitimacy of this belief is the consensus of Twelvers, because none of them has ever opposed this belief.”[1]

It is understood, of course, from the words of some of the ancient scholars of Shi’ah, and the Late Tabarsi’s in Majma‘-ul-Bayan that a very minority of Shi‘ah did not believe in this belief and commented /raj‘at/ in the sense of the return of the domination and government of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), not the return of persons and that the dead be quickened, but their opposition is in such a way that it does not harm consensus.

However, there are a lot of statements here that, in order not to go out of the way of commentary discussion, they are referred to in short as follows:

1- No doubt, the act of restoring some dead persons to life in this world is not one of the impossible things, as the restoring all human being to life in Hereafter is quietly possible.

To surprise for such an affair is like the wonder of a group of pagans of the Age of Ignorance concerning the subject of Resurrection, and mocking it is similar to their mockery upon Resurrection, because intellect does not consider it impossible; and the Power of Allah is so vast that all these affairs are easy for Him.

2- According to the Holy Qur’an, the occurrence of /raj‘at/ (return to life) has happened for five instances of the former nations:

A. The first instance is about a prophet who was passing by a township the walls of which were ruined and the bones of the bodies of its people were scattered over there. He asked himself how Allah might restore these dead bodies to life.

Then Allah caused him to die and after one hundred years He restored him to life and asked him how long he had tarried. The prophet in answer said he tarried for one day or a part of a day. But Allah said he tarried for one hundred years.[2]

Whether this prophet is ‘Uzayr or other prophet it is the same, the important matter is the life after death in this world.

The Qur’an says:

“…so Allah made him die a hundred years, then He raised him up…”

B. The Holy Qur’an in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 243 also speaks about another group who, being afraid of death and, with pretext of plague, restrained from going to the Holy War. They went out of their houses and Allah issued the command of death for them and then they were restored to life.

“…Then Allah said to them; ‘Die’ (and they died); then He restored them to life…”

C. Again in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verses 55 and 56, concerning the Children of Israel, we recite that a group of them, after asking Moses for seeing Allah, died because of thunderbolt, and, the Qur’an says:

“Then We raised you up after your death in order that haply you might be thankful.”

D. In Surah Al-Ma’idah, No. 5, verse 110, among miracles of Jesus (as) we recite:

“…and you did raise the dead (from their graves), by My leave…”

This shows that Jesus (as) used to use this miracle of his repeatedly to raise the dead, and this is counted as a kind of /raj‘at/ for some men.

E. Concerning the dead body and finding his murderer, the Children of Israel were quarrelling. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 73 says:

“So, We said: ‘strike him (the corps) with a part of it (the sacrificed cow)’. Thus, Allah gives life to the dead and shows you of His signs, so that you might understand.”

In addition to these five instances, there are also some other instances mentioned in the Qur’an, like the story of ‘the Companions of the Cave’ which was something similar to /raj‘at/ (return to life); and the story of Hadrat Ebrahim and the four birds that, after killing them, returned to life again in order to illustrate the possibility of Resurrection of human beings for him.

This is also notable in the subject of /raj‘at/.

However, how is it possible that a person accepts the Qur’an as a heavenly Book and, with these clear verses, does also reject the possibility of /raj‘at/ (return to life)?

Basically, is /raj‘at/ something other than returning to life after death? Is /raj‘at/ not counted as a small example of Resurrection in this small world? He who accepts Resurrection with its vast scale, how can he deny the subject of /raj‘at/ (return to life in this world)?

3- Whatever was said, up to here, proved the possibility of the occurrence of /raj‘at/ (return to life), and there are also many traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) which confirm its happening. Since our discussion has not the capacity of mentioning all of them, it is enough to refer to the number of them which the Late ‘Allamah Majlesi has collected and introduced.

He says:

“How is it possible that a person believes the truthfulness of the statements of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) but he does not accept the widely

transmitted traditions of /raj'at/, the explicit traditions the number of which reaches about two hundred and that more than forty reliable persons of the narrators and famous scholars have referred to them in more than fifty books. If these traditions are not widely transmitted, what kind of tradition is widely transmitted?"[3]

A Few Traditions as Examples

1- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The first one to whom the earth (grave) will be cleft and he will return to the world is Husayn-ibn-Ali (as)."

2- Imam Baqir (as) said to 'Bukayr-ibn-'A'yan':

"Verily the Messenger of Allah (S) and Ali (as) will return to life."

3- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"There will come with Gha'im (as) twenty seven men from behind Kufah; fifteen persons of them are from the people of Moses (as), those who used to guide (others) to the Truth and to call (them) to it; and seven persons of the Companions of Kahf; and Yusha'-ubnu-Nun, Salman, 'Abu-Dujanat-il-'Ansari, Miqdad, and Malik-i-'Ashtar will be his helpers and governors."[4]

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

"Verily /raj'at/ (return to life) is not general but it is informal, because only a group will return to life that have pure faith or pure infidelity."[5]

This holy tradition defines the philosophy of /raj'at/, because a group of sincere believers who had encountered some barriers on the path of spiritual perfection in their life and their perfection remained incomplete, the Divine Wisdom requires that they continue their path of perfection by returning again to this world, so that they can be witnesses of the worldly government of Truth and Justice and participate in building this government, since participation in the formation of such a government is one of the greatest honours.

On the contrary, some of the hypocrites and obstinate tyrants, besides their special retribution in Hereafter, must tolerate some punishments in this world similar to what the people of Pharaoh, 'Aad, Thamud and Lot tolerated, and its only way is /raj'at/ (return to life in this world).

During the period of /raj'at/ (return to life in this world), the disbelievers will be reprimanded for both their beliefs and their behaviour.

Concerning the time when they are brought for reckoning, the verse says:

"Till when they come (before their Lord), He will say: 'Did you reject My revelations while you had no comprehensive knowledge of them? Or what was it you did?'"

The speaker of this statement is Allah and the objective of the Qur'anic term /'ayati/ is the miracles of Divine prophets, or the commandments of Allah, or all of them.

And the purpose of the phrase 'you had no comprehensive knowledge' is that without doing any research about it and being unaware of the reality of a matter, they began to reject it. This is the ultimate ignorance of a person that with rather no research and having no knowledge about something tries to deny it.

In fact, they will be asked of two things: one is their rejection while having not any research, and the other is the deed they used to do.

If the above verse is taken as about Hereafter and Resurrection, its meaning is clear, but if it refers to /raj‘at/ (return to life in this world), as the agreement of the verse requires, it points to this fact that at the time of returning some of the wrong doers to this world, the one who is vicegerent of Allah and is the ‘master of affairs’ will investigate them and then he will punish them in this world as much as they deserve.

This punishment does not hinder their Hereafter punishment. It is like the state of many of the criminals who tolerate the ‘fixed punishment for certain crimes’ in this world and, if they do not repent, their proper chastisement in Hereafter is reserved.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 85

وَوَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِم بِمَا ظَلَمُوا فَهُمْ لاَ يَنطِقُونَ

85. “And the word will be fulfilled against them because they were unjust so they shall not speak.”

The Divine punishment of the oppressors is decisive and the promise of the Divine chastisement has been said to them aforetime. Of course usually the cause and factor of the man’s afflictions is he himself.

However, concerning the punishment, this verse implies that when the command of Allah will be issued against them, they will not have anything to say.

It says:

“And the word will be fulfilled against them because they were unjust so they shall not speak.”

This punishment is their chastisement in this world, if the verse is commented in the sense of /raj‘at/ (return to life in this world); and it means the chastisement of Hereafter, if the verse is commented in the sense of Hereafter.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 86

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِيَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِراً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

86. “Have they not seen how We have appointed the night that they may rest therein, and the day to give light? Verily, in this are signs for the people who believe.”

The function of the darkness of night in man’s tranquility of nerves, and the light of the day in man’s activity are the scientific issues which have been proved today.

Night is one of the bounties and mercy of Allah upon people, and it is the sign of Divine knowledge and power, thus, ignoring the function of the night is an example of the ‘ignorant rejection’.

These verses refer to the subjects of origin and end, and the signs of Power and greatness of Allah (s.w.t.) in the world of existence.

The Qur’an also refers to the events of Resurrection, when it says:

“Have they not seen how We have appointed the night that they may rest therein, and the day to give light? Verily, in this are signs for the people who believe.”

This is not the first time that the Qur'an speaks about the refreshing effects of night and day, and the system of light and darkness; and it is not the last time, either.

This repetition is for the fact that the Qur'an is a Book for education and training of men, and we know that the principles of education sometimes require that a subject should be repeated and reminded in different occurrences, so that that subject might be completely understood.

The tranquility that can be obtained from night is a certain scientific fact. The dark curtain of night not only is an compulsory means for the cessation of activities of the day, but also it has a deep effect on the nerves of men and other animals and causes them to be in a deep sleep and rest, or as the Qur'an says, to be in a 'silence'.

Also, scientifically there is no room for any doubt that the light of the day has a relation with the struggle movement and activity of man during the day which is the property of the sunlight. Sunlight not only brightens the scene of life and makes man's eyes active, but also it awakens all the particles of the entity of man and makes them to move.

This verse makes manifest a part of 'Lordly Unity', and in view of the fact that the true object of worship is the Lord and Administrator of the world of existence, it nullifies the idols and causes the idolaters to review their creeds.

It is necessary for man to note this point that he must adapt himself with this system; to rest at night and to have effort and endeavour during the day, so that he can be safe and active. Spending the night like some sensual persons, and sleeping in the morning until noon, is wrong.

It is interesting that the Arabic word /mubsir/, which originally means 'clear-sighted', has been used as a modifier for the day while it is a modifier for human beings in the day. This is a kind of beautiful emphasis for it.

This difference of meaning which is seen in the statement of the benefit of the night and the day inside the verse, and once it says /liyaskunu fih/ and then in another place it says /mubsiran/ may be a hint to this fact that the main aim of the night is rest and peace, but the aim of the light of the day is not 'seeing' but seeing is a means for reaching the merits of life and enjoying them. (Be careful)

However, though this noble verse speaks directly about Monotheism and contrivance of the world of existence, it can contain a tender hint to the subject of Resurrection, too, because sleep is like death and wakefulness is like life after death.

At the end, some things that are introduced as the means of peace and tranquility are stated as follows:

1- Remembrance of Allah:

"…Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."[6]

2- Unseen succour:

"It is He Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the Believers…"[7]

3- Some sacred effects and objects:

"…That the Ark of Covenant will come to you, wherein shall be a tranquility from your Lord…"[8]

4- The encouragement of the Divine saints:

"…Surely your prayers are a comfort for them…"[9]

5- Residence and house:

"And Allah appointed a place of rest for you of your houses…"[10]

6- Spouse:

"…He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you dwell in tranquility with them…"[11]

7- The Night:

"…We have appointed the night that they may rest therein…"[12]

It should be said that the occurrence of the descent of the Qur'an, the Prophet's 'ascension to Heaven', and the proper time for prayer and supplication all are at night, though some of the deluded persons misuse the bounty of the darkness of the night and commit some sins in it. In the present age, people seek for tranquility somewhere else and, therefore, they do not obtain it.

Today the world is engaged with technology, weapon, wealth, power, and political relations and, because of losing spirituality, it cannot find tranquility. There are also many persons who have been polluted with narcotic matters, alcoholic liquors, sex, etc. and are completely sinful. To find the reality in this regard, it is enough to refer to the investigations of crimes in the world.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 87

وَيَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الاَرْضِ إِلاَّ مَن شآءَ اللَّهُ وَكُلٌّ أَتَوْهُ دَاخِرِينَ

87. "And (remind them of) The Day when the Trumpet will be blown and those who are in the heavens and those who are in the earth shall be terrified except him whom Allah will please, and all shall come to Him in utter humility."

The destruction of the system of existence, the death of people, and beginning of Hereafter will occur with terrible sound of trumpet, (the Trumpet will be blown).

So, this noble verse, referring to the Resurrection and its preliminary events, announces:

"And (remind them of) The Day when the Trumpet will be blown and those who are in the heavens and those who are in the earth shall be terrified except him whom Allah will please, and all shall come to Him in utter humility."

It is understood from the whole verses of the Qur'an that the Trumpet will be blown two or three times. One of them will be at the end of the world and at the threshold of Resurrection, when horror will encompass all. The second time is when, by hearing it, everybody will die. (These two Blasts of Trumpet may be the same).

The third time will be at the time of resurgence and establishment of Hereafter when by the blown of the Trumpet quickening of the dead will occur and all the dead return to begin a new life.

Commentators are divided in the belief that the above verse refers to the first and second Blast or the third Blast. There are some frames of reference

both in this verse and the coming verses which involve both of them. Some other commentators believe that it points to all of these Blasts.

But the apparent of the verse shows that it relates to the first Blast that occurs at the end of the world, because the Qur'anic word /faza'/ which means a fear and horror that fills the whole heart of man is counted of the signs of this Blast; and we know that, in the Blast of Hereafter, fear and horror is because of deeds, reckoning, and retribution, not because of the effect of the Blast.

In other words, the apparent of the Qur'anic term /fa fazi'a/, mentioned in the verse, indicates that this fear and horror is because of blowing in the Trumpet which belongs to the first Blast, since not only the last Blast does not create any horror, but also it is the cause of life and movement, and if there is any fear at that time it is for the deeds of man himself.

The Arabic word /nafx/ means 'to blow', and the word /sur/ means 'trumpet'. When offering the commentary of Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 68, we will explain the different ideas of the commentators concerning its purpose.

The holy phrase 'except him whom Allah will please' points to those who are good and pure, irrespective of the angels and the believers who are in the heavens and the earth. As the result of their Faith, they will have a special tranquility, and neither will the first Blast make them terrified, nor the last one.

And also in the next verses we recite:

"Whoever brings good, for him shall be better than it, and they shall be secure from the terror on that Day."[13]

The last sentence of the verse under discussion which says:

"All shall come to Him in utter humility"

apparently is general and there is no exception in it, because even the prophets and saints will be humble before Him.

And Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verses 127-128 which says:

"…therefore they shall most surely be brought up,"

"Except the chosen servants of Allah, the purified ones.",

contain no contradiction with the generality of the verse under discussion, because the abovementioned verse refers to the principle of attendance in gathering-place of resurrection before Allah and secondly refers to the attendance in the scene of reckoning the deeds.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 88

وَتَرَي الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنْعَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ

88. "And you see the mountains and think them firmly fixed but they shall pass away as the passing away of the cloud. It is the work of Allah Who has made everything in perfect order. Verily He is Aware of what you do."

The Arabic word /sun'/ is used for a work which is based upon knowledge, accuracy, and skill.

The universe is moving; even the mountains which seem motionless have motion and this motion is the sign of the Wise Power of Allah.

This verse points to another sign of the grandeur of Allah in the expansion of the world of existence.

It says:

"And you see the mountains and think them firmly fixed but they shall pass away as the passing away of the cloud. It is the work of Allah Who has made everything in perfect order…"

The One, in Whose program of creation all these orders and accuracy are found, is certainly aware of the deeds we do.

The verse says:

"…Verily He is Aware of what you do."

Many commentators believe that the above mentioned holy verse is a hint to the events that will happen at the threshold of Resurrection, for we know that at the end of this mortal world and at the beginning of the next world there will happen some great earthquakes, explosions, and transformations wherein mountains will surely burst asunder.

This meaning is explicitly mentioned in many Suras in the end of the Qur'an.

Of course, this verse being set among the verses of Resurrection is the reason and evidence of this commentary.

But there are several frames of reference in the verse that verify another commentary. For example, the abovementioned verse is of the kind of verses of Unity and the signs of the greatness of Allah in this very world; and it points to the 'movement of the earth globe', the movement which is not sensible for us.

Thus, some parts of the verses under discussion are about Unity and some parts are about Resurrection.

The conclusion we can take from this commentary is that these mountains which we consider motionless are moving fast. Certainly, the movement of these mountains, without the movement of the lands they are on them, is meaningless. Thus, the meaning of the verse is that the earth moves fast like the movement of the pieces of the cloud.

According to the calculations of the modern scientists, the movement of the earth around itself is about 30 kilometers a minute, and its rotation around the sun is more than this.

The reason why the Qur'an has put the mountains in the center of discussion here, maybe for that mountains from the point of heaviness, weight and firmness are referred to in parables, and for explaining the Power of Allah, are counted a better example.

When the mountains, with this greatness and heaviness they have, move (accompanied with the earth) by the command of Allah, His Power over everything is proved.

However, the abovementioned verse is one of the scientific miracles of the Qur'an. We know that the first scientists who found out the movement of the sphere of the Earth were Galileh from Italy, and Kepernic from Netherlands.

They introduced this idea to the world in the end of sixteenth century and at the beginning of seventeenth century A.D., although the authorities of the Church violently condemned them.

But the Qur'an many years before them removed the curtain from over this fact, and announced the movement of the earth in the above form as a sign of Unity.

Therefore, informing of the movement of mountains is among the scientific miracles of the Qur'an, and in recognition of Allah everything is fix and perfect in its place, as the Qur'an says about Him:

"Who has made every thing in perfect order."

Surah An-Naml - Verses 89-90

مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَهُم مِن فَزَعٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ ءَامِنُونَ

وَمَنْ جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّـئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

89. "Whoever brings good, for him shall be better than it, and they shall be secure from terror on that Day."

90. "And whoever brings evil, those shall be cast down on their faces, in the (Hell) Fire; 'Are you rewarded (for) aught except what you used to do?'"

One of the bounties of the Qur'an is that it has let the way open to all people for development and happiness.

The holy verse says:

"Whoever brings good, for him shall be better than it, and they shall be secure from terror on that Day."

This merit is for all people without considering their age, race, and sex. The word 'good' is used in general meaning /al hsanah/, in order that it concludes all favours, including: accepting the leadership of the Truth, the way of the Truth, the word of the Truth, the job of the Truth, and the choice of the Truth, the examples of some of which have been referred to in Islamic narrations.

But if the good deed, from whoever it is, is not destroyed because of hypocrisy, pride, haughtiness, and sin and comes to its destination safely, will deserve some additional rewards:

(Whoever brings good…).

But pleasures, insolence, and contumacies which come into being in the world as the result of sin, by burning in Hereafter, will be changed into disgrace and degradation.

The verse says:

"Whoever brings good, for him shall be better than it, and they shall be secure from terror on that Day."

Upon the objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /hasanah/ commentators have offered different beliefs. Some of them have rendered it into the term 'Unity' and the holy phrase of: 'There is no god but Allah', and also into 'having faith in Allah'.

Some of them believe that it refers to the mastership of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and immaculate Imams (as). This meaning has been emphasized in many traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

For example: in a tradition Imam Baqir (as) says that one of the followers of Ali (as) who was called 'Abu-'Abdullah Jabali came to him (as) and Imam asked him whether he might inform him of the meaning of the word of Allah that says:

"Whoever brings good, for him shall be better than it, and they shall be secure from terror on that Day."

He answered:

"Yes, may I be your ransom, O' Amir-ul-Mu'minin!"

Imam said:

"Good is cognition of mastership and the love of us, Ahl-ul-Bayt; and sin is the denial of mastership and enmity against us, Ahl-ul-Bayt."[14]

Of course, as we have said repeatedly, the scope of the meaning of the verses is vast and the Arabic words /hasanah/ and /sayyi'ah/ have also here such a vast concept that envelops all the good deeds, including: faith in Allah, the Messenger of Islam, and the mastership of the Immaculate Imams (as), that are at the top of every good deed, and do not hinder that other righteous deeds be involved in the meaning of the verse.

And that some persons have become worried because of this generality concerning the word 'good' and said whether there can be found anything better than the Faith in Allah to be its reward. Its answer is clear because the pleasure of Allah is also higher than Faith. In other words, all of these things are the preliminaries for that and the consequence is prior to the preliminary.

Another question here is that the apparent of some verses (like Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 2) shows that the terror of Resurrection will cover all, then how are the possessors of good as an exception from it?

Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 103 answers this question, where it says:

"The Great Terror (of that Day) shall not grieve them…"

And we know that the 'Great terror' is the terror of the Hereafter Day, and the Terror of arriving into Hell, not the horror which will appear at the time of the Blast.

By the way, the Arabic word /kubbat/, mentioned in the verse, means: 'to be cast down'.

Then, the next verse refers to those who are situated in a place opposite to this group.

The verse says:

"And whoever brings evil, those shall be cast down on their faces, in the (Hell) Fire…"

Such people cannot expect anything except this.

The verse continues saying:

"…'Are you rewarded (for) aught except what you used to do?'"

The Arabic term /kubbat/ is derived from /kabb/ which originally means 'casting something on face down', and, therefore, mentioning the word 'faces' in the above verse is for emphasis.

As the worst kind of punishment is said that this group shall be cast down on their faces in the (Hell) Fire. In addition, since they used to turn their faces away when they confronted the Truth, and they used to go toward sins with the same faces, now they should meet such a punishment.

The sentence:

"…'Are you rewarded (for) aught except what you used to do?'"

may be the answer to the question that someone may say this punishment is a grievous punishment. They will be answered that those are the same deeds of theirs that have seized them and they have not any reward except their own deeds.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 91

إِنَّمَآ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ اعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

91. "(O' Muhammad say:) 'I am commanded only to serve the Lord of this city, Who has made it sacred, and His are all things; and I am commanded that I should be of those who submit'."

The holy Prophet (S) is under the command of Allah, the Almighty.

A leader must announce his severity and decisiveness to people and say to them that whether they believe or not he will continue his way. The day when Mecca was conquered by Muslims, the Messenger of Allah (S) arrived in Mecca and broke the idols therein.

Then he stood at the threshold of Ka'bah and said:

"Verily Allah has respected Mecca (since the first day until the Hereafter)."[15]

This verse, addressing the Prophet of Islam (S), reiterates some facts. It implies that he (S) should tell the people that he does his duty whether the obstinate pagans believe or not.

The verse says:

"(O' Muhammad say:) 'I am commanded only to serve the Lord of this city…"

This sacred city (Mecca) is the secure sanctuary of Allah, and is the noblest point on the earth. It is the oldest temple of Monotheism.

Yes, The Prophet (S) is commanded to worship the Lord Who has made this city (Mecca) sacred, and He has appointed some specialities for it. He has assigned some particular respects, ordinances, and prohibitions for it that other cites in the world do not have them.

But do not consider that only this city belongs to Allah, because everything in the world of existence belongs to Him.

The verse continues saying:

"…Who has made it sacred, and His are all things…"

The second order that he (S) is commanded to fulfil is that he should absolutely submit the commandment of Allah, not other than it.

The verse says:

"…and I am commanded that I should be of those who submit'."

Thus, the Prophet (S) states his two main missions which are 'worshipping Allah, the One', and 'being absolute obedient to His commandment'.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 92

وَأَنْ أَتْلُوَا الْقُرْءَانَ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَي فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ

92. "And that I should recite the Qur'an (to people), so whoever is guided aright, he is guided aright to his own gain, and whoever goes astray, then say: 'I am only (one) of the warners'."

Next to Monotheism, the most important mission of the holy Prophet (S) was reciting the Divine verses to people. The benefit and harm of belief and disbelief of people, whether they accept the truth or not, return to them.

By this verse, the Prophet of Islam (S) announces that he is commanded to recite the Qur'an to the people of Mecca and to invite them to fulfil its commandments, to use the Qur'an as a light of guidance, to drink much from its life-giving source, and to rely on its guidance in all his programs.

Yes, Qur'an is a means for him in reaching to those two sacred aims and struggling against any infidelity, deviation, and aberration.

The verse says:

"And that I should recite the Qur'an (to people)…"

Then, he (S) adds to the abovementioned statement implying that the people should not think that their belief is beneficial for him or more important than that, for Allah, the Great. No, all the benefits of guidance reach them both in this world and the Next.

The verse continues saying:

"…so whoever is guided aright, he is guided aright to his own gain…"

And whoever goes astray his burden is over his own shoulder, because the Prophet (S) is only a warner and the evil consequences of their deeds do not reach him. His duty is to convey the clear revelation, and his duty is also showing the way and that how it can be paved, but he who is eager to remain in aberration he has caused only his own misfortune.

It is interesting that concerning guidance it says:

"whoever is guided aright, he is guided aright to his own gain",

but concerning aberration it does not say it is to his own loss; it says:

"I am only (one) of the warners".

This difference in statement may refer to this fact that the prophet is never silent in front of those who go astray and he does not leave them alone to their own state, but he constantly warns them and he does not become tired of doing it continuously, because he is a warner.

The verse says:

"…and whoever goes astray, then say: 'I am only (one) of the warners'."

This point is noteworthy that this Surah has begun with the statement of the importance of the Qur'an and it ends with the emphasis on recitation of the Qur'an, so the beginning and the end of the Surah is about the Qur'an.

Surah An-Naml - Verse 93

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ سَيُرِيكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

93. "And say: 'Praise be to Allah. Soon He will show you His signs that you shall recognize them, and your Lord is not heedless of what you do'."

The Qur'anic phrase /'al hamdu lillah/ (praise be to Allah) is the best sentence for praising Allah that not only the Prophet (S) has repeatedly been

commissioned to say it, but also everyday all Muslims have to repeat it through Surah Al-Hamd.

Therefore, in this verse, which is the last verse of Surah An-Naml, the command is that he should praise Allah for all these great bounties, specially for the bounty of guidance.

It says:

"And say: 'Praise be to Allah…"

This praise relates to both the bounty of the Qur'an, and the guidance of Allah, and also can be a preparation for the next sentence when it says:

"…Soon He will show you His signs that you shall recognize them…"

This meaning in this verse indicates that by the passing of time and the development of science, knowledge, and man's wisdom, everyday some new secrets of the revelations in connection with the world of existence will be unveiled and, a day after another, humankind can be acquainted more and more with the greatness of the Power of Allah and the depth of His knowledge, and this property of Divine revelation will never be ceased and will continue as long as man lives.

Yet, if you go astray and pave the way of deviation, you must know that your Lord is never heedless of the deeds you do.

The verse says:

"…and your Lord is not heedless of what you do'."

You should not imagine that if Allah postpones your retribution because of His grace and mercy it is for the reason that He is not aware of your deeds, or that its reckoning and record are not preserved.

The above ending sentence of the verse, which has exactly been repeated in nine occurrences of the Qur'an or with a little difference, is a short sentence and it is an expressive warning upon all human beings.

O Lord! Show us a part of the signs of Your greatness each day so that we know You everyday better and more than before, and that we thank You for these bounties You have bestowed on us!

O Lord! A mass of difficulties have surrounded us, and the enemies, both inside and outside, are trying hard to quench Your Light!

O Lord! It is You Who gave Solomon those abilities, and strengthened Moses to stand against Pharaoh; cause us to be victorious against the enemies, and destroy those of them who are not eligible to be guided like the People of 'Ad, the People of Thamud, and the People of Lot.

Notes

1. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, P. 511
2. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 259
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 53, P. 122
4. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, Vol. 4, P. 1982; Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 4, P. 76; Bihar, Vol. 53, P. 39
5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 53, P.39
6. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28
7. Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 4
8. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 248
9. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 103
10. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 80
11. Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 21
12. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 86
13. The current Surah, verse 89

www.alhassanain.org/english

14. The Commentaries of As-Safi, Burhan, Atyab-ul-Bayan, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, following the verse.

15. The Commentary of Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq

Surah Al-Qasas, Chapter 28

(The Narratives)

No. 28 (Revealed at Mecca)

88 Verses in 9 Sections

The Virtue of Recitation of Surah Al-Qasas

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"The one who recites Surah Al-Qasas will be given ten rewards as many as the number of all those who assented Moses and those who rejected him, and there is no angel in the heavens and the earth but he will attest to his rightfulness in Hereafter."[1]

Imam Sadiq (as) in another tradition says:

"The one who recites suras Al-Qasas, An-Naml, and Ash-Shu'ara by the night before Friday, he will be of the friends of Allah, will be nigh to Him, and will be supported by Him; and in this world he will not encounter a sever poverty, insecurity and disquiet, and in Hereafter Allah will bestow on him so much merits that he will be pleased and even more than being pleased."[2]

It is evident that all of these rewards will be given to the one who, by reciting this Surah, tries to be in the row of Moses (as), the true believers, and those who struggle against the wrongdoers such as Pharaoh and Korah.

When confronting the difficulties, he must not knee before the enemies and accept the disgrace of submission, for all these many rewards are not given to anyone cheaply. They are specified to those who usually recite the Surah, contemplate its content, and fulfil them accordingly.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the commentary
2. Thawab-ul-'A'mal, according to the commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn

Section 1: The Narrative of Moses

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

طسم

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

نَتْلُواْ عَلَيْكَ مِن نَبَإِ مُوسَى وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Ta. Sin. Mim."

2. "There are verses of the Book (that makes the truth) clear."

3. "We recite to you some of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, for a people who believe."

The Qur'an, the eternal miracle of Islam, has been formed of these very Arabic letters. If you think that it is the word of a human, you may bring the like of it, too.

This is the fourteenth Surah of the Qur'an which begins with 'the abbreviated letter', and the form Ta. Sin. Mim., in particular, is for the third and the last time that has been mentioned in the Qur'an.

As we have cited repeatedly, the Abbreviated letters of the Qur'an have different interpretations which we have referred to at the beginning of Suras of Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and Al-'A'raf.

Moreover, there are a lot of traditions which indicate that the letters Ta. Sin. Mim., in the Qur'an are some abbreviation signs of the attributes of Allah or sacred places, but this does not hinder the famous commentary, which we have repeatedly emphasized on, that Allah desires to make clear this fact to all that this great Heavenly Book which is the source of a great revolution in the history of man and contains the complete program of the happy life of humankind, has been formed of a simple means such as alphabetical letters which everybody can pronounce.

This is the ultimate greatness of the Qur'an that it produces such an extraordinary important product from such simple materials which every body possesses.

Perhaps this is for the same reason that immediately, after these abbreviated letters, it refers to the greatness of the Qur'an and implies that these great verses are the verses of the Book manifest, the Book which is clear itself and makes clear the man's way of happiness both.

It says:

"There are verses of the Book (that makes the truth) clear."

The Qur'anic phrase /kitabun mubin/ has been rendered to 'Protected Tablet' in some verses of the Qur'an, like Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 61 where it says:

"…not anything lesser than that or greater but are (recorded) in a Clear Book.",

and Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 6 where it says:

"…All is (recorded) in a Clear Book",

but in the verse under discussion, with the frame reference of mentioning /'ayat/ (verses) and the phrase /natlu 'alayka/ (We recite to you) mentioned in the next verse, it means 'Qur'an'.

Here the word Qur'an has been qualified by /mubin/ (clear), and the Arabic word /mubin/, as understood from lexicon, is used both in the senses of 'transitive' and 'intransitive' case, viz. it means something which is 'clear' and 'makes clear'. So, the Holy Qur'an, with its clear content, makes clear the Truth from untruth, and the true way from false way.

After mentioning this short proposition, referred to in the above, in the next verse the Qur'an points to the life story of Moses and Pharaoh where it says:

"We recite to you some of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, for a people who believe."

The application of the word /min/, here, points to this fact that whatever is mentioned here is a part of the concerning adventurous story the statement of which has been appropriate and necessary.

And the application of /bil haqq/ in the verse points to this fact that whatever has been mentioned here is free from any superstition, old fables, and false matters; and it is a recitation with truth and exact reality.

The application of the phrase /liqaumin yu'minun/ (for a people who believe) is an emphasis on this fact that those believers who were under pressure at that time in Mecca, and the like of them, should reach to this fact, by hearing this story, that how abundant the enemy's power, number of persons, and their forces is, and how the number of believers is apparently little and they are under pressure, the power of Allah is above all and they must not feel weakness in themselves.

The Lord Who caused Moses to be brought up in the bosom of Pharaoh to destroy him; the Lord Who made the oppressed slaves as the governors on the earth, and made the cruel oppressors abject, mean, and annihilated; the Lord Who protected a little baby in the rushing waves of water, and buried thousands of thousand strong people of Pharaoh inside the sea, is able to save you, too.

Yes, the main target of these verses is believers, and this recitation has been accomplished for them. They are the believers who can be respired by it and find their way to the aim among the mass of difficulties.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 4

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلاَ فِي الاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعاً يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَآءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

4. "Verily Pharaoh exalted himself in the land (of Egypt) and divided its people into sections, weakening a group of them, he slaughtered their sons and spared alive their females, verily he was of the mischief-makers."

The Arabic word /šiya'/ is the plural form of /ši'ah/ which originally means 'following' and 'obeying', but since in a group there are some persons who usually follow some others, this word is used in the sense of a group, too.

The Arabic word, /nisa'/ means 'women', but in this verse it may mean 'daughters' because it has come as the opposite of 'sons'.

The word /fir'aun/ is not the name of a person, but it had been the title of the kings of Rome.

However, in this verse, the Qur'an says:

"Verily Pharaoh exalted himself in the land (of Egypt)…"

Pharaoh was a very weak person who, as the result of ignorance, lost his own personality and went astray so far that he claimed to be deity.

The application of the Arabic word /'al 'ard/ (the land) in the verse is an indication to the land of Egypt and around it, and since a great part of the habituated land of the earth at that time was that area, this term has been used in an absolute form. This is also probable that the existence of Alif and Lam at the beginning of the word /'ard/ is for agreement and points to the land of Egypt.

However, in order to strengthen the bases of his cruel oppression, Pharaoh committed a number of crimes:

At first, Pharaoh tried to produce disunity among people. This was the same policy that had been forming the main foundation of the oppressors in the length of history. The dominion of a little minority over a great majority is often impossible save by the principle of: 'cast division and govern'.

They have always been afraid of 'the unity of the word' and 'the word of unity'. They terribly feared of the close relation of the rows of people with each other, and for this reason the only way of their protection is 'class government', the same thing that Pharaoh and the like have done in any age.

The verse continues saying:

"…and divided its people into sections…"

Yes, Pharaoh divided the people of Egypt into two separate groups: Coptic group and Sebtian group. Coptic ones were the native people of that land, and all the governmental positions, means of comfort, and castles and wealth were under their control.

Sebtians were the emigrant Children of Israel who were in the grips of Coptic ones as slaves, retainers, and handmaidens. Poverty and deprivation had fully surrounded them and they had to do the most labour-some works without enjoying any interest.

(The Arabic word /'ahl/ is used in the verse for this group, because the Children of Israel had lived for a long time in that land and they had verily become the people of it.)

When we hear that for building a grave such as the famous Pyramid called 'Khofo' and to be located close to the capital of Egypt, Cairo, the kings of Egypt make one hundred thousand slaves work during twenty years and thousands of them are killed in this event by means of lash or because of the pressure of working, we may guess the whole things.

His second crime was that he oppressed a group of the people of that land.

The verse says:

"…weakening a group of them, he slaughtered their sons and spared alive their females…"

Pharaoh had ordered his men to find the boys born among the Children of Israel and slay them and if the child was a girl they should keep her alive to become a slave maid.

What Did He Want to Do By This Action of His?

It is said that he had seen in his dream that a piece of fire came from Jerusalem and covered all the houses of Egypt. It burnt the houses of Coptic ones but the houses of the Children of Israel remained safe. He wanted the learned people and interpreters of dreams to explain his dream.

They said that there would come out a man from Jerusalem who might have the power of destruction of Egypt and the government of its kings.

It is also said that some of soothsayers told him that there would be born a boy among the Children of Israel who could destroy his government.[1]

At last, this event caused that Pharaoh decided to slay the new born boys of the Children of Israel.

This is also probable that the former Divine prophets had delivered the glad tidings of the advent of Moses (as) and his specialties, thus, the people of Pharaoh, being informed of this fact, were terrified and tried to stand against it.[2]

But the occurrence of the phrase:

"…he slaughtered their sons…"

next to the phrase:

"…weakening a group of them…"

points to another matter.

It implies that, in order to weaken the Children of Israel, the people of Pharaoh had designed this evil plan that they would annihilate the male generation of the Children of Israel who could stand against the people of Pharaoh and fight with them, and to keep their females alive in order that they could serve them, because those girls and women alone had not the power of struggling against them.

Another clear evidence for this statement is Surah Mu'min (Qafir), No. 40, verse 25 which implies that the act of slaying boys and keeping girls alive continued even after the rising of Moses (as).

It says:

"So when he brought to them the truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who believe with him and keep their women alive'; and the struggle of the unbelievers will only come to a state of perdition."

The phrase: 'keep their women alive' apparently indicates that they wanted to keep the girls and women alive either for that those females might serve them, or for their lusts, or both of them.

In the last sentence of this verse, as a conclusion and also for stating the reason, the Qur'an says:

"…verily he was of the mischief- makers."

Shortly speaking, the act of the people of Pharaoh was wholly making mischief in the land. His self-superiority was a mischief. Inventing a kind of life with class division in Egypt was another mischief. Torturing the Children of Israel, slaying their sons and using their daughters as slaves was their third mischief. In addition to these, there were many other corruptions in them, too.

It is natural that those who seek their self-superiority are only the protectors of their own interests; and protecting the personal interests never agrees with protecting the social interests, which needs justice, benevolence, and donation. Therefore, whatever it may be, its result is mischief in all dimensions of life.

By the way, the Arabic word /yuŏabbihu/, derived from /ŏabaha/, shows that the behaviour of the people of Pharaoh with the Children of Israel in slaying them was like killing animals.

There have been cited many stories concerning this crime of the people of Pharaoh. Some of the commentators say that Pharaoh had ordered his men to take the pregnant women of the Children of Israel under an exact control, and only the Coptic midwives were allowed to be the mission of their child-birth; so that if the child was a boy they would immediately inform the Egyptian authorities about the event and they would come and take their prey.[3]

It is not exactly clear that how many of the babies of the Children of Israel were killed in this program. Some have said that its number was about ninety thousand, while some others said it was one hundred thousand.

They imagined that by these horrible crimes, they could hinder the rising of the Children of Israel and the certain accomplishment of the will of Allah.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 5-6

وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ

وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

5. "And We have intended to bestow (Our) favour upon those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs."

6. "And to grant them power in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Haman, and their hosts, what they were dreading from them."

The worldly government of the oppressed ones and also supporting them in the length of history is Allah's will. There is no doubt that when Allah's will is issued for a thing to occur, that thing will certainly be performed and no barrier can hinder it.

The holy Qur'an says:

"Verily when He intends a thing, His command is, 'Be', and it is!"[4]

So, in this verse, it says:

"And We have intended to bestow (Our) favour upon those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs."

Then, in the next verse, it says:

"And to grant them power in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Haman, and their hosts, what they were dreading from them."

How much these two verses are expressive and hope-giving! They are expressed in the form of Arabic present tense (which shows the continuation of action) and as a general law so that no one imagines that it belongs only to the oppressed ones of the Children of Israel and the government of Pharaoh.

The verse implies that Pharaoh intended to disperse the Children of Israel and destroy their power and greatness, but Allah (s.w.t.) intended them to become strong and victorious.

Pharaoh wanted that their power could be in the hand of the oppressors forever, but Allah (s.w.t.) intended to give the government to the oppressed ones, and finally it happened exactly the same.

By the way, the application of the Arabic word /minnat/, as we have formerly said, too, is in the sense of 'to bestow merits and bounties', and this usage is completely different from the verbal /minnat/ that we reiterate a bounty in order to belittle the opposite party, which is certainly a blameworthy action.

In these two noble verses Allah (s.w.t.) has removed the curtain from His Will concerning the oppressed ones, and states five affairs in this ground which are closely connected to each other.

The first thing is that Allah intends to give them His bounties by saying:

"And We have intended to bestow (Our) favour…"

Another thing is that Allah intends to make them leaders when He says:

"…and to make them leaders (in faith)…"

The third thing is that Allah intends to make them the heirs of the government of the oppressors, where He says:

"…and make them heirs."

The fourth is that Allah gives them a strong and lasting government:

"And to grant them power in the earth…"

The fifth is that Allah showed their enemies that which they were afraid of and they had mobilized all their forces against them:

"…and to show Pharaoh and Haman, and Their hosts, what they were dreading from them."

Such is Allah's favour and grace unto the oppressed ones. But who are the oppressed, and what qualities do they have? We will state about them later.

Haman was Pharaoh's famous minister, and he was so influenced in the court of Pharaoh that in the above verse the forces of Egypt are called the forces of Pharaoh and Haman.[5]

By the way, it was said that these verses do not speak about a private, local, and limited program related to the Children of Israel, but they are stating a general law for all centuries and the entire people and generations.

The first abovementioned verse says:

"And We have intended to bestow (Our) favour upon those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs."

This is a glad-tidings upon the field of triumph of the truth over the untruth and faith over disbelief.

This is a glad-tidings for all the free men who seek for the government of justice and wiping the elements of injustice and cruelty.

An example of the outward existence of Allah's Will was the actual government of the Children of Israel and annihilation of the government of Pharaoh.

And a more complete example of it was the government of the Prophet of Islam (S) and his followers after the advent of Islam. It was the government of the faithful, poor, indigent and purified oppressed people who were always mocked and despised by the Pharaohs of their time and were under their pressure, injustice and cruelty.

At last, by the hand of this very group, Allah opened the gates of the castles of those kings and brought them down of the throne of power and humiliated the tyrants.

And a vaster example of it will be the advent of the government of Justice and Truth all over the world by Hadrat Mahdi (may our souls be sacrificed to him).

These verses are among the verses that clearly give the glad tidings of the advent of such a government. Some Islamic traditions indicate that, commenting on this verse, the Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) have pointed to this great advent.

We read in Nahj-ul-Balaqah from Ali (as) who said:

"The world will bend towards us after having been refractory as the biting she-camel bends towards its young."

Then Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) recited the verse:

"And We have intended to bestow (Our) favour upon those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs."[6]

Also the same Imam (as), commenting on the above verse, said:

"They are the progeny of Muhammad (S). Allah will raise their Mahdi after their trouble (and pressure they receive); then He will give them honour and make their enemies despised."[7]

Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin, Ali-ibn-il-Husayn (as), once in a tradition said:

"By the One Who raised Muhammad (S) legitimately as the giver of glad tidings and warner, verily the righteous of us Ahl-ul-Bayt and their followers are like Moses and his followers. … (Finally we will be victorious and they will be destroyed and the government of the truth and justice will be ours.)"[8]

Of course, the worldly government of Mahdi (as) at the end will never hinder the limited Islamic government to be formed before it by the oppressed ones against the oppressors. Then whenever they prepare its conditions the certain promise and Divine Will will be accomplished for them and they will gain this victory.

Some Traditions Upon the Advent of Mahdi (as)

Fadl-ibn-Shathan narrates from Hassan-ibn-Mahbub, from Malik-ibn-'Atiyyih, from 'Abu-Hamzah Thabit-ibn-'Abi-Safiyyih Dinar, from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"The night before 'Ashura Imam Husayn (as) delivered a great sermon for his companions and informed them that whoever was with him would become martyr and he (as) let them go out of that land and would rescue themselves if they desired. Some of them said earnestly that they might never separate from him.

Then he delivered a sermon again and said:

"I give you glad tidings of Paradise. By Allah, after we become martyr, we will remain (in the bounty of Allah) how long He desires. Then Allah will bring you and us out at the time of the advent of Our Qa'im. Then he will take vengeance from the oppressors. Then you and I will see them in chains, yokes, and kinds of punishment and tortures."

Some one asked:

"O son of the Prophet of Allah! Who is your Qa'im?"

He (as) said:

'He is the seventh son of my son, Muhammad-ibn-Ali, Al-Baqir, and he is Allah's proof, the son of Hassan-ibn-Ali-ibn-Muhammad-ibn-Ali-ibn-Musa-ibn-Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad-ibn-Ali my son, and he is the one who will be absent for a long time, then he will reappear and fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with tyranny and injustice."[9]

In this tradition Imam Husayn (as) has spoken about his return to this world as well as the martyrs of Karbala.

Shaykh Hurr 'Amili has narrated the last part of this tradition from the book entitled 'Ithbat-ur-Raj'ah, by Fadl-ibn-Shathan.[10]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The first person to whom the earth (grave) will cleave and he returns to the world is Husayn-ibn Ali (as)."[11]

Imam Baqir (as) said to Bukayr-ibn-'A'yun:

"Verily the Messenger of Allah (S) and Ali (as) will return (to this world)."[12]

Imam Husayn (as) said:

"I am the first person to whom the earth will cleave and I will come out of it and this is contemporary with the return of Amir-ul-Mu'minin and the raising up of our Qa'im."[13]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Accompany with Qa'im, there will come out twenty seven persons from behind Kufah, fifteen ones of them are from the people of Moses (as), those who used to guide (to the Truth) and called (people) to justice…"[14]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"I asked the Messenger of Allah:

'O' Messenger of Allah! Is Mahdi from us, the progeny of Muhammad, or from other than us?'

Then the Messenger of Allah said:

'But he is of us with whom Allah will end the religion as He began it with us, and by us people will be delivered from disturbances the same as they were delivered from polytheism; and by us they will be brethren after the sedition of the enemy as they became brethren after the enmity of polytheism."[15]

Abu Sa'id-il-Khudri narrates from the Prophet (S) that verily he said:

"At the time of Mahdi, my Ummah will be favoured a bounty the like of which they had never been favoured. The sky will gradually send (bounties) down on them and the earth will not restrain anything of its plants but it brings them out."[16]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Mahdi (as) will come out while there will be a cloud above his head in which a caller will call: 'This is Mahdi, the viceroy of Allah; then do follow him'."[17]

By the way, the great learned Hasan-ibn-Solayman Al-Hilly has written a book upon the virtues of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), in which he has recorded many narrations about Raj'at (returning to this world), and the Late 'Allamah Majlisi has stated around two hundred explicit traditions widely transmitted from the immaculate Imams and said:

"More than forty notables of Shi'ah, such as: Shaykh Tusi, Shaykh Mufid, Sayyid Murtada 'Alam-ul-Huda, Shaykh Saduq, Kulayni, and the like have referred them in their valuable works."

He says:

"If the traditions of Raj'at were not widely transmitted, there could not be any one to claim widely transmitted of."

Also The Late Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, when discussing Raj'at, says:

"It has been narrated widely transmitted from the Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt that at the time of raising of Mahdi (as) Allah will cause some of his friends and followers to return to this world, who had formerly passed away, in order to help him and get the reward of his assistant and see his victorious government and become happy.

Allah will also bring back some of his enemies to be taken vengeance and be killed as punishment, and to be involved of being abject and contemptible by seeing Mahdi's glory and grandeur."[18]

For proving Raj'at, the Late Shaykh-i-Tusi, in his valuable commentary, Tibyan, has reasoned to many holy verses of the Qur'an, and then he has claimed that some of the traditions of Raj'at are widely transmitted.

The Late Shaykh Hurr 'Amily, by means of different statements, has also proved that the traditions of Raj'at are widely transmitted. There have been recorded five hundred and twenty traditions in the valuable book entitled "'Iqath" concerning Raj'at.[19]

Upon the explanation of Tahthib, the Late Muhaddith Jaza'iri has stated that he had seen six hundred and twenty traditions about Raj'at.[20]

However, the abovementioned matters have been taken from the book entitled: Raj'at-i-Daulat-i-Karimeh Khandan-i-Wahy, pp. 141, 142.

Who The Oppressed and Oppressors Are

We know that the Arabic term /mustad'af/ is derived from the word /da'f/ (weakness). But, here, it does not mean someone who is weak, unable, and not having power, it means someone who has powers both in actuality and potentiality but he has been under serious pressure from the side of the unjust and tyrants so that he is in weakness, chains, and yokes.

He always tries to break the chains in order to become free, and send the oppressors away so that he can establish the right religion and justice everywhere.

Allah has promised such a group that He will help them and give them the government of the earth. This promise is not for those shiftless and coward people who are not ready even to make a shout, let alone that they enter the field of struggle and be sacrificed.

That day, the Children of Israel could become the heirs of the government of Pharaohs, too, when they supported their leader, Moses (as), and mobilized their forces in a single row. They completed the remaining faith that they had inherited from their grand father Abraham (as) with the invitation of Moses (as), and after wiping out superstitions from their thought, they became ready to raise.

Of course, there are various kinds of Mustad'af (oppressed). They are ideological, cultural, economical, ethical and political oppressed. That which the Qur'an has emphasized on more, are the political and ethical oppressed.

No doubt the arrogant tyrants, in order to strengthen the bases of their tyrannical policy, at first try to mentally and culturally weaken their preys and to economic weakness so that power and ability may not remain for them and they do not think about raising and taking the rein of government in their hand.

In five occurrences of the holy Qur'an the oppressed are referred to in which the words are about the believers who were under the pressure of the oppressors.

In one place, the Qur'an invites the believers to struggle in the way of Allah and helping the Faithful oppressed ones.

It says:

"And what has happened to you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and for the weak among men, women, and children who say: 'Our Lord! Take us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us from You guardian, and appoint for us from You helper!'"[21]

Only in one instance the Qur'an speaks about the ones who are unjust and cooperate with disbelievers while they claim that they are oppressed but the Qur'an negates their claim, where it says:

"…'In what state were you?' They will reply: 'We were oppressed in the land'. (The angels) will say: 'Was not Allah's land vast so that you could have migrated therein?'…"

But since they did not so, their abide is Hell.[22]

Yet, the Qur'an has, however, supported the oppressed everywhere and has mentioned them fairly and has considered them the under-pressure-believers who are strugglers and are in the grace of Allah.

The General Style of All Oppressors

It was not only Pharaoh who, for the captivity of the Children of Israel, slaughtered their men and kept their women alive to be as maid servants, but all the tyrants of history used to do like that and caused the active powers to be useless by any mean they could.

Wherever they could not break the men, they broke their manliness. They stopped the spirit of bravery, courage and faith in them by spreading means of corruption, narcotic materials, expansion of indecency, sexual libertinage, the development of liquor and gambling, and kinds of unsafe amusement so that they could continue their self-interest government with peace of mind.

But the Divine prophets, specially the Prophet of Islam (S), tried to awaken the inactive powers of the young persons; and even taught manliness to women and set them in the row of men against the oppressors.

The evidences of these two programs are so manifest in the history of the past, and nowadays in all Islamic countries, that there is no need of mentioning them.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 7

وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي أُمّ ُوسَي أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمّ وَلاَ تَخَافِي وَلاَ تَحْزَنِي إِنَّا رَآدُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

7. "And We inspired unto the mother of Moses, saying: 'Give him suck, then when you fear for him, cast him into the River and do not fear nor grieve, for We will return him unto you and make him one of the apostles'."

Pharaoh had been told that in that year a child would be born that if he could grow up he might destroy him. He ordered that all the newborn children should be killed. But when Moses was born, Allah inspired his mother to give him suck.

Then she should put him inside a box and cast the box into the sea. In this noble verse, there are two orders, two prohibitions, and two glad tidings unto Moses' mother.

The two orders are:

"Give him suck"

and

"Cast him into the River".

The two prohibitions are:

"Do not fear"

"Nor grieve".

And the two glad tidings are:

"We will return him unto you"

and

"Make him one of the apostles".

The Arabic word /xauf/ (fear) is used for a probable danger, and the Qur'anic word /huzn/ is applied for a certain anxiety.[23] The objective of the term /yamm/ is the Nile River in Egypt which is called 'sea' because of its greatness and largeness. The castle of Pharaoh had been built on its bank.

When Allah desires it, man's enemy becomes his refuge, either:

"Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the River)."[24]

Therefore, in order to illustrate a lively example of the triumphant of the oppressed over the oppressors, in this verse Allah starts the story of Moses and Pharaoh. It specially explains the parts in which Moses is in the weakest states and Pharaoh is in his mightiest circumstances, so that it shows the triumph of the Will of Allah over the will of tyrants in its best form.

It says:

"And We inspired unto the mother of Moses, saying: 'Give him suck, then when you fear for him, cast him into the River and do not fear nor grieve, for We will return him unto you and make him one of the apostles'."

This short holy verse contains two commandments, two prohibitions, and two glad tidings which are a summary of a great story full of adventures, the extract of it is as follows:

The system of Pharaoh had designed a vast plan for killing the 'new born boys' of the Children of Israel, and even the midwives of Pharaoh were taking control over the pregnant women of the Children of Israel.

In this course, one of the midwives had friendship with Moses' mother. (The delivery of Moses performed secretly and the signs of pregnancy were not so apparent in his mother.) When she felt that the childbirth was approaching, she went to meet her friend, the midwife. She told her that she had a child in her womb and she was in need of her kindness and friendship.

When Moses was born, a mysterious light came out from his eyes, in a manner that the midwife's body trembled, and she felt a light of love in the depth of her heart for him, so that it brightened all parts of her heart.

The midwife turned to the mother of Moses and said:

"I had decided to inform the birth of this child to the government in order that the officials come and kill this boy (and I take my tip), but what can I do that I feel an intensive love from this child inside my heart, so that I do not wish that he receives even the slightest harm. Take care of him properly. I think that at last our final enemy is this child."

When the midwife came out from the house of Moses' mother, some of the spies of the government saw her and decided to enter the house. Moses' sister informed the event to the mother and she became so hasty that she did not know what to do.

In the midst of this intensive fear that she could not think at all, she wrapped the child in a piece of cloth and threw him into the oven. Then the men of government came in and, after searching everywhere, they found nothing there save an oven full of fire.

They began making investigations from the mother of Moses. They asked what that midwife was doing there. She answered them that she was her friend and had come to see her. The spies became disappointed and went out.

Moses' mother came to her senses and asked Moses' sister where Moses was. She answered she did not know. Suddenly a cry was heard from the inside of the oven. The mother hasted toward the oven when she saw Allah had made the fire cold and safe for him, (the same Lord Who made the fire of Numrud cold and safe for Abraham). She took out her child safe and sound from the oven.

Still the mother was not in security because the officials were searching here and there and, hearing the sound of a body would be enough for a great danger to happen.

Now a Divine inspiration enlightened the heart of Moses's mother. It was an inspiration that apparently invited her to a dangerous action, but, however, she felt peace from it.

She realized that it was a Divine mission that she should fulfil it in any case. She decided to accomplish the content of this inspiration and cast her newborn child into the Nile River.

She went to an Egyptian carpenter, (a carpenter who was one of Coptic people). She asked him to make a small box for her. The carpenter asked her for what purpose she wanted that box with those qualities.

The mother of Moses, being unable to tell a lie, disclosed her plan to the carpenter and said that she was from the Children of Israel and she needed the box for her newborn son to hide him in it.

The carpenter intended to inform the event to the cruel informers. When he went to them he became dumb because of the horror he felt in his heart. He wanted to communicate the matter to the informers by only making signs, but they took his deeds as a mockery and, beating him, drove him away.

When the carpenter came out he found himself to be all right. He went again to the informers and the previous event happened to him once more. Then he was convinced that there was a Divine secret in it, and he made the box for Moses' mother and gave it to her.

Perhaps it was in the early morning, when the people of Egypt were still asleep, that the mother of Moses brought her baby with the box beside the Nile River. She sucked him for the last time, and then she put him in that special box and let it move on the water like a ship.

Soon the waves of the River took the box far from the bank. The mother was standing there, watching the scene. In a short moment she felt that as if her heart was separated from her and was moving on the waves. Had not the grace of Allah made her heart calm, she would have cried and every thing was disclosed!

Now, we may see what happened in the palace of Pharaoh as stated in the news. The only child Pharaoh had was a young daughter. She was suffering from a serious sickness. He wanted the physicians to cure her, but he got no result from them. He betook to the soothsayers.

They said:

"O Pharaoh! We have foresighted that from the inside of this sea there will come a human into this castle that if the body of this patient be rubbed with his saliva, she will be cured."

Pharaoh and his wife, 'Asiyah, were waiting for such an event. One day suddenly a box, which was moving on the waves of the River, attracted their attention. He ordered his men to go immediately toward the box and take it and bring it to him to see what was inside it.

The mysterious box was put in front of Pharaoh. Those who were around him could not open it. Yes, the box of the safety of Moses should be opened by the hand of Pharaoh himself, and so it happened.

When the eyes of Pharaoh's wife were faced with the eyes of the baby, a light brightened the depths of her hearts and all those who were there, and Pharaoh's wife in particular, heartily loved him; and when the saliva of this newborn baby caused the sick person to be cured, this love was increased.[25]

The rest of this story is shortly explained by the Holy Qur'an, which we refer to in the following pages.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 8

فَالْتَقَطَهُ ءَالُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوّاً وَحَزَناً إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ

8. "Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the River) that he might be unto them an enemy and a (cause of their) grief; verily Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were sinners."

When anxieties and difficulties often rush, Allah is the best guide and support for the believers.

In the way of performing the commandments of Allah we must neither afraid of anything nor be anxious of any problem.

The Qur'an says:

"Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the River) that he might be unto them an enemy and a (cause of their) grief…"

The Qur'anic word /'altaqata/ is derived from the word /'iltiqat/ which originally means: 'reaching to something without any effort and endeavour'. And it is also for this reason that the lost things that one finds, in Arabic, are called /luqatah/.

It is evident that the men of Pharaoh did not take the box of this baby from the waves of the river with the purpose that they would foster their enemy in their own lap, but as the Pharaoh's wife said, they wanted to take 'a refreshment of eye' for themselves, but finally it became as it happened.

The delicacy of this meaning is in this very fact that Allah intends to show His power that how He made this group, who had mobilized all their forces to kill the boys of the Children of Israel, to take care of and foster eagerly the some one for whom they applied all those cruelties in order that they could vanish him.

However, the Arabic phrase: /'alu fir'aun/ (the people of Pharaoh), used in the verse, shows that not only one person but a group of the people of Pharaoh participated in taking the box from the water, and this is an evidence for the fact that they were waiting for such a thing.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…verily Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were sinners."

They were sinners in every thing. What a sin is greater than this that they had left out the path of truth and justice, and founded the foundation of their government on vice, injustice, tyranny, and polytheism. And what a sin is clearer than this that they killed thousands of children to destroy Moses, but Allah put him in their own hands to take him, foster him and bring up their own enemy.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"There is a difference between the Arabic words /xati/ and /muxti/. The term /xati/ is used for the one who begins a job that he can not afford doing it and goes a wrong way, while the term /muxti/ is used for a person who begins a job that he can afford it very well, but it happens that he makes mistake and wastes it."

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 9

وَقَالَتِ ا ْمرَأَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّـي وَلَكَ لاَ تَقْتُلُوهُ عَسَي أَن يَنفَعَنَآ أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَداً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

9. "And Pharaoh's wife said: '(He will be) a joy of the eye for me and for you; do not slay him; may be he will profit us, or we may take him for a son; but they did not perceive (what they were doing)."

The women have an effective function in social affairs. (Pharaoh's wife changed the decision of Pharaoh and neither of his dignity, sovereignty, and wealth could hinder her.)

In Moses' life, a few women had an important fundamental function. They were Moses' mother, Moses' sister, Pharaoh's wife and the wife of Moses. In this verse, the function of the wife of Pharaoh in preventing him from killing Moses is stated.

The verse says:

"And Pharaoh's wife said: '(He will be) a joy of the eye for me and for you; do not slay him; may be he will profit us, or we may take him for a son…"

It seems that by the face of the baby and other signs, including putting him in the box and leaving him on the waves of Nile, Pharaoh had found out that this baby belonged to the Children of Israel.

Suddenly the thought of raising up of a man from the Children of Israel and the destruction of his kingdom by his hand came into his mind and he wanted that his criminal law upon the new-born children of the Children of Israel should be executed for this baby, too.

The flatterers around Pharaoh also encouraged this kind of thought and said that there was no reason that the law might not be executed upon him.

But 'Asiyah, Pharaoh's wife, who had no son and her pure heart, which was not of the kind of that of the people of Pharaoh's court, had been the center of the love of this new-born boy, stood against all of them, and since in these kinds of family debates women often win, she became victorious there, too.

And if the event of the Pharaoh's daughter, who was cured before them, is also added to it, the triumph of 'Asiyah in this conflict will be made more clear.

But, at the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an, in a short expressive sentence, says:

"…but they did not perceive (what they were doing)."

Yes, they did not know that the Divine operative command and the invincible Will of Allah (s.w.t.) was upon this fact that this baby should be grown up in the most important center of danger and no one had the ability and power of opposing with this Divine Will.

Yes, the providence and power of the Almighty is not only in that if He wishes to destroy a powerful and tyrannical people He sends the forces of heaven and the earth for their destruction.

Showing power is in that He appoints the arrogant tyrants themselves as the destructive of them, and influences in their hearts and thoughts so effectively that they eagerly gather the fuel-wood by the fire of which they must be burnt; or they build a prison wherein they must die; or they set up a gallows-tree on which they must be put to death.

The state of the arrogant powerful people of Pharaoh was also as this, and Moses' fosterage and deliverance, in all stages, were done by their own hand:

Moses' midwife was a Coptic woman.

The maker of the deliverance box of Moses was a Coptic carpenter.

Those who took the box from the waves of Nile were among 'The people of Pharaoh'.

The person who could open the door of the box was Pharaoh himself or his wife, 'Asiyah'.

And, finally, the secure, peaceful, and educational place of Moses, who became brave and Pharaoh-breaker was that very palace of Pharaoh! And this is the providence.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 10-11

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ ُوسَي فَارِغاً إِن كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلاَ أَن رَّبَطْنَا عَلَي قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيهِ فَبَصُرَتْ بِهِ عَن جُنُبٍ وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

10. "And the heart of the mother of Moses became void; she was about to disclose it had We not strengthened her heart so that she might be of the believers (in Our promises)."

11. "And she said to the sister of (Moses): 'Follow him.' So she watched him from afar while they did not perceive."

The peace of hearts is in the authority of Allah (s.w.t.).

The important thing before Allah is Faith, and in this field, men and women are equal for Him. And the peace of mind and rest of heart are among the signs of Faith.

Moses' mother sent her child on the waves of Nile, but after this event there appeared an intensive fear in her heart. The vacant place of her newborn baby, which had filled her heart, was completely sensible.

It was almost nigh for her to shout and cast out the secrets hidden in her heart.

It was nigh that she might cry and moan for the separation of her son.

But the grace of Allah (s.w.t.) was showered over her and the heart of Moses' mother was empty of everything except the remembrance of her son; and if Allah had not strengthened her heart by the light of Faith and hope, she might have disclosed the matter.

The verse says:

"And the heart of the mother of Moses became void; she was about to disclose it had We not strengthened her heart so that she might be of the believers (in Our promises)."

The Arabic word /Fariq/ means 'empty', and here the purpose of it is that it became void from all things save the remembrance of Moses. Some commentators have taken it with the sense of being empty from sorrow and grief; or empty from inspiration and the glad tidings that she was already given; but regarding the sentence of the holy verse, these commentaries do not seem correct.

This is completely natural that a mother, who separates her child from herself in the abovementioned manner, forgets everything but her child and goes into such a mood that, without considering the dangers that may threaten both her and her child, cries and reveals the secrets hidden in her heart.

But the Lord, Who has assigned this heavy mission for this kind and compassionate mother, strengthens her heart so firmly that she believes in the Divine promises and knows that her child is in the protection of Allah and, at last, He will return him to her and he will become a prophet.

The Arabic word /rabatna/ is derived from /rabata/ which originally means: 'to tie an animal, or the like, somewhere to be assured that it is secure in its place'.

That is why the site of this kind of animals is called 'Ribat', and afterward it has been used in a vaster scope of meaning, as: 'to guard, to strengthen, and to get firmness'; and the purpose of /rabatna 'ala qalbiha/ in this verse is 'strengthening the heart of this mother', so that she believes in the Divine inspiration and tolerates this great event.

The next verse implies that Moses' mother regained her calmness as the result of Allah's grace, but she wanted to know the circumstance of her child.

Therefore, the verse says:

"And she said to the sister of (Moses): 'Follow him.'…"

The Qur'anic term /qussiyuhu/ is derived from /qass/ which means 'seeking for the traces of something'. The Arabic word /qissih/ is used in the sense of 'story' because it follows the different news and events.

Moses' sister fulfilled the command of the mother and watched the affairs from a considerable distance.

The verse continues saying:

"…So she watched him from afar while they did not perceive."

Some commentators have said that several special servants of Pharaoh had brought the child out of the castle in order to search for a nurse for him, and it was just this time that Moses' sister saw her brother from a distance.

But the first commentary seems more fitting.

Thus, after that when the mother of Moses returned to her own home, Moses' sister was in the bank of Nile, watching the events from afar, and by her own eyes she saw the manner how some of the people of Pharaoh took him off the water and rescued him from the horrible danger which was threatening him.

There have also been delivered some other commentaries for the Qur'anic sentence: /hum la yaš'urun/ (they did not perceive).

The Late Tabarsi, particularly, believes that the repetition of this sentence in the previous verses and here about Pharaoh may point to this fact that he who was so abundantly unaware of the affairs, how did he claim divinity? How did he want to fight against the Will of Allah?

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 12

وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِن قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ نَاصِحُونَ

12. "And We already forbade on him all foster mothers ere until (his sister came up and) said: 'Shall I guide you unto the people of a house who will take care of him for you and they will be benevolent to him?'"

The Arabic term /maradi'/ is the plural form of /murdi'/ that means 'the woman who gives suck at the breast', and 'wet-nurse'.

If Allah does not wish something, a large system such as that of Pharaoh is impotent to supply it as the food of a baby, either.

The most elementary things, such as sucking milk of a sucking child is also done by Allah's Will, and if He does not desire, it will not happen:

(And We already forbade).

When an arrogant person was discouraged, he might easily accept the guidance and suggestion of even an unknown fellow, too.

However, the will of Allah was that this child would return to his mother soon and make her heart calm.

So, the verse says:

"And We already forbade on him all foster mothers ere…"

It is natural that, after a few hours, a newborn child, such as Moses, becomes hungry and cries impatiently. They had to search a foster mother for him, in particular that the queen of Egypt had bent her heart upon him and loved him very much.

The men of Pharaoh began searching everywhere to find a foster mother for the child, but it was surprising that he did not suck milk from any foster mother.

Perhaps the child was frightened by their features, or the flavor of their milk was not acquainted with his taste, and it was unpleasant to him. As if he wanted to throw off himself from the bosom of those foster mothers. This was that very divine genetic prohibition that He had forbidden all foster mothers on him.

Every moment, the child became hungrier and more impatient. He was ceaselessly crying and his sound was heard in the castle and caused the queen's heart to tremble.

The officials intensified their efforts. Suddenly they met in a not so distanced place a girl who said that she knew a family who could take care of that newborn child and they would be benevolent to him.

The verse continues saying:

"…until (his sister came up and) said: 'Shall I guide you unto the people of a house who will take care of him for you and they will be benevolent to him?'"

She implied that she knew a woman from the Children of Israel whose chest was full of milk and she had a heart full of affection. She had lost her child and was ready to undertake giving suck to the baby of the castle.

The officials become happy and took the mother of Moses to Pharaoh's castle. When the child smelt the mother's smell, he eagerly pressed her nipple in his mouth and he got a new life from her milk.

The light of joy was seen in the eyes of the audience, specially those officials who, after a tiresome research, had gained their aim and were happier than others. Pharaoh's wife could not hide her happiness from others for this event.

Perhaps they told the foster where she was that they sought everywhere for her. They wished she had come sooner. They admired her and also her milk which was a resolver of their difficulty.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that when Moses accepted the nipple of the mother, Haman, the minister of Pharaoh, said:

"I think you are the real mother of this child. Why did he accept only your breast from among those many women?"

She said:

"O king! It is because I am a sweet-smelling woman and my milk is also very sweet. Up to now there has been no child given to me but he (she) has accepted my nipple."

The audience verified her words and each of them gave her a precious present.[26]

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition said:

"It did not last longer than three days that Allah returned the baby to his mother.[27]

Some have said that this Divine genetic prohibition of the milk of others for Moses was that Allah did want that this great prophet drink the milk which was polluted with unlawful food, polluted with properties gained by larceny, crime, bribery, and usurping other's rights.

He should drink a pure milk such as the milk of his mother so that he could stand against the pollutions and fight against the impious ones.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 13

فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَي أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلاَ تَحْزَنَ وَلِتَعْلَمَ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

13. "Thus did We restore him to his mother that her eye might be refreshed, and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true, but most of them do not know."

Never do the Divine promises fail, but the majority of people are those who see only the surface of the things and have no understanding of the wise secrets and devise plans of Allah. Of course, for the people of Truth the aims are important, not the titles.

Finally, the child was returned to the bosom of the mother, though this time the mother was employed as a foster mother. But the title is no important, the return of the child was important.

Therefore, this verse says:

"Thus did We restore him to his mother that her eye might be refreshed, and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true, but most of them do not know."

There arises a question here: Did the people of Pharaoh give the child to the mother to suck him and during this time, every day, or now and then, she had to bring the child into the castle of Pharaoh in order that the Queen

of Egypt might have a new visit from him? Or did they keep the child inside the court and Moses' mother came there in special times and sucked him?

There is not any clear evidence for either of these two probabilities, but the first one seems more fitting.

And also, was Moses transported to the castle of Pharaoh after the end of his sucking period? Or did he usually keep his relation with the mother and his family and used to have familiar intercourse between these two?

Some commentators have said that after the sucking period she gave him to Pharaoh and his wife, 'Asiyah, and Moses was fostered by them and in their hands.

Here there are cited some other stories about the childish but expressive acts of Moses unto Pharaoh that mentioning all of them takes a long space.

But this sentence that, after that Moses was appointed to prophethood, Pharaoh told him:

"…'Did we not cherish you as a child among us, and you tarried among us for (many) years of your life?",

shows that Moses had lived in the castle of Pharaoh for a length of time and had remained there for some years.

It is understood from the commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim that Moses remained in the castle of Pharaoh with utmost honour until the period of his puberty, but his theistic statements made Pharaoh very inconvenient, so much so that he decided to kill Moses.

Moses left the castle and entered the city where he confronted the conflict of two men: one from the Coptic people and the other was from among the Children of Israel.[28]

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 239, and Fakhr-i-Razi, in Tafsir-i-Kabir, following the verse.
2. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
3. Tafsir-i-Kabir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
4. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 82
5. More explanation about Haman, Allah willing, will be given in the commentary of verse 38 in the current Surah.
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 209
7. Qiybat by Shaykh Saduq, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, P. 110
8. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
9. Mokhtasar 'Ithbat-ur-Raj'ah, seventh tradition; and Kifayat-ul-Mahdi, P. 50
10. 'Ithbat-ul-Hudat, Vol. 3, P. 569
11. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, Vol. 4, P. 1982
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. 'Iqd-ul-Durar, P. 142
16. 'Iqd-ul-Durar, P. 169
17. Kashf-ul-Qummah, Vol. 2, P. 485
18. Majma'ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 234; and Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 4, P. 76
19. Kitab-ul-'Iqaz, P. 31 and P. 430
20. Bayan-ul-Furqan, Vol. 5, P. 288
21. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 75
22. Ibid, verse 97
23. The Commentary of Al-Mizan

www.alhassanain.org/english

24. The current Surah, verse 8

25. This part of the narration is said by Ibn-'Abbas, recorded in the commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, and there or also other narrations recorded in the commentary of 'Abul-Futuh and Majma'-ul-Bayan.

26. The Commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 221, P. 231

27. Tafsir-us-Safi, Vol. 3 under verse 40 from Surah Ta-Ha

28. The Commentary of Ali-Ibn-'Ibrahim, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 117

Section 2: Moses Saved By Allah From Being Murdered

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 14

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْماً وَعِلْماً وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

14. "And when he reached his full strength and was ripe, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward the good-doers."

The first condition of accepting responsibility is bodily puberty; but real puberty is not obtained by only the bodily growth and sexual power, it depends on the completion of thought and intellect, too.

Here we are faced with the third part of the adventurous life story of Moses (as), in which the events of before his puberty period, and before he goes from Egypt to Madyan, and the motive of his migration are pointed out.

It says:

"And when he reached his full strength and was ripe, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward the good-doers."

The Arabic term /'ašudda/ is derived from /šiddat/ in the sense of 'to become strong'; and the word /'istawa/ is derived from /'istiwa'/ which means 'the perfection of creation and equilibrium'.

Some commentators have said that /balaqa 'ašudd/ is the state in which man reaches the limit of perfection from the point of bodily strength and it is often in the age of eighteen; and /'istiwa'/ is the state of equilibrium and establishment in the affair of life and living which usually comes forth after the perfection of bodily power.

The difference between these two Arabic words /hukm/ (judgment) and /'ilm/ (knowledge) may be in the fact that /hukm/ refers to intellect, understanding, and ability for correct judgment, while /'ilm/ is an awareness and knowledge which is not accompanied with ignorance.

The Qur'an sentence /kaðalika najzil mu'minin/ clearly shows that, because of his godly piety and for his good and pure deeds, Moses had got this eligibility that Allah gave him the reward of wisdom and knowledge, and it is clear that the purpose of this wisdom and knowledge is not revelation and prophethood, because on that day Moses had a long distance with the time of revelation and prophethood.

Then, the purpose is that awareness, clear sightedness, the ability of correct judgment and the like of them that Allah gave to Moses for his chastity, veracity, and righteousness.

Shortly speaking, this sentence indicates that Moses did not change to the habit of the castle, the environment where he lived, and, as far as he could, he tried to help the right and justice, though today the details of it are not clear to us.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 15

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَي حِينِ غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلاَنِ هَذَا مِن شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِن شِيعَتِهِ عَلَي الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَزَهُ ُوسَي فَقَضَي عَلَيْهِ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ ُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ

15. "And he entered the city at a time when its people were unheeding, and found there two men fighting, one being of his own party, and the other of his enemies. Then the one that was of his own party sought his help against the one who was of his enemies, so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: 'This is of the Satan's doing; verily, he is an enemy that manifestly misleads'."

The reformers of the society should sometimes informally, unknowingly and without any title come among people.

Before his prophethood, Moses (as) had some companions and followers, too. Though he was grown up in the castle of Pharaoh, the oppressed people had mostly accepted him as their supporter and leader because of his thought and manner.

However, the verse says:

"And he entered the city at a time when its people were unheeding…"

It is not clear that which city it was that Moses entered, but most probably it was the capital of Egypt. As some Islamic commentators have said, Moses had been condemned to be banished from the capital of Egypt as the result of the daily increasing discords he had against Pharaoh and his governmental system. But, in a special time when people were unaware, Moses entered the capital.

This is also probable that the purpose of entering the city was his coming out from the castle of Pharaoh, because the castle of the kings were usually built by the city so that they could control the ways of coming and going.

The objective of the sentence 'at a time when its people were unheeding' is the time when the people of the city stopped their business and no one was exactly taking care of the circumstances of the city. But at what hour it happened?

In a tradition the holy Prophet (S) said:

"The hour of negligence is between sunset and the evening supper."[1]

And, verily, this hour is the hour of negligence and many of the crimes, vices, and ethical deviations are performed in these very hours of the beginning of night.

At this time, people are mostly neither busy working nor are they in the state of sleeping and resting. There is usually a general negligence in the city at this time, and the circulation of the mischief centers are also during these hours.

Anyhow, Moses entered the city where he was confronted a scene.

The verse continues saying:

"…and found there two men fighting, one being of his own party, and the other of his enemies…"

The application of the Arabic term /ši'atihi/ in the verse shows that from that time Moses had some communications with the children of Israel and

he had some followers there, and probably he had chosen them as a central source for struggling against the tyrannical system of Pharaoh.

When the Israelite man saw Moses who was a strong man, asked him, to help him against his enemy.

The verse says:

"…Then the one that was of his own party sought his help against the one who was of his enemies…"

Moses hastened to help him in order to deliver him from the grips of that unjust cruel man. Some commentators have said that this enemy was one of the cooks of Pharaoh and he wanted to force the Israelite man to carry the woods without pay.

The verse says:

"…so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him…"

No doubt Moses did not want to kill the Coptic man, and this meaning is also understood from the later verses, not for the sake that they were not deserving to be killed, but for the sequels that this action might have for Moses and the Children of Israel.

So immediately Moses spoke:

"…He said: 'This is of the Satan's doing; verily, he is an enemy that manifestly misleads'."

In other words, he wanted to separate the hand of the Coptic man from the collar of the man who was from the Children of Israel. Though the people of Pharaoh deserved more than this, in those circumstances that action was not expediential and, as we will see later, this event caused him not to remain in Egypt any longer and he went toward Madyan.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 16

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

16. "(Moses) said: 'My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do You then forgive me!' So (Allah) forgave him. Verily He is the forgiving, the Merciful."

The righteous people immediately ask forgiveness even for the unintentional wrong actions, too, and avoid from their sequels. (By his seeking forgiveness, Moses asked several things from Allah: both wiping the social effects of his action, and removing the anxiety from the future, and repellence of the revengeful plots of the people of Pharaoh.)

In this verse, the Holy Qur'an from the tongue of Moses (as) says:

"(Moses) said: 'My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do You then forgive me!' So (Allah) forgave him. Verily He is the forgiving, the Merciful."

Certainly Moses did not commit any sin here, but there happened a 'leaving the better (nodbi)' from him that there should not happen such a thing so that he would not inflict some annoyance, trouble, and pain.

For this very action he asked Allah to forgive him and Allah included him in His grace, too. Commentators have delivered a great deal of discussions about the affray of the Coptic man and the Israelite one, and the Coptic being killed by Moses (as).

Of course this action was not itself an important problem, because the criminal men of Pharaoh were some cruel mischief mongers who cut the head of thousands of newborn sons from the Children of Israel and refused to commit no crime against the Children of Israel. Thus they were not some ones whose blood could be honourable specially for the Children of Israel.

The things that have created difficulty for the commentators are the expressions that Moses (as) himself has stated in this event:

Once he says:

"…This is of the Satan's doing…"[2]

In another occurrence he says:

"My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do you then forgive me!'…"[3]

How do these expressions agree with the infallibility of the prophets who must have the rank of immunity even before their prophethood and Messengership?

But the above explanations upon the commentary of the above verses make clear that what Moses did was not more than leaving the better (nodbi).

By this act he troubled him because a Coptic being killed by Moses was not an ordinary thing that the people of Pharaoh could easily renounce, and we know that abandoning this action is in the sense of an action which is not essentially unlawful (haram), but it causes that a better deed may be left without that a wrong action would have been done.

Something similar to this meaning has also been cited in the life story of some other prophets, including Hadrat Adam, the explanation of which was given when commenting on Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 19.

A tradition upon the commentary of this verse has been recorded in 'Uyun-ul-'Akhbar from Imam Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as) who said:

"The purpose of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…this is of the Satan's doing…"

is the conflict of those two with each other which was considered as a Satanic act, not the act of Moses (as); and the purpose of the sentence:

"My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself!…"

is that I put myself in a place where I should not put. I should not come into this city; and the purpose of the phrase:

"…Do You then forgive me!…"

is that You do cover me from Your enemies so that they do not find me.

(One of the meanings of /qufran/ is 'to cover'.)

Sayyid Murtada 'Alam-al-Huda, in Tanzih-ul-'Anbiya, commenting on the verse, has chosen the same meaning, too.[4]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 17

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيراً لِّـلْمُجْرِمِينَ

17. "He said: "My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty'."

It is better that we call Allah in our supplications by the holy word 'Rabb' (Lord).

The bodily power is one of the bounties of Allah (s.w.t.) given to human beings. (Moses (as) had ability that he could kill a pagan by his fist.)

Moses implicitly said to Allah:

"For the gratitude of this bounty that You included me in Your forgiveness and caused me not to be seized by the enemies, and for the gratitude of all bounties that You have bestowed on me since the beginning, I will never support the guilty and will not be the helper of the unjust. On the contrary, I will hasten to help the oppressed and the deprived."

The verse says:

"He said: "My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty'."

The purpose of Moses (as) from this noble sentence was that he would never cooperate with the criminal sinful people of Pharaoh and he (as) would be the supporter of the oppressed Children of Israel.

In Islamic jurisprudence there is a large chapter about 'helping the sin' and 'assisting the oppressors'; or there are many traditions which show that one of the most clear sins is helping the unjust, tyrants, and criminals. It causes man to share the evil fate of theirs.

In principle, the unjust, tyrants, and persons like Pharaoh are some particular members who always exist in every society, and if the crowds of people do not cooperate with them the tyrannical kings will not become so tyrant.

When a group of vile and weak fellows, or the seekers of an occasion and mammonists gather around them and become as their aids or, at least, as their multitude of soldiers, they usually provide a satanic power for them.

This Islamic and humane principle has repeatedly been emphasized on in the Holy Qur'an.

For example, Allah in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 2 says:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression…".

There are some other evidences in it, too.

The Qur'an explicitly says:

"And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you…"[5]

The Qur'anic word /rukun/, whether it may be meant in the sense of heartily inclination, outward cooperation, or expressing content, or friendship and benevolence, or obedience on which each of commentators have delivered a commentary, or a concept that envelops all of them and it is reliance, confidence and dependence, is a lively evidence and attestation to our purpose.

Muhammad-ibn-Muslim Zuhari was a learned man who had cooperation not only with the system of Umayyads but also with Husham-ibn-'Abdul-Malik in particular.

Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin Ali-ibn-il-Husayn (as), after avoiding him of helping the unjust, in his shaking words told him:

"Did they not invite you to their own group and did they not form a center by you that the mill of their oppression turns around its axis? Did

they not set you as a bridge for their passing unto their afflictions, as a ladder for their aberrations, an emissary for their misguidance, and a follower for their shameful path?

They create doubt the scholars by you, and through you they entrap the hearts of ignorant simple-minded ones. What a little price they gave you for that which they took from you, and instead of what they ruined from you, how little they built! Ponder upon yourself, because there is no one to be sympathetic for you save yourself; and as a responsible man reckon your account."[6]

Truly this clear expressive logic of the Imam (as) can attract the attention of any courtier and dependent scholar to his evil end.

Concerning the verse under discussion, Ibn 'Abbas says:

"This verse is among the verses which attest that supporting the guilty is a crime and a sin, while helping the believers is obeying the commandment of Allah."

Once one of the scholars was told:

"So and so is the writer of an unjust person, and what he writes is only his accounts. If he takes a salary for this work, his living will be safeguarded, otherwise he and his family will seriously be involved in poverty."

In answer to this question, the scholar only said:

"Have you not heard the word of that righteous man (Moses) who said:

'…My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty."

Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"Avoid tyranny because verily a tyrant will never smell the smell of Paradise."[7]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says:

'By My Honour (and Glory) I will certainly take vengeance from the unjust in this world and the next; and take vengeance from the one who sees an oppressed and he can help him but he does not help him.'"[8]

The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

"The Wrath of Allah is violent on the one who is unjust upon whom that finds no helper save Allah."[9]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The oppressor, the one who helps him, and he who is content of it all three are the associates of the oppression."[10]

Imam Ali (as) advised both Hassan and Husayn (as), saying:

"…Be enemy of the oppressor and the helper of the oppressed…"[11]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"No oppression is more serious than oppressing the one who finds no helper for it except Allah."[12]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever breaks the oath of allegiance, or establishes an aberration, or hides a knowledge, or occupies one's property unjustly, or helps an oppressor in his oppression while he knows that he is surely an oppressor, he has certainly refused Islam."[13]

The holy Prophet (S) once said:

"When people see an oppressor (who is committing cruelty) and do not take his hands (do not hinder him of it) it will be nigh that Allah inflicts a punishment upon them."[14]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"There have been written three words on the fourth door of the doors of Hell: Allah abases the one who disgraces Islam; Allah abases the one who disgraces Ahl-ul-Bayt; Allah abases the one who helps the oppressors in their injustice upon people."[15]

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"The most vicious of people is the one who helps (the oppressor) against the oppressed."[16]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 18

فَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَآئِفاً يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنصَرَهُ بِالاَ ْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهُ قَالَ لَهُ ُوسَي إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ

18. "And he was in the city, fearing, awaiting, when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Moses said to him: 'Verily you are one erring manifestly'."

Not any fear is blameworthy. The fear of failing in reaching some good aims and wishes is a praiseworthy fear.

In this verse, and the next verses, we are faced with the fourth scene of this adventurous story.

The news of slaughter of a man from Pharaoh's people quickly spread in Egypt, and perhaps it was known by the frame of references that the slaughterer was a man from the Children of Israel, and perhaps the name of Moses was also mentioned in it.

This slaughter, of course, was not a simple one. It was counted a spark for a revolution, or a prerequisite for it, and the system of the government of Pharaoh could not simply ignore the event that the slaves from among the Children of Israel might intend to kill their lords.

So, as a fact next to this event, the verse says:

"And he was in the city, fearing, awaiting…"

The Arabic word /taraqqub/ means 'wait for'; and the term /surax/ means 'seeking help'.

Suddenly Moses was faced with a scene, as the verse says:

"…when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Moses said to him: 'Verily you are one erring manifestly'."

Moses told the man that he was clearly an ignorant person, because every day he fought with a man and created trouble and did some deeds which were not suitable at that time. Moses then added that the sequences of his yesterday programs were still continued that he began another one.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 19

فَلَمَّآ أَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَا ُوسَي أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْساً بِالاَ ْسِ إِن تُرِيدُ إِلاَّ أَن تَكُونَ جَبَّاراً فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَن تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ

19. "So when he intended to assault him who was the enemy of them both, the man said: 'O Moses! Do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire nothing but to be a tyrant in the land; and you do not desire to be of the reformers'."

The Arabic word /batš/ means: 'anger accompanied with severity and power'.

Criticism upon the friends' fault should not cause them to leave the fact and do not support their right.

(Though Moses criticized his friend, saying:

'…You are one erring manifestly',

yet he decided to support him again.)

The verse says:

"So when he intended to assault him who was the enemy of them both, the man said: 'O Moses! Do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire nothing but to be a tyrant in the land; and you do not desire to be of the reformers'."

This sentence shows that Moses had already expressed his reforming intention both in the castle of Pharaoh and outside of it, and some narrations indicate that he had some conflicts in this field with Pharaoh, too.

That is why the Coptic man says to Moses that every day he wanted to kill a man; what a reformer he was! While if Moses decided to kill this tyrant, too, it would be a step on the way of reform.

However, Moses understood that the yesterday event had been revealed and, in order that he would not face with some more difficulties, he did not follow the matter.

By the way, Ibn Abbas, as well as the majority of the commentators of both sects, have said that the subject of the Qur'anic verb /qala/ is the Israelite man for whose support Moses had killed the Coptic man the previous day, and who fearfully said that Moses wanted to kill him as he killed the Coptic man.[17]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 20-21

وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَي قَالَ يَا ُوسَي إِنَّ الْمَلأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ فَاخْرُجْ

إِنّـِي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَآئِفاً يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجّـِنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

20. "And there came a man from the furthest part of the city, running. He said: 'O Moses! Verily the chiefs are consulting to slay you. So depart (from here at once); Verily I am one of Your sincere advisers'."

21. "So he departed there from, fearing, awaiting, (and) he said: 'My Lord! Deliver me from the unjust people'."

The purpose of the Arabic word /rajul/, in this verse, is 'the Believer of the people of Pharaoh' that Surah 'Mu'min' (Qafir) in the Qur'an has been entitled by his name. He concealed his faith and in the guise of 'taqiyyah' (precautionary concealment) helped Moses.

Moses (as) had a penetrating factor and supporter in the court of Pharaoh. Sometimes, giving information promptly and on time may change the fate of a nation. (If this man did not give the news to Moses (as) and Moses did

not go out from the city, then he might be killed by the men of Pharaoh.) This is why that revealing the treacherous plots is incumbent.

However, this holy verse implies that the event was informed to both Pharaoh and his entourage, and they took its repetition as a threat against their own situation. They held a meeting of consultation, and issued the command of Moses' slaughter.

At this time, an unexpected incident saved Moses from a certain death, as the verse says:

"And there came a man from the furthest part of the city, running. He said: 'O Moses! Verily the chiefs are consulting to slay you. So depart (from here at once); Verily I am one of Your sincere advisers'."

This man apparently is the same one who later became known as 'the Believer of the people of Pharaoh'. It is said that his name was Hezqil and he was one of the close relatives of Pharaoh.

Hezqil had such a communication with them that he could take part in that kind of meetings. He was suffering from the crimes of Pharaoh and he was waiting for a godly raise to happen against him so that he could join to it.

His hope was apparently to Moses in whose feature he had observed to be a godly revolutionary man. For this reason, when he felt that he was in danger, he quickly approached him and saved Moses (as) from the grips of that danger.

We will see later that not only in this event but also in some other circumstances he was a support for Moses (as), and he was counted as a keen-eyed person for the Children of Israel in the castle of Pharaoh.

The next holy verse implies that Moses (as) took this information very earnest, and valued the benevolence of that faithful man. According to his advice, Moses went out from the city while he was terrified and every moment he expected an event to happen.

The verse says:

"So he departed there from, fearing, awaiting…"

He concentrated his whole heart to Allah and for solving this great problem he sought His Grace.

The verse continues saying:

"…(and) he said: 'My Lord! Deliver me from the unjust people'."

This means: I know that they are unjust and cruel, and I defended the oppressed while I was not the supporter of the unjust; then, as I repelled the vice of the oppressors from the oppressed so much that I could, You, too, O' Almighty Lord! repel the vice of the oppressors from me.

Notes

1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 5, P. 249; and Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, following the verse.
2. Surah under discussion, verse 15
3. The verse under discussion
4. 'Uyun-ul-'Akhbar, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Tafsir-us-Safi, Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Tafsir-i-Manhaj-us-Sadiqin under the verse.
5. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 113
6. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, P. 66
7. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, Vol. 7, P. 33

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, P. 7641
9. Sunan Ibn-Dawud, Vol. 2, P. 436
10. Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 333, No. 16
11. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Letter No. 47 and sermon No. 3
12. Bihar, Vol. 72, P. 329
13. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa’il, Vol. 2, P. 137
14. Sunan Ibn-Dawud, Vol. 2, P. 436
15. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 107
16. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa’il, Vol. 2, P. 437
17. The commentaries of Qurtabi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Atyab-ul-Bayan, Safi, Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, Burhan, and Makhzan-ul-‘Irfan, Vol. 9

Section 3: Moses Weds Laban's Daughter

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 22

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَآءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَي رَبِّـي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَآءَ السَّبِيلِ

22. "And when he turned his face towards Madyan, he said: 'I do hope that my Lord will guide me in the right path'."

Change of residence, migration, and application of various tactics are usually the means of a revolution. That is why it is necessary that at first we move and then we utter invocate and be hopeful.

Hadrat Moses (as) decided to go toward Madyan, a city in the south of Syria and the North of Arabia, which was out of the domain of Egypt and the government of Pharaoh.

But a youth, who has grown up in a comfortable and bountiful environment, and goes on a trip for the first time in his life, neither has any provision, nor a companion and guide with him, his situation is clear, in particular that he always fears that the informers arrive and capture him in order to kill him.

Yes, Moses must tolerate hardships and difficulties, and come out from the webs that the castle of Pharaoh had twisted around his personality, live beside the oppressed, feel their pain with all his entity, and become prepared for a godly raise in their favour and against the oppressors.

Therefore, when he started to go toward Madyan, he said he hoped that the Lord would guide him in the right path.

The verse says:

"And when he turned his face towards Madyan he said: 'I do hope that my Lord will guide me in the right path'."

The Arabic word /tilqa'/ here means: 'direction'.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 23-24

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةً مِنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمُ ا ْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ
قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لاَنَسْقِي حَتَّي يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَآءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ
فَسَقَي لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَ ّ إِلَي الظِّـلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّـي لِمَآ أَنزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

23. "And when he arrived at the watering (place) in Madyan, he found on it a group of men watering (their flocks), and besides them he found two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: 'What is the matter with you?' They said: 'We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take away (their sheep from the water), and our father is a very old man'."

24. "So he watered (their flocks) for them, then he turned back to the shade, and said: 'My Lord! Verily I stand in need of whatever good You may send down to me'."

We must not misuse the modesty and weakness of women. If a system of law does not interfere, many men ignore the rights of women. The enclosure between man and woman is a value, so the daughters of Shu'ayb observed this enclosure when watering their sheep.

Here we are confronted the fifth scene of this story. It is the arrival scene of Moses into Madyan.

This pure youth was paving the way to this city for several days, a way which he had never seen before and was not acquainted with it. As some commentators say, he had to walk the way in barefoot. It has been said that he was in the way for eight days, and he walked so much so that his feet was wounded.

To remove his hunger, he (as) consumed the plants of the desert and the leaves of the trees; and alongside all of these difficulties he had only one satisfaction and it was that, by the grace of Allah, he had been delivered from the unjust grips of the people of Pharaoh.

Little by little the landscape of Madyan appeared in the horizon and his heart got calm. When Moses reached the city, a crowd of people attracted his attention. Before long, he understood that they were some shepherds who had crowded around a well in order to give water to their flocks.

The verse says:

"And when he arrived at the watering (place) in Madyan, he found on it a group of men watering (their flocks)…"

Then the verse continues stating about two women who were taking care of their sheep but did not approach the well.

It says:

"…and besides them he found two women keeping back (their flocks)…"

The Arabic term/ tazudan/ is derived from the word /zawd/ which means: 'to hinder, to prevent'.

The condition of those chaste girls who were standing in a corner and none was there to help them, where there were some rude shepherds who thought only about their own flocks and did not give turn to anyone, attracted the attention of Moses. He went to them and asked them why they did not go forth for watering their sheep.

The verse says:

"…He said: 'What is the matter with you?'…"

This discrimination, injustice, cruelty, and this absence of observing the right of the oppressed, which was seen at the threshold of that city, Madyan, was not tolerable for Moses. He was the defender of the oppressed people, and because of it, Moses left the castle of Pharaoh and its favours and went vagrant of his home. He could not abandon his custom and be silent in the face of injustices.

Now, here is the answer of the girls, as the Qur'an says:

"…They said: 'We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take away (their sheep from the water)…"

In order that this question would not remain without any answer for Moses that why the father of these chaste girls sent them after this action, they added:

"…and our father is a very old man'."

They implied that their father was very old and he was not able water the sheep, nor did they have a brother to undertake that action, and in order not to be a burden over the shoulder of others, they could not be helped but they did it themselves.

When Moses heard this word from them, he became very inconvenient and said to himself that how unjust were those people that they all thought of their own affairs and did not do the least support for the oppressed ones?

He came forth and, taking the heavy bucket, threw it into the well. It was so heavy that, as it is said, several persons had to bring it out from the well, hut Moses, by his strong hands, brought it out by himself and watered the sheep of those two.

The verse says:

"So he watered (their flocks) for them…"

It is said that when he approached the crowd, he told them what kind of people they were that they thought not for any one other than them. Then the crowd went aside and gave the bucket to him. They told him to come and if he could he would rinse.

They knew that the bucket was so heavy that it needed ten persons to be brought out from the well. They let Moses (as) be alone, but the power of Faith came to help him and increased his bodily strength. Though he was tired, hungry, and inconvenient, he watered completely all the sheep of those two girls by pulling out only one bucket of water from the well.

The verse continues saying:

"…then he turned back to the shade, and said: 'My Lord! Verily I stand in need of whatever good You may send down to me'."

Yes, Moses was tired and hungry. He was a stranger in that city and had no place to refuge.

But, in the meanwhile, he was not impatient, and he was so polite that even at the time of supplication he did not say: 'O Lord! Do so and so', but he said:

"…'My Lord! Verily I stand in need of whatever good You may send down to me'."

That is, he mentioned only his need and left the rest of it to the grace of Allah.

Through a divine utterance, Allah said:

"O Moses! Ask Me for whatever you are in need of, even if it is the grass for your sheep and the salt of your bread."[1]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 25

فَجَآءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَي اسْتِحْيَآءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ قَالَ لاَ تَخَفْ نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

25. "Afterwards one of the two (damsels) came to him walking bashfully. She said: 'Verily my father invites you that he may give you the reward of your having watered for us'. So when he came to him and narrated unto him his story, (the old man) said: 'Be not afraid; you are secure from the unjust people'."

According to the holy Qur'an, modesty is one of the most distinguished accomplishments of a chaste woman. Therefore, a woman must ply outside of the house with modesty and chastity. Father must be aware of the conduct of his children and show a suitable reaction for their actions.

(When Shu‘ayb noticed that his daughters came back sooner than other days, he asked them its reason and decided to thank Moses.)

Now, look that how significant a deed of benevolence is! And how much marvellous bounties it has!

Doing a single action for Allah, and bringing one bucket of water out of a well in order to support an unknown oppressed person, causes a new chapter to appear in the life of Moses, and brings so much material and spiritual bounties for him. He obtained a gift, his wife, for which he had probably to search for many years.

It began as follows:

“Afterwards one of the two (damsels) came to him walking bashfully. She said: ‘Verily my father invites you that he may give you the reward of your having watered for us’…”

A special light of hope appeared in his heart, as if Moses (as) felt that an important event was going to happen, and he would meet a great man, a gratitude man who did not agree that even the labour of a person, even as much as driving a bucket of water from the well, remained without being rewarded. He must be a particular man, a godly man. O my Lord! What a precious chance!

Yes, that old man was Shu‘ayb, the Divine prophet, who had been inviting people to Allah in that city for many years. He was an example of ‘gratitude’ and devotion to truth and justice, and when he was informed of the subject, he decided to pay his debt to this unacquainted young man, whoever he might be.

Moses started going towards Shu‘ayb’s house. According to some Islamic narrations, in order to show the way, the girl went ahead and Moses walked behind her. The wind was blowing to the girls’ clothing so hard that the clothes might be removed from her body.

The modesty and chastity of Moses (as) did not let him be so. Then he told the girl that he would go ahead and on the crossroads she could guide him.[2]

Moses entered Shu‘ayb’s house. It was a house in which the light of prophethood and spirituality was seen everywhere. An old man, with majesty and dignity, having white hair on his head, said welcome to Moses.

He said to Moses:

“Where do you come from? What is your business? What do you do in this city? What is your purpose here? Why are you alone?”

And some other questions like them.

Moses told his own story for Shu‘ayb.

The Qur’an says:

“…So when he came to him and narrated unto him his story, (the old man) said: ‘Be not afraid; you are secure from the unjust people’.”

Our region is out of their realm, and they do not dominate here. Let no horror be in your heart. You are in a secure land, and you may not suffer from loneliness and strangerhood, because everything will be solved by the Grace of Allah.

Soon Moses (as) realized that he had found a great teacher, Shu‘ayb, in whose entity there were pure springs of knowledge, gnosis, piety, and spirituality, and he could satiate him well.

Shu‘ayb also felt that he had got a worthy, receptive and qualified learner to whom he could transfer the science, knowledge and experiences of his whole life. Yes, as much as that a learner gets gratification from finding a great teacher, the teacher is also happy for finding a worthy student.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 26

قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الأَمِينُ

26. “One of the two (damsels) said: ‘O my father! Employ him. Verily the best of those that you can employ is the strong man, the faithful one’.”

Hadrat Imam Rida (as) once said:

“Hadrat Shu‘ayb asked her daughter: ‘How did you recognize the trustworthiness of this youth that you called him faithful?’ She said: ‘When I conveyed your invitation to him, he told me to guide him from his behind in order that he might not look at my stature.”[3]

The girls of a family have the right of suggestion based upon logic and wisdom, too; and good relations between parents and children, and freedom of exposition and declaration in the family is a value.

This is the sixth scene from the life of Moses (as) in this great event.

Moses (as) entered the house of Shu‘ayb; it was a simple rural house, a pure house full of spirituality. When he explained his story life for Shu‘ayb, one of his daughters began speaking and by a short but expressive expression suggested her father to employ him for protecting their sheep, because he had taken the examination of his power and purity and faithfulness both.

The verse says:

“One of the two (damsels) said: ‘O my father! Employ him. Verily the best of those that you can employ is the strong man, the faithful one’.”

A girl who has been grown up in the house of a great prophet must speak like this, so politely and accurately, and she utters the Truth with the least words and in some short sentences.

How did this girl know that this young man was both strong and trustworthy, notwithstanding it was the first time that she had seen him beside the well and his background was not clear for her?

The answer to this question is evident. She found out his strength when he went toward the well and put the shepherds aside for getting the right of these oppressed girls, and driving the bucket out of well by himself. His trustworthiness and honesty was proved when, on the way to the house, he did not agree that a young girl walks in front of him and the wind might displace her clothes.

Moreover, through the truthful explanation of his life story that he stated for Shu‘ayb both his strength became clear, because he struggled against the Coptic, and his trustworthiness and honesty, because he did not collude with the tyrants.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 27

قَالَ إِنِّـي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَي ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ عَلَي أَن تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَانِيَ حِجَجٍ فَإِنْ أَتْمَمْتَ عَشْراً فَمِنْ عِندِكَ وَمَآ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

27. "He said: 'Verily I intend to wed one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you serve me for eight years, but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I do not wish to be hard to you, if Allah wills, you will find me one the righteous ones."

Here Shu'ayb welcomed the suggestion of her daughter, as it is mentioned in the translation of the verse. But there are a few questions in this regard.

Firstly, doubt in marrying one of these two girls is meaningless, since both husband and wife must be specified. Secondly, doubt in the length of time, where eight years or ten years, is not correct either. Thirdly, the contract of hire is on behalf of Shu'ayb, whereas the wife is the possessor of the wedding gift.

The answers to these questions are as follows:

A, doubt here means that each of the girls that both parties agree is defined at the time of marriage.

B, the contract of hire is based on eight years, but at last, if Moses desires, he can add two years.

C, it does not matter that the wife appoints her dower on benefit of someone else. For example, she may say that her dower is one hundred dollars which will be given to the poor as charity.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that at the time of the Messenger of Allah (S) many people married with the dower of teaching a Surah of the Qur'an, or one derham, or a pound of wheat given to the poor.

However, Moses (as) accepted to be at the service of Shu'ayb. In the mead-time, Shu'ayb (as) said he did not want that during that time (eight or ten years) to be strict and severe to Moses and put on his shoulder some labours other than protecting their sheep.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Verily I intend to wed one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you serve me for eight years, but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I do not wish to be hard to you, if Allah wills, you will find me one the righteous ones."

The last sentence of the verse means: if Allah lets him (Moses) be alive, they will find righteousness and competency in him; otherwise, Allah may take his life from him and He does not give him the success of offering righteousness and competency from him.

Yahy-ibn-Salam says:

"Shu'ayb told Moses that every new born lamb whose colour was not like that of its mother would belong to Moses. Then all the new born lambs had a colour different from their mothers."

Some other commentators have said that Shu'ayb promised Moses that in that year every lamb whose head was black and its body was white it would belong to Moses. Then all the children of the sheep were born in the same colour.

Some Points

1- There are two main conditions for correct administration.

In the short sentence which was mentioned in the above verses from the tongue of Shu‘ayb’s daughter about employing Moses, the Most important and the most methodical conditions of administration were stated in a summarized and general form: power and trustworthiness.

It is evident that the purpose of power is not only the bodily strength, but the objective is the power and ability of performing the responsibility. A powerful and trustworthy physician is the one who is acknowledged enough of his job and has a full dominance on it.

A strong administrator is a person who knows his realm of mission well, is rather aware of the ‘motives’, is mastered in planning, has enough share of originative faculty, and has the necessary skill in ‘arranging the affairs’. He must make the aims clear, and mobilize the powers for reaching the aim. In the meantime, he must be kind, sympathetic, benevolent, trustworthy and honest.

Those who suffice to only trustworthiness and honesty for giving the responsibilities and jobs to someone are in fault as much as they consider that, for accepting responsibility, having expertness is enough. The treacherous specialists and evil conversant factors are as harmful as the unaware honest persons.

If we decide to destroy a country, we must give the affairs to one of these two groups: the treacherous administrators, and the honest ones who are not administrator, and the fruit of both is the same.

The logic of Islam is that every affair should be given to some powerful, capable, and trustworthy persons so that the system of the society ends properly. If we study the causes of the defection of governments in the length of history, we will see that the main factor has been giving the affairs to one of the abovementioned two groups.

It is interesting that everywhere in Islamic programs often ‘knowledge’ and ‘piety’ have come beside each other. An authority of imitation must be just and expert in the Islamic jurisprudence. A judge and a leader must be both expert in Islamic jurisprudence and also be just.

(Besides these two conditions there are also some other conditions, but these two are the basic ones: ‘knowledge’ and cognizance accompanied with justice and piety).

The second subject is the answer to a few questions about the marriage of Shu‘ayb’s daughter with Moses.

We said that the above noble verses have caused a lot of questions to come forth all of which must be answered in a condensed way:

A: Is it correct that a girl who wants to be married with a person may not be precisely distinguished, and at the time of reciting the marriage contract it is said to the bridegroom that one of these two girls is married with you?

Answer: It is not definite that the above expression has been said at the time of the recitation of marriage contract, but the apparent is that at first there is the primary debate and agreement, and after the agreement of Moses, the two parties choose each other and then the formula of marriage contract is executed.

B: Can dower be set ambiguously, and between a small and a large sum?

Answer: From the tone of the verse, it is clearly understood that the real dower had been serving for eight years, and the other two years depended on the will and desire of Moses.

C: In principal, can ‘working and service’ be set as dower? And how this spouse can be touched and associated with while the time of the payment of the dower has not come yet, and he is not even able to pay all of it at once?

Answer: There is no evidence for the lack of permission of such a dower, but in our religion, everything which has value is also included for dower. It is not compulsory that the entire of the dower must be paid in a lamp.

It is enough that all of it is in protective covenant of the husband and the wife owns it. The principle of health and ‘authorizing the previous state’ also judges that this husband will remain alive and will have the ability of doing this service.

D: In principal, how can serving to the father be the dower of the daughter? Is the girl a material that may be sold for a service?

Answer: No doubt Shu‘ayb had got the agreement of his daughter about this issue, and he had a representation and authority to execute the formula of such a marriage contract.

In other words, the main owner of Moses’ protective covenant was that very daughter of Shu‘ayb, but in view of the fact that the living of all of them was passing in a common form with utmost serenity, and purity so that there was not any separation between them, (as even now in many old or rural families it is seen that the living of a family is completely mixed), it was no problem that how that debt ought to be paid.

Shortly speaking, the owner of the dower was only the daughter, not the father, and the service of Moses (as) was also in this way.

E: The dower of Shu‘ayb’s daughter had been a rather heavy dower, because if we count the work of an ordinary worker in a month and in a year and then multiply it to eight, it will be a considerable sum.

Answer: Firstly, this marriage was not a simple marriage, but it was a preliminary cause for Moses to remain in the school of Shu‘ayb. It was a preparation for Moses to study in a great university during that long term, and only Allah knows how many things Moses learnt from the learned old man of Madyan.

Moreover, if Moses worked for Shu‘ayb during this term, instead of it Shu‘ayb would safeguard all the living of Moses and his wife from the same way. Therefore, if we decrease the expenditure of Moses and his wife from the wage of this labour, there will not remain so considerable sum, and we ‘will attest that it was a simple and light dower’.

The third matter is that it is understood from this story that our nowadays custom that we consider the suggestion of the father and relations of the girl for marriage with a youth as a blemish, is not correct.

There is no impediment that the close relatives of the girl find a person who is appropriate for marrying their child and suggest him, as Shu‘ayb did. Similar to this action has been seen among some of the notables of Islam.

The fourth matter is that the names of Shu‘ayb’s daughters have been recorded ‘Safurah’ (or Safura) and ‘Laya’, that the former married Moses.[4]

The fifth matter: Labour and labourer: Allah has desired people to work and make the earth habitable, which will not obtain unless with effort and endeavour.

The Qur'an says:

"…It is He Who produced you from the earth and settled you therein…"[5]

The Qur'an thoroughly emphasized on righteous deed which has a very vast meaning. Many prophets of Allah have been farmer, shepherd, tailor, and carpenter. In Islam working is worship and it is considered as Holy Struggle,[6] and the invocation of a jobless person is not accepted.

Work is a means of training both body and spirit, filling the hours of leisure, a hindrance of mischief and disturbance. It is a factor of growth, genius, originative faculty, economic development, honour, self-sufficiency, and helping others.

The Qur'an says:

"It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse you through its tracts and enjoy of the sustenance which He furnishes…"[7]

Islam has considered a special value and respect for labour, and has advised that the right of labourer must be observed, his consent be gained, his wage be paid quickly with some addition to the appointed one, and respecting him in all instances. In Islam, satiating the trees by a farmer deserves the satiating believers.

Hadrat Ali (as) advised one of his governor-generals that the farmers might not be done unjustly, and they should be favoured when taking tax from them.[8]

In Islam mental activities are also valued highly, so much that a useful hour of contemplation is better than some hours of worship. Laziness and carelessness in work is criticized.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Allah likes that whoever does a thing, he does it well."[9]

The Qur'an advises that after finishing an important action another action should begin. Therefore, laziness is forbidden.

The Qur'an says:

"So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil)."[10]

Yes, idleness causes fatigue, laziness, weariness, and a chance for Satan to penetrate, creation of corruption, and spread of vice.

Islam, of course, has assigned some hours and wages for working, and those who work during holidays are entitled 'oppressors'.[11]

Hadrat Imam Rida (as) said:

"A believer must divide his busy time into four parts: a part for working, a part for worship, a part for friends and dealing with social affairs. Otherwise, man will turn to be a greedy person who deserves all critics which are about greed."[12]

Islam has a special attention to the quality of the work, not its quantity.

The Qur'an says:

"…which of you is the best in conduct…"[13]

However, Islam attaches importance to work, so much that we read in Islamic traditions:

"Allah takes the one who sleeps too much and an idle, jobless (disengaged) person as an enemy."[14]

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"He who is lazy in his worldly work, is also lazy in his hereafter work."[15]

A tradition indicates that once a poor jobless man came to the Prophet (S) and asked help. The Prophet asked the companions whether there was anyone who had an ax in his home. Someone answered he had.

He fetched it and the Prophet (S) equipped it with a steak and gave it to that jobless man and said:

"Here is the tool of job, but you must strive yourself."[16]

We can understand several points from this tradition, as follows:

1- The Divine prophets take the life of people under consideration, too.

2- The weakest person of the society can meet the first personality of the society.

3- Society is in need of help and cooperation. One gives an ax, another person provides its stick, and the Prophet (S) arranges them and makes an ax.

4- For struggling against poverty, the implements of production must be given to the active factors of the society. However, for employing persons, they necessarily must have two elements of: ability (expertness) and trustworthiness.

The abilities and trustworthiness of persons of course, must be made known and defined in ordinary conditions and without the attention of the concerning person. (Many persons cover their reality artificially, flatteringly and hypocritically. But Hadrat Moses, in a natural scene, showed himself by a supporting action and a modestly meeting.)

Once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked which girl went after Moses (as). He answered:

"The one who became his wife."

They asked him which term of the two terms Moses finished. Imam answered the longer and more complete one, (that is, ten years). They asked whether Moses wedded his wife before ten years or after it.

He answered:

"Before ten years".

They asked him whether a man can marry a woman and makes a condition with her father to be hired for two months for him.

He answered:

"Moses knew that he would finish this condition."

They asked:

"How did he know it?"

Imam (as) said:

"He knew that he would remain alive and act according to the condition."[17]

The Importance of Marriage

Some Islamic narrations indicate that marriage causes half of the person's religion to be protected. Two units prayer of the person who has spouse is better than seventy units prayer of those who are not married. The sleep of the married persons is better than the fast of the wakeful unmarried ones.[18]

Yes, in spite of those who think of marriage as the factor of poverty, the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Marriage causes the sustenance to be increased."

Also he said:

"He who abandons marriage because of the fear of poverty is not of us, and has thought ill of Allah."[19]

Some Islamic narrations denote: he, who takes an action on the marriage of his brethren, will be favoured by a special favour of Allah on the Day of Hereafter.[20]

Regarding the 'formation of a family' and taking an action for marriage, the Holy Qur'an has seriously ordered and recommended not to be afraid of poverty. If you are poor, Allah will enrich you out of His grace.[21]

Marriage is a means of peace[22]. By marriage families approach each other and the hearts will become kind, then the suitable ground of training a pure generation with a spirit of cooperation will be prepared.

We read in Islamic narrations to hasten for marriage. The girl whose term of marriage has come is like a ripe fruit that if it does not be separated from the tree, it will decay.[23]

Choosing a Spouse

The criterions of choosing a good spouse among people are: wealth, beauty, linage and nobility, while an Islamic tradition indicates that you must pay attention to belief, kind of thought and insight.[24]

Another tradition indicates that there had been many beauties that caused destruction, and wealth that caused disobedience.[25]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"If a person came to solicit your daughter in marriage and you approved his religion and trustworthiness, you should not refuse him, else you will get into a great disturbance and decadence."[26]

Hadrat Imam Hassan (as) told the one who was consulting him (as) for the marriage of his daughter:

"Choose a pious bridegroom so that if he loves your daughter, he will respect her, and if he does not love her, because of his piety he will not do unjustly to her."[27]

Some Islamic narrations indicate that daughters must not be married to men who drink alcoholic liquors, are ill-tempered, and have not a safe line of thought, and those who have grown up in corruptive families.[28]

Once the Messenger of Allah (S), addressing people, said:

"Avoid the plants grown in ruins."

He was asked:

"What are the plants grown in ruins?"

He said:

"A beautiful lady who has been grown up in a corrupt family."[29]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"The best women of my Ummah are the most beautiful ones and have the least dower."[30]

It should also be mentioned that marriage is of two kinds: permanent marriage and temporary marriage about both of which there are special commandments and recommendations in the Qur'an and Islamic narrations.

Unfortunately, because of some incorrect customs and pretexts and undue expectations of some of the members of the family of bride or bridegroom and having vain desires, the permanent marriage has appeared in the form of a difficult, puzzle or an impracticable pass; and the temporary marriage has also been counted so ugly and reprobated that indecency has occupied its place.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 28

قَالَ ذَلِكَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ أَيَّمَا الاَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلاَ عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ عَلَي مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

28. "(Moses accepted Shu'ayb's suggestion and) said: 'This shall be (an agreement) between me and you, whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no injustice unto me, and Allah is a witness of what we say'."

In marriage contracts, faith in Allah guarantees the safety of contracts.

Here is the statement of Moses as the acceptance of this contract:

"(Moses accepted Shu'ayb's suggestion and) said: 'This shall be (an agreement) between me and you, whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no injustice unto me…"

Then, in order to fasten it and getting help from the Name of Allah, he added:

"…and Allah is a witness of what we say'."

So simply and easily Moses (as) became the son-in-law of Shu'ayb (as).

In all his affairs, even in his own voluntary deeds, man is not independent; he is under the will of Allah and Divine providence.

Whatever Allah desires, it 'will Be', and whatever Allah does not desire, it 'will not Be'; and also 'there is neither might nor strength but in Allah'. In any circumstance man's reliance must be to Allah; and reliance and trust is one of the concerns of unity of Divine Acts. Absolutely, man must set the tools aside and be in an entire submission. This is a particular Unity.

By the way, some commentators have said that Moses asked for a stick from Shu'ayb in order to drive the sheep. Shu'ayb had several sticks and he told Moses to take one of them. He took the stick, which Gabriel had brought from Heaven for Adam. That stick had a light at night.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"A stick was brought from Heaven for Adam, then it came to Shu'ayb. Then, it was given to Moses and now that stick is with us. It spoke whenever it was spoken to, and it accomplished whatever it was ordered to do."[31]

Notes

1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, P. 1090
2. The Commentary of Abul-Futuh Razi, following the verse
3. Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. 13, P. 44
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 249

5. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 61
6. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 12, P. 43
7. Surah Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 15
8. Tafsir-i-Nur, No. 9, P. 4
9. Ibid
10. Surah 'Inshirah, No. 94, verse 7
11. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 65
12. Tafsir-i-Nur, Vol. 2, P. 41
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 7
14. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 11, P. 37
15. Ibid
16. Tafsir-i-Nur, Vol. 9, P. 42
17. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
18. Mizan-ul-Hikam, narrated from Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 103, P. 25/221
19. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, No. 44460
20. Kafi, Vol. 5, P. 331
21. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 32
22. the Holy Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, verse 21
23. Wasa'il-Ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, chapter 33 and 38
24. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, No. 46602
25. Sunan Ibn-Majeh, No. 1859, and Mizan-ul-Hikam, Vol. 5, P. 2256
26. Bihar, Vol. 103, P. 372
27. Makarim-ul-Akhlagh, Vol. 1, P. 446
28. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 79, P. 142 and Mizan-ul-Hikam, Vol. 5, P. 2558
29. Bihar, Vol. 103, P. 232
30. Bihar, Vol. 103, P. 237
31. 'Atyab-ul-Bayan, Manhaj-us.Sadiqin, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Safi, Burhan, following the verse

Section 4: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 29

فَلَمَّا قَضَي ُوسَي الأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بأَهْلِهِ ءَانَسَ مِن جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَاراً قَالَ لاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنّـِي
ءَانَسْتُ نَاراً لَعَلّـِي ءَاتِيكُم مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

29. "So when Moses had fulfilled the term, and he journeyed with his family, he observed a fire in the direction of Mount Tur. He said to his family: 'Tarry you here; verily I observe a fire. Perhaps I shall bring you news of it, or a brand of the fire, so that you may warm yourselves'."

The Arabic term /'anastu/ means to observe something in which there is intimacy and peace. The word /jaŏwah/ means 'a piece', and the Qur'anic phrase /tastalun/ is derived from /saly/ which means 'to be heated by fire'.

Hadrat Musa had addressed his wife with plural form of Arabic pronoun, in terms such as /'umkuu/, /'atikum/, /la'allakum/ and /tastalun/. It is perhaps for the reason that during the ten years that Moses was living with his wife he got a child or children.

It is understood from the sentences:

'he journeyed with his family',

'I shall bring you news of it',

and

'so that you may warm yourselves',

and also the sentence which says:

"…or may find some guidance at the fire",[1]

that Moses (as) has traveled by night. It was a cold and dark night during the time when Moses lost his way, too.

Here we reach the seventh scene of the story life of Moses (as).

No one exactly knows how Moses spent that term of ten years, but certainly that term was among the best years of Moses' lifetime. It was some wholesome, sweet and peaceful years when he became prepared for a great mission.

Indeed, it was necessary for Moses (as) to pass a ten-year-term in strangerhood and beside a great prophet. He had to be a shepherd so that if the habit of living in a castle had left any effect on his thought and spirit, it would have been washed off entirely. Moses must be among some poor people in order to understand their pain and be prepared for struggling against rich tyrants.

On the other hand, Moses ought to have a long time for contemplation upon the secrets of creation and for self- improvement. Where was it for him better than the desert of Madyan? And where was it better than the house of Shu'ayb for him to remain?

The mission of an arch-prophet is not so simple that it can be easily undertaken. It can be said that, next to the Prophet of Islam (S), from one point of view, the mission of Moses (as) among the Divine prophets on the earth put an end to the captivity of a large nation, and he wiped out the traces of the culture of slavery from their spirit, all of which were not so easy.

It is written in Torah, as well as the Islamic narrations, that Shu‘ayb had promised Moses to give him the lambs which were born with a special colour, in order to appreciate Moses’ troubles.

By chance, in the last year, when Moses intended to say good-by with Shu‘ayb and return to Egypt, all or most of the lambs were born with the same specialty and Shu‘ayb willingly gave all of them to Moses, too.[2]

It is obvious that Moses did not suffice to be a shepherd until the end of his life, though being at the presence of Shu‘ayb was very enjoying for him. He ought to hasten to help his people who were captured in the chains of captivity and ignorance.

He ought to put an end to the injustices in Egypt, to break the idols, to abase the despots, and to elevate the oppressed by the help of Allah. An innate feeling encouraged Moses for this journey.

At last, Moses gathered his furniture, provision, and sheep and set out for the journey.

However, the application of the Arabic word /’ahl/ (family) mentioned in numerous verses of the Qur’an, shows that, besides his wife, Moses had a child (or children) with him in that journey. Some Islamic narrations verify this meaning, and in Torah, Exodus, it has been stipulated. Moreover his wife was pregnant at that time.

When he was coming back, he lost the way, and perhaps it was for the reason that he went a by-way so that he might not be seized by the grips of the Syrian oppressors.

However, the Qur’an says:

“So when Moses had fulfilled the term, and he journeyed with his family, he observed a fire in the direction of Mount Tur. He said to his family: ‘Tarry you here; verily I observe a fire. Perhaps I shall bring you news of it, or a brand of the fire, so that you may warm yourselves’.”

There is not anything mentioned in the verse about the situation of Moses’ wife, but it is generally accepted by the commentaries and narrations that she was pregnant and at that time she felt the pain of delivery, and Moses was also anxious from this point of view.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 30

فَلَمَّآ أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِن شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَن يَا مُوسَي إِنِّـي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

30. “Then when he came to it (he) was called (by a voice) from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, from the tree, saying: ‘O Moses! Verily I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds’.”

When Moses approached the fire he saw that it was a fire not alike other fires; it was not hot and not burning. It was entirely light and serenity. Meanwhile, Moses was seriously wondered, suddenly from the right side of the valley in that blessed high land, from inside of the tree, a voice was heard, addressing Moses, saying that He was Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Here is the verse:

"Then when he came to it (he) was called (by a voice) from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, from the tree, saying: 'O Moses! Verily I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds'."

The Arabic word /šati'/ means 'bank'; and the term /wadi/ means 'valley' or 'the pass way of a torrent'; and the Qur'anic word /'ayman/ means 'right' which is a modifier for the Qur'anic word /šati'/; and the Arabic word/ /buq'ah/ means a piece of land which is usually distinguished with respect to the lands around it.

No doubt Allah is able to create the sound waves inside whatever He desires. Here He created it inside a tree for He wanted to speak with Moses, and Moses was a body and he had ears and needed the sound waves.

Many of the divine prophets, of course, received the revelation by their inward inspiration, and sometimes by dream, but sometimes by means of hearing the sound waves. However, there is no room for this delusion that we consider a physical being for Allah.

Some narrations indicate that when Moses went near the fire, he noticed that the fire glittered from inside of a green branch and every moment it became brighter and more beautiful. He bent to take some of it with the small piece of wood he had in his hand, but the fire came toward him.

He terrified and came back. Sometimes he went toward the fire and sometimes the fire came towards him. Then, all of a sudden, a voice gave him the glad tidings of revelation. Thus, by the undeniable frame of references it became clear for Moses that this call was the call of Allah (s.w.t.), not other than Him.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 31

وَأَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِراً وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَي أَقْبِلْ وَلاَ تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الأَمِنِينَ

31. "And saying: 'Cast down your staff.' So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating, and did not return. (Then it was said to him): 'O Moses! Come you forward and fear you not! For surely you are in security!'"

Regarding the heavy and great responsibilities that Moses had, there should have been bestowed on him some great miracles proportionate to them from the side of Allah that two important parts of which are referred to in this verse.

The first thing was that Moses was called to cast down his staff and Moses did. When he looked at it he saw that it was a serpent which was moving swiftly. Moses returned back because of fear so that he did not look at his behind.

The verse says:

"And saying: 'Cast down your staff.' So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating, and did not return…"

The day when Moses chose this staff for him to lean on it, and to beat down leaves with it for his sheep[3], he did not believe that there was such a great power in it by the command of Allah.

This simple staff of a shepherd caused the castles of the tyrants to shake, and thus are the beings of this world that they seem small in our view but there are great potentialities in them which can be revealed by the command of Allah.

At this time, Moses heard the voice again as a command.

The verse continues saying:

"…(Then it was said to him): 'O Moses! Come you forward and fear you not! For surely you are in security!'"

The Arabic word /jann/ originally means 'an unseen being', and it is also applied for small snakes, because they pass through grasses and furrows of the land in an unseen way. Of course, in some other verses of the Qur'an, it has been referred to as /u'ban un mubin/ (a clear serpent).[4]

Formerly we have said that these differences of meaning may state the different shapes of that snake which at first was small and then appeared as a great serpent. This is also probable that when Moses saw it for the first time in Tur land, it was in its smallest size, and in later stages it became bigger and bigger.

However, Moses should become acquainted with this fact that at the presence of Allah there is an absolute security, and in that rank there is no room for any fear and scare.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 32-33

اسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ وَاضْمُمْ إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ فَذَانِكَ

بُرْهَانَان مِن رَّبِّكَ إِلَي فِرْعَوْنَ وَ َلَئِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْماً فَاسِقِينَ

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْساً فَاَخَافُ أَن يَقْتُلُونِ

32. "(Now) enter your hand into the your bosom, and it will come forth white (radiant) without evil, and draw your arm to yourself to ward off fear; and these (two miracles) be two proofs from your Lord unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, verily they have been a transgressing people."

33. "He said: 'My Lord! Verily I have killed one of them, so I fear that they would slay me'."

The first miracle of Moses, that his staff became a serpent, was a sign of terror. After that, he was ordered to apply his second miracle, which was a sign of light and hope. Then both of them are a combination of 'warning' and 'glad tidings'.

Moses was ordered:

"(Now) enter your hand into the your bosom, and it will come forth white (radiant) without evil…"

This whiteness and radiance was not because of the disease of leprosy, and the like; it was a Divine light for him which was completely new.

The observation of those wonderful supernatural events, in that dark night and in that empty desert, caused Moses (as) to shake vigorously. In order that he could regain his peace and calmness, he was ordered another commandment.

It was as follows:

"…and draw your arm to yourself to ward off fear…"

Some commentators have said that this sentence ironically means the necessity of decisiveness and firm decision in fulfilment of the responsibility of prophethood, and the lack of any fear and horror from any rank and any power.

Some other commentators have also thought that when the staff was changed into a snake, Moses (as) stretched his arms to defend himself, but Allah ordered him to draw back his arms and he should not fear, because he did not need to defend himself.

The application of /janah/ (wing) instead of 'hand' is a beautiful meaning that, perhaps, its purpose is to liken the state of man's tranquility and calmness to the state of a bird that when it observes a frightening thing, it flies, but when it regains its calmness, it gathers its wings.

Again, Moses heard the same voice, saying:

"…and these (two miracles) be two proofs from your Lord unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, verily they have been a transgressing people."

Yes, these people have gone out from the obedience of Allah, and they have disobeyed Him very violently. It is upon you that you advise them, but if it is of no avail, you must struggle against them.

Here Moses remembered the important event of his life in Egypt, the event of killing that Coptic man and mobilization of the forces of Pharaoh to avenge his blood. Although Moses had combated with that oppressor, these things had no meaning in the logic of Pharaoh. He is still decided to kill Moses without dispute if he finds him.

That is why here Moses speaks to Allah: as follows:

"He said: 'My Lord! Verily I have killed one of them, so I fear that they would slay me'."

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 34-35

وَأَخِي هَارُونَ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنّـِي لِسَاناً فَأَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْءاً يُصَدِّقُنِي إِنّـِي أَخَافُ أَن يُكَذِّبُونِ
قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَاناً فَلاَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا بِآيَاتِنَآ أَنتُمَا وَمَنِ
اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغَالِبُونَ

34. "And my brother Aaron, he is more eloquent in speech than I, so send him with me as an assistant, to testify me, surely I fear that they would reject me."

35. "(Allah) said: 'We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you; (go) with Our signs; you two and those who follow you two shall be the triumphant'."

In giving heavy responsibilities to someone, all dimensions of the concerning person must be regarded. Although Hadrat Harun (Aaron) was older and more eloquent than Hadrat Moses (as), but for other good qualities and competencies that Moses had, he became responsible of this mission, while Aaron was a Divine prophet, too.

In the way of propagation, guidance, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, sometimes two or more persons must take an action.

"…so send him with me…"

That is why in the verse Moses (as) implicitly utters that he is alone and his tongue is not eloquent.

The verse says:

"And my brother Aaron, he is more eloquent in speech than I, so send him with me as an assistant, to testify me, surely I fear that they would reject me."

The Arabic term /'afsah/ is derived from /fasih/ which originally refers to 'the purity of something'; and it is used for a pure, expressive speech which is free from any redundancy and unnecessary words. The Qur'anic word /rid'/ means: 'Assistant'.

However, in view of the fact that this mission was very great and heavy, and Moses wanted not to fail in it, he asked Allah for it.

By the way, confessing the accomplishments of others is a virtue and a value. Therefore, though Moses (as) was an arch prophet he confessed the virtue of his brother, because an eloquent speech is one of the factors of attracting people and that of a successful propagation.

By the next verse, Allah accepted Moses' invocation, too, and gave him enough confidence, as it says:

"(Allah) said: 'We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you; (go) with Our signs; you two and those who follow you two shall be the triumphant'."

What a great glad tidings! It was a glad tidings that not only encouraged the heart of Moses, but also caused his decision to become firm, and made his will very strong, the clear sequels of which will be explained later through some other topics of this story.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 36

فَلَمَّا جَآءهُم مُّوسَي بِاَيَاتِنَا بَيِّـنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُفْتَرًي وَمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي ءَابَآئِنَا الاَوَّلِينَ

36. "So when Moses came to them with Our clear signs, they said: 'This is nothing but a forged sorcery, and we never heard of it amongst our fathers of old'."

Accusation and slander is one of the greatest weapons of the tyrants against the reformers.

In accepting beliefs, the criterion is logic and reasoning, not the habit of the fathers,

"…and we never heard of it…".

The teachings of the divine prophets are not to follow the old customs.

However, at that dark night and in that holy land Moses (as) received the command of prophethood from Allah. He came into Egypt and informed his brother, Aaron, of this important mission and conveyed the message of the great prophecy to him.

Both of them went toward Pharaoh, and after tolerating many difficulties, they could meet him. While his entourages and the elect ones were around him, Moses communicated the invitation of Allah to them. Now we are going to see what was their reaction in the face of this divine message.

The Qur’an says:

“So when Moses came to them with Our clear signs, they said: ‘This is nothing but a forged sorcery, and we never heard of it amongst our fathers of old’.”

Alongside of the great miracles of Moses, they betook the same weapon that in the length of history all tyrants and misguided ones used to betake in the face of Divine prophets’ miracles, that is, the weapon of sorcery, because that was extraordinary and this was also a supernatural event, but how one can reconcile these two?

Sorcerers are some deviated and mostly mammonist persons whose foundation of work is an alteration of facts and by this sign they can be recognized, while the invitation of Divine prophets, as well as its content, is a witness upon their miracles.

Moreover, since sorcerers rely on the power of man, their acts are always limited, but the divine prophets, who enjoy of the Power of Allah, have great and unlimited miracles.

The Qur’anic phrase /’ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs), which points to the miracles of Moses (as), is in plural form because besides these two miracles Moses might have shown them other miracles, too, that with the combination of each of these two there would have been many miracles.

The change of his staff into a great snake is a miracle, and its return to the first state is another miracle. Again the brightness of Moses’ hand in a moment is a miracle, and its return to the first state is another miracle.

The usage of the Qur’anic term /muftaran/ (forged), derived from /faryah/ in the sense of accusation and slander, is for the sake that they wanted to say that Moses had falsely attributed it to Allah.

They said:

“…we never heard of it amongst our fathers of old,”

though before Moses the invitation of Noah, Abraham, and Yusuf had been heard in that land. It is either because of the long length of time, or for the sake that they wanted to say that their ancestors did not submit to such invitations, too.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 37

وَقَالَ مُوسَى رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَن جَاءَ بِالْهُدَى مِنْ عِندِهِ وَمَن تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الْظَّالِمُونَ

37. “And Moses said: ‘My Lord knows best who comes with guidance from unto Him, and whose end will be best in the Hereafter, verily the unjust will not prosper’.”

In the previous verse, the entourages of Pharaoh boldly introduced the Divine miracles as sorcery and implicitly said that they had not heard such words in the history of their ancestors.

In this verse, Moses in allusion says that they told lie, because before him there were persons, like Hadrat Yusuf, who had the torch of guidance of their ancestors in hand and had been circulating the religion of Abraham.

And also, with a threatening tone, in answer to them, Moses started speaking, as the verse says:

"And Moses said: 'My Lord knows best who comes with guidance from unto Him, and whose end will be best in the Hereafter…"

It indicates that Allah is well aware of his situation, though they accuse him of telling lie. How is it possible that Allah gives such a supernatural event to a liar who was the cause of His servants' aberration? The best proof of the legitimacy of his invitation is that Allah knows his intention and He has given him this position.

Moreover, a liar can continue his job only for a short time, and at last the curtain will be removed from his deeds. You may wait to see that whose good end and victory will be, and who is the failing one.

This meaning is similar to what has come in Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 69 which says:

"…and the sorcerer will not be successful wherever he goes'."

This sentence may refer to the situation of the obstinate and arrogant people of Pharaoh, meaning that you have found out the situation of my miracles and the legitimacy of my invitation, but you oppose me unjustly. You should know that you will not win and at last the prosperity will belong to me, not to you.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'aqibat-ud-dar/ in the verse may refer to their end in this world, or in the next world, or both of them. The third meaning, of course, seems more comprehensive and more fitting.

The verse continues saying:

"…verily the unjust will not prosper'."

By this polite logical statement, Moses reported them their failure both in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 38

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَآ أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَا هامَانُ عَلَي الطّـِينِ
فَاجْعَل لِي صَرْحاً لَعَلّـِي أَطَّلِعُ إِلَي إِلَهِ ُوسَي وإِنّـِي لأَظُنُّهُ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

38. "And Pharaoh said: 'O Chiefs! No god do I know for you but myself; therefore, O' Haman, light me a fire upon the clay, and build for me a tower, so that I may obtain knowledge of Moses' God, and verily I think him to be one of the liars'."

The existence of an arrogant mentality usually hinders the acceptance of the truth. As the verse indicates, Pharaoh said that he knew no god for his people but himself. The arrogant persons impose their beliefs and thoughts upon others and their slogan is that: whatever thing they do not know, then it does not exist.

In this noble verse, we are faced with the ninth scene from this adventurous and instructive story, and it is the scene of making a tower by the command of Pharaoh in order to knock out Moses (as).

We know that one of the customs of the skilful politicians is that whenever an important event occurs which is against their desire, they immediately begin to create a new scene so that it can attract, the attention of people to itself and dissuade their thought from that undesirable event.

It seems that the story of building a great tower had happened after the event of Moses' struggle against sorcerers, since it is understood from Surah

Mu'min in the Qur'an that this action was done at the time when the people of Pharaoh were planning to kill Moses (as) and the believer of the people of Pharaoh attempted to defend him; and we know that there was not such a thing existed before the struggle of Moses (as) with the sorcerers, but they were searching about Moses and that how they could beat him by means of the sorcerers.

Since the Qur'an has explained the event of the struggle of Moses against sorcerers in Suras: TaHa, 'A'raf, Yunus, and Ash-Shu'ara', it has relinquished speaking about it again here and it has only referred to the subject of building the tower. This subject has been mentioned merely in this Surah and Surah Mu'min.

However, the news of Moses' victory against sorcerers spread throughout Egypt. The subject of sorcerers' belief in Moses (as) strengthened the matter, too. The stability of the government of Pharaoh was going to be in danger seriously, and it was very probable that the captured people might awake.

In any rate, the common thought and attention should be deviated from this issue, and there must be provided some mental engagements which, in the meantime, were accompanied with the munificence of the governmental organizations so that it could beguile people.

In this regard, Pharaoh started consulting and, consequently, his thought reached to the thing which is mentioned in the above verse.

It says:

"And Pharaoh said: 'O Chiefs! No god do I know for you but myself…"

Pharaoh implicitly says that it is certain that he is the only god on the earth but, as for the god of heaven, there is no proof available for its existence. Yet, he does not miss caution and begins to search about it.

Then he turned to his minister, Haman, and, addressing him, said:

"…therefore, O' Haman, light me a fire upon the clay…"

He ordered Haman to build a very high tower for him to climb it and get some information about the God of Moses, though it did not seem to him that Moses could be truthful.

The verse says:

"…and build for me a tower, so that I may obtain knowledge of Moses' God, and verily I think him to be one of the liars'."

When the building of the tower was finished, and they were not able to make it higher than that, one day Pharaoh went there with some ceremonies to climb that great tower personally. When he reached the top of the tower, he looked at the sky and observed its scenery like the same form that he used to see it on the level land and he found no change and variation in it.

It is said that he put an arrow in the bow and threw it toward the sky. The arrow struck a bird, or by his own aforetime plot, it returned back while it was bloody.

Pharaoh came down from that tower and told people:

"Go home, and have no anxiety, for I killed Moses' God."[5]

Surely, some of the contemporary simple-minded people of the government believed it and spread its news everywhere. They made a new amusement out of it for deluding people of Egypt.

It is notable that in this saying:

"…No god do I know for you but myself…"

Pharaoh did his utmost satanic deed. He counted his divinity certain and continued that whether there was any god other than him. Then, because of the lack of any proof, he negated it either.

In the third stage, in order to bring forth a proof for the absence of the existence of any other god, he designed the subject of the great tower.

All of these affairs show that he knew the matter well, but in order to beguile the people of Egypt and protecting his own position, he said those words.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 39

وَاسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لاَ يُرْجَعُونَ

39. "And he and his hosts prided in the land without any right, and they thought that they would not be returned unto Us."

The lack of belief in Resurrection and Reckoning is the ground for formation of arrogance.

In this verse, the Qur'an refers to the arrogance of Pharaoh and his people as well as the lack of their submission in the face of 'Origin' and 'End'. Their crimes originated from the denial of these two principles.

The verse says:

"And he and his hosts prided in the land without any right, and they thought that they would not be returned unto Us."

A feeble human being who sometimes is not able to send away a mosquito from him, and sometimes an atomic being called microbe may send the strongest man of his members under the ground, how can he introduce himself grand and claim divinity?

A divine tradition indicates that Allah says:

"Majesty is My mantle, and Greatness in My wrapper. Then whoever disputes with Me about each of these two, I will send him into (Hell) Fire."[6]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 40

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ

40. "So We seized him and his hosts, and We cast them into the sea; behold then how was the end of the unjust."

In this verse, Pharaoh and his hosts have been likened to a worthless thing which is taken from the ground and is thrown into the sea. This despise is for the sake that all powers are insignificant before the Might and Wrath of Allah.

The Qur'anic word /nabaða/ means: 'to throw away', or 'to discard, something which is worthless'.

And, finally, we may see where the end of pride and arrogance reached. The Qur'an says:

"So We seized him and his hosts, and We cast them into the sea…"

Yes, Allah caused their death by means of what was the essence of their life, and changed Nile, which was the secret of their greatness and power, into a graveyard for them.

Yes, Allah warded off these worthless beings from the society of human beings and wiped out the face of the earth from the dirt of their existence.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"…behold then how was the end of the unjust."

This look is not done with the apparent eyes, it is done by the eye of the heart; and this meaning does not belong to the yesterday oppressors, because the tyrants of today will have the same fate, too.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 41-42

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَي النَّارِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لاَ يُنصَرُونَ

وَأَتْبَعْنَاهُمْ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُم مِنَ الْمَقْبُوحِينَ

41. "And We appointed them leaders who invite unto the (Hell) Fire and on the Day of Judgment they shall not be helped."

42. "And in this world, we made a curse to follow them; and on the Day of Judgment they will be of those made to appear hideous."

This holy verse indicates that Allah set the people of Pharaoh as leaders who invited others to the Hell, and on the Hereafter Day no one will help them.

The verse says:

"And We appointed them leaders who invite unto the (Hell) Fire and on the Day of Judgment they shall not be helped."

This meaning is a question for some commentators that how it is possible that Allah appoints some people as leaders of falsehood, since His job is to invite to goodness and appointing leaders of the truth, not falsehood.

But this is not a very complicated matter, because: firstly, they are the leading members of the hellish people and when some groups of these people are going towards Hell Fire, they walk in front of them.

It will be in the same manner that they were the leaders of misguidance here in this world, then, they will be also the leaders of hellish people there, because next world is the place of embodiment of this world.

Secondly, it is in fact, the result of their own deeds that they are the leaders of misguidance, and we know that the effect of any cause is under the command of Allah. They paved a way that ended to being the leaders of the misguided ones. This is their position in Hereafter, too.

Again, for more emphasis, the Qur'an illustrates their feature in this world and the next, as follows.

"And in this world, we made a curse to follow them; and on the Day of Judgment they will be of those made to appear hideous."

The curse of Allah is the same as exclusion from His Mercy, and the curse of angels and believers is the curse that they send for them every morning and evening, and every now and then. Sometimes all the unjust and oppressors are involved in a general curse, and sometimes they are cursed

particularly, because whoever studies history about their lives will curse them.

However, those who have ugly way of life in this world will have ugly face in the next world.

Here, the Qur'an has divided the leaders into two groups: the leaders of 'light', and the leaders of Fire. In the logic of the Qur'an, we have two kinds of leader.

The leaders who are in front of the pious ones on the path of guidance, as Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 73, concerning some divine prophets, says:

"And We made them leaders guiding (the people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, and the establishing of prayer, and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone)."

These are the leaders with clear bright programs, because pure Monotheism, invitation to goodness, truth and justice have formed the content of their program. These are the leaders of Light whose manner has been continued by all prophets and their vicegerents up to the Seal of the Prophets (S) and his vicegerents (as).

The second group are the leaders of misguidance, and as the Qur'an introduces them in the verses under discussion, they are the leaders of Fire.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) about the qualities of these two groups of leaders indicates that the first group give priority to the command of Allah rather than the command of people and their own will,[7] and consider His Commandment as the highest ordinances, while the second group give priority to their own command before the command of Allah (s.w.t.) and consider their own command before His commandment.[8]

Thus, by this criterion, the recognition of these two groups of leaders will be very clear.

On the Day of Resurrection when the rows of people will be specified, every group will be at the back of their leader.

The hellish people follow the hellish ones, and the people of light follow the people of light, as the Qur'an says:

"On the Day We shall call every people with their Imam (leader)…"[9]

We have repeatedly said that Resurrection is a great embodiment from this small world, and those who have loved a leader and practically followed his way of treatment here, in Hereafter will be on his line, too.

Bushr-ibn-Qalib says that once he asked Hadrat Imam Abu-'Abdillah-il-Husayn (as) about the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"On the Day We shall call every people with their Imam (leader)…"[10]**,**

and he (as) answered:

"A leader invites to guidance and a group accept him, and a leader invites to misguidance and a group accept him, too.

The former are in Heaven and the latter are in Hell Fire, and this is the meaning of the word of Allah Who says:

"…(When) some will be in the Paradise and some in the blazing Fire[11]***."***[12]

It is interesting that Pharaoh who moved in front of his followers and caused them to be drowned in the waves of Nile, on the Hereafter Day he

will walk in front of them and will make them enter into the sea of Hell Fire.[13]

We put an end to this discussion with a statement narrated from Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) who said about a group of hypocrites:

"…they have continued after the holy Prophet. They gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell through falsehood and slandering. So, they put them in high posts and made them officers over the heads of the people…"[14]

Notes

1. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 10
2. 'A'lam-i-Qur'an, P. 409
3. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 18
4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 107, and Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 32
5. The Commentary of 'Abul-Futuh-i-Razi, Vol. 8, P. 462
6. The Commentary of Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, Tafsir-i-Kabir, and Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, following the verse.
7. The Commentary by Safi, following the verse
8. Ibid
9. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 71
10. Ibid
11. Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 7
12. 'Amali by Saduq, narrated by Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, P. 192
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 98
14. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Sermon 210

Section 5: Moses' Mission Referred to

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 43

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا ُوسَي الْكِتَابَ مِن بَعْدِ مَآ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الأُو َ بَصَآئِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

43. "And indeed We gave Moses the Book (Torah) after We had destroyed the earlier generations (as a means) of insight for mankind and a guidance and mercy that haply they might receive admonition."

The Arabic word /basa'ir/ is the plural form of /basirat/ in the sense of 'insight and awareness', and the word /'absar/ is the plural form of /basar/ which means 'eye'.

A man usually will not be guided unless he obtains /basirat/ (insight and awareness), and he will not be guided unless he receives the favour and grace of Allah.

Religion is inside the nature of human beings, and the Heavenly Books uncover the dust from it.

By this verse, which is the last verse of this section of verses, we reach the tenth scene of the adventurous story of Moses (as). This verse speaks in relation with the revelation of Divine ordinances and Torah, i.e. the period when the 'negation of deity' has finished and the period of construction and proof begins.

It says:

"And indeed We gave Moses the Book (Torah) after We had destroyed the earlier generations (as a means) of insight for mankind and a guidance and mercy that haply they might receive admonition."

Concerning the objective of the Qur'anic phrase: /qurun al 'ula/ (the earlier generations who were destroyed) and that who they are, commentators are divided.

Some of them have said that it refers to the disbelievers among the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and the like, because, by the past of time, the effects of the former prophets had disappeared and it was necessary that a new Heavenly Book be set at mankind's disposal.

Some other commentators of the Qur'an believe that it refers to the destruction of the people of Pharaoh who were the remaining of the early generations, since Allah gave Torah to Moses (as) after their destruction. But it is no problem that the above-mentioned sentence refers to all of these generations and peoples.

The Qur'anic term /basa'ir/, which is the plural form of /basirat/, means insight and awareness and its objective here is the verses and proofs that caused the hearts of believers to be enlightened, and guidance and mercy are also the concomitants of this 'insight', and there follows it admonition and vigilance of the receptive hearts.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 44

وَمَا كُنتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَآ إِلَي ُوسَي الأَ ْرَ وَمَا كُنتَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

44. "And you were not on the western side of (Mount Tur) when We passed to Moses the commandment, and you were not one of the witnesses."

Reiterating the story and adventure of Moses' prophethood with all its qualities from the tongue of a prophet who did not present at those times, is a sign of legitimacy and inimitability of the Qur'an.

Some of the stories of the Qur'an are among the heavenly news, not taken and narrated from eyewitnesses.

Therefore, in this verse the fact is stated, saying that whatever was said about Moses and Pharaoh, with all its details, is a proof for the legitimacy of your Qur'an, because you did not attend in these scenes and did not see these events by your eyes. It was only the Grace of Allah that He sent down these verses unto you for the guidance of people.

The verse says:

"And you were not on the western side of (Mount Tur) when We passed to Moses the commandment, and you were not one of the witnesses."

It is necessary to note this point that on his way from Madyan to Egypt, which was in the land of Sinai, Moses (as) was going just from East towards West, and, on the contrary, when the Children of Israel came from Egypt towards Syria and passed Sinai, they were coming from West to Egypt. (That is why some of the commentators believe that the sentence:

"Then they (Pharaoh's hosts) pursued them at sunrise",[1]

which is about the hosts of Pharaoh in pursuance of the Children of Israel, points to this meaning.)

Finally the author of Atyab-ul-Bayan in the following of the verse says:

"Some Islamic narrations indicate that the objective of executorship has been Yusha'-ibn-Nun- and that every prophet that was sent his executor of testament was appointed by Him and the appointment of executor of testament is in His hand.

That is, you, O' Messenger of Allah, too, should appoint your executor of testament. Some of these narrations denote that the purpose was 'going' toward Pharaoh, but it apparently means if you were there and saw the affairs of Moses and inform them to the Ummat, this would not be a miracle for them.

They would say that he has seen it and informs of it; but now that you inform them of these affairs by means of the Qur'an, this is itself a miracle that without seeing them you inform of Moses' affairs as well as other prophets and their nations.

The Qur'an also informs of the future events because Allah (s.w.t.) has the knowledge of everything from beginning to the end of arriving in Hereafter; and this itself is a great miracle.[2]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 45

وَلَكِنَّآ أَنشَأْنَا قُرُوناً فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ وَمَا كُنتَ ثَاوِياً فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا وَلَكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

45. "But We raised up generations and a long time passed upon them, and you were not dwelling among the people of Madyan, reciting unto them Our signs, but We were sending messengers."

The Qur'anic word /awiyan/ is derived from /awi/ which means 'resident', and also the term /mawi/ derived from the same root, means 'abode'.

So, through this holy verse, Allah says:

"But We raised up generations and a long time passed upon them…"

A long time passed and the effects of the prophets as well as their guidance went away from their hearts and thoughts. That was why We brought both you and your Qur'an forth and stated the story life of the old generations in it in order to enlighten mankind.

The verse continues saying:

"…and you were not dwelling among the people of Madyan…"

O Prophet! You were not among the people of Madyan to be acquainted with their signs and the news of their lives so that you can reiterate them for the people of Mecca. But We sent you and gave you these exact news related to thousands years ago in order that you guide them.

The above holy verse continues saying:

"…reciting unto them Our signs, but We were sending messengers."

Of course, the time between the advent of Moses (as) and the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) lasted about two thousand years.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 46

وَمَا كُنتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْ نَادَيْنَا وَلَـكِن رَّحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْماً مَّآ أَتَاهُم مِن نَّذِيرٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

46. "And you were not on the side of the Mount Tur when We called (unto Moses), but (this revelation is) a mercy from your Lord that you warn a people to whom no warner had come before you, in order that they may receive admonition."

Like other people, the Divine prophets do not know the heavenly news without the contact with the source of Divine revelation.

The Qur'anic news is entirely from the source of Divine revelation.

Again, for emphasis on this very meaning, this holy verse adds:

"And you were not on the side of the Mount Tur when We called (unto Moses)…"

It was that time that Allah (s.w.t.) issued the command of prophethood for Moses.

The Qur'an continues saying:

"…but (this revelation is) a mercy from your Lord that you warn a people to whom no warner had come before you, in order that they may receive admonition."

Shortly speaking, Allah (s.w.t.) reiterated the warnings and awakening events that had occurred in the old nations' time when the Prophet of Islam (S) was not present and did not witness them, so that he would recite them for this misguided people, probably they cause them to awaken.

There arises a question here that how does the Qur'an say that no warner had come for this nation (i.e. the Arabs contemporary with the Prophet (S)), while we know that there comes no time that the earth is empty of a godly Hujjat (proof) and the vicegerents of the prophets had always been present among this nation, too?

In answer, we say that its purpose is to send a prophet who had a heavenly Book and was a clear warner, because it prolonged for centuries between the time of Jesus (as) and the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) when no arch-prophet came, and this very matter gave a pretext to the atheists and mischief-makers.

In one of his sermons, Ali (as) says:

"Verily Allah sent Muhammad (S) when none among the Arabs read a (heavenly) Book or claimed prophethood. He guided the people till he took them to their (correct) position and reached them their salvation."[3]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 47

وَلَوْلآ أَن تُصِيبَهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلآ أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولاً فَنَتَّبِعَ ءَايَاتِكَ وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

47. "And were it not that there should befall them a calamity for what their hands have sent before, they would say: 'Our Lord! Why did You not send to us a messenger so that we might follow Your signs and so be of the believers?'"

The previous verse denoted that the purpose of coming prophets was warning and admonition. This verse states another aim of the mission of the Prophet (S) which is to complete the argument and to shut the way of seeking pretext.

Thus, in the verse under discussion, the Qur'an, pointing to the grace given unto the Prophet (S), says:

"And were it not that there should befall them a calamity for what their hands have sent before, they would say: 'Our Lord! Why did You not send to us a messenger so that we might follow Your signs and so be of the believers?'"

In fact, the verse refers to this point that: the path of Truth is clear, and any intellect judges the falseness of paganism and idolatry. The ugliness of a great deal of their vain deeds, like tyrannies and cruelties, belongs to the judgment of intellect, and even without sending prophets in this regard they can be punished.

But, even in this field, upon which the judgment of intellect is clear, Allah sent prophets with heavenly Books and miracles in order to complete the argument and negate any kind of pretexts, so that no one can say their misfortune was because of lacking any leader and if they had divine leader(s) they would not be misguided.

However, this verse is among the verses that have indication to the necessity of Grace through sending prophets.

It shows that Allah's way of treatment is based on this fact that he should not punish any nation for their sins before sending a prophet for them; as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 165 says:

"(We sent) messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no argument against Allah after the (invitations of) the messengers, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 48

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا لَوْلاَ أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَي أَوَلَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَي مِن قَبْلُ قَالُوا سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلٍّ كَافِرُونَ

48. "But when the truth came to them from Us they said: 'Why has he not been given the like of what was given Moses?' (But) did they not believe also in what Moses was given aforetime? They said: 'A pair of sorceries supporting each other'. And they (also) said: 'Verily we disbelieve in all'."

Magic and sorcery was the most current accusation which prophets were accused of. The enemies confuse the logic and truth in order that they pave the way for their own denial. Therefore, in this holy verse the Qur'an points to their seeking pretexts and implies that, even after sending messengers for them, they did not abandon pretext seeking and continued their deviated way.

It says:

"But when the truth came to them from Us they said: 'Why has he not been given the like of what was given Moses?'…"

They want to say why does not the Messenger of Islam have a staff like what Moses had? Why did he not have a white Hand? Why does not the sea cleave for him? Why do the enemies not drown? Why and why…?

The Qur'an answers these pretext seekers when it says:

"…(But) did they not believe also in what Moses was given aforetime?…"

Did they not say that these two, Moses and Aaron, were two sorcerers who had exchanged hands with each other to misguide them? And, therefore, they said they disbelieved them. The verse continues stating:

"…They said: 'A pair of sorceries supporting each other'. And they (also) said: 'Verily we disbelieve in all'."

Though customarily there must be said /sahiran/ (sorcerers) in the verse instead of saying /sihran/, it is for the severity of emphasis, because when, in Arabic, it is speaking about a person earnestly, that person is counted as the exact, for example, justice, or injustice, or magic.

It is also probable that the purpose of /sehran/ is the two great miracles of Moses: Rod and White Hand.

If someone says what is the connection of these denials with the pagans of Mecca, and it relates to the people of Pharaoh who were infidels? Its answer is that the purpose of it is that the subject of seeking pretext is not a new thing. All of them are alike and their statement is very similar to that of each other. Their line, method, and program are the same.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 49

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَي مِنْهُمَآ أَتَّبِعْهُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

49. "Say (O' Apostle Muhammad): 'Bring you then a Book from Allah that gives better guidance than both of them (i.e., Torah and Qur'an), (that) I follow it, if you are truthful'."

Man is surely incapable to bring a book better than the Qur'an and original Torah. The religious leaders must deliver the best speech and the most logical style when confronting the opponents. They must answer the vain sayings of the rejecters with a suitable reply.

Therefore, this verse, addressing the holy Prophet (S), says:

"Say (O' Apostle Muhammad): 'Bring you then a Book from Allah that gives better guidance than both of them (i.e., Torah and Qur'an), (that) I follow it, if you are truthful'."

In other words, they are seeking for a Book of guidance and for miracles. What miracle is greater than the Qur'an and what guiding Book is better than it? If the Prophet of Islam (S) had not anything other than this Qur'an, it would be enough for proving the legitimacy of his invitation. But they do not seek the Truth; they are a group of pretext seekers.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 50

فإِن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ ِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

50. "But if they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their own low desires, and who is more astray than he who follows his own low desire without any guidance from Allah? Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

Wherever there is not any eligibility of accepting guidance, sensuality dominates. The rejecters of the Truth and sensualists are the most misguided people. Thus, the relation between these two is explicitly stated in this verse, and even the most aberrant people are introduced as those who have taken their own sensual desire as their leader and they have never accepted the Divine guidance.

Sensual desire is a thick curtain before the eyes of man's intellect.

Sensual desire attracts the man's attention to a subject so much that he often loses the ability of understanding the facts because the condition of understanding the fact is an absolute submission for realities, leaving any prophecy and attachment, and to be unconditionally submissive unto whatever outwardly exists, whether it is sweet or bitter; it is alongside our innate wishes or opposite of them; it is on the way of our personal interests or against them; but sensual desire is not consistent with these principles.

In this regard, there is a detailed discussion explained when commenting on Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 43.

It is interesting that through a lot of Islamic narrations, the abovementioned verse has been rendered into those who have not accepted the Divine leaders and have relied only on their own thoughts.[4]

These narrations which have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as), Imam Sadiq (as) and some other Imams (leaders) of right guidance (as) are, in fact, of the kind of clear aspect. In other words, man is in need of Divine guidance.

This guidance sometimes is found in the heavenly Book, sometimes in the person of Prophet (S) and his way of treatment, sometime in his immaculate vicegerents, and sometimes in the logic of intellect and wisdom. The important thing is that man should be on the line of Divine guidance, not on the line of his own sensual desire, so that he can enjoy the rays of this guidance.

Notes

1. Surah Ash-Shu‘ara’, No. 26, verse 60
2. Atyab-ul-Bayan, following the verse
3. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 33
4. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Basa’ir-ud-Darajat, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 136

Section 6: Guidance From Allah Had Been Continuous

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 51

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

51. "And We have made the Word to reach them in order that haply they may be admonished."

The Arabic term /wassalna/ is derived from /wasl/ which means 'to relate' and 'to join'. The purpose of this joining is either the continuation of reflections, or harmoniousness and agreement of the matters which are delivered.

One of Allah's ways of treatment is His guidance upon mankind, which does not cease even for a moment.

The noble verse under discussion speaks about the receptive hearts that by hearing these holy verses found the Truth and remained seriously faithful to it and submitted to it heartily; while the dark, ignorant, and zealous hearts did not show the least reaction from them.

The verse says:

"And We have made the Word to reach them in order that haply they may be admonished."

Such as rain, these verses were continuously sent down upon them. These noble verses were in various forms and with different qualities.

They were sometimes with promise of divine rewards, sometimes with warning of Hell Fire, sometimes they were some advices, sometimes they were threats and warnings, sometimes they were accompanied with intellectual reasoning, and sometimes they were about the history of old nations as some useful instructive lessons.

To sum up, it is a complete collection with materials of the same kind which attracts to itself any heart that has a little receptivity, but the blind hearted ones have not accepted it.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 52

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِهِ هُم بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

52. "Those to when We gave the Book before this (Qur'an), they believe in it."

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of these verses, it is narrated from Sa'id-ibn-Habir who said that these verses were sent down about seventy Christian priests whom Najashi sent from Ethiopia to Mecca in order to search. When the Prophet of Islam (S) recited Surah Yasin for them, they shed tears of joy and embraced Islam.[1]

Some other commentators have said that these verses have been sent down in relation to a group of Christians from Najran, (a city in the North of Yemen), who came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and heard the verses of the Qur'an and believed in Islam;[2] while some others believe that they are in relation to Najashi and his companions.[3]

However, these verses are a lively witness to the fact that a group of the learned persons of the People of the Book believed in Islam when they heard the verses of the Qur'an, because it was impossible that the Prophet (S) to say such a thing while no one of the people of the Book had believed in him. If it were so, the pagans of Mecca would immediately reject it and could protest it earnestly.

The Holy Qur'an implies that the People of the Book (from among the Jews and Christians) may believe in the Qur'an because they find it consistent with the signs that they have found in their own heavenly Book.

It says:

"Those to when We gave the Book before this (Qur'an), they believe in it."

It is interesting that these people were a group of the People of the Book, but the verse refers to them as 'the People of the Book' without mentioning any quality. Perhaps it means that the real people of the Book were only those ones who believed, and others were naught.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 53-54

وَإِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِهِ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِن قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ

أُوْلَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُم مَّرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

53. "And when it is recited to them, they say: 'We believe in it, verily it is the truth from our Lord, verily even before it we had surrendered."

54. "These shall be granted their reward twice for that they patiently endured, and avert evil with good, and spend out of the sustenance We have provided them with.

The seekers of the Truth are searching for the Truth and it does not matter for them who says it, what race he is and in what language he speaks.

Of course, if there is receptivity in a person, he may believe in the truth, but if the ground is not prepared, there is no hope of faith even with the continuation of citation of the Qur'an.

That is why the verse says:

"And when it is recited to them, they say: 'We believe in it, verily it is the truth from our Lord…"

Yes, the recitation of these verses was enough for them to affirm it and say:

"We believe in it…".

Then they add that not only today they are surrendered to the Words of the Lord, but also they were Muslims from before.

The verse continues saying:

"…verily even before it we had surrendered."

They implicitly say that they had found out signs of this Prophet (S) in their heavenly Book and loved him. They were expecting him, and as soon as they found him, they took him and accepted him eagerly and heartily.

Then, in the next holy verse, the Qur'an refers to the great reward of this group of truth seekers and says:

"These shall be granted their reward twice for that they patiently endured…"

They will be rewarded once for their belief in their own heavenly Book, to which they were really loyal, and once again for their belief in the Prophet of Islam (S), the promised prophet whom the earlier Books had informed of.

There is also this probability that they will be granted rewards twice, because, as it is understood from the previous verses, they believed in the Prophet of Islam (S) both before his advent and after his advent.

For fulfilling their duty, they showed much patience and perseverance in both stages. Neither the deviated Jews and Christians approved their action, nor the imitation from ancestors and social atmosphere allowed them to leave their former religion. But they stood firm, left their own interests and renounced their sensual desires, and, consequently, they gained the great Divine reward twice.

Then, the Qur'an points to a group of their righteous deeds, each of which is worthier than the other. These actions are 'averting evil with good', 'spending out of the Divine bounties', and 'facing with the ignorant magnificently.' These qualities added to patience and perseverance, mentioned in the former sentence, make four outstanding qualities.

It begins saying:

"…and avert evil with good…"

They avert evils, such as: ugly words with good sayings, the indecency with virtue, the ignorance with knowledge, the enmity and grudge with kindness, and the rupture of relation with friendship and union of kindred. In short, instead of answering vice with vice, they try to repel it with goodness.

This is a very effective style in struggling against mischief, specially against a group of obstinate persons, and the Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized it.[4]

Another thing is that they spend not only out of their property and wealth, but also out of their knowledge, mental power, body strength, and social honour, all of which are sustenance and merits of Allah that they give in the way of Allah.

The verse says:

"…and spend out of the sustenance We have provided them with.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 55

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَآ أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لاَ نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ

55. "And when they hear idle talk, they turn away from it and say: 'We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds. Peace be on you, we do not seek the ignorant'."

A real believer is he who not only does not go into a meeting of vanity and does not listen to an idle talk, but also if he heard a vain word, he would react properly.

Turning away from speaking and hearing idle talk and also from seeing and associating with it is a virtue which is praised in all religions. The above verse is about the qualities of a group of the People of the Book.

Therefore, the verse says:

"And when they hear idle talk, they turn away from it…"

They never answer an idle talk with an idle talk, and do not reply ignorance with ignorance, but they tell the talkers of idle as follows:

"…and say: 'We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds…"

Neither you will be punished for our deeds, nor we will be punished for your deeds, but soon you will know about the result of the deed of each of us.

Then the Holy Qur'an adds that they say farewell to the ignorant idle talkers, and those who, by some vicious talks, try to hurt the nerves of the faithful and benevolent persons, and their speech is such:

"…Peace be on you, we do not seek the ignorant'."

Neither we are the people of idle talk, ignorance, and mischief, nor we seek them. We seek for clear-minded scholars, the learned men who practice their own knowledge, and true believers.

Thus, instead of wasting their strength and power in struggling against the blind-hearted ignorant and unaware idle talkers, they honourably pass by them and pay to their own fundamental aims and programs.

It is worthy to note that when these believers face with such people, their greeting is not salutation of 'meeting' but it is the salutation of 'farewell'.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 56

إِنَّكَ لاَ تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَـكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

56. "Verily you cannot guide whom you like, but Allah guides whomever He pleases, and He knows best those that are guided."

Divine prophet's duty is conveying the Messages of Allah to people and showing the right way. Whether people accept or not it does not relate to them.

The verse says:

"Verily you cannot guide whom you like…"

Guiding people is the job of Allah which involves only the pure and receptive hearts.

The verse continues saying:

"…but Allah guides whomever He pleases, and He knows best those that are guided."

Regarding the fact that the previous verses referred to two groups of the people of Mecca: the obstinate pagans in whom the light of Faith did not penetrate though the Messenger of Allah (S) tried to guide them.

On the contrary, a group of the People of the Book and those who were in some distance places, accepted the Divine guidance and eagerly tried their best in the way of Islam, and they did not fear of the opposition of their near relatives and the arrogant ignorant pagans.

Keeping these things in mind, the above verse uncovers the curtain from over this fact that the Prophet (S) could not guide whomever he liked, but Allah guides whomever He pleases.

Allah knows those who are eligible to accept Faith. He knows which hearts are eager for the Truth, He knows which minds contain the love of

Allah. Yes, He knows these persons well and He gives them success, and endows them His grace so that they be guided towards Faith.

But those dark hearted evil doers who are inwardly enemy of the Truth, and they struggle against the messengers of Allah (as) with all their strength, and, from the point of life, they are so polluted and disdained that are not eligible for the light of Faith, Allah (s.w.t.) does not set the torch of success above their way.

Therefore, the purpose of guidance, here, is not 'showing the way', because showing the way is the main job of the Prophet (S) and he shows the way to everybody unexceptionally, but the purpose of guidance, here, is remittance to that which is sought and causing them to reach the destination.

This is only the job of Allah that He spreads the seed of faith in the hearts, and His deed is not done undue either. He looks at the receptive hearts and cast this heavenly light into them.

However, this verse is a kind of console for the Prophet (S) that he regards this fact that neither the persistence of a group of idolaters of Mecca upon polytheism is undue, nor the sincere faith of the people of Ethiopia, or Najran and the like in becoming Muslim.

He should never be worried of the disbelief of the first group, because this divine light goes only into the receptive hearts, wherever it arrives it erects camp therein.

There are many examples of this meaning found in the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 272 says:

"It is not upon you to guide them (O' Muhammad), but Allah guides aright whomever He wills…"

Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 43 says:

"And some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind even though they will not see (inwardly)?"

And, in Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 4 it says:

"…then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

The last sentence of the recent verse shows that the will of Allah concerning these two groups is not undue, but it is according to His Wisdom and upon the competencies, activities, and efforts of the persons. It is only upon this basis that Allah gives the success of guidance to a group and negates it in another group.

Now pay attention to this matter that the content of this verse, which is a consolation for the Prophet (S), has been repeated in some other verses of the Qur'an with some rather different statements and meanings; including, Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 103 that says:

"And most people will not believe, though you desire it."

Or Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 272 says:

"It is not upon you to guide them (O' Muhammad), but Allah guides aright whomever He wills…"

Yet, in the commentary of Durr-ul-Manthur, Vol. 5, as well as some other commentaries, there have been narrated some narrations from Sunnites indicating that when Abutalib, Ali's father, was going to die, the holy

Prophet (S) went to him and suggested Islam to him but he did not accept it, and then this verse was revealed.

But apart from the fact that what the occasion of revelation is, or whether it relates to the father of Ali (as) or not, with a little care, the lack of this relation is proved, because the continuation of the verse is about a group of the believers of the People of the Book comparing with the pagans of Mecca.

Now, in order to make the fact clear, we discuss on these narrations and the faith of Hadrat Abutalib.

'Allamah 'Amini, the author of the worthy book of Al-Qadir, in Vol. 8, P. 19 on rejecting all these forged narrations and relying on the historical documents, believes that the narrators of such narrations were either some little infants at the time of the death of Hadrat Abutalib, or, like 'Abu-Hurayrah, had not embraced Islam yet.

Again, in pages 330 to 410 of the same volume, 'Allamah proves that Hadrat Abutalib was a true believer. He narrates hundreds of poems from that Hadrat himself, ten reminiscences and forty traditions from the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the holy Prophet (S) which denote to his belief in Allah and the Messenger of Allah. Some of these evidences are as:

1- The words of the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as) about him.

2- The grief and sorrow of the Prophet (S) for Abutalib's death, so grievous that that year was named /'am-ul-huzn/ (The year of grief).

3- The Prophet's invocation (S) on the pulpit for 'Abutalib and attending in his funeral.

4- The Prophet's tradition (S) by which he said he would be the interceder of his parents and his uncle 'Abutalib on the Day of Hereafter.

5- The testament of 'Abutalib in which he supported Bani Hashim and the Prophet of Islam (S).

6- His recommendation to his wife and his son, Ja'far, for supporting the Prophet (S) and to regard Islam and prayer (salat) are some evidences.

7- His abundant supports in regard to the Prophet (S) by the nights of danger when he changed the sleeping place of the Prophet (S) with the sleeping place of his son, Ali (as), and that he exposed his son to danger.

8- The life of Fatimah-Bent-Asad with Abu-Talib, in whose Islam there is no doubt, is an evidence, because if Hadrat 'Abu-Talib were not Muslim, a Muslim woman would surely not be his wife.

9- The existence of a great deal of poems which denote to his confess to Islam. Yet, how ignorance, ingratitude and injustice it is that some people persistently tried to say that this sincere Unitarian believer died in paganism.

Of course, it should not be forgotten that the only his unforgivable sin was that he was Ali's father (as). Ali's enemies spent a great deal of money in the way of striking him. They concocted many false narrations, and in order to set a kind of relation between Abutalib, Ali's father (as), and Abusufyan, the father of Mu'awiyah, they accused Abutalib of paganism.

For more information, you may refer to the commentary books of Shi'ah and the narrations of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) cited following the abovementioned verse.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 57

وَقَالُوا إِن نَتَّبِعِ الْهُدَي مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفْ مِنْ أَرْضِنَآ أَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّن لَهُمْ حَرَماً ءَامِناً يُجْبَي إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِزْقاً مِن لَدُنَّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

57. "And they say: 'If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be driven out from our land.' Have We not settled them in a secure sanctuary to which fruits of everything are drawn, as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know."

A group of the pagans of Mecca once told the Prophet of Islam (S) that if they accepted Islam, very soon they would be sent away from their home and, being homeless, they would be vagrant from their own life and living.

This statement, of course, is uttered by those persons who count the Might of Allah naught and the power of ignorant Arabs great. This statement is uttered by those who are not still acquainted with the depth of favours and helps of Allah and they do not know how He assists His friends and how He causes His enemies to fail.

So, in answer to them, the Qur'an says:

"And they say: 'If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be driven out from our land.' Have We not settled them in a secure sanctuary to which fruits of everything are drawn, as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know."

The Lord Who set a dry saline land, which had no trees and plants, as a secure sanctuary, and attracted the hearts to it so strongly that the best products from different parts of the world are brought towards it, has clearly shown His Power.

The One Who has proved such a Might and has provided security and those abundant bounties in this land and every one sees their effects and have enjoyed of them for many years, how He is not able to protect them from the attack of a group of idolatrous Arabs.

When they were in infidelity, they were enjoying of these two great bounties of Allah: security and the merits of life, how is it possible that Allah deprives them from these bounties after Islam? They must be strong-hearted, stand firm and believe in Islam since the Lord of Ka'bah and Mecca (s.w.t.) is with them.

The Qur'anic term /yujba/ (are drawn) is mentioned in the Arabic form of simple present tense. It denotes the continuation of action in both the present and future; and now, after fourteen centuries, we witness the concept of this statement that all kinds of merits are continuously drawn toward this sacred land.

Those who go to Mecca see by their eyes that how this dry, hot, grassless land is full of kinds of the best bounties, so that there may not this affluence, from all points of views, be found so easily in any place of the world.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 58

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيشَتَهَا فَتِلْكَ مَسَاكِنُهُمْ لَمْ تُسْكَن مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ

58. "And how many a town We did destroy which exalted in its means of subsistence; so these are their abodes, they have not been dwelt in after them save a little, and We are their heirs!"

The Arabic word /batira/ means disobedience and inebriate because of abundance of wealth and welfare.

In the previous verse we studied that a group of people told the holy Prophet (S) that if they believed in him, the pagans of Mecca would drive them out from their land, and Allah implicitly said that the same Power that made Mecca a secure place for them with plenty of sustenance, can protect His bounties for them after Faith, too.

Now, in this verse, He implicitly says they should not forget that the people of those cities, that were inebriate with His bounties and full welfare, were destroyed; then they must be aware that they, too, will meet the Wrath of Allah because they do not believe in Islam in order to protect their own properties and welfare.

The verse says:

"And how many a town We did destroy which exalted in its means of subsistence…"

Yes, the affluence and pride of bounties invited them to disobedience, and disobedience became the source of injustice and cruelty, and injustice annihilated the whole their living.

The verse continues saying:

"…so these are their abodes, they have not been dwelt in after them save a little, and We are their heirs!"

Yes, their ruin houses and cities are empty, silent, and ownerless, and if there came some persons into them to live therein they were a few and it was for a short length of time.

O' the pagans of Mecca! Do you also want to have such a comfortable life, under the shadow of infidelity, the end of which is the same thing that was said? What can the worth of it be?

The application of the Arabic term /tilka/, which is a demonstrative pronoun pointing to a far place and is often used for perceptible things, may refer to the land of 'Ad and Thamud and the people of Lot which was not so far from Mecca, viz. in the land of 'Ahqaf (between Yemen and Syria), or in Wad-il-Qura, or in the land of Sadum, all of which were on the way of commercial caravans of Arabs of Mecca to Syria, and those Arabs could see the empty houses of that place with their own eyes and knew that there had dwelt few persons there after them.

The application of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…and We are their heirs"

points to that place being empty, and is an indication to the real ownership of Allah Who is the owner of everything, and if the nominal ownership of some things is temporarily given to some persons, it will not last long and all of them will disappear and their heirs will be Allah.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 59

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ ُهْلِكَ الْقُرَي حَتَّي يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمّـِهَا رَسُولاً يَتْلُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا ُهْلِكِي الْقُرَي إِلاَّ وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ

59. "And your Lord never destroyed the towns until He raised in their centers a messenger, reciting to them Our signs, and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust."

This verse, in fact, is the answer of the probable question saying that: if it is so that Allah (s.w.t.) destroys the disobedient and rebellious ones, then why did He not annihilate by His punishment the pagans of Mecca and Medina who committed the utmost contumacy and there was no ignorance and crime that they did not commit?

The Qur'an says:

"And your Lord never destroyed the towns until He raised in their centers a messenger, reciting to them Our signs,…"

Yes, He will not punish the people of the towns unless He completes the argument and sends messengers with explicit instructions.

Moreover, after completing the argument, He has constant attention to their deeds, and if they commit any injustice or oppression that deserves punishment, He will punish them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust."

The application of the Arabic phrases /ma kana rabbuka/ (Your Lord never) and /ma kunna/ (We never) in the verse is an evidence over this fact that it has been the constant and permanent way of treatment of Allah that He never punishes any nation before giving them enough proofs.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…until He raised in their centers a messenger…"

points to this fact that it is not necessary that He raises a messenger in every town and city. It is enough that a messenger to be raised in a great center where the people of mind and wisdom of a nation are gathered and the news are quickly scattered from it throughout the province and the people of that locality can get the news they need.

The news of the raise of the Prophet of Islam in the land of Mecca spread throughout Arabia peninsula in a short time, and it went beyond it since Mecca was 'Mother of cities'; it was both the spiritual center of Hijaz (Mecca and Medina) and a commercial center. It reached even the important centers of the civilization of that time during a short period.

Therefore, the verse states a universal and a general principle, and, thus, the belief of some commentators who say it refers to Mecca is completely baseless; and the usage of the Arabic phrase /fi 'ummiha/ (in their centers) is also a general meaning since the Arabic word /'umm/ means 'mother' and 'the main center', and it is not allocated to Mecca.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 60

وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِن شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِندَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَي أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

60. "And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of the life of this world and its adornment, and whatever is with Allah is better and more lasting, have you then no sense?"

Indeed, this is the third answer that Allah (s.w.t.) gives to the infidel pretext seekers of Mecca who used to say if they believed their living would be ruined. This verse implicitly says that whatever they imagine they obtain through disbelief is a worthless perishing thing for the limited life of this world while the things with Allah are better and more lasting.

The verse says:

"And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of the life of this world and its adornment, and whatever is with Allah is better and more lasting…"

All the material bounties of this world generally have some unwholesome sequels mixed with different problems, and there is no material bounty free from harm and difficulty.

In addition, the bounties which are with Allah are permanent and are not comparable with the perishing merits of this world; therefore, they are both better and more lasting.

Thus, with a simple comparison, every rational person can understand that he should not devote that lasting bounty for this mortal one.

That is why, at the end of the verse, He says:

"…have you then no sense?"

Fakhr-i-Razi narrates from one of the jurisprudents who said that if a person makes testament that one third of his wealth must be given to the wisest person among people, his legal opinion was that this one third ought to be given to those who obey the commandment of Allah, because the wisest person among people is the one who gives little (perishing) thing and takes a large (lasting) capital, and this is true only in the obedient persons of the command of Allah.

Then, Fakhr-i-Razi adds that it seems that that jurist has taken this legal injunction from the verse under discussion.[5]

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Fi Zilal, Vol. 6, PP. 357, 358
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. There is a detailed explanation in this regard when commenting on Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 22, and Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 96
5. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 25, P. 6

Section 7: Unity of Allah

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 61

أَفَمَن وَعَدْنَاهُ وَعْداً حَسَناً فَهُوَ لاَقِيهِ كَمَن مَتَّعْنَاهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ

61. "Is he then unto whom We have promised a goodly promise which he shall meet it, similar to him whom We have provided with the provision of the life of this world, then on the Day of Hereafter he shall be of those brought up (for punishment)?"

The promises of Allah are both decisive and certain; and rewards in hereafter are both great and good.

In the previous verses, the words were about the persons who, for the enjoying of the bounties of the world, prefer disbelief to Faith and infidelity to Monotheism. Now, the verse under discussion defines the situation of this group in the Hereafter comparing the true believers.

At first, through a question, the Qur'an wants the conscience of all to judge, when it says:

"Is he then unto whom We have promised a goodly promise which he shall meet it, similar to him whom We have provided with the provision of the life of this world, then on the Day of Hereafter he shall be of those brought up (for punishment)?"

No doubt every vigilant conscience prefers the Divine goodly promises and His great lasting merits to a few days of enjoying of perishing bounties and fleeting joys which have pain and toil in sequel.

The Qur'anic sentence /fahuwa laqiyah/ (which he shall meet it) is an emphasis on the fact that the promise of Allah does not infringe, and it should be such, because to infringe the promise is either because of ignorance or powerlessness, none of which is found in Divine Essence.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"Then on the Day of Hereafter, he shall be of those brought up (for punishment)"

refers to the calling before Allah (s.w.t.) for the reckoning of deeds. Some commentators have rendered it into calling to the Hell Fire, but the first commentary is more suitable. However, this meaning shows that these polluted persons are drawn to this scene unwillingly, and it must be so, because the horror of reckoning and retribution has covered their whole entity.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /hayat-ud-dunya/ 'life of this world', which has repeatedly been mentioned in different Suras of the Qur'an, points the meanness of this mortal life in comparison with the 'Hereafter life' which is permanent and perpetual.

The Arabic word /duniya/ is derived from /dunuw/ which originally means: 'nearness in place, or time, or position'.

Then the terms /duniya/ and /adna/ have sometimes been used for the small creatures which are available, versus huge creatures, and sometimes it has been used for some mean things versus good and exalted things, and sometimes for 'near' versus 'far'.

And, in view of the fact that the life of this world in the face of the life of the next world is both small and worthless, and near, then the appellation of /hayat-ud-duniya/ (the life of this world) is perfectly fitting.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 62-64

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلآءِ الَّذِينَ أَغْوَيْنَآ أَغْوَيْنَاهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا تَبَرَّأْنَآ إِلَيْكَ مَا كَانُوا إِيَّانَا يَعْبُدُونَ

وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَهْتَدُونَ

62. "And on the Day (when) He will call them and say: 'Where are My associates whom you were asserting?'"

63. "Those against whom the sentence has been confirmed will say: 'Our Lord! These are they whom we led astray; we led them astray, as we were astray ourselves. To You we declare ourselves to be clear (of them). They were not unto us worshipping'."

64. "And it will be said (unto them): 'Call your associate (gods)'. So they will call upon them, but they will not answer them, and they will see the punishment and would wish that they had been guided aright."

Whoever calls others towards himself instead of Allah, the punishment of Allah is certain for him. We must not do something that we remain unable to answer for that thing on the Day of Hereafter.

Through these verses, the Qur'an illustrates the scenes of Resurrection for pagans in a way that its consideration brings horror and causes man's body to shake.

The verse says:

"And on the Day (when) He will call them and say: 'Where are My associates whom you were asserting?'"

It is evident that this question is an objurgatory question, for on the Hereafter Day, when the curtains will be removed and everything is manifest, neither paganism is meaningful nor pagans have remained on their belief. So, this question is only a kind of reproach and punishment, or a kind of reprimand and retribution.

But instead of pagans, that must answer this question themselves, their objects of worship will start speaking and express their hatred from them. We know that their objects of worship were sometimes idols made of stone and wood, and sometimes some sacred beings such as angels and Jesus Christ, and sometimes Jinns and Satans.

Here, the third group will speak who will be referred to in this verse, which says:

"Those against whom the sentence has been confirmed will say: 'Our Lord! These are they whom we led astray; we led them astray, as we were astray ourselves. To You we declare ourselves to be clear (of them). They were not unto us worshipping'."

The abovementioned verse is similar to Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 28 which says:

"…and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship'."

Thus, the seductive objects of worship, such as: Pharaoh, Namrud, and Satans and Jinns will proclaim their hatred from such worshippers and defend themselves. They will also negate even aberration from themselves and implicitly say that the worshippers followed them with their own accord.

But it is clear that neither this negation has any effect nor that hatred and repudiation are useful, and they will surely share the sin of their worshippers.

It is worthy to note that on that Day every one of these sinful deviated persons will repudiate the other one and each of them try to put his own sin on another's shoulder.

This is just like the thing we see its small example in this world with our own eyes. A group of persons gather with together to commit a crime. Then, after being captured, and attending in the court, they hate each other and try to put the fault on the neck of another one. This is the fate of the criminals and astray ones in this world and the next.

Also, Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22 indicates that, on the Day of Hereafter, Satan will say to his followers as follows:

"…and I did not have any authority over you except that I called you and you responded me. Therefore, do not blame me, but blame yourselves…"

Concerning pagans, in Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, we recite that they will conflict with each other and every one will count another a guilty one, but those whose work is temptation will explicitly reply them:

"Nor had we any authority over you. Nay, it was you who were a people in obstinate rebellion!"[1]

However, after that they will be questioned about their objects of worship and they will remain impotent to answer.

Their situation is explained as follows:

"And it will be said (unto them): 'Call your associate (gods)'…"

They are told to call their gods to help them but they, who know their objects of worship cannot do anything there, as a result of the intense horror and that they find nothing to help them, or because of obeying the command of Allah, Who wants to disgrace such pagans and their astray objects of worship before the public, they will go to their gods and ask them to help them, but it is clear that they will not answer them.

At this time, they will see the chastisement of Allah by their own eyes, and they gain nothing but failure and disgrace, because the only way of salvation is Faith and righteous deed which they do not have.

The verse says:

"…So they will call upon them, but they will not answer them, and they will see the punishment and would wish that they had been guided aright."

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 65-67

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَآ أَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

فَعَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الاَنْبَآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لاَ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ

فَاَمَّا مَن تَابَ وءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَعَسَي أَن يَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِينَ

65. "And on that Day He will call them and say: 'What was the answer you gave to the messengers?'"

66. "On that Day (all) tidings will be dimmed for them, nor will they ask each other."

67. "But any that (in this life) repents, and believes, and works righteousness, haply he shall be one of the prosperous ones."

Every body is responsible before the call and invitation of the Divine prophets.

On the Hereafter Day, people cannot prepare any answer for the just court of Allah (s.w.t.) by means of cooperation, consultation and asking questions from each other.

Next to the question about their objects of worship, the pagans will be asked another question about their reaction before the Divine prophets.

The verse says:

"And on that Day He will call them and say: 'What was the answer you gave to the messengers?'"

It is certain that, like the first question, they will not have any answer for this question. If they say that they answered their invitation, it will be a lie, and a lie will have no room there.

If they say that they rejected the prophets, denigrated them, called them sorcerers and insane ones, and struggled against them with weapons and killed both them and their followers, their statement will be the cause of their disgrace and misery.

On the Hereafter Day, when the prophets will be questioned that what people did in answer to their invitation and they will answer:

"…'We have no knowledge, verily You are the All-knowing of the Unseen'.",

what can these blind-hearted pagans say in answer to this question?

Therefore, in the next verse the Qur'an implicitly says that they will have no answer to deliver, nor can they hear any answer from each other.

The verse says:

"On that Day (all tidings will be dimmed for them, nor will they ask each other."

It is worthy to note that, in the above verse, blindness and dumbness are attributed to 'tidings' not to them. It does not say that they will become blind, but it implies that all tidings will be blind to find them.

The reason is that many times it happens that a person is not aware of something but it seems that the news turns round by tongues and finally comes to him, as many social news are scattered through this very way where neither are persons aware of them, nor are the news worthy of being scattered.

Thus, all tidings will be covered for them, and they will find no answer for the question that what they answered to the Divine prophets and, therefore, there will remain an absolute silence for them as an answer.

And, since the Qur'an always leaves the door open for the sinners and pagans to return to the truth in what stage of mischief and pollution they may be, by the next verse it adds:

"But any that (in this life) repents, and believes, and works righteousness, haply he shall be one of the prosperous ones."

Therefore, the way of felicity is summed up in three phrases: returning to Allah, Faith and righteous deeds in this world the result of which will certainly be: deliverance, salvation and prosperity.

Though whoever has true Faith and righteous deed will surely be prosperous, the usage of the word /'asa/ (haply) in the verse may be for the sake that this prosperity is conditioned to the existence and continuation of this state, and since the existence and continuation of this state is not certain for all the repentant, the word 'haply' has been used for it.

Some commentators have also said that when this word, haply, is said by a generous personality, its concept is the certainty of the matter, and Allah is 'The Most Generous'.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verses 68-70

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الأُوَ وَالآخِرَةِ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

68. "And your Lord creates whatever He pleases, and He chooses: They have not the choice. Glory be to Allah, and exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)!"

69. "And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal and what they manifest."

70. "And He is Allah, there is no god but He! His is all praise in this (life) and the Hereafter, and His is the authority, and unto Him you shall be returned."

The Absolute Power is Allah's, and then the creation of existence and the law of life (religion) both belong to Him. Therefore, the choice of heavenly leader is in the hand of Allah, not in the authority of people.

These verses, in fact, are as an evidence for the negation of polytheism and falseness of the belief of polytheists.

The first verse says:

"And your Lord creates whatever He pleases…"

Creation belongs to Him, and administration, authority, and choice are also under His will and commandment.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He chooses: They have not the choice…"

The authority of creation is with Him, the authority of intercession is in His hand, and the authority of sending prophets is also in His will. Shortly speaking, the authority of all things depends on the Divine providence, His Pure Essence. Therefore, neither can idols do anything, nor even can the angels and prophets, save with His leave.

However, Allah is the possessor of authority both in natural affairs and religious affairs, both of which originate from the rank of His creation.

Yet, how do they pave the path of polytheism, and how do they go towards other than Allah?

Thus, at the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an says:

"…Glory be to Allah, and exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)!"

In the narrations of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), the above verse has been rendered into the authority and choice of Immaculate Imam (as) from the side of Allah, and the Qur'anic sentence:

"They have not the choice"

has also been adapted to this very meaning. This, in fact, is of the kind of stating the clear example, because protecting divine religion and choosing the immaculate leader for this aim is impossible but from the side of Allah.[2]

The next verse, which is about the vast knowledge of Allah, is, indeed, an emphasis, or a reason, upon what was stated in the previous verse concerning the vast authority of Allah.

It says:

"And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal and what they manifest."

This His sovereignty over everything is a reason for His authority unto all things, and, in the meantime, it is a threat for the pagans who should not imagine that Allah is not aware of their intentions and plots.

The last verse of the abovementioned verses is, in fact, as a conclusion and explanation for the previous verses in the field of negation of polytheism. It points to four qualities of the Attributes of Allah, all of which are derivatives of His creative power and His Will being independent.

It says:

"And He is Allah, there is no god but He!…"

How can an object of worship, except Him, be found while He is the only creator and all authorities belong to Him? Those who, as a pretext of intercession and the like of it, go to idols are seriously in error.

Another thing is that all bounties, whether in this world and the next, are from His side, and this is the requisite of His absolute creative Power.

Therefore, it says:

"…His is all praise in this (life) and the Hereafter…"

The third is that He is the Judge in both worlds. The verse continues saying:

"…and His is the authority…"

The fourth is that the return of all men, for reckoning and receiving rewards and retribution, will be to Him.

The verse says:

"…and unto Him you shall be returned."

It is He Who has created us, and it is He Who is aware of our deeds, and it is He Who is the Judge of the Day of retribution; therefore the reckoning and reward of our deeds are in His hand, too.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 71

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الَّيْلَ سَرْمَداً إِلَي يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُم بِضِيَآءٍ أَفَلاَ تَسْمَعُونَ

71. "Say: 'Have you thought, if Allah made the night everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah shall bring you illumination? Will you not hear?"

The Arabic word /sarmad/, mentioned in this verse, means permanent and perpetual.

Among the ways of knowing Allah there is the way of contemplation about extinction or change of bounties. The change of day and night, of course, is one of the greatest Divine bounties and signs.

The verse under discussion points to a great part of Divine bounties, which is both a reason on Monotheism and negation of polytheism.

From this point of view, it completes the previous discussion, and it is an example of the bounties of Allah for which He is eligible of being praised and glorified, a praise that was pointed out in the previous verses. It is also the evidence on His authority in the system of creation and administration of this world.

At first, it points to the great bounty of the light of the day, which is the cause of any movement.

It says:

"Say: 'Have you thought, if Allah made the night everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah shall bring you illumination? Will you not hear?"

Here, the word /diya'/ (light) has been used, because the main purpose of 'day' is 'light', the same light that the life and living of all living beings depends on it. If there were not the sunlight, neither would a tree grow, nor could a flower smile, nor might a bird fly, nor would exist a human being, nor would it rain a drop of rain.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 72

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَداً إِلَي يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُم بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ أَفَلاَ تُبْصِرُونَ

72. "Say: 'Have you thought, if Allah made the day everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah shall bring you the night in which you rest? Do you not then see?"

The existing system of the world of existence is arranged from the side of Allah, and if He wills He can change it to another system, because the power of Allah is the same unto all beings.

This verse refers to the bounty of darkness. It, addressing the Prophet (S), commands him to tell the people of Mecca who were busy worshipping idols:

"Say: 'Have you thought, if Allah made the day everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah shall bring you the night in which you rest?…"

It is evident that they are not able to answer this question except that they say there is not anyone to do it. Consequently, the argument is completed to

them and they must confess that there is not anyone eligible for being worshipped but Allah, the One.

Therefore, it says:

"…Do you not then see?"

That is, do you not obtain knowledge by the way of insight? Do you not observe the day and the night, and do you not contemplate about them so that you know that they both are from the side of a Wise Administrator?

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 73

وَمِن رَّحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

73. "And it is out of His Mercy that He has made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thank."

In the verses of the holy Qur'an, the word 'night' is always mentioned before the word 'day'. It may be for the reason that the darkness of the night substantially belongs to the earth and it is from the earth itself, but the light of the day is from the sun which comes to the earth.

This verse, which is, in fact, the conclusion of the previous two verses, says:

"And it is out of His Mercy that He has made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thank."

Yes, the vastness of the expanse of Allah's Mercy requires that He provides all the means of your life. From one side, we need to work, struggle, and run, which is not possible without the light of the day; and from another side, we need to rest and to have tranquility, which naturally does not complete without the darkness of the night.

Today, it has scientifically been proved that, because of light, all organs of the body of man become active and alive, such as: circulation of the blood, respiratory organs, the work of the heart, as well as other organs.

And if light is too much, the cells will become tired and joy and cheerfulness gives its place to weariness. On the contrary, at night, the organs of the body go into a deep tranquility and rest, and get strength and joy by it.

It is interesting that when in verse 71 it speaks of the lasting night, at the end of verse it says:

"…will you not hear"

while at the end of verse 72 it says:

"Do you not then see?"

This variation of meaning may be for the reason that the sense proportional to night is hearing and the sense proportional to day is sight. To this extreme the Qur'an uses exactness and precision.

This is also noteworthy that at the end of this verse the subject of thanksgiving is mentioned; giving thank for the accurate system of light and darkness, a thanksgiving that causes man to know the Benefactor, and a thanksgiving which is the motive of Faith in the doctrinal subjects.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 74

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

74. "And on the day when He shall call them and say: 'Where are My partners whom you used to assert?'"

Allah, the Almighty, has no partner. Whatever is counted as a partner for Him, is naught but an imagination and unfounded assumption. Therefore, those who associate anything with Allah (s.w.t.) must prepare themselves to have an answer on the Day of Hereafter.

The commentary of this verse, of course, was explained formerly and its repetition is for the sake that in the first time the aim was that they would confess their aberration, and here the aim is that they might be made understand that they are unable to bring any reasoning.

Thus, Hereafter is the Day when the futility of the objects of worship and frustration of polytheists will appear. It is a Day when all objects of worship in their vanity and all polytheists in their being unable to give answer are equal.

However, it is cited in the commentary of Jawami'-ul-Jami'that Allah, the Glorified, repeats the scorn of pagans for their disbelief in order to claim that paganism causes the Wrath of Allah more than any other sin, as Monotheism is the most inclusive thing for gaining the consent and pleasure of Allah.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 75

وَنَزَعْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيداً فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

75. "And We will draw forth from every nation a witness, and say: 'Bring you your proof!' Then shall they know that the Truth is Allah's, and that which they used to forge shall depart from them."

Pagans have not any logic and demonstrative proof.

On the Day of Hereafter, the witnesses come out from their own nations. On that Day, the sinful persons will think of denying their crimes, but the existence of witnesses cause them not to do anything.

So, this verse says:

"And We will draw forth from every nation a witness, and say: 'Bring you your proof!'…"

It is at this time that everything will be manifested, and as the verse says:

"…Then shall they know that the Truth is Allah's, and that which they used to forge shall depart from them."

According to some other verses of the Holy Qur'an, these witnesses will be the Divine prophets, and every prophet is the witness of his own nation, while the Prophet of Islam (S), who is the seal of the prophets, will be a witness over all prophets and nations, as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 41 says:

"How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and We bring you a witness over those (witnesses)?"

Thus, there will be held a meeting at the presence of prophets and Messengers. In this great meeting, those blind-hearted arrogant pagans will be put under judgment. It is at that time that they will be acquainted with the

depth of the calamity of paganism and will understand the rightfulness of the Lord and futility of the idols clearly.

It is interesting that the Qur'an in the above mentioned verse says:

"…and that which they used to forge shall depart from them."

That is, their baseless imaginations about idols will completely be dismissed from their minds, because resurrection plain is the place of Truth and there is no room for falsehood there. In that place, falsehood will be lost and disappear.

If in this world falsehood hides itself under the curtain of truth and is busy with deceit for a few days, in Hereafter the curtains of deceit and trick will disappear and there will remain nothing but the Truth.

Upon the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"And We will draw forth from every nation a witness…"

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition has said:

"And from this nation there will also be chosen its Imam."[3]

This noble statement refers to this fact that in any age there will be necessary to exist an immaculate witness, and the abovementioned tradition is of the kind of statement of the extension of this meaning.

Notes

1. Surah As-Safat, No. 37, verse 30
2. According to Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 136
3. The Commentary of Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, P. 20

Section 8: Korah's (Qarun) Ruin

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 76

إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِن قَوْمِ مُوسَي فَبَغَي عَلَيْهِمْ وءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَآ إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوأُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُوْلِي الْقُوَّةِ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ

76. "Verily Korah was of the people of Moses, but he oppressed them; and We had given him of the treasures so much that its keys would have been a burden to a company of men endowed with strength. Once his people said to him: 'Do not exult, for Allah does not love the exultant'."

Mentioning the historical examples is a gazing-stock for the coming generations.

Having a good background is not a proof for being good in the future or renunciation of the present deviations.

The wonderful story life of Moses and his struggle against Pharaoh was explained in a part of former verses of this Surah, and what had to be said about them was stated sufficiently.

In another part of the verses of this Surah, the struggle of the Children of Israel against a rich arrogant man among them called Korah is referred to. He was a wealthy man who was the manifestation of wealth accompanied with pride, deceit, and contumacy.

In principle, during his lifetime, Moses struggled against three important oppressive tyrannical powers: Pharaoh, who was the sample of governmental power, Korah, who was the manifestation of wealth, and Sameri, who was the example of art, deceit, and elusion.

Although the most important struggle of Moses (as) was against the governmental power, the recent two struggles have importance for themselves and contain some great instructive lessons.

It is said that Korah was a close relative of Moses (as), (his cousin (son of a paternal uncle), or uncle, or son of his maternal aunt); and, from the point of information, he had a considerable knowledge about the matters of Torah.

At first he was one of the believers, but, later, pride and wealth drew him towards disbelief and sent him into the depth of the ground, made him fight against the messenger of Allah, and his amazing death became a lesson for all. The explanation of this event will be discussed later in the concerning verse.

The Qur'an says:

"Verily Korah was of the people of Moses, but he oppressed them…"

The cause of this oppression and disobedience was that he had obtained a great deal of wealth, and since he had not enough capacity and strong faith, this abundant wealth deceived him and drew him towards deviation and arrogance.

The Qur'an continues saying:

"…and We had given him of the treasures so much that its keys would have been a burden to a company of men endowed with strength…"

The Arabic word /mafatih/ is the plural form of /maftah/ in the sense of ‘a place wherein something is stored’, like the chests that properties are stored up in them.

Thus, the concept of the verse is that Korah had so much gold, silver and precious properties that a group of strong men could move its box with difficulty.

And, regarding that the Arabic word /‘usbah/ means a body of men (from ten to forty) who are with together and are strong enough and they have held each other like nerves, makes it clear that how heavy the jewels and precious properties of Korah had been.

The term /tanu’/ is derived from /nu’/ which means: to raise with difficulty and heavily, and it is used for a heavy burden that when a man is carrying it, because of heaviness, it causes him to sway this side and that side.

What was said in the above about the Arabic term /mafatih/ is something that a very large group of commentators and lexicologists have accepted, while some other commentators have said that the term /mafatih/ is the plural form of /miftah/ which means key. They say that the keys of the treasures of Korah were so heavy that several strong men could carry them with difficulty.

Those who have chosen this meaning have got in trouble to themselves to adjust it that how it is possible to be so many keys of treasures, and, however, the first commentary is more clear and more correct.

Now, it is better to see what the Children of Israel told Korah. The Holy Qur’an implicitly says: remember when his people told him not to have so much joy flourished with pride, negligence and arrogance, because Allah does not like the proud exultant.

The verse says:

“…Once his people said to him: ‘Do not exult, for Allah does not love the exultant’.”

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 77

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَآ ءَاتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الاَخِرَةَ وَلا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِن كَمَآ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الاَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

77. “And seek by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the Hereafter, and do not forget your portion in this world, and be good (to others) just as Allah has been good to you, and do not seek to make mischief in the land, verily Allah does not love the mischief-makers.”

Every body ought to suffice to his own share in this world and let the rest for Hereafter. Wealth and property can become a means for the prosperity in Hereafter.

In this verse, next to the advice mentioned in the previous holy verse, there are four other expressive and instructive exhortations here for Korah which form a complete five-ring collection.

At first, it says:

"And seek by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the Hereafter…"

It points to the fact that, in spite of the imagination of some ill-disposed persons, wealth and property is not a bad thing; the important thing is that we must see in which way it is used. If it is applied in the way of seeking the good abode of the Hereafter, what is better than that? If it is a mean of pride, negligence, injustice, oppression, and sensuality, what, then, can be worse than it?

This is the same logic that Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali's famous sentence reminds about the world.

He said:

"…If one sees through it (the world), it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it, it would blind him."[1]

And Korah was a person who had the power of performing a lot of social good affairs with those abundant properties he had; what was use of it when his pride did not let him see the facts?

By the second advice, it is added that he should decrease his portion from this world: the verse says:

"…and do not forget your portion in this world…"

This is a fact that every person has a proper limit share of this world, viz., the amount of properties he uses for his body, clothing, and residence is a definite amount, and the additional ones are never consumed by him; therefore, one must not forget this fact.

How much food can a person eat? How many pieces of clothing can he wear? How many houses and how many cars can he have? And how many shrouds does he take with him when he dies? The rest, however, is the share of others and man is the depositary of them.

How nice Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) stated when he said:

"O' son of Adam! Whatever you earn beyond your basic needs you will only keep vigil over it for others."[2]

There is another interpretation upon the abovementioned sentence cited in Islamic narrations and the statements of the commentators which adapts to the above interpretation and, perhaps, both of them are its purpose.

It is that Ma'any-ul-'Akhbar, narrates from Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) who upon the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…do not forget your portion in this world…"

said:

"Do not forget your health and strength, and your opportunity, and your youth, and your mirth, and by means of these (five bounties) seek out the Hereafter."[3]

According to this commentary of the holy verse, the abovementioned statement is a warning to all human beings that they should not lose the opportunities and capitals, because they pass on like cloud.

The third advice is as follows:

"…and be good (to others) just as Allah has been good to you…"

This is also a fact that one must always expect the good of Allah and ask for any kind of goodness and all kinds of expectation from Him. In this

condition, how can he ignore the explicit demand of others and pass by all of these clear things inattentively?

In other words, as Allah has bestowed them to you, you ought to bestow (some of them) to others. A similar meaning to this is mentioned in Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 22 in connection with forgiveness and remittal.

It says:

"…And they should pardon and overlook. Do you not like that Allah should forgive you?…"

This sentence can be rendered like this that sometimes Allah gives man some great bounties so that he does not need them all in his personal life. Allah gives him a powerful wisdom which is useful not only for running a person but also for running a country.

He gives him knowledge that not only an individual but also a society can take benefit from it. He gives him a wealth which is appropriate for great social programs.

The implication of these kinds of Divine merits is that the totality of them does not belong to you, but you are the agent of Allah in giving them to others. Allah has bestowed this merit on you that He manages His servants by your hand.

Finally, the fourth advice is as follows:

"…and do not seek to make mischief in the land, verily Allah does not love the mischief-makers."

This is also a fact that many of the faithless rich people, sometimes as the result of the madness of avariciousness and sometimes because of self-superiority, commit mischief and draw the society into deprivation and poverty.

They usually take everything in their own authority. They wish people to be some servants and slaves for them, and whoever protests they try to destroy him, and if they cannot, they desert him through slander by means of their secret agents. Thus, they draw the society towards corruption and decadence.

Now it is understood that these advisers tried, at first, to break the pride of Korah.

In the second stage, they warned him that the world is a means, not an aim.

In the third stage, they warned him that he could use only a small part of what he had.

In the fourth stage, they reminded him this fact that he should not forget Allah had been good to him, then he had to be good to others either, else his merits would be taken from him.

In the fifth stage, they told him to avoid making mischief in the earth, which is the direct result of former four principles.

It is not completely definite that who these exhorters were but it is certain that they were some knowledgeable, pious, aware, exact, and brave men.

Some commentators have thought that probably Moses (as) himself did it but it is very improbable, because the Qur'an in previous verse says:

"…When his people said to him…".

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 78

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ اُوتِيتُهُ عَلَي عِلْمٍ عِندِي أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِن قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعاً وَلا يُسْأَلُ عَن ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُـجْرِ ُونَ

78. "Said he (Korah): 'I have been given this (wealth) only because of a knowledge that is in me.' Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of the generations that were mightier in strength than he and greater in amassing (wealth)? And (then even) the guilty shall not be asked about their sins."

To boast for one's knowledge is a manner of people like Korah.

The pride for having knowledge changes man so selfish that he accepts the function of no one and nothing any more:

"…'I have been given this (wealth) only because of a knowledge that is in me'…"

We must think of wealth and power as Divine bounties, not the fruit of our own knowledge and effort.

With that very state of pride and haughtiness, which originates from his abundant wealth, Korah used to say as the Qur'an announces:

"Said he (Korah): 'I have been given this (wealth) only because of a knowledge that is in me.'…"

Korah used to say implicitly that it was not their business that what he did with his wealth. He said he did not need any one to guide him how to use his wealth, because he himself obtained it with his own knowledge and awareness.

Moreover, Korah implicitly added that certainly Allah knew him eligible of having wealth that He had given it to him and He had also taught him the way of using it. Then, he said, he knew better than others what to do, and it was not necessary that they interfere in his affairs.

Besides all of these, I have taken trouble, tolerated pains, and was deeply afflicted in order to gather this wealth; why do they not also take trouble if they have eligibility and ability? I am not bothering them; and if they are poor, it is the better that they remain hungry until they die.

These are the decade and disgrace logics that many faithless wealthy people often express in reply to those who advise them.

This point is also worthy noting that the Qur'an has left this matter secret that in obtaining this wealth to which knowledge of his does Korah emphasize?

Is it the knowledge of alchemy, as some commentators have said?

Is it the knowledge of commerce, agriculture, and the arts of industry?

Or is it his special administration by which he could obtain that enormous wealth? Or it refers to all of them?

It is not improbable that the verse has a vast meaning and encompasses all of these things.

(It is not known, of course, that the knowledge of alchemy, the knowledge by which gold is made from copper and the like, is a fable or a reality.)

Here, the Qur'an gives a harsh answer to Korah and others like him.

It says:

"…Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of the generations that were mightier in strength than he and greater in amassing (wealth)?…"

Korah says that whatever he has is by means of knowledge, but he has forgotten that there were many persons who were more knowledgeable, stronger and wealthier than him while they could not escape from the punishment of Allah.

The fair- minded ones of the Children of Israel had told Korah that it was Allah Who had given him that wealth but this impolite and bold man answered them:

"…'I have been given this (wealth) only because of a knowledge that is in me'…",

while Allah, in the above verse, manifests his strength in the fact of His Will.

At the end of the verse, he is warned again by a very short sentence, where it says:

"…And (then even) the guilty shall not be asked about their sins."

In principle, there will not be any time for asking and answering. It is a decisive, painful, violent and sudden divine punishment.

That is, today the aware men of the Children of Israel advise Korah and give him respite to contemplate and give answer, but when the argument is completed and the Divine punishment comes, surely there will not be any respite for contemplation or uttering some vain and haughty words. As soon as the Divine punishment comes, they will be destroyed.

There will arise a question here inquiring that what is the objective of the question that the guilty are negated from? Is it in this world or in the next world?

Some of the commentators have chosen the first one while some others have taken the second, and there is no matter that both of them to be the objective of it; i.e. neither they will be asked in the world at the time of sudden punishment so that they bring some excuses and count them faultless, nor in the Hereafter, because in that place everything is manifest and as the Qur'an says:

"The guilty ones shall be recognized by their marks…"[4]

Thus the verse under discussion is consistent with the verse which says:

"And on that Day neither man nor jinn shall be asked about his sin."[5]

There comes forth another question here which is not consistent with the holy verse that says:

"So, by your Lord, We shall surely question them all (in the Hereafter),"[6]

This question can also be answered in two forms: the first is that there are different places of standing in the Hereafter. In some of them the guilty are questioned while in some others every thing is clear and there is no need of questioning.

Another thing is that question is of two kinds: the question of investigation, and the question of blame. In the Hereafter there is no need of 'the question of investigation', because all things are manifest, but the

reproach question is found there and this is a kind of punishment for the guilty.

It is just like the question that the father asks from his degenerate son and says:

"Did I not serve you so much? And was the recompense of those service treachery and corruption?"

(While both of them are aware of the affairs and the purpose of the father is to blame the son.)

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 79

فَخَرَجَ عَلَي قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَالَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَآ أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

79. "So he went forth unto his people in his adornment. Those who aspired for the life of this world said: 'We wish we had like what Korah has been given! Verily he owns a great fortune'."

When the power and wealth are in the hand of some negligent persons and they are the cause of boasting, gaudiness, and luxury; and showing the wealth and property to others boastingly, this manner is one of the qualities of Korah.

The boastful wealthy persons usually afflict with kinds of madness, one branch of which is 'the madness of exhibiting wealth'. They take pleasure to show their own wealth to others. They feel peace of mind when they ride a good precious mount and pass through the crowd of the poor while, by making dust unto their faces, they despise them.

This showing wealth is often a calamity for their lives, because it fosters grudge in people's hearts.

This evil action may have a motive such as: 'Allurement of covetous persons' and the like, but they do this deed even without this motive. This is a kind of desire, not a program and plan.

However, Korah was not an exception from this law, but he was considered as a clear example of it. The Qur'an has stated it through a sentence in this verse.

It says:

"So he went forth unto his people in his adornment…"

The application of the Arabic word /fi/ (in) in the phrase: 'in his adornment' expresses this fact that he used all his own ability and power in order to show his final adornment and his ultimate wealth, and with no words, it is clear that how large activities he can do by this wealth.

Of course, there are many stories or legends cited in history upon this field which are not necessary to be mentioned.

But, as usual, here people were divided into two groups: 1) The majority of people who were some mammonish persons and when they saw that gazing scene, their hearts shook, and gasped moaning, and they wished they could be in the place of Korah, even for one day, or one hour, or one moment.

They thought what a sweet and attractive life they could have, and how a happy and pleasant world it were for them!

The Qur'an says:

"…Those who aspired for the life of this world said: 'We wish we had like what Korah has been given! Verily he owns a great fortune'."

They said that praise be upon Korah and upon his abundant wealth! What a rank and grandeur! And what a glory it is that history does not contain anything similar to that! This is a God-given glory…and some statements like them.

In fact, here the furnace of the trial of Allah became hot. From one side, Korah is in the middle of the furnace and he has to be examined for his arrogance; and, on the other side, the mammonists of the Children of Israel are around this furnace.

The painful punishment, of course, is the punishment that exists after such an exhibition and from that height he falls down into the depth of the ground.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 80

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَلا يُلَقَّاهَآ إِلاَّ الصَّابِرُونَ

80. "And those who were given (true) knowledge said: 'Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for him who believes and acts righteously, and none shall attain it save the patient'."

The real knowledge draws man towards Hereafter, piety, and righteous deed. An aware learned man is he whom the dazzling glare of the world might not attract, and his manner can advise the mammonist ones and affect them.

However, besides this large group of mammonist, whom were referred to in the previous verse, there were also several learned, thoughtful, pious, and faithful people present there whose level of thought was above and superior than these affairs.

Those were some men who did not estimate the personality of their people with the criterion of gold and force. They were those who did not seek the values in the material potentialities, and always used to laugh at these kinds of exhibitions mockingly, and belittled these empty minds.

Yes, a group of such men attended there, as the Qur'an says:

"And those who were given (true) knowledge said: 'Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for him who believes and acts righteously…"

Then, they added:

"…and none shall attain it save the patient'."

Those who prove steadfastness against exiting dazzling glare of the ornaments of the world; those who stand firm like mountains in the Divine trials for wealth, property, fear, and calamity, yes these ones are eligible for the Divine rewards.

It is certain that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase:

"Those who were given (true) knowledge"

is the faithful learned men of the Children of Israel among whom there were some great men such as 'Yusha''.

It is interesting that against the Qur'anic sentence:

"Those who aspired for the life of this world",

mentioned in the previous verse, about the first group, the Qur'an does not apply the sentence:

"Those who aspired for the life of Hereafter",

but it emphasizes only on 'knowledge', because 'knowledge' is the main origin and root of faith, steadfastness, eager and love to the Divine reward, and the abode of Hereafter.

By the way, the application of the sentence:

"Those who were given (true) knowledge"

is a severe answer to Korah who considered himself a knowledgeable one. The Qur'an implies that these are true knowledgeable whose level of thought is very high, not the arrogant, obstinate and proud Korah. Thus, we see that the origin and root of all blessings and bounties returns to real knowledge.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 81

فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِن فِئَةٍ يَنصُرُونَهُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ

81. "And We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house, then for him there was no group to help him against (the wrath of) Allah, nor could he defend himself."

Man can spiritually move alongside two curves: toward upward that he reaches ascension and toward downward that he goes down deeply into the lowliness.

The final end of amassing wealth is often miser, pride and destruction.

By this action, Korah caused his disobedience to reach its climax, but regarding this matter there has been recorded in history and narrations another event that is the sign of Korah's ultimate impudence, it is as follows:

One day Moses (as) told Korah that Allah had commanded Moses to take the right of the needy (Zakat) of his property. Then Korah with a simple calculation understood how great amount of money he had to pay in this way. He refused it, and in order to exonerate himself, he struggled against Moses (as).

Once he stood among a rich group of the Children of Israel and said:

"O people! Moses has intended to devour your properties. He brought the command of prayer and you accepted it; you accepted all other things, too; do you also bear to give him your property?"

They said:

"No. But how can we stand against him?"

Here, Korah thought of a Satanic action. He said:

"I have thought a very good way for it. In my opinion, we must produce a file of the act of indecency for him. We must send for a bad woman among the prostitutes of the Children of Israel and tell her to go to Moses and accuse him that he had a liaison with her."

They approved it and sent for that kind of woman and told her whatever she demanded they would give her for the act that she might attest that Moses had a liaison with her. The woman accepted that suggestion.

This was from one side, on the other side Korah went to Moses and said it was better that he (as) would gather the Children of Israel and recite the commands of Allah for them. Moses accepted it and gathered them in one place.

People said to Moses to reiterate the ordinances of his Lord. Moses said that He had commanded him that they should not worship any one other than Him, they should regard for kinship, and do so and so; and in regard for an adulterer He has ordered that if it was an adultery (fornication with a married one) he had to be stoned.

At this time, those rich people of the Children of Israel who had conspired said:

"Even if that man is you yourself!"

He (as) answered:

"Yes, if it is I myself."

Here, they made their shamelessness that reached its climax and said:

"We know that you have committed this action yourself and you have associated with that woman who is a prostitute."

Then, they immediately sent after that particular bad woman and told her to say her attestation. Moses addressed her and said:

"I administer you an oath by Allah to say the reality clearly."

By hearing this statement, the bad woman shook severely, trembled and was touched at heart. She said:

"Now that you say so I tell the truth manifestly. These people invited me and promised to pay me a heavy reward that I accuse you; but I bear witness that you are pure and you are the messenger of Allah."

Another narration indicates that that woman said:

"Woe on me! I have committed many wrong actions, but I have not denigrated the messenger of Allah."

Then she showed the two purses of money that they had given her and said whatever was to say.

Moses (as) fell prostrated and wept, and it was then that the command of the punishment of Korah, the evildoer, was issued.

This very narration denotes that Allah gave the command of /xasf/ (swallow) at Moses disposal.[7]

In this regard, the Qur'an says:

"And We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house…"

Yes, when inordinacy contumacy and humiliation of the poor believers, as well as plotting against the pure messenger of Allah, reaches its peak, the Power of Allah works and puts an end to the life of the plotters. It destroys them so severely that their life becomes a gazing-stock for all.

The act of /xasf/, which here means: to sink, and being concealed into the earth, has happened many times during the history of man. It occurs when a horrible earthquake comes and the ground splits and swallows a city or some villages. But this one was different with other instances. Its main prey was only Korah, his house, and his treasures.

Strange! Pharaoh sinks in the waves of Nile; Korah sinks in the depth of the ground; water, which is the source of life, is commissioned to destroy the people of Pharaoh; and the ground, which is the place of comfort, becomes the graveyard of Korah and Korah-like people.

It is certain that Korah was not the only inhabitant of that house. It was he and his entourage; he and his confederates, he and his unjust cruel friends. All of those people sank into the depth of the ground.

The verse continues saying:

"…then for him there was no group to help him against (the wrath of) Allah, nor could he defend himself."

Neither those who received rations from him, nor his loyal friends, nor his wealth and properties, could save him from the Divine punishment, and all of them sank into the ground.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 82

وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيْكَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَوْلاَ أَن مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا وَيْكَأَنَّهُ لا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ

82. "And (by seeing Korah's annihilation) those who yearned for his position the day before were saying: 'Ah! That Allah enlarges the sustenance for whomever He pleases, of His servants, or restricts it. Had not Allah been gracious to us, He might have made the earth swallow us, too. Ah! (know) that the unbelievers do not prosper'."

Sometimes it happens that a supplication is not accepted or a desire is not obtained, and this very thing is the greatest grace and favour of Allah upon man.

This noble verse illustrates the surprising change of the spectators who yesterday were enraptured and rejoiced by seeing the glorious rank of Korah and desired that they were in his place forever, or at least, for a moment. This scene is, indeed, wonderful and instructive.

The verse says:

"And (by seeing Korah's annihilation) those who yearned for his position the day before were saying: 'Ah! That Allah enlarges the sustenance for whomever He pleases, of His servants, or restricts it…"

They said that it was proved for them that day that no one has anything from him and whatever exists is from the side of Allah. Neither His grant is the reason of His consent and pleasure from a person, nor his restriction is the reason for the absence of his value before the presence of Allah.

It is by means of these very properties that He puts individuals and nations under examination and makes their conducts and morals manifest.

Then, they thought that if Allah accepted their invocation and put them in the place of Korah yesterday, what could they do that day?

Therefore, they decided to thank for that bounty of Allah and said:

"…Had not Allah been gracious to us, He might have made the earth swallow us, too…"

"…Ah! (know) that the unbelievers do not prosper'."

www.alhassanain.org/english

Now we see the truth with our own eyes and understand the result of pride and negligence as well as the end of disbelief and lust. We also realize that how terrible these kinds of lives are which have a charming landscape!

By the way, it is understood from the recent sentence of this story that the end of proud Korah was that he died with infidelity and faithlessness, though one day he was in the row of the readers of Torah and was counted among the learned men of the Children of Israel, and he was one of the close relatives of Moses (as).

Some points

The story of Korah, the sample of a proud rich man, has been stated in the Qur'an through seven verses in a very interesting way, and it removes the curtain from the facts of many lives of human beings.

This story makes it clear that the pride and lust of wealth sometimes draws man towards kinds of madness; the madness of exhibiting the wealth and showing it to others, and the madness of taking delight from despising the poor.

And also the same pride and unlimited love to gold and silver sometimes causes man to commit the most hideous and shameful sins. For example, he stands against the pure prophet of Allah, and struggles against the Truth, and even he charges the most shameless accusations to the most sincere men, and he may even use of his wealth in taking from some bad women to reach his aim.

Pride originated from wealth usually does not let man to hearken the advice of some godly advisers and the benevolent statements.

They have provided this imaginary splendid life while in their city, and sometimes on their close neighbourhood, there are some deprived persons who usually sleep hungry at night; and it is surprising that their conscience has become so feeble that they do not feel the least inconvenience from this painful situation.

Sometimes their animals have the most comfortable life, and they enjoy even the existence of teacher, physician, and proper medicine while there are some oppressed people living in their neighbourhood who have the worst conditions of life; or they are sick, moaning in the bed because of pain while they have neither a physician nor any medicine.

When we discuss these affairs about some particular persons in a society, and sometimes about a particular country, it means that it is a country as that of Korah opposite to other countries, of the world, as we see, in our time, about America and many counties of Europe.

They have provided the most glorious life for themselves by exploitation of the people of the third world and those of poor countries, so that sometimes their extra food stuffs are wasted and if they were gathered in a correct way, they would be enough to satiate millions of hungry men. Sometimes they even pour their extra wheat into the sea.

When we say 'poor countries' it does not mean that they are really poor, but they are, in fact, some thief-stricken and robbed people. Sometimes the best and the most valuable mains are in their disposal, but these great plunders take all of those precious capitals and cause them to be poor.

These are some people with qualities of Korah who have built the foundation of their castles of cruelty upon the ruin houses of the oppressed; and the situation of the world will be in the same form unless the oppressed of the world unite and send them, like Korah, to the depth of the ground. Those oppressors drink wine and laugh joyfully while these oppressed ones must always be sad and do weep.

Of course, it must not be considered from what was said that Islam has a negative position in the face of wealth and opposes it. It must not be understood that Islam admires the poor and invites Muslims to poverty or takes it as a means for reaching the spiritual accomplishments.

On the contrary, Islam emphasizes on wealth as an effective means, and in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 180 wealth has been rendered into /xayr/ (goodness).

Imam Baqir (as) has said:

"The world is a good help for obtaining the Hereafter."[8]

The verses under discussion, which reproach the proud rich Korah the most severely, is an expressive evidence for this subject; but Islam approves a wealth by which the abode of Hereafter can be sought, as the learned men of the Children of Israel told Korah:

"And seek by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the Hereafter…"[9]**.**

Islam approves a wealth in which there is good unto all and it contains the meaning of:

"…be good (to others) just as Allah has been good to you…"[10]

Islam admires a wealth in which this meaning is seen that the Qur'an says:

"…and so not forget your portion in this world…"[11]

Finally, Islam seeks for a wealth which is not the cause of mischief on the earth, forgetting the human values, being involved in the race of amassing wealth and 'multiplication of properties and children,' and does not draw man toward 'self-admiration' and 'humiliating others', and even opposing the Divine prophets.

Wealth must be a means for the benefit of others, for filling the present economic gaps, for using as a remedy upon the worrying wounds of the deprived and applying for removing the needs and difficulties of the oppressed.

Being interested in such a wealth, with such aims, it is not an attachment to the world; it is an attachment to the Hereafter. As it is said in a tradition that one of the companions of Imam Sadiq (as) came to him and said as a grievance that they were after the world and were interested in it, (and they were afraid of becoming mammonists).

Imam Sadiq (as) (who knew the purity and virtue of that man) said:

"What do you want to do with this wealth of the world?"

The man answered:

"I want to supply the expenditure of myself and my household, help my relatives, spend in the way of Allah, and perform pilgrimage (Hajj) and lesser pilgrimage ('Umrah)."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"This is not to seek the world, this is to seek the Hereafter."

Here, the corruption of the belief of two groups is made manifest: a group of people who are apparently Muslims but they are unaware of the teachings of Islam and introduce Islam as the supporter of the tyrant oppressors; and a group of self-interested enemies who want to show the feature of Islam wrongly and try to introduce it as a religion opposite to wealth and adherent of poverty.

They want to say in principle, a poor nation cannot live freely and honourably; poverty is the means of dependence; poverty is the source of disgrace both in this world and the next; and poverty invites man to sin and pollution.

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The needlessness that hinders you from injustice (and violating others' right) is better than the poverty that makes you commit sin."[12]

The Islamic communities must try and do their best to become rich and needless from others (none Islamic nations), so much that they become independent and stand on their own feet. As the result of poverty, they must not devote their modesty, honour and independence for depending on others, and know that this is the noble line of Islam.

Notes

1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 82
2. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying 192
3. Ma'aniy-ul-'Akhbar, narrated by Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 139
4. Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 41
5. Ibid, verse 39
6. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 92
7. Durr-ul-Manthur, Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, P. 84
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 12, P. 17
9. The current Surah, verse 77
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 12, P. 17

Section 9: The Apostle (Muhammad)

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 83

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوّاً فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فَسَاداً وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

83. "That abode of the Hereafter, we assign it for those who do not intend to exalt themselves in the earth nor (to make) mischief and the good end is for the pious ones."

This verse works the resolution of the story of Korah, indicating that any amassing wealth and self-superiority is the cause of destruction in the world and wretchedness in the Hereafter. According to some Islamic narrations, Hadrat Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) recited this holy verse for the merchants in the market.[1]

A tradition indicates that if a person thinks of himself as superior to another person because of having a better shoelace, he is one of those who intend to exalt themselves in the earth.[2]

There are many people who, for providing a residence, vehicle, clothing, speech, marriage and nominating their child, do something that they may become recognized in the society and attract people to themselves. Such people, as the above tradition denotes, intend to exalt themselves in the earth and will be deprived from Heaven.

After mentioning the agitating story of that rich, proud, and criminal man, i.e., Korah, there is a statement in this verse which, in fact, is a general conclusion from this event.

It says:

"That abode of the Hereafter, we assign it for those who do not intend to exalt themselves in the earth nor (to make) mischief…"

Not only they are not self-superior and mischievous, but also they do not even intend to do it. Their heart is free from these affairs and their soul is far from these pollutions.

Whatever causes the deprivation of man from the merits of the abode of Hereafter is found, indeed, in these very two things. All sins are concentrated in self-superiority and mischief in the earth.

The reason is that whatever Allah has prohibited us from is surely against the system of the creation of man and the development of his entity. Therefore performing it disturbs the system of his life and, thus, it is the source of mischief in the earth.

Even the subject of self-superiority is itself one of the clear expanses of mischief in the earth, but its extraordinary importance has caused it to be mentioned particularly.

Islamic narrations have specially emphasized on this subject very much. A tradition from Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) denotes that he said:

"sometimes it happens that someone likes that his shoelace is better than that of his friend and for this very thing he will be counted in this verse, (because this mood is a small branch of self-superiority)."[3]

It is interesting that the author of Kashshaf commentary, after mentioning this tradition says:

"Some of the covetous ones say that according to the sentence:

'Verily Pharaoh exalted himself in the land (of Egypt)…'[4]

the word ‘to exalt’ mentioned in the abovementioned verse refers to Pharaoh, and according to the sentence:

“…and do not seek to make mischief in the land”[5]

‘mischief’ refers to Korah, and they say he who is not like Pharaoh and Korah, Paradise and the eternal abode belong to him, and thus they send only Pharaoh and Korah and those similar to these two out from Heaven and consider the rest belonging to them.

They have not taken the last sentence of this verse under consideration which says:

“…and the good end is for the pious ones”

such that Ali (as) has taken it in mind.’

The matter that we must add to this statement is that this group of people have been in err even for knowing Pharaoh and Korah, because Pharaoh both exalted in the earth and was a mischief-maker, when the verse says:

“…Verily he was of the mischief-makers”.[6]

And Korah also was both a mischief-maker and exalted according to the sentence which says:

“So he went forth unto his people in his adornment…”[7]

Another tradition about Imam Ali- (as) indicates that during his apparently caliphate, Ali (as) used to walk in the market, leading those who were lost, helping the weak and, when passing by the sellers and trades men, he recited this verse for them:

“That abode of the Hereafter, we assign it for those who do not intend to exalt themselves in the earth nor (to make) mischief and the good end is for the pious ones.”,

then he (as) usually said:

“This verse has revealed about the just and humble rulers and also other powerful ones among people.”[8]

This means that in the same manner that I have not use the government as a means for my self-superiority, you must not use your financial ability as means for your domination over others, either, because the good end belongs to that group who do not want to make mischief and do not seek self-superiority.

The Qur’an at the end of the verse says:

“…the good end is for the pious ones.”

The word ‘end’ in its vast concept is ‘the good end’, victory in this world, and Heaven and its bounties in the next world. We saw what an evil fate had the people like Korah and Pharaoh, though their might was unique. Since they were not pious they afflicted the most painful fate.

We conclude the speech about this verse by a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

It happened that when Imam Sadiq (as) recited this verse he began weeping and said:

“By Allah! With this verse, all of the hopes have entirely perished,”

and it is difficult to gain the good abode of Hereafter.[9]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 84

مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَمَن جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّـئَةِ فَلاَ يُجْزَي الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّـئاتِ إِلاَّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

84. "Whoever brings good, he shall have (reward) better than it, and whoever brings evil, then those who commit misdeeds shall not be requited except for what they used to do."

After mentioning this fact that the good abode of Hereafter and its bounties are specific to the humble, pious truth-seekers, in this verse the Qur'an refers to stating a general law which is a complex of 'justice' and 'favour' concerning both reward and retribution.

It says:

"Whoever brings good, he shall have (reward) better than it…"

This is the stage of favour or kindness. That is, Allah is not ill-liberate, as some people are, that they try to pay the wage or reward of someone so just and exact in order to observe justice.

Sometimes, He gives the reward of a deed tenfold and sometimes one hundred fold out of His unending grace, and at least He pays ten fold of it, as Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160 says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like…"

And only Allah knows its maximum, a part of which concerning the payment of the alms-tax in the way of Allah is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 61.

Of course, this is not an additional or undue reward. It depends on the level of purity of the deed, sincerity, good intention and serenity of the heart, and this is the stage of Divine favour for the righteous.

Then the Qur'an points to the punishment of the wrong doers.

It announces:

"…and whoever brings evil, then those who commit misdeeds shall not be requited except for what they used to do."

This is the stage of Divine Justice, because, according to the verses of the Qur'an, they will not be punished more than what they have done, even as an atom.

It is interesting that it implies that their own deeds are their retribution. That is, their deed, that according to the law of permanence of beings in the world of existence, the effect of which remains in this world, whether inside of the soul or outside of it, and on the Day of Hereafter, which is the day of manifestation of what is hidden, will be depicted in an appropriate form and will accompany the sinners and will torture them.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 85

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْءَانَ لَرَآدُّكَ إِلَي مَعَادٍ قُل رَبِّـي أَعْلَمُ مَن جَآءَ بِالْهُدَي وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُبِينٍ

85. "Verily He Who has (revealed and) ordained the Qur'an unto you will bring you back to the destination. Say: 'My Lord knows best him who has brought the guidance and him who is in manifest error."

The Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have narrated an occasion of revelation for this verse from Ibn-Abbas, the content of which is as follows:

When the Prophet (S) was coming as migration from Mecca to Medina, he reached Juhfah, a land not so distanced from Mecca. He thought of his home, Mecca, a city which is the secure sanctuary of Allah, and where Ka'bah was located, the thing that the heart and soul of the Prophet (S) had an unbroken link with it.

The signs of this yearning, which had been mixed with an impression and sadness, were seen in his blessed face. Here Gabriel, the harbinger of revelation, came down and asked him (S) whether he was fond of his city and home town. The Prophet answered him positively.

Gabriel said:

"Allah has sent this message for you: 'Verily He Who has (revealed and) ordained the Qur'an unto you will bring you back to the destination.'…"

And we know that this great promise was finally fulfilled and the Prophet of Islam (S), with a mighty army and with abundant glory, returned to Mecca victoriously, and the secure sanctuary of Allah was given to him without fighting and blood shedding.

Thus, the abovementioned verse is one of the miraculous predictions of the Qur'an which stated such a prophecy so decisively and without any condition and it happened after a short time.

This verse addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and, following the statement about some parts of the life story of Moses, the son of 'Imran (as), and his struggle against Pharaoh, gives a glad tidings with some serious instructions to the Prophet of Islam (S).

We said that the first verse out of these verses, as it is circulated, was revealed in Juhfah when the Prophet (S) was going to Medina. He was going to go to Yathrib and change its name to Madinat-ur-Rasul in order to form the main center of the Islamic government there and to cause the people's talents to open to blow.

He wanted to make it a platform for availability to the vast Divine government and his aims. Yet, his love and affection to Mecca vexed him hard and that periodic from that secure sanctuary of Allah was very inconvenient for him.

Here, the light of revelation enlightened his pure heart and gave him the good tidings of returning to his hometown, and announced:

"Verily He Who has (revealed and) ordained the Qur'an unto you will bring you back to the destination…"

Do not grieve! The same Lord Who returned Moses to his mother when he was a baby; the same Lord Who after ten years of absence returned him from Egypt to his main home-town in order to lighten the light of Monotheism and form the government of the oppressed after breaking the power of Pharaoh and his people, the same Lord will return you to Mecca with full might and strength and will lighten the light of Monotheism by your hand in this holy land.

These affairs are easy for the power of the Lord, the same Lord Who sent down the Qur'an unto your heart and made its conveyance obligatory and its

ordinances incumbent. Yes, He is the Lord of the Qur'an, the Mighty Lord of the earth and heavens.

Then the Qur'an adds that, against the stubbornness of the obstinate opponents, the Prophet (S) must treat as follows:

"…Say: 'My Lord knows best him who has brought the guidance and him who is in manifest error."

The way of guidance is clear, and their aberration is manifest. They make themselves tied in vain. Allah is well aware and the truth-seeking hearts also know this reality.

Of course, the manifest commentary of the verse was the same thing which was said in the above, but some of the commentators have delivered some other probable meanings upon the Qur'anic word /ma'ad/ and said that the purpose of /ma'ad/ is 'returning to life after death', or 'the land', or 'the rank of the Great Intercession', or 'Paradise', or Jerusalem which was the place of ascension of the first prophet, and the like.

But regarding to the whole content of Surah Qasas and what is said in the story life of Moses and the Children of Israel, as well as the occasion of revelation that was cited in the above, all of these meanings seem improbable except the commentary of /ma'ad/ i.e., the place of return, the land of Mecca.

In addition, Resurrection on the Day of Hereafter is not something that can be specific to the Prophet (S), while the verse speaks only about the Prophet (S), and this verse, being mentioned after the verse concerning the reward and retribution in the Hereafter, not only is not an evidence for this matter but also it may be a reason for its contrary, because the previous verse talks about the felicity in the next world and it is appropriate that the verse under discussion talks about the victory in this world.

By the way, the commentaries of Burhan, Safi, and 'Atyab-ul-Bayan narrated from Jabir, from Hadrat Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /la radduka 'ila ma'ad/ is the period of Raj'at (return to this world after death) when the Prophet (S), Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as), the Immaculate Imams (as), those who are absolutely believers, and those who are absolutely disbelievers will return to this world and the Imams will govern throughout the world and will take vengeance from the enemies.

The narrations of Raj'at are widely transmitted and Raj'at is of the self-evident knowledge of Shi'ah sect. There are also some verses in the Holy Qur'an that adapt to it.

For example:

"He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may prevail it over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it.", [10]

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They

will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."[11]

and some other verses. Up to now the religion of Islam has not prevailed over all religions and the promise of Allah has not been done yet, but it will not fail either, and this belongs only to the period of Raj'at.

The Late Sayyid Murtada 'Alam-al-Huda has narrated in his book: 'Muhkam Wa Mutashabih' from Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) that this verse relates to Raj'at in this world.[12]

At the presence of Imam Baqir (as) Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah-'Ansari was spoken about, when Imam Baqir said:

"May Divine Mercy be upon Jabir. He was one of our jurisprudents.

His knowledge had reached to a point that he knew the verse:

'Verily He Who has (revealed and) ordained the Qur'an unto you will bring you back to the destination…'

which relates to Raj'at."[13]

Once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the commentary of this verse. He said:

"By Allah, the world will not end until the holy Prophet (S) and Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) meet each other in Thuwiyyah. They will build a mosque there the doors of which will be numerous."[14]

Thuwiyyah is the name of a province in the suburb of Kufah.[15]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 86

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُوا أَن يُلْقَي إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً مِن رَبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيراً لِلْكَافِرِينَ

86. "And you did not hope that the Book should be cast unto you, except it be a mercy from your Lord, therefore be not a supporter of the disbelievers."

The Divine prophets, with that purity of soul and perfection in worship, did not expect to receive revelation. Revelation and sending Heavenly Books are among the affairs of sovereignty of Allah.

There are two similarities between Hadrat Musa (as) and Hadrat Muhammad (S) found in the verses of this holy Surah:

1. Hoping to obtain fire Hadrat Musa went toward it and he reached a Light. The Prophet of Islam went into Hirra cave intending to worship and he was acquainted with Heavenly revelation.

This verse points to one of the greatest bounties of Allah bestowed on the Prophet (S).

It says:

"And you did not hope that the Book should be cast unto you, except it be a mercy from your Lord…"

A great deal of people had heard the glad tidings of the advent of the new religion and, perhaps, a group of the People of the Book, and other than them, were waiting that the revelation might be sent down on them and Allah would give them this responsibility, but the Prophet (S) did not think of it and Allah knew him the most eligible for it.

Then the verse continues implicitly saying that now for giving thanks upon this great bounty he should follow this command:

"…therefore be not a supporter of the disbelievers."

Surely the Prophet (S) was never a supporter of the disbelievers, this commandment was an emphasis concerning him, and it was the statement of an important duty for others.

This meaning, in fact, agrees with the matter which was mentioned in former verses about Moses that he (as) said:

"…'My Lord! For the bounty you have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty'."[16]

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 87

وَلا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ وَادْعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ وَلا تُكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

87. "And let them not turn you away from the signs of Allah after they have been sent down unto you, and invite (mankind) unto your Lord, and be not of the polytheists."

Being attentive to Monotheism and negation of paganism and infidelity, it is so important that in these verses Allah has warned the Prophet (S) about them.

Most sentences concerning this matter in these recent verses are accompanied with the Arabic signs of emphasis, and with the exaggeration form:

(be not of …, let them not turn you away …).

The two ending verses of the Surah are an emphasis on the subject of Monotheism with some different expressions and reasoning. It is Monotheism which is the origin of all religious affairs, a Monotheism that is both source and branch, both whole and part.

In this holy verse there are four instructions given to the Prophet (S) and Allah is qualified by four attributes which complete the whole discussions of the verses of this Surah.

At first, it says about the pagans:

"And let them not turn you away from the signs of Allah after they have been sent down unto you…"

Although the prohibition is for pagans, its concept is that the Prophet (S) should not surrender for their hindrances and plots. It is just like that we say so and so must not temptate you, i.e., you should not surrender to his temptations.

Thus, the Prophet (S) is commanded that when the Divine verses are sent down, he should stand decisively on them without any hesitation and doubt. He (S) must remove the hindrances that are on his way, and go forward to the destination with firm steps, because Allah is with him and supports him.

According to the statement of Ibn-Abbas, the famous commentator, though the addressee is the Prophet (S), the purpose of the verse is all mankind.

Following this instruction, which had a negative aspect, this holy verse issues the second instruction, which has a positive aspect.

It says:

"…and invite (mankind) unto your Lord…"

He is the Lord Who is your owner, your trainee, and your fosterer.

After invitation to Allah, the third instruction is negation of any polytheism and idolatry. It says implicitly that he (S) should never become of the polytheists, because the way of Monotheism is brightly clear and those who pave it are on the straight way.

Surah Al-Qasas - Verse 88

وَلا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلهاً ءَاخَرَ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلاَّ وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

88. "And do not call upon another god with Allah, there is no god but He. Every thing is perishable but He. He is the Authority and unto Him shall you be returned."

The true monotheist is the one who is free from all objects of worship, great powers, deviated parties, and tyrants:

(… do not call upon another god with Allah).

This holy verse is a second emphasis on the negation of any polytheism, when it says:

"And do not call upon another god with Allah…"

These consecutive instructions, each of which emphasizes on one another, make clear the importance of the subject of Monotheism in Islamic programs without which every thing is lost.

Next to these four instructions, the Qur'an qualifies Allah by four attributes all of which are some repeated emphasis on the subject of Monotheism.

At first, it says:

"…there is no god but He…"

"…Every thing is perishable but He…"

The Judgment and Sovereignty in the world of creation and the world of religion both are specific to His Pure Essence.

The verse says:

"…He is the Authority…"

And the return of all of you is toward Him (s.w.t.):

"…and unto Him shall you be returned."

These recent three qualities can be a reasoning upon proving the Monotheism and abandoning any kind of idolatry which is inside of the first quality, because:

When we are all perishable and existence is allocated to Him;

When the administration of the system of existence belongs to Him;

And when the return of all of us in the Hereafter is toward Him, what kind of function can other objects of worship have? And except Him, what is appropriate to be worshipped?

The great commentators of the Holy Qur'an have delivered different matters upon the sentence:

"Everything is perishable but He"

which turn on the axis of commenting the Qur'anic term: /wajh/ and the Arabic word /halik/.

Philologically the Arabic word /wajh/ is applied for a part of the body which is located on the face of man, but when it is used concerning Allah, it means 'His Pure Essence.'

The Arabic term /halik/ is derived from /halak/ which means ‘death’ and ‘destruction’. Therefore the abovementioned sentence refers to the destruction of all beings except His Pure Essence.

They are perishable not only after the end of this world, but also they are perishable before Him just now, because all beings are dependant on His Pure Essence and in all moments they take their own possibility of being from Him and they have nothing from their own essence but that which is from Allah.

Moreover, all beings of this material world are variable and are in the expose of variations, even according to the belief of transubstantiation, the essence is the object of change, and we know motion and variation means perishing into a new thing permanently.

In any moment the beings of the world of matter die and are quickened. Therefore, just now they are perishable and destroyed. The only Essence that does not change, has not destruction, and is absolute independent is His Holy Essence.

We also know that at the end of this world destruction will have a more clear manifestation and, as the Qur’an says:

“Everyone on it must pass away,”

“And there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour.”[17]

Not only the beings on the earth, but also those who are in heavens will perish.

The Qur’an says:

“The Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on the earth will swoon…”[18]

This is a commentary consistent with the apparent of this noble verse and other verses of the Qur’an. But some other commentators have delivered some other commentaries on it, too, including as follows:

The objective of the Qur’anic word /wajh/ is ‘righteous deed’, and the concept of the verse is that all deeds will perish save the deed which has been done for the Pure Essence of Allah.

Some others have said that the objective of the Qur’anic word /wajh/ is that very relation of the things to Allah. Thus, the concept of the holy verse is that everything is naturally perishable except for its relation to Allah.

Some commentators have said that the Qur’anic word /wajh/ means ‘religion’ and the concept of the verse is that all religions are perishable and nullified, except the religion of Allah. They have taken the Qur’anic phrase /la hul hukm/ in the sense of religious sovereignty and considered it an emphasis upon this commentary.

They have also commented the Qur’anic sentence:

“Unto Him shall you be returned”

in the sense of returning to Allah in choosing religion and a second emphasis on this meaning.

These interpretations, in fact, do not contrast to what was said in the above, because when we accept that the only thing that will remain in this world is the Pure Essence of Allah, it will become clear that whatever is

somehow related to His Pure Essence, that thing will also take the colour of existence and eternity to it.

The religion which is from His side is eternal; the righteous deed that is done for Him is eternal; and the Divine leaders who relate to Him, from this point that they are related to Him, are eternal. In short, everything that is somehow related to the Pure Essence of Allah, from that point is not perishable and has not destruction.

At the end, some 'fanatic sects' of Sunnite people say that whoever calls upon other than Allah will become a polytheist, since Allah has said:

"…do not call upon another god with Allah…".

Therefore, those who call the saints of Allah in their supplications are polytheists.

But this verse explains that polytheist is the one who calls upon other than Allah as another god:

"…do not call upon another god with Allah…".

And it is evident that the Shi'ite people do not call any rank as Allah, but they call the one as a person who has honour with Him, the honour that has been given him from the side of Allah, such as prophets, the friends of Allah, not any illusive intercessor and honoured, since the idol-worshippers in their imagination also consider an honour for their idol.

In this holy verse, wiping polytheism has been stated with different phrases:

1- Do not call upon another god with Allah.

2- There is no god but He.

3- Everything is perishable but He.

4- He is the Authority.

5- Unto Him shall you be returned.

Every year, the king of Sa'udi Arabia invites the scholars of Islamic sects to entertain them on the Day of festival of sacrifice.

One year 'Allamah Sayyid Sharaf-ud-Din Jabal-'Amili (one of the outstanding scholars of Lebanon) was invited to that festival. As soon as 'Allamah entered the meeting, he gave a Qur'an with leather cover as a gift to the king. The king took it and kissed it.

'Allamah told him he was a polytheist. The king became inconvenient that why 'Allamah accused him like that. 'Allamah answered him that it was so because the king kissed a piece of leather which was an animal's skin and respecting the skin of an animal is polytheism.

The king said:

"I do not kiss any skin. My shoe is made of leather and the skin of animal, but I never kiss it. This piece of leather has been used as the cover of the Qur'an."

'Allamah said:

"We do not kiss any piece of iron, either. We kiss the iron which has been used as the box, or burial chamber, and the door and window of the grave of the Prophet (S) or that of our Immaculate Imams (as)."

Yes, polytheism is the case when we take someone or something as god instead of Allah, and consider an independent might for that. The Shi'ite do

not consider the might of the friends of Allah as an independent might, but they consider it a power dependent to the power of Allah.

Therefore, if the Shi‘ite make a dome, or build a shrine, it is for the sake that they inform people that there is a monotheist buried here, or the one who is buried here is a martyr in the way of Allah and has been devoted for Unity. Thus, a dome and an Islamic shrine usually means a center under which the call of Unity is heard, not a center opposite to mosque.

Imam Rida (as) said:

“The prophet of Allah and His Authorities on the earth are /wajhullah/ by whom Allah, religion, and His cognition are paid attention to.”[19]

We recite in Nudbah Supplication about the Expected Imam (May Allah hasten his glad advent):

“Where is the Authority of Allah that will come?”

And also we read in it:

“Where is the Authority of Allah who pays attention to the saints?”

O Lord! Do taste us the sweetness of recitation of the Qur’an, contemplation in it and being advised by it!

O Lord! Enlighten our hearts with the Light of the Qur’an, and set our entity a light giver!

O Lord! Cause our manner and speech to be emerged from Qur’an and from the manner and life of Prophet Muhammad (S) and his Immaculate progeny (Ahl-ul-Bayt) (as)

Amen, O the Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse.
2. Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, the Commentary, following the verse
3. Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, the Commentary, following the verse
4. The current Surah, verse 4
5. Ibid, verse 77
6. The current Surah, verse 4
7. The current Surah, verse 79
8. Zazan has narrated this tradition from Amir-ul-Mu’minin Ali (as), taken from Majma‘-ul-Bayan
9. The commentary of Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim, following the verse.
10. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 33
11. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 55
12. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 93, P. 87
13. Burhan commentary, Vol. 3, P. 240, and Al-’Iqaz, P. 386
14. Bihar, Vol. 53, P. 113
15. Mustadrak Safinah, Vol. 1, P. 429
16. The current Surah, verse 17
17. Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verse 26 and 27
18. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 68
19. Tauhid-i-Saduq, P. 117

Surah Al-‘Ankabut, Chapter 29

(The Spider)

No. 29 (Revealed at Mecca)

69 Verses in 7 Sections

The Feature of Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah was revealed in Mecca and contains sixty nine verses. The names of some of Suras such as Al-Baqarah Al-Fil, An-Naml, and An-Nahl, have been taken from the names of the animals which are mentioned somehow in these verses.

In verse No. 41 of this Surah, the construction of Polytheism is counted the frailest building like the house of spider and, thus, this Surah has been nominated as Surah ‘Ankabut.

This Surah speaks about a few subjects, such as: Faith, the man’s duty, the Divine trial, the history of some prophets, prohibition of unfair disputes, and relying on other than Allah.

The Virtue of Surah ‘Ankabut

Majma‘-ul-Bayan narrates a noble tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

“Whoever recites Surah ‘Ankabut will have ten good rewards as the number of all believers and hypocrites.”

Section 1: Every Soul Shall Be Tried

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَن يُتْرَكُوا أَن يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لاَ يُفْتَنُونَ

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. “Alif ‘A’, Lam ‘L’, Mim ‘M’.”

2. “Do people imagine that they will be left off on saying: ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?”

3. “And certainly We tried those before them, and assuredly Allah knows those who speak truly, and assuredly He knows the liars.”

The Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators have mentioned a narration according to which the beginning eleven verses of this Surah were revealed in Medina.

These verses are about the Muslims who were in Mecca but, though they expressed Islam they did not agree to migrate to Medina, then they received a letter from their brothers lived in Medina who wrote in it:

“Allah does not accept your confession to Faith unless you migrate and come unto us.”

Therefore, they decided to migrate and went out from Mecca. A group of pagans pursued them and fought against them. Some of those believers were killed but some others delivered. (Probably some others surrendered and returned to Mecca).

Some other commentators believe that the second verse is about ‘Ammar Yasir and a group of other first Muslims who embraced Islam and were seriously tortured by the enemies of Islam.

Some other commentators have said that the eighth verse of the Surah has been revealed upon the belief of Sa‘d-ibn-’Abi-Waqqas.

But the study of these verses themselves shows that there is no indication in them upon the relation of these verses with emigration. They only point to the pressures that the believers received from the side of the enemies at that time, and even from the side of their parents who were polytheists.

And, also if these verses refer to the hypocrites, it is probable that they point to a group of persons with superficial belief who were among Muslims in Mecca. They were sometimes with Muslims and sometimes with the disbelievers, and whenever each of them were in a better position they turned to them.

However, the flowing and union of the verses of this holy Surah necessitates to consider all of them Meccan; and the abovementioned narrations, which have not any flowing with each other, cannot disturb this union.

Again, at the beginning of this holy Surah, we confront the abbreviated letters (Alif, Lam, Mim) that we have stated their commentaries from

different viewpoints. In this regard, for example, you can refer to the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, and Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7.

After mentioning the abbreviated letters, one of the most important issues of the man’s life is referred to, i.e. the calamities, pressures and Divine trials.

At first, it says:

“Do people imagine that they will be left off on saying: ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?”

Then immediately the verse points to this fact that trial is a permanent way of treatment of Allah. Trial is not allocated to the community of Muslims; it is something that all former nations had, too.

The verse says:

“And certainly We tried those before them…”

Allah had tried them in violent furnaces of trials, too, and they were also under the pressure of the cruel, ignorant, unaware, and obstinate enemies. The field of examination has always been open and some groups have ever participated in this field.

The Arabic word /fitnah/ means ‘to melt gold in order to separate its impure parts’; and since the real essence of man is recognized in difficulties and calamities from the false mottoes, it is called ‘fitnah’.

It must be so, too, because in the case of claiming Faith everyone can introduce himself the best believer, the best striver, and the best advocator devotee of a group of people. The weight, value and worth of this claim must be estimated by means of examination.

Yes, it is true that:

“…and assuredly Allah knows those who speak truly, and assuredly He knows the liars.”

It is evident that Allah, the Almighty, knows everything, even the things before the creation of mankind. The purpose of knowledge here is the objective manifestation of the affairs and their external existence.

In other words, it is the practical effects and evidences of the deeds. That is, whoever has it in his interior must pour it out externally. This is the meaning of ‘knowledge’ with respect to these aspects when they are used about Allah.

The reason of this issue is also clear, because reward and retribution have no meaning unless the inner intentions and esoteric qualities are practically seen in man’s action.

Trial is for proving the intrinsic intentions and qualities of a person to be true.

In other words, this world is like a ‘university’ or a ‘farm’. In a university the talents open to blow, the competencies grow, and whatever is in the stage of potentiality reaches the stage of actuality.

In this farm the seeds must be planted. The shots and sprouts must come out of their inside. These sprouts come out from the land, grow to be some small plants, and finally become some tall fruitful trees. These things are not possible without experience and examination.

www.alhassanain.org/english

By this course we understand that the Divine trials are not only for knowing persons, but they are for fostering the talents and that they are to open to blow.

Therefore, when we examine something, it is for finding out an unknown thing in it, but when Allah examines, it is not for finding out an unknown thing, because His knowledge encompasses everything, but it is for fostering the talents and causing the potentialities to reach to actualities.

The statement of the generality of trial for all nations and communities had a very considerable effect on the Muslims of Mecca, who were in a severe minority at that time, and attending to this fact made them steadfast and patient in front of the enemies of Islam.

Yet, this was not allocated to the believers of Mecca, but every group and nation is somehow involved in this Allah's way of treatment, and the trials of Allah come to meet them in different sorts.

Some people may be in some environments which are polluted from any point of view, and the temptations of making mischief surround them from all sides. Their great trial is that, in such an atmosphere and in such conditions, they do not tend to the pollutions of the environment and protect their own nobility and purity.

A group may involve in the pressure of deprivations, while they see that if they agree to exchange the capitals of their noble selves, their poverty and deprivation will quickly disappear, but this is for the price of losing their Faith, piety, freedom, nobility, and honour; and this very thing is their trial.

On the contrary, another group may be enjoyed of affluence and different kinds of bounties when material possibilities can be at their reach. Do they try to fulfil the duty of thanksgiving in this circumstance? Or will they be drowned in negligence, haughtiness, self-conceit, egotism, lusts, etc. with alienation unto the society and their own selves both?

Another group encounter some countries that have enjoyed a glaring material civilization and a considerable social welfare while they have no virtue and mortality and are far from Allah.

Here a strong and mysterious attraction drags them toward this kind of life for them and their own society which provides it with them for the price of neglecting all the principles which they believe in, and for the price of accepting the disgrace of dependence. This is also a kind of trial.

Afflictions, pains and toils, wars and conflicts, dearth and scarcity, tyrannical governments which invite people to their own slavery and captivity and call them to submit their own tyrannical programs, and, finally, the strong waves of sensual desire and lust, all of them are a few means of trial in the way of the servants of Allah.

It is in the same events that Faith, personality, piety, purity, trust, and nobility of persons are recognized.

But for gaining victory in these hard trials, there is no way but having continuous effort and endeavour and relying on the particular grace of Allah.

It is interesting that some commentators have narrated a tradition in 'Usul-i-Kafi from Immaculate Imam who upon the commentary of the above verse said:

"They will be tried the like that gold is tried (in furnace)."

Then he said:

"They will be purified the like that gold is purified (under the pressure of fire)."[1]

However, those who think that by mere claim of expression of faith they will be in the row of believers and will be admitted in Paradise with the prophets, truthful ones, and martyrs are seriously in err.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"By Allah, Who sent the Prophet with Faith and truth, you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low…"[2]

He (as) said this statement just after that people had paid allegiance to him and were waiting to see how Ali (as) treated with division of the Treasury of the Muslims and ranks and positions. They wanted to see whether it was treated with the former criterions or upon the bitter criterion of Islamic Justice.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 4-5

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّـئَاتِ أَن يَسْبِقُونَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

مَن كَانَ يَرْجُواْ لِقَآءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لآَتٍ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

4. "Or do those who practise evil imagine that they will outstrip Us? Evil is it that they judge!"

5. "Whoever hopes to meet Allah, (knows that) the term (appointed) by Allah is surely coming; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

"The purpose of /liqa'allah/ is the Hereafter Day".[3]

We must cure our delusions with the remembrance of death and Resurrection. Both the believers, who are in the course of examination, and the disbelievers must know that opportunities are not durable, and mercy and punishment of Allah will encompass them.

The former verses spoke of the general examination of the believers, and here the first verse under discussion is a severe threat against the disbelievers and sinful ones, so that they should not think that if they put the believers under pressure and the Divine punishments does not promptly seize them, it is because Allah is neglectful of them or He has not the power of punishing them.

It says:

"Or do those who practise evil imagine that they will outstrip Us? Evil is it that they judge!"

Allah's respite must not cause them to be proud, because this is also an examination for them as well as a chance for repentance and their return.

Some commentators have taken this verse as referring to the sinful believers, but this belief is never consistent with the context of the verses, and the frame of references testify that the purpose is polytheists and pagans.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"Whoever hopes to meet Allah, (knows that) the term (appointed) by Allah is surely coming…"

Yes, this promise of Allah is certain and it is a way which must finally be paved.

Moreover, Allah hears all the words and is aware of all deeds and intentions, as the verse continues:

"…and He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

According to the above traditions from Ali (as), the purpose of /liqa'allah/ (to meet Allah) is the Hereafter Day. It is for being quickened and reaching the recompense from the side of Allah by reckoning the deeds on the Day of Hereafter.

It should be said that the meeting Allah on the Hereafter Day is not a sensible meeting, but it is a spiritual meeting and a kind of inner intuition, because in that place the thick curtains of the world of matter will be removed from before the eye of man's soul and man will get into an intuition.

As 'Allamah Tabataba'i has cited in Al-Mizan, the objective of /liqa'allah/ is that the servants of Allah will be set in a state that there will be no curtain between them and their Lord, because the nature of the Hereafter Day is the manifestation of the facts as the Qur'an says:

"…and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest truth'."[4]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 6

وَمَن جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

6. "And whoever strives hard, he strives only for his own self, verily Allah is self sufficient, above (need of) the Worlds".

The purpose of 'strive' in this verse is not only to struggle with sword against the enemies, but the purpose is effort and endeavour. This effort is in the way of self-improvement and striving against one's self both, or struggling against the temptations of Satan or against the foreign enemies.

This verse implies that whoever strives with effort and endeavour and tolerates the afflictions and difficulties, indeed, he has strived for himself, because Allah is self-sufficient above all the beings of the worlds.

The verse says:

"And whoever strives hard, he strives only for his own self, verily Allah is self sufficient, above (need of) the Worlds".

The Divine trial is the man's struggle against low desire, and strive against severe enemies for protecting his faith, purity and piety, else Allah is an unlimited Essence, and He has no need which can be removed by worship or obedience of the servants. He has no deficiency that others give it to Him, but whatever others possess is from Him and they have nothing from themselves.

This statement makes it clear that the Qur'anic word /jihad/ (strive) here does not necessarily mean struggle with weapon against the enemy, but it has its own main lexicographical meaning which envelops any kind of effort and endeavour for protecting Faith and piety and suffering all sorts of calamities and local struggles against the obstinate enemy.

Shortly speaking, all the benefits of this struggle return back to the self of the striver, and it is he who obtains the goodness of this world and the next world under the light of his struggle; and even if the society enjoys the blessings of the struggle it will be in the second stage. Therefore, if anyone succeeds to have this struggle, he must thank Allah for this great bounty.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 7

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

7. "And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, We shall certainly acquit them of their evil deeds, and shall recompense them the best of what they were doing."

Among the best examples of struggle that we studied in the previous holy verse are faith and righteous deed which are mentioned in this verse.

For receiving the Divine rewards, a person needs faith and righteous deeds both.

The Divine reward is not only forgiving the past sins, but it contains the best reward, too. However, this holy verse is an explanation and a complementary meaning for what was said closely in the previous verse under the title of 'strive'.

Here, the reality of struggle is explicitly explained, where it says:

"And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, We shall certainly acquit them of their evil deeds…"

Thus, the first benefit of this great struggle (both Faith and righteous deed) is the concealment of sins which man gains, in the same manners that reward reaches him, too; as it is mentioned at the end of this verse:

"…and shall recompense them the best of what they were doing."

The Arabic word /nukaffirann/ is derived from /takfir/ which originally means: 'To conceal', and the objective of it here is 'the Divine forgiveness'.

Though Allah compensates all of good deeds whether they are 'good' or 'better' and 'best', the application of the phrase: 'The best of what they were doing' in this verse may point to this fact that Allah reckons all their good deeds as their best deeds.

That is, if some of their deeds are excellent, some are good and some are medium, Allah counts all of them as excellent, and this is the meaning of 'Allah's grace' which is also mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an, such as Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 38, which says:

"That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace…"

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 8

وَوَصَّيْنَا الإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْناً وَإِن جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلاَ تُطِعْهُمَآ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّـئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

8. "And We have enjoined on man goodness unto his parents; and if they strive with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, unto Me is your return, and I will inform you of what you were doing."

The Occasion of Revelation

There are cited different narrations upon the occasion of revelation of the above verse that the extract of all of them is the same, and its explanation is as follows:

Some persons, who were in Mecca, embraced Islam and when their mothers were informed of the subject they decided not to eat food and not to drink water until their sons would apostatize from Islam, though none of these mothers kept her promise and all of them ate food.

Then the abovementioned verse was revealed and showed a clear way to all for the conduct with their parents concerning belief and disbelief.

To do goodness to parents is a humane matter, not a mere creedal subject, and it has no condition either, irrespective of being racial, age, regional, scientific, social, political, economical, and creedal.

Children must do them favour even when they are pagan or polytheist. However, one of the most important trials is the subject of contradiction in the line of faith and piety with the sympathetic and relational links. The Qur'an has clearly stated the duty of the Muslims in this regard.

At first, as a general law, which originates from the roots of affections and gratitude, it says:

"And We have enjoined on man goodness unto his parents…"

This subject is a divine religious ordinance, but before it is a religious binding, it has been settled in the nature of all humankind as a law.

The application of the word 'man', in particular, here attracts the attention, because this law is not only for the believers, but everyone who is eligible to be called under the title of 'human' must be gratitude before his parents, and he does not forget honour, kindness and benevolence to them throughout his lifetime, though he can never pay his debt to them by these acts.

Then, in order that no one imagine that the emotional link with parents can overcome the link of man with Allah and Faith, it makes clear the matter with an explicit exception in this regard.

It says:

"…and if they strive with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them…"

The application of the Qur'anic term /jahadaka/, in the verse, means that they use their most effort and endeavour with persistence.

And, the applications of the phrase 'of which you have no knowledge' refers to the fact that polytheism is not a logical thing, since if polytheism were really correct, there would exist an evidence for it. In other words, where man has not knowledge to a thing he must not follow it, let alone that he has knowledge to its falseness.

Following such a thing is following one's ignorance. If parents make you follow ignorance, you should not obey them. In principle, blindly imitation is wrong, even when it is about Faith, let alone polytheism and paganism.

This very disobedience in regard to parents is also mentioned in Surah Luqman, with this addition that while you must not accept their invitation to polytheism you ought to help them in worldly affairs and have kindness in social intercourse with them, lest no one imagine that opposition with

parents concerning their invitation to polytheism is an evidence unto having ill-treatment toward them; where it says:

"…yet bear them company in this life with justice…"[5]**.**

And this proves the utmost emphasis of Islam on respecting the parents.

Thus, a general principle is understood here that nothing can prevail the relation of man with Allah, because this relation is before all things, even the relation of the parents which is the closest emotional relations.

The famous tradition narrated from Ali (as) who said:

"There should be no obedience for anyone in disobeying Allah"[6]

gives a clear criterion.

And, at the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an adds that Allah will give you entirely the reward and retribution of what you used to do:

"…unto Me is your return, and I will inform you of what you were doing.""

This sentence, in fact, is a threat against those who pave the way of polytheism as well as those who invite others to this way, because the verse clearly indicates that Allah keeps the account of all their deeds and deliver them to them at the appropriate time.

It is not the first time that the Holy Qur'an points to this important issue of man. Formerly it was referred to in Surah Al-'Asra', No. 17, verse 23, and later this important matter will be pointed out in Surah Luqman, No. 31, verses 14 and 15 and also in Surah Al-Ahqaf, No. 46, verse 15.

In fact, Islam considers the highest respect for these two, father and matter, in a manner that even when they are polytheists and they invite to polytheism, which is the most shunned acts in the view of Islam, yet it enjoins the protection of their respect, with disobedience in regard to their invitation to polytheism.

This is, in fact, one of the great Divine trials which has been referred to at the beginning of this Surah; for parents are sometimes so old that keeping and hearing them are difficult. It is at this time, indeed, that the children must take their own examination in the field of gratitude and obeying the command of Allah, and keep protection from their parents in the best form.

A tradition from the Prophet (S) indicates that once someone came to him and said:

"Whom should I do goodness to?"

He (S) answered:

"To your mother."

Again the man asked:

"Next to her?"

He (S) said:

"To your mother."

For the third time he asked:

"Next to her?"

Again he (S) said:

"To your mother."

And in the fourth time, he (S) recommended him to do goodness to his father and then to other relatives according to their nearness to the man.[7]

In another tradition, which has been mentioned in many Islamic books, the Prophet (S) said:

"Paradise is under the feet of the mothers."

And it is only by the way of humility and veneration in front of them that a person can enter Paradise.

Some Other Traditions

1- The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever obeys the command of Allah concerning parents, two doors of Paradise will be opened to him, and if he fulfils the command of Allah unto one of them, then one door will be opened."[8]

2- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The servant who is obedient to his parents and to his Lord: (on the Hereafter Day) he will be in the highest rank (in Paradise)."[9]

3- The Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"He who performs pilgrimage rite for his parents, or pays their debt, on Resurrection Day Allah will rouse him with the righteous."[10]

4- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"He who likes to have a long lifetime and his sustenance increases, he should do good to his parents and visit his kim."[11]

5- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best deeds are prayer at its (proper) time, doing kindness to the parents, and struggle on the way of Allah."[12]

6- The Messenger of Allah said:

"Do good to your parents so that your children do good to you; renounce the women of people so that your women be chaste (and others renounce your women)."[13]

7- The Prophet of Allah said:

"The affectionate look of the progeny to his parents is worship."[14]

8- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"What hinders a person among you that he does good to his parents when they are alive or dead by praying for them, giving alms for them, doing pilgrimage rites for them, and observing the fast for them, because if he does such, the parents will be rewarded, and he, too, will be rewarded the same amount.

Moreover, Allah (Almighty, and Glorious) gives him much goodness for his goodness and his prayer (Salat)."[15]

9- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever visits the graves of his parents or one of them once every Friday Allah forgives him and writes him among the righteous."[16]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ

9. "And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, certainly We shall admit them among the righteous."

The fact that formerly was stated about those who have Faith and righteous deed is repeated and emphasized again in this verse.

It says:

"And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, certainly We shall admit them among the righteous."

Upon the purpose of the repetition of this meaning, some commentators have said: former verses pointed to those who pave the path of the truth, and this verse points to those who are the guides of this path and are as signs to the way of Monotheism, since the application of /salihin/ (righteous) is mentioned about many of the prophets, those who asked Allah to join them to the righteous ones.

This is also probable that in former verses the words were about the forgiveness of sins and good reward for this group of believers, but here their high rank is referred to, which itself is another reward for them. They will be set in the row of both the righteous, and the Divine prophets, and truthful ones, and the martyrs, and they will keep company with them.

By the way, some commentators, such as the author of Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan, say that the purpose of 'believers' mentioned in this verse, regarding the previous verse, means the children who, under the command of parents, are invited to polytheism that if they persist and, for protection of their Faith, become vagrant from their house and region, though being far from parents is difficult for them, on the Hereafter Day Allah will admit them among the righteous.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 10

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَآ أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِن
جَآءَ نَصْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ

10. "And among the people there are those who say: 'We believe in Allah,' and when they are hurt in Allah's cause, they think the persecution of men as it were Allah's chastisement, and if help comes from your Lord, they would certainly say: 'Verily we were with you'. What! Is not Allah the Best-Knower of what is in the breasts of mankind?"

The expression of Faith by some people is only oral and it is not said by heart. The true faith will often be made manifest at the time of afflictions.

Imam Ali (as) said:

"The reality (and essence) of man will be known in the change of circumstances."[17]

In view of the fact that there were mentioned some explicit statements about the 'righteous believers' and 'polytheists' in the former verses, in this verse the words are about the third group, viz.: 'hypocrites'.

It says:

"And among the people there are those who say: 'We believe in Allah,' and when they are hurt in Allah's cause, they think the persecution of men as it were Allah's chastisement, and if help comes from your Lord, they would certainly say: 'Verily we were with you'. What! Is not Allah the Best-Knower of what is in the breasts of mankind?"

The Arabic word /'amanna/ (we believe), is used in the verse in plural form, while the next phrase is in singular and it may be for the reason that this group of hypocrites want to be counted among the group of believers

then they say /'amanna/ (we believe) and they mean that they have believed like other people.

The application of 'they are hurt in Allah's cause' is in the sense of 'they are hurt in the way of Allah', that is, they sometimes are hurt in the way of Allah and Faith by their enemy.

It is interesting that when speaking about the punishment of Allah, the Qur'anic word /'aŏab/ is used, but when it speaks about people's hurts it uses /fitnah/ (trial) indicating that people's hurts are not in fact 'punishment' but they are trials in order to complete man.

In this way it teaches them that they might not compare these two with each other, and by the pretext that the opponents hurt and torture them they leave out their Faith, because this is a part of total program of trial in this world.

There arises a question here that which victory had Allah bestowed on the Muslims in Mecca that hypocrites demanded share in it?

The answer of it is that the above sentence is a conditional sentence, and we know that a conditional sentence is not an evidence for the existence of condition, but its concept is that if there will be some victories for the Muslims in future, these feeble-faith hypocrites will demand share in them.

Moreover, the Muslims gained some victories against enemies in Mecca, although they were not martial and they were some victories in the fields of propagation, penetration in public thoughts, and the development of Islam amongst the different levels of people.

Besides, the application of the word 'hurt' fits with the environment of Mecca, else in the environment of Medina such a thing rarely happened.

However, this point was also made clear that the term 'hypocrites' is not only used for those who have never Faith inwardly and do not express Faith, but those feeble-Faith persons who, under the pressure of this and that individuals soon change their belief are counted among hypocrites, and the holy verse under discussion apparently speaks of this kind of hypocrites and announces that Allah (s.w.t.) is aware of their intentions.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 11

وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ

11. "And certainly Allah knows those who believe, and certainly He knows the hypocrites."

Belief in the knowledge of Allah is the factor of abandoning hypocrisy.

It is only Allah Who knows the true and false believers, and therefore in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And certainly Allah knows those who believe, and certainly He knows the hypocrites."

If some simple-minded people think that they can be far from the dominance of the knowledge of Allah by concealing the facts, they are in a manifest err.

Again we repeat that the application of the word hypocrites here is not the evidence upon thinking that these verses were revealed in Medina.

It is true that the subject of hypocrisy usually appears after the victory of a group and forming government when the opponents change their features

and form hidden organizations, but, as it was said before, hypocrisy has a vast scope of meaning and it envelops the persons of weak belief who change their faith by a little pressure.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 12

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَمَا هُم بِحَـٰمِلِينَ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُم مِن شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

12. "And those who disbelieve say unto those who believe: 'Follow our path and we will certainly bear (the burden of) your sins.' And they shall not be bearers of any thing of their sins. Verily they are liars."

In order to invite and encourage others to do mischief and wrong, the deviated persons often say: if it has any sin we carry the burden of that sin, while no one can undertake the sin of another one.

This verse points to one example of the weak and haughty logics of the polytheists which exists among a vast group, too, even just now.

It says:

"And those who disbelieve say unto those who believe: 'Follow our path and we will certainly bear (the burden of) your sins.'…"

Today, we see many seductive persons that at the time of invitation to a wrong action say if it has any sin they bear its sin, but we know that none can bear the burden of any one's sin.

In principle, this thing is not rational, because Allah is just and He does not punish anyone for the crime of another one. Besides, with these baseless words, the responsibility of a person for his deeds does not go away, and against that which some short-minded persons imagine these meanings do not decrease aught from the man's punishment.

That is why no court heeds this kind of words that so and so has undertaken its sin. It is right that this person who has encouraged the other has a share in his sin, but this participation does not decrease his responsibility at all.

Therefore, in the next sentence of the verse, the Qur'an explicitly says:

"…And they shall not be bearers of any thing of their sins. Verily they are liars."

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 13

وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالاً مَعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

13. "And certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and (other) burdens with their own burdens, and certainly they shall be questioned on the Day of Resurrection as to what they were forging."

The deviators carry the burden of those who have been deviated, too.

In order that there would not come an imagination that these inviters to paganism, polytheism, idolatry, and injustice will not have any chastisement for their action, this noble verse says:

"And certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and (other) burdens with their own burdens…"

This burden is the burden of the sin of misguidance, seduction, and encouraging others to sin.

This is the burden of establishing a bad tradition about which the Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever establishes a bad tradition, the sin of that tradition and the sin of those who commit it are upon him without that anything can be decreased from the sin of the person who performs it."[18]

The important thing is that they also share the sin of all those who commit it while these sinners have their own sin without decreasing anything of it, and we know that whoever is effective in the preparation of an action, he has a share of that action, though the preparation is simple.

The evidence for this statement is the tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S). Once the Prophet (S) was accompanied with some of his companions when a beggar came and asked for help, but no one gave him anything. Then a man took the lead and helped him something. Others were encouraged thereby and helped him, too.

Here the holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever establishes a good tradition and others follow him there will be for him his own reward and from the reward of those who follow him without that their rewards be decreased anything, and whoever establishes an evil tradition and others follow him, there will be for him his own sin and from the sins of those who follow him without that their sins be decreased anything."

Similar to this meaning, with some different statements, there has been mentioned in the tradition sources of both great sects of Islam: Sunnites and Shi'ites; and this is a known tradition.

However, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and certainly they shall be questioned on the Day of Resurrection as to what they were forging."

But, there arises another question here that what is the purpose of this calumny, mentioned in the verse that they have to answer its question?

Answer: It may refer to the falsehoods they forged to Allah and said that Allah (s.w.t.) had said that they should worship those idols.

Or it may refer to their words that they implicitly said every person could bear the responsibility of another's sin. But this statement is also a lie and a calumny, because everybody is responsible of his own deeds.

Finally, the Arabic word /iql/ is often used for the house furniture, and its plural form is /'aqal/.

It has also been used in the famous tradition of the Prophet (S) who said:

"Verily I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things: the Book of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an) and my progeny, my Ahl-ul-Bayt. Never, never will these two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Haud of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance)…"

Besides the Shi'ah, this tradition is accepted by the consensus of the Sunnite and it has been mentioned in all their history, tradition and commentary authentic books narrated from the Prophet (S) with different statements.

Its secret is that after the event of Qadir-i-Khum and appointing Amir-ul-Mu'minin 'Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as) to the rank of caliphate and government after his death, the Prophet (S) recommended about Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as)

and his progeny in different occasions and many times he (S) uttered of these kinds of words.

Hakim-i-Neyshabury has narrated the abovementioned tradition in the book: Mustadrak, part 3, Page 48. In another tradition its similar Meaning is cited by Tarmathi. He narrated from Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, P. 44, from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"I leave behind me among you what that if you attach yourselves to it, never, never shall you get astray, the Book of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an) which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahl-ul-Bayt, for verily Allah, the Merciful, the Aware, informed me that never, never will these two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)."

This tradition very well shows the awareness of the Prophet (S) from the future of his Ummah. It seems that the Prophet (S) could see the deviations of the people after his own death that would take place by the authority of a group of ambitious persons, and in order to attract the attention of people more, he said of this kind of statements abundantly.

It was specially only a few months after the historical event of Qadir-i-Khum that at the time of his death with the purpose of confirming the caliphate of Ali (as) the Prophet (S) wanted to write it down on the paper but, according to Shaykh Mufid, the sentence which was uttered by one of the companions and created discord, the Prophet (S) avoided writing anything to hinder the discord, but he recommended it orally.

In this regard you can refer to the history texts of Shi'ah and the authentic books of tradition and commentary of the Sunnite, including the book entitled: As-Sawa'iq by Ibn Hajar 'Aqlani, P. 135 - (Kanz-ul-'Ummal) Hindi, Vol. 1, chapter 'Al-'I'tisam Bil-Kitab Wal-Sunnah - The book: Al-Mustadrak by Hakim-i-Neyshaburi, Part 3, P. 148 - The Book: Al-Musnad, by Imam Ahmad Hanbal, Vol. 3, PP. 17, 26, 29 - Al-Muraji'at, by Sayyid Sharaf-ud-Din 'Amili - The epistle: Fi Hadith-ith-Thaqalayn, by Qawam-ud-Din Washnuwi, and…

According to the citation of Ibn-i-Hajar, who is one of the notables of the Sunnite in the book As-Sawa'iq, this tradition has been narrated by more than twenty persons from the companions of the Prophet.

Some of them are as follows:

1- Imam-ul-Muttaqin 'Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as)
2- Imam Hassan (as)
3- Salman Farsi
4- 'Abuthar Qafari
5- Ibn 'Abbas
6- Abu Sa'id
7- Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah 'Ansari
8- Abu Hashim-ibn-Tihan
9- Hathifah Yamani
10- Abu-Rafi'Maula Rassulillah the Messenger of Allah (S)
11- Hathifat-ibn 'Asbad Qafari

12- Khazifat-ibn-Thabit-Zush-Shahadatayn
13- Ziyd-ibn-Thabit
14- ’Anas-ibn-Malik

The famous tradition of Thaqalayn, with abovementioned documents is one of the proofs of Shi‘ah about immediate Imamate and caliphate of ‘Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib and his progeny, and Shi‘ah has other proofs in this regard, too, including the explicit text of the Qur’an, that for shortness we do not mention them here.

Notes

1. ’Usul-i-Kafi, according to narration of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 148
2. Hahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 16
3. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, and Tauhid-i-Saduq, P. 267
4. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 25
5. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 15
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying: No. 165
7. Bihar, Vol. 74, P. 49 and Majma‘-ul-Bayan following the verse
8. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 166, P. 467
9. Ibid
10. Ibid, P. 468
11. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 16, P. 475
12. Bihar, Vol. 74, P. 85
13. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 16, P. 466
14. Bihar, Vol. 74, P. 80
15. Ibid, P. 46
16. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 16, P. 468
17. Nahj-ul-Balaqahm, saying No. 217
18. The commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 25, P. 40

Section 2: Noah and Abraham's Mission

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 14-15

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ نُوحاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلاَّ خَمْسِينَ عَاماً فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَآ ءَايَةً لِّـلْعَالَمِينَ

14. "And certainly We sent Noah to his people, so he remained among them a thousand years save fifty years. And the deluge overtook them while they were unjust."

15. "So we delivered him and the Companions of the Ark. And We made it a sign for all peoples."

Propagation and training need patience and resistance. This holy verse shows the resistance of Noah (as) and obstinacy of people.

However, since the previous verses had some statements about the general trial of people, from here on the verses contain some discussions about the hard trials of the former divine prophets and their peoples that how they were under the pressure and hurt of their enemies, and how they applied considerable patience that finally they gained victory.

This was both consolation for the companions of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), who were under the harsh pressure of the powerful enemies of Islam in Mecca, and a threat for the enemies that they should be careful of the painful end of their lifetime.

At first, it begins from the first arch-prophet, i.e. Noah (as), and in some short sentences it explains that part of his life that is more suitable with the condition of the Muslims of that day.

It says:

"And certainly We sent Noah to his people, so he remained among them a thousand years save fifty years…"

All days and nights Noah was busy teaching and inviting people to Monotheism. During this long time, that is 950 years, using the opportunity both in private and among public, Noah called them toward Allah and he did not become tired from this constant effort, and he did not let weakness and intermission come to him.

Yet, they did not believe save a small group (about eighty people as history narrates), that is, every twelve years one person.

Therefore, O Prophet! you should not get tired in the way of invitation toward the truth and struggle against deviations, because your program comparing that of Noah is very easy.

Now behold that how the end of this cruel and obstinate group of people was.

The verse continues saying:

"…And the deluge overtook them while they were unjust."

And thus the length of their disgraceful life ended and their castles, palaces, and dead bodies were buried under the waves of flood.

The application of 'a thousand years save fifty years' in the verse, while it could say 950 years from the beginning, refers to the greatness and length

of this time, because the figure ‘one thousand’ which is used in the form of ‘a thousand years’ for ‘the length of the time of propagation’ is counted a very enormous figure:

The apparent of the above verse shows that this amount was not the whole lifetime of Noah, though the present Torah has mentioned this figure for the entire lifetime of Noah[1], but he lived another length of time after Flood either, and according to some commentators this time was three hundred years.

Of course, this long lifetime comparing the usual life times of our age is very long and it does not seem natural. It is probable that the length of lifetime in those days was different from that of today.

Some documents indicate that, in principle, the people of Noah had a long lifetime and, in this course, Noah had also been extraordinary. However, this shows that the man’s structure lets him have a long lifetime.

The studies of the scientists show today that man’s lifetime has not a fix and determined restriction. Some people consider it as limited to 120 years, or less and more than that which is completely baseless, and with the change of conditions it may vary.

Now, by some experiences, scientists could prolong the lifetime of some plants, or some other living creatures, to twelve times of their ordinary lifetime, and in some instances, if you do not wonder, to nine hundred times. If they succeed they can increase the man’s lifetime with the same criterion, and man may live thousands of years.[2]

By the way, it must be noted that the Arabic word /tufan/ originally means any event that surrounds man. (It derives from Tawaf).

Then it has been used for abundant water, or a strong flood which covers a vast land and overtakes it, and also it has been used for any thing that is severe, much, and stretched, irrespective of wind, fire, and water. Sometimes it has also been used in the sense of severe darkness of the night.[3]

It is interesting that the holy verse says: /wa hum zalimun/ (while they were unjust) which means: at the time of the occurrence of the flood, they were going on their injustice. This indicates that if they had left this deed and became regretful with going to Allah, they would not have been involved in such an evil fate.

Then, in the next verse, it adds:

“So we delivered him and the Companions of the Ark. And We made it a sign for all peoples.”

It was made a sign for all peoples and it means that it is a gazing-stock for all people until the Hereafter Day, because the event of the Ark separated the line of the believers from disbelievers and distinguished the righteous ones from the guilty ones, in order to prove that Noah was truthful in his statement, and his people were infidels.

By the way, the pronoun in the Arabic phrase: /ja‘alnaha/ refers to the Arc.

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 16

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

16. "And (recollect) Abraham when he said unto his people 'Worship Allah and be in owe of Him; that will be best for you if you did but know'."

Monotheism and piety are at the top of the programs of Divine prophets, and, therefore, worship without piety is not so effective.

Next to the concisely explained event of Noah (as) and his people, the Qur'an refers to the story of Abraham (as), the second great arch-prophet, and says:

"And (recollect) Abraham when he said unto his people 'Worship Allah and be in owe of Him; that will be best for you if you did but know'."

Here, the noble verse has stated two important creedal and practical programs of the prophets with together, which is invitation to 'Monotheism' and 'piety'.

At the end of the verse it says if you contemplate correctly, following Monotheism and piety is the best for you, because they save you in this world from pollutions of polytheism and sin and affliction, and your next world will also be with perpetual felicity.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 17

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَاناً وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكاً إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقاً فَابْتَغُوا عِندَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

17. "You worship idols besides Allah and you create a calumny, verily those whom you worship besides Allah do not own for you any sustenance, therefore seek the sustenance from Allah and worship (only) Him, and be grateful to Him, unto Him you shall be returned."

Through the previous verse, Hadrat 'Ibrahim invited people to worship and obedience of Allah, and in this holy verse he (as) negates the worship of other than Allah and counts it useless while, at the end of the verse, he emphasizes again on the worship of Allah.

Then, Abraham points to the reasons of the nullification of idolatry and condemns their belief earnestly with different statements, each of which contains a separate reason.

At first, he says:

"You worship idols besides Allah…"

These idols are some statues with no soul. They have no will, no intellect, no sense, and no understanding, so that their appearance is a clear evidence for the falseness of the belief of idolatry.

You must be careful that the Arabic word /auan/ is the plural form of /waan/ in the sense of some pieces of stone which idolaters curve and worship.

After this, he goes further and he implicitly says that not only the circumstances of these idols show that they cannot be worshipped, but you also know that you yourselves forge some falsehoods and put the name of the object of worship on them.

The verse continues as follows:

"…and you create a calumny…"

What kind of reason do they have for this great lie, except some fancies and superstitions?

Since the Arabic term /taxluqun/ is derived from /xalaqa/ which sometimes is used with the meaning of 'to create and to make' and sometimes with the sense of 'to lie', some commentators have mentioned another commentary upon this sentence which is different from what was said in the above.

They have said that the purpose is that you grate these idols (false idols) with your own hand and you create them. (Therefore, the word /'ifk/ means 'false objects of worship' and /xalq/ means 'to grate and to create some stone and wooden idols'.

Then he refers to the third reason, saying that your worship due to these idols is either for material interests or your fate in the next world, and whichever of them it may be it is wrong, because:

"…verily those whom you worship besides Allah do not own for you any sustenance…"

You yourselves accept that idols are not creators, and the Creator is Allah, therefore the giver of sustenance is also Allah.

The verse says:

"…therefore seek the sustenance from Allah…"

And since He is the giver of sustenance, then worship and thank Him, too.

The verse continues saying:

"…and worship (only) Him, and be grateful to Him…"

In other words, one of the incentives of worship is usually thanksgiving unto the true benefactor. You know that the true Benefactor is Allah, then thanks and worship is also specific to His Pure Essence.

And if you seek the life of the next world, the return of all of you is unto Him, not unto idols.

The verse says:

"…unto Him you shall be returned."

Idols are effective neither here nor there. Thus, Abraham (as) condemns their logic by means of a few short and clear proofs in these verses.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 18

وَإِن تُكَذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

18. "And if you reject (the Message), so did generations before you and nothing is incumbent on the messenger but a plain delivery (of the message)."

The rejection of the opponents should not hinder the act of propagation.

In this verse, as a threat and also as heedlessness to them, Abraham (as) says:

"And if you reject (the Message), so did generations before you…"

And, of course, they were punished severely with a painful chastisement.

The verse continues saying:

"…and nothing is incumbent on the messenger but a plain delivery (of the message)."

The objective of "generations before you" is the people of Noah and the nations who came to live after them.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 19

أَوَ لَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

19. "Have they not seen how Allah originates creation, then brings it back again? Verily that is easy for Allah."

Creation, causing to die, and to raise from the dead are the permanent work of Allah; and the world of creation is the manifestation of providence in creating the life and death of phenomenon.

In this point, the Qur'an temporarily leaves out the story of Abraham, and completes the discussion that Abraham had in the field of Monotheism and expressing his own prophethood by mentioning reason upon Resurrection, and concerning the rejecters of Resurrection it says:

"Have they not seen how Allah originates creation, then brings it back again?…"

The purpose of the act of 'see' is the observation by heart and having knowledge about it. It means: do they not know the quality of the creation of Allah? The same One Who had the power of 'the first creation' is also able to return it, because having power on one thing is the power on its similar ones, too.

This is also probable that the word 'see' here is used in the sense of observation by the eye, because everybody observes by his eye that dead lands are quickened, plants grow, babies are born from sperm drop, and chickens are produced from eggs. The One Who is able to do such things, is also able to bring the dead to life again.

Then, at the end, as an emphasis, it says:

"…Verily that is easy for Allah."

It is so because comparing the creation on the first day, revival is counted an easier work.

This meaning, of course, is due to the conception and logic of individuals, else being easy or difficult has no meaning for the One Whose Power is unlimited. It is our limit power that creates these concepts and regarding its application, some things are difficult and some others are easy.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 20

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

20. "Say: 'Travel in the earth and see how He has originated the creation, then Allah brings forth the later creation; verily Allah is powerful over everything'."

By exact study in creation, we can remove our doubt and know Allah better than before.

Peregrination, traveling, studying the nature, and purposeful excursion is a duty and value.

This holy verse continues the subject of Resurrection. This meaning has been expressed in the form of parenthetical clauses in the middle of the story of Abraham (as).

This is not the first time that we encounter such a method of explanation. This is the style of the Qur'an that when the statement of a story reaches a sensitive stage, it temporarily leaves the rest of it and pays to the necessary conclusion emerged from that story.

However, this verse invites people to extroversive traveling upon the subject of Resurrection, while the previous verse had mostly the side of introversive traveling. The verse implicitly says that you should travel on the earth in order to see kinds of living creatures, and different nations with their specialties and observe how Allah (s.w.t.) has originated the creation.

The verse announces:

"Say: 'Travel in the earth and see how He has originated the creation…"

Then, the same Lord, Who has the power to create these plenty creatures with various colours and different nations, is able to bring forth the next creation, because by the first creation He has proved His Power to all and, truly, He is powerful over everything.

The verse says:

"…then Allah brings forth the later creation; verily Allah is powerful over everything'."

Both this verse and the verse before it prove the possibility of Resurrection through the way of the vastness of Providence, with this difference that the first verse talks about the first creation of man himself and whatever is around him while the second verse commands to study the different states of other nations and creatures so that they see the first life in different features and in various conditions, and be acquainted with the generality of the Power of Allah and understand His ability to the return of this life.

In fact, in the same way that proving Monotheism is sometimes possible by observing the 'introversive signs' and sometimes by 'extroversive signs', proving resurrection can be done through both of them, too.

Today, this verse can give scientists some deeper and more exact meaning in this manner that they go and see the effects of the first living creatures in the depth of the seas, inside mountains, and between the levels of the earth.

In this way, they can understand a part of the secrets of the beginning of life in the earth as well as the greatness and power of Allah, and do know that He is able to bring back the life.

By the way, the Arabic word /naš'at/ originally means 'to create and train something' and sometimes the term: /naš'at-il-'ula/ is used for 'this world' and /naš'at al-'axirah/ is used in the sense of 'the next world'.

This point is also notable that at the end of the previous verse the sentence:

"Verily that is easy for Allah"

and at the end of this verse the sentence:

"Verily Allah is powerful over everything"

are mentioned. This difference may be for the sake that the first verse states a limit study and the second one indicates to a vast study.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 21-22

يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ

وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَمَا لَكُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ نَصِيرٍ

21. "He punishes whom He pleases and has mercy on whom He pleases, and unto Him you will be turned back."

22. "You are not able to frustrate Him either in the earth or in heavens; and you have not, apart from Allah, either protector or helper."

The training style of the Qur'an is in a manner that when it states the love and wrath of Allah it often begins with love and mercy and then refers to wrath and chastisement, but since this verse is the continuation of the rejection of disbelievers it has begun the words about punishment, and next to it, it has spoken about the Divine mercy.

Then, this holy verse refers to the completion of one of the issues concerning the Resurrection, i.e. the issue of mercy and punishment.

It says:

"He punishes whom He pleases and has mercy on whom He pleases, and unto Him you will be turned back."

In other words, though His mercy precedes His punishment, here punishment has been mentioned before mercy, because the verse intends to threat and the word suitable for threat is said in this manner.

By the way, this point is also clear that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /man yaša'/ (whom He pleases) is the Divine Will accompanied with wisdom. That is, whom He knows deserving and eligible for it, because the Divine Will is not undue and it is consistent with eligibilities and merits.

The Arabic phrase /taqlibun/ is derived from /qalb/ which originally means: 'To change a thing from one form into another form', and since on the Hereafter Day man changes from soil into a complete living being, this meaning has been used for his second creation.

This meaning may also refer to this point that in Hereafter man will be changed in a way that his inward aspect will appear and his interior secrets will be made manifest and, thus, it reminds the meaning of verse 9 from Surah At-Tariq, No. 86, which says:

"On the Day when hidden things shall be made manifest."

Then, in the next verse, on the completion of this discussion which is about the punishment and mercy of Allah, and that the return of all is unto Him, it adds implicitly that if you think that you can exit from the domain of Allah, the Almighty, and that the grips of punishment may not seize you, you are in a great err, because:

"You are not able to frustrate Him either in the earth or in heavens…"

And if you think that a guardian or helper will defend you, you are wrong, too, because:

"…and you have not, apart from Allah, either protector or helper."

In fact, deliverance from the Divine punishment is either in the case that you go out of the realm of the government of Allah, or that you remain and,

relying on the power of others, defend yourself; while neither going out of it is possible when everywhere is His realm, and all the world of existence belongs to Him, nor does anyone exist who can stand before His Power and defend you.

The Late Tabarsy in Majma‘-ul-Bayan says:

“A guard in /waliyy/ is he who helps without asking”.

Regarding those two words, it can be said that /waliyy/ refers to the guardian who helps without asking him to help, and /nasir/ is the helper who comes to help after asking him to help.

Thus, the Qur’an shuts all the doors of escaping from the grips of Divine punishment to the wrong-doers.

Notes

1. Torah, Genesis, chapter 9
2. You may refer to the book: “Mahdi ’Inqlabi-yi- Buzurg”
3. Mufradat by Raqib and ‘Amid Dictionary

Section 3: Abraham and Lot

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 23

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَآئِهِ أُوْلَئِكَ يَئِسُواْ مِن رَّحْمَتِي وَأُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

23. “And those who disbelieved in the signs of Allah and His meeting, these are despaired of My mercy, and these it is that shall have a painful chastisement.”

The only people who are disappointed and deprived from the mercy of Allah are pagans.

So, in this verse the Qur’an decisively says:

“And those who disbelieved in the signs of Allah and His meeting, these are despaired of My mercy…”

Then, in order to emphasize, it adds and implies that this punishment is a requisite of being disappointed from the mercy of Allah.

The objective of the Qur’anic phrase /’ayatillah/ (the signs of Allah) is either ‘the signs of nature’; that is, the signs of the greatness of Allah in the system of creation, which refers to the subject of Monotheism; and the Arabic term /liqa’ihi/ (His meeting) refers to the subject of Resurrection. That is, they deny both the Origin and Resurrection.

Or it refers to ‘the signs of religion; that is, the verses that Allah has sent down to His prophets, which talk about both Origin, and prophethood, and Resurrection, and in this case, the application of /liqa’/ is of the kind of mentioning ‘general’ after ‘specific’.

This probability also exists that the purpose is the entire signs of Allah in the world of creation and religion.

It is also necessary to mention this point that the Qur’anic term /ya’isu/ (they despaired of) is a past form verb, though its main aim is future. The reason is that it is customary in Arabic literature that when the occurrence of future events is completely certain, they are sometimes said in the form of past tense of the verb.

Then, the verse continues saying:

“…and these it is that shall have a painful chastisement.”

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 24

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلاَّ أَن قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

24. “But the answer of his people was only that they said: ‘Kill him, or burn him’. Then Allah saved him from the fire. Verily in this there are signs for a people who believe.”

When a believer overcomes the whole disbelievers, the worst plots are nullified, and fire becomes safe and sound. Each of them is one sign out of the signs of Allah.

Now we may see what this misguided group said in answer to those three clear proofs of Abraham (as) in the field of Monotheism, prophethood, and Resurrection.

Certainly they had no logical answer; therefore, like all strong violent persons with no logic, they relied on their satanic power and issued the command of his slaughter, as the Qur'an says:

"But the answer of his people was only that they said: 'Kill him, or burn him'…"

It is understand from this meaning that a group of the pagans said that Abraham should be burnt while another group suggested his annihilation by sword or the like. Finally, the first group won since they believed, indeed, that the worst kind of execution was burning by fire.

There is also this probability that at first all of them were thinking upon his execution with ordinary means, but later all of them decided to burn him and use the maximum intensity of action.

Here, there is mentioned no word about the quality of burning Abraham. It is only mentioned at the end of the verse:

"…Then Allah saved him from the fire…"

The explanation of burning Abraham (as) in the fire is mentioned in Surah Al-'Anbia', No. 21, verses 68-70 which was discussed before.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily in this there are signs for a people who believe."

Not only one sign but also there are several signs in this event. From one side, the lack of effect of fire on the body of Abraham was a clear miracle. Change of fire into safety was another miracle. Then inability of this great powerful group against a single person, who apparently had no means, was the third miracle.

And the lack of effect of this wonderful and extraordinary event of the heart of those cruel persons was also a sing from the Providence. It took the success from those obstinate people so miraculously that the greatest signs do not affect on them.

A tradition indicates that when Abraham was thrown in the middle of the fire, the only thing that was burnt from him was the rope with which Abraham was fastened firmly.[1]

Yes, the fire of ignorance and crime of those mischief-mongers burnt only the means of captivity, and Abraham became free; and this is counted another sign.

It may be because of these things that in the story of Noah and his deliverance by the Ark, the Qur'an says:

"…we made it a sign for all peoples."[2]

(In the singular form), and here it says:

"Signs"

(in the plural form.)

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 25

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَاناً مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضاً وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِن نَّاصِرِينَ

25. "And said (Abraham): 'You have chosen only idols instead of Allah; the love between you is only the life of the world. Then on the Day of Resurrection some of you shall deny the others, and some of you shall

curse the others and your abode shall be the (Hell) Fire, and for you shall not be any helpers."

Among the idolater tribes the idols were the axis and every tribe had a particular idol; for example, Quraysh had an idol called 'Uzza, Thaqif had an idol called Lat, the idol of tribes 'Aus and Khazraj was called Manat, and these idols were the means of the link of idolaters with their ancestors.

However, by the grace of Allah, Abraham (as) delivered extraordinarily from that great fire, but he only did not desist from stating his aims but also strengthened it with more speed and enthusiasm.

The verse says:

"And said (Abraham): 'You have chosen only idols instead of Allah; the love between you is only the life of the world. Then on the Day of Resurrection some of you shall deny the others, and some of you shall curse the others and your abode shall be the (Hell) Fire, and for you shall not be any helpers."

How was the choice of idols as the cause of love between the idolaters?

This question can be answered in different ways:

The first is that worshipping an idol in every tribe was the secret of unity between them and for every tribe there was a chosen idol. It has been cited about the famous idols of the Age of Ignorance that the people of every city or tribe had an idol, (including the idol of ('Uzza belonged to Quraysh, Lat belonged to Thaqif tribe and Manat was particular to 'Aus and Khazraj).[3]

Another matter was that worshipping idols had created a relation between them and their ancestors and they often pretended by the same pretext that those things were the traces of their ancestors which they followed.

Besides, the chiefs of the pagans invited their followers to worship idols and this was a ring of join between 'the chiefs' and their 'followers'.

But on the Day of Hereafter, all these chaffy and rotten links will be broken, and everyone puts its sin on another one's shoulder while he curses him and repudiates the deed of the other.

Even their objects of worship that they wrongly thought they were the means of their relation with Allah and about which they said:

"…'We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah…"[4]***,***

will repudiate them, as the Qur'an says:

"No, soon they (gods) shall deny their worship, and become adversaries against them."[5]

Therefore, the purpose of 'denying some of them the others and some of them shall curse the others' is that on that Day they will repudiate each other, and what was the cause of their link and false love in this world will change into enmity and hatred in Hereafter, as the Qur'an, in Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 67 says:

"Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another, except the pious ones."

It is understood from some Islamic narrations that this meaning is not particular to idol worshippers but all those who chose a false leader for them and followed him, and had covenant of love with him, on Hereafter Day, will be foes of each other.[6]

The love connection between the believers is based upon Monotheism, theism, and obedience of the command of Allah in this world, which will take the colour of perpetuance here and will be become stronger there.

It is understand from some traditions that in Hereafter the believers even ask forgiveness and intercession for each other, while the polytheists will be busy cursing each other.[7]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 26

فَـامَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّـي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَي رَبِّـي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

26. "Then Lot believed in him (Abraham) and he said: 'I am a fugitive unto my Lord, for verily He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Sometimes there had been several Divine prophets at the same time among people, but only one of them had been Imam and leader.

This holy verse points to the Faith of Lot and migration of Abraham when it says:

"Then Lot believed in him (Abraham)…"

Lot was one of the great prophets of Allah and he was a close relative of Abraham; (it is said that he was Abraham's nephew) and in view of the fact that following a great person is as following an Ummah, Allah here specially speaks of Lot's faith, the great personality contemporary to Abraham, in order to make clear that if others did not believe it would not have been important.

Of course, it seems that there were some receptive hearts in the land of Babylon to accept the invitation of Abraham, and after observing that great miracle they believed in him, but they were a minority.

Then the verse adds:

"…and he said: 'I am a fugitive unto my Lord, for verily He is the Mighty, the Wise."

It is clear that when the Divine leaders had fulfilled their mission in a region and the atmosphere of the environment was so polluted and under the pressure of the tyrants that it stopped the progress of their invitation, they ought to migrate from that place to another region so that they can spread the invitation of Allah.

Abraham (as) accompanied with Lot and his wife (Sarah) also started to go to Syria, the site of Divine prophets and Monotheism, in order to be able to gather some persons and means for developing the invitation of Monotheism.

It is interesting that Abraham (as) says:

"I am a fugitive unto my Lord".

The reason was that this path was the path of Allah, the Almighty, the path of His pleasure, and the path of His religion.

Of course, some commentators have said that probably the pronoun in the Qur'anic word /qala/ refers to Lot; that is, Lot said that he is fugitive unto his Lord. The apparent of the sentence is consistent to this meaning, but the historical and Qur'anic evidence shows that the antecedent is Abraham and the emigration of Lot (as) was done in subordination to Abraham (as).

The Qur'anic evidence of this statement is Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 99 that from the tongue of Abraham says:

"He said: 'I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me'."[8]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 27

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ وءَاتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

27. "And We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and We appointed the Prophecy and the Book to be among his progeny, and We gave him his recompense in the world, and verily in the Hereafter he will certainly be of the Righteous."

The reward of the sincere services and goodness to father is seen in one's descendants. In this verse, the Qur'an refers to the four merits that Allah gave Abraham after his emigration.

The first merit was some worthy offsprings, those who could keep the torch of faith and prophethood light in his progeny.

The verse says:

"And We granted him Isaac and Jacob…"

They were two great and eligible prophets each of whom could continue the way and the line of Abraham, the iconoclast prophet.

The second merit was as follows:

"…and We appointed the Prophecy and the Book to be among his progeny…"

The third merit was what is said by the Qur'an as follows:

"…and We gave him his recompense in the world…"

This reward, which has been mentioned secretly, may refer to different affairs; such as 'good name' and 'truthful tongue' among all nations, because all nations respect Abraham as a great prophet, and boast for his existence, and call him 'the chief prophet'.

Among his other rewards can be mentioned as: the flourish of Mecca by his supplication, the attraction of all hearts toward him and the yearly recollection of his glorious instructive, faith-creative remembrance in the rites of Hajj ceremonies.

The fourth merit is as follows:

"…and verily in the Hereafter he will certainly be of the Righteous."

As it is understood from many verses of the Qur'an, being among the righteous ones is the utmost honour that a person may earn. That was why many prophets asked Allah that He would appoint them in the row of the righteous.

After gaining the highest apparent victories, Yusuf asked Allah and said:

"…cause me die Muslim (in submission unto You) and join me with the righteous."[9]

Solomon, with all glorious rank and magnificence he had, said:

"…and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants."[10]

When the contract of Shu'ayb with Moses finished, he said:

"If Allah wills, you will find me one the righteous ones".[11]

Abraham asked Allah that He might count him among the righteous, saying:

"My Lord! Bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous."[12]

And he would have a righteous son.[13]

In many verses of the Qur'an when Allah admires the great prophets, He characterizes them as being among the righteous.

It is well understood from the totality of these verses that 'being righteous' is the highest stage of the development of a man.

What does 'to be righteous' mean? It means eligibility from the point of faith and belief, eligibility from the point of action, and eligibility from the point of speech and morals.

The opposite point of 'righteous' is 'corruptible', and we know that corruption envelops all injustice, cruelties, and indecencies.

In the Qur'an sometimes /salah/ is used instead of /fasad/ and sometimes instead of /sayyi'ah/ which means sin and evils.

Some commentators have said that there is a tender point in the above verse and it is that Allah changed all the inconvenient things of Abraham (as) into their opposites:

1- The idol-worshippers of Babylon decisively wanted to burn Abraham by fire, but fire was changed into safety.

2- They desired that he should be alone forever, but Allah set a very abundant population for him so that throughout of the world was filled with the progeny of Abraham.

3- Some of the close persons to Abraham went astray and became idol worshippers, including 'Athar, instead of it Allah gave him some children that not only they themselves were guided aright but also they guided others.

4- At the beginning Abraham had not any wealth and dignity, but at last Allah gave him great wealth and dignity.

5- At the beginning Abraham was so undistinguished that even when the idol worshippers of Babylon wanted to mention him, they said:

"…'We heard a youth making mention of them, who is called Abraham'."[14]

But Allah gave him such a fame that he became known as 'the chief of prophets, or 'the chief of Messengers'.[15]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 28-30

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ

إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

28. "And (remember) Lot when he said to his people: 'Verily you commit a lewdness which none of the people of the worlds has ever done before you'."

29. "Do you approach males and cut the way (of natural matrimony), and you commit dishonour in your assemblies? But his people gave no

answer except that they said: 'Bring us the chastisement of Allah if you are of the truthful (ones)'.

30. "He (Lot) said: 'My Lord! Help me against the mischievous people!'"

The religious leaders should note the corruptions, evils, and public dangers of the society and try to remove them.

After stating a part of life story of Abraham, in this verse the Qur'an refers to a part of life story of his contemporary prophet, Lot (as), when it says:

"And (remember) Lot when he said to his people: 'Verily you commit a lewdness which none of the people of the worlds has ever done before you'."

The Arabic word /fahišah/ (lewdness), as was mentioned before, is derived from /fuhš/ which originally means: any word or saying which is very ugly, sharp and biting, and here it ironically means 'sodomy'.

It is clearly understood from the Qur'anic sentence, saying:

"…which none of the people of the worlds has ever done before you"

that this ugly and shameful action, at least in the public and general form, had not been done among no nation and group.

Around the qualities of the people of Lot (as) it has been recorded that one of the main factors of their pollution in this action was that they were some miser people.

Their cities were on the way of caravans of Syria and, by this action unto some of their guests and travelers, they caused them to become hateful to them, but the desire of sodomy strengthened among them and they were accustomed to it.

However, they carry both the burden of their own sin and the burden of the sin of those who will follow their action in the future (without that their sin may be decreased anything), because they were the founders of this ugly and evil deed; and we know that whoever creates a tradition he will share the acts of those who commit it.

Through the next verse, the Qur'an implies that Lot, this great prophet, stated his purpose more clearly, when he said:

"Do you approach males and cut the way (of natural matrimony), and you commit dishonour in your assemblies?…"

The Arabic word /nadi/ is derived from /nada'/ in the sense of 'public meeting', and sometimes it is used with the sense of 'a pleasure center' and 'to call' since the people there usually call each other.

The Holy Qur'an has not explained here that what kind of lewdnesses they used to commit in their meetings, but without saying it is evident that they were some deeds consistent to their own ugly action, and as some records written in history books indicate that they used to exchange some abuses and ugly biting words between them.

They used to beat at the backs of each other with their palms; they gambled; they had some childish plays, in particular that they threw pebbles to each other and to the wayfarers; they played kinds of musical instruments; and even at the presence of public they committed indecent exposure and sometimes they showed their pudenda.

A tradition from 'Umm-i-Hani from the Prophet (S) indicates that in answer to the question about

"…you commit dishonour in your assemblies…"

he (S) said:

"They used to throw pebbles toward whoever passed by and mocked them."[16]

Now we are going to see what the answer of this astray and shameful people was to the logical words of Hadrat Lot (as).

The Qur'an says:

"…But his people gave no answer except that they said: 'Bring us the chastisement of Allah if you are of the truthful (ones)'.

Yes, those sensual persons, who had not enough intellect and comprehension, said this saying with mockery in answer to the logical invitation of Lot.

It is understood from this answer of theirs that, besides his reasonable words, Lot also threatened them by the painful chastisement of Allah if they continued their own way. But they left all and took only this one mockingly. Something similar to this meaning has also been mentioned in Surah Qamar, No. 54, verse 36.

It says:

"And (Lot) did warn them of Our violent seizure but they disputed about the warning."

This statement of the astray people shows that they wanted to take result from the lack of descent of chastisement and say that Lot was a liar, while it is from the mercy of Allah that He gives respite to the most polluted people in order to study, review, and return to the truth.

The next verse implies that it was here that Lot could do nothing and turned to Allah and, with a heart full of sorrow and grief, asked Him as follows:

"He (Lot) said: 'My Lord! Help me against the mischievous people!'"

A people who have made mischief on the earth, have ignored morals and piety, have set aside chastity and modesty, have trodden the social justice, have often mixed paganism and idolatry with immorality, injustice, and cruelty, and have threatened the generation of man to extinction and destruction. So he asked Allah to make him victorious against these astray mischief-mongers.

At the end, sodomy, whether among men (lawat) or among women, (lesbianism), is of the worst ethical deviations which can he the origin of many corruptions in the society.

In principle, the nature of woman and man has been created in such a way that they find their tranquility and sound satiation in being attached to opposite sex (by the way of sound marriage); and, otherwise, any kind of sexual inclination is deviation from the safe nature of man, and it is a kind of psychic disease that, in case of continuation, it intensifies a day after another, and its result is dislike to the 'opposite sex' by unsafe satiation with homosexuality.

These kinds of unlawful relations have some destructive effects on the limbs of man's body and even they are effective in the nervous system and spirit.

They change man from being a complete man and woman from being a complete woman in a way that such women and men who are accustomed to homosexuality will be entangled with an intensive sexual weakness and they will not be able to be a good parents for their future children, and sometimes they lose utterly the ability of producing offspring.

Those who practise homosexuality may gradually tend to reclusion and also alienation from society and then alienation from themselves, and also involve the psychotic complicated contradiction, and if they do not improve themselves they may be afflicted with various psychotic sexual sicknesses.

For this reason and for other ethical and social reasons, Islam has intensively banned the practice of homosexuality in any form and manner, and has appointed a serious punishment that sometimes it is nigh to execution.

The important matter here is that libertinism and seeking miscellaneousness of the material civilized world draw the boys and girls toward this great ugly deviation.

At first, it encourages boys to wearing frivolous woman clothing with special ornamentation, and invites girls to wear boy clothing, and from this point deviation and the practice of homosexuality begins so far that the most shameful shapes of deeds in this field are legally approved, in some countries, and are free from any punishment so impudently that pen shames to explain them.[17]

Some Traditions Upon Sodomy and its Punishment

1- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The thing I fear for my Ummah most of all is the act of the people of Lot (Sodomy)."[18]

2- The Prophet (S) said:

"If you find someone who does the act of the people of Lot, do know that its punishment in Islam is execution."[19]

3- Imam Rida (as) said:

"The reason of banning men for men and women for women is the structure of women and the nature of men (that each of them has been created for the opposite sex), and that going men to men and women to women causes the cut of generation (of mankind) and also disturbance of the order of management (in the society) and wasting the world."[20]

4- In answer to the reason of banning of sodomy, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"If the act of sodomy were lawful, the men would be needless of women, and the generation (of mankind) might be cut, women remained without husband, and there would exist many corruptions in the authorization of sodomy.

And Allah created women for men so that they associate with them and gain tranquility by them, and women are the site of men's lust and mothers of their children."[21]

Notes

1. Rauh-ul-Ma‘ani, the Commentary, Vol. 20, P. 130
2. The current Surah, verse 15
3. Sirah by Ibn-i-Husham, Vol. 1, PP. 86-87
4. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 3
5. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 82
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, Vol. 4, P. 154
7. Tauhid-i-Sadugh, according to the narration of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4. P. 154
8. In relation to the emigration of Abraham from Babylon to Syria, there is a detailed discussion under verse 71 on from Surah Al-’Anbiya, No. 21, in Nimunah commentary, Vol. 13, P. 451 on
9. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 101
10. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 19
11. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 27
12. Surah Ash-Shu‘ara, No. 26, verse 83
13. 14.
Surah Al-’Anbiya’, No. 21, verse 60
15. The Commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi
16. The Commentary by Qurtabi
17. Concerning the banning of sodomy and its philosophy in Islam, there was a detailed explanation mentioned in the commentary of Surah Hud, No. 11, verses 79-80
18. At-Tarqib wal-Tarhib, Vol. 3, P. 285
19. Ibid, and Vol. 7, P. 288
20. ‘Ilal-ush-Sharayi‘, Vol. 1, P. 547
21. Bihar, Vol. 10, P. 181

Section 4: The Mission of Abraham, Lot, Shu‘ayb and Moses

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 31

وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَآ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَي قَالُوا إِنَّا ُهْلِكُوا أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ

31. “And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the glad tidings (of a son unto him), they said: ‘Verily we are going to destroy the people of this town, for verily its people are unjust’.”

In Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, Imam Sajjad (as) mentions some groups of angels each of which has a special responsibility, but those angels who came to Hadrat ’Ibrahim (as) had several aims. They were missions both for giving glad tidings of a child to Abraham (as), and for announcing the punishment of the people of Lot, and the executives of the Divine punishment.

This verse indicates that finally the supplication of Lot was accepted and the command of a heavy and severe punishment for this evil people was issued from the side of Allah.

Before their arrival to the land of Lot for performing their mission, the angels of punishment went to the area where Abraham lived for the fulfilment of another mission, i.e. the glad tidings of the birth of children to Abraham (as)

The abovementioned verse, at first, refers to their meeting with Abraham (as) and says:

“And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the glad tidings (of a son unto him)…”

Then, pointing to the cities of the people of Lot, the angels added to their statement as follows:

“…they said: ‘Verily we are going to destroy the people of this town, for verily its people are unjust’.”

The application of the Qur’anic phrase /haðihil qaryah/ (this town) is an evidence that the cities of the people of Lot were in the neighbourhood of Abraham’s land.

The application of the Arabic word /zalim/ (unjust) is for the sake that they were unjust both to themselves, who took the way of polytheism, immorality, and corruptibility, and to others so that their injustice and cruelty involved even all the wayfarers and the caravans that crossed that land.

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 32

قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطاً قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلاَّ ا ْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

32. “Said (Abraham to the messenger angels): ‘Verily Lot is in it.’ They said: ‘We know very well who is in it; we shall certainly deliver him and his family, except his wife; she shall of those who stay behind’.”

The social title is not important, but the Faith and righteous deed are criterions. Being the prophet’s wife alone is not a value, but being in his accompany and following him is a value. The wives of prophets are not

sinless. (Even among the wives of the Prophet of Islam (S) only a few of them were favoured by the special grace of Allah.

This noble verse indicates that when Abraham heard this statement, he worried about Lot, the great prophet of Allah, and he asked about his fate.

The verse says:

"Said (Abraham to the messenger angels): 'Verily Lot is in it.'…"

Then the messenger angels, in answer to him, immediately said that he should not be worried:

"…They said: 'We know very well who is in it…"

They meant that never Allah chastises evildoers and good doers with together and His program is completely accurate and calculated.

Then, they added:

"…we shall certainly deliver him and his family, except his wife; she shall of those who stay behind'."

It is understood from this verse that in all of those cities there was only one pure faithful family and Allah delivered them on time, either; as it is mentioned is Surah Ath-Thariyat:

"But We found not there any except one Muslim household."[1]

And, moreover, the wife of Lot was also out of the row of believers and, therefore, she was punished.

The Arabic word /qabirin/ is the plural form of /qabir/ with the sense of 'the one whose companions go only he one remains. The woman who was among the family of prophethood must not separate from the Muslims and believers, but her infidelity, polytheism, and idolatry caused her separation.

This makes clear that her deviation was only from the point of belief, and it is not improbable that she had got this deviation from her own environment while at the beginning she had been faithful and monotheist; and in this case there will be no objection to Lot that why he married such a woman.

By the way, if there were some other people who had believed in Lot, they would certainly have migrated from that polluted land before this event. It was only Lot and his family that had to stay there until the last hour that he thought his teaching and warning might have an effect in them.

There may arise a question here that did Abraham (as) think that probably the punishment of Allah might seize Lot, too, that he expressed his worry about Lot before the angels and they assured him that Lot would be delivered?

The clear answer to this question is that Abraham knew the matter but for the certainty of his heart he asked, as this very great prophet had a similar condition about Resurrection and by restoring the birds to life Allah illustrated the scenery of Resurrection in front of him.

But 'Allamah Tabataba'i, the great commentator, believes that the aim of Abraham was that he took the existence of Lot among that nation as a reason for removing the punishment from them, and 'Allamah takes help from Surah Hud, No. 11, verses 74-76 for this purpose, because these verses say:

"…he began disputing with Us concerning the people of Lot."

"O Abraham! Forsake this! Indeed the decree of your Lord has come to pass and surely there is coming (upon) them an irreversible chastisement."[2]

But we believe that the answer that the angels gave here about the deliverance of Lot and his family clearly shows that in these verses only Lot was spoken of, while the verses of Surah Hud pursue a separate matter and, as we said, Abraham (as) asked this question only for being assured more. (Be careful)

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 33

وَلَمَّآ أَن جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطاً سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعاً وَقَالُوا لاَ تَخَفْ وَلاَ تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنَجُّوكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ ا ْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

33. "And when Our messengers came to Lot he was grieved on their account and distressed for them; but they said: 'Fear not, nor grieve, for verily we shall deliver you and your family, except your wife, she shall be of those who stay behind."

In a polluted society the men of Allah are in straitened circumstances, and even for protecting their own guests and children they are worried, too.

The family relation does not save a person but faith and righteous deed is the key of deliverance.

This verse says:

"And when Our messengers came to Lot he was grieved on their account and distressed for them…"

Lot's anxiety was for that he did not know them. They were in the form of some handsome youths, and the arrival of such guests in that polluted environment might become the source of trouble for Lot and probably disrespect before his guests. Therefore, he became seriously thoughtful that what the reaction of those astray, disgrace and shameless people might be before these honourable guests.

The Qur'anic /si'a/ is derived from /sa'a/ in the sense of 'to become grievous'; and the Arabic word /ŏar'/ means: 'heart' or 'temper'. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase: /daqa bihim ŏar'a/ means 'he became grievous and inconvenient.'

Some of the Islamic commentators have said that this phrase originally means 'the distance between the front legs of a camel at the time of walking' and since when a heavy load is put on its back it decreases the distance of its steps lesser and narrower, this sentence /daqa ŏar'a/ is mentioned as ironically for a heavy and laborious event.

But when the guests found his inconvenience soon they introduced themselves and removed his anxiety and told him those shameless people could not do anything, and all of them would be annihilated soon.

The verse says:

"…but they said: 'Fear not, nor grieve, for verily we shall deliver you and your family, except your wife, she shall be of those who stay behind."

Of course, the verses of Surah Hud clearly show that when those evil people were informed of the arrival of the guests of Lot they came to him and intended to bother them.

Lot, who had not known the angels, became very anxious, wanted to hinder them from doing that action: sometimes with advice, sometimes with threat, sometimes by way of arousing their conscience, saying that:

"…is there not among you one upright man?",[3]

and sometimes by the way of suggesting them to marry his daughters. But those disgrace people did not accept anything and they thought only of their own evil aim.

But the messengers of Allah introduced themselves to Lot (as) and by means of Divine miracle made the eyes of those attacking persons blind and caused the heart of this great prophet to rest.

It is notable that the messenger angels of Allah told Lot (as) that he should not fear and grieve. Concerning the difference between /xauf/ and /huzn/ it is cited in Al-Mizan, the commentary, that /xauf/ is used about the inconvenient probable events and /huzn/ about some decisive and certain instances.

Some commentators believe that the Qur'anic word /xauf/ (fear) relates to the future events and the term /qam/ (grief) relates to the past events.

It is also probable that /xauf/ is used in relation to dangerous instances, but /qam/ is related to painful events, though there is no danger in them.

There is a question here that according to the verses of Surah Hud the fear and grief of Lot were not about himself, but he feared that those evil people might make trouble for his guests while the answer the angels gave him was about the deliverance of Lot and his family and these two are not consistent with each other.

The answer to this question can be understood from Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 81, because when the shameful people came to bother the guests, the angels told Lot:

"…fear not nor grieve, for verily we shall deliver you and your family…".[4]

That is, 'they not only cannot bother us, but also are not able to hurt you.' Therefore, the angels took their deliverance certain, and verily it was certain, and they concentrated the glad tidings on the deliverance of Lot and his family.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 34-35

إِنَّا مُنزِلُونَ عَلَي أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزاً مِنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

وَلَقَد تَّرَكْنَا مِنْهَآ ءَايَةً بَيِّنَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

34. "Verily We are bringing down upon the people of this town a punishment from heaven for what they were transgressing."

35. "And certainly We have left a clear sign of it for a people who have sense."

The repetition of sin and persisting to its doing cause the descent of the chastisement of Allah.

The acquaintance with the philosophy of history and being acquainted with past generations are regarded by the Qur'an.

In order that the fate of this polluted group of people might be made more clear in their mission, the Qur'an adds:

"Verily We are bringing down upon the people of this town a punishment from heaven for what they were transgressing."

The objective of the Qur'anic word /qaryah/ (town) is 'Sudum' and the cities and towns around it where the people of Lot used to live. The population of them has been mentioned seven hundred thousand people.[5]

And the objective of the Arabic term /rijz/ here is 'punishment'. Its original meaning is 'anxiety', then everything that causes anxiety is called /rijz/ and thus Arabs use it in a lot of senses, like harsh afflictions, plaque, intensive snow and hail, idol, the temptation of Satan, and Divine punishment.

The Qur'anic sentence /bima kanu yafsuqun/ (for what they were transgressing) states the cause of their painful punishment that was transgression and disobedience from the command of Allah, and its application in future form of the verb is an indication to the continuation of their ugly deeds.

This meaning shows this fact that if those people stopped the continuation of it and returned to the path of right, piety and purity, they would not he involved in such a punishment and their past sins would be forgiven.

In this verse the manner of their painful punishment has not been explained, and it only refers to the ruins of their afflicted and non-afflicted cities, when it says:

"And certainly We have left a clear sign of it for a people who have sense."

But the explanation of their punishment is referred to in Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 82 and Surah Al-'A'raf, No 7, verse 84, implying that at first a severe earthquake turned their cities upside down and then a shower of stone rained on them in a way that their bodies and their ruined cities and castles were buried under it.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'ayatan bayyinatan/ (a clear sign) refers to the remaining of the city of 'Sudum' which, according to the verses of the Qur'an, was located alongside the way of the caravans of the people of Medina and Mecca and they could see it at the advent of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (S), as Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 76 says:

"It is on a way (yet) remaining.",

and Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 137-138 says:

"Verily you pass by their (cities) by day," "And by night; will you not ponder?"

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 36

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْباً فَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الآخِرَ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

36. "And to Madyan (We did send) their brother Shu'ayb, so he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah, and look you for the Last Day; and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief."

Monotheism and Resurrection are at the top of the godly invitation of the Divine prophets.

The servitude unto Allah (s.w.t.) and the belief in Origin and Resurrection both are some preparation for separation from corruption.

Next to the story of Lot and his people, the stories of other peoples, such as the people of Shu‘ayb, the people of ‘Ad, the people of Thamud, Korah and Pharaoh, come forth.

At first, it says:

“And to Madyan (We did send) their brother Shu‘ayb…”

As we have repeatedly said before, the application of the word ‘brother’ in the verse refers to the utmost love and affection of these prophets unto their peoples, and it shows the lack of seeking domination over them. These prophets, of course, had often relation with their peoples, too.

Madyan is a city in the west south of Jordan which is called Mu‘an today and it is located in the east of ‘Aqabah Golf, where Shu‘ayb and his people lived.

Like other great Divine prophets, Shu‘ayb began his invitation from belief in Origin and Resurrection which are the foundation of any Divine religion.

The verse says:

“…so he said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah, and look you for the Last Day…”

Belief in Origin causes man to feel constant observation from the side of Allah upon his deeds, and belief in Resurrection reminds man of the great court where everything of man will be dealt with entirely.

Belief in these two great principles will certainly have an extraordinary effect in training and improvement of man.

The third command of Shu‘ayb was an inclusive practical order which envelops all social programs.

He said:

“…and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief.”

The word corruption has a vast meaning which encompasses any kind of vice, disturbance, destruction, deviation, and transgression. The opposite point to it is righteousness and reconciliation in the concept of which the whole constructive programs are gathered.

The Qur’anic term /ta‘au/ is derived from /’aa/ in the meaning of ‘to make mischief’, with the difference that this meaning is mostly used in relation of ethical corruptions. Therefore, mentioning the Qur’anic word /mufsidin/ after it is for emphasis.

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 37

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

37. “But they belied him, so the earth quake seized them, and they lay (deed) in their abodes motionless by the morning.”

The Arabic word /rajfah/ means the shake of the earth. The word /’arajif/ is used for the news ad words which cause instability in the faith and spirit of people, and the word /marjuf/ is used for those who say or write such matters.

This verse implies that the people of Shu‘ayb, instead of hearkening to the advices of this great reformer, tried to reject him.

"But they belied him…"

This act of theirs caused that a severe earthquake seized them. The verse continues saying:

"…so the earth quake seized them…"

The Arabic term /jaim/ is derived from /jam/ in the sense of 'sitting on the knee' and 'staying in one place'.

It is not improbable that this meaning refers to the fact that at the time of this severe earthquake they were asleep and suddenly they got up. As soon as they sat on their knees, the event did not give them respite, and by falling down the walls, which was accompanied with that fatal earthquake, they lost their own lives.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 38

وَعَاداً وَثَمُودَاْ وَقَد تَبَيَّنَ لَكُم مِن مَّسَاكِنِهِمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ

38. "And (We destroyed) 'Ad and Thamud, and it has become clear to you from their dwelling-places, and Satan made their deeds fair-seeming unto them, so he kept them back from the (right) path, though they were keen-sighted."

Pride, self-admiration, and boasting for wealth and power are some examples of satanic ornamentations.

Man naturally loves beauty and adornment, and the Satan misuses this man's inner quality.

In this verse, the words are about the people of 'Ad and the people of Thamud without mentioning any thing about their prophets (Hud and Salih) and their talks to these two obstinate peoples, because they were two known nations that the story of their prophets has been repeatedly referred to in other verses of the Qur'an.

It says:

"And (We destroyed) 'Ad and Thamud…"

Then, it adds implying that the ruins of their cities in the lands of Hijr and Yemen are alongside your way.

"…and it has become clear to you from their dwelling-places…"

In your journeys toward Yemen and Syria for commerce and trade, every year you cross the land Hijr, which is located in the north of Arabia, and the land of 'Ahqaf, which is located in the south and near to Yemen, and you observe the ruins of the cities of 'Ad and Thamud with your own eyes; then why do you not take an example?

Then, the noble verse points to the main cause of their wretchedness and says:

"…and Satan made their deeds fair-seeming unto them, so he kept them back from the (right) path…"

They treated like that while they had keen eyes and intellect. Their nature was on Monotheism and piety, and the Divine prophets had also shown them sufficiently the right path.

The verse continues saying:

"…though they were keen-sighted."

Some commentators have taken this sentence in the sense of having vigilant eyes and enough wisdom, while some others have meant it into ‘safe nature’, and some others into correct use of the guidance of Divine prophets.

It does not matter that the holy verse contains all these meanings, indicating that they were not ignorant, but formerly they knew the truth well and they had vigilant conscience, enough intellect, and the prophets completed the argument for them, yet they left the invitation of the prophets and went after the temptations of Satan, and day after another day their evil deeds seemed beautiful to them, and they reached a point where they had no way to return.

The law of reaction burnt these dry, fruitless pieces of wood in fire of their deeds, and this was their own compensation.

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 39

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُم مُّوسَي بِالْبَيِّـنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ

39. “And (We destroyed) Korah, and Pharaoh, and Haman; and indeed Moses came unto them with clear proofs, but they behaved haughtily in the land, yet they could not outstrip (Us).”

The end of arrogance is destruction and their evil fate is a gazing-stock. Allah’s way of treatment is to complete argument and then taking to task will come forth.

In this holy verse, the Qur’an mentions the names of three persons each of whom was a clear sample of a satanic power.

It says:

“And (We destroyed) Korah, and Pharaoh, and Haman…”

Korah was the epiphany of wealth together with pride, egoism, and negligence. Pharaoh was the epiphany of arrogant power furnished with mischievousness; and Haman was an example of being the assistant of the oppressive tyrants.

Then, the verse says:

“…and indeed Moses came unto them with clear proofs, but they behaved haughtily in the land…”

Korah relied on his own wealth, ornament, treasures, and knowledge, while Pharaoh and Haman relied on having army, martial forces, and the great power of propagation among unaware people.

Yet, with those abilities they had they could not precede Allah and escape from the grips of His power.

The verse continues saying:

“…yet they could not outstrip (Us).”

Allah issued the command of destruction of Korah for the land, which was the place of his rest and comfort, and He commanded water, the cause of their life, to destroy Pharaoh and Haman. For destroying them, Allah did not mobilize the hosts of heavens and the earth, but what was the cause of their life executed the command of their death![6]

The Arabic term /sabiqin/ is the plural form of term /sabiq/ which means: ‘the one who precedes’ and if it says /ma kanu sabiqin/ (they did not overreach) its concept is that ‘they could not escape from the domain of the Power of Allah with all possibilities they had and be saved from the punishment of Allah; but He annihilated them with abasement and humiliation at the same moment He decided.

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 40

فَ ُ ً أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ فَمِنْهُم مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِباً وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الاَرْضَ وَمِنْهُم مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَـكِن كَانُوا اَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

40. “So each (one of them) We seized (in punishment) for his sin; and of them, against some We sent a violent tornado (with showers of stones), some were caught by a mighty Blast; some We caused the earth to swallow up, and some We drowned; and it was not Allah to do injustice to them, but they unto their own selves did injustice.”

We must not become proud when Allah gives us respite, since the end of sin is retribution, and it is easy for Allah to punish us with kinds of punishments.

Therefore, in this verse He says:

“So each (one of them) We seized (in punishment) for his sin…”

Indeed, since there were mentioned four groups in the previous two verses whose punishments were not mentioned there, (the people of ‘Ad, the people of Thamud, Korah, Pharaoh, and Haman), in the above verse their chastisements are stated sequentially, as follows:

“…and of them, against some We sent a violent tornado (with showers of stones)…”

The Qur’anic word /hasib/ means: ‘a violent wind bringing with it a shower of stones’. The Arabic word /hasban/ means ‘pebbles’.

The objective of mentioning this group is ‘the people of ‘Ad’ that, according to suras Ath-Thariyat, Al-Haqqah, and Qamar, a violent and harsh wind came over them for seven nights and eight days. It ruined their houses and threw their corpses here and there like the leaves of the trees in fall.[7]

The verse continues:

“…some were caught by a mighty Blast…”

We have said that the heavenly blast is the result of thunderbolts which are usually accompanied with earthquake at the center of its occurrence, and this was the chastisement which came down upon the people of Thamud, and some other peoples, as Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 67 says about the people of Thamud:

“And the (mighty) Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless corpses in their abodes.”

And in Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 81 the Qur’an says:

“And We caused the earth to swallow up him…”

This was the punishment which Korah, the rich, proud and arrogant person from the Children of Israel received; and, finally, Allah drowned some others of them.

The verse says:

"…some We caused the earth to swallow up, and some We drowned…"

We know that this meaning points to Pharaoh, Haman, and their followers which has been mentioned in different Suras of the Qur'an.

However, keeping this statement in mind, the above four chastisements are sequentially for the four evil groups whose deviation, stray, and sins were referred to in previous two verses without mentioning their punishments.

For an emphasis upon this fact that they got the result of their own deeds and reaped the product of the seed of which they themselves had scattered, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and it was not Allah to do injustice to them, but they unto their own selves did injustice."

Yes, the punishments in this world and the next world are some reactions and embodiments of man's deeds when they close all the doors of improvement and return to the truth to them.

Allah is more just than He does the slightest injustice and transgression to any person.

Like many other verses of the Qur'an, this verse clearly strengthens the principle of freedom of will in man, and makes this fact fully clear that making decision everywhere and for everything belongs to man himself, and Allah has created him free, and wanted him to be free.

Therefore, the belief of the followers of the school of fatalism, who also exist among Muslims, is made futile by this strong logic of the Qur'an.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 41

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَآءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتاً وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنكَبُوتِ لَوْكَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

41. "The parable of those who take guardians besides Allah is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house but verily the frailest of (all) houses is the house of the spider, if they but know (this)."

To use parables is one of the best methods applied in education, and the best parable is the parable which is tangible for all levels of people everywhere and in any time.

Taking the name of 'Ankabut (spider) from this verse, the Surah under discussion has been entitled 'Ankabut.

It has been narrated from Plato who said that fly is the greediest insect which, for its livelihood, often sits on pickle, confectionery, a taint, and a wound, but a spider weaves in a corner and has continence. It is interesting that Allah has set the most active and the greediest insect as the prey of the most retiring insect. A fly goes toward the spider and it hunts the fly by its webs.

However, in the previous verses the painful and sad fate of the mischievous, arrogant, obstinate, unjust, and self-loving pagans was stated. In this relation, in this verse there has been stated an interesting parable for those who take objects of worship and guardian besides Allah for themselves, in a way that the more we contemplate about this parable, the more points we gain from it.

It says:

"The parable of those who take guardians besides Allah is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house but verily the frailest of (all) houses is the house of the spider, if they but know (this)."

What an expressive and interesting parable, and what a comprehensive and minute simile it is!

You can be careful that every animal and insect has a house or a nest for itself, but none of them is as weak as the spider's house.

In principle, a house must have walls, a roof, and a door and it protects its owner from bad events, and maintains his food and necessary things in it. Some houses have not ceiling but they have at least a wall, or they have not walls while they have ceilings.

But the spider's house, which is made of a few very thin webs that has neither any wall, nor any ceiling, nor any yard, nor any door.

These are from one side. On the other side, its materials are so weak and unstable that they resist before no event, and if a mild wind blows, it will tear the webs entirely. If a few drops of rain fall on it, they destroy it wholly. The least flame of fire burns it. It will be torn up even with a little dust, and it will hang on the ceiling.

The false objects of worship of this group have neither any profit nor harm, nor can remove any difficulty, nor can be a place of refuge for any one of them on the day of affliction.

It is true that this house not only is a resting place for the spider, with its long legs, but also a snare for hunting insects and earning food, while comparing it with the houses of other animals and insects it is very weak and unstable.

Those who choose a support other than Allah, their support is as the web of spider. The crown and throne of persons like Pharaoh, the endless wealth of individuals such as Korah, the castles and treasures of the kings all are like the webs of a spider: They are weak, unstable, unreliable and ephemeral before the storm of events.

The history also shows that: verily none of these things can be the support of man, but those who rely on their faith and trust in Allah, they have relied on a firm and strong support.

It is also necessary to note that though the house of spider and its webs are used as a proverb for its weakness, that is one of the wonders of the world of creation and paying attention to it makes man more acquainted to the greatness of the Lord.

The webs of spider are made from some viscous liquid which is stored in some very small cavities as small as the needle-point located under its belly. This liquid has a special combination that when it is exposed to the weather it becomes hard and firm.

By its particular claws spider draws that liquid out from these cavities and makes its webs by it.

It is said that by this little liquid that it has, each spider is able to make about five hundred meters web.

Some commentators have said that the weakness of these webs is because of their extraordinary tenderness; else it is stronger than a steal string with the same thinness.

It is surprising that each of these webs sometimes comes out from a very small hole which is in its body. Now you may think that how tender, exact, and narrow every one of these secondary webs is produced!

Besides the wonderful materials which have been used in the structure of a spider's house, its structural shape is also interesting. If you look carefully at the sound houses of spiders, you will see an interesting scenery like a sun with its sunbeams that are built on some particular bases made of the same webs.

This house, of course, is a suitable and ideal house for spider, but on the whole, there cannot be considered a house weaker than that; and the objects that they worship other than Allah are like that house.

Regarding the fact that spider is not only of one kind, and some scholars claim that more than twenty thousand sorts of spider have been known until now and each of them has some specialties, the greatness and power of Allah is made in the creation of this small creature.

However, the application of the Qur'anic word /'auliya'/ (the plural form of /waliy/) instead of /'asnam/ (idols) may point to this fact that not only the man-made objects of worship, but also the leaders of non-religious groups are in the same row.

The sentence /lau kanu ya'lamun/ (if they but know), that is mentioned at the end of the verse, is about the idols and false objects of worship, not about the weakness of spider's house, for its weakness is known to all.

Thus, the concept of this sentence is: if they were aware of the weakness of the objects of worship and the position that they have chosen other than Allah, they would know well that these are like the web of spider from the point of weakness.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 42-43

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ مِن شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

وَتِلْكَ الأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَآ إِلاَّ الْعَالِمُونَ

42. "Verily, Allah knows whatever thing they call upon besides Him; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

43. "And such are the parables We set forth for mankind, but none understand them but the learned (ones)."

The man's inclinations to other than Allah (s.w.t.) are in the knowledge of Allah, and we must make us ready to answer for it.

The verse says:

"Verily, Allah knows whatever thing they call upon besides Him…"

Instead of relying on other than Allah, which is as weak and baseless as the spider's house, we must rely on Allah, Who is the Mighty, the invincible.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

However, in this verse the Qur'an threatens and warns these negligent unaware polytheists, and implicitly says that Allah knows whatever they call other than Him.

Neither their manifest polytheism nor their hidden one is concealed to Allah, and He is the Mighty and the Absolute Wise. If He gives respite to them, it is not for the sake that He does not know or His Power is finite, but His wisdom requires that He gives enough respite to them so that He completes the argument to all, and those who are eligible for guidance, be guided.

Some commentators have taken this sentence as an indication to the pretexts that the polytheists sought for themselves.

They used to say that if they worshipped those idols, it would not be because of the idols themselves and they were, indeed, some symbols of stars of the sky and of their prophets and angels. They said, in fact, they prostrated for them and respected them, and their 'good and evil', and their 'benefit and harm' are in their authority.

The Holy Qur'an implies that Allah knows what things the polytheists call. Whomever they may be and whatever they may be, they are like the web of spider comparing the power of His command, and they have nothing to give them.

The next verse may refer to the rejection of the enemies of the Prophet (S) who pointed to these parables and said that how is it possible that Allah, Who is the Creator of the earth and heaven, brings forth parables to spider, fly, insects, and the like?

In answer to them, the Qur'an says:

"And such are the parables We set forth for mankind, but none understand them but the learned (ones)."

The importance and tenderness of a parable is not in its being small or big, but it is in its fitness with the aim. Sometimes its being small is its most significant point of strength.

For example, when the words are mostly about the weak and baseless supports, the parable must be chosen from spider which can illustrate this weakness, instability and lack of resistance better than anything else. This is the identity of eloquence and elegance.

That is why it is said that only the learned ones can recognize the elegance and elaborations of the Qur'an.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 44

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

44. "Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth, verily in this is a sign for the believers."

The creation of the world has an aim. Our look unto the world must have an aim, too.

Materialists usually stop in recognizing the phenomena, but worshippers of Allah (theists) pass through phenomena and reach the recognition of Allah and Faith.

Therefore, this verse announces:

"Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth…"

There is no vanity and falsehood in His affair. If He brings forth parable to spider and its weak house, it is not undue; and if He has chosen a small creature for the parable, it is for stating the truth, else, He is the creator of the greatest galaxies and systems in heaven.

It is interesting that, at the end of these verses, the Qur'an emphasizes on 'Knowledge' and 'Faith'.

In one place it says:

"…if they but know"[8],

and in another place it says:

"…but none understand them but the learned (ones)."[9]

And here it says:

"…verily in this is a sign for the believers."

This meaning points to this fact that the feature of the Truth is clear like the sunshine, but it appears in receptive ones. It needs an aware and seeking heart, a vigilant and submissive spirit before Allah; and if these blind-hearted persons do not see the Divine beauty, it is not because of its being hidden, but it is because of their blind eyes.

Notes

1. Surah Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 36
2. 3.
Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 78
4. The verse under discussion
5. Ruh-ul-Bayan, Vol. 6, P. 467
6. The explanation of the life of Korah and the destruction of Pharaoh and his people have been mentioned in the commentary of Surah Al-Qasas, and Surah Al-'A'raf.
7. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verses 5 to 7
8. The current Surah, verse 41
9. The verses under discussion, No. 43

The End of Part (Juz') 20

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 14

From Surah al- ‘Ankabut (29) verse 45 to Surah al-Azhab (33)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur’an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *“An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an”* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 10
What is a 'Commentary'? 11
The Current Commentary 12
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 13
The Problems in Translating 13
Translators Note 14
Editor's Note 15
Notes 17
Acknowledgment 18
Notes 18
References 19
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 19
English Translations of Qur'an 19
Supporting Technical References 20
Phraseological and Philological Sources 20
A Presentation to Muslims 22
Notes 23
Surah Al-'Ankabut, Section 5: To Argue in the Best Way Possible ... 24
Part (Juz') 21 24
Surah Al-'Ankabut, Chapter 29 - Verse 45 24
Some Traditions 25
The Effect of Prayer in an Individual and in Society 27
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 46 30
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 47 32
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 48 35
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 49 35
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 50 37
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 51 38
Notes 39
Section 6: The Disbelievers Warned 41
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 52 41
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 53-54 42
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 55 43
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 56 44
Occasion of Revelation 44
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 57 45
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 58 46
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 59 47
Some Traditions On Patience and Confidence 48
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 60 48
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 61 49
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 62 50
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 63 51
Notes 52
Section 7: The Sincere Seekers Shall Be Guided Aright 53
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 64 53

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 65 54
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 66 55
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 67 56
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 68 56
Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 69 57
Note to the Following Points 58
Notes 60
Surah Ar-Room, Chapter 30 61
(The Romans) 61
No. 30 (Revealed at Mecca) 61
60 Verses in 6 Sections 61
The Virtue of the Surah 61
The Feature of the Surah 61
Notes 61
Section 1:The Defeat of the Romans Prophesied 62
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 1-5 62
The Occasion of Revelation 62
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 6 65
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 7 65
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 8 67
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 9 68
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 10 70
Notes 70
Section 2: The Five Times of the Daily Glorification of Allah 72
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 11-13 72
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 14-16 73
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 17-18 74
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 19 76
Notes 78
Section 3: The Might of Allah Manifesting in Nature 79
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 20 79
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 21 80
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 22 82
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 23 83
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 24 85
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 25 86
A Complete Course of Theology 87
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 26-27 89
Notes 91
Section 4: Islam, the Natural Religion 93
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 28 93
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 29 94
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 30 95
A Few Traditions Upon the Nature of Theology 97
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 31 98
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 32 99
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 33 100
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 34-35 101

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 36 102
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 37 104
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 38 105
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 39 107
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 40 109
Notes 110
Section 5: Suffering of the World Through What Men Have Themselves Wrought 111
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 41 111
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 42 111
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 43 112
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 44-45 113
Note 114
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 46 115
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 47 117
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 48 117
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 49-50 118
Surah Ar-Room - Verses 51-52 120
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 53 122
Notes 124
Section 6: The Evidence of Those Given Knowledge and Faith 125
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 54 125
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 55 126
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 56 127
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 57 128
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 58 129
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 59 130
Surah Ar-Room - Verse 60 130
Notes 132
Surah Luqman, Chapter 31 133
(Luqman) 133
No. 31 (Revealed at Mecca) 133
34 Verses in 4 Sections 133
The Feature of the Surah 133
The Virtue of the Surah 133
Section 1: Qur'an, a Guidance and Mercy for the Righteous 134
Surah Luqman - Verses 1-4 134
Surah Luqman - Verse 5 135
Surah Luqman - Verse 6 136
The Occasion of Revelation 136
Surah Luqman - Verse 7 139
Surah Luqman - Verses 8-9 139
Surah Luqman - Verse 10 140
Surah Luqman - Verse 11 142
Note 143
Section 2: The Ethics Preached Through Luqman 144
Surah Luqman - Verse 12 144
Luqman, the Wise, and His Feature 145

Some Parts of Luqman's Admonitions 146
Wisdom, Knowledge, and Worship 147
The Value of Wisdom 147
How Can Wisdom Be Obtained? 148
Some Examples of Wisdom 148
Surah Luqman - Verse 13 148
A Few Points 149
1. The Meaning of Polytheism 149
2. The Effects of Polytheism 150
3- Diversity 150
4- Disgrace in Hereafter 150
The Signs of Polytheism 151
The Motives of Polytheism 151
Struggle Against Polytheism 151
The Personality of Luqman 152
Surah Luqman - Verse 14 153
A Few Traditions About Parents 155
Surah Luqman - Verse 15 155
Surah Luqman - Verse 16 157
Surah Luqman - Verse 17 158
Surah Luqman - Verse 18 159
Some Examples of the Modesty of the Friends of Allah 160
Surah Luqman - Verse 19 160
Some Traditions on Islamic Rules of Etiquette 161
Note 162
Section 3: He Who Submits Himself to Allah Holds the Never-Breaking Firmest Rope 163
Surah Luqman - Verse 20 163
Surah Luqman - Verse 21 164
Surah Luqman - Verse 22 165
Surah Luqman - Verses 23-24 166
Surah Luqman - Verse 25 168
Surah Luqman - Verse 26 168
Surah Luqman - Verse 27 169
Surah Luqman - Verse 28 171
Surah Luqman - Verse 29 171
Surah Luqman - Verse 30 172
Notes 173
Section 4: Let Not the Life of This World Deceive Anyone 174
Surah Luqman - Verse 31 174
Surah Luqman - Verse 32 175
A Few Points Upon Sincerity 177
The Ways of Obtaining Sincerity 177
Surah Luqman - Verse 33 179
Surah Luqman - Verse 34 181
Surah As-Sajdah, Chapter 32 183
(The Adoration) 183
No. 32 (Revealed at Mecca) 183

30 Verses in 3 Sections 183
The Feature of the Surah 183
Section 1: Qur'an, the Book From the Lord of the Worlds 184
Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 1-2 184
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 3 185
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 4 186
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 5 188
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 6 189
Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 7-8 190
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 9 192
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 10 193
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 11 194
Notes 195
Section 2: A Believer and Disbeliever Cannot Be Equal 197
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 12 197
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 13 197
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 14 198
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 15 199
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 16 200
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 17 201
A Few Traditions Upon Midnight Prayer 202
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 18 202
Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 19-20 203
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 21 205
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 22 206
Notes 207
Section 3: Similitude of Moses' Missions 208
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 23 208
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 24 209
Patience and Perseverance in Divine Leaders 210
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 25 212
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 26 213
Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 27 213
Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 28-30 215
Notes 216
Surah Al-'Ahzab, Chapter 33 217
(The Clans) 217
No. 33 (Revealed at Medina) 217
73 Verses in 9 Sections 217
The Feature of the Surah Al-'Ahzab 217
The Virtue of Surah Al-'Ahzab 217
Notes 217
Section 1: The Prophet Muhammad's Claim Upon the Souls of the Believers 218
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 1 218
Occasion of Revelation 218
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 2-3 219
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 4 220

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 5 223
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 6 225
What does 'the Prophet is closer to the believers' mean? 226
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 7 227
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 8 229
Notes 230
Section 2: The Treachery of the Hypocrites Exposed 231
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 9 231
Points Worthy to Be Noted 232
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 10-11 232
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 12 235
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 13 237
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 14 238
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 15 239
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 16 240
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 17 240
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 18 241
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 19 242
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 20 243
Notes 244
Section 3: An Excellent Pattern in the Apostle Muhammad 246
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 21 246
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 22 247
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 23 248
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 24 249
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 25 250
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 26-27 251
Some Points 254
1- The Main Root of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah 254
2- The Event of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah 254
3- The Sequels of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah 256
Notes 256
Section 4: The Ahlul Bayt Divinely Made Pure 257
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 28 257
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 29 258
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 30 258
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 31 260
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 32 260
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 33 262
Who Are the Prophet's Family (Ahlul Bayt)? 264
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 34 264
A Few Points 265
1- The 'Purification Verse' is the Clear Proof of Immaculacy 265
2- Whom is the Purification Verse About? 266
3- Is Allah's Will, Here, Genetic or Religious? 269
Notes 270
Section 5: No Believer Shall Have Any Choice Against the Command of the Prophet of Allah 272

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 35 272
The Occasion of Revelation 272
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 36 276
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 37 277
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 38 279
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 39 280
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 40 281
Notes 285
Section 6: The Prophet Sent as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad-tiding and Bright Lamp 286
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 41-42 286
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 43-44 288
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 45-46 289
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 47-48 292
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 49 294
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 50 296
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 51 299
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 52 301
Notes 303
Section 7: Those Who Annoy Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ... 304
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 53 304
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 54 306
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 55 306
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 56 308
A Few Points 309
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 57 311
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 58 312
Notes 313
Section 8: The Knowledge of the Hour of Judgment 315
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 59 315
Some Corruptions of Unveiling 316
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 60 316
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 61-62 317
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 63 319
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 64-65 320
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 66 320
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 67 320
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 68 321
Notes 322
Section 9: He Who Obeys Allah and His Apostle Achieves a Mighty Success 323
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 69 323
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 70-71 324
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 72 326
Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 73 330
Notes 331

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Al-‘Ankabut, Section 5: To Argue in the Best Way Possible

Part (Juz') 21

Surah Al-‘Ankabut, Chapter 29 - Verse 45

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اتْلُ مَآ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ إِنَّ الصَّلاَةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

45. “Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book, and establish the prayer, verily prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is greater, and Allah knows what you do.”

In this verse Allah’s commands to the Prophet (S) for reciting the Qur’an and establishing the prayer have come beside each other and it is for the sake that Qur’an and prayer are two strengthening sources of strength.

Allah, Who informs His Prophet (S) of a heavy responsibility, tells him to take help from two strengthening sources for performing this heavy responsibility; one is recitation of the Qur’an, and the other is establishing prayers.

However, after the end of different parts of the life story of the former nations and the great prophets and the unpleasant manner of those nations with those Divine leaders, and the painful end of their lives, in order to comfort and console the Prophet (S) and for strengthening his spirit and showing a general and conclusive policy, the Qur’an, addressing him, commands him and at first says:

“Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book…”

He (S) is commanded to recite these verses, because whatever he wants is found in them: knowledge and wisdom, advice and admonition, the criterion of the cognition of right and wrong, the means of enlightening of the heart and spirit, and the path of every group and people to move along, all are in the Qur’an.

He should recite it and apply it in his life, recite it and be inspired by it and recite it and enlighten his heart by the light of its recitation.

Next to this command, which is, indeed, an instructive one, it pays to the second command which is the main branch of education.

It says:

“…and establish the prayer, verily prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil…”

Of course, since the nature of prayer reminds man the strongest restraining factor, i.e. the firm belief in origin and Resurrection, it has an impedimental effect from indecency and evil.

He who stands in prayer, says ‘Allahu Akbar’, and calls Allah higher than and beyond everything, he remembers his bounties, praises and glorifies Him, praises Him for His mercifulness and compassionateness,

remembers the Day of His Judgment, confesses his servitude to Him, seeks for His help, asks Him to lead him to the straight Way, and he refuges to Him for the path of those inflicted with His wrath and those gone astray.[1]

No doubt, there will appear a movement in the heart and spirit of such a person toward the truth, purity, and piety.

He bows for Allah, he falls in prostration before Him, he contemplates deeply in His greatness, and forgets overweening and self-admiration.

He certifies to His Oneness, attests to the prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad (S), and he sends salutation to His Prophet and asks Allah in supplication that He appoints him among the righteous servants.

All these things create a wave of spirituality in him, a wave that can be considered as a barrier against sins.

This action is repeated several times in a day and night, and when he gets up in the morning he is drowned in the remembrance of Allah.

At midday, when he is busy with material life, suddenly he hears the sound of 'Allahu 'Akbar' called by Mu'azzin, he ceases his current program and hastens to go to Him.

And even at the end of the day and at the beginning of the night, before he goes to bed to rest, he prattles with Him and makes his heart the centre of the rays of His Light. Moreover, while he is preparing himself for establishing prayer, he washes himself and purifies himself, he sends away unlawful things and anger from him and goes toward Him.

All these affairs have an impedimental effect against the line of indecency and evil. But as much as every prayer contains the conditions of perfection and the essence of worship, it keeps one away from indecency and evil. Sometimes it is a general and inclusive prohibition and sometimes it is a limited and partial prohibition.

It is often impossible that someone keeps up prayer but it affects him nothing, even when his prayer is untrue, even if he is sinful. This kind of prayer, of course, has a little effect, and if such persons did not keep up that very prayer, they would be more polluted than that.

Speaking more clearly, the prohibition from indecency and evil has naturally many degrees, and according to observing its conditions, every prayer deserves some of these degrees.

Some Traditions

1- A tradition indicates that the Prophet of Islam (S) once said:

"The five ritual prayers is like a stream with flowing wholesome water at the door of the house of one of you in which he washes himself five times a day, then there will remain no dirt (over his body)."[2]

2- Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"I recommend you to prayer and protecting it because verily it is the best deed and it is the pillar of your religion."[3]

3- We recite in a tradition from the Prophet (S) that a young man from the Helpers ('Ansar) once established prayer with the Prophet (S) while he was polluted with some ugly sins. Some persons went to the Prophet (S) and told him his circumstance.

He (S) said:

"Verily his prayer will finally purify him from his pollution one day."[4]

4- This very effect of prayer is so important that some Islamic traditions refer to it as the criterion of the accepted prayer and the none-accepted prayer.

For instance, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The one who likes to know whether his prayer has been accepted or not, he should see whether his prayer hindered him from indecency and evil, then with the same scale that it has hindered him, his prayer is accepted from him."[5]

5- Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Islam has been founded on five things: the prayer (Salat), the poor-rate (Zakat), Hajj pilgrimage, fasting, and wilayat (mastership) of Ahlul Bayt (as)."[6]

6- The Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"Whoever protects his five (ritual) prayers, on the Day of Hereafter they will be light, guide, and (means of) deliverance for him."[7]

7- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The first thing that will be reckoned from a servant is the prayer. Then if the prayer is accepted, his other (good) deeds will be accepted, but if it is rejected his other (good) deeds will not be accepted either."[8]

8- Imam Baqir (as) said:

"When our children are five years old, we order them to establish the prayer, then when your children become seven years old, order them to establish the prayer."[9]

9- The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah says: 'Verily I have a covenant for my servant that if he establishes the prayer in its time I may not punish him, and that I admit him in Paradise without reckoning."[10]

10- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever takes his prayer light will not be of me and by Allah he will not arrive unto me in the pond (of Kauthar)."[11]

11- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever intentionally abandons the prayer his name will be written on the door of Hell among those who enter it."[12]

12- The Prophet (S) said:

"Never comes the time of prayer but an angel calls among people: 'O people! Stand up and by means of your prayer, extinguish the fire you have kindled upon your selves'."[13]

Finally, at the end of the verse the Qur'an adds:

"…and certainly the remembrance of Allah is greater…"

The appearance of the above sentence is that there is a more important statement for prayer than this.

That is, one of other important effects and blessings of the prayer, which is also even more important than prohibition from indecency and evil, is that it reminds man of Allah that is the main cause of every goodness and prosperity.

Even the main factor of prohibition from indecency and evil is this very 'remembrance of Allah', too. Its superiority, in fact, is in that it is also counted the cause and the basis.

In principle, the remembrance of Allah is the source of life and peace for the hearts, and nothing is comparable with it.

The Qur'an says:

"…Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."[14]

In principle, the essence of all worships, irrespective of prayer and other than that, is the remembrance of Allah: The sayings of prayer, the acts of prayer, the preliminary deeds of prayer and the supplications after prayer all, indeed, revive the remembrance of Allah in man's heart.

It is noteworthy that in Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 14 this philosophy of prayer has been pointed out, and Allah tells Moses:

"…and establish prayer for My remembrance."

And in view of the fact that the men's intentions and the level of the attention of their hearts in prayer, as well as other worships, is very different.

So at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and Allah knows what you do."

Allah knows the deeds you do in hidden or manifestly, the intentions you have in your mind, and the words you utter by your tongue.

The Effect of Prayer in an Individual and in Society

Prayer is not a thing the philosophy of which can be concealed to anyone, yet attention to the text of the verses of the Qur'an and Islamic narrations lead us to some more narrow points in this grand.

1. The spirit, bases, preliminary, result and, finally, the philosophy of prayer is the remembrance of Allah. It is that very 'remembrance of Allah' which has been mentioned in the above verse as the most superior result.

Of course, it must be a remembrance which paves the way for contemplation, and a contemplation which leads to action; as Imam Sadiq (as) on the commentary of the phrase: /wa liðikr-ullah-i-'akbar/ says:

"The remembrance of Allah at the time of performing a 'lawful' and 'unlawful' action."[15]

(That is, one must remember Allah and goes to a lawful thing and renounces an unlawful one.)

2. The prayer is a means for wiping out one's sins and for Allah's forgiveness, because, more or less, prayer invites man to repenting and amending the past.

So we recite in a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) that he asked:

"If there is a stream at the door of the house of one of you in which he washes himself five times a day, will there remain anything from the dirt over his body?"

He was answered:

'No'.

Then he (S) said:

"Verily the parable of the prayer is like the parable of the flowing stream. Whenever he keeps up prayer, the sins he has committed between two ritual prayers will be vanished."[16]

Thus, the wounds which the man's soul obtains because of sins will be cured by prayer as a vulnerary, and the rust covered the heart will be wiped out.

3. Prayer is a barrier against the future sins, because it strengthens the essence of faith in man, and grows the plant of piety in his heart, and we know that 'Faith' and 'piety' are two strong dams before sins.

This is the same thing that has been stated in the above verse as the prohibition of indecency and evil, and it is the same thing that many Islamic Traditions refer to. There were many sinful persons whose story life was explained to the leaders of Islam and these leaders said that prayer would rectify them; and it did.

4. Prayer removes negligence. The greatest affliction for those who pave the path of truth is that they forget the aim of their creation and are utterly busy with the material life and temporary joys.

But prayer, which is established five times a day and in different hours, it ceaselessly warns man and reminds him the aim of his creation; it reiterates him his situation in the world. This is a great bounty that man has a means which warns him earnestly several times a day of his duty.

5. Prayer breaks egotism and haughtiness for everyday a person performs seventeen units of prayer and in each of them he puts his forehead on the dust before his Lord and he sees him not only a very small thing before the greatness of Allah but also naught before Infinity.

Prayer removes the curtains of pride and self-loving and destroys arrogance and self-superiority.

It is for this reason that Ali (as) in his famous tradition, wherein the philosophies of Islamic worships are explained, next to Faith, refers to the first worship which is prayer with this very aim and says:

"Allah has enjoined Faith for purification from polytheism, and Salat (prayer) for purification from vanity…"[17]

6. Prayer is a means of fostering the virtues of morals, and that of man's spiritual perfection, because it brings out man from limited material world and surrounded nature, and invites him to the kingdom of heavens, and makes him high in the same level with the angels. Without any agent, he sees him before Allah and speaks with Him.

The repetition of prayer during day and night, and emphasizing on the attributes of Allah, such as: mercifulness, compassionateness, and greatness, especially with taking help from the different suras of the Qur'an, which are recited next to Surah Al-Fatihah, that are the best invitors to goodnesses and purifications, have a considerable effect in the growth of the ethical virtues in man.

Upon the philosophy of prayer, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition says:

"For the God-fearing, prayer is a means of seeking nearness (to Allah)."[18]

7. Prayer gives value and spirit to other deeds, because it makes the essence of sincerity alive in man. Prayer is a collection of: sincere intention, pure sayings, and noble deeds.

The repetition of these things every night and day grows the seeds of other good deeds in man's spirit and strengthens the essence of sincerity in him.

In his famous tradition, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), after his head was cleft by the sword of Ibn-Muljam, the wretched, said:

"…(Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion."[19]

We know that when the pillar of a tent breaks or falls, the ropes around it are useless. Such is when the relation of the servants through prayer abolishes, other deeds lose their effect.

Besides the content of the prayer, regarding its veracity conditions, it invites man to purification of his life, because we know the place where he perform prayer, the pieces of his clothing, the carpet on which he keeps up his prayer, the water with which he makes ablution or performs a total ablution, the place where he makes and performs his ablution, all must be purified from usurpation and from oppressing the rights of others.

He who is polluted with oppression, injustice, usury, usurpation, defrauding, bribery, and obtaining some unlawful properties, how can he prepare the necessities of the prayer? Therefore, the repetition of prayer for five times a day itself is an invitation to observing the rights of others.

8. Besides the conditions of validity, the prayer must have the conditions of perfection that observing them is also another effective factor for abandoning a great deal of sins.

In jurisprudent books and tradition sources, there are also mentioned many things as the barriers of the acceptance of the prayer, including drinking alcoholic liquors, about which a tradition says:

"The prayer of the drinker of alcoholic liquor is not accepted until forty days except that he repents."[20]

A large number of Islamic narrations indicate that among those whose prayer will not be accepted is the leader of oppressors.

In some other traditions, it has been declared that the prayer of the one who does not pay poor-alms (zakat) will not be accepted.

Also some Islamic traditions denote that eating unlawful food, or egotism, egoism, and overweening are among the barriers of the acceptance of prayer. It is evident that how much providing these conditions of acceptance is constructive.

9. Prayer strengthens the spirit of discipline in man, because it must be performed exactly at proper times since before or after their time the prayers are not valid. Also, observing other rites and ordinances in relation to intention, standing up, bowing, prostration, and the like make the acceptance of discipline in life programs quite easy.

All of these are the benefits which exist in prayer, and if we add the property of congregation prayer to it, that the spirit of prayer is its being in congregation, it has other abundant blessings that we do not explain them here.

We conclude our definition and explanation about the secrets and philosophy of prayer with a tradition narrated from Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as).

In answer to a letter in which the philosophy of prayer was asked, he said:

"The reason of the legislation of prayer is acknowledgement to the Lordship of Allah, struggle against polytheism and idolatry, standing in front of Allah in utmost humbleness and submission, confession to the sins and asking forgiveness for the past faults, and putting forehead on the ground for glorification of Allah every day.

Again, the aim is that man may always be sensible and reminded, so that negligence does not encompass his heart, and he might not become proud, but he should be humble and be interested in increasing the merits of religion and worldly life.

Moreover, he must remember Allah every night and day which can be provided under the light of prayer. It causes man not to forget his Master, Divisor, and Creator, and the rebellious and disobedient soul does not overcome him.

And this very attention to Allah and standing in front of Him restrain man from committing sins and hinder him from kinds of mischief."[21]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 46

وَلاَ تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلاَّ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

46. "And do not dispute with the People of the Book save in the best way, except for those of them who act unjustly, and say: 'We believe in what has been sent down unto us and sent down unto you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit'."

Islam accepts the change of ideas, correct debates between the followers of different schools of thought, cultures and nations. A dispute is accepted that the content of which and the style of its words are the best.

In the former holy verses, the words were mostly about the method of tackling the obstinate haughty, and ignorant 'idol-worshippers' that, because of their conjectures, they were spoken to with a harsh logic, and their objects of worship were considered weaker than the spider's web.

In the verses under discussion, the words are about the disputation with the 'People of the Book' which must be milder, because, at least, they had heard a part of the Divine prophets, instructions and the heavenly Books and they had some more receptivity for a logical debate, and every one must be talked with according to the standard of his wisdom, knowledge and morals.

At first, it says:

"And do not dispute with the People of the Book save in the best way…"

The Qur'anic phrase: /la tujadilu/ (do not dispute) is derived from /jidal/ which originally means: 'To spin thread' and 'fastening it'.

This term is also used for a firm building and the like; and when two persons begin disputing, in fact, each of them tries to turn the other from his thought. This action is called 'disputation'; a wrestling is also called in Arabic /jidal/. The purpose of it, here, however, is logical discussions and argumentations.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'allati hiya ahsan/ (the best way) is a very inclusive phrase which envelopes all of the correct and suitable ways of discussion, including the expressions, the content of the speech, its tone, and other acts accompanied with it.

Thus, the concept of this sentence is that the expressions must be uttered politely, the tone of speech must be friendly and its content must be reasonable, the voice must be free from shouting and any roughness and rudeness which cause the aspersion of honour. Also the gesticulations, which are usually the complement of man's statement, all must be performed with the same method and style.

How beautiful are the expressions of the Qur'an that they carry a great deal of meaning by a very short sentence!

All these are for the sake that the aim of disputation and discussion is not self superiority and putty the other party to shame, but the aim is effect of the word and its penetration in the depth of the mind of the opposite party; and the best way for reaching this aim is this very method of the Qur'an.

Many a time it happens that if the speaker states in a way that the opposite party takes it as his own thought not as the speaker's thought, he may show inclination sooner since a man is interested in his own thoughts as he is interested in his children.

It is just for the same reason that the Qur'an propounds many issues in the form of question and answer so that their answers come out from the inside of the addressee's mind and he considers it as his own thought.

But, of course, every law has usually an exception, too. For example, this very general principle in Islamic argumentation for some instances may be rendered as the sign of weakness and despicableness, or the opposite party may be so proud that this kind of humane treatment increases his dare and boldness.

Therefore, continuing the verse, as an exception, it says:

"…except for those of them who act unjustly…"

These are those who acted unjustly both to themselves and to others, and concealed many verses of Allah in order that people would not be acquainted with the characteristics of the Prophet of Islam (S).

These are those who constantly acted unjustly and trod on the commands of Allah where they were against their interests.

These are those who acted unjustly and brought forth some superstitions similar to that of the polytheists who called Jesus, or Ezra, as Allah's child.

And, finally, those who often acted unjustly and, instead of logical argument, used swords, betook to force, and tended to naughtiness and conspiracy.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an introduces one of the clear examples of 'dispute in the best way', which can be a living sample for this discussion, where it announces:

"…and say: 'We believe in what has been sent down unto us and sent down unto you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit'."

What a beautiful meaning, and what an interesting tone! It is the tone of Unity and faith unto whatever has been sent down from the side of Allah,

and deleting all bigotries and separations; and, finally, the Unity of the object of worship and submitting to Allah without any reservation.

This is an example of 'disputation in the best way' that whoever hears it will be attracted to it. This shows that Islam is not the seeker of a group, and is not the seeker of disunion, the call of Islam is the call of unity and being submitted to any right word.

There are many examples of this discussion in the Qur'an.

Among them is the sample to which Imam Sadiq (as) refers in a tradition where he says:

"Disputation in the best way is like the subject which has been mentioned at the end of Surah Ya-Sin about the rejecters of Resurrection, when they brought the rotten bones before the Prophet (S) and said:

'…Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten?'[22]

He (S) answered:

'…He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first…'[23]

'He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree…'"[24], [25]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 47

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَؤُلاَءِ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَآ إِلاَّ الْكَافِرُونَ

47. "And thus have We sent down unto you the Book. So (some of) those whom we have given the Book believe in it, and of these (pagans) there are those who believe in it, and none deny Our signs except the unbelievers."

The Qur'an invites all the followers of the former religions to Islam, because the Divine guidance is certain and necessary, though whole people do not accept the guidance.

As an emphasis upon the four principles mentioned in the previous verse, this verse says:

"And thus have We sent down unto you the Book…"

Yes, this Book (the Qur'an) has been sent down based on Unity of the object of worship, Unity of the invitation of the former true prophets, submitting to the command of Allah (s.w.t.) without any reservation, and disputation in the best way.

Some commentators have said that the purpose of the abovementioned sentence is the similarity of the descent of the Qur'an upon the Prophet of Islam (S) to the descent of the former Books to other Divine prophets. That is, in the same way that Allah sent down heavenly Books to the former prophets, He sent down the Qur'an to him (S), too.

But the first commentary seems more precise, though it is possible to consider both of them, too.

Then, the Qur'an adds:

"…So (some of) those whom we have given the Book believe in it…"

The reason of their belief is that not only they have found its characteristics in their own Books but also, from the view of general principles, its content is consistent with the content of their own Books.

Of course, we know that the entire People of the Book (the Jews and Christians) did not believe in the Prophet of Islam (S). Therefore, the above sentence refers to those true believers and truth seekers free from bigotry who deserve the appellation of 'People of the Book' to be used only for them.

Then, the Qur'an adds about some people of Mecca and the pagans of Allah:

"…and of these (pagans) there are those who believe in it…"

And, at the end of the verse, concerning the disbelievers of both groups, it says:

"…and none deny Our signs except the unbelievers."

Regarding to the fact that the concept of the Qur'anic word /jahd/ is that: one believes in something but he denies it, the above sentence means: even the disbelievers confess the greatness of these verses in their hearts, and they see the signs of veracity in them and consider the Prophet's manner and his pure life, as well as that of his followers, as a reason for its nobility, but they deny often t as the result of their bigotry, stubbornness, blindly imitation from their ancestors, or for protecting their unlawful fleeting interests.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an defines the opposition of different nations against this heavenly Book.

On one line, there are believers, including the scholars of the People of the Book, True believers, and the polytheists who were thirsty of the Truth and when they found it they joined to it; and, on the other line, there were the obstinate deniers who saw the truth but, like bats, they hid themselves from it, because the gloom of infidelity had become as a part of their entity and they were afraid of the light of Faith.

It is noteworthy that this group were also pagan, but the second emphasis on their infidelity may be for the sake that they were not offered proof before and the real infidelity exists in them just now that the argument has been completed to them and they have abandoned the Straight Way knowingly and pave the wrong way.

By the way, for attracting the hearts and influencing the truth into others' thoughts, only attaching the strong and powerful proofs are not enough, but, in this stage, the style of speaking with the opposite party and the method of discussion has the deepest effect.

There are many persons who are careful and narrow in discussions and know the scientific subjects very well, but they are not so successful in influencing in others' hearts by their speech since they are not acquainted well with the way of 'dispute in the best way' nor with the constructive discussions.

The fact is that satisfaction of 'intellect and thought' alone is not enough, but emotions, which form half of man's entity, must become satisfied, too.

Studying the life of the prophets, and that of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the Immaculate Imams (as) in particular, shows that, for reaching to their

educational and propagation aims, they used the social morals, psychological principles, and the best humane ways of influencing in hearts.

When confronting people, they had a kind of behaviour that they could quickly attract them toward their own aims. Though some individuals wish to render these affairs as miracles, it is not such. If we apply their way and method of discussion with others, we can affect them very soon and influence in the depths of their hearts.

The Qur'an explicitly says to the Prophet of Islam (S):

"Thus, it is due to the mercy from Allah that you have been lenient with them, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you…"[26]

It has happened many times that some persons, after hours of discussion, not only have not gained anything from their debates, but they find the opposite party more stable, steadfast, and zealous in his own wrong belief. Its reason is that the method of 'dispute in the best way' has not been used in that debate.

Roughness in discussion, self-superiority, despising the opposite party, expression of pride and haughtiness, the lack of respect to others' thoughts and the absence of sincerity in discussions all are the things that cause the man's failure in debates.

That is why there is a section in Islamic morals under the title of prohibition of Jidal (dispute) and Mira' (argument) the objective of which is the discussions in which there is not 'seeking the truth', but its aim is quarrel, self-superiority, and fixing one's statement.

Besides the spiritual and ethical aspects, the prohibition of Jidal (dispute) and Mira' (argument) is for the fact that they are not mentally successful in this kind of discussions.

The prohibition of Jidal (dispute) and Mira' (argument) are close to each other; but the Islamic scholars have considered some differences between them. They believe that Mira' is for the expression of excellence and perfection, while Jidal is for despising.

The Arabic word /Jidal/ is used for the elementary attacks in discussion while /mira'/ is applied for the defensive attacks.

The term /jidal/ is used for the scientific issues, but the meaning of /mira'/ is general. (Of course, there is not any contradiction between these commentaries.)

However, the dispute and discussion with others is sometimes 'dispute in the best way', and it is a discussion in which the abovementioned conditions are exactly observed, and sometimes it is other than that when the abovementioned affairs are forgotten in it.

We conclude this statement with a few expressive and instructive narrations:

A tradition from the Prophet (S) indicates he said:

"No servant perceives the reality of Faith unless he abandons Mira' (argument) though he is right."[27]

Another tradition indicates that Solomon (as), the Divine prophet, told his son:

"O my son! Avoid /mira'/ (argument) because not only it has no benefit, but also it stirs up enmity between the brothers."[28]

Again, it has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that he said:

"No group went astray after when they were guided except by the dispute (in which the truth is not pursued)."[29]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 48

وَمَا كُنتَ تَتْلُواْ مِن قَبْلِهِ مِن كِتَابٍ وَلاَ تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذاً لاَّرْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

48. "And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted."

The descent of the Holy Qur'an upon the illiterate Prophet (S), who could neither read nor write, is one of the Divine ways of completing the argument to mankind.

We must not be proud and boast of our ability of reading and writing, sometimes it happens that, by the Will of Allah, an illiterate person changes the culture of human beings.

In this holy verse, one of the clear signs of veracity of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been pointed out which is an emphasis on the content of the previous verse. It says:

"And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted."

How is it possible to believe that an illiterate person, who has not been taught by a human teacher and has not gone to any school, brings a Book by himself and invites all mankind to challenge it but everybody is impotent to bring the like of it? Is this not a proof to the fact that his power gets help from the infinite power of Allah and his Book is a heavenly revelation which has been inspired to him from the side of Allah?

It is necessary to note this point that if a person asks how can we know that the holy Prophet of Islam never went to school and learned to write? In answer we say that he used to live in an environment where the literate and educated persons were very scanty, and it is also said that there were only seventeen persons in Mecca who could read and write.

In such a place it is impossible for an individual to be able to conceal his being taught if he has gone to any school. If so, he will be known everywhere and his teacher and his lesson will be introduced. Thus, how can such a person claim that he is a true prophet while he tells a lie so manifest?

In particular that these verses were sent down in Mecca where the Prophet (S) lived and grew up, and before the obstinate enemies from whose view the smallest point of weakness was not hidden.

By the way, in the commentary of Surah Al-'A'raf, no. 7, verse 157 it was said that there have been mentioned three meanings for the Arabic word /'ummi/ among which the meaning: 'unschooled' is the most clear.[30]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 49

بَلْ هُوَ ءَايَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَآ إِلاَّ الظَّالِمُونَ

49. "Nay! It (Qur'an) is the clear signs in the breasts of those who have been granted the knowledge, and none but the unjust reject Our Signs."

The verses of the Holy Qur'an influence in scholars' hearts and it is this group who apprehend the truthfulness of the Qur'an with their whole selves.

In this holy verse, there are stated some other signs for the legitimacy of the Qur'an. It implies that this heavenly Book is a collection of clear verses which influence in the breasts of the bearers of knowledge.

The verse says:

"Nay! It (Qur'an) is the clear signs in the breasts of those who have been granted the knowledge…"

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /'ayatun bayyinat/ refers to this fact that the signs of legitimacy of the Qur'an are found in the Qur'an itself and in its verses, and its proof is with it.

In fact, it is the genetic verses that by the recitation of which man needs no other thing to understand the truth. These verses containing of divine legislation, from the point of both appearance and content, are in such a manner that they all are the proof of their own truthfulness.

Besides that, the adherents and lovers of these verses are those who have a portion of knowledge and awareness, though they are poor.

In other words, one of the ways of knowing the nobility of a school of thought, is verification of the state of the believers of that school.

If some ignorant persons or charlatans are the supporters of someone, it seems that he is of the same group, but if some people, who carry the secrets of knowledge in their breasts, announce their loyalty to a school of thought, it is the evidence of legitimacy of that school.

And, we see that a group of the learned among the People of the Book and some pious personalities, such as Abuthar, Salman, Miqdad, 'Ammar-i-Yasir, and a high esteemed person like Hadrat Ali (as) were the supporter, and lovers of this school.

According to a great deal of traditions narrated from the way of Ahlul Bayt (as) this holy verse has been rendered into the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as). This does not mean exclusiveness, but it is the statement of a clear example for the Qur'anic phrase: /'allaðina 'utul-'ilm/ (those who have been granted the knowledge).

When we see that some Islamic narrations declare that the purpose of the verse is Imams, in particular, it, indeed, is an indication, to the perfect stage of the knowledge of the Qur'an which is at their disposal, and it does not matter that scholars, learned ones, and the mass of people who have commonsense have a portion of the sciences of the Qur'an.

However, this verse shows that knowledge is not limited to what is studied through books and what is learnt in front of teachers, because, as the Qur'an explicitly says, the Prophet (S) did not go to school and did not learn how to write but he was the highest referent of a concept of the Qur'anic sentence saying:

"Those who have been granted the knowledge".

Therefore, beyond the formal knowledge, there is a knowledge higher than that which may be inspired unto the heart of man in the form of a light, which is the essence of knowledge, and other sciences are as an outward cover for it.

An Islamic tradition says:

"knowledge is a light that Allah puts it in the heart of whom He desires."[31]

At the end, verse the Qur'an adds:

"…and none but the unjust reject Our Signs."

It is because the sings of it are clear: the bringer of it is the unschooled Prophet (S), and some thoughtful aware persons believe in it.

Moreover, the Qur'an itself is a collection of clear verses, and its characteristics have also been mentioned in the former Divine Books.

Yet, do reject it save those who are unjust to their selves and to the society?

We repeat again that the Arabic word /jahd/ is used for a person who knows something but, in spite of his knowledge, he denies it.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 50

وَقَالُوا لَوْلآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَاتٌ مِن رَّبِّـهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

50. "And they say: 'Why have signs (miracles) not been sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: 'The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner'."

The act of 'seeking for excuses' in the obstinate people does not end. (After observing kinds of miracles they demanded other miracles either.) The Prophet (S) resisted before the pretext-seekers and, answering them, he refused them, because miracle is a Divine wise affair, not a play for the pretext seekers.

However, those unbelievers who, as the result of obstinacy and persisting on falsehood, never agreed to accept the logical argument of the Qur'an, and bringing a Book, such as Qur'an, by an illiterate person, like the Prophet of Islam (S), which was a clear proof upon his legitimacy, tried to seek a new pretext, as the Qur'an through the verses under discussion, as well as the other verse, implicitly indicates that they mockingly used to say why there have not been sent down some miracles to the Prophet of Islam (S) like the miracles which were sent down to Moses (as) and Jesus (as) from the side of Allah. Why has he not a Rod and white hand like Moses or a breath like the breath of Jesus?

Why does he not destroy his enemies by great miracles, in the same way that Moses, Shu'ayb, Hud, Noah, and Thamud (as) did?

Or as Surah 'Isra' from their tongue says, they used to claim some things as follows:

"…We shall never believe in you till you make a spring to gush forth the earth for us,"

"Or till you should have a garden of date-palms and grapes in the midst of which you cause streams to flow forth,"

"Or you cause the heaven, as you think, to fall in pieces upon us, or bring Allah and the angels face to face with us,"

"Or there be for you a house of gold, or you should be flying into the sky and never will we believe in your ascending unless you bring down to us a book which we may read…"[32]

Without doubt, besides the Qur'an, the Prophet of Islam (S) had some other miracles which have explicitly been mentioned in history books, but

by these words of theirs, they were not seeking for miracle. From one side, they wanted to ignore the miracle of the Qur'an, and, from other side, they used to ask for extemporarily miracles.

The purpose of extemporarily miracles is that the Prophet (S) should do any extraordinary action they suggested according to their own desires. For instance, someone suggested him to make springs to gush forth, someone else said that he (S) had to change the mountains of Mecca into gold; and the third sought pretext that the Prophet (S) should ascend to sky.

Thus, they wanted to show miracles as a worthless play, and, finally, to call him a sorcerer.

Therefore, the Qur'an in Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 111 says:

"And even if We sent down the angels to them, and the dead spoke to them, and We mustered all things before them, (even then) they would not believe, unless Allah pleases; but most of them (deliberately) ignore."

However, in order to answer to these obstinate pretext-seekers, the Qur'an uses two ways:

At first, it says to the Prophet (S) to tell them that bringing miracle is not his job that he does it according to their desires, because all miracles are with Allah alone:

"…The signs are only with Allah…",

and He knows which miracle, in what time and for which nation, is appropriate. Allah knows who try to seek the truth and supernatural events must be shown to them, and who seek pretext and follow their carnal desires.

Then the verse continues saying that the Prophet of Allah (S) tells them that he is only a plain warner, and his duty is to state the word of Allah, while giving them miracles is only with His Pure Essence.

"…and I am only a plain warner."

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 51

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَى لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

51. "And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them? Verily in this there is mercy and a reminder for a people who believe."

Qur'an is an inclusive and complete Book and somehow it provides all spiritual needs, so that it is the cause of mercy and being off from negligence.

Following the previous verse, this holy verse says:

"And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them?…"

They ask for bodily miracles while the Qur'an is the greatest spiritual miracle.

They ask for a temporary miracle while the Holy Qur'an is a perpetual miracle and its verses are recited to them every night and day.

Is it possible that an unschooled person, or even supposing literate one, brings a Book with such contents and wonderful attraction, which is above the ability of mankind, and invites the whole human beings to challenge it while all of them remain impotent to bring like it?

If they really demand a miracle, by the descent of the Holy Qur'an, Allah (s.w.t.) has given them more than what they ask for. Nay, they are not truth-seekers. They are pretext seekers.

This fact should be noted that the Qur'anic sentence:

"Is it not enough for them?"

is usually used for the aspects that one has accomplished something beyond the expectation of the opposite party, and he is neglectful of it and shows that he is neglectful. For example, he says: "Why did you not do me that favour?"

Now Allah refers to a greater favour that he has ignored it. Allah says:

"Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book…?"

Besides them all, a miracle must be consistent with the conditions of the time, the place, and the circumstance of the Prophet's call. The holy Prophet (S) whose religion is perpetual must have an everlasting miracle.

The prophet, whose invitation is worldly and it must also continue for many centuries in future, has to have a so clear, spiritual and intellectual miracle that it attracts the minds of wise and mindful persons to him. Surely the Qur'an is suitable for such an aim, not the Rod of Moses and his white hand.

At the end of the verse, for an emphasis and for further explanation, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily in this there is mercy and a reminder for a people who believe."

Yes, the Holy Qur'an is both mercy and the means of remembrance, but only for the believers; for those who have let the doors of their hearts open to the Truth; for those who seek for the Light to find the right path, such persons feel this Divine mercy with their whole entity, and they rest under its rays. Every time they recite the verses of the Qur'an, they find a new admonition.

The difference between the Qur'anic words /rahmat/ and /õikra/ may be in this that the Qur'an is not only one miracle and a source of admonition, but, in addition to that, it is full of merciful programs and laws, and it is full of constructive and educational instructions.

For example, Moses' Rod was only a miracle and it had not any effect in people's daily life, but the Qur'an is both a miracle and a complete program for life, and a source of mercy.

Notes

1. The content of Surah Al-Fatihah
2. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition 1893
3. Bihar, Vol. 82, P. 209
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the explanation under the verse
5. Ibid
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 82, P. 234
7. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition No. 18862
8. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 3, P. 22
9. Ibid, P. 12
10. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition No. 19036
11. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 82, P. 224
12. Kanzul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, Tradition No. 19090

13. Bihar, Vol. 82, P. 209
14. Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 28
15. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 82, P. 200
16. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, Vol. 3, P. 7
17. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 252
18. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 136
19. Ibid, letter (will) 47
20. Bihar, Vol. 84, P. 317 and 320
21. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, Vol. 3, P. 4
22. Surah Ya Sin, No. 36, verse 78
23. Ibid, verse 79
24. Ibid, verse 80
25. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 163
26. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 159
27. Safinat-ul-Bihar, the term /mira’/
28. ’Ihya’-ul-‘Ulum
29. Ibid
30. The current commentary, Vol. 6, (parts 9 and 10), PP 111, 112
31. Tafsir-i-Burhan, Vol. 3, P. 254 on
32. Surah ’Asra’, No. 17, verses 90-93

Section 6: The Disbelievers Warned

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 52

قُلْ كَفَي بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيداً يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

52. “Say: ‘Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you’. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth; and those who believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in Allah, these, they are the losers.”

This verse is a cause of solace for the Prophet of Islam (S) and as a threat for the obstinate pretext-seekers, since Allah (s.w.t.) is a witness upon what happens between the Prophet (S) and pagans, and He reckons everything.

So, this verse says:

“Say: ‘Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you’…”

It is obvious that the more aware the witness is the more valuable his testimony is.

That is why, by the next sentence, the verse adds:

“…He knows what is in the heavens and the earth…”

Now, we are going to know how Allah has testified to the truthfulness of His prophet.

This witness may be a practical witness, for when Allah gives a great miracle, such as Qur’an, to His Prophet (S), He has signed the document of his legitimacy. Is it possible that Allah, the Wise, the Just, gives the Miracle to a liar (God forbid)? Therefore, giving such a miracle to the self of the Prophet (S) is the best way of Allah’s attestation to his prophecy.

In addition to the abovementioned practical witness, there has also been given some oral attestations in a lot of verses of the Qur’an; as Surah Ahzab, No. 33, verse 40 says:

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah is Cognizant of all things.”

And Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 29 says:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other…”

Some commentators have said that the verse under discussion has been sent down in Medina in answer to some chiefs of the Jews, such as Ka‘b-ibn-’Ashraf, and his followers.

They told the Prophet (S):

“Who testifies that you are the messenger of Allah?”

The verse was sent down and said that Allah testifies to it.

By regarding to this statement, another commentary and explanation for the above verse can also be understood. It shows that the purpose of it is the testimony and witness of Allah mentioned in the former Divine Books of which the scholars of the People of the Book are well aware.

In the meanwhile, there is no contradiction between these three commentaries, and all of them may be found in the meaning of the verse.

At the end of the verse, as a warning, the Holy Qur’an says:

"…and those who believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in Allah, these, they are the losers."

What a loss is greater than this that once one loses all the capitals of his self for nothing, the same as the polytheists did. They set their heart and spirit at the disposal of idols and spent their whole bodily powers, social facilities and personal potentialities in the way of propagation and putting in circulation the belief of idolatry and wiping the Name of Allah, while they obtained nothing save that they became losers.

The Holy Qur'an often refers to this great loss in its verses, and sometimes it shows this fact by the Arabic word /'axsar/ (more loser) and there is no loss greater than this.[1]

More important than this is that in a bargain, it happens that one loses his whole capital and he smashes up, but sometimes it goes further than this and a heavy debt remains for him, which is the worst kind of trade fallen; and polytheists are just in the same case. They sometimes cause the failure and aberration of others, too, and they form a chained failure.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verses 53-54

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْلاَ أَجَلٌ مُسَمًّى لَجَآءَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُم بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

53. "And they demand of you to hasten the chastisement! And had not a term been appointed, the chastisement would certainly have come to them; but it shall certainly come upon them suddenly when they are not aware."

54. "They demand of you to hasten the chastisement! And verily Hell encompasses the unbeliever."

The disbelievers, who were threatened to divine punishment because of disbelief or mockery, or that they frequently asked their prophet for a sudden punishment, have been referred to in the Qur'an in several occurrences, and this haste of pagans has been criticized in all instances.

In the delay of Divine chastisement, of course, there are some bounties, including:

1- It is an opportunity for repentance.

2- There may come forth some righteous children from deluded fathers.

3- People are examined in religiousness and resistance, (perseverance).

However, the grace or wrath of Allah is wisely, accurate, and has order, so that it does not change with the haste of this one and that one. But the fall of man's thought is so horrible that he agrees to be annihilated, but not to accept the truth.

In this holy verse, the third kind of their seeking pretext is pointed out. It implies that they hasten for the punishment and demand it from the Prophet (S) to fall swiftly.

The verse says:

"And they demand of you to hasten the chastisement!…"

They say if the punishment of Allah (s.w.t.) is right and encompasses the pagans, then why does it not come to them? In reply to their statement, the Qur'an delivers three answers.

At first, it says:

"…And had not a term been appointed, the chastisement would certainly have come to them…"

This appointed time is for the sake that the essential aim, i.e., vigilance, or the argument should be completed to them. Allah never makes haste in His Affairs when it is against His Wisdom.

The second is that those who say this statement, how much are they certain that every moment the Divine punishment may seize them?

The verse continues saying:

"…but it shall certainly come upon them suddenly when they are not aware."

The proper time of coming punishment is, indeed, defined and appointed, but the expedience is in this that they should not be aware of it and it comes suddenly. If its time were known, the pagans and sinners would become rather bold and they might continue their infidelity and committing sins until the last moment, and when the last moment of the appointed time of punishment was approaching, they would return toward the truth.

The educational philosophy of these punishments requires that their time should be concealed in order that the fear and terror of them in all moments may become an impedimental factor.

By the way, it becomes clear from what was said that the purpose of the Qur'anic sentence: /wa hum layaš'urun/ (when they are not aware) is not that they do not perceive the principle of the existence of punishment, else the philosophy of punishment would be vanished, but the purpose of it is that they do not discriminate the moment of its occurrence and its preliminaries.

In other words, the punishment suddenly, and like lightning, comes over them, attacking unawares.

It is well understood from the different verses of the holy Qur'an that this pretext seeking was not confined to the pagans of Mecca, but many other nations persisted on the hastening of punishment, too.

The third answer has been stated in the next verse, where the Qur'an says:

"They demand of you to hasten the chastisement! And verily Hell encompasses the unbeliever."

The worldly punishment may be postponed, but the punishment of Hereafter is one hundred percent certain.

It is so certain that the Qur'an mentions it as an existing thing at the present time, and says:

"…verily Hell encompasses the unbelievers".

As the result of being polluted by infidelity and sin, they burn in the Hell which they themselves have provided for them i.e. the Hell of war and blood, the Hell of conflict and discord, the Hell of insecurity, the Hell of injustice and oppression, and the Hell of evil passions and ungovernable desires.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 55

يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

55. "On the Day when the chastisement shall cover them from above them, and from beneath their feet, and He shall say: 'Taste now what you were doing'."

The encompassing punishment of Hell is because of the continuation of our wrong deeds.

This verse says:

"On the Day when the chastisement shall cover them from above them, and from beneath their feet, and He shall say: 'Taste now what you were doing'."

This verse may be an explanation for the punishment of Hell upon disbelievers on the Day of Hereafter, or it may be considered as an independent statement for their painful punishment which, as the result of their deeds, has surrounded them today, and tomorrow it will appear manifestly.

However, that the verse says:

"…from above them, and from beneath their feet…"

but it does not mention other limbs and other sides, it is, in fact, because of the evidence of the subject and clarity of the discussion. Moreover, when the flames of Fire come from under their feet and are poured over their heads from above them, the Fire will envelop the entire of their body and it will be from all sides to cover them.

Principally, this kind of meaning is used in languages including Persian and Arabic that they say so and so, from head to feet is covered with, for example, the pollution of impurity, which means his whole entity is covered with sin.

Thus, keeping this explanation in mind, the question that some commentators have faced with saying that why the sides of above and below have been mentioned and the rest of four sides are not pointed out is removed.

The sentence that Allah says:

"Taste now what you were doing"

not only is a kind of psychological punishment for such persons, but also declares this fact that the divine punishment is nothing but the reflection of the man's own deeds in the growth of Hereafter.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 56

يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

56. "O' My servants who believe! Verily My earth is vast, therefore, Me alone should you worship!"

Occasion of Revelation

Many of the commentators believe that this verse has been sent down about the believers who were under such a so hard pressure of the pagans in Mecca that they were not able to perform their Islamic duties. So, they were commanded to migrate from that region.

Since the words in previous holy verses were about the different reactions of polytheists against Islam and Muslims, now the verses under discussion refer to the situation of the early Muslims themselves and their duty and responsibility concerning one of their problems in connection with

the pagans, i.e., the problem of restriction, pressure, and harm and trouble they were faced with.

This holy verse addresses the Muslim believers who were under the pressure of the enemy because of fulfilling their religious duties and implies that Allah's land is vast and they should migrate to somewhere else and worship Him alone.

The verse says:

"O' My servants who believe! Verily My earth is vast, therefore, Me alone should you worship!"

However, Islam has enjoined migration for a group of people. Those who live in places where infidelity and tyrant govern, who are involved with cruelty and restrictions and who find their own growth and deliverance in emigration, they must migrate.

But, for fulfilling this duty, there will be some temptations cast on man from inside and outside, the answer of which will be given through later verses. One of these temptations is the danger of death and one may say: if he migrates death might not come to him, but the next verse announces that wherever he lives he tastes death.

Another temptation is for detaching one's heart from his residence, which is difficult for him, and he may hesitate not to migrate. Verse No. 58 answers them that instead of the worldly residence, those believers who migrate will be rewarded with lofty chambers of Paradise; and verse 59 implies that this temptation must be removed by patience and relying on the Lord.

Another temptation is for providing provision. He who thinks of emigration may say that his emigration deprives him from income and sustenance. Verse No. 60 answers him that how many a moving creature that does not carry its own provision but Allah sustains it, let alone those emigrants who work and struggle.

Emigration is the factor of creating sincerity.

Those who do not migrate, when they ought to do, and depend themselves on an individual, party, region, tribe and possibilities of this and that one, desirably or undesirably, the regional, racial, and tribal problems, and insularities raised from jealousies, and negative rivals from the side of both familiar and foreign persons bring out man from sincerity.

Thus, emigration to the places wherein these affairs are absent is the best circumstance for the appearance of sincerity and devotion.

In the explanation of this verse, Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Do not follow the mischievous governor, and if you fear that they cause you deviate from your religion, then do migrate."[2]

Of course, we must bear the bitter hardships of emigration by the Divine friendly call, because Allah (s.w.t.) has a special attention to the believers when He in this verse says:

"O' My servants…".

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 57

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

57. "Every soul tastes death, then unto Us you shall be returned."

Perhaps this verse is in connection with the previous one, explaining the man's duty if his death approaches when he is in emigration.

This verse announces that do not afraid of death when emigration is necessary, because death is the certain fate of everybody, but it is not an end.

The verse says:

"Every soul tastes death, then unto Us you shall be returned."

You will come to Us and We will bestow the reward of the death in the path of emigration on you; and We will chastise the oppressors who forced you to migrate, though reaching that reward and retribution prolongs.

The application of the Arabic word /θumma/, in this verse, indicates a long length of time.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 58

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفاً تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

58. "And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will certainly lodge them in lofty chambers of Paradise beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; how excellent is the recompense of those who act (aright)."

The condition of being admitted to Heaven is Faith and righteous deed. Allah has promised Paradise unto the believers, so, in this verse, He says:

"And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will certainly lodge them in lofty chambers of Paradise beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever…"

Such believers will surely abide in the castles which are surrounded by Heavenly trees from every side, and beneath which, according to other verses of the Qur'an, various rivers, with different special tests and views, flow.

Be attentive that the Arabic word /quraf/ is the plural form of /qurfah/ which means a lofty building that is dominant over its sides.

Another privilege of the chambers of Paradise is that they are not like the houses and castles of this world where after a short time and before a complete rest of man, the call of movement is heard, but they will dwell there forever.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…how excellent is the recompense of those who act (aright)."

A simple comparison between what was said about pagans and sinners in the previous verses, and what is said in this holy verse, makes the greatness of the believers' reward clear.

The disbelievers will be in a Fire and punishment which envelops their whole body from head to feet, and as a scorn they will be told taste whatever you used to do.

But the believers will be in the midst of bounties of Heaven, and the mercy of Allah encompasses them from every side. They do not hear any scorn, but instead they hear some words all of which are the signs of love and grace of the Gracious Lord.

Yes, they will be told:

"…how excellent is the recompense of those who act (aright)."

It is obvious that the objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /'amilin/ (those who act), with the frame of reference of the sentences before it, is those who have faith and do righteous deeds, though the word /'amilin/ is absolute.

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"Verily there are some chambers in the Heaven so transparent that their outwards are seen from their inwards, and their inwards are seen from their outwards."

Someone asked him:

"To whom do these chambers belong, O' Messenger of Allah?"

He (S) answered:

"These chambers belong to those who purify their speech, satiate the hungry (ones), observe the fact frequently, and keep prayer at night (for the sake of Allah) when people are asleep."[3]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 59

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَي رَبِّـهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

59. "Those who are (patiently) steadfast and on their Lord do they rely."

Patience and relying on Allah are two clear examples of righteous deed; and it is the righteous ones who must remove the spiritual pressures, barriers and difficulties of life by patience and relying on Allah.

This verse states the most important characteristics of the believers who act aright.

It says as follows:

"Those who are (patiently) steadfast and on their Lord do they rely."

When it requires, they separate from their wife, children, friends, relatives, and houses and they tolerate patience. They taste the troubles of loneliness, the hardships of being vagrant from home, and they are patient.

In order to protect their Faith, they usually tolerate the hurts of the enemies, and receive kinds of difficulties in the path of struggling against their selves (which is 'the greater' warfare), and they are patient.

Yes, patience and perseverance are the secrets of their triumph, and they are two great factors for their honour, without which no positive action is possible in the life.

Moreover, they rely neither on their properties, nor on their friends and relatives. They rely only on Allah; and they trust only on His Pure Essence. If thousand of enemies try to destroy them, they stand firm and do not fear because they know Him as their friend.

If we think properly, we find out that the root of man's all virtues is this very patience and relying on Allah. Patience is the cause of steadfastness in front of barriers and difficulties; and confidence is the motive of moving in this way which is full of ascent and descent.

For performing righteous deed we must get help from these two ethical virtues, patience and confidence. Without these two, doing righteous deed, in a large scale, is impossible.

Some Traditions On Patience and Confidence

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Patience is a treasure out of the treasures of Paradise."[4]

2. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Verily the patient will enter Paradise without reckoning."[5]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever likes to be the most virtuous of people, he must rely on Allah."[6]

4. Once Imam Rida (as) was asked what the limit of confidence was. He answered:

"That you do not be in owe of other than Allah."[7]

5. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The best people with Allah is the one who trusts on Allah more than others and surrenders to Him."[8]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 60

وَكَأَيِّن مِن دَآبَةٍ لاَّ تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

60. "And how many a moving creature that does not carry its own provision, (but) Allah sustains it and you! And He is he Hearing, the knowing."

The Arabic word /tahmil/ is derived from /himalah/ in the sense of 'suretyship' and 'to undertake', and the purpose of 'carrying provision' may be used in the sense of: 'storing up things for the future'.

Emigration was recommended through verse 56, now the abovementioned verse indicates that the knowledge of Allah provides the sustenance of all creatures:

"And how many a moving creature that does not carry its own provision, (but) Allah sustains it and you!…"

However, the Qur'an says that you should not be worried about your sustenance, and do not accept any shame, disgrace, and captivity for it, because He Who gives sustenance is Allah.

He sustains not only you but also many of the creatures that cannot even carry their provision, and have no food stored in their nests while every new day they need a new provision and Allah does not let them be hungry. He sustains them and you, too.

Among moving creatures, animals, and insects, besides man, there are a few kinds that, like ants and bees, carry their own foodstuff from fields and deserts toward their dwelling places and store it up, and concerning their provision most of them are like sparrow, that is, every new day they must seek for the provision of that day.

There are millions of millions of them around us, far and near, in deserts, in the depth of valleys, on the top of mountains, and inside the seas that are sustained at the table of His endless bounties.

And you, O' man! who are cleverer and more capable than them for earning and storing up your provision, why do you clasp the pollute and shameful life because of the fear of cease of sustenance and admit any injustice, cruelty, disgrace and abjectness for it?

You, too, can come out from inside of this narrow, limited and dark life of yours and sit at the stretched table of your Lord and do not care for sustenance.

On that day when you were prisoner in the womb of mother as a weak and feeble embryo, and nobody, even your kind parents, had the chance to reach you, your Lord did not forsake you and whatever you needed He gave you properly, it is the same today that you are a capable and strong being.

And in view of the fact that giving provision to the needy is in the secondary of the awareness of their existence and their need, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…And He is he Hearing, the knowing."

He hears the words of you all, and He even knows the mute tongue of you and all moving creatures. He knows the needs of all of you, and nothing is hidden from the realm of His infinite knowledge.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 61

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَاَنَّي يُؤْفَكُونَ

61. "And if you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient?' They will certainly say: 'Allah!' Whence are they then perverted?"

The Arabic term /'ifk/ means 'changing something from its real form', viz. someone changes a fact into something else consciously.

The purpose of 'making the sun and the moon subservient' is their subservience in the way which is useful for us.[9]

In this holy verse, as well as the next verses, the Prophet of Islam (S), and in fact all believers, are addressed and the proofs of Unity through the way of creation, Lordship, and nature, viz. by three different ways, have been stated, and they are admonished that their fate is with Allah Whose effects are found in heavens and souls, not with idols, since idols have no function in this regard.

At first, it refers to the creation of the heaven and the earth and, taking help from their intrinsic beliefs, it says:

"And if you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient?' They will certainly say: 'Allah!'…"

Their answer is such, because neither idolaters nor other than them say that the creator of the heavens and the earth and the subjective factor of making the sun and the moon subservient is some pieces of stone and wood which have been manufactured by their own hands.

In other words, even idolaters had no doubt in the 'Unity of Creator'. They were polytheists in worship.

They used to say that they worshipped idols for the sake that they would intercede them before Allah, as Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 18 announces:

"…and they say: 'these are our intercessors with Allah'…"

They wanted to say that they were not eligible to directly communicate with Allah and they had to relate to Him by the way of idols.

They used to say:

"…We do not serve them save that they make us nearer to Allah…"[10]

They were inattentive that there is no gap between the Creator and the created, and He is nearer to us than our jugular vein.[11] Moreover, if man, who is the best creature in the world of existence, cannot communicate with Allah, what can be his intercessor?

However, after mentioning this clear proof, at the end of the verse the Qur'an questions that after having these evidences how are they returned from worshipping Allah to the worship of some idols made of some pieces of stone and wood?

It says:

"…Whence are they then perverted?"

The Qur'anic term /yu'fakun/ is derived from /'ifk/ which means: 'changing something from its real form', and in this connection it is used for falsehood, and also for some apposite winds.

The application of the term /yu'fakun/ in its Arabic passive form, points to this fact that they have not any ability to make decision, as if they were unintentionally drawn toward idolatry!

By the way, the purpose of objecting the sun and the moon is the systems that Allah has arranged for them and by these systems He has sent them in the way of man's benefits.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 62

اللَّهُ يُبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

62. "Allah enlarges the sustenance for whichever of His servants He pleases, and He grants him by (strict) measure, (as He pleases); verily Allah is Well-Cognizant of all things."

Increasing and decreasing men's sustenance is knowingly and wisely done by Allah (s.w.t.) on the base of seen and unseen criterions.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the common good of some servants of Allah is in that they have vast sustenance and if they fall in the straitened circumstances of life, they become corruptive.

On the contrary, the common good of another group is that they have a strict measure of sustenance, and if they are granted plenty of it, they will fall in decadence.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"Allah enlarges the sustenance for whichever of His servants He pleases, and He grants him by (strict) measure, (as He pleases)…"

The key of sustenance is in His hand, not in the hand of men, nor with idols.

That in the former verses it was said that the true believers rely only on Him is for this very fact that the authority of all things is with Him. Then why should they fear to express forth and sometimes think that their life is in danger from the side of their enemies?

If they believe that Allah is powerful but He is not aware of their state, they are in a great error, because:

"…verily Allah is Well-Cognizant of all things."

Is it possible that someone is the creator and the administrator of the affairs and whose favour reaches to the creatures, and in the meantime He is not aware of their circumstance? This is not imaginable.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 63

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَن نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الاَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَيَعْقِلُونَ

63. "And if you ask them: 'Who sends down water from the heaven and gives life with it unto the earth after its death?' They will certainly say: 'Allah!' Say: 'All praise is due to Allah.' But most of them do not ponder."

One of the great bounties for which we must be thankful, is the light of Faith and natural disposition. Knowing of Allah is natural, and if the dust of sin and deviation is removed from the nature of deviated ones, their clear and manifest confessions will be found out.

In this verse, where the words are about Unity of Lordship and that the descent of the main origin of provisions is from the side of Allah, it says:

"And if you ask them: 'Who sends down water from the heaven and gives life with it unto the earth after its death?' They will certainly say: 'Allah!'…"

This is the inner belief of idolaters that they even did not refuse to express it by their tongue, because they both knew the Creator as Allah, and introduced Allah as the Lord and also the administrator of the whole world.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…Say: 'All praise is due to Allah.'…"

Praise is for the One from Whose side all bounties come, because when water, which is the main source of life and by which all living creatures are alive, is from His side, it is clear that other provisions are from His side, too.

Therefore praise must also belong to Him alone, and other objects of worship have no share in it.

We must thank Allah, for our logic is so alive and strong that nobody is able to nullify it.

And since the polytheists' sayings, from one side, and their speech and actions, from other side, contradicted with each other, at the end of the verse the Qur'an adds:

"…But most of them do not ponder."

Else, how is it possible that a wise and thoughtful person speaks so much scattered and contrarily? From one side, he knows Allah (s.w.t.) as the creator, the giver of sustenance, and administrator of the world, and, on the other side, he falls in prostration before some idols that have no role in his fate.

From one side, they believe in the Unity of Creator and Unity of Lordship, but, on the other side, they practically worship other than Allah.

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an does not say that they do not have mind and wisdom, but it says:

"…(they) do not ponder",

which means they have intellect while they do not use it.

Notes

1. Suras: Hud, No. 11, verse 22; An-Naml, No. 27, verse 5; and Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 103
2. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
3. The commentary of Qurtabi, following the verse
4. Muhajjat-ul-Bayda', Vol. 7, P. 107
5. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 5
6. Mishkat-ul-'Abrar, P. 50
7. Ibid, P. 40
8. Majmu'ah Warram, Vol. 2, P. 123
9. The commentary entitled 'Rahnama'
10. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 3
11. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 16

Section 7: The Sincere Seekers Shall Be Guided Aright

Surah Al-‘Ankabut - Verse 64

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَآ إِلاَّ لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الأَخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

64. “And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play and verily the abode of the hereafter, is certainly the (real) life: did they but know!”

The Qur’anic word /lahw/ is used for the amusements which hinder man from the main aims and fundamental affairs. The Arabic term /la‘ib/ is doing something like play in which there is no particular aim.[1]

The creation of the world has been done wisely and for a particular aim, while being mammonist and neglectful from the Hereafter is done foolishly.

In order that men can promote their thought higher than the horizon of this limited life, and that they open the doors of some vaster worlds to the scope of the vision of their intellect, in this verse the Holy Qur’an, through a short and very expressive sentence, compares the life of the present world with the eternal life in another world, where it says:

“And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play…”

There is not anything in this world save sport and play, while the life in another world is the real life. The above verse continues:

“…and verily the abode of the hereafter, is certainly the (real) life: did they but know!”

What an interesting and expressive meaning this Qur’anic phrase /la hiyal hayawan/ is! Because the Arabic word /lahw/ means ‘sport’ and anything that makes man busy to it and turns him away from the essential affairs of life, while the word /la‘ib/ (a play) is used for the acts that have a kind of imaginary order for an imaginary aim, (play).

In a ‘play’ someone plays as a king and another one as a minister, another one is the commander of the army, and some others play as a caravan or as a thief. But after their struggles and conflicts, we see that all of their deeds have been some imaginary acts.

The Qur’an implies that the life of this world is a kind of sport and play. In it, there are some people who pursue some imaginary things. After a few days they scatter and their bodies will be buried under the ground, and, then everything will be forgotten.

But the real life, which has no declension or destruction, will remain. There is neither pain, nor toleration, nor distress, nor fear, nor any trouble in the life of hereafter, but it is with the condition that man knows it and studies it carefully.

Those who love the life of this world and became happy and beguiled by its dazzling glare are like some children, though they have lived a long life.

However, it must be noted that, as some commentators and philologists believe, the Qur’anic word /haywan/ means ‘life/, It points to this fact that ‘the abode of hereafter’ is the abode of real life, as if life gushed from all of it and there were nothing in it but ‘life’.

It is evident that never the Qur'an intends to negate the Divine merits of this world by this meaning, but it intends to illustrate the value of this life comparing with that life by an explicit and clear comparison.

Moreover, it wants to warn man that he must not be as captive for these merits; he must be a commander upon them, and he must never exchange the noble values of his own self for them.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 65

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

65. "So when they ride in the ships, they call upon Allah sincerely vowing worship (only) unto Him, and when He brings them safe to the land, they associate others (with Him),"

Being in awe of Allah removes the dusts of negligence, and awakens the nature of seeking-Allah in man.

This verse refers to the nature and fate of man and it pays to the manifestation of the Light of Unity inside the selves of men at the most severe states, and, through a very expressive example, it says:

"So when they ride in the ships, they call upon Allah sincerely vowing worship (only) unto Him, and when He brings them safe to the land, they associate others (with Him),"

Yes, the difficulties and calamities are the preparations for the growth of man's nature. The Light of Unity is hidden inside the spirit of all human beings.

Superstitious customs, wrong educations, and evil indoctrinations cast some curtains over it, but at the time of attack of calamities from every side and when the pile of difficulties appear in front of man and he sees he cannot apparently do anything, he involuntarily goes toward the world of super nature and he wipes out any polytheistic thought from his heart and, in the furnace of these events, he becomes pure and free from any impurity.

Shortly speaking, there is always a luminous point inside the man's heart which is the nearest mean of his communication with the world of super nature and the shortest path toward Allah.

Wrong teachings, negligence, and pride, specially at the time of health and affluence, draw some curtains over it, but the mass of calamities and terrible events tear these curtains, put the ashes away from it and that luminous point inside the man's heart appears.

It was for this very reason that the great leaders of Islam used to guide those who were seriously doubtful in the subject of theology by this way.

We have heard the story of the wandering man who was in doubt for the subject of theology and Imam Sadiq (as) guided him aright through this very natural and innate way.

The man said:

"O son of the Messenger of Allah (S)! (Please) guide me to Allah that who He is, because the tempters have made me bewildered."

Then the Imam told him:

"O' servant of Allah! Have you ever embarked a ship?"

The man answered he had.

Then Imam said:

"Has it happened that your ship was broken where there was no other ship to save you and you did not know how to swim?"

The man answered:

"Yes."

He said:

"In that state, did your heart tend to this matter that there is something that can save you from that affliction?"

He answered:

"Yes."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"This thing is Allah Who is able to save (anyone) where there is no deliverer and succours and where there is no helper."[2]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 66

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

66. "(Thus) let them be ungrateful for what We have given them and let them enjoy, but they shall soon know."

Polytheism is a kind of ungratefulness and ingratitude unto the favours of Allah.

We must not be happy with those successes which are accompanied with blasphemy and ungratefulness, because they usually have an evil end.

After mentioning so many reasoning upon Monotheism and theology, this verse confronts the opponents with a sharp and serious threat when it says:

"(Thus) let them be ungrateful for what We have given them and let them enjoy, but they shall soon know."

They will enjoy of the fleeting pleasures, but they shall know very soon what the end of their disbelief and polytheism will be, and what an evil fate they will have.

It is true that the appearance of the verse here seems to be a command to disbelief and denial of the Divine verses, but it is evident that its purpose is a warning.

It is just like that we tell a criminal person:

"Perform whatever crime you can, but soon you will taste the bitter fruit of your deeds in a lump."

In such sentences where the form of the verb is imperative the main aim is a threat against the opposite party, not a state of imperative nature.

It is interesting that here the Qur'anic sentence /fasaufa ta'lamun/ (they shall soon know) has been stated in an absolute form.

It does not say what they know, but it simply says:

"They shall soon know".

This vastness in meaning is for the sake that the mind of hearers might not be limited in its concept. The fruit of bad deeds is the divine punishment, disgrace in both worlds, and all kinds of other miseries.

At the end you may note these two verses:

"And whatever of favour is (bestowed) on you, it is from Allah; then whenever any calamity afflicts upon you, unto Him you cry (for assistance)."

"Then when He removes the affliction from you, behold! A group of you associate others with their Lord."[3]

This very meaning is mentioned in Surah Yunus in another form.

It says:

"And when an affliction touches a man, he calls Us (while reclining), on his side, or sitting, or standing, but when We remove from him his affliction, he passes on, as if he never called Us to an affliction that touched him…"[4]

The above meaning has also been stated in Surah Ar-Rum, verse 33, Surah Az-Zumar, verse 49, and Surah 'Asra', verses 67-69 in some other phrases and with some comprehensive words.

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 67

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَماً ءَامِناً وَيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ

67. "Have they not seen that We have appointed a sanctuary secure, while the people are snatched away from all around them? Will they still believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in bounty of Allah?"

One of the ways of inviting people to Allah is attracting their attention unto the divine bounties.

This verse says:

"Have they not seen that We have appointed a sanctuary secure, while the people are snatched away from all around them?…"

Arabs were in insecurity then, but in spite of that insecure environment, He caused Mecca to be a sanctuary secure, then how can He not protect them against their enemies? And their enemies were afraid of these weak people before Allah, the Great, the Mighty.

The verse continues saying:

"…Will they still believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in bounty of Allah?"

Shortly speaking, the Lord Who is able to cause a small piece of land to be secure inside a vast area of the earth where a group of half wild people used to live, how can He not protect the faithful people amongst some pagans and unbelievers?

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 68

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًي لِلْكَافِرِينَ

68. "And who is more unjust than one who forges a lie against Allah, or belies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not a home in Hell for the disbelievers?"

The Divine revelation should be accepted completely and without decreasing anything from it. Adding anything to the religion is invention and false allegation, and it is the worse injustice.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And who is more unjust than one who forges a lie against Allah, or belies the truth when it has come to him?…"

Allah has delivered many clear evidences which prove that there is nothing to be worthy of being worshipped save Allah, but polytheists forge some lies to Him and associate some partners with Him, too. They even claim that this is a divine program!

On the other hand, Allah sent down the Qur'an for them, in which the signs of Truth are clear, but they ignored them and put them at their back. Can any injustice and oppression be considered more superior than this? It is certainly injustice against their own selves and against all humankind, because polytheism and disbelief is a great injustice.

In other word, is injustice, in its vast scope of meaning, anything save deviation and bringing something out of its proper place? Is there anything worse than this that one puts some pieces of worthless stone and wood in a row with the Creator of the heavens and the earth?

Moreover, polytheism is the source of all social corruptions, and in fact other kinds of injustice originate from it. Sensualism, mammonism, and worshipping ranks, each one is a kind of polytheism.

But do know that an evil fate is waiting for the polytheists.

The Qur'an questions:

"…Is there not a home in Hell for the disbelievers?"

It is noteworthy that in fifteen occurrences of the Qur'an some people have been introduced as 'the most unjust ones', and in all of these occurrences the Qur'anic sentence is a positive interrogation with a negative sense and it begins with /man 'azlama/.

A careful study upon these verses shows that all of them return to polytheism, though there are apparently some different matters mentioned in them. Therefore, it can be said that there is not any contradiction in them.[5]

Surah Al-'Ankabut - Verse 69

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

69. "And those who strive hard for Us, We will certainly guide them in Our ways, and verily Allah is with the good-doers."

In order to reach the special guidance of Allah, effort and endeavour is necessary, and it is the man who must take the first step.

Sometimes, a step and a sincere struggle consequences both the Divine guidance and eternal salvation.

This holy verse, which is, in fact, the last verse of Surah Al-'Ankabut, points to an important fact, which is the epitome of the whole Surah and is consistent with its beginning.

It implies that though there are many difficulties for those who pave the path of Allah, the Almighty, the difficulty from the point of recognizing the truth, the difficulty of temptations of the Satans of man and Jinn; the difficulty of facing with the opposition of the obstinate and cruel enemies; and the difficulty of probable mistakes.

Here, there is one true thing which strengthens you, supports you, and gives you power and certainty for these difficulties, as follows:

"And those who strive hard for Us, We will certainly guide them in Our ways, and verily Allah is with the good-doers."

Upon the purpose of struggle here, the commentators have delivered numerous probabilities. Is it the struggle against enemies? Is it the struggle against carnal soul? Or is it the struggle in the path of knowing Allah by a scientific and logical way?

They have also discussed about the objective meaning of the Arabic term /fina/ (in Us), applied in this verse, whether it means in the way of Allah's pleasure, or in the way of struggle against carnal soul, or in the path of worship, or in the path of struggle against enemy.

But it makes manifest that the application of both /jihad/ which has a vast and absolute meaning, and /fina/ are correct.

Therefore, it envelops any kind of struggle and effort which is performed in the way of Allah and for Him and with the purpose of gaining the divine aims, whether they are in the way of obtaining knowledge, or struggle against carnal soul, or struggle against enemy, or showing patience in obedience, or having patience against temptation of committing sin, or in the way of helping the weak persons, or doing any other good action.

Those who strive in these ways for Allah, in any form and any manner, will be involved in the support and guidance of Allah.

By the way, through what was said, it became clear that the purpose of the Arabic word /subul/ (ways), used here, is different ways which are led to Allah: the way of struggle against carnal soul, the way of struggling against enemies, and the way of learning knowledge and culture. In short, struggle in any one of these ways causes one to be led to a path which ends to Allah.

This is the promise that Allah has strictly and emphatically given to all of the strivers in His way, and He has strengthened it by kinds of emphasis, and has considered success, progress, and triumph in the pledge of two important things: 'Struggle' and 'sincerity of intention'.

Thus, man must strive in this way, but guidance is with Allah; and that a tradition indicates that knowledge is a light that Allah casts in the heart of any one whom He desires and knows eligible for it, may also refer to this very meaning.

Note to the Following Points

1- It is understood from the abovementioned verse that any kind of failure and dissatisfaction we are confronted is the effect of one of these two things: we have neglected the struggle, or there has not been enough sincerity in our action. If these two exist with together, according to the promise of Allah, victory and guidance will surely come forth.

And if we contemplate well, we can find out the origin of difficulties, and the afflictions of the Islamic societies in this very fact. Why the Muslims, who once were an advanced nation in the world, are backward and retarded today?

Why do they beg nearly all their needs, even for their own culture and laws, from foreigners? Why must they rely on others for protecting themselves against political storms and martial attacks? Why one day others were in need of the bounty of knowledge and rich culture of Muslims, but today these people have to sit at the table of other nations?

And, finally, why are they captured in the hand of others and their lands are occupied by the transgressors?

All these questions have only one answer, and it is that either they have neglected the holy struggle, or their intentions have become polluted.

Yes, struggle in the fields of science, culture, politics, and army has been neglected and love of self, mammonism, love of comfort, short sightedness, and private motives have overcome them so much that the number of those killed by their own forces is larger than the number of those killed by their enemy.

The despair of some persons affected by the West or the East, the treachery of a group of rulers and chiefs, and the hopelessness and the reclusion of some knowledgeable men and the possessors of reflection have taken from them both struggle and sincerity.

Whenever a little sincerity appears in us and strivers come in the scene, victories appear one after another, and the chains of captivity will be broken.

Then, despairs change into hope and failures into success; disgrace changes into honour and eminence, and dispersion and hypocrisy changes into unity and flowing. Thus, how great and inspirational the Qur'an is that has stated both the pain and its remedy in a short sentence.

Yes, those who struggle in the path of Allah are included in the guidance of Allah, the Almighty, and it is evident that wherever His guidance exists, aberration and failure does not have any place.

Some narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as) have rendered this verse into the Prophet's progeny (as) and his followers. It is the statement of a complete extension of it, because they were always pioneers and leaders in the way of struggle and sincerity, and it is not an evidence upon the limitation of the concept of the verse at all.

However, every one clearly feels this Qur'anic fact in his effort and endeavour that when he strives in the path of Allah, the doors will be opened to him, difficulties become easy, and hardships will be tolerable.

2- People are divided into three groups: A group of people are some obstinate deniers for whom no guidance is useful. The second group are some sincere strivers who reach the Truth. The third group are more excellent than the second group. They are not far from the truth that must become near, and are not separate from Him that must join Him, because they are always with Him.

The previous verse, saying:

"And who is more unjust than one who forges a lie…"

is about the first group.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"And those who strive hard for Us…"

is about the second group.

And the Qur'anic phrase:

"…verily Allah is with the good-doers"

is about the third group.

By the way, this phrase makes it clear that the rank of good-doers is higher than that of strivers, because besides striving in the path of their own deliverance, they have the characteristic of donation and kindness and they strive for others, too.

O Allah! Give us such a success that in our whole lifetime we do not stop effort and striving in Your way!

O Allah! Bestow us such a sincerity that we do not think about anything but You and we do not take any step save for You!

O Allah! Take us higher than the rank of strivers and endow on us the rank of kindness and donation of the good-doers, and appoint us under the cover of Your guidance in our whole lifetime!

Amen, O the Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Mufradat by Raqib
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 3 (New edition), P. 41
3. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verses 53 and 54
4. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 12
5. Some other explanations are mentioned in the commentary of Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 21

Surah Ar-Room, Chapter 30

(The Romans)

No. 30 (Revealed at Mecca)

60 Verses in 6 Sections

The Virtue of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Whoever recites Suras Al-'Ankabut and Ar-Room in the month of Ramadan at the twenty third night, by Allah he will be admitted in Paradise, and I do not consider any exception in this word…(with the condition that he fulfils his religious duties). These two Suras have an important situation with Allah."[1]

In another tradition narrated from the Prophet (S), he has said:

"Whoever recites Surah Ar-Room, will be rewarded ten rewards as the number of every angel who glorifies Allah between the heaven, and the earth, and whatever he has lost in that day and night will be recompensed."[2]

It is evident that he who puts the content of this Surah, which is full of teachings about Monotheism and the great court of Hereafter in his soul and manner, and observes the constant watch of Allah over him, and knows the Day of Judgment and Divine court certain, the Divine devoutness will fill his heart in a manner that he will be eligible for such a great reward.

The Feature of the Surah

This holy Surah contains 60 verses and has been revealed at Mecca.

Similar to many Meccan Suras, the main subject in this Surah is 'Origin and End' and the statements of the believers and disbelievers are in this relation.

This Surah begins with the Prophecy about the victory of Romans against Iranians in the war, and for this reason this Surah has been called Ar-Room.

A great part of the verses of this Surah is about the Divine bounties in the heaven and in the earth, the conjugality system in plants and animals, creation of man from dust, the relation between man and woman, effort in the day and sleep at night, the fall of rain, the winds, and the earth being revived after its death.

Notes

1. Thawab-ul-'A'mal, by Saduq, according to the narration of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 169, the Commentary
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, at the beginning of Surah Ar-Room

Section 1:The Defeat of the Romans Prophesied

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ

فِي أَدْنَي الأَرْضِ وَهُم مِّـن بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ

فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الأَمْرُ مِن قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنصُرُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M'."

2. "The Romans have been defeated."

3. "In a near land, but they, after being defeated, will soon be victorious,"

4. "Within a few years. To Allah belongs the Command before and after, and on that day the believers shall rejoice."

5. "With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

The Arabic word /bid'/ means: 'a piece', as the Prophet (S) said:

"Fatimah is a piece from me."

Sometimes the objective meaning of /bid'/ is a part of time between three to nine years.

Question: What relation is there between the triumph of the army of Room over Iranians and the Muslims that the Qur'an says:

"…that day the believers shall rejoice"?

Answer: The Prophet of Islam (S) wrote two letters to the kings of Iran and Room and invited them to the religion of Islam. The king of Iran, Khusrow Parviz, tore the letter, but the king of Room respected Prophet's letter.

Muslims liked the Romans who respected Prophet's letter to be victorious, but they failed in the war, so the Muslims became inconvenient because of that event.

By these holy verses Allah gave a good tidings to the Muslims that although Romans failed, they would win the battle thereafter in near future and that victory could make the believers happy.[1] Yes, a faithful society should not look only its own inside but it must show reaction unto the bitter and sweet events of other nations, too.

The Occasion of Revelation

The great Islamic commentators all believe that the beginning verses of this Surah were sent down for the sake that at that time when the Prophet (S) was at Mecca and the believers were in minority, there happened a fight between Iranians and Romans, and Iranians became victorious.

Pagans of Mecca, then, took it as a good omen and considered it as a proof of legitimacy for their own polytheism. They said Iranians were

Zoroastrians and polytheists (dualists), but Romans were Christians, the People of the Book'.

Since Iranians overcame Romans, then the final victory belonged to polytheism and Islam would be vanished soon and they (the polytheists) might be victorious.

Though such conclusions had no foundation, but, in that atmosphere and that environment, they were not far from effect for propagation amongst those ignorant people. Therefore, that event seemed heavy for the early Muslims.

The abovementioned verses were revealed, saying decisively that though Iranians became victorious in that war, after a short time they would bear a failure from Romans. The Qur'an stated even the time of that prophecy and said that that event would happen during a few years.

This decisive prediction of the Qur'an which, from one side, was the sign of the miracle of this heavenly Book and the sign of the relation of its bringer to the infinite knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) unto the world of Unseen, and on the other side, it was a point opposite to the bibliomancy of the polytheists, encouraged the Muslims in a manner that, it is even said, some of them laid an important wager with the polytheists upon this matter.

(At that time the command of the prohibition of these sorts of betting had not been sent down yet.)

However, this Surah is the twenty ninth Surah of the Qur'an which begins with the abbreviated letters. We have repeatedly discussed on the commentary of these abbreviated letters[2].

The only thing which attracts attention here is that, contrary to many Suras of the Qur'an which begin with abbreviated letters and next to them the words are about the greatness of the Qur'an, in this Surah there is not any discussion upon the greatness of the Qur'an, while the words are about the Roman's failure and their future victory.

But a careful study makes it clear that this discussion is also the statement of the greatness of the Qur'an, because this prediction is considered as one of the signs of the miracle of the Holy Qur'an and the greatness of this heavenly Book.

After mentioning the abbreviated letters, it says:

"The Romans have been defeated."

"In a near land…"

This failure occurs in a land near you, the people of Mecca, in the North of Arabia, in the land of Syria, the western Rome.

Some commentators, like Shaykh Tusi in Tibyan, have said that the purpose of it may be a place near the land of Iranians, that is, it happened in a land which was the nearest point between Turan and Rome.[3]

It is true that because of the existence of Alif and Lam in the Arabic word /'al 'ard/, the first commentary is more suitable, but as we will explain later, from some view points, the second commentary seems more proper.

Here, there is a third commentary that, maybe from the point of result, does not differ so much from the second commentary. According to this commentary the objective of it is the land of Rome. That is, they confronted

defeat then in the nearest parts of their boundaries with Iran; and this points to the importance and depth of this failure.

Defeat in far points and distanced boundaries, is not so important. The important matter is that a country is defeated in its nearest boundaries with enemy where it is more powerful and forceful than other places.

Therefore, mentioning the phrase: /fi ’adnal ’ard/ (in a near land) is a hint to the importance of this defeat, and predicting the triumph of the defeated party during a few years in future is of a greater magnificence and it is not predictable but by the way of miracle.

Then the verse adds:

“…but they, after being defeated, will soon be victorious,”

The Qur’anic sentence /sayaqlibun/ (they will soon be victorious) was enough for stating the purpose definitely, but the sentence /min ba‘d-i-qalabihim/ (after being defeated) has particularly been added to it in order that the importance of this victory becomes more manifest, because when a defeated group can overcome the enemy in its nearest and strongest boundaries and specially during a short time, it is something unexpectedly, and the Qur’an explicitly predicts this event.

Then, through the next holy verse, the Noble Qur’an states the approximate years of its occurrence, but saying:

“With in a few years…”

And we know that the Arabic word /bid‘/ means a figure at least ‘three’ and at most ‘nine’.

If we see that Allah (s.w.t.) predicts the future, it is because everything and every affair is in His authority whether before victory or after the victory of this defeated nation.

The verse says:

“…To Allah belongs the Command before and after…”

It is evident that everything being in Allah’s authority and by His command does not hinder our freedom and will for effort and endeavour and striving in the path of obtaining our aims.

In other words, this phrase does not intend to negate the authority of others, but it intends to make this matter clear that it is He Who is Mighty by Essence and is the absolute Owner, and whoever possesses anything he has it from His side.

Then the verse implies that if today that the Romans failed and the polytheists became happy, on that day when the Romans overcame the believers would become happy.

The verse continues saying:

“…and on that day the believers shall rejoice.”

Yes, by Allah’s help they will be happy.

The next Holy verse announces:

“With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful.”

Upon the objective meaning of the sentence:

“On that day the believers shall rejoice”,

the commentators have delivered different ideas. Some of them have said that this rejoice is because of Roman’s victory, though they themselves were

in the row of pagans, too, but since they had heavenly Book their victory over the Zoroastrians, who were polytheists, was one stage of victory of 'Monotheism' over 'polytheism'.

Some other commentators have added that the believers became happy for they took this event as a good omen and as an evidence for their victory over the polytheists.

Or their happiness was for the sake that the greatness and truthfulness of the decisive prediction of the holy Qur'an, which itself was counted as an important spiritual victory for the Muslims, appeared on that day.

This probability does not seem so far that the Roman victory was simultaneous with one of the Muslims' victories over the polytheists in particular that some of the statements of the commentators indicate that this victory was simultaneous with the victory of the 'Badr' or with the peace agreement of Hudaybiyyah which was counted a great victory.

In particular that the application of "With the help of Allah' is in consonant with this meaning, too.

In short, the Muslims became happy from different points of view on that day because of the victory of the 'People of the Book' over the Zoroastrians, which was a scene of the victory of Monotheism against polytheism.

This happiness was because of spiritual victory for the appearance of the miracle of the Qur'an. Or it was for the sake of its simultaneous victory of Muslims, probably the peace of Hudaybiyyah or one of other conquests of the Muslims.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 6

وَعْدَ اللَّهِ لاَ يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

6. "(This victory is) Allah's promise! Allah does not fail His promise, but most people do not know."

The cause of breach of promises is either powerlessness, or ignorance, or regret, but Allah, the Almighty, the Aware, is free from all of them.

The reason of unawareness of people is the lack of their knowledge due to the Knowledge and Power of Allah.

They have not known Allah properly; therefore they are not aware of this fact that He never fails His promise. Breach of promise is either because of ignorance unto something that it had been concealed, then it has become revealed and has caused the change of idea.

Or it is because of weakness and inability, when the giver of promise has not changed his mind but he is not able to perform his promise.

But Allah, Who is both aware of the sequences of the affairs and His Power is above all powers, will never breach His promise.

The verse says:

"(This victory is) Allah's promise! Allah does not fail His promise, but most people do not know."

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 7

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِراً مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الأَخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ

7. "They know (only) the appearance of the life of this world and they are heedless of the Hereafter."

Being in the love of the materials of the world causes the negligence from Hereafter.

The world itself is not bad, but negligence from Hereafter is bad. This holy verse implies that these shortsighted people see only the outward of the life in this world but they are unaware of the hereafter and the end of the affairs.

It says:

"They know (only) the appearance of the life of this world and they are heedless of the Hereafter."

Common people are only aware of the life of the world, and they have also sufficed to the outward of this life. A collection of amusements, some temporary pleasures, and vain imaginations have formed their understanding from the life of this world. The pride and negligence, which is hidden in this understanding, is not concealed to anyone.

If they only knew the inward and innate of the life of this world, too, it was enough for the recognition of the Hereafter, because enough care in this temporary life shows that it is a ring from a long circle of affairs and it is a stage out of a great and long way.

As the care upon the life of an embryo in its term shows that the final aim is not only this short life by itself, but it is a preliminary stage for a later vast life. Yes they see only the appearance of this life and are heedless of its content, its concepts, and what is in its inside.

It is interesting that here by the repetition of the Arabic pronoun /hum/ (they) the Holy Qur'an points to this fact that the people themselves are the cause of this negligence and heedlessness. It is just like that someone tells us "You neglected me from this thing"; and in answer to him we say: "You yourself neglected". That is, you yourself were the cause of negligence.

At the end, one of the ways of proving the miracle of the Qur'an is the prediction of the Qur'an, one of which is clearly mentioned in these very verses. Through a few verses and with kinds of emphasis, the Qur'an informs of a great victory in a few later years for a defeated army and introduces it as a promise of Allah which never fails.

From one side, the Holy Qur'an predicts the reality of the victory itself, by saying:

"…but they, after being defeated, will soon be victorious."[4]

From another side, it informs of another victory for the Muslims against the pagans simultaneous with it.

And, from the third side, the noble Qur'an declares that this event will happen in a few future years.

In the fourth side, with two emphases, the Qur'an confirms the decisiveness of the promise of Allah:

"(This victory is) Allah's promise! Allah does not fail His promise…"[5]

The history indicates that it was before nine years that these two events happened: the Romans won a new separate war against Iranians, and at the same time the Muslims, by the peace of Hudaybiyyah (and according to a tradition in the Battle of Badr), obtained a considerable victory against the enemies.

Principally, the thought of a godly and faithful person is very different from that of a materialist or a polytheist.

A believer, according to his Monotheistic belief, thinks of the world as the creation of Allah, the Wise, the Aware, Whose all deeds are done accurately and regularly. For this reason, he believes that the world is a collection of some exact secrets and mysteries. Nothing is simple in this world. All the words of this Book are expressive and meaningful.

This Monotheistic belief tells him not to simply pass by any event and any matter, because the simplest problems may be the most complicated ones.

He always observes the depth of the things of this world and does not suffice to the appearance of the world. He has learnt this lesson in the school of monotheism.

He considers a great aim for the world and he sees all things inside the circle of that aim; while an ordinary faithless person considers the world as a collection of events which have no aim, and he does not think but about its outward.

In principle, he does not consider any innate and depth for it. Is it possible that we consider a depth and magnificence for a book which contains of only some lines that a little child have created on its pages with his own hand without having any aim?

According to some of the great scientists of the natural science, all those scientists who have contemplated about the system of the world have a sort of religious thought.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 8

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّـهِمْ لَكَافِرُونَ

8. "Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with truth and (for) an appointed term? And verily most of the people are deniers of the meeting of their Lord (at the Resurrection)."

Contemplation is usually the medicine of the sickness of negligence.

The consequence of a safe and sound thought is having belief in truthfulness and knowing that existence and Hereafter have an aim, while the consequence of thoughtlessness is often disbelief and denial of Resurrection.

The words in the previous verse were about those who see only the surface of the things and whose thoughts are limited to observing this world and the world of matter and they are not aware of the Hereafter and the world of super nature.

This holy verse, as well as the later verses, mentions some various matters around the Origin and Resurrection.

At first, in the form of a question, the verse critically says:

"Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with truth and (for) an appointed term?…"

That is, if they do contemplate correctly and refer to both their own conscience and the judgment of their intellect, they will be well familiar with these two things: that, firstly, the world has been created on the basis of truth, and it contains some systems which prove the existence of a complete wisdom and power with the creator of this world.

Secondly, this world goes toward downfall and destruction; and in view of the fact that it is impossible that the Wise Creator has created it in vain, this is an evidence that after this world there is another world which is the eternal abode, else the creation of this world, with all its things created only for a few days of life, would be meaningless, and by this we find out the existence of the Hereafter.

Thus, a careful observation in the regularity and legitimacy of this world leads to the existence of its origin, and a careful attention to its having 'an appointed term' is an evidence to the 'Resurrection'. (Be careful)

That is why, at the end of this holy verse the Qur'an adds:

"…And verily most of the people are deniers of the meeting of their Lord (at the Resurrection)."

Either the pagans are principally deniers of Resurrection, as the verses of the Qur'an have repeatedly narrated from their tongue who used to say: When we have become dust, shall we certainly be brought forth again? This is impossible! This is evident that its talker is mad.[6]

Or they do not deny it by their tongues, but their deeds are so polluted and shameful that they indicate that they do not believe in Resurrection, because if they believed they would not be so mischievous and corrupt.

By the Qur'anic phrase /fi 'anfusihim/ (upon themselves) it is understood that they should study about the secrets of their selves, as Fakhr-Razi has said in his commentary, but the purpose is that they may contemplate upon the creation of the heavens and the earth from inside of their selves and souls by the way of intellect and conscience.

The Arabic word /bil haqq/, applied in this verse, may have two meanings: one is that creation is accompanied with truth, law, and regularity. The second is that the aim of creation is a true aim, and, of course, these two recent commentaries do not contrast with each other.

As we have repeatedly said in this commentary, the Qur'anic phrase /liqa'-i-rabbihim/ (meeting of their Lord) means Hereafter and Resurrection where the curtains will be removed and, by inner intuition, man will know Allah with His greatness.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 9

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَآ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَـكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

9. "Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of these before them? They were stronger than them in strength, and they ploughed up the earth and cultivated it more than they themselves have cultivated it; and their messenger came to them with clear proofs (miracles) (which they rejected, to their own destruction); so Allah would

never deal with them unjustly, but they dealt unjustly with their own selves."

We must look at the fate and the end of the former nations, not at their daily glories.

Concerning the necessity of familiarity with the events in history and contemplating on them, Hadrat Ali (as), addressing his son, says:

"Though my age is not so old but I am familiar with the history of the former nations as if I have the lifetime of history."[7]

Explaining the meaning of the Qur'anic sentence:

"Have they not travelled in the earth"

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The purpose of it is contemplation and study the history of the former nations (who are mentioned) in the Qur'an".[8]

However, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of these before them?…"

These nations are those who had a better power than these ones and who had changed the land and had flourished it more than that they did.

Here is what the verse says:

"…They were stronger than them in strength, and they ploughed up the earth and cultivated it more than they themselves have cultivated it…"

Divine messengers came to them with clear miracles, but they showed stubbornness and did not submit to the Truth and, consequently, they encountered the painful chastisement of Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and their messenger came to them with clear proofs (miracles) (which they rejected, to their own destruction)…"

"…so Allah would never deal with them unjustly, but they dealt unjustly with their own selves."

In fact, the holy Qur'an here points to those nations who, comparing the polytheists coeval with the Prophet (S), were considerably stronger than these people from the point of power, bodily strength, and finance, and it explains their painful end as a lesson for these people.

The Qur'anic phrase: /'aθar-ul-'ard/ (they ploughed up the earth) may refer to ploughing the earth for farming and planting trees, or digging it for streams and irrigation systems, or preparing the land for building high buildings, or all of these affairs, for this phrase has a vast concept which encompasses these things which are the preliminary of cultivation.[9]

And since in the world of that day the utmost power was in the hand of those who were more developed from the point of agriculture and had considerably progressed in constructing buildings, the superiority of those nations, comparing the polytheists of Mecca whose ability, from this point of view, was very limited is made clear.

Yet, those nations, with all their power and abilities, when they rejected the Divine revelations and denied their messengers, could not escape from the grips of divine punishment, then how can you escape?

These painful punishments are the fruit and sequence of their own deeds. They themselves did unjustly against their own selves and Allah would never deal with them unjustly.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 10

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَآءُوا السُّوأَي أَن كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

10. "Then evil was the end of those that did evil, for they belied the signs of Allah, and at them they used to mock."

Those who usually reject the verses of Allah and mock them do not often gain any benefit from their deeds except evil punishment.

The above holy verse, which is the last verse of the verses under discussion, states the last stage of their infidelity. It implies that the end of those who did evil in this world was that they rejected the revelations of Allah, and worse than that, they mocked them.

The verse says:

"Then evil was the end of those that did evil, for they belied the signs of Allah, and at them they used to mock."

Yes, sin and committing evil, like the sickness of gangrene, attacks man and consumes the soul of faith and destroys it. Such a person reaches a point that he belies the Divine verses and, beyond that, he mocks both the messengers and the revelations of Allah.

Such a person will be in a stage that no advice, no admonition, and no warning is effective on him, and there will remain no way except the lash of the painful punishment of Allah.

A glance upon the life of a great deal of rebellious and criminal persons shows that at the beginning they were not like that. At least there was a slight and weak light of faith in their hearts, but committing consecutive sins caused them to get distance from Faith and piety a day after another and, at last they reached the stage of infidelity.

This verse, with the same concept that was described in the above, was also mentioned in the famous sermon of Hadrat Zaynab (as), the brave woman of Karbala, that she delivered in Syria in front of Yazid.

When Hadrat Zaynab (as) observed that Yazid, by saying some blasphemous words and reciting those famous poems, which showed his disbelief in the basis of Islam, was mocking everything, after praising Allah and greeting to the Prophet (S), she clearly said:

"It is not wonderful that today, by these poems, you deny Islam and Faith, and you tell your polytheistic ancestors, who were killed in the Battle of Badr by Muslims, that you wish they were here and would see that you have taken vengeance from the family of Bani Hashim.

It is the same thing that Allah (s.w.t.) has said and announced that the sinners will finally belie the signs of Allah…"

She said many things in this regard.[10]

Notes

1. Wasa'il, Vol. 20, P. 67
2. Especially at the beginning of Suras Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and Al-'A'raf
3. Tibyan Commentary, Vol. 8, P. 206
4. Verse 3 out of verses under discussion

5. Verse 6 out of verses under discussion

6. Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 5; Surah Al-Mu’minun, No. 23, verse 35; Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 67; and Surah Ghaf, No. 50, verse 3

7. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, letter No. 31

8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn

9. The Arabic term /’aθar/ is derived from /θaur/ in the sense of ‘scatter’, and that in the Arabic language a male cow is called /θaur/ is for the sake that the land is ploughed by it.

10. For more explanation, you can refer to Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 45, P. 157

Section 2: The Five Times of the Daily Glorification of Allah

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 11-13

اللَّهُ يَبْدَؤُا الخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُـجْرِمُونَ

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَهُم مِن شُرَكَآئِهِمْ شُفَعَآءُ وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ

11. "Allah originates the creation, then reproduces it, then unto Him you shall be returned."

12. "And On the Day when the Hour will come, the guilty shall be in despair."

13. "And these shall not be for them any intercessors from among their 'partner gods' and they shall disbelieve in their partners."

The Arabic word /yublisu/ is derived from /'iblas/ which means a grief that has appeared because of intensity of despair. The term 'Iblis is also derived from the same word.

The previous verses talked about the rejecters who used to mock the signs of Allah. By stating a part of discussions about Resurrection and the fate of the sinners in Hereafter, these holy verses complete the discussions stated in the former verses about the Resurrection.

At first, the Qur'an says:

"Allah originates the creation, then reproduces it, then unto Him you shall be returned."

The subject of Resurrection, which has also been mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an, has been stated through a short and expressive reasoning. The Qur'an implies that the same One Who had the ability of originating the creation, has also the ability of bringing Resurrection forth, as well as the law of justice, and also the Divine Wisdom requires that this creation should be reproduced.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…then unto Him you shall be returned"

points to this fact that after this life, in Hereafter, all of you return to the Divine Court and to His reward and His compensation. And more than that, those believers who have come in the path of perfection of Allah will also go forth in their perfection toward infinite and toward the Pure Essence of Allah.

In the next verse, the state of the guilty in Hereafter has been illustrated as follows:

"And On the Day when the Hour will come, the guilty shall be in despair."

However, on that Day, the guilty are right to be in despair and sorrow, because they neither have brought any faith and righteous deed with them into the resurrection plain, nor have they any helper, nor it is possible for them to return to the world and compensate their past faults.

Therefore, in the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"And these shall not be for them any intercessors from among their 'partner gods'…"

These are the same idols and the objects of worship that whenever these idolaters were asked why they worshipped them, they used to say:

"…these are our intercessors with Allah…"[1]

In Hereafter, they will surely understand that there is neither any peculiarity nor profit in these worthless hollow objects of worship.

It is for this reason that they will disbelieve in the objects of worship that they had associated them with Allah and they will hate them.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they shall disbelieve in their partners."

Why should they not disbelieve in them? These objects of worship not only do not solve any problem for them, but also, as the Qur'an claims, they will belie them and say:

"…they were not unto us worshipping."[2]

And worse than this is that these objects of worship will be some enemies for their worshippers, as Surah Al-'Ahqaf, No. 46, verse 6 says:

"And when mankind are mustered (at the Resurrection) they will be hostile to them and deny that (men) had worshipped them."

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 14-16

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَفَرَّقُونَ

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَآءِ الأَخِرَةِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ

14. "And on the Day when the Hour will come, that Day they shall be divided;"

15. "And as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they shall be made happy in a garden (of Paradise)."

16. "And as for those who disbelieved and rejected Our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, those shall be arraigned into the chastisement."

This verse points to the different groups of people on the Day of Hereafter, when it says:

"And on the Day when the Hour will come, that Day they shall be divided;"

It means that on the Hereafter Day the pure persons will be separated from the impure ones.

That is, Hereafter will be the Day of the end of ungodly relations and friendships.

Then in the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"And as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they shall be made happy in a garden (of Paradise)."

The Qur'anic word /yuhbarun/ is derived from /hibr/ with the sense of 'an interesting and good effect'. It is also used for the state of rejoice and happiness the effect of which appears in the face, and since the hearts of the people of Paradise are so full of rejoice and happiness that its effects appear in their whole entity, this meaning has been used concerning them.

The Arabic term /raudah/ is called to a place where there is plenty of water and trees; that is why the green gardens are called /raudah/. The reason why this word has been used in its indefinite Arabic form here, it is for veneration and dignifying it. That is, they will be in affluence inside the best and the most beautiful and joyful gardens of Paradise.

Then, in the next verse, it says:

"And as for those who disbelieved and rejected our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, those shall be arraigned into the chastisement."

It is interesting that the Qur'an, qualifying the people of Paradise, uses the word /yuhbarun/ (are made happy) which is the sign of their full consent, while the word /muhdarun/ (they will be arraigned) is used concerning the people of Hell, which is an indication to their utmost dislike and unhappiness, because to be arraigned is used in the instances that are done against the inner desire of man.

Another point, which is mentioned about the people of Paradise, is both 'Faith' and 'righteous deed', while, concerning the people of Hell, the Qur'an suffices to mentioning only their lack of Faith which leads to both the rejection of Divine signs and Resurrection.

This points to the fact that, for entering into Paradise, mere Faith is not enough and righteous deed is also necessary. But for entering into Hell only disbelief is enough though the one has not committed any other sin, since disbelief itself is the greatest sin.

However, 'Ibn-i-Manzur in 'Lisan-ul-'Arab' says:

"The Arabic word /sa'at/ is an appellation for the time when the Blast of the end of the world is blown and suddenly all will die, and it is also a name for the time when people will be raised in Hereafter.

This name has been chosen for the end of the world and for the occurrence of Resurrection, for the sake that by the first Blast, that Allah has pointed out in Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 29, saying:

"It was no more than a single mighty Blast, and behold! They were like ashes quenched and silent",

everybody will suddenly die, (and by the second Blast they will suddenly stand up and the Hereafter will be set).

Zubaydi in Taj-ul-'Arus narrates from some commentators that /sa'at/ is of three kinds:

1) 'Sa'at-ul-Kubra' (the great hour) which is the Day of Resurrection when people will be quickened for reckoning.

2) Sa'at-ul-Wusta (the middle hour), the day of sudden death of the people of one age (by the Divine punishments and by the chastisements for some people who are not amendable).

3) Sa'at-us-Suqra (the lesser hour), the day of everyone's death."

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 17-18

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَعَشِيّاً وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ

17. "So glory be to Allah, when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning."

18. "And to Him belongs praise in the heavens and the earth, and at nightfall and when you are at midday."

Some commentators believe that these verses point to the times of the five daily prayers done in the morning, noon, and evening.

The Qur'anic sentence 'So glory be to Allah' and the sentence: 'To Him belongs praise' may be a command for glorification and praising, which has been said in the form of declarative sentences.

Next to a great deal of detailed discussions about Origin and Resurrection and pointing to some rewards of the believers and retributions of the disbelievers mentioned in the former verses, in these verses which are under discussion, the Qur'an refers to the glorification and praise of Allah (s.w.t.), and also removal and sanctification of His Pure Essence from any partners, defect and blemish, where it says:

"So glory be to Allah, when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning."

"And to Him belongs praise in the heavens and the earth, and at nightfall and when you are at midday."

Thus, in these two verses there have been stated about the glorification of Allah done in four times: at the beginning of night

"…When you enter the evening…",

in the morning at the dawn:

".. When you enter the morning",

by the night:

"…and at nightfall…"

and at the decline of noon:

"…When you are at midday."

But praise of Allah has been generalized from the point of place and it has encompassed the expanse of the heaven and the earth.

The announcement of these four different times cited in the abovementioned verses may be an allusion of the constance and permanence of glorification; as we may say: 'Take care of so and so every morning and evening' (which means always and at any time).

It is also necessary to be mentioned here that the Qur'anic sentences: 'glory be to Allah' and 'to Him belongs praise' can be a statement of glorification and praise from the side of Allah, as in Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 14 He says:

"…So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators".

And this glorification and praise may be in the sense of command, which means: do glorify and praise Him.

This meaning seems nearer to the fact that the above verses are as a command to all servants so that they glorify and praise Allah every morning and evening as well as every noon and night by prayer and other than that in order to wipe out the effects of polytheism and sin from their hearts and souls.

The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"Whoever recites these two holy verses and the verse after them in the morning whatever (of virtues) is lost from him on that day will be

recompensed, and whoever recites them at the beginning of night whatever is lost from him at night will be recompensed."[3]

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 19

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

19. "He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death, and thus shall you bed brought forth."

There are many examples and expansions mentioned in the commentary books concerning the Qur'anic sentence saying:

"He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth dead from the living…",

among them are: man produced from sperm drop and producing sperm drop from man; a faithful child from unfaithful parents and vice versa, all of which are the signs of absolute power of Allah in the world, and His ability in producing the Hereafter and Revivification of the creatures.

However, in this holy verse again the Qur'an returns to the subject of Resurrection and, in another way, it answers the doubt of the deniers of it, as follows:

"He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death, and thus shall you bed brought forth."

That is, 'the scene of Resurrection' and 'the scene of the end of the world', one of which is 'coming out the living from the dead' and the other is 'coming out the dead from the living' is constantly repeated before your eyes. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the end of the world all living beings pass away and, in Resurrection, all human beings return to a new life.

Then, as for the 'coming out the living from the dead' concerning the dead lands, which is repeatedly emphasized on in the Holy Qur'an for the subject of Resurrection, is clear for everybody that the land turns to be dead in winter when neither there grows any plant on it nor does any flower smile, nor does any blossom blow.

But in spring, with the change of weather, and by falling the life giving drops of rain, there will be a movement in the land: plants grow everywhere, flowers smile, and blossoms will appear on the trees; and this is the scene of Resurrection that we see in the world.

Then, as for coming out the dead from the living, which is not any thing concealed, either. It is seen that over the globe always the trees change into bare wood, or human beings and animals lose their life and become dead bodies.

But, concerning 'coming out the living from the dead', some commentators have rendered it into as coming out men and animals from sperm drop, while some others of them have rendered it into the birth of believers from disbelievers, and some into waking up from sleep.

But the outward of the verse denotes that the main meaning of the verse is none of these meanings, because sperm drop itself is a living creature; and

the subject of faith and disbelief is something from the parts inside of the holy verse not outward of it.

The outward of the verse means that Allah brings forth the living creatures from the dead and He changes the dead into living creatures.

According to the assured science of today, at least in the laboratories and daily observations of human beings, there have been seen no instances that living creatures would be produced by inanimate beings, but the living beings always are produced from egg, seed or sperm drop of other living beings.

But certainly at the beginning, when this dust globe was wholly a fiery globe, there existed no living creature. Later, in some particular conditions, that science has not properly discovered it yet, by a great evolution, some living creatures come into being from some inanimate things.

This matter, of course, cannot be seen in the present conditions of the earth as far as it is available in man's knowledge. (Yet, under some conditions in the depth of oceans this evolution may occur at the present time, too.)

But what is sensible and completely tangible for us is that the inanimate beings are constantly absorbed to become as a part of living creatures' bodies and wear the clothing of life.

Neither of water and food we have is a living being, but when they arrive inside our body they change into some living beings, and some new cells are added to the cells of our body and, for example, by this very way a little child changes into a powerful young man with a strong body.

Is this not bringing forth the living from inside of the dead, or the living from dead?

Therefore, it can be said that in the system of the world of nature ceaselessly life comes out from death and death comes out from life. For this very reason the Lord, Who is the Creator of nature, is able to give life to the dead in the next world.

Of course, as we said before, the abovementioned verse have some other commentaries, too, from the spiritual point of view, including: the birth of some believers from disbelievers, disbelievers from believers, coming forth of learned ones from ignorant one, and ignorant ones from learned ones, and good doers from evildoers, and evildoers from good doers. These meanings have been mentioned in some of the Islamic narrations, too.

Again, these meanings may be among the innate meanings of the verse, because we know that the verses of the Qur'an have both outward and inward meanings. And, also, death and life may have a vast and conclusive meaning which encompasses both the material aspect and the spiritual aspect.

Upon the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…gives life to the earth after its death…"

Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (as) through a tradition says:

"The purpose of it is not that He will make the land alive by the rain, but Allah will raise some men to establish justice and the earth will become alive by means of justice. (Do know that) the establishment of justice in the earth is more beneficial than forty days of rainfall."[4]

It is clear that when the Imam (as) says the purpose is not rainfall, it is a negation of exclusiveness; that is, the verse should not be limitedly rendered into rain, because the spiritual giving life to the earth by means of justice is also more significant than rainfall.

Notes

1. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 18
2. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28. verse 63
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 172
4. Narrated from the book of Kafi, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 173

Section 3: The Might of Allah Manifesting in Nature

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 20

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُم مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَآ أَنتُم بَشَرٌ تَنتَشِرُونَ

20. "And one of His signs is that He created you from dust, and then, behold, you are human beings scattered (in the world)."

The best way of theology is contemplation in creation.

The signs of Allah are not countable; what is mentioned contains a few ones from a great deal of them.

This verse, as well as a part of the later verses, reiterates some interesting points from among the proofs of Monotheism and signs of Allah in the system of the world of existence, and it completes the former discussions. It can be said that these very noble verses, on the whole, form an important part of the monotheistic verses of the Qur'an.

These verses, all of which begin with "one of His signs" and have a special harmony, an interesting tone, and deep and effective meaning with each other, have totally been formed by seven verses, six of which are consecutive and one of them is separate from others.[1]

These seven verses have an interesting division from the point of extroversive verses and introversive verses. Three verses are about the introversive verses (the signs of Allah in the man's self, and three verses are about extroversive verses, (the signs of the greatness of Allah outside of man's self), and one verse talks about both of them.

It is interesting that the verses which begin with this sentence are not more than eleven that seven of them have occurred in this very Surah, Ar-Room, and two verses are mentioned in Surah Fussilat, No. 412, and two verses are in Surah Shawra, No. 423. All of these eleven noble verses are truly as a complete collection about Monotheism.

Before beginning the commentary of these verses, it is necessary to mention that though what is stated in these verses, at first, is understandable for almost all people, but by the development of man's knowledge in every field some new points are gradually revealed to the scientists, a part of which will be pointed out through the commentary of these verses.

At first, here the Qur'an refers to the creation of man for whom is the first and the most important merit of Allah.

It says:

"And one of His signs is that He created you from dust, and then, behold, you are human beings scattered (in the world)."

In this verse two signs of the greatness of Allah (s.w.t.) are pointed out: one is the creation of man from dust, which may be a hint to the creation of the first man, i.e. Adam, or the creation of all humankind from dust, because foodstuff, which constructs the man's being, directly or indirectly, is wholly taken from dust.

The second matter is the increase of man and that Adam's children are scattered throughout the earth. If the speciality of scattering human beings were not created in Adam's offspring, man would be destroyed soon and his posterity could be vanished.

Verily, how far is the distance between the dust and the man with these delicacies!

If we compare the delicate curtains inside the eye, which are more delicate, sensitive and tender than a petal, or the extraordinary delicate and sensitive cells of mind, with dust we will then understand how Excellent is the Lord Who has applied an amazing power to produce such sensitive, exact, and worthy systems from dust, a dark and worthless matter?

Dust itself has neither light, nor warmth, nor beauty, nor freshness, nor movement, but it is the origin of man with these wonderful qualities.

The One Who, from such a dead being that is counted as the lowest beings, produces a wonderful living creature such as man, is worthy of any kind of praise for this His endless power and knowledge:

"…Blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators."[4]

By the way, this statement points to this fact that there is no difference between human beings and the origin of all of them is one thing. All human beings have an unbreakable relation with dust and, naturally, they all will finally return to the dust, too.

It is noteworthy that in the Arabic language the word /'iŏa/ is usually used for the things which often suddenly occur. The application of it here may point to the fact that Allah gave such an ability of proliferation to man that in a short time suddenly his progeny scattered throughout the world and brought the organized human society into being.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 21

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً لِّتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

21. "And of His signs is that He crated spouses for you from yourselves, that you may repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy; verily there are signs in this, for a people who reflect."

A spouse must be the cause of peace, not the cause of agitation and anxiety.

The aim of marriage is not often only satisfying the sexual instinct, but the aim is mostly reaching to a spiritual and bodily tranquillity.

This holy verse refers to another part of the extroversive verses which are in a stage after the creation of man.

It says:

"And of His signs is that He crated spouses for you from yourselves, that you may repose in them…"

And since the continuation of this relation between spouses, in particular, and between all human beings, in general, needs a heartily and spiritual attraction, next to the above statement, the Qur'an adds:

"…and He has set between you love and mercy…"

For more emphasis, at the end of the holy verse, the Qur'an continues saying:

"…verily there are signs in this, for a people who reflect."

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an introduces the aim of marriage as peace and tranquillity, and here by applying the Arabic expressive phrase:

/litaskunu/ (that you may repose) it has implicitly stated many subjects. Similar to this meaning is also mentioned in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 189.

Verily the existence of spouses with this special quality, which is the cause of tranquillity of their lives, is counted one of the great bounties of Allah, because these two genders are complementary of each other and each generally causes the mirth, fruitfulness, and development of the other, so that every one of them is imperfect without the other.

And it is natural that there should be such an honourable attraction between a being and its complement.

From this statement we can conclude that those who turn away from this Allah's way of treatment have an incomplete life, because one of their developing stages has stopped, (except that some particular conditions and a necessity truly requires that one remains single).

However, this tranquillity is from the point of both body and spirit, and from the point of both individual and social.

The sicknesses, which happen to the man's body because of the abandonment of marriage, are not deniable.

Also, the lack of spiritual equilibrium and the psychological uneasiness, which the single persons are faced with, are, more or less, clear to everybody.

From the social viewpoint, the unmarried persons feel responsibility less than others and, for this reason, suicide is more common among them than among others, and they commit horrible crimes more than others, too.

When a person turns from the stage of celibacy into the stage of family and married life, he finds a new personality in him and feels a further responsibility; and this is the meaning of feeling tranquillity under the light of marriage.

The issues of 'love' and 'mercy', in fact, are the 'clay' and the 'adhesive substance', of constructional materials of the human society, because a society is formed by each one of the individuals of human beings, like a huge and glorious building which is made of brakes and pieces of stone.

If these separate individuals, and those different parts do not relate to each other and combine with each other, there will not appear a 'society' or 'a building'. He, Who has created man for social life, has provided this necessary relation in his soul, too.

There may be some differences between the meaning of the Arabic words /mawaddat/ (love) and /rahmat/ (mercy, as follows:

1- 'Love' is the motive of relation and communication at the beginning, but at the end, when one of the two spouses may become so weak that can not give any service, 'mercy' substitutes it.

2- 'Love' is used concerning the adults who are able to serve each other, but little children and babies are fostered under the shadow of 'Mercy'.

3- 'Love' is often mutual, but 'mercy' is unilateral and is done as an act of donation and altruism, because for the existence of a society the mutual services, the source of which is love, are sometimes necessary, and sometimes free services are needed, which require 'donation' and 'mercy'.

This verse, of course, states ‘love’ and ‘mercy’ between two spouses, but this probability also exists that the application of the Qur’anic word /baynakum/ (between you) refers to all human beings, and ‘two spouses’ is counted of its clear extensions, since not only the family life but also the life in the whole human society is not possible without these two principles: ‘love’ and ‘mercy’.

So, the destruction of these two relations, and even with their weakness and scantiness, brings thousands of calamities, unhappiness, and social uneasiness.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 22

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِلْعَالِمِينَ

22. “And of his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variety of your languages and your colours; verily there are signs in this for the learned.”

The difference of races and languages is a way toward theology.

This holy verse is a combination of the extroversive and introversive signs. At first, it refers to the divine creation of the heavens and the earth and says:

“And of his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth…”

The heavens, with those plenty of spheres, those many systems and galaxies; are some things that the man’s thought can not perceive their greatness, and his mind gets tired by studying them. The more man’s knowledge develops the more new points are revealed from their greatness.

Once man considered the heavenly stars the same number of them that he could see by his eyes. (The scientists had counted the stars which can be been with natural eyes about five to six thousand stars.)

But when some stronger and greater telescopes were made, the greatness and multiplicity of stars of heaven increased more, so much that today the scientists believe that our galaxy, which is one of the abundant galaxies of the heaven, contains, more than one hundred million stars; and our sun, with its glary glory, is counted as one of its mean stars.

And only Allah knows how many stars exist in all galaxies, the number of which is not known to anyone yet.

Also, the more the natural sciences, geology, botany, zoology, anatomy, physiology, psychology and its branches develop, the more new wonders are discovered about the creation of the earth, each of which is a sign out of the signs of the greatness of Allah.

Then the words of the verse tend to speak about one of the great introversive signs, when it says:

“…and the variety of your languages and your colours;…”

No doubt, without knowing individuals, the recognition of social life of human beings is impossible. If it happens that one day all the members of humankind have the same form, the same feature, and the same size, on the same day the regularity of their life will be disturbed.

Neither father, child and spouse is recognized from strangers, nor criminal from innocent, nor debtor from loaner, nor commander from the submissive, nor the boss from employee, nor host from guest, nor friend from enemy. Then, what a wonderful tumult appears!

Sometimes this case happens concerning the twins who are completely similar to each other, and there appear so many difficulties in their relations and communications with other people.

We have heard that one of the similar twins once was sick and the Mother gave the medicine to the other. Therefore, in order to organize the human societies, Allah has made the sounds and colours different.

As Fakhr-i-Razi in the explanation of the verse under discussion says: the cognition of a person by another person should be performed either by the eyes, or by the ears.

For recognition Allah has created eyes, colours, faces, and different shapes, and for the recognition by the ears He created difference in songs, tones and sounds so that no one can find two persons in the world whose features and tones of sound are the same from all points of view, i.e., the man's face which is a small limb, and the tone of his sound, which is a simple matter, by Allah's power, are produced in many billions of different shapes, and this is among the signs of His greatness.

Of course, there is also another probability, to which some great commentators have pointed out, that the difference of languages means the difference in languages such as Arabic, Persian, and the like; and the difference of colours refers to the difference of races that every one of them has a colour.

However, the Arabic word /'ixtilaf/ (variety) can have a vast meaning which envelops both this commentary and the previous commentary, and whichever meaning it may have, this variety in creation testifies to His greatness and Power.

In his encyclopaedia, Farid Wajdi narrates from Newton, the famous western scientist, who said:

"Do never doubt about the Creator of the world, Allah, because it is not rational that necessity and cause and effect without sense alone be the leader of existence, since necessity in any place and any time can not be considered that these various heavens and colourful creatures are issued from Him.

And it is not possible that the existence, with its system, order of its parts, and the needed proportions consistent with the changes of time and place, appear, but all these affairs must certainly originate from a source which has Knowledge, Wisdom, and Will."[5]

At the end of the above verse, the Holy Qur'an says:

"…verily there are signs in this for the learned."

The reason of it is that the learned ones are aware of these secrets more than other people.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 23

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُم بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَآؤُكُم مِن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

23. "And of His signs is your sleeping by night and day and your seeking after His grace; verily there are signs in this for a people who hear."

This holy verse refers to another part of these great signs.

At first, the verse attracts the attentions to the phenomenon of 'sleep' as an important phenomenon of creation and a design from the wise system of its creator, and says:

"And of His signs is your sleeping by night and day and your seeking after His grace…"

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…verily there are signs in this for a people who hear."

This fact is not concealed for any one that all 'living creatures' are in need of rest in order to renew their strength and obtain necessary preparation for continuation of work and activity. It is a kind of rest that necessarily comes to them, and it forces the studious and greedy ones to have it.

For gaining this aim what can be considered better than sleep which compulsorily comes to man and forces him to sleep when he stops many bodily activities and an important part of his mental reactions? In sleep only some organs of body such as heart, the two lungs, and a part of mind, which are necessary for the continuation of life, go on their job very quietly and calmly.

This great merit of Allah causes man's body and spirit to be cleaned, and by the occurrence of the state of sleep, which is a kind of pause in the work of the body, a rest will be obtained, and man finds a sort of liveliness, mirth, and new strength in him.

Admittedly, if sleep did not exist, the man's spirit would become faded and worn out very soon and before long senility and infirmity would meet him. That is why a suitable and calm sleep is usually the cause of health, prolongation of lifetime and duration of the youth cheerfulness.

It is noteworthy that, firstly, the word 'sleeping' has been stated before the Qur'anic phrase 'seeking after His grace' which in the verses of the Qur'an means: struggle for sustenance. This indicates that sleeping is considered as a foundation for it, since without having enough sleeping 'seeking after His grace' is difficult.

Secondly: it is true that sleeping usually happens at night, and struggle for ways of making a living is done during the day, but it is not so that man can not change this program when it is necessary.

Allah has created man in a way that he can change his sleeping program and adapts it with his own necessities and needs. The application of 'your sleeping by night and day' seems to be a hint to this very point.

No doubt the main program of sleeping relates to night, and for the sake of the rest emerged from darkness, night consists of a special precedence in this respect.

But sometimes there may appear some circumstances in man's life that, for example, he has to travel by night and sleeps and rests during the day.

What kind of difficulties would there happen if the program of arranging the time of sleeping were not at the disposal of man?

In our age, in particular, when many of the manufacturing, healing and medical institutes have to ceaselessly work during day and night and their cessation is impossible and, therefore, the employees and workers are busy working in three shifts, the importance of the above subject is more manifest than any other time.

The need of both body and spirit of man to sleeping is so much so that man can rarely bear not to sleep for a long time, and this length of time is not more than a few nights and days.

That is why hindrance from sleeping has always been known as the most painful tortures by the tyrant and the arrogant. And also it is for this very reason that one of the effective ways of treating many human diseases is that the patience is made sleep deeply, and by this way they increase the might and ability of the patience.

Of course, no one can define a proper amount of sleeping as 'the necessary amount of sleeping' for all people. This matter depends on the age, and conditions of persons and also on their spiritual and bodily state. What is important is that 'enough sleeping' is that amount after which man feels that he is satiated from this point of view, just like when he feels he has been satiated by water and food.

This is also notable that besides the 'length' of the time of sleeping, its depth has also a special importance. It happens that one hour of a deep sleeping has the effect of several hours of superficial sleeping in reconstruction of man's spirit and body.

Of course, where a deep sleeping is not possible for a person, a 'slumber' is also among the bounties of Allah, as Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 11, concerning the strivers of the Battle of Badr, mentions it, because in battlefield sleeping is often neither possible nor useful.

However, the bounty of sleeping and rest and tranquillity resulted from it, and also the strength and the mirth which appear after sleeping, are among the divine bounties that are describable by no statement.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 24

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفاً وَطَمَعاً وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَيُحْيِي بِهِ الاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

24. "And of His signs is that He shows you the lightning for fear and for hope and that He sends down water from the heaven and gives life therewith to the earth after its death; verily there are signs in this for a people who understand."

Fear and hope together can be constructive.

Neither heavenly lightning nor falling rain and growing plants on the earth are casual, but they are performed upon a just and accurate program. This holy verse, which states the fifth part of the signs of the greatness of Allah, again refers to the extroversive signs and pays attention to the subject of rain, lightning, and the life of the earth after its death.

It says:

"And of His signs is that He shows you the lightning for fear and for hope…"

The danger emerged from lightning, which sometimes in the form of thunderbolt, burns everything in its realm and turns them into ashes, causes fear; and hope, here, appears because of rainfall which often falls after thunder-storm in the form of a shower.

Thus, lightning is a harbinger for the descent of rainfall. (This is besides the various important benefits of lightning which the modern science has revealed, and a few of which were pointed out at the beginning of Surah Ar-Ra'd.)

Then the Qur'an adds:

"…and that He sends down water from the heaven and gives life therewith to the earth after its death…"

The dry and hot land, every spot of which seems dead, after receiving some refreshing drops of rain will become so alive and green that the effects of life are seen in it in the form of plants and flowers, and sometimes it is not really believable that this is the same former dead land.

At the end of the verse, as an emphasis, the Qur'an says:

"…verily there are signs in this for a people who understand."

These are those who understand that there is a proper power in this accurate program, which leads it, and such a power can never be the effect of casual events, and blind and deaf necessities.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 25

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَن تَقُومَ السَّمَآءُ وَالأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً مِنَ الأَرْضِ إِذَآ أَنتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ

25. "And of His signs is that the heaven and the earth subsist by His command, then (after your death) when He summons you once (and) suddenly out of the earth, behold, you come forth."

In these verses not only the creation of man from dust has been counted as a sign of Divine Power, but also both death and man's coming out from his grave are the signs of His Power.

Of course, the belief in the Origin is preliminary for the belief in Resurrection. The One Who can set up the system of existence will also restore you to life after death.

In this holy verse and in the previous five verses, Allah has addressed people for fifteen times and has mentioned His bounties. This is one of the methods of propagation.

However, in this verse the Qur'an continues the discussion upon the extroversive signs in the field of the contrivance of the regulation of the heaven and the earth as well as its perseverance and permanence, where it says:

"And of His signs is that the heaven and the earth subsist by His command…"

That is, not only the creation of the heavens, which was mentioned in the previous holy verses, is a sign, but also their erecting and the permanence of

their regulation is another sign, because, in their regular rotations, these tremendous bodies are in need of many things that the most important one among them is the complicated computation of equilibrium of the power of polarization.

Allah, the Mighty, the Great, has arranged this equilibrium so minute that they rotate millions of years in their own orbits without any deviation.

In other words, the previous holy verse referred to Unity of creation while this verse refers to the Unity of Lordship and contrivance.

The application of the Arabic word /taqum/ (subsist) is a tender application which has been taken out of the states of man, because the best state of man's states for continuing the activities is the state of subsisting in which he is able to fulfil all his needs and he dominates over all his surroundings.

The application of /'amr/ (command) here refers to Allah's utmost power that for the continuation of life and order of this vast world only His command is enough.

By using the existence of the preparation of Unity for Resurrection, at the end of the verse the Qur'an has turned the discussion to this subject, Resurrection, and says:

"…then (after your death) when He summons you once (and) suddenly out of the Earth, behold, you come forth."

We have repeatedly seen in the verses of the Qur'an that Allah proves the subject of Resurrection by emphasizing on His signs in the heaven and the earth, and also the verse under discussion is one of them.

The Qur'anic phrase /da'akum/ (He summons you) points to this fact that as for the contrivance and the order of the world His one command is enough, for quickening of the dead, uprising, and Resurrection His one command is enough, too; specially with regard to the Qur'anic sentence /'iða 'antum taxrujun/ (behold, you come forth) wherein the Arabic word /'iða/ makes it clear that by one invitation everybody suddenly comes out.

By the way, the application of /da'watan minal 'ard/ (He summons you once (and) suddenly out of the earth) is a clear indication to 'the resurrection of the body', meaning that on the Day of Resurrection man will be summoned from this earth. (Be careful)

A Complete Course of Theology

1- Through former six holy verses, there were mentioned different discussions about theology which, on the whole, form an interesting course, including: the creation of the heaven, and the creation of man from dust; the love of family, and the restful sleep at night and during the day; the contrivance of the order and the above world, and the lightning of the sky, the rainfall, and the difference in languages and colours.

All of these subjects are a suitable collection of the extroversive and introversive verses.

It is interesting that in every one of these six verses two sections of the proofs of Unity have been mentioned in order that one prepares the preparation and the other strengthens and approves it. It is just like bringing two witnesses for proving a claim; thus, these six verses form twelve truthful witnesses for the unlimited Power of Allah.

2- At the end of four verses out of these six verses, there has been emphasized that there are clear signs in these affairs for a people who reflect, for the learned, for a people who hear, for a people who understand, but this meaning is not seen in the first nor in the last verse.

In this regard, Fakhr-i-Razi explains as follows: the lack of its mentioning in the first verse may be for the sake that the first and the second verses, which have come one after another and both of them are among the introversive verses, are the same.

And in the last verse, the matter is so evident that it needs not further explanation and emphasizing on understanding and contemplation.[6]

It is interesting that at first the Holy Qur'an speaks of 'reflection' and then of 'knowledge', because contemplation is the foundation and preparation of knowledge.

Next to it the words are about 'the hearing ear', since under the light of knowledge and awareness man is ready to hear and accept the Truth, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"…therefore give good news to my servants,"

"those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it…"[7]

And at the last stage, the words are about 'wisdom', because those who have a hearing ear will finally reach the stage of good understanding.

This point is also noteworthy that at the end of the first verse the Qur'an refers to the creation of man and that his progeny have been scattered in the earth:

"…then, behold, you are human beings scattered (in the world)"[8]**,**

and in the last verse the words are also about the man's resurrection in the Hereafter,

"…behold, you come forth."

3- The concerning scientists have abundantly discussed about sleeping and its specialties, but it seems that its all parts and secrets have not been made manifest yet, and its whole complicated facts have not been revealed.

There is still a discussion among the scientists that what action and reaction happen in the body of man that in a moment suddenly a part of the activities of his mind and body stop and there appears a change throughout his spirit and body?

Some believe that the main factor of sleeping is a 'physical factor'. They believe that the circulation of blood from brain to other parts of the body causes this phenomenon to happen. In order to prove their own belief, they have used a special bed called 'scale bed' which distinguishes the circulation of the blood from brain to other limbs.

Some other scientists believe that the factor of sleeping is a 'chemical factor'. They believe that at the time of effort and struggle there appear some poisons in the body, which cause a part of brain to stop working, and, as a result, man falls asleep. Then, when these poisons are absorbed by the body and are frustrated, the person awakes and gets up.

Some others believe in a nervous factor for sleeping. They say there is a special active nervous system in brain which works automatically and, as the result of tiredness, it temporarily stops working.

But concerning all of these various attitudes, there are many questions and ambiguous points the answers of which have not been clearly given yet, and sleeping has ever kept its mysterious feature.

One of the wonders of the world of sleeping, which some scientists have recently revealed, is that at the time of sleeping and temporarily stopping of a great part of mind, some of its cells, which must be called 'the guardian cells', will remain vigilant, and they never forget the recommendations that man gives them before the time of sleeping about the moment of vigilance so that, at the necessary time, they awaken the brain wholly and cause it to work.

For example, when the tired mother goes to bed at night while her suckling child is inside the cradle beside her, she involuntarily recommends this matter to her 'guardian cells', which are the communicator between soul and body, that whenever her child makes the least sound they would awaken her, but other sounds and noises are not so important for them.

Therefore, a thunderbolt may not cause her to wake up. Those guardian cells have undertaken this important duty!

We ourselves have also experimented this matter that whenever we have decided to get up soon in the morning, or even in midnight, when we want to travel or pursue an important program and recommend this matter to us, often we wake up on time, while in other times we may remain in sleeping for hours.

In short, since sleeping is one of the spiritual phenomena, and spirit is a world full of secrets, it is not surprising that its all dimensions have not been made clear yet, but the more we contemplate upon it we will be more acquainted with the greatness of the Creator of this phenomenon.

All these statements were about sleeping, but there are a great deal of discussions concerning dream and to dream a dream a part of which was referred to in the commentary of Surah Yusuf, No. 12.

4- The love of two spouses: Though the relation of a person with his parents and his brother is a genealogical relation, and it concerns to the relative deep roots while the relation of two spouses is because of a legal agreement, but many times it happens that the love and affection emerged from it precedes even the relative love of parents, and this, in fact, is the same thing that has been referred to in verses under discussion with the expressive sentence:

"…and He has set between you love and mercy…"

An Islamic tradition indicates that, after the Battle of 'Uhud, the Prophet of Islam (S) told Jahish's daughter:

"Your uncle, Hamzah, became martyr."

She answered:

"Verily We belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return.
I want the recompense of this calamity from Allah."

But when she was informed of the martyrdom of her husband, she put her hand on her head and cried loudly:

The Prophet (S) said:

"Nothing is equal to husband with a woman!"[9]

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 26-27

وَلَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ ۖ كُلٌّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الأَعْلَى فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

26. "To Him belongs every being that is the heavens and the earth; all are subservient unto Him."

27. "And He it is Who originates the creation, then He brings it back again, and it is easier for Him (than the first creation), and His is the Sublime Similitude in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Might, the Wise."

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /man fis-samawat/ (every being that is in the heavens) is either the angels, who are obedient to the command of Allah, or some other intelligent beings over there whom are not recognized to humankind.

This holy verse says:

"To Him belongs every being that is the heavens and the earth…"

And since all of them belong to Him, they are humble and subservient before Him.

The verse says:

"…all are subservient unto Him."

Thus, it is clear here that the purpose of ownership and also obedience is a genetic ownership and obedience; that is, from the point of the laws of creation everything in His authority and, desirably or undesirably, all are subservient to His laws in the world of creation.

Even the disobedient haughty persons and the sinful law-breakers also have to obey Allah's genetic laws.

The reason of this ownership is His divinity and Lordship. The One Who has created the beings from the beginning and has undertaken their management, surely He must be the essential owner, too, not other than Him.

And in view of the fact that all the beings of the world of existence are equal from this point of view, it makes clear that there is no partner for Him in ownership; even the polytheists' imaginary objects of worship are totally owned by the Lord of sovereignty and they obey His command.

By the way, it should be noted that the Qur'anic word /qanit/ is derived from /qunut/ which originally means: 'obedience accompanied with humility'.[10]

The holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"Every time (the word) /qunut/ (is mentioned) in the Qur'an it means obedience."

But sometimes it is either genetic obedience and sometimes it is religious obedience.

Some commentators have rendered the word /qanitun/ here into 'being witnessed unto 'Unity of Allah' which, in fact, is the statement of one of the extensions of obedience, because giving witness to the Unity of Allah is a kind of obedience to Him.

In this verse the themes of Origin and Resurrection have been woven into each other. In the next verse, the Holy Qur'an returns again to the subject of Resurrection and says:

"And He it is Who originates the creation, then He brings it back again, and it is easier for Him (than the first creation)…"

The noble Qur'an has proved the subject of possibility of Resurrection with the shortest reasoning in this holy verse. It announces that you believe that the origin of creation belongs to Him, why does its return again, which is easier than that, not belong to Him?

The reason of its being easier than its originating at first is that: at the beginning there was nothing existed and Allah absolutely created it, while in returning something, at least, the main materials are present: a part of it is inside the dust of the earth, another part is scattered in the sky, and the only problem is to organize and to shape it.

Here, there is a point which must be noted, and it is from the window of our thought that something is easy and another one is difficult.

For the Essence Who is infinite, being easy or difficult is the same. In principle, being difficult or easy is meaningful where a limited power is spoken of, that the possessor of that power can fulfil something well and easily, or rather with difficulty. But when the words are about an infinite power, being difficult or easy becomes meaningless.

In other words, taking the greatest mountains from the earth for Allah is as easy as taking a piece of straw.

And perhaps it is why that at the end of the holy verse the Qur'an says:

"…and His is the Sublime Similitude in the heavens and the earth…"

Its reason is that any complete description we consider for anything in the heavens and in the earth from the point of knowledge, power, ownership, greatness, graciousness, its most complete and perfect extension is with Allah, because all of beings have a limited scale of it, but His is unlimited.

The attributes of all things are casual, but those of His are essential and He is the main source of all virtues. Even our words which are often used for stating our daily aims cannot describe His qualifications, as we already saw its example in the Qur'anic word /'ahwan/ (easier).

The abovementioned sentence is similar to what is said in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 180:

"And to Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them…",

and in Surah Ash-Shaura, No. 42, verse 11 Qur'an says:

"…there is nothing whatever like unto Him…"

Finally, at the end of this holy verse, as an emphasis or as reasoning, it says:

"…and He is the Might, the Wise."

He is Mighty and invincible but, in the meantime that He Has an infinite Power, He does not do anything undue and all His deeds are based on Wisdom.

Notes

1. verse 46 of the current Surah

2. verses 37 and 38
3. verses 29 and 32
4. Surah Al-Mu’minun, No. 23, verse 14
5. Encyclopedia by Farid Wajdi, Vol. 1, P. 496
6. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse under discussion.
7. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verses 17 and 18
8. The current Surah, verse 20
9. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 174
10. Mufradat by Raqib

Section 4: Islam, the Natural Religion

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 28

ضَرَبَ لَكُم مَثَلاً مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ هَل لَكُم مِن مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُم مِن شُرَكَآءَ فِي مَا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَآءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

28. "He sets forth to you a parable relating to yourselves. Have you among those whom your right hands possess partners in what We have given you for sustenance, so that with respect to it you are alike, you fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We explain the signs in detail for a people who understand."

Using parables is sometimes one of the ways of propagation and education.

You are not the real owner; yet you are not ready to have partner, then how do you take pieces of stone and wood as partners of the Creator and the real Owner. So the Qur'an also mentions a proof upon the negation of polytheism in the form of stating a parable.

It says:

"He sets forth to you a parable relating to yourselves…"

That parable is as follows:

"…Have you among those whom your right hands possess partners in what We have given you for sustenance, so that with respect to it you are alike…"

So that you fear that they, independently and without your permission, interfere in your properties as you fear about free partners in your own properties or heritage.

The above verse continues saying:

"…you fear them as you fear each other?…"

When you consider such a thing wrong concerning your slaves, who are in your casual possession, how do you take the creatures that are in Allah's true possession as His partners? Or you count some prophets as Jesus (as), or Divine angels, or some creatures as jinn, or idols made of stone and wood as the partners of Allah? What an ugly judgment and far from logic it is?

The casual owned objects, that may become free very soon and come in the same row with you (as Islam had designed it) they, as an owned one, never stand in the row of their owner and they have no right to interfere in his realm, then how the true owned ones whose whole entity belong to Allah, and it is impossible that this dependence be ceased, because whatever they have are from Him and without Him they are nothing, how have they chosen them as partners with Allah?

Some of the commentators have said that the verse refers to the words that polytheists of Quraysh mentioned at the time of Hajj rites when saying: /labbayk/, because in their Hajj rites they used to say:

"O Allah! You have a partner that You are its owner as well as the owner of what it possesses."[1]

It is obvious that, like other occasions of revelation, this occasion of revelation does not limit the meaning of the verse and, however, the verse is

an answer to the whole polytheists and, taking their life which used to turn upon the pivot of slavery, it brings argumentation for them.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /ma razaqnakum/ (what We have given you for sustenance) points to this matter that you are neither the true owner of these slaves nor the true owner of your properties, because all of them belong to Allah, yet you are not ready to transfer your own casual properties to your own casual slaves and accept them as your partners, while there will not appear any difficulty and impossibility from the genetic point, because the statement is upon the axis of authenticities.

But the difference between Allah and His creatures is a genetic difference which is invariable, and their taking partner is impossible!

On the other side, worshipping a creature is either because of its greatness, or for the benefit or harm that man gets from it, but these artificial objects of worship have neither that nor this.

For emphasis on being more careful of the content of this question, at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"…Thus do We explain the signs in detail for a people who understand."

Yes, by mentioning some clear parables from the inside of your life, the facts are reiterated in order that you contemplate and do not accept at least something for Allah, the Lord of the worlds, that you do not admit it for yourself.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 29

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَآءَهُم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَن يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُم مِن نَاصِرِينَ

29. "Nay! Those who are unjust follow their low desires without any knowledge, so who can guide him whom Allah leaves astray? And they shall have no helpers."

The polytheists do not ponder wisely and they are unjust to themselves. They do not have any scientific argument for their own polytheism, and the origin of their deviation is their inner low desires. The verse says:

"Nay! Those who are unjust follow their low desires without any knowledge…"

These clear noble verses and such evident and manifest examples are for the possessors of mind, not for the unjust, sensual and unaware persons that the curtains of ignorance and unawareness have covered their whole hearts, and superstitions and the bigotries of the Age of Ignorance have severely darkened the atmosphere of their thought.

Because of their deeds, Allah has put these unjust people, who follow no logic, in the valley of misguidance, and who can guide those whom Allah (s.w.t.) has left astray?

The verse continues saying:

"…so who can guide him whom Allah leaves astray?…"

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /zalamu/ (are unjust) instead of /'ašraku/ (are polytheists) points to this fact that 'polytheism' is considered the greatest 'injustice'. Their injustice is upon the Creator, because they have set His creature in the same low with Him; (and we know that injustice is when something is put somewhere other than its own place).

They are also unjust to Allah's creatures, because they have certainly restrained them from the path of benevolence and happiness which is the path of Monotheism.

They are unjust even to themselves, because they have destroyed the capitals of their existence, and they are in the wrong way.

By the way, this meaning is preliminary for the next sentence indicating that if Allah has let them be astray from the Path of Truth, it is for their injustice; as Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 27 says:

"…and Allah leaves the unjust to stray…"

Thus, it is certain that those, whom Allah leaves to them and lets them alone, will not have any helper, as the verse announces:

"…And they shall have no helpers."

So, in this way, the verse makes the evil end of this group clear. Why not? They have committed the greatest inequities when they have dismissed their wisdom and thought and have turned their backs to the light of knowledge by going to the darkness of low desires. It is natural that Allah negates His succour from them and leaves them in darkness so that there will remain no helper for them.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 30

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفاً فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لاَ تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

30. "So set your face to the religion being upright, the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created mankind. There is no altering of Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

The Arabic word /Fitrat/ in lexicon means: creation and tearing the curtain of non-existence for the creation of a being. It seems that Allah has created man in a form that he inclines for the Truth and repudiates from wrong. It is just like the mother's love to her child, which is not something taught but it is natural and instinctive.

Yes, walking along the path of religion is walking along the path of nature. The man's natural affairs may decrease or increase, but they will never be abolished absolutely, and also the truth seeking wishes, which are hidden inside of man, will not change by the change of place and time.

Up to here, we have had some detailed discussions about Monotheism and theology by the way of observing the system of creation and using it for proving an origin of knowledge and power in the world of super nature through the noble verses of Monotheism in this Surah.

Next to them, in the first holy verse out of the verses under discussion, the words are about the natural Monotheism. In other words, it pursues the same subject from the way of inside and innate observation, and through necessary apprehension of conscience.

It says:

"So set your face to the religion being upright, the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created mankind. There is no altering of Allah's creation…"

"…That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

The Arabic word /wajh/ means ‘face’, and here the purpose of it is the innate face, and the face of the heart. Therefore, the objective meaning of it is not attention only by the face, but attention with the entire entity, because the face is the most important limb of the body and its symbol.

The Arabic term /’aqim/ is derived from /’iqamah/ here in the sense of ‘to straighten’ and ‘to establish’.

The Qur’anic word /hanif/ is derived from /hanaf/ with the sense of inclining from falsehood toward the truth and from crookedness toward straightness and it is, of course, contrary to the Arabic word /janaf/ with the sense of inclination from straightness to aberration.

Therefore, ‘the religion upright’ means a religion which has inclined from crookedness, deviations, superstitions and aberrations toward straightness.

This sentence on the whole means that we must constantly turn our attention toward the religion which is far from any crookedness, the religion of Islam, the pure religion of Allah (s.w.t.).

The above verse emphasizes that the pure religion which is free from any polytheism is the religion that Allah has created in the nature of all human beings and it is a permanent and unchangeable nature, though a great deal of people do not pay attention to this fact.

The abovementioned verse points to some facts:

1. Not only theology but religion, as a general rule, and in all dimensions, is also something natural; and it must be so, because monotheistic studies tell us that there should be an agreement between the system of genesis and divine religion. Whatever is found in religion has certainly a root in nature, and whatever is in creation and man’s ego is a complement for the religious laws.

In other words, ‘genesis’ and religion are two powerful arms that act harmoniously in all fields. It is impossible that you find an invitation in religion the root of which is not in man’s nature; and it is impossible that there can be something in the depth of man’s entity but religion opposes it.

No doubt religion defines some limits and conditions for the leadership of nature so that it does not fall in the way of deviation, but it never struggle against the principle of natural demand, and it will guide it by means of a lawful way, else there will appear a contradiction between religion and creation which is not consistent with the basis of Monotheism.

In a more clear statement, never Allah, the Wise, does some contradictory deeds in a way that His creation command says: ‘Do’, and His religious command says: ‘Do not do’!

2. Religion in the form of a pure fact, and free from any pollution, exists in inside of the man’s soul, and deviations are some casual things. Therefore, the duty of Divine prophets is to wipe out these casual affairs and let the noble nature of man have possibility of development.

3. The Qur’anic phrase: /la tabdila li xalqillah/ (there is no altering of Allah’s creation) and next to it the sentence: /ðalika dinul qayyim/ (that is the right religion) are two other emphases on the fact that religion is natural and the lack of possible change of this Divine nature, though, as the result of

the lack of enough development, a lot of people are not able to comprehend this fact.

It is also necessary to pay attention to this point that the Arabic term /fitrat/ is originally derived from /fatr/ in the sense of splitting something from its length, and in those instances it is used in the sense of 'creation', as if, at the time of the creation of beings, the curtain of non-existence were cleft and they appear.

However, from the first day that man comes into the world of existence, this Divine light is flaming inside his soul.

The Islamic traditions, which have been narrated upon the commentary of this holy verse, verify what was said in the above, which will be referred to later in addition to other discussions on the subject of Monotheism as being natural.

A Few Traditions Upon the Nature of Theology

Not only in the verses of the Qur'an, but also in the Islamic traditions there are some considerable explanations about the 'knowledge of Allah' and 'Monotheism' as being natural. In some of them the 'monotheistic nature' is emphasized, and in some other concerning traditions, this meaning has often been discussed under the title of 'gnosis' or 'Islamic gnosis' or 'knowing mastership'.

An authentic tradition, which the famous scholar Kulayni has narrated from Husham-ibn-Salim, indicates that he said:

"I asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase:

/fitrat allah-illati fatar-an-nasa 'alayha/ (the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He has created mankind),

and he (as) answered:

'Its purpose is Monotheism'."[2]

Also in the same book, Kafi, it has been narrated from one of the companions of Imam Sadiq (as) that when he asked the Imam about the commentary of this verse, Imam said:

"It is Islam".[3]

A similar tradition from Imam Baqir (as) indicates that in answer to Zurarah, one of his learned companions, who had asked about the commentary of this verse, Imam (as) said:

"Allah set their nature on knowing Him."[4]

A well known tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that he said:

"Every new born child is born with the nature of Islam, (a religion free from any polytheism) but the child will be brought up by his parents in a deviated way such as Jewish and Christianity."[5]

Upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) also said:

"The purpose of 'nature' is mastership (and accepting the leadership of the saints of Allah)"[6]

In the first sermon of Nahj-ul-Balaqah Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as), in a short but expressive sentence, says:

"…then Allah sent His Messengers and series of His prophets (one after another) towards them to get them fulfil the pledges of His creation,

to recall to them His forgotten bounties, to exhort them by preaching, and to unveil them the hidden virtues of wisdom…"

According to the abovementioned narrations, not only 'the knowledge of Allah', but also the whole Islam, in an intensive form has been put in man's nature, including Monotheism to the leadership of Divine leaders and true successors of the Prophet (S), and even 'the articles of the Practice of the Faith'.

Therefore, according to the meaning mentioned in Nahj-ul-Balaqah, the prophets' job is to get men fulfil their nature and to recall to them the forgotten bounties of Allah including the monotheistic fate and to unveil the treasures of wisdom which are covered and hidden inside the soul and thought of man.

It is interesting that the Qur'an, through numerous verses, mentions the afflictions, difficulties, and painful events that may happen in man's life as a preliminary factor for arousing and developing the religious sense, among them is that it says:

"So when they ride in the ships they call upon Allah sincerely vowing worship (only) unto Him, and when He brings them safe to the land, they associate others (with Him)".[7]

In this field, of course, we will explain more vastly when commenting on the next verse of this very Surah which is fairly similar to the verse of Surah Al- 'Ankabut.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 31

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَلاَ تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

31. "Turn you to Him, and fear Him, and perform the prayer and be not of the idolaters,"

By supplication, turning to Him, being in awe of Him, and by establishing prayer we must make the natural and innate tendency to religion active.

In the previous verse, the Prophet (S) was addressed saying:

"So set your face…",

while in this verse all people are commanded to turn to Allah, and it implicitly says that their attention to the pure and natural religion is in the case that they turn to Allah. It says:

"Turn you to Him…"

The Qur'anic word /munibin/ is derived from /'inabah/ which originally means: 'return to the monotheistic nature', indicating that whenever there may appear a factor that may deviate and dissuade man, from the point of belief and action, and from the principle of Monotheism, he must return to Him.

It does not matter that this event repeats again and again so that, at last the foundations of nature become so strong, and the barriers become so weak and ineffective that he stands constantly in the front point of Monotheism and becomes a complete example of the verse which says:

"So set your face to the religion being upright…"[8]

It is noteworthy that the Qur'anic phrase /'aqim wajhika/ (set your face) is in the singular form while the Arabic term /mubinin/ (turn you) is

mentioned in the plural form. This shows that, though the first command is singular and its addressee is the Prophet (S), the real addressees, in fact, are all believers and all Muslims.

Next to the command of 'turn', the Qur'an orders to piety, which is consistent of all Divine orders and prohibitions.

It says:

"…and fear Him…"

This Qur'anic sentence means that we must fear to oppose His command.

Then, among all His commands, the holy verse emphasizes on the subject of prayer and says:

"…and perform the prayer…"

Its reason is that prayer, with all its dimensions, is the most important program of struggling against polytheism and the most effective means for strengthening the foundations of Monotheism and Faith in Allah.

That is why, among all prohibitions, the verse emphasizes on 'polytheism', and says:

"…and be not of the idolaters,"

It says so because polytheism is one of the greatest sins and Allah may forgive any sin but He never forgives polytheism, as the Qur'an says:

"Verily Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whom He pleases…"[9]

It is clear that the four commands mentioned in this verse all are as emphasis on the subject of Monotheism and its practical issues, irrespective of repentance; returning to Him, piety, establishing prayer, and avoiding polytheism.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 32

مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعاً ۖ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

32. "Of those who split up their religion, and have become sects, every party rejoicing in what is with them."

Polytheism is not only worshipping the sun, the moon, and idols; every one who is the cause of separation in the religion of Allah is polytheist.

Under the shade of repentance, piety, and prayer a person can obtain the power of being distanced from polytheism. The verse under discussion has stated one of the signs and sequels of polytheism in a short and expressive sentence. It implies: you should not be among the polytheists, those who scattered their religion and divided into groups.

It says:

"Of those who split up their religion, and have become sects…"

And it is wonderful that, with all the ethical differences that they had, every group of them was happy with their own sect.

The verse says:

"…every party rejoicing in what is with them."

Yes, one of the symptoms of polytheism is separation in belief, because having different objects of worship is the cause of having different methods which is the origin of separations and deviations, in particular that polytheism is always with carnal desire and bigotry, and pride, individualism, and selfishness are its sequels.

Therefore, union and Unity is impossible save under the shade of theology, wisdom, humility, and donation.

Thus, wherever we see discord, deviation, and separation we must know that a kind of polytheism domains there. This subject can be stated as a clear conclusion that the fruit of polytheism is separation of rows, opposition, and powers being spoiled and its end is weakness, vileness, and inability.

The reason why every group of deviated persons and polytheists are rejoicing in the way they have chosen, and imagine it as True, is clear, because carnal desire decorates the wishes in the man's view, and the fruit of this decoration is an increasing affection and rejoice for the way he has chosen, though that way is wrong and aberration. Sensuality never lets man see the feature of truth in its real form and find a correct judgment free from love and wrath.

In Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 8, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Is he whose evil deed is made fair seeming to him so much so that he considers it good?…",

and is he like the one who is on the Path of Truth and sees the facts as they are?

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 33

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُم مُّنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَآ أَذَاقَهُم مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

33. "And when harm afflicts men, they call upon their Lord, turning to Him, then, when He makes them taste of mercy from Him, behold, some of them associate partners with their Lord,"

The losses we bear are from our own side, but the mercy and favours are from the side of Allah.

There are some people who call on Allah only at the time of afflictions and difficulties, but a believer ought to call upon Allah at all times.

The verse under discussion, in fact, is reasoning and an emphasis on the discussion mentioned in the previous verse indicating that monotheism is natural and that this divine light will develop with the existence of afflictions and difficulties.

It says:

"And when harm afflicts men, they call upon their Lord, turning to Him…"

But they are so incapacious, short sighted, and captive of the bigotry and blind imitation of their ancestors', polytheistic ideas that as soon as the terrible events remove and they feel the breeze of peacefulness and Allah makes them taste of mercy from His side, a group of them become polytheist.

The verse says:

"…then, when He makes them taste of mercy from Him, behold, some of them associate partners with their Lord,"

The use of 'harm afflicts men' points to a little distress as the phrase 'when He makes them taste of mercy from Him' indicates to receiving a little bounty, because the application of 'taste' in these instances is used for

showing the scanty of something, specially with mentioning the Arabic words /durr/ (harm) and /rahmah/ (mercy) in an indefinite form.

That is, there are some persons who with a little stress go toward Allah (s.w.t.) and the curtain of over their nature of Monotheism will be removed, but by a little bounty they will change the way and become neglectful of Him and may forget everything.

For the first case, of course, it speaks in a general form and says that all people are such that they remember Allah (s.w.t.) when confronting afflictions, because the monotheistic nature is general and for all.

But for the second case, i.e. mercy, the verse mentions only those who pave the path of polytheism, since some of the servants of Allah usually remember Him both when they confront difficulties and when they face with Divine bounties, and the variations of life never cause them to be neglectful of the Truth.

With regard to the concept of the Arabic word /'inabah/ which is derived from /noub/ in the sense of: 'returning again to something, the application of the Qur'anic phrase: /munibina 'ilayh/ (turning to Him) is a tender hint to this meaning that the basis and foundation in man's nature is certainly monotheism and theology, but polytheism is something casual, because when his hope is ceased from it, he, desirably or undesirably, returns to Faith and Monotheism.

It is interesting that in the abovementioned verse, 'mercy' is counted from the side of Allah, but harm has not been attributed to Him, for a great deal of our difficulties and afflictions are the consequences of our own deeds and sins, while all bounties are from Allah whether directly or indirectly.

The Qur'anic word /rabbahum/, which has been mentioned twice in this verse, is an emphasis on this fact that man feels the Divine Lordship and administration on his own self, if wrong training does not drive him toward polytheism.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned here that the pronoun mentioned in the word /minhu/ relates to Allah and it is an emphasis on this fact that all bounties are from the side of Allah, the Exalted.

Many of the commentators, such as the authors of Al-Mizan, Tibyan, and Abul-Futuh Razi, have chosen this meaning, though some other commentators, such as Fakhr-i-Razi, have considered this pronoun for /durr/ (harm) and have rendered the verse as this: 'When Allah gives them mercy after harm and stress, some of them associate partners with their Lord'.

But it is clear that the first commentary is more consistent with the appearance of the verse.

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 34-35

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

أَمْ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَاناً فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ

34. "That they may be ungrateful for what We have given them. 'Take your enjoyment, certainly you will soon know'."

35. "Or have We sent down any authority upon them, such as it speaks of what they associate with Him?"

Polytheism is a step towards paganism and being unthankful, and returning to polytheism is a kind of being unthankful of divine bounties.

As a threat to these incapacious polytheistic persons who neglect Allah when they reach bounties, this verse says:

"That they may be ungrateful for what We have given them. 'Take your enjoyment, certainly you will soon know'."

Here, though the polytheists are addressed, it is probable that the verse has a vast concept and it encompasses all those who forget Allah (s.w.t.) at the time of affluence of bounties and are only busy enjoying them and neglect the endower of the bounties.

It is evident that the application of the imperative form of the Arabic verb here is for threatening.

In order to condemn this polytheistic group, next verse in the form of an objurgatory question says:

"Or have We sent down any authority upon them, such as it speaks of what they associate with Him?"

The word /'am/ here is used for the aim of question and this is an objurgatory question with negative sense. That is, following this path and this custom must be either for the sake of the call of 'nature', or it is the judgment of intellect the command of Allah.

But their conscience and nature is made manifest at the time of afflictions and difficulties and it cries for a call of monotheism. The intellect also says we must go to the One Who is 'the giver of bounties'.

There remains the command of Allah that in this verse it has been negated and the Qur'an says: He has not sent down such a command upon them. Thus, they are not relying on any acceptable principle for their own belief.

The Arabic word /sultan/ is in the sense of something which creates dominion and victory, and here it means a firm and convenient reasoning.

The application of the Arabic term /yatakallam/ (it speaks) is a kind of figurative meaning which is used when a proof is clear. Here it implies that this is an expressive proof that speaks with man.

Some commentators have said that the word /sultan/ here probably means an angel with authority. In this case, the word 'speak' has its real meaning. It means: "We have not sent down upon them an angel that speaks of what they associate with Him".

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 36

وَإِذَآ أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّـِٔةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ

36. "And when We make people taste of mercy they rejoice in it, and if an evil befalls them for what their own hands have forwarded, behold, they despair."

In this holy verse, which is another illustration of the kind of thought and spirituality of these in capacious ignorant persons, the Qur'an says:

"And when We make people taste of mercy they rejoice in it, and if an evil befalls them for what their own hands have forwarded, behold, they despair."

But the true believers are those who are not proud and neglectful at the time of affluence nor are they hopeless at the time of affliction. They believe that the bounties are from the side of Allah (s.w.t.) and they thank Him; they also consider the afflictions as an examination and divine test, or as the fruit of their own deeds, then they are almost always patient and they turn to Him.

In the meantime that the faithless persons are wandering in the midst of pride and hopelessness, the faithful persons are often spending time in the midst of 'gratitude' and 'patience with perseverance'.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that at least a part of afflictions that afflict man is the consequence of his own deeds and sins. By this means, Allah intends to warn them and He causes them to become purified and brings them towards Him.

This point is also necessary to be remembered that the Qur'anic sentence /farihu biha/ (they rejoice in it) here does not mean only 'to be happy with the bounty', but the purpose is a rejoice together with pride and a kind of unawareness, the same mood that the incapacious poor persons feel when they sometimes find affluence, else rejoice together with thanks and remembrance of Allah not only is not bad, but also it has been enjoined, as the Qur'an says:

"Say: 'In the grace of Allah and in His mercy…"

The application of the Qur'anic phrase / bima qaddamat 'aydihim/ (for what their own hands have forwarded) which refers only to sins, is for the reason that most of the deeds of man are fulfilled by the help of his hands, though there are some sins which are also committed by the heart, the eyes, and the tongues, but the abundance of the deeds of hands are the cause of this usage.

There appears a question here that whether this verse does not contradict with the verse No. 33 of this Surah, since this verse refers to their despair at the time of afflictions while in that verse the words are about their attention to Allah at the time of coming afflictions and stresses. In other words, that verse speaks about hopefulness, but this verse speaks about despair.

With regard to one point, the answer to this question is made clear. In the former verse the words were about 'harm', i.e., the harmful events such as torments, earthquakes, and other afflictions that in that position all people, irrespective of monotheist and polytheist ones, remember Allah, and this is one of the signs of monotheistic nature.

But in the verse under discussion the words are about the sequels of man's sins and the despair emerged from them, because some people are so that if they did a good action they would become proud and would consider themselves secure from the Divine punishment, and when they commit an evil action and its sequel comes to them, a despair from the mercy of Allah encompasses their whole entity.

Both that pride and this despair from the mercy of Allah are blameworthy.

Therefore, either of these two verses mentions a matter which is separate from the other.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 37

أَوَ لَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

37. "Do they not see that Allah enlarges the provision for whomever He pleases and straitens? Verily there are signs in this for a people who believe."

Being attentive that the sustenance is with Allah, it hinders man of being despair. Every body must struggle for earning his livelihood, but he must know that determining the proportions of livelihood is in Allah's authority so, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"Do they not see that Allah enlarges the provision for whomever He pleases and straitens?…"

Neither the manifestation of bounties must cause man's pride, negligence, and disobedience, nor should its absence bring despair for him, because affluence and straitening of sustenance is in the power of Allah, and sometimes He assigns the former and sometimes the latter.

It is true that the world is the world of means and those who strive more usually obtain a better portion of provisions, and those who are lazy and do not work hard have a smaller share, but in the meantime this is not a general and permanent principle.

It happens that sometimes some very earnest, studious and eligible persons do their best but they gain nothing and, on the contrary, there are some maladroit ones to whom the doors of provision are open from every side.

These exceptions may be for the sake that Allah shows that, with all effects that He has created in the world of means, they should not be lost in the world of means, and they should not forget that behind this system there is another strong hand that turns it.

Sometimes He takes it so straitened that the more he strives the less he gets, because all doors are shut to him, and sometime He takes it so easy that before reaching to a door that door may be opened in front of him.

This fact with the examples of which we have, more or less, been familiar in our own life, besides that it struggles against the pride for affluence and despair emerged from poverty, it is an evidence upon the fact that, beyond our will and our wish, there is another powerful hand in affairs.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily there are signs in this for a people who believe."

Some of the Islamic commentators have stated that once a knowledgeable man was asked:

"What is the proof that there is only one creator for the world?"

Then he answered:

"For three proofs: that the clever persons are (usually) backward, the artists and learned men are often poor, and the physicians are (sometimes) sick."

Yes, the existence of these exceptions is a sign for the fact that the affairs are entirely in the hand of another one.

A famous tradition narrated from Hadrat Ali (as) indicates that he said:

"I came to know Allah, the Glorified, through the breaking of determinations, change of intentions, and losing of courage."[10]

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 38

فَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

38. "So give what is due to kindred, the needy, and the wayfarer, that is best for those who seek the pleasure of Allah, and those are they that are prosperous."

The real owner of properties is Allah, and then it is He Who defines how the properties must be used. In spending out and helping others, relatives are prior to every other one, either.

Therefore, this verse says:

"So give what is due to kindred, the needy, and the wayfarer…"

At the time of affluence, you should not think that whatever provision you have, you are the owner of it, but others have a share in it, too, among them are your relatives and the needy who are paralytic because of the intensity of poverty, and also those reputable persons who are far from home and as the result of an event have remained in the way and are in need of help.

The application of the Arabic word /haqqah/ (due to) in the holy verse points to this fact that they have a share in man's properties and if one pays something to them he has paid their own right to them and he has no reproach over them.

Some of the commentators have considered the addressee in this verse is only the Prophet of Islam (S) and they have rendered the Qur'anic phrase /ðilqurba/ (kindred) into his relatives.

A famous narration from Abu-Sa'id-Khidri, as well as others, indicates that when the abovementioned verse was sent down the Prophet of Islam (S) bestowed Fadak on Fatimah (as) and delivered it to her.[11]

This very meaning has been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as). The content of this tradition has been mentioned in a very detailed narration from Hadrat Imam Sadiq (as) containing the dialogue of the Lady of Islam, Fatimah Zahra (as) with Abu-Bakr.[12]

But some of other commentators have taken the addressee in this verse as general and believe that it includes the Prophet (S) and other people. According to this commentary all people are obliged not to neglect the right of their relatives.

These two commentaries, of course, do not contradict each other and they can come along with together, in this way that the verse has a vast concept and the Prophet (S) and his relatives, specially his daughter, Fatimah Zahra (as), are its perfect denotation expansion.

This makes it clear that neither of the above interpretations contradicts with this noble Surah as a Meccan Surah, because the concept of the verse is a conclusive concept so that it must be fulfilled in both Mecca and Medina,

and, according to this holy verse bestowing Fadak on Fatimah (as) is completely acceptable.

The only thing which remains rather ambiguous here is the sentence:

"When the abovementioned verse was sent down…"

mentioned in the narration of Abu-Sa'id Khidri the appearance of which indicates that the bestowal of Fadak was after the revelation of the verse.

But if we take the Arabic term /lamma/ here in the sense of cause, not in the sense of a particular time, this problem will also be solved, and the concept of the narration will be that the Prophet (S) for the sake of this Divine commandment bestowed Fadak on Fatimah (as). In addition to that, some of the verses of the Qur'an have been sent down twice.

As for the matter that why among all the needy persons and possessors of right only these three groups have been mentioned the reason may be for the importance of them, because the right of relatives is more significant than any other right, and among the deprived and the poor, the needy and the wayfarers are in need more than all.

Or it is for the sake of the point that Fakhr-i-Razi has said here. He says:

"The eight groups to whom alms must be given is in the case of that alms is obligatory, while the three groups who are mentioned in the verse must also be helped even at the time when giving alms is not obligatory, because some of the relatives are those to whom giving alimony is obligatory for a person but the needy is the deprived person that if he is not helped his life may be in danger.

Also a wayfarer may be in some circumstances that with the lack of succour he dies. The order of mentioning these three groups in the holy verse is also appropriate to the order of their importance.

However, for the encouragement of the benevolent, and also for stating the condition of the acceptance of expending, at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"…that is best for those who seek the pleasure of Allah…"

"…and those are they that are prosperous."

They will be prosperous both in this world and the next, since expending brings some wonderful bounties with it in this life and the next both, because it is one of the heaviest deeds in the Divine scale.

With regard to the fact that the Qur'anic phrase /wajh-ullah/ does not mean the bodily face of Allah, because He has not any bodily face, and it means the pure Essence of the Lord, this verse shows that the act of expending and paying the right of relatives, as well as that of the possessors of rights, is not enough.

It is important that this action must be accompanied with sincerity, pure intention, and free from any kind of hypocrisy, gaudiness, approach, scorn, and expectation of compensation.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned that, opposite to the statement of some commentators who have stipulated that expending for the sake of reaching Paradise is not the extension of /wajh-ullah/, all the deeds that one does and have a kind of communication with Allah whether they have been done for the pleasure of Allah, or reaching to His compensation, or being delivered from His punishment all are the extensions of /wajh-

ullah/ though the high and complete stage of it is that the one does not consider in his view anything save servitude and obedience to Him.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 39

وَمَآ ءَاتَيْتُم مِن رِباً لِيَرْبُوَا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلاَ يَرْبُوا عِندَ اللَّهِ وَمآ ءَاتَيْتُم مِن زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ

39. "And that which you give in present so that it may increase in the property of men it will not increase with Allah, and whatever you give in charity (Zakat) seeking the pleasure of Allah, it is these (persons) that shall get manifold."

The privilege of Islam is in this fact that, besides wiping out poverty from the deprived, it considers the spiritual growth of those who pay expending, too.

This verse refers to two kinds of expending: one of which is for the cause of Allah, and the other is for the purpose of reaching the worldly wealth.

It says:

"And that which you give in present so that it may increase in the property of men it will not increase with Allah…"

"…and whatever you give in charity (Zakat) seeking the pleasure of Allah, it is these (persons) that shall get manifold."

The concept of the second sentence, viz., giving Zakat and paying expending in the path of Allah which causes abundant compensation and an immense reward, is clear, but as for the first sentence, regarding to the fact that /riba/ originally means 'increase', the commentators have cited different interpretation.

The first commentary, which is the most clear one and is the most consistent with the concept of the verse and adapts to the narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as), is that its purpose is the gifts and presents that some persons sent to others specially to the possessors of wealth and properties hoping to receive some more and better reward from them.

It is obvious that in giving such presents neither the need nor the eligibility of their receivers are considered, but all attention is focused on this that the present should be sent to a place where a better sum can be hunted, and it is natural that such presents that have not any sincerity in them are worthless from the point of ethics and spiritual aspects.

Therefore, the purpose of /riba/, in this verse, is 'present' or 'gift' and the objective of the Qur'anic sentence: /liyar bu fi 'amwalin-nas/, mentioned in this verse, is taking some more reward from people.

No doubt taking such a reward is not unlawful, since there is no condition or agreement between them, but it lacks the spiritual and ethical value. Therefore, some narrations from Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in authentic sources of tradition, it has been rendered into 'lawful /riba/' (interest) in spite of 'unlawful /riba/' in which there is condition and agreement contract.

In the book entitled Tahthib-ul-'Ahkam there is a tradition which has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who, on the commentary of this verse, said:

"Its purpose is a present which you give to another person and you seek a reward from him more than that and this is a lawful interest."

In another tradition Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Interest is of two kinds: one is lawful and the other is unlawful.

The lawful interest is that one lends his (Muslim) brother (something) as a loan hoping that when he returns it he adds something to what he has taken from him without any condition between them, and if the borrower gives the lender something more than that which he has taken without any condition between them, this excess is lawful for him, but there will be no reward for him with Allah concerning his loan, and this is what the Qur'an says in sentence /falayarbu 'indallah/ (it will not increase with Allah).

But the unlawful excess is the case that one loans someone with the condition that he returns it with something added to it. This is the unlawful interest."[13]

Another commentary which has been mentioned on the above verse says that the purpose in this verse is unlawful interest.

According to this commentary, in fact, the Qur'an intends to compare usury with pure expending and to say that although usury is apparently an increase in wealth, but it is not an increase with Allah.

The real increase is found in expending in the path of Allah. Upon this foundation, they consider the verse as a preliminary on the prohibition of usury that, at first, before the migration of the prophet (S), it was stated as an ethical advice, and later, after the migration, its prohibition was gradually announced in three Suras of the Qur'an: Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and An-Nisa'.

There is not, of course, any contradiction between these two meanings. The verse can be rendered into a vaster scope of meaning which contains both the lawful interest and unlawful interest, and both of them may be matched with the expending in the path of Allah, but the concept of the verse is more consistent with the first commentary.

The apparent of the holy verse shows that here an action is fulfilled that has not any reward, but it is lawful, since it says:

"…it will not increase with Allah…",

and this meaning fits with 'the lawful interest' which has neither any reward nor any sin, i.e. it is not a thing that causes the wrath and punishment of Allah (s.w.t.), and we said before that the Islamic narrations approve it, too.

It is also necessary to be mentioned that the Arabic term /mud'ifun/ does not here mean 'increaser', but it means the possessor of the increased reward.

This matter must not be neglected that the words /du'f/ and /muda'af/ in the Arabic philology do not mean 'increase' but they mean 'two fold' and 'several folds' and, in this verse, the word means 'twofold' at least; as the Qur'an in other occurrence says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like…"[14]

Concerning the reward of 'loan', it increases into eighteen times, as in a tradition Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"It has been written on the door of Paradise that the reward of loan is eighteen times and (that of) alms is ten times."[15]

Concerning the loan without interest in the path of Allah, it can be increased into seven hundred times, as Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261 announces.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 40

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَآئِكُم مَّن يَفْعَلُ مِن ذَلِكُم مِن شَيْءٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالِي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

40. "Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He shall make you die, then He shall bring you to life; is there any of your associate-gods who does aught of that? Glory be to Him and Exalted High is He far above what they associate (with Him)."

Our life and death, our past, present and future, as well as our sustenance are in the authority of Allah. In this verse, the Qur'an returns again to the subject of Origin and Resurrection which form the basic matter of many verses of this Surah, and Qualifies Allah with four attributes so that it can be both a hint to monotheism and struggle against polytheism, and a proof upon Resurrection.

It says:

"Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He shall make you die, then He shall bring you to life; is there any of your associate-gods who does aught of that?…"

"…Glory be to Him and Exalted High is He far above what they associate (with Him)."

It is certain that none of the polytheists believed that the creation was done by idols, or that their sustenance was given by idols, or the end of their lives was under the control of the idols, because they used to consider these artificial objects of worship as a medium and some intercessors between them and Allah (s.w.t.), not the creators of the heaven and the earth and sustainers.

Therefore the answer to these questions is negative and this question is a positive interrogation with a negative sense.

Another matter which will be asked here is that they mostly did not believe in the life after death, how does the Qur'an emphasize on it here by means of the last attribute of Allah?

This application may be for the sake that the question of the life after death, as we have said in the discussion of Resurrection, has an innate aspect, and here the Holy Qur'an does not emphasize on their beliefs, but it emphasizes on their innate disposition.

Besides, sometimes it happens that when a capable speaker encounter a person who denies a matter, he mentions it among some other facts which that person accepts and he decisively emphasizes on it so that it affects on him. Now the life after death is an unbreakable relation, and regarding this logical relation both of them have been mentioned in one sentence.

However, the Qur'an implies that when all of these affairs (such as creation, sustenance and death) are in His Power, worshipping must be done only for Him, too, and the sentence:

"…Glory be to Him and Exalted High is He far above what they associate (with Him)"

restates this fact that they have made the rank of Allah extraordinarily low when they have put Allah in the row of idols and artificial objects of worship.

Notes

1. The Commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, under the verse
2. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 10
3. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 10
4. Ibid
5. The commentary of Jawami'-ul-Jami', by Tabarsi, under the verse
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary, Vol. 4, P. 184
7. Surah Al-'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 65
8. The current Surah, verse 36
9. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 48
10. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying 250
11. Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the verse
12. Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-i-'Ibrahim, according to the narration of Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.
13. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 191
14. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 190

Section 5: Suffering of the World Through What Men Have Themselves Wrought

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 41

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُم بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

41. "Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea because of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of what they have done, so that they may turn (away from evil)."

Man's deeds affect on the nature. The evil deeds of man hinder the water, and the land to give benefit and they cause some undesirable phenomena to be created.

So, in this verse it says:

"Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea because of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of what they have done, so that they may turn (away from evil)."

The above holy verse has a vast scope of meaning around the relation between 'mischief' and 'sin' which is neither allocated to the lands of Mecca and Arabic nor to the age of the Prophet (S), but it is a verity-proposition which states the link of 'predicate' and 'subject'.

In other words, wherever a mischief appears, it is the effect of the people's deeds; and, in the meantime, it contains an educational goal, so that people taste the bitter fruit of their deeds, perhaps they turn away from evil.

Some commentators believe that this verse refers to the drought and famine which seized the pagans of Mecca as the result of the Prophet's curse. The sky did not rain, the deserts dried and became drier, and even fishing in the sea (the Red Sea) became difficult for them.

Supposing this statement is correct, it is only the statement of one example and it never restrains the meaning of the verse in the relation of 'mischief' and 'sin'; restrains neither to that time and that place, not to the drought and scanty of rain.

We read in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who once said:

"The life of the animals of the sea depends on rain; so when it does not rain, decadence appears in both the land and the sea, and this is at the time when sins increase."[1]

Of course, whatever is mentioned in this noble narration is the statement of a clear expansion of mischief, and what is mentioned in this tradition about the rainfall and the life of animals in the sea is a matter which has exactly been experienced that whenever it rains less, there will be found less fish in the sea.

We heard some of the dwellers of the sea banks say:

"The benefit of rain for the sea is more than its benefit for the desert."

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 42

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّشْرِكِينَ

42. "Say: 'Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those before, most of them were polytheists."

A purposeful travelling is recommended by Islam, and the protection of the instructive building is necessary for the future generations.

In order that people actually see with their eyes some lively evidences in connection with the appearance of corruption on the earth as the result of sin, the verse commands for travelling in the earth, and He tells the Prophet (S) as follows:

"Say: 'Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those before, most of them were polytheists."

You may see the ruined castles and palaces of those who used to live before you, watch their treasures which have been spoilt, study the strong nations who are scattered and their graves contain the rotten bones of their bodies.

You can see what was the end of their injustice, cruelty, sin, vice, and polytheism? You can see if they burnt the nests of some birds, how were the houses of these hunters destroyed? Yes, most of them were polytheists, and polytheism was the source of their mischief and caused them to be annihilated.

It is interesting that when the words in the former verses were about the bounties of Allah, at first the creation of man was mentioned and next to it the words were about his sustenance:

"Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance…",[2]

but in the verses under discussion, when it speaks about the Divine punishment, at first it points to the destruction of bounties as the result of sin, and then it refers to the destruction because of polytheism.

Its reason is that at the time of remittal the merit of creation is first and sustenance is next to it; but at the time of taking it back, the destruction of bounties is first and annihilation is next to it.

In regard to the fact that this Surah is a Meccan Surah and the Muslims were in minority at that time, the application of the Qur'anic sentence /'akθaruhum mušrikin/ (most of them were polytheists) may point to this matter that you should not fear of the polytheists who are in majority, because Allah has annihilated many large groups of such people in the past. It is also a severe warning unto the disobedient persons that they should travel in the earth and see the end of the former nations who were similar to them in action.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 43

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لاَّ مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُونَ

43. "Then Set your face to the established religion before there comes a day from Allah which cannot be averted; on that day shall become separated."

Then addressee in this verse is the Prophet (S) when it says:

"Then Set your face to the established religion before there comes a day from Allah which cannot be averted; on that day shall become separated."

No one, on that Day, has any power to turn back that Day and to stop the program of Allah when people will become divided into different groups

and the rows will be separated from each other; a group will be admitted in Paradise and the other group will be sent into Hell.

The Arabic word /qayyim/ in this verse means: ‘subsistent’ and ‘establisher’, and it, qualifying the religion by this attribute, in fact, points to the constant regard to the religion. That is, since the religion of Islam is a subsistent, and straight religion which establishes the peoples’ system of material and spiritual life, the Prophet (S) should never deviate from it.

Allah addresses the Prophet (S) in this verse so that others take care of their own account.

The Arabic phrase /yassadda‘un/ is derived from /sad‘/ which originally means: ‘to break or cleave a plate’ but gradually it has been used for any separation. Here it refers to the separation of the rows of the people of Heaven and the people of Hell that either of them will also be divided into some rows according to their degrees in Paradise and in Hell.

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 44-45

مَن كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلاِنفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُونَ

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

44. “Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief shall be (charged) against him, and whoever does good deed, for their own selves they are preparing,”

45. “That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds out of His Grace, verily He does not love the unbelievers.”

The previous verse implied that on the Day of Hereafter people will scatter and become separated into different groups. This verse explains that this separation is so that each group of believers and disbelievers will be given their appropriate reward and retribution.

In Hereafter, of course, the grace of Allah (s.w.t.) will involve those who have both faith and righteous deed. Thus, for entering Paradise only Faith is not enough but good deed is also necessary.

This verse is, in fact, an explanation for this separation of rows in Hereafter. The verse says:

“Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief shall be (charged) against him, and whoever does good deed, for their own selves they are preparing,”

The Qur’anic term /yamhadun/ is derived from /mahd/ and, as Raqib has said in Mufradat, it originally means cradle or a place which is prepared for a child.

Then the words /mahd/ and /mihad/ have been used in a vaster sense, that is, it is called to any prepared place wherein the utmost ease and tranquillity is found. It is for this point of view that this meaning has been chosen for the people of Paradise and righteous believers.

In short, you should not think that belief and disbelief, or your ugly and beautiful deeds have any effect on the Pure Essence of Allah, but it is you who become pleased and happy, or worried and sad.

It is interesting that concerning the disbelievers, the Holy Qur’an has sufficed with the sentence:

“Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief shall be (charged) against him…”,

but concerning the believers, in the next verse, the Qur'an explains that not only they will see their deeds there but also Allah will bestow some more merits on them because of His Grace.

The verse says:

"That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds out of His Grace…"

This is the aim and it is certain that this Divine Grace (in Hereafter) does not reach the disbelievers, since:

"…verily He does not love the unbelievers."

It is evident that He will treat them with His justice, too, and He will not punish them more than their due, but they will not receive any grace or merit from Him either.

Note

No doubt any evil action effects on the situation of society and by means of it the situation of individuals will be affected and a kind of corruption will appear in the social system. Sin, vice, and breaking law is like a poisonous food which, willingly or unwillingly, will have some unpleasant effects on man's system of body and he will encounter its natural reaction:

Falsehood causes confidence to be vanished.

Treachery of trust disturbs the social communications.

Injustice is always the cause of another injustice.

Misuse from freedom will usually lead to dictatorship and dictatorship will lead to bursting.

'The abandonment of the rights of the deprived' often creates hostility, and compression of rancour and enmities causes the foundation of society to become unstable.

However, any wrong action, whether in a limited measure or a vast one, has often an unpleasant reaction, and one of the commentaries on the holy verse which says:

"Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea because of what the hands of men have wrought…"[3]

is this very thing.

(This is the natural relation of 'sin' and mischief'.)

It is understood from the Islamic narrations that many of sins, besides this, have a series of evil sequels with them, the relation of which with those effects is, at least, unknown.

For example, some Islamic narrations indicate that 'breaking off ties of relationship causes life to become short; consuming unlawful things causes heart to become dark; and publicity of fornication causes the destruction of men and decreases the provision. …

The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"Fornication has six sequels; three sequels in the world, and three sequels in Hereafter. In the world, it decreases the person's luminosity, brings death sooner than its proper time, and ceases the sustenance. In the Hereafter, it causes the severity of reckoning, the wrath of Allah, and eternity in Fire."[4]

We read in a narration form Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Those who die because of sins are more than those who die by a natural death."[5]

Similar to this meaning with another form is said in the Qur'an, where it says:

"And if the people of the towns had believed and kept from evil, we would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they belied; so We seized them for what they used to earn."[6]

Thus, the Qur'anic word /fasad/ mentioned in verse 41 encompasses the social corruptions, calamities, and negation of blessings.

Another attractive point is that the above verse denoted to the fact that one of the philosophies of calamities and pests is their educational effect on human beings. They must receive the fruit of their own deeds so that they awaken from the sleep of negligence and return toward purity and piety.

We do not say that all vices and calamities are of this kind, but we say at least a part of them has such a philosophy. There are, of course, some other philosophies for it, too, which will be discussed in their appropriate places.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 46

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَن يُرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُم مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

46. "And among His signs is that He sends forth the winds bearing good tidings (of rain), and that He may make you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may run by His command, and that you may seek (sustenance) of His grace, and that you may be grateful."

Nothing happens accidentally, even the winds blow with the will of Allah, the Wise, too. Whatever we receive from the blessings of the winds is a part of His signs and graces. Again, the movement of a ship on the sea is in the hand of Allah, not in the hand of its captain.

The previous verse was about faith and righteous deed and in this verse Monotheism and its evidences are referred to.

It says:

"And among His signs is that He sends forth the winds bearing good tidings (of rain)…"

The winds come before rainfall. They take the scattered pieces of cloud with them and join them together and send them toward the dry and thirst lands. They cover some parts of the sky and, by altering the heat of atmosphere, they cause the cloud to be prepared for raining.

The importance of the arrival of these harbingers of rain may not be so clear to those citizens who enjoy the comforts of life, but those thirsty people who are in need of some drops of water in the desert, when the winds come and move the pieces of cloud with them, and they smell the special odour of rain which has come down on the plants somewhere else, the light of hope appears in their hearts.

Though the verses of the Holy Qur'an have emphasized on wind as a harbinger of the descent of rain, the Qur'anic term /mubašširat/ (bearing good tidings of rain) cannot be confined in it, because winds have many other good tidings with them, too.

Winds adjust the heat and cold of the weather.

Winds can amortize affections on vast atmosphere and purify the air.

Winds decrease the pressure of sun's heat on leaves and plants, and work as a barrier against sunburn.

Winds bring the oxygen produced by the leaves of the trees for men, and take the carbonic gas produced by men's breath as a present for plants.

Winds inoculate a lot of plants and join the male and female seeds to each other in the world of plants.

Winds are a means for mills to move, as well as a factor for filtering the heaps of corn.

Winds often carry the seeds of some plants from the places where there are a great deal of them and, like a compassionate gardener, scatter them throughout the desert.

Winds take sailors and ships with passengers and much heavy loads to different parts of the world, and even today, when machinery has substituted the wind force, the winds are still very effective in the work of ships to be slow or fast.

Yes, they are givers of glad tidings in different ways.

Thus, in the continuation of the verse, we recite as follows:

"…and that He may make you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may run by His command, and that you may seek (sustenance) of His grace, and that you may be grateful."

Yes, winds are both a means of creating abundant bounties in the fields of agriculture and breeding livestock, and a means of carrying kinds of loads, and a cause of lustre in commerce.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…that He may make you taste of His mercy…"

refers to the first blessing, and the sentence:

"…that the ships may run by His command…"

points to the second one and the sentence:

"…that you may seek (sustenance) of His grace…"

refers to the third one. It is interesting that all these bounties are the results of 'movement', a movement in the atoms existed in the air near the earth.

But the magnitude of no bounty is recognized until it is taken from man. In the same way, man does not understand what calamity has come to him unless these winds and breezes stop.

The stop of winds makes life, even in the best gardens, like life in the dark holes of a prison; and if a breeze blows in the cells of solitary prisons it makes it like an open place and, in principle, one of the factors of torture in prisons is the stop of weather therein.

Even on the surface of oceans, if wind stops and waves do not exist, the life of the living creatures therein will be in danger as the result of the scarcity of oxygen of the air, and the sea will be altered into a terrible fetid marsh.

Fakhr-i-Razi says:

"Regarding to the fact that 'to taste' is used for a scanty thing', the sentence:

"…and that He may make you taste of His mercy…"

points to this meaning that the whole world and the bounty of the world is not more than a little mercy, and the vast mercy of Allah belongs to the next world."

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 47

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ رُسُلاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوهُم بِالْبَيِّـنَاتِ فَانتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا وَكَانَ حَقّاً عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

47. "And We did indeed send, before you, messengers unto their people, and they came to them with clear proofs, then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty, and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."

In this holy verse, four ways of Allah's treatment have been referred to:

1- The practice of sending prophets.

2- The practice of prophets having miracles.

3- The retribution of the wrong doers.

4- The triumph of the believers.

So, the holy verse says:

"And We did indeed send, before you, messengers unto their people, and they came to them with clear proofs…"

"…then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty…"

And Allah (s.w.t.) helped the believers. The verse continues saying:

"…and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."

The application of the Arabic word /kana/ is an indication that this custom has some roots, and the application of the word /haqq/ and next to it the term /'alayna/ (on Us), which also states the truth, are counted some consecutive emphases in this regard, and mentioning the Qur'anic phrase /haqqan 'alayna/ before the Qur'anic phrase /nasrul mu'minin/, which denotes to restriction, is another emphasis.

On the whole, the holy verse means that surely Allah has undertaken helping the believers and without being in need of any one else, He will fulfil this promise of His.

By the way, also this sentence was a console for those Muslims who, at that time, were under the severe pressure of the enemies of Islam in Mecca that were stronger than them from the point of both number and equipment.

In principle, that the enemies of Allah (s.w.t.) are drowned in pollution and sin it itself is one of the factors of triumph and help of the believers, because this very sin will finally root out them and will provide the means of their destruction by their own hands when it sends the Divine revenge to them.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 48

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَاباً فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسَفاً فَتَرَي الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلاَلِهِ فَإِذَآ أَصَابَ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

48. "It is Allah Who sends forth the winds so they raise a cloud, then He spreads it forth in the sky as He pleases, and breaks it into fragments

so that you see the rain coming forth from inside it, then when He causes it to fall upon whom He pleases of His servants, behold, they rejoice."

The natural changes are the signs of power, wisdom, and device of Allah, and also the movement of pieces of cloud, and rainfalls are performed by the will of Allah.

In this holy verse the Qur'an refers again to the bounty of blowing winds, where it says:

"It is Allah Who sends forth the winds so they raise a cloud, then He spreads it forth in the sky as He pleases, and breaks it into fragments so that you see the rain coming forth from inside it…"

Yes, at the time of raining, one of the important functions has been given unto the winds. It is they that carry the pieces of cloud from over seas toward dry and thirsty lands, and it is they that have the duty of stretching pieces of cloud and preparing them for being creative of rain.

The winds are like an aware and experienced shepherd that in time gathers the cattle of sheep from here and there in the desert and makes them move on a certain way and then he prepares them to be milked.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"…So that you see the rain coming forth from inside it…"

may point to this meaning that the intense of clouds and the blow of winds is not so much that hinders the exist of small drops of rain from cloud and their descent on the earth, but, in spite of the storm and cloud that have covered the expanse of sky, these small drops find their way from inside them toward the earth and in the meantime, they do not create destruction.

The wind and storm that sometimes root out the great trees and move rocks, lets the small tender drop of rain pass through it and come down on the land.

This point is also noteworthy that though on a cloudy day when cloud has covered the expanse of the sky, the pieces of cloud are not so sensible for us, but they are completely visible when we pass through these pieces of cloud or fly over them by airplane.

The verse at the end says:

"…then when He causes it to fall upon whom He pleases of His servants, behold, they rejoice."

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 49-50

وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلِ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِم مِن قَبْلِهِ لَمُبْلِسِينَ

فَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ ءَاثَارِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَآ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

49. "Although before it was sent down on them before that they had been in despair."

50. "Look then at the traces of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death; verily He is the giver of life to the dead; and He is All-powerful over all things."

Hardships and kinds of hopelessness increase the pleasure of bounties very much.

Rainfall and the new life of the earth is a divine sign for the reality of Resurrection. This holy verse says:

"Although before it was sent down on them before that they had been in despair."

The Arabic term /mublis/ is derived from /'iblas/ in the sense of: 'despair' and 'hopelessness'.

Those people, such as wandering Arabs, whose life and living is closely depended on these very drops of rain, will conceive this despair and that glad tidings very well.

While despair and hopelessness has last its evil and heavy shadow over their soul and spirit and the sign of thirst has appeared in them as well as in their cattle and their farming lands; then suddenly the winds, which are the harbingers of rain, start to come through which these people smell the smell of rain.

After some minutes, the pieces of cloud will scatter in the sky and become more intensive and more compressed and then it begins to rain. The ditches will be filled with wholesome water, and small and big streams will contain of this heavenly bounty.

Life and living will be seen in dry lands and in the depth of the hearts of these wanderers of the desert both. The light of hope enlightens their hearts and the dark cloud of despair will disappear thereof.

The repetition of the Arabic word /qabl/ (before) in the verse apparently is for emphasis. It says: "before it", yes, a few minutes before rain, the features are frowned, but suddenly it rains and the smile of happiness appears on the lips. What a weak being are man, and what a kind Lord He is!

In the Persian language, too, the time is sometimes stated repeatedly for emphasis. The Persian speakers may say: 'Until yesterday' -Yes, until that very yesterday- so and so was a friend with me, but now he is seriously in hostility", and the purpose of this repetition is an emphasis on the change of man's moods.

The next verse, addressing the Prophet of Islam (S), says:

"Look then at the traces of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death…"

The Arabic term /fanzur/ (look then) as an emphasis in the verse, points to this fact that the effect of Allah's mercy in giving life to the dead lands by means of rain is so much manifest that it appears for any man by a glance without being in need of searching and seeking for it.

Thus, the application of the Qur'anic phrase /rahmat-illah/ (Allah's mercy) about rainfall in the verse refers to the effects of its bountifulness from different dimensions.

Rain waters the dry lands and causes the seeds of plants grow.

Rain gives new life to the trees in order that they continue their living.

Rain clears out the dust of the air and makes the man's living environment safe and clean.

Rain washes the plants and gives them freshness.

Rain makes the weather moist and mild so that it will be appropriate for human beings to inhale.

Rain penetrates inside the ground and after some time it will appear on the ground in the form of springs and water pipes.

Rain creates some floods, which, after being controlled at the back of dams, produces electricity, light, and energy.

Finally, rain usually adjusts both cold and hot weather. It decreases the heat and makes cold tolerable.

Rain is also mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an as 'mercy', among them is Surah Furqan, No. 25 verse 48, and Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 63.

Also, Surah Shoura, No. 42, verse 28 says:

"He is the One that sends down rain (even) after (men) have given up all hope, and scatters His Mercy (far and wide)…"

Then, regarding to the relation that origin and Resurrection have in different issues, at the end of the verse it says:

"…verily He is the giver of life to the dead; and He is All-powerful over all things."

The application of the Arabic phrase /muhy il mauta/ (the giver of life to the dead) in the form of Arabic noun-agent instead of the verb in the simple present tense, specially with 'l' as an Arabic sign of emphasis, is the indication of the utmost emphasis.

We have repeatedly seen in the verses of the Qur'an that this heavenly Book chooses the dead land, which is quickened after the descent of rain, as a reference to prove the subject of Resurrection.

Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse eleven, after mentioning the life of the dead lands, it says:

"…that will be the Resurrection".

Similar to this meaning is also found in Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 9 where it says:

"…even so (will be) the Resurrection."

In fact, the law of life and death is always similar to each other everywhere. The One, Who gives life to the dead land and creates movement and liveliness in it, and also this thing repeats every year and sometime every day, has this ability that after their death gives life to all human beings, too. Everywhere death is in His authority, and life is also by His command.

It is true that apparently the dead land does not turn to be alive, and it is the seeds of the plants that are under the soil of the ground and grow up, but we know that these small seeds have attracted a great part of the ground in their own body and have changed some dead beings into living beings, and even the scattered parts of these plants give power again to the ground for life, too.

The deniers of resurrection, in deed, had no proof for their claim except improbability, and in order to break it, the Holy Qur'an brings these examples.

Surah Ar-Room - Verses 51-52

وَلَئِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحاً فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرّاً لَّظَلُّوا مِن بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ

فَإِنَّكَ لاَ تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَي وَلاَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ

51. "And if We send a wind (from which) they see (their tilth turned) yellow, they certainly become, thereafter, disbelievers (ungrateful)."

52. "For verily you can not make the dead to listen nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they turn away backward."

The fatal winds and those winds that cause impediments are not undue and accidental. The destructive winds are less than the useful winds.

The previous verses were about the bountiful winds which are the harbingers of the rains that bring mercy. Now, the first verse points to harmful winds.

It says:

"And if We send a wind (from which) they see (their tilth turned) yellow, they certainly become, thereafter, disbelievers (ungrateful)."

These are some weak and incapacious people. They are such that before rainfall they are hopeless and after it they are very happy. If one day a poisonous wind blows and their life temporarily faces with some difficulties, they cry and become disbelievers.

On the contrary, the true believers who are happy and gratitude with the bounties of Allah, when they face with afflictions and difficulties they are patient and steadfast. The changes of material life never affect in their faith and they are not as the blind-hearted people whose faith is weak and with the blow of a wind they become faithful and with the blow of another wind become disbelievers.

The Arabic word /musfarran/ is derived from /sufrih/ which means 'yellow', and as the majority of commentators believe, the pronoun in the word /ra'auhu/ refers to the plants and trees that as the result of harmful winds they may become yellow and faded.

Some commentators have also said that the pronoun may refer to 'cloud', because the yellow clouds are naturally some thin clouds which usually have not rain while dark and intensed clouds often bring rain.

Some others also believe that 'wind' is the antecedent of the pronoun, since the ordinary winds are usually colourless and the poisonous winds, which sometimes carry the dust of the desert with them, are yellow and dim.

There is also a fourth probability which indicates that the Arabic term /musfar/ means 'empty', because as Raqib says in Mufradat: an empty plate and a stomach empty of food and vessels empty of blood in Arabic called /safir/.

Thus the above meaning is an indication to the winds which are empty of rain. (In this case the pronoun in the word /ra'auhu/ (they see it) refers to 'wind'.) (Be careful).

But the first commentary is the most famous one among them all.

This point is also worthy to be noted that here the useful winds, which cause rain to fall, are said in plural form, while the harmful winds are stated in singular form. This matter implies that most of the winds are useful, and the poisonous winds are expressed as an exceptional one, which sometimes blows once a month or once a year, while useful winds blow during all days and nights.

Or it points to this fact that useful winds are beneficial if they come repeatedly, while the harmful winds affect their evil only once.

The last matter, which is necessary to be mentioned here, is the difference between the Qur'anic term /yastabširun/ (they rejoice) which has been stated about useful winds in former verses, and the Qur'anic sentence:

"…they certainly become, thereafter, disbelievers (ungrateful)."

This difference shows that they see those masses of great and continuous blessings of Allah (s.w.t.) and become happy, but if there comes an affliction once and for one day to them, they cry so severely and go toward disbelief that as if they did not desist from it.

It is just like those who are safe for a life time and do not say a word of gratitude, but one night when they burn in fever they say all words of disbelief and ingratitude; and this is the state of ignorant and faithless people.

In this regard, there have been stated some other matters in the commentary of verse 35 of the current Surah, and Surah Hud, No. 11, verses 9 and 10, and Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 11.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 53

وَمَآ أَنتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمْيِ عَن ضَلاَلَتِهِمْ إِن تُسْمِعُ إِلاَّ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

53. "Nor can you lead the blind out of their straying. Only those will you make to hear who believe in Our signs and so they submit."

The divine prophet's duty is to guide people to accept the truth, not to force them to be guided; since having a submissive mood before the truth is a preliminary state for some spiritual apprehensions.

In connection with the former discussion mentioned in the commentary of the previous verse, through this verse and the next one, people are divided into four groups:

1- The dead: That is, those who do not apprehend any fact, though they are apparently alive.

2- The deaf, those who cannot hear the truth.

3- Those people who are deprived from seeing the feature of the truth.

4- The true believers who have aware hearts, hearing ears, and seeing eyes.

At first, the holy verse implies that the words of the Prophet (S) do not affect on those who have dead hearts. It says:

"For verily you can not make the dead to listen…"

Then it continues saying:

"…nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they turn away backward."

And also, the verse says:

"Nor can you lead the blind out of their straying. Only those will you make to hear who believe in Our signs and so they submit."

As we said formerly, too, besides 'life' and 'death' of the body, as well as the apparent hearing and sight, the Qur'an considers a superior kind of life and death as well as sight and hearing in which the main root of man's happiness and wretchedness is found.

The assessment of the Qur'an from these issues is not a material and physical assessment, but it is, in fact, a spiritual and humane assessment.

The first condition for comprehending the reality is to have a ready and receptive heart, a seeing eye and a hearing ear, otherwise if all prophets and saints come and recite all Divine verses to the one who has lost his discriminating sense and apprehension of the facts, as the result of committing many sins, obstinacy, and hostility, there will not appear a change in him.

And that the Qur'an points to only two parts of the apparent senses, added to the innate apprehension, is for the sake that the majority of man's data are gained either by the means of these two senses (eye and ear) or through sensa and analysis of wisdom.

It is interesting that the three stages, which are mentioned in the above verses, are three different stages of deviation and the lack of understanding the reality which has begun from an intensive case and ended to the mild one.

The first stage is the state of despondency which in the Qur'an has been rendered into /mauta/ (the dead) that there is no way to be possible to penetrate into them.

The second stage is the stage of being deaf when they turn away backward and run away so violently that even the loud shouting, which may affect on them when they are near, are useless in this stage.

This group, of course, are not like the dead. It is sometimes possible that a matter can be conveyed to them by some signs and gesticulations, but we know that many facts can not be made understand by this way, specially when they turn away.

The third stage is the state of blindness. Of course, living with the blind is much easier, because the meanings can orally be explained to them.

However, mere stating the subjects is not enough. Supposing a blind person is told to take the right direction or the left direction, acting this instruction is not so easy and sometimes, because of a slight mistake in measuring, that blind person may fall into a precipice.

When commenting on Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verses 80 and 81 in the explanation of the reality of 'life' and 'death' in the Qur'an, we pointed to the weak rejection of a group of Wahhabites who, in order to negate the resorting to the holy Prophet (S) and Imams (as) take help from the verses under discussion, and the like, and say that the dead (even the Prophet (S)) never understand anything.

But, in that place, we proved that man, specially the great leaders and the martyr have a kind of life in purgatory after their death. There are many documents from the Qur'an and tradition that testify to it. In this purgatory life they have a kind of perceive and understanding which is vaster than that in the worldly life.

Here we must add that all of the Muslims in their prayers always address the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and send salutation to him by saying:

"As-salamu 'alayka 'ayyuhannabiyu wa rahmatullah-i-wa barakatuh"

and we know that the real addressee, not the figurative one, is certainly the one who hears and understands. Therefore, addressing and sending

salutation to him from far and near distances is an indication to the fact that his holy soul hears all these salutation and it needs not reason that we consider these salutation as figurative ones.

Notes

1. Tafsir-Qurtabi, according to the narration of Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, p. 210
2. The current Surah, verse 40
3. The Surah under discussion, verse 41
4. Safinat-ul-Bihar, chapter Zina and Thanb
5. Ibid, Part ‘Thanb’
6. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 96

Section 6: The Evidence of Those Given Knowledge and Faith

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 54

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِن ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفاً وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ

54. "Allah is He Who created you out of weakness, then He gave strength after weakness, then after strength He appointed weakness and grey hair; He creates what He pleases, and He is the Knowing, the Powerful."

At the beginning of his creation, man is thoroughly full of weakness.

The man's stages of weakness and power are designed wisely in a program.

Of course, this noble verse refers to one of the proofs of Monotheism, i.e., the proof of poverty and needlessness. It completes the discussions about Monotheism cited throughout this Surah.

It says:

"Allah is He Who created you out of weakness, then He gave strength after weakness, then after strength He appointed weakness and grey hair; He creates what He pleases, and He is the Knowing, the Powerful."

At the beginning you were so weak that you were not able even to send away a fly from yourself, or hold up your saliva; this is from the point of body; and from the mental view-point, as the Qur'anic term /la ta'lamun/ indicates, (you did not know anything) you did not know even your kind parents who permanently took care of you.

But, little by little, you became bodily and mentally powerful and, just like a person who ascend a mountain from its lap until he reaches its top, you began to come down from other side of it and you reached the bottom of the valley of weakness and became unable bodily and spiritually.

These changes, and these ascents and descents are the best proof for this fact that neither that power was yours nor was this weakness, but both of them were from the side of Allah, and this itself is a sign that another one turns the wheel of your entity, and whatever you have is accidental.

This is the same meaning that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has pointed to in his saying where he says:

"I came to know Allah, the Glorifies, through the breaking of determinations, change of intentions and losing of courage."[1]

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an also adds the Arabic word /šaybah/ (grey hair) for the second weakness of man during his lifetime, but in regard to the first weakness it does not mention 'childhood'.

This difference may point to the fact that the weakness of senility is rather more painful, because firstly contrary to the weakness of childhood, it has a direction toward death and annihilation and, secondly, the expectation from the aged, old, and experienced persons is never like that from the

babies, while sometimes their weakness and disability are equal, and this is very instructive.

It is this stage that draws the disobedient powerful persons to weakness, despicableness, and helplessness.

The last sentence of the verse, which is an indication to the knowledge and Power of Allah, is both a glad tidings and a warning implying that He is aware of all your deeds and intentions and also He is able to give you both reward and retribution.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 55

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُـجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ

55. "And on the Day that the Hour (of Judgment) will be established, the guilty will swear that they tarried not but an hour; thus were they used to being deluded."

He who is accustomed to perjure in this world, will use it in the Hereafter, too.

We formerly said that the discussions around 'Origin' and 'Resurrection' are said close to each other in this Surah. In the above verse, following the former discussions about Origin and Resurrection, again the Qur'an speaks about the subject of Resurrection and illustrates another painful scene of the state of the guilty on that Day.

It says:

"And on the Day that the Hour (of Judgment) will be established, the guilty will swear that they tarried not but an hour…"

Yes, in the past, too, the guilty were wholly deprived from understanding the reality in such a way. The verse continues saying:

"…thus were they used to being deluded."

The application of the Qur'anic word /sa'ah/ (hour) instead of 'the Day of Hereafter', as we have formerly pointed out, is either for the sake that the Hereafter will be set in a sudden moment, or because the men's deeds will quickly be reckoned because Allah, the Aware, is swift at reckoning. And we know that the word /sa'ah/ in the Arabic language means a very small part of time.

Since there is no word mentioned about the place of this establishment in the verse, some commentators have said that it may refer to the time of staying in the world, which is, in fact, no more than a fleet moment.

But the next verse is a clear evidence that the purpose of it is staying in the purgatory world, or the world after death and before Resurrection, because the Qur'anic sentence:

"…Certainly you have tarried according to Allah's Book till the Day of Resurrection…"

concludes the end of these two to the Hereafter, and this is not correct but concerning the purgatory world.

We also know this fact that the quality of purgatory is not the same for all. Some people have an aware life in purgatory (intermediate world), while there is another group who are like ones who go asleep deeply as if they would awake from their sleep on the Hereafter Day and consider thousands of days as one hour.

There will remain two matters here to be discussed. The first is that how can the guilty make such a wrong oath?

The answer to this question is clear. They truly think such that the purgatory term is a very short course, because they have had a state similar to sleep.

Did not ‘the people of the cave’, who were some believing righteous people, consider that they had slept for a day or a part of a day after awakening from their very long sleeping?

Or one of the Divine prophets, whose story is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 259, after one hundred years that he had passed away; returned to life again and he did not say that the gap between two kinds of life was one day or a part of a day.

What is the problem that, regarding to the particular state of the people of the Hell, the guilty have such a consideration because of unawareness?

That is why, as the next verse announces, the aware believers will tell them that they are wrong and they have tarried in the purgatory world until the Day of Hereafter and they are in the Day of Resurrection.

By this statement, the second matter i.e., the commentary of the Qur’anic sentence:

“…thus were they used to being deluded”

is made clear, for the Arabic word: originally means: ‘the change of real feature and declining from Truth, and because of their peculiar condition in purgatory, this group have naturally remained far from realities and cannot discriminate the length of the time of their staying in purgatory.

Regarding to what was said in the above, there seems no need to pose the long discussions of a group of commentators who explain why the guilty ones tell intentionally lies on the Hereafter Day, since, in this stage, there is no reference of their intentional falsehood in the verse.

Of course, in other verses of the holy Qur’an, there are seen some examples concerning the lie and falsehood of the guilty on the Day of Resurrection the answer of which has been given in detail when commenting on Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 187, but this discussion does not relate to the subject of the discussion concerning these verses.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 56

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَي يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

56. “And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say (to the guilty); ‘certainly you have tarried according to Allah’s Book till the Day of Resurrection, so this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know’.”

Knowledge and faith are two great Divine gifts which are bestowed on men:

“…who have been given knowledge and faith…”.

This holy verse also reiterates the response of the aware believers to the words of unaware guilty who have no proper information about the situation of purgatory and Hereafter.

It says:

"And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say (to the guilty); 'certainly you have tarried according to Allah's Book till the Day of Resurrection, so this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know'."

Mentioning the word of knowledge before the word faith in the holy verse is for the sake that knowledge is the foundation of faith.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /fi kitab-i-llah/ (according to Allah's Book) may refer to the genetic Book, or to the heavenly Book, or both of them. It means it was by the genetic and religious command of Allah (s.w.t.) that they were determined to remain in purgatory for such a length of time and then be mustered on the Day of Resurrection.

As for the purpose of /'allaðina 'utul 'il mawal 'iman/ (those who have been given knowledge and faith) that who they are, some commentators have said that it points to the Divine angels who have both knowledge and faith, while some others have said that it refers to the aware believers; and the second interpretation is more apparent.

Some authentic Islamic narrations indicate that it has been rendered into the progeny of Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), the Immaculate Imams (as) which is of the statement of clear extensions and it does not confine the vast meaning of the verse.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned that some commentators believe that the dialogue between these two groups about 'purgatory', that one of them imagines its time as long as one hour and the next one knows its real amount of time originates from this point that since the first group are waiting for the Divine punishment they are willing that it can be postponed more and they consider the distances short though they are very long.

But the second group, who are waiting for Paradise and its bounties knowingly, see this distance long.[2]

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 57

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لاَّ يَنفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

57. "So on that Day their excuse shall not profit those who did injustice, nor will they be allowed to make amends."

The man's fate and the manner of his presence in Hereafter is in pledge of his own deed. Of course, repentance and apology are effective only in this world, and in the Hereafter such things are not useful.

The Arabic term /yusta'tabun/ (to make amends) is derived from /'utbah/ with the sense of distress and when it is used in this Arabic form it means repentance and the distress being dismissed.

However, when the guilty confront the painful facts of the Hereafter, they try to repent and apologize, but the Holy Qur'an says:

"So on that Day their excuse shall not profit those who did injustice…"

This matter is noteworthy that some verses of the Qur'an indicate that the guilty will never be allowed to apologize, for example, it says:

"Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuse,"[3]

but here it says:

"…their excuse shall not profit…"

which apparently means that they will apologize but it will not be useful.

Of course, there is not any contradiction between these verses, because Hereafter has different stages.

In some stages they are never allowed to apologize or even speak and their mouths will be sealed and only their hands, feet, and limbs, as well as the land on which they have committed sins, will speak about their deeds, while in some other stages their tongue will be relieved and they apologize, but it will not profit them.

One of their apologies is that they put their own sins on the shoulder of the chiefs of disbelief and hypocrisy.

They will tell them:

"…Has it not been for you, we should certainly have been believers."[4]

But in answer to them, in Hereafter, they will say:

"…Was it we who kept you back from guidance after it reached you?…"[5]

And sometimes in the state of apology they try to accuse Satan for their own deviation and they will blame him for his temptations.

But Satan answers them:

"…therefore, do not blame me, but blame yourselves…"[6]

Satan says: he did not force them to do any things, he only invited them friendly and they accepted it, too.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 58

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ مِن ۖ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِن جِئْتَهُم بِآيَةٍ لَّيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ مُبْطِلُونَ

58. "And indeed We have set forth for the people in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude, and if you bring unto them a sign, certainly those who disbelieve will say: 'You are naught but follow falsehood'."

Qur'an is a book of guidance containing some similitudes. This method is of the best ways of expressing the facts. That is why Allah has set forth them in different fields.

Of course, the materials of the Holy Qur'an are the cause of completing the argument, and he who understands the truth, and the argument is made clear to him, surely his excuse is not accepted any more.

However, Allah has brought forth every kind of similitude for people in the Holy Qur'an. He has repeatedly stated some promises and threats, enjoinments and prohibitions, glad tidings and warnings, extroversive signs and introversive signs, proofs upon Origin and Resurrection, news of unseen, and, in short, about everything that may affect positively in men's selves.

In fact, the Holy Qur'an, in general, and Surah Ar-Room, in particular, is a fairly collection of awakening subjects for every group of people and for any form of thought and belief.

The Qur'an is a collection of instructive lessons, ethical matters, practical programs and ideological affairs in a way that all possible methods for

influencing in man's thought and inviting them to the path of happiness have been used.

Yet, there are some people that none of these issues affect their dark and black hearts. That is why any verse or sign which is brought for them upon the truth, these disbelievers will say that you are followers of falsehood and these things are some baseless affairs.

The verse in this regard says:

"And indeed We have set forth for the people in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude, and if you bring unto them a sign, certainly those who disbelieve will say: 'You are naught but follow falsehood'."

The application of the Qur'anic term /mubtilun/ here is an inclusive meaning which encompasses all the undue labels and attributions of the polytheists: the attribution of falsehood, sorcery, insanity the superstitious fables, and fair tales, each of which is a feature from the false features.

Yes, they always accused the Divine prophets to one of these things in order to make the pure hearted people neglectful by them for a few days.

The addressee in the word /'antum/ (you) may be the holy Prophet (S) and the true believers, or it may refer to all of the adherents of the Truth and the whole Divine prophets and leaders, since this group of obstinate disbelievers opposed the whole adherents of this school of thought.

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 59

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لاَيَعْلَمُونَ

59. "Thus does Allah set a seal on the hearts of those who do not know."

This is the verse which states clearly the reason of this group's opposition. It clearly implies that this impenetrability and limitless enmity against any reality is for the sake that they have lost their sense of recognition and comprehension as the result of multiplicity of sin and obstinacy and understand nothing at all.

Yes, the verse says:

"Thus does Allah set a seal on the hearts of those who do not know."

The Arabic word /yatba'u/ is derived from /tab'/ in the sense of 'to seal'.

It refers to the action that both in the past and present time it has been common that, in order that something can remain intact and that no one absolutely interferes in it, its door is firmly fastened and, after putting some material on it, the lock or tie on its door is sealed.

It is evident that opening its door is impossible except by breaking that seal, and this is an action which will be divulged soon.

The Qur'an uses this clear meaning ironically pointing to the impenetrable hearts and those who have entirely lost their conscience, awareness, and safe and sound intellect so that there is no hope for their guidance.

It is noteworthy that in the former verses knowledge was introduced as the foundation of Faith, and in this holy verse ignorance is the foundation of disbelief (and the lack of submission before the truth).

Surah Ar-Room - Verse 60

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلاَ يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لاَيُوقِنُونَ

60. "So be patient, verily the promise of Allah is True, and let not those who have no certainty hold you in light estimation."

Surah Ar-Room began with the prophecy of victory and ended with the promise of Allah (s.w.t.) to the triumphant of the Truth.

This is the last verse of Surah Ar-Room and contains two important instructions and one great glad tiding for the holy Prophet of Islam (S) in order to invite him to steadfastness in this constant struggle against these ignorant and very obstinate persons.

At first, it implicitly says: now that the case is like that, he (S) should be patient against all these events, the whole harms, hindrances, and undue accusations, because patience and perseverance is the main key to victory.

The verse begins saying:

"So be patient…"

Then, in order to encourage the Prophet (S) in this way more than before, it adds:

"…verily the promise of Allah is True…"

Allah has promised the Prophet (S) and the believers to be victorious, to have the vicar of Allah on the earth, the triumph of Islam against paganism, the light against darkness, and knowledge against ignorance, and that this promise will actually be fulfilled.

The Qur'anic word /wa'd/ here refers to the numerous promises of the Qur'an about the victory of the believers.

Among those victories is what is mentioned in this very Surah, verse 47 where it says:

"…and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."

Surah Qafir, No. 40, verse 51 also says:

"We will, without doubt, help Our messengers and those who believe, (both) in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth."

And Also in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 56, it says:

"…Surely the party of Allah are triumphant."

The second command is the instruction of having control over the nerves, and protecting the coolness and calmness in this hard and continued struggle.

Then the holy verse continues saying:

"…and let not those who have no certainty hold you in light estimation."

Your duty is that you should have patience, tolerance, further forbearance, and keeping the coolness which is worthy to be in a leader to stand against these kind of persons.

The Qur'anic term /la yastaxifannaka/ is derived from /xiffat/ in the sense of lightness. That is, you must stand so heavy, firm, and steadfast that they cannot consider you light and cause you to move. You must stand firm in your way because they have no certainty, while you are the centre of certainty and Faith.

As it was said before, this Surah started with promise of believers' triumphant against the enemies and ends with the promise of victory, too, but its main condition is counted patience and perseverance.

O' Allah! Bestow on us such a patience and perseverance that the storms of difficulties and terrible events would never shake us.

O' Allah! We refuge to Your Pure Essence that we may be among those in whose hearts do not affect admonitions, advices, and exhortations.

O' Allah! The enemies are organized and united, and they are equipped with kinds of satanic weapons. We ask You the victory against our outward enemies and inward Satans.

Amin, O The Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying 250
2. The commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse.
3. Surah Al-Mursalat, No. 77, verse 36
4. Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 31
5. Ibid, verse 32
6. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22

Surah Luqman, Chapter 31

(Luqman)

No. 31 (Revealed at Mecca)

34 Verses in 4 Sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This is one of Meccan Suras, and it is called Luqman because of the existence of Luqman's name in this Surah. It is among the sixth Suras which begin with abbreviated letters: A.L.M.

The content of Surah Luqman can be summarized briefly in the following instances:

1- The statement of the greatness and importance of the Holy Qur'an concerning the guidance of humankind.

2- The division of human beings into the benevolent and the tyrant, and the statement of their fate.

3- The advice and wise teachings of Luqman to his son.

4- The reasons for the Faith in Origin and Resurrection.

5- The statement of Allah's particular knowledge, such as: the time of every one's death and the time of the occurrence of Resurrection.

The Virtue of the Surah

We recite in a tradition narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that he said:

"Whoever recites Surah Luqman at night Allah ordains thirty angels to protect him during the night until morning from Satan and his army, and if he recites it in daytime these angels protect him from Satan and his army until evening."

We have repeatedly said, and now we emphatically say again, that the recitation of a Surah as the cause of these many virtues, divine rewards, and honour is for the sake that recitation is a preliminary for contemplation, and a thinking which in turn is a preliminary for action. Therefore, we must not expect those abundant virtues for a mere recitation.

Section 1: Qur’an, a Guidance and Mercy for the Righteous

Surah Luqman - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُم بِالأَخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. “Alif, ‘A’, Lam, ‘L’, Mim ‘M’.”

2. “These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom.”

3. “A guidance and a mercy for the righteous ones,”

4. “Those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and they are certain of the Hereafter.”

Twenty nine Suras of the Qur’an begin with abbreviated letters in twenty four of which the greatness of the Qur’an has been stated after those letters which denote that this Qur’an has been compiled out of these very letters that are before you, but none of you can bring the like of it. It contains such a high and great content that practicing it may totally change the man’s fate.

Most of writers have not find their books empty of deficiency and, therefore, have apologized to the readers for those deficiencies and faults and they do accept the new suggestions and proper critics, but it is only Allah who, concerning His Book, explicitly says:

“The Book of Wisdom. It is a firm and unchangeable Book which has no deficiency and defect in it.”

Therefore, next to the abbreviated letters, it says:

“These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom.”

The word /tilka/ in Arabic is used for a distanced thing and, as it has repeatedly been said, this application is specially metonymy and refers to the greatness and importance of these verses, as if they were in high skies and in a very far point.

The Arabic word /kitab/ (Book) here being qualified by the Qur’anic term /hakim/ (wisdom) is either for the firmness of its content, because by no means falsehood penetrates in it, and it is aloof of any superstition, and it says naught but the Truth, and it does not invite save to the Truth. It is exactly opposite to /lahwul hadiθ/ (idle talk) which will be dealt with in later verses.

Or it is in the sense that this Qur’an is like a wise learned man who, in his silence, usually speaks with thousand different tongues, instructs others, admonishes, encourages, warns, tells instructive stories and, shortly speaking, possesses wisdom and statement with complete meaning.

This introductory meaning has a direct relation with the words of Luqman, the wise, which are referred to in this Surah.

Of course, there is no problem that both of the meanings of /hikmat/ are meant in the above verse.

The next verse states the ultimate aim of the descent of the Qur'an by saying:

"A guidance and a mercy for the righteous ones,"

'Guidance' is, in fact, an early preparation for Allah's mercy, because, at first an alert man finds the fact under the light of the Qur'an and believes in it and then he uses it in his actions and after that he will be involved in the endless Divine bounties and His All-Embracing Mercy.

It is noteworthy that here the Holy Qur'an is counted as the source of guidance and mercy for the righteous and at the beginning of Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 2, the Qur'an implies it is the source of guidance and glad tidings for the believers:

"A guidance and glad tidings for the believers",

and at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 verse 2, it qualifies the Qur'an as:

"…a guidance to the pious ones".

This very difference of statements may be for the sake that without piety and righteousness the soul of submission and accepting the facts will not become active in man and naturally there will not be any guidance for him.

Next to this stage, i.e. the stage of accepting the truth, there comes forth the stage of being faithful in which, besides 'guidance', the glad tidings to Divine bounties will also exist.

And when we pass the stages of piety and faith, we reach the stage of righteous deed where the mercy of Allah will be added.

Thus, the above mentioned verse reiterates three stages of development of the servants of Allah one after another: the stage of accepting the truth, the stage of having faith, and the stage of righteous action, and in these three stages the Qur'an is sequentially the source of: "guidance", "glad tidings", and "mercy". / (Be careful)

The next holy verse qualifies the righteous ones with three qualifications. It says:

"Those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and they are certain of the Hereafter."

Their link with Allah is through prayer, with the servants of Allah by means of paying poor-rate, and their certainty to the court of Judgment in Hereafter is a powerful motive for avoiding from sin and for fulfilling the duties.

Surah Luqman - Verse 5

أُوْلَئِكَ عَلَي هُدي مِن رَبِّـهِمْ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

5. "These are on (true) guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who are successful."

The Divine guidance is bestowed on the righteous ones, because guidance relates to the dignity of Lordship. Of course, felicity belongs to those who establish prayer, give poor-rate, and are certain of the Hereafter.

However, the Qur'an explains the end of the righteous as follows:

"These are on (true) guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who are successful."

The first sentence of the verse, from one side, shows that their guidance has been guaranteed from the side of their Lord and, from other side, the application of the word /'ala/ (on) in this verse is an evidence for this fact that as if guidance were for them as a calm and level mount on which they are riding and have mastered it.

By this explanation, the difference between this guidance and the guidance mentioned at the beginning of the Surah is made clear, because the first guidance is the very preparation of accepting the truth, and this guidance is the program of reaching the destination.

By the way, the Qur'anic sentence:

"They are the ones who are successful"

which, according to the Arabic literature is a reference for its restriction, shows that the only way of felicity is this way which is the way of the good doers, the way of those who are in relation with Allah and the servants of Allah, and the way of those who have a perfect faith in both Origin and Resurrection.

At the end, it is understood from this verse that felicity is gained by the success and guidance of Allah (s.w.t.) which is, of course, given to man because of his effort and endeavour, too, as, in another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"And those who strive hard for Us, We will certainly guide them in Our way, and verily Allah is with the good doers."

Surah Luqman - Verse 6

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُواً أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

6. "And there are, among men, those who purchase idle talk to lead (others) astray from the way of Allah without knowledge, and to take it in mockery; for these shall be a disgracing chastisement."

To invest capital for cultural attack and struggling against the truth surely has a long and vast precedent. Whatever exists opposite to wisdom is idle and it is a hinder for reaching to perfection.

The Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators have said that the verses under discussion are revealed about 'Nadr-ibn-i-Harith'. He was a merchant who used to travel to Iran and sometimes it happened that he told the Iranian stories for the members of Quraysh.

He said:

"If Muhammad (S) reiterates the story life of 'Ad and Thamud, I reiterate the stories of Rustam and 'Isfandiyar, the news of Kasra and the kings of non-Arab."

Thus, people used to gather around him and they abandoned listening to the recitation of the Qur'an.

Some other commentators have said that these verses of the Qur'an have been sent down about a man who had bought a maid-servant who could sing

songs. All days and nights she sang for him and caused him to neglect the remembrance of Allah.

After mentioning this occasion of revelation, the Late Tabarsi says:

"The tradition which has been narrated from the holy Prophet (S) in this regard confirms the above occasion of revelation, because he (S) said:

'Teaching music to maid-servant singers is unlawful, and bargaining them as well as Profit gained from it is unlawful, too. The reference to this (matter) is mentioned in the Book of Allah (where it says):

'And there are, among men, those who purchase idle talk to lead (others) astray from the way of Allah without knowledge'…'"

However, the words in this holy verse are about a group of people who use their capitals for vanity and leading others astray by which they buy the wretchedness in this world and the next for themselves.

At first, it says:

"And there are, among men, those who purchase idle talk to lead (others) astray from the way of Allah without knowledge, and to take it in mockery…"

Then, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"…for these shall be a disgracing chastisement.""

Purchasing idle talks and falsehood is either in this manner that they really earn superstitious and false fables by giving money, like that that we studied in the story of Nadr-ibn-i-Harith.

Or it is in this way that for arranging some meetings of vanity, singing, and falsehood they buy some maid-servant singers, as was said in the occasion of revelation through the tradition of the Prophet (S).

Or they spend wealth in any way or form that by which they get this unlawful aim, i.e. the false and idle talks.

It is surprising that these blind hearted persons bought the false and idle matters for the dearest price, but they used to ignore the Divine verses and wisdom that Allah had given them without money.

This probability also exists that the word 'purchase' has an ironical meaning and its purpose is any kind of struggle and effort for reaching this aim.

The Arabic phrase /lahwul hadiθ/ (idle talk) has such a vast meaning that envelops any kind of talks or amusing musical songs which drive man into idleness or aberration, whether they are from the sort of lascivious music, sounds, and songs, or the words that, not by the way of tune, but by means of its content drive man towards vanity and mischief; or by means of both of them; like love poetry and songs of the ordinary singers that both their content and tune are perverse; or like the superstitious stories and fables which cause people to deviate from the Divine straight way cause their deviation.

Or the ridiculous statements which are said with the purpose of dismissing the truth and weakening the basis of Faith, like what is narrated from Abujahl and his companions who, addressing the Quraysh, said to them:

"Do you want me to feed you from Zaqqun by which Muhammad threatens us?"

Then he ordered his men to provide some butter and date and said that it was that very ‘Zaqqum’; and thus he used to mock the noble verses of Allah.

However, the Qur’anic phrase: /lahw-ul-hadiθ/ (idle talk) has a vast meaning which encompasses all of these senses and the like of them, and if some particular Islamic narrations, or the words of the commentators have emphasized on one of them, it does never indicate to the restriction of the concept of the verse.

The auspicious traditions narrated by the way of Ahlul Bayt (as) contain some points which refer to the same vastness of the concept of this term, too.

Among them is a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) in which he has said:

“The session of /qina’/ is a session that Allah does not look at its people (and He does not bestow His mercy on them) and this is (the extension of what Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, has said:

‘And there are, among men, those who purchase idle talk to lead (others) astray from the way of Allah…’.”

The application of the Qur’anic phrase /lahwul-hadiθ/ (idle talk) instead of saying /’al-hadiθ-ul-lahw/ may refer to this fact that their main aim is that very vanity, and ‘talk’ is a means for reaching it.

The Qur’anic sentence “to lead (others) astray from the way of Allah” also has a vast meaning which involves both ‘to lead mentally astray, such that was said in the story of Nadr-ibn-i-Harith and Abujahl, and to lead ethically astray, such that the above traditions about ‘singing songs’ indicate.

The Qur’anic phrase /biqayr-i-‘ilm/ (without knowledge) points to the fact that this misleading and deviated group do not believe even in their own false school either, but they follow only ignorance and blind imitations. They are some ignorant persons who cause others to be afflicted with their ignorance, too.

This meaning is in the case that we count the phrase ‘without knowledge’ as a quality for ‘those who lead others astray’, while some other commentators have also said that it may be a quality for ‘those who are led astray’, that is, they unknowingly lead some ignorant persons to deviation and falsehood.

These unaware people go further than this, too; i.e., they do not suffice to only the amusing and neglecting aspects of these issues, but they use their vain and idle talks as a means for mocking the verses of Allah, and this is the same thing that the Qur’an points to at the end of the above verse by saying:

“…and to take it in mockery…”

The word ‘chastisement’, here is qualified by the word ‘disgracing’ for the reason that punishment should be equivalent with the crime. They disgraced the Divine verses, and then Allah has also appointed a chastisement for them which is both painful and disgracing.

At the end, Imam Baqir (as) said:

“Profane singing is among the sins for which Allah has promised the (Hell) Fire”,

and then he recited the verse under discussion. Therefore, profane singing is one of the great sins, since a great sin is the sin for which punishment has been promised in the Qur'an.

Surah Luqman - Verse 7

وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ ءَايَاتُنَا وَلَّى مُسْتَكْبِراً كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِي اُذُنَيْهِ وَقْراً فَبَشِّـرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

7. "And when Our signs are recited to him, he turns back proudly as if he had not heard them, as though in his ears were a heaviness, therefore give him the tidings of a painful chastisement."

Listening to the idle talks removes the man's receptivity for accepting the truth.

The Arabic word /waqr/ means: 'heavy load, burden'; the persons with personality and reverence are called 'venerate', too.

This holy verse points to the reaction of this group before the verses of Allah. In fact, it compares it with their reaction before /lahwul-hadiθ/ (idle talk), and says:

"And when Our signs are recited to him, he turns back proudly as if he had not heard them, as though in his ears were a heaviness, therefore give him the tidings of a painful chastisement."

The application of the Arabic phrase: /walla mustakbiran/ (he turns back proudly) refers to this point that his turning back is not only for bothering his worldly profits and desires, but it is beyond this and the motive of pride and haughtiness before Allah and the verses of Allah, which is the greatest sin, exists in his deeds, too.

It is interesting that it says:

"…he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them…"

and he passes by it completely heedlessly. Then the Qur'an implicitly adds that not only he does not hear these verses but also as if he were deaf and heard no word. The punishment of such persons is also appropriate to their deeds. In the same manner that their deed was painful for the people of truth, Allah has appointed their punishment painful, too, and gives them a painful chastisement.

It is also necessary to note this point that the application of the Arabic word /baššir/ (give glad tidings), concerning the Divine painful chastisement, agrees with the action of the proud ones who used to mock the verses of Allah and rendered Zaqqum of the Hell into butter and date.

Surah Luqman - Verses 8-9

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقّاً وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

8. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them are the gardens of Bliss,"

9. "To dwell therein; the promise of Allah is true, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Concerning the previous verses where it was said that with their vain words people used to try to lead astray the followers of the truth. By having

a proud mood and by means of not listening to the heavenly verses, they used to mock the believers.

In this verse, Allah consoles on the believers by giving the glad tidings of the bounties of Paradise and that Paradise is particular to the believers who do righteousness.

Therefore, the disgrace and mockery of the proud ones compensate with the promises and glad tidings of Allah to the true believers. Another thing is that the pride and aversion of the opponents is temporary, while the reward of the believers is eternal.

Yes, contrast to the faithless tyrants and blind-hearted misleaders, who neither see the affects of Allah in the world nor hearken to the words of the messengers of Allah, the believers by means of vigilant intellect, seeing eyes, and hearing ears that Allah has bestowed on them, believe in the Divine verses and use them in their righteous deeds both.

How interesting is this that those people had 'painful chastisement' and these believers have 'the gardens of Bliss'.

The verse says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them are the gardens of Bliss,"

This is more important than this is that these gardens of bliss are eternal for them and they will abide in them for ever. And this is the certain promise of Allah, a true promise.

The verse says:

"To dwell therein; the promise of Allah is true…"

Allah never gives a false promise, nor is He impotent to fulfil His promise, because, as the holy verse continues, it clearly says:

"…and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

This point is also noteworthy that, concerning their pride, the word 'chastisement' is mentioned in singular form, but concerning the believers who do righteous deeds, the word 'gardens' is mentioned which is in plural form, because the mercy of Allah always precedes His Wrath (punishment).

The emphasis on eternity and Divine promise are also emphasis on the increase of mercy comparing punishment. The Qur'anic term /na'im/ is derived from /ni'mat/ and has a vast scope of meaning which envelops all kinds of material and spiritual bounties, even the bounties that are not perceptible for us, the prisoners of the prison of the body in this world.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"Bliss means 'plenty of bounty."

Surah Luqman - Verse 10

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَأَلْقَي فِي الأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن
ُ ّ ِ دَآبَّةٍ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن ُ ّ ِ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ

10. "He created the heavens without any pillars as you see them; and He cast mountains on the earth lest it shakes with you, and He spread in it of every kinds of animals; and We sent down water from the heaven, then We caused to grow therein (vegetables) of every noble kind in pairs."

In this verse a few examples of the miracles of the Qur'an, belonging to the time when man could not even imagine them, are clearly pointed out. One of them is the unseen pillars of the settlement of the planets and stars in the sky, i.e., the gravity power and centrifugal force, the two forces that are the secret of the rotation of the globes in their orbits.

Another miracle is pointing to the settlement of the mountains for the protection of the earth from being shaken and, also, pointing to the law of conjugality in plants; so, the verse says:

"He created the heavens without any pillars as you see them…"

The Arabic word /'amad/ which is the plural form of /'amud/ in the sense of 'pillar', and qualifying it with the term /taraunaha/ (as you see them) is an evidence that heavens have not some visible pillars.

The concept of this sentence is that the heavens do have some pillars but they are not visible. As it was formerly pointed out in the commentary of Surah Ar-Ra'd, this meaning is a smooth indication to the law of polarization, which like a very strong pillar, but not visible, practically holds the heavenly planets in their proper places.

This meaning has been stipulated in the tradition that Hussayn-ibn-Khalid has narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as), who said:

"Glory be to Allah, did Allah (s.w.t.) not say:

'Without any pillars as you see them'?"

The addressee answered positively and he (as) said:

"There are some pillars but you do not see them."

However, the above mentioned holy sentence is one of the scientific miracles of the Qur'an the explanation of which has been stated in Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 2.

Then the Qur'an refers to the philosophy of the creation of mountains.

It says:

"…and He cast mountains on the earth lest it shakes with you…"

This verse, some like of which are found in the Qur'an, shows that mountains are some means of stability for the earth. This fact, however, has also been scientifically proved today that, in numerous respects, mountains are the cause of stability of the earth:

In this respect that their roots are jointed together and, like strong armour, protect the earth against the pressures originated from the inner heat of it. If they were not, the destructive earth-quakes were so abundant that they might not let man live on it.

And in this respect that this strong cover of the earth resists against the gravity of the moon and that of the sun in a way that if the mountains did not exist a great tide could come into being over the ground that was not unlike the flow and ebb of the seas and could make life impossible for man.

And in this respect that it breaks the pressure of storms and decreases the contact of the surrounding air of the earth, at the time of its rotation, to the least, and if they did not exist the surface of the earth, like dry salt deserts, would be the field of fatal winds and destructive storms.

Now that the bounty of calmness of the heavens by their unseen pillars and the calmness of the earth by mountains have been provided, there come

the turn of the creation of living creatures and their calmness that they can step in the field of life in a calm environment.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He spread in it of every kinds of animals…"

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /minkullidabbah/ is an indication to the variety of life and living in different features among which are the very small living creatures through our environment that can not be ordinarily seen with normal eyes, to the gigantic animals whose greatness causes man to feel horror.

Also, each group of moving creatures are in different colours and in completely various features. Those animals that live by water and those that live by air, birds, creepers, kinds of insects and the like of them have different worlds for themselves and they reflect the subject of life in hundreds of thousand forms.

But it is evident that these moving creatures need both water and food, then through next sentences the Qur'an points to these two things.

It says:

"…and We sent down water from the heaven, then We caused to grow therein (vegetables) of every noble kind in pairs."

Thus, the verse refers to the main means of the life of all creatures specially man, which is water and plants. There is a table stretched all over the earth with various foods. That, from the point of creation, each of them is a proof upon the greatness and power of Allah.

It is noteworthy that in stating the creation of the first three items, the Arabic verbs are said in the form of third person singular, but when it speaks about the descent of rain and the growth of vegetables, the Arabic verbs are stated in plural form, and it says:

"…We sent down water from the heaven, then We caused to grow therein (vegetable)…"

This itself is one of the arts of eloquence that at the time of mentioning different affairs the meanings are stated in two or more various forms so that the listener feels no fatigue. Moreover, this style of statement shows that the descent of rain and the growth of plants have been particularly regarded.

This verse points to the conjugality in the world of plants once more, and this is also one of scientific miracles of the Qur'an, because at that time the conjugality (the existence of male and female) in the world of plants had not been vastly proved, and the Qur'an revealed it.[1]

By the way, the Arabic word /karim/ (noble) used as an attribute for the pairs of plants, points to the kinds of merits that exist in them.

Surah Luqman - Verse 11

هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِن دُونِهِ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

11. "This is Allah's creation, but show me* what those besides Him have created. Nay! The unjust are in a manifest straying."

One of the ways of knowing of Allah is comparing His power and others' power. Those who go to other than Allah are both misguided and unjust.

"…The unjust are in a manifest straying."

However, next to mentioning the greatness of Allah in the world of creation and some different features of creation, the Qur'an addresses the polytheists and calls them to account. It says:

"This is Allah's creation, but show me what those besides Him have created…"

It is certain that they could not claim that any of the creatures of this world was created by idols. Therefore, they confessed the Unity of Creative power, then, how could they justify polytheism in worship, when 'Unity of Creative power' is an evidence for Unity of Divinity and Oneness of the administrator of the world, which in turn is the evidence for Unity of worship?

However, at the end of the verse the Qur'an considers their action as injustice and straying when it says:

"… Nay! The unjust are in a manifest straying."

We know that 'injustice' has a vast scope of meaning which involves putting every thing in other than its place. And since the polytheists considered worship, and sometimes the administration of the world, related to idols, they committed the greatest injustice and error.

By the way, the above interpretation is a tender hint to the relation of 'injustice' and 'error', because when man does not recognize the position of concrete beings in the world, or he recognizes them but does not observe them and does not see every thing in its proper place, this injustice certainly will cause his error and aberration.

Note

1. Some more explanation about this subject can be studied in the commentary of Surah Ash-Shu'ara', No. 26, verse 7

Section 2: The Ethics Preached Through Luqman

Surah Luqman - Verse 12

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

12. "And indeed We gave wisdom to Luqman, (saying:) 'Be grateful to Allah; and whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, (he does no harm to Him) for verily Allah is self sufficient, Praised."

The preparation of wisdom is obtainable but wisdom itself is not obtainable and it is bestowed by Allah.

Proportionate to the former discussions about Monotheism and polytheism, the importance of the Qur'an, the greatness of the Qur'an, and the wisdom used in this heavenly Book, in this verse as well as in a few verses after it, the words are about Luqman, the wise, and a part of the important admonitions of this godly wise man concerning Monotheism, struggle against polytheism, and some important moral issues.

These matters have also been introduced and pointed out in Luqman's admonitions to his son.

These ten admonitions, which have been stated in an interesting way through six noble verses, contain both some ideological matters, and the principles of religious duties and ethical subjects.

In later discussions, we will say who Luqman was and what qualities he had. But here we only mention that indications show that he was not a prophet, but he was a pious man free from vice who had overcome his sensual desires and Allah (s.w.t.) also let some springs of knowledge and wisdom flow in his heart.

It is sufficient for the greatness of his rank that Allah has set his admonitions in a row with His Own words and He has mentioned them inside the verses of the Qur'an.

Yes, when man's heart is enlightened by the light of wisdom resulted from purity and piety, the divine words will be uttered by his tongue and he will say the same thing that Allah pleases and he thinks in the same way that Allah approves.

Next to this short explanation, we return to the commentary of the verse. Allah says:

"And indeed We gave wisdom to Luqman, (saying:) 'Be grateful to Allah; and whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, (he does no harm to Him) for verily Allah is self sufficient, Praised."

Upon the proper definition of the Qur'anic word /hikmat/ (wisdom) we must say that there have been mentioned many meanings for it, such as:

"Recognition of the secrets of the world of existence", "being aware of the facts of the Qur'an", "reaching to the Truth from the point of speech and deed", and "gnosis of Allah and knowing Him".

All these meanings can be gathered with together and for the commentary on the word 'wisdom' it may be said as this:

"The wisdom that the Qur'an speaks about and Allah has given to Luqman has been 'a collection of gnosis, knowledge, pure morals and piety, light, and guidance'."

Imam Musabn-i-Ja'far, the seventh Imam, (as) in a tradition upon the commentary of this holy verse once said to Hisham-ibn-Hakam:

"The purpose of /hikmat/ is understanding and intellect."

In another tradition, upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Luqman knew the Divine Leader of his time."

It is clear that each of these concepts is counted as one of the branches of the vast concept of wisdom and they are not in contrast with each other.

However, because of having this wisdom, Luqman thanked his Lord. He knew the aim of the Divine bounties and their usage. He used to apply them just in the same way that they had been created for, and this very thing is the meaning of wisdom that: 'every thing is used in its own place'. Thus, both 'gratitude' and 'wisdom' end to one point.

The result of gratitude and ungratefulness for the bounties has been stated in the verse saying that being grateful is useful for the self of man and being ungrateful is against him, too, because Allah is self-sufficient. If all creatures thank Him, there will not be added anything to His greatness, and if the entire world of existence becomes ungrateful nothing will be decreased from Him.

The Arabic sign 'L' in the word /lillah/ is for allocation and this sign in the word /linafsihi/ is for 'benefit'. Therefore, the benefit of 'being grateful', which is the permanence of bounty, its increase, and the reward in Hereafter, will come to man himself; and, similarly, he who is ungrateful will have the result of his own deed.

The Qur'anic phrase: 'Self-Sufficient, Praised' points to this fact that an ordinary grateful person usually either gives something to the giver of bounty, or if he does not give him anything, by praising him he elevates his rank among people. But Allah has not either of these two.

He is free from want in front of all beings and He is worthy of being praised by all. The angels praise Him and all particles of the whole beings are busy glorifying Him. If a person utters ingratitude by verbal language there will affect him naught, and at the same time, the particles of his own body are busy praising him by none verbal language.

It is noteworthy that the Arabic word /yaškur/ (he thanks) is said in simple present tense which in Arabic shows the continuation of the action, while the word /kafara/ is stated in past tense in Arabic that denotes to the occurrence of the action even for one time.

This denotes that ingratitude, even for one time, may have some painful sequels; but thankfulness must be done always and continuously so that one paves the path of his development.

Luqman, the Wise, and His Feature

There is an explanation about Luqman in Al-Mizan a part of which is as follows:

The holy Prophet of Allah (S) once said:

"Luqman was not a Divine prophet, but he was a servant of Allah who contemplated very much, and he truly believed in Allah. Luqman loved Allah, the Almighty and He loved him, too, and gave him Wisdom."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Luqman had not received wisdom for the sake of wealth, beauty, and lineage, but he was a pious, kin, modest and sympathetic man. If two persons quarrelled and had hostility with each other he would settle reconciliation between them.

Luqman used to associate with many learned men. He used to struggle against his carnal soul.

Luqman lived a long life and he was contemporary with David, the Divine prophet (as). Luqman was one of the close relatives of Hadrat 'Ayyub (Job) (as). He was suggested to be either a governor or a sage and he elected to be a sage, a wise man.

Once Luqman was asked how he gained that rank, and he answered that he obtained it as the result of trustworthiness, his own truthfulness, and his silence in what was not related to him."

Imam Sadiq (as) said about him:

"Luqman acknowledged the Divine Leader of his time. Although Allah did not give him a heavenly Book, He gave him something equivalent of it, i.e. wisdom.

One day the Luqman's master wanted him to fetch him the best limb of a lamb and Luqman brought the tongue of the lamb to him. Another day he told Luqman to fetch him the worst limb of a lamb, and Luqman brought him again the tongue of the lamb. When his master asked him about the reason of that action, he answered:

"If tongue moves and speaks in the path of the Truth, it is the best limb of the body, otherwise it will be the worst limb."

This fact is enough for the greatness of Luqman that Allah, His Messenger (S) and Immaculate Imams (as) have narrated his admonitions for others.

Some Parts of Luqman's Admonitions

1- If you learn to be polite during your childhood, you will enjoy it when you grow up.

2- Do avoid laziness, and set a part of your lifetime for learning. Do not dispute with obstinate persons.

3- Do not dispute with jurist-consults. Do not make friend with mischief-mongers. Do not take a mischief-monger as your brother; and do not associate with accused persons.

4- Be in awe of Allah only and be hopeful of Him. Fear and hope unto Allah should be in the same level in your heart.

5- Do not rely on the world, and consider it as a bridge to pass through it.

6- Beware that in the Hereafter you will be asked of four things: of your youth that in what way you spent it; of your lifetime that how you ended it; of your wealth that how you earned it; and in what way you spent it.

7- Do not long for what people have, and treat with all people pleasantly.

8- Consult with your fellow-travellers very much, and do divide your travelling provision among them.

9- If they consult with you always announce your sympathy sincerely to them. If they ask you any help or loan assist them; and hearken to the words of the one who is elder than you.

10- Establish your prayers on time. Perform the prayer in congregation even at the most difficult conditions.

11- If you are in keeping up prayer, do protect your heart.

12- If you are busy eating, protect your throat.

13- If you are among people, protect your tongue.

14- Do never forget Allah and death, but forget the favour you do to people or the vice that others have done against you.

Wisdom, Knowledge, and Worship

Wisdom is an insight which comes into being under the light of the knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) and it can be obtained by means of full contemplation upon the whole existence and reaching to the truth, light, and piety.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Wisdom is concept, knowledge, and deep recognition, a cognition that makes man serve Allah and the heavenly leader and it separates him from committing great sins."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The peak of wisdom is worship of Allah."

Concerning the meaning of this word, Raqib in Mufradat says:

"Wisdom is reaching the truth by means of knowledge and intellect."

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"I am the house of wisdom and Ali is its door. Whoever is the seeker of wisdom must enter by this door."

Numerous Islamic traditions have introduced Ahlul Bayt (as) as the gate and the key to wisdom.

The Value of Wisdom

One of the duties of the Divine prophets is to teach the Book and wisdom:

"…and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom."

Wisdom is the match of the heavenly Book. Whoever is bestowed wisdom on, has been given abundant good.

The Qur'an says:

"…and Whoever has been granted wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good…"

As some Islamic narrations indicate, wisdom is like a light which settles in man's soul and its effects are seen in his speech and manner.

Wisdom is an insight that if it is in a poor person makes him more beloved than a rich one in the society, and if it is in a very young person, elevates him above the elder ones.

"Wisdom is a lost article of the believer…"

Learning wisdom has been so recommended that there has been said:

"In the same manner that you take a precious piece of pearl from among rubbish, you must learn wisdom even from the enemy."

A sage person does not stop on superficial and temporary matters; he looks for the end and sequel of the affairs. He neither conflicts with those superior to him nor despise those inferior to him. He does not say anything without knowledge, and there is not any contradiction in his speech and his manner.

A sage does not spoil the bounties of Allah and never goes to vanities. He loves people as he likes himself, and whatever he wishes for him he desires for them, too. He never deceives others.

How Can Wisdom Be Obtained?

Wisdom is a gift that Allah (s.w.t.) endows on the sincere servants.

We read in several narrations:

"Whoever is sincere (in his deed) for Allah during forty days and nights), He may makes the springs of wisdom appear from his heart to his tongue."

Another tradition indicates:

"Whoever is pious in the world, and dazzling glares do not deceive him, Allah will settle wisdom in his spirit."

Protecting the tongue, controlling the belly and lusts, trustworthiness, courtesy, and abandoning the useless things are the fields of the appearance of wisdom.

Some Examples of Wisdom

In Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verses 22 to 38 Allah has given some commandments and, at the end, the Qur'an says:

"That (commandment) is of the wisdom (that) your Lord has revealed to you…"

Some of these commandments are as follows:

Monotheism and also avoiding of polytheism; showing kindness to the parents specially at the age of their senility, and speaking to them with gracious words accompanied with humility and affection, furnished with good invocation to them are recommended.

He commands us to give to the near of kin his due, and to pay the Allah's right to the needy, and the way farer and that we do not squander wastefully. We must avoid killing offspring, fornication, and approaching the property of the orphan.

We must pay the people's right to them and give them full measure. We should not follow that of which we have not knowledge and do not walk around exultantly on the earth.

Then Allah implicitly says that these commandments are some examples of the Divine wisdom.

Surah Luqman - Verse 13

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِإِبْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لاَ تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّـرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

13. "And (remember) when Luqman said to his son admonishing him: 'O my son! Do not associate aught with Allah for verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity'."

Admonition is one of the means of inviting to the Truth and no one is needless of it. One of the names of the Qur'an is admonition.

Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 57 says:

"O mankind! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord…"

And, in the books of tradition, there is an independent chapter particular to admonitions.

Some of the verses of the Qur'an announce that sometimes the Prophet (S) told Gabriel to admonish him. Ali (as) also sometimes told some of his companions that they might admonish him, because there is such an effect in hearing that it does not exist in knowing.

Next to introducing Luqman and the rank of his knowledge and wisdom, in this noble verse, the Qur'an points to the first admonition of Luqman.

It is the most important recommendation to his son, and says:

"And (remember) when Luqman said to his son admonishing him: 'O my son! Do not associate aught with Allah for verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity'."

Luqman's wisdom requires that, before anything else, he refers to the most basic ideological subject, the subject of Monotheism, and Monotheism in all its aspects and dimensions. Every destructive movement which is against Allah originates from polytheism.

Mammonism, worshipping one's station, sensuality, and the like of them are counted the branches of polytheism. On the contrary, the source of all correct and constructive movements is Monotheism. It is to rely on Him, to obey His command, to separate from other than Him, and to break all idols in the threshold of His sovereignty.

It is worthy noting that Luqman mentions the reason of the negation of polytheism that 'polytheism is a grievous iniquity' and his statement contains of several points of view.

What an injustice is greater than this that not only it has been done about Allah, that they have considered a worthless being equivalent with Him, but also about the servants of Allah that they lead them astray and, by their criminal deeds, cause them cruelty, and also about themselves that they have fallen from the peak of honour of servitude of Allah down to the depth of disgrace of worshipping other than Him.

A Few Points

1. The Meaning of Polytheism

Polytheism has a vast meaning the most clear of which is polytheism in the sense of idolatry. This kind of polytheism, as jurisprudents have given decree, causes man to go out of the realm of religion and to become apostate. It has also another meaning which is absolute obedience from other than Allah, or following the carnal desire.

The Qur'an says:

"And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): 'Serve Allah and shun false gods.'…" In another place, it says: "Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his gods…?"

More than one hundred times the Arabic phrase /dunallah/ or /dunihi/ has occurred in the Qur'an which means: 'obedience and worshipping other than Allah, the Exalted, is polytheism'.

Those believers who, in some instances, act upon the command and criterions other than that of Allah, the Almighty, go out of the orbit of Monotheism, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"And most of them do not believe in Allah except that they associate others (with Him)."

This statement means that the majority of the believers are polytheists too, and they have some refuges other than Allah.

An Islamic narration indicates that this kind of polytheism is more concealed than the movement of an ant on a black stone at night.[1] Thus, polytheism is not only idolatry, but depending on any power, rank, wealth, certificate, tribe, and anything that is not on the path of Allah, is polytheism.

2. The Effects of Polytheism

A- Deeds will fail:

Polytheism destroys the good deeds of man in the same manner that fire destroys the green trees of a forest.

The Qur'an, addressing the Prophet of Allah (S), says:

"…If you were to join (gods with Allah) truly fruitless will be your work…"

B- Agitation and anxiety:

The aim of a Monotheism and worshipper of Allah is to please Allah, the One, Who will be content very soon; but he who, instead of Allah, thinks of making others content is always in anxiety, because people are many and each of them has various desires and expectations.

Hadrat Yusuf told his polytheistic companions in prison:

"…Are (many) diverse lords better, or Allah, the One, the All-Dominant?"

The Qur'an gives the parable of the one who separates from Allah as follows:

"…and whoever associates with Allah (anything), it is as though he has fallen from heaven and birds snatch him away, or the wind carries him off to a far distant place."

Yes, Monotheism and sincere servitude of Allah is a strong fortress which protects man from becoming useless, relying on any one, turning around any person, having hope in anyone, praising anyone and being afraid of any person. A tradition announces that the word of Unity is a strong fortress that whoever enters into it will be secure from the punishment of Allah.

3- Diversity

In a true Monotheistic society, the axis of everything is Allah. The Divine leader assigns the law and the path of Allah, and all turn around the same axis. But in a polytheistic society, instead of the One God, there are false gods, and there exist different tastes and ways so that people are involved in diversity, discord and disunion.

The Qur'an says:

"…and be not of the idolaters,"

"Of those who split up their religion…"

4- Disgrace in Hereafter

the Qur'an says:

"…and do not associate with Allah any other god for you will be thrown into Hell blamed cast away."

The Signs of Polytheism

One of the signs of polytheism is to seek a pretext against the Divine law.

The Holy Qur'an, pointing to some of them, says:

"…Is it that whomsoever (thereafter) there came to you a messenger, with what your selves desire not, you became arrogant?…"

in another place it says:

"…but when fighting was prescribed for them,…they said: 'Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us?…"

And when a group of the Children of Israel received food, they said:

"'O' Moses! Never can we (always) endure one (sort of) food…' And whenever Allah set forth a parable, they said: '…What does Allah mean by this parable?'…"

Another sign of polytheism is to give superiority to family, wealth, position and so on rather than the commandment of Allah (s.w.t.).

Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 24 says:

"…If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command…"

Polytheism is so dangerous that although doing kindness to the parents has been recommended four times in the Qur'an beside monotheism, yet if parents invite their child to worship other than Allah, the Qur'an says:

"…do not obey them…"

The Motives of Polytheism

People go to a person because of his power, while the Qur'an says:

"Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah can never create (even) a fly, though they should all gather for it…".

Or they go to this and that for the sake of a piece of bread, that the Qur'an says about them:

"…do not own for you any sustenance…"

Or it is for gaining honour and glory that they go to a person, that the Qur'an in Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 139 says:

"…Then, verily, all glory belongs to Allah".

Or for the sake of being saved from difficulties they gather around a person, that the Qur'an says:

"…so they shall neither have the ability of removing the affliction from you, nor to change (it)."

Somewhere else the Qur'an implies that why do you leave the best Creator and go to others?

It says:

"Verily those whom you call upon other than Allah are creatures like your own selves…"

Struggle Against Polytheism

The first message and the aim of all Divine prophets has been struggle against polytheism and invitation to the sincere servitude unto Allah.

The Qur'an says:

"And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): 'Serve Allah and shun false gods'…"

All sins may be forgiven except polytheism.

The Qur'an says:

"Verily Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whom He pleases…"

Associating anything with Allah is not accepted, even if its percent is little.

If ninety nine percent of an action is done for the sake of Allah but only one percent of it is done for other than Him, the entire action fails.

The Qur'an says:

"And worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him…"

Not only idols and false gods, but also prophets and the friends of Allah should not be taken as a partner of Allah.

Allah questions Jesus:

"…did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?…"

Taking a partner for Allah is a calumny and a great sin.

The Qur'an says:

"…and whoever associates (aught) with Allah, has indeed devised a great sin."

Polytheism is so shunned that Allah says:

"It is not (fit) for the Prophet and those who believe to seek forgiveness for the polytheists…"

Islam, logically and reasonably, always struggles against polytheism.

It says:

"Show me what it is they have created in the (wide) earth…"

In whose authority is your death and life? In whose authority is your glory and disgrace?

Yes, leaving Allah, Who has infinite Power and Knowledge, is the greatest injustice to humanity. It is not reasonable that we be captives of some things and individuals or rely only on industry and seek help from an impotent one. One of the aims of narrating the history of the old nations or telling stories in the Qur'an is to eradicate the roots of polytheism.

The Personality of Luqman

1- Luqman's name has been mentioned in two verses of this very Surah of the Qur'an.

There is no evidence in the Qur'an that he was a prophet or only a sage, but the tune of the Qur'an about Luqman shows that he was not a prophet, because, concerning prophets, the Qur'an usually speaks about their prophethood, invitation to Monotheism, struggle against polytheism and the deviations of the environment, the lack of demand for recompense, and also glad tiding and warning for nations.

But concerning Luqman none of these affairs are mentioned and only his admonitions to his son have been privately stated, though their content is general. This shows that he had been only a sage man.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that he (S) said:

"I say in truth that Luqman was not a prophet, but he was a servant who thought very much, his certainty was excellent; he loved Allah and Allah loved him, too, and He gave Him wisdom."

2- A Part of Luqman's Wisdom:

Due to the admonitions of Luqman that are mentioned in the verses of this Surah, some commentators have reiterated some of the wise sayings of this godly man, a concise portion of them are as follow:

1- Luqman used to say to his son:

"O My son! Verily the world is a deep sea wherein many people have drowned. Then appoint your ship in it 'the Faith in Allah'; and appoint its sail reliance on Allah; and appoint your provision in it 'God-fearing'.

Then if you relieve (from sea) it is by the mercy of Allah, the Almighty, and if you are annihilated, it is because of your sins."

These very admonitions are recorded in Al-Kafi, through the sayings of Imam Kazim (as) to Hisham-ibn-Hakam in a more complete form narrated from Luqman, the wise, as follows:

"O my son! Verily the world is a deep sea. Many people have drowned in it; then your ship in it must be fright of God, and your provision must be Faith, and the sail of it must be reliance, and its captain is intellect, its leader is knowledge, and its rudder is patience."

There are also some other admonitions recorded in 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1, and the commentary books by Baydawi, Tha'labi, and Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan.

Surah Luqman - Verse 14

وَوَصَّيْنَا الإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْناً عَلَي وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

14. "And We did enjoin upon man concerning his parents, did his mother bear him with fainting upon fainting and his weaning takes two years, (saying:) 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents: unto Me is the ultimate return (of all)."

The Arabic word /wahn/ means bodily weakness, and the word /tauhin/ means to weaken the personality.

The circle of 'kindness' is wider than that of disbursement. The act of /'ihsan/ (kindness) envelops any kind of affection and favour, but /'infaq/ (disbursement) is usually used in financial aids. In the Qur'an, the term /'ihsan/ (kindness) is mentioned beside Monotheism.

It says:

"And your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him and (to show) kindness to your parents…"

In the verse under discussion at first the kindness to parents has been recommended, then the Qur'an points to the course of mother's pregnancy

in order to awaken the moral conscience of man and that he should not forsake the events of the past.

He must always remember that his mother bore him and fed him with her own milk. She dispensed with her sleep and food for the sake of his tranquillity in a manner that no one was ready to bear such troubles.

Since mother's right is more probable to be wasted, or her right is greater than the father, Allah has recommended her in particular.

Parents and their child have mutual rights. In the previous verse, the admonition of father to the child was referred to, while in this verse the kindness and gratitude of the child unto the parents is mentioned.

It says:

"And We did enjoin upon man concerning his parents…"

Then it points to the extraordinary labours of the mother and says:

"…did his mother bear him with fainting upon fainting…"

This subject has scientifically been proved, and experience has shown it, too, that mothers will faint during the course of pregnancy because they allocate nearly all their own milk and the marrow of their bone to the growth of their embryo, and they give her child the best materials of their own vitality out of all of them.

For this reason, during their pregnancy, mothers will be in need of kinds of vitamins and if they are not provided there will be some distresses for them. This matter continues even in the suckling course, too, because milk comes from inside of mother's body.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…and his weaning takes two years…"

Pointing to this matter, in another place, the Qur'an says:

"And the mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years…"

The purpose, of course, is a complete course of suckling, though it may sometimes be less than that.

However, during these thirty three months (the pregnancy course and suckling course) mother performs the greatest self-sacrifice both from the spiritual and emotional points of view, and also from the point of body, and from the point of services to her child.

It is interesting that at first the Qur'an recommends about both parents and at the time of stating the labours and services, it emphasizes on mother's labours in order to attract the man's attention to the donations and great right of mother.

Then it says:

"…(saying:) 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents:…"

You should be grateful to both the Creator and the main giver of blessings and the kind parents He has given to you, and you should be grateful to your parents, too, who are the mediate of this emanation and undertake the transition of Allah's bounties to you.

And how interesting and expressive is that the gratitude to the parents has been set and mentioned just beside the gratitude to Allah.

And, at the end of the verse, with a tune of statement which is not far from threat, it says:

"…unto Me is the ultimate return (of all)."

Yes, if we neglect here, all the rights, labours, and services will be dealt with there and will be exactly counted. We must fulfil the Divine account in respect to the gratitude of both His bounties and the bounty of the existence of parents and their pure and sincere affections.

Some of the commentators here have pointed out that the Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized on observing the rights of parents, while recommendation due to children is rarely seen in the Qur'an (except the prohibition of killing children which was an evil and ugly exceptional tradition during the Age of Ignorance).

This is because of the fact that parents, as the result of their strong affections to their children, may rarely forget them, while there have frequently happened that children have forgotten their parents specially at the time of senescence and weakness. This is counted the most painful state for them and the worst ingratitude for the children.

A Few Traditions About Parents

1- Ibn-i-Mas'ud said:

"I asked the Messenger of Allah (S) 'Which one of deeds is the dearest one with Allah, Almighty and Glorious?'

He answered:

'Prayer at its time.'

I said:

'What is after it?'

He answered:

'Kindness to the parents.'

I said:

'What is after it?'

He answered:

'Struggle in the way of Allah'."

2- The Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"Whoever obeys the command of Allah concerning the parents, two doors from paradise will be opened to him, and if he obeys Allah's command about one of them one door will be opened."

3- The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"Every righteous child who looks at his parents kindly will be given the reward of an accepted complete Hajj for each glance."

He was asked:

"If he looks even for one hundred times a day?"

He answered:

"Yes. Allah is greater and more purified."

Surah Luqman - Verse 15

وَإِن جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَن تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلاَ تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفاً
وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

15. "And if they (both) contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in (this) world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to

Me, then unto Me is the return of you (all) and then will I inform you of what you were doing."

It is not necessary to obey parents when there is a deviated thing, but the ordinary way of life must always be observed.

Therefore, since the recommendation on kindness to parents may create this thought for some individuals that even in relation to the subject of beliefs whether faith and infidelity, one must comply with them, the Qur'an says:

"And if they (both) contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them…"

One's communication with his parents must never be prior to his communication with Allah, and relative affections must never dominate the theological beliefs.

The Qur'anic term /jahadaka/ points to this factual matter that sometimes parents, considering that they wish the happiness of their child, try to drive him toward their own deviated belief, and this action has been seen in almost all parents.

The duty of children is that they should never surrender these pressures and they should protect their own ideological independence and do not exchange the belief in Monotheism for any thing else.

By the way, the Qur'anic sentence:

"…what you have no knowledge of"

means that if supposing we ignore the reasons of nullification of polytheism, at least, there is no reason to prove it, and no seeker of pretext can bring a reason for proving polytheism, either.

Moreover, if polytheism were a reality, there would exist a reason for proving it, and since there is not any reason to prove it, this itself is a reason upon its nullification.

Again, since it is probable that this commandment brings this imagination into being that the irreligious parents must be encountered violently and disgracefully, immediately after it the Qur'an implies that the lack of obedience to them in the subject of disbelief and polytheism is not an evidence for absolute rupture of relation with them; but in the meantime we must have an appropriate manner to them in the world.

The verse continues saying:

"…and keep company with them in (this) world kindly…"

From the point of the world and material living we must have love, affection, and benignity to them but from the point of belief and religious programs we must not surrender to their wrong thoughts and suggestions. This is exactly the essential point of equilibrium in which the rights of Allah and parents are gathered.

That is why, next to it, Allah says:

"…and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then unto Me is the return of you (all) and then will I inform you of what you were doing."

The successive negations and affirmations as well as enjoinments and prohibitions mentioned in the above verse is for the sake that Muslims find out the main line when in such issues there may consider, at first glance, a

contradiction between the fulfilment of two duties, and they follow the correct path without the least excess and defect.

This accuracy and delicateness of the Qur'an in these narrow things is out of the features of its deep elegance and rhetoric.

However, the abovementioned verse is completely similar to what is mentioned in Surah Al-'Ankabut, no. 29, verse 8 which says:

"And We have enjoined on man goodness unto his parents; and if they strive with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, unto Me is your return, and I will inform you of what you were doing."

Surah Luqman - Verse 16

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَآ إِن تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُن فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ

16. "O' my son! If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware."

The man's faith to the presentation of his deed in the Hereafter is the source of his improvement.

Luqman's first admonition to his son was about the subject of Monotheism and struggle against polytheism. His second admonition was about the reckoning of deeds in resurrection, and it completes the ring of 'Origin' and 'Resurrection'.

So, in this verse, Luqman says:

"O' my son! If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware."

Mustard is a plant which has some very small black seeds the smallness of which is often said as a parable.

This meaning refers to the fact that the man's good and evil deeds, even the smallest and the most worthless of them, that are hidden, like a mustard-seed that is hidden in a rock, or deep in the earth, or in a corner in the heavens, Allah, the Subtle, the Aware, Who knows everything throughout the world of existence, whether they are small or big, will bring it forth to be reckoned and to be recompensed with reward or retribution, and nothing will be lost in this system.

The pronoun in the Qur'anic word /'innaha/ refers to the good and evil deeds.

The man's attention to the awareness of Allah concerning his deeds and that all good and evil deeds will be protected in Allah's knowledge and that nothing will be vanished in this world of existence, is the source of all individual and social improvements, and it is a strong motive towards doing righteous works and it is an effective impedimental factor for man from committing evils and vices.

Mentioning the words: 'the heavens' and 'the earth' after the statement of 'rock', in fact, are of the kind of mentioning a 'general meaning' next to a 'particular meaning'.

A tradition has been recorded in 'Usul-i-Kafi narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"Avoid (committing) the small sins because once they will be called to account and some of you (sometimes) say that they commit sin and then they will ask forgiveness, while Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says:

'…We will record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).'

And He also says:

'…If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware' ."

Surah Luqman - Verse 17

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَي مَآ أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ

17. "O' my son! Keep up the prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and patiently persevere against whatever may befall you, for this (patience) is among the (necessary and) important affairs."

One of the duties of the parents unto their children is to recommend them to perform prayer.

We must train our children to be believers and godly by means of recommending them the prayers, and also through recommending them that they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, we may bring them up thereby some social and responsible persons.

However, after strengthening the foundations of Origin and Resurrection, which are the sources of all theological beliefs, Luqman refers to the most important thing, that is the performance of the prayer.

It says:

"O' my son! Keep up the prayer…"

You must establish prayer because it is the most important link between you and your Lord. Prayer makes your heart awaken, your soul purify, and your living light and bright.

Prayer washes out the signs of sin from you, causes the light of faith to illuminate inside your heart, and keeps you away from indecency and sins.

Next to the subject of prayer, Luqman refers to the most important social affair, i.e. the subject of enjoining right and forbidding what is wrong.

He says:

"…and enjoin the good and forbid the evil…"

After these three practical important instructions, he refers to the subject of patience and perseverance that, comparing with Faith, is like head for the body.

He says:

"…and patiently persevere against whatever may befall you, for this (patience) is among the (necessary and) important affairs."

It is certain that there are many difficulties in all social affairs and particularly in 'enjoining right' and 'forbidding wrong', to which the

dominant mammonists, and also the experienced polluted self-lovers will not easily surrender.

They even try to hurt, annoy and accuse those who enjoin right and forbid wrong that, without patience and perseverance, it is impossible to become victorious against these difficulties.

The Arabic word /‘azm/ means: ‘a firm determination’, and the application of /‘azm-il-’umur/ here either means the things that Allah has ordered to be serious about them, or the affairs that man must have a decided decision and a firm intention unto them. Either of these two meanings points to its importance.

The Arabic word /ŏalika/ here refers to patience and perseverance. This is also probable that it refers to all of the affairs that have been mentioned in the verse, including: prayer, enjoining right and forbidding wrong, but this subject has been mentioned after the subject of patience in some other verses of the Qur’an, which strengthens the first probability.

Surah Luqman - Verse 18

وَلاَ تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلاَ تَمْشِ فِي الأَرْضِ مَرَحاً إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

18. “And do not turn your face away from people (in contempt), nor walk in the earth exultantly; verily Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster.”

After that, Luqman has referred to the morals in relation with people and himself. At first, he recommends his son to have modesty and good temper.

The verse says:

“And do not turn your face away from people (in contempt)…”

Then Luqman continues saying:

“…nor walk in the earth exultantly; verily Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster.”

The Arabic word /tusa‘ir/ is derived from /sa‘ar/ which originally means a kind of sickness (torticollis) that usually paralyses the camel’s neck.

The Qur’anic term /marah/ means haughtiness produced because of affluence of bounties.

The Qur’anic word /muxtal/ is derived from /xiyal/ and /xayla’/ in the sense of the one who, usually because of some imaginations and vain conjectures, considers himself great.

The Arabic word /faxur/ is derived from /faxr/ which means: he who shows haughtiness unto others. (the difference of /muxtal/ and /faxur/ is in this that the former points to inward imaginary pride and the latter refers to outward proudly deeds.)

Thus, Luqman, the wise, points to two very ugly attributes here which cause the sincere social relations to be vanished: one of them is haughtiness and heedlessness, and the other is pride and selfishness, both of which draw man into a world of misconception, delusion, and self-admiration and cease his relation from others.

Specially with regard to the original meaning of the world /sa‘ar/ (torlicollis) that makes it clear that this kind of qualities is a sort of psychological ethical sickness, or a kind of deviation in realization and

thought, else a safe and sound person from the point of mind and psyche never involves in such misconceptions and delusions.

It is evident that the purpose of Luqman is not only the act of turning the face away from people, or walking exultantly and proudly, but the purpose is to struggle against all manifestations of arrogance and pride, and, before anything else, these qualities show themselves in the ordinary daily manner. Luqman has emphasized on these particular qualities.

Some Examples of the Modesty of the Friends of Allah

1. The first personality of creation, i.e. the holy Prophet (S), used to sit among his companions in a way that he had no superiority to others, and whoever joined their meeting and did not know the Prophet (S) he would ask:

"Which one of you is the Messenger of Allah?"

2. In a travelling, wherein everybody usually undertook a responsibility for providing food, the holy Prophet (S) undertook a duty, too.

He said:

"I gather pieces of wood."

3. As soon as the Prophet (S) saw that there was not enough carpet for some ones to sit on, he gave his shoulder-mantle to them to sit on it.

Wearing simple clothing, riding in bare donkey, milking, accompanying with slaves, greeting to little children, patching up his shoe and clothes, accepting people's invitation, sweeping the house, shaking hand with all individuals, and not holding the food light, were among the Prophet's ways of life.

4. In order to respect Imam Sadiq (as), some of the believers wanted to forbid the entry of others into the public bathroom where the Imam was bathing, but the Imam did not let them and said:

"You need not to do this. The life of a believer is simpler than this."

5. Some persons insisted that Imam Rida's table cloth could be separate from the table cloth of the servants, but he (as) did not accept.

6. Someone did not recognize Imam Rida in a public bathroom; and he wanted him (as) to rub his body. Without introducing himself, and with a complete dignity, the Imam accepted his demand. After that, when the man recognized the Imam, he began apologizing him. The Imam (as) comforted him.

Accepting others' suggestions and critics, and sitting in a place lower than the one's position, are among the signs of modesty.

Surah Luqman - Verse 19

وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنكَرَ الأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ

19. "And be moderate in your pace; and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the asses."

Imam Hassan (as) said:

"To walk swiftly decreases the value of a believer."

Another tradition indicates:

"It does not matter that the invitation of people and recitation of the Qur'an be uttered loudly."

Therefore Luqman by this verse says:

"And be moderate in your pace; and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the asses."

In fact, in these two verses two qualities are prohibited and two qualities are enjoined. The qualities which are forbidden are self-admiration and selfishness, one of which causes man to be proud unto the servants of Allah, and the other causes man to consider himself as a complete one and, consequently, he closes the doors of development to him although he does not compare himself with another person.

Although these two qualities in a man are often with together and have a common root, sometimes they also separate with each other.

Observing to be moderate in 'action' and speech' are two useful commandments, because emphasizing on moderation, in pace and the tune of the sound, of a person are mentioned as two examples.

Verily he who has these four qualities is a successful, happy and victorious person both amongst people and before Allah (s.w.t.).

It is noteworthy that there may be some sounds in our living place which are more troublesome than the braying of asses, but no doubt these sounds are not general and common. Moreover, to be troublesome and to be uglier are different.

Whatever that a person hears and is truly the most unpleasant of voices is that very braying of an ass, to which the shouts of the proud and the foolish persons have been likened.

Not only because of ugliness, the loudness and the style of the braying of an ass, but also because of its being sometimes unreasonable, for as some of the commentators have said, the sound of other animals are often because of a need or a reason, but this animal sometimes unreasonably and without having any need suddenly brays.

There may be for this reason that some Islamic narrations denote that when an ass brays, it has seen a Satan.

Some commentators have said the sound of every animal is the glorification to Allah except the sound of an ass! However, the ugliness of this sound comparing other sounds does not need to be discussed.

And if we see that in a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) this verse has been rendered into the sneeze with a loud voice, or into speaking very loudly, it is, indeed, the statement of a clear extension of it.

Some Traditions on Islamic Rules of Etiquette

Islamic traditions narrated from the Prophet (S) and the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as) have been considered giving more importance unto the subject of modesty, good character, benignity in meetings, and absence of harshness in social intercourse than other things.

The best and the most expressive reason in this regard are the Islamic narrations themselves, the examples of which are as follow:

1- Hadrat Sadiq (as) has been narrated from that he said:

"Allah has enjoined faith upon the man's limbs and has divided it among them.

Among them is that He has enjoined man's feet not to go toward sin and iniquity and to move in the path of the content of Allah. So the Qur'an says:

'…do not walk in the earth exultantly…'

and it also says:

'…be moderate in your pace…' ."

2- Another narration indicates that once the holy Prophet (S) was passing through a lane. He saw a madman around whom people had gathered and looking at him.

He (S) said:

"What have they gathered there for?"

People answered:

"For a madman who has an epileptic fit."

The Prophet (S) looked at them and said:

"This is not mad. Do you want me to introduce the real mad one to you?"

They answered:

"Yes. O Messenger of Allah."

He said:

"The real mad is he who walks proudly, constantly looks at his side, and moves his sides with his shoulders (and shows haughtiness). This is the true mad (one), but this one (that you are looking at) is sick."

3- A person once came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to admonish him. Then he (S) told him:

"Do meet your brother with a joyful face."

4- Another tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) said:

"On the Day of Hereafter there will not put anything of actions in the scale of a man better than good character."

5- Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Pious goodness and good character flourish houses and increase in lifetimes."

6- Again the holy Prophet (S) said:

"The things for which my people may enter Paradise most of all are piety for Allah and good character."

Concerning modesty we also read that Imam Ali (as) has said:

"The adornment of the honourable people is modesty."

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Modesty is the origin of every goodness and happiness. It is a high rank, and if there were a word for modesty which people understood, it would state many hidden secrets of the sequel of the affairs…And he who has modesty for Allah, He will elevate him above many of his servants…No worship is accepted by Allah and He is pleased of but that its door is modesty."

Note

1. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 8849

Section 3: He Who Submits Himself to Allah Holds the Never-Breaking Firmest Rope

Surah Luqman - Verse 20

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلاَ هُدًى وَلاَ كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ

20. "Have you not seen that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and He has lavished on you His blessings outward and inward? And among the people is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without any guidance and without any book giving light."

The Arabic word /'isbaq/ means: 'To (cause to) spread' and 'to develop'.

In this holy verse two sorts of bounties are referred to: the outward bounties, such as: health, sustenance, beauty and the like; and the inward bounties, such as: faith, gnosis, certainty, good character, unseen succour, knowledge, nature, mastership, and so on.

At last, after mentioning ten admonishments about Origin and Resurrection, the rules of living, and ethical and social programs, for completing them, The Holy Qur'an goes to the statement of Divine bounties in order to move the sense of gratitude in people, a thanksgiving that becomes the source of 'recognition of Allah' and motive of obedience to Allah's command.

Luqman addresses all humankind and say:

"Have you not seen that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth…"

'Making subservient whatever is in the heavens and in the earth to man' has a vast concept which encompasses both what he has in his authority and uses them, with his own will, along-side his interests, such as many earthly animals, and the things which are not in man's authority but Allah has appointed them to serve mankind, like the sun and the moon.

Therefore, all beings subservient to the command of Allah are alongside the path of the benefits of men whether they subservient to his command or not. Thus, the Arabic sign 'L' in the Qur'anic word /lakum/ (for you) is the 'L' with the meaning of benefit.

Then, it adds:

"…and He has lavished on you His blessings outward and inward?…"

The commentators have stated a lot of explanations on the meaning of 'His blessing outward and inward'.

Some of them think of 'outward blessings' as a thing that is not deniable for anyone, such as creation, life, and kinds of provisions. They say that the inward blessings refer to those things that are not comprehensive without care and study, (such as many spiritual powers and constructive instincts).

Some others have rendered the 'outward blessings' into the outward limbs and the 'inward blessings' into 'the heart'.

Some other commentators have considered the beauty of the face and stature and the health of the limbs as the outward blessing, and the 'gnosis of Allah' as the inward blessing.

Once Ibn-i-‘Abbas asked the Prophet of Islam (S) in this regard, and he answered:

“O’ Ibn-i-‘Abbas! The outward blessing is Islam, and your complete and ordered creation by Allah, as well as the sustenance He has given you. And the inward blessing is His concealing the ugliness of your deeds and that He, the Mighty, does not disgrace you publicly in front of people.”

Imam Baqir (as) once in a tradition said:

“The outward blessing is the Prophet (S), the gnosis of Allah, and Monotheism that the Prophet (S) has brought; and the inward blessing is love of us, Ahlul Bayt, and the covenant of friendship with us.”

But, in fact, there is no contrast between these different commentaries, and each of them states the clear extensions of the outward and inward blessings without restricting their vast concepts.

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an speaks about those who are ingratitude unto the great bounties of Allah (s.w.t.) that have inwardly and outwardly surrounded them and they dispute against the Truth.

It says:

“…And among the people is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without any guidance and without any book giving light.”

Instead of recognizing the giver of those abundant manifest and concealed bounties, they ignorantly and obstinately turn to polytheism and denial.

For the explanation of the difference existing between “Knowledge”, “guidance” and “Illuminating Book” it may be better to say that “Knowledge” refers to the Divine teachers and leaders and those learned ones who can help man in this path and guide him to the appointed destination.

And the purpose of “Illuminating Book” refers to the heavenly Books that, by the way of revelation, enlighten the man’s soul and heart.

In fact, this obstinate group neither themselves have any knowledge nor do they seek for a leader or a guide, nor do they get help from the Divine revelations, and since the way of guidance is only in these three things therefore, by abandoning them they will get astray and pave the way of Satan.

Surah Luqman - Verse 21

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَآ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَآ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

21. “And when it is said to them: ‘Follow what Allah has sent down’, they say: ‘We shall follow that on which we found our fathers.’ What! (Would they do it) even if Satan were calling them to the chastisement of the blazing Fire?”

The application of the Arabic word /qila/ in this verse is a sign to the intensity of the bigotry of the pagans.

That is, they obstinate and do not accept any true word from any speaker, whoever he may be.

So, this holy verse points to the weak and baseless logic of this group when it says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has sent down', they say: 'We shall follow that on which we found our fathers.'…"

And since following the ignorant deviated ancestors is none of the three guiding ways mentioned in the above, the Holy Qur'an has introduced it as a Satanic way, and in this noble verse says:

"…What! (Would they do it) even if Satan were calling them to the chastisement of the blazing Fire?"

In fact, here the Qur'an removes the cover of following the ancestors' tradition, which has a deluding appearance, and makes manifest the real feature of their deed that is, in fact, following the Satan which is alongside the way of blazing Fire of Hell.

Yes, the leadership of Satan alone is enough that one rejects the Holy Qur'an though it is disguised in the invitation toward the Truth, and his leadership is certainly a false cover, and an invitation toward the Fire of Hell and it alone is also enough for opposition and the duty is clear, although the situation of the inviter is unknown.

Does any wise person leave out the invitation of the Divine prophets unto Heaven and goes after the invitation of Satan unto Hell?

Surah Luqman - Verse 22

وَمَن يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الأُمُورِ

22. "And whoever submits himself (truly) to Allah and he be a doer of good, he indeed has taken hold of the firmest hand-hold (a rope); and unto Allah is the end of all affairs."

Submitting oneself to anything other than Allah is slavery and captivity, but submitting one's self to Allah is freedom, growth and development. That is why the Qur'an in this verse implies that the one who submits his heart and soul to Allah and obeys His commandments while he is a good doer, he has grasped a firm hand-hold.

The verse says:

"And whoever submits himself (truly) to Allah and he be a doer of good, he indeed has taken hold of the firmest hand-hold (a rope)…"

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /yuslim wajhahu 'ilallah/ (submits himself (truly) to Allah) is, in fact, an implicit indication to a perfect attention wholly to the Pure Essence of Allah, because the word /wajh/ (face) has ironically been used for His Essence for the sake that the face is the most honoured part of the body and it is the centre of the most important senses of a person.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /huwa muhsinun/ (he is a doer of good) is of the kind of mentioning 'righteous deed' next to 'faith'.

The Qur'anic phrase: 'Having taken hold of the firmest hand-hold' is a tender simile from this fact that for being delivered from the depth of the valley of materials and elevating to the highest peak of knowledge, and spirituality man needs a firm and certain true means.

This means is not anything but faith and righteous deed. Except this, all other things are not reliable and will be the cause of fall and death.

Moreover, it is only this mean that remains and all other means are perishing, so, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and unto Allah is the end of all affairs."

There is a tradition recorded in Tafsir-i-Burhan, cited by the Sunnites, saying that it has been narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"'After me there will be a dark sedition. Only those can deliver from it who take hold of the firmest handhold."

Then it was said what the firmest handhold was, and he said:

"It is the mastership of sayyid-ul-Wasiyyin."

They said:

"O' Messenger of Allah! Who is this Sayyid-ul-Wasiyyin?"

He answered:

"Amir-ul-Mu'minin!"

They asked:

"O' Messenger of Allah! Who is Amir-ul-Mu'minin?'

He answered:

"(He is) the master of the Muslims and their leader after me."

They asked:

"O' Messenger of Allah! Who is the master of the Muslims and their leader after you?"

He answered:

"(He is) my brother, Ali-ibn-'Abitalib (as)"

There have been narrated some other traditions in this field, too, indicating that the purpose of /'urwatul-wuθqa/ is the friendship of Ahlul Bayt (as), or the friendship of the progeny of Muhammad (S), or the friendship of the Imams out of the descendants of Imam Husayn (as).

We have repeatedly said that these interpretations are the statement of some clear expansions, and they do not contrast with other expansions, such as: Monotheism, piety, and the like.

Surah Luqman - Verses 23-24

وَمَن كَفَرَ فَلاَ يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّـئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

نُمَتِّـعُهُمْ قَلِيلاً ُ مَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَي عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

23. "And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you, unto Us is their return then will We inform them of what they did. Verily Allah is the knower of what is in the hearts."

24. "We give them to enjoy a little, then will We drive them to a severe chastisement."

The holy Prophet of Islam (S) was sympathetic for all humankind and he even did toil for the deviation and disbelief of the opponents, too.

So, Allah says:

"And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you…"

For, you have performed your duty very well, and it is the disbeliever who has been unjust to himself.

These kinds of meanings, which have been frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, show that the holy Prophet of Islam (S) severely toiled when he observed that an ignorant and obstinate group of people left the way of Allah and went astray after having a lot of clear evidences and manifest signs; he became so sad and grieved that Allah consoled him many times. And such kind is the way and manner of a sympathetic leader.

And also he should not be worried that a group of people enjoy the comforts of life in this world and are not involved in punishment though they disbelieve and are unjust and cruel, because it is not so late and they all will return to Allah and He will inform them of both their deeds and the bitter and evil fruits of their deeds.

The verse says:

"…unto Us is their return then will We inform them of what they did…"

Allah, the knowing, is aware of not only their deeds but also of the secrets and hidden intentions in their hearts.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily Allah is the knower of what is in the hearts."

This meaning that on the Day of Hereafter Allah will inform people of their deeds or that He will inform them of what they differed in, has been revealed through a great deal of verses of the Holy Qur'an.

The Qur'anic term /nunabbi'ukum/ is derived from /naba'/ which, according to what Raqib has cited in Mufradat, is used for a news that has an important content and benefit, and it is also explicit, manifest, and free from any falsehood.

This makes it clear that these meanings, point to the fact that on the Hereafter Day Allah will divulge the people's deeds in a manner that there will remain no place of objection and denial for anyone.

He will make appear entirely whatever people do in this world and they often forget them in this world, and He will make them ready for reckoning and recompense. Even that which passes in the mind of a person and none is aware of, will completely be reported to their owners.

Then in the next verse, He implies that their enjoyment of the life of this world should not make the Prophet (S) surprise, because He gives them a little share of the provision of the world, and whatever this provision may be, it is scanty, and finally they will compulsorily be driven into a just severe punishment, a punishment which is constant and painful.

The verse says:

"We give them to enjoy a little, then will We drive them to a severe chastisement."

This meaning may point to the fact that they should not think that they are out of the grasp of Allah's power. He Himself desires to let them be free to be tried, the argument be completed to them, and other aims; and this little provision given to them is from His side, too.

And how different is the circumstance of this group who are compulsorily and scornfully driven to the divine severe chastisement from that of those who submit their whole entity to Allah and have taken hold the

firm rope of Allah. They live in this world piously and righteously, and then, in Hereafter, they will enjoy the bounties of Allah with His mercy.

Surah Luqman - Verse 25

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

25. "And if you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth? Certainly they will say: 'Allah'. Say: '(All) praise is Allah's.' 'Nay! Most of them do not know',"

It is not concealed to pagans that Allah is the creator, since the pagans implicitly confess their deviation.

Therefore, in this verse He says:

"And if you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth? certainly they will say: 'Allah'…"

This meaning, which has also been mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an[1], from one side, is an evidence that pagans were never the deniers of the Unity of the Creator and they could not rather accept divinity for idols; they believed only in polytheism in worship and intercession.

And from other side, it is a reference to the fact that Monotheism and the manifestation of this Divine Light in the nature of all humankind is innate. Then He implies that now that they confess the Unity of the Creator, they should be told that the entire praise is Allah's, the One Who is the Creator of all things, not the idols which themselves are His creatures.

But most of them do not know and do not understand that worship must be particular to the Creator of the world.

The verse continues saying:

"…Say: '(All) praise is Allah's.' 'Nay! Most of them do not know',"

Surah Luqman - Verse 26

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

26. "What is in the heavens and the earth is Allah's; verily Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Most Praised."

Only Allah, the Almighty, is the Creator and the Owner of the creatures, and also it is only He Who is Self-Sufficient and Most Praised.

In this noble verse the Qur'an refers to the ownership of Allah, because next to proving His creative power there needs not to bring another reason for His ownership.

In this verse the Holy Qur'an says:

"What is in the heavens and the earth is Allah's…"

It is evident that the One Who is the Creator and the Owner is the Divisor of the affairs of the world, too. Thus, by the above mentioned explanation, three parts of Monotheism are proved: (the Unity of creatorship, the Unity of ownership, and the Unity of Lordship.

And the One, Who is like that, is self-sufficient of all things and is worthy of any praise.

That is why, at the end of the holy verse it says:

"…verily Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Most Praised."

Allah is All-Sufficient and is the Most Praised from any point of view, since every merit which is found in the world belongs to Allah, the Self-

Sufficient, and whatever a person has is completely obtained from Him, and the sources of every goodness are in His authority, and this is a real evidence to His self-sufficiency.

In view of the fact that /hamd/ means praise for a good deed which a person does voluntarily, and whatever good thing we see in the world is from His side, then all praises belong to Him.

Even when we praise the beauty of a flower, and we explain the attraction of the heavenly loves, or we honour the greatness of the action of a self-sacrificing altruist, again we, in fact, praise Him, because this beauty and that attraction and realness also belong to Him, therefore, He is All-Praised.

Surah Luqman - Verse 27

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الأَرْضِ مِن شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلاَمٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

27. "And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea added to seven seas (were ink in the writing), (yet) would not the Words of Allah be exhausted; Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The purpose of the Arabic phrase /sab'atu 'abhur/ (seven seas) may be for multiplicity and the number is not properly meant. That is, if the water of all seas becomes ink, they can not write down the entire words (knowledge) of Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, by it.

There is an illustration from the endless knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) in this holy verse which has been depicted by mentioning a very expressive and comprehensive similitude.

It says:

"And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea added to seven seas (were ink in the writing), (yet) would not the Words of Allah be exhausted; Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The Arabic word /yamudduhu/ is derived from /midad/ in the sense of 'ink' or a coloured substance by which something is written, and it is originally derived from /madd/ in the sense of 'drawing', because the writings are produced by drawing of a pen on the sheet of paper.

Some commentators have also cited another meaning for this term. It is the oil which is poured in a torch and is the cause of its light. Both of these meanings mentioned here, in fact, return to one root.

The Arabic term /kalimat/ is the plural form of /kalimah/ which originally means the words by means of which a person speaks.

Then it has been used with a wider scope of meaning which envelops anything that can convey a matter; and since each of the different creatures of this world is an indication to Allah's pure Essence, as well as His knowledge and Power, every being can be called /kalimat-ullah/ (the word of Allah).

This term has been used particularly in respect to the nobler and more magnificent beings, as about Jesus (as) where the Holy Qur'an says:

"…the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah, and His word…"[2]

Then, in this relation, the Qur'anic phrase /kalimat-ullah/ has been used in the sense of Allah's knowledge.

Now we must think properly that for writing the whole knowledge of a person usually a pen and some amount of ink is sufficient; and it is even possible that with this very single pen some other people write down their entire knowledge on the sheet of paper, but the Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"…if all the trees on the earth were pens…"

and we know that there can be produced thousands or millions of pens from the trunk and branches of a single tall tree.

Also, we know about three fourth of the surface of the earth that it is covered by water with a very considerable depth. Now, how wonderful will it be if all the oceans on the earth become ink for writing and how much knowledge and sciences can be written down by them?

Specially by adding seven other seas to them that each of them is equal to all the oceans of the earth, and particularly that the figure 'seven' here does not mean number but it is for multiplicity and denotes to numerous seas, it makes it clear that how vast is the knowledge of Allah, the Almighty, the Wise.

Moreover, all of them will be ended but the words of Allah will not be exhausted.

Is there any illustration more interesting and more beautiful than this to show such infiniteness? This figure is so expressive and comprehensive that might take with itself the waves of man's thought into the unlimited horizons and causes him to be in full wonder.

Regarding this clear and expressive statement, a man feels that his knowledge comparing the knowledge of Allah is as a zero in front of infiniteness, and it is worthy for him to only say that his knowledge has reached a point that he has realized his ignorance.

One of tender points that are found in this verse is that the word /šajarah/ (tree) is said in singular form and the term /'aqlam/ (pens) is said in plural form in order to indicate a large number of pens provided from a single tree with its trunks and branches.

And also the application of the word /al-bahr/ (sea) in the singular form and the Arabic signs 'Alif' and 'Lam' at its beginning are for the sake that it encompasses all the oceans on the earth, in particular that all the oceans of the world are connected to each other and, indeed they can be considered as a whole vast ocean.

And it is interesting that concerning the pens it does not speak about some additional pens, while when it speaks about the oceans it say about other seven seas, because there will be used a few pens for writing and that which is used very much is ink.

The figure 'seven' in the Arabic language is sometimes used for multiplicity and perhaps it is for this view point that former nations counted seven the spheres of the solar system (and in fact whatever is seen today by natural eyes in solar system is not more than seven spheres).

And regarding that a week is not formed by more than seven days, and the whole globe was traditionally divided into seven sections and was called

by seven provinces, makes it clear that why the figure ‘seven’ has been used as a complete figure and for multiplicity.

Surah Luqman - Verse 28

مَّا خَلْقُكُمْ وَلاَ بَعْثُكُمْ إِلاَّ كَنَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

28. “Your creation and your raising (after your death) are only as (the creation and the raising of) a single soul; verily Allah is Hearing, Seeing.”

The origin of scepticism in the principle of Resurrection is sometimes the length of time that how do the dead bodies return to life again after a long time? Sometimes its origin is the dead themselves that how can the rotten bones, which have been mixed and scattered, be separated from each other?

And sometimes its cause is being informed of the deeds, behaviour, and that how will those of all human beings be reckoned after the recreation of the dead? In this verse, Allah answers to all of these paradoxes by a single sentence.

The Qur’an implies that raising you all after your death is as easy for Him as the creation of one of you, and the length of time has no role in it. He hears and sees your murmurs and knows all your deeds, and He will reckon all of them.

Therefore, quantity, population, time and place, and even ‘hidden and manifest’ have no effect in Allah’s knowledge and power.

The verse says:

“Your creation and your raising (after your death) are only as (the creation and the raising of) a single soul; verily Allah is Hearing, Seeing.”

Surah Luqman - Verse 29

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۖ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّي وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

29. “Have you not seen that Allah merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient, each passing till an appointed time and that Allah is aware of what you do?”

The decrease and increase of the length of day and night, that occur gradually, have an important function in the life of the living creatures that need some more darkness or light for their lives.

This holy verse speaks about shortening and prolonging night and day as well as the sun and the moon being made subservient by Allah. Then it refers to the movement of each of them for an appointed time; and finally it implies that Allah is aware of what all human beings do.

It says:

“Have you not seen that Allah merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient, each passing till an appointed time and that Allah is aware of what you do?”

That is, the aim of all existence and different changes in the system of creation is man's deed; then we must do something which contains the pleasure of Allah. Most of the verses of the Qur'an do not address only the Prophet (S), but they are sent for all people.

For example, the Qur'an says:

"…and (to show) kindness to parents; if one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them 'fie', nor repulse them, and speak to them a gracious word."

And we know that the Prophet (S) lost his parents when he was a child and they were not alive to reach old age with him.

In this verse, too, though the Prophet of Islam (S) is addressed with the Qur'anic phrase: /'alam tara/ (have you not seen), at the end of the verse it says:

"…and that Allah is aware of what you do?"

this shows that the content of the verse envelops all people in general.

Surah Luqman - Verse 30

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

30. "This is because Allah is the Truth and because whatever they call upon besides Him is falsehood, and because Allah, He is the High, the Great."

Only Allah and whatever is from His side or depends to Him is the Truth and whatever is besides Him or depends on other than Him is falsehood and is perishable. Therefore, this verse implies that the matters which were mentioned in the previous verses are some evidence that Allah is the Truth and whatever they call upon besides Him is falsehood, for verily Allah is the High, the Great.

The verse says:

"This is because Allah is the Truth and because whatever they call upon besides Him is falsehood, and because Allah, He is the High, the Great."

The totality of the discussions mentioned in the previous verses about creative power, ownership, and the infinite knowledge and power of Allah prove these things, and that the Truth is only He and other than Him is transitory, falsehood, limited and dependant, and the attributes of /'aliyy/ (the High) and /kabir/ (the Great), which are above everything and are beyond explanation, belong to His Pure Essence.

An Arabic poet says:

"Beware that everything that is besides Allah, the High, is falsehood, and every material bounty will finally perish."

The content of the verse can philosophically be stated as follows: the Truth refers to a real and lasting being, and that real being that is self-existent, permanent, stable, and eternal is only Allah (s.w.t.), and the rest, whatever they may be, have not any existence in their essence and are falsehood, because they have got their existence by the way of depending on that eternal Truth, and as soon as He takes His grace from them they will be wiped out in the darkness of annihilation and non-existence.

Thus, the more relation of other beings to his Essence is, proportionally the more legitimacy they will earn.

However, as it was said before, these verses contain ten attributes out of the prominent attributes of Allah, the Pure, and ten Names out of the Most Beautiful Names of Allah. They contain some strong and undeniable reasons upon the negation of any polytheism and upon the necessity of Unity in all stages of worship.

Notes

1. like Surah Al-‘Ankabut, No. 29, verses 61-63, Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 38, and Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 9
2. Similar to this very meaning is also mentioned in Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 45

Section 4: Let Not the Life of This World Deceive Anyone

Surah Luqman - Verse 31

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُم مِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

31. "Have you not seen that the ships ran on in the sea by Allah's favour that He may show you of His signs? Verily in this are signs for every (steadfast) patient, grateful (one)."

In previous verses, the sky, the sun and the moon were pointed out while in this verse the earth, the seas, and ships are referred to. It implies that the movement of a ship on the sea is the consequence of a collection of Allah's bounties such as: the blow of the wind, specific gravity, and the rules of the pressure of water which causes things to float on it.

So the verse says:

"Have you not seen that the ships ran on in the sea by Allah's favour…"

The aim of these affairs is that He wants to show you a part of His greatness.

The verse continues saying:

"…that He may show you of His signs?…"

Yes, there are some signs in these things for those who are very patient and are grateful, too.

The verse says:

"…Verily in this are signs for every (steadfast) patient, grateful (one)."

No doubt the movement of the ships on the surface of oceans is the fruit of a series of laws of creation: the regular blow of the winds, from one side; the specific gravity of wood or other materials by which a ship is built, from the other side; the level of the density of water, from the third side; and the pressure emerged from the side of water to the body of the things which cause them to float on it, from the fourth side, are among them.

And if there appears any confusion in one of these things, either the ship sinks into the bottom of the sea, or it turns down, or it remains wandered in the midst of the sea.

But the Lord Who has intended to set the expansion of the seas the best way for the men's voyage, and carrying the useful goods often from one point to another point, has also provided these conditions, each of which is a bounty out of His bounties.

The greatness of the power of Allah in oceans and the smallness of man compared with it is so much so that, in the past when people used only the power of the wind for the movement of a ship, if all the people of the world gathered to make a ship run in the midst of the sea against the direction of a strong wind, they would not be able to afford it.

And now that the power of great engines has substituted the wind, again the strength of some storms is so hard and heavy that can shake even the greatest ships, and sometime it may break them.

And that at the end of the verse the emphasis has been laid on being patient and grateful, it is either for the sake that living in this world consists of a collection of afflictions and favours, that both of them are means of trial, perseverance and patience against severe events, and thanksgiving for bounties, all form a combination of duties for human beings.

A lot of Islamic commentators have recorded a tradition from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"The Faith has two halves: half of it is patience (and perseverance), and the other half is thanksgiving."

Or there is an indication in this that for understanding the great Divine verses in the expanse of creation man needs to have a motive, like being grateful to the benefactor accompanied with patience, in order to be more careful and more curious.

Surah Luqman - Verse 32

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُم مَوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُاْ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَي الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُم مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيَاتِنَآ إِلاَّ ُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ

32. "And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto Him, but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle course, and none denies Our signs, except every perfidious, ungrateful one."

Man naturally is godly, but some material means may cover the nature like a curtain, and the occurrence of some events and dangers may disclose this curtain.

After stating the movement of ships in the seas which have been the greatest and the most useful means for many men to transport and carry their loads both in the past and today, through this verse the Qur'an refers to one of other features of the same subject, where it points to the time when people embark a ship and in the midst of the sea they may encounter a storm.

It says:

"And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto Him…"

The Arabic word /zulal/ is the plural form of /zullah/ for which the commentators have mentioned several meanings. Raqib in Mufradat says:

"The term /zullah/ means the cloud that is shady, and it is often used in the cases that there is an unpleasant matter in the affair."

Some commentators have also rendered it into 'canopy', derived from /zill/.

Some others have taken it with the sense of 'mountain'.

Though in relation to the verse under discussion these very meanings do not differ very much with each other, regarding that this word has repeatedly been used in the Qur'an with the meaning of Shady clouds, and regarding that the application of the Qur'anic term /qašiyahum/ (covers them) is more fitting with the sense of 'cloud', this interpretation seems closer to the fact.

Then the verse means that the great waves of the sea will arise and surround the ship so violent that as if a cloud had cast a shadow over them, a shadow which is fearful and horrible.

It is here that man, with the whole apparent powers that he has gained and gathered for him, now sees himself weak, naught, and unable. He receives no help from anywhere, and all spiritual and material means becomes useless for him. There will remain no hope for him except the light which glitters from inside his soul and from the depth of his nature.

It discloses the curtains of negligence and brightens his heart and tells him that there is someone Who can save you. The same One Whose command the waves of the sea obey.

It is here that the pure Monotheism fills his whole heart, and he considers religion, faith, and worship specific to Him.

Then the verse adds:

"…but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle course…"

But there are another group of people who forget everything and the army of polytheism and paganism overcome the country of their heart.

Some of the commentators believe that the above holy verse refers to 'Akramat-ibn-'Abijahl who became Muslim.

At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet of Islam (S) forgave all people of Mecca except four persons, one of whom was 'Akramat-ibn-'Abijahl.

The Prophet (S) had issued the order of execution against them and had said wherever they could be found they should be killed, (because these four vicious persons had fulfilled every kind of hindrance, enmity, and crime that they could against Islam and the Muslims).

Therefore, 'Akramah had to flee from Mecca.

He came to the bank of the Red sea and embarked a ship. In the middle of the sea, a dangerous storm threatened the ship.

The people in the ship told each other:

"Let us say fair well to the idols and only ask help from Allah, the Merciful, because our gods can do nothing."

'Akramah said:

"If but Monotheism does not save us in the sea, it will not save us in the land either."

He continued saying:

"O' Allah! I may covenant with You that if You deliver me from this affliction I will go to Prophet Muhammad (S) and shake hand with him for I know him a forgiver and gracious."

At last, he was delivered and went to the Prophet (S) and embraced Islam. This very event has also been recorded in 'Usd-ul-Qayah fi Ma'rifat-is-Sahabah, Vol. 4, P. 5.

It has also been cited in some Islamic history books that later 'Akramah was counted in the row of the true Muslims and he got to be a martyr in the Battle of 'Yarmuk' or ''Ajnadin'.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…and none denies Our signs, except every perfidious, ungrateful one."

The Arabic term /xattar/ is derived from /xatr/ in the sense of perjury. This term in Arabic is an amplification form. The polytheists and the guilty repeatedly turn to Allah for their afflictions and covenant with Him or make vows, but when the affliction is removed, they often breach their covenants one after another and are ingratitude to the bounties of Allah.

Indeed the Qur'anic words /xattar/ (perfidious) and /kafur/ (ungrateful) that have occurred at the end of the verse are the opposite points of the Qur'anic terms /sabbar/ (patient) and /šakur/ (grateful) which were mentioned in the previous verse; (the term 'Ungrateful' is opposite of 'grateful', and perjury is opposite of 'patience' and to be loyal to one's covenant.)

For, fulfilling the promise is possible only by applying patient. It is they who, when the flame of natural faith is enlightened inside their soul, try to keep this Divine light and not to be quenched any more as the result of being covered by curtains and barriers.

A Few Points Upon Sincerity

Sincerity is the case that an action is perfectly performed for the cause of Allah, so much so that even if one percent of it, or less than it, is for other than Allah (s.w.t.) that worship is nullified or it has problem.

If we take the place of keeping up the prayer for other than Allah, for instance, we try to stand somewhere that so other people see us, or the camera shows us, our prayer is kept up for other than Allah.

If we choose the time of worship for other than Allah, for example, we establish prayer in time in order to attract the attention of people, it will be the same.

If the gesture and our appearance in which we establish prayer is for other than Allah, for example, we may wear a shoulder-mantle; or have a change in our voice, and have an aim other than the pleasure of Allah (s.w.t.), in all these instances our prayer is null and void, and for hypocrisy we have committed sin, too.

In other words, sincerity is in that we do not heed our sensual desires, carnal wishes, false deities, political adherences, and the wrong demands of individuals, but our motive is only one thing: obeying the command of Allah and fulfilling our duty.

Verily obtaining sincerity is not possible but with the help of Allah.

The Qur'an by the verse under discussion says:

"And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto him, but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle course…"

The Ways of Obtaining Sincerity

1- We must be attentive to the knowledge and Power of Allah. If we know that all glories, powers, and provisions are in His authority, we never refer to other than Him in order to gain glory, power, and provision.

If we note that the creatures are created by the will of Allah and by His will every thing will be vanished; if we know that He both produces the

causes and nullifies the causes, that is, He appoints the dry palm tree the cause of fresh date for Mary, and turns the fire, which could cause Abraham to be burnt, to become cold for him, we do not betake ourselves to other than Him.

There are hundreds verses and stories in the Qur'an that invite people to pay attention to Allah's Providence in order that haply they may leave out other than Him and go sincerely toward Him.

2- We must note the blessings of sincerity: A sincere person has only a single aim which is 'gaining the content of Allah', and the one whose aim is only that, does not seek the encouragement of this one or that one. He does not fear of blames.

He does not scare of loneliness. He never retreats in his way. He never rues. For the sake of people's heedlessness, he never loses hope. In paving the path of the Truth he never tends to majority and minority.

The sincere believers do not afraid that:

"…they fight in the way of Allah, so they slay and they are slain…"

In the threshold of his journey to Karbala, Imam Hussayn (as) said:

"We go to Karbala whether we become martyr or become victorious. Our aim is to fulfil the duty."

3- We must regard to Allah's favours: Another way which causes us to approach to sincerity is the remembrance of the favours of Allah. We must not forget that we did not exist. The life-germ was made of soil and food stuff and was put inside the darkness of the mother's womb.

It passed the development stages one after another and it was born in the form of a perfect human being. At that time this baby did not know anything save sucking the mother's milk, a complete food which provides all the needs of the body.

The mother's milk, accompanied with mother's affection, was almost always at his service. Does any aware conscience let that after reaching to those abundant bounties, power, and knowledge we incline to others? Why may we sell ourselves to some human beings who neither have any right on us nor have they done us any favour?

4- We must always seek the will of Allah. If we know that people's hearts depend on Allah's will and that He is the converter of the hearts, we will perform any action for Him, and wherever we need the people's supports, we ask Allah to bestow it on us the necessary love, amiability, and position in people's hearts and opinions.

Hadrat 'Ibrahim (as) elevated the basis of Ka'bah in the hot and blazing deserts of Arabia and invoked that He would tend the people's hearts toward his progeny. Now, after thousand years that that event has passed, every year millions of people circumambulate amorously around that House, more exciting than a butterfly.

How many a man that try hard to make some people fairly content, but these people still do not love them, and there are many persons that without having hope to people, properties, name, wealth and position rely on Allah and sincerely fulfil their duty while they are also honoured in the eyes of people. Therefore, the aim must be Allah's pleasure and they ask people's pleasure from Allah, too.

5- We must note to the duration of affairs. If an action is done for Allah its result will remain, since it has a godly colour. But if it is not done for Allah, soon or late it will be vanished.

The Qur'an says:

"What is with you comes to an end, and what is with Allah will endure…"

6- We must compare the recompenses. There are kinds of restrictions in people's recompense. For example, if people decide to give recompense to a prophet, they may give him the best clothing, food, and residence, while all these bounties are limited, and the evil people possess them, too. The wrong doers can also use kinds of ornamentations, palaces, gardens and glorious private mounts.

But when an action is done in the cause of Allah, there will wait some unlimited recompenses for it, whether material and spiritual. Here, too, if we think correctly, wisdom does not allow us to exchange infinite and inclusive recompenses for some limited ones from the side of human beings.

Surah Luqman - Verse 33

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَاخْشَوْا يَوْماً لاَ يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَن وَلَدِهِ وَلاَ مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَن وَالِدِهِ شَيْئاً إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلاَ تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلاَ يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغَرُورُ

33. "O people! Be in awe of your Lord and dread the Day when no father shall avail aught for his son, nor a son shall avail aught for his father. Verily the promise of Allah is true; so let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah."

Everybody must be in awe of Allah and avoid all kinds of creedal, ethical and practical deviations in order to be pious, because the best provision, for the day when even a father and son will not help each other, is piety.

So, in this verse as a conclusion of the last admonishments and the evidences of Monotheism and Resurrection, at first the Qur'an attracts the attention of all human beings to Allah and the Day of Hereafter. Then it warns them against the pride originated from the world and Satan; and after that it refers to the vast knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) and that it encompasses everything.

It says:

"O people! Be in awe of your Lord and dread the Day when no father shall avail aught for his son, nor a son shall avail aught for his father…"

In fact, the first command refers to the Origin, and the second command refers to Resurrection.

The first command awakens the power of attention in man, and the second divine command awakens in him the feeling of recompense and retribution.

No doubt he who knows an aware and well-informed One Who sees all his deeds, knows them, and records them, and, on the other side, there will be held a just court to investigate all things in detail, such a person hardly commits any sin or corruption.

The Arabic phrase /layajzi/ is derived from /jaza'/ which has been used with two senses. One of them is 'to give reward or retribution instead of

something'; and the other is: 'to suffice, to succeed and to bear', as the verse under discussion implies that no father shall accept the responsibility of his son's deeds and he does not succeed him nor does avail him.

It is possible that both of them return to one root, for both reward and retribution succeed the deed, too, and each will be given to its doer appropriate to the deed.

However, on that Day every one is so busy with him and is afflicted with the circumstances of his own deeds that he can not do any favour to another one, even neither the father nor the son, who have the closest relation with each other, will think of the other one.

This verse is similar to what has occurred at the beginning of Surah Al-Hajj which, concerning Hereafter and the earthquake of the Resurrection Day, says:

"On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe…"

It is noteworthy that concerning father the Qur'an applies the Arabic clause /layajzi/ (which is in future tense) but concerning son it applies the Arabic word /jaz/ which in Arabic is a 'noun-agent'. This difference may be for variety in speech; or it points to the duty and responsibility of a child before his father, because an Arabic noun-agent indicates some more permanence and repetition.

In other words, it is expected from the father's affection that at least in some instances he tolerates the punishment of his child in the same way that in the word he eagerly accepted his afflictions, but concerning a child it is expected that he tolerates some more afflictions of his father for many rights he has upon him; while none of them solve the least problem from the other on that Day, for everybody is busy with his own deeds.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an warns man against two things: the life of the world and Satan.

It says:

"…Verily the promise of Allah is true; so let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah."

In fact, instead of two enjoinments that were mentioned at the beginning of the current Surah, there are two prohibitions mentioned here, since if the fear from Divine reckoning and retribution be awaken in a person, there will not need for him to be afraid of existing deviation and pollution in him, except from two ways: the first is that the dazzling glare of the world changes the facts wrongly in his view and takes the ability of discrimination from him since the love of the world is the cause of all sins.

The second is that the temptations of Satan may beguile him, make him proud, and cause him to become far from Origin and Resurrection.

If these two ways of penetration of sin can be closed, no other danger will threaten him, and by these abovementioned four instructions, a complete collection of program is provided for the felicity of man.

In conclusion, Allah's justice makes the existence of Hereafter necessary for man, because we see many good and evil ones that apparently do not reach to their proper reward and retribution in the world. Therefore, Allah,

the just, must appoint another place for giving them their due reward and retribution.

Of course, now and then there are seen some rewards and retributions for them in the world, but their main place for a great deal of deeds is only Hereafter, because in some instances there is no possibility for them in this world.

For example, the one who has become martyr in the way of Allah is not present in the world to receive his reward, or the one who has killed a lot of people can not endure more than one retribution in this world; he must get his real chastisement in Hereafter.

Surah Luqman - Verse 34

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَداً وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

34. "Verily Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn the morrow, and no one knows in what land he shall die. Verily Allah is Knowing, Aware."

Only Allah knows the time of the death and the occurrence of Hereafter. If human beings knew that the time of their death were far and the Hereafter were not be held so soon, they would be proud and would commit more sins; and if they are told that the Hereafter will be held very soon, they terrify and leave their job and activity.

So we mortals, who do not know the exact time of our death and Hereafter, must always be prepared.

However, in relation to the discussion about Resurrection mentioned in the previous verse, this verse, which is the last verse of this Surah, speaks of those information which are specific to Allah.

It says:

"Verily Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour…"

"…and He sends down the rain…"

"…and He knows what is in the wombs…"

"…and no one knows what he shall earn the morrow…"

"…and no one knows in what land he shall die…"

"…Verily Allah is Knowing, Aware."

It seems this entire verse is an answer to the question in regard to Hereafter, the same question that the pagans of Quraysh repeatedly asked from the Prophet (S) and said:

"…When will it be?…"

In answer to them, the Qur'an implicitly says no one knows the moment of the occurrence of Hereafter save Allah; and according to some other verses of the Qur'an, Allah has made this knowledge concealed for all humankind so that pride and negligence would never encompass people; He says:

"Verily the Hour (of Doom) is coming, but I will to keep it hidden…"

Then the Qur'an implies that not only the Hereafter is concealed for you, but there are also many things in your daily living and among the nearest affairs of your death and life that you are not aware of.

The time of the descent of the life-giving drops of rain, to which depend the lives of all living beings is not manifest to any one of you, and you discuss about it only by guesses, estimations, and conjectures.

Also no one is aware of the time of your appearance in the mother's womb and the specifications of the embryo.

And, again, the near future, that is, the events of your tomorrow and also the place wherein you shall die are hidden to all.

You, who are not aware of these affairs which are close to your living, do not surprise that you are not informed of the moment of the occurrence of Hereafter.

It is cited in Durr-ul-Manthur that once a man by the name of 'Warrath', from Banymazin Tribe, came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"O Muhammad! When will the Hereafter be held? Moreover, our cities have met drought; when there will affluence come? And also when I set out to come here my wife was pregnant; when will she be confined? And also I know what I have done today, but what will I do tomorrow? And, finally, I know where I have been born, but tell me to know in which land will I die?"

The above verse was sent down and announced that the knowledge of all these things is with Allah.

Surah As-Sajdah, Chapter 32

(The Adoration)

No. 32 (Revealed at Mecca)

30 Verses in 3 Sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is one of 29 Suras that begin with abbreviated letters and after which the Qur'an is glorified.

It is one of the four Suras of Qur'an which contain obligatory prostration. According to the tradition recorded in Majma'-ul-Bayan, the holy Prophet (S) used to recite this Surah and Surah Al-Mulk every night before sleeping.

Similar to other Meccan Suras, there are some almost detailed explanations about Origin and Resurrection in this Surah, too. The end of the disbelievers is also mentioned in it, in order that the faith of the believers and their steadfastness against the pressure of the enemies would be strengthened.

To perform bowing and prostration at night, when people are asleep, is mentioned as one of the specialities of the true believers pointed out in verse No. 25, the recitation of which needs obligatory prostration.

Section 1: Qur’an, the Book From the Lord of the Worlds

Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم

تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. “Alif, ‘A’, Lam, ‘L’, Mim ‘M’.”

2. “The revelation of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of the Worlds.”

We have explained in detail about the abbreviated letters of the Qur’an at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, but according to some Islamic traditions the abbreviated letters are among allegorical ambiguous verses the knowledge of which is with Allah (s.w.t.) and His saints.[1]

Question: Regarding to the doubt, false allegation, and calumny that the opponents of the Qur’an used to announce and some verses refer to them, too, how does this verses say:

“…there is no doubt in it…”?

Answer: The verse implies that there is no doubt in the legitimacy of the Qur’an and its commandments and gnostic knowledge, not that no one has doubted in it; so, in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 23 the Qur’an says:

“And if you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our (faithful) servant (Muhammad), then bring forth one Surah the like thereof…”.

The writer of the Fi-Zilal-il-Qur’an says:

“An artificial flower is not the same as a natural flower, because a natural flower itself stands witness, that there is no doubt in its being natural.”

The Qur’an has been sent down from the side of Allah and this fact has repeatedly been emphasized in it.

The following examples are among them:

“The revelation of the Book…is from the Lord of the Worlds.”[2]

“And verily this (Qur’an) is from the Lord of the Worlds.”[3]

“A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful.”[4]

“The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.”[5]

“The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Knowing.”[6]

“A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful (Allah).”[7]

“…A revelation from the Wise, the Praised (One).”[8]

“It has been sent down from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens.”[9]

Yes, The One Who has sent down the Qur’an possesses everything of the existence, and dominates over all things. He is Mighty, Merciful, Wise, Knowing, and Praised.

However, in this verse the Qur’an says:

“The revelation of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of the Worlds.”

This verse, in fact, is an answer to two questions. It seems at first that the content of this heavenly Book is questioned about. In answer, it announces that its content is the Truth and there is no room for any doubt in this concern. Then, the compiler of it is asked about. In answer to this question, the Qur'an says that it is from the Lord of the Worlds.

This interpretation is also probable that the sentence:

"From the Lord of the Worlds"

is an evidence for the sentence:

"There is no doubt in it".

As if someone asks by what reason this Book is the Truth and that there is no doubt in it. It says by the reason that it is from the Lord of the Worlds from Whom every truth and reality comes into being.

By the way laying emphasis on the attribute of "The Lord of the Worlds" among all attributes of Allah may point to this fact that this Book is a collection of the wonders of the world of existence and it contains the facts of the world of existence, because it is from the side of the Lord of the Worlds.

Paying attention to this point is also necessary that here the Qur'an does not want to suffice to a mere claim, but it intends to say that what is evident does not need to be explained, and the content of this Book itself is a witness to its legitimacy and veracity.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 3

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْماً مَّآ أَتَاهُم مِن نَّذِيرٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

3. "Or do they say: 'He (the Prophet) has forged it'? Nay! It is the truth from your Lord, that you may warn a people to whom no warner came before you, that haply they may be guided aright."

The permanent manner of the pagans is to belie the Qur'an, but you must convey the Truth and do not be disappointed from guiding them. This holy verse points to the calumny that polytheists and faithless hypocrites had repeatedly calumniated on this great heavenly Book.

It says:

"Or do they say: 'He (the Prophet) has forged it'?…"

In answer to their unfounded claim, the Qur'an implies it is not a calumny, and the proof of its truthfulness is manifest in it.

It says:

"…Nay! It is the truth from your Lord…"

Then, the Holy Qur'an refers to the aim of its revelation, when it says:

"…that you may warn a people to whom no warner came before you, that haply they may be guided aright."

The invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) is both 'glad tidings' and 'warning', and more than being a warner, the Prophet of Islam (S) is a giver of glad tidings, yet confronting a misguided and obstinate group, he (S) should emphasize rather on 'warning'.

The sentence which says:

"…it is the truth from your Lord…"

is again a hint to this fact that the proof of its legitimacy is seen inside of it.

The sentence:

"…That haply they may be guided aright"

points to this fact that the Holy Qur'an leads you to the right path but the final decision, however, must be made by man himself.

By the way, the "people to whom no warner came" were Quraysh because there had not been sent a prophet for them before the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (S). Some of the commentators have said the objective meaning of this sentence is the intermission time and its purpose is the length of the time between Jesus (as) and the advent of the last Prophet (S).

For more explanation you may refer to commentary books entitled: Tafsir-us-Safi, Jawami'-ul-Jami', Majma'-ul-Bayan, Manhaj-us-Sadighin, and Atyab-ul-Bayan.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 4

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَي الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٍ أَفَلاَ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

4. "Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six Days then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne of authority), for you there is none besides Him of a guardian, nor any intercessor; will you not then receive admonition?"

In order to wipe out polytheism, the eternal power of Allah and the creation of heavens and earth must be spoken of. So, next to the statement of the greatness of the Qur'an and the Messengerhood of the Prophet (S), this verse refers to one of the most important bases of the Islamic beliefs, i.e. Monotheism and negation of polytheism.

It says:

"Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six Days…"

The objective meaning of 'Six Days' mentioned in such verses is 'six periods', and we know that one of the meanings of 'Day' in daily applications is 'period', as we say: 'One day the despotic government was ruling and 'today' the council system is', while we know that despotic government used to rule thousands of years but they are said as 'days'.

On the other side, we know that the heavens and the earth have passed different periods. One day all the spheres of the solar system were in the form of a single melted mass. Another day some planets separated from the sun and began to rotate around it.

One day the earth was entirely fiery, and another day it became cold and appropriate for the life of plants and animals. Then, the living creatures came into being in different stages.[10]

It is evident that the infinite power of Allah is enough to create the entire universe in one moment or less than that, but this gradual system can illustrate better the glory, knowledge and providence of Allah in all stages.

For example, if an embryo could complete all its periods of development to be born, its wonders would remain aloof from the man's view. But when we see that every day and every week during this period of nine months foetus gets a new shape and adopts some new surprising circumstances, and it passes its wonderful stages one after another, we will be better acquainted with the greatness of Allah.

Next to the statement of the creation of the things, the verse refers to the subject of Divine sovereignty over the world of existence, and says:

"…then He established Himself on 'Arsh (The Throne of authority)…"

As we have formerly said, the Arabic word /'arš/ originally means: 'a throne with long legs', and usually it ironically means 'power', as in our daily speaking we say:

"The legs of his throne were broken"

which means his power was vanished. Thus, that Allah established Himself on 'Arsh, is not an indication to its bodily meaning that He may have a throne like human kings to sit on it, but it means He is both the Creator of the world of existence and the administrator over the whole universe.

At the end of the holy verse, by pointing to the subject of Monotheism, 'mastership' and 'intercession', the above verse completes the stages of Monotheism.

It says:

"…for you there is none besides Him of a guardian, nor any intercessor…"

By this clear reason that the creation of the world is a sign for His Sovereignty, and sovereignty is an evidence for the Unity of 'master', 'intercessor', and 'object of worship', why do you pave the wrong way and go to false gods?

The verse says:

"…will you not then receive admonition?"

In fact, the three stages of Monotheism mentioned in the above verse, each is counted an evidence for the other; the Unity of creative power is an evidence for the Unity of sovereignty, and the Unity of sovereignty is an evidence for the Unity of 'master', 'intercessor' and 'object of worship'.

Some commentators have delivered a question here, the answer of which is not so complicated.

They say the recent sentence of the verse announces:

"…for you there is none besides Him of a guardian nor any intercessor…".

The concept of this sentence is that your guardian and intercessor is only Allah (s.w.t.). Is it possible that someone intercedes with himself?

This Question can be answered in three ways:

1- All intercessors have to intercede by His permission, as the Qur'an says:

"…who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave?…"[11]

Regarding to this fact, it can be said that although the intercession is from the side of Divine prophets and saints, it will return again to His Pure

Essence, whether the intercession is for forgiving the sins of a person or for reaching some Divine bounties.

The witness to this statement is the verse which contains just the same meaning of this very verse and it says:

"…No intercessor can there be except after (obtaining) His leave…"[12]

2- Regarding to this fact that when we resort to Allah, we resort by His Attributes and ask help from His mercifulness, and beneficence, His being Forgiver and All-Forgiving, and His bounteousness and His loving kindness; as if we set Him intercessor with Himself, and we count these Attributes as agents between us and His Pure Essence, though His Attributes, in fact, are the essence of His Pure Essence.

This is the same thing that is mentioned in the Supplication of Kumayl through the expressive sentence of Ali (as) where he says:

"I seek intercession by You unto You."

3- The purpose of the Qur'anic word /šafi'/ (intercessor) here is guardian helper, and aid, and we know that the helper, aid and guardian is only Allah. And that some commentators have rendered the word /šafa'at/ here into the sense of creation and completion of the souls, in fact, it returns to this very meaning, too.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 5

يُدَبِّرُ الأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ إِلَي الأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

5. "He directs the affair (of this world) from the heaven to the earth, then shall it ascend to Him in a Day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you reckon."

In the same manner that in creation everything is from Him and is unto Him, the management of affairs is also from Him and is unto Him. This fact is rendered into Unity of Lordship.

Therefore, this verse says:

"He directs the affair (of this world) from the heaven to the earth…"

In other words, the Lord of the world of existence Has taken everything, from heavens to the earth, under His Own management, and except Him there is no other controller in this world.

Then, concerning this management of affairs, the Qur'an says:

"…then shall it ascend to Him in a Day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you reckon."

As some other verses of the Qur'an indicate, the objective meaning of this 'day' is the Day of Hereafter. There are also some Islamic traditions narrated on the commentary of this verse that Allah, the Almighty, has created this world, has arranged the heavens and the earth with a special order, and has bestowed the merit of life on man and other living creatures, but in the end of the world He will roll up this order, the sun will become dark and the stars will lose their light, and, as the Qur'an says:

"The Day when We will roll up the heaven as the rolling up of the scroll for writing; as We originated the first creation, (so) We shall get it return…"[13]

Then, following the rolling up of this world a new scheme and a wider world will be formed. That is, after this world another world will begin.

This meaning has been mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an, too, including Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 156 which says:

"…Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return…"

And Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 27 says:

"And He it is Who originates the creation, then He brings it back again, and it is easier for Him (than the first creation)…"

And in Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 34 we recite:

"…Say: '(Only) Allah originates creation, then brings it back again; then how are you turned away (from the Turah)'?"

Regarding to these meanings and other noble verses of the Qur'an which indicate that all affairs finally return to Allah, like Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 123 that says:

"…and to Him the whole affairs will be returned…"[14]**,**

makes it clear that the verse under discussion also speaks about the beginning and the end of the world and the reality and existence of the Hereafter Day.

Therefore, the concept of the verse is that: Allah devises the affair of this world from the heaven to the earth, (i.e.) He begins from the heaven and ends it in the earth), and then all of them return to Him on the Day of Hereafter.

It is recorded in Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim's commentary, following the verse, that the purpose of it is the management of the affairs that Allah undertakes, as well as the enjoinments and prohibitions that are cited in religion and the deeds of all human beings. All of these things will be made manifest on the Day of Hereafter, the length of which is a thousand years comparing the years of this world.[15]

There arises here a question that in Surah Al-Ma'arij, No. 70, verse 4 concerning the Day of Hereafter we recite:

"To Him ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years."

How can the content of the verse under discussion in which the measure of the day is mentioned only one thousand years and that of this verse be considered with together?

The answer to this question is given in a tradition recorded in 'Amali by Shaykh Tusi Vol. 1, P. 36, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Verily in Hereafter there are fifty stations (places of standing for taking care of deeds and reckoning) each of which takes one thousand years of what you reckon.

Then he recited this verse:

'…in a Day the measure of which is a thousand years…'."[16]

These meanings, of course, do not contrast to this matter that these figures (a thousand and fifty thousand) here are not figures of counting, but, indeed, each of them is for showing multiplicity and stating the plurality, that is, in Hereafter there are fifty stations that a person must stand for a long time in each of them.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 6

ذَلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

6. "This is the Knower of the hidden and the manifest, the Mighty, the Merciful,"

The facts of the world are divided into two kinds for us: manifest and hidden, but there is nothing absent or hidden for Allah. Therefore, the rules governed over the world are based on the infinite knowledge of Allah, and the Divine knowledge is equal for the manifest and hidden things.

This holy verse at first refers to and emphasizes on the Monotheistic discussions mentioned in the former noble verses which contained four Attributes of Allah: Unity in Creative Power, Sovereignty, Mastership, and Lordship.

It says:

"This is the Knower of the hidden and the manifest, the Mighty, the Merciful,"

It is evident that the One Who manages the affairs of the heaven and the earth, governs on them, and undertakes the rank of Mastership, intercession, and creation, must be aware of everything whether seen or unseen, because without a vast knowledge none of these affairs is possible to be fulfilled.

In the meantime such one must be Mighty so that He can do these important affairs, but this power and glory logically is not accompanied with rudeness, it is accompanied with mercifulness and grace.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 7-8

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الإِنسَانِ مِن طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلاَلَةٍ مِن مَآءٍ مَهِينٍ

7. "He Who made best everything that He created, and He began the creation of man from clay,"

8. "Then He made his progeny of an extraction of mean water,"

Everything is created by Allah, and that the Qur'an has mentioned 'man' separately beside all the things of existence shows the particular importance and value of man.

This verse points to the best system of creation in general, and it is a beginning for the statement of man being created and being gradually completed particularly.

It says:

"He Who made best everything that He created…"

Whatever He created He gave it whatever it needed. In other words, He established the great building of creation on 'the best system'; i.e. He appointed it on such a firm system that something more complete than it could not be considered.

He created relationship and harmony among all beings, and He bestowed on each of them whatever they demanded by non-verbal language.

If we look carefully at the stature of a human beings and think about every one of the systems of his body we see that, from the point of construction, volume, the condition of cells, and the manner of their work have been just created in a way that they can perform their duty very well; and in the meantime He has appointed such a relation between the organs

that all of them, with no exception, affect on each other and are affected by each other.

And this meaning is exactly seen in the whole universe with many varieties of creatures, specially in the world of living beings that have some organizations entirely different.

Yes, it He Who gives kinds of pleasant perfumes to various flowers; and it is He Who endows spirit on clay and from it He makes a clever and free man. And also He creates kinds of flowers, sometimes men, sometimes other sorts of being from this very clay. Even the soil itself also contains, in its turn, whatever it must have.

Similar to this meaning is that which we recite in Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 50 from the tongue of Moses and Aaron:

"…'Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation, then guided it aright'."

Then, after mentioning this extroversive proposition, the Qur'an begins the introversive discussion, and in the same manner that in the extroversive verses it referred to a few branches of Monotheism, here it speaks about a few great merits concerning man. At first it says:

"…and He began the creation of man from clay,"

He did so in order to show His Own greatness and Power: that He has created such a magnificent creature from this simple and valueless material; and He created man, the picturesque attractive being, from mud. And He did so in order to warn man that where he has come from and where he will go to.

It is clear that this verse speaks about the creation of Adam (human) not all men, because the continuation of his seed is referred to in the next verse; and the outward of this verse is a clear reason for the independent creation of man.

This meaning becomes clearer in regard to the verse which says:

"Verily the likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust…"[17]

And also it says:

"And certainly We created man of raw clay, of black mud moulded"[18]

From the totality of these verses it is understood that the creation of man was in the form of an independent creation which came into being from dust and mud.

The next verse points to the creation of man's progeny and how the children of Adam are born in later stages.

It says:

"Then He made his progeny of an extraction of mean water,"

The Arabic word /ja'ala/ here means 'creation'; and the term /nasl/ indicates to progeny and grand children in all stages.

The Qur'anic term /sulalah/ originally means extract and pure squeezed material of anything, and its purpose here is the man's seed which, in fact, is the extract of the clay of his entity and it is the source of life and the essential cause of the birth of offspring and continuation of generation.

This water which apparently is a worthless water from the point of construction and the life cells which are floating in it, is a particular

combination of a fluid wherein cells are floating and it is very delicate and extraordinarily exact and complicated. It is counted one of the signs of the greatness, power and knowledge of Allah.

The Arabic term /mahin/, which means: weak, mean, and naughty, refers to the outward situation of water, else it is one of the most mysterious beings.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 9

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِن رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ وَالأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

9. "Then He fashioned him, and breathed into him of His spirit and appointed for you hearing, and sight, and hearts (but) little is it that you give thanks."

One of the signs of man's honour is the Divine spirit which has been breathed into him; and for receiving the Divine accomplishments, man needs preparation and equilibrium, (at first a proportionate stature, then the spirit of Allah breathed in him).

In this verse there are some hints to the complicated stages of man's development in the environment of the womb, as well as the stages that Adam passed at the time when he was created from clay.

It says:

"Then He fashioned him…"

"…and breathed into him of His spirit…"

"…and appointed for you hearing, and sight, and hearts…"

"…(but) little is it that you give thanks."

The Arabic term /sawwah/ (fashioned him) is derived from /taswiah/ in the sense of 'to complete', and this refers to the whole stages that a person passes from the time of being in the form of semen as far as the stage when all the limbs of his body appear, and also the stages that Adam passed after being created from dust until when the spirit was breathed into him.

The application of the Arabic word /nafx/ (breath) is ironically for inhering spirit in man's body, as if it has been likened to the air and respiration, though it is neither this nor that.

If it is said that from the time when semen arrives into the womb, and before that, it is a living being, then what does 'breathing spirit' mean?

In answer to this question it is said that at the beginning when the semen coagulates it has only a kind of 'animal life', viz., it only feeds and grows, but it lacks sense and movement, which are the signs of animal life, and also it lacks the perceptive faculty, which is the sign of 'human life'.

But the development of semen in the womb reaches a stage that it starts moving and other faculties gradually appear in it. This stage is the same stage that the Qur'an renders into 'breathing spirit'.

The situation of the word /ruh/, in Arabic sentence, in relation with Allah is an honouring relative, that is, an honourable and worthy spirit which is eligible to be called Allah's spirit was breathed into man. This indicates that though man from the point of material dimension is made of 'dark dust' or from a worthless water', but from the spiritual point of view it carries the spirit of Allah.

One end of his being is soil and its another end is Allah's 'Arsh (throne); and for having these two dimensions the scope of his ascending, and descent, or development and degeneration, is very vast.

In the last stage of creation, which is counted its fifth stage, the Qur'an has pointed to the bounties of ear, eye, and heart. Of course, the objective meaning here is not the creation of these limbs, because this creation happens before 'breathing spirit', but the purpose is a good hearing, a good sight, and a good perceptibility and wisdom.

And if among all the 'apparent' and 'innate' senses the verse has emphasized only on three limbs, it is for the sake that the most important apparent senses of man, which set a strong relation between man and the outward world, are ear and eye. The ear receives the sounds and it is specially by it that education is performed and the eye is a means for seeing the outward world and the different scenes of it.

The ability of intellect is also the most important inward sense; or, in other words, it rules over the man's entity.

It is interesting that the Arabic term /'af'idah/ is the plural form of /fu'ad/ in the sense of heart, but it has a meaning more delicate than that. This word is usually used where there is blaze and maturity in it.

And thus Allah has stated the most important means of acknowledge in 'outside' and 'inside' of man's entity in this verse, since the human studies can be obtained either by the way of 'experience' the means of which is eye and ear, or by the way of intellectual analysis and rational demonstrations and the means of which is wisdom and intellect.

This has been rendered in the Holy Qur'an into /'af'idah/ (hearts). Even the concepts that come to man's heart by the way of inspiration or intuition and inner intuition are again by this very 'heart'. If this means of cognition is taken from man his value will come down as low as a piece of stone and dust.

That is why at the end of the verse under discussion, the Qur'an attracts the attention of human beings to thanksgiving for these great bounties and says:

"…(but) little is it that you give thanks."

This points to this fact that the more you thank for these great bounties, the less it is for them.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 10

وَقَالُوا أَءِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الأَرْضِ أَءِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ بَلْ هُم بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّـهِمْ كَافِرُونَ

10. "And they said: 'When we are lost in the earth, shall we even then be (returned) into a new creation?' Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord."

In the previous verse we recited that Allah has given us two means of understanding (eye and ear) and He complains that we give thanks a little. The verse under discussion is one of the examples that states the ungratefulness of man that, after seeing all the providence and power of the Almighty, yet man doubts the establishment of Hereafter.

In this holy verse, too, it says:

"And they said: 'When we are lost in the earth, shall we even then be (returned) into a new creation?'…"

The application of the sentence "we are lost in the earth" refers to this fact that after his death man will become dust, like other kinds of dust, and, as the result of natural factors and non-natural ones, every particle of it will be thrown in a corner and it seems that there remains nothing of him until when he will be returned again in Hereafter.

But, in fact, they do not deny the power of Allah in this action, but they deny the meeting of their Lord. They want to reject the stage of meeting their Lord which is the stage of Divine reckoning and giving reward and retribution in order that, consequently, they become free to do whatever they want to do in this world.

The verse says:

"…Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord."

In fact, this verse has much similarity to the beginning verses of Surah Al-Qiyamah that say:

"Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?"

"Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers."

"But man wishes to do wrong (even) in the time in front of him."

"He questions: 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'"[19]

Therefore, they do not need anything from the point of reasoning; but their lusts have cast a curtain over their heart, and their evil intentions hinder them to accept the subject of Resurrection.

Else, the same Lord Who has given this property to a piece of magnet that it absorbs to itself the very tiny pieces of iron that have been lost inside so much dust by a search in the dust and it easily gathers them, can create such a mutual attraction among the particles of the body of man, too.

The majority of the germ of the man's body is water. Who can deny that the existing water in his body, as well as every part of its food stuff had been scattered in different points of the world, for example, one thousand years ago, every drop of it was in an ocean and every particle of it in a land.

But, by the means of pieces of cloud, rain, and other natural factors they were gathered and finally were formed as the man's body. It is not surprising that after their destruction and returning to their first state, they will gather together again and join to each other.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 11

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُم مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ

11. "Say: 'The angel of death, who is put in charge of you, shall cause you to die, then unto your Lord you shall be brought back."

In this holy verse their answer is given in another way. The verse here implies that you should not imagine that your personality depends only on your body, but the basis of your personality is formed by your spirit.

The verse says:

"Say: 'The angel of death, who is put in charge of you, shall cause you to die, then unto your Lord you shall be brought back."

Regarding to the concept of the Qur'anic phrase /yatawaffa kum/ which is derived from /tawaffa/ in the sense of: 'to take back', death does not mean 'annihilation' and 'destruction', but it is a kind of taking the man's soul by angels, and soul forms the most essential part of man's existence.

It is true that the Qur'an speaks about the resurrection of the body and counts the return of material body and soul decisive in resurrection, but the aim of the above mentioned verse is to state this fact that the basis of the man's personality is not formed by these material limbs which have occupied your whole thought, but it is that very worthy spirit which has come from the side of Allah (s.w.t.) and once it will surely return to Him again.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the two abovementioned verses answer the deniers of resurrection as follows: If your problem is the dispersion of bodily particles, you yourself believe in Allah's power and you do not reject it.

And if the problem is annihilation and destruction of man's personality as the result of dispersion, it is not right either, because man's personality has been based on the soul.

This objection is similar to the famous paradox of /'akil/ and /ma'kul/ as the answer to both of them is similar to each other.

By the way, it is necessary to note this point that in some verses of the Qur'an 'taking soul' has been attributed to Allah, as the Qur'an says:

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death…"[20]

And in some other verses it is attributed to a group of angels, as another verse says:

"Those whom the angels take their lives while they are unjust to themselves…"[21]

And in the verse under discussion taking souls is attributed to the angel of death. But there is not any contrast between these meanings. The Qur'anic phrase: /malik-ul maut/ (the angel of death) has a meaning of genus and is used for all angels, or it refers to the chief of them; and since all of such angels take the soul by the command of Allah, it is also attributed to Allah.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. The current Surah, verse under discussion
3. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 192
4. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 5
5. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 1
6. Surah Al-Mu'minin (Qafir) No. 40, verse 2
7. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 2
8. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 42
9. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 4
10. This meaning and also the 'six periods' were explained in the commentary of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 54.
11. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
12. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 9
13. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 104
14. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 123
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 221, and the commentary of Safi, under the verse

16. Al-Kafi, Vol. 8, P. 143
17. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 59
18. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 26
19. Surah Al-Qiyamah, No. 75, verses 3-6
20. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 42
21. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 28

Section 2: A Believer and Disbeliever Cannot Be Equal

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 12

وَلَوْ تَرَي إِذِ الْمُـجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُؤُوسِهِمْ عِندَ رَبِّـهِمْ رَبَّنَآ أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحاً إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

12. "And if you could see when the guilty hang down their heads before their Lord (saying): 'Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard (what You had promised), therefore send us back (to the world) we will do righteousness, verily (now) we are certain."

The present arrogance of the guilty results to their shame in Hereafter, since the Hereafter Day is the Day of manifestation of facts and it is the time when the eyes and the ears will work properly.

So, this verse says:

"And if you could see when the guilty hang down their heads before their Lord (saying): 'Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard (what You had promised), therefore send us back (to the world) we will do righteousness, verily (now) we are certain."

At that time, you will wonder, and verily you will surprise that whether these regretful persons who have cast down their heads are the same arrogant ones who did not accept any fact in the world.

But now that they see the scenes of Hereafter and reach the state of intuition, they change their situation. Even this change of situation and awareness is temporary and, according to some other verses of the Qur'an, if they return to this world they will continue their own previous manner.[1]

The Arabic term /nakis/ is derived from /taks/ in the sense of 'turning something upside down', and here it means 'to hang down one's head'.

The Qur'anic term /'absirna/ (we have seen) is mentioned before the term /sami'na/ (we have heard) and it is for the sake that on the Hereafter Day at first man encounters the scenes and then he hears the judgment of Allah and His angels.

Any how, it is understood from what was said that the purpose of the word 'guilty' here is disbelievers and the deniers of Hereafter in particular.

However, this is not the first time that we see in the verses of the Holy Qur'an that when the guilty see the fruit of their deed and observe the signs of Allah's punishment they will become seriously regretful and ask to return to the world, while from the point of Allah's way of treatment such a return is surely impossible.

It is similar to the fact that the return of a child to the mother's womb is impossible and the return of the picked fruit to the tree is not possible either.

This point is also noteworthy that the guilty ask to return to the world in order to do only righteous deeds. This matter makes it clear that on Hereafter Day the only man's capital for becoming delivered is righteous deeds, the deeds that are done by a pure heart, full of faith, and sincere intention.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 13

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَأَتَيْنَا ۖ نَفْسٍ هُدَاهَا وَلَـٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

13. "And if We had pleased We would certainly have given to every soul its guidance, but the true word (which has gone forth) from Me, certainly will I fill Hell with the jinn and men together."

The acceptance of guidance must be done voluntarily not compulsorily. Since there are abundant persistence and a lot of emphasis for accepting faith, it may bring this allusion that Allah is not able to cast the light of faith into their hearts, then in this verse He says:

"And if We had pleased We would certainly have given to every soul its guidance…"

It is sure that Allah has such a power, but the faith which is produced by means of Allah's prohibition is not so worthy, and Allah's Will is in that humankind should be honoured with the bounty of being 'free' and pave the path of the verse He says:

"…but the true word (which has gone forth) from Me, certainly will I fill Hell with the jinn and men together."

Yes, they have paved this evil way by their own abuse authority and deserve Divine punishment, so Allah has decisively decided to fill Hell with them.

Regarding to what was said in the above, and regarding to hundreds verses of the Qur'an that have counted man as a free being who has authority, and is obliged to do some duties, and is responsible for his own deeds, and he is worthy of being guided and refined by Divine prophets (as), and is worthy of purification of the carnal soul and self-improvement, so any misconception indicating that the above verse is an evidence upon fatalism, as Fakhr-i-Razi and the like have considered, is not acceptable.

The above decisive and severe sentence may point to this fact that you should not imagine that the mercifulness and beneficence of Allah (s.w.t.) is a hinder for the guilty and polluted criminals to be punished, and no one should be proud of the verses of Divine mercy so that he exempt himself from the punishment of Allah, because His Mercy has a place and His Wrath another place.

Regarding to the Arabic signs of emphasis in the Qur'anic term /la'amla'anna/ (certainly will I fill), surely Allah will fulfil His promise and He will fill the Hell with these hellish people, because if He does not, it will be contrary to His wisdom.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 14

فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَـٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

14. "So taste (the recompense) because you neglected the meeting of this day of yours; verily We, too, forsake you; and taste the abiding chastisement for what you were doing."

Attributing forgetfulness to Allah (s.w.t.) is meaningless. Therefore, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /nasina/ (We forsake) is that Allah's reaction with those who has forgotten the Hereafter is the reaction of the one who has forsaken you.

So, it is understood from this holy verse that forgetfulness of the just court of Hereafter is the main origin of man's wretchedness, and it is in this case that he finds himself free in front of injustice and breaking laws. And also this verse makes it clear that the eternal chastisement is for the evil deeds that man commits, not something else.

By the way, forsaking of Allah (s.w.t.) due to His servants is a kind of heedlessness and abandonment of His support and succour, else the whole universe is always with the Providence, and forgetfulness concerning Him does not mean.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 15

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّداً وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لاَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

15. "Only those believe in Our signs who, when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrating in obeisance and celebrate the praise of their Lord, and they are not proud,"

In its own style of teaching, when illustrating the feature of the wrong doers, the Qur'an mentions the signs of the true believers, too. Therefore, after explaining some things about the wrong doers and disbelievers in the former verses, here the Holy Qur'an refers to some outstanding qualities of the true believers.

It briefly states their creedal principles and practical programs through two verses by mentioning eight qualities of theirs.[2]

It says:

"Only those believe in Our signs who, when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrating in obeisance and celebrate the praise of their Lord, and they are not proud,"

The application of the Arabic word /'innama/, which is usually used for restriction, points to this matter that when someone claims faith and he is not qualified with the specialties mentioned in this noble verse he is not on the row of the true believers. He is a person of a weak faith who can not be counted among true believers.

In this holy verse four qualities of theirs are mentioned:

1- As soon as they hear the word 'Allah' they fall in prostration. The application of the term /xarru/ in place of /sajadu/ points to a tender matter, saying that this group of believers, whose hearts are vigilant, at the time of hearing the verses of the Qur'an will be so absorbed to the words of Allah that they voluntarily fall in prostration and lose their soul and heart in this way.

Yes, their first specialty is their ardent love and interest to the word of their believed and their object of worship. This very quality has been mentioned in some other verses of the Holy Qur'an, too, as one of the most outstanding qualities of the Divine prophets. Concerning a group of great Prophets, He says:

"…When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."[3]

The verses are mentioned here absolutely, but it is clear that its purpose is mostly the verses that invite to Monotheism and struggle against polytheism.

2 and 3- Their second and third signs are celebration and praise unto Allah. From one side, they count Allah exempt from imperfection, and, from other side, they praise Him for His attributes of perfection and beauty.

4- Their other quality is modesty and abandoning any kind of arrogance, since pride is as the first step of the ladder of blasphemy and faithlessness, while modesty, in regard to the truth, is the first step of faith.

Those who pave the path of pride and egotism neither prostrate before Allah nor do they glorify and praise Him, nor do they formally respect the rights of His servants. They have a great idol and it is their selves.

At the end, there are four verses of the Qur'an that at the time of recitation of them, it is obligatory for us to fall ourselves in prostration.

The concerning Suras of these verses are: Fussilat, No. 41, An-Najm, No. 53, 'Alaq, No. 96, and As-Sajdah, No. 32, and idiomatically they are called 'Aza'im (incantations).

According to the school of Ahlul Bayt (as) the recitation of these four Suras in prayer, after Al-Hamd, is not permissible, and those who are in the state of major ritual impurity and monstrous women must not recite even one verse of these four Suras.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 16

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفاً وَطَمَعاً وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

16. "Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance that We have bestowed on them."

Getting up in midnight and separating from one's bed is one of other signs of the believers. Therefore, this verse says:

"Their sides draw away from (their) beds…"

They, get up in midnight and begin uttering invocation in the presence of Allah.

Yes, when the eyes of the negligent people are asleep, they awaken and spend a part of night in praying and supplicating.

At that time when the ordinary programs are suspended, mental occupations reach to the lowest point, quietness and quietude dominate everywhere, the danger of polluting worship to hypocrisy can exist less than other times, and, shortly speaking, the conditions of heart's attention is available, they go to Allah with their whole entity and they tell Him what they have in mind.

They are alive with His remembrance, and they keep the container of their hearts full of His love.

Then, the Qur'an says:

"…they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope…"

Yes, their other qualities are 'fear' and hope'.

They neither feel security from the punishment of Allah, nor are they disappointed from His Mercy. The balance of this fear and hope, which is the warrant of their perfection and progression in the path of Allah, is

always found in them, because when fear overcomes, hope in a man will fall in hopelessness and weakness.

The increase of hope and desire draws man toward pride and negligence, and these two are both the enemies of man's developing movement alongside his way towards Allah.

The last and the eighth quality of theirs is donation.

The verse says:

"…and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance that We have bestowed on them."

They not only spend out of their own wealth for the needy ones, but also bestow their knowledge, power, correct judgment, experience, and good thoughts on those people who are in need of them.

They are as a centre of goodness and blessing, and they work as a flowing spring of benedictions from which the thirsty men can drink and remove their own indigence as much as they can afford.

Yes, their qualities are known as a collection of: firm belief, strong faith, and ardent love to Allah, worship and obedience, struggle and movement, helping the servants of Allah in all its dimensions.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 17

فَلاَ تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَآ أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

17. "And no person knows what (important reward) is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes, in recompense for what (good) they were doing."

The act of being vigilant at midnight, the midnight prayer, and helping the needy and deprived people bring the best rewards, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The reward of every good deed has been mentioned in the Qur'an except the reward of the midnight prayer and none knows its reward but Allah."

Then he recited this verse.[4]

However, this holy verse refers to the great and important reward of the true believers who have the signs and qualities mentioned in the previous two verses. With an interesting statement which denotes to the extraordinary importance of their reward, it says:

"And no person knows what (important reward) is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes…"

This extraordinary great reward is the recompense of the good deeds that they used to do. The verse continues saying:

"…in recompense for what (good) they were doing."

The application of "no person knows" and the application of the Arabic phrase: /Qurrat-i-'a'yun/ (of the joy of the eyes) show the endless dignity of these rewards, specially with regard to this fact that the Arabic word /nafs/ has been mentioned in the form of an undefined noun and with a negative style which denotes to generality and it encompasses all of the souls, even the Divine near-stationed angels and the friends of Allah.

The application of the Arabic phrase: /qurrat-i-'a'yon/ (of the joy of the eyes) without annexation to the word /nafs/ points to this fact that these Divine bounties, which have been appointed for the abode of Hereafter as

the rewards of the true believers, are in such a state that they are the cause of the joy of the eyes of everybody.

The Arabic word /qurrah/ is derived from /qurr/ in the sense of 'cold' and 'coolness', and since it is known that the tear of joy is cold and the tear of sorrow is warm, then the application of /qurrat-i-'a'yon/ in the Arabic language means something that causes the man's eyes to become cold; that is, it makes the tear of joy flow down from his eyes, and this is a tender allusion for the utmost happiness.

A Few Traditions Upon Midnight Prayer

1- Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"There is not any good deed but there has been stated a reward for it except the midnight prayer that Allah, the Mighty, has not stated its reward for the sake of its importance and He has said: 'And no person knows what (important reward) is hidden for them of the joy of he eyes…'"[5]

But besides all of these things, as we said before, too, the world of Hereafter is an extraordinary vaster world than this world, and it is even vaster than the life of this present world comparing the world of foetus in Mother's womb, and in principle, its vastness is not comprehensible for us, the prisoners of this world, and it is not imaginable for anyone.

We only hear something about it and see an adumbration of it from far distance, but it is impossible for us to understand its importance until we get a kind of seeing and understanding resembled to that of that world, as supposing the child in the mother's womb had a complete intellect and wit he could never understand the merits and bounties of this world.

This very meaning has been cited about the martyrs in the way of Allah.

When a martyr falls on the ground, the ground says:

"Well done for the pure soul that flies from a pure body. This glad tiding is for you that you will have a thing that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no man's heart has ever perceived."[6]

2- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The two-unit prayer that a person establishes in the middle of night is better for him than the world and what is in it; and if it were not difficult for my Ummah I would certainly enjoined those two on them."[7]

Imam Rida (as) said:

"Be aware of the midnight prayer.

There will not be any servant who gets up at the end of night and establishes eight units of night prayer, two units of Shaf' prayer, and one unit of Watr prayer and in his Qunut (personal prayer) seventy times asks forgiveness from Allah except that Allah will save him from the punishment of the grave, the punishment of the Fire and prolongs his lifetime, and enlarges his living for him."

Then he (as) said:

"The houses wherein night prayer is established at night, its light glitters for the inhabitants of the heaven in the same way that the light of stars glitters for the inhabitants of the earth."[8]

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 18

أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِناً كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقاً لاَ يَسْتَوُونَ

18. "Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal."

The way of comparison is one of the best educational ways. In this verse, the comparison which was mentioned in former verses is made more clear.

It says:

"Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal."

This sentence has been stated in a positive interrogation with a negative form the answer of which emerges from the intellect and nature of any person indicating that these two are never equal. Yet, in order to emphasize, the Qur'an specifies this inequality.

In this verse, the Qur'anic word /fasiq/ (transgressor) has been mentioned versus /mu'min/ (believer), and this is an evidence for the fact that the Arabic word /fisq/ has a vast scope of meaning which encompasses both infidelity and other sins.

This word originally is taken from the Arabic phrase /fasaqat-iθ-θamarah/ (the fruit has come out from its cover, or the stone of the date has separated from the date and has come out from it).

Then it has been used for coming out from the obedience of the command of Allah and wisdom; and we know that whoever blasphemes or commits a sin has come out of the command of Allah and wisdom.

This point is also notable that as long as a fruit is inside its cover it is safe, but when it comes out from its cover it will decay. Therefore, when a person becomes a transgressor, he has indeed become decayed.

A group of great commentators concerning this verse have cited that one day Walid-ibn-'Aqabah told Hadrat Ali (as):

"I am more elegant than you from the point of tongue, and my sword is sharper than yours."

(He wanted to say, as he thought, he was better than him (as) both in speech and fighting.) In answer to him, Imam Ali (as) said:

"It is not such that you say, O' evil-doer!"

(He implicitly said that he was the same person that at the time when he was gathering alms from the tribe of Ban-il-Mustalaq he accused them to opposition against Islam and Allah rejected him and called him evil-doer in Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 7 where the Qur'an says:

"O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it…"

This tradition has been cited in Majma'ul-Bayan by the Late Tabarsi, in the Commentary of Qurtabi, and in Rouh-ul-Bayan by Fadil-i-Barsu'i.

It is notable that we recite in ''Usd-ul-Qayah fi Ma'rifat-is-Sahabah' that there is no contradiction between the commentators of the Qur'an that this recent verse (49:7) has been sent down about Walid-ibn-'Aqabah in the event of the tribe of Ban-il-Mustalaq.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 19-20

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَي نُزُلاً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ كُلَّمَآ أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَآ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

19. "As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, the gardens (of bless) are their abiding-place, and entertainment for what they used to do."

20. "And as for those who transgress, their abode is the Fire. Whenever they desire to go out of it, they shall be brought back into it, and it shall be said to them: 'Taste the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny'."

In the previous verse (No. 18) it was simply asked whether a believer and an evil-doer are equal. The above verse explains the fate of both of them.

It says:

"As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, the gardens (of bless) are their abiding-place…"

Then it implicitly adds that these gardens of abiding-place are the means of Allah's entertainment instead of the good deeds they did.

The verse continues saying:

"…and entertainment for what they used to do."

The Arabic word /nuzulan/ is usually used for something which is provided for the guest. This is a narrow indication for this reason that the believers will ceaselessly be entertained in Paradise like some guests, while the people of the Hell, as will be said through the next verse, are like some prisoners that whenever they wish to come out from it they will be brought back into it.

And if we see that Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 102 says:

"…Verily We have prepared Hell for the infidels to be entertained (therein)"

it is, indeed, from the kind of

"…give tiding to them of a painful chastisement."

This indirectly says that instead of entertaining them they will be punished and instead of giving them glad tidings it threatens them.

Some commentators believe that /nuzul/ (an entertainment) is the first thing by which a new entered guest is entertained. Thus, it is a tender indication to this fact that the gardens of bless as their abiding-place, with all the bounties therein, are the first entertainment of these Divine guests, and after them there will be many other merits of which no one is aware but Allah.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /lahum jannatun/ can be a hint to this matter that Allah does not give them these gardens as a loan, but they will be in their possession eternally, in a way that the probability of the transience of these bounties never disturbs the calmness of their thought.

The next verse speaks about the opposite group who disobey Allah, where it says:

"And as for those who transgress, their abode is the Fire…"

They will be prisoners in this terrible abode forever in a way that:

"…Whenever they desire to go out of it, they shall be brought back into it, and it shall be said to them: 'Taste the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny'."

Again we see here that the Divine punishment has been appointed for infidelity and rejection, which is a recompense for one's deed. This matter points to this fact that faith alone is not enough but it must be a motive for action, while disbelief alone is enough for the punishment although there is not any action accompanied with it.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 21

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الأَدْنَي دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

21. "And indeed We make them taste of the nearer chastisement (in this world) before the greater chastisement (in Hereafter) that haply they may return (to Allah)."

The worldly punishment is both near and small, while the punishment of Hereafter is both far and great. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The purpose of /'aŏabil 'adna/ (the nearer chastisement) is afflictions, sicknesses, and labours that man face with in this world."[9]

So, following the discussion mentioned in previous verses about the sinners and their painful punishment, in this verse the Holy Qur'an points to one of the secret favours of Allah concerning them which is exactly the small and awakening punishments of this world in order that it shows that Allah never wishes that His servants may be involved in the eternal punishment; for this reason He uses all the awakening means for their deliverance.

He sends the Divine messengers; He sends down heavenly Books; and He gives blessings. So, such evil-doers will not have any fate but the Fire of Hell. It says:

"And indeed We make them taste of the nearer chastisement (in this world) before the greater chastisement (in Hereafter) that haply they may return (to Allah)."

Certainly, the Qur'anic phrase /'aŏab-il-'adna/ has a vast meaning which envelops many of the probable meanings that the Islamic commentators have separately mentioned upon its commentary. Among them is that its purpose is the afflictions, pains, and troubles.

Or it is the violent famine and draught that the pagans were faced with in Mecca for seven years, so terribly that they had to feed from corpses.

Or it is the hard stroke that they received in the Battle of Badr; and the like of them.

But some commentators have thought that the purpose of it may be 'the punishment of grave' or 'the chastisement in Raj'at (return to life in this world after death). This idea does not seem correct, because it is not consistent with the Qur'anic holy sentence /la'allahum yarji'un/ (haply they may return (to Allah)).

This matter must be noted, of course, that there are some sudden chastisements in this world, too, that when they come the doors of repentance will be shut. This chastisement is the unchangeable punishment which comes for the incorrigible persons to annihilate them, and, of course,

as a subject this kind of chastisement is not naturally inside the discussion of this verse.

The Qur'anic phrase /'aŏab-il-'akbar/ (the Divine greater chastisement) refers to the punishment of the Hereafter Day, which is greater and more painful than any other chastisement.

The reason why the word /'adna/ (nearer) is mentioned versus /'akbar/ (greater) while the word /'adna/ must be said either versus /'ab'ad/ (farther), or /'asqar/ (smaller) versus /'akbar/, there is a point in it that some commentators have explained it.

The punishment of the world has two qualities: it is small and it is near; and at the time of threat it is not appropriate that its being small to be emphasized but its being near is emphasized.

And the punishment of the Hereafter Day has also two qualities: it is far and it is great, and concerning that it is appropriate that it should be emphasized on its 'being great', not on its 'being far'.

The application of the Arabic word /la'alla/ (haply) at the end of the verse, as we said before, is for the sake that tasting the chastisements that are given as warnings are not the whole sufficient cause for awakening, but it is a part of the cause, and it needs preparation and a receptive ground without which there will not come any result. So the word /la'lla/ points to this fact.

By the way, hereby one of the important philosophies of the existence of afflictions, disasters, and calamities, which is very sensitive in the discussions concerning Monotheism, theology, and justice of the Lord, will be made clear.

Not only in this verse, but also in some other verses of the Qur'an this fact has been pointed out, including Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 94 which says:

"And We did not send a prophet in any town but We overtook its people with distress and affliction that they might humble themselves."

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 22

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَآ إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ

22. "And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the signs of his Lord, then he turns away from them? We shall take vengeance upon the guilty."

Turning away from the revelations of Allah is a crime, and the guilty will be involved in the Divine vengeance.

This verse implies that if none of the awakening means, even the punishment of Allah, is of no avail, there will be no way but the Divine vengeance upon this group of people who are the most unjust ones.

Therefore, the verse says:

"And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the signs of his Lord, then he turns away from them? We shall take vengeance upon the guilty."

These people, in fact, are those ones on whom the Divine merits and blessings have not affected, nor do His punishment and affliction give them

as a warning. Therefore there is not any one more unjust than them, and if they are not taken vengeance of, then of whom vengeance must be taken?

It is clear that, regarding the former verses, the purpose of ‘the guilty’ here is the deniers of Origin or Resurrection and the faithless sinners.

The verses of the Qur’an have repeatedly introduced a group of people as the most unjust ones, though the form of the sentences is different, but, in fact the root of them all returns to infidelity, polytheism and disbelief. Therefore, the usage of ‘the most unjust’, which is a superlative form, is not improper.

The application of the Arabic word /θumma/ in the above verse, which is usually used for distance, may point to this fact that such persons will be given enough respite here in order to search, and their first oppositions will not bring the vengeance of Allah (s.w.t.). But after the end of sufficient respite, they will deserve the Divine vengeance.

By the way, it must be noted that the application of ‘vengeance’ from the point of Arabic lexicon means ‘to punish’, though in daily usages the concept of ‘healing the heart’ is understood from it but this meaning is not found in its main lexicographical concept.

This meaning has numerously been applied in the Holy Qur’an in respect of Allah, the Mighty, while He is above these concepts and He acts only according to His Wisdom.

Notes

1. Surah Al-An‘am, No. 6, verse 28
2. It should be noted that the above verse is the first verse of ‘obligation prostration in the Qur’an, and all of it is recited or is heard it is obligatory that one prostrates. Of course, ablution is not necessary in it but the obligatory precaution is in that the forehead should be put on something upon which prostration is correct.
3. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 58
4. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Al-Mizan, and Burhan, following the verse.
5. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Following the verse.
6. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following verse 171 from Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3
7. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 7, No. 21405, P. 785 (published in 18 Vols.)
8. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 87, P. 161
9. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn and Kanz-ud-Daqa’iq, the commentaries

Section 3: Similitude of Moses' Missions

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 23

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ فَلاَ تَكُن فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِن لِّقَآئِهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًي لِبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ

23. "And certainly We gave the Book (Torah) to Moses, so be not in doubt of his receiving it and We appointed it guidance for the Children of Israel."

There should not be any doubt about the heavenly leader:

"So be not in doubt".

However, the Torah was sent down for the guidance of the Children of Israel, not for mankind:

"…a guidance for the Children of Israel."

This verse briefly points to the story of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel in order to console the Prophet of Islam (S) and the early Muslims, and to invite them to patience and perseverance in the face of the polytheists' denials, rejections and hindering in the affairs.

It is also a glad tidings for the believers that at last they would overcome this group of obstinate disbelievers, as the children of Israel overcame their enemies and became leaders throughout the earth.

In view of the fact that Moses (as) is a great prophet in whom both the Jews and Christians believe, from this point of view this matter can be a motive for the People of the Book to move toward Qur'an and Islam.

At first the verse says:

"And certainly We gave the Book (Torah) to Moses, so be not in doubt of his receiving it…"

Then it continues saying:

"…and We appointed it guidance for the Children of Israel."

Commentators have some discussions that to whom the pronoun in the Qur'anic phrase /min liqa'ihi/ returns, and there are seven probable interpretations about it.

That which seems nearer to the fact among them is that it returns to 'Book' (the Torah, the heavenly Book of Moses), and it is the object of the sentence and Moses is the subject of it.

Therefore, the whole sentence means:

"You should not be in doubt that Moses met the heavenly Book and he received it which had been revealed to him from the side of Allah."

The vivid evidence for this commentary is that there are three sentences mentioned in the above holy verse.

The first and the last sentence surely speak about the Torah. Thus, it is appropriate that the middle sentence also follows the same meaning, not that it speaks about the Hereafter or the Qur'an, in this case it will be a parenthetical clause, and we know that a parenthetical clause is opposite to the apparent and it must not be mentioned unless it is needed.

The only question that remains in this commentary is the word /liqa'/ used concerning the heavenly Book, because this word has often been used in the Qur'an with the term 'Allah', or 'Rabb', or Hereafter and the like, and it refers to the Resurrection.

It is for this reason that some commentators have preferred this probability here to say that the above verse at first speaks about the descent of the Torah to Moses, and then it commands the Prophet of Islam (S) that he should not doubt in /liqa'allah/ and the subject of Resurrection, and again it returns to the subject of Torah.

But it should be admitted that, in this case, the relationship between the sentences of this verse will utterly be disturbed and it ruins the flowing of it.

It must be noted, however, that though the word /liqa'/ has not been used in the Qur'an about the receiving a heavenly Book, the words /'ilqa'/ and /talaqqi/ have repeatedly been used in this sense, as the Qur'an says:

"Has the reminder been made to light upon him (Muhammad) from among us?…"[1]

and in the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba we recite when Solomon's letter reached her, she said:

"…Verily there has been thrown unto me a noble letter."[2]

And in this very Surah, verse 6, concerning the Qur'an we recite:

"And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-knowing."

And in Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 13 we recite:

"…We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open."

From the whole of what we said the preference of this commentary to other probabilities mentioned about the above verse is made clear.

But in any case, it is necessary to note this matter that the holy Prophet (S) had no doubt in these issues, but these kind of meanings are usually for emphasis upon the subject and also a lesson for others.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 24

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

24. "And We appointed from among them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, when they endured patiently, and they were quite certain of Our signs."

The appointment of Divine leaders is among the rights of Allah (s.w.t.).

Certainty and patience with perseverance are two necessary conditions for leadership. (A leader must have certainty in the aim and he must have patience and perseverance until the last moment.) Therefore, this verse points to the honours that the children of Israel obtained under the shade of perseverance and faith in order that it can be a lesson for others.

It says:

"And We appointed from among them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, when they endured patiently, and they were quite certain of Our signs."

Here the Holy Qur'an counts two things as the secrets and conditions of leadership: one is proving faith and certainty to the Divine verses, and the other is patience and perseverance.

This matter is not allocated to the Children of Israel; it is a lesson for all nations and for the Muslims in all times. They must strengthen the basis of their own certainty and do not fear from the difficulties found in the way of confirming the line of Monotheism. They must have patience and

perseverance in order to become the leader of the nations throughout the history of the world.

The Qur'anic term /yahdun/ (they guide) is used in the simple present tense, and also the term /yuqinun/ (they are certain) which is in the simple present tense, too, are two evidences for the continuation of these two qualities throughout their lifetime since the subject of leadership is not far from difficulties even for a moment and in every step the godly leader of people encounters a new problem against which he must permanently struggle by the power of certainty and perseverance and continue the line of guidance by Allah's commandment.

It is notable that the subject of guidance is conditioned to 'Allah's command' and the Holy Qur'an says:

"Who guided (people) by Our command"

and the important thing in the subject of guidance is this very thing that it originates from the command of Allah, not from the people's affair and the desire of the self, nor imitation from this and that.

Considering the contents of the Qur'an, Imam Sadiq (as) in his expressive tradition, divides leaders into two kinds: The first are the leaders who undertake the leadership of people by the command of Allah, not by people's affair.

They always give priority to the command of Allah, the Almighty, the Wise, rather than their own affairs and they consider Allah's commandment above their own command.

But the second kind are the leaders who invite others to Fire and give priority to their own command before the command of Allah. They act according to their own carnal desire and against the Book of Allah.[3]

Whether the Qur'anic word /'amr/ (command), here, is a religious command (the Divine commandments in religion) or a genetic command (the influence of Divine command in the world of creation), the apparent of the holy verse leads to the first meaning and the interpretations of the traditions and commentators indicate to this very meaning, too. But some of the great commentators have taken it with "genetic command."

Explanation: In the verses of Qur'an and Islamic traditions Guidance has been rendered into two meanings: Showing the way, and taking a person to what he demands (causing him to reach the destination).

The guidance of the Divine leaders is also done by both those ways. Sometimes they suffice only to enjoinment and prohibition but sometimes, by innate influence inside the receptive hearts, they cause them to reach educational aims and spiritual positions.

Patience and Perseverance in Divine Leaders

In the holy verses under discussion, there are two qualities mentioned for the Divine leaders: the first is patience and perseverance, and the second is Faith and certainty to Divine verses.

This patience and perseverance, mentioned in the above, has a lot of branches.

Sometime it is for the afflictions that come to a person.

Sometimes it is in the fact of the freedom which may be given to his friends and advocators.

Sometimes it is alongside of the slanders, ill-talks and profanities that are done against sacred things.

Sometimes it is from the side of malevolent persons.

Sometimes it is from the side of ill-wishing ones.

Sometimes it is from the side of ignorant people.

Sometimes it is from the side of a group of knowledgeable wrong-doers.

In short, an aware leader must always show patience and perseverance in the face of all these difficulties and other than them. He must never go out from the centre of events. He must not be impatient nor does he complain. He should not lose his control. He must not become hopeless. He must not be anxious nor regretful. Such a leader can gain his goal.

There is a conclusive and interesting tradition in this regard narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

Once he (as) told one of his close companions:

"He who shows patience, is patient for a short time (and after it there comes victory); and he who is impatient, he also shows impatience for a short time (and its fruit is failure)."

Then he said:

"You should be patient in all your affairs, because Allah, the Almighty, has appointed Muhammad (S) to prophecy and commanded him to patience and perseverance, and He told him to show patience in the face of what they say and if it is necessary he may separate from them, but not a separation that hinders his invitation unto the Truth.

Here is the Qur'an's saying:

'And have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble (dignity)'."[4] [5]***,***

He also told him to do good instead of their bad actions. It is in this case that those who are his enemy will become as his sincere friends.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend."[6]

Then he (as) added:

"The Prophet (S) showed patience and perseverance so much so that they threw the kinds of arrows of calumny towards him. (They called him mad, sorcerer, and poet and belied him his prophethood.) The breast of the Prophet (S) became straitened because of their words and Allah sent down this verse to him, saying:

'And certainly We know that your breast straitens at what they say,'

'Therefore celebrate the praise of your Lord and be of those who make obeisance',[7]

because these acts of worship comfort you."

"Again they rejected him and accused him. He became sad. Allah sent this verse to him indicating that He knew that their words had made him sad, but he should know that their aim was not to belie him, but those unjust people belied the verses of Allah.

The Holy Qur'an says:

‘Indeed We know that what they say surely grieves you. Yet verily it is not you (that) they belie, but the unjust deny the signs of Allah.’[8]

‘Messengers indeed have been denied before you, but they, were patient on being denied and hurt, until Our help came unto them…’[9]

The Prophet (S) was again patient until they violated the limit. They uttered the Name of Allah badly and belied.”

The Prophet (S) said:

“O Lord! I was patient in respect to myself, my family and my honour, but I can not be patient in the face of their slanders against Your Sacred Rank.”

Again Allah commanded him to be patient and said:

“And certainly We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and there touched Us not any fatigue.”[10]

Then Imam Sadiq (as) adds:

“After that, the Prophet (S) was patient in all cases and for all difficulties, and this patience caused that Allah gave him glad tidings that there would be some Imams (leaders) in his family (his progeny), and He recommended those Imams to be patient, too.11”

“It was here that the Prophet (S) said:

‘Patience for the Faith is like head for the body’.

And finally this patience and perseverance caused him to overcome the polytheists and the Divine command was issued that he could take vengeance of those transgressors who were not worthy of guidance, so they were killed by the Prophet (S) and his followers. This was their recompense in this world, in addition to the rewards of the Hereafter.”

Then Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“He who is patient and counts it for Allah, will not go out of the world until the time when Allah enlightens his eyes with the defeat of his enemies, besides the rewards that He will store for him for the Day of Hereafter.”[12]

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 25

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفونَ

25. “Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ.”

To judge between people for what they differ in is one of the affairs of Lordship in Hereafter.

Since the Children of Israel, like other nations, after these true leaders discarded among them and went different ways so that they caused people to separate into various groups, in the verse under discussion, the Holy Qur’an, in a threatening tone, says:

“Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ.”

And in the Hereafter Day everybody will be recompensed for his own deed.

Yes, the origin of discords is always when the Truth is mixed with desire and wishes, and since the Hereafter is a Day when the desires will be colourless and vanished, and the truth will be manifest in the same form that

it is, by His command, Allah will put an end to the dissensions. And this is one of other philosophies of Resurrection.

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 26

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ أَفَلاَ يَسْمَعُونَ

26. "Does it not point out to them the right way, how many of the generations, in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them? Verily in that are signs: do they not then hear?"

The people of Mecca were aware of the destruction of the former nations and the remaining traces of theirs existed in the roads wherein they used to pass by, but they did not take an example.

The previous verses contained threats upon the faithless sinners, and the verse under discussion is also an explanation and a completion upon this threat.

It says:

"Does it not point out to them the right way, how many of the generations, in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them?…"

The afflicted lands of 'Ad and Thamud and the ruined cities of the People of Lot were located on their way towards Syria.

These lands were once the central place of some powerful nations who were also misguided and polluted. Their prophets constantly warned them, but they did not change their manner and, finally, the Divine punishment annihilated them.

Whenever they pass across these lands they hear the shout of the gravels of that desert and the sounds of their ruined castles which have hundred tongues and reiterate the result of infidelity and pollution for them, but they react as if they have entirely lost their hearing ears.

Therefore, at the end of this noble verse, the Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"…Verily in that are signs: do they not then hear?"

Surah As-Sajdah - Verse 27

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَآءَ إِلَي الأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنفُسُهُمْ أَفَلاَ يُبْصِرُونَ

27. "Have they not seen that We drive the water to the parched land and We bring forth thereby crops of which their cattle and themselves eat? Will they not then see?"

The training method of the Holy Qur'an is that for guiding people it uses some of the natural transformations.

The movement of the clouds which have moist, and the rainfall in the zones far from the sea, is not casual, but it is done by the Wise will of Allah.

This verse points to one of the most important bounties of Allah which is the cause of cultivation of all lands and the means of the life of all living creatures, in order to make clear that in the same manner that Allah, the Almighty, is able to destroy the habitable lands of the transgressors, He can

flourish the ruin and dead lands, too, and bestow all kinds of merits on His servants.

It says:

"Have they not seen that We drive the water to the parched land and We bring forth thereby crops of which their cattle and themselves eat? Will they not then see?"

The Arabic term /juruz/ means a land where plants have been rooted out from, or, in other words, there grows no plant from it. It is originally derived from /jaraz/ with the sense of 'to cut off' and 'to chop off'. As if any kind of plant had been cut off from such a land, or the land itself had cut those plants.

It is interesting that the Arabic phrase /nusuq-ul-ma'/ (we drive the water) has been applied here. This indicates that for its heaviness the nature of water appropriates that it stays on the land and in ditches, and because of its being liquid it must naturally go down in the depth of the ground, but when Allah's command comes, it loses its nature and changes into some light vapour which goes everywhere by the blow of an ordinary simple wind.

Yes, these very pieces of cloud that are in the sky are some large seas of sweet water which, by Allah's command and by the help of winds, are sent toward the dry lands.

Verily if rain did not fall a great deal of lands would not receive a drop of water, even if supposing there were some rivers full of water they might not flow over them.

But now we see that by this grace of Allah there have grown some forests, plenty of trees and many plants on a lot of high mountains, in impracticable slopes and high hills.

This wonderful power of natural irrigation is found only in the nature of rain, and nothing else can afford it.

The Arabic word /zar'/ has a vast meaning which envelops any plant and tree, though in applications it is sometimes used for trees.

The word 'cattle' is mentioned in this verse before 'men' and it may be for the sake that the cattle feed entirely from plants while men feed on both plants and the meat of cattle. Or for the sake that as soon as plants grow they are fit for the use of cattle, while the use of plants for men often postpones to later times when the plants deliver their seed and fruit to them to consume.

It is interesting that at the end of the verse the phrase:

"Will they not then see?"

is mentioned, while at the end of the previous verse the phrase:

"…do they not then hear?",

has come. This difference is for the sake that everybody sees the scene of lands that are quickened by the descent of rain by the eyes while they often hear the details concerning the former nations in the form of some news.

It is understood from then whole explanations of the two abovementioned verses that Allah says to this disobedient group that they may open their eyes and ears to see and hear the facts in order to contemplate that how one day He (s.w.t.) commanded the winds to rain the

castles and buildings of the People of ‘Ad and, on another day, He commands the same winds to take clouds toward the dead lands and cause them to become cultivated and green. Do they not yet submit to such a Power?

Surah As-Sajdah - Verses 28-30

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لاَ يَنفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَانتَظِرْ إِنَّهُم مُنتَظِرُونَ

28. “And they ask: ‘When shall be this Victory, if you are truthful?’”

29. “Say: ‘On the day of Victory, the faith of those who disbelieve will not profit them nor will they be respited’.”

30. “Therefore turn away from them and wait, verily they, too, do wait.”

And in view of the fact that the previous verses threatened the guilty to the Divine vengeance and gave glad tidings to the believers about their later leadership and victory, here the pagans proudly ask this question that when do these Divine promises and punishments will be fulfilled?

As the Qur’an says:

“And they ask: ‘When shall be this Victory, if you are truthful?’”

Immediately after this, the Qur’an answers them and the Prophet (S) is commanded as follows:

“Say: ‘On the day of Victory, the faith of those who disbelieve will not profit them nor will they be respited’.”

That is, if your purpose is that you see the veracity of the Divine promises that you have heard from the tongue of the Prophet (S) and then you believe, that day is too late and that faith does not profit you.

It is understood from what was said that the purpose of the phrase /yaum-ul-fath/ (the day of victory) is ‘the immediate punishment’, i.e. the punishment which annihilates the pagans and will not give them respite to believe.

In other words, it is a kind of worldly punishment. So it is neither the punishment of the Hereafter nor the ordinary chastisement in this world but it is a punishment which, after completing the argument, puts an end to the life of guilty people.

Finally, in the last verse of this Surah (Surah As-Sajdah) the words are concluded with an expressive and meaningful threat.

Addressing the Prophet (S), it says:

“Therefore turn away from them and wait, verily they, too, do wait.”

Now that neither glad tidings nor warning affect them, nor are they some logical and reasonable people that by observing the Divine signs in the expanse of creation know Him and do not worship other than Him, nor do they have a vigilant conscience that they hearken to the cry of Monotheism from inside their own soul, the Prophet (S) should turn away from them and wait for the grace of Allah and they, too, wait for the punishment of Allah, because they deserve only the punishment.

O Lord! Set us among those who by seeing the first signs of the truth submit to it and believe.

O Lord! Separate us entirely from the moods of pride, haughtiness, and obstinacy.

O Lord! Provide the perfect victory of the army of Islam over the army of disbelief as soon as possible.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 25
2. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 29
3. Kafi, Vol. 1, P. 168
4. Surah Al-Muzammil, No. 73, verse 11
5. Al-Kafi, Vol. 4, P. 268
6. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 34
7. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verses 97 and 98
8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 33
9. Ibid verse 34
10. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 38
11. The verse under discussion
12. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 72 (old edition), and Vol. 4, PP. 268-270 (New edition with Persian translation)

Surah Al-'Ahzab, Chapter 33

(The Clans)

No. 33 (Revealed at Medina)

73 Verses in 9 Sections

The Feature of the Surah Al-'Ahzab

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah was revealed in Medina and contains seventy three verses.

In the fifth year of Hijrah the Jews of Medina, pagans of Mecca, and the hypocrites hidden amongst the Muslims united to fight against the Muslims. Then the Prophet (S) and his followers dug a deep ditch around Medina to defend against their attack.

This battle was designed by different groups and thus it was called 'The Battle of Clans', and since the Muslims dug a ditch in order to defend themselves, this battle became known as 'The Battle of Ditch'.

On the whole, seventeen verses of this Surah are about the Battle of clans, and since in verses 20 and 22, the Arabic word /'ahzab/ (the clans) is used for three times, this Surah was called Al-'Ahzab (the clans).

In addition to the explanation concerning the Battle of Clans, there are some other matter mentioned in this Surah about 'injurious assimilation', divorce in the Age of Ignorance, the ordinances of adoption (adopted son), the subject of veiling of women, and paying attention to Resurrection.

The Virtue of Surah Al-'Ahzab

All knowledgeable men of Islam believe that this Surah was revealed in Medina, and, as we said before, the whole verses of it are seventy three; and since a great part of this Surah refers to 'The Battle of Clans', the name of Al-'Ahzab has been chosen for it.

Upon the virtue of this Surah, it is sufficient that the holy Prophet of Islam (S) in a tradition said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-'Ahzab and teaches it to his family members…will be secure from the chastisement of the grave."[1]

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Whoever recites Surah Al-'Ahzab frequently, on the Hereafter Day, will be in the neighbourhood of Muhammad (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (as)."[2]

We have repeatedly said that these kinds of virtues and honours are not obtained by a mere recitation which is empty of any kind of contemplation and action. A recitation is needed that is the origin of contemplation, a contemplation that makes the horizon of man's thought so bright that the rays of which appear in his deeds.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 234
2. Ibid

Section 1: The Prophet Muhammad's Claim Upon the Souls of the Believers

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلاَ تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "O' Prophet! Be in awe of Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites; verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Occasion of Revelation

The Islamic commentators have cited different occasions of revelations here, all of which pursue one matter. One of them is that these verses have been revealed about Abusufyan and some of other chiefs of pagans and polytheists who, after the Battle of 'Uhud, asked permission from the Prophet (S) and entered Medina.

They came to the Messenger of Allah (S) accompanied with 'Abdillah-ibn-'Ubay and some others of their friends and said:

"O Muhammad! You may dispense with vilifying our gods (the idols: Lat, 'Uzza, and Manat) and say that they will intercede their worshippers and then we will desist from you, too, and you can explain about your God whatever you want."

This suggestion made the Prophet (S) inconvenient, so 'Umar stood up and addressing the Messenger of Allah, said:

"Let me kill them by my sword!"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I have given them security and such a thing is impossible."

But he (S) ordered that they should be sent out from Medina. The above holy verse was sent down and ordered the Prophet (S) not to heed such kind of suggestions.[1]

One of the most dangerous precipices on the way of the great leaders is the collusive suggestions that are offered from the side of the opponents. It is here that some deviate lines are created in front of the leaders which intend to send them out of the main road, and this is a great trial for them.

The pagans of Mecca and the hypocrites of Medina, for several times, tried to deviate the Prophet of Islam (S) from the line of Monotheism by their collusive suggestions, among which was the one that was said in the above occasion of revelation.

So, the first verses of Surah Al-'Ahzab were sent down and put an end to their evil plot, and invited the Prophet (S) to continue his decisive style in the way of Monotheism without the least collusion.

These noble verses totally give the Prophet (S) four important commands:

The first Divine Command: is in the field of piety and virtuousness which is a preliminary of any other good program.

It says:

"O' Prophet! Be in awe of Allah…"

The essence of piety is one's innate sense of responsibility and as long as this sense of responsibility does not exist, man will not go after any constructive program.

Piety is the motive of guidance and enjoying the Divine verses, as the second verse of Surah Al-Baqarah indicates, this Qur'an is the cause of guidance for the pious ones.

It is true that the last stage of piety will be earned after having faith and acting according to the commandment of Allah, but its primary stage is found before all of these issues, since if a man does not have the sense of responsibility in his self, he will not go to search about the prophets' invitation, nor does he hearken to their words. Even the issue of "repelling the probable harm", which the scholars of theology have mentioned as the foundation of effort for gnosis of Allah, is in fact a branch of piety.

The second command is about the negation of obeying the disbelievers and hypocrites. It says:

"…and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites…"

For laying emphasis on this subject, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

If Allah orders you to leave obeying them, it is according to His infinite Knowledge and Wisdom; because He knows how painful afflictions and numerous harms are hidden in this obedience and collusion.

However, next to piety and sense of responsibility, the first duty is wiping out the face of the heart from the strangers and eradicating the troublesome thorns from this area.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 2-3

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَي إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّـكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيراً

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَكَفَي بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلاً

2. "And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; verily Allah is aware of what you do."

3. "And rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

When you close a deviated way, you should let a clear way be open.

The verse says:

"And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; verily Allah is aware of what you do."

Therefore, at first the evil of man's spirit must be sent out from inside of his soul so that the goodness substitutes it. In order that the seeds of flowers grow the thorns must be rooted out. At first the false gods must be dismissed and then the government of Allah, the Almighty, and the Divine system substitutes them.

And since there is a great deal of difficulties in the continuation of this way and there are many threats, plots, and hindrances in it, the fourth command is issued as follows:

"And rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

If a thousand enemies intend to kill the Prophet (S) he should not afraid since Allah, the Knowing, is his protector and his friend.

Apparently the addressee in these verses is the Prophet (S) but it is clear that the command itself is for the whole believers of the world. It is a prescription for salvation as well as a life-giving remedy in any age.

Some commentators have said that the Qur'anic phrase /ya'ayyuha/ is special for the instances that the aim is to attract the attention of entire people though the addressee is only one person, and it is versus the Arabic word /ya/ which is usually used in the instances that the aim is only the person who is addressed.[2]

And since in the verses under discussion the statement has begun with the phrase /ya'ayyaha/ it emphasizes the generality of the aim of these verses.

Another evidence for this meaning is the sentence which says:

"…verily Allah is aware of what you do."

The addressee in this sentence is in plural form. (Be careful)

Without saying, it is evident that the purpose of these commandments to the Prophet (S) is not that he had ever shown shortcoming in the subject of his virtuousness, and abandoning the obedience from the pagans and hypocrites, but these statements, from one side, has an emphasis on the duties of the Prophet (S) and, on the other side, they are some lessons for the whole believers.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 4

مَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِن قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ اللاَّئِي تُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَآءَكُمْ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُم بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ

4. "Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him, nor has He made your wives whom you divorce by Zihar your mothers: nor has He made your adopted sons your (real) sons these are the words of your mouths, and Allah tells you the Truth, and He guides unto the (right) way."

The heart and nature of man both incline to one thing, and whatever a person says or acts against it is his own personal hypocrisy, not the will of Allah.

(Allah has not made …)

In relation to the former holy verses that commanded the Prophet (S) that he should follow the Divine revelations, not from the pagans and hypocrites, the verses under discussion point to the result of obeying them indicating that following them invites man to a series of superstitions, falsehoods, and deviations, three of which have been stated in the verse under discussion.

At first, it says:

"Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him…"

Some of the commentators have cited upon the occasion of revelation of this part of the verse that at the Age of Ignorance there was a man named 'Jamil-ibn-Mu'ammar' who had a very strong memory. He claimed that there were two hearts within him that by either of them he could understand

better than Muhammad (S), therefore, the pagans of Quraysh called him in Arabic: /ðul qalbayn/ (The possessor of two hearts).

On the day of the Battle of Badr, when the pagans ran away, Jamil-ibn-Mu‘ammar was also among them. Abusufyan saw him in the case that he was escaping while he was wearing one shoe on his foot and he had another one in his hand.

Abusufyan asked him what news he had, and he answered:

“The army ran away.”

He said:

“Why do you have one shoe on your foot and just the other in your hand?”

Then Jamil-ibn-Ma‘ammar answered:

“Verily I did not care it. I thought I had worn both of them on my feet. (It became clear that, with that abundant claim, he was so giddy that he could not understand things as much as having even one heart). Of course, the purpose of heart in these instances is wisdom.”[3]

However, following pagans and hypocrites and leaving the obedience from Divine revelations, usually invites man to these superstitious subjects.

But besides these, this sentence has a deeper meaning, too, and it is that man has not more than one heart and it does not have capacity save for the love of one object of worship. Those who invite to polytheism and to numerous objects of worship must have numerous hearts in order to appoint each of them as a centre for the love of either of objects of worship.

In principle, a safe and sound person naturally has a single personality, and the line of his thought is a single line. He is the same in solitude and in society; in manifest and hidden; in outward and inward, and in thought and action, all of them must be the same.

The existence of any sort of hypocrisy and duality in the entity of man is an imposition upon him which contrasts the requirement of his nature.

Since man has no more than a heart, he must be a single centre of emotions, he must submit to one Law, he must have the love of one beloved, he must follow only one proper path in his life; he must parallel his manner with one party, otherwise, the variety of numerous ways and scattered aims may draw him to vanity and deviation from the path of natural Monotheism.

Upon the commentary of this verse, Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) in a tradition said:

“The love of us and the love of our enemy do not assemble in one’s heart, since Allah has not appointed for a man two hearts within him, that he loves with one and hates with another. Then our lovers are sincere in the love for us in the same manner that gold becomes pure by fire.

Whoever desires to know this fact he may test his heart. Then if there is anything of the love of our enemy mixed with the love of us (in his heart) he is not of us and we, too, are not of him.”[4]

Therefore, a single heart is the place of a single belief and it also performs a single program, because man, in fact, can not believe in something but, in action, he separates from it.

In our time, there are some persons who have taken numerous personalities for them and say that they have done, for example, that action

from the political view, and another action from the religious view, and something else from the social view and, thus, they often adjust their own contradictory deeds.

They are some hypocrites with ugly behaviour who intend to tread on the law of creation by these words. It is true that the sides of man's life are different, but there should govern a single line over all of them.

Then, the Qur'an refers to another superstition of the Age of Ignorance, which is Zihar.

When they became inconvenient from their wife and wanted to express their hatred to her, they used to say:

"You are to me like my mother's back.",

and by this saying they considered her as their own mother and it was a divorce.

In the continuation of this verse, the Qur'an says:

"…nor has He made your wives whom you divorce by Zihar your mothers:…"

Islam has not agreed with this program of Ignorance, and has not appointed the ordinances of mother in respect of them, but it appointed a punishment for it.

The person who says this statement is not allowed to copulate with her wife until when he pays the necessary atonement, and if he did not give the atonement nor did he go to his wife either, by going to the religious judge, the wife can force him to do one of two things: either he must formally and according to the law of Islam divorce her and separate from her, or he must pay the atonement and continues their matrimonial life as before.

What a kind of statement is this that a man by saying:

"You are to me like my mother's back"

to his wife she becomes as his mother? The relation of the mother and child is a natural relation and it never becomes true by a mere saying.

So, in Surah Al-Mujadalah, No. 58, verse 2 the Qur'an, in this regard, explicitly says:

"…their mothers are no others than those who gave them birth, and verily they utter a hateful word and a falsehood…"

And if their aim in saying those words was to separate from the wife, that was so in the Age of Ignorance and some of them divorced their wives in this way, separation from one's wife needs not these ugly words. Can not the divorce be uttered by a proper statement?

Some of the commentators have said that in the Age of Ignorant, the act of Zihar did not work as a cause for the separation of a man and a woman from each other, but it caused woman to be in a state of an absolute suspense.

If it had been so, the criminality of this action would have been made clearer, because by uttering a meaningless saying he would absolutely cut the matrimonial relation with his wife without that the woman could be divorced.[5]

Then the verse refers to the third superstition of the Age of Ignorance, where it says:

"…nor has He made your adopted sons your (real) sons…"

Explanation: In the Age of Ignorance there was a custom that some people would take some other children as their own children and adapted them as their own sons, and then, after it, they considered all the rights that a boy might have from his father for themselves.

For example, that by could inherit from his adopted father and the adopted father would be his heir, too, and the prohibition of step-mother (father's wife) or daughter-in-law (son's wife) was current among them.

Islam severely negated these illogical and superstitious rules, and as we will see later, in order to condemn this wrong custom, even the Prophet (S) married the wife of his adopted son, Zayd-ibn-Harithah, after that she obtained her divorce from Zayd in order to make it clear that these empty sayings could not change the facts, because the relation between father and son is a natural relation and it can never be obtained by utterances, agreements, and hollow claims.

Later we will explain that the Prophet's marriage with the divorced wife of Zayd caused a great tumult among the enemies of Islam and they used it in their evil propaganda against Islam, but those tumults were worthy in comparison with condemning that custom of the Age of Ignorance.

So, next to this sentence, the Holy Qur'an says:

"…these are the words of your mouths…"

You utter that so and so is my son, while you know in your heart that surely it is not so. These sound waves turn only in the vacant space of your mouth and come out and they never originate from your heartily belief. These are not any things but some falsehood, while the word of Allah is the Truth.

The verse continues saying:

"…and Allah tells you the Truth, and He guides unto the (right) way."

A true statement is a statement which adapts to a concrete reality or it is an agreement consistent with the interests of the whole matter, and we know that the reprobated subject of Zihar in the Age of Ignorance, or the subject of 'adapted son', which considerably ruined the rights of other children, was neither a concrete reality nor was it an agreement to protect the common interest.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 5

ادْعُوهُمْ لِآبَآئِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِندَ اللَّهِ فَإِن لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوا ءَابَآءَهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَآ أَخْطَأْتُم بِهِ وَلَكِن مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً
رَحِيماً

5. "Call them after their (true) fathers, that is more equitable with Allah; but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends, and there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, but what you do with intent of heart (you are responsible), and Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

In order to lay a more emphasis and making clear the correct and logical line of Islam, the Qur'an says:

"Call them after their (true) fathers, that is more equitable with Allah…"

The Arabic word /'aqsat/ (more equitable) used here means that if you call them by adapted fathers' names it is just and by their real fathers' names is more equitable. As we have repeatedly said, this Arabic form of the word is sometimes used for the instances that the quality is not found in the opposite party.

For example, it may be said that: 'It is preferable that man might be cautious and does not put his life in danger'. This statement does not mean that putting life in danger is good, and to be cautious is better than that, but the purpose is to compare 'good' and 'bad' with each other.

And, in order to remove the pretexts, the Qur'an adds:

"…but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends…"

That is, the lack of knowing their fathers is not a reason for this that you put the name of another person as their father, but you can address them as your brethren in religion or as your friends.

The Arabic word /mawali/ is the plural form of /maula/ and the Islamic commentators have mentioned several meanings concerning it.

Some of them have taken it in the sense of 'friend' and some others have meant it 'the slave who has become emancipated', (because some of the adapted sons were the slaves who were bought and then they were emancipated and since they were in the favour of their possessors they were called as their adapted sons).

This point should also be noted that the application of /maula/ in these instances, that he was an emancipated slave, was for the sake that after emancipation they would keep their relation with the possessor, and, from legal point, this relation might somehow substitute the relationship, and it is called in Arabic /wula'-i-'itq/.

Some Islamic narrations denote that Ziyd-ibn-Harithah was called as Ziyd-ibn-Muhammad after that the Prophet (S) emancipated him, until when the above verse was sent down and from then on the Prophet (S) told him:

"You are Ziyd-ibn-Harithah",

and people called him 'Maula Rasulullah'.[6]

Also it is said Abu-Hathifah had a slave by the name of 'Salim'. He emancipated him and called him as his son. When the above mentioned verse was sent down he was named as Salim-Maula-'Abi-Hathifah.[7]

But in view of the fact that it happens that, as the result of former custom, or mistake in recognition of individual's linage, a person may be ascribed to other than his father, and this is out of the realm of his authority, Allah, the Just, the Wise, will not punish such a person.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake…"

"…but what you do with intent of heart (you are responsible), and Allah is forgiving, Merciful."

Allah will forgive what happened in the past and what you may do by mistake, err, and forgetfulness, but if after the revelation of this ordinance

you oppose it intentionally and optionally and call persons by other than the name of their fathers so that you continue the wrong custom of ‘adopted son’ and ‘adopted father’ Allah will not forgive you.

Some commentators have said that ‘mistake’ envelops those instances that someone does call affectionately unto another one ‘son’, or for the sake of reverence he says ‘father’.

Of course, it is correct to say that these meanings are not ‘sin’, but not for the sake of mistake, but for the sake that these meanings are used ironically and metaphorically, and its frame of reference is usually mentioned with them. The Qur’an negates the real applications in this field, not the metaphorical ones.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 6

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَى بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُوْلُوا الاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلاَّ أَن تَفْعَلُوا إِلَي أَوْلِيَآئِكُم مَّعْرُوفاً كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا

6. “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers, and blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Book of Allah, than the believers and the emigrants, except that you do some good to your friends, this (ordinance) is written in the Book.”

It is cited in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the commentary, that the holy Prophet (S) had appointed brethren knot between Muslims (the Emigrants and the Helpers) in a way that they inherited each other as real brothers, because at the beginning the Emigrants were far from their homes, properties, and relatives and the brethren knot could compensate these instances.

Then the verse was sent down and cancelled such kind of heritage and implied that the criterion of a person to inherit is relationship.

So, when Islam expanded and the former communications gradually came forth, this ordinance was not necessary to be continued.

The above verse was revealed and cancelled the system of brethren-knot which was used to be substitute of linage and set the ordinance of heritage and the like special to the real relatives.

Therefore, though the system of brethren was an Islamic system, (opposite to the system of ‘adopted son’ which was a system in the Age of Ignorance), it ought to be cancelled after removing the extraordinary conditions, and it did.

But in the verse under discussion, before mentioning this point, two other ordinances are referred to as a premise, saying that the Prophet (S) is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are as their mothers.

The verse says:

“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers…”

Thus, the Prophet (S) was as father and his wives were as mothers for the believers but they did not inherit from them, then how can it be expected that adopted sons become some heirs?

Then the verse adds:

"…and blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Book of Allah, than the believers and the emigrants…"

Yet, in the meanwhile, for the sake that the way might not be entirely closed to the Muslims and they can leave something as heritage for their friends and those in whom they are interested, even it is by the way of bequest due to one third of the property, at the end of the verse the Qur'an adds:

"…except that you do some good to your friends…"

In order to emphasize on all former ordinances, or on the recent ordinance, the holy verse implies that this ordinance is recorded in the Divine Book, (The Protected tablet or the Holy Qur'an).

It says:

"…this (ordinance) is written in the Book."

What does 'the Prophet is closer to the believers' mean?

In this verse, the Qur'an has mentioned the precedence of the Prophet (S) to Muslims in an absolute manner. Its concept is that in all the things that man has authority unto him; the Prophet (S) is also closer to him than his own self.

Some commentators have rendered it to the subject of 'management of social affairs' or 'precedence in the subject of judgment' or 'obedience for the command', but there is not, in fact, any evidence for restriction in each of these three things.

And if we see that in some Islamic narrations 'precedence' has been rendered into 'government', in fact, it is the statement of one of the branches of this precedence.[8]

Therefore, it must be said that the holy Prophet of Islam (S) was closer to any person than his own self not only in social affairs, but also in personal and private affairs, and in affairs of government, and judgment and invitation, so that the will and desire of the Prophet (S) is prior to the will and desire of all men.

This subject must not be the cause of wonder, because the Prophet (S) is infallible and he is Allah's agent. He does not think of anything save of goodness and interest of the society and individuals. He never follows the carnal desire.

He never gives priority to his own benefits rather than to those of others. On the contrary, his programs are always alongside the benefits of human beings and self-sacrifice for them.

This precedence is, in fact, a branch of the precedence of Allah's will, because whatever we have belongs to Allah.

Moreover, a man can reach the peak of faith when he appoints his strongest love, which is the love of his own self, under the precedence of the love to the Essence of Allah and His agents.

So, the Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"None of you reach to true faith until when his desire depends on what I have brought (from the side of Allah)."[9]

In another tradition he (S) also said:

"By the One my life is in Whose hand, none of you reaches to true faith until when I am more beloved to him than his self, and his wealth, and his son and all people."[10]

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"There is no believer save that I am closer to him than his own self in the world and the Hereafter."[11]

The Holy Qur'an, in the current Surah, verse 36 says:

"And it is not for any believer, man or woman, to have the choice in their affair when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying."

Again we emphasize that the concept of this statement is not that Allah has made His servants totally submit to the desires of an individual, but regarding that the holy Prophet (S) possesses the rank of infallibility and according to the Qur'an which says:

"Nor does he (the Apostle) speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed"[12]**,**

whatever he says is from the side of Allah and is not from his own accord. He is even more sympathetic and sentimental than father.

This precedence, in fact, is alongside the path of the benefits of people both from the aspects of government and management of Islamic society, and from the personal and individual aspects.

It is for this reason that many a time this precedence puts some heavy responsibilities on the Prophet's shoulder.

So, according to a famous tradition recorded in both Sunnite and Shi'ite sources, the Prophet (S) said:

"I am closer to any believer than his own self. Whoever leaves a wealth, it is for his heir, and whoever leaves any debt (when he dies) or offspring and wife, the suretyship of them is upon me."[13]

This should be noted that the word /diya'/ here means offspring or wife who are remained without any proper guardian, and the application of the word /dayn/ (debt) before it is also a clear frame of reference upon this meaning, because its purpose is to have debt without having any wealth.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 7

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِيثَاقاً غَلِيظاً

7. "And (remember) when We took a Covenant from the prophets and (also) from you, and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and We took from them a firm covenant,"

Among all Divine prophets (as) only five prophets were 'possessors of determination', that is, they had Book and religion, and they had a particular rank with Allah.

This verse has named them specially. Of course, the prophet of Islam (S) has been mentioned before the rest which denotes to another peculiar grandeur, and also the Qur'an has mentioned Jesus' mother which indicates to the particular situation of Mary and the miraculous birth of Jesus (as).

However, since, in former verses, the vast authorities of the Prophet of Islam (S) were referred to by saying:

"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves…".

The verse under discussion states the heavy duties of the Prophet (S) and other great prophets. We know that authorities are always accompanied with responsibilities, and wherever there is a 'right', there is also a responsibility for it and these two will never separate from each other.

Therefore, if the Prophet of Islam (S) has a vast right, there is also a great duty and responsibility appointed for him.

At first, it says:

"And (remember) when We took a Covenant from the prophets and (also) from you, and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and We took from them a firm covenant,"

Thus, at first the verse refers to the whole prophets saying that they were concerned in the subject of covenant, then it points to five arch prophets the first of whom is mentioned the Prophet of Islam (S) for the sake of glory and grandeur he has, and next to him four other arch prophets are mentioned sequentially according to the times of their advent (Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as)).

This matter shows that the mentioned covenant had been a common covenant that was taken from all prophets, though the arch prophets had more seriously been engaged in the face of this covenant.

The Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…and We took from them a firm covenant"

is an extraordinary emphasis stated upon this covenant.

As Raqib in Mufradat says, the Arabic word /miθaq/ means: 'a severe covenant'.

It is important for us to know what kind of severe covenant was it that all Divine prophets had undertaken?

The commentators have stated different words about it, for which we can say that all of them are different branches of one general principle. This principle is the accomplishment of the duty of propagation, messengerhood, leadership, and guidance among people in all fields and all dimensions.

They were responsible to invite all humankind toward Monotheism before anything else.

They were also responsible to confirm each other, and the former prophets made their nations prepared to accept the later prophets, in the same way that the later prophets used to verify and confirm the call of their former prophets.

In short, the invitation of all of them was toward one way, and all of them preached one reality so that they would gather all nations under a single flag. The evidence for this meaning is also found in other verses of the Qur'an.

Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 81 says:

"And (remember) when Allah took the pledge of the prophets (saying): 'since I Have given you of Book and wisdom - then there comes to you a Messenger, confirming that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must help him'. He said: "Do you affirm and accept my compact

in this (matter)?' They said: 'We affirm', He said: 'Then bear witness and I am also with you among the witnesses'."

Similar to this meaning has also occurred in Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 187 wherein the Qur'an explicitly implies that Allah had taken a pledge from People of the Book to make the Divine verses known to people and that they should not hide them.

Thus, Allah has taken covenant from both prophets that they must invite people to Unity of Allah, Unity of the Truth and the heavenly religions, and from the scholars of the People of the Book that they, too, must try to make the religion of Allah known to people as much as they can and avoid hiding it.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 8

لِيَسْأَلَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَن صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَاباً أَلِيمَاً

8. "That He might question the truthful of their truthfulness, and He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful chastisement."

Allah takes a covenant from the Prophets and He has an aim in it. Its aim is to separate the truthful ones from the disbelievers. Thus, being far from truthfulness is being nigh to infidelity.

This verse states the aim of the mission of the prophets and the firm covenant that has been taken from them as follows:

"That He might question the truthful of their truthfulness, and He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful chastisement."

The Islamic commentators have delivered a great deal of interpretations upon the purpose of the Qur'anic term /sadiqin/ (the truthful) here that who they are, and that what question is this question?

The matter, which seems harmonious with the verses of this Surah as well as other suras of the Qur'an, is that the purpose is to define the believers who have proved the truthfulness of their own claim in action.

In other words, they have been successful in the trial of Allah. The evidence for this statement is as follows:

1- The term 'Sadiqin' (the truthful) here is mentioned versus 'Kafirin' (disbelievers) and this meaning is understood well from the context in opposition of this concept.

2- We recite in verse No. 23 of this Surah (Al-'Ahzab):

"Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah…"

Immediately after that statement, in verse 34, the Holy Qur'an explains the aim of it by saying:

"That Allah may recompense the truthful ones for their truthfulness, and chastise the hypocrites if He please, or turn unto them (mercifully)…"

3- Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 15 and Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 8 introduce the truthful ones clearly.

The Qur'an says:

"The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His messenger then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; and these are the truthful ones."[14]

And, concerning the booties that Muslims gain without fighting, it says:

"(It is) for the poor who fled, those who were driven from their homes and their possessions, seeking grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and assisting Allah and His messenger, these it is that are the truthful."[15]

Thus, it is clear that the purpose of the term /sadiqin/ is those who have proved their truthfulness in the fields of supporting the religion of Allah, Holy struggle and perseverance against the difficulties and giving their wealth and lives in the path of Allah.

Now, what is the main purpose of the question from the truthfulness of the truthful ones? Regarding to what was said in the above, it is clear that the purpose is that whether they prove the sincerity of intention and the truthfulness of their claim in their deeds or not.

Among their deeds there are: payment of the alms-tax, Holy struggle, and showing patience and perseverance against the difficulties and the hardships of the battle-field in particular.

Where will this question be asked? The apparent of the holy verse shows that it will be asked in Hereafter and in the just court of Allah. There are also numerous verses in the Qur'an that inform of the performance of this question wholly in Hereafter.

But there is also this probability that the question may have a practical aspect and it performs in this world, because by the mission of the Divine prophets all those who claim faith will be questioned and their action is an answer to this question that whether they are truthful in their claim or not.

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, under the above verse
2. The Commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 25, P. 190
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and the Commentary of Qurtabi, following the verse
4. Commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn Vol. 4, P. 234
5. The commentary of Fi-Zilal, Vol. 6, P. 534
6. Ruh-ul-Ma'ali, Vol. 21, P. 131
7. Ruh-ul-Bayan, following the verse
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, PP. 238-239
9. The commentary of Fi-Zilal, following the verse
10. Ibid
11. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Vol. 6, P. 145, and Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, Vol. 2, P. 334
12. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verses 3 and 4
13. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 17, P. 551
14. Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 15
15. Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 8

Section 2: The Treachery of the Hypocrites Exposed

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 9

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَآءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحاً وَجُنُوداً لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا

9. "O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when hosts came against you, so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do."

This verse, as well as the verses next to it, relate to the Battle of 'Ahzab which occurred in the fifth year of Hejira. In this war the Jews, pagans, and the hypocrites had decided to occupy Medina by a sudden attack. Salman Farsi suggested and the Prophet (S) agreed that the Muslims would dig a ditch around Medina and defend against the enemy.

In this action, digging the ditch, the Prophet (S) himself began digging the ground, and every time that a lightning was seen as the result of picking on a piece of stone, the Prophet (S) gave the glad tidings of the victory of Islam over an area of the world. In this Battle, Allah helped the Muslims by means of blowing winds and the descent of some angels.

However, this holy verse speaks about one of the greatest Divine trials concerning the believers and the hypocrites, and the trial of the truthfulness of their speech in action, which was pointed out in the previous verses.

This verse and the verses next to it discuss about one of the most important events of the history of Islam, i.e., the Battle of 'Ahzab. It was a war that, in fact, was counted a turning point in the history of Islam and changed the balance of forces between Islam and infidelity in the benefit of the Muslims, and the victory of which was as a key for the later great victories.

In fact, the enemies of Islam were hopeless in this Battle, and after that they could not perform any magnificent work.

The Battle of 'Ahzab, as it is clear from its name, was a conclusive war from the side of all enemies of Islam with different groups whose unlawful benefits would be in danger by the development of this religion.

The first spark of fight was lit from the side of a group of the Jews by the name of 'Bani Nadir' who came to Mecca and encouraged Quraysh to fight against the Prophet (S). They promised the Quraysh to be with them and fight until the end. Then they went to the tribe of Qatfan and made them agree to the war.

These tribes invited their own confederate, such as the tribes 'Bani 'Asad' and 'Bani Salim', too; and since all of them had felt the danger they united with each other to put an end to Islam for ever. They wanted to kill the Prophet (S), to annihilate the Muslims, to occupy Medina, to spoil it, and quench the torch of Islam.

When the Muslims saw themselves before this great group of enemy, under the command of the Prophet (S) they began to consult, and, before anything else, by the suggestion of Salman Farsi, dug a ditch around Medina so that the enemy could not easily pass it and attack the city. (That is why one of the names of this Battle is 'The Battle of Ditch.)

Muslims tolerated some hard and dangerous moments. At that time the lives had become close to the lips. The hypocrites were hastily running here and there among the Muslims. The mass of the forces of the enemy and the small number of the soldiers of Islam in front of them, and their preparation from the point of war equipments and providing the accessory means, illustrated a hard and painful future before the eyes of the Muslims.

But Allah wished that the last stroke would come down on the body of the infidelity; and the row of the hypocrites would be recognized from the rows of Muslims; He wanted to divulge the conspirators, and put the true Muslims under a severe examination.

As it will be explained later, this Battle, at last, ended with the triumphant of the Muslims. A strong storm came under the command of Allah. It destroyed all the camps and means of the disbelievers. It caused a horrible fear to appear in their hearts. Allah sent some unseen forces of the angels to help the Muslims.

The manifestation of some surprising powers, such as that of Amir-ul-Mu'minin's against 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, were also added to them and the pagans, without being able to do anything, ran away.

This was a brief scenery of the Battle of 'Ahzab which happened in 5 A.H.[1]

From here on, we pay to the commentary of the verse and let the details of this Battle be discussed later under the title of 'points'.

The Holy Qur'an, at first, summarizes this event in one verse, and then through sixteen other verses it explains its specialties.

It says:

"O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when hosts came against you…"

Then, it continues saying:

"…so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do."

Points Worthy to Be Noted

1- The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /'uŏkuru/ (remember) shows that these holy verses were revealed after the end of the Battle when some length of time had passed during which the Muslims could contemplate over what they had seen in that Battle and analysed them so that it had a deep effect in them.

2- The application of the word /junud/ points to different clans of the Age of Ignorance[2] and the Jews of Medina inside the city.

3- The purpose of "hosts that you saw not.", who came to help the Muslims, is the same angels whose help to the believers in the Battle of Badr has also explicitly been mentioned in the Qur'an, but, as it was said in the commentary of verse No. 9 from Surah Al-'Anfal, there is not any evidence that these angels, these unseen Divine forces, had formally participated in the Battle and started fighting. But there are some hints which show that they came down for strengthening the spirit of the believers and to encourage them.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 10-11

إِذْ جَآءُوكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَاْ

هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالاً شَدِيداً

10. "When they came against you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes swerved and the hearts reached to the throats, and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts,"

11. "There it was that the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking."

You can taste the sweetness of the graces of Allah when you depict the bitter scenes before you.

The spiritual moods affect on the body. (Fear causes the ordinary function of the eyes and the heart to be disturbed. For example, the eye becomes terrified and the pulse of the heart becomes fast.)

This holy verse illustrates the dangerous situation of the Battle of 'Ahzab, the great power of the enemy's army, and the intensive anxiety of a lot of Muslims.

It implicitly says that you may remember when the enemies entered your city from above you and from below you and surrounded Medina and when the eyes swerved because of fear and the hearts reached to the throats and you imagined badly about Allah with diverse thoughts.

The verse says:

"When they came against you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes swerved and the hearts reached to the throats, and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts,"

Many of the commentators believe that the Arabic word /fauq/ (above) mentioned in this holy verse refers to the east of Medina wherefrom the tribe of Qatfan entered, and the word /'asfal/ (below) refers to the west of it wherefrom the tribe of Quraysh and their assistants came.

Of course, regarding to the fact that Mecca is located in the south of Medina, the pagans of Mecca must have come from the south, but perhaps the condition of the road and that of the arrival the gate of Medina were in a state that they had to turn round a part of the city and arrive from the west.

However, the above sentence points to the siege of this city from the side of different enemies of Islam.

The Qur'anic phrase: /zaqat-il-'absar/ (the eyes swerved) refers to the state that a person feels at the time of intensive horror when his eyes turn aside and gaze on a proper fix point.

The Qur'anic sentence /balaqat-il-qulub-ul-hanajir/ (the hearts reached to the throats) is an interesting allusion, like that which is said in Persian language: 'his soul reached his lips', else the heart, the special organ, the distributor of blood, never moves from its place and it never reaches to the throat.

The Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts"

points to this fact that in that state there had been appeared some wrong thoughts among a group of the Muslims, because from the point of Faith, they had not reached to a perfect stage.

Such were the same ones about whom the next verse says:

"…they were shaken a tremendous shaking."

Perhaps some of them thought they would finally be defeated and the enemy's army, with that power and might, could be victorious. They imagined that the last days of the life of Islam had approached and the Prophet's promises about the triumphant of Islam would never happen.

These thoughts, of course, had appeared in the minds of some of the Muslims in the form of a temptation.

This is similar to that which the Qur'an mentions concerning the Battle of 'Uhud, saying:

"…while another group have cared only for their own selves, thinking about Allah unjustly, the thought of ignorance…"[3]

It was here that the furnace of the Divine examination became hot, as the next verse says:

"There it was that the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking."

It is natural that when a person falls into the tempest of thoughts, his body is not aloof of that tempest either, and it involves in an anxiety and agitation. Many times we have seen the persons who have mental agitation and, while they are sitting in their seat, they ceaselessly move, rub their hands to each other, and completely show their own anxiety in their manner.

One of the evidences of this horrible terror was that, as it is said, five famous heroes of Arabs, the greatest of whom was 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, had worn the clothes of war and came into the battle-field with a special pride, and challenged for champion. 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, in particular, was boasting and ridiculed both Hereafter, and Paradise. He said:

"Do you not say that your slain members will be admitted in Paradise? Is there none of you who desires to see Paradise?"

But all of the members of the army of Islam were silent before his shouts, and none dared to face with him, save Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) who fought against him and caused a great victory for the Muslims.

As it is evident from its name, the Battle of 'Ahzab was a battle in which all the clans and different groups of the enemies of Islam had united in order to destroy the 'young Islam'.

The Battle of 'Ahzab was the last effort, the last trial of the infidels, and the last exhibition of the power of polytheists. It was for this reason that when the greatest champion of the enemy, i.e., 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd stood before the brave officer of Islam, Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), the Prophet (S) said:

"The whole of Faith stood against the whole of polytheism."[4]

For, in that event, the triumphant of one of these two groups over the other was the triumphant of infidelity over Faith or Faith over infidelity. In other words, it was a Battle which could define the future of Islam and polytheism.

That was why, after the defeat of the enemies in this great Battle, they could not stand firm any more, and from then on always the control of action was in Muslims' hand.

The star of the luck of the enemy began to decline and the basis of their power was ruined.

Of course, at first Amir-ul-Muminin Ali (as) invited him to Islam, but he did not accept. Then he (as) invited him to leave the battlefield, he refused it, too, and he counted it shame for himself. The third suggestion was that he would come down from the horse and have a battle on foot.

'Amr became angry and said:

"I did not believe that a person from among Arab gives me such a suggestion."

He came down from his horse and attacked against Ali (as) with his sword.

Here, Ali (as) used a special style of fight, and quickly, and with a particular way, he struck with sword on the enemy's leg and pushed it into his leg. It was at this time that the powerful body of 'Amr fell on the ground.

A thick dust filled the space of the battle-field. A group of hypocrites thought that Ali (as) was killed by 'Amr, but when they heard the sound of Takbir, 'proclaim His greatness', Ali's victory was confirmed.

Suddenly they saw Ali (as) was coming toward the camp while he had a smile of victory on his lips and 'Amr's body, without head, was on the ground in corner of the battlefield.

The slain of the famous champion of Arab was not tolerable for the army of the clans and it ruined their hopes and desires. It was a stroke which weakened their spirit very much and disappointed them from victory.

So, the Prophet (S) told Ali (as) about them:

"If they compare your action today with the deeds of all the followers of Muhammad, your action will be preferred to their deeds, because by the slain of 'Amr there will remain no house of the polytheists but there entered a disgrace in it; and there remains no house of the believers but entered an honour in it."[5]

The famous learned man of the Sunnite, Hakim-i-Neyshaburi has narrated the same meaning about it from the Prophet (S) with a different statement.

Here is the Prophet's statement:

"The struggle of Ali-ibn-Abitalib against 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd on the Day of Ditch is better than the deeds of my Ummah until the Hereafter Day."[6]

In another tradition we recite that, after the end of the Battle of 'Ahzab, the Prophet (S) said:

"Now we fight against them and they are not able to fight against us."[7]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 12

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلاَّ غُرُوراً

12. "And when the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, were saying: 'Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion'."

To make the strivers of Islam disappointed and weakening their spiritual conditions is a sign of deviation and hypocrisy. Among the companions of the Prophet (S) there were some sceptics and some were hypocrites.

It was formerly said that the furnace of the examination in the Battle of 'Ahzab became hot, and everybody was engaged in that great examination. It is almost clear that, in such hard circumstances, the people who in the ordinary conditions are apparently in one row will be divided into different rows.

Here, too, the Muslims were divided into various rows: a group of them were true believers, a part of them were the elect of the believers, another part contained of some persons of a weak faith, some hypocrites, some obstinate and intensive hypocrites; some of them were in thought of their own home and life and wanted to run away; some of them tried to hinder others from going to Holy war; and a group of them worked to fasten their unity with the hypocrites. In short, everybody made manifest his inner secrets in this wonderful resurrection and on this "Manifestation Day."

Former verses were upon the state of the Muslims who were of a weak faith and the bad temptations and imaginations they had; and in this verse the position of the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, has been referred to.

It says:

"And when the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, were saying: 'Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion'."

It is recorded in the history of the Battle of 'Ahzab that during the time when the Muslims, one by one, were digging a ditch, one day they reached a big and hard piece of stone on which no pick affected.

The Prophet (S) was informed of this matter and he himself entered the ditch and stood by that piece of stone. When he hit the first stroke on it, a part of the stone was separated and a lightning came out from it.

The Prophet (S) victoriously said: "Allahu Akbar", and the attending Muslims, too, proclaimed His greatness.

For the second time, the Prophet (S) blew a strong stroke over the stone when another part of the stone separated and a lightning came out from it. So the Prophet (S) said: "Allahu Akbar" and the Muslims did, too.

Finally, the Prophet (S) blew the third stroke on the stone and a lightning came out and the rest of the stone split asunder. Again, the Prophet (S) said: "Allahu Akbar" and the Muslims, too, shouted: "Allahu Akbar".

Salman asked the Prophet (S) about it and he answered:

"In the midst of the first lightning I saw the land of "Hirah" and the castles of the kings of Iran, and Gabriel gave me the glad tidings that my Ummah will be victorious over them.

In the second lightning the reddish castles of Syria and Room manifested, and Gabriel gave me the glad tidings that my Ummah will defeat them.

In the third lightning I saw the castles of San'a and Yemen, and Gabriel informed me that my Ummah will defeat them again. Glad tidings be on you, O Muslims!"

The hypocrites looked at each other and silently said:

"What wonderful words! What false and baseless statements! He is watching the land of Hirah and the buildings of Kasra from Medina, and informs you of its occupation! While just now you are in the grips of a group of Arabs (and you are in the state of defence) and you can not even go to Baytul-Hathar (around Medina)!"

The above verse was revealed and announced that those diseased hypocrites say:

"Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion."

They are unaware of the infinite power of Allah.[8]

Verily, on that day, such information and glad tidings, save in the view of the aware believers, were not anything but a delusion and pride.

But the heavenly eyes of the Prophet (S) who, in the midst of fiery lightning produced as the result of the strokes of the picks for digging the ditch, could see the occupation of the castles of the kings of Iran, Room, and Yemen, and gave glad tidings to his devoted Ummah by removing curtains from over those secrets.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 13

وَإِذْ قَالَت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَآ أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لاَ مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ اِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَاهِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِن يُرِيدُونَ إِلاَّ فِرَاراً

13. "And when a party of them said: 'O' you the people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand (here) so go back,' and a group of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying: 'Verily our houses are exposed'; and they were not exposed. They only intended to flee away (from battle field)."

The hypocrites usually try to separate the believers from the religious culture, even in nominating of things and names.

(They say: "O' you the people of Yathrib!")

We must not be neglectful of the hypocrites' propagations for discouraging the strivers.

Divine revelation makes the evil thoughts of hypocrites manifest and disgraces them publicly.

This verse explains the state of a dangerous group of these very diseased-hearted hypocrites who were more treacherous and polluted unto others.

It says:

"And when a party of them said: 'O' you the people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand (here) so go back,'

Briefly speaking, they mean that you can not do anything against this mass of enemy so you may go out of the battle and do not send yourself to death and that your wife and your children to be captives.

Thus, they wanted to separate the group of the Helpers from the army of Islam. This was from one side. On the other side, a group of the same

hypocrites, who had houses in Medina, asked permission of the Prophet (S) to return home, and they sought pretexts for it.

Among their pretexts they said that their houses had no wall, while it was not true. They only desired to leave the scene and run away.

The Arabic word /‘aurat/ is originally derived from /‘ar/ and it is used for something that its making manifest causes shame. Also, the word /‘aurah/ is used for the gaps appeared in clothes and the walls of a house; and for the damageable points of boundaries; and for whatever man is afraid of.

Here, the purpose is the houses which have not a certain door and wall and at which the enemy may attack.

By offering these pretexts, the hypocrites intended to leave the battle field and refuge to their own houses.

An Islamic narration indicates that the members of the tribe of ‘Bani Harithah’ sent a person to the Prophet (S) and said that their houses were without any guard, and none of the houses of the Helpers as well as their own houses had a protector, and there was not any barrier between them and the tribe of Qatfan who attacked from the east of Medina.

They asked the Prophet (S) to let them return to their own houses and defend their wives and children.

At this time, Sa‘d-ibn-Ma‘ath, the chief of Ansar (the Helpers) arrived and heard them. He told the Prophet (S) not to give them leave. He added:

“By Allah! Whenever we were confronted a difficulty, they sought the like of this pretext. They tell a lie.”

The Prophet (S) ordered them to stay and defend Islam, too.

Before the time the Prophet’s emigration to that city, the ancient name of Medina, had been Yathrib. After that it was gradually called ‘Madinat-ur-Rassul’ (the city of the Prophet) the shortened form of which was Madinah.

This city has had various names. Besides these two names (Yathrib and Madinah), the Late Sayyid Murtada has mentioned eleven names for it, including: Tayyibah, Tabah, Sakinah, Mahbubah, Marhumah, and Qasimah. (Some commentators call the name of the land of this city Yathrib.)

Some narrations denote that the Prophet (S) said:

“Do not call this city as Yathrib”.

Perhaps, it was for the reason that /yaθrib/ is originally derived from /θarb/ in the sense of ‘to blame’ and the Prophet (S) did not like that name for this blessed city. However, it was not without reason that the hypocrites addressed the people of Medina as ‘The people of Yathrib’.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the Prophet (S) hated this name; or they wanted to announce the lack of formality of Islam and the title of ‘Madinat-ur-Rassul’ or to attract their attention to the Age of Ignorance.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 14

وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِم مِنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لأَتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا بِهَآ اِلاَّ يَسِيراً

14. “And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city. Then they had been asked to apostatise, they would certainly have done it, and they would not have stayed in it but a little while.”

In order to create sedition, enemy often takes help from the interior hypocrites.

Hypocrites easily turn away from the truth and go toward the enemy and cause disturbance.

This verse points to the weakness of the faith of this group implying that they are so weak in expressing Islam that if enemies come into Medina from its all sides and martially occupy this city and suggest the hypocrites to return to the belief of polytheism and infidelity, they quickly accept it and do not wait much time for choosing this way.

The noble verse says:

"And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city. Then they had been asked to apostatise, they would certainly have done it, and they would not have stayed in it but a little while."

It is clear that, such people, who are so weak in their faith neither are ready to fight against the enemy, nor do they entertain martyrdom in the way of Allah (s.w.t.), soon will they surrender and change their way.

Thus, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /fitnah/ here is 'polytheism' and disbelief.[9]

But some other commentators offer another probability, saying that the objective meaning of the word /fitnah/ here is fight against the Muslims, in a manner that if this group of hypocrites are suggested to, they will accept this invitation soon and will cooperate with seditious ones.

But this commentary does not agree with the apparent of the sentence which says:

"And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city…",

and perhaps it is for this very reason that the majority of commentators have chosen the first meaning.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 15

وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ لاَ يُوَلُّونَ الأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْؤُولاً

15. "And indeed they had made a covenant with Allah before that, that they would not turn their backs (to the enemy) and covenants with Allah shall be questioned of."

To make agreement is not so important, it is loyalty which is important. We must not take the covenant of Allah (s.w.t.) inconsiderable, because we will surely be questioned and reprimanded.

This holy verse summons the hypocrites to judgment.

It says:

"And indeed they had made a covenant with Allah before that, that they would not turn their backs (to the enemy)…"

They had formerly made a covenant to fulfil their promise in defending Monotheism, Islam, and the Prophet (S). Do they not know that the covenant with Allah, the Aware, will be questioned and they are responsible before it?

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and covenants with Allah shall be questioned of."

Some commentators have said this covenant is the same promise that the tribe of 'Bani Harithah' had made with Allah and the Prophet (S) on the Day of the Battle of 'Uhud.

At the time when they decided to return back from the battle field and were regretful, they made a covenant that they would never approach those affairs, but the same persons thought to breach their promise in the Battle of 'Ahzab.[10]

Some other commentators also believe that it refers to the covenant that they made with the Prophet (S) in the Battle of Badr, or in 'Aqabah, before the Prophet's migration. 'Alusi has cited this meaning in Ruh-ul-Bayan. But it seems that the above verse has a vast meaning which encompasses both these covenants and other covenants and promises.

In principle, everybody who embraces Islam and pays allegiance with the Prophet (S) has made this covenant with him that he should defend Islam and the Qur'an so seriously that he gives his life.

The emphasis on covenant here is for this reason that even the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance used to respect the act of promise and covenant, then how is it possible that after believing in Islam someone breaches his covenant?

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 16

قُل لَّن يَنفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ إِن فَرَرْتُم مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذاً لاَ تُمَتَّعُونَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

16. "Say: 'Flight will never avail you if you flee from death or slaying, and in that case you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little'."

After that Allah divulged the intention of the hypocrites that their purpose was not the protection of their houses but they wanted to escape from the battle field, He answers them through two proofs: at first, He commands to His Messenger as follows:

"Say: 'Flight will never avail you if you flee from death or slaying, and in that case you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little'."

Supposing you succeed to escape, your position will be one of these two ones: either your life's final term has ended and your certain death has come, then wherever you are, death will seize you, even when you are at home beside your wife and your children, an incident from inside or outside puts an end to your life.

And if your life's final term has not ended you will live in this world for a few days disgracefully and humiliatorily and you will be as a captive in the hand of enemies and then the divine punishment will seize you.

In fact, this statement is like what was revealed in the Battle of 'Uhud concerning another group of the slothful hypocrites, where the Qur'an says:

"…say: 'Even if you were in your own homes, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to their deathbeds…"[11],

and they would be killed.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 17

قُلْ مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُم مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءاً أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلاَ يَجِدُونَ لَهُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيّاً وَلاَ نَصِيراً

17. "Say: 'Who is he that shall defend you from Allah, if He desires punishment for you, or desires mercy for you?' And they shall find for themselves, apart from Allah, neither protector nor helper."

Mercy and punishment, or bitterness and sweetness will come to a man by the will of Allah (s.w.t.).

The will of Allah concerning the appearance of man's afflictions and hardships is in this sense that, by his own authority and committing some evil deeds (like escaping from war) man draws himself toward the fire of the punishment of Allah and, since all things are done by Allah's will, these afflictions and hardships are attributed to Allah.

So, this holy verse, addressing the Prophet (S), announces:

"Say: 'Who is he that shall defend you from Allah, if He desires punishment for you, or desires mercy for you?'…"

"…And they shall find for themselves, apart from Allah, neither protector nor helper."

Therefore, now that all your pre-destined affairs are with Him, do obey His command in the field of Holy war eagerly because it is the cause of your honour both in the world and before Him. So, if in this way martyrdom meets you, embrace it happily.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 18

قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ مِنكُمْ وَالْقَآئِلِينَ لاِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ اِلَيْنَا وَلاَ يَأْتُونَ الْبَأْسَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

18. "Indeed Allah knows those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren: 'Come to Us' and they come not to the fight but a little,"

Allah is aware of all the evil propagations of the enemies of the truth.

This holy verse points to the state of another group of hypocrites who withdrew from the battle field of the Battle of 'Ahzab and invited others to abdicate it, too.

It says:

"Indeed Allah knows those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren: 'Come to Us'…"

They told them to leave that dangerous battle and there came not to the battle save a few of them who came rather unwillingly or hypocritically.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they come not to the fight but a little,"

The Arabic term /mu'awwiqin/ is derived from /'auq/ which means: 'To hinder, to dissuade from something'.

The Qur'anic term /ba's/ originally means 'intensity' and the objective meaning of it here is 'fight'.

The above verse may point to two groups. A group of hypocrites who were among the Muslims, (that the word /minkum/ (among you) is its evidence), and they tried to dissuade the weak-faith Muslims from the fight. These were the same as /mu'awwiqin/.

The second group were those who were outside of the scene from among the hypocrites or the Jews. When these people met the soldiers of the Prophet of Islam (S) told them to go to them and draw out themselves from that battle. (These are the ones whom are referred to in the second sentence.)

However, an Islamic narration indicates that it happened that one of the companions of the Prophet (S), who had come inside the city for a particular thing, and met his brother who had got bread and wine in his front. He told him that how he was passing the time luxuriously in the city while the holy Prophet of Allah (S) was busy fighting in the midst of swords and javelins.

In answer to him, his brother said:

"O silly man! You may come to sit with us and be happy. By the One to Whom Muhammad makes an oath, he will never come back from this battle field, and this huge army who are gathered there will not let him and his companions continue their lives."

His brother said:

"You are telling a lie. By Allah! I will go and inform the Prophet (S) of what you said."

Then he came to the Prophet (S) and explained for him what happened. It was then that the above verse was revealed.

Thus, the occasion of the revelation of the Qur'anic term /'ixwanihim/ (their brethren) may be meant in the sense of 'true brothers' or in the sense of 'with the same manner', as the Qur'an says:

"Verily, the squanderers are the brethrens (accomplices) of the Satans…"[12]

At the end, the Qur'an has pointed to the kinds of brethren:

A) Natural brotherhood which comes into being by the way of parents.

B) Religious brethren which is obtained by means of having the same religion.

C) Political and party brethren, which has been referred to in this verse.

D) The behavioural brotherhood which is provided by obedience and following someone; as the Qur'an introduces /mubaððirin/ (squanderers) they are as brethren of Satan.[13]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 19

أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِذَا جَآءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنظُرُونَ اِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَي عَلَيْهِ
مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُم بِأَلْسِنَةٍ حِدَادٍ أَشِحَّةً عَلَي الْخَيْرِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

19. "Being niggardly with respect to you; but when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes rolling like one who swoons of death; but when the fear departs, they smite you with sharp tongues, being niggardly of the good things. Those have never believed and so Allah has made their deeds in vain, and that is easy for Allah."

The hypocrites are never benevolent for you. At the time of danger they are niggardly for helping and attending in the battlefield.

This verse implies that the motive of all these hindrances is that they are niggardly in all things unto you.

The holy verse says:

"Being niggardly with respect to you…"

The Arabic word /'ašihhah/ is the plural form of /šahih/ which is derived from /ših/ in the sense of a stinginess which is accompanied with avarice.

They are misers not only in giving their souls in the battle field, but also in giving financial helps for providing the tools and means of war; in bodily helps for digging a ditch, and even for giving mental helps. It is miserliness together with avarice and an avarice which increases every day.

After stating their stinginess and saying that they refused to give any donation, the Qur'an refers to stating some other qualities of theirs, which have almost a common and general aspect in all hypocrites during all ages and centuries.

It says:

"…but when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes rolling like one who swoons of death…"

Since they do not possess a correct faith and do not have a strong support in life, when they confront a hard event they totally lose their control, as if their souls are being taken.

Then, when the storm of afflictions subsides, they will come over to you so expectant that as if they are the main conquerors of the battle and shout like creditors and demand their share of the spoils with rough words.

The verse adds:

"…but when the fear departs, they smite you with sharp tongues, being niggardly of the good things…"

The Qur'anic term /salaqukum/ is derived from /salq/ which originally means: 'to open something angrily' whether it is the opening of one's hand or tongue. This expression is used in respect to those who shout in a commanding tone and demand something.

The Arabic phrase: /'alsinatin hidad/ philologically means (sharp tongues), and here it ironically means: 'being harsh in speech'.

At the end, the verse points to the last qualification of theirs which, in fact, is the origin of all their misfortunes.

It says:

"…Those have never believed and so Allah has made their deeds in vain, and that is easy for Allah."

On the whole, we conclude that /mu'awwiqin/ (hinderers) were some hypocrites who had the following qualifications:

1- They never came to fight but a little.

2- They were never from among those who sacrifice their lives and properties, and they did not tolerate the least distress.

3- In stormy and critical moments they entirely might lose countenance because of intense fear.

4- At the time of victory, they considered themselves as the heirs of the whole glories.

5- They were some faithless people so their deeds were worthless with Allah, too.

Such is the custom and behaviour of the hypocrites in all times and in any society. What an exact explanation the Qur'an has given about them, by which the like of them can be recognized, and how a great many examples of them we can see by our eyes in our own age!

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 20

يَحْسَبُونَ الأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا وَإِن يَأْتِ الأَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوا لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الأَعْرَابِ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ أَنبَآئِكُمْ وَلَوْ كَانُوا فِيكُم مَا قَاتَلُوا إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

20. "They think that the clans have not withdrawn, and if the clans should come (again) they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you, and if they were in your midst, they would fight not but a little."

The coward persons who are of a weak faith always think that the enemy is stronger than the Muslims. (The hypocrites imagined that the clans of the Jews and polytheists would not be scattered unless they conquered Medina.)

This verse illustrates the state of fear of this group more clearly and explicitly. It implies that they were so frightened that, after the disperse of clans and the army of the enemy, they thought that they had not gone yet.

The verse says:

"They think that the clans have not withdrawn…"

A horrible incubus had cast its shadow over them, as if the soldiers of disbelievers were ceaselessly marching before their eyes, and they were threatening them with their swords and spears.

These coward fighters, these chicken-hearted hypocrites were afraid even of their own shadows. Any sound of a horse, or every cry of a camel they heard they twisted with fear and thought that the forces of the clans had returned.

Then the holy verse adds:

"…and if the clans should come (again) they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you…"

Every moment they sought repeatedly the last news from any traveller lest the clans had approached their region, and that they would hold you under this obligation that they had always been anxious about your situation.

Then, in the last sentence of the verse the Qur'an says:

"…and if they were in your midst, they would fight not but a little."

Therefore, you may not be so worried of their going, nor should you be happy of their presence, because they are some worthless and useless persons, and their absence is better than their presence.

Even this little fighting is not for the sake of Allah. It is because of the fear of people's blame, and for pretence and hypocrisy, since if it were for the sake of Allah it would have not any limit and they would stand in this field until the end of their lives.

Notes

1. What was said in the above was a brief from the detail discussion that Ibn-Athir, has recorded in his Book, 'Kamil'.
2. such as: Quraysh, Qatfan, Bani-Salim, Bani 'Asad, Bani Fazarah, Bani Ashja', and Bani Marrah
3. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 154
4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 20, P. 215
5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 20, P. 216
6. Mostadrak-i-Hakim, Vol. 3, P. 32
7. Tarikh-i-Kamil-i-Ibn-i-Athir, Vol. 2, P. 184

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. This event is mentioned in ‘Kamil-i-Ibn-i-’Athir, Vol. 2, P. 179
9. As other verses of the holy Qur’an say, like Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 193.
10. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Tafsir-i-Fi-Zilal under the verse
11. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 154
12. Surah Al-’Isra’, No. 17, verse 27
13. Surah Al-’Isra’, No. 17, verse 27

Section 3: An Excellent Pattern in the Apostle Muhammad

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 21

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الأَخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيراً

21. "Indeed in the messenger of Allah you have an excellent pattern (of conduct) for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much."

The Arabic word /'uswah/ (an excellent pattern) is used in the case that someone follows others in doing good deeds. This word has been used two times in the Qur'an concerning two great prophets. One of them is about Abraham (as), and the other is about the Prophet of Islam (S).

It is interesting that Abraham being an excellent pattern is in acquittance from the polytheists, and the Prophet of Islam (S) being an excellent pattern mentioned in the holy verses relates to his perseverance against the enemies.

So the verse says:

"Indeed in the messenger of Allah you have an excellent pattern (of conduct) for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much."

Not only in this field but also in the whole life the best pattern of conduct for you is the Prophet of Islam (S). His excellent spiritual conditions, his patience and perseverance, his awareness, wit, sincerity and attention to Allah, his domination upon different events, and not being submitted when confronting hardships and difficulties, each can be a pattern and a lesson for all Muslims.

This great captain does not show the least weakness or precipitation when his ship faces with the strongest tempests. He is not only the captain of this ship but also its sure anchor. He is both the guiding torch and the cause of calmness and tranquillity of the souls of its travellers.

He is a good companion for the believers. He takes a pick in his hand, digs the ditch, gathers its soil with a spade, and takes them out of the ditch.

In order to protect the spiritual conditions and coolness of his companions, he jokes with them, and for encouraging them he recites epic poems. He constantly reminds them the remembrance of Allah, and gives them glad tidings concerning their glorious future and great victories. He makes them beware of the plots of the hypocrites and gives them the required awareness.

He does not neglect of the correct martial arrangement and selecting the best methods of army even for a moment, and, in the meantime, by applying different ways, he strives to create a gap between the rows of the enemy.

Yes, he is the best leader and excellent pattern of conduct for the believers in this field and in all fields.

It is interesting that the Qur'an in the above verse considers this excellent pattern specific to those who have these three specialties: being hopeful in Allah, hopeful in the Day of the Hereafter, and remembering Allah very much.

In fact, faith in origin and Resurrection is the motive of this motion, and the remembrance of Allah is the cause of its continuation; for, no doubt, the one whose heart is not filled with such a faith, is not able to act like the manner of the holy Prophet (S), and also, in the continuation of paving this way, if he does not ceaselessly remember Allah and does not send away Satans from himself, he will not be able to continue the proper imitation.

This point is also worthy to be noted that Ali (as), with that bravery that he had in all battlefields, a sample of which is the Battle of 'Ahzab, in one of his statements says:

"When the crisis became red-hot, we sought refuge with the Messenger of Allah (S) and none of us was closer to the enemy than he himself."[1]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 22

وَلَمَّا رَأَي الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ اِلاّ اِيمَاناً وَتَسْلِيماً

22. "And when the believers saw the allies, they said: 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth; and it increased not in them but faith and submission."

Formerly, in verse 12, we recited that the hypocrites and those in whose heart was a disease counted the promises of the Messenger of Allah a delusion, while, in this noble verse, the believers consider them the truth.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an refers to the state of the true believers and says:

"And when the believers saw the allies, they said: 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth; and it increased not in them but faith and submission."

Which promise was it that Allah (s.w.t.) and His Messenger (S) had promised?

Some commentators have said that this promise refers to the saying that the Prophet (S) had said before announcing that soon the tribes of Arab and the Muslims' different enemies would unite with each other and come to attack them, but finally Muslims would be victorious.

When the believers observed the attack of the clans they became sure that it was that very promise of the Prophet (S).

They said:

"Now that the first part of the promise has taken place, the second part of it, that is triumph, will surely happen, too."

So, their faith and submission increased in them.

Another thing is that in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 214 Allah had told the Muslims:

"Or have you supposed you will enter Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you? They were afflicted by distress and adversity and were so shaken that…said: 'When will Allah's help (come)?'…"

In brief, they had been told that they would be seriously tried by different hard examinations, and observing the clans, they understood the statement of Allah and His Messenger (S) and thus their faith increased.

These two commentaries, of course, do not contradict with each other, specially with regard to the fact that, in principle, one of them is Allah's promise and the other is the promise of the Prophet (S) both of which have been mentioned in the verse under discussion, and this matter seems completely appropriate.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 23

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُم مَّن قَضَي نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلا

23. "Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah; some of them have fulfilled their vow (by martyrdom), and some are still awaiting and they have not changed in the least,"

To defend from the truth mainly as far as the boundary of martyrdom, is the sign of truthfulness in faith.

This verse points to two special groups of the believers who always were before others in following the Prophet (S), and were steadfast in their covenant with Allah, i.e., in self-sacrifice until their last breath and that their last drop of blood to be shed. Some of them kept their words and became martyr in the field of Holy Struggle, and some others are waiting, too.

The verse says:

"Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah; some of them have fulfilled their vow (by martyrdom), and some are still awaiting and they have not changed in the least,"

In contrast to the hypocrites, or to the believers of weak faith, whom the tempest of the events causes to sway this side and that side and everyday create a new evil thought in their feeble mind, those true believers stood firmly, like a mountain, and proved that their covenant with Allah was never breakable.

The Arabic word /nahb/ here means covenant, vow, and promise, and sometimes it has also been used in the sense of: death, or danger, or speed, or shedding tear with a loud voice.[2]

The commentators are divided in belief that about which persons this verse was revealed.

Hakim Abul-Qasim Huskani, the famous scholar of the Sunnites, with document narrates from Ali (as) who said:

"The verse (saying:)

'Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah'

has been revealed about us, and by Allah I am the same one who is waiting for martyrdom, and I have never changed my style and I am still firm upon my covenant."[3]

Some other commentators have said that the Qur'anic sentence:

"Some of them have fulfilled their vow (by martyrdom)"

refers to the martyrs of Badr and 'Uhud; and the sentence:

"and some are still awaiting"

refers to some other true Muslims who were waiting for victory or martyrdom.

It has been narrated from ’Anas-ibn-Malik who said his uncle, Anas-ibn-Nadr, was absent on the day of the Battle of Badr. Later when he was informed of it, the Battle had been finished and he regretted why he could not take part in that Holy war.

He made a covenant with Allah that if another battle happened he would participate in it and continue until the end. So, he participated in the Battle of ’Uhud and at the time when a group of strivers ran away he did not and resisted so much so that he was injured and finally he was martyred.[4]

It has also been narrated from Ibn-‘Abbas who said:

“The sentence:

‘Some of them have fulfilled their vow’

points to Hamzat-ibn-‘Abd-ul-Mutallib and the rest of the martyrs of ’Uhud as well as Anas-ibn-Nadr and his companions.”[5]

There is no contradiction between these commentaries, because the verse has such a vast concept that envelops the entire martyrs of Islam who had been martyred before the event of the Battle of ’Ahzab, and waiters were all those who were awaiting for the victory and martyrdom; and some persons such as Hamzah Sayyid-ush-Shuhada’ (as) and Ali (as) were at the top of these two groups.

It is recorded in Tafsir-us-Safi as follows:

“Verily when every one of the companions of Imam Husayn in Karbala intended to go out (towards the battlefield) he went to Imam Husayn (as) for farewell said:

‘Peace be on you, O son of the Messenger of Allah!’

Then he (as) responded him (by saying):

‘And peace be on you, and we will come after you, too,’

and recited:

‘Some of them have fulfilled their vow (by martyrdom), and some are still awaiting’.”[6]

It is understood from ‘books of martyrdom’ that Imam Husayn (as) also recited this verse beside other martyrs, such as Muslim-ibn-‘Ausajah, and he recited it when the news of the martyrdom of ‘Abdillah-ibn-Yaqtar reached him.[7]

This shows that the verse has such a vast concept that it encompasses all true believers in any time, whether those who became martyr in the path of Allah, or those who remained unchanged upon their covenant with Allah and were ready for Holy war and martyrdom.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 24

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِن شَآءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّه كَانَ غَفُوراً رَّحِيماً

24. “That Allah may recompense the truthful ones for their truthfulness, and chastise the hypocrites if He please, or turn unto them (mercifully), verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

The amount of receiving reward is based on veracity in action.

This holy verse reiterates the result and the final aim of the deeds of the believers and the hypocrites in a short sentence, as follows:

"That Allah may recompense the truthful ones for their truthfulness, and chastise the hypocrites if He please, or turn unto them (mercifully), verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Neither the truthfulness and loyalty of the sincere believers remains without divine recompense, nor will the negligence and hindrances of the hypocrites be left without retribution.

But in order that even the way of repentance might not be closed to these obstinate hypocrites, He leaves the doors of repentance open to them by the sentence:

"Or turn unto them (mercifully)"

and He qualifies Himself with the Attributes of Forgiving and Merciful, so that the motive of moving toward faith, truthfulness, and fulfilling the Divine responsibilities becomes active in them.

In view of the fact that this sentence has been mentioned as the result of the ugly deeds of the hypocrites, some of the great commentators have said that sometimes a great sin in the receptive hearts may become the source of a revolution and return toward the truth, and it might be a vice which is an initiation of a goodness.[8]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 25

وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْراً وَكَفَي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا

25. "And Allah sent back those who disbelieved in their wrath, they gained no good; and Allah sufficed the believers of fighting, and Allah is Strong, Mighty."

You should not be afraid of the unity of the enemies. In the Battle of 'Ahzab there were three groups who united against the Muslims: pagans, the Jews, and the hypocrites, but they returned back while they got no victory, nor any booties.

In this verse, the Qur'an states the ending words about the Battle of 'Ahzab, and, in some short sentences, gives clear conclusion from this event and puts an end to the discussion.

At first it says:

"And Allah sent back those who disbelieved in their wrath, they gained no good…"

The Arabic word /qayz/ means 'wrath' and sometimes it is used in the sense of 'sorrow', but here there is a combination of both of them. The troops of clans, who had used their utmost effort and endeavour for being victorious against the forces of Islam but failed, returned to their lands while they were sad and angry.

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /xayr/ (good) here is victory in the war. The victory of the army of the disbelievers, of course, was never 'good' but it was vice, yet the Qur'an, which speaks from the mouth of theirs, has applied it 'good', pointing to this fact that they did not get any kind of victory in this field.

Some commentators have said that the objective meaning of /xayr/ here is ‘wealth’, because this word in some other cases is used in the sense of ‘wealth’, too, such as in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 180 which says:

“…if he leaves behind wealth for parents…”

One of the main motives of the army of the disbelievers was gaining booties in Medina and spoiling that city. In principle, in the Age of Ignorance the most important motive of war was this very thing.

But we have no evidence here to limit the meaning of /xayr/ to only ‘wealth’, but it contained any kind of victory that they desired, and ‘wealth’ was also one of them that they deprived from all.

Through the next sentence, the verse adds:

“…and Allah sufficed the believers of fighting…”

Allah provided such factors that without a vast fight, in which the believers might tolerate abundant damages and harms, the battle ended. From one side, a strong cold wind disturbed the circumstances of the polytheists.

On the other side, their hearts were filled with a serious terror and horrible fear, which itself is one of the unseen armies of Allah. On the third side, the stroke that Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) used over the body of ‘Amr-ubn-‘Abdiwudd, the greatest champion of the enemy, and sent him to destruction, caused them to become hopeless.

So, they gathered their tools, left the siege of Medina and returned back to their own tribes with no gain.

By the last sentence, the verse says:

“…and Allah is strong, Mighty.”

There may be found some persons who are ‘strong’ but they are not mighty and invincible, i.e., a stronger person can defeat him; but the only strong and Mighty one in the world is Allah Whose strength and power is infinite.

It was He Who in such a very hard and dangerous field gave the believers a kind of victory that they did not need even to violently fight, nor did they left so many martyrs.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verses 26-27

وَأَنزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُم مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِن صَيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيقاً تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقاً

وَأَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضاً لَّمْ تَطَؤُوهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَي ٰ كُ ِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيراً

26. “And He drove down those of the people of the Book (the Jews) who supported them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts, some you killed and some you made captive.”

27. “And He made you heirs of their lands, their dwellings, and their properties, and a land you had not trodden, and Allah is All-powerful over everything.”

We must not neglect the penetrating forces and the hidden members of the enemy in the society.

This holy verse refers to the Battle of Bani Qurayzah in the Battle of ’Ahzab who, as they imagined, perjured their own covenant with the

Muslims and on the form of hidden members of the enemy helped the polytheists of Mecca in the Battle of ’Ahzab, but they were disgracefully defeated and surrendered.

Three famous tribes of the Jews lived in Medina: Bani Qurayzah, Bani-Nadir, and Bani Qayniqaq. All of these groups had made a covenant with the Prophet of Islam (S) that they should not cooperate with his enemies and would not spy in their benefit, and that they should have a peaceful life with the Muslims.

But the tribe of Qayniqaq in the second year of Hejira, and the tribe of Bani Nadir in the fourth year of Hejira, each with a separate pretext, perjured their covenant and began to fight openly against the Prophet (S). At last, their resistance vanished and they were sent out from Medina.

The members of Bani Qayniqaq went toward ’Atharu‘at in Syria, and those of Bani Nadir party were drawn toward Khiybar and partly toward Syria.[9]

Therefore, when the Battle of ’Ahzab happened in the fifth A.H., the only tribe of these tribes, who remained in Medina, was the tribe of Bani Qurayzah; and as we explained in the commentary of the verses concerning the Battle of ’Ahzab, they knowingly broke their covenant in this field and joined the polytheists of Arab and fought against Muslims.

According to the Islamic narrations, after the end of the Battle of ’Ahzab, when the Quraysh, Qatfan, and other hostile tribes of Arab disgracefully retreated from Medina, the holy Prophet (S) returned home and took off the clothes of war from him and began washing himself.

At this time, by the command of Allah, Gabriel came to him and said:

“Why did you put down your sword? The angels are ready to fight. Just now you must go toward Bani Qurayzah and determine their fate. Truly, there was no chance for verifying the account of Bani Qurayzah better than that opportunity.”

The Muslims were busy with their victory, Bani Qurayzah, being horribly terrified, because of their defeat, were returning home with a very weak spirit, and their friends among the Arab tribes were completely tired, and there was no one to support them.

However, a caller from the side of the Prophet (S) announced that before establishing the evening prayer the strivers should move toward Bani Qurayzah. So, they quickly went out to fight. It was just the sunset when the very strong fortresses of Bani Qurayzah were surrounded by the Muslims.

This siege prolonged 25 days and, after that, as we will explain later, all of them were surrendered. In this event some of them were killed and another great victory was added to the victories of the Muslims, and, then, the land of Medina was purified for ever from the dirt of the existence of these hypocritical tribes, and the obstinate enemies.

The verses under discussion have a compressed and exact hint to this event and, as we said before, these verses were sent down after gaining victory and explained the details of this event in the form of a great bounty and merit of Allah.

The verse says:

"And He drove down those of the people of the Book (the Jews) who supported them from their fortresses…"

The Arabic term /sayasi/ is the plural form of /sisah/ in the sense of strong fortresses, then it has also been applied for any means of defence, such as: a cow's horn, and the small horn of the foot of a rooster.

This makes it clear that the Jews had built their fortresses in a side of Medina on a high point and defended themselves from their tops. (The application of the Qur'anic word /'anzala/ (He drove down) is also in the same meaning.)

Then, it adds:

"…and He cast awe into their hearts, some you killed and some you made captive."

The next verse continues saying:

"And He made you heirs of their lands, their dwellings, and their properties…"

These sentences state briefly the whole results of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah in which some of these perfidious persons were killed by the Muslims and another group were taken as captives, and a great deal of booties, including: their lands, their houses and their properties were occupied by the Muslims.

The application of the word 'heirs' concerning those booties is for the sake that the Muslims did not tolerate much toil for them and they easily got those abundant booties which were the fruit of the Jews' cruelty, tyranny, and exploitation during many years in Medina.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…and a land you had not trodden, and Allah is All-powerful over everything."

The commentators have delivered different statements about the purpose of the land mentioned in the verse, saying: "a land you had not trodden".

Some of them believe that it refers to the land of 'Khiybar' which was later conquered by the Muslims.

Some others say that it refers to the land of Mecca, while another group believe that it refers to the lands of Room and Iran.

Some commentators say that it refers to all of the lands that from that day on until the Day of Hereafter Muslims occupy as their own realms.

But none of these probabilities is consistent with the apparent of the verse, because the verse in the frame of reference of the verb in the past tense /'auraθakum/ (He made you heirs) mentioned in the verse is an evidence that this land was occupied by the Muslims in this very fight of Bani Qurayzah in addition to the land of Mecca, which is one of commentaries, and it was not a land that the Muslims had not trodden in, while the Qur'an says:

"…and a land you had not trodden…".

Apparently this verse points to the special gardens and lands which were under the authority of Bani Qurayzah and no body had the right to enter them, because the Jews seriously tried to protect their properties.

And if we disregard the past tense of the verb of this victory, it adapts more to the land of Khiybar which was located not so far from the Jewish tribe and, however, the Muslims occupied it.[10]

Some Points

1- The Main Root of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah

The Holy Qur'an testifies that the main factor of this Battle was the support of the Jews of Bani Qurayzah from the polytheists of Arabs in the Battle of 'Ahzab, because it says:

"…He drove down those of the people of the Book (The Jews) who supported them…"

Moreover, the Jews, in principle, were counted as a hidden group in Medina for the enemies of Islam. They worked hard in propagations against Islam and they used any opportunity they found to damage the Muslims.

As we said before, among the three tribes of the Jews (Bani Qayniqaq, Bani Nadir, and Bani Qurayzah) only the third group had remained in Medina at the time of the Battle of 'Ahzab, and the first and second groups as the result of perjury were condemned to leave Medina, and this third group, who acted to breaking covenant and joining to the enemies of Islam, should receive the retribution of their own treacherous deeds and be punished for their crimes.

2- The Event of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah

We said that the Prophet (S), immediately after the end of the Battle of 'Ahzab, was ordered to make clear the account of Bani Qurayzah.

It has been recorded that the Muslims hurried to attend in the region of the fortresses of Bani Qurayzah so hastily that even some of them neglected to perform their evening prayer and out of necessity they belated accomplishment of it later.

The Prophet (S) issued the command of the siege of their fortresses. This siege prolonged twenty five days. As the Holy Qur'an implies, Allah cast an intensive awe in their hearts.

Ka'b-ibn-'Asad, who was one of the chiefs of the Jews, said:

"I am sure that Muhammad (S) will not leave us alone until he fights against us. I suggest three things that you choose either of them that you desire.

My first suggestion is that we shake hand with this man and believe in him and follow him, because it has been proved for you that he is the Messenger of Allah, and we find the signs of his prophethood in our books. In this case your life, wealth, children and wives will be safe and sound."

They answered that they would not leave the Torah and would not accept anything instead of it.

He said:

"Now that you did not accept my suggestion, let us kill our children and wives with our own hands so that our thought can be free from them, and then draw your swords and fight against Muhammad (S) and his followers to see what Allah desires.

If we are killed we will not be worried about our wives and children, and if we won the battle, there would be found many wives and children for us later."

They said:

"How do we kill these helpless ones with our own hands? After them, what is the worth of living for us?"

Ka'b-ibn-'Asad said:

"Well! You did not accept this. Tonight is the night before Saturday. Muhammad (S) and his companions think that we will not attack them tonight. Let us attack them insidiously, perhaps we will win the battle."

They said that they would not do that either, because they were never willing to violate the esteem of Saturday.

Ka'b angrily said:

"Since the day you were born from your mothers, none of you have been wise even for a night."

After that, they asked the Prophet (S) to send 'Abu Lubabah to them in order that they would consult with him.

When 'Abu Lubabah came to them, the Jewish women and children began crying in front of him and he was seriously affected by that scene. Then the Jewish men asked him whether he approved that they would submit the command of Muhammad (S).

'Abu Lubabah agreed with them, but at the same time he pointed to his throat which meant that the Prophet (S) would kill all of them.

'Abu Lubabah says when he left that place he understood his treachery. Then, instead of going to meet the Prophet (S), he went directly into the mosque and fastened himself to one of the pillars of the mosque and said he would not move from that place until Allah (s.w.t.) might accept his repentance.

At last, Allah forgave his sin because of his truthfulness and a verse of the Qur'an was revealed in this concern, saying:

"And (there are) others who have confessed to their sins. They have mixed a righteous deed and an evil one. May be Allah will turn (mercifully) to them (and accept their repentance). Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."[11]

Finally, the Jews of Bani Qurayzah had to be surrendered without any condition. The holy Prophet (S) told them whether they were content that he should execute whatever Sa'd-ibn-Ma'ath would judge about them, (and they accepted).

Sa'd-ibn-Ma'ath said:

"It is the time when Sa'd must state the ordinance of Allah without considering the scorn of any blamers."

Sa'd made the Jews confess again that they would accept whatever he might judge, and then he shut his eyes and turned his face to that side that the Prophet (S) was standing and said:

"Do you accept my judgement, too?"

the Prophet (S) answered:

'Yes'.

He said:

"I say that those who were ready to fight against Muslims (the men of Bani Qurayzah) must be killed, and their wives and children must be captured, and their properties must be divided."

But some of them embraced Islam and saved.[12]

3- The Sequels of the Battle of Bani Qurayzah

The triumph over this cruel obstinate group had some fruitful results for the Muslims; among them are as follow:

1- Purification of the inner army of Medina and that the Muslims become mentally reposeful from the spies of the Jews.

2- The destruction of the centre of Arab polytheists in Medina and that they became hopeless of providing an inner rebellion.

3- The finance power of the Muslims was strengthened by the booties of this battle.

4- The way of the future victories was paved, and that of Khiybar occupation in particular.

5- The fixation of the situation of Islam in the view of both the enemies and friends inside and outside of Medina was established.

Notes

1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, wonderful saying No. 9
2. Mufradat by Raqib, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Lisan-ul-'Arab
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan under the abovementioned verse
4. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Fi-Zilal, and Majma'-ul-Bayan
5. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
6. Tafsir-us-Safi, following the verse
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 259
8. The commentary Al-Mizan, following the verse
9. Kamil-i-Ibn-Athir, P. 2, P. 137 and 173
10. The Battle of Khiybar happened in the seventh A.H.
11. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 102
12. Kamil, by Ibn-i-'Athir, Vol. 2, P. 185 and Sirah, by Ibn-Husham, Vol. 2 P. 244

Section 4: The Ahlul Bayt Divinely Made Pure

The People of the House (The Ahlul Bayt) Divinely Made Pure (Clean)

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 28

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُل لاَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحاً جَمِيلاً

28. "O Prophet! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world and its adornment, then come, I will provide you enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner."

As the result of gaining the booties by the Muslims, the wives of the Prophet (S) wished to develop their lives and, therefore, demanded him (S) some means and welfare potentialities. The Prophet (S) opposed their demand and did not go to them for a month until when the verses under discussion were revealed.

The life of all Muslims must be simple. The religious, social and guiding situation creates a particular duty for man.

"…If you desire the life of this world…"

Therefore, the verse says:

"O Prophet! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world and its adornment, then come, I will provide you enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner."

The Arabic word /'umatti'kunna/ is derived from /mut'ah/ and, as it has been said in the commentary of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 236, its purpose is a present which is fit with the rank of a woman.

Here the purpose is that he ought to add to the dowry an appropriate sum, or if there has not been appointed a particular dowry he may give them a worthy present so that they become content and happy and that their separation would occur in a friendly environment.

The Arabic word /sarah/ is originally derived from /sarh/ in the sense of a plant which has leaves and fruit; and the Arabic phrase: /sarahtul-'abil/ means 'I left the camels to enjoy the plants and the leaves of the trees'.

Then, it has been used in a vaster scope of meaning, with the sense of any kind of leaving anything and anyone; and sometimes it is also used ironically in the sense of 'to divorce'.

However, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: /sarahan jamila/ (in a handsome manner) mentioned in the verse under discussion is: 'To set women free pleasantly and without any quarrel and wrath.'

Here, there are some detailed discussions among the Islamic commentators and jurists whether the purpose of this statement mentioned in the above verse is that the Prophet (S) let his wives free between remaining or they separate, and if they chose separation, it would itself be counted as divorce and it did not need the formula of repudiation to be recited.

Or the purpose has been this that they would choose one of those two ways. If they chose separation, the Prophet (S) would recite the formula of repudiation, otherwise they would remain in their own state.

Yes, the combination of the meaning of the above verse and other verses of divorce requires that separation must be done by means of divorce.

However, this problem is discussed among the jurists of both Shi‘ah and the Sunnites, though the second attitude, i.e. separation by the way of divorce is nearer to the apparent of the holy verse.

Moreover, the application of the Qur’anic phrase /’usarrihkunna/ (I set you free) denotes that the Prophet (S) took action in separating them, specially that the word /tasrih/ in another occurrence of the Holy Qur’an has been used in the sense of ‘divorce’.[1]

For more information in this regard, you may refer to the legal books, particularly to the book Jawahir, Vol. 29, P. 122.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 29

وَإِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الأَخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْراً عَظِيماً

29. “And if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of Hereafter, then verily Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.”

Allah (s.w.t.) considers simple life for the religious leaders’ families as a good action. Therefore, those who renounce the little provision of this world will gain a great reward.

So, this verse says:

“And if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of Hereafter, then verily Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.”

In fact, these few sentences contain all the basis of faith and programs of a believer. From one side, he has the Faith in Allah, His Messenger (S), and in the Day of Hereafter, and he tries to increase it. On the other side, he is in the row of the benevolent and righteous doers.

Therefore, a mere desire and expression of love to Allah, the Prophet (S), and Hereafter is not enough, but one’s practical programs must be consistent to it, too.

Thus, Allah made the duty of the Prophet’s wives clear forever, that they must be an example for the faithful women. They must be pious, virtuous, heedless to the dazzling glares of the world and beautiful ornament, and must specially be attentive to faith, righteous deed, and spirituality.

If they are such, they can remain and possess the great honour of being the Prophet’s spouses; else, they may take their own way and separate from him.

In these sentences the addressees are the Prophet’s wives, but the content of the holy verses and its result envelops all, specially those who have been appointed in the position of leadership over people and common people should follow them.

They can always choose one of two ways: they may use their apparent position for reaching a welfare of material life, or submitting to some deprivations in order to get the pleasure of Allah and guidance of people.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 30

يَا نِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

30. "O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open indecency, the punishment for her will be doubled, and that is easy for Allah."

In Divine retribution and reward personal merit and noble descent have no effect and every offender must be punished.

Those who have a religious feature and a social situation and whose manner is considered as a model for others, will deserve a greater retribution than that of others if they commit a sin.

This holy verse through some clear statements refers to the situation of the wives of the Prophet (S) concerning their good and evil actions as well as their prominence and their heavy responsibility.

It says:

"O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open indecency, the punishment for her will be doubled, and that is easy for Allah."

You are living in the house of the Prophet (S), the centre of revelation and prophecy. Regarding to your constant nearness to the Messenger of Allah (S) your awareness about the Islamic affairs is more than the common people, in addition that others look at you and your deeds are as models for them.

Therefore, your sin is more grievous than theirs with Allah, since both reward and retribution are given according to the one's knowledge and level of cognizance, and its effect in the environment. You have both a heavier portion of information and a more sensitive situation from the point of having an affect of the society.

Besides them all, your wrong actions, from one side, annoy the holy Prophet (S), and, on the other side, damage his honour, and this is counted another sin which deserves another punishment.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: /fahišatan mubayyinah/ is the open lewdnesses; and we know that the harm of the sins that some known personalities commit will often be more effective when they are done manifestly.

The Qur'anic sentence that says: "That is easy for Allah" refers to this fact that they should never imagine that their punishment causes any difficulty for Allah and that their relation with the Prophet of Islam (S) may hinder it, as it is customary among people that they ignore, or consider the sins of their friends and relatives small.

No, it is not such. This ordinance will decisively be executed upon them. The above mentioned verses are about the wives of the Prophet (S), saying that if they obey Allah they will have a double reward, and if they commit a manifest sin their retribution will also be doubled.

But in view of the fact that the main criterion of judgment is one's social position, personality and rank, this ordinance is also true about other persons who have a social position.

Such persons do not belong only to them, but their existence consists of two dimensions: one dimension belongs to their own selves, and the other

belongs to the society. So, their life programs can guide a group or mislead another group. Thus, their deeds have two effects: a personal effect and a social effect, and from this point of view, each of them has a reward or retribution.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that he said:

"An ignorant person's seventy sins will be forgiven before that a single sin of a learned one can be forgiven."[2]

It is narrated that:

"Once someone came to Imam Sajjad, Ali-ibn-il-Husayn (as), and said:

'Verily you are the family whom Allah has forgiven.'

The Imam (as) became angry and said:

"We are more deserving that what Allah has appointed about the wives of the Prophet (S) to be appointed to us, not as you say. We consider two rewards for our righteous (ones) and two retributions for our evil (ones), then, he recited the two abovementioned verses."[3]

The messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The stroke of Ali (as) on the day of the ditch is better than the worship of Jinn and human beings."[4]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 31

وَمَن يَقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحاً نُؤْتِهَآ أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقاً كَرِيمًا

31. "And whoever of you (women) is obedient to Allah and His Messenger, and does righteousness, to her shall We grant her reward twice; and We have prepared for her a generous sustenance."

Encouragement and threat are effective when they are beside each other.

That obedience is worthy which is based upon knowledge and love accompanied with modesty.

Therefore, this verse says:

"And whoever of you (women) is obedient to Allah and His Messenger, and does righteousness, to her shall We grant her reward twice; and We have prepared for her a generous sustenance."

The Arabic word /yaqnut/ is derived from /qunut/ in the sense of obedience accompanied with modesty and discipline.[5] So the Holy Qur'an tells them in this way that they should be obedient both to the command of Allah and the Prophet and observe the condition of discipline perfectly.

Here, we confront again this point that mere claim of faith and obedience is not enough, but in respect to the Qur'anic phrase /ta'mal salihan/ (does righteousness) its effects must be seen in action, too.

The Arabic phrase /rizqan karim/ (a generous sustenance) has a vast meaning which encompasses all the spiritual and material merits. It has been rendered into Paradise for the sake that Paradise is the abode of all these merits.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 32

يَآ نِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلاَ تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلاً مَعْرُوفاً

32. "O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women if you are in awe of Allah, then be not soft in speech lest he in whose heart is disease aspire (at you) and speak honourable words."

The circumstance of the families of religious leaders is different from that of others and they should be more careful of their behaviour than others.

When the wives of the Prophet (S), most of whom were old and aged and had a simple life, are warned that they should not speak with an amorous gesture, the young and beautiful women must count their own account.

So, in this verse, Allah says:

"O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women if you are in awe of Allah…"

From one side, because of your connection to the Prophet (S), and that you are inside the centre of revelation and hear the verses of the Qur'an and teachings of Islam, on the other side, you have such a particular situation that you can be a model for all women, whether in the way of piety, or in the way of sin, therefore, you must recognize your situation and do not neglect your heavy responsibility.

You should know that if you are pious you will have a very excellent rank with Allah.

Next to this fair premise, which makes them prepare for accepting responsibilities and consider personality for them, it issues the first divine command in the field of chastity, and, in particular, refers to a narrow subject so that other issues in this relation would be made clear. It says:

"…then be not soft in speech lest he in whose heart is disease aspire (at you)…"

You should be severe and dry in speech, and speak ordinarily, not like some low women who try to speak with some stimulative changes in their voice and gesture that cause the voluptuous persons to fall in the thought of sin.

The application of the Qur'anic clause: "He in whose heart is disease" is a very explicit meaning upon this fact that the existence of sexual instinct in the level of moderation and religion is the sign of health, but when it is beyond this level it is a kind of disease, so much so that it becomes nigh to madness and is usually called: 'sexual madness!'

Nowadays, the concerning scientists have explained in their books different kinds of this psychological sickness, which come into being as the result of the increase of this instinct and submitting to kinds of sexual pollutions in corruptive environments.

The Qur'an issues the second command as follows:

"…and speak honourable words."

In fact, the phrase "…be not soft in speech…" refers to the modality of speaking, and the phrase: "speak honourable words" points to the content of speech.

Of course, the phrase 'honourable words', here, has a vast meaning that, besides what was said, negates any kind of false, vain, and sinful saying which is opposite to the truth.

By the way, the recent sentence can be an explanation for the former one, lest no one think that the wives of the Prophet (S) must encounter strangers insidiously or far from discipline, but their manner must be decent, polite and, in the meanwhile without having any sort of behaviour with stimulation.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 33

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلاَ تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلاَةَ وَءَاتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً

33. "And stay in your abodes and do not display your finery, like the former times of Ignorance, and establish the prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O' you the people of the House! And purify you (with) a thorough purification."

This verse addresses the wives of the Prophet (S), but certainly its purpose is all the Muslim women who must practice these commandments respectively.

Sin is a pollution for the spirit, and the family of the holy Prophet (S) must be far from this pollution.

In the field of observing chastity, this verse says:

"And stay in your abodes and do not display your finery, like the former times of Ignorance…"

The Arabic word /qarn/ is derived from /wiqar/ in the sense of 'heaviness', which implicitly refers to staying at homes. Some others have also said that it may be derived from /qarar/ which, from the point of consequence, does not much differ from the first meaning.

The Arabic word /tabarruj/ means to be manifest before the eyes of people. It is derived from /baraja/ which means to be apparent in front of the eyes of all.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic word /jahiliyyah/ (ignorance) apparently is the same Ignorance which existed at the time of the Prophet (S). As the history indicates, at that time women had not a correct veil.

They used to cast the lap of their shawls behind their heads in a way that their throat and a part of their breast, necklace, neck and ear-rings were seen, and by this style the Qur'an dissuades the wives of the Prophet (S) from these sorts of treatments.

No doubt this ordinance is general, and the emphasis of these verses on the wives of the Prophet (S) is as a stressed recommendation. It is just like that we tell a scholar that he, who is a scholar, should not tell a lie.

The concept of this statement is not that telling a lie is permissible for others, but the purpose is that this man who is a scholar must avoid this action more seriously and more emphatically than others.

However, this statement shows that in future there will come some Ignorance similar to the Ignorance of Arabs, and today, in our time, we see the traces of this prophecy of the Qur'an in the civilized material world.

But the former commentators, who could not foresee such an affair, had been in trouble for commenting this word.

So, they have commented the phrase /jahiliyyatil 'ula/ (the former times of Ignorance) as the time between the age of Adam and that of Noah, or the time between the age of David and Solomon, when women came out in public with some dresses that their bodies were manifest, so that they could name the Ignorance before Islam as the second Ignorance.

But, as we said before, these statements are not needed, and the apparent meaning is that /jahiliyyat-il-'ula/ is that very Ignorance of before Islam which is referred to in another place of the Qur'an, too.[6] and the second Ignorance is the Ignorance which will come into being later (like our age).[7]

However, the verse of the Qur'an has stated three Divine instructions as follows:

"…and establish the prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger…"

If in the field of worship the Qur'an emphasizes on ritual prayer and poor-rate, it is for the sake that prayer is the most important way of communication with Allah and in the meantime that the poor-rate is a great worship, it is counted as a firm connection with the servants of Allah.

The Qur'anic sentence: "obey Allah and His Messenger" is a general ordinance which envelops all the Divine programs. These three instructions also show that the above ordinances are not allocated to the wives of the Prophet (S), but they are for all, although they have an emphasis concerning them.

At the end, the verse says:

"…Verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O' you the people of the House! And purify you (with) a thorough purification."

The application of the Arabic word /'innama/ here, which is usually for restriction, is an evidence that this merit is only for the family of the Prophet (S).

The Arabic term /yuridu/ refers to the genetic will of Allah, else, 'the religious will' and, in other words, the necessity of keeping one's self pure does not restrict to the family of the Prophet (S) and, according to the command of religion, all people are dutifully responsible to be pure from any kind of sin and pollution.

It may be said that 'the genetic will' causes a kind of fatalism, but regarding to the discussions we had about the infallibility of Divine prophets and Imams the answer of this question will be made clear, and here it can be briefly said: the infallible ones have a sort of acquired eligibility by means of their own deeds, and a kind of innate competency gifted from the side of Allah so that they can be a paradigm for people.

In other words, the infallible ones, for the sake of Divine aids and their own pure deeds, are in a state that they do not go toward sins while they have power and authority to commit sin.

It is just like that never a wise person is ready to take a piece of fire and puts it in his mouth, while there is neither a compulsion nor any aversion in this action. This is a mood emerged from inside of the self of a man as the

result of information and innate natural principles, without being any compulsion and predestination in the action.

The Arabic term /rijs/ means an impure thing, whether it is impure from the view of the man's nature, or according to the intellect or religion or all of them.

The Qur'anic word /tathir/ means 'to purify' and in fact, it is an emphasis on the negation of any kind of uncleanness; and its mentioning here in the form of 'absolute object' is counted another emphasis on this meaning.

According to the view of all scholars of Islam and commentators, the application of the term Ahlul Bayt here refers to the family of the Prophet (S) and this is the thing which is understood from the apparent of the verse itself.

The objective meaning of the word /bayt/ (house), which has been mentioned here in an absolute form, with the context of the verses before and after it, is the house of the Prophet (S)

Who Are the Prophet's Family (Ahlul Bayt)?

There are a lot of traditions recorded in the sources of the Sunnites and Shi'ah which indicate the addressees in the abovementioned verse are only five persons. They are: the Prophet (S), Ali (as), Fatimah (as) Hassan and Husayn (as).

There are more than one hundred and thirty narrations mentioned in this regard in the book entitled Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, which is one of the famous books of the Sunnites. The book entitled Ihqaq-ul-Haqq introduces more than seventy traditions taken from the famous sources of the Sunnites which allocate this verse to the above mentioned five persons.[8]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 34

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفاً خَبِيراً

34. "And remember what is recited in your abodes of the signs of Allah and the Wisdom; verily Allah is All-Subtle, Aware."

There have been mentioned two meanings for the Qur'anic word /ðikr/: one is 'to memorize' and the other is 'to utter'.

Therefore the Qur'anic phrase: /waðkurna/ means: O' wives of the Prophet! You should remember, and do not forget, that the Divine revelation is sent down in your house; or it means: you should reiterate for others whatever of the Book of Allah is recited in your house and you learn.

Instead of a mean and worthless culture, you must follow the Divine culture. The household of the Prophet (S) must do righteous deeds prior to others.

This fact mentioned in this verse has been stated as the last duty of the wives of the Prophet (S), and it is a warning unto all of them that they may utilize the best opportunity which has been given to them; that is, being informed of the facts of Islam, and that they might improve themselves under its light.

It says:

"And remember what is recited in your abodes of the signs of Allah and the Wisdom…"

You are in the centre of revelation and under the light of the Qur'an. Even when you are at home, you can abundantly enjoy the lessons of Islam and the words of the holy Prophet (S) stated by his holy tongue, because his every breath is a lesson and his every word is a program.

Upon the difference between /'ayatillah/ (the signs of Allah) and /hikmat/ (wisdom) some of the commentators have said that both of them refer to the Qur'an, but the application of the Qur'anic word /'ayat/ states its being as a miracle, and the application of /hikmat/ reiterates the deep content and knowledge hidden in it.

Some other Islamic commentators have said that /'ayatullah/ points to the verses of the Qur'an and /hikmat/ refers to the Prophet's way of treatment and his wise admonitions.

Both of these two commentaries adapt to the rank and words of the verse, but the first one seems nearer, because the application of the word 'recite' is more appropriate in respect to the Divine verses. In addition, the word /nuzul/ has been used in many verses of the Qur'an in connection with both 'verses' and 'wisdom'.

Among them is Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 231 which says:

"…and what He has sent down unto you of the Book and wisdom…".

Similar to this very meaning is also recited in Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 113.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…verily Allah is All-Subtle, Aware."

This sentence points to this fact that Allah is aware of the most precise things, and He knows your intentions very well, and He is aware of the secrets hidden inside your breasts.

This meaning is in the case that we comment the Qur'anic word /latif/ (All-subtle) in the sense of the One Who is aware of the minute points, and if we comment it in the sense of 'the possessor of mercy', it refers to this fact that Allah is both merciful unto you, the wives of the Prophet (S), and is aware of your deeds.

This is also probable that the emphasis on the word /latif/ (All-subtle) is for the sake of the miracle of the verse of the Qur'an, and the emphasis on the word /xabir/ (aware) is for its wise content. In the meanwhile, these meanings do not contrast each other and can be said with together.

A Few Points

1- The 'Purification Verse' is the Clear Proof of Immaculacy

Some commentators have taken the Arabic word /rijs/, mentioned in the verse, only as a hint to polytheism, or to the ugly major sins such as adultery, while there is no proof available for this restriction.

But (regarding that the Arabic signs 'Alif and Lam added to the material noun /rijs/) the word 'Ar-Rijs' encompasses every kind of pollution and sin, since all sins are called in Arabic 'Rijs'. In the Qur'an, this word has been used in the senses of: polytheism, alcoholic liquors, gambling, hypocrisy, unlawful meats, and the like.[9]

And regarding that the Will of Allah is not changeable and the sentence:

"…verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness O' you the people of the House…"

mentioned in the Qur'an is an evidence upon the certain Will of Allah, specially regarding to the Qur'anic word /'innama/ which is used for restriction and emphasis, makes it clear that the decisive Will of Allah is determined that 'the people of the House' should be clean from any pollution, wrong and sin and this is that very rank of infallibility.

This point is also noteworthy that the objective meaning of 'the Will of Allah' in these verses is not His instructions and ordinances concerning lawful and unlawful things, since such instructions are for all people and do not allocate to only Ahlul Bayt (as), therefore, it is not consistent with the concept of the word /'innama/.

Thus, this constant Will refers to a kind of Divine aid which helps the people of the House (Ahlul Bayt) in infallibility and its continuation, and in the meantime, (as it was explained before), it does not contrast with free will and choice.

In fact, the concept of the verse is the same thing that is also mentioned in Jami'ah Supplication, which says:

"Allah protected you from errors, and made you safe from seditions, and purified you from pollutions, and kept off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, and purified you (with) a through purification."

2- Whom is the Purification Verse About?

We said before that though this verse is mentioned inside the verses concerning the wives of the Prophet (S), the change of its style (the alteration of feminine plural pronouns to masculine plural pronouns) is the evidence for that this part of the verse has a content apart from these verses.

That is why even those who have not considered this verse concerned to the Prophet (S), Ali (as), Fatimah (as), Hassan and Husayn (as), believe that it has such a vast meaning that it envelops both these dignitaries and the wives of the holy Prophet (S).

But there are many narrations available which indicate that the verse is allocated to only these dignitaries and the wives of the Prophet (S) are not involved in this meaning though they have a symmetrical respect. Here are a number of those narrations:

A) The narrations that have been narrated from the wives of the Prophet (S) themselves. They said:

"When the Prophet (S) was speaking about this holy verse, we asked him whether we were included in it, and he answered:

'You are good but you are not included in this verse'."

Among them is the narration which Tha'labi has narrated in his commentary from 'Umm-us-Salamah, saying:

"The Prophet (S) was at home when Fatimah (as) brought a piece of silk cloth to him.

The Prophet (S) told her:

'Call your husband and your two sons, Hassan and Husayn (as)'.

She fetched them.

Then they ate food.

Then the Prophet (S) cast a mantle over them and said:

‘O’ Allah! These are my family (Ahlul Bayt), then keep off from them (every kind of) uncleanness and purify them (with) a thorough purification’.

And it was here that the verse saying:

‘Verily Allah intend…’

was revealed.

I said:

‘Am I with you, O’ Messenger of Allah?’

He (S) said:

‘You are upon goodness, (but you are not among them)’.”

Also Tha‘labi himself narrates from ‘Ayishah as follows:

“When she was asked about the Battle of Jamal and her interference in that destructive battle, she (regretfully) said:

‘This was a Divine pre-ordination’.

And when she was asked about Ali (as), she said:

‘Do you ask me about the one who was the most beloved with the Messenger of Allah (S) among people, and about the wife of the one who was the most beloved with the Messenger of Allah (S) among people?

I have seen myself Ali, Fatimah, Hassan, and Husayn whom the Messenger of Allah had gathered under clothing, and said:

‘O’ Allah! These are my family (Ahlul Bayt) and my support; then keep off from them (every kind of) uncleanness and purify them (with) a thorough purification.’

She said:

‘I asked:

‘O’ Messenger of Allah! Am I from (among) your family?’

He answered:

‘Be off! You are upon goodness’.”[10]

These sorts of narrations explicitly denote that the wives of the Prophet (S) are not considered as Ahlul Bayt (family) in this verse.

B) There have been recorded many narrations about Hadith Kasa from all of which it is understood that once the Prophet (S) called up Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Husayn (as), or they themselves came to him.

He cast a shoulder-mantle over them, and said:

“O’ Allah! These are my family (members), then Keep off (every kind of) uncleanness from them.”

At this time the verse:

“Verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness…” was revealed.

Hakim Huskani Neyshaburi, the famous scholar, has compiled several narrations in this field narrated from various narrators.[11]

Here, this question attracts the attentions that what was the aim of gathering them under that single piece garment?

It seems that the Prophet (S) intended to specify them well and say that this verse is only about this group, lest someone considers the addressees of this verse were the whole wives of the Prophet (S) and all those who are counted as a part of his family.

Even some narrations indicate that the Prophet (S) repeated this sentence for three times and said:

"O Allah! These are my family (members) and my particular (ones), then Keep off (every kind of) uncleanness from them and purify them (with) a thorough purification."

C) A great deal of other narrations denote that after the revelation of this verse until six months when the Prophet (S) was passing by the house of Fatimah (as) for going to perform his morning prayer, he called:

"It is the time of prayer O' Ahlul Bayt. Verily Allah intends but to Keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O' you the people of the House! And purify you (with) a thorough purification."

Hakim Huskani has narrated this tradition from 'Anas-ibn-Malik.[12]

Another narration, which is narrated from 'Abu-Sa'id Khidri, from the Prophet (S), indicates:

"The Prophet (S) continued this program until eight or nine months."[13]

Ibn-i-'Abbas has narrated this tradition from the Prophet (S), too.[14]

This point is also notable that the constant repetition of this subject for six, or 8, or 9 months beside the house of Fatimah (as) is for the purpose that the matter could completely be distinguished so that there would remain no doubt for anyone that this verse was revealed only in the rank of this group, specially that after that he (S) ordered that the doors of the houses of others towards the mosque should be closed, and, at the time of prayer, naturally a group of people could hear this statement there from the Prophet (S).

The only house the arrival door of which was allowed to be open into the Mosque of the Prophet (S) was Fatimah's house.

D) There are numerous narrations narrated by 'Abu-Sa'id Khidri, the famous Companion of the Prophet (S), who manifestly testifies:

"This verse has been sent down only about those five persons: the Messenger of Allah, Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Husayn (as)."[15]

These narrations are so abundant that some of the Islamic researchers consider them 'widely transmitted'.

It is concluded from what was said that the sources and the narrators of the traditions which indicate that the verse relates only to those five persons are so abundant that there remains no room far any doubt.

The book entitled: 'Sharh-i-'Ihqaq-ul-Haqq' introduces more than seventy sources from among the famous sources of the Sunnites, while the available sources of Shi'ah in this field are more than one thousand sources.[16]

The writer of Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, who is one of the famous scholars of the Sunnis, has narrated more than 130 traditions in this regard.[17]

Besides, some of the wives of the Prophet (S) committed something during their lifetime which never agreed with the rank of infallibility, such as the event of the Battle of Jamal, which was a rebellion against Imam Ali (as), the Imam of the time, that caused a great deal of blood to be shed and, as some of historians have said, more than seventeen thousand people were killed in it.

No doubt, this event is never justifiable, and we see that even 'Ayishah herself also after this event expresses regret, a part of which was referred to formerly. 'Ayishah's finding fault from Khadijah, who was the greatest, the

most self-sacrificing and the most virtuous women of Islam, is known in history.

Her word was so sad for the Prophet (S) that, because of the intense of wrath his hair stood on end, and he said:

"By Allah! I had no wife better than her. She embraced Islam when people disbelieved, and she offered her properties at my disposal when all people had got distance with me."

3- Is Allah's Will, Here, Genetic or Religious?

When explaining the commentary of the verse we pointed out that the word 'Will' in the sentence:

"Verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness…"

is a genetic will not a religious one.

For more explanation we must mention that the purpose of 'religious will' is the commands and prohibitions of Allah. For example, Allah has ordered us to perform prayer, fasting, Hajj, and Holy Struggle. This is religious will.

It is clear that religious will relates to our deeds not to the acts of Allah, while in the above-mentioned verse what belongs to will is Allah's action. It says:

"Allah intends to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness",

so, such a will must be 'genetic' and it relates to Allah in the world of genesis.

Besides this, the 'religious will' due to purification and piety, does not allocate to Ahlul Bayt (as) because Allah has ordered everybody to be pure and virtuous, and this is not a privilege for Ahlul Bayt (as), since all those who are fully capable are involved in this commandment.

However, this matter, i.e. religious will, not only is not consistent with the apparent of the verse, but also does not agree with the former traditions, since all of those traditions speak about a high privilege and an important particular value which is specific to Ahlul Bayt (as).

This is also certain that the Qur'anic word /rijs/ here does not mean the outward uncleanness but it refers to innate pollutions. The application of the word negates any kind of restriction and limitation in polytheism, infidelity, deeds of indecency, and the like, and it envelops all sins, and creedal, ethical and practical pollutions.

Another point which must be under careful consideration is that the genetic will which is meant 'creation' here means advisable not the 'complete cause' so that it becomes the source of fatalism and negation of choice.

Explanations: The rank of infallibility is in the sense of a state of Divine piety which comes into being in Divine prophets and Imams by the aid of Allah. But with the existence of this case, it is not such that they can not commit any sin, but they have this ability; too, and they renounce committing sin with their own choice.

It is just like a good physician who never eats a very poisonous thing that he knows its serious dangers, though he has the power of doing it, but his

knowledge, mental and spiritual principles cause that he renounce eating it with his own choice.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned that this Divine piety is a particular merit which is endowed upon the Divine prophets, not upon others; but it must be noted that Allah has bestowed this privilege upon them for the heavy responsibility of leadership that He has given them.

Therefore, it is a privilege that the result of which benefits everyone, and this is the essence of justice. It is just like the particular privilege that Allah has given to the thin, tender, and very sensitive curtains of the eyes that the whole parts of the body enjoy of it.

Moreover, in the same respect that Divine prophets have privileges and are involved in the merits of Allah, their responsibility is heavy, too; so that only a 'leaving the better' of theirs is equivalent to a major sin committed by the ordinary people. This is a distinguisher of the line of justice.

Conclusion: This will is a genetic will in the level of an advisable cause (not a complete cause), and, in the meantime, it is neither the cause of fatalism nor does it negate any advantage and honour.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 229
2. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1, P. 37
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 354
4. Al-Qadir, Vol. 7, P. 206
5. Mufradat by Raqib, under the word 'Qunut'.
6. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 143, Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 50, and Surah Al-Fath, No. 48, verse 26
7. As it was pointed out a group of the commentators were in doubt about the meaning of the Arabic phrase /jahiliyyat-il-'ula/ mentioned in the verse under discussion, as if they could not believe that after the advent of Islam there will come into being in the world a kind of Ignorance that the Ignorance of the Arabs before Islam comparing with it will certainly be an insignificant matter.

But today this matter is completely clear for us, who are witnesses of the horrible manifestations of the Ignorance of the twentieth century, and this must be counted as one of the miraculous prophecies of the Qur'an.

If in the age of first Ignorance the Arabs had some wars and robberies and, for example, for several times the market of 'Akkaz was the scene of foolish blood-sheds, and some people were killed, in the Ignorance of our time some universal wars take place wherein sometimes more than twenty million people are slain, and more than that are injured or become deformed.

If in the Ignorance of Arabs women displayed their finery, and put their scarves aside in a way that a part of their breast, throat, necklace, and ear-rings were seen, in our age they form some clubs under the title of 'Necked Club' (the example of which is famous in England) wherein, with utmost excuse, individuals become nude for indecent exposures.

If in the age of Arab Ignorance the polluted women put a sign above their own houses in order to invite some individuals toward themselves, in the Ignorance of our age there are some persons who introduce some things in this field in some special newspapers or in the sites of internet which are earnestly shameful to be mentioned and the Ignorance of Arabs were hundred times more honourable than this.

In short, there are some corruptions in faithless material world of today that leaving them unmentioned is better, and this commentary ought not to be polluted by it.

What was said was only a small portion out of very many kinds of them in order to show the life of those who get distance with Allah and, with having thousands of universities, scientific centres and famous scholars, they are fully polluted by corruptions, so much so that even these very scientific centres and their scholars sometimes cooperate with them.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. The Commentaries of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Burhan, and Safi
9. Suras Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 30; Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 90; At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 125; Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 145
10. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
11. Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, Vol. 2, P. 32
12. Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, Vol. 2, P. 25
13. Shawahid-ut-Tanzil. Vol. 2, P. 11
14. Ibid, PP. 28, 29
15. Durr-ul-Manthur, Following the verse.
16. Vol. 2 of Ihqaq-ul-Haqq and its footnotes
17. You may refer to Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, P. 10 to P. 92

Section 5: No Believer Shall Have Any Choice Against the Command of the Prophet of Allah

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 35

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيراً وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْراً عَظِيمًا

35. "Verily the Muslim men and the Muslim women, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obedient men and the obedient women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the alms-giving men and the alms-giving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their modesty and the women who guard (their modesty), and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah (much), for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward."

The Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have said that when 'Asma' Bent-i-'Umays, the wife of Ja'far-ibn-Abitalib, accompanied with her husband, came back from Ethiopia, she went to visit the Prophet's wives.

One of the questions she began asking was that whether there was anything of the verses of the Qur'an revealed about women. They responded a negative answer to her.

Then she came to the Prophet (S) and, concerning it, she said:

"O' the Messenger of Allah! Women are in loss!"

The Prophet (S) asked her:

"Why?"

She answered:

"For the reason that there has not come in the Islam and Qur'an anything about the excellence of women."

It was here that the above verse was revealed (and gave them certainty that the men and women are equal with Allah from the point of nearness and rank. The important thing is that they should have the conditions of excellence from the view of belief, action, and Islamic morals).

This verse has numerated ten virtues for the general men and women in the subjects of belief, ethics, and practice. If we study the differences that Arabs and non-Arabs used to consider between men and women and we search the heart-rending history of woman, the value of this verse will be made clear.

Next to the discussions about the duties of the Prophet's wives mentioned in the former verses, now, in this verse, there are some comprehensive and expressive statements stated about the whole men and women as well as their outstanding qualities.

After mentioning ten specialties from among their ideological, ethical, and practical qualities, their great reward has been pointed out at the end of the verse.

A part of these ten specialties is about the stages of belief: (confession by the tongue, attesting by the heart, and practicing by the limbs).

Another part of them speak about controlling the tongue, the stomach, and lust, which are three important factors in the life and morals of human beings.

Another part of the discussion is about the subject of supporting the deprived, standing against hard and heavy events with patience, which is the root of faith, and finally, it is about the main element of the continuation of these qualities, i.e., remembering Allah.

It says:

"Verily the Muslim men and the Muslim women, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obedient men and the obedient women…"

Some commentators have taken the words: 'Islam' and 'faith' mentioned in the above verse, with the same meaning, but it is clear that this repetition indicates that the purpose of them is two different things.

It refers to the same matter which is mentioned in Surah Al-Hujurat, No. 49, verse 14, which says:

"The dwellers of the desert say: 'We believe'. Say: 'You do not believe but say: 'We submit', and faith has not yet entered into your hearts, and if you obey Allah and His Apostle, He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This shows that Islam is that very confession by tongue which sets man in the row of Muslims and includes him in their ordinances, but faith is something testified by the heart and mind. Some Islamic narrations have referred to this difference, too.

In a narration we read that one of the companions of Imam Sadiq (as) once asked him about the meaning of 'Islam' and 'Faith', and he also asked him whether they are different from each other.

In answer to him, the Imam (as) said:

"Yes, Faith accompanies Islam, but Islam may not accompany faith."

The man requested him (as) to explain it more, and the Imam (as) continued saying:

"Islam is a confession denoting that there is no god but Allah, and testifying to the messengership of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Whoever confesses these two, his life will be protected (in Islamic government), the marriage of Muslims with him is permissible, and he can inherit from Muslims. Some group of people are involved in this very apparent of Islam.

But 'Faith' is a light of guidance and reality that will be established in the hearts from the quality of Islam, and by which the deeds will be appeared (and come into being)."[1]

The Arabic word /qanit/ is derived from the word /qunut/ in the sense of 'obedience accompanied with veneration', an obedience which originates

from Faith and belief. This fact points to the practical aspects and effects of Faith.

Then, the verse refers to another man's quality, which is one of the most important qualities of the true believers. That is, 'tongue protection'.

It says:

"…and the truthful men and the truthful women…"

It is understood from the Islamic narrations that the man's veracity of faith lies in the veracity of his tongue. A tradition says:

"A man's faith does not become true until his heart becomes true; and his heart does not become true until his tongue becomes true."[2]

And since the foundation of Faith is patience in difficulties and its function in spiritualities is as the function of 'the head' for 'the body', the fifth qualification of the believers stated as follows:

"…and the patient men and the patient women…"

On one side; we know that one of the worst ethical corruptions is pride and the love of rank.

The opposite point of it is humbleness, therefore concerning their sixth quality, the verse says:

"…and the humble men and the humble women…"

Besides the love of rank, the love of wealth is a great corruption, too, so that being captured in its grips is a painful captivity, and its opposite is charity and helping to the needy.

So, in their seventh quality, the verse says:

"…and the alms-giving men and the alms-giving women…"

We said that there are three things that if a man protects him from their vice, he will be secure from many ethical vices and corruptions. They are: tongue, stomach and sexual lust.

Here the verse points to the second and the third ones of these things as the eighth and the ninth qualities of the true believers as follows:

"…and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their modesty and the women who guard (their modesty)…"

At last, the verse refers to their tenth and their last quality, on which all former qualities depend for their continuation, where it says:

"…and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah (much)…"

Yes, in any case and in any condition, they remove the curtains of negligence and unawareness from their hearts by the remembrance of Allah. By this means, they cast away the temptations of Satans, and if they may commit a fault, they immediately try to compensate it so that they do not become far from the straight way.

Concerning the purpose of the Arabic phrase: /ðikr-i-kaθir/ (remembrance of (Allah) much), there are mentioned different commentaries in the Islamic narrations and in the statements of the commentators, so all of them are apparently of the kind of mentioning the denotation expansion, and the vast meaning of this phrase envelops all of them.

Among them is a tradition stated by the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

"When a man awakens his wife at night and both of them make ablution and establish (night) prayer, they will be written among those men and women who remember Allah very much."[3]

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Whoever recites Hadrat Zahra's hymns at night he will be involved in this verse."[4]

Some of commentators have said that the meaning of 'the remembrance of Allah much' is that a person remembers Allah in the states that he stands, he sits and at the time he goes to bed.

However, 'remembrance' is a sign of having thought, and contemplation is preliminary condition for action; and the aim is never a mere remembrance with no contemplation and practice.

At the end of the verse, the great reward of this group of men and women, who possess these ten abovementioned qualities, is stated as follows:

"…for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward."

At first, it washes out their sins which cause the pollution of their soul and spirit with the water of forgiveness. Then, He gives them a great reward, the greatness of which is not known to anyone save Allah (s.w.t.). In fact one of these two is for the negation of afflictions and the other is for the attraction of pleasures.

The application of the Qur'anic word /'ajran/ (reward) is itself an evidence for its greatness; and qualifying it by /'azim/ (great) is an emphasis on this greatness; and also this greatness being absolute is another evidence for its vast scope. It is evident that the thing which Allah counts great is extraordinary great.

This point is also noteworthy here that the Arabic verb /'a'adda/ (he has prepared), mentioned in perfect present tense, is a statement for showing the certainty of this reward and that there is no fail in it; or it is an indication that Paradise and its bounties are prepared just now for the believers.

At the end, you may also make notice of this matter that: sometimes some persons consider that Islam has set the main scale of personality for 'men' and women have not a fair considerable place in the programs of Islam.

May be, the source of their mistake is a few legal differences, while each of them has a particular reason and philosophy. But, apart from such differences that relate to their social position and natural conditions, there is not any difference between men and women in Islamic programs from the point of human aspects and spiritual ranks.

The abovementioned verse is a clear evidence upon this reality, because, at the time of stating the qualities of believers and the most fundamental theological and ethical issues, it has set them beside each other equally and has mentioned the same reward for both of them with no difference.

In other words, the bodily difference of man and woman, as well as their spiritual difference, can not be denied, and it is evident that this difference is necessary for the continuation of the system of the society of mankind and creates some effects in some legal laws of man and woman.

But never Islam criticizes the human personality of women, like the manner that some Christian clergymen in former centuries did. Islam does not consider any difference between man and woman from the point of human spirit.

Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 97 in this regard says:

"Whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall certainly give him to live a goodly pure life and, definitely, We will pay them a recompense in proportion to the reward for the best of what they used to do."

Islam has maintained the same economical independence for woman that for man; (contrast to many laws of the former nations, and even today, that they absolutely maintain rather no economical independence for woman).

That is why that in Islamic biography and criticism of traditionists we find a particular section related to the learned women who were in the row of traditionists and jurisprudents whom have been mentioned as some unforgettable persons.

If we refer to the history of Arab before Islam and study the circumstance of the female in that society, that how they were deprived from the least human rights, and that occasionally they had not the right of living and some of them were buried alive after birth, and also if we observe the situation of woman in the world of today some of whom have been changed into the form of some unauthorized factors with no authority in the hand of some persons who claim civilization, we will testify that how a great service Islam has given to woman, and how a great right it has over them.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 36

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلاَ مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَي اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْراً أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلاَلاً مُّبِينًا

36. "And it is not for any believer, man or woman, to have the choice in their affair when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying."

The commands of the holy Prophet (S) are incumbent to be fulfilled as those of Allah. In the system of religious government, obedience of Allah is superior to the people's rules, because those people's views are valuable which are not opposite to the ordinance of Allah.

However, we know well that the essence of Islam is 'submission', the submission that has no condition before the command of Allah.

This meaning has been stated in different verses of the Qur'an through various sentences; including the above verse which says:

"And it is not for any believer, man or woman, to have the choice in their affair when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter…"

They must make their will obedient to the Will of Allah in the same way that their whole entity is dependant to Him.

The Arabic term /qada/ (decree) in this verse is 'a religious decree', a law, a command, and an arbitration; and it is evident that neither Allah

needs people's obedience and submission, nor does the Prophet have any hope.

In fact, it is their own interests that sometimes, as the result of their limit information they (people) are not aware of them, but Allah knows and instructs them to His Messenger.

This is similar to the fact that a skilful physician tells a patient that he treats his sickness, if the patient absolutely submits his orders and never shows any interference from him. This is the utmost sympathy of the physician to the patient; and Allah is much higher than such a physician.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, this matter is pointed out where it says:

"…and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying."

Such a person will lose the path of happiness and will be drawn to wrong way and wretchedness; since he has ignored the command of the Lord of the world, the Beneficent, and that of His Messenger, which is guarantee of his good faith and happiness, and what a mislead is more manifest than this!

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 37

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَن تَخْشَاهُ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَراً زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لاَ يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَآئِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَراً وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولاً

37. "And (remember) when you said to him on whom Allah had conferred favour (of faith) and you (too) had conferred favour (of freedom): 'Keep your wife (in wedlock) and be in awe of Allah', and you concealed within your self what Allah would bring to light, and you feared the people, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. But when Zayd had accomplished his concern with her (i.e., divorced her), we joined her in marriage to you, so that there should not be a difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons when they have accomplished their concerns with them (i.e., have divorced them), and the command of Allah shall be performed."

Then, the Qur'an refers to the well-known story of Zayd and his wife, Zaynab. This story relates to the story of the wives of the Prophet (S) which was mentioned in the former verses, and it is one of the sensitive issues of the life of the Prophet (S).

It says:

"And (remember) when you said to him on whom Allah had conferred favour (of faith) and you (too) had conferred favour (of freedom): 'Keep your wife (in wedlock) and be in awe of Allah'…"

The objective meaning of 'favour' is the favour of faith and guidance which He had given to Zayd-ibn-Harithah, and the favour of the Prophet (S) was that he manumitted him and favoured him as his own son.

It is understood from this verse that there had happened a conflict between Zayd and Zaynab which continued so long that they were at the threshold of divorce. Regarding to the word /taqul/, which is a simple present Arabic verb, the Prophet (S) continuously and frequently advised and hindered them of being separated and divorced.

Whether this conflict was either for the lack of concord of the social condition of Zaynab, who was from a famous tribe, and that of Zayd, who was a manumitted slave, or because of some rude manners of Zayd, or neither of them, but there was not a spiritual and ethical accord between them.

Sometimes it happens that two persons are good but they are different from the point of thought and taste so that they can not continue their common life with each other.

However, there is not a complicated problem here, but the verse continues saying:

"…and you concealed within your self what Allah would bring to light, and you feared the people, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him…"

Of course, the Prophet (S) was going to choose Zaynab as his wife for compensating the defeat that his niece, Zaynab, was faced with that even a manumitted slave had divorced her if the activities of reconciliation between the two spouses were not successful and they had to accept to be divorced, but he (S) was afraid that people would object him for two things, and the opponents might raise a tumult about it.

The first: Zayd was the holy Prophet's adapted son and, according to an ignorant custom, an adopted son had the same ordinances that a real son had. Among them was that they considered that to marry with the divorced wife of an adopted son was unlawful.

The second: How was the Prophet (S) ready to marry the divorced wife of a manumitted slave? Was it suitable for his rank?

It is understood from some Islamic narrations that, however, the Prophet (S) had made this decision by the command of Allah and there is a frame of reference upon this meaning in the later part of the verse.

Thus, this subject was an ethical and humane one, and also it was an effective means for breaking two wrong ordinances of the Age of Ignorance (marriage with the divorced wife of the adopted son, and marriage with the divorced wife of a slave).

So, the verse continues saying:

"…But when Zayd had accomplished his concern with her (i.e., divorced her), we joined her in marriage to you, so that there should not be a difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons when they have accomplished their concerns with them (i.e., have divorced them)…"

And this action was something which should be fulfilled.

The verse continues:

"…and the command of Allah shall be performed."

The Arabic term /'ad'iya'/ is the plural form of /da'iya/ in the sense of 'adopted son'. The Arabic word /wataran/ means 'an important need'.

The choice of this meaning concerning the divorce of Zaynab is, in fact, for the delicacy of the statement that it explicitly mentions 'divorce' so that it would not be considered as a blemish by women and even by men, as if these two had been in need of each other to have a common life with each

other for a length of time, and their separation had been for the sake of the end of this need.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /zawwajnakaha/ (we joined her in marriage to you) is an evidence that this marriage was a divine marriage.

That is why, as history indicates, Zaynab used to boast over other wives of the holy Prophet (S) for this matter and she said:

"You have been joined in marriage to the Prophet (S) by your relatives, but I have been joined in marriage to the Prophet (S) from heaven by Allah."[5]

It is worthy noting that the act of Prophet's marriage with Zaynab happened in the fifth A.H.[6]

Another notable matter is that, for removing any ambiguity, the Qur'an states very clearly that the main aim of this marriage had been breaking a pagan tradition in the field of self-restraint of marriage with the divorced wives of the adopted sons.

This is a general hint to the numerous marriages of the Prophet (S) which was not a simple matter, but it pursued some goals which had an effect in the fate of his godly school.

The Qur'anic sentence: "…the command of Allah shall be performed" points to this matter that in such issues we must show decisiveness, and an action which is performable should be performed, and being surrendered to the tumults, in the issues which relate to the general and fundamental goals, is meaningless.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 38

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَراً مَّقْدُوراً

38. "There is no difficulty to the Prophet (in doing) that which Allah has ordained for him, and such has been the way of Allah with those who have passed before, and the command of Allah is a decree determined."

This holy verse is as a resolution upon the previous verse indicating that a religious leader must be decisive and does not fear the blames nor does he wait for the consent of others. So, to complete the former discussions, this verse says:

"There is no difficulty to the Prophet (in doing) that which Allah has ordained for him…"

Wherever Allah commands him to do something, he must put it in action without any hesitation and nothing is permissible to be considered against it.

In carrying out the commands of Allah (s.w.t.), the heavenly leaders never must obey the words of others, or consider the political circumstances and the wrong customs existing in the environment. It may happen that that command is for breaking these very wrong conditions and wiping out the existing ugly innovations.

According to Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…do not fear the scorn of any blamer…"[7]**,**

they must fulfil the command of Allah without any fear from the blames and tumults.

In principle, if we want to wait to attract the consent and pleasure of everybody in order to carry out the command of Allah, such a thing is impossible. There are some groups of people who may be pleased only when we submit to their desires and that we follow their school.

The Qur'an says:

"For, never will the Jews be pleased with you nor the Christians unless you follow their religion…"[8]

And concerning the verse under discussion the matter was as such, since, as we said before, the marriage of the Prophet (S) with Zaynab, in the common thought of the people in that environment, consisted of two objects: one was marriage with 'the wife of the adopted son' which was like the marriage with the wife of a real son in their view; and this was an innovation which had to be broken out.

The other was the marriage of a personality such as the Prophet (S) with the divorced wife of a manumitted slave, which was a blemish and vice among those people, because it would make the Prophet (S) in a row with a slave.

This wrong culture should be dismissed, too, and some humane values might substitute it, and suitability of two spouses must be fixed only on the base of faith, Islam, and piety.

In principle, breaking the traditions and rooting out the superstitious and none-humane customs is always accompanied with oppositions, and the Divine prophets must never heed them. Therefore, in the next sentences, the verse implies that this way of treatment of Allah (s.w.t.) had been current for the prophets of the former nations and you are not the only one who is faced with such a difficulty.

The verse continues:

"…and such has been the way of Allah with those who have passed before…"

For fixing the decisiveness in such fundamental matters, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and the command of Allah is a decree determined."

The application of the sentence: "a decree determined" may refer to the certainty of Allah's command, or it may refer to observing wisdom and interest in it, but the more suitable case for this verse is that both meanings might be used for it. That is, the command of Allah is both accurate and seriously indispensable.

It is interesting that we study in history that for the marriage with Zaynab, the Prophet of Allah (S) invited people for eating food so generally and vastly that he had not done it for any one of his wives.[9]

As if he wanted to show by this action that he would never be terrified by the superstitious traditions of his environment, but on the contrary, he boasted for performing this command of Allah. Moreover, by this way, he wanted to make the ears all over Arabia hear this breaking the pagan tradition.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 39

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالاَتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلاَ يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَداً اِلاَّ اللَّهَ وَكَفَي بِاللَّهِ حَسِيباً

39. "Those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account."

This verse refers to the conclusiveness and courage of the emissary in conveying the command of Allah to people, but we must know that in some aspects, in order to attract the hearts conciliation, mildness, and silence are necessary.

So, this verse points to one of the most important general programs of the Divine prophets, where, concerning them, it says:

"Those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allah…"

You, too, should not have the least horror from anyone in conveying the messages of Allah when He commands you to marry the divorced wife of your adopted son, Zaynab, in order to break the wrong pagan tradition in the field of marriage, and you must never afraid of the words of this one or that one, because this is the way of treatment of all Divine prophets.

In principle, the duty of the prophets in many stages is to break such traditions, and if they let them have the least fear in it, they will not be successful in fulfilling their messengership.

They must go forth conclusively, tolerate eagerly the wrong words of some opponents, and heedless to the evil circumstances and the plots of corruptive people, they must go on their own programs, because all accounts are in the power of Allah.

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and Allah is sufficient to take account."

He both keeps the account of the prophets' devotions in this way to reward them, and takes account the wrong and evil words of the enemies to punish them.

In fact, the sentence: "Allah is sufficient to take account" is an evidence for this matter that the Divine leaders must not have any fear in conveying their messengership, since the reckoner of their labours and the giver of rewards is Allah.

The purpose of the Qur'anic term /yuballiqun/ here is 'to convey', and when it relates to 'messages of Allah', it means: whatever Allah has taught the Prophets in the form of revelation, they must teach people and cause them to penetrate into their hearts by means of reasoning, warning, glad tiding, advice, and admonition.

The Qur'anic word /xašyat/ is in the sense of fear accompanied with respect and veneration, and that is why it differs with the word /xauf/ which lacks this quality. It sometimes is used in the sense of 'absolute fear', too.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 40

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَآ أَحَدٍ مِن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيماً

40. "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah is Cognizant of all things."

This holy verse is the only verse which consists of both the name of the holy Prophet (S) and has mentioned his messengership in the form of two titles: "Muhammad", "The Messenger of Allah", "The Seal of the Prophets".

It is also the last word that Allah has stated here about the marriage of the Prophet (S) with 'Zayd's divorced wife' for breaking a wrong pagan tradition. It is a short and compact answer as the last answer to them. By the way, this holy verse, with a special relationship, has stated here another important fact, i.e. the subject of being the seal of the prophets.

It says:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men…"

That is, Muhammad was not the father of Zayd, nor that of any other men; and if one day he was called by this name, it was only an old custom which was dismissed by the advent of Islam and the descent of the Qur'an, and it was not a natural relationship.

The Prophet (S), of course, had some real children by the names of: Qasim, Tayyib, Tahir, and 'Ibrahim, but, according to the historians, all of them died in childhood, and, therefore, their names were not counted among the names of 'men'.[10]

At the time of the revelation of the above verse, Imam Hassan and Imam Husayn (as), whom were called the Prophet's children, were still young children, though later they reached old ages, so the sentence: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men" surely had been true about everybody at that time. And if in some traditions we read that the Prophet (S) himself said:

"I and Ali are the fathers of this Ummah"

certainly his purpose was not to be a relative father, but this originated from his rank of teaching, training, and leading them.

Yet the marriage with the divorced wife of Zayd, that the Qur'an explicitly mentions its philosophy as for breaking the wrong traditions, was not a thing that caused murmurs among people, or that they could take it as a document for their evil aims.

Then, the Qur'an implicitly adds that your connection with the Prophet (S) is only through messengership and being the seal of the prophets.

It says:

"…but the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets…"

Thus, the beginning of the verse causes the relative relation as a general rule and, at the end of the holy verse, it fixes the spiritual relation originated from messengership and being the seal of the prophets, by which the relation of the beginning of the verse with its end is made clear.

Moreover, the holy verse also hints to this facts that the Prophet's passion is above the passion of a father to his child, because his passion is the messenger's passion to the Ummah, specially the holy Messenger who knows there will come no messenger after him and he must foresee whatever is necessary for the Ummah until the Hereafter carefully and with utmost sympathy.

Of course, whatever has been needed in this field Allah (s.w.t.), the Knower, the Aware, has provided, including: the fundamentals of the Faith

and the Articles of the Practice of the Faith, the universals and the details in all fields. So, at the end of the verse it says:

"…and Allah is Cognizant of all things."

However, the Arabic word /xatam/, as philologists have said, means something by which the affairs are put to end. It also means something by which papers and the like are sealed.

The above verse is enough for proving that the Prophet of Islam (S) is the last divine prophet, but it is not the only evidence of the fact that the Prophet of Islam (S) is the seal of the prophets, because not only there are some other verses in the holy Qur'an which point to this meaning, but also there have been recorded numerous narrations in this regard.

In Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 19 we recite:

"…and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you thereby, and whomever it reaches. Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah?' Say: 'I do not testify'. Say: 'He is only One God. And verily I am quit of that which you associate (with Him)'."

The vastness of the concept of 'whomever this statement reaches' makes clear the universal messengership of the Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (S), from one side, and the subject of 'being the seal' of the prophets, on the other side.

There are some other verses in the Qur'an which prove the generality of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) for all humankind, such as: Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 1 that says:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (the Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a warner to the worlds;…".

Or like Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 28 that says:

"And We have not sent you to all mankind but as a bearer of glad tidings and as a warner, but most people do not know."

And the verse that announces:

"Say: 'O mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all…"[11]

The vast meanings of the Qur'anic words /'alamin/ (the worlds), /nas/ (mankind), and /kaffatun/ (all) also verify this concept.

Besides that, the consensus of the scholars of Islam from one side, and the necessity of this matter among Muslims, on the other side, and the numerous narrations cited by the Prophet (S) and other leaders of Islam, on the third side, make the matter more clear. Here, we suffice to a few examples of the narrations:

1- A tradition from the Prophet (S) indicates he said:

"My lawful things are lawful until the Day of Hereafter, and my unlawful things are unlawful until the Day of Hereafter."[12]

This meaning shows that the continuation of this religion is until the end of the world.

The abovementioned tradition has also been narrated in this form:

"The lawful (things) of Muhammad is always lawful until the Day of Hereafter, and his unlawful (things) is always unlawful until the Day of Hereafter. There will not be (anything) other than that and there will not come (anything) other than them." [13]

2- The famous tradition of Manzilat which has been recorded in different books of two great sects of Islam: Sunnites and Shi'ites, about the event of remaining Ali (as) in Medina in place of the Prophet when he (S) went out toward the Battle of Tabuk, makes the subject of the seal of prophets completely clear, too.

This tradition denotes that the Prophet (S) told Ali (as):

"You are to me like Aaron to Moses save that there is no prophet after me."

(Therefore, you have all the positions of Aaron with respect to Moses but prophethood.)[14]

In another tradition from the Prophet (S) we read he said:

"I came and put an end to the prophets."[15]

The above tradition is also mentioned in Sahih-i-Bukhari[16], in Musnad-i-Ahmad Hanbal, in Sahih-i-Tarmathi, Nisa'i and many other books. It is one of very famous traditions which has been referred to by the commentators of Shi'ites and Sunnites, such as Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Qurtubi in his commentary under the verse.

3- The holy Prophet of Islam (S), as the seal of the prophets, has also been explicitly mentioned in many sermons of Nahj-ul-Balaqah, including sermon No. 173 which, qualifying the Prophet of Islam (S), says:

"The Prophet is the trustee of Allah's revelation, the last of His prophets, the giver of tidings of His mercy and the warner for His chastisement."

In sermon No. 133 we recite about the holy Prophet (S):

"Allah deputed the Prophet after a gap from the previous prophets when there was much talk (among the people). With him Allah exhausted the series of prophets and ended the revelation…"

After numerating the programs of the former prophets, the first sermon of Nahj-ul-Balaqah continues saying:

"…Allah deputed Muhammad (S) as His Prophet, in fulfilment of His promise and in completion of His prophethood…"

4- At the end of the sermon of Farewell Pilgrimage, which the Prophet (S) expressed in his last pilgrimage and in his last year of his life as an inclusive testament for people, the subject of being last Prophet has also been stated, where it says:

"Behold, and the present ones of you convey the absent ones of you (that) there is no prophet after me, and there will be no (other) Ummah after you."

Then he raised his hands to the heaven so high that the whiteness of his armpit appeared and said:

"O Allah! Bear witness that verily I conveyed (what I should say)."[17]

5- There is a tradition recorded in Kafi narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Allah ended the prophets with your Prophet, therefore there will be no prophet after him at all; and with your Book He put an end to the heavenly Books, therefore there will be no Book after it at all."[18]

In this regard there are a great deal of traditions recorded in Islamic sources, in a manner that there are cited 135 traditions upon this subject in

the books of Islamic scholars narrated from the Prophet (S) and the great leaders of Islam.[19]

Notes

1. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 21
2. Mahajjat-ul-Bayda', Vol. 5, P. 193
3. The commentary by Qurtabi, and Majma'-ul-Bayan under the verse
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse under discussion
5. Kamil by Ibn-i-'Athir, Vol. 2, P. 177
6. Ibid
7. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 54
8. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 120
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 361
10. The commentary of Qurtubi and the commentary of Al-Mizan, following the verse
11. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 158
12. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 2, P. 260
13. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1, chapter Al-Bad'-war-Ra'y, tradition 19
14. This tradition has been narrated by Muhibb-ud-Din Tabari, in Zakha'ir-ul-'Uqba, P. 71; and by Ibn-i-Hajar, in Sawa'iq-ul-Muhraqah, P. 177; and Tarikh-i-Baqdad, Vol. 7, P. 452; and some other books like Kanz-ul-'Ummal, and Yanabi'-ul-Muqaddah
15. Sahih-i-Muslim, Vol. 4, P. 1790-1791
16. Kitab-ul-Manaqib
17. Bihar, Vol. 21, P. 381
18. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1
19. Ma'alim-un-Nubuwwah, section: The Last Prophet.

Section 6: The Prophet Sent as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad-tiding and Bright Lamp

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 41-42

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْراً كَثِيراً

وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً

41. "O You who have believed! Remember Allah with much remembrance,"

42. "And glorify Him morning and evening."

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever remembers Allah constantly, the good of this world and the next has been given to him."[1]

And Imam Sadiq (as) said that everything has a limit except the remembrance of Allah.[2]

An Islamic tradition indicates that the heart and soul may rust like iron and the remembrance of Allah is a means to remove it and to make it bright.

So, the Qur'an says:

"O You who have believed! Remember Allah with much remembrance,"

"And glorify Him morning and evening."

Yes, since the factors of negligence are abundantly found in material life of man, and the arrows of the temptations of Satans are being thrown from every side to him, there is no way to defend save by 'much remembrance' in its real meaning, i.e., with full attention to Allah, not only by mere murmuring it. It must be a 'much remembrance' that affects on all one's deeds and casts light on them.

Thus, in this verse, the Holy Qur'an enjoins all the believers that they remember Allah in all cases. At the time of worship we must remember Him (s.w.t.) and have attention and sincerity.

At the time when we are in the scene of committing sin, we must remember Him and renounce, or if there happened a fault, we would immediately repent and return to the right way.

At the time of affluence of bounties, we must remember Him 'and thank Him'; and at the time of affliction and calamity we must remember Him and be patient and steadfast. In short, we must not forget His remembrance in any scene out of the scenes of life.

In a tradition which has been recorded in 'Sahih Tarmathi' and 'Musnad-i-Ahmad, Abu Sa'id Khidri narrates from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said that once he (S) was asked:

"Which servants have the highest degree with Allah on the Hereafter Day?"

He answered:

"Those who remember Allah very much."

However, we must note that the Qur'anic phrase: /ðikran kaθira/ (with much remembrance) has a vast meaning.

If in some narrations it has been rendered into the hymns of Hadrat Zahra (as)[3] and some commentators have commented it upon the mentioning the

Exulted Attributes, the Names Most Beautiful, and removal Allah from what is not correct for Him, and the like, all of them are of the kind of stating the mentioning the clear example, not for limiting the concept of the verse, and these examples in particular.

Thus, much remembrance of Allah and His glorification every morning and evening will not be obtained but with constant regard to Allah, and permanent removal Him from any blemish and defections and we know that the remembrance of Allah for man's soul and spirit is like food and water for the body.

Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28 says:

"…Behold! By Allah's remembrance (only) the hearts are set at rest."

The peace and certainty of the hearts are also the consequence of that which had been stated in Surah Al-Fajr, No. 90, verses 27-30 saying:

"O' you serene soul!"

"Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

"So enter among My servants,"

"And enter into My Garden."

A Few Traditions Upon 'Much Remembrance'

1- The Qur'an has stated some effects and favours for the remembrance of Allah and it has mentioned it as one of the reasons of 'prayer'.

It says:

"…and establish prayer for My remembrance."[4]

2- Turning away from the remembrance of Allah, will consequence a straitened life.

Allah in the Qur'an says:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance, verily for him is a life straitened…"[5]

3- The holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who has a tongue busy reciting Thikr (the Name of Allah) the good of (both) this world and the next has been given to him."

And Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Everything has a limit except the remembrance of Allah."[6]

4- It has been narrated from Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah (May Allah be pleased with him) who said that he has heard the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The best Thikr (remembrance of Allah) is /la'ilaha'illalah/ (there is no god but Allah)."[7]

5- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"A great bliss shall be his whose tongue is busy reciting Thikr (the Name of Allah)."[8]

6- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Do recite much /la houl-a-wala-quwwata-'illa-billah/ (There is neither might nor strength but in Allah) for verily it is (one) of the treasures of the Heaven."[9]

7- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever whose last word is /la-'ilaha-'illalah/ (there is no god but Allah) will enter Paradise."[10]

8- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The pleasure of the lovers (of Allah) is the remembrance (of Allah)."[11]

9- Imam Ali-ibn-'Abitalib (as) said:

"Do remember Allah everywhere because He is surely with you (everywhere and in any case)."[12]

10- Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The hymns of Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) is of (the kind of) 'much remembrance' that Allah, Almighty and Glorious, said:

'…Remember Allah with much remembrance."[13]

11- Some authentic Islamic narrations indicate that 'the remembrance of Allah' is not done only by the tongue, but the real remembrance of Allah is in that that at the time of encountering the lawful and unlawful (things) of Allah we remember Him and desist from committing sin.[14]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 43-44

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيماً

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْراً كَرِيماً

43. "He it is Who sends blessings on you, and (likewise do) His angels, to bring you forth from the shadows (of infidelity) into the light (of faith); and He is Merciful to the believers."

44. "Their greeting on the Day when they meet Him will be 'Peace', and He has prepared for them an honourable reward."

In the previous verse the Qur'an said:

"Remember Allah with much remembrance".

Now, in this verse it says:

"He it is Who sends blessings on you…".

As if the blessing of Allah is your much remembrance. It is like the holy verse which says:

"Therefore, remember Me, (and) I will remember you…" [15]

In fact, this holy verse is the result and the ultimate cause of the constant remembrance and glorification.

It says:

"He it is Who sends blessings on you, and (likewise do) His angels, to bring you forth from the shadows (of infidelity) into the light (of faith)…"

Allah brings you out from the darkness of ignorance, polytheism, and infidelity and leads you toward the light of faith, knowledge, and piety, because He is Beneficent and Merciful unto the believers and that is why He has undertaken their guidance and leadership and also has commissioned His angels to help them.

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and He is Merciful to the believers."

The Qur'anic term /yusalli/ is derived from /salat/ which here means a special attention and favour; and this favour in respect to Allah is the descent of Mercy, and in respect to the angels is seeking forgiveness and asking mercy, as in Surah Qafir, No. 40, verse 7 we recite that the angels who bear 'Arsh (the throne of Allah) and those around it:

"…implore forgiveness for those who believe…".

However, this verse contains a great glad tiding for the believers who ceaselessly remember Allah, for it explicitly indicates that, in their motion toward Allah, they are not alone, but, based on the Qur'anic verb /yusalli/, which is expressed in future tense and is an evidence to the continuation of action, they are always under the cover of the Mercy of Allah and His angels.

It is under the shade of this Mercy that the curtains of darkness will be removed and the light of knowledge, wisdom, faith, and piety brightens their hearts and souls.

Yes, this verse is a great glad tiding for all those who pave the path of Allah, and it informs them that there is a strong help from the side of Allah, the Almighty, that they succeed to pave the straight way.

The Arabic verb /Kana/ in the sentence:

"…and He is merciful to the believers"

which is grammatically a past tense verb, denotes this fact that Allah is always particularly merciful to the believers, and it is another emphasis on this matter.

Yes, it is this special mercy of Allah that brings the believers out from the darkness of illusions, lusts, and Satanic temptations, and leads them to the light of intuitive faith, certainty, and domination on one's self, so that if His Mercy were not, this difficult path could not be paved.

The next holy verse, in a short sentence, illustrates the rank of the believers and their reward in the best form.

It announces as follows:

"Their greeting on the Day when they meet Him will be 'Peace'…"

The Arabic word /tahiyyat/ is derived from /hayat/ in the sense of 'invocation' for the health and life of another one.

This is a greeting which is, in fact, the sign of security from punishment and from any kind of pain and affliction. It is a greeting accompanied with calmness, tranquillity, and certainty.

Some commentators believe that the concept of the Qur'anic term /tahiyyatuhum/ (their greeting) refers to the greeting of the believers to each other, but regarding to the former verses the words of which were about the favour and Mercy of Allah and His angels in this world, apparently this greeting is also from the side of His angels in the Hereafter, as Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verses 23 and 24 says:

"…and unto whom the angels will enter from every gate,"

"Peace (be) upon you (saying) that you persevered in patience!…"

It was made clear from what was said that the objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: /yauma yalqaunahu/ is the Day of Hereafter which has been called: 'The day of meeting Allah', and this collocation is usually used in the verses of the Qur'an.

After this greeting, which, in fact, relates to the beginning of their affair, the Qur'an has pointed to the end of their fate and says:

"…and He has prepared for them an honourable reward."

This is a sentence, which being very short, contains every thing gathered in it and points to all blessings and merits.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 45-46

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِداً وَمُبَشّـِراً وَنَذِيراً
وَدَاعِياً اِلَي اللَّهِ بِاِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجاً مُّنِيراً

45. "O Prophet! Verily We have sent you as a witness, and as a bearer of glad tiding and as a warner,"

46. "And as one inviting to Allah by His leave, and as a light-giving lamp."

In these two holy verses the function of the holy Prophet (S) in the society has been stated.

He (S) invites people toward Allah, and his style in this invitation is glad tiding and warning. It is not only by the tongue, but his manner is also an argument for people and as a sample for them.

Therefore, at first, it says:

"O Prophet! Verily We have sent you as a witness…"

From one side, he is as a witness over the deeds of the Ummah, because he sees their deeds, as, in another place, the Qur'an says:

"And say: 'Act you (as you will)! Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers…"[16]

and this cognizance will be occurred by the way of reporting the deeds of Ummah to the Prophet (S) and immaculate Imams.

On the other side, he is as a witness to the former prophets who were in turn witnesses to their own nations, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and We bring you a witness over those (witnesses)?"[17]

On the third side, your existence with your good qualities and good temper, with your constructive programs, with your bright background and with your actions, you are witness for the truthfulness of your school, as well as a witness for the greatness and Power of Allah.

Then, the verse refers to the second and the third qualities.

It says:

"…and as a bearer of glad tiding and as a warner,"

The Prophet (S) is a bearer of glad tiding to the righteous for the endless reward of Allah, for the eternal health and happiness, and for honourable victory and success. He is a warner for the disbelievers and the hypocrites against the painful punishment of Allah, against the loss in their whole capital of their selves, and against falling into misery both in this world and the next.

As we said before, too, glad tiding and warning must be with together and equilibrated with each other everywhere, because half of the self of man is formed by the interest of attracting profit, and the next half is formed by repelling the harm. Glad tiding is a motive for the former, and warning is a motive for the latter.

So, those who, in their programs, insist only on one part, in fact, have not recognized man, and have not noted the motive of his action.

The next holy verse points to some other qualities of the Prophet (S).

It says:

"And as one inviting to Allah by His leave, and as a light-giving lamp."

The Prophet (S) is as a lamp of guidance in the society whose light is the cause of growth, movement and discrimination.

Here, it is necessary to pay attention to a few points:

1- Concerning the Prophet (S) the rank of being as a witness is mentioned before all of his other qualities since this rank needs not a preliminary state save the self of the Prophet (S) and his prophethood, and, as soon as he was appointed to that rank, his being witness to all those aspects which were mentioned in the above statements will be certain, while the rank of being as a 'bearer of glad tiding' and as a 'warner' are some things that happen after that.

2- The invitation to Allah is a stage next to that of glad tiding and warning, since these are some means for making people prepared for accepting the Truth. When through encouragement and warning preparation was gained, the invitation to Allah would begin, and it is only in this case that the invitation will be effective.

3- Here only the act of invitation is conditioned to the leave of Allah, although all the deeds of the Prophet (S) were done by the leave and command of Allah.

This is for the sake that the most difficult and the most important duty of the prophets is that very invitation to Allah.

The reason of it is that the Prophet (S) must lead people to pave a path against their desires and lusts, and this stage must be fulfilled by the leave, command and help of Allah to be accomplished; and, in the meantime, it makes it manifest that the Prophet does not do anything from his own accord, and whatever he does is by the leave of Allah.

4- The application of the Qur'anic phrase /sirajan munira/ (a light-giving lamp) as a quality of the Prophet (S), with regard that means 'lamp' and /munir/ means 'illuminative', points to the miracles and proofs of legitimacy and signs of truthfulness of the Prophet's invitation.

He is a lamp which is witness of him. He causes every kind of darkness to be dismissed, and the eyes and the hearts to be attracted toward him, and like sun, his existence is a reason for his legitimacy, too.

It is noteworthy that the word /siraj/ is mentioned four times in the Qur'an.

In three occurrences, it means 'sun', including Surah Noah, No. 71, verse 16, which says:

"And made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp."

The existence of the Prophet is like an illuminating sun that removes the darkness of ignorance, polytheism, and paganism from the horizon of the sky of man's soul, but in the same way that the blind do not utilize the light of the sun, and those ones, who like bats, their eyes can not bear seeing this light will hide themselves from it.

The obstinate blind- hearted ones have not utilized this light and will not do, either. Abujahl used to put his finger into his ear in order not to hear the sound of reciting the Qur'an.

Also, the existence of the Prophet (S) is the cause of tranquillity, the cause of the fleet of the thieves of religion and faith, and the fleet of the

cruel members of the societies. He is the cause of the ease of mind, of the elevation and growth of the essence of faith and morals; and in short, he is the cause of vitality, activity, and motion in the society.

The history of the Prophet's life is a good witness over this matter.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 47-48

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلاً كَبِيراً

وَلاَ تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعْ أَذَاهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَكَفَي بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلاً

47. "And give the believers the glad tiding that they shall have from Allah a great grace."

48. "And do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and heed not their hurt, but rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

The Prophet (S) is commanded from the side of Allah to give glad tiding to the believer that His special grace and favour will envelop them, and this itself is the greatest grace of Allah.

So, here, the Qur'an says:

"And give the believers the glad tiding that they shall have from Allah a great grace."

This points to the fact that the Prophet's glad tiding is not limited only to the reward of the good deeds of the believers, but Allah bestows on them from His grace so much so that the balance between their good deed and this reward will utterly be changed, as some other noble verses of the Qur'an certify this meaning.

In one place the Holy Qur'an says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like…"[18]

In another place it says:

"The likeness of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills…"[19]

So that, according to it, sometimes the reward of a charity will be seven hundred times more, and sometimes more than one thousand times.

Sometimes their reward may be more than this and beyond what was said.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And no person knows what (important reward) is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes…"[20]

Thus, this verse elevates the dimensions of the great grace of Allah higher than that which can come into existence in man's imagination and apprehension.

Next to that, the Qur'an refers to the second and the third instruction.

It says:

"And do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites…"

No doubt the Messenger of Allah (S) never did obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but the importance of the matter is so much that the Qur'an has specially stressed on it as an emphasis for the Prophet (S) and as a warning and lesson for others.

The reason of it is that there are some important dangers in the way of the true leaders that they may be invited to collusion that they submit, sometimes by threat and sometimes by the way of giving some privileges.

This may happen so frequently that sometimes man makes mistake and thinks that the way of reaching to the aim is accepting such a collusion and submission; the same collusion and submission the result of which is that all efforts and endeavours remain fruitless and the whole struggles become futile.

The history of Islam announces that some pagans, or some groups of the hypocrites, repeatedly tried to draw the Prophet of Islam (S) to such situation. Sometimes they suggested that he should not mention the names of their idols in a bad way and would not criticize them.

Sometimes they told him to allow them to worship his object of worship for one year and then he would worship their objects of worship. Sometimes they told him to respite them for one more year to continue their own programs and then they would believe.

Sometimes they suggested him to send away the poor believers from around him so that they, who were rich and influential, might accept him. Sometimes they said they were ready to give him some financial privileges, sensitive rank and position, beautiful wives and the like.

It is evident that all of them were some dangerous pitfalls on the way of rapid progress of Islam and against rooting out paganism and hypocrisy. If the Prophet of Islam (S) showed flexibility in the face of one of these suggestions, the basis of the Islamic revolution would ruin and the struggles might not result.

Then in the fourth and fifth commands, it says:

"…and heed not their hurt, but rely on Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

This part of the verse shows that in order to make the Prophet (S) submit they had put him in an intensive pressure. They hurt him in different ways: whether through sarcasm, slander and undue insolence, or through bodily hurt, or by economic embargo (siege) unto him and his companions, differently in Mecca and Medina.

The term 'hurt', mentioned here, is a word the meaning of which covers all kinds of annoyance.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"'Hurt' means any kind of harm that reaches a living creature, whether unto its spirit or unto its body, or unto his relatives, worldly or other worldly."

The history indicates the Divine prophets and early believers stood firmly against kinds of hurts and never accepted the disgrace of submission and defeat and finally succeeded in their goals.

This is also noteworthy that the above five commandments, which have been mentioned in the recent two holy verses, are related to each other and are complement to each other.

Giving glad tiding to the believers for attracting the faithful forces, the lack of collusion and submission before pagans and hypocrites, being heedless to their hurts, and relying on Allah totally form a collection in

which the way of reaching to the goal is hidden and they are as an inclusive instruction of action for all the truth seekers.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 49

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْتَدُّونَهَا فَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ وَسَرِّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحاً جَمِيلاً

49. "O you who have believed! When you marry believing women and then divorce them before you touch them, you have no period to reckon against them; so give them a present, and release them in a handsome manner."

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /nikah/, here, is marriage and the purpose of /tamas/ (touch) is 'to have sexual intercourse', and the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /sarahan jamila/ is a divorce without any enmity and roughness.

The Arabic word /'iddah/ is called to the term that women must wait, and do not marry another spouse, until its end after becoming divorced. The woman's term in divorce is three menstrual cycles and becoming purified; and the term of the death of her husband is four month, and ten days.

In this verse Allah says:

"O you who have believed! When you marry believing women and then divorce them before you touch them, you have no period to reckon against them…"

Here Allah has stated an exception for the ordinance of the divorced woman's term saying that if the divorce occurs before the first coition in marriage, keeping the term is not necessary. It is understood from this meaning that the ordinance of the term (period) has been stated before this verse.

The application of the Qur'anic word /mu'minat/ (believing women) is not an evidence for saying that marriage with non-Muslim women is absolutely forbidden but it may refer to the precedence of them.

Therefore, it does not contrast with the narrations and the known pronouncements of jurisprudents which consider the temporary marriage with the women of the People of the Book permissible.

However, it is understood from the Arabic word /lakum/ (you have) and also from the Qur'anic sentence: /ta'taddunaha/ (to reckon against them) that woman's keeping the term is counted a kind of right for man, and it must be so, because it is possible that, in fact, the woman is pregnant and marriage with another man without keeping the term causes that the situation of the child would not be distinguished and the man's right in this regard might be disregarded.

Moreover, woman's keeping term gives an opportunity to the man and woman both that if they have accepted the divorce under the effect of ordinary excitements, they can find a time to review and return, and this is a right for both man and woman.

Then it refers to another ordinance from the ordinances concerning the women who have obtained their divorce before having sexual intercourse, which has also been mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, and says:

"…so give them a present…"

No doubt, giving a suitable present to the woman is obligatory when there has not been appointed a dower for her, as Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 236 says:

"There is no sin on you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor settled any dowry on them; you make provision for them…"

Therefore, though the verse under discussion has an absolute meaning and covers both the instances in which dowry has been settled or not, yet with the frame of reference of the verse of Surah Al-Baqarah we limit the verse under discussion to the instance that there has not been settled a dowry, because in the case dowry is settled and the first coition in marriage is not performed, it is incumbent to pay half of the dowry[21].

As some Islamic commentators and jurists said, this is also probable that the ordinance of 'paying a suitable present' mentioned in the verse under discussion is general and it envelops even the instances in which the dowry is determined, but in these instances it is recommendable, and in the instance that the dowry is not defined it is obligatory.

Some verses of the Holy Qur'an, as well as some Islamic narrations, have referred to this meaning, too.[22]

Concerning the level and amount of this present, the Holy Qur'an, in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 236 has stated:

"…a provision in a fair manner…"

Again, in this very verse, it says:

"…the rich according to his means, and the straitened according to his means…"

Thus, if there have been mentioned some instance in the Islamic narrations such as: house, servant, clothing, and the like, they are some extensions of this general meaning which varies in respect to the possibilities of husband and the situation of woman.

The last ordinance in the verse under discussion is that you must release the divorced women in a fair manner and separate from them with a proper form.

It says:

"…and release them in a handsome manner."

The Qur'anic phrase /sarahan jamila/ means: to leave them respectfully and affectionately, without any enmity, roughness, cruelty and disgrace. In short, as it is said in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 229 either the wife must be maintained suitably in honour or she may be released kindly and respectably.

Both the continuation of conjugality must be with the humane criterions, and separation. It is not so that whenever the husband decides to separate from his wife, he counts any kind of hatred, injustice, cruelty and taunt unto his wife permissible. This kind of manner is certainly non-Islamic.

Some other commentators have rendered the Qur'anic phrase: /sarahan jamila/ mentioned here into the sense of divorce according to the Islamic rule.

In the narration mentioned in the commentary of ‘Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim’ and ‘Uyun-ul-’Akhbar, this meaning is emphasized, too. But it is certain that the meaning of /sarahan jamila/ is not limited only in this meaning, though one of its clear expansions is this very meaning’.

Some other commentators have taken the phrase /sarahan jamila/ here with the sense of permission of going out of house and departure, since the woman has not a duty to keep ‘the term’, therefore she must be allowed to go wherever she wishes.

But, regarding to the fact that the phrase /sarahan jamila/, or the like, in other verses of the Qur’an concerns even about the women who must keep ‘the term’, the above mentioned meaning does not seen proper.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 50

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّآ أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ اللاَّتِي ءَاتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّآ أَفَآءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمِّـكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّاتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالاَتِكَ اللاَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً اِن وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ اِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَن يَسْتَنكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلاَ يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَّحِيماً

50. “O’ Prophet! Verily We have made lawful to you the wives whom you have paid their dowries, and those whom your right hand possesses of those whom Allah has assigned to you, and (marriage with) the daughters of your paternal uncle, and the daughters of your paternal aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncle, and the daughters of your maternal aunts who have emigrated with you, and a believing woman if she gives herself unto the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to wed her, for you exclusively, not for the (rest of the) believers. Indeed We know what We have ordained for them about their wives and those whom their right hands possess in order that there should be no difficulty for you. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

It is only Allah Who defines what is lawful and what is unlawful. (Even the Prophet (S), in his personal subjects, obeys the law of Allah.)

Islam has appointed some duties and also some special privileges for the Prophet (S).

This verse explains seven instances that marriage with them was allowed for the Prophet (S).

1- At first, it says:

“O’ Prophet! Verily We have made lawful to you the wives whom you have paid their dowries…”

As the next sentences indicate, the objective meaning of these wives is those wives who were not the Prophet’s relatives and got marriage with him. Perhaps, mentioning the payment of dowry is for the same reason, because it had been customary then that, at the time of marriage with women other than relatives, the dowry should be paid in cash.

Moreover, hastening in giving the dowry is better, specially that the wife is in need of it. But, however, this action is not among obligatory deeds, and

with mutual agreement the dowry, partly or wholly, can remain as a debt that the husband is charged with it.

2- The second instance is as follows:

"…and those whom your right hand possesses of those whom Allah has assigned to you…"

The Arabic phrase /'afa'allah/ is derived from /fay'/ which is called to the properties that are gained without trouble, therefore, it is used for the spoils of war and also the natural wealth and properties which belong to the Islamic government and have not a proper possessor.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"The Arabic word /fay'/ means 'return to a good state and if a shadow is called /fay'/ it is for the sake that it returns." Then, he adds: "It is also called to the easy gained properties, since, with all goodness it has, again it is, like shadow accidental and fleeting."

It is true that sometimes there are many troubles in spoils of war, but since in comparison with other properties there is less difficulty in them, and sometimes it happens that in a single attack a lot of properties are gained, the word /fay'/ is used for it.

Concerning this fact that which one of the holy Prophet's wives this ordinance was about, some of the commentators have said that one of the Prophet's wives named "Mariyah Qibtiyyah" was from spoils of war and two other his wives named: "Safiyyah" and "Juwayriyyah" were from /'anfal/ whom the Prophet (S) had manumitted and accepted them as his wives.

This itself was a part of general program of Islam for gradual manumitting of slaves and returning their humane personality to them.

3- The third instance of those who are also lawful for him to marry with are mentioned as follows:

"…and (marriage with) the daughters of your paternal uncle, and the daughters of your paternal aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncle, and the daughters of your maternal aunts who have emigrated with you…"

Thus, among all his relatives only marriage with daughters of his paternal uncle, and the daughters of his paternal aunts, and the daughters of his maternal uncle, and the daughters of his maternal aunts with the condition that they had emigrated with the Prophet (S) were permissible and lawful for him.

The restriction being laid on these four groups is clear, but the condition of emigration is for reason that in that time emigration was an evidence for faith, and the lack of emigration was as a sign of disbelief.

Or it is for the reason that emigration would give them some more privileges to them, and the aim in this verse is to state the noble and virtuous women who are worthy of marriage with the Prophet (S).

That whether these four groups are mentioned as a general ordinance in the verse and they were practically amongst the Prophet's wives or not, we can mention only the marriage of the Prophet (S) with 'Zaynab-bent-i-Jahsh', the story of which was stated in this very Surah, because Zaynab

was the daughter of the Prophet's maternal aunt and Jahsh was the spouse of his aunt.

4- The fourth instance is announced as follows:

"…and a believing woman if she gives herself unto the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to wed her…"

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"…for you exclusively, not for the (rest of the) believers. Indeed we know what We have ordained for them about their wives and those whom their right hands possess…"

Therefore, if Allah has assigned some limitations in same instances in the affairs concerning their marriage, it has been for some things that were existed in their life and the life of the Prophet (S), and none of these ordinances and rules was undue.

Then, the verse adds:

"…in order that there should be no difficulty for you…"

"…And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

By the way, the following points must be considered about the recent group (the women with no dowry):

First: No doubt the permission of 'wedding a wife without dowry' was one of the specialties of the Prophet (S), and the verse expresses it explicitly; that is why it is one of the 'certain issues' of the Islamic jurisprudence.

Thus, no one is allowed to marry with if the dowry is not mentioned at the time of reciting the formula of marriage, and there is not any frame of reference to determine it either, he must pay 'suitable dower'. The purpose of 'suitable dower' is the dowry which the women of the same conditions and specialties of her usually appoint for them.

Second: commentators are divided in that whether this general ordinance was practised by the holy Prophet (S) or not. Some of them, such as Ibn-'Abbas, believe that the Prophet (S) did not marry any woman in this way.

Therefore the above ordinance was only a general permission for the Prophet (S) which was never practically applied. Some other commentators have mentioned the names of three or four women among the Prophet's wives who married with him (S) with no dowry.

They were "Maymunah" the daughter of Harith, "Zaynab" the daughter of "Khuzaymah" who was from the tribe of Ansar, a woman named 'Umm-i-Sharik, Jabir's daughter who was from the tribe of Bani 'Asad, and "Khulah", the daughter of Hakam.

It is evident that such women only desired to earn spiritual honour which could happen by the way of marriage with the Prophet (S). Therefore, they accepted to marry with him without any dowry.

Third: It is clearly understood from this verse that the recitation of the formula of marriage by the expression of /hibih/ (gift) had only been specialized to the Prophet (S) and no other person can recite the formula of marriage with such an expression.

But if the recitation of the formula of marriage is performed with the expression of marriage, it is allowed even though the dowry is not

mentioned, because, as it was said, if the dowry is not mentioned, the 'suitable dower' must be paid. (In fact, it is like that 'the suitable dower' has been stipulated.)

Fourth: The Qur'anic sentence:

"…in order that there should be no difficulty for you…"

is a hint to the polygamy of the Prophet and the philosophy of these ordinances that are specialized to the Prophet of Islam (S).

This sentence indicates that the Prophet (S) has some conditions that others have not, and this very difference has caused the difference in such ordinances. In other words, it more clearly says that: the aim had been that a part of the restrictions and difficulties could be decreased for the Prophet (S) by means of these ordinances.

This is a delicate meaning which shows that the Prophet's marriage with different women had been for the removal of a series of social political difficulties from his life.

We know that when the holy Prophet (S) announced Islam he was alone, and it took a long time that people did not believe in him, except a few persons. He roused against all the superstitious beliefs of his time and his environment, and proclaimed the declaration of war against all. It was natural that all the families and tribes in that place to be mobilized against him.

He had to use all possible means to break the evil unity of the enemies, one of which was creating relation by the way of marriage with the women of different tribes of Arab, since the most stable relation among the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance was counted the relative relation. There are many evidences which show that the Prophet's marriages were mostly done politically.

Some of his marriages, like marriage with Zaynab, were for breaking the rules of pagan Arab, the explanation of which was stated in the commentary of verse 37 of the current Surah.

Some of his other marriages were for the sake of decreasing the level of the enemies' hostility or attracting the affection of individuals or that of the obstinate zealous tribes.

In some history books we even read that the Prophet (S) married with numerous women but there happened nothing save the ceremonies of wedding, and he had no sexual intercourse with them. In some instances he sufficed only with marriage proposal from the women of some tribes.[23]

They were happy and boasted only with this that a woman from their tribe was called as the Prophet's wife and they were honoured with it. Thus, their social relation with the Prophet of Islam (S) became closer and they were more decided to defend him.

The enemies of Islam had intended to use the numerous marriages of the Prophet of Islam (S) as a means for their most horrible attacks and to make some false stories from them, but referring to history and the manner of the Prophet (S), makes the fact fairly manifest and introduces the anonymous plots.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 51

تُرْ ِ مَن تَشَآءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤْوِي إِلَيْكَ مَن تَشَآءُ وَمَنِ ابْتَغَيْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَي أَن تَقَرَّ أَعْيُنُهُنَّ وَلاَ يَحْزَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَآ ءَاتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيماً حَلِيماً

51. "You may put off whom you please of them, and you may take to you whom you please, and whom you desire of those of whom you have separated, no blame shall be on you, this is most proper to give them the joy of their eyes and they may not grieve, and that they should be pleased, all of them with what you give them, and Allah knows what is in your hearts; and Allah is Knowing, Forgiving."

Those who have heavy responsibilities should be offered some particular authorities.

According to the previous statements and the proofs which were mentioned in the explanation of the verse, the numerous marriages of the holy Prophet (S) were often formed by political, social, and emotional aspects, and they were, in fact, a part of the fulfilment of his Divine messengership, but in the meantime, the opposition between his wives and their normal woman rivals created a conflict inside the Prophet's house, and it would make his thought busy.

It is here that Allah has mentioned another quality of the Prophet (S) and, by putting an end to these conflicts, made his mind free from this point of view and, as we recite in the verse, He said:

"You may put off whom you please of them, and you may take to you whom you please…"

The Arabic term /turji/ is derived from /'irja'/ in the sense of delay; and the term /tu'wi/ is derived from /'iwa'/ in the sense of 'to take in one's place'.

We know that one of the ordinances of Islam is that when a man has numerous wives he must divide his time justly among them. If one night he is with one of them, another night he must be with another wife, and there is not any difference between them from this point of view. This subject has been explained in the books of Islamic jurisprudence under the title of /haqq-i-qasm/.

One of the qualities of the Prophet (S) was that this right, mentioned in the above verse, was not upon the Prophet (S), because of the specific conditions of his difficult life, specially when he was inside Medina and approximately every month a war was imposed on him during this very time that he had numerous wives.

Then he could divide his time in any form he desired, though, as the Islamic history books explicitly denote, he tried to observe equality among them as much as possible. Yet, the existence of this divine ordinance gave a kind of peace to the Prophet's wives and to the interior environment of his life.

Then, the verse adds:

"…and whom you desire of those of whom you have separated, no blame shall be on you…"

Thus, not only at the beginning the authority was with the holy Prophet (S) but also this choice was with him in the continuation of it, and, in other words, this choice was a ‘continuous choice’.

By this expansive and vast ordinance any kind of excuse due to the Prophet’s wives was ceased from the programs of his life, and he could concentrate his thought on the great and heavy responsibilities of prophetship.

Then in order that the wives of the holy Prophet (S) should also know that besides obtaining the honour of being the Prophet’s wives, by submitting to this particular program of the Prophet’s time division they have shown a kind of self-sacrifice from them and that there is no objection upon them at all, because they have submitted to the ordinance of Allah, it adds:

“…this is most proper to give them the joy of their eyes and they may not grieve, and that they should be pleased, all of them with what you give them…”

This is so because: firstly this is a general ordinance about all of them, and, thus, there is no difference between them. Secondly: this is an ordinance from the side of Allah which has been ordained for some important interests.

Therefore, they must accept it willingly and contently in a way that they not only should not be annoyed but also be pleased with it.

At the end, the Holy Qur’an concludes the verse with the following sentence:

“…and Allah knows what is in your hearts; and Allah is Knowing, Forgiving.”

Yes, Allah knows well that which ordinance you are heartily pleased by and submitted to, and which one you are unpleased with. He knows that in which of your wives you are more interested and in which one less, and how you observe the ordinance of Allah when confronting these affairs.

Again, He knows who, protesting in their hearts, sit here and there and object these Divine ordinances concerning the Prophet (S), and who eagerly accept them all.

So, the application of the Qur’anic term /qulubikum/ has a vast meaning that involves both the Prophet (S) and his wives, and all the believers who submit to these ordinances with consent, or protest and deny them though they do not make it manifest.

In Islamic jurisprudent, there is a discussion that whether it was obligatory for the Prophet (S) to divide his time equally among his numerous wives in the same way that is incumbent for the Muslims in general, or the Prophet (S) had the exception ordinance of ‘choice’.

It is known among the jurisprudents of Shi‘ah and among a group of the jurisprudents of the Sunnites that he was made an exception of this ordinance.

They take the above verse as its evidence that says:

“You may put off whom you please of them, and you may take to you whom you please…”

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 52

لاَ يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِن بَعْدُ وَلاَ أَن تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ اِلاَّ مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَي ٰ ٓ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا

52. "Thereafter women are not lawful to you, neither for you to take other wives in exchange for them, though their beauty may charm you, except what your right hand possesses, and Allah is watchful over all things."

Some tribes of Arab put the holy Prophet (S) under pressure to take a wife from them so that they boasted that the Messenger of Allah was their bridegroom. According to some expediencies, the holy Prophet (S) married with a few women, but this verse hindered the continuation of this action.

It says:

"Thereafter women are not lawful to you, neither for you to take other wives in exchange for them, though their beauty may charm you, except what your right hand possesses, and Allah is watchful over all things."

The commentators of the Holy Qur'an and the Islamic jurisprudents have delivered many various explanations upon the commentary of this verse and there have also been recorded many different narrations in the Islamic sources upon this matter.

At first, without regarding the commentators' statements, we mention whatever is meant from the apparent of the verse and in relation with the before and later verses, then we will refer to other matters.

The apparent meaning of the Arabic phrase /min ba'du/ (thereafter) is that 'thereafter new marriages are unlawful for you'. Therefore, the Arabic word /ba'du/ means either the length of time, that is, after this time do not choose any more wife.

Or after that, according to the command of Allah in previous verses, you told your wives to choose to have a simple life in your house or to be divorced, and they willingly preferred to continue their matrimonial life with you, you should not marry any other woman thereafter.

And also, you can not divorce some of them and take other wives in exchange for them. In other words, you can neither increase them nor can you change the existing ones.

The commentators have taken the Qur'anic sentence: /walau 'a'jabaka husnuhunna/ (though their beauty may charm you) as an evidence for the famous ordinance which is also referred to in some Islamic narrations saying that: the one who wants to marry a lady, he can have a look at her before, a looking that makes her situation, feature, and body distinguish for him.

The philosophy of this ordinance is that man may choose his wife with a complete distinction and it might prevent the later regret, which can put the marriage agreement in danger.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) told one of his companions who wanted to marry a woman:

"Look at her (previously) and this causes that the affection between you will endure."[24]

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) in answer to this question that whether, at the time of deciding to marry a lady, man can look at her carefully and sees her face and her back, the Imam (as) said:

"Yes, it does not matter that when man wants to marry a lady he looks at her back and her face."[25]

There are, of course, a lot of traditions in this regard, but some of them explicitly denote that this look at this time should not be done by the man lustfully and with the intention of pleasure.

This is also clear that this ordinance is specialized for the instances that the one really intends to study about a woman to understand that if she has the conditions he desires to marry her; but the one who has not decided to marry and that he will probably marry later, or as a mere study, he is not allowed to look at women.

Notes

1. Kafi, Vol. 2, chapter 'Remembrance'
2. Ibid
3. 34 times Allah-u-Akbar, 33 times Al-Hamd-u-lillah, and 33 times Subhan-allah
4. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 14
5. Ibid, verse 124
6. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 4, P. 274
7. Riyad-us-Salihin, P. 542
8. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, P. 465
9. Kashf-ul-'Iqal, Vol. 1, P. 454
10. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, P. 418
11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 25
12. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 90, P. 54
13. Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 500
14. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, and Safinat-ul-Bihar, section Thikr
15. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 152
16. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 105
17. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 41
18. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160
19. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261
20. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 17
21. as Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 237 has announced
22. Like Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 241, and many traditions in this regard in chapter 50, Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 15, P. 59
23. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 22, PP. 191-192
24. The commentary by Qurtabi, Vol. 8, P. 5303
25. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, chapter 36, tradition 3

Section 7: Those Who Annoy Allah and His Prophet Muhammad

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 53

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلاَّ أَن يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَي طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نَاظِرِينَ إِنَاهُ
وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانتَشِرُوا وَلاَ مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي
النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لاَ يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعاً فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِن وَرَآءِ
حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَن تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلاَ أَن تَنكِحُوا
أَزْوَاجَهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ أَبَداً إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

53. "O you who believe! Do not enter the houses of the Prophet for a meat without waiting for the proper time, unless permission be granted you. But when you are invited, enter, and, when your meal is ended, then disperse; neither lingering for conversation; verily this annoys the Prophet, and he is ashamed before you, but Allah is not ashamed before the truth. And when you ask his wives for any object, ask them from behind a curtain. This is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not for you to hurt Allah's Messenger, neither to marry his wives after him, ever, verily this is grievous (sin) with Allah."

To take permission to enter into the people's house is not allocated to the Prophet's house.

As we recite in Surah An-Nur:

"…Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission…"[1]

This verse addresses the believers and clearly and expressively, in some short sentences, states some other Islamic ordinances, specially those relating to the rules of etiquette with the Prophet (S) and his household.

At first, it says:

"O you who believe! Do not enter the houses of the Prophet for a meat without waiting for the proper time, unless permission be granted you…"

The Arabic term /'inahu/ is derived from /'ani-ya'ni/ in the sense of 'the time of something', and here it means 'readiness of food for eating'.

Thus, the holy verse states one of the important rules of association that was rarely observed in that environment. This statement outwardly is about the house of the holy Prophet (S), but surely this ordinance does not allocate to him alone.

Never must we enter the house of anyone else without permission, (as Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 27 announces, too). It is said that even the Prophet (S), standing outside the door, asked his daughter, Fatimah (as), to enter her house when he wanted to go into it.

Once when he wanted to go in, Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah was with the Prophet (S), then after that he (S) asked permission for him to enter, he (S) asked permission for Jabir, too. Moreover, when some people are invited for a meal, they must be punctual and do not bother the landlord out of place.

Then the verse refers to the second ordinance, saying:

"…But when you are invited, enter, and, when your meal is ended, then disperse…"

In fact, this ordinance is as an emphasis and complimentary for the previous ordinance. You should neither enter a house out of place when you have been invited for it, nor ignore the invitation, nor stay there for a long time after eating the meal.

It is evident that contrasting these affairs causes trouble for the host and it does not agree with the principles of ethics. For the third ordinance, the verse implies that you should not form a meeting of conversation in the house of the holy Prophet (S), nor in any other host's house.

It says:

"…neither lingering for conversation…"

Of course, sometimes it happens that the host is willing to have such a meeting of conversation; in this case it is an exception. These wards are about the case that the invitation is for only eating food, not for forming the meeting of conversation.

In such a place, after eating the meal, meeting must be left, specially that the house is that of the Prophet (S), the centre of accomplishing the greatest divine missions, and some troublesome affairs must not occupy his time.

Then, the Holy Qur'an states the reason of this ordinance as follows:

"…verily this annoys the Prophet, and he is ashamed before you, but Allah is not ashamed before the truth…"

Of course, concerning the instances that had not a personal and private nature, the Prophet of Allah (S) never refused to say the truth, while to state the right of persons from the side of them is not so fair, but it is interesting and beautiful when it is said from the side of others, and the case in the verse is of this kind.

The ethical principles required that the Prophet (S) would not defend himself, but Allah defended him.

Then, the fourth ordinance is stated about the subject of veil, as follows:

"…And when you ask his wives for any object, ask them from behind a curtain…"

It has been a custom among Arabs, as well as many other people, that when they are in need of some furniture and means of life they borrow them temporarily from the neighbour. The Prophet's house was also one of them and, now and then, neighbours would come and borrow something from the wives of the Prophet (S).

It is clear that coming before the people's sight (even with Islamic veil) was not a good action for the Prophet's wives, that was why it was ordained that they would take them from behind the curtain or the door.

The point which must be taken under consideration is that the purpose of the Qur'anic word /hijab/, in this verse, is not the women's veil, but it is an ordinance added to it which had been particular for the wives of the Prophet (S).

By it, for the special conditions of the wives of the Prophet (S), people were commanded if they wanted to take something from them, they would take it from behind the curtain, and these wives should not appear before people in such instances, even with Islamic cover.

This ordinance, of course, has not been ordained about other women, for whom only observing the religious cover is enough.

This command was ordained for the wives of the Prophet because of the existence of the abundant enemies and self-interested fault-finders who might denigrate them and the black-hearted persons might take it as a document; then this special command was for them, or, in other words, it was given to the people that at the time of asking something from the Prophet's wives they would ask them what they wanted from behind the curtain.

Specially the application of the Qur'anic word /wara'/ (behind) is a witness for it.

Next to this command, the Qur'an states the philosophy of it as follows:

"…This is purer for your hearts and for their hearts…"

The Qur'an states the fifth ordinance as follows:

"…And it is not for you to hurt Allah's Messenger…"

The act of annoyance is mentioned in this verse and it is to go to the Prophet's house out of place, and staying there and causing bother after eating the meal, yet, however, the concept of the verse is general and envelops any kind of annoyance and hurt.

In Islamic narrations, there is also mentioned in occasion of revelation indicating that some of the black hearted persons had sworn that after the Prophet (S) they would marry with his wives. This speech was another hurt, too.

Finally, the sixth, and the last divine ordinance, is about the prohibition of marriage with wives of the Prophet (S) after him, as follows:

"…neither to marry his wives after him, ever, verily this is grievous (sin) with Allah."

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 54

إِن تُبْدُوا شَيْئاً أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيماً

54. "Whether you reveal anything or conceal it, verily Allah has full knowledge of all things."

Allah is aware of not only our deeds but also of everything, and His awareness is also equal upon what is hidden and what is manifest.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an has severely warned people by saying:

"Whether you reveal anything or conceal it, verily Allah has full knowledge of all things."

You should not imagine that Allah is not aware of your annoyance to His Prophet (S). He knows both all the things you utter by your tongue and the things you think and decide about them in your heart; then He will reward everyone according to his action and intention proportionately.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 55

لاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي ءَابَآئِهِنَّ وَلاَ أَبْنَآئِهِنَّ وَلاَ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلاَ أَبْنَآءِ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلاَ أَبْنَآءِ
أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلاَ نِسَآئِهِنَّ وَلاَ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى ُ ّ ِ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا

55. "There is no sin for them (not to have veil) with their fathers, nor their sons, nor their brothers, nor their brothers' sons, nor the sons of their sisters, nor their own women, nor of what their right hands possess; and be in awe of Allah! Verily Allah is a witness of all things."

There is no hardship or difficulty in Islam. The first grade relatives who permanently ply in the house and among the household are on confidential terms with each other.

Sine there has been stated an absolute ordinance in the previous verse about the wives of the Prophet (S) and the absoluteness of this ordinance brings this misconception into being that their very near relatives are also obliged to perform it, and they must communicate with them from behind the curtain, the above holy verse was revealed and explained how they may behave.

It says:

"There is no sin for them (not to have veil) with their fathers, nor their sons, nor their brothers, nor their brothers' sons, nor the sons of their sisters, nor their own women, nor of what their right hands possess…"

In other words, their very near relatives, who are limited in these six groups, are as exceptions. If someone says that there are some other persons who are also among the very near relatives, such as paternal uncles and maternal uncles, but they are not mentioned in these six groups, it must be answered as follows:

In view of the fact that the Qur'an uses eloquence and elegance in their best form, and one of the principles of eloquence is that there should not be any extra word in the speech, so here, it has not mentioned the paternal uncles and maternal ones, because by mentioning the children of brother and the children of sister the allowance of paternal uncles and maternal uncles is made clear, because it is always mutual.

In the same way that a brother's son is a near relative to the person, the one is also near relative to one's brother's child; (and we know that such a woman is counted a paternal aunt. And Also as the sister's child is a near relative to the one, the one is also near relative to the sister's child, (and we know that such a woman is a maternal aunt).

When the paternal aunt and the maternal aunt are near relatives (mahram) to her brother's son and sister's son, the paternal uncle and the maternal uncle are also near relatives (mahram) unto brother's daughter and sister's daughter, (because there is no difference between paternal uncle and aunt, and also maternal uncle and aunt) and this is one of the narrow things of the Qur'an.

By the way, the husband's father and husband's son are also counted among the near relatives of the woman, as they are also mentioned in Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 31 among the near relatives, too.

Also, the lack of mentioning the foster brothers and foster sisters and the like in the verse is for the sake that they are counted as brother and sister like other very near relatives and there is no need to be mentioned independently.

At the end, the verse changes the tone of speech from absent addressee to present addressee, when it addresses the wives of the Prophet (S) and says:

"…and be in awe of Allah! Verily Allah is a witness of all things."

There is nothing hidden and concealed for Allah, because a curtain and a cover and the like are nothing but some means as barriers against committing sins, and the main root is piety that if it is absent even these means will not be beneficial.

This point also seems necessary to be mentioned here that the Arabic term /nisa'ihinna/ (their own women) refers to the Muslim women entirely, because, as it was mentioned in the commentary of Surah An-Nur, it is not suitable for Muslim women that they appear before non-Muslim women since they may explain the things for their husbands.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 56

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلاَئِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَي النَّبِيِّ يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيماً

56. "Verily Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet, O you who believe! Send you also blessings on him, and you salute him with submission.

In the whole six narration books of the Sunnites there are some narrations indicating that once the Prophet (S) was asked:

"How should we send blessings?"

He answered:

"Say: 'O' Allah! Bless Muhammad and his descendents'."[2]

It is important to recite Salawat beside the name of the Prophet (S). The Messenger of Allah said:

"Whoever sends blessing on me in his book and his writing(s), he will be rewarded as long as that Salawat exists in that writing."[3]

Some Islamic narrations indicate: whoever once sends blessings on Muhammad, Allah will send blessings on him ten times and (also) his ten faults will be concealed.[4]

After the statements mentioned in the previous holy verses, about the protection of the Prophet's respect and that he should not be annoyed, the verses under discussion at first speak about the special love of Allah and His angels to the Prophet (S) and then He commands the believers in this regard.

Then, the Holy Qur'an explains the evil and painful sequels for those who annoy the Prophet (S) and finally it mentions the great sin of those who hurt the believers by means of slander.

At first, it says:

"Verily Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet…"

The rank of the Prophet (S) is so high that Allah, the Creator of the world, and all His angels, who are divinely ordered to manage this world, send blessings on him (S).

Now that it is so, you may come into agreement with this message of the world of existence, as the verse continues saying:

"…O you who believe! Send you also blessings on him, and you salute him with submission.

The Prophet (S) is an excellent being of the world of creation. Now that, by the grace of Allah, he is available for you, be careful not to count him cheap. Behold not to forget his rank before Allah and with the angels of all

heavens. He is a human being. He has come out from among you, but he is not an ordinary man, he is one in whose entity a world can be found.

A Few Points

1- When the Arabic word /salat/ and the word /salawat/, which is its plural form, are attributed to Allah, they will be meant: 'sending Mercy', and when they are attributed to the angels and the believers they are in the sense of 'asking for mercy'.

2- The application of the term /yusallun/, which is a verb in the present tensed, is an indication to the continuance of the verb; that is, Allah and His angels continuously send blessings and Mercy on him, a permanent mercy and salutation.

3- Commentators have delivered different attitudes about the difference between the Qur'anic term /sallu/ and /sallimu/ among them that which seems more suitable with the lexical form of these two Arabic terms is that: the term /sallu/ is an imperative form of the verb that means to seek mercy and to send blessings on the Prophet (S), while the term /sallimu/ either means to submit to the commandments of the Prophet of Islam (S) as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 65 concerning the believers says:

"…Then they find within themselves no dislike of which you decide and submit with full submission."

There is a narration which indicates that once Abubasir said to Imam Sadiq (as) that he had understood the meaning of sending blessing on the Prophet (S) but what was the meaning of submitting to him.

The Imam answered him:

"The purpose of it is being submitted to him in affairs."[5]

Or it means to send salutation to the Prophet (S) as it is said:

"Peace be upon you O' Messenger of Allah!",

and the like, the content of which is asking safety and health for the Prophet (S) from the presence of Allah.

Abu-Hamzah Thumali narrates from one of the friends of the Prophet (S) by the name of Ka'b as follows:

"When the above verse was revealed we told him we knew the meaning of 'peace be upon you', but how was to send blessing on you?"

The Prophet (S) answered:

"Do say: 'O' Allah! Bless Muhammad and his descendents as You blessed Abraham, verily You are Praised, the Glorious. And send blessings on Muhammad and his descendents as you sent blessings on Abraham and the progeny of Abraham; verily you are Praised, the Glorious."

Both the meaning of salutation and the manner of sending blessing on the Prophet are made clear from this tradition.[6]

These two meanings are completely different for salutation, but by proper care they can be lead to a single point, and it is a verbal and practical submission to the Prophet (S); since he, who sends blessings on him and asks Allah safety for him, loves him and accepts him as a Divine Prophet necessary to be obeyed.

4- It is noteworthy that in numerous narrations recorded by the Sunnites and narrated from Ahlul Bayt (as) concerning the modality of sending blessings on the Prophet (S), it has explicitly been mentioned that the

‘descendents of’ Muhammad should be added at the time of sending blessings on Muhammad.

It is mentioned in Durr-ul-Manthur from Sahih Bukhari, and Muslim, Abu-Dawud, Tarmathi, Nisa’i, Ibn-i-Majah, Ibn-i-Marduwayh, and some other narrators who have narrated from ka‘b-ibn-‘Ujrah that a man told the Prophet (S):

“We know how to salute to you, but how should be sending blessings on you?”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Do say: ‘O’ Allah! Bless Muhammad and his descendents as You blessed Abraham; verily You are Praised, the Glorious. And send blessings on Muhammad and his descendents as You sent blessings on Abraham and the progeny of Abraham; verily You are Praised, the Glorious.”

Besides the abovementioned tradition, the writer of Durr-ul-Manthur have recorded eighteen more traditions in all of which this fact has been stipulated that /’al-i-Muhammad/ (the progeny of Muhammad) must be mentioned at the time of reciting Salawat.

These traditions have been taken from the famous books of the Sunnites narrated from a group of the Companions, including Ibn-i-‘Abbas, Talhah, Ibn-i-Mas‘ud, ’Abu Sa‘id-Khidri, ’Abu-Hurayrah, ’Abu Mas‘ud-i-’Ansari, Baridah, Ka‘b-ibn-‘Ujrah, and Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as).

Sahih Bukhari, which is one of the most famous sources of traditions of the Sunnites, has delivered numerous narrations in this regard. For more details you can refer to the text of the book itself.[7]

There are also two narrations recorded in Sahih-i-Muslim in this regard.[8]

This point is also noteworthy that in some narrations of the Sunnite and many narrations of Shi‘ites even the Arabic word /‘ala/ (upon) has not occurred as a separation between ‘Muhammad’ and ’Al-i-Muhammad’, but the phrase is recited as this: /’allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad-in wa-’al-i-muhammad/. We conclude this discussion with another tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S).

Ibn-i-Hajar cites in ‘Sawa‘iq’ that the Prophet (S) said:

“Do not send an imperfect Salawat on me”

They asked:

“What is an imperfect Salawat?”

He answered:

“That you say: ‘O’ Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad’ and you do not continue it. But you do say: ‘O’ Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and the descendents of Muhammad’.”[9]

It is for this very narration that a group of the great jurisprudents of the Sunnites consider incumbent the phrase /’al-i-muhammad/ to be added to his name in the prayer.[10]

5- Is sending Salawat on the Prophet (S) incumbent, or not? And if it is obligatory, where is it? This is a question which the jurisprudents answer.

All the jurisprudents of Ahlul Bayt say that its recitation in the first and second ‘Tashahhud’ is obligatory, and in other than that it is recommended. Besides the traditions narrated from Ahlul Bayt (as) in this regard, there are

also a great deal of proper narration recorded in the books of the Sunnites indicating that it is incumbent.

Among them is the famous narration that ‘Ayishah narrates.

She says:

“I heard from the Messenger of Allah who said: ‘A prayer without purification and without sending Salawat on me will not be accepted’.”

Among the jurisprudents of the Sunnites, Shafi‘i says it is obligatory to be recited in the second Tashahhud. Ahmad considers it as obligatory in one of two narrations quoted by him; as well as another group of the jurisprudents. But some others, like ’Abu-Hanifah, have not counted it obligatory.[11]

It is interesting that Shafi‘i has explicitly expressed this very pronouncement in his famous poem, where he says:

“O’ Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah! The love of you has been enjoined from the side of Allah in the Qur’an. And for the glory of you, this is enough that whoever does not send Salawat on you his prayer is invalid.”

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 57

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالأَخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَاباً مُّهِيناً

57. “Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.”

Annoying Allah means doing something against His desire and His consent that, instead of attracting His Mercy, one causes to bring His wrath and curse as a consequence.

And also the purpose of annoying Allah may be that His servants are annoyed, like the act of lending to a believer which is in fact lending to Allah. And the purpose of annoying His Messenger (S) is to reject him, to denigrate him, to treat impolitely with him (S), and hurting His Ahlul Bayt (progeny) (as).

As in a few traditions we recite that the Prophet (as) said:

“Fatimah is a part of me (my body); then whoever makes her angry, he has made me angry.”[12]

This holy verse in fact states something in the face of the content of the previous verse. It says:

“Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.”

Concerning the purpose of the Qur’anic phrase: ‘annoy Allah’, some commentators have said it is disbelief and atheism which causes the wrath of Allah, because annoyance in respect to Allah can not have any concept save causing Wrath.

This is also probable that ‘to annoy Allah’ is the same as to annoy the Prophet (S) and the believers, and the word ‘Allah’ mentioned here is for the importance and emphasis on the subject.

The annoyance of the Prophet has a vast meaning, and it envelops any action that hurts him, including: disbelief, atheism, and opposition with the

commandments of Allah, and also undue attributions, accusations, or creating trouble when the Prophet (S) invited them into his own house, which was referred to in verse 53 of this very Surah, saying:

"…verily this annoys the Prophet…"

Or the matter which is mentioned in Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 61 where they accused the Prophet (S).

This verse says:

"And there are among them those who hurt the Prophet and say: 'He is an ear!'…"

Even from the narrations mentioned about the verse, it is understood that hurting the household of the Prophet (S), specially Ali (as) and Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter (as), has also been involved in this very verse.

In part five of Sahih-i-Bukhari it is recorded:

"The Messenger of Allah said:

'Fatimah is a part of my body, then whoever makes her angry, he has made me angry."[13]

This very tradition is mentioned in Sahih-i-Muslim in this form:

"Verily Fatimah is a part of me (my body); whatever hurts her, it hurts me."[14]

Similar to this meaning has been narrated about Ali (as) from the Prophet (S).[15]

As it was said before, the word 'curse' mentioned in the above holy verse is in the sense of being far from the Mercy of Allah, and this is just the opposite point of Mercy and Salawat mentioned in the previous verse.

In fact, curse and being far of the Mercy from the side of the Lord Whose Mercy is vast and endless, is counted the worst kind of punishment, specially that it is both in the world and Hereafter, (as it is said in the verse under discussion).

Perhaps, it is for this reason that the word 'curse' has been mentioned in the above verse before the phrase 'a humiliating punishment.'

The application of the Qur'anic term /'a'adda/ (He has prepared) is an evidence upon the emphasis and importance of this punishment.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 58

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلوا بُهْتَاناً وَإِثْماً مُّبِيناً

58. "And those who annoy believing men and believing women without that they have earned it, have laid upon themselves a calumny and a manifest sin."

The act of hurting and annoying others, in any form it may be, is among the sins which bring the Wrath of Allah. The most important hurt is sarcasm and slander. So, after the hurt of both Allah and the Prophet (S) this verse speaks about the hurt of the believers because of the extraordinary importance that it has.

It says:

"And those who annoy believing men and believing women without that they have earned it, have laid upon themselves a calumny and a manifest sin."

This is so because, by the way of Faith, a believer has a link with Allah and His Prophet, and for this reason he has been mentioned in the same line and in the row of Allah (s.w.t.) and His Messenger (S).

The phrase ‘without that they have earned it’ points to this fact that they have not committed any sin for which they should be annoyed. This makes it clear that if they commit a sin for which they deserve a religious fixed punishment, just retaliation, and discretionary punishment the execution of these things upon them does not matter.

Again, the act of enjoining right and forbidding wrong is not inside the realm of this statement.

Prior to /’iθman mubina/ because of its importance, since calumny is counted one of the greatest hurts, and the pain of the annoyance created by it is even more intensive than the pain of sword and dagger, because the pain of the wound of a dagger is reconcilable, but the wound of the tongue is not reconcilable.

Islamic auspicious narrations also consider an extraordinary importance for this subject.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

“Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious says: ‘Whoever annoys My believing servant, he has announced declaration of war against Me.”[16]

However, some of the commentators have said that it is understood from the style of the verse that there had been some rumourmongers in Medina who used to accuse unduly the believers, (and even the Prophet (S) was not secure from their tongues).

Such persons are not scanty in the societies of today. Their job is to make plots against the righteous and pious ones, as well as to forge lies and slanders.

The Holy Qur’an has seriously attacked them with the most grievous attacks and has introduced their deeds as calumny and a manifest sin.

The evidence for this statement will also be recited in later verses.

Imam Ali-ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) has narrated a tradition from his grand father, the Prophet (S), in which he said:

“The one who calumniates a man believer or a woman believer, or he says something about him/her which does not exist in him/her, Allah, the High, will set him on a heap of Fire on the Day of Hereafter until he tolerates what he has said about him/her.”[17]

Notes

1. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 27
2. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Tradition No. 5880
3. The Commentary of Rauh-ul-Bayan following the verse
4. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the commentary
5. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse under discussion
6. Ibid
7. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Vol. 6, P. 151
8. Sahih-i-Muslim, Vol. 1, P. 305
9. Sawa‘iq, P. 144
10. ‘Allamah Hilli, has narrated this saying in Tathkirah, from the scholars of Shi‘ah added to Imam Ahmad and some Shafi‘iyyah
11. Tathkirah, by ‘Allamah, Vol. 1, P. 126
12. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Vol. 5, P. 26; and Sahih-i-Muslim, Vol. 4, P. 1903

13. Sahih-i-Bukhari, Vol. 5, P. 26
14. Sahih-i-Muslim, Vol. 4, P. 1903
15. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse
16. ’Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 35
17. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 75, P. 194

Section 8: The Knowledge of the Hour of Judgment

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 59

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِن جَلاَبِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَي أَن يُعْرَفْنَ فَلاَ يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَّحِيماً

59. "O' Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they draw their veils close to them, that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not be annoyed, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Arabic word /jalabib/ is the plural form of /julbab/ in the sense of a veil which covers the head and the neck, or a long cloth which can cover the whole body as well as the head and the neck.[1]

Upon the occasion of revelation of this verse it is recorded in the commentary book of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim that at that time Muslim women used to go to the mosque and establish prayer behind the Prophet (S).

At night, when they went to perform their evening and night prayers, some young abusive men sometimes waited in their way and hurt them with their jokes and evil words and by this means they bothered them.

The above verse was revealed and ordered the women to observe their veil perfectly so that they would become recognized clearly and nobody could find any pretext for brothering them. So, in this verse, the Qur'an orders the believing women not to give any pretext to mischief-mongers.

Then with the most intensive threat, which is very rare in the verses of the Qur'an, attacks the hypocrites, troublesome persons, and gossipers.

By the first part, the holy verse says:

"O' Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they draw their veils close to them, that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not be annoyed…"

The commentators have delivered two views upon the sentence "…that they should be known (as such)…" which are not contrary with each other.

The first is that in those days it had been customary that the maid servants would come out of home without covering their head and neck, and since from the point of manner they were not so well, sometimes some impolite young persons made trouble for them.

Here the free Muslim women were ordered to observe wearing a complete Islamic veil in order to be recognized from the maid servants and do not give the wicked persons a pretext to cause trouble.

It is evident that the concept of this statement is not this that the wicked persons had the right of causing trouble for the maid servants, but the purpose is that the Muslim women should take the pretext from the mischievous persons. Another aim of it is that the Muslim women might not be careless or heedless in wearing their veil.

There are some women who are so careless that, in the meantime that they have veils, they are so disrespectful and ill-mannered that some parts of their bodies are often visible, and this state attracts the attention of the mischievous persons to them.

The philologists and commentators have introduced some meanings for the Arabic word /jilbab/:

1- The first is /milhafah/ (chadur). It is a long cloth which is longer than scarf and covers the head, neck, and the chest.

2- The second is /maqna'ah/ and /xamar/ (scarf).

3- The third meaning is 'a wide shirt'.[2]

Apparently these meanings are different but their average concept is that: it covers the body. By the way this Arabic word is pronounced in two ways: /jilbab/ and /jalbab/.

But it mostly seems that the objective meaning of it is a cover which is longer than a scarf and shorter than a chadur, (a mantle), as the writer of Lisan-ul-'Arab has said.

And the purpose of the Arabic term /yudnin/ (draw close) is that women make the veil close to their own body so that it justly protect them, not in a manner that now and then it goes aside and their body becomes manifest. In other words, it simply means that they must arrange their clothes properly.

Some have tried to use this sentence in the sense of covering the face, too, but there is no indication to this meaning in it, and few commentators believe that covering the face is inside the concept of the verse.

However, it is understood from this verse that the ordinance of Hijab (veil) for free women had been sent down before that time, but some women simply were not careful of it, the above verse emphasizes that they must observe it carefully.

Since when this ordinance was revealed it caused some faithful women to become worried about their past, at the end of the verse it says:

"…and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This statement indicates that if you have had shortcoming in this subject since before (until now), because it has been done as the result of ignorance, Allah will forgive it. You must repent and return toward Him and fulfil the duty of chastity and cover yourself well.

Some Corruptions of Unveiling

1- The growth of the act of looking gloatingly.

2- The increase of corruption and lewdness.

3- To intend malice, and transgression by violence.

4- Unlawful pregnancies and abortion.

5- The appearance of psychic and venereal diseases.

6- Suicide and desertion from house because of disgrace.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 60

لَئِن لَمْ يَنتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لاَ يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَآ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

60. "If the hypocrites and those in whose heart is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall certainly rouse you up against them, then they shall not be your neighbours in it, but a little while;"

Islam takes the security of society so important that it has issued the command of banishment of those who create terror among people.

Next to the divine command which was given to the faithful women through the previous verse, this verse refers to another dimension of this subject, i.e. the insidious activities of some wicked persons, and says:

"If the hypocrites and those in whose heart is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall certainly rouse you up against them, then they shall not be your neighbours in it, but a little while;"

The Arabic term /murjifun/ is derived from /'irjaf/ in the sense of spreading lies or false rumors with the purpose of saddening others, and its root /'irjaf/ means: anxiety and agitation, and since spreading lies and rumours causes the common and general anxiety, this word has been used for it.

The Qur'anic term /nuqriyannaka/ is derived from /'iqra'/ in the sense of inviting to do something accompanied with encouragement.

From the tone of the verse, it is understood that there were three groups in Medina who were busy disturbing the affairs, and each group fulfilled their own evil aims in a way which had been formed as a current program, and had not a personal and individual aspect.

Hypocrites were the first group who worked for abolishing Islam by their anti-Islamic plots.

The second group were the rascals and lewd persons about whom the Qur'an says:

"Those in whose hearts is a disease."

This meaning is also used in the current Surah, verse 32 about the voluptuous persons, where it says:

"…then be not soft in speech lest he in whose heart is disease aspire (at you)…"

The third group were those who by spreading rumours in Medina specially when the Prophet (S) and the army of Islam went out for a war used to weaken the spirit of the remaining people. They often gave false news about the failure of the Prophet (S) and the believers to them. According to the statement of some commentators this group were the Jews.

Thus, the Qur'an has intensively threatened all those three groups.

There is another probability in the commentary of the holy verse, too, that the above mentioned three corruptive programs were wholly performed by the hypocrites and separating them into three groups is for separating their qualities, not the persons.

However, the Qur'an indicates that if they go on their ugly and shameful deeds Allah will issue the command of attack of general people to them so that the believers, with an attack, eradicate all of them from Medina in a manner that they can not live there any more.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 61-62

مَّلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوا أُخِذُوا وَقُتِّلُوا تَقْتِيلاً

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلُ وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلاً

61. "Accursed, wherever they are found they shall be seized and slain with a (fierce) slaughter."

62. "(Such has been) the way of Allah concerning those who have passed away before, and you shall never find any change in the way of Allah."

The Qur'anic term /θuqifu/ is derived from /θaqafah/ in the sense of a just skilful victory; therefore knowledge and culture in Arabic is called /θaqafah/.

No place should be a secure abode for those who seek disturbance and cause disorder in the security of the society.

Some commentators consider all these severities for those who hurt the believers mentioned in the previous verses; but it seems that all these threats and deserving death is for those who intend to disturb the security of the society and to abolish the system of the government, not only those who are sometimes troublesome for the people's wives.

In this verse, the Qur'an implies that when they are driven out from this city and are sent out from the support of the Islamic government, they are accursed.

It says:

"Accursed, wherever they are found they shall be seized and slain with a (fierce) slaughter."

This indicates that, after this general attack, they will not be secured in any place because they will be sought carefully and when they are found they will be annihilated.

Concerning the purpose of this verse that whether they will be sought outside of Medina and will be killed, or if after the ordinance of general banishment they remain inside of Medina they will be faced with such a fate, there are two probabilities, and in the meantime, there is no contradiction between these two.

That is, after the negation of security from these 'heart-diseased ones, destructive plotters' and the ordinance of their banishment from Medina, they will not be secured from the side of brave Muslims whether they remain there or they go out.

Then the next verse adds that it is not a new commandment, but this has been the way of Allah among the nations who have passed away before, that whenever the corruptive groups violate the limits with shamelessness and plots, the Divine command of general attack will be issued.

It says:

"(Such has been) the way of Allah concerning those who have passed away before…"

And since the ordinance is Allah's way of treatment, it will never change, because:

"…and you shall never find any change in the way of Allah."

In fact, this change defines that this threat is earnest, and they should know that the subject is completely decisive and there is no way of change in it. They must either put an end to their evil deeds, or wait for such a painful fate.

By the way, there arises a question here that what is mentioned in these verses upon the eradicating the corruptions such as the plots of the hypocrites, the constant troublesome unto the Muslims' women, and seeking

mischief of the gossipers, are these ordinances permissible for all Islamic governments in other times and centuries, too?

Few of the commentators have discussed upon this subject, but it seems that this ordinance, like other Islamic ordinances, is not limited to a particular time, place, and persons.

If enmity and plotting really exceeds the limits and forms as a current state in a manner that causes the Islamic society to face with some serious dangers, it does not matter that the Islamic government practices the commandments mentioned in the above verses given to the Prophet (S), and it mobilizes people for eradicating the roots of mischief.

But, no doubt, such things and the like are not permissible to be done unconditionally, specially that it has been introduced as an unchangeable tradition. So it must be done only by the leave of the master of the affairs of Muslims and Islamic judges.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 63

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ اِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِندَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيباً

63. "The people will ask you concerning the Hour (of Judgment). Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with Allah; what shall make you know? Perhaps the Hour (of Judgment) is nigh'."

The former verses were about the plots of the hypocrites and the vile men. This holy verse refers to one of their other destructive programs. Sometimes as mockery or with the purpose of creating doubt in the hearts of some simple minded people, they propounded this question that when would happen the Hereafter with those qualities that Muhammad (S) informed of?

It says:

"The people will ask you concerning the Hour…"

This is also probable that some of the believers, because of the sense of curiosity, or for receiving some more information, had asked such a question from the holy Prophet (S), but regarding to the verses which come after this verse, it is understood that the first commentary is closer to the meaning of the verse.

The evidence for this statement is the verses in this field mentioned in Surah Ash-Shura which say:

"…and what shall make you that haply the hour be nigh?"

"Those who do not believe in it would hasten it on, and those who believe are in fear from it, and they know that it is the truth…"[3]

Then, by the verse under discussion, the Qur'an answers them as follows:

"…Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with Allah…"

Even the Divine messengers and the near-stationed angels are also unaware of it. Then, after it, the Qur'an adds:

"…what shall make you know? Perhaps the Hour (of Judgment) is nigh."

Thus, we must be always ready to confront the Hereafter, and principally, the philosophy of its being hidden is in this that none sees his self in security and does not think of Hereafter as a distanced event and that he is far off from the Divine punishment.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verses 64-65

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيراً

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَداً لاَ يَجِدُونَ وَلِيّاً وَلاَ نَصِيرًا

64. “Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and has prepared for them a flaming fire,”

65. “Wherein they will abide for ever. They will find no protecting friend nor a helper.”

Allah’s wrath upon the disbelievers is certain. They will have neither a protector to protect them from entering into the Hell, nor a helper to save them.

This verse contains a threat against the unbelievers, and it explains a part of their painful punishment in the Hereafter.

It says:

“Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and has prepared for them a flaming fire,”

Then, in the next verse it continues saying:

“Wherein they will abide for ever. They will find no protecting friend nor a helper.”

The difference between the Qur’anic words /waliyy/ and /nasir/ is in this sense that /waliyy/ (protector) undertakes the accomplishment of all affairs, while /nasir/ (helper) is the one who helps man so that he reaches his destination. But in Hereafter, these disbelievers will have neither a protector nor a helper.

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 66

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَالَيْتَنَآ أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولاَ

66. “On the Day when their faces are turned over in the Fire, they say: ‘Oh! Would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed the Messenger!’”

In Hereafter, regret will never be useful. So, the only way of being saved is to obey Allah and His Messenger.

The above noble verse explains another part of the painful (punishment) of the unbelievers in Hereafter.

It says:

“On the Day when their faces are turned over in the Fire…”

This change in their faces is either from the point of the colour of the faces: that sometimes they become red and grey, and sometimes they become yellow and pail. Or it is from the point that their faces will be put over the flames of Fire that sometimes this side of their faces will be put over the fire, and sometimes another side.

It is here that they shout of regret and say that if they had obeyed Allah and the Prophet, they would not have encountered such a painful fate.

The verse continues saying:

“…they say: ‘Oh! Would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed the Messenger!’”

Surah Al-’Ahzab - Verse 67

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَآ إِنَّآ أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَآءَنَا فَاَضَلُّونَا السَّبيلاَ

67. "And they shall say: 'O our Lord! Verily we obeyed our chiefs and our elders, and they led us astray from the path'."

Those who in the world did not say "Our Lord" even for one time, they will be faced with groan and regret in Hereafter.

The Arabic word /sadah/ is the plural form of /sayyid/ with the sense of owner and a great person who has undertaken the management of the affairs of some important cities or a country.

The Arabic word /kubara'/ is the plural form of /kabir/ in the sense of some great men, whether from the point of age, or knowledge, or social position, and the like.

Thus, the Qur'anic word /sadah/ has an indication to the great chiefs of the locality, and /kubara'/ means those who run the affairs under their control, as if they were their assistants and counsellors.

In fact, we have set a simple obedience instead of the obedience of Allah, and have exchanged the obedience from the Prophet (S) for the obedience from the elders, and that is why we have encountered kinds of deviations and kinds of misfortunes.

It is evident that the criterion of /siyadat/ (to be a chief) and greatness among them was the criterions of force, oppression, unlawful wealth, and deceit and guile. The choice of these two meanings here is for the sake that they show their excuse adjusted and say that they have been under the effect of their apparent greatness.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 68

رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنْهُمْ لَعْناً كَبِيراً

68. "O' our Lord! Give them double chastisement and curse them with a great curse."

This holy verse indicates that on the Day of Hereafter the misguided hellish people will be excited and ask for a grievous punishment from Allah (s.w.t.) for those who misguided them. They will ask Him to give them two kinds of punishment, one punishment for their own aberration and another one for their misleading them.

They say:

"O' our Lord! Give them double chastisement and curse them with a great curse."

It is certain that they deserve a curse and chastisement, but 'double chastisement' and ' a great curse' is for the attempt that they applied for leading others astray.

It is interesting that in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, when these aberrant followers ask a double chastisement for their leaders, they will be told:

"…For each one there is double (chastisement), but you do not know'."[4]

That is, there will certainly be a double chastisement both for them and for you.

The double chastisement for the leaders of disbelief and aberration is clear, but the double chastisement for the aberrant followers is a question.

The reason of it is that they have a punishment for their aberration, and another one for the sake of their strengthening and helping the unjust ones, because the unjust ones can not do anything by themselves, but their friends and helpers assist them in increasing their injustice and their infidelity, though in comparison, the punishment of the leaders is more grievous and more painful.

Notes

1. The commentary of Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and Al-Mizan
2. Lisan-ul-Arab, Majma‘-ul-Bahrayn, Mufradat by Raqib, Qutr-ul-Muhit, Taj-ul-‘Arus
3. Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verses 17-18
4. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 38

Section 9: He Who Obeys Allah and His Apostle Achieves a Mighty Success

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 69

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ ءَاذَوْا مُوسَي فَبَرَّأَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهاً

69. "O' you who believe! Be not like those who hurt Moses (with a slander), but Allah cleared him of what they said, and he was well esteemed with Allah."

Sometimes the godly leaders are hurt and accused from the side of believers.

Following the discussion about respecting the rank of the Prophet (S) and leaving any kind of hurt unto him mentioned in the previous verses, here the Qur'an, addressing the believers, says:

"O' you who believe! Be not like those who hurt Moses (with a slander), but Allah cleared him of what they said, and he was well esteemed with Allah."

Among all divine prophets, who were hurt by people, the election of Moses (as) here is for the sake that those who hurt him among the Children of Israel are more than any other Divine prophet. Moreover, some of their hurts were similar to the hurts that the hypocrites caused unto the Prophet of Islam (S).

There are different ideas delivered by the commentators upon the objective meaning of hurting Moses (as) here, and that why the Qur'an has stated it ambiguously.

Therefore, there are various probable commentaries cited upon the holy verse, including:

1- According to a narration, once Moses and Aaron went upon a mountain where Aaron died. Rumourmongers of the Children of Israel attributed his death to Moses (as). Allah, the Almighty, made the fact of the matter manifest and made the Rumourmongers infamous.

2- As it was explained in upon the commentary of some verses of Surah Al-Qasas, No. 29, Korah plotted not to accept the law of Zakat, and that he might not pay the rights of the poor. So he planned that a bad woman would stand among the public and accuse Moses (as) saying that he had an unlawful relation with her.

By the grace of Allah, not only that plot failed but also the same woman attested to the virtue of Moses (as) and the Korah's plan.

3- Some of Moses' enemies once accused him (as) with sorcery, insanity, and attributing lies to Allah, but by means of some clear miracles Allah introduced him that he was free from them.

4- Some of the ignorant people of the Children of Israel accused Moses (as) that he had some bodily defects such as: leprosy, and the like, because when he wanted to wash himself he never stripped himself of clothing in front of others.

But one day, when he wanted to perform a total ablution in a corner far from people, he put his clothes on a piece of stone, then the stone moved

and took Moses' clothes with it and some of the Children of Israel saw his body that it had no defect.

5- One of other factors of the hurts to Moses (as) was the seeking pretext of the Children of Israel. Sometimes they asked him that he would show Allah to them. They said that they were not ready to enter Jerusalem and fight against 'Amaliqah. They wanted him (as) to go there with his Lord and occupy it, then they would enter it.

But what is closer to the meaning of the verse is that the holy verse states a general and conclusive ordinance. The Children of Israel hurt Moses (as) in different ways.

They were some hurts that were not unlike to the hurts of some people of Medina unto the Prophet of Islam (S), such as spreading some false rumours, telling lies, and charging undue attributing unto the Prophet's wife, the explanation of which was stated in the commentary of Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verses 11 to 20, and the fault-findings they had about the marriage of the Prophet (S) with Zaynab, or the troubles they made in his house, or at the time of impolitely calling him (S) that they caused them against the Prophet (S).

However, it can be understood from this holy verse that if a person is esteemed at the presence of Allah, and has a good position and rank with Him, He will defend him for the undue attributes that some wicked people charge him. You must be pure and protect your honour before Allah; He will also in turn manifest your purity, though the malicious persons may try to accuse you.

Similar to this meaning is recited in the story of Yusuf, the truthful, the pious, that how Allah exempted him from the great and dangerous accusation of Zulaykha.

Again, Mary's baby attested to his mother's chastity and stopped the tongue of malicious ones of the Children of Israel who wanted to accuse her.

This point also seems necessary to be mentioned that this statement was not only for the believers of the time of the Prophet (S). There may come into being some people after him who do some things that hurt his holy spirit.

For example, they belittle his religion, waste his efforts and endeavours, and forget what he left behind among Muslims. Such people are included in the content of this verse.

So, we recite in some traditions narrated from Ahlul Bayt (as) that those who hurt Ali (as) and his progeny are involved in this verse.[1]

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verses 70-71

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلاً سَدِيدًا

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزاً عَظِيمًا

70. "O' you who believe! Be in awe of Allah and speak you the right word,"

71. "He will adjust your works for you and will forgive you, your sins, and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, then indeed he has achieved a great success."

If a person practically observes Allah in his behaviour He will solve other problems for him, because the key to salvation is piety and obeying both Allah and the Apostle.

Following the discussions about the rumourmongers and the foulmouthed ones mentioned formerly, this verse issues an order which, in fact, is the remedy of this great social pain.

It says:

"O' you who believe! Be in awe of Allah and speak you the right word,"

The Arabic word /sadid/ is derived from /sadd/ with the sense of 'firm' and 'unchangeable' which adapts with the truth, and reality. It is a statement which is similar to a strong dam, stands against the waves of corruption and falsehood.

Then, if some of the commentators have rendered it into 'right', and some others into 'free from false and idle talk' or 'outward being adapted with inward' or the like, all are meant in the above inclusive meaning.

In the next holy verse, the conclusion of 'the right word' has been stated as follows:

"He will adjust your works for you and will forgive you, your sins…"

In fact, piety is the basis of the improvement of the speech and it is the origin of the right word, and the right word is one of the factors of the deed improvement, and deed improvement is the cause of forgiveness of sins, since:

"…verily the goods remove evil deeds…"[2]

The scholars of ethics have said:

"The tongue is the most blissful part of the body."

It is the most effective means of obedience, guidance, and improvement; and in the meantime it is counted as the most dangerous and the most sinful limb of the body, so much so that there may appear about thirty sins from this little limb.

The holy Prophet of Islam (S) in a tradition has said:

"The faith of a servant (of Allah) does not truly straighten unless his heart straightens, and his heart does not straighten unless his tongue straightens."[3]

It is interesting that in another tradition Imam Sajjad (as) has said:

"Every morning everyone's tongue inquires after other limbs' health and says:

'How are you?'

and all of them in reply to the tongue's affection answer:

'We are fine, if you let'.

Then they add:

'By Allah! Be careful of us! Verily we will both get reward because of you and will be punished because of you'."[4]

There are a lot of traditions in this regard all of which denote the extraordinary importance of the function of the tongue and that its

improvement causes the improvement of ethics and purification of the carnal soul.

That is why we recite in a tradition:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) did not sit on his pulpit but he recited this verse:

'O' you who believe! Be in awe of Allah and speak you the right word'."[5]

Then, at the end of the verse, the holy Qur'an adds:

"…and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, then indeed he has achieved a great success."

What a salvation and success is better than this that one's deeds become purified, his sins be forgiven, and he becomes acceptable before Allah.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 72

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الأَمَانَةَ عَلَي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَن يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الإِنسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُوماً جَهُولاً

72. "Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof; and man undertook it, verily he is unjust, ignorant."

Man is superior to the heavens and the earth. He is trusty with Allah in the world of existence.

This noble verse completes the important issues which are referred to in this Surah concerning: faith, righteous deed, Holy war, donation, modesty, discipline, and ethics. It shows that man has such a very worthy position that can be the bearer of the Divine messengership.

So, if he becomes ignorant to his own values he will be unjust to himself and, consequently, he will fall into the lowest point.

At first, the holy verse refers to the greatest and the most important privilege of man over the whole world of creation, where it says:

"Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains…"

But these significant great and huge beings of the world of creation refused to bear this trust and announced that they were unable and were afraid to bear it.

The verse continues saying:

"…but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof…"

It is evident that their refusal was not because of arrogance, as we recite about the refusal of Satan in the prostration for Adam:

"…he refused and was full of pride…"[6]

but their refusal was derived from fear accompanied with humility and veneration.

But, in this circumstance, man, this wonder of the world of creation, came forth and undertook the trust:

"…and man undertook it…"

Alas! From the beginning he was unjust to himself, and he did not recognize his value and did not perform what was eligible for bearing that trust:

"…verily he is unjust, ignorant."

The great commentators of Islam have discussed a lot about this verse, and tried very much to make the fact of 'trust' manifest. They have delivered different views the best of which, based on the content of the verse, have been chosen as follows:

Fundamentally, there are five points in this expressive verse on which we must emphasize:

1- What is the purpose of 'trust', the divine trust?

2- What does 'We offered unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains' mean?

3- Why and how did these great things refuse to bear this 'trust'?

4- How did man bear this 'trust'?

5- Why and how was he 'unjust' and 'ignorant'?

Concerning 'the trust' there have been mentioned different commentaries.

Among them are: 'The purpose of 'trust' here is the 'Divine love (wilayah)' and the perfection of the attribute of worship which can be required by the way of knowledge and righteous deed.

1- The objective meaning is the attribute of authority and free will which causes man to be privileged from other living creatures.

2- The objective meaning is 'man's wisdom' which is the common basis of duty and criterion for reward and punishment.

3- The objective meaning is the limbs of man's body. The eye is a 'trust' of Allah which must not be applied in the path of sin. The ear, the hands and feet, and the tongue are some other trusts which are obligatory to be protected not to commit sins thereby.

4- The objective meaning is the deposits that people take from each other, as well as fulfilling the promise.

5- The objective meaning is 'gnosis of Allah'.

6- The objective meaning is obligations and Divine duties such as: prayer, fasting, and Hajj.

But with a little care, it makes the fact clear that these different commentaries are not contradictory with each other, and some of them can be contracted into some others. Some of them refer to a small part of the subject, while some others encompass the whole matter.

In order to find an inclusive answer, we must look at 'man' and see what does he have that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains have not it?

Man is a being that has an extraordinary talent by which he can be the complete extension of Allah's viceroy. By earning knowledge, purification of the carnal soul, and accomplishments he can obtain the climax of honour and go high above the angels.

This talent is accompanied with free will and authority; that is, he has begun this way from the beginning and paved it by himself and with his authority towards infinity.

The heavens, the earth and the mountains have also a kind of gnosis of Allah that they are busy mentioning the remembrance and glorification of Allah (s.w.t.) and they are humble and do prostrate before His greatness, but

all of these acts are innate, genetic, and compelling. That is why there is not a development in them.

The only being whose both ascension and descent are unlimited, and that can climb towards the top of perfection and do all of these things by his will and authority, is man. And this is that very trust of Allah that all beings refused to bear it, but man came forth and undertook it alone.

So, we see that the next verse has divided men into three groups: believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites.

Therefore, it must be said in a short sentence: the Divine trust is that very potentiality of infinite perfection accompanied with will and authority so that he may reach to the rank of a perfect and sincere servant of Allah by means of accepting the love (wilayat) of Allah.

Why has this issue been rendered into 'trust' while our existence and all what we have are the 'trust' of Allah?

This matter is for the importance of this great privilege of man; else other merits are also the deposits of Allah that, in comparison with it, have a less importance.

Here, this trust can be referred to with another sense and said that 'the Divine trust' is engagement and undertaking responsibility.

In other words, this holy verse states some facts about man that man's intellect has not found them yet. But that which is understood from the apparent of the verse is that Allah has bestowed some particular specialties and privileges on man that none of the beings in the heavens and the earth has them.

These privileges are the trusts of Allah which bring forth some responsibilities for man. But many of human beings have been treacherous in this trust and have applied it in a path opposite to the command of Allah.

The intellect and the man's will, which must be used alongside the path of knowing the truth and choosing it so that it can be the cause of his development and perfection, has been applied in some false ways, and it has resulted to the expansion of injustice and cruelty so far that the man's behaviour has been counted as an 'ignorant' action.

Some Islamic narrations cited by the Ahlul Bayt (as) have rendered this trust as the acceptance of the love (wilayat) of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and his progeny.

It is for the sake that the love of prophets and the Imams is a strong ray of that general love (wilayat) of Allah, and reaching the rank of worshipping servitude and paving the path of development is not possible save by accepting the love of the friends of Allah.

When Ali-ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) was asked about the commentary of the offering the trust mentioned in this verse, he said:

"The trust is the mastership (Wilayah). Whoever claims it without truth has disbelieved (and has gone out from the realm of the Muslims)."[7]

In another tradition we read that when Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the commentary of this verse, he said:

"The trust is the mastership, and the man (who has been qualified as 'unjust' and 'ignorant') is the possessor of a great deal of sins and is a hypocrite…"[8]

Another tradition indicates that when the time of prayer approached, the body of Hadrat Ali (as) began trembling, and he said:

"It is the time of prayer. Prayer is the trust of Allah which the heavens and the mountains refused to bear."[9]

Addressing Ahlul Bayt (as), we recite in Jami'ah-yi-Kabirah, the supplication:

"You are the protected trust!"

Ibn-Shahr'ashub, and Muhammad-ibn-Ya'qub Kulayni have narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"The purpose of 'trust' is the love (wilayat) of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)."[10]

Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim from Qum writes in his

"Trust is Imamate and enjoinment and prohibition.

The evidence upon the fact that it is Imamate is the word of Allah, the Glorious, the Almighty, to the Imams (as) where the Qur'an says:

'Verily Allah commands you restore deposits to their owners…'[11]

Thus, the trust is Imamate which Allah offered unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains and they refused to bear it so that they would claim or usurp it from its owner and they were afraid to do so, then man bore it…"

Muhammad-ibn-Hassan Saffar in his book entitled Basa'ir-ud-Darajat narrates from Imam Baqir (as) who about this verse said:

"The trust is mastership (wilayah)…"

Upon the rank of Ali (as) Ibn-i-Shahr'ashub, narrating from Abibakr Shirazi, cited in the book entitled Nuzul-i-Qur'an, narrated from Muhammad Hanafiyyah from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who in a detailed tradition said that the purpose of 'the trust' is mastership (wilayah).

There are also some other narrations in all of which 'the trust' has been rendered as the mastership (Wilayah) of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as). You may refer to the commentaries of Burhan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, As-Safi, Majma'ul-Bayan, and other books of tradition.

Upon the acceptance of the Divine trust, it must be said that this acceptance has not been a ceremonial and conventional acceptance, but it is a genetic acceptance according to the level of talent.

The only question that remains here is about man's being unjust and ignorant.

Is 'man' being qualified by these two attributes, which apparently are as his reprimand and reproach, for his accepting this trust? Certainly the answer of this question is negative, since the acceptance of this trust is the greatest honour and privilege of man.

How is it possible that for the sake of the acceptance of such an important and high position he would be blamed? Or these qualifications are for the forgetfulness of most men and that they are unjust to themselves because of the lack of awareness of man's rank, the very thing that began in Adam's generation by Cain and his followers, and has also been continuing until now.

The man whom is called from the top of 'Arsh, the progeny of Adam on whose head was put on the crown of Allah's honour:

"…We have honoured the children of Adam…"[12]

the men who are the vicegerents of Allah on the earth:

"…Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy'…"[13]***;***

the man who was the 'angels' teacher and was made prostrated by the angels of the heaven. How much must he be 'unjust' and 'ignorant' that he forsakes these great splendid values and, making him captive of this world, stands in the row of Satans and falls into the lowest point of Hell?

Yes, accepting this deviated line, that unfortunately has had many followers since the beginning, is the best reason that man is unjust and ignorant. However, we must confess that this man, who is apparently very little, is one of the wonders of the world of creation, who has been able to carry the burden of the trust that the heavens and the earth were unable to bear, if he does not forget his rank.

Surah Al-'Ahzab - Verse 73

لِيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً

73. "So Allah punishes the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheist-men and the polytheist-women and Allah turns in mercy to the believer-men and the believer-women, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The trust of Allah causes man to be responsible. He who protects the trust will receive the Divine Mercy, and he who proves treacherous will be punished.

This verse, in fact, states the cause of offering this trust to man. It states this fact that, after bearing this great Divine trust, the members of human beings are divided into three groups: the hypocrites, the polytheists, and the believers.

It says:

"So Allah punishes the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheist-men and the polytheist-women and Allah turns in mercy to the believer-men and the believer-women, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

However, the letter 'L' at the beginning of the Qur'anic word /liyu'aððiba/ is as the sign of the purpose of something which is mentioned for the statement of the end of something.

Thus, the concept of the verse is: the end of the carrying this trust was that a group paved the path of hypocrisy and another group took the path of polytheism and, as the result of being treacherous in the trust of Allah, then they will encounter His punishment, while a group, who believe, for being faithful to this trust and that they do perform their duty concerning it, will be involved in the Mercy of Allah.

By the way, the application of /yatub/ (turns in mercy) for the believers (instead of reward) may be for this fact that the most fear of the believers is for the faults they may have committed, so it gives them certainty and rest that their faults will be forgiven.

Or it is for the sake that the repentance of Allah unto the servants is His turning to mercy, and we know that all merits and rewards have lied in the term /rahmat/ (mercy).

O Lord! Appoint us among those who have sincerely accepted the trust of Yours, and have eagerly protected it by fulfilling their duties about it.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 308
2. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 114
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 17, P. 78
4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 71, P. 278
5. Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, P. 376
6. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 34
7. The Commentary of Burhan, Vol. 3, P. 341
8. Ibid
9. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary
10. Kafi, the commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Burhan, and Safi, under the verse
11. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 58
12. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 70
13. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 30

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 15

From Surah Saba (34) to Surah Sad (38)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 10
What is a 'Commentary'? 11
The Current Commentary..... 12
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 13
The Problems in Translating..... 13
Translators Note..... 14
Editor's Note 15
Notes 17
Acknowledgment 18
Notes 18
References 19
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 19
English Translations of Qur'an 19
Supporting Technical References..... 20
Phraseological and Philological Sources 20
A Presentation to Muslims 22
Notes 23
Surah As-Saba, Chapter 34 24
(The Saba)..... 24
No. 34 (Revealed at Mecca) 24
54 Verses in 6 Sections 24
The Feature of Surah As-Saba..... 24
The Virtue of the Surah..... 24
Note 24
Section 1: Those Given the Knowledge (By Allah) 25
Surah As-Saba- Verse 1 25
Surah As-Saba- Verse 2 26
Surah As-Saba- Verse 3 27
Surah As-Saba- Verse 4 29
Surah As-Saba- Verse 5 30
Surah As-Saba- Verse 6 31
Surah As-Saba- Verse 32
Surah As-Saba- Verse 8 33
Surah As-Saba- Verse 9 34
Notes 35
Section 2: The Destruction of Saba 36
Surah As-Saba- Verse 10 36
Surah As-Saba- Verse 11 38
Surah As-Saba- Verse 12 39
Surah As-Saba- Verse 13 41
A Few Traditions Upon Thanksgiving 43
Surah As-Saba- Verse 14 44
Animals Work For Allah 45
Surah As-Saba- Verse 15 46
Surah As-Saba- Verse 16 48
Surah As-Saba- Verse 17 49

Surah As-Saba- Verses 18-19 49
Surah As-Saba- Verses 20-21 52
Notes 54
Section 3: The Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Apostle For Humanity as a Whole 56
Surah As-Saba- Verse 22 56
Surah As-Saba- Verse 23 57
Surah As-Saba- Verse 24 58
Surah As-Saba- Verses 25-26 59
Surah As-Saba- Verse 27 61
Surah As-Saba- Verse 28 62
Surah As-Saba- Verses 29-30 63
Notes 65
Section 4: The Disbelievers and Their Leaders 66
Surah As-Saba- Verse 31 66
Surah As-Saba- Verse 32 67
Surah As-Saba- Verse 33 67
Surah As-Saba- Verses 34-35 69
Surah As-Saba- Verse 36 70
Notes 71
Section 5: Wealth and Children Shall Be of No Avail 72
Surah As-Saba- Verse 37 72
Surah As-Saba- Verses 38-39 73
The Qur'anic sentence 75
Surah As-Saba- Verses 40-41 75
Surah As-Saba- Verse 42 76
Surah As-Saba- Verse 43 77
Surah As-Saba- Verse 44 79
Surah As-Saba- Verse 45 79
Notes 80
Section 6: The Triumph of Truth 82
Surah As-Saba- Verse 46 82
Some Traditions Upon the Importance of Contemplation 85
Surah As-Saba- Verses 47-48 86
Surah As-Saba- Verses 49-50 88
Surah As-Saba- Verses 51-52 89
Surah As-Saba- Verses 53-54 91
Notes 93
Surah Al-Fatir, Chapter 35 94
(The Originator) 94
No. 35 (Revealed at Mecca) 94
45 Verses in 5 Sections 94
The Feature of Surah Al-Fatir 94
The Virtue of the Surah 94
Notes 94
Section 1: Humanity Exhorted to Hold Satan as its Enemy 95
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 1 95
Note 96

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 2 98
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 3 99
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 4 100
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 5 100
Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 6-7 101
Notes 103
Section 2: The Triumph of Truth Prophesied 105
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 8 105
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 9 107
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 10 108
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 11 110
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 12 113
Some Points 113
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 13 116
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 14 118
Notes 120
Section 3: Every People on Earth Had a Warner 122
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 15 122
Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 16-17 123
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 18 123
Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 19-23 125
Two Points 127
Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 24-26 128
Notes 130
Section 4: The Inheritors of the Qur'an 131
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 27 131
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 28 132
Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 29-30 133
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 31 136
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 32 137
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 33 139
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 34 140
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 35 140
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 36 141
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 37 142
Notes 144
Section 5: Never Can Anyone See Allah's Plan Ever Getting Altered or Changed 145
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 38 145
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 39 145
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 40 146
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 41 148
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 42 149
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 43 150
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 44 151
Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 45 153
Note 155
Surah Ya-Sin, Chapter 36 156

No. 36 (Revealed at Mecca) 156
83 verses in 5 Sections 156
The Feature of Surah Ya-Sin 156
The Virtue of Surah Ya-Sin 156
Notes 157
Section 1: The Qur'an, The Apostle and the Manifest Guide 158
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 1-4 158
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 5-6 159
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 7-8 160
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 9-10 162
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 11 163
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 12 164
Notes 165
Section 2: Apostles Sent Before, Referred to 167
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 13 167
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 14 167
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 15-17 168
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 18-19 169
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 20-21 170
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 22-24 172
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 25-27 173
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 28-29 175
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 30 176
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 31-32 176
Notes 178
Section 3: Allah's Bounties as Signs of Guidance to Mankind 179
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 33 179
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 34-35 180
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 36 181
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 37-38 182
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 39-40 184
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 41-42 187
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 43-44 188
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 45-46 189
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 47 190
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 48-50 191
Notes 193
Section 4: A Scene of the Resurrection 195
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 51-53 195
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 54 197
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 55-58 198
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 59-62 201
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 63-64 204
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 65 204
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 66-67 205
Notes 206
Section 5: The Kingdom of the Universe Belongs to Allah 207
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 68 207

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 69 208
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 70 209
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 71-72 210
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 73 211
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 74-75 212
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 76 213
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 77-78 213
Occasion of Revelation 213
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 79 215
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 80 216
Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 81 218
Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 82-83 219
Notes 220
Surah As-Saffat, Chapter 37 222
(The Rangers) 222
No. 37 (Revealed at Mecca) 222
182 Verses in 5 Sections 222
The Feature of the Surah 222
The Virtue of Reciting Surah As-Saffat 222
Note 222
Section 1: Unity Shall Ultimately Triumph 223
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 1-3 223
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 4-5 225
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 6-7 226
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 8-10 227
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 11-12 228
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 13-15 229
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 16-18 230
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 19-21 231
Notes 232
Section 2: The Sufferings of the Guilty 233
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 22-24 233
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 25-27 234
Surah As-Saffat - Verse s 28-29 235
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 30-31 236
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 32-33 237
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 34-36 237
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 37-39 238
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 40-44 238
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 45-47 240
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 48-49 241
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 50-52 243
Surah As-Saffat - Verse 53 243
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 54-55 244
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 56-57 244
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 58-61 244
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 62-64 246
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 65-68 247

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 69-70 248
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 71-74 249
Notes 250
Section 3: The Great Sacrifice Shifted 252
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 75-79 252
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 80-82 254
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 83-84 255
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 85-87 256
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 88-92 257
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 93-94 259
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 95-98 260
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 99-102 262
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 103-106 265
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 107-113 266
Notes 269
Section 4: Allah's Blessings on Moses 271
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 114-116 271
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 117-119 272
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 120-122 272
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 123-125 273
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 126-129 274
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 130-132 275
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 133-136 276
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 137-138 277
Notes 278
Section 5: Jonah's Delivery From Distress 279
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 139-141 279
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 142-144 280
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 145-147 281
Surah As-Saffat - Verse 148 282
Surah As-Saffat - Verse 149 283
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 150-152 284
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 153-156 284
Surah As-Saffat - Verse 157 285
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 158-160 285
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 161-163 287
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 164-166 288
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 167-169 288
Surah As-Saffat - Verse 170 289
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 171-173 289
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 174-176 290
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 177-179 291
Surah As-Saffat - Verses 180-182 292
Notes 293
Surah Sad, Chapter 38 295
No. 38 (Revealed at Mecca) 295
88 Verses in 5 Sections 295
The Feature of Surah Sad 295

The Virtue of Recitation of This Surah 295
Notes 295
Section 1: The Utter Defeat of the Clans Combined, Prophesied 297
Surah Sad - Verses 1-3 297
The Occasion of Revelation 297
Surah Sad - Verse 4 300
The Occasion of Revelation 300
Surah Sad - Verses 5-7 301
Surah Sad - Verses 8-11 303
Notes 306
Section 2: Allah's Blessings On David 307
Surah Sad - Verses 12-16 307
Surah Sad - Verses 17-20 310
Surah Sad - Verses 21-22 313
Surah Sad - Verse 23 314
Surah Sad - Verses 24-25 315
Surah Sad - Verse 26 316
A Few Traditions Upon Low Desire 318
Notes 319
Section 3: Allah's Blessings On Solomon 320
Surah Sad - Verses 27-28 320
Surah Sad - Verse 29 321
Surah Sad - Verses 30-33 323
Surah Sad - Verses 34-35 325
Surah Sad - Verses 36-40 326
Notes 328
Section 4: Job's Patience Rewarded 329
Surah Sad - Verses 41-42 329
Surah Sad - Verses 43-44 331
Surah Sad - Verses 45-48 333
Surah Sad - Verses 49-51 337
Surah Sad - Verses 52-54 338
Surah Sad - Verses 55-57 339
Surah Sad - Verses 58-61 341
Surah Sad - Verses 62-64 343
Notes 344
Section 5: The Great Tiding 346
Surah Sad - Verses 65-68 346
Surah Sad - Verses 69-70 348
Surah Sad - Verses 71-74 349
Surah Sad - Verses 75-78 351
Surah Sad - Verses 79-83 353
Surah Sad - Verses 84-85 355
Surah Sad - Verses 86-88 356
Notes 358

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النَّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنَّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سمي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي "حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah As-Saba, Chapter 34

(The Saba)

No. 34 (Revealed at Mecca)

54 Verses in 6 Sections

The Feature of Surah As-Saba

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah has been revealed at Mecca, and contains fifty four verses. For the explanation of the people of Saba mentioned in this Surah, it has been called Saba and, like other Meccan suras, most expressions of it are about ideological issues, and the Origin and the End (Hereafter) in particular.

In the story of Solomon, of course, and his encounter with the people of Saba, a part of the Divine bounties and the end of the thankful believers and disbelievers are pointed out.

The Virtue of the Surah

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said:

"He who recites the couple of Suras which has begun with the praise of Allah (suras Saba and Fatir) in a night, he will be in the protection of Allah, the Almighty and in His guard; and if he recites them in the daytime, no undesirable thing will come to him on that day, and he will be given so much good of this world and the next that has never come to his mind and which he has never desired or thought of." [1]

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 375

Section 1: Those Given the Knowledge (By Allah)

Surah As-Saba- Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الأَخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "(All) praise is (only) Allah's, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and to Him belongs also (all) praise in the Hereafter, and He is the Wise, the Aware."

We must learn from Allah how to praise Him.

The praises must be for His perfection, power, ownership, awareness, and wisdom.

Among the Suras, of the Qur'an, there are five suras which have been begun with the Praise of Allah in three of which the praise of Allah is for the sake of the creation of the heaven and the earth and other creatures.

In one Surah[1] this praise is for the sake of the descent of the Qur'an on the pure heart of the holy Prophet (S). And, in another Surah, Al-Hamd, there is a conclusive meaning which envelops all these affairs.

It says:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds."

However, Surah Saba begins with the praise of Allah for His Ownership, and Wisdom in both this world and Hereafter.

It says:

"(All) praise is (only) Allah's, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and to Him belongs also (all) praise in the Hereafter…"

Thus the sovereignty and ownership of both worlds belong to Him.

Every bounty, every merit, every benefit and blessing, and every wonderful elegant, and well-proportioned creation, all belong to His Pure Essence, and it is for this reason that 'the Praise', the reality of which is a praise for 'the optional good deeds' returns to Him. And if some creatures are also eligible of praise, they are a ray of His Essence and a shade of His deeds and attributes, too.

Therefore, when anybody in this world praises something, this praise finally returns to His Pure Essence.

At the end of the verse, the Holy Qur'an adds:

"…and He is the Wise, the Aware."

It is because of His vast wisdom that this surprising system governs over the world, and it is because of His Knowledge and awareness that everything has been located in its own place, and whatever thing a being needs, it is available for it (him).

The commentators have discussed very much about the objective meaning of:

'the praise of Allah in Hereafter'.

Some of them have said that although there is no duty for people in the Hereafter, the servants of Allah will eagerly praise Him there and glorify Him, and they will take pleasure by praising Him.

Some others have said: the people of Paradise will praise Him for His grace, while the people of Hell will do it for His justice.

Sometimes it is said: the people who are in this world, because of the various curtains over their hearts and thoughts, mostly have not a sincere praise, but in Hereafter, where the curtains are removed and according to the sentence:

"On that Day the Sovereignty will be Allah's…"

and everything will be made manifest for everybody, all of them will begin praising Him with a perfect sincere intention.

Also in this world human beings may become neglectful and, imagining some beings as independent of the Essence of Allah, praise them. But in Hereafter, where the relation of all to His Pure Essence is like the rays of sunshine to the sun and it will be made manifest, no one will praise aught but Him.

Moreover, the holy Qur'an has repeatedly said that the people of Paradise will praise Him there.

For example:

"…and the close of their cry (will be): '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'."[2]

In another occurrence, upon the time when the believers enter the eternal gardens of Paradise, it says:

"And they will say: '(All) praise is (only) Allah's Who has removed from us (all) sorrow…"[3]

This praise is expressed not only by the tongues of human beings and angels, but also it can be heard from all the particles of the world of existence, and there is no being but praises and glorifies Him.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 2

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ

2. "He knows whatever goes down into the earth and whatever comes out of it, and whatever comes down from the heaven and whatever goes up to it; and He is the Merciful, the Forgiving."

This verse, following the attributes of Allah mentioned in the previous verse as Wise and Aware, refers to a part of His infinite knowledge and says:

"He knows whatever goes down into the earth and whatever comes out of it…"

Yes, He is aware of all of the drops of rain which come down from sky and the waves of floods, the water of which penetrates into the depth of the earth and will be stored there for men.

He is aware of the seeds of the plants which will be spread in earth by the help of winds or insects and go under the soil and grow so that one day they are seen as some green plants. He knows how the roots of trees go down into the depth of the ground to seek food and water.

Allah knows the electric waves, the different gases and the atoms in the air which penetrate into the ground. He is aware of the living creatures that go through the land and give life to it. He knows all treasures and precious things buried inside this vast ground as well as the corpses of the dead

irrespective of men and other animals. Yes, He is aware of all of these things.

Also Allah knows all the plants that come out of the earth.

He knows the men who have raised from it; the springs that gush out from it; the gases come from inside of it; the volcanoes emerge from it; the insects which have nests in the earth and originate from it; and, in short, He is aware of all the creatures that come out of the depths of the ground, whether we know or we do not know.

Then the verse adds that He also knows whatever comes down from the sky, and whatever goes up to it, among them are the drops of rain, the life giving rays of the sun, the powerful waves of revelation and heavenly religious affairs, the angels who come down to the earth in order to convey the messengership or to perform other things, the heavenly rays which come from beyond the atmosphere unto the earth globe, the piercing flames and wandering meteorites which are attracted toward the earth.

Allah is aware of all of them.

It continues saying:

"…and whatever comes down from the heaven and whatever goes up to it…"

Allah also knows the servants' deeds which ascend to the heaven; of the angels, that after fulfilling their duty, return to the heaven; of the Satans that go to the heavens to eavesdrop; of the branches of thick tall trees; of the vapours that rise from the sea and form the pieces of cloud in the sky; of the moan of an oppressed that ascends to the heaven. Yes, He knows all of these things.

Is there anyone to be aware of these affairs but He? Can the knowledge of all learned men among human beings dominate a part of His knowledge?

So, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and He is the Merciful, the Forgiving."

Allah being qualified by these two attributes is either for the sake that among the things ascend to the heaven there are the deeds of the servants and their souls, and it is He Who takes them under the cover of His mercy and forgiveness.

Or it is for the sake that the descent of all the heavenly blessings and merits are produced by His Mercy; and the righteous deeds of the believing servants, which, basing on the Qur'anic sentence:

"…it is He Who exalts the righteous deeds…"[4]**,**

ascend up and will be involved of His forgiveness.

Or, it says that those who so thank for these blessings deserve His mercy, and those who are faulty, if do not exceed the limits, will have forgiveness.

Shortly speaking, the above verse has a vast meaning in all its dimensions and it must not be limited in one side.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 3

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لاَ تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ قُلْ بَلَي وَرَبِّي لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ لاَ يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلاَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ أَصْغَرُ مِن ذَلِكَ وَلاَ أَكْبَرُ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

3. "And those who disbelieve say: 'The Hour (of Judgment) shall not come upon us.' Say: 'Yes! By my Lord, the Knower of the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you, from Him is not hidden the weight of (even) an atom in the heavens nor in the earth, and neither is aught smaller than that, nor greater, but (all) is in a manifest Book."

It does not matter that the blasphemous words and expressions may be cited in order to criticize or nullify them.

1- The rejecters of the resurrection often merely claim something and they have no reasoning for it.

The former holy verses, though referred to Unity and the attributes of Allah, contained something about the subject of Resurrection, because, as we will see later, the problems of the subject of Resurrection will not be solved except by the way of infinite knowledge of Allah.

That is why, the verse under discussion at first says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'The Hour (of Judgment) shall not come upon us.'…"

Not only for us, but also for neither of human beings there will be a Resurrection.

By this way they wanted to get 'freedom of action' and perform whatever they could do, hoping that there is no reckoning and no justice at the end.

But, in view of the fact that the evidences of Hereafter are manifest, by means of a decisive sentence, and in the form of stating the conclusion, the Qur'an orders the Prophet (S) to declare:

"…Say: 'Yes! By my Lord, the Knower of the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you…"

The emphasis is on the word 'Lord', because the Hereafter is one of the affairs of Lordship. How is it possible that Allah is the cherisher of human beings and makes them progress alongside the path of development but in the midway He leaves them and, by death, everything comes to an end, while man's life becomes aimless and his creation would become naught.

This very subject has been emphasized on in Surah At-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 7, where it says:

"The unbelievers think that they will not be raised up (for Judgment). Say: 'Yes, by my Lord, you shall surely be raised up; then shall you be told (the Truth) of all that you did…"

And since one of the objections of the opponents of Resurrection was that when the man's body becomes dust and its particles will be scattered around, who can recognize them, and gather them, and return them to life again?

On the other hand, who can keep the account of all the deeds of the servants, hidden and manifest, inward and outward, and reckon them in a proper time?

So, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…from Him is not hidden the weight of (even) an atom in the heavens nor in the earth…"

The Qur'anic word /ya'zub/ is derived from /'uzub/ which originally means: 'going far from the family for finding a pasture'.

The verse continues saying:

"…and neither is aught smaller than that, nor greater, but (all) is in a manifest Book."

Thus, neither the atoms of the man's body scattered about in the earth nor their being mixed with other creatures, nor even the entrance of these parts into the body of other men by means of food stuffs, none can create any problem for their being returned together in Hereafter.

Their deeds will remain in this world, too, though their forms change, and He is well aware of all these things.

Similar to this meaning is also recited in Surah Qaf, No. 50, verses 3 and 4, where the Qur'an says:

"What! When we die and become dust (shall we live again?) that is a (sort of) Return far (from our understanding)" "We already know how much of them the earth takes away; with Us is a Record guarding (the full account)."

Concerning the objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /kitabun mubin/ (a manifest Book), many commentators have said it is 'The Protected Tablet'.

But there is another question asking: what is the Protected Tablet? As we have said before, the most probable meaning which can be stated for it is that it is the very tablet of the infinite knowledge of Allah wherein everything is recorded, and no change will occur in it.

The vast world of existence is also a reflection of this Protected Tablet, because all the particles of ourselves and all our sayings and deeds will remain protected in it, though their appearance will outwardly change, but they will never vanish.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 4

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُوْ لَـئِكَ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

4. "That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds, for such is forgiveness and a bountiful provision."

A bountiful provision is a provision which is given vastly, bountifully, and honourably not with reproach and pity.

This holy verse states the purpose of the establishment of the Hereafter, or in other words, it explains the reason of the necessity of such a world after this present world for its rejecters. It says:

"That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds, for such is forgiveness and a bountiful provision."

If the righteous believers do not get their reward, is the principle of justice, which is the most fundamental principle of the creation, not suspended? Can the Divine Justice have any meaning without it? But we see many of such people in this world who never receive the compensation of their good deeds. Therefore, there must be another world wherein this principle can be performed.

The word 'forgiveness' has been mentioned before the concept of 'bountiful provision', and it may be for the sake that the most anxiety of the believers is for the faults that they probably have had, therefore, before anything else by means of the statement of forgiveness they are given peace of mind.

Moreover, they are not eligible of ‘bountiful sustenance’ and ‘the noble rank’ unless they are cleaned with forgiveness.

‘A bountiful provision’ is in the sense of any worthy sustenance, and the vastness of its concept is so much that it envelops all the Divine merits, even the bounties which no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard of and nobody has thought of.

In other words, Paradise, with all its spiritual and material bounties, is found in this word.

Some commentators have rendered this Qur’anic word, /karim/, as two good and painless things, but it seems that its meaning is vaster than that.5

Surah As-Saba- Verse 5

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِ نَ أُوْ َ ِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِن رِّجْزٍ أَلِيمٌ

5. “And those who strive hard in invalidating Our signs, challenging (us), for such will be a chastisement of a painful wrath.”

Man’s inordinacy is so much so that he wishes to nullify the Divine verses and to hinder their effects and practical consequence. So in this verse it implies that those who tried to frustrate and deny Allah’s revelations, and imagined that they could escape from the realm of Allah’s Power, there will be a chastisement for them which is out of the worst and the most painful punishments.

It says:

“And those who strive hard in invalidating Our signs, challenging (us), for such will be a chastisement of a painful wrath.”

The words in previous verse were about ‘a bountiful provision’ while this verse speaks about ‘a chastisement of a painful wrath’.

The Arabic word /rijz/ originally means: anxiety and the lack of power for the protection of equilibrium. So when a camel is sick and is unable to walk quickly, at the time of walking, it has to take its steps shortly in order to partly keep equilibrium. This state in Arabic is called /rijz/. Then it has been used for any kind of sin and impurity.

The epics, poems peculiar to wars, are called /rajaz/ for the sake that they have some pauses which are short and close to each other.

However, the purpose of the Qur’anic word /rijz/ here is the worst kind of punishment which has also been intensified with the term of /’alim/ (painful), and it refers to the kinds of spiritual and bodily painful chastisements.

Some commentators have paid attention to this point that here at the time of stating the bounties of the people of Heaven, the Qur’an has not applied the Arabic word /min/ (of) to be evidence that those bounties are vast, while this word has been applied for the chastisement in order to be a sign of a relative limitation and the statement of His Mercy.

The Arabic term /sa‘aw/ is derived from the word /sa‘y/ in the sense of any effort and endeavour. Here it means to strive for rejecting and denial of the Divine revelations and hindering people from embracing the religion of Allah.

The Arabic term /mu‘ajizin/ is derived from /‘ajaza/ in the sense of ‘to make impotent’, and in these instances it is used for those who run away from someone in a way that he cannot have dominance over them.

It is evident that this quality mentioned for the guilty is for the imagination they used to practically show. Their action was similar to the act of the persons who thought they could commit whatever crime they desired to do and they would escape from the realm of the Power of Allah.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 6

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقَّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

6. “And those who have been given the knowledge see that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the path of the Mighty, the Praised.”

Knowledge gives man insight and awareness.

The sign of a real knowledge is to find out the legitimacy of the Qur’an and accepting it. Without knowledge and gnosis gratitude is impossible.

In former verses the words were about the unaware blind-hearted persons who decisively denied the Resurrection with those clear evidences, and they tried to belie the Divine verses and to make others astray.

In this connection, the verse under discussion refers to the scholars and knowledgeable men who pay to acknowledgement of the Divine verses and encourage others to accept them.

It says:

“And those who have been given the knowledge see that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the path of the Mighty, the Praised.”

Some of the commentators have rendered the Qur’anic sentence:

“Those to whom the knowledge has been given”

mentioned in this verse, into those scholars of the People of the Book who, by seeing the signs of legitimacy of the Holy Qur’an, became humble before it and confessed its rightfulness.

It does not matter that ‘the scholars of the people of the Book’ may be one of the expansions of the above verse, but confining its meaning to them alone has no evidence, but, on the contrary regarding to the Arabic verb /yara/ (see), which is in present tense, and also with regard to the vast concept of the sentence which says:

“Those who have been given the knowledge”

it envelops all the scholars and knowledgeable ones in any age and in any place.

And if we see that in the commentary of Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim this sentence has been rendered into Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as), it is, in fact, the statement of complete and perfect expansion of it.

Yes, any scholar, who contemplates on the content of this heavenly Book with no bigotry, consisting of its meaningful gnosis, good ordinances, wise advices, and abundant shaking admonitions, as well as its wonderful histories, and scientific miraculous discussions, knows that all of them attest to the legitimacy of these verses.

Nowadays, there have been published different books about Islam and the Qur'an by the eastern and western scholars in which there can be found some very clear and expressive confessions upon the greatness of Islam and the truthfulness of the abovementioned verse.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /huwal-haqq/ (it is the truth) in the verse is an inclusive expression which adapts to the whole content of the Qur'an, because 'truth' is the very concrete reality and the external existence, viz., the content of the Qur'an is consistent with the laws of creation the realities of the world of existence, and the world of humanity.

And since it is such, it leads man toward the path of Allah, Who is both the Mighty and the Praised; that is, in the meantime that He is Mighty and has no failure, He is worthy of any kind of praise. He is not like the powerful men who when they sit on the throne of force, they take the path of cruelty, oppression, and monopolistic manner.

Similar to this meaning is recited in Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse one which says:

"…(This is) a Book which We have sent down to you so that, by their Lord's permission, you lead out the people from the darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith), into the way of the Mighty, the Praised (One)."

It is clear that the One Who is both Mighty, and worthy of praise, and Aware, and kind, His way is the most secure ways and the straightest ones, and those who pave His path approach themselves to the source of power and all sorts of praised attributes.

Surah As-Saba- Verse

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَي رَجُلٍ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ اِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ اِنَّكُمْ لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

7. "And those who disbelieve say (in ridicule): 'Shall we point out to you a man who informs you (that) when you are scattered the utmost scattering (even then) you shall be certainly (raised) into a new creation?'"

The disbelievers hinder people to come toward religion. They always introduce themselves as the leaders and heads of groups of people.

("Shall we point out to you…?")

Disbelievers usually despise the religious personalities and sacred things so that they pave the way for common people to get away. Once more in this verse the Qur'an returns to the subject of Hereafter and Resurrection, and completes the former discussions in another form.

It says:

"And those who disbelieve say (in ridicule): 'Shall we point out to you a man who informs you (that) when you are scattered the utmost scattering (even then) you shall be certainly (raised) into a new creation?'"

It seems that their urge on the denial of Resurrection originates from two matters. The first is that they imagined the Resurrection which the Prophet (S) propounded (bodily resurrection) was a damageable subject to which they could change the people's attitude into a pessimistic mood and then negate it easily.

The second thing is that the belief in Resurrection and even accepting it as a probable occurrence, however, creates a kind of responsibility in man, and makes him think in order to seek for the truth. So this was something which was counted very dangerous for the chiefs of disbelievers; therefore they insisted to wipe out the thought about Resurrection and the reward or retribution of deeds from the people's mind in any way they could.

They used to say: was it possible that those rotten bones and those scattered dusts that the winds had taken its atoms into different directions one day come together and become alive again?

Or that they called the Prophet (S) 'a man' with an indefinite form in order to despise him.

But they had forgotten that, at the beginning, we were also as some separate scattered articles. Every drop of the existing water in our body had lied in a corner of the earth. Then, in the same way that Allah gathered them at the beginning, He is also capable to do it again at the end.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 8

أَفْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً أَم بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالأَخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلاَلِ الْبَعِيدِ

8. "Has he forged a lie against Allah or there is madness in him? Nay! Those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in torment and are straying far (away from the truth)."

The pagans pave all the deviated ways but they do not believe. This holy verse implies that it is surprising that they took this statement as a reason for mendacity or insanity of its speaker.

They used to say:

"Has he forged a lie against Allah or there is madness in him?…"

Else, how is it possible that a truthful person talks such statements?

But the Qur'an answers them decisively that he is neither a madman nor a liar.

It says as follows:

"…Nay! Those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in torment and are straying far (away from the truth)."

What an aberration is more manifest than this that one denies the Resurrection, a resurrection that he sees its example in front of his eyes everyday in the world of nature and in the dead lands to be quickened.

It is a Resurrection that if it did not exist, the life of this world would be meaningless and empty.

And, finally, it is a Resurrection the denial of which is equivalent to the denial of Power, Justice, and the Wisdom of the Lord.

But the question is that why does it say that they are in punishment and straying now?

This is for the sake that there are some difficulties and events in the life that, without having faith in Hereafter, man cannot tolerate them.

Verily if the life were limited to these very few days of the lifetime in this world, the consideration of the death would be as horrible nightmare for all persons.

That is why the deniers of Resurrection are always in a kind of worrying anxiety and a painful punishment, while the believers in Resurrection count

death as a door to the lasting world and a means for breaking the cage of this life and being delivered from this prison.

Yes, belief in Resurrection gives peace and tranquillity to man. It often makes difficulties tolerable, and causes donation, devotion, and self-sacrificing for man to be easy.

In principle, those who counted Resurrection as evidence upon mendacity and insanity, as the result of their disbelief and ignorance, they encountered the punishment of moral darkness and far aberration.

Some commentators have pointed out that this punishment is a hint to the punishment in Hereafter, but the apparent of the holy verse shows that just now they are in punishment and aberration in this world.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 9

أَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَي مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ اِن نَّشَأْ نَخْسِفْ بِهِمُ الأَرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطْ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسَفاً مِنَ السَّمَآءِ اِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَةً لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ

9. "Have they not then observed what is before them and what is behind them of the heavens and the earth? If We please We will make them sink into the earth or We drop down upon them lamps from heaven. Verily in that is a sign to every penitent servant."

Allah's Power is ready for any change in the system of existence. Contemplation about existence is the source of servitude and plea in the Presence of Allah.

Then the Holy Qur'an refers to another reason concerning Resurrection which is accompanied with threat against the obstinate negligent ones.

It says:

"Have they not then observed what is before them and what is behind them of the heavens and the earth?…"

This grand sky, with all its wonders, with all these fixed stars and planets, and the systems governed over them; and also this globe with all its wonders and kinds of living creatures and its blessings and merits are the most expressive reasons to the Power of the Creator.

Is the One Who has power over all these affairs unable to bring back man to the world of life and living after death?

This is the very proof of power by which in the verses of the Qur'an in the face of the rejecters of Resurrection has been reasoned. Among them is the last part of Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 82; and also there are Surah Asra', No. 17, verse 99; and Surah Qaf, No. 50, verses 6 and 7.

By the way, this sentence is a premise for threatening this group, the zealous dark hearted group who insist to shut their eyes unto all the facts.

So, next to that, it says:

"…If We please We will make them sink into the earth…"

It can happen that when an earthquake occurs and the earth splits, they may be buried inside of it.

The verse continues saying:

"…or We drop down upon them lamps from heaven…"

In this case, those lamps of stone may destroy them, their selves, their houses, and their lives altogether.

Yes, in this matter, there is a clear sign unto the Power of Allah and His ability over everything, but this sign is only for every servant who returns toward Allah and utilizes his thought.

The verse continues:

"…Verily in that is a sign to every penitent servant."

During his lifetime, everybody has seen some examples of earthquakes, eclipses of the moon and sinking things down into the earth, or he has heard about them.

Some persons may have seen or heard of the fall of some aeroliths from above atmosphere, or as the result of falling rocks from the mountains because of thunder bolts, or volcanoes and the like.

Any intellectual person knows that the occurrence of these affairs is possible in any time and in any place. If the earth is calm and the sky is safe and sound for us, it is because of the Power and command of Allah.

How can we deny His ability in the erection of Resurrection while we are under His power? Or how can we escape from the realm of His Government?

Notes

1. Surah Al-Kahf
2. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 10
3. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 34
4. Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 10
5. 'Alusi, in Rauh-ul-Ma'ali, following the verse

Section 2: The Destruction of Saba

Surah As-Saba- Verse 10

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلاً يَا جِبَالُ أَوِّبِي مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرَ وَأَلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ

10. "And certainly We gave David an excellence from Us, (saying:) 'O' mountains! Sing you (the praise of Allah) along with him, and (you) the birds (too), and We softened the iron for him,"

Since in the previous holy verse the words were about the penitent servant, and we know that this quality has been mentioned in some verses of the Qur'an1 about David, the Divine prophet (as), and, Allah willing, we will explain it later.

Therefore, it is better that a part of the story of this great prophet and his son, Solomon, should be explained as a sample, and the former discussion might be completed.

By the way, it can be a warning for all those who neglect the blessings of Allah, and when they sit on the throne of power, they do not obey Allah.

At first, it says:

"And certainly We gave David an excellence from Us…"

The Arabic word /fadl/ has a vast concept which envelops all of the bounties Allah (s.w.t.) had bestowed on David (as), and mentioning it in an indefinite form, is evidence upon its greatness.

David was bestowed many merits, whether material or spiritual ones, from the side of Allah that the verses of the Qur'an explain them.

Once it says:

"And certainly We gave David and Solomon knowledge and they both said: 'Praise belongs to Allah, Who has favoured us above many of His believing servants'."2

In another occurrence, the Qur'an emphasizes particularly on their awareness from animals' communication and it refers to it as a great favour, where it says:

"…'O' people! We have been taught the languages of the birds, and we have been granted of everything; verily this is the manifest favour'."3

The different miracles, which will be mentioned in the commentary of the verse under discussion, are a part of those favours. Moreover, the beautiful song, the ability of judging justly, which is referred to in Surah Sad, are counted as another part of this divine favour. And most important of all is the favour of prophethood and messengership that Allah granted to David.

However, after this ambiguous hint, the holy Qur'an explains it, and a part of the spiritual favours and some things of the material favours of David are detailed as follows:

"…(saying:) 'O' mountains! Sing you (the praise of Allah) along with him, and (you) the birds (too)…"

The Arabic word /'awibbi/ originally is derived from the term /ta'wib/ in the sense of preponderance and turning the sound in the throat of a person. This Arabic term is sometimes used in the sense of repentance, too, because its reality is returning unto Allah.

All the particles of the world, of course, entirely say the glorification of Allah and praise Him, whether someone like David does the same with them, or not, yet the privilege of David was in this that at the time of singing loudly and changing his inward murmuring into outwardly singing in the same way that concerning the glorification of pebbles in the Prophet's hand has also been mentioned in the Islamic narrations.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Verily David went out (to the farms and deserts) while he was reciting Zabur, and when he was reciting Zabur there was no mountain, no stone, and no bird but murmured it with him."4

Next to mentioning this spiritual favour, the Qur'an refers to a material favour, where it says:

"…and We softened the iron for him,"

It may be said that Allah taught David, in a miraculous way, how to soften the iron in a manner that he could produce some thin but strong iron bars for waving and making a coat of mail.

Or it may be said that before David, in order to defend in the battles, the plates of iron were used which were both heavy and when they fastened them to their bodies, they were so stable and inflexible that made the strivers very inconvenient.

Until then, none could make anything like armour from some stable narrow iron bars that could be put on easily over the body like clothing and could be harmonious and soft with the movements of the body. But the apparent of this holy verse shows that it was by the command of Allah that iron became miraculously soft in the hand of David.

It does not matter that the same One Who gave the property of softening the iron to the hot furnace, gave the same property in another form to the David's fingers. Some Islamic narrations have pointed to this meaning, too.5

In a tradition it is cited that Allah sent revelation to David, saying:

"You are a good servant save that you get your sustenance from public treasury."

Then David wept for forty days (and asked Allah to lead him somehow). So, Allah softened iron for him and he made armour… and in this way he did not need to use from public treasury.6

It is true that the use of public treasure is for those who serve the society without demanding any wage, and remove the important difficulties, but it is better that a person both deliver this service and, if it is possible for him, subsists through manual labour, David wanted to be such a kind of outstanding servant.

However, David utilized this ability that Allah had granted him in the best way, i.e., making a means used in the Holy war for protection against the enemies. He never profited from it in the ordinary means of life, but on the contrary, according to some narrations, besides running his own simple life, he spent a part of his income as a charity for the needy.7

In addition to all of these things, there was another benefit in this job of his which was counted as a manifest miracle for him.

Some of the commentators have said that Luqman came to David when he was weaving the first armour. David was changing iron into iron bars and formed them as numerous rings and joined the rings into each other.

This scene attracted Loqman's attention very much. He fell into a deep thought while he was still watching and saying nothing until when David finished weaving the armour.

He stood up and put the armour on and said:

"What a good defensive means it is for fighting!"

Luqman, who had found out the final aim, said:

"Silence is wisdom, but there are a few persons who do it."8

Surah As-Saba- Verse 11

أَنِ اعْمَلْ سَابِغَاتٍ وَقَدِّرْ فِي السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحاً إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

11. "(Saying unto David): 'Make wide coat of mail, and measure well the links, and do righteousness, verily I see what you do'."

Martial technology must be at the service of righteous deed (not for oppression, cruelty and occupying others' lands).

In this holy verse, there is an explanation for David about making armour, and also there is a very expressive command from Allah in this regard.

It announces:

"(Saying unto David): 'Make wide coat of mail, and measure well the links…"

The Arabic term /sabiqat/ is the plural form of /sabiq/ in the sense of 'a complete wide coat of mail', and in Arabic the phrase /'isbaq-i-ni'mat/ also means 'affluence of bounty'.

The Arabic word /sard/ originally means: 'weaving some rough things such as armour'. The Qur'anic sentence: /wa qaddir fis-sard/ means: to observe a suitable measure in making the rings of the armour and that how it may be weaved.

In fact, Allah orders David that he must be a lesson for all of the people of art and believing workers in the world. This is an order for firmness, stability and observing exactness in quality and quality of manufactures in a manner that the users of them can apply them easily and comfortably.

It implicitly orders David that he should make the armour wide and comfortable in a state that when the strivers put it on they do not feel that they are in prison.

The links should be neither so small and narrow that they lose their flexibility, nor should they be so big and abnormal that sometimes the sword-point, a dagger, a javelin, and an arrow can pass it through. The whole affairs of it must be measured and proportionate.

Shortly speaking, Allah not only gave David the main substance regarding to the sentence:

"…We softened the iron for him",

but also taught him how to form and weave the coat of mail in order that he could provide a complete production from this 'substance' and 'form'.

At the end of the verse, Allah addresses David and his family and says:

"…and do righteousness, verily I see what you do'."

At the beginning of the verse the addressee was only David, but at the end of the verse he and his family, or he and his people, are addressed, because all of these things are as a preparation for righteous deed, and these are a means alongside that path that both David and his family could enjoy them.

One of the dimensions of the righteous deed is that carefulness must be observed in manufactures from every point of view, and a complete and useful product must be delivered so that any defective state and imperfection on it might be avoided.

This probability also exists that the addressee in this statement had been David and all those who utilized his hand woven armour, indicating that they should use this defensive means in the path of righteous deed, not in the way of oppression, cruelty, and sin.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 12

وَلِسُلَيْمَـانَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَن يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّـهِ وَمَن يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

12. "And for Solomon (We made subservient) the wind which travelled in the morning a month's journey and a month's journey in the evening. And We made a fountain of molten copper to flow out for him, and of the jinn, some worked before him by the leave of his Lord; and whoever of them turned away from Our command, We made him taste of the chastisement of the blazing Fire."

The Divine prophets have mastership (wilayah) over the world of existence and the world of genesis.

Allah made iron subservient to David and the atmosphere to Hadrat Solomon.

Next to the discussion of the merits that Allah had given to David, in this verse the words relate to his offspring, Solomon. Concerning David, the Qur'an referred to two merits, while concerning his son, Solomon, it mentions of three great merits.

It says:

"And for Solomon (We made subservient) the wind which travelled in the morning a month's journey and a month's journey in the evening…"

It is interesting that for the father He made subservient a rough and extraordinary firm and stable substance, but for the child, his son, He made subservient a very tender being, while both of them are effective, useful and miraculous. He softens the stable substance for David, and for Solomon He causes the tender waves of the wind to become active and severe.

The smooth of the wind is never a barrier that it performs some important actions. It is the wind that moves some huge gigantic ships over the surface of the oceans; turns millstones, and balloons to float in the sky like aeroplane.

Yes, Allah made subservient this tender substance, with this amazing power for Solomon.

That how the wind moved Solomon's things, (such as his throne or his carpet), is not clear to us. We only know there is nothing difficult and complicated for the Power of Allah.

When man, with his very little power, can send balloons, and today the great gigantic aeroplanes with hundreds passengers and many heavy means can be sent to the depth of the sky, how is it difficult for Allah to move Solomon's things by the wind?

Which factor was it that protected Solomon (as) and his means from falling down or from the air pressure and other difficulties resulted from the movements in the heavens?

This is also among the problems the details of which are not clear for us, but we know that there have been many of these kinds of supernatural events in the history of the Divine prophets, though, unfortunately, some ignorant persons, or the aware enemies, have mixed them with some superstitions in order to change the main feature of these issues into a bad form.

So in this regard we suffice to the same amount that the Qur'an has mentioned.9

The Arabic word /quduww/ often means the time toward morning, opposite to the word /rawah/ which means the time toward evening, when animals return to their abode in order to rest.

But it is understood from relationships in the context that in this verse the Qur'anic word /qudaww/ is the first half of the day while /rawah/ means the second half of the day.

Then the concept of the verse is that from morning until noon a man could pave a way equal to one month travelling that the travellers of that time might pave; and in the second half of the day he could travel the same distance, too.

Then the Qur'an refers to the second Divine bounty given to Solomon.

It says:

"…And We made a fountain of molten copper to flow out for him…"

The term /'asalna/ is derived from /sayalan/ in the sense of 'to flow', and the word /qitr/ means 'copper'. The objective meaning of it is that Allah made this metal molten for him and, like a spring, caused it to flow.

Some commentators have meant the word /qitr/ in the sense of brass, and, thus, for the father, David, iron was softened and for the son, Solomon, metals became molten, (but the first meaning is popular).

How was a spring of molten copper, or other metals, under the control of Solomon? Did Allah teach this prophet the way of melting these metals in a vast measure by the way of miracle and inspiration? This was also one of graces of Allah unto this great prophet.

And finally, the verse refers to the third bounty of Allah unto Solomon, i.e., making subservient a group of jinn, where it says:

"…and of the jinn, some worked before him by the leave of his Lord…"

"…and whoever of them turned away from Our command, We made him taste of the chastisement of the blazing Fire."

As it is also manifest from its name, jinn is a being which is not realized by the sense. It has intellect and power, and, as it is understood from the verses of the Qur'an, it is responsible to fulfil some divine duties.

There are many superstitious stories cited about jinn, but if we omit these superstitions, the principle of its existence and the proper qualities that have been said about jinn in the Qur'an, it is a matter which never contrasts the knowledge and intellect. More details about this subject will be delivered in the commentary on Surah Jinn, No. 72, Allah willing.

It is noteworthy that for running a vast government in a very vast country like the country of Solomon, many factors and agents are needed, but the most important of them all are three factors which have been mentioned in the above verse:

The first is a means of rapid movement by which the chief of the country can constantly go here and there and become aware of all parts of his country.

The second is the first original main material staffs which can be used for supplying necessary means of people's life and different manufactures.

And, finally, some active human members are needed who can take enough benefit from those material stuffs and give them the necessary quantity to them so that the various needs of the country from this view can be removed.

We see that Allah granted these three merits to Solomon, and he, too, took benefit from them in a good way for people's welfare, and furnishing the country and its security.

This subject does not allocate to the time of Solomon and his government, and being careful of it is necessary not only today but always and everywhere for correct running of a country.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 13

يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَآءُ مِن مَّحَارِبَ وَتَمَاثِيلَ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَّاسِيَاتٍ اعْمَلُوا ءَالَ دَاوُدَ شُكْراً وَقَلِيلٌ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ

13. "They made for him whatever he wished of places of worship and mages and basins (large) like water-troughs and (cooking) cauldrons fixed, 'Exercise thanks, O family of David! But few of My servants are grateful!'"

This holy verse refers to a part of important productive activities of some jinns who accomplished them by the command of Solomon, where it says:

"They made for him whatever he wished of places of worship and mages and basins (large) like water-troughs and (cooking) cauldrons fixed…"

A part of those things were related to spiritual issues and Divine services, and another part of them proportionate to bodily needs of men, as well as the members of his large troop and workers.

The Arabic term /maharib/ is the plural form of /mihrab/ which philologically means 'house of worship', or some great buildings and castles which have been built to be used as temple.

This word is also used in the sense of the highest seat of an assembly, or the first part of a mosque.

That which today is called /mihrab/ (prayer niche) is in fact a new meaning that has been taken from the main root.

However, since this word is derived from the term /harb/ in the sense of fight, the reason why the worship temples are called /mihrab/ is that it is the place of fighting against Satan and carnal desire.10

Or it is derived from the Arabic word /harb/ in the sense of 'clothes' which is taken off from the enemy's body in the battle field, because in temple, the place of worship, man must put aside the cover of the worldly thoughts and mind dispersion from himself.11

However, these active clever workers of Solomon used to arrange some great and glorious temples for Solomon (as) that were appropriate for his divine religious government so that people could easily perform their own religious worshipping duties.

The Qur'anic term /tamathil/ is the plural form of /timthal/ which has been used both in the sense of 'portrait', (picture), and statue. There have been commented differently on this matter that the features of which beings these pictures or statues were taken, and for what purpose Solomon ordered that they should be prepared.

It is possible that they had been made as ornament, in the same manner that they are now seen in important old buildings, and even in our modern buildings, too.

Or they were produced to give some additional glory and grandeur to his organizations, since the picture of some animals, like lion, is the cause of creation of grandeur in the thought of many persons.

Upon the commentary of this verse, a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that he said:

"By Allah, the pictures Solomon wanted to be produced were not the statues of men and women, but they were portraits of some trees and the like."12

The Arabic word /jifan/ is the plural form of /jafnah/ in the sense of container of food. The word /jawab/ is the plural form of /jabiyah/ in the sense of 'pool', and it is understood from this application that they provided some great vast containers each of which was like a pool for Solomon so that a large group could sit around it and eat food from it.

In some rather old times, if we have not forgotten, at the tables of food some large vessels were used for eating food by a group, and, in fact, their tablecloth was that very vessel, and it was not customary that some independent separate containers to be used as it is done today.

The Arabic word /qudur/ is the plural form of /qidr/ with the sense of a container in which food is cooked; and the Qur'anic term /rasiyat/ is the plural form of /rasiyah/ in the sense of 'steadfast' and 'fixed', and here its purpose is some cooking-pots that, because of their greatness, they were not moveable.

At the end of the holy verse, after mentioning these merits, Allah, addressing the family of David, says:

"…'Exercise thanks, O family of David! But few of My servants are grateful!'"

It is evident that using the divine blessings alongside the same path they are created and granted for is a kind of thanks-giving, and it is certain that

those who utilize the merits of Allah generally in their own places are not so many.

Of course, the people of the truth among human beings have always been very few.

You may consider the number of the believers in comparison with the disbelievers, the guided ones with the misguided ones, the obedient ones with the zealous ones, the pious ones with disobedient ones, the just ones with evil-doers, the immaculate ones with other than them, the gratitude ones with ingratitude ones.

At the end, some dignitaries have considered three stages for thankfulness: thanksgiving by heart, which is:

(a), having consent and happiness for the blessing;

(b) thanksgiving by the tongue, which is to praise the bestower of the blessing;

(c), the thanksgiving of other limbs and organs, which is to harmonize the deeds with that blessing.

The Qur'anic term /šakur/ in Arabic is an amplification form, and denotes the abundance of thanksgiving that refers to the repetition of thanksgiving and its continuation by means of the heart, the tongue, and the limbs.

This epithet, of course, has sometimes been mentioned for Allah, too, like what is cited in Surah At-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 17, which says:

"…Verily He is All-thankful, Most forbearing",

and the purpose of thankfulness of Allah is that as much the servants pave the path of obeying Him He will involve them in His merits and graces, and He thanks them, and by His grace, He increases them more than what they deserve.

A Few Traditions Upon Thanksgiving

In a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) we read that someone asked him whether there is a limit for the thank of Allah that when a person reaches that limit he is counted thankful.

He (as) answered:

"Yes."

The man asked:

"How?"

The Imam answered:

"He must praise Allah for His whole blessings upon his family and his wealth; and if there is any right in the wealth He has given him he should pay it."13

Another tradition from the same Imam (as) indicates:

"Thanksgiving of a blessing is avoidance from sins."14

Again in another tradition the same Imam (as) said:

"Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, revealed to Moses, saying:

'O' Moses! Do thank Me which is a due thank.'

Moses said:

'How can I thank You a due true thank while every time I do thank You, You give me a new blessing for it?'

He said:

'O' Moses! Just now you performed thanksgiving to Me since you know that that (success) is from Me'."15

This point is also necessary to be noted that being gratitude unto those who are a means for a bounty for Man is a kind of thanking Him. Imam Sajjad, Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as) says:

"When the Hereafter Day comes forth Allah, the Exalted, will say to some of His servants: 'Did you thank so and so?'

The servant answers:

'O' Lord! I performed thanksgiving to You'.

Allah says:

'Since you did not thank him, you have not performed My Thanksgiving'."

Then, the Imam (as) added:

"The one (among you) who thanks Allah the most is the one who thanks people (for their bounties and favours)."16

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Whoever does not thank for a small (bounty) will not thank for abundant bounties; and whoever does not thank people, will not thank Allah either."17

It is narrated from Imam Sajjad, Ali-ibn-il-Hossayn (as) who said:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

'Verily (when) a believer is satiated from eating food, then he praises Allah, the Almighty; so He will give him a reward equal to that which He gives to him who fasts during the day and keeps vigil at night establishing prayer. Verily Allah accepts thanks-giving and loves those who are gratitude'."18

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Thanksgiving is to avoid the unlawful things, and a complete thanksgiving is that one says: 'The praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'."19

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Do continue your thanksgiving, then your blessing will be permanent."20

We have discussed about the reality of 'thanksgiving' and that how it causes the blessing to be increased and that being ungrateful is the source of its annihilation in Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 7.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 14

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَي مَوْتِهِ إِلاَّ دَآبَّةُ الأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ أَن لَّوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ

14. "Then when We decreed death for him (Solomon) naught showed them his death except a creature of the earth devouring his staff; and when he fell down, the jinn came to know that, had they known the Unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment."

The time of death is in Allah's Power:

("We decreed").

Death meets even those who have prophethood and kingdom with together.

The words in this verse are about Solomon. It speaks about the wonderful and marvellous death of this great prophet of Allah. It makes this fact clear that how that mighty prophet and that powerful ruler with that glory that he had easily gave his soul to the Creator of the Soul. Even before that his body could get rest in the bed; the grips of death seized him.

Allah says:

"Then when We decreed death for him (Solomon) naught showed them his death except a creature of the earth devouring his staff…"

It is understood from both the above verse and numerous narrations that when Solomon's death came he was standing, leaning on his staff. It was just then when suddenly death seized him and his soul went out from his body.

For a length of time he was in the same state of standing until when termite, which the Qur'an has rendered into 'a creature of the earth', ate his staff and, losing his equilibrium, he fell down on the ground. It was then that the jinn understood that if they had been aware of the Unseen they would not have remained in abasing chastisement.

The verse continues saying:

"…and when he fell down, the jinn came to know that, had they known the Unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment."

The Arabic term /tabayyanat/ here is derived from /tabyin/ which usually means: 'to be manifest' (an intransitive verb), and sometimes it also means 'To become aware of something' (a transitive verb), and here the second meaning is appropriate.

It means: until that time the group of jinn were not aware of the death of Solomon and they understood that if they had known the secrets of Unseen, they would not have remained in trouble and the pain of heavy labours during that time.

Some commentators have taken the sentence with the first meaning and have said that the concept of the verse is such that after that Solomon fell the status of the jinn became manifest for human being and they understood that the jinn were not aware of the secrets of the Unseen, and it was not right that some men had such a belief about them.

The application of 'abasing torment' may be an indication to the hard heavy labours that sometimes Solomon, as a forfeit and punishment put on the shoulder of a group of jinn, else the prophet of Allah would never put anyone under pressure and punishment specially under an 'abasing torment'.

By the way, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"…If there were anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death, it was Solomon, the son of David (as) who was given control over the domain of the jinn and men along with prophethood and great position (before Allah)…"21

Animals Work For Allah

1- A piece of the body of a cow makes a slain person alive and he introduces his killer:

"Verily Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow…"22

2- A spider protects the Prophet (S) in the cave:

"If you do not help him, yet Allah has helped him already…"23

3- A raven becomes the teacher of man:

"Then Allah sent a raven digging up the ground…"24

4- A hoopoe is ordered to take the Solomon's letter to Bilqiys:

"Go you with this letter…"25

5- Birds in flocks are told to destroy the possessors of elephants:

"And send down (to prey) upon them birds in flocks."26

6- A serpent can be a means to show the legitimacy of Moses:

"…it was a clear serpent."27

7- A big fish is commanded to punish Yunus:

"Then the big fish did swallow him…"28

8- Termite is the means of divulgement of Solomon's death.

"…devouring his staff…"29

9- The dog of the Companions of the Cave is ordered to guard.

"…and their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold…"30

10. Four birds cause the certainty of Abraham.

"…Take four of the birds…"31

11. A donkey causes the certainty of Ezra to Resurrection.

"…and look at your ass…32

12- In Hajj, camel, cow and sheep become the symbols of Allah

"And (as for) the fat camels, We have made them for you of the symbols of Allah…"33

13. Animals are a means of theology.

"Do they not look at the camels…"34

14- Animals become the means of man's examination.

"…Allah will surely try you with something of the games which your hands and your spears can reach…"35

15- An animal can be the miracle of Allah.

"…This she-camel of Allah is a sign…"36

16- Animals can be the means of the Wrath of Allah.

"…The locusts and the vermin and the frogs…"37

There are several suras in the Qur'an entitled by the names of animals, such as: Al-Baqarah, Al-'An'am, An-Nahl, An-Naml, 'Ankabut, and Fil.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 15

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ ءَايَةٌ جَنَّتَانِ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ كُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ

15. "Indeed there was a sign for the (people of) Sheba in their abode, two gardens in the right and the left; 'Eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him (that you have) a pure city and a forgiving Lord'."

Saba is the name of the cultivated land of Yemen. This name, Saba, had been the name of a great personality in that region that was chosen for this land.

The biography of this country is instructive.

After the statement of the great bounties that Allah had bestowed on David and Solomon and that these two Divine prophets acted on the duty of thanksgiving, in this holy verse there has been referred to another nation

who were in a state opposite to them and they lived perhaps in the same time with them or a little after them.

They were some people whom Allah granted kinds of blessings, but they paved the way of disbelief and, consequently, Allah negated His blessings from them. Then, they became so scattered and wandered that the story of their life became a gazing-stock for the people of the world. This nation was the people of Saba.

The Glorious Qur'an has stated their instructive biography in five verses and it has pointed to some important details and specialties of their life in these few verses.

At first, it says:

"Indeed there was a sign for the (people of) Sheba in their abode…"

As we will see later, this great Divine sign originated from here that those people by utilizing the particular spatial conditions and situation of the mountains around that region, in addition to the abundant God-given talent of those people, they could control the floods, which had no result save destruction, behind a strong dam, by which they succeeded to build a very habitable country.

What a great sign it is that a means of destruction is changed into the most important means of development.

The historians are divided in the belief that "Saba" is whose name and what it is. The popular idea is that 'Saba" is the name of the father of Arabs of Yemen.

According to a tradition narrated from the Messenger of Islam (S), there was a man by the name of Saba, from whom ten children were born, and from every one of them a tribe from the tribes of Arabs came into being in that land.38

Some believe that "Saba" is the name of the land of Yemen, or a part of it. The apparent meaning of the Qur'an in the story of Solomon and hoopoe in Surah An-Naml also shows that 'Saba" had been the name of a place, where it says:

"…and I have come to you from Sheba with a sure tiding."39

The situation here is that the apparent of the verse under discussion shows that "Saba" had been a group of people who lived in that region, because the plural masculine pronoun /hum/ has returned to them.

But there is not any inconsistency between these two commentaries, because it may be that at first Saba had been the name of a person, then all his offspring and his tribe were entitled by that name, and later this name was also used for their land.

Then the Qur'an refers to the explanation of this Divine sign which was given to the people of Saba. It says:

"…two gardens in the right and the left…"

The story was such that the people of Saba, by building a great dam between the magnificent mountains of that region, could store the water of the numerous floods, which caused only destruction or at least were wasted in the deserts vainly, at the back of that great dam, and by creating some windows in the dam they could take the vast store of water behind it under their own control.

Thus, they succeeded to plant and grow different things in the vast lands over there. Fakhr-i-Razi has cited a problem here, saying that the existence of "two gardens" is not an important thing which can be referred to as 'a sign'.

In our opinion basically this problem is not something worthy to be discussed, because they were not two ordinary simple gardens, but they were a series of gardens joined together at two sides of a great stream which were watered from that lofty dam.

These gardens were so bountiful of fruits and blessed that, as history indicates, if a person would put a large basket on his head and at the season of fruit, he passed under these trees there he could pour so much fruit in it that after a short time the basket would be filled with fruits.

Is it not wonderful that a flood which is the source of destruction becomes the cause of cultivation? Is it not counted as a sign of Allah? In addition, an extraordinary security existed in that land which itself was counted one of the signs of Allah. This fact will later be referred to by the Qur'an.

Then the verse says that Allah told them as follows:

"…Eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him (That you have) a pure city and a forgiving Lord'."

This short sentence has reiterated a collection of material and spiritual bounties in the most beautiful form.

From the point of material bounties, they had a pure and clean land. It was clean from the various pollutions: from thieves and unjust people, from pests and afflictions, from draught and famine, and from insecurity and terror.

It has even been said that their land was clean from harmful insects, too. Their town had a clean air, a pleasant enlivening breeze, and a fertile land with productive trees.

From the point of spiritual bounty, they had the forgiveness of Allah. He would dispense with their short comings and faults and He did not punish them and He did not involve their land in misfortune.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 16

فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُم بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتَيْ أُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَأَثْلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِن سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ

16. "But they turned away (from Allah), so We loosed on them the Flood of 'Arim, and We gave them in exchange for their two gardens, two gardens bearing bitter produce and tamarisk-bushes, and here and there a few lote-trees."

Through this verse, the Qur'an implicitly says that instead of being thankful of Allah, they turned away from Him. They counted the bounties of Allah insignificant. They considered the cultivation and security of their land very simple.

They, forsaking the affluence of bounties, became neglectful of the remembrance of Allah. Their rich people boasted to the poor and imagined them as some bothers for their own status. The explanation of this will be dealt with in commentary of later verses.

It was here that the lash of punishment was whipped on their bodies, as the Qur'an says:

"But they turned away (from Allah), so We loosed on them the Flood of 'Arim…"

The Arabic term /'arim/ is derived from /'aramah/ in the sense of harshness, ill-temper, and strictness, and flood being modified by it, points to its harshness and destructiveness, and the application of the phrase /sayl-al-'arim/ (the Flood of 'Arim) is, so to speak, of the kind of addition of modified to the modifier.

Some commentators have rendered the Arabic term /'arim/ into field-mice which, as a result of making holes in this dam, caused its destruction.

Lisan-ul-'Arab introduces different meanings about the Arabic term /'arim/ including: 'a tiresome flood, barriers, which are built between valleys for stopping water, and also a big field-mouse'.40

Then the Qur'an explains the later situation of this land as follows:

"…and We gave them in exchange for their two gardens, two gardens bearing bitter produce and tamarisk-bushes, and here and there a few lote-trees."

The Qur'anic word /'ukul/ means any kind of victuals.

The Arabic term /xamt/ means a bitter plant.

The Arabic word /'athl/ is in the sense of 'tamarisk-bush'.

And, thus, instead of those masses of green trees there remained only a few wild- deserted trees with a very low value that, perhaps, the most important of them was lote-tree a few of which were found among them.

The statement of these three kinds of tree which remained in that ruined region refers to three different groups of trees a part of which were harmful, some of them were useless, and some of them were of very little benefit, and on the whole they had their turning away, ingratitude and Divine punishment as a sequel, and flood, earthquake, tempest, thunder and lightning are not casual.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 17

ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُم بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَهَلْ نُجَازِي إِلاَّ الْكَفُورَ

17. "This We recompensed them for their disbelief; and do We ever recompense any but the ungrateful?"

The Divine retributions are Allah's way of treatment and a godly law against evil doers, and they are not allocated to the People of Sheba.

As a conclusion, this verse explicitly implies that this was a chastisement that Allah gave them for their own infidelity.

The verse says:

"This We recompensed them for their disbelief…"

But in order that no one considers that this fate belongs to only this group, but its generality unto all those who have similar actions is certain, it says:

"…and do We ever recompense any but the ungrateful?"

Surah As-Saba- Verses 18-19

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَي الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا قُري ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّاماً ءَامِنِينَ

فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَّقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لاَيَاتٍ لِكُلّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

18. "And We made between them and the towns which We had blessed (other) towns apparent and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion: 'Travel therein secure, by night and by day'."

19. "And they said: 'O our Lord! Place longer distances between our journeys'; and they were unjust to themselves, so We made them stories and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments. Verily in this there are signs for every patient, grateful one."

Ingratitude causes the destruction of man's living.

Through these two verses the Qur'an returns again to the story of Sheba and explains their story in some more detailed explanation. It refers to their punishment almost larger than before in such a way that it can be an important and instructive lesson for anyone.

It implies that Allah made their land so cultivated that not only He caused their cities to become full of bounties but also He appointed between them and the cities that Allah had blessed some other manifest cities.

The holy verse says:

"And We made between them and the towns which We had blessed (other) towns apparent…"

In fact, between them and the blessed land there were some towns joined together like a chain, and the distances between these towns were so little that from each of them the other town could be seen; and this is the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase: /quran zahirah/ (towns apparent).

Some of the commentators have rendered this phrase in another way. They say that it refers to the towns which were just manifestly alongside the way and passengers could stay well in them. Or that these towns were upon some high places and they were apparent for the wayfarers.

As for the purpose of 'the blessed towns' that which towns they may be, most commentators have rendered it as the towns of old Syria41, since this very meaning has been mentioned about this land in Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse one, and in Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 81.

But some other commentators say that the purpose of it may be the towns of "San'a" or "Ma'arib" both of which have been located in the region of Yemen, and this commentary is not so improbable; because the distance between Yemen, which is located in the most southern point of Arabia, and Shamat (Syria), which is located in the most northern point, is so much so, and had been covered with some dry and hot deserts, that rendering the verse into it seems very improbable, and, it has not been recorded in history books either.

Some commentators have also believed that the blessed lands may be the land of Mecca, which is improbable, too. This explanation was from the point of cultivation, but since only cultivation is not enough and security is its importance and basic condition, the verse adds:

"…and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion:…"

"…'Travel therein secure, by night and by day'."

Thus, the towns had an appropriate distance, and from the point of the attack of wild and fearsome animals of the desert, or thieves and robbers, they were also in utmost security in a manner that people could travel between them without having any provision or any mount.

They did not need to travel in groups and use some armed persons with them because of fear due to insecurity of the way, or for the fear of the lack of water and food along their way.

That who conveyed them the sentence: "Travel therein", there are two probabilities: one of them is that it was conveyed to them by their prophet, and the other is that the mute tongue of that cultivated land and its secure and safe roads were the means of conveying the sentence to them.

Preceding the word /layali/ before /'ayyam/ in the verse is for the sake of the importance of the existence of security at nights both security from the point of thieves of the way and wild animals of the desert, else providing security during days is easier.

Through the next verse, the Holy Qur'an implies that these ingratitude people in the face of those great bounties of Allah, which had encompassed their whole living thoroughly, like many other nations who lived in pleasure, were involved in pride and negligence.

Affluence of bounties and their scanty of capacity caused them to pave the way of ingratitude and deviated from the path of Truth and they became heedless of the commands of Allah.

Among their unwisely demands was that they asked Allah to appoint long distance between their journeys.

The verse announces:

"And they said: 'O our Lord! Place longer distances between our journeys'…"

Their purpose was that Allah would set a distance between their cultivated towns and there would appear some dry deserts between them, because the rich were not willing that the poor people could travel like them and travel wherever they wished without any provision and any mount.

As if travelling was among their boasts and it was the sign of power and wealth and they desired that this privilege and superiority should be registered for them for ever.

Or comfort and welfare had made them inconvenient, in the same way that Mann and Salwa (two heavenly foods) had made the children of Israel tired and asked Allah for onion, garlic, and lentil.

Some have also guessed that the sentence:

"Place longer distances between our journeys"

may point to this fact they had become so pleasure-seeking that they were not ready to travel for the purpose of breeding livestock or merchandise and agriculture, and they asked Allah that they would always remain at home and the time between their journeys would be increased.

But the first commentary seems best of all.

However, the verse says:

"…and they were unjust to themselves…"

Yes, if they imagined that they had been unjust to others, they were wrong. They had taken a dagger and cut their own chest asunder, and they themselves had to tolerate all the hurts.

What an interesting meaning it is!

Next to this short sentence, which is stated about their painful fate, the Qur'an implies that Allah punished them so seriously and twisted their lives so complex that it became as a matter of talk for others.

The verse says:

"…so We made them stories…"

Yes, from that furnished living and that glorious vast civilization, there remained nothing but some news talked by tongues, and a remembrance in minds, and some lines written on the pages of histories.

The verse continues saying:

"…and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments…"

Their region and towns became so ruined that they had not the ability of living there and, in order to continue their life, they had to go toward different places in different groups.

Like leaves in the season of fall, which are in the current of storms, everyone of them was thrown into a corner, in a manner that their division became a 'proverb' and whenever people wanted to say, for example, a group was severely scattered, they used to say:

"Like the people of Sheba and their bounties, they have scattered."

As some commentators have said, the tribe of 'Qasan' went to Syria, 'Asad went to 'Amman, while the tribe of Khaza'ah went toward Tahamah, and the tribe of 'Anmar went to Yathrib.42 At the end of the verse, it says:

"…Verily in this there are signs for every patient, grateful one."

Why can the patient and the grateful ones take lesson from these events? (Specially that the Arabic words: /sabbar/ (patient) and /šakur/ (thankful) both are in the Arabic amplification form which indicate the statement of repetition and emphasis.)

This is for the sake that they can control their ungovernable desire by means of patience and perseverance, and they stand powerfully against sins, and because of their thanksgiving in the way obeying Allah they are prepared and vigilant.

It is for this reason that they take an example well. But those who follow their desires and are heedless unto the Allah's merits, how can they take an example from these events?

Surah As-Saba- Verses 20-21

وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلاَّ فَرِيقاً مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِم مِن سُلْطَانٍ إِلاَّ لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِالأَخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ وَرَبُّكَ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ

20. "And certainly 'Iblis found true his conjecture concerning them, so they followed him, except a party of the believers."

21. "And he has no authority over them, save that We would know (distinguished) him who believes in the Hereafter, from him who is in doubt concerning it, and your Lord is the Preserver of all things."

Satan cannot make people force to do something, and that they follow 'Iblis is based upon their authority and their own decision.

Belief in the existence of Hereafter is like a barrier against Satan.

These verses are, in fact, a kind of general conclusion from the story of 'the people of Sheba' which was stated in the previous verses, and we realized that how they involved in all those misfortunes and deprivations as the result of submitting to low desires and temptations of Satan.

In the first verse, it says:

"And certainly 'Iblis found true his conjecture concerning them…"

"…so they followed him, except a party of the believers."

Or in other words, the Satan's prophecy that, after denying of prostrating in front of Adam and being banished from the Presence of Allah, 'Iblis said:

"…then, by Your power, I will lead them all astray." "Except Your servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Your grace)."43

Satan said this sentence by conjecture and guess, but finally this conjecture and guess became true, and the weak-faith people who were feeble in their will moved after him group by group.

There were a small group of believers who broke the chains of Satan's temptations and were not deceived by his traps. They came in freely, they lived freely, and they passed away freely. Though they were scanty from the point of number, each of them matched a world from the point of value.

Ali (as) says:

"…they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allah…"44

In relation to the temptations of 'Iblis and those who go into the realm of his influence and those who are outside this realm, through the second verse the Qur'an points to two subjects.

At first it says:

"And he has no authority over them…"

It is we who let him and issue the permission of his arrival into the country of our mind and body.

This is the same thing that the Holy Qur'an in another occurrence from the tongue of Satan says:

"…I did not have any authority over you except that I called you and you responded me…"45

But it is clear that after accepting his invitation from the side of some faithless and sensual persons, Satan will not stay motionless, but he will make the foundations of his domination firm on their selves.

So, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an adds about the aim of Satan's freedom, as follows:

"…save that We would know (distinguished) him who believes in the Hereafter, from him who is in doubt concerning it…"

It is obvious that Allah (s.w.t.) is aware of every thing that happens in this world, from the pre-eternity to the future eternity. Therefore, the

Qur'anic term /lina'lama/ (We would know) does not mean that He does not distinguish the believers from those who are in doubt.

The temptations of Satan must come across so that they can be distinguished, but the purpose of this sentence is the objective accomplishment of the knowledge of Allah, since Allah never punishes persons from His innate knowledge and because of their deeds in potency, but there must be provided a sense of trial, the temptations of Satan and low desires begin so that every body authoritatively and with complete free will brings out what he has in his inside than the objective accomplishment of Allah's knowledge appears, because there will not be any deserving of reward and retribution unless an action is fulfilled practically in outside.

In other words, no one will be rewarded or punished only because of innate goodness or innate evil, unless what is in potency appears in action.

At the end, as a warning to all the servants of Allah, the Qur'an says:

"…and your Lord is the Preserver of all things."

It says such so that the followers of Satan do not imagine that any thing of their deeds or sayings will disappear in this world, or Allah forgets it. No, never. Allah keeps and protects them all for the Day of Justice.

Notes

1. such as Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 24
2. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 15
3. Ibid verse 16
4. Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, P. 390
5. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 3, P. 343; and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 315
6. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
7. The commentary by Abul-Futuh Razi, Vol. 9, P. 192
8. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Following the verse
9. About this matter, we have also hinted out in the commentary of Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 81
10. Mufradat, by Raqib
11. Ibid
12. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 12, Tradition 1
13. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, Part Thanks, Traditions 10 and 12
14. Ibid
15. Ibid, Tradition No. 27
16. Ibid, Tradition No. 20
17. Mustatraf, Vol. 1, P. 236
18. Ibid, P. 237
19. Bihar, Vol. 68, P. 40
20. Jami'-ul-'Ahadith-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 13, P. 545
21. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 182
22. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 67
23. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 40
24. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 31
25. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 28
26. Surah Al-Fil, No. 103, verse 3
27. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 107

28. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 142
29. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 14
30. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 18
31. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 260
32. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 259
33. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 36
34. Surah Al-Qashiyah, No. 88, verse 17
35. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 94
36. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 73
37. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 133
38. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
39. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 22
40. Lisan-ul-'Arab
41. Syria, Palestine and Jordan
42. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, and Tafsir-i-'Abul-Futuh-Razi, following the verse under discussion
43. Surah Sad, No. 38, verses 82-83
44. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 147
45. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 22

Section 3: The Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Apostle For Humanity as a Whole

Surah As-Saba- Verse 22

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلاَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِن شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُم مِن ظَهِيرٍ

22. "Say: 'Call upon those whom you have asserted apart from Allah; they own not the weight of an atom in the heavens nor in the earth, nor for them is any partnership in either (of them), nor for Him is (there) from among them any one to back Him up."

No one other than Allah is the owner of the heavens and the earth, nor is any one His partner and helper.

At the beginning of this holy Surah it was said that a considerable part of the verses of this Surah is about Origin and the End and the true beliefs, so that by joining them together there comes into being a collection of true Qur'anic wisdom.

In this section of verses, in fact, the Holy Qur'an takes the polytheists into trial and by some logical questions it knocks them out. It makes manifest their baseless decayed logic in the field of intercession of idols.

In these verses the Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) for five times and commands him to say to them something, and every time it propounds a new matter in connection with the fate of idols and idolatry, in a manner that at the end anybody feels that there is no empty school worse than the school of idolism, and that it can not be called even a school of thought and a religion.

By the above verse, it implies that they may call those that they consider (as their object of worship) other than Allah, but they should know that these idols never answer their pray nor do they solve any problem of theirs.

It says:

"Say: 'Call upon those whom you have asserted apart from Allah…"

Then, the Qur'an refers to the reasoning of this statement and implies that it is for the sake that these hand-made objects of worship do not own anything.

It continues saying:

"…they own not the weight of an atom in the heavens nor in the earth, nor for them is any partnership in either (of them), nor for Him is (there) from among them any one to back Him up."

If they were able to solve any problem they would have one of these three qualities: they owned something in the heavens and the earth; or, at least, they were partner of Allah in the creation, or, at last, they were assistants of Allah in something of these affairs.

While it is clear that 'necessary being' is only One and the rest are all 'possible being that are dependant to Him, so that if He takes His grace from them, all of them will pave the way of destruction.

It is interesting that when it says:

"…the weight of an atom in the heavens nor in the earth…"

it means that the beings which do not own anything as heavy as the weight of an atom in the endless heavens and in the vast earth, what kind of difficulty can they remove from themselves than from you?

Surah As-Saba- Verse 23

وَلاَ تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِندَهُ اِلاَّ لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ حَتَّي إِذَا فُزِّعَ عَن قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

23. "And intercession will not avail with Him except for him to whom He gives leave; till, when terror is lifted from their hearts, they will say: 'What is it that your Lord said?' They will say: 'The truth'; and He is the Most High, the Great'."

In Hereafter, there is the possibility of intercession, but by the leave of Allah.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an implies that there are some intercessors in the Court of Allah who can intercede only by His leave and command, since; the verse says:

"And intercession will not avail with Him except for him to whom He gives leave…"

Therefore, the pretext of the idolaters for worshipping their idols that they said:

"…these are our intercessors with Allah'…"1

will be ceased by this statement, because Allah has never given any leave to them for any intercession.

That whether the sentence:

"…except for him to whom He gives leave…"

refers to the intercessors or to the interceded ones, commentators have offered two probabilities; but in relation to the fact that in this verse the words are about idols and those people consider the idols as their intercessors, it is appropriate that it refers to 'intercessors'.

Is the purpose of the word 'intercession' mentioned here the intercession in the world or in the Hereafter? Both of them are probable, but the subsequent sentence shows that it is meant the intercession in the Hereafter.

So, after this sentence, it implicitly says that in that Day there will be such an anxiety and horror upon the hearts that both the intercessor and the one who is interceded will be full of anxiety, and they expect to see to whom Allah gives permission to intercede, and for whom.

This state of anxiety will continue until when it will be removed from the hearts and the command from the side of Allah will be issued.

The verse says:

"…till, when terror is lifted from their hearts…"

However, on that Day there is a surprising tumult. Those who expect to be interceded look worriedly at the intercessor and by non-verbal language or by their own tongues, they eagerly ask them for intercession.

But the intercessors also have waited for the command of Allah to see how and about whom He gives permission for intercession. This common and general anxiety will continue until when the command of intercession about those who are eligible for it will be issued from the side of Allah, the Wise.

It is in this circumstance that the both groups turn their faces to each other and ask each other (or the guilty ask the intercessors) as follows:

"…they will say: 'What is it that your Lord said?'…"

"…They will say: 'The truth'…"

And 'the truth' is not anything save the permission of intercession about those who had not entirely ceased their relation with Allah, not the polluted ones who had broken all the links and means of communication, and who had wholly become alien with Allah, the Prophet (S) and his friends.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…and He is the Most High, the Great'."

This sentence is the continuation of the statement of the intercessors and its complement. Indeed, they say that since Allah is the Most High and the Great, whatever command He issues is the exact truth, and any truth adapts His command.

Whatever was said in the above is the nearest commentary that is consistent to the sentences of the verse.

In this regard, commentators have also cited some other commentaries, and it is wonderful that in some of them the relation and dependence of the beginning and the end of the verse, and its before and after, have never been considered at all.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 24

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّآ أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَي هُدًي أَوْ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُبِينٍ

24. "Say: 'Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?' Say: 'Allah'. And verily we or you are upon right guidance, or in manifest error."

In training and teaching we should make the conscience of the addressees awaken by the use of the method of asking questions and cause their thought to work. That is why, for nullifying the beliefs of polytheists, next to the question of 'creation' mentioned in the previous verses, the subject of the act of the giver of sustenance is questioned.

This reasoning is also in the form of 'question and answer' in order to awaken their sleeping conscience by this way, and that by the answer which emerges from their inside they find out their mistake.

The Qur'an says:

"Say: 'Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?'…"

It is evident that none of them could say that the stone and wooden idols could bring rain down from the sky, grow plants from the earth and give them the earthly and heavenly sources to use.

It is interesting that without waiting for any answer, the Qur'an immediately adds:

"…Say: 'Allah'…"

Tell them it is Allah Who is the Origin of all these bounties. That is, the matter is so clear and evident that it does not need the opposite party to answer. But the questioner and hearer both say one thing, because even the polytheists knew Allah as the Creator and Giver of sustenance and, for the idols, they considered only the rank of intercession.

This point is also noteworthy that Allah's sustenance, which comes down from heaven for human beings, is not limited to rain. The light and heat of the sun, the air which exists in the atmosphere of the earth, are also more important than the life- giving drops of rain.

Also, the blessings of the earth are not allocated to plants. kinds of water sources in the ground, various mains some of which had been discovered at that time and some others of them were discovered by the pass of time, all are under this title.

At last, the verse refers to a matter which itself can form the foundation of a proof, a true proof accompanied with the utmost justice and reverence, in a shape that opposite party may come down from the platform of pride and obstinacy and begin to think.

It says:

"…And verily we or you are upon right guidance, or in manifest error."

This statement points to this matter that there is clear contrast in our belief and yours, therefore it is impossible that both of them are right, because never two opposite things gather with together, therefore one group is upon guidance and the second group is in error.

Now contemplate which group is on guidance and which is on misguidance. You can see the signs in both groups and observe which group contains the signs of guidance and which group has the signs of misguidance.

And this is one of the best methods of discussion and dispute which makes the opposite party contemplate. Some consider it as a kind of precautionary concealment, which is the utmost mistake.

It is interesting that in Arabic text of the verse the word 'guidance' has been mentioned with the Arabic word /'ala/ (upon) and the word 'error' is mentioned with the Arabic word: /fi/ (in), which points to this fact that 'the guided ones' seem to be riding on a calm horse, or are located on a high place and dominate over all things, while the misguided ones are in deep error and in the darkness of their ignorance.

This is also noteworthy that the holy verse at first mentions 'guidance' and the word 'error' is cited after it, because at the beginning of the sentence at first it says: 'We' and after that it says: 'you' in order to have a delicate and colourless hint to the guidance of the first group and the lack of guidance of the second group.

Some of the commentators of the Qur'an believe that the modifier /mubin/ (manifest) refers to /dalal/ (error), because error consists of different kinds and the error of polytheism is the most manifest of all.

But there is also this probability that this modifier is used for both 'guidance' and 'error', because in these circumstances, inside the words of the eloquent, modifier is not repeated. Thus, both 'guidance' and 'error' are qualified by 'manifest', as in other verses of the Qur'an this qualification is seen for both of them.2

Surah As-Saba- Verses 25-26

قُل لاَ تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّآ أَجْرَمْنَا وَلاَ نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ

25. "Say: 'You will not be questioned as to what we are guilty of, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do'."

26. "Say: 'Our Lord will gather us together, then will He judge between us (and you) with the truth, and He is the greatest Judge, the All-knowing'."

The divine prophets' urge on the guidance of people is mostly because of their sympathy, not for the sake that the recompense of people's sins might be upon the prophets, or vice versa.

With the same just tone that the previous verse brought down the enemy from the platform of pride and obstinacy, this verse continues and says:

"Say: 'You will not be questioned as to what we are guilty of, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do'."

It is surprising that here the Prophet (S) is ordered to use the word 'guilty' concerning him, and concerning the opponent, he is commanded to use the phrase:

"What you do".

Thus, he is to make this fact clear that everybody must be responsible of his own deeds, since the sequels of the deeds of every person, beautiful or ugly, shall reach the same person himself.

By the way, the verse also contains a smooth hint to this point that if we urge to guide you, it is not for the sake that your sin will be written upon us or your polytheism has any harm for us. But we urge on this matter from the view of sympathy, truth-seeking and legitimacy.

In the second holy verse the reality is stated that how the situation of everybody will be dealt with, right and wrong will be separated from each other, and, according to their responsibilities, everyone will be given reward or retribution.

It says:

"Say: 'Our Lord will gather us together, then will He judge between us (and you) with the truth…"

He will do this and separate us from each other so that the guided ones should be recognized from the misguided ones, and every one of them receives the fruit of his own deeds.

If you see that today all people are mixed and everybody claims that he is right and is the one who will prosper, this situation will not last for ever, and the day of the separation of the groups will come.

The Lordship of Allah requires that finally there will come a Day when correct will be separated from incorrect, pure from impure and right from wrong and each of them will be set on their own place.

Now you may think what will you do on that Day? And in which group will you be? And have you made ready an answer for the questions of your Lord on that Day?

In order to make clear that this scene shall certainly occur, at the end the verse it adds:

"…and He is the greatest Judge, the All-knowing'."

One of these two names, which are among the Most Beautiful Names of Allah, refers to His Power upon separating the men's rows, and the next

refers to His Infinite Knowledge, because separating the rows of right and wrong from each other is impossible without these two.

The Arabic term /fath/, as Raqib has said in Mufradat, originally means: 'removing complexity and difficulty', which is of two kinds: sometimes it is seen by the eye, like unlocking a lock; and sometimes it is understood by contemplation, like: complexity of grief, sorrows, and opening the secrets of science, and also judging between two persons and solving the problem of their conflict.

It is worthy to be noted that in some Islamic narrations the phrase 'Ya Fattah' has been emphasized on for solving the difficulties, since this great Name of Allah, which has been mentioned in the form of /fattah/, which is the Arabic amplification form of /fath/, refers to the Power of Allah upon opening any difficulty and putting an end to any grief and sorrow, and providing the means of any conquest and victory.

In fact, nobody is "fattah" (The Opener) except Him and the key of all closed doors is with Him, His Power.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 27

قُلْ أَرُونِيَ الَّذِينَ أَلْحَقْتُم بِهِ شُرَكَآءَ كَلاَّ بَلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

27. "Say: 'Show me those you have joined to Him as associates! By no means (can you do it). Nay! He is Allah, the Mighty, the Wise'."

Again in this holy verse the Qur'an returns to the subject of Monotheism with which it had begun the words and by this subject it concludes the discussion.

It says:

"Say: 'Show me those you have joined to Him as associates! By no means (can you do it)…"

What worth and eligibility do they have? If your objective meaning is this lifeless and silent mass of stone and wood, what a great misfortune and shame that you take the same manufacture that you yourselves have chosen from the lowest beings of the world of inanimate objects and considered as the great Lord!

If you imagine these things as the symbol of souls and angels, it is also a calamity and aberration, because they are His creatures, too, and are ready to obey Him.

Therefore, in the continuation of the verse, the Holy Qur'an with a single word nullifies their whole conjectures and says:

"…Nay!…"

These material things are never worthy of being the object of worship, and in these conjectures of yours there is not found anything of reality. Sufficient it is! You should become vigilant. How long do you continue this wrong way?

In fact, the word 'Nay' is a small word which has encompassed all these meanings. Then, at the end of the verse, for emphasis and strengthening this statement, it says:

"…He is Allah, the Mighty, the Wise'."

His Honour and His Might requires that none finds any way into the realm of His Lordship, and His Wisdom also requires that He uses this Might in its correct place.

Yes, having these attributes is the sign of His being necessary existence, and the necessary existence of the world of existence is infinite and can never be more than One and has no associate and resemblance because every plurality makes him limited and possible, but the infinite being is always One.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 28

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ اِلاَّ كَآفَّةً لّـِلنَّاسِ بَشِيراً وَنَذِيراً وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

28. "And We have not sent you but unto the whole of mankind, a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner, but most of the people do not know (it)."

The prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S) is for the whole world.

The most important function of the Divine prophets in guiding people is warning and glad tiding.

This holy verse points to the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S), and the verses after this verse discuss about Resurrection, and regarding to the fact that the words in the previous verses were also about Unity, they form a complete collection of religious beliefs which are fitting to the Meccan suras, such as Surah Saba.

At first, it points to the vastness of the invitation of the Prophet (S) and the generality of his prophecy over all human beings.

It says:

"And We have not sent you but unto the whole of mankind, a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner, but most of the people do not know (it)."

The Arabic term /kaffah/ is in the sense of the palm of the hand; and since man takes things with his hands, or makes them aloof from himself, this term has sometimes been used in the sense of 'to gather' and sometimes in the sense of 'to repel'.

The commentators have also suggested the both meanings probable in the verse.

The first is that it may be used in the sense of 'to gather', and in this case the concept of the verse is the same thing which was mentioned in the above; saying:

"And We have not sent you but unto the whole of mankind…",

which points to the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) as a universal one.

The numerous authentic narrations recorded upon the commentary of this verse by the way of both Shi'ites and Sunnites all strengthen this very interpretation, too.

Therefore, the content of the verse is like that of Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse one which says:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (the distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a Warner to the worlds."

And also like Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 19 which says:

"…and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you thereby…"

In the tradition that some of the commentators have mentioned in relation with the above verse, the generality of the invitation of the Prophet (S) is understood as one of his great honours, where he (S) says:

"Allah bestowed on me five things, and I do not say it as a boast (but I say as the gratitude of the bounty). I was appointed to all men, white and black, and the earth was appointed for me pure and purifier and (everywhere of it being) as a mosque.

The booties of war are lawful for me while they were not lawful for anyone before me. I have been aided (by fear and horror in the hearts of the enemies) so that it paves the way of one month journey in front of me; and I was given (the rank of) intercession then I have stored it for my Ummah in Hereafter."3

Surah As-Saba- Verses 29-30

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُل لَّكُم مِّيعَادُ يَوْمٍ لاَ تَسْتَأْخِرُونَ عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَلاَ تَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

29. "And they say: 'When will this promise be (fulfilled) if you are truthful'?"

30. "Say: 'You have the appointment of a day from which you cannot hold back any while, nor can you bring it on'."

Hereafter is an important Day and its time of occurrence is not changeable.

In view of the fact that in the former verses this meaning was pointed out that Allah will gather all people in Hereafter and will judge between them, in this verse there has been suggested a question from the side of some of the deniers of Resurrection in the following form:

"And they say: 'When will this promise be (fulfilled) if you are truthful'?"

The deniers of Resurrection used to ask this question very frequently from the Prophet of Islam (S) or from other prophets. It was sometimes for perceiving the matter, and perhaps most often for mockery, implying that when will this resurrection that you repeatedly emphasize on come if you are truthful?

This matter points to this fact that a truthful person should know all the details of the matter he informs of. He must be aware of its qualifications, its time, and its place. In answer to them the Prophet (S) was commanded to say its time is in the Knowledge of Allah.

And also we recite in many verses of the Qur'an that no one knows the time of Hereafter but Allah, and this is of the wisdom of Allah in order that human beings always spend time in the state of 'being prepared' and ready.

Moreover, the luck of knowledge of details is usually not a hinder for the faith in universals. For example, from the sound of the bell of the house you are acknowledged that someone is at the door, though you do not know any detail about that person whether the one is a male or a female, how old he is and how much he knows.

The lack of your knowledge unto these things does not damage your knowledge and faith that a person rang the bell of the house. Yes, we have knowledge about the Hereafter, though we do not know its time.

The Qur'an always restrains to give a clear answer to this question and to define the time of the occurrence of Hereafter, and it emphasizes that this is one of the things the knowledge of which is with Allah and none but He is aware of it.

So, in the next verse, this very meaning is reiterated in a different sentence.

It says:

"Say: 'You have the appointment of a day from which you cannot hold back any while, nor can you bring it on'."

This concealment of the date of the occurrence of the Hereafter, even unto the Prophet of Islam (S), as it was also pointed out before, is for the sake that Allah desires people to have a kind of freedom of action accompanied with the constant state of 'being ready', since if the date of Hereafter were defined, and its time was far, everybody would live in ignorance, pride and unawareness, and when its time was near, they would lose the freedom of action and their deeds would have the emergency state, and in both cases the man's training aims would remain barren (fruitless).

It is for this reason that the date of the occurrence of Hereafter is concealed to all. It is in the same manner the night of Qadr, the night which has the virtue of one thousand months, or the date of the reappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as).

The content of Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 15 which says:

"Verily the Hour (of doom) is coming, (but) I will to keep it hidden so that every soul may be rewarded for its endeavour."

is a tender hint to this very meaning.

In the meanwhile that they considered that the Prophet (S), who informed of the Hereafter should know the exact date of it, was their ultimate mistake, and it was the reason of the lack of their knowledge from the duty of the prophecy.

He was commanded only to convey the Message and to give warning and glad tidings, but the question of Hereafter relates to Allah, and it is He Who is aware of all its details, and He has given to His Prophet (S) that part of the training issues that He had decided to be necessary for him.

Here, there arises a question and it is that the holy Qur'an, threatening the opponents about the appointed time of Hereafter, says:

"…you cannot hold back any while…",

but why does it also say:

"…nor can you bring it on"?

What effect does it have in the goal of the Qur'an?

In answer, two points must be noted to. The first is that mentioning these two with together points to the decisiveness and exactness of the date of something. Just in the same way that we say so and so matter, sooner or later, has a decisive appointed time.

The second is that a group of obstinate pagans always put the Prophet (S) in pressure that why the Hereafter did not come, and in other words, they

made haste for it, whether in mockery or other than it. The Qur’an tells them not to haste; its date is the same that Allah has appointed.

Notes

1. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 18

2. The following verses can be referred to: Surah An-Naml, verse 1; Surah An-Nur, verse 12; Surah Hud, verse 6; Surah Al-Qasas, verse 2; Surah An-Naml, verse 79

3. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, under the verse; and in Durr-ul-Manthur it has been narrated from Ibn-i-‘Abbas.

Section 4: The Disbelievers and Their Leaders

Surah As-Saba- Verse 31

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَن نُّؤْمِنَ بِهَذَا الْقُرْءَانِ وَلاَ بِالَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلَوْ تَرَي إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ مَوْقُوفُونَ
عِندَ رَبِّـهِمْ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَي بَعْضٍ الْقَوْلَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لَوْلاَ أَنتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ

31. "And those who disbelieve say: 'Never will we believe in this Qur'an, nor in that which is before it, and could you see when the unjust shall be made to stand before their Lord, bandying words one with another! Those who were despised as weak will say unto those who had prided: 'Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been believers'."

Pagans, in fact, believe in none of the heavenly Books, and because of their obstinacy, they are not ready to accept faith and believe.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an says:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'Never will we believe in this Qur'an, nor in that which is before it…"

The Arabic word /lan/ is used for an everlasting negation. Thus, they intend to say that if you preach for ever they will not believe, and this is evidence upon their obstinacy.

They had made their decision not to believe until future eternity, while if a truth-seeking person, for any reason, is not convinced can not deny the future probable reasons without hearing them and say that he absolutely refuses other reasons, too.

In relation to the objective meaning of the Qur'an sentence: /'allaðina kafaru/ (those who disbelieve), some of the Islamic commentators have rendered it into pagans, some into the Jews and 'the People of Book', but the context of the later verses, which speaks about paganism, is an evidence that the purpose of it is 'pagans'.

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /'allaði bayna yadayh/ (that which is before it) is the heavenly Books which had been sent down before Qur'an.

This meaning has been applied in many verses of the Qur'an with the same sense specially after mentioning the word Qur'an; and that some commentators have said that its purpose is probably 'Resurrection', or is 'the content of the Qur'an' does not seem so probable.

However, the denial of faith in the Books of the former prophets perhaps has been for the purpose that the Qur'an prophesies of this matter that the symptoms of the Messenger of Islam and the Qur'an have clearly been mentioned in the Torah and the Bible, so in ordered to negate the prophecy of the Prophet of Islam (S), they negate other heavenly Books, too, and say that they neither believe in this heavenly Book, the Qur'an, nor in the Books before it.

Then the Qur'an refers to their situation in the Hereafter and, addressing the Prophet (S), it says:

"…and could you see when the unjust shall be made to stand before their Lord, bandying words one with another!…"

Again, it is understood from the above holy verse that one of the most important extensions of 'injustice' is that very 'polytheism' and 'disbelief'.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'inda rabbihim/ (before their Lord) refers to this matter that they will attend before the One Who has been their owner and their Lord; and what a shame is higher than this that a person is summoned to the One that he has never believed in Him and in Whose commandments, while his whole self has been built and covered with His bounties.

At this time, the 'oppressed', the same unaware persons who blindly followed some others, will say to the 'oppressors', viz., the same ones who used to pave the way of pride and domination over others, and giving them the line of satanic thought, as such: if you had not been, and if your satanic beguiling temptations had not existed, we would have been in the row of the believers.

The verse says:

"…Those who were despised as weak will say unto those who had prided: 'Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been believers'."

By this manner, they want to put all their sins on the shoulder of these cruel 'oppressors', though they were not ready to have such a decisive treatment with them in the world, because in that life weakness and vileness had dominated them and they had lost their own freedom and frankness.

But now that those false concepts, which separated the oppressors from them, have gone and the fruit of the deeds of everyone is made manifest, they stand in front of them and speak frankly, disputing with them.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 32

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا أَنَحْنُ صَدَدْنَاكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُم بَلْ كُنتُم مُّجْرِمِينَ

32. "Those who had prided shall say unto those who were despised as weak: 'Did we turn you away from the guidance after it had come to you? Nay! You (yourselves) were guilty'."

In this holy verse the Qur'an clearly announces that the oppressors in answer to the oppressed ones say that: they did not hinder them from the way of guidance after that guidance came to them and they were preached enough and the prophets said what they should say, and the oppressors were not responsible of it, but the oppressed themselves were sinful.

They will say:

"You, with your free will, submitted to our baseless words and came to infidelity and theism, while you forgot the logical words of the prophets."

The verse says:

"Those who had prided shall say unto those who were despised as weak: 'Did we turn you away from the guidance after it had come to you? Nay! You (yourselves) were guilty'."

It is true that, by their evil temptations, the oppressors had committed a great sin, but this statement of theirs is also true that these followers should not follow them blindly, so, from this point of view, their sins are upon their own shoulders.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 33

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَنَآ أَن نَّكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهُ أَندَاداً وَأَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا الأَغْلاَلَ فِي أَعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلاَّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُون

33. "And those who were despised as weak shall say unto those who had prided: 'Nay! It was a plot (of yours) by day and by night when you bade us that we should disbelieve in Allah and set up equals with Him. And they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty; and We will put shackles on the necks of those who disbelieved. Are they requited aught save what they used to do?"

The mental cultural deviation of the people in a society is the consequence of the constant effort of the arrogant enemies.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an says:

"And those who were despised as weak shall say unto those who had prided: 'Nay! It was a plot (of yours) by day and by night when you bade us that we should disbelieve in Allah and set up equals with Him…"

Yes, it was you who did not desist your evil propagation and did not lose any opportunity during day and night to gain your wrong aims.

It is true that we were free in accepting you, and thus we are sinful, but you, as a factor of corruption, are responsible and guilty, too. Or, in other words, it was you who set the first base with your polluted hands, in particular that you always talked to us from the position of power.

(The application of the Qur'anic sentence /ta'murunana/ (you bade us) is the evidence for this matter.)

It is evident that the proud cannot have any answer to this statement and do not deny their participation in this great crime.

Therefore, both groups will be regretful of their deeds: the proud will be regretful for making others astray, and the oppressed ones for their unconditionally accepting these evil temptations.

The verse continues saying:

"…And they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty; and We will put shackles on the necks of those who disbelieved…"

Some commentators have said that this regret is probably because of the intensity of the terror they get from seeing the Divine punishment and the chains and shackles on their necks.

This will cause their tongue not to be able to speak though the same ones, in other halts of the Hereafter will cry:

"…'Oh woe to us! Verily we were unjust'."1

Some philologists have meant the Arabic phrase /'asarru/ in this verse in the sense of 'declare', in spite of those who have meant it 'hide', and said that this term has been used with two opposite meanings in the Arabic language, and its like is not few, but regarding to the usages of this term in the Qur'an, and other than it, this meaning is not probable, because the Arabic word /sirr/ usually comes as opposite to /'alan/, and Raqib has also stipulated that this meaning is weak. Yet, some of the lexicologists have referred to both of them.

However, this is the consequence of their own deeds that they have provided from before.

The verse says:

"…Are they requited aught save what they used to do?"

Yes, these are the very deeds and behaviour of pagans and evil-doers that will be shown in the form of shackles of captivity put on their necks, hands and feet. In this world, too, they were captives of their low desires, money, power, and position, and, in Hereafter when the deeds will incarnate, the same captivities will appear in another form.

The above mentioned holy verse once more makes clear the incarnation of deeds, which has repeatedly been pointed out, because it implicitly says that their recompense is, in fact, the incarnation of their own deeds.

And what a meaning is more lively and clearer than this for incarnation of deeds?

The application of the Qur'anic sentence /'allaðina kafaru/ (those who disbelieved) is an evidence that both those who tempted others proudly will be involved in this fact, and those oppressed who were tempted, and all pagans. And, basically, mentioning this quality is a hint to this fact that the cause of their punishment is their paganism.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 34-35

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِن نَذِيرٍ إِلاَّ قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَآ إِنَّا بِمَآ أُرْسِلْتُم بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالاً وَأَوْلاَداً وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

34. "And We sent no Warner into any city except the opulent ones of it said: 'Verily we are disbelievers in what you are sent with'."

35. "They also said: 'We are more (than you) in wealth and children and we shall not be punished'."

Opposition with the holy Prophet of Islam (S) is not a new thing, while former people used to oppose other Divine prophets, too.

Since the words in previous verses were about the proud people's temptation (seduction), the verses under discussion introduce a part of this seduction and, in the meanwhile it also consoles the holy Prophet of Islam (S) indicating that if a group of people oppose you, you may not surprise, because the opposition of the rich tyrants against the true prophets has been a constant style of theirs.

Allah says:

"And We sent no Warner into any city except the opulent ones of it said: 'Verily we are disbelievers in what you are sent with'."

The Qur'anic word /naðir/ means: 'Warner'. It refers to the Divine prophets who warned people by Allah's punishment against their deviations, cruelties, sins, and corruptions.

Here the Arabic phrase /mutrafuha/ is the plural form of /mutraf/ derived from /taraf/ in the sense of 'prosperity', and /mutraf/ is used in the sense of 'prosperity'.

The Arabic word /mutraf/ is applied for the one whose affluence of bounty and welfare of life has made him proud, and neglectful, and has caused him to be disobedient.2

Yes, those who were in the first row of the opponents of the Divine prophets (as) were usually from this group of disobedient neglectful people of prosperity.

Since, on one side, they saw the teachings of the prophets as a hinder for their pleasures and lusts, and on the other side, they were defenders of the deprive that by usurpation of whose rights had reached to this dazzling life, and on the third side, in order to guard their wealth and properly, they always used the power of government, and in all these instances they found the Divine prophets in their opposite situation, then they immediately decided to stand against them.

It is wonderful that they did not emphasize on a particular divine ordinance or instruction, but they generally said:

"…'Verily we are disbelievers in what you are sent with'…"

They insisted not to be with them even for a step, which itself is the best proof for their obstinacy and enmity against the truth.

This is an important matter which the Qur'an has disclosed through different verses: that the deprived were often the first group of people who accepted the invitation of the Divine prophets, and the proud people, who were in prosperity, were also the first group of people who began opposition.

Certainly the deniers of the Divine prophets' call were not allocated to this group; the factors of mischief and claimers of polytheism and superstitions were those who ceaselessly tried to forcefully drug others towards themselves.

This very meaning is also mentioned in Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 23; Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 116; and also in Surah Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 33.

This group oppose not only against the Divine prophets, but also against any step of improvement that may be taken from the side of any learned reformer and any studious scholar. In order to confuse the programs of the reformers, they often conspire and commit any crime they can.

Next verse refers to their futile logic to which they betake all times to prove their superiority and to beguile common people.

It announces:

"They also said: 'We are more (than you) in wealth and children…"

They say that Allah has affection to them because He has given them both abundant wealth and plenty of human power, and this is the evidence for His grace upon them and the sign for their rank and near position to Him, so He will not punish them, the near- stationed ones!

The verse continues saying:

"…and we shall not be punished'."

Does Allah punish His beloved? If we were banished from His presence, why would He give us so many bounties? In short, our world being bountiful itself is a clear reason for the good of our Hereafter.

Some of the commentators believe that the Qur'anic sentence: /wa ma nahnu bi mu'aððabin/ (we shall not be punished) is probably a reason that they denied the Hereafter and punishment entirely, while the later verses show that this sentence does not imply this meaning but their purpose has been in this that, for the reason of their wealth, they are nigh to Allah.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 36

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّـي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَـكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

36. "Say: 'Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases and straitens for whom He pleases, but most of the people do not know'."

Giving or taking sustenance is inside the rank of Lordship and giving or taking the blessings is not as a sign of affection or wrath of Allah.

(It is possible that He takes it from a believer and gives it to a disbeliever.)

(Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance…)

This holy verse answers to their hollow demagogical logic in the best way and knocks it out.

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an says:

"Say: 'Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases and straitens for whom He pleases…"

All of these are according to public interests which are for the trial of people and are necessary for the system of their living, and they do not depend on the man's rank and position with Allah.

Therefore, we should never count the amplification of sustenance as a reason for happiness, and its being straitened as a reason for wretchedness.

The verse continues saying:

"…but most of the people do not know'."

Of course, the unaware majority of people are such, else this matter is clear for the aware ones.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 14
2. Lisan-ul-'Arab, Vol. 9, p. 17

Section 5: Wealth and Children Shall Be of No Avail

Surah As-Saba- Verse 37

وَمَآ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلآ أَوْلاَدُكُم بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا زُلْفَي اِلاَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَأُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَآءُ الضِّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ ءَامِنُونَ

37. "And neither your wealth nor your children are that which bring you nigh unto us, except for him who believes, and does righteousness, these are (the ones) for whom is a double recompense for what they did, and they in the exalted places shall be secure."

Allah (s.w.t.) has appointed faith, righteous deed, charity, and sincerity as means for His nearness, while some unaware people think of wealth, children and race as the factors of nearness to Allah and having prosperity.

So, in this verse, the Qur'an pursues this very meaning more explicitly, and says:

"And neither your wealth nor your children are that which bring you nigh unto us…"

This is a great mistake that a group of people imagine that those who are in deprivation from the point of finance are disfavoured and reprobate in the sight of Allah, and those who are apparently in welfare with affluence of favours are beloved and accepted by Him.

There are many deprived persons who are tried by this means and reach the most superior ranks; and there are many persons who enjoy the comforts of life but whose wealth and properties are some pests for them and work as the cause of their punishment.

Does not the Holy Qur'an explicitly say in Surah Taqabun, No. 64, verse 15:

"Verily your properties and your children may be but a trial; where as Allah, with Him is the highest Reward"?

This statement does not mean that man may stop the necessary effort and endeavour in life, but the purpose is that having financial possibilities and abundant human powers are never counted as the criterion of spiritual values of man with Allah.

Then the Qur'an refers to the standard of the values of individuals and that which causes the nearness to Allah, and (as a separate exception) says:

"…except for him who believes, and does righteousness, these are (the ones) for whom is a double recompense for what they did, and they in the exalted places shall be secure."

Thus, all these criterions of these two cases return to

"Faith and righteous deed"

from any one, in any time, and wherever they may be, and the difference of persons in the presence of Allah depends on the difference of the degrees of their Faith and righteous deeds, and there is nothing else save this.

Even having much knowledge and relating to some great persons, even to prophets, if they are not accompanied with these two criterions do not lonely increase anything to the value of man.

It is here that the holy Qur'an, with its unique explicitness, nullifies all deviated and superstitious imaginations in the field of the factors of getting

nearness to Allah and the man's value of existence, and summarizes the noble standard in two things which all human beings can tolerate and obtain, so that neither anyone's material possibilities nor his deprivation, are effective in them.

Yes, if wealth and children also pave this way, they will take this divine colour and will assume the colour of faith and righteous deed, and they will be the cause of getting nearness to Allah.

But the properties and children that make man aloof from Allah, and like an idol will be worshipped which cause mischief and corruption, they are the fuels of Hell, and, as the Qur'an says, they are the man's enemy and the enemy of his happiness.

It says:

"O' you who have Faith! Verily, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves so beware of them…"1

However, as it was also said before, the Arabic term /di'f/ singly does not mean 'two fold', but it means "many folds", and it has been used with the same sense in the verse under discussion, because we know that the reward of each good deed is at least ten folds with Allah.

The holy Qur'an says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed) he shall have ten times its like…",2

and sometimes it is much more than that.

The Arabic word /qurufat/ is the plural form of /qurfah/ in the sense of some rooms which are in the upstairs that have both some lighter and better weather, and the pests are far from them. That is why this meaning has been applied for the best abodes of Paradise.

This word is originally derived from /qarf/ in the sense of lifting and taking something.

The application of the Qur'anic term /'aminun/ (those who are in security), concerning the people of Paradise, is a very comprehensive meaning which reflects the peace of their both body and spirit from any point of view, because they have neither the fear of an annihilation, destruction, and death, nor the fear of the enemy's attack, nor the fear of sickness, pest, grief and even the fear of fear; and there is no bounty higher than this that one passes time in a complete security; in the same way that there is no affliction worse than insecurity in different aspects of life.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 38-39

وَالَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِ نَ أُوْ َلِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّـي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِن شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

38. "And those who strive against Our signs to void them, they shall be arraigned into the chastisement."

39. "Say: 'Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens (it) for him and whatever thing you spend He replaces it; and He is the Best Sustainers'."

In order to wipe out the Truth, enemy always uses his best effort. So, in this verse, the Qur'an implies that those who try to nullify Allah's signs not

only they themselves do not have Faith, but also do not let others pave the path of Truth, while they imagine that they can escape from the grips of the Power of Allah, while they will be brought into the painful chastisement on the Hereafter Day.

Since there is no word about future in the sentence:

"They shall be arraigned into the chastisement",

it may point to this sense that in this world they are also involved in chastisement just now. What chastisement is worse than this prison which he has built for him by his wealth and children?

The verse says:

"And those who strive against Our signs to void them, they shall be arraigned into the chastisement."

There is also this probability that the above meaning is for the sake that this Divine promise is so certain that as if they are in it just now in the same way that it has been mentioned in the previous holy verse:

"…and they in the exalted places shall be secure."

As some philologists have said, the application of the Qur'anic term /mu'ajizin/ means that they imagine that they can flee from the realm of Allah's Power and His punishment, while this is a mere baseless delusion.

Through the next verse, Qur'an says:

"Say: 'Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens (it) for him…"

Then it continues saying:

"…and whatever thing you spend He replaces it; and He is the Best Sustainers'."

The content of the verse is an emphasis on the previous matter, but from two points of view it is new.

The first is that the previous verse the concept of which was the same as this one was mostly about wealth, children, and disbelievers, while the application of the Arabic word /'ibad/ (servants) in the verse under discussion shows that it refers to the believers.

That is, concerning the believers, He sometimes amplifies the sustenance - where it is good for the believer - and He sometimes straitens and limits the sustenance in the place where it requires. However, the vastness and narrowness of sustenance can cot be the evidence for anything.

The second matter is that the previous holy verse said about the vastness and narrowness of sustenance and living concerning two different groups of men, while the verse under discussion may be a hint to two different states of one person whose sustenance is vast and sometimes is straitened and limited.

Moreover, what is mentioned at the beginning of this verse is, in fact, a preliminary for that which is at the end of the verse, i.e. encouraging to spending in the cause of Allah.

The Qur'anic sentence /fahuwa yuxlifuhu/ (He replaces it) is an interesting meaning which shows that whatever is spent in the cause of Allah is, in fact, a rich profitable bargain, because Allah undertakes its recompense; and we know that when a gracious one undertakes the

recompense of something he does not observe equality, but he pays it back several folds, and sometimes hundred folds.

The promise of Allah, of course, is not limited to Hereafter and next life, which is certain in its turn, but in this world, too, He gives kinds of favours abundantly instead of those godly payments.

The Qur'anic sentence

"…and He is the Best sustainers"

has a vast meaning which can be considered from different dimensions.

He is the Best of all sustainers because He knows what to bestow and how much of provision He may endow that it would not be the cause of mischief and corruption, and He knows everything.

Whatever He wills He can grant to whomever He wishes, because He is powerful to do everything.

Allah does not demand any recompense for what He bestows, because He is self-sufficient in Essence.

Allah grants the things even without asking them from Him, because He is aware of all things, and He is Wise.

And none, but He, is the giver of sustenance, since whatever a person has is from Him, and whatever a person gives to another one the person is the means of transferring the sustenance, not the giver of sustenance.

This point is also noteworthy that for fleeting properties He gives some lasting bounties, and He gives 'abundant' recompense for a 'scanty' deed.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 40-41

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ أَهَؤُلآءِ إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِن دُونِهِم بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُم بِهِم مُّؤْمِنُونَ

40. "And on the Day when He will muster them all together then He will say to the angels: 'Did these worship you?'"

41. "They (the angels) will say: 'Glory be to You. You are our Guardian, not they, nay rather, they were worshipping the jinn, (while) most of them were believers in them'."

In Hereafter, besides reprimanding the polytheists, Allah asks from the objects of worship. He asks whether they called them to polytheism, so that it proves that the objects of worship themselves condemn this action. So, in this verse, the Qur'an implies that in Hereafter He musters all, including the worshippers and the objects of worship.

The verse says:

"And on the Day when He will muster them all together then He will say to the angels: 'Did these worship you?'"

It is evident that this question is not an inquiry that can disclose an unknown thing for the Pure Essence of Allah, because He is Omniscient; the aim is that the facts might be said by the angels' statements, so that this group of wrong worshippers might become abashed and ashamed, and know that the angels are completely hateful of their action and that they become hopeless for ever.

Mentioning ‘angels’ out of all objects of worship that the polytheists had, is either for the sake that the angels were the most honoured creatures that they used to worship.

Or it is for the sake that the idolaters considered the pieces of stone and wood as the symbol of the heavenly creatures (angels, spirits, and prophets) and they worshipped them under this title. It is cited in the history of idolatry among Arabs that once when ‘Amr-ubn-Luha had travelled to Syria saw some people who were worshipping their idols.

He asked them about that action and they answered that they were some gods that they had made in the shapes of heavenly creatures in order to get help from them and by means of them they asked for rain.

‘Amr-ubn-Luha liked it and followed their idea and he brought an idol with him to Arabia as a present, and since then idolatry began there and continued until when Islam came and rooted it out.

Now we refer to the response of the angel in answer to the question of Allah.

They will choose the most inclusive and the most polite answer as the verse says:

“They (the angels) will say: ‘Glory be to You. You are our Guardian, not they, nay rather, they were worshipping the jinn, (while) most of them were believers in them’.”

Concerning the kind of the concept of the answer of the angels, commentators have delivered various ideas and each of them has rendered it differently. But what seems nearer to the fact is that: the purpose of ‘jinn’ is Satan and other evil beings that encouraged the idol-worshippers to this action and decorated it in their sight.

Thus, the purpose of ‘worshipping the jinn’ is obeying their commands and accepting their temptations.

By expressing their hate and repudiation and announcing their dislike of this action the angels will say that the main factor of this corruption was Satans, though they apparently worshipped the angels, the real feature of it must be made manifest.

Similar to this meaning is also recited in Surah Yunus, where it says:

“And the Day We shall muster them all, then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us): ‘Get you to your place! You and your associates’, then We shall set a space between them, and their associates shall say: ‘It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!’” 3

That is, you, indeed, used to worship your own low desires, delusions and conjectures, not us. Moreover, your worship was done neither by our command nor with our consent, and such worship is not, in fact, a real worship.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 42

فَالْيَوْمَ لاَ يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَّفْعاً وَلاَ ضَرًّا وَنَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

42. “So on that Day one of you shall not own for the other any profit or harm, and We will say unto those who did injustice: ‘Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny’.”

In Hereafter both sovereignty and ownership belong to only Allah. (None of objects of worship - the Jinn, the angels, and others - has any power. Neither the object of worship can do anything for its worshipper, nor can a worshipper do anything for the object of worship).

This verse implicitly says that on that Day the hope of the polytheists will change into despair and this fact will be clearly made manifest for them that their objects of worship will not be able to work for them the slightest, but, on the contrary, they will be hatred of them.

So, in the above mentioned holy verse, as an expressive conclusion, the Holy Qur'an says:

"So on that Day one of you shall not own for the other any profit or harm…"

Therefore, neither the angels, who were apparently their objects of worship, can intercede nor are they themselves able to help each other.

It is here that Allah announces:

"…and We will say unto those who did injustice: 'Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny'."

This is not the first time and verse that the Qur'an refers to polytheists as 'unjust' and cruel ones, but in many other verses of the Qur'an 'disbelief' has been rendered into 'injustice' or 'pagans and polytheists' have been introduced as 'the unjust ones', because, before anything else, they have done injustice to themselves.

They take off the honourable crown of worship of Allah from their own heads and put the abased shackle of servitude of idols on their necks and, thus, they naturally lose their entire honour, personality, and fate.

In fact, in Hereafter, they receive both the punishment of their own polytheism and the punishment of the denial of Resurrection, and both of these meanings are compiled in the sentence:

"…and We will say unto those who did injustice: 'Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny'."

Surah As-Saba- Verse 43

وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ يُرِ دُ أَن يَصُدَّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ
وَقَالُوا مَا هَذَآ إِلاَّ إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرًي وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

43. "And when Our clear signs are recited to them, they say: 'This is naught but a man who desires to bar you from that your fathers used to worship'; and they say: 'This (Qur'an) is nothing but a falsehood forged'. And the unbelievers say to the truth, when it has come to them: 'This is nothing but a manifest sorcery'."

The Arabic word /bayyinat/ is the plural form of the term /bayyinah/ and it is used for a proof that its truthfulness is manifest and the word /'ifk/ is used for something which has been reversed and its original shape has changed. The verses of Allah are clear, and the denial of disbelievers is because of their obstinacy.

That is why the Qur'an says:

"And when Our clear signs are recited to them, they say: 'This is naught but a man who desires to bar you from that your fathers used to worship'…"

This is their first reaction in the face of these clear verses that they propounded among this fanatic tribe in order to move their bigotry.

Specially the application of the term /'aba'ukum/ (your fathers) instead of 'our fathers' is mostly for this very purpose that they might make those fanatic people understand that the legacy of their ancestors was in danger and they should stand against that man and dismiss him.

The application of the phrase:

"This is naught but a man who desires to"

has been used for the contempt of the Prophet (S) by means of two elements: one is the word /haŏa/ (this), and the other is /rajul/ (a man), in an indefinite form, while all of them knew the Prophet (S) very well and that he had a good background.

This is also notable that the Qur'an qualifies the 'signs' by the word 'clear', which means the proofs of their legitimacy are accompanied with them and this fact does not need to be explained.

Then the Qur'an refers to their second statement that they expressed in order to nullify the invitation of the holy Prophet (S).

It says:

"…and they say: 'This (Qur'an) is nothing but a falsehood forged'…"

The Arabic word /'ifk/, as was explained before, means: 'anything that changes from its original form'. So, the opposite winds in Arabic are called /mu'tafikat/, then it has been used also for any falsehood, accusation, and any incorrect statement. Some others say that the word /'ifk/ is used for great lies.

Although the application of the word /'ifk/ for accusing the Prophet of Islam (S) of falsehood was enough, they emphasized it with the Arabic word /muftara/ without having any document for this claim of theirs.

Finally, their third accusation to the Prophet (S) was the denigration of 'sorcery', as the last part of the verse under discussion says:

"…And the unbelievers say to the truth, when it has come to them: 'This is nothing but a manifest sorcery'."

It is surprising that this aberrant group used to state these three accusations with the most explicit emphasis which was restriction. Once they said that it was only a manifest sorcery; in another place they said it was but a lie; and, finally, in the third place they said that he only wanted to bar them from the objects of worship of their ancestors.

These three undue charges, of course, do not contrast with each other, although they did not refuse to say contradictory words. Therefore, there is no reason that, according to the statement of some commentators, we attribute each of these accusations to one group of the disbelievers.

This point is also notable that: in the first and second stages the Qur'an has used the word /qalu/ (they said), but in the third stage, instead of that, it has used the sentence: /qalallaŏina kafaru/ (those who disbelieved said), pointing to this fact that all these miseries originate from disbelief, denial of the Truth, and enmity with reality.

Else, how is it possible that, without having any reasoning, one forges all these accusations, one after another, to a man that the proofs of legitimacy are clearly seen from his speech, his deed, and his background? As if, by

these three accusations they followed an accurate program in conflicting against the Prophet (S).

On one side, they saw that it was a new religion and had a proper attraction. On the other side, the Prophet's threats to Divine punishment in this world and the next, willy-nilly, had made some people terrified.

On the third side, the Prophet's miracles (S) affected on the minds of common people.

They had devised a way in order to nullify each of these three subjects.

So, in opposition to the new religion, they attached to protecting the heritage of the ancestors, while their ancestors were, as the Qur'an says, the extension of verse which says:

"…had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright."4

It does not matter that he restrains people from such superstitious customs which are the devise of the foolish ignorant ones, and that against the Prophet's threats to Divine punishment, they had propounded the subject of mendacity in order to make people calm.

In the face of miracles, they propounded the accusation of 'sorcery' so that they could justify it thereby and stop people from embracing it.

But, as we know and history testifies it, too, none of these Satanic temptations did work effectively, and finally people accepted this pure religion in groups.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 44

وَمَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُم مِن كُتُبٍ يَدْرُسُونَهَا وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِن نَّذِيرٍ

44. "And We had not given them (Arab pagans) any Books which they could study, nor did We send unto them before you any Warner."

The Holy Qur'an in this verse answers their all vain claims by one sentence.

It says:

"And We had not given them (Arab pagans) any Books which they could study, nor did We send unto them before you any Warner."

This points to this fact that these claims can be brought forth by the one to whom has already come a prophet and has brought a heavenly Book for him that he compares the content of the new invitation with it and he finds it different with and he belies it.

Once he says this new invitation is untrue. Another time he says that the religion of your ancestors must not be lost. And sometimes he calls the bringer of the new invitation a sorcerer.

But the one, who relies only on his own thought and without any heavenly revelation and without having any knowledge, delivers some vanities, has no right to judge like that.

This point is also understood from this verse that by relying only on the power of his own intellect, one can not pave the difficult path of life successfully, but he must get help from the power of revelation and with the aid of the leadership of the Prophet (S) steps in the way, else there is darkness and he must be afraid of the danger of aberration.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 45

وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا بَلَغُوا مِعْشَارَ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوا رُسُلِي فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

45. "And those before them rejected (the messengers) and these have not yet attained a tenth of what We had given them but they belied My apostles; so (see) how was My punishment (unto them)!"

Relying on their wealth and power, pagans used to deny the Truth, and Allah said that their wealth, comparing that of others, is not a tenth of it.

So, this verse has threatened that disobedient group by some effective and expressive words, and says:

"And those before them rejected (the messengers) and these have not yet attained a tenth of what We had given them…"

But you can see what kind of fate they had!

The verse continues saying:

"…but they belied My apostles; so (see) how was My punishment (unto them)!"

Their ruined cities, destroyed because of the Divine punishment, are near to you alongside your way toward Syria. You may take them as a lesson, and hearken the necessary admonitions from the tongue of these ruins and guess your fate according to them, because neither the way of treatment of Allah (s.w.t.) is changeable nor is your state higher than theirs.

The Arabic word /mi'šar/ is derived from /'ušr/ and it is in the same meaning, one tenth.

Some commentators have taken it with the sense of one-hundredth, but many Arabic dictionaries and commentaries have mentioned the first meaning for it. But, however, these kinds of figures do not refer to the number and they are used to show scantiness in comparison with the figures like: seven, seventy, one thousand, and the like which are used to show multiplicity.

Therefore, the concept of the verse is that Allah has vanished some powerful haughty persons that comparing them these people have not even a small part of their power.

Similar to this meaning is said in other different verses of the Qur'an, including Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 6 which says:

"Have they not considered how many a generation We destroyed before them, when We had established in the earth (to the extent) that We have not established you, and We sent abundant (water down from) the sky upon them and made the rivers flow beneath them? Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and raised up after them another generation."

Again, the like of this very meaning is mentioned in Surah Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 21; and in Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 9, too.

The Qur'anic word /nakir/ is derived from /'inkar/ in the same sense, and the purpose of denying Allah is the denial of His punishment.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 14
2. Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 160
3. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 28
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 verse 170

Section 6: The Triumph of Truth

Surah As-Saba- Verse 46

قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَعِظُكُم بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَن تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَثْنَىٰ وَفُرَادَىٰ ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِكُم مِن جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ لَّكُم بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ

46. "Say: 'I exhort you only to one (thing), that rise up for Allah's sake two by two and one by one, then ponder: there is no madness in your comrade (the Prophet), he is only a Warner to you before a severe chastisement'."

One of the duties of the Divine prophets (as) is giving admonition to people.

In this verse, and the next verses, Allah again commands the Prophet of Islam (S) that he should invite them to the Truth by means of different proofs, and dissuade them from aberration.

Similar to the contents of the former discussions, the Prophet (S) is addressed for five times and is told to say to them as follows:

"Say: 'I exhort you only to one (thing), that rise up for Allah's sake two by two and one by one, then ponder: there is no madness in your comrade (the Prophet), he is only a Warner to you before a severe chastisement'."

Each of the words and meanings mentioned in this verse points to an important matter that ten points of which are referred to in the following:

1- The sentence 'I exhort you' in fact points to this fact that your goodness and interest is considered in this saying, not in any other matter.

2- The application of the Arabic word /wahidah/ (only one thing), specially with the term /'innama/ (only) for emphasis, is a clear indication to this reality that the root of all individual and social improvements is the utilization of intellects.

Whenever the thought of a nation is inactive, it will be invaded by the thieves and robbers of faith, religion, freedom, and independence. But when thoughts become active the way will be closed to those robbers.

3- The application of the Arabic term /qiyam/ here does not mean 'to stand on one's two feet', but it means readiness for performing affairs, because when a person stands on his feet he is almost ready to fulfil different programs of the life.

Therefore, contemplation needs a former preparation which brings a motion and motive into being in man so that he willingly and intentionally begins to contemplate.

4- The application of the word /lillah/ (for the sake of Allah) points to this meaning that standing and preparation must have a divine godly motive, and the contemplation which originates from such a motive is worthy.

In principle, sincerity in affairs, and even in thinking, is the cause of deliverance, happiness, and beatitude.

It is interesting that the faith in Allah has here been taken certain so contemplation for other issues is an indication to this fact that Monotheism is an innate thing which is clear even without thinking.

5- The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /mathna wa furada/ (two by two and one by one) points to this fact that pondering and contemplation must be done far from tumults.

People ought to rise singly or maximum two by two and utilize their thoughts, because contemplation inside a tumult will not be so deep, in particular that the factors of egotism and bigotry in the path of defending from one's own belief in front of a crowd is rather more evident.

Some other commentators also believe that these two meanings are probably for this purpose that men must learn the 'individual' thought and the congregational thought, i.e., with consultation.

A person must both contemplate lonely and enjoy the others' proper thoughts, because despotism in thought and judgment is often the cause of destruction; and cooperation in thought and struggle for solving the scientific difficulties, where it does not stretch to tumult, has a better effect, and it is perhaps for this reason that the word /mathna/ (two by two) has been preceded by the word /furada/ (one by one).

6- The application of the Qur'anic word /sahibikum/ (your companion), in respect to the holy Prophet (S), has an indication to this fact that he is not an unfamiliar person for you.

He has lived among you for many years, and you have known him for his deposit, perspicacity, truthfulness, and veracity. You have never seen any dark or weak point in his biography. Therefore, justly all the accusations you attribute to him are baseless.

7- The Arabic word /jinnah/ in the sense of madness is originally derived from the word /jinn/ with the sense of 'cover', and in view of the fact that a mad man is such that as if his wisdom were covered, this meaning has been used about him.

However, the notable point is in this that it seems to say this fact that how is it possible that an inviter to contemplation to be mad himself? And this fact that he is caller to thinking itself is an indication to his utmost wisdom and perspicacity.

8- The sentence saying:

"…he is only a Warner to you…"

summarizes the messengership of the Prophet of Islam (S) in the subject of 'warning', that is, to give warning unto people concerning the responsibilities and the court and retribution of Allah.

It is true that the Prophet has the messengership of glad tiding, too, but that which mostly makes man move is 'warning'.

So, in some other verses of the Qur'an, 'giving warning' has been mentioned as the only duty of the Prophet (S); such as Surah Al-Ahqaf, No. 46, verse 9 which says:

"…and I am not but an open Warner."

The like of this meaning is recited in Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 65, as well as in other verses, too.

9- The application of the Qur'anic sentence:

"…before a severe chastisement"

points to this meaning that Hereafter is so nigh that as if it is in front of you; and verily, in comparison with the life-time of this world it is so, too. This meaning has also been referred to in a few Islamic narrations.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"My appointment (to prophecy) and the establishment of Hereafter are like these two; (then he put his fore-finger and his middle finger with together and showed the audience)."1

Thus, how is it possible that our religion like Islam be a means of stupefaction or be resulted by ignorance, while its bringer addresses all human beings, in its best form, and says that they mobilize for enlivening the asleep thoughts, in a quiet environment which is empty of any tumult.

It must be in an environment far from sensual desires, and poisonous atmosphere of propaganda.

It should be far from bigotries and aloof from obstinacies.

You must rise for the sake of Allah, and contemplate only for Him.

This is the only admonition of the Prophet (S) to you, and nothing else.

Is not this laughable that such a religion, that has repeated this very invitation both here and in many other instances, be accused to stupefaction of thoughts?

In particular that he says to you to contemplate not only in solitude and individually, but also you may ponder two by two and with the help of each other. You must hearken to the content of the invitation of the divine prophets, study their reasoning and if they adapt to wisdom, you accept it.

The recent events which happened because of the raise of revolutionary Muslims during our time in different countries against the hellish powers of the East and the West, and made the world dark in the view of the tyrants and threatened the pillars of their power, showed that they had understood this point correctly that the noble religious beliefs work as their severe enemy and is counted a great danger for them; and it also showed what was the aim of these hostile accusations that they attributed to Islam.

It is verily wonderful that in the philosophical analysis of the Western sociologists this subject has been considered certain that there is not any supernatural world, and religion is an artificial phenomena made by man. Then they quarrel upon this matter that: what is its cause? Is its cause the economical affairs, or the men's fear, or the man's lack of cognizance, or some spiritual complexes?

But they are not ready to, for a moment, empty their mind of this wrong pre-judgment and think that there is probably another world beyond the world of nature; and that they may contemplate about the clear proofs of Monotheism and the manifest signs of the prophecy of some divine prophets, such as: Muhammad (S).

These people are not unlike to the pagans of the Age of Ignorance, with this difference that the pagans were some illiterate zealous and obstinate people, while these are also zealous and obstinate but are literate, and for this reason, they are more dangerous and more seductive.

It is interesting that the last part of many of the verses of the Qur'an contains invitation to contemplation, or comprehension, or admonition.

Sometimes it says:

"…Verily there is a sign in that for a people who reflect." 2

And sometimes it says:

"…Certainly there are signs in that for a people who reflect."3

And sometimes it says:

"…that they may ponder." 4

And sometimes the same sentence is stated as addressing the believers:

"…Thus does Allah make the signs clear to you, in order that you may ponder?" 5

There are a great deal of such meanings in the Qur'an, like invitation to: understanding, wise, wisdom, and admiring those who use their wisdom, and intensively blaming those who do not apply their thought. This meaning has been referred to in the verse under discussion.6

There are many explanations in the Qur'an about men of knowledge, scientists, and the rank of knowledge that if we try to gather all of them with together and give commentary for them, it will become an independent book by itself.

In this respect it is enough to say that the holy Qur'an has mentioned one of the qualities of hellish people the lack of contemplation and wisdom, where it says about them:

"They will say: 'Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not be among the companions of the Blazing Fire'."7

In another occurrence, it implies that, in principle, there are some persons who have ears but they do not hear, they have eyes but they do not see, they have mind but they do not ponder.

The verse says:

"Indeed We have created for Hell many jinn and humans; they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. They are as cattle, rather they are more astray. These are the heedless ones."8

Some Traditions Upon the Importance of Contemplation

1- In a tradition Imam Ali-ibn-Musa-ar-Rida (as) says:

"Worship is not by abundant prayer and fasting. Verily the real worship is contemplation in the work of Allah, Almighty and Glorious."9

2- Another tradition indicates that most of the worship of Abuthar was contemplation.10

3- In a tradition we read that once someone asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the meaning of the statement of the Prophet (S) who said:

"One hour of contemplation is better than one night of worship."

And how should this contemplation be done?

The Imam (as), in answer to him, said:

"When he passes by a ruin or a (ruined) house (empty of dwellers) he should say to the house:

'Where have your dwellers gone? What happened to your founders? Why do not you speak?"11

4- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"Contemplation invites to goodness and acting to it."12

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Before making decision do ponder, consult before that you regret, and think deeply before you attack."13

Surah As-Saba- Verses 47-48

قُلْ مَآ سَأَلْتُكُم مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبّـِي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِ عَلاَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ

47. "Say: 'Whatever reward I have asked of you, it is for yourselves; my reward is only with Allah; and He is witness over all things'."

48. "Say: 'My Lord hurls the truth (on hearts), the great Knower of the Unseen'."

The Divine emissaries ought to announce for people that they expect nothing from them; because if a spiritual leader expect some material thing from people, the society may not bear him.

In this holy verse and the following verses Allah orders His Messenger for five times that he should speak with those faithless aberrant people in different ways and shut the door of excuse to them.

In the previous verse, the words were about invitation to contemplation and about the negation of any lack of spiritual equilibrium in the Prophet (S).

In the first verse under discussion the words are about the lack of asking any reward from people for the Messengership.

He commands:

"Say: 'Whatever reward I have asked of you, it is for yourselves…"

"…my reward is only with Allah…"

This matter points to this fact that whatever a wise person does must naturally have a motive. When my perfect intellect is proved to you and you see that I have no material motive, you should know that the Divine and spiritual motive has made me do it.

In other words, I invited you to ponder. Now you do think and ask your own conscience what has caused me to warn you against the intense punishment of Allah? What benefit do I get from this, and what kind of material profit does it have for me?

In addition, if your pretext for this turning away from the truth is this that you must pay a dear price for it, principally, I have asked no compensate and reward from you.

This very meaning is clearly mentioned in Surah Al-Qalam, No. 68, verse 46 which says:

"Or do you ask from them a reward, so that they are burdened with debt?"

Upon the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /fa huwa lakum/ (it is for yourselves) there are two commentaries: the first is that it may be an implicit declaration of the lack of asking for any kind of reward absolutely; like that we say:

"Whatever I have wanted from you can be yours."

Indicating that, I have wanted nothing from you. The witness to this statement is the sentence next to it which says:

"…my reward is only with Allah…"

The second is that: if you see that in some of my words that I have brought from my Lord I have told you:

"…'No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin.'…"14

The profit of this also returns to you, because the concept of the sentence: 'The love of those near of kin' returns to 'deposit and Wilayah' which is the continuation of the subject of messengership, that which is also necessary for the continuation of your guidance.

The evidence upon this recent statement is the occasion of revelation narrated here by some commentators.

They have said when the verse saying:

"…say: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin…"

was revealed, the Prophet (S) told the pagans of Mecca:

"Do not annoy my relatives"

and they accepted this suggestion, too. But when the Prophet (S) said something bad against their idols, they said that Muhammad did not treat us justly.

From one side he wanted us we would not annoy his relatives, but on the other side, by saying something bad against our gods, he annoys us. It was here that the recently mentioned verse was revealed and told them that whatever the Prophet (S) wanted from them in this regard was for their own benefit, now the pagans may hurt them or not.15

And, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…and He is witness over all things'."

If I ask my reward from him it is for the sake that He is aware of all my deeds and intentions.

Moreover, He is a witness to my legitimacy, because it is He Who has given me these clear signs and miracles.

And verily He is the best witness, because the one who knows the facts better than all, and can deliver it better than anyone, and there comes out of him nothing but the truth, he is the best witness, and He is Allah.

Regarding to what was said about the legitimacy of the invitation of the Prophet (S), the next verse implicitly says that Qur'an is a reality which is undeniable and it has been cast on the heart of the Prophet (S) from the side of Allah, and it announces:

"Say: 'My Lord hurls the truth (on hearts), the great Knower of the Unseen'."

Regarding to the fact that the Arabic word /yaqðifu/ is derived from /qaðf/ in the sense of 'to throw from a far point' or 'to throw from a far distance', there have been delivered different commentaries upon this verse which are consistent with each other.

The first is that: the purpose of 'hurls the truth' is casting the content of the heavenly Books and Divine revelation upon the hearts of the Divine prophets and the messengers of Allah, because as the result of being 'Knower of the Unseen' He knows the receptive hearts and chooses them and casts the revelation upon them so that it penetrates deeply into them.

Thus, this statement is not unlike to the tradition which says:

"The knowledge is a light that Allah casts it into the heat of the one He pleases."

The application of 'Knower of the Unseen' verifies this.

Some others have said that its purpose is: 'casting the Truth on the falsehood and knocking down the wrong by the 'Truth. That is, the Truth has such a power that it removes all the barriers out of its way and none is able to stand against it. So, it is a threat against the opponents that they might not rise against the Qur'an, and know that the legitimacy of the Qur'an will defeat them.

In this case, it is similar to the matter which is mentioned in Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 18 which says:

"Nay! But We hurl the truth against falsehood so that it breaks out its brain, and behold, falsehood vanishes away…"

This probability has also been suggested that the purpose of the application of /qaŏf/ here is the penetration of the legitimacy of the Qur'an in both near and far points of the world and pointing to this fact that finally this heavenly revelation will be worldly and its light will light everywhere.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 49-50

قُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِئُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ

قُلْ إِن ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَآ أَضِلُّ عَلَي نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ فَبِمَـا يُوحِي اِلَيَّ رَبّـي اِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِ بٌ

49. "Say: 'The Truth has come, and falsehood neither brings forth anything nor does it reproduce (it)'."

50. "Say: 'If I astray, I astray only against my own self, and if I am guided aright, it is of what my Lord has revealed unto me. Verily He is All-Hearing, the (Most) Nigh'."

The Truth defeats the falsehood and is victorious over it.

In this verse, Allah commands:

"Say: 'The Truth has come, and falsehood neither brings forth anything nor does it reproduce (it)'."

Thus, falsehood can do nothing against the Truth and it has no function before it: neither a new function which is initiator, nor a repeated function, because its plans are entirely destroyed, and that is just why it cannot cover the light of the truth and wipe out its effect from the memories.

Some commentators have tried to limit the denotation expansions of the 'right' and 'wrong' in this verse into some few ones, but it is clear that the concept of those two is very vast.

The Qur'an, the Divine revelation and the whole teachings of Islam are all gathered in the concept of 'the Truth', and polytheism, paganism, misguidance, injustice, sin, satanic temptations, and tyrannical primordial innovation all are simply compiled in the meaning of 'falsehood'.

In fact, this verse is like Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 81 which says:

"And say: 'The truth has come and the falsehood' has vanished away, verily the 'falsehood' is (something) vanishing."

Question: Why does falsehood still exist after coming the Qur'an and the Prophet of the Truth?

Answer: The logical and scientific sovereignty is different from practical and executive sovereignty. Whatever relates to Allah is sending the Truth, and that which relates to us is action and executing the Truth.

This is what we practically did not perform. Yes, the return of the health of a sick person depends on a correct prescription and consuming its medicine. One of them is the duty of physician and the other is the duty of the sick person.

Then, in order to make clear that whatever he says is from the side of Allah, and that the entire guidance is from Him, and that there happens no mistake in the Divine revelation, in the next verse,

He adds:

"Say: 'If I astray, I astray only against my own self, and if I am guided aright, it is of what my Lord has revealed unto me…"

That is, if I, too, be left alone to myself, as you claim, I will become astray, because finding the way of the Truth from among the mass of wrong ways is not possible except by His help; and the light of guidance in which there is no aberration, is the light of His revelation.

Then, you may come nigh toward this light, the Divine revelation, in order that you come out from the realm of darkness and arrive into the realm of light.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Verily He is All-Hearing, the (Most) Nigh'."

You should not think that He may not hear our words and yours; or He hears them but He is far from us. No, He is both Hearing and Nigh. Therefore, nothing of our speaking and our demands is concealed to Him.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 51-52

وَلَوْ تَرَي اِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلاَ فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِن مَكَانٍ قَرِ بٍ

وَقَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِهِ وَأَنَّي لَهُمُ التَّنَاوُشُ مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

51. "And could you see when they shall become terrified, but (then) there shall be no escape and they shall be seized upon a near place (you will surprise),"

52. "And they shall say: 'We believe in it', and how shall the attaining (of faith) be possible to them from a distance place?"

The impatience and fear of polytheists and their asking for help do not solve any problem out of their problems for them, because polytheists have no place of refuge.

Regarding to the discussions about the obstinate polytheists mentioned in the former verses, the above verses address the Prophet (S) again and illustrate the circumstance of this group when they are in the grips of the Divine chastisement, showing that how they will think of Faith after that they will be involved in it, but their faith will not be useful for them.

It says:

"And could you see when they shall become terrified, but (then) there shall be no escape and they shall be seized upon a near place (you will surprise),"

The opinions of the commentators are divided upon that to which time this impatience and fear relate.

Some of them believe that this status relates to the worldly chastisement or to the chastisement at the time of their death, while some others say that it relates to the punishment of the Day of Hereafter.

But in the last verse of the verses under discussion, there is a meaning which shows that these verses are all related to this world and the worldly sudden punishment for incorrigible wrong doers, or the punishment of the time of giving up one's life, because in that verse the Qur'an says:

"And a barrier shall be set between them and that which they desire, as was done unto the likes of them afore-time…"16

This meaning does not adapt to the punishment of the Day of Hereafter, because, on that Day, all will be gathered with together for Reckoning, as Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 103 says:

"…That is a Day (when) mankind are to be gathered to, and that is a Day that shall be witnessed (by all)."

And Surah Al-Waqi'ah, No. 56, verses 49-50 say:

"Say: 'Those of old and those of later times," "All will certainly be gathered together for the meeting appointed for a Day well-known."

Therefore, the purpose of the sentence: "…they shall be seized upon a near place" is that these faithless and cruel persons not only cannot escape from the realm of the Power of Allah, but also He will seize them from a place which is very near to them.

Were not the Pharaohs buried under the waves of the Nile which was the capital of their honour? Did not Korah sink into the earth with his treasures?

Did not the people of Sheba whose story is referred to in this very Surah afflict from the nearest place, i.e., the same great dam which was in the midst of their city and was the cause of their life and motion? So, Allah afflicts them from the nearest place in order that they see His Power.

A great deal of unjust kings were killed or destroyed by their nearest men; and many of the cruel powerful men received the last stroke from the inside of their homes.

Many Islamic narrations, introduced by the way of the Shi'ites and the Sunnites, have adapted this verse to the revolt of Sufyani.

(There are a group of people who follow the school of thought of Abu-Sufyan, the continuation of the thought of the Age of Ignorance, who will raise against the adherents of the Truth in the threshold of the reappearance of Mahdi (as) and his army.)

At time when they will be going toward Mecca to occupy it they will afflict the Divine punishment. A severe earth-quake causes that the earth will split asunder and they will fall into it.

This meaning, in fact, is the statement of one of the expansions of the Qur'anic phrase:

"…they shall be seized upon a near place",

that they shall meet the Divine punishment in a place where on they are standing.

Ibn-'Abbas, Ibn-Mas'ud, Abu-Hurayrah, Abu-Hathifah, Umm-us-Salamah, and 'Ayishah, according to what has been mentioned in the books of the Sunnites, have narrated the content of this tradition from the Messenger of Allah (S).17

And many of the commentators of the Shi‘ites have recorded this tradition in their commentary Books, such as: Qummi, Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, and As-Safi. Also a group of the commentators of the Sunnites such as the writer of the Commentary of Ruh-ul-Ma‘ani and Rauh-ul-Bayan, and Qurtubi have narrated it following to the verses under discussion.

The Late ‘Allamah Majlisi has narrated a lot of traditions in this regard in Bihar-ul-’Anwar from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) and from the Prophet (S) which show that one of the denotation expansions of the verses under discussion is the revolt of Sufyani at the time of reappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as), when Allah will seize and destroy them from the nearest place to them.18

As it has repeatedly been said, the narrations which are mentioned upon the commentary of the verses of the Qur’an mostly refer to the clear denotation expansions and they are never as a reason for limiting the concepts of them.

In the next verse, their circumstance, when they are involved in the grips of the Divine chastisement, is explained. It implicitly says that they will say they believe in the Qur’an, in its bringer, and in Origin and End.

It says:

“And they shall say: ‘We believe in it’…”

“…and how shall the attaining (of faith) be possible to them from a distance place?”

Yes, when the death and the sudden punishment come, the doors of return will absolutely be closed, and, as if, there will be created a firm dam between man and recompense of the past wrong deeds. For this very reason, expression of Faith at that time is done from a very far distance.

Principally, such a faith which is compulsory, and is because of extraordinary terror of the punishment they see by their own eyes, is not valuable.

Therefore, some other verses of the Qur’an say:

“…and even if they were returned, they would revert to what they were prohibited, and most certainly they are liars.” 19

The Arabic word /tanawuš/ is derived from /nauš/ in the sense of ‘taking something’, and some have taken it in the sense of ‘to take easily’, i.e., how can they reach an aim easily which is very far?

Surah As-Saba- Verses 53-54

وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ مِن قَبْلُ وَيَقْذِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِم مِن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُّرِيبٍ

53. “And indeed they did disbelieve in it before, and aim their conjectures about the unseen from a distant place.”

54. “And a barrier shall be set between them and that which they desire, as was done unto the likes of them afore-time; for they have been in a disquieting doubt.”

Those who were denigrating the Prophet (S) and the Qur’an yesterday, today that they have encountered a straiten circumstance, they believe, but what is its benefit?

In these verses, which are the last verses of Surah Saba, the Qur'an implicitly says: now that every thing has ended, how can they compensate their faults and believe? While before that when they were in the utmost freedom and authority, they disbelieved.

The verse says:

"And indeed they did disbelieve in it before…"

They not only disbelieved, but forged kinds of accusations to the Prophet of Islam (S) and his teachings.

The verse continues sayings:

"…and aim their conjectures about the unseen from a distant place."

As we said before, the Arabic word /qaŏf/ means 'to throw something', and the Qur'anic word /qayb/ means the world of beyond sense, and the Arabic phrase /makanin ba'id/ means 'a distant place', and totally is a tender allusion of a person who judges about the world of supper-nature without having any knowledge, in the same manner that throwing something from a distant place rarely strikes to the target.

This conjecture and judgment of their does not strike the aim either.

Sometimes they called the Prophet (S) 'sorcerer', sometimes 'mad', and sometimes 'a liar'.

Sometimes they considered the Qur'an as the production of the thought of a man, and sometimes they entirely denied the Paradise, the Hell, and Hereafter. All of these were a kind of 'stoning to unseen', 'throwing an arrow in darkness', and 'throwing something from a distant place'.

Then it adds that finally death separated them from what they desired:

"And a barrier shall be set between them and that which they desire, as was done unto the likes of them afore-time…"

In a painful moment, they see that all their wealth and properties, all their castles and positions, and their desires are separated from them. Those who had clasped to even a penny and could not leave the least material possibilities, how will they be at the moment when they must suddenly say farewell to all of them and shut their eyes and go toward a dark and terrible future?

How beautiful says Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) when he illustrates the moments of death and separation from the bounties of the world through his delightful words in the clearest form. He (as) says:

"…Pangs of death and grief for losing (this world) have surrounded them. Consequently their limbs become languid and their complexion changes. Then death increases its struggle over them.

In one of them, it stands in between him and his power of speaking although he lies among his people, looking with eyes, hearing with his ears, with full wits and intelligence. He then thinks over how he wasted his life and in what (activities) he passed his time.

He recalls the wealth he collected when he had blinded himself in seeking it, and acquired it from fair and foul sources. Now the consequences of collecting it have overtaken him. He gets ready to leave it. It would remain for those who are behind him. They would enjoy it and benefit by it.

It would be an easy acquisition for others but a burden on his back, and the man cannot get rid of it. He would thereupon bite his hands with teeth out of shame for what was disclosed to him about his affairs at the time of his death.

He would dislike what he coveted during the days of his life and would wish that he who envied him on account of it and felt jealous over him for it should have amassed it instead of he himself."

Finally, in the last sentence of the verse under discussion, it implies that the reason of all these things is that they always spent their life in doubt and, naturally, such fate was waiting for them.

The verse says:

"…for they have been in a disquieting doubt."

O' Lord! Set us among those believers who before losing opportunities awaken and try to compensate whatever they had missed.

O' Lord! Appoint us of those who at the time of affluence begin thanksgiving and do not become proud and neglectful, and that at the time of afflictions they do not complain but they take a lesson.

Notes

1. The of Rauh-ul-Ma'ali, Vol. 22, P. 143
2. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verses 11 and 69
3. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 3 and Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 42; Al-Jathiyah, No. 45, verse 13
4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 176, and Hashr, verse 21
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verses 219 and 266
6. No. 46
7. Surah Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 10
8. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 179
9. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 45
10. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 383
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Nasikh-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. 2, P. 142
14. Surah Ash-Shaura, No. 42, verse 23
15. The commentary of Rauh-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 308
16. The current Surah, verse 54
17. Al-Mizan, Vol. 16, P. 419
18. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 52, P. 185
19. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 28

Surah Al-Fatir, Chapter 35

(The Originator)

No. 35 (Revealed at Mecca)

45 Verses in 5 Sections

The Feature of Surah Al-Fatir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah has been revealed at Mecca, and contains forty five verses.

'Fatir' is one of the attributes of Allah and it means 'the Originator'. The name of this Surah has been taken from the first verse of the Surah in which Allah has been introduced as 'the Originator of the heavens and the earth'.

Like other Meccan Suras, the main axis of the discussion in this Surah is about Origin, Resurrection, and struggle against polytheism.

The Virtue of the Surah

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"There are two suras in the Qur'an which are one after another and they begin with /alhamd-u-lillah/ (the praise belongs (only) to Allah): Surah As-Saba, and Surah Al-Fatir. Whoever recites them by night, Allah will protect him in His support, and whoever recites them during the day, there will come to him no affliction (on that day)…"[1]

Notes

1. The of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 345

Section 1: Humanity Exhorted to Hold Satan as its Enemy

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلآئِكَةِ رُسُلاً أُوْلِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَى وَثُلاَثَ وَرُبَاعَ يَزِ دُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

1. "(All) praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who appointed the angels messengers having wings two, three, and four. He adds to creation what He pleases; verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing."

The Qur'anic word /fatir/ means: 'Originator', and the Arabic word /'ajnihah/ in the sense of 'wing' is derived from /jinah which allusively means power. In Persian it is also said 'the wing of so and so is burnt or broken' which indicates he has no power.

Similar to Suras: Al-Hamd, Saba, and Al-Kahf, this Surah begins with the praise of Allah, too. His praise is for the sake of the creation of the vast world of existence.

Concerning the fact that all bounties and merits of existence originate from His Exalted Being, the Qur'an says:

"(All) praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth…"

The Qur'anic word /fatir/ is derived from /futur/ originally means 'to cleave' and since the creation of creatures is like cleaving the darkness of nothingness and it is the appearance of the light of existence, this meaning has been used in relation to creation particularly in regarding to the modern science which says that at the beginning the totality of the world of existence had been a single mass which has gradually split and some parts have separated from it.

The application of the word Fatir for the Pure Essence of Allah produces a new and clearer concept.

Yes, we do praise Him for His creative Power, because whatever exists is from His side and none has anything from him except Allah.

And in view of the fact that the management of this world, because of the fact that this world is the world of means, has been given to the angels, the verse immediately speaks about their creation and the considerable power that Allah, the Almighty, has bestowed on them.

It says:

"…Who appointed the angels messengers having wings two, three, and four…"

Then the verse continues saying:

"…He adds to creation what He pleases; verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing."

Allah (s.w.t.) adds to the creation whatever His Will and His Wisdom require including wings and other things.

In this regard, the verse is absolute and it contains any kind of adding, irrespective of tallness of the body, moderation in face and bodily power and good intellect, and other merits. Some of the commentators say that the purpose of 'adding to creation' is: beautiful face, nice voice, and fair hair.

Note

There are many verses in the Qur'an that are about the angels' attributes, specialties, missions, and duties. Even the Qur'an has considered the faith in angels in the row of the faith in Allah, prophets, and heavenly Books, and this is evidence upon the fundamental importance of this subject.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. (They) all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His messengers…"[1]

No doubt the angels are among the Unseen things for proving which by these attributes and specialties there is no way save the traditional proofs, and because of belief in Unseen, we must accept them.

On the whole, the Qur'an explains the specialties of the angels as follows:

1. The angels are some wise and intellectual beings of the honourable servants of Allah.

"…but (angels) are (His) honoured servants."[2]

2. They obey Allah (s.w.t.) and never commit sin.

"They do not precede Him in speech, and (only) according to His commandment do they act."[3]

3. They have been given many important and various duties from the side of Allah:

Some of them bear the 'Arsh (throne):

"…bear the throne of Your Lord above them."[4]

A group of them manage the affair:

"And those who manage the affair."[5]

A group of them are the angels of taking souls:

"…until when Our messengers came to them to take them away…"[6]

A group of them are the recorders of the deeds of men:

"And surely there are Watchers over you,"

"Honourable scribes:"

"They know (and understand) whatever you do."[7]

A group of them are the protectors of man from dangers and evil events:

"…and He sends guardians (to watch) over you until when death comes to one of you…" [8]

A group of them are ordered to punish the disobedient people:

"And when Our messengers (the angels) came to Lot, he was grieved for them and felt straitened to protect them. He said: 'This is a distressful day'."[9]

A group of them are Divine helpers to the believers in battles:

"O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when hosts came against you, so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do." [10]

And, finally, a group of them are the bringers of revelation and heavenly Books from Allah for Divine prophets:

"He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills…"[11]

4. They are always busy glorifying Allah, as Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 5 says:

"…and the angels celebrate the Praise of their Lord and seek forgiveness for those who are on the earth…"

Yes, because of talent and potentials of development that man has, he is higher than and superior to the angels so much so that all angels, with no exception, once for the sake of the creation of Adam fell in prostration and Adam became their teacher.[12]

6. Some angels appear for prophets and even other than the prophets in the form of human beings, as we recite in Surah Maryam that the great angel of Allah came to Mary as a handsome man:

"…Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man".

In other occurrences of the Qur'an we recite that angels appeared in the form of some men before Abraham and Lot[13]. It is understood from the verses of this Surah that the people of Lot, too, saw them in the form of some handsome me.[14]

Is the appearance in the form of man a concrete fact? Or is it in the form of presentation and interfering in the perceptive faculty? The outward of the verses of the Qur'an implies to the first meaning, though some great commentators have chosen the second meaning.

7. It is understood from Islamic narrations that the number of angels is so large that they can never be compared with all human beings.

Once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked whether the number of the angels is larger or that of the human beings, he said:

"By Allah in whose hand is my soul! the angels in heavens are more than the (number of) whole atoms of the dust of the earth, and there is no place in heaven but an angel is busy glorifying and praising Him therein."[15]

8. They neither eat nor drink nor marry. Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Verily the angels neither eat, nor drink, nor marry, and they do live only by the breeze of the (Divine) 'Arsh!)"[16]

9. They have neither sleep nor negligence, nor laziness.

Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"There is no cessation between them, nor there is negligence with them, nor there is sin among them… sleep does not overtake them, their wisdom never involves in mistake and forgetfulness, their bodies do not tend to laziness, and they do not lie in the loins of fathers and in the wombs of mothers."[17]

10. They have different proper positions and ranks. Some of them are always in the state of 'bowing' while some others are in the state of prostration.

The Qur'an, from the tongue of the angels, says:

"There is not (any one) of us but for his is an assigned place."

"And verily we are they who range ourselves in order;" "And verily we are they who celebrate His glory!"[18]

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Verily Allah has some angels who are (in the state of) bowing until the Day of Hereafter, and verily Allah has some angels who are (always in the state of) prostration until the Day of Hereafter."[19]

For more information about the specialties of the angels and their classes, you may refer to the books entitled: As-Sama'-i-wal-'Alam, Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Abwab-ul-Mala'ikah, Vol. 59, P. 144-326. Also, Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermons number one and ninety one, Sermon 'Ishbah, sermons 109, and 171.

Having these attributes mentioned for the angels in mind, are they abstract or material?

Certainly, with these specialties, they cannot be formed from the dirty elemental matter, but it does not matter that they have been created from some tender matters, some things beyond this ordinary matter which we are acquainted with.

Of course, we know the angels as those who are introduced by the Qur'an and by the certain Islamic narrations, and we know them as a great part of the high and outstanding beings of Allah, without considering any rank for them save the rank of servitude, and we do not know them as the partner of Allah in creation or worship, because this is absolutely polytheism and infidelity.

By the way, in many phrases of the Torah the angels are introduced as gods, which is blasphemous and this is one of the signs of the distortion in the present Torah.

But the Qur'an is pure and far from these meanings, since it has not considered any rank for them except servitude and worship, and executing the commands of Allah; and, as we said before, it is understood from the different verses of the Qur'an that the rank of a complete man is higher than and superior to the angels.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 2

مَّا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِن رَّحْمَةٍ فَلاَ مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكْ فَلاَ مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

2. "Whatever mercy Allah opens to men, none can withhold and whatever He withholds, none can loose after Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

All people throughout the world are enjoying the favours of Allah, the Almighty, the Merciful.

Next to the explanation of the creative power of Allah and the mission of the angels, who are the means of giving favours, this verse refers to His Mercy which is the foundation of the whole world of existence.

It says:

"Whatever mercy Allah opens to men, none can withhold…"

"…and whatever He withholds, none can loose after Him…"

"…and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

In short, all of the treasures of mercy are with Him, and whomever He sees eligible He gives it to him, wherever His Wisdom requires, He opens its doors; and if all humankind may gather with together in order to open the door He has shut, they will never be able to do. This fact is an important branch of Unity which is the origin of other branches.

Similar to this meaning has also been mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an, for example it says:

"And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favour. He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."[20]

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 3

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ منْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ لآ اِلَهَ اِلاَّ هُوَ فَاَنَّي تُؤْفَكُونَ

3. "O' people! Remember Allah's favour upon you; is there any creator, apart from Allah, who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth? There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away (from the truth)?"

We ought to invite all to contemplation upon the blessings of Allah, because the best way of knowing Allah is to be attentive to His favours.

In this holy verse the Qur'an has pointed to 'the Unity of worship' based on 'Unity of creative power and giving sustenance'.

It says:

"O' people! Remember Allah's favour upon you…"

Do think properly! Who and where is the main origin of all these favours, merits, and blessings? Who has given you all these vital possibilities in which you live? Is there any creator, except Allah, who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?

Who sends the life giving light of the sun, the enlivening drops of rain, and the pleasant breezes from heaven toward you? And who brings out the mines and treasures of the earth, the food stuffs, kinds of plants, vegetables, fruits and other blessings from this land for you?

In this regard the verse continues saying:

"…is there any creator, apart from Allah, who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?…"

Now that you know that Allah is the origin of all of these blessings, then do know that there is no object of worship but He, and worshipping is eligible only for His Pure Essence.

It says:

"…There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away (from the truth)?"

The Qur'anic term /tu'fakun/ is derived from /'ifk/ which is used for anything that diverts it from its original state, therefore any hardship which diverts from the Truth is called /'ifk/ and it is from this very point of view that it is applied in the sense of falsehood and slander; but some commentators believe that this word refers to the great lies and slanders.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 4

وَإِن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَإِلَي اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ

4. "And if they belie you, apostles before you have been belied, and to Allah are all affairs returned."

All Divine prophets had some opponents, and rejecting the truth is the permanent style of the pagans. Pagans, of course, do not do anything against ordinary persons, they are opposite of the way and aim. Whoever calls to the truth he will be rejected by them.

This holy verse, at first, teaches the Prophet (S) to be steadfast along his way, and this is the most important lesson for him.

It says:

"And if they belie you, apostles before you have been belied…"

This rejection is not a new thing. Those prophets before you also persevered in this way and they did not stop their activities in their prophecy before when they fulfilled their mission. You, too, must stand firm and perform your prophecy, the rest is up to Allah.

He never ignores your troubles in this way, in the same manner that He does not leave the rejections of the obstinate opponent without retribution. If there were not the Day of Hereafter, there would be the state of anxiety. But, regarding to the existence of that great Court and that the entire deeds of people are recorded and preserved for that Great Day, there is no room for anxiety any more.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 5

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلاَ تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلاَ يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغَرُورُ

5. "O' people! Verily the promise of Allah is true. So let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allah!"

The promises of Allah are true, but the promises of Satan are chaffy and deceptive.

In this verse, the Qur'an states the most important program of men where it says:

"O' people! Verily the promise of Allah is true…"

Hereafter, Reckoning, Record, the Balance, Retribution, Paradise, and Hell-Fire are all the promises which are not changeable from the side of Allah, the Almighty, the Wise.

With regard to this true promise, let not the life beguile you and let not the deceptive Satan deceive you and make you proud of the forgiveness and mercy of Allah.

The verse says:

"…So let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allah!"

Yes, the amusing factors, and deceptive dazzling glares of this world tend to occupy your heart and cause your neglect from that great Divine promise constantly.

The Satans from among jinn and men are always busy beguiling you by various means of deception. They also want to attract your whole thought

and attention to them and deviate it from that great promised Day that you have in front of you.

Thus, if their deception and temptation become effective, all your life will be destroyed and the wish of your happiness will fail. So you should be careful of them, too.

The repetition of warning unto people that they should be neither proud of the Satan's temptations nor of the world is, in fact, an indication to this that the way of penetration of sin in man consists of two ways:

1- The deceptive glories of the world: rank and dignity, wealth and position, and kinds of lusts, (being proud of the Divine forgiveness and mercy, and it is here that, from one side, Satan decorates the dazzling glory of this world in the man's view and introduces it as a present, attractive, lovely, and valuable thing.

And, on the other side, whenever man decides to control himself, by the remembrance of Hereafter and the Great Court of Allah, against the charm and intense attraction of the world, Satan makes him proud of the vastness of the Divine Mercy and, consequently, he invites him to sin and disobedience.

But man may be neglectful that in the same manner that Allah is 'the Most Merciful of all merciful' in the rank of mercy, in the rank of punishment and retribution, He is severe in retribution, too. His Mercy never encourages any one to committing sin, as His Wrath cannot be the cause of despair.

The Qur'anic word /qarur/ here means a being which is extraordinarily deceitful, and the objective meaning of it here may be any deceitful factor, and its purpose may be particularly Satan.

Of course, the second meaning is more fitting with the next verse specially that, in the verses of the Qur'an, 'deceit and pride' has repeatedly been attributed to Satan.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 6-7

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوّاً إِنَّمَا يَدْعُواْ حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

6. "Verily Satan is your enemy, so you (too) take him (as your) enemy. He only invites his adherents that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire."

7. "Those who disbelieve, for them shall be a severe chastisement, and as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them shall be forgiveness and a great recompense."

The record of enmity of Satan with humankind is ancient.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"If Satan is an enemy, then why do you neglect him?"[21]

This verse is a warning to all believers in relation to the temptations of Satan which were referred to in the previous verse.

It says:

"Verily Satan is your enemy, so you (too) take him (as your) enemy…"

His enmity began from the first day of the creation of Adam. When Satan was rejected from the presence of Allah as the result of the lack of

submission to the command of Allah concerning prostration to Adam, he took an oath that he would be an enemy to Adam and his children for ever, and he even asked Allah a respite and length of lifetime for this action.

Satan persists on his saying and he avail himself of the slightest opportunity for enmity upon man. Does wisdom let you that you do not accept him as an enemy and remain neglectful of him even for a moment? Let alone that you wish to follow Satan's footsteps, or accept him as a close friend and sincere adviser.

The Qur'an says:

"…Will you then choose him and his seed as your protecting friends instead of Me, when they are enemies to you?…"[22]

Moreover, he is an enemy who attacks you from every side, as he himself says:

"Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right and from their left…"[23]

Specially that he is in a hiding place where he sees man and man does not see him:

"…Surely he sees you: he and his Tribe, from where you do not see them…"[24]

Of course, this does not hinder your power to defend yourself against his temptations.

There is an interesting meaning in the teachings of Allah to Moses, the son of 'Imran, as Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) narrates that Allah told Moses:

"I have four recommendations to you in the protection of which you should try:

The first is that during the time you do not see your sins to be forgiven, do not refer to others' defects.

The second is that while you do not see my treasures have been ended, you might not be sad for your sustenance.

The third is that when you do not see my sovereignty destroyed, you should not be hopeful to anyone except Me.

The fourth is that during the time you do not see Satan as dead, you should not (think to be) secured from his deceit (and plots)."[25]

However, the enmity of Satan unto the children of Adam is a matter which has been pointed out in many verses of the Qur'an, and he has even been mentioned repeatedly in them as 'a manifest enemy':[26]

We should always avoid such an enemy.

For more emphasis, the Qur'an at the end of the verse, says:

"…He only invites his adherents, that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire."

The Qur'anic word /hizb/ originally means: 'a group or society which has an organization and intensity in action'; but it is usually used for any group and society that follow a special program and aim.

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase 'Hizb-ush-Shaytan' is his adherents and those who are on his line.

Of course, Satan can never take anybody as a formal member of his party, and invites him toward Hell.

The members of his party are those who are mentioned in some other verses of the Holy Qur'an and they have the following symptoms:

Those who have put the yoke of Satan's servitude and friendship on their necks are as such:

"His authority is only over those who befriend him, (following him)…"[27]

Those who are qualified as follows:

"Satan has gained hold on them, so he makes them forget the remembrance of Allah; they are Satan's party. Beware! Verily, the party of Satan are the losers."[28]

It is interesting that in three occurrences of the verses of the Qur'an 'The Party of Allah' has been mentioned, and in three different occurrences 'The Party of Satan' is referred to; so that what persons may enrol their names in this party or may be the members of that one.

But, however, it is natural that Satan invites his party to corruption, and sins, to pollutions of lusts, to polytheism, disobedience, cruelty, and, finally, to the Hell-Fire.

In the second verse, the Qur'an refers to the final fate of 'The Party of Allah' and the painful end of 'the Party of Satan' as follows:

"Those who disbelieve, for them shall be a severe chastisement, and as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them shall be forgiveness and a great recompense."

It is interesting that, concerning those who deserve of Divine punishment, the above verse suffices to the subject of disbelief, while for gaining 'forgiveness and a great recompense' it does not suffice to, 'faith' alone and adds 'righteous deed' to it, because only infidelity by itself causes a person to dwell eternally in Divine punishment, but having faith without good action does not cause man to be saved, so, from one view, faith and good action are necessarily with each other.

At the end of this holy verse, the Qur'an at first mentions forgiveness, and then speaks of 'great recompense', for, in fact, at first forgiveness washes the spirit of the believers and then makes them ready to receive 'a great recompense'. In literary terminology, the first is called 'dissociation' and the second is 'ornamenting'.

Notes

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 285
2. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 26
3. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 27
4. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verse 17
5. Surah Nazi'at, No. 79, verse 5
6. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 37
7. ar, No. 82, verses 10-12Sura Al-'Infit
8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 61
9. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 77

10. Surah zab, No. 33, verse 9Al-'Ah
11. Surah l, No. 16, verse 2An-Nah
12. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verses 30-34
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verses 69 and 77
14. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 78
15. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 126
16. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 174
17. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 175
18. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 164-166
19. Bihar, Vol. 59, P. 174
20. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 107
21. Tafsir-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, following the verse
22. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 50
23. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 17
24. Ibid, verse 27
25. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, P. 509
26. Al-Baqarah, verses 161, 203; Al-'An'am, verse 142; 'Al-A'raf, verse 22; Yusuf, verse 5; Yasin, verse, 60; and Az-Zukhruf, verse 62
27. Surah l, No. 16, verse 100An-Nah
28. Surah Al-Mujadalah, No. 58, verse 19

Section 2: The Triumph of Truth Prophesied

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 8

أَفَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَءَاهُ حَسَناً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ فَلاَ تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرَاتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

8. "Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deed is made alluring so that he looks upon it as good, (equal to one who is rightly guided)? Now verily Allah makes err whom He pleases and guides aright whom He pleases, so let not your soul waste away in grief for them; verily Allah is Cognizant of what they do."

The one who introduces the evil behaviour of a person as a pleasant one, and instead of criticizing it, he flatters him, is counted a Satan, because, in other verse, the Holy Qur'an says:

"…Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them…"[1]

Imam Kazim (as) says:

"Seeing bad things as good ones is the premise of haughtiness and self-administration."[2]

In view of the fact that in the previous verses people were divided into two groups: a believing group and a disbelieving group, or 'the party of Allah', who are the enemy of Satan, and 'the Party of Satan', who are the followers of Satan, this verse has stated one of the important qualities of these two groups, which, in fact, is the origin of their other evil programs, where it says:

"Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deed is made alluring so that he looks upon it as good, (equal to one who is rightly guided)?…"

In fact, this very subject is the key of all miseries of the misguided and obstinate nations whose ugly deeds seem to them as fair because of the fact that they are consistent with their lusts and their black hearts.

It is also evident that such an obstinate person neither accepts any admonition, nor does he usually show any fitness for listening to criticisms, nor does he agree to change his way. He neither tries to experience and analyse his deeds, nor is he anxious about their sequels.

Further than that when the ugliness and beauty is spoken of, they consider beauties as theirs, and attribute the true believers with the ugly things.

There were many obstinate pagans who when heard the previous verses about the Party of Satan and their painful fate they adapted them with the true believers and counted themselves as an extension of the Party of Allah. And this is a very great calamity.

But, who makes the evil deeds of the wrong doers seem fair in their view: Allah or the carnal desire or Satan?

No doubt the main factor is carnal desire and Satan, but since Allah has created this effect in their deeds it can be attributed to Allah; because when people commit a sin at the beginning that their nature is pure, their conscience is vigilant, and their wisdom works fairly well, they become inconvenient from their action, but the more they repeat it, the more their inconvenience decreases.

Gradually they reach to the stage of indifference, and if they repeat it more, the ugly things seem beautiful in their views, thus far that they imagine it among their honours and virtues, while they have been drowned in the dirty situation of corruption.

It is interesting that when the Holy Qur'an propounds this question, saying:

"Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deed is made alluring so that he looks upon it as good…?"

it does not clearly express the opposite point of it. As if it intends to give a vast respite to the hearer that he illustrates in his mind all the different things that he can consider opposite to it and understands more. It seems it wants to say whether such a person is like the truth seekers.

Is such a person like the pure hearted persons who are always busy examining their own selves?

Is there any hope of felicity for such a person?

Then, the Qur'an refers to the statement of reason of the difference of these two groups. It adds:

"…Now verily Allah makes err whom He pleases and guides aright whom He pleases…"

If the ugly deeds of the first group are decorated in their views, this is the consequence of the Divine mislead. It is He Who has put this property in the repetition of ugly deeds to which the man's self accustoms itself, he gets the habit of it, and harmonizes with it.

It is He Who gives some penetrating and kin eyes, together with some hearing ears to the pure-hearted believers for understanding the facts as they exactly are.

It is clear that the Divine Will is accompanied with His Wisdom and gives everyone whatever he is eligible to.

So, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…so let not your soul waste away in grief for them…"

This meaning is similar to the content of verse 3 in Surah As-Shu'ara', No. 26, which says:

"Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief, for that they do not become Believers."

The application of the Qur'anic word /hasarat/ which is an object for the previous sentence refers to this fact that not only you grieve for them one regret but also with several regrets.

They are the regret of losing the bounty of guidance, the regret of wasting the jewel of humanity, the regret of losing the sense of recognition thus far that they see an ugly thing as beautiful; and, finally, the regret of their encountering the Fire of the Wrath of Allah.

But why does Allah say:

"…So let not your soul waste a way in grief…"?

It is because Allah is cognizant of their deeds and He gives them what they deserve of.

The verse continues saying:

"…verily Allah is Cognizant of what they do."

The extraordinary sympathy of the Prophet of Islam (S) unto the misguided and deviated ones is completely understood from the tone of the verse. And this is the state of a true Divine leader that, because of the people's lack of acceptance of the truth and rejecting the means of their happiness, he pains so much that as if he tended to kill himself.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 9

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَاباً فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلَي بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذَلِكَ النُّشُورُ

9. "And Allah is He who sends the winds that stir up cloud then We drive it to a dead land and there with revive the earth, after it is dead. Even so is the Resurrection."

In the same manner that by the Will of Allah, the Almighty, the movement of the cloud and winds, and the fall of rain make the dead land alive and plants shoot out of the soil, with His Will a great earthquake will happen and the dead come out of the ground and will be quickened.

Regarding to the discussions, which were mentioned in the previous holy verses about guidance, misguidance, faith, and disbelief, this holy verse talks briefly and clearly about Origin and Resurrections and by an interesting reasoning it proves both of them.

It says:

"And Allah is He who sends the winds that stir up cloud…"

"…then We drive it to a dead land and there with revive the earth, after it is dead…"

"…Even so is the Resurrection."

The accurate system which runs the movement of winds and then the movement of the pieces of cloud and after that the descent of the life-giving rain drops and, next to it, reviving the dead lands, itself is the best proof and the best evidence upon this fact the Might of a Wise One exists beyond this system and directs it.

It is also necessary to note this point that the Qur'anic phrase /tuthiru/ is derived from /'itharah/ in the sense of 'distribute and scatter', and here it refers to the rising of pieces of cloud as the result of the blow of winds over the water of oceans, since the subject of the movement of pieces of cloud has been mentioned in the next sentence, saying:

"…That stir up cloud…"

It is interesting that we recite in a tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) that once one of his companions asked him:

"O' Messenger of Allah! How does Allah quickens the dead and what is the sign of it in the world of creation?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Have you not passed by the land of your tribe while it has been dry and dead, and then you passed by it while it has become green?"

I said:

"Yes, O Messenger of Allah."

He (S) said:

"In such a way Allah quickens the dead and this is its sign in the creation."[3]

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 10

مَن كَانَ يُرِ دُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعاً اِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَكْرُ أُوْ لَئِكَ هُوَ يَبُورُ

10. "Whoever desires glory, the glory belongs to Allah wholly to Him do ascend the good words and the righteous deed, He uplifts it; but those who devise evil deeds, for them is a terrible chastisement, and their plot shall come to naught."

The real glory is with Allah, not with people, and it is found under the light of 'Faith' and 'righteous deed.'

Following to this monotheistic discussion, this verse points to the great error of the pagans who asked their glory from their idols and thought that believing in the Prophet (S) caused the dispersion of people from around them.

They used to say:

"…'If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be driven out from our land.'…"

The Qur'an says:

"Whoever desires glory, the glory belongs to Allah wholly…"

As Raqib has said in Mufradat, the Arabic word /'izzat/ originally means that state that makes man resisting and mighty. It is for this reason that the hard and firm lands are called /'azaz/ in Arabic.

Since it is only the Pure Essence of Allah that is Mighty, else, because of their limitation, all creatures can be defeated. Therefore, the whole glory belongs to Him, and whoever obtains any glory it is from the endless ocean of His blessing.

During the last hours of his lifetime when Imam Hassan (as) was asked by one of his companions named Junadat-ibn-'Abi-Sufyan to advise him, Imam stated some valuable and effective admonitions for him, among which was this:

"If you wish to be 'honoured' without having any tribe, and to have reverence without the power of government, then come out from the shade of sin of Allah, and settle in the glory of the obedience of Allah."

And if we see that some verses of the Qur'an introduce glory, besides Allah, for the Prophet (S) and the believers, (like Surah Munafiqun, No. 63, verse 8 which says:

"…Honour belongs to Allah and His Messenger and to the Believers…",

it is for the reason that they have earned glory from the rays of the glory of Allah, too.

Then the verse introduces the way of reaching to glory as follows:

"…to Him do ascend the good words and the righteous deed, He uplifts it…"

The Qur'anic phrase: /'al kalimutayyib/ means: 'pure words', and the purity of a speech depends on the purity of its content, and the purity of content relates to the concepts which adapt to the pure, brilliant, objective facts.

What reality is higher than the Pure Essence of Allah and His right and just religion, as well as the pure righteous ones who pave the way of its distribution? Therefore, this holy phrase has been rendered into correct belief in Origin, Resurrection and Allah's religion.

Some of the commentators have rendered the Qur'anic phrase: /'al kalimut tayyib/ into: 'there is no god but Allah', - while some others have rendered it into: /subhan-allah-i-wal-hamd-u-lillah-i-wala-'ilaha-'illallah-u-wa-llah-u-'akbar/, and some commentators have rendered it, after mentioning there is no god but Allah, into "Muhammad rasul-ullah wa 'Aliyyan waliyyullah wa xalifata rasulihi".

Or in some Islamic narrations the Qur'anic phrases /'al kalimut tayyib/ and /'al-'amal-us salih/ have been rendered into the love of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) or the like of it. All of them are of the kind of the statement of clear extensions for that vast concept, and they do not create any limitation in its concept, because every statement which has a pure and excellent content is entirely found in this title.

However, the same Lord Who, according to the previous verse, makes the dead land alive by life-giving drops of rain, furnishes 'the pure word and righteous deed', too, and causes them to reach to the neighbourhood of His Mercy.

Then the Qur'an refers to the opposite point of it, where it says:

"…but those who devise evil deeds, for them is a terrible chastisement, and their plot shall come to naught."

Although the corruptive persons imagine that, by injustice, cruelty, falsehood, and plot, they can obtain a kind of glory for them by means of wealth, property, and power but at the end they shall understand that not only they have provided a chastisement for them, but also their efforts in this way will become naught.

As the Qur'an says, there were some people who behaved like this:

"And they have taken gods besides Allah that they might be for them a glory."[4]

And there were some hypocrites who imagined themselves as some honoured ones and the believers as the meaner:

"They say: 'If we return to Medina, surely the more honourable (element) will expel there from the meaner'…"[5]

There were some other persons, who considered the deceit of the Pharaohs as their own glory, or they sought honour from sin, injustice, and cruelty, but all of them were defeated. So, it is only faith and righteous deed which go up toward Allah.

In philology the Arabic word /makr/ means any kind of device, but in some instances it is used in the sense of the devices that are accompanied with mischief, and the verse under discussion is among those instances.

The term /sayyi'at/, mentioned in the above verse, refers to all ugly and evil things which occur, irrespective of creedal evils and practical ones, and that some commentators have rendered it into the pagans' plots for killing or banishing the Prophet of Islam (S) from Mecca is, in fact, one of the expansions of it, not its whole concepts.

The Qur'anic word /yabur/ is derived from /bawar/ and /buran/ which originally means excess dullness of market, and since this kind of dullness of market often causes destruction, this word has been used in the sense of destruction and annihilation.

The whole glory belongs to Allah. Does this state mean something save reaching to the stage of being Almighty? If it is so, where can glory be sought, and what can give glory to man?

By a clear analysis we reach this fact that the reality of glory, at the first degree, is the power which appears in the heart and entity of man and dissuades him from having humility submission, and collusion in relation with disobedient and rebellious persons to the command of Allah. It is a power that with having it one never surrenders to unlawful lusts and he never obeys his low desires.

It is a power which usually elevates him up to the stage of impenetrability before any wealth and force.

Does this power originate from any source save from the Faith in Allah, which is the main source of power and glory?

What was said is only in the stage of thought, belief, soul and spirit; but in the stage of action, glory originates from some deeds that have correct root and an accurate program and style. In other words, glory can be found in 'righteous deeds'. These two elements give man honour, greatness, might, and glory.

The world loving sorcerers, contemporary to Pharaoh, began their tricks in his name and glory.

"…and said: 'By Pharaoh's dignity we shall certainly be the victors."[6]

Yet, before long, they failed from the shepherd-stick of Moses (as), but when they came out from the cover of the disgraceful flag of Pharaoh and went under the light of Monotheism and believed, they became so strong and mighty that the most severe threats of Pharaoh did not affect on them.

They eagerly lost their hands, feet, and even souls in the cause of Allah and suffered martyrdom. By this action, they proved that they would surrender neither to money nor to force. They remained mighty and, today, their honourable history contains a great deal of instructive lessons for us.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 11

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُم مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنثَى وَلاَ تَضَعُ اِلاَّ بِعِلْمِهِ
وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِن مُعَمَّرٍ وَلاَ يُنقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ اِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَي اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

11. "And Allah did create you from dust; then from a sperm-drop, then He made you pairs. And no female conceives nor does she bring forth, save with His knowledge and none is given long life who is given long life neither is any diminished in his life, but it is in a Book. Verily this, for Allah, is easy."

The Arabic word /mu'ammar/ is called to the owners of a long-life. The word /'umr/ is derived from /'imran/ (flourishing state), and since a person has the ability of flourishing during the time he is alive, the length of his life is called 'life-time'.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that charity and visiting one's kin cause the life-time to be long, but 'breaking off connections with one's kindred' and to disgrace parents cause the lifetime to be shortened.[7]

In this holy verse, the Qur'an states another part of the extroversive and introversive verses which are, on one side, the evidence over the Power of Allah and, on the other side, over His Knowledge.

At first, it points to the creation of man in different stages, when it says:

"And Allah did create you from dust; then from a sperm-drop, then He made you pairs…"

These are three stages among the whole stages of the creation of man: soil, sperm-drop, and the stage of matrimony.

It is certain that man is from dust, not only from this point that all materials that form the man's body are derived from dust, and that which man takes food from, or wherefrom his sperm-drop originates all are finally found in the materials which are in soil.

Some commentators believe that the concept of 'the creation of man from dust' probably refers only to the first creation, while the creation from sperm-drop refers to later stages.

The first one is the stage of men's compendious creation, (because the entity of all human beings has been extracted in the entity of Adam); and the second is the expansive stages which are separate from each other.

However, the stage of person's matrimony is the stage of continuation of generation and man's reproduction.

Then it refers to the fourth and the fifth stage of man's life, viz., the subject of 'pregnancy' of mothers and their delivery.

It says:

"…And no female conceives nor does she bring forth, save with His knowledge…"

Yes, the subject of pregnancy, and the complicated and very amazing changes of foetus, then reaching the stage of delivery and the wonderful variations that, at that sensitive moment, come forth to mothers, from one side, and to the foetus, on the other side, are so tender and accurate that is not possible save by relying on the infinite knowledge of Allah.

It is done in a manner that if the governing regulation over it changes, even very slightly, the program of delivery or delivery itself will face with disturbance and confusion, and it will come to destruction.

Each of these five stages of man's life is more wonderful than the other.

The inanimate dust is in one side and the wise, alert, and originative man, the alive, is on the other side. How different they are!

The sperm-drop which has been formed of a few drops of fetid water is on one end, and the handsome, beautiful, and talented man equipped with different senses and organs is on the other end.

Next to this stage, there is the subject of variety of man into two genders: male and female.

Regarding to the abundant differences in the body and soul, there will come some physiological problems into being each of which takes its own separate way from the very beginning of the combination of semen and

everyone of them goes toward the duty which has been given to them and thus they develop.

The next subject is the responsibility of mother which is the acceptance and bearing of this burden, its protection, its nutrition and its growth, which has attracted the thoughts of great scientists to them, and they confess that it is one of the most surprising subjects of the world of existence.

The last stage of this part of foetus is the stage of birth. It is a revolutionary stage and completely dangerous, that is accompanied with a great deal of wonders.

What factors command foetus to come out from the mother's womb?

How is the complete harmony arranged between this command and readiness of the limbs of the mother for its execution.

How can foetus totally change the situation to which it has been accustomed for nine months just in a moment: ceases its relation with the mother, uses the fresh air, the way of his food from umbilical cord is suddenly closed, the new way, i.e. the mouth begins to work, the dark environment of mother is left and the bright environment full of light is used, and it resists against all these changes and it immediately adapts itself to them?

Are these things not the best signs to the endless power and knowledge of Allah? It is a complete injustice that man judges so vainly about his own creation.

Then the Qur'an refers to the sixth and seventh stages of this wonderful program.

It says:

"…and none is given long life who is given long life neither is any diminished in his life, but it is in a Book…"

What factors are effective in the length of man's life? What factors fight against the continuation of his life? And in short, what factors must gather and help each other in order that man can continue his living for one hundred years or less and more! And, finally, what factors cause the difference in man's life-time?

All of these things have also some complicated and exact computations of which none is aware but Allah; and whatever we know in these fields today comparing with what we do not know is very little and worthless.

The Arabic word /mu'ammar/ is derived from the word /'umr/ which is originally derived from /'imarat/ in the sense of 'habitation', and the fact that the length of man's living is called lifetime is for the sake that the habitation of his body is in this time.

This word, /mu'ammar/, means a person who has a long life. So, the Qur'an concludes the verse with this sentence, saying:

"…Verily this, for Allah, is easy."

The creation of this wonderful being from 'dust' and the initiation of the creation of a complete man from 'sperm-drop', and also the whole facts concerning 'genetic state', conjugality, pregnancy, delivery, increase and decrease in life-time, whether from the point of power and from the point of knowledge, and computation of all of them is entirely easy and simple for Him.

These are as a small part of the extroversive verses that, from one side, they relate and acquaint us with the world of existence, and, on the other side, they are counted as some valid proofs upon the possibility of Resurrection.

He Who was able to create a being from ‘dust’ and from sperm-drop for the first time, is He not able to revive men?

And does He, Who is aware of the minutes of these laws, have any difficulty in protecting and reckoning of the deeds of people in the scene of Resurrection?

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 12

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَآئِغٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِن كُلٍّ تَأْكُلُونَ لَحْماً طَرِيّاً وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَي الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَاخِرَ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

12. “And not are the two seas alike, the one (is) palatable, and pleasant to drink, and the other, salt and bitter. Yet from the both you eat fresh flesh; and you extract ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleave through it that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be thankful.”

The Divine bounties are from His grace and we are not His creditors, but we may gain something because of our effort and endeavour, so noting to blessings is a premise to the growth of the essence of thanksgiving.

Another part of the extroversive verses, which are the signs of His greatness and power in the creation of the seas, blessings, and their benefits are referred to in this verse.

It says:

“And not are the two seas alike, the one (is) palatable, and pleasant to drink, and the other, salt and bitter…”

The Arabic word /‘aõb/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, means: pure and cold, while Lisan-ul-‘Arab has rendered it into: ‘Pure water’.

Although, on the first day, the water of these two seas has been sent down from the sky in the form of some sweet and wholesome drops of rain, and both of them originate from one source, but they have appeared in two completely different forms and with various benefits.

It is also wonderful that:

“…Yet from the both you eat fresh flesh…”

“…and you extract ornaments which you wear…”

Moreover, you can take enjoy both of them, not only for transportation but also for carrying your goods, as the verse says:

“…and you see the ships cleave through it that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be thankful.”

Some Points

1- As the Lisan-ul-‘Arab says, the Arabic word /furat/ is the water which is in utmost purity and wholesomeness.

The Qur’anic word /sa’iq/ means the water that because of its wholesomeness is easily swallowed, contrast to the word /milh/ (a salt water) and the word /’ujaj/ (a bitter water) that as if this kind of water hurts the throat and bars the way of the gullet.

2- Some commentators believe that this holy verse is an example to show the lack of equality between believers and disbelievers, but the verses before and after it all talk about the signs of creation.

Even the last part of this very verse is the evidence over this fact that this sentence, too, discusses about the secrets of Unity, and it is an indication to the variety of the seas and their different effects, and their common benefits.

3- In this verse three benefits out of abundant benefits of the seas have been mentioned: foodstuff, means of ornament, and the subject of transportation.

We know that the seas are one of the important sources of man's foodstuff, and every year millions of tons of fresh flesh are taken from them without that man bears a considerable trouble for it. The system of creation has arranged a proper program in this regard so that men can enjoy this vast blessing, the spread Divine food table, without the least task.

Some different means of ornament, such as: pearl, shell, pearls and coral are drawn out from the seas. The emphasis of the Qur'an on this subject is for the sake that, contrary to the beasts, the man's self has different dimensions one of which is the sense of beauty.

This sense is the origin of the appearance of some artistic, literary and taste issues, the satiation of which correctly and far from any kind of excess and defect, and immoderation and extravagance pleases the self and gives man mirth and calmness, and makes him ready for the heavy affairs of life.

As for the subject of transportation, which is one of the most important fillers of human civilization and the man's social life, regarding the fact that the seas (and oceans) have covered the main part of the surface of the earth and, that they relate to each other, they can do man the best favour in this regard.

The amount of the goods that are transported on the seas and the number of the passengers who are removed from one place to another on them is so large that they cannot be compared with any other means of vehicle. Sometimes it happens that one ship can carry by it the loads as many as the tens of thousand cars.

4- Of course, the benefits of the seas are not limited to what was said in the above, and the Qur'an does not tend to limit them in these three aspects. The formation of pieces of cloud, different medicines, oil, the means of clothing, the fertilizing materials for the uncultivated lands, having effect on winds, and so on are counted as other favours of the seas.

5- The emphasis of the Holy Qur'an on 'fresh flesh' is an expressive indication to the nutrition benefited from such fleshes comparing the harms of the stale fleshes, the conserves, and the like.

6- There arises a question here: the seas with salt water are spread all over the globe, where is the sea with sweet water?

In answer it must be said: the seas and lakes with sweet water are not so few in the earth, like the lakes of sweet water in the United States and the others. Moreover, some great streams are sometimes called sea, like the great river of Nile which in Arabic has been called /bahr/ (sea) in the story of Moses.[8]

Moreover, the advance of the water of the great streams into the seas, regarding the fact that it goes through the salty water therein and does not mix with it for a length of time, itself forms some seas of sweet water in different places.

7- The Qur'anic sentence:

'That you may seek of His bounty'

contains a vast meaning which includes any economical activities which are done by means of sea-ways.

The last sentence of the verse:

'That you may be thankful',

has been mentioned for awakening the sense of thanksgiving in men and it is a means for theism and theology.

Be Careful of the Following Points:

1- The spiritual elements effective in prolongation and, shortening the life-time: In relation to the discussion stated in the abovementioned verses about the increase and decrease of lifetime by the command of Allah, paying attention to the Islamic narrations concerning the prolonging and shortening of lifetime, a group of Qur'anic commentators have explained some matters in this regard.

There are, of course, some natural factors effective in increasing and decreasing the length of lifetime most of which have been known to human beings yet, like correct feeding free from excess and defect, being constantly busy working and moving, avoidance from any kind of narcotic materials and dangerous addictions and alcoholic liquors, avoiding the permanent excitements, and having a strong Faith which can give man peace and power in the difficulties of life and living.

But, besides these things, there are some factors that their outward relation with the question of prolongation of life-time is not so clear to us, while some Islamic narrations have properly emphasized on it.

As a few examples, pay attention to the following narrations:

1- The holy Prophet (S) says:

"Verily alms-giving (in the way of Allah) and union of kindred cause houses to be furnished and prolong the life-times'."[9]

2- He (S) also has said:

"Whoever desires his sustenance to be increased and his death to be postponed should perform union of kindred."

3- Concerning some of sins, like fornication in particular, Islamic narrations indicate that such sins decrease the length of lifetime.

Among them is the famous tradition of the Prophet (S) in which he has said:

"O' Muslims! Do avoid fornication which has six sequels: Three of them are in this world and three of them are in Hereafter. Those three which are in the world are as these: it causes the worth (and light) of man to be vanished, brings indigence, and decreases the length of lifetime…"[10]

4- Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Kindness and hidden alms-giving remove poverty and increase life-time, and prevent seventy kinds of evil death."[11]

There are also some indications in Islamic narrations concerning some other sins, such as injustice, and sins in absolute.

Some of the commentators who have not been able to make difference between the 'appointed death' and the 'sudden death' have attacked to these traditions and believe that they are contradictory to the texts of the Qur'an which consider the limit of the length of man's lifetime fixed and unchangeable.[12]

Explanation: No Doubt Man Has Two Kinds of 'End of Life'

The appointed term, which is the end of potential ability of man's body for continuity of entity, and by its coming everything will end by the command of Allah.

The sudden death that, with the change of circumstances, the length of life-time changes. For example, someone commits suicide while if he had not committed this great sin, he would have been alive for longer years.

Or as the result of using the alcoholic liquors and some narcotic materials, and excess sensuality, he loses his bodily ability in a short time, but if these things were absent in his life, he could live for many longer years.

These are some vivid things which are experimental and comprehensible for every body and none can deny them.

Concerning the unexpected events, there are also some affairs which are naturally related to the sudden death; this is not deniable, too.

Therefore, if a great deal of Islamic narrations indicate that alms-giving in the cause of Allah, or union of kindred cause the length of lifetime to be prolonged and pests to be removed, in fact, they depend on these very factors.

And if we do not separate these two kinds of the term of death from each other, the comprehension of many of the issues in relation with fore-ordination and destiny, and the effect of effort and endeavour in men's lives will remain insolvable.

This discussion can be made clear by a simple example. For instance, a person provides a new car that, according to the different preparations used in the structure of it, the car can work for example for twenty years, but upon condition that it would be treated well and the necessary protections should be applied. In this case the appointed term of this car is twenty years, not more than that.

But if the necessary protections are not applied, and the car is given to some unaware experienced and careless persons to ride and they use it beyond its power and capacity, and every day they take it to work in rough roads, the life-time of the car may decrease to half or less than that. This is that very 'sudden death' of it.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 13

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِن قِطْمِيرٍ

13. "He merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night, and He has made subservient (to you) the sun and the moon, each of them running to an appointed time; such is Allah, your Lord; to Him

belongs the kingdom, and those whom you call upon, apart from Him, possess not (so much as) the skin of a date-stone."

The change of the length of the night and the day, or the gradual transfer of each of them to another is not casual, but the nature is subjected to Allah.

Again in this verse, the Qur'an points to another part of the signs of Monotheism and the infinite blessings of Allah so that, by giving awareness to human beings, it invokes their sense of thanksgiving alongside the recognition of the real object of worship and dissuades them from any partnership and superstitious worshipping.

It says:

"He merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night…"

The Qur'anic term /yulij/ is derived from /'ilaj/ in the sense of 'to merge'. It may refer to one of the following two meanings, or both of them: the gradual increase and decrease of the nights and the days during the year which cause the appearance of different seasons with all their effects and blessings.

The gradual decrease from the night and adding to the day, and vice versa, is because of the existence of twilight, which hinders the dangers of sudden transfer from darkness to light and from light to darkness. It gives human beings enough preparation to quietly and slowly transfer from one to another without any danger.

Then the verse refers to the subject of making the sun and the moon subservient, and says:

"…and He has made subservient (to you) the sun and the moon…"

What a subservient is higher than this that all of them run in the way of man's interests and that they are the source of kinds of favours in the man's life. The cloud, the wind, the moon, the sun, and the universe are all busy in order that men can provide his life well and he would not be in negligence, and he should always remember the main real origin of these merits.[13]

But in the meantime that the sun and the moon in full regularity rotate in their orbits and they are good servants for humankind, the system which governs over them is not eternal, and even these great stars, with their much light, will finally become dark and will be destroyed.

So, next to the subject of making them subservient, the Holy Qur'an adds:

"…each of them running to an appointed time…"

And according to Surah Takwir, No. 81, verses 1-2, which say:

"When the sun (with its spacious light) is folded up."

"And when the stars fall, losing their lustre."

All of them turn to darkness and will become extinguished.

Some other commentators have delivered here another commentary for the Qur'anic term /'ajal-im-musamma/ (the appointed term). It refers to the rotations of the sun and the moon. The first prolongs one year and the second ends in one month.[14]

But, regarding to the different usages of this meaning in numerous verses of the Qur'an which have been applied in the sense of 'the end of life', it

becomes clear that the said commentary is not correct, and its commentary is that very first one, i.e., the end of the lifetime of the sun and the moon.[15]

Then, as a conclusion upon this monastic discussion, the verse continues saying:

"…such is Allah, your Lord…"

Allah is the Lord Who has assigned the system of light and darkness and the accurate movements of the sun and the moon with all their favours.

The verse continues again saying:

"…to Him belongs the kingdom, and those whom you call upon, apart from Him, possess not (so much as) the skin of a date-stone."

The Qur'anic term /qitmir/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, is the sign which exists at the back of the date-stone (a small gap), and according to Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Qurtabi in his commentary book, it is a thin white skin which has covered over the date-stone thoroughly. In any case, it indirectly refers to some very small and worthless beings.

Yes, these idols are neither the source of any benefit, and harm, nor do they defend you nor of themselves, nor do they have any authority and possession even over the skin of a dater-stone. Yet, why do you, the unwise, worship them and demand them to solve your problems?

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 14

إِن تَدْعُوهُمْ لاَ يَسْمَعُوا دُعَآءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلاَ يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ

14. "If you call upon them, they will not hear your prayer; and even if they heard, they would not answer you; and on the Day of judgment they will deny your partnership; and none can inform you like (the One Who is) aware."

On the Day of Hereafter, the naughty objects of worship will repudiate and hate the polytheists. They will say to them that you polytheists did not use to worship them (the idols) but you were the servants of your own conjectures and your low desires.

Man reaches a point where he leaves out the invitation of Allah, the Hearer, the Responder,

"…Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer)…"

and goes to some dumb, blind and useless solid bodies.

That is why addressing the polytheists, the Holy Qur'an says:

"If you call upon them, they will not hear your prayer…"

They do not answer you, because they are but some pieces of stone and wood which are inanimate bodies and have no sense. And supposing they were able to hear your moan, invocation, and persistence they would never have the ability of answering to your needs.

The verse continues saying:

"…and even if they heard, they would not answer you…"

It became clear that they do not own any benefit and harm even as much as the thin skin of a date-stone in the world of existence, yet how do you expect them to do something for you or to solve a problem?

Moreover, this fact is higher than that:

"…and on the Day of judgment they will deny your partnership…"

They will say: O' Lord! these did not worship us, but they, in fact, worshipped their own carnal desire.

This witness is done by non-verbal language that whoever looks at idols he hears this statement from them by the ear of his conscience. Or the same Lord Who on that Day makes the man's limbs, organs, and skin of the body speak, will order them to talk and they will bear witness that these deviated polytheists used to worship, in fact, their own conjectures and carnal desires.

This holy verse is similar to the content of verse 28 in Surah Yunus, No. 10 which says:

"And the Day We shall muster them all, then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us): 'Get you to your place! You and your associates', then We shall set a space between them, and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!' "

For more emphasis, at the end of the verse the Holy Qur'an says:

"…and none can inform you like (the One Who is) aware."

A Notable Point:

Through the commentary of the previous verses, it became clear that the purpose of the sentence:

"If you call upon them, they will not hear your prayer…",

mentioned in the verse under discussion, is idols which have neither a hearing ear to listen to the demands of their worshippers, nor if they had, they would not be able to solve any problem, nor do they possess anything and any authority.

But in order to cease the communication of the Muslims with the Prophet of Islam (S) and the great leaders by the way of seeking supplicating and intercession, some outwardly Muslims have taken hold of this verse and the like of it and have said that all those whom you call besides Allah, even the prophets, do not hear your word and if they heard they would not answer.

Or they have seized Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 197 which says:

"And those whom you call upon other than Him can neither help you, nor help themselves.",

and the like.

Thus, they negate any supplicating to the souls of prophets and the Imams and count it contrast to Monotheism.

While a simple glance over the verses which are before these verses and after them are sufficient to perceive this fact that the purpose of the verse is idols, because the words in all these verses are about idols; the words are about the pieces of stone and wood that they considered as the partners of Allah. And they believed in a power for them in the face of the Power of Allah.

But who is the one who does not know that the Divine prophets and the friends of Allah are like the martyrs in the cause of Allah about whose life the Qur'an explicitly speaks, saying that they have the purgatory life, and we know that in the purgatory life the activity of the soul is vaster and more expanded, because it has been delivered from the worldly needs and material curtains.

This is from one side.

On the other side, no doubt, supplicating to these pure souls does not mean that we have considered any independence for them against Allah, but the aim is that we get help from their honour and their position with Allah, and that we seek help from the reverence and greatness they have in the Court of Allah, and this is the exact Unity and servitude of Allah.

Therefore, as the Qur'an explicitly says in the subject of intercession, they intercede only by the leave and command of Allah:

"…Who is it that can intercede with Him save by His leave?…"[16]

Also, supplicating to them is from this way and of this kind.

Who can reject the clear verses of supplicating? Or may he imagine this act as polytheism and stands against the Qur'an and claims Monotheism? They are but some proud ignorant persons who bring these subjects forth to create separation between Muslims.

We study in the biography of the companions of the Prophet (S) that for their difficulties they used to go beside the tomb of the Prophet (S) and resorted and sought help from his pure soul in the Presence of God.

As Biyhaqi, the famous traditionist of the Sunnites, Narrates that there happened a draught and famine at the time of the second Kalif.

Then Bilal, accompanied with a group of Companions of the holy Prophet (S), went beside the Prophet's grave, and said such:

"O' Messenger of Allah! Seek rain for your Ummah… for verily they have annihilated."[17]

Some of the commentators of the Sunnites, like 'Alusi, have narrated many traditions in this regard.

After a discussion and strictness concerning these traditions, at last he says:

"Next to all these statements, I do not see any hinder in resorting to Allah by the rank of the Prophet (S) whether at the time of his life and after his death."

Then he also adds the names of some others who have a rank with Allah and confesses to the admissibility of resorting to them.[18]

Notes

1. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 8, verse 48
2. Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 313
3. The book by Qurtabi, Vol. 8, P. 5409
4. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 81
5. Surah Al-Munafiqun, No. 63, verse 8
6. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 44
7. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, the word 'life-time'
8. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 50, Surah As-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 63, and Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 70, verse 38
9. The of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, PP. 354-355
10. Ibid
11. ar,Safinat-ul-Bih Vol. 2, P. 23
12. 'Alusi, the , Vol. 22, P. 164

www.alhassanain.org/english

13. Concerning the subservient of the sun and the moon we had a rather detailed explanation mentioned in the commentary of Surah Ar-Ra‘d, No. 13, verse 2, and in the commentary of Surah ’Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 33

14. The of Rauh-ul-Bayan, and Abul-Futuh-i-Razi

15. In Surah Fatir, verse 45, you may refer to this relation, Surah An-Nahl, verse 61, Surah Az-Zumar, verse 43, Surah An-Nur, verse 4, and Surah Qafir, verse 67

16. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255

17. ulsKitab-ut-Taqas ’ila Haghighat-it-Tawassul.

18. ????

Section 3: Every People on Earth Had a Warner

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 15

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَي اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

15. "O people! You are the needy unto Allah; and Allah (alone) is He Who is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised."

None is there to be free from want from Allah (s.w.t.), and all beings are needy, but since Man disobeys, he should be controlled.

Following to the emphasized invitation to Monotheism and struggle against all kinds of polytheism and idolatry mentioned in the previous verses, this misconception may appear in some individuals that what is the need of Allah to our worshipping that He persists on it and emphasizes it so much?

Therefore, in order to state this fact that it is we who are in need of his worship, and He is not in need of our worship, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"O people! You are the needy unto Allah; and Allah (alone) is He Who is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised."

What a worthy and important statement it is that makes clear our situation in the scene of the world of existence before the One Who has given us our existence! The verse opens many puzzles in this regard and answers to a great deal of questions.

Yes, the One really free from need and Self-Subsistent in the whole world of existence is He Who is Allah. All human beings, or it is better to say all beings are thoroughly needy and they are dependant to that Independent Existence that if their relation is ceased from Him, even for a moment, they are nothing.

Therefore, none should bow and submit to other than Him, and demand other than Him to provide his needs, because they all are in need of Him, too. Even dignifying the Divine prophets and leaders of the Truth is for the sake that they are His messengers and His deputies and they absolutely have no independence from themselves.

Thus He is both Self-Sufficient and Praised, that is, in the meantime that He is Self-Sufficient, He is so generous and kind that He is worthy of any sort of praise and gratitude; and also, in the mid-time that He is gracious and kind to the servants, He is Self-Sufficient of all.

Being attentive to this fact produces two positive effects on the believing persons. From one side, it causes them to come down from the horse of pride, selfishness, and disobedience, and warns them that they have not anything from themselves to boast for it, and whatever they have they are the deposits of Allah with them.

And on the other side, they should not ask their needs from other than Allah, and they do not put the yoke of servitude of other than Him on their necks. They must deliver themselves from all possessions so that all others become servants of theirs.

By this kind of concept and theology, whatever the true believers see in the world they know them from His source, and no means may cause them to be neglectful from the cause of causes.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 16-17

إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

16. "If He pleases, He will take you off and bring a new generation,"

17. "And this is not hard to Allah."

The statement of the power of Allah is a way for inviting people and threatening the disobedient ones. Allah is powerful in creation and His Power has no limit.

For laying an emphasis on this very need and indigence of men, this verse says:

"If He pleases, He will take you off and bring a new generation,"

Therefore, He is not in need of you and your worship, but it is you who are in need of Him.

He neither needs your worshipping nor is he afraid of your sins, and in the meantime, His vast mercy has encompassed all of you. Neither the destruction of the entire world decreases anything from His greatness, nor has the creation of this world added anything to the rank of His sovereignty.

In the second verse, the Qur'an, as a repeated emphasis, says:

"And this is not hard to Allah."

Yes, whatever He intends He commands it to be, and immediately it also comes into being. Not only for the creation of Man, but also this statement is true about the whole world of existence.

However, if Allah (s.w.t.) commands you concerning Faith, obedience, and worship, all are for your own benefit, and the advantages and blessings of them all return to you.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 18

وَلاَ تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَي وَإِن تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَي حِمْلِهَا لاَ يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَي إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَمَن تَزَكَّي فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّي لِنَفْسِهِ وَإِلَي اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

18. "And no one laden bears the burden of another; and if one heavy-burdened calls for its load to be carried, not a thing of it will be carried, even if he be a near kinsman. You warn only those who fear their Lord in secret and keep up prayer. And whoever purifies (himself), he only purifies for his own self. And Unto Allah (alone) is the destination (of all)."

Based on justice, everyone must carry his own burden.

The verse says:

"And no one laden bears the burden of another…"

In the Hereafter, the Record and Reckoning of everybody is separate from those of others.

In the Qur'an we recite that, in order to deceive others, a group of disbelievers say:

"…follow our path and we will certainly bear (the burdens of) your sins'…"[1]

This verse is an answer to them.

Question: Taking this verse which says in Hereafter the burden of everybody is on one's own shoulder and it does not harm others, can we say

we should leave alone the sinners, because they themselves will carry the burden of their own sins and it does not relate to us?

Answer: This verse does not justify the silence before unlawful things, because undue silence itself is a sin upon those who commit this action. Our duty is to bid the right and forbid the wrong, but if they did not follow it, their sin would not be upon us.

The Qur'anic term /wizr/ means the heaviness and a load. The Arabic word /muthqalah/ means the weight of a load. The word /himl/ refers to the load on the back while /haml/ refers to the load in the womb.[2]

This Qur'anic sentence:

"And no one laden bears the burden of another…"

is one of the basic fundamentals in Islamic convictions. In fact, on one side, it relates to the justice of Allah that He counts everybody pledged in his own action, rewards his righteous efforts and endeavours, and gives retribution for his sins.

On the other side, it points to the severity of the divine punishment on the Day of Hereafter when nobody agrees to carry the burden of the sin of another person, even though he had been fond of him extraordinarily.

Being attentive to this meaning has a great effect in man's self-improvement, because whoever is careful of himself he never tends to corruption with the pretext that his entourage or his environment is polluted. He does not count the pollution of the environment as a justification for his own pollution, because everybody carries his own burden.

On the other side, it gives man such a conception and understanding that the reckoning of Allah with societies is not a total and a lamp reckoning, but everybody will be reckoned separately and independently.

That is, if he has done his duty both in relation to his purification and struggle against corruption, there will be no fear and horror on him, although all humankind totally, except him, are polluted with infidelity, polytheism, injustice, and sins.

Principally, no training program will be effective without attracting the attentions to this basic principle.

This very subject is referred to in the second sentence in another form.

It says:

"…and if one heavy-burdened calls for its load to be carried, not a thing of it will be carried, even if he be a near kinsman…"

An Islamic tradition indicates that on the Day of Hereafter there will be brought a mother and a son both of whom have a heavy burden of sins. The mother asks her son to carry a part of her burden of sin and responsibility instead of those labours she tolerated in the world for him. The son will say to the mother to get distance from him, because he is involved in difficulty more than her.[3]

Finally, in the third sentence this fact is revealed that the warnings of the Prophet (S) affect only in the receptive hearts, where it says:

"…You warn only those who fear their Lord in secret and keep up prayer…"

The warnings of Divine prophets and Allah's friends will not have any effect unless there is the fear of Allah in the heart, and the one does not feel

the observance of a spiritual power over him inwardly and outwardly, and by establishing the daily prayers which survives his heart and causes him to remember Allah, he does not help this inner feeling.

At the beginning of an action, when a person has chosen no faith and has not believed, if he has not a truth-seeking character and does not feel responsibility before the cognition of the facts, he will not hearken to the invitation of prophets, and consequently he will not contemplate over the Divine signs in the world of existence.

In the fourth sentence, the verse returns again to this fact that Allah is self-sufficient from all. It adds:

"…And whoever purifies (himself), he only purifies for his own self…"

And, at last, in the fifth and the last sentence, it warns that if the good doers and the evil doers do not reach the result of their deeds in this world, it does not matter because the return of all is to Him.

It says:

"…And Unto Allah (alone) is the destination (of all)."

Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 19-23

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ

وَلاَ الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلاَ النُّورُ

وَلاَ الظِّلُّ وَلاَ الْحَرُورُ

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الأَحْيَآءُ وَلاَ الأَمْوَاتُ اِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ

اِنْ أَنتَ اِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ

19. "And the blind and the seeing are not alike,"

20. "Nor the darkness and the light,"

21. "Nor the shade and the heat"

22. "Neither are the living and the dead alike. Verily Allah makes whom He pleases hear, and you cannot make those hear who are in the graves."

23. "You are naught but a Warner."

The believers are some heartily and hale persons who enjoy the real life. Faith gives life to both an individual and society, while disbelief is a factor of spiritual death for both an individual and the society.

Pursuing the discussions about faith and disbelief in the former holy verses, the verses under discussion mention four interesting parables concerning the believers and disbelievers in which the signs of faith and infidelity have been illustrated in the most manifest form.

In the first parable, a disbeliever and a believer are likened to a blind person and a seeing person.

It says:

"And the blind and the seeing are not alike,"

Faith is both light and light giver; and it gives light and cognition to man's whole life in his world-view, belief, action. But infidelity is darkness in which there is neither a correct insight for the whole world of existence, nor a proper conviction, nor a righteous deed.

In this regard, the Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257 expressively says:

"Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide."

Then, it implies that since only the seeing-eye is not enough there must be a light, too, so that, by the help of these two factors, the things can be observed.

The next holy verse concerning the equality of them, says:

"Nor the darkness and the light,"

The reason of it is that darkness is the cause of mislead. It is the factor of dangers, but light is the source of life, living, movement, growth, and development. If light were destroyed, all sources of energy in the world would be wiped out and death would dominate the whole world of matter. Such is the light of faith in the world of spirituality which is the cause of growth, development and life.

In the third sentence, it continues saying:

"Nor the shade and the heat"

A believer continues to live in peace, security and safety under the shade of his faith, but a disbeliever, because of his infidelity, is in inconvenience and pain. Raqib in Mufradat says:

"The word /harur/ means: 'a hot and blazing wind', (a drying and fatal wind)".

Zamakhshary in Kashshaf says:

"The term /sumum/ is called to some harmful and fatal winds which blow during the day, while the Arabic word /harur/ is called to the same winds whether they blow during the day or at might."

Anyhow, how different is this wind and the cold cheerful shade which gives rest to both soul and body?

And finally through the last similitude in the fourth verse, the Qur'an says:

"Neither are the living and the dead alike…"

The believers are the living ones who usually have effort, endeavour, movement and growth. They are somehow like plants which have leaves, flowers, and fruits; but disbelievers are like pieces of dry wood which have neither greenness nor flower, nor shade, and they are not useful but for burning.

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"…Verily Allah makes whom He pleases hear…"

Allah makes him hear in order that he hears the invitation of the truth heartily and answers the call of the callers of Monotheism.

But the more your cry is loud, and your words are pleasant, and the more your statement is expressive, the dead do not perceive anything from it; and those who have lost their human soul as the result of continuously committing sins and being drowned in bigotry, enmity, injustice, and corruption, certainly are not ready to accept your invitation.

The verse says:

"…and you cannot make those hear who are in the graves."

In the fifth verse Allah implicitly says that the Prophet (S) should not be worried and anxious about the lack of faith in them, his duty was to convey it and to warn them.

The verse says:

"You are naught but a Warner."

Two Points

The first is the effects of belief and disbelief:

We know that the Qur'an considers no importance for the geographical, racial, and classical boundaries which separate groups of human beings from each other. The only boundary in its view is the boundary of 'Faith' and 'blasphemy'. Thus, all of the human societies are divided into two groups: faithful and unfaithful.

For introducing 'Faith', in many occurrences, the Qur'an has likened it to 'light', and 'disbelief' into 'darkness', and this is the most expressive simile of the Qur'an for introducing belief and disbelief.[4]

Faith is a kind of perceiving and inner insight. It is a sort of knowledge and cognizance combined with heartily conviction together with movement. It is a kind of belief which has penetrated into the depth of man's soul and becomes the source of instructive activities.

But disbelief is ignorance, unawareness, and the lack of certainty, the result of which is the absence of feeling of responsibility and the existence of Satanic destructive actions.

The second:

Do the dead not perceive any reality?

Regarding to what has been said in the abovementioned verses, there appear two questions: the first is that how does the Qur'an say:

"…you cannot make those hear who are in the graves"?

or that a famous tradition indicates that on the day of the battle of Badr, the Prophet (S) ordered that the dead bodies of the pagans would be cast into a well at the end of the war.

Then he called them and said:

"Have you found truth what Allah and His Messenger promised? But I found truth what Allah promised me."

Here 'Umar protested and said:

"O' Messenger of Allah! How do you speak with some bodies in which there is no soul?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"You do not hear what I say better than that they do, except that they are not able to answer anything."[5]

Or that one of the rites of a dead is that the right beliefs are indoctrinated him (her). How does this action adapt to the verses under discussion?

With regard to one point, the answer to this question can be made clear. This is a fact that the verses under discussion speak about the lack of understanding in the dead in ordinary natural case, while the tradition of the Battle of Badr is different from the indoctrination of a dead.

It relates to some extraordinary conditions by which Allah (s.w.t.) transfers the sayings of His Messenger (S) extraordinarily to the ears of those dead bodies.

In other words, the communication of man in the purgatory world with this world will be ceased, except in the cases that Allah commands, and then this communication occurs. That is why, in ordinary circumstances we cannot communicate with the dead.

Another Question is: If our sound does not reach the dead, what is the meaning of our greeting to the Prophet (S) and to the Imams (as), resorting to them, visiting of their tombs, and asking for intercession from them before Allah?

Some extravagant Muslims, who are generally known for their thought conventionalism also relying on this very imagination, without considering other verses of the Qur'an, and without having any veneration for the abundant traditions narrated from the Prophet (S), have negated the subject of resorting and, as they think, they have nullified it.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 24-26

إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيراً وَنَذِيراً وَإِن مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلاَّ خَلاَ فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

وَإِن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ وَبِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

24. "Verily We sent you with truth as a bearer of glad-tidings and a Warner, and there was not a people but a Warner having gone in them (in the past)."

25. "And if they belie you, so indeed did belie those before them; their apostles had come unto them with clear proofs, and with scriptures, and with the enlightening Book."

26. "Then did I seize those who disbelieved, so how (severe) was My punishment?"

Allah is true, and He has appointed the training system by the means of prophets in the basis of the truth, too.

So, in this verse, He says:

"Verily We sent you with truth as a bearer of glad-tidings and a Warner, and there was not a people but a Warner having gone in them (in the past)."

O' Prophet! When you fulfil your duty in 'glad tidings' and 'warning' it is enough for you. You may convey them your call and give them the glad tidings of the Divine rewards and warn them of the retributions of Allah, whether they accept them or continue their stubbornness and enmity.

The Arabic word /xala/, here, is derived from /xala'a/ which originally means a place wherein is not any curtain. This term is used for both time and place, and since time is always passing the 'past times' is called /'azminah xaliyah/, because there is no trace from them at the present time and the world is empty of them.

Therefore the Qur'anic sentence saying:

"…and there was not a people but a Warner having gone in them (in the past)"

means that every nation of the ancient nations had had a Warner in the past.

This point is also noteworthy that according to the above verse all nations had a Divine Warner, viz., a Divine prophet, though some commentators have taken it with a vaster meaning which envelops the scholars, and learned ones who warn people, too.

Of course, this statement does not mean that in any town and city a prophet has been appointed, but when the invitation of Divine prophets and their words reach peoples it is enough, because the Qur'an says:

"…a Warner having gone in them"

(Fiha) and it does not say /minha/ (among them).

In the next verse, it implies that if they reject you it is not wonderful and, you should not be surprised and sorry, because the people who were before them rejected their prophets, too, while their messengers came to them with clear miracles, books containing admonitions, and the heavenly Books introducing ordinances, and enlightening laws to them.

It says:

"And if they belie you, so indeed did belie those before them; their apostles had come unto them with clear proofs, and with scriptures, and with the enlightening Book."

It is not only you who, with having miracles and heavenly Book, have been rejected by this ignorant group of people; the former prophets had encountered this difficulty, too. So you should not be sad and do stand firm in your path, and do know that those who must accept the truth will accept it.

What is the difference between 'Bayyinat', 'Zubur', and 'The enlightening Book'?

1- The Qur'anic term /bayyinat/ means some clear proofs and miracles which prove the legitimacy of the Prophet (S).

2- The purpose of Zubur is that part of the prophets' Books which contained of only some admonitions, advices, and supplications, (like supplications of David)[6]

3- The Qur'anic phrase /kitab-il-Munir/ refers to that group of heavenly books which contain some ordinances, laws, and different social and individual instructions, such as Turat, Bible, and Qur'an.

In the last verse of the verses under discussion, the Qur'an, referring to the painful retribution of this group, implicitly says: It was not such that they could remain safe from the Divine retribution and would continue constantly their rejections, but Allah seized the disbelievers and punished them severely.

The verse says:

"Then did I seize those who disbelieved…"

The Arabic word /'axaðtu/ is derived from /'axaða/ with the sense of 'to take', but its application in such cases indirectly means 'punishment', because taking and capturing someone is the beginning of punishment.

However, Allah caused some pagans to be faced with a tempest, another group with a destructive hurricane, and some people were destroyed by the heavenly Blast, lightning, and earthquake.

Then at the end of the verse, for emphasis and stating the greatness and severity of their punishment, the Qur'an says:

"…so how (severe) was My punishment?"

In any case, on one side, these verses console and encourage all those who pave the path of Allah, particularly the true leaders of any nation in any time that they should not be despaired of the murmurs of the opponents and know that the Divine invitations have always been faced with the intensive oppositions from the side of aberrant zealous ones and cruel profit seekers, and in the meantime, there have been some sympathetic pure lovers who sacrificed their souls helping the claimers of the path of the truth.

And, on the other side, it is a threat against these aberrant opponents that they should know that they cannot continue their disgraceful and destructive deeds forever. Soon or late, the divine punishments will encompass them.

Notes

1. Surah Al-'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 12
2. Mufradat by Ragib
3. The Commentary of Abul-Futuh, Qurtubi, and Rauh-ul-Bayan
4. You may refer to Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 257, Surah Al-Ma'idah, verses 15 and 16, Ibrahim, verses 1 and 5, Al-Hadid, verse 9, Surah Az-Zumar, verse 22, and At-Talaq, verse 11
5. Tafsir-i-Rauh-ul-Bayan, -Bukhari, Vol. 5, P. 97ihunder the verse, and Sah
6. The Arabic word /zubur/ is the plural form of /zabur/ which means the books the scriptures of which have been written to be permanent (like writings on the stone, and the likes that here it indicates to the firmness of their matters.

Section 4: The Inheritors of the Qur'an

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 27

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُّخْتَلِفاً أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بِيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

27. "Have you not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky, then We bring forth with it fruits of various colours, and in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of divers hues and (others) intensely black?"

By means of the colourless water and from the earth of one colour, Allah creates fruits of different colours.

In these verses, the Qur'an returns again to the subject of Monotheism, and shows a new section of the book of creation to human beings. This is a severe answer to the obstinate polytheists and the headstrong rejecters of Monotheism.

In this beautiful section from this large and great book of creation, the variety of soulless beings, and the different beautiful features of life in the world of plants, animals and human beings have been regarded to, that how He has brought hundred thousands of colours into being from the colourless water, and He has created some completely diverse beings from some defined and limited elements each of which is fairly more beautiful than the other.

This skilful painter, by a single pen and ink, has produced kinds of pictures which attract the attention of their visitors and charm them.

At first, it says:

"Have you not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky, then We bring forth with it fruits of various colours…"

This verse begins with a confessional interrogation and, besides moving the curiosity sense of men, points to this fact that this matter is so clear and vivid that whoever looks at it he seas that from the same water and land, one of which is colourless and the other has only one colour, there have been created these abundant different colours in various fruits, beautiful flowers, leaves and blossoms with diverse features.

The Qur'anic word /'alwan/ (colours) may refer to the apparent colours of fruits that even in a single fruit, like an apple, there exist different colours, let alone the diverse fruits.

And it may refer to the differences in their different tastes, constructions, and properties, so much so that even in one kind of fruit you can find various sorts. For example, there are, perhaps, fifty kinds of grapes and more than seventy kinds of date.

In the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an has referred to the variety of roads which exist in the mountains and these mountains cause the ways to be recognized from each other.

It says:

"…and in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of divers hues and (others) intensely black?"

From one side, this difference of colours gives a special beauty to the mountains and, on the other side, it is a cause for finding ways not being lost

in the crooked roads of the mountains, and, ultimately, it is a proof upon the Power of Allah over everything.

The Arabic word /judad/ is the plural form of /juddah/ in the sense of ‘road and way’.

The Arabic word /bayd mar/ is the plural form /umur/ is the plural form of /’ah/ which means ‘white’; and /hof /’abyad in the sense of ‘red’.

The Qur’anic term /qarabib/ is the plural form of /qirbib/ which means ‘black in full’, and that in Arabic ‘crow’ is called /qurab/ is also from this quality. Therefore, the mention of the word /sud/, which is also the plural form of /’aswad/, next to it is for an emphasis upon the ‘intensely black’ colour seen in some mountain roads.

However, the construction of the mountains with diverse and completely different colours, from one side, and the mountain roads with various colours, on the other side, are some other signs for the Greatness, Power, and Wisdom of Allah which every moment appear in a form and every time decorate themselves in another clothing.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 28

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَآبِّ وَالأَنْعَامِ مُّتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَآءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

28. “And of the people and beasts and cattle are of various colours likewise; verily only those of His servants fear Allah who have knowledge, verily Allah is Mighty, Forgiving.”

The difference of the colours of human beings and animals is one of the signs of the Power and Greatness of Allah.

Having some knowledge and awareness over the secrets of existence is a preparation for reaching the position of fearing Allah.

This verse refers to the variety of colours in men and in other living animals.

It says:

“And of the people and beasts and cattle are of various colours likewise…”

Yes, although human beings are all from the same parents, they have diverse races and colours completely different.

Some of them are as white as snow while some others are as black as ink. Even in one race, there is also difference of colours.

If we look carefully of the twin children who have passed the different stages of foetus with together and have been in the bosom of each other from the beginning, they are not sometimes completely in the same form from the point of colour, though they are from one father and one mother and their life-germ has combined in a single moment, and they have fed from one kind of food.

Besides the outward features, their innate colours, their characters, their attributes and qualities, their talents and tastes may be completely different so that they all with together form a single unit with the whole needs.

In the world of moving creatures, there are many thousands kinds of insects, birds, creepers, sea-animals, different desert wild animals that, with

all their specialties and wonders of creations, each of them is a sign of the Power and Greatness and Knowledge of the Creator.

After stating these signs of Unity, finally, as a conclusion, it implies that the matter is like that.

And, since enjoying from these great verses of creation is for the wise and knowledgeable servants more than others, at the end of the verse, it says:

"…verily only those of His servants fear Allah who have knowledge…"

Yes, from among all of Allah servants only scholars are those who gain the high rank of 'fear', that is, the fear of responsibility accompanied with perception of the greatness of the position of their Lord. This state of 'Fear' is the result of contemplation on the extroversive and introversive verses of the Qur'an, and knowing the Knowledge and Power of Allah and the aim of His creation.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"The word /xašyat/ means a 'fear' mixed with veneration, and it is often used in some instances which originate from knowledge and awareness of something."

Therefore, in the Qur'an, this rank is counted specialized to the learned ones.

We have repeatedly said that this is a fear because of the responsibilities that one has in front of Allah: a fear that he may not fulfil his own duties well. Furthermore, in principle, perceiving the greatness, that greatness which is unlimited and infinite, for a being that is limited, such as man, causes fear.

Upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"The purpose is that there are some scholars whose deeds are consistent with their words. The one whose saying and deed are not consistent is not knowledgeable."[1]

Another tradition announces:

"The most learned one of you is the one whose fear to Allah is the most."[2]

Shortly speaking, from the view and logic of the Qur'an, the 'learned ones' are those scholars and authorities that the light of knowledge has made their whole selves enlightened with the light of Allah, faith, and piety, and they intensively feel responsibility unto their duties and they fulfil them more than the others.

At the end of the above verse, as a short reasoning upon what was said, the Qur'an says:

"…verily Allah is Mighty, Forgiving."

His Veneration and endless Power is the origin of the fear of the learned ones; and His Forgiveness, which is the sign of His unlimited Mercy, is the cause of their 'hope'. Thus, these two holy names keep the servants of Allah between 'fear' and 'hope'. And we know that the constant movement toward development is not possible without being qualified with these two characters.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verses 29-30

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرّاً وَعَلاَنِيَةً يَرْجُونَ ـ َارَةً لَن تَبُورَ

لِيُوَفِّـيَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَ َزِ دَهُم مِن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

29. "Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, hope for a merchandise which will never perish,"

30. "That He will pay them their rewards fully and increase of His grace unto them; verily He is Forgiving, Thankful (of their good deeds)."

The words 'prayer' and 'Book' (the Qur'an) have repeatedly been mentioned beside each other in the Qur'an, and also prayer must be accompanied with helping the deprived.

In view of the fact that the former verses referred to the state of fear of the learned ones from Allah, the verse under discussion points to their state of 'hope', because, as we said, it is only by means of these two wings that man can fly high in the sky of felicity and pave the path of spiritual development.

At first, the verse says:

"Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, hope for a merchandise which will never perish,"

It is evident that the act of recitation here is not a mere reciting without contemplation and action.

It is a reading which is the origin of thought, a ponder which is the source of righteous deed, an action which, on one side, joins man to Allah the manifestation of which is prayer, and, on the other side, it relates him to the servants of Allah the manifestation of which is spending in charity, expending from whatever Allah has bestowed on a person, including: wealth, knowledge, authority, powerful thought, character, experiences, and, briefly speaking, from all merits that Allah has given him.

Sometimes this expending is done secretly (/sirran/) to be the sign of a complete sincerity, and sometimes it is done openly (/'alaniyah/) in order to encourage others and to be the veneration of rituals.

Yes, the knowledge which has such an effect is the source of hope.

Regarding the contents of this verse and the verse before it we conclude that the true Muslim scholars have the following characteristics.

From the spiritual point of view, their hearts are full of fear of Allah mixed with His greatness.

From the point of speech, their tongues are busy reciting the verses of Allah.

From the point of the spiritual and bodily action, they establish prayer and worship Him.

And, finally, from the point of aim, the horizon of their thought is so high that they have left the fleeting material world aside and look for only the Divine beneficial merchandise which will neither be dull nor does it vanish.

This point is also noteworthy that the Arabic word /tabur/, mentioned in this noble verse, means destruction. Thus, 'the merchandise free of destruction' is a trade which has neither slackness nor degeneration.

An interesting tradition indicates that once a man came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said:

"Why do I not like death?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"Do you have any property?"

He answered:

"Yes".

He (S) told him:

"Send it before you."

The man answered:

"I cannot."

The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily the heart of a person is with his property. If he sends it before himself, he likes to join it; and if he keeps it (for later), he likes to be with it."[3]

This tradition, in fact, has illustrated the whole content of the above mentioned verse, because it implies that they establish prayer and spend in charity in the path of Allah (s.w.t.) and are willingly hopeful of the next world, because they have sent some goodness before themselves and they are willing to reach it.

The next holy verse states the aim of the true believers as follows.

They do these righteous deeds:

"That He will pay them their rewards fully and increase of His grace unto them; verily He is Forgiving, Thankful (of their good deeds)."

This sentence, indeed, points to their ultimate sincerity that, in their actions, they look for nothing but the Divine reward. Whatever they desire they ask it from Him, and they do nothing for hypocrisy, showing, admiration, and glorification of this one or that one, because the most important thing in righteous deeds is the sincere intention.

The application of the Arabic term /'ujur/ (the plural form of /'ajr/) in the sense of 'wage' is, in fact, a grace from the side of Allah, as if He sees the servants as His creditors because of their righteous deeds, while whatever the servants have belongs to Him; even the strength for performing the righteous deeds has also been given from His side.

A more affectionate meaning is the sentence which says:

"…and increase of His grace unto them…".

This gives them glad tidings that besides the ordinary reward, which itself sometimes is hundreds or thousands fold of the deed, He increases it of His grace. And He bestows on them, from some merits which no mind can bear and none in this world is able to consider.

However, the sentence which says:

"…verily He is Forgiving, Thankful…"

shows that the first grace of Allah unto them is that very forgiveness of their sins and the faults they might have had, since the most anxiety of a person is the anxiety about this issue.

After having peace of mind from this point of view, He involves them in His thankfulness, i.e., He thanks for their good deeds and endows on them the best reward.

It is much to be regretful that a free wise man refuses such a merchandise and refers to other than it; and worse than that is that he sells the goods of his self for naught.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"Is there no free man who can leave this chewed morsel (of the world) to those who like it? Certainly, the only price for your selves is Paradise. Therefore, do not sell your selves except for it."[4]

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 31

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقاً لِّـمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ اِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

31. "And that which We have revealed to you of the Book, it is the truth verifying that which is before it, verily Allah, about His servants, is Aware, Seeing."

In Qur'an there is not any false word, or any superstitious idle and illogical statement; and even the scale of legitimacy of any word or book is the Qur'an:

"It is the truth."

Since the words in former verses were about the believers who recite the verses of the Book of Allah and actually apply them, the verse under discussion speaks about this heavenly Book and the evidence upon its legitimacy as well as the true bearers of the Book.

It completes the discussion mentioned in the former verses about Monotheism by this discussion which is about prophecy.

It says:

"And that which We have revealed to you of the Book, it is the truth verifying that which is before it, verily Allah, about His servants, is Aware, Seeing."

Regarding this fact that 'truth' is in the sense of something which adapts the reality and is consistent with it, this meaning is a reasoning for proving this idea that this heavenly Book has been sent down from the side of Allah, because the more we are careful in its content the more we find it consistent with realities.

There is no contradiction in it; no falsehood or superstition is found in it; its beliefs and knowledge are consistent with the logic of wisdom; its statements about the ancient events are far from myths and legends; and its laws agree with the needs of human beings. This legitimacy is a clear proof upon this fact that it has been sent down from the side of Allah.

The holy sentence which says:

"…verifying that which is before it…"

is another proof upon the veracity of this heavenly Book, because it adapts with the signs which have been mentioned in the former heavenly Books about it and its bringer.[5]

The Qur'anic sentence which says:

"…verily Allah, about His servants, is Aware, Seeing"

states the cause of legitimacy of the Qur'an and that it is parallel with the facts and needs, because it has been sent down from the side of Allah Who knows His servants well and is Aware and Seeing unto their needs.

As for the difference between the Qur'anic words /xabir/ and /basir/ some commentators have said that the word /xabir/ is in the sense of cognizance about innate things, beliefs, intentions and the man's spiritual construction, while /basir/ means having insight unto the man's outward things and his bodily phenomena.[6]

Some other commentators believe that the ir/word /xabir/ refers to the principle of the creation of man, and /bas refers to his deeds and states.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 32

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُم مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ

32. "Then We gave the Book (Qur'an) as inheritance unto those whom We elected of Our servants. But of them are some who wrong themselves, and of them are some who follow the middle course, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave. That is the great (Divine) favour!"

To inherit from the Holy Qur'an is a great favour of Allah. The election of Allah is wisely. Those are the inheritors of the science of the Qur'an who are foremost in good works.

In this holy verse the Qur'an has referred to an important subject, viz., the bearers of this great heavenly Book, the same ones who, after the revelation of the Qur'an upon the pure heart of the Prophet (S), protected and preserved this luminous torch at that time and during later centuries.

It says:

"Then We gave the Book (Qur'an) as inheritance unto those whom We elected of Our servants…"

It is clear that the objective meaning of 'The Book' here is the same thing that has been mentioned in the previous verses, (the Holy Qur'an), and the Arabic signs ''Alif' and 'Lam' are, so to speak, of the kind of 'Ahd.

The application of 'inheritance' here, and in some other instances similar to it in the Qur'an, is for the reason that this word is used for something which is gained without bargain and labour or trouble, and Allah gave this very great Book to Muslims in such a way.

There is a great deal of traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) in all of which the Qur'anic phrase:

'the elected servants of Allah'

has been rendered into the immaculate Imams.[7]

As we have repeatedly said, these narrations are the statement of the clear and first grade expansions of the case and they do not hinder that the scholars, and learned ones of the Ummat, and those martyrs and righteous ones who tried hard in the way of protecting this heavenly Book and continuation of the performance of its instructions, are counted under the title of:

"those whom We elected of Our servants".

Then the Qur'an divides them into an important division in this regard.

It says:

"…But of them are some who wrong themselves, and of them are some who follow the middle course, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave. That is the great (Divine) favour!"

The apparent of the verse indicates that these three groups among 'the elected ones of Allah' are the inheritors and bearers of the Book of Allah.

In a more clear meaning, Allah has given the protection of this heavenly Book, after His Messenger, upon this Ummah, the ones who are elected by Allah, but there are different groups among them. Some of them fail to fulfil their great duty in protecting this Book and performing its ordinances and, in fact, they did injustice to themselves.

These are the extension of:

"Some who wrong themselves".

Another group did a considerable amount of this duty concerning the act of protection and practicing on this Book, although they had some faults and shortcomings in their deeds, too. These are the extension of:

"Some who follow the middle course".

And, finally, there are some distinguished persons who fulfil their heavy duties very well and, in this race-field they outstrip others.

This group, who are foremost in good deeds, are the same ones whom in the above mentioned verse have been rendered into:

"Some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by the leave of Allah."

The Qur'anic phrase: /sabiqun bil xayrat/ (outstrip through good deeds), in many traditions narrated from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) has been interpreted into Imam and the Immaculate ones; and the phrase: /zalim-un-linafsihi/ has been rendered into the ones who have not knowledge while the term /muqtasid/ is used for those who know Imam (as) unto Imam (as); and follow him.[8]

These interpretations are clear verifications upon what was said in the commentary of the whole verse, and it does not matter that these three groups can exist among the inheritors of the book of Allah.

Perhaps it is not necessary to mention that the interpretations in the above mentioned traditions are from the kind of the statement of clear extensions; that is the immaculate Imam is in the first row of

"Some who outstrip (others) through good deeds",

and scholars, learned men, and protectors of the divine religion are in other rows.

The commentary which has been mentioned id/ in the traditions are also from the kind of theabout /zalim/ and /muqtas statement of extension; and if we see that in some narrations the existence of scholars in the concept of the verse has totally been negated, in fact, is for attracting attentions to the existence of Immaculate Imam in front of these rows.

It is noteworthy that in commenting these three groups some of the former commentators and the modern commentators have delivered many other probabilities that, in deed, all of them are from the kind of the statement of extension.

Concerning the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"That is the great (Divine) favour", some commentators have said that it is that very inheritance, the Book of Allah.

Some other commentators believe that it is a hint to the success which is given to those who outstrip (others) through good deeds and pave this way by the leave of Allah.

That is, they outstrip all nations in doing good deeds: they outstrip in learning knowledge; in piety and morality; in worshipping and serving the servants; in effort and endeavour; in order and reckoning; in donation and self-sacrifice, and they are usually the foremost in all these affairs.

Yes, the bearer of that heritage can be only such persons.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 33

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤاً وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِرٌ

33. "Gardens of Eden! They shall enter; therein they shall be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls; and their raiment there shall be of silk."

The reward of a temporary deprivation can be a permanent success.

This verse is, in fact, a conclusion for what was mentioned in the previous verses. This holy verse implicitly says that the reward of those who outstrip in good deeds is the eternal gardens of Paradise in which all of them will wholly enter.

The verse says:

"Gardens of Eden! They shall enter…"

The Qur'anic word /jannat/ is the plural form of /jannah/ with the sense of 'garden' and /'adn/ is in the sense of settlement and stability; and 'main' is so called because it is the place of the settlement of metals and the like. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase: /jannat-u-'adn/ means 'the eternal gardens of Paradise'.

However, this meaning shows that the great bounties of Paradise are eternal and stable. And like the merits of the worldly material, they are not mixed with anxiety originated from the fear of destruction. The people of Paradise not only have a garden in Paradise, but also have many gardens at their disposal.

Then the verse refers to three parts of the bounties therein, some of which have material aspect and outward nature; some others have spiritual aspect and inward nature; and the third part has pointed to the negation of the existence of any kind of hindrance and trouble.

It says:

"…therein they shall be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls; and their raiment there shall be of silk."

In this world they were heedless to the dazzling glares and did not make themselves as captives to the glare of ornaments and when the deprived had not some cheep pieces of clothing, they did not tend to have expensive garments. To recompense these, in the next world, Allah will make them wear the best clothing and ornaments.

In this world, they adorned their outward with good deeds, then, in the next world, which is the world of incarnation of deeds, Allah will adorn them with kinds of ornaments, too.

We have repeatedly said that our words, which have been formed for the limited life of this world, never can convey the concepts of the great world of Hereafter. In order to state those bounties, we need to apply another kind of Alphabet, culture and dictionary.

But, however, in order that an outline of those great bounties could be shown to us, the prisoners of this world, we must take help from the slight ability of these very words to explain those bounties.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 34

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

34. "And they say: 'Praise belongs to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow; verily our Lord is Forgiving, Thankful."

The motto of the people of Paradise is the Praise of Allah. And there is not any grief or sadness inside Paradise.

Next to mentioning the material bounty, which was referred to in the previous verse, this verse points to a particular spiritual bounty, where it says:

"And they say: 'Praise belongs to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow…"

For this great merit which has been endowed on them, and, by the grace of Allah, all the factors of sadness have gone out from the environment of their living, and the sky of their spirit has been wiped out from the dark pieces of the cloud of grief, they praise Allah and thank Him.

They have neither a fear from the Divine punishment nor are they afraid of death and annihilation. There is neither any cause of insecurity of mind for them, nor do hurt them the harm of malicious ones, the impositions of polluted tyrants, and companionship of evildoers and inept persons.

Some commentators believe that this grief and sorrow refers to the sadness similar to that which exists in the world, while some others believe that it refers to the grief that they will have in Hereafter concerning the result of their own deeds. These two commentaries do not contrast with each other and both can be considered for the meaning of the verse.

The Qur'anic words /hazan/ and /huzn/, as many books of philology and commentary indicate, both have the same meaning, and they originally are in the sense of unevenness and roughness of the earth; and since sorrow cause the man's spirit to become uneven and rough, this meaning has been applied in this sense.

Then, according to the verse, those people of Heaven will add:

"…verily our Lord is Forgiving, Thankful."

By His forgiveness, He removes the heavy grief of faults and sins, and by the attribute of His thankfulness, He bestows the eternal merits on us which never will the shade of sadness fall on them. His forgiveness has covered our abundant sins, and, by His thankfulness, He has given us a great deal of rewards for our small and scanty deeds.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 35

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِن فَضْلِهِ لاَ يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَلاَ يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ

35. "He Who, of His grace, has made us to dwell in a house for ever, toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us."

Paradise is eternal and the people of Paradise know that the bounties are because of the grace of Allah, not because of only their deeds.

This verse has referred to the bounty of the absence of the factors of toil, pain, and fatigue, and from their tongue, it implicitly says that praise belongs to Allah:

"He Who, of His grace, has made us to dwell in a house for ever, toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us."

From one side, there is the place of residence and it is not such that before soon and before the time a person becomes familiar with it and likes it, he is called to come out of that place.

And, on the other side, although the long life in that world joins to eternity and in such a long time, principally, pain and fatigue are expected, there is nothing of these affairs there, at all. Even the length of time does not cause of tiredness and fatigue either, because every day a new bounty and a fresh manifestation of blessings from Allah is shown to the people of Paradise.

The Arabic word /nasab/ means toil and trouble, and many of the philologists and commentators believe that the Qur'anic term /luqub/ means the same, too; while some others have mentioned a difference between these two as follows: they say that the word /nasab/ refers to the bodily toils, while the term /luqub/ refers to the spiritual troubles.[9]

Also, some commentators have taken the Qur'anic term /luqub/ in the sense of weakness and fatigue resulted from toil and pain, and thus, /luqub/ becomes the consequence of /nasab/.

Therefore, in the Heaven, there is neither any factor of bodily toils, nor any means of spiritual pain.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 36

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لاَ يُقْ ضَى عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُم مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَفُورٍ

36. "And those who disbelieve, for them shall be the Fire of Hell, it shall not be decreed that they should die, nor shall the chastisement of it be lightened to them; even thus do We recompense every ungrateful one."

Disbelief is a kind of ingratitude of bounties. The Qur'an, beside promises, usually refers to threats, and, beside glad tidings, it mentions warnings in order to strengthen two factors of fear and hope which are the motives of motion, because of the love of self, man is affected by the instinct of 'acquiring benefit' and 'repelling harm'.

So, following the former verses, which were about the great rewards of the believers who 'outstrip in good deeds', this verse is about the painful punishment of disbelievers. Here also the words are about the material and spiritual punishments.

It says:

"And those who disbelieve, for them shall be the Fire of Hell…"

In the same manner that Paradise is an eternal abode for the believers, Hell is also an eternal abode for this group.

Then the verse adds:

"…it shall not be decreed that they should die…"

Although all those painful punishments and the blazing Fire of Hell can cause them their death, since the command of Allah, that everything, including life and death, is in Whose authority, has not been issued; they will not die. They must be alive, and they will not be delivered from this toil, so that they taste the Divine chastisement.

For such persons, death is a way to deliverance, but by the aforementioned sentence this way has been closed to them.

There will remain another way. It is in this that they should be alive and gradually their chastisement may decrease, or that their tolerance could be increased so that consequently their pain and toil may decrease.

This way is also closed by another sentence which says:

"…nor shall the chastisement of it be lightened to them…"

And, at the end of the verse as an emphasis upon the decisiveness of this Divine threat, it says:

"…even thus do We recompense every ungrateful one."

Those who, firstly, showed ingratitude to the bounty of the existence of Divine prophets and heavenly Books, lost their Divine given capitals which could help them in gaining happiness.

Yes, the recompense of such evil-doers is burning in the painful chastisement of Fire, a Fire which they themselves lit in the life of this world and its fuel was their own evil thoughts and deeds.

Since the Qur'anic word /kafur/ is an amplification form in the Arabic language, it has a deeper meaning than the word /kafir/ (disbeliever).

Moreover, the word 'disbeliever' is usually used as opposite to the word 'believer', while the Arabic word /kafur/ (ungrateful) is used as for the ingratitude of all blessings. Therefore, it has a vaster meaning.

Thus, the word /kafur/ refers to those who have been ungrateful to all the divine bounties, and they have closed all the doors of His Mercy to them in this world. Therefore, in Hereafter, Allah will close all the doors of deliverance to them, too.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 37

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحاً غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ
فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَصِيرٍ

37. "And they shall cry aloud therein (for help, saying:) 'O' our Lord! Take us out (so that) we will do good deeds other than what we used to do (before).' (They will be said): 'Did We not give you long life enough to remember therein for him who would remember?' And (moreover) the Warner came to you. So (now) taste you (the fruit of your deeds), then for the unjust there is no helper."

That which makes man to be a hellish person is impious deeds, and one day all wrong doers will be in powerlessness and seek for help.

This verse refers to another part of the painful punishment of the people of Hell and emphasizes on some sensitive points in this regard.

It says:

"And they shall cry aloud therein (for help, saying:) 'O' our Lord! Take us out (so that) we will do good deeds other than what we used to do (before).'…"

Yes, by observing the fruits of their evil deeds, they will regret deeply and they will cry loudly and ask for a respite. They ask Allah to return to this world in order to do righteous deeds.

The application of the Qur'anic word /salihan/, in an indefinite form, points to this fact that they did not do the least righteous deed, and its consequence will be those painful chastisements for these who had let no way for them toward Allah and were thoroughly full of sin. Therefore, performing some righteous deeds may also cause deliverance.

The application of the Qur'anic word /na'mal/ (we will do), an Arabic verb in the future form which denotes to the continuation of their action, is also an emphasis on this very meaning that they used to do some impious deeds.

Yes, because of his pure nature, a sinner, at the beginning, understands the ugliness of his deeds, but gradually he will be accustomed to them and its ugliness will be decreased in him.

Little by little, it goes beyond that and that ugly action will appear to him as a good action, as the Qur'an says:

"…The evil of their deeds has been made fair seeming to them…"[10]

And sometimes the Qur'an says:

"…While they think that they are working good deeds."[11]

However, for this request there will be given a conclusive answer to them from the side of Allah, as follows:

"…(They will be said): 'Did We not give you long life enough to remember therein for him who would remember?'…"

The verse continues saying:

"…And (moreover) the Warner came to you…"

Now that the case is such and all the means of felicity have been available for you, but you did not enjoy them, you should be afflicted the chastisement here.

It says:

"…So (now) taste you (the fruit of your deeds), then for the unjust there is no helper."

This holy verse clearly indicates that they had not anything insufficient because they had enough respite, and there came to them necessary Divine Warners so that these two elements of awareness and felicity were ready for them, therefore, there was no excuse or pretext remained for them.

If they had not enough respite, it could be an excuse; and if you had enough respite, but there might not came any teacher, trainee, leader, and guide to them, they would have a pretext, too; but with the existence of these two, what kind of excuse they may have!

The Qur'anic word /naðir/ (Warner) in the verses of Qur'an usually refers to the Divine prophets and specially to the Prophet of Islam (S), but some Islamic commentators have mentioned here a vaster meaning for it which encompasses both the Divine prophets, and the heavenly Books, and the awakening events like the death of friends and relations, and senility and

weakness, in particular that in the Arabic language the word /naðir/ has been abundantly used in the sense of senility.

This point is also noteworthy that in Islamic narrations there have been mentioned differently a limit in the lifetime which is enough for the man's awareness and admonition.

Some of them have rendered it to the age of sixty; as a tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates:

"Whomever Allah has given sixty years of lifetime, He has closed the way of excuse to him."[12]

This very meaning has also been narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)

Another tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates:

"When the Day of Hereafter comes, a caller will call:

'O people of sixty years old! (Where are you?)

This is the same lifetime about which Allah has said:

'Did We not give you long life enough to remember therein for him who would remember?'"[13]

Notes

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse.
2. Ibid
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 408
4. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying No. 456
5. In this regard, there is a detailed discussion in the commentary of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 41
6. Tafsir-i-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse.
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 361 on
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the , Vol. 4, P. 461
9. Rauh-ul-Ma'aly, Vol. 22, P. 184
10. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 37
11. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 104
12. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
13. The commentary by Tabarsi, following the verse.

Section 5: Never Can Anyone See Allah's Plan Ever Getting Altered or Changed

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 38

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَالِمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

38. "Verily Allah is the Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth; surely He knows all that is in the breasts (hearts)."

The belief in the fact that Allah knows everything is the best hindrance of man from committing wrong. This verse answers to the request of the disbelievers who want to return from Hell to the world.

It says:

"Verily Allah is the Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth; surely He knows all that is in the breasts (hearts)."

The first sentence, in fact, works as a proof over the second sentence. It means: how is it possible that Allah to be unaware of the secrets of inside the hearts while He is aware of the whole secrets of the earth and the heavens and the unseen of the world of existence?

Yes, He knows that if the request of the people of Hell were answered positively and they could return to the world, they would continue the same evil deeds they had before.

This meaning is clearly mentioned in Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 28 which says:

"…and even if they were returned, they would revert to what they were prohibited, and most certainly they are liars."

Moreover, the verse is a warning unto all believers so that they try to purify their sincere intentions and they do not keep anyone in their mind save Allah, because if there is the least insincerity in their intention and motive He, Who is aware of all the Unseen things, surely knows it and compensates it accordingly.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 39

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلاَئِفَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَمَن كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَلاَ يَزِ دُ الْكَافِرِ نَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّـهِمْ إِلاَّ مَقْتاً وَلاَ يَزِ دُ الْكَافِرِ نَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلاَّ خَسَاراً

39. "He is the One Who appointed you viceroys in the earth, so whoever disbelieves, his disbelief shall be against him, and their unbelief does not increase the infidels with their Lord in anything except hatred; and their unbelief does not increase the infidels but loss."

Stating the dangers of sins is a factor to restrain the sinner from committing it.

Following the discussions which were upon the previous verses about the fate of infidels and polytheists, in the verse under discussion they are called to account in another way, and the nullification of their style has been made manifest by some clear proofs.

It says:

"He is the One Who appointed you viceroys in the earth…"

The Arabic word /xala'if/, whether it means the viceroys and vicegerents of Allah on the earth or it means the vicegerents of the former nations,

(though the second meaning seems more appropriate here), indicates to the utmost grace of Allah upon human beings for whom He has provided all of the facilities of living.

Allah (s.w.t.) has given wisdom, understanding, thought, and intelligence to man. He has bestowed kinds of bodily powers on him. He has filled the surface of the earth with different sorts of bounties, and He has taught man the way of using these facilities. Yet, how has man forgotten his main benefactor and refers to the superstitions and artificial objects of worship?

In fact, this sentence is the statement of 'the Unity of Lordship' which itself is a clear proof over 'the Unity of worship'.

This sentence, however, is a warning unto all human beings that they should know that their course is not eternal and everlasting. In the same way that they became the vicegerents of the former nations, after a few days these people will also pass away and some others will succeed them.

Therefore they must be careful what they do in their short lifetime. They must consider their future fate, and that what kind of record will they leave in the history of the world from them?

That is why the verse immediately says:

"…so whoever disbelieves, his disbelief shall be against him, and their unbelief does not increase the infidels with their Lord in anything except hatred…"

However, their disbelief does not add to them except loss.

It continues saying:

"…and their unbelief does not increase the infidels but loss."

In fact, the last two sentences are as a commentary upon the sentence:

"…whoever disbelieves, his disbelief shall be against him…",

because this sentence implicitly says that the infidelity of a person results a loss upon him. Then the Qur'an brings two kinds of reasoning for this subject.

The first is that disbelief and infidelity with their Lord, Who is the giver of all bounties, does not result aught save Divine Wrath and punishment.

The other is that, besides the Divine Wrath, this infidelity does not give anything to them except loss. They lose their lifetime and the capital of their own existence and take wretchedness, degradation, and darkness for it. What a loss is greater than this?

And either of these two proofs is enough for condemning this incorrect style.

The repetition of the Arabic term /layazid/ (does not increase), which is in present tense, is an indication to the continuation of action and points to this fact that man is naturally looking for increase and excess.

If he paves the path of Monotheism, he will have the increase of happiness and perfection, but if he paves the path of disbelief, he will obtain the increase of Wrath of Allah and loss.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 40

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَآءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَمْ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَاباً فَهُمْ عَلَي بَيِّنَتٍ مّنْهُ بَلْ إِن يَعِدُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُم بَعْضاً إِلاَّ غُرُوراً

40. "Say: 'Have you seen your associates on whom you call, apart from Allah? Show me what they have created in the earth; or have they a partnership in (the creation of) the heavens? Or have We given them a Book so that they follow a clear argument from it? Nay, the unjust promise each other nothing but delusions."

Islam is a logical religion. It awakens conscience of people by asking questions.

The Prophet of Islam (S) had a duty to speak with the opponents of Islam.

This verse is another decisive answer to the polytheists. It tells them that if a person follows something, or loves it, he must have a reasonable reasoning from intellect for it, or a reasoning from conclusive tradition, but you have neither of these two, and you have no support save delusion and pride.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Have you seen your associates on whom you call, apart from Allah? Show me what they have created in the earth; or have they a partnership in (the creation of) the heavens?…"

Yet, what is the reason of the polytheists' worship? The act of being object of worship is a secondary thing to creative power. Now that you know that the creator of the heavens and the earth is only Allah, and there will be no object of worship except Him, because the Unity of divinity is always a reason upon the Unity of worship.

Now that it was proved that there is no intellectual reasoning for your claim, do you have any reasoning from tradition with you?

Or do you have a heavenly Book for it?

The verse says:

"…Or have We given them a Book so that they follow a clear argument from it?…"

No, they have no clear proof from the Divine Books with them. Therefore, their capital for it is nothing save guile and delusion.

In this regard, the verse says:

"…Nay, the unjust promise each other nothing but delusions."

In other words, if the idolaters, and other polytheists of any kind and group, claim that the idols have a kind of power on the earth to provide their needs, they should deliver an example of their earthly creation.

And if they believe that these idols are the manifestation of the angels and heavenly sacred beings, as it was the belief of a group of them, they must show their participation in creation of the heavens.

And if they believe that these are not some partners in the creation, and only the rank of intercession has been given to them, as some of the polytheists believed, they must bring a proof from the heavenly Book for proving this claim.

Now that they have none of these proofs, then they are some unjust deceivers who tell each other false words.

It is notable that the purpose of 'the earth and the heavens' here is the entire creations on the earth and in the heavens, and the application of the word creation due to the earth and having a partnership in the creation of the

heavens, points to this fact that ‘the partnership in the heavens’ should be by the way of creation.

And, the application of the Arabic word /kitaban/, in an indefinite form and also concerned to Allah, is a hint to the fact that there is the least reasoning for their claim in neither of the heavenly Books.

The Arabic word /bayyinah/ points to this fact that the clear reasoning can be found in heavenly Books.

The application of the Qur’anic plural word /zalimun/ (the unjust) is another emphasis on this meaning that ‘polytheism’ is a clear ‘injustice’.

The application of ‘the promises of delusion’ is a hint to this fact that the polytheists used to take these superstitions and delusions from each other in the form of some hollow vain promises, and some of them transfer them to some others in the form of gossips and baseless imitations.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 41

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ أَن تَزُولاَ وَلَئِن زَالَتَآ إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِن بَعْدِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيماً غَفُوراً

41. “Verily Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they remove (from the orbit); and did they remove, none would hold them after Him; verily He is the Forbearing, the Forgiving.”

The situation of the heavens and the earth, as well as their motions and orbits, are with the will of Allah, and it is He Who protects them in every moment.

The words in this holy verse are about the sovereignty of Allah over the whole heavens and the earth. In fact, next to the negation of the partnership of the artificial objects of worship in the world of existence, it proves the Unity of divinity and Lordship.

It says:

“Verily Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they remove (from the orbit)…”

Not only the creation at the beginning is done by Allah, but also their maintenance providence and protection are in His infinite Power.

Moreover, in any moment they have a new creation, and the grace of being comes down to them from that bountiful source a moment after another, so that if their communication with that great source is ceased for a short moment, they will face with destruction.

It is true that the verse emphasizes on the subject of the protection of the superior system of existence, but, as it has been proved in the philosophical discussions, all beings are in need of the Origin for their permanence in the same form that they are for their temporal origination.

And, thus, the protection of the system is not anything except the continuation of new creation and Divine emanation.

It is worthy to note that, without being fastened by anything, the celestial spheres have been rotating for millions of years in their places with the same orbs that have been decided for them without the least deviation, the example of which is seen in solar system.

Our globe, the earth, rotates in its orb round the sum for millions or milliards of years with an exact order, which originates from the equilibrium of the power of polarization, and it obeys the command of Allah.

Then, as an emphasis, the verse says:

"…and did they remove, none would hold them after Him…"

Neither your idols, nor the angels, nor anything other than them is able to do this job.

In order not to shut the door of repentance to deviated polytheists and let them return in any stage they are, at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"…verily He is the Forbearing, the Forgiving."

Because of His forbearance, Allah does not hasten in punishing them, and because of His forgiveness, He accepts their repentance, with its conditions, in any case and stage it is. Thus, the ending part of the verse refers to the situation of polytheists and that His Mercy encompasses them at the time of repentance and returning.

Some commentators have taken these two attributes in relation to maintenance of the heavens and the earth, because their destruction is an affliction and a punishment, and Allah, because of His Forbearance and Forgiveness, does not let people get this punishment and affliction, though the sayings and deeds of many of them require that this chastisement should be sent down, as Surah Maryam, No. 19, verses 88 to 90 say:

"And they say: 'The Beneficent (Allah) has taken (unto Himself) a son'."

"Indeed you have put forth something hideous!"

"At it the skies are about to burst, and the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down crashing."

During the length of the history of human beings this event has repeatedly happened that some of the astronomers have foreseen that, in its way, a particular comet, or other than it, may pass by the earth and probably it crashes this globe.

These predictions have worried the thoughts of all people in the world.

In these circumstances this feeling appears for everybody that in this problem nobody can do anything, because if, for example, so and so celestial globe comes towards the earth and, under their gravity they crash each other, there will remain no trace from the thousand-year-old civilization of mankind, and even from other living creatures on the earth; and no power, except the Power of Allah, can prevent this event.

In these cases everyone feels absolute need unto absolute Self-Sufficient Allah; but when those probable dangers are removed, forgetfulness encompasses human beings.

Not only the crash of the celestial spheres and planets cause calamity, but also a slight deviation of a planet, like earth, from its orb may bring forth a calamity.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 42

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَى مِنْ إِحْدَى الأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلاَّ نُفُوراً

42. "And they swore by Allah with the strongest oaths that if a Warner came to them, they would be more rightly guided than any one of the nations; but when a Warner came to them, it increased them naught but aversion (unto the truth)."

The polytheists believed in Allah and sanctified Him and used to swear by Him, but upon the occasion of revelation of -ul-Ma'ali, Mafatih-ul-Qaybthis holy verse it is cited in Durr-ul-Manthur, Rauh and other commentary books that: whenever the Arab polytheists heard that some of the former nations, such as the Jews, had rejected the Divine prophets and killed them, they said that they were not like them.

If the messenger of Allah came to them, they would be the best rightly guided of the nations. But when the world illuminating sun of Islam appeared in the horizon of their land and the Prophet of Islam (S) with the greatest heavenly Book came to them, not only they did not accept it, but also tried to reject it and to play kinds of tricks against it.

The abovementioned holy verse was sent down and blamed them for these empty baseless claims.

(Most of the commentary books, has been mentioned under this verse.)

The verse says:

"And they swore by Allah with the strongest oaths that if a Warner came to them, they would be more rightly guided than any one of the nations…"

The Arabic term /'ayman/ is the plural form of /yamin/ which means 'oath'. Originally it means 'right hand', but since at the time of taking oath and promising people they shake hands with their right hands and take an oath, this word has gradually been used in the sense of oath.

The Arabic word /jahd/ is derived from /jihad/ in the sense of 'struggle and effort'. Therefore, the application of the Arabic phrase /jahd-a-'aymanihim/ refers to the strong oath.

Yes, when they were observing the former events recorded in the pages of the history, saying about disloyalties, ingratitude actions, hindrances and crimes of the former nations, specially the Jews unto their prophets, they wondered very much, while they had every kind of claim and boast about themselves.

But when their own trial practically came forth and they wanted to practise it, they showed that they were of the same kind, as the Qur'an in this verse declares:

"…but when a Warner came to them, it increased them naught but aversion (unto the truth)."

We must be also attentive to this matter. God forbids those who are waiting for the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (May Allah hasten his glad advent) and say that if he (as) comes they will do so and so, but when he (as) comes they stand against him.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 43

اسْتِكْبَاراً فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السّيِـ ِ وَلاَ يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّـِئُ إِلاَّ بِاَهْلِهِ فَهَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ سُنَّتَ
الأَوَّلِينَ فَلَن َ ِدلِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلاً وَلَن َ ِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِ لاً

43. "On account of their arrogance in the earth, and devising evil; but evil devising encompasses only the devisers themselves; so do they expect anything except the way of (Allah against) the former people? For never shall you find any alternation in the course of Allah and never shall you find in the course of Allah any change."

The origin of escape and hatred from the way of prophets is either arrogance or evil devising. (Perhaps arrogance is from the side of obstinate pagans and evil devising from the side of hypocrites.)

This holy verse is an explanation over what was said in the previous verse. The verse implicitly says that their being aloof from the Truth was for the sake that they paved the path of arrogance in the earth and they never accepted to surrender to the truth. And, also, it was for the sake that they used to commit devising evil, but the evil devising afflicts none but those who do it.

The verse says:

"On account of their arrogance in the earth, and devising evil; but evil devising encompasses only the devisers themselves…"

The Arabic sentence /la yahiq/, derived from /haq/ means: 'it does not descend down, does not overtake, and does not overcome'.

This points to the fact that applying devises may temporarily reach others, but finally they come forth against the devisers themselves and will make them disgrace before the servants of Allah, and will make them shameful in front of Allah; and this is the same evil fate that the pagans of Mecca encountered.

In fact, the verse implies that they did not suffice only to get aloof from this great Divine Prophet, but also they took help from their entire ability and power in hurting him; and the main motive of it was arrogance, pride, and the lack of humility before the truth.

In the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an threatens this arrogant, deceitful and treacherous group by an expressive awakening sentence, and says:

"…so do they expect anything except the way of (Allah against) the former people?…"

This short sentence is a hint to the whole evil ends of the haughty, and disobedient former nations, such as the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and Pharaoh, each of whom were afflicted with a great calamity, and the Qur'an has frequently pointed to some parts of their painful and evil fates.

Here, by this very short sentence, the Qur'an illustrates all of them in front of the eyes of this group.

Then, for a more emphasis, it adds:

"…For never shall you find any alternation in the course of Allah and never shall you find in the course of Allah any change."

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 44

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلاَ فِي الأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيماً قَدِيراً

44. "Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them while they were stronger than them in power? Nor is

Allah to be frustrated by anything whatever in the heavens or on the earth; verily He is Knowing, Powerful."

None should become proud of his power since there have been many more powerful people than them who have been destroyed; and nothing can overcome the Will of Allah.

This verse invites the guilty polytheists to study the traces of the former nations and the fate which they afflicted with. This is for the sake that whatever they have studied in the history about those nations, they would see by their eyes in the lands belonging to them, and they would observe those things among their effects so that they actually see what they have studied in the statements.

It says:

"Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them…"

If they think that they are stronger than those nations, they are in an earnest error, because the Qur'an continues saying:

"…while they were stronger than them in power?…"

The people of Pharaoh who had taken the land of Egypt under the control of their own power, the people of Namrud who were governing over the land of Babylon and some other countries all were so strong that the idolaters of Mecca, compared with them, were counted naught.

Moreover, the more men are powerful, comparing the power of Allah, their power is naught, because nothing in the heavens nor in the earth can escape from the realm of His Power, and will not frustrate Him.

The verse says:

"…Nor is Allah to be frustrated by anything whatever in the heavens or on the earth…"

Allah is both Knowing and Powerful. Neither does anything remain concealed from His sight nor anything is difficult for His Power, nor can anybody overcome Him.

If these blind-hearted, arrogant and deceitful persons think that they can escape from the grips of His Power, they are in error, and if they do not leave their committing ugly deeds, at last they will confront the same fatal end of the former arrogant ones.

We repeatedly recite in the verses of the Qur'an that Allah invites the faithless and disobedient persons 'to travel in the earth' and see the traces of the nations who have afflicted the Divine chastisement.

In Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 9 we recite:

"Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them?…"

These are those who had a stronger power than these and changed the earth, and they made it more populated than the amount these have done.

Their prophets came to them with clear proofs, but they continued their own egotism, and were encompassed with painful divine punishment. Never did Allah injustice to them, but they were unjust to themselves.

This verse from Surah Ar-Room continues saying:

"…they were stronger than them in strength, and they ploughed up the earth and cultivated it more than they themselves have cultivated it; and

their messenger came to them with clear proofs (miracles) (which they rejected to their own destruction); so Allah would never deal with them unjustly, but they deal unjustly with their own selves."

These frequent emphases of the Qur'an are some proofs upon the extraordinary effect of these observations in the selves of human beings. They must go to see by their eyes that which they have studied in the history or heard from people.

They should go and see the former destroyed land of the Pharaohs, the ruined castles of the ancient kings, the scattered graves of Caesars, the rotten bones of people such as Numrud, and the afflicted lands of the people of Lut and Thamud from near and close distance, they can hear the advice of these silent people and pay attention to the cry of those who are buried under the dust, and watch by their eyes what will finally happen to them.

Surah Al-Fatir - Verse 45

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَي ظَهْرِهَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَلَـكِن يُؤَخِّـرُهُمْ اِلَي أَجَلٍ مُّسَـمًّ
فَاِذَا جآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيراً

45. "And if Allah were to seize the people (to punish them) for what they have earned, He would not leave on the back of it any creature; but He gives them respite till an appointed term. So when their term expires, then verily Allah is seeing with respect to His servants."

Allah is patient and He forgives people and gives them respite, and does not immediately punish the wrong doers in this world for their evil actions.

Allah's giving respite to the sinners is a wisely action.

The abovementioned verse, which is the last verse of Surah Fatir, concludes the earnest discussions and serious threats previously mentioned in this Surah with Allah's grace and mercy upon the people on the earth, in the same manner that this Surah began with the Mercy of Allah on humankind.

Thus both the beginning and the end of the holy Surah are consistent in stating the Mercy of Allah.

More over, the previous verse which threatened the guilty faithless persons to the evil fate of the formers brings this question forth for many of them, as well as others, that if the manner of treatment of Allah is the same about all of the arrogant ones, then why He does not punish this arrogant polytheistic nation.

In answer to this question, the Qur'an says:

"And if Allah were to seize the people (to punish them) for what they have earned, He would not leave on the back of it any creature…"

In that case, there will be sent down so many frequent punishments, and lightning, earthquakes and tempests will destroy the unjust ones in a form that the earth will not be a suitable place for anyone to live on.

Yet, the verse continues saying:

"…but He gives them respite till an appointed term…"

But this patience and respite of Allah has an account. It lasts until when their appointed term has not come, but when their appointed term reaches, He will recompense everybody, as the verse says:

"…So when their term expires, then verily Allah is seeing with respect to His servants."

He (s.w.t.) both sees their deeds and is aware of their intentions.

Here, there arise two questions the answer of which is made manifest by what was said.

The first is that: Does this general command envelop Divine prophets, friends of Allah, and righteous ones, too?

The answer of this question is clear, because these kinds of ordinances refer to almost the mass of people and the decisive majority of them, and surely the Divine prophets, Imams, and righteous ones, who are in minority, are out of this circle. Shortly speaking, every ordinance has an exception and such ones are as exceptions of this ordinance.

The second is that: Does the application of the Qur'anic term /dabbah/ (creature), mentioned in the above verse, refer to non-human creatures, too? That is, will they be destroyed as the result of the punishment upon human beings?

The answer to this question will be made clear in regard to this point that the philosophy of the existence of other living creatures is for the benefit of men from them, and when the human generation is whipped out, their existence will not be necessary.

The Arabic word /dabbah/ is derived from /dabib/ in the sense of 'to work slowly', but from the philological point of view it refers to any living creature, and sometimes the Arabic word /dawab/ is used for the animals fit for riding, in particular.

At last, we put an end to this discussion with a tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) which has been recorded upon the commentary of this verse.

According to this tradition, the Prophet (S) says:

"Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, has implicitly said:

'O' the children of Adam! It is by My will and desire that you have been created free and you can wish for yourself whatever you wish; and it is by My Will that you have possessed a kind of will that you can decide for yourself whatever you will.

You have got strength by means of the bounties I gave you and you have committed sins; and it was by means of My Power and Safety that I gave you and you could do the obligations I commanded you.

Therefore, due to your good actions, I am prior to you yourself, but due to your sins, you are prior to Me. By means of the bounties I have given you, the good things ceaselessly come to you from My side, and the vice and wretchedness always come to you from yourself because of your treacheries.

I have never neglected you for warning and advising and I did not punish you immediately at the time of your pride and negligence, but I gave you enough respite that you might repent and improve yourselves."

The verse says:

"…but He gives them respite till an appointed term. So when their term expires, then verily Allah is seeing with respect to His servants."

Then, the Prophet (S) said that this is the same thing that Allah says:

"And if Allah were to seize the people (to punish them) for what they have earned, He would not leave on the back of it any creature…"[1]

O' Allah! Appoint us among those who come forth before lasting the respites and return to You, and enlighten their dark past course by the light of good deeds and attracting Your consent.

O' Allah! If Your Grace had not encompassed us, the fire from inside of our evil deeds would have swallowed us into its bottom; and if the ray of the light of Your forgiveness had not been showered on our heart, the army of Satan would have occupied it.

O' Allah! Protect us from any kind of polytheism, and lit the torch of sincere Faith and Unity in our heart, and increase the light of piety in our speech and deeds.

Note

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 370

Surah Ya-Sin, Chapter 36

No. 36 (Revealed at Mecca)

83 verses in 5 Sections

The Feature of Surah Ya-Sin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah has been revealed at Mecca. It contains eighty three verses and has been entitled by the name of its first verse, which is from the abbreviated letters, Ya-Sin.

The subjective points of this Surah are based on axis of beliefs. Teaching it to the children and gifting the reward of its recitation to the dead have been recommended.

This holy Surah begins with Allah's testifying upon the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S) and it continues with the statement of the prophethood of three Divine prophets.

In a part of this Surah, some verses of the greatness of Allah in the world of existence as the sign of Unity have been pointed out. In another part of it, the matters concerning to Resurrection, questions and answers in the Court of Hereafter, and some specialties of Paradise and Hell are mentioned. In some Islamic narrations, this Surah has been introduced as 'The heart of Qur'an'.

The Virtue of Surah Ya-Sin

According to numerous Islamic traditions which have been vastly received on this concern, Surah Ya-Sin is one of the most important Suras of the Qur'an, in a manner that it has been introduced in some traditions as 'The Heart of the Qur'an'.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates he said:

"Everything has heart (centre) and Ya-Sin is the heart of the Qur'an."[1]

This very meaning has been narrated in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who, at its end, adds:

"Whoever recites Surah Ya-Sin on a day before sun sets, during the whole day he will be protected and sustained (affluently); and whoever recites it at night before sleeping, one thousand angels will be for him to protect him from any accursed Satan and any impediment."

And after it, he (as) mentions some other important virtues for it, too.[2]

There are so many other Islamic traditions on this regard mentioned in the Sunnites and Shi'ites books that if we want to reiterate them, it will be a long explanation. Thus, it must be confessed that there are few suras of the Qur'an which have so many virtues in them.

As we have said, these virtues are not for those who only recite the words of it and forget its meanings, but this greatness is for the sake of the magnificent content of this Surah.

The content of the Surah is awakening, faith-giving, giver of responsibility, and increaser of piety in man, in a manner that when a person

contemplates in it and this contemplation reflects in his deeds, it brings the goodness of this world and the next for him.

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, at the beginning of Surah Ya-Sin.
2. Ibid

Section 1: The Qur'an, The Apostle and the Manifest Guide

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

يس

وَالْقُرْءَانِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

عَلَي صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

1. "Ya Sin (Y.S)"
2. "By the Qur'an, full of Wisdom,"
3. "Verily you are of the messengers,"
4. "On a straight path."

In spite of the kinds of accusations which were said to the Prophet (S), like: poet, soothsayer, sorcerer, and insane, Allah, the Wise, swears by the Qur'an full of wisdom and emphasizes on the messengership of the Prophet (S).

It says:

"Ya Sin"

"By the Qur'an, full of Wisdom,"

It swears by the Qur'an which has been sent down from His side. This explains its greatness and sacredness.

Similar to twenty eight other Suras of the Qur'an, this Surah begins with abbreviated letters:

(Ya Sin).

About the commentary of the abbreviated letters of the Holy Qur'an, there have been explained some discussions in details at the beginning of Suras: Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and Al-'A'raf.

But there are some other interpretations about the abbreviated letters of Ya Sin, too, including the following:

This term contains: 'Ya' (a vocative particle) and 'Sin' viz., the Prophet of Islam (S), and thus, the holy Prophet (S) is addressed for the statement of the later matters.

Some Islamic traditions also indicate that this term is one of the names of the holy Prophet of Islam (S).

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"Ya-Sin is the name of The Messenger of Allah (S) and its evidence is the word of Allah, The Exalted, Who said:

'Verily you are of the messengers'

'On straight path'."[1]

Next to these abbreviated letter, like many other Suras of the Qur'an which have began with abbreviated letters, the words are about the Holy Qur'an, but here Allah swears by them and says:

"By the Qur'an, full of wisdom."

It is interesting that Qur'an is qualified by the word /hakim/ while this word is usually the quality of an alive and wise person. As if it introduces the Qur'an as a wise, living, and leading leader that can open the doors of wisdom to human beings, and lead them to the straight way that will be pointed out in later verses.

Of course, Allah does not need to take any oath, but the oaths of the Qur'an have always two important usages. The first is an emphasis on the concerning matter, and the second is the statement of the greatness of the thing by which is sworn, for nobody takes an oath to the worthless things.

Therefore, in the next holy verse, the Qur'an reiterates the thing for which the oath in the previous verse has been taken.

It says:

"Verily you are of the messengers,"

"On a straight path."

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 5-6

تَنزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ

لِتُنذِرَ قَوْماً مَّآ أُنذِرَ ءَابَآؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ

5. "A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful."

6. "That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, hence they are heedless."

The origin of the descent of The Qur'an is Divine Power and Mercy, and whoever attaches it, reaches honour and grace. This holy verse implies that this is The Qur'an which has been sent down from the side of Allah, the Mighty, the Merciful.

It says:

"A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful."

The emphasis of the holy verse on the fact that Allah is 'Mighty' is for the statement of His power over such a great Book which remains during all centuries as an eternal miracle, and no power is able to wipe out its greatness from the hearts of the believers.

The emphasis on mercifulness of Allah is for the statement of this fact that His Mercy has required that He bestows such a great bounty on human beings.

So, if people try to deny and belie the truth, Allah has threatened them by His Might, and if they come forth with submission and acceptance, Allah has given them glad tiding by His Mercy.[2]

Therefore, His Might and Mercy, one of which is the symbol of warning, and the other is the symbol of glad tiding, have mixed with together and He has given this great heavenly Book to men.

Here, there arises a question that why the addressee in this sentence has been taken the holy Prophet (S), not the polytheist nor the people in general.

The answer is that: the purpose has been in this fact that He emphasizes that you are legitimate and on the straight path, whether they accept it or not. For this very reason, you should be earnest in the heavy mission of your messengership, and do not let the least discouragement come to you because of the rejection of the opponents.

In the next verse, the Qur'an explains the main aim of the descent of the Qur'an, as follows:

"That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, hence they are heedless."

The purpose of this people is certainly the pagans of Arab, and if someone says that, as they believe, there has not been any nation without a Warner, and the earth will never be empty of Allah's ir, No. 35, verse 24:

"…Authority, and, moreover, we recited is Surah Al-Fat and there was not a people but a Warner having gone in them (in the past)"

there is, of course, an answer for it.

In answer we will say that the purpose of the verse under discussion is the manifest Warner and a great prophet whose name is heard everywhere, else, in any time, there exists Divine authority for those who eagerly seek him.

And if we see that the course between the time of Hadrat Messiah (as) and the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been counted as the course of intermission, it does not mean that there has not absolutely been any Divine Authority for them, but this interval had been from the point of the appointment of great prophets or arch-prophets.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in this regard says:

"Verily Allah appointed Muhammad (S) when neither one of Arabs used to read a heavenly Book, nor (anyone) claimed prophesy."[3]

However, the aim by sending down the Qur'an was to make the negligent people aware and to awaken those who were asleep. It intended to remind them the dangers that had surrounded them, and the sins they were involved in and the Polytheism and immorality, they were polluted by.

Yes, the Qur'an is the base of knowledge and awareness, and it is the Book of sanctification of the heart and soul, too.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 7-8

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَي أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلاَلاً فَهِيَ اِلَي الأَذْقَانِ فَهُم مُّقْمَحُونَ

7. "The word (of punishment) has been realized against most of them, yet they do not believe."

8. "Verily, we have put chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so their heads are raised."

Allah puts chains on the pagans' necks, but they themselves have provided its preparation.

As a prophecy about the chiefs of pagans and leaders of polytheists, this verse says:

"The word (of punishment) has been realized against most of them, yet they do not believe."

Concerning the purpose of the Qur'anic word /qaul/ (the word) mentioned here, the commentators have delivered some probable meanings, but apparently the objective meaning is the promise of the Hell punishment for the followers of Satans, as Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 13 says:

"…but the true word (which has gone forth) from Me, certainly will I fill Hell with the jinn and men together."

And again Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 71 says:

"…but the Decree of chastisement has been proved true against the Unbelievers."

However this state is for those who had ceased all their communication lines with Allah and had broken all the means of relation. They had closed the entire doors of guidance to them and had committed the utmost degree of enmity, obstinacy, and stubbornness. Yes, such people will never believe and have no way to return, because they have ruined all the bridges behind them.

The fact is in this that man will be corrigible and worthy of being guided if he has not totally ruined his monotheistic nature with his ugly and polluted deeds, otherwise, an absolute darkness will dominate over his heart and all of the doors of hope will be closed for him.

By the way, it was made clear by this statement that the purpose of the majority of the persons who never believe is the chiefs of polytheists and pagans, and that was why that some of them were killed in the battles of Muslims in the state of polytheism and idolatry, and those who remained did not have any faith in their hearts until the end, while after the conquest of Mecca, the majority of the Arab polytheists embraced Islam groups and groups, as the Qur'an says:

"…the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds."[4]

The verses which are recited after it and refer to the barriers in front of them and behind them and count their eyes blind, and clearly says that they are alike whether they are warned or not, all attest to this very meaning.

However, the next holy verse continues explaining this unchangeable group, when it says:

"Verily, we have put chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so their heads are raised."

The Arabic word /'aqlal/ is the plural form of /qul/ and the word /qalala/ originally means: something which is in the middle of some things. For example, the flowing water, which passes through some trees, is called /qalal/ and the Arabic word /qul/ was a ring which was put on the necks or the heads of persons and then it was fastened with some chains.

So, since the hand was put in the middle of it, this word has been used for it. Sometimes the rings which were put on the necks were separately fastened by a chain, and the rings on the heads were different from them.

But, sometimes the hands were put in a ring and this ring was fastened to the ring which was on the neck, and, thus, the prisoner or the captive was intensively put in pressure, limitation, and torture.

If this word is used for the state of thirst or intense of grief and anger, it is called /qullih/ which is also for the sake of penetrating this state into the man's heart and soul. Principally, the Arabic word /qall/ has been applied in both the senses of: 'to bring in' and 'to enter', therefore the income of the house, or agriculture, and the like is called /qallih/.[5]

In any case, sometimes when the ring, which was put on the neck, came up to the chin and set the head upward, and the captive or prisoner, being extraordinarily tortured by it, could not see around him.

How interesting is the resemblance which has been made from the state of obstinate idolaters to such persons.

Those have put the ring of imitation and the chain of superstitious customs on their necks, hands, and feet and their rings are so wide and vast that they have kept their heads upward and they are deprived from seeing the facts around them. They are some captives who have neither the power of activity and motion, nor the ability of watching.

Some commentators have mentioned a few occasions of revelation for the above mentioned verse and the verse next to it, saying that they have been revealed about Abujahl, or a man from 'Bani Makhzun' tribe, or the tribe of Quraysh.

They frequently decided to kill the Prophet (S), but Allah, by the way of miracle, hindered them to commit this action, and at that sensitive moment when they reached the holy Prophet (S) and wanted to attack him, their eyes could not see, or the power of motion was taken from them.[6]

But these occasions of revelation do not hinder the generality of the concept of the verse and the vastness of its meaning about all chiefs of pagans and those who are obstinate and zealous.

In the meantime it is a confirmation over what was said on the commentary of the Qur'anic phrase:

"They do not believe"

that its purpose is not the majority of polytheists, but the purpose of it is the majority of the chiefs of polytheists, pagans, and hypocrites.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 9-10

وَجَعَلْنَا مِن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدّاً وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدّاً فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يُبْصِرُونَ

وَسَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

9. "And We have put a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and (further), We have covered them up, so they do not see."

10. "And the same is to them whether you warn them or you do not warn them, they do not believe."

The feature of the obstinate person has been illustrated very exactly and interestingly in this verse. The negligent faithless persons neither take an example from the past of pagans, nor from the miracle and argument which are in front of them.

That is why there is another description about these persons in this verse. By implying that they are confronted a barrier in their front and a barrier in their behind, the verse illustrates the expressive hindrances they have, and that they are so surrounded between these two barriers that they can move neither forward nor backward.

It says:

"And We have put a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them…"

In the meantime their eyes have been covered by a barrier and, consequently, they cannot see anything at all.

It continues saying:

"…and (further), We have covered them up, so they do not see."

What a wonderful clear illustration it is! From one side, they are like some prisoners who are put in ring and chains. And, on the other side, this ring is so wide and vast that it has caused their heads to be kept upward unto the sky so that they do not see absolutely anything from around them.

Think carefully about this kind of person who has such circumstances. What can he do? What thing does he understand? What can he see? And how can he walk? Such is the status of the self-loving egoistic men of pride, and the blind and deaf imitators, who are obstinate and zealous, in front of the face of the facts.

For this reason the Qur'an explicitly says:

"And the same is to them whether you warn them or you do not warn them, they do not believe."

The more your speech is influential, and the more the heavenly revelation is fairly effective, they will not affect unless they arrive into a receptive ground.

If thousand years the world illuminating sun shines on a saline, and the life-giving rains come down on it, and the spring winds constantly pass over it, this land will not deliver any product save some thorn, because the receptivity of the recipient beside the activity of the agent is its condition.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 11

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ

11. "You can only warn him who follows the reminder (Qur'an) and fears the Beneficent (Allah) in secret; so give him the good tidings of forgiveness and a generous wage."

Qur'an is the cause of remembrance, and following it is the means of reminding that which has been forgotten and recalling the man's passive nature.

It is also necessary that fear and hope come beside each other. In the Qur'anic sentence: /xašiy-ar-rahman/ (fears the Beneficent (Allah)) there are both fear and mercy.

In the previous holy verse, the words were about a group of people who had never the readiness of accepting the Divine warnings, and warning them or not is the same for them. But the verse under discussion speaks about another group who are just opposite of them, so that, by comparing them, as it is the style of the Holy Qur'an in discussions, the subject can be made more manifest.

It says:

"You can only warn him who follows the reminder (Qur'an) and fears the Beneficent (Allah) in secret…"

And whoever is like that, to him you should give the glad tidings of forgiveness and worthy compensation.

It continues saying:

"…so give him the good tidings of forgiveness and a generous wage."

These two qualities, in fact, are readiness and its 'potential' aspect. That is, warning can be effective only upon those who have a hearing ear and a receptive heart. Warning leaves two effects on them. The first is following

the contents of the Holy Qur'an; and the second is to be in awe before Allah and for responsibilities.

In other words, these two states potentially exist in them, but, after warning, they become active, in spite of the blind-hearted, obstinate and negligent persons who have neither a hearing ear nor are they ready to fear.

A great deal of the commentators believe that the objective meaning of the word /ðikr/, in this verse, is the Holly Qur'an, because this word, in this form, has repeatedly been used in this very meaning.

But it does not matter that the purpose of the word /ðikr/ is its lexicographical meaning which is any kind of remembrance that includes the verses of the Holy Qur'an and other warnings of the Prophet (S) and those of the Divine leaders.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 12

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَءَاثَارَهُمْ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ

12. "Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We write down that which they send before and (even) their footprints, and We have numbered everything in a clear Register."

The man's file of deeds is open even after his death until the Hereafter. Not only the man's deeds, but also all his traces will be recorded and will be reckoned in the Hereafter, whether they are good effects, like: mortmain, remaining voluntary alms, teaching knowledge to people and so on; or they are evil effects like establishing centres of indecency.

However, fitting with the explanation of the former holy verse about the compensation and the valuable rewards of the believers and those who accept the admonishments of the prophets, this verse refers to the subject of Resurrection and recording the man's deeds for reckoning and compensation, and it says:

"Verily We shall give life to the dead…"

The emphasis on the Arabic word /naḥnu/ points to this fact that with the great powers that you all know about Allah, there is no room for the discussions and debates that how the rotten bones will revive again and continue to live in a new life.

Allah not only gives life to the dead but also He writes down whatever people sent before them and He writes all their effects that they leave behind them. Therefore, there will surely remain nothing save that they will be protected in the record of deeds for the Reckoning Day.

The Qur'anic sentence /ma qaddamu/ (that which they send before) refers to the deeds they have done and there is no trace remained from them; but the application of the Qur'anic phrase /wa 'atharahum/ (and their footprints) refers to the deeds which remain from a person and their effects are seen in the environment, like: remaining voluntary alms: (buildings, mortmain properties, and the centres which remain after the death of a person and people take benefit from them)

There is also this probability in the commentary that the Qur'anic sentence /ma qaddamu/ (that which they send before) points to the deeds which have personal aspect while the Qur'anic phrase /'atharahum/ points to the affairs which become precedent custom and later, after the death of the

person, will also be the source of public welfare and blessing, or the cause of vice, harm, and sin.

The concept of it is vast, of course, and both of these commentaries may be involved in its concept.

For more emphasis, at the end of the verse the holy Qur'an adds:

"…and We have numbered everything in a clear Register."[7]

The majority of the famous commentators have rendered the Qur'anic phrase: /'imam-in-mubin/ here into 'Protected Table'. The same Book in which all the deeds of men and the whole beings and events of this world are recorded and protected.

The application of the word /'imam/ here may be for the sake that in the Hereafter this book is the guide and a lead for all of the angels of reward and retribution, and it is a criterion for evaluation of the value of men's deeds and their reward and retribution.

It is interesting that in some other verses of the Holy Qur'an this meaning (Imam) has been used in respect to 'the Turah', where the Qur'an says:

"Is he then (like unto him) who has a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness from Him, and before it (is) the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)?…"[8]

The usage of the word /'imam/ (guide) in this verse, about the Torah, is for the knowledge, ordinances, and instructions in it. It is also for the signs of the Prophet of Islam (S) which have been mentioned in it. In all these affairs it could be guide and leader of people. Thus, the above mentioned word has a concept in every one of them proportionate to it.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn ,Vol. 4, P. 375
2. The commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi
3. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermons 33 and 104
4. Surah An-Nasr, No. 110, verse 2
5. and Majma'-ul-Bayanitr-ul-MuhMufradat, by Raqib Qut
6. Tafsir-i-'Alusi, Vol. 22, P. 199
7. There are some Islamic narrations available from the side of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) in which the Qur'anic phrase: /'imam-in-mubin/ has been rendered into 'Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as).

Among them is a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) from his father, from his grandfather (as) who said:

"When this verse was revealed, Abubakr and 'Umar stood up and said:
'O messenger of Allah! Is its purpose the Turah?'
He answered:
'No'.
They asked:
'Is it Bible?'
He said:
'No'.
They said:
'Is its purpose the Qur'an?'

He said: ‘No’. At this time Amir-ul-Mu’mimeen Ali (as) came toward the Prophet (S). As soon as the Messenger of Allah (S) saw him, he said:

‘This man is /’imam-in-mubin/. He is the Imam in whom Allah, the Exalted, has numbered the knowledge of everything’.” (Ma‘ani-ul-‘Akhbar, by Saduq)

In the commentary of Ali-ibn-‘Ibrahim it has also been narrated from Ibn-i-‘Abbas, from Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) himself that he said:

“By Allah! I am Al-’Imam-ul-Mubin. I make manifest the right from wrong. I have learnt this (knowledge) from the Messenger of Allah (S).”

8. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 17

Section 2: Apostles Sent Before, Referred to

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 13

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلاً أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

13. "And coin for them a similitude of the people of the town, when the messengers came to it."

The messenger of Allah used to go toward people and they did not wait for people to come toward them.

Following the former discussions about the Qur'an, the Prophecy of the Prophet of Islam (S), the true believers, and the obstinate rejecters, in the verse under discussion, in this regard an example of the situation of the former nations is referred to.

Through this verse and a few verses after it, which totally form eighteen verses of this Surah, the life story of several former prophets who had duty to guide a polytheistic nation and the Qur'an has mentioned hab-ul-qaryah/ (the people of a town), who opposedthem as /'as those prophets and belied them and, finally, encountered a painful chastisement, is stated, so that it can be both a warning to the polytheists of Mecca and a solace for the Prophet (S) and the believers of that day.

However, emphasizing on this story which is in the centre of this Surah, which itself is the heart of Qur'an, is for the complete similarity which has with success of the Muslims of that day. It says:

"And coin for them a similitude of the people of the town, when the messengers came to it."

The Arabic term /qaryah/ originally means the name of a place where people gather (to live); and sometimes the people themselves are called /qaryah/. Therefore, it has such a vast meaning that it envelops both cities and villages, though in the ordinary Persian language this term is used for only a village.

In Arabic and in the Qur'an this term has frequently been used for the main and important cities, such as: Egypt, Mecca, and the like.

Among the commentators it is popular that this city is meant 'Antakiyyah, which has been one of the cities of Shamat, and it had been one of very famous cities of ancient Room, and at the present time, from the geographical point of view is in the territory of Turkish country.

However, it is understood from the verses of this Surah that the people of this city had been idol worshippers, and these messenger had come to invite them toward Monotheism and struggle against polytheism.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 14

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّآ إِلَيْكُم مُّرْسَلُونَ

14. "When We sent unto them two (of Our apostles) they belied them both, then We strengthened (the two) with a third and they said (unto the people): 'Verily we are messengers to you (from Allah)'."

This holy verse says:

"When We sent unto them two (of Our apostles) they belied them both, then We strengthened (the two) with a third and they said (unto the people): 'Verily we are messengers to you (from Allah)'."

Thus, there came to this aberrant people three messengers of Allah.

The ideas are divided among the commentators that who were these messengers. Some of them have said: the names of those two were ‘Sham‘un’ and ‘Yuhanna’ and the third of them was Polos, while some others have mentioned other names for them.

Also that they were the messengers of Allah or the angels of Jesus (as), (And if Allah says: “We sent” it is for the sake that the messengers of Jesus are His messengers, too.)

Again the ideas are divided among the commentators, though the apparent of the above verses adapts to the first commentary.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 15-17

قَالُوا مَآ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَمَآ أَنزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ تَكْذِبُونَ

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّآ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ

وَمَا عَلَيْنَآ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

15. “They said: ‘You are not but men like unto us, nor has the Beneficent (Allah) sent down anything. You are speaking only lies’.”

16. “They (the messengers) said: ‘Our Lord knows that we have been sent to you.”

17. “And our duty is only to deliver the clear Message’.”

Now we deal with the reaction of those aberrant people in the face of the invitation of those Divine messengers. The Holy Qur’an implies that they expressed the same pretext that many disobedient unbelievers had formerly stated against the Divine prophets.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘You are not but men like unto us, nor has the Beneficent (Allah) sent down anything. You are speaking only lies’.”

Had it been decided that a messenger came from the side of Allah, he should be a near-stationed angel, not a mortal like us. They considered this very thing as a proof for rejecting the messengers and the denial of the descent of the command of Allah.

They said this while they themselves might also know that all the Divine messengers in the length of history were from the generation of Adam including Abraham (as), whom all knew as a prophet, surely were human beings. Moreover, can anything ever understand the men’s needs, difficulties and pains save a human being?

That why the significant attribute of Allah’s mercifulness is emphasized on, it may be from this point that, by narrating their statement, because: how is it possible for Allah, Whose general Mercy has been spread throughout the world, He does not send some messengers for training people and for inviting human beings to rectitude and development?

However, these prophets were not hopeless from the severe opposition of that misguided people and did not let any weakness and debility come to them.

Their answer to them was as follows:

“They (the messengers) said: ‘Our Lord knows that we have been sent to you.”

"And our duty is only to deliver the clear Message'."

Certainly the messengers of Allah did not suffice to mere claiming, and to only oath, but, as it is understood from the Qur'anic sentence /balaq un mubin/ (the clear Message), they showed some miracles and proofs from themselves, else their message, as an expansion of the Clear Message, must be in such a manner that it conveys the reality to all, and this is not possible but by the help of some firm proofs and clear godly miracles.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that, like Jesus (as), by the leave of Allah, they cured some irrecoverable patients.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 18-19

قَالُوا اِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَـِ لَّمْ تَنتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَـمَسَّنَّكُم مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

قَالُوا طَآئِرُكُم مَعَكُمْ أَئِنْ ذُكِّـرْتُم بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ

18. "(The pagans told the prophets:) 'For us, we augur an evil omen from you, if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us'."

19. "They said: 'your evil omens are with yourselves, (should you augur a bad omen) if you are admonished? But you are a prodigal people'."

This verse indicates that not only those blind-hearted people did not submit before that clear logic and those miracles, but also they increased their hardship and went beyond the stage of rejection and reached the stage of threat and vehemence of action, as the Qur'an says:

"(The pagans told the prophets:) 'For us, we augur an evil omen from you…"

Perhaps, simultaneous to the time of the advent of these Divine prophets, some difficulties appeared in the life of the people of that area as the result of their sins or as a Divine warning, as some commentators have also cited that the rain ceased to fall for a length of time[1], but not only they did not take a lesson from it, but also they related that event to the invitation of the prophets.

They did not even suffice it, but by the manifest threat they showed their evil and ugly intentions, and said:

"…if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us'."

Yes, when the adherents of wrong and the supporters of injustice and corruption have not any acceptable logic, they always rely on some threat, pressure, and hardship.

They are neglectful of the fact that those who pave the path of Allah will never submit because of these threats, but their perseverance will be increased. On the day when they entered this field, they put their souls ahead and became ready for donation.

The second verse indicates that it was here that the Divine messengers, by their expressive and clear logic, answered their meaningless words, as follows:

"They said: 'your evil omens are with yourselves, (should you augur a bad omen) if you are admonished?…"

If misery, misfortune, and evil events have encompassed the environment of your society and the Divine blessings have gone out from amongst you, you must seek its cause inside yourselves and in your wrong thoughts, and in your ugly and evil deeds, not in our invitation.

It is you who have made the atmosphere of your lives dark in relation to idolatry, sensuality, tyranny, and voluptuousness, and thus you have ceased the bounties of Allah from you.

A group of commentators have considered the Qur'anic sentence: /'a 'in ðukkirtum/ as a hinder to an independent matter and said that its concept is this that if the Divine prophets come and admonish you and warn you its recompense is that you threaten them to punishment and think of their existence as omen.

They have brought light, guidance, goodness and blessing for you. Is the response of such a service those threats and ugly words?

At last, the last word of these messengers of Allah to them was this that they said:

"…But you are a prodigal people'."

That is, the main problem of yours is your prodigality and oppression. If you have denied Monotheism and referred to polytheism, its reason is prodigality and violating the Truth; and if your society has been afflicted an evil fate, its cause is also immoderation in sins and polluting to lusts.

And, finally, if you threaten the benevolent to death for their benevolence, this is also because of your oppression.

Next to the commentary of the rest verses of this story, we will explain about the historical event of these messengers and the place where these events happened.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 20-21

وَجَآءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَي قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ

اتَّبِعُوا مَن لاَ يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْراً وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ

20. "And from the farthest part of the city there came a man running; he said: 'O' my people! Follow the messengers;"

21. "Follow those who ask no reward of you, and who are themselves guided."

Supporting the truth must be accompanied with severity, speed, logic, and sympathy. In order to support the leadership of the truth, breaking the silence and shouting in the swerved environments is admired by Allah.

Another part of the struggles of the messengers, whom are referred to in this story, has been mentioned in this holy verse. It concerns the accurate and bravely support of the believers from them, who, with their small number, stood firmly against the majority of obstinate, polytheistic pagans and defended the Divine prophets with their souls!

The verse says:

"And from the farthest part of the city there came a man running; he said: 'O' my people! Follow the messengers;"

This man, whose name has been introduced as 'Habib Najjar' by most of the commentators, was one of those who, by their early meetings with the messengers of Allah, recognized the legitimacy of their invitation and the

depth of their teachings, and proved that he was a decided and steadfast believer.

As soon as he was informed that in the centre of the city people had quarrelled with these messengers and, perhaps, they intended to kill them, he did not count his silence in that occasion permissible and, as it is understood from the Qur'anic word /yas'a/ (running), he quickly and hastily reached himself to the centre of the city and defended the truth as much as he could.

The application of the Arabic word /rajul/ (man), in an infinitive form, points to this matter that he was an ordinary person.

He had not so much power and dignity, and he was alone in his own path.

In the meanwhile, the light and the heat of Faith had made him so light and warn that heedless to the sequels of this severe defence from the strugglers of the path of Unity, entered the battle-field, so that the believers of the time of the Prophet of Islam (S), who were not more than a few at the beginning of Islam, would take an example and know that even a single believer has responsibility, too, and silence is not permissible for him.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /'aqs al madinah/ (the farthest part of city) shows that the invitation of these messengers had reached the far points of the city, too, and had attracted the receptive heart.

Besides this, the far points of the cities are always the place of the oppressed who are more receptive to accept the truth. On the contrary, in the centre of cities there usually live some welfare people who are not easily absorbed to the truth.

The application of the Arabic phrase /ya qaum/ (O' my people!) indicates to the sympathy of this simple man unto the citizens and people of that area, and invitation to obeying and following the divine prophets is a sincere invitation which has no benefit in it for him.

Now, we refer to the fact that by which logic and proof did this believing struggler attract the attention of his fellow citizens?

At first he began saying:

"Follow those who ask no reward of you…"

This is the first sign of their veracity, that they have no material benefit in their invitation. They do not demand people any wealth, nor any position and rank, nor even any thank and gratitude, nor any other reward or recompense.

This meaning is the same thing which has repeatedly been emphasized on in the Qur'an concerning the great prophets as the sign of sincerity, no request, and purity of the hearts of prophets.

Only in Surah As-Shu'ara', No. 26, the sentence:

"I do not ask you…"

has been repeated for five times.[2]

Then the verse concerning these prophets implicitly adds that, as it is understood from the content of their words and invitation, they are some guided persons.

It says:

"…and who are themselves guided."

This points to this fact that the lack of submission to the invitation of a person is either for the sake that his invitation is in the way of the truth and drives persons to aberration; or it is in the way of the truth but those who bring it earn some benefits under its shade which causes pessimism unto that invitation. But when there is neither that nor this, is there any room for hesitation?

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 22-24

وَمَا لِيَ لاَ أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً إِن يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لاَ تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُنقِذُونِ

إِنِّي إِذًا لَفِي ضَلاَلٍ مُبِينٍ

22. "And why should not I worship Him Who brought me into being, and unto Whom you all shall be returned."

23. "Shall I take (other) gods besides Him, if the Beneficent (Allah) desires affliction for me, their intercession shall not avail me aught, neither can they deliver me?"

24. "Verily in that case I shall be in manifest error."

Being attentive toward both Origin and Resurrection is the course of servitude.

The verse says:

"And why should not I worship Him Who brought me into being, and unto Whom you all shall be returned."

Those who do not serve Allah are condemned in the court of their conscience.

In the second verse it refers to its third reasoning due to idols and it completes the affirmation of the servitude for Allah by negating the servitude from idols.

It says:

"Shall I take (other) gods besides Him, if the Beneficent (Allah) desires affliction for me, their intercession shall not avail me aught, neither can they deliver me?"

Again, here it speaks of himself in order not to have the form of commandment and order, and that others may reckon their own account.

In fact, he has taken the main pretext of the idol worshippers who said they worshipped idols for the sake that they intercede (the idols) in the court of Allah. The Holy Qur'an implies that what kind of intercession may it be? They themselves are in need of your help. What can they do for you when you are in afflictions?

The application of the Qur'anic term 'Ar-Rahman' (The Beneficent Allah) here, besides pointing to the vastness of the Mercy of Allah and that all merits and bounties returned toward Him, which itself is a proof upon the 'Unity of worship', indicates to this point that the Beneficent Allah does not desire any harm for anyone, unless the man's wrong action reaches to its utmost degree.

This causes man to be far from the vast scope of Allah's Mercy and inflicts him in the realm of His Wrath.

Then, in order to emphasize on it and to explain it more, this believing champion said:

"Verily in that case I shall be in manifest error."

What error can be more manifest than this that a wise man knees before these fatuous idols and puts them in comparison with the Creator of the earth and heaven.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 25-27

إِنِّي ءَامَنتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ

بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ

25. "Verily I have believed in your lord, therefore hear me!"

26. "(Finally he became martyr.) It was said (unto him): 'Enter Paradise.' He said: 'O' would that my people had known,"

27. "That my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honoured ones."

The best way of invitation is a practical invitation.

To become martyr in the path of supporting the Divine leader and enjoining the right, has a very long background in the history of man.

This verse indicates that this believing champion, the struggler, after expressing these argumentations and effective propaganda, in the presence of a crowd, with a loud voice, said:

"Verily I have believed in your lord…"

"…therefore hear me!"

And do know that I am faithful to the invitation of these messengers. Then utilize my statement, too, because it is in your benefit.

The question is: who is the addressee of this sentence, and also of the sentence which says:

"Verily I have believed in your Lord…"?

The apparent of the previous verses shows that the addressees are the same polytheists and idolaters who were in that land. This meaning has been used in many verses of the Qur'an concerning pagans and at the time of stating the Monotheistic arguments.[3]

And also the Qur'anic sentence /fasma'un/ (therefore hear me!) does not contrast to what was said, because he has mentioned this sentence to invite them to follow his own statement.

It is similar to what has been mentioned in the story of the believer of 'Al-i-Fir'aun, where, addressing the Pharaohs, he says:

"O' my people! Follow me, I guide you to the path of guidance."[4]

This makes it clear the fact that some of the commentators have said the addressees in this sentence are the same messengers who had come from the side of Allah for the invitation of this group, and they have taken the word 'rabbikum' and the sentence 'therefore hear me' as a 'frame of reference' for it, for which there is no kind of evidence available.

But, what did this obstinate group do in respect to this pure believer? The Qur'an says nothing about it, but it is understood from the tone of the later verses that they rebelled against him and killed him.

Yes, the enthusiastic and exiting words of this man which were accompanied with some strong arguments and some interesting points not only did not affect positively on those black hearts and on those mind full of deceit and pride, but also it lit such a fire of enmity and grudge in their hearts that they sprang and, with utmost callousness and cruelty, attacked this brave man to kill him.

According to a narration, they stoned him and his body was so harshly thrown by stones that he fell down and died, while he constantly was saying:

"O' would that my people had known."[5]

According to another narration they trampled him under their feet so violently that his soul flew to the heaven.[6]

But the Qur'an has stated this fact in an interesting and secret sentence:

"(Finally he became martyr.) It was said (unto him): 'Enter Paradise.'…"

This is the meaning which has been used in other verses of the Qur'an about the martyrs in the path of Allah:

"And do not think of those who were killed and in the way of Allah to be dead. Nay, they are alive, being provided sustenance with their Lord."[7]

It is interesting that this meaning shows that as soon as the martyrdom of this faithful man happened he entered Paradise. The length of the time between these two events was so short that the Qur'an, in its smooth meaning, instead of mentioning his martyrdom, had mentioned his arrival into Paradise; and how nigh is the way of Paradise and the eternal happiness to martyrs!

It is clear that the purpose of Paradise here is the Purgatory Paradise, because it is understood from both the verses of the Qur'an and Islamic narrations that such a Paradise will be of the believers, and in the same manner there will be the Purgatory Hell for the wrong doers, too.

Thus, there will be another kind of Paradise and Hell in the purgatory world which are the samples of Paradise and Hell in Resurrection.

There is a tradition about grave narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

"The grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or it is a cavity out of the cavities of Hell."[8]

However, the pure soul of this man went up to the heavens and hastened toward the nearness of the Divine Mercy, in the bliss of Paradise, where whose only wish was that which the verse continues saying:

"…He said: 'O' would that my people had known,"

"That my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honoured ones."

He wished that they had had an eye which was not covered with the thick heavy worldly material curtains and they could see whatever is behind this curtain; that is they might see these plenty of bounties, generosity and honour from the side of Allah and that they might know that, instead of their scorns, what the great favour Allah had done to him.

He wishes they could see and believe. But alas!

A tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) said:

"Verily this faithful man not only in his life wanted good for his people, but also after his death wished their guidance."[9]

It is noteworthy that at first he emphasized on the forgiveness of Allah and then upon His generosity, because, at first, the man's soul should be purified from the pollution of sins with the spiritual water of forgiveness, and when it became purified, he might approach the rank of nearness and generosity of Allah.

However, this was the end of this man, the true faithful champion, who did not have any shortcoming in fulfilling his duty and supporting the Divine prophets and, at last, he became martyr and succeeded to be admitted to the nearness of Allah's Mercy.

Now, what was the end of that disobedient cruet nation?

The Qur'an does not say anything about the end of those three prophets who were sent to that nation, but a group of commentators have written that, besides killing that faithful man, that nation killed their own prophets, too.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 28-29

وَمَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَي قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِن جُندٍ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنزِلِينَ

إِن كَانَتْ إِلاَّ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ خَامِدُونَ

28. "And We did not send down upon his people, after him, any host from heaven, nor do We ever send down."

29. "It was no more than a single (heavenly) Blast that suddenly they were still."

The angels are the missions of the wrath or affection of Allah, and their coming down or not depends on the command of Allah. However, the Wrath of Allah comes all of a sudden and we should not be neglectful.

Former holy verses explained how the people of Antioch opposed the Divine prophets.

Now, we may refer to their end. In this respect, the Qur'an says:

"And We did not send down upon his people, after him, any host from heaven, nor do We ever send down."

It is not so that for destroying this disobedient nation We betake to these things.

We do not need such affairs. Only a single hint is enough that We cause them to be quenched and, by ruining their life, We send them to destruction.

Only a single command is enough that the factors of their lives changes into the factors of their death, and in only a short moment all their lives would be annihilated.

In the second verse, the Qur'an adds:

"It was no more than a single (heavenly) Blast, that suddenly they were still."

Was this Blast the sound of a thunderbolt which appeared from a piece of cloud and came down to the earth, shook everything and ruined all buildings, and by means of the intense terror, they submitted to death?

Or was it a blast which, as the result of a horrible earthquake, came out from the inside of the earth into the atmosphere and the waves of its burst brought all to the mouth of death?

Whatever it was, it was no more than a Blast happened in a fleeting moment. It was a ‘cry’ which made all cries silent, and it was a shock which caused all to be motionless. And such is the power of Allah, and this was the fate of a misguided and useless nation.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 30

يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ مَا يَأْتِيهِم مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُونَ

30. “Alas for the servants! Never came there unto them a messenger but they used to mock him!”

Mocking the Divine prophets has been the constant style of pagans throughout the history of man.

This verse with a very attractive and effective tone puts the opposition of all arrogant ones of the history against the invitation of the Divine prophets in a lump under discussion.

It says:

“Alas for the servants! Never came there unto them a messenger but they used to mock him!”

Woe to those who shut the doors of Allah’s Mercy to them themselves!

Alas for those who broke their torches of guidance!

Miserable and deprived of happiness are those who not only did not hearken to the call of the Divine leaders, but also tried to mock them, and then, they killed them by swords, while they had seen the evil fate of those faithless arrogant people before them and they had heard by their ears or studied in history the painful end of theirs that they did not take the least example and paved just the same way they had gone and, consequently, faced with the same fate.

It is clear that this sentence is the word of Allah, since all these verses have been stated from His side, but, of course, the term ‘Alas’ in the sense of inner annoyance concerning the events for which man cannot do anything, is meaningless about Allah; as ‘Wrath’, ‘anger’ and the like, in their real concepts do not exist in respect to Allah either.

But the purpose is that the status of those wretched people was so that whoever became aware of their circumstance he would be sad and stressed that why did they drown in that horrible whirlpool while they had so many means of prosperity.

The application of the Qur’anic word /‘ibad/, (the servants of Allah), points to this fact that it is surprising that the servants of Allah, who are encompassed with the bounties of Allah, have committed such crimes.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 31-32

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

وَإِن كُلٌّ لَمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ

31. “Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them? Not to them will they return.”

32. “And all of them shall surely be brought before Us.”

The consequence of people’s mocking Divine prophets is annihilation, and when the Wrath of Allah comes, there is no way for them to return and recompense. We must not lose the opportunities.

That is why the Qur'an in these two holy verses says:

"Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them?…"

These are not the first people who lived on the earth. There have been some other arrogant people before them who lived in this world and the painful fate of them which has been recorded in the history and the sorrowful traces which have been remained from them in the ruins of their habituated cities are in front of their eyes.

Is this amount of news not enough for them to take example?

That to whom does the plural pronoun in the Qur'anic sentence saying /'alam yarau/ (have they not seen) return? The commentators have delivered some probabilities:

The first is that it returns to the 'people of the town' about whom the previous verses talked. And also its purpose maybe the people of Mecca for whom these verses were revealed to be warned of.

But, regarding to the previous verse saying:

"Alas for the servants!…"

it shows that its purpose is all human beings, because the Qur'anic word /'ibad/ (servants) in that verse envelops all human being throughout the history, those who, at the time of appointment of the Divine prophets, belied them and mocked them.

However, it is an invitation to all the people of the world that they may carefully study the story of former nations, and observe their remaining effects, and use the sense of taking an example from them to understand them well, and the ruin castles of those arrogant people may have an effect on them.

At the end, the verse adds:

"…Not to them will they return."

That is, the great calamity is here that they have no possibility to return to the world and recompense their former sins and misfortunes. The bridges behind them have been ruined so violently that it is impossible for them to return in order to recompense these faults.

This commentary is just like the word of Hadrat Ali (as) who has said in one of the sermons of Nahj-ul-Balaqah about taking example from the dead.

He said:

"There is neither a possibility that they transfer from their ugly deeds nor are they able to increase their goodness."[10]

In the next verse the Qur'an says:

"And all of them shall surely be brought before Us."

That is, it is not such that if they were destroyed and could not return to this world, everything is finished. In fact, death is neither the beginning nor the end. Soon all human beings will be mustered in the scene of Hereafter for reckoning and, after that, there will be the painful chastisement of Allah which is waiting for the wrong doers.

In this case, is it not the time they take example from their condition and do not afflict themselves in the same fate as theirs and, in this remaining respite, they go aside from this terrible whirlpool.

Yes, if death were the end of everything, it would be possible to say that it was the beginning of tranquillity, but also it is not so. If we were left to ourselves when we died, death would be the cause of rest for all the living people. But when we pass away, we will be quickened again and after that we wholly will be asked about everything.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, following the verse
2. Verses: 109, 127, 145, 164, and 180
3. You may refer to Surah Yunus, verses 3, and 32; Surah Hud, verses 3 and 52, Surah An-Nahl, verse 24; Al-Kahf, verse 29
4. Surah Qafir, No. 40, verse 35
5. The commentary book by Qurtabi
6. The commentary books: Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Tibyan, Abulfutuh-i-Razi and so on.
7. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 169
8. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 6, P. 218
9. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Vol. 8, P. 5464
10. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 188

Section 3: Allah's Bounties as Signs of Guidance to Mankind

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 33

وَءَايَةٌ لَّهُمُ الأَرْضُ الْمَيْتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبّاً فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ

33. "And a sign for them is the dead and; We give life to it and We bring forth from it grain so they eat of it."

The best way of having faith in Resurrection is carefulness in the created things.

The verse under discussion states some signs of Unity and Resurrection with together in order that it can be a means for the rejecters to become aware and believe in the Origin and Resurrection.

At first it refers to the revival of the dead lands and the blessings from which reach to mankind.

It says:

"And a sign for them is the dead and; We give life to it and We bring forth from it grain so they eat of it."

The subject of life is one of the most important proofs of Monotheism. It is a very complicated, mysterious and wonderful problem which has caused the intellect of all scientists to surprise. With all great progresses which man has gained in science, none has opened its puzzle yet.

It has not exactly been known to anyone that under what factors at the beginning the inanimate beings changed into living cells.

Still no one knows how the seeds of plants and their different levels have minutely been built; and what mysterious laws administer them that they move when the suitable conditions are provided, and they begin to grow and absorb the atoms of the dead land into their own being; and, in this way, they change the dead beings into some tissues of the living creature so that every day it shows some new manifestations of life.

From one side, the subject of life in the world of plants, animals, and revival of the dead lands are some clear proofs upon the fact that there have been applied a great knowledge in the creation of this world; and, on the other hand, they are as a manifest sign upon Resurrection.

It is clear that the Arabic pronoun /lahum/ (for them) refers to /'ibad/ (servants) which has been mentioned in previous verses; and the purpose of /'ibad/ here is all the servants who made mistake and deviated in the subjects of Origin and Resurrection, and the Qur'an counts their circumstance as the cause of regret and sigh.

The application of the Arabic word /'ayah/ in an indefinite form points to the greatness, importance and clarity of this monotheistic sign.

The Qur'anic sentence /fa minhu ya'kulun/ (so they eat of it), from one side, points to this fact that man feed from a part of vegetal grains, and some others of them are not edible for man, but they have some other benefits, such as: food for animals, producing the colouring matters, medicine, and other things which are utilized in man's life.

And, on the other side, by preceding the word /minhu/ to /ya'kulun/, which is usually used for restriction, expresses this point that the most (and

also the best) source of man's food is vegetal stuffs, so much so that as if they form all foods of man.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 34-35

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ
لِيَأْكُلُوا مِن ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

34. "And We made therein gardens of date-palms and grape vines, and We caused springs to flow forth in it,"

35. "That they may eat of its fruit, and of what their hands have produced; will they not then be grateful?"

In man's nutrition, cereals and grains have the first function and then there are fruits.

The man's duty for bounties is cognition and thanks giving. Allah gives life to the dead land and makes plants and fruits available that man eats them and thanks.

This holy verse refers to the life of dead lands.

It says:

"And We made therein gardens of date-palms and grape vines, and We caused springs to flow forth in it,"

In the previous verse the words were about grains, but here the strengthening and nutritive fruits, two outstanding samples of them are date and grapes each of which is counted a complete food.

As we have formerly said in detail, too, the studies of scholars show that these two fruits, in particular, have kinds of necessary vitamins and different vital materials for man's body. Moreover, these two useful fruits can be kept and used in different forms during the year for eating.

The Arabic term /'a'nab/ is the plural form of /'inab/ and the term /naxil/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, is the plural form of /naxl/ but with this difference that the term /'inab/ is usually called to 'grapes' itself and it is rarely used for a vine, while the word /naxl/ is a name for the tree, the fruit of which is fresh date and is called /tamr/ (fresh but dry date).

Some believe that this difference of meaning that in one place the Qur'an says: 'Tree' and in another place it says: 'fruit' is for the sake that date-palm, as it is popular, all its parts are useful: its trunk, its branches and leaves are totally used differently, and its fruit is superior to all of these things, while vine is usually planted for its fruit and its trunk and branches have not much usage.

And that both of them are mentioned in plural form, this may refer to the different kinds of these two fruits, because each of them is of more than 10 kinds, with different specialties and suitable for everybody and for various tastes.

This point is also noteworthy that in the previous verse the meaning was referred to giving life to the dead lands, which is usually accompanied in the Qur'an with the statement of the descent of rain, but in this verse the words are about the flowing springs, because for a great deal of agriculture only rainwater is not enough and fruit trees are usually in need of flowing water, too.

The Arabic term /fajjarna/ is derived from /tafjir/which here means: ‘to create a vast gap’, and since springs are gushed forth by splitting the land, this meaning has been used for coming out spring-water from the land.

The next holy verse states the aim of the creation of these fruitful trees as such:

“That they may eat of its fruit, and of what their hands have produced; will they not then be grateful?”

Yes, the fruits which appeared on the branches of trees, without being in need of any changes, are eatable when they are picked up from the trees; and this shows the utmost grace and greatness of Allah unto humankind.

He has packed this delicious prepared food as well that it can be maintained for a long time without that it loses its nutritiousness. This is different from the foods man makes from natural god-given stuffs that they often become putrid quickly.

There is another commentary upon this verse which is noteworthy, too. It says: the Qur’an intends to point both to the fruits that are used without any change, and to the kinds of different foods which are obtained with an action on these fruits. (In the first commentary the Arabic word /ma/ in the Qur’anic sentence is a negative sign, while in the second one is a ‘relative pronoun’.

However, the aim is that this sense of gratitude and thanksgiving of men may be moved so that, by the way of thanksgiving they can step in the stage of knowing Allah, in which thanking the Benefactor is the first step of knowing Allah (s.w.t.).

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 36

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

36. “Glory be to Him Who created pairs (of) all things, of what the earth grows, and of their selves and of what they do not know.”

One of the scientific miracles of the Qur’an is the statement of the law of matrimony in all things: plants, human beings, and that which people did not know at that time and now they know.

This holy verse talks about the glorification of Allah and nullifies the polytheism of the polytheist about which the former verse referred to and shows all human beings the way of Monotheism.

It says:

“Glory be to Him Who created pairs (of) all things, of what the earth grows, and of their selves and of what they do not know.”

Yes, the Lord, Who created these all pairs in the expanse of the world of existence, whose Knowledge and Power are infinite, and there is no defect and blemish in His Essence, has no partner, no like, and no equal. So if some groups of people have counted some pieces of the stone, wood and other creatures of His like, He is far off from these undue attributes.

It is evident that Allah does not need to glorify Himself. This is an instruction for the servants and it is a prescription for paving the path of development.

Commentators have rendered the Qur’anic term /’azwaj/ (pairs), mentioned here, into different meanings. What is certain is that the term

/’azwaj/ is the plural form of /zauj/ which is called to the two genders of masculine and feminine, whether they are in the world of animals, or other than them.

Then, this word has been expanded and every two beings which are companions to each other, or even they are opposite to each other, are called /zauj/. This word is used even for two similar rooms in a house, or two halves of a door, or two fellow-members. And, thus, it considers a pair for any being in the world.

However, it is not impossible that matrimony here is used with the same specific sense of masculine gender and feminine gender, and, in this verse, the Qur’an informs of the existence of matrimony in the world of all plants, human beings, and other beings that people are not aware of.

These beings may be plans that the vastness of the scope of matrimony had not been discovered yet at that time.

Or it may point to the animals in the depth of the seas of which on that day nobody was aware and today a part of it has been discovered for human beings.

Or it points to other living creatures that live in other heavenly spheres.

Or they are very small living creatures, although the modern scientists do not know any masculine and feminine among them; but the world of these living creatures is so mysterious and secret that the knowledge of man has not found a way to this part of it.

Even, as we said, the existence of matrimony in the world of plants was unknown at the time of the revelation of the Qur’an, except some special instances, like the trees of dates and the like, and the Qur’an uncovered it. In the present centuries, by the way of science, this meaning has been proved that the subject of matrimony in the world of plants is a general and common subject.

This probability has also been delivered that ‘matrimony’ here refers to the existence of positive and negative particles inside the centre of atom and the electrons which rotate around it and which has been proved.

Some have also believe that it refers to the combination of the things from ‘matter’ and ‘form’, or ‘substance’ and ‘accident’ while some others consider that it is an implicit declaration of different kinds of plants, human beings, animals, and other beings in the world.

But it is clear that when we can adapt these words to the real meaning (masculine and feminine genders) and there is not any frame of reference contrary to it, why do we refer to the allusive meanings; and, as was said, there are several interesting commentaries for the real meaning of matrimony here.

However, this verse is one of the verses that state that man’s knowledge is limited and which shows that there are a great deal of facts in this world which are not known to our knowledge.[1]

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 37-38

وَءَايَةٌ لَّهُمُ الَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُم مُّظْلِمُونَ

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

37. "And a sign for them is the night; We strip it of the day and behold they are plunged in darkness."

38. "And the sun runs unto a resting-place fixed for it; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing."

Night is one of the signs of Power and Wisdom of Allah. It is a fixed program in the length of history which has no disorder. This fact is the sign of the existence of a Wise and Knowing Geomancer.

These verses state another part of the signs of the greatness of Allah in the world of existence; and following the discussion mentioned in the former verses about Resurrection and reviving the dead lands, plants and trees, another form of the forms of Monotheism is stated.

It says:

"And a sign for them is the night…"

While the light of sun has covered everywhere, and the army of darkness has been drawn back, Allah says:

"…We strip it of the day and behold they are plunged in darkness."

The Arabic term /naslaxu/ is derived from /salax/ which originally means 'taking off the skin of an animal' and it is a tender meaning. As if the light of the day were a white clothing which has been put on the body of the night. At the sunset this clothing is taken off of its body, like the skin, in order that its innate becomes manifest.

To be careful in this meaning reiterates this point that the main nature of the earth is darkness, and light is something casual which is given to it from another source. It is like a shirt put on the body of a person that when he takes it off, the natural colour of the body is made manifest.

Here, the Qur'an has emphasized on the darkness of night. It seems it intends to state the change of the light of the day into darkness of the night, as an example of the death after life, and this is next to the statement of giving life to the dead lands, which was mentioned as a sign out of the Divine signs in the previous verses.

However, when man is in the midst of the darkness of night, he remembers the light and its blessings, the light and its excitements, the light and its source, and, by a comparison he will be acquainted with 'the Creator of light and darkness'.

In the next verse, which has been pointed out next to the night as a sign, there is the light of sun as a sign.

It says:

"And the sun runs unto a resting-place fixed for it…"

This verse clearly states the constant motion of the sun, but, concerning the purpose of this motion, commentators have delivered different discussions. A group of them say that this motion refers to the apparent motion of the sun round the earth which will continue until the end of the world and, in fact, is the destination of the sun and it is the end of its lifetime.

Some others have rendered it to the declamation of the sun in summer and winter towards the North and South of the earth, because we know that from the beginning of spring the sun declines from the moderate line (equator) toward the North and goes forth as far as 23 northern degree and

from the beginning of summer it returns back until the beginning of autumn when it reaches the moderate line (equator).

It also continues its movement toward the South until the beginning of winter, and from the beginning of winter it moves toward the line of equinox and it reaches it at the beginning of spring.

Of course, all these motions, in fact, are because of the movement of the earth and the inclination of its excess due to the level of its orb, though apparently and as the result of the sense it seems relates to the movement of the sun.

Some others consider it as an indication to the rotation of the 'sun globe', because the studies of the scientists have decisively proved that the sun turns round itself.

The last and the most modern commentary for the abovementioned verse is the same thing that scientists have recently discovered. It says that the sun moves with the solar system in the midst of our galaxy toward an appointed direction and toward a far distanced star which has been called 'Weca'.

These meanings do not contrast to each other and the Arabic phrase /tajri/ may refer to all these movements and the movements which have not been known to our knowledge and that they may be discovered in future.

However, to move the sun, this very great globe which is one million and two thousand times bigger than the earth and with an accurate movement in the endless atmosphere, is possible by no one save by Allah Whose Power is above all powers and Whose Knowledge is infinite.

That is why, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing."

The last word about this verse is that there is a meaningful hint in its content upon the system of the solar year which comes into being by means of the movement of the sun in zodiacs a system that gives order and program to the living of man, and arranges its different aspects.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 39-40

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّي عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ

لاَ الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَآ أَن تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلاَ الَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

39. "And (as for) the moon, We have fixed for it the stages till its returns to be bent like an old palm branch."

40. "Neither is it expedient for the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and each swims along in (its own) orbit."

The orb of the movement of the sun and the moon has been arranged in a way that they never crash each other, and there will not appear any confusion in the creation of the night and the day.

In spite of the attitude which said the sum was fixed, the Holy Qur'an says that the sun has motion, and a motion with a proper direction.

Therefore, in order to complete this discussion, these noble verses of the Holy Qur'an speak about the moon and its zodiacal signs, the system of the division of the days of the moon.

It says:

"And (as for) the moon, We have fixed for it the stages till its returns to be bent like an old palm branch."

The objective meaning of 'stages' is the same twenty eight places at the moon passes before 'its absence in the last nights of a lunar month' and absolute darkness, because when a lunar month is fully thirty days, the moon is visible in the sky until the twenty eighth night, but by this night the moon appears very narrow with a yellow colour and a little light.

It is not visible during the 'two remaining nights' which is called in Arabic /muhaq/. In the lunar months, of course, which contains twenty nine days, the moon is usually seen in the sky until twenty seventh night, and 'the two remaining aq/ (the absence of the moon).nights' is /muh

These stages are completely exact and accurate, in a manner that the astronomers, according to their minute calculations, can foretell them from one hundred years sooner.

This marvellous system gives order to the men's living. It is a natural celestial calendar which everybody is able to study. It is so that if a person is careful in the situation of the moon in different nights, he can, by looking at its situation, know, exactly or approximately, which night of the lunar month that night is.

This fact has been experienced, because, at the beginning the tips of the crescent are upward and gradually the bulk of the moon increases until the seventh night when a complete half of the moon is fully made manifest. Then its increasing state will continue on to the fourteenth night when it becomes a full moon.

From this night on, the moon decreases from down side until the twenty first night when the moon appears in a semicircle form. It continues being decreased until the twenty eighth night when the moon is seen with a weak colourless crescent the tips of which are downward.

Yes, the main basis of the men's living is formed by order, and without defining the exact time having order is impossible; and Allah has set this exact monthly and yearly calendar in the sky for this very aim.

It is from this hint that the tender concept of the Qur'anic phrase /kal 'urjun-il-qadim/ (to the best like an old palm branch) is made clear. As most commentators and philologists have said, the Arabic word /'urjun/ means that part of the bunch of dates which is attached to the tree. The explanation is that: dates appear on the tree in the form of bunch of dates.

The end of this bunch is in the form of yellow wooden arc which is attached to the tree, and its tip is like a sweep, and the dates, like grapes, are joined to its strings. When the bunch of dates is cut, that wooden arc branch remains on the tree.

When it dries, it is completely similar to the crescent before /muhaq/, because, as the crescent of the last nights of the lunar month, which is in the east of the sky, appears nearly in the morning. It is like arc, yellow and withered, the tips of which is downward, and /'urjun-il-qadim/ is also like this.

This similarity, in fact, appears in different dimensions. They are from the point of arc form of the date branch, from the point of yellow colour, from the point of withered state, from the point of its tips being downward,

and from the point of it being inside the mass of green branches of the palm tree which is not unlike to the crescent of the last night inside the dark sky.

The moon is qualified as ‘old’ which points to its oldness, because the more old these branches are, the more narrow, withered, and yellowish they become, and they are more alike to the crescent of the last lunar month. Glory be to Allah! That how many tenders and beauties there are in a short phrase of the Holy Qur’an!

The last verse of the group of verses under discussion speaks about the perseverance and permanence of this order of year, month, day and night. The Lord has arranged such a program for them that there appears the least change in their situation, and it is for this very perseverance that the history of man can be arranged fully.

It says:

“Neither is it expedient for the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and each swims along in (its own) orbit.”

We know that the sun spends its term in twelve months during one year while the moon passes its stages during one month.

Therefore, the circular movement of the moon in its orb is twelve times quicker than the movement of the sun in its orb. That is why it implies that the sun in its own movement never reaches the moon so that it performs its one-year movement during one month and that the one year system varies.

Also, the night never outstrip the day so that it brings a part of it into itself and that the present system alters, but all of them continue their path without the least change for millions of years.

And, thus, the state of sun and moon swimming in their orbits also comes forth from this.

There is also this probability that the purpose of the ‘sun swims in its orbit’ is its movement accompanied with the solar system and accompanied with the galaxy inside which we are, because it has been proved that our solar system is a part of the great galaxy which is rotating round itself.

As many known commentators believe, the Qur’anic sentence:

“Each swims along in (its own) orbit”

refers to each of the sun, the moon and stars that have a separate orbit for themselves, though the word ‘stars’ has not formerly been mentioned in the verses, with regard to the mention of /layl/ (night) and companionship of stars with the sun and the moon, the recognition of this meaning does not seem impossible, in particular that un/ has been mentioned in plural form.the term /yasbah

There is also this interpretation that this sentence refers to each of sun, moon, night and day, because each of night and day has an orb for itself and exactly they turn round the earth. Always half of the earth is dark while another half has light and these two turn round the earth one complete round during twenty four hours.

The Qur’anic term /yasbaḥun/ is derived from /sabahat/ that, according to Mufradat by Raqib, originally means move ‘speedily’ in water and space, which points to the quick movement of the heavenly spheres. It has likened them to some intellectual beings that continue swiftly their rotation.

This fact has also been proved today that the celestial spheres are moving in their path with very surprising speeds, and sometimes with extra ordinary speed.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 41-42

وَءَايَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ

وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ

41. "And a sign for them is that We bore their offspring in the loaded ship."

42. "And We have created for them the like of it whereon they ride."

Taking benefit from ships and animals has frequently been mentioned as the Divine blessings.

Former verses were about the signs of Allah in the creation of the sun and the moon as well as the night and the day, and also the earth and the blessing of the earth. Now, in the verse under discussion the words are about the seas and a part of the bounties and merits of the seas, i.e. the movement of ships over them for taking passengers and commerce.

Moreover, the movement of these ships in the middle of oceans is not unlike to the movement of celestial spheres in the ocean of atmosphere.

So, at first, it says:

"And a sign for them is that We bore their offspring in the loaded ship."

The Arabic pronoun /lahum/ not only returns to the pagans of Mecca but also to all servants and creatures of Allah whom were spoken about in the previous verses.

The Arabic term /ðurriyah/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, originally means little offspring, although it is sometimes used in ordinary speaking for all children, young and old.

This word is used for both singular and plural; and that it implicitly says that Allah bore their offspring (or their small children) in this ships without that it speaks about them, perhaps it is for this sake that offspring need more to this still amount, since adults are more prepared for walking and paving the beaches on foot than little children.

Moreover, this meaning is more fitting for moving their sympathy.

The application of the Qur'anic term /mašhun/ (full) points to this fact that not only they themselves embark in the ship but also their goods and their necessary means are carried with them.

However, the movement of ships is the greatest and the most important means of transformation for human beings, and their benefit is thousands times more than other vehicles. This is the result of the particular specialties of water and the specific gravity of the materials that an ordinary ship has usually been made therewith.

All of these are the might and forces that Allah has made subservient to man and each of them, and also their entire existence, is a sign among the Divine signs.

In order that it should not misunderstand that the only god-given mount is ship, in the next verse it adds:

"And We have created for them the like of it whereon they ride."

These are the vehicles which run on land, or in the sky and atmosphere and carry both men and their heavy means. Some commentators have simply rendered this holy verse into camel which has been called the ‘ship of desert’.

Some others have rendered it into all beasts, and some others into airplanes and aircrafts which have been invented in our time; and applying the Qur’anic phrase /xalaqna/ (We created) about them is for this view that their materials and means have been created formerly.

But the verse has a vast scope of meaning which envelops all these concepts and other than them, too.

Of course, in some verses of the Qur’an the word beasts has numerously been mentioned beside /fulk/ (ships), like the verse which says:

“…and made for you of the ships and the cattle what you ride on.”[2]

And also in Surah Al-Mu’min, No. 40, verse 80 we recite:

“…and upon them and upon the ships you are carried.”

But these verses do not contrast to the generality of the concept of the verse.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 43-44

وَإِن نَّشَأْ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلاَ صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنقَذُونَ

إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعاً إِلَى حِينٍ

43. “And if We please, We drown them, then there shall be none to help them, nor shall they be rescued.”

44. “Save (by) mercy from Us, and enjoyment for a while.”

It is Allah Who has set water in a form that man can move by ship on it, and this merit is among the signs of the Power of Allah. Therefore, for making this great bounty more clear, this verse states the situation which comes into being because of this bounty being changed.

It says:

“And if We please, We drown them, then there shall be none to help them, nor shall they be rescued.”

We may order a huge wave to drown their ship; or We may command a whirlpool to take them inside itself; or We may tell a tempest to throw them in the midst of the waves like a blade of straw.

And if We please, We can alter the property of water, ship, the regularity of the blow of winds, and the stillness of the sea so that all their things confuse. It is We Who cause this system to continue in order that they enjoy; and if now and then We sent some events of this kind, it is for the sake that, by means of them, they know the bounty they are inside of it.

The Qur’anic term /sarix/ is derived from /sarax/ in the sense of ‘helper’; and the Arabic term /yunqaŏun/ is derived from /’inqaŏ/ in the sense of “to rescue, to deliver”.

At last, in order to complete this meaning, in the next holy verse it says:

“Save (by) mercy from Us, and enjoyment for a while.”

Yes, by no means they can deliver, except that Our mercy comes to them and Our grace hastens to help them.

The Arabic word /hin/ means ‘time’ and in the above verse it refers to the end of the man’s life and his death. Some commentators have rendered it into the end of the world.

Yes, those who have embarked a ship (the old small ships or the huge great modern ships which run on the oceans) understand well the depth of the meaning of this verse, that the most gigantic ships of the world are like a blade of straw in the face of great waves of the sea and terrible storms of oceans, and if the mercy of Allah were not upon persons, their deliverance would be impossible.

In this narrow way, which is between death and life, He intends to show His Power to humankind, perhaps the misled ones of the way may find a path toward Him therefrom.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 45-46

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِم مِنْ ءَايَةٍ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلاَّ كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

45. “And when it is said to them: ‘Be in awe of that which is before you and that which is behind you; haply you will be treated with mercy, (they turn back).”

46. “And there comes not to them any sign from the signs of their Lord but they turn aside from it.”

Piety is the secret of receiving the mercy of Allah.

The signs of Allah are many, but the People's acceptance is little.

In the former verses the words were about some important discussions concerning the Divine signs in the expanse of the world of existence. In the verses under discussion the reaction of the obstinate pagans against the Divine verses, and also the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) and warning to the punishment of Allah have been stated.

By the first holy verse, it says:

“And when it is said to them: ‘Be in awe of that which is before you and that which is behind you; haply you will be treated with mercy, (they turn back).”

Concerning the Qur’anic phrases:

“That which is before you and that which is behind you”

and their meanings, commentators have delivered different interpretations the most important of which is that the purpose of the Qur’anic phrase /ma bayna ’aydikum/ (that which is before you) is the chastisements of the world that one example of which is mentioned in the previous verses; and the purpose of the phrase /ma xalfakum/ is the chastisements of the Hereafter which they have in behind, and the application of ‘behind’ is for the sake that they have not come yet, as if they are running behind the one’s back and finally they reach him one day and will encompass him.

The purpose of ‘being in awe of them’ is that he may not create their factors and, in other words, he would not do something that he should meet these terrible chastisements.

The evidence for this statement is that the application of the Qur’anic term /’ittaqu/ in the verses of the Qur’an is either in concern with Allah, or

in concern with Hereafter Day and Divine punishments that, in fact, both return to one meaning, because to be in awe of Allah (s.w.t.) is to be in awe of His punishment.

This itself is a proof upon the fact that to be in awe of Divine punishment mentioned in the verse under discussion is also the chastisement in this world and the next.

The second verse emphasizes again on the same meaning, and distinguishes the obstinacy of the blind hearted people in neglecting the verses of Allah and the prophet's teachings, where it says:

"And there comes not to them any sign from the signs of their Lord but they turn aside from it."

Neither is the statement of introversive verses effective in them, nor is the explanation of the extroversive verses; neither threat nor glad-tiding to the mercy of Allah. They accept neither the logic of intellect nor the command of sympathy and nature.

They are like some blind persons who do not see the nearest things around them and do not differ between the light of the sun and the darkness of the night.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 47

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنُطْعِمُ مَن لَوْ يَشَآءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ فِي ضَلاَلٍ مُبِينٍ

47. "And when it is said to them: 'Spend out of what Allah has provided you with the sustenance, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: 'Shall we feed him whom, if Allah willed, He could feed (Himself)? You are not but in a manifest error'."

Man may reach a point where he considers infidelity and stinginess as a right path, and faith and charity as a deviated way.

In this holy verse, the Qur'an refers to one of the important instances of their obstinacy and renouncement and, in this regard, it says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Spend out of what Allah has provided you with the sustenance, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: 'Shall we feed him whom, if Allah willed, He could feed (Himself)? You are not but in a manifest error'."

This is the same very vulgarly logic which is propounded from the side of self-loving and niggardly persons who usually say: If so and so is poor, he has surely done something that Allah desires him to remain poor; and if we are rich we have necessarily done something that we are in the grace of Allah; therefore, neither their poverty nor our richness is not void of wisdom.

They are heedless that the world is the field of trial. Allah tries someone with poverty and the other with wealth, and sometimes He puts one person under trial in both of them in different times.

He tries him whether he performs the rites of deposit, high-mindedness of nature, and gratitude, or he neglects all of them; and at the time he is wealthy whether he spends out what he has in his possession in the way of Allah, or not.

Some commentators have adopted the above verse upon some particular groups, such as: the Jews, or Arab pagans, or a group of atheists and rejecters of the religions of the Divine prophets, but the apparent is that the verse has a general concept and in any time there can be found some examples for it, though the reference of its concept at the time of the revelation of the verse had been a number of the Jews or polytheists.

This has been a common pretext in the length of centuries that they say: if the giver of sustenance is Allah then why do you want us to give sustenance to the poor persons? And if Allah has wished they remain deprived then why do we help the one whom Allah has made deprived?

They are unaware that sometimes the order of creation chooses something and the order of religion another thing.

The order of creation has required such that Allah, the wise, puts the earth with all its merits at the man's disposal and lets them free in their actions in order that they pave the path of development, and in the meantime He has set some instincts in him each of which leads him toward a direction.

And the order of religion has required such that, in order to control the instincts, purification of the carnal souls, and training men by the way of donation, self-sacrifice, forgiveness, and spending out, it appoints some laws and causes man to reach, by this way, the rank of Allah's viceroy for which he has potentiality.

By the way of Zakat (alms) they may purify their selves, and by means of charity they may wipe out miserliness, and thereby they dismiss the class division, which is the source of thousands of evils in man's life.

This is just like that some persons say that what is the necessity in this that we study or teach others? If Allah desired, He would give knowledge to us all so that none was in need of learning knowledge. Does any wise person accept this logic?

The Qur'anic sentence:

"Those who disbelieve say",

which has emphasized on their disbelief, points to this fact that these superstitious logics and pretexts originate from infidelity.

Upon the commentary of the sentence:

"You are not but in a manifest error"

it is said that its purpose is the speech of the pagans due to the believers. In fact, they wanted to be paid in their own coin opposite the believers and to attribute them to 'a manifest error',

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 48-50

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

مَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ

فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلاَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

48. "And they say: 'When will this promise come to pass if you are truthful?'"

49. "They are not awaiting for aught but a single (fatal) blast which will overtake them while they are disputing among themselves."

50. "Then they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they be able to return unto their families."

Pagans have not any proof for the denial of the Hereafter, and only by asking this question that 'When will be Hereafter' they mock it. When the Hereafter comes neither the tongue can speak, nor is the foot able to escape.

Following the mentioning the weak and pretext-seeking logic of the disbelievers concerning expending referred to in the former verses, in these verses the words are about their mockery unto the establishment of the Hereafter, and with a decisive answer, the Qur'an nullifies their hollow logic about the denial of Resurrection.

In addition, the discussions stated through former verses in the field of monotheism are completed with the discussions of Resurrection.

At first, it says:

"And they say: 'When will this promise come to pass if you are truthful?'"

They implicitly say: the fact that you can not define a proper time for the establishment of Hereafter is an evidence upon this matter that you are not truthful in your statement.

In answer to this question, which is accompanied with derision, the Holy Qur'an firmly and earnestly implies that the establishment of the Hereafter and the end of this world is not a complicated matter for Allah and it is not a difficult thing for Him, when it says:

"They are not awaiting for aught but a single (fatal) blast which will overtake them while they are disputing among themselves."

This very single great heavenly Blast is enough to take the soul of every one of them immediately in any place and any state they are, and to change their material exiting lives, which contain disputations and constant quarrels, into a silent world, vacant from any sound and noise.

In Islamic narrations, it has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that this heavenly Blast occurs so suddenly that before that the two people who are bargaining and have spread a cloth can role it, the world will end, and there will be some people that, at that moment, have taken some food from the plate, but before it reaches their mouth the heavenly Blast comes and the world finishes.

There will be some people who are busy mending a pool in order that they water their cattle, but before that the cattle become satiated the Hereafter comes forth.[3]

The Qur'anic sentence: /ma yanzurun/ here means 'they are not awaiting', because, as Raqib says in Mufradat, the Arabic stem /nazar/ means the circulation of thought for observing or conceiving something. Sometimes it is used in the sense of deliberation and research, and also in the sense of knowledge resulted from research.

The Arabic term /sayhah/ (blast) originally means cleaving a piece of food or cloth and arising a sound from it. Then it has been used for any loud sound and cry-like. Sometimes, it has also been applied for the length of the body.

The Arabic phrase /yaxisimun/ is derived from /xusumat/ in the sense of 'quarrel' and 'dispute'; but on what thing do they dispute?

This meaning has not been mentioned in the verse, but it is clear that the purpose is to dispute upon the worldly matter and the affairs of the material life.

But some commentators have taken it in the sense of disputation upon ‘Resurrection’, while the first meaning seems more fitting, though it is not improbable that taking a consistent meaning which includes both of them and that envelops any kind of disputation is also possible.

It is noteworthy that the numerous pronouns existing in the verse all refer to the pagans of Mecca who were doubtful in the subject of Resurrection, and they ridiculously asked that when Hereafter will occur.

But it is certain that the purpose is not they themselves, but the purpose is the kind of them. (It is the kind of those who are neglectful and unaware of Resurrection), because they died and did never see this heavenly Blast.

However, by this short and decisive statement, the Qur’an warns them that, firstly, Hereafter will suddenly be established, and secondly, it is not a complicated matter that they would be busy disputing and quarrelling about its possibility; everything will be ended by a single blast and the world will be finished.

Then, in the third verse, it implies that this subject will so quickly and suddenly happen that they will not be able even to make a bequest, or return to their houses or to their families.

It says:

“Then they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they be able to return unto their families.”

When an event happens for a person, and he usually feels that the end of his life is near, wherever he is, he tries to go home in order to be among his family: with his wife and children; then, by testament, he gives his half-done affairs and the fate of his remaining persons to others that this or that person would undertake them and recommend them to other persons.

But the Blast of the end of the world gives no respite to anyone; and supposing there will be a respite, does anyone remain alive to listen to the recommendations of people? Or, for example, the wife and children sit by the spouse and father and take his head in bosom so that he dies peacefully? Nay, none of these things is possible.

And that the word ‘a bequest’ has been used in an infinitive form, it points to this fact that they will not have even the chance of a small bequest and recommendation, either.

Notes

1. Upon the matrimony of beings in the world, and particularly in the world of plants, there is a discussion under Surah Ash-Shu‘ara, No. 26, verse 7

2. Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 12

3. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, following the verse under discussion; and some other commentary books, such as: Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Rauh-ul-Bayan and so on.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Section 4: A Scene of the Resurrection

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 51-53

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِنَ الأَجْدَاثِ إِلَي رَبِّـهِمْ يَنسِلُونَ

قَالُوا يَاوَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

إِن كَانَتْ إِلاَّ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ

51. "And the Trumpet shall be blown, then behold, from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord."

52. "They shall say: 'Oh! woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent (Allah) promised; and the apostles told the truth."

53. "There would be naught but a single Blast, when they shall all brought before Us."

Hereafter is a scene of awareness, acknowledgement and confession. The establishment of Hereafter and reckoning is the requisite of the Attribute of Allah Who is Beneficent.

That which the disbelievers denied in the world, they will confess it on That Day. (When the name of Rahman was mentioned in the world they used to say:

"What is Rahman?",

but on that Day they will say:

"This is what the Beneficent (Allah) promised".

In this verse, the Qur'an points to another stage which is the stage of life after death. It says:

"And the Trumpet shall be blown, then behold, from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord."

By the command of Allah, the dust and the rotten bones will have life again and come out from their graves and attend that wonderful court for trial and reckoning.

They will have life again and will be quickened by a single Blast, in the same manner that all of them died with a single Blast (blown in the Trumpet). Neither their death nor their being quickened is difficult for Allah.

Just like the trumpet which is blown for the soldiers of the army to gather and be ready, and then, in a short time, they all get up and come out from their tents and attend in the row, the act of raising the dead is, like that, quick for Allah, too.

The Qur'anic word /'ajdath/ is the plural form of /jadath/ in the sense of 'grave'. This meaning shows well that resurrection, besides having the spiritual aspect, has the bodily aspect, too, and the man's new body will be made from the same former materials.

The application of the Arabic term /nufixa/ (shall be blown) in the past tense form is for the sake that in the Arabic language the certain future affairs are stated in past verb form indicating that there is no doubt in it, as if it had happened before.

The Arabic term /yansilun/ is derived from /nasl/ in the sense of 'walking quickly'. Raqib in Mufradat says: this word originally means: 'to separate

from something', and that a person's children in Arabic are called /nasl/ (offspring) it is for the sake that they have separated from father and mother. Therefore, when a person quickly gets away and separates, this word is used.

The application of the Arabic term /rabbihim/ (their Lord) seems that it refers to this fact that the Lordship, ownership and training of Allah require that there should be a reckoning and Resurrection for the affairs.

However, it is clearly understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an that ending of this world and the beginning of the next world both will happen suddenly and with a revolutionary movement and each of them has been rendered into 'blowing in the Tempest', the full explanation of which will be mentioned in the commentary of Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 68.

In the next verse, the Qur'an adds:

"They shall say: 'Oh! woe to us! who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent (Allah) promised; and the apostles told the truth."

Yes, the scene is so expressive and terrible that man forgets all the false and superstitious matters, and he will not have any way except confessing the facts explicitly. It likens the graves to sleeping-places, and the Resurrection to getting up from sleep.

This has also been mentioned in a famous tradition which says:

"You will pass away like that you sleep, and you will be raised as you get up from sleep."[1]

Here they terrify and cry that woe to us! Who did awaken us from sleeping, and rose up from our sleeping-place?

But soon they will realize and remember that the true prophets in the world have given them promise of this Day from the side of Allah. They answer themselves that this is the promise of the Beneficent, Allah; the Lord Whose general mercy has enveloped all and Whose prophets told the truth and made us aware of this Day, but alas we mocked them all.

Therefore, the Qur'anic sentence:

"…this is what the Beneficent (Allah) promised and the apostles told the truth"

is the continuation of the statement of the rejecters of Resurrection, but some commentators have considered it as the statement of the angels or the believers, which contrasts the apparent of the verse, and there is no necessity upon it, because the confusion of the rejecters on the fact on that Day is not a matter that is mentioned only in this verse.

Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 97 says:

"And the true promise has drawn nigh; then behold, staring wide (in terror), the eyes of those who disbelieve! (They say:) 'Alas for us! We were heedless of this (Day); nay; we were unjust ones'."

However, the application of the Arabic term /marqad/, which is used in the sense of 'sleeping-place' and 'sleep', denotes to this fact that in the world of purgatory they are in a state similar to sleep, and as it is said in the commentary of Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 100, due to the majority of people, who are in a status between infidelity and faith, 'purgatory' is not unlike to the state of sleeping, where both the excellent believers and

extraordinary vice disbelievers are completely aware and enjoy the blessings or are faced with kinds of chastisement.

Some of the commentators have given this probability that the terror and grief in Hereafter is so much that the purgatory chastisement, compared with it, is like naught but a peaceful sleep.

Then, in order to explain the speed of the occurrence of the blast of the trumpet, in the third verse the Qur'an says:

"There would be naught but a single Blast, when they shall all brought before Us."

Therefore, there will not need a long time for the dead to be quickened and that they rise from their graves and attend in the just court of Allah, in the same manner that there needs not a long time for the death of individuals. The first Blast is a cry for death and the second Blast is a cry for life and attending in the court of Allah, the Just.

The application of the word 'Blast' (a cry) and emphasizing it with the word 'single' and then the application of the Arabic term /'iða/, which in such instances informs of the sudden occurrence of something, and the application of:

"They shall all be brought before Us"

in the form of a nominal sentence all are as evidence to the quick occurrence of this part of Resurrection.

The conclusive tone of these verses and the piercing influence of them in the men's hearts is so effective that as if they hear this cry with their ears saying: O' men who are asleep! O' the scattered dusts! And O' rotten bones! Stand up! Stand up! And be ready for Reckoning and recompense! How beautiful the verses of the Qur'an are, and how expressive their warnings are!

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 54

فَالْيَوْمَ لاَ تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئاً وَلاَ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

54. "So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least, nor shall you be recompensed but that which you used to do."

Allah is just, and the Hereafter is the Day of appearance and manifestation of Allah's Justice. The retribution and reward on the Hereafter Day is on the basis of our deeds in the world.

This verse refers to the end of the righteous believers and the wicked disbelievers. It implies that on that Day nobody shall be dealt with unjustly. Neither the reward of anybody will be decreased, nor will the retribution of anybody be increased.

It says:

"So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least…"

Then it refers to a statement which, in fact, is a clear and vivid evidence for the lack of injustice in that great court. It continues saying:

"…nor shall you be recompensed but that which you used to do."

In other words, the deeds you do in this world, good or bad, will be with you there on that Day. The same deeds will be incarnated and in all stations of the gathering place of resurrection, and after the end of Reckoning, will

be with you as your companion. Is the deliverance of the fruit of someone's deeds to him contrary to justice?

Or is the carnation of deeds and making it as a person's companion injustice? And by this it is made clear that, basically, in that sense 'injustice' does not have any concept. If here, amongst human beings, there is sometimes justice and sometimes injustice, it is for the reason that they have not the ability of showing and delivering the deeds of everybody to him.

Some of the commentators have considered that the recent sentence refers to the evil doers and pagans who will face with retribution equal to their deeds and it does not refer to the believers, because Allah will give them the rewards more than their deeds because of His Grace and His Mercy.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 55-58

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُونَ
هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلاَلٍ عَلَي الأَرَآئِكِ مُتَّكِئُونَ
لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُم مَّا يَدَّعُونَ
سَلاَمٌ قَوْلاً مِن رَّبٍّ رَّحِيمٍ

55. "Verily the inhabitants of Paradise that day are busy in rejoicing,"

56. "They and their wives shall be in the shades, reclining on raised coaches;"

57. "They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire."

58. "'Peace': is the word from a Merciful Lord (for them)."

In Paradise, there will be life without death, health with no sickness, youth with no senility, honour with no disgrace, favour with no indebtedness, permanence with no distraction, joy with no wrath, and intimate ease with no fear. Moreover, in Paradise there will be received a consent and a significant greeting from the side of Allah.

And, however, this holy verse refers to the part of the rewards of the believers and, before anything else, emphasizes on the peace of mind and says:

"Verily the inhabitants of Paradise that Day are busy in rejoicing,"

They are busy with the bounties of Allah and are aloof from any annoying thought, so they will be in the utmost joy and happiness.

The Arabic word /šuqul/ and the term /šuql/ both are with the sense of events and moods that come to man and make him busy to them whether they are happy or sad.

But since the Qur'anic term /fakihun/ has immediately been mentioned after it, and this term is the plural form of /fakih/ in the sense of joyful, happy, and laughing, it can be a hint to the affairs which make man so busy to him that he may neglect the annoying affairs totally in a way that he will be in full rejoicing and no grief or sorrow dominates him, and he forgets even the horror and fear that he gets at the time of the establishment of Hereafter and attending in the Divine court of justice.

If this horror does not really go, the shade of anxiety and sorrow will constantly have heaviness on the man's heart. Therefore, one of the effects of this business of mind is forgetting the terror of the Hereafter.

However, next to the peace of mind which is the source of all bounties, and it is the condition of using all merits, it refers to the explanation of other bounties.

It says:

"They and their wives shall be in the shades, reclining on raised coaches;"

The Arabic term /'azwaj/ here means 'the heavenly wives', or it means the faithful wives whom they had in this world.

And that some have said that it may be in the sense of 'their associates', like Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 22 which says:

"(And Allah will command the angels:) 'Gather you together those who were unjust and their mates and what they used to worship,"

that here it seems very improbable, in particular that the Qur'anic term /'ara'ik/, the plural form of /'arikah/, according to a group of commentators and philologists is in the sense of some beds which are in bridal chamber.[2]

The application of the Arabic word /zilal/ (shades) refers to the shades of the trees in Paradise amidst which the thrones of the people of Heaven have been erected. Or it refers to the shades of the castles in Paradise.

All of these show that there is sunshine there, too; but there is not a tormenting sunshine. Yes, they have some other kind of pleasure and happiness under the pleasant shades of the Heavenly trees.

In addition to that, the verse says:

"They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire."

It is clearly understood from other verses of the Qur'an that the food of the people of Paradise is not only fruits, but the abovementioned verse shows that the best food of the people of Heaven is fruit, the special fruits which are completely different from the fruits of this world.

And, even in this world, according to the confession of the specialists of nutriment, fruits are the best and the most suitable nutriment for man.

The Qur'anic term /yadda'un/ is derived from /da'ayah/in the sense of 'demand', i.e. whatever they demand and desire it will available for them, and they will not have any wish which will not be done for them.

In Majma'-ul-Bayan the Late Tabarsi says:

"An Arab uses this meaning in respect to /tamanni/ and he says: 'whatever you desire you may demand from me'."

And thus, whatever today man may think of and whatever does not come into his mind from among the kinds of merits and the bounties, they will be available and prepared there, and the entertainment of Allah from His guests will be done in the highest possible level.

But, the most important of all are the spiritual merits which are referred to in the last verse of the verses under discussion.

It says:

"'Peace': is the word from a Merciful Lord (for them)."

This enlivening and pleasant call, which is full of His love and affection, attracts the man's attention to itself so deeply, and gives him joy, happiness and spirituality, that does not match any other bounty.

Yes hearing the call of the beloved one, is a call filled with love and mixed with grace which causes the people of Paradise to be thoroughly rejoicing, a moment of which is superior to the whole world and whatever exists in it.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that he said:

"While the people of Paradise are busy enjoying the bounties of Heaven there will appear a light above them.

This is the light of Allah which is cast upon them and at the same time a call will be heard saying:

'Peace and greeting on you, O' the people of Paradise!'

And this is the same thing which has been mentioned in the Qur'an. It is here that the view of Allah attracts them so strongly that they neglect His all other things and, in that state, they forget the whole bounties of Paradise.

It is here that the angels come out from every door and say:

'Peace upon you'."[3]

Yes, the ecstasy of the intuition and presence of the Beloved and the visit of the Lord's Grace are so delightful and gratifying that a moment of which is not equal with any blessing, even with the whole world.

The lovers of visiting Him are so that if this spiritual gift might be ceased from them, they would die. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"If I remain walled from the visit of the Lord for a moment, I will die."

It is interesting that the apparent of the verse is that this greeting of Allah unto the believers in Paradise is a direct greeting without any intermediator. It is a greeting from the Lord, Allah, the greeting which originates from His special Mercy, i.e., the rank of His specific Mercy, and all grace and favours are gathered in it. Oh, what a blessing it is!

In principle, Paradise is 'the Abode of Peace', as Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 25 says:

"And Allah does call mankind to the Abode of Peace…"

And the people of Paradise, who are the dwellers of this abode, will sometimes face with the angel's greeting.

At the time of arrival into Paradise, the angels arrive to them from every door and say:

"Peace (be) upon you (saying) that you persevered in patience! (And now) how excellent is the Ultimate Abode."[4]

And sometimes the dwellers of 'A'raf call them and say:

"…Peace be upon you!…"[5]

And sometimes they will be faced with the angels' greeting after entering into Paradise:

"…and the warders thereof say unto them: 'Peace be unto you…"[6]

Sometimes, at the time of taking their souls, this greeting is delivered to them from the side of the angels of death.

They say:

"…Peace be upon you! Enter the Paradise because of what you used to do."[7]

And sometimes they themselves greet each other.

And, in principle, in their greeting there is ‘Peace’, the Qur’an says:

“…their greetings therein is: ‘Peace!’.”[8]

And, finally, the superior and above all of these is the greeting of Allah:

“‘Peace’: is the word from a Merciful Lord (for them).”

Briefly speaking, there will be heard there neither a vain word nor a sinful thing. There will be only ‘peace’ and ‘peace’.

The Qur’an says:

“They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse,”

Of course, it is not a greeting in mere pronunciation, but it is a greeting the effect of which penetrates in the depth of man’s soul and makes it thoroughly full of tranquillity, peace, and health.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 59-62

وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُـجْرِمُونَ

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي ءَادَمَ أَن لاَّ تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنكُمْ جِبِلاًّ كَثِيراً أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ

59. “And (they will be told) get you aside this day O’ you the guilty ones!”

60. “Did I not make covenant with you, O’ children of Adam, that you should not serve the Satan, verily he is a manifest foe to you;”

61. “And that you should serve Me? This is the straight path.”

62. “And yet he has led astray a great number of you. Did you not then understand?”

The separation of the guilty ones from the righteous ones is according to the law of Divine Justice Who said that the faithful and the pagan are not equal.

The Qur’an says:

“Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.”[9]

In the verses under discussion, a short part of the fate of the hellish people and the followers of Satan is referred to.

The first is that the Qur’an implies that, on that Day, with a contemptuous tone, it will be said to the guilty ones to get aloof from the believers.

The Qur’an says:

“And (they will be told) get you aside this day O’ you the guilty ones!”

It was you who, in the world, had substituted yourself deceitfully in the rows of the believers and sometimes took benefit of their honour and credit. Now you must separate your rows from theirs, and appear in your own real feature.

This is, in fact, the actualization of the promise of Allah that in Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 28 He says:

“Shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make the pious ones like the wicked?”

However, the apparent of the verse under discussion refers to the separation of the rows of the guilty from those of the believers, though the commentators have delivered some other probabilities, among them is the separation of the rows of the guilty from each other, and every group of them will be in a definite line.

The next verse refers to the expressive rebukes and blames of Allah unto the sinners on the Day of Hereafter and says:

"Did I not make covenant with you, O' children of Adam, that you should not serve the Satan, verily he is a manifest foe to you;"

This Divine covenant has been taken from man in different ways, and He has repeatedly mentioned this matter to him.

At first, on the day when the children of Adam were living on the earth, they were addressed by this word of Allah, saying:

"O' children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you as he expelled your parents from the Garden, stripping them both of their clothing that he might expose unto them their shameful parts. Surely he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. We have made the Satans the friends of those who do not believe."[10]

Then, this very warning was expressed by the tongues of Divine messengers, as Surah Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 62 says:

"And let not the Satan prevent you, surely he is manifest enemy."

And in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 168 we recite:

"…and do not follow the footsteps of Satan surely he is a manifest foe for you."

On the other side, this covenant has also been taken in the world of nature with the tongue of bestowing wisdom on man, because the intellectual proofs clearly testify that man should not obey the command of the one who has been his enemy from the first day and has sent him out from the Paradise, and has sworn to seduce the children of Adam.

From the third side, by the Divine constitution and innate disposition of all human beings upon Monotheism, and the restriction of obedience for the Pure Essence of Allah, this covenant has also been taken from man. And thus, not only by one mere language but also by several languages this Divine recommendation has been performed and this promise and covenant has been signed.

By the way, we recite in a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"Whoever obeys a person in committing a sin, he has worshipped him."[11]

In another tradition Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Whoever listens to a speaker (and accepts his statement) he has worshipped him. If the speaker reiterates the ordinance of Allah, he has worshipped Him, but if the speaker speaks from the side of Satan, he has worshipped Satan."[12]

And in the third verse, for more emphasis and stating the duty of the children of Adam, it says:

"And that you should serve Me? This is the straight path."

From one side, He has taken covenant from men that they should not obey Satan, because he has proved his enmity and hatred from the first day. Which wise person follows the command of his ancient and manifest foe?

And in the opposite side, He has taken covenant that he obeys Him and He has defined its reason by saying:

"This is the straight path."

This, in fact, is the best motivation for human beings, because, for instance, when it happens that a person finds himself in the middle of a dry and hot desert and sees his soul, his wife and children, as well as his wealth, in the danger of the thieves and wolves, the most important thing he may think of, as finding the straight way toward the destination, a way which can lead him easier and sooner to the point of safety.

However, it is understood from this meaning that this world is not the abode of residence, because the path is shown to the person who passes a passage and he has a destination in front of him.

Again, for being more acquainted with this clear dangerous enemy, in the fourth verse, it says:

"And yet he has led astray a great number of you. Did you not then understand?"

Do you not see that how many miseries Satan has provided for his followers? Have you not studied the history of the ancient nations to see how painful and evil fates his followers had? The ruins of their afflicted cities are in front of your eyes; and their sorrowful end is clear for anyone who has the least understanding and thought.

Then, why do not you take earnest the enmity of the one who has repeatedly shown the examination of his enmity? You make friends with him again, and, even, you choose him as your own leader and as your own friend.

The Qur'anic term /jibill/, as Raqib says in Mufradat, is in the sense of 'society' and 'group'; and the application of the Arabic term /kathir/ is for emphasis concerning the followers of Satan who form a great number of people.

However, a safe wisdom requires that man should seriously avoid of such a dangerous foe who shows no mercy to anyone and his prays are seen over the soil of destruction everywhere, and he should not let himself be in negligence.

As Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), the aware leader, in one of his sermons[13], addressing people, attracts their attention to this fact by saying:

"Therefore, O' the servants of Allah! You should fear lest Satan infects you with his disease (pride), or leads you astray through his call, or marches on you with his horsemen and foot-men, because, by my life, he has put the (dangerous) arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow very strongly, and has aimed at you from a nearby position, and he (Satan) said:

'O' Lord! Because you have left me to stray, certainly I will adorn (evil) to them on the earth, and certainly I will cause them all to go astray'.[14]**"**[15]

(While Allah was not the cause of his mislead, but his low desire made him astray.)

And, really, it is surprising that we choose such an enemy as our friend!

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 63-64

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُون

اصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

63. "This is the Hell which you were promised."

64. "Enter you into it today for what you were disbelieving."

Allah has completed the argument to the hellish people and has constantly conveyed the danger of Hell to them.

Yes, on that day, while the blazing and flaming Fire of Hell is in front of the eyes of the wrong-doers, pointing to it, He addresses the guilty and says:

"This is the Hell which you were promised."

One after another the Divine prophets came and made you avoid such a Fire on such a Day, but you mocked them all. So, in the next verse, it implicitly says: you should enter it and burn by its blazing Fire, because this is the fruit of the rejection you used to have.

It says:

"Enter you into it today for what you were disbelieving."

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 65

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَآ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

65. "Today we set a seal on their mouths, and their hands speak to Us, and their feet bear witness as to what they have been earning."

The mention of the head and of the feet, are as an example, because in other verses of the Qur'an we recite that, the ear, the eye, and the heart will be questioned of, too, and even the skin will bear witness.

In this verse, the Qur'an hints to the witnesses on the Day of Hereafter. These are some witnesses that are as parts of the man's body and there is no room for denying their words.

It says:

"Today we set a seal on their mouths, and their hands speak to Us, and their feet bear witness as to what they have been earning."

Yes, on that Day the man's limbs are not submitted to his wishes any more. They will separate their account from the entire entity of man and will submit to Allah and obey Him only, the Sacred Essence, and by their witness they make the facts manifest.

What a wonderful court it is, where its witnesses are the limbs of the man's body. They are the means by which they have committed the sins.

Perhaps, the witness of the limbs is for the sake that when these sinners are told their recompense is Hell for the deeds they did, they deny them thinking that it is the worldly court and they can deny the facts by tricks.

Here, the bearing witness of the limbs will begin and wonder accompanied with terror will overcome their entity thoroughly, and all the ways of escape will ilat, No. 41, verse 20 says:

"Until when theysbe shut to them. As Surah Fus come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins shall bear witness against them as to what they used to do."

And Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 24 says:

"On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do."

This point is also noteworthy that in one place the Qur'an says 'their tongues testify' (like Surah An-Nur), and in the verse under discussion He says:

"…We set a seal on their mouths."

This meaning may be for the sake that at first on the man's tongue will be set a seal and his limbs will begin to bear witness. When he sees the witness of the limbs, his tongue will start speaking, and since there is no room for denials the tongue will confess the truth, too.

There is also this probability that the objective meaning of the witness of the tongue is not the ordinary speaking, but it is a speech like the speech of other limbs which comes from its inside not from its outside.

Concerning the number of witness in that great Court and that how they will testify, we will explain it in more details when commenting on Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verses 19-23, Allah willing.

The final word is that the witness of the limbs is about the pagans and sinners; otherwise, the account of the believers is clear.

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition says:

"The limbs of a believer do not testify against him, but they testify against the one on whom the command of punishment has been decreed.

As for the believer, his record (of deeds) will be given to his right hand, (and he will recite it himself), as Allah has said:

'… then whoever is given his book in his right hand, then these will read their book (joyfully) and they will not be treated unjustly in the least'."[16]

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 66-67

وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَي أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّي يُبْصِرُونَ

وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَي مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيّاً وَلاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

66. "And if We please, We would obliterate their eyes, then they would race to the way, but how would they see?"

67. "And if We please, We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return."

We should not be neglectful of the wrath of Allah (s.w.t.) and change of His bounties. Before the descent of punishment, obstinacy should be put aside.

This verse points to one of the punishments which Allah may afflict the guilty group in this very present world, and it is a terrible painful punishment.

It says:

"And if We please, We would obliterate their eyes…"

In this state, an extraordinary horror will envelop them. They want to go in the path they usually used to go and to precede each other, but how can they do?

"…then they would race to the way, but how would they see?"

They will be unable even to find the road toward their houses, let alone they find the path of the truth and step in the straight way.

Then, the next verse refers to another painful chastisement.

It says:

"And if We please, We would surely transform them in their place…"

(They may be transformed into some motionless statues that have no soul, or into some palsied animals.)

The verse continues saying:

"…then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return."

However, the two abovementioned verses are about the chastisements in the world. They are as threatening to the disbelievers and the sinners that Allah is able to afflict them to such painful fates in this very world, but, because of His Grace and Mercy, He has not done so, haply these obstinate sinners become aware and return to the path of the truth.

Notes

1. Tafsir-us-Safi, (old edition), P. 352; and 'Athar-us-Sadiqin, Vol. 21, P. 381
2. Lisan-ul-'Arab, Mufradat Raqib, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Qurtabi, Rouh-ul-Ma'ani, and some other commentaries
3. The commentary of Rouh-ul-Ma'ani, Vol. 23, P. 35
4. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 24
5. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 46
6. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
7. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 32
8. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 23
9. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 18
10. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 27
11. Wasa'il, Vol. 18, P. 91
12. Ibid.
13. No. 192, Nahj-ul-Balaqah
14. Qur'an, 15:39
15. the commentary of Fakhr-Razi, under the verse; Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, P. 392
16. Tafsir-us-Safi, under the verse; verse 7 from Surah Isra', No. 17

Section 5: The Kingdom of the Universe Belongs to Allah

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 68

وَمَن نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلاَ يَعْقِلُونَ

68. "And whomever We cause to live long, We reverse him to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand?"

Through previous verses Allah implicitly said that if He pleases He may make the eyes blind and change the features. This verse refers to an example of these changes concerning the aged persons.

It points to the man's situation at the end of his life from the point of weakness and inability of both mind and body, so that it can be both a warning unto those who postpone choosing the path of guidance from today to tomorrow, and an answer to those who take the short of life as a cause for their faults, and it can be an evidence for the might of Allah indicating that as He is able to return a strong and powerful man to the weakness of his childhood, He is able to bring forth the Resurrection and also make the sinners blind and unable to move.

It says:

"And whomever We cause to live long, We reverse him to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand?"

The Qur'anic term /nunakkishu/ is derived from the Arabic term /tankis/ in the sense of reversing something in a manner that its top comes down and its down goes up in the place of the top. Here, there is a metonymy pointing to the complete return of man to the circumstances of his childhood.

From the very beginning of his creation, man is weak and then gradually he grows and develops. During the foetus course every day he passes some new stages and new growth. After his birth he will swiftly continue the path of development from the point of body and spirit, and the God-given strengths and talents, which are hidden inside his entity, will appear one after another.

The course of youth, and next to it, the course of expertness approach, and man will be seated in the climax of bodily and spiritual development. Here, sometimes, the body and the spirit separate their way from each other. The spirit will continue its path of development, while the body begin retardation.

But, at last, the man's intellect, too, will begin the downward march, and little by little, and sometimes quickly, that stages of childhood return. The childish movements begin, and thinking, and even one's pretext seeking will be like those of children.

The bodily weakness will also come along with them, with this difference that these movements and spiritualities are sweet and attractive when they are from the side of children, because they are some glad-tidings unto their future hopeful lives and that is why they are completely tolerable. But in relation to the old persons, they are pungent, not beautiful, and, sometimes, hateful, or pitiful.

Verily, there will come some days which will be very painful, so much so that the depth of its inconvenience is hardly considerable.

This meaning has been pointed out in Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 5, where it says:

"…and some of you are kept back to the worst part of life so that they know nothing after having known (much)…".

(They will not recognize even their nearest members of their family.)

However, the Qur'anic sentence /'afala ya'qilun/ (do they not then understand) gives a wonderful remark in this regard and it tells men: if this strength and power that you have were not temporary it would not be taken from you so easy. Do know that there is another might over you which is capable of doing everything.

You must be careful of yourself before reaching that stage, and before that the mirth and beauty turns into sadness and withered state, make the best of it and provide the provision of the path of the next world in this world, since in the term of weakness, senility, and wretchedness mostly you are able to do nothing.

So, one of the five things that the Prophet (S) recommended Abuthar to be careful of this very thing.

He (S) said:

"Do avail five things before five things: your youth before your senility, your health before your sickness, your richness before your poverty, your ease before your affliction, and your life before your death."[1]

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 69

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْءَانٌ مُّبِينٌ

69. "And We have not taught him poetry, nor would it beseem him; it is naught but a Reminder and manifesting Qur'an,"

One of the accusations that the Prophet (S) was charged, besides accusing him of being sorcerer, insane and soothsayer, was the accusation of being a poet. Contrast to revelation, poetry is the fruit of imagination.

Contrast to revelation, poetry arises from emotions and feelings. Contrast to revelation which is from the side of Allah and originates from the source of existence and turns on the pivot of realities, poetry is usually mixed with exaggeration.

It says:

"And We have not taught him poetry, nor would it beseem him…"

The Qur'an is not anything but a remembrance.

It is the remembrance of Power and Wrath of Allah; the remembrance of His graces and bounties; the remembrance of His pardon and forgiveness; the remembrance of His way of treatment and His laws; the remembrance of His whole prophets, saints, and friends; a remembrance of the instinctive events of history; a remembrance of the factors of dignity and failure of nations; the remembrance of the righteous and the guided ones; a remembrance of the evildoers, pagans, mischief mongers, sinners, tyrants and their end; a remembrance of sincerities, donations, brevities, chastity, patience and their good end; a remembrance of murders, tortures, hurts, accusations, scorns, injustices, cruelties, and the evil end of the men of

pride; a remembrance of Allah's commandments and prohibitions, admonishments and wisdoms; a remembrance of the created things in the heaven, the earth, and the seas; a remembrance of the future of the history, the triumph of the government of the truth and the world becoming full of justice and condemnation of the unjust and the cruelty; a remembrance of the purgatory, Resurrection, and the events before Hereafter, and the state of the scene of Hereafter, the dangers of Hell, and the blessings of Paradise.

The Holy Qur'an is the source of admonishments and remembrance. The Qur'an is a clear and understandable word with argumentation.

Yes, with negation of poetry from the Prophet (S), the Qur'an adds:

"…it is naught but a Reminder and manifesting Qur'an,"

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 70

لِيُنذِرَ مَن كَانَ حَيّاً وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَي الْكَافِرِ نَ

70. "That it may warn him who is alive and the Word may be proved against the disbelievers."

A sign for the heart to be alive is the acceptance of the warnings of the Qur'an, because the appointment of the prophets and the revelation to them are the source of awareness and spiritual intelligence of the godly people, and it is to complete the argument for the dead-hearted ones.

The aim of this verse is:

"That it may warn him who is alive and the Word may be proved against the disbelievers."

Yes, these verses are as a Reminder which is the source of remembrance and is the means of awareness. These verses are from 'the manifesting Qur'an' which states the truth without any curtain and with conclusiveness and explicitness, and it is why it is the factor of awareness, life and living.

Once more here we see that the Qur'an has considered the faith as 'life' and the believers as 'the living ones' and the disbelievers as 'the dead'. From one side, it mentions 'living' and on the other side opposite to it, it mentions 'disbelievers'.

This is that very spiritual 'life' and 'death' which is more significant than the apparent life and death, and their effects are vaster and more expanded. If life and living mean 'to breathe', 'to eat', and 'to walk' these are those which are common in all animals. This is not the human life.

Human life is the appearance of the effects of intellect, the outstanding good habits of man's spirit, piety, donation, self-sacrifice, controlling the self, virtue, and morality; and the Qur'an grows this life in man's self.

However, concerning the invitation of the Qur'an, human beings are divided in two groups. A group of them are alive and alert. These are those who answer its invitation positively and hearken to its warnings and admonishments.

The next group are the dead-hearted disbelievers who never show any positive reaction to it. But this warning works to complete the argument upon them and makes the command of punishment certain on them.

However, man has several kinds of life and death. The first is 'the vegetation life' which is the manifestation of the very growth, eating, and reproduction, and from this point of view he is rather similar to all of plants.

The next is the animal life and death, the clear sign of which is ‘feeling’ and ‘motion’, and in these two qualities he is the same as other animals.

The third kind of life is specific to human beings. This life separates them from plants and other animals. This is the human and spiritual life. This is the same thing which has been rendered as ‘the life of the hearts’ in the Islamic narrations; and the objective meaning of ‘heart’ here, is the man’s spirit, mind, and emotions.

Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) in his sermons and sayings has emphasized on this matter very much.

Concerning the Holy Qur’an, in a sermon in Nahj-ul-Balaqah he says:

“…and understand it thoroughly for it is the best blossoming of the hearts…”[2]

In another place, concerning wisdom and knowledge, he (as) says:

“Wisdom is a life for the dead hearts.”[3]

Sometimes the sickness of the heart is compared with the sickness of the body.

Ali (as) says:

“…while worse than bodily ailment is the disease of the heart…”[4]

And one time he (as) says:

“…He whose fear of Allah (his piety) is less, his heart dies…”[5]

There are many other expressions of this kind. Imam Zayn-ul-‘Abidin (as) in one of his supplications says:

“A great crime has caused my heart to die”[6]

On the other side, the Qur’an has considered a special kind of apparent insight, hearing, apprehension, and perception, for man as about the disbelievers it says:

“…deaf, dumb, and blind (are they) wherefore they do not understand.”[7]

In another occurrence, Qur’an calls the hypocrites as some diseased-hearted people that Allah increases their disease:

“In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease…”[8]

It introduces those who do not fear Allah as stone-hearted ones whose heart is harder than stone:

“Then your hearts hardened after that as stones or even worse in hardness…”[9]

In another place the Qur’an says:

“Only those accept who hearken, and (as for) the dead, Allah will raise them up, then unto Him they will be returned.”[10]

From all these meanings, and from some abundant other expressions which are similar to them, it is clearly understood that the Qur’an counts the pivot of life and death that very pivot of human and wisdom, because the whole value of man has also been put in this very section.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 71-72

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِّـمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَاماً فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ

وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ

71. “Have they not seen that We have created for them of that Our hands wrought cattle that of them they own?”

72. "And then (the cattle) We have subdued to them, and some of them they ride upon, and some of them they eat."

In order to recognize the Power of Allah, men can take help by nothing to the animals which are always available for him almost every where.

Again in these verses the Qur'an returns to the subject of Monotheism and polytheism and, after counting some signs of the greatness of Allah in the life of men, and removing their needs from the side of Allah, it points to the weakness and inability of idols and, in a clear comparison, it makes manifest the truthfulness of the line of monotheism and falseness of the line of polytheism.

At first, it says:

"Have they not seen that We have created for them of that Our hands wrought cattle that of them they own?"

Then, in the next verse it implies that in order that they can enjoy these cattle well Allah has subdued them to them so that not only they ride upon them but also they eat from them.

It says:

"And then (the cattle) We have subdued to them, and some of them they ride upon, and some of them they eat."

If cow and sheep were not tamed, the door of the world of dairy products, which have many benefits for man, would be shut to him, and if all animals were wild, many of the journeys could not be performed.

Both the earth:

"…has made the earth manageable…"[11]

and animals are subdued:

"And then (the cattle) We have subdued…"[12]

But man, who is in need of both of them is disobedient:

"Verily man does transgress all bounds."[13]

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 73

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبُ أَفَلاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

73. "And therein they have benefits and drinks, will they not then be grateful?"

The Arabic word /mašarib/ is the plural form of /mašrab/ and it is the place of drinking water, but here the purpose of it is 'to drink milk'.

This verse implicitly says that their benefits do not end to only this, but there are some other benefits for them in these animals.

It says:

"And therein they have benefits and drinks…"

Yet, do they not thank for these blessings, a thank which is the means of Knowing Allah and recognizing the Benefactor?

It continues saying:

"…will they not then be grateful?"

Among the different blessings which have surrounded man, here the Qur'an stresses on the blessing of cattle, because they are permanently present in the daily life of man, so that man's life has been mixed with them in a manner that if it may be obliterated from his life, it will really be

difficult for him; but because of their constant presence they are less regarded.

The sentence:

"Therein they have benefits"

points to many other benefits which man gets from cattle, including: their wool for kinds of clothing, carpets, and tents; their skin for clothes, shoes, hats, and different means of life.

Even today when the industry has entirely changed the feature of man's life, yet the need of men from the point of both nutrition and clothes and other means of life to cattle has remained.

Even today, different kinds of serums and vaccines which are the most effective means for struggling against disease or for prevention, are provided from cattle and the materials taken from their blood.

Even the most worthless things in the life of cattle, that is, their feces, are used, too. By them lands will be fertilized and trees are made fruitful.

The application of the Qur'anic term /mašarib/ refers to the kinds of milk which are taken from different cattle and a great part of man's food stuff is usually produced from it and its productions, so that the milk industries and the products from milk in the world today form an important part of exports and imports of some countries, the same milk which is a complete food for man.

This wholesome drink comes out from special parts of the body and causes the pleasure of its drinkers and is the source of strength for the weak.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 74-75

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُندٌ مُّحْضَرُونَ

74. "And they have taken gods besides Allah, haply they might be helped."

75. "They shall not be able to help them; and yet they (the disbelievers) are their host (who in Hereafter) shall be brought forth (in Hell Fire)."

Polytheism and idolatry both are counted as ingratitude of blessings. The incentive of idolaters is based on imaginations and conjectures.

This verse refers to the status of polytheists, where it says:

"And they have taken gods besides Allah, haply they might be helped."

What a false conjecture and vain thought they have that they put these powerless creatures, that cannot even defend themselves let alone the others, beside the Creator of the earth and the sky and the giver of those abundant merits and that they expect them to help them in the problems of life.

And, in the next verse, regarding the worshippers of idols, the Qur'an says:

"They shall not be able to help them; and yet they (the disbelievers) are their host (who in Hereafter) shall be brought forth (in Hell Fire)."

How painful it will be that on that Day these followers march at the back of idols and their hosts, and all of them will attend the Court of Justice of Allah and after that they entirely will be sent into Hell without that the idols can solve any problem of their own host.

In principle, the Arabic word /muhdarun/ (shall be brought forth) is a sign of contempt everywhere, and bringing persons forth without that they themselves be willing to it is the sign of their humiliation.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 76

فَلاَ يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

76. "Therefore, let not their speech grieve you. Verily We know what they do in secret and what they do openly."

As the console of the Prophet (S) and strengthening his spirit against those many hindrances, temptations, and superstitious thoughts and deeds, this holy verse says:

"Therefore, let not their speech grieve you…"

Sometimes they call you a poet, sometimes a sorcerer, and sometimes they accuse you with some other things, but Allah knows all what they hide in their hearts or they reveal by their tongues.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily We know what they do in secret and what they do openly."

Neither are their intentions concealed to Us nor their hidden plots, nor their belies, nor their open naughtiness. We know them all and We have kept their full account for the Reckoning Day, and We secure you in this world from their vice, too.

Not only the Prophet (S) but also every believer can be animated by this statement of Allah, because everything in this world exists in the Presence of Allah, and nothing of the devices of the enemies are concealed to Him. He will not leave His friends alone at the violent moments and He will always be their supporter and protector.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 77-78

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الإِنسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلاً وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَن يُحْيِ الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ

77. "Has not man seen that We created him of a sperm-drop? Yet behold! He is an open disputant."

78. "And he has struck for Us a similitude and forgotten his creation; he says: 'Who shall quicken the bones when they are decayed?'"

Occasion of Revelation

In the majority of the concerning commentary books it has been cited that: A man from among the polytheists by the name of 'Ubay-ibn-Khalaf, or -ibn-Wa'il found a piece of rotten bone and said'Umayyat-ibn-Khalaf, or 'As that by that firm proof he would stand with entity against Muhammad (S) and he might nullify his speech about Resurrection.

He took that piece of stone and came to the Prophet of Islam (S). (Perhaps, he made a part of it as powder at the presence of the Prophet (S)) and said:

"Who can give life again to these decayed stones? (And which intellect may believe it?)".

Then the abovementioned verses together with four verses after them were revealed and gave a logical firm answer to him and those who thought like him.

The various discussions related to Origin, Resurrection, and prophethood, have been mentioned in Surah Ya-Sin in different sections. This Surah began with the name of the Holy Qur'an and the subject of prophethood, and it ends with seven related verses which contain the strongests statement about Resurrection.

At first, the Qur'an takes man to the beginning day of his life, the day when he was not more than a worthless sperm-drop, and makes him think.

It says:

"Has not man seen that We created him of a sperm-drop? Yet behold! He is an open disputant."

What an expressive meaning it is! At first it emphasizes on the word 'man', that is, every man with any belief and school of thought and with any amount of knowledge can find out this truth.

Then it speaks of the Arabic word /nutfah/ which originally means: the naught worthless water; so that this proud and egoistic man thinks a little and knows that what he was on the first day.

And, yet, the entire of this naught drop of water has not been the source of his entity, but a very small living cell, which cannot be seen by the ordinary eyes, among thousands cells which were floating in that drop of water, combined with a very small living cell which was in the woman's womb, and then, from that very small being, man came into being.

This creature passed the developing stages one after another, that according to the statement of the Qur'an, at the beginning of Surah Al-Mu'minun, six stages of them are inside the womb: (the stages of: sperm, then clot, then a lump of flesh, then the appearance of bones, then they being covered with flesh, and, finally, the appearance of sense and movement in it.)[14]

After his birth, when he was a weak and unable child, he quickly passed the stages of development, too, until when he reached the stage of his puberty: the bodily and mental growth. Yes, this weak and unable creature became so strong and powerful that he let himself stand against Allah and forget his both past and future and become the clear example of:

"an open disputant".

It is interesting that the Qur'anic phrase /xasim-un-mubin/ (an open disputant) has an aspect of 'strength' and an aspect of 'weakness' that, apparently, here the Qur'an refers to both of them.

From one side, this action is not done save by a human being that naturally has intellect, thought, understanding, and independent will, authority, and power.

And we know that the most important thing in the man's life is his ability of speaking, the contents of such speeches will formerly be provided in his thought, then they will be put together in the form of sentences and, like bullets of a gun, these sentences come out of the mouth and will be shot at the aim one after another.

This is the marvellous action that no living creature can do except man.

And, thus, the holy verse illustrates the power of Allah in this great strength that He has given to this apparently insignificant drop of water.

But, on the other side, man is a forgetful and proud being, and he uses these bounties, that He has bestowed on him, against Him and disputes inimically against Him. What an unaware and stubborn being he is!

The next holy verse implicitly announces that for man's unawareness this is enough that he struck a similitude for Allah and as he thought he had found a firm proof while he, forgetting his first creation, said:

'Who can quicken these bones when they are decayed?'.

The verse says:

"And he has struck for Us a similitude and forgotten his creation; he says: 'Who shall quicken the bones when they are decayed?'"

The purpose of 'striking similitude' here is not an ordinary proverb or a simile and an allusion, but the purpose is the statement of a reasoning and mentioning an extension in order to prove a general matter.

Yes, he ('Ubay-ibn-Khalaf, or 'Umayyat-ibn-Khalaf, or 'As-ibn-Wa'il) finds a rotten bone in the desert. It was not known to whom that bone belonged. Whether he had died by a natural death, or he had been killed badly in one of the battles of the Age of Ignorance, or he had died because of hunger. However, he thought he had found a very firm proof.

With an anger accompanied with happiness, he takes the piece of bone of a dead person and says:

"By this firm proof I stand with enmity against Muhammad (S) So that he can not give any answer."

He came hastily to the Prophet (S) and shouted saying:

"Who can give life to this rotten bone?"

Then he crushed a part of the bone into powder and scattered it on the ground. He thought the Prophet (S) would not have any answer for that logic.

It is interesting that the Qur'an has given his whole answer in a short sentence, saying:

"…and forgotten his creation…"

although next to it, the Qur'an has also mentioned some more explanation with more reasoning so it implies that if he had not forgotten his creation, he would not have attached such a weak and vain reasoning.

O' forgetful man, return back and look at your creation that you were an insignificant sperm and every day He put a new cloth of life on you.

You are always in the state of death and resurrection. You were changed from the state of clot into an animal and you came out from that world and became a human being. But you, O' forgetful man! Did you forget all these states and ask who gives life to these decayed bones?

When this bone decays completely, just it will become dust. Were you not dust at first?

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 79

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَاَهآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

79. "Say: 'He will enliven them who created them for the first time, and He knows all creation,"

Being attentive to the creation of man from sperm, may strengthen the faith of man in Resurrection.

Resurrection needs two things: the Power of Allah in recreation of man; and His cognizance to the people's deeds. This verse refers to both of them.

The sentence which says:

"…who created them for the first time…"

is the sign of His power, and the sentence saying:

"…He knows all creation"

is the sign of His knowledge.

In this verse He commands the Prophet of Islam (S) to tell this obstinate, proud, and forgetful man that He gives life to him again Who created him on the first day.

Here is the commandment:

"Say: 'He will enliven them who created them for the first time…"

If today there is a rotten bone available from him, once even this rotten bone did not exist either, and there was not also even any dust. Yes, He Who created him of nothing, enlivening the decayed bones is easier for Him.

And if you think that when this rotten bone became dust and was scattered everywhere, who could recognize those parts and gather them from different places? The answer to this question is also clear. He is aware of every creature and knows all his specialities.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He knows all creation,"

He Who has such a 'Power' and 'Knowledge' will have no difficulty for the subject of Resurrection and enlivening the dead. If we turn a magnet amongst a heap of dust which contains scattered pieces of iron, it will quickly gather all these pieces of iron, while it is not more than an inanimate being.

By a single command, Allah can easily gather all the particles of every man's body in any place of the earth it may be.

He is aware of not only the principle of the creation of man, but also of their intentions and actions, and the account and reckoning of them is clear with Him.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 80

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الأَخْضَرِ نَاراً فَإِذَآ أَنتُم مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ

80. "He Who made for you fire from the green tree, and behold! from it you kindle (fire)."

Allah gathers the opposites. He can gather water and fire, which do not have consistency with each other.

In this verse, the Qur'an brings some more discussions about the subject of Resurrection, and follows it by three or four interesting ways.

At first, it says:

"He Who made for you fire from the green tree, and behold! from it you kindle (fire)."

Allah is also able to give life to these rotten bones. What a wonderful and interesting meaning it is! that the more we contemplate about it, the more and deeper concepts it delivers to us.

In principle, many of the verses of the Qur'an contain several meanings. Some of them are simple for all people, in any time and any place, while some others are deep for the elect, and, finally, some of them are completely deep which are for the elites of the elect, or for other times and centuries in far distanced future.

In the meantime, these meanings do not contrast with each other; and in the same moment they are gathered in an expressive concept.

The first interpretation that many of the earlier Islamic commentators have mentioned for it, and it is a simple and clear meaning which is understandable for all people, is that: in ancient times, it was a custom among Arabs that for kindling fire they used the wood of some special trees called 'Markh' and ''Afar', which grew in the deserts of Arabia.

The Arabic terms /marx/ and /'afar/ were the names of two kinds of kindling wood, the earlier was put in the below and the latter was put over it, and like a kindling stone, a spark came out from them and, in fact, they were used instead of today match. The Qur'an implicitly says: that the Lord, Who can bring out fire from these green trees, is also able to give life to the dead.

Water and fire are two opposite things. The One Who can put them beside each other, has the ability to put 'life' beside 'death' and 'death' beside 'life'.

Praise upon the Creator of existence Who keeps 'fire' inside 'water' and holds 'water' in the middle of 'fire'. It is certain that giving life to the dead people is not a difficult thing for Him.

If we step out beyond this meaning, we reach a more punctilious commentary, and it is that the property of kindling fire by the wood of trees is not limited to the wood of 'Marakh' and 'Afar, but this property exists in all trees and in all of the materials of the world, (although the wood of the abovementioned two trees, because of their materials and their specific gravity, are more appropriate for this action).

In short, if any piece of wood of any trees strikes hard to another piece, they produce spark, even it is the wood of the green trees.

It is for this reason that sometimes there happen some vast and horrible fire accidents inside forests that nobody has been their factor; their only factor has been the strong blow of winds and storms that has caused the branches of trees to crush to each other and from between them a spark has come to burn dry leaves and then the blow of wind has helped it, and this has been the main factor.

This is the very spark of electricity which appears by friction and rubbing. This is the same fire which is hidden inside of all particles of the beings of the world and, at the time of friction and rubbing, it shows itself in such a way, He creates 'fire' from 'a green tree'.

This is a vaster commentary which makes the perspective of gathering of opposites in creation vaster, and which shows subsistence in 'destruction' more clear.

But, here, there is a third commentary which is deeper than that, which has been found out by the help of modern science and we have called it ‘the resurrection of energies’.

Explanation: One of the important actions of plants is the subject of ‘taking carbon’ from air and making vegetal-cellules, the main parts of which are: ‘Carbon’, ‘Oxygen’ and ‘Hydrogen’.

Now, we may see how is this cellule made? The small parts of trees and plants take the carbonic gas from air and analyse it. Then, they release its oxygen and keep its carbon in themselves. They combine it with water and make the wood of trees from it. For more information, you may refer to the books written in this regard.

At the end, the action of kindling fire by using the wood of trees, though it is a simple matter in our view, a paying careful attention to it makes it clear that it is one of the most surprising matters, because the most part of materials of which a tree is formed is water and some particles of the soil, and neither of them is combustible.

What a power is this that has made this energetic matter from water, soil, (and air) which has been used closely in the life of men for thousands years.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verse 81

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَي أَن يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُم بَلَي وَهُوَ الْخَلاَّقُ الْعَلِيمُ

81. “Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them? Yes, (He can!) And he is the Creator (Omnipotent), the Knower.”

In speaking with the disbelievers, we ought to begin with the insignificant subjects and then we refer to greater subjects. (The first parable was sperm, the next parable was green tree, and the third parable was the creation of heavens.)

Now, this verse beings by the way of the infinite Power of Allah, and implicitly says that whether the One, Who has created the heavens and the earth with those abundant glories, wonders, and amazing regular systems, can not create the like of these men who have become rotten (and return them to a new life). Yes, He can and He is the Omnipotent Creator, the Knower.

The verse says:

“Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them? Yes, (He can!) And he is the Creator (Omnipotent), the Knower.”

This sentence, which has been started with ‘a positive interrogation with a negative sense’, in fact propounds a question for the vigilant consciences and alert wisdoms that whether you do not look at this splendid sky with all its wonderful planets and fixed stars and the numerous systems and galaxies in it, that any piece of it is a vast world?

The One Who is able to create such extraordinary great and regular worlds, how is it possible that He would not be able to enliven the dead?

And since the answer of this question is present in the heart of any vigilant person, it does not wait for its answer, and immediately implicitly says: Yes, He has such a power.

And next to it, the Qur'an emphasizes on these two great attributes of Allah, which must be noted in relation to this subject, viz., the attribute of Creativity and His infinite Knowledge, which, in fact, is an evidence upon the former statesment, saying that if you are in doubt concerning His Power in relation with creation

"He is the Creator".

And if the act of gathering these particles needs knowledge, He is Omnipotent and, from any point of view, is Aware and Knower.

By the way, the Arabic antecedent of the Qur'anic term /mithlahum/ (the like of them) returns to human beings, that is, the Creator of the heavens and the earth is able to create the like man.

Surah Ya-Sin - Verses 82-83

إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

فَسُبْحَانَ ٱلَّذِي بِيَدِهِۦ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

82. "His command, when he intends anything, is only to say to it 'Be', so it is."

83. "So glory be to Him, in Whose hand is the domination of everything, and unto Whom you shall be returned."

In the creation of existence, Allah needs neither a means nor any help, nor anyone who removes the barriers.

This holy verse is an emphasis upon what was said in the former verses. It is an emphasis on this fact that for His Will and Power, every creation is easy. It is the same for Him to create the lofty skies and the earth, or that He creates a small insect.

The verse says:

"His command, when he intends anything, is only to say to it 'Be', so it is."

Everything depends on His only single command, and about the One Who has such a Power there is no room of doubt that He can give life to the dead.

It is evident that the command of Allah, here, is not a command in expression, and also the Arabic phrase /kun/ (Be) is not a phrase that states by utterance, because neither has He utterance nor is He in need of expressions, but the purpose is His Will upon the direct creation of something; and the application of the word /kun/ (Be) is for the sake that there is not a shorter, smaller and quicker than this one in consideration.

Yes, as soon as His intention comes to something, that thing comes into being.

In other words, when Allah intends something, it will immediately come into being, so that there is no distance between 'His Will' and the existence of the things.

Therefore, the application of 'command', 'saying' and the phrase: 'Be' all are an explanation for the subject of creation and making men understand His Power, and, as we said before, the command in expression, utterance and the word containing 'B' and 'E' are not necessary. All of them indicate the rapid existence of the things after the Will of Allah. He does not need any utterance and words.

And again in other more clear words, there are no more than two stages in the deeds of Allah: the stage of Will, and the stage of creation.

In the abovementioned verse, the second stage has been referred to as ‘command’, say, and the phrase ‘Be’.

How beautifully Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) says in one of his sermons:

“When He intends to create something He says ‘Be’ and there it is, but not through a voice that strikes (the ears) is that call heard. His speech is an act of His creation. His like never existed before this. If it had been created it would have been the second god.”[15]

In other words, every call needs an addressee, and when a thing has not been existed, how does Allah addresses it by the phrase ‘Be’? Is a non-existent thing addressable?

This very meaning has been mentioned in some other verses of the Qur’an.

For instance, Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 117 says:

“…and when He decrees a matter to be, He only says to it ‘Be’ and it is.”[16]

In the next verse, which is the last verse of Surah Ya-Sin, in a general conclusion on the subject of Origin and Resurrection it ends beautifully this discussion, where it says:

“So glory be to Him, in Whose hand is the domination of everything, and unto Whom you shall be returned.”

Regarding to the fact that the Arabic word /malakut/ is derived from /mulk/ in the sense of ‘government and ownership’ the additional Arabic letters ‘waw’ and ‘ta’ in the Qur’anic form of /malakut/ are for emphasis and exaggeration.

Then the concept of the verse is such: the unconditioned sovereignty and ownership of everything is in the hand of Allah, and such a Lord is far from any inability, and, in this case, giving life to the dead and quickening the rotten bones and their scattered dust will not bring any difficulty for Him, since certainly all of you will return to Him, and the Resurrection is true.

Notes

1. Bihar, Vol. 77, P. 77
2. Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon 110
3. Ibid, sermon 133
4. Ibid, saying 388
5. Ibid, saying 349
6. Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, Munajat-ut-Ta’ibin, line 2
7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 171
8. Ibid, verse 10
9. Ibid, verse 74
10. Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 39
11. Surah Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 15
12. The verse under discussion
13. Surah Al-Falaq, N0. 96, verse 6

www.alhassanain.org/english

14. Surah Al-Mu’minun, No. 23, verse 14
15. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 186
16. Some more explanation may be studied in vol. 1, pp. 271-272 of the current commentary book

Surah As-Saffat, Chapter 37

(The Rangers)

No. 37 (Revealed at Mecca)

182 Verses in 5 Sections

The Feature of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, containing one hundred and eighty two verses, was revealed at Mecca. The name of this Surah has been taken from its first verse which begins with an oath by Saffat, a group of angels who are arrayed to perform the command of Allah.

This Surah is the first Surah of the Holy Qur'an which begins with an oath. Like most of other Meccan Suras, many of the verses of this Surah are also about Origin and Resurrection accompanied with some warnings and admonitions.

The Virtue of Reciting Surah As-Saffat

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Whoever recites Surah As-Saffat every Friday, he will be saved from every pollution and disease, and every contamination will be removed from his worldly life, and Allah will provide him with the most abundant sustenance and He does not afflict him, his children and his body with the harms of the cursed Satan and the hostile haughty ones.

And if he dies on that day or night, Allah will cause him to die as a martyr, and He will raise him among martyrs, and He will set him in the same grade with the martyrs in Paradise."[1]

These abundant rewards are given for reciting the Surah if the person performs the content of the Surah and the Qur'an accordingly, and these are required but the barriers must be removed, too.

Note

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse

Section 1: Unity Shall Ultimately Triumph

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالصَّافَّاتِ صَفّاً

فَالزَّاجِرَاتِ زَجْراً

فَالتَّالِيَاتِ ذِكْراً

1. "By those who range themselves in ranks,"

2. "And those who drive away (the evils and temptations) with reproof,"

3. "And the reciters of a Remembrance (Qur'an),"

It is necessary that there should be some impedimental factors of sins and forbidders of indecencies in the society.

This Surah is the first Surah of the Qur'an that the beginning verses of which begin with oaths. They are some expressive oaths which take the man's thought with them toward different directions of this world and make it ready for accepting the facts.

It is true that Allah is more truthful than all truthful ones and He does not need to take any oath. Moreover, if the oath is for the believers, they are submitted without any oath, and if it is for the rejecters, they do not believe in the oaths of Allah. But noting to two points will solve the problem of oaths in all verses of the Qur'an upon which we will deal with henceforth.

The first point is this that oaths are always made by the worthy and important things. Thus, the oaths of the Qur'an show the importance and greatness of the things that the oaths are made by, and this very matter causes the more contemplation upon the thing that the concerning oaths are made by, a contemplation which makes man acquainted with some new facts.

The other point is that: oath is always for emphasis, and it is a proof upon this fact that the things for which the oath is made are among the completely earnest and emphasized affairs of creation.

Besides, when a speaker states his speech decisively, it will psychologically affect more on the addressee's heart, strengthens the believers more, and makes the deniers of that speech milder.

However, at the beginning of this Surah, we find three groups by whom oaths are made.

At first, it says:

"By those who range themselves in ranks,"

Then, it says:

"And those who drive away (the evils and temptations) with reproof,"

"And the reciters of a Remembrance (Qur'an),"

Who are these three groups? And whom are these qualities about? And what is its final aim? The popular and known commentary is that these are some qualities for some groups of angels.

These are some groups of angels who have stood in rows in the world of existence and are ready for performing the command of Allah. They are

some groups of Divine angels who restrain men from sins, and nullify the temptations of Satans in their hearts.

Or they are arranged for the cloud in sky to take them to different sides and make them ready to water the dry lands.

And, finally, there are some groups of angels who, at the time of revelation of the verses of the heavenly Books, recite them to the Divine prophets.

It is noteworthy that the Qur'anic term /saffat/ is the plural form of /saffah/ which in term has a plural sense, and it refers to a group who have ranged themselves in rank. Therefore, the term /saffat/ indicates some numerous rows.

The Qur'anic term /zajirat/ is derived from /zajr/ in the sense of driving away something with sound and shout. Then it has been used in a vaster scope of meaning which envelops any repel and prohibition. Therefore, the term /zajirat/ means some groups who act in prohibition, repelling, and driving others away.

The Arabic term /taliyat/ is derived from /talawat/, the plural form of /tali/, and means some groups who take action on reciting something.

And, regarding to the vastness of the concepts of these words, it is not surprising that commentators have mentioned different interpretations for them that, in the meantime, they do not contrast each other, and all of them may be found in the concept of these verses.

For example, the purpose of 'Saffat' is all the rows of the angels who are ready to perform the Divine commands in the world of creation, and also the angels who are ordered to bring the revelation down to Divine prophets in the atmosphere of religion; and also the rows of strivers and strugglers in the path of Allah, or the rows of keepers of prayer and worshippers.

Although the frame of references show that the purpose of it is mostly the angels, this meaning has been referred to in some Islamic narrations.[1]

Also, it does not matter that the Arabic term /zajirat/ refers to both the angels who drive away the Satanic temptations from the men's hearts, and the men who perform the duty of forbidding from doing evils.

And the term /taliyat/ points to all Divine angels and groups of the believers who constantly recite the Divine verses and the name of Allah.

However, the oath of Allah made by all these groups shows the greatness of their rank with Allah, and in the meantime inspires this fact that those who pave the path of the Truth also for reaching the destination must pass these three stages. Firstly, they must arrange their rows and every group stand in their own row.

Then they must remove the barriers from the way and repel the troubles by shout and a loud voice. And, after that, they must continually recite the Divine verses and the commands of Allah to the receptive hearts and try to actualize their contents.

The strugglers of the path of the truth have not any way but passing these three stages, either. In the same manner, the truthful scholars, in their collective efforts, must also follow the same program.

It is notable that some of the commentators have rendered these verses into 'strugglers' and some others into 'scholars', but restricting the concept

of these holy verses to those two groups seems improbable, while the generality of verses is not improbable; and we also consider them particular to the angels, again others can be inspired in their lives by the program of these angels.

In the first sermon of Nahj-ul-Balaqah, where the angels are spoken of, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), dividing them into different groups, says:

"…some of them (angels) are in array and do not leave their position. Others are extolling Allah and do not get tired. The sleep of the eye or the slip of wit, or languor of the body, or the effect of forgetfulness does not affect them. Among them are those who work as trusted bearers of the message, those who serve as speaking tongues for His prophets…"

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 4-5

إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ

رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ

4. "Verily your God is One,"

5. "Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them, and Lord of the rising-places (of sun)."

Among the signs and proofs of Unity is the agreement between the heaven, the earth, and other creatures of the world of existence.

Therefore, in these holy verses, the Qur'an says:

"Verily your God is One,"

"Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them…"

Here, there arises a question that: after mentioning the words heavens and the earth and what is between them, what is the need of mentioning 'rising-places (of sun)' which is also a part of them?

By noting to one point, the answer to this question will be made clear.

The Qur'anic term /mašariq/ (rising-places (of sun)) whether points to the rising-places of the sun during the year, or the rising-places of different stars in the sky, they have a particular program and order that their system, besides the system of the heavens and the earth, is the sign of the infinite Power and Knowledge of their Creator and their Administrator.

During the year, everyday the sun rises from a point in the sky which is different from the points where it rises the previous day and the next day, and the distance between these points is so exact and regular that they do not decrease or increase even one thousandth of a second during a year and for ever, and the order of the rising-places of the sun has been the same in thousands of thousands years.

This very order is also seen in the rising and setting of other stars, too.

Moreover, if the sun did not gradually pave this path, the different blessings that are produced because of four seasons of the year would not exist. This is itself another sign upon the greatness and administration of Allah.

Besides, one of the other meanings of /mašariq/ is that for the earth being globular, every point of it, comparing another point, is counted east or west. And, thus, the above verse attracts our attention to the globular shape of the earth and its different places of east and west.

The verse is concluded as follows:

"…and Lord of the rising-places (of sun)."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 6-7

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ

وَحِفْظاً مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ

6. "Verily We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars."

7. "And to preserve against every rebel Satan;"

The adornment of the heaven of the world is a reflection of the Lordship of Allah.

The man's willing to adornment and beauty is among his natural inclinations, and the Qur'an has verified it.

This holy verse says:

"Verily We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars."

Verily, a look at the sky at night, when it is dark and the stars are seen, will show man a very beautiful scenery that it fascinates him to itself.

As if they speak with us by dumb language and reiterate the secrets of Divine creation. It seems all of them were poets and constantly made the most beautiful amatory and gnostic poems.

Their nictitating express some secrets that exist nowhere but between a lover and a beloved.

Truly the scenery of the stars of the sky is so beautiful that never the eyes become tired from seeing them, on the contrary, they send out fatigue from the man's body, although in our Age when the citizens of large cities are living in the smoke of the factories, and the like, and naturally they have a dark and black sky, these interesting subjects are not so meaningful.

But the villagers can still observe the concept of this verse of the Qur'an which says that the lower heaven is adorned with the adornment of the bright stars.

It is interesting that, in this verse, He says:

"…We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars."

While the hypothesis which dominated the thoughts of the scholars at that time said that only the higher sky was the sky of stars and planets: (according to hypothesis of Ptolemy, the eighth sky).

But as we know, the nullification of this hypothesis has been proved and that the Qur'an did not follow the wrong famous hypotheses of that time is itself a living miracle delivered by this heavenly Book.

Another interesting point is that from the view point of the modern science it is certain that the beautiful nictitating act of stars is as a reason of the air which has covered all around the earth and makes them to do so, and this meaning completely fits with the Qur'anic phrase /as-sama'-ud-duniya/ (the lower heaven).

But outside the atmosphere of the earth, the stars gaze and they lack sparkle.

The next verse refers to the protection of the sky from the penetration of Satans. It implicitly says that Allah preserves the heaven from every corrupt Satan who is far from any benevolence.

It says:

"And to preserve against every rebel Satan;"

The Arabic word /marid/ is derived from /mard/ which originally means 'a high land empty of any kind of plant'. A tree that is bare of its leaves, in Arabic, is called /'amrad/, that is why for the young man on whose face has grown no hair this word is usually used. Here, in this verse, the purpose of /marid/ is the one who has no benevolence, or, in other words, 'has nothing'.

We know that one of the ways of protecting the sky from Satans is by a group of stars called in Arabic /šuhub/ which will be dealt with in later verses.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 8-10

لاَّ يَسَّمَّعُونَ إِلَي الْمَلأِ الأَعْلَي وَيُقْذَفُونَ مِن كُلِّ جَانِبٍ

دُحُوراً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ

إِلاَّ مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ

8. "They cannot listen to (the secrets of) the exalted assembly and they are thrown at from every side,"

9. "(To be) driven off, and for them is an everlasting chastisement,"

10. "Except him who snatches a fragment, and he is pursued by a piercing flame."

Satans are some responsible beings who will be called to account and will be given retribution by Allah.

So, here the Qur'an says:

"They cannot listen to (the secrets of) the exalted assembly and they are thrown at from every side,"

The next verse implies that they will seriously be driven back and will be sent off from the scene of heaven, and there is a permanent punishment for them.

It says:

"(To be) driven off, and for them is an everlasting chastisement,"

The Qur'anic term /la yassamma'un/ (which is used in the sense of /yatasamma'un/) means that: they want to listen to the news of the exalted assembly (High council), but they are not allowed.

The Arabic phrase /mala'-il-'a'la/ means the angels in the high world, because /mala'/ originally means 'community and group who have the same attitude and, by this agreement and unity, they fill the eyes of others.

And superiors, notables, and entourage of the centres of power are also called /mala'/ because their outward situation is considerable, but when it is qualified by /'a'la/ (high), it refers to the high ranked angels of Allah.

The Arabic term /yaqõifun/ is derived from /qaŏf/ in the sense of 'throw' and 'shooting to a distanced place', and the purpose here is 'repelling Satans' by 'flames', which will be explained later. This shows that Allah does not let them even approach the realm of 'High Council'.

The Arabic term /duhur/ is derived from /dahr/ in the sense of ‘drive off’. And the term /wasib/ originally means ‘chronic diseases’, but, in general, it means: permanent and lasting, and sometimes it has also been used with the sense of pure.

Here, it points to this meaning that not only Satans are prohibited from approaching the scene of heaven, but also they will finally be involved with the permanent chastisement, too.

This, verse refers to a group of rebellious and insolent Satans who intend to ascend to the high expanse of heaven.

It says:

“Except him who snatches a fragment, and he is pursued by a piercing flame.”

The Qur’anic term /šihab/ originally means: a flame which comes up from a burning fire. It is also called to the fiery flames which are seen in the sky like an extended line. We know that these are not stars, but they are alike to stars.

They are some small pieces of stone which are scattered in the sphere, and when they come into the gravity realm of the earth, they will be attracted toward the earth, and as the result of speed and their intense of strike with the air around the earth, they burn.

The Arabic word /thaqib/ means: penetrating and piercing, as if, because of an intense light, it pierces the face of the eye and burns it.

Therefore, there are two barriers for the influence of Satans into the expanse of heavens: the first barrier is ‘throwing from every side’, which is also apparently done by /šuhub/. The second barrier is a special kind of flame which is called: ‘a piercing flame’.

It waits for them that when they, now and then, approach ‘High council’ for eavesdropping, they will be struck by them.

Similar to this meaning is mentioned is Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verses 17 and 18, where He says:

“And We have guarded them against every accursed Satan” “Save him who steals the hearing, so there pursues him a clear flame.”

Again, Surah Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 5 says some meaning like this.

It says:

“And We have adorned the lower heaven with lamps, and We have made them missiles for the Satans…”

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 11-12

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقاً أَم مَّنْ خَلَقْنَآ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُم مِن طِينٍ لاَّزِبٍ

بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ

11. “Then ask their opinion whether they are stronger in creation or (the others) whom we have created. Verily We created them of a sticky clay.”

12. “Nay! you wonder while they mock.”

We can adjust the mockers and proud persons by reminding them their own source of creation.

These two verses also pursue the subject of Resurrection and the opposition of the obstinate rejecters, and following the previous discussion

about the Power of Allah over everything, Who is the Creator of the heaven and the earth, the first verse says:

"Then ask their opinion whether they are stronger in creation or (the others) whom we have created. Verily We created them of a sticky clay."

Yes, Allah has created them of a simple thing, from a piece of sticky clay. It seems that the polytheists, who had denied Resurrection, after hearing the former verses concerning the creation of the heavens, the earth and the angels, stated that their creation was more important than them.

In answer to them the Holy Qur'an implies that the men's creation compared with the creation of the earth and the vast heaven and the angels, which are in these worlds, is not such a significant thing, because the creation of man was from a little amount of sticky dust.

The Arabic phrase /'istaftihim/ is derived from /'istifta'/ which originally means 'asking for some new news'.

And that a young man is called in Arabic /fata/ is because of the freshness of his body and soul.[2]

This application points to this fact that if they really know their creation more important and stronger than the creation of the heaven and the angels, they say a new word which is void of example.

The Arabic term /lazib/, as some have said, originally has been /lazim/ the 'm' of which has changed into 'b' and now it is used in this form.

However, it means some mud which is sticky, since the source of the creation of man at first was 'dust', then it was mixed with water and, little by little, it changed into a bad smell slime, and then it became a sticky mud. (And, thus, by this statement the different meanings in various verses of the Qur'an are gathered here)

Then, the Holy Qur'an implicitly says: you wonder of their denial concerning the Resurrection while they mock it.

It says:

"Nay! you wonder while they mock."

By your pure heart, you see the matter so clear that you surprise of their denial, but these impure hearted people count this matter so impossible that they begin to mock.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 13-15

وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لاَ يَذْكُرُونَ

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا ءَايَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ

وَقَالُوا إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

13. "When they are admonished, they mind not,"

14. "And when they see a sign (miracle) they invite one another to scuff,"

15. "And they say: 'This is nothing but an open sorcery."

Admonishment is not usually effective for the hard-hearted persons.

The cause of these ugly actions is not only ignorance, but it is obstinacy and enmity. That is why when they are reminded the evidences, the argumentations of Resurrection and Divine punishment, they never mind and continue their own way.

The verse says:

"When they are admonished, they mind not,"

Then even they go beyond this, as the verse says:

"And when they see a sign (miracle) they invite one another to scuff,"

In the third verse, it says:

"And they say: 'This is nothing but an open sorcery."

They use the Arabic word /haŏa/ (this) in order to despise it and to show that the miracles and Divine verses are worthless.

And the application of 'sorcery' had been for the sake that, from one side, the supernatural deeds of the Prophet of Islam (S) were not deniable, and, on the other side, they did not want to submit before them and accept them as a miracle.

The only word, which could show their wickedness and quench their desires, had been this very word: 'sorcery', which, in the meantime, shows the confession of the enemy upon the wonderful and extraordinary influence of the Qur'an and the miracles of the Prophet (S).

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 16-18

ءَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

أَوَ ءَابَاؤُنَا الأَوَّلُونَ

قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ

16. "(They say:) 'When we are dead and have become dust and (rotten) bones, shall we (then) be raised up (again)?'"

17. "And also our forefathers?'"

18. "Say: 'Yes, (you all shall be raised) while you will be brought low'."

The rejecters of resurrection, instead of reasoning, consider it as improbable.

This holy verse introduces the improbability of the deniers of Resurrection as follows:

"(They say:) 'When we are dead and have become dust and (rotten) bones, shall we (then) be raised up (again)?'"

And worse than this, they say:

"And also our forefathers?'"

Verily there has not remained from them aught but a little rotten bone or some scattered dust. Who can gather these scattered particles? And who can give life again to them?

But those blind-hearted persons had forgotten that on the first day all of them were dust and they were created from dust. If they were doubtful upon the Power of Allah, they should know that once He had shown them His Power, and if they were doubtful about the receptivity of dust, it would also have been proved once.

Moreover, the creation of the heavens and the earth, with all their greatness, has left no room for doubt upon the infinite Power of Allah in anybody.

It is noteworthy that they strengthened their statements upon denial with kinds of emphasises, which was an evidence on their ignorance and obstinacy.

The third verse contains a very harsh answer to them. It, addressing the prophet, says:

"Say: 'Yes, (you all shall be raised) while you will be brought low'."

The Arabic term /daxir/ is derived from /daxr/ and /duxur/ both of which mean: 'disgrace' and 'humiliation'.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 19-21

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنظُرُونَ

وَقَالُوا يَاوَيْلَنَآ هَذَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

19. "Then it (the Resurrection) will only be a single cry, and behold, they begin to see (the scene of Hereafter)!"

20. "And they shall say: 'Woe for us!' This is the Day of Judgment."

21. "(They will be told:) 'This is the Day of Separation (of right and wrong), which you used to belie."

Man becomes dust and it is not a barrier for his being quickened again.

The obstinately denying the Resurrection causes humiliation in the Hereafter.

This holy verse indicates that you think that quickening you and your forefathers is difficult for Allah, the Mighty, the Omnipotent. But by a single great cry, ordered from the side of Allah, all will suddenly come out of their graves, and, being alive, they all will see the scene of Resurrection by their own eyes, the thing which they would have been denying until that Day.

The verse says:

"Then it (the Resurrection) will only be a single cry, and behold, they begin to see (the scene of Hereafter)!"

The Arabic word /zajrah/ is derived from /zajr/ and, as we pointed out before, sometimes it means 'drive away', and sometimes means 'cry', and here the second meaning is meant. It points to the second Blast, which will be done by Seraph: the explanation about it will be stated in the commentary of the verses of Surah Az-Zumar, Allah willing.

The Arabic sentence /yanzurun/ (they begin to see) refers to their look at the scene of Hereafter awaiting for the punishment. And, however, its purpose is that not only they will be quickened, but also will gain again their senses of understanding and seeing by that one single cry.

Regarding to the content of these two Arabic words: /zajratan wahidah/ (a single cry) the verse refers to the speed of the event and that Resurrection will happen suddenly, and it is easy for the Might of Allah that by a commanded cry of 'the angel of Resurrection' everything will be arranged.

It is in this place that the moaning of these obstinate proud polytheists, which is the sign of their weakness and disgrace, is heard, as the verse says:

"And they shall say: 'Woe for us!' This is the Day of Judgment."

Yes, when they observe the just court of Allah, the witnesses and the judgment of this court, and the sings of chastisement, they involuntarily cry moaning and thoroughly confess the truthfulness of Resurrection, a

confession that cannot solve any problem for them, or create the least mitigation in their sentence.

The third verse indicates that it is here that from the side of Allah or His angels they will be addressed, as the holy verse says:

"(They will be told:) 'This is the Day of Separation (of right and wrong), which you used to belie."

This means: the separation of the right from the wrong, the separation of the rows of the wrong doers from the good doers, and the Day of arbitration of Allah, the Exalted.

Some other verses of the Qur'an contain a similar meaning like this very verse which have introduced the Hereafter Day as the Day of separation: /yaum-ul-fasl/. What a wonderful, expressive and horrible meaning it is! It is noteworthy that on the Day of Hereafter when the pagans speak about that Day they render it as the Day of Judgment.

But Allah refers to it as 'the Day of separation'. This difference of meaning may be from this view that the guilty think only about their own retribution and sentence, while Allah points to a vaster meaning, one of which is the subject of sentence and it is one of its dimensions, and that the Day of Hereafter is the Day of separations.

Yes, it is the Day of separation of the rows of the ugly doers from the righteous ones, as Surah Yasin, No. 36, says:

"And (they will be told) get you aside this day O' you the guilty ones!".[3]

And how painful this is that they observe that their faithful children and relatives separate from them and go toward Paradise! Moreover, that Day is the Day of separation of the truth from false. The opposite schools and lines, and the true programs and false ones are not mixed with each other, like this word, Everyone of them must be set in their own position.

Besides all, that Day is the Separation Day, that is, the Day of Judgment, and the Lord of the Worlds, the Just, in the rank of judgment, will issue the most exact judgments about His servants, and it is here that there will be a complete disgrace for the polytheists.

Shortly speaking, the nature of this world is with the mixture of right and wrong, while the nature of Hereafter is the nature of separation of these two from each other.

That is why one of the names of Hereafter in the Qur'an, which has been numerously repeated, is /yaum-ul-fasl/ (the day of separation). In principle, on the day when all the hidden things are made manifest, the separation of the rows is unavoidable.

Notes

1. Burhan, the commentary, Vol. 4, P. 15, Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur, Vol. 5, P. 271
2. Rauh-ul-Ma'ali, following the verse
3. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 56

Section 2: The Sufferings of the Guilty

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 22-24

احْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَي صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ
وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُم مَّسْؤُولُونَ

22. "(And Allah will command the angels:) 'Gather you together those who were unjust and their mates and what they used to worship,"

23. "Besides Allah, and lead them (all) unto the path of Hell'."

24. "And stop them, for verily they must be questioned:"

He, who does not accept the Divine guidance in the world, will be lead to the Hell on the Day of Hereafter.

Therefore, Allah will command the angels, who are responsible to send the guilty toward the Hell, as follows:

"(And Allah will command the angels:) 'Gather you together those who were unjust and their mates and what they used to worship,"

This is enough for the wretchedness of man that he should be mustered together with inanimate idols.

And in the next verse the noble Qur'an implies that whatever they worshipped, besides Allah, should be lead to the Hell. Thus, the wrong objects of worship not only are not able to solve any problem, but also they themselves will have difficulty.

The Qur'anic term /'uhšuru/ is derived from /hašr/, and as Raqib says in Mufradat, it means to excel a group of people from their place and to send them to a battle-field, and the like. In many instances, this word has been used in the sense of: 'gathering javelins'.

However, this statement is either from the side of Allah or from the side of a group of angels unto another group who are responsible to gathering and moving the guilty toward the Hell, and the consequence is the same.

The Arabic word /'azwaj/ (wives) here refers to their guilty wives who are idol worshippers, or to those who have the same opinion and manner with theirs, because this word has been used in both of these two meanings; as we recite in Surah Al-Waqi'ah, No. 56, verse 7:

"And you shall be sorted out into three classes."

Therefore, the polytheists together with polytheists, and wrong doers together with people and things like them, will be sent into the Hell in some rows.

Or the purpose is the Satans who had the same shape and the same action as theirs.

In the meanwhile, these three meanings do not contrast with each other, and they all may be found in the concept of the verse.

The Qur'anic sentence:

'… and what they used to worship'

refers to the polytheists' object, of worship, irrespective of idols, Satans, and the cruel people such as Pharaohs and Namruds. And this meaning may be for the sake of this that their objects of worship were some inanimate things that had no intellect.

The Qur'anic word /jahim/ means Hell and is derived from /jahmah/ with the sense of 'violence of the burning fire'.

The Qur'an says:

"Besides Allah, and lead them (all) unto the path of Hell'."

It is interesting that the Qur'an renders it into:

'lead them (all) unto the path of Hell'.

What a wonderful sentence it is! One day they were lead unto the Straight Way, but they did not accept it, but today they must be lead unto the path of Hell, and they have to accept it. This is a heavy blame which burns their souls deeply.

The next verse implies that the command will be issued saying:

"And stop them, for verily they must be questioned:"

Yes, they must be stopped and answer some different questions. But, what will they be questioned of? Some commentators have said that they will be questioned of the innovations they have left.

Some other commentators of the Holy Qur'an have said they will be questioned of the ugly deeds and sins they have committed.

Some have added that they will be asked of Unity, and of 'there is no god but Allah'.

A group of them have said they will be questioned of different bounties: the bounties of their youth, health, lifetime, wealth, and the like. A well known tradition narrated by the Sunnites and Shi'ites indicates that they will be questioned of 'the friendship (Wilayah) of Ali (as)'.

This matter has also been narrated in Sawa'iq from Abu Sa'id Khidri, from the Prophet (S); and also in Shawahid-ut-Tanzil by Hakim Abul-Ghasim Huskani it has also been narrated from him (S). It has also been recorded in 'Uyun 'Akhbar-ur-Rida narrated from Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as)[1].

These commentaries, of course, do not contradict with each other, because on that Day everything will be questioned of: of beliefs, of Unity, of friendship (Wilayah), of sayings and deeds, and of the bounties and merits that Allah has bestowed on man.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 25-27

مَا لَكُمْ لاَ تَنَاصَرُونَ

بَلْ هُمُ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ

25. "(They will be told:) 'How now, that you help not one another?'"

26. "Nay! this day they make full submission."

27. "And some of them shall turn to the others questioning each other."

On the Day of Hereafter, the guilty cannot help anything to each other. These miserable hellish people can do nothing when they will be leading in the path to Hell.

They will be told that they used to refuge to each other in the world forgetting help in their difficulties, but in Hereafter, the verse says:

"(They will be told:) 'How now, that you help not one another?'"

Yes, all the supports they imagined for themselves in the world have been ruined here. They can neither get help from each other, nor their object of worship come to aid them, because they are themselves helpless.

It is said that on the day of the Battle of Badr, Abu-Jahl shouted, saying:

"We all help each other (and will overcome Muslims)."

This statement has been reiterated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 44 saying:

"…We are a host allied together to help each other."

But in Hereafter the people who are like Abu-Jahl, and those who have such qualities, will be asked why they do not help each other, while they have no answer to this question, and they can do nothing save having a disgraceful silence.

The next holy verse adds implying that they will submit the command of Allah (s.w.t.) and will not be able to do anything let alone opposition.

It says:

"Nay! this day they make full submission."

It is here that they begin to blame each other and everyone of them tries to put his sin on the shoulder of another.

The followers count their chiefs and leaders guilty and vice versa; as in the next verse, it says:

"And some of them shall turn to the others questioning each other."

Surah As-Saffat - Verse s 28-29

قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ

قَالُوا بَل لَّمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

28. "They will say: 'Verily you used to come unto us, from the right side."

29. "They answer: 'Nay! you (yourselves) were not believers."

One of the current styles of the leaders of the infidels and polytheists for beguiling others is using force or pretending to benediction.

In this verse, the aberrant followers tell their perversive leaders that through the way of advice and benevolence and sympathy and as guidance, and leading, you came to us, but you had nothing except plot and delusion.

The verse says:

"They will say: 'Verily you used to come unto us, from the right side."

Because of our nature, we were seeking for benevolence, purity, and happiness that we accepted your invitation. We were unaware that under your benevolent feature there is hidden a Satanic feature which drives us to the valley of wretchedness.

Yes, all our sins originate from you. We had no capital save good intention and purity in heart, but you, the satans, the liars, had no means but deceit and illusion.

The Arabic word /yamin/ which means 'right hand', or 'right side', is sometimes used ironically by Arabs in the sense of goodness, blessing, and advice. And Arabs, basically, used to whatever comes to them from the right side take as a 'good omen'.

That is why, as we said in the above, many of the Islamic commentators have commented the Qur'anic sentence: /kuntum ta'tunana 'anil yamin/

(you used to come unto us from the right side) ‘showing benediction and advice’.

However, this is a common culture that the right limb and the right side is considered ‘honoured’, and the left side rather ‘dishonoured’, and this very thing has caused ‘right’ to be used in good things and charitable deeds.

A group of commentators have mentioned here another interpretation and said that the purpose is that ‘you came to us by relying on your force’, since the right side is usually stronger. It is for this reason that most people do their important actions by their right hand, and therefore, this application has been ironically understood as power.

However, in the second verse it implies that their leaders will not be silent, either, and as the verse says:

“They answer: ‘Nay! you (yourselves) were not believers.”

If your innate state were not receptive of deviation and if you yourselves were not the seeker of vice and Satanic actions, how would you come to us? Why did you not answer to the invitation of the prophets, the sages, and the purified ones, and as soon as we hinted you hastened to us?

Thus, it is certain that the fault is in you, yourselves. You must blame yourselves, and send all your curses to yourselves.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 30-31

وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُم مِن سُلْطَانٍ بَلْ كُنتُمْ قَوْماً طَاغِينَ

فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَآ إِنَّا لَذَآئِقُونَ

30. “And there was not for us any authority over you. Nay! You were a rebellious people!”

31. “So, now the word of our Lord has been proved against us that verily we shall taste (the chastisement).”

The leaders of infidelity both confess to their own aberration and accept the responsibility of deceiving and misleading their followers, but they do not accept the responsibility of force and authority over others.

In this verse they say:

“And there was not for us any authority over you. Nay! You were a rebellious people!”

How painful is that a person sees that the leader, in whom he believed for a life-long-time, has provided the causes of his wretchedness and then he repudiates from him like that! He puts the whole sin and fault on his shoulder and acquits himself entirely.

The fact is that each of these two groups is right from one point of view. Neither these nor those are sinless. Those were seductive and evil, and these were practically submissive to their seductions.

So, the second holy verse implies that these debates result nothing and, at last, these aberrant leaders confess this fact and say that for this reason the command of Allah has been fixed against all of them and the order of punishment has been issued about them and they all shall taste it.

The verse says:

“So, now the word of our Lord has been proved against us that verily we shall taste (the chastisement).”

You were disobedient and this is the end of the disobedient persons (to the command of Allah), and we were both pervertible and perversive.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 32-33

فَأَغْوَيْنَاكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَاوِينَ

فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ

32. "So we misled you, for verily we were ourselves astray."

33. "So verily they (both) on that Day are sharers in the (Divine) chastisement."

In the world, the leaders and chiefs of polytheists have heard the promise and warning of Allah, but they have denied it intentionally.

In the above verses and in some other verses of the Qur'an there are some expressive hints to the enmity between the aberrant leaders and their followers in Hereafter or in the Hell.

The verse says:

"So we misled you, for verily we were ourselves astray."

This is an instructive warning to all of those who put their intellect and religion in the authority of aberrant leaders.

On that Day, when everybody tries to acquit from another, and even puts his own sin on that one's shoulder, yet neither of them can prove his innocence.

Therefore, this verse implies that, on that Day, everyone irrespective of obedient and obeyed, follower and leader, all are sharers in the punishment of Allah.

The verse says:

"So verily they (both) on that Day are sharers in the (Divine) chastisement."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 34-36

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُوا آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ

34. "Verily thus do We deal with the guilty."

35. "Verily they used to be proud when it was said to them: 'There is no god but Allah'."

36. "And said: 'Shall we give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet?"

The first verse indicates that Allah implicitly says that He will deal with the guilty seriously by His punishment. This is the everlasting way of treatment of Allah; a way of treatment that has originated from the law of justice.

The verse says:

"Verily thus do We deal with the guilty."

The sign of a guilty is that he has proud manner concerning Monotheism. So, this verse says:

"Verily they used to be proud when it was said to them: 'There is no god but Allah'."

Yes, the root of all their deviations was mostly pride, self-admiration and assumption, refusing the clear right, having obstinacy and often insisting on the wrong customs and false imitations, and looking at everything contemptuously.

The opposite point of pride is humbleness and submission to the Truth, and the true Islam is only this. That pride is the cause of wretchedness, and this humbleness and submission is the source of happiness.

And in the next holy verse the Qur'an implies that for this great sin of theirs the polytheists brought a clumsy excuse, and always they murmured:

"And said: 'Shall we give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet?"

They called him a poet because his statements influenced so deeply in the hearts and attracted the people's emotions that as if he made the most rhythmical poets, while his ordinary talk was never poetry.

They called him mad, because he did not follow the current custom of his environment, and he stood against the superstitious beliefs of the crowd of zealous obstinate people. From the view of some groups of aberrant people, this action was a kind of self-murder and insanity. But this was the greatest honour of the Prophet (S), and he did not submit to those circumstances.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 37-39

بَلْ جَآءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِنَّكُمْ لَذَآئِقُواْ الْعَذَابِ الأَلِيمِ
وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

37. "Nay: he has come with the Truth and verified the (former) messengers."

38. "Verily you will taste the painful punishment, (too)."

39. "And you are not requited except (for) what you were doing."

The teachings of all Divine prophets are the same, and all prophets invite to Unity and the Truth, and the Prophet of Islam (S) has verified them, too.

In this verse, in order to negate these baseless words and to defend the rank of revelation and prophecy of the holy Prophet (S), the Qur'an adds:

"Nay: He has come with the Truth and verified the (former) messengers."

But you, O blind-hearted people! And you, O' aberrant and foul-mouthed ones! You will surely taste the painful chastisement of Allah, because the retribution of those who intentionally called the content of the Holy Qur'an poems, and considered the holy Prophet of Islam (S) mad is a painful punishment.

"Verily you will taste the painful punishment, (too)."

This verse implies that they should not imagine that Allah is taker of vengeance and He wants to take vengeance from them.

It is not such, as the verse says:

"And you are not requited except (for) what you were doing."

In fact, it is the result of your own deeds that incarnates in front of you and remains with you and hurts you. Your retribution is that very deed of yours.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 40-44

إِلاَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُـخْلَصِينَ
أُوْ َـئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ
فَوَاكِهُ وَهُم مُّكْرَمُونَ
فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ
عَلَي سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ

40. "Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones,"
41. "For them is a known sustenance,"
42. "(Kinds of) fruits, and they shall be highly honoured,"
43. "In the gardens bountiful,"
44. "Upon thrones facing each other."

In this holy verse the Qur'an says:

"Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones,"

For the relation of this group to Allah, only the phrase /'ibad-allah/ (servants of Allah) is enough, but when the word /muxlasin/ (the purified) comes beside it, the phrase will earn another kind of depth in its meaning.

The Arabic word /muxlas/ is in passive participle form, which means: 'the one whom Allah has purified'. He is purified from any kind of polytheism and hypocrisy, and also from any kind of Satanic temptation and blemishes of low desire.

Yes, it is only this group whose deeds will not be simply rewarded, but Allah (s.w.t.) will treat them with His Grace and generosity and will give them innumerable rewards.

In the second verse under discussion, the Qur'an mentions the numerous merits and blessings that Allah bestows on the purified servants. They can be referred to shortly in a few divisions.

At first, it says:

"For them is a known sustenance,"

Is this an extract of the bounties which will be explained in later verses of the Qur'an, or it refers to the unknown spiritual and unexplainable blessings which are at the top of the blessings of Paradise?

According to the interpretation of a group of commentators, the proportion of discussion and totality of blessings are more consistent with the second meaning, and, thus, the first blessing from the blessings which have been mentioned in the verses under discussion, are spiritual merits, spiritual pleasures, and apprehension of the splendour of the Pure Essence of Allah, and being drunk from the pure wine of His love.

The same pleasure which none knows unless he sees it.

And that the material merits of the Paradise have been mentioned frequently in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, but the spiritual merits and the pleasures of soul have been stated ambiguously is for this very sake that the former ones are explainable and the latter ones are not explainable.

Concerning the Arabic phrase: /rizqun ma'lum/ (a known sustenance) there have been delivered many statements: whether its time is known; or its duration, or its other qualifications. But, based on what was said in the above, the Arabic word /ma'lum/ is an ambiguous sense for these unexplainable merits.

In the third verse, the Qur'an has referred to stating other blessings, and before anything else, it has mentioned the blessings of heaven. They are the blessings which will be given to the people of Paradise with the utmost respect.

It says:

"(Kinds of) fruits, and they shall be highly honoured,"

They will be entertained honourably as some dear guests who are received with utmost esteem, not like some animals that food is poured in front of them.

And in the fourth verse, after mentioning the blessings: the colourful fruits and respecting and honouring the purified servants, the words are about their position in the green, bountiful gardens.

The verse says:

"In the gardens bountiful,"

Whatever blessing they wish they can find there, and whatever they intend to have will be ready in front of them.

In view of the fact that the greatest delight of man is enjoying the meeting of sincere friends, this bounty is pointed out in the fourth stage. It says about the people of Paradise that they sit therein:

"Upon thrones facing each other."

They look each other, and speak about everything.

They sometimes talk about their past deeds in the world, and sometimes about the great bounties of Allah in Hereafter, sometimes about the attributes of beauty and dignity of Allah, and sometimes about the ranks of the saints and their extraordinary acts, and some other affairs the information upon which is not conceivable for us, the prisoners of this world.

The Arabic word /surur/ is the plural form of /sarir/ which is called to the thrones on which people sit in the meetings of pleasure and intimacy; though it has also been used in a vaster scope of meaning, so far that sometimes the shroud of a dead has been called /sarir/, perhaps for the hope that it may be a mount of happiness for him toward he Divine forgiveness and His eternal garden.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 45-47

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِكَأْسٍ مِن مَّعِينٍ
بَيْضَآءَ لَذَّةٍ لِّـلشَّارِبِينَ
لاَ فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنزَفُونَ

45. "Round will go unto them a cup (of wine) from a clear spring,"

46. "Crystal-white, delicious to the drinkers,"

47. "Free from headiness, nor will they suffer intoxication from it."

Being entertained in Paradise is not limited to a particular side, but the bounties are turned round from every side of the people of Paradise.

In the fifth stage of the statement of the merits of the people of Paradise, the words are about their purified drink. It says:

"Round will go unto them a cup (of wine) from a clear spring,"

Whenever they decide they can be satiated from its cup and can feel its world of mirth and spirituality.

These cups are not set in a corner or a place that they come and ask for one of them, but these cups will be turned round unto them.

The Arabic word /ka's/ philologically is called to a cup which is completely full, and if it is rather empty it is called 'goblet'.

Raqib in Mufradat says:

"Cup is a container which is full of beverage."

The Qur'anic term /ma'in/ is derived from /ma'n/ in the sense of 'flow'. It points to this fact that there are some flowing springs therein which have purified wine out of which every moment the cups are filled and turned round among the people of Paradise.

It is not such that this purified wine finishes or that it may need any trouble, pain, and task to be provided, or that it may become old, decayed, and imperfect.

Then, the second holy verse explains these cups of purified wine.

It says:

"Crystal-white, delicious to the drinkers,"

The pleasures in Heaven have no hidden and manifest evil sequels. The heavenly wine is delicious, but it has not the intoxication and other sequels of the worldly wine.

The third holy verse, by mentioning a short and expressive sentence, explaining that purified wine, says:

"Free from headiness, nor will they suffer intoxication from it."

And there is nothing in it but spiritual intelligence, mirth, and joy.

The Arabic word /qaul/ originally is in the sense of a corruption which penetrates into a thing in a hidden manner and it is for this reason that, in the literature of Arab, the hidden murders and terrors are called /qilah/.

The Arabic term /yunzafun/ originally is derived from /nazf/ in the sense of 'to destroy something gradually'. When this word is used for the water of a well, its concept is that the water is gradually taken out from the well until when it finishes.

However, the purpose of it in the verse under discussion is that the gradual destruction of intellect does not absolutely exist in the purified wine of Paradise. It neither decreases the intellect, nor does it cause any infection.

These two meanings are implicitly very thin and exact about the worldly wines and alcoholic materials which gradually influence in man's body and cause destruction and decadence in it.

It not only spoils intellect and the system of nerves, but also it has an undeniable destructive effect on all systems of man's body, irrespective of heart, blood vessels, stomach, kidneys, and liver. As if it destroys man. And also like the water of a well, it gradually decreases the man's intellect and intelligence until when it empties it.

But, in Hereafter the purified wine of Allah is free from all these qualities.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 48-49

وَعِندَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ عِينٌ

كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَكْنُونٌ

48. "And with them will be chaste women; restraining their glances,"

49. "As if they were (as white as) eggs (secured) hidden."

Among the characteristics of the women in Paradise is that they restrain their eyes from other than their husbands. The women in Paradise are not only beautiful and charming, but also chaste and covered.

And finally, in the sixth stage, the Qur'an points to the chaste women in Paradise, who do not make love to anyone save their husbands, and do not look at anybody except them. They have beautiful large eyes.

It says:

"And with them will be chaste women; restraining their glances,"

The Arabic word /tarf/ originally means eyelids, and since at the time of looking the eyelids move, this word ironically refers to the act of looking. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase /qasirat-ut-tarf/ means the women who have a short glance; and in commenting it, there have been delivered different numerous probabilities of meaning which, at the meanwhile, can be gathered with together.

The first meaning is that: they look only at their husbands, and restraining their eyes from anything, they look at them alone.

The second meaning is that: this application canonically shows that they make love only to their husbands, and except their love, they have no other love in their hearts. This is one of the greatest privileges of a wife that she does not think of anyone but her husband and makes love to none but to him.

The Arabic word /'iyn/ is the plural form of /'iyna'/ in the sense of 'a large-eyed woman'.

The next verse explains these very women in Paradise in another form of statement, and introduces their chastity and the sanctity of their bodies as follow:

"As if they were (as white as) eggs (secured) hidden."

Indicating that: from the point of intense of purity, delicacy, whiteness, and serenity, their bodies are like some eggs that neither the hand of a man has touched, nor has any dust covered them, but they have been as if covered and hidden under the wing and feather of a hen.

The Arabic word /bayd/ is the plural form of /baydah/ with the sense of 'egg', (the egg of any bird); and the term /maknun/ is derived from /kin/ in the sense of 'covered'.

This resemblance of the Qur'an will exactly be made clear when a person sees closely the egg of a hen at the time when it separates from the hen and no man's hand has still touched it and it is under the wing and feather of the hen. At this time, it has a wonderful transparency and pleasantness.

Some commentators have taken the Qur'anic term /maknun/ in the sense of the content of an egg which is concealed under the egg-shell and, in fact, the above resemblance refers to the time when the egg has been cooked and its shell has been entirely separated. In that state, besides its whiteness and its brightness, it has a special delicacy and smoothness.

However, the Qur'anic meanings in stating the facts are so deep and comprehensive that in a short and tender expression it conveys a lot of matters with a particular delicacy.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 50-52

فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ

قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّـنْهُمْ إِنِّـي كَانَ لِي قَرِ نٌ

يَقُولُ أَءِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ

50. "Then shall some of them advance to others, questioning each other."

51. "One of them will say: 'Verily I had an intimate companion (in the world),"

52. "Who used to say: 'Are you really among the believers (of Hereafter)?'"

In the feast of the people of Paradise, where they have sat on the thrones in front of each other, they begin questioning about their worldly companions.

Through this verse the Qur'an implies that the sincere servants of Allah who, according to the previous verse, are in the spiritual and material bounties of Paradise, including the kinds of fruits of Paradise, from one side, and with the maidens (a nymph) of Paradise, from the other side, and the cups of the purified wine turned round them while they are leaning against the thrones in Paradise busy speaking with their sincere friends, suddenly some of them think of their past and their friends in the world, the same friends who separated their way and they are missed in Paradise and among them.

They want to know what their destiny is.

Yes, while they are busy speaking and talk about everything, as the verse says:

"Then shall some of them advance to others, questioning each other."

Then, in the second and third verse, the Qur'an implicitly says that one of them remembers some events and then he turns to the others, talking as follows:

"One of them will say: 'Verily I had an intimate companion (in the world),"

But unfortunately, he was led astray and paved the way of the rejecters of Resurrection. He repeatedly used to ask me whether I had really believed this word of theirs and confirmed it.

The verse says:

"Who used to say: 'Are you really among the believers (of Hereafter)?'"

Surah As-Saffat - Verse 53

أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً أَءِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ

53. "When we die and have become dust and bones, shall we then in fact be brought in account?"

Pagans never have any proof upon their saying of lack of Resurrection.

Whatever they have in this regard is mostly improbability and wonder, so, concerning the disbelievers, this verse says:

"When we die and have become dust and bones, shall we then in fact be brought in account?"

They say this and strengthen it by announcing that they do not believe in it.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 54-55

قَالَ هَلْ أَنتُم مُّطَّلِعُون

فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَءَاهُ فِي سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيمِ

54. "He says: 'Can you take a look?'"

55. "Then he looks and sees him in the midst of Hell."

The people of Paradise get information about the state of the people of Hell that the rejecters of Hereafter are in the midst of Fire.

So, the first verse from the tongue of him about his friend, says:

"He says: 'Can you take a look?'"

Then, the second holy verse implies that it is here that this friend also begins searching about him and looks toward the Hell and suddenly he sees his friend in the middle of Hell.

The verse says:

"Then he looks and sees him in the midst of Hell."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 56-57

قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدتَّ لَتُرْدِينِ

وَلَوْلاَ نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِ نَ

56. "He says: 'By Allah! You had almost caused me to perish;"

57. "And had it not been the bounty of my Lord, certainly would I have been brought into (the Hell)'."

The Qur'anic term /turdin/ is derived from /'ida'/ in the sense of 'to fall from a height which is accompanied with destruction'.

In these two verses the Qur'an implies that he addresses his deviated friend and:

"He says: 'By Allah! You had almost caused me to perish;"

And also it was nigh that your temptations would affect on my pure heart and bring me into the same deviated path that you were in.

The verse says:

"And had it not been the bounty of my Lord, certainly would I have been brought into (the Hell)'."

It was the Divine success which helped me in my way and it was the grace of Allah that came to me and guided me aright.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 58-61

أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِينَ

إِلاَّ مَوْتَتَنَا الأُولَى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

لِمِثْلِ هَذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ

58. "Is it that we do not die,"

59. "Save our first death; and we shall not be chastised?"

60. "Verily this is the mighty triumph,"

61. "And for the like of this let the workers work."

In the first two verses in the above, the Qur'an implicitly says that the believing person turns to his hellish friend and, as a blame, reminds this word to him, saying:

"Is it that we do not die,"

And that, except the first death in the world, there is not any death and life again after it, and there will not be any punishment.

The verse says:

"Save our first death; and we shall not be chastised?"

Now you may look and see that what a great mistake you made. After death, there is such a life and such reward, recompense, and retribution. Now all the facts have been made manifest for you, but alas, there is no way to return.

According to the commentator of these two holy verses, by the statement of the faithful person to his hellish friend, he reminds him his words upon the denial of Resurrection.

But some other commentators have mentioned another probable commentary on these two verses. It says that the talk of the man in Paradise with his hellish friend has finished and the people of Paradise speak again with each other.

One of them happily cries:

"Is it then that we do not die,"

"Save our first death; and we shall not be chastised?"

Do we have an eternal life here and does this grace of Allah remains for ever and we will not be chastised?

These words, of course, are not said doubtfully, but they are expressed because of joy and happiness. Just like the person who, after a long time of expectation, gains a vast and comfortable house.

He surprisingly says:

"Is this mine? O' Lord! What a blessing it is! Will it not be taken from me?"

However, in the next two verses, this debate finishes with an expressive, meaningful fall of feelings and is emphasized by kinds of emphasis.

It says:

"Verily this is the mighty triumph,"

What a triumph is greater than this that a person is given an eternal bounty and a permanent life that has kinds of Divine bounties? What can be considered better and more superior than this?

And, finally, by an expressive, awakening and short sentence, Allah, the Great, puts an end to this discussion:

"And for the like of this let the workers work."

Some commentators have thought that the recent verse may also be said by the people of Paradise. But it seems very improbable, because on that Day there is no deed to be done.

And, in other words, on that Day there is not any program that by this sentence people may be encouraged to it, while the apparent of the verse shows that the aim is that, by mentioning this sentence, all the former verses can be concluded and people may be driven toward faith and action. Therefore, it is suitable that this word of Allah comes at the end of this discussion.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 62-64

أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلاً أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِّـلظَّالِمِينَ

إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ

62. "Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of Zaqqum?"

63. "Verily We have appointed it as a trial for the unjust."

64. "Verily, it is a tree that grows in the bottom of the Hell."

We must compare the examples of the grace of Allah with His wrath so that we may act better. The tyrants, who cause others to feel smarting grief in the world, will be entertained with a blazing food in the Hereafter.

After stating the pleasant and worthy bounties of Paradise, the verses under discussion refer to the painful and grievous chastisement of the Hell, and illustrate them in such a way that, comparing the aforementioned Divine bounties, they affect deeply on the receptive persons and restrain them from performing any ugly and impure action.

At first, I implicitly ask whether these eternal and pleasant bounties with which the people of Paradise are entertained are better or the Tree of Zaqqum.

The verse says:

"Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of Zaqqum?"

Regarding to its concept, the application of the Arabic term /nuzul/ is called to something which is prepared for the entertainment of a guest. Some commentators have said that it is the first thing by which a guest is entertained. This shows that the people of Paradise will be entertained as some dear and respectful guests.

The Holy Qur'an asks whether this is better or the Tree of Zaqqum.

The application of the word 'better' is not any evidence that the tree of Zaqqum is a good thing and the bounty of the people of Paradise is better than that. These meanings are sometimes used in the Arabic language for the aspects that, from one side, they have no goodness at all. But there is this probability that this is a kind of allusion.

It is just like this that a person, as the result of being polluted by kinds of sins, has become seriously disgrace among people and we tell him whether this disgrace is better or honour and honesty.

As for the Arabic word /zaqqum/ according to the philologists, it is the name of a plant which has some small leaves that are bitter with bad smell. It grows in the land of Tahamah and polytheists were acquainted with it.[2] And it is also said in Tafsir-Rauh-ul-Ma'ani that this plant has a sap that when it reaches the body of a person, it swells.[3]

Raqib in Mufradat says that Zaqqum is any kind of hateful food for the people of Hell.

However, the Arabic word does not always mean ‘Tree’. Sometimes it is also used in the sense of ‘plant’, and the context shows that its objective meaning here is ‘plant’.

Then, in the second verse, referring to some qualities of this plant, the Qur’an says:

“Verily We have appointed it as a trial for the unjust.”

The Qur’anic term /fitnah/ may be used in the sense of punishment, or with the sense of trial, as the Qur’an has often applied it in this meaning. Thus, it points to this concept that when they heard the name of Zaqqum, they began to mock and, therefore, it became a mean of trial against the unjust.

In the next verse, the Qur’an says:

“Verily, it is a tree that grows in the bottom of the Hell.”

But these proud unjust people continued mocking and said that:

“Is it possible that a tree grows in the bottom of Hell?”

“How different is between Fire and a tree and plant?”

Therefore, hearing the name of this plant and its qualities is the source of their trial in this world, and the tree itself is the source of their pain and punishment in Hereafter.

It seems that they were neglectful of this fact that the principle governed on the life of the next world is very different from that of this world. The plant and tree which grows in the bottom of Hell is of the same nature of Hell, and it has grown up with the conditions of Hell.

It is not a plant like the plants that grow in the gardens of this world. And perhaps they are unaware of this point; but their aim is only mock and ridicule.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 65-68

طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُؤُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ

فَإِنَّهُمْ لَآكِلُونَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِؤُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْباً مِنْ حَمِيمٍ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْجَحِيمِ

65. “The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils,”

66. “Then verily they eat from it and fill (their bellies with it.”

67. “Then verily on Top of it they will have a mixture made of boiling water.”

68. “Then verily their return shall be unto the Hell.”

Like the people of Paradise, the people of Hell have also some things to eat and to drink, but the latter not only is not delicious and pleasant, but also they are ugly, distasteful, and injurious.

For being far from the foods of Hell, there is no way to escape, nor any way to evade.

The people of Hell are so hungry that they fill their bellies with the worst food.

(… and fill (their) bellies with it.)

The first verse says:

"The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils,"

The Arabic word /tal'/ is usually used for the shoot of some white strings that later they change into a cluster of dates. This term is derived from /tulu'/, because it is the first fruit that appears on the tree as if it rises.

Here, there comes forth a question asking whether people had seen the heads of devils that the Qur'an likens the shoots of Zaqqum to it.

The commentators have answered this question by different answers. Some of them have said: one of the meanings of 'Satan' is a kind of ugly snake that the shoots of Zaqqum have been likened to it.

Some have said that it is a kind of ugly plant. It is cited in Muntah-il-Adab: /ra's-uš-šaytan/ or /ru'us-uš-šayatin/ is an ugly plant.

But what is more correct is that this likening is for the statement of the utmost ugliness and its hateful shape.

Then, in the second verse, the Qur'an implies that these proud unjust people will certainly eat of this plant and fill their bellies from it.

The verse says:

"Then verily they eat from it and fill (their bellies with it."

This is the same punishment and trial which was mentioned on the previous verse. Eating from this hellish plant, with that bad smell and bitter taste, and with that sap, the touch of which with the body causes hurt and swelling, and specially eating abundantly, is a painful chastisement.

It is evident that eating this bitter and unwholesome food brings thirst, but what do they drink when they become thirsty?

The Qur'an in the third verse says:

"Then verily on Top of it they will have a mixture made of boiling water."

The Arabic word /šaub/ means something which is mixed with something else; and the Qur'anic term /hamim/ is 'hot blazing water'. So, the hot water they drink is not unmixed, but it is polluted.

That is the food of the people of Hell and this is their drink, but where do they go after this entertainment?

The Qur'an in the fourth verse says:

"Then verily their return shall be unto the Hell."

Some of the commentators have understood from this meaning that this hot polluted water comes from a spring from outside of Hell. The people of Hell are formerly taken there like animals that are taken to a pond, and after drinking from it, they are returned into the Hell.

As we pointed out before, neither the blessings of Heaven are available for us in this world as they are, nor the chastisements of the people of Hell. Only by some short sentences their outline from a far distance are partly illustrated in our mind.

(O' Lord! Protect us, by Your grace, from these punishments.)

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 69-70

إِنَّهُمْ أَلْفَوْا ءَابَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّينَ

فَهُمْ عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ

69. "Verily they found their fathers on the wrong path."

70. "So in their footsteps they are being hastened on."

One of the qualities of the people of the Hell is blindly imitation from their fathers and ancestors, while imitation in beliefs is not permissible and one's beliefs should be based on the basis of intellect and reasoning.

In these two verses, the Qur'an states the main cause of the inflection of the people of Hell in the grips of these painful punishments through two short and expressive sentences.

It says:

"Verily they found their fathers on the wrong path."

Yet, involuntarily they hasten to follow them.

The Qur'an says:

"So in their footsteps they are being hastened on."

It is interesting that the Arabic term /yuhra'un/ is mentioned in the passive form derived from /'ihra'/ which means 'to run swiftly'. It indicates that they have so believed in imitating from their ancestors that as if they had not any act of willing from their own selves. And this is a sign of their utmost bigotry and being interested in their ancestors' superstitions.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 71-74

وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ الأَوَّلِينَ

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِم مُنذِرِ نَ

فَانظُرْ كَيفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِ نَ

إِلاَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُـخْلَصِينَ

71. "And indeed most of the ancient went astray before them."

72. "And certainly We sent among them warners."

73. "Then see how was the end of those warned,"

74. "Except the servants of Allah, the purified ones."

In the atmosphere of deviation, the most important dusty is 'warning'. Allah has sent some warners for the deviated nations.

Through these verses, the Qur'an prepares the ground for the life story of many former nations, the information of whose states is an expressive proof for the former discussions. These are nations such as: the peoples of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Lot, Yunus, and the like.

At first, it says:

"And indeed most of the ancient went astray before them."

It is not only the polytheists of Mecca who, imitating their ancestors, are involved in a deep corruption, but before them, the majority of the ancient nations were involved in the same fate, too, and the number of their believers comparing those who went astray were very small.

This is a solace for the Prophet (S) and the believers of Mecca whose number was small and were surrounded by the enemy from every side.

Then, in the second verse, the Holy Qur'an adds that their aberration was because of having no leader or guide.

So, He says:

"And certainly We sent among them warners."

These warners were the Divine prophets who used to warn them from polytheism, disbelief, injustice, tyranny, and blindly imitation from others, and made them acquainted with their responsibilities.

It is true that the Divine prophets had the letter of warning in one hand and the letter of glad tiding in the other hand, but since the great pillar of their teaching, specially for such a corrupt and rebellious nation, was ‘warning’, it has been emphasized on here.

And, in the third verse, through a short and meaningful sentence, it says:

“Then see how was the end of those warned,”

The addressee in the Qur’anic sentence /fanzur/ (then see) may be the Prophet (S) himself, or any other wise and aware person.

This sentence, in fact, is a hint to the end of the nations whose explanation will be expressed in the coming verses.

Through the fourth verse, as an exception, it says:

“Except the servants of Allah, the purified ones.”

In fact, this sentence points to this fact that you may see the end of these nations that how Allah caused them to be involved in a painful punishment and destroyed them, except the purified faithful servants who were saved from this destruction.

It is noteworthy that in this Surah ‘the purified servants of Allah’ are emphasized on five times in different verses, and this is a sign upon the greatness of their rank.

And, as we pointed out before, they are those who have been so victorious in the path of Knowledge, faith, and struggle against carnal soul that Allah has elected them and purified them, and that is why they have become secured from deviations and faults.

Satan cannot influence in them and, from the first day, hopelessly he expressed his inability before them.

The uproar of the environment, the temptations of the seductive factors, the imitation from ancestors, and the wrong and oppressive cultures can never mislead them from their way.

And this, in fact, is a message for the persisting believers of that day in Mecca, and for us, the Muslims of the world of today that we should not be afraid of the abundance of the enemies and try to stand in the row of the purified servants of Allah, because it is only the purified servants of Allah who take the warnings of the prophets earnest.

“Then see how was the end of those warned,”

“Except the servants of Allah, the purified ones.”

Notes

1. Among those who have narrated this tradition are the following scholars:
   A) Ibn-Hajar Hiythami, in Sawa‘iq-ul-Muhraghah, P. 147
   B) ‘Abd-ur-Razzaq Hanbali, according to Kashf-ul-Qummah, P. 92

C) ‘Allamah Sibt-ibn-Jauzi, in Tathkirah, P. 21
D) ’Alusi, in Rauh-ul-Ma‘ani, following the verse under discussion
E) ’Abu-Na‘im Esfahani, according to Kifayat-ul-Khisal, P. 360
And some others that for more information you may refer to the worthy book entitled ‘’Ihqaq-ul-Haqq’, Vol. 3, P. 104 (new edition), and Al-Murajirat, P. 58.
2. Tafsir-i-Rouh-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 464
3. Rauh-ul-Ma‘ani, Vol. 23, P. 85

Section 3: The Great Sacrifice Shifted

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 75-79

وَلَقَدْ نَادَانَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ
وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ
وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَه هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ
وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْأَخِرِ نَ
سَلَامٌ عَلَي نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ

75. "And indeed Noah did call upon Us, and the most excellent answerer (of prayer are We)."

76. "And We delivered him and his people from the great distress,"

77. "And We made (only) his progeny the survivors."

78. "And We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later generations."

79. "Peace be on Noah among the nations."

If a person calls Allah sincerely, his supplication will be accepted and answered.

From here on, the story life of three great prophets, which was secretly pointed out in the former verses, begins. At first, Noah, the chief of the Divine prophets, and the first arch-prophet, is referred to and, before anything else, his pungent prayer, when he became disappointed from the guidance of his people, is pointed out.

It says:

"And indeed Noah did call upon Us, and the most excellent answerer (of prayer are We)."

This call may point to the same thing which is mentioned in Surah Noah:

"And Noah said: 'O' my Lord! Leave not of the unbelievers, a single one on the earth!"

"For, if You do not leave (any of) them, they will but mislead Your devotees, and they will breed none but wicked ungrateful ones."[1]

Or it is the prayer which he asked Allah before embarking on the Ark.

He said:

"…'My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land'."[2]

Or it is the prayer which is mentioned in Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 10, saying:

"Then he called on his Lord: 'I am one overcome; do You then help (me)!'"

Of course, there is no problem that the verse under discussion might be a hint to all of these prayers and Allah answered them all in the best way.

So, in the next verse, it immediately says:

"And We delivered him and his people from the great distress,"

According to Raqib in Mufradat, the Arabic term /karb/ means 'a severe grief'.

Which grief has been this great grief that troubled Noah seriously? It may refer to the mockeries of the proud faithless people, and their oral hurts,

such as their violation and affront to him and his followers. Or it may refer to the consecutive denials of this obstinate nation.

They hurt this patient Divine prophet, Noah, and acted so impolitely unto him and said that he was mad, that as the Qur'an says:

"He (Noah) said: 'My Lord help me against what they belie'."[3]

However, a group of these unwholesome events and harsh sarcasms presses his heart violently until when the flood came, and Allah delivered him from the grip of that cruel nation and that great distress.

Some of the commentators have said that the probable purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /karbin 'azim/ has been that very Flood in which none delivered except Noah and his followers, but this meaning seems improbable.

Then, in the next verse, it adds:

"And We made (only his progeny the survivors."

Are really all the human beings, who are living on the earth at the present time, from among the progeny of Noah? And does the above verse say the same meaning? Or did great group of prophets, saints, and righteous ones remain from his seed, though all human beings are not from his seed?

Some of the great commentators have said that all the members of humankind after Noah have come into being from his generation and, just now, all people are the Children of Noah.

A great deal of the historians have cited that there have remained three sons from Noah, by the names of: Sam, Ham, and Yafith, and all the present nations living on the earth terminate to them. The races of Arab, Persian, and Roman are called Semitic (races).

The Turkish race and another group of people are considered as the progeny of Yafith. The races in Sudan, India, Nubia, Ethiopia, Qibt, and Barbary are counted as the progeny of Ham.

The discussion is not upon this matter that, for example, this race is from which son of Noah, because there are many different ideas delivered by the commentators and historians upon this subject. The discussion is upon this matter that do all the human races terminate to these three ones?

This question arises here that: did not some other believers embark in the Ark with Noah? Then, what fate did they have? Did they all pass away without having any offspring after them? Or, if they had some children, would they be girls who married with Noah's sons?

This problem is not so clear from the point of history, but it can be understood from Some Islamic narrations that, in relation with the hints in the verses of the Qur'an, there remained some children from them on the earth and there exist some people from those children, too.

Upon the explanation of the above holy verse, there is a tradition recorded in the Commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"The purpose of Allah from the verse saying:
'And We made (only) his progeny the survivors'"

is that the Truth, prophethood, the (heavenly) Book, and Faith remained in the progeny of Noah, but the entire people who are living on the earth

from the children of Adam are not from the offspring of Noah (as), because Allah, the Exalted, says in His Book:

'… We said: 'Embark therein, of each kind a pair and your family (a part from your wife and a son) except for those against whom the Word has already passed - and whoever believed. And there believed not with him but a few."[4]

And also He, the Almighty, (addressing the Children of Israel,) says:

'(O' you!) the offspring of those whom We embarked along with Noah (on the Ark)…'[5]„[6]

And thus, whatever is known about the whole races on the earth terminating to the Noah's sons is not fixed.

In the Next verse, the Qur'an says:

"And We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later generations."

Noah is known as a steadfast, brave, patient, sympathetic, and kind prophet, and he is called 'the chief of the Divine prophets'.

Noah's life story is usually the example of persistence and perseverance, and his manner and program is as a sample for all those who pave the path of Truth against the hard hindrances of the enemies.

In the last verse of this group of verses, the Qur'an says:

"Peace be on Noah among the nations."

What an honour is higher than this that Allah, the Exalted, sends greeting to him? It is a greeting that remains in the world among the nations of the world and will be stretched until the Hereafter. Allah's greeting is accompanied with the beautiful praise and good mention of the servants of Allah.

It is interesting that there is hardly a greeting in the Qur'an about anyone as vast as this one, specially that the Qur'anic word /'alamin/ (nations), which is in plural form and with the Arabic signs (of definite article).

It contains such a vast meaning that it may envelop not only all human beings but also the whole angels and those who are in the entire Universe.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 80-82

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

80. "Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good."

81. "Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

82. "Then We drowned the others."

The reward of Allah for the righteous ones is a course and an Allah's way of treatment, not a temporary event and an eventual happening.

Therefore, in this holy verse the Qur'an clearly says:

"Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good."

That is why, when there comes a Divine chastisement in the world, only believers and the righteous ones may be delivered and the others will be punished whether they are disbelievers or inattentive.

And in the next holy verse, concerning Noah (as), it says:

"Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

In fact, the rank of servitude and submission as well as Faith accompanied with kindness and benevolence, which have been referred to in the recent two verses, are the main evidence of the grace of Allah unto Noah and delivering him from the great grief, and the greeting of Allah unto him.

If this program is followed by others, too, they will be inside the same mercy and grace that Noah (as) was in, since the criterions of Allah's graces are unchangeable and they have not a personal and private aspect.

In the third verse, through a short and awakening sentence, the Qur'an states the fate of that unjust, vicious, and anonymous nation, where it says:

"Then We drowned the others."

There came a flood from the sky, water gushed out from the earth, and all over the sphere of the earth turned to a rough ocean. It ruined the castles of the tyrant ones, and their corps remained floating over the face of water.

It is interesting that He states His favours unto Noah in several verses, but He mentions the chastisement of that rebellious people through a short sentence heedlessly and contemptuously, because the rank of stating the honours and victories of the believers, and the aid of Allah unto them, is the rank of explanation, while the rank of stating the circumstance of the disobedient ones is the rank of heedlessness.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 83-84

وَإِنَّ مِن شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ

إِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

83. "And verily Abraham was of his persuasion."

84. "When he came unto his Lord with a sound (pure) heart."

We ought to purify inside of ourselves at first, and then we may try to purify the society. The necessary condition of the success of the religious leaders is to have a sound pure heart.

In these verses a considerable part of the life story of 'Ibrahim, the iconoclastic hero (as), together with some parts of the adventurous history of Noah (as) are referred to.

Here, at first it begins with the event of Abraham's idol-breaking and the harsh reaction of the idolaters against him, and in another part, it speaks about the greatest scene of Abraham's self-sacrifice, sacrificing his son. This part of the event has exclusively been mentioned only in this section of the Qur'an.

The first verse relates the event of Abraham with the event of Noah as this:

"And verily Abraham was of his persuasion."

Abraham paved the same way of Unity and Justice, the same path of piety and sincerity that Noah paved, since all divine prophets were the preachers of the same school and the teachers of the same university, and every one of then continued and completed the program of the previous one.

What an interesting meaning this is! Abraham was one of the followers of Noah! Though there was a long time between them, (according to some commentators, about (600 years), but we know that time has not any effect on the relation of religious schools.

In the second verse, it says remember the time:

"When he came unto his Lord with a sound (pure) heart."

The commentators of the Qur'an have delivered different meanings for the Qur'anic term /qalb/ (heart), each of which refers to one of the dimensions of it: a heart which is free from polytheism; the sincere heart which is far from sins, grudges, and hypocrisies; a heart empty of the love of the world, because the love of the world is the source of faults, and, finally, a heart which contains nothing but Allah.

The fact is that the Qur'anic term /salim/ is derived from /salamat/ (health), and when healthy is propounded in its absolute state, it envelops health from all kinds of ethical and creedal sicknesses.

Concerning the hypocrites, the Qur'an implies that there is a disease in their hearts and, as the result of their obstinacy and sins, Allah will increase this sickness:

"In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease…"[7]

Imam Sadiq (as) has stated the best commentary on the Qur'anic phrase /qalbin salim/ where he says: "A sound heart is the one which meets his Lord while there is none in it except Him."[8]

This clear commentary is conclusive of all aforementioned qualities.

Again, in another authentic tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) he said:

"Whoever has a truthful intention is the possessor of a sound heart, because the soundness of the heart from polytheism and doubt, purifies the intention for Allah in all affairs." [9]

This is sufficient about the importance of the sound heart that the Qur'an counts it as the capital of safety in Hereafter, as in Surah As-Shu'ara, No. 26, verses 88 and 89 from the tongue of this very prophet, Abraham (as), we recite:

"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail," "Except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart."

In a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) we recite he said:

"The heart is the sanctuary of Allah; do settle no one in the sanctuary of Allah, except Him."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 85-87

إِذْ قَالَ لأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ

أَئِفْكاً ءَالِهَةً دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ

فَمَا ظَنُّكُم بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

85. "When he said to his father and his people: 'What is it that you worship?'"

86. "Is it a falsehood - gods other than Allah that you desire?"

87. "What is then your idea about the Lord of the Worlds?"

In invitation to Monotheism, clarity, explicitness, bravery, inattentiveness to the tribal and genealogical considerations, are the sings of a firm Faith. In this regard, Abraham condemned the creed of the father.

Yes, Abraham was ordered to struggle against idolatry with a sound pure heart, a pure spirit, a strong will, and a firm decision.

He began from his father (uncle) and his own relatives, as the Qur'an says:

"When he said to his father and his people: 'What is it that you worship?'"

Is it not a pity that man, with his natural honour and his good intellect, stands in front of some worthless pieces of stone and wood and bows? Where is your wisdom?

Then, in the next holy verse, the Qur'an completed this meaning, which was a clear contempt, with another sentence, saying:

"Is it a falsehood - gods other than Allah that you desire?"

Regarding to the fact that the Arabic term /'ifk/ means a great lie or the ugliest lies the decisiveness of Abraham's talk about the idols will become more clear.

He concluded his speech in this regard with another severe sentence, and said:

"What is then your idea about the Lord of the Worlds?"

You consume His sustenance, His merits have surrounded your selves thoroughly, yet you have worshipped some worthless things instead of Him, and yet do you expect Him to have mercy on you, and that He would not give you retribution with a terrible chastisement? What a great mistake, and what a dangerous aberration you have!

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /rabb-il-'alamin/ (the Lord of the worlds) points to this fact that the whole universe is being managed under the Lordship of Allah, but you have left Him and attached to some conjectures and illusions which have no source of effect.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 88-92

فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ

فَقَالَ إِنِّـي سَقِيمٌ

فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِ نَ

فَرَاغَ إِلَي ءَالِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلاَ تَأْكُلُونَ

مَالَكُمْ لاَ تَنطِقُونَ

88. "Then he glanced, casting glance at the stars,"

89. "Then he said: 'Verily I am sick (and I cannot participate in your festival)."

90. "So they went away from him, turning back."

91. "Then he turned unto their gods secretly and (mockingly) said: 'Why do you not eat?'"

92. "What is the matter with you that you do not speak?"

The logic of Divine prophets is negation of idolatry, and it is very clear, natural, and rational.

History and commentary books indicate that every year the idolaters of Babylon had some special festival ceremonies when they used to cook and prepare some food, in idol temple, and put them there imagining that the foods would become blessed.

Then they went out from the city and returned back in the evening when they went into their idol temple in order to worship and to eat food.

That day, the city became empty of people, and it was a good opportunity for Abraham to break idols. It was an opportunity for which Abraham was waiting for a long time and he did not like to lose it easily.

So, at night, when he was invited to participate in their ceremonies, the verse says:

"Then he glanced, casting glance at the stars,"

"Then he said: 'Verily I am sick (and I cannot participate in your festival)."

And in this way, Abraham (as) excused himself, and the verse says:

"So they went away from him, turning back."

Here, there come forth two questions:

The first: Why did Abraham look at stars? What was his aim of this glance?

The second is that whether he was really sick when he said:

'Verily I am sick'?

And What ailment did he have?

The answer to the first question: Regarding to the beliefs of the people of Babylon, and their customs, its answer is clear, because they had some studies in astronomy, and even it is said that their idols were in the shape of stars, and they respected them because they were the symbols of stars.

Beside their astrologic information, of course, there were also many superstitions in this field current among them, including that they believed stars were effective in their fates, and asked goodness and blessing from them. They reasoned their situation for the future events.

In order to make them convenient, according to their custom, Abraham (as) cast a glance to the stars in the sky in order that they thought he had foresighted his sickness by studying the situations of the stars, and they might be convinced, some of the great commentators have also offered this probability that he wanted to find out exactly the time of his sickness from the movement of the stars; because there was a kind of sickness, like fever, which came to him between some particular points of time.

But, regarding to the condition of the thoughts of the people of Babylon, the first probable is more fitting.

Some other commentators have also said that perhaps his glance to the sky was, in fact, a glance of study in the secrets of the creation, though they considered his glance as the glance of an astronomer who wanted to foresight the future events by the situations of the stars.

Concerning the second question, there have been delivered numerous answers, including that he was really sick, although if he had been safe either, he would not have participated in the ceremonies of the festival of idols.

But his sickness was a good excuse for his absence in that festival and utilizing the golden opportunity for breaking the idols, and there is no evidence for us to say he equivocated, because equivocation is not suitable for prophets.

Some others have said that Abraham had not really a bodily ailment, but as the result of the wrong actions of those people and their infidelity, polytheism, injustice, and corruption, his soul was sick. Thus, he stated a fact though they thought differently and considered him bodily sick.

So, in the fourth holy verse the Qur'an implies that only Abraham remained in the city and the idolaters, leaving the city empty, went outside of it.

Abraham cast a glance around him, there appeared a light of happiness in his eyes, because the moments, he had been waiting for from a long time ago, had come. He thought he should begin fighting against idols lonely and strike a hard blow on their bodies, a strike that might shake the minds of the idolaters and awaken them from their sleep.

The Qur'an says:

"Then he turned unto their gods secretly and (mockingly) said: 'Why do you not eat?'"

Abraham implicitly said to the idols that their worshippers had prepared those sweet, various, delicious and colourful foods:

"Why do you not eat?"

Then, in the next verse he, addressing the idols, tells them why they do not speak, as if they were dumb.

The above verse says:

"What is the matter with you that you do not speak?"

In this way, Abraham mocked all their superstitious beliefs. No doubt he knew well that the idols did neither speak nor eat food and they were not anything but some inanimate beings. He wanted, in fact, to give the reason of his breaking idols in this beautiful and tender form.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 93-94

فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْباً بِالْيَـمِينِ

فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُّونَ

93. "Then he turned against them in secret, striking (them) with the right hand."

94. "So they (people) advanced towards him hastening."

There are some stages in the act of 'forbid from doing evil', if the first stage, which is speaking, did not affect, the second stage would be the practical action. According to this verse, Abraham decided to begin the action. He took the axe in his hand and moved it with strength and intentionally struck a severe stroke on their bodies.

The verse says:

"Then he turned against them in secret, striking (them) with the right hand."

The objective meaning of the Arabic word /yamin/ is really here 'right hand' that man often does his most actions with it, or it ironically means 'power' and 'force', (both of the meanings can also be used).

However, before soon, he made that beautiful furnished idol temple as a terrible ruined place. The idols were totally turned into pieces, and each of them, with broken hands and feet, was fallen in a corner, and, verily, they

got a state of sad, grievous, and heart-rending scenery for the idol-worshippers.

Abraham did what he should do, and silently, and calmly he came out from the idol temple and went toward his home, while he was preparing himself for the future events.

He knew that he had created a great explosion not only in the city but also throughout the country, Babylon, the news of which would be heard later. Because of anger he began walking since he was alone in the midst of that tempest! But he had Allah with him and that very One was enough for him.

And, the next holy verse implicitly denotes that the idol worshippers returned to the city and went into the idol temple. They encountered a horrible view and astonished, as if they had been fixed there as statues.

They could not think for some moments and were gazing, looking at those ruined scattered idols. They saw that the idols, which they imagined as the shelter of their day of wander, were defenceless over there.

Then their amazing motionless state changed into the state of shouting, crying, and roaring.

They protested saying:

"Who has done this? Which unjust one has committed it?"

And before long, they remembered that there was a young theistic man in that city by the name of Abraham, who mocked idols and had threatened that he had designed a dangerous plan for their idols. They thought it might be his action.

The verse says:

"So they (people) advanced towards him hastening."

The Arabic term /yaziffun/ is derived from /zaf/ which has originally been applied for the blow of the wind, and fast motion of the ostrich, which is a mixture of walking and flying. Then this word has ironically been used in the sense of taking bride toward the house of bridegroom.

However, the purpose is that the idolaters came hastily toward Abraham. (The rest of the event will be mentioned through later verses.)

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 95-98

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

قَالُوا ابْنُواْ لَهُ بُنْيَاناً فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْداً فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الأَسْفَلِينَ

95. "He said: 'Do you worship what you (yourselves) hew out?'"

96. "While Allah has created you and what you make."

97. "They said: 'Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire'."

98. "So they desired a plot against him, but We made them lower ones."

Everything in the world must be devoted to Monotheism and Monotheistic thought. Imam Hussayn (as) is sacrificed in order that false deity might no dominate over people. All the troubles, and even the souls of

the Divine prophets, were devoted for Monotheism. Here Abraham risked and did a dangerous action in order to root out idolatry.

At last, after the event of breaking idols, Abraham was taken to the court with the same accusation.

Abraham was inquired, and he was ordered to explain who accomplished the horrible event of the idol temple.

The Holy Qur'an has explained this event in Surah Al-Anbiya', No. 21, and, in the verses under discussion, it suffices to one sensitive point of it which is the last statement of Abraham with them about the falsehood of idolatry.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Do you worship what you (yourselves) hew out?'"

Does any wise man worship his own handicraft? Does any intellectual person knee before his own created thing? Which intellect and logic have given you such a permission?

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that the heavens and the earth all are created by Allah and the entire time and place belong to him. Such a Creator must be worshipped.

The verse says:

"While Allah has created you and what you make."

This is a very strong proof. They had no response to give against it.

Oppressors and tyrants have never been familiar with logic and reasoning. It was for the same reason that the evident and strong argumentation of Abraham (as) did not affect on the hearts of the cruel rulers of Babylon, though it awakened a group of the oppressed people of the time.

But, the proud tyrants, who found out the advance of this Monotheistic logic as a barrier for their own benefits, came in with the logic of force, weapon, and fire: a logic except which they understood nothing.

They relied on their own power and, the verse says:

"They said: 'Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire'."

It is understood from his meaning that, at first it was ordered that a large place with four walls to be built. Then inside of it some fire was made ready. Perhaps for the purpose that not only they could control the fire from scattering and from probable dangers, but also they might practically prepare a hell fire by which Abraham threatened the idolaters.

It is true that for burning a man like Abraham only a small load of wood was enough, but in order to quench the fire of their hearts resulted by breaking the idols and so to speak, to take their vengeance in utmost level, and, by the way, to give a glory and greatness to the idols in order that their lost honour might be returned, and also to use severity upon all their opponents so that that event would not happen again in the history of Babylon, they prepared that vast, huge fire.

(Be careful that the Arabic word /jahim/ philologically means: 'Some fires which are heaped up with together.)

Some commentators have rendered the Qur'anic word /bunyan/ here into catapult (mangonel), which was a means of throwing heavy things from a distance. But most of the commentators have chosen the first interpretation.

The fourth holy verse, in a condensed and interesting conclusion, states the end of this event as follows:

"So they desired a plot against him, but We made them lower ones."

The Arabic word /kayd/ means any 'thinking of a mean' whether it is in a correct way or a wrong one, though it is often used for an evil aspect; and regarding to the form of the word here as an indefinite article which indicates to greatness and importance, it refers to the vast plot that they had designed for the annihilation of Abraham and wiping out the effects of his oral and practical propagation.

Yes, Allah set them the lower ones, and set Abraham in a 'high rank', like his logic which had superiority.

In the event of burning and fire, Allah gave him superiority, too, and caused his powerful enemies to be low. He made the fire cold and safe for him, and without that even his hair burnt, he came out safely from that huge heap of fire.

One day He delivers Noah from being drowned, and on the other day He delivers Abraham from being burnt, in order to make it clear that both water and fire obey His command and whatever Allah says to do they do accordingly.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 99-102

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

99. "And he said: 'Verily, I am going unto my Lord, He will guide me'."

100. "My Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!"

101. "So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy,"

102. "And when he (the son) reached (the age of working) with him he said: 'O my son! Verily I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice you. Now see what is your view. He said: 'O' my father! Do what you are commanded; you will find me, Allah willing, of the patient ones'."

A righteous son is one of the Divine remittals, and one of prophets' supplications is for it, and he is the best helper along side the path of the movement of the family toward Allah.

The former verses indicated that, after fulfilling his duty of prophecy in Babylon, Abraham emigrated from that place. His first beseech from Allah was that He would give him a righteous son, because he had had no child until that day.

The first verse of the verses under discussion talks about the acceptance of this prayer of Abraham.

It says:

"And he said: 'Verily, I am going unto my Lord, He will guide me'."

"My Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!"

"So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy,"

In fact, there are three glad tidings in this sentence: the glad tiding of a son, the glad tiding of reaching the son to the age of adolescence, and the glad tiding of the good quality of being for bearing.

Upon the commentary of the Arabic word /halim/ it is said that he is the one who does not haste in any action before its proper time, while he has its ability; and does not haste in the retribution of the guilty. He has a great spirit, and can control his emotions.

Raqib in Mufradat says that: the term /hilm/ means: forbearing at the time of commotion of anger, and since this status originates from wisdom, it has sometimes been used in the sense of intellect, too, else the real meaning of /hilm/ is the same thing which was said at the beginning.

By the way, it is understood from this quality that Allah has given the glad tiding of the existence of this son until he reaches an age that he can be qualified by 'forbearing'. As we will recite in the following verses, he proved the rank of his being forbearing at the time of the event of 'sacrifice'. Also, Abraham showed his being forbearing both at that time and at the time of the fire accident.

It is interesting that the word /halim/ (forbearing) has been used fifteen times in the Qur'an, and is often used as an attribution for Allah, except in two cases which has been mentioned in the word of Allah as a quality for Abraham and his son, and in one occurrence it is a quality for Shu'ayb from the tongue of others.

As some commentators believe, the Arabic word /qulam/ (boy) is used for any child before reaching the age of adolescence, while some others have used it for the child who is more than ten years old and has not reached the age of puberty.

By the different meanings which have come in the Arabic language, it can be understood that /qulam/ is an age between childhood and youth that is usually meant into adolescence.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that at last according to the glad tiding of Allah, the promised son of Abraham was born, and enlightened the heart of the father who was waiting for a righteous son and was expectant for many years. This child passed his childhood and reached the age of adolescence.

Here, the Qur'an says:

"And when he (the son) reached (the age of working) with him…"

That is, he reached a stage in which he could work and struggle in the different affairs of life, accompanying his father and helping him.

Some commentators believe that the Qur'anic word /sa'y/ here means worship and working for Allah. This term, of course, has a vast meaning and encompasses this concept, too, but it is not restricted to it. And the application of the Arabic word /ma'ahu/ (with him) shows that its purpose is his assistance to the father in the affairs of life.

However, as some of the commentators have said, at that time his son was thirteen years old when Abraham sees a wonderful dream which denotes the beginning of another great trial in respect to this respectable prophet. In his dream he sees that he was ordered from the side of Allah to sacrifice his only son by his own hand and to cut his head.

Being very terrified, Abraham awoke. He knew that the prophets' dream was true and it was far from the Satanic temptations. Yet the same dream was repeated two times more, which was an emphasis on the necessity of that action as well as its urgency.

It is said that at the first time Abraham saw this dream in the night of 'Tarwiyah' (the eighth night of Zil-Hajjah), and on the night of 'Arafah and the night of Feast of Sacrifice (the ninth and tenth of Zil-Hajjah) the dream was repeated, so there remained no doubt for him that it was the decisive command of Allah.

Abraham, who had repeatedly become successful in the hard trials of Allah, this time again he must obey the command of Allah, either, and kill the son for whom he waited for a lifetime and now he was a handsome adolescent by his own hand.

But, before anything else, he ought to make the son prepared for this action.

So, Abraham, addressing him, informed him as follows:

"…he said: 'O my son! Verily I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice you. Now see what is your view…"

The son, who was as a copy of the father, the donator, and had learnt the lesson of patience and perseverance, and faith in his father's school during his short lifetime, happily and eagerly accepted that Divine commandment, and explicitly and with conclusiveness, answered as follows:

"…He said: 'O' my father! Do what you are commanded; you will find me, Allah willing, of the patient ones'."

How expressive and meaningful the sentences of the father and son are! And how many delicate things there are inside them!

From one side, the father suggests the subject of sacrifice to his thirteen-year-old son and asks his view about it. He considers independent personality and freedom of decision for him, because he does never intend to deceive his son and blindly invites him to this great field of trial.

He wishes that the son may also participate in this excellent struggle willingly and, like the father tastes the pleasure of submission and contentment.

On the other side, the son intends that the father would be firm in his decision, then he does not say 'sacrifice me', but he says:

'Do what you are commanded'

and that he submits to His commandment.

The son specially addresses the father by the phrase: 'O my father!' in order to show that this subject does not decrease the least from the affection between father and son, since the commandment of Allah (s.w.t.) prevails over everything.

And, on the third side, he keeps the state of courtesy at the presence of Allah in the best form. He never relies on the power of his own faith, will,

and decision, but he relies on the divine will and providence of Allah and, through this sentence, he seeks success, perseverance and steadfastness from Him.

And thus both father and son (as) pass completely and successfully the first stage of this great examination.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 103-106

فَلَمَّآ أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَن يَآ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَآ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلآءُ الْمُبِينُ

103. "So when they both submitted (to Our command) and he (Abraham) laid him (the son) prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice),"

104. "And We called out to him: 'O Abraham!'"

105. "Indeed you have proved true the dream; verily thus do We reward the doers of good!"

106. "This is indeed the manifest trial."

The commandments of Allah (s.w.t.) are sometimes for trial. Allah wanted that Abraham would detach his heart, not that the Ishmael's blood might be shed.

In these holy verses, the Qur'an says:

"So when they both submitted (to Our command) and he (Abraham) laid him (the son) prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice),"

Again here the Qur'an explains shortly and lets the hearer pursue the story with the waves of his affections.

Some commentators have said that the objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /tallahu lil jabin/[10] was that Abraham put the forehead of Ishmael on the dust according to the son's own suggestion, lest his eyes might see the son's face and the fatherly affections would be exited and might hinder the fulfilment of the command of Allah/.[11]

However, Abraham put the son's face on the dust and moved the knife and, swiftly and powerfully, put it on the child's throat, while his soul had been filled with excitement, and it was only the love of Allah which forwarded him undoubtedly alongside his way. But the sharp knife left the least effect on the smooth throat of his child.

Abraham was in full surprise. He tried again and used the knife, but for the second time it affected naught. Yes, Abraham, the friend, says: "Cut it", but Allah, the Majestic, says: "Do not cut"; and the knife obeyed only Allah's command.

In the next verse, the Qur'an with a short and expressive sentence, puts an end to all expectations and says:

"And We called out to him: 'O Abraham!'"

"Indeed you have proved true the dream; verily thus do We reward the doers of good!"

That is, We give them both the success of triumph in trial, and We do not let his beloved child be lost for him. Yes, he who submits thoroughly to

Him and has one goodness in its highest degree will not have any recompense, but this.

Then, in the next verses it adds:

"This is indeed the manifest trial."

To sacrifice a child by his own hand, a young child who is worthy enough, for a father who has been expecting such a son, is not simple action.

How can he detach his heart from such a child? And more important than that without showing any frowning, but with the utmost submission and contentment, he hastens to fulfil this commandment. He accomplished all the primary affairs up to the last stage, so that he would not neglect anything from the point of psychological and practical preparations.

And more wonderful than that, there was the absolute submission of this lad before this command, who eagerly and with certainty of mind, by the grace of Allah and submitting to His will, hastened to receive the sacrifice.

Some Islamic narrations indicate when this action was done, Gabriel (surprisingly) shouted:

'Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar' (Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest).

And Abraham's son cried:

"There is no god but Allah. Allah is the greatest!"

And the devoted father, the hero, also said:

"Allah is the greatest and the praise belongs to Allah."[12]

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 107-113

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الأَخِرِ نَ

سَلاَمٌ عَلَي اِبْرَاهِيمَ

كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيّاً مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَي إِسْحَاقَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ

107. "And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice."

108. "And We left (praise) for him among generations (to come) in later times."

109. "Peace be on Abraham."

110. "Thus do We recompense the doers of good,"

111. "Verily he was (one) of Our believing servants."

112. "And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous ones."

113. "And We bestowed Our blessings on him and on Isaac, and of their offspring are the doers of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own selves."

The act of sacrifice is one of Abraham's way of treatment. A sincere action turns to be a great current in the history, and every year hundreds of

thousand sheep, cows, and camels are sacrificed in the altar of Ishmael in his remembrance.

This holy verse indicates that in order that Abraham would complete the program of his sacrifice at the presence of Allah and attain his wish, Allah sent a big sheep for him to sacrifice it instead of the child and that could be a manner left from Abraham for the coming generations in the rites of Hajj and the land of Muna, as the Qur'an says:

"And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice."

There are different ideas among the Islamic commentators concerning the greatness of this sacrifice and that from which point of view it was great: from the bodily and appearance point, or from this point that it became the ransom of Abraham's child, or from the point that it was for the sake of Allah and in the path of Allah, or from this point that this sacrifice was sent for Abraham from the side of Allah?

But it does not matter that all these aspects can be found in the 'great sacrifice', and that it has greatness from different points of view.

One of the signs of the greatness of this sacrifice is that by the past of time every year its scope increases, and now more than one million sacrifices are ransomed each year, and its remembrance is kept alive.

The Arabic phrase /fadaynah/ is derived from /fada/ which originally means: 'appointing something as alms and designed to avert evil from a person or something else. That is why the sum which is paid for manumission of a captive is called /fidyah/ (ransom). And also the atonement which some sick people pay instead of fasting is called by this name.

Upon the idea that how was this big sheep given to Abraham, many commentators believed that Gabriel brought it? Some believe that it came down from the sides of the hills of Muna, but whatever it was, it was done by the command of Allah and by His will.

The next holy verse implies that not only Allah praised the victory of Abraham in this great trial on that day, but also He made its remembrance eternal.

The verse says:

"And We left (praise) for him among generations (to come) in later times."

Abraham (as) became an example for all the coming generations and as a paradigm for all the lovers of Allah, and Allah made his program eternal as a rite of Hajj during the future centuries until the end of the world. He was the father of the great prophets, the father of the Ummah of Islam, and the father of the Prophet of Islam.

Then, in the third and fourth verses, the Qur'an says:

"Peace be on Abraham."

"Thus do We recompense the doers of good,"

It is a recompense as great as the world; a recompense eternal throughout the time; a recompense fit for the peace of Allah, the Almighty!

It is interesting that the sentence:

"Thus do We recompense the doers of Good"

one time has been mentioned here and another time in former verses. This repetition certainly contains a proper point.

Its reason may be in this that in the first stage Allah verifies Abraham's victory in his great trial, and He approves his success. This is a great reward and recompense, and this was the most important glad tidings that Allah gave Abraham.

Then there is the subject of 'the great sacrifice' and that it and his name remained as ever lasting. And the greeting of Allah to him which is another great merit and Allah introduces it as the recompense of the righteous.

By the way, there are many authentic narrations stated in the commentary books such as Majma'-ul-Bayan and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn recorded under these verses which you can refer to.

The fifth verse says:

"Verily he was (one) of Our believing servants."

This sentence, in fact, is a witness upon what was said, and also stated this reality that if Abraham sincerely gave his entire entity and his dear son in a lump and sacrificed them in the path of his Lord, it was because of his deep faith and his promise. Yes, all of these have a wonderful manifestation.

However, this meaning expands and generalizes the act of Abraham, and separates it from a personal and private form, and shows that wherever there is faith, you can find donation, love self-sacrifice, and remittal.

Abraham liked whatever Allah liked, and he wanted the thing that Allah wanted; and every believer can be like that.

The sixth verse refers to another merit of Allah bestowed on Abraham.

It says:

"And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous ones."

Regarding to the holy verse saying:

"Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good"

which has been mentioned at the beginning of this event[13], it is made clear that these two glad tidings relate to two children.

If the recent glad tidings according to the explicit mentioning of the verse under discussion relates to Isaac, then the Qur'anic holy phrase 'forbearing boy', the patient adolescence, surely refers to 'Isma'il, and those who urge to consider Isaac as 'the sacrificed one' have taken both verses referring to one thing, with this difference that they think of the first verses as the statement of the main glad tidings and the second verse as a glad tiding to the prophethood; but this meaning is very improbable, and the abovementioned verses clearly say that these two glad tidings relate to two offspring.

Moreover, the glad tiding of prophethood shows that Isaac should remain alive and perform the duties of prophethood, and this does not adopt to the subject of sacrifice.

It is interesting that here again we confront the greatness of the rank of the righteous, and for the qualification of Isaac it implies that he must become a prophet and become one of the righteous and how excellent is the rank of the righteous with Allah, the Almighty!

And in the seventh verse the words are about the blessing that Allah bestowed on Abraham and his sin, Isaac.

It says:

"And We bestowed Our blessings on him and on Isaac…"

But there is not any explanation saying in which thing the blessing was given, and We know that when a verb is usually said absolutely and there is not any condition in it, has a general sense. Therefore, it concludes blessing in every thing: in lifetime and in living, in the coming generations, in history and school of thought, and in all things.

Here, it is clear that the verse under discussion points to prophethood, and all Divine blessings unto Abraham and Isaac (and their family). One of the blessings that Allah granted to Abraham and Isaac was this that all the Divine prophets of the Children of Israel came into being from the progeny of Isaac, while the great Prophet of Islam (S) was from the progeny of 'Isma'il.

But in order that there does not come forth an imagination that the existence of this blessing in the family of Abraham has the aspect of genealogy and race, but it is in relation with religion, school of thought, and faith, at the end of the verse it adds:

"…and of their offspring are the doers of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own selves."

The Arabic term /muhsin/ here means: a believer and the one who is obedient to Allah (s.w.t.); and what a kindness and goodness can be considered better than this!

The term /zalim/ is in the sense of disbeliever and sinful, and the application of /linafsihi/ points to this fact that disbelief and sin are at the first degree of being unjust to oneself, a clear injustice.

And thus, the above verse answers to a group of the Jews and the Christians who boasted that they were from the progeny of the prophets, that only the relative relation is not an honour unless it comes under the shelter of mental and religious relation.

The reference of this statement is the tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who, addressing Bani Hashim, said:

"O Bani Hashim! Let it not be that on the Day of Hereafter people come to me with their deeds and you come with your relations and relatives, in a manner that they may have religious relation and you may have bodily relation."[14]

Notes

1. Surah Noah, No. 71, verses 26-27
2. Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 29
3. Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 26
4. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 40
5. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 3
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 405; and Tafsir-us-Safi, following the verse

www.alhassanain.org/english

7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 10
8. Al-Kafi, according to Tafsir-us-Safi under Surah As-Shu‘ara’, No. 26, verse 89.
9. Ibid
10. The Qur’anic word /tallahu/ is derived from /tal/ originally in the sense of a high place and the whole phrase means that he put one side of his face on the ground in a high place.
11. The Qur’anic word /tallahu/ is derived from /tal/ originally in the sense of ‘a high place’ and the whole phrase means that he put one side of his face on the ground in a large place.
12. The commentaries of Qurtabi, and Rauh-ul-Bayan.
13. verse 80
14. Rauh-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 479

Section 4: Allah's Blessings on Moses

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 114-116

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَي مُوسَ وَهَارُونَ

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَكَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ

114. "We bestowed Our favour on Moses and Aaron."

115. "And We delivered them both and their people from the great distress."

116. "And We helped them so that they were the victors (over their enemies)."

The remembrance of the graces and favours of Allah to the former Divine prophets (as) was the cause of peace, comfort, encouragement and consolation of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the Muslims in the terrible circumstances of Mecca.

These verses refer to a part of the Divine favours unto Moses and his brother, Aaron, and there are some discussions consistent with what was formerly said about Noah and Abraham in the previous verses. The contents of these verses are fairly similar to each other, and the words are somehow harmonized so that they may arrange a firm training program about the believers.

Again in these verses for the explanation of many events the style of 'epitome and expansion', which is the style of the Qur'an, has been used.

At first, it says:

"We bestowed Our favour on Moses and Aaron."

In Philology and the uses of the Qur'an, the Arabic term /minnat/ has a vast meaning which includes bestowing the divine heavy bounties, too.

However, in these verses Allah secretly gives the news of some worthy and great favours which he granted to these two brothers; and in the later verses He explains a few of these favours each of which is worthier than the other.

In the second verse, Allah says:

"And We delivered them both and their people from the great distress."

What grief was greater than this that the Children of Israel were captured in the grips of the cruel, blood-thirsty people of Pharaoh who used to slaughter their sons and spared alive their females to serve them and make their men work hard for them?

Yes, losing freedom and being involved in the grips of a cruel king who had mercy neither on the children nor on the adults, and he even misused the honour of the females of a nation, was a great distress and a heavy grief. This was the first favour that Allah bestowed on the Children of Israel.

Then, in the third verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah helped Moses and Aaron and the Children of Israel so that they could win their powerful enemies, on the day when the great blood-thirsty army of Pharaoh, and in front of them Pharaoh himself, forcefully attacked them, the Children of Israel were very weak and had not enough fighters and means of war to fight

against them, but the grace of Allah came to help them and buried the troops of Pharaoh in the waves of the sea.

So the Children of Israel were delivered from great distress and He gave the Pharaohs' castles, wealth, gardens, and properties to them.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 117-119

وَءَاتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ

وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الأَخِرِ نَ

117. "And We gave them both the Book making things clear."

118. "And We guided them both on the right way."

119. "And We left (praise) for them both among the later generations."

The first is deliverance from that tyrant ruler, and then there is invitation to the Book and Path of Allah.

These verses point to the favours and spiritual merits that Allah gave to this group of people.

The Qur'an says:

"And We gave them both the Book making things clear."

Yes, the Torah, the clear Book, was a Book which made things clear, and answered all the religious and worldly needs of the Children of Israel at that time; as in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 44 we recite:

"Verily We have sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light…"

And in the next verse it points to another spiritual merit, the merit of guidance to the Straight Way, when it says:

"And We guided them both on the right way."

It is the same right way which is far from any crookedness and deviation and which is the way of the Divine prophets and there is not any line of deviation, aberration and fall in it:

It is interesting that in all our prayers, when we ask Allah to guide us to the straight Path, we say:

"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your bounties, and not (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."[1]

And this is the path of prophets and saints.

In the third verse, it refers to the duration of the religious school and their good name (praise) and says:

"And We left (praise) for them both among the later generations."

This is the same meaning that the Qur'an mentioned in the former verses about Abraham and Noah.

In principal, the history and the names of all men of Allah and those who pave the great path of the right, are eternal and it must be so, because they do not belong to a proper people or nation, but they belong to the whole world of humanity.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 120-122

سَلاَمٌ عَلَي مُوسَ وَهَارُونَ

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُـحْسِنِينَ
إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

120. "Peace be on Moses and Aaron."
121. "Verily thus do We reward the doers of good."
122. "Verily they were both of Our faithful servants,"

The godly men are alive and receive Allah's greetings.

These verses refer to the greeting and peace of Allah to Moses and Aaron, a salutation from the side of Allah, the Exalted, the Merciful, a greeting which is the secret of health in religion and faith, in belief and religious school, and in the right line and doctrine. It is a greeting which denotes to the deliverance and security from the Divine punishment in this world and the next.

It says:

"Peace be on Moses and Aaron."

Through the next verse, Allah refers to the recompense and to His great reward to them, and says:

"Verily thus do We reward the doers of good."

If they obtained these honours, it is not undue. They were righteous. They were faithful, sincere, and benevolent, and such ones must be given all these rewards.

Finally, in the third verse, the Qur'an points to the same proof that was formerly mentioned in the story of Abraham and Noah.

So, concerning Moses and Aaron, it says:

"Verily they were both of Our faithful servants,"

It is faith that makes man's spirit so clear and strong that he goes after kindness, benevolence, purity and virtuousness, a kindness which opens the doors of Divine mercy to man, and brings kinds of blessings down to him.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 123-125

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ
أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلاً وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

123. "And verily Elyas was of the apostles."
124. "When he said to his people: 'Will you not be in owe (of Allah)?'"
125. "Do you call on Ba'l and abandon the best of the creators?"

The fourth life story, which is mentioned in Surah, out of the life stories of the former prophets, is the short biography of Elyas.

It says:

"And verily Elyas was of the apostles."

There is no doubt that Elyas (as) is one of the prophets of Allah, and the verse under discussion has explicitly stated this matter.

The name of this Divine prophet has been mentioned in two verses of the Qur'an, once in this very Surah, As-Saffat, and the other one is mentioned is Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 85. However, there are different stories and various matters about this Divine prophet recorded in books.

You may refer to the commentary books of Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Al-Mizan, Rauh-ul-Bayan, Al-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi, Fi-Zalal, ’A‘lam-ul-Qur’an, and Encyclopaedia by Dehkhuda.

In the second verse, it implicitly announces that they ought to remember the following event:

“When he said to his people: ‘Will you not be in owe (of Allah)?’”

This statement points to the subjects of godliness, avoiding from polytheism and idolatry, from sins, injustice, and corruptions and from whatever drives man into destruction.

With a more precision, in the third verse it says:

“Do you call on Ba‘l and abandon the best of the creators?”

It is understood from this verse that they had a famous idol by the name of Ba‘l, in front of which they fell themselves in prostration, and Elyas dissuaded them from that ugly action and invited them toward the great Creator of the world and pure Unity.

It is for this reason that some commentators believe that the centre of the activity of Elyas was Ba‘labak, one of the cities of Syria since the name of that special idol was Ba‘l, and /bak/ meant ‘city’ and with the combination of those two parts the word Ba‘lbak had been formed.

It has been said that this long idol had been so big that the length of it was nearly twenty one meters and it had four faces with a few guards.

But some other commentators have not considered Ba‘l as the name of a definite idol and they have taken it as the absolute name of idol, while some others use it as the concept of Rabb (lord) and object of worship. Raqib in Mufradat says:

“Originally /ba‘l/ means husband, but Arabs use the objects by which they drew nigh to God called Ba‘l.”

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 126-129

اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ ءَابَآئِكُمُ الأَوَّلِينَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ

إِلاَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الأَخِرِينَ

126. “Allah is your Lord and the Lord of fathers of old.”

127. “But they belied him, therefore they shall certainly be brought (to Hell).”

128. “Except for Allah’s sincere servants;”

129. “And We left (praise) for him among the later generations.”

The comparison of an idol and Allah makes any conscience awake, Elyas seriously reprimanded this idol worshipping nation, and reminded them that they had left the Lord Who is their Lord and the Lord of their fathers.

He told them He had been the Owner and Lord of all of them, and any blessing they had was from Him, and solution of any problem is possible by His Might, and besides Him, there is neither any source of goodness and favour nor any remover of vice and impediment.

It seems that, similar to the idol worshippers of the time of the Prophet of Islam (S), the idol worshippers of the time of Elyas, in order to justify their

own deed, relied on the tradition of their ancestors, and in answer to them, Elyas says:

"Allah is your Lord and the Lord of fathers of old."

The application of the Arabic word /rabb/ is the best motive for contemplation and thinking, since the most important matter in a man's life is this fact that he knows from the side of whom he has been created and now who is his authorized one, his lord, and his benefactor.

In the next verse the Qur'an implies that this obstinate and self-loving group of people did not hearken to the reasonable advices and clear guidance of this Divine great prophet and they belied him.

The verse says:

"But they belied him…"

So, Allah has stated their punishment in a short sentence where the Qur'an continues saying:

"…therefore they shall certainly be brought (to Hell)."

In Hereafter, they will be called in the Divine court of Justice and then brought into the chastisement of the Hell where they will receive the retribution of their ugly and evil deeds.

The third verse indicates that a small group of people, who were sincere, pure and righteous, believed in Elyas, and in order that their right would not be wasted.

The verse immediately after it says:

"Except for Allah's sincere servants;"

And in the fourth verse, Allah says:

"And We left (praise) for him among the later generations."

Later generations will never forget the utmost efforts of these great prophets in guarding the line of Monotheism and growing the seed of faith, and their remembrance and their school of thought will be alive as long as the world exists.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 130-132

سَلاَمٌ عَلَي إِلْ يَاسِينَ

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُـحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

130. "Peace be on 'Ilyasin (Elyas)."

131. "Verily thus do We reward the doers of good."

132. "Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

We must learn from Allah (s.w.t.) how to greet to Divine prophets, the great friends of Allah.

This verse says:

"Peace be on 'Ilyasin (Elyas)."

The application of the term 'Ilyasin instead of Elyas is either for the sake that 'Ilyasin was a word inside the term Elyas and both of them have the same meaning; or it refers to Elyas and his followers which has been used in this total form.

"Verily thus do We reward the doers of good."

Here the purpose of righteousness and kindness is in their vast meaning which envelops both performing all His laws and commandments and then struggling against any kind of polytheism, deviation, sin and mischief.

And in the third verse it refers to the main root of all of these things which is faith.

Concerning Elyas, it says:

"Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

Faith and servitude is the origin of kindness, and kindness causes that one may be involved in the row of the sincere ones and be addressed with the greeting of Allah.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 133-136

وَإِنَّ لُوطاً لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ
إِلاَّ عَجُوزاً فِي الْغَابِرِ نَ
ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الأَخَرِ نَ

133. "And verily Lot was (one) of the Envoys."

134. "When We delivered him and his people all."

135. "Except an old woman among those that tarried."

136. "Then We destroyed the rest."

The life story of the people of Lot is a gazing-stock for all. In these verses the life story of Lot (as) has been reiterated as an instructive lesson.

According to the explicit statement of the Qur'an, Lot was contemporary with Abraham and he was one of great prophets of Allah. Lot's name has been mentioned in many verses of the Qur'an, and both he and his people have repeatedly been discussed in it, and the painful fate of this deviated nation, in particular, has been explained in the clearest form.

The first verse says:

"And verily Lot was (one) of the Envoys."

In the second verse, after this short statement, base on the style of epitome and expansion that the Qur'an has, it refers to a part of his event in order to be remembered, and says:

"When We delivered him and his people all."

And, in the third and fourth verses, it continues saying:

"Except an old woman among those that tarried."

"Then We destroyed the rest."

The above mentioned short sentences point to the history of every adventure of this nation the explanations of them were stated in the verses of Suras: Hud, No. 11, Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, and Al-'Ankabut, No. 29.

Like other Divine prophets, Lot began his invitation with Monotheism, and then he applied his utmost struggle against the corruptions of the society, specially against the same famous ethical deviation, their act of homosexuality, the disgrace of which is known throughout of history.

This great prophet suffered very much and he did his best for the improvement of this deviated nation and he did whatever he could to hinder them from their ugly shameful deeds, but he failed and got no positive

result. There were, of course, a few people who believed in him and very quickly they went out from that polluted environment.

At last, Lot became hopeless of them and decided to pray and asked for the deliverance of his own self and his family from Allah. So He accepted his invocation and delivered that small group save his wife, the same old woman who not only did not follow his teachings but also helped his enemies.

Allah sent the most grievous punishments for that nation. At first, He destroyed their cities and then He caused a rain of pebbles to be rained over them in a form that all of them were annihilated and even their bodies were effaced.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 137-138

وَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِم مُّصْبِحِينَ
وَبِالَّيْلِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

137. "And verily you pass by them in the morning."

138. "And at night; do you not then understand?"

Both deliverance and destruction are in the power of Allah.

This verse declares that every morning you usually pass by their ruined cities and you see what kind of fate they afflicted with.

The verse says:

"And verily you pass by them in the morning."

Of course, these things are as a preparation for awakening the proud neglect ones.

And, in the next verse, it says:

"And at night; do you not then understand?"

This statement is for the sake that the cities of the people of Lot were located alongside the way of the caravans of the people of Arabia toward Syria and, in their travelling, these people used to pass by them both day and night.

If they had a spiritual ear they would hear the painful cries of this sinful afflicted people, because the ruins of their cities, by a mute tongue, teach all the passengers and make them aware of being afflicted in the grips of some other events similar to them.

Yes, there are a lot of lessons for taking example, but those who may take an example are few.

Ali (as) says:

"How many are the objects of lessons, but how few the taking of lessons."[2]

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) who, in answer to the question about the commentary of these verses, said:

"When you are reciting the verses of the Qur'an you pass by them. The Qur'an reiterates the news which Allah has stated for you."[3]

Notes

1. Surah Al-Fatihah, No. 1, verse 7
2. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 297
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 432

Section 5: Jonah's Delivery From Distress

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 139-141

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ
فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ

139. "Verily Jonah was (one) of the Envoys,"
140. "When he ran away to the laden ship."
141. "So he cast lots, and was of the rebutted,"

To become familiar with the history of prophets is a lesson for us today.

It says:

"Verily Jonah was (one) of the Envoys,"

The last life story of the Divine prophets and the former nations, which has been mentioned in this Surah is the life-story of Yunus (Jonah) and his repentant people who, by seeing the signs of Divine punishment, came out of their negligence and repented.

Therefore Allah showered His favours over them and caused them to enjoy His material and spiritual blessings. Even Yunus (Jonah) (as) encountered some difficulties and problems because of the leaving the better he performed in hastening for emigration from among his people.

And even the Qur'anic word /'abaq/ (ran away), which is usually used for the run-away servants, is used for him. This meaning refers to this fact that whether the pagans of Arab and the polytheists in the length of history want to be like the people of Jonah. Do they seek for that evil and painful end or a happy prosperous fate? It depends on their decision.

However, like other prophets, Jonah began his invitation from Monotheism and struggled against idolatry and then he referred to struggling against the corruptions which were current in the society.

But those zealous people, who blindly used to follow their ancestors, did not accept his invitation. Like a kind father, Jonah (as) sympathetically and benevolently continued admonishing that deviated nation, but in spite of this wise logic he did not hear from those enemies anything save fallacy and sophistry.

Only a very small group, who were perhaps no more than a few persons, believed in him. There was a servant of Allah and a knowledgeable man among them. Jonah (as) preached so much that he approximately became disappointed from them.

Some Islamic authentic narrations indicate that, considering the circumstances of that aberrant nation, he decided to curse them. This decision was performed and Jonah cursed them. It was revealed to him that the Divine punishment would come to them at so and so time.

When the appointed time of punishment was approaching, Jonah accompanied the servant of Allah went out from among those people while he was angry. He went as far as he reached the shore. Over there he saw a ship full of people and laden with loads. He asked them to take him with them, too.

The next verse implies that this is the same thing which the Qur'an points to, and announces that you do remember when he ran away toward the ship full of loads and people.

It says:

"When he ran away to the laden ship."

The application of the Qur'anic term /'abaqa/ is derived from /'ibaq/ in the sense of 'to run away a servant from his master' which here is a wonderful application. It shows that how much important a very small 'leaving the better' from the side of the high rank stationed prophets is with Allah and is taken so hard from His side that He calls His prophet 'a ran away servant'.

No doubt Jonah was an immaculate prophet, and never did he commit a sin, but it was better that he would tolerate more again and remain among people until the last moment, perhaps they could awaken.

It is true that according to some narrations he preached for forty years, but it was better for him to add some more days or hours to it, and since he did not so, he was likened to a run away servant.

The third verse implies that Jonah embarked a ship and, according to some Islamic narrations, a great fish, opening his mouth wide, came across the ship and intercepted its way as if it demanded its food. The people in the ship said it seemed there was a sinner among them, and he had to become the bait of that fish. They could not help it save casting lots.

Here they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah. According to a narration the lot was repeated three times and every time the lot fell upon Jonah's name. Therefore, they took Jonah and threw him into the mouth of the great fish.

Through a short sentence the Qur'an points to this event where it says:

"So he cast lots, and was of the rebutted,"

The Qur'anic term /sahama/ is derived from /sahm/ which originally means 'arrow' and the term /sahama/ has been used in the sense of 'lottery', because at the time of lottery the names were written on the end of the arrows rejected out and everyone whose name was fallen by the lot he was involved in it.

The Arabic term /mudhad/ is derived from /'idhad/ in the sense of: 'to nullify, to wipe out, and to overcome', and here the purpose is that the lot fell upon his name.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 142-144

فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

فَلَوْلاَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ

لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ اِلَي يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

142. "Then the fish swallowed him while he blamed himself;"

143. "So had he not been of those that glorify Allah,"

144. "He would have tarried in its belly until the Day of Resurrection.

Sometimes animals are ordered from the side of Allah to do something.

So, the great fish swallowed Jonah while he deserved to be blamed.

The verse says:

"Then the fish swallowed him while he blamed himself;"

The Arabic term /mulim/ originally is derived from /lawama/ in the sense of 'blame' and when it is conjugated in this Arabic form it means: to be deserved of blame.

It is certain that this blame and scorn was not because of a lesser sin or a heinous sin but its cause was only the leaving the better which he committed.

That he hastened in going out and emigrated from among his people. But the Lord Who makes fire safe inside water and glass beside stone, ordered this great animal that it would not hurt his servant, Jonah, the least hurt.

Jonah should pass an unprecedented term in prison in order to note his own 'leaving the better' and to try to recompense it. An Islamic narration indicates that Allah inspired the fish not to break any bone and not to cease any join of him.[1]

In the second and third verses, the Qur'an implies that Jonah realized the situation very soon and thoroughly he turned to Allah and asked Him forgiveness for his 'leaving the better'. So, in this verse, through a short sentence, it says:

"So had he not been of those that glorify Allah,"

"He would have tarried in its belly until the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, this temporary prison would be changed into a permanent prison, and that permanent prison would be changed into his grave. Or the fish might remain alive forever and Jonah would be kept prisoner in its belly until the Hereafter.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 145-147

فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ

وَأَنبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِن يَقْطِينٍ

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِاْئَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِ دُونَ

145. "But We cast him forth on the naked shore while he was sick,"

146. "And We caused to grow over him a plant of gourds."

147. "And We sent him to a hundred thousand (people) or more."

Allah protected four prophets in relation with water in different forms: Jonah was protected under the water; Noah on the water; Moses and Yusuf beside the water.

In a tradition Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Jonah was kept prisoner in the belly of a fish for a few days where his hairs went away and the skin of his body became thin. Then he came out from the belly of the fish. He sucked the bush of gourd and rested under the shade of the gourd."[2]

The verse says:

"But We cast him forth on the naked shore while he was sick,"

The great fish approached the dry shore where there was no tree or plant and, by the command of Allah, it threw out the morsel which was extra inside it. But it is clear that this wonderful prison disturbed the bodily health of Jonah and he was delivered from that prison while he was sick.

The second verse indicates that again the grace of Allah came to him. Since his body was sick and he was bodily tired and feeble, the shore sunshine hurt him and his tender face. It was necessary for him to rest under the shade of the wide leaves of that plant.

The Qur'an says:

"And We caused to grow over him a plant of gourds."

As many of the philologists and commentators have said, the Arabic word /yaqtin/ is called to every plant which has not a stalk and has wide leaves, such as the bush of melon, cucumber, watermelon and the like. But a great deal of commentators and Islamic narrators here have stipulated that the purpose here is particularly gourd.

It should be noted that the Arabic word /šajarah/ is used for both the plants which have stalk and branches, and those without stalk and branches, and in other words, it is irrespective of tree and plant.

There has been narrated a tradition from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) that someone asked him whether he liked gourd, and he (S) answered:

"Yes, it is the plant of my brother Jonah."[3]

By the way, besides that a gourd has some wide leaves full of water which can be used as a good shady recess, flies and other insects do not approach it.

When Jonah left his people angrily, and the sign of the Divine Wrath was also going to appear to them, they were shocked severely and came to themselves. They went toward the learned man who was among them and by his leadership they decided to repent.

Some Islamic narrations denote that they entirely moved toward the desert and they caused a separation between men and women, and their children, and also between animals and their children. Then they began crying loudly and for the sins and wrongs they had performed against the prophet of Allah, Jonah, repented sincerely.

It was then that the Divine punishment went away and was poured on the mountains, and the faithful people who had repented returned safely by the mercy of Allah.[4]

After this event Jonah came back to his people to see what the punishment had done upon them. When he came he wondered that how they were all idol worshippers on the day of his emigration and now they were wholly worshippers of Allah.

The Qur'an says:

"And We sent him to a hundred thousand (people) or more."

Surah As-Saffat - Verse 148

فَآمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ

148. "And they believed, so We gave them enjoyment for a while."

Repentance for the past actions accompanied with sincere faith is a ground for the future success. Jonah's people repented and Allah took back His Wrath and made them successful.

So, this verse says:

"And they believed, so We gave them enjoyment for a while."

Their beginning faith and repentance were formerly existed, but their detailed faith in Allah and His prophet Jonah and his teachings and instructions performed when Jonah (as) returned back among them.

It is noteworthy that it is understood from the verses of the Qur'an that this second return has been toward that very former people and that some commentators have considered this return as a new duty for him does not adopt to the verses of the Qur'an, because from one side, we recite here that these people, whom Jonah was appointed to guide, believed and Allah gave them enjoyment for a certain time.

This makes it clear that the purpose of 'for a while' is the same as the end of their life and their natural death. There is a question that why in the previous verses it has been said 'a hundred thousand people or more' the apparent state is that these kinds of meanings are for emphasis and the greatness of something, not for the sake of the doubt of the speaker.

Surah As-Saffat - Verse 149

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ

149. "Then ask them whether your Lord has daughters and they have sons."

Asking from conscience is the key to contemplation and warning of people.

A group of the polytheists theists of Arab, because of the lack of knowledge and degradation of thought, compared Allah with their selves, and considered child, and sometimes wife, for Him.

Among them there were mainly the tribes of Jahinah, Salim, Khuza'ah, and Bani Malih who believed that the angels were Allah's daughters, and also a great deal of Arab polytheists imagined jinn as His offspring, or some of them believed that Allah had a wife from jinn.

These baseless and superstitious imaginations had completely deviated them from the path of truth in a manner that the signs of Monotheism and Oneness of Allah had disappeared from among them.

It is said in a tradition that an ant thinks that its Lord has two small feelers, like an ant.[5]

Yes the low thought drives man into gossip. The comparison of the Creator with the creature is the worst factor of aberration in recognizing Allah. However, at first the Qur'an refers to those who considered the angels as the daughters of Allah and answers them in three various ways: experimental, intellectual, and traditional.

It says:

"Then ask them whether your Lord has daughters and they have sons."

The Qur'anic phrase /'istaftihim/ is derived from /'istifta'/ which is taken from /fatwa/ which is in the sense of 'the answer to difficult problems.'

However, it implicitly asks them how they consider for Allah that which they do not desire for themselves.

This statement is according to their wrong belief who severely hated daughters and were seriously interested in sons, since sons had a very effective function in their lives, their fights, and their robberies while daughters could not help them in these affairs.

No doubt, from the point of value and being a 'human', a daughter and a son are the same with Allah and the criterion of both of them is piety, but the reasoning the Qur'an here, in terminology, is for mentioning the certain issues of the enemy in which the subjects of the opposite party is taken and they are returned to him again.

The like of this meaning has been mentioned in some other Suras of the Qur'an: such as Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verses 22-23 where it says:

"What! For you the male sex and for Him the female?"

"Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 150-152

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلآئِكَةَ إِنَاثاً وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ

أَلآ إِنَّهُم مِّنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ

وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

150. "Or did We create the angels females while they were witnesses?"

151. "Beware! Verily it is of their own lie that they say."

152. "Allah has begotten, and verily they are liars."

Those who consider the angels as pregnant women will be called to account by Allah.

In this verse, it refers to a sensible proof of the subject and, again by the way of appositive interrogative with a negative sense, the Qur'an asks whether Allah created the angels as girls and those people were as witnesses over it. No doubt their answer in this regard will be negative because none of them can claim that they were present at the creation of the angels.

The verse says:

"Or did We create the angels females while they were witnesses?"

In the second and third verses the Qur'an returns to the rational proof which has been taken from their certain mental issues and says:

"Beware! Verily it is of their own lie that they say."

"Allah has begotten, and verily they are liars."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 153-156

أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطَانٌ مُبِينٌ

153. "Has He chosen daughters in preference to sons?"

154. "What has happened to you, how is it that you judge?"

155. "Will you not then receive admonition?"

156. "Or have you a clear authority?"

Man may reach a point that, basing on a wrong opinion, he considers daughter bad and son good. Then, it happens that he may imagine daughters for Allah (s.w.t.) and sons belonging to him.

So, with the sense of blame and reprimand, in these four verses the Holy Qur'an implies whether they have preferred daughters to sons. What is the

matter with them and how do they judge? Do they understand what they say?

Is it not the time they would leave these vanities and ugly superstitions, because these words are so vain and baseless that if a person has a little intellect and contemplates he will realize its vanity.

Here are the verses:

"Has He chosen daughters in preference to sons?"

"What has happened to you, how is it that you judge?"

"Will you not then receive admonition?"

"Or have you a clear authority?"

After the nullification of their superstitious claim, by a sensible reasoning and a rational reasoning, it refers to the third evidence which is a reasoning stated in tradition. It indicates that if the thing you say is correct, there must be a remark or symptom from it in the former Books. Do you have any clear evidence in this regard?

Surah As-Saffat - Verse 157

فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

157. "Then bring your book if you are truthful."

The heavenly Books are mostly proofs and documents for judgment about Allah, and in neither of these Books there is any word saying that Allah has child.

So, in this verse, the Qur'an says if you have anything in this regard and you are truthful, bring your Book and show in which Book, in which writing and in which heavenly revelation such a thing has been mentioned and to which prophet it has been revealed.

The verse says:

"Then bring your book if you are truthful."

No, these are not the things found in the heavenly Books. These are some superstitions which have been transferred from one ignorant generation to another ignorant generation and have no acceptable source.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 158-160

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَباً وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

إِلاَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

158. "And they have set up a kinship between Him and the jinn, while the jinn know (quite well) that they shall surely be brought up (to account)."

159. "Glory be to Allah! (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him)!"

160. "Except for Allah's sincere servants."

The beliefs of polytheists are artificial and false. Beliefs should be based on intellect, nature, and tradition. This verse refers to another superstition of polytheists. They believed in a kinship between Allah and the jinn.

The Qur'an changes the form of the statement from the kind of 'address' to the form of absent one, as if they were so worthless that they had not the eligibility of being spoken to face in face.

It says:

"And they have set up a kinship between Him and the jinn…"

What kind of kinship was it that they believed between Allah and the jinn? In answer to this question it has been said that the purpose of it is any kind of kinship and relation although they have no relationship. And we know that a group of pagan Arabs used to worship the jinn and considered them as partners of Allah and thus they believed in a communication between them and Allah.

However, the Qur'an seriously rejected this superstitious idea and implies that the jinn whom the superstitious idol worshippers imagine as their objects of worship, or they believe in a kinship relation between Allah and them, themselves know well that these superstitious idol worshippers will be brought up to the court of justice of Allah for reckoning and punishment.

It continues saying:

"…while the jinn know (quite well) that they shall surely be brought up (to account)."

In the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"Glory be to Allah! (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him)!"

And in the third verse, it implicitly says: except for the explanation that the sincere servants of Allah have about Him knowingly, there is no other explanation suitable for the Pure Essence of Allah. It says:

"Except for Allah's sincere servants."

Thus, every qualification that man may have about Allah from himself is incorrect and Allah is free from it, except for that which the sincere servants have about him. These are the true servants who are quit of any kind of polytheism, low desire, ignorance, and aberration.

They do not qualify Allah save that which He Himself has allowed them to explain.

For obtaining more knowledge in this regard, we must refer to the words of the Prophet (S), the sermons of Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balaqah, and the comprehensive supplications of Imam Sajjad (as) in Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, and know Allah under the light of the explanations of these servants of Allah.

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"…He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him…"[6]

In another place, upon qualifying Allah, he (as) says:

"…Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity. Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him.

He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter him. He is not qualified by anything of the limbs, nor by the parts of the body, nor by the length and width.

It cannot be said that He has a limit, extremity, or end, or termination, nor do things control him so as to raise Him or lower Him, nor anything carry Him…" [7]

Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as) in Sahifah Sajjadiyyah says:

"Praise belongs only to Allah Whose Existence is the source of creation, an Essence that the eyes of the lookers cannot see Him and the understanding and thought of the explainers are not able to explain His qualities…"[8]

The cognition and knowledge of Allah must be learnt from the school of the leaders of the religion.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 161-163

فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ

مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَاتِنِينَ

إِلاَّ مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ

161. "So verily you and what you worship,"

162. "Can never excite (anyone) against Him."

163. "Except such as are (themselves) going to the blazing Fire."

Through the first and second verses, the Qur'an implies that the temptations of idol worshippers do not affect on the hearts of the pure and righteous ones, and only the polluted hearts and hellish souls, which tend to their mischief, surrender themselves to these temptations.

It says:

"So verily you and what you worship,"

"Can never excite (anyone) against Him."

It indicates that neither you nor what you worship can deceive anyone by it and separate them from Allah, or deviate them by means of delusion and mischief.

In the third verse the Qur'an says:

"Except such as are (themselves) going to the blazing Fire."

These verses are as a hint to this fact that none can consider himself excused before deviations and claims that he has been deceived and driven to idol worship. The Qur'an implies that you idol worshipper have not the ability of deceiving persons except for those who choose the path of Hell willingly.

The evidence for this meaning is the phrase: 'going to the blazing Fire', since the Arabic word /sali/ has originally been in the form of 'active participle', and usually when an active participle form is used for an intellectual being its concept is that the accomplishment of an action is done willingly and with authority like the Arabic words: /qatil/ (murderer), and /darib/ (striker).

Therefore, the Arabic phrase /sal-il-jahim/ means a person who is willing to burn himself in the Fire of Hell. Thus, the Holy Qur'an shut the way of pretext to every deviated one.

By the way, it is necessary to note to this point that the word /sali/ is derived from /saly/ in the sense of candling fire and entering into fire, or being burnt and roasted by it.

The Arabic term /fatin/ is an active participle derived from /fitnah/ in the sense of tempter.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 164-166

وَمَا مِنَّآ إِلاَّ لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَعْلُومٌ

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّونَ

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ

164. "And (the angels say:) 'There is not (any one) of us, but for him is an assigned place,"

165. "And verily we are they who range ourselves in order."

166. "And verily we are they who celebrate His glory."

In the world of angels, there is a rank, position, special responsibility and hierarchy for every one of them, the same angels whom the idol worshippers used to imagine as the daughters of Allah.

It is interesting that the Qur'an narrates this statement from their own tongue, and says:

"And (the angels say:) 'There is not (any one) of us, but for him is an assigned place,"

And, in the second and third verses the Qur'an announces that they said they were all ready to obey the command of Allah and waiting to receive His order while celebrating His glory.

Yes, they say that they are some servants who are always ready, with their whole entity, to perform His order. They say they are far off to be Allah's offspring and they count Him free from these kinds of ugly and false attributes, and that they hate these superstitions and delusions of the polytheists.

The abovementioned three verses, in fact, refer to three qualities of the angels. The first is that each of them has a proper rank which they do not exceed. The second is that they are always ready to obey the command of Allah in the expanse of creation and execute His orders in the whole world of existence.

The third is that they constantly celebrate the glory of Allah and exempt Him from whatever is not suitable for him.

It is noteworthy that, concerning these verses, a group of the commentators have narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said that in all heavens there is no room, even as large as a span, except that an angel is over there busy praying and glorifying Allah.[9]

Another narration indicates that one day the prophet of Islam (S) was sitting with some of his companions when he said:

"Once the heaven began moaning (because of its heavy burden), and it is right to moan because there is no space in it even as large as a footstep save that an angel is bowing or prostrating there",

then he recited these verses.[10]

These different meanings are as a tender hint to the fact that the world of existence is full of the obedient beings of Allah and those who glorify Him.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 167-169

وَإِن كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ
لَوْ أَنَّ عِندَنَا ذِكْراً مِنَ الأَوَّلِينَ
لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُـخْلَصِينَ

167. "And verily they used to say:"
168. "If we had had but a reminder from the men of old."
169. "We would certainly have been Allah's sincere servants."

The history of the past should not be taken as a pretext against logic and reasoning. So in the above three verses the Qur'an announces that the polytheists used to say if they had had one of the old heavenly Books with them, they would have been among the sincere servants of Allah.

This statement is just like the words of the lazy students who have failed in their examinations and in order to cover their own laziness they say if they had had some good and clever teachers they would have certainly been some first grade students, too.

Here are the concerning verses:
"And verily they used to say:"
"If we had had but a reminder from the men of old."
"We would Certainly have been Allah's sincere servants."

Surah As-Saffat - Verse 170

فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

170. "Then they disbelieved in it, so soon they will know."

We must be careful of the end of the affairs, because being neglectful unto the future can be the cause of disbelief and denial.

There has been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that the polytheists of Mecca and the pagans of Quraysh used to curse the Jews and the Christians who belied their prophets.

They swore by Allah that if they had had one of the heavenly Books of old with them, they would have believed in it, but when the holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, (S) was appointed as a Divine prophet, they disbelieved in him and denied him.

The verse says:
"Then they disbelieved in it, so soon they will know."

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 171-173

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ
وَإِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

171. "And certainly Our word has already gone forth for Our servants, the apostles:"
172. "Verily they shall be the assisted ones."
173. "And verily Our host alone shall be the victorious ones."

The prophets of Allah being helped is Allah's way of treatment. The future will also witness the victory of the Divine prophets and the failure of

their enemies. The prophets and their followers are the troops of Allah, and certainly the army of Allah is victorious in all sense.

Therefore, these three verses indicate that the conclusive promise of Allah about the sincere servants of Allah has already been confirmed that they will be helped and the army of Allah is always victorious in all scenes. What an explicit and expressive sentence, and what an enlivening and pleasant promise this is!

Allah says:

"And certainly Our word has already gone forth for Our servants, the apostles:"

"Verily they shall be the assisted ones."

"And verily Our host alone shall be the victorious ones."

Yes, the victory of the army of truth over the troops of falsehood and the help of Allah unto the sincere servants is among the certain promises of Allah and is one of His decisive treatments which has been mentioned in the above verses as an Allah's way of treatment done from the beginning.

It is evident that Allah, Who is Mighty over everything, and there has not been any failure in His promises, can fulfill these great promises and, like the unchangeable precedent custom of the world of existence, will make the men of truth completely victorious.

This Divine promise is one of the most important issues by which the people of the way of truth are encouraged and take spirit from it whenever they become tired.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 174-176

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّي حِينٍ

وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ

أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

174. "So turn you away from them for a time,"

175. "And see them, for they soon shall see (their retribution)"

176. "Do they seek to hasten Our chastisement?"

At first there must be warning, admonition, and ultimatum and after that there comes punishment. In these verses, both for the condolence of the Prophet (S) and the believers, and for emphasis on their victory, and also for threatening the neglectful polytheists the Qur'an says:

"So turn you away from them for a time,"

This is an expressive and frightful threat which originates from the certainty in final Divine victory, specially that it has ambiguously been said 'for a time'.

The length of this time is not known, whether it is the time of migration, the time of the Battle of Badr, the time of the Conquer of Mecca, or the exact time when the conditions of ultimate and common raise of Muslims against these blind-hearted people will be provided.

Similar to these threats, of course, are seen in some other verses of the Qur'an, such as Surah an-Nisa', No. 4, verse 81, and Surah Al 'An'am, No. 6, verse 91.

This sentence is emphasised with another threat in the second verse where it implicitly points to their situation to be seen that it is empty of content: their obstinacy, their lies, their superstitions, and their pertinacities; but they will see the result of their evil deeds soon.

The verse says:

"And see them, for they soon shall see (their retribution)"

Soon they will see the victory of you and the believers over them and their humiliating failure in this world and the Divine punishment in the next world.

Since those obstinate shameless people used to repeat this word that what happened to the promise of Allah about His punishment, and if you, the Prophet, are truthful why do you hesitate?

So, in the third verse, the Qur'an with a threatening tone answers them, saying:

"Do they seek to hasten Our chastisement?"

Sometimes they say:

"…'When will this promise be, if you are truthful?'"[11]**,**

and sometimes they say:

"…'When shall be this victory, if you are truthful?'"[12]

They should know that the chastisement of Allah will seize them soon.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 177-179

فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَآءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنذَرِ نَ

وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّي حِينٍ

وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ

177. "But when it shall descend in their courtyard, how evil will be the morning of them that are warned!"

178. "And turn you away from them for a time."

179. "And see you, for they shall soon see (their fate)."

Against the heedlessness of the pagans to the threats of Allah, repetition is necessary. The Qur'anic commandments: /tawalla 'anhum/ (turn you away from them) and /wa 'absir fasaufa yubsirun/ (and see you, for they shall soon see) have been repeated two times.

The first verse indicates that when the punishment of Allah will come down in the courtyard of their houses and their circumstances become dark for them, that time they will understand how bad and dangerous the morning of those who are warned is.

It says:

"But when it shall descend in their courtyard, how evil will be the morning of them that are warned!"

The application of the Arabic word /sahat/ (courtyard) is for the sake that it may illustrate the descent of the punishment inside their life and living, and that it shows them that the centre of their peace and tranquillity changes into a terror and terrible centre.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /sabah ul munðarin/ (the morning of them that are warned) points to this meaning that the chastisement of Allah upon this cruel nation, like in many ancient nations, will come in the

morning. Or that morning is the time of awakening and they will awaken when there has been no way to salvation and everything has been done.

The subject discussed in the second and third verse is the same thing which was mentioned formerly, too, and it is repeated here again for emphasis.

The Qur'an, with a threatening tone, says:

"And turn you away from them for a time."

"And see you, for they shall soon see (their fate)."

As we said before, this repetition is for emphasis, so that they know that this is a decisive subject that they will meet the painful results of their evil deeds, and that the believers are surely victorious either.

Or it is for the sake that, at first, it threatens them to the worldly punishment, and in the second time it threatens them to the chastisement and retribution of Allah in Hereafter.

Surah As-Saffat - Verses 180-182

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَي الْمُرْسَلِينَ

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

180. "Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, far above that which they ascribe (unto Him)."

181. "And peace be upon the messengers,"

182. "And (all) praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

The world of creation is the manifestation of the Lordship of Allah. The Lordship of Allah is the doorway to the praise of Allah. The attributes that the polytheists ascribed to Allah do not agree with the rank of honour and Lordship of Allah, because He is the Owner and Manager of the whole world of existence.

This verse says:

"Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, far above that which they ascribe (unto Him)."

They sometimes call the angels as the daughters of Allah, and sometimes they consider a communication between Him and the jinn, and sometimes they put some worthless things, such as pieces of stone, and wood, in a row with Allah. The emphasis on the honour and might of Allah, in fact, is in the sense of nullifying all these imaginary objects of worship.

The verses of this Surah have sometimes spoken of the glorification of the sincere servants of Allah, and sometimes the glorification of the angels are referred to, and here the words are about the glorification of Allah due to His Pure Essence.

In the second verse Allah has involved all the messengers in His endless grace and favour and says:

"And peace be upon the messengers,"

This is a greeting which is the sign of health and security from any kind of punishment and retribution in Hereafter. It is a peace that is security against failures and is an evidence to victory over the enemies.

In the third verse the Qur'an concludes the words with the praise of Allah when it says:

"And (all) praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

These three recent verses can be a short review over all the materials of this Surah, because an important part of this Surah is about Unity and struggling against kinds of polytheism. The first verse, by glorifying Allah, nullifies all the undue qualities that the polytheists attribute to Him.

Another part of this Surah is the statement about the states of former seven great prophets; and the second verse refers to them. And, finally, another part of this holy Surah is about the Divine bounties, specially the kinds of blessings in Paradise, and the victory of the army of Allah against the troops of the pagans. The praise of Allah, mentioned at the end, is an indication to all of them.

Numerous traditions narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S), from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), and sometimes from Imam Baqir (as) indicate that whoever desires that on the Day of Hereafter his container of reward would be filled and given fully with the great container, his last word in any meeting he participates should be this, saying:

"Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, far above that which they ascribe (unto Him)."

"And peace be upon the messengers,"

"And (all) praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."[13]

Yes, our meetings must be concluded by the glory to the Pure Essence of Allah, and peace to his prophets, and praises and thank to Him for His blessings, so that if we have done something wrong or said some undue words in this meeting they may be recompensed.

O Lord! You have promised to help Your messengers and to make Your army victorious; set us in the line of Your messengers and in the rows of Your army, and make us victorious over the blood-thirsty enemies who have raised from the east and west of the world against the Qur'an to vanish it and to quench its light!

O Lord! Protect and secure us from being polluted to any polytheism and deviation from the way of Monotheism!

O Lord! Those difficulties which the appointed prophets faced with during the length of history against the troops of infidelity and polytheism, have just now appeared in our Islamic society, may You involve us in the same peace that was the cause of the health of the appointed messengers in these events!

Amin, O' the Lord of the Worlds.

Notes

1. The commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, and Burhan under the verse.
2. The commentary book of Qummi and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, under the verse.
3. Al-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 489; Nur-uth-Thaqalayn under the verse

4. You can read these matters in Burhan commentary, under the verse
5. Tafsir-i-Nimunah, Vol. 19, P. 171
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 49
7. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 186
8. Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, Supplication One
9. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Vol. 8, P. 5581
10. Durr-ul-Manthur and Al-Mizan, under the verses
11. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 48
12. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 28
13. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, under the verses, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 440

Surah Sad, Chapter 38

No. 38 (Revealed at Mecca)

88 Verses in 5 Sections

The Feature of Surah Sad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah was revealed at Mecca and contains eighty eight verses.

The name of this Surah, which is one of the Qur'anic abbreviated letters, is taken from its first verse. Similar to Surah As-Saffat, the verses of this Surah are about the continuation of the current of prophethood during the length of history and the opposition of the polytheists and pagans against the belief of Unity and Resurrection.

In Surah As-Saffat, the names of some Divine prophets such as: Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, Aaron, Elyas (Elija) and Yunus were mentioned. Here, this Surah mostly refers to the life history of David, Solomon, and 'Ayyub (Job).

The ending part of this holy Surah refers to the event of the creation of man, the angels' prostration unto Adam and the disobedience of Satan in order that the believers recognize the innate greatness of man with Allah and that they avoid following Satan.

The Virtue of Recitation of This Surah

In the virtue of this Surah that for its beginning has been called Surah Sad, a tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) denotes that he said:

"Whoever recites Surah Sad, will Allah give him reward as much as the weight of every mountain that Allah had subjected it for David (as), and He protects him from persisting in committing sins whether minor or major."[1]

In another tradition Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Whoever recites Surah Sad in the night before Friday will be given good rewards of the world and the Hereafter (by Allah) as much that have not been given to anyone of the people save the Divine prophets and the near-stationed angels, and Allah admits him and all those he loves from among his household in Paradise, even the servant who served him."[2]

If we put the content of this Surah beside these rewards, the relation of these rewards with those instructions will be made clear, and again it is an emphasis on this fact that the purpose is not a mere dry recitation of the Surah, but it is a recitation that inspires contemplation and creates decision, a contemplation and decision which leads to action, in a manner that the content of the Surah may be practised in man's living.

Notes

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 463
2. Ibid

Section 1: The Utter Defeat of the Clans Combined, Prophesied

Surah Sad - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

ص وَالْقُرْءَانِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ

كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَّلَاتَ حِينَ مَنَاصٍ

1. "Sad (s). By the Qur'an, full of admonition,"

2. "Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition."

3. "How many a generation We destroyed before them, then they cried, but time was none to escape."

The Occasion of Revelation

There are some similar occasions of revelation for the beginning verses of this Surah recorded in the commentary and tradition books. Here we refer to one of them which is more detailed and more inclusive than others. It is the tradition that the Late Kulayni has narrated from Imam Baqir (as).

Once Abujahl and a group of the members of Quraysh came to Abutalib, the Prophet's uncle (S) and said:

"Your brother's son has annoyed us and has made our gods inconvenient, too. Call him up and tell him to abandon our gods so that we may not abuse his God."

Abutalib sent a person to the Prophet (S) to come.

At the time when the Prophet (S) entered his uncle's house and looked around the room, he saw that there was nobody beside Abutalib save the polytheists; then he said:

'And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance!',[1]

and then he sat down. Abutalib reiterated their words for the Prophet (S).

In answer to him, the Prophet (S) said:

"Do they agree with me in a sentence and by it they precede all Arabs and they will govern?"

Abujahl said:

"Yes, we agree. What is that sentence?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"You may say: 'There is no god but Allah', (and send away these idols which are the source of your misery and disgrace)."

When the audience heard this sentence, they terrified so much that they put their fingers in their ears and quickly went out of the room while they were saying:

"We have not heard such a thing yet. This is a lie."

It was here that the beginning verses of Surah Sad were revealed.[2]

In the first verse of this Surah again we encounter one of the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an, Sad (s), and so the former discussions about the commentary of these letters come forth that whether they point to the greatness of the Qur'an meaning that the Qur'an has been made up of some

simple things such as alphabetical letters, or it contains something which changes the world of humanity.

And this is the great wonderful might of Allah that by those simple things He has provided such a surprising combination.

Or it points to the secrets which had been between Allah and His Prophet and is a message from the side of a familiar One toward a familiar one. Or it is a hint to the Names of Allah, because many of the Names of Allah begin with the letter 'Sad', like: Sadiq (truthful), Samad, and Sani'; or it points to the holy sentence: /sadaqallah/ (Allah is truthful) which has been abridged in one letter, Sad.

Some more detailed explanation about the commentary of the abbreviated letters can be studied at the beginning of Suras Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and Al-'A'raf.

The first verse indicates that by the Qur'an, which contains the admonition, you are on the truth and this Book is the miracle of Allah.

It says:

"Sad (s). By the Qur'an, full of admonition,"

The Qur'an is both itself remembrance and contains remembrance. The Qur'anic term /ðikr/ means: 'a reminder' and 'to remove the rust of negligence from the face of the heart'. The remembrance of Allah is the remembrance of His bounties, the remembrance of the Great Court in Hereafter, and the remembrance of the aim of the creation of man.

Yes, the important and main factor of Man's misery is his forgetfulness and negligence, and the Holy Qur'an wipes it out.

Concerning the hypocrites, the Qur'an says:

"…They have forsaken Allah, so He has forsaken them, (too)…"[3]

And in this very Surah, Sad, verse 26 talks about those who go astray:

"…(as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."

Yes, the great pest of the aberrant people and sinners is that very forgetfulness, so much so that they forget the value of their own selves, and the Qur'an is a means for breaking these curtains of forgetfulness, and it is a light for removing the darkness of negligence.

Its verses cause man to remember Allah and Resurrection, and its sentences make man acquainted with the values of his own self.

The next holy verse implies that if you see that they do not surrender to the awakening verses of the Qur'an, it is not for the sake that there has been fallen a curtain over the words of truth, but the disbelievers have a kind of pride which hinders them from accepting the truth, and their enmity and disobedience prevent them to accept the invitation of the Prophet (S).

The verse says:

"Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition."

As Raqib says in Mufradat, the Arabic term /'izzat/ is a state which hinders man to defeat, and originally it is derived from /'izaz/ in the sense of a solid, firm, and impenetrable land.

It is of two kinds: sometimes it is the acceptable and worthy honour like when we attribute the pure Essence of Allah with the word 'Aziz (Mighty);

and sometimes it is the blameworthy honour, and it is the impenetrable state against the Truth and being proud to accept the realities, and this honour is, in fact, an abasement.

The Arabic word /šiqaq/ from the point of etymology is derived from /šiq/ and originally means: 'To cleave', then it has also been used in the sense of 'difference', because difference causes that every group to be separated into a section.

Here the Qur'an has counted the subject of impenetrability, pride, and paving the path of separation dispersion, and disunity as the factor of unhappiness of the pagans. Yes, these are some ugly and evil qualities which cast a curtain over the man's eyes, ears, and understanding and take the sense of recognition from him.

How painful is that the eye and the ear of man are valid, yet he is blind and deaf.

Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 206 says:

"And when it is said to him: 'Hear Allah', pride drives him toward sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode in deed."

Then, in order to awaken these proud and negligent people, the Qur'an takes them to the past history of man and shows them the evil end of the proud, haughty and obstinate nations, perhaps they take a lesson.

It says:

"How many a generation We destroyed before them, then they cried, but time was none to escape."

The day when the Divine prophets and the saints advised them and warned them of the evil end of their deeds, they not only did not hearken, but also mocked and hurt the believers and even they killed them.

They lost their opportunities and all their future possibilities. So, at the time when the doors of repentance and returning were all shut for them the worldly sudden punishment came over them to destroy them and their shouts of asking for help remained useless.

The Arabic word /lat/ is used for negation and originally it has been /la/ as a negative sign in Arabic, and the letter /t/ is for emphasis added to it.

The Arabic term /manas/ is derived from /nawasa/ in the sense of 'shelter' and 'a reliever'. It is said that when a harsh and very horrible event had happened, specially in battles, it was customary that Arabs repeated this word and said / manas/. This word means: 'where is shelters'. And since this word is accompanied with 'escape', it has also been used in the sense of 'the place of escape'.[4]

However, when these proud negligent people had respite to refuge to the graceful mercy of Allah they did not use it, and later, when they lost their opportunities, and the worldly sudden punishment came to them, their shouts of asking help and their struggle for finding a shelter and a way of escape did not assist them.

This Allah's way of treatment had worked in all former nations and it will continue in future, too, because there is no change in Allah's way of treatment.

There is a pity that a great deal of people are not ready to use the experiences of others, and they want to try on the bitter experiences of others themselves. They are the experiences that sometimes happen only once in the whole lifetime of a person and there will not be a turn for the second time.

Surah Sad - Verse 4

وَعَجِبُوا أَن جَآءَهُم مُّنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ

4. "And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them, and the disbelievers said: 'This is a lying sorcerer'."

The Occasion of Revelation

There has been cited an occasion of revelation for these verses similar to what was stated upon the previous verses, but since this one contains some new matters, we narrate it from the commentary written by Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, as follows:

When the Messenger of Allah (S) announced his invitation openly, the chiefs of Quraysh came to Abutalib and said:

"O Abutalib! Your brother's son calls us feeble-minded, and abuses our gods. He has made our youths corruptible and has dispersed our community. If this action is because of financial deficiency, we will gather so much money for him that he can be the wealthiest man among Quraysh, and we are even ready to choose him as a chief."

Abutalib conveyed this message to the Messenger of Allah (S).

The Prophet (S) said:

"If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I would not intend it; but (instead of these promises) they may agree with me in one sentence so that by which they govern over Arab and also non-Arab come into their religion, and they will be kings in Paradise."

Abutalib sent this message to them, and they said they were ready to accept ten sentences instead of one sentence.

The Prophet (S) told them:

"You may testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah."

They terrified very much (from this statement) and said:

"Do we leave three hundred and sixty gods and go to only one God? What a surprising thing is this? (That God Who can never be seen)."

It was here that the following verse was revealed, saying:

"And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them, and the disbelievers said: 'This is a lying sorcerer'."[5]

This very meaning, with a slight difference, has been narrated in Majma'-ul-Bayan, and at the end of it there has been added:

"While tears were flowing from the Prophets eyes, he said:

'O' my uncle! If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in order that I abandon this statement, I would never do so; except that I cause this word to penetrate in the society, or that I would be killed in its path."

When Abutalib heard this statement, he said:

"You may follow your program. By Allah! I will never leave helping you."[6]

The most important duty of the Divine prophets is to warn people, but the proud and self-loving ones are both impenetrable and absolutist. They do not formally assume anything save what they have perceived by their own limited and deficient thoughts and they take the same things as the criterion of the values.

That was why when the holy Prophet of Islam (S) announced Islam in Mecca and stood against the small and big idols, the number of which was around 360 idols, sometimes they wondered why the Divine prophet, the Warner, had appeared from among them, and their surprise was because of this that Muhammad (S) was one person from themselves.

The verse says:

"And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them…"

They used to say why there had not been sent an angel from the heaven. They imagined this great point of strength as a point of weakness.

The one who had come out from among the mass of people, who was aware of their needs and pains, and was acquainted with their difficulties and the problems of their lives, could be an example in all things for them.

They considered this great privilege as a dark point in the invitation of the Prophet (S) and wondered upon it. And sometimes they went beyond this stage, too.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the disbelievers said: 'This is a lying sorcerer'."

We have repeatedly said that attributing sorcery to the Prophet (S) was for observing the undeniable miracles and his extraordinary penetration in the people's thoughts; and attributing falsehood to him was for the sake that he stood against the superstitious customs and deviated ideas which were counted as the certain things of that environment, and he spoke against them in his claim as a prophet from the side of Allah.

Surah Sad - Verses 5-7

أَجَعَلَ الأَلِهَةَ إِلهَاً وَاحِداً إِنَّ هَذَا لَ ٰ ءٌ عُجَابٌ

وَانطَلَقَ الْمَلأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَي ءَالِهَتِكُمْ اِنَّ هَذَا لَ ٰ ءٌ يُرَادُ

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الأَخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ اخْتِلاَقٌ

5. "Has he made gods (all) into One God? This is indeed a strange thing!"

6. "And the chiefs from them departed, (saying:) 'Go! and be steadfast to your gods; this is a thing to be desired."

7. "We never heard (the like) of this in the former creed; this is nothing but a made up tale."

The first action of the prophet is the negation of the false objects of worship and proving the One God.

When the Prophet (S) openly revealed his theistic invitation, the disbelievers looked and said to others to come and hear the things they had not heard ever before.

They said:

"Has he made gods (all) into One God? This is indeed a strange thing!"

Yes, sometimes pride, self-loving, absolutism, and the aberration of the environment change the man's insight and judgment so violently that he wonders from the clear facts while he is seriously bond to some superstitions and vain conjectures.

The Arabic term /'ujab/, in this verse, denotes to an exaggerative meaning and is used for some very strange affairs.

These empty-minded persons used to think the more their objects of worship could be, the more power and influence of credit they would have, and that was why Allah, the One, seemed a little thing to them, while we know that, from the point of philosophy, the numerous things are always limited, and the unlimited Essence is not more than One.

That is why all the studies in theology end to the line of monotheism.

In the second verse, the Qur'an indicates: when the leaders of them become hopeless from Abutalib and his mediation, they came out from his place and said that they should walk away and remain constant to their gods since Muhammad (S) wanted to destroy their society and to cease the bounties of the gods from them by turning away from their idols and he himself would govern over them.

The verse says:

"And the chiefs from them departed, (saying:) 'Go! and be steadfast to your gods; this is a thing to be desired."

The Arabic term /'intalaqa/ is derived from /'intilaq/ in the sense of: 'going out quickly together with leaving the former affairs'. Here it means: 'Leaving Abutalib's meeting angrily'.

The Qur'anic term /mala'/ refers to the nobles and well known members of Quraysh who came to Abutalib, and after coming out from that meeting they told each other, or their followers, not to leave their idols and to be steadfast to their gods.

The Qur'anic phrase /lišay'in yurad/ means: 'this issue is something desired', and since it is an ambiguous sentence, commentators have delivered many commentaries upon it.

Among them is that some of them have said: it refers to the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) and its purpose is that this invitation is a plot the aim of which is we people. It has an appearance which is invitation to Allah, and it has an innate purpose which is to govern over us and to be a chief upon Arabs and all of these are pretexts for this matter.

So you people go away and be steadfast to your belief, and let us, the leaders, analyse about this plot.

This is the thing that the leaders of falsehood always refer to in order to make quiet the sound of the followers of the path of truth and call it 'plot', a plot that only politicians must analyse carefully and arrange a program to struggle against it, but the common people must pass by it heedlessly, and be careful of what they have in their hands.

In the third verse, the Qur'an implies that for deceiving people, or for satisfying themselves, they said:

"We never heard (the like) of this in the former creed; this is nothing but a made up tale."

If the claim of Unity and negation of idols were really true, our ancestors, with that greatness and personality should perceive it and we would hear it from them, but this is only a false and baseless statement.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /fil-millat-il-'axirah/ may be a hint to the group of their fathers who were the last people with respect to them, as we said in the above.

And it may be a hint to the People of the Book, specially the Christians who were counted as the last nation and had the last religion before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S).

This sentence means that there is nothing about the words of Muhammad (S) in the Book of the Christians, because they believe in trinity (three gods) and the monotheism of Muhammad (S) is a new matter.

But as the tone of the Qur'an in other different verses shows, the Arab of the Age of Ignorance did not rely on the Books of the Jews and Christians. All their reliance was on the custom and religion of their ancestors, and this is a good reference for the first commentary.

The Qur'anic word /'ixtilaq/ is derived from /xalaqa/ which originally means the creation of something with no trace. Afterward, this word has been used for 'falsehood', too, because, in many cases, falsehood refers to some matters that have no trace.

Therefore, the objective meaning of the word /'ixtilaq/ mentioned in the verse under discussion is that the claim of Unity which Muhammad (S) refers to, is a new claim with no former trace, and it had been completely unknown to the former nations, and this itself is a proof for its falseness.

Surah Sad - Verses 8-11

أَءُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِن بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِن ذِكْرِي بَل لَّمَّا يَذُوقُوا عَذَابِ

أَمْ عِندَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ

أَمْ لَهُم مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَلْيَرْتَقُوا فِي الأَسْبَابِ

جُندٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنَ الأَحْزَابِ

8. "Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all? Nay, they are in doubt about My Reminder, nay, they have not yet tasted My chastisement."

9. "Or have they the treasures of the Mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Greater Bestower?"

10. "Or is theirs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them? Then let them ascend by any means."

11. "A defeated host are the factions that are there."

The doubt of some of pagans in the prophecy of the Prophet of Islam (S) originates from the doubt in the principle of the possibility of revelation. Alike them are some of those who have pretext on the ordinances of the religion. They, in deed, do not accept the religion itself.

The verse says:

"Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all?…"

When the pagans of Mecca saw that their own unlawful benefits were in danger, the fire of enmity and jealousy was lightened in their hearts, so in order to deceive people and also to satisfy themselves, as for opposition against the Prophet of Islam (S), they resorted to various logics, including with surprise and denial they said:

"Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all?…"

Was not anybody else among these many old men and the wealthy ones, the well known ones, except Muhammad, the poor and the orphan, that Allah sent His Qur'an to him?

This logic was not allocated only to that time, but every time, and even in our age, too, when an important responsibility is given to someone, the mood of jealousy appears, the eyes become astonished, the ears become sharp to hear, and some grumbles, murmurs and seeking pretexts begin, and some persons say that was not there a proper man among people that this job was given to so and so who is from an unknown and poor family?

Yes, mammonism from one side, and jealousy from other side caused that the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians), who were in common against the Muslims, to get distance with Islam and the Qur'an and to go to the idol worshippers and tell them that their way was better than the way of Muslims, as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 51 says:

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Jibt (idol) and Taqut (false deities) and they say about the infidels: 'These are better guided on the way than those who have believed (in Islam)'."

It is evident that these wonders and denials which, besides jealousy and mammonism had another source, that is mistake in 'recognizing the values', could never be a logical criterion for judgment. Is the personality of man found in name, wealth, rank, and his age? Has the mercy of Allah been divided among people according to these criterions?

So, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"…Nay, they are in doubt about My Reminder…"

The objection to Muhammad (S) personally was not more than a pretext, and this doubt of theirs in the matter was not for the sake of the existence of ambiguity in the Holy Qur'an, but its origin was mainly their low desires, mammonism and jealousies.

And, finally, the Qur'an threatens them by this sentence, saying:

"…nay, they have not yet tasted My chastisement."

They have not tasted the chastisement of Allah that they have stood so boldly against the messenger of Allah, and by these vain words they go to fight against the revelation of Allah.

Yes, there are always some persons whose ears do not hearken logical and proper statements and nothing dissuade them from pride save the lashes of punishment. They must be punished because their remedy is only Divine punishment.

In answer to them, through the next verse the Holy Qur'an implicitly inquires whether the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Beneficent are with them so that whomever they desire appoint to be a prophet and whomever they do not like can deprive of it.

The verse says:

"Or have they the treasures of the Mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Greater Bestower?"

For the case that Allah is the Lord (and is the Owner and Cherisher of the world of existence and the whole humanity) will choose the one for His messengership that can train and lead people alongside the path of development; and for the case that He is Mighty, he does not overcome to the desire of anyone so that He gives the rank of Messengership to an ineligible and incompetent person.

And, principally, the rank of prophethood is a rank so great that only Allah is able to give it to someone, and the case of His being the Bestower, He gives whatever He wants and to whomever He intends.

It is noteworthy that the Qur'anic term /wahhab/ in Arabic is an amplification form and means the All-giving.

This points to the fact that prophethood is not only a mere merit, but it is a combination of numerous merits that come together so that a person can undertake that position, including the merits of knowledge, piety, infallibility, bravery, and manliness.

Similar to this Qur'anic statement is also recited in Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verses 31-32, saying:

"…'Why was not this Qur'an revealed to a man of importance…"

"Will they distribute the mercy of your Lord?'…"

By the way, it is understood from the application of the word 'mercy' that prophecy is a mercy of Allah upon the world of mankind, and it is verily so, because if there were not prophets, human beings would lose both the way of hereafter and spirituality, and the path of this world; and those who are far of the school of Divine prophets have lost both of them.

The third verse pursues the same meaning, where it says:

"Or is theirs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them? Then let them ascend by any means."

This statement, in fact, is a complement to the former discussion. In that occurrence it implicitly said that the treasures of the mercy of Allah are not in your hands to give them to anyone who is harmonious to your desires.

Now it implies: now that these treasures are not in your hands and they are only in the power of Allah, the only way that you can choose is that you ascend to the heaven and hinder the revelation to come down to him; and you yourself also know that you can never do it.

Thus, neither 'expedient' is in your authority, nor you are able to create 'a barrier'. Then what can you do? You may die because of jealousy and do whatever you are able to do.

Therefore, as some commentators have said, these two verses do not reiterate a single matter, but each of them refers to one of the dimensions of the subject.

The fourth verse, which is the last verse of this discussion, as a state of despising these proud feeble-minded persons, says:

"A defeated host are the factions that are there."

The Arabic term /hunalika/ in the sense of ‘there’ is used for pointing to a distanced thing. That is why some of the commentators consider it as a hint to the defeat of the pagans in the Battle of Badr which happened in a rather far point from Mecca.

The application of the Qur’anic word /’ahzab/ in the verse apparently points to all the groups who worked against the Divine prophets and Allah destroyed them. These pagans are a small group out of those groups who will have the same fate as theirs.

(The evidence for this statement is the coming verses which have mentioned this matter.)

We should not forget that this Surah is one of the Meccan Suras, and the Qur’an stated this statement at the time when Muslims were in such a hard minority that pagans might destroy them easily.

“…and were fearful that people would snatch you away…”[7]

That day there was not any sign of victory seen for the Muslims. On that day the great victories of the Battles of Badr, Ahzab, and Hunayn had not happened, but the Holy Qur’an decisively said that these violent enemies were a small army that would be defeated.

Today, too, the Qur’an gives the same glad tiding to the Muslims of the world who are surrounded from every side by the powers of the cruel oppressors, saying that if they, like the early Muslims, stand firm on the covenant of Allah, He will also fulfil His Own promise concerning the defeat of the army of the disbelieving parties.

Therefore, in Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran the Qur’an says:

“…but if you are patient and be pious, their plotting will not harm you in any way…”[8]

and the Qur’an has depended the help of Allah on patience, perseverance and piety.

Notes

1. Surah Ta-Ha, No, 20, verse 47
2. Usul-i-Kafi, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 441
3. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 67
4. Mufradat by Raqib, Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, Rauh-ul-Ma‘ani.
5. The commentary by Ali-ibn-’Ebrahim, according to the commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 442
6. Majma‘ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 65
7. 1Sura Al-’Anfal, No. 8, verse 26
8. Surah ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 120

Section 2: Allah's Blessings On David

Surah Sad - Verses 12-16

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الأَوْتَادِ
وَثَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ ْيْكَةِ أُوْ َلِكَ الأَحْزَابُ
إِن كُلٌّ إِلاَّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ
وَمَا يَنظُرُ هَؤُلآءِ إِلاَّ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً مَّالَهَا مِن فَوَاقٍ
وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّـل لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

12. "Before them, the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Pharaoh, the lord of stakes, belied (messengers),"

13. "And Thamud and the people of Lot, and the dwellers of the Thicket, these were the parties (who also rejected the messengers)."

14. "There was none of them but belied the messengers, so just was My retribution."

15. "And these (infidels) do not wait aught but a single blast, which (when it comes) will brook no delay."

16. "And they (ridiculously) say: 'O our Lord! Hasten on to us our portion before the Day of Reckoning."

These verses refer to the evil end of the peoples of six prophets who lived before Islam, so that both the pagans of the time of the Prophet of Islam (S) may take a lesson, and the Prophet (S) and the believers know that rejecting prophets has an old background and it is not a new thing and they should also know that if there comes a punishment there will not be given any respite to the disbelievers.

Following the last verse which was explained and informed of the defeat of the polytheists in future, and introduced them as a small army out of the 'defeated parties', now, it introduces a group of the parties who belied the prophets and afflicted a bad fate.

It says:

"Before them, the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Pharaoh, the lord of stakes, belied (messengers),"

And in the next verse it says:

"And Thamud and the people of Lot, and the dwellers of the Thicket, these were the parties (who also rejected the messengers)."

Yes, these were six groups out of parties of Ignorant and idolaters who opposed against the prophets:

The people of Noah against this great prophet.

The people of 'Ad against Hud, the prophet.

Pharaoh against Moses and Aaron (as).

The people of Thamud against Hadrat Salih.

The people of Lot against Hadrat Lot.

The dwellers of the Thicket against Shu'ayb, the prophet.

They did their best in belying, hurting and vexation of both Divine prophets and believers. But, finally, the Divine punishment came over them and, like a dry farm, it reaped them.

The people of Noah were destroyed by means of Storm and heavy rains; the people of ‘Ad by a strong wind; Pharaoh and his people by the waves of Nile; the people of Thamud by heavenly Blast (and great Thunderbolts); the people of Lot by a horrible earthquake accompanied with the rain of heavenly pebbles; and the people of Shu‘ayb were also destroyed by an annihilating thunderbolt which came down over them from a piece of cloud, and thus, the water, wind, dust, and fire which form the means of life for man were ordered to destroy them, and they vanished them so violently that there remained no trace of them.

These polytheists of Mecca should think that, comparing these parties, they were not more than a small group, why did they not awake from the sleep of negligence?

The attribution of /ðul’autad/ (the lord of stakes) for Pharaoh which is mentioned clearly in these verses and also in Surah Al-Fajr, No. 87, verse 10 is ironically used to show firmness.

It is said, for example, the nails of so and so are firm; or the nails of this job have been fastened; or it has been fastened with four nails, because for firmness of a building or the tents the nails are always used.

Some commentators have considered it as a hint to the great troops of Pharaoh, because an army usually uses tents and for holding tents nails are used.

Some other commentators say that it refers to the horrible tortures of the Pharaohs unto their enemies that so to speak, they crucified them and fastened each of their hands and feet with nail to the ground, to a gallows-tree, or to a wall and left them to die.

And, at last, some commentators have said that probably the Arabic word /’autad/ is the same as /’ahram/ (pyramids) in Egypt which are fixed into the ground like a nail, and since pyramids are from the specialties of the Pharaohs, this quality in the Qur’an is used inclusively about them.

In the meanwhile, these probabilities are not contradictory with each other and they may gather in the concept of this word.

The Arabic word /’aykah/ means ‘tree’ and the Qur’anic phrase /’ashab-ul-’aykah/ are the very people of Hadrat Shu‘ayb who used to live in a land with abundant water and trees located between the lands of Syria and Mecca and Medina. In the commentary of Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 78 we have talked enough in this regard.

In the third verse, the Qur’an implies that each of these groups belied the Divine messengers and the chastisement of Allah came to them.

It says:

“There was none of them but belied the messengers, so just was My retribution.”

History shows that how each group of them died by a pest and their cities were changed into ruins during a short time and their members turned to be some corpses.

In the fourth verse, the Holy Qur’an implicitly says whether these polytheists of Mecca, by these bad actions can have a better fate than them, while their deeds are the same as theirs and Allah’s way of treatment is the same.

So, as a decisive and hard threat, it says:

"And these (infidels) do not wait aught but a single blast, which (when it comes) will brook no delay."

This blast may be similar to the blasts which came upon the former nations. It was a horrible thunderbolt, or an earthquake with a tremendous sound which wiped out their livings.

However, these neglectful people, by their rejections and denials of the Divine revelations, and their undue accusations unto the Prophet (S) and their persisting and obstinacy on idolatry, cruelty, and corruption, seemed that they had been waiting for the Divine punishment, a punishment which would burn the stack of their lifetime, or a blast that would put an end to the life of the world and take them to a way which was not returnable.

As many of the commentators and philologist have said, the Arabic word /fawaq/ originally means the length of time between two times of milking milk from the udder, because when the milk is fully milked, it needs waiting a while until the milk gathers in the udder again, and since after milking the milk the udder rests, this word has also been used in the sense of resting and calmness.

And also since this distance of time is for returning milk to the udder, this meaning has been used in the sense of 'return', too, and that is why the convalescence of a sick person in Arabic is called /'ifaqah/ since health turns back to him.

However, there is no return of rest, calmness, and peace in this horrible blast, and when it happens all the doors will be shut to them. Neither regret is useful nor there is possibility of recompense, nor are shouts of avail.

The last verse of the verses under discussion points to one of other statements of the pagans and rejecters who spoke mockingly as follows:

"And they (ridiculously) say: 'O our Lord! Hasten on to us our portion before the Day of Reckoning."

Those blind hearted proud persons were so haughty that even they used to mock the punishment of Allah and His just court. They used to say why He delayed in the portion of their punishment.

Among the former nations, these kinds of self-loving feeble-minded persons were not scanty either, but at the time of being captured in the grips of the Divine punishment, they cried like animals and nobody came to help them.

The Arabic term /qitt/ originally means something which is cut from its width, and the word /qadd/ means something which is cut from its length.

And since the certain portion of everybody is similar to something broken and cut, this word has been used in the sense of portion.

Sometimes it is in the sense of a piece of paper on which something is written, or the names of persons and their prizes are written on it. So, some of the commentators have said upon the commentary of the above mentioned verse that the purpose is this:

'O' Allah! Give us the record of our deeds before the day of Judgment.'

They said this statement when the above verses informed that on the Day of Judgment a group of people will have the record of their deeds in their right hand and another group in their left hand. The disbelievers mockingly

said that how well was it that their records of deeds were given to them that they would read them and see their own position and fate.

However, ignorance and pride are two qualities which are very ugly and blameworthy and they often do not separate from each other. They are the ignorant proud ones, and the proud ignorant ones, and the effects of these two are seen in the polytheists of the Age of ignorant abundantly.

Note the Following Traditions:

1- Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The utmost ignorance is that a person is happy for his ignorance."[1]

2- Again he (as) said:

"The utmost of wisdom is confession to what he does not know."[2]

3- Again he (as) said:

"The utmost of knowledge is the awe of Allah, Glory be to Him."[3]

Surah Sad - Verses 17-20

اصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الأَيْدِ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالإِشْرَاقِ

وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ

وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ

17. "Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power, verily he ever turned (to Allah)."

18. "Verily We subjected the mountains to give glory with him at the evening and the sunrise,"

19. "And the birds assemble together, every one to him reverting;"

20. "And We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and a clear judgment."

The requisite of leadership is tolerance and patience in the face of the bitter words of others.

David used to turn to Allah very much, and in all his affairs in his life he turned to Him. This permanent attention was the cause of his power. David (as) was one of the great prophets of the Children of Israel who had a very large government, and his high rank has been praised in many verses of the Qur'an.

Following the discussions mentioned in the former verses about the hindrances of polytheists and idolaters and their undue accusations to the Prophet of Islam (S), in order to console the holy Prophet (S) and the small group of the believers of that day, here the Qur'an explains the story of David, the one to whom Allah gave those many forces and He even made the mountains and birds subjected to him, in order to show that when His favour comes to someone, the mass of enemies can do nothing.

But this great prophet, with those many apparent forces, was not secure from the people's sarcasm, so that he would be a comfort and solace for the Prophet (S), because this matter was not only for him but the great men of the world had had a share of it.

At first, it says:

"Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power, verily he ever turned (to Allah)."

The Qur'anic word /'ayd/ has been used both in the senses of 'power' and 'bounty', and David had both of them. His bodily power was so that he could defeat Jalut, the tyrant, in the battle-field by a strong strike that he left the stone by his sling toward him and Jalut fell bloody on the ground.

Some writers have written that the stone cleft his chest and came out from other side.

And from the point of political power, he had a powerful government so that he could stand with full power against the enemies. And from the point of spiritual and ethical power and the strength of worship, it was such that he was vigilant a great part of the night busy worshipping Allah, and half of the days of the year he was fast.

From the point of the bounties of Allah, he had been bestowed kinds of apparent and hidden bounties. In short, David was a strong man in fights, in worship, in knowledge, and in government, and also he had abundant bounties.

The Arabic word /'awwab/ is derived from /'aub/ with the sense of voluntary return toward something, and since the word /'aub/ is an Arabic amplification form, it indicates that he turned to his Lord very much and repented for the slightest negligence and leaving the better.

Then in the second verse, after shortly referring to the Divine bounties to David, in order to explain a part of them, He says:

"Verily We subjected the mountains to give glory with him at the evening and the sunrise,"

In the third verse He implicitly says that not only the mountains were subjected to him, but also the birds did in order that they glorify Him with him.

It says:

"And the birds assemble together, every one to him reverting;"

All the mountains and birds obeyed the command of David and joined in singing with him.

The pronoun in the Arabic word /lahu/ may refer to David. If so, the meaning of the sentence is the same which was said in the above. It is also probable that it refers to the Pure Essence of Allah, which means all the particles of the world return to Him and are obedient to Him.

Concerning the quality of the act of birds and mountains joining in singing with David (as), it has been said that this glorification of God had been together with the apparent sound accompanied with a kind of understanding which is in the innate of the particles of the world.

According to this idea all of the beings of the world have a kind of wisdom and understanding, and when they heard the delightful sound of this great prophet at the time of his worship, they accompanied him and the sound of their glorification were heard with together.

And this is not far from the power of Allah. It was a murmur which was always current in the inside of the innate of the beings of the world, but Allah caused it to be appear for David by the power of miracle, in the same

way which was seen in respect to the glorification of the pebbles in the hand of the Prophet (S).

The fourth verse again continues mentioning the bounties of Allah unto David.

It says:

"And We strengthened his kingdom…"

This was in a way that all the haughty ones, disobedient persons and the enemies would take heed of him.

Besides that, Allah gave him wisdom; the same wisdom about which the Qur'an says:

"…and whoever has been granted wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good…"[4]

The verse says:

"…and gave him wisdom…"

The Qur'anic term /hikmat/ here means knowledge and the ability of managing the affairs of country, or the rank of prophecy, or all of them. This word has sometimes the scientific aspect which is rendered into 'excellent sciences'; and sometimes it has the practical aspect which is rendered into 'ethic and righteous deed', and David had enjoyed all of them abundantly.

The last bounty of Allah unto David was that he was given the knowledge of correct and just judgment.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…and a clear judgment."

The application of the Arabic phrase /fasl-ul-xitab/ as an attribute for judgment is for the sake that the word /xitab/ is the debate of two parties of quarrel, and /fasl/ means: 'cut and separation'.

And we know that the talks of a person who quarrels may be ceased when a correct judgment is done between the two parties, therefore this phrase has been meant in the sense of a just judgment.

There is also this probability in the commentary of this phrase that Allah gave David a strong logic which contained an excellent thought and deep meditation. Not only in the occasion of judgment, but also everywhere David would say the last word and the best statement.

Truly, with the existence of such a Lord Who is able to give an eligible man so many powers and abilities, there is no room for anybody to be despair from His grace, and this was not only the cause of comfort for the Prophet (S) and the believers who were under a hard pressure on those days, but it is the cause of solace for the whole captured believers in all centuries.

Some commentators have extracted ten great Divine merits from the above mentioned verses for David which clear both the high rank of this prophet and the specialties of a complete man.

1- The Prophet of Islam (S), with that great glory, is ordered to imitate David in patience and to get help from his history:

"Bear patiently what they say and remember Our servant David…"

2- Allah qualifies him by the rank of servitude and, in fact, He counts his first specialty this very rank of his servitude:

"Our servant".

Similar to this meaning is said concerning the holy Prophet of Islam (S) relation to the subject of Muhammad's ascension to Heaven where the Holy Qur'an says:

"Glory be to Him Who took His servant by night from Masjid-ul-Haram to Masjid-ul-'Aqsa…"[5]

3- Having power:

"Verily We subjected the mountains to give glory with him…"

4- Returning to Allah and his turning to Him constantly:

"…Verily he ever turned (to Allah)."

5- The mountains being subjected to him and that they gave glory with him:

"…to give glory with him…"

6- Allah counts the birds' glorification with him as one of his god-given merits:

"And the birds assembled together…"

7- That all of them joined in singing with him:

"…every one to him reverting."

8- Sovereignty and government:

"And We strengthened his kingdom…"

9- The Divine wisdom:

"…and gave him wisdom…"

10- His ability of giving just judgment and putting an end to the conflicts:

"…and a clear judgment."

And verily the bases of no government are firm without these qualities: knowledge, power, logic, godly piety, ability of controlling the carnal desire, and also approaching the rank of servitude to Allah.

By the way, David was one of the prophets who had had prophethood and kingdom with together.

Surah Sad - Verses 21-22

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ نَبَؤُاْ الْخَصْمِ إِذ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَي دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوا لاَ تَخَفْ خَصْمَانِ بَغَي بَعْضُنَا عَلَي بَعْضٍ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ

وَلاَ تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَآ إِلَي سَوَآءِ الصِّرَاطِ

21. "And has the story of the litigants come to you when they climbed the wall into the (David's) prayer chamber?"

22. "When they entered to David, and he was frightened of them, they said: 'Fear not, (we are) two litigants, one of us has exceeded against the other, so decide between us with truth, and treat not unjustly, and guide us unto the right way."

The act of judgment in the prayer room increases its value and sanctity. Hadrat Ali (as) used to judge among people in Kufah Mosque, and the place of David's judgment was often in his prayer chamber.

Following to the previous verses which stated the special qualities of David and the great merits that Allah gave him, the Holy Qur'an explains the event which happened for him in a judgment.

At first, addressing the holy Prophet of Islam (S), the Qur'an says:

"And has the story of the litigants come to you when they climbed the wall into the (David's) prayer chamber?"

The Arabic word /xasm/ originally means: 'To quarrel' but it frequently happens that each of the parties of a quarrel is called /xasm/ (enemy). This word is used for both singular and plural forms, but sometimes its Arabic plural form has been used in the shape of /xusum/.

The Qur'anic phrase: /tasawwaru/ is derived from /sur/ in the sense of a high wall which has surrounded around a house or a city; but it must be noted that this word originally means: 'to jump and climb'.

The Arabic term /mihrab/ means: the highest seat of an assembly, or the rooms in upstairs; and since the place of worship had usually been there it has gradually been used in the sense of 'temple', and in daily usages it is particularly used for the place where the prayer leader stands for performing the congregation prayer.

It has been narrated in Mufradat that the prayer niche of a mosque is called such because it is the place of fight against Satan and the carnal desire.

The second verse denotes that though David had numerous protectors, the two parties of quarrel climbed the wall of his prayer chamber and, through an unusual way, they entered his castle and suddenly they appeared in front of him.

In the continuation of this discussion, the Qur'an implicitly says that they suddenly entered David's room and, without previously informing him or getting permission, they stood in front of him. Therefore, by observing them, David terrified, because he thought they had an evil intention about him.

The verse in this regard says:

"When they entered to David, and he was frightened of them…"

But soon they removed his terror by their manner.

The verse continues saying:

"…they said: 'Fear not, (we are) two litigants, one of us has exceeded against the other, so decide between us with truth, and treat not unjustly, and guide us unto the right way."

The Qur'anic term /tuštit/ is derived from /šatat/ which originally means: 'much remoteness', and since injustice and cruelty keeps man aloof very much from the truth, the word /šatat/ has been used in this sense. It is also called to the speech which is far from reality.

The two parties of a quarrel must demand the execution of the truth, not the protection of their profits.

Surah Sad - Verse 23

إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ أَكْفِلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ

23. "Verily this my brother has ninety nine ewes, and I have (only) one ewe, but he says: 'Give her into my charge' and he overcame me in the argument."

This verse indicates that they did not give so much respite to David and one of them preceded the other to tell him their complain.

He said:

"Verily this my brother has ninety nine ewes, and I have (only) one ewe, but he says: 'Give her into my charge' and he overcame me in the argument."

The Arabic word /na'jah/ means 'ewe'; it is also used for female wild cow and wild sheep.

The Qur'anic term /'akfilniha/ is derived from /kifalat/ which here ironically means 'to abandon'. (The sentence means that you do abandon the charge of it to me, or give it to me.)

The Arabic term /'azzani/ is derived from /'izzat/ in the sense of 'overcome', and the concept of the sentence is: 'He overcame me'.

However, man is usually greedy and solicitous, and he never satiates from the wealth of the world.

Surah Sad - Verses 24-25

قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ إِلَي نِعَاجِهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنَ الْخُلَطَآءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعاً وَأَنَابَ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِندَنَا لَزُلْفَي وَحُسْنَ مَأَبٍ

24. "(David) said: 'Indeed he has been unjust to you in demanding your ewe to add her to his own ewes; and verily many of the associates are wrongfully unto one another, save those who believe and do good deeds, and few are they!' And David perceived that We had tried him, so he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down bowing, and he repented."

25. "So We forgave him that (lapse), and verily for him, with Us is a nearness and an excellent resort."

Man can own a lot of properties. David (as) did not criticize for having ninety nine ewes, but he criticized the brother's oppressive avariciousness.

The verse indicates that before hearkening to the statement of the opposite party, as it is understood from the apparent of the verses of the Qur'an, David turned to the complainant and spoke as follows:

"(David) said: 'Indeed he has been unjust to you in demanding your ewe to add her to his own ewes…"

But this is not a new thing and many of the friends and persons who work with together are unjust to each other.

The verse continues saying:

"…and verily many of the associates are wrongfully unto one another, save those who believe and do good deeds, and few are they!'…"

Yes, those who observe the right of others perfectly in association and friendship and do not have the least oppression to their friends are few, and only those who have got enough share of the capital of faith and righteous deed can usually pay the rights of their friends and familiar ones perfectly and justly.

However, it seems that the two parties of conflict were convinced by hearing this statement and left the David's meeting.

But here David began thinking, and though he knew he had made a just judgment, and his silence was the best evidence that the problem was the same that the complainant had mentioned, yet the manners of the meeting of

judgment required that David would not hasten in his speech, and first he should personally ask the opposite party and then arbitrated.

Therefore, because of this action of his, he became regretful very much and, as the verse says:

"…And David perceived that We had tried him, so he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down bowing, and he repented."

The Qur'anic term /xarra/ is derived from /xarir/ in the sense of 'falling from a height accompanied with a sound', like the sound of a waterfall, and since the persons who fall in prostration are as if they fall from a height, and at the time of prostration they pronounce glorification, this meaning has been used as to prostrate.

The application of the Arabic word /raki'an/ in the verse under discussion is either for the sake that the Arabic word /ruku'/ (bowing) has also been used in vocabulary in the sense of prostration, or bowing is a premise for prostration.

In the second verse the Qur'an implies that Allah favoured His mercy over him and forgave his lapse in this leaving the better, as the Qur'an in this verse says:

"So We forgave him that (lapse), and verily for him, with Us is a nearness and an excellent resort."

The Arabic term /zulfa/ is in the sense of 'rank and nearness with Allah', and the Qur'anic phrase /husna ma'ab/ refers to Paradise and bounties in Hereafter.

Surah Sad - Verse 26

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَي فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

26. "O David! Verily We have appointed you a vicegerent in the earth, so judge between the people with justice and do not follow (vain) desire for it will mislead you from the way of Allah; (as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."

Religion is not separate from politics. Allah has given the administration of His servants' affairs to the prophets. The administration of people's affairs is Allah's right which He gives to whomever He desires. Governing over people is a great bounty the gratitude of which is the execution of justice among people.

Following the story of David, and as the last saying, this verse addresses David, while stating his high rank, it explains his heavy duties and responsibilities through a decisive tone and some expressive statements, where it says:

"O David! Verily We have appointed you a vicegerent in the earth, so judge between the people with justice and do not follow (vain) desire for it will mislead you from the way of Allah; (as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."

The content of this verse, which refers to the high rank of David and his important duty, contains five sentences each of which pursues a fact.

The first is the rank of vicegerency of David in the earth.

Is the purpose of it the replacement of the former prophets, or the Divine vicegerency? Here the second meaning seems more fitting, and it is more consistent with Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 30 which says:

"When your Lord said to the angels: 'Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy'…"

Of course, vicegerency, with its real meaning, in respect to Allah does not have any meaning, because it is meaningful and correct for only those who are absent or have died. Then, its purpose is His deputation among His servants and performing His commands in the earth.

This sentence denotes that government on the earth must originate from the government of Allah, and any government that works other than this way is verily an unjust and undue government.

In the second sentence it commands: now that this great merit has been given to you, your duty is to judge among people with justice. In fact, the result of the Divine vicegerency is the government of Truth. It can be understood from this sentence that the government of Truth originates only from vicegerency and it is its direct product.

The third sentence points to the most important danger which threatens a just governor.

It says:

"…do not follow (vain) desire…".

Yes, vain desire puts a thick curtain over the truth-seeking eyes of man and it causes a distance between him and justice.

So, in the fourth sentence it implies that if you follow the low desire, it hinders you from the path of Allah, which is the same as the path of truth.

Thus, wherever there is stray, there exists the low desire; and wherever the low desire exists, it ruins the rights of people, and, for this reason, his government is ephemeral and will face with failure.

Here, vain desire may have a vast meaning which encompasses both the vain desire of man himself, and the vain desire of people. And thus the Qur'an nullifies the schools which follow the common thoughts, whatever they may be, and count them necessary for the governments, because the result of both of them is misled from the path of Allah and the straight way.

Today we see the effects of this kind of thought in, so to speak, the civilized world. They have passed the worst deeds as a law for the sake of people's desires and they have reached the notoriety to its utmost limit, so that pen shames to explain it.

It is true that the bases of government must be on the shoulder of people and it forms with the association of common people, but this does not mean that the criterion of right and wrong in everything and everywhere is the desires of the majority of people.

A government must have a framework of the Truth (Allah), but in practising this framework it must get help from the power of society, and the Islamic Republic, which we demand, is made up of the words: Republic and Islamic, also means the same thing. In other words, the principles are taken from the religious school, but people execute them.

Finally, in the fifth sentence the verse points to this fact that going astray from the path of Allah originates from forsaking 'The Day of Reckoning' and its fruit is the severe punishment of Allah.

Principally, forgetting the Day of Hereafter is always the source of aberrations, and each aberration is mixed with this forgetfulness, and this principle makes clear the training effect of being regardful to the Resurrection in the lives of men.

The narrations cited in this regard in Islamic sources are very notable.

Among them is the tradition which has been narrated from both the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) who said:

"O people! Verily the most terrible things about which I fear on you are two things: following the low desire, and long hopes. Then, following low desire restrains you from the truth, and extending of hopes causes you to forget the Hereafter".[6]

It is suitable that this sentence to be written excellently and put in the sight of all, specially that of the rulers, judges, and the responsible officials of the affairs.

In another tradition Imam Baqir (as) has said:

"There are three things which destroy (man): the miserliness that is obeyed, the low desire which is followed, and the state of man's being content with his own self."[7]

A Few Traditions Upon Low Desire

1- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The intellect is the possessor of the army of Allah, the Beneficent, and the low desire is the leader of the troops of Satan, and the man's self is under the pressure of the attractions of these two. Then, every one of them overcomes, the self will follow it."[8]

2- Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"There are many intellects which are captive with the soul that bids to evil."[9]

3- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The one whose intellect overcomes his low desire will be prosperous, and the one whose low desire overcomes his intellect will be ignominious."[10]

4- Ali (as) said:

"…Unfortunate is he who fell victim to his desires and his pride…"[11]

5- Imam Jawad (as) said:

"He who obeys his low desire, he has caused his enemy to reach his hope." [12]

6- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Make the intellect superior to the low desire, because intellect owns the time but the low desire makes you the servant of the time."[13]

7- Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"There is no enemy like the low desire."[14]

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Qurar-ul-Hukam, Vol. 4, P. 374
2. Ibid
3. Ibid, P. 375
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 269
5. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 1
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 42
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 453, taken from Khisal
8. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 113
9. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, chapter Hikam
10. Mustadrak, Vol. 2, P. 287
11. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 86
12. Bihar, Vol. 75, P. 364
13. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Ibn-Abil-Hadid, Vol. 2, No. 209
14. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, P. 130

Section 3: Allah's Blessings On Solomon

Surah Sad - Verses 27-28

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلاً ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِين كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ

27. "And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the Fire (of Hell)!"

28. "Shall We treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like the mischief makers in the earth? Or shall We treat the pious like the wicked?"

In the Divine world-view, creation is done with an aim. Since the system of existence is based on the truth, then arbitration must be based on the truth, too, so that the system of law and the system of creation can be in the same path.

Therefore, following the life story of David and his Divine Deputy in the earth, this verse talks about this fact that the world of existence pursues an aim so that the direction of the government on the earth, which is a part of it, can be specified.

It says:

"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the Fire (of Hell)!"

The important issue, from which all rights originate, is the existence of aim in creation.

When we accept this matter in our world-view that this vast world has not been created in vain from the side of Allah, the Exalted, we immediately look for its aim, the aim which is summarized in the short but expressive words of: 'development, education, training'.

It is from this line that we conclude that governments must also pave this very line. They must make the foundations of education and training firm and cause men to be spiritually developed.

In other words, the foundation of the world of existence is based on truth and justice, and governments must also be consistent with the whole world, i.e. they should act according to the criterions of right and justice.

By the way, the last sentence of the previous verse, which was about the man's forgetfulness of the Day of Reckoning, is completely consistent with the content of this holy verse, too, because the aim of the creation of the world requires that there should exist a Reckoning Day, as it was said in the discussions about Resurrection (at the end of Surah Yasin) that if there were not a Reckoning Day, the creation of this world would be rather useless, meaningless, and ambiguous.

It is interesting that at the end of this holy verse the Qur'an points to one of the clear lines which separates the school of belief from infidelity. It is the belied of the futility of the world in atheistic schools the kinds of which we encounter today, too.

They explicitly announce that this world is futile and aimless. By this way of world-view, how can they execute the right and justice in their governments?

Only that government can execute the right and justice which originates from a Divine world-view that believes an aim for the world and has an accurate system in whose path the government runs, too. And, if the modern atheistical world has reached to a blind lane in its government, in its peace and war, and in its economy and culture, its main root must be sought in this very matter.

And that is why that they base their own activities on 'force' and domination, and they think that everybody can gain it by force. How horrible is the world which is founded and controlled upon this form of thinking.

However, Allah is Wise and it is impossible that He creates this world without any aim. This aim will be safeguarded in the case that this world can be a premise for a vaster world, a world which connects to eternity and justifies the legitimacy of this world.

In the next verse, the Qur'an adds:

"Shall We treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like the mischief makers in the earth? Or shall We treat the pious like the wicked?"

There exists neither the possibility of aimlessness in the creation nor the equality of the righteous and the mischief makers, because the first group take steps alongside the path of godly aims and go forward unto the destination, but the second group are in the opposite side.

In fact, the discussion of the subject of Resurrection with all its dimensions has reasonably been stated both in this verse and its previous verse.

From one side it indicates that the Wisdom of Allah requires that the creation of the world to have an aim (and this aim is not acquired without other world because the few days of the life of this world, is not so worthy that can be the aim of this great creation.

On the other side, wisdom and justice require that the good ones and the bad ones, or the just and the unjust, should not be equal, and this is the whole collection of: resurrection, reward, retribution, and Paradise and Hell.

Moreover, when we look at the human society in this world, we see that the mischief-makers and believers are in the same row; and the evildoers are beside the good doers. And, in many cases, we see that the wrong doers are in a better welfare.

If there were not another life next to this fleeting world in which justice will be executed, the circumstance of this world is both against 'wisdom' and against 'justice', and this itself is counted another proof for the existence of Resurrection.

In other words, for proving the Resurrection sometimes it is reasoned from the way of 'wisdom' and sometimes from the way of 'justice'. The former verse refers to the first reasoning and the next verse to the second reasoning.

Surah Sad - Verse 29

كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا ءَايَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ الأَلْبَابِ

29. "(The Qur'an) is a blessed Book which We have sent down unto you, that they may meditate on its verses and that men of understanding may receive admonition."

The Holy Qur'an is surely blessed. (Its recitation, reflection, history, reasoning, story, the samples of sciences, hidden news, similes, bids and forbids, all in all are full of mysteries and secrets.

Qur'an is for contemplation and it is not merely for taking a good omen to its apparent. And contemplation in the Qur'an is for admonition, else there may happen that a person perceives the scientific secrets and subtle essences of the Qur'an, but it causes his pride.

This verse points to a matter which, in fact, is the provider of the aim of creation.

It says:

"(The Qur'an) is a blessed Book which We have sent down unto you, that they may meditate on its verses and that men of understanding may receive admonition."

Its instructions are eternal, its commandments are really deep and expressive, and its programs are refreshing and leading for human beings on the way of the aim of creation.

The aim of the descent of this great Book has not been that the believers suffice to its mere recitation by the tongue, but its aim has been in a manner that its verses become the source of contemplation and cause conscience to become vigilant, and it, in its turn, brings a fairly movement alongside the path of 'action'.

As we know, usually the application of the Qur'anic word /mubarak/ means something which has a continuous and constant good, and the usage of this meaning for the Qur'an points to the permanent usage of the human societies from its teachings; and since this word has been used in an absolute form, it involves any kind of goodness and the prosperity of both this world and the next.

Shortly speaking, in it there is all kind of goodness that you want, upon condition that you contemplate in it, and get inspiration from it.

Now, pay attention to these two traditions:

1- In the commentary upon these verses we study that the Qur'anic phrase:

"Those who believe and do righteous deeds"

refers to Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) and his followers, while the Qur'anic phrase:

"The mischief makers in the earth"

points to the opponents of them.[1]

2- In another tradition that Ibn-i-'Asakir has narrated from Ibn-i-'Abbas, it is said that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase:

"Those who believe"

is Ali (as), Hamzah, and 'Ubayd who stood against 'Uqbah, Walid, and Shaybah from the troops of polytheists in the Battle of Badr and in their battles that they overcame upon them. The purpose of the mischief makers

in the earth is those three persons of the army of polytheists who stood against the three above persons of Islam.

Surah Sad - Verses 30-33

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَـانَ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَـ ـِ الصَّافِنَاتُ الْجِيَادُ

فَقَالَ إِنِّـي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّـي حَتَّي تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ

رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحاً بِالسُّوقِ وَالأَعْنَاقِ

30. "And We gave to David Solomon, an excellent servant (he was)! Verily he was a penitent."

31. "When there were brought before him in the evening light-footed courses,"

32. "Then he said: 'Verily I love the love of good things, (these horses), for the sake of the remembrance of my Lord, (the watching of parade continued) until they (the horses) got hidden in the veil."

33. "(Then he ordered:) 'Bring them (horses) back to me'. And he began to rub (their) legs and necks."

Holding review of an army and its possibilities and strivers is a praise-worthy action. A leader must personally review of the troops and to be aware of the quality and quantity of the troops and possibilities is the condition of leadership.

In the continuation of the discussion about David, the first verse of this group of verses informs of giving a noble child, Solomon, to him who was the one who continued his Divine government and prophecy. It says:

"And We gave to David Solomon, an excellent servant (he was)! Verily he was a penitent."

What a good servant he was! because he always used to return to Allah and to the bosom of the truth.

The application of the Qur'anic term /wahabna/ (we gave), from one side, and the application of the Qur'anic phrase /ni'mal 'abd/ (an excellent servant), on the other side, and saying its reason /'innahu 'awwab/ (he who constantly returns to the obedience and command of Allah and repents from the slightest negligence and errs.), and from the third side all of these are the signs of the greatness of the rank of this great prophet.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: /'innahu 'awwab/ is just the same meaning which was recited about his father David in verse 17 from this very Surah.

Regarding to the fact that the word /'awwab/ which is an Arabic amplification form and its meaning is 'a very returning one' and there is no condition in it, can be in the sense of the one who returns to the obedience from the commandment of Allah, returning to the truth and justice, returning from negligence and leaving the betters.

Through the next verse, the Qur'an says:

"When there were brought before him in the evening light-footed courses,"

The Arabic term /safinat/ is the plural form of /safinah/, as many commentators and philologists have recorded, it is used for the horses which

stand on three legs at the time of standing and slightly raise only one hand and they put only the front top of the hoof on the ground, and this state is mostly particular to the swift horses which, if necessary, every moment are ready to move.

The Arabic word /jiyad/ is the plural form of /jawad/ which here is in the sense of swift horses and originally it has been taken from /jud/ (remittal), but remittal in human beings is done through the way of granting wealth and in horses through speed in running.

Thus, the above mentioned horses both at the state of standing showed their readiness for moving, and at the time of moving by quick action.

It is understood from this verse entirely, and with different contexts which exist around it, that one day in the evening Solomon was parading his quick 'horses' that he had prepared for the battle-field of Holy Struggle and the officers, riding their horses, were passing by in front of him.

And since a just and influential king must have a powerful army, and one of the important means of an army had been quick horses, this quality has been mentioned in the Qur'an, after pointing to the rank of Solomon, as one of the samples of his deeds.

In the third verse, in order that none thinks that his interest to these quick powerful horses is for worldly affairs, Solomon said that he loved them for the remembrance of his Lord and His command.

He said he wanted to use them in war and the battlefield of Holy Struggle against His enemies.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Then he said: 'Verily I love the love of good things, (these horses), for the sake of the remembrance of my Lord, (the watching of parade continued) until they (the horses) got hidden in the veil."

It is a custom among Arabs that they render the Arabic word /xayl/ (horse) into /xayr/ (goodness).

And an Islamic tradition indicates that the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"Goodness has been tied on the forehead of the horse until the Day of Hereafter."[2]

In the fourth holy verse, it indicates that the scene was so interesting and beautiful for a great commander such as Solomon that he ordered that those horses would be returned again for him.

When his officers obeyed this command and returned the horses, Solomon personally soothed them and touched their legs and necks.

The verse says:

"(Then he ordered:) 'Bring them (horses) back to me'. And he began to rub (their) legs and necks."

And by this way he both encouraged their coaches, and appreciated them, because it is customary that when they want to appreciate a horse, they touch the head, face, neck and legs of the horse; and such an action for a useful means which helps man in his excellent aims done by a great prophet like Solomon, is not surprising.

The Arabic term /tafiq/ means to start something. The Arabic word /suq/ is the plural form of /saq/, and the Arabic word /'a'naq/ is the plural form of

/‘unuq/ (neck). So the whole sentence means: ‘Solomon began touching and soothing their necks and legs’.

Surah Sad - Verses 34-35

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَي كُرْسِيِّـهِ جَسَداً ثُمَّ أَنَّابَ

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكاً لاَ يَنْبَغِي لأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْوَهَّابُ

34. “And certainly We did try Solomon, and We cast on his throne a (mere) body; then he repented.”

35. “He said: ‘My Lord! Forgive me and grant me a dominion such as shall not be fit anyone after me, verily You are the Bounteous (without measure).”

Trial is a means for polishing the soul and getting nigh to Allah.

These verses explain another part of Solomon’s life story, and show that how much high the power of a man may grow, again he has nothing from his own and whatever exists is from the side of Allah. Here, the Qur’an says:

“And certainly We did try Solomon, and We cast on his throne a (mere) body; then he repented.”

The Arabic word /kursi/ means a throne with short legs. It seems such that the ancient kings had two kinds of throne: one was for ordinary times, which had short legs, and a throne for their formal meetings and official ceremonies which had long legs. The former was called /kursi/ and the latter was called /‘arš/.

The Arabic word /jasad/ means a body without soul, and as Raqib says in Mufradat, it has a concept more limited than the concept of body, because the word /jasad/ is not used for anything other than man (but scarcely) while the word /jism/ (body) is general.

It is understood from this verse that Solomon’s trial had been through a soulless body which was on his throne before his eyes, the thing which he did not expect, and he hoped for something other than it. The Qur’an has delivered no more explanation on this matter.

The commentators and traditionists have mentioned some news and commentaries on this field.

The most fitting and clear of all of them is that Solomon desired to have some brave and fruitful children who could help him in running the country and specially in struggling against the enemy, but since he did not say the holy phrase: ‘If Allah wills’, the same sentence which shows the man’s reliance to Allah in all circumstances, at that time, he got no child from his wives except a handicapped child like a soulless body that was brought and put on his throne.

Solomon thought very much and became inconvenience that why he neglected Allah for a moment and relied on his own power.

Then he repented and returned to Allah.

In the next verse, the Holy Qur’an reiterates Solomon’s repentance in more details. It says:

“He said: ‘My Lord! Forgive me and grant me a dominion such as shall not be fit anyone after me, verily You are the Bounteous (without measure).”

Surah Sad - Verses 36-40

فَسَخَّرْنَا له الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُخَآءً حَيْثُ أَصَابَ

وَالشَّيَاطِينَ كُلَّ بَنَّآءٍ وَغَوَّاصٍ

وَءَاخَرِينَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الأَصْفَادِ

هَذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِندَنَا لَزُلْفَى وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ

36. "So We made subservient unto him the wind; that it ran at his command, softly, wherever he desired,"

37. "And the Satans, every builder and diver,"

38. "And others (of the Satans) fettered in chains."

39. "(We said:) 'This is Our free gift, therefore bestow or withhold without reckoning."

40. "And verily for him unto Us is a nearness and an excellent resort."

In these verses, Allah points to the favours He had given to Solomon (as), among them are the wind made subservient to him, his taking benefit from the power of the jinn, controlling the destructive powers, and having the authority and the rank of nearness to Allah with a bright future.

These bounties are a part of the sample government that Solomon had asked for. So this verse hints to another merit that Allah had bestowed on Solomon (as).

The verse says:

"So We made subservient unto him the wind; that it ran at his command, softly, wherever he desired,"

He was also given the act of controlling the disobedient beings for performing some positive activities, as the second verse announces:

"And the Satans, every builder and diver,"

Allah made them subservient to him so that a group of them would accomplish every building he desired in the land, and a group of them would work in the sea.

Thus Allah gave Solomon some ready-made powers for some positive actions, and made the Satans, whose nature is to be disobedient and rebellious, so subservient to him that they worked for him in buildings on the land and extraction of precious things from mines.

Not only in this verse, but also in some other numerous verses of the Qur'an this meaning has been pointed out that Satans were made subservient to Solomon and they did some positive activities for him. In these verses as well as Surah An-Naba', No. 78, verse 82 the word 'Satans' has been used while in Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 12 they have been called 'Jinn'.

As we have also said before, jinn is a being which is concealed to us, but it has intellect, understanding, and power. They are also divided into believers and disbelievers. It does not matter that under the command of Allah they should be used by a divine prophet and be busy in some useful jobs.

This probability exists, too, that the Qur'anic word 'Satans' has a vast meaning which encompasses both the rebellious human beings and other

than them, and this vast meaning for Satan has been used in the Qur'an[3]. Thus, Allah gave such a power to Solomon that he could make all rebellious ones submit.

In the next verse, another merit of Allah to Solomon is mentioned that he controlled a group of the destructive forces, because, in any case, there were some members among Satans who were not counted as a useful and constructive power, and there was no way save that they should be in fetter in order that the society could be in security from their vice, as the Qur'an says:

"And others (of the Satans) fettered in chains."

The Qur'anic term /muqarranin/ is derived from /qarana/ in the sense of 'resistance' and nearness, and here it points to the act of putting hand and foot or neck in chain and fetter.

The Arabic word /'asfad/ is the plural form of /safad/ in the sense of chain and fetter, (like the fetters put on the hands and feet of prisoners). Some commentators have rendered the Qur'anic phrase: /muqarranina-fil-'asfad/ into a complete yoke and it has been a chain which fastened the hands on the neck.

This fits to the concept of the Qur'anic term /muqarranin/ which contains the meaning of 'nearness'.

The fourth merit of Allah to Solomon was the abundant abilities he had and they let him to give or restrain things, as the next verse says:

"(We said:) 'This is Our free gift, therefore bestow or withhold without reckoning."

The application of the phrase 'without reckoning' refers either to this that: for the sake of the rank of your justice Allah has given you a vast authority which will not be reckoned or asked about; or it is in the sense that the Divine bestowal on you is so much that whatever you grant it will not be counted in it.

Some commentators have considered this meaning only related to the fettered Satans, meaning that whoever you desire you may let him go, and whomever you want you may keep in fetter.

In the fourth verse, the fifth and the last merit that Allah had given to Solomon is referred to. It was his spiritual rank that Allah had bestowed on Solomon because of his eligibilities. In this verse, Allah says:

"And verily for him unto Us is a nearness and an excellent resort."

This sentence, in fact, is an answer to those who, following to what is mentioned in the present Torah, polluted the sacred realm of this great prophet by kinds of undue and superstitious attributes. And, thus, it counts him free from all these wrong accusations, and honours his position with Allah, specially with the holy phrase: 'an excellent resort'.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) indicates he said:

"Have you heard that how much of property and government Allah gave Solomon, the son of David? Yet, with all these merits, it did not increase in him (anything) except to his humility, in a manner that because of intense humility and discipline he did not look at the sky because of humility for his Lord."[4]

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 453
2. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, Under the verse
3. Surah Al-’An‘am, No. 6, verse 112
4. Rauh-ul-Bayan, the commentary, Vol. 8, P. 39

Section 4: Job's Patience Rewarded

Surah Sad - Verses 41-42

وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَي رَبَّهُ أَنِّـي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ

ارْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ

41. "And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord 'Verily, Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment'."

42. "(We told him:) 'Stamp with your foot, here is a cool washing-place and a drink'."

The history of the great men should not be forgotten. The history of the Divine prophets is instructive even for the friends of Allah: because being acquainted with others' difficulties may strengthen patience and perseverance.

In the former verses the words were about Solomon and his glory which showed the god-given power and this itself was a glad tiding for the Prophet of Islam (S) and the Muslims of Mecca who were in a serious pressure at that proper time.

These verses are about Job, the sample of patience and perseverance in order to teach the Muslims of that day, today, and tomorrow to show perseverance in the face of difficulties of life, and to invite them to assistance and to make the good end of this patience clear.

Job is the third prophet a part of whose life story has been mentioned in this Surah, and our great Prophet was enjoined to remember his life story and to reiterate it for the Muslims so that they would not fear from tiresome difficulties and never become hopeless from the grace and favour of Allah.

The name or the life story of Job has been mentioned in several Suras of the Qur'an: in Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 163; and in Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 84 where only his name has been mentioned in the row of other Divine prophets in order to confirm the rank of his prophethood.

It is contrary to the existing Torah which has not counted him among the Divine prophets, but it introduces him as a rich righteous servant of Allah who had a lot of properties and children.

There is a short explanation about his life in Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verses 83 and 84, but his biography has been mentioned in the verses under discussion through four verses more in details than any other place of the Holy Qur'an.

The verse says:

"And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord 'Verily, Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment'."

The Qur'anic terms /nusb/ and /nasb/ both mean: toil and torment.

By the Arabic phrase /'abdana/, mentioned in this verse, firstly, the high rank of Job with Allah is clearly understood. Secondly, the holy verse ambiguously refers to the severe and tiresome afflictions of Job and that he had too much pain and toil.

The explanation of this affliction has not been mentioned in the Qur'an, but it has been said in the well known commentary books and traditions as follows:

"Someone asked Imam Sadiq (as):

'What was the affliction for that Job tolerated?' (And he thought Job had probably done a wrong action that Allah caused him to be so.)"

In reply to him, Imam Sadiq (as) gave a detailed answer the summery of which is as follows:

Job was not afflicted with those great calamities because of ungratefulness to blessings, but, on the contrary, it was for the gratitude to the blessings, since Satan said to Allah:

'If You find Job grateful, it is because of the abundant bounties You have given him. It is certain that if these bounties are taken from him, he surely will not be a thankful servant'.

In order to make the sincerity of Job clear to all, and to set him be grateful to Allah at the time of both bountifulness and pain, He let Satan dominate his whole world.

Satan asked Allah that Job's abundant wealth, his tilth, his sheep and his children would be entirely annihilated. Then the pests and calamities destroyed them all in a short length of time; but not only the status of the thankfulness of Job did not decrease, but also it was increased.

This time Satan asked to dominate over Job's body and he should be so sick that he would twist in bed as the result of pain and sickness.

This bodily sickness did not decrease anything from his state of thankfulness, either. But there happened something that annoyed Job and hurt his spirit very much. This event was that a group of the monks of the children of Israel came to meet him. They said:

'What have you done that you were afflicted with painful punishment?'

In answer to them Job said:

'By my Lord! There has not been any wrong, and I have always been studious in the obedience of Allah. Whenever I ate a little food, there have been an orphan and an indigent present at my table.'

It is true that Job became worried from this taunt of the friends more than any other calamities, yet he did not lose his patience and did not polluted the pure sincere thankfulness with ungratefulness.

He only turned to Allah and uttered the abovementioned sentences. Since he had passed the Divine examinations successfully, He opened the doors of His favour again to him, this patient servant, and He returned the last bounties to him one after another and even more than before so that everybody might know the good end of patience and gratitude.[1]

Some commentators believe that the pain and hurt of Satan to job might be from his different temptations. Sometime he said to Job that his sickness had become long and his Lord had forgotten him.

Sometimes he said:

"How great bounties you had! What a safety, power and strength you had and He took them all from you! Do you yet give thank to Him?"

Perhaps this commentary is for the sake that they have considered the domination of Satan on a prophet like Job and on his soul, property and progeny impossible.

But, regarding to the fact that firstly this domination had been done by the command of Allah, secondly it had been limited and temporal, and,

thirdly, it had been done for the trial of this great prophet and electing his degree, it brings no problem.

However, it is said that the sickness, pain, and hurt of Job prolonged seven years, or, according to another narration, it lasted eighteen years, and his circumstances changed to a state that his closest friends and companions left him.

It was only his wife who showed steadfastness in loyalty to Job. This is itself an evidence for the loyalty of some wives to their husbands.

But among all these calamities and pains what hurt the Job's spirit most was the taunts of the enemies.

So, a narration indicates that next to the time Job regained his health and the doors of Divine mercy were opened to him, he was asked what his worst pain was, and he said:

"The taunt of the enemies."[2]

Through the next verse Job was ordered as follows:

"(We told him:) 'Stamp with your foot, here is a cool washing-place and a drink'."

The Arabic term /'urkud/ is derived from /rakd/ in the sense of 'to stamp on the earth' and sometimes it means 'to run', and here it has been used in the first meaning.

The same Lord Who caused the spring of Zamzam to gush in that dry hot desert under the foot of Ishmael, that little baby, and the same Lord from Whose side is every motion, every stop, every bounty, and every merit, also issued this command for Job (as). The spring began gushing cold and wholesome water and cured his inside and outside sicknesses.

Some commentators believe that this spring had a kind of mineral water which had been both wholesome for drinking and the effects of remedy for the sicknesses. Whatever it was, it was the grace and mercy of Allah, the Almighty, for a patient Divine prophet.

The Arabic word /muqtasil/ means the water with which washing is done, while some others have taken it in the sense of the place of washing, but the first meaning is more correct. However that water being qualified with 'coldness', perhaps is a hint to the special effect of washing with cold water for health and bodily welfare, as it has been proved in the medicine of today.

It is also a tender hint to this fact that the perfection of water is in this thing that from the point of purity and cleanliness it should be like drinking water. The reference of this statement is that in Islamic recommendations we also recite that before having a ritual ablution, you do drink a little of its water.[3]

Surah Sad - Verses 43-44

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُم مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَذِكْرَى لأُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثاً فَاضْرِبْ بِّهِ وَلاَ تَحْنَثْ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِراً نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

43. "And we gave him his family and the like of them with them as a mercy from Us, and a reminder for those with understanding."

44. "And (We said to him:) 'Take in your hand a bunch of (thin) stick and strike (your wife) with it, and do not break your oath. Verily We found him patient, an excellent servant. Verily he was a penitent."

In hardships never be hopeless of the mercy of Allah. The first and the most important Divine blessing, which was health, convalescence, and safety, came back to Job and it was the turn of returning other merits and blessings.

In this regard, the Qur'an says:

"And we gave him his family and the like of them with them as a mercy from Us, and a reminder for those with understanding."

There are various commentaries said upon the question that how Job's family were returned to him. It is said that they had passed away and Allah returned them again to the life of the world.

But some other Qur'anic commentators say that as the result of the prolonged sickness of Job they went away from around of him and when Job gained back his health, they gathered around him again.

This probability has also been suggested that all, or at least some of them, had also been afflicted by kinds of sicknesses. So, the mercy of Allah enveloped them, too, and all of them gained their health back and gathered kindly around the father, Job.

The additional phrase 'The like of them with them' refers to this matter that Allah caused his family gathering to become warmer than before and He, the Merciful, granted him some more children.

There is nothing said in these verses about Job's wealth, but the context shows that Allah returned his properties back to him in a richer form, too.

It is interesting that, at the end of this verse, the aim of returning the Divine merits to Job is mentioned two things: one is the mercy of Allah to him, which has a personal aspect, and it is, in fact, a prize and reward from the side of Allah given to this patient servant; and the other is giving a lesson to all those who possess intellect and understanding throughout of the history, so that they do not lose their patience when facing with difficulties and terrible events and they may always be hopeful to the mercy of Allah.

The next verse indicates that the only problem that Job had was the oath he had taken in respect to his wife. It was so that he saw a wrong which she did and, at the time of his sickness, he swore that if he got his power, he would strike one hundred whips, or less than that, on her.

But after his convalescence, as a reward for her loyalties and services to him, he wanted to forgive her, but the problem of oath and the name of Allah hindered him.

Allah solved this problem for him, too, and as the Qur'an says:

"And (We said to him:) 'Take in your hand a bunch of (thin) stick and strike (your wife) with it, and do not break your oath…"

The Arabic term /diqth/ means a bundle of (thin) stick formed of stems of wheat and barely, or some branches of date strings or bundle of flower and the like.

The name of Job's wife, according to some narration, was Laya, the daughter of Jacob. Concerning her wrong action to Job, there have been different ideas cited among the Qur'anic commentators.

It has been narrated from Ibn-'Abbas, the famous Islamic commentator, who said that Satan, or a wicked person, appeared to Job's wife and said that he would treat her husband but the only condition he had was that when

Job had got his convalescence she would tell him (as) that he (the one) had been the only factor of his convalescence and he would demand no other wage.

The wife of Job, who was much inconvenienced for the continuation of the sickness of her husband, accepted it and she offered this suggestion to Job. Job, who knew the trap of Satan, became very angry and made an oath that he would punish his wife.

And, finally, in the last sentence of the holy verse under discussion, which, in fact, is an extract of this story from beginning to the end, it says:

"…Verily We found him patient, an excellent servant. Verily he was a penitent."

It is evident that Job's invocation to the presence of Allah and that he asked Him to remove the temptations of Satan and the pain and affliction of his sickness does not contradict with the rank of patience, tolerating pain, sickness and poverty for about seven years, or according to another tradition for eighteen years and yet being thankful.

It is noteworthy that in this sentence Job (as) has been qualified with three qualifications which whoever possesses is a complete human:

1- The rank of servitude;

2- Patience and perseverance; and

3- Constant returning to Allah.

When the waves of calamities and painful events surround a person from every side, he must not become hopeless and disappointed, but he should think of it as the sign and premise for the entrance of the Divine bounties.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"At the extremity of hardship comes relief, and at the tightening of the chains of tribulation comes ease." [4]

Surah Sad - Verses 45-48

وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَآ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُوْلِي الأَيْدِي وَالأَبصَارِ

إِنَّآ أَخْلَصْنَاهُم بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَي الدَّارِ

وَإِنَّهُمْ عِندَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الأَخْيَارِ

وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِنَ الأَخْيَارِ

45. "And remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men of might and insight."

46. "Verily We purified them by a pure quality, the remembrance of the Abode."

47. "And truly they are with Us of the elect, the good ones."

48. "And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Zulkifl, they all were of the good ones."

We must keep the history of the pure, the prophets, and the saints alive because the origin of all virtues of Divine prophets is servitude.

Following the former verses which explained some details about the lives of David, Solomon, and a shorter explanation about the life of Job and the outstanding points of the life of this great Divine prophet, the verses under discussion mention the names of six other great Divine prophets and have

briefly referred to their outstanding qualities which can be as examples for all human beings.

It is interesting that the Qur'an has mentioned six different specifications for these great prophets each of which contains a special meaning.

At first, the verse addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"And remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob…"

The rank of servitude is the first quality which has been mentioned for them and verily it contains everything. The servitude of Allah means having absolute dependence on Him. It means to have no will against His will, and obeying His command in all conditions.

The servitude of Allah means to be self-sufficient from other than Him and being heedless to what is other than Allah and being hopeful to only His grace. This is the very summit of man's perfection and it is his highest dignity and honour. Then, the Qur'an implies that they possessed some strong hands and mighty eyes.

It adds:

"…men of might and insight."

The Arabic word /'aidi/ is the plural form of /yad/, and /absar/ is the plural form of /basar/ in the sense of 'eye' and 'insight'.

For gaining his aims, man needs two powers: the power of discrimination, and the power of work and activity. In other words, he must get help from knowledge and strength so that he reaches his aim.

Allah has qualified these prophets with having 'the strong ability of comprehension, discrimination, and insight' and 'enough might for performing actions'.

They were not some unaware persons. The level of their religious knowledge was high. They had some considerable acknowledgment of the religion of Allah, the secrets of creation and the mysteries of life.

From the points of will, decision, and the power of action, they were not some feeble, despicable, weak and unable persons, but they were some wilful and powerful persons with strong decisive decisions.

This is an example for all those who pave the path of the truth that, after the rank of servitude of Allah, they must be equipped with these two effective arms.

It was made clear by what was said that the terms 'hands' and 'eyes' here do not mean the two particular limbs, because there are many people who have these two limbs, but they have neither an enough apprehension, nor power of making decision, nor ability of action. So, these two wards indicate to the two qualities of 'knowledge' and 'power'.

For their fourth quality, in the next verse, Allah says:

"Verily We purified them by a pure quality, the remembrance of the Abode."

Yes, they were always in the remembrance of the next world. Their sight in the life was not limited to the few days of living in this world with its few pleasures. Beyond this temporary life, they saw the perpetual abode with its infinite bounties, and they always tried and struggled for it.

Therefore, the real purpose of the Arabic term: /’ad-dar/ (abode), which has been mentioned absolutely, is the abode in the next world. It seems there is no abode other than that, and whatever exists other than that is a pass way towards Him.

Some of the commentators have suggested this probability that the purpose of the Qur’anic word /’ad-dar/ mentioned here is the abode of this world, and the application of the Qur’anic phrase: /ðikr-ad-dar/ refers to the good name which has remained from these prophets in this world.

But this probability seems very improbable specially regarding to the absoluteness of the term /’ad-dar/, and it does not so consistent with the word /ðikra/ (remembrance), either.

However, others may sometimes remember the abode of the next world, specially when one of their friends passes away, or they attend in the ceremonies of funeral, or remembrance meeting, of one of their dear relatives, but this remembrance is not pure and sincere, it is mixed with the remembrance of the world.

But the godly men have a sincere, deep, constant and continual attention to the next world, as if it is always present before their eyes, and the application of the Qur’anic word /xalisah/ in the verse refers to this very meaning.

In the third verse the words are about the fifth and sixth qualities of theirs which have been mentioned in the next verse, too.

It says:

“And truly they are with Us of the elect, the good ones.”

Their faith and righteous deeds have caused that Allah would elect them from among His servants and honoured them to the rank of prophecy.

Their righteousness had reached to an extend that they earned the title of ‘’Akhyar’ (the goodness) in its absolute meaning. Their thoughts were good, their temper, behaviour, and programs throughout their lives were good.

That is why some of the commentators have taken this meaning that Allah, without any condition, has called them /’axyar/ and used the rank of ‘innocence’ for the Divine prophets, because if a person is ‘absolute good’ he is certainly innocent.[5]

The application of the Arabic phrase /‘indana/ (with us) is a very expressive meaning.

It points to this fact that their being elected and their goodness is not with only people who sometimes commit kinds of negligence and sparing in their assessments, but the qualification with these two qualities by the phrase ‘with us’ is certain that this assessment has been done with full accuracy and from their outward and inward.

After pointing to the outstanding ranks of three prophets, the turn comes to other three prophets, and it says:

“And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Zulkifl, they all were of the good ones.”

Each of these prophets had been the example of patience perseverance, and obedience to the command of Allah (s.w.t.), specially Ishmael who agreed to sacrifice his life in the way of Allah and that was why he was called /ðabihallah/ (the sacrificed in the cause of Allah).

He, accompanied with his father Abraham, helped in building the House of Ka‘bah and furnishing this great centre, which survives the spirit of piety, sacrifice, and donation in human beings, and makes them resisting against the difficulties and horrible events.

The application of the clause: ‘they all were of the good ones’, regarding that this very quality (good ones) was exactly used for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the last quality of theirs, may refer to this fact that these three prophets have had the whole qualities of the former three prophets, because ‘the absolute good’ has a vast meaning which envelops both prophethood, and attention to the next world, and the rank of servitude, knowledge and power.

Among these three prophets, Ishmael is the most famous and known.

But Elisha, whose name has been mentioned two times in the Qur’an[6] as the Qur’an indicates, is one of the great prophets of Allah, and he is among those about whom Allah says:

“…and everyone (of them) did We prefer above all beings.”[7]

Some commentators believe that he (Al-Yasa‘) is the same as Yusha‘-Ibn-Nun, the famous prophet of the Children of Israel to whose name the Arabic ‘Alif’ and ‘Lam’ have been added and the letter Shin (š) has been changed into Sin (s), while adding ’Alif and Lam to a non-Arabic name (and here Hebrew) is not a new thing, in the same way that Arabs know ‘Alexander’ as ‘Al-Alexander’.

Some others think that ‘Al-Yasa‘’ is an Arabic word which is derived from /yasa‘a/ (a verb in future tense taken from /wus‘at/), and after that it was used as a noun, the letters ’Alif and Lam, which an Arabic noun is qualified with, were added to it.

The verse No. 86 of Surah Al-’An‘am shows that Elisha was from the progeny of Abraham, but it does not make clear whether he had been one of the prophets of the children of Israel, or not.

In Torah in the book ‘The Kings’ his name has been recorded ‘Al-Yasha‘’, the son of Shafat; and the word Al-Yasha‘ in the Hebrew language means: ‘deliverer’ and the word ‘Shafat’ means: ‘Judge’.

Some commentators have taken him and Khidr the same, but there is not a clear evidence available for this meaning. Some others say that he is the same as Zulkifl but this contrast the explicit text of the verse under discussion because the word ‘Zulkifl’ has been added to Al-Yasa‘. However, he is a high-ranked and resisting prophet, and this is enough for us to take inspiration from his life.

It is known that Zulkifl had been one of the prophets and the existence of his name in Surah Al-’Anbiya’, No. 21, verse 85 in the row of the names of prophets after the names of Ishmael and Enoch (’Idris) is an evidence for this meaning.

Some commentators believe that he is one of the prophets of the Children of Israel. It is said that he was Jacob’s son whose main name was ‘Bushr’, or Bashir, or Sharaf, while some others say that he is the same as Hizqil (Ezekiel) for whom Zulkifl has been chosen as nick name.[8]

That why he has been called Zulkifl, regarding to the fact that /kafl/ has been used in the sense of both ‘share’ and surety ship (to stand bail), there

have been delivered different probabilities. Sometimes they have said: since Allah had given him a large share of rewards and of His mercy he has been called Zulkifl, the owner of sufficient share.

Sometimes they have said: Since he had promised that he would get up for worship at nights, to be fast during the days, and would never be angry at the time of judgment, and kept this his promise, this nickname was given to him.

And sometimes they have said since he stood bail a group of the prophets of the children of Israel and protected their lives against the cruel king of the time he was called by this name.

However, this very amount that we know about his life today is an evidence upon his steadfastness in the path of obedience and servitude of Allah and resistance against the tyrant which can be as an example for us now and our future, though because of long length of time we can not judge minutely about the details of their lives.

Surah Sad - Verses 49-51

هَذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ

جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ مُفَتَّحَةً لَهُمُ الأَبْوَابُ

مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَرَابٍ

49. "This is a reminder; and verily for the pious there is an excellent resort."

50. "Gardens of perpetuity, whereof the gates are open to them."

51. "Wherein they recline, and wherein they call for fruits abundant, and drink."

The Qur'anic term /ðikr/ has different dimensions:

Qur'an is the Reminder:

"Verily, We Ourself have sent down the Reminder…".[9]

Prayer is /ðikr/ (remembrance):

"And establish prayer for My remembrance."[10]

The history of the elites is also /ðikr/ (reminder):

"…This (Qur'an) is a blessed Reminder…"[11]

The history of the elites is a means of: vigilance, remembrance, and learning lessons; while piety is the means of having a good end.

From here on, there begins another variety of theme of the verses of this Surah where the pious ones are compared with the disobedient ones. These verses, explaining the fates of these two groups in Hereafter, on the whole complete the discussions in the former verses.

At first, as a conclusion from the life stories of the past prophets and pointing to the instructive points of their lives, it says:

"This is a reminder…"

Yes, the purpose of pointing to some parts of their glorious history was not merely telling stories.

Its aim was a remembrance and admonition, as this issue has been being emphasized from the beginning of this Surah:

"Sad (S). By the Qur'an, full of admonition"

The aim is to awaken the negligent thoughts, elevating the level of knowledge and cognizance; increasing the strength of perseverance and steadfastness in Muslims for whom these holy verses have been sent down.

Then the issue is changed from stating about the private form of the lives of the prophets into a general form, and the destiny of the pious ones is discussed in general.

It says:

"…and verily for the pious there is an excellent resort."

After this short ambiguous sentence which illustrates their welfare briefly, the second verse, by using the style of epitome and expansion, which is the style of the Qur'an, explains it (their resort) in details.

It says:

"Gardens of perpetuity, whereof the gates are open to them."

The Qur'anic term /jannat/ refers to the gardens of Paradise; and the term /'adn/ is in the sense of 'stand still' and 'perpetuity', and the Arabic word /ma'dan/ (mine) is so called because metals and some precious materials are settled there. However, the usage of this meaning here is a hint to the perpetuity of the gardens of Paradise.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase:

"The gates are open to them"

points to this that there is not even the trouble of opening the doors for the people of Paradise. It seems Paradise is waiting for them, and when Paradise meets them, it opens its bosom and invites them to enter.

This peace and special reverence of the people of Paradise is stated in the third verse in this form:

"Wherein they recline, and wherein they call for fruits abundant, and drink."

Whenever they desire anything of them, immediately it comes to them. But whether the servants of Paradise bring them before them or only their will is enough that they come to them, both probabilities exist.

The emphasis on 'fruit' and 'drink' may refer to this matter that the utmost food of the people of Paradise is fruit, though, according to the verses of the Holy Qur'an other kinds of food are also available there. It is in the same way that the best and the healthiest food of man in this world is fruit, too.

The application of the word 'abundant' points to the kinds of fruit in Paradise; as its drink and its 'purified drink' are in various kinds, too. These facts have been pointed out in different verses of the Qur'an.

Surah Sad - Verses 52-54

وَعِندَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ أَتْرَابٌ

هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَالَهُ مِن نَّفَادٍ

52. "And beside them will be chaste women restraining their glances, (companions) of equal age."

53. "This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning."

54. "Verily this is Our sustenance for which there is no end."

Reclining on the thrones, eating fruits, drinking pure drinks, and having spouse all are signs that the Resurrection is of the bodily resurrection.

The words in this verse are about the chaste women in Paradise.

It says:

"And beside them will be chaste women restraining their glances, (companions) of equal age."

The Arabic word /tarf/ means eyelid, and it has also been used in the sense of 'to look'.

The women of Paradise qualified by: "restraining their glances, (companions) of equal age" indicates that those women look only at their husbands and they are in love of only them and they do not think of anyone other than them, and this is one of the greatest advantages of a wife.

Some of the commentators have also rendered it into the state of languish of the eye which is an attractive state. The combination of these two meanings is also possible.

The Arabic term /'atrab/ in the sense of 'of equal age' is another attribute for the women of Paradise comparing their husbands, because the equality of age increases the attraction between two spouses. Or it is a description for those women themselves that they are all of the same age and they are young. The word /'atrab/ is the plural form of /tirb/.

In the next verse of the verses under discussion, all the great blessings of the people of Paradise, which were mentioned in the previous verses, are pointed out.

It says:

"This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning."

It is a promise which does not fail, it is pleasant, and is a promise from the side of Allah.

In order to emphasize on the eternity of these merits, Allah adds:

"Verily this is Our sustenance for which there is no end."

Therefore, the sadness of destruction, which we have for the blessings of this world, does not exist in the next world. Those blessings are always helped by the Divine sources and there is no limit for them, and there will not appear even any decrease in them, because they exist under the Will of Allah.

Surah Sad - Verses 55-57

هَذَا وَإِنَّ لِلطَّاغِينَ لَشَرَّ مَآبٍ

جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

هَذَا فَلْيَذُوقُوهُ حَمِيمٌ وَغَسَّاقٌ

55. "This (for the righteous), and verily for the wicked ones there is an evil resort."

56. "Hell, wherein they enter, an evil is the place,"

57. "This water is boiling and pus, so let them taste it."

Piety is at the top of all virtues, while contumacy and despotism is at the top of all vices, and contumacy is the cause of an evil end.

The verses which are under discussion, by using the style of opposition and comparison, which the Qur'an applies much, point to the evil end and various punishments of the wicked and disobedient ones against Allah.

At first, it says:

"This (for the righteous), and verily for the wicked ones there is an evil resort."

The excellent resort of the pious was pointed out before (verse 49) and now the wicked ones have an evil resort.

The next holy verse, by using the style of epitome and expansion, explains this ambiguous sentence by saying: this evil resort, into which they will enter and will be burnt in its Fire, is Hell:

"Hell, wherein they enter, an evil is the place,"

It seems that the Qur'anic phrase: /yaslunaha/ (they will enter Hell and will be burnt) is for the statement of this that no one imagines that they only see Hell from a far distance, or they will be beside it, no, they will enter into its inside; and also that nobody imagines that they will be accustomed to the Fire of Hell and will be able to tolerate it; no, they will be constantly burning in it.

The Qur'anic term /mihad/, as was mentioned before, means a bed which is stretched for sleep and rest. It is also used for the cradle of a child.

Bed is the place of resting and from any point of view it must be fitting and pleasant for a person. But how will be the situation of those whose bed is the Fire of Hell?

The third verse refers to other kinds of their punishment.

It says:

"This water is boiling and pus, so let them taste it."

The Qur'anic word /hamim/ means: 'Some hot and boiling water'. It is one of the drinks of the people in Hell, opposite to the 'purified drink' which was mentioned for the people of Paradise in former verses.

The Qur'anic term /qassaq/ is derived from /qasaq/ in the sense of the intense dark of night. Ibn-Abbas has rendered it into a very cold drink which because of intense of coldness burns the man's inside and hurts it.

But there is not anything in the meaning of the root of this word which denotes to this meaning except its opposition with the word /hamim/ which means 'hot blazing water' and this may have been the origin of such understanding.

Raqib in Mufradat has rendered it into the drops that come out from the skin of the body of the people of Hell (the pusses of their body).

The dark colour of it necessarily has caused this word to be used, because the products of that blazing Fire are not anything but some burnt bodies with some black exudations in the Hell.

However, it is understood from some of the words that /qassaq/ (pus) has a very bad sharp smell which hurts everybody.

Some others have rendered it into a kind of penalty that none knows it save Allah, because they have committed some great sins and grievous tyrannies that none has been aware of them except Allah and their retribution must be such, too. It is in the same manner that the pious people of Paradise used to do some righteous deeds which knew none except Allah,

and, therefore, they have been promised some rewards which knows none save Allah; the Holy Qur'an says:

"And no person knows what (important reward) is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes, in recompense for what (good) they were doing."[12]

Surah Sad - Verses 58-61

وَءَاخَرُ مِن شَكْلِهِ أَزْوَاجٌ

هَذَا فَوْجٌ مُقْتَحِمٌ مَعَكُمْ لاَ مَرْحَباً بِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ

قَالُوا بَلْ أَنتُمْ لاَ مَرْحَباً بِكُمْ أَنتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوهُ لَنَا فَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَن قَدَّمَ لَنَا هَذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَاباً ضِعْفاً فِي النَّارِ

58. "And other punishments of a similar kind to match them!"

59. "(To their leaders it shall be said:) 'This is a group (of your followers) rushing in with you.' (They say:) 'There is no welcome for them! Verily they shall enter the Fire'!"

60. "They say: 'No, it is you have no welcome: you forwarded it for us; how evil is the abode'."

61. "They say: 'Our Lord! Whoever has forwarded this for us, increase him a twofold chastisement in the Fire'."

On the Day of Hereafter, the followers of corruption will hate their leaders.

By the way, the others' invitation to sin does not remove the responsibility of the sinner.

Again these holy verses refer to other kinds of their painful punishments.

The Qur'an says:

"And other punishments of a similar kind to match them!"

The Arabic word /šakl/ means 'like', and the Qur'anic term /'azwaj/ here means 'kinds, sorts', and this is a slight hint to some other kinds of punishment like the aforementioned punishments which have been stated here ambiguously, and maybe they are not explainable and understandable for the prisoners of this world of material.

This, in fact, is the opposite point of 'abundant fruits' which was mentioned in the former verses and pointed to the kinds of different bounties and fruits in Paradise.

However, this similarity may be in severity, and in troublesome, or in all aspects.

The next holy verse points to their last punishment. This punishment is their companions, bad language with full of scorn.

The verse implies that when the leaders of mischief arrive into Hell and by their eyes see that their followers are being brought into Hell, too, they shall say to each other as follows:

"(To their leaders it shall be said:) 'This is a group (of your followers) rushing in with you.' (They say:) 'There is no welcome for them! Verily they shall enter the Fire'!"

The Qur'anic sentence saying:

"This is a group (of your followers) rushing in with you…",

with the context of the later sentences and verses, is from among the statements of the leaders of corruption.

When they see their followers are going to enter into Hell, they tell each other that these will be with you, too. Some commentators have also said that this is a sentence from the side of the angels addressing to the leaders of infidelity and disobedience; but the first meaning is more suitable.

The Arabic word /marhaba/ is a word which is said to a guest when he is welcome, but the Arabic word /la marhaba/ is opposite to it. This word is derived from infinitive /rahb/ in the sense of the vastness of place; it means: 'You are welcome that you have arrived in a vast and suitable place'. The equivalent of it is 'welcome'.

The Qur'anic word /muqtaham/ is derived from /'iqtiham/ in the sense of arriving into a hard and horrible deed; and it is often used in the case of arriving into some things without previous thought and study, too.

This application shows that the followers of mischief will arrive into the severe and horrible Fire of Hell because of only their carnal desires and blind limitations without formerly thought and study.

However, those followers hear this sound and they become very angry because of the leaders of mischief's saying 'no welcome' for them.

They will address them and say, as the verse says:

"They say: 'No, it is you have no welcome: you forwarded it for us; how evil is the abode'."

This recent sentence: 'How evil is the abode' is, in fact, the opposite point to 'Gardens of perpetuity' (verse 50) which was mentioned about the pious ones, indicating that the great calamity is that Hell is not a temporary abode, but it is a permanent abode.

The purpose of 'the followers' from this meaning is that they want to say whatever it is, it has this goodness that you, the leaders of mischief, are in the same thing that we are, and this is the remedy of our heart. Or it points to this matter that your crimes, the leaders, unto us, are some great ones, because Hell is not a temporary abode for all of us, but it is our permanent abode.

Yet, the followers do not suffice to this saying, because they thought that the chiefs of mischief, who were the main factor of the crime, were more deserving than them.

So they turn to Allah and express as the verse says:

"They say: 'Our Lord! Whoever has forwarded this for us, increase him a twofold chastisement in the Fire'."

There must be a punishment for their aberration, and the second punishment must be for making us aberrant.

This verse is similar to what is said in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 17, verse 38 which says:

"…'Our Lord! These are they who led us astray. Therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire.'…".

Though the same verse continues saying that both of them will have double chastisement, because the followers were also the executive factors of the leaders and the grounds of mischief and astray were provided by them, and if people do not help the tyrant they will not have power to do anything.

But, in any case, there is no doubt that the leaders will have a more grievous punishment, though both of them have double chastisement.

Yes, this is the end of those who made friend with each other and promised to lead others astray, and when they see the result of their evil deeds they will become the enemy of each other and curse each other.

It is noteworthy that the blessings of the pious are more various than the punishments of the disobedient: (there are seven merits mentioned for the former and five punishments for the latter.). This may be for the sake of preceding Allah's Mercy to His wrath.

We say:

"O' He Whose mercy precedes His wrath."

Surah Sad - Verses 62-64

وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لاَ نَرَي رِجَالاً كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُم مِنَ الأَشْرَارِ

أَتَّخَذْنَاهُمْ سِخْرِيّاً أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمُ الأَبْصَارُ

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

62. "And they say: 'What has happened to us that we do not see the men whom we counted among the wicked ones?'"

63. "Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock or have our eyes missed them?"

64. "Verily the disputing of the inhabitants of the Fire is a Fact."

In Hereafter everybody seeks for an accomplice in crime in order to put his sin on his shoulder.

These verses continues the discussions of the people of Hell, which were referred to in the former verses, and states one of their other debates which denotes to a deep tiresome regret of theirs that causes them a spiritual torture.

It implies that when the chiefs of astray look around them in Hell they ask this question, as the verse says:

"And they say: 'What has happened to us that we do not see the men whom we counted among the wicked ones?'"

Yes, when persons such as Bujahl, Bulahab and the like see that there is no sign of the existence of the persons like 'Ammar-i-Yasir, Khabab, Sahab, and Bilal in Hell, they come to themselves and will ask each other: 'Then, what happened to such people?'

We counted them as a group of vicious people, some mischief-mongers in the earth, and the wicked ones who used to try to confuse the calmness of the society and to destroy the honour of our ancestors. It seems that we were wrong.

Some Islamic narrations indicate that once a group of the Shi'ites came to Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) and complained that there were a group who called them Rafidi and considered them worse than idolaters and pagans.

Imam (as) made an oath that the Shi'ites will be involved in their intercession and those people will seek them in Hell, and then he recited this verse, saying:

"And they say: 'What has happened to us that we do not see the men whom we counted among the wicked ones?'"[13]

In the next verse the Qur'an says:

"Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock or have our eyes missed them?"

Yes, they will say that they took these great men, who were of the personality, for laughing, and used to wrongly call them some wicked people; and sometimes they even came lower than this and considered them as some despised persons.

But it became known that their carnal desires, ignorance, and pride had put a curtain over their eyes so that they could not see that they were some near-stationed persons with Allah and now Paradise is their abode.

Some other Islamic commentators have suggested another probability for the commentary of the above verse.

They have said the issue of mockery points to the situation of this world and the sentence:

"…or have our eyes missed them"

refers to the situation of the Hell. That is, their eyes can not see them in the midst of flames of fire and smoke. But, of course, the first meaning seems more proper.

This point is notable that one of the lacks of understanding the facts is not to take the issues earnest and mocking the facts. The fact must always be dealt with an earnest decision so that the fact can be made clear.

As a conclusion to the debates between the people of Hell, and an emphasis on what was said, the third verse says:

"Verily the disputing of the inhabitants of the Fire is a Fact."

The people of Hell are involved in enmity and quarrel in this world, too, and the status of quarrelsomeness and disputation predominate them.

Every day they make quarrel with a person, and in Hereafter, where the inner things manifest, whatever they had in their inside will appear and they will dispute in Hell with each other. The friends of yesterday will be the enemies of today, and the followers of yesterday become the opponents of today.

It is only the line of faith and monotheism which is the line of unity and sincerity both in this world and the next.

It is interesting that the inhabitants of Paradise are sitting on the thrones, busy speaking friendly, as the verses of the Qur'an denote, while the inhabitants of Hell are disputing and quarrelling. That itself is a great merit, and this is a painful punishment.

Notes

1. The commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, 'Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim, Qurtabi, Fakhr-i-Razi, Safi, and 'A'lam-ul-Qur'an
2. Bihar, Vol. 12, P. 351
3. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, tradition one.
4. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, saying 351
5. The commentary by Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 26, P. 229

www.alhassanain.org/english

6. here and Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 86
7. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 86
8. 'A'lam-ul-Qur'an, Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Rouh-ul-Bayan, and Almizan each of which has pointed to a part of the matters
9. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 9
10. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 50
11. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 14
12. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 17
13. The commentary books of Atyab-ul-Bayan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, and kanz-ud-Daqayiq.

Section 5: The Great Tiding

Surah Sad - Verses 65-68

قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ مُنذِرٌ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ
رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِ زُ الْغَفَّارُ
قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌاْ عَظِيمٌ
أَنتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ

65. "Say: 'I am only a Warner and there is no god but Allah, the One, the Almighty',"

66. "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and what is between them two, the Almighty, the Most Forgiving."

67. "Say: 'It is a message of (great) importance,"

68. "From which you are turning away'."

The Arabic word /qahhar/ is in the sense of the supreme Power that all powers are overpowered and condemned by it.

All the previous discussions, whether those which speak about the painful punishment of the people of Hell or those which discuss the worldly chastisement of the former sinful peoples all are as warnings and threats for the polytheists, arrogant ones, and oppressors.

This very matter is pursued in these verses, saying:

"Say: 'I am only a Warner…"

It is true that the Prophet (S) is the giver of glad tidings, too, and the verses of the Qur'an refer to both of them, but since 'glad tidings' is for the believers and 'warning' is for the polytheists and mischief- mongers, and here the words address the recent group, then only warning is emphasized.

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

"…and there is no god but Allah, the One, the Almighty',"

The emphasis on His Wrath is also for the same purpose so that none might be proud of His Grace and counts himself far from His Wrath and enters in the course of infidelity and sin.

As the mentioning of the reason for Monotheism and worship of Allah, the next verse immediately adds:

"Lord of the heavens and the earth, and what is between them two, the Almighty, the Most Forgiving."

In this verse, in fact, three qualifications of the attributes of Allah have been stated, each of which is for proving a separate purpose. The first issue is His Divinity unto the whole world of existence. He is the Owner of this world entirely, a Possessor Who trains and directs them. The only One is worthy of being worshipped that is such, not the idols which have nothing of their own.

The second issue is his Might. We know that the Qur'anic word /'aziz/ from the point of meaning is called to a person unto whom none can overcome, and whatever he wills is doable; and, in other words, he is always victorious and never is defeated.

The one, who has such qualities, how is it possible to escape from his might? And how can a person be safe from his retribution?

The third quality is His Rank of Forgiveness, the All-Forgiving. He is the One Who opens all the doors to the sinners and showers the rain of His Mercy over them, so that they do not think that if He is Almighty and Powerful it does not mean that He shuts the doors of mercy and repentance to His servants.

In fact, one of them is the statement of 'fear' and the other is the statement of 'hope' that without the equality of these two the status of the man's development is not possible: he either will be involved in pride and negligence, or dives into the whirl pool of despair and hopelessness.

In, other words, qualifying Him with 'Almighty' and 'most forgiving' is another proof over His Divinity, because He is worthy of being worshipped since, besides Lordship, and having the Power of punishing, the doors of His mercy and forgiveness are also open.

In the third and fourth verses, the Prophet (S) is addressed by two short but expressive sentences:

"Say: 'It is a message of (great) importance,"

"From which you are turning away'."

Which message is this that the Qur'an has pointed out and counted it important? Is it the Holy Qur'an? Or is it the prophecy of the Prophet (S)? Or is it Hereafter and the fate of the believers and disbelievers? Or is it the Unity and singleness of Allah? Or are they all?

In view of the fact that the Qur'an envelops all of these things the rejection of the disbelievers has also been upon it, the first meaning, i.e. the Qur'an, is the most fitting one.

Yes, this heavenly great Book is an important message, as great as the whole world of existence, which has been sent down from the side of the Creator of this world, Who is Almighty, Most Forgiving, and the One. It is a message that a lot of people did not find out its greatness at the time of its revelation.

A group of them mocked it, and some others called it a sorcery, while some of them counted it poetry, but it did not last so much that this 'great news' showed its inside. It changed the way of mankind, and it was stretched over the expanse of the world. It created a great bright civilization in all fields.

And it is interesting that the announcement of this 'great news' is in this Meccan Surah, at the time when the Muslims were apparently in utmost weakness, and the doors of victory were all shut to them.

Even today the greatness of this important message is not completely clear to human beings and even to the Muslims themselves, and future must show it. (By the way, according to some Islamic narrations, the purpose of /naba'-un-'azim/ 'a great News' is Ali (as))

It has been recorded in Atyab-ul-Bayan, the commentary, concerning the above holy verse that in the narrations of the immaculate Imams (as) the phrase /naba'-un-'azim/ (the great news) has been rendered into Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as); as Kulayni has narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"It is about Amir-ul-Mu'mineen".

And Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"There is no sign for Allah which is greater than me, and there is no message for Allah greater than me!"

And it has been narrated from Muhammad-ibn-il-Hassan-is-Saffar documented from Hadrat Sadiq (as) who said:

"And 'message' means Imamate".

The explanation of this saying is that the sacred religion of Islam is complete, beyond entire and perfect, which contains all the true beliefs, excellent ethics, scientific and social aspects, and righteous deeds.

It is free from any blemish and defect which exist in incorrect beliefs, corrupt epithets, and wrong deeds; but all of them are as the body of Islam which are perfect from any kind of view. But the body is without spirit and it is not more than a statue.

The spirit of Islam is 'Wilayah' (guardianship), and the faith is not faith save with guardianship. All worships and good deeds depend on the acceptance of the person's 'guardianship'.

The evidence for this that the purpose of /naba'-il-'azim/ (great message) is guardianship, not in what the commentators have said that the holy verses:

"Say: 'It is a message of (great) importance,"

"From which you are turning away"

address the Muslims, because pagans and polytheists turn away from Islam, religion and the Qur'an entirely and they turn away even from Monotheism and messengership, not only from the 'great message' in particular, and it is the Muslims who turn away from guardianship.

Moreover in the verse of Surah An-Naba', pagans and polytheists do not differ in Islam but they completely deny Islam and difference exists in Muslims in relation to the matter of guardianship and Imamate.[1]

Of course, this statement of the Qur'an which says:

"From which you are turning away"

is still true, and this very turning away of Muslims has caused that they are not able to be satiated fully from this gushing spring of the blessing of Allah, and go forward under the light of it and occupy the peaks of honour and dignity.

Surah Sad - Verses 69-70

مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلأِ الأَعْلَى إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

إِن يُوحَى إِلَيَّ إِلاَّ أَنَّمَآ أَنَاْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

69. "I had no knowledge of the High Council when they disputed."

70. "Naught is revealed to me save that I am a clear Warner."

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /mala'-il-'a'la/ (High Council) is the same thing that is said in Surah An-Najm, No. 53 verse 7:

"While he was in the highest part of the horizon".

And the aim of Mi'raj (Muhammad's ascension to Heaven) was the elevation of the level of the knowledge of the Prophet (S):

"…that We show him (some) of Our signs…"[2]

In this holy verse, as a premise for mentioning the event of the creation of Adam and the high value of the Essence of Man so much so that all angels prostrate before him, it says:

"I had no knowledge of the high Council when they disputed."

In the next verse he announces that his knowledge is only by the way of revelation.

The verse says:

"Naught is revealed to me save that I am a clear Warner."

Though the angels had no dispute and enmity with Allah, yet as soon as He, addressing them, said:

"Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy'…"

They began debating with each other and

"…they said: 'Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood…?"

Then, in answer to them, He said:

"…'Assuredly I know what you know not."[3]

These debates have been called 'dispute' which is a permissible action, and, as we pointed out, this, in fact, is a premise for the coming verses which talk about the creation of Adam.

There is also another probability that the Qur'anic phrase: /mala'-il-'a'la/ has a vast meaning which envelops even Satan, because at that time Satan was in the row of the angels and then he disputed with Allah and protested Him, and for this very reason he was sent out from the presence of Allah. But the first commentary is more suitable.

In several Islamic narrations recorded by both Sunnite and Shi'ah, we recite that once the Prophet (S) asked one of his companions:

"Do you know about what the angels of the High Council dispute?"

He answered:

"No".

The Prophet (S) said:

"They disputed about Kaffarat (the things compensate the sins) and Darajat (whatever increase the man's degrees).

So 'Kaffarat' include: taking ablution with cold water in winter, going toward the congregation prayer, and waiting for a prayer after another prayer, while 'Darajat' refers to much greeting, feeding food to others, and establishing midnight prayer when people's eyes are asleep."[4]

Of course, this point is also notable that the lack of Prophet's knowledge does not mean he did not know anything from him in this regard, but it means that he knew whatever was revealed to him.

Regarding the verse:

"I had no knowledge of the high council when they disputed."

some Islamic commentators have said:

"I was unaware of the above world when people were disputing about Ali's guardianship, but in the voyage to Mi'raj, the guardianship of Ali-ibn-Abitalib was discussed and was confirmed. Then do not think that his Imamate is my own personal attitude, whatever is it is the Divine revelation."[5]

Surah Sad - Verses 71-74

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلآئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَراً مِن طِينٍ

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلآئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ
إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

71. "When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create a mortal out of mire."

72. "When I have completed him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall you down in prostration unto him."

73. "Then the angels did fall prostrating all together,"

74. "Save Iblis, he was proud and he was of the disbelievers."

It has been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

"Allah created Adam and set Ahl-ul-Bayt in his progeny and it was for honouring us that He issued the command of prostration. Then the fact that Adam was prostrated it was servitude to Allah and respect for Adam, because we were in his loin."

As we said before, these verses are as an explanation upon

"The dispute of the High Council"

and Iblis, as well as a talk about the creation of Adam and, on the whole, the aim of the statement of this event is that, firstly, to remind humankind that their entity is so valuable that all angels fell themselves in prostration for their grand father, Adam (as).

With this great dignity, how man becomes captive in the grips of Satan and the carnal desire? How does he leave his own great value, or prostrate before a piece of stone and wood?

In principle, one of the effective methods in training, is to give personality unto the persons who are being trained, or, in a more correct meaning, their high and valuable personality should be remind them and it is in such circumstances that man feels that lowliness and deviation is not suitable for his rank, and spontaneously he abdicates it.

Secondly, the obstinacy, pride, haughtiness, and envy of Satan caused him to fall down from the peak of honour forever and to encounter the curse of Allah. This can be a warning for all obstinate and proud persons so that they take a lesson and abandon the Satan's manner.

Thirdly, it informs of the existence of such a great enemy who swore to beguile man, so that everybody be aware not to fall in his trap.

All these clear matters are as a complement to the former discussions.

However, the first verse mentioned in the above says you may remember:

"When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create a mortal out of mire."

But in order that it would not be considered that the man's entity is the same as the dimension of his being from soil, in the next verse, it says:

"When I have completed him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall you down in prostration unto him."

In the third verse it indicates that in this way the creation of man ended and the spirit of Allah and the dark clay (mire) both were mixed with together and a wonderful being, whose ascent and descent were both limitless, was created. He was an extraordinary talented being who could be worthy of the rank of Allah's deputy, who came into the world of existence.

The verse says:

"Then the angels did fall prostrating all together,"

All angels without an exception fell in prostration and found that the Creator is worthy of being worshipped Who is Mighty in all things and can produce such a beautiful being from some fluid and clay.

Then in the fourth verse it adds:

"Save Iblis, he was proud and he was of the disbelievers."

Yes, the worst calamity of man is this very pride which casts the dark curtains of ignorance over his seeing eyes and deprives him from understanding the facts. It makes him disobey and causes him to be sent out from the row of the believers, which is the row of the obedient servants of Allah, and sets him in the row of the pagans, which is the row of disobedient ones, in the same manner that He set 'Iblis.

Surah Sad - Verses 75-78

قَالَ يَآ إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَن تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ

قَالَ أَنَاْ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

75. "(Allah) said: 'O' Iblis! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands? Are you proud or are you of the exalted ones?'"

76. "(Iblis) said: 'I am better than he: You created me from fire and You created him from clay'."

77. "(Allah) said: 'Then get out of it for verily you are driven away'."

78. "And verily on you shall be My Curse till the Day of Judgment."

According to what the Prophet of Islam (S) said, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /'alin/ is a group of beings who are higher than the angels and who originate from another rank, stage, and place.[6]

Perhaps, the purpose of the holy Prophet (S) is the same thing that in Jami'ah Supplication, addressing Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), we recite:

"Allah created you as lights and set you in His 'Arsh and He even favoured on us by you, and for making human kind able to reach your guidance, He set you in some parts of the earth to be the cite of the call of Monotheism, (Allah knows)."

However, in this holy verse, Iblis was taken to task and questioned.

The verse says:

"(Allah) said: 'O' Iblis! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands?…"

It is evident that the application of the Arabic word: /yadayy/ (two hands) does not mean the bodily hands, because He is far from being a 'body', but hand here denotes to power, since man usually uses his power by hands. So, this word is used abundantly in daily conversations in the sense of 'power'.

It is sometimes said that the so and so country is in the hand of so and so group; or and so temple or great building has been built by the hand of so and so person. Sometimes it is said: 'My hand is short' or 'your hand is full'. According to Imam Sadiq's statement (as), the purpose of 'two hands' is the hands of power and knowledge.[7]

And in neither of the usages, hand does not mean the special limb of the body, but all of these ironically mean Power and Sovereignty.

And since man does the important actions by his two hands, and using the two hands is the sign of man's utmost attention and interest to a thing, mentioning this meaning in the above mentioned verse indicates to the special regard of Allah and applying His absolute power in the creation of man.

Then, it continues:

"…Are you proud or are you of the exalted ones?'"

No doubt none can claim that his honour and position is above this that he prostrates for Allah (or for Adam by the command of Allah). Therefore, there remains only the second probability, that is, pride.

Some of the commentators have rendered the Qur'anic word /'alin/ here in the sense of those who are always in the way of pride, and therefore the sentence means: 'Are you proud only just now, or have you ever been so?' but the first meaning seems more suitable.

The second verse implies that, with utmost surprise, Satan chose the second item, and he believed he was better than this that he would be ordered such a command.

Therefore, with a full insolence, he tried to reason his disobedience to the command of Allah by this statement:

"(Iblis) said: 'I am better than he: You created me from fire and You created him from clay'."

Indeed, he wanted to negate, as he thought, the command of Allah by three premises:

The first is that he said he was created from fire while Adam was created from clay, and this has been a fact, as the Qur'an testifies it:

"He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels,"

"And He created the jinn of a flame of fire."[8]

The second premise is that whatever is created from fire is better than whatever was created from clay, because fire is more superior than clay.

The third premise is that never a superior being should be ordered to prostrate in front of a non-superior being. And the whole mistake of Iblis was in these two recent premises, because, firstly, Adam (as) was not from only clay, but his greatness was because of the Divine spirit which was inspired in him, else how clay could be compared with those honours, talents and developments.

Secondly, not only soil is not lower than fire, but also it is very higher than it. The entire elements of life, living, and main sources come from soil. Plants, flowers, and all living creatures get help from soil.

All precious mines are hidden in the soil, and, shortly speaking, soil is the origin of kinds of blessings, while fire, with all the importance which has in man's living, never reaches the position of soil. It is only a mean for taking benefit from the earthly mines, a dangerous and distractive means. Moreover, the kindling matters are often produced by soil: (wood, coal, oil, and the like).

Thirdly, the subject of obeying Allah and performing His commandments is a duty for all servants and they should be obedient to His orders.

However, if we cleave the Iblis' reasoning we will reach a wonderful infidelity. By this statement, he wanted both to negate the knowledge of Allah and to count His orders invalid.

This state of his denotes to his utmost ignorance, because if he said his carnal desire hindered him, or pride did not let him, and the like, he would confess to only one sin, but now that for adjusting his disobedience he negates the infinite Wisdom and Knowledge of Allah, the circumstance shows that he has fallen to the lowest stage of infidelity.

Moreover, a created being has no independence from himself before the Creator. Whatever he has is from Him.

And the tone of Iblis shows that he had considered a sovereignty and independence for himself in the face of the sovereignty of Allah, and this is one of other sources of infidelity.

However, the cause of Satan's aberration had been a mixture of self conceit, pride, ignorance and envy. These satanic qualities worked with together and brought him down from the peak of honour, the one who was the companion and even the teacher of the angels for many years.

How dangerous are these ugly qualities wherever they are found? Ali (as) in one of his sermons said:

"You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan worshipped Allah for six thousand years… but he lost it for the sake of pride in one moment. Then how is it possible that a person does the same thing that Iblis did and be safe from the punishment of Allah?"[9]

Yes, an important and glorious building may be built during some long years but it can be ruined in a moment by a strong bomb.

The third verse indicates that it was here that this foul being should be sent out from the rows of the angels of the high world.

So, addressing him, Allah ordered him as follows:

"(Allah) said: 'Then get out of it for verily you are driven away'."

Yes, the one, who is within forbidden degree, must go out from here because it is not its place anymore. Here is the place of the purified ones and the near-stationed ones not the cite of disobedient and polluted ones.

The Arabic word /rajim/ is derived from /rajm/ in the sense of 'to stone', and since its necessity is exclusion, sometimes it is used in this sense, too.

In the fourth holy verse Allah denotes that Satan is always banished from His mercy, where He says:

"And verily on you shall be My Curse till the Day of Judgment."

Surah Sad - Verses 79-83

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنظِرْنِي إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ

إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

79. "He said: 'O' Lord! Then respite me till the Day they shall be raised,"

80. "(Allah) said: 'Verily you are of the respited ones."

81. "Until the day of the known time'."

82. "(Iblis) said: 'Then by Your glory, I shall pervert them all together',"

83. "Except Your servants among them that are sincere."

Imam Ali (as) says:

"The reason of Allah giving respite to Iblis was in this that his trial had been completed and he had had no vacant place any more."[10]

However, it was here that Satan's envy was changed into enmity, a serious and deep enmity, as the Qur'an says:

"He said: 'O' Lord! Then respite me till the Day they shall be raised,"

He asked for a respite in order that he might take revenge from the children of Adam and to lead them astray, though the aberration of each of them was a new burden of sin on his shoulder.

In fact, he wanted to tempt the children of Adam until the end of the possible time, because the Day of Resurrection is the end of the course of duty and from then on temptation and seduction are meaningless. Besides that he wanted to send death away from him and to survive until the Hereafter, though all the human beings pass away.

The next holy verse indicates that, because of some reasons which will be pointed out later, the Divine will required that this question of Iblis would be answered but not in an absolute form but in a conditioned form, as the Qur'an in the second and third verses says:

"(Allah) said: 'Verily you are of the respited ones."

"Until the day of the known time'."

This respite is not given until the Day of Resurrection and raising the creatures, but until a definite time.

The commentators have delivered different ideas upon this day.

Some of them consider it as the end of this world, because on that Day all the living creatures will die and only the Pure Essence of Allah will remain; as we recite in Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 88:

"…Everything is perishable but He…"

And, thus, a part of Iblis' request was fulfilled.

Some others have said its probable purpose is the Day of Hereafter. There is also this probability that the above mentioned holy verse points to a time that none knows it save Allah. A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that Iblis will pass away between the first and the second Blasts.[11]

The fourth verse denotes that it was here that Iblis revealed his intention and showed his ultimate aim from his request for an everlasting life.

The Qur'an says:

"(Iblis) said: 'Then by Your glory, I shall pervert them all together',"

An oath (by glory) is for emphasizing on power and expressing the 'ability', and these frequent emphasises (oath from one side, the sign of emphasis: Nun, on the other side, and the word /'ajma'in/ (all together),

from the third side, show that he had the utmost persistence on his decision and he will stand firmly on his speech until the end.

The fifth verse implies that Satan knew this fact that a group of the special servants of Allah will never come in the realm of his penetration and temptation.

Therefore, helplessly he mentioned them as an exception from the above statement, and said:

"Except Your servants among them that are sincere."

You have also accepted them and You have made them pure and have put them in the realm of Your protection. It is only this group that I cannot penetrate in them; else I will put the others in my trap.

Occasionally this Iblis' guess became true and everybody was captured in his trap in some way and did not come out from it save the sincere ones, as the Qur'an in Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 20 says:

"And certainly Iblis found true his conjecture concerning them, so they followed him, except a party of the believers!"

Surah Sad - Verses 84-85

قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ

لأَمْلأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنكَ وَمِمَّن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

84. "(Allah) said: 'Then it is the truth; and the truth do I speak,"

85. "Certainly I will fill Hell with you, and with whoever of them follows you, all together'."

Both Allah and His statement are true. These two verses are in answer to Iblis who threatened he would beguile all humankind except the sincere ones.

Here are the holy verses concerning this matter:

"(Allah) said: 'Then it is the truth; and the truth do I speak,"

"Certainly I will fill Hell with you, and with whoever of them follows you, all together'."

Whatever was said from the beginning of this Surah up to here, and whatever for which Divine great prophets struggled, a part of whose life story has been mentioned in this Surah, all have been true.

The words about the Hereafter, the painful chastisement of the disobedient ones, and the kinds of merits for the inhabitants of Paradise which have been referred to in this Surah all are true.

The end of the Surah is true, too, and Allah swears in truth. He speaks true when He says He will fill Hell with Satan and his followers. Allah says so in answer to the statement of Satan, who decisively said about the temptation of humankind, and He also speaks decisively and makes the circumstance of all clear.

However, these two verses contain different emphasises. The first verse has emphasised on the word 'true' for two times and oath has been made. The Qur'anic sentence: /la'amla'anna/ (I will fill) has also another emphasis.

The word 'all together' is also a repeated emphasis over all of these so that no one may have the least doubt in this regard, because there is no way

of salvation for Satan and his followers and their way will be led to Dar-ul-Bawar (one of the names of Hell).

Surah Sad - Verses 86-88

قُلْ مَآ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَآ أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ

86. "(O Prophet!) say: 'No reward do I ask of you for it, nor am I of the impostors."

87. "It is naught but a Reminder unto the Worlds,"

88. "And you shall certainly know its tiding after a while'."

A preacher must announce his unexpected demand to people. The condition of succession in preaching is the lack of expectation from people. The Divine prophets not only had no material expectation but also had not any kind of wish from people and they were not a bore over people either.

So, the first verse says:

"(O Prophet!) say: 'No reward do I ask of you for it…"

And thus he (S) puts an end to the pretexts of the pretext-seekers, and makes clear that he wishes only their prosperity and happiness.

He demands no material reward nor spiritual one from government, and his reward is only on Allah, as it is explicitly mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an, including: Surah As-Saba, No. 34, verse 47 which says:

"…reward is only with Allah…"

This by itself is one of the proofs of the truthfulness of the Prophet (S), because a false claimer suggests his claim for some things and his demands, however, will be clear through his statements.

And in the second stage he implies that he is not of the impostors, his statements are based on proof and logic and there is no adulation in them. His sentences are clear and his speech is free from any ambiguity and complication.

The verse continues saying:

"…nor am I of the impostors."

The first sentence, in fact, is about the qualities of the inviter, and the second sentence is about the kind of invitation and its content and, indeed, it proves itself.

In the third stage, which is found in the next verse, it indicates that the main aim of this great invitation is the descent of this heavenly Book. It implies that this Qur'an is only a means of admonition and awareness for all the worlds.

It says:

"It is naught but a Reminder unto the Worlds,"

Yes, it is important that people come out of negligence and do contemplate, because the way is clear and its signs are manifest.

There is a pure nature inside the man's entity which leads him and attracts him to the line of Monotheism and piety. The important thing is awareness, and the main duty of prophets and the heavenly Books is this very thing.

This application, the like of which is not so few in the Holy Qur'an, shows that the content of the invitation of prophet, in all stages, is consistent with the God-given nature and these two go forward with together.

Through the third verse, the Holy Qur'an threatens the opponents by some short but expressive sentences.

It says:

"And you shall certainly know its tiding after a while'."

You may take these words insignificant and pass by them heedlessly, but soon the truthfulness of these words will be made manifest.

You will see them both in this world: in the battle-fields of Muslims and pagans, in the social and mental realms, in the Divine punishments, and in the other world by means of painful punishments of Allah.

In short, whatever I told you, you will observe by your own eyes in its appropriate time. However, the lash of Allah is ready and soon it will come down on the back of oppressors and the proud ones.

Who is an Imposter?

In the above verses (verse 86) we recited that one of the honours the Prophet (S) counted for himself was that he was not of the 'Impostors'.

In Islamic narrations there are a lot of discussions about the signs of impostors and their qualities, including the tradition recorded in the Commentary of Jawami'-ul-Jami' narrated from the Prophet (S).

It says:

"An imposter has three signs: He always quarrels with those who are above him, he follows some affairs to which he never reaches, and he speaks of some matters about which he has no knowledge."[12]

In another tradition in the Prophet's recommendations (S) to Hadrat 'Ali (as) we recite:

"An impostor has three signs:

1) He flatters at one's presence,

2) He backbites in one's absence,

3) At the time of calamity, he begins taunting."[13]

However, it is understood from some of the narrations recorded in Nur-uth-Thaqalayn that at the end an imposter will not have any consequence save meanness and humility, and just today he has also no share but pain, trouble, and disquiet.

The apparent of an imposter is hypocrisy, and his innate is sedition and he always flies with these two wings.

O' Allah! Grant us a success that we can repel all traces of adulation, sedition, and disobedience from us.

O' Allah! Set us in the row of the sincere ones whom You support and protect and Satan, the tempter, is hopeless of them.

O' Allah! Give us that kind of awareness that we can stand to survive the content of this Great Qur'an, to be able to gather all the powers of the Muslims throughout the world, and to step forward firmly in Your path, so that we can overcome the enemies of the truth. Amen, O the Lord of the Worlds.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Burhan, Safi, as well as other commentary books.
2. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 1
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 30
4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Durr-ul-Manthur, following the verse.
5. The commentary Books of Burhan, and Safi, following the verse
6. of 'Atyab-ul-Bayan
7. The commentary of 'Atyab-ul-Bayan.
8. Surah Ar-Rahman, No. 55, verses 14 and 15
9. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 192
10. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon one
11. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Vol. 2, P. 342, under the verse
12. Al-Mizan, Jawami'-ul-Jami', Nur-uth-Thaqalayn following the verse
13. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Following the verse

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 16

From Surah az-Zumar (39) to Surah ad-Dukhan (44)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 10
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 11
What is a 'Commentary'? 12
The Current Commentary 13
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 14
The Problems in Translating 14
Translators Note 15
Editor's Note 16
Notes 18
Acknowledgment 19
Notes 19
References 20
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 20
English Translations of Qur'an 20
Supporting Technical References 21
Phraseological and Philological Sources 21
A Presentation to Muslims 23
Notes 24
Surah al-Zumar, Chapter 39, Verses 1 - 29 25
(The Groups) 25
Sections (juz') 23-24 25
Number of Verses: 75 25
General Overview of the Chapter 25
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 25
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 1-2 25
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 3 27
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 4 29
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 5 30
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 6 32
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 7 35
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 8 36
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 9 38
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 10 41
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 11 - 13 43
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 14 - 15 44
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 16 44
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 17 - 18 45
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 19 - 20 47
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 21 48
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 22 50
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 23 51
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 24 54
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 25 - 26 54
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 27-28 56
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 29 57
Notes 58
Surah al-Zumar, Verses 30 - 55 60

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 30 - 31 60
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 32 61
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 33 - 35 62
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 36 - 37 64
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 38 67
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 39 - 40 69
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 41 69
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 42 70
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 43 70
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 44 71
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 45 72
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 46 73
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 47 74
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 48 74
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 49 75
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 50 - 51 76
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 52 77
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 53 78
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 54 80
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 55 81
Notes 81
Surah al-Zumar, Verses 56 - 75 83
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 56 83
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 57 - 58 83
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 59 84
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 60 85
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 61 87
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 62 - 63 87
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 64 - 65 89
Surah al-Zumar - Verses 66 - 67 90
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 68 92
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 69 94
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 70 96
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 71 - 72 97
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 73 99
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 74 101
Surah al-Zumar - Verse 75 102
Notes 103
Surah al-Ghafir, Chapter 40, Verses 1 - 22 104
Surah al-Ghafir or Surah al-Mu'min 104
(The Forgiver/The Believer) 104
Section (juz' 24) 104
Number of Verses: 85 104
General Overview of the Chapter 104
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 1 - 3 104
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 4 106
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 5 107
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 6 108

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 7 108
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 8 - 9 110
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 10 111
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 11 112
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 12 113
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 13 - 14 113
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 15 - 16 115
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 17 118
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 18 - 19 119
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 20 121
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 21 122
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 22 123
Notes 123
Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 23 - 45 125
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 23 - 25 125
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 26 126
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 27 128
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 28 128
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 29 130
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 30 - 31 131
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 32 - 33 132
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 34 133
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 35 134
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 36 - 37 135
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 38 - 39 137
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 40 138
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 41 - 42 139
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 43 139
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 44 140
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 45 141
Notes 141
Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 46 - 63 143
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 46 143
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 47 143
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 48 - 49 144
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 50 145
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 51 - 52 146
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 53 - 54 148
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 55 148
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 56 150
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 57 152
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 58 152
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 59 153
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 60 154
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 61 157
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 62 - 63 158
Notes 159
Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 64 - 85 161

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 64 161
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 65 162
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 66 163
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 67 164
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 68 165
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 69 - 70 166
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 71 - 72 167
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 73 - 74 168
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 75 - 76 169
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 77 170
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 78 171
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 79 - 81 172
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 82 174
Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 83 - 84 175
Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 85 176
Notes 177
Surah Fussilat, Chapter 41, Verses 1-40 179
(Explained in detail) 179
Section (juz' 25) 179
Number of Verses: 54 179
General Overview of Surah Fussilat 179
The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 179
Surah Fussilat - Verses 1 - 4 179
Surah Fussilat - Verse 5 181
Surah Fussilat - Verses 6-7 182
Surah Fussilat - Verse 8 183
Surah Fussilat - Verse 9 183
Surah Fussilat - Verses 10-11 184
Surah Fussilat - Verse 12 186
Surah Fussilat - Verses 13 - 14 187
Surah Fussilat - Verse 15 187
Surah Fussilat - Verse 16 188
Surah Fussilat - Verses 17 - 18 189
Surah Fussilat - Verses 19 - 20 190
Surah Fussilat - Verse 21 191
Surah Fussilat - Verses 22 - 23 192
Surah Fussilat - Verse 24 195
Surah Fussilat - Verse 25 195
Surah Fussilat - Verses 26 - 28 196
Surah Fussilat - Verse 29 197
Surah Fussilat - Verse 30 197
Surah Fussilat - Verses 31 - 32 198
Surah Fussilat - Verse 33 200
Surah Fussilat - Verse 34 201
Surah Fussilat - Verse 35 203
Surah Fussilat - Verse 36 203
Surah Fussilat - Verse 37 204
Surah Fussilat - Verse 38 205

Surah Fussilat - Verse 39 205
Surah Fussilat - Verse 40 206
Notes 206
Surah Fussilat, Verses 41 - 54 208
Surah Fussilat - Verse 41 - 43 208
Surah Fussilat - Verse 44 209
Surah Fussilat - Verse 45 210
Surah Fussilat - Verse 46 210
Surah Fussilat - Verse 47 211
Surah Fussilat - Verses 48 - 49 212
Surah Fussilat - Verse 50 212
Surah Fussilat - Verse 51 213
Surah Fussilat - Verse 52 214
Surah Fussilat - Verse 53 - 54 214
Notes 216
Surah al-Shura, Chapter 42, Verses 1-26 217
(The Consultation) 217
Section (juz' 25) 217
Number of Verses: 53 217
General Overview of the Chapter 217
The Merits of Recitation of the Chapter 217
Surah al-Shura - Verses 1 - 3 217
Surah al-Shura - Verse 4 219
Surah al-Shura - Verse 5 219
Surah al-Shura - Verse 6 220
Surah al-Shura - Verse 7 220
Surah al-Shura - Verses 8 - 9 221
Surah al-Shura - Verse 10 222
Surah al-Shura - Verse 11 222
Surah al-Shura - Verse 12 223
Surah al-Shura - Verse 13 224
Surah al-Shura - Verse 14 225
Surah al-Shura - Verse 15 226
Surah al-Shura - Verse 16 227
Surah al-Shura - Verse 17 228
Surah al-Shura - Verse 18 228
Surah al-Shura - Verse 19 229
Surah al-Shura - Verse 20 229
Surah al-Shura - Verse 21 230
Surah al-Shura - Verse 22 231
Surah al-Shura - Verse 23 231
Surah al-Shura - Verse 24 239
Surah al-Shura - Verse 25 240
Surah al-Shura - Verse 26 241
Notes 242
Surah al-Shura, Verses 27 - 53 243
Surah al-Shura - Verse 27 243
Surah al-Shura - Verse 28 243

Surah al-Shura - Verse 29 244
Surah al-Shura - Verse 30 244
Surah al-Shura - Verse 31 245
Surah al-Shura - Verses 32 - 33 245
Surah al-Shura - Verses 34 - 35 247
Surah al-Shura - Verse 36 247
Surah al-Shura - Verse 37 248
Surah al-Shura - Verses 38 - 39 249
Surah al-Shura - Verses 40 - 41 251
Surah al-Shura - Verses 42 - 43 252
Surah al-Shura - Verse 44 252
Surah al-Shura - Verse 45 253
Surah al-Shura - Verse 46 253
Surah al-Shura - Verse 47 254
Surah al-Shura - Verse 48 254
Surah al-Shura - Verses 49 - 50 255
Surah al-Shura - Verse 51 256
Some Traditions Concerning Divine Revelation 258
Surah al-Shura - Verses 52 - 53 259
Notes 261
Surah al-Zukhruf, Chapter 43, Verses 1 - 39 263
(The Gold Adornments) 263
Section (juz' 25) 263
Number of Verses: 89 263
General Overview of the Chapter 263
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 263
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 1 - 4 263
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 5 - 8 265
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 9 266
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 10 267
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 11 - 12 267
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 13 - 14 268
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 15 - 16 269
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 17 269
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 18 270
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 19 271
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 20 271
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 21- 22 272
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 23 272
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 24 - 25 273
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 26 - 28 274
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 29- 30 276
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 31 - 32 277
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 33 - 35 278
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 36 - 37 281
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 38 - 39 282
Notes 283
Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 40 - 63 284

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 40 284
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 41 - 42 284
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 43 - 44 285
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 45 285
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 46 - 47 286
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 48 - 50 287
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 51 - 52 288
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 53 - 54 289
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 55 - 56 290
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 57 - 60 290
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 61 - 62 293
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 63 294
Notes 295
Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 64- 89 296
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 64 - 65 296
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 66 - 67 296
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 68 - 70 298
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 71 299
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 72 - 73 300
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 74 - 76 301
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 77 302
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 78 - 80 302
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 81 - 82 303
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 83 304
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 84 - 85 304
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 86 305
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 87 306
Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 88 - 89 306
Notes 307
Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 1 - 36 308
(The Smoke) 308
Section (juz' 25) 308
Number of Verses: 59 308
General Overview of the Chapter 308
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 308
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 1 - 3 308
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 4 - 6 309
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 7 - 8 311
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 9 - 11 311
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 12 - 13 313
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 14 - 16 313
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 17 - 19 314
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 20 - 22 316
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 23 - 24 317
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 25 - 28 317
Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 29 318
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 30 - 31 319
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 32 - 33 320

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 34 - 36 320
Notes 321
Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 37- 59 322
Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 37 322
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 38 - 39 322
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 40 - 42 323
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 43 - 46 324
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 47 - 50 325
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 51 - 53 325
Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 54 327
Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 55 327
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 56 - 57 327
Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 58 - 59 328
Notes 329

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Zumar, Chapter 39, Verses 1 - 29

(The Groups)

Sections (juz') 23-24

Number of Verses: 75

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter has 75 Verses and is revealed at Mecca. Like other Meccan Chapters, it mainly treats of God Almighty and Resurrection.

The word zumar indicates "groups" and the title of the Chapter, as mentioned in Verses 71 and 73, alludes to the ingress of the peoples of Hell and Paradise into their assigned dwellings. The Chapter mainly focuses on the Unity of the Creator, Lordship, and worshipping Him particularly sincere worshipping and humble veneration of Him.

The presence of people on the Day of Judgment and their being judged on the basis of the records of their deeds and the testimony of the witnesses and the ingress of sinners and the pious into Hell and Paradise receive further emphasis and detail.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

Recitation of Chapter 39 receives remarkable significance in Islamic traditions and instance of which is the Prophetic tradition saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Zumar shall not lose hope of Divine Mercy and shall be recompensed the rewards of the God fearing."[1]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who recites Surah al-Zumar shall be accorded honor and dignity in this world and the Hereafter even if he lacks in worldly possessions and family support in such manner that others shall stand in awe upon meeting him and his body shall not be burned in Hell."[2]

A comparison of the aforementioned merits with the contents of the Chapter concerning fear of God, setting one's hope on His Mercy, sincerity in worshipping Him, and absolute submission to the Pure Essence of Truth clearly indicates that such rewards shall be reaped by those for whom the recitation of Divinely revealed Verses serve as a prelude to reflection based upon which they have faith and do righteous good deeds.

In other words, the contents of the Chapter find their way into their heart and they turned into their permanent disposition of mind whose reflection may be fully noticed in their life. Such people deserve to reap such great rewards and Divine Boundless Bounties and Favors.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ الدِّينَ

1. The Revelation of the Book [unto you in portions at certain times] is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

2. Indeed We have sent down this [Revealed] Book unto you in truth; So worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake.

The words:

tanzil ("sending down in portions at certain times")

and

inzal ("sending down in whole at one time")

are both mentioned in these two blessed Verses, opening with the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the former and the latter allude to the Pure Divine Essence as the Origin of Revelation and the content as well as the final goal of the Holy Qur'an respectively.

The first Verse says that this Book is Revealed by God, the All-Mighty and All-Wise.

Any book is known by its revealer or author. Being apprised of the Divine Origin of Revelation of this Glorious Revealed Book and the fact that the Omniscience of God Almighty, the Omnipotent and the All-Wise, is the Origin of the Revelation of the Book thanks to Whose Omnipotence nothing is impossible and His Boundless Knowledge embraces all things, we come to comprehend the Gloriousness of Its contents.

It will suffice to acquire certitude concerning the veracity of Its contents abounding in Wisdom, Light, and Guidance.

It is worthy of note that such expressions opening Qur'anic Chapters bear witness to the fact that the contents of this Glorious Book is wholly Revealed by God Almighty; in other words, the contents of the Holy Qur'an constitute Divine Word rather than that of the Noble Prophet (S), even though his word is also exalted and full of wisdom.

The second Verse treats of the contents and the goal of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an saying:

"We have sent down this [Revealed] Book unto you in truth."

The significant point is that there is nothing but Truth in the Divinely Revealed Book; that is why seekers of Truth proceed toward it and those thirsty of finding their way to the valley of Truth are after Its contents.

The goal behind the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an is to provide humanity with pure religion as a consequence of which the Verse closes thus:

"So worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake."

The word religion may ad hoc designate worshipping God Almighty, since it is preceded by:

"So worship Allah"

which is followed by:

"by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake,"

making a reference to the fact that the prerequisite of the verity of worship lies in sincerity of heart and its purity from polytheism and dissimulation.

Yet, taking into account the wide range of the meaning of the word:

"religion" (din)

and its lack of restrictions one may notice that it signifies a wider range of meaning embracing worship, other deeds, as well as beliefs.

In other words, the word:

"religion"

encompasses the corporeal and spiritual dimensions of man. In this vein, sincere servants of God Almighty are supposed to refine all the aspects of life from impurities, reject other entities besides God Almighty from their hearts, souls, words, and deeds, reflect upon Him, love for His sake, speak and act for Him, and take steps for His satisfaction - this is

"religious sincere devotion."

Therefore, there would be no need to restrict the meaning of the Verse to the declaration of faith by uttering "There is no god but Allah," nor is there any firm ground to delimit the meaning to

"worship."

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 3

أَلا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَي

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

3. Know that the pure religion is for Allah and those who take gods besides Allah [said justifyingly] "We solely worship them that they may bring us near to Allah." Indeed Allah will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ. Allah never guides one who is a disbelieving liar.

The value of religion lies in its purity lest it is metamorphosed by vain desires and superstitious beliefs

("the pure religion is for Allah").

The opening clause of the blessed Verse may be interpreted in two ways.

Firstly, God Almighty solely accepts the pure religion, total submission to Divine Decree, whereas any polytheism, dissimulation, and confusion of Divine Laws to those besides them are unacceptable.

Secondly, pure religion is solely bestowed upon man by God Almighty, since human thought is imperfect and erroneous.

Taking the exegesis of the preceding Verse into account, it sounds more appropriate to acknowledge the former interpretation since the subject of purity or sincere devotion is

"God's servants,"

as a consequence of which they are supposed to act accordingly.

Another argument substantiating the same is a Prophetic tradition according to which a certain man came unto him saying:

"O Messenger of God (S)! We give out possessions to others in order to gain reputation. Will we be rewarded thereby?"

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"No!"

The man inquired once more that at times they give their possessions for both acting upon Divine Decree and gaining reputation and he wondered whether there would be any reward for the same.

The Prophet (S) replied:

"God does not accept anything unless it is solely done for Him."

Then, he recited the blessed Verse:

"Know that the pure religion is for Allah."[3]

It is worthy of note that the third Verse substantiates the preceding One.

The former says:

"Worship God out of sincere devotion and sincerity of heart."

The latter says:

"God Almighty solely accepts righteous deeds."

Great emphasis is laid upon

"sincere devotion" (ikhlas)

in Qur'anic Verses and Islamic traditions. The opening word of the Verse, ala is usually employed to attract attention which also bears testimony to the significance of the subject in question.

The blessed Verse also makes a reference to the falsity of the polytheists' baseless arguments since they turned away from the path of sincere devotion and went astray in error saying that those who acknowledge gods besides Allah as their objects of devotions justifying that they worship them to render them closer to God, God will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ on the Day of Resurrection.

The falsity and corruption of their thoughts and deeds will be knows to everyone on that Day:

("Allah and those who take gods besides Allah [said justifyingly] 'We solely worship them that they may bring us near to Allah.' Indeed Allah will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ. Truly Allah guides not one who is a disbelieving liar."

The blessed Verse serves as a serious warning to polytheists that the Day of Resurrection will be the Day on which differences shall be removed and the truth shall be clear. On such a Day, God Almighty will judge between them so that they will be recompensed for their deeds; furthermore, they will be disgraced before everyone on the Day of Resurrection.

Human immediate contact with God Almighty is accorded particular emphasis in the Qur'an- he may speak unto Him, offer Him his devotions, supplications, ask Him for forgiveness, and the acceptance of his repentance.

They are all within His Will and Omnipotence. Chapter 24 bears testimony to this fact since God's servants recite it in all their daily prayers thereby they establish immediate contact with their Creator and invoke Him to answer their prayers.

The manner of repentance and asking God for forgiveness and answering prayers as mentioned in the devotions transmitted through many a tradition demonstrate that no intermediary is acknowledged in the Islamic faith and the same indicates the Truth of Divine Unity.

The question of intercession with God's saints or favorites is also based on the Creator's Permission which once more lays emphasis on the dogmatic principle of Divine Unity.

The attachment is supposed to be established since He is closer to us than ourselves, as it is thus said in the Holy Qur'an:

"We closer to him than his jugular vein" (50:16);

"Know that Allah comes in between a person and his heart" (8:24).

Yet, He is neither far from us, nor are we far from Him; thus there is no need for intercession. He is closer to us than any other one; He is Ubiquitous and our hearts entertain Him.

Therefore worshipping intercessors, be them angels, jinn, and the like, or worshipping stone and wooden idols is baseless and false; furthermore, such worship is considered ingratitude for Divine Blessings, since the One Who bestows Bounties, rather than inanimate objects or needy creatures deserves worship.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question closes with:

"Allah never guides one who is a disbelieving liar."

He neither guides disbelievers to the Straight Path in this world nor will He admit them to Paradise in the Hereafter, since they have turned away from Divine Guidance. God Almighty solely guides those who deserve and are willing to embrace it rather than those who have suppressed their faculty to accept the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 4

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَداً لاصْطَفَي مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

4. Had Allah willed to take an offspring [for Himself], He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created. But Glory is to Him! [He is above such things]. He is Allah, the One, the All-Subjugator.

God Almighty has no [real] offspring:

("He begets not, nor was He begotten," 112:3)

nor any adopted children:

("Had Allah willed to take an offspring [for Himself]"),

since real offspring indicate corporeality, divisibility, bearing similitude, and having a spouse, whereas He is One.

He is neither divisible nor does He have similitude nor spouse. Polytheists also regarded a number of their objects of worship as Allah's daughters.

Treating of the false belief, the blessed Verse says:

"Had Allah willed to take an offspring [for Himself], He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created. But Glory is to Him! [He is above such things]. He is Allah, the One, the All-Subjugator."

At any rate, the blessed Verse is saying that having offspring is either for assistance or for spiritual intimacy. Even reflection upon such impossible supposition does not necessitate having offspring since He could select one among His noble creatures, rather than an offspring, in order to attain to such a goal.

Nonetheless, He is One God Who is the eternal All-Subjugator of all things, Needless of the assistance of any entity. He is neither perturbed by anything hence His Needlessness for intimacy with anyone or anything, nor is he in need of progeny.

Consequently,

"Glory is to Him!"

He is above having real or adopted children.

As mentioned above, these ignorant and lightheaded disbelievers and polytheists considered angels to be Allah's offspring and some of them maintained affinities between Him and jinn and at times regarded Ezra ('Uzayr) or Jesus ('Ïsa) as God's sons unaware of the manifest truth that God's need for real offspring would necessitate corporeality, divisibility (since an offspring is a part of the progenitor's being which separates from him), bearing similitude (because of the similarity between the progenitor and the offspring), and the need for having a consort.

God Almighty is Glorified of all these. Adopting children is also due to the need for corporeal, moral intimacy, and the like and the All-Mighty and All-Subjugating God is Needless of such things.

Therefore, the Most Beautiful Divine Names:

"the One" (Wahid)

and

"the All-Subjugating" (Qahhar)

constitute a decisive argument against such false beliefs.

It is noteworthy that the employment of the conjunction law ("if") connoting impossible conditions makes reference to the impossible supposition of God's adoption of children and had He any need for it, He would have no need for what they say rather He could have selected one of his chosen creatures.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 5

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَي النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّي أَلا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ

5. He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running for an appointed term. Know that He is the Exalted in Might, the Oft-Forgiving.

The creation of the heavens and the earth, the rotations of the earth and the moon, and going the night into the day and vice versa are manifestations of Divine Exaltation in Might.

The blessed Verse substantiates the argument that God is Needless of His creatures and as an indication of His Unity and Exaltedness in Might is says:

"He has created the heavens and the earth with truth."

The truth of their creation demonstrates that the great final end has been nothing but the perfection of beings, particularly that of man, finally leading to Resurrection.

Following the treatment of this great creation, the Verse proceeds to make a reference in passing to their extraordinary arrangement, well measured alterations, and the fascinating and prevailing systematicity, saying:

"He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night."

The expression is worthy of note - taking a glance without the globe at the earth's rotation on its axis leading to the succession of days and nights

makes one notice that it is seems as if the dark ribbon of night wraps up the brightness of the day and vice versa.

It is to be noted that the verbal form yukawwir derives from takwir which is literally employed in the sense of "roll up, wrap up" an instance of which is mentioned in particular by philologists as "wind up [a turban]."

The delicacy of this Qur'anic expression is thus clarified; nonetheless, it is ignored by many an exeget who have make mention of other points which are not so consistent with the meaning of the word.

The point worthy of note is that the earth is globular rotating on its axis and as a consequence of the rotation, the black and white ribbons of night and day constantly rotate around it as if the white ribbon goes to the black ribbon on the one hand and on the other hand the opposite occurs.

Diverse expressions have been employed in the Holy Qur'an concerning the consecution of nights and days each of which makes a reference to a delicacy from a specific angle.

It is also said in the Holy Qur'an that:

"He merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night"[5].

The latter expression designates the quiet and furtive consecution of days and nights.

It also says:

"He brings the night as a cover over the day"[6]

according to which the night is likened to a dark veil as if covering the brightness of the day. The blessed Verses in question treats of "winding" one over the other, the delicacy of which was mentioned above.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the order and systematicity of arrangement of the world by saying:

"And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running for an appointed term."

In its rotation on its axis or its movement with the totality of the solar system toward a specific point in the galaxy by no means demonstrates neither the least disorder, nor the moon in its rotation around on its axis and around the earth reveals any disorder.

All creatures are at His Command, totally subject to the laws of creation at all times.

Subjection of the sun and the moon may also indicate their subjection through Divine Permission, as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And He has made the sun and the moon, both constantly pursuing their courses"[7].

The Verse closes with a warning to polytheists and suggestion of treading the path leading to Divine Favor:

"Know that He is the Exalted in Might, the Oft-Forgiving."

However honorable and powerful polytheists and sinners may be, they may not escape Divine Chastisement. Thanks to His Oft-Forgiveness, He casts a veil on the sins of the repentant and bestows His Mercy on them.

The word:

ghaffar ("Oft-Forgiving")

is intensive in form and derives from gh-f-r (“forgive”).

The infinitive form ghufran is literally employed in the sense of wearing anything which keeps man from uncleanliness and impurity; applied to God Almighty, it denotes that He conceals the sins committed by the repentant servant and keeps him from the torment of chastisement.

He is Omnipotent and Oft-Forgiving; the Most Gracious and the All-Subjugator. The accompaniment of these two Most Beautiful Names at the close of the Verse creates a sense of fear and hope in servants of God which mainly and finally leads to human perfection.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 6

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقاً مِنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلاثٍ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ

6. He created you from a single soul; then made from him his wife. And He has sent down for you [thanks to His Omnipotence] of cattle eight pairs [of the sheep, goats, oxen, and camels, two each, male and female]. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness [flesh, skin, and blood]. Such is Allah your Lord. His is the sovereignty. There is no god [to be worshipped] but He. How then do you turn away [from the Straight Path]?

In spite of physical differences, all men, irrespective of sex and color of complexion, share the like genus and soul

(“single soul”).

The blessed Verse once more treats of the Signs of Divine Glory, His creation, and some of the diverse Bounties bestowed upon mankind.

The Verse opens with the creation of man saying:

“He created you from a single soul; then made from him his wife.”

Creation of all men from

“a single soul”

is a reference to the question of the creation of Adam, our primeval ancestor.

All human beings, though diverse in creation, dispositions, faculties, and tastes trace back to one common origin, namely Adam.

The clause:

“then made from him his wife”

actually indicates that God created Adam; then, He created his wife from the remainder of his clay; as a consequence of which the creation of Adam precedes that of Eve and his offspring.

“Then” (thumma)

does not connote temporal posteriority at all times, but at times it is employed to demonstrate delay in expressing something; an instance of which is “We noticed your work today; then we saw the work you did yesterday;” yet, what was carried out yesterday certainly precedes that of today.

Some exegets have maintained that the aforesaid expression is a reference to the question of “the world of pre-existence” (‘alam al-dharr)

and the creation of Adam's offspring following his creation and prior to that of Eve in the form of ants is inaccurate, as mentioned above under 7:172.

It is also worthy of note that the creation of Adam's wife was not done out of Adam's body, but from the remainder of his clay, as clearly specified in Islamic traditions. Nonetheless, according to a tradition, Eve was created out of Adam's lowest left rib which is groundless.

The tradition derives from Jewish and Christian traditions (Isra'iliyyat) and is consistent with the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, namely the available distorted Torah.

Furthermore, it is inconsistent with observation and sense, since as per the tradition in question, one of Adam's ribs was removed from which Eve was created, as a consequence of which man are supposed to have one rib less in their left side, whereas we know that men and women do not differ in the number of ribs and the difference is no more than a legend.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the question of the creation of quadrupeds as a significant means of human life. Men use them to produce clothes out of their skins, nourishment from their milk and meat.

They make clothes and different means of life out of their skin and fleece.

Quadrupeds are used by men as well as means of transportation:

"And He has sent down for you [thanks to His Omnipotence] of cattle eight pairs."

By

"eight pairs",

the Verse intends to connote "of the sheep, goats, oxen, and camels, two each, male and female," since the word pair (zawj) is applied to either of the sexes, the males and females of the animals enumerated above make eight pairs; however it is not consistent with other Arabic expressions; consequently, Adam's wife, namely Eve, is mentioned in the opening of the Verse in question as the

"pair."

As mentioned above, the expression:

"He has sent down for you"

does not indicate sending down quadrupeds from above, but it denotes "descent from a higher state of hierarchy" as a Bounty bestowed upon those occupying a lower state.

A tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), concerning the interpretation of the Verse in question,

"sending down eight quadrupeds in pairs is their creation by God."[8]

Some have also maintained that:

inzal ("sending down")

is taken from nuzul ("showing hospitality to guests; first food served to a guest") as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"therein are they to dwell forever, an entertainment from Allah"[9]**.**

It is to be noted that even though quadrupeds are not used for transportation as they were used in the past, but the use of such animals has been on the increase for making other significant products.

Even today, man mainly uses quadrupeds for their milk, meat, clothes, and other means of life produced out of their wool and skin; as a consequence of which breeding them constitutes one of the significant revenues for powerful countries.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of other forms of Divine creation, saying:

"He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness [flesh, skin, and blood]."

It is needless to say that

"creation after creation"

designates consecutive creations rather than creation at one single time.

It is worthy of note that the verbal form yakhluqukum is in the present tense, indicating progressiveness and making a brief but significant reference to extraordinary developments and the different remarkable forms of the fetus in the womb which is according to embryologists one of the most extraordinary and the most intricate forms of Divine creation such that the science of embryology is a complete course in Divine Unity and theology.

Few people may study such questions in details and fail to praise the Creator.

The phrase:

"three veils of darkness"

refers to the darkness of the womb and the chorion consisting of three thick membranes or veils covering the fetus.

Ordinary painters have to paint in a well-lit workspace, but the Creator of mankind paints such fascinating paintings in such strange dark place that everyone is enthralled by it, where no one may have access to it. He constantly provides for the nourishment of the fetus that is in a dire need of it for growth.

In the well known prayer titled 'Arafa which is a complete and perfect course on Divine Unity, enumerating Divine Bounties and manifestations of His Omnipotence before His Threshold, the Chief of the Martyrs (Sayyid al-Shuhada'), Imam Husayn (as), says:

"You made my creation to be preceded by drops of semen, then you proceeded with my creation through placing me in the three veils of darkness, amidst flesh, skin, and blood. You provided for all my vital functions; then you brought me into the world in perfect health."[10]

Following the reference to the tripartite chains of Divine Unity regarding the creation of men and quadrupeds and the developments of fetus, the blessed Verse closes thus:

"Such is Allah your Lord. His is the sovereignty. There is no god [to be worshipped] but He. How then do you turn away [from the Straight Path]?"

It seems as if following an observation of such glorious manifestations of Divine Unity, man has been able to experience personally such manifestations; then the blessed Verse proceeds to make a reference to His Sacred Essence saying:

"Such is Allah your Lord."

Any attentive perceiver may perceive Him beyond such manifestations. The eyes of the head and the heart see the manifestations and the Creator respectively.

("You have come out with many a manifestation, so that I may look at you with many an eye!")

The expressions

"your Lord"

and

"His is the sovereignty"

are provided as arguments for the exclusivity of the Divine Pure Essence as the object of worship expressed in the formula

"There is no god but Allah."

He is the Creator as well as the Sole Sovereign and Nurturer; in other words, the Sovereignty in all the world of existence solely belongs to Him, so other entities in this world do not deserve to be the objects of worship.

The blessed Verse calls the ignorant thus:

"Why do you turn away from the Straight Path of Divine Unity?"

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 7

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلا يَرْضَى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

7. If you disbelieve, then indeed Allah is not in need of you; He likes not disbelief for His servants. And if you are grateful, He is pleased therewith for you. No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you what you used to do. Indeed, He is the Omniscient of that which is in breasts.

The preceding Verse treats of Divine Bounties in the creation of man and the provisions bestowed upon him by God. Verse seven makes mention of man's obligation which is his gratitude for the bestowal of Divine Bounties.

Therefore, the blessed Verse in question says:

"If you disbelieve, then indeed Allah is not in need of you"

since His servants will reap the recompense of their disbelief and gratitude.

It further adds that Divine Needlessness does not mean that His servants are not supposed to be grateful for the Divine Bounties bestowed upon them nor are they permitted to disbelieve, since obligation is another Divine Bounty,

"He likes not disbelief for His servants and if you are grateful, He is pleased therewith for you."

The Verse in question proceeds with treating of another question, namely any man's responsibility for his acts and deeds, since the question of obligation will remain incomplete without such obligation:

("No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another").

It is worthy of note that obligation without recompense is meaningless.

The Verse closes with the question of Resurrection and man's return to God Who shall inform him of his past deeds:

("Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you what you used to do").

It is worthy of note that Divine Reward and Retribution of human acts and deeds necessitate being fully aware of secrets.

Thus the Verse comes to Its close:

"Indeed, He is the Omniscient of that which is in breasts."

Therefore, the philosophy of obligation, its characteristics, human responsibility, and Divine Reward and Retribution are expressed in concise and consistent clauses. In the mean time, the Verse is a decisive reply to the followers of the school of predestination whose number among Islamic schools of thought has been unfortunately large.

The blessed Verse explicitly says:

"He is never pleased with His servants' disbelief"

which clearly bears testimony to the fact that contrary to the false belief maintained by the followers of the school of predestination it is not His Will that disbelievers disbelieve in Him, since as long as He is not pleased with something, He will not will it. Divine Will and Satisfaction are not apart.

It is a source of wonder that the biased have made attempts to conceal the evident meaning of the clause by restricting the meaning of:

"servants" ('ibad)

to the pious or the infallible; however the word in question clearly embraces all servants. God is never pleased with any of His servant's disbelief in the same manner that He is pleased with their gratitude.

It is also noteworthy that everyone's responsibility against his own acts and deeds are acknowledged by all Divine religions.[11]

It is also possible that a wrong doer may have an accomplice the render him support in one way or another, an instance of which is the one who innovates some vicious thing or tradition and whoever acts upon them will be responsible like the innovator against the sin of innovation of vicious things.[12]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 8

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْأِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيباً إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَاداً لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلاً إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ

8. And when some hurt touches man, he cries to his Lord, turning to Him in repentance. But when He bestows a favor upon him from Himself, he forgets that for which he cried for before [for its removal], and he sets up equals to Allah, in order to mislead [himself and others] from His Path. Say: "Take pleasure in your disbelief for a while: surely you are of the dwellers of the Fire!"

Man is of a small capacity for tolerating hardships and when hardships touch him, he cries out but the Holy Qur'an criticizes him for his transient attention toward God in vicissitudes of life and says that he forgets God when he enjoys comfort:

("And when some hurt touches man, he cries to his Lord").

The preceding Verses produce arguments for Divine Unity and man's making attempts at acquiring knowledge about Him through reflecting upon

the signs of His Glory in horizons and souls (afaq wa anfus); however, the blessed Verse in question opens with Divine Unity as perceived through man's primordial disposition thus clarifying that man's perception through his intellection and studying the order of creation is something innate in his natural disposition manifesting themselves in vicissitudes and hardships; nonetheless, when the storm of disasters is abated, such forgetful man is once more preoccupied with neglect and vanity.

The blessed Verse says:

"When some hurt touches man [the Light of Divine Unity illuminates his heart], he cries to his Lord, turning to Him in repentance. But when He bestows a favor upon him from Himself, he forgets that for which he cried for before [for its removal], and he sets up equals to Allah, in order to mislead [himself and others] from His Path."

"Man"

ad hoc makes a reference to those people who are uncultured and unrefined since they turn away from prophetic teachings, otherwise those refined by men of God, like their educators, remember Him at all times in ups and downs and seek Divine Favor.

"Hurt" (darr)

ad hoc indicates any kind of physical or mental harm or discomfort. The verbal form "khawwalahu," deriving from khawl is employed in the sense of constant taking care of something or someone and since such care necessitates bestowal of favor, the word designates "bestow."

Some exegets also maintain that khawl indicates rendering service; therefore, khawwalahu indicates "granted him servants," and it is also applied to bestowing favor to someone. Some have also taken the word in the sense of taking pride; as a consequence of which they take the meaning as honor someone through bestowal of a favor.[13]

The above explanations reflect the question of Divine bestowal of Favors and Bounties and His special care for His servants.

Muniban, as an adverb of manner, indicates that at the time of hardship when the veils of vanity and neglect are removed, man abandons everything and everyone besides God Almighty and turns to Him.

The word:

"repentance" (inaba)

demonstrates that God Almighty is man's origin and place of return.

Andad ("equals")

is the plural form of nidd which is close in meaning to mithl; however the latter possesses a wider range of meaning, since the former is only used in the sense of likeness in essence.

The verbal form:

"sets up" (ja'ala, literally "set up" [past tense])

demonstrates that man falsely imagines equals and peers for God, whereas it is inconsistent with reality.

The clause:

"in order to mislead [himself and others] from His Path"

reflects the vanity of those in error who make attempts at misleading others to error. Man a time the Holy Qur'an refers to the link between

reflection upon Divine Unity through innate primordial disposition and vicissitudes of life as the scenes of its manifestation.

The low capacity of forbearance makes this vain man to turn to Divine Unity in vicissitudes, but when the storms of disasters are abated, he obdurately treads the path of polytheism.

Many are such inconstant and capricious people and few are those who may not be perturbed by triumphs, Bounties, and storms of vicissitudes.

A small vessel or a pond is easily perturbed by a breeze, but the Pacific Ocean, because of its vastness, may not be agitated by harsh storms, hence the title "Pacific."

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive warning to these people:

"Say: 'Take pleasure in your disbelief for a while [and spend a few days in neglect and vanity, but know that]: surely you are of the dwellers of the Fire!'"

How may such narrow minded and misleading person have any other thing in store for him?

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 9

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِداً وَقَائِماً يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

9. Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord [is better or such a person]? Say: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember [and get a lesson].

Alongside the preceding Verses depicting the characteristics of the people of Fire, the blessed Verse in question treats of the believers' characteristics.

The preceding Verse says that some people solely invoke God in hardships and forget Him in peace of mind and comfort whereas the Verse question says that believers irrespective of hardships and comforts remember God Almighty at all times.

This Verse reflects the employment of the Qur'anic methodological treatment of questions to ask the rhetorical question:

Is such person worthy of Divine Reward or the one who worships God Almighty:

"prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the [chastisement] of the Hereafter and Hoping for the Mercy of his Lord?"

The disbelieving, forgetful, capricious, astray, and misleading man is too apart from the one whose soul is awakened and when the neglectful are asleep prostrates before his Friend and invokes Him in awe and hope.

They neither regard themselves secure from chastisement in comfort nor do they lose their hope for His Mercy in hardship; as a consequence of which they constantly, willfully, and attentively tread the Path toward their Friend.

The present participle:

qanit ("obedient")

indicates the accompaniment of obedience with humbleness. ana' is the plural form of ana' which indicates hour and portion of time.

The emphasis laid on the hour of night reveals that at that time presence of heart is more and impurities springing from dissimulation are less than any other time.

"Prostrating" (sajidan)

Precedes:

"standing in prayer" (qa'iman)

since prostration is a higher state of worship and the absoluteness of Divine Mercy and Its lack of restriction to the Hereafter reflects the inclusivity of Divine Mercy in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) attested in 'Ilal al-Shara'i' and Kafi:

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night"

is interpreted as night prayer.[14]

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Verse reads:

"Are those who know equal to those who know not?"

The reply to this rhetorical question follows thus:

"It is only men of understanding who will remember [and get a lesson]."

Though the question is signifies a wide range of meaning explicitly referring to those who know and those who know not, men of understanding and the ignorant, but owing to the fact that the preceding question treats of the inequality of believers praying to God at night time and disbelievers, the latter question alludes to the same question, namely those obdurate disbelievers are not on a par with sincere devout believers.

It is to be noted that the aforementioned rhetorical question and is regarded as one of the fundamental slogans of the Islamic faith bears testimony to the Glory of knowledge and the knowledgeable against the ignorant and with due consideration of its inclusivity, it is evident that the two groups are neither on a par at Divine Threshold nor from the viewpoint of the aware; they are far apart in this world and the Hereafter. They are inwardly and outwardly unlike to one another.

The word:

knowledge ('ilm)

is not employed ad hoc in the sense of knowing some terms or the material links amongst things; in other words, it does not indicate "formal sciences" but it denotes a specific knowledge and awareness that leads man to obedience (qunut) to God Almighty and fear of Judgment makes man to set his hopes on Divine Mercy.

This the truth of knowledge and formal sciences constitute knowledge in case they are in this vein; otherwise, they lead to vanity, neglect, wrong doing, and corruption in this world and they are no more than futile discussions not leading to spiritual realization.

Contrary to what the ignorant imagine regarding religion as the opium of people, the most fundamental prophetic calls addressed gaining knowledge thereby proclaiming their objection against ignorance at all times.

Besides the Qur'anic Verses imbued with the exposition of such truth, Islamic traditions abound in such unimaginable expressions concerning the significance of gaining knowledge.

According to a prophetic tradition:

"Life is solely fruitful for two people: a knowledgeable person whose views are followed and students giving their ears to a scholar."[15]

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Scholars are the inheritors of prophets, since the latter left no worldly possessions but they left sciences and traditions and whoever possesses anything enjoys abundant possessions of prophets' heritage."

Imam Sadiq (as) further adds:

"Be careful from whom you gain your knowledge [from real scholars or pretenders to knowledge]. Know that at any era, there are just and trustworthy individuals from amongst us, the Prophet's (S) Household, who reject the extremists' distortions, the deviants' baseless claims, and the justifications of the ignorant in order to remove the impurities from this pure religion."[16]

The blessed Verse in question makes mention of three groups of people: those who know, those who do not know, and men of understanding.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) includes an interpretation concerning the three groups mentioned herein:

"We are those who know, our enemies are those who do not know, and our followers are men of understanding."[17]

According to a tradition, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) departed one night from the Mosque at Kufa toward his house while he was accompanied by one of his intimate friends, Kumayl ibn Ziyad. Passing by a house from which they could hear a man reciting:

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord"

with a pleasing and sad voice, Kumayl was quite pleased with the spiritual state of the man though he refrained from uttering any word.

Imam 'Ali (as) turned to him and said:

"Do not be pleased by this man's voice. He is among the people of the Hell! I will inform you of that soon!"

Kumayl was taken aback since Imam 'Ali (as) had been able to read his mind and besides, he had informed him of the apparently pious man's place in Hell.

Before long, Seceders (Khariji's, khawarij) disobeyed Imam 'Ali (as) and the Imam waged war against them, though they knew the Qur'an by heart as It was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

Standing among the carcasses of the rebellious disbelievers, Imam 'Ali (as), holding his sword in his hand, turned to Kumayl and pointed with his sword at one of heads fallen on the battleground and said unto him:

"O Kumayl! Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord."

By which he meant that it was the same person reciting the Holy Qur'an that night and whose seemingly spiritual state had made you wonder. Kumal kissed the Imam and prayed for repentance.[18]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 10

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

10. Say: "O My servants who believe! Stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him. Good is for those who do good in this world and Allah's earth is spacious [so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then emigrate to another]! Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning."

Having faith is not sufficient and it is supposed to be accompanied with fear of God Almighty and abstention from committing sins:

("O My servants who believe, stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him").

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"There shall be no reckoning for a group of people and they will be admitted to Paradise without answering questions."

Then he recited the blessed Verse:

"Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning."

Following the discussion concerning the comparison between vain disbelievers and believers obedient to Divine Command and also the one between

"those who know"

and

"those who do not know,"

this Verse and the following Verses treat of the main guidelines of sincere and devout servants in the form of "seven injunctions" included in a number Verses each opening with:

"say" (qul).

The Verse opens with fear of God and asks the Prophet (S):

"Say: O My servants who believe! Stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him."

The first guideline is fear of God and abstention from committing sins and the sense of obligation and responsibility at Divine Threshold. Fear of God serves as a shield against fire protecting man against deviation from the Straight Path. It is the main possession on the Day of Resurrection, and the standard for human character and dignity at Divine Threshold.

The second injunction is concerned with

"doing righteous good deeds"

in this world which is the abode of deeds and encourages people to act upon it through making mention of the consequences of doing good, saying:

"Good is for those who do good in this world."

Doing good in this world through good words and deeds, in thoughts regarding friends and strangers leads to great rewards in this world and the Hereafter. Fear of God is a preventive factor and doing good is a moving one and the composite of which is abstention from committing sins and carrying out obligatory and preferable religious duties.

The third injunction is encouraging believers to

"emigrate"

from the centers of polytheism, disbelief, and sin:

"Allah's earth is spacious [so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then emigrate to another]!"

It is a response to those people of frail faith who sought pretexts and said that they were not able to carry out our Divine obligations under polytheist rule at Mecca.

The Holy Qur'an says that God's earth is not limited to Mecca; Emigrate to Medina, the earth is spacious. Move from centers polluted with polytheism, disbelief, and suppression hindering your freedom and carrying out your obligations to another place.

The question of emigration constitutes one the most significant issues that not only played the most fundamental role in the triumph of the Islamic rule as a consequence of which served as the starting point of the history of Islam but also enjoys an extraordinary significance at all times thereby believers do not surrender against pressure and suppression prevalent in their environment and on the other hand leads to the dissemination of the Islamic faith to different regions of the world.

In this vein, the Holy Qur'an[19] says:

"Indeed, as for those whom the angels take [in death] while they are wronging themselves they [angels responsible for taking away their souls] ask [them]: 'in what [conditions] were you?' They reply: 'We were weak and oppressed on the earth.' They ask: 'Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?' Such men will find their abode in Hell - what an ominous place!"

The Verse clearly indicates that where emigration is possible, no pretext as to pressure and suppression is to be acknowledged at Divine threshold.[20]

Since emigration usually entails many a problem in different aspects of life, the fourth injunction is thus expressed regarding patience and perseverance:

"Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning."

The verbal form:

yuwaffa ("shall receive in full")

deriving from w-f-y on the one hand and the phrase:

bi-ghayri hisabin ("without reckoning")

on the other clearly demonstrates that the perseverant patient shall receive the best reward at Divine Threshold and patience and perseverance are above any other act.

A well known Prophetic tradition narrated by Imam Sadiq thus bears testimony to the significance of perseverance and patience:

"When the scrolls of deeds are unrolled and the scales of Divine Justice are installed, there shall be neither of the twain for those who were perseverant despite being entangled with hardships and vicissitudes."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the Verse in question according to which God Almighty shall reward the patient without reckoning.

Some maintain that the occasion of revelation of the blessed Verse was the emigration of a large number of Muslims to Ethiopia led by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib. It has been reiterated above that occasions of Revelation provide further exposition for the Verses rather than restrict their significance.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 11 - 13

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ الدِّينَ

وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

11. Say: "Indeed I am commanded to worship Allah when at the same time I have rendered the faith pure for him."

12. Say: "Indeed I am commanded to be the first Muslim [i.e., the first of those who submit themselves to Allah].

13. Say: "Indeed if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of a great Day."

The Noble Prophet (S) was keen on worshipping God sincerely and carrying out other obligations of his despite the agreement or disagreement of others;

("I am commanded; sincerely; the first Muslim");

as a consequence of which the Noble Verse says:

"Say that having purified my religion for him, I am commanded to worship God."

Verse 12 reads:

"I am commanded to be the first Muslim, namely be the first to submit fully to Divine Command."

Verse 13 is thus concerned with the seventh and the last injunction, fear of Divine Chastisement on the Day of Resurrection,

"Say that if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of the great Day [of Resurrection]."

It is herein indicated that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is one of the servants of God; he is also commanded to fully submit to Divine Command.

His obligations even far exceed others since he is supposed to be the forerunner in this respect. He neither claimed divinity nor did he deviate the path of sincere servantship, but he took pride in such state hence he is the model for all Muslims.

He never regarded himself to enjoy any privilege and the same clearly indicates his high rank and truthfulness, unlike pretenders who expect others to worship them claiming that they stand above human beings in terms of rank, essence, and origin and calling their adherents at times to provide them annually with gold and precious stones as per their weight!

The Noble Prophet (S) is actually saying that he is unlike tyrant sovereigns who oblige people to carry out obligations but regard themselves superior to carrying out obligations.

It demonstrates a significant point pertaining to the formative side of education, namely any educator and leader is supposed to be the forerunner in acting upon the injunctions of his school; he is supposed to be the first believer in his own doctrine, the most assiduous individual and exceed others in making sacrifices such that others trust his sincerity and regard him as a role model in all matters.

It is thus clarified that his being the forerunner of total submission to Divine Will is true since he was the first Muslim in all respects, e.g. in terms of faith, sincere devotion, deeds, making sacrifices, jihad, resistance, and perseverance. All accounts of his life bear testimony to the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 14 - 15

قُلِ اللَّهَ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ دِينِي

فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

أَلا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

14. Say: "Allah Alone I worship while I have rendered the faith pure for him."

15. So worship what you like besides Him. Say: "[real] losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed that will be a manifest loss!"

Monotheism surpasses prophetic teachings. Sincere devotion has been so far mentioned four times in this Chapter since history reveals that accretion of superstitions, idiosyncratic tastes, and distortions have been the worst blights of religion.

Following an exposition of the seven injunctions in the preceding Verses, i.e., fear of God, doing righteous good deeds, emigration, patience, sincere devotion, total submission [to Divine Will], and dread of the Master of the day of judgment, emphasis is once more put on ethical norms particularly those against diverse motives behind polytheism, saying:

"Allah Alone I worship while I have rendered the faith pure for him. So Worship what you like besides Him, [since real] losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection."

They neither made use of their own life, nor did their families could have led them to deliverance, nor could they provide them with honor and intercession at Divine Threshold.

"Indeed that will be a manifest loss!"

The word

"loss"

is thrice reiterated to awaken man and make him aware of the loss of the soul on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 16

لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ذَلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ يَا عِبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ

16. They shall have coverings of Fire above them and coverings [of Fire] beneath them. With this [torment] Allah frightens His servants: "O My servants, therefore fear Me!"

The chastisement of those who have turned away from God Almighty and have turned toward others and have thereby incurred loss is that fire encompasses them from all sides.

The Noble Verse in question thus presents a depiction of manifest loss:

"for and above them stand canopies of fire and beneath them are canopies of fire as well!"

Thus, they are enfolded with fire. What loss may be worse than that? What torment may be more excruciating that that?

The word sulal, the plural form of sulla, indicates "awning, marquee, and canopy" installed from above, hence its application to the sense of a carpet spread underneath is a metaphorical extension of the semantic range of the word.

Some exegets maintain that since the people of Hell are entangled in the layers of Hell, coverings of fire are both above and below them and even the word sulal is not supposed to be applied to lower coverings.

A similar depiction is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[21]:

"On the Day when the torment shall cover them from above them and from underneath their feet and it will be said: 'Taste what you used to do!'"

It is a depiction of the state of their world in which ignorance, disbelief, and wrong doing encompassed them.

Further emphasis is laid on it to give them a lesson:

"With this [torment] Allah frightens His servants: 'O My servants, therefore fear Me!'"

The word:

'ibad ("servants")

and its relation to "God" reiterated in this blessed Verse indicates that Divine Warning against torment is for His Mercy and Favor so that His servants do not meet such ominous fate; as a consequence of which it becomes clear that the word ibad ad hoc does not necessarily signify "believers" rather it is applied to everyone, since in case of wrong doing, no one is secure from Divine torment.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 17 - 18

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَى فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

17. Those who avoid false deities [powers antithetical to God] by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants.

18. Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are [the ones] whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding.

One of the characteristics of sincere believers and God's servants is their avoidance from false deities, since it is a prelude to attentiveness to God.

These Verses compare and contrast biased and obdurate polytheists for whom Hell fire is in store with truth seeking servants of God, saying:

"Those who avoid false deities [powers antithetical to God] by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants."

Since the word bushra is used in the broad sense of the word, it encompasses all kinds of

"good tidings"

for Divine Bounties, material and spiritual; however such inclusive good tidings solely belongs to those who avoid from worshipping false deities and turn toward God as it embraces faith and doing righteous good deeds.

Furthermore, the word taghut is taken from tughiyan indicating transgression of bounds.

Therefore, the word is applied to any object of worship other than God Almighty, e.g. Satan and tyrants. It is worthy of note that it is used both in the singular and the plural.

"Avoidance from taghut,"

employed in its broad sense, indicates any kind of polytheism, idolatry, concupiscence, Satan worship, and submission to tyrant rulers.

"Turning toward Allah" (inaba ila Allah)

embraces fear of God, piety, and faith. It is needless to say that such people deserve the good tidings.

It is worthy of note that worshipping Taghut is not restricted to bowing down and prostration in worship, but it includes any kind of obedience as well.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who obeys a tyrant ruler, he worships him.[22]

Thus the elite servants of God are represented:

'Announce the good news to My servants.'"

Verse 18 says:

"Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are [the ones] whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding."

These two Verses have turned to an Islamic slogan demonstrating Muslim freethinking and selectiveness in different issues.

According to Verse 17,

"so announce the good news to My servants,"

then these servants are presented as people who listen to the words irrespective of the speakers' characteristics and make use of their intellection to select the best of them. They are devoid of any kind of bias or obduracy, nor is their thought limited by anything.

They seek truth and turn toward it wherever they find it. They drink their fill of the pure springhead of truth. They are not only after truth and good words, but also are they selective between good and better and choose the latter. This is the characteristic of a true Muslim and a truth seeking believer.

Regarding the word:

qawl ("word")

in the clause:

yastami'un al-qawl ("[They] listen to Word"),

exegets present different exegeses.

Some maintain that

"Word"

indicates the Holy Qur'an and whatever is included in It in terms of obedience and lawfulness and regard following the best to indicate obedience to God Almighty.

Some others hold that the word is employed in the broad sense of Divine Command irrespective of being mentioned in the Holy Qur'an or elsewhere. However, there exists no argument to substantiate such restricted exegeses, since the apparent meaning of the Verse includes any kind of word.

The faithful servants of God select the best from amongst all the words and follow the same and act upon it.

It is worthy of note that as per the blessed Verse, those following Divine Guidance are solely considered to be amongst such people as men of understanding solely belong to such people.

It makes a reference to the fact that such people are outwardly and inwardly guided; in other words, they are outwardly guided through intellection and understanding and inwardly through Divine Light and Assistance. Such truth seeking freethinkers may solely take pride in the twain.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 19 - 20

أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ

لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَبْنِيَّةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ

لا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ

19. Is then one against whom the Word of chastisement is justified [may be guided?] Will you save him who is in the Fire?

20. But those who fear their Lord and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms [in Paradise], one above another under which rivers flow. [This is] the Promise of Allah and Allah does not fail in [His] Promise.

Owing to their obduracy and bias, some people prevent themselves from Divine Forgiving;

("against whom the Word of chastisement is justified").

The blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet (S) was keen on guiding polytheists and those in error and was saddened by those who deviated from the true Path and were not attentive toward realities.

Verse 20 is a consolation for him by saying that this world is arena of free will and trial as a consequence of which some people, owing to their disbelief, deserve Hell fire, saying:

"Is then one against whom the Word of chastisement is justified [may be guided?] Will you save him who is in the Fire?"

The clause:

"against whom the Word of chastisement is justified"

alludes to Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"That I will fill Hell with you [Satan] and those of them that follow you, together!"[23]

Justification of Divine Word regarding chastisement of this group was not evidently preordained, since they taste Divine chastisement because of their evil deeds and their persistence in wrong doing, corruption, and sinfulness, such that their spirit of faith and distinction is doomed to perdition and they all deserve Hell fire.

Thus, the clause:

"Will you save him who is in the Fire?"

is a delicate allusion to the fact that their being doomed to Hell fire is so evident that it is as if they are in fire now. It is to be noted that such people have severed all their ties with God Almighty and are thus left with no way toward deliverance; even the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who is a

"Mercy for all the world"

may not save them from Divine chastisement.

As a source of consolation for the Noble Prophet (S) and believers, the blessed Verse closes thus:

"But those who fear their Lord and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms [in Paradise], one above another under which rivers flow."

The people of Hell dwell in coverings of fire:

("They shall have coverings of Fire above them and coverings [of Fire] beneath them")

but for the people of Paradise are:

"built lofty rooms [in Paradise], one above another under which rivers flow,"

since looking at flowers, water, rivers, and gardens from above the rooms is more pleasing.

The word:

ghuraf

is the plural form of ghurfa ("lofty room") is taken from gharf indicating "take up; ladle" hence the water taken from the river for drinking is referred to as ghurfa; however, it is figuratively applied to the upper stories of buildings.

Such beautiful lofty rooms in Paradise are further embellished with the rivers flowing underneath, thus the blessed Verse further adds:

"under which rivers flow."

The Verse closes with:

"[This is] the Promise of Allah and Allah does not fail in [His] Promise."

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 21

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً مُخْتَلِفاً
أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرّاً ثُمَّ ´ْعَلُهُ حُطَاماً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

21. See you not that Allah sends down water from the sky and causes it to penetrate the earth [then makes it to spring up] as water springs and afterward thereby produces crops of different colors and afterwards they

wither and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them dry and broken pieces. Indeed, in this is a Reminder from men of understanding [to know that the world is transient].

Rain is the source of springs and subterranean waters. Natural phenomena serve to fulfill Divine Will (making plants to grow is God's work but it is done by means of water). In the blessed Verse in question, the Holy Qur'an once more returns to the arguments substantiating Divine Unity and the Hereafter and pursues to complete the foregoing discussions concerning disbelief and faith.

From amongst the signs of Divine Glory and Lordship in the world of existence, mention are made of sending down rain from the sky and making verdure grow with many a color out of the colorless water, different stages of life, and attaining to the final stage.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the Verse gives a lesson to all believers, saying:

"See you not that Allah sends down water from the sky?"

The life giving drops of rain are sent down from the sky. They penetrate the penetrable layer of the earth and the process of penetration stops at the impenetrable layer. The water fills the subterranean basins and thence it exudes in the forms of rivers, manmade subterranean water canals, and spring wells.

The clause:

salakahu ("caused it [rain water] to penetrate it [the earth]")

makes a brief reference to what has been already mentioned. The word yanabi' is the plural form of yanbu' ("spring") is taken from n-b-' ("well up; gush forth [water]").

Had the earth had no impenetrable layer, one single drop of water would not have been reserved in it and all rain would have flowed into seas.

There would have been no spring, nor manmade subterranean water canal, nor well. Had it had solely one penetrable layer, all rain would have penetrated into the earth such that it would have been impossible to have access to it.

The two penetrable and impenetrable layers are made use of in digging shallow, semi-deep, and deep wells.

The Verse further adds:

"Afterward thereby [God Almighty] produces crops of different colors."

The kinds of plants, e.g. wheat, barley, rice, and corn, as well as their qualities and colors differ; some are light green in color, some have broad and some narrow and delicate leaves.

The word zar' is applied to plants with fragile stems, as the opposite of shajar often applied to trees with strong trunks.

The former is broader in its semantic range embracing non-nutritive plants, e.g. different kinds of flowers, luxurious plants, and medicinal herbs extraordinarily diverse in types, forms, and colors, such that at times different colors are quite interestingly and delicately intertwined in one branch, stem, twig, or even one single flower or blossom which sing the song of Divine Glory and Unity.

The Verse further treats of the other stages of the plant:

"afterward thereby produces crops of different colors and afterwards they wither and you see them turn yellow."

Harsh winds blow uprooting those whose roots are weak,

"then He makes them dry and broken pieces."

It serves as a reminder for thinkers and intellectuals,

"Indeed, in this is a Reminder from men of understanding."

It is a reminder referring to the well measured and astonishing system of the world of existence and Divine Lordship reflected in this astounding scene and also a reminder of the end of life and extinguishing the flames of life, Resurrection, and the raising of the dead.

Despite the fact that the Verse depicts the world of plants, but It warns mankind that the same happens in your lifespan, though whose duration may differ; however they share the same features: birth, youth and rigor, withering away and old age, and finally death.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 22

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلالٍ مُبِينٍ

22. Is he whose breast Allah has opened to [convert to] Islam, so that he is [alighted on] light from His Lord [like someone entangled with bias, obduracy, and vanity]? So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah! They are in plain error!

The Islamic faith rests on arguments and one possessing extension of mind (sharh sadr) may draw a distinction between truth and falsity through Divine Light.

The blessed Verse in question is asking:

"Is the one whose breast is opened to convert the Islamic faith by God and is mounted on Divine Light is on a par with the lightless hardhearted deprived of Divine Guidance?"

The Verse further adds:

"Woe to those whose hearts are so hardened and impenetrable that they may not be affected by remembrance of Allah."

Neither fruitful admonitions, nor good tidings, nor warnings, nor moving Qur'anic Verses, nor life giving rain of Divine Revelation may cause flowers of fearing God and piety grow in their hearts. In other words, they have neither freshness, nor leaves, nor flowers, nor shade!

Such people

"are in plain error."

The word qasiya is taken from qaswa indicating coarseness, uncouthness, and impenetrability and the word qasi is applied to rough stones.

Likewise, the word is applied to hard hearts unaffected by Divine Light and Guidance.

The expression is employed as the opposite of "extension of mind" and openness of heart, since extension and openness alludes to preparation for acceptance. A desert or a spacious mansion may accommodate more people and likewise, an opened mind and broad breast may accept more realities.

According to a report narrated by Ibn Mas'ud, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was asked concerning the interpretation of the Verse,

"In what manner man may attain to extension of mind?"

the Noble Prophet replied:

"When Light penetrates into human heart, it broadens in extent and returns."

He was again inquired regarding the tokens thereof, to which he replied:

"The tokens include attentiveness toward the everlasting abode, separation from the abode of vanity, and preparation for welcoming death prior to its occurrence."[24]

According to the exegetic work by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim,

"Is he whose breast Allah has opened to [convert to] Islam, so that he is [alighted on] light from His Lord [like someone entangled with bias, obduracy, and vanity]?"

is revealed for the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as).

As per some Qur'anic exegetic works,

"So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah"

is addressed to Abu Lahab and his offspring.[25]

It is worthy of note that Light in

"[alighted on] light from His Light"

is expressed such that it reminds one of a mount on which believers are alighted on it whose speed is extraordinary, whose path is bright, and whose rigor encompasses the world over.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 23

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَاباً مُتَشَابِهاً مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

23. Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book whose [Verses] resemble each other. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from [its recitation]. Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allah [through faith and intimacy]. That is Divine Guidance. He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray [because of his disobeying Him], for him there is no guide.

The word:

hadith

is employed in the sense of "word, statement."

In the blessed Verse in question, it makes a reference to the Holy Qur'an which is the Best Statement, since it embraces comprehensiveness, eloquence, and firmness.

The word:

mutashabih ("similar; polysemous; equivocal")

is per se polysemous, since some of the Verses are equivocal as opposed to the clear and unequivocal Ones.

According to a Verse in Chapter three,

"They [constitute] the Mother of the Book and others [are] equivocal";

however, the word mutashabih in this Verse implies the similarity of Qur'anic Verses and it is employed as an adjective modifying all the Verses.

The word:

mathani

is the plural form of mathniya ("inclination, tendency") indicating the proximity of Qur'anic Verses such that some of which interpret some others; in other words, the same meaning may be found in different forms.

It is noteworthy that the preceding Verses treated of God's servants who listen to the words and select the best of them and also mention was made of open breasts and broadened minds prepared to embrace Divine Word.

In the same vein, the blessed Verse in question makes mention of the Holy Qur'an in order to complete the foregoing discussions concerning Divine Unity and Resurrection substantiated with arguments put forward for the veracity of prophethood.

The Verse opens with:

"Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book whose [Verses] resemble each other."

It further proceeds with an enumeration of the merits of the Holy Qur'an among which three merits of this Glorious Divine Book is mentioned:

"a Book whose [Verses] resemble each other."

The word mutashabih ad hoc refers to a statement whose constituent elements are consistent and harmonious, in which neither inconsistency nor discrepancy may be found, but one is better than the other.

Furthermore, another characteristic of this Book is that it is oft-repeated (mathani). The expression may allude to the reiteration of different topics mentioned in the stories and admonitions, but they are never boring, rather they are enthusing and invigorating.

It is one of the fundamental principles of eloquence that as required, a point may be reiterated in a novel and interesting manner for a more profound impression in the audience.

Besides, the reiteration of Qur'anic themes help to interpret each other and may thus provide answers to many a question. Some maintain that it makes a reference to the reiteration in reciting the Holy Qur'an and the fact that Qur'anic Verses never lose their freshness through repetition.

Some also make a reference to the Revelation of the Qur'an once at one single time on the Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) and also at different times within a period of 23 years. It is also possible that the reiteration of the Qur'anic Truth at any time and a novel manifestation of the same out of occultation refer to the passage of time.

The first interpretation sounds more preferable; however the foregoing interpretations are not inconsistent, rather they complement each other.

Furthermore, the Verse proceeds toward an exposition of the last characteristics of the Holy Qur'an, namely Its extraordinary and profound impression, saying:

"The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from [its recitation]. Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allah [through faith and intimacy]."

This is an elegant depiction of the unusual impression caused by Qur'anic Verses in welcoming hearts that causes fear and awe in the first place which leads to awakening and beginning of motion. Such fear makes man attend to his different obligations.

It is in the second place that he attains to flexibility and welcoming the Word of Truth leading to peace of mind.

The two fold state demonstrating different stages of:

"treading the Path toward Allah"

which is quite understandable.

The blessed Verses revealing Divine Wrath and warning the Noble Prophet (S) make the hearts shiver which are followed by the Verses designating Divine Mercy and thus leading to peace of mind. Reflection upon the Essence of Truth and the Pre-eternality and Infiniteness of His Pure Essence causes fear in his heart as to the manner through which He may be known, but pondering on the Signs of the Sacred Essence in the horizons and souls bestows peace of mind on him.[26]

The history of Islam abounds in instances of the extraordinary impression of the Holy Qur'an in the hearts of both believers and non-believers whose hearts were prepared to welcome It and such unusual impression bears witness to the Divine Revelation of this Holy Book.

According to a tradition narrated on the authority of Asma',

"Upon the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, the Companions of the Prophet (S) wept and shuddered in awe."[27]

Regarding the pious, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) makes an exposition of such truth in the best possible manner:

"Those stand in prayer at night time, recite the Holy Qur'an in a meditative and clearly enunciated manner, immerse their souls in it in a pleasing sadness, seek the cure of their pain in it; whenever they come unto any encouraging Verse, they set their hopes on it and the eyes of their hearts gaze at it in astonishment and they set it as their example, and when they come unto One in which there are warning and inspiration of awe, they listen to them wholeheartedly, as if they the moans and the flames of the awe inspiring Hell fire echo in their hearts."

The blessed Verse closes thus:

"That is Divine Guidance. He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray [because of his disobeying Him], for him there is no guide."

It is true that the Holy Qur'an is revealed for the Guidance of all, but truth seekers and the pious may solely benefit from the Light of Its Guidance.

Those whose hearts are intentionally sealed and the shadows of bias and obduracy dominates their souls not only may not benefit from It, but also owing to their obduracy and enmity, they sink further in error.

Thus the Verse proceeds with:

"He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray [because of his disobeying Him], for him there is no guide."

Such error is owing to their own deeds springing from their will and it is in no way inconsistent with the human free will.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 24

أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِي بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

24. Is he then who will confronts with his face the awful torment on the Day of Resurrection [through faith and righteous good deeds on a par with one who neglects Divine Wrath on the Day of Resurrection]? And [on that Day] it will be said to the wrong doers]: "Taste what you used to ear!"

The fruit of fearing God Almighty is to turn his face away from Divine Wrath on the Day of Resurrection. The blessed Verse in question compares wrong doers and sinners with the believers whose state has been already mention so that such comparison shed more light on realities.

The Verse in question asks:

"Is he who turns away with his face the excruciating Divine torment on a par with the one who is secure on that Day and Hell fire never touches him?"

It is noteworthy that the Verse says:

"confronts with his face the awful torment."

The word face is used in this expression since it is one of the most organs of the body and the significant human sources, i.e., vision, hearing, smell, and taste, are in it and human beings are basically recognized through their faces; that is why they try to shield their hands, arms, and other organs against it to save it from perils.

However, the wrong doing people of Hell have to defend themselves with their faces, as their hands and feet are in fetters and shackles as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[28]:

"Indeed We have put on their necks iron collars [in which their hands are also laid] reaching to the chins, so that their heads are raised up."

Some have maintained that the expression indicates that they will be cast into Fire on their faces, so that their first organ touching the fire will be their faces, as it is mentioned in 27:90,

"And whoever brings an evil deed, they will be cast down on their faces in the Fire."

It is also held that the expression solely implies their inability to save themselves from Hell fire. The three interpretations are not inconsistent and they may all be comprehended from the contextual content of the Verse.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"And it will be said to wrong doers: 'Taste what you used to earn!'"

Angels responsible for inflicting torment inform them of the excruciating reality that the torment is the consequence of what you used to earn. Now they embrace and hurt you and the expression per se is another mental torment for them.

It is worthy of note that the Verse does not say: "Taste the consequences of your deeds," but it says:

"Taste your deeds"

which is another piece of evidence for

"embodiment of deeds."

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 25 - 26

كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَشْعُرُونَ
فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

25. Those before them belied and so the torment came on them from directions they perceived not.

26. Therefore, Allah made them to taste the disgrace in the present life, but greater is the torment of the Hereafter if they only knew!

The history of disbelievers and tyrants is a lesson for future generations. The foregoing discussions made a reference in passing to the excruciating torments of disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection; however, the blessed Verse in question treats of their torments in this world, lest they may imagine that they are secure in their mundane life.

In this vein, the blessed Verse says:

"Those before them belied and so the torment came on them from directions they perceived not."

Expected blows are less excruciating than unexpected ones, e.g. those from the most intimate friends, the most beloved means of life, from the water which is the source of his life, from the gentle breeze which invigorating, and from the serene land which is his abode and place of rest and security. Such Divine torments are very excruciating.

The accounts of the peoples of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, Lot, Pharaoh, and Qarun (Korah) reveal that they were inflicted with quite unexpected torments.

Verse 26 indicates that their mundane torment was solely corporeal but they were inflicted with mental chastisement as well,

"Allah made them to taste the disgrace in the present life."

It is not an issue when someone is inflicted with a hardship but he manages to save himself honorably, rather the hardship lies in falling a victim to torments disgracefully,

"but greater is the torment of the Hereafter if they only knew!"

The word greater (akbar) designates the severity of the torment.

According to a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of 'Abbas, the Noble Prophet's (S) paternal uncle,

"Upon shuddering with fear of God, a servant is absolved of his sins in the same manner that withered leaves fall from the trees."[29]

It is evident that one who is so affected out of fear of God that leads him to repentance shall be certainly forgiven by God Almighty.

As mentioned above, it is narrated from Asma' that upon being asked of the Prophet's (S) Companions, the answer provided is that as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, upon hearing or reciting the Verses, tears ran from their eyes and their bodies shuddered with fear.

The transmitter asked Asma' concerning those who faint upon hearing Qur'anic Verses and they fall into a state of ecstasy, to which the latter replies:

"I seek refuge in God Almighty from Satan."[30]

The tradition is actually a decisive critique of Sufi pretenders who convene sessions in which Qur'anic Verses and certain prayers are being recited and bodily movements lead them to ecstasy as a consequence of

which they shout and pretend to swoon and some of them may really faint; nonetheless, such states are not reported from the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions but they are Sufi innovations.

It is worthy of note that at times, one may faint out of awe and fear of God, but it is quite different from Sufi activities in aforementioned prayer sessions.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 27-28

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

27. And indeed We have put forth for [the Guidance of] man, in this Qur'an every kind of similitude in order that they may remember.

28. An Arabic [and eloquent] Qur'an, without any crookedness in order that they may fear God.

Guiding and reminding men of their duties, through producing arguments or similitude, is of significance.

The Holy Qur'an includes:

"every kind of similitude"

for reminding him of his obligations and making him to avoid neglectfulness.

Ordinary people

("for man")

are more prone to be impressed by similitude rather than argument.

Proceeding with the aforementioned discussions, the blessed Verse in question mainly treats of the Holy Qur'an and Its characteristics.

Mention is made in the first place of the question of the comprehensiveness of the Holy Qur'an:

"And indeed We have put for [the Guidance of] man, in this Qur'an every kind of similitude in order that they may remember."

The Divine Book includes the excruciating fates of the disobedient and tyrants in the past, the dire consequences of sinfulness, every admonition, secrets of creation and its systematicity, clear and precise Laws and Injunctions, and whatever is required for man's guidance in the form of similitude

"in order that they may remember"

and return to the Straight Path. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word mathal is applied to any word that embodies a truth, depicts something, or likens something to something else.

The expression includes all the facts and points included in the Holy Qur'an and specifies Its comprehensiveness.

Verse 28 provides another depiction of the Holy Qur'an saying:

"An Arabic [and eloquent] Qur'an, without any crookedness."

Three characteristics are being enumerated herein. Firstly, the expression Qur'an-an makes a reference to the fact that Qur'anic Verses are being recited at all times in daily prayers and otherwise, in solitude and in assemblies, and throughout the history of Islam to the end of the world; such that It is an ever illuminating Light of Guidance.

The other point is the eloquence, elegance, and impressiveness of the Divine Word expressed by the word:

"Arabic" ('Arabiy-yan),

since the word is ad hoc employed in the sense of "eloquent."

Some philologists and exegets maintain that 'iwaj and 'awaj are applied to inward and outward crookedness respectively, an instance of which is to found elsewhere in the Qur'an[31]:

"You will see in it [i.e., plain] nothing crooked or curved,"

as a consequence of which a number of philologists consider the former interpretation to be general.[32]

It is noteworthy that the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an with so many characteristics is that man may fear God and be pious.

The other point worthy of note is that the penultimate Verse closes with:

"in order that they may remember,"

where as the last One ends in:

"in order that they may fear God."

The reason is that Remembrance at all times is a prelude to fear of God; in other words, the latter is the fruit of the former.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 29

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً رَجُلاً فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ وَرَجُلاً سَلَماً لِرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلاً الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

29. Allah puts forth a similitude [for Divine Unity and polytheism]: a [slave] man belonging to many partners disputing with one another [giving him contradictory orders], and a [slave] man belonging entirely to one master [taking his orders solely from him]. Are those two equal in comparison? All the praises and laudations are to Allah! But most of people know not.

Monotheists are preoccupied with the satisfaction of the One God, whereas polytheists are preoccupied at all times with the satisfaction of different gods.

It is not ill-advised to illustrate examples concerning God in religious discussions, since the blessed Verse in question uses a similitude to liken total submission to God to a slave's obedience to his master:

("belonging entirely to one master").

The Verse is saying that all individuals and paths besides God lead to contradiction and inconsistency, since every man is to his taste and desire:

("many partners disputing with one another").

Thus the Holy Qur'an illustrates the fates of polytheists and monotheists by employment of the similitude as per which a slave belongs to several masters each of whom order him to do something and the point is that the orders are contradictory.

Therefore, the slave is perplexed as to which order is supposed to be acted upon. To add insult to injury, each and every master asks the other to meet the slave's demands and the latter is perplexed, miserable, and destitute.

Au contraire, mention is made of a man obedient to one single person:

("a man belonging entirely to one master")

whose master and orders to be taken and carried out are specifically clear. He is neither in doubt, nor perplexity, nor contradiction; rather he takes his steps calmly and confidently, since he is under the guardianship of one single person who supports him anywhere and anytime.

"Are those two equal in comparison?"

Such are the states of polytheists and monotheists. The former are entangled with every contradiction and inconsistency.

Each and every day they set their hearts on an object of worship and turn toward different masters at all times. They lack in peace of mind, security, and a clear path to tread.

Au contraire, the latter set their hearts on God, select Him from the entire world, and seek refuge in His Boundless Mercy. They have turned away from all beings besides God and are totally obedient to Him. Their path is straight and evident and their fate is clear.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) he says

"I am the man who was totally obedient to the Messenger of God (S) at all times."

It is narrated in another tradition:

"The men who were actually obedient were 'Ali (as) and his adherents."

The Verse closes with:

"All the praises and laudations are to Allah!"

God Almighty illustrates such examples to beacon the Path. He produces clear arguments to draw a distinction between Truth and falsehood. He calls every one to sincere devotion leading to security and peace of mind.

It is the most exalted Bounty that requires praise and laudation.

"But most of people know not,"

in other words, despite such clear arguments, some people are preoccupied with mundane possessions and unchecked vain desires such that they may not find their way to Truth.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter.
2. Majma' al-Bayan; Thawab al-A'mal; Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Ruh al-Ma'ani [Exegesis], vol. 23, p. 212, under the blessed Verses in question.
4. Surah al-Hamd or Surah al-Fatiha
5. 35:13
6. 7:54
7. 14:33
8. Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. 3:198
10. The 'Arafa Prayer, see Misbah al-Za'ir by Ibn Óawus.
11. For further information, see the exegesis of 17:15.
12. For further information, see the exegesis of 6:94.
13. See Lisan al-'Arab; Raghib's Mufradat; the Exegetic work titled Ruh al-Ma'ani.

www.alhassanain.org/english

14. Apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 479.
15. Kafi, vol. 1, Bab Sifat al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi ("The Chapter on the Characteristics of Knowledge and its Exellence") Tradition 7.
16. Ibid, Tradition 2.
17. Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the Verses in question.
18. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 496, the section on accounts of Kumayl.
19. 4:97
20. For further discussions concerning the significance of emigration in Islam and its different dimensions, see the Holy Qur'an 4:100; 8:72.
21. 29:55
22. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
23. 38:85
24. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5691, exegesis of Chapter 39, under the Verses in question.
25. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
26. The word taqsha'iru ("he has gooseflesh with fear") derives from qusha'rira ("having gooseflesh with fear, shudder"), see Raghib's Mufradat; Lisan al-'Arab; Tafsir Kashshaf; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Qurtubi.
27. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5693.
28. 36:8
29. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verses in question. Abu al-Futuh Razi and Qurtubi have transmitted the Prophetic tradition with minor variations.
30. Àlusi, Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 23, p. 235.
31. 20:107
32. Raghib's Mufradat.

Surah al-Zumar, Verses 30 - 55

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 30 - 31

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ

30. Verily you will die and indeed they will die [too].

31. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.

Prophets are like ordinary people in their daily life. Being a Favorite [of God] may not hinder the execution of Divine Ordainments like death:

("Verily you will die").

Proceeding with the foregoing discussion on monotheism and polytheism, the blessed Verse in question treats of the consequences of monotheism and polytheism on the Day of Resurrection.

The Verse begins with the question of death, the gate to Resurrection, and treats of the general applicability of the law to all humanity, saying:

"you will die and they will die too."

Death is one of the questions as to which all men are alike. That is the way of all the flesh. There is neither any exception nor any difference in death.

"You will die and they will die"

apparently indicates the death of everyone in the present tense, but is in the real present tense that is at times used in the senses of past and present. Some exegets maintain that the Noble Prophet's (S) foes awaited his death and were happy that he would die some day.

The Holy Qur'an raises a question to them,

"Put the case that he dies, will you be stay alive?"

Verse 31 treats of the Last Judgment depicting servants' disputations on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

"Then on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord."

The verbal form:

takhtasimun ("they dispute")

is taken from ikhtisam denoting "disputation" between two individuals or two groups, each of whom makes attempts at the nullification of the words of the other; in which case, either or both of them may err, an instance of which is the disputations of the people in error.

Exegets differ as to the generality of the issue, some of whom maintain that the disputation in question concerns Muslims and disbelievers, but some also hold that the disputation may be between Muslims and the people of their tribes.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri to the effect that Muslims contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) could never imagine that disputations might occur between Muslims holding that they share the same Creator and religion.

It was on the Day of Siffin that two apparently Muslim parties waged war against each other that Abu Sa'id learned that the Verse concerns them as well.[1]

Nonetheless, the following Verses demonstrate that the disputation occurred between the Noble Prophet (S) and believers on the one hand and the polytheists and liars on the other.

It is well known in the history of Islam that following the sad demise of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), 'Umar denied his death saying that the Prophet (S) might not die but he had gone to his Lord in the same manner that Moses had been in occultation away from his people for forty days but had returned to them.

Likewise, the Messenger of God (S) would return and the hands and feet of those believing in his death was to be severed! Upon hearing the news, Abu Bakr went to him and recited a number of the Qur'anic Verses concerning the demise of the Prophet (S) as a consequence of which 'Umar became silent and said that it was the first time that he heard them.[2]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 32

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِباً أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوىً لِلْكَافِرِينَ

32. Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [i.e., the truth] comes to him? Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?

The word

"truth" (sidq)

in the blessed Verse indicates Divine Word Revealed to the Prophet (S) as the Holy Qur'an.

The preceding Verses treated of people on the Day of Judgment and disputations occurring then.

The Verse in question resumes the same discussion dividing people into

"the lying"

and

"the trustworthy."

The former have two characteristics as reflected in the Qur'anic Verse in question:

"Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [i.e., the truth] comes to him?"

Polytheists and disbelievers uttered many a lie concerning God; for instance, some regarded angels His daughters, some others regarded Jesus (as) his son, some considered idols as intercessors interceding on their behalf, and some others forged false injunctions as to lawfulness and unlawfulness.

Nonetheless, when the Truth, i.e., the Holy Qur'an Revealed to the Prophet (S), came unto them, they denied It.

The Verse closes with a brief clause demonstrating the retribution of these people:

"Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?"

It is worthy of note that the word mathwa is taken from thawa' which indicates "residence, residing, abiding," hence the former ad hoc designates permanent abode or residence.

Hell embodies all its excruciating torments.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 33 - 35

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَ نَزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

33. And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing.

34. They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers.

35. So that Allah [thanks to their faith and sincerity] may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do.

One of Divine Favors is that He expiates from sinners the evil of what they did and gives them rewards in the best manner.

Two characteristics are also mentioned for believers:

"And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing."

The clause

"And he who brought the Truth"

is interpreted in a number of traditions narrated from Shi'i Imams as a reference to Imam 'Ali (as).[3]

However, it is worthy of note that the blessed Verse presents clear pieces of evidence, since the clause:

"They are the God fearing"

indicates the general applicability of the Verse. It bears testimony to the fact that the interpretation of the Verse in question to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), as the bearer of Divine Revelation and believer in It is an instance of the applicability (bayan misdaq) of the contextual meaning of the Verse rather than the meaning thereof in Its entirety.

Consequently, some exegets interpret the clause:

"he who brought the Truth"

to be applicable to all prophets and hold that:

"believed in it"

designates the true believers of them who are all the God fearing of the world.

Another interpretation of the Verse in question which is the most comprehensive, though more or less neglected by exegets despite the fact that it is more consistent with the outward meaning of the Verses, is that:

"he who brought the Truth"

does not solely refer to the bearers of Divine Revelation, i.e., the prophets, rather it is addressed to all those who disseminated their teachings as the Words of Truth.

Therefore, both clauses may refer to the same group, as reflected by the outward interpretation of the Verse, since:

"And he who"

is mentioned solely once.

Thus, the Verse treats both the bearers of Truth and those acting upon the same. It is concerned with the disseminators of Divine Revelation and True Word and they, i.e., prophets, the Infallible Imams and promulgators of their teachings, believe in and act upon the same.

It is noteworthy that

"Truth"

designates "Revelation," making a reference to the fact that they only word which is not subject to inconsistency and contradiction is Divine Word Revealed to prophets.

Furthermore, fearing God Almighty may flourish in hearts through believing in prophetic teachings and acting upon them. The next Verse enumerates three great rewards for such believers.

Firstly, it says:

"They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers."

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is so comprehensive that It includes all this worldly and otherworldly Bounties some of which may be unimaginable.

It is worthy of note to keep in mind that the Rewards of the Hereafter and Divine Bounties shall be bestowed upon servants as per the merits they accrue in this world.

The expression:

"with their Lord"

expresses Divine Boundless Favors granted to them as if they are His guests for good and may request whatever they require.

In

"That is the reward of good doers"

the present participial form:

muhsinin ("good doers")

is employed in lieu of demonstrative pronoun to make a reference to the fact that the main reason behind the bestowal of such Rewards is their good doing.

Verse 35 treats of the second and the third characteristics granted to good doers:

"So that Allah [thanks to their faith and sincerity] may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do."

The expression is worthy of note. On the one hand, they expect that the worst of their deeds be expiated thanks to Divine Mercy such that they may be absolved of them and on the other hand they pray to God Almighty to regard their best of deeds as the standard of according Rewards to them and accept all their deeds accordingly!

It is evident in the Verse that God Almighty accepts their request, namely, He forgives the worst and regards the best as the standard of

granting Rewards. It is to be noted that when worse faults are to be forgiven by Divine Mercy, other faults will be reckoned accordingly.

The point in question is that man is more concerned by worse faults as a consequence of which believers are more preoccupied with it.

Now a question arises: Who was the first believer? Many a Shi'i and Sunni exegets have reported a tradition concerning the interpretation of:

"he who brought the Truth and believed therein"

according to which:

"he who brought the Truth"

indicates the Noble Prophet (S) and

"[he who believed therein]"

refers to 'Ali (as).

Eminent exegets, Tabarsi in Majma' al-Bayan and Abu al-Futuh Razi in Rawh al-Jananhave narrated the tradition from the Prophet's Household (Ahl al-Bayt).

However, a number of Sunni scholars and exegets, e.g. 'Allama Ibn Maghazili in Manaqib, 'Allama Ganji in Kifayat al-Matalib, Qurtubi in his Tafsir ["Exegesis"], 'Allama Suyuti in Durr al-Manthur, and Alusi in Ruh al-Ma'ani,[4] narrate the Prophetic tradition from Abu Hurayra and or other transmitters.

As mentioned above, such interpretations are included for referring to the most evident instances and indubitably, 'Ali (as) is the first person to believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). He is the first believer.

It is to be noted that all Muslim scholars unanimously believe that from amongst men, 'Ali (as) was the first who converted to the Islamic faith and he is many a time mentioned by the Noble Prophet (S) as the

"first believer"

or "the first one who converted to the Islamic faith," the references of which were mentioned above under 9:10.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 36 - 37

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ

36. Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him! And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide.

37. And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader. Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?

God's servants are secure from evils since God is their guardian, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as) were protected from drowning, fire, Pharaoh, and crucifixion.

Many an exeget hold that Meccan idolaters warned the Prophet (S) against their idols lest that he may be harmed or possessed by them! The occasion of the Revelation of the Verse is the reply to their warnings.[5]

Resuming the discussion of the Divine Threats against polytheists as well as the Promises to His Prophet (S) mentioned the preceding Verses, the Verses in question treat of disbelievers' threats saying:

"Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him!"

God is the Omnipotent, All-Aware of His servants' needs and difficulties, and is All-Merciful toward them. How could He abandon his faithful servants in the face of vicissitudes and enmities?

When He supports His servants,

"even if the swords of the world happen to be wielding, no one shall be harmed against His Will."

Likewise, when He Wills to assist someone,

"even if a thousand enemies intend to destroy me, I shall not entertain fear when Your are my Friend,"

let alone idols which are devoid of any power whatsoever.

According to the aforementioned tradition, the occasion for the Revelation of the Verse in question is the Meccan disbelievers warning to the Prophet (S) against the wrath of the idols; however, the contextual meaning of the Verse is so inclusive that It includes any kind of threat against those besides God.

It is to be noted that the Verse in question is a good tiding to all those treading the Path of Truth particularly sincere believers residing in places where they are considered as minorities and are subject to perils from all sides.

The Verse is a source of consolation, encouragement, and perseverance to them invigorating their souls, and refreshing them with determination. It neutralizes the harmful mental impressions and the menaces of their foes. Through Divine Support, we are not frightened by any one besides Him. When we distance ourselves from Him, everything inspires awe in our hearts.

Verses 36 and 37 treat of the questions of Guidance and error, division of people into the two groups of astray and guided, and the fact that these are within His Omnipotence.

He Wills that the entire world comprehend that all His servants need His Threshold. Nothing occurs in this world without His Will, saying:

"And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide."

"And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader."

It is evident that neither the error nor the Guidance is groundless, rather either of the twain is the fruit of human will and endeavor.

God Almighty misleads one who is in error, leaves no stone unturned to extinguish the Light of Truth, makes any attempt to deceive others, and is deep in sinfulness and rebellion.

God Almighty causes his defeat, renders his understanding and distinction useless, seals his heart, and casts a veil on his eyes, as the Retribution of his evil deeds.

Those sincere devout believers aiming to tread the Path toward Allah who have made the necessary preparations for the same and have taken the first steps in that direction, the Light of Divine Guidance renders them assistance, angels of Truth come to their succor absolving their hearts of satanic temptations, strengthen their will, and make them firmer in taking steps on the true path, and Divine Mercy protects them in precipices.

These questions are treated in many a Qur'anic Verses. Those failing to perceive the interrelation existing between such Verses with others are so ignorant that they consider them as arguments substantiating the school of predestination, as if they are unaware of the fact that Qur'anic Verses interpret each other.

An evident piece of evidence is to be found in the Verse in question:

"Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?"

It is well known that Divine Retribution aims at chastisement of wrong doing, indicating that misleading the wrong doer is the chastisement for human deeds and His Guidance is the Reward of the sincere deeds and struggles on the Path toward Allah.[6]

Guidance is divided into beaconing the path and attaining to the object of desire, in other words, legislative (tashri'i) and existential (takwini) Guidance.

It is noteworthy that at times one may show the seeker the way with total precision and wholehearted benevolence, but it will be incumbent upon the seeker to proceed on the path and attain to his goal.

However, at times one may take the hand of the seeker and accompany him on the path till he attains to his goal.

In other words, the guide in the former case merely suffices to inform the seeker of the laws, the conditions of proceeding on the path, and the manner of attainment to the goal, but in the latter case prepares the required means for the journey, removes the obstacles, unravels the intricacies to be met en route, and renders the wayfarers accompaniment and support until they attain to their destination.

It is to be noted that the most precise and the best interpretation consistent with all the Qur'anic Verses concerning Guidance and error is that legislative Guidance in the sense of beaconing the Right Path is unconditional and of general applicability, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Verily, We showed him the way whether he be grateful or ungrateful" (76:3), "Verily, You guide them to the Straight Path"[7].

It is needless to say that the Noble Prophet's (S) Call represents Divine Call since he is Divinely appointed to prophethood.

According to another Qur'anic Verse:

"Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Path"[8].

In this blessed Verse, obedience to Divine Command and seeking His Satisfaction paves the path for Divine Guidance.

Regarding some polytheists and those in error another Qur'anic Verse[9] says:

"There has surely come to them the Guidance from their Lord [but they failed to believe]!"

It is said elsewhere[10],

"Allah guides not the wrong doing people."

In the last Verse, emphasis is laid on wrong doing leading to error.

The Holy Qur'an elsewhere[11] refers to disbelief as the cause of error:

"Allah does not guide the disbelieving people."

Lying and disbelief have also been mentioned as the sources of error[12]:

"Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever."

According to another Qur'anic Verse,

"Allah guides not one who is a transgressor, a liar!".[13]

In other words, transgression of bounds and lying lead to error. It is to be noted that the aforementioned themes abound in many a Qur'anic Verse. In short, the Holy Qur'an considers certain characteristics, e.g. disbelief, wrong doing, vice, lying, transgression of bounds, prodigality, and ingratitude as leading to error.

Are not such people worthy of being in error? Shadows and veils conceal the hearts of people with such characteristics. In any case, such deeds and conducts lead to undesirable consequences, cast a veil on man's eyes, ears, and intellect leading him to error.

Since the qualities of all things and the effects of all means are subject to Divine Will, such error in all cases may be attributed to God; however, such attribution is consistent with His servants' free will. Divine Will on which emphasis is laid in the Verses concerning with Guidance and error by no means indicate unfounded and unwise Will, but there are certain conditions in each and every instance consistent with Divine Wisdom.

According to a Qur'anic Verse,

"And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins and He knows what you do"[14]

in which acts are attributed to servants rather than to His Sacred Essence. Therefore, there is no predestination. Hopefully, the above discussions have shed light on the issues.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 38

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَاتُ رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

38. And indeed if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth?" Surely they will say: "Allah." Say: "Tell me then, [Have you thought about] the things that you invoke besides Allah? [Indeed] if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?" Say: "Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust."

Idolaters believed in God's creativity but also believed in idol's lordship and intercession. The blessed Verse in question says that one who deserves to be worshipped is supposed to be able to intend assistance or harm for others.

The preceding Verses treated of disbelievers' and polytheists' errors and their evil consequences. The Verse in question deals with the arguments for Divine Unity to produce further arguments in order to complete the discussion.

The foregoing Verses concerned with the sufficiency of Divine Succor and the same is resumed in this Verse and it is accompanied with arguments. The Verse opens with the question:

"If you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Surely they will say: 'Allah.'"

It would be unwise to believe that such immense world be created by an earthly being let alone by inanimate idols devoid of understanding.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an asks them to make use of their intellect, conscience, and primordial disposition in order to reinforce in their hearts the first pivot of Divine Unity which is the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Then, mention is made of the question of assistance and harm in human affairs to substantiate the fact that idols play no role therein, saying:

"Say: 'Tell me then, [Have you thought about] the things [i.e., objects of worship] that you invoke besides Allah? [Indeed] if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?' Say: 'Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust.'"

Now that they are neither creators nor are they able to render assistance or harm, their worship is meaningless.

Why do you turn away from the Originator of the creation of the world within His Control lie any assistance and harm and resort to such beings that are devoid of capability and understanding?

Even if objects of worship happen to possess understanding, e.g. jinn and angels worshipped by some idolaters, they are neither creators nor have they any control over assistance and harm.

In this vein, the blessed Verse in question presents a general and final conclusion saying:

"Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust."

The belief held by polytheists as to the creation of the sky and the earth by God is oft-repeated in the Holy Qur'an[15].

It indicates that they firmly believed in it and the same serves as the best argument against polytheism, since monotheistic Creatorship, Lordship, and Sovereignty in the world of existence is the best argument for monotheistic servantship which leads to trust in Divine Pure Essence and turning away from all entities besides Him.

It is also worthy of note that the pronouns whose antecedents are false objects of worship and also the plural forms denoting the same are all feminine in gender

(hunna "them [feminine];"
kashifat "remover [feminine];"
mumsikat "withholder [feminine]").

It is worthy of note that firstly, well known idols worshipped by Arabs bore feminine names (e.g. Lat, Manat, and 'Uzza) since they believed in the weakness of the fair sex and God Almighty intends to reveal the weakness of the idols as per their own beliefs; secondly, many an object of worship

were inanimate and feminine plural forms have been used at times for inanimate objects as mentioned in the blessed Verse in question.

It is also worthy of note that owing to the precedence of

'alayh ("in"),

the clause:

"In Him those who trust must put their trust"

indicates limitation and restriction (hasr), i.e., those who put trust solely rely on Him.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 39 - 40

قُلْ يَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ

39. Say: "O my people! Act upon your stance [and position or authority]. I [also] act upon mine. Then you will come to know.

40. to whom comes a disgracing torment [of this world] and on whom descends an everlasting torment [of Resurrection]."

Believing in Allah and putting trust in Him leads one to adopt a stance against enemies; therefore, a leader is supposed to act decisively and kindheartedly.

The blessed Verses in question reveal a Divine and effective warning to those failing to submit to intellect and conscience by saying:

"O my people! Act upon your stance [and position or authority]. I [also] act upon mine. Then you will come to know."

Verse 40 informs them as to who will be afflicted with a disgracing torment in this world and the everlasting torment in the world to come;

("to whom comes a disgracing torment [of this world] and on whom descends an everlasting torment [of Resurrection]").

Thus, He asks them to either submit to your intellect and conscience or await two excruciating torments, one in this world which is disgracing and another in the Hereafter which is everlasting. These are the torments caused by you and the fire for making which you have collected firewood.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 41

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَى فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا

وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

41. Indeed We have sent down unto you [for your Guidance] the Book [the Holy Qur'an] for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his [own] loss. And you are not a guardian over people [so that you necessarily have to guide them].

Following an enumeration of the arguments for Divine Unity and an exposition of the fates of disbelievers and monotheists, the blessed Verse in question explicates the fact that they shall be rewarded or chastised for their acknowledgement or denial of Truth and if the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) insists on guiding them, it is not for his own benefit rather he fulfils his obligation toward God.

The Verse reads:

"We have sent down unto you [for your Guidance] the Book [the Holy Qur'an] for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goe3s astray, he goes astray only for his [own] loss."

The blessed Verse further adds:

"You are not a guardian over people [so that you necessarily have to guide them]."

His duty is to proclaim his prophetic mission and also to warn them.

The fact that whoever treads the Path of Truth will reap the fruits thereof and whoever goes astray shall pay for the evil consequences thereof is oft-repeated in Qur'anic Verses which emphasizes that neither God nor His Prophet (S) need His servants' belief nor are they afraid of their disbelief. God does not aim at gaining anything but He intends to show His Liberality to His servants.

The word wakil is ad hoc employed in the sense of someone responsible for converting those in error to faith.

The word is attested in the Holy Qur'an in the same clause or clauses similar to it which bear testimony to the fact that the Noble Prophet (S) is not obliged to convert people to the Islamic faith, since such conversion may not be attained through obligation, rather it is his duty to proclaim Divine Command to people at all times whether they turn to it or turn away from the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 42

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَى عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَى إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

42. It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Indeed in this [taking and giving the soul at the time of sleep and wakefulness] are [great] signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for a people who think deeply.

In order to make it clear that all human affairs including their life and death is lies within Divine Omnipotence, the blessed Verse in question says:

"It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep."

Thus, sleep is death's brother and the former indicates the least frailty of the nexus between soul and body and many a bond between the twain is severed at the time.

The Verse further adds:

"He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed,"

such that they do not wake up and other souls for who He has ordained to live on are restored to their bodies for an appointed term. Verily, the point in question indicates clear signs for those who reflect upon the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 43

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئاً وَلا يَعْقِلُونَ

43. Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah? Say "Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence [could they still be intercessors on your behalf]?

An intercessor is supposed to be authorized by God. By whom are idols authorized? An intercessor is supposed to be God's favorite; however, idols are neither God's favorites nor is God satisfied with them.

The preceding Verse treated of God's Sovereignty over human existence and His plan of actions carried out through death, life, sleep, and wakefulness.

The blessed Verse in question discusses polytheists' error as to the question of intercession in order to substantiate the argument as per which the Master of intercession is the same as the One of human death and life rather than unintelligent idols.

The blessed Verse asks:

"Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah?"

As mentioned above, one of the pretexts used by polytheists was;

"We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah"[16]

since they either regarded idols as icons and tokens representing angels and sacred spirits or they considered such inanimate pieces of stone and wood possess secret powers.

It is noteworthy that intercession is dependent upon intelligence and understanding in the first place and secondly, it depends on power, mastery, and sovereignty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to ask polytheists whether they invoke their idols to intercede on their behalf:

"Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence [could they still be intercessors on your behalf]?"

If they consider their intercessors to be angels and sacred spirits, they are supposed to know that they have nothing of their own but they are totally dependent on God.

They may not invoke their stone and wooden idols to intercede on their behalf since besides lack of mastery, they are devoid intelligence and understanding. Polytheists are asked to abandon such pretexts and turn to the Master and Sovereign of the entire world of existence and all paths lead to Him.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 44

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعاً لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

44. [O Prophet!] Say [unto them]: "To Allah belongs all intercession [in this world and the Hereafter]. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back."

God Almighty is the Master of the entire existence and all the agents involved in it.

The blessed Verse in question says:

"To Allah belongs all intercession [in this world and the Hereafter]. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back."

Thus, all idols are totally abandoned, since the Unity prevailing the entire world informs us that intercession is solely possible if it is permitted by God Almighty;

"Who is supposed to intercede with Him without His Permission?"[17]

Some exegets maintain that intercession is basically the same as supplication to the Most Beautiful Divine Names, His Graciousness, Forgivingness, and Concealing of sins committed by His servants. Thus, any intercession is supposed to be carried out with His Pure Essence. Therefore, how may one intercede with Him without His Own Permission?[18]

Exegets produce different interpretations as to the nexus between the clause:

"then to Him you shall be brought back"

and the preceding points discussed herein.

1. The clause indicates that not only the intercession in this world is subject to His Permission and one is not supposed to invoke other entities besides God to solve their problems and remove their hardships, but also intercession and deliverance in the Hereafter shall be dependent upon His Will.

2. The clause in question produces another argument for the fact that intercession is solely dependent on God Almighty since the first argument lays emphasis on Divine Mastery and the second one emphasizes the return of all beings toward Him.

3. The clause serves as a warning to polytheists as per which they all return unto God Almighty and shall be chastised for their evil deeds. It is to be noted that all the interpretations sound appropriate; however, the first two seem to be more suitable as to the contextual meaning of the Verse.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 45

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

45. And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately.

One may test his belief and faith in the Hereafter through his disgust at or attention toward Divine Commands. Likewise, remembrance of God which is the source of consolation for believers is a source of harm for disbelievers.

The blessed Verse in question also treats of monotheism and polytheism depicting quite a vicious picture of polytheists and those denying the Hereafter confronting the question of Divine Unity, saying:

"And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately."

Man is at times so accustomed to vices and so far from purity and good that he is offended upon hearing the Name of Truth and rejoices upon hearing falsehood, failing to show humbleness toward God, the Creator of

the world of existence, though he kneels down before manmade pieces of stone and wood, human beings, and creatures like himself.

A similar theme is to be found in 17:46:

"And when you make mention of your Lord Alone in the Qur'an, they turn on their backs, fleeing in extreme dislike."

Noah (Nuh), the Arch-Prophet, complains to God Almighty about such misguided people saying:

"And indeed, every time I called unto them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, and persisted [in error], and magnified themselves in pride"[19].

The biased obdurate and the vain ignorant are like that. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the misfortune of such people sprang from denial of Divine Unity and faithlessness in the Hereafter.

Au contraire, believers are so rejoiced by hearing the Sacred Name of the One God that they sacrifice their possessions for Him. The mere Name of the Beloved makes them some happy and illuminates their hearts that not only His Name but also whatever is attached to Him rejoices them.

One is not supposed to assume that such dislike is restricted to the polytheists contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but vicious disbelievers at all times rejoice at hearing the names of God's enemies, atheistic schools of thought, and tyrants' and wrong doers' triumphs, but the mere names of the good and the pure and their plans and victories are excruciating pains to them.

As a consequence, as per the interpretations included in a number of traditions, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to those people who dismayed at hearing the excellence of the Noble Prophet's (S) Household (as) and the triumphs of their school of thought.[20]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 46

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

46. Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [at all times]."

Confronting obdurate disbelievers, religious leaders and promulgators of religion are supposed to remember God and invoke him for succor at all times. The blessed Verse in question is saying that these obdurate people and the vain ignorant are even disgusted at hearing the Name of God Almighty.

God Commands His Prophet (S) to turn away from them and turn toward His Threshold invoking Him with a tone revealing his profound faith imbued with his love for Him and complain to Him about such people such that he may find a source of consolation for his heart filled with sorrow and also make attempts thereby to awaken disbelievers' sleeping souls thus:

"Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [at all times]."

The Resurrection Day is the Day of Judgment of all differences. Now many a truth are concealed from man's perception, but He is the Master and the Sovereign, the Creator of all things, the Omniscient of their secrets. Man will think about compensating his past deeds on that Day, but it will be of no avail.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 47

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ

47. And those who did wrong, if they had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [though it shall be of no avail], and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.

There shall be no ransom for wrong doers on the Day of Judgment, as a consequence of which the blessed Verse in question says:

"If wrong doers had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [though it shall be of no avail]."

Wrong doing (shirk) ad hoc bears a wide range of meaning which includes polytheism and other wrong doings as well.

The blessed Verse proceeds further to add:

"there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning."

They may not imagine the torments to be inflicted upon them. Besides, they falsely imagine that Divine Mercy will be granted to them but they were unaware of His Wrath. They do deeds which are supposed by them to be good deeds whereas some of their deeds were grave sins.

It stands against the Promise given to believers[21]:

"No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do."

It is reported that on death bed, a Muslim was quite restless.

Upon inquiry, he replied:

"I recalled the Verse

'and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning'

and fear wrapped me up. I fear that there will become apparent to me from Allah what I had not been reckoning."[22]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 48

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

48. And [on that Day] the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them.

The Day of Resurrection is the Day on which all secrets shall be known, thus the blessed Verse in question says:

"[on that Day] the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them."

It is noteworthy that four points are raised in this Verse as to polytheists and wrong doers:

1. Fear of Divine Chastisement is so severe that even if they had all the worldly possessions, they would not be able to barter them for deliverance from torment.

2. Different kinds of Divine Chastisement will become apparent to them which they did not imagine.

3. All sins committed by men will become apparent and embodied before them.

4. That which they used to mock at will become apparent to them like absolute or objective reality and they shall find no deliverance.

It is to be noted that :

"the evils of that which they earned [in their mundane life] will become apparent to them"

produces another argument to substantiate the question of the embodiment of deeds, since there would be no need for the words chastisement and recompense to be included by predestination.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 49

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْأِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

49. When harm touches man, he calls to Us; then when We have granted him a favor, he says: "Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it." [It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!

Experiencing hardships renders man to confess to his weakness and awakens man's God seeking primordial natural disposition in him and flourishes the same.

Thus, the blessed Verse says that whenever man is afflicted with loss and harm, pain, hardship, and poverty, he invokes God for their removal. He is the same man who disgusted at hearing the Name of the One God, now that he is entangled with vicissitudes, he seeks refuge in Divine Mercy.

Yet, his refuge is also transient since when God Almighty grants him a favor, he says that it was solely out of his savoir-faire and competence:

("then when We have granted him a favor, he says: 'Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it.'")[23]

An instance of such ingratitude is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[24] uttered by Qarun (Korah) addressing the scholars of the Children of Israel providing him with admonitions:

"This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess."

Such ignorant people do not reflect in the least upon the fact that their knowledge is also a Divine Favor granted to them. Do they assume that the knowledge leading to gaining abundant possessions is their own? Is it their innate quality?

Addressing such vain and incapable braggarts who forget their small capacity when the gain worldly possessions, the Holy Qur'an says:

"[It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!"

The trial aims at making them reveal what they entertain in their hearts upon gaining mundane possessions. Are they rendered desperate upon experiencing afflictions? Do they become vain upon gaining worldly possessions?

Do they invoke God or are they ensnared by mammon upon being afflicted with vicissitudes? Do they consign themselves to oblivion or they notice their frailties and remember God more than the past?

It is unfortunate that the majority of people are forgetful and do not attend to such facts. Qur'anic Verses reiterate the truth many a time that the Omniscient God entangles man with hardships and also bestows on him peace and other Bounties so as to test him, make him to comprehend better the true value of his existence, and make him acquainted with the fact that everything springs from Him.

Vicissitudes basically pave the path for man's primordial natural disposition to flourish; it is in the same manner that blessings serve as a prelude to gaining knowledge.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 50 - 51

قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

50. Indeed, those before them said it [as well], yet that they had earned [in the world] availed them not.

51. Therefore, the evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them and those [Meccan disbelievers] who did wrong shall soon be overtaken by the evil [consequences] of what they had committed and they shall never be able to render Us desperate [to escape from Us].

History is the best testimony that upon Divine Wrath mundane possessions may save man neither in this world nor in the Hereafter.

When God Almighty caused the earth to swallow Qarun (Korah) and his swelling place, he had no group or party to render him assistance against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves[25].

Verse 50 reads:

"Those before them said it [as well, i.e., they also claimed that their possessions were the fruits of their knowledge and competence], yet that they had earned [in the world] availed them not."

Vain people like Qarun considered their possessions to be owing to their own competence and had consigned to oblivion the fact that they were due to Divine Bounties; however, history bears testimony to the fact that when

God caused the earth to swallow their possessions, there was no one to render them assistance nor their possessions were of any avail to them, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[26]:

"Therefore, We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group or party to help him against Allah."

The same fate was in store for the peoples of 'Ad, Thamud, Sheba, and others.

Verse 51 says:

"The evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them."

They were afflicted with Divine Chastisements, e.g. storm, flood, earthquake, and outcries from the heaven (instantaneous death), and met their dire end.

The blessed Verse further adds that it was not merely their fate, but Meccan polytheists and wrong doers would soon be overtaken by the evil consequences of their vicious deeds and would not be able to escape from Divine Chastisement. Yet, the dire fate embraces all vain wrong doers in all eras unaware of Divine Wrath.

Exegets have considered:

"[they] shall soon be overtaken by the evil [consequences] of what they had committed"

to indicate affliction with mundane or otherworldly torment.

However, taking into account:

"the evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them,"

it sounds that the former is more appropriate herein.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 52

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

52. Do they not know [yet] that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills? Indeed, in this are signs [of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence] for those who believe.

Man's knowledge and endeavor are the requisites for gaining provision, but they are not sufficient. He is not supposed to solely rely on his knowledge and capabilities, since everything depends on another Power.

In reply to those who considered their possessions as the fruits of their knowledge and capacities, the Holy Qur'an reminds man to take a glance at the history of ancient peoples and notice that others uttered such claims and experienced the afflictions and torments. It is a historical reply.

Thus the blessed Verse in question produces an intellectual reply:

"Do they not know that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills?"

There are many a worthy people overtaken by deprivation, privation, seclusion, and isolation and there exist many an incompetent and weak people enjoying all means of mundane welfare.

Had such means of worldly welfare the fruits of their endeavors and capabilities, there would not have been such discomfort for the worthy merits. It reveals that there is a Powerful Hand behind worldly affairs that manages everything as per a well measured plan.

It is true that man is supposed to make his level best in life and making effort serve as the key to many a problem, but it would be a gross mistake to forget the Cause of all the causes and merely perceive the causes and consider ourselves as the real author of all the causes.

One of secrets of the unfulfilled wishes of some competent and knowledgeable people and the success and prosperity of some incompetent ignorant people is to remind people that they should not lose the thread in the world of causes nor are they supposed to rely on their own capacities.

Thus the blessed Verse ends:

"Indeed, in this are signs [of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence] for those who believe."

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"I knew God through the abrogation of decisions, solution of problems, and abrogation of wills."[27]

These beacon man's frailty and weakness so as he may not forget his incompetence and be not ensnared by vanity.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 53

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

53. Say "O My servants who have transgressed against [and wronged] yourselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins, since He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious."

Pursuant to the recurrent warning to polytheists and wrong doers mentioned in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question provides all sinners with the hope of turning to Allah Almighty, since the main goal behind all them is to guide man toward Him rather than hostility and vengeance.

Proclaiming His Boundless Mercy, Forgiving, and Love to all, He says:

"Say unto them 'O My servants who have transgressed against and wronged yourselves! Lose not your hope of Divine Graciousness since God Almighty forgives all sins."

He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Compassionate. Reflection on the meaning of the Verse indicates that It is the most promising Verse addressed to all sinners.

According to a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), the extent of its implication is such that

"No Verse may be found throughout the Holy Qur'an to be more inclusive than this one."[28]

The reason is crystal clear since:

1. The phrase:

"O My servants!"

is a beacon of Divine Favor.

2. The employment of the word:

"transgression" (israf)

in the senses of "wrong, sin, and crime" is another Divine Favor.

3. The phrase:

"against yourselves" ('ala anfusihim)

designates that man is the source of all his sins. It also makes a reference to Divine Love, since it may be likened to a father addressing his child and saying unto them: "Do not inflict so many wrongs on yourself!"

4. The negative imperative verbal form

"Despair not!" (la taqnatu)

is also worthy of note since

"despair" (qunut)

is originally employed in the sense of despair of good but connotes that sinners are not supposed to despair of Divine Favor.

5. The phrase:

"of Divine Mercy"

following the clause:

"Despair not"

lays further emphasis on good and love.

6. The clause:

"Verily, Allah forgives all sins"

opened with the emphatic particle inna and taking into account the plural definite noun al-dhunub ("the sins) which includes all sins, the Promise reaches its zenith and the sea of Divine Mercy becomes full of waves.

7. Hopefulness reaches its climax with the adverb of manner

jami'an ("all").

8 and 9. The two promising Divine Beautiful Names:

"the Oft-Forgiving (ghaffur)"

and

"the Most Gracious (rahim)"

at the close of the Verse leave no room for the least despair and hopelessness.

Taking the above into consideration, we notice that it is the most inclusive Qur'anic Verse encompassing Divine Forgiveness of all sins as a consequence of which it is considered as the most promising Qur'anic Verses.

One may not expect otherwise from God Almighty Whose Ocean of Mercy is Boundless. His Graciousness exceeds His Wrath and has created His servants to bestow His Mercy upon them rather than subject them to His Wrath and Torment. God Almighty is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, and the Most Loving.

Man may not expect otherwise.

Two questions have preoccupied exegets that their solutions lie in the Verse in question and the following One. Firstly, does the Verse include all sins, even polytheism and grave sins as well?

If so, what is the reason behind the exclusion of the sin of polytheism among those to be forgiven by God Almighty according to which:

"Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should associated with Him, but He forgives except that to whom He wills"[29]?

The other question concerns whether the Divine Promise as to Forgiving is conditional upon repentance and the like.

However, the two questions are interrelated and the response may be found the following Verses, since the latter contain three illuminating injunctions:

"Return to your God,"

"Submit to His Will,"

and

"Follow the injunctions sent down for you by your Lord."

The three injunctions inform us that the gates of Divine Forgiving and Mercy are open to all servants provided that following committing sins, they perceive that they have sinned and change their course toward Divine Threshold, submit to His Command, show their sincerity in their repentance through doing righteous good deeds.

Thus, it becomes known that neither polytheism nor any other sin is excluded and its conditionality upon Divine All-Embracing Mercy is indubitable.

Regarding the aforementioned Verse[30] as to the exclusion of polytheists from Divine Mercy it is worthy of note that the exclusion is applicable to those passing away as polytheists rather than those who wake up and tread of the Path of Truth since almost all Muslims in the first days of Islam used to be polytheists.

Taking into account the state of many a sinner who following committing sins turn so grieved and regretful that they may never assume that there might be a path of return for them and consider themselves to be too impure to be absolved from their impurities, inquiring whether their sins might be forgiven and if there might be a path of return toward God Almighty, we may well comprehend the meaning of the Verse.

They are willing to repent in any way but consider their sins as unforgivable, particularly when they repented many a time but broke their repentance.

The Verse in question serves as a source of hope to them all. It is reported that upon his conversion to the Islamic faith, Wahshi, the notorious criminal in the history of Islam and the slayer of Hamza, the Chief of the Martyrs, was afraid that his repentance may not be accepted since his sin was too grave; however some exegets maintain that the blessed Verse in question was sent down opening the gates of Divine Mercy Wahshi and the like.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 54

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لا تُنْصَرُونَ

54. "And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him before the torment comes upon you then you will not be helped.

There is no salvation and attainment of Divine Help except through return toward Divine Threshold; consequently, repentance is the prerequisite for the bestowal of Divine Forgiving.

The blessed Verse shows the path toward the Boundless Ocean of Divine Mercy for all sinners and criminals saying:

"Turn in repentance… to your Lord"

and change your course in life for the better.

"Submit to Him and obey His Command before [Divine] torment comes upon you then you will not be helped."

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 55

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَأَنْتُمْ لا تَشْعُرُونَ

55. "And follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!"

The blessed Verse bids people to follow Qur'anic injunction since the best path is toward God Almighty and It is the most comprehensive and the most perfect of what is sent down unto man.

Following the two steps of repentance and submission to Divine Will, the Verse treats of the third step which is that of action:

"follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!"

Thus, there are three steps to take so as to attain to Divine Mercy:

1. Repentance, regret about committing sins, and turning to God Almighty.

2. Faith and submission to His Command.

3. Doing righteous good deeds. After taking these three steps, one shall certainly enter the boundless ocean of His Mercy despite the heavy burden of man's sins.

What is intended by:

"follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord?"

Exegets produce different possibilities the best of which sounds to be the one as per which Divine Injunctions are of diverse types: some call people to carrying out obligatory acts, some address recommended ones, and some include permissible ones.

Taking the hierarchy of acts into account one may notice that the best indicates selecting obligatory and recommended acts.

Some exegets take it as a reference to the Holy Qur'an among Divine Books, taking into consideration Verse 23 of the same Chapter (39) as per which the Holy Qur'an is the Best Statement (ahsan al-hadith):

"Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book, its parts resembling each other."

However, the two interpretations are not inconsistent with each other.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p.497.

2. Ibn Hisham's Sira ["Biography of the Prophet of Islam (S)"], vol. 4, pp. 305-306 (the account is summarized herein); see also Ibn Athir's Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 323-324.

3. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.

4. For further details, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 177 f.; al-Muraja'at, p. 64.

www.alhassanain.org/english

5. Khashshaf [Exegesis]; Majma' al-Bayan; Abu al-Futuh Razi's Exegesis [Rawd al-Jinan wa Rawh al-Janan]; Fi Úilal al-Qur'an.

6. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that naqma is employed in the sense of "retribution, chastisement." It is to be noted that hidaya literally denotes "guidance with favor and precision, ibid, under h-d-y.

7. 3:51
8. 5:16
9. 53:23
10. 2:258
11. 2:264
12. 39:3
13. 40:28
14. 42:25
15. 29:61, 63; 31:31; 43: 9, 87
16. 39:3
17. (2:257)
18. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 17, p. 286.
19. 71:7
20. Usul Kafi; Rawdat al-Kafi; apud Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 490.
21. 32:17
22. Majma' al-Bayan and Qurtubi (Exegeses), under the blessed Verse in question.
23. The verbal form khawwala is taken from takhwil ("grant a favor").
24. 28:78
25. 28:81
26. 28:81
27. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism no. 250.
28. Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
29. 4:48
30. 4:48

Surah al-Zumar, Verses 56 - 75

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 56

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَى عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِينَ

56. Lest a person should say "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah and I was indeed among those who mocked [His Verses]."

The Day of Resurrection is the Day of Regret. Underrating Divine Injunctions, and worse than that, mocking them all spring from neglect.

Following the emphatic injunction as to repentance and compensation for the past wrong deeds, the blessed Verse in question is saying that these injunctions have been sent down lest on the Day of Resurrection one may say:

"Woe to me that I failed to act upon Divine Command and I mocked His Verses and Messengers."

The word hasra is employed in the sense of sorrow and grief caused by past regrettable acts. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the word derives from hasr indicating pull way or remove garment but it figuratively connotes regret about and grieve for the past acts as if the veils of ignorance have been removed.

When man is raised on the Day of Resurrection and perceives the consequences of his transgressions of bounds, neglects, sins, underrating serious affairs, will cry out "Woe to me!" A dire sense of grief and regret wraps up his heart and expresses himself with such interjections.

Exegets differ as to the meaning of

janb Allah ("beside Allah")

and present many a suggestion.

The word is literally employed in the sense of side and it applies to anything located at the side of something else, in the same manner that yamin and yasar signify right and left sides of the body respectively, but owing to generalization, they imply anything located at the left and right sides.

The phrase:

"beside Allah"

also ad hoc designate all the affairs beside Him, e.g. His Command, Obedience to Him, Closeness to Him, The Divine Books sent down by Him.

Thus, the sinful regret about and grieve for their undutifulness against Allah and particularly lay emphasis on mocking Qur'anic Verses and Divinely appointed Messengers, since their wrong acts mainly stem from their neglect and derision which in turn spring from ignorance, vanity, and bias.[1]

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 57 - 58

أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هَدَانِي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي كَرَّةً فَأَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

57. Or [lest] he should say [out of profound grief]: "If only Allah has guided me, I should indeed have been among the righteous."

58. Or [lest] he should say when he sees the torment: "If only I had another chance [to return to the world] then I should be among the good doers."

On the Resurrection Day, sinners aim to acquit themselves of their sins. On the Day of Resurrection the sinful wish that they could return to the world in order to do good [to himself and others].

The blessed Verse in question says:

"Lest that the sinful say: 'Had God guided me, I would have been among the righteous.'"

Such words are apparently uttered upon reckoning, noticing that some people proceed toward Paradise enjoying all Bounties for their righteous good deeds. He also wishes that he could accompany them to Paradise.

Verse 60 is saying that upon experiencing Divine Chastisement, he wishes that he could return to the world to become one of the righteous. Upon treading the way to Hell, he notices the blazing fire and the excruciating torment, he sighs wishing that he could be permitted to return to the world and compensate for his sins through committing righteous deeds and become one of the good doers.

Thus, each of the three words are uttered at certain times: noticing the Resurrection he regrets his past deeds; perceiving the rewards of the righteous, he wishes that the same were in store for him; experiencing Divine Chastisement, he wishes that he could return to the world and compensate for his past deeds.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 59

بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَتْكَ آيَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

59. Yes! Indeed, there came unto you My Verses but you denied them and were vain and were among disbelievers.

The sinful express some words on the Day of Resurrection:

1. Confessing to neglect
2. Confessing to derision
3. Wishing for guidance
4. Wishing for returning to the world.

God Almighty accepts his confessions but concerning the third word, the blessed Verse in question says that God Almighty provided you with Guidance but he denied it.

An answer provided for the fourth word is to be found elsewhere:

"Even if they are returned [to the world] they shall still be wrong doers."

A reply is provided for the second word as per which Divine Verses came unto him; however, he denied them and was vain and one of the disbelievers. He is saying that had Divine Guidance came unto him, he would have been one of the righteous.

What is Divine Guidance but some many Divine Books, God's Messengers, Divine Verses and Signs of Truth in horizons and souls? He saw and heard them all but what was his reaction toward them but denial, vanity, and disbelief?

Would it be possible that God Almighty chastises anyone without warning them? Was he different from the guided in terms of Divine Guidance? Therefore, he is to blame for his evil deeds. Vanity and denial of Divine Verses and Signs are the main reasons that lead to disbelief and faithlessness.

No answer is suggested for the first word, since it is an inevitable reality - they have to regret and grieve for their past vicious deeds. Regarding the third word, i.e., request for being returned to the world, numerous answers are provided, e.g.:

"if they were returned [to the world], they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden. And indeed they are liars"[2] [3].

Furthermore, the reply suggested for the second word may make a reference to the reply provided for this question as well - what is the goal of returning to the world? Is it anything other than being warned against vicious deeds?

It is worthy of note that God Almighty had already warned them and such further warnings would be futile. Experiencing torment in the Hereafter is their sudden awakening which will be rendered futile upon their return to the world.

In the same vein, the Holy Qur'an makes mention of polytheists entangled in the agitated sea invoking God with sincere devotion but upon stepping on the shore they consign everything to oblivion:

("And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only: but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others,"[4]).

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 60

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُمْ مُسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

60. And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah - their faces will be black. Is there not in Hell an abode for the vain?

Lying against Allah are of diverse kinds:

1. Associating other objects of worship with Him
2. Likening God Almighty to something
3. Regarding angels as God's offspring
4. Attributing one's vicious act to God Almighty
5. Pretending to be God or Divinely appointed Messenger
6. Making distortions and innovations in Divine Commands.

It is narrated in traditions that forging traditions and narrating them from the Infallible Imams (as) are on a par with lying against God Almighty, since the Infallible Imams narrate from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Prophet (S) imparts Divine Word.[5]

Pursuant to the words of the lying polytheists and the arrogant on the Day of Resurrection regretting about their past vicious deeds and their request as to being returned to the world to compensate for their past deeds which is a futile and unacceptable request, the blessed Verses in question treat of the same question saying:

"And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah - their faces will be black."

Although the meaning of

"lied against Allah"

is broad in its semantic range, but it is ad hoc applied to associating partners with God and claiming that angels, Jesus Christ (as), and the like are His offspring.

The word mustakbir indicates arrogant, but it is herein employed to refer to those who waxed arrogance against Divinely appointed messengers calling people to the Religion of Truth and their denial of them. The liars' blackened face on the Day of Resurrection reveals their disgrace and humility.

It is well known that secrets will be manifest and man's thought and deeds will be embodied on the Day of Resurrection. Those who have black hearts and their deeds were dark like their thought will be seen with dark and blackened faces on that Day.

In other words, what is concealed shall be manifest and faces shall reflect hearts as a consequence of which those with black hearts shall appear with blackened faces and those whose hearts are illuminating shall appear with bright faces on that Day.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[6]:

"On the Day [of Resurrection] when some faces will become white and some faces will become black; as for those whose faces will become black [unto them will be said]: 'Did you reject faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment [in Hell] for rejecting faith.' And for those whose faces will become white, they will be in Allah's Mercy, therein they shall dwell forever."

According to a number of traditions narrated from the Shi'i Imams (as), lying against Allah will lead to blackness of face on the Day of Resurrection is broader in its semantic range as per which it includes false claims to the leadership of the Muslim community (umma).

In the same vein, in his I'tiqadat, Shaykh Saduq narrates from Imam Sadiq that upon being asked as to the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, he replied:

"It refers to one who pretends to be the Imam."

He was asked regarding such person whether he happens to be a descendant of 'Ali and Fatima (as), to which he replied:

"Even if he happens to be of such descent."[7]

It clearly bears testimony to the fact that false claim to Divine leadership and Imamate is an instance of lying against God. In the same vein, those who lie against the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams will be on a par with those who lie against Allah.

Thus, it is reported in another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Whoever transmits a tradition from us, we will ask him some day regarding its truth.

If he happens to be in the right and he is one of us, he has attributed a true word to God Almighty and His Messenger (S), but if he lied against us, he has lied against God and His Messenger (S), since when we report a tradition, we do not say such and such a person reported thus, but we say God or His Messenger (S) said it.

Then he recited the Verse:

'And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah - their faces will be black.'"[8]

The tradition clearly bears testimony to the fact that the Shi'i Imams (as) transmitted nothing of their own, but all the sound traditions narrated on their authorities trace back to Prophetic traditions.

The fact in question is worthy of note for all Muslim scholars; therefore those who do not acknowledge their Imamate are supposed to acknowledge the veracity of their transmissions as Prophetic traditions.

In the same vein, another tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) in Kafi as per which:

"The tradition narrated by each of the Imams is another tradition and our tradition is that of the Messenger of God (S)."[9]

It is worthy of note that Qur'anic Verses clearly refer to the fact that disbelief mainly stems from vanity, as the Qur'anic Verse[10] says:

"He refused and was arrogant and was one of the disbelievers."

Thus, the arrogant may not dwell nowhere but in Hell.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"There is an abode in Hell for the arrogant called Saqar which once complained to God Almighty about the unbearable heat and requested Him to take a breath. Upon obtaining the Permission, it took a breath and set Hell ablaze.[11]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 61

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

61. And Allah will deliver those who are the righteous with their success, untouched by evil in the least, nor shall they grieve.

Fear of God leads to deliverance and the God fearing entertain no grief.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the righteous and their happiness on the Day of Resurrection as opposed to the arrogant and the vain, saying:

"Allah will deliver those who are the righteous with their success."

Their deliverance and success are explicated with two terse clauses:

"[They are] untouched by evil in the least, nor shall they grieve."

They live in a world devoid of anything but good, purity, and happiness. The brief expression actually encompasses all Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 62 - 63

اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

62. Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian, Preserver, and Controller of all things.

63. To Him belongs the keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who disbelieve in Divine Signs and Verses, such are they who will be the losers.

The real monotheist believes in all dimensions of Divine Unity: Unity in Creatorship, Unity in Lordship, and Unity in worship.

The following Verse says:

"Do you order me to worship other than Allah?"

In other words, all existent beings need Him in creation and survival.

"Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian, Preserver, and Controller of all things."

The first and the second clauses refer to Unity in Creatorship and Unity in Lordship respectively.

It is noteworthy that even most of the polytheists admitted Unity of Creatorship, as it is reflected in Verse 38 of the Chapter in question:

"If you ask them [i.e., disbelievers]" 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Surely they will say: 'Allah.'"

However, they had gone astray concerning Unity of Lordship, since they regarded idols as their guardians, preservers and disposers of their affairs and sought refuge in them in hardships.

The Holy Qur'an actually makes a reference to such belief saying that disposing the affairs of the world as well as its preservation and protection are at the hand of its Creator, as a consequence of which, people are supposed to seek refuge in Him at all times.

In his Lisan al-'Arab, Ibn Mansur makes mention of different senses for the word wakil, e.g. guardian, preserver, and disposer of affairs. Thus, it becomes evident that idols lead to neither gain, nor loss. They neither solve problems, nor do they make problems. They are weak and useless objects incapable of doing anything.

The clause:

"Allah is the Creator of all things"

is employed by some adherents of the school of predestination as an argument for their false belief, saying that their acts are referred to in the Verse in question, hence, Allah is the Creator of such acts, even if people physically carry out such acts.

Their gross mistake stems from their inability to comprehend that Divine Lordship as to man's acts has nothing to do with his free will, since Divine Will and human will are not parallel but rather interrelated lengthwise; in other words, man's acts are related to God and to himself.

On the one hand, all things in the world of existence are encompassed by Divine Omnipotence hence his acts are created by Him, since He provides man with power, intellect, free will, and the required means to act. Consequently, man's acts may be ascribed to Him.

He wills that man enjoys free will to act. He provides man will the means required for acting upon his will. Yet, man is free to choose his acts, as a consequence of which such acts are ascribed to him and he is responsible against them.

One who claims that man is the creator of his own acts and God has nothing to do with them is a polytheist, since he believes in two creators, the Great Creator and the small creator.

If one claims that God is the Creator of his acts and he has nothing to do with it, he has gone astray since he has denied Divine Wisdom and Justice.

Would it be possible that man be responsible for His Acts? If so, responsibility, obligation, the Hereafter, reckoning, chastisement and reward would be meaningless.

Therefore, the standard Muslim dogmas based on Qur'anic Verses demonstrate that all human acts are ascribed both to Him and man and such ascription is not inconsistent in the least, since the relation between the two is not parallel but lengthwise.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 64 - 65

قُلْ أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِّي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

64. Say: "Do you order me to worship other than Allah? O you fools!"

65. And indeed it has been revealed to you as it was to those [Messengers] before you: "If you join others in worship with Allah, surely your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be among the losers.

The Verses in question are mainly addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) but all people are also involved in such affairs; yet, God Almighty addresses the Prophet (S) owing to the significance of the issue indicating that even if the Prophet (S) disbelieves for a single moment, his deeds will be in vain and he will be among the losers.

Thus, Verse 65 draws a neat distinction between belief and disbelief, saying:

"indeed it has been revealed to you as it was to those [Messengers] before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, surely your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be among the losers.'"

Therefore, disbelief leads to two consequences which may affect Divinely appointed Messenger in case of their disbelief: vanity of deeds and being a loser in one's life. The former refers to futility of righteous good deeds owing to disbelief since such acts will solely be acknowledged if one believes in Divine Unity.

Disbelief is likened to a blazing fire burning the tree of human deeds, a lightening setting ablaze all the crops of his life, a tempest rendering human deeds futile, as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12]:

"The parable of those who disbelieved in their Lord is that their works are as ashes, on which the wind blows furiously on a stormy day; they shall not be able to get aught of what they have earned. That is the straying, far away."

According to a prophetic tradition:

"God Almighty reckons the deeds of all servants unless they disbelieve; surely they shall be sent to Fire without reckoning."[13]

Disbelievers will be among losers since they lose their most valuable possessions, i.e., intellect and life, in this spacious market of mundane world and fail to purchase anything except for regret and grief.

A question arises here: Would it be possible that Divinely appointed eminent prophets turn to disbelief as a consequence of which the Verse in question treats them in such harsh tone?

The answer to this question is crystal clear: they shall never turn to disbelief even if they enjoy the free will to do so and infallibility is not on a par with the loss of free will.

It is to be noted that their excellence of knowledge and their immediate and constant nexus with the Origin of Divine Revelation hinders them to entertain disbelief for one single moment. Would it be imaginable that an intelligent physician aware of the effects of a fatal poisonous substance entertains the thought of its consumption?

The Verse aims to warn people of the great risk of entertaining disbelief so as to inform them that God Almighty warns His Messengers about disbelief. It reminds one of the Arabic proverb:

"I mean you, but O neighbor! Listen to it!"

According to a tradition narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, inquired by Ma'mun concerning the Verses in question, he said:

"Such Verses refer to the Muslim community, even if the Messenger of God (S) is addressed herein."[14]

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 66 - 67

بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعاً قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ

سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

66. Nay! But worship Allah alone and be among the grateful.

67. They did not appreciate Allah as such as is due to Him, though on the Day of Resurrection the whole of the earth shall be subject to His Omnipotence and the heavens will be rolled up in His Hand. Glorified is He and Exalted is He above all that they associate as partners with Him.

Monotheism is the best manner of deliverance from loss and harm; likewise one may show his gratitude toward God Almighty is to worship Him.

Thus the blessed Verse lays further emphasis:

"Nay! But worship Allah alone and be among the grateful."

Precedence of Allah is for specification (hasr), i.e., you are solely supposed to worship the Pure Essence of Allah. What follows is the Divine Injunction to gratitude since showing gratitude for Divine Bounties bestowed upon man may serve as a means of knowing God and rejection of any kind of polytheism and disbelief.

Gratitude for Divine Bounties is in human primordial natural disposition, but it is supposed to follow the provider of bounties. Consequently, it leads to the acknowledgement of Divine Unity and thus idols which provide man with no bounty are abandoned.

Verse 67 treats of another exposition for rejection of polytheism and disbelief regarding it mainly to stem from not knowing God deservingly as a consequence of which his Sacred Name was relegated to those of idols:

("They did not appreciate Allah as such as is due to Him").

Polytheism and disbelief mainly spring from lack of appreciating God Almighty as such.

One who knows that His Existence is Boundless, He is the Creator of all creatures and they are at all times in need of His Source of Emanation and Divine Bounty, He is the Dispenser of the world of existence and He is the One Who solves all problems, He is the Provider of all existent beings and

intercession depends on His Permission and Command, may not turn to another being.

It is worthy of note that duality is not applicable to God Almighty since two boundless beings are not reasonably possible.

To express Divine Omnipotence and Glory, the Verse in question employs a figurative expression saying:

"on the Day of Resurrection the whole of the earth shall be subject to His Omnipotence."

The word qabda is applied to what is grasped by hand and it is usually used figuratively in the sense of absolute power and sway in the same manner that it is said in daily speech that such and such city or such and such property are in hand of so and so.

The word matwwiyat is taken from tayy which literally denotes "to be enclosed" and at times it connotes "transience of life" or "passing by something."

The aforesaid expression is more clearly attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[15]:

"The Day when We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books."

It is to be noted that one who has rolled up a scroll holding it in his hand wields perfect sway over it.

The choice of the word:

yamin ("right hand")

is due to the fact that right hand is usually used by most of the people for carrying out tasks of significance since they feel that it is stronger than the left one.

In short, all these similes and expressions connote absolute sway of the Creator over the world of existence in this world and the Hereafter so that all men comprehend that in the Hereafter, the key to deliverance and the solution of problems is in the Hand of God Almighty lest they turn to idols and other objects of worship for intercession and any other support.

Are not the earth and the heavens under His Sway? Why do they make mention of the Hereafter? The reply to these questions is that on that Day, Divine Omnipotence shall be more manifest than any other time as It shall be evident to such extent that all men shall clearly perceive that all things belong to Him and they are under His Sway.

Furthermore, on the Day of Resurrection, some men may turn to others besides God Almighty for deliverance, in the same manner that Christians raise the question of deliverance for worshipping Jesus Christ (as). It is in this vein that the Verse treats of Divine Omnipotence on the Day of Resurrection.

The above clearly bears testimony to the fact that all these expressions are figurative and it is because of the brevity of words in our daily life that we have to express such exalted meanings with such small words.

Only very simple and narrow minded people may entertain Divine anthropomorphism in their minds. Since words fail to convey Divine Glory,

one has to make use of such words in their figurative meanings with their broader semantic range.

It is noteworthy that a clear but terse conclusion closes the Verse:

"Glorified is He and Exalted is He above all that they associate as partners with Him."

Had man not pass judgments with his limited thought concerning His Glorified and Pure Essence, he would have never turned toward polytheism and idolatry.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 68

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

68. And the Trumpet Shall be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth shall swoon away [and die], except him whom Allah wills. Then it shall be blown a second time and they shall suddenly rise up, looking [around].

All men die upon the blowing of the Trumpet; thus, the exception attested in the clause:

"except him whom Allah wills"

makes a reference to Divine Omnipotence. In other words, God Almighty wields absolute sway over the world of existence and when all die, He keeps alive those whom He wills. According to a number of traditions, [Archangels] Jibra'il, Israfil, and Mika'il, and also martyrs are mentioned among those who shall stay alive.[16]

The preceding Verses treated of the Day of Resurrection and blessed Verse in question pursues the same question and makes mention of many a characteristic thereof.

It opens with the end of the world, saying:

"And the Trumpet Shall be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth shall swoon away [and die], except him whom Allah wills."

The Verse proceeds with saying:

"Then it shall be blown a second time and they shall suddenly rise up, looking [around]."

The Verse clearly indicates that a sudden happening shall occur at the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection. All animate beings immediately die at the end of the world and following an interlude, all human beings shall be suddenly raised and await Reckoning upon Resurrection.

The Holy Qur'an expresses these two incidents as:

"blowing of the Trumpet"

serving as an elegant metaphorical expression connoting sudden and simultaneous incidents, since nafkh denotes "blowing" and sur is employed in the sense of trumpet or a hollow horn usually used for setting caravan and or army to get underway or march or making them stop.

It is worthy of note that the two differed in tunes. The expression also connotes the ease of carrying out the task indicating that God Almighty

raises all with one single Command likened to blowing of the trumpet used for getting the caravan underway.

It has been repeatedly mentioned above that our words are invented for our limited daily life hence they fail to precisely convey the truths of the metaphysical world upon the end of this world and the beginning of the other world as a consequence of which we have to attend to the existing evidence and use ordinary words in a broader semantic range.

It is worthy of note that diverse expressions are attested in the Holy Qur'an as to the end of this world and the beginning of the world to come.

In this vein, different Verses (more than ten Verses) treat of:

"blowing of the Trumpet."

In one instance [17] mention is made of nuqira fi al-naqur which bears the sense of blowing the trumpet and the like:

("Then when the Trumpet is sounded. Verily, that Day shall be a Hard Day").

The expression:

qari'a ("rigorous striking")

is also attested in 101:1-3.

The same theme is also expressed by the word:

sayha ("harsh shout")

as in 36:49:

"They await only but a single shout which will seize them while they are disputing,"

which treats of the shout heard at the end of the world which takes men unawares.

Verse 53 of Chapter 36 treats of the shout heard on the Day of Resurrection upon hearing which all men shall raise and they shall be brought before the Just Lord:

"It will be but a single shout, so they shall all be brought up before Us."

The aforesaid Verses indicate that a very harsh shout shall make all the beings of the heavens and the earth die and it shall be the:

"shout of death."

They shall all come back to life by a very harsh shout by the time of Resurrection and it shall be the:

"shout of life."

What is precisely the manner of the twain shouts? In what manner do they impress the beings?

Nobody save God Almighty knows the answer to this question. Treating of the Trumpet to be blown by Israfil at the end the world, a number of traditions indicate that all the beings of the heavens die upon blowing the Trumpet and God Almighty issues the Command of his death bidding him to die and he shall die.[18]

The majority of Qur'anic exegets interpret nafkh fi al-sur as

"blowing the Trumpet,"

as mentioned above. These are delicate expressions concerning the manner of the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection. The

question raised at the close of the Verse concerns the number of blowing the Trumpet.

The majority of exegets maintain that it is blown twice and the blessed Verse in question apparently makes a reference to the same.

Taking into account other Qur'anic instances regarding the same indicates the same, such that the first blowing is termed:

fright ("faza'");

("And the Day on which the Trumpet will be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will be terrified,"[19])

and the second one:

"death and life,"

referred to in Qur'anic Verses some of which were mentioned above, the former and the latter are termed:

"swooning and dying" (sa'q)

and

"rising up" (qiyam).

It is true that there shall not be more than the twain.

Another Qur'anic evidence may be produced for the matter at hand, namely:

"On the Day the earth and the mountains will shake violently."

The second earthquake shall occur raising servants as peers.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 69

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجِيءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

69. [On that Day] the earth will shine with the Light of its Lord and the Book of deeds will be placed [forward] and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward and it will be judged between them with truth and they will not be wronged.

The phrase:

"with the Light of its Lord" (bi-nur-i rabbih)

denotes either the Light of Truth and Justice with which God Almighty illuminates the earth on that Day or a Light other than the one shed by sun and moon to be Divinely created on that Day.

The exegetic work Atyab al-Bayan reads:

"Since the light of sun and moon is not apparent,

"the Light of its Lord"

indicates the Light shed by believers,"

then this Verse in cited as evidence thereof:

"On the Day you shall see the believing men and women, their light illuminating before them and by their right hands"[20].

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion concerning Resurrection, saying:

"[On that Day] the earth will shine with the Light of its Lord."

Different interpretations have been suggested as to the "shining" with Divine Light, the most significant of which are the following:

1. Some exegets maintain that Divine Light indicates Truth and Justice with which God Almighty illuminates the face of the earth.

In his Bihar al-Anwar ‘Allama Majlisi says:

“That is, the earth shall be illuminated with Divine Justice on the Day of Resurrection, since Justice is the Light of the earth.”[21]

Some other exegets maintain that the Prophetic tradition:

“Wrong doing manifests itself as darkness and shadows on the Day of Resurrection”

substantiating the suggestion in question.[22]

In his Kashshaf, Zamakhshari suggests the same meaning, saying:

“On that Day, the earth shall be illuminated by the administration of justice and fair arbitration of records of righteous and vicious deeds.”

2. Some other exegets hold that it is a reference to a Light other than that of sun and moon which shall be created by God Almighty particularly for that Day.

3. The eminent author of [the exegetic work] Tafsir al-Mizan [‘Allama Tabataba’i] says:

“Illumination of the earth by Divine Light is regarded as one of the characteristics of the Day of Resurrection which is uncovering veils and manifestation of the truth behind things and human deeds including good, evil, obedience, disobedience, truth, and falsehood,”

following which Verse 22 of Chapter 50 is quoted to substantiate the suggested meaning:

“You neglected it, then we unveiled the cover from you and your eyes see it clearly today!”

It is true that Divine Light on that Day encompasses all things, but the emphasis laid on the earth refers to the fact that it makes a reference to the state of people on earth on that Day.

It is to be noted that the aforementioned interpretations are not inconsistent; however the first and the third interpretations sound more appropriate.

The blessed Verse in question indubitably refers to Resurrection and interpreting it in a number of traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet’s (S) Household (as) [Ahl al-Bayt] to Imam Mahdi’s (as) Rise at the end of the world is in fact a kind of comparison and likening, emphasizing that upon his Rise, incidents resembling Resurrection shall occur and he will administer justice as per the nature of the world as the rightful Imam (as), the Successor to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), and the Vicegerent of God Almighty on the earth.

Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar narrates from Imam Sadiq (as):

“Upon the Rise of our Riser, the earth shall be illuminated by Divine Light and Lord’s servants shall not be in need of sun shine and darkness shall wither away.”

The second clause of the blessed Verse in question treats of the record of deeds, saying that on that Day, the record of deeds shall be put forward and man’s deeds shall be reckoned;

(“And the Book [of deeds] shall be put forward”).

Such records embrace all the significant and non-significant deeds and according to the Holy Qur'an[23]:

"What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small sin nor a grave sin, but has recorded it with numbers!"

The following clause of the blessed Verse in question treating of witnesses further adds:

"the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward."

Prophets shall be summoned to talk to sinners concerning the fulfillment of their Prophetic Missions:

("We shall definitely inquire the Messengers,"[24]).

Witnesses shall be called to the Just Tribunal to bear witness. It is true that God is Omniscient, but the testimony of witnesses shall be required for laying emphasis on Divine Justice. Who are these witnesses?

Qur'anic exegets are not unanimous on the issue. Some regard the good, the pure, and the just among communities who bear witness to Prophetic Missions and some regard the deeds of the people contemporaneous with Prophets.

The Infallible Imams (as) are regarded as the forerunners of the witnesses.

Substantiating their arguments by the Qur'anic Verse:[25]

"And every person will come forth along with his companion to drive him to Divine Tribunal and a witness accompanies him,"

some other exegets interpret witnesses as angels bearing testimony to man's deeds. Yet, there are exegets who interpret the word alluding to bodily members, space, and time of obedience and disobedience as witnesses on the Day of Resurrection.

However, the word

"witnesses"

is apparently employed in its broad semantic range and each of the exegets refer to one of the aspects thereof.

The fourth clause says:

"It will be judged between them with truth."

The fifth clause further adds:

"They will not be wronged."

It is evident that when God Almighty wields sway, the earth is illuminated by the Light of His Justice, the record precisely reflecting man's deeds is put forward, and the Prophets and just witnesses make their presence, the Judgment shall be based on Truth and Justice and wrong doing may not find its way there.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 70

وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

70. And each person shall be paid in full of what he did and He is Best Aware of what they do.

Divine Chastisement and Reward shall be paid in full.

The sixth clause that completes the foregoing discussion is to be found in the blessed Verse in question:

"Each person shall be paid in full of what he did."

It is neither the Chastisement nor the Reward of the deeds which shall be given to man but the deeds themselves.

It shall be the best Chastisement and the best Reward that they shall be paid in full and they shall accompany man at all times. Who is able to administer justice so precisely but One Whose Knowledge encompasses everything.

Thus, the seventh and the last clause says:

"He is Best Aware of what they do."

There is even no need for witnesses, since His Omniscience far exceeds all witnesses. Yet, Divine Favor and Justice require the presence of witnesses. This is the Day of Resurrection for which we have to prepare ourselves.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 71 - 72

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَراً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنْذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَى وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

71. And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups till when they reach it the gates thereof will be opened and its keepers shall say: "Did not the Messengers come unto you from yourselves reciting to you the Verses of your Lord warning you of the Meeting of this Day?" They will say: "Yes, [the Messengers came unto us and recited Divine Verses unto us]," but the Command of Divine torment has been justified against disbelievers.

72. It will be said [unto them]: "Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant."

Driving sinners toward Hell is a humiliation different from other Chastisements. The blessed Verses in question resume the discussions on Resurrection providing details concerning what was already said concisely in the foregoing Verses regarding the Rewards and Chastisements of believers and unbelievers.

Verse 71 opens with the people of the Hell, saying:

"Those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups."

Who will drive them to Hell? The answer is that the angels responsible for inflicting torments will drive them to the gates of Hell.

A similar expression is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[26]:

"And every person will come forth along with his companion to drive him to Divine Tribunal and a witness accompanies him."

The word:

zumar ("small group")

indicates that they will be driven in small and scattered groups toward Hell. The word siqa is taken from s-w-q ("to drive").

The blessed Verse 71 further adds that they proceed toward Hell till they reach it. Then, the gates of Hell will be opened and the guardians of Hell will reproach them thus:

"Did not the Messengers come unto you from yourselves reciting to you the Verses of your Lord warning you of the Meeting of this Day?"

The expression clearly reveals that prior to their arrival, the gates of Hell are shut in the same manner that the gates of prisons are closed but upon the arrival of new comers, they open to them all of a sudden and the sudden opening of the gates inspires more fear and awe in their hearts.

Prior to anything else, the people of Hell bombard them with reproaches saying that all the means of guidance was prepared for you. Messengers from among yourselves used to recite to you Divine Verses and constantly warned you to follow the Straight Path.

What did happen that such misfortune befell you? Such words uttered by guardians of Hell will be among the most excruciating pains by which they will be welcomed upon their entering Hell.

Their reply is a painful brief sentence:

"Yes, the Messengers came unto us and recited Divine Verses unto us and warned us of our disbelief."

Consequently, the Command of Divine torment will be justified against disbelievers.

Some Qur'anic exegets regard the phrase:

"the Command of Divine torment" (kalimat al-'adhab)

an allusion to Divine Word upon Adams Fall onto the earth or upon Satan's decision as to deceiving the Children of Adam, as reflected elsewhere in the Qur'an[27]:

"But those who disbelieve and belie Our Ayat ("Signs, Verses"), they are the dwellers of the Fire. They shall abide therein forever. When Satan said unto God Almighty that he would deceive all but His sincerely devout servants, He replied: "I will fill Hell with jinn and mankind[28]."

Thus, they confess that they disbelieved the Prophets and Divine Verses and naturally a better fate may not be in store for them.

It is also possible that:

"the Command of Divine torment has been justified against disbelievers"

indicates that at times, owing to committing many a sin and bearing animosity, grudge, and prejudice against Truth, man's heart is sealed and he may not return in which case the Command of Divine torment will be justified against him.

It is to be noted that such misfortune stems from man's deeds and there is no room for predestination and lack of human free will.

The brief dialogue at the gates of Hell comes to its end by saying unto them:

"Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant."

As mentioned above,

"the gates of Hell"

may refer to those set in conformity with human deeds and each and every group will be driven to Hell as per their acts.

Likewise, the gates of Paradise conform to deeds.

The name of a gate of Paradise, "the gate of warriors" (bab al-mujahidin) is mentioned by Imam 'Ali (as):

"Verily, jihad is one of the gates of Paradise."[29]

It would be of interest to note that from amongst all human vices, the angels of torment driving man to Hell lay emphasis on arrogance which bears testimony to the fact that disbelief and sin mainly spring from arrogance and disobedience against the Truth.

Arrogance casts thick veils over man's eyes and deprives him of perceiving the illuminating countenance.

Likewise, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (as):

"One who entertains the slightest degree of arrogance in his heart may not enter Paradise."[30]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 73

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَراً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ

73. And those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups till when they reach it and its gates will be opened and its keepers will say peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein!

Purity is the prerequisite to being admitted to Paradise which has come into being owing to either someone's primordial natural disposition or repentance.

According to a narration narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) in Kitab al-Khisal,

"Paradise has eight gates, each of which is for a certain group: one for Prophets and sincerely devout believers, one for martyrs and good doers, five for my adherents (shi'a), and one for Muslims who bear no grudge against me."[31]

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on the hereafter. The preceding Verses treated of the manner by which believers enter Hell but the Verse in question expresses the way righteous believers enter Paradise so that the comparison sheds further light on the issue.

The Verse opens with saying that those who feared God shall be taken to Paradise in groups.

The expression:

"will be led" (siqa),

taken from s-w-q ("drive, lead") in the clause:

"Those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise"

arises a question attracting the attention of many an exeget, since the expression is employed when something is carried out without enthusiasm and inclination.

It is true about the people of Hell but why is it used for the people of Paradise who enthusiastically proceed toward Paradise?

Some exegets suggest that the enthusiasm of meeting their Lords has attracted their attention to such an extent that they do not heed anything besides him, even Paradise. Some maintain that they are alighted on mounts taking them to Paradise in no time.

All these suggestions are consistent and stand to reason, but it is worthy of note that the best interpretation may be the fact that the more the righteous are eager to enter Paradise, Paradise and angels of Mercy are more eager to admit them to their everlasting abode.

Likewise, a host may at times be so eager to meet his guest that he will take him faster than the guest proceeding toward him.

It is noteworthy that the word:

zumar ("small group")

indicates that the people of Paradise proceed toward their everlasting abode in different groups revealing the hierarchy of their spiritual states.

Upon reaching Paradise, they notice that the gates have been already opened to them.

Then the guardians and keepers of Paradise, the angels of Mercy say unto them:

"Peace be upon you! You have done will, so enter here to abide therein!"

It would be of interest to note that upon reaching Hell, the gates open where as the gates had been already open for people of paradise.

Having already been open makes a reference to the respect paid to the people of Paradise, like a host who has opened the gate of his house and willingly awaiting to meet his guest. The angels of Divine Mercy act accordingly.

The preceding Verse treated of the people of Hell who are reproached by the angels of torment upon their arrival censuring them that despite the availability of the means of guidance, such misfortune befell them. However, the people of Paradise are welcomed by greetings and words revealing respect and homage following which they will be invited to enter their everlasting abode!

The verbal form:

tibtum ("you have done well")

is taken from t-'-b ("be good, be pleased"), which following greetings is used in the sense of "be pleased, be happy," in other words, thus the angels say unto them:

"Enjoy these pure Bounties, O you who are pure of heart and nature!"

However, many an exeget consider the clause to be in the indicative mood taking it to mean that the angels say unto them:

"You have been purified of any impurity. Faith and righteous good deeds have purified your hearts and souls. You are absolved of your sins."

Some of the exegets even cite a narration according to which there is a tree at the gate of Paradise underneath which there is a fountain of pure water from which believers drink and thus purify themselves inwardly.

They wash themselves in another spring and thus cleanse themselves outwardly.

Then the keepers of Paradise say unto them:

"peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein!"[32]

It is to be noted that

"everlasting abode"

is mentioned for peoples of Hell and Paradise so as the former know that there is no deliverance and the latter may not entertain any concern regarding the transience of Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 74

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

74. And [the people of Paradise] will say: "Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us and has made us inherit the land. We can dwell in Paradise where we will." How excellent a reward for good doers!

It is the permanent disposition of the people of Paradise to say:

"Praise be to Allah"

following enjoyment of Divine Bounties.

The blessed Verse in question mentions four terse clauses revealing their utmost satisfaction:

"Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us."

The Verse further adds:

"[He] has made us inherit the land."

"The land"

ad hoc designates "the land of Paradise" and

"inherit"

indicates that so many bounties are bestowed upon them for little efforts. It is common knowledge that inheritance refers to something fallen into someone's share without taking troubles. It may also allude to the fact that everyone has a place in Paradise and a place in Hell.

When he turns into one of the people of hell for his vicious deeds, his place in Paradise will be assigned to others, but if one becomes one of the people of Paradise, his place in Hell will remain there for those doomed to Hell.

It may also indicate that they may use it freely in the same manner that one may make use of his inheritance as he wish.

The clause actually reveals the fulfillment of Divine Promise which is also mentioned in 19:63,

"Such is the Paradise which we shall give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who have been God fearing."

The third clause thus indicates their free will in making use of their Lord's vast Paradise:

"We can dwell in Paradise where we will."

Different Qur'anic Verses indicate that there are many a Garden in Paradise and the expression

"the everlasting Gardens of Paradise" (jannat 'adn,[33])

refers to the same. People of Paradise dwell in them according to their spiritual states and stations. Thus they may freely select their abodes in the vast Gardens of Paradise.

They never opt for stations more exalted than theirs nor do they request the attainment to the same.

Finally, thus they say in the last clause:

"How excellent a reward for good doers!"

Good doers are those who act upon Divine Commands. It reveals that such rewards are bestowed because of past righteous good deeds.

Such excellence stems from faith and good deeds. Who asks the last clause, God Almighty or the people of Paradise?

Qur'anic exegets maintain that both are possible but it would be more consistent with other clauses in the same Verse if we considered it as an expression of surprise uttered by the people of Paradise.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 75

وَتَرَى الْمَلاَئِكَةَ حَافِّينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

75. And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praises. And they will be judged with truth and it will be said: "All the praises are to Allah, the Lord of the world."

The word:

hafin ("those who surround")

derives from h-f-f ("surround") and 'arsh is the seat of Divine Omnipotence and Will. Angels are prepared to act upon Divine Commands;

("surrounding the Throne")

glorifying their Lord at all times.

The closing Verse of the Chapter in question is an address to the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"[On that Day,] you will see the angels surrounding Divine Throne circumambulating it and glorifying their Lord with praises."

Making a reference to the angels surrounding Divine Throne either indicates their preparation for acting upon Divine Commands or alludes to the cherished spiritual state of those close to Divine Threshold on that Day. The three interpretations are not inconsistent, but the first interpretation sounds more appropriate.

Thus the blessed Verse in question proceeds:

"They [i.e., Lord's servants] will be judged with truth."

Since they serve as tokens of Divine Lordship and glorification of His Pure Essence with all praises, thus the Verse closes:

"All the praises are to Allah, the Lord of the world."

Who says it? People of Paradise? The righteous? All of them? Seemingly, the last choice is more appropriate since the wise and those close to Divine Threshold glorify God Almighty with praises and thanks.

O Lord! Unanimously with all angels and your obedient servants, we all thank you for the Bounties that You have bestowed upon us, particularly studying the Verses of Your Holy Qur'an saying: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the World.

Notes

1. As per many a tradition narrated from Shi'i Imams (as), "beside Allah" is interpreted as "Shi'i Imams," for instance a tradition narrated from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) mentioned in Usul Kafi interprets "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah" as: "'Beside Allah' indicates the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) and also his eminent successors to the last of them [i.e., Imam Mahdi (as)]." It is also reported from Imam Sadiq (as) in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's exegetic work that "We are 'beside Allah.'" See Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 495.
2. 6:28
3. See also the Holy Qur'an, 23:100.
4. 29:65
5. Tafsir Burhan.
6. 3:106-107
7. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p.496.
8. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.
9. Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on the transmission of books and traditions (Bab Riwayat al-Kutub wa 'l-Hadith), vol. 14.
10. 2:34
11. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir ("Exegesis"), apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 496; the same theme in Tafsir Safi, under the Verses in question.
12. 14:18
13. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 497.
14. Ibid.
15. 21:104
16. al-Mizan and Durr al-Manthur [exegetic works].
17. 74:8
18. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir ["Exegesis"], apud Nur al-Thiqalayn.
19. 27:87
20. 57:12
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 321.
22. Ruh al-Ma'ani and Ruh al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
23. 18:49
24. 7:6
25. 50:21
26. 50:21
27. 2:39
28. 32:13
29. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 27.
30. Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter on Arrogance (Bab al-Kibr), tradition 6.
31. Tafsir al-Mizan.
32. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 574.
33. 9:72

Surah al-Ghafir, Chapter 40, Verses 1 - 22

Surah al-Ghafir or Surah al-Mu'min

(The Forgiver/The Believer)

Section (juz' 24)

Number of Verses: 85

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This Chapter has eighty five Verses and it was revealed in Mecca. The title Ghafir derives from the third Verse in which God Almighty is mentioned as the Oft-Forgiver of sin (Ghafir al-dhanb).

The other title of the Chapter is Mu'min alluding to the person who was at the service of Pharaoh and concealed his faith so as to render support to Moses.

The account of the person in question, known as the believer among Pharaoh's people (mu'min al Fir'awn) may be found in Verses 28 ff. besides the accounts of Moses, Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud, the Chapter treats of Divine Unity, Resurrection, and Divine Wisdom.

There are approximately twenty Verses concerning the believer among Pharaoh's people which are not attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

There are seven consecutive Qur'anic Verses opening with Ha Mim; the Chapter in question is the first one in the series termed as Hawamim and the rest are: Fussilat, Shura, Zukhruf, Dukhan, Jathiya, and Ahqaf.

According to a Prophetic tradition Hawamim constitute the gist of the Holy Qur'an. The series is the crown of the Holy Qur'an and its fragrant flowers. God bestows His Bounties upon the reciter of these Verses as well as his neighbors, relatives, and friends and Divine Throne ask for his forgiveness.[1]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

1. Ha Mim.

2. The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient.

3. The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in chastisement, the Bestower [of many a Bounty]. There is no god but Allah, to Him is the final return [of all].

As per a number of traditions, the interpretation of the detached letters is solely known by God Almighty.[2]

However, according to some other traditions and taking into account that following these letters which concern the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty tells disbelievers that Divine Revelation is composed of the same letters of alphabet available to them and challenges them to produce similar Verses.

It is worthy of note that many a discussion are to be found in the openings of a number of foregoing Chapters, e.g. Baqara, Al 'Imran, and A'raf.

Furthermore, according to a number of traditions and many a words of its exeget, the first two letters of the opening of the Chapter in question are interpreted as Divine Names beginning with these two letters. As per a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the twain letters in question are interpreted as Hamid ("Praiseworthy") and Majid ("All-Glorious").[3]

Some exegets have also interpreted "H" as Divine Names like Hamid ("the Praiseworthy"), Halim ("the Clement"), and Hannan ("the Most Compassionate") and "M" as those like Malik ("the Sovereign"), Malik ("the Lord"), and Majid ("All-Glorious").

"H" and "M" might as well allude to Divine Hakimiyya ("Sovereignty") and Malikiyyat ("Lordship"). It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that Ha Mim is one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names.[4]

It is evident that these interpretations are not inconsistent and the contextual meaning of the Verse in question may designate them all.

The Qur'anic Verses opening with the phrase

"Revelation of the Book" (tanzil al-kitab)

make mention of Divine Names and Attributes among which mention may be made of the following:

The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise[5];

The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient[6];

The Revelation from [Allah], the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful[7];

The Revelation [is] sent down by the Omnipotent, the Most Merciful[8];

[It is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise[9];

A Revelation from the Lord of the worlds[10].

Thus, the origin of Revelation is the Possessor of Omnipotence, Wisdom, Mercy, Lordship, and worthy of all praise and glorification.

According the Holy Qur'an, Divine Forgiveness is bestowed upon believers for a number of reasons, including:

Faith:

("We have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us,"[11]);

Fearing God Almighty:

("If you fear Allah, He will forgive you,"[12]);

Following Prophets:

("If you follow me, He will forgive you,"[13]);

Pardoning and forgiving people:

("Let them pardon and forgive… and Allah will forgive you,"[14]);

Lending interest free loan to people:

("If you lend Allah a loan… He will forgive you,"[15]);

Jihad:

(“… you fight in the Cause of Allah… He will forgive you… ,[16]);

Worship:

(“If you worship Allah… He will forgive you,”[17]);

Avoiding grave sins:

(“If you avoid grave sins… We shall expiate from you your sins,”[18]);

Invoking God Almighty, asking for forgiveness, repentance:

(“… I have wronged myself… then He forgave him,”[19]);

Saints’ invocations to God Almighty for man:

(“O our father! Ask forgiveness [from Allah] for our sins,”[20]).

The Revelation of the Book, Divine Warning and Forgiveness all aim at man’s perfection. The Book, the Law, Reckoning, Chastisement, and Forgiveness are all due in their own right.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 4

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلادِ

4. None disputes in the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah but those who disbelieve. Therefore, let not their ability of going about here and there through the land deceive you.

The Arabic word jadal literally designates “twisting a rope” but it is figuratively applied to disputations in which the parties attempt to defeat the other party through twisting in disputes. It is better avoided in scholarly and doctrinal issues unless the parties make use of proper arguments.

Following making reference to the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an by God Almighty and making mention of Divine Attributes that arouse fear and hope, the blessed Verse in question treats of those who resort to disputation and aggression against Divine Verses thus depicting their fate:

“Non disputes in the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah but those who disbelieve.”

It is true that they may possess force and power, but:

“Let not their ability of going about here and there through the land deceive you.”

They may have pomp and hue and cry for a few days, but they shall tread the road to perdition like bubbles or ashes against gale.

It is worthy of note that the word mujadala does not connote a pejorative sense at all times, but it is worthy of praise in case it is applied within the context of following the path of Truth substantiated by sensibility for expressing realities and guiding the ignorant.

Nevertheless, it is evil in case it happens to rely on false arguments stemming from prejudice, ignorance, and vanity aiming at deceiving people. It would be of interest to say that it is employed in the Holy Qur’an in both senses.

It is once used in 16:125:

“And argue with them in a way that is better.”

It is also employed in its pejorative sense in the Verse in question and elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an.

The Arabic word taqallub derives from q-l-b "change, alter, transform," but the former is employed ad hoc in the sense of dominance and conquest of lands and regions and also frequentation in them.

The blessed Verse in question suggests that the Noble Prophet (S) and early Muslims the majority of whom were from the deprived stratum of the society are not supposed to attribute to tyrant disbelievers their financial, political, and social power and influence as tokens of their truthfulness or real might since the passage of time reveals that such people have been so weak against Divine chastisement like withered leaves against autumn gale.

Arrogant and tyrant disbelievers today try to intimidate the oppressed and the deprived of the world through resorting to a series of attempts, political visits, propaganda, conferences, military maneuvers, pacts and contracts with their allies so as to create the requisite atmosphere for achieving their vicious goals.

However, believers are supposed to be aware of their plots rather than being deceived by such stratagems nor are they supposed to be intimidated by them.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 5

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ

5. [Meccan disbelievers and also] the people Noah and the Confederates after them denied [their Prophets] before these; and every nation plotted against their Messenger to seize him and disputed by means of falsehood to refute therewith the Truth. Therefore, I seized them [by My Wrath] and [behold] how My Chastisement was!

In their confrontations with Divinely appointed Prophets all disbelieving opponents shared the same goal but they were ignorant of Prophets' Divine Support;

([behold] how My Chastisement was!).

The fate of a number of peoples of old who were astray and wrong doing are thus mentioned in terse but decisive clause:

"the people Noah and the Confederates after them belied [their Prophets] before these."

The word Confederate (ahzab) alludes to the peoples of 'Ad, Thamud, Pharaoh, Lot, and the like alluded to in 38:12-13:

"Before them the people of Noah, 'Ad, and Pharaoh the man of stakes, and Thamud and the people of Lot and the Dwellers of the Wood: such ere the confederates."

The confederates cooperated with each other to belie the Divinely appointed Prophets whose Calls were inconsistent with the confederates' illicit interests, lusts, and passions.

They were not content with these but:

"Every nation plotted against their Messenger to seize him."

They even stepped further and resorted to falsehood to cast a veil over Truth and persisted in misleading people:

("and disputed by means of falsehood to refute therewith the Truth").

The Arabic verbal form yudhidu derives from d-h-d ("disprove, refute, obliterate"). However, their stratagems did not last since God Almighty seized them in time and chastised them.

Behold Divine torment:

("I seized them [by My Wrath] and [behold] how My Chastisement was!").

The ruins of their cities are visible on your routes and their evil fate is recorded in historical books and the hearts of the pious. Behold and take lessons. These Meccan tyrant disbelievers and Arab wrong doing polytheists will not have a better fate in store for them unless they change their course and think twice about their beliefs and conducts.

The Verse in question presents a summary of the stratagems of the rebellious Confederates: belying, denial, conspiracy against men of Truth, making attempts to slay them, incessant propaganda for misleading the masses.

Arab polytheists resorted to the same stratagems against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) hence there is no wonder that the Holy Qur'an warns them against entanglement with the fate of ancient people.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 6

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

6. Thus [the Confederates were chastised in this world] has the Word of your Lord been justified against those who disbelieved that they will be the dwellers of the Fire.

The following Verse makes mention of this worldly and otherworldly chastisements saying:

"Thus [the Confederates were chastised in this world] has the Word of your Lord been justified against those who disbelieved that they will be the dwellers of the Fire."

The outward meaning of the Verse is broad in scope encompassing obdurate disbelievers from every people. It is not as a number of exegets have deemed a particular reference to Meccan disbelievers.

It is evident that the justification of Divine Command regarding this people is consequent to their incessant willful commitment of sins and faults.

It is surprising that some exegets like Fakhr Razi maintain that the Verse in question serves as an argument for the preordained fate of different peoples and divesting them of free choice whereas if sectarian biases could be removed, they could evidently and conveniently notice that God Almighty preordains such dire fate for them when they commit all kinds of wrong and crime.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 7

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْماً فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

7. Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness [of God] for those who

believe [saying]: "Our Lord! You comprehend all things in Mercy and Knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your Path and save them from the torment of Fire!

It is a recurrent Qur'anic theme that deprived believers should never conceive that the opportunities available to wrong doing, tyrant, and disbelieving individuals and groups indicate their final felicity or victory.

To expose the falsity of such conception maintained by narrow minded people as per which they regard material opportunities as their spiritual truth, the Holy Qur'an alludes to the accounts of former peoples and makes reference to evident instances such as the powerful people of Pharaoh in Egypt, people of Nimrod in Babylon, and peoples of Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud in Iraq, Hijaz, and Sham lest deprived and destitute believers feel weak and deficient and be intimidated and weak by faithless tyrants' pomp and apparent power.

God Almighty does not immediately chastise anyone committing sins as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction"[21];

"So give a respite to the disbelievers; deal gently with them for a while"[22];

"We postpone the chastisement only so that they may increase in sinfulness, and for them is a disgracing torment"[23].

In short, such respites aim to give ultimatum to disbelievers, test believers, and increasing of sins by those who have blocked all their ways of return.

A similar sense of humiliation against tyrant and materially powerful governments may be perceived by some materially underdeveloped believing nations.

The aforementioned Qur'anic arguments may decisively serve against such false conceptions. Furthermore, it should be explained to them that their deprived state mainly stems from those tyrants' oppression and if they sever the fetters and shackles of bondage and oppression they may strive hard to compensate their underdevelopment.

"Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness [of God] for those who believe."

The tone of the preceding Verses indicate that they were revealed when Muslims constituted a deprived minority and their enemies were at the zenith of power and dominance and enjoyed many opportunities.

The occasion of the Revelation of the Verses in question is to bear glad tidings to true believers that they are never alone, they should not feel estranged since the bearers of Divine Throne, the Arch-Angels, support you and always invoke God Almighty to make you victorious in this world and the Hereafter and it is the best support for believers in this world and the world to come.

They say:

"Our Lord! You comprehend all things in Mercy and Knowledge [i.e., you are aware of Your servants' sins and You are compassionate toward

them], so forgive those who repent and follow Your Path and save them from the torment of Fire!"

On the one hand, they say unto believers that you who worship God and glorify Him are not alone since before you, the Arch-Angels who are closest to God Almighty, bear His Throne, circumambulate It, and glorify Him.

On the other hand, it warns disbelievers that their belief or disbelief is of no significance since God Almighty is Needless of others. So many angels glorify him that even their glorification may not be imagined by anyone; however, He is Needless of their glorification.

It also enlightens believers that they are not alone in this world. Inasmuch as you happen to constitute a minority, the Most Omnipotent of the Invisible Powers of the world and the bearers of Divine Throne render you support.

The bearers of the Throne invoke God Almighty at all times to comprehend you in His Infinite Mercy and Compassion, absolve you of your sins, and keep you from the torments of Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 8 - 9

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

8. "Our Lord! And make them enter the abodes in gardens which you have promised them and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their offspring! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

9. "And [O Lord!] save them from the sins [and the recompense of their evil deeds], and whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy." And that is the supreme deliverance.

Deliverance does not lie in mundane welfare rather in fear of God Almighty.

"And whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy. And that is the supreme deliverance."

Resuming the invocations of the bearers of Divine Throne, the blessed Verse says:

"Our Lord! And make them enter the abodes in gardens which you have promised them and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their offspring! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise."

The Verse opens with:

"Our Lord!"

which indicates the humble request of the bearers of the Throne and the Arch-Angels who are closest to God Almighty. To invoke him to comprehend believers in His Boundless Mercy, they lay emphasis on His Lordship.

They not only invoke God Almighty to save believers from Hell but also ask Him to make them as well as their fathers, spouses, and offspring enter the everlasting gardens of Paradise. The Divine Promise mentioned in these Verses is recurrently declared by Prophets to people.

Division of believers into two groups indicates that some of them stand foremost and make every effort to obey Divine Commands. The other group on a par with the aforesaid ones but owing to their relative adherence to the first group and their attribution thereof will be taken into Divine Mercy as invoked by angels.

In their fourth invocation, the angels ask God Almighty:

"Save them from the sins and whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy."

Thus they end their invocations:

"This is the supreme deliverance."

The supreme deliverance is that sins are absolved from man, torment and evils are kept away from him, he is taken into Divine Mercy, he enters everlasting Paradise in which he is accompanied by his beloved relatives.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْأِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ

10. Those who disbelieve will be addressed [in Hell]: "Allah's Wrath [against you] was greater towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse."

The verbal for yunadun is attested twice in the Holy Qur'an both of which are employed for humiliating the people of Hell, the other instance is:

"They are those who are called from a remote place,"[24].

The blessed Verse in question treats of the manner of Divine Wrath against disbelievers so as to shed further light through symmetrical juxtaposition.

The blessed Verse says:

"Those who disbelieve will be addressed [in Hell]: 'Allah's Wrath [against you] was greater towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse'."

Who is calling them in this manner? The angels responsible for inflicting torment upon disbelievers are apparently calling them thus to reproach and disgrace them whereas angels of Mercy are at all times prepared to pay homage and respect to the believing pious.

Some exegets have maintained that some disbelievers call their like; however, the first interpretation sounds more appropriate. It is worthy of note that the call shall be voiced on the Day of Resurrection as the following Verses evidently bear witness to the same.

The word maqt literally designates "hatred, detestation, aversion." The blessed Verse indicates that inasmuch as faithless people severely detest themselves, Divine Wrath shall be beyond their aversion.

What is intended by disbelievers' aversion and enmity against themselves? There are two interpretations for it.

According to the first interpretation, they have been their most bitter enemies of themselves since they turned away from those who called them to believe in Divine Unity. They not only turned away from the Lights of Divine Guidance but they also shattered them.

Is there any enmity more severe than blocking for oneself the path to everlasting bliss in exchange for following concupiscence and enjoying the transient mundane life?

As per the present interpretation, the clause:

"when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse"

reflects the manner of their wrath and enmity against themselves.

According to the other interpretation, their enmity and wrath comprehends them on the Day of Resurrection, since they perceive the consequences of their acts there which will lead to their regret and repentance.

They will cry out biting their hands out of sorrow and regret saying:

"The Day when the wrong doer will bite at his hands"[25]

"and the disbeliever will say: 'Woe to me! Would that I were dust!'"

"And sharp is the sight of this Day"[26]***,***

"The Day when all the secrets will be examined"[27]***,***

"And when the pages of deeds of every person are laid open"[28]***,***

"You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day"[29]***.***

Thus they condemn themselves decisively and turn away in detestation and flee from themselves.

Now it is called:

"Allah's Wrath [against you] was greater towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 11

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

11. They will say: "Our Lord! You have made us to die twice and You have given us life twice! Now we confess to our sins, then is there any way to get out [of Hell]?"

Dying twice apparently refers to death at the end of mundane life and the one at the end of Purgatory. Likewise, giving life twice indicates those in Purgatory and on the Day of Resurrection.

It is worthy of note that upon observation of the circumstances on the Day of Resurrection as well as Divine against them, sinners awake from their long sleep of neglect and reflect upon finding a way out, saying:

"O Lord! You made us to die twice and gave us life twice! Now we comprehend everything following death and coming to life again. Now we confess to our sins. Is there any way out of the Hell and returning to the world for compensating past errors and mistakes?"

All veils of vanity and neglect will be cast away and man will perceive the truth and will have no alternative but to confess to his sins.

In their mundane life, they persisted in their denial of Resurrection, mocking Prophets who called them to believing in God Almighty. There will be no room for denial when they see their consecutive death and life.

Their emphasis on the consecutiveness of death and life may make a reference to the view as per which they say:

"O Lord! You are the Owner of death and life, You are Able to return us to the world so that we may compensate for our past misdeeds."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 12

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ

12. "This [torment] is because when Allah Alone was invoked [as the One God] you disbelieved, but when partners were associated with Him, you believed! Therefore, [now] the judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"

To make such ignorant disbelievers and polytheists lose their hope for ever, the closes with:

"Therefore, [now] the judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"

There is no other judge at the Tribunal, since He is the Most High, the Most Great. He will not be subjugated by anyone, nor will He be affected by any recommendation. Offering ransom, indemnity, or support may not alter His Decision.

He is the Absolute Sovereign and all beings submit to His Command. There will be no way out against His Decree.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 13 - 14

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقاً وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

13. It is He Who shows you His Ayat (Verses, Signs) and sends down provision for you from the sky. And none remembers but those who turn in repentance.

14. Therefore, call you upon Allah making [your] faith pure for Him; however much the disbelievers may dislike [it].

The world of existence abounds in tokens of Divine Unity. Why should man turn to other beings besides God Almighty? In these blessed Verses people are called to believe in Divine Unity saying that merely those who turn in repentance remember God Almighty.

The clause:

"However much the disbelievers may dislike [it]"

is attested thrice and the clauses

"However much the polytheists may dislike [it]"

and

"However much the sinners may dislike [it]"

are to be found twice. Such attestations indicate that we are not supposed to satisfy disbelievers, polytheists, and sinners and desist from carrying out our duties for the sake of their displeasure.

It is noteworthy that the last two blessed Verses serve as arguments substantiating the issues suggested in the form of admonitions and warnings in the foregoing Verse. They serve as arguments for Divine Unity and Lordship and refutation of polytheism and idolatry.

Verse 13 opens thus:

"It is He Who shows you His Ayat (Verses, Signs)."

"The judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"

In this blessed Verse, an argument is produced against declining disbelievers request as to getting out of Hell and returning to the world.

It designates that when they were called to believe in Divine Unity, they denied the call and persisted in their disbelief, but whenever some people associated partners with Him, they submitted to them and believed in their polytheistic beliefs.

It is to say that they frowned upon whoever made mention of Divine Unity, purity, fearing God, and submission to Divine Will, but they rejoiced at polytheism and impurity. Consequently, they may have no better fate.

Now a question may be raised here as to the nexus between the reply and returning to the world. However, the contextual meaning of the Verse demonstrates that such deeds of theirs were not sporadic and transient rather they were likewise at all times.

Consequently, if they returned they would resume their misdeeds and such faith and submission on the Day of Judgment are out of necessity rather than being genuine. Furthermore, their past disbelief, misdeeds and evil intentions necessitate their everlasting dwelling in Hell. Thus their return to the world would be impossible.

It is worthy of note that that such is the circumstance of those in whose hearts disbelief, polytheism and committing sins are deeply rooted. They are those who were disgusted at hearing the Name of the One God and rejoiced at hearing the names of Idols.

"And when Allah Alone is mentioned the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when besides Hi are mentioned, behold they rejoice!"[30]**.**

Such circumstances are not restricted to the time of the Noble Prophet (S) rather there are ignorant in our time who turn away from faith, Divine Unity, and fearing God and whenever they hear disbelief, discord, and corruption, they turn to them.

Thus, according to a number traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the Verse in question is interpreted as referring to the question of guardianship (wilaya) at which some people are disgusted rather they rejoice at hearing the names of its opponents.

It goes without saying that the interpretation in question makes mention of a number of instances rather than referring to all the instances of the blessed Verse in question.

It makes also a reference to the signs upon the horizon and those upon the soul abounding in the world of existence. It alludes to the wonderful images found in the world of existence and whoever does not reflect upon such images will resemble one of the same.

Mention is then made of one of these signs:

"He sends down provision for you from the sky."

The life giving rain drops, the invigorating sunshine giving life to all beings, and the air which enlivens all plants and animals are all sent down from the sky. We know that these are the main means of life and other means are secondary to them.

The Verse thus closes: despite all the signs abounding in the world of existence, blind eyes and the hearts over which a veil is cast fail to perceive anything:

"only those who turn toward God in repentance may remember"

and absolve their hearts and souls from impurities.

The following Verse concludes that now that you comprehend the circumstances,

"call you upon Allah making [your] faith pure for Him."

Believers are encouraged herein to arise and erase polytheists' idols through your faith and remove them from your thought, culture, and society.

It is to note that such act will disgust biased and obdurate disbelievers, but believers are supposed to have heart and purify their faith

"however much the disbelievers may dislike [it]."

In an environment in which idolaters constitute the majority, Divine Unity sounds disgusting to them like sunrise among bats; however, believers are supposed to ignore such ill-mannered and transient reactions, proceed decisively, and raise the banner of Divine Unity and sincere devotion everywhere.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 15 - 16

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

15. [He is] the Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the angel of Revelation [Faithful Spirit, Gabriel] by His Command to any of His servants He wills that he may warn [people] of the Day of Mutual Meeting [and Resurrection].

16. The Day when they will come out, nothing of them will be concealed from Allah. [It shall be called:] "Whose is the sovereignty of this Day?" [A call shall answer:] "It is Allah's, the One, the All-Subjugator!"

Exaltation and owning high ranks fall into two types:

1. Spatial, as in:

"And when Abraham… raised the foundations of the House [of Ka'ba]… "[31]**,**

2. In terms of station, as in:

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe"[32]**.**

The preceding Verse called people to sincere devotion in matters of faith, but the present Verse is saying that God Almighty will exalt you in proportion to your degree of sincere devotion. He is the Owner of High Ranks and Degrees.

This interpretation assumes that the word rafi' designates "promoter, exalter." However, a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word in question indicates

"exalted."

Consequently, rafi' al-darajat makes a reference to Divine Exalted Ranks and Degrees. He is Exalted in His Omniscience and Omnipotence. All His

Perfect Attributes are so Exalted that they defy man's limited knowledge and intellect.

The blessed Verse adds:

"He is the Owner of the Throne,"

i.e., He wields His Sway over all the world of existence. He has no rival in His Sovereignty which bears testimony to the fact that determination of His servants' ranks are as per their merits and they rest within His Control.

The contextual meaning of Throne was treated in the preceding Verse and there is no need to reiterate the exposition.

The third Divine Attribute is that:

"He sends the angel of Revelation [Faithful Spirit, Gabriel] by His Command to any of His servants He wills."

The Spirit in question is the Holy Qur'an and the rank of prophethood and Revelation that invigorates hearts and resembles human soul and body. His Omnipotence and Owning High Ranks and Degrees necessitate that He informs men of their duties.

The expression is of interest as per which Revelation is likened to the Spirit that engenders life, motion, jihad, and development.

Qur'anic exegets have presented different interpretations for

"Spirit"

herein, but the contextual meaning of the word in this Verse and elsewhere, i.e.:

"He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His Command to whom of His servants He wills [saying]: 'Warn mankind that there is no god but Allah, so fear Me,'"[33]

and

"Thus We have sent to you the Spirit of Our Command, you knew not what is the Book, nor what is faith?"[34]

addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), all bear testimony to the fact that the word

"Spirit"

ad hoc designates Revelation, the Holy Qur'an, and Divine obligations.

The expression:

"by His Command"

indicates that if the angel of Revelation responsible for proclamation is this Spirit, it is imparting Divine Word rather than its own.

The expression

"to any of His servants He wills"

does not indicate that He vests the Bounty of Revelation to anyone without due measure, since Divine Will is the same as His Omniscience.

The point is that He vests Revelation with the one whom He regards worthy of such state, as the same is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Allah knows best with whom to place His Message"[35]***.***

As per a number of traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the word

"Spirit"

in the Verse in question is interpreted as "The Holy Spirit" as belonging to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as); however, this interpretation is not inconsistent with the above since the

Holy Spirit is the same sacred Spirit and the exalted spiritual rank vested perfectly in Prophets and the Infallible Imams (as) whose manifestations are many a time found in other people and whenever the manifestation of the Holy Spirit renders them aid, they may utter extraordinary words and carry out deeds of significance.

It is worthy of note that the preceding Verses treated of sending down rain and mundane provisions but the Verses in question make mention of sending down Revelation and spiritual sustenance.

Now let us proceed to the question of the goal of sending down the Holy Spirit upon prophets. Why do they tread the long path which entails many vicissitudes?

The answer is to be found at the end of the blessed Verse in question:

"that he may warn [people] of the Day of Mutual Meeting [and Resurrection]."

It is the Day on which servants meet their Lord through inward intuition, when the past and future generations, the oppressed and the oppressors, the wrong doers and the wronged, and men and angels meet.

It shall be on this Day that man shall stand at Divine Tribunal with his acts, words, and deeds. The goal of sending down all Scriptures and Divine plans is to warn servants against the Day of great meeting.

It is noteworthy that the unusual name

"day of meeting"

is employed in this Verse to designate the Day of Resurrection. Verse 16 provides further exposition for such a Day.

The last two Verses treat of a number of characteristics of Resurrection each of which is more moving than the others.

Verse 16 opens with the clause:

"The Day when they will come out."

It is on this Day that all veils will be removed. All material obstacles like mountains shall be removed and according to a Qur'anic expression, the earth shall be:

"a level smooth plain"[36].

All men shall leave their graves.

It is a:

"Day when all secrets will be manifest"[37]

and

"When the earth throws out its burdens"[38].

It is a Day:

"When the pages [of deeds of everyone] are laid open"[39].

It is:

"the Day when man will see that [the deeds] which his hands have sent forth"[40].

"Nay, it has become manifest to them what they had been concealing before"[41].

On that Day human organs and even the earth on which deeds were taken place

"will declare its information [about all that happened over it of good or evil]"[42].

In short, all men with all his being and identity shall appear on that great scene and nothing shall remain concealed:

"they all shall appear before Allah"[43]**.**

In order to grasp what will happen on that Day, it would suffice to imagine such scene in this world, when nothing will be concealed from others. What chaos will prevail among people? How will the ties of relationship be severed?

The blessed Verse further adds that:

"nothing of them will be concealed from Allah."

In this mundane world nothing is concealed from God, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient. The One Whose Existence is Boundless is not restricted by any impediment in His Pure Essence and apparent and concealed and visible and invisible are on a par to Him.

The other point is Divine Absolute Sovereignty as reflected in this blessed Verse:

"[It shall be called:] "Whose is the sovereignty of this Day?"

The answer to the question is thus provided:

"It is Allah's, the One, the All-Subjugator!"

Who asks the question? A number of Qur'anic exegets main that it is God Almighty Who asks the question and all believers and disbelievers answer.[44] Some also hold that God Almighty both asks the question and answers to it.[45] A number of exegets also believe that the Divine Caller asks the question and produces the reply.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 17

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

17. This Day shall every person be recompensed for what he earned. This Day no injustice [shall be done to anybody]. Verily, Allah is Swift in reckoning.

All mankind shall be subject to reckoning on the Day of Resurrection and the recompense shall be based on deeds.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the fourth characteristic of the Day of Recompense saying that each and every person shall be recompensed for what he earned. Divine Omniscience, Omnipotence, Lordship, and All-Subjugation all explicitly indicate this awe and hope inspiring truth.

The fifth characteristic is that:

"This Day no injustice [shall be done to anybody]."

How may injustice be done to any one since it stems from either ignorance or impotence, but He is Omniscient, Lord, and All-Subjugator. Consequently no wrong shall be done on the Day of Resurrection which is the Day of Divine Judgment.

The sixth and the last characteristic is the swiftness in reckoning the deeds of servants as mentioned at the end of the blessed Verse in question:

"Allah is Swift in reckoning."

He is so swift in reckoning that as per a tradition:

"Verily, Allah reckons all His servants' recompenses in the twinkling of an eye."

Having admitted to the embodiment of human acts and the traces of good and evil deeds, the question of reckoning is already solved. Do the reckoning technological systems of this world require time to produce the results?

The repetition of the expression:

"swift in reckoning"

in different Qur'anic Verses may suggest that some satanic disbelievers may tempt simple people that the reckoning of the deeds of all mankind down the millennia is not so facile. Furthermore, the expression warns all mankind that no respite shall be granted to anyone in the manner that extended respites may be granted to criminals to examine their records.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 18 - 19

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

18. [O Prophet!] warn them of the Day [of Resurrection] that is drawing near, when the hearts [out of intensity of fear] will be choking the throats and they can neither return them to their chests nor can they throw [them] out. [On that Day] there will be no friend, nor an intercessor for the wrong-doers who could be given heed to.

19. Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal.

Death and the Day of Resurrection are drawing near. Let us prepare ourselves for them. These two Verses resume the depiction of Resurrection. The two Verses and the following Ones treat of other characteristics of Resurrection and awe inspiring incidents that make believers to deeply ponder.

Verse 18 opens with the clause:

"Warn them of the Day that is drawing near."

The word azifa indicates "near." What an unusual name!

It is used in lieu of

"Day of Resurrection"

so as the ignorant may not say:

"the Day of Resurrection is too far away. Do not preoccupy yourselves with such empty words."

It is noteworthy that compared to the Resurrection, the life of the world is but a transient moment and since not specific date has been imparted to Prophets regarding the same, one has to be prepared for it at all times.

The other depiction is that:

"when the hearts [out of intensity of fear] will be choking the throats and they can neither return them to their chests nor can they throw [them] out."

Confronting with dire straits, man may feel that his heart is being displaced, as if it will come out of his throat. The Arabic expression for the same is "the hearts will be choking the throats" (balaghat al-qulub al-hanajir).

The English equivalent would be "to reach the end of one's tether." The expression is quite figurative, though it literally designates that the heart which pumps blood in veins is displaced and reaches the throat.

The word

"heart"

may connote soul, that is the soul reaches the throat as if the soul gradually exits the body and a little of it is still there.

At any rate, the expression indicates that the fear and anxiety caused by Divine reckoning and fear of being disgraced among all people and entanglement with an excruciating pain from which there is no release inspires such awe in heart that it defies expression.

The third depiction illustrates that their being abounds in grief and sorrow but they may not express it. The word kasim is a present participle and derives from k-s-m which literally indicates tying a skin bag full of water but it is figuratively applied to people who are wrathful but owing to some reasons abstain from venting their wrath.

Afflicted with excruciating grieves and sorrows, one may cry out and alleviate the pain to some extent; but unfortunately there will be no such opportunity on that Day when all secrets will be exposed at Divine Tribunal and in the presence of all people. Will crying be of any avail then?

According to the fourth depiction,

"[On that Day] there will be no friend."

All fair weather friends who used to pretend that they were faithful, sincere, and devoted friends will be preoccupied with their own affairs. There shall be no one on that Day to sympathize with anyone else.

As per the fifth depiction,

"nor [there will be] an intercessor for the wrong-doers who could be given heed to."

The point is that true intercessors like Prophets and Saints shall intercede upon Divine Permission. Consequently, polytheists and idolaters may not expect their gods and idols to intercede on their behalf.

The sixth Divine Attribute is depicted in Verse 19 which also serves as a depiction of the manner of Resurrection, saying:

"Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal."

God Almighty is Aware of the surreptitious movement of eyes and the secrets of hearts and on that Day judges concerning man's deeds. His Omniscience renders the days of sinners into shadows.

Upon being asked as to the meaning of the Verse in question, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Have you not seen that at times man looks at something but pretends that he is not looking at it? Such glances are surreptitious."[46]

Looking at people's honor, i.e., wives and daughters, or looking at other forbidden things may not be concealed from God Almighty:

"not even the weight of an atom or less than that or greater escapes His Omniscience in the heavens or in the earth"[47]**.**

According to a Prophetic tradition, one of his Companions sat in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S) beside one of the bitterest enemies of Islam.

When the latter obtained assurance of safety from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and left, the Companion inquired:

"Why did you not command us to behead him prior to his obtaining the assurance of safety from you?"

The Messenger of God (S) replied:

"Prophets never cast surreptitious looks."[48]

It is needless to say that there are different types of surreptitious looks: at times, looks may be cast surreptitiously at women outside the circle of close kinship and at times it may aim at humiliating, finding faults, or hatching plots and satanic ruses.

If man knew that such precise reckoning will be carried out on the Day of Resurrection and even glances and thought will be all subject to scrutiny, utmost fear of God would be engendered in him and such faith in the Hereafter and Divine reckoning on the Day of Resurrection would affect the improvement of human souls.

It is said that following the completion of his studies at the hawza ("the educational religious institution") of Najaf, an eminent scholar intended to return to his hometown. Upon bidding farewell to his professor, he asked for an admonition and the latter said:

"Following taking all these troubles, my last admonition is God's Word. Never forget the Verse 'Knows he not that Allah does see [what he does]'49?"

It is to note that from the viewpoint of a true believer, all the world is God's audience. He does see everything. Remembering the same suffices man to abstain from committing sins.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 20

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

20. And Allah judges with truth while those to whom they invoke besides Him cannot judge anything. Certainly, Allah! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

Judging with truth is one of Divine Acts. The seventh depiction of Resurrection is mentioned in this Verse as one of Divine Attributes:

"Allah judges with truth while those to whom they invoke besides Him cannot judge anything."

On that Day, God shall be the only Judge and he will not judge with untruth, since wrong judgment springs from ignorance but His Omniscience comprehends even the inward secrets of hearts. Wrong judgment may also stem from inability or need but He is Free from such incompetence.

It is worthy of note that the Verse in question also serves as an argument substantiating Divine Unity since One Who is Worthy of being worshipped shall be the Arbitrator but idols are devoid of any usefulness in this world nor will they be the arbitrators on the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, how could they be worthy of being worshipped? It is also noteworthy that Judgment with Truth embraces a wide range of meaning comprehending all the world of existence, becoming, and law making.

Likewise the expression:

"decree" (qada)

is employed in the Holy Qur'an in both senses:

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him"[50].

It indicates His legislative judgment.

It is said elsewhere:

"When He has decreed something, He says to it only: 'Be?' and it is"[51].

Finally, to lay emphasis on the foregoing points raised in the preceding Verses, the Verse in question closes thus:

"Certainly, Allah! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."

Seeing and hearing in the true and strict sense of the word indicates that He hears and sees everything and Omniscience solely belongs to His Pure Essence. It emphasizes his Omniscience and the fact that His Judgment is with truth since one who is not all-hearing and all-wise may not judge with truth.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 21

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَاراً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ

21. Have they not traveled in the land and seen what was the end of those who were before them? They were superior to them in strength and in the traces in the land. But Allah seized them with chastisement [out of His Wrath] for their sins. And none had they to protect them from Allah ['s Wrath].

Man is supposed to take lessons from history rather than take pride in his power and traces in the land. It is needless to say that preservation of the monuments of ancient generations will be required for generations to take lessons. Disbelievers' opposition to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was due to their vanity for their power.

Thus the Holy Qur'an says:

"We destroyed those who were superior to you in strength and in the traces in the land."

The blessed Verse in question raises a question:

"Have they not traveled in the land and seen what the end of those who were before them was?"

This living history reminds men of the wrong doers' ruins of palaces, the disaster stricken cities of the rebellious, the rotten bones of those asleep in dust, and the palaces buried in the earth. All these decisive words depict a true picture of the genuine history of ancient peoples.

Thus the Verse proceeds:

"They were superior to them in strength and in the traces in the land."

The phrase:

"superior to them in strength"

indicates their political, military, economic, and possibly their scientific and technological power.

The phrase:

"in the traces in the land"

may demonstrate their great agricultural developments as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Do they not travel in the land and see what the end of those before them was? They were superior to them in strength and they tilled the earth and populated it in greater numbers than these have done"[52].

It may also make a reference to well founded and solid constructions by a number of ancient peoples in mountains and plains as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an regarding the people of 'Ad:

"Do you build high palaces on every high place, while you do not live in them? And do you get for yourselves palaces as if you will live therein forever"[53].

The dire fate of the rebellious people is expressed briefly:

"But Allah seized them with chastisement [out of His Wrath] for their sins. And none had they to protect them from Allah ['s Wrath]."

Neither their large number nor their power, nor glory, nor immense worldly possessions could impede Divine Chastisement.

The word:

"seize"

is recurrently employed in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of "chastise" since in order to inflict a severe punishment, the perpetrator is first seized and then they will be chastised.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 22

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

22. That [Divine Wrath] was because there came to them their Messengers with clear proofs but they disbelieved. Therefore, Allah seized them. Indeed He is All-Strong, Severe in chastisement.

Sending Prophets is a Divine tradition recorded in the history of mankind since God Almighty never chastises anyone without having given him the ultimatum.

The blessed Verse in question tersely makes mention of the foregoing points by saying that such Divine excruciating chastisement was because there came to them their Messengers with clear proofs but they denied them all.

They were not seized unaware nor were their disbelief and sin without warning, since Messengers recurrently (kanat ta'tihim) came to them but they failed to submit to Divine Commands. They shattered the lights of guidance, turned away from their compassionate Messengers, and at times they slew them.

Then God seized and chastised them since He is All-Strong and Severe in Chastisement. He is both the Most Compassionate of all the compassionate; however, at the time of Wrath, He is the Severest in Chastisement.

Notes

1. Tafsir Nimuna.
2. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.

3. Ma'ani al-Akhbar by Saduq, p. 22, Chapter on the meaning of the detached letters opening the Qur'anic Chapters (Bab Ma'ni al-Huruf al-Muqatta'a fi Awa'il al-Suwar).
4. Tafsir Qurtubi, under the blessed Verse in question.
5. 39:1
6. 40:2
7. 41:3
8. 36:5
9. 41:42
10. 57:80
11. 20:73
12. 8:29
13. 3:31
14. 24:22
15. 64:17
16. 61:11-12
17. 71:3-4
18. 4:31
19. 28:16
20. 12:97
21. 18:59
22. 86:17
23. 3:178
24. 41:44
25. 25:27
26. 50:22
27. 86:9
28. 81:10
29. 17:14
30. 39:45
31. 2:127
32. 58:11
33. 16:2
34. 43:52
35. 6:124
36. 20:106
37. 86:9
38. 99:2
39. 81:10
40. 78:40
41. 6:28
42. 99:4
43. 14:21
44. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
45. al-Mizan, under the Verses in question.
46. Tafsir Safi, under the verse in question.
47. 34:3
48. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5747.
49. 96:14
50. 17:23
51. 3:47
52. 30:9
53. 26:128-129

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 23 - 45

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 23 - 25

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

23. And verily We sent Moses with Our Ayat (Verses, Signs) and a manifest authority.

24. To Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah, but they called [him] a sorcerer, a liar.

25. Then when he brought them the Truth from Us, they said: "Slay the sons of those who believe with him and let their women live" but [they knew not that] the plots of disbelievers are nothing but in vain.

Messengers had two weapons of significance against tyrants: the miracle of Divine Ayat and manifest authority. Prophetic missions mainly aim at struggling with the chiefs of corruption and disbelief who make use of force, government, political power, stratagems, mischief, cultural power, worldly possessions, and economic power.

Resuming the allusion to the dire fate of ancient peoples in the preceding Verses, the verses in question alludes to the story of Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah.

Verses 23 and 24 say:

"We sent Moses with our Ayat and manifest authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah, but they said: 'He is a lying sorcerer.'"

Different interpretations have been produced by Qur'anic exegets as to the difference between Ayat and manifest authority. Some maintain that the former and the latter refer to manifest arguments and miracles respectively.

Some maintain that the former indicates all of Moses' miracles whereas the latter designate his prominent miracles such as his walking stick and illuminating hand which led to his manifest dominance over Pharaoh. Thus, Ayat refers to his miracles and manifest authority designates his solid and decisive arguments against the people of Pharaoh.

It is worthy of note that Moses possessed intellectual arguments and also wrought miracles which demonstrated his nexus with the supernatural; however, the stance of the people of Pharaoh was that they accused him of being a liar and a sorcerer.

They made use of such accusations against Ayat and miracles and disbelieved him against his logical arguments. It bears another testimony to the acceptability of the two interpretations in question. To refute the true arguments of men of truth, lords of disbelief have always made use of such accusations. Even today we find many instances of such false accusations.

It is noteworthy that three names have been mentioned in this Verse each of whom symbolize something: Pharaoh as the symbol of rebellion and tyrannical rule; Haman as the symbol of mischief and satanic stratagems;

Korah as the symbol of material possessions, rebellion, and exploitation who left no stone unturned to preserve his wealth.

Thus Moses was divinely appointed to put an end to the oppression of tyrannical rules, the mischief of treacherous politicians, and transgressions of the arrogant rich and establish a society on the basis of justice and on a politically, culturally, and economically firm ground, but those whose illegitimate interests were in jeopardy rose against him.

Verse 25 exposes some of their mischievous stratagems saying:

"Then when he brought them the Truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who believe with him and let their women live.'"

The expression reveals that slaying males and keeping females alive was not restricted to the time prior to Moses' birth but it recurred following his uprising and prophethood.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that the Children of Israel said unto Moses (as):

"We had suffered troubles before you came to us."

The Children of Israel said it unto Moses following the conspiracies of the people of Pharaoh aiming at slaying believers' offspring.

It is worthy of note that satanic rulers recurrently hatch vicious plots so as to destroy active forces and keep alive inactive ones for exploitation.

It is not a source of wonder that such plots were hatched prior to Moses' (as) birth for the Children of Israel who were slaves of the people of Pharaoh and it was regarded as an anti-revolutionary move following Moses' (as) uprising so as to severely suppress the forces of the Children of Israel forever.

At the close of the blessed Verse in question it reads:

"but [they knew not that] the plots of disbelievers are nothing but in vain."

Their stratagems are like arrows shot in the shadows of ignorance and error hitting rocks, since they are not convinced that they will pay for the consequences of their vicious acts. It is Divine Will that the forces of Truth vanquish those of falsehood.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 26

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ

26. Pharaoh said: "Leave me to slay Moses and let him call his Lord [so that He may save him]. I fear that he may change your religion or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land."

It is the common practice of tyrannical rulers to slay the leaders of the Path of Truth and it is the policy of the arrogant to deny, menace, and humiliate.

The struggle between Moses (as) and his adherents on the one side and Pharaoh and his followers on the other heightened and in order to impede the revolutionary move of Moses (as), Pharaoh made up his mind to slay him but it sounds as if his people and advisors declined.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Leave me to slay Moses and let him call his Lord [so that He may save him]."

The Verse reveals that the majority of his advisors or at least some of them were against slaying Moses (as) and produced arguments to the effect that taking his miraculous acts he might cast a curse and his God might send down some torment.

Yet, the arrogant Pharaoh said:

"I will slay him! Come what may!"

However, the real motive of the adherents and advisors behind such impediment is not precisely known.

There are different possibilities all of which may be true: firstly, fear of Divine torment, secondly, fear of slaying Moses (as) and making a hero and martyr out of him thereby casting him in a halo of sanctity.

Thus, it could increase the number of believers and adherents particularly when it happened following Moses (as) demonstrating his feats against sorcerers and his wonderful victory over them.

It is apparently so since Moses had demonstrated the twain great miracles of his, namely the walking stick and the illuminating hand, in his first meeting with Pharaoh as a consequence of which he had obtained the appellation of sorcerer.

He had asked for Moses' confrontation with his sorcerers and had set his hope on their sorcery as a consequence of which he awaited the due date of confrontation.

Taking the above points into consideration, there would remain no reason for Pharaoh's decision as to slaying Moses (as) at this time span nor would he stand in awe as to mass conversion into Moses' (as) religion.

In short, Pharaoh and his people maintained that Moses is a "menace" but slaying him would turn him into an "uprising" which would lead to an uncontrollable effervescent and massive movement.

There were a number of Pharaoh's people who were displeased with him. They wanted Moses (as) alive so that Pharaoh might be preoccupied with him and leave them in peace to take advantage of the preoccupation and be engaged in their misappropriations.

It is the usually practice that sovereigns' retinues desire the crown's preoccupation with certain affairs so that they could fill up their own coffers and at times provoked foreign enemies so as to stay secure from the crown's peace of mind.

To justify his decision as to slaying Moses (as), Pharaoh produces two arguments, a religious and spiritual argument and a material and worldly one, saying:

"I fear that he may change your religion or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land."

He says:

"If I keep silence, the religion of Moses (as) will immediately profoundly penetrate the hearts of the people of Egypt, as a consequence of which the sacred religion of idolatry protecting your identity and interests will be substituted with a monotheistic religion against you!

If I stay silent today and take measures against Moses (as) after a while, he will gather many an adherent and bloody conflicts will follow which will lead to bloodshed, corruption, and unrest throughout the land. Thus, it sounds expedient that I slay him at the earliest convenience."

It is noteworthy that from Pharaoh's point of view, religion was nothing more than being worshipped or idolatry which aimed at fooling the masses and poisoning their minds and a means of sanctification of their tyrannical and blood thirsty rule.

By corruption, he intended the creation of anti-arrogance revolution aiming to liberate the masses in bondage and eradication of the traces of idolatry and revival of monotheism. To justify their crimes and to struggle against the men of God the corrupt and tyrants have made efforts at all times to make use of unfounded pretexts the instances of which may be seen in our time.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 27

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

27. Moses said: "Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and Your Lord from [the evil of] every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckoning."

We are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty against the menaces of enemies since all our affairs are within His Sway and We are all subject to His Lordship.

Moses (as) said:

"I seek refuge in my Lord and Your Lord from [the evil of] every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckoning."

Moses (as) uttered such words with decisiveness and assurance springing from his firm faith and reliance on his Lord and demonstrated that he entertained nor fear of such menace.

The words of Moses (as) explicitly reveal that people with arrogance and lack of faith in the Day of Resurrection put others in jeopardy and one is supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty against such people.

Arrogance leads man to bias as a consequence of which he may not perceive nothing but his own self and thought, regard Divine Signs and Miracles as sorcery, and consider benevolent reformers to be corrupt and the admonitions of friends and adherents conservative and weak in character.

Faithlessness in the Day of Reckoning leads man to a frame of mind into which no specific plan may find its way.

Such a person may rise against Divine Omnipotence and resort to his limited power and fight His Messengers, since there is neither reckoning nor measure in his affairs. Now let us see to what Pharaoh's threats led. The following Verses unravels the issue and sheds light on the manner of Moses' (as) rescue from the tyrannical rule of that arrogant and vain Pharaoh.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 28

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلاً أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِباً فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقاً يُصِبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

28. And a believing man of Pharaoh family who concealed his faith said: "Would you slay a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allah and he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord? And if he is a liar, upon him will be [the sin of] his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that [misfortune] wherewith he threatens you will befall on you.'" Indeed Allah guides not one who is a transgressor [of limits] a liar!

One of the manifestations of Divine Succor springing from seeking refuge in Him is appearance of adherents among opponents. Bounties of forbidding evil extend to such degree that a Messenger may be saved from being slain and he may save a society from perdition.

This Verse treats of another episode in the history of Moses (as) and Pharaoh which is solely attested in this Chapter. It is the story of the believer of Pharaoh's family, one of his kith and kin who acknowledged Moses' (as) Call to monotheism.

However, he did not reveal his faith since he considered it incumbent upon himself to render Moses (as) well measured support. When he observed that Pharaoh was severely wrathful and he could jeopardize the life of the Messenger, he valiantly stepped forward and nullified the conspiracy aiming at taking his life.

The blessed Verse reads:

"A believing man of Pharaoh family who concealed his faith said: 'Would you slay a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allah and he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord?'"

Can you deny his miracles like those of his walking stick and his illuminating hand? Did you not see him who defeated sorcerers such that they surrendered to him? Did you not see that they were not moved by our threats and spared their lives for the sake of their faith in Moses' (as) Lord? Can such person be called a sorcerer?

Think twice before resorting to any hasty measure. Think about the consequences of your acts otherwise you will regret your negligence.

Furthermore, there are two alternatives:

"If he is a liar, upon him will be [the sin of] his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that [misfortune] wherewith he threatens you will befall on you."

In other words he is saying that if Moses (as) happens to be a liar, he will be disgraced and will be recompensed for his lies, but it is also possible that he is an honest man appointed by Allah to impart Divine Promises and Warnings; consequently, it would be unwise to slay him.

Then he adds:

"Allah guides not one who is a transgressor [of limits] a liar!"

If a believer proceeds toward transgression of bounds and telling lies, he will certainly lose Divine Guidance and if you happen to act likewise, he will be deprived of His Guidance.

It is worthy of note that the words of the believing man of Pharaoh family aimed at impressing Pharaoh and his people from different angles: firstly, Moses (as) does not deserve such severe reaction; secondly, one should not forget that he produces his own arguments which sound justified and confrontation with such a man will entail perils; thirdly, there is no need for your measures, since if he happens to be a liar, he will be chastised by God Almighty, but there exists the possibility that he is right and we will be chastised by his Lord!

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 29

يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

29. "O my people! Yours is the sovereignty today, you are dominant in the land. But who will save us from the torment of Allah, should it befall us?" Pharaoh said: "I show you only that which I see and I guide you only to the path of guidance!"

Believers are compassionate to people and prefer to struggle and make his presence even in disbelievers' rule rather than keep aloof and live in solitude. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh was not satisfied with uttering such words.

Addressing them benevolently in a friendly manner, he said:

"O my people! Yours is the sovereignty today, you are dominant in the vast land of Egypt. You are dominant and triumphant. Do not squander such abundant bounties. Who is going to render us succor if Divine torment befall us?"

It is possible that he intended to say unto them:

"Today you have absolute power and you may pass any judgment as to Moses' (as) fate, but do not be deceived by the power nor forget the contingent consequences of your acts."

His words apparently impressed Pharaoh's people and led to abatement of their wrath against Moses (as). However, Pharaoh did not keep silent and said abruptly:

"The die is cast and I believe in the veracity of my decree. Moses (as) should lose his life and there remains no other alternative. Know that:

'I guide you only to the path of guidance!'"

That is the case with all tyrants and wrong doers in the past and present that they always imagine that their decisions are right and allow no one to comment on their acts. They consider themselves to be the masterminds and others are devoid of knowledge and intellect! This is mere ignorance and inanity.

Let us say a few words concerning the believing man of the family of Pharaoh. Qur'anic Verses solely reveal that he was a man of Pharaoh's people who had believed in Moses (as) but he concealed his faith and loved Moses (as) at heart.

He regarded it incumbent upon himself to defend him. He was intelligent, meticulous, tactful, and very sensible who helped Moses (as) at a critical point and saved him from a perilous conspiracy aiming at his

murder. Islamic traditions and the words of Qur'anic exegets yield further details regarding him among which mentioned is made of his relation to Pharaoh.

It is noteworthy that one of the points treated in the blessed Verse is discretionary concealment of one's beliefs (taqiyya).

It is not equal to weakness, fear, and conservativeness, au contraire, it is the concealment of one's believes employed as an effective means against the arrogant tyrants through which the secrets of enemies may be exposed.

Concealment of beliefs, plans, and stratagems of struggles against enemies may inflict severe blows on them. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh employed the same means so as to render service to the religion of Moses (as) and save his life at a critical point.

What is better than having a believing supporter to defend one at the enemy's administration through whom one may penetrate into the depth of enemy's seat of power and obtain intelligence regarding everything, inform one's supporters, impress tyrants' minds, and alter their plans and stratagems?

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Discretionary concealment of beliefs is my religion and that of my forefathers. One who lacks it does not believe in religion. It is Divine Shield on the earth, since had the believing man of the family of Pharaoh revealed is faith, he would have lost his life."[1]

It may be particularly employed when believers constitute a minority under the rule of a merciless and insensible majority. Thus, it may impede ungrounded sparing of active forces rather it may concentrate and mobilize them for final uprising.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (as) concealed his Call in the first years of his Prophethood and make use of the same method; however, following an increase in the number of his adherents and followers and the solidification of the original nucleus, he declared his Call in public.

It would be of interest to note the following Prophetic tradition:

"The first individuals who believed in the Call [of the exalted Prophet]: Habib the carpenter, the believer among the people of Yasin, the one who asked the people [of Antioch] to follow the Messengers of God who are guided themselves and ask you for no remuneration; Ezekiel (Hizqiyal), the believer of the family of Pharaoh; and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) who is superior to all in rank."[2]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 30 - 31

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ

مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْماً لِلْعِبَادِ

30. And he who believed said: "O my people! Indeed I fear for you a fate like that day [of destruction] of the [former] Confederates!

31. Like the fate of the people of Noah and 'Ad, and Thamud [inflicted with tempest, poisonous icy gale, and lightning, respectively] and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for [his] servants.

Do not desist promulgation of faith and Divine Guidance for the sake of opponents' words. Solitude does not lie in commanding good and forbidding evil.

Egyptians at the time were relatively civilized and literate and knew about historians' accounts of ancient peoples, like those of Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud whose lands did not lie too remote from theirs and they were more or less aware of their dire fates.

The blessed Verses in question indicate that the believing man of the family of Pharaoh, after raising objection as to the conspiracy against Moses' (as) life faced Pharaoh's severe resistance who confirmed his command as to taking the life of Moses (as); however, he did not desist from making efforts as he deemed it fit and appropriate to do so and thought of reminding the rebellious people of the history of ancient peoples and warn them against being inflicted with the same afflictions so that they may wake up and revise their decision.

Thus he opened his admonition:

"O my people! Indeed I fear for you a fate like that day [of destruction] of the [former] Confederates!"

Then he added:

"Like the fate of the people of Noah and 'Ad, and Thamud [inflicted with tempest, poisonous icy gale, and lightning, respectively] and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for [his] servants."

He made efforts to convince them, saying:

"these people were entangled with polytheism, disbelief, and rebellion and we are apprised of their dire fates. Some of them met their end by a devastating tempest, some by a horrible gale, some by lightning, and some by annihilating earthquakes!

Do you not think that you may be afflicted by such terrible disasters as a recompense of your persistence in disbelief and rebellion? Therefore, allow me to say unto you that I am afraid of such dire fate in store for you.

Could you produce some argument substantiating that you are different from them and you will not be afflicted with such Divine torments? What had they done that they were entangled with such torments? They solely resisted the Calls of Prophets and at times murdered or denied them. You are supposed to know that whatever befalls on you will be the consequences of your evil acts since:

'Allah wills no injustice for [his] servants.'"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 32 - 33

وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ

يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

32. "And, O my people! Indeed I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling."

33. A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protection from Allah [' torment]. And whomsoever Allah sends astray [for his evil deeds and abandons him], for him there is no guide.

In promulgation of faith we are not supposed to expect achievement of favorable consequences at imparting the first reminder, but reiteration is a part and parcel of the task. One should also attend to emotions and feelings in this vein. We are supposed to remind people of Divine Wrath in this world and on the Day of Resurrection.

According to Verse 32, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:

"O my people! Indeed I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling,"

when people call one another for help but they hear no answer. The word al-tanad, originally al-tanadi whose final /i/ is omitted and the final /i/ indicates the ellipsis derives from n-d-' ("call").

Most of Qur'anic exegets maintain that:

"the Day of mutual calling"

is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection. Different exegets attend to very similar aspects of the appellation in question.

According to an exeget, mutual calling refers to calling the people of Paradise by the people of Hell as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And the dwellers of Hell call to the dwellers of Paradise: 'Pour on us some water or anything that Allah has provided you with.' They will say: 'Both Allah has forbidden to disbelievers'"[3].

They may as well call others seeking refuge in one another and the Callers of Resurrection call unto them:

"No doubt! The curse of Allah is on wrong doers"[4].

When a believer sees the record of his deeds, he cries excitedly:

"Here, this is the record of my deeds. Come hither. O people! Read it!"[5]

A disbeliever at that time will fearfully cry out:

"I wish that I had not been given the record of my deeds"[6].

It is worthy of note that a broader semantic range may be assumed for the Verse in question such that

"the Day of mutual calling"

may comprehend this world as well, since it merely indicates calling one another and those who are at the end of their tether call one another but their calling is of no avail.

We find so many instances of mutual calling when Divine torments are sent down, when societies come to dead ends for their own sins and faults, when crises and terrible incidents adversely affect everyone, they flee seeking some refuge but there is not one to be found; all cry out for succor!

Verse 33 provides an interpretation for the Day of mutual calling:

"A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protection from Allah [' torment]."

One whom God Almighty sends astray [for his evil deeds] may not find any guide. Such people lose the Path of Guidance and sink in the dire of ignorance and error and will lose the Path of Paradise and Divine Bounties.

The aforesaid expression may allude to Pharaoh's words:

"I show you only that which I see and I guide you only to the path of guidance!"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولاً كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ

34. And verily Joseph did come to you in times gone by with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in what he did bring to you: till when he died you said: "No Messenger will Allah send after him." Thus, Allah leaves astray him who is a transgressor [of limits] and one who doubts [Allah's Warning and His Oneness].

The conducts of the good affects the obduracy of their generation. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:

"If you do not believe in Moses (as) today, it is no wonder, since you did not believe in Joseph (as) either."

In this blessed Verse, he further proceeds with his admonition.

A brief survey of the preceding Verses and the One in question reveals that to impress the impenetrable heart of Pharaoh and his people, the believing man from his family made efforts to cleanse their arrogance and disbelief by presenting his words in five forms and stages.

Firstly, he opened his remarks with precaution calling that rebellious and disbelieving people to abstain from contingent loss saying that if Moses (as) were lying, he would carry the burden of his sins but if he tells the truth, we will be afflicted with Divine torment, so behave cautiously and be afraid of the dire consequences of your deeds.

Secondly, he asked them to glance at the accounts of ancient peoples and warned them against entanglement with such dire fate.

Thirdly, mention is made of an account of other peoples who were not too remote from them and they were still aware of their history since the nexus between them and those people were still intact. He raises the question of Joseph's (as) Prophethood who was Moses' (as) forefather. He also mentions Joseph's (as) people confronting with his Call.

"And verily Joseph did come to you in times gone by with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in what he did bring to you."

They declined his Call for the sake of their arrogance, obduracy, and incessant suspicion rather than because of intricacies in his Call.

To dispose themselves of any obligation and in order to persist in their arrogance and following their concupiscence, they said upon Joseph's (as) demise that God would never appoint another Messenger.

On the one side, they transgressed Divine bounds and on the other they entertained doubts as to everything; as a consequence of which God deprived them of His Bounties and left them in the mire of error and they could never expect any fate better than that.

The believing man of the family of Pharaoh further added:

"If you show the same reaction against Moses' (as) Call without any reflection or investigation, he may be a divinely appointed Messenger but you may deprive your sealed hearts of Divine Guidance."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 35

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرَ مَقْتاً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ

35. Those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah, without any authority that has come to them, it would lead to a fearsome Wrath to those who believe. Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant, tyrant.

The word sultan indicates "authority, argument" and maqt designates "severe wrath."

The blessed Verse in question provides further exposition for those according to which God Almighty seals hearts. It is herein said that God Almighty seals up the heart of arrogant tyrants.

Treating of

musrif-un murtab-un ("transgressor, doubter") the Verse explains that they are those who

"dispute about the Ayat of Allah without any authority that has come to them."

In other words, they take a stance against Divine Signs and Verses without producing an intellectual or narrational argument to substantiate their groundless disputations which spring from baseless assumptions, temptations, and pretexts.

Such baseless disputations against the Truth lead to Divine Wrath and detestation of believers, since groundless disputations and taking insensible stances against Divine Signs and Verses lead to the error of disputants and others; it extinguishes the light of truth and reinforces the pillars of the rule of falsehood.

Their failure to submit to Truth is mentioned at the close of the Verse, saying that thus God Almighty seals the hearts of the wrong doing arrogant to the extent that their hearts are sealed up that neither their foul contents may exude nor may the right and invigorating contents be absorbed by them.

God deprives the arrogant tyrants who rise against the Truth failing to acknowledge truths of the spirit of truth seeking such that truth tastes bitter and falsehood tastes sweet to them.

The words of the believing man of the family of Pharaoh were quite effective and Pharaoh changed his mind as to slaying Moses (as) or at least postponed the execution of his decision, such that Moses (as) was saved from the perils and it was the great mission fulfilled by that intelligent and valiant man at that critical point and as will be mentioned below, he lost his life for it.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 36 - 37

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحاً لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ
أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِباً وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ
وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ

36. And Pharaoh said: "O Haman! Build a tower for me so that I may arrive at the ways,

37. "The ways of [ascending] the heavens and I may look upon the God of Moses: Indeed, I regard him a liar." Thus it was made fair, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds and he was impeded from [treading] the [Straight] Path; and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and perdition.

The word sarh designates "lofty edifice" visible from afar and tasrih indicates "declaration, clear statement." The word tabab is used in the sense of "continuity in incurring loss." Materialists regard everything in terms of materiality.

Pharaoh imagined that God was in the heavens and the way to knowing Him was only through the senses, like vision:

("and I may look upon the God of Moses").

Though Pharaoh was impressed by the words of the believing man of his family to avoid slaying Moses (as), but he was still vain and arrogant and he failed to make him submit to Truth, since the arrogant man did not deserve such submission; as a consequence of which he proceeded with his mischievous measures and ordered that a lofty tower be built for ascending to the heavens and finding intelligence concerning Moses' (as) God, as it is reflected in the blessed Verse,

"Pharaoh said: 'O Haman! Build a tower for me so that I may arrive at the ways."

Was Pharaoh so ignorant that he thought Moses' (as) God was in the heavens and he could ascend to the heavens through the construction of a lofty edifice whose height was nothing compared to the mountains?

He apparently took such measure to achieve a number of goals. Firstly, he intended to preoccupy people with something other than Moses' (as) Prophethood and the uprising of the Children of Israel.

Construction of such lofty edifice which according to a number of Qur'anic exegets was supposed to employ fifty thousand architects, masons, and construction workers on a vast site could overshadow other issues and the loftier the tower, the more attention it could attract.

Then people would talk about it and defeating sorcerers by Moses (as) could temporarily slip into oblivion. Secondly, he aspired to bear financial assistance to laborers and provide them with at least a temporary employment for the unemployed so that they may consign to oblivion his wrong doings and people become more economically dependent on his treasury.

Thirdly, following the completion of construction, he planned to ascend it and take a glance at the sky, probably shoot an arrow, return to people and deceive them by saying that Moses' (as) claims were baseless, proceed with your affairs and rest assured! It is worthy of note that he knew that his lofty edifice could not be taller than mountains and there would be no difference in looking at the sky from the top of the edifice or mountains or from the plains.

It is also noteworthy that through ordering the construction of such lofty edifice, he took a step backwards by saying that he intended to investigate about God of Moses (as).

By saying:

"Indeed I regard him a liar!"

he descended from certitude to doubt.

The sentence

"Thus it was made fair, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds and he was impeded from [treading] the [Straight] Path; and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and perdition"

reveals that the main reason lying behind Pharaoh's error was the embellishment of his evil deeds in his eyes which stemmed from his arrogance and vanity. The consequence of his vanity and arrogance was that he went astray from the Path of Truth.

In the third stage, the total defeat of his plans is declared. Three brief but terse clauses suffice to express the truth. Certainly, such political stratagems may impress people in the short run; however, in the long run, total defeat is the consequence of such stratagems.

According to a number of traditions, Haman continued the construction of Pharaoh's tower such that strong winds impeded the process.

He came to Pharaoh and said unto him:

"We cannot construct it loftier than this."

A strong wind blew before long and the edifice collapsed.[7]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 38 - 39

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ

38. And the man [from the family of Pharaoh] who believed said: "O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the Path of Guidance.

39. "O my people! Indeed this life of the world is nothing but an [insignificant] merchandise, and verily the Hereafter is the permanent abode."

One is supposed at times to disregard discretionary concealment of one's beliefs and express them and call people to tread the Straight Path single handedly.

And the man [from the family of Pharaoh] who believed said:

"O my people! Follow me; I will guide you to the Path of Guidance".

It was mentioned in the preceding Verses that Pharaoh said:

"What I say leads to the Path of Guidance."

However, the believing man from the family of Pharaoh refuted his words and convinced people not to be deceived by his temptations since his plans would result in defeat and misfortune. He suggests them to follow the Path of fearing and worshipping God Almighty.

Verse 39 reads:

"O my people! Indeed this life of the world is nothing but [insignificant] merchandise, and verily the Hereafter is the permanent abode."

Put the case that we become victorious, turning away from the Truth, and resorting to wrong doing and bloodshed. How long will we stay in this transient world? Death takes all into its sickle and sends everyone from lofty palaces to dust. Our everlasting abode is somewhere else.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 40

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

40. "Whosoever does an evil deed will not be requited except the like thereof and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a true believer, will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein without limit.

Faith and deeds are jointly effective and one of them may not lead to deliverance.

The question is not merely the transience of this world and the everlastingness of the world to come, but the significant question is reckoning deeds, since:

"Whosoever does an evil deed will not be requited except the like thereof but whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer, will enter Paradise and will be provided therein without limit."

Secondly, in his well measured words, he refers to Divine Justice on the one hand through which sinners will be recompensed the like of their sins and on the other hand, he makes a reference to Boundless Divine Bounties to be bestowed upon believers without limit.

Such Bounties are without human imagination. Thirdly, the requisite of the accompaniment of faith and righteous deed is mention. Fourthly, mention is made of the equality of females and males before God Almighty and human values.

It is noteworthy that he tersely expresses the fact that despite the insignificance and transience of the merchandise of this world, it may lead to gaining boundless rewards. Is there any transaction more profitable than this?

The phrase:

"the like thereof" (mithlaha)

indicates that the recompenses in the Hereafter closely resemble the deeds committed in this world.

The phrase:

"without limits"

may demonstrate that reckoning the Bounties if for those who enjoy a few of them and fear that failing to keep a record of the same would entail shortage, but the Lord requires no reckoning since His Bounties are limitless and bestowing bounties may not decrease them.

A question is raised here as to the consistency of the Verse in question with:

"Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit"[8].

In providing a reply to the question, it is worthy of note to keep in mind that

"ten times"

is the least Divine Reward and in case of expending in the Cause of Allah, it will be increased to seven hundred times and more and finally it

will be increased to limitless reckoning whose extend is solely known by God Almighty.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 41 - 42

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ

تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ

41. [The believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:] "And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to Hellfire!

42. "You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and to associate partners in worship with Him of which I have no knowledge [whereas] I invite you to the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving!

Repentance and turning away from polytheism and disbelief will be accepted by God Almighty; however such acceptance is not owing to inability and desperateness, but it signifies that God Almighty, the Omnipotence, is Oft-Forgiving.

In the fifth and the last stage, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh tore all veils asunder. He could not conceal his faith any longer and expressed what was due frankly and as it will be mentioned below, they made a perilous decision about him.

The contextual meaning of the Verses demonstrates that those vain and obdurate people were not silent before that faithful and valiant man but talked of polytheism and called him to embrace idolatry.

In reply, he cried:

"And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to Hellfire?"

In Verse 42, he said:

"You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and to associate partners in worship with Him of which I have no knowledge [whereas] I invite you to the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving!"

Different Qur'anic Verses and the history of Egypt reveal that besides worshipping Pharaohs, they also worshipped many an idol, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: 'Will you leave Moses and his people to spread mischief in the land and to abandon you and your gods?' He said: 'We will slay their sons and let live their women and we have indeed irresistible power over them"[9].

Joseph (as) imprisoned at Pharaoh's prison said unto his inmates:

"Are many different lords better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible?"[10]

In a crystal clear juxtaposition, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh reminded them that they call him to polytheism which is groundless and a dark and perilous path whereas he calls them to tread a manifest path, that of God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving.

The Divine Most Beautiful Names, the Omnipotent and Oft-Forgiving make a reference to the Great Origin of fear and hope on the one hand and allude to the negation of the divinity of idols and Pharaohs lacking potency and forgiveness on the other.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 43

لا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

43. "No doubt you call me to [worship] one who cannot grant [me] my request in this world nor in the Hereafter. And our return will be to Allah and the transgressors [of limits] shall be the dwellers of the Fire!"

Faith and decisiveness play significant roles in doctrinal issues. We are supposed to substantiate our arguments with convincing reasons in matters concerning commanding good and forbidding evil. Idols may not call people nor do they grant their requests.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that what they call him to may not grant his requests in this world and the Hereafter. In other words, these idols have never sent messengers to people to call people to them nor will they have any power in the Hereafter.

These insentient things may never engender anything. They do not talk; they have neither messengers nor any tribunal.

In short, they may not solve problems nor are they able to make them. Thus, we should know that we shall return to God Almighty on the Resurrection Day. He is the One Who sent His Messengers for man's guidance and He is the One Who shall chastise and reward His servants for their good and evil deeds.

We are also supposed to bear in mind that:

"transgressors [of limits] shall be the dwellers of the Fire!"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 44

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

44. "And [before long] you will remember what I am telling you and my affair I leave it to Allah since He is the All-Seer of [His] servants."

The Arabic word tafwid ad hoc indicates "leaving affairs to Allah" which is higher in rank than tawakkul "reliance in God" since in the former the client may supervise the task of the agent but in the former all the affairs are unquestionably vested with the agent.[11]

It is worthy of attention that leaving all affairs to God as the slogan of the believing man of the family of Pharaoh followed all his efforts toward saving Moses (as) from execution, promulgation of faith, warning Pharaoh's people against Divine Wrath, and waking others from neglect.

Such leaving affairs to God Almighty leads to Divine Support:

("Therefore Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted [against him]").

Thus, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh finally revealed his faith and drew a distinction between his monotheism and their polytheism and singlehandedly resisted them and refuted their polytheistic beliefs.

Finally, he provided them with a meaningful warning to the effect that they would remember what he said them and that would be when Divine wrath would afflict you with torments in this world and the Hereafter. It is unfortunate that it will be too late since all the gates to repentance will be shut in this world and there will be no return to this world in the Hereafter.

He further added:

"my affair I leave it to Allah since He is the All-Seer of [His] servants."

That was why he entertained no fear of their threats, large number, power, and being singlehanded since he had left all his affairs to God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the All-Seer of His servants' states.

It is noteworthy that his last words were his humble devotions to God Almighty when he was entangled by a powerful and merciless people invoking God Almighty to protect him in such dire circumstances.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 45

فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ

45. Therefore Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted [against him], while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people.

It is through Divine Grace that the life and faith of believers are saved from conspiracies and conspirators and plotters are destroyed. The blessed Verse in question says that God Almighty did not leave this believing and struggling servant alone but protected him from their vicious plots.

The expression:

"the evils that they plotted"

reveals that they probably hatched plots against him. What were these plots? The nature of these plots is not explicitly mentioned herein; however, they were naturally different punishments, torments, and finally execution.

The important point is that Divine Grace rendered all those plots ineffective. A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the believing man took an opportunity to reach Moses and the Children of Israel and crossed the Nile with them.

It is also said that when the decision was made as to his execution, he escaped to a mountain and no one could see him anymore.[12] The twain interpretations are not inconsistent. It is probable that he hid somewhere without the city to join the Children of Israel later on and cross the Nile with them.

Some of the plots in question were probably the imposition of idolatry and convincing him to abandon monotheism but God Almighty saved him from these plots as well and made him to proceed more firmly on the Path of faith, monotheism, and fearing God Almighty.

Au contraire, severe torments were sent down on the people of Pharaoh.

Divine chastisements and torments are all excruciating but the expression:

"an evil torment"

reflects that God Almighty condemned them to a more excruciating torment which is mentioned in the following Verse.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 521, under the Verses in question.

2. Saduq, Amali; Ibn Hajar, Sawa'iq, Chapter 2, Section 9.
3. 7:50
4. 11:18
5. 69:19
6. 69:25
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 13, p. 125, apud 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.
8. 6:160
9. 7:127
10. 12:39
11. Tafsir Nimuna.
12. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 46 - 63

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 46

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوّاً وَعَشِيّاً وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ

46. The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and evening. And on the Day when the Hour will be established [it will be said]

Between death and Resurrection lies a period in which sinners find out that their abode is Hellfire. Thus the blessed Verse says that their excruciating torment is the fire in which they suffer every morning and evening.

Pharaoh's people are ordered to taste the most excruciating torment. It is worthy of note that mention is made of Pharaoh's family, companions, and adherents who were all astray. When they become entangled with such dire fate, Pharaoh will have a far worst fate in store for him.

Secondly, the Verse says that they will taste Hellfire every morning and evening, but they will taste the worst excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection which explicitly indicates that the former torment will be that of purgatory to be inflicted after this world and prior to the Day of Resurrection and will entail tasting Hellfire.

Such torment will make soul shiver with terror and will also affect the body.

Thirdly, the phrase:

"morning and evening" (ghadw wa 'ashi)

may either refer to the progression of the torment, as it is said he is our pest morning and evening, i.e. at all times, or it makes reference to the discontinuity of the purgatorial torment, i.e., torments will be inflicted upon them in the morning and in the evening when they were engaged in merry making and boasting their power.

The expression:

"morning and evening"

should not be a source of wonder as to the existence of times of the day in purgatory, since Qur'anic Verses reveal that there will be morning and evening even in the Hereafter as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and evening"[1].

It is not inconsistent with the permanence of the Bounties of Paradise, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Its provision is eternal and so is its shade"[2]

since there exists the possibility that despite the permanence of provisions and sustenance, certain Bounties be bestowed upon the people of Paradise.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 47

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعاً فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيباً مِنَ النَّارِ

47. And when they will dispute [and producing arguments] in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: "Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?"

The preceding Verses treated of Divine Wrath against Pharaoh's family. These Verse reflect the dialogs of the arrogant and Pharaohs down the centuries with their flattering companions and supporters in Hell.

Thus it is said in this Verse:

"When they will dispute [and producing arguments] in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: "Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?"

The weak say unto the arrogant that they were their followers but they wonder whether they could take some of the torments of Hellfire in lieu of them.

"The weak"

refers to those who were not intellectually independent and blindly followed the chiefs of disbelief referred to in the Holy Qur'an as the arrogant.

Their followers in Hell indubitably know that their chiefs like them are entangled with Divine torment in Hell and are not able in the least to protect them. A question is raised here as to the grounds lying behind their request from their former chiefs as to taking from them some portion of Hellfire.

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that it was their habit to seek refuge in them upon being afflicted with severe afflictions as a consequence of which they are unconsciously reacting likewise. However, it would be better to say that such request is a kind of derision and reproach toward them so that they know that all their claims were false and groundless.

It is worthy of note that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in a sermon delivered on one of the days of Ghadir called people to monotheism and bade them to follow those whom God appointed as leaders.

Reminding people of the Verse in question, he asked:

"Do you know what arrogance is? It is failure to obey those whom you are supposed to follow. Arrogance is to regard yourselves superior to them. There are recurrent instances in which the Holy Qur'an treats of the same such that if man reflects upon it, the Holy Qur'an provides him with admonitions and impedes him from committing evil deeds."

In fact, Imam 'Ali (as) intended to warn that there was no excuse for those who consigned the Noble Prophet's (S) testament on the Day of Ghadir and followed others.[3]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 48 - 49

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْماً مِنَ الْعَذَابِ

48. Those who were arrogant will say [in reply]: "We are all in this [Fire]! Indeed Allah has judged between [His] servants [justly]!"

49. And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!"

No one will be able to carry the burden of others on the Day of Resurrection. How one who is the Fire save others from torment?

According to the blessed Verses in question, the arrogant will say:

"We and you are in Hellfire and share the same fate and God judged between His servants with justice. Had we been able to render you help, we would have helped ourselves. We cannot do anything here.

We may neither ward off torment from you nor from us, nor are we able to take from you some of your torment. God never chastises anyone without any reason. Whoever has committed evil will be chastised accordingly.

Our burden of sins is heavier than yours since we were in error ourselves and sent you to error as well. Had we been able to do anything, we would have done something for ourselves. You have also committed sins for having followed us out of your free choice. You could believe in God as some you did and saved themselves from torment."

When all of them lose their hope, they seek refuge in the angels of torment.

Verse 49 is saying that when they become totally desperate, they turn to the keepers of Hell and angels of torment:

"and those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!"

They know that there is no escape from Divine chastisement, but they merely request that Divine torment be alleviated form them for one day so that they may be able to take a rest and are content with the same.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 50

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

50. They [keepers of Hell] will say: "Did there not come to you, your Messengers with miracles?" They will say: "Yes." They will reply: "Then call [invoke God Almighty]! And the invocation of the disbelievers is nothing but in vain!"

Conversion to belief in God upon tasting Divine Wrath shall be of no avail, since repentance upon death shall be in vain. Upon drowning, Pharaoh repented his sins, but it was said unto him that now it will be of no use since you committed sins without repentance[4].

According to the blessed Verse in question, keepers of Hell will say:

"Now that you are entangled with Divine torment, you may invoke God Almighty as you wish; however, you are supposed to know that disbelievers' invocations will not be answered and they will be in vain.

You confess that Divinely appointed Messengers came unto you with clear proofs and miracles, but you ignored them and disbelieved. Therefore, your invocations will be fruitless since God Almighty will never answer disbelievers' prayers."

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the last sentence indicates that keepers of Hell say unto disbelievers:

"You may invoke God yourselves, since we are not supposed to invoke God Almighty without His Permission."

The sentence demonstrates that when angels lack such permission, the gates to deliverance are all closed and disbelievers' invocations will not be answered.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 51 - 52

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ

يَوْمَ لا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

51. Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness],

52. The [same] Day when wrong doers' excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode.

It is Divine practice to render support to Messengers and believers. It is a Divine Promise that Truth becomes victorious over falsehood. Verse 51 is saying:

"Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness]."

Such support is emphatically unconditional and boundless; as a consequence of which it entails different triumphs, including becoming victorious in arguments, battles, sending down Divine torment upon opponents and causing their perdition, and also sending down invisible succors invigorating hearts and souls through Divine Favor.

In Verse 51 we come across a new expression concerning the Day of Resurrection - the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness]. The word ashhad is the plural form of shahid ("witness").

Different interpretations have been produced as to the identity of such witnesses which are all consistent with each other:

1. Angels recording deeds,
2. Messengers bearing witness concerning their peoples,
3. Angels, Messengers, and believers who bear witness to deeds of mankind.

The expression is worthy of attention referring to the point that on that Day when all people shall gather together, witnesses shall rise to bear witness. Being disgraced on that Day is the worst as victory on that Day is the best. God shall support His Messengers and believers on that Day and shall make them more prestigious.

Nonetheless, that Day is the day of disgrace and misfortune for disbelievers and wrong doers as reflected in Verse 52:

"The [same] Day when wrong doers' excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode."

Firstly, their excuses before witnesses shall be of no avail and they shall be disgraced at that great tribunal; secondly, they shall be deprived of Divine Mercy and Divine curse shall befall on them; thirdly, they shall suffer physical chastisement and torment in the worst abode, in Hellfire.

It would be of interest to make mention of some Qur'anic Verses concerning Messengers and Divine Succor bestowed upon Messengers and believers in order to provide further exposition for :

"Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness]."

"If you help God, He will help you"[5].

Noah's (as) deliverance:

"We delivered him and those with him on the ship"[6].

Abraham's (as) deliverance:

"O Fire! Be cold and safe [for Abraham]"[7].

Lot's (as) deliverance:

"When We saved him and his family all"[8].

Joseph's (as) deliverance:

"Thus We established Joseph on the land"[9].

Shu'ayb's (as) deliverance:

"We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him"[10].

Salih's (as) deliverance:

"And thus We do deliver the believers"[11].

Hud's (as) deliverance:

"We saved Hud and those who believed with him"[12].

Jonah's (as) deliverance:

"And We saved him from sorrow"[13].

Jesus' (as) deliverance:

"I will take you and raise you to Myself"[14].

The Noble Prophet of Islam's (S) deliverance:

"Indeed We have given you a manifest victory"[15].

Believers' deliverance:

"And Allah has already made you victorious at Badr when you were a weak little force"[16];

"Then Allah did send down His reassurance on the Messenger (S) and on the believers"[17];

"He it is Who sent down reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they may grow more in faith"[18];

Answering the prayers of Noah, Jonah, Zachariah, and Job (as)[19];

Answering the invocations of righteous believers:

"And He answers the invocation of those who believe and do righteous good deeds"[20].

Divine Deliverance of Prophets and believers manifests itself in diverse forms as follows:

"To strengthen your hearts"[21];

"Allah will keep firm those who believe with the word that stands firm in this world"[22].

"Then his Lord answered his prayers"[23];

"My Lord! Leave not one of the believers on the earth!"[24].

"Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs"[25].

"We had conferred given the family of Abraham a great kingdom"[26].

"Truly Allah has given you victory on many battlefields"[27].

"And Verily Allah sent down upon him His reassurance and helped him with invisible hosts"[28].

"So We took retribution from them. We drowned them in the sea"[29].

"Is it not enough for you that your Lord should help you with three thousand angels sent down?"[30].

"And He cast terror into their hearts"[31].

"He it is Who has sent His Messenger (S) with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all religions.[32]"

"The We saved him and those with him on the ship"[33].

"Surely Allah weakens the deceitful plots of the disbelievers"[34].

Therefore, man is in need of Divine deliverance at all times.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 53 - 54

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ

هُدىً وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

53. And verily We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah],

54. A guide and a reminder for men of understanding.

Guidance is a Divine Favor and all people, even the Prophets, are in need of it.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

"We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah]."

The Divine Guidance bestowed upon Moses (as) embraces a broad semantic range which includes Prophethood, Revelation, the Scripture (Torah), the Guidance granted to him in order to fulfill his mission, and the miracles granted to him.

The expression inheritance connoting the Torah indicates that Children of Israel could avail themselves of it down the generations non gratia like the property inherited without toil, though they misused this Divine inheritance.

Verse 54 further adds that this Scripture was Divine Guidance a reminder for men of understanding. The difference between guidance (hidaya) and reminder (dhikra) is that the former indicates the inception of something whereas the latter designates reminding what one has already heard and believed in it, but he has consigned it into oblivion. In other words, the Scripture is the origin and the means of progression of guidance.

However, men of understanding, rather than the blind biased and obdurate ignorant, reap the harvest in the beginning and thereafter. Intellection and fear of God are the prerequisites of understanding Divine teachings.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 55

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْأَبْكَارِ

55. Therefore be patient. Indeed, the Promise of Allah is true, and ask forgiveness for your sin and glorify the praises of your Lord in the time

period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening.

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty gives three injunctions of significance to the Noble Prophet (S). Although they are addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but they are in fact given to all people.

The blessed Verse in question opens with the injunction:

"Be patient as the Promise of Allah is true."

He is asked to be tolerant against his enemies' obduracy, enmity, and sabotage and also against the ignorance, weakness, negligence, and the harms of a number of his friends. He is asked to be patient against unchecked passions and anger since the key to victory is patience against vicissitudes at all times.

God's Promise to make him and his followers victorious is true. Believing in the truth of Divine Promise encourages him and makes him to preserver against vicissitudes and difficulties.

He is many a time asked to be patient at all times, as it is reflected in the Verse in question and elsewhere, and at times, specific instances are mentioned, e.g.:

"So bear with patience all that they say and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting. And during a part of the night glorify His praises and after the prayers"[35];

"And keep yourself patiently with those [your seemingly poor followers] who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face and let not your eyes overlook them"[36].

All the victories of the Prophet (S) and early Muslims were the fruits of patience and perseverance. Even today, one may not vanquish so many enemies and solve so many problems without the same.

The second injunction says:

"Ask forgiveness for your sin."

Owing to his infallibility, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) did not commit sins, but as mentioned above, such Qur'anic expressions concerning the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and other Prophets (as) indicate relative sins, since at times, some of the deeds which are regarded as good deeds and acts of devotion for ordinary people are considered as sins for Prophets (as):

("The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of those close to God Almighty").

They are not supposed to avoid preferable acts for one single moment. Owing to their exalted station and understanding, they are supposed to stay away from such acts and they should ask forgiveness whenever they commit the same.

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that sins committed by Muslims are ad hoc intended or those sins committed against the Noble Prophet (S), and asking forgiveness is arbitrary and devotional; however, these interpretations are not seemingly possible.

The last injunction says:

"Glorify the praises of your Lord in the time period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening."

The Arabic word 'ashi designates "afternoon till before sunset" and abkar is used in the sense of "early morning."

They may indicate these two times when man is prepared to praise and glorify Allah, since he has not preoccupied himself with daily affairs or he has finished them.

The expression may demonstrate the continuity of praising and glorifying God Almighty throughout the day and night, as we say, for instance, take care of him morning and night," by which we mean at all times.

Some have also maintained that such praises and glorification refers to morning and evening prayers or all daily prayers; however, the contextual content of the Verse encompasses a broader semantic range and daily prayers may solely be regarded as their instances.

It is worthy of note that these three comprehensive injunctions aim at purification of the self for gaining victories through Divine Favor. They may be used as the provisions required for proceeding on the path toward attainment of significant goals.

It is incumbent upon man to endure the vicissitudes of life and its obstacles, purify his heart of sins and any other impurities, and embellish it with the remembrance of the Lord.

Such embellishment depends upon praising God Almighty for His Perfection and glorifying Him for His being far from any imperfection. Such praise and glorification of God Almighty sheds light onto His servants' hearts, absolves them of impurities, and adorns them with perfect attributes.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 56

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

56. Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride. They will never have it [nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes]. Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

Disputation with the Truth springs from vanity rather than sensibility and the vain obdurate may not achieve their goal which is leadership.

Thus the blessed Verse says:

"Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride."

As mentioned above, the word mujadala indicates "disputation and illogical discussions," though the same is also employed in the semantically broader sense of truth and falsehood.

The expression:

"any authority having come to them"

lays emphasis on the meaning of disputation since authority (sultan) designates the argument substantiating a claim which leads to one's superiority over the other party.

The phrase:

"having come to them"

alludes to the arguments revealed by God Almighty and the emphasis on Revelation is due to the fact that it is the most assuring way of substantiating the true claims.

Divine Ayat which were subject to disputation refers to the miracles and Verses of the Holy Qur'an and the relevant discussions regarding Origin and the Hereafter, at times referred to as sorcery, madness, stories of the ancients (asatir al-awwalin)!

Therefore, the blessed Verse bears witness to the fact that disputes Originate from vanity and arrogance, since the arrogant and the vain, owing to their keen interest in themselves are indifferent to others and regard their own thought and words true and those of others as false hence their persistence in the veracity of their baseless claims.

The Arabic particle:

inna ("indeed")

indicates that the such claims originate from vanity and arrogance; otherwise, how may one insist on one's claims without producing evidence and arguments?

The word:

"breasts" (sudur)

refers to hearts which in turn designates "soul, thought" recurrently attested in Qur'anic Verses.

Some Qur'anic exegets interpret the word:

kibr ("arrogance, vanity")

in the aforesaid blessed Verse as hasad ("envy, jelousy") and maintain that disputants envy the Noble Prophet's (S) exalted spiritual and worldly station and rank; however, the word kibr does not denote hasad but it may connote it, since the vain and the arrogant are usually envious as well and wish all bounties for themselves and grieve when others enjoy them.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"They will never have it [nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes]."

They intend to satisfy their own vanity and arrogance and rule the society, but they shall not reap anything but degradation and debasement. They will neither achieve their vain goals nor will they be able to nullify the truth through their baseless disputes.

The blessed Verse closes with Divine Injunction to the Noble Prophet (S):

"Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."

God Almighty hears their baseless disputes and sees their vicious deeds and conspiracies. The point is that not only the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but also all believers treading the Path of Truth are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the vicissitudes of life and against insensible disputants.

It is for the same reason that against the tempest of Zulaykha's lust, Joseph (as) says:

"I seek refuge in Allah! Truly, he [your husband] is my master! He made my living in a great comfort! Indeed wrong doers will never be successful"[37]**.**

Verse 27 of the Chapter in question reads:

"Moses (as) said: 'Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant person who believes not in the Day of Reckoning!'"[38]**.**

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 57

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

57. The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not.

If we take a glance at the grandeur of the creation of the world of existence, we will never find ourselves superior to others.

Since one of the most significant issues disputed by disbelievers against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is Resurrection, the blessed Verse in question explicitly raises the issue saying:

"The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not."

One Who is Able to create such celestial bodies and galaxies with such grandeur and set them in order will not be incapable of raising the dead. Some people are too ignorant to understand such truths.

Most of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the blessed Verse is a response to disbelievers' disputes against Resurrection.[39]

Some also hold that the blessed Verse may be a response to the arrogant who consider their narrow minded though great; however, compared to the grandeur of the world of existence, they were not but an iota. The latter is not too remote from the contextual meaning of the Verses, but taking the following Verses into account, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

Thus, ignorance is mentioned in this blessed Verse as one of the reasons of false disputes. The issue of vanity and arrogance was already raised and the two, i.e., ignorance and vanity, are closely intertwined since vanity springs from ignorance toward one's limited extent of knowledge.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 58

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلاً مَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

58. And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [equal] those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil. Little do you remember.

Those who neglect understanding truths are like the blind. Some of the people do not know and some of those who know refuse to acknowledge the truths.

In an explicit comparison, the blessed Verse depicts the state of the ignorant arrogant against understanding believers, saying:

"And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [equal] those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil."

The blind refers to the ignorant whose eyes are covered by the veils of vanity and arrogance thus hindered from perceiving the truth. Au contraire, the seers is a reference to those who perceive the Truth in the light of knowledge and logical arguments.

Are they equal? Now, are the believers who do righteous good deeds on a par with vicious and evil doers? The former comparison aims at knowledge and understanding and the latter makes a reference to the reflection of such knowledge in their deeds.

The point is that seers perceive their humbleness and the grandeur of the world of existence; as a consequence of which they are aware of their state and rank, but the blind solely perceive their spatial and temporal states rather than their surrounding world, that is why they make mistakes concerning their own existence at all times and are entangled by vanity and arrogance which lead them to doing evil deeds.

It is also possible to make use of the twain clauses of the blessed Verse to the effect that having faith and doing righteous good deeds make man see and disbelief and committing evil deeds render him blind such that the blind are impeded to draw a distinction between truth and falsehood.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 59

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

59. Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not.

Doubts concerning the coming of Resurrection originate from disbelievers' ignorance of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience.

The blessed Verse in question explicitly and decisively apprises people of the coming of Resurrection, saying:

"Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not."

"Indeed" (inna),

"surely" (la- in la-atiyatun),

and

"there is no doubt about it" (la rayba fi-ha)

recurrently emphasize that the Day of Resurrection shall definitely arrive. Many arguments for the substantiation of the coming of Resurrection are to found in Qur'anic Verses and there are also attestations of the issue as a certainty without providing arguments.

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the word:

sa'a ("hour")

is originally employed in the sense of a division of time and since the coming of Resurrection and Reckoning of deeds shall be carried out instantly, the word in question is used to convey the idea.

The expression is to be found in tens of Qur'anic Verses in the same sense; however, it is employed at times regarding the Resurrection per se at times concerning the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection.

Since the twain are closely intertwined and they both occur unexpectedly, they are referred to as:

"the Hour."

The clause:

"yet most men believe not"

is not a reference to the ambiguity and concealment of Resurrection, but if designates that one of the significant reasons lying behind denial of Resurrection is inclination toward liberty in taking unconditional use of worldly possessions and concupiscence.

Furthermore, boundless and vain desires impede man from reflection on the coming of Resurrection and expressing his belief in the same.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 60

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

60. And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, I will respond to your [invocation]. Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation."

God Almighty asks us to invoke Him despite the fact that He is All-Aware of our needs, but invoking Him entails consequences.

The preceding Verses included warnings against disbelievers and the vain; however, the blessed Verse in question, He promises the repentant to bestow His Bounties and Favors on them, saying:

"And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, I will respond to your [invocation].'"

Many an exeget maintain that invocation herein and also in numerous traditions cited in their exegeses under the blessed Verse in question as to invocation and its Divine Rewards refers to its literal sense.

Nevertheless, following Ibn 'Abbas, the exeget of repute, some other Qur'anic exegets hold that invocation attested herein may designate monotheism and worshipping God Almighty, i.e.

"Worship Me and believe in My Unity."

However, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question makes mention of a number of points:

God Almighty wants believers to invoke Him in their devotions.

Answering prayers follows invocation, but we know that it is a conditional Promise, since solely prayers are answered that they have the required qualifications as to the invoker and the subject of invocation. The point was already raised and a detailed discussion on the same as well as on its philosophy and true meaning are to be found under 2:186.

Prayer is a form of worship since the word worship is applied to it in the blessed Verse in question.

Those refraining from invoking God Almighty are thus severely warned:

"Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation."

Numerous traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Imams (as) clearly refer to the significance of invocation.

A number of the instances include:

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Invocation is worshipping God."[40]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the Noble Imam is asked:

"What do you say about two persons who entered a mosque and one of them established more prayers and the other invoked God Almighty in more devotions. Which one enjoys a more exalted state?"

The Imam replied:

"Both did righteous good deeds."

He was again asked:

"I know that, but which one is superior to the other?"

The Noble Imam replied:

"The one who invoked God in more devotions is higher in rank. Have you not heard that invocation is the greatest worship?"[41]

It is reported that Imam Baqir (as) was asked on the excellence of invocation.

He replied:

"There is nothing more excellent that invoking God Almighty in devotions and no one is more detested before God Almighty than one who is too arrogant to invoke him to bestow His blessings and bounties on him."[42]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that there are stations on the Path toward God Almighty whose attainment is solely possible though invocation. If one fails to invoke Him, nothing will be granted to him. Therefore, invoke God Almighty to grant you His Favors, since if you knock at any door and persevere, it will be finally opened to you."

According to some traditions, invocation is even considered to entail more excellence than recitation of the Holy Qur'an, since it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), Imam Baqir (as), and Imam Sadiq (as) that invocation is more excellent than the recitation of the Holy Qur'an.[43]

A brief analysis may lead to the profound contextual meaning of these traditions, since invocation of God Almighty in devotions leads man to knowing God Almighty that is the best possession for him on the one hand and makes him perceive that he is in need of Him and he should be humble before Him, cast away vanity and arrogance resulting in misfortunes and disputes concerning the Signs and Verses of God Almighty on the other.

Thus, man feels inferior before His Pure Essence. It is through invoking God that man perceives that Bounties are bestowed by God Almighty; as a consequence of which he loves Him thus strengthens his spiritual nexus with His Presence.

It is in this vein that man perceives that he is in need of Divine Favors and feels the obligation to submit to Him and obey His Command.

Besides, when man understands that answering prayers is not unconditional, but it depends on sincerity of intention, purity of heart, repentance from committing sins, and meeting the demands of friends and

the needy, he will purify his heart and endeavors to avoid from excesses and impurities.

Furthermore, invocation leads to self confidence and impedes man from sinking into hopelessness and encourages him to make further attempts to attain to his goals.

Finally, a significant point is to follow this brief discussion.

According to Islamic traditions, invoking God is required when man spares no effort in attaining to his goals, but his endeavors are of no avail; it is then that he invokes God Almighty to render him help. In other words, man may not invoke God Almighty in lieu of making his efforts, since in this case, his invocations will not be definitely answered.

As per a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"There are four groups whose invocations will not be answered: one who stays at home and asks God to grant him sustenance.

It is said unto him:

'Did I not ask you to endeavor?'

One who hurts their spouse and the latter prays to God to help them get rid of them.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not permit you to get divorce?'

One who squanders their possessions but invokes God to provide them with sustenance.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not provide you with injunctions as to moderation and economy? Did I not command you to manage your financial affairs wisely?'

One who loans their possession to someone without any witness and the receiver of the loan denies the receipt. The lender invokes God Almighty to make the denier acknowledge the loan.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not command you to take witnesses upon lending your possessions to others?'"[44]

It is needless to say that in such instances, such people do not take the required care as to making efforts and taking the precautions and entangled themselves by the undesirable consequences thereof and their invocations in this vein will not be answered.

Now it has been clarified why many an invocation are not answered: some people to desist from making efforts and seek refuge in prayers, but God Almighty shall never answer them. There exist other reasons for prayers not being answered; for instance, many a time, man makes mistakes as to distinction between gains and losses.

At times, he invokes God Almighty wholeheartedly to grant him something which is not to his interest and later on he may notice that his request was not to his interest.

For example, a patient or a child may ask their nurses to provide them with delicious foods but acting upon their requests will aggravate their ailment or their lives may be jeopardized. In such cases, the Most Compassionate and the Most Gracious Allah will never answer prayers but saves them for their Hereafter.

Furthermore, answering prayers are subject to conditions mentioned in Qur'anic Verses and Islamic traditions[45]. It is mentioned in numerous traditions that committing certain sins, e.g. malevolence, hypocrisy, delaying the establishment of daily prayers, slander, consumption of unlawful food, failure to pay alms tax and expending in Allah's Cause impedes prayers from being answered.[46]

The discussion closes with a significant tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

In his Ihtijaj, Tabarsi cites a tradition from the Imam (as):

"The Noble Imam was asked:

'Does God Almighty not ask His servants to invoke Him and He will answer the prayers?' We see many people in need who pray but their prayers are not answered. We see many wronged people who invoke God to render them victorious over wrong doers but they are not helped.'

The Imam (as) said:

'Woe unto you! No one invokes Him whose prayer is not answered. However, the wrong doers' invocations are not accepted unless they repent.

The prayers of the wronged will be answered and the evils are warded off and at times they are not apprised of the same or the rewards are abundantly saved for them for their time of need (Day of Resurrection). Whenever His servants invoke Him to grant them something against their benefits, He will not answer such prayers.[47]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 61

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِراً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَشْكُرُونَ

61. Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see. Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks.

It is solely the Creator of the day and night and the Provider of our needs Who is worthy of being invoked. Since invoking God is secondary to knowing Him, the following Verse treats of the truths which raise the level of human understanding and meets one of the requirements of invocation which is setting one's hope in its being answered.

The blessed Verse says:

"Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see,"

since the darkness of night leads to the obligatory stoppage of daily activities on the one side and darkness per se engenders serenity and resting of body and soul and light leads to motion and activity on the other.

The blessed Verse says:

"the day for you to see"

so as to brighten the living environment and prepare it for all activities. It is worthy of note that mubsiran indicates "seeing" and thus depicting the day actually emphasizes making people see.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks."

The precise order of the night and day and the consecution of light and darkness are instances of Divine Bounties and Favors bestowed upon servants considered among significant factors of the life of mankind and other living beings.

There will not be life and motion without light. Without temporary darkness, all creatures will be weakened and plant will wither. However, most of people take no account of such Divine Great Bounties and pass them unnoticed.

It is worthy of note that we normally expect a pronoun for the second

al-nas ("people, mankind"),

namely:

"Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of them give no thanks,"

but the use of

"mankind"

instead of pronoun may indicate that uncultured mankind are ingratiate for Divine Blessings, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Qur'an[48]:

"and man is indeed an extreme wrong doer, a disbeliever."[49]

However, if man happens to have seeing eyes and a wise heart to perceive "the showers of His Boundless Mercy have penetrated to every spot and the banquet of his unstinted liberality is spread out everywhere," he will unconsciously express his gratitude and praise before God Almighty and will feel humble and inferior before Divine Mercy and Glory.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 62 - 63

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

62. That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah. How then are you turning away [from the Path of Truth]?

63. Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah.

God Almighty Who is the Lord of mankind and the Creator of all beings is worthy of praise. One who does not set his hope in the Origin of existence will deviate from the True Path.

The blessed Verse 62 opens with the Unity of Divine Lordship and closes with the Unity of Creatorship and Lordship, saying:

"That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah."

Abundant Divine Bounties actually indicate His Lordship and expediency of His Acts. Creatorship of all things reveals His Unity of Lordship, since the Creator of all beings is the Possessor and Fosterer of them.

We know that Divine Creatorship does not designate that He creates all beings and then leaves them on their own, but all beings of the world of

existence enjoy His Emanations at all times and such Creatorship is inseparable from Lordship. It is evident that God Almighty is solely worthy of praise and Divinity.

Thus,

"the Creator of all things"

serves as an argument for

"That is Allah, your Lord"

and

"There is no god but Allah"

is the conclusion.

Verse 62 closes thus:

"How then are you turning away [from the Path of Truth]?"

The question raised is:

"Why do you turn away from worshipping God Almighty and instead you turn to idolatry?"

It is noteworthy that tu'fakun is a verb in the passive voice designating that they make you turn away from the Path of Truth, as if idolaters are so weak minded that they lack free choice in their course of action.

Verse 63 lays emphasis on the foregoing points, saying:

"Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah."

The verb form yajhadun derives from j-h-d designating denial of something entertained in one's heart, i.e. believing in something and denying the same or believing in the denial of something but proving the same.

Stingy and closefisted people who pretend to be poor are called jahd and ard jahda is applied to a land with less plants.[50] Some other lexicographers define jahd and juhud as thought accompanied by knowledge.[51]

Thus, the semantic range of jahd entails some obduracy and/or enmity against God Almighty.

Such people confront with truths with such attribute and they merely turn away from the Path of Truth, since a truth seeking man who is submitted to Divine Will may solely attain to the Truth which requires purification of the self and fearing God Almighty as a prerequisite for believing in Him, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an[52]:

"This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to the God fearing pious."

Notes

1. 19:62
2. 13:35
3. Misbah by Shaykh, apud Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p.526.
4. 40:85
5. 47:9
6. 10:73

www.alhassanain.org/english

7. 31:69
8. 37:134
9. 12:21
10. 11:94
11. 21:88
12. 21:66
13. 10:
14. 3:55
15. 48:1
16. 3:123
17. 9:26
18. 48:4
19. 21:76
20. 42:26
21. 8:11
22. 14:11
23. 12:34
24. 71:26
25. 57:25
26. 4:54
27. 9:4
28. 9:4
29. 7:136
30. 3:124
31. 59:2
32. 61:9
33. 29:15
34. 8:18
35. 51:39-40
36. 18:28
37. 12:23
38. 40:27
39. Fakhr Razi's Majma' al-Bayan; Kashshaf; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi; Ruh al-Bayan.
40. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 528.
41. Ibid, p. 529.
42. Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Fadl al-Du'a ("Chapter on the Excellence of Invocation"), p. 338.
43. Makarim al-Akhlaq, apud al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 34, under 2:186.
44. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Du'a ("Chapter on Invocation"), hadith 2.
45. for details, see the exegesis of 2:186
46. Ma'ani al-Akhbar, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 534.
47. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
48. 14:34
49. Tafsir al-Mizan; Ruh al-Ma'ani, under the blessed Verse in question.
50. Raghib's Mufradat, under j-h-d.
51. Lisan al-'Arab, apud Jawhari.
52. 2:2

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 64 - 85

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 64

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَاراً وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

64. Allah, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes good and has provided you with good things. That is Allah, your Lord: so Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The earth as a serene dwelling place, fashioning the sky, creation of man, and providing him with blessings are all for fostering him as his good shape and pure provision and sustenance are manifestations of Divine Lordship.

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on Divine Favors bestowed upon servants so as to accord them further knowledge and hope in whose light they may invoke God Almighty and their prayers be answered.

It is worthy of note that the preceding Verses treated of temporal bounties, i.e. night and day, and the blessed Verse in question deals with spatial Bounties, e.g. the earth as a dwelling place and the elevated canopy of the sky, saying:

"Allah, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place."

God Almighty created all the prerequisites for the establishment of a secure and serene dwelling place, free from quaking, harmonious with human physical and psychological aspects, and abounding in many Bounties encompassing all human needs.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"and the sky as a canopy."

The word bana', according to Ibn Mansur's Lisan al-'Arab, is applied to tents and canopies and the like used by Bedouin.

The sky is interestingly depicted as a canopy surrounding the earth. It is worthy of note that the word sky indicates the atmosphere surrounding the earth like a canopy.

This great Divine canopy serves as a means of protection against severe sun shine without which the rays of the sun and the fatal rays of galaxies would have perished all living beings on the face of the earth.

It is for the same reason that astronauts have to constantly wear specially heavy and valuable clothes to protect them against such rays.

Furthermore, the "canopy" protects the earth from meteors constantly absorbed toward the earth and burns them at the outset of entering the atmosphere due to their velocity and pressure so that their ashes calmly subside on the earth.

The same idea is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[1]:

"And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded."

The blessed Verse proceeds from physical to spiritual issues:

"[He is the One Who] has given you shape and made your shapes good."

With his erect, well built body, and beautiful visage, man is superior to other living beings and he is thus able to perform all kinds of delicate or

heavy tasks and live conveniently and enjoy the bounties of life. Contrary to most of animals that use their mouths nozzles to eat and drink, man uses his hands to select healthy food, peel fruits, and dispense with useless pieces.

A number of Qur'anic exegets interpret

sura (literally "visage, face")

herein in the sense of outward and inward aspects designating faculties and tastes created by God Almighty in man through which he is superior to all living beings.

The fourth and the last Bounty mentioned in the blessed Verse is that God Almighty

"has provided you with good things."

The word tayyibat is of broad semantic range encompassing any good and pure thing, e.g. food, clothes, spouses, homes, mounts, and even good words and conversations. Man may render such bounties impure through ignorance, but God Almighty has created them pure.

Following an enumeration of these four great Bounties, which are two by two granted to the sky and the earth and man, the blessed Verse says:

"That is Allah, your Lord: so Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The Bestower of all these bounties upon mankind is the Creator of the world of existence and He is worthy to be worshipped for His Lordship.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 65

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

65. He is the Ever-Living, there is no god but Allah. Therefore, invoke Him, having made your worship pure for Him Alone. All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Real existence belongs to God but the existence of other beings is limited, transient, and contingent. The blessed Verse treats of knowing God Almighty and invoking and worshipping Him.

The question of the Unity of worshipping God Almighty proceeds from a different course in this Verse which is acknowledgement of existence in the real sense of the word as belonging to Him Alone, saying:

"He is the Ever-Living,"

since His Existence springs from His Own Essence Which is Independent of other beings and Immortal. It is solely God Almighty Who possesses such Attributes and all living beings besides Him lead a limited and transient life which springs from Divine Essence.

The object of worship is supposed to be Ever-Living as:

"There is no god but Allah. Therefore, invoke Him, having made your worship pure for Him Alone."

Man is supposed to leave aside all beings besides God Almighty, since they are transient and constantly change in the course of their life.

"You are not subject to alteration. You are the only Being Who has not died and shall not die."

The blessed Verse closes thus:

"All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The statement is actually an admonition to Allah's servants who glorify and praise Him for the Bounties mentioned in the preceding Verses, the Bounties encompassing all human existence, particularly that of life.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 66

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

66. Say: "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you worship besides Allah, since there have come to me Signs from my Lord and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds.

Believers may not suffice to believe in Allah in their hearts, but they are supposed to express their belief. Association with Allah's friends and dissociation from His enemies should accompany each other. Having not warded all kinds of polytheism and disbelief, we may not be monotheists in the real sense of the word.

The blessed Verse in question makes a conclusion of the foregoing discussions on Divine Unity and so as to render polytheists and idolaters desperate, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is thus addressed:

"I have been forbidden to worship those whom you worship besides Allah, since there have come to me Signs from my Lord and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds."

The blessed Verse impedes man from idolatry and produces manifest, sensible, intellectual, and narrational arguments which have come to him from his Lord.

It is also an injunction as to submission against

"the Lord of the worlds"

which presents a sufficient argument for total submission against His Pure Essence.

It is worthy of note that injunction (amr) and prohibition (nahy) are distinct in this Verse, injunction toward total submission before God Almighty and prohibition from idolatry.

The reason lying behind the distinction may lie in the fact that in terms of worshipping idols, man worships what he is prohibited from it, but in terms of worshipping God Almighty, man, besides worshipping Him, is supposed to submit to His Commands.

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"Say: 'Indeed I am commanded to worship Allah by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only. And I am commanded [this] in order that I may be the first of those who submit themselves to Allah as Muslims."

It is worthy of note that the Verse is saying that I have received injunctions and prohibitions, namely you are supposed to take care of yourselves without provoking their sense of obduracy.

The last word about the preceding Verses is that the Divine Attribute:

"Lord of the worlds"

is reiterated in three consecutive Verses:

"So Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds,"

"All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,"
"I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds."

The logical sequence is evident: Divine Immortality and Bountifulness; all praises and thanks are devoted to His Pure Essence; His Sacred Essence as the only Object of worship.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 67

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلاً ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا
أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخاً وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلاً مُسَمّىً وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

67. It is He Who has created you from dust, then from semen, then from a clot, then brings you forth as an infant [from womb], then [makes you grow] to reach the age of full strength, and afterwards to be old, though some among you die before [you reach an advanced age, but some of you live and] reach an appointed term in order that you may understand.

Man is created from clay rather than from animals through evolution. It is Divine Omnipotence that makes the reasoning and thinking man from inanimate clay. The best subject of intellection is man's creation whose death does not lead to his perdition but it is taking his soul from his body.

Thus the blessed Verse in question says:

"It is He Who has created you from dust, then from semen, then from a clot, then brings you forth as an infant [from womb], then [makes you grow] to reach the age of full strength, and afterwards to be old, though some among you die before [you reach an advanced age, but some of you live and] reach an appointed term in order that you may understand."

Therefore, the first stage is man's creation from clay, since all nutrient elements constituting man and his semen stem from clay. The next stage is that of semen which concerns all men but Adam and his wife, Eve.

The third stage is the one in which semen has evolved into a clot. The fourth stage is that of mudgha ("small chunk of chewed flesh") in which organs begin to develop and it is the stage of sense and movement. The Holy Qur'an does not make mention of these three stages herein but it is mentioned elsewhere in It.

The fourth stage is mentioned herein as that of the birth of the embryo. The fifth stage is that of development of physical strength maintained by some as the age of thirty in which physical strength reaches its zenith, though some have considered it earlier or later than thirty years of age; however it is different in different people.

The mentioned age is termed as:

"utmost growth or maturity" (bulugh ashadd)

in the Holy Qur'an. After the age of thirty, faculties begin to regress. The sixth stage is old age which comes in time. Finally, the last stage arrives which is the end of life and man is taken to his immortal dwelling place.

Taking some many expressions, systematic and well measured developments there remains no room for doubts as to the Omnipotence and Glory of the Origin of the world of existence and His Bounties and Favors.

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"He created you" (khalaqakum)

is employed with regard to the first four stages concerning man's creation from clay, semen, clot, and the birth of the infant in which no role is stipulated for man; however, the three stages following birth, i.e. the stage of attaining to the zenith of physical strength, old age, and the end of life, the clauses:

"that you reach" (li-tablughu)

and

"that you be" (li-takunu)

are employed which refer to man's existential independence following birth and probably to the fact that the three stages may be attained earlier or later owing to man's prudence or imprudence; in other words, man may cause his early old age or early death mentioning which makes a reference to Qur'anic precise expressions.

The verbal form:

yutawaffa ("you die")

referring to death indicates that within the context of Qur'anic Verses, death is not equal to perdition, but angels of death take human soul to the other world.

This recurrent Qur'anic motif explicitly reveals the Islamic attitude toward death thus totally stripping death of the material concept which is perdition and non-existence and considers it as a gate to the world of immortality.

The clause:

"some among you die before [you reach an advanced age]"

may either refer to the period of life prior to death or to all the preceding stages in which man may come to the end of his life.

It is also worthy of note that all these stages are intertwined with

"then" (thumma)

indicating consecutiveness with interludes except the last stage which is the end of life connected with

"and" (wa).

This different expression may demonstrate that reaching the end of life does not necessarily occur following attaining to an old age, since:

"many a youth died before reaching advanced years"

and even some children or young adults die before reaching youth.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 68

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَى أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

68. It is He Who gives life and causes death. And when He decides upon a thing He says to it only: "Be!" and it is.

It is solely God Almighty Who gives life and causes death. He is omnipotent and nothing lies beyond His Omnipotence. His Will is inevitable and irresistible.

The blessed Verse treats of the most significant manifestations of Divine Omnipotence which is the question of life and death. Despite scientific advancement, the two phenomena are still dilemmas. Life and death in the broader sense of the words as applicable to plants, animals, and human beings in diverse forms are within Divine Omnipotence.

It is worthy of note that living beings, from monocellular to gigantic beings living in the dark depths of oceans to the birds soaring in the sky, to planktons, to trees whose heights reach tens of meters each have a particular type of life and circumstances. It is in the same vein that they differ in the manner of death.

Forms of life are indubitably the most diverse and the most wondrous forms of the world of creation, particularly coming from the inanimate into the animate world and vice versa are one of the most amazing manifestations of Divine Omnipotence.

It is needless to say that none of these intricate and significant issues constitutes any difficulty before Him and they come into being so long as He commands them to do likewise.

Therefore, the blessed Verse thus closes:

"And when He decides upon a thing He says to it only: 'Be!' and it is."

The employment of

"Be"

and

"and it is"

indicates the incompetence of words in conveying meaning, otherwise there would be no need to such words since Divine Will directly leads to the creation of the being.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 69 - 70

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

69. See you not those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah? How are they turning away [from Truth]?

70. Those who deny the Book and that with which We sent Our Messenger, they will come to know [the consequences of their acts].

Familiarity with the history of ancient obdurate peoples provides modern peoples with lessons and peace of mind. Disputing about Qur'anic is on a par with going astray; that is why warning could be quite fruitful in propagation.

The blessed Verse in question treats of those who dispute about Divine Ayat and deny the arguments and Calls of Messengers. The fate of such people is vividly depicted in these Verses.

Verse 69 opens thus:

"See you not those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah? How are they turning away [from Truth]?"

such disputes are accompanied by obduracy and enmity and these blind imitations and unfounded biases lead them astray, since Truth manifests itself solely through the spirit of truth-seeking.

The rhetorical question addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) indicates that taking into account their state, any impartial person wonders at their error and asks himself:

"what do they not see the truth despite the availability of so many clear Signs and Verses?"

Verse 70 adds:

"Those who deny the Book and that with which We sent Our Messenger."

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah"

is attested thrice in the Chapter in question[3] and the contextual meaning indicates that the Ayat of Allah refers to the Signs of Prophethood and the contents of the Scriptures.

Since the Signs of Divine Unity and the issues concerning Resurrection were included in Scriptures, they were also subject to disputes. Does the reiteration lays emphasis on this significant topic or some other issue were intended by the same?

The latter sounds more viable, since each of the here Verses treat of some specific topic. Verse 56 deals with the incentives of such disputes, namely vanity and arrogance, whereas Verse 35 discusses their worldly chastisement which is sealing up their hearts by God Almighty.

The blessed Verse in question[4] treats of their otherworldly chastisement and kinds of torments to be inflicted on them in Hell.

It is also noteworthy that the verbal form:

yujadilun ("they dispute")

is in the present tense and indicates progression. It is a reference to those who deny Divine Signs and verses so as to justify their vicious false beliefs and vicious deeds and preoccupy themselves with baseless disputes.

Thus they are warned at the close of the Verse:

"[Soon] they will come to know [the consequences of their acts]."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 71 - 72

إِذِ الْأَغْلاَلُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ

فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ

71. When iron collars will be rounded over their necks and the chains they shall be dragged along,

72. In the boiling water, then they will be burned in the Fire.

The word aghlal is the plural form of ghull indicating "iron collar" as a token of debasement and denigration.

Salasil is the pluralized form of silsila ("chain") and the verbal forms yusbahun and yusjarun designate "they are dragged along" and "they are burned" respectively. Depiction of Resurrection and the diverse kinds of torments as reflected in Divine Revelation warns and fosters man and creates the fear of God in him.

Thus the two blessed Verses in question say:

"When iron collars will be rounded over their necks and the chains they shall be dragged along in the boiling water, then they will be burned in the Fire."

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that they are filled with fire, though the two meanings are not inconsistent. The torment is actually a reaction against the deeds of those who obdurately and arrogantly disputed about Divine Ayat and denied them out of vanity and ignorance.

Thus, they entangle themselves in the chains of blind imitations and biases and on that Day, they will be fettered with iron collars and shackles with utmost humility. They will be dragged along in boiling water and they will turn into kindling in Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 73 - 74

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئاً كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ

73. Then it will be said to them: "Where are [all] those whom you used to associate in worship as partners

74. Besides Allah?" They will say: "They have vanished from us [then thus they will lie]: Nay, we did not invoke anything before." Thus Allah leads astray the disbelievers.

The Day of Resurrection is the day of manifestation of truths and fruitlessness of polytheism. The blessed Verses are saying that besides inflicting physical torments upon them, they shall suffer from psychological excruciating torments.

"Where are [all] those whom you used to associate in worship as partners Besides Allah"

so that they may intercede on your behalf and save you from such painful torments and the blazing Hellfire? Now, where are they to intercede on your behalf?

Bowing their heads in shame, they will reply:

"They have vanished from us and perished such that we know nothing of them."

As reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, these false objects of worship are indubitably in Hell and most probably they are beside their former worshippers, but since they are ineffective, it seems as if they are deaf and blind!

Then they notice that their former confession to their praiseworthiness is a stigma of disgrace on them; as a consequence of which they deny their praiseworthiness, saying:

"Nay, we did not invoke anything before."

They try to say that they were not but illusions, like a mirage in the desert of life that we regarded as real springheads; however they now know that they were names devoid of meaning whose worship was solely vanity and error. Thus they express an indubitable reality.

Another possible interpretation is that they try to tell lies, assuming that they may deliver themselves from disgrace and shame through lying, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[5]:

"there will then be [left] no excuses for them but to say: 'By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who joined others in worship with Allah.' Behold! How they lie against themselves! But the [lie] which they invented will disappear from them."

Thus Verse 74 closes:

"Thus Allah leads astray the disbelievers."

Their disbelief and obduracy serve as veils covering their hearts and thought, as a consequence of which they deviate from the Straight Path and go astray. On the Day of Resurrection, they shall be deprived of Paradise and shall enter Hell. Thus God Almighty leads disbelievers astray.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 75 - 76

ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ

ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

75. That [torment] was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right and that you used to rejoice extremely [in your error].

76. Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant!

The Islamic faith is in man's natural and primordial disposition (fitra). It is not against happiness which is in man's original nature. It is only inappropriate exultations which are subject to criticism a number of whose instances are reflected in the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 75 says:

"That [torment] was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right and that you used to rejoice extremely [in your error]."

They rejoiced in denying the Prophets, slaying believers, and suppressing the deprived and the weak. They were falsely proud of committing sins and breaking the law. Now they have to meet the consequences of such improper exultation, arrogance, negligence, and concupiscence in shackles and fetters and amid blazing flames of Hellfire.

The verbal form tafrahun derives from f-r-h ("exult, rejoice") which may be employed in an ameliorative sense, as in 30:4-5:

"And on that Day, the believers will rejoice [the people of the Book against the Magians] with the help of Allah,"

or a pejorative one, as reflected in the story of Korah[6]:

"Remember when his people said to him: 'Do not exult in vain, since Allah likes not those who exult vainly.'"

The difference between the two connotations should be distinguished and it is evident that it is employed pejoratively in the blessed Verse in question.

The verbal form tamrahun derives from m-r-h and according to a number of Qur'anic exegets and lexicographers it designates

"rejoice excessively."

Some maintain that the word connotes rejoice in vain but some others hold that it implies rejoicing by making use of Divine Bounties in vain.

These senses apparently refer to the same signification, since excessive rejoicing leads to error and is accompanied by sins, impurities, and concupiscent desires.

Such vain exultations imbued with arrogance, neglect, vanity, and concupiscent desires lead man astray in the twinkling of an eye and impede him from comprehending the truth. Such attitude renders realities facetious and truths, vain. The fate reflected in the preceding Verses is in store for such people.

Verse 76 is addressed to the people condemned to torment who are being asked to

"enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant!"

The Verse is a further emphasis on the fact that misfortunes stem from vanity and arrogance, serving as the origin of all evils, a veil before the truth seeking eyes of man, resistance to Messengers, and persistence in error.

Again, we come across

"the gates"

of Hell in the blessed Verse in question. Does entering the gates of Hell indicate that each group enters a specific gate?

Or a group enters different gates? It may imply that there are different gates and levels in Hell, in the manner of terrible prisons with labyrinthine corridors with many cells, and a number of those who were obdurately in error have to descend all these levels and find their everlasting abode on the lowest level at the depth of Hell!

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) as the interpretation of a Qur'anic Verse[7]:

"It [Hell] has seven gates, for each of those gates is a [specific] group [of sinners] assigned,"

saying:

"Hell has seven gates. It has seven levels on top of each other."

Then, he laid one hand on the other, saying:

"Like this!"[8]

There is another interpretation according to which the gates of Hell, like those of Paradise, refer to different factors leading man to Hell or Paradise, e.g. sins and good righteous deeds, as reflected in Islamic traditions. The number seven indicates multiplicity rather than number. It is worthy of note that the eight gates of Paradise designate that Bounties exceed torments.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 77

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ

77. Therefore, [O Prophet] be patient! Indeed the Promise of Allah is true and whether We show you some part of what We have promised them or We cause you to die [before that] then [in any case] still it is to Us they all shall be returned.

The Veracity of Divine Promises is the source of patience and serenity, since Divine Acts occur timely.

Resuming the foregoing discussions on disbelievers' impediments and their arrogance and vanity and denial of Divine Verses and Signs, the Noble Prophet (S) is thus consoled:

"Therefore, [O Prophet] be patient! Indeed the Promise of Allah is true."

In other words, the Promise of victory to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Warning against the excruciating chastisement of the arrogant are both true and shall be indubitably fulfilled.

In order to hinder the enemies of Truth from conceiving that any delay in their chastisement may deliver them from Divine chastisement, the Verse further adds:

"If we show you some part of what We have promised them or We cause you to die [prior to their entanglement with torments] then still [it does not matter, since] it is to Us they all shall be returned [and We shall fulfill Our Promises]."

The Noble Prophet's (S) obligation was to clearly declare his Call and impart the Truth to all people such that the hearts of the awakened people may be enlightened through your propagation of the Islamic faith and there remains no room for the opponents of the true faith.

The Noble Prophet (S) was merely asked to attend to the fulfillment of his obligation without feeling sympathy for the affliction of the obdurate disbelievers with Divine torments. The Verse is evidently a clear warning against them so they know that they shall be entangled with Divine torment in the Hereafter as some of them met their dire ends on the battlefield of Badr.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 78

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلاً مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

78. And verily We have sent Messengers before you of some of them We have related to you their story. And of some We have not related to you their story and it was not given to any Messenger that he should bring a sign except by the Leave of Allah. But, when comes the Commandment of Allah [the Day of Resurrection], the matter will be decided with truth and the followers of falsehood will then be at loss.

One of the means of education and guidance, made use of many a time in the Holy Qur'an, is to narrate the history of the ancients and good models. The Day of Resurrection is the Day of Divine Judgment and the disgrace of the followers of falsehood.

To further console the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the Prophets of ancient peoples who were entangled with such difficulties but pursued the propagation of their teachings despite the impediments; as a consequence of which they became victorious:

"And verily We have sent Messengers before you of some of them We have related to you their story. And of some We have not related to you their story"

each of whom faced such intolerable vicissitudes and many a vain and obdurate disbeliever; nevertheless, finally Truth prevailed and wrong doers and sinners were vanquished.

Since obdurate and querulous polytheists and disbelievers asked Messengers to show unto them their miracles at all times and the polytheists contemporaneous with the Prophet of Islam (S) requested the same, the blessed Verse in question further adds:

"And it was not given to any Messenger that he should bring a sign except by the Leave of Allah."

All miracles are wrought by Divine Will rather than by disbelievers' requests who consider them to be playthings.

Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) may not accept their requested miracles; rather God Almighty made evident unto people what was required for public guidance at the hands of Prophets.

The blessed Verse addresses with a serious and warning tone the disbelievers who said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that had he been right, how come that Divine torment would not have been sent unto them.

Thus the blessed Verse warns them:

"But, when comes the Commandment of Allah [the Day of Resurrection], the matter will be decided with truth and the followers of falsehood will then be at loss."

On that Day, no repentance shall be accepted and all the ways of returning to Allah shall be obstructed. Moans and cries shall be of no avail.

It is on that Day that the followers of falsehood shall clearly perceive that they have missed their opportunities without accruing any righteous good deeds, rather they have been entangled with Divine Wrath and excruciating torments.

Why then do they ask for the coming of that irreversible Day? As per this interpretation, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the torment of desperateness.

However, some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the blessed Verse refers to the Divine Command of inflicting torments upon wrong doers on the Day of Resurrection. It shall be on that Day that the deeds of all men shall be judged with truth and the followers of falsehood shall be apprised of their total loss.

The interpretation is substantiated by another Qur'anic Verse[9]:

"And on the Day that the Hour will be established, on that Day the followers of falsehood shall lose [everything]."

Phrases like:

"Divine Decree"

are applied to the torment in this world in numerous Qur'anic Verses[10]. The Verse may be of a broader semantic range to encompass the torments in this world and the Hereafter. It is worthy of note that the total loss of the followers of falsehood become evident in both.

It is also noteworthy that according to a number of narrations there was a clown in Medina who make people laugh and at times said that Imam Sajjad 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) had irritated him since he had not been successful in making him laugh.

Thus, one day the Imam (as) was passing by and the clown took away his aba ('aba'), but the Noble Imam (as) did not take any heed of him. The Imam's companions followed the clown and restored the cloak. Imam (as) inquired them about his identity.

They replied:

"He is a clown who makes Medinans laugh."

The Noble Imam (as) asked them to say unto him:

"There shall be a Day on which followers of falsehood shall be at loss."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 79 - 81

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ
وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَأَيَّ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ

79. Allah it is He Who has made quadrupeds for you that you may ride on some of them and of some you eat.

80. And you have benefits from them and that you may reach by their means a desire that is in your breasts and on them and on ships you are carried.

81. And He shows you His Ayat [i.e., Signs and Verses, at all times]. Which then of the Ayat of Allah do you deny?

Taking heed of Divine Bounties is the best means of development and reinforcement of knowledge and gratitude. In this vein, attending to those Bounties which may be perceived and used by all people at any time and any place is the best way.

Thus, these Verses refer to the Signs of Divine Omnipotence and His All-Embracing Bounties and reveal some of them so that people may be further acquainted with His Glory and thereby arouse the sense of gratitude as a means of knowing God Almighty in them.

The blessed Verse reads:

"Allah it is He Who has made quadrupeds for you that you may ride on some of them and of some you eat."

Some cattle, e.g. sheep, are used for their meet and some larger ones are used as mounts as well, e.g. camel which is the ship of parched deserts and is also used for its meat.

The Arabic word an'am (plural form of na'am) was originally employed in the sense of camel but its semantic range further developed to include camel, cow, and sheep. The word is a cognate of ni'ma ("delight"), since cattle are among the delights of man.

Even today, despite the availability of vehicles used on the land and in the air, at times men have solely to make use of cattle for crossing sandy deserts and narrow mountainous passageways.

The creation of diverse quadrupeds, particularly owing to their domesticability, is at times stronger than the most powerful men serve as Great Signs of God Almighty. There are small beasts of prey which are dangerous for men, but at times, a child may lead a file of enormous camels and

"he may take them where ever he wishes!"

Besides, man makes many other uses of them as reflected in Verse 80:

"And you have benefits from them."

Man makes use of them for their milk, fleece, hair, hide, and even their feces as fertilizer. In short, there is nothing useless in cattle; even some drugs are made from them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to add that there was another reason for their creation:

"that you may reach by their means a desire that is in your breasts."

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the Verse makes a reference to the transportation of consignments with quadrupeds as reflected in the preceding clauses, but

"a desire that is in your breasts"

may also indicate personal uses, such as making use of them for the purposes of recreation, emigration, travel, races, gaining prestige, and the like.

Since they are all used for traveling on the land, the Verse closes thus:

"on them and on ships you are carried."

The employment of the phrase

"on them" ('alayha)

whose antecedent is

"quadrupeds"

precedes

"ships" (fulk)

indicates that God Almighty provided men with means of transportation in deserts and seas so that they may reach their destinations conveniently. God Almighty created a quality in ships that despite their heaviness, they stay afloat. He set order in the flow of winds such that they may be used for sailing and "visiting friends."

Verse 81 lays further emphasis on Divine Bounties and asks mankind to bear testimony to them:

"And He shows you His Ayat [i.e., Signs and Verses, at all times]. Which then of the Ayat of Allah do you deny?"

Neither His physical nor His non-physical Signs, e.g. man's creation out of clay, developments of embryo and fetus, the stages of development following birth, and His Signs concerning life and death, are undeniable. Divine Signs and Manifestations are visible everywhere, but despite such undeniable evidence, some men deny them.

The eminent Qur'anic exeget, Tabarsi, maintains that such denial may spring from the following:

1. Following concupiscent desires leads man to make attempts at concealing the Truth with unfounded doubts and act upon his vain desires since acknowledgement of the Truth restricts him through obligations. However, despite evident arguments, they fail to acknowledge such obligations and deny the Truth.

2. Blind imitation of others, particularly their ancestors, thus making attempts at concealing the Truth.

3. False biases and beliefs of their predecessors which have penetrated their minds and impede impartial investigation of Divine Signs; as a consequence of which they fail to perceive them.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 82

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَاراً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

82. Have they not traveled through the land and seen what was the end of those before them [and the manner of their perdition]? They were more in

number than them and mightier in strength and in traces in the land; yet all that they used to earn availed them not.

One of the Qur'anic criticisms is failing to travel so as to acquire knowledge and experience. Disbelievers' opposition against the Noble Prophet (S) stemmed from their vanity for their large number and might.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an says that God Almighty destroyed those mightier than them and one of the reasons lying behind the fall of civilizations is opposition against Prophets and turning away from Divine Commands.

Following the expression of Divine Omnipotence and reminding mankind of His Bounties, Prudence, and the orderly system of creation, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to warn disbelievers and remind them that those who deny Divine Signs and Verses and the Noble Prophet (S) should travel through the land and see the manner of their predecessors.

The blessed Verse reveals that the ruins of the cities of 'Ad and Thamud were still visible at the time of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, since it is encouraged herein to travel and see them and perceive that those people who were superior to them in terms of might, valiance, and number failed to resist Divine Wrath and were entangled with torment.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 83 - 84

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ

83. Then when their Messengers came to them with clear miracles, they were glad with that which they had of the knowledge [failing to acknowledge Prophets' logical arguments] and that [Divine Wrath] at which they used to mock, surrounded them.

84. Therefore, when they saw Our chastisement, they said: "We believe in Allah Alone and reject that we used to associate with Him as partners.

Divine appointment of Prophets to provide mankind with decisive arguments as to Divine Unity is one of Divine Acts.

It is worthy of note that human sciences and experiments may not substitute Divine teachings and render man needless of Prophets, since being arrogant of one's knowledge leads to derision of Divine Promises.

There have been people in human history who owing to the sciences which have led to the development of civilizations and accruing worldly possessions or due to their knowledge concerning their ancestors or other peoples imagine that they are needless of Divine Revelation and Prophetic teachings.

Men with small capacities, upon acquisition of limited knowledge or attainment to credentials and positions become arrogant.

According to the Holy Qur'an, there are three types of knowledge:

1. Fruitful knowledge which leads to human spiritual growth, as when Moses (as) said unto Khidr:

"May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge which may lead to my [spiritual] growth"[11].

2. Fruitless knowledge such as knowledge as to the precise number of the people of the Cave:

"[Some] say that they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; and [others] say they were five, the dog being the sixth, guessing at the unseen; [yet others] say they were seven and the dog being the eighth. Say [O Muhammad]: 'My Lord knows best their number; none knows them but a few.' So debate not [about their number] except with the clear proof [which We have revealed to you], nor consult any of them about the people of the Cave"[12].

3. Harmful knowledge, e.g. magic and sorcery for separating men from women.

It is said in Verse 83:

"Then when their Messengers came to them with clear miracles."

The antecedent of the pronoun is apparently the disbelievers entangled with torment the ruins of whose cities were still visible at the time of Revelation of the blessed Verse.

The Verse is saying that such people denied Divinely appointed Messengers and regarded their teachings as false tales. In fact, it was not their knowledge, but absolute ignorance since they were deprived of true knowledge which could lead to their deliverance from error.

They considered their apparent knowledge to be the true one:

("They know solely the outside appearance of the life of the world and they are heedless of the Hereafter,"[13]).

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that

"this is their utmost knowledge,"

i.e. their knowledge is limited to the affairs of this world rather than to those of the Hereafter. They imagined that they possessed knowledge, rejoiced at it, and derided Messengers; as a consequence of which they were surrounded with Divine torment.

According to Verse 84:

"Therefore, when they saw Our chastisement, they said: 'We believe in Allah Alone and reject that we used to associate with Him as partners.'"

Nevertheless, upon tasting Divine chastisement, their repentance shall be of no avail, since they may not be provided with the opportunity to compensate for their vicious deeds and they are condemned by Allah Almighty to torment in Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 85

فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ

85. Then their Faith could not avail them when they saw Our chastisement. This has been the way of Allah in dealing with His servants. And there the disbelievers shall be utterly at loss.

Unexpected happenings and emergencies flourish man's original disposition and reminds disbelievers to embrace faith; however, converting to belief in Divine Unity is supposed to be out of free choice rather than obligation and desperateness.

It is Divine tradition that forced belief is of not avail. Divine tradition refers to what God Almighty made prevalent among His servants.

It is for the same reason that repentance after tasting Divine torment shall not be accepted by God Almighty thereby:

"disbelievers shall be at utterly at loss."

According the blessed Verse in question, the laws and the system of creation are such that they come to their end upon death, since when man comes to the end of his life, whatever potential perfection he has comes to its end as a consequence of which his repentance shall not be accepted.

It would be of interest to make mention of two traditions at the end of the exegesis of the Chapter in question. According to the first tradition, a Christian man fornicated with a Muslim woman at the time of Mutawakkil, the 'Abbasid Caliph. He converted before being chastised.

Yahya ibn Aktham said:

"His conversion to the Islamic faith solved the problem and there is no need to chastise him."

A dispute arose between them concerning the same issue. Mutawakkil wrote a letter to Imam Hadi (as) and inquired about his opinion.

The Noble Imam (as) replied:

"Whenever a disbeliever violates a Muslim woman, he should be killed."

A number of Muslim scholars found fault with his opinion saying that it was unprecedented in the Holy Qur'an and traditions (sunna).

Imam (as) referred to the Verse in question[14] and replied:

"Since the man is a Christian and he has converted to Islam at the time of chastisement, his conversion is of no avail and he has to be chastised."[15]

The other tradition is narrated from Imam Rida (as) on the authority of Ibn Babiwayh as per which, the noble Imam (as) is asked:

"Why did God Almighty drowned Pharaoh when he believed in Divine Unity?"

the Imam (as) replied:

"He believed when he tasted Divine torment, and such belief shall not be accepted."

Then He alluded to the blessed Verse in question.[16]

Notes

1. 21:32
2. 39:11-12
3. 35, 56, 70
4. 70
5. 6:23-24
6. 28:76
7. 15:44
8. Majma' al-Bayan, vols. 5-6, p. 338 (under 15:44); Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 289.
9. 45:27
10. e.g. 11:43, 76, 101

11. 18:66
12. 18:22
13. 30:7
14. 40:85
15. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
16. Atyab al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah Fussilat, Chapter 41, Verses 1-40

(Explained in detail)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 54

General Overview of Surah Fussilat

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This Meccan Chapter has fifty four Verses and whose title derives from the third Verse. It is also called "HM sajdah" since it opens with HM and it is the first among the four Chapters with obligatory prostrations. The Verses of the Chapter concerns Resurrection, history of ancient peoples, the Glory of the Holy Qur'an, and manifestations of Divine Omnipotence in the world of existence.

The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"One who recites HM sajdah, God Almighty will bestow upon him ten good deeds for each of its letters."[1]

According to another tradition, the Messenger of God (S) recited the Chapter every night before going to bed.[2] It is also worthy of note that the title of the Chapter, Fussilat, is taken from the third Verse, and the title HM sajdah derives from the opening of the Chapter, HM, as well as Verse 37, requiring an obligatory prostration.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 1 - 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

بَشِيراً وَنَذِيراً فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لا يَسْمَعُونَ

1. HM

2. A Revelation [the Qur'an] from the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

3. A Book whereof the Verses are explained clearly, a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know.

4. [A Book] bearing glad tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not [the Qur'an].

The Arabic words:

anzalna ("We sent down")

and

tanzil ("sending down")

are employed in the senses of sending down at one time and in time respectively.

To assume a common meaning out of the twain, one may say that the content of the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) at one time on the Night of Ordainment (Qadr) though the forms and words were revealed to him in time.

The mere mention of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an indicates guidance, decisiveness, exaltedness, wisdom, and mercy.

The Holy Qur'an makes use of every means of guidance (e.g. commanding the good and forbidding evil, stories and accounts of ancient peoples as lessons, arguments, allegories, exposition of Divine Bounties, future of mankind, the manner of Resurrection, factors leading to exaltedness and denigration) in details with decisiveness and unambiguity.

The Holy Qur'an draws a distinction between Truth and falsehood, believer and disbeliever, Paradise and Hellfire, obedient and disobedient, obligatory and unlawful (acts), blessing and torment, good and evil, and the like.

The Holy Qur'an was revealed in eloquent Arabic.

The word:

'Arabi ("Arabic")

designates both Arabic tongue and eloquent. It is needless to say that those familiar with eloquent Arabic may comprehend the eloquence of the Qur'an.

Verse 2 reads:

"A Revelation [the Qur'an] from the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

The word

tanzil ("Revelation")

is in the predicative position (khabar) whose subject (mubtada') is omitted, namely the Holy Qur'an is revealed by God Almighty Whose Mercy and Grace are bestowed upon all existent beings.

Verse 3 says:

"A Book whereof the Verses are explained clearly, a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know."

The Verse clearly makes a reference to the inimitability of the Qur'an which may be comprehended by the knowledgeable.

Those who pay no heed of the Qur'an are devoid of true knowledge. Divine Revelation of the Holy Qur'an from Divine realm to the material world aims at the knowledgeable who are capable of comprehending some secrets of the Holy Qur'an.

They know that it lies without human ability to bring the like of the Qur'an; as a consequence of which, they believe in Divine Revelation of the Holy Qur'an and the fact that it is revealed for the guidance of jinn and mankind, but the knowledgeable are solely capable of comprehending it.

Verse 4 says:

"[A Book] bearing glad tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not [the Qur'an]."

The Arabic adjectives:

bashir ("bearing glad tidings")

and

nadhir (“bearing warning”)

are two attributes of the Holy Qur’an designating the Qur’an bears glad tidings to believers that as a consequence of their righteous good deeds, exalted stations and Bounties in Paradise will fall into their share in the Hereafter.

It also warns disbelievers that they will be chastised with torments in Hell as a result of their evil deeds. Those who turn away from hearing the Holy Qur’an are unable to give their ears to the Holy Qur’an being recited owing to their vain desires.

The Holy Qur’an says elsewhere that disbelievers are deaf, dumb, and blind unable to comprehend Divine Word since they do not make use of their intellect.

Those who turn away from God Almighty turn toward nature, and are wholly preoccupied with mundane affairs and the pleasures of the flesh are actually unable to hear the Truth. Such people may not endure to hear Qur’anic Verses being recited.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 5

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّنَا عَامِلُونَ

5. And they say: “Our hearts are wrapped up in coverings from that to which you invite us and in our ears is deafness and between us and you is a screen: so work you [on your way]. Indeed, we are working [on our way].”

The Arabic word akinna is the plural form of kinan which indicates a piece of fabric in which something is wrapped up. The word waqr indicates deafness.[3]

Disbelievers rigorously took a fivefold stance against the Messenger of God (S) and the Holy Qur’an:

1. Turning away and keeping distance against them:

(“But most of them turn away, so they hear not [the Qur’an],”[4]).

2. Unpreparedness for acknowledging the Truth:

(“Our hearts are wrapped up in coverings from that to which you invite us”).

3. Failing to listen to the Messages:

(“In our ears is deafness”).

4. Making mention of impediments, namely the covering of self-conceit, worshipping mammon, and the like.

5. Persisting obdurately in their error

(“Indeed, we are working [on our way]”).

God Almighty bestows His Bounties upon man and sends down His Revelation springing from His Fountainhead of Mercy, but disbelievers are obdurate and turn away from Truth.

If the audience be not prepared, neither Divine Revelation and Mercy nor Scriptures nor its glad tidings and warnings shall be of no avail, since obduracy and bias cast their veils onto their hearts.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse says that when disbelievers noticed that they had sunk into shadows as if they failed to hear Qur'anic Verses, they said that their hearts had been wrapped up in natural covering and they were deaf such that they were unable to hear Qur'anic Verses.

In other words, they said that there had been a veil of ignorance and arrogance between them and God Almighty such that the Messenger of God (S) could not expect them to turn to Qur'anic Verses and each of the parties was supposed to be preoccupied with their own affairs.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 6-7

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ

الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

6. Say [O Prophet (S)]: "I am only a human being like you [the difference is that] it is revealed to me that your God is One God; therefore take the Straight Path toward Him and seek forgiveness of Him and woe to the polytheists.

7. Those who give not the alms tax and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

In Qur'anic terms, indifference toward a number of Divine Commands is regarded as disbelief and polytheism.

It is said concerning pilgrimage to Mecca that:

"Pilgrimage to Mecca is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses, and whoever disbelieves, then Allah sands not in need of any of the both worlds"[5].

Regarding non-performance of daily prayers, the Messenger of God (S) said:

"Any Muslim who fails to perform obligatory prayers is on a par with disbelievers."[6]

Concerning failing to pay alms tax, the blessed Verse in question reads:

"Woe to the polytheists, those who give not the alms tax."

Alms tax (zakat) is a source of revenue for the Islamic government and failing to settle the same will be equal to failing to recognize the monotheism or disbelieving in the Hereafter which is on a par with disbelief.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is addressed to the exalted Messenger of Allah (S), asking him to say unto those who are in error and raise objections against you saying that you eat, sleep, and marry like them, assuming that you are like them, pursuing pleasures of the flesh, such as property, exalted ranks, sovereignty and you lay claims to divinity.

Say unto them that you are neither an angel nor a genie, but you are a human being like them in terms of eating, sleeping, and other natural acts. Your only privilege is that Divine Revelation is communicated to you. Your Creator, Origin, and Resurrection are the same.

You are supposed to worship him and solely invoke Him for support. It is a quite logical and clear statement.

If you render the veil of arrogance, bias, and ignorance and be moderate in human attributes and turn away from bestial desires, you will perceive through your intellect and conscience that your source of support is the One who brought you from non-existence into existence and everything lies within His Omnipotence.

Thus, you will perceive the manifestation of His Unity emanated to all beings.

The blessed Verse closes with an injunction to mankind as to perseverance in their belief in monotheism and invoke God Almighty to forgive their sins as polytheists and disbelievers will be sunk in denigration and humility.

Verse 7 treats of polytheists' attributes: failure to pay alms tax and denial of the Hereafter. The blessed Verse explicitly indicates that paying alms tax serves as a trial for believers' belief in the Hereafter, since mundane property is loved by people and it may not be easily forsaken.

According to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S),

"Failing to pay alms tax is on a par with disloyalty and polytheism."[7]

As per another Prophetic tradition,

"One who does not pay any alms tax will die a Jew or a Christian."[8]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 8

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

8. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, for them will be an endless reward that will never stop.

Faith and righteous good deeds are inseparable. Those who do righteous good deeds in this world without expecting any reward will avail themselves of Divine Bounties and Rewards. God Almighty grants His Rewards non gratia.

It would be unbefitting to expect remuneration for our insignificant favors. The blessed Verse is saying that believers enjoy permanent and endless rewards.

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that mamnun designates expecting reward or remuneration and some others take it in the sense of innumerable and endless. There are still some other exegets holding that the sustenance granted to believers is non gratia and the Provider does not denigrate His Favors.

It is worthy of note that God Almighty is Most-Bountiful and Most-Gracious and belief and righteous good deeds are both possible through His Favor and the Rewards promised to believers are all fulfilled through His Grace and Bounty.

Despite doing righteous good deeds, servants are not worthy of compensation since it is their obligation as servants to serve their Lord. However, the blessed Verse in question is saying that those who believe and do righteous good deeds will be granted permanent and endless rewards non-gratia.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 9

قُلْ أَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَاداً ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

9. Say: "Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days? And you set up rivals [in worship] with Him? That is the Lord of the worlds.

By the creation of the earth in two days, two stages are being intended. Prior to the creation of the earth and the heaven and the emergence of night, day, month, and year, there existed no day so that we say God Almighty created the earth in two days.

Divine Omnipotence accompanies His Omniscience and although God Almighty may create the heavens and the earth and whatever exists between them at one time and the recurrent clauses:

"Be! And it was"

indicate the same, but He created the heavens and the earth in several stages which bears testimony to the fact that exercising power requires consideration and expediency and creation was expediently carried out in several stages.

The blessed Verse in question is a reproach to mankind in the form of a rhetorical question addressed to the Messenger of God (S) saying:

O Muhammad (S) say unto these disbelievers:

"Do you disbelieve and deny God Almighty Who created the earth in two days and set up rivals in worship for him? God Almighty Who created the earth in two days is the Lord of all the worlds. He is Omnipotent over the creation of the earth. He is the Creator of all creatures, since the heaven, the earth, and all the world of existence are inseparable from each other.

'Had there been gods beside God Almighty in them, they would have gone on the way to perdition.'"

Unity of the world bears testimony to Divine Unity since it is evident that all creatures are inseparable from each other like the rings of a chain.

Unity in creation indicates the Oneness of Creator since two causes may not affect one effect, hence the blessed Verse thus closes:

"That is the Lord of the worlds."

The Verse indicates that material beings come into being in time and the One Who created the earth also created all the worlds of existence.

The phrase:

"two days"

apparently demonstrates that had there been day and night, it would have taken two days, since there were neither days nor nights at the time so that creation could be restricted.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 10-11

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِلسَّائِلِينَ

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعاً أَوْ كَرْهاً قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

10. He placed therein firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance in four days sufficient for all those in need.

11. Then He rose over towards the heaven when it was smoke and said unto it and unto the earth "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly [and take shape]." They both said: "We come willingly [took shape]."

The Arabic word rawasi is the plural form of rasiya designating firm mountains. Sawa' indicates equal and the phrase sawa'an li-sa'ilin signifies that abilities are proportionate to needs. Taw'an and karhan are used in the senses of willingly and unwillingly respectively.

The verbal form istawa used with the preposition 'ala literally indicates dominion (as in:

"The Most Gracious [Allah] rose over towards the heaven,[9]");

however juxtaposed with the preposition ila it designates intention (as in the blessed Verse in question).[10]

The earth and mountains are Divine Blessings including provision of sustenance, growth of plants, refinement of polluted water into pure water; sowing seeds and harvesting abundantly; excavation of mines; preservation of snow; provision of rocks for building; checking earthquakes, storms, and winds; serving as beacons for travelers.

It is worthy of note that mountains serve as the anchor of the earth since some of their roots lie in water so that waves may not destroy the earth.

The blessed Verse 10 says:

"And He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance,"

that is, all types of corns, vegetables, and fruits are produced for mankind and animals.

The phrase:

"in four days"

includes the aforesaid two days. In other words, the creation of the earth, mountains, and plants took four days.

Taking the two days for the creation of the heavens mentioned in the following Verse, it could be said that the creation of the earth and heavens and the creatures between them took six days, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"Indeed your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days."

The phrase:

"sufficient for all those in need"

indicates that creation is well-measured according to Divine Omniscience which is free from immoderation, vanity, and defect.

Verse 11 says:

"Then He rose over towards the heaven,"

that is, He set order in heavenly bodies, some of which are far larger than the earth in size such that a specific place was apportioned for each of them and they may not exceed their bounds and veer off their orbits as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12]:

"It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit."

The clause:

"it was smoke"

indicates that owing to distance from the earth, it seemed like smoke, in the same manner that the air and sea water seems to be blue from afar.

The blessed Verse 11 closes by saying that following the creation of the heaven and the earth in due measure, it was said unto them by the Glorious Creator that they had to obey Divine Commands willingly or unwillingly.

The blessed Verse in question explicitly indicates that the heaven, the earth, and all creatures are intelligent and it is a consequence of their intelligence that they are addressed by God.

The Verse confirms the views held by Philosophers and theologians who maintain that depending on their degrees of power and weakness, all creatures are intelligent. The Command may also be taken as existential rather than legislative making a reference to Divine Omnipotence through Which existent beings come into being.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 12

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظاً ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

12. Then He completed and finished [it was in the form of smoke] from their creation seven heavens in two days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps to be an adornment as well as to guard [heavens]. Such is the Decree of Him, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient.

Although God Almighty was Able to create everything at a single instance, but it was because of His Omniscience that He created the heavens in two stages. In terms of Divine Omnipotence, there is no difference between the Creation of the earth or that of the seven heavens as He created them in two stages.

Whatever lies within our knowledge concerning celestial bodies and whatever which will be discovered later on are adornments of the lower heaven:

"We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps to be an adornment."

The blessed Verse in question is saying that Divine Decree was acted upon throughout the seven heavens in two days and the Decree of each heaven was Divinely revealed unto it. It is a reference to the fact that each heaven is inclined by nature to act upon its existential Command as per Divine Omniscience and the order of the world.

The Arabic word sama' deriving from sammu designates "high" and it is applied to the atmosphere encompassing celestial bodies. The lights of the heaven are the sun, moon, and all the stars and planets.

They are likened to lights owing to their brilliance and giving off light onto the earth day and night.

Specification of lights to the sky of the world indicates that all the planets and stars visible in the sky are those belonging to the sky of our own world which is lower than all the planets since the word:

dunya ("world")

derives from dunuw ("proximity") above which lie other heavens whose number is solely known by God Almighty as their innumerability is attested in a number of traditions.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) in al-Khisal that the noble Imam said:

"To God Almighty belong twelve thousand worlds each of which is greater than the seven heavens and the seven earths none of which is sentient of other worlds."

Many other traditions indicate that the world is not limited to the seven heavens and the seven earths.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 13 - 14

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ
مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

13. But if they turn away, then say: "I have warned you of a destructive awful cry like that which overtook 'Ad and Thamud."

14. When the Messengers came to them from before them and behind them [saying]: "Worship none but Allah," they said: "If our Lord had so willed, He would surely have sent down the angels. So indeed we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent."

Prophets were divinely appointed to bear glad tidings and warnings unto mankind. These guides are supposed to prognosticate deviations and errors and find solutions to them.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question warn disbelievers and address the Messenger of God (S) that O Muhammad say unto them that if they turn away from Divine Command, you will be cast into perdition through startling torment resembling lightning in the same manner that the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud were afflicted with destructive gale (sarsar) and awful cry respectively and they were both destroyed.

Verse 14 is saying that the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud committed sins since they denied the Calls of the divinely appointed Prophets saying that had our Lord willed to send Messengers to us, He would have made angels descend from the heaven, but you are like us and we will never acknowledge your Prophetic mission.

They were too ignorant to comprehend that angels are different from mankind by nature and they may neither associate with nor guide them, unless they take the form of human beings; however, in such case they would be regarded as human beings.

The motif is elsewhere attested in the Holy Qur'an[13]:

"And had We appointed him an angel, We truly would made him a man and We would have certainly disguised them in human form."

Surah Fussilat - Verse 15

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

15. As for ‘Ad, they were arrogant in the land without right and they said: “Who is mightier than us in strength?” See they not that Allah Who created them is mightier in strength than them. And they used to deny Our Ayat [Signs and Verses].

The people of ‘Ad inhabited the South of the Arabian Peninsula. They were mighty warriors who had constructed fortified castles and lofty buildings and all these had led to their arrogance and vanity.

What leads to disbelievers’ perdition is their persistence in their disbelief and obduracy. The blessed Verse is saying that the people of ‘Ad were destroyed by gale owing to their sin of being arrogant in the land without right. They regarded themselves to be superior in strength assuming that no one may vanquish them.

Consequently, they asked others as to the existence of any people superior to them in terms of strength and power.

When arrogance stemming from the bestial faculty vanquishes man, he consigns to oblivion his essential non-existence and contingent needs and takes pride in himself assuming that his glory and power is permanent, but he disregards the truth that God Almighty is All-Superior in His Omnipotence against Whose Boundless Power, all other powers are nothing in comparison.

The rhetorical question aims to reveal that all these people who deny Prophetic Calls disregard the fact that the Creator who has brought them from non-existence into existence is far superior to them in terms of power.

How could they deny His Signs of Omnipotence? It is needless to say that taking a glance at one’s creation and the frailties of man from his embryonic stage onwards may remove arrogance and vanity.

“See they not that Allah Who created them is mightier in strength than them. And they used to deny Our Ayat [Signs and Verses].”

Surah Fussilat - Verse 16

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحاً صَرْصَراً فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحِسَاتٍ لِنُذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَى وَهُمْ لا يُنْصَرُونَ

16. So We sent upon them a furious and poisonous gale in days of evil omen that We might give them a taste of disgracing torment in this present worldly life. But surely the torment of the Hereafter will be more disgracing and they will never be helped.

Another reference is made to the people of ‘Ad elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[14]:

“And as for ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale! Which Allah inflicted upon them for seven nights and eight days successively, so that you could see men lying overthrown as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms!”

Divine Wrath may destroy some people in an instant, though their perdition may take a number of days and nights. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is saying that incompetent people with small capacities take pride in their limited power and rise in rebellion.

They may even rise against Divine Omnipotence out of ignorance. God Almighty may easily turn their opportunities into means of their perdition, as it is reflected in the story of the people of ‘Ad in the blessed Verse in question:

“So We sent upon them a furious and poisonous gale in days of evil omen that We might give them a taste of disgracing torment in this present worldly life.”

The strange gale levitated them from the ground and knocked them down as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“Indeed, We sent against them a furious gale of harsh noise on a day of evil omen and continuous calamity. Plucking out men as if they were uprooted stems of date-palms”[15];

“And as for ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale! Which Allah inflicted upon them for seven nights and eight days successively, so that you could not see men lying overthrown, as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms! Do you see any remnants of them?”[16].

This violent gale blew for seven nights and eight days and all the possessions of the wrong doing and arrogant people were being knocked and there remained solely ruins of their glorious palaces, abundant possessions, and luxurious life.

The blessed Verse in question closes by saying that:

“disgracing torment in this present worldly life. But surely the torment of the Hereafter will be more disgracing.”

All these excruciating torments in this worldly life resemble a spark against a sea of fire! What is worse than that is that:

“they will never be helped.”

Such wrong doing and arrogant people tried for a life time to show their glory, but at the time of torment, God Almighty inflicted a disgracing chastisement upon them in this world and another humiliating punishment will be in store for them in the Hereafter such that such vain arrogant people comprehend their humility.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 17 - 18

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَى عَلَى الْهُدَى فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

17. And as for Thamud, We showed and made clear unto them the Path of Truth, but they preferred blindness to guidance. Therefore, a destructive cry of disgracing torment seized them because of what they used to earn.

18. And We saved those [from ‘Ad and Thamud] who believed and used to fear Allah, keep their duty to Him, and avoid evil.

The Prophet of the people of Thamud was Salih (Salah). They lived in Umm al-Qura (“the Mother of Cities) located between Medina and Sham, and possessed great strength and agricultural means and opportunities.

Their perdition was caused by lightning and earthquake as reflected in Qur’anic Verses, though both afflictions might have led to their destruction.

Verse 17 is saying that God Almighty provided them with means of guidance, but they denied it.

It is worthy of note that Divine Guidance was available to all disbelievers and polytheists and it was not restricted to the people of Thamud. The blessed Verses apparently allude to the Salih's she-camel that came out of rock with her calf.

She provided them with sufficient milk and it was a miracle to guide them; however they preferred blindness over guidance and cut the sinews of her feet and killed her calf which led to the warning against their perdition.

"Therefore, a destructive cry of disgracing torment seized them."

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the destructive cry expressed as lightning. The destructive cry was so harsh that it deafened their ears and they were all destroyed instantly.

The clause:

"because of what they used to earn"

refers to severing the sinews of the she-camel's feet and killing her calf. It is reported that three members of Ahl al-Bayt (Prophetic family, AS) made references to Salih's she-camel:

firstly, Sadiqa Tahira saying:

"Salih's she-camel and her calf were not superior to me before God Almighty in terms of excellence,"

al-Husayn (as) when Radih (the suckling infant) was killed said:

"O Lord! This infant before you is not inferior to the calf of Salih's she-camel,"

Imam Hadi (as), accompanying Mutawakkil to the latter's palace said:

"My index finger is superior to Salih's she-camel."

Mutawakkil did not live longer than three days and his body was cut into pieces.

Verse 18 says:

"And We saved those [from 'Ad and Thamud] who believed and used to fear Allah, keep their duty to Him, and avoid evil."

Many Qur'anic Verses and traditions indicate that so long as believers and the God fearing live among disbelievers and the corrupt, Divine torment will not be sent to them and they should fear that if religious scholars, the pious, and the God fearing leave them, such torments will be inflicted upon them.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 19 - 20

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

حَتَّى إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

19. And [remember] the Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire, then they will be restrained.

20. Till when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.

The Arabic verbal form yuza'un is used in the sense of "they are restrained," connoting that the first one is restrained to the coming of the

last one following which they shall be driven to Hell. Representation of Resurrection leads to warning and guidance.

The Holy Qur'an asks the Noble Prophet (S) to remind people of such Day.

The blessed Verse 19 is saying that God Almighty makes mention of disbelievers and the manner of their advent of the Day of Resurrection reminding His Messenger (S) that upon their arrival, God's enemies will be gathered such that those occupying the front row shall be restrained so that others may arrive and they all enter Hell.

Upon their assembly, their bodily organs, through Divine Command, bear witness against them: their ears bear testimony that they disregarded both the Signs of existence which were recurrently heard by them and the Qur'anic Verses heard by them.

They did not take any lessons but neglected them. Their skins bear witness that they touched unlawful objects. It is worthy of note that there is a vital force within bodily organs and everything shall attain to perfection on the Day of Resurrection.

Upon the arrival of human body from the mundane world to the Hereafter, all inward deeds and conducts shall be manifest through Divine Command and it may justify the secret of the manner of bearing testimony by bodily organs against man.

Verse 20 is saying that their ears bear witness to hearing the Call to proceed toward Truth but they turned away from it. Their eyes bear witness that they saw many a Signs indicating Divine Unity, but they failed to believe. Other bodily organs bear witness against their deeds and sins.

It is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi's Tafsir[17] that the Verse is concerned with those whose deeds become manifest to them, but they deny them, saying:

"We are not aware of such deeds in the least."

Then, the angels in charge of recording their deeds bear witness that they have committed such acts.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"They say unto God Almighty

'O Lord! They are your angels and bear witness to your benefit.'

They take an oath that they have not committed any of such deeds."

Thus, God Almighty places the seal of silence on their tongues and makes their bodily organs speak- any ear, eye, hand, and foot, having heard, seen, touched, and proceeded toward unlawful words, sights, objects, directions bear testimony before God Almighty.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 21

وَقَالُوا لِجُلُودِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

21. And they will say to their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" They will say: "Allah has caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak and He created you the first time and to Him you are made to return."

There will be numerous witnesses on the Day of Resurrection, including God Almighty, Prophets, the earth, time, angels, and bodily organs.

Bearing witness by bodily organs indicates their knowledge as to human deeds. It is worthy of note that the One Who is Omnipotent and creates creatures is also Able to make them speak as well. The blessed Verse in question treats of bodily organs' response to man's objection to his skins bearing witness against him, saying:

"Allah has caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak."

It is worthy of note that the word:

"thing" (shay')

is used in the general sense of the word which indicates that all the constituent elements of the world shall speak, which may in turn designate disclosure of their inner secrets, since nothing shall be concealed at that time and everything shall manifest its truth and inner secrets.

The One Who makes everything speak is the One Who created you in the first place and you shall return unto Him.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 22 - 23

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلا جُلُودُكُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيراً مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

وَذَلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْدَاكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

22. And [suppose that] you have not been hiding yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should testify against you, but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing.

23. And that thought of yours which you thought about your Lord, has brought you to destruction; and you have become of those utterly lost.

Bearing witness to deeds committed in this world by bodily organs is indubitable, though sinners neglect the same. Belief in the fact that we are in the presence of God Almighty is the most significant factor leading to human growth and guidance.

We may invoke God Almighty to render us succor so that through logical reasoning we may make our beliefs firm and transparent and thereby avoid suspicion as to Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse raises an objection against disbelievers that they may not conceal anything since your bodily organs like ears, eyes, and skins bear witness against you on the Day of Resurrection. Furthermore, God Almighty is Omniscient and Omnipotent and such groundless suspicions against God led to their perdition and they have become utter losers.

Qur'anic exegets narrate on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas concerning the occasion of revelation of the Verses in question as saying:

"One day I had covered my face in the Ka'ba covering when three persons approached - Safwan from Rabi'a, Umayya, and 'Abd Allah Thaqafi.

One of them said:

'May God hear what we say?'

Another one replied:

'If we speak loudly, He will hear us.'

The other said:

'If He hears our loud speech, he may hear our whisper.'

I went to the Noble Prophet (S) and quoted their words. Then, the Verse was revealed to remove such baseless suspicions."[18]

Finally, mention will be made of fair thought toward God Almighty and suspicion against Him.

The above Verses clearly indicates that suspicion against God Almighty is so perilous that it may lead to perdition and everlasting torment, instances of which include a group of disbelievers who imagined that God Almighty may neither see their deeds nor may He hear their words and such suspicion caused their utter loss and perdition. Au contraire, entertaining fair thought about God Almighty leads to deliverance in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Entertaining good thought about God is the best of devotions."[19]

As per another Prophetic tradition:

"Make attempts to entertain fair thought about God, since it is the cost of Paradise."[20]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Entertaining fair thought about God is that you do not set your hopes on anyone else and be solely afraid of your sin."[21]

Musa ibn Ja'far, Imam Kasim (as), said:

"The Good of this world and the Hereafter is solely due to believers' good thought about God and causes them to set their hopes on Him."[22]

There are many other traditions for which one may consult the related sources.

Mention will hereunder be made of witnesses at the Tribunal to be held on the Day of Resurrection. When we say all human beings shall stand the Tribunal in the Hereafter, it may remind one of the tribunals held in this world at which each person produces documents and/or witnesses before judges and following questions and answers the final verdict is issued.

However, it has been mentioned many a time that words designate broader and deeper meanings there which at times may defy the understanding of the prisoners of this world and at times it may be impossible to grasp at all.

It is worthy of note that taking into account the Qur'anic allusions and the traditions narrated from the Infallible Imams, we may discover truths which to some extent, uncover the grandeur and profundity of the world to come and demonstrate that the Tribunal to be held on the Day of Resurrection shall be quite extraordinary.

For instance, when it is said:

"scales of deeds"

one may assume that our deeds will turn into light and heavy objects weighed on a balance. According to traditions narrated from the Infallible Imams (as), 'Ali (as) is the standard for assaying deeds.

In other words, human deeds and characters will be compared with those of this eminent man in the world of humanity. The more one resembles him, the heavier one weights on the balance.

Qur'anic Verses reveal truths concerning the question of testimonies and treat of issues which are not issues at the courts of law in this world but they play significant roles at the Tribunals in the Hereafter. Generally speaking, there are six types of witnesses for the Tribunal.

The Most Sublime in rank is Divine Pure Essence:

"Neither you [O Muhammad!] do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur'an, nor you do any deed but We are Witness thereof"[23]**.**

It is worthy of note that the same testimony is sufficient for anyone and anything, but Divine Grace and Justice necessitate the presence of other witnesses as well.

The Prophet (S) and the trustees:

"How then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against these people?"[24]**.**

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the Verse in issue quoted in Kafi

"It is revealed about Muhammad's nation that there will be witnesses for them from amongst us in each and every century and Muhammad (S) is a witness to all of us."[25]

Bodily organs, e.g. tongue, hands, feet, eyes, and ears

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs [or feet] will bear witness against them as to what they used to do"[26]**.**

The blessed Verses in question indicate that eyes and ears bear witness in the hereafter and a number of traditions designate that all bodily organs in their turn bear witness to their acts.[27]

Skins also bear witness in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verses in question explicitly treat of the issue and further add that sinners will never expect their skins to bear testimony against them, as they address their skins saying:

"Why do you bear testimony against us?"

They reply:

"God Almighty Who makes everything speak has made us speak too."

Angels will be witnesses then, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"And every person will come forth [on that Day] along with an angel to drive him toward Reckoning and angels bear witness to his deeds"[28]**.**

The earth that is beneath our feet and we are always its guest enjoying its blessings closely keeps an eye on us.

On that Day, it will bear testimony to all our deeds, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"That Day it will declare its information [about all that happened over it of good or evil']"[29]**.**

Time is also among the witnesses, though it is not reflected in the Holy Qur'an, but traditions narrated from the Infallibles (as) bear witness to the same, as it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as):

"No day passes for the son of Adam unless it tells him:

'O son of Adam! I am a new day witnessing to your deeds, say good words and do righteous good deeds in me so that I bear witness to your good words and deeds on the Day of Resurrection.'"[30]

It is actually a source of wonder that so many truthful witnesses of that great Tribunal, from space and time to angels, bodily organs, Prophets, saints, and above all, Divine Pure Essence, closely watch our deeds and we are unaware of the same. Belief in the existence of such watching witnesses should suffice to make man tread the Path of Truth, Justice, Purity, and fearing God.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 24

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعْتِبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ

24. Then if they bear the torment patiently, [it will be of no avail, since] the Fire is the home for them, and if they seek Divine Forgiveness, yet they are not of those who will ever be forgiven by Allah.

Neither patience nor crying shall be of no avail to disbelievers in Hell, since repentance and asking for Divine Forgiveness may solely help man in this world. The Arabic word mathwan indicates permanent residence and the verbal form yasta'tibu deriving from isti'ab designates request forgiveness.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that Hellfire shall be disbelievers' home whether they endure the pain or no and it shall be of no point to ask for Divine Forgiveness then since it shall be of no avail.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 25

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ

25. And we have assigned for them companions who have made fair-seeming to them, what was before them and what was behind them [i.e., their evil deeds]. And the Word [Divine Command of torment] is justified against them as it was justified against those who were among the previous generations of jinn and men that had passed away before them. Indeed they were the losers.

Addled friends adversely influence human mind and character, since they take advantage of instincts and natural desires. Man loves good and beauty by dispositions and seducers take advantage of the same to make vicious acts seem fair so that their victims facilely accept them; as a consequence of which, man regards his past sins as fair and thereby refrains from repentance.

To sum up, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to disbelievers' misfortune, evil fate, humility and the fact that they have lost the sacred spirit and the Divine faculty vested in human disposition.

Their heart was supposed to embrace angels instead devils frequent it. Consequently, friends and companions from amongst devils and evil jinn and men are assigned to them as their intimate companions encompassing them from all sides making their vicious deeds seem fair to them.

Thus Divine Command of torment is justified against them as it was justified against the peoples of the past. Those who follow Satan and their vain desires shall be losers who have lost their life and shall reap nothing but regret and grief.

The verbal form qayyadna derives from qayd designating egg shell since the vicious and corrupt people who vanquish man encompass him like egg shell, robbing them of their thought and distinction such that evils deeds seem fair to them.

How painful is such state for man leading him to the abyss of corruption impeding him from finding deliverance. The Arabic root q-y-d is at times employed in the sense of metamorphosing, namely changing something into something else.

Thus, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse would be:

"We take righteous friends them from them and instead give them addled friends."

Surah Fussilat - Verses 26 - 28

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ

فَلَنُذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَاباً شَدِيداً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

26. And those who disbelieve say: "Listen not to this Qur'an, and make noise in the midst of its [recitation] that you may overcome."

27. But surely, We shall cause those who disbelieve to taste a severe torment and certainly, We shall requite them the worst of what they used to do.

28. That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah: the Fire. Therein will be for them the eternal home, a recompense for that they used to deny Our Ayat [Signs, Verses].

Propaganda against religion has existed at all times. Those whose words do not stand to reason, hinder people from listening to the logical words uttered by others. The clause wa alghu fihi indicates "they endeavor to make deviation in the True Path through vain acts, e.g. whistling, clapping, making noise, telling tales, creating suspicions, and raising irrelevant questions."

It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas concerning the occasion of Revelation of blessed Verse 26 that the chiefs of disbelievers failed at imitating Qur'anic Verses and were afraid that Arabs from different regions depart for Mecca and believe in the Prophetic Call.

Following consultations they decided to distract the Prophet (S) and his audience while he was reciting the Holy Qur'an. Serving this purpose, they gathered at his reciting the Qur'anic Verses and sang songs, uttered vain words, whistled, and clapped their hands so as to impede the audience from listening to the Noble Prophet (S).

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse says:

"And those who disbelieve say: "Listen not to this Qur'an, and make noise in the midst of its [recitation] that you may overcome."

Enemies of religion imagined that they could extinguish Divine Light, but they were unaware that Divine Light may not be put out.

Verse 27 is saying that disbelievers resorted to such inappropriate and inhumane act imagining that they could succeed in their evil ways, but were unaware that they would fail and thereby pave the way for their perdition

since it is emphatically stated that they shall taste excruciating torments and chastisements for their vicious deeds.

Verse 28 makes a reference to the previous Verse saying that the torment shall be very painful and enemies of God shall be chastised by Hellfire therein shall be their everlasting abode as a recompense for their denial of Divine Revelations.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 29

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذَيْنِ أَضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْأِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ

29. And those who disbelieve will say: "Our Lord! Show us those among jinn and men who led us astray: that we may crush them under our feet so that they become the lowest."

Disbelievers wish to know those who led them to error so that they may take their vengeance upon them. Those who led people in this world were highly respected to those in error but the latter wish to denigrate the former in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that when disbelievers find themselves in the shadows of Abyss and the blazing Hellfire lose their hope of deliverance and utter such words out of desperateness wishing to find those who led them to such unfortunate state and take their vengeance upon them for having them misled and crush them and send them to the lowest level of Hell.

They will apparently say that those who were their chiefs and leaders seduced them and they wish that they be crushed by them so that they may be happy to take their vengeance upon them.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 30

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

30. Indeed, those who say: "Our Lord is Allah," and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend [at the time of their death, saying]: "Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!

Perseverance fosters faith and large were in number the believers who had an evil fate, since perseverance is supposed to accompany faith, otherwise, disbelievers stand firm on their false belief. The most exalted blessing given to believers by angels is serenity and peace of mind.

Following a depiction of disbelievers' torments and unfortunate state as the consequences of their vicious deeds, the blessed Verse in question depicts the merits of the God fearing believers saying that they said that God Almighty is the Lord and Fosterer.

They stood firm on their beliefs and obligations. Angels welcome them upon their death and on the Day of Resurrection making them feel secure and confident without entertaining any fear or grief, when disbelievers are scared by witnessing the awe inspiring scenes of that Day, since God Almighty promised God fearing believers that they would be secure and

angels bear them glad tidings of the Paradise promised by God Almighty to believers.

The comprehensive and interesting expression actually encompasses all goods and excellent characteristics: love of God and firm belief in Him in the first place and then act upon such belief in all spheres of life. Many a people claim His love, but they lack perseverance owing to their weakness and frailty.

Upon facing with the tempests of passions and lusts, they bid farewell to belief and turn into polytheists. When they find out that their interests are in jeopardy, they lose their weak and frail belief of theirs.

In one of the sermons of Nahj al-Balagha, Imam ‘Ali (as) provides a clear and meaningful interpretation of the Verse, saying:

“You said that our Lord is Allah. Now stand firm on your word and persevere in acting upon His Commands, treading His Path, and praising Him as it is worthy of Him. Do not disobey Him, nor make innovations in His Religions, nor deny His Prophet’s Call.”

According to a Prophetic tradition, following the recitation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

“Some uttered such words, but the majority of them disbelieved. However, one who utters such word and perseveres in acting upon it to his last day will be regarded among those who stand firm on their beliefs.”[31]

It is narrated from Imam ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Rada (as) that in reply to a question raised concerning the interpretation of perseverance, he said:

“It is Divine Guardianship that is available to you.”[32]

Such interpretation does not mean that the general context of the Verse in question solely refers to Divine Guardianship, but it aims to designate that acknowledgement of the guardianship of the Infallible Shi’i Imams (as) guarantees steadfastness in adhering to monotheism and doing righteous good deeds according to pure Islamic beliefs.

To sum up, it could be said that human value lies in keeping his faith and doing righteous good deeds as reflected in this Verse:

“’Our Lord is Allah,’ and then they stand firm.”

It is narrated that someone asked the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

“Provide me with injunctions through acting upon them I may be among the saved in this world and the Hereafter.”

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

“Say my Lord is Allah and stand firm on your word.”

The man further inquired:

“What is the most perilous thing of which I should stand in fear?”

The Prophet (S) touched his tongue and said:

“This!”[33]

Surah Fussilat - Verses 31 - 32

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ

نُزُلاً مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

31. "We [angels] have been your friends in the life of this world and are [so] in the Hereafter. Therein [paradise] you shall have [all] that your inner selves desire, and therein you shall have [all] for which you ask.

32. "An entertainment from [Allah], the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

Perseverant believers have friends amongst heavenly creatures and their material and spiritual demands shall be met in Paradise. The Arabic word nuzl designates foods and drinks served to guests.

The blessed Verse is saying that addressing believers, angels say that they were their friends in the world and the Hereafter.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) is narrated as saying that angels say unto believers that they protected them from afflictions and hardships and upon death they protect them against satanic temptations. It will be in the Hereafter that they will protect them from the severity of chastisement and will accompany them unto Paradise.

Interpreting the Quranic Verse:

"Indeed, those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then they stand firm,"

a number of mystics maintain that they said that their Lord had been Allah following which they persevered in keeping their faith and abstained from turning away from Him, as a consequence of which angels descend upon them willingly saying unto them.

"Do not entertain fear of being reproached nor grieve for transience since we bear glad tidings to you for your admission into the everlasting abode in Paradise.

There shall be no fear in the everlasting abode since the persevering believers are not supposed to be afraid of anything are they supposed to entertain grief and sorrow. There will be all kinds of blessings for you. We bear glad tidings to you for all blessings."

("Stand firm. Do not grieve. Grasp the Divine Cord. There are glad tidings for you for your admission into Paradise that is the abode of satisfaction.").[34]

Angels are the friends of God's friends and the enemies of God's enemies in this world and the Hereafter. All creatures are the Most Gracious Allah's Host protecting God's friends and they are enemies of God's enemies and whenever they are permitted by God Almighty, they bring ruin to disbelievers.

Verse 32 says:

"An entertainment from [Allah], the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word nuzl designates what is served to guests following their arrival.

The blessed Verse in question may make a reference to the blessings of the people of Paradise as promised by angels when they said unto believers that they were their friends, protectors, and guardians in this world and they will accompany them upon their hardships in the Hereafter and will take them to Paradise which is the abode of Divine Blessing wherein is prepared

what you desire by your Lord Who is the Oft-Forgiving of sins and is the Most Gracious and the Most Compassionate.

The author of the Tafsir [“Exegesis] titled Atyab al-Bayan says:

“Nuzlan designates the glad tidings to be borne by angels upon death encompassing all this worldly and otherworldly blessings from the moment of death to entering Paradise and the phrase:

min ghafurin [“from the Oft-Forgiving”]

indicates the first glad tidings upon death which is forgiving of their sins. God Almighty is Rahim [“All-Compassionate”] such that He will bestow all Bounties upon them.”

Now let us consider the Blessings bestowed by God Almighty upon those people who revive the two significant principles of monotheism and perseverance.

Man attains to a station in which angels descend upon him through his belief and perseverance and proclaim unto him the Divine Message which abounds in Divine Mercy and Favor. The first and the second glad tidings pertain to the aforesaid lack of fear and grief.

They are followed by the third glad tiding:

“Receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!”

The fourth glad tiding is:

““We [angels] have been your friends in the life of this world and are [so] in the Hereafter.”

The fifth glad tiding is:

“Therein [paradise] you shall have [all] that your inner selves desire.”

The sixth one is:

“And therein you shall have [all] for which you ask.”

The seventh and the last glad tiding borne to believers by angels is that you are God’s guests abiding in His everlasting Paradise and all the Bounties and Blessings are offered to them as they are His cherished guests:

“An entertainment from [Allah], the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

Surah Fussilat - Verse 33

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

33. And who is better in speech than he who [says: “My Lord is Allah” and then stands firm and] invites [men] to Allah’s and does righteous deeds and says: “I am one of the Muslims.”

Propagation of religion is the best of words and Divine Messengers are the best of speakers. The best of words is not the most scholarly and the most melodious rather it is the Call to people to embrace faith, one which is purposeful.

The blessed Verse in question praises those who act in three ways: firstly, they call people to God Almighty, guide them, and show unto them the path to happiness and Divine Guidance and show them the Straight Path of Divine Laws.

Such people are those who call people to embrace true faith. Their words and deeds are the best. Secondly, one calling people to embrace faith are supposed to do righteous good deeds so that his words impress the audience.

Those who call people to turn to Truth are supposed to base their words on their deeds otherwise their words will be of not be efficacious, since empty words go into one ear and out the other without impressing the audience.

Thirdly, it is incumbent upon those calling people to turn to Allah to say that he is a Muslim, i.e., totally submitted to Divine Commands, and he is calling his audience to submit to Divine Will and truly believe in God.

Their words are supposed to be substantiated by their deeds. It is worthy of note to consider two traditions:

1. Ibn Shahr Ashub narrates from Ibn ‘Abbas who in turn narrates from the Messenger of God (S) that He said:

“After me, ‘Ali (as) will call and guide people to my Lord. He is the pious man among believers (salih al-mu’minin) and the clause:

“He is the best who invoked Allah and did righteous good deeds”

is addressed to him.[35]

2. According to ‘Ayyashi’s Tafsir [“Exegesis”], the blessed Verse in question was revealed concerning ‘Ali (as).[36]

Although a number of Qur’anic exegets maintain that such attributes belong to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the Noble Prophet (S) and the Shi’i Imams calling people to Truth, or Callers to daily prayers, but it is evident that the blessed Verse is applicable to all those calling people to monotheism; however, it is best applicable to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

Taking into account the Occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verse, it may be said that the Verse is applicable to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the Infallible Imams (as), and all scholars and those who struggle in the Path of Allah, those who command good and forbid evil and all the propagators of the Islamic faith from all walks of life.

The blessed Verse is a great glad tiding and an unequalled glory to those who may be encouraged by it.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 34

وَلا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

34. The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with one which is better; then verily he between whom and you there was enmity [will become] as though he was a closed friend.

One way of calling people unto Allah is to erase tensions and do good in return for the evil acts committed by others.

One is not supposed to think that the passage of time consigns everything to oblivion. Positive and negative reactions are not on a par as they impress minds. It is worthy of note that indifferent and ill-mannered people confront those who call people unto Allah.

In this vein, the propagators of religion are supposed to face them with their good disposition and tolerance or else they may not succeed in their call.

The blessed Verse in question is advising callers to do good in return for the evil acts committed by other people and abstain from taking vengeance, as reflected in the prayer of Excellences of Disposition (Makarim al-Akhlaq), in which Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) invokes Allah to bestow upon him the favor of saying good things about people in return for their slanders and backbiting, forgive them, and associate with those who turn away from him.

There are many an account in the biographies of the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt regarding such excellences of dispositions through which the strictest opponents turned into their adherents.

In other words, it is evident that good and evil are not on a par - wrong-doers and the just, believers and disbelievers, monotheists and polytheists, the knowledgeable and the ignorant, the generous and the close-fisted are not equal as the truthful and righteous people whose words are substantiated by their deeds are not equal with the lying and the ill-mannered man.

Thus, the Most Gracious Lord Whose Mercy encompasses all His creatures and servants commands the Messenger of His Mercy who represents His Graciousness and Mercifulness and calls Him a Mercy to the world:

"O Muhammad (S)! Turn evil and sin into something better and wrath into clemency and conceal sin with forgiveness or words and refute falsehood with truth."

In other words, God Almighty is saying unto His Noble Prophet (S) that no matter how disbelievers utter slanderous words against you and do wrong to you, you should return their evil words with clemency and speak unto them gently and kindly so that your enemies and foes may befriend you and turn to the Islamic faith.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[37]:

"And argue with them in a way that is better."

It was the Noble Prophet's (S) disposition to behave with his enemies and foes in a friendly manner and treated them kindly and gently and it is said that most of those who embraced the Islamic faith did so through his favorable disposition.

Thus it is said in the Holy Qur'an concerning his disposition:

"Indeed you the best in terms of good disposition."

A tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the blessed Verse in question in Tafsir Burhan according to which the Noble Imam (as) said:

"The good deed (hasana) is discretionary concealment of one's beliefs under duress (taqiya) and keeping secrets and the vicious deed (sayi'a) is disclosure of secrets."

Concerning the meaning of:

"Repel [the evil] with one which is better,"

the Noble Imam (as) said:

"Defend yourself through discretionary concealment of beliefs under duress which is the good deed."

It is said in the Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan under the blessed Verse in question that good and evil deeds are interpreted in many traditions as

discretionary concealment of one's beliefs under duress and disclosure of secrets respectively, saying:

"It is a significant issue since the Noble Imams (as) hardships under Umayyad, Marwanid, and 'Abbasid tyrranous rules were caused by the statements uttered by some ignorant Shi'is who disclosed their secrets.

Had they concealed their beliefs out of discretion, they would not have suffered so many afflictions. Even today, one is at times supposed to conceal one's beliefs out of discretion."

Surah Fussilat - Verse 35

وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

35. But none is granted it [such good disposition] except those who are patient and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion [of excellences of dispositions] in this world.

It is only the patient who possess the great portion. Those who seek worldly gains regard Korah as the possessor of the great portion, but the Holy Qur'an says that it belongs to those who possess excellences of disposition.

The blessed Verse in question says that one may not possess such praiseworthy character which is the opposite of committing evil deeds unless he is patient and tolerant in hardships.

Only those who possess a great portion of wisdom, clemency, and knowledge may attain to the exalted station of the patient and those who do good in return for the evil deeds of others. Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the great portion indicates Paradise and the exalted stations bestowed by God Almighty in the Hereafter.[38]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 36

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

36. And if an evil whisper from Satan tries to turn you away [from doing good in return for the evil deeds committed by others], then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the All-Hearer, the Omniscient.

The Arabic word nazgh is used in the sense of incitement to evil and Satan's temptation and provocation. Incitement of vengeance is a satanic stratagem but doing good in return for the evil deeds committed by others is a Divine Injunction.

Satan often holds man in check when his irascible faculty is incited through some unfavorable state as a consequence of which he gets into a rage and many a time loses control of himself and may commit a sin.

Thus, God Almighty addresses the Noble Prophet (S) in the blessed Verse in question and says unto him that whenever Satan desires to incite some temptation in your heart and provoke you to do something, seek refuge in Allah, since He is All-Hearing to hear your invocation and is Omniscient and nothing is concealed from Him.

The blessed Verse in addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but it actually addresses the Muslim community, since Satan may not hold Prophets in check, let alone the Seal of the Prophets (S). Numerous Qur'anic Verses bear testimony to the point in question.

Mention is herein made of two traditions. According to a Prophetic tradition, someone slandered at someone else.

The latter got into a rage, but the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"I know a word that if the wrathful utter it, their wrath subsides:

'I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.'"

The tradition is a reference to the fact that the tempest of wrath is one of the satanic temptations, in the same manner that the tempests of lusts and passions are among satanic temptations.[39]

It is mentioned in the book titled Khisal that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) taught his companions four hundred aphorisms regarding the issues which are to the benefit of Muslims in this world and the Hereafter, an instance of which is:

"Whenever one of you is tempted by Satan, he should seek refuge in God Almighty and say

'I believe in Allah and purify my faith for him.'"[40]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 37

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

37. And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate yourselves not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allah Who created them, if you worship Him.

The night and the day are the Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Mercy. Verse 32 terms the best word as a call toward Allah and the blessed Verse in question treats the Path to Call to Him.

The night and the day are Divine Signs indicating His Omnipotence: the serenity of night and its consecution with the day, their timing, decrease, and increase and their proportion to sleep and peace of mind.

The blessings of the day include growth of plants and animals, evaporation of waters which leads to formation of clouds, rain, fruit bearing of trees, saving of energy, genesis of motion, circling, and circulation and contribution of the earth in its revolving and motion, the distance of the sun from the earth, the atmosphere that controls the solar heat, the moon as the nightly light and the natural and common calendar for all, phases of the moon in their roles in the ebb and flow are all the Signs of Divine Omnipotence.

In other words, the blessed Verse in question is saying that consecutive nights and days are Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Governance.

The sun and the moon are among His evident Signs each of which perform their functions in its own position as per the Ordainment of the Governor and Provider of the world and do not veer off its orbit.

The sun and the moon despite their grandeur and glory follow Divine Commands and their existence and survival depends upon Divine Will, but they are not worthy of being worshipped, since prostration and showing humility are worthy of the Lord Who brought them from non-existence into existence and ordained them for human existence and survival.

Polytheists imagine that prostrating before the sun and the moon would lead to their exalted station before God as a consequence of which they said:

"We solely worship them in order to be closer to Allah."

God Almighty is saying unto them that if they wish to become closer to Truth and worship Him, they should not prostrate before them but they should prostrate before God Who is their Creator and Provider.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 38

فَإِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لا يَسْأَمُونَ

38. But if they are too proud [to worship God Almighty, it matters not, since] there are those who are with your Lord [angels] glorify Him night and day, and never are they tired.

Turning away from prostration and worship are clear indications of arrogance.

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"O Muhammad! If these polytheists turn away from prostrating before and worshipping Allah out of arrogance and enmity, diverse ranks of angels and heavenly creatures who are close to Allah glorify and worship their Lord night and day and they are never tired of glorification at all times."

Surah Fussilat - Verse 39

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنَّكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

39. And among His Signs is that you see the earth barren, but when We send down water to it, it is stirred to life and growth. Indeed, He Who gives it life, surely is Able to give life to the dead. Indeed He is Able to do all things.

God Almighty works through natural means. It is a representative sample; He Who revives the barren earth is Able to raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

In blessed Verse in question, God Almighty addresses His Messenger (S) to show the veracity of Resurrection and raising of the dead on the Last Day so that His Prophet (S) reminds people to consider the Divine Signs and notice that the earth, withered and barren in winter is revived in spring when the rain renders the barren earth verdant and lush green.

One Who is Able to make the barren earth alive and verdant is also Able to resurrect the dead bodies through His Mercy, since He is Omnipotent.

The motif of raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection and its similitude to the rejuvenation of the earth in springtime following its withering away in winter season is to attested in numerous Qur'anic Verses.

Since there should exist a point of similarity between tenor and vehicle in eloquent speech, without which similes lose their effectiveness, one may infer from the Verse that as the potentiality and actuality of the earth exists in winter season though the growth of plants stay stagnant, in like manner, man does not become non-existent following death but the external

indications of his existence are not evident and he will be raised on the Day of Resurrection which is the springtime of his actuality through Divine Command and whatever stays dormant in his mind shall become evident.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 40

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمَّنْ يَأْتِي آمِناً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

40. Indeed, those who turn away from Our Ayat [Signs, Verses] are not hidden from Us. Is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you will. Verily He is All-Seer of what you do.

The Arabic word

ilhad (“apostasy”)

is cognate with lahad (“hole deviating toward one side”) and mulhid (“apostate”).

God provides man with respite but He is All-Aware of deviations. He grants respite to those in error so that they may repent. The people of Paradise proceed toward their everlasting abode in peace and glory but the people of Hell will be cast into Hell.

Upon hearing the Holy Qur’an, disbelievers attempted at distracting the audience through making noise and clapping their hands. The blessed Verse in question is saying that evil doers should know that God Almighty is All-Aware of their vicious deeds and it is such deeds that will lead them to Hell.

The hamza in the initial position of ‘a-fa-man indicates a rhetorical question connoting guidance for disbelievers reminding them of the necessity of intellection and reflection upon the evil consequences of their deeds in Hell.

The blessed Verse poses this question:

“Is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who come secure on the Day of Resurrection”

without fear?

It stands to reason that the two are no on a par.

It is worthy of note that:

“Do what you will”

is addressed to those who uttered false words regarding the Holy Qur’an. The blessed Verse is saying that they are granted respite to do what they will; however, they should know that God Almighty is All-Aware of what they do and He will provide them with the recompense of what they do in this world.

Notes

1. Majma’ al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter in question.
2. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma’ani, under the Chapter in question.

www.alhassanain.org/english

3. Raghib’s Mufradat.
4. the preceding Verse
5. 3:97
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 58.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 29.
8. Mizan al-Hikma, s.v. Zakat.
9. Chapter 20
10. Raghib’s Mufradat.
11. 7:54
12. 36:49
13. 6:9
14. 69:6-7
15. 54:19-20
16. 69:6-8
17. vol. 2, p.264
18. Tafsir Qurtubi, Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayan, Fakhr Razi’s Tafsir, Ruh al-Bayan, Maraghi’s Tafsir, Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahih, and Tirmidhi.
19. Madinat al-Balagha, vol. 2, p. 450.
20. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 109.
21. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 116; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 367.
22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 389.
23. 10:61
24. 4:41
25. Usul Kafi, vol. 1, p. 190.
26. 24:24
27. La’ali al-Akhbar, p. 462.
28. 50:21
29. 99:4
30. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, s.v. yawm [“day”].
31. Majma’ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verses in question.
32. Ibid.
33. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 454.
34. Abu al-Futuh’s Tafsir.
35. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 111; Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
36. Tafsir Safi, p. 361, under the blessed Verse in question.
37. 16:126
38. Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayan.
39. Ruh al-Ma’ani, vol. 24, p. 111.
40. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Majma’ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah Fussilat, Verses 41 - 54

Surah Fussilat - Verse 41 - 43

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

لا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

41. Indeed, those who disbelieved in the Reminder [the Holy Qur'an] when it came unto them [shall be chastised]. And indeed, it is an honorable [well-fortified respected] Book.

42. Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it; [it is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.

43. Nothing is said unto you [O Muhammad!] except what was said unto the Messengers before you. Verily, your Lord is the Possessor of Forgiveness and the Possessor of excruciating chastisement.

The Holy Qur'an reminds man of his neglect and negligence.

The title:

'Aziz ("honorable")

is exclusively employed to refer to the Holy Qur'an from amongst Scriptures.

The blessed Verses are addressed to all polytheists and disbelievers who regard the Holy Qur'an as encompassing magic and falsehood and also those who do not believe in some of Qur'anic Injunctions, e.g. usury, murder, adultery, and calumnious accusation and slander as well as Divine Commands as to one-fifth tax and pilgrimage to Mecca, and act against them.

It also addresses those who subjectively interpret Qur'anic Verses like those regarding the Guardianship, Infallibility, and Purity of Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet's family).

Verse 42 is saying that Falsehood cannot find its way into it from any side, that is, there are no contradictions in its form, i.e., words, nor are they any falsity in it. No alteration may find its way into it.

There is neither decrease nor increase in it. It is well fortified and serves as the Argument for all responsible for their religious duties to the Day of Resurrection. Another Qur'anic Verse[1] makes a reference to the same:

"Indeed, it is We Who have sent down the Reminder and truly We will guard it [from distortion and corruption attempted by disbelievers and the envious]."

According to traditions narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), there are no falsity in Qur'anic Verses concerning the past events and the prognostications about future.

It is said in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that there is no point in Scriptures like the Bible to abrogate the Qur'an nor will there be any book in the future to do the same;

("Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it").[2]

Thus the Holy Qur'an stays unaltered in the face of passage of the time and falsehood may not penetrate into it, since it is descended from the

Origin of Wisdom which is Firm as a consequence of which it stands unchanged at all times.

Verse 43 is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) as to disbelievers' accusations who called him by terms like magician, liar, poet, augur, soothsayer, and lunatic.

It is said unto the Prophet (S) that his predecessors were also the subject of false accusations and indeed his Lord is Oft-Forgiving and Merciful toward the repentant and He is also the Possessor of excruciating torment and chastisement against disbelievers and enemies of religion.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 44

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآناً أَعْجَمِيّاً لَقَالُوا لَوْلا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدىً وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمىً أُولَئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

44. And if We had sent this as a Qur'an in a foreign language, they would have said: "Why are not its Verses explained in detail? What! [A Book] not in Arabic and [the Messenger] an Arab?" Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and it [the Qur'an] is blindness for them. [As if] they are those who are called from a place far away [but they fail to hear the call]."

The Arabic word a'jami is cognate with 'ujma designating intelligible, since other languages were intelligible to Arabs hence the designation for non-Arabic languages. Enemies never desist from finding faults.

When the Holy Qur'an is in the Arabic tongue, they say that they are hard of hearing and when it is in any languages other than Arabic, they say it is not intelligible to them. In other words, the blessed Verse in question treats of the state of disbelievers, saying that had God Almighty revealed the Holy Qur'an in any language other than Arabic, they would have asked why it was not intelligible to them since the audience were Arabs.

The blessed Verse is saying that had the Holy Qur'an been sent to them in any tongue other than Arabic, they could ask why it had not been revealed in Arabic. Qur'anic exegets maintain that "non-Arabic" indicates any tongue other than Arabic, e.g. Persian and Turkish; however, the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic tongue since the Noble Prophet (S) was an Arab by descent.

The blessed Verse apparently makes a reference to the Arabs who, despite the revelation of the Holy Qur'an in eloquent Arabic, noticed that it is so eloquent in terms of form and meaning that it was hard for them to fully comprehend it hence they asked whey Qur'anic Verses were not quite intelligible to them.

Thus, God Almighty addresses His Messenger (S) and says unto him:

"O Muhammad! Say unto them that the Qur'an is a healing and guidance to those who believe."

It apparently indicates that the Holy Qur'an is the Path of guidance, happiness, and righteousness and its propagation may heal disbelievers' hearts and absolve them of their impurities. In fact, the Holy Qur'an is

addressed to them through which they may find the path toward happiness and may thereby attain to their main goal.

It is worthy of note that any sound mind may comprehend the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an and anyone who fails to believe in Qur'anic Verses suffer from defects in their perceptive faculties such that they fail to perceive its message through their ears and hearts.

Upon the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, they are as if they hear sounds and voices from afar but fail to comprehend the messages, since their ears and hearts fail to perceive the inimitability of the Qur'an, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 45

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

45. And indeed We gave Moses the Scripture [the Torah], but dispute arose therein. And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord [regarding granting respite], the matter would have [definitely] been settled between them [and all disputants would have been chastised]. But truly, they are in grave doubt [and suspicion] thereto [the Qur'an].

Familiarity with the history of Prophets is a source of consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) and Muslims. Divine Lordship grants respites to sinners so that they may repent and attain to spiritual growth. God Almighty grants respites to sinners to repent otherwise they had no way to turn to repentance.

The blessed Verse is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) saying that the disputes concerning the Qur'an amongst Muslims and subjective interpretations thereof is not unprecedented since the people of Moses (as) did the same - some of them acknowledged the Torah as a Divinely Revealed Scripture and some denied his Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verse is saying that had it not been for a Word, i.e. God's Promise, that went forth before from Him regarding granting them respite, He would have definitely chastised them; however, the fact is that these disbelievers turn away from the Qur'anic Message and they will remain in doubt and suspicion, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 46

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

46. Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to [His] servants.

Favorable and unfavorable consequences follow man's conducts and he is not supposed to put the blame on others. There is no doubt concerning the fact that whoever does righteous good deeds will reap the benefits. Righteous good deeds are to be based on Qur'anic Injunctions and Islamic teachings. Such person will enjoy Divine Favors.

Au contraire, one who commits evil deeds, i.e. turns away from Divine Injunctions and follows concupiscent and satanic desires will pay for the evil consequences thereof. The torments in store for disbelievers are the

consequences of their vicious deeds. God Almighty never wrongs His servants and it is worthy of note that any good or evil deed will lead to consequences.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 47

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَى وَلا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِي قَالُوا آذَنَّاكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ

47. To Him is referred the knowledge of the Hour. No fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive nor brings forth [young], except by His Omniscience. And on the Day when He will call unto them [polytheists saying]: "Where are My partners?" They will say: "We inform You that none of us bears witness to it [that they are Your partners]!"

The Arabic word akmam is the plural form of kimm ("sheath, calyx, perianth") and kumm ("sleeve"). Kumma is applied to head gear, like skullcap. The verbal form adannaka ("we inform you") derives from a-d-n ("inform, proclaim").

It is reported concerning the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question that the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired about the Hour of Resurrection. The blessed Verse was revealed as a reply to the question, saying that only God Almighty is Aware of the same.

The word:

al-sa'a ("the Hour")

indicates Resurrection and the designation may refer to its spontaneity. Disbelievers inquired the Noble Prophet (S) regarding the time of Resurrection and he replied that it will be spontaneous and dependent upon Divine Will and it is solely God Almighty Who is All-Aware of it.

No fruit comes out of its sheath unless God Almighty God Almighty is All-Aware of its quantity, quality, color, and its other characteristics. No female conceives unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the contents of the womb in terms of its sex, form, complexion, and so on. No female brings forth young unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the time of delivery.

On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers will be reproached thus:

"Where are those who were associated as partners with me by you? Today is the day of your misfortune. Seek them so that they may deliver you from torments."

They will reply:

"We have already informed You that there is no witness to bear testimony to Your partners."

It will be at that time that disbelievers confess to Divine Unity since they will attain to certainty concerning the same. What requires arguments to prove in this world will become evident on the Day of Resurrection.

Those who worshipped idols and imagined that they were of exalted stations realize that there are no partners for Allah and they dissociate themselves from idolatry and idolaters.

The closing clauses of the blessed Verse,

"We inform You that none of us bears witness to it [that they are Your partners]"

may refer to those whom polytheists and disbelievers set up as partners of God Almighty, hence they say that there is not anyone from amongst them to bear witness to the veracity of their false claim as to associating partners with Him.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 48 - 49

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ

لا يَسْأَمُ الْأِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَؤُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ

48. And those whom they used to invoke before [in this world] shall disappear from them, and they will perceive that they have no place of refuge.

49. Man does not become tired of invoking Allah to grant him good things, but when an evil touches him, then he gives up all hope and is lost in despair.

The Arabic word mahis indicates refuge or place of refuge. On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers find out that they have lost their past opportunities and a dire fate is in store for them. It will be at that time that the idols invoked by them have disappeared.

They will find out that they have no way out and they may not set their hopes on idols any longer and they have definitely no refuge.

Verse 49 is saying that man always seeks material gains and happiness and invokes God Almighty to grant them to him and is never tired of invocation, but when he is touched with some affliction, he will lose his hope and turns away from God Almighty. The Arabic words ya's and qunut indicate hopelessness and despair respectively.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 50

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَى فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

50. And indeed, if We give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: "This is due to my [merit]; [he becomes so arrogant that he says:] I think not that the Hour will be established. But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best [exalted state] with Him. Then, We verily, will show to the disbelievers what they have done and We shall make them taste a severe torment.

Seeking Mammon leads to neglect and at times denial of Resurrection. Man is intolerant and arrogant and upon his access to bounties becomes arrogant. Likewise, upon tasting afflictions, man loses his heart and cries out for assistance.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the undesirable states of men who lack knowledge and faith, namely, arrogance and vanity, saying:

"Whenever we give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: 'This is due to my merit.'"

Such miserable and arrogant person forgets that had it not been for Divine Favor, he would have been afflicted with adversity. It was in the same vein that arrogant Korah who was granted many a material gain for his trial refrained from doing good.

When he was asked to do good in return for Divine Favors, he claimed that he possessed his material possessions because of his knowledge and merits,

"He said: 'This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess'"[3]**.**

The blessed Verse further adds that such arrogance will lead him to denial of Resurrection and he will say:

"I do not think that the Hour will be established, but whenever I return to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best [rewards and bounties."

He says that his Lord has cherished him in this world and will surely grant him better rewards!

Surah Fussilat - Verse 51

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ

51. And when We show favor unto man, he withdraws and turns away, but when evil touches him he has recourse to long supplications.

Welfare and hardship are the best means of assaying man's characters and his spiritual blights. The blessed Verse expresses the states of such people at the time of fortune and misfortune in this mundane world and makes mention of their forgetfulness at the time of enjoying bounties and his restlessness at the time of afflictions.

The blessed Verse is saying that when God Almighty provides man with bounties, he turns away arrogantly from God, but when he is touched by the slightest adversity, he invokes God Almighty many a time to remove it.

The Arabic word na' is taken from na'y which literally indicates going away and when it is collocated with:

janib ("side"),

it connotes arrogance and vanity, since the arrogant turn away their faces and go away with indifference.

The word:

'arid ("wide")

is the opposite of tawil ("long"). Both are employed in the Arabic tongue to connote multiplicity.

Such faithless and godless person suffers from such miserable states of mind at all times. When he is granted bounties, he becomes avaricious, arrogant, and forgetful and when such bounties turn away from him, he loses his heart and beseeches God Almighty to bestow them upon him once more.

Au contraire, men of truth and the true followers of Prophetic teachings are so tolerant and rich inwardly that neither bounties nor afflictions may make them lose their heart. The most profitable transactions and the greatest of remunerations may not keep them from remembrance of God.

They are well acquainted with vicissitudes of life and are aware that unfavorable circumstances serve as reawakening and favorable states of affairs are Divine trials. Adversities are at times the consequences of man's neglect and bounties at times urge God's servants to express their gratitude.

The most significant signs of belief in God Almighty include magnanimity, i.e. greatness of spirit, broadmindedness, tolerance, and preparedness to confront hardships, vicissitudes, and struggling against the unfavorable states of mind resulting from availability of bounties.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in teaching his companions certain invocations says:

"We invoke God Almighty to help us be so tolerant that no bounty may make us arrogant and vain and no aim may impede us from obeying Divine Commands, and may not regret nor grieve upon the hour of death."[4]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 52

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

52. Say: "Tell me, if it [the Qur'an] is from Allah, you disbelieve in it. Who is more astray than one who is in opposition far away [from Allah's Straight Path through his utter denial of the Qur'an]?

The wise keep away from contingent losses. If the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty, what will happen to those who disbelieved?

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"Say unto these disbelievers if you know that the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty but you still do not acknowledge that it is Divine Revelation, who is more astray than one who knows the Truth but still denies it and opposes it with such forcefulness? Such person is quite far away from Truth."

In other words, such person has gone to extreme in his opposition and enmity against God Almighty.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 53 - 54

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ

53. We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the Truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?

54. Know that they are in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection. Verily! He it is Who is surrounding all things!

Divine Manifestations of His Omnipotence and Omniscience are innumerable.

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe"

indicates that besides the Signs perceptible to man, he will be shown further Signs in future. These two blessed Verses closing the Chapter in

question make mention of two important points which in fact include a summation of the points raised herein. The first Verse treats of Divine Unity and the Holy Qur'an and the second one makes mention of Resurrection.

Verse 53 says:

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the Truth."

Signs of the horizon (ayat afaqi) include creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars with the order governing them, creation of all kinds of animals, plants, mountains, and seas with their innumerable wonders and mysterious creatures whose novel mysteries are unraveled in time and each of which demonstrates the Truth of His Pure Essence.

Signs of the soul (ayat anfusi) include creation of different systems of human body, the order governing the wondrous mechanisms of brain and the systematic movements of heart, blood vessels, textures, and bones, and coagulation of semen and growth of embryo in the womb, and above all, the mysteries and wonders of human soul each aspect of which reveals the Omniscience of God Almighty, the Creator of the world.

It is true that these Signs have already been sufficiently manifested by God Almighty, but taking into account the verbal form:

sanurihim ("we show unto them"),

one notices that this present verb is in the progressive mode indicating that such manifestation is an ongoing process and even if man lives for hundreds of thousand years, he will discover many a novel mystery and will notice Divine Signs in time, since the mysteries of this world is endless.

All books on natural sciences and anthropology in all their dimensions including anatomy, physiology, psychology, and psychiatry, and also the sciences of botany, zoology, mineralogy, astronomy and so on all serve as expositions of Divine Unity and knowing God, since they generally unravel wondrous mysteries which demonstrate the Omniscience and Omnipotence of the Creator of this world.

At times, a scientist devotes all his life to one of these sciences, or one branch from amongst tens of branches of one of these sciences, but at the end of his life, he regrets that he knows nothing about that branch and his limited knowledge has made him perceive the depth of his ignorance.

The blessed Verse 53 is complemented with a beauteous and meaningful sentence:

"Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?"

What Signs are more evident than the Manifestation of His Omnipotence through Creation of all creatures, leaves of trees, petals of flowers, mysterious layers of brain, delicate multilayer membranes of eyes, the face of the sky, the heart of the earth, and in short all creatures demonstrate the Signs of Divine Unity and bear witness to Divine Creation of the world.

The above constitutes one of the well-known interpretations of the blessed Verse in question according to which the blessed Verse solely treats of Divine Unity and the manifestation of the Signs of Truth in horizons and souls.

The other interpretation treats of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an which may be summed up thus:

"We show Our Diverse Signs and Miracles in different regions of the Arabian Peninsula as well as other regions of the world and We show Our Signs regarding these polytheists and disbelievers so that they may know that the Holy Qur'an is Divine Revelation."

Signs of horizon also include the triumph of Islam in different battlegrounds, in the arena of logical arguments produced in debates and also in different regions conquered by the Islamic faith prevailing thoughts.

The Muslim community formed a minority at the time of the Revelation of these Verses in Mecca. They enjoyed no opportunities to engage in propagation activities.

Consequently, upon Divine Command, they emigrated and in a short while were able to conquer many a land and their religion was embraced by a large number of people throughout the world. Signs of souls also include the triumph of Muslims over Meccan polytheists and disbelievers in the battle of Badr and the conquest of Mecca and penetration of the light of Islam into the hearts of many of the conquered.

These Signs of the horizon and the soul demonstrated that the Holy Qur'an is Divine Revelation. Thus God Almighty Who is the Witness of all things bore witness to the Truth of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation.

The last Verse treats of the origin of the adversities of this polytheist, corrupt, and tyrannous group of people, saying:

"Be aware that they are in doubt and suspicion regarding their meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection."

They commit all crimes and disgracing deeds since they do not believe in Divine Reckoning and Recompense. Their hearts are wrapped up in veils of neglect and arrogance and forgetting the fact that they shall meet their Lord on the Day of Resurrection has denigrated them from the zenith of humanity to nadir of humility.

However, they should know that

"God surrounds all things."

He is All-Aware of their intentions, words, and deeds all which are being recorded for that great Tribunal. The Arabic word mirya designates entertaining doubt in making decisions and some Qur'anic exegets maintain that it indicates great doubt and suspicion.

Notes

1. 15:9
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.
3. 28:78
4. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 64.

Surah al-Shura, Chapter 42, Verses 1-26

(The Consultation)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 53

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This Meccan Chapter has fifty three Verses and its title derives from the question of shura ("consultation") referred to in Verse 38.

The Chapter treats of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, e.g. Divine Unity, Resurrection, Prophethood, as well as ethical and social issues. From amongst the twenty-nine Chapters opening with detached letters, the longest series of detached letters is attested in the Chapter in question.

It is worthy of note that the Chapter unravels the mystery of detached letters, since they are followed by:

"Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you,"

i.e. the Revelation is sent down employing the Arabic letters of alphabet available to everyone whom are challenged to produce the like of it.

The Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"One who recites Surah al-Shura is among those on whom angels send down Divine Mercy and for whom they ask forgiveness.[1]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

عسق

كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. HM.

2. 'A-S-Q.

3. Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you [O Muhammad] as [He sent Revelation to] those before you.

The detached letters in Verse 2 allude to the Divine Beauteous Names: the All-Wise (hakim), the All-Glorious (majid), the Omniscient ('alim), the All-Hearing (sami'), the Omnipotent (qadir) making reference to Divine Favors and Bounties bestowed upon His Messenger (S).

Detached letters are to be attested elsewhere in the Chapter. The ones mentioned in the first and the second Chapters, numbering five, are the most detailed of all. The detached letters HM open seven Qur'anic Chapters[2], but further detached letters, i.e. 'A-S-Q , are found in the Chapter in question.

It was recurrently mentioned above that much has been said regarding the Qur'anic detached letters and exegets have dealt with the subject in many a discussion.

According to the renowned Qur'anic exeget, Tabarsi, eleven interpretations have been provided for Qur'anic detached letters whose remarkable discussions were briefly treated in the opening sections of Chapters 2, 3, 7, and 19.

Following detached letters, as usual, mention is made of Revelation and the Holy Qur'an, saying:

"Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you [O Muhammad] as [He sent Revelation to] those before you."

The adverb

"likewise"

actually makes a reference to the contents of the Chapter and its exalted subject matter.

It is worthy of note that Divine Revelation springs from the same fountainhead - Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence and the contents of Revelation are in principle the same with regards to all Prophetic Calls, though there exist minor changes in terms of requisites of the time, evolution of man, and generalities.

It is noteworthy that mention is made of seven Divine Attributes each of which is in some way related to the question of Revelation, two instances of which are:

"the Omnipotent, the Omniscient."

These two Attributes necessitate that Divine Revelation be wise and harmonious with human evolutionary requirements.

The verbal form:

yuha ("sends down Revelation")

is in the present tense and indicates that sending down Divine Revelation has been an ongoing process from the creation of Adam to the time of the Seal of the Prophets (S).

The phrase:

qablaka ("before you")

which is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) is recurrent and indicates that he had predecessors in Prophethood.

The point is that

ba'daka ("after you")

is not attested in the Holy Qur'an which indicates that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is the last Prophet. Despite the fact that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is the Seal of the Prophets, his name precedes others which indicates his exalted state.

Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, Wisdom, and Glory are all manifested in Divine Revelation, hence Divine Revelation and Word deserve further attention.

All Noble Prophets (as) are all related to the springhead of Divine Omnipotence and Glory; as a consequence of which whoever confronts them in opposition will tread the path to perdition.

It is one of the inimitabilities of the Holy Qur'an that clauses and expressions are made of common letters and words the like of which may not be produced by anyone. The system of making Laws, i.e. Revelation and Guidance, belongs to the Creator of the order of creation, e.g. that of the heavens and the earth, Who presides over the world of existence.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 4

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

4. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the fact that all Prophets and Messengers were appointed by God Almighty to guide mankind with the same word so that they worship God Almighty with His Divine Attributes of Glory, Beauty, Oneness, and Eternity.

They were also reminded of the fact that God Almighty is Omniscient, Omnipotent, All-Glorious, and Just and all the spheres of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists between them are subject to His Omnipotence and He encompasses all the worlds through His Glory, Omnipotence and Omniscience and He is the Provider and the Fosterer of them all. He is Superior to all existent beings.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 5

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

5. Nearly the heavens [through the Greatness of Revelation] might be rent asunder from above them and the angels glorify the praises of their Lord [with gratitude], and ask for forgiveness for those on the earth. Truly, Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

The heavens are impressed by Divine Revelation. How is it that some people are not affected by it.

"The heavens being rent asunder from above them"

may refer to Divine Glory and Greatness that keep the heavens from being rent asunder.

It may also refer to polytheists' groundless claims as to associating partners with Allah for which the heavens may be rent asunder and drive them to perdition, as the people of Moses (as) requested him to show God unto them and heard the reply:

"You shall not see Me."

Consequently, Moses (as) was assigned to look at the mountain and if it stayed in its place, he would be able to see Him, but when His Lord manifested Himself, the mountain trembled and Moses (as) became unconscious and those people were destroyed by Divine Wrath.

The blessed Verse may also make a reference to Resurrection through which polytheists and disbelievers are warned that the heavens will be soon rent asunder and angels praise Divine Glory and invoke God Almighty to forgive the inhabitants of the earth.

It is thus confirmed when it is thus said unto His Messenger (S):

"Be Aware that God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious such that He will grant His Mercy and Forgiveness upon believers rather than disbelievers when the heavens will be rent asunder."

At that time, angels will invoke God Almighty to forgive believers as it is reflected in Surah al-Ghafir that invocations by angels as to Forgiving is solely for believers.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 6

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهُ حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

6. And as for those who take as guardians others besides Him, Allah is Protector over them and you [O Muhammad] are not a guardian over them [to make them believe].

It is the Noble Prophet's (S) duty to impart the Divine Message, but if people turn away from him, he will not be responsible for their disbelief. He is solely responsible for their guidance rather than for making them believe in God Almighty and embrace the Islamic faith.

The blessed Verse in question is a consolation to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) to entertain no grief for polytheists' disbelief in Divine Unity and associating partners with God Almighty, since their disbelief may not affect them.

He is not a guardian over them, but his sole responsibility is to impart the Divine Message, whether they believe in God Almighty and tread the Path of Guidance or veer off the Path out of obduracy and fall into the abyss of error.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 7

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ

7. And thus We have revealed unto you [O Muhammad], a Qur'an in Arabic that you may warn the Mother of the Town [Mecca] and all around it and warn [them] of the Day of Assembling [Resurrection] of which there is no doubt, when a party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire.

It is reported in traditions that Mecca is the Mother of the Town, since it was the first town which was dry following the Deluge. The Day of Assembling is one of the attributes of Resurrection whereon all people shall assemble in one place.

The clause:

"of which there is no doubt"

is attested eleven times for Resurrection, four times for the Holy Qur'an, and once for the time of death. In other words, noticing the manifestations of Resurrection in nature - rejuvenation in springtime and withering away in autumn - man is not supposed to entertain doubts as to raising of the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that in like manner that upon Prophet Muhammad's (S) predecessors were sent Scriptures in the languages of their peoples, the Holy Qur'an is sent down upon him in the Arabic tongue such that Arabs may comprehend its contents.

"That you may warn the Mother of the Town [Mecca] and all around it"

intends to say that the Noble Prophet (S) was supposed to warn the people of Mecca and its vicinity that what was in store for former nations who denied their Prophets.

"And warn [them] of the Day of Assembling"

indicates that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was to inform his people of the Day of Resurrection on which God Almighty shall assemble all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth as to which there is no doubt.

Then, God Almighty divides people on the Day of Resurrection into two groups:

"a party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire,"

in other words, a group will go to Paradise owing to their obedience to God Almighty and another group will go to Hell due to their sins and vicious deeds committed in this world.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 8 - 9

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلا نَصِيرٍ

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

8. And if Allah had willed, He could have made them one nation, but [He provides them with free choice and] admits whom He wills to His Mercy. And the wrong doers will have neither a protector nor a helper [on that Day].

9. Or have they taken [for worship] guardians besides Him? But Allah, He Alone is the [True] Protector, and it is He Who gives life to the dead and He is Able to do all things.

God Almighty is All-Wise and all His Acts are done wisely, even if human thought fails to perceive His Wisdom.

Thus, when God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an that He cherishes or denigrates whom He Wills indicates that those who deserve Guidance and exalted stations through their faith and doing righteous good deeds will be on the Path of Divine Mercy and Guidance through Divine Will, whereas those who hinder themselves from bliss through their disbelief, hypocrisy, and obduracy will not be helped by God Almighty.

Put the case that upon entering your home you notice that a thief is there. You would lock the door to confine him and report the house break to the police. You would lock the door but the thief has made you lock the door. God Almighty seals up some hearts and denigrates some or leads some astray, but Divine Wrath is the consequence of people's disbelief and misdeeds.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to Divine Omnipotence as to making all mankind believe in Divine Unity and send all of them to Paradise, but Divine Will and Omniscience requires that each and every person is supposed to voluntarily find him way to happiness and tread the Path of Guidance and enjoy Divine Mercy and Favor due to his own righteous good deeds and proceed on the Path to Paradise.

Nonetheless, those who wrong themselves and voluntarily turn away from Divine Mercy, they will have neither friends nor helpers, since all beings are the friends of God's friends and enemies of God's enemies.

Verse 9 is saying that disbelievers selected objects of worship and guardians from amongst idols whereas God Almighty is the only Protector who possesses all gains and losses as well as life and death. How do polytheists and disbelievers select friends besides God Almighty, whereas God Almighty is your friend and guardian and their life and death are subject to His Will and Omnipotence? He is the Creator of all beings and they shall return unto Him.

He shall raise the dead, since He is Able to do anything. He brought everything from non-existence into existence and He is Able to raise the dead and bestow a new life to them.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 10

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

10. And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah. Such is Allah, my Lord in Whom I put my trust and to Him I turn in repentance.

So long as man exists, there are differences of opinion which in turn necessitates Divine Laws and religion.

Thus, it may not be claimed that man is needless of religion. It is solely religion which not only provides solutions for not only ethical and doctrinal questions but also for economic, political, and the like issues. It is incumbent upon man to refer to God Almighty at the time of disputes and differences of opinion, to put one's trust in Him, to turn to Him in repentance.

Man is not supposed to entertain concerns as to Divine Decrees, since putting one's trust in God Almighty and turning to Him in repentance are the consequences of belief in His Lordship;

("Such is Allah, my Lord in Whom I put my trust and to Him I turn in repentance").

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question resembles in terms of content to another Qur'anic Verse, saying:

"If you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day"[3].

The relative pronoun ma in the clause:

ma akhtalaftum ("in whatsoever you differ")

indicates generalization requiring believers to refer to Divine Decrees and Decisions in their differences in terms of religion, Qur'anic equivocal Verses, legal decrees and laws, sciences, and teachings.

It is incumbent upon believers to refer to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who may decide on behalf of God Almighty.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 11

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجاً يَذْرَأُكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

11. The Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you spouses from yourselves, and for the cattle [also] mates. By this means He creates you [in the wombs]. There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

The Arabic word fatir indicates creator of something unprecedented. Although nothing is like God Almighty, but there is a nexus between Him and all things. He is the All-Hearer and the All-Seer and sees all creatures.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty to Whom are referred all decisions and He is the Lord of the Day of Recompense is also the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

He has made for you spouses from yourselves through His Omnipotence such that men may have mates. He has also made for cattle male and female mates. It is through His Perfect Wisdom that He has made mates for mankind and animals for procreation through which their genera may survive extinction.

The blessed Verse also says:

"There is nothing like Him,"

referring to the fact that nothing may be likened to His Essence. In other words, He is Unique in terms of Essential Truth and True Attributes. The expression is emphatic as it is said in common usage that nobody may do something as somebody else does.

Divine Essence is Unique in terms of His True Manifestations, but He has manifested some of His Attributes, e.g. hearing and vision, in His creatures such that they may recognize Him through such Attributes and praise His Glory.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 12

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

12. To Him belongs the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens [it for whom He wills]. Verily, He is the All-Knower of everything [and His enlarging and straitening the provisions are based on His Omniscience and Wisdom].

The Arabic word maqalid is the plural form of miqlid ("key"). In the same manner that one may use a key to lock or unlock something, One Who has the key to the heavens and the earth may enlarge or straiten provision.

The keys of existence are at times material means as intermediaries of Divine Bounties like rain that rejuvenates the earth and at times they are Divine Names as mentioned in the Prayer of Samat:

"O Lord! We call You by the Name that if It is called unto the closed gates of the heavens, they will be opened through Your Mercy."

Although enlarging and straitening provision and sustenance are dependent upon Divine Will, but man is not supposed to desist from making endeavors.

It is said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Follow Divine Bounties,"

that is, make efforts to earn your living.

The keys to the heavens and the earth are subject to His Omnipotence and each and every person is granted his provision as ordained by Divine Decree as per His Wisdom and the order of the world. It is His Divine Will that He enlarges the provision of some people and straitens that of others.

"Verily, He is the All-Knower of everything"

refers to the fact that enlarging and straitening of provisions for different people are not haphazard but they all depend upon His Wisdom and Discretion as He is the Lord and Provider of all things and has preordained portions for everything and everyone.

The motif is elsewhere[4] reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"And there is nothing a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure."

It is worthy of note that some Qur'anic exegets interpret:

"the stores of Allah (khaza'in Allah)"

as Divine Ordainments. In other words, everything is in the stores of Divine Omnipotence and He sends down whatever He wills.

However, some other Qur'anic exegets maintain that the phrase:

"stores of Allah"

indicates all beings that exist in the world of existence and the material world.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 13

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحاً وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

13. He has ordained [from amongst religious laws] for you the same religion which He ordained for Noah and that which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad (S)] and that which We ordained for Abraham (as), Moses (as), and Jesus (as) saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it. Intolerable for the polytheists is that to which you [O Muhammad (S)] call them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience.

The names of the five Arch-Prophets, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (as) and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), are attested in the blessed Verse in question. Prophetic Calls rest on the same basis, since all these eminent Prophets called people unto monotheism, Resurrection, fearing God Almighty, justice, establishing prayers, fasting, doing good to one's parents, and taking care of the needy.

The Arabic verbal form shara'a is a cognate of shari'a designating a tributary leading to larger rivers, e.g. Shari'a 'Alqama leading to Euphrates. The word connotes religious laws since they lead to perfection attributes and states.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that there is one true religion since the religious laws of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) are consistent with those of former Arch-Prophets. The Verse addresses the followers of their religions that if they convert to the Islamic faith they merely follow all true Prophets.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) received Divine Revelation as it had been already revealed to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Noah (as). They were recommended to establish the religion of Truth and make no division in it.

The blessed Verse refers to the fact that the religion and laws of all Prophets were on a par and they unanimously believed in Divine Unity, monotheism, steadfastness in beliefs, and abstention from division due to individual tastes and inclinations.

It is worthy of note that polytheists and disbelievers do not follow any religion, since all Prophets called people to worship the One God, but they associated idols and other objects of worship with God Almighty imagining that they could intercede on their behalf. Thus, they disfavored Prophets' unanimous call to monotheism.

The blessed Verse addresses the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) saying:

"O Muhammad! God Almighty to Whom you call them to worship chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience."

Divine Guidance is granted to one who turns away from people and turn to Truth wholeheartedly and indubitably God Almighty paves the Path for such person. Thus, it becomes evident that it is incumbent upon God's servant to turn to Truth voluntarily and God Almighty will guide him to the Straight Path.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 14

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْياً بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمّىً لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

14. And they divided not [to turn away from the Prophets] till after knowledge [as to their true Calling] had come unto them, through the spirit of enmity and envy amongst themselves. And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord for an appointed term [respite for disbelievers], the matter would have been settled amongst them [the the followers of falsehood would have perished]. And verily, those who were made to inherit the Scriptures after them are in grave doubt concerning it.

The clauses:

"after knowledge had come unto them"

and

"were made to inherit the Scriptures"

designate that despite their knowledge as to Truth and having inherited the Scriptures, they still tread the path of division.

Although the Prophets asked them to keep their solidarity, they were divided and the source of most of divisions is envy, wrong doing, and greed. God Almighty, because of His Lordship, provides man with respites such that he may enjoy the opportunity to reveal his essential character.

The blessed Verse is saying that differences of opinion concerning religious issues were merely due to rebellion and prejudice prevalent in the Age of Ignorance which, despite evident truth of the Islamic faith, led to denial of Islam and the Holy Qur'an.

However, God Almighty granted them respite and postponed their torment because of His Omniscience otherwise these disbelievers could have the same dire fate which had been in store for the peoples of ‘Ad and Thamud.

It is worthy of note that followers of certain religions, such as Jews and Christians, were acquainted with the name and characteristics of the Seal of the Prophets (S) attested in their Scriptures; however, because of their bias and arrogance, they failed to seek the true religion and submit to the Will of Allah, as a consequence of which they have remained in doubt and suspicion.

They failed to comprehend the truth but still entertained doubts in their hearts.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 15

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ لا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

15. So unto this then invite [the people of the Book, O Muhammad! Since they are obdurate and stand in enmity against you] and stand firm as you are commanded, and follow not their desires but say: “I believe in whatsoever Allah ahs sent down of the Book and I am commanded to administer justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us our deeds and for you your deeds [i.e., we are not responsible for each other’s deeds]. There is no dispute between us and you. Allah will assemble us and to Him is the final return.

Administration of justice is the consequence of belief in certain values, e.g. acknowledgement of the Path of Truth and the injunctions of the Messengers of God Almighty, turning away from lusts and vain desires, belief in standing at Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection, and receiving recompense befitting one’s deeds. Divine Injunction as to administration of justice and the aforesaid values are treated in the blessed Verse in question.

The leader of the Muslim community is supposed to stand firm as to the tenets of his call rather than submit to people’s unlawful demands.

The blessed Verse is addressing the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

“O Muhammad! When the People of the Book entertain doubts as to the Divine source of the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an and your Divine Call owing to their illusions, do not desist from guiding them and propagation of the Islamic faith, but as per your Divine Call stand firm and strive hard on your way so that your doubts may turn into certainty. Do not follow their vain and concupiscent desires and speak according to their beliefs and ways.”

It is quoted from Tibyan that Mughayra asked the Noble Prophet (S) to desist from his call and he would grant half of his property to him in return.

‘Utba also asked the Noble Prophet (S) to desist from his call and he will marry his daughter to him. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed. However, the blessed Verse is applicable in other issues as well.

God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S):

"Say that you are submitted to My Command and I shall act according to Qur'anic Injunctions since you are appointed to judge amongst them with justice."

The blessed Verse is apparently saying that the Noble Prophet (S) is appointed to establish harmony and consensus amongst people such that they all stand firm as to the true religion. Following imparting the Divine Message unto people and stood firm in imparting Divine Guidance and tolerated their wrong doing patiently but lost his hope in guiding them, he said:

"Your Lord and My Lord is Allah. We shall bear the consequences of our deeds as you shall bear yours. Now that you are provided with Divine decisive Argument, there remains no excuse for you in this world. There should exist neither enmity nor debates between us.

God Almighty shall assemble us on the Day of Resurrection and He shall judge between us and to Him shall return all things."

Surah al-Shura - Verse 16

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

16. And those who dispute concerning Allah, after they have accepted His Call, of no use is their dispute before their Lord and on them is Wrath, and for them will be a severe torment.

The Arabic word muhaja deriving from h-j-j ("to intend") indicates debate through which someone makes attempts at substantiating or refuting something.

When a certain path is substantiated and proven for someone, he is not supposed to desist from the same due to doubts and temptations. When one believes in someone, he is not supposed to be affected by rumors and let go of him.

When one perceives the path of intellection and Divine disposition, he is not supposed to engage in debates in that respect. The blessed Verse is a critique of those who enter into debates concerning the religion of God.

On the day of Covenant, man acknowledged His Lordship and he is not supposed to break his promise.

The other point is that those Jews and Christians who saw the attributes of the Seal of the Prophets (S) in their Scriptures and acknowledged the same but refuted his Divine Call afterwards may not produce Arguments as to the refutation of the Divine Call. Some of the People of the Book had converted to the Islamic faith but assumed that their former religions were better and said unto Muslims that their Scriptures and Prophets preceded the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and claimed their precedence and superiority.

Having acknowledged the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of Islam, their arguments may not be accepted by God Almighty but they shall be subject to Divine Wrath and severe torments in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse might as well allude to those who had acknowledged the Prophetic Call after decisive arguments were produced before them, but they engaged in debates concerning the religion of God Almighty and manner of its injunctions.

Resorting to their limited intellect, they claimed that certain injunctions could have been different. Such claims shall lead to Divine Wrath and excruciating torments.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 17

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ

17. It is Allah Who has sent down the Book in truth and the Balance. And what can make you know that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?

The Holy Qur'an has a very exalted Truth that aims at our happiness.

"The Hour"

is one of the attributes of Resurrection, since it shall arrive unexpectedly. The blessed Verse in question makes God Almighty known through His Book, the Holy Qur'an. It is Allah Who has revealed the Holy Qur'an in truth and has made its laws and injunctions according to the Balance.

Two attributes of the Holy Qur'an are also treated in this blessed Verse: the Truth of the Holy Qur'an and the fact that the Holy Qur'an is the Balance for assaying through which a distinction may be drawn between Truth and Falsehood.

Divine Names, Bounties, and Attributes are revealed through the Holy Qur'an and Qur'anic Verses indicate that it is revealed by Absolute Truth. In short, God Almighty gives further details about the Holy Qur'an since He reveals its inimitable Verses which are revealed by the Omniscient and All-Wise Lord.

On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an gives details about God Almighty, since it is known by Divine Beauteous Names and Attributes which are blessings through which we may have a name for truth and invoke and glorify Him by that Name.

"And what can make you know that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?"

The sentence is apparently a resumptive one reminding the Noble Prophet (S) that although he is the Messenger of Allah (S) and aware of the mysteries of creation, but the Hour of Resurrection is solely known by God Almighty.

In reply to disbelievers inquiring about the Hour of Resurrection, he is asked to say unto them that God Alone is aware of it and it may be close at hand.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 18

يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ أَلا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي ضَلالٍ بَعِيدٍ

18. Those who believe not therein seek to hasten it, while those who believe are fearful of it, and know that it is the very truth. Verily, those who dispute concerning the Hour are certainly in error far away.

When those in error have not gone too far away, they may be found and saved, but if they are too far away from the Straight Path, it will be hard or impossible to find and save them from error. Disbelievers and polytheists were always hasty in their judgments concerning Prophets' warnings against Resurrection and asked when such torments happen and why they are not realized.

The Arabic verbal form yumaruna designates persistence in doubt and

mushfiq ("fearful")

is cognate with shafaqat ("fear accompanied with precaution").

The blessed Verse is saying that since disbelievers did not believe in Resurrection, they were apparently mocking and said unto the Noble Prophet (S):

"O Muhammad! When Resurrection against which you warn us will happen."

However, believers were certain that Resurrection would happen as a consequence of which they always stood in awe as to its occurrence. Believers tread the path of vice and righteousness but those who doubt the happening of Resurrection are in error far away from the Straight Path and shall sink into the abyss of humility.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 19

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ

19. Allah is very Gracious and Kind to His servants. He gives provisions to whom He wills. And He is the All-Strong, the Omnipotent.

Grace embodies gentleness and consideration. Allah is Most Gracious, that is, He is All-Aware of the minutest affairs and is the Omnipotent Lord Who does anything with facility.[5]

Divine Omnipotence and Grace guarantee provision of sustenance for God's servants. Divine Might is Invincible.

Latif ("the Gracious")

is one of the Most Beauteous Names of God Almighty which is cognate with lutf ("gentleness, grace, compassion, mercy"). Grace may indicate that God Almighty provides everyone with his daily sustenance in a manner unbeknown to him.

Divine Grace and Bounty is infinite and enlarging and straitening provision solely depends upon Divine Will. Divine provision is based on His Wisdom and consideration of common good and He is the Omnipotent, the Dominant, and the Victorious.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 20

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

20. Whosoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his reward, and whosoever desires the reward of this world, We give him thereof, and he has no portion in the Hereafter.

The value of man's deeds depend upon his intentions as well as his long term and short term goals. All Rewards shall be granted by God Almighty. Such Rewards shall be granted proportionate to man's intention and choice.

The Arabic word harth indicates earning and acting as it is said fulanun yahrithu li-'ayalihi, i.e. so and so works to earn a living for his family. The agricultural land which is plowed for sowing is figuratively called harth, since benefits will be gained from working on it as farmers plow their land in autumn and sow the seeds such that they reap the crops in summer.

Act is likened to seeds, since they are supposed to be scattered onto the land, penetrate into it, remain there for some time, sprout through sunshine and irrigation, and grow and bear fruit and crops.

Likewise, righteous good deeds are sown in the farmland of man's soul and turn into permanent dispositions of mind through recurrently acting upon them and they will bear fruit in this world and/or the Hereafter. It should be known that any deed will bear fruit whose quality depends on intent and will of the agent.

One who sows the seeds of good deeds in the farmland of his heart and removes the weeds and impurities from it through the hoe of fearing God Almighty and irrigates it with the pure water of faith and devotion aspiring to reap the harvest in the Hereafter, he has done good deeds with perfect faith and devotion.

As God Almighty has said regarding expending in His Cause, He will reward him seven-hundredfold or more. To reap the crops of the good deeds in this world depends upon Divine Mercy and Grace, but it will entail being deprived of the portion of rewards to be granted by God Almighty in the Hereafter.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 21

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

21. Or have they partners with Allah [false deities] who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained? And had it not been for a decisive Word [as to giving respite to sinners], the matter would have been judged between them [through causing their perdition]. And verily, for the wrong doers there is an excruciating torment.

Man is in need of Divine Laws and such need may solely be met by God Almighty rather than anyone else. Divine Laws are solely realized through Divine Permission without which it shall be devoid of legitimacy and lawfulness.

Addressing his son, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Had your Lord had partners, messengers would have come to you from them."

The blessed Verse in question imparts the same sense:

"Have the partners whom you have associated with God Almighty sent you any religion?"

Concerning Divine respites, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) says:

"O Lord! My recompense for my first sin was Hellfire [but you granted me respite]."

The blessed Verse is a warning to disbelievers against institution of secular laws together with their satanic associates from amongst jinn and mankind without Divine Permission. Such act is so vicious that had there not been Divine Decree as to giving respites in this world and chastisement in the Hereafter, they would have afflicted Divine torments in this world as well.

There shall be excruciating torments for wrong doers who wrong their own selves and act upon laws besides Divine Laws. The blessed Verse may be applied to our own time in which some people legislate laws against Islamic laws and legislators should know that their wrong act shall entail painful torments.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 22

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ

22. You will see [on the Day of Resurrection] the wrong doers fearful of that which they have earned and it [chastisement] will surely befall them. But those who believe and do righteous deeds [will be] in the flowering meadows of the Gardens. They shall have whatsoever they desire with their Lord. That is the supreme Grace.

Resurrection is now invisible, but it is as if it is evident. Man's vicious deeds entail nothing other than Hellfire.

Although people of Paradise are believers and do righteous good deeds, but all those Favors are the consequences of Divine Bounties rather than the Rewards of their deeds.

The Arabic word rawda is applied to a place abounding in water and trees. Addressing the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verse says that the Prophet (S) sees wrong doers who are afraid of their acts and are aware of their the viciousness of their deeds, but they do not desist from committing evil deeds.

They are unaware of the fact that they will pay for the evil consequences of their evil deeds, as if their eyes and ears are filled with muddy water hindering them from perceiving the viciousness of their deeds.

"But those who believe and do righteous deeds [will be] in the flowering meadows of the Gardens. They shall have whatsoever they desire with their Lord."

The blessed Verse is explicitly saying that wrong doers' hearts are darkened by the viciousness of their deeds and they pay for the consequences of their sins in this world and the Hereafter; au contraire, committing righteous good deeds has illuminated believers' hearts as if they stroll in the meadows of Paradise and whatever they desire will be provided by their Lord. It is the consequence of their faith and righteous good deeds, but they will be granted the true reward on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 23

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَى وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْناً إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

23. That is [the great Bounty] whereof Allah gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous good deeds. Say [O Muhammad! Say unto people]: "No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives." And whoever earns a good righteous deed, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate [the deeds of those obedient to Him].

The preceding Verse treated of the Reward of beneficent believers, e.g. gardens in Paradise and attainment to all desires and Divine Bounties.

The blessed Verse in question is about the Reward of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who has guided hundreds of millions of people to these Gardens and Bounties. Giving a flower to someone as a gift requires a favor in return, delivering mankind requires a far greater Reward.

It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that all Prophets said that they did not expect any reward from anyone besides God Almighty, their Lord.

"That" (dhalika)

is a reference to the preceding blessed Verse, saying that the great Bounty promised to God fearing believers is God's glad tiding to His righteous servants as it is also reflected elsewhere[6] in the Holy Qur'an:

"For them are glad tidings, in the life of this world and that of the Hereafter."

In short, these Verses indicate that the perfect believer is happy in this world through the illuminations reflected on his heart at all times as if he is in Paradise.

The occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verses 23-26 is mentioned in Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan as per which it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that when he arrived in Medina, the pillars of the Islamic faith were fortified.

The Helpers (Ansar) said:

"We will go to the Noble Prophet (S) and will tell him if he has financial needs, our property will unconditionally be at your disposal."

When he was informed of their offer, the Verse:

"Tell them that I do not expect any remuneration but the love for my kith and kin"

was revealed.

The Noble Prophet (S) recited the blessed Verse to them and said:

"Love my relatives after my demise."

They left his presence with satisfaction and happiness, but hypocrites accused him of attributing his own claims to God Almighty saying that he expects them to be responsible to his relatives following his demise.

Then the next Verse was revealed:

"Why do you say that he attributed false claims to Allah?"

The Noble Prophet sent for them and recited the Verse to them. Some of them regretted their false claim, grieved, and wept.

Then the third Verse was revealed:

"But He is the One Who accepts the repentance of His servants."

The Noble Prophet (S) sent for them and bore them the glad tiding that their sincere repentance had been accepted by God Almighty.

To express the greatness of this Reward, the blessed Verse in question further adds:

"That is [the great Bounty] whereof Allah gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous good deeds."

Such glad tidings aim at alleviating the pains of obedience to God Almighty, struggling against concupiscent desires, and jihad against enemies. They also encourage them to proceed with more vigor in vicissitudes and hardships in this life for the attainment of Divine Satisfaction.

Since imparting the Divine Call by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) led some people to misunderstanding as to his expecting remunerations for the same, he is addressed thus:

"Say: 'I do not expect any reward from you for imparting the Divine Call but to love my relatives.'"

As it will be discussed in details below, love for his relatives alludes to the question of the Divine Guardianship and Leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) as descendants of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

It is actually the continuity of the Guardianship of the Noble Prophet (S) whose acknowledgement evidently leads to the happiness of mankind and they shall reap the rewards thereof.

It is worthy of note that Qur'anic exegets raise many a discussion and interpretation regarding the blessed Verse.

Taking an objective glance at such discussions and interpretations reveals that owing to diverse motives they have deviated from the fundamental meaning of the Verse and have opted for possibilities inconsistent with the contextual meaning of the Verse and narrative and historical evidence. All in all, three well-known interpretations have been provided for the Verse in question:

As mentioned above, the term dhawi al-qurba indicates the relatives of the Noble Prophet (S) and love for them may serve as a means of acknowledging the Imamate and leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) as descendants of the Noble Prophet (S) and as a support for imparting the Divine Call.

Some of the earlier exegets and all Shi'i ones have opted for the meaning in question and many a tradition have been narrated by Shi'i and Sunni scholars in this vein which will be mentioned below.

The blessed Verse intends to say that the Reward of Prophethood is to favor the affairs which call man unto nearness to God Almighty.

The interpretation opted by some of Sunni exegets is by no means consistent with the literal meaning of the Verse since taking this interpretations into account, the Verse would mean:

"I ask you to love obedience to God Almighty and develop a liking for it,"

whereas it is supposed to say that I expect you to obey God Almighty rather than love for God. Furthermore, there was not a single person among

the audience of the Verse who did not want to come closer to God, even polytheists were interested to approach God and they principally regarded idolatry as a means of the same.

The Verse intends to say that you have your relatives as the reward of Prophethood. Take care of your blood relatives. This interpretation is quite inconsistent with the Prophetic Call and its Reward, since loving one's relatives has nothing to do with assisting the Noble Prophet (S) and it may not be regarded as the Reward for imparting his Prophetic Call.

Now, the best way to further familiarize ourselves with the true contextual meaning of the Verse is to take into account other Qur'anic Verses.

It is reflected in many a Qur'anic Verse that Prophets expected no remuneration from people for imparting the Divine Message, but they solely expected God Almighty to Reward them. There are different interpretations about the Noble Prophet's (S) Reward. Mention is made of the Reward elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, for instance,

"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'Whatever reward I might have asked of you is ours. My Reward is from Allah only, and He is a Witness over all things'"[7]***;***

"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'I expect no reward from you for imparting the Divine Call unless from those who want to take the Path toward their Lord'";

"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this [the Prophetic Call], nor am I one of those who impose anything on you'"[8]**.**

Taking into account the three Verses and the One in question, we may easily make a conclusion: expectation of remuneration is totally negated in one of the Verses, but another says:

"unless from those who want to take the Path toward their Lord."

The third Verse says:

"The reward which I have asked from you is for your own selves."

Finally, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Loving [my] close relatives is the reward of my Prophetic Call,"

in other words, what he expects have the following characteristics: He is not supposed to reap the fruits of such love but such love paves their path toward God Almighty.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the continuity of the Prophetic doctrine by the Divine Guardians who are his Infallible successors and descendants.

The question of loving them serves as the basis of the nexus which is explicitly mentioned in the Verse.

It would be of interest to say that besides the Verse in question, the word: close relatives (qurba)

is attested fifteen times in the Holy Qur'an, but it is not known why some people insist that the word in this context designates "closeness to Allah" and thereby turn away from the denotative meaning as attested throughout the Holy Qur'an.

It is also noteworthy that the Verse further adds:

"And whoever earns a good righteous deed, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate [the deeds of those obedient to Him]."

The most exalted excellence for man is to obey Divine leaders, love them, proceed on their path, inquire about ambiguous issues and ask for their expositions, regard their deeds as the standards of his own, and set their manners as his models.

The aforesaid interpretation is substantiated by many a Prophetic tradition attested in Sunni and Shi'i sources which all indicate that the phrase

"close relatives"

is applied to his Ahl al-Bayt and his kith and kin, instances of which include:

In his Fada'il al-Sahaba, Ahmad narrates thus on the authority of Sa'id ibn Jubayr who in turn narrates from 'Amir:

"When the Verse

'Say [O Muhammad! Say unto people]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives'

was revealed, the Companions of the Prophet (S) said unto him:

'O Messenger of Allah! Who are your relatives whose love is incumbent upon us?'

He replied:

'Ali and Fatima and their two sons (as).'

He reiterated the sentence thrice."[9]

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) in Mustadrak al-Sahihayn that when Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (as), was martyred, Hasan ibn 'Ali delivered a sermon, in which he said:

"I am from a family whose love is incumbent upon all Muslims by God Almighty and He said unto His Prophet (as):

'Say [O Muhammad! Say unto people]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives.'

Acquisition of the good is a reference to being kind to Ahl al-Bayt."[10]

In his Durr al-Manthur under the Verse in question, Suyuti narrates from Mujahid who in turn narrates from Ibn 'Abbas that the Noble Prophet was asked as to the interpretation of the Verse:

"No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives"

and he replied:

"It means to say that preserve my right regarding my Ahl al-Bayt and be kind to them because of me."[11]

Thus it becomes evident that what is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas by others in a different manner as per which the Noble Prophet's (S) safety had been due to his relation to different Arab tribes is not certain since as mentioned above, counter-traditions have been narrated from Ibn 'Abbas.

In his Tafsir ("Exegesis"), Ibn Jarir Tabari narrates on the authorities of Sa'id ibn Jubayr and 'Umar ibn Shu'ayb that the Verse in question indicates the relatives of the Prophet (S).[12]

Quoting Hakim Haskani's (a well-known Sunni exeget and traditionist) Shawahid al-Tanzil, Tabarsi narrates from Abi Umama Bahili that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"God Almighty created Prophets from different trees, but He has created me and 'Ali (as) from the same tree. I am the trunk and 'Ali is the branch of the tree and Fatima (as) causes the tree to thrive and Hasan and Husayn (as) are the fruits thereof and the Shi'i, our followers, are its leaves…

Even if someone worships God Almighty between Safa and Marwa for three thousand years such that he will be likened to an old water skin but he fails to love us, God Almighty will cast him on his face onto the Fire."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the Verse:

"No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives."

It is worthy of note that the tradition was so well-known that the famous poet, Kumayt, alludes to it:

"We have found for you (the Family of the Noble Prophet) a Verse in HM Chapters which is interpreted by those who conceal their beliefs out of discretion in duress and it is explicitly expressed by those who evidently express their beliefs."[13]

Thus quotes Suyuti in al-Durr al-Manthur from Ibn Jarir who in his turn narrates on the authority of Abi Daylam:

"When 'Ali ibn al-Husayn was captured and held at the gate of Damascus, a certain man from Sham said:

"God bless that He killed and eradicated you."

'Ali ibn Husayn replied:

"Have you read the Qur'an?"

He said:

"Yes."

'Ali ibn Husayn inquired:

"Have you read the Chapter HM?"

He said:

"No."

'Ali asked him:

"Have you not read the Verse:

'No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives?'"

The man asked:

"Are you the ones referred to in the Verse?"

'Ali replied:

"Yes."[14]

In his Kashshaf, Zamakhshari quotes a tradition which is also cited on his authority by Fakhr Razi and Qurtubi in their exegetic works. The tradition explicitly expresses the excellence of the family of the Prophet (S) and the significance of the love for them, saying:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"One who passes away with the love of the family of Muhammad (S) is a martyr. Beware that such person passes away with repentance.

Beware that he passes away as a perfect believer. Beware that when he dies, the angel of death bears glad tidings to the people of Paradise and the angels in charge of questioning the deceased in purgatory bear him glad tidings.

Beware that such person will be taken to Paradise with respect such that a bride is taken to the bridegroom. Beware that two gates will be opened in his grave to Paradise. Beware that his grave shall be the place of worship for the angels of Mercy.

Beware that such person passes away according to the practice of the Muslim community. Beware that one who passes away with enmity against the family of the Prophet (S) will enter the desert of Resurrection with a sign on his forehead which reads:

'Disappointed from Divine Mercy.'

Beware that one who passes away with a grudge against the family of the Prophet (S) dies as a disbeliever. Beware that such person will not smell the fragrance of Paradise."[15]

It is worthy of note that that citing the tradition also quoted by the author of Kashshaf, Zamakhshari, Fakhr Razi further adds:

"The family of the Prophet (S) are those to whom they shall return, those people whose relationship is firmer and more perfect are regarded as the 'family' and it is evident that Fatima, 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as) had the firmest relationship with the Messenger of Allah (S).

This fact is substantiated by consecutively transmitted traditions. Thus it is incumbent upon us to call them as the family of the Prophet (S). Some people have different opinions regarding the meaning of 'family' (al). Some regard them as the close relatives of the Prophet (S) and some maintain that they are the Noble Prophet's (S) community.

If we take the former meaning as preferable the term exclusively refers to them, but if we take it as indicating those who acknowledged his Prophetic Call, the close relatives of the Messenger of God (S) are still regarded as his family. Therefore, in any case, they are the family of the Prophet (S), but there are differences of opinion as to the inclusion of people other than them."

Then Fakhr Razi proceeds to quote from Zamakhshari's Kashshaf:

"When the Verse was revealed, the Noble Prophet (S) was asked:

'O Messenger of God! Who are your relatives whose love is incumbent upon us?'

He replied:

''Ali, Fatima, and their two sons (as).'

Now it is evident that these four persons are the Noble Prophet's (S) close relatives and it behoves Muslims to pay deed respect to them."

Fakhr Razi further adds that there are different arguments substantiating the question:

The aforesaid clause:

"except to be kind to my close relatives"

whose manner of argumentation was discussed above.

The Noble Prophet (S) indubitably loved Fatima (as) and regarding whom he said:

"Fatima is a part of my body, what hurts her, hurts me."

According to consecutively transmitted traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), he loved 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as) which makes it incumbent upon all Muslims to love them, since the following Qur'anic Verses explicitly indicate the same:

"Follow him so that you may be guided"[16];

"And let those who oppose his commandments beware of Divine torment[17];

"Say [O Muhammad!]: "If you love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins"[18];

"Verily in the Messenger of Allah (S) you have a good example to follow19."

It would be a great honor to pray for the family (al), thereby the tashahhud part of daily prayers devoted to the invocation of Divine Presence closes with:

"O God! Bless Muhammad and his family, forgive Muhammad and his family."

Such honor is unprecedented for people besides the Noble Prophet's (S) family. Thus, the aforesaid arguments indicate that it is incumbent upon Muslims to love the Noble Prophet's (S) family.

Finally, Fakhr Razi closes his discussion on the same with the well-known lines by Shafi'i:

O rider heading to pilgrimage to Mecca

/ In a place close to Mina, the great centre for pilgrims' assembly, where rocks are gathered for symbolic lapidation of Satan (ramy jamara)

/ Stand and call unto all those praying at Khayf Mosque or are moving around,

/ Cry out at daybreak when pilgrims depart from Mash'ar toward Mina and flow like an immense and roaring river into the land of Mina

/ Call unto them that if the love for the family of the Noble Prophet (S) is heresy and apostasy, all jinn and mankind will bear witness that I am a heretic and an apostate.[20]

Thus is the exalted state of the family of the Noble Prophet (S) whom we ask to intercede with God Almighty on our behalf and whom we regard as our leaders and guides in matters of religion in this world and as our models in life. We regard their Imamate as the continuity of the Prophetic Call.

It is worthy of note that in addition to the aforesaid traditions, there are many other traditions mentioned in Islamic sources concerning the same issue; however, owing to concision and making solely mention of exegetic dimensions, mention was made above of seven traditions.

It is also noteworthy that the tradition in question is attested in theological sources, e.g. Ihqaq al-Haqq and its detailed commentary and also in approximately fifty Sunni sources. Such attestation explicitly bears witness to the prevalence of the tradition in Sunni as well as Shi'i sources.

In terms of traditions, Shi'i and Sunni sources unanimously reveal that the blessed Verse in question is revealed concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) family (Ahl al-Bayt) loving them is obligatory and enmity against them is forbidden.

Now, mention will be made of the Sunni sources regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question and the obligation of loving the Noble Prophet's (S) family: Bukhari's Sahih, section six concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question; Muslim's Sahih, section five regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question; Tirmidhi's Sahih, vol. 2, p. 308; Hilyat al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 201; Kifayat al-Talib, chapter 11, p. 90; Musnad al-Sahaba, section 10, p. 71; Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 1, p. 125; Fada'il Ibn Hanbal, tradition 263; Ghayat al-Maram, chapter 5, p. 306; Ibn Maghazili's Manaqib, tradition 355; Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 168; Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 2, p. 339; Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba', p. 25; Sawa'q, p. 101; Ibn 'Asakir, no. 181, Ta'rikh Dimashq, vol. 37, p. 43; Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 434; Ta'rikh Isbahan, vol. 2, p. 165; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 208; Fara'id al-Simtayn, chapter 26, simt 2, tradition 425; Maqatil al-Talibiyin, p. 50; Tafsir Furat, p.70; Taysir al-Matalib, p. 120; Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p. 79; Tafsir Tabari, vol. 25, p. 25; Usd al-Ghaba, vol. 5, p. 367; Ta'rikh Baghdad, vol. 2, p. 146; al-Durr al-Manthur, under the blessed Verse in question; Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 172; Kunuz al-Haqa'iq, vol. 5, Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba, p. 18; Nur al-Absar, p. 103.

To sum up, all Sunnis and Shi'is, friends and foes, are unanimous in saying that it is incumbent upon all Muslims to love and support the Noble Prophet's (S) family and his descendents.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 24

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِباً فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

24. Or say they: "He has invented a lie against Allah?" If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart. And Allah wipes out falsehood and establishes the truth by His Word. Verily, He knows well what [secrets] are in the breasts [of men].

Regarding the question of Prophetic Call disbelievers and heretics said that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) was a man like them and his Prophetic Call was an accusation against God Almighty; likewise they voiced the same accusation regarding the question of Imamate.

Those who did not intend to regard the love for Ahl al-Bayt as a Prophetic Call said:

"Muhammad invents lies against God by saying that his reward is that people love his next of kin."

The blessed Verse in question is saying had the Messenger (S) invented a lie against Allah, He would vent His Wrath upon him by sealing up his heart.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question resumes the subject matter of the preceding Verses concerning Prophetic Call and the Reward thereof, love for his next of kin and the Ahl al-Bayt.

In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that they do not acknowledge Divine Revelation, but say that He invents lies against God and his words are the fruits of his imagination:

("If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart").

The blessed Verse is in fact an allusion to the well-known logical argument as per which if someone claims to be the Prophet and works miracles and signs and is supported by God, but invents lies against Him, Divine Wisdom will necessitate that the miracles and His Support be taken away and he will be disgraced as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[21]:

"And if he had forged a false saying concerning Us, We surely would have seized him by his right hand [and would have cut the vessel of his heart]."

It is also noteworthy that one of the false accusations made by disbelievers and polytheists was that they said that he had regarded the love for his kith and kin as the reward for his Prophetic Call and had thus forged a false saying concerning God. Taking into account the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question rejects such false claim.

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is not restricted to this sense, since the Holy Qur'an reveals that the enemies of the Noble Prophet (S) forged the same false claim as to the entirety of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[22]:

"Or do they say: 'He [Muhammad (S)] has forged it?' Say: 'Bring then a Chapter like unto it and call upon whomsoever you can besides Allah, if you are truthful.'"

The following Verse also puts further emphasis on the same:

"Allah effaces falsehood"[23].

It rests with God Almighty to disgrace falsehood and make truth appear. Thus, He never allows anyone to forge a lie against Him and render him assistance and allow him to make miracles at the same time.

It is not imaginable that the Noble Prophet (S) was able to forge a lie against God Almighty without His being Aware of the same, since:

"He is All-Aware of the secrets in breasts."

As mentioned above under the exegesis of 35:38, the word dhat is not employed in the Arabic tongue in the sense of essence and truth of things, but it is a philosophical term.[24]

The point is that the word is used in the sense of

"possessor, having."

Thus, the meaning of the last Verse[25] is that God Almighty is All-Aware of the thoughts and beliefs predominating hearts since He is the Possessor of the same. It is a delicate allusion to predominance of thought over the hearts and souls of mankind.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 25

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

25. And He it is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do.

It solely rests with God Almighty to accept the repentance of His servants and forgive their sins. There are no deadlocks in Islam and the path of return is open at all times.

God Almighty forgives all sins, but repentance is supposed to accompany change of words and attitudes unless it would be a kind of dissimulation and hypocrisy known by God Almighty.

Since God Almighty leaves the path of return open at all times to His servants, following reproaches as to sinners' and polytheists' vicious deeds, the Holy Qur'an repeatedly makes reference to the path of repentance at all times and adds:

"He is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins."

The point is that if man pretends repentance but keeps on committing vicious deeds, he should know that nothing is concealed from Divine Omniscience, since

"He knows what you do."

It was mentioned above that following the Revelation of the Verse of loving Prophet's (S) family, some hypocrites and those of frail faith said that Muhammad (S) had invented a lie against God intending to belittle them before his kith and kin following which the Verse:

"He has invented a lie against Allah?" If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart"

was revealed; as a consequence of which some of them regretted their words, grieved, and wept. Thus, the blessed Verse in question was revealed to bear them glad tidings that if they sincerely repent, God Almighty will forgive their sin.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 26

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

26. And He answers [the invocations of] those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and gives them increase of His Bounty. And as for the disbelievers, theirs will be a severe torment.

God Almighty answers the invocations of those who believe and do righteous good deeds. It is worthy of note, however, that answering their invocations depends upon faith and doing righteous good deeds.

Thus it is said in the blessed Verse in question:

"And He answers [the invocations of] those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and gives them increase of His Bounty. And as for the disbelievers, theirs will be a severe torment."

Taking into account the blessed Verse

"Invoke Me and I shall answer your invocations"

encompassing all men, it becomes apparent that answering invocations is solely restricted to believers. One whose heart is enlightened through faith and monotheism and obeys Divine Commands, God Almighty turns to him and answers his prayers.

It is reflected in traditions that one who approaches God Almighty one span, He will approach him one cubit:

("One who is for God, God is for him").

Finally, mention will be made of two traditions. Regarding the invocation in question, Imam Baqir (as) says:

"A believer's invocation for his brother in faith shall be answered by God Almighty, since He will say that owing to his love for his brother in faith, the invoker and the one for who he invokes will be granted what they require."[26]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that:

"gives them increase of His Bounty"

makes a reference to the right of believers interceding with God Almighty on behalf of others.[27]

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, opening of the Chapter in question.
2. 40-46
3. 4:59
4. 15:21
5. Tafsir al-Mizan.
6. 10:64
7. 34:47
8. 38:86
9. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, p. 2. Qurtubi also cites the tradition under the Verse in question (vol. 8, p. 5843).
10. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 2. Muhibb al-Din Óabari in Dhakha'ir (p. 37) and Ibn Hajar in his Sawa'iq (p. 101) have also cited the tradition.
11. al-Durr al-Manthur, under the Verse in question, vol. 6, p. 7.
12. Tafsir Óarabi, vol. 25, pp. 16-17.
13. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 29.
14. al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 7.
15. Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 4, pp. 220-221; Fakhr Razi, vol. 27, pp. 165-166; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5843. Tafsir Tha'labi, under the blessed Verse in question, apud al-Muraja'at, no. 19.
16. 7:158
17. 24:63
18. 3:31
19. 33:21
20. The Tafsir by Fakhr Razi, vol. 27, p. 166.
21. 69:44-46
22. 10:38
23. 17:11
24. Raghib's Mufradat.
25. 35:38
26. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
27. Majma' al-Bayan; Nur al-Thiqalayn.

Surah al-Shura, Verses 27 - 53

Surah al-Shura - Verse 27

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

27. And if Allah were to enlarge the provision for His servants, they would surely rebel in the earth, but He sends down by measure as He wills. Truly! He is in respect of His servants the Well-Aware, the All-Seer.

In the same manner that Divine Bounties are His Favors, depravations are at times Divine Favors. In the same vein, enlarging provision for servants leads at times to their neglect, rebellion, and exceeding limits.

Many a servant have trodden the way to perdition owing to mundane possessions. as sending down provision by measure impedes corruption, enlarging the same and granting respites to the affluent serve as trials.

Thus provision is measured as per a general rule, but man's provision may be enlarged as a means of trial.[1]

Thus, the blessed Verse in question guides believers saying that they should not be saddened by the restriction of their provision, since they are supposed to know that their interest lies in the same and it is preordained by Divine Will and Wisdom that some should have access to less means, since the increase in their provision will lead to the disobedience of the concupiscent soul whetting their vain desires for mundane possessions and making them veer off the path of Divine Law.

Poverty is one of the means of making man approach God Almighty, since the poor believe in the measurement of Divine provision and they are at all times preoccupied by the same and turn to Him and seek their provision from Him.

Au contraire, worldly possessions and affluence may preoccupy man with attending to concupiscent desires and he is thus made remote from the Truth, since God Almighty is All-Aware of the affairs of His servants.

He restricts the provision and enlarges the same through His Divine Wisdom. It is worthy of note that healthful social relations are prerequisites for rational and well measured life style. Divine Bounties are granted as per Divine Wisdom and Discretion rather than human desires.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 28

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

28. And He it is Who sends down the rain after they have despaired and spreads His Mercy. And He is the Protector, Worthy of all praise.

Rain is a manifestation of Divine Mercy and decrease in the amount of rain impedes man's disobedience.

The Arabic word ghayth is applied to fruitful rain whereas the word matar designates any kind of rain, fruitful or harmful, as it is reflected elsewhere[2] in the Holy Qur'an:

"And indeed they have passed by the town [of Prophet Lot (as)] on which was rained the evil rain."

The blessed Verse in question says that one of the Signs of Divine Bounty and Mercy is that you were desperate at the time of famine, but He sent down rain for you and distributed His Mercy so that your provision may be enlarged and your trees and crops may thrive. He is you Friend whom you are supposed to obey in return for His Bounties and you are supposed to praise your Lord.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 29

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ

29. And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and whatever moving [living] creatures He has dispersed in them both. And He is Omnipotent over their assembling whenever He wills.

Creation of the heavens, the earth, and moving living creatures is one of Divine Signs. All creatures in the heavens, on the earth, and those in between them from inanimate beings, plants, and animals dispersed in them are all Signs of the Existence of the Necessary Existent Being and the Most Beauteous Names indicating His Omniscience, Omnipotence, Will, Unity, and so on serve as Attributes of the Glory and Beauty of the Creator and the Provider of the world, since we may know the Originator of creation through such intelligible and praise and worship the Lord.

The word dabba may indicate animals and mankind that will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection and the prepositional phrase:

fihi-ma (“whatever in them both”)

may include all creatures in the heavens as well, like angels and other creatures whose knowledge of existence rests with God Almighty.

All these creatures existing between the heavens and the earth shall be assembled on the Day of Resurrection through Divine Will.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 30

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

30. And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons many [of your sins].

There exists a nexus between man’s conduct and the vicissitudes of life;

(“And whatever of misfortune befalls you”).

His problems are the consequences of some of his vicious deeds rather than all of them, since God Almighty forgives many sins committed by man;

(“And He pardons many [of your sins”).

The blessed Verse is a warning to sinners that whatever hardship or misfortune befalling on them is the consequence of their deeds.

It is a reference to the fact that vicious deeds breed undesirable consequences which are different from the recompense of wrong doing to inferiors whose venomous fruits are reaped in a brief period of time, as it is imagined by the short-sighted that the recompense to which sinners are warned is not solely restricted to their recompense in this world but it is far less than the one to be measured at the Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection.

“And He pardons many [of your sins]”

indicates that many a sin will be forgiven by God Almighty since He is the Glorious, of permanent Bounties, and Pre-Eternal of Beneficence (qadim al-ihsan), such that He pardons many a sin committed in a number of years with one single repentance.

It should not be imagined that whoever is afflicted with some affliction or hardship is paying for his evil deeds, since the blessed Verse in question addresses sinners who are afflicted by misfortunes as the consequences of their sins.

It is even out of Divine Mercy that worldly afflictions alleviate their torments in the Hereafter. According to a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of Imam ‘Ali (as), the Messenger of God (S) is reported as saying:

“It is the best of Verses revealed in the Divine Book. O ‘Ali (as), there is no scratch nor falling down unless it is the consequence of committing sins and God is Greater than chastising those who have committed sins in this world but they were forgiven by Him. He is so Just that He never again chastises sinners who have been chastised in this world.”[3]

It is however worthy of note that the infallible Prophets and Imams (as) suffer from afflictions in this world and thereby their exalted state shall be promoted and such afflictions are not the consequences of their evil deeds.

In this vein, the blessed Imam (as) is quoted as saying as per a tradition cited in the book titled Wafi, the Chapter on believers’ afflictions, that the more believer’s faith grows, the more his afflictions will be. Thus, whoever is nearer to God Almighty is afflicted with more afflictions.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 31

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلا نَصِيرٍ

31. And you cannot escape from Allah [and leave His Dominance] in the earth and besides Allah you have neither any protector nor any helper.

Man pays for the consequences of his evil deeds but he may not harm God Almighty in the least. The motive behind many a vicious deed is to seek protectors and helpers, but the truth is that God Almighty is the true Protector.

The blessed Verse is an objection raised against polytheists and disbelievers warning them that they are not supposed to be able to escape from God Almighty and leave His Dominance through their evil deeds and words.

The blessed Verse aims at encouraging worship and obedience to God Almighty and discouraging disobedience saying that it is solely God Almighty Who is Able to ward off torment and He is the only Protector Who grants Succor.[4]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 32 - 33

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلامِ

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآياتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

32. And among His Signs [of Omnipotence] are the ships [sailing] in the sea like mountains.

33. If He wills, He causes the wind to cease, then they would become motionless on the back [of the sea]. Truly, in this are Signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for everyone patient and grateful.

The Arabic word al-jawar is the plural form of jariya designating a sailing ship and the phrase ka-al-a'lam indicates colossal ships or moving icebergs. The role played by wind in nature is also noteworthy.

Respiration of living beings, movement of ships and clouds, pollination of plants, and modification of cold and heat all depend upon blowing of wind and it is one of the sources of energy in modern times.

The word sabbar is attested four times in the Holy Qur'an all instances of which are followed by the word:

shakur ("grateful").

Such coincidence bears testimony to the fact that they play a significant role together. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that faith has two branches: patience and gratitude.[5]

The blessed Verses in question are saying that Divine Signs of Omnipotence and Mercy include the ships as tall as mountains sailing in the seas but if the wind does not blow upon Divine Will, no one will be able to move such colossal ships in the sea.

Ships sailed in seas in former times, so if the wind blew gently and the sea happened to be calm, ships could easily reach their destinations. Nonetheless, it was quite perilous for ships to sail in stormy seas in thunder and lightning. If there was no wind, ships would stay still in water.

As a consequence, the blessed Verse reminds men that they are all Divine Signs of Omnipotence and whenever He wills, the wind blows gently and ships with their passengers and their possessions reach destinations safely;

("Truly, in this are Signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for everyone patient and grateful").

How similar is mundane life to a ship in water. The sea is agitated at times and man is perplexed and entangled with vicissitudes and at times, it is stagnant and man is perplexed as what to do. At times, Divine Mercy is granted on him and he finds serenity.

It is as if it serves as a reminder reminding men that these are Divine Signs of Omnipotence. He makes the wind blow whenever He wills. It may be likened to man's life wherein at times he is perplexed when he finds everything stagnant and wonders as what measure to take. At times Divine Mercy is granted to him and he finds serenity.

The blessed Verses evidently guide those whose inner eyes have opened and they see these alterations in Divine Signs of Omnipotence providing them with the admonition that they are supposed to be quite patient, tolerant, and grateful in the face of ups and down.

Such people benefit from what happens to them and they will be rescued from the sea of perplexity, since they know that what is preordained for them is through Divine Wisdom. Those who are submerged in the agitated sea of concupiscent desires will be drowned unless Divine Mercy rescue them from the abyss of the world and guide them to the shore of deliverance.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 34 - 35

أَوْ يُوبِقْهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ

34. Or He may destroy them [the ships] because of that which their [owners] have earned. And He pardons many [people and does not drown them].

35. And those who dispute as regards Our Ayat [Signs, Verses] may know that there is no place of refuge for them.

The verbal form:

("He destroys them")

derives from the root w-b-q ("destroy") and it is ad hoc employed in the sense of "drown." The word mahis, deriving from h-'-s ("flee, escape"), designates "way of return and deliverance."

To depict Divine Glory, the blessed Verses in question further add:

"Or He may destroy them [the ships] because of that which their [owners] have earned."

As it was reflected in the preceding Verses, human afflictions are often the consequences of his own deeds; however, man finds Divine Mercy;

"and He pardons many [people]."

If He does not grant His Mercy, no one besides the Infallible Prophets and Imams and also those pure and sincere at heart may not stay away from Divine Chastisement, as it is reflected elsewhere[6] in the Holy Qur'an:

"And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a living being on the face of the earth, but He grants them respite to an appointed time and when their term comes, indeed Allah is the All-Seer of His servants."

God Almighty is Omnipotent and may impede winds from blowing so that ships stay standstill in the heart of oceans and He is All-Able to turn winds into severe storms to crush colossal ships and roll them on gigantic waves, but His All-Inclusive Mercy impedes the same.

Verse 35 says:

"And those who dispute [and rise in denial] as regards Our Ayat [Signs, Verses] may know that there is no place of refuge for them [but Divine Pure Essence]."

Such people may not be granted Divine Forgiving, since they willfully rise against him and persist in their enmity and obduracy. They are deprived of His emanating fountainhead of Forgiving and Mercy and may not find deliverance from His torment.

As mentioned above, the word mahis, deriving from h-'-s ("flee, escape"), designates "way of return and deliverance." The word mahis denotes place and is employed in the sense of place of refuge.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 36

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

36. So whatever you have been given is but [a transient] enjoyment for this worldly life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.

The preceding Verses treated of disputes and the blessed Verse in question evidently reveals that disputes spring from attachment to this worldly life which is not more than a transient enjoyment.

However, it is worthy of note that the blessed Verse addresses mankind saying that whatever God Almighty gives them from worldly possessions, knowledge, and other things is to benefit from this world.

In other words, man is granted Bounties so as to proceed on the path of betterment, but whatever is with God Almighty, e.g. otherworldly Bounties, true knowledge, and everlasting life, is far better and intransient for those who regard God Almighty, their Lord and Provider, as their refuge and rely on His Grace.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 37

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ

37. And those who avoid the grave sins and vicious deeds, and when they are angry, forgive.

The preceding Verse treated of faith and putting one's trust in God Almighty both of which are attached to the heart. The blessed Verse in question treats of believers' practical strategies.

What are grave sins (kaba'ir al-ithm)? In his Tahrir al-Wasila, Imam Khomeini (May God Almighty sanctify his noble spirit) in discussing the qualifications of the Imam leading a congregational prayer states that it is incumbent upon such Imam to abstain from committing grave sins which include any sin for committing which the Holy Qur'an promises torment, or those against which there are strict injunctions, or those for which there exist arguments bearing testimony to the fact that they are on a par with or worse than grave sins, or the ones which are deemed as such by intellection, or those regarded as such by the common run of believers, or there exists certain reason to regard them likewise.

Then, he proceeds to enumerate a number of instances, including:

1. Despair of Divine Mercy
2. Forging lies against Allah and His Noble Prophet (S)
3. Homicide and fornication
4. Accusing a married woman of a groundless imputation
5. Desertion at the time of war
6. Being cursed and disinherited by one's parents
7. Breaking off all relations with relatives
8. Practicing magic
9. Fornication
10. Sodomy
11. Transgressing the rights of the orphan
12. Withholding truth
13. Bearing false testimony
14. Breaking one's promise
15. Drinking alcoholic drinks

16. Overstepping the stipulations of a will
17. Usury
18. Gambling
19. Stinting or scrimping in selling something
20. Consumption of pork and corpse
21. Bearing wrong-doers assistance and relying on them
22. Extravagance and prodigality
23. Withholding people's rights
24. Forging lies
25. Arrogance
26. Treachery and disloyalty
27. Backbiting
28. Underestimation of the excellence of pilgrimage to Mecca
30. Failing to establish of daily prayers
31. Withholding religious alms tax (zakat)
32. Persistence in committing lesser sins
33. Preoccupation with libidinous pleasures
34. Associating partners to God Almighty
35. Theft
36. Consumption of blood
37. Consumption of corpse
38. Consumption of the meat of an animal at whose slaughter the Name of God Almighty was not uttered or the one slaughtered by non-Muslims
39. Bearing false testimony
40. Feeling safe against Divine Scheme
41. Bearing wrong-doers assistance
42. Perjury
43. Fraudulence in transactions and entertaining hatred and stealing from the war booty before its distribution
44. Waging war against favorites of God Almighty

The blessed Verse in question treats of the exalted states of those who believe in God Almighty and put their trust in their Lord knowing that what is provided for them with their Lord is far better and enduring than the limited material possessions with which disbelievers are provided.

It is also worthy of note that it is an attribute of believers that they abstain from committing grave sins and vicious deeds and forgive others when they are in a rage against them.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 38 - 39

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ

38. And those who answer the Call of their Lord, establish prayers, [conduct] their affairs by consultation, and expend of what We have bestowed upon them.

39. And those who when an oppressive wrong is done to them [do not surrender but] seek succor.

Attending to Divine Lordship enthuses man to act upon Divine Injunctions. Those who love establishing prayers and expending in the Cause of Allah shall reap better and enduring Bounties in the Hereafter.

Talha and Zubayr said unto Imam ‘Ali (as):

“We support you provided that you seek our consultation regarding all issues, since we are different from others.”

The Noble Imam (as) replied:

“I look into the Book of Allah and Prophetic traditions and act upon them. I have no need for your consultation in this respect; however if I come to issues for which I could not find any argument thereto and feel the need to seek your consultation, I will do likewise.”

Verse 38 lays emphasis on consultation in the administration of society hence the designation of the Chapter, Shura (“consultation”). A number of traditions will be cited hereunder regarding consultation.[7]

“Consult with pious scholars, those who fear God Almighty who prefer the Hereafter to worldly possessions. Consult with the wise who are knowledgeable and experienced. Do not consult with the avaricious, the timid, and the greedy.

Consult with those who are truthful and have no attachments. Reveal your secrets unto them so that they may present their comprehensive and complete opinions. Consultation with the benevolent wise leads to growth and Divine Blessing. Regarding your affairs, consult with one who possesses five excellences: sensibility, knowledge, experience, benevolence, and fear of God Almighty.”[8]

It is worthy of note that one is supposed to seek consultation regarding the affairs of people, but one is not supposed to do likewise concerning Divine matters, e.g. Resurrection, Imamate, and worship of God. Establishment of prayers is a Divine Covenant and believers are supposed to keep their promise without seeking consultation.

Imamate and leading the Muslim community are also Divine Covenants, since Abraham (as) invoked God Almighty and asked Him to appoint his offspring to lead the community and God Almighty answered to him:

“Leadership and Imamate are My Covenants and appointment of individuals to the same is dependent upon My Will rather than your invocation, since wrong-doers do not deserve leadership.”

Thus, we should surrender to Him in terms of the leadership of the Muslim community, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur’an,

“Indeed, I appoint you as the leader of people.”

Imamate depends upon Divine Will, but consultation regards people’s social affairs rather than Injunctions and Divine Laws. It is noteworthy that that Islam is a comprehensive and complete religion in terms of ideological, ethical, social, economic, religious, and political issues. The present tense indicating progression is employed to express such characteristics.[9]

Other characteristics of those who believe in God and in Whom they put their trust is that they act upon Divine Injunctions and establish prayers. In establishing their prayers, they seriously observe the outward aspects, e.g. the order of their parts and conditions, and the inward aspects, e.g. sincerity

and presence of mind and all the affairs that lead to the acceptance of their acts by God Almighty.

Believers also consult with each other and act upon each other's discretion. They do not act opinionatedly. Consultation is fruitful in consulting with the wise and scholars since it leads to favorable consequences.

Besides, it breeds friendship amongst believers, since they trust each other in their secrets, keep company with them, and seek their own good from them. Furthermore, believers provide others with the material possession, knowledge, recognition, and rank which are all granted to them by God Almighty.

They expend their material possessions in the Cause of Allah through bearing aid to the poor and the miserable. They make use of their power and rank to assist the oppressed and the needy.

Verse 39 is saying that it is a characteristic of believers who take vengeance upon disbelieving wrong-doers when they are wronged by them. They never surrender to their opponents rather they struggle against them valiantly such that they defeat them, since the humility of Muslims is on a par with that of the Islamic faith.

It is worthy of note that it is incumbent upon Muslims to defend themselves with seeking aid from believers. Silence against being wronged is forbidden. It is incumbent upon Muslims to forgive believers but believers are supposed to defend themselves against wrong-doers and seek aid from other believers

("forgive," "seek succor").

Surah al-Shura - Verses 40 - 41

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

40. The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah. Indeed, He likes not the wrong doers.

41. And indeed whosoever seeks succor [for compensation] after he has suffered wrong for such there is no blame against them.

One may take just vengeance against the transgression of his rights;

("The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof");

however, one who is powerful enough to take vengeance but he forgives and makes reconciliation shall be granted a great Reward;

("but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah").

The clause;

"his reward is with Allah"

is attested twice in the Holy Qur'an; an instance of which[10] regards Meccan Emigrants (Muhajirun) and the other instance concerns forgiving the evil deeds committed by others attested in the blessed Verse in question. Thus, it is evident that the recompense for forgiving and making reconciliation is on a par with emigration toward Allah.

The blessed Verse 40 is saying that believers are such that if someone wrongs them, they take a well-measured vengeance upon them and a believer who forgives the wrong done to him by his brother in faith shall be granted a great Reward by God Almighty, since Allah does not favor wrong-doers.

Verse 41 is saying that one who takes his revenge upon someone who has wronged him shall stay unharmed by the Muslim community nor shall he be chastised nor reproached for his vengeance.

It is everyone's legitimate right to take revenge upon the wrong-doer since it is not reproached in this world nor will it be recompensed in the Hereafter. However, if he forgives the wrong-doer, he shall be rewarded by God Almighty.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 42 - 43

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

42. The way [of blame] is only against those who oppress men and rebel in the earth without justification; for such [wrong-doers] there will be an excruciating torment.

43. And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives [the wrong-doer] that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah.

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an[11] that

"No ground of complaint can there be against good-doers."

It was also reflected in the preceding Verse that the oppressed are not subject to reproach. The blessed Verse 42 is saying that wrong-doers are to be reproached. Islam is a comprehensive religion that recognizes the rights of the oppressed and also leaves room for forgiving. Verses 41 and 42 express the states of the wrong-doers and the wronged.

According to the Qur'anic Verse:

"Thus the one who wrongs you, you may take your revenge upon them"

when believers take revenge upon wrong-doers proportionate to the wrong done to them, they shall not be chastised by believers since they have attained their right. Nonetheless, those who wrong people and make mischief on the earth without justification are supposed to be chastised by believers and an excruciating torment is in store for wrong-doers.

Verse 43 is saying that one who is patient and forgives believers possesses determination and excellences.

The blessed Verse may allude to the fact that those who have been wronged by others and failed to attain to their rights have been patient. Such people possess determination since it requires a strong and confident soul to confront hardships and persevere in making efforts to achieve one's goals.

Such were Arch-Prophets (as) so strong and perseverant that they could bear the wrongs done to them by people, but they never make attempts at taking their revenge upon their enemies unless they were divinely appointed to wage war against disbelievers in order to support religion.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 44

وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَى مَرَدٍّ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

44. And whomsoever Allah sends astray [and abandons him in his error], for him there is no protector for him. And you will see the wrong-doers when they behold the torment, they will say: "Is there any way of return [to the world]?"

Transgression of people's rights entails deprivation from Divine Guidance and entanglement with the abyss of error, perplexity, and remorse. Those who are in error are supposed to know that no power shall deliver them from error.

They are those who are not guided through Divine Guidance. One who voluntarily turns away from Truth and failed to be guided by God Almighty shall proceed the way toward the abyss of humility and error and he will have neither friends nor protectors.

The Noble Prophet's (S) heart was so enlightened by Divine Light that he could notice that disbelievers would be encompassed by Hell and was also able to see that upon tasting Divine torment in the Hereafter, they would desperately inquire if they could return to the world and compensate for their evil deeds.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 45

وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَاشِعِينَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلا إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُقِيمٍ

45. And you will see them brought forward to it [Hell] made humble by disgrace, [and] looking with stealthy glance. And those who believe will say: "Truly, the losers are they who lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, the wrong doers will be in a lasting torment.

Those who are arrogant today shall be in disgrace tomorrow. The fright caused by noticing the Resurrection will make evil-doers lose their eye-sight.

The blessed Verse in question addresses the Noble Prophet (S) and says:

"You also notice the state of wrong-doers who wronged themselves and were deprived of Divine Guidance. Now it is the time that they tasted Divine torment.

They will be so desperate, humbled, and disgraced that they will be afraid of taking a glance at Hellfire but look at stealthily. When believers who are saved from torment see the torment of disbelievers, they say these are the losers who spent their mundane life in vain instead of gaining benefits from their transactions.

They are losers and together with their adherents fall into the abyss of Hell. The people of the world are supposed to be aware that disbelieving and polytheist wrong-doers shall remain in torment and Hell everlastingly."

Surah al-Shura - Verse 46

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

46. And they will have no protectors to help them other than Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray, for him there is no way [of deliverance].

The blessed Verse in question is saying that polytheists and disbelievers who invoked idols and other objects of worship to intercede on their behalf and assumed that they would be effective in warding off torment in their time of desperate need were in error unaware of the truth that there is no friend nor support to deliver them from torment and whoever failed to find the path to happiness through Divine Guidance will have no other way of deliverance.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 47

اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ

47. Answer the Call of your Lord before there comes from Allah a Day which cannot be averted. You will find no refuge on that Day nor will there be for you any denying [of your sins].

Acting upon Divine Injunctions leads to our growth.

Thus, we are supposed to obey our Provider;

("Answer to the Call of your Lord").

Following Divinely appointed Prophets preserves man from incurring loss. The preceding Verses treated of losers and the blessed Verse in question says that the solution lies in obedience to God Almighty and serving Him.

Two possible interpretations have been provided regarding the contextual meaning of

"there comes from Allah a Day which cannot be averted":

1. Sinners may not return to the world.

2. That Day will indubitably come and it may not be averted. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question addresses mankind.

They are asked to answer the Divine Call and acknowledge and act upon the Injunctions Divinely revealed to His Prophet (S) before you miss the opportunity of saving righteous good deeds in this world for the Day of desperation.

The Resurrection Day shall come whereon there shall not be any return for anyone, since losers have actually spent in vain the faculty of perfection.

They there shall be no refuge to be sought since they had all Divine Decisive Arguments available to them but they knowingly denied the Prophetic Call and the Truth of the Holy Qur'an. They may not deny their disbelief at the Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 48

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظاً إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلاغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْأِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْأِنْسَانَ كَفُورٌ

48. But if they turn away [do not be sad, since] We have not sent you [O Muhammad] as a protector over them [to make them believe]. Your duty is

to convey [the Message]. Indeed, when We cause man to taste of Mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat [and neglects his duties]; but when some ill befalls them because of the deeds which their hands have sent forth [they consign Divine Bounties to oblivion and] then verily, man [becomes] ingrate!

The Noble Prophet's (S) duty was to impart Divine Call rather than make people believe in God Almighty. Mercy is from God Almighty but afflictions are the consequences of man's vicious deeds.

To console His Messenger (S) deeply concerned with disbelievers' denial of his Call, God Almighty bids unto him to not be sad since He did not appoint him to watch over their deeds rather his duty solely lies in guiding them to the Strait Path of Divine Laws and impart his Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verse closes with human vices saying that whenever God Almighty makes man taste of His Mercy and Bounties, he rejoices and whenever he is afflicted with afflictions as the evil consequences of his vicious deeds, he becomes ingratiate, since it is a human characteristic that he is ingratitude for Blessings.

It is his natural disposition that even if he rejoices Blessings for a hundred years but is afflicted with some unfavorable circumstance, he will forgive those Blessings and Favors and complaints of afflictions and becomes ingratitude for Divine Blessings.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 49 - 50

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَاثاً وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ

أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَاناً وَإِنَاثاً وَ يَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيماً إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

49. To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female [offspring] upon whom He wills, and bestows male [offspring] upon whom He wills.

50. Or He bestows both males and females [in the same womb], and He renders barren whom He wills. Indeed, He is the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.

Since pre-Islamic Arabs living in the Age of Ignorance preferred male offspring over female ones, the word

yahabu ("bestows")

is employed for both male and female offspring in Verse 49 to indicate that they are both Divine Gifts and the word:

inathan ("female [offspring]")

precedes

al-dhukur ("male [offspring]")

with the definite article to say that the male offspring at whom you rejoice are also Divine Gifts.

The clause:

yuzawwijuhum ("bestows them")

designates that God Almighty at times bestows male and/or female offspring.

Verse 49 is saying that the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth solely belongs to God Almighty since He is the Possessor of the heavens

and the earth and creation of the world and all creatures has been made possible through His Omnipotence and Omniscience and everything is dependent upon His Will. He bestows male and female offspring upon whomever He wills as per His Discretion and Wisdom. He may bestow male and female offspring in pairs or many male and female offspring.

It is dependent upon His Wisdom and Discretion that He makes some females barren and sterile. He is the Omnipotent, the Omniscience. These blessed Verses make a reference to Divine Perfect Might and Knowledge. Nothing may impede His Will.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 51

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْياً أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولاً فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

51. It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak unto him unless [it be] by Revelation [descended upon his heart], or from behind a veil, or [that] He sends a messenger [an angel] to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise.

Occasion of Revelation. A number of Qur'anic exegets present an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question whose summary is as follows.

A number of Jews came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and said:

"Why do you not speak unto God nor do you look at Him? If you are the Messenger of God, speak unto and look at Him in the manner that Moses (as) did. We never believe in you unless you do likewise."

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Moses (as) never saw God Almighty."

Then, the blessed Verse in question was revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) to express the manner of the Prophet's nexus with God Almighty.[12]

Divine Revelation is from God Almighty. It is not dependent upon human will. It is from the Exalted Lord and it is based on His Wisdom. Since the preceding Verses treated of Divine Bounties, the blessed Verse in question treats of the most significant of Divine Bounties and Favors bestowed by Him upon humanity.

These Bounties and Favors are Divine Revelation and the Prophets' nexus with God Almighty.

In the first place, the blessed Verse says:

"It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak unto him unless [it be] by Revelation [descended upon his heart], or from behind a veil"

in the manner that Moses son of 'Imran spake unto God Almighty and received His Answers through sound waves produced by God in the air without His being seen, since looking at Him is impossible.

Such communication is also possible through sending a messenger to impart unto him the Divine Message

("or [that] He sends a messenger [an angel]").

Likewise, the angel of Revelation, the Divine Messenger, Gabriel the trustworthy, descended upon the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). It is at that

time that God's Messenger imparts unto His Prophet (S) whatever He wills through His Command.

There exists no other means of communication between God Almighty and His servants, since He is Most Exalted and All-Wise;

("Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise").

He is far Exalted such they no one may see or speak unto Him. All his Acts are Wise and His Nexus with His Prophets are well-measured. The blessed Verse serves actually as a clear response to those who may out of ignorance imagine that Divine Revelation designates that Prophets may see God Almighty and speak unto Him.

The blessed Verse concisely and precisely reflects the nature and truth of Divine Revelation.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse indicates that there are solely three means of communication between Prophets and God Almighty:

Revelation unto heart, instances of which are to be found with many a Prophet, e.g.

"Therefore, We revealed unto him [Noah (as) saying]: 'Construct the ship before Us and as per Our Command'"[13]***.***

From behind the veil, in the manner that God Almighty spake unto Moses (as) on the Mount of Tur

("And to Moses (as) Allah spake directly,"[14]***).***

Through sending down a Messenger, in the manner that God Almighty spake with the Noble Prophet of Islam (as):

"Say [O Muhammad (S)]: 'Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel [is an enemy of God Almighty], since verily he has brought it [the Holy Qur'an] down unto your heart through Allah's Permission,'"[15]***.***

It is to be noted that it was not the exclusive means of receiving Divine Revelation by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). Divine Revelation was also descended upon Prophets through revealing unto him Divine Message when he was awake as it was mentioned above.

At times, Prophets received Divine Revelation in sleep through true dreams, for instance in the case of Abraham (as) who received the Divine Command to sacrifice Ishmael, although a number of Qur'anic exegets have considered it an instance of Divine Revelation from behind a veil.

Although the main means of sending down Divine Revelation constitute the three means mentioned in the blessed Verse in question, but each of which may fall into further categories, as a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that sending down Divine Revelation through the angel of Revelation constitutes four means:

Where the angel of Revelation imparted the Divine Message unto the Noble Prophet's (S) heart without appearing before him, as it is reflected in a Prophetic tradition saying:

"The Holy Spirit has revealed unto my heart that no one dies unless he receives his provision in full; therefore, fear God Almighty and be not avaricious in seeking your provision."

At time, the angel of Revelation appeared in human form, addressed the Noble Prophet (S) and imparted the Divine Message unto him. According to

a number of traditions, Gabriel appeared in the form of Dahya (or Dihya) Kalbi.[16]

At times, he heard Divine Revelation like chimes and it was the hardest means of receiving Divine Revelation such that even in very cold days his blessed visage perspired and if he was mounted, the mount was not able to carry the burden and sat down.

At times, Gabriel appeared to him in his original form as he was created by God Almighty. It happened only twice in his life time, as it will be revealed below under 53:12.[17]

Finally, it may be mentioned that means are Divine Revelation falls into ten categories in the book Wujuh al-Qur'an; however, taking into account all the instances of the word:

wahy ("Revelation")

and its derivatives, it may be concluded that Divine Revelation falls into two categories: legislative Revelation (wahy tashri'i) sent to Prophets (as) between whom and God Almighty existed a particular nexus through which they received Divine Commands and Truths, and existential Revelation (wahy takwini) constituting the specific instincts, faculties, conditions, and laws placed by God Almighty in different creatures of the world.

Some Traditions Concerning Divine Revelation

There are numerous traditions regarding Divine Revelation mentioned in Islamic sources which shed some light on this mysterious nexus between Prophets and the Originator of creation.

It is reported in a number of traditions that when the angel of Revelation descended upon the Noble Prophet (S) he was alright but when immediate nexus was established he felt an extraordinary burden such that at times he became unconscious.

According to a tradition narrated by Saduq in his Tawhid on the authority of Imam Sadiq (as) that the Noble Imam (as) was asked:

"What was the state of unconsciousness experienced by the Noble Prophet (S) at the time of Divine Revelation?"

He replied:

"It occurred when the Revelation was sent down upon him at the time of Divine Immediate Manifestation."[18]

When Gabriel was sent down to the Noble Prophet (S), the Archangel respected him, as it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"When Gabriel came to the Noble Prophet (S), he sat down before him like servants and never entered without permission."[19]

A number of traditions indicate that it was through Divine Blessing and inward intuition that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) could easily recognize Gabriel, as it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"It was solely through Divine Blessing that the Messenger of God (S) recognized that God Almighty had sent down angel Gabriel."[20]

An interpretation which is worthy of note is attested in a tradition narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas concerning the Noble Prophet's unconsciousness at the time of Divine Revelation:

"When Divine Revelation was descended upon the Noble Prophet (S), he felt an excruciating pain and suffered from headache and felt an

extraordinary heaviness. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an says that God Almighty sent down a grave Word on him. The tradition further adds that Gabriel was sent down onto the Messenger of Allah (S) sixty thousand times.[21]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 52 - 53

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحاً مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلا الْأِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ
جَعَلْنَاهُ نُوراً نَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ
صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

52. And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command [the Holy Qur'an]. You knew not what the Book is, nor what the faith. But We have made it [the Qur'an] a Light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will. And verily, you [O Muhammad] are indeed guiding [people] to the Straight Path.

53. The Path of Allah to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Verily, all matters at the end go to Allah.

The Chapter in question opened with the Verse of Revelation:

("HM.'A S Q. Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you [O Muhammad]")

and it closes with the same;

("And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command [the Holy Qur'an]").

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word:

ruh ("spirit")

in Verse 52 refers to ruh al-amin ("the faithful or trusted spirit, Gabriel") and some others hold that it indicates an angel more exalted in rank than other angels:

(cf. "Therein descend the angels and the spirit,"[22]***).***

Some also hold that it makes a reference to the Holy Qur'an. The last interpretation seems to be preferable. Spirit is the essence of life and the Holy Qur'an is the secret of man's spiritual life.

In the same manner that body without spirit disintegrates and decays, society without The Book, the Holy Qur'an, is unimaginable and in the same manner that spirit never becomes old and useless, so is the Holy Qur'an that will defy the passage of time.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question proceed the general discussion on Divine Revelation raised in the preceding Verses and treat of the same saying:

"In the same manner that We sent Our Revelation upon former Prophets through diverse means, We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command."

The adverb

"thus" (ka-dhalika)

may indicate that all the three types of Divine Revelation were realized for the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and at times he established immediate nexus with the Pure Essence of Lord, at times heard the Revelation through

the angel of Divine Revelation, and at times he heard a voice like sound waves as reflected in the aforesaid Islamic traditions.

Concerning the meaning of

"spirit'

in this context, Qur'anic exegets maintain two views. Firstly, the Holy Qur'an is being intended which rejuvenates hearts and souls. The majority of Qur'anic exegets hold the same view.[23]

In his Mufradat, Raghib also says that the Holy Qur'an is termed as spirit in the Verse:

"And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command"

since it leads to the life in the Hereafter.

The interpretation is consistent with the different pieces of evidence attested in the Verse, e.g. the adverb:

"thus" (ka-dhalika)

alluding to Divine Revelation and the expression:

"We have sent a Revelation" (awhayna)

and the expressions regarding the Holy Qur'an under the Verse in question.

Secondly,

"spirit"

connotes the Holy Spirit or an Archangel who accompanied the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) at all times and was more exalted in rank than those like Gabriel and Michael.

Based on the same interpretation, awhayna is used in the sense of anzalna, namely We have sent down the Holy Spirit or an Archangel onto you.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"You knew not what the Book is, nor what the faith. But We have made it [the Qur'an] a Light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will."

In other words, it was Divine Favor bestowed upon you that besides guiding you by this Great Scripture and its Guidance, He guides His other servants through this Divine Light covering the east and the west throughout the centuries to the end of the world.

Thus Verse 52 closes:

"Verily, you guide people unto the Straight Path."

The Holy Qur'an is the Divine Light for you and all people and also a means of Guidance for those treading the path leading to Truth, and the elixir for the thirsty.

The exposition of the Straight Path follows in Verse 53:

"The Path of Allah to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth."

Could there be found any path more straight than the one leading to the Originator of the world of existence? Is there any path smoother than the one leading to the Creator of the world of existence? True happiness is what God Almighty calls people unto it and the only way leading to it is the one which is chosen by Him.

The last sentence of the Verse which is the last sentence of the Chapter as well actually serves as an argument substantiating that the Straight Path is solely the one which leads toward God Almighty:

"Verily, all matters at the end go to Allah."

Since He is the Possessor and the Organizer of the world of existence and owing to the fact that all human plans toward perfection are to be accepted by this Great Organizer, the Straight Path is the only Path leading toward Him and any other path besides this one leads to error and falsehood.

Is there any Truth other than His Pure Essence in the world of existence? It is worthy of note that the sentence bears a glad tiding to the God fearing and a warning to wrong-doers and sinners who shall all return unto God Almighty.

It also bears testimony to the fact that Revelation should solely be from God Almighty, since the return of all existent beings shall be toward Him and with Him rests the management and judgment of all things.

Therefore, He should be the Origin of Divine Revelation sent down onto Prophets so that people may find true Guidance. Thus, the order of the Verses from the opening to the close of the Chapter is interrelated and the opening and the close of the Chapter are consistent with its prevailing theme of the same.

Notes

1. Tafsir al-Mizan.
2. 25:40
3. Majma' al-Bayan.
4. Majma' al-Bayan.
5. Tafsir Safi.
6. 35:45
7. Ibn Abi al-Hadid's Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 7, p. 41.
8. Tafsir Nur, p. 412.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 105, apud Tafsir Nimuna.
10. 4:100
11. 9:91
12. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5783.
13. 23:27
14. 4:164
15. 2:97
16. Dahya or Dihya ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi was the Noble Prophet's (S) foster brother and one of the most handsome men of his time. At times, Gabriel came unto the Noble Prophet (S) in his form, see Majma' al-Bahrayn, s.v. w-h-y. he was an eminent Companion of the Noble Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) sent him as an emissary to Heraclius, the Roman emperor in 6/627 or 7/628 and he lived to the reign of Mu'awiya (41-60/661-680), see Lughat-nama-yi Dihkhuda.
17. Fi Âalal al-Qur'an, vol. 7, p. 306.
18. Saduq's Tawhid, apud Bihar al-Anwar, vol.18, p. 256.
19. 'Ilal al-Shara'i', apud Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 256.
20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 256.
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 261.

www.alhassanain.org/english

22. 97:4

23. For instance, Óabarsi in Majma’ al-Bayan, Shaykh Óusi in Tibyan, Fakhr Razi in Tafsir Kabir, Maraghi in Tafsir Maraghi.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Chapter 43, Verses 1 - 39

(The Gold Adornments)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 89

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Except for Verse 45, the rest of the Verses of the Chapter were revealed in Mecca.

The title of the Chapter derives from Verse 35 in which the word

zukhruf ("gold, silver; adornments")

is attested. Main issues discussed in the Chapter include: the Holy Qur'an and prophethood; opponents' reaction against prophets; arguments substantiating Divine Unity, struggles against polytheism; partial narration of the legends of prophets; and a depiction of the Hereafter.

A point worthy of note is that seven consecutive Qur'anic Chapters, namely Ghafir, Fussilat, Shura, Zukhruf, Dukhan, Jathiya, and Ahqaf termed as Hawamim or Suwar Al Ha Mim, open with the detached letters HM.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

Many sources on Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir) and tradition (hadith) include Islamic traditions concerning many a merit for the recitation of the Chapter in question, an instance of which is a Prophetic tradition saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Zukhruf is among those who are thus addressed on the Day of Resurrection:

'O My servants, you are to entertain neither fear nor grief on this day as you shall be admitted to Paradise[1] provided that you act upon religious instructions.'"

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 1 - 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

1. HM

2. By the illuminating Book [the Qur'an].

3. Indeed We have made it a Qur'an in the Arabic [tongue] that you may be able to understand [It].

4. And indeed It is in the Mother of the Book [the preserved tablet, lawh mahfus] with Us indeed exalted, full of wisdom, and firm on Its basis.

The characteristics of the Holy Qur'an as a Divinely Revealed Book include: manifest and illuminating (mubin); springing from Divine Omniscience (fi Umm al-Kitab); of immaterial origin (ladayna); Its form and content are exalted ('aliy); Its contents are full of wisdom and firm on Its basis (hakim).

The word

qur'an ("book")

derives from the root q-r-' ("recite, read").

'Arabi ("clear, manifest")

is taken from 'Arab ("the Arabs"). The Arabic tongue is employed in the sense of clear and unambiguous language.

The Chapter in question as well as the following ones includes discussions by Qur'anic exegets concerning HM to the effect that the detached letters constitute the title of the Chapters or they may serve as a reference to the Most Beautiful Divine Names e.g. the Praiseworthy (Hamid), the All-Glorious (Majid), the Compassionate (Hannan), the Benevolent (Mannan), the Protector (Hafis), and the Noble (Majid).

It is said that all the letters of alphabet opening a number of the Qur'anic Chapters apparently serve as codes between God Almighty and His Prophet (S) regarded as Qur'anic equivocal Verses (mutashabihat) the knowledge of which rests with God and those well rooted in knowledge (al-rasikhun fi 'l-ilm) thus dropping the subject is more appropriate.

Waw ("by")

is the word of oath which ad hoc makes a reference to the manifest Book, namely the Holy Qur'an, which is clear in terms of form and eloquence and is inimitable, i.e., producing the same form, meaning, and intricacies rests beyond human capacity.

A brief reflection on the form and content of Qur'anic Verses clearly indicates that the most eminent scholars fail to discover Its least intricacies even if they exert themselves assiduously; none the less Its injunctions and laws are manifest:

("Indeed We have made it a Qur'an in the Arabic [tongue] that you may be able to understand [It]").

The preceding clause is the apodosis of the oath which is ad hoc employed in the sense of taking an oath to the Qur'an Divinely Revealed by God Almighty to His Prophet (S) in the Arabic tongue so that the Arabs ponder on Its meaning and intricacies.

One of the grounds behind Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in the Arabic tongue is that it is the most eloquent and the most comprehensive language and eminent scholars bear testimony to the fact that it rests on comprehensive and precise rules possessing the capacity to convey the most intricate and significant points and issues.

Another reason is that according to the Holy Qur'an:

"And war your tribe of near kindred"[2]

as per which the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to guide his kith and kin and since they were from the Quraysh tribe wo were speakers of the Arabic tongue, the Holy Qu'an was Revealed in it. However, there are other secrets known by experts.

The fourth Verse enumerates three more characteristics of the Holy Qur'an:

1. Prior to Its Revelation to the Noble Prophet (S), the Holy Qur'an had been recorded in the Mother of the Book, namely the Preserved Tablet (lawh mahfus), in Divine Presence.

2. It is the Most Elevated Book among all Divinely Revealed Books and it the Most Comprehensive Book abrogating preceding ones. It will serve as Divine Guidance to man to the Last Day without being abrogated by any other book.

3. The Holy Qur'an is full of wisdom, namely it provides man with wisdom. All Its injunctions and laws rest on reason and logic and Its Verses are consistent with intellectual proofs and arguments. Furthermore, it rests on the golden mean such that a brief reflection on It will suffice for the wise and scholars to acknowledge that It is Revealed by the Wise Originator of creation.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 5 - 8

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحاً أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْماً مُسْرِفِينَ

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشاً وَمَضَى مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

5. Shall We then take away the Reminder [i.e., the Holy Qur'an] from you, because you are transgressors beyond bounds.

6. And how many a prophet have We sent amongst the ancient.

7. And never came there a prophet to them but they would mock him.

8. Then We destroyed men stronger [in terms of power] than them [transgressors of bounds] and the fate of the ancient was recurred.

Ignoring Divine injunctions is regarded as transgression of bounds (israf). All prophets were mocked by disbelievers; therefore, any prophet was expected to be aware of his predecessors so that he would not desist from carrying out his duty for disbelievers' mockery.

Verse five is a reference to the preceding one.

"Shall We then take away" (a-fa-nadribu)

is a rhetorical question conveying the meaning that are We supposed to leave you in your ignorance and take away the Reminder, namely the Holy Qur'an, from you so that you may be deprived of such Divine Favor despite your transgression of bounds, persistence in disbelief and animosity to the extreme, and your being astray in the abyss of error?

It may allude to disbelievers' persistence in staying in error and denial of Divine Guidance, namely the inimitable Word emanated from the springhead of Divine Favor revealed to the Prophet (S) for guidance and felicity.

Despite disbelievers' turning away from the Reminder, God Almighty provides humanity with everlasting Grace and innumerable Favors through the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in order that they may benefit from Divine Guidance.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the following Verses serve as a consolation to him and a warning against polytheists by saying that God Almighty appointed many a prophet among the polytheist ancient who transgressed the bounds.

Their disbelief did not hinder Divine appointment of prophets. All prophets were subject to the mockery of ancient disbelievers and it was their disbelief that led to the chastisement of the most powerful of the ancient nations and their perdition.

A number of instances are attested in the Holy Qur'an as per which the glory and power of the ancient could not impede their being chastised for their persistence in disbelief and their treatment of their prophets. Their dire fate may serve as a lesson to others.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 9

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ

9. And indeed if you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth" They will surely say: "The Omnipotent, the Omniscient [God] created them."

Polytheists regarded God as the Creator, but they worshipped idols which bears testimony to the fact that even if vanity, ignorance and imitating ancestors overshadows human intellection, primordial natural disposition (fitra) fully comprehends Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse in question is saying O Muhammad (S), if you ask these disbelievers and polytheists about the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they will unhesitatingly answer,

"the Omniscient, the All-Victorious, the All-Conqueror God has created them."

It alludes to the fact that human primordial disposition is by nature inclined toward Divine Unity bearing to the existence of the One God through his primordial disposition since human intellect bears testimony to the fact that no construction, movement, or created being may exist without constructor, mover, or creator.

Reflecting on his existence, man comprehends that he is created ex nihilo, how could he deny the existence of Divine Unity when reflecting on the systematicity of creation, the glory of the vast world and the secrets of Creation manifest throughout the world of Creation all bowing to precise laws.

Nonetheless, man is too ignorant and wrong doing (saluman jahula) to associate other objects of worship with God and it is through his imperfect intellect that he imagines that other entities besides God may be of any effect in the world of existence.

The blessed Verse warns disbelievers who refrain from following prophetic teachings and neglect the truth that anyone, through his primordial disposition, comprehends that he is in the presence of the Sublime God and all the higher and lower creatures are subjugated to His Creation; however, disbelievers resort to frail creatures, such as inanimate things that are far inferior to them, for support and protection.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 10

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْداً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلاً لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

10. Who has made for you the earth a resting place, and has made for you roads therein, in order that you may find your way.

The path to Guidance is a Divine Favor. If the regions of the earth were detached by lofty mountains and deep valleys, mankind would be unable to live on it. Therefore, the possibility of constructing roads is a Divine blessing.

Traversing lands and perceiving them may lead man to the path of Guidance. The blessed Verse indicates Divine Unity and His Essential Attributes a posteriori saying that God Whose Existence is acknowledged by you is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

He is the Creator of all things Who has made the earth for you like a cradle through His Grace and Bounty. The similitude of the earth to a cradle is a reference to the rotation of the earth on its axis.

The rotary movement of the earth is also discovered by modern science. It is worthy of note that astronomers of the old maintained that the earth is motionless and the sun rotates around the earth once in 24 hours and the existence of nights and days are resulted from the solar rotary movement.

Qur'anic exegets have interpreted the word mahd as peace and rest, but the word means the cradle used for infants as a place of rest. The discovery of the rotary motion of the earth on its axis by modern science bears testimony to one of the Qur'anic miracles and secrets unknown to any anyone in olden times.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 11 - 12

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتاً كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ

11. And Who sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We revived a dead land therewith, and so you will be brought forth [from the graves].

12. And Who has created all the pairs and has appointed for you ships and cattle on which you ride:

The preceding Verse and the One in question make mention of Divine Unity and the Hereafter respectively. The word qadar is either used in the sense of "measure" or "ordainment and plan," i.e., He sent down rain in due measure or sent down rain as per ordainment and plan; therefore, all rain drops are sent down according to a well calculated plan;

("sent down water from the sky in due measure").

According to the blessed Verse, it is another Divine Favor that He sends down water from the sky so that the soil which is dead in winter season turns verdant in springtime.

"So you will be brought forth [from the graves]"

indicates that in the same manner the dead soil turns verdant in springtime as if it is revived, the dead undergo a drastic change on the Day of Resurrection and an everlasting life is bestowed upon them. The revival

of the dead on the Day of Resurrection is likened to the rejuvenation of the dead soil in springtime in many a Qur'anic Verse.

The secret may lie in the fact that soil per se remain dormant in winter season but the land is not verdant with plants and in the meantime, through divine Omnipotence and Wisdom, rears water, freshness, and seeds in it such that it may be covered with verdant and lush coverage in springtime.

In like manner, man may turn mortal through death, but his material being turns invisible in this world and all his acts acquired and actualized in his lifespan turn invisible; however, they are reared posthumously and it will be through Divine Will that he will be accorded a new life on the Day of Resurrection which is the last stage of his journey toward the Divine.

On such Day, he will reap whatever he has sown such that if he sowed fruitless and bitter plants in the field of his being, he shall certainly reap the same on the Last Day.

Verse 12 is a Reminder from God Almighty to man that He has created all male and female pairs. It was mentioned elsewhere that all creatures have been created in male and female pairs, even constituent elements include positive and negative elements which stand on a par with male and female pairs in the animal world.

True Unity solely belongs to God Almighty, the Necessary Existent Being. The Verse in question also makes mention of other Divine Favors, e.g. ships that may easily traverse water and quadrupeds used for riding and other purposes, bestowed on mankind in order to meet their needs.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 13 - 14

لِتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ

وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ

13. In order that you may mount on their backs and then may remember the Favor of your Lord when you mount thereon and say "Glory to Him Who has subjected this to us and we could never have it [by making efforts]."

14. And indeed to our Lord we shall return.

Benefiting from Divine Bounties is to be accompanied by remembrance of God Almighty and gratitude toward Him rather than vanity and negligence. Divine Bounties and their due measure is a reflection of Divine Lordship.

The blessed Verse says that when you mount on ships and quadrupeds, you should be aware that they are Bounties bestowed upon you by your Creator. You are supposed to say that God Almighty Who has subjected all these creatures in the heaven and on the earth are All-Glorious and man is too weak to subject such overpowering creatures to his will.

Thus man is supposed to be grateful toward God Almighty for the innumerable Bounties bestowed upon man. He should never be neglectful of remembering his Lord.

The Verse says:

"And indeed to our Lord we shall return"

which alludes to the remembrance of the Divine Origin of creation and the Hereafter. Whoever reflects and acknowledges through certain knowledge (‘ilm al-yaqin) that God Almighty has subjected all creatures for human growth and perfection and each being is ordained to have a purpose and final end, he will acknowledge that man who is the ultimate end (ghayat al-ghayat) is supposed to attain to the final end of his being which is to return to his Origin.

Such return shall be done on the Day of Resurrection as the final stage of human development. Returning to God Almighty is a great Favor for righteous believers bestowed by God Almighty Whose Most Beautiful Names include the All-Compassionate (al-Rahman) and the All-Gracious (al-Rahim).

Au contraire, disbelievers and hypocrites return to God Almighty Who is Wrathful and Whose Most Beautiful Names include All-Subjugating (al-Qahhar) and Strict in Punishment (Shadid al-‘Iqab).

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 15 - 16

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءاً إِنَّ الْأِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ

أَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَاكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ

15. [Polytheists said: “Angels are daughters of God”] and they assigned to some of His servants a share with Him. Indeed man is a manifest ingrate.

16. Or has He taken daughters out of what He has created and He has selected for you sons?

It would be unbefitting to regard daughters a disgrace and imagine that that God Almighty has daughters. The blessed verse in question alludes to disbelievers’ ignorance that they assign to some of His servants a share with Him, such that angels who are His creatures are termed as God’s daughters. This inappropriate attribution is a manifest token of disbelief.

The other point is that:

“or has He taken”

as a rhetorical question with hamza of denial in Arabic is a reproach to them to the effect that disbelievers regard weak creatures as God’s offspring.

The blessed Verse inquires disbelievers:

“Would it be fitting that God Almighty select daughters for Himself from among His Creatures and select sons for you?”

Such attributions reveal their ignorance and inanity since daughters and sons are accorded shares with their parents but the Necessary Being is the Originator of the world.

He is One, Glorified, and Free from corporeality as it is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an:

“He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him”[3].

As a consequence, the blessed Verse 15 closes with saying that indeed man is a manifest ingrate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 17

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلاً ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدّاً وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

17. And if one of them is informed of the news of what pleases God the All-Compassionate, his face becomes dark and he suppresses his grief.

Those filled with grief upon being informed of the birth of a daughter and imagine that sons are better than daughters suffer from polytheistic superstitions.

The blessed Verse is a reproach to disbelievers who upon being informed of the news of the birth of a daughter that they set forth as a parable to the Most Gracious Allah, their faces became dark out of suppressed rage and ire since they deemed it a disgrace to have daughters and as a consequence of their malice and viciousness they attributed female offspring to God and called them Allah's daughters.

The Verse reproaches disbelievers whose faces darkened from suppressed anger upon hearing the news of the birth of female offspring. However, the Creator of daughters and sons is the Same and they are both human beings and their offspring.

The Verse inquires of disbelievers:

"Why do you attribute to God what you deem weaker and attribute to yourselves what you regard stronger?"

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 18

أَوَمَنْ يُنَشَّأُ فِي الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ

18. Is [it appropriate that] the one who is brought up in adornments and who in dispute cannot make herself clear [be attributed to God Almighty]?

We noticed in Verse nine that polytheists regarded the Glorious and Omniscient God as the Creator of being.

The blessed Verse in question says:

"why do you who regard the Creator as Glorious and Omnipotent attribute daughters to Him who are brought up in adornments and are subjugated by their feelings and sentiments in disputes, but the fact is that firmness and decisiveness rather than sentimentality are the prerequisites of endearment and logic and argumentation rather than being subjected to feelings are necessary for the acquisition of knowledge."

The Verse inquires of disbelievers,

"Why do you regard as Divine offspring the one who is brought up in adornments and who in disputes cannot make herself clear but regard sons as your offspring?"

The word yunsha'u ("is brought up") derives from nasha'a (lit. "make something," ad hoc "be brought up"). The words hilya and khisam are employed in the senses of "adornment" and "dispute" respectively.

Two feminine characteristics noticed in the majority of females springing from their sentimentality are to be found in the blessed Verse in question, i.e., their keen interest in adornments and their insufficient capacity for substantiating their arguments which is due to their modesty and prudency.

There are indubitably females not so interested in adornments and a moderate interest in adornments is by no means a demerit for them. The

demerit lies in extreme keenness of adornments as if they are born in adornments and are brought up there.

Likewise, there are females who possess a remarkable capacity for logic and argumentation, but it may not be denied that because of modesty and prudence, compared with males, the majority of females possess a weaker capacity for argumentation and disputation.

The major theme of the blessed Verse in question is that disbelievers regard female offspring as Allah's daughters and deem their sons as their own offspring.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 19

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثاً أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ

19. And they make the angels who themselves are servants of the Most Gracious [Allah] females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony [for superstitions] will be recorded and they will be questioned.

All testimonies and words are recorded in the presence of Allah. Superstitious beliefs are to be severely suppressed. The blessed Verse reveals their unworthy and baseless words regarding their false beliefs according to which angels who are Allah's servants are termed as His daughters.

The Verse inquires:

"Were they present at the time of their creation to witness the manner of their making and learn that they were male or female? Their false words and testimonies will be recorded soon and they will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection and will be chastised for their words and acts."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 20

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

20. And they said: "If it had been the Will of the Most Gracious [Allah], we should not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge [nor scientific reason] whatsoever of that. They say nothing but out of conjecture and supposition.

Wrong doers make attempts at justification of their acts and take advantage of Divine Will as their pretext.

The word yakhrusun derives from khars which is employed in the sense of words based on conjecture and supposition. Words having no basis on knowledge, particularly those concerning dogmatic issues, are not to be acknowledged.

Consequently, the blessed Verse in question says that had the Most Gracious Lord willed, we would not have worshipped idols and false deities; thereby, they made attempts at exonerate themselves of sins saying that it had been Divine Will that they worshipped deities besides Allah.

The blessed Verse is a reply to them to the effect that such words, like other baseless words uttered by them, indicate their ignorance and illogicality.

They are liars since they utter untrue words since God Almighty never wills the disbelief of disbelievers as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"He is not pleased of His servants' disbelief"[4]**.**

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 21- 22

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَاباً مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

21. Or have We given them any Book before this to which they are holding fast?

22. Nay! [It is not so.] They say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we have found guidance by following them.

Polytheism and superstition have neither intellectual nor narrational bases. The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to another argument which may be produced by disbelievers.

The Verse says,

"Or We have provided them with any Book before this to which they hold fast,"

i.e., they are supposed to take resort to rational or narrational arguments in order to substantiate their claim; nonetheless, they fail to provide either of the twain since all intellectual arguments as well as the teachings of prophets and scriptures bear witness to Divine Unity.

Verse 22 makes a reference to their main pretext which is no more than a superstitious claim serving as the pivot of another.

The blessed verse in question informs of their false claim:

"We found our fathers following a certain religion and we have found guidance by following them."

They blindly imitated their ancestors and forefathers. It is interesting to know that they regarded themselves guided to the right path whereas in dogmatic issues no wise person may rely on imitation particularly in the manner of ignorant imitation of the ignorant.

We know that their ancestors possessed no knowledge but they were preoccupied with superstitious beliefs and ignorance wielded a vast sway in their thoughts and society.

The point is that imitation is solely sensible in minor issues and such imitation is supposed to be based on scholarly and expert advice such that patients and non-specialists take the advice of physicians and experts. As a consequence, it may be said that disbelievers' blind imitation from their ancestors and forefathers was inaccurate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 23

وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ

23. And similarly We sent not a warner before you to any town but the luxurious ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion and we will indeed follow their footsteps."

The word

mutraf ("living in ease and luxury")

derives from tarifa ("to live in opulence") and implies one whose opulent life has led him to vanity.

It was mentioned in the preceding Verse that common people believe that their ancestors' way of life was true and they may follow their footsteps in order to tread the path of guidance:

("we have found guidance by following them").

However, the blessed Verse in question says that those living in luxury think about opulence and worldly possessions rather than attaining to guidance and following their ancestors' beliefs is not for attaining to guidance:

("we will indeed follow their footsteps").

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty informs His Prophet (S) that all the prophets before him said unto people that they were all treading the path of falsehood and prophets were appointed by God Almighty, the Creator of the world, to lead them to the right path and show them the path of felicity and deliverance so that they may know that the God of the world is One and he has no associates in His Divine Being and Essence rather he creates out of His Will.

He provides for His creatures through Omnipotence. He is neither part of a whole nor any thing is part of Him. He is All-Glorious and free from corporeality.

"He begets none, nor was He begotten"[5].

All attributes of Perfection, e.g. Everlastingness and Unity are His. Such Divine Being rather than incompetent and ignorant objects of worship is Praiseworthy. In response to the prophets' wise admonitions, they did not resort to their reason and common sense but said that they followed the footsteps of their ancestors and believed in their religion.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 24 - 25

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَى مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

24. [Their Prophet] said, "[Would you desist from following your ancestors' footsteps] if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?" They said: "Indeed we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent."

25. Therefore, We took revenge on them then see what was the end of those who denied [monotheism].

It is worthy of note that one may offer a better alternative in forbidding evil;

("I bring you better guidance").

One method of the presentation of a school of thought is to compare and contrast the teachings of different schools. In their Calls, prophets made use of reason and intellection where as their opponents resorted to tribalism and imitation.

The point is that taking revenge and violence in their appropriate places are not inconsistent with Divine Mercy and Grace.

According to the last two Verses their prophets inquired them to make use of their intellection to perceive if prophets provide them with a better course leading to righteousness and felicity they must acknowledge the truth

and thereby benefit from Divine Favors. However, they turned away from Divine Guidance and went to extremes in the persecution of prophets.

They were so entangled with tribalism, vanity, and enmity that they were not supposed to turn to Divine Guidance rather regarding them the Holy Quran says:

"[They are] the deaf, dumb, and blind. Therefore, they do not understand"[6].

Then it was the proper season for taking revenge;

("Therefore, We took revenge on them")

and they were subject to Divine Wrath and they were afflicted with diverse torments such as drowning, tempest, and icy gale.

The Noble Prophet (S) is here addressed thus:

"See what was the end of those who denied [monotheism]."

It is apparently addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) but it implies a warning to polytheists and disbelievers.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 26 - 28

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

26. And [remember] when Abraham (as) said unto his father [his paternal uncle, Azar] and his people: "Indeed I dislike what you worship, "Except Him Who did create me; and indeed He will guide me." And he made it [the formula of Divine Unity, namely "There is no god but Allah"] a Word lasting among his offspring that they may turn back [toward Divine Unity].

As mentioned above, idolaters' logic rested on following their ancestors' footsteps. According to the blessed Verse in question, Abraham (as) bitterly criticized the religion of his guardian who was his uncle as well.

The subject (fa'il) of the verb:

ja'ala ("made")

in the clause:

wa ja'ala-ha kalimat-an baqiya ("and he made it a Word lasting")

may be either God or Abraham (as); the former made Abraham (as) offspring to believe in Divine Unity thanks to Abraham (as) faith; it may also be said that Abraham (as) left the Call of Divine Unity and abstention from polytheism with his offspring.

According to a narration from Imam 'Ali (as), the Noble Prophet (S) is a descendant of Abraham (as) and the Prophet's Household (as) are descendants of Abraham (as) and Muhammad (S).[7]

Mention is briefly made of Abraham (as) and his encounter with his idol worshipping people of Babylon to complete the discussion on the reproach of blind imitation in the preceding Verses, since Abraham (as) was the most eminent Arab figure well respected by everyone and being descended from him was regarded as an honor.

He was the one who tore asunder the veils of blind imitation. The Holy Qur'an is saying that were they speaking the truth, they would follow his

footsteps. Why did they blindly imitate idolaters if they were inclined toward adherence to their forefathers?

The other point is that the idolaters whose false beliefs were criticized by Abraham (as) resorted to the same groundless claim of following their ancestors' footsteps; nonetheless, Abraham (as) did not acknowledge their baseless claim as it is in the Holy Qur'an:

"They said, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.' He said, 'Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error'"[8].

It is to be noted that it is a consolation for the Prophet (S) and early Muslims so that they know that such oppositions are not unprecedented and they are not supposed to lose their hope.

Firstly, it is said,

"[Remember] when Abraham (as) said unto his father [his paternal uncle, Azar] and his people: 'Indeed I dislike what you worship.'"

The following Verse says that since many an idolater worshipped god as well, Abraham (as) immediately makes an exception saying:

"Except Him Who did create me; and indeed He will guide me."

In this terse clause he makes mention of an argument according to which God alone is supposed to be worshipped since the object of worship is the Creator and the Governor of the world and everyone believed that God is the Creator of the world. It is also a reference to Divine Guidance in matters of existence and legislation as necessitated by Divine Grace.

According to Verse 28, Abraham (as) not only adhered to the principle of Divine Unity and struggled against any form of idolatry but also he made his utmost efforts to make the Word of Divine Unity last in the world for ever, as it is mentioned in the blessed Verse 28:

(And he made it [the formula of Divine Unity, namely "There is no god but Allah"] a Word lasting among his offspring that they may turn back [toward Divine Unity]).

It is worthy of note that the word 'aqib is literally used in the sense of "heel," but it is figuratively employed in the sense of "offspring."

It is of interest to know that the followers of all world religions believing in Divine Unity are inspired by Abraham's (as) teachings regarding Divine Unity and the three arch-prophets Moses (as), Jesus (as), and Muhammad (S) are his descendants and it bears testimony to the veracity of the Qur'anic prediction in this vein.

It is true that prophets preceding Abraham (as), e.g. Noah (as) struggled against polytheism and idolatry and called the world to believe in Divine Unity,but it was Abraham(as) who made the Word of Divine Unity rest on its firm basis.

As an iconoclast, he raised the flag of Divine Unity everywhere.

In his lifetime, not only he made his utmost attempts at the continuity of belief in Divine Unity but also in his supplications he inquired the same from God Almighty:

("and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols,"[9]).

According to another interpretation, the antecedent of the pronoun of ja'ala in Verse 28 is God Almighty as per which the meaning of the clause is that God placed the Word of Divine Unity in Abraham's (as) Household.

However, the first interpretation as per which the antecedent of the pronoun is Abraham (as), seems preferable.

On the basis of different traditions narrated on the authority of the Noble Prophet's Household (as), the antecedent of the pronoun is the question of imamate and naturally the antecedent of the subject pronoun is God; namely, God Almighty made the question of imamate last among Abraham (as) descendants.

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an[10] that when God said unto Abraham (as) that He appointed him as the imam, he prayed to God to appoint his descendants as imams and God answered to his prayer but He made an exception for wrong doers:

("He said [unto him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an Imam for mankind [to follow you].' Abraham (as) said, 'And of my offspring [to make Imams].'" [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not wrong doers.'"

The question arising at the first glance is that there is no mention of imamate in the Verse in question unless the clause:

"He will indeed guide me" (sayahdin)

be interpreted in a like manner since the prophets' and imams' guidance derives from Divine Guidance and the truth of imamate is identified with that of guidance.

It would be preferable to say that the question of imamate is included in that of Divine Unity since one of the branches of Divine Unity is the Unity of rule, guardianship, and leadership. We know that Imams derive their guardianship and leadership from Allah and they do not rely on themselves.

Likewise, such narrations specify a subcategory of the universal concept of:

"And he made it [the formula of Divine Unity, namely "There is no god but Allah"] a Word lasting"

which is not inconsistent with the aforementioned exegesis.[11]

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 29- 30

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلاءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

29. [Not only I did not destroy polytheists] but also I made them and their fathers to enjoy till there came to them the truth (the Holy Qur'an) and a Messenger (S) making things clear.

30. And when the truth came to them, they said: "This is magic and we disbelieve therein."

God makes believers and disbelievers enjoy and gives respite to all people.

The blessed Verse 29 says that God Almighty bestowed worldly possessions and pleasures to Meccan polytheists and fathers until the truth, i.e., the Holy Qur'an, and the Messenger of God (S) came to them making things clear.

Not only God Almighty made them think about the falsity of polytheism and idolatry and Divine Unity through their intellection and conscience, but

also He gave them respite to benefit from Divine Guidance through turning to the Holy Qur'an, the Book which is all truth, and the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S).

"That they may turn back [toward Divine Unity]"

in the preceding Verse indicates that Abraham (as) made attempts at making his offspring turn to Divine Unity; nonetheless, the Arabs claimed to have descended from him but they failed to turn to It. God Almighty provided them with further respite through sending the Noble Prophet (S) with a new Book. It was awakening for a large number of the Arabs.

According to Verse 30, upon the revelation of the Holy Qur'an they failed to rectify their past errors and instead opposed the Word of Truth by saying that it was magic and they disbelieved in it:

("And when the truth came to them, they said: 'This is magic and we disbelieve therein'").

They called the Holy Qur'an magic and the Noble Messenger of God (S) magician. Had they persisted in their disbelief, they would have been afflicted with Divine chastisement.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 31 - 32

وَقَالُوا لَوْلا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ

بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً سُخْرِيّاً وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

31. And they said: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man [in terms of dignity and wealth] of the two towns (Mecca and Ta'if)?"

32. Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord [regarding the Divine appointment of Muhammad to prophethood]? It is We Who portion out [between them] their livelihood in this world [let alone the exalted rank of prophethood] and We raised some of them above others in ranks so that some may employ others in their work. But the Mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.

Some disbelievers entertained inappropriate expectations and said that such and such person was a man of substance and he was expected to receive revelation from God but the point is that material possessions may not necessitate spiritual superiority. Mention was made of polytheists' being difficult and making excuses against prophets' Calls in the preceding Verses.

At times they called their prophetic calls magic and sometimes they resorted to blind adherence to their ancestors and turned away from Divine Word.

Verses 31 and 32 make reference to another baseless excuse saying:

"Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man [in terms of dignity and wealth] of the two towns (Mecca and Ta'if)?"

they regarded worldly possessions, ranks, and reputation as the standards of dignity. Such ignorant people imagined that their wrong doing tribal chiefs and men of substance were the closest people to God and were surprised to learn that prophethood and the Divine great Favor had not been

accorded to such people but they had been bestowed upon the poor orphan, Muhammad (S). It was incredible to them.

Such inaccurate merit system of theirs led to such inferences and they still account for the afflictions of human societies and the main reason behind their intellectual deviation which falsely depict the truths of human life.

The standard bearer of the Divine Call is supposed to be one whose heart brims with the spirit of piety, awareness, will, determination, courage, justice, and familiarity with the afflictions of the deprived and the oppressed.

The required values for imparting the Divine Call do not include beautiful attires, luxurious palaces, and adornments of all kinds. None of the prophets enjoyed such opportunities lest true and false values be confused.

Whom were pointed at by polytheists making excuses? Exegets are not unanimous on the issue; however the majority of them make references to Walid ibn Mughayra from Mecca and ‘Urwa ibn Mas’ud Thaqafi from Ta’if. It is to be noted that polytheists did not apparently specify anyone but they means men of substance, good name, and noble descent.

Verse 32 is a harsh critique of such inappropriate and superstitious thought and perfectly explicates the Islamic point of view:

“Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord [regarding the Divine appointment of Muhammad to prophethood]?”

Anyone may not be accorded prophethood nor may the scripture be revealed to anyone. It is God Almighty who portions out his Divine Mercy between them.

He knows better that who is worthy of being appointed to prophethood as it is said elsewhere in the Holy Quran:

“Allah knows best with whom to place his message”[12].

Furthermore, the differences between people in terms of wealth and substance may never account for their spiritual ranks, but

“It is We Who portion out [between them] their livelihood in this world [let alone the exalted rank of prophethood] and We raised some of them above others in ranks so that some may employ others in their work.”

They forget that man is inclined toward social life and managing the affairs may solely be carried out through cooperation and had all people enjoyed the same faculties, opportunities, standards of life, and social status, the principle of cooperation and division of labor would lose their balance.

Therefore, they are not supposed to be ensnared by such differences and imagine that they are the standards of human values:

“But the Mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.”

In other words, worldly possessions and social ranks are of no value against Divine Mercy and closeness to Him. The word rabbi-ka which is employed twice in the Verse is a delicate allusion to the Divine Favor particularly accorded to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and appointing him as the Seal of Prophets.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 33 - 35

وَلَوْلا أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقُفاً مِنْ فِضَّةٍ
وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ
وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَاباً وَسُرُراً عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِئُونَ
وَزُخْرُفاً وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

33. And were it not that mankind would have become of one community [of disbelievers], We would have provided for those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious [Allah], silver roofs for their houses and stairs whereby they ascend.

34. And for their houses, doors and thrones on which they could recline

35. And adornments of gold. Yet all this would have been nothing but an enjoyment of this world. And the Hereafter with your Lord is [solely] for the pious.

Mundane embellishment is so valueless that God Almighty says in Verse 35 that He is prepared to accord abundant substance to disbelievers; nonetheless, people are easily deceived by them and if disbelievers be accorded such possessions, all people shall turn to disbelief.

Verse 33 is saying that disbelievers' enjoyment of diverse mundane possessions will lead to all people's inclination toward disbelief and error. In such case, God would have made for disbelievers houses with silver roofs.

"And were it not that mankind would have become of one community [of disbelievers], We would have provided for those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious [Allah], silver roofs for their houses and stairs whereby they ascend."

The word ma'arij is used in the sense of stairs and ladders.

Some exegets maintain that silver stairs are meant herein and the word "silver" (fidda) is so clear that it is not reiterated; nonetheless, they do not apparently consider stairs as an indication of the significance of the houses, but it is not so, since numerous stairs indicate the splendor of the multi-storey construction;

"and stairs whereby they ascend."

The word:

saqf ("roofs")

is the plural of suqf and some lexicologists consider it to be the plural for of saqifa ("roofed place"), however the former meaning seems to be preferable.

Verse 34 adds:

"And for their houses, doors and thrones on which they could recline."

The sentence may allude to silver doors and thrones since the word

"silver"

was employed in the preceding Verse but it is not reiterated herein.

It may also refer to numerous doors and thrones, with due consideration to the indefiniteness of

"doors and thrones"

mentioned herein to demonstrate significance, which indicate the glory of the palaces since modest houses do not require numerous doors and thrones.

Verse 35 further says:

"And adornments of gold,"

in other words, they were provided with embellishments of all kinds so that mundane and gaudy possessions, e.g. luxurious and multi-storey palaces with sliver roofs, doors and thrones and all kinds of adornments desired by mammon worshippers, be fully prepared for them.

However, they are all worldly possessions and the Hereafter belongs to the God fearing:

("Yet all this would have been nothing but an enjoyment of this world. And the Hereafter with your Lord is [solely] for the pious").

The word zukhruf in its literal sense indicates any type of adornments and embellishments with stylized floral motifs but since gold is the main means of adornment, the word zukhruf is also applied to it. Muzakhraf indicates idle talk because of the gaudiness and embellishment applied to it.

In short, mundane possessions and luxuries are so valueless before God that they should solely fall into lowly people like disbelievers in Truth and had people of weak faith and mammon worshippers not been inclined toward disbelief and faithlessness, God Almighty would have solely accorded them to such disliked and outcast people so that everyone would know that mundane substance is not the measure of human dignity.

Indeed, there is not any allegory more eloquent than the one mentioned in the preceding Verses in order to shatter false values and change a society whose standards of people's merits rest on the number of one's camels, cash money, maids and servants, houses and mansions, and luxurious adornments such that the appointment of Muhammad (S) who was a poor orphan to prophethood was a source of astonishment.

The best thing to do is to shatter such baseless standards and replace them with human values of fearing God and piety, knowledge, sacrifice, and courage otherwise none of the superficial and transient reforms will be of no avail.

The same was carried out in the best manner by the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an, and the Messenger of God (S); as a consequence of which a society that was regarded as the most underdeveloped and superstitious societies flourished in a brief span of time.

It would be of interest to know that a Prophetic tradition complements the aforesaid plan:

"If the world had any value before God as little as the wings of a fly, God would not have provided disbelievers with water to drink."[13]

The issue is eloquently expressed by 'Ali (as), the Commander of the Faithful, in the Qasi'a Sermon.

Reproaches of the sinful and concupiscent world in Qur'anic Verses and the traditions narrated from the Prophet's Household (as) are to found in tradition sources including: Nahj al-Balagha, Majlisi's Bihar, Usul al-Kafi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'a, Kanz al-Ummal, Saduq's Amali, Mahajjat al-Bayda', Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, Mir'at al-Uqul, Ghazali's Ihya' al-Ulum, Mustadrak, Shaykh Mufid's Amali, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Riyad al-Salihin, Madinat al-Balagha, Warram's Majmu'a ("Collection [of Traditions]"), Mishkat al-Anwar.

It is worthy of note that the Islamic Revolution is based on the revolution of values. As a consequence of losing the genuine values and because the values of the Age of Ignorance flourish anew among Muslims in modern times, they live in dire circumstances under the pressures of merciless and bloodthirsty enemies.

It is unfortunate that men are judged on the basis of worldly possessions. Knowledge, fear of God, and other virtues have been consigned to oblivion; they have sunk into mundane gaudy embellishments and have alienated themselves from the Islamic faith.

So long as the status quo is maintained, they have to pay dearly for their dire mistake. In such circumstances, they have to make drastic changes in the values preoccupying them in order to become prepared for Divine Favors being accorded to them

("Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves [from evil to good],"[14]).

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 36 - 37

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَاناً فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

36. And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious [Allah], We appoint for him a devil to be a companion to him.

37. And verily, they [devils] hinder them from the Path [of Allah], but they think that they are guided.

The preceding Verses made mention of disbelievers sinking in worldly possessions but the Verses in question make a reference to one of the tokens of such sinking in gold and adornments.

It is to be noted that the

"companion"

may imply bad company, spouse, children, or partner. It is for the same reason that the indefinite for of Devil (Shaytanan) in ad hoc employed to include devils of all kind.

According to the preceding Verses, a devil will be appointed by God Almighty to be the companion of the one who turns away from reflection on Qur'anic Verses and turns to mundane preoccupations.

The two blessed Verses in question say that one who does not remember God and the Attributes of his Glory and does not reflect on Qur'anic Verses and Their secrets and delicacies so that the Truth of the Islamic faith becomes manifest to him will undoubtedly be occupied with falsehood and entertains satanic thought in his heart.

Such thought hinders the path of Truth and the passage of angels to his heart; as a consequence of which his heart turns into the camp of devils and man will have no other alternative to hinder the path of devils but to remember God and reflect on Divine Attributes and Creation and through Divine Aid may be able to hinder the path of devils.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S)[15] that had it not been for the devils surrounding man's heart, he would have taken a glance at the dominions of the heavens and the earth.

The Prophetic tradition indicates that any man is worthy of attainting to such station; however, when he is enslaved by his concupiscence, devils will take control of him surrounding his heart and blinding the eyes of his heart through which he is supposed to take a glance at the dominions of the heavens and the earth and discover spiritual truths.

It is to be noted that when one is entangled with the blindness and darkness of one's concupiscence, he will falsely imagine that he is on the right path whereas he is in error.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 38 - 39

حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ

38. [Satan's companionship continues] till when [the sinner on Resurrection Day] comes unto Us saying [unto his companion, Satan,] "Would that between me and you were the distance of the east and west" - a worst [type of companion you were] indeed!

39. [But it will be said unto him] "It will profit you not [the wish to turn away from devils, since] you did wrong [and] that you will be sharers [you and devils] the chastisement.

On the Day of Resurrection, sinners wish they could distance from devils in Hell, but the Holy Qur'an says that they will share the chastisement with devils and they will not be apart.

Veils will be torn asunder on the Day of Resurrection and many a beloved will fall into disfavor and many an illusion and false belief will be manifest:

("but they think that they are guided").

The two blessed Verses indicate that sinners turn away from God Almighty as a consequence of which devils turn into their companions in this world until when they return to God Almighty in the Hereafter:

("till when [the sinner on Resurrection Day] comes unto Us")

and find themselves in chastisement together with the devils who were their company in this world.

Addressing their evil company they say:

"Would that between me and you were the distance of the east and west."

The word

mashriqayn ("the two easts")

may indicate the east and west since they are far from each other.

The word may designate preferential dual (taghlib) as is the case in "the two suns" (the sun, lit. "the sun and the moon," shamsayn) and "the two moons" (the moon, lit. "the moon and the sun," qamarayn). The two easts may also designate hibernal or wintry and estival or summery easts which stand far from each other.

In short, those who have turned away from God Almighty and Qur'anic verses and instead have taken devils as their company will be their companions in Hell but their regrets will be in vain, since they have lost their opportunities with which they were provided in the world.

Turning away from their Origin and Originator and enslaved by their concupiscence, they have provided Satan with the opportunity to ensnare them. They have done wrong to themselves and they have to share Divine Chastisement with their company.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter.
2. 26:214
3. 112:3-4
4. 39:9
5. 112:3
6. 2:171
7. Tafsir Burhan.
8. 21:53-54
9. 14:35
10. 2:124
11. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, pp. 596-597; Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, pp. 138-139.
12. 6:124
13. Kashshaf [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 250.
14. 13:11
15. Makhzan al-'Irfan [Exegesis], p.25.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 40 - 63

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 40

أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلالٍ مُبِينٍ

40. Can you [O Muhammad!] make the deaf to hear, or can you guide the blind or him who is in manifest error?

Divine Word may solely affect the God fearing who are alive at heart. The message of the Messenger of God (S) may not affect those who are not prepared to give ears to his words.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), thus the blessed Verse inquires him:

"Do you expect to make the deaf listen to you or can you guide the blind to the path of Guidance? Are you able to make those who are astray and tread the path of manifest error to turn toward the right path of the Islamic faith?

It is beyond your means. One whose heart is covered by the dark veil of neglect, vanity, and arrogance and the eyes and ears of his heart are blind and deaf may never be affected by Qur'anic Verses, the Divine Message revealed to the Messenger of God (S), so that he may proceed toward the Truth. It will be of no avail."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 41 - 42

فَإِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ

أَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُقْتَدِرُونَ

41. And when We take you away [from among them], We shall indeed take vengeance on them.

42. Or [if you happen to be alive] We show you that wherewith We threaten them: then verily We have perfect command over them.

Disbelievers should not imagine that they will not be chastised so long as the Noble Prophet (S) is alive, or there will be no chastisement following his demise. By Divine Chastisement, Divine Just Recompense, rather than hatred and abhorrence as the source of human vengeance, is intended.

The blessed Verse is a consolation to the Prophet (S) saying that if God Almighty takes him to His Closeness of Mercy before his taking vengeance of disbelievers, He will take his vengeance of them.

It is also said that the Verse means that if God Almighty takes him from Mecca without his taking vengeance of Quraysh disbelievers, He will take vengeance of them on the day of the Battle of Badr.

It is mentioned in the Prophet's Household's (as) exegesis that God Almighty will take vengeance of them through 'Ali (as).[1]

Two points may be inferred from the blessed Verse in question.

Firstly, reference is made to the Noble Messenger of God (S) as

"a Mercy bestowed upon the world,"

since he tolerated all the polytheists' persecutions and it is unknown whether he ever cursed them but it is known that he asked God Almighty to bestow forgiving upon them through His Mercy and Favor.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Whether you [O Muhammad (S)!] ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them [and even] if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness - Allah will not forgive them,"[2]).

Secondly, the afflictions other than jihad inflicted on disbelievers by Divine Command might have been inconsistent with his noble disposition since Quraysh disbelievers were his kith and kin and despite their dire persecutions he did not wish for their being afflicted by Divine torment; as a consequence of which he is told that when we take you from the world or when you emigrate from Mecca God Almighty will take vengeance of them which is confirmed by another Qur'anic Verse,

"And Allah would not chastise them while you are amongst them"[3].

Verse 42 is a consolation for the Noble Prophet (S) according to which God Almighty will take vengeance of them following his demise or emigration from Mecca to Medina.

It may also serve as a warning to Meccans to the effect that God Almighty will take His Messenger's (S) vengeance of them in his lifetime in the Battle of Badr or at a later time. God Almighty is Omnipotent and may take vengeance of them at any time.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 43 - 44

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ

43. Therefore, hold you fast to that which is revealed to you. Indeed you are on the Straight Path.

44. And verily this [the Holy Qur'an] is indeed a Reminder [and a Glory] for you and your people and you will be questioned [about it].

One who is on the Right Path benefiting from Divine Revelation is supposed to be assiduous and of lively disposition in his work:

("hold you fast")

and he is supposed to entertain doubts regarding his true beliefs because of people's oppositions:

("Indeed you are on the Straight Path").

Addressing His Noble Prophet (S), God Almighty says unto him:

"O Muhammad (S)! Do not disturb your noble disposition by disbelievers' persistence in staying in error and the contemptuous words they say about you and hold fast to Qur'anic Verses and Divine Traditions revealed to you by God Almighty and be content that your are certainly on the Straight Path."

The antecedent of "this" (inna-hu) is the Holy Qur'an in which lie the glory, honor, and the Straight Path for you and your followers. You and your people will be asked about the Holy Qur'an before long on the Day of Resurrection.

The Divine Book is full of Wisdom and Beacons of the Path to human felicity and virtue and you will be asked about what you did with Its instructions.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 45

وَاسْأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ

45. And ask those of Our Messengers [through their followers or by consulting their Books] whom We sent before you: "Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides the Most Gracious [Allah]?"

Divine Unity is a dogmatic principle shared by all religions and the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) pursues the Call of his predecessors:

("And ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you").

To reject idolatry and polytheist beliefs, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Inquire of the messengers sent before you whether we asked them to worship gods other than the Most Gracious Allah."

The Verse is a reference to the messengers of God who called people to believe in Divine Unity and they decisively condemned polytheism en masse.

Therefore, the opposition of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) against idolatry was not unprecedented, but he solely revived his predecessors' long standing tradition; however, idolaters and polytheists proceed against the Path beaconed by all prophets.

According to the present exegesis it is the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who was inquired about his predecessors, but all communities and even his opponents are asked the same question.

Those inquired include the followers of earlier prophets, their true and trustworthy adherents, or even laity among them, since their words lead to a unanimous assertion (khabar mutawatir) bearing testimony to the prophets' belief in Divine Unity.

It is to be noted that even those deviating from the dogma of Divine Unity, e.g. Christians of modern times believing in trinity, still discuss the question of Divine Unity saying that their trinity is not inconsistent with Divine Unity as a dogmatic principle shared by all prophets! Thus, inquiring from these peoples will suffice to negate polytheist claims.

Yet, some exegets also maintain that another possibility exists as to the interpretation of the Verse in question based on a number of traditions.[4]

It is also worthy of note that from among the Beautiful Divine Names,

"the Most Gracious" (Rahman)

receives emphasis in the Verse which makes references to the all inclusiveness of Divine Mercy and the fact that some people worship idols who engender neither gain nor loss.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 46 - 47

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَإِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ

46. And indeed We did send Moses with Our Ayat [Signs, Miracles, Verses] to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Then he said: "Indeed, I am a Messenger of the Lord of the world.

47. But when he came to them with Our Ayat, they laughed at them [Ayat and Miracles].

Mention is again herein made of the story of Moses (as), Pharaoh, and the Children of Israel since the destiny of Moses (as) and his people resembles that of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the people of Mecca - Pharaoh made excuses about Moses' (as) poverty saying that he is the sovereign in Egypt and likewise the chiefs of Meccan disbelievers regarded the Prophet of Islam (S) poor and an orphan where as they considered themselves to be men of substance and dignity.

It is needless to say that mockery and derision indicates their opponents' lightheadedness and frivolity.

The two blessed Verses are revealed as a consolation to the Prophet of Islam (S) by which mention is made of the story of Moses (as) saying that God Almighty sent him with many a miracle, e.g. the walking stick that turned into a serpent, his hand that shined when he took it out of his armpit, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood serving as tokens of his Divine appointment to prophethood since he was ordered by the Lord of Creation to guide Pharaoh and the dignitaries of his land.

According to Verse 47, when Moses (as) said that he had been sent by the Lord of the World and presenting his walking stick and his shining hand as proofs of his prophethood, Pharaoh and his followers, instead of using their intellect to distinguish between sorcery and miracle and acknowledge his prophethood, derided him.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 48 - 50

وَمَا نُرِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّاحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُونَ

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ

48. And not a miracle We showed them but it was greater than another and We seized them with torment in order that they might return [to Monotheism].

49. And they said: "O you sorcerer! Invoke your Lord for us [to remove the torment from us. Then, we] will certainly acknowledge your guidance."

50. But when [because of Moses' invocation] We removed the torment from them, they broke their covenant [and disbelieved].

Sending down Divine Guidance precedes chastisement:

("and not a miracle We showed them").

Divine Wrath in this world is for people to return to Monotheism). Inasmuch as Pharaoh and his people waxed their disbelief and denial of truth, God Almighty made Moses (as) show them a greater miracle inflicting torments on them, e.g. swarms of locusts descended upon them.

Following supplications, they asked for a covenant to the effect that if the affliction be removed from them, they will believe, but after the removal of the affliction, they broke their covenant and persisted in their disbelief.

They were also afflicted with lice, frogs, blood in their water and the like in order that they may acknowledge Moses' (as) Call and return to Monotheism. Despite the diversity of Moses' (as) miracles, they all concerned natural phenomena, e.g. animate beings.

Likewise, other prophets presented their peoples with miracles. Though the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) presented miracles concerned with extraordinary phenomena but his main miracle is the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an revealing the Divine Dominion and the secrets of His Sovereignty through which man may acquaint himself with intangible worlds thanks to Which human soul and perception of truth may exceed the realm of natural phenomena and find acquaintance with the metaphysical world.

It is an intelligible matter that the world, particularly human species as they follow Allah's Laws constantly proceeds toward perfection and the Islamic faith is supposed to serve as Divine Guidance for mankind to the Resurrection Day; as a consequence of which Prophetic miracles are supposed to exceed natural and tangible phenomena and beacon man toward spirituality so that he may avail himself of Divine Guidance and everyone may benefit from this inimitable Divine Word on the basis of his faculties and capabilities; however, other prophets' miracles suited their contemporaries.

Verse 49 says that when Pharaoh's people were afflicted with torments, they took refuge with Moses (as) and since common people were too ignorant to draw a distinction between miracle and sorcery, they regarded him as a great sorcerer and inquired of him to invoke his Lord and ask Him to remove the torments from them thanks to His covenant with him.

The covenant may refer to his prophethood, answering his invocation by his Lord, or the one according to which anyone opposing him will be afflicted with torment.

They asked Moses (as) to invoke his Lord to remove the torment from them so that they believe in his Call and find Guidance. Verse 50 says that when the torments were removed from them thanks to Moses' (as) invocations, they broke their covenant and persisted in their disbelief.

These are all lessons to be taken by Muslims and a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) to preserver tirelessly despite his opponents' obduracy and animosity without entertaining hopelessness in his heart.

Muslims may hereby take a lesson from the story of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel who despite hardships attained to victory over Pharaoh and his people. It also serves as a warning to the obdurate enemies of Islam so that they may see the fate of disbelievers and take a lesson from their dire fate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 51 - 52

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِي أَفَلا تُبْصِرُونَ

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ

51. And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people: "O my people! Is not mine the dominion of Egypt and these rivers flowing underneath [my palace]? See you not [my greatness]?"

52. "Am I not better than this one who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly?"

As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the clause:

"Am I not better" (ana khayrun)

is uttered by Iblis and Pharaoh. These two Verse clearly reveal fear, vainglory, despotism, vanity, false belief, reliance on worldly possessions, and the use of adornments which are characteristics of tyrants.

Having premonitions, tyrants make attempts at propaganda:

("And Pharaoh proclaimed").

Lacking logicality, tyrants rely on their palaces and worldly possessions;

("Is not mine the dominion of Egypt?").

The blessed Verse 51 says that when Pharaoh with his great power and glory failed to resist Moses (as) and noticed that Moses' (as) followers are on the increase, resorted to hypocrisy and ordered his men to gather people so that he may deceive them by his sovereignty and worldly possessions and make himself greater in their eyes.

Addressing the believing Children of Israel he said:

"Is not mine the dominion of Egypt and these rivers flowing underneath [my palace]? Am I not better than this one who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly?"

It is reported from some exegets in Atyab al-Bayan and Majma' al-Bayan that when God Almighty send Moses (as) to Pharaoh, he removed his stuttering, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"And loose the knot from my tongue"[5]

to whom God Almighty answered thus:

"You are granted your request, O Moses!"[6]**.**

Pharaoh meant to remind people of former times and reveal Moses' (as) speech defect.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 53 - 54

فَلَوْلا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلائِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْماً فَاسِقِينَ

53. "[If Moses is in the right] whey then are not golden bracelets bestowed on him or [as a proof of his prophethood] angels sent along with him?"

54. Thus he [Pharaoh] belittled his people and they obeyed him. Indeed they were a people who were disobedient [to Allah].

One who lacks sensibility resorts to worldly possessions and adornments and regards such possessions as a token of truthfulness and the lack of the same as a sign of falsehood:

("[If Moses is in the right] whey then are not golden bracelets bestowed on him").

It is the job of tyrants to make attempts at weakening Divine leadership and resorting to befooling others.

Blind devotion and obedience have their roots in cultural poverty, narrow mindedness, and superficiality:

("Thus he belittled his people and they obeyed him").

Verse 53 says that Pharaoh adds to his idle words saying that if Moses (as) is Divinely appointed to prophethood, why is he not wearing gold bracelets.

It is said that whoever was vested with governorship at the hand of Pharaoh, he would receive a gold bracelet and necklace and such adornments served as tokens of his rule.

He uttered such baseless words to show that Moses (as) did not deserve prophethood since he neither had worldly possessions nor did invisible beings like angels accompanied him to render him aid thereby he questioned adherence to him.

According to Verse 54, having deceived his people and hindered them from using their reason by his baseless words, they compared Divine honor with mundane glory as the majority of common people at any time make no distinction between true spiritual honor and the mundane and untrue one unaware of the truth that Divine honor whose perfect representation is prophethood springs from another source.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 55 - 56

فَلَمَّا آسَفُونَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفاً وَمَثَلاً لِلْآخِرِينَ

55. Therefore, when they angered Us, We chastised them and drowned all of them.

56. And We made them an [evil] precedent and an example to later generations.

At times, people see their recompense in this world besides the one on the Day of Resurrection:

("[We] drowned all of them").

In the sphere of rebellion and exceeding bounds, those who issue and obey orders meet their dire end together:

("all of them").

Divine Wrath and Vengeance is for the sake of man's deeds. History bears witness to the fact that destruction of tyrannical rules is an inevitable Divine Law:

("And We made them an [evil] precedent and an example to later generations."

In these Verses, God Almighty informs his Prophet (S) that when Pharaoh went to extremes in his rebellion and disobedience and angered God Almighty and Divinely appointed prophets, vengeance was taken of him and his followers and they were all drowned.

Verse 56 says that God Almighty set them a precedent and an example for disbelievers of later generations so that they learn that God is Wrathful and takes vengeance of disbelievers and is the Most Gracious Lord at the time of Mercy.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 57 - 60

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلاً إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ

وَقَالُوا أَآلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلاً بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلاً لِبَنِي إِسْرائيلَ

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ

57. And when the son of Mary (as) is quoted [by idolaters] as an example [that if objects of worship besides God will go to Hell, He will go there as well], your people cried out derisively [at the example].

58. And said: "Are your gods better or is he [better]? [If Jesus (as) who is better than our objects of worship is in Hell, ending up in Hell is neither important to us nor to our objects of worship.] They quoted not the above example except for argument but they are a quarrelsome people.

59. He [Jesus (as)] was not more than a servant. We granted Our Favor to him and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.

60. And if it were Our Will, We would have made angels to replace you on the earth.

Upon the revelation of:

"Disbelievers and the objects of worship [besides Allah] are fuel for Hell!"[7]***,***

the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was asked:

"If it is true, Jesus (as) and Ezra (as) are the objects of worship for Christians and Jews and according to the Verse, they will be the fuel for Hell! If Jesus (as) is in Hell, We and our idols wish to be admitted to Hell."

Disbelievers cried out derisively.

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Objects of worship from amongst men who wish to be worshipped, like Pharaoh, will go to Hell, but Jesus (as) and Ezra (as) never wished to be worshipped."

There are many reports narrated by exegets regarding the point in question,[8] the summary of their contents is that the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"'Ali (as) among my people is like Jesus (as) son of Mary among his people."

His people dislike his words and uttered words mentioned in the following Verse.

The Noble Prophet (S) means that Jesus' (as) followers divided into three sects:

1. A Jewish sect that turned into Jesus' (as) bitterest enemies, hated him, and attributed false claims to him

2. A Christian sect that went to the extreme regarding him and regarded him as the Son of God and God Himself

3. A moderate sect that regarded him as the Arch-prophet, the Messenger of God, and God's servant.

The first two sects went to extreme and became disbelievers and were condemned to torments in Hell. The third sect found deliverance and felicity. Likewise, a sect was the bitterest enemy of 'Ali (as) and even attributed disbelief to him, e.g. tyrants, Ummayads, and Kharijis.

They entertained hatred against 'Ali (as) and on the tenth day ('Ashura) of Muharrum said unto Abi 'Abd Allah (as):

"Verily, we will enter into battle with you out of hatred in the same manner that we did with your father and what we did in the Battles of Badr and Hunayn."

The second sect went to the extreme and regarded 'Ali (as) as the creator of the heavens and the earth. These two sects share their torment in Hell.

The third sect regard him as Imam and the immediate successor of the Noble Prophet (S) and consider 'Ali's (as) eleven male offspring as the Imams and people's Guide after the Prophet (S).

They neither innovate anything in matters of religion nor do they deny the dogmatic principles. They act upon the religion of Islam and form the moderate community of Muslims who enjoy deliverance and felicity.

Regarding:

"And when the son of Mary (as) is quoted"

it is also said that the:

"quoter" (darib)

is the Noble Prophet and the similitude or example (mathal) is the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), who is likened to Jesus (as) son of Mary among the two communities in terms of beliefs in them.

"Your people cried out derisively [at the example]"

makes a reference to the hypocrites around the Noble Prophet (S) who were disbelievers outwardly Muslims and inwardly polytheists.

"Cried out derisively"

refers to disbelievers' hatred against the Noble Prophet (S) and the Islamic faith and their likening 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as).

"Crying out loudly derisively" (yasiddun)

indicates disbelievers' hatred and animosity to such extent that they liken 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as). The above is reported by Hafis Abu Bakr ibn Mardiwayh, the eminent Sunni scholar, in his Manaqib.[9]

According to Verse 58, polytheists said:

"Are our gods better or is he [better]?"

They quoted not the above example except for argument but they are a quarrelsome people. The antecedent of the pronoun "he" (am huwa) is a rhetorical question denoting that their idols are better than Jesus (as), since Jesus (as) is an ordinary human being undeserving divinity like other human beings.

The reply to their rhetorical question is that your idols are pieces of wood or metal undeserving to be worshipped like other pieces of wood and metal. Jesus (as) possessed understanding, perception, distinction, and he could move whereas your idols lack the same, since man stands above animals, plants, and inanimate objects in the hierarchy of existence. Some exegets maintain that the antecedent of the pronoun:

"he"

is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as) asking why the Noble Prophet (S) did likened 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as) so that some believe in him and some fail to do so.

Why did he not liken him to our idols so that some of us believe in their divinity and some fail to do so? The reply to the question may be thus provided: firstly, regarding your idols there are two sects. Polytheists

believe in their divinity but some people fail to do so saying that they are no more than pieces of metal and wood fashioned by you.

There were three sects regarding Jesus (as) and ‘Ali (as), two of whom went to the extreme and one treading the path of moderation.

Secondly, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) believed that Jesus (as) was an Arch-prophet and the spirit of God and worked wonders such as reviving the dead, healing incurable diseases, e.g. leprosy and blindness, whereas idols made no effects. The Noble Prophet (S) intended to say that the rank of ‘Ali (as) is as elevated as that of Arch-angels even more elevated than them.

“They quoted not the above example except for argument.”

Disbelievers roused disputations to abrogate truth and substantiate falsehood in the same manner that they made attempts to attribute sorcery, lying, and the like to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

“But they are a quarrelsome people.”

They uttered such idle talk out of their animosity toward the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), but if they had distinction and could perceive the truth, they would not be ensnared in such error.

According to Verse 59,

“He [Jesus (as)] was not more than a servant. We granted Our Favor to him and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.”

It is said in Verse 60 that in the same manner that We could create a son without father,

“if it were Our Will,”

We have the Power to destroy you and

“make angels to replace you on the earth.”

Angels who obey Divine Decree know nothing but to obey Him.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 61 - 62

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

وَلا يَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

61. And he [Jesus (as) as he raised the dead] will be a known sign for [the coming of] the Hour [Day of Resurrection]. Therefore have no doubt concerning it [the Day of Resurrection]. And follow Me [Allah]. This is the Straight Path.

62. And let not Satan hinder you [from the Path to God]. Indeed, he is a plain enemy to you.

Against the polytheists’ false belief that regarded Jesus (as) an example for objects of worship besides God, the blessed Verse 61 makes mention of Jesus (as) as one of the signs of the coming of the Day of Resurrection.

He was born of a virgin mother that bears testimony to Divine Omnipotence to raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection as he did the same in this world and he will descend from the heaven as a prelude to Resurrection.

The Verse makes a reference to another characteristic of Jesus (as):

“he will be a known sign for [the coming of] the Hour [Day of Resurrection].”

His birth from a virgin mother indicates Divine Omnipotence in whose light there will be no room for questions concerning life after death. On the basis of numerous Islamic traditions, the descent of Jesus Christ (as) will occur in the Last Days and will serve as the coming of Resurrection Day.

The blessed Verse proceeds with the clause

"Therefore have no doubt concerning it [the Day of Resurrection]."

People are warned against neglect of Resurrection in terms of beliefs and practice:

"And follow Me [Allah]. This is the Straight Path."

God's Path is the straightest path treading which will make you aware of the risks and the way of deliverance from error and perils on the Day of Resurrection. The following Verse informs people that Satan wishes to keep you in ignorance and neglect.

Be alert lest

"Satan may hinder you from treading the Path to God"

and attending to your fate, since

"he is a plain enemy to you."

He showed his animosity toward you when he tempted your parents, Adam and Eve and had them expelled from Paradise and once more, he took an oath to lead all the children of Adam, except

"sincere believers,"

into error. How could you stay dormant against such sworn enemy of yours and let him subjugate your hearts and hinder you from the Path toward God through his constant temptations?

We close the exegesis of Verse 61 with a citation from the exegetic work titled Atyab al-Bayan:

"And he will be a known sign for [the coming of] the Hour [Day of Resurrection]."

Exegets vary on the antecedent of the pronoun:

"he"

some of whom, based on the apparent meaning of the Verse, hold that the antecedent is Jesus (as), i.e., the descent of Jesus (as) from the heaven is one of the signs and prerequisites of the coming of the Hour, namely Resurrection Day.

Following the advent of Imam Mahdi (as), the Twelfth Shi'i Imam ("the Remainder of God," Baqiyat Allah), Jesus (as) will descend from the heaven to establish prayer with the Imam, be appointed as his vizier, and slay Sufyani in Jerusalem. Four living prophets, Edris (Enoch [AS]), Jesus (as), Khidr (as), and Ilyas (Eliah [AS]) will appear at that time.

"The knowledge of the Hour" ('ilm li-'l-sa'a)

denotes the sign for Resurrection as one of the prerequisites of the advent of Imam Mahdi (as). Nonetheless, according to a number of traditions narrated from Jabir and Imam Sadiq (as), the antecedent of the pronoun

"he"

is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as) and it may make a reference to the return of Imam 'Ali (as) in the third stage in which devils will be slain.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 63

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

63. And when Jesus (as) came with clear proofs [and miracles], he said: "I have come to you with Wisdom and [I have come] to make clear to you some of the [points] in which you differ. Therefore fear Allah and obey me.

Prophets came with clear, convincing, logical, and undistortable proofs and many a miracle:

("Jesus (as) came with clear proofs [and miracles]").

Following the points mentioned above, the blessed Verse in question informs us that when Jesus son of Mary (as) was Divinely appointed to prophethood, he worked many a miracle, e.g. raising the dead and making a bird out of clay thanks to Divine Omnipotence and blowing into it causing its flight. Based on such proofs he informed the Children of Israel of his prophethood and his Divine appointment for their guidance.

He said that his words had been based on wisdom and truth and he had brought the Bible in order to remove the differences existing between them and help them to draw a distinction between truth and falsehood. Addressing the Children of Israel, he asked them to abstain from opposition to Divine Command but acknowledge and obey It.

Notes

1. Abu 'l-Futuh Razi's Tafsir ("Exegesis").
2. 9:80
3. 8:33
4. For further information, see the Exegeses by Qurtubi, Fakhr al-Din Razi, Nur al-Thiqalayn, Majma' al-Bayan, Ihtijaj, and the Exegesis by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim.
5. 20:27
6. 20:36
7. 21:98
8. For further information, see Shi'i and Sunni exegetic sources, e.g. Kulayni and Shaykh Óusi in Kafi, Ibn Babiwayh in Tahdhib, and Ibn Maghazili in Manaqib.
9. Apud Kashf al-Ghumma, p. 95. The same point, with minor alterations, is mentioned in Mir Muhammad Salih Kashfi Tirmidhi's Manaqib Murtadawi. Some other eminent Sunni and Shi'i scholars cite the same report with or without the blessed Verse in question. For further information, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, p. 398 ff.; Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 609 ff.; Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the blessed Verses in question.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 64- 89

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 64 - 65

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

64. Verily Allah! He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the Straight Path.

65. But the sects from among themselves differed. So woe to those who do wrong from the torment of a painful Day.

The main message of Jesus (as) is to call people to Monotheism. God, the Creator of all beings is solely worthy of worship.

The blessed Verse 64 says that He is truly my Lord and your Lord. Only worship Him. It is the Straight Path which finally leads to Closeness to God Almighty.

The pronoun:

"he" (huwa)

is one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names whose antecedent is Allah.

It refers to the Indivisible or Non-Composite (basit) Being who is Imperceptible through human senses. He is your Lord and my Lord and we are solely supposed to obey Him so that through such obedience to Him you may attain to excellence and felicity and His Infinite Mercy.

Verse 65 refers to the point that following the Call of the prophets with their indubitable proofs, wise sayings, scriptures, and many a miracles each of which bear testimony to the truth of their call, woe to those who have done wrong to themselves and deserve excruciating torment for their opposition to prophetic calls.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 66 - 67

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لا يَشْعُرُونَ

الْأَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

66. Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?

67. Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious.

The Day of Resurrection shall come all of a sudden and no one is aware of the Hour of its occurrence:

("It shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware").

All friendships not based on piety and fear of God will turn into enmity:

("Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious").

The preceding Verses made mention of obdurate idolaters, deviants, and polytheists of the people of Jesus (as) and the Verses in question depict their end. Verse 66 says:

"Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?"

The rhetorical question expresses the real circumstances of such people according to which those who do not listen to anyone providing advice out of one's kind heart and thereby paves the path for his perdition.

In this respect, it is said that such a person waits for his own death! The word "Hour" (sa'a) in this Verse and many other Verses indicate the Day of Resurrection, the happenings of which occur immediately as if they all happen in one single hour. However, the word at times signifies the last moment of the world. Since the two meanings are not too far from each other, it may indicate both.

The coming of the Day of Resurrection to occur all of a sudden is depicted in the blessed Verse in question. Two points are here raised: firstly, its sudden occurrence (baghtatan), and secondly, people being uninformed of the hour of its occurrence.

It is needless to say that something may suddenly occur but we are informed of it beforehand and prepare ourselves to encounter its aftermath; however, it would be unfortunate when a dire incident occurs all of a sudden and we happen to be totally unaware of its occurrence.

The sinful live in such state, in other words, they are caught by surprise to the extent that according to some traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

"The hour shall come when (people are preoccupied with their daily affairs) men milk ewes and [other] me unroll fabric [for trade];"

then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the blessed Verse:

'Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?'"[1]

It would be very painful to be unaware of an irretrievable occurrence and be caught in surprise.

Verse 67 depicts the state of the friends extending their hands toward each other in pursuit of corruption and the gaudy mammon saying:

"Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious."

The word:

akhilla' ("friends")

is the plural form of khalil ("friend") derives from khulla ("friendship").

Depicting the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, the Verse in question clearly reveals that the word:

"Hour"

also used in the preceding Verse indicates the Day of Resurrection, when all bonds of friendship break off unless those established for God and in His Name.

It is natural that such friendships turn into enmity on that Day since each and every of them reckons the other as the one leading him to misfortune and hopelessness, saying:

"You showed me the wrong way and called me to tread it. You were the one who embellished the world for me and encouraged me to be preoccupied with its gaudy adornments. You made me sink in neglect, ignorance, and vanity and thereby made me unaware of my dire end."

Yet, the bonds of friendship of the pious are everlasting since they are established on everlasting values whose fruitful consequences shall be more evident on the Day of Resurrection and thereby they place them on a firmer basis.

It is natural that friends render assistance to each other in daily life and if their friendship be based on evil and corruption they will be accomplices in their sins and crimes; however if their friendship be based on good and discretion, they will be associates in recompense. Therefore, it is not surprising to know that the former will turn into enmity and the latter into firmer friendship.

It is reported from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Know that any friendship which is not for God will turn into enmity and animosity on the Day of Resurrection."[2]

The following Verse is actually an interpretation of the characteristics and states of the God fearing pious and a depiction of their glorious fate. God will thus address them on the Day of Resurrection:

"O My servants! Today you do not have to entertain neither fear nor grief."

What an interesting message! A Message which is immediately sent by God to humanity opening with the best depictions:

"O Allah's servants!"

The Message removes the worst concern on that Day, a Message that removes all past grieves from hearts. This Message bears the four aforesaid merits.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 68 - 70

يَا عِبَادِ لا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآياتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ

68. [God says unto them:] My servants! No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve.

69. Those who believe in Our Ayat [Verses, Signs, Proofs] and are submitted [to Truth] at all times.

70. Enter Paradise, you and your wives in happiness.

Submission to the Will of God Almighty guarantees security from fears and perils on the Day of Resurrection.

Serenity will precede benefiting from Bounties in Paradise:

("No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve").

Having faith is insufficient; we have to be totally submitted to Divine Will.

The phrase:

"O servants!"

in the blessed Verse in question is addressed to the God fearing pious admitting them to Paradise on the Day of Resurrection free of excruciating grieves and fears of torments and afflictions experienced by people in this world.

Such believers do not have to entertain sorrow for their past lives since they did not waste their mundane life. They will neither regret nor grieve on the Day of Judgment. The Verse proceeds with saying that the pious shall benefit from Divine Infinite Mercy and Bounties.

Verse 69 makes a reference to certain characteristics of God's servants who are praised for worshipping God. Those are the ones who believed in Divine Signs (or Verses, i.e., the Holy Qur'an) and totally and unconditionally submitted to His Commands and Injunctions imparted to them through His Messenger, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (S).

These God fearing, pious, and endeared servants are further depicted by two more clauses, i.e.,

"Those who believed in Our Ayat and submitted to our Command."[3]

They are those who are addressed by such glorious appellations and benefit from such divine Bounties. In fact, the two aforesaid clauses provide a precise depiction of their belief and practice. Faith (iman) specifies the firm bases of their beliefs and submission to the Will of God (islam) explicates their act of submission to Divine Commands and Injunctions.

Verse 70 says:

"Enter Paradise"

which is addressed to the pious by the Most Gracious and All-Great Allah. Thus, their host is actually God who invited His company and now is asking them to enter Paradise.

Then mention is made of the first Bounty to be bestowed upon them, i.e.,

"you and your wives."

It is evident that being with faithful and kind spouses is a source of pleasure for both men and women since they were their partners in mundane sorrows and now they may be their partners in happiness in the Hereafter.

The Verse further says unto believers that they may enjoy happiness such that your faces may be illumined by it.

The verb form:

tuhbarun (lit. "you are happy")

derives from hibr ("compose thoughts effectively) and at times it is employed in the sense of the features of happiness reflected in countenance.

The word hibr (pl. ahbar) is also used to refer to scholars since they affect human societies, as it is reported from the Command of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

"Scholars will live to the end of the world, their persons will be lost but their works will live on in hearts."[4]

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 71

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

71. Vessels and cups of gold will be passed round them; [there will be] therein all that inner-selves could desire and all that eyes could delight in and you will abide therein forever.

The words sihaf (plural form of sahfa) and akwab (plural form of kub) are applied to "large vessels" and "goblets" respectively.

It is to be noted as well that the pleasures of the eye will be in harmony with other wishes of the people of Paradise:

("eyes could delight").

The blessed Verse promises believers that they will enjoy all kinds of Divine and luxurious Bounties reserved for them in Paradise, e.g. gold bowls and jars and the Bounties of the people of Paradise are generally divided into three kinds:

1. Whatever the inner-selves of the people of Paradise wish shall be prepared for them
2. They shall enjoy all the pleasures of the soul and flesh
3. The last one which is the highest of Bounties is that the people of Paradise shall reside there forever.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 72 - 73

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

72. This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do.

73. Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat.

According to traditions, God has specified for each person a place in Hell and another place in Paradise.

The people of Paradise inherit the place of the people of Hell in Paradise and the people of Hell inherit the place of the people of Paradise in Hell.[5]

The issue of inheriting Paradise in mentioned in different Verses, an instance of which is:

"These are indeed the inheritors who shall inherit Paradise and dwell in it forever"[6].

To make it clear that so many Bounties in Paradise are bestowed upon the

God fearing for their deeds, the blessed Verse 72 says:

"This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit."

It is of interest to learn that on the one hand the recompense of past deeds are mentioned and on the other hand mention is made of

"inheritance"

which usually denotes some gain fallen into someone's share with no pain at all. It demonstrates the fact that human deeds serve as the pivot of his deliverance but what he receives for them far exceeds the recompense of his deeds.

Some exegets maintain that the allegory makes a reference to what mentioned above according to which for each and every person two dwelling places are reserved in Paradise and in Hell; people of Paradise inherit the place reserved in Paradise for the people of Hell and the people of Hell inherit the place reserved in Hell for the people of Paradise!

Verse 73 makes mention of the fruits of Paradise which are amongst the best Divine Bounties, saying:

"Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat."

According to a tradition:

"No one picks up the fruits of trees in Paradise unless two folds shall grow instead of them."[7]

Such Bounties constitute some of the invigorating Bounties in Paradise to be granted to those who are faithful and do righteous good deeds.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 74 - 76

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

لا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ

74. Indeed sinners will be in the torment of Hell to abide therein forever.

75. [The torment] will not be lightened for them and they will be plunged into destruction with deep regrets, sorrows, and in despair therein.

76. We wronged them not, but they were wrong-doers.

The verbal form:

mublisun ("they grieve in despair")

derives from iblas ("grief with despair"). The word Iblis may also connote that he is hopeless of Divine Mercy. The blessed Verse 74 says that human evil deeds will take him to Hell and Divine Chastisement is fair.

Whenever the Holy Qur'an mentions the Bounties promised to believers, it usually warns disbelievers to torments and au contraire, whenever It warns disbelievers against torments, It promises believers that they will be granted Bounties in Paradise.

The reason may lie in the fact that man should at all times stay between awe and hope; as a consequence of which the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is by Divine Word, a mercy to the world but at the same time is a bearer of good tidings and a warner.

It is to be noted in the mean time that believers will enjoy infinite Bounties and will stay in Paradise forever; au contraire, disbelievers and sinners will taste many a torment in Hell and will stay there for good.

The following Verse says that their torment will not be lightened and they will lose their hope for deliverance.

Verse 76 serves as a reminder as per which it is not to be imagined that those who will be admitted to paradise to enjoy the Bounties there had some inborn quality and they did not struggle willfully to do righteous good deeds; au contraire, it may not be supposed that those who will end up in Hell to be afflicted with such torments had some inborn defect in them and they did not commit evil deeds without their will.

This is the false belief maintained by Ash'aris which is inconsistent with Divine Justice. Had it been like this, evil doers would have been wronged. Yet, The Essence of Divine Unity is far from chastising His weak servant because of his inborn quality driving him to committing sins.

Therefore, God Almighty reminds the people of Hell and torment in many a Qur'anic Verse that He did not wrong them but they did wrong knowingly and out of their own will as a consequence of which they deserve chastisement which is fair. It is through His Justice that everything is placed in order and thanks to His boundless Mercy, He may forgive anyone He wills.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 77

وَنَادَوْا يَا مَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَاكِثُونَ

77. And they will cry: "O Keeper [of Hell]! Let your Lord make an end of us." He will say: "Indeed you shall abide forever [and there shall be no death]."

The inhabitants of Hell ask for assistance from anyone.

At times, they ask help from believers:

"Look at us so that we may use your light?"

and at times they extend their hands toward tyrant chiefs:

"Would you deliver us from Divine Wrath?"

They sometimes beseech the keepers of Hell to render them aid. They ask them to make an end of them, but it will be of no avail.

The blessed Verse in question says that the people of Hell seek refuge with the keeper of Hell out of the severity of torment and ask them in supplication:

"'O Keeper [of Hell]! Let your Lord make an end of us.' He will say: 'Indeed you shall abide forever.'"

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 78 - 80

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ

أَمْ أَبْرَمُوا أَمْراً فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَى وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

78. Verily, We have brought the truth to you, but most of you have a hatred for the truth.

79. Or have they plotted some plan? Then We too are planning.

80. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel? [Yes We do] and Our messengers are by them, to record [everything].

God Almighty is the Origin of Truth and angles are responsible for recording the recompense of acknowledging the Truth or failing to do so.

Divine recompense is consistent with our deeds and He will not chastise anyone without carrying out evil deeds or making decisions to commit them:

("Or have they plotted some plan?").

Disbelievers unknowingly imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secret plans. The first two Verses confirm the preceding Verse to the effect that the Essence of Divine Unity addresses disbelievers and in reply to those of them who seek deliverance says that He clarified for them the Path of Truth in this world; in other words, He sent His Messengers to guide them but they disliked to follow the Straight Path.

They not only failed to acknowledge the Message imparted to them by prophets but also they persisted in their opposition to and denial of Divine Word and made attempts at their persecution; as a consequence of which God Almighty rendered their torment more severe and the same bears testimony to the fact that Divine Retribution is consistent with human deeds.

Verse 80 asks disbelievers whether they imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secrets and inward hatred and opposition to the Message and what they whisper into the ears of each other. Then it provides the reply saying that it is not as they have imagined since if they hear the words of each other and they are unaware of what they entertain in their hearts, God Almighty hears their words and is aware of their secrets and see their deeds. He is well informed of their oppositions to Muslims and their secret counsels and the most noble of recorders (kiram al-katibin), i.e., the angels in charge of recording human words and deeds, are present at your side and listen and record whatever they say or they do.

The All-Hearing (sami') and the All-Seeing (basir) are two of the Most Beautiful Divine Names. It is also said that the two Divine Names indicate His Pre-eternal Knowledge, i.e., His Omniscience embraces all intelligible phenomena.

As mentioned above, the two Divine Names may also allude to the fact that whatever you perceive through your senses of vision and hearing is known through Divine Immediate Knowledge ('ilm huduri) since all contingent beings are embraced by His Omniscience:

("Nothing is excluded from His Knowledge even if it be an iota in the heaven or on the earth").

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 81 - 82

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

81. [O Prophet (S)] say: "If the Most Gracious [Allah] had a child, then I am the first of Allah's worshippers [to respect that child].

82. Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe [to Him].

The Creator of the world is needless of children and whenever there is any word concerning any possible defect of Him, we are supposed to glorify Him. In the preceding Verses, particularly the opening Ones, mention was made of Arab polytheists who reckoned angels as Allah's daughters and the foregoing Verses included accounts of Jesus (as) and his Call to people concerning Divine Unity and obedience to Him.

The blessed Verses in question negate these false beliefs from another viewpoint saying:

"If the Most Gracious [Allah] had a child, then I am the first of Allah's worshippers [and I were the first person to respect the child and to obey him]."

The theme of Verse 81 is intricate to a number of Qur'anic exegets as a consequence of which they have resorted to different justifications some of which sound quite queer; nonetheless, the Verse is by no means intricate.

It is a method of interest employed in confronting obdurate people.

An instance of employing the method would be when someone falsely claims that a certain individual is a man of knowledge but he is not so, we might say that had he been knowledgeable, we would have been the first people to follow him so that he may reflect upon his false claim and make

attempts at finding an argument to substantiate it and when he fails to produce such argument, he may be awakened from his neglect.

It is also worthy of note that

"serve" ('a-b-d)

is not employed everywhere in the sense of "worship" and at times it is used in the senses of "obey; respect" and it is used ad hoc in the latter sense.

Verse 82 clearly rejects these false claims saying:

"Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe [to Him]."

The Creator and Possessor of the heavens and the earth is the Lord of the Great Throne is needless of children since His Existence is Infinite, Embracing all the world of being. He is the Creator of the world of creation.

Children are required by those who die and beget children to continue their progeny. Children are needed by those who need aid and company at the time of incapacity and solitude. Finally, children indicate corporeality and contingence. The Creator of the Throne, the heaven and the earth has no need for children.

"Lord of the Throne" (rabb al-'arsh)

follows

"Lord of the heaven and the earth" (rabb al-samawat wa 'l-ard)

is an instance of enumeration of the general following the specific, since

"Divine Throne"

implies the world of existence which is ruled by God Almighty.

It is also possible that

"the Throne"

alludes to the metaphysical world as the opposite of

"the heavens and the earth."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 83

فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى يُلاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

83. So leave them [these idle talkers alone] to speak nonsense and play until they meet the Day which they have been promised.

God Almighty usually provides the unworthy with respite and leaves them alone for some time following sending down Guidance. When producing arguments and warnings be of no effect, the other party is supposed to be left alone in the same manner that a kind physician desperately leaves his obdurate patient alone.

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Messenger of God (S) asking him to leave alone the ignorant people preoccupied with mundane affairs who regard the Creator of the world to natural phenomena and attribute false ascriptions to Him.

They may not be guided; therefore, leave them alone to be immersed in vanity until the Day of Resurrection arrives which has been promised to them.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 84 - 85

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

84. It is He Who is the only God worshipped in the heaven and the only God to be worshipped on the earth and He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient.

85. And Blessed is He Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and to Whom you will be returned.

He Who possesses Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom is worthy of being worshipped. The blessed Verse 84 says that the Creator of the heaven and the earth is the One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

He has placed everything in its proper place in the precise system of creation and He is Fully Aware of the generation and corruption of worldly phenomena and His Immediate Knowledge embraces everything and all entities in this world are under His Guardianship.

Qur'anic exegets ad hoc take

"God"

in the sense of Object of Worship and maintain that God is the One Who is the Creator and the Object of Worship of the inhabitants of the heavens, the earth, and the Throne.

The word:

"God"

may allude to Divinity and Creativeness since God Almighty, praise be to Him, is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and their inhabitants and is also their Breeder and Educator as it may be comprehended from the close of the Verse:

("He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient")

since His creation is based on His Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge and a firm basis and it is done in the best possible manner.

Verse 85 indicates Divine Greatness, Sovereignty, and Majesty saying that the Almighty is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists between them and they are all embraced by his Infinite Sovereignty and Almightiness. He is of Everlasting and Boundless Bounties.

"And with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour,"

i.e., He is the only One Who is aware of the hour of Resurrection and restoration and return of all things in within his Almightiness.

The blessed Verse in question enumerates five Divine Attributes, namely Lordship, Divinity, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Possession [of all things]. These five Divine Attributes include all Most Beautiful Divine Names and His other Names branch off from these five Attributes.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 86

وَلا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

86. And those whom they invoke instead of Him have no power of intercession - except for those who bear witness to the truth knowingly [e.g. Jesus (as) and the angels who know where the objects of intercession lie].

Intercession is acceptable but only those who bear witness to the truth may intercede for others. The blessed Verse is about the false belief held by

polytheists imagining that idols or others such as angels and Jesus (as) could intercede on their behalf and save them from torment.

The Verse is saying that no one may intercede except those who bore witness to the truth knowingly. The Verse indicates that verbal testimony is insufficient in matters of faith but it must be borne out of knowledge and certitude. It may also allude that interceders solely intercede on behalf of believers in Divine Unity.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 87

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

87. And if you ask polytheists who created them, they will surely say: "Allah." How then do they turn away [from God]?

Meccan polytheists believed in Allah's creative act, but they were entangled in polytheism regarding Divine Sovereignty, Grace, and intercession and associated gods with Allah in these respects.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse says:

"O Muhammad (S)! If you ask these polytheists who created them, they will emphatically say that Allah created them."

"How then do they turn away [from God]?"

Surprisingly, they, out of their primordial disposition, seriously confess that God is their Creator, but they turn away from him and worship idols and gods and in the mean time ask Him to answer their prayers. Thus, they render themselves inflicted with everlasting torment and destruction.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 88 - 89

وَقِيلِهِ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلاءِ قَوْمٌ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

88. And Our Prophet says: "O Lord! Verily, these are a people who do not believe.

89. [Now that you have lost your hope to guide them to the Straight Path] then turn away from them and say: "Peace [unto you]! But they will come to know [what their recompense shall be].

Qilihi like qawlihi is an infinitive denoting "to say." Confronting obdurate people, prophets seek refuge with God. They are asked to leave obdurate polytheists alone rather than enter into disputation with them lest they happen to be defeated.

The blessed Verses in question reveal the Noble Prophet's (S) complaint against the obdurate and insensible people. The Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) complains that he talked to them day and night and made attempts at bearing glad tidings and warnings.

He related the dire fate of the ancient peoples who refrained from believing in Divine Unity. He warned them against Divine Retribution and heartened them that if they turn away from error, they will be rewarded by Divine Bounties.

In short, he did his level best to guide them to the Straight Path of the Islamic faith, but they were not affected by his words and they failed to believe in God. Now God knows best as what to do with them.

The last Verse includes Divine Injunction to His Prophet (S) to leave them alone. He is reminded that turning away from them does not entail refusing to talk to them, violence, and aggression.

He is asked to say unto them:

"Peace [unto you]!"

The gentle word connotes neither friendship nor greeting, but it indicates separation and alienation.

It resembles the gentle words mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And when the foolish address them with bad words, they reply back with mild words of gentleness"[8].

The word peace ad hoc indicates indifference accompanied with dignity. In the mean time, he warns them with a meaningful sentence lest they imagine that the separation and farewell indicate that God has nothing to do with them.

The Verse closes with the clause:

"But they will come to know."

O Lord! Make our bonds with thee and your saints firmer day by day so that they may intercede on our behalf.

O Lord! Protect us from any kind of manifest and latent polytheism. Amen O Lord of the world!

Notes

1. Ruh al-Bayan [Exegesis], vol. 25, p. 89.
2. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol.4, p. 612.
3. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 612.
4. Nahj al-Balagha.
5. Maraghi's Exegesis.
6. 23:10-11
7. Ruh al-Bayan Exegesis, vol. 8, p. 392.
8. 25:63

Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 1 - 36

(The Smoke)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 59

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter in question revealed in Mecca has fifty nine Verses. It is the fifth Chapter beginning with the detached letters HM.

The word:

dukhan ("smoke")

it attested twice in the Holy Qur'an. One instance is to be found in Chapter 41[1] concerning the beginning of this world and the other which may be found in the tenth Verse of the Chapter in question, makes a reference to the end of the world.

Most of the issues mentioned in the Chapter concern the Greatness of the Qur'an; it Revelation on the Night of Decree; Unity; disbelievers' fate; the story of prophet Moses (as), Children of Israel, and Pharaoh; uselfulness of creation; and the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"One who recites Surah al-Dukhan on Friday in the day and at night, God will have a mansion built for him in Paradise."[2]

Another Prophetic tradition says:

"One who recites Surah al-Dukhan in one night, he will awaken when seventy thousand angels ask for his forgiveness."[3]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ

1. HM
2. By the manifest Book that makes things clear.
3. We sent It down on a blessed night. Indeed, We are ever warning.

The word "blessed" (mubarak) refers to the Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) which is in the blessed month of Ramadan [the ninth month of the lunar calendar]:

("The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down").

Different interpretations have been put forward for the detached letters opening a number of Qur'anic Chapters the best of which may be the one according to which the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an springs from the

same letters as the second Verse of Chapter 42[4], following the detached letters HM ‘ASQ, reads:

“Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation to you [O Muhammad!].”

according to a number of traditions, a secret lies in these letters which is solely known to God.[5]

The detached letters HM open the Verse in question as well as the four preceding and the two following Chapters. Interpretations of these letters have been discussed above. Such interpretations of the detached letters HM may be found in the openings of Chapters 40 and 41[6].

It is worthy of note that a number of exegets have taken HM in the sense of taking an oath consistent with the following oath to the Qur’an thus making two oaths to the detached letters HM and the Qur’an.

It was mentioned above that God Almighty swears to the Holy Qur’an in the second Verse of this Chapter saying:

“By the manifest Book that makes things clear.”

The Holy Qur’an is a Book with manifest contents, invigorating teachings, constructive decrees, and well measured plans. It bears testimony to Its Truth.

“The Sun bears testimony to [the existence of] the Sun.”

The truth for which the oath has been taken is suggested in the third Verse:

“We sent It [i.e., the Holy Qur’an bearing testimony to the veracity of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S)] down on a blessed night.”

The word:

mubarak (“blessed; useful; everlasting; permanent”)

derives from baraka.

What night is the one which is the source of permanent good things? The majority of exegets maintain that it is the Night of Decree, a blessed Night on which the Ordainments of the world of humanity found a novel color with the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an, a night on which the fates of humanity and the Ordainments of one year are predestined.

Thus, the Holy Qur’an was revealed to the pure heart of the Prophet (S) on a fateful and momentous night. It is noteworthy that the Verse apparently indicates that the Holy Qur’an, in Its entirety, was revealed to the Prophet (S) on the Night of Decree.

What was the main purpose behind Its revelation?

It is mentioned in the same Verse:

“Indeed, We are ever warning.”

God Almighty appoints His Messengers to warn polytheists and wrong doers and the prophethood of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) with this manifest Book is the last link of the chain of prophethood.

It is true that prophets warned on the one hand and bore glad tidings on the other, but their calls basically rested on giving warnings to wrong doers and sinners.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 4 - 6

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ

أَمْراً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

4. Therein [the blessed night] is decreed [and explicated] every [momentous] matter of Ordainments [as per Divine Wisdom].

5. As a Command [the Revelation of the Qur'an on the Night of Decree and the Decree of every matter on that night] from Us. Indeed, We are ever sending [all the Messengers].

6. [Revelation of the Book and sending Messengers is] a Mercy from your Lord. Indeed, He is the All-Hearer, the Omniscient.

The Night of Decree is recurrent each and every year. The present tense of the verb indicates progression. The Ordainments of the Night of Decree concern basic issues. The Night of Decree is the fateful and momentous night.

The blessed Verse provides a description of the Night of Decree

"Therein [the blessed night] is decreed [and explicated] every [momentous] matter of Ordainments [as per Divine Wisdom]."

"Is decreed" (yufraqu)

makes a reference to the Ordainment of all fateful and momentous matters on that night.

The employment of the word:

"All-Wise" (hakim)

demonstrates the wisdom and unchangeability of Divine Ordainment. The attribute is usually used in the Holy Qur'an for God but its employment for things other than God is for the sake of emphasis.

The exposition is in harmony with many a tradition to the effect that the Ordainments of all humanity, e.g. provisions and longevity, within a period of one year are ordained on the Night of Decree. The exposition of the issue and other discussions on the Night of Decree and the harmony of Divine Ordainment with human free will are to found in the exegesis of Chapter 97[7].

Emphasis is laid on the Divine Revelation of the Qur'an in Verse five:

"As a Command [the Revelation of the Qur'an on the Night of Decree and the Decree of every matter on that night] from Us. Indeed, We are ever sending [all the Messengers]."

Basic grounds for the revelation of the Qur'an, sending the prophets, and the Ordainments of the Night of Decree are mentioned in the third Verse:

"A Mercy from your Lord."

His infinite Mercy necessitates that he does not abandon His servants but send them plans and guides in order to guide them on the winding path of perfection toward God. All the world of existence is basically emanated from his infinite Mercy and humanity enjoys His Mercy more than other creatures.

Seven Divine Attributes are enumerated in the Verse and the following Ones all of which indicate His Unity.

These Attributes include:

"All-Hearing (His servants' invocations) and Omniscient (of the secrets of His servants' hearts)."

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 7 - 8

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ

لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

7. The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you have a faith with certainty.

8. There is no god but He. It is He Who gives life and causes death - your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

Let us give careful consideration to the Holy Qur'an revealed by the Lord of heavens, the earth, and all creatures. Careful consideration of creation and guidance on the path of perfection paves the way for acquiring certitude.

Three Divine Attributes are mentioned in these two Verses: firstly, Divine Lordship (rububiyya) describing Himself as the Lord and nurturer of creatures, i.e., the heaven, the earth and what exists between the twain.

Secondly, Divine Lordship, the Everlasting Lord and Creator of all material and immaterial creatures unassociated in His Sovereignty and Creation with any existent being. Thirdly, His Oneness in His Deeds the highest of which is to give life and cause death, i.e., He gives life to the dead and thereafter causes death.

With due consideration to the fact that in these Verses, one is supposed to reason a posteriori, the unity and movement of creatures evidently substantiates proving the Necessary Being (wajib al-wujud), God Almighty, the Creator of the world Who usually describes Himself in this Verse and many other Verses as the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

Thus, taking into consideration the admirable system of creation and the marvelous palace of this world, one may, to some extent, learn the secrets of creation and notice that there is a secret concealed in each and every atom of creatures,

"if you split the heart of each atom, you will find a sun shining within it."

Thus, one may attain to certitude regarding the existence of the All-Wise and Omnipotent Originator.

Through careful consideration of the systematicity and unity of the world, it will be known that all creatures function as the links of a chain under the Command of the All-Wise God and will acknowledge His Unity, i.e., there is no creator but:

"He Who gives life and causes death - your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers."

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 9 - 11

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُبِينٍ

يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

9. [Disbelievers do not believe in it.] Nay! They play about [with truths] in [unfathomable] doubt.

10. Then await you the Day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke.

11. Covering [all] the people: this is an excruciating torment.

Both attestations of the word fa-'rtaqib in the Holy Qur'an are to be found in this Chapter. The word is a warning to disbelievers and a consolation to the Prophet (S).

There is neither complication nor any ambiguity in the arguments produced for Divine Unity and disbelievers doubts spring from their innermost grudge and animosity;

("But they play in their doubt in vain").

The blessed Verse says that disbelievers are in doubt regarding what God Almighty imparted to them through prophets assuming that mundane life and possession are permanent, since they are preoccupied with mundane affairs and pass their time in sport until they become entangled with torment and they are rendered desperate.

According to the Verse, disbelievers pretend ignorance so that they spend their time in mere play and show unto others that the words of the Noble Prophet (S) are baseless; however any wise individual, thanks to his intellection, perceives that such marvelous systematicity requires the creation of the Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator.

It is so unfortunate that the wise man perceives the facts but pretends ignorance and through his pretence and denial deserves torment.

Had he been unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, he would not have deserved torment.

According to the second and third Verses, following an exposition of His Lordship, Godhead, and Creation He warns disbelievers against their chastisement by Him and addressing his Messenger He says O Muhammad (S) against disbelievers' hostility and animosity await the day on which the recompense of their deeds will be sent down from the heaven as a consequence of their disobedience.

On such day, a visible smoke will embrace people and that will be an excruciating torment.

The Exegets' Views Regarding the Verse in Question

By smoke famine is intended. As narrated on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, when the people of Quraysh did not believe in the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (S) but made many an attempt to harm him, the Noble Prophet (S) cursed the tribe of Banu Nadr and they were afflicted by famine for seven years such that they had to feed on carcass and bones.

There was no rain and there was so much dust in the air that they, out of hunger, saw smoke in the sky.

Such dire situation made Abu Sufyan to go to the Noble Prophet (S) and say unto him:

"You enjoined us to care for our kith and kin and your blood relatives are dying of starvation. They have taken an oath that if you invoke God to remove the torment, they will believe in your prophethood."

As a consequence, their supplication

("O God! Remove the torment since we are believers")

is narrated in the Holy Qur'an. Upon the removal of the torment, they persisted in their disbelief.[8]

The smoke in question is a reference to the dust in the air resembling smoke on the day of the conquest of Mecca.

It refers to the day before the Resurrection Day and the disintegration of the world. According to the Prophet (S), early signs of Resurrection are the smoke, the descent of Jesus (as), and the fire erupting from the depth of the town of Aden driving all people to the gathering place of Resurrection.

Hudhayfa inquired:

"O Messenger of God (S)! What kind of fire is that?"

In reply, the Noble Prophet (S) recited the same Verse saying that:

"The smoke will embrace the East and the West and will last for forty days and nights. On that day, the believer will be like someone who has a cold and the disbeliever will resemble a drunk."

A similar narration is transmitted from Imam 'Ali (as).[9] Taking into consideration the last tradition, the third explanation seems preferable since according to which God Almighty warns disbelievers against the signs appearing before the Resurrection Day.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 12 - 13

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ

أَنَّى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَى وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ

12. [People will say]: "Our Lord! Remove the torment from us, really we shall believe!"

13. How can there be for them an admonition when a Messenger explaining things clearly has already come to them [though they ignored them].

Those who have taken religion as a mere play will notice their neglect and doubt one day. They will offer their supplications since Divine Wrath follows sending the last guidance and there will be no avail in repentance after being afflicted with torment.

Consequently, the two blessed Verses say that when disbelievers notice the tokens of torment and the approach of the Resurrection Day, they will regret their past evil deeds and say that they believe but their repentance will be of no avail since the torment will approach them and what exists in them potentially will be actualized. When the Messenger and Divine Guidance (S) called them to believe in God, they turned away from him and lost the opportunity to act and save themselves.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 14 - 16

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَجْنُونٌ

إِنَّا كَاشِفُو الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلاً إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَى إِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُونَ

14. Then they had turned away from him and said: "[He is] one taught [by someone], a man possessed!"

15. Indeed, We shall remove the torment for a while. Indeed you will return [to disbelief].

16. On the Day when We shall seize you with the greatest seizure. Indeed, We will exact retribution.

Divine Retribution will not be exacted for gratification of His thirst for revenge, rather it will be exacted for administration of justice.

The word batsh is employed in the sense of "seize with awe, severity, and greatness." Some have taken the word in the sense of defeating polytheists in the battle of Badr. God Almighty is the source of Mercy; however at times, He is Wrathful. Those who take Divine Revelation as mere play shall suffer severely from Divine Wrath.

God Almighty shall exact retribution of disbelievers who called the Prophet (S)

"taught [by someone], a man possessed."

Instead of believing in his prophethood and Divine Unity wholeheartedly, they turned away from him and said that:

"he was taught by someone and he was a man possessed [by evil spirits]."

They said at times that "a Roman slave" had heard the legends of the prophets and he taught him such legends. At times they also claimed that his words spring from his mental imbalance.

Verse 15 reads:

"Indeed, We shall remove the torment for a while. Indeed you will return [to disbelief]."

It is thus evident that regretting one's deeds when afflicted with torment is of no avail since their decision as to the revision of their deeds is transient and when disasters subside, they proceed with their previous stratagems.

Verse 16 reads:

"On the Day when We shall seize you with the greatest seizure. Indeed, We will exact retribution."

The word batsh denotes seizing by force and it ad hoc designates seizing for severe chastisement and the adjective:

kubra ("great, severe")

modifying batsha indicates the harsh and severe chastisement in store for disbelievers and polytheists.

In short, subsiding and removal of their ad hoc chastisement will be of no avail since the harsh and final chastisement is inevitably in store for them. Muntaqimun is from intiqam indicating, as mentioned above, chastisement, though the latter is used in common usage in the sense of revenge which is accompanied by anger and hatred.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 17 - 19

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ

أَنْ أَدُّوا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

وَأَنْ لا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

17. And verily We tried before them Pharaoh's people when there came to them a noble Messenger.

18. Saying [Moses unto the Children of Israel]: "Deliver to me Allah's servants [so that I may set them free and save them from exploitation]. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger."

19. "And exalt not yourselves against Allah. Truly, I have come unto you with a manifest authority."

Divine trial is an inevitable and long standing tradition. God Almighty tries humanity through sending prophets so that those acknowledging the Truth and those persisting in their obstinate denial could be distinguished:

("And verily We tried").

Proceeding with the topic of the foregoing Verses as to the disobedience of Arab polytheists' and well as ancient people's disobedience against the Truth, the Verses in question make mention of their excruciating torment and utter defeat so that they may serve as a consolation for believers and a warning against hateful disbelievers.

Mention is made of the story of Moses and Pharaoh:

"And verily We tried before them Pharaoh's people when there came to them a noble Messenger."

Fatanna is taken from fitna which is originally employed in the sense of placing gold ore in crucible to refine it from impurities. It is figuratively used in the sense of any test or trial conducted to determine the sincerity of human beings. The world is the scene of the trial of humanity throughout their lifespan.

The people of Pharaoh enjoyed a powerful state,abundant possessions, and extraordinary resources and opportunities which contributed to their living at the zenith of power; however, such power led to their vanity and they were entangled with all kinds of sin and wrong doing.

"There came to them a noble Messenger"

at that time. The Messenger was noble (karim) in terms of his high esteem and magnanimity in the presence of God and in respect to his noble descent. The Messenger was Moses(as) son of 'Imran (as).

In Verse 18, Moses (as) addressed the Children of Israel politely and lovingly:

"The purpose of sending me to you is that you, as Allah's servants, believe in me as His Messenger, and deliver to me what has been commanded to you."

According to this exegesis,

"Allah's servants"

is addressed to the people of Pharaoh, though this Qur'anic expression is used for God's righteous servants, it is employed for disbelievers and sinners in order to console them and also attract them to believe in Truth. Therefore, "deliver" (addu) indicates obeying Divine Command and acting upon His Injunctions.

Some exegets have presented another interpretation for the sentence maintaining that

"Allah's servants" ('ibad Allah)

indicates the Children of Israel and:

"deliver" (addu)

means leave them to Moses (as) so that he may set them free from bondage. Mention is made of the point in Verse 17 of Chapter 26;10

"Therefore, allow the Children of Israel to go with us."[11]

To reject any false accusation he says:

"Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger."

Thus, in various Qur'anic Verses, he rejects the false accusations of the people of Pharaoh, e.g. sorcery, aiming at superiority and ruling the land of Egypt, driving Egyptians out of their land.

According to Verse 19, following calling them to obey God through liberating the Children of Israel, Moses (as) says:

"And exalt not yourselves against Allah. Truly, I have come unto you with a manifest authority."

By manifest authority, he means clear miracles and obvious and logical arguments.

By

"exalt not yourselves against Allah"

any deed inconsistent with total submission to Divine Will is intended which may range from opposition and disobedience to harming and hurting God's Messengers to claims to divinity, divine sovereignty and the like.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 20 - 22

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ

وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَزِلُونِ

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنَّ هَؤُلاءِ قَوْمٌ ُرِمُونَ

20. "And truly I seek refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should accuse [or stone] me.

21. "But if you believe me not (at least) keep away from me and leave me alone.

22. Then [when he lost his hope in his Call being acknowledged by them] called upon his Lord [saying]: "These are indeed the people who are sinners."

Opposition against prophets and exploiting people are on a par with making attempts at being superior to God Almighty.

Moses (as) addressed his opponents who exploited people and said:

"And exalt not yourselves against Allah."

When sin and corruption find their way into man's heart, the prophets' Call will be of no avail;

("These are indeed the people who are sinners").

According to the blessed Verse, when Moses (as) insisted on guiding them to the true path and worked miracles to show unto them his superiority over them, the people of pharaoh, intending to kill him, tried to stone the noble prophet (as).

Upon being threatened to execution, he said that he sought refuge to his Lord and their Lord, thus trying to say unto them that their Lord was the same and that he called them to believe in the One God Who created all

creatures and they would all return to Him, but Pharaoh was a weak creature unworthy of being worshipped.

In Verse 22, Moses (as) says

"if you believe not in me who am the Messenger of God, why do you intend to kill me. Leave me on my own, i.e., I have my duty of trying to guide you to the true path but if you do not acknowledge my Call, keep distance from me."

When Moses (as) lost his hope in guiding Pharaoh and the Copts to the true path he cursed them at Divine Command;

("Then [he] called upon his Lord").

It is mentioned in Verse 22 that Moses called upon his Lord saying:

"O my Lord! These are disobedient and sinners, so immersed in sin and disobedience and their hearts are so darkened that there is no hope for them to come to the true path."

Being immersed in sins and pleasures of the flesh keeps man far from God such that even his primordial nature (fitra) may not save him.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 23 - 24

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلاً إِنَّكُمْ مُتَّبَعُونَ

وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْواً إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُغْرَقُونَ

23. [We said unto him:] "Depart you with My servants by night[12]. Surely you will be pursued [the people of Pharaoh]."

24. "And traverse the sea[13] [and expect nothing since following your passage water will fill up the gap] since they are to be drowned."

The nightly flight of the Children of Israel led by Moses (as) was a kind of velvet coup unbearable to Pharaoh hence dispatching a host to pursue them. The Verse implies that if you cannot attain to your goals in a land of disbelief emigrate from it and know that God bestows security and peace to his friends.

According to Verses 23 and 24, Moses' (as) prayer was answered and he was asked to depart from Egypt at night with his followers from among the Children of Israel. God let him know that following their flight, the people of Pharaoh would pursue you.

He commanded Moses (as) to strike the Nile with his stick and it would be cleaved so that they may traverse it safely, but he had to leave it as it was and entertain no worries since it had been ordained that Pharaoh and his host, i.e., the Copts, be drowned in it.

Upon hearing the intelligence that Moses (as) and the Children of Israel departed from the city, he pursued them with his host and saw that the Nile was cloven asunder and learned that it was Moses' miracle, but because of is vanity and arrogance he thought that he could traverse the Nile on their heels; however, when they reached half way, the cleft collapsed and they were all drowned.

All creatures are the Divine Host totally under His Command. They are the friends of God's friends and the enemies of His enemies. They await the Call to take vengeance upon His enemies and cause their destruction.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 25 - 28

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ
وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ
وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ
كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْماً آخَرِينَ

25. How many of gardens and springs that they left behind.
26. And green crops and excellent places.
27. And comforts of life wherein they used to take delight!
28. Thus [We took them all from them] and We made other people inherit them.

Mundane possessions may not save man from Divine Wrath. Many a time, God Almighty caused the destruction of a wrong doing people and made another people inherit the kingdom of their predecessors.

("Thus We made other people inherit them").

In the last four Verses God Almighty lets know His Messenger that Pharaoh drowned together with his host and lost many a garden, excellent construction, and fountains because of their disobedience.

Many a field and excellent royal palace were inherited by others, i.e., the Children of Israel and the land of Egypt with so many bounties were inherited by them without toil and hardship because of their faith. It needs to be said that believers, besides the heavenly palaces reserved for them, they will inherit those of disbelievers.

The heavenly degrees of believers are attested in the Holy Qur'an;

"They are the inheritors who inherit Paradise."

The Verse is an admonition and a reminder to believers to think about the manner in which Pharaoh and his people caused their destruction because of their disobedience against the Messenger of God and as a consequence of which were drowned in the torment of this world and the Hereafter, the latter of the two is more severe and excruciating.

Thus, the Children of Israel, through their faith in God and His Messenger, attained to such sovereignty without any hardship. Such sovereignty was their Divine Bounty in this world. Surely, their Bounties in the Hereafter will be infinite.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 29

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ

29. And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given a respite.

All creation is harmonious through Divine will. Giving respites to man has certain prerequisites but at times man is so immersed in sin that he will not be given a respite;

("nor were they given a respite").

The blessed Verse is saying that neither the heaven nor the earth wept for the drowning of Pharaoh and the Copts.

It indicates his lawlessness despite his false claims to superiority and worthiness of being worshipped; however, he had neither dignity nor honor with the inhabitants of the heaven so that his death may cause them to

grieve let alone enjoying any station in the eye of the inhabitants of the earth.

He falsely claimed that he was god, but the inhabitants of both the heaven and the earth are the friends of God's friends and the enemies of God's enemies. His perdition gladdened all the creatures of the heaven and the earth since he had led people astray.

Some exegets also maintain that by:

"the heaven and the earth"

their inhabitants are being meant since they only weep for believers and the Close Ones (muqarrabin) rather than for wrong doers like the people of Pharaoh. Some also hold that the weeping of the heaven and the earth is real and is reflected by a specific reddening and change besides the permanent reddening at the times of sunrise and sunset.

According to a tradition,

"When Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was martyred, the heaven wept for him and the weeping was reflected in the corners of the sky."[14]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as)

"The heaven wept for Yahya ibn Zakariyya (who was martyred by the tyrant ruler of his time very deplorably) and Husayn ibn 'Ali (as) for forty days and did not weep for anyone else except for the two."

The narrator inquired:

"How was the weeping of the heaven?"

He replied:

"An unusual reddening appeared in the sky at sunrise and sunset."[15]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 30 - 31

وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرائيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَالِياً مِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

30. And verily We saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment:

31. From Pharaoh ['s torment]; indeed he was arrogant and was from amongst transgressors beyond bounds.

Historical developments are all within Divine Control; however, it is to be noted that man's perdition lies in his disposition and conduct.

These two Verses are addressed to the Children of Israel saying:

"We drowned Pharaoh and saved the Children of Israel from the torments inflicted by Pharaoh and the Copts who had held them in servitude and humility and killed their sons and forced their women to work for them."

"From Pharaoh"

is a metaphorical expression denoting torment, i.e., We liberated the Children of Israel from Pharaoh's torment.

"Indeed he was arrogant and was from amongst transgressors beyond bounds"

makes a reference to Pharaoh's disobedience, disbelief, arrogance, and rebellion that transgressed beyond bounds such that he falsely claimed divinity.

As a consequence of his transgression and oppressing God's servants, he suffered Divine Wrath and was drowned in the Nile. That is the chastisement of one in this world and the Hereafter who steps beyond limits, does not obey God, and does wrong to his inferiors.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 32 - 33

وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُبِينٌ

32. And We chose them [the Children of Israel] above mankind and jinn [during the time of Moses (as)] because of knowledge.

33. And granted them signs in which there was a plain trial [though it was of no avail].

God's Ordainments are based on His Omnipotence. He tests His servants by the mundane possessions bestowed them. According to these two blessed Verses, He bestowed merit and dignity to the Children of Israel since He knew that they deserved them.

God Almighty bestowed to the Children of Israel from the Signs of His Omnipotence and many a miracle attested in Qur'anic Verses, e.g. cleaving the sea asunder and the clouds casting their shadows on them (and manna and salwa) at the time of their hardship in the desert.

Such miracles served as tests for them demonstrating that they had to be grateful and patient in afflictions. The Verse indicates that abundance of bounties is a test for them when they are vanquished by Satan to be preoccupied by the pleasures of the flesh.

The wise are not arrogant in such instances noticing that mundane bounties are transient and they are being tested by them. Such individuals know that they are supposed to enjoy the bounties in the best way in order to obtain Divine Satisfaction. They are expected to be grateful since according to the Holy Qur'an:

"If you give thanks I will give you more, but if you are thankless, indeed My chastisement is severe"[16].

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 34 - 36

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنْشَرِينَ

فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

34. Indeed these [polytheists] are [always] saying:

35. "There is nothing but our first death and we will not be resurrected."

36. "Then bring back our [deceased] forefathers if you [prophets] speak the truth.

Belief in Resurrection draws a distinction between faith in Divine Unity and polytheism.

It is worthy of note that polytheists believed in God but did not acknowledge Resurrection:

("we will not be resurrected").

According to these three blessed Verses, the Quraysh in reply to believers who said unto them that they would be resurrected after death:

("Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death then again will bring you to life [on the Day of Resurrection]").

However they were too ignorant or pretended ignorance to acknowledge Resurrection. Any wise person may perceive that the world and its systematicity it not in vain but they bear abundant fruits. All prophets let humanity know that the Hereafter awaits them and their sayings as well as Divine Guidance bear witness to the truth of their words to the effect that whatever is sown in this life will be reaped in the world to come.

There remains no room for any doubt concerning Resurrection until the dead will be raised to let them know that there is an afterlife and they will be recompensed for their deeds.

In reply to believers who aimed to let them know of the Day of Judgment they said that if they were in the right their forefathers could be raised to inform them of the Judgment so that they could acknowledge the veracity of believers' claims.

However, such ignorant people did not know that the advent of Resurrection would be at the end of this world since it is parallel with this world rather than beginning at the expiry of the mundane world.

It is reported that Abu Jahl asked the Noble Prophet (S) to give life to their forefather, Qusayy ibn Kilab, so that we could ask him about the Hereafter since he was a truthful man and we may believe you upon his acknowledgement.

Notes

1. Surah Fussilat
2. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, the opening of Surah al-Dukhan (Chapter 44).
3. Ibid.
4. Surah al-Shura
5. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 1, p. 30.
6. Surah al-Ghafir and Surah Fussilat
7. Surah al-Qadr
8. Burhan [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 160, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. Tafsir al-Safi, vol. 4, p. 405, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. Surah al-Shu'ara
11. See also 7:105; 20:47.
12. Asr is taken from isra' "move from one location to another by night.
13. Rahw means open, quiet, and vast road.
14. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 65, under the Verse in question.
15. Ibid.
16. 14:7

Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 37- 59

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 37

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

37. Are they better [in terms of opportunities] or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them because they were indeed criminals. [Why do you not take a lesson?]

History provides man with the best lessons. The prosperous land of the Yemen, located in the South of the Arabian Peninsula, was the cradle of a great civilization ruled by kings called Tubba' (the plural form is Tababi'a).

The term literally indicates "those whose orders are followed by people" or "those succeeding each other to rule." The people enjoyed a very powerful state wielding a vast sway.

The blessed Verse, preceded by making mention of Meccan polytheists and their animosity toward the Prophet (S) and their denial of Resurrection, makes a reference to the fate of the sinful and criminal people of Tubba' warns Meccan polytheists against Divine torment in store for them on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse asks:

"Are they better or the people of Tubba'? We destroyed them because they were indeed criminals."

The people of Hijaz were to some extent aware of the fate of the people of Tubba' as a consequence of which no further details are provided in the following Verses concerning them, but It merely suffices to warn Meccan polytheists against a fate in store for them similar to that of other peoples inhabiting the regions in Sham [viz. Syria, Palestine, East Jordan, Lebanon, and the northwestern parts of the Fertile Crescent] and Egypt.

Put the case that you deny Resurrection, how could you deny Divine torments sent down on these criminal and disobedient peoples?

"Those before them"

alludes to the peoples of Nuh, 'Ad, Thamud, and the like.

Some exegets maintain that Tubba' was a believer and a truth seeking man and the

"people of Tubba'"

mentioned in the two Qur'anic Verses bear testimony to the same since not the ruler but his people are censured.

According to a prophetic tradition:

"Do not slander Tubba' since he submitted to Divine Will."[1]

A tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Tubba' verily said unto [the tribes of] Aws and Khazraj:

'Stay here until this Prophet proclaims his Call. Had I enjoyed the opportunity to be his contemporary, I would have been at his disposal in his Prophetic Call.'"[2]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 38 - 39

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لاعِبِينَ

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

38. And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for merely play.

39. We created them not except with truth, but most of them [polytheists] know not.

The word la'b is used in the sense of "merely play, anything done in vain," like childish plays. These two blessed Verses serve as a prelude to the following Verses on Resurrection.

It is as if they indicate that if there were no Resurrection, creation would be purposeless, since the world of existence has been created for man and if man becomes non-existent by death, the world of existence would also be in vain.

It is for the same grounds that God Almighty says:

"We created not the heavens and the earth for merely play, but We created them with truth."

Logical arguments are being produced for proving Resurrection to the effect that any sensible person may use his intellection to perceive that God Almighty created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain but they were created with truth as per Divine Wisdom and Omniscience.

The Verses in question and the following Ones indicate that the purpose behind creating the heavens and the earth is the creation of man and the purpose behind creating man is to raise him up on the Day of Resurrection, or else the creation of the heavens and the earth would be in vain.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 40 - 42

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

يَوْمَ لا يُغْنِي مَوْ ٍ عَنْ مَوْ ٍ شَيْئاً وَلا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

40. Indeed the Day Distinction [between truth and falsehood] is the time appointed for all of them -

41. The Day when a friend avails not a friend [of his] in aught and no help can they receive [from any source],

42. Except him on whom Allah has Mercy. Indeed He is the Omnipotent, the Most Merciful.

Since creation enjoys a true purpose, Resurrection should occur. Since the All-Wise Lord created the world of existence as per truth, He will not abandon His favorite creature following his death. All humanity will gather on the Day of Resurrection, but man will be alone then.

The Day of Distinction (yaw al-fasl), the appointed time when all humanity gather, is one of the appellations of Resurrection, since truth and falsehood will be distinguished on that Day and the wrong doings of wrong doers will be compensated.

The people of truth and falsehood will clearly see their past deeds and their deeds will be recompensed.

According to the latter two Verses no friend may meet the demands of his friend since no one will be able to extend help to his friends unless one

will be granted Divine Mercy and Favor, since Glory, Dignity, and Succor will solely belong to Divine Essence.

He is All-Merciful and All-Gracious toward his creatures. He chastises or forgives whomever He Wills. It is needless to say that His chastisement and forgiving are based on Divine Justice and Wisdom and no wrong will be done to anyone.

Since His Mercy surpasses His Wrath, we are all hopeful to enjoy His Mercy and sinners, no matter to what extent they have transgressed the bounds, should not despair of His Mercy.

It is in the Holy Qur'an that:

"Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve"[3]**.**

The righteous good doing pious should fear God at all times and not be arrogant for their deeds since they may never know whether their deeds are accepted by God. It is reported from Infallible Imams that believers' hope and fear should be like the two pans of the balance.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 43 - 46

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ
طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ
كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ
كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ

43. Verily, the tree of Zaqqum
44. Will be the food of the sinners.
45. Like boiling oil, it will boil in the bellies.
46. Like the boiling of scalding water.

The word zaqqum indicates a kind of undesirable food served in Hell. Mohl is used in the sense of molten or impure metal or copper. The four Verses concern the torment of sinners, particularly disbelievers.

By

athim ("sinful")

disbelievers may be intended since the preceding Verses were about disbelievers and the general theme of the Verses indicate that one who believes in Divine Unity, Resurrection, the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets (S), and the imamate of the Infallible Imams (as), even if he happens to be a sinner, he will not be inflicted with such torment.

Based on the above, some exegets maintain that the Verses in question allude to the cursed Abu Jahl who went to the extreme in disbelief, grudge, and animosity against the Prophet (S). It is reported that once Abu Jahl was eating some dates mingled with butter and was saying mockingly that it was the Zaqqum against which Muhammad warned us and we eat our fill of it.

Rejecting his false claim, God Almighty said that the fruit of the tree of Zaqqum was the food of sinners rather than what Abu Jahl conceived of it.

Any molten metal, e.g. gold, silver, and copper, is called muhl. Some also hold that by it oil impurities are being meant such that when oil is

heated, its impurities settle as sediment or dregs which are also called durdiy al-zit ("oil dregs").

The fruit of the tree of Zaqqum boils in bellies in the manner of boiling scalding water cutting up their intestines. The Almighty (jabbar) and All-Subjugating (qahhar) Sovereign addresses the myrmidons, i.e., the angels who thrust the damned into Hell (zabaniya) wrathfully.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 47 - 50

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ

ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ

47. [It will be said] "Seize him and drag him into the midst of blazing Fire,

48. Then pour over his head the torment of boiling water.

49. Taste you [this]! Indeed, you were [were pretending to be] the mighty, the generous.

50. Indeed, this is that whereof you used to doubt!"

The torments of the Resurrection Day are both physical and non-physical. The former include the use of boiling material and the latter include hearing of humiliation and derision saying who you were who falsely claimed to be mighty and generous in your mundane life?

The blessed Verse 47 asks the angels to seize the unbeliever and drag him forcefully into the midst of Hell surrounded by fire.

The next Verse reads:

Then pour over his head boiling water such that Zaqqum cuts them into pieces inwardly and burns them with it outwardly.

Regarding the third Verse exegest maintain that Abu Jahl would say unto the Messenger of God (S):

"O Muhammad! I enjoy power and I am held in esteem in Mecca but neither you nor your God may ever inflict any harm unto me."

As a consequence of his boastful remarks, he will be held in contempt on the Resurrection Day and it will be said unto him derisively:

"Then taste the torments since you are mighty and you are held in esteem."

Verse 50 reads that when disbelievers taste the torments, it will be said unto them that this is the torment warned against by the prophets but you held them in doubt and slandered them.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 51 - 53

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ

51. Verily, the pious will be in place of security.

52. Among gardens and springs.

53. Dressed in fine silk and in thick silk, facing each other.

Sundus and istabraq indicate fine and thick silk fabric respectively. The word hur is the plural form of huriyya which is used in the sense of women with black eyes and white complexion.

The word 'ayn the pluralized form of which is 'ayna' indicates "having wide, lovely eyes." The pious are certainly placed in place of security, enjoying the bounties of Paradise and secure from the torments of Hell.

God Almighty says:

"Verily, the pious will be in the midst of gardens and rivers in a seat of truth, near the Omnipotent King"[4].

"Place of security"[5]

and

"seat of truth"[6]

are reserved for those who are ranked third among the pious.

They are the people whose hearts are secure through having faith and their hearts are free from all existent beings besides God. They have struggled against the hosts of estimative, irascible, and concupiscent powers and have succeeded in subjugating them.

They have detached themselves from the attractions of the mundane world and have blocked the way in this world through which powers of darkness used to frequent their hearts; as a consequence of which their hearts are frequented by angels of Mercy. They have stepped out of the abyss of illusions and vain desires so that their hearts have turned into the Threshold of Divine Mercy.

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"The believer's heart is the Threshold of the All-Merciful."

In short, the blessed Verse refers to those whose hearts are secure in this world through faith. They are placed in the place of security. They are secure in their worldly life from concupiscent and satanic desires enjoying the protection of God Almighty. They will also be secure from any affliction in proximity to God in the Hereafter.

The following Verse says that such person derives pleasure from perceiving spiritual and Divine bounties as well those of physical pleasures of Paradise since in the same manner that man is essentially composed of soul and body, his pleasures are to be consistent with his corporeality and spirituality.

The Verse apparently makes a reference to both dimensions since the place of security is consistent with spiritual states attained by human soul upon attainment to perfection. Thus, through perceiving corporeal knowledge, man acquires the knowledge of the spiritual realm of the Hereafter through which he attains to the place of security.

Verse 53 is concerned with the ranks of the corporeal bounties of the pious whose clothes are made in Paradise from sundus and istabraq (fine and thick silk respectively).

Some exegets also maintain that istabraq indicates the carpets prepared for them and the word:

mutaqabilin ("facing each other")

refers to the couches in Paradise facing each other so that they enjoy meeting each other.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 54

كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ

54. Such [We recompense them]. And We will marry them to fair females with wide, lovely eyes.

In depicting hur al-'ayn exegets say they are fair females wide, lovely eyes and delicate of complexion. 'Ayn serves as an adjective for the hur of Paradise who are delicate of complexion. Such is the state of the people of Paradise who will enjoy all kinds of bounties and pleasures in Paradise.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 55

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ

55. They will call therein for every kind of fruit [that they wish] in peace and security.

The greatest bounty is security since the

"place of security"

precedes other bounties. It is worthy of note that security in Paradise is all inclusive. There will be no fear of death, foes, the envious, or perdition.

Peace and security in Paradise concerns the

"place of security"

and the foods

("every kind of fruit").

Eating some kinds of fruit may at times cause diverse diseases in this world. Piety and fear of God Almighty in this world will lead to peace and security in the Hereafter. The blessed Verse in question says whatever kind of fruit desired will be available to them without incurring and pain, hardship, or displeasure

("in peace and security").

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 56 - 57

لا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ ۖ وَوَقَاهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

فَضْلاً مِنْ رَبِّكَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

56. They will never taste death therein except the first death [of this world] and He will save them from the torment of the blazing Fire.

57. As a bounty from your Lord! That will be the supreme success!

One who protects himself through piety and fear of God in this world, God will save him from Hell in the Hereafter.

Paradise is everlasting and the people of Paradise will be free from being preoccupied with death. God Almighty owes nothing to anyone rather all blessings are granted through Divine bounteousness (fadl) and all the blessings bestowed upon the people of Paradise are through Divine Favor

("as a bounty from your Lord!").

According to Verse 56, the highest bounty bestowed upon the people of Paradise is their being admitted to Paradise and the worst torment of the people of Hell is that they will be sent to Hell.

According to a tradition, when the people of Paradise and the people of Hell are settled down in Paradise and Hell respectively, a sheep will be brought to them. It will be said unto them that it is death and the sheep will be killed and it will be said unto the people of Paradise and Hell that it was death, but it no longer exists.

The allegory makes a reference to the absence of death in Resurrection. This world is the world of generation and corruption in which death and life follow each other, i.e., each life is followed by death, each pleasure is followed by displeasure, and health is followed by ailment, since this world is the world of corporeality and potentiality.

It is composed of contradictory constituents and the constituents of any composite entity will disintegrate one day.

That is why death is imminent and inevitable for any entity. Nonetheless, the Hereafter is the permanent and unchangeable world, since any potentiality in this world will be actualized in the world to come; as a consequence of which, all creatures inclusive of the jinn, humanity, Paradise, Hell, and their constituent elements are neither transient nor subject to disintegration or annihilation.

Another bounty reserved for the pious and the people of Paradise is that they will be secure from the torments of Hell.

Addressing the Messenger of God (S), the blessed Verse says O Muhammad! Saving them from the torments of Hell is a great Bounty, Mercy, and Success from your Lord bestowed upon them. It is a reference to the Divine Succor of faith and piety as bounties granted upon the pious and the God fearing.

The possessive pronoun -ka whose antecedent is the Messenger of God (S) may indicate that the Bounties and Favors bestowed upon the pious springs from their adherence to the Noble Prophet (S), were guided to the true path, worshipped the One God, and adhered to the Infallible Imams (as).

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 58 - 59

فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

فَارْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُمْ مُرْتَقِبُونَ

58. Certainly, We have made this [Qur’an] facile in your tongue so that they may remember.

59. Await then [for your triumph]; indeed, they are also awaiting [their ominous fate].

The purpose behind the revelation of the Holy Qur’an is to make people remember that they are God’s servants.

The Holy Qur’an is revealed as the last guidance sent down to people saying unto them that if they fail to acknowledge that It is Divine Revelation they should await Divine Wrath.

The last two Verses says unto man that God Almighty sent down the Holy Qur’an in the Arabic tongue in order that upon noticing Its unsurpassed Eloquence and Inimitability, they perceive that it springs from

the springhead of Divine Emanation. Thus, they may remember and believe in the prophethood of the Messenger of God (S).

The blessed Verse addresses the Prophet (S) saying

"O Muhammad! Await their being guided to the true path since disbelievers await your fate."

The Verse apparently implies that you await their guidance and felicity where as they await your defeat and death.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the blessed Verse in question.
2. Ibid.
3. 12:87
4. 54:54-55
5. 44:51
6. 54:55

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 17

From Surah al-Jathiyah (45) to Surah al-Hadid (57)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 13
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 14
What is a 'Commentary'? 15
The Current Commentary 16
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 17
The Problems in Translating 17
Translators Note 18
Editor's Note 19
Notes 21
Acknowledgment 22
Notes 22
References 23
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 23
English Translations of Qur'an 23
Supporting Technical References 24
Phraseological and Philological Sources 24
A Presentation to Muslims 26
Notes 27
Surah al-Jathiya, Chapter 45, Verses 1 - 22 28
(The Kneeling) 28
Section (juz' 25) 28
Number of Verses: 37 28
General Overview of the Chapter 28
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 28
Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 1-3 28
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 4 30
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 5 31
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 6 32
Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 7-8 32
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 9 33
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 10 34
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 11 34
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 12 35
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 13 35
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 14 36
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 15 37
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 16 38
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 17 38
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 18 39
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 19 40
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 20 40
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 21 41
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 22 42
Notes 43
Surah al-Jathiya, Verses 23 - 37 44
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 23 44
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 24 44

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 25 44
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 26 45
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 27 46
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 28 46
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 29 47
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 30 48
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 31 48
Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 32-34 49
Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 35 49
Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 36-37 50
Notes 51
Surah al-Ahqaf, Chapter 46, Verses 1 - 21 52
(The Curved Sand-Hills) 52
Section (juz'): 26 52
Number of Verses: 35 52
General Contents of the Chapter 52
Merits of the Chapter 52
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 1-3 52
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 4 53
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 5-6 54
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 7 56
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 8 56
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 9 57
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 10 57
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 11 58
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 12 58
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 13-14 59
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 15 60
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 16 62
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 17-18 63
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 19 64
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 20 65
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 21 66
Notes 66
Surah al-Ahqaf, Verses 22 - 35 68
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 22-23 68
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 24-25 69
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 26 70
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 27 70
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 28 71
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 29 72
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 30 72
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 31 73
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 32 73
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 33 75
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 34 76
Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 35 76
Notes 77

Surah Muhammad, Chapter 47, Verses 1 - 21 79
(Muhammad/The Fighting) 79
Section (juz'): 26 79
Number of Verses: 38 79
General Overview of the Chapter 79
The Merits of Reciting the Chapter 79
Surah Muhammad - Verse 1 79
Surah Muhammad - Verse 2 80
Surah Muhammad - Verse 3 81
Surah Muhammad - Verse 4 82
Surah Muhammad - Verses 5-6 84
Surah Muhammad - Verse 7 85
Surah Muhammad - Verses 8-9 86
Surah Muhammad - Verse 10 87
Surah Muhammad - Verse 11 87
Surah Muhammad - Verse 12 88
Surah Muhammad - Verse 13 88
Surah Muhammad - Verse 14 89
Surah Muhammad - Verse 15 89
Surah Muhammad - Verse 16 91
Surah Muhammad - Verse 17 91
Surah Muhammad - Verse 18 92
Surah Muhammad - Verse 19 92
Surah Muhammad - Verse 20 94
Surah Muhammad - Verse 21 95
Notes 96
Surah Muhammad, Verses 22 - 38 97
Surah Muhammad - Verse 22 97
Surah Muhammad - Verse 23 97
Surah Muhammad - Verse 24 97
Surah Muhammad - Verse 25 98
Surah Muhammad - Verse 26 98
Surah Muhammad - Verses 27-28 99
Surah Muhammad - Verses 29-30 100
Surah Muhammad - Verse 31 101
Surah Muhammad - Verse 32-33 102
Surah Muhammad - Verse 34 103
Surah Muhammad - Verse 35 103
Surah Muhammad - Verse 36 105
Surah Muhammad - Verse 37 105
Surah Muhammad - Verse 38 106
Notes 108
Surah al-Fath, Chapter 48, Verses 1 - 16 110
(The Victory) 110
Section (juz'): 26 110
Number of Verses: 29 110
General Overview of the Chapter 110
The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 110

Surah al-Fath - Verses 1-3 111
Surah al-Fath - Verse 4 113
Surah al-Fath - Verse 5 115
Surah al-Fath - Verse 6 116
Surah al-Fath - Verse 7 117
Surah al-Fath - Verses 8-9 117
Surah al-Fath - Verse 10 118
Surah al-Fath - Verse 11 119
Surah al-Fath - Verses 12-13 120
Surah al-Fath - Verse 14 121
Surah al-Fath - Verse 15 121
Surah al-Fath - Verse 16 123
Notes 124
Surah al-Fath, Verses 17 - 29 125
Surah al-Fath - Verse 17 125
Surah al-Fath - Verses 18-19 125
Surah al-Fath - Verse 20 126
Surah al-Fath - Verse 21 127
Surah al-Fath - Verses 22-23 127
Surah al-Fath - Verse 24 128
Surah al-Fath - Verse 25 129
Surah al-Fath - Verse 26 130
Surah al-Fath - Verse 27 131
Surah al-Fath - Verse 28 132
Surah al-Fath - Verse 29 134
Notes 138
Surah al-Hujurat, Chapter 49 139
(The Rooms) 139
Section (juz'): 26 139
Number of Verses: 18 139
General Overview of the Chapter 139
The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 139
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 1 139
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 2 140
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 3 141
Surah al-Hujurat - Verses 4-5 142
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 6 143
Surah al-Hujurat - Verses 7-8 146
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 9 147
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 10 149
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 11 151
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 12 153
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 13 157
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 14 160
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 15 162
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 16 163
Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 17-18 164
Notes 165

Surah Qaf, Chapter 50, Verses 1 - 26 167
(Qaf) 167
Section (juz' 26) 167
Number of Verses: 45 167
General Overview of the Chapter 167
Merits of Recitation of the Chapter 167
Surah Qaf - Verses 1-2 167
Surah Qaf - Verses 3-4 168
Surah Qaf - Verse 5 169
Surah Qaf - Verses 6-8 170
Surah Qaf - Verses 9-11 170
Surah Qaf - Verses 12-14 171
Surah Qaf - Verse 15 173
Surah Qaf - Verse 16 173
Surah Qaf - Verses 17-18 174
Surah Qaf - Verse 19 175
Surah Qaf - Verses 20-21 175
Surah Qaf - Verses 22-23 176
Surah Qaf - Verses 24-26 176
Notes 177
Surah Qaf, Verses 27 - 45 178
Surah Qaf - Verses 27-29 178
Surah Qaf - Verse 30 179
Surah Qaf - Verses 31-33 180
Surah Qaf - Verses 34-35 181
Surah Qaf - Verses 36-37 182
Surah Qaf - Verse 38 183
Surah Qaf - Verses 39-40 184
Surah Qaf - Verses 41-42 185
Surah Qaf - Verses 43-44 185
Surah Qaf - Verse 45 186
Notes 187
Surah al-Dhariyat, Chapter 51, Verses 1 - 23 189
(The Scattering Winds) 189
Section (juz' 26-27) 189
Number of Verses: 60 189
General Overview of the Chapter 189
Merits of Recitation of the Chapter 189
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 1-4 189
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 5-6 191
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 7-9 191
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 10-11 193
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 12-14 194
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 15-16 195
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 17-19 196
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 20-23 197
Notes 199
Surah al-Dhariyat, Verses 24 - 46 201

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 24-27 201
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 28-30 202
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 31-34 203
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 35-37 204
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 38-40 205
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 41-42 206
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 43-45 206
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verse 46 207
Notes 208
Surah al-Dhariyat, Verses 47 - 60 209
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 47-48 209
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verse 49 210
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 50-51 211
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 52-55 212
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 56-58 213
Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 59-60 215
Notes 215
Surah al-Tur, Chapter 52, Verses 1 - 28 217
(The Mount) 217
Section (juz'): 27 217
Number of Verses: 49 217
General Overview of the Chapter 217
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 217
Surah al-Tur - Verses 1-8 217
Surah al-Tur - Verses 9-14 218
Surah al-Tur - Verses 15-16 220
Surah al-Tur - Verses 17-18 220
Surah al-Tur - Verses 19-20 221
Surah al-Tur - Verse 21 222
Surah al-Tur - Verses 22-23 222
Surah al-Tur - Verse 24 223
Surah al-Tur - Verses 25-27 223
Surah al-Tur - Verse 28 224
Notes 224
Surah al-Tur, Verses 29 - 49 225
Surah al-Tur - Verses 29-30 225
Surah al-Tur - Verses 31-32 225
Surah al-Tur - Verses 33-34 226
Surah al-Tur - Verses 35-36 226
Surah al-Tur - Verse 37 227
Surah al-Tur - Verse 38 227
Surah al-Tur - Verse 39 228
Surah al-Tur - Verse 40 228
Surah al-Tur - Verse 41 228
Surah al-Tur - Verse 42 229
Surah al-Tur - Verse 43 229
Surah al-Tur - Verse 44 229
Surah al-Tur - Verses 45-46 230

Surah al-Tur - Verse 47 230
Surah al-Tur - Verses 48-49 231
Notes 232
Surah al-Najm, Chapter 53, Verses 1 - 32 233
(The Star) 233
Section (juz'): 27 233
Number of Verses: 62 233
General Overview of the Chapter 233
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 233
Surah al-Najm - Verses 1-2 233
Surah al-Najm - Verses 3-4 235
Surah al-Najm - Verses 5-9 236
Surah al-Najm - Verses 10-11 237
Surah al-Najm - Verses 12-15 239
Surah al-Najm - Verses 16-18 240
Surah al-Najm - Verses 19-22 241
Surah al-Najm - Verse 23 241
Surah al-Najm - Verses 24-25 242
Surah al-Najm - Verse 26 242
Surah al-Najm - Verses 27-28 243
Surah al-Najm - Verse 29 244
Surah al-Najm - Verse 30 244
Surah al-Najm - Verse 31 244
Surah al-Najm - Verse 32 245
Notes 248
Surah al-Najm, Verses 33 - 62 249
Surah al-Najm - Verses 33-34 249
Surah al-Najm - Verses 35-37 249
Surah al-Najm - Verses 38-39 250
Surah al-Najm - Verses 40-42 251
Surah al-Najm - Verses 43-44 251
Surah al-Najm - Verses 45-47 251
Surah al-Najm - Verses 48-49 252
Surah al-Najm - Verses 50-54 252
Surah al-Najm - Verses 55-56 253
Surah al-Najm - Verses 57-58 254
Surah al-Najm - Verses 59-62 255
Notes 256
Surah al-Qamar, Chapter 54, Verses 1 - 32 257
(The Moon) 257
Section (juz'): 27 257
Number of Verses: 55 257
General Overview of the Chapter 257
Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter 257
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 1-3 257
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 4-6 259
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 7-8 260
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 9-10 261

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 11-12 262
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 13-14 262
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 15-16 263
Surah al-Qamar - Verse 17 263
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 18-19 264
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 20-22 264
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 23-26 265
Surah al-Qamar - Verse 27 266
Surah al-Qamar - Verse 28 267
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 29-30 267
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 31-32 268
Notes 268
Surah al-Qamar, Verses 33 - 55 270
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 33-35 270
Surah al-Qamar - Verse 36 270
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 37-39 270
Surah al-Qamar - Verse 40 271
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 41-42 271
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 43-44 272
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 45-46 273
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 47-49 274
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 50-51 274
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 52-53 275
Surah al-Qamar - Verses 54-55 276
Notes 276
Surah al-Rahman, Chapter 55, Verses 1 - 32 278
(The Most Gracious) 278
Section (juz'): 27 278
Number of Verses: 78 278
General Overview of the Chapter 278
Merits of Recitation of the Chapter 278
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 1-2 279
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 3 281
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 4 281
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 5 282
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 6 283
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 7-8 284
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 9 285
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 10-11 286
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 12 287
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 13 287
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 14-16 288
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 17-18 290
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 19-21 291
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 22-23 292
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 24-25 293
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 26-28 294
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 29-30 294

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 31-32 295
Notes 296
Surah al-Rahman, Verses 33 - 55 297
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 33-34 297
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 35-36 298
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 37-38 298
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 39-40 299
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 41-42 299
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 43-45 300
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 46-47 301
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 48-51 302
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 52-53 302
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 54-55 303
Notes 303
Surah al-Rahman, Verses 56 - 78 305
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 56-57 305
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 58-59 305
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 60-61 306
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 62-63 306
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 64-65 307
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 66-67 307
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 68-69 308
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 70-71 308
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 72-73 309
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 74-75 309
Surah al-Rahman - Verses 76-77 310
Surah al-Rahman - Verse 78 311
Notes 312
Surah al-Waqi‘a, Chapter 56, Verses 1 - 40 314
(The Event) 314
Section (juz’): 27 314
Number of Verses: 96 314
General Overview of the Chapter 314
Merits of Recitation of the Chapter 314
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 1-2 314
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 3-4 315
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 5-6 316
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 7-9 316
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 10-14 317
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 15-16 319
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 17-19 319
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 20-21 320
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 22-24 320
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 25-26 321
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 27-29 321
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 30-33 322
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 34-37 323
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 38-40 323

Notes 324
Surah al-Waqi‘a, Verses 41 - 96 325
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 41-44 325
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 45-47 325
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 48-50 326
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verse 51-53 327
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 54-56 328
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 57-61 328
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verse 62 330
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 63-67 330
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 68-70 332
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 71-74 333
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 75-78 335
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 79-82 337
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 83-87 339
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 88-89 341
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 90-91 341
Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 92-96 342
Notes 344
Surah al-Hadid, Chapter 57, Verses 1 - 15 345
(Iron) 345
Section (juz’ 27) 345
Number of Verses: 29 345
General Overview of the Chapter 345
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 345
Surah al-Hadid - Verses 1-3 345
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 4 348
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 5 351
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 6 351
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 7 352
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 8 353
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 9 354
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 10 355
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 11 355
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 12 356
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 13 357
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 14 358
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 15 359
Notes 359
Surah al-Hadid, Verses 16 - 29 361
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 16 361
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 17 362
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 18 362
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 19 363
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 20 363
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 21 365
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 22 366
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 23 367

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 24 368
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 25 369
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 26 371
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 27 371
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 28 373
Surah al-Hadid - Verse 29 374
Notes 375

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

“O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur’an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.”[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur’an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Jathiya, Chapter 45, Verses 1 - 22

(The Kneeling)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 37

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter was revealed in Mecca. The designation of the Chapter is taken from Verse 28 in which the word jathiya denotes kneeling. God Almighty is described as the Omnipotent (al-'Aziz) and the Wise (al-Hakim) in the opening and closing Verses of the Chapter.

The subject matter of the Chapter includes the Greatness of the Qur'an, arguments substantiating Divine Unity, refutation of materialistic views, history of some ancient peoples, warning to the astray, encouragement to forgiveness, and allusions to the depictions of resurrection.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"God Almighty will conceal the defects of whoever recites Surah al-Jathiya and will turn his fear into serenity[1]."

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

حم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

1. Ha Mim.

2. The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

3. Verily, there are signs for the believers in the heavens and the earth.

Allah is All-Wise.

His Book is full of Wisdom[2].

His Messenger is the instructor of Wisdom[3].

His Book and Creation are manifest, though the God fearing solely benefit from His Book.

"It is Guidance for the God fearing"[4].

The creation may merely remind believers of their God.

The Holy Qur'an constitutes the commonly used letters of alphabet and it was revealed in time.

Revelation of the Book and the Law are among the greatest Divine Bounties. As a consequence, it precedes the creation of the heavens and the earth (tanzil al-kitab

"Revelation of the Book").

In the first place, specification of the position of the Holy Qur'an should precede Its Instructions in the manner of promulgation.

The textual content of the Qur'an is impervious to alterations, since it is revealed by God.

Ha Mim is the Name of the Chapter. It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that Ha Mim is the greatest of Divine Names. The Name alludes to the Divine Names beginning with Ha or Mim, e.g. the Praiseworthy (Hamid), the Clement (Halim), the Living (Hayy), the Truth (Haqq), the Wise (Hakim), the Arbitrator (Hakim), the Protector (Hafid), the Guardian (Hafid), the Ruler (Malik), the Glorious (Majid), the Honorable (Majid), the Beginner (Mubdi'), the Returner (Mu'id), the Exalted (Mu'izz), the Vigilant (Muhaymin).

It is also said that Ha Mim is an oath by Divine Clemency and Sovereignty, viz. I swear by My Clemency and Sovereignty that I shall not chastise those sincerely uttering 'There is no god save Allah.'

Some say that Ha and Mim are the two middle letters al-Rahman ("the Merciful") and the name of Muhammad (S) alluding to the secret known by God Almighty and his Friend, Muhammad.

There are other justifications for these two letters; however, since the letters of alphabet in the openings of a number of Qur'anic Chapters are, as it is well known in Islamic sources, among ambiguous Verses (mutashabihat) whose knowledge is with God Almighty and

"those firmly rooted in knowledge" (rasikhun fi al-'ilm).

The word tanzil is an infinitive used ad hoc as a past participle denoting an oath regarding the revelation of the Qur'an by God, the Omnipotent, the Dominant, the Wise, and the Beneficent through Whose Everlasting Will has established everything in order out of Wisdom such that the system of creation is flawless.

According to exegets, the following Verse is substantiated by the fact that when theoretical sciences may not be proved through the five senses, i.e., any matter beyond the domain of the senses should be proven through either apriori demonstration, viz. from cause to effect, or aposteriori demonstration, viz. from effect to cause.

Since Divine Existence is Supernatural, i.e., beyond perception, unintelligible, and without cause, it is the cause of causes not necessitating apriori demonstration. As a consequence, His Existence maybe proved merely through aposteriori demonstration, viz. the perceiver should become aware of and attain certitude from effect to cause and believe in His Attributes of Glory and Beauty.

Therefore, many a Qur'anic Verse prove the Existence of the Creator and attainment of certitude through the existence of the heavens and the earth.

The blessed Verse denotes that whoever, if not a materialist, has a holistic view of this vast world and the system of cosmos like the levels of heavens and the earth and the revolving confirms the truth of the former view and believes in the Omniscient and Omnipotent God, the Creator, the fountainhead of creation and the Governor and Instructor of the world.

The existence of the world serves as the indubitable argument for the Existence and the Attributes of God Almighty. It is common sense to know

that any building requires a builder, any created entity requires a creator, any moved entity requires a mover, and any composite entity requires a composer. All superior and inferior creatures serve as signs for believers.

Therefore, it is sufficient for the attainment of faith and belief in the Existence of the One God to have an open and enlightened mind and know His Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Wisdom through meditation on the heavens and the earth. There would be no need for philosophical arguments, even if we happen to be unaware of the manner of composition, the chain of causality, and the perfect harmony among heavenly bodies and other creatures.

"Signs for believers"

particularly denotes believers since the eyes of their hearts are open, but concupiscence has blinded those of non-believers, depriving them of perceiving the rays of light emanating from Divine Existence illuminating the worlds and rendering their eyes of the heart incapable of perceiving such light.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 4

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

4. And in your creation, and what He scattered [in the world of existence] of moving [living] creatures are signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for people who have faith with certainty.

All existence is the book of knowing God. In this vein, the heaven, mankind, and the animal world may render us assistance towards achieving one single goal. The creation of heavens, the earth, and living creatures lies on one scale and that of man on the other. Making mention of man independently and prior to other living creatures is worthy of note.

The existence of heavens and the earth are referred to in the preceding Verse, but the Verse in question regards the creation of mankind and all living creatures of the world as signs for believers who have attained to certitude, since the level of the latter stands above that of faith; knowledge of certitude (‘ilm al-yaqin) is inferior to essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin) and the latter is in turn inferior to realization of certitude (haqq al-yaqin).

Besides signs upon the horizons, the Verse in question treats of signs upon the soul saying:

"And in your creation and what He scattered [in the world of existence] of moving [living] creatures are signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for people who have faith with certainty."

According to a well known narration attributed to the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali (as), man is the microcosm embracing the macrocosm. His qualities constitute an admixture of the qualities shared by all living creatures and the diversity of his creation is an extract of all the accidents of the world.

The structure of a human cell is as enigmatic as that of an industrial metropolitan city and the creation of one single hair whose various characteristics have been discovered by science may serve as a great Divine Sign.

Thousands of kilometers of veins and vessels some of which are extraordinarily delicate and thousands of kilometers of commissural fibers of the nervous system and the manner of their interrelation with the highly complicated, enigmatic, and powerful brain system and the functions of each and every internal bodily organ and their strange harmony at the time of emergencies and the strong immune system against external bodies demonstrate the greatness of Divine Signs.

Besides mankind, hundreds of thousands of living creatures from microscopic living beings to huge animals with totally diverse characteristics and structures, one of which may be the subject of lifelong research for many a scientist, bear testimony to Divine Signs.

In spite of the fact that thousands of books have been authored on the mysteries surrounding their creation, human knowledge is still quite limited. Each of these creatures serves as a sign of the Creator's Infinite Knowledge, Wisdom, and Omnipotence.

What is the reason lying behind the fact that many individuals witness such signs for decades but they are totally unaware of them? The Holy Qur'an provides an answer to the question: these signs are for seekers of faith and certitude and those who think.

They are for those who have opened their hearts and are thirsty for certitude and knowledge. Such people do not fail to notice the slightest movement and the tiniest being, rather ponder about them for long hours, thus transcend towards God and the Book of knowing the Creator, spending their time in devotions and supplication, brimming the goblets of their hearts with the wine of love for God.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 5

وَاخْتِلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

5. And in the alternation of night and day and the provision [viz. rain] that Allah sends down from the sky and revives therewith the earth after its death and in the turning about of the winds are signs for a people who understand.

The book of existence abounds in diverse signs the understanding of which requires intellection. Following an enumeration of three Bounties, viz. light, water, and air, each of which play a significant role in the life of mankind and other living beings and serve as a Divine Sign, the Verse goes on to say that

"in the alternation of night and day and the provision [viz. rain] that Allah sends down from the sky and revives therewith the earth after its death and in the turning about of the winds are signs for a people who understand."

The question of the order of 'light and darkness' and the alternation of night and day each of which substitutes the other with a precise pattern are well calculated and astonishing. If day time were permanent or too long, the temperature would increase to the extent that all living beings would burn. If

the night were everlasting or too long, all living beings would freeze to death!

The word ikhtilaf may not denote alternation but the same difference in the length of nights and days in different seasons of the year through which man may benefit from the produce, rain, snow, and other bounties.

Interestingly scientists say that despite the differences in the length of night and day in different altitudes and longitudes, a calculation of the days of the year demonstrates that the sun shines equally on each and every point![5]

Secondly, mention is made of rain, the heavenly life bestowing element regarding the delicacy of its nature and its reviving force is indubitable. It is a sign of life, freshness, and beauty. The fact is that water constitutes the main constituent element of man, many animals, and plants.

Thirdly, mention is made of winds turning around and moving the air which is full of oxygen, making it available to living beings. Winds move the dioxide polluted air to be purified on plains, forests, and deserts. After being purified, the wind moves the fresh air to cities and habitats.

It is a source of wonder that animals and plants precisely function in opposition to each other, i.e., the former takes oxygen and emits carbon dioxide and the latter functions vice versa so that equilibrium may be maintained in vital system and the air supply of the earth may not come to an end through the passage of time.

Furthermore, winds pollinate plants and scatter seeds in different lands, help pastures and forests grow, make waves in oceans, waves that invigorate the seas and purify water from putrefaction and decay, and make ships sail in oceans.[6]

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 6

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

5. These are the Ayat (‘Verses; signs; proofs, evidence’) of Allah which We recite to you with truth. Then in which speech after Allah and His Ayat will they believe?

Those listening to Divine Ayat but do not heed Guidance, suffer from complications, but Divine Ayat are true and evident.

In this Verse, God Almighty addresses His Messenger, Muhammad (S), saying that when disbelievers do not believe in these evident Ayat revealed to you in truth from the springhead of Divine Glory in conformity with logical principles, common sense, and human nature, they will not believe in the words of prophets and their scriptures nor in the sayings of ancient sages.

It demonstrates that the Qur’anic Verses are so unchangeable and consistent with pure nature; they have made evident the path of guidance for people that there is no room for denial or objection for anyone. One unaffected by such evident proofs may not be influenced by any true word; rather such an individual has lost his pure human nature.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 7-8

وَيْلٌ لِكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِراً كَأَنْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

7. Woe to every sinful liar.

8. Who hears the Verses of Allah being recited to him, yet persists arrogantly as if he heard them not. So announce to him a painful torment!

The present participle affak derived from ifk denotes "one who tells many lies." Athim derived from ithm signifies "one who is very sinful."

Wayla, recurring in the Qur'an 27 times is used in the sense of "woe to," this word too refers to intellectual traitors who author false claims and attribute them to God;

("Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,'")[7].

It also denotes those who do wrong in their business transactions, like

"Those who give less in measure and weight"[8].

The word Wayla refers to ideological deviants, such as disbelievers[9] and polytheists[10] and also to slanderers and backbiters[11].

Divine Chastisement is consistent with the offenses committed. One who hears the words of the Prophet (S) but ignores them and as such offends him will be chastised by a severe torment and that of one who slanders others mockingly will be punished by a humiliating torment.

According to some exegetes wayla used in the sense of 'woe' connotes warning to very sinful liars. Some have also said that it is the name of a well in the lowest level of the hell and the dwelling place of disbelievers and the damned in the sight of Allah.

It is also said that the antecedent of the pronoun of yasma'u "hears" is Nadhr ibn Harith;

"Who hears the Verses of Allah recited to him, yet persists with arrogance as if he heard them not. So announce to him a painful torment!"[12]

Whoever might be the antecedent of the pronoun, the Verse refers to anyone ignoring the Qur'anic Verses as Divine Revelation for whom severe punishment is in store.

It is worthy of note that the word bishara is used in the sense of good tiding; however, it had hoc signifies Divine Retribution that is in store for disbelievers, as if the good tiding for contesters is the warning of torment.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 9

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئاً اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُواً أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

9. And when he learns something of Our Verses, he makes them a jest. For such there will be a humiliating torment.

Since humiliation lies in offense, the mockers' chastisement is a humiliating torment. The blessed verse makes mention of another blameworthy quality of the arrogant and begrudging disbelievers. They not only ignore Divine Verses but also react against them through slander and mockery. A humiliating torment is in store for such people.

As mentioned above, chastisement should be consistent with the wrong deed. Humiliation is the recompense for humiliation. Disbelievers such as Abu Jahl and Nadhr ibn Harith upon hearing Qur'anic Verses, not only

ignored them but also engaged in mockery and slander and attributed untrue qualities which were worthy of themselves to the Prophet (S); hence the severe and humiliating torment in store for them.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 10

مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوا شَيْئاً وَلا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

10. Before them there is Hell. And that which they have earned will be of no profit to them, nor [will be of any profit to them] those whom they have taken as protectors) besides Allah. And theirs will be a severe torment.

Mundane property will be of no avail on the Last Day. It is merely attending to Hellfire that may serve as the best means of abstaining from arrogance and persistence in committing sins.

This blessed Verse explicates

"humiliating torment"

(‘adhabun muhin) as

"Before them there is Hell."

The phrase Min wara'ihim jahanamu literally means "there is Hell behind them," though the hell is before them and it is in store for them. It may connote that they turn to mundane affairs ignoring Divine Retribution. According to a common expression, man ignores certain things.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"They love the transient life and disregard the severe Doomsday."

The Verse further says that if they suppose that their abundant wealth, idols, and false deities may solve their problems, they are in sheer err since:

"whatever they gain nor protectors from whom they sought succor may never rescue them from Divine Retribution"

and as there is no way out, they will have to taste Divine Wrath

"and there is a severe torment in store for them."

They paid no heed to Divine Verses and Signs and God increased their torment. They were arrogant and Divine Retribution fell into their share. The torment is quite severe, everlasting, and humiliating and deeply affects the sinful. Undoubtedly, committing mortal sins before God will lead to severe Divine Retribution.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 11

هَذَا هُدى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآياتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِنْ رِجْزٍ أَلِيمٌ

11. This [Qur'an] is guidance and those who disbelieve in the Ayat (signs, proofs, Verses) of their Lord, for them there is a painful and awe inspiring torment.

The word rijz denotes anxiety and may connote rijs ("filth"). The Verse may connote that disbelievers are being chastised by polluted and disgusting material.

The demonstrative pronoun hadha

("this")

refers to the Quranic Verses revealed to the Prophet (S) for the guidance of mankind. Those who were not guided by the Qur'an, but persisted in their disbelief and underrated the Divinely Revealed Verses for their guidance and attainment of felicity shall taste torment and chastisement.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 12

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

12. It is Allah Who has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His Command, and that you may seek of His Bounty, and that you may be thankful.

Divine Acts are Purposeful, Wise, and Fruitful for mankind. The seas and other natural phenomena are under Divine Sway.

Even though

"By His Command"

is Divine Bounty and Mercy, but man has to make attempts to attain to them;

("that you make seek of His Bounty").

Divine Essence reminds man with Its Infinite Grace to behold! Know thy God, and know that your Lord is He Who has subjected to you boundless seas abounding in waves such that by Divine Command ships may easily sail in them and thus benefit from Divine Bounty and Mercy. He is also reminded that he may express his gratitude if he remember Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 13

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

13. And He has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. It is all a favor and kindness from Him. Indeed there are signs in it for a people who think deeply.

All creation is available for man's use and the harmony of the constituents of existence solely indicates Divine Oneness. The Blessed Verse in question reminds mankind that whatever exists in the seas, heavens, earth, and heavenly bodies have been subjected to them for their creation, sustenance, and welfare. Each and every element of this organic whole has its own specific function.

Upon perceiving the great and remarkable system of the world, the wise study the system and immediately submit to Divine Will and accept that the immense wheels of creation are incessantly revolving, the sun and the moon shine, the stars ascend and descend in their specific manner, the earth, resembling a cradle, gently rocks, constituent elements despite inconsistency and contrariness stay in harmony for a specific span of time specified in the system of creation subject to Divine Command regarding genesis and function to sustain human life.

The wise do not regard such enormous creation to no avail, but maintain that it leads to a great purpose and benefit. Upon scrutiny it seems that its greatest benefit is the enigmatic creation of mankind who becomes existent

ex nihilo, becomes perfect from imperfection, prepares himself for everlasting life.

To demonstrate man's superiority over all creatures, it would suffice to know that all archangels were commanded to prostrate before him and many an angel were subjected to manage the affairs of man such that he may avail himself of them.

"Cloud and wind, moon and sun move in the sky

That thou mayest gain bread, and not eat it unconcerned.

For thee all are revolving and obedient.

It is against the requirements of justice if though obeyest not."

As mentioned above, man's perfection and dignity depend on his intellection and knowledge.

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"one hour spent on thinking is better than sixty years of devotions."

As per another tradition,

"one hour spent on thinking is better than one year of devotions."[13]

It is evident that the difference between the traditions concerning thinking lies in the types and hierarchies of thinking, i.e., the thought concerning devotions is meritorious and praiseworthy in its own right, but it may not be compared with that regarding Divine Attributes and Acts. The latter is superior to the former. True submission to Divine Will depends on the accurate understanding the subject of worship.

As a consequence, the dependent clause li-ya'budun attested in 51:56:

("And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [alone]")

is interpreted by scholars as li-ya'rifun denoting "getting to know."

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 14

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْماً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

14. [O Prophet] say to the believers to forgive those [i.e., leave them to God] who hope not for the Days of Allah [viz. the Last Day], that He may recompense people, according to what they have earned.

The Noble Prophet (S) is Divinely appointed to enlighten the believers as to their manner of conduct toward disbelievers. Undoubtedly, faith requires forgiving and magnanimity. Consequently, one ethical Command is provided in the blessed Verse in question concerning their encounter with disbelievers so that the foregoing logical discussions be perfected by this ethical Command.

Addressing the Prophet (S), God Almighty says:

"Say unto the believers to forgive those who hope not for the Days of Allah"

rather than be strict with them. Owing to their distance from the fundamentals of faith and religious ethical principles, they may suffer from undesirable and inhumane conducts and attitudes; however, you are supposed to treat them magnanimously and generously lest they may wax their animosity and further distance from Truth.

Such magnanimity and generosity will improve their conduct and may also make them embrace the pure faith.

Such instructions are recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

"So turn away from them and say peace! But they will come to know"[14]**.**

Basically, strictness and persistence in retaliation are of no avail in dealing with the ignorant, but showing indifference and magnanimity may serve as a means of awakening and guidance. It is to be noted that it is not a general rule, since in a number of cases there remains no other alternative save retaliation and punishment.

Another point is that all days are days of Allah; nonetheless, Days of Allah are applied to specific days as the designation indicates their significance. The expression is attested twice in the Holy Qur'an, once in the Verse in question and another instance is to be found with a broader application in Chapter 1415.

The Days of Allah have been interpreted as different days within the body of Islamic traditions. For instance, according to 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's , the Days of Allah are enumerated as the Day of Mahdi's (as) Rise, the day of death, and the Day of Resurrection.

According to another Prophetic tradition:

"The Days of Allah are the days of His Bounties and those of His Trials by afflictions."[16]

This expression indicates the significance of the Last Day, the day of Divine Manifest Rule over anyone and anything, and the day of total administration of justice.

To prevent these individuals from misusing such magnanimity and forgiving, the Verse ends in

"that He may recompense people, according to what they have earned."

Some exegets have regarded the clause as a warning against disbelievers and sinners; nonetheless, some have considered it as a good tiding for believers because of their forgiveness and magnanimity. The clause may equally indicate good tidings for the latter and warning for the former.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 15

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ

15. Whosoever does a good deed, it is for himself, and whosoever does evil, it is against [himself]. Then you will be made to return to your Lord.

Divine Retribution and Reward is just and according to man's good and evil deeds.

The blessed Verse says:

"Whoever does a good deed, he will gain the benefits thereof and whoever commits evil acts, he will reap the evil consequences thereof."

The same expression is recurrently attested in the Qur'an with different wordings as a reply to those who inquire what gain or loss may be made by God owing to their obedience or rebellion and is the reason behind insistence on obedience to or rebellion against Him.

These Verses express that the rewards and the evil consequences will fall into their share. It is you who tread the path of perfection through your good deeds and soar toward God and it is again you who fall into depravity,

Divine Wrath, deprivation from His Mercy, and ending up with everlasting damnation out of your sins and evil deeds.

All Divinely appointed obligations, prophetic missions, and the revelation of Books are for the same purpose.

The Qur'an says:

"And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for [the good of] himself. And whoever is unthankful, then indeed, Allah is Self-Sufficient and Praiseworthy"[17].

It also says:

"So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for himself and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray merely for his loss"[18].

In another instance, the Holy Qur'an says:

"And he who purifies himself, then he purifies solely for his own benefit. And to Allah is the Return [of all]"[19].

Such expressions indicate that the call of the 'callers to Allah' is a great service in all its dimensions rendered to the mankind rather than a one rendered to Allah, the Self-Sufficient or to His Messengers whose Reward will be bestowed to them by Him. Attending to this fact may significantly lead to proceeding toward obedience to God and abstaining from sins.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرائيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

16. And verily We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, and the understanding of the scripture and its laws, and the Prophethood, and provided them with pleasant [provisions], and preferred them above the people of the time.

The Children of Israel failed to benefit from the Divine Favors mentioned in the Verse in question; as a result of their disobedience and wrong doing, their exalted station turned into humility and damnation. This blessed Verse enumerates certain Divine Bounties some of which were bestowed on the Children of Israel and the offspring of Jacob (Ya'qub).

Firstly, the Torah, embracing theoretical and practical wisdom, was sent down for them.

Secondly, prophets like David (Da'ud), Solomon (Sulayman), Moses (Musa), and Jesus ('Isa) were appointed from amongst them. It is reported that one thousand prophets were appointed for their guidance between Moses and Jesus.

Thirdly, they were provided with pleasant provisions like manna and salwa. Fourthly, they were granted superiority and privileges above all peoples of the time and such superiority and privileges are among the best Bounties bestowed on them.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 17

وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلاّ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْياً بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

17. And We gave them clear proofs in matters [of religion]. And they differed not until after the knowledge came to them, [and the difference was] through envy among themselves. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ.

God Almighty has given an ultimatum to people to the effect that the worst disbelief is to differ in matters of Truth. Even though God granted them superiority over enemies, instead of being thankful, they differed. The blessed Verse says that from among the privileges bestowed upon the Children of Israel by God Almighty was that He made the affairs of this world and the world to come manifest to them.

We bestowed them the knowledge to be aware of the proper management of this worldly and otherworldly affairs. Some exegets have said that by evident proofs, certain indications in the Torah as to the Prophet of Islam are being meant.

However, despite enjoying many a Bounty, they advertently disobeyed the injunctions of the Torah and knowingly ignored the tidings of the Divine Appointment of the Noble Prophet (S). God will indubitably judge between you and them as well as the objections raised by them.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 18

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

18. Then We have put you on a way of Commandment. So follow you that and follow not the desires of the ignorant.

God specifies the path of piety and whoever is responsible for guiding the people is supposed to be fully aware of the path. The Noble Prophet (S) was fully aware of the path. The word shari'a is applied to a waterway leading to a river, but in common usage it denotes the path of the prophets. Addressing his Prophet (S) in this blessed Verse, God Almighty says that He has placed him, rather than others, on the Divine Path.

Therefore, he is asked to turn away from the desires of the ignorant. The word amr may ad hoc be employed in the sense of Divine world rather than the world of creation and nature, meaning that your path is from the Divine world descended onto this world of nature.

All the prophets' Divine Laws and Scriptures are descended from the supernatural world and they all embrace Divine Proofs, Wisdom, Teachings, and Laws; however, they differ largely in certain respects, one difference being the circumstances of the time. It is evident that the ancients did not differ much with animals; as a consequence of which the Commandments and Paths suited their understanding.

It may for be owing to this point that a number of prophets were superior to other prophets in rank. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an[20] that the prophets at any time were superior to others.

Since there are solely five Arch-prophets and the book of prophethood has been sealed by the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as the last one, it becomes evident that whatever attains to its final purpose comes to its end.

Therefore, owing to the highest station of the Prophet (S) and his sublime perfectness, and as a consequence of the perfectness and unchangeability of Divine Commands, the Divine Law suits any period of time.

Consequently, the Verse in question reminds us that the Prophet's (S) Divine Law is mentioned following that of prophet Moses (as) and Allah addresses Prophet Muhammad reminding him that your revealed religion is from the Divine World and above any other religion and the Prophet (S) is supposed to follow the same religion and ignore the desires of the ignorant, since he is vested with revealed truths, traditions, and religion so firm in basis that it will remain to the Last Day.

The Islamic faith is such that had Moses and Jesus (as) been Prophet Muhammad's (S) contemporaries, they would have obeyed the same Divine Law.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 19

إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

19. They shall never defend you against God and verily the wrong doers are helpers of one another but Allah is the protector of the pious.

Piety leads to the attainment of Divine Protection and Succor. One of characteristics of the pious is their turning away from the passions of people.

"And Allah is the protector of the pious."

The pious abstain from wrong doing and being subject to it. Since disbelievers, irrespective of polytheists and Jews, as mentioned in the Qur'anic Verses, out of their evil intentions, left no stone unturned to make the Prophet of the Islamic faith to follow their distorted religion, the Verse in question as well as other Verses emphatically warn the Prophet (S) against following them.

Such Verses inform the Prophet that they are unable to make the Prophet needless of God Almighty. They also indicate that wrong doers, viz. the disbelievers, help one another, but God is the Friend of the pious.

The Verse refers to the fact that the disbelievers' friendship with one another is of no avail. They may neither stop the occurrence of disasters and afflictions in this world nor may they save their friends from torment in the Last Day. However, as God is the Friend of the pious and He is Omnipotent, He protects and helps His friends at all times.

"Verily the pious are in place of security"[21]**.**

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 20

هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدىً وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

20. This [Qur'an] is a clear insight and evidence for mankind and guidance and mercy for people who have faith with certainty.

Piety is supposed to serve as the basis of insight. Qur'an is the basis of insight in all intellectual, ethical, political, social, economic, and family domains. The demonstrative pronoun hadha apparently refers to the Qur'an and enumerates three Qur'anic merits in the blessed Verse in question.

Firstly, the Holy Qur'an is vision. In the same manner as the eye of the head makes seeing objects and colors possible, the Holy Qur'an is the eye of the heart through which knowledge finds its way to the heart.

One who ponders a while on Qur'anic Verses, the light meant by the Infallible Imam (as):

("Knowledge is the light shed by Allah on the heart of whoever He wills from among His servants")

illuminates his heart and shows him the path of deliverance from the shadows of ignorance to the light of knowledge and wisdom. Secondly, the Qur'an is Guidance toward the path of felicity and the Guide to the path of deliverance.

It is by following the Qur'anic teachings that one may leave the way of err and tread on the straight path. Thirdly, the Holy Qur'an is Divine Mercy bestowed on the faithful through following Its Injunctions and Instructions Divine Mercy, Forgiveness, and Bounty will be granted to them. Such merits and virtues belong to those who act upon Qur'anic Verses through certainty and meditation.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 21

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

21. Do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous good deeds and their life and death shall be equal? How incorrect is the judgment that they make.

The verbal noun ijtirah deriving from the root j-r-h denotes any harm afflicted on the body. Since committing sins hurts the sinner's soul, the verbal form ijtarahu "they harm" is used in this Verse.

It is worthy of note that a comparison between a believer and a disbeliever indicates that the former finds peace of mind by remembering God, is satisfied with whatever God has given to him, is hopeful about future, his path is illuminated, and regards death as migrating to a more spacious dwelling, whereas the latter always circumambulates false deities and illegitimate authorities, entangled with the vain desires of his or others, regards the future to be dark, and considers death as perdition.

Therefore, the Qur'an makes use of comparison and contrast for further illumination so that people with different backgrounds be able to understand the point in question. Thus it is inquired in this Verse regarding the disbelievers thinking that those who have committed sins and opposed the believers who have found guidance and insight through the Qur'an, are worthy of being granted Divine Mercy, and have done good deeds are equal.

It is never like that. How would it be possible to pass such inaccurate judgment? The believers' and disbelievers' life and death are not equal.

Believers have grasped:

"the most trustworthy handhold that will never break"[22],

i.e., through grasping the firmest and unbreakable handhold, believers in their mundane life rely on Divine Mercy and seeking succor from Him and their hearts are illuminated by the light of knowledge. They know that they

are always protected by Him and thanks to their hope in Divine Grace they are happy at all times irrespective of being healthy or sick, poor or rich, and experiencing ups and downs.

They are always patient, satisfied, and submitted to the Divine Will, since they know that everything happens by Divine Will and whatever happens to them is in accordance with Divine Omniscience and Wisdom and the believers' and disbelievers' deaths are not on an equal basis.

After death, the latter descend to the lowest level of nature befitting their mundane life, as God Almighty says in the Qur'an[23] that upon their demise, angels beat them on their faces and their backs and harshly make their souls leave their bodies. Au contraire, upon their demise, believers ascend from the vicissitudes of the mundane world and enter the Divine world as per their way of life in this world.

The angels of mercy bear them the good tidings of transporting them to Paradise and the Abode of Dignity:

("an exact recompense [according to their deeds]")[24].

Divine Reward and Retribution are consistent with man's acts. One whose heart is illumined by Divine Light is not on a par with one whose heart is tarnished by the shadows of disbelief.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 22

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

22. And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth, in order that each person may be recompensed what he has earned and they will not be wronged.

The Verse in question substantiates the preceding one. The preceding Verse reads that the sinful think that we regard them on a par with believers. It is wishful thinking. Do they not know that the heavens and the earth are created with truth and in a true system, the good and the evil are not on an equal basis. Creation in truth requires justice in retribution.

According to the blessed Verse, God created the heavens and the earth with truth in order to make manifest his Omnipotence and purposelessness is far from the sacred threshold of the Creator of the world.

The prepositions li- in li-tujza and bi- in bi-ma kasabat indicate that the final purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth is the existence of man so that he may tread the path of improvement and attain to perfection and on the Last Day that is the destination of his becoming perfect may encounter the recompense of his acts, as it is mentioned in Verse 13 of this Chapter;

"And He has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth,"

so that they may meet the needs of man's life and pave his way toward perfection.

"And they will not be wronged"

refers to the fact that the All-Merciful God who has subjected such great creation and this innovative system of the world for the sake of man will not be wronged, but he will be rewarded for his good deeds and chastised for his evil ones.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Majma’ al-Bayan [Exegesis], the opening of Chapter 45
2. 36:1-2
3. 2:129
4. 2:2
5. The Holy Qur’an, 2:164; 3:190; 10:6; 28:71.
6. For details regarding the effects of wind and rain, see the Qur’an 30:46-50.
7. 2:79
8. 83:1
9. 14:2
10. 41:6
11. 104:1
12. 45:8
13. al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 95; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 326.
14. 43:89
15. Abraham, Ibrahim
16. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 2, p. 526
17. 31:12
18. 39:41
19. 35:18
20. 2:254
21. 44:51
22. 2:256
23. 8:52
24. 78:26

Surah al-Jathiya, Verses 23 - 37

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 23

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلا تَذَكَّرُونَ

23. Have you seen him who takes his own vain desires as his god? And Allah knowing [him as such] left him astray and sealed his hearing and his heart and put a cover on his sight. Who then will guide him after Allah? Will you not then remember?

When one follows his vain desires and regards his concupiscence as object of worship, they will turn into a cover covering his vision, hearing, and heart. As a consequence, the Words of Truth may not affect him. In this way, he is not worthy of being guided and thereby he is led astray.

God has made available to man the means of deliverance from error, but when he does wrong to himself and follows the path of error, he will be deprived of Divine Guidance. It is not Divine Will to lead him astray, but his deprivation from Guidance is mere error. It is for the same reason that the Verse closes with the question;

"Will you not then remember?"

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 24

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلاّ حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلاّ الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلاّ يَظُنُّونَ

24. And they say: "There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live [viz. a group departs and another group enters] nothing destroys us except Nature and Time." And they have no knowledge of it: they are only wishful thinkers.

The word dahr denotes the passage of time. Materialists maintain that the passage of life time leads to human perdition.[1] Following vain desires blinds the eye of the heart such that he denies resurrection and regards life restricted to transience.

According to this blessed Verse, those who take their vain desires as their deities and obey Satan and concupiscence and thereby weaken their intellect think that life is restricted to this mundane and transient life and deny the life in the world to come, saying that life is nothing save this mundane life in which we see the light and then we die and nothing may destroy man except the passage of time.

Their words are not substantiated by knowledge since they have lost their innate sound nature owing to following their vain desires. They regard Divine Omnipotence as limited and falsely conjecture that the world is limited to this mundane world.

By saying:

"And nothing destroys us except Time"

disbelievers mean the passage of time.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 25

وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلاّ أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

25. And when Our Clear Verses [concerning Resurrection] are recited to them, their argument is no other than that they say: "Bring back our [deceased] fathers, if you are truthful."

Qur'anic Verses are clear and enlightening. Instead of thinking about Divine Ayat ("Verses, signs, evidence") disbelievers ask for reviving their ancestors.

"And when"

(wa idh) refers to the preceding Verse concerning the disbelievers' false claims that when the Verses concerning proving Resurrection are recited to them, they fail to provide an acceptable reply saying if the prophets were truthful in proving Resurrection, bring our fathers back to life so that they inform us of the other world and if they accepted your words, we would accept them to be true.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 26

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

26. Say: 'Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt.

The system of creation follows an order dominating the world of existence through the Will of the Wise God denying which stems from ignorance. The evidence of Divine Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Justice is so clear that there leaves no room for any doubt regarding Resurrection.

In the blessed Verse in question God Almighty says:

"O Muhammad, say unto these disbelievers denying Resurrection that God makes you see the light out of human seed and will cause you to die after the completion of this mundane life. Then, He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection and there is no room for entertaining doubts regarding being assembled on the Last Day; though the majority of people do not know."

The Verse refers to the fact that if they knew, they would recognize the order, harmony, and purpose of their own creation and would be capable of perceiving the qualities of their life and death.

In this case, they could be certain that there is a significant purpose behind man's life and death - this worldly death is a preamble to everlasting life, since the final purpose of this worldly death is that what the Creator has placed in human faculty may be actualized and attain to its final purpose through death and when something is actualized it may find immortality; as the final purpose of man's creation is attainment to everlasting life, he will not be subject to annihilation.

Therefore, following the end of the mundane world, all human beings who have seen the light and have passed away successively shall be assembled for everlasting life and shall meet their recompense; otherwise, human existence, even the creation of the world were in vain and acting in vain is far from Divine Threshold.

There is no doubt in it[2] since the point is clear to the knowledgeable, but the ignorant who neither know themselves nor are aware of creation or resurrection and their intellects are entangled with vain desires, nor are they capable of perceiving anything may solely refer to the life after death only if their fathers were brought back to life.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 27

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَخْسَرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

27. And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heaven and the earth. And on the Day that Resurrection will be established - on that Day those talking nonsense shall be losers.

Bringing to life and causing to die is facile for God Almighty, since existence is in His Hands. Worldly losses are trivial, but the losses to be incurred on the Resurrection Day shall be significant. Those who deny Resurrection shall be losers on that day.

The Verse in question is related to the preceding one. God Almighty is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything is within the Sway of that Omnipotent King. All the worlds of creation have come into existence from non-existence through His Will. As the All-Praiseworthy God is the Cause of the existence of possible beings, He is the cause of their survival as well. Any alterations may be made in any being through His Omnipotence.

On the Day of Resurrection, this world will turn into the other one and the Day of Resurrection shall be established on which evil doers shall be losers since they spend their life in vanity and ignorance. This world resembles a commercial center and life is the merchant's capital from which he is supposed to accrue otherworldly gains, pure everlasting life, and spiritual stations.

Failure to accrue gains despite the availability of the capital of life to him may be likened to a bankrupt merchant having lost his capital without accruing any gain from his worldly life. There will be nothing in store for him save rue and regret for having lost his capital.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 28

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

28. And you will see [on the Day of Resurrection] each nation humbled to their knees; each nation shall be called to its Record [of deeds]. This Day you shall be recompensed for what you used to do.

On that Day everyone shall kneel down in terror. The system of creation is kept in order and harmony and the records of human deeds are based on evidence.

The blessed Verse is thus addressed to the Prophet (S):

"O Muhammad! You shall see that on that Day each and every nation shall kneel out of fear and each nation shall be called to its Record of deeds."

The clause:

"[Each nation] shall be called to its Records"

apparently signifies that when on that Day all mankind shall stay motionless on their knees out of severe fear and anxiety, the Records of their

deeds shall be opened and everyone will be called by his own Record of deeds, since on that Day everyone shall be known by his deeds rather than by his name and lineage. Everyone shall be recompensed according to his deeds.

Some have said that everyone shall be called by the Divine Book revealed to the prophet of his time and he will be asked whether he acted upon Its Instructions. A number of points are worthy of note. Jathiya denotes kneeling down at the time of fear, awe, humility, and submission.

According to the Holy Qur'an, three types of Books and Records are mentioned for mankind on the Day of Resurrection:[3]

There is a Record kept for everyone in which his deeds are recorded:

"And We have fastened every man's deeds to his neck and on the Day of Resurrection We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open.[It shall be said to him]: Read your book"[4].

There is a Book for each nation in which social affairs are recorded in it, as the blessed Verse in question reads:

"Each nation shall be called to Its Book."

All nations have one single Book in which everything and the deeds of everyone are recorded in it:

"And the Book [of one's records] shall be placed and you shall see the sinners fearful of that which is [recorded] in it"[5].

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 29

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

29. This is Our Book that speaks about you with truth. Indeed, We were recording what you used to do.

There shall be nothing concealed on the Day of Resurrection. Everything shall be put forward. The word kitab connotes that everything shall be written down on that Day.

Again It is God who addresses them emphatically:

"This is Our Book [viz. Record] that speaks about you with truth"

and reveals your deeds. You could never believe then that your deeds were being recorded somewhere; however, We had commanded [the angels] to record all your deeds.

The word nastansikhu and its verbal noun istinsakh are originally derived from n-s-kh denoting "to erase, take away," e.g. erasing something by something else; for instance, "The sun took away the shade or shadow" (nasakhta al-shams al-dill). The word was later employed to signify "to transcribe" a book from another book without the latter being destroyed.

Some exegets say that

'the Book'

in the Verse may indicate 'Divine Book' revealed to that nation, but

'the Book'

ad hoc is apparently employed in the sense of 'record of deeds' and the majority of exegets accept this view.

According to a tradition narrated from 'Ali (as), the Commander of the Faithful,

"God sends down angels every day to record the deeds of men."

Following the narration of the mentioned tradition in Tibyan[6] under the Verse in question, Shaykh Tusi says:

"By Nastansikhu it is meant that God Almighty commands the angels responsible for recording the deeds to take from this group the deeds worthy of recompense and deed them, but delete the rest, since the first group record all the deeds."

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 30

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ

30. Then as for those who believed [in God] and did righteous good deeds, their lord shall admit them to His Mercy. That shall be the evident deliverance.

The word fawz used in this Verse denotes triumph and attainment of good together with security and fulfillment of wish. In the Holy Qur'an, the word collocates with evident (mubin) and great ('adim, kabir).

Instead of "They enter Paradise" (yadkhuluna fial-janna), it is said:

"Their lord shall admit them to His Mercy" (yudkhiluhum rabbuhum fi rahmatihi)

denoting that the believers and the beneficent enjoy Divine Grace and Mercy.

Following an expression of the fact that everyone shall be recompensed according to the record of his deeds, the Verse in question says that the deeds of the believers and the beneficent shall be assayed following which their lord shall admit them to His Infinite Mercy.

Indubitably, this is felicity, merit, deliverance, and the final purpose of mankind rather that of all creatures created for the sake of mankind. It is through the creation of such perfect man that the Divine attribute of Mercy is manifested without which the existence of the world became non-existent.

The Divine Tradition:

"Had it been not for your sake, I would have not created celestial spheres"

is addressed to Prophet Muhammad (S), since the perfect man is the final purpose of the existence of the world.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 31

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْماً مُجْرِمِينَ

31. But as for those who disbelieved [it shall be said to them: Were not our Verses recited to you? But you were arrogant and you were a people who were sinners.

Sins stem from disbelief and arrogance. Following an expression of the believers' and good doers' sublime station, the blessed Verse, addressing the disbelievers, reproaches them saying that they are entangled with torment and chastisement on the Day of Recompense. Were not Divine Verses recited to them by Divinely appointed Messengers?

Instead of accepting them and finding deliverance from the torment recompensed owing to your own deeds, you ignored the words of the prophets and declined to submit to Divine Command. They were arrogant.

Now they are sinners. Whenever the prophets said unto them that Divine promises would be true and there would be no doubt regarding the Resurrection Day, they replied that they had not found it to be true and they disbelieved in such Hour.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 32-34

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ نَظُنُّ إِلاّ ظَنّاً وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِينَ

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ

32. And when it was said: "Indeed, Allah's Promise is the truth and there is no doubt about the coming of the Hour," you said: "We know not what is the Hour: we do not think it but as a conjecture, and we have no firm convincing [in it]."

33. And the evil of what they did shall appear to them, and that which they used to mock at will completely encircle them.

34. And it will be said: "This Day We shall forget you as you forgot the Meeting of this Day of yours. And your abode is the Fire and there is none to help you."

The characteristics of the disbeliever include suspicion and those of the believer include inquiry, follow up, and attainment to certitude. On the Day of Resurrection, in addition to the evil deeds committed, disbelievers shall be encircled by the evil consequences of their evil deeds.

Thus, according to Verse 32, whenever the prophets said unto you that Divine Promises were true and there was no doubt for the establishment of Resurrection, you replied that you did not think it but as a conjecture and you were not firmly convinced in it.

It is mentioned in Verse 33 that their evil deeds committed in their worldly life shall be manifest on the Day of Resurrection. In other words disbelievers failed to perceive their arrogance against and denial of Divine Verses nor did they understand their evil deeds stemming from concupiscence and vain desires.

Thus the muddy water of this world covered their eyes and left them deprived of truth such that they regarded their deeds as desirable unaware of what would be in store for them owing to their derision of Divine Verses.

Verse 34 demonstrates that afflicted by torment disbelievers shall be told by the angels Divinely appointed for their tormenting that Messengers of God reminded you of such a Day but you greeted them with derision. Now that you are desperate, you shall be recompensed by abandoning you to experience everlasting torment in the Hell. There shall be no savior to save you from such torment.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 35

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُواً وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ لا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

35. This is because you derided the Divine Verses and the life of the world deceived you. So this Day they shall not be taken out from there [Hell], nor shall they be returned to the worldly life [to seek Divine Satisfaction].

Being deceived and satisfied with mundane life leads man to deride truths. Those who deride Divine Verses shall not find the path of deliverance, nor shall their excuses be justified. The blessed Verse warns disbelievers that this is the recompense for your deriding Divine Verses springing from the fountainhead of Truth and ignoring the words of the prophets.

Allured by mundane life, you forgot your origin and Resurrection. Like as you failed to leave aside your disbelief, you shall not leave the Hell. You may not embark on any desirable act as it is too late and today is the Day of Recompense.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 36-37

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

36. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth, and the Lord of all that exists.

37. The Majesty in the heavens is His, and He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

The One God is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all that exists. Verses 36 and 37 indicate that all the praises belong to the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists in them including soul and bodies as well as what exists on the earth from among inanimate beings, plants, and animals. He is the protector of all the worlds.

Generalization following specification indicates generality, i.e., the Creator of the heavens and the earth is the same as the Creator of all the worlds including the mundane world as well as the supernatural worlds of intellects and souls and the infinite worlds existing between them whose number is known by their Creator whose Majesty and Sovereignty are manifest in the heavens and on the earth; He is the Omnipotent Sovereign Who has arranged everything out of Wisdom in harmony with the order of the world.

Thus, Majesty and Magnanimity solely belongs to Him.

It is attested in Divine Traditions that:

"Sovereignty and Majesty solely belongs to My Essence. Whoever vies with Me for these two Attributes, I shall cast him into the Hell."

The words rida' ("cloak") and izar ("shawl") connote Divine Encompassment and Self-Existence; like as cloaks and shawls encompass the body, Divine Essence also encompasses all the worlds and anyone attempting to vie with God for any or both of the twain Attributes shall be cast into the abyss of the Hell.

Notes

1. See Raghib’s Mufradat.
2. 2:2
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, p. 348.
4. 17:13-14
5. 18:49
6. vol. 9, p. 260©

Surah al-Ahqaf, Chapter 46, Verses 1 - 21

(The Curved Sand-Hills)

Section (juz'): 26

Number of Verses: 35

General Contents of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Placed at the beginning of the twenty sixth section of the Qur'an and revealed in Mecca, the Chapter consists of thirty five Verses. The word ahqaf is used in the sense of curved sand hills piled up due to the action of the wind. The land of the people of 'Ad was covered by sand hills, hence the designation of Ahqaf.

The word appears in Verse 21 wherein the story of prophet Hud (Hod) and the people of 'Ad are being mentioned. The Chapter is the last one among the seven Chapters beginning with detached or abbreviated letters HM followed by the revelation and significance of the Qur'an.

Merits of the Chapter

According to a narration narrated by Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who recites Surah al-Ahqaf every night or every week is vouchsafed against the fears of this world and the world to come."

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

حم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلاّ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُسَمّى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنْذِرُوا مُعْرِضُونَ

1. HM.

2. The revelation of [this] Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

3. We created neither the heavens nor the earth nor all that is between them except with truth and for an appointed term. But those who disbelieve turn away from that whereof they are warned.

Seven Chapters, namely Ghafir[1], Fussilat[2], Shura[3], Zukhruf[4], Dukhan[5], Jathiya[6], and Ahqaf[7] open with the detached letters HM and are well known as the Seven HMs.

The reiteration of

"HM the revelation of [this] Book"

in a series of recurrent Chapters bears testimony to the fact that fundamental and significant issues are to be reiterated. Divine Glory ('Izza)

is one of the attributes of Allah, His Book[8], His Messenger (S), and believers[9]. Divine Creation is based on Wisdom and Truth.

Encountering things of whose existential mysteries we are unaware may not affect the Creator but it stems from the restrictions of our knowledge as it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"We have not created the heavens, the earth, and all that is between them for mere play. We created them not except with truth; however, most of them know not"[10].

A meager attempt at attending to the verses following the detached letters HM leads us to the fact that the Qur'an is from the springhead of Divine Omniscience, Glory, Omnipotence, and Wisdom. It is the source of Blessing, Bounty, and Grace. It is Illuminating and pondering on it leads one to intellection. The revelation of the Qur'an is merely possible from Omnipotent and All-Wise God, lying beyond the limited human power.

The second Verse, besides the Book of Compilation (tadwin), deals with the Book of Creation, making mention of the glory and truth of the heavens and the earth saying:

"We created neither the heavens nor the earth nor all that is between them except with truth."

There is no single untrue word in His Book nor is there any unharmonious and untrue thing in His System of Creation. Everything is well calculated and stands in perfect harmony according to truth.

However, the world of creation has an end as it has a beginning.

In this vein, the Verse further adds:

"We have appointed a term for it,"

upon which the transient world will come to its end. Since this world is true and purposeful, there should naturally exist another world in which deeds be recompensed. Therefore, the truthfulness of this world bears testimony to the existence of resurrection, or else it would have been vain and abounding in wrong and oppression.

Despite the Truth of the Qur'an and the creation of the world,

"those who disbelieve turn away from that whereof they are warned."

On the one hand, Qur'anic Verses recurrently warn them of the Great Tribunal awaiting them and on the other hand, the world of creation, with certain orders of its, warns the negligent that everything shall be reckoned; nonetheless, they heed neither of the twain warnings.

The present participle mu'ridhun "turning away," from the root '-r-dh, demonstrates that attending to the Ayat ("Verses; Signs") of creation and compilation may enable one to comprehend the Truth; however, they turn away from Truth lest that it may not affect their passions and lusts."

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 4

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ ائْتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

4. Say: "Think you about all that you invoke besides Allah? Show me. What have they created of the earth? Or have they a share in [the creation

of] the heavens? Bring a trace of knowledge [to substantiate your claims] if you are truthful!"

The word Athara denotes the traces and tokens of the existence of something. The logic of Divine Oneness rests on such firm and indubitable grounds that it may be used in debates with disbelievers to defeat them.

In this vein, Imam Baqir (as) says:

"The word

'Book'

in this Verse denotes the Torah and the Bible and the word

'knowledge'

signifies the words of the prophets' successors."

The Prophet (S) in all matters related to his prophethood, even the manner of debate with opponents, acts upon Divine Command.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), thus God Almighty says in this blessed Verse:

"O Muhammad! Ask those worshipping false deities believing in their power to show Me what they have created on the earth thanks to which they have become worthy of being worshipped and thanked.

Do they have any share in the creation of the heavens? Bring a book unto Me preceding the Qur'an to substantiate your claim. Ask them to show the tokens of their knowledge, if they are true in claiming the veracity of their godhead."

The Verse in question indicates the logical argument produced to make disbelievers comprehend that each and every claimant produces arguments to substantiate his claims and each being has its own tokens. It is particularly true about those standing higher on the hierarchy of being. What characteristics have they found in the false deities in which disbelievers have sought refuge and before them they prostrate themselves invoking them to answer their prayers?

They merely fancy that they have made themselves close to such worthless objects. Have they created anything ex nihilo to demonstrate that it stands within their power? Have they shown any extraordinary knowledge? Have you learned that they are related to heavenly beings?

The fact is that they lack any merits or privileges, but they are worthless, inanimate objects fashioned by you who claim to be sensible, knowledgeable, and humane. It stands against reason to seek refuge in inanimate things.

In short, the Verse in question bears testimony to Its Divine Origin demonstrating that whatever exists in the heavens and the earth and all things between them have come to light through Truth and the Source of Truth and the Verse substantiates Divine Oneness;

("No one affects existence save Allah")

and everything is from Him and is dependent on the Sublime Intellect. They are all needful of the Absolute Self-Sufficient Being.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 5-6

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ

وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ

5. And he who is more astray than one who invokes [ones] besides Allah who will not answer him till the Day of Resurrection and who are unaware of their being invoked?

6. And when mankind are gathered, they will become their enemies and will deny their worshipping.

The worst error is deviation from true recognition and one who turns away from the Omnipotent, Omniscient, All-Hearing, and All-Seeing God and turns to false deities will be entangled with such error, since none but God Almighty may embark upon doing anything. Polytheistic and mundane ties shall turn into animosity on the Resurrection Day.

The blessed Verse is a reproach to idolaters treading the path of error and astrayness to the extreme since they are deeply sunk in ignorance to the extent that they invoke the succor of false deities and objects of worship:

"other than Allah"

including angels, jinn, and prophets. The Verse is a reference to the fact that the only true object of worship and the Provider of Needs (qadhi al-hajat) is God. According to the second Verse, whatever has been regarded as their object of worship and support turn into their enemies on the Day of Resurrection.

At the end, attention may be paid to the differences between God and false deities in the life of mankind:

The Role of God in the Life of Mankind

"He is the Creator"[11]***.***

"He is the Lord all that exists"[12]***.***

"Allah is full of kindness toward mankind"[13]***.***

"He is the All-Hearer of invocation"[14]***.***

"He responds to the distressed"[15]***.***

"He will surely guide them to His Paths"[16]***.***

"He provides the pious with support"[17]***.***

"He guides them unto growth"[18]***.***

"The hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah"[19]***.***

"He has taught [man] by the pen"[20]***.***

"If man thanks, He will give him more [of His Blessings]"[21]***.***

"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me"[22]***.***

"And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Recompense"[23]***.***

The Role of Deities Other Than God in the Life of Mankind

They have no power over creation "They cannot create [even] a fly"[24]***.***

"They are unaware of their invocations to them"[25]***.***

"They do not hear his invocation"[26]***.***

"They have no power to remove the adversity from you"[27]***.***

"They are their enemies."

"They are unable to ward off adversity from you"[28]***.***

"They harm them and profit them not"[29]***.***

To sum it up, mention may be made of Yusuf's (Joseph) words to his fellow inmates:

"Are many different lords [gods] better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible?"[30]***.***

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 7

وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

7. And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, the disbelievers say of the truth when it reaches them: "This is plain magic!"

Dominance of obduracy leads to the denial of the Clear Signs, i.e. the illuminating Qur'anic Verses. The obdurate regarded the prophets' miracles incredible, but interesting and weird;

("This is plain magic!").

The Verse in question demonstrates that disbelievers regarded Qur'anic Verses as extraordinary since despite the fact that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in eloquent Arabic and Arab polytheists were speakers of the Arabic tongue, they knew that composing such Verses were beyond them; nonetheless, the prejudice predominant at the time of pre-Islamic ignorance in Arabia and the arrogance and vanity deeply rooted in the hearts of polytheists impeded them from believing in the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets (S) and confessing that It is the Word of God, so that whenever they heard a Verse, they attributed magic and sorcery to the Noble Prophet (S).

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 8

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَى بِهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

8. Or they say: "He has fabricated it." Say: "If I have fabricated it still you have no power to support me against [the Wrath of] Allah. He knows best of what you say [engage in debates] among yourselves concerning it! He is sufficient as a witness between me and you! And He is the Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

The verbal form tufidhun is from the root f-w-dh ("to enter, to flow"). If someone falsely claims to be a prophet, God shall disgrace him and no one may impede his disgrace and support him against God. Obduracy and impiety result in diverse contradictory words and conducts.

It is mentioned in the preceding Verse that polytheists and disbelievers claimed that the Qur'an was magic and he Prophet (S) was a liar.

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Verse says unto him:

"O Muhammad (S)! Do disbelievers produce such false claims saying that the Qur'an is your own fabrication?

God bids you to respond to them saying:

'If I fabricate the Qur'an for your guidance and attribute it to Divine Revelation, you shall have no power to do anything to my benefit and save me from torment. God knows better as to what you say, viz. your criticism

and mockery regarding Divine Verses. God is sufficient for me to be a witness between us. He is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.'"

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 9

قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعاً مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلا بِكُمْ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلاّ مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلاّ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

9. Say: "I am not unprecedented among the Messengers nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me and I am but a plain warner."

The word bid' indicates something novel and unprecedented. The Noble Prophet's (S) opponents reacted as if no prophets preceded him and his prophethood is something novel. The Prophet utters solely the Divine Word and practically follows nothing save the Divine Revelation. Therefore, his words and conduct may serve as a model for mankind. Divinely appointed guides, even in substantiating their truthfulness, act upon Divine Command.

The Verse in question says:

"O Muhammad (S)! Say unto the disbelievers that you are not the first divinely appointed prophet. You are not unaware of the preceding prophets so as to regard my prophethood as falsity, but God Almighty, out of His Grace and Mercy appoints prophets and messengers at all times to provide mankind with Divine Guidance."

By saying:

"I am unaware as to what God shall do with me and you,"

it may be meant that the Prophet (S), despite his sublime station of prophethood, is not fully aware of Divine Ordainments, but admits that Omnipotence solely belongs to God and he does not command or forbid people out of his taste, but he is totally obedient to Divine Revelation.

He is Divinely appointed to fulfill his mission and his claim does not transgress prophethood. In the same vein, he does not consider himself to be independent in judgment and discretion. He is appointed to apprise people of their evil deeds and warn them against the torment in store for them out of evil deeds as a recompense of their vices.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 10

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرائِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَآمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

10. Say: "Tell me! If this [Qur'an] is from Allah and you deny it, and a witness to it from among the Children of Israel testifies that this Qur'an is like it and he believed while you are too proud [to believe]." Verily, Allah guides not the people who are wrong doers.

Wrong doing impedes insight and results in deprivation from Divine Grace.

In the blessed Verse in question, God says:

"O Muhammad (S)! Ask them to inform you of their sayings. If this Qur'an is Revealed by God and a witness from the Children of Israel bears witness to its veracity but you waxed proud and disbelieved in it,

what will be in store for you? Are you not from among wrong doers? God shall not guide wrong doers."

It is reported that by

"witness"

(shahid) 'Abd Allah ibn Salam is being meant. He was one of the ascetics and scholars of the Children of Israel. By "like it" (mithlihi) the verses and meanings of the Torah are being intended that testify to the Qur'an as Divine Revelation and is consistent with it in terms of Divine Teachings and Promises and Threats.

In short, the Verse signifies that the Noble Prophet (S) is Divinely appointed by God to provide the Jews with guidance saying that as per the testimony of their own scholars it is substantiated that the Qur'an is Divine Revelation but they deny it out of their vanity. Are they not wrong doers? Sunk in wrong doing, they are not guidable.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 11

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْراً مَا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ

11. And those who disbelieve say of those who believe: "Had it [the Islamic faith] been a good thing, they would not have preceded us thereto!" And when they have not let themselves be guided by it, they say: "This is an ancient lie!"

The enemy does not enter from one single way and his words and logic are not in the same vein.

At times he says:

"Islam is worthless or else we would have preceded in embracing it. He sometimes says the call to embrace the Islamic faith is an age old and precedent lie."

The blessed Verse addresses either the disbelievers from Quraysh or the Jews or disbelievers in general who were the Noble Prophet's (S) contemporaries. Since they regarded themselves as wealthy, noble, magnanimous, scholars, and knowledgeable, they considered the Noble Prophet's (S) poor Companions, e.g. 'Ammar, Suhayb, and Ibn Mas'ud as unworthy and weakling.

To persuade the believers they said unto them that had there been merits and felicity in following Muhammad (S), we would have preceded you in embracing the Islamic faith. According to the blessed Verse, since disbelievers did not find their way toward felicity and merits and were deprived of guidance and their vanity and prejudice impeded their hearts from being enlightened by the Qur'anic light and admitting the true source of the Qur'an, they pretend ignorance and say this Qur'an is a fabrication attributed by Muhammad (S) to God.

The content of the Verse resembles one[31] as per which disbelievers said that the Qur'an is nothing save ancient lies (in hadha asatir al-awwalin).

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 12

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَاماً وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِسَاناً عَرَبِيّاً لِيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ

12. And before this was the Scripture of Musa (Moses) as a guide and a mercy. And this is a confirming Book in the Arabic tongue to warn those who do wrong and as glad tidings to good doers.

Revelation of the Divine Book is a Divine tradition

("And before this was the Scripture of Musa").

Through the glad tidings included in preceding Scriptures, the Holy Qur'an confirms them.

The antecedent of

"before this"

is the Holy Qur'an which is preceded by Torah, the Scripture of Musa which had been Divinely Revealed as the precursor of all Divine Scriptures as a Mercy demonstrating the Path of Guidance through the Books of the Torah.

This Book, namely the Qur'an, which is revealed in the eloquent Arabic tongue confirms what is included in the Torah and other Divine Books so that it may inspire awe in disbelievers as to the torments of this world and the world to come and threaten disbelievers and polytheists and bear the glad tidings of Paradise and the stations prepared for them as rewards of the good deeds to the pious and the beneficent.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 13-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

13. Indeed those who say: "Our Lord is Allah," and thereafter stand firm and straight [on the Islamic faith of Monotheism], on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

14. Such shall be the dwellers of Paradise, abiding therein [for ever] - a reward for what [good deeds] they used to do.

To say

"our Lord is Allah"

signifies nothing by its mere form, but it connotes the choice of the True Path and standing firm on It. It is hard to stand firm on the True Path, but it turns facile through a great reward like Paradise abounding in bounties and devoid of grief. Thus hard tasks turn more convenient though great rewards.

After threatening opponents and bearing glad tidings to the beneficent believers, the blessed Verse enumerates the qualities of believers standing firm on the True Path and the rewards to fall into their share through their good deeds. Good doers (muhsinin) are those who utter their belief, confirm from the bottom of their hearts, and stand firm on the Path of True Religion in terms of faith and practice.

They need not fear of what is in store for them nor do they grieve as to their past deeds.

Needlessness of fear and grief by believers standing firm on the Path may refer to fears and grieves in the other worldly matters. On the Resurrection Day, they stand near to God and are saved from the great distress there.

They neither fear of torment nor are they grieved since as per the Verse in question, negation of fear and grief from the beneficent may include their mundane life and that to come, since one who fears God fears no one but is enclosed within the enclosure of:

"There is no god but Allah"

(La ilaha illa 'llah).

He does not grieve since one who loves God and seeks meeting his Lord may not be grieved from mundane matters but such a person has joined those regarding whom it is said:

"God is satisfied with them and they are [satisfied] with Him."

It is worthy of note that it is solely through clemency and perseverance that man may attain to perfect faith and certitude. It is not sufficient to utter the declaration of the faith verbally and confirm it by heart in order to attain to perfect faith.

The perfect believer is one who admits no impediments in his way attains to the station of certitude by sight ('ayn al-yaqin) or real certitude (haq al-yaqin). Such attainment is possible through firm will to act. To put it short, perfect faith depends on clemency, perseverance, and standing firm so that one may struggle against his concupiscence and ward off devils such that angels may find their ways into his heart and he may attain to the station of peaceful soul (nafs al-mutma'inna).

Such a person may be termed as perfect believer and as per the Verse in question; there will be no fear or grief for him.

The second Verse in question makes mention of another merit of good doers and those standing firm on the Path of Faith, as per which they are from among the dwellers of Paradise for good as a reward for their good deeds in this world, admitting to Divine Oneness, standing firm in their faith without any instability in their certitude and faith in their mundane life. Paradise is the reward of those who act rather than those who merely talk.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 15

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْأِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَاناً حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهاً وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهاً وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلاثُونَ شَهْراً حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحاً تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

15. And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him [lasts] thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my offspring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims [submitting to Your Will].

Being dutiful and kind to one's parents is highly rewarded by God.

The phrase:

"We enjoined"

is attested five times in the Qur'an three instances of which are employed for parents[32]. Owing to the hardships of pregnancy, delivery, and suckling, mothers enjoy a special privilege and deserve further kindness. It is noteworthy that being dutiful and kind to one's parents does not depend on their being Muslims.

The basis of man's life and his felicity and improvement rests on unanimity, kindness, and philanthropy and his closest relations are his parents who partially form his material existence. That is why God Almighty enjoins man to do good to his parents.

In this vein, motherly love for her child is one of the wonders of the world and one of the secrets of creation, since despite suffering so many hardships and so much pain, however her child be ugly in form or character, her love never turns into disgust. She bears the child for a period of nine months and her delivery is very painful. She suckles her child.

According to the Verse, such activities last thirty months. Therefore, compared with fathers, mothers suffer further hardships; however, fathers undergo many hardships for their children in other respects. In bringing up their children, parents undergo many a hardship to provide for their children's provisions and education until their children reach majority.

The verse connotes guidance through intellect since any fair individual knows through their reason that they are dutiful against their parents and the verse stands on such rational command.

The Qur'an[33] says:

"Is there any reward for good other than good?"

which is a reference to the rational command in question.

However, when we compare this Verse with:

"And worship Allah and do not associate false deities with Him in any way and do good to your parents"[34]

which is attested in four Qur'nic Chapters for the sake of emphasis and we take the large number of traditions and narrations narrated from the Infallibles (as) we notice that the number is so large that enumerating all of them will run to many a page.

Taking the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions and narrations bears testimony to the fact that as per Divine Command doing good to one's parents is on a par with worshipping God based on which it is obligatory to be dutiful to one's parents and obey them unless their commands be inconsistent with Divine Commands and those of His Messenger.

It is incumbent upon every individual to make every attempt to do good to them and obtain their satisfaction at all times and to the extent possible to do so since obedience to them and obtaining their satisfaction are on a par with obedience to God and obtaining Divine Satisfaction.

Man attains to the perfect state of physical and mental development when he is forty years of age. It clearly demonstrates whether he treads the path of felicity or is astray.

Thus God Almighty says that within a period of forty years, man may proceed on the path of felicity and thus say in a state of need and gratitude:

"Bestow upon me the blessing that I may be grateful for the abounding material and immaterial bounties granted to me and my parents and as a token of gratitude act upon Your Satisfaction."

Such individual not only invokes God to respond to his needs but also seeks felicity and welfare for his offspring.

He turns to the threshold of the Absolute Self-Sufficient God and sincerely addresses God saying:

"I have turned toward you. I have submitted to Your Will and Command."

Experts of Islamic law have employed:

"the bearing of him and the weaning of him [lasts] thirty months"

and

"the mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years"[35]

to conclude that pregnancy in the least lasts six months which together with two months of suckling amount to thirty months.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 16

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

16. They are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evil deeds. [They shall be] among the dwellers of Paradise - [this Paradise is] a promise of truth, which they have been promised.

The value of deeds lies in their being accepted;

("They are those from whom We shall accept …").

For instance, being dutiful and doing good to one's parents and being grateful to God leads to the acceptance of one's good deeds and being dutiful to and doing good to one's parents and gratitude toward God results in Divine Forgiving.

"They"

in this Verse refers to the people some of whose qualities are enumerated in the preceding Verse. The Verse in question makes mention of their good deeds and intentions accepted by God better than what they have done. God forgives their sins and has promised them to enter Paradise. His Promise is true and shall be fulfilled.

The Verse indicates that such Grace and Mercy are the rewards of three good deeds of theirs:

1. Being dutiful and doing good to one's parents
2. Their invocation and supplication to the Absolute Self-Sufficient for the bounties granted to them and their parents
3. Their repentance and turning away from opposition to embracing the Islamic faith in case of committing any sin or fault, since invocation and supplication at the Threshold of the Omnipotent God as well as repentance from committing sins and faults serve as two gates of Divine Mercy and Grace.

Mention will be made of a number of traditions concerning showing respect for parents:

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“The most significant Divine obligation is to do good to one’s parents.”[36]

The Messenger of Allah (S) Said:

“Any good doing child who looks at his parents out of kindness is granted the Divine Reward of pilgrimage to Ka’ba for each and every look. He was asked concerning a child who looks kindly at his parents one hundred times a day and he replied: “God is the Greatest and the Most Pure”[37]***.***

The Messenger of Allah (S) Said:

“A servant who is obedient to his parents and God shall dwell on the highest place in Paradise”[38]***.***

The Messenger of Allah (S) Said:

“One who obtains the satisfaction of his parents, has gained the satisfaction of God and one who angers his parents, angers God”[39]***.***

The Messenger of Allah (S) Said:

“One who wishes to have his life prolonged and his daily sustenance increased should do good to his parents and provide for his blood relatives”[40]***.***

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 17-18

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ أُفٍّ لَكُمَا أَتَعِدَانِنِي أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ الْقُرُونُ مِنْ قَبْلِي وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيثَانِ اللَّهَ وَيْلَكَ آمِنْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلاّ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْأِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ

17. But he who says to his parents: “Fie upon you both! Do you hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up [from the grave posthumously] when generations before me have passed away?” While they invoke Allah for help [and say unto him]: “Woe to you! Believe! Verily, the Promise of Allah is true.” But he says: “This [promise] is nothing but the tales of the ancient.”

18. They are those against whom the Word [of torment] is justified among the previous generations of Jinn and mankind that have passed away. Indeed, they are ever the losers.

Unworthy children insult their parents;

(“Fie upon you both!”)

but faithful and compassionate parents seek God’s assistance to guide their children and ask them to do good deeds and keep away from vices.

In the Verse in question, mention is made of unfaithful and ungrateful individuals who are cursed by their parents:

“He who says to his parents: ‘Fie upon you both! Do you hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up when generations before me have passed away?’”

Faithful parents do not desist before their obdurate son,

“they invoke Allah for help [and say unto him]: ‘Woe to you! Believe! Verily, the Promise of Allah is true.’”

But he says:

"This [promise] is nothing but the tales of the ancient."

What you say concerning the Last Day and Reckoning is superstitions and legends of the ancients and I shall never submit to believing them.

The qualities enumerated in this Verse concerning such obdurate individuals are as follows:

1. disrespect toward parents, since

"Fie"

refers to impurities and connotes insult and humiliation.[41]

2. Such people not only disbelieve in the Last Day but also mock such belief and regard it on a par with legends and superstitions

3. Enjoining them to embrace the true faith falls onto deaf ears as they do not submit to the Divine Will and they are conceited with false pride and ignorance. Compassionate parents make every attempt to rescue their obdurate children from the abyss of ignorance and the painful torment in the world to come; however, the unworthy children persist in their disbelief and their parents find no other alternative but to leave them.

According to Verse 18:

"Obdurate disbelievers are those against whom the Word [of torment] is justified among the previous generations of Jinn and mankind that have passed away. Indeed, they are ever the losers [viz. they shall suffer the painful chastisement and shall abide in Hell].

The reason is that they are all losers. What loss is worse that losing all one's capabilities and gaining the Divine Wrath? In comparing the dwellers of Paradise and Hell in these Verses we notice that one group attain to growth and development and the other loss all their capabilities and turn into losers.

The former are grateful to God and their parents but the latter are ungrateful and show their disrespect to their parents. The former shall abide in Paradise near to God and the latter are the dwellers of Hell to abide there among faithless people.

Each of them joins their lot. The former repent of their sins and faults and submit to the Will of God and the latter are rebels sunken in false pride. It is to be noted that the latter are obdurate in their deviation from the true path and rely on their predecessors and shall be raised up in Hell with their likes."

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 19

وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجَاتٌ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

19. And for all [viz. Jinn and mankind, the preceding and coming generations], there will be degrees according to that which they did, that He may recompense them in full for their deeds. And they will not be wronged.

Divine degrees and stations are consistent with human deeds. Resurrection shall be a reward for the faithful and a chastisement for evil doers

("He may recompense them in full for their deeds").

"And"

(wa) in

"and for all"

(wa li-kulli) refers to the last two Verses; the former concerns those who embrace the true faith and submit to the Divine Will following their maturity and development invoking God to grant success to them and their parents, repenting their evil deeds and turning to God Almighty and the latter concerns those who showed disrespect for their parents and denied the veracity of the Resurrection Day. Each of them shall be granted degrees of ascension consistent with their deeds.

Every act shall be recompensed in full and no one shall be wronged.

The Qur'an says:

فمن يعمل مثقال ذره خيرا يره و من يعمل مثقال ذره شرا يره

"So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it and whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it"[42].

In short, the Verse apparently refers to the fact that degrees are the results of deeds and since people are quite different in their deeds, their degrees are quite different. Each and every individual's degree is determined by his qualities and morals acquired by himself in his mundane life.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 20

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا
فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ

20. On the Day when those who disbelieve will be exposed to the Fire [it shall be said]: "You received your good things in the life of the world, and you took your pleasure therein [without saving anything for this day]. Now this Day you shall be recompensed with a torment of humiliation, because you were arrogant in the land without a right, and because you used to rebel against Allah's Command.

Diverse physical and mental torments shall be in store for evil doers on the Resurrection Day beginning posthumously with reproach, humiliation, losing one's capabilities and bounties, and regretting their loss.

Concerning the manner of dying, Imam 'Ali (as) in Nahj al-Balagha says:

"In his last minute, man thinks about what he has done in his lifetime (fi-ma afani 'umrahu)"[43].

The blessed Verse in question treats of the manner of torments of the Resurrection Day, when disbelievers are exposed to Hell fire. It will be said unto them that the bounties granted to you in your mundane life, e.g. outward ones like health, property and wealth, delicious food and inward ones such as intellect, intelligence, and bravery were spent inappropriately rather than employing them for the attainment of felicity, virtue, and perfection.

You spent them on the pleasures of the flesh and as a consequence of ingratitude for such blessings, disobedience against Divine Command you will pay for your ingratitude by suffering from a humiliating torment (jaza'an wifaqan). Since recompense is supposed to be consistent with deeds, false pride and vicious conduct shall be chastised by humiliating torment ('adhab al-hawn).

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 21

وَاذْكُرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

21. And remember [Hud] the brother of 'Ad, when he warned his people in Ahqaf. And surely, there have passed away warners before him and after him [saying]: Worship none but Allah; truly, I fear for you the torment of a mighty Day."

The proper noun Ahqaf is from hiqf ("flowing sand") is applied to a region covered by sand in the South of the Arabian Peninsula located between the Yemen, Oman, and Aden in which the people of 'Ad dwelt (cf. Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur'an).

Addressing His Messenger in this Verse, God says:

"Remember 'Ad's brother [namely Prophet Hud (as)]."

It is said that Hud (as) was 'Ad's brother by blood or from the latter's tribe. Hud (as) was asked to inspire awe in his Bedouin tribe and threaten them.

God Almighty appointed Hud (as) as His Messenger to encourage the people of 'Ad to worship the One God saying unto them:

"Do not worship any god other than the One God. I fear for you the torment of a mighty Day."

Notes

1. 40
2. 41
3. 42
4. 43
5. 44
6. 45
7. 46
8. 41:41
9. 63:8
10. 44:38-39; 40:2-3; 41:2-4; 42:3-5; 43:2-3, 6; 44:3
11. 55:3
12. 1:2
13. 2:143
14. 3:38
15. 27:62
16. 29:69
17. 38:2
18. 13:28
19. 13:28
20. 96:4
21. 14:7
22. 26:80
23. 26:82
24. 22:73

25. 46:5
26. 35:14
27. 17:56
28. 17:56
29. 2:102
30. 12:39
31. 6:25
32. 29:8; 31: 14; 46:15
33. 55:60
34. 4:40
35. 2:233
36. Mizan al-Hikma, vol. 10, pp. 7-9
37. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p.73
38. Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 16, p. 467
39. Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 16, p. 470
40. Kanz al-'Ummal, p. 16, p. 475
41. cf. Raghib's Mufradat
42. 99:7-8
43. Sermon 109

Surah al-Ahqaf, Verses 22 - 35

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 22-23

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِتَأْفِكَنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْماً تَجْهَلُونَ

22. They [the people of 'Ad to Prophet Hud] said: "Have you come to turn us away from our gods? Then bring us that with which you threaten us, if you are one the truthful!"

23. He said: "The knowledge [of the time of Resurrection] is with Allah only. And I convey to you that wherewith I have been sent, but I see that you are a people given to ignorance!"

At times polytheism and disbelief appear so true that monotheism and belief are considered to be deviation from the right path. Requesting the prophet to bring torment upon them rather than pondering on the True Word is a token of ignorance.

Such obdurate people stood against Divine Invitation and said unto Hud:

"Have you come to turn us away from our gods with your lies. Then bring us that with which you threaten us, if you are one of the truthful!"

The two sentences clearly demonstrate the deviation and obduracy of this disobedient people. According to the former, they say that Hud's call to Monotheism is false since it is against their common practice regarding their objects of worship passed down to them from their forefathers. In the latter, they request the prophet to bring torment upon them, a torment which will be totally irreversible.

In response to their unwise request, Hud says:

"The knowledge is with Allah only. He is the only One who knows when and under what circumstances the torment shall be brought forth whose occurrence shall be irrelevant to their request or his will and desire. The purpose is giving the ultimatum since Divine Wisdom requires the same. He further adds that it is his duty to convey to them that wherewith he has been sent.

It is his responsibility but they are to decide concerning obeying God and it rests upon His Will to bring torment upon them. However, he sees that they are a people given to ignorance. Their misfortune has its roots in their ignorance that together with obduracy and false pride impedes them from giving their ears to the Messengers of God and makes you persist in requesting God to send down His torment upon them and cause their annihilation. Had they been aware in the least, they would have thought about the realization of the threat."

The people were indifferent toward Hud's (as) words and Divine Promise and Threat but waxed their disobedience. According to Qur'an exegets, God Almighty sent down famine and three years passed without a single drop of rain so that they may take a lesson.

Prophet Hud (as) asked them to believe in Monotheism so that God may send down rain or else Divine torment would be brought upon them. At the end and out of dire necessity they sought refuge in Ka'ba which was merely

a pile of red sand at the time. A certain adherent of Hud (as) asked them to believe in Hud's prophethood in order to save themselves from the disaster, but they ignored him and put him in prison.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verses 24-25

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضاً مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُمْطِرُنَا بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا لا يُرَى إِلاّ مَسَاكِنُهُمْ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

24. When they saw it as a dense cloud coming toward their valleys, they said: "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Nay, but he [Hud] said that it is that [torment] which you were asking to be hastened - a wind wherein is a painful torment!

25. Destroying everything by the Command of its Lord! So they became such that nothing could be seen except their dwellings! Thus do We recompense the people who are sinners.

The word 'Aridh denotes a cloud appearing in the sky covering the horizon all over. Awdiya is the plural form of wadi ("valley; dwelling place"). Having faced severe famine and having awaited rain for long, the people of 'Ad were gladdened to see the cloud in the sky but later on they found out that the cloud was not a harbinger of felicity but one of misfortune. It was the torment sought desirously and hastily by them.

Seeing three clouds in the sky, the people of 'Ad thought that they would bring rain, but they were mistaken. Au contraire, they led to their annihilation. It was the same severe torment of which prophet Hud (as) had informed them and said that had they not believed in Monotheism and had they worshipped the One God, they would have not suffered from the severe torment.

However, they were too ignorant to believe him and said that if he had been in the right he would have brought that severe torment upon them. According to the exegets, the cloud contained a wind which blew so hard that they were desperate and their property and animals were scattered and they were annihilated as well.

As per a narration recorded in Manhaj and narrated on the authority of 'Amr ibn Maymun, the wind blew so hard that it took the tents and the camels with their litters to the sky like grasshoppers jumping up.

According to another narration, the first person to notice the torment was a woman who said:

"I see a wind blowing and blazing with flames."

Hud (as) took away the believers from among the disbelievers. The wind invigorated the believers and softened their bodies and they enjoyed its blow.

The fact is that all creatures are the Divine Host at His Command. They are the enemies of God's enemies and the friends of God's friends. If they do not turn away from God's enemies for a while we should know that God works in mysterious ways and the Creator has granted them respite so that the world may be refashioned.

It is said that when the people of ‘Ad were desperate with the harsh wind blowing, they sought refuge in their houses and closed the doors thinking that they could save themselves from God’s torment.

The wind blew harsher and pulled out the doors. It blew for seven days and nights and embraced them beneath the piles of sand in Ahqaf so that they were hidden beneath them and were annihilated:

“such that nothing could be seen except their dwellings!”

According to Verse 25, following the occurrence of the harsh disaster, no trace was seen of the people of ‘Ad but their houses and dwelling places. It becomes evident that when the wind subsided, their dead bodies had also disappeared, since it is said that the wind hurled them toward the mounts so that their bodies were destroyed.

Thus is the chastisement decreed for the sinners. If God wills, they have to meet the recompense of their vices so that others may take a lesson.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 26

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعاً وَأَبْصَاراً وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

26. And verily We had firmly established them with that wherewith We have not established you! And We had assigned them hearing, seeing, and hearts; but their hearing, seeing, and their hearts availed them nothing since they used to deny the Signs of Allah, and they were [finally] completely encircled by that which they used to mock at!

To have access to facilities necessitates making efforts, but they all belong to God:

(“And verily We had firmly established them”).

In ad hoc indicates negation and is addressed to Meccans signifying:

“O people of Quraysh! The people of ‘Ad were better than you in terms of property, wealth, power, high stature, and perseverance.”

It is said that they were so powerful that they would built houses out of mountain rocks. God had provided them with such wealth and power that they were superior to Quraysh in this respect. In ad hoc may be taken as a particle referring to the fact that the people of ‘Ad, despite their strength, power, high stature, and lofty and fortified dwellings were unable to stay unharmed from the harsh wind blowing as a result of Divine Wrath.

How could you who are weaker than them save yourselves from God’s torment?

In spite of having been granted hearing, seeing, and perceiving hearts, i.e., having provided them with all the requirements of mankind in terms of bodily strength and intellectual power, they failed to enjoy Divine Bounties, felicity, and spiritual merits. They made use of them to satisfy their bestial needs, denied Divine Signs, and derided the Messenger of God. As a consequence of their vices, they suffered from the torment and paid for their mockery.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 27

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِنَ الْقُرَى وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

27. And verily We have destroyed towns round about you and We have shown [them] the Signs in various ways that they might return [from error to the Truth].

Annihilation and Divine Wrath follow the ultimatum given by prophets. Studying the history of peoples closer to us in terms of time may bear further results. The blessed Verse in question refers to the preceding one saying that in the same manner that the people of ‘Ad were annihilated as a consequence of their opposition against their prophet, he inhabitants of the villages around you, namely within the vicinity of Mecca were also destroyed.

Consider the peoples of Hud (as) in the Yemen, Salih (as) in Hijr, and Thamud in Sodom, and Lot on your way to Sham [viz. Syria, Palestine, East Jordan, Lebanon, and the northwestern parts of the Fertile Crescent] and take a lesson. God recurrently showed His Signs and the Tokens of His Omnipotence unto them so that they may turn away from disbelief to Monotheism. Failing to do so, they were afflicted with the torment as a consequence of their vicious deeds.

The Verse refers to the fact that God repeatedly shows His Signs in the forms of miracles, threats, rewards of Paradise, Heavenly Bounties, Tokens of His Omnipotence, poverty, and hardships so that man may forego his obduracy. God gives an Ultimatum to man to not deny the Divine Message, harming prophets and the faithful. Failing to take a lesson, man will be afflicted with torment so that others may take a lesson.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 28

فَلَوْلا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَاناً آلِهَةً بَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ وَذَلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

28. Then why did those whom they had taken for gods besides Allah, as a way of approach [to Allah] not help them? Nay, but they vanished completely from them [when there came the torment]. And that was [the end of] their deviation and what they were seeking.

Inclination toward proximity to God is innate; even idolaters regard idols as a means of nearness to God:

(“as a way of approach”).

We may rely on someone as a means of succor in hardships, but it would be wishful thinking to regard idols as means of support:

(“Nay, but they vanished completely from them”).

The Verse in question rejects the claims of those entangled in torment owing to their polytheism and disbelief.

They worshipped the statues of gods fashioned by them and said:

“we do not worship them except for rendering us nearer to God.”

Upon sending down the torment they were abandoned.

At that time:

“they vanished completely from them when there came the torment.”

They were unable to find their objects of worship owing to slandering the One God and associating false gods with Him. The Verse refers to the fact

that had they enjoyed any rank or merit with, they should have been able to save their worshippers from torment rather than being annihilated in it.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 29

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَراً مِنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ

29. And when We sent toward you a group of the jinn, listening to the Qur'an. When they stood in the presence thereof, they said: "Listen in silence!" And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners.

Familiarity with the Qur'an broadens man's horizon. According to the Qur'an, man is not the only perceiving and willful being, but other beings called jinn enjoy the same conditions but excel man in power. The Verse may allude to polytheists and those in error who regard themselves as masterminds. It denotes that you listened to so many Verses but failed to believe; however, the jinn listened to a few Verses and believed in the Islamic faith and promulgated its teachings.

The Noble Prophet (S) is thus addressed herein:

"Remember when We sent toward you a group of the jinn, listening to the Qur'an."

It is said that some of the jinn were Divinely inspired to leave their dwellings and lands and make their presence there to listen to the Qur'an. It is also said that when devils noticed that the way to the sky is blocked for them and whenever they wish to ascend the sky they were warded off by meteors.

They said that a great event has occurred on the earth as a consequence of which the path to the sky has been blocked for them. They embarked upon a thorough search. Traversing on the earth they came upon idols and met with the Messenger of God (S) in Wadi Nakhla. Listening to the Qur'an they learned that the same impeded them from ascending the sky.

Narrating on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, a number of exegets regard nafaran as denoting a number of the jinn ranging between seven, nine, and ten. Upon hearing the Holy Qur'an they asked each other to stand silent and listen to the Verses being recited. Upon returning to their folk they warned them.

It is reported that following listening to the Qur'an, the jinn believed in the Islamic faith and inquired about a number of issues and the Prophet (S) appointed a number of the jinn to promulgate the Islamic teachings among their folk.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 30

قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَاباً أُنْزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

30. They said: "O our people! Verily, we have heard [the Verses of] a Book sent down after Musa, confirming what preceded it: it guides to the Truth and to the Straight Path."

The prophets of mankind are the prophets of the jinn as well and a group of the jinn were appointed to promulgate prophetic teachings among their own society:

("They said: 'O our people! Verily, we have heard …'").

The jinn knew the history of prophets and the Divine Books.

Upon hearing a number of Verses the jinn comprehended the truth; however, people like Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab spent a life time with the Prophet (S); however they did not wish to perceive the truth:

("It guides to the truth").

According to the blessed Verse in question, upon returning to their people, the jinn said:

"We have heard [the Verses] of a Book sent down after Musa."

It is said that the jinn made no mention of the Christian Bible since they were either Jews or unaware of the Christian Bible or did not believe in it. Upon their return, they addressed their people saying that they had heard a Book confirming the preceding Scriptures including the prophets' truthfulness and guiding to the truth and the straight path."

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 31

يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

31. O our people! Respond to Allah's Caller [namely the Messenger of God, Muhammad (S)] and believe in him. He [Allah] will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment.

As per the Holy Qur'an, faith, repentance, interest free loan, and fearing God lead to Divine Forgiving.

The blessed Verse enumerates the principles of Islamic dogma, i.e., Divine Oneness:

("believe in him"),

Prophethood:

("Allah's Caller"),

and Resurrection:

("He will save you from a painful torment").

Divinely appointed prophets call people to God rather than to themselves. Faith absolves man of a number of sins like polytheism and disbelief, but sins like transgression of the rights of people is different. The Verse holds that certain sins may be forgiven. The other point is that the jinn, like mankind, have obligations and their disobedience shall lead to being regarded as sinners and subject to Divine Recompense.

According to the blessed Verse, the jinn addressed their people to guide them to the true path saying:

"O our people! Respond to Allah's Caller [namely the Messenger of God, Muhammad (S)] and believe in him. He [Allah] will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment."

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 32

وَمَنْ لا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلالٍ مُبِينٍ

32. And whosoever does not respond to Allah's Caller, he cannot escape on earth, and there will be no supporter for him besides Allah [from Allah's punishment]. Those are in manifest error.

Any path besides that of God is manifest error. Disbelief entangles man such that he may neither release himself nor may anyone release him. According to the blessed Verse, whosoever does not respond to Allah's Caller, i.e., Prophet Muhammad (S), out of disobedience and turning away from God's Callers, torment shall befall him and he shall have no support to release him from the affliction, since all beings are God's friends and the enemies of His enemies.

Such astray ones tread the path of manifest error.

In the same vein, Qur'anic exegets say that following the demise of his support, Abu Talib, the Noble Prophet (S) was harassed by the Quraysh and know that his call could not affect the disbelievers from Quraysh whose hearts had been hardened in time. Consequently, the Noble Prophet (S) found himself in jeopardy.

Even though he entertained no fear, but in order to accomplish his mission he left Mecca for Ta'if, located at the verdant foot of a hill at a distance of a three day journey from Mecca. Ta'if and Thaqif, his maternal uncles, resided there and the Prophet (S) thought that they may render him support there.

He entered into negotiation with three chiefs of Thaqif, 'Abdiyaliyl ibn 'Amr and his two sons Mas'ud and Habib and called them to his support; however they not only declined his call but also derided him and instigated some rascals against him.

The people of Thaqif were of substance and had transactions with Quraysh. Their town was the seat of Lat, one of the most respected Qurayshi idols. They even failed to send their guest away unharmed. When the Noble Prophet (S) learned that they did not accept his call, he requested them to disregard the call so as not to instigate the Qurayshis.

Au contraire, they instigated rascals to stone him such that he suffered a wound in his foot and was sent away. On his way, the Prophet (S) stayed in a garden called Nakhila for a few days.

Released from the hands of the rascals from Ta'if, his heart broke and finding himself without support from men, he turned to his Lord with tears in his eyes saying:

"O Lord! I complain to You from powerlessness, insufficient means, and humility in the eyes of people, O Most Forgiving Lord!"

When the sons of Rabi'a noticed his sadness, their sense of family ties made them to ask 'Addas, a Christian slave, to take a dish of grapes to him. Fining the dish before him, he said "In the Name of Allah" and began eating the grapes.

Shockingly 'Addas asked him:

"The inhabitants of this town never utter such words. Where are you?"

He replied:

"From Mecca. Where are you from? What is your religion?"

The slave answered:

"I am a Christian from Nineveh."

The Prophet (S) inquired:

"Are you from the village of the pious man Yunus ibn Matta (as)?"

'Addas asked:

"What do you know about Yunus?"

Muhammad (S) replied:

"Yunus (as) the prophet was my brother and I am a prophet too."

Upon hearing him, 'Addas fell to his knees and kissed the Prophet's (S) hands and feet. The sons of Rabi'a saw them surprisingly from afar; however they did not convert to the Islamic faith. Upon their slave's return they warned him against the Prophet asking him to be cautious lest he might lose his faith though his was better than the one proclaimed by Muhammad.

'Addas informed them that he had heard something from Muhammad (S) that no one save a prophet would be apprised of it.

They said to him:

"the man is a sorcerer and a charlatan."

When Prophet Muhammad (S) learned that the people of Ta'if would not believe in the Islamic faith, he departed for Mecca and upon arriving at Nakhla at night he established his late night prayers and recited the Qur'an when the jinn heard him and believed in the Islamic faith:

("And when We sent to you a group of the jinn listening to the Qur'an…").

The Verse in question as well as those of Chapter 72 (Surah al-Jinn) and some other Verses evidently indicate two points - one is that the jinn exist and they are different from mankind and the other is that the Seal of the Prophets (S) was Divinely appointed to proclaim his Call to the jinn and mankind alike.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 33

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْيَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى
بَلَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

33. Do they not see that Allah Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation is Able to give life to the dead? Yes, He surely is Most Able to do all things.

Lam ya'a is from 'ayy ("powerlessness"). In order to conceive the inevitability of Resurrection, it would suffice to notice the Infinite Divine Omnipotence.

Do disbelievers in Resurrection think that raising the dead is more difficult than creation of the heavens and the earth?

("Do they not see that Allah Who created the heavens and the earth … is Able to give life to the dead?")

The blessed Verse rejects disbelievers' incredulity of Resurrection and proves the raising of the dead on the Last Day.

In response to their disbelief the Verse says:

"Do they not see?"

Do disbelievers not perceive that God created the heavens and the earth without any toil? The Creator is so Omnipotent that He has created such heavens with such grandeur abounding in planets, stars, galaxies, and

creatures whose number is solely known by Him. He has also created the earth together with mountains, oceans, and diverse species of creatures through His Divine Will.

The Qur'an says:

"When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: 'Be!' - and it is"[1]**.**

"Be!"

in the aforementioned Verse indicates the immediate response of possibilities that through Divine Creative Command come into being ex nihilo which bears testimony to Divine Omnipotence including the raising of the dead unintelligible to disbelievers' imperfect intellect attempting in vain to deny and/or restrict Divine Omnipotence and interpret the Verses without the scope of physical phenomena through their comprehension and taste.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 34

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَى وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

34. And on the Day when those who disbelieve will be exposed to the Fire [God will say to them]: "Is this [Hell] not the truth?" They will say: "Yes by our Lord!" He will say: "Then taste the torment, because you used to disbelieve!"

Physical and mental torments are side by side on the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, confessing Divine Sovereignty shall be of no avail. In this Verse God Almighty informs His Noble Prophet (S) that when disbelievers are exposed to Hell fire on the Last Day, it will be said unto them that they did not believe the prophets' warnings.

They will say:

"Aye, by God what they said unto us were totally right but we failed to believe their promises and warnings."

The angels in charge of tormenting disbelievers in Hell will say unto them

"You declined the prophets' Calls and felt animosity toward them. Now you taste a severe torment as a recompense for your vicious deeds."

"Because you used to disbelieve!"

may refer to the fact that Hell fire blazes through wickedness, denial of Truth, and animosity toward Divinely appointed prophets and messengers.

At that time, man reproaches his own self saying:

"The prophets uttered the Truth, but you denied it."

Upon tasting the torment they admit to their ignorance, but their belief will be of no avail and they have to suffer the consequences of their disbelief.

Surah al-Ahqaf - Verse 35

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلاّ سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ بَلاغٌ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلاّ الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

35. Therefore be patient [O Prophet!] as did the arch-prophets [lit. possessor of constancy, determination, and strong will, applied to Noah,

Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad]. On the Day when they will see that [torment] with which they are promised as if they had not stayed more than an hour in a single day. [This is] a clear Message [for all]. But shall any be destroyed except the people who are evil doers?

'Azm is used in the senses of will, decision, determination, and Divine Law (shari'a) Uulu al-'azm is applied to the legislating prophets.

Taking disbelievers' chastisement into consideration paves the way for believers' patience and perseverance. Addressing His Messenger (S), God asks him to be patient with disbelievers and their false claims as to deeming you words as legends in the same manner as the arch-prophets were patient with disbelievers and their cruelty.

He also asks him to not make haste in having them chastised for their vicious deeds since mundane life is so transient that when disbelievers taste Divine Torment they think that they stayed in this world but for a single hour. Compared to the life to come, this worldly life seems to resemble a single moment. In retrospect, this mundane life may be likened to a dream. Fanciful pleasures of the flesh preoccupying man leave him with nothing but misfortune, cruelty, and darkness of heart.

"Illa al-sa'a"

("except an hour")

may indicate the changeable moment referred to the time that is constantly in the process of generation and corruption lacking stable existence.

The world to come is the stable and unchangeable world of life, i.e., eternal life, referred to in the Holy Qur'an as:

"Verily, the home of the Hereafter - that is the life indeed [i.e., the eternal life that will never end], if they but knew"[2].

In Manhaj al-Sadiqin it is narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) that the arch-prophets were five in number who abrogated their preceding Laws. They are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (as), and Muhammad (S) who are also referred to as Sarat al-Nabiyin. Thus is narrated on the authorities of Ibn 'Abbas and Qatada. Other narrations have been narrated by exegets but space limitations impede their citation.

In short, ulu al-'azm in its literal sense of "having a strong will" may be applied to all the prophets since they possessed strong will, clemency, and perseverance in the fulfillment of their Divine Mission. Their words were against the beliefs and practices of their time, as a consequence of which they suffered many an affliction and were patient with disbelievers for the fulfillment of Divine Command.

The Verse in question may serve as an encouragement for the Noble Prophet (S) to be patient in the same manner as all the prophets were patient with disbelievers and their vicious deeds.

Notes

1. 2:117
2. 29:64

Surah Muhammad, Chapter 47, Verses 1 - 21

(Muhammad/The Fighting)

Section (juz'): 26

Number of Verses: 38

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter has thirty eight Verses and is revealed at Mecca. The title of the Chapter derives from the second Verse in which mention is made of the name of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S). The dominant theme of the Chapter is jihad against the enemies of Islam hence Its designation "The Chapter of Battle" (Surah al-Qital).

The main subject matter concerns believers and disbelievers, comparing the twain in this world and the world to come, and the hypocrites' sabotage in Medina. Mention is also made of issues regarding the captivity and freedom of the prisoners of war, call to spend money in Allah's Cause, and forbidding obsequiousness and complacency in dealing with the enemy.

It is narrated that whoever wishes to perceive the circumstances of the Prophet's (S) Household (as) and their enemies is supposed to recite the Chapter in question.[1] It is also reported that the Noble Prophet (S) would recite the Chapter in his evening prayers.[2]

The Merits of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition

"One who recites Sura Muhammad, God will provide him with the streams of Paradise."[3]

Surah Muhammad - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

1. Those who disbelieve and hinder [men] from the Path of Allah, He will render their deeds vain.

From among the one hundred and fourteen Chapters of the Holy Qur'an, mention is made of reproaching and threatening the enemies in eleven Chapters. The verse in question is one of such instances.

The Noble Verse reads:

"Those who disbelieve and hinder men from the Path of Allah, God will render their deeds vain."

The verse alludes to the Meccan polytheists and leaders of disbelief serving as war mongers waging wars against the Islamic faith. They were not only disbelievers but also employed diverse stratagems to hinder people from the Path of Allah.

Some exegets, e.g. Zamakhshari in his Kashshaf, considering the meaning of the following Verse which concerns faith, have interpreted sadd ad hoc in the sense of:

"turning away" (i'radh)

from faith; however, taking the Qur'anic usage of the word into consideration, the dominant sense of the word is "hindering and impeding."

"Render their deeds vain"

is used in the sense that "He" will make their plans ineffective and fruitless, since reducing something serves as a metaphor for being abandoned which necessitates perdition.

At any rate, some exegets take the sentence as an allusion to those who provided people with the meat of the camels slaughtered at the battle of Badr. Abu Jahl, Safwan, and Sahl ibn 'Amr each slaughtered ten camels as a token of thanksgiving.[4] Such acts were of no avail with polytheism and satanic stratagems hence their being rendered totally vain.

It is not apparently restricted to the sense in question rather all their seemingly good deeds, e.g. providing aid to the needy and hospitality, will be rendered vain owing to their faithlessness. Furthermore, God Almighty will render all their acts performed for the obliteration of Islam and defeating Muslims and also impedes them from attaining to their goals.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 2

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ

2. But those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and believe in that which is sent down to Muhammad - for it is the truth from their Lord - He will absolve them of their vices and will make good their state.

Having faith is insufficient for availing oneself of Divine Favors rather one has to do good righteous deeds and follow the Messenger of God:

("those who believe and do righteous good deeds and believe in that which is sent down to Muhammad").

Regarding the Noble Verse in question exegets maintain that:

"But those who believe"

alludes to the Medinan Helpers (ansar) and "that which" (ma):

"in that which is sent down" (bi-ma nuzzila)

refers to the Qur'an; in other words the contextual meaning of the clause in question is "those who believed in the Qur'an sent down to Muhammad (S) by God and held that It is true, unchangeable, and standing firm on Its basis to the Last Day and It is not exposed to alterations like other Divine Books, e.g. the Torah, the Christian Bible, which have been abrogated by the Holy Qur'an.

Those believing in the Qur'an and the prophethood of the Messenger of God, the Seal of the Prophets (S) and did righteous good deeds as per the Divine Decrees and Laws of the Islamic faith, God:

"will make good their state" (aslaha balahum),

namely their state will improve out of having faith in Islam, since their conversion to the Islamic faith and having faith in it will alter their inward states and refine their heart out of moral and inward vices and corruption.

"Will make good their state"

concerns believers and contrasts with:

"Will render their deeds vain"

which falls to the share of disbelievers. In other words, in as much as believers proceed on the path of improvement of their inward and outward states through their faith, disbelievers will remain in error out of their disbelief. It may also indicate that as disbelief will render good deeds vain, faith, au contraire, will lead to purity and refinement of heart.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 3

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِن رَبِّهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ

3. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, while those who believe follow the truth [sent down] by their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth for mankind their parables [for their awakening].

One of the Qur'anic didactic techniques attested in a number of Verses is to draw a distinction between the fates of believers and disbelievers. In the Verse in question, belief and disbelief are distinguished as per truth and falsehood which reveals the Qur'anic logic in Its encounter with foes.

"That"

(dhalika) in the blessed Verse is a demonstrative pronoun whose antecedent are the disbelievers and it signifies the vanity of their deeds.

Since they followed their vain desires and proceeded on the path of falsehood, their deeds reflect their inner self, even though seemingly good, their deeds would be rendered vain since their motives rested in the pleasures of the flesh rather than obtaining Divine Satisfaction and were done out of disobedience to God and following their concupiscence and Satan.

Whoever does such deeds, his deeds will be rendered vain and devoid of truth since truth is restricted to God and the followers of falsehood remain in error.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"That is because Allah - He is the Truth and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood"[5].

Thus God strikes a parable saying that good and righteous deeds depend on believing in Divine Unity and the prophethood of His Messenger. When the heart rests truly on the firm ground of faith, deeds stemming from it will be of effect and constancy since man's truth lies in his heart which accommodates faith and serves as the reservoir of piety. In case it is corrupted through disbelief, all deeds will be rendered vain and ineffective.

Thus it becomes evident that the recompense of one's deeds depends on the firmness or frailty of faith. The firmer one's faith and certitude become the effects and the rewards of one's deeds will be higher and the same will purify the heart from vices.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 4

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَثْخَنْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَثَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنّاً بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لانْتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

4. Therefore, when you meet those who disbelieve [in battlefield], smite [their] necks [when they fall into captivity] till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly [lest they flee] either for generosity or ransom until the war lays down its burden. Thus [is God's Command] But if it had been Allah's Will [to send down lightning, earthquake, and other disasters], He Himself could certainly have punished them. But [He let you fight] in order to test some of you with others. But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.

Athkhantumuhum derives from th-kh-n "totally vanquish the enemy." Withaq is used in the sense of "a bond used to tie someone or something, e.g. a rope."

As mentioned above, the preceding Verses serve as a prelude to prepare Muslims for receiving a significant order concerning war.

It reads:

"Upon confrontation with disbelievers on the battlefield attack them with full force and smite their necks!"

"Smiting their heads" is evidently employed in the sense of "smiting them." It is needless to say that warriors are not supposed to embark upon doing the same but it would suffice to slay them. However, "smiting their necks" evidently indicates taking their life and that it what on which emphasis is laid.

At any rate, the Command ad hoc concerns engaging in war on the battlefield, since laqaytum derives from l-q-y which in such instances indicates "war." Other pieces of evidence are to be found in the Verse in question denoting the same idea, e.g. captivity of prisoners of war, the word harb ("war"), and martyrdom for Allah's cause.

In short, the word liqa at times denotes "meeting, encounter" and at times it indicates "confronting on the battlefield." Both senses are attested in the Qur'an and the word in the Verse in question is used in the latter sense.

Thus it becomes evident that those aspiring to spread anti-Islamic propaganda claim that according to the Islamic doctrine, Muslims may behead disbelievers upon confrontation with them; however, the claim springs from ill will and ulterior motives otherwise the Verse per se clearly demonstrates confrontation with the enemy on the battlefield.

It is needless to say that upon confrontation with the bloodthirsty enemy on the battlefield, one has to attack severely and strike fatal blows on the enemy or else he will perish. The instruction fully stands to logic.

It further says that such fatal attacks are supposed to be pursued such that the enemy falls down in which case defeated warriors are to be taken as captives and they are supposed to be bound firmly:

("till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly [lest they flee]").

The word athkhantumuhum derives from th-kh-n denotes harshness and firmness hence indicating triumph and conquest and total subjugation of the enemy.

The majority of exegets take the sentence in the sense of the immense number and severity of slaying the enemy, the issue of slaughtering the enemy rather than the original sense remains untouched.[6]

At any rate, the verse indicates a measured military command to the effect that defeated warriors are not supposed to be taken as captives prior to the enemy's total defeat since embarking upon the same may jeopardize the position of Muslims engaged in war through their preoccupation with the issue which may hinder them from their main tasks.

The expression:

"then bind a bond firmly [lest they flee]" ("fa-shuddu al-withaq")

with due consideration to the meaning of the word withaq ("rope") is a reference to making doubly sure that the captives are bound firmly lest they liberate themselves and strike fatal blows.

The next sentence indicates the instruction concerning those taken captive at war as per which following the war they may either be granted freedom non gratia or they may be ransomed or exchanged with odd numbers:

("either for generosity or ransom").

Therefore, prisoners of war may not be slain following the end of the war but the leader of Muslims exercises his discretion to either ransom or exchange them for odd numbers or set them free non gratia. It is actually a kind of compensation to be borne by the enemy. The issue is discussed in sources on Islamic law.

The Verse further adds that the status quo is supposed to be still effective in which fatal blows are to be struck upon the enemy and a number of them are supposed to be taken captive:

"until the war lays down its burden."

One may desist from inflicting further blows when the enemy is totally defeated and the flame of war is extinguished. Awzar is the plural form of wizr denoting "heavy burden" and at times connoting "sins" since the burden of the latter is borne by one who commits it.

It is interesting to note that the heavy burdens referred to in the Verse are attributed to the war:

"until the war lays down its burden."

The heavy burdens refer to diverse kinds of weaponry as well as the responsibilities shouldered by warriors. It is solely at the end of the war that they desist from shouldering them.

The Verse further adds that you are supposed to act upon the same instructions:

"but if it had been Allah's Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them"

through lightning, earthquake, storm, and other disasters. Nonetheless, there would be no ground for trials.

"But [He let you fight] in order to test some of you with others."

It is actually the grounds lying behind engaging in war and the main point of the opposition between the Truth and falsehood. It is through such wars that the lines of true believers who act are separated from those who merely talk.

Faculties and abilities flourish, perseverance and resistance are invigorated, and the main goal of the mundane life which is strengthening the power of faith and other human values are attained. Had believers stepped aside preoccupied with everyday life and had God intervened miraculously to defeat the polytheists' and oppressors' rebellions, a worthless, stagnant, and frail society would have come into being and the Islamic faith would have been merely a name.

To sum up, one could say that to establish His Religion, God is needless of our struggles. The point is that we need the sacred war on the battlefield to improve our abilities.

The same idea is variously expressed in the Qur'an, for instance,

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought in His Cause and also tests those who are the patient?"[7].

The preceding Verse reads:

"And that Allah may [through such battles] purify the believers from sins and destroy the disbelievers."

The last sentence of the Verse in question treats of the martyrs fell in such battles whom the Muslim community owes a great deal;

"But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost."

Their troubles and pains will not be in vain but they will be all kept in Divine Records.

Their sacrifices will be evident in this world since hearing:

"There is no god but Allah"

reminds Muslims that thanks to their sacrifices the chains of bondage are broken and Muslims owe their good name to them.

Surah Muhammad - Verses 5-6

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَّفَهَا لَهُمْ

5. He will guide them and set right their state.

6. And will soon admit them to [high stations in] Paradise which He has made known to them.

Divine Guidance is permanent even after death and martyrdom. Martyrdom for God's Cause leads to all sins and faults to be forgiven and states to be set aright. The Verses in question add three further bounties.

Firstly,

"He will guide them"

which indicates Guidance toward high stations, great deliverance, and Paradise as Divine Reward.

Secondly,

"He will set right their state,"

i.e., He bestows peace of mind and spirituality upon them, sets them in harmony with Divine angels, and invites them to His Feast through His Mercy.

The last bounty is that He

"will soon admit them to [high stations in] Paradise which He has made known to them."

Some exegets maintain that God not only expresses the qualities of the Garden of Paradise but also specifies the attributes and signs of their palaces in Paradise such that upon being admitted to Paradise, they immediately depart for their palaces.[8]

Some exegets take 'arafaha from 'arf ("fragrance, perfume") saying that God admits to Paradise throughout which the guests may enjoy the sweet smell.

Some also hold that taking into consideration the Verse:

"Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision"[9],

it becomes evident that:

"set right their state"

is on a par with everlasting life through which martyrs are prepared to stand in the presence of Allah with the veils and coverings removed.[10]

It would be appropriate to make mention of a number of traditions concerning martyrs.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"There is a better deed above another ending in martyrdom in the Way of Allah, above which no better deed is imaginable."[11]

According to a tradition narrated on the authority of Imam Baqir(as):

"There is no single drop dearer to God except for the drop of the blood shed in His Way or the drop of tears shed at night for His awe. There is no step dearer to God but the one taken for helping blood relatives or the one taken to participate in the holy war for God's Cause."[12]

The discussion may be concluded with a tradition narrated on the authority of Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (as).

Quoting his forefathers from the Messenger of God (S) he says:

"The first one to enter Paradise is the martyr."

Surah Muhammad - Verse 7

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ

7. O you who believe! If you help Allah, He will help you, and make your foothold firm.

Whoever bears aid to the Islamic faith through his thought, speech, and deeds, God will also bear him assistance.

Man is a very limited creature and the assistance borne to the Religion of God is very restricted, but God is infinite and His Help springs from His Infinite Power. Addressing believers, the noble Verse says that if they help Allah, He will help them, and their foothold will be firm in the way of Truth. Helping God is on a par with helping His Religion and Messenger (S).

Whoever helps God's Religion, i.e., the Islamic faith revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) by any means possible to him through his life, property, pen, with attempts at helping to establish Islam, hinder corruption in religion, and bear assistance to believers through any possible means has helped God and strengthened His Religion and in return, God will strengthen his will to carry out his mundane and otherworldly tasks conveniently.

"And make your foothold firm"

demonstrates that He will make the helpers of God's Religion to persevere such that they may not deviate from the True Path by satanic temptations.

It is narrated from Qatada that

"It is incumbent upon God to bear aid to one helping His Religion since He says:

'If you help Him, He will help you.'

It is also incumbent upon Him to increase His bounties to those who thank Him since He says:

'If you be grateful, I will increase [your bounties].'

He will remember him who remembers Him since He says:

"If you remember Me, I will remember you."

It is also incumbent upon God to keep His Promise to those who keep their promise since He says:

'Keep My Promise and I will keep yours.'"

Surah Muhammad - Verses 8-9

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعْساً لَهُمْ وَأَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

8. But those who disbelieve, for them is destruction, and [Allah] will make their deeds vain.

9. That [destruction] is because they dislike thatwhich Allah has sent down; so He has made theirdeeds fruitless.

The word ta's indicates "slip, stumble, fall into the river." Comparison is one of the best methods of education.

Concerning martyred believers a preceding Verse reads:

"He will never let their deeds be lost."

Regarding disbelievers the Verse in question reads:

"[He] will make their deeds vain."

The contrast is a good tiding to the believers struggling in Allah's Cause.

Addressing believers, the Qur'an says:

"[He will] make your foothold firm."

Concerning disbelievers, the penultimate Verse says:

"For them is destruction,"

which originally denotes that they will stumble over the precipice.

According to the last two Verses, those who disbelieved were humiliated and destroyed. God made them stumble on the battlefield thus rendering their attempts vain. They disliked the Qur'an revealed to His Prophet (S) as

a consequence of which they were defeated and humiliated and their deeds were rendered fruitless.

According to Manhaj, it is narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that the Verse in question indicates that disbelievers disliked ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib’s merits, as a consequence of which they deviated from the Right Path and their deeds were rendered vain, since doing righteous good deeds are based on belief in Divine Unity, sincerity in worshipping God, belief in Divine Guidance, and loving the Prophet (S) and his pure offspring (as).

It is worthy of note that:

“What God sent down”

is employed to denote different things one of which is the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib’s (as) Imamate.[13]

Surah Muhammad - Verse 10

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَالُهَا

10. Have they not traveled through the earth and seen what was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed them completely, and a similar [fate is in store for] disbelievers.

Dammara derives from the root d-m-r denotes “destroy, annihilate, demolish.” Collocated with the preposition ‘ala, it indicates emphasis.

Addressing the negligent astray in ignorance, the blessed Verse asks:

“Why do they not travel on the earth to see the traces of the peoples of the past and see that they were destroyed by Us owing to their denial of the prophet and harassing them. They should know that their destruction was due to their disbelief and disobedience. We destroyed the peoples of the past and such fate awaits these disbelievers.”

Surah Muhammad - Verse 11

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

11. That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no protector.

The disbelievers who did not apparently enjoy any support in this world relied solely on God and He will be their Protector on the Last Day. Having faith leads to being granted Divine support and disbelief and finally it leads to losing it. The polytheists’ and disbelievers’ support will be ineffective on the Last Day.

The antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun

“that”

(dhalika) in the blessed Verse in question is the preceding Verse. The believers’ dignity, honor, and triumph is due to the fact that they helped God’s Religion, as a consequence of which they enjoyed Divine Protection.

The token of God’s Friendship toward His servant is that the latter is obedient to his conscience. His heart is the home of love and friendship toward God and it is through his faith, piety, and helping God’s Religion that such great bounty has fallen to his share.

“And the disbelievers have no protector”

since it is through their disbelief that disbelievers have failed to receive Divine bounties as a result of which they have not protector. Thus, all creatures turn into his obedient host. They all become his helpers and friends and at Divine Command render him aid whenever necessary and set right his state.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 12

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ

12. Certainly Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous good deeds to Gardens [of Paradise] under which [i.e., trees] rivers flow while those who disbelieve enjoy themselves [in worldly life] and eat as cattle eat and [finally] the Fire will be their abode.

Admitting believers to Paradise is a token of Divine Guardianship. Believers doing righteous good deeds are under Divine Protection and He makes them enter Paradise. Deriving pleasures in life is permitted within the limits of Divine Laws. What lie beyond such limits are beastly pleasures.

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty promises believers and those who have done righteous good deeds that Gardens of Paradise will fall into their share beneath whose trees the rivers of Divine Mercy are incessantly flowing. The people of Paradise shall abide in them forever. The bounties of Paradise will be granted through his Grace and Beneficence. His Mercy will be permanent since He is of Permanent Bounties and He is of Abundant Beneficence.

He warns disbelievers that believers will abide in the bountiful Paradise whereas those who disbelieve in Divine Unity and the Last Day but are solely preoccupied with pleasures of the flesh and eat as cattle eat and the abode of such people will be Hellfire.

It is said elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that the recompense of deeds should be consistent with the deeds committed (jaza'an wifaqan). Believers help the Religion of God and His Messenger (S) as a consequence of which God helps and befriends them and they will enjoy His Grace and Mercy in this world and the world to come; whereas disbelievers turned away from Truth and followed their mundane and false desires.

They were preoccupied themselves with the mundane pleasures and did not take one single step toward Truth and spirituality hence their abode is the Fire.

"Allah is not unjust to His servants"[14].

Surah Muhammad - Verse 13

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَتْكَ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ

12. And many a [people of a] town, stronger than [the people of] your town which has driven you out We have destroyed. And there was no helper for them.

The Prophet of Islam's (S) migration was based on his own will, but Meccan disbelievers drove him into dire circumstances which led him to emigrate from Mecca.

That is why God says that the people of Mecca were responsible for his emigration:

("has driven you out").

In this blessed Verse God warns disbelievers that many an inhabitant of towns were stronger than Meccans in terms of power but Meccan and Qurayshi disbelievers drove the Prophet (S) out of his hometown. God rendered them hopeless such as the ancient peoples like 'Ad and Thamud who were strong and powerful and their physical prowess failed to save them from torment since, as mentioned in the above Verse, God is the Friend and Protector of believers.

He will not help disbelievers against torments and afflictions.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 14

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

14. Is he who is on a clear proof from his Lord, like those for whom their evil deeds that they do are beautified for them while they follow their own lusts?

The prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S) is accompanied with clear proofs. He is Divinely appointed to proclaim the Divine Message. He has nothing of his own to profess and he lays emphasis on the same. Certainly believers rely on proofs whereas disbelievers rely on their vain desires.

The noble Verse draws a distinction between the people of Truth and those of falsehood. He produces clear proofs as to his Divine prophethood. The Holy Qur'an is both the Noble Messenger's (S) miracle and the Book of Law. It is a clear proof demonstrating his Truth since Divine Word is inimitable in terms of eloquence and inclusion of secrets such that Arab eloquent orators and scholars worldwide failed to produce one single verse like It.

Is such individual on a par with one devoid of spiritual perfection? Are not their vices beautified for them through satanic embellishment? Are they not followers of their concupiscence? The wise know that these two individuals are not alike.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 15

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيماً فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

15. The description of Paradise which the pious have been promised [is that] in it are rivers of water the taste and smell of which are not changed, rivers of milk of which the taste never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of clarified honey therein for them is every kind of fruit and forgiveness from their Lord. [Are these] like those who shall dwell forever in the Fire and be given to drink boiling water so that it cuts up their bowels.

Those who keep away from the transient pleasures of the flesh through piety will attain to permanent felicity;

("the pious have been promised").

Imam Husayn (as) says

"Divine Forgiveness falling to the share of the people of Paradise is the best bounty for them."

Then the Noble Imam refers to the Qur'anic verse:

"But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success"[15].

The Verse depicts the Paradise awaiting the pious saying that there are four rivers in Paradise for the pious.

Firstly,

"rivers of water"

in which pure and permanent water flows unlike that of the world whose taste and color will not change through stagnation but its purity and taste will be the same. It is this world which is subject to permanent alteration whose elements are at all times in the process of generation and corruption.

The elements of the world to come will not be subject to change since as per the Holy Qur'an

"Verily, the home of the Hereafter - that is the life indeed"[16].

Secondly,

"rivers of milk"

in Paradise,

"whose taste never changes"

resemble water in terms of purity. The milk is not like that of this world that goes sour shortly and becomes useless. The milk, like the water, is incessantly flowing since the milk and water in Paradise spring from the purity of the hearts of the pious.

Thirdly,

"rivers of wine,"

represent all kinds of intoxicant drinks. Unlike the wine in this world, that of Paradise is tasty, delicious, joyful, and invigorating.

Fourthly,

"rivers of clarified honey"

are prepared for the pious in Paradise.

The word:

"clarified"

indicates that heavenly honey is pure and devoid of impurities. It is unlike the honey in this world mingled with wax and other things which is to be purified.

"Therein for them is every kind of fruit and forgiveness from their Lord."

Heavenly bounties for the pious are not restricted to these four rivers but all kinds of fruit and any imaginable or unimaginable bounty will be prepared for them.

Those aspiring to find such bounties are supposed to know that Divine Favors and heavenly bounties are reserved for the pious in the Hereafter:

("the pious have been promised").

It is noteworthy that the seeds of such bounties are to be sown in our hearts in this world so that they bear fruit. In other words, one has to

struggle in order to attain to the disposition of piety. The disposition of piety is to be acquired in this world such that it bears fruit in the Hereafter in the form of three rivers. God strikes parables in the Holy Qur'an to express many a meaning and secret of creation without which man may not perceive them through his intellect.

Qur'anic Verses are the mines of secrets and abundant delicacies contained in Their words whose esoteric meaning is solely perceptible to:

"those deeply rooted in knowledge,"

namely the Infallible Imams (as).

According to a recurrently transmitted Prophetic tradition, through performing deeds and prayers of supererogation (nawafil) man attains to a state in which his vision, hearing, and touch turn into those of Truth. The self of such man is annihilated and he is absorbed in God such that he finds everlasting life in Him.

Are such pious believers immersed in the rivers of Mercy and those enjoying His Infinite Bliss are on a par with those whose abode will be Hellfire for good as they are disfavored?

"[Are these] like those who shall dwell forever in the Fire and shall have to drink boiling water so that it shall cut up their bowels."

Any wise person knows that the pious believer is not on a par with the polytheist and/or the dissimulating disbeliever. The former will immerse in the rivers of Divine Mercy enjoying Divine Infinite Bounties for good and the latter will be disfavored and afflicted with different kinds of torment. How may they stand on a par?

Surah Muhammad - Verse 16

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفاً أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

16. And among them are some who [apparently] listen to you till when they go out from you, they say to those who have received knowledge: "What has he said just now? Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed and they follow their vain desires.

Addressing the Prophet (S) the Verse says that the disbelievers who are nominal Muslims attend your sessions and listen to the Qur'an, but they neither believe in your prophethood nor in the Book revealed to you. They are neither able to recognize it as the Divine Book nor do they understand it.

Upon meeting your followers who know your words they say contemptuously and mockingly: "about what the man is talking?" O Prophet (S)! Your words are not beyond human understanding, but it is through their grudge and animosity that God seals their hearts so that they are unable to perceive the truth and they follow their vain desires.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 17

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

17. While as for those who accept Guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety.

Accepting Divine Guidance by man leads to Its increase by God. Piety is the Divine Reward bestowed upon those who accept the Guidance;

("[He] bestows on them their piety").

The Verse refers to the guided whose guidance is increased upon listening to the Revelation through which the truth of piety and the light of knowledge illuminate their hearts leading them from the shadows of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 18

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلاّ السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرَاهُمْ

18. Do they [disbelievers in order to believe] then await [anything] other than the Hour that it should come upon them suddenly? But some of its portents have already come and when it is on them [on the Day of Resurrection] how can they benefit then by their reminder?

Ashrat is the plural form of sharat ("portent, sign, indication").

As per a Prophetic tradition,

"but some of its portents have already come"

refers to his prophethood,[17] since the last Messenger has Divinely appointed, the last Divine Book has been revealed, and men have been provided with the last decisive Argument. Thus any sin, corruption, disbelief, and denial will make the Last Day occur earlier.

The world al-Sa'a;

("the Hour")

is usually employed in the sense of Resurrection, but it may also indicate Divine Wrath and annihilation of men in this world which will be a prelude to the torments of Resurrection.

Ibn 'Abbas narrates that at the farewell pilgrimage (hajjat al-wida') on which Salman the Persian was the most intimate Companion of the Noble Prophet (S), Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

"Should I inform you of the portents of Resurrection? They are negligence in establishing daily prayers, following vain desires, cherishing the wealthy, exchanging religion for worldly possessions."[18]

Some traditions refer to more than one hundred portents for the coming of Resurrection.

The Verse in question warns disbelievers and polytheists that an ounce of precaution is better than a pound of cure saying that those who await the advent of resurrection should know that it will come all of a sudden.

"The portents have already come"

since the Seal of the Prophets (S) has been Divinely appointed in the last days (akhir al-zaman). According to a Prophetic tradition recorded in Manhaj, the Noble Prophet (S) pointed at two fingers of his saying that the Resurrection and I are attached like these two fingers. Some other portents have already come and others are to come in time.

"When it is on them [on the Day of Resurrection] how can they benefit then by their reminder?"

Surah Muhammad - Verse 19

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاّ اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

19. Therefore, know that there is no god but Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for [the sin of] believing men and believing women. And Allah knows well your moving about and your place of rest.

The clause;

"ask forgiveness for your sin"

is also attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[19].

With due consideration to the fact that all prophets are infallible, there are grounds for such asking for forgiveness:

Asking for forgiveness is a kind of worshipping God even if no sin has been committed.

It may ad hoc indicate avoidance from doing what is preferable (tark al-ula). In other words, the Prophet (S) was supposed to do preferable acts but he abstained from doing them.

Asking for forgiveness may turn into a common practice for people.

It leads to attaining supreme stations by the Prophet (S).

It may connote asking for forgiveness for the sins committed by people in respect of the Prophet (S).

Asking for forgiveness is not at all times for one's sins and faults, but perceiving that he is so inferior against Divine Glory and Greatness, man asks for forgiveness.

Addressing His Prophet (S) God Almighty says unto him:

"know that there is no god but Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin and also for [the sin of] believing men and believing women."

Imami scholars are unanimous in maintaining that prophets, particularly the Seal of the Prophets (S), are infallible.

"Your sin"

(dhanbika) may either indicate abstaining from doing preferable acts or preoccupation with mundane affairs. It is narrated from the Prophet (S) that he asked forgiveness of God seventy times a day. It was for his preoccupation with carrying out the tasks of promulgation of the Islamic faith and attending to the affairs of his prophethood.

It is in the Qur'an that he is a man like other men;

("Verily, I am a human being like you").

Owing to the restrictions of human nature, preoccupation with any matter may at times hinder one from attending fully to God.

It is to be noted that his preoccupation with attending to the affairs of his prophethood was out of is obedience to God and acting upon His Command but:

"the good deeds of those disfavored by God are like the faults of favorites of God."

That is why he is asked to ask for forgiveness for himself and believers. In other words, he is asked to turn away from people following the communication of the Message and attend fully to the glorification of God. It is a source of hope to believers that the Noble Prophet (S) is asked to pray for their forgiveness.

His prayer will not remain unanswered unless we really have faith in God and His Messenger. It is worthy of note that the Prophet (S) with his supreme station is required to ask for forgiveness let alone us since we commit sins and neglect our duties at all times.

Asking for forgiveness of "the All-Forgiving of sins" and turning away from opposition to God lead to turning toward God and are regarded per se as an act of worship.

The Verse ends in:

"Allah knows well your moving about and your place of rest."

In other words, God is fully aware of the acts committed by man as well as his abode in the Hereafter. Past, present, and future make no difference to His Omniscience.

Narrating on the authority of Hudhayfa Yamani, Tabarsi records that the former said unto the Prophet (S) that he had a sharp tongue and as a consequence was afraid of ending up in Hell for that sake. The Noble Prophet (S) asked him why he was not asking for forgiveness as he [the Prophet (S)] was asking for the same one hundred times a day.

According to a Prophetic tradition, uttering:

"I ask forgiveness of God"

and

"There is no god but Allah"

are the best devotions since God Almighty says in a Qur'anic Verse:

"Therefore know that there is no god but Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for [the sin of] believing men and believing women."[20]

It is to be noted that asking for forgiveness of God may not be solely done verbally but true repentance lies in being regretful from committing sins and intending to not turn to sins and mere praying for forgiveness is of no avail.

According to a Prophetic tradition recurrently narrated:

"Regret [from committing sins] is asking for forgiveness,"

in other words, regret from committing sins forms the basis of asking for forgiveness of God. However, such regret necessitates intending to abstain from committing further sins. It may be said that true asking for forgiveness lies in repentance and intention as to committing no further sins; nonetheless, praying for forgiveness and other requirements attested in traditions and narrations are the conditions of perfect repentance.

The repentant ask for forgiveness of the All-Forgiving of sins by heart and tongue.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 20

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنْزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَأَوْلَى لَهُمْ

20. Those who believe say: "Why is not a Chapter [of the Qur'an] sent down [regarding jihad]? But when a decisive Chapter is sent down and jihad is mentioned therein, you will see those in whose hearts is a disease looking at you with a look of one fainting to death. But it [death] was better for them.

A number of believers await the declaration of jihad and make mention of their preparedness to engage in it;

("Those who believe say …").

Such declaration should be based on Divine Revelation and Command. The Verse concerns the believers whose hearts are not touched by faith and await Revelation inquiring why a Chapter has not been sent down so that we may act upon it. Nonetheless, upon the Revelation of a Chapter regarding jihad they become anxious as if they suffer from heart disease.

They look at the Prophet (S) as if they are on death bed. But the best thing leading to their felicity is to obey God's Command and that of His Messenger as well as uttering good words to the effect that they have heard the Command and they Obey It;

("We hear and obey").

Now that they disobey the Command, death is better for them.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 21

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْراً لَهُمْ

21. Obedience and carefully considered words [were better for them]. And when the matter [jihad] is resolved on, then if they had been true to Allah [and engage in jihad wholeheartedly] it would have been [certainly] better for them.

Believers are wholeheartedly obedient before the Divine declaration of jihad

("obedience").

Words and deeds are to be both accurate and well considered;

("obedience and carefully considered words [were better for them]").

People with frail faith are afraid of engaging in jihad. They not only disobey the Command but they also attempt at justifications and irrelevant words.

Their pretexts are mentioned in different instances in the Holy Qur'an, e.g. inability to engage in jihad,

"insecurity of their families, insecurity of their houses,"

"hot weather,"

being tempted to commit sin in case of engagement in jihad, looking at Roman maids will tempt us into getting involved in sedition (at the battle of Tabuk). The Holy Qur'an says that their deserting is the sedition.

Other pretexts to refrain from engagement in jihad include: inappropriate time designated for battle, preferably postponed

"for the fear of evading incurring loss and suffering from disaster."

The verse in question says that it would be better to obey the Command and say good words rather than uttering such pretexts. In other words, it says that it would be better for them if they speak and act wholeheartedly when the declaration of jihad is decisive, since they will lead to their pride and honor in this world and great reward, felicity, and salvation in the hereafter.

The clause:

"the matter is resolved on"

basically indicates decisiveness but taking the preceding and the following Verses into consideration it connotes "jihad."

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis].
2. Maraghi's Exegesis.
3. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, Sura Muhammad.
4. Ruh al-Ma'ni, vol. 26, p. 33.
5. 22:62
6. Ibn al-A'rabi is quoted in Lisan al-'Arab as saying "Athkhana idha ghalaba wa qahara" ("The word athkhana is employed upon conquering and subjugation").
7. 3:142
8. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 98.
9. 3:169
10. al-Mizan, vol. 18, p. 244.
11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 100, p.15.
12. Ibid, p. 14.
13. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. 8:51
15. 9:72
16. 29:64
17. Majma' al-Bayan.
18. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis].
19. 40:55
20. Manhaj al-Sadiqin.

Surah Muhammad, Verses 22 - 38

Surah Muhammad - Verse 22

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

22. Then if you [who are sick at heart and frail of faith] turn away from [jihad], you are solely expected to do mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship.

Turning away from religion and Qur'anic injunctions prepares the ground for corruption and mischief.

Severing the ties of kinship is a sin which is on a par with doing corruption in the land;

("to do mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship").

The blessed Verse addresses those who are frail of faith and turn away from engagement in jihad to save their lives and says unto such people that they should not imagine that they may save themselves through abstaining from engagement in jihad since through deserting they merely pave the way for further corruption and slaughter whose consequence will affect you.

You look for the opportunity to do mischief in the land and sever the ties of kinship as you did all wrongs to gain further property in the pre-Islamic times of ignorance (jahiliyya).[1]

Surah Muhammad - Verse 23

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعْمَى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

23. Such are they whom Allah has cursed so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight [to hinder them from perceiving the truth].

Those who desert jihad, do corruption, and sever ties of kinship are cursed by Allah. Deprivation of Divine Mercy is the consequence of our own acts.

The blessed Verse says that such people, i.e., hypocrites, who do corruption in the land and sever the ties of kinship incur Divine damnation, as a consequence of which God has made them deaf and blinded their sight so that they do not perceive the apparent and concealed signs

("[They are] deaf, dumb, and blind. So they do not understand")[2].

Surah Muhammad - Verse 24

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

24. Do they not then think deeply about the Qur'an or are their hearts locked up?

The Holy Qur'an is not solely for recitation but is the Book of thought and meditation.

Recitation is supposed to be the prelude of thought and meditation;

("Do they not then think deeply about the Qur'an?").

Everyone is supposed to think about the Qur'an and thinking is not limited to a specific group of people. The Verse raises an objection regarding those who do not think about the Qur'an to benefit from its secrets.

"Are their hearts locked up"

so that they learn nothing of the warnings and promises mentioned in the Qur'an? Their unfortunate state lies either in their carelessness toward the Perfect Divine Guidance or in their lack of perception owing to the insensitivity of their hearts and following their vain desires and their vicious acts committed earlier. One who loses his way in darkness is either blind or does not carry a light. Such hypocrites who are sick at heart failed to think about the Qur'an.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 25

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَى الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمْلَى لَهُمْ

25. Verily, those who have turned back as disbelievers after the guidance has been manifested to them - Satan has beautified for them [their vicious acts] and has deceived them with long awaited [vain] desires.

Being tempted by Satan is a blight of faith which leads to apostasy and misfortune;

("Verily, those who have turned back as disbelievers").

Satan works through beautification of vicious acts.

Whoever beautifies vicious acts is satanic;

("Satan has beautified for them [their vicious acts]").

The Verse depicts those who being aware of the decisive argument believed in the Islamic faith but through satanic beautification of their vices turned away from the true religion. Such people have been deceived by worldly possessions and pleasures of the flesh. They underestimated turning away from their religion.

It is also said that they are the hypocrites who following their turning to the truth of the Islamic faith and uttering the formula of Divine Unity and the prophethood of the Messenger of God were deceived by satanic beautification of their vices and vain desires and turned away from the true religion. One who believes in the Islamic faith through discernment and spiritual perception will never turn away from it.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 26

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَمْرِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ

26. This is because they [apostates who are sick at heart] said to those who dislike what Allah has sent down: "We will obey you partially of the matter." But Allah knows their secrets.

Hypocrites promise aid and support and even obedience to those who are displeased with Divine Decrees.

They collaborate with disbelievers and enemies of the Islamic faith;

("We will obey you partially of the matter").

Thus the blessed Verse explains the reasons behind such beautification and embellishment.

They said unto those who disliked the Divine Revelation sent down to the Prophet of Islam (S);

"We will obey you in part of the matter."

Hypocrites look for desperate opponents and if they do not share common denominators with them in all respects, they collaborate with them

or obey them to the extent of the common denominators. Medinan hypocrites turned to Jews.

Jews from Banu Nadhir and Banu Quraydha were among the promulgators of the Islamic faith prior to the Prophet's (S) prophethood but following his Divine appointment to prophethood and owing to jealousy, arrogance, and as their interests were in jeopardy, they became displeased with the advent of Islam and promised to render aid to hypocrites because of their common denominators as to disagreement with and hatching plots against him.

"Partially for the matter"

indicates that the Jews agreed to collaborate with hypocrites but they believed in resurrection and disagreed with their idolatry.

The Verse ends in a concise warning;

"Allah knows their secrets."

He is aware of their disbelief, hypocrisy, and their conspiring with the Jews and will chastise them in the proper season. God also knows about the jealousy and enmity concealed in the hearts. They had read their scriptures and had been apprised of the signs of the Prophet of Islam (S) such that they were able to recognize him like their own child.

However, following the proclamation of his prophethood, they failed to make mention of such signs. God is aware of their secrecy.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (as),

"those who dislike what Allah has sent down"

refers to the Umayyads who were displeased with the Revelation of the Divine Decree concerning the Imamate of 'Ali (as).[3]

Surah Muhammad - Verses 27-28

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمُ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَسْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

27. Then how will it be when the angels will take their souls at death, smiting their faces and their backs?

28. That is because they followed that which angered Allah and disliked that which pleased Him. So He made their deeds fruitless.

The word tawfi indicates "taking back in full what has been given to someone." The word is employed in the Qur'an in the sense of "death" since death is actually taking back the soul from the body. Death is not on a par with annihilation but it denotes taking back the soul in full by the angels.

Attending to the transience of the world, the end of conspiracies, and tasting the torment may hinder man from hatching plots. The blessed Verse warns those who are deceived by satanic beautification of their vices and make Muslims turn away from the Path of Truth through empty promises. All creatures are the Divine Host. Angels responsible for taking the souls also constitute the Divine Host.

They are the enemies of God's enemies and the friends of God's friends. Wielding their blazing whips they strike blows on the enemies of God since they followed falsehood and turned away from Truth. They followed the

objects of Divine Wrath and disliked to obtain His Satisfaction. Their good deeds, if any, will be rendered vain and they will be the objects of Divine Wrath.[4]

Surah Muhammad - Verses 29-30

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكَهُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ

29. Or do those in whose hearts is a disease [of hypocrisy] think that Allah will not bring to light all their hidden ill-wills [and jealousy]?

30. Had We willed, We could have shown them to you and you should have known them by their marks but surely you will know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah knows [all] your [apparent and secret] deeds.

Sinners' disgrace is not merely for the Resurrection Day but they may be ashamed in this world too. Hypocrites may be known through their tone of speech. When the Messenger of God (S) appointed 'Ali (as) as his successor at Ghadir Khum, some people said that Muhammad (S) did so out of nepotism. It was the occasion for sending down these Verses.[5]

These Verses make mention of the marks and qualities of hypocrites and emphasize that they may not conceal their real intentions from the Prophet (S) and believers and thereby save themselves from being disgraced.

Verse 29 reads:

"Or do those in whose hearts is the disease [of hypocrisy] think that Allah will not bring to light all their hidden ill-wills [and jealousy]?"

The word adhghan is the plural form of dhighn denoting "rancor, (secret) hatred." Hypocrites entertained severe hatred against the Prophet (S) and believers and were at all times looking for the opportunity to strike a blow on them. The Holy Qur'an warns them that they may not conceal their real intentions from the Prophet (S) and believers.

Verse 30 further adds:

"Had We willed, We could have shown them to you and you should have known them by their marks,"

in other words God marks their faces by which their hypocrisy could be evident to everyone.

Thus the Verse proceeds:

"but surely you will know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah knows [all] your [apparent and secret] deeds."

In his Mufradat Raghib says that lahn indicates deviation from linguistic norms such as incorrect conjugation and inflection or employment of metaphorical expressions in lieu of using words in their literal sense. The latter is intended by the Verse, namely such hypocrites who are sick at heart may be exposed through their use of hypocritical and mischievous metaphorical expressions.

Hypocrites make attempts at weakening the will power of the people so as they refrain from engagement in jihad. They try to make people veer off the course of truth and justice. They try to somehow assassinate the character of the pious and the pioneers of the Islamic faith.

According to a recurrently transmitted narration narrated by Abu Sa'id Khudri:

"We knew hypocrites at the time of the Messenger of God (S) through their hostile tone of speech concerning 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as)."[6]

Thus an evident mark of the hypocrites was their animosity against the first believer from among men and the forerunner in supporting the cause of the Islamic faith.

As a general rule, one may not entertain anything in his heart and conceal it for long such that he may not be exposed by his tone of speech and metaphorical expressions.

Thus a narration by the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), says:

"One may not conceal anything without being exposed by his slips of tongue uncovering [his true intention reflected in] his face"[7]***.***

Hypocrites' mischievous tone of speech and their suspicious gestures and postures are to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an. It is on the same grounds that a number of exegets maintain that it was following the Revelation of the Verse in question that the Prophet (S) was able to fully recognize hypocrites through their characteristics.

Thus the Noble Prophet received the Injunction to neither establish the funeral prayer for hypocrites nor ask for their forgiveness of God at their grave:

("And never prayer [funeral prayer] for any of them [hypocrites] who dies, nor stand at his grave"[8]***).***

The Verse ends in;

"And Allah knows [all] your [apparent and secret] deeds."

God Almighty is fully aware of all their innermost intentions and their outward deeds.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 31

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ

31. And surely We will try you till We test those who strive hard [for Allah's Cause] and the patient and We shall test your facts [and deeds].

The word Ibtila' may indicate trying people to discover the truth and may also denote making diverse preparations for giving vent to innermost feelings such as those mentioned in the Verse.[9] ***Na'lama ("we let know") is from 'alam ("mark") rather than 'ilm (knowledge), the antonym of jahl ("ignorance") connoting that they will be known through Divine Trial.***

To lay further emphasis and demonstrate the ways of distinguishing believers from hypocrites the Verse reads:

"Surely We will try you till We test those who strive hard [for Allah's Cause] and the patient."

Thus pseudo-warriors and unprincipled and characterless hypocrites may be exposed.

The trial is vast in scope and covers patience and clemency in fulfilling all obligations; however, taking into consideration the word mujahidin:

("those who strive [in the Cause of Allah]")

in the preceding and following Verses indicates that trial on the battlefield is intended. Such battlefield is the arena of a hard and great trial in which few people may conceal their true intentions.

The Verse ends in:

"We shall test your facts [and deeds]."

Many an exeget have held that akhbar ("facts") denotes deeds since whose news spreads among people. Some have also maintained that the word ad hoc is used in the sense of innermost secrets since they are reflected by deeds. The word may also denote the news which people communicate concerning their state or their responsibilities.

For instance hypocrites:

"had already made a covenant with Allah not to turn their backs"[10]

to the battlefield but they broke it.

A number of them also asked for permission of the Prophet (S) to return from the battlefield saying:

"'Our homes lie open [to the enemy].' And they lay not open. They but wished to flee"[11]**.**

Thus Allah tries deeds, words, and facts. It is not the first time that people are informed of being tried so that a distinction may be drawn between true believers and hypocrites and those of frail faith. The point is raised in many instances in the Qur'an.

"Till We test those who strive hard [for Allah's Cause]"

does not connote that Allah is unaware of them but the Omniscient God is fully aware of them and such people and their stance are to be exposed through His Omniscience.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 32-33

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَى لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئاً وَسَيُحْبِطُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

32. Verily those who disbelieve and hinder [people] from the Path of Allah and oppose the Messenger after the guidance has been clearly shown to them they will not hurt Allah in the least but He will make their deeds fruitless.

33. O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and render not vain your deeds.

According to Qur'anic Verses and traditions, a number of words and deeds render vain diverse deeds, e.g. hurting the needy which renders vain rewards.

Following a delineation of the hypocrites' and disbelievers' stance against the Islamic faith, the Verse in question says:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and render not vain your deeds."

The fact is that believers take an opposite stance in all matters against disbelievers and hypocrites. The former obey the Divine Decree where as the latter disobey It. The deeds of the latter are rendered vain through their

disbelief, dissimulation, and hurting others but the rewards of the former are preserved at Divine Threshold.

The tone of the Verse indicates that there were believers at the time who failed to meet their obligations in terms of obeying God and His Messenger and preserving their deeds from being rendered vain. God warns them against such neglect. According to some exegets, the occasion for the revelation of the Verse is the conversion of Banu Asad tribe to the Islamic faith.

They said unto the Prophet (S) that they were prepared to sacrifice themselves and their families for his cause, but their tone of speech somehow reflected the Prophet's (S) indebtedness for their favor. The Verse was sent down as a warning against their attitude.

Some experts in the field of Islamic law maintain that:

"and render not vain your deeds"

refers to the unlawfulness of leaving the daily prayers incomplete; however, taking into consideration the preceding and the following Verses as well as the Verse in question indicates otherwise. The Verse indicates rendering vain the good deeds out of polytheism, hypocrisy, hurting others and the like.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 34

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ

34. Indeed those who disbelieve and hinder [people] from the Path of Allah, then die while they are disbelievers. Allah will not forgive them.

God Almighty is All-Forgiving and man may turn to Him at all times for repentance, but those who die in disbelief, apostasy, and hypocrisy may never be absolved of their sins. The Verse explicates and emphasizes the points raised in the preceding Verses regarding disbelievers. It also demonstrates the path of repentance to those inclined toward it.

The Verse reads:

"those who disbelieve and hinder [people] from the Path of Allah, then die while they are disbelievers. Allah will not forgive them,"

since death serves as a hindrance against repentance. Such people carry the heavy burden of their disbelief as well as that of leading others astray. How may God almighty forgive them? Thus these Verses make mention of hypocrites, disbelievers, and believers together with a delineation of their attributes and fates.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 35

فَلا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتِرَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ

35. Therefore, be not weak and ask not for peace while you are having the upper hand. Allah is with you and He will never decrease the reward of your good deeds.

Believers are not supposed to be weak since steadfastness and endurance are the prerequisites of triumph. Thus Muslims are supposed to enhance their morale and remind themselves of their values. Pursuing the discussion on jihad, the Verse refers to a significant point - people of frail faith often

raise the issue of making peace with the enemy in order to flee jihad and the hardships of the battlefield.

Making peace is indubitably appropriate in its proper season. Such peace leads Muslims to the attainment of Islamic sublime goals and may vouchsafe the dignity and greatness of Muslims rather than leading them to humiliation and contempt. The Verse encourages believers that having heard the previous injunctions they are not supposed to be weak nor do they ask the enemy to make peace with them while they have the upper hand.

In other words, now that their triumph and superiority is evident they are supposed to consider the peace treaty which implies withdrawal and defeat. Actually, it is not peace but surrender and complacency springing from frailty. Such vicious complacency will engender perilous and excruciating consequences.

To invigorate the Muslims' morale, the Verse ends in

"Allah is with you and He will never decrease the reward of your good deeds."

When God Almighty is with someone, he will have all the means of triumph. He may never feel abandoned. He never entertains frailty in his heart nor does he surrender to the enemy.

Such person feels the responsibility upon his shoulders to not render vain the martyrs' blood shed in sensitive moments.

Wa lan yatrikum literally means "He will not abandon you," but it figuratively indicates

"He will never decrease [the reward of your good deeds]").

The root w-t-r denotes "to abandon" and watr is used in the senses of "single, separate, alone." Those whose kith and kin fall in battle and leave them alone are termed as witr. The word also signifies defect and shortcoming. The Verse in question says that God will not abandon you but he will provide you with the rewards of your deeds.

Believers are aware of the fact that each step taken for jihad will be recorded and nothing shall be decreased of their rewards but God Almighty is so Bountiful that He will increase them.

The above bears testimony to the fact that the Verse in question is by no means inconsistent with:

"But if they incline to peace, you are also inclined toward it and trust Allah. Indeed, He is the All-Hearer, the Omniscient"[12].

None of the two abrogates the other, but each of the twain makes reference to a particular instance. One refers to the sensible peace and the other to the insensible one. The former meets all the demands of the Muslims and the latter is raised at the threshold of triumph by Muslims who are frail of faith.

That is why the last Verse[13] follows thus:

"And if they intend to deceive you, then verily, Allah is All-Sufficient for you"[14].

In his epistle to Malik Ashtar, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as) makes reference to both types of peace saying:

"Whenever the enemy calls upon you to make peace with him in which lies God's Satisfaction, do not decline the offer"[15].

The peace offered by the enemy and Divine Satisfaction indicate the division of the types of peace into the twain. Muslim leaders are supposed to use extra care in terms of distinguishing between types of peace and war which are among the most sophisticated and epoch making issues, since the slightest miscalculation will lead to fatal consequences.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 36

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أُجُورَكُمْ وَلا يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ

36. The life of this world is mere play and pastime, but if you believe and fear Allah and avoid evil, He will grant you your rewards and will not ask you your wealth.

The preceding Verse was a warning against frailty and complacency against disbelievers. The Verse in question makes a reference to the main ground behind frailty - attachment to worldly possessions: "Be careful to not be deceived by the world."

The majority of people regard the world as the scene of pastime and pleasure, but believers consider it as the scene of Divine Manifestations consisting of Divine Signs, where they exchange the rewards of the Hereafter for righteous good deeds and obtaining merits and virtues. The blessed Verse encourages Muslims to obey God in general and raises the issue of jihad in particular.

It also refers to the vanity of mundane life since mundane attachments serve as a significant factor hindering people from engagement in jihad.

The Verse reads:

"The life of this world is mere play and pastime."

The word la'b ("play") is applied to involvement in a kind of imaginary order in order to attain to an imaginary goal. Lahw ("pastime") denotes what preoccupies man and leads to his deviation from fundamental issues. Indeed the life of the world is play and pastime since no advantage or permanence may be accrued from it. The pleasures of the transient world end in hardships.

The Verse further adds:

"but if you believe and fear Allah and avoid evil, He will grant you your rewards and will not ask you your wealth."

Divine Rewards in this world and the Hereafter are all non gratia. Neither He nor His Messenger (S) ask for anything. He is All-Sufficient and His Messenger solely needs Him and no one else.

The meager amount of your wealth which is paid as alms tax and other religious levies are spent for you, the upkeep of orphans, the needy, and the stranded poor travelers and also for jihad, defending the security and independence of the land, maintenance of peace and security, meeting the needs, and the development of towns and cities.

Such meager amount is paid for your own sake since God is All-Sufficient. Therefore, there exists no inconsistency between the meaning of the Verse in question and those concerning expending for Allah's Cause, paying alms tax, and the like.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 37

إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمُوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخَلُوا وَيُخْرِجْ أَضْغَانَكُمْ

37. If He were to ask you of it and press you, you would covetously withhold and He will bring out all your ill-wills.

The attachment of some men to worldly possessions is to the extent that even if God asks them for anything, they will entertain ill-wills against Him. Human character is exposed through his encounter with command and forbidding.

To demonstrate the extent to which most men are attached to worldly property and substance, the blessed Verse says:

"If He were to ask you of it and press you, you would covetously withhold and He will bring out all your ill-wills."

The word yuhfikum is from ihfa' ("press or insist in claiming and asking") is originally taken from hafiya ("go barefoot"). The expression is metaphorically used for the matters which are pursued by man to the end, an instance of which is ihfa' sharib denoting trimming moustaches as short as possible.

Idhghan is the plural form of dhighn which is, as mentioned above, used in the sense of severe hatred. In short, the Verse indicates the severe attachment of many a people to material possessions and in fact serves as a reproach to those entangled with such attachments but in the meanwhile is a source of encouragement for severing such mundane ties which may grow to the extent that even if God asks them for anything, they will develop anger and hatred against Him!

Thus He awakens the dormant soul of man with such reproach so that he may liberate himself from the shackles of mundane possessions and sacrifice everything for his Friend and in return ask Him to bestow faith, piety, and satisfaction upon him.

Surah Muhammad - Verse 38

هَا أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلاءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخَلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخَلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخَلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْماً غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ

38. Behold! You are those who are called to spend in the Cause of Allah yet among you are some who are niggardly. And whoever is niggardly, it is solely at the expense of his own self. But Allah is All-Sufficient and you are poor. And if you turn away, He will exchange you for some other people and they will not be your likes [in terms of frailty of faith and niggardliness].

People are to be called to spend in the Cause of Allah and help others; however, they should be free to think and make their choice. One who is niggardly assumes that he has deprived people of his possessions. The last Verse emphasizes what has already been raised in the preceding Verses concerning material possessions and attachments to them and spending in the Cause of Allah saying: Behold!

You are the same people who are called to spend in the Cause of Allah; some of you obey the Divine Injunction but some others are niggardly;

("yet among you are some who are niggardly").

A question is raised here: God does not want your possessions in the preceding Verses; how come that the Injunction in this Verse concerns spending in the Cause of Allah? The Verse provides the answer to the question.

Firstly It says:

"whoever is niggardly, it is solely at the expense of his own self,"

since he will enjoy the consequences of his own spending in the Cause of Allah. In this manner, class gaps are diminished and security and peacefulness prevail in the society, and love and sincerity replaces animosity - this is your mundane reward. You will be compensated in this world and the Hereafter by Divine Bounties and Favors for each and every cent of your expenses in the Cause of Allah.

Such Bounties and Favors are not imaginable. Therefore, the more you are niggardly, the more you will pay for it!

In other words, spending in the Cause of Allah ad hoc refers to spending for jihad and the phrase

"in the Way or Cause of Allah" (fi sabil 'llah)

is consistent with the denotation in question. Rendering any assistance in the Cause of jihad for Allah evidently guarantees the maintenance of the integrity, independence, and dignity of the society.

The other answer to the question is that :

"Allah is All-Sufficient and you are poor."

He is Needless of your spending and your obedience, but it is you who are in need of Divine Favor, Mercy, and Reward in this world and the Hereafter. All possible beings besides God are actually in need and the only All-Sufficient Being by essence is God.

Possible beings are essentially and permanently dependent on Him and benefit at all times from His incessant fountainhead of emanation. Even if He ceases the emanation for one single moment, all existent beings vanish and

"all mold will shatter!"

The last sentence of the Verse is a warning to all Muslims to appreciate the great Divine Favor that He appointed you as the guardians of His pure religion so that you may support the Islamic faith and His Prophet (S).

Nonetheless,

"if you turn away, He will exchange you for some other people and they will not be your likes [in terms of frailty of faith and niggardliness]."

If you do not comprehend the significance of your situation and neglect such great responsibility, God Almighty will raise another people, far superior to you in terms of sacrificing their life and possession in the Cause of Allah, to fulfill such great mission.

A similar great warning is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion [may never harm Allah], Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble toward the believers, stern toward the disbelievers, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never fear of the blame of the blamers"[16]***.***

It is interesting to note that the majority of exegets have related that following the revelation of the Verse a number of the Companions of the Prophet (S) inquired:

"Who are the people mentioned in this Verse?"

Salman sat close to the Prophet (S).

The prophet (S) put his hand on Salman's foot (or his shoulder as per another narration) and replied:

"This [man] and his people [i.e., Persians]. I swear to Him in Whose hand lies my life, if faith be attached to Pleiad (Thurayya, a star proverbial for remoteness), a group of Persians will get their hands on it."

The above tradition and its likes have been recorded by prominent Sunni traditionists like Bayhaqi and Tirmidhi and Shi'i and Sunni exegets of renown, e.g. authors of Tafsir Qurtubi, Ruh al-Bayan, and Majma' al-Bayan, and Fakhr al-Din Razi, Maraghi, and Abu 'l-Futuh Razi, have unanimously transmitted them as genuine traditions. A number of similar traditions are to be found in the exegetic work titled Durr al-Manthur under the Verse in question.[17]

Another tradition narrated on the authority of Imam Sadiq (as) may serve as a supplement to the above tradition, saying:

"I swear by God that He has kept His Promise and a far better non-Arab people have replaced them."[18]

Taking a glance, devoid of any prejudice, at the history of Islam and Islamic sciences bears testimony to non-Arab, particularly Persian, contributions to jihad against the enemies of the Islamic faith on the one hand and their works in the field of Islamic sciences on the other. Space limitations hinder us from details in this respect.

It would be of interest to close the Chapter with a number of traditions on niggardliness:

The Messenger of God (S) said:

"It is not befitting a believer to be niggardly and timid."[19]

The Messenger of God (S) said:

"The twain character traits of niggardliness and bad temper may not be found in a Muslim."[20]

Imam Husayn (as) said:

"The niggardly person is he who is too niggardly to greet."[21]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best of you are your generous people and the worst of you are your niggardly ones. Doing righteous good deeds and struggling to meet their demands are out of pure faith."[22]

Imam Ridha (as) said:

"The niggardly person is far from God, Paradise, and People."[23]

Notes

1. According to a Prophetic tradition “Three groups will never enter Paradise: drinkers, sorcerers, and those who sever ties of kinship,” Saduq’s Khisal apud Tafsir-i Nimuna, vol. 7, p. 5.
2. 2:171
3. Majma’ al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 105.
4. According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (as) “who dislike what Allah has sent down” refers to Umayyads who were displeased with the Divine Decree regarding ‘Ali’s (as) Imamate, see Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 43, hadith 70 apud Mufid’s Rawdhat al-Wa’iÛin; Majma’ al-Bayan, vol.9, p.105. It is needless to say that it expresses the partial meaning of the Verse rather than the total meaning of the same.
5. Tafsir al-Burhan.
6. Majma’ al-Bayan, under the Verses in question. The general content of the narration is recorded in the sources by Sunni eminent scholars, e.g. Fadha’il by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Isti’ab by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ta’rikh Awwal al-Islam by Dhahabi, Jami’ al-Usul by Ibn Athir, Kifayat al-Talib by ‘Allama Ganji, Riyadh al-Nadhra by Muhibb al-Din Tabari, Durr al-Manthur by Suyuti, Ruh al-Ma’ani by Àlusi, and Shawahid al-Tanzil by Haskani. The inclusion of the narration in many a source bears testimony to the fact that it is a genuine Prophetic tradition. For further information, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 110 ff.
7. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 26
8. 9:84
9. Raghib’s Mufradat.
10. 33:15
11. 33:13
12. 8:61
13. 8:61
14. 8:62
15. Nahj al-Balagha, Epistle 53
16. 5:54
17. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p.67.
18. Majma’ al-Bayan, vol.9, p. 108.
19. Mahajja al-Baydha’, vol.6, p. 74.
20. Safina, under bukhl (“niggardliness”); Bihar, vol. 70, p. 302; Khisal, vol.1, p. 38.
21. Tuhaf al-’Uqul, p. 283.
22. Bihar, vol.70, p. 307.
23. Safinat al-Bihar, under sakha’ (“generosity”).

Surah al-Fath, Chapter 48, Verses 1 - 16

(The Victory)

Section (juz'): 26

Number of Verses: 29

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter in question has twenty nine Verses and it was revealed in the sixth year following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya in Medina.

The Chapter in question mainly treats of the glad tidings as to the conquest of Mecca and the issues pertained to the Treaty of Hudaybiyya, pledge of pleasure (bay'at al-ridhwan), hypocrites' sabotage, turning one's back to jihad, and finally mention is made of the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions.

As the title of the Chapter designates, it beacons triumph and victory over the enemies of Islam, a remarkable a decisive triumph, be it the conquest of Mecca or Khaybar or the Treaty of Hudaybiyya or triumph in the broad sense of the word. To appreciate the contents of the Chapter, it is required, above all, to know that the Chapter was revealed in the sixth year following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya.

The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"One who recites the Chapter is on a par with one who served in the Noble Prophet's (S) army upon the conquest of Mecca."

It is narrated in another tradition that such person

"is like one who was beneath the tree in Hudaybiyya and gave him his pledge."[1]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Preserve your wives and possessions from perdition through the recitation of

'Indeed, We have granted you a triumph.'

One who recites it at all times a caller shall call on the Day of Resurrection such that he will be heard by everyone saying:

'You are one of My sincere servants; take him to My righteous servants and admit him in bountiful gardens of Paradise and offer him the drink particular to the people of Paradise.'"[2]

It goes without saying that such excellence and honor may not be accrued with mere recitation devoid of thought and deeds, but the main goal of the recitation of the Chapter lies in establishing one's deeds and disposition upon the contents of the Verses.

Wondrous traditions are attested in Islamic sources concerning the blessed Chapter in question. According to a tradition narrated on the authority of Anas,

"Upon our return from Hudaybiyya, polytheists impeded us from entering Mecca and performing voluntary ('umra) pilgrimage.

We were deeply sad when God Almighty of a sudden revealed the Verse:
'Indeed, We have granted you a manifest triumph.'"
The Noble Prophet (S) is reported as saying:
"A Verse has been revealed to me which I love more than the world."[3]

Surah al-Fath - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحاً مُبِيناً

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطاً مُسْتَقِيماً

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْراً عَزِيزاً

1. Indeed, We have granted you a manifest triumph.
2. That Allah may forgive you your sins of the past and the future [attributed to you by Meccan polytheists] and complete His Favor on you and guide you on the Straight Path,
3. And that Allah may help you with invincible succor.

Qur'anic exegets disagree on the interpretation of
"a manifest triumph."
Some of them, e.g. Alusi, Abu al-Futuh, 'Allama Tabataba'i, and Faydh Kashani attribute it to the Treaty of Hudaybiyya and some others, e.g. Shaykh Tusi, Zamakhshari, and Fakhr Razi regard it as related to the conquest of Mecca and all of them have substantiated their views with certain traditions. The significance of the Treaty of Hudaybiyya lies in the fact that it served as a prelude to the conquest of Mecca and its ensuing remarkable triumphs.

Furthermore, to that time, polytheists solely entertained thoughts regarding Muslims' perdition and did not recognize their position. Nonetheless, following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya, they recognized Muslims and such recognition served as a great triumph in the socio-political scene.

The
"manifest triumph"
makes a reference to the fact that approximately one thousand and forty hundred people were with the Noble Prophet (S) in the sixth year, but following two years, ten thousand people accompanied the Noble Prophet (S) in the conquest of Mecca.

There is not obscurity in Divine Guidance, rather all things are evident and illuminating including His Messenger;
("a Messenger explaining things clearly,")[4]**.**
His Qur'an is clear and illuminating;
("a plain Qur'an,")[5]**.**
It is expressed clearly and eloquently;
("This [the Qur'an] is a clear Arabic tongue,")[6]**.**
Its warnings are also unequivocal;
("He [Prophet Muhammad] is but a plain warner,"[7]**.**
Even its war and peace is unambiguous;
("manifest triumph,")[8]**.**

Thus, those standing against such transparency are in manifest error

("And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed into a plain error,")[9]**.**

The noble Prophet of Islam (S) is addressed six times:

"We have granted you triumph … for your forgiving, your sin, upon you, guides you, grants you succor."

The word dhanb used in the second Verse signifies the consequence of anything and it is often employed in the sense of the consequence of sins and their evil consequences. Any truth seeking move is indubitably undesirable to those in error considering the call as sin and bring about diverse problems, concerns, persecutions, false accusations, conspiracies, and rumors against the callers.

Imam Ridha says:

"To polytheists, nobody was on a par with the Noble Prophet (S) in terms of the burden of sins, since he struggled against idolatry but polytheists worshipped three hundred and sixty idols prior to the conquest of Mecca. However, upon the conquest of Mecca and the decisive triumph of the Noble Prophet (S) and Muslims, all the faults remained concealed."[10]

As a consequence, such sins were imaginative rather than actual thus regarded by polytheists and idolaters. It is worthy of note that the direction of prayers changed to that of Ka'ba in the second year following Hijra, i.e. the Noble Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina.

Furthermore, the Treaty of Hudaybiyya was concluded in the sixth year and the conquest of Mecca occurred in the eighth year when the Promise to the completion of the most exalted Divine Favors in future was proclaimed.

However, it was on the Noble Prophet's (S) farewell pilgrimage (hajjat al-wida') that the Promise was actualized through his announcement of 'Ali (as) as the Imam, saying:

"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"[11]**.**

Account of the Treaty of Hudaybiyya. It was in the month of Dhu al-Qa'da of 6 AH / March 628 that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) departed for Mecca intending to go on pilgrimage. Having encouraged Muslims to accompany him on the pilgrimage, one thousand and forty Muslims wearing pilgrims' garment accompanied him.

Apprised of the intelligence, Meccan polytheists stopped them in the vicinity of Mecca at the Village of Hudaybiyya and impeded them from reaching Mecca. Delegates from both parties entered into negotiations and the polytheists' representative noticed that Muslims feel such love for the Noble Prophet (S) that they take the drops of water used by him when performing ablution before daily prayers.

The representative informed polytheists of the same saying that they might not sever the bond between the Noble Prophet (S) and Muslims.

Representing Muslims, 'Uthman went to Mecca to negotiate with Meccan polytheists, but rumors became widespread that he had been murdered in Mecca. To keep Muslims alert, the Noble Prophet (S) had

Muslims gather beneath a tree to renew his allegiance with them. The allegiance was termed Bay'at al-Ridhwan.

'Uthman returned safe after a few days. Participated by representatives from both parties, a session was held in which a treaty was drafted with a number of articles and 'Ali (as) wrote down the text of the treaty which was signed by representatives.

According to the treaty, both parties assumed obligations including: keeping away from engaging in war for a period of ten years; Muslims had to return from Hudaybiyya to return the next year for a three day pilgrimage to Mecca; the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) ordered that the camels brought for pilgrimage be sacrificed there; Muslims shave their heads and took off their pilgrimage garments to return to Mecca.

Although Muslims did not perform their pilgrimage rituals in Mecca, but the Treaty ensured that that there would be no war for ten years and performing the pilgrimage rituals would be unimpeded, hence the manifest triumph for Muslims. The Treaty put an end to polytheists' manifest enmity against Muslims, opened the path of propagation of the Islamic faith, and paved the way for consolidation of their might and the prospective conquest of Mecca.

It is worthy of note that we need to know that success and triumph springs from Divine Support rather than our thought, schemes, prudence, and might:

("Indeed, We have granted you a manifest triumph").

The other point is that the Noble Prophet (S) enjoys Divine Support as he is addressed in:

"We have granted you triumph, to forgive your sins, to guide you, to render you triumphant."

Thus, what God Almighty bestows upon man is the most exalted, the most manifest, and the best. He grants manifest victory, perfect bounties, guidance to the Straight Path, and invincible succor.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 4

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَاناً مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً

4. He it is the One Who sent down serenity into the hearts of believers so that they may grow more in faith along with their faith. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth and Allah is Ever Omniscient, All-Wise.

The Arabic word sakina designates serenity and calm. Whoever is granted such Divine Favor shall enjoy many a consequence. He is not afraid of being blamed. He puts his trust in God. If he loses something, he shall not be saddened by the loss. If he gains something, he shall not rebel nor shall he disobey Divine Commands. He shall not be affected by people's respect or indifference, fame, obscurity, poverty, or affluence.

In the same manner that frightening disbelievers is Divine Succor;

("We shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve,")[12]**,**

serenity is also a Divine Favor granted to believers' hearts:

("is the One Who sent down serenity into the hearts of believers").

Therefore, peace of mind is solely possible through Divine Favor and it may not be accrued from any other source.

The aforementioned Verses reflect the Great Favors bestowed by God Almighty upon the Noble Prophet (S) as consequences of the manifest triumph, namely the Treaty of Hudaybiyya.

However, the blessed Verse in question treats of a Great Favor bestowed upon all believers:

"He it is the One Who sent down serenity into the hearts of believers so that they may grow more in faith along with their faith."

Believers shall definitely be rewarded by serenity and peace of mind, since;

"To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth and Allah is Ever Omniscient, All-Wise."

The Arabic word sakina is cognate with sukun which designates such serenity and peace of mind that removes any doubt and fear from man's heart and makes him persevere in the face of the tempest of vicissitudes.

Such serenity may be ideological and remove ideological debilitation or it may be practical such that it may provide man with perseverance and patience. It is worthy of note that taking into account the foregoing discussions and the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question, it mainly alludes the former sense. Even if faith had not other fruits but such serenity and peace of mind, they would have sufficed to make man welcome it from the bottom of his heart.

However, the fact is that faith engenders many other bounties and favors.

Taking a glance at the states of believers and disbelievers reflects that the latter suffer from permanent anxiety and concern, whereas the latter enjoy unequalled peace of mind as a consequence of which they fear no one but Allah:

("And fear none but Allah,")[13].

Whether faith be taken in the sense of knowledge and awareness or the spirit of submission to God Almighty, it consists of different degrees and even love and passion together with faith are different.

The clause:

"so that they may grow more in faith along with their faith"

lays emphasis on the same truth.

Consequently, believers are not supposed to stay at one stage of faith, but they need to ascend to more elevated stages through self-purification through knowledge and practice.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that:

"There are ten degrees to faith in the same manner that one ascends the steps of a ladder."[14]

Each of the two clauses closing the blessed Verse in question,

"to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth and Allah is Ever Omniscient, All-Wise,"

reflects one of the reasons lying behind believers' serenity.

The former ensures man that if he believes in God Almighty; He shall support you with all the forces of the heavens and the earth. The latter says

unto him that God Almighty is All-Aware of his needs, problems, struggles, and obedience. Having faith in these two principles will lead to his serenity and peace of mind.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 5

لِيُدْخِلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفِّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً

5. That He may admit the believing men and the believing women to Gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow [beneath trees] to abide therein forever and He may expiate from them their sins and that is with Allah a supreme salvation and success.

Descent of Divine serenity increases faith and prepares the path for being admitted to Paradise. Believers' great and real happiness and salvation lie in serenity in this world and abode in Paradise in the Hereafter.

A number of Shi'i and Sunni Qur'anic exegets narrate that upon the revelation of the opening Verses of the Chapter regarding the glad tidings to the Noble Prophet (S) as to manifest triumph, completion of Favors, Guidance, and Succor, concerned and saddened by the incident of Hudaybiyya, some Muslims said unto the Noble Prophet (S):

"Good for you since you have been promised so many Divine Bounties. What will be granted to us?"

Thus the first Verse was revealed bearing glad tidings to believers that they would be granted great rewards.[15] These Verses also treat of the Treaty of Hudaybiyya and its diverse reflections in people's thought and its fruitful consequences, specifying the fate of each group in the crucible of such ordeals.

The Verse opens by saying that another goal behind such great triumph was that believing men and women would be admitted the gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow.

They shall abide in it for good and they shall never lose such great Favor; ***("to abide therein forever").***

Furthermore,

"He may expiate from them their sins and that is with Allah a supreme salvation and success."

Thus, against the four Favors bestowed upon the Messenger of God (S) in the manifest triumph, two great Favors were also granted to believers: everlasting Paradise with all its Bounties and forgiving of their faults besides serenity and peace of mind in this world. These three Favors constitute a great triumph and a grand salvation for those who pass the ordeals with flying flags.

In the Holy Qur'an, the word fawz is often collocated with 'adim and at times with mubin and kabir. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that fawz designates victory and attainment of good things together with health when it entails salvation in the Hereafter despite losing worldly bounties.

According to a well-known narration, upon receiving the blow on his head inflicted by 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam, the criminal of the time, Imam 'Ali's (as) shouted:

"By the God of Ka'ba I attained to triumph"

(and the letter of my happiness was signed with blood of my head).

Divine Ordeals are at times so difficult and unbearable that they uproot shallow faiths and turns hearts upside down; true believers enjoying the bounty of serenity may solely persevere and reap the consequences of their perseverance in the Hereafter and it is actually the great triumph.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 6

وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّانِّينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيراً

6. And that He may chastise the hypocrites, men and women, and also the polytheist men and women who entertain evil thoughts about Allah [say that God will not support His Messenger (S)]. For them is a disgraceful torment, and the Wrath of Allah is upon them and He has cursed them and prepared Hell for them and worst indeed is that destination.

The Arabic phrase da'irat al-su' connotes unfavorable and far-reaching incident.[16] Following the treatment of the four Divine Favors bestowed upon the Noble Prophet (S) and believers in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question includes threats against hypocrites and polytheists.

The torment of hypocrites and polytheists may not connote the torment in the Hereafter but it may refer to the torments and afflictions bred by hypocrisy and polytheism with which they were entangled following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya and the conquest of Mecca.

It is narrated that God Almighty shall never afflict any servant with torment following his repentance and asking God for forgiving his sins unless he entertains suspicion against Him and loses his hope of His Favor. Then the noble Imam recited the Verse in question.[17]

"He may chastise the hypocrites, men and women, and also the polytheist men and women who entertain evil thoughts about Allah."

Upon the departure of the Noble Prophet (S) and believers from Medina, hypocrites thought that they would never return safe and sound, as it is reflected in Verse 12 of the Chapter in question:

"Nay, but you thought that the Messenger (S) and the believers would never return to their families."

The word da'ira literally designates occurrences and incidents, good and evil, happening to man, but it ad hoc is accompanied with the word su' ("bad, evil") and connotes unfavorable incidents.

The other point is that:

"the Wrath of Allah is upon them and He has cursed them."

The blessed Verse finally adds that God Almighty:

"prepared Hell for them and worst indeed is that destination."

It is worthy of note that the majority of men were Muslim at Hudaybiyya and they were opposed by hypocrite and polytheist men, but the preceding Qur'anic Verses make mention of men and women in attainment to the great triumph and being afflicted with the excruciating torment.

reason is that the believing men appearing on the battleground may never succeed without being supported by believing women and likewise,

hypocrite men may never attain to their goals without the support of hypocrite women.

Basically, the Islamic faith does not solely belong to men nor does it ignore women's characters and contributions; as a consequence of which whenever failing to mention women leads to exclusion of women, they are explicitly mentioned such that it becomes evident that the Islam faith belongs to humanity.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 7

وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزاً حَكِيماً

7. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Ever Omnipotent, All-Wise.

God Almighty works through causes and ways.

The blessed Verse in question reiterates Divine Omnipotence and Greatness, saying:

"To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Ever Omnipotent, All-Wise."

Reference to Divine Omnipotence was already mentioned when the preceding Verses treated of the exalted states and Favors bestowed upon believers. It is reiterated herein in treating of chastising hypocrites and polytheists in order to indicate that God Almighty whose Commands are followed by all the hosts of the heavens and the earth is Omnipotent everywhere.

Those worthy of enjoying His Mercy are at all times provided with the same and whenever He is Wrathful against any wrong doer, he may not flee the same. It is worthy of note that when mention is made of believers, Divine Attributes of Omniscience and Wisdom, consistent with His Mercy are mentioned, but treating of hypocrites and polytheists, His Attributes of Omnipotence and Wisdom, consistent with torment, are mentioned.

"The hosts of the heavens and the earth"

include hosts of angels and also those of lightning, earthquakes, tempests, torrents, sea waves, and also invisible forces lying beyond our knowledge since they all constitute Divine hosts and follow His Commands.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 8-9

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِداً وَمُبَشِّراً وَنَذِيراً

لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً

8. Indeed, We have sent you as a witness [over deeds], as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner,

9. In order that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger and that you assist and honor him and that you glorify [His] praises morning and evening.

The Arabic verbal form tu'azziruhu derives from 'azara ("keep from") connoting that the Noble Prophet (S) should be preserved from any harm or harassment. The word shahid ("witness") may refer to a perfect model. Applied to the Noble Prophet (S), the word indicates that he is the perfect model for humanity.

The verbal forms tu'azziruhu and tuwaqqiruhu ("honor him") may refer to God Almighty, i.e. assist and honor Him. It may also refer to the Noble Prophet (S) and it is to be noted that honoring him is honoring God Almighty.

Verse 8 is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying unto him that God Almighty sent him on the Prophetic mission such that he serves as a witness for people confirming the words of true believers and reject those uttered by hypocrites.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that:

"The Messenger is a witness over them."

It may also refer to the Noble Prophet's (S) spiritual state implying that he attained to such intuitive knowledge that he may perceive through the eyes of his head and heart that he may bear glad tidings to believers that they shall enjoy Divine Mercy and elevated states in Paradise and he may warn disbelievers and polytheists against torments in Hell as the consequences of their polytheism and disbelieve such that he may impart the final argument to people and help them purify their souls.

Verse 9 is saying that thus he may show unto people the Path of Guidance so that through their intellect, they may believe in God Almighty and His Messenger (S), assist the True Religion, defeat disbelievers, and glorify God Almighty as a token of obedience to Him in the morning and in the evening. The Arabic words bukra and asil designate morning and evening and may also refer to the prayers established at these times.

It is worthy of note that five significant injunctions are being mentioned as the causes and goals of the preceding attributes of the Noble Prophet (S).

Two injunctions concern obedience to God Almighty and glorifying Him and three Injunctions are related to obeying, defending, and honoring the elevated state of the Noble Prophet (S), saying that the goal of the Prophetic Call is that people believe in God Almighty and His Messenger (S), defend him against enemies, honor him, and glorify God Almighty in the morning and in the evening.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَن نَّكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

10. Indeed, those who give pledge to you, they are giving pledge to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his pledge breaks it only to his own harm and whosoever fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward.

Muslim leaders are supposed to lay emphasis in critical circumstances and require their adherents to pledge allegiance once again.

God Almighty is in need of no one, thus man should abstain from unfaithfulness since Divine Might is superior to everyone else. In this blessed Verse, God Almighty addresses His friend, the Noble Prophet (S), saying unto him that those who pledge their allegiance with you have in fact sworn allegiance with Him, since Divine Omnipotence far exceeds people's

might and those who have broken their allegiance have in fact broken their own character and have denigrated himself.

Au contraire, those who stand loyal to the pledge sworn with God Almighty through the Noble Prophet (S) and act upon their duties shall soon receive great Divine Rewards.

The Arabic word bay'a derives from b-y-' designating purchase and exchange.

The Verse is saying that one who swears a pledge with the Noble Prophet (S), it is as if he has entered into some transaction with God Almighty;

("Indeed, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their property for that theirs shall be the Paradise,"[18]).

God Almighty has purchased believers' lives and possessions at the price of Paradise, since swearing allegiance with the Messenger of God (S) is on a par with pledging allegiance with God Almighty.

"The Hand of Allah is over their hands"

refers to the fact that God Almighty regards the His Messenger's (S) hand like that of His own. In other words, the Noble Prophet's (S)'s hand at the time of pledging allegiance with him is actually His Hand, since His Messenger's (S) hand symbolizes that of God Almighty.

The blessed Verse reveals that swearing allegiance with the Noble Prophet (S) is in fact giving pledge to God Almighty, i.e. if God Almighty had Hands, He would regard the Noble Prophet's (S) hands like His own and giving pledge to him is in fact giving pledge to God Almighty.

The blessed Verse reflects the Noble Prophet's (S) closeness to God Almighty so that believers know that their allegiance with the Noble Prophet (S) stands precisely on a par with their allegiance with God Almighty, since the Noble Prophet (S) has attained to such elevated state of nearness to Him that he annihilated his self and has found everlastingness in Truth. Thus, his word and act stand on a par with those of God Almighty.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 11

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِم
مَّا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَن يَمْلِكُ لَكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ
كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

11. Those of the Bedouin who lagged behind [in jihad] will say unto you [in order to justify their transgressions]: "Our possessions and our families preoccupied us, so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: "Who then has any power at all [to intervene] on your behalf with Allah, if He intends you harm or intends you benefit? Nay, but Allah is Ever All-Aware of what you do.

The Arabic word 'arab is ad hoc applied to anti-social and uncultured Bedouin. Unrefined people tend to show weakness in participating in jihad. Leaders are supposed to be forward-looking, predict the words and intrigues of opponents and hypocrites and think of appropriate reactions.

The blessed Verse in question is informing the Noble Prophet (S) that the Arabs who disobeyed his orders would apologize to him. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas and Mujahid narrate that when the Noble Prophet (S) intended to

depart for Mecca for performing ‘umra pilgrimage together with a number of his companions.

Thus he summoned the Arabs living in the vicinity of Mecca bidding them to accompany him so that if the Quraysh engaged in fight with Muslims, they could render them aid. They thought that the Quraysh could defeat Muhammad (S) and his followers and they could lose their lives so they declined the Noble Prophet’s (S) request.

It was for this occasion that the blessed Verse in question was revealed informing the Noble Prophet (S) that the Arabs who failed to keep their loyalty to him following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya and pledging allegiance with him would come to him to express their apologies saying that their possessions and families preoccupied them and kept them from accompanying him.

Then they implored the Noble Prophet (S) to ask God Almighty for their forgiveness. They were hypocrites and what they uttered was not from their hearts. The blessed Verse in saying unto the Noble Prophet (S) that he needs to ask them if God Almighty intends to make them accrue benefits or harms who possesses the might to intervene on your behalf. God is All-Aware of what they do, their hypocrisy and lies. He is Omniscient of all outward and concealed affairs.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 12-13

بَلْ ظَنَنتُمْ أَن لَّن يَنقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَى أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَزُيِّنَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَنتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ وَكُنتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا

وَمَن لَّمْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا

12. “Nay, but [your disobedience and flight was because] you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return [safe and sound] to their families and that was made fair-seeming in your hearts and you did entertain an evil thought and you became a vain people going for perdition.”

13. And whosoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then truly, We have prepared for disbelievers a blazing Fire.

The Arabic word bur designates bankruptcy, disgrace, and perdition. Some deeds are evil by human natural disposition, but Satan and Concupiscence make them seem fair to man so that he may commit them. Those Arabs who had turned away from jihad thought that Muslims would all be defeated and killed; consequently, fear, meanness, deprivation, and disgrace fell into their share.

The blessed Verses in question address those Arabs saying unto them that they entertained suspicion and doubt imagining that the Messenger of Allah (S) and believers who accompanied him at Hudaybiyya would never return to Medina as they would be destroyed by the Quraysh. Satan made such evil thought seem fair to them.

“They entertained an evil thought and became a vain people going for perdition.”

Consequently, they were deprived of embarking upon that historic journey, the pledge of the tree, and other honors. It entailed such disgrace, perdition, and excruciating torment in the Hereafter.

Their hearts were dead as a consequence of which such dire fate was in store for them. Since such wrong acts sprang at times from faithlessness, Verse 13 is saying that:

"Whosoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger (S), then truly, We have prepared for disbelievers a blazing Fire."

Surah al-Fath - Verse 14

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاء وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

14. And to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He wills [and deems it appropriate] and punishes whom He wills [and deems it befitting]. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

There are some instances when God Almighty says:

"Allah forgives whom He wills and chastises whom He wills."

Taking into account Divine Justice and Wisdom, it may be said that man makes himself worthy of receiving

Divine Forgiving and Mercy and at times he makes himself unworthy of such Divine Forgiving and Mercy and accrues Divine Wrath and torment. Divine Forgiving precedes His Chastisement which indicates that the former precedes the latter.

The Arabic word sa'ir ("blazing fire") indicates that for those who fail to believe in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) is prepared a blazing fire, namely Hell.

The verbal form a'tadna ("we have prepared") and the contextual meaning of other related Verses demonstrate that Hell and Paradise exist in their places and whose gates are closed to us so long as we live but they shall be opened upon our death rather than as some have imagined will be created in the Hereafter.

It is worthy of note that Forgiving precedes torment. The close of the blessed Verse lays further emphasis on Divine Forgiving and Mercy, since these threats and warnings aim at educating people which necessitates that the path of return be open to sinners and even disbelievers; particularly owing to the point that most of such wrong deeds spring from ignorance.

Such ignorant people are supposed to be encouraged to ask for Divine Forgiving so that they may turn to the Straight Path and proceed toward belief in God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

Surah al-Fath - Verse 15

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى مَغَانِمَ لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُبَدِّلُوا كَلَآمَ اللَّهِ قُل لَّن تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِن قَبْلُ فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَآ يَفْقَهُونَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً

15. Those who lagged behind [at Hudaybiyya] will say, when you set forth to take the spoils [of Khaybar], "Allow us to follow you." They want to change Allah's Words [to the effect that those other than the

companions of Hudaybiyya were not supposed to participate at Khaybar]. Say [unto them]: "You shall not follow us. Thus Allah has said [about you] in advance." Then they will say: "Nay, you envy us [and do not want us to benefit from the spoils which is not true]." Nay, but they understand not except a little.

The majority of Qur'anic exegets maintain that these blessed Verses treat of the conquest of Khaybar occurring in 7 AH/627, one year following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya.

It is worthy of note that according to traditions, it was upon the Noble Prophet's (S) return from Hudaybiyya that by Divine Command he bore glad tidings to those participating at Hudaybiyya that Muslims would conquer Khaybar and specified that they were solely supposed to participate at the battle of Khaybar; as a consequence of which they rather than those lagging behind, could have war spoils.

However, when these timid mammonists noticed that the Noble Prophet (S) shall definitely be triumphant at the prospective war and many spoils shall fall into the share of the army of Muslims took the opportunity to come to him asking for permission to take part in the battle of Khaybar.

They resorted to the apology that they intended to compensate for their past faults, repent of their sins, and serve the cause of the Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an with sincerity! They were ignorant of the revelation of the Qur'anic Verses that disclosed their secret intentions:

"Those who lagged behind [at Hudaybiyya] will say, when you set forth to take the spoils [of Khaybar], 'Allow us to follow you.' They want to change Allah's Words [to the effect that those other than the companions of Hudaybiyya were not supposed to participate at Khaybar]."

It may be noted that in other instances such avaricious, indolent, and self-indulgent people fled hardships and perils and aimed at accruing mammons which entailed less hardships.

At any rate, the blessed Qur'anic Verses in question provides an answer to these opportunists:

"They want to change Allah's Words."

Then, it is further added:

"You shall not follow us."

It is not what the Noble Prophet (S) says of his own, but

"Thus Allah has said [about you] in advance"

informing Muslims of your future deeds. It is Divine Command that the spoils of Khaybar shall fall into the share of the companions of Hudaybiyya and others are not supposed to accompany them in this respect.

It is worthy of note that such shameless defectors persist in their false claims and accuse Muslims of entertaining envy;

"Then they will say: "Nay, you envy us."

Thus, they even impliedly refute the Noble Prophet's (S) words, claiming that they enviously impede them from taking part in the battle of Khaybar!

The blessed Verse closes thus:

"Nay, but they understand not except a little."

Their misfortunes spring from their ignorance regarding God Almighty, the elevated state of His Messenger (S), man's fate, and transience of

worldly possessions. It is true that they were clever and precise in financial matters and personal gains, but they were too ignorant to exchange whatever they had with transient mammons.

Finally, the Noble Prophet (S), as per historical accounts, distributed the spoils of the battle of Khaybar amongst the companions of Hudaybiyya, even the person present at Khaybar who failed to participate in the battle of Khaybar, received a share. He is no one but Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah Ansari.[19]

Surah al-Fath - Verse 16

قُل لِّلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسْلِمُونَ فَإِن تُطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّن قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

16. Say unto the Bedouin who lagged behind: “You shall be called [soon] to fight against a people given to great warfare, then you shall fight them, or they shall convert to Islam. Then if you obey [and embrace the Prophetic Call], Allah will give you a fair reward; but if you turn away as you did turn away before, He will chastise you with a painful torment.”

We are supposed to leave the path of return open to defectors without depriving them of the same for good. Muslims are supposed to possess such military means and might that they be able to defeat their mighty enemies and make them surrender;

“You shall be called [soon] to fight against a people given to great warfare, then you shall fight them, or they shall convert to Islam.”

People reveal their inward secrets, sincerity, and hypocrisy in battleground.

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S):

“O Muhammad (S)! Say unto those Arabs who disobeyed the Messenger’s (S) command and failed to accompany believers at Hudaybiyya and then offered their apologies and intended to participate at the battle of Khaybar with believers in order to have a share of spoils.

“You shall be called [soon] to fight against a mighty and bold. You need to confront them in battle so that they convert to the Islamic faith or surrender. If you Arabs obey Divine Commands and fight for Allah’s cause, He will grant you fair reward, but if you turn away from departing for Mecca, as you did earlier, you will be chastised by God Almighty with excruciating torment. Now, who were these mighty warriors referred to in the blessed Verse in question?”

The sentence:

“You shall fight them or they shall convert to Islam”

demonstrates that they were not people of the Book, since they could not be required to embrace the Islamic faith as they are free to choose between conversion to the Islamic faith or recognition of the conditions of paying tribute to the Islamic state and living under the protection of Islamic rule through peaceful coexistence with Muslims.

Only polytheists and idolaters have to convert to the Islamic faith, since Islam does not recognize idolatry as a religion and it is permitted to force idolaters to forgo idolatry.

Notes

1. Majma’ al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 108.
2. Thawab al-A’mal, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 46.
3. Majma’ al-Bayan, loc. cit.
4. 44:13
5. 15:1
6. 16:103
7. 7:184
8. 48:1
9. 33:36
10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
11. 5:3
12. 3:151
13. 33:39
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 165.
15. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 26, p. 85; Tafsir Abu al-Futuh Razi, vol. 10, p. 26; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma’ani, vol. 26, p. 86.
16. Raghib’s Mufradat.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 399.
18. 9:112
19. Ibn Hisham's Sira, vol. 3, p. 364.

Surah al-Fath, Verses 17 - 29

Surah al-Fath - Verse 17

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَآ عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَآ عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنهَارُ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

17. No sin is there upon the blind, nor is there sin upon the lame, nor is there sin upon the sick [that they turn away from fighting in Allah's cause]. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens [of Paradise] beneath [whose trees] rivers flow; and whosoever turns back, He will chastise him with a painful torment.

Legislators are supposed to attend to all legal aspects and stipulate specific laws for special cases (e.g. the lame, the blind, and the ailing). The disabled will not be deprived of being admitted to Paradise unless they obey Divine Commands to the best of their abilities.

It is reported on the occasion of the blessed Verse in question that upon being apprised of the order of engaging in jihad, the disabled entertained fear and informed the Noble Prophet (S) of their disabilities to participate in battles together with other believers and they were anxious of their fates.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed as per which there is no sin upon the blind, the lame, and the ailing if they fail to take part in jihad.

Irrespective of the occasion of revelation, it is evident that it applies to all religious obligations.

Thus,

"Whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger"

refers that believers are supposed to obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S) in all cases, be it concerning jihad or otherwise, and those who are disabled and owing to their disabilities fail to perform a number of their obligations, they shall be rewarded with Divine Bounties so long as they obey Allah and His Prophet (S).

Au contraire, those who are able to obey Allah and His Messenger (S) but they fail to act likewise shall be chastised with excruciating torments.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 18-19

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

18. Verily, Allah was pleased with believers when they gave pledge to you under the tree [at Hudaybiyya]: He knew what was in their hearts [of faith and sincerity] and He sent down serenity upon them, and He rewarded them with a near triumph.

19. And abundant spoils that they will capture. And Allah is Ever Omnipotent, All-Wise.

Giving pledge is a religious obligation whose keeping is obligatory and whose breaking is unlawful and entails evil consequences. God Almighty is satisfied with the faith accompanied by loyalty to His Messenger (S). It is noteworthy that religion is not discrete from politics. God is satisfied with

the believers pledging allegiance with their Prophet (S) in social and political issues.

The blessed Verses are revealed on the occasion of the allegiance pledged at Hudaybiyya hence its designation bay'a al-ridhwan. Believers gave their pledge to the Messenger of God (S) beneath a tree well-known as the tree of sammara (shajara al-sammara) at the village of Hudaybiyya.

God Almighty was Aware that their pledge was devoid of sincerity and they obey the Messenger of Allah (S) in jihad. Consequently the blessed Verses in question were revealed to bear glad tidings to believers that owing to their pledge four things fell into their share:

1. Obtaining Divine Satisfaction which is the most exalted Bounty.
2. Fortitude and perseverance through which their hearts find confidence and they persevere in their faith.
3. Triumph which will shall into their faith soon, be it in the conquest of Khaybar, or as some maintain the conquest of Mecca.
4. Abundant spoils which fall into their share. God Almighty is Omnipotent and Truthful and He acts upon Wisdom.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 20

وَعَدَكُمُ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنكُمْ
وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا

20. Allah has promised you abundant spoils that you will capture and He has hastened for you this [the spoils of Khaybar] and He has restrained the hands of men from [inflicting harm upon] you that it may be a sign [and a lesson] for believers and that He may guide you to the Straight Path.

The preceding two Verses bore the glad tidings of early triumph which according to a number of Qur'anic exegets, e.g. Tabari, Shaykh Tusi, Zamakhshari, Maraghi, and Tabarsi, allude to the conquest of Khaybar. The fortress of Khaybar located two hundred kilometers from Medina.

The fortress had lofty fortifications and ten thousand Jews resided in it and were engaged in agricultural activities in its vicinity. This remarkably fortified fortress had an extraordinary and heavy gate which could be moved by forty people.

Since Khaybar had turned into the enemy base and the spy den of the opponents of the Islamic faith, Muslims departed for Khaybar one month following the Treaty of Hudaybiyya. In the outset, Muslims were headed by those who failed to do anything, until the Noble Prophet (S) said that he would give the banner to one who had obtained the satisfaction of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), one who is loved.

He handed the banner to Imam 'Ali (as) the next day. Imam 'Ali (as) departed for the colossal fortress of Khaybar with the Muslim army.

A Jew from the top the wall asked him:

"Who are you?"

He replied:

"I am 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."

The Jew shouted:

"O Jews! You shall be defeated."

It was at that time that Mirhab, the Jewish castellan proceeded to the gate to fight ‘Ali (as). ‘Ali (as) forcefully dislocated the gate and threw it aside, thus Muslims could enter the castle and conquer it.[1]

At any rate, the blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty has promised to reward believers before long with abundant spoils and impede the enemy from inflicting harm upon them. He made the conquest of Khaybar happen earlier so that believers entertain no doubts as to the words of the Noble Prophet (S) regarding their triumph.

It is definitely a reference to the conquest of Khaybar which occurred prior to the conquest of Mecca in the same year at Hudaybiyya. Further details are to be found in exegetic and historical sources.

The blessed Verse proceeds with two further Bounties:

“That it may be a sign [and a lesson] for believers and that He may guide you to the Straight Path.”

Surah al-Fath - Verse 21

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا

21. And other [triumphs and spoils] which are not yet within your power [will fall into your share], but Allah compasses them. And Allah is All-Able to do all things.

Promising the achievement of spoils in future rests on Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience. Qur’anic Verses engender trust in God Almighty and educating monotheists.

The blessed Verse in question informs believers that another spoil shall also fall into your share which stays beyond your power at the time or you are unaware that it is encompassed by Divine Omnipotence but its occurrence is predetermined.

What was beyond their power at the time could be the conquest of Mecca or other bounties fallen into the share of Muslims at the lifetime of the Noble Prophet (S). However, the wide application of the Verse and the word “abundant” in the preceding Verse include all the spoils to fall into the share of Muslims to the last day.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 22-23

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوُا الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلاً

22. And if those who disbelieve fight against you [they fail to confront you and] they certainly will retreat and turn their backs. Then they will find neither a protector nor a helper.

23. That [your triumph and disbelievers’ fear of being defeated] has been the Way of Allah with those who passed away formerly and you will not find any alteration in the Way of Allah.

Weak Muslims attained to such might that their enemies could not stand against them. One who is not supported by God Almighty has no helper.

In the prayer of ‘Arafa Imam Husayn (as) thus addresses God Almighty:

“One who has you [as a helper] has everything, but one who does not have you, has nothing.”

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty informs His Messenger (S) that if the disbelievers from Banu Asad and Qatafan intend to wage war with Muslims, He will cast fear into their heart so that they turn away from battle and flee. Disbelievers will be defeated, denigrated, and helpless at all times, since they have neither friend nor helper. It is an allusion to the truth that God Almighty is the only true friend and support.

One who has not entered the stronghold of

"There is no god, but Allah"

has no refuge and may not achieve any success.

Verse 23 is saying that it has always been the Way of Allah that Truth and the followers of Truth are triumphant at all times as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Indeed, it is I and My Messengers who shall be the triumphant"[2].

It is evident that:

"Verily, falsehood is ever bound to vanish"[3],

since falsehood disappears before truth and things other than God Almighty and His Signs are false and nothing.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 24

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُم بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِن بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا

24. And He it is Who has withheld their hands from you [at Hudaybiyya] and your hands from them in the midst of Mecca after He had made you triumphant over them. And Allah is Ever the All-Seer of what you do. [All triumphs and progresses are dependent upon Divine Will.]

The blessed Verse in question is saying that He is the One who withheld disbelievers from inflicting harm upon you at the heart of Mecca as he withheld your hands from them after He had made you victorious over them. God Almighty is the All-Seer of what you do.

Indeed, this account was a clear instance of

"manifest triumph"

in Qur'anic terms. A limited number without sufficient equipment entered the land of the enemy who had embarked upon military expedition against Medina and had left no stone unturned to defeat them. However, now that the limited number of Muslims penetrated their land they fearful that offered the peace treaty.

Could there be any more significant triumph that they conquered the enemy without the least bloodshed?

The Treaty of Hudaybiyya was indubitably a defeat for the Quraysh and a triumph for Muslims throughout the Arabian Peninsula since Muslims were able to cast fear into the hearts of their enemies. In other words, withholding from waging war is a reference to the Treaty of Hudaybiyya, since Meccan polytheists had prepared themselves for engaging in war against Muslims and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) had pledged allegiance with Muslims to stay loyal to him.

Thus both parties were prepared to confront each other.

In the Treaty of Hudaybiyya, God Almighty impeded polytheists from attacking Muslims on the one hand and hindered Muslims from killing polytheists on the other. There were two reasons behind the treaty which were Bounties: preservation of the sanctity of the sacred precinct of Mecca which was not to be defiled by Muslims and the other Bounty was the ten year truce stipulated in the treaty in which the number of Muslims was on the increase.

Since Muslims did not shed the blood of any of the Meccans, they went on pilgrimage the following year and three years after that they gloriously conquered Mecca. These Bounties were all the consequences of the treaty. Had some polytheists been fallen, peace, truce, pilgrimage in the following years, preservation of the sanctity of Mecca, and perhaps the conquest of Mecca would have been impossible.

Consequently, the Treaty of Hudaybiyya has been regarded as

"manifest triumph"

which paved the path of penetration and propagation of the Islamic faith.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 25

هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيَ مَعْكُوفًا أَن يَبْلُغَ مَحِلَّهُ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاء مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَن تَطَؤُوهُمْ فَتُصِيبَكُم مِّنْهُم مَّعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاء لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

25. They are the ones who disbelieved and hindered you from al-Masjid al-Haram and detained the sacrificial animals from reaching their place of sacrifice. Had there not been believing men and believing women [in Mecca] whom you did not know [owing to the command as to attack], that you may sill them and on whose account a sin would have been committed by you without [your] knowledge [We would have issued the command of waging war and attacking Mecca and confrontation with these disbelievers, but we did not issue such command], that Allah might bring into His Mercy whom He wills, if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment.

The Arabic word ma'kuf is employed in the sense of an animal kept for sacrifice. The word mu'takif designates someone who makes himself bound to something or a place for some sacred cause. The word ma'arra indicates loss and the verbal form tazayyalu signifies "they had been apart."

The blessed Verse in question treats of Divine Favors bestowed upon believers such that war and bloodshed were removed from the people of Mecca for the safety of believers.

Thus it is said that though Meccan polytheists prevented Muslims from entering Masjid al-Haram and returned the seventy camels brought by the Noble Prophet as sacrificial animals from the sacrificial place, God Almighty lifted the command of war, since believing men and women lived in Mecca who concealed their belief out of fear and had there occurred a war between Meccan polytheists and Muslims, they would have perished without they being aware of the same and they would have been grieved.

Concerning the reason for accepting the truce with Mu'awiya, Imam Hasan (as) said:

"I avoided war out of discretion and defending their blood." [4]

Thus, God Almighty bestowed His Mercy upon Meccan believers and provided them with safety against being killed. It is also worthy of note that the prodosis of the law ("if") apodosis is deleted, in other words, had it not been for providing Meccan believers with safety against their lives, We would have commanded jihad against Meccans and you would have conquered them.

To lay further emphasis, the blessed Verse in question thus closes:

"Had there not been believing men and believing women whom you did not know, that you may sill them and on whose account a sin would have been committed by you without [your] knowledge, that Allah might bring into His Mercy whom He wills, if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment."

The verbal form tazayyalu ("they had been apart") derives from the root z-w-l ("disperse, scatter, break up, separate").

Based on numerous traditions cited in Shi'i and Sunni sources concerning the blessed Verse in question, it could be said that there were believers living amongst disbelievers and it was for their safety and God Almighty did not chastise disbelievers.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), he was asked:

"Was 'Ali (as) not mighty and perseverant in God's religion?"

The Noble Imam replied:

"Yes, he was."

He was again asked:

"Why did he not destroy disbelievers and hypocrites when he conquered them? What did impede him from doing the same?"

Imam Sadiq (as) replied:

"Owing to one Qur'anic Verse."

He was asked about the Verse and he answered:

"The Verse in which God Almighty says:

'if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment.'"

Then the Noble Imam (as) added:

"There were believers under Divine custody residing with disbelievers and hypocrites and 'Ali (as) did not intend to kill fathers so that those under custody become apparent … and also our Riser (qa'im) of the Ahl al-Bayt ("the Noble Prophet's family") will not rise until such believers under Divine custody become apparent." [5]

God Almighty is Aware that a number of their children will voluntarily convert to the Islamic faith and it is for their sake that He exempts fathers from immediate chastisement.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 26

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

26. When those who disbelieve had entertained in their hearts pride and arrogance, the pride and arrogance of the time of ignorance, then Allah sent down His serenity upon His Messenger and upon believers [and they prepared themselves for peace] and made them adhere to the truth of fear of God and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah is the Omniscient of all things.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the account of the Quraysh whose arrogance and false pride of the time of ignorance and also their hatred against the Messenger of God (S) made them impede the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions who had set to enter Mecca, his hometown, on pilgrimage.

Although it was difficult for the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions, but since it was according to Divine Wisdom they had to tolerate them and their harms until the time of triumph and conquest arrives. Thus, they had to make peace with them and abstain from waging war and bloodshed.

Since it was Divine Wisdom and discretion, God Almighty:

"sent down His serenity upon His Messenger and upon believers"

so that they receive perseverance and serenity and obey Divine Command.

"And made them adhere to the truth of fear of God"

indicates that God Almighty made believers persevere in the fear of God which is

"There is no god but Allah,"

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,"

or

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,"

with which the Quraysh failed to be satisfied and desist from entertaining the arrogance of the time of ignorance and disobeying Divine Command, though it was hard for believers to return without having gone on pilgrimage to Mecca.

"They were well entitled to it and worthy of it"

since believers, as required by faith, were God fearing and more entitled or worthy of fear of God Almighty or being granted serenity. Fear of God Almighty, the fruit of faith, had penetrated into their hearts, since whoever is more perseverant in faith entertains more fear of God. The believers accompanying the Noble Prophet (S) at Hudaybiyya persevered in faith and fear of God.

"Allah is the Omniscient of all things"

indicates that God Almighty is All-Aware of things in the world in terms of betterment and corruption. He was All-Aware that the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions were not supposed to go on pilgrimage to Ka'ba, but it was better for them to depart for Mecca that year and accept the peace treaty as the prerequisite for facile conquest of Mecca to happen in future.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 27

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِن شَاء اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَآ تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِن دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

27. Verily, Allah shall fulfill the true vision which He showed unto His Messenger in very truth. Truly, you shall enter al-Masjid al-Haram if Allah wills, secure, having your heads shaved, and having your hair cut short, entertaining no fear. He knew what you knew not and He granted besides that a near triumph.

Prophets' dreams are among those which definitely come true. One of the manifestations of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an is that it was prognosticated that Muslims would enter Masjid al-Haram in security and the same was realized. Man is unaware of the favorable or unfavorable consequences of his deeds; as a consequence of which his should obey God Almighty.

Muslims though about entering Mecca but God Almighty was Aware that the consequences of making peace would be far better. In fact, God Almighty made His Messenger's (S) vision come true, since it was a true vision rather than a confused dream.

Its postponement was based on Wisdom. One of the reasons lying behind such postponement was to test believers' perseverance so that perseverant believers be distinguished from non-perseverant ones.

The li- in li-tadkhulunna is an intensifying particle, though a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that it is employed as a particle of oath indicating by God! God willingly, they will enter Masjid al-Haram the following year in triumph and glory, in which case, li-tadkhulunna is the prodosis.

It is said that

"If God wills"

designates that whoever God wills will enter since a number of companions might decease or there might be some other hindrance for them. Thus, whoever God Almighty wills and obeys the Messenger's (S) command will be triumphant and will enter in safety with their heads shaved and following performance of pilgrimage rituals.

"If God wills"

may also instruct believers to utter the formula before embarking upon doing anything. God Almighty was Aware of something of which believers were unaware and thereby preordained that prior to the conquest of Mecca there was to precede another triumph which was either the conquest of Khaybar or the Treaty of Hudaybiyya.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 28

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

28. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion that He may make it superior to all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness.

The secret behind the triumph of the Islamic faith is Divine Guidance and Truth;

("He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion").

Conquering falsehood by Truth is an ideal which may solely be realized by God Almighty. It is attested many a time in the Holy Qur'an that Islam is superior to all religions.

The superiority may indicate Islam's superiority in terms of scholarship, logic, and argument which has always been so, or it may also make a reference to the future when the Islamic faith will encompass the world over, when the inheritors of the earth will be righteous servants of God Almighty as the sovereignty of Islam wielded its sway in a vast area in the latter half of the first/seventh century.

The pronoun huwa

("He")

in the blessing Verse in question refers to Divine Truth and Simple Essence, in other words, God Almighty is He Who sent down His Messenger (S) with the means of Guidance, i.e. many a miracle, the Inimitable Qur'anic Verses, and manifest religion and laws and made him conquer disbelievers so that the religion of Truth, i.e. the Islamic faith, be manifest to all peoples and followers of different religions and they recognize that the religion of Truth is the Islamic faith and there exist no doubt for anyone as to its Divine Truth.

"And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness"

reflects that the Pure Essence of God Almighty is sufficient to bear witness to His Messenger's (S) Prophethood and Truth in his words and deeds.

Qur'anic exegets disagree on the manner of the superiority and triumph of the Islamic faith over all other religions. Some maintain that the superiority lies in logical and argumentative aspects saying that such superiority has realized since in terms of logic and argument, the Islamic faith is superior to all other religions.

Some other Qur'anic exegets hold that superiority (li-yudhirahu) is employed in the outward sense of the word since it is attested in the same sense. thus, it may be said that many a vast area throughout the world are within the territory of Islam and in modern times, more than forty Muslim countries with a population of approximately one billion are under the banner of Islamic faith, but a time shall arrive in which all the world hold the same banner and it will attain to perfection through the Rise of Mahdi (as).

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"There will remain no house made from stone and mud, nor do tents made from wool and hair unless Allah makes the name of Islam enter them."

The eminent scholar Tabarsi in his Majma' al-Bayan cites a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) which is an interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, saying:

"The Promise given in this Verse shall realize at the Rise of Mahdi (as) from the family of the Noble Prophet (S). On that day, there shall remain no one on the face of the earth but those who acknowledge the Truth of Muhammad's (S) Prophethood."[6]

On the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, Shaykh Saduq in his Ikmal al-Din narrates a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as), saying:

"By Allah! The meaning of the Verse is yet to realize and it shall solely realize when the Riser rises. Upon his Rise, there shall be no one denying belief in God Almighty throughout the world."

The traditions concerning the Rise of Mahdi (as) are such that no Muslim scholar from any denomination may deny their consecutive transmission (tawatur). Many a book have been written in this respect whose authors have unanimously acknowledged the reliability of the traditions concerning the reformer of the world, Imam Mahdi (as).

These traditions are attested in many a well-known Islamic source including sunan, ma'ajim, and masanid books among which mention may be made of the following: the Sunan compiled by Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, Ibn 'Amr al-Dani; Masanid compiled by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Ya'la, Bazzaz; Hakim's Sahih; Ma'ajim (Kabir and Mutawassit) compiled by Tabarani, Ruyani, Dar Qutni; Abu Nu'aym's Akhbar Mahdi; Khatib's Ta'rikh Baghdad; Ibn 'Asakir's Ta'rikh Dimashq.

It is worthy of note that a number of Muslim scholars have written books devoted to such traditions, e.g. Abu Nu'aym's Akhbar Mahdi; Ibn Hajar Haythami's al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntadar; Shukani's al-Tawdhih fi Tawatur Ma Ja'a fi al-Muntadar wa al-Dajjal wa al-Masih; Idris 'Iraqi Maghribi's al-Mahdi; Abu al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Maghribi's al-Wahm al-Maknun fi al-Radd 'ala Ibn Khaldun.

A number of earlier and later scholars have also explicitly mentioned that the traditions narrated concerning Mahdi (May God Almighty Hasten His Rise) are indubitably consecutive in their chains of transmission, e.g. al-Sakhawi in Kitab al-Fath al-Mughith; Muhammad ibn Ahmad Safawini's Sharh al-'Aqida; Abu al-Hasan al-Abri's Manaqib al-Shafi'i; Ibn Taymiyya's Fatawi; Suyuti's al-Hawi; Idris 'Iraqi's al-Mahdi (as); Shukani's al-Tawdhih fi Tawatur Ma Ja'a fi al-Muntadar; Muhammad Ja'far Kinani's Nadm al-Tanathur; Abu al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min's al-Wahm al-Maknun.

The aforesaid traditions are cited in most of Shi'i tradition compendia and Qur'anic exegetic works under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 29

مُّحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاء عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاء بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِم مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

29. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down in prostration, seeking Bounty and Satisfaction from Allah. The mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. But their description in the Gospel is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it

strong and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward.

Muslims need to be severe, decisive, and firm against enemies;

("And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers").

The blessed Verse in question presents a clear depiction of the Noble Prophet's (S) companions, adherents, and those who followed him illustrating it with expressions from the Torah and the Gospel which is a source of glory and pride for those who persevered at Hudaybiyya. It also provides Muslims of all ages with a lesson.

The blessed Verse opens with:

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

It does not matter whether men of insignificance like Suhayl ibn 'Amr like it or not or hide themselves from the sun shining on the entire world. God Almighty bears witness to His Prophethood and believers who are aware of it bear witness to the same. The blessed Verse then proceeds to present a depiction of the Noble Prophet's (S) companions and followers.

Thus it depicts their outward and inward characteristics and also their thoughts, emotions, and deeds by enumerating five attributes.

Firstly,

"Those who are with him are severe against disbelievers."

Secondly, they are

"merciful among themselves."

Believers are like a hearth of emotions and love for their brethren, friends, and co-religionists and they are similar to a blazing and burning fire and a solid and hard wall against enemies.

In fact, their emotions may be summarized in their love and wrath; however, the existence of the twain is by no means inconsistent with each other, nor do their wrath against enemies and their love for their friends make them leave the path of Truth and Justice.

The third attribute treats of their deeds:

"You see them bowing and falling down in prostration."

The expression of serving and worshipping God Almighty is depicted by the two main pillars of

"bowing"

and

"falling down in prostration"

as their permanent states. Such worship reflects submission to Divine Command and negation of arrogance and false pride.

The fourth characteristic reflects their sincere intention:

"seeking Bounty and Good Pleasure from Allah."

They neither resort to pretension nor do they expect people to reward them, but they are solely attentive toward Divine Satisfaction and Bounty. It constitutes their only incentive in their lives.

The expression:

"Divine Bounty"

reflects their confession to their faults and regarded their deeds less worthy of Divine Reward.

Despite making efforts, they still say:

"O God! Woe unto us if you do not bestow Your Bounty upon us!"

The fifth and the last depiction treats of their fair-seeming appearance:

"The mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration."

The Arabic word sima literally denotates

"mark"

be it on the face or other parts of the body. The word, however, is employed in modern Persian in the sense of "appearance." In other words, their "appearance" clearly reflects that they are humble people before God Almighty, right, law, and justice and it is not only reflected on their faces, but also all their being and life indicate the same.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question that the mark of their faces indicates:

"wakefulness at night for establishing prayer"

whose marks are visible on their faces during the day.[7]

It is worthy of note that these meanings and interpretations are all consistent.

Following such depictions, the Holy Qur'an adds:

"That is their [the Noble Prophet's companions] description in the Torah."

This truth is already mentioned in the Scriptures revealed more than one thousand years ago. However, it should be borne in mind that the expression:

"those who were with him"

refers to those who stood with the Noble Prophet (S) in terms of thought, beliefs, ethics, and practice, rather than his contemporaries some of whom differed with him in the aforesaid terms.

The Holy Qur'an proceeds to treat of their description in the Gospel, saying:

"Their description in the Gospel is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers."

The Arabic word shat'a denotes "sprout; chicken" but the word ad hoc signifies offshoot. Azara derives from '-z-r ("support, back up"). The verbal form astaghlada derives from gh-l-d ("become strong").

The clause istawa 'ala suqihi means "It is so strong that it stands on its own," though the word suq indicates "stem, stalk." The expression yu'jab al-zura' signifies that fast growth and abundant sprouts and crops are to such an extent that even farmers who are at all times engaged in such things are perplexed.

Such people with these descriptions never cease for one single moment, but they always grow, sprout, and bear crops. They propagate the Islamic faith at all times throughout the world through their words and deeds and add to the number of the Muslim community each and every day. They never stop, but they always proceed and despite being pious, they are warriors too.

Despite being warriors, they are comely both outwardly and inwardly. They have vigorous emotions and pure intentions. They represent Divine Wrath in the face of enemies and reflect Divine Mercy and Favor before the friends of God Almighty.

The blessed Verse in question proceeds to say that such exalted characteristics, fast growth, and blissful movement serve as a source of encouragement for friends, but at the same time, enrages disbelievers;

("He may enrage the disbelievers with them").

Thus the blessed Verse in question closes:

"Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward."

It goes without saying that the characteristics mentioned in the opening of the blessed Verse encompassed faith

and righteous good deeds. Thus, reiteration of these two characteristics makes a reference to its continuity. In other words, God Almighty has solely promised those among the Noble Prophet's (S) companions that they remain in his line and perpetuate faith and righteous good deeds; otherwise, those who were among his friends and companions one day and left him the day after proceeding another path contrary to his will never be rewarded by God Almighty.

It is also worthy of note that the clause

"And those who are with him"

does not indicate physical association and companionship with the Noble Prophet (S), since hypocrites associated with him, but "with him" definitely indicates being with him in terms of faith and fearing God Almighty. Thus, we may never make use of the blessed Verse in question to come to a conclusion regarding all the contemporaries and companions of the Noble Prophet (S).

It is interesting, however, that modern Muslims have distanced from the impressive guideline of the Verse and the descriptions provided in it regarding true believers and the companions of the Noble Prophet (S) and at times enter into such conflicts with one another, entertain hatred, and embark upon bloodshed and the enemies of the Islamic faith have never embarked upon the same!

At times, they establish such friendly ties with disbelievers that it sounds as if they are brothers descending from the same forefathers. Such bowing and prostration, sincere intentions, desire for Divine Bounty, reflection of the marks of prostration on faces, growth, sprouting, invigoration, and standing on one's feet are not visible.

It is also noteworthy that the more we have distanced from these Qur'anic precepts, the more we have entangled ourselves in pain and humility; but we are unaware of the sources of blows inflicted upon us. False pride and arrogance of the time of ignorance impedes thinking, revision, and return to the Holy Qur'an.

O Lord! Awaken us from such perilous and deep sleep!

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 216-221. Besides Ibn Athir, the well-known Sunni historian, all Shi'i and Sunni historians and Qur'anic exegets have reported the account with minor alterations in details.

2. 58:21

3. 17:81

4. Ibn Athir, Kamil, vol. 3, p. 205, apud Imam dar 'Iyninnat Jami'a, p. 128; see also Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi; Majma' al-Bayan under the blessed Verse in question.

5. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 70. Numerous traditions are cited in this respect.

6. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 5, p. 25; Tafsir Qurtubi, under 24:55, vol. 7, p. 4692.

7. Man la Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih and Rawdhat al-Wa'idhin, apud Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 78.

Surah al-Hujurat, Chapter 49

(The Rooms)

Section (juz'): 26

Number of Verses: 18

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter in question has eighteen Verses and it was revealed in Medina. The Arabic word hujurat is the plural form of hujra. The fourth Verse of the Chapter treats of the rooms of the Noble Prophet's (S) house, hence the designation Hujurat ("rooms").

The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who recites Surah al-Hujurat every night or every day, shall be regarded as one of the visitors of Prophet Muhammad (S)."

It goes without saying that visiting the Noble Prophet (S) stands second to acting upon the rules mentioned herein concerning the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), since recitation is at all times a prelude to practice.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

1. O you who believe! Make not [a decision] in advance before Allah and His Messenger and fear Allah. Indeed! Allah is All-Hearing, Omniscient.

The three Chapters titled Ma'ida, Hujurat, and Mumtahana, opening with the clause:

"O you who believe!"

treat of social and political issues.

The blessed Verse in question intends to educate believers like angels, since the Holy Qur'an says regarding them:

"They speak not until He has spoken, and they act upon His Command"[1].

The instances of making decisions in advance before the Noble Prophet (S) are not attested in the Holy Qur'an so that it includes prohibitions of making decisions in advance in doctrinal, socio-political, economic, and other issues in words and deeds.

God Almighty strictly forbids making decisions in advance before the leader of the Islamic community, since one who makes decisions in advance before God Almighty and His Messenger (S), causes disorder in the management of the Islamic system, leads the society to chaos, and in fact plays with the legislative system through his personal inclinations.

Acting upon the blessed Verse in question prevents from the emergence of many a flaw, since following surmises , inclination toward innovation,

hasty judgment, and so-called liberal thoughts may at times lead man to making decisions that involuntarily does so in advance before God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

In like manner, some people aspiring to worship God Almighty, be decisive, revolutionary, pious, and leading a simple life make decisions in advance before God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and became more catholic than the Pope.

Therefore, acknowledging and acting upon social customs or secular laws and regulations which are not based upon the Holy Qur'an, traditions of the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as), and human intellect and his natural and innate disposition (fitra) are all instances of making decisions in advance before God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

At any rate, God Almighty addresses believers in the blessed Verse in question saying:

"O you who believe! Make not [a decision] in advance before Allah and His Messenger (S)."

Believers are hereby asked not to obey anyone besides God Almighty and His Messenger (S). They are supposed not to say anything against the Book and Prophetic traditions (sunna).

"Fear Allah"

and withhold from disobeying Divine Commands and know that:

"Indeed! Allah is All-Hearing, Omniscient."

He hears your words and He is All-Aware of your deeds.

It is worthy of note that a number of Qur'anic exegets concerning the occasion of the revelation of the blessed Verse in question have said that it makes a reference to the deeds of some Muslims who performed some of their devotion rituals prior to their due time; as a consequence of which the blessed Verse in question was revealed to forbid them from embarking upon the same.[2] For the sake of brevity, other views are not mentioned herein.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَآ تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَآ تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَآ تَشْعُرُونَ

2. O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest [for the sake of such indecency] your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not.

The preceding Verse forbade believers from making decisions in advance before the Messenger of Allah (S) and Divine Commands and the blessed Verse in question treats of speaking aloud in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S).

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"Make not the calling of the Messenger (S) among you as you call one another."

The blessed Verse in questions says:

"Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not."

The first clause,

"Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet,"

designates that such manner of speech before the Noble Prophet (S) is an act of indecency. One is not supposed to show such indecency before one's parents and teachers either.

The following clause,

"nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another,"

may either lay further emphasis on the preceding one or make a reference to a novel point which is forbidding believers to address the Noble Prophet (S) by the phrase:

"O Muhammad!"

rather than

"O Messenger of Allah!"

Regarding the difference between the twain clauses, a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the former indicates that in speaking to the Noble Prophet (S) people were not supposed to raise their voices above his voice and the latter designates that when the Noble Prophet (S) was silent and people were talking to him, they were not supposed to raise their voices either.

It goes without saying that if such acts of indecency aim at affronting the most exalted state of Prophethood, they will lead to disbelief and without aiming at abusing his most exalted state, they will be regarded as abuse and sin. It is evident that the former results in rendering one's good deeds fruitless, since disbelief leads to the same.

The latter may also lead to the same since such acts of indecency end in rendering many a righteous good deed fruitless owing to committing certain sins; in like manner, some of the sins committed may be definitely absolved through righteous good deeds. It is worthy of note that it is a general rule concerning righteous good deeds and sins and the same stands to reason as well.

According to a tradition, upon the revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Thabit ibn Qays, the preacher of the Noble Prophet (S) who was loud spoken, said:

"It was I who raised my voice above that of the Noble Prophet (S). My righteous good deeds have been all rendered fruitless and I am one of the people of the Hell."

Informed of his words, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"It is not so. He is one of the people of Paradise, since he acted upon his duty when he delivered a sermon for believers or against opponents."[4]

Likewise, it was in the battle of Hunayn and at the behest of the Noble Prophet (S) that 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib called loudly to deserters to return.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 3

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِندَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

3. Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger (for the sake of good manners and their respect for him], they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested [and prepared] for [entertaining] piety. For them are forgiveness and a great reward.

The Arabic word ghadhdh is used in the sense of "lower, cast down."

It is employed in the Holy Qur'an in the senses of lowering one's voice and glance; for instance, lower one's glance to avoid from looking at those outside the circle of close kinship as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Tell the believing men to lower their glance [from looking at forbidden things and persons]"[5].

It should be borne in mind that we have to censure the wrong-doing and encourage the good-doing.

The preceding blessed Verse reproaches those who raised their voices in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S) and the blessed Verse in question and the following ones encourage decent people;

("Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger (for the sake of good manners and their respect for him], they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested [and prepared] for [entertaining] piety. For them are forgiveness and a great reward").

At any rate, the blessed Verse makes a reference to the pious whose characteristics includes speaking softly in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S) and never raise their voices above that of the Noble Prophet (S), since his exalted state and grandeur have penetrated in their hearts such that they are so modest that they never raise their voices before him but they lower them. Divine Reward and Forgiving are in store for such people.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verses 4-5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِن وَرَاء الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَآ يَعْقِلُونَ

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

4. Indeed those who call you from behind the rooms, most of them refrain from intellection.

5. And if they had patience till you could come out to them, it would have been definitely better for them. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Social decorum has the prime of place in Islam. Some of the rules of etiquette are mentioned in this Chapter, hence its designation Surah al-Adab ("The Chapter of Manners").

Each of the rooms of the Noble Prophet's (S) house was devoted to one of his wives. These rooms were quite simple, but unfortunately, they were destroyed under the caliphate of Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik and their spaces were annexed to a mosque.[6] Had these rooms been preserved, the world would have been able to notice the simplicity of their life and they would have received a lesson concerning the same.

Bad manners indicate insensibility.

Imam ‘Ali (as) says:

“One devoid of reason lacks good manners.”

Thus it is said in the blessed Verses in question:

“O Muhammad! Those who call you from behind the rooms, most of them are ignorant. If they had reason and could understand your exalted state of Prophethood, they ceased to do so. Had they had patience until you left the room, it would have been better for them, since they could reflect their understanding and modesty.”

The blessed Verses apparently make mention of those people concerning whom the blessed Verses were revealed.

Some Qur’anic exegets have also said that the blessed Verses indicate that the Noble Prophet (S) is not supposed to be called:

“O Muhammad! O Ahmad!”

in the manner that they call themselves, but they are supposed to called him as:

“O Messenger of Allah! O Prophet of Allah!”

They maintain that the blessed Verses in question are like the other Qur’anic Verse[7]:

“Make not the calling of the Messenger among you as you call one another.”

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

6. O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with important news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance [out of haste in belief and making decision], and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done.

Addressed to believers, the blessed Verse in question is saying that if an evil-doer comes to you with intelligence, do not acknowledge it unless you investigate its veracity, otherwise if you do something in ignorance, you may have done something wrong and thereafter you may regret what you have done.

A number of jurisprudents make use of the blessed Verse in question to argue the authenticity of a tradition transmitted by one single but honest transmitter, since the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse indicates that the intelligence imparted by a wrong-doer is not to be trusted.

Concerning the occasion of the revelation of the blessed Verse in question, it is said that the Noble Prophet (S) dispatched Walid ibn ‘Uqba ibn Abi Mu’it to collect the alms tax from Banu Mustaliq. The latter intended to pay homage to him and in so doing went to welcome him.

Upon seeing them, Walid was afraid and thought that they were there to take his life. Thus, he returned to the Noble Prophet (S) saying that they failed to pay the alms tax and intended to take his life.

The Noble Prophet (S) became sad, but they came unto him saying:

"We had come to pay homage to your messenger by welcoming him, but upon seeing us, he returned and we are unaware as to the reason behind his return. Now, we have come to see whether he conveyed the truth. The alms tax is ready. Send someone to collect it."

The Noble Prophet (S) summoned Khalid ibn Walid and ordered him confidentially to go to them and see if they acted upon Islamic precepts and collect the alms tax if he sees that they act upon precepts but confront them like disbelievers if they fail to act upon them. When Khalid reached there, he heard the evening call to prayer. He collected the alms tax and returned.

It was then that the blessed Verse in question;

("O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with important news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance [out of haste in belief and making decision], and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done")

was revealed. Another occasion for the revelation of the blessed Verse is reported but for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein made of the same.

Now, let us take a glance at the meaning of fisq ("wrong-doing") and fasiq ("wrong-doer"). The Arabic word fisq denotes deviation and in Qur'anic terms, it connotes deviation from the straight path. The word is the antonym of 'adala ("justice") and fasiq is applied to someone who commits a grave sin but fails to repent it.

The Arabic word fisq is employed in different contexts in the Holy Qur'an, including: disobedience of the Pharaoh and his people to Allah:

("Indeed they are a people who are disobedient to Allah,")[8];

Hypocrisy:

("Indeed, the hypocrites are disobedient to Allah,")[9];

abusing Prophets and disobedience to their injunctions:

("They said: 'O Moses! We shall never enter it so long as they are there. Therefore, go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here.' He said: 'O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my brother, so separate us from the people who are disobedient to Allah.'")[10];

those who do not judge based on Divine Law:

("Let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such people are disobedient to Allah.")[11];

the deceitful:

("And ask them about the town that was by the sea; when they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them openly on the Sabbath and did not come to them on the day they had no Sabbath. Thus, We made a trial of them, for they used to disobey Allah.")[12];

those who leave aside the significant obligation of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil:

("Therefore, when they forgot the reminding that had been given to them, We rescued those who forbade evil, but We seized those who did wrong with a severe torment because they used to disobey Allah.")[13];

those who prefer their families and worldly possessions over jihad for Allah's Cause:

("O you who believe! Take not as helpers your fathers and your brothers if they prefer disbelief to belief. And whoever of you does so, then he is one of the wrong-doers.")[14]***;***

obvious sins and sexual deviations and unlawful sexuality:

("Indeed, We are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been disobedient to Allah.")[15]***;***

consumption of unlawful food:

("Unlawful to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns and that which has been [partly] eaten by a wild animal unless you are able to slaughter it [before its death] and that which is sacrificed on stone altars. Unlawful is also to use arrows seeking luck or decision; all that is disobedience to Allah.")[16]***;***

accusing chaste women:

("And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever. Indeed, they are disobedient to Allah.")[17]***.***

Other instances are not mentioned for the sake of brevity.

The Holy Qur'an harshly criticizes those who hear rumors and disseminate the same without investigation as to their authenticity

("When there comes to them some matter touching public safety or fear, they make it known. If only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority amongst them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them. Had it not been for Allah's Favor and Mercy bestowed upon you, you would have followed Satan, but a few of you.")[18]***.***

The Holy Qur'an has stipulated a harsh chastisement for those who agitate the society through spreading false news among people:

("If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease and those who spread false news amongst the people in Medina do not cease [their activities], We shall certainly let you overpower them. Then, they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbors but a little while.")[19]***.***

In his last year of life, when the Noble Prophet (S) was on pilgrimage he said:

"Those who spread false news are large in number and their number will grow in future. Whoever voluntarily accuses me of lying shall abide in Hell. Compare whatever you hear concerning me against the Holy Qur'an and my traditions (sunna). If you find them consistent with them, acknowledge them, but you do not, reject them."[20]

Imam Sadiq (as) cursed a certain person who falsely attributed traditions to his father (as) saying:

"Whatever you hear from us compare it against the Holy Qur'an or our words, if you find testimony for the same, you may accept them, otherwise do not acknowledge them."[21]

Imam Ridha (as) said:

"Our words are substantiated by the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic traditions."[22]

It is worthy of note that one of the most significant of Islamic sciences is that of transmission authorities (rijal) by which sound and unsound traditions narrated by transmitters may be assayed. Believers are supposed to be interested in investigation of matters rather than being superficial and look at matters simplistically.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verses 7-8

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ

فَضْلاً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

7. And know that among you there is the Messenger of Allah [whom you should obey]. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would surely be in trouble. But Allah has endeared your faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, disobedience [to Allah], and committing sin hateful to you. Such are they who are the rightly guided.

8. [This interest in belief and hate of disbelief are] a Bounty from Allah and His Favor. And Allah is Omniscient, All-Wise.

Mention was made under the preceding Verse of Walid ibn 'Uqba's false report about people's failure to pay alms tax to the Noble Prophet (S) and people's besiege toward attack when the preceding blessed Verse was revealed as per which Muslims are supposed to investigate and assay the news reported by wrong-doers.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that people are basically supposed to obey the Noble Prophet (S) and the divinely appointed leader is not supposed to be affected by the frantic effervescence arising from the reports imparted by wrong-doers. There are traditions to the effect that endearment of believers indicates treading the straight path otherwise wayfarers are in error.[23]

According to traditions, one of the tokens of faith attested in:

"Allah has endeared your faith to you"

is love for 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and disbelief and disobedience to Allah are on a par with enmity against the Noble Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ("family").[24]

If the decision maker happens not to be just or infallible, policy making will lead to despotism which leaves no room for growth

("And the command of Pharaoh was no right guide,")[25]**.**

Au contraire, if the decision maker happens to be infallible or just, the ground is paved for growth;

("Such are they who are the rightly guided").

Thus, addressing believers, the blessed Verse aims at guiding them saying that the Messenger of Allah (S) is amongst you and you are supposed to obey his commands rather than expect him to obey you, since had he

acted upon your wish, you believers, unaware of your gain and loss, would have been in trouble and hardship.

Furthermore, when you deviate from the right path, your faith will be penetrated by flaws. However, God Almighty has endeared your faith to you and has embellished it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, disobedience to Allah, and committing sin hateful to you.

Such people are the rightly guided. It is mentioned in the following Verse that if you obey the Messenger of Allah's (S) commands, faith shall be deeply rooted in our heart and you shall clearly perceive the truth of the Islamic faith; thus, your hearts shall be illumined by the light of the Islamic faith and you will find Guidance through your belief in Islam which is Divine Bounty and Favor bestowed upon whomever He wills.

God Almighty is Omniscient and All-Aware of your states and deeds and has set everything in its proper place.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 9

وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

9. And if two parties or groups among the believers engage in fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you against the one that outrages till it complies with the Command of Allah. Then if it complies [and ceases outrage], then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Indeed! Allah loves those who are equitable.

Although faith requires abstention from fighting and confrontation amongst believers, but the fact is that believers are not infallible and uttering one single word or doing one single act may lead to confrontation amongst them.

According to a tradition, believers are supposed to render aid to their brethren, either wrong- doer or wronged. If he is wronged, help him to reclaim what is due to him and if he is a wrong-doer, to prevent him from wrong-doing.[26] To reconcile Muslims, one is supposed to act immediately.

It is worthy of note that the conjunction fa- in fa-aslihu

("then make reconciliation")

indicates immediacy.

It is reported regarding the occasion of revelation of the blessed Verse in question that there emerged a contention between Aws and Khazraj, the two Medinan tribes of renown and some people from these the twain tribes engaged in some conflict and hit each other with wooden sticks and sandals.

The blessed Verse in question was revealed and Muslims were provided with instructions as to encountering such incidents.[27] It is also reported that some contention emerged between two persons from Helpers (ansar).

One said unto the other:

"I will reclaim from you what is due to me by force, since the population of my tribe exceeds yours."

The other person suggested that they should consult with the Noble Prophet (S). The former declined the suggestion and there emerged a conflict between them and their supporters from the twain tribes. They attacked each other with sandals and even swords. It was then that the blessed Verse in question was revealed and clarified Muslims' obligations against such disagreements.

As a general rule applicable anywhere and anytime, the Holy Qur'an says:

"And if two parties or groups among the believers engage in fighting, then make peace between them both."[28]

The verbal form iqtatalu is from q-t-l ("fight"), but the context reflects that it encompasses any kind of contention and conflict, even if it has not resulted in fight and war. Some of the aforesaid occasions of revelation substantiate the meaning in question.

Furthermore, it could be said that when the ground is paved for conflict and contention, for instance disputations and clashes as preludes to bloody conflicts occur, it is incumbent upon Muslims to take reconciliatory measures, since the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question may be inferred through specification.

At any rate, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to prevent from occurrence of contention, conflict, and bloodshed amongst Muslims and assume responsibility in this respect rather than stay aside like indifferent and ignorant onlookers passing by such scenes. It is the first obligation of Muslims with respect to such incidents.

Then, the second obligation is thus expressed:

"But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you against the one that outrages till it complies with the Command of Allah."

It goes without saying that if the blood of the disobedient and wrong-doing tribe, despite being Muslim, is shed, they are to blame for the bloodshed, since it is taken for granted that the incident concerns a conflict between two Muslim tribes. Thus, Islam requires that wrong-doing be hindered and justice is to be administered through reconciliation but in case it fails, it should be administered even if Muslims' blood be shed.

Then, mention is made of the third injunction:

"Then if it complies [and ceases outrage], then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable."

In other words, Muslims are not supposed to be content with shattering the power of the wrong-doing tribe, but their fight should serve as a prelude to peace and eradication of the causes of contention and conflict; otherwise, the wrong-doer will shortly resume the conflicts as soon as he feels competent enough to embark upon the same.

Taking into account the adverbial phrase bi-'l-'adl ("justly"), some Qur'anic exegets hold that had some right been trampled or some bloodshed leading to contention

and conflict, just reconciliation should be made in this respect, otherwise it may not be termed "just reconciliation" (islah bi-'l-'adl).[29]

Since inclination toward some groups at times make people tend toward either of the "twain conflicting tribes" and the same violates the arbiters'

impartiality, thus the Holy Qur'an warns Muslims in the fourth and the last injunction:

"Be equitable. Indeed! Allah loves those who are equitable."

The blessed Verse in question closes with three injunctions as to establishing peace and reconciliation amongst people based on justice:

"Make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Indeed! Allah loves those who are equitable."

It is worthy of note that creation is based on justice:

"The heavens rest upon justice"[30]

and the Prophets' Missions aimed at establishment of justice by people:

"Indeed We sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance [justice] that people may maintain justice,")[31]**.**

In modern societies, realization of justice requires abiding by the laws and injustice is synonymous with evading or delaying the law. Now the question arises as to which law? The law legislated by people like us? The law which is subject to alteration each and every day? The law in which people's interests lie? What arises from unmeasured thought, limited knowledge, and alteration?

What is subject to threats, enticement, and passions? What is legislated by those who delay laws and fail to act upon the same? Could such laws enjoy sanctity and credibility and provide the society with justice and security?

The point is that Divine laws may solely establish peace and justice in society and stay away from defects and flaws. Such laws are legislated by the Creator of man based upon infinite Grace and Omniscience and its Legislator is the first One Who has acted upon the same.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 10

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

10. The believers are nothing else than brethren. So make reconciliation amongst your brethren [in case contention and conflict arise] and fear Allah that you may receive Mercy.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the relationship amongst believers like that between brothers. The similitude demonstrates a number of points including:

1. The friendship between two brothers is deeply rooted and firm.
2. The friendship between two brothers is bilateral rather than unilateral.
3. Such friendship is based on innate nature and disposition rather than on worldly and mundane appeals.
4. Two brothers are unanimous before strangers and support each other.
5. The two brothers descend from common progenitors.

It is narrated in traditions that two brethren are likened to two hands washing each other.[32] The verbal form aslihu is attested three times in the preceding Verse and the one in question which indicates that the Islamic faith attends to the establishment of peace and reconciliation amongst individuals in society.

At any rate, the blessed Verse in question s lays emphasis upon reconciliation inter se (dhat al-bayn) whose reason is thus expressed:

"The believers are nothing else than brethren."

The blessed Verse is saying that inasmuch as you strive to reconcile two brothers, it is also incumbent upon you to make peace seriously and decisively amongst conflicting believers. What a meaningful and interesting expression. All believers are like brethren and contentions and conflicts running amongst brethren are to be replaced by peace and sincerity.

Since preferential treatment at times replaces precepts, the blessed Verse warns once more and thus closes:

"fear Allah that you may receive Mercy."

Thus, one of the most significant social responsibilities of Muslims against one another in administration of justice is clarified with all its dimensions.

It is also worthy of note that the clause:

"The believers are nothing else than brethren"

is one of the fundamental and deeply rooted Islamic slogans, a very remarkable, profound, effective, and meaningful slogans.

When others intend to demonstrate their love for their co-religionists, they make mention of them as comrades; however, the Islamic faith has elevated the friendship amongst Muslims to such an extent that mention is made of the relationship between two human beings based upon equity by the love between two brothers.

Based upon this significant Islamic principle, Muslims from any race and tribe speaking any language and at any age range feel profound brotherly love amongst themselves, even if they live in different parts of the world.

Such love, relationship, and accord are quite intelligible in pilgrimage to Mecca in which Muslims from all parts of the world congregate at the focal point of monotheism and display the objective realization of this significant Islamic law.

In other words, the Islamic faith regards all Muslims as members of the same family and addresses them as brothers and sisters. They are brethren and sisters both in words and slogans and also in practice and mutual obligations.

Islamic traditions lay considerable emphasis on the issue, particularly on its practical aspects. Mention will be herein made of a number of meaningful traditions narrated in this respect:

According to a Prophetic tradition

"Muslims are brethren, they never do wrong to each other, they never forgo supporting each other, they never abandon their brethren in hardships."

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Muslims are brethren and serves as each other's eye and guide. They never betray each other. They never do wrong to each other. They never deceive each other. They never break their promises."[33]

Islamic sources abound in traditions concerning the claims of believers before his Muslim brethren, the kinds of such rights, the merits of visiting believing brethren, shaking hands with, embracing, remembering, and

gladdening them and particularly meeting their demands and making efforts in this respect and also alleviating their sorrows, providing them with food and clothes, and respecting them; such claims have been dealt with in different chapters of Usul Kafi.

A Prophetic tradition regarding thirty claims of believers before their believing brethren which is one of the most comprehensive traditions in this respect will be narrated hereunder to crown the discussion.

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Muslims enjoy thirty claims before his Muslim brethren whose absence may not be cleared unless he acts upon them or his Muslim brethren waive their rights:

1. Forgive their faults.
2. Be kind to them in afflictions.
3. Keep their secrets.
4. Make good for their errors and mistakes.
5. Accept their apologies.
6. Defend them against slanderers.
7. Be benevolent toward them.
8. Watch over their friendship.
9. Be steadfast against their pacts.
10. Visit them in their ailments.
11. Attend their funeral processions.
12. Answer their calls.
13. Accept their gifts.
14. Return their favors.
15. Be grateful for their bounties.
16. Make efforts to render them aid and support.
17. Preserve their dignity and honor.
18. Meet their demands.
19. Intercede on their behalf.
20. Say Gesundheit when they sneeze.
21. Help them find what they have lost.
22. Return their greetings.
23. Cherish their words.
24. Be benevolent toward their bounties.
25. Acknowledge their oaths.
26. Regard their friends as his own friends.
27. Refrain from enmity against them.
28. Render them aid and support whether they be wrong-doers or wronged such that keep them from doing wrong and help them to reclaim their rights when they are wronged.
29. Stand by them in afflictions and refrain from belittling them.

30. Expect them to have whatever good he favors and disfavor for them whatever he disfavors."[34]

At any rate, one of the claims of Muslims before each other is rendering each other aid and support and reconciliation inter se (islah dhat al-bayn) as mentioned in the foregoing Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَآ يَسْخَرْ قَومٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَآ نِسَاء مِّن نِّسَاء عَسَى أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَآ تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَآ تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

11. O you who believe! Let not a group derides another. It may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let women deride other women. It may be that the latter are better than the former. Neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames [since] doing wrong after having faith is an evil practice [unbefitting you]. And whosoever does not repent [of committing such deeds], then they are indeed wrong-doers.

The preceding Verse treated of the question of brotherhood amongst believers and the blessed Verse in question deals with the causes leading to its obliteration. Likewise, the preceding Verses discussed peace and reconciliation, but the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to a number of factors and roots of contention and conflict including deriding, belittling, and slandering.

Merits springing from acting upon Islamic injunctions include providing a healthy environment and impeding social conflicts. It may be said that deriding and belittling as mentioned in the blessed Verse in question serve as instances of such vices, but it should be borne in mind that uttering any word or committing any act that distorts Muslim brotherhood is forbidden.

Thus, addressed to believers, the blessed Verse in question is saying that you who believe should abstain from deriding your believing brethren. You are unaware of their hearts and acts. Those who have subject to your derision may be better than you. Believing women are strictly forbidden from deriding other women and casting sarcastic remarks upon them, since they are unaware of their excellence over them.

The blessed Verse provides believers with guidance and admonition to the effect that whenever they intend to deride someone, expose his faults, insult or reproach him or entertain evil thought about him, they are supposed to consider their own deeds, since

"man is aware of his self"

and if he contemplates about his own disposition and deeds he will perceive that even if he happens to be devoid of vices, such derision of believers is one of the most reprehensible demerits and thereby he may take measures toward improving his self and restrains himself from insulting others and finding faults with them.

Qur'anic exegets' views regarding the occasion of revelation of the blessed Verse in question. A group of Banu Tamim derided some the Companions of the Noble Prophet (S), including 'Ammar, Khabbab, Balal, Salman, Suhayb, and Abu Darda'; as a consequence of which the blessed Verse in question was revealed forbidding them to deride believers saying that they are outwardly poor, but inwardly they may be better than deriders.

According to Ibn 'Abbas' Tafsir[35], the blessed Verse was revealed regarding two wives of the Noble Prophet (S) who had derided another wife of his, Umm Salama thereby God Almighty impeded them from such reprehensible deed;

("Nor let women deride other women").

As it was recurrently mentioned above, the blessed Verse in question is not specific, in other words, it imparts a general rule forbidding believers not to commit such evil deed and the rule is applicable to those present at the time of revelation and also to those from the following generations.

The blessed Verse proceeds by saying:

"Neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames [since] doing wrong after having faith is an evil practice [unbefitting you]."

The Arabic word lamz indicates backbiting and finding faults with others and some have said that it denotes making mention of someone's fault before him. It is said that hamz denotes backbiting and lamz is to expose someone's faults through facial expressions. It is also said that hamz solely denotes expressing someone's faults.

The Qur'anic Chapter 104 opens with:

"Woe to every slanderer and backbiter."

The blessed Verse forbids believers to find faults with one another. The pronoun 'one another' (anfusakum) may indicate that since believers are regarded as one single soul (nafs wahida), if they find faults with others through uttering words and facial expressions, they expose their own faults.

In other words,

"Believers are like one single soul" (al-mu'minun ka-'l-nafs wahida)

connotes that they are like one person since they are unanimous in faith and beneficence.

The negative imperative:

"nor insult one another"

(la tanabizu) is cognate with nabaz ("nickname"). The blessed Verse is saying that believers are not supposed to call each other by adversive nicknames; in like manner one who did some evil deed and thereby earned the an abusive nickname but afterwards repented committing the same is not supposed to be called by the same nickname.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse indicates that by 'nickname,' abusive nickname is being intended since the clause:

"[It] is an evil practice [unbefitting you]"

follows the same connoting that faith is like unto pure water absolving all dirt and filth. Therefore, it is forbidden to call someone by abusive nicknames following his conversion to faith.

"Those who repent not are wrong-doers."

One who hurts believers through facial expressions and exposes the faults of others is regarded amongst evil-doers and if he fails to repent, he is regarded amongst wrong-doers.

Finally, deriding others is apparently one sin, but it actually consists of a number of sins: belittling, humiliating, exposing faults, causing discord, backbiting, rancor, contention, intrigue, and casting sarcastic remarks upon others.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَآ تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَآ يَغْتَب
بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

12. O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not [on others], neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? By no means, [since] you would hate it. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.

Resuming the discussion raised in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse in question treats of factors perturbing the peace and brotherhood amongst believers among which mention may be made of suspicion, prying, and backbiting. It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an recommends believers to entertain good intentions toward others and refrain from entertaining suspicion about others.

The Arabic word ghayba designates talking behind someone's back without people being aware of the same and it happens to be offensive to the person being backbitten.

The blessed Verse in question opens with:

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins."

The word suspicion (dann) ad hoc refers to bad opinions exceed good ones amongst people, hence reference to them by 'much' (kathir); whereas forming good opinions about others is good rather than bad.

It is worthy of note that forming many suspicions is forbidden, but the blessed Verse is expounding that 'certain' suspicions are sins; the reason behind the same might be the fact that certain bad opinions are true hence the expression;

"Indeed some suspicions are sins."

Thus, committing such sin suffices to make man refrain from all such instances.

A question arises here as to forbidding involuntary good and bad opinions formed in mind consequent to a series of preliminary assumptions beyond human volition reflected in mind. Such forbidding applies to the sequence of acts; in other words, when one entertains a bad opinion about a Muslim in his mind, he is not supposed to pay the least attention to it in practice, nor should he make any alterations in his attitude and relations with him.

Thus, acting upon the bad opinion or suspicion is considered as a sin. Consequently, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that three things are unpleasant in Muslims and there exists a way out of them one of which being suspicion whose way out is to desist from acting upon it.[36] Man may contemplate different issues and thereby abstain from forming bad opinions about others.

Thus, he may reflect upon true alternatives and possibilities concerning the same and overcome forming bad opinions in time. Therefore, forming bad opinions is not at all times beyond human will. According to traditions, one has to form the best possible opinion concerning the deeds committed by his brethren unless the opposite be substantiated.

One is not supposed to form bad opinions regarding the words uttered by his Muslim brethren so long as one may find a favorable justification for the same.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“Interpret the deeds of your brother in the best possible manner such that what he does pleases you. Do not form bad opinions about the words uttered by your brother as far as you may find good justification in them?”

At any rate, the Islamic injunction is question is one of the most comprehensive and well-measured injunctions in the domain of social relations perfectly guaranteeing security in society. In other words, taking into account all aspects of the issue, the Islamic faith aims at the security of people in their personal lives. It is evident that if anyone is allowed to pry into other people’s affairs, he may bring disgrace to them and all individuals of the society will live in hell.

It is needless to say that such injunction is by no means inconsistent with the activities carried out by the intelligence systems of the Islamic government against conspiracies, assassinations, bloodshed, and arson.

According to the third and the last injunction which is the consequent of the twain preceding injunctions, the blessed Verse in question reads:

“And spy not [on others], neither backbite one another.”

Therefore, forming bad opinions leads to prying and exposing the defects and secrets of others and such knowledge results in backbiting whose causes and effects are all forbidden in Islam.

The blessed Verse in question thus clearly depicts the evil resulting from such act:

“Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?”

The blessed Verse further adds:

“By no means, [since] you would hate it.”

The honor of a Muslim brother is likened to the flesh of his dead body and putting him into disgrace leads to backbiting and exposing secrets is similar to consumption of his flesh. Making mention of ‘dead body’ is owing to the fact that backbiting is done behind people’s back in the same manner that the dead are unable to defend themselves.

Such evil act is the most dishonorable wrong which may be done by one human against his own brother. The similitude expresses the extraordinary unpleasantness of the act of backbiting and its entailing sin.

As it will be mentioned hereunder, backbiting receives significant treatment in Islamic traditions and few sins are on a par with it, since it sows rancor and enmity in hearts and at times entails bloody conflicts, murder, and massacre.

Since there may exists sinners having committed these three sins and intend to compensate for their sins upon hearing these blessed Verses, the Verse in question further adds:

“And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.”

The point is that the spirit of fearing God Almighty is to be invigorated and then the sinner is supposed to repent from having committed sins so that Divine Mercy and Favor may embrace him.

Like many repugnant qualities, backbiting in time turns into mental disorder such that backbiters derive pleasure from their blameworthy acts and find satisfaction in disgracing others. It constitutes a quite perilous repugnant attribute. Thus, one may absolve his soul of such impurities through improving one's self and reflecting upon the evil consequences springing from them and thereby one may refrain from committing the sin of backbiting.

Then, one may repent and since backbiting entails trampling human right (haqq al-nas), it is incumbent upon him to offer him his apologies even in terse expressions, like, owing to ignorance, he slandered him behind his back and demands forgiveness.

It should be born in mind, however, that one has to desist from offering apologies if he finds out that it may lead to further problems and adverse consequences. In case the victim of backbiting is not available or he is not known or he has deceased, the sinner is supposed to ask forgiveness for him and embark upon doing righteous good deeds so that God Almighty may forgive him and gain the satisfaction of the victim.

Finally, like any other injunction, that of backbiting has certain exceptions. It may be committed for consultation; for instance it may aim at choosing a spouse, business partner, and colleague.

Confidentiality in providing consultation is a certain Islamic precept necessitating that the defects of the person are to be expressed, lest a Muslim may be ensnared and talking behind someone's back for this purpose does not involve committing unlawful acts. The same rule applies when significant goals are involved instances of which include like those of consultation or reclaiming the rights and wrongs.

One who openly commits sins and is notorious for debauchery (mutajahir bi-'l fisq) is an exception to the rule and mentioning his sins behind his back does not involve committing sins, though it should be borne in mind that such rule solely applies to those who are notorious for debauchery. For other instances, one should consult the relevant chapters in hadith sources.

It is also worthy of note that besides committing the sin of backbiting, listening to the same or attending sessions in which people are being slandered behind their back are also unlawful. According to a number of traditions, it is incumbent upon Muslims to reject backbiting, i.e. they are supposed to defend the honor of their Muslim brother.

It would be so pleasant to live in a society in which such moral precepts are precisely acted upon. In this respect, a number of traditions will be cited hereunder.

The Noble Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Three persons will not be admitted to Paradise: reminder of past favors done to others, slanderer talking behind other people's back, drinker of alcoholic beverages."[37]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Abstaining from backbiting is dearer to God Almighty than establishing ten thousand units of recommendable prayers."[38]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"The expiation for the victim of backbiting is to ask God Almighty to forgive him."[39]

It is narrated on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah [Imam Sadiq] (as) from the Messenger of God (S):

"Whoever believes in God Almighty and the Day of Judgment is not supposed to attend a session in which a certain Imam or leader is slandered or a Muslim is the victim of backbiting."[40]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"One who listens to backbiting is a culprit of the backbiter."[41]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Backbiting, slandering, and telling lies lead to torment of the grave."[42]

It is narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad [Imam Sadiq] (as):

"Paradise is ordained to one who abstains from backbiting, anger, and envy."[43]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Abstain from envy, anger, and backbiting and maintain brotherhood O God's servants."[44]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"It is unlawful for Muslims to backbite. Verily, in the like manner that fire consumes firewood, backbiting consumes good deeds and qualities."[45]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Leave the deceased alone and abstain from reiterating their vices. Talk about the good qualities of the deceased."[46]

Imam Ridha (as) narrates from Imam Sajjad that whoever refrains from disgracing Muslims, God Almighty will ignore his faults.[47]

According to traditions, one who pries into his brethren's faults [and talks about the same with others] God Almighty will expose his vices.[48]

According to a tradition, sitting at a mosque waiting for congregation prayer so long as it does not involve backbiting is regarded as worship of God Almighty.[49]

In his last sermon in Medina, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"Backbiting invalidates fasting."

In other words, one who backbites is deprived of the spiritual and religious merits of the fasting.[50]

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

13. O people! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is that [one] who fears Allah. Indeed, Allah is Omniscient, All-Aware.

The Islamic faith rejects all racial, political, ethnological, tribal, geographical, economic, intellectual, cultural, social, and military

segregations and places fear of God as the standard for distinction between virtues and vice;

("Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is that [one] who fears Allah").

The preceding Verses were addressed to believers by the phrase:

"O people!"

It is worthy of note that numerous Qur'anic Verses deal with factors leading 'believing community' to perils and forbids people from the same. The blessed Verse in question addresses the members of the human society and thus expresses the most significant principle guaranteeing discipline and stability and the true standard of human values against false values.

The blessed Verse is saying:

"O people! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another."

'Creation of mankind from a male and a female'

indicates tracing the genealogy of mankind to Adam and Eve. Therefore, all mankind spring from the same root and taking pride in terms of genealogy and tribe is meaningless.

God Almighty created different characteristics for tribes for the maintenance of social order, since such different characteristics indentify men without which identification of people and thereby maintenance of social order in human society may not be established and chaos would encompass human society.

Following an invalidation of taking pride in ancestors and tribes predominant as the most significant source of honor and pride in the age of ignorance, the Glorious Qur'an treats of the rue standard of values by saying:

"Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is that [one] who fears Allah."

Thus, all outward and material privileges are invalidated and the true standard of values is determined by fear of God saying that it is solely through fear of God that one may attain to closeness to God Almighty and the threshold of his sanctity. Fear of God is a spiritual and inward quality whose permanence in the heart and soul should precede any other quality. Besides, many people pretend to have the quality in question but only few people possess the same.

Thus the blessed Verse in question closes:

"Indeed, Allah is Omniscient, All-Aware."

He knows the righteous quite well and is fully aware of the degree of their fear of God, sincerity of intention and purity of heart.

He endears them based upon His Omniscience and bestows rewards upon them. He also knows pretenders and chastises them.

What follows constitutes a brief discussion on fear of God Almighty. As mentioned above, the Holy Qur'an recognizes fear of God as the highest privilege and acknowledges that it is the only standard for assaying human values.

Fear of God is elsewhere[51] regarded by the Holy Qur'an as the best provision:

"And take a provision [with you] for the journey, but the best provision is Fear of God (taqwa)."

Fear of God Almighty is elsewhere regarded as:

"the best garment"[52].

Numerous Qur'anic Verses consider the first principle of the Prophetic Call as fear of God and the significance of fear of God Almighty is so exalted that:

"He [Allah] is the One, deserving that mankind should stand in awe before Him and He is the One Who forgives [mankind]"[53].

Fear of God is reflected in the Holy Qur'an as Divine Light creating knowledge wherever it takes roots:

("Be afraid of Allah and He teaches you,")[54].

Doing righteous good deeds are considered to be on a par with fear of God;

("Render one another help in doing righteous good deeds and fear of God Almighty").

Besides, justice is regarded on a par with fear of God Almighty;

("Be just and it is closer to fear of God").

Now, let us attend to the truth of fear of God as the great spiritual capital and the most exalted of honors with so many privileges. The Holy Qur'an makes certain allusions and thereby reveals the truth of fear of God Almighty.

According to numerous Qur'anic Verses, the place of fear of God Almighty is human heart, for instance:

"Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger (for the sake of good manners and their respect for him], they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested [and prepared] for [entertaining] piety. For them are forgiveness and a great reward"[55].

According to the Holy Qur'an, taqwa ("fear of God Almighty") is the antonym of fujur ("immorality, iniquity, depravation, dissolution, debauchery, licentiousness, profligacy, dissolute life")

("Then He showed him what is debauchery for him and what is fear of God for him,")[56].

Whatever springs from the spirit of sincerity, faith, and pure intention is regarded as a quality based on fear of God Almighty, as in the case of the Mosque of Quba opposite which the Mosque of Âirar was built by hypocrites, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Indeed the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on fear of God is more worthy that you stand therein,")[57].

The aforesaid Qur'anic Verses clearly indicate that fear of God is the same feeling of obligation and duty which follows the penetration of faith in heart, predominating his existence, impeding him from committing impiety and sin, calls him to good, purity, and justice, and purifying his thought and intention from impurities.

Taking a glance at the etymology of the Arabic word taqwa, we come to the same conclusion, since the root w-q-y denotes "striving toward preserving something." The word ad hoc connotes preserving the soul

from any impurity and concentrating one's faculties in carrying out deeds in which Divine Satisfaction lies.

A number of eminent personalities consider three stages for fear of God Almighty:

1. Preservation of soul from everlasting torment through attaining to true beliefs.

2. Abstaining from committing any sin including abandonment of carrying out obligations and committing sins.

3. Restraining one's self from entanglement in what preoccupies the mind and keeps man from remembrance of God Almighty. This is the most exalted kind of fear of God Almighty.[58]

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) expresses clear and graphic depictions and expressions regarding fear of God Almighty in which he contrasts fear of God with sins and impurities:

"Know that sins are like wild mounts used by sinners whose reins are torn asunder thus casting sinners into the depth of Hell; whereas, fear of God Almighty is like a tamed and calm mount whose riders take their reins in their hands and gallop toward the heart of Paradise."[59]

Based on this delicate depiction, fear of God is restraining and checking one's self and overcoming one's concupiscence against wild desires and leaving them unchecked.

Imam 'Ali (as) also says elsewhere:

"Know O servants of Allah that fear of God Almighty is like a fortified and invincible castle, but impiety and sin are like a weak and indefensible wall which may not save those seeking refuge in it, nor may any one find security in it. Know that many may solely stay unharmed by sins through fear of God Almighty."[60]

He says elsewhere:

"Grasp fear of God Almighty which is a strong cord and hold and a secure refuge."[61]

The truth and the spirit of fear of God Almighty are revealed from these depictions and expressions. It is also worthy of note that fear of God Almighty is the fruit of the tree of faith. Consequently, one has to fortify the pillars of faith in order to attain to such great reward.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 14

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَـكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَإِن تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُم مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

14. The Bedouin Arabs say: "We believe." Say: "You believe not but you only say: 'We have submitted [to the Will of Allah],' for faith has not yet penetrated your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease an iota in reward for your deeds. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The Arabic word a'rab ad hoc connotes those Bedouin Arabs some of whom were believers and they were cherished elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[62]:

"And of the Bedouin Arabs there are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day."

Nonetheless, some of who attached more importance to themselves than they deserved despite the fact that they were newly converted to the Islamic faith.

At times the incentive behind conversion to the Islamic faith is attaining or preserving mundane possessions, but that of faith is certainly spiritual. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Pure blood is preserved through conversion to the Islamic faith and marrying Muslims becomes lawful as well, but the reward in the Hereafter will be bestowed based on heart-felt faith."[63]

A number of Qur'anic exegets make mention of an occasion of revelation for the blessed Verse in question whose summary will be mentioned herein.

Some people from the tribe of Banu Asad entered Median in one of the years of famine and aspiring to receive aid from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) they uttered the formula:

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah"

and thus addressed the Noble Prophet (S):

"Mounting Arab tribes waged war against you but we have come to you with our families without engaging in fight with you"

and thus they intended to remind the Noble Prophet (S) of their so-called favor.

It was on this occasion that the blessed in question and the following Verses were revealed reminding them that they have nominally converted to the Islamic faith and faith has not penetrated into their hears. Besides, even if they converted to Islam, they should not remind the Noble Prophet (S) of their so-called favors but God Almighty reminds them of His Guidance bestowed upon them.[64]

The preceding Verse treated of the standard of the values of humanity, namely fear of God Almighty.

Since fear of God Almighty is the fruit of the tree of faith, the faith penetrating the depth of heart, the blessed Verse in question deals with the truth of faith, saying:

"The Bedouin Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You believe not but you only say: 'We have submitted [to the Will of Allah],' for faith has not yet penetrated your hearts.'"

The blessed Verse reflects the difference between Islam and faith, saying that Islam is the outward and legal aspect of faith and whoever utters the formula:

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah"

is recognized as a Muslim and is thus obliged to act upon Islamic laws; but faith is a real and inward affair whose place is human heart rather than his tongue and appearance. There might be different incentives, even personal and materials ones, behind Islam but those of faith are necessarily spiritual springing from knowledge and awareness. Such faith is like a tree bearing on whose branches the rejuvenating fruit of fear of God Almighty.

The same theme is clearly expressed by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

"Islam is something evident, but faith resides in heart."[65]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"It is through Islam that the [purity] of blood is preserved, one's trust is guaranteed, and marrying him or her will be lawful, but Divine Rewards will be bestowed upon man through his faith."[66]

It is in the same vein that according to some traditions, the meaning of Islam is solely restricted to verbal proclamation whereas faith is mentioned as proclamation together with practice.67The same theme is to be found in a different expression in the chapter on "Islam and Faith."

Fudhayl ibn Sayyar narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Faith accompanies Islam but the opposite is not true [in other words, every believer is a Muslim but every Muslim is not a believer]. Faith resides in heart but Islam is something thereby people act upon the laws of marriage, inheritance, and preservation of blood."[68]

The conceptual difference reveals when the twain words are juxtaposed unless the words Islam and faith are applied to the same referent.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease an iota in reward for your deeds. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The Arabic clause la yaltakum

("He will not decrease an iota in reward")

derives from l-y-t denoting "decrease what is due. The aforesaid clauses actually make a reference to the Qur'anic principle as per which deeds shall be accepted if they are carried out through faith.

The blessed Verse is saying that the token of obedience to Allah's and His Messenger's Commands lies in faith them from the bottom of one's heart and it is solely in this case that your deeds will be of any significance and God Almighty will accept and reward the least of your righteous good deeds and it is through the same faith that He will forgive your sins since He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 15

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

15. Believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger (S) and then doubt not but strive with their possessions and their lives for the Cause of Allah. They are the truthful [in their claims to faith].

Having faith in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is supposed to accompany that in God Almighty;

("Believe in Allah and His Messenger [SAW]").

Faith is something inward that may be recognized through practice and without struggling in the Cause of Allah is nothing more than empty words.

The token of true faith is perseverance and doubtlessness regarding the same;

("And then doubt not but strive with their possessions and their lives for the Cause of Allah").

Since attainment to such inward affair, namely faith, is not so facile, the blessed Verse treats of its tokens distinguishing believers from Muslims, the sincere from the lying, and those who enthusiastically answered to the Noble Prophet's (S) Call from those who pretended belief in order to achieve worldly possessions, saying that true believers are solely those who believe in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and entertain no doubt but struggle with their lives and possessions in the Cause of Allah.

The first token of faith is doubtlessness in proceeding on the Path of the Islamic faith. The second token is to struggle in Allah's Cause with one's possessions. The third token which is the most exalted is to struggle with one's life.

Thus, Islam makes mention of the most obvious tokens: perseverance and doubtlessness on the one hand and sacrificing one's possessions and life on the other. How may faith be deeply rooted in heart when man does not sacrifice his possessions and life in the Cause of the Beloved?

Thus the blessed Verse closes:

"They are the truthful [in their claims to faith]."

They are truthful believers in whose hearts the spirit of faith flows.

The standard put forth by the Holy Qur'an for distinguishing between

"truthful believers"

and

"liars pretending belief in the Islamic faith"

is not restricted to the tribe of Banu Asad, but it is a clear criterion for all times thereby a distinction may be made between true believers from pretenders.

The criterion may also serve to reveal the value of those who pretend belief in the Islamic faith anywhere and claim the Noble Prophet's (S) indebtedness to them but in practice they do not reflect the least token of their faith and belief in Islam.

Au contraire, there are people who not only claim nothing but also regard themselves at fault and at the same time stand foremost in the arena of self sacrifice. If we apply this Qur'anic criterion in assaying true believers, the number of pretenders to belief in the Islamic faith far exceeds that of true believers.

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 16

قُلْ أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

16. Say: "Will you inform Allah of your religion while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; and Allah is All-Aware of everything.

A number of people taking the oath said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that they were sincere in their belief in Allah and his Prophethood. Consequently, the blessed Verse in question was revealed saying that there was no need to take the oath since Allah is All-Aware of everything.

Presenting one's beliefs to Allah's saints is quite fine in case it serves to assay, improve, and/or attainment to certitude as Hadhrat 'Abd al-'Adim

Hasani (as) presented his beliefs to Imam Hadi (as);[69] otherwise hypocritical presentation of beliefs is reprehensible.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse is saying:

"O Muhammad (S)! Say unto those who utter the formula 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah': Do you intend to inform me that you have converted to the Islamic faith? God Almighty is All-Aware of what is concealed in the heavens and in the earth. He is Omniscient of everything and your inward and outward. If your belief is out of hypocrisy, He is All-Aware of it and He is All-Aware of your intentions."

Surah al-Hujurat - Verse 17-18

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُل لَاَ تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسلامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

17. They regard as a favor to you that they have converted to Islam. Say: "Count not your Islam as a favor to me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith if you indeed are truthful.

18. Truly, Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

Being guided to the Islamic faith and embracing it are great Divine Favors conferred upon man, since God Almighty is needless of his belief, faith, and worship;

("Count not your Islam as a favor to me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith if you indeed are truthful").

At any rate, the tribe of Banu Asad counted their conversion to the Islamic faith as a favor to the Noble Prophet (S) saying that they had come to him with their families without waging war against him and had converted to the Islamic faith as a consequence of which they regarded themselves worthy of being rewarded imagining that they render a service to the Noble Prophet (S) through their conversion and requested him to return their favor.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question was revealed to refute their false belief so that no one may presume that conversion to the Islamic faith or doing righteous good deeds requires God Almighty and His Messenger (S) to return their favor through conferring rewards upon him. Nonetheless, God confers a Favor upon those who believe, since being guided and any righteous good deed are dependent upon Divine Favor.

The blessed Verse 17 reflects that no one deserves Reward in return for his belief or for his righteous good deeds. The Rewards promised to believers are through Divine Favor rather than owing to worthiness since God Almighty confers whatever He wills to whoever He wants.

The blessed Verse 18 is saying that God Almighty is certainly All-Aware of what is concealed from sense perception in the heavens and the earth. The blessed Verse disapproves the claims of those who making attempts at

dissimulating their inward wickedness pretend belief without faith having penetrated their hearts and count themselves amongst believers.

Such people should know that the truth is other than what they imagine since God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are fully aware of their secret intentions.

Notes

1. 21:27
2. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 9, p. 6121; Majma' al-Bayan; Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
3. 24:62
4. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 130.
5. 24:30
6. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, apud Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat.
7. 24:63
8. 27:12
9. 9:67
10. 5:24-26
11. 5:47
12. 7:163
13. 7:165
14. 9:23
15. 29:34
16. 5:3
17. 24:4
18. 4:83
19. 33:60
20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 225.
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 250.
22. Ibid.
23. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 126.
24. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 426.
25. 11:97
26. Wasa'il, vol. 12, p. 212.
27. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 132.
28. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 9, p. 6136.
29. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 18, p. 342.
30. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 33, p. 493.
31. 57:25
32. Mahajjat al-Baydha', vol. 3, p. 319.
33. Usul Kafi, vol. 2.
34. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 236.
35. "Commentary," p. 323
36. Mahajjat al-Baydha', vol. 5, p. 269.
37. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 260.
38. Ibid, p. 261.
39. Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 10, p. 432.
40. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 246; Safina, vol. 2, p. 337.
41. Ibn Warram's Majmu'a ("[Hadith] Compendium"), p. 84.
42. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 259.
43. Ibid.

www.alhassanain.org/english

44. Ibn Warram's Majmu'a ("[Hadith] Compendium"), p. 81.
45. Mahajjat al-Baydha', vol. 5, p. 255.
46. Nahj al-Fasaha, tradition no. 264.
47. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 256.
48. Abu Da'ud's Sunan, apud Mahajjat al-Baydha', vol. 5, p. 252
49. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 357.
50. Mahajjat al-Baydha', vol. 5, p. 254.
51. 2:197
52. 7:26
53. 74:56
54. 2:282
55. 49:3
56. 91:8
57. 9:108
58. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 136.
59. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 16.
60. Ibid, sermon 157.
61. Ibid, sermon 19.
62. 9:99
63. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 24.
64. Tafsir al-Mizan; Ruh al-Bayan; Fi Thialal al-Qur'an, under the blessed Verses in question.
65. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 138.
66. Kafi, vol. 2, traditions 1 and 2, Bab Inna al-Islam Yuhaqqiqu bi-hi al-Damm.
67. Ibid.
68. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, tradition 3.
69. Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 198.

Surah Qaf, Chapter 50, Verses 1 - 26

(Qaf)

Section (juz' 26)

Number of Verses: 45

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter has forty four Verses and it was revealed in Mecca. The title of the Chapter derives from the opening detached letter qaf. Similar to other Meccan Chapters, the Chapter in question treats of resurrection and an exposition of the destinies of former nations as well as those of the good and the vicious.

The Chapter opens with the opponents' denial of resurrection and proceeds with making mention of the examples of resurrection in nature and creation.

Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

According to Islamic traditions, the Noble Prophet (S) accorded great significance to the Chapter in question such that he recited it every Friday at the sermon of the congregation prayer.[1]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Whoever recites the Chapter Qaf, Allah shall alleviate the difficulties and throes of death for him."[2]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as):

"One who recites the Chapter Qaf in obligatory and supererogatory prayers at all times, Allah shall increase his means of subsistence, shall give him the letter of his deeds to his right hand, and shall make facilitate his account on the Day of Judgment."[3]

It is worthy of note that so many glories and merits may not be accrued through mere recitation of the words, but it may open a path toward awakening of thought as a means of doing righteous good deeds consistent with the contextual meaning of the Chapter.

Surah Qaf - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَن جَاءهُم مُنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ

1. Qaf. By the Glorious Qur'an [your Prophethood and Resurrection are true].

2. Nay, they wonder that there has come to them a warner from amongst themselves. Therefore, the disbelievers said [regarding the news of Resurrection]: "This is a strange thing!

Taking an oath to the Holy Qur'an is of significance, since it is Glorious. Thus, if you seek glory, turn to the Glorious Qur'an. A number of Qur'anic Chapters open with detached letters and the Chapter in question opens with the detached letter Qaf.

As mentioned above, of one the significant interpretations for detached letters is that the Most Glorious Qur'an consists of letters of alphabet reflecting the truth that God Almighty Who revealed the Holy Qur'an is Omnipotent and Omniscient such that He created such exquisite system out of such simple means. However, there are other interpretations for detached letters regarding which one may refer to the openings of Chapters 2, 3, 7, and HM Chapters.

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that Qaf alludes to a number of Allah's Most Beauteous Names, e.g. the Omnipotent (Qadir) and the Self-Existing (Qayyum).

From amongst the evidence alluding to the point that the detached letter indicates the Glory of the Holy Qur'an is that an oath is taken to the Glorious Qur'an immediately following the letter:

"Qaf. By the Glorious Qur'an."

The Arabic word majid ("glorious, illustrious, exalted") derives from m-j-d ("to be glorious, illustrious, exalted"). The titled majid is applied to the Holy Qur'an since it possesses glory without bounds and it wholly deserves the title in terms of contents, beauteous form, exquisite Injunctions, and invigorating and didactic plans.

Numerous possibilities have occurred to Qur'anic exegets as to mentioning the oath and its object. Taking into account the following Qur'anic Verses, it seems that the object is the question of the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophethood or Resurrection.

Taking an oath in the following Verse;

("Nay, they wonder that there has come to them a warner from amongst themselves. Therefore, the disbelievers said [regarding the news of Resurrection]: 'This is a strange thing!'")

may reflect disbelievers' wonder as to the Noble Prophet's (S) chiefship and leadership as someone who was raised amongst them. The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty revealed the Holy Qur'an to substantiate his Prophethood and remove their wonder.

It is saying that Qur'anic Verses are inimitable, namely no one is able to produce the like of the blessed Verses. Such inimitability suffices to substantiate his Prophethood and there remains no room for wondering since the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God Almighty rather than the Noble Prophet's (S) words and it serves as warning to people.

Surah Qaf - Verses 3-4

أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِندَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ

3. "When we are dead and have become dust [shall we be resurrected?] That is a far return."

4. We know that which the earth takes of them [their dead bodies], and with Us is a Book preserving all things in it.

The Prophets' warning rests on paying heed to Resurrection.

By

"far return,"

disbelievers are saying that Resurrection does not stand to reason and common practice.

Thus, disbelievers may not produce any argument against Resurrection but it merely sounds impossible to them. Qur'anic exegets maintain that the interrogative particle opening Verse 3 reflects wonder and alludes to disbelievers' denial of Resurrection saying that when they die and turn to dust, it would be next to impossible to be resurrected and return to life.

Verse 4 is saying that disbelievers' wonder at Resurrection on the Last Day is for their conception that when man dies, nothing will remain of his flesh, skin, and organs in the earth; thus it would be impossible to be rejuvenated.

The blessed Verse in question aims to remove their disbelief in Resurrection saying that they are not supposed to imagine that they turn into absolute non-existence when nothing remains of their bodies when they turn into dust.

In other words, their denial springs from their unfounded conception that when man dies, his flesh and bones turn into dust and become parts of the earth and particles of the same turn into gases and vapors as well and it would be impossible to collect them anew and find any intelligence as to their existence.

The response to such questions is that God Almighty whose Omnipotence encompasses all things, is All-Aware of such particles and shall collect them all when the need arises in such manner that the scattered particles of Iron may be collected from amongst a pile of dust using a magnet; it shall be far facile for God Almighty to collect the scattered particles of human beings.

In case disbelievers raise a question as to keeping records of human deeds for Resurrection, one may provide the response as per which all such records are being preserved in the 'preserved tablet' (lawh mahfud) and basically nothing will be lost in this world but deeds, despite alterations in their forms, remain.

"Preserving Book"

refers to a Book in which everything including human deeds are preserved in it. An exposition was made above[4] regarding the 'preserved tablet.'

Surah Qaf - Verse 5

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِيجٍ

5. Nay, but they have denied the truth [the Holy Qur'an] when it has come to them; thus they are in a confused state [as to Prophethood and Resurrection].

The Arabic word marij designates "agitation, confusion," as it is said in the Holy Qur'an regarding the intermingling of the water of two seas

"He has let loose the two seas [the salt and fresh water] intermingle"[5].

The adjectival form marij is attested once in the Holy Qur'an connoting disbelievers' perplexity. Anxiety and perplexity spring from denial and disbelief but remembrance of God Almighty and paying attention to the Holy Qur'an lead to serenity and peace of mind.

Surah Qaf - Verses 6-8

أَفَلَمْ يَنظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاء فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِن فُرُوجٍ

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ

تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ

6. Have they not looked at the heaven above them, how We have made it and adorned it [with stars], and there are no rifts in it?

7. And the earth! We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and have produced therein every kind of fresh plant.

8. An insight and a Reminder for every servant turning [to Truth].

Nature is a theology class;

("Have they not looked at the heaven above them?").

Call people unto God Almighty by illustrating your Calls with examples. Look at the heaven and the earth to perceive the possibility of Resurrection and Divine Omnipotence.

Thus, you may know the beauty, systematicity, and other characteristics of Divinely created creatures in the heaven and earth. The blessed Verse 6 opens with the interrogative particle (a-) to indicate wonder at disbelievers' denial of Creation and Resurrection.

It connotes wonder at disbelievers who do not look above at heavens to perceive the manner by which God Almighty created them and adorned them with stars. He filled the heaven with stars and galaxies standing one above another such that there remains no rift between them.

Nor do these disbelievers look at the earth to see that God Almighty has spread it on water and placed mountains on it so that they keep it firm on its place. God Almighty has made all types of creatures grow in pairs. The blessed Verse and the like of it reflect that all creatures, even plants, are in pairs and unity solely belongs to Divine Essence, the Originator of the world.

The following Verse is saying that one who reflects upon such exquisite creation, novel and beauteous system, and the magnificent palace of the world and notices the Glory and Grandeur of the Creator may perceive the Cause through the effect and such servant turns to the Creator of the world through perceiving the effects.

Surah Qaf - Verses 9-11

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء مُّبَارَكًا فَأَنبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ

وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيدٌ

رِزْقًا لِّلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ

9. And We send down blessed water [rain] from the sky, then We produce therewith gardens and grain [every kind of harvests] that are reaped.

10. And tall date-palms, with ranged clusters.

11. A provision for [Allah's] servants. And We give life therewith to a dead land. Thus will be the Resurrection [of the dead from the graves].

Rain is a natural phenomenon but it depends on Divine Will. It rejuvenates the earth, provides it with blessings including destruction of blights, growth of plants, delicacy of the air, and flowing of springs. The Arabic word basiq is employed in the sense of "tall"; tal' designates "a blossom newly turned into date"; nadhid designates "ranged, compact"; and hasid denotes "reaped."

The most joyous moments for agriculturalists are the time of ripening and harvesting their crops;

("grains that are reaped").

The blessed Verses in question make use of rain and growth of plants to illustrate Resurrection.

Regarding;

"We send down blessed water from the sky,"

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"There is no water in the earth unless it is mingled with that from the sky."[6]

Imam 'Ali (as) washed his hands[7] and face when it rained saying:

"This blessing is from the sky untouched by any hand or vessel."

Thus the blessed Verses in question are saying that the Glorious Divine Essence of Unity reminds His servants to bring His blessings to completion saying:

"We sent down rain so that trees and other plants grow and gardens and orchards be available to man for his sustenance and pleasure. We made tall and fruitful date-palms grow by rain."

The blessed Verse 11 is saying that God Almighty provided His servants with all plants as a blessing for their provision and sustenance.

Making mention of 'servants' may make a reference to the point that the main goal behind the creation of such natural phenomena including the growth of plants and sending down rain is to provide those who worship God Almighty and are obedient to Him with provision and sustenance and disbelievers and the disobedient make use of such natural resources because of the former as it is mentioned in the Divine tradition addressed to the Noble Prophet (S):

"Had it been not for your sake, I would not have created the heavens."

The tradition reflects that the natural world of existence was created for his sake. God Almighty gave life to dead cities through sending down rain.

"Thus will be the Resurrection [of the dead from the graves]"

alludes to convincing those who deny Resurrection such that in the same manner that God Almighty gives life to dead lands through water therewith plants grow from the earth, He is Omnipotent to give a new life to those who have died and have turned into dust.

Surah Qaf - Verses 12-14

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ

وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ

12. Denied before them [polytheists of Mecca] the people of Noah, and the dwellers of Rass, and [the people of] Thamud;

13. And [also the people of] ‘Ad, and Pharaoh, and the brothers of Lot;

14. And the Dwellers of the Wood [Ayka, namely the people of Shu‘ayb], and the people of Tubba‘ [the kings of the Yemen]. Every one of them denied [their] Messengers; therefore, My Threat took effect [and they perished].

The name of the people of Rass is attested in this Chapter and also in 25:29. Qur’anic exegets maintain that the people of Rass lived in Yamama. They had a Prophet by the name of Handalla, but they denied his Call and cast him into a well. Since the Arabic word rass denotes “well”, hence their designation ‘the people of Rass.’ Imam Sadiq (as) was inquired regarding the reason behind the torment inflicted upon the people of Rass.

He replied:

“Their women contended themselves with women [i.e. they were lesbians].”[8]

The peoples of Thamud and ‘Ad were those of Prophets Salih and Hud (as). The people of Ayka were a group of the people of Prophet Shu‘ayb (as) who lived in the woods. Their name is attested in Chapters 15 and 26.

Tubba‘ is the title of the kings of the Yemen. The people of Tubba‘ is applied to a group of the people of the Yemen who followed their kings and whose name is also attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[9].

According to traditions, the king of the Yemen (Tubba‘) asked the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj:

“Stay in Yathrib (later Medina) until the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) be appointed to Prophethood and if I happen to be contemporaneous with him, I will serve and follow him.”[10]

The Holy Qur’an makes mention of the people of Lot (as) as

“brothers of Lot”

since they were all his kith and kin.[11] It is worthy of note, however, that according to the Holy Qur’an, the Prophets are the brothers of peoples and it is for this sake that the people of Lot (as) are referred to as his brothers.

The Holy Qur’an repeatedly reminds the Noble Prophet (S) of former Prophets (as) and their peoples and the point that their Prophetic Calls were denied and they were subject to persecutions. Thus, God Almighty consoles His Messenger (S) saying that if you see that disbelievers of Quraysh hurt you and attribute false accusations to you, former peoples were alike. Be patient against their persecutions in the manner that Arch-prophets did likewise.

Furthermore, these blessed Verses warn disbelievers against the torments to be inflicted upon them in this world since God Almighty inflicted torments like tempest, loud cries hear from the heaven (sayha), icy gale

(sarsar), pouring down rocks on them such that they may fear such torments in this world and desist from denial of Prophets (as).

Surah Qaf - Verse 15

أَفَعَيِينَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

15. Were We then tired with the first creation [to be hopeless of creating you anew on the Day of Resurrection]? Nay, they are in confused doubt about a new creation [resurrection].

Creation of any existent being bears testimony to Divine Omnipotence to create it anew, since the first creation justifies the possibility of further creations.

Disbelievers may not produce any argument for substantiating their denial of Resurrection, but they merely entertain doubts;

("Nay, they are in confused doubt about a new creation [resurrection]").

The interrogative particle (a-) is employed to indicate denial. In other words, the blessed Verse is asking disbelievers whether they imagine that God Almighty is tired of the first creation and He is unable to create anew. Disbelievers are mistaken as to Divine Omnipotence as to creating anew unaware of the fact that they are subject to permanent change.

Surah Qaf - Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

16. And verily We have created man and We know what his ownself whispers to him. And We are closer unto him than his jugular vein [and We are in full control of everything].

The Arabic word waswasa denotes 'whisper' and the same connotes unbefitting thought occurring to man's heart. The word warid ("vein") derives from w-r-d denoting 'to go to water.' Since vein is the means by which blood circulates between heart and other bodily organs, it is termed as warid.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to Divine Majestic Attributes of Originating creation and Divine Omniscience; the latter reflects that God Almighty created man ex nihilo and He is the Originator of his existence.

Since He is the Creator of man, He is All-Aware of his outward and inward qualities and deeds and He is Fully Aware that disbelievers' denial of Resurrection springs from concupiscent temptations despite the fact that their innate natural disposition is aware of their Origin.

The blessed Verse may make a reference to the point that had those who denied Resurrection made use of their reason, they would have abstained from satanic temptations and they could acknowledge the veracity of Resurrection without entertaining any doubts as to the same. Other Divine Majestic Attributes include Comprehensiveness and Guardianship.

"And We are closer unto him than his jugular vein."

Warid is the vein connected to heart and liver through which blood flows and waridan or shara'in are applied the twain blood vessels connecting heart to brain on which depends survival of the body. It is one of the closest

things to man's life such that if blood flow suffers from any defect, man will die. The blessed Verse makes a reference to Divine encompassing of existence and Divine Guardianship.

In other words, since existence depends upon God Almighty, He is closer to him than the jugular vein that keeps him alive. Such closeness reflects that God Almighty is closer to man than anyone else, since the existence of anything depends upon what realizes its existence and keeps it as it is. Since the Divine Essence is the Creator, the Origin, and the Final End of creation, all created beings are encompassed by him and their existence depends upon Him.

How then He may be unaware of anything? It is worthy of note that these are all similitude and closeness to God Almighty is far superior to such things, but such illustration which makes use of intelligible, is the most evident means of exposition.

Now that we perceive that God Almighty encompasses all things and we are under His full Sway, we know that our words, deeds, thought, intentions, or even temptations occurring to our hearts are by no means concealed from Him.

Attending to this truth awakens man and acquaints him with his heavy responsibility and precise recording of his words and deeds to be presented at Divine Tribunal. Thus, the truth turns a neglectful and indifferent man into an alert, obedient, duty bound, and God fearing servant.

Surah Qaf - Verses 17-18

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلاَّ لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

17. [Remember] that the two angels [accompanying man] receive [man's deeds], one sitting on the right and one on the left [to note his deeds].

18. Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher [recording angel] by him ready [to record it].

The blessed Verses are saying:

"Remember when the twain angels sitting on the right and left sides of man accompanying and watching him, record his deeds."

In other words, besides Divine Omniscience as to man's inward and outward deeds and intentions, two angels are also assigned to keep records of his deeds. The twain angles watch man on both sides and accompany him at all times. They never leave him alone so that further emphasis be laid on the question of keeping records of deeds. The Arabic word talaqqi denotes 'receive, record," and mutalaqqiyan is applied to the twain angles appointed to keep records of man's deeds.

The Arabic present participle

qa'id ("sitting")

derives from q-'-d ("sit") but it ad hoc connotes 'companion, watcher.' In other words, the blessed Verses do not intend to say that the twain angels sit on the right and left hand sides of man, since man is sitting at some time but walks at some other time; the expression connotes that the twain angels accompany man at all times and watch his deeds.

Surah Qaf - Verse 19

وَجَاءتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

19. And the stupor of death will come in truth [and it is said unto man]: "This is what you escaped at all times!"

Man loses his consciousness at the moment of death;

("the stupor of death will come in truth").

The Arabic word sakra denotes the state in which man loses his consciousness and reason. The word tahyid designates escape and evasion.

Man's fear and anxiety at the moment of death is such that the Holy Qur'an refers to it as

"stupor of death,"

in like manner, the fear of Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection shall lead man to such state that it is elsewhere expressed in the Holy Qur'an[12] as:

"You shall see people as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the torment of God."

At any rate,

"stupor of death"

is such state of unconsciousness occurring to one in throes of death that it is as if man loses his consciousness and his soul desires to separate from body and the worst state of man is that in which soul departs from body. It will be at that time that Divine Mercy will be bestowed upon believers and veils will be cast from their eyes and they will see the abodes prepared for them.

Thus, the souls of believers willingly turn toward the other world and the angel of death will bear unto them the glad tidings of Paradise and its Bounties. Nonetheless, unfortunate will be disbelievers, hypocrites, and the disobedient perceiving that Divine Wrath, rather than His Mercy, and the angels of torment warn them against Divine torment.

The stupor shall be the inevitable death. The past form of the verb ja'at may refer to the point that death is inevitable and no one may escape it.

Good for those who, in such state, hear the message;

"Come back to your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing"[13].

Surah Qaf - Verses 20-21

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ

وَجَاءتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ

20. And the Trumpet [of Resurrection] will be blown that will be the Day when the warning of torment shall be realized.

21. And every person will come forth [on to the scene of Resurrection] along with two angels, one driving him forward and another bearing witness [to his words and deeds].

Blowing the Trumpet ad hoc refers to the second blowing since according to Qur'anic Verses and traditions, the first blowing will occur when the world disintegrates and perishes such that no creature shall remain in this world. It shall be upon the second blowing that all creatures find a

new life and all men depart their graves to hastily proceed toward their meeting place where they are supposed to meet their Lord.

It shall be at that time that Resurrection shall be established and angels shall say this is what the Prophets talked about and warned men against. The following blessed Verse treats of the state following death when on the Day of Resurrection each of the obliged shall be accompanied by an angel driving them toward Reckoning and an angel shall follow him to bear witness to his deeds recorded. No one may escape or deny Reckoning at that time.[14]

It may also make a reference to the aforesaid twain angels (raqib and ‘atid) responsible for recording man’s deeds.

Surah Qaf - Verses 22-23

لَقَدْ كُنتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنكَ غِطَاءكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ

22. [It will be said to him]: “Verily, you were [totally] heedless of this [scene]. Now We have removed from you your covering [of neglect] and sharp is your sight this Day!”

23. And his companion [angel] will say: “Here is [the Record of his deeds] ready with me!”

This world is the abode of neglect and the world to come is that of vigilance. This world cast the veil of neglect on man with its charming appearances and man in his turn makes veils of neglect for himself. The majority of Qur’anic exegets maintain that the blessed Verses in question are addressed to disbelievers. When they enter the Day of Resurrection, they are overwhelmed by fear and anxiety.

It will be said unto them:

“This is the Day against which you were warned by the Prophets but you were heedless. Today, the veils are removed from your eyes and you sight is sharp. You see what you used to disbelieve and deny.”

According to Qur’anic exegets, the antecedent of the word ‘companion’ (qarina) in the blessed Verse 23 may be either of the twain aforesaid angels (raqib and ‘atid) recording man’s deeds on his right and left hand sides in this world.

Thus, the ‘companion’ will say on the Day of Resurrection

“His deeds and states are recorded by me.”

Surah Qaf - Verses 24-26

أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ

مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ

الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ

24. [Allah will say to the driving and witnessing angels:] “Both of you throw into Hell every stubborn disbeliever.

25. “[the one who is the] Hinderer of good, transgressor, arousing doubt,

26. "Who sets up another god with Allah. Then both of you cast him in the severe torment."

The present participle

manna' ["hinderer"]

derives from m-n-' and the present participle

murib ["arousing doubt"]

deriving from r-y-b is applied to one who arouses doubt accompanied with pessimism in others.

The present participial form

kaffar ["disbeliever"]

designates the zenith and depth of disbelief in a man's being naturally reflecting animosity and stubbornness arousing doubts in others as to the Truth of God's Path.

Such person naturally ends up with severe torment in Hell. It is worthy of note that the twain angels are appointed to throw such person into Hell and they are either driving or witnessing (raqib and 'atid). However, according to Shi'i and also Sunni sources, the Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Imam 'Ali (as).[15]

The blessed Verse 26 is saying that such disbeliever is the one who associated idols and other false objects of worship with the One God and such disbelievers has to be cast into severe torment.

Notes

1. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 9, p. 6171.
2. Tafsir fi Thialal, vol. 7, p. 547.
3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 140.
4. 13:39
5. 55:19
6. Usul Kafi, vol. 6, p. 387.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 59, p. 27.
8. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p.551.
9. 44:37
10. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
11. Ibid.
12. 22:2
13. 88:28
14. Majma' al-Bayan.
15. For further details, consult exegetic works. Details have not been dealt with for the sake of brevity.

Surah Qaf, Verses 27 - 45

Surah Qaf - Verses 27-29

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْتُهُ وَلَكِن كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُم بِالْوَعِيدِ

مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

27. His companion [Satan] will say: "Our Lord! I did not push him to transgression, but he was himself in error far astray."

28. [Allah] will say:"Dispute not in front of Me, I had already sent you the warning.

29. The Sentence [as to casting disbelievers into Hell] that comes from Me cannot be changed, and I am not unjust to [My] servants."

Imam Sadiq (as) is quoted as saying:

"[The word]

companion [attested]

in this Verse refers to Satan."[1]

It is attested elsewhere that Satan becomes the companion of certain evil-doers.[2] One of the factors leading man to Hell is bad company, as the Qur'anic Verses makes mention of Satan as a companion leading man to Hell. Complaints of the people of the Hell include their regret for bad company in this world, as it is attested in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"Ah! Woe unto me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as an intimate friend!"

There will be disputes on the Day of Resurrection amongst evil-doers with one another, between evil-doers and corrupt leaders, and between evil-doers and Satan each of whom make attempts at putting the blame of their own sins on the other. Like scenes are to be found in the Holy Qur'an.

At times they say unto one another:

"Had it not been for you, we should certainly have been believers!"[4]***.***

"They will reply: "Nay you yourselves were not believers"[5]***.***

In another scene, they will say unto corrupt leaders:

"Indeed, we were following you. Can you avail us anything against Allah's torment?"[6]

They censure Satan in another scene and he says:

"Therefore, blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I deny your former deed in associating me as a partner with Allah"[7]***.***

The blessed Verse 27 says:

"Our Lord! I did not push him to transgression, but he was himself in error far astray."

The Hell repeatedly says: "Is there any more," as the people of Hell used to repeat the same in worshipping mammon, i.e. mundane property and worldly offices and transgressing the rights of others.

At any rate, the stubborn disbelievers' disputes with Satan on the Day of Resurrection removes the veil from their destiny.

They censure the tempting devils for all the sins committed by them, but their companion, Satan, says:

"O Lord! I did not push him to disobedience nor did I force him to go astray, but he chose this way out of his own will and he was in astray far away."

It is worthy of note that Satan does not intend to deny his role as the tempter, but he intends to say that he did not force anyone, but man welcomed his temptations out of his own will and desire.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is not inconsistent with another Qur'anic Verse[8] saying:

"Then I will certainly mislead them all."

The blessed Verse 27 apparently serves as a defense for Satan and no mention is made of disbelievers' complaints against Satan, but taking into account their disputes on the Day of Resurrection in other Qur'anic Verses and the following One, their words become briefly apparent, since the blessed Verse 28 says:

"[Allah] will say:"Dispute not in front of Me, I had already sent you the warning"

and I have informed you in advance of this dire destiny.

The blessed Verse on the one side alludes to God's words unto Satan;

"[Allah] said: 'Go and whosoever of them follows you, surely Hell will be the recompense of you - an ample recompense,"[9]

and on the other, God Almighty had warned men thus:

"That I will fill Hell with you and those of them that follow you"[10]**.**

Such warnings are to be found in other Qur'anic Verses as well reflecting that God Almighty has given His Ultimatum to devils and men, warning them against tempting and being tempted.

The blessed Verse 39 says:

"The Sentence [as to casting disbelievers into Hell] that comes from Me cannot be changed, and I am not unjust to [My] servants."

The word Sentence (qawl) ad hoc refers to the warnings mentioned in different Qur'anic Verses examples of which were mentioned above. The Arabic word dallam is the intensified present participial form designating absolute negation of wrong-doing by God Almighty. In other words, the Most Gracious and Just Allah is by no means unjust to His servants. The blessed Verse in question and the like Qur'anic Verses bear testimony to human choice.

Surah Qaf - Verse 30

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتِ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِن مَّزِيدٍ

30. On the Day when We will say unto Hell: "Are you filled?" It will say: "Are there any more?"

Hell is intelligent in some way or another as it is addressed by God Almighty and thus replies His question:

"Are there any more?"

Likewise, people of Hell used to say the same when they were preoccupied in this world with worshipping worldly possessions and offices and transgressing people's rights.

The imperative verbal form;

"Remember"

in the blessed Verse in question may refer to destiny, namely:

"O Muhammad [SAW]! Remember the Day when Hell will be filled with jinn and mankind and God Almighty asks Hell: "Are you filled?"

Hell will reply in verbal or non-verbal language:

"Are there any more?"

The blessed Verse bears testimony to the point that Allah's promises and warnings are true and Hell shall be filled with disbelievers and the disobedient.

Surah Qaf - Verses 31-33

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ

هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَن بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاء بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ

31. And Paradise will be brought near to the God fearing, not far off.

32. [It will be said unto them:] "This is what you were promised - [it is] for the repentant and preservers [of Allah's bounds],

33. "Who feared the Most Gracious [Allah] inwardly and brought a heart turned in repentance [to Him].

Piety and fear of God drive man closer to Paradise. Following a treatment of disbelievers' state after death and blowing of the Trumpet and their arrival at Divine Tribunal and torment of Hell, the blessed Verses in question reflect the state of the God fearing.

The former shall be entangled with hardship and torment and Hell drives them toward itself and expects enthusiastically more of the people of the Hell; au contraire, the latter shall proceed toward Paradise.

"Not far off"

may reflect that Paradise shall not be far away from the God fearing, but it is in their inward natural disposition manifesting itself on the Day of Resurrection. The antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun 'this' in the blessed Verse 32 is Paradise promised to whoever turned from disbelief and polytheism to monotheism and abstained from committing what was forbidden.

Such people fear God in their hearts without perceiving the same with their outward senses and live in such state at all times;

("Who feared the Most Gracious [Allah] inwardly and brought a heart turned in repentance [to Him]").

Paradise shall become closer to those who enter Resurrection with pure hearts turned from people toward the Truth. The people of Paradise as mentioned in the blessed Verses in question possess four characteristics.

Firstly, they fear God Almighty and as mentioned elsewhere, fear of God Almighty is higher in degree than faith the relation between the twain is that of inclusion; in other words, the God fearing have faith, but some of the faithful may lack fear of God Almighty.

Thus, fear of God Almighty stands above faith in matters of degrees. Secondly, the people of Paradise are those who have returned from

disobedience to Divine Command. They never commit sins willfully. Thus is the state of the God fearing.

Thirdly,

"Who feared the Most Gracious [Allah] inwardly and brought a heart turned in repentance [to Him]"

refers to those who regard their Lord as the Most Gracious, but His Glory and Grandeur overwhelms them to such degree that they fear His Wrath at all times.

Fourthly, of the attributes of the people of Paradise is that they enter Resurrection with pure hearts purified from natural impurities. They turn away from people and turn to God Almighty. The Arabic word khashiyya is applied to the fear arising from Divine Omniscience and Grandeur.

Three kinds of hearts are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

A. The pure heart devoid of polytheism, hypocrisy, hatred, and other vices;

("Except him who brings to Allah a pure heart,")[11]**.**

B. The repentant heart repenting to God Almighty following committing sins;

("And brought a heart turned in repentance [to Him],")[12]**.**

C. The sick heart entertaining hypocrisy and disbelief in God Almighty.

The sickness worsens if it is left on its own;

("In their heart is a sickness,")[13]**.**

Surah Qaf - Verses 34-35

ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ

لَهُم مَّا يَشَاؤُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ

34. [It shall be said unto them:] "Enter you therein in peace and security - this is a Day of eternal life [for you]!"

35. There, they will have all that they desire - and [for them] We have more [than what they desire].

Four virtues were enumerated for the God fearing in the preceding blessed Verses: repentance, preservation of one's self and Divine bounds, Fear of God Almighty, repentant heart. Four attributes are enumerated in these two blessed Verses: security, peace, eternal life, and enjoyment of Divine Bounties. Mundane Bounties involve blights whose likes are not to be found in Paradise:

1. They involve pain and hardship, but nothing like them exist in Paradise;

("peace and security").

2. They are transient whereas Paradise is eternal;

("Day of eternal life").

3. Worldly Bounties are limited in range, but whatever one desires is to be found in Paradise;

("There, they will have all that they desire").

4. Mundane Bounties come to an end, but those in Paradise are on the increase;

("We have more [than what they desire]").

It is worthy of note that the twain blessed Verses in question are addressed to those who possess the attributes enumerated in the preceding Verses. The God fearing will be admitted to Paradise as the abode of Divine Grace, peace, and security warding them from whatever sounds unpleasant to them. Paradise shall be everlasting abode of the God fearing therein they shall be safe from any peril.

"There, they will have all that they desire,"

since they represent Divine Attributes including Creativity, namely the people of Paradise represent Divine Creativity and they will have whatever they desire.

"And [for them] We have more [than what they desire]"

may reflect that there will be in store for those doing righteous good deeds what is neither seen, nor heard, nor occurred to anyone.

Surah Qaf - Verses 36-37

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُم بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِن مَّحِيصٍ

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

36. And how many a generation We have destroyed before them who were stronger in power than them. And [when Our torment came] they found their ways into cities [with their might]! Could they find any means of escape [for themselves]?

37. Indeed, therein [historical developments and destruction of the disobedient] is truly a reminder for him who has an [awakened] heart or gives ear [to the words of Truth] while he is heedful.

The Arabic word qarn denotes approximation of two things. It is also applied to generation or people living in the same era. The word connotes a span of time (thirty or one hundred years). Batsh designates 'seize by power' and at times 'fight, conflict.'

The verbal form naqqabu derives from n-q-b 'make a hole or breach.' The cognate word manqabat is applied to virtues and merits that affect people's hearts. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse 36 is that some of the former peoples penetrated into the realms of other people and conquered them. The Arabic word qalb does not designate the bodily organ, but human perception.

Imam Kadim (as) is quoted as saying:

"Heart

(qalb) designates intellect ('aql)."[14]

We find a like Verse in 67:10;

"And they will say: 'Had we but listened or used our intellect, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!"

The blessed Verse juxtaposes intellection with hearing and the blessed Verse in question heart is juxtaposed with hearing. Thus, the word 'heart' connotes 'intellect.' The expression alqa al-sam' designates lending one's ear so as to learn; in other words, it refers to the ear of the soul rather than the organ of hearing.

The Arabic word shahid is employed in the sense of witness and present, namely one who attends some session and listens attentively to words rather than one who is physically present somewhere but is mentally absent.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question treat of the states of disbelievers and the God fearing and their arrival on the Resurrection scene following the blowing of the Trumpet for warning those who denied the Divine Origin of existence and Resurrection and reminding them of those who suffered some many afflictions owing to denying the Prophets despite their physical strength and power wielding sway in the lands like the peoples of ‘Ad and Thamud who suffered torments and became desperate.

Such warnings may give a lesson to disbelievers. But if they do not fear the torments in the Hereafter springing from their vicious deeds, they may at least be afraid of the recompense of their vices in this world and thereby let go of their false pride and obstinacy.

The blessed Verse 37 is saying that such words are reminders to those whose hearts are pure or those who listen to the wondrous words of Truth.

Surah Qaf - Verse 38

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُّغُوبٍ

38. And verily We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days and nothing of pain or fatigue touched Us.

There are secrets and acts of wisdom in the creation of creatures in time, but neither frailty nor fatigue may penetrate Divine Omnipotence. If God Almighty wills, He may create all things in one single moment.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question says:

“And verily We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days and nothing of pain or fatigue touched Us.”

The Arabic word lughub designates fatigue and weariness. It goes without saying that a being with limited power and strength will be encompassed with fatigue and weariness if it exerts itself beyond its limit, but such thing is not applicable to the Being whose Omnipotence is infinite.

Therefore, the Being Who is Able to create the enormous heavens and the earth with so many planets and galaxies is Able to give life anew to man following his death.

A number of Qur’anic exegets make mention of an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question saying that Jews imagined that God Almighty created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on Saturday and put one leg on the other as a consequence of which they regard such posture solely belongs to God Almighty and human beings are not supposed to assume such posture. Thus, the blessed Verse in question was revealed and put an end to such hilarious superstitions.[15]

However, such occasion of Revelation is not inconsistent with the question of Resurrection treated herein.

It also serves as an argument substantiating Unity, Omniscience, and Omnipotence of God Almighty Who created the heavens and the earth with so many wonders and billions of living creatures and wondrous secrets and orders. Reflection upon one instance of creation may lead us toward the

Omnipotent Creator Whose Omnipotence has set this enormous wheel to motion and has shed the light of life everywhere.

The motif of the creation of the heavens and the earth in 'six days' is repeatedly mentioned in Qur'anic Verses. The Arabic word yawm, as mentioned above, denotes 'day' but it connotes 'era' in many an instance rather than the twenty four hour span of time.

For instance, it is said:

"One day [once] people lived under the auspices of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and another day, the tyrannous Umayyads and 'Abbasids wielded sway."

It goes without saying that 'day' in such expressions connotes span of time be it one year, one hundred, thousands, or millions of years. For instance, it is said the globe was set ablaze one day and it became cold the other day, ready to accommodate life. All these expressions make a reference to spans of time.

Therefore, the blessed Verse in question reflects that God Almighty created the heavens, the earth, and all creatures in six spans of time. Thus, there remains no room for the question as per which there were no days and nights prior to the creation of the sun and the earth so that Creator of the world could be Able to create it in six days.

Surah Qaf - Verses 39-40

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ

39. Therefore, bear with patience [against] all that they say and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before [its] setting.

40. And during a part of the night [also] glorify His praises and [do likewise] after the prostrations [of prayers].

The times of prayer in the Islamic doctrine are based on natural phenomena like the moon and the sun visible to all people;

("before the rising of the sun and before [its] setting").

In these blessed Verses, God Almighty addresses his Noble Messenger (S) and commands him to be patient against the unfounded words of disbelievers and occupy himself with praising and glorifying his Lord before sun rise whose perfect instance includes the morning prayer and its supererogatory prayers in which God Almighty is praised and glorified.

The phrase:

"before sun set"

may connote evening or noon and evening prayers or both of them.

The blessed Verse 40 opens thus:

"And during a part of the night" (wa min al-layl)

in which the disjunctive preposition min connotes

'a part of the night'

spent in praising and glorification of God Almighty. The phrase 'during a part of the night' may indicate early and late evening prayers.

The phrase:

'after the prostrations' (adbar al-sujud)

designates praising and glorifying God Almighty following prostrations.

It is narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as) that:

‘after the prostrations’

refers to the two units of prayer established after sun set as adbar al-nujum designates two units of supererogatory prayers.[16] The preceding blessed Verses seemingly make a reference to the five daily prayers; since the main intention behind establishing prayers is to praise and glorify God Almighty, all prayers are referred to as glorification.

Surah Qaf - Verses 41-42

وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ

41. And listen on the Day when the Caller will call from a near place.

42. The Day when they will hear the shout in truth [from the Trumpet to be blown by Israfil]: that will be the Day of coming out [of people from the graves].

The blessed Verse 11 treated of the principle of the dead coming out of the graves and the blessed Verses in question deal with the time of coming out.

The expression:

‘a near place’

makes a reference to the point that the vibrations of the sound of the Call shall travel through the air in such manner that it will be as if everyone may hear it likewise from a near place and it shall be on that Day that all the resurrected people shall hear the voice of the Caller from a near place.

The word:

‘shout’ (sayha)

does not designate the first shout marking the end of this world, but it denotes the second shout through which the dead shall raise from the graves.

The blessed Verse 41 is saying:

“O Muhammad (S)! Be patient and persevere in obedience to the Commands of God Almighty until the time when you hear the Caller from a near place; in other words the Call shall be heard before long from a place near unto you."

The Caller shall be Israfil calling from a rock in Jerusalem saying: ‘O decayed bones, disintegrated joints, decomposed flesh, and scattered hairs! God Almighty commands you to integrate for the Day of Recompense.’”

The blessed Verse 42 is saying that on that Day when the shout shall be heard in truth, it shall be the Day of coming out from the graves and from the dust of the earth. The latter Verse provides further exposition for the former.

Surah Qaf - Verses 43-44

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ

يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ

43. Indeed, We it is Who give life and cause death; and to Us is the final return [of all].

44. On the Day when the earth shall be cleft asunder from them [they will come out] hastening forth. That will be a gathering [of all mankind], facile for Us.

God Almighty is the only being Able to give life and cause death. He shall cleave the earth asunder for mankind to come out of the graves. He shall put together the scattered bodies.

The blessed Verse 43 is saying that God Almighty gives life to the dead sperm inside the womb and causes it to grow and leaves it live for a certain span of time, but when it reaches its end, there shall be no delay in causing it to die.

In the same manner that life was given to man, He will cause him to die and He is Omnipotent to make his final return unto Him; in other words, He is Able to give a new life to man on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 44 provides further details by saying that their return unto God Almighty shall occur on the Day when the earth shall cleave asunder from them and they shall be given a new life and shall hasten to leave their graves;

("On the Day when the earth shall be cleft asunder from them [they will come out] hastening forth").

Thus the blessed Verse closes:

"That will be a gathering [of all mankind], facile for Us."

The Arabic word hashr designates 'gathering from all sides.' It goes without saying that it shall be facile for the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and what exists between the twain to resurrect the dead. Difficulty and facility are basically applicable to beings with limited power, but the Being Whose Power is infinite may easily do anything.

It is worthy of note that according to a number of traditions:

"The first men who leave the graves and enter the scene of Resurrection are the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) accompanied by Imam 'Ali (as)."[17]

Surah Qaf - Verse 45

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْهِم بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَن يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ

45. We know best what they [disbelievers] say. And you are not the one to force them [to believe]. But warn by the Qur'an him who fears My Warning.

The Arabic word jabbar designates both "All-Powerful" as one of the Most Beauteous Names of God Almighty and "tyrannous" which is a vicious quality. It is worthy of note that the Chapter opens with taking an oath to the Holy Qur'an and closes with reminding people to attend to reading the Holy Qur'an and act upon the Injunctions mentioned therein.

The blessed Verse in question, addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of disbelievers' false accusations as to the Noble Prophet's (S) sorcery and madness and their denial of Resurrection and false attributes to Godhead.

Nonetheless, the Noble Prophet (S) is enjoined to fulfill his duties of Prophethood as to preach the Qur'anic Verses, warn disbelievers against torments in this world and the Hereafter, and guide people to the Straight Path. It is said unto the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that he is unable to force them to believe and acknowledge Divine Unity.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[18]:

"You are only a warner for those who fear it [Resurrection and Divine Wrath]."

Finally, a number of traditions will be quoted on the Gloriousness of the Holy Qur'an.

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as):

"Verily, God Almighty has included in His Book what is required by the Muslim community and has made expositions regarding the same for His Messenger (S); He has apportioned measures for everything and has set the Holy Qur'an as the Guide for the same."[19]

Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali (as) is quoted as saying:

"Illuminating lights [of Guidance] and the curing physics of hearts are to be found in the Holy Qur'an."[20]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"I leave two things with you: the Qur'an and my family, so long as you grasp them, you shall not go astray."[21]

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"The superiority of the Qur'an over all words is like that of God over creatures."[22]

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is quoted as saying:

"It is incumbent upon you to remember the Qur'an, since the Qur'an is a cure, a useful physic, the guard of one who grasps it, and the deliverer of one who follows it."[23]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Verily, the Holy Qur'an is a hinderer and a commander, it commands man to [find one's path toward] Paradise and hinders man from [entering] Hell."[24]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Indeed, I leave amongst you the Book of Allah and it is the fast grip of Allah; whoever follows it will be guided and whoever turns away from it will go astray."[25]

Imam Sadiq (S) said:

"Verily, Allah taught His Messenger (S) the meaning and interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an and the Noble Prophet (S) taught the same to the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as).

O Lord! Rank us amongst the followers of the Holy Qur'an, the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as). Amen, O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 323.
2. Tafsir al-Mizan.
3. 25:28
4. 34:31
5. 37:29
6. 14:21
7. 14:21
8. 38:82
9. 17:63
10. 38:85
11. 26:89
12. 50:33
13. 2:10
14. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Usul Kafi, vol. 1, p. 16.
15. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 110.
16. Manhaj; Tafsir Maraghi; Masa'il, vol. 4, p. 73.
17. Kitab al-Khisal; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 119.
18. 79:45
19. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 84.
20. Jami' al-Akhbar wa al-Àthar, vol. 1, p. 164.
21. Ibid, Kitab al-Qur'an, vol.1, p. 94.
22. Ibid, p. 182.
23. Ibid, p. 432.
24. Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 12, p. 481; Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. 1, p. 107.
25. Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 185.

Surah al-Dhariyat, Chapter 51, Verses 1 - 23

(The Scattering Winds)

Section (juz' 26-27)

Number of Verses: 60

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter has sixty Verses and it was revealed in Mecca.

The title of the Chapter derives from its opening Verse:

"By the scattering winds"

connoting harsh winds that scatter everything. The Chapter opening and closing with a treatment of Resurrection deals mainly with Divine Unity, Divine Manifestations in the world of existence, the story of angels receiving Abraham's (as) hospitality and bearing to him the glad tidings of a child to be born to him, warning against destruction of the people of Lot (as), and a reference to a number of Prophets (as) like Moses and Noah (as) and the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud.

Making mention of the history of former Prophets (as) and the hardships they experienced for guiding their peoples, the Chapter in question calls the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) to persevere and be patient in proclaiming his Call.

Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who recites Surah al-Dhariyat in the day or at night, God Almighty will improve his life and sustenance, providing him with abundant provision, and illuminating his grave with a light shining to the Day of Resurrection [provided that he acts upon Qur'anic Injunctions]."[1]

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

وَالذَّارِيَاتِ ذَرْوًا

فَالْحَامِلَاتِ وِقْرًا

فَالْجَارِيَاتِ يُسْرًا

فَالْمُقَسِّمَاتِ أَمْرًا

1. By the winds that scatter everything forcefully.

2. Then by the clouds bearing heavy weight [of water].

3. Then by the ships that float with ease.

4. Then by angels distributing the affairs by [Allah's] Command.

In the opening four blessed Verses of the Chapter in question God Almighty swears by four great things in the world of creation, saying that what the Prophets promised you concerning the exalted states and Bounties

in store for good-doers in the Hereafter are certain and true and the Recompense of deeds shall be given at Divine Tribunal in the Hereafter such that each and every person shall certainly be recompensed for his deeds.

Qur'anic exegets' views concerning the opening four blessed Verses of the Chapter in question:

1. By the winds dispersing the clouds or dust. By the angels who disperse the clouds. By the women who disseminate generations of mankind through conception and pregnancy.

2. By the clouds bearing the heavy weight of rain by the angels responsible for making the clouds heavy with the weight of rain to flow. By the women carrying the burden of pregnancy.

3. By the ships floating in the sea with ease. By the planets, the sun, and the moon circling in their orbits. By the winds that move around.

4. Then these are the distributors of affairs or the angels serving as agents of the affairs of creation, responsible for sending down rain and distributors of the provisions of creatures, since each kind of angels are responsible for fulfilling certain duties so that the world of creation be preserved through order.

Ibn al-Kawwa' asked the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) regarding the opening four blessed Verses and narrated from Mujahid that 'distributors' refers to the four archangels responsible for the affairs of mankind: Gabriel for severity, Michael for Mercy, 'Izra'il for taking life, and Israfil for blowing the Trumpet or distributing the winds that distribute the clouds throughout the world.

The author of [the exegetic work titled] Kashshaf and Tabarsi narrate from Ibn 'Abbas and Mujahid who in turn narrate from Ibn al-Kawwa' that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) was asked while preaching on the pulpit:

"O Commander of the Faithful (as)! I ask you a few questions. Tell me what is meant by:

'al-Dhariyat Dharwa?'"

He replied:

"The wind is being intended."

I inquired:

'What about

fa-al-hamilat waqra?'

He replied:

'The clouds are being meant.'

I further asked:

'What is intended by

fa-al-muqassimat amra?'

He answered:

'Angels are being meant.'"

The tradition is attested in many a tradition source. The tradition in question bears testimony to the aforesaid view as per which dhariyat, hamilat, jariyat, and muqassimat designate the wind, the clouds, the ships, and the distributing angels respectively.

Certain Qur'anic exegets have been quoted as saying that in all instances, the word

'Lord'

is the object of oaths, since it is solely befitting to swear by God Almighty.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as per which he said:

"No one is allowed to take an oath unless he swears by God Almighty, but He may swear by any of His creatures. God Almighty swears by these creatures since they are of great benefits. Divine Unity is also further substantiated through such oaths. The fundamentals of the physical world include these four things; even if one of the four fails to function or transgress its bounds, the affairs of all mankind and also all creatures shall be ruined."

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 5-6

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ

وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ

5. Indeed, that which you are promised is certainly true.

6. And indeed, the [Day of] Recompense is certain to occur.

God Almighty fulfills the Promises given to His servants in this world and the Hereafter. God Almighty whose Manifestations of Omnipotence are visible in the world of creation is Able to fulfill His Promises.

The twain blessed Verses in question serve as the apodoses of the oaths to such multiplicities in the natural phenomena and their distribution as promised by the Prophets including the Rewards, Chastisements, Paradise, and Hell which are all true. Since the oath taken is supposed to be consistent with what is mentioned as the substantiation thereof, making mention of the multiplicities of the natural phenomena, e.g. wind, rain, and cloud, may make a reference to the point that despite the contradiction and dispersion of natural phenomena, God Almighty has removed such contradiction and dispersion though His Omniscience and Omnipotence and they all constitute an orderly world.

Likewise, it was promised by the Prophets as to getting together of all mankind and jinn living in dispersion and different spatial and temporal spheres that on the Promised Day they shall get together in one single line. These temporally disintegrated creatures shall unite on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, all different and dispersed deeds committed in this world shall be presented to them in the Books of Deeds and those committing them shall be recompensed.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 7-9

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ

يُؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُفِكَ

7. By the heaven abounding in beauteous paths and beauties,

8. Surely, you are [perplexed] in having different words.

9. Turned aside from Truth is he who will be led astray [in future].

The insensible may utter different words at different times. Thus, there is one Straight Path, but ways leading people astray are large in number. There is one true belief, but untrue ones are many. The blessed Verses in question like the preceding ones open with an oath and treat of disbelievers' differences regarding Resurrection and different questions including the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Divine Unity.

The blessed Verse 7 reads:

"By the heaven abounding in beauteous paths and beauties."

Different senses have been presented by lexicographers for the Arabic plural noun hubuk (singular form: hibak) including: paths and meanders as traces of wind blowing onto desert sand, water surface, or clouds. It is also applied to 'curly hair' and at times to 'beauty, adornment, orderly shape.'

The word derives from the root h-b-k denoting 'bind, tighten.'[2] All the different senses traces back to one single sense: the beauteous folds and meanders visible in waves, clouds, desert sand hills, and hair.

Application of the original sense of the word to the heaven is owing to either the different forms of the masses of planets and constellations or the fascinating meanders visible in clouds which are at times so appealing that one may be mesmerized by them for a while. It may also reflect the immense masses of galaxies appearing in spheres like curls of hair.

The fascinating pictures taken by scientists by means of telescopes remind one of curly hair. Thus, the Holy Qur'an swears by the heaven and immense galaxies still unperceived by the sharp vision of science.

Taking into account the fact that these senses are by no means inconsistent may reflect that they are all intended in the oath, as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"And indeed We have created above you seven heavens [one above the other]"

which makes a reference to the multiplicity and variety of the heavens, planets, galaxies, and different worlds. It is also worthy of note that the root of the word may reflect the consolidation of the heavens and the solid nexus existing amongst planets, like that between the planets of the solar system with the sun.

The apodosis of the oath, namely the object of it, is to be found in the blessed Verse 8:

"Surely, you are [perplexed] in having different words."

It is saying that your words are contradictions in terms demonstrating the unfoundedness of your words. Regarding Resurrection you say at times:

"We never believe that decayed bones may ever be rejuvenated."

At times you say:

"We are in doubt concerning Resurrection."

You sometimes say:

"Bring our ancestors to bear witness that Resurrection will follow death so that we may acknowledge your claims."

Regarding the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) you sometimes say that he is a lunatic, a poet, a sorcerer. At times you say that a teacher teaches him these

words. At times, you call the Holy Qur'an 'ancient legends' (asatir al-awwalin), poetry, magic, and lie.

By the meanders of the heavens! Your words abound in contradictions in terms. Had you had any reasonable argument to produce, you would have presented the same argument instead of searching different unfounded arguments each and every day. Such expression is actually an argument negating disbelievers' unfounded claims regarding Divine Unity, Resurrection, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), and the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note that based on the contextual meaning of the following blessed Verses, the focal point of these blessed Verses is the question of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 9 treats of the reasons behind deviation from the true path, saying:

"Those who refuse to acknowledge sound arguments and submit to reason deviate from belief in Resurrection; though the arguments substantiating life after death are evident."

("Turned aside from Truth is he who will be led astray [in future]").

It is worthy of note that the Verse in expressed in brief as the literal translation of the same is:

"Turned aside from Truth is he who will be led astray [in future]."

The Arabic word ufik originally designates 'turn away from'; consequently, it is applied to 'lie' which entails deviation from the Straight Path. Likewise the Arabic plural noun mu'tafikat is applied to different winds. Taking into account the point that the preceding Verses treated of Resurrection, it may be said that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse makes a reference to deviation from such belief.

Since the preceding blessed Verses dealt with disbelievers' contradictory statements, it is evident that those deviating from reason and clear arguments are being meant herein. Thus, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse refers to those who deviate from belief in Resurrection owing to turning away from logical arguments and the logic aiming at seeking truth.

However, deviation may reflect refusing to acknowledge the Truth including the Holy Qur'an, Divine Unity, the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophethood, Resurrection, and Divine Guardianship of the Infallible Imams (as) reflected in a number of traditions. The Question of Resurrection is indisputably involved herein.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 10-11

قُتِلَ الْخَرَّاصُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ

10. Down with the liars [talking of the Holy Qur'an and Resurrection without relying on sound arguments]

11. Who are immersed in heedlessness and neglect.

The Arabic word kharras

("liar")

derives from kh-r-s denoting ‘form a conjecture, tell untruth.’ The Arabic word ghamra designates ‘abundant bottomless water,’ but it ad hoc connotes profound ignorance encompassing man. Some people are in the habit of gossiping based on their surmises and conjectures aiming to create doubts in others.

Gossips are usually commissioned by the enemy, created by hypocrites, and acknowledged by simpletons. At any rate, the blessing Verse in question is saying: “May the liars die.” The sentence is a curse to those liars who deserve to die since their non-existence is better than their existence.

The blessed Verse 11 is a depiction of such liars, saying that they are immersed in neglect and heedlessness. The Arabic word sahun derives from s-h-w denoting ‘to be inattentive, to neglect; though it ad hoc connotes those who are immersed in ignorance and produce unfounded words and excuses each and every day in order to evade the Path of Truth.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 12-14

يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الدِّينِ

يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ

ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

12. They inquire: “When will be the Day of Recompense?”

13. [It shall be] a Day when they will be burned over the Fire!

14. [It is said unto them:] “Taste you your trial! This is what you used to demand to be hastened!”

Inquiry aiming at understanding entails no problem, but it is blameworthy if the same aims at finding faults and denial of truth;

(“They inquire: “When will be the Day of Recompense?”).

The antecedent of

‘they’

in

“They inquire”

are those immersed in ignorance as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses; those who have turned away from the Path of Truth and inquire from believers regarding the Day of Recompense sworn by in the Holy Qur’an as well as the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) in order to deride them.

“A Day when they will be burned over the Fire”

is the reply to their question whose predicate is omitted, namely the Day of Recompense is the Day on which you shall be burned and chastised and the angel responsible for inflicting chastisement upon disbelievers in Hell says unto them: “Taste your trial!”

This is same Day promised by the Prophets warning disbelievers against the pain and torment in the Hereafter; but disbelievers refused to believe them; instead they hastened out of denial asking about the time of Recompense.

Now, they may taste their trial and acknowledge the truth thereof. It is also worthy of note that the Arabic word fitna is used originally in the sense of melting gold and silver in the crucible to separate pure gold or silver from

impurities, though the world ad hoc signifies the severity of disbelievers' torment.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 15-16

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

آخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ

15. Indeed, the God fearing shall be in the midst of Gardens and [beside] Springs,

16. Receiving what their Lord has granted them. Indeed, they were formerly the good-doers [in this world].

Turning away from transient pleasures entails permanent ones. Besides gardens and springs, the people of Paradise receive new Bounties at any moment. It is worthy of note that what they receive befits Divine Lordship and all Bounties in Paradise will be granted to the God fearing by the Sacred Essence of God Almighty.

Following a depiction of those who have immersed in the mire of ignorance and the manner of their dire fate, God Almighty depicts the state of the good-doers and the Bounties and Blessings granted to them. The Qur'anic depiction of the state of disbelievers and evil doers and their dire fate follows precedes or follows the state of believers and the God fearing.

We expect the same since God Almighty has glorified His Messenger (S) and called him 'bearer of glad tidings and a warner.' Furthermore, the perfect man is supposed to know God Almighty by all Divine Beauteous Names and be aware that He bestows many Blessings at the time of Mercy and is severely Revengeful at the time of Wrath.

Thus, the God fearing are supposed to be in a state between fear and hope at all times, rather than be proud of their piety, worship, and fearing God Almighty or lose their hope of Divine Mercy. As a consequence, the Qur'anic Verses treat of the state of disbelievers and their torments inflicted upon them in Hellfire preceding or following a treatment of the state of the God fearing and those obedient to Divine Commands deriving pleasure in Gardens and beside Springs in Paradise.

The Arabic word jannat the plural form of jannat which may not only allude to the point that they will enjoy different kinds of Paradise but it may also make a reference to the point that they will enjoy physical and spiritual Paradises and Springs without bounds. The Arabic word 'uyun is the plural form of 'ayn which may refer to different kinds of Springs to be enjoyed by the God fearing.

The blessed Verse proceeds with some of the attributes of the God fearing including the receipt of what their Lord bestows upon them out of Mercy and Graciousness;

("Receiving what their Lord has granted them").

The relative ma ("that, what") in

"what their Lord has granted them" (ma ata-hum rabbu-hum)

designates generality connoting innumerable Bounties. It may also allude to their exalted state, namely they are so close to God Almighty that they immediately receive Bounties from Him.

A similar motif is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[4] that it seems as if the hand of the poor is likened to His:

"Know they not that Allah Accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms and that Allah Alone is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, the Most Gracious?"

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the exalted state of the God fearing by which they receive Divine Bounties from His Hand; in other words, they heavenly soul shall receive many a Bounty from its Origin.

The clause

"Indeed, they were formerly the good-doers [in this world]"

refers to the point that the God fearing believers attained to such exalted state of receiving Divine Bounties immediately from the Origin of Such Bounties owing to their piety and fearing God in their mundane life.

Qur'anic exegets maintain that:

"formerly" (qabla dhalik)

may refer to mundane life and reflect that the Reward of their doing righteous good deeds is that their pure souls receive Bounties from the Lord and they also receive Divine Blessings in their worldly life.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 17-19

كَانُوا قَلِيلاً مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

17. They used to sleep but little by night.

18. And at dawn, they were invoking [Allah] for forgiveness.

19. And in their property there was the right of mendicants and the deprived.

The second attribute of the God fearing is made mention of in the blessed Verse 17, saying:

"They used to sleep but little by night."

The verbal form yahja'un is cognate with huju' ("night's sleep") deriving from the root h-j-'. The blessed Verse may be interpreted in two ways: firstly, the God fearing are awake most of the night and sleep a short time at night; secondly, most of the nights they are awake worshipping God Almighty and few are the nights in which they sleep failing to be awake for the sake of worship.

In this vein, there is a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the blessed Verse in question according to which he said:

Few are the night in which they sleep without rising [to worship God Almighty]."[5]

The blessed Verse 18 enumerates another attribute of the God fearing saying that they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness.

The blessed Verse reflects that istighfar designates asking God Almighty for forgiveness at night has a further merit: despite spending most of the night in worshipping God Almighty and what is desirable to the Divine Legislator (shari'), the God fearing believer whose hear is purified devotes

the dawn time to invoking God Almighty, the Oft-Forgiving, for forgiveness.

As some Qur'anic exegets maintain, the blessed Verse refers to the point that the God fearing are supposed to repeatedly invoke God Almighty for forgiveness following their nightly prayers unless they be deceived by formal worship imagining that they have attained to the exalted state of being close to God Almighty consigning to oblivion the Qur'anic Verse:

"Indeed Allah accepts [prayers] from the God fearing."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best time for invocation to God Almighty is dawn, since Allah says:

'And at dawn, they were invoking [Allah] for forgiveness.'"[6]

Regarding the blessed Verse in question, he said:

"It refers to invoking God Almighty seventy times for forgiveness in odd (witr) and night prayers."[7]

According to a Prophetic tradition quoted in Durr al-Manthur:

"Late night is more desirable to me than early night for night prayers, since God Almighty says:

'The God fearing invoke God Almighty for forgiveness at dawn.'"[8]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"The good-doers who are the people of Paradise invoke God Almighty seventy times for forgiveness in their odd prayers at dawn."[9]

The blessed Verse 19 enumerates another attribute of the God fearing saying that they determine certain portions for the poor in their property thereby they take the poor as their partners in their property. The Arabic word sa'il is applied to a poor man who expresses his poverty asking the rich to provide him with what is due to him. The word mahrum is applied to a gentleman whose continence impedes him from expressing his poverty and dire state.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 20-23

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ

وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنَّكُمْ تَنطِقُونَ

20. And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certitude.

21. And also in [the creation of] your ownselves [are Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Grandeur, and Wisdom]. Will you not then see [with your inward sight]?

22. And in the heaven is [the preordainment of] your provision, and that which you are promised.

23. Then by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it [Word of Ours] is the Truth, just as it is the truth that you can speak [in which you entertain no doubt, likewise entertain no doubt concerning Our Words].

According to the Holy Qur'an preparedness of heart is the prerequisite for finding Guidance and attaining to certitude through Signs of nature, the Book, and the Islamic faith;

("And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certitude").

Many a secret lie behind the creation of the earth and that of mankind, including the mass, area, and depth of the earth, mountains and valleys, its distance from the sun and other planets, different motions of the earth, visible and invisible mines, vegetation, water reservoirs, colors, stones, soils, fruits, plants, refinement of the earth and its providing food and other provisions for its inhabitants all of which reflect the Signs of Divine Omnipotence and Wisdom to those seeking certitude.

Different states of the body, from conception onward serve as manifestations of Divine Omnipotence and man's different instincts reflect the signs of His Omniscience and Wisdom as to man's needs. The harmony between physical senses and their lack of consistency with each other, skeleton, nervous, respiratory, and digestion system well as sight, hearing, and defense mechanism are all signs of Divine Omnipotence.

Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"God Almighty created you with hearing and sight; you become happy, angry, hungry, and thirsty."[10]

The certain (mawqinin) are those who have attained the knowledge of certitude ('ilm al-yaqin) through intellectual and narrational arguments and look at the earth in order to increase their certitude and knowledge so that they may perceive the Signs of Divine Attributes of Glory and Beauty.

They are attentive at all times to find Signs of Divine Mercy in all things so that through attentiveness and reflection they may attain to such state thereby they may perceive things as representatives of Divine Attributes and reach from knowledge of certitude to certitude by sight ('ayn al-yaqin).

It is then that they see with their inward eye what is attributed to the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"His Signs are to be seen in all things, reflecting that He is One";

Thus, they may perceive Divine Infinite Mercy in all creatures.

The blessed Verse 21 is addressed to all mankind.

The hamza (the glottal stop) in a-fa-la ("why not") is an interrogative particle connoting censure for those who fail to perceive the Signs of Divine Omnipotence in themselves, nor do they see that whatever exists in macrocosm is an instance existing in human existence, since man is the only creature in him exist all the world of existence and the treasure of Divine Secrets; he is the only representative of Divine Attributes who at times soars in the infinite realm of the world of contingent being through the faculty of his spiritual soul and he is at times attracted by nature and plunges into the depth of the mire of materiality.

Despite his Divine vicegerency, he has blinded his inward eye and fails to perceive the Signs of the Divine in order to know Him.

Acquisition of the knowledge of the origin and Resurrection is dependent upon knowing one's self. First of all, one is supposed to know one's self in one's own being as one is the Sign of the Existence of God Almighty so that one may acquire knowledge of the origin and Resurrection of one's self as it

is reflected in a generally transmitted and accepted (mashhur) tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

"One who knows his own self and truth, he has known his Lord."

It is worthy of note that knowing one's self is not solely dependent upon acquisition of knowledge concerning one's body, natural faculties, and genealogy, but one who knows his own self through acquiring knowledge as to his createdness and knowing that he is the manifestation of Divine Existence and Attributes, he may know God Almighty within the limited capacity of his knowledge and existence.

It is narrated from the master of mystics, Imam 'Ali (as), saying:

"Do you imagine that you are but a minute mass? But, macrocosm is encompassed in you."

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that your provision and what is promised to you are in the heaven descending upon the earth through rain, snow, and sunlight thereby vegetation grows on which you feed. What is promised to you has been sent down as Divine Signs.

The word:

'heaven' (sama')

may refer to the celestial realm, namely the world of preordainment and the Preserved Tablet (lawh mahfud) including provision (rizq) preordained for man from the beginning of creation embracing physical and spiritual Bounties and also what is promised to the God fearing from Bounties in Paradise to the exalted states in the Hereafter through Divinely appointed Messengers.

Although the former meaning of provision, namely what constitutes man's sustenance and/or natural requirements, occurs to mind at the first glance, but taking into account the clause

"and what is promised"

with the conjunct 'and' and the following blessed Verse:

"Then by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it [Word of Ours] is the Truth, just as it is the truth that you can speak,"

it becomes evident that the general meaning is intended, since the antecedent of 'it' are seemingly the preceding blessed Verses in which oaths were taken as to the Lord, Distributor, and Organizer of the heaven and the earth. Such attributes were enumerated as belonging to the God fearing for whom states were specified.

It was also mentioned that man's preordained provision and what is promised to them from worldly to otherworldly Bounties are certainly true, like your words of which you are certain. It is worthy of note that it would be unbefitting to swear by the provision prepared for man through rain, snow, and sunlight and thereby attempt to substantiate what is evident by such emphatic oaths.

Notes

www.alhassanain.org/english

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan, the opening of Chapter 51; Thawab al-A‘mal apud Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 120.
2. Lisan al-‘Arab; Raghib’s Mufradat, under h-b-k.
3. 23:17
4. 9:104
5. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 446.
6. Mustadrak, vol. 5, p. 200.
7. Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 130.
8. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 113.
9. Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verses in question.
10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.

Surah al-Dhariyat, Verses 24 - 46

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 24-27

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُّنكَرُونَ

فَرَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَجَاء بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ

فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ

24. Has the story reached you, of the honored guests of Abraham (as)?

25. When they came in to him and said: "Peace be upon you!" He [Abraham] replied: "Peace be upon you," and said: "You are a people unknown to me."

26. Then he turned to his household secretly and brought out a fattened [roasted] calf.

27. Then placed it before them [noticing that they refrain from eating, he said]: "Will you not eat?"

Bearing the glad tidings of a child to be born to Abraham (as), some angels entered his home, but the Prophet (as) did not know them. However, he invited them to go in and showed his hospitality by preparing food for them. Noticing that they refrained from eating, he was anxious and inquired the reason for their refraining to partake of the food.

Then, they presented themselves to him and enlightened him on their mission. Instances of anthropomorphic angels are attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, including: descent of Gabriel upon Mary (as), that of Harut and Marut in Solomon's (as) realm, and that of angels upon Abraham (as).

Thus, addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verses in question say:

"O Muhammad (S)! Are you aware of the story of the Abraham's (as) guests honored by God Almighty?"

A similar Qur'anic instance is attested elsewhere in which God Almighty says of angels:

"But they are honored servants."

The adjective 'honored' may refer to Abraham (as), i.e. he honored the angels by preparing food for them. The manner of expression reflects that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) had not been aware of the story but he learned the story through Divine Revelation.

The blessed Verse 25 saying:

"When they came in to him"

indicate that they were sent by God Almighty to fulfill two missions: to bear glad tidings to Abraham (as) that God Almighty would grant him a son; they were also sent to afflict the people of Lot (as) with torment.

The blessed Verse 25 is saying that when the angels descended, they greeted with Abraham (as) by saying:

"Peace be upon you."

The angels' greetings may merely serve as asking Divine Mercy for Abraham (as). It may also indicate that they aimed to inform Abraham of

their mission as to afflicting the people of Lot (as) with torment and apprise him of his safety and that of his followers.

Replying them by saying:

"Peace be upon you"

he noticed that he did not know them, since he thought that they were human beings and it was his habit to show hospitality to his company.

The blessed Verse 26 says that Abraham (as) went to Sarah and had a fattened calf roasted and brought it to his guests.

Noticing that the guests who appeared like human beings to him refrain from eating, he inquired with surprise:

"Will you not eat?"

Since they were unknown to him and besides they declined his offer to partake of the food, he was afraid of them lest they might be his enemies suspecting some malintention against him.

Thus, the angels said unto him:

"Fear not. We are here to bear you glad tidings rather than harm you."

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 28-30

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَبَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ

قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ

28. Then he entertained fear of them [when they ate not]. They said: "Fear not [since we are God's angels]." And they bore him glad tidings of a son having knowledge.

29. Then his wife [hearing the glad tidings of a son] came forward with a loud voice: She smote her face and said: "[How] a barren old woman [may conceive a child]!"

30. They [the angels] said [unto him]: "Thus says your Lord. Indeed, He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient."

The Arabic word awjas ("apprehensive, entertaining fear, having presentiments") derives from w-j-s ("be apprehensive, have presentiments, be seized by fear"). The Arabic noun Khiyfa ("fear, dread") derives from the root kh-'-f ("fear, dread") and its nunnation (tanwin) indicates diversification (tanwi') connoting that Abraham was seized by a kind of fear.

The blessed Verse is saying that the angels introduced themselves to Abraham saying that they were not human beings in need of partaking food, but they were angels sent on a mission by God Almighty to inform him of a son who would be quite knowledgeable and wise.

The son mentioned herein may refer to Ishmael (Isma'il) born to Hagar (Hajar). The following blessed Verse indicates that the son mentioned in the blessed Verse 28 was Isaac (Ishaq) born to Sarah (Sara).

The blessed Verse 29 is saying that upon hearing such glad tiding, Sarah, Abraham's (as) wife, hastened toward the room with a loud voice (fi sarratin) saying:

"How may I conceive a child when I am an old [barren] woman."

Qur'anic exegets maintain that Sarah and Abraham (as) were ninety five and one hundred and ninety years of age respectively at the time.

The blessed Verse 30 is saying that replying to Abraham's (as) wife seized by great surprise and fear, the angles said:

"Thus says your Lord. Indeed, He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient,"

i.e. he is All-Aware of all good and evil things. The angels might have intended to say that they were on a mission from God Almighty to bear them glad tidings rather than saying something of their own, aiming to make her understand that God Almighty willed to reflect his Omnipotence to the world that whatever He willed would be realized and there was nothing impossible against His Omnipotence.

Thus, the angels said:

"He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient."

The emphatic conjunction inna ("behold, verily, truly") indicates that whatever God Almighty wills is based upon His Wisdom and Omniscience as to improving the affairs and vanity may never penetrate his Sacred Divine Presence.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 31-34

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ

لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ

مُسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ

31. [Abraham] said: "Then for what purpose you have come, O Messengers?"

32. They said: "We have been sent to a wrong-doing people,

33. To send down upon them stones of baked clay [for their perdition].

34. [Stones] marked by your Lord for [the perdition of] transgressors of Divine Bounds.

The Arabic word khatb designates 'significant affair or concern' and musawwama denotes 'marked.' Lot (as) was a relative of Abraham (as) who propagated monotheism in the region of Sodom, Jordan, at the time. Lot's (as) people were promiscuous and also sodomizers inattentive to Prophet Lot's (as) warnings. As a consequence, God Almighty caused the destruction of their region and their story is mentioned in Chapters 7, 11, 15, and 29.

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that when Prophet Abraham (as) recognized the angels through the light of his heart and learned that they were on a significant mission, he inquired about their purpose.

The blessed Verse 32 is saying that since Prophet Abraham (as) occupied a place higher than that of Prophet Lot (as), the former was informed by God Almighty through His angels that He intended to cause the destruction of the people of Lot (as) inhabiting Mu'tafaka turning a deaf ear to Lot's warnings against their committing such obscene acts.

Thus they brought Divine torment upon themselves. Replying to Prophet Abraham (as), the angels informed him that they had been sent by God Almighty to send down upon them stones of baked clay.

The blessed Verse 34 is saying:

"O Muhammad (S)! Those stones marked by your Lord are for those people leading their lives in pleasures of the flesh, disbelief, and sin."

The blessed Verse may make a reference to the point that the recompense of any act is to be consistent with it (jaza'an wifaqan). Since the promiscuous deeds of the people of Mu'tafaka were the lowliest acts against the laws of nature and human practice, but quite bestial, their chastisement had to be inflicted upon them by means of the lowliest of things, namely baked clay.

It may be for the same reason that the punishment for sodomy is being stoned so that the sodomizer tastes the most excruciating torment in this world and others may take a lesson and refrain from committing such act of obscenity.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 35-37

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِّلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

35. Therefore, We brought out from therein all the believers.

36. But We found not there any household of the Muslims except one.

37. And We have left there [nothing but] a sign for [warning] those who fear the excruciating torment.

Corruption at times disseminates to such an extent that an honored Prophet like Lot (as) is backed by one single household, to be more precise by his household excluding his wife;

("any household of the Muslims except one").

As reflected in the blessed Verses in question, the angels said unto Prophet Abraham (as) who was concerned about Prophet Lot (as), his nephew, that they had expelled all disbelievers from the city of Mu'tafaka but one home belonging to the Muslims that stayed intact by Divine torment and the home belonged to Prophet Lot (as) and his two daughters.

It is said that Prophet Lot (as) propagated monotheism for twenty one years, but only one person believed him. Thus, the inhabitants of the city deserved Divine Chastisement since it is reflected that they did not deserved Divine Guidance. Had some of them had faith, they would have remained unharmed.

The blessed verse 37 is saying that God Almighty left the city in ruins so that those who fear excruciating torment might take a lesson. The blessed Verse reflects that the Prophets were able to lead those unto Guidance who were prepared to have faith and believe in God Almighty believing that He is Most Gracious at the time of Mercy and Most Revengeful at the time of being Wrathful.

Noticing the traces of Divine torment descended upon former peoples, their faith increases and fear of God Almighty overwhelms them, but those

who are frail of faith are not prepared to receive Guidance, like the pretending Muslims of our time who take all disasters inflicted upon them to be natural phenomena and do not regard themselves to be blameworthy deserving such afflictions.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 38-40

وَفِي مُوسَى إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

فَتَوَلَّى بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

38. And in [the story of] Moses [AS there is a sign and a lesson to take], when We sent him to Pharaoh with a manifest authority.

39. But [Pharaoh] turned away relying on his might and hosts, saying: "[He is] a sorcerer, or a madman."

40. Therefore, We took him and his hosts [by force] and dumped them into the sea for he was blameworthy.

The phrase:

"manifest authority"

is a clear evidence for the possibility of entering into discussions with others and producing one's logical arguments.

The verbal form nabadhnahum ["we dumped them") deriving from the root n-b-dh is employed in the sense of dump unworthy and insignificant objects. The Arabic word mulim deriving from l-'-m ("censure, blame, and rebuke") denotes 'blameworthy.' The word rukn ad hoc connotes Pharaoh's might, holsts, property, authority, and propaganda, intending to say that Pharaoh relying on his might, confronted Moses (as)and refused to acknowledge his Prophetic Call.

Alluding to the previous blessed Verses, those in question proceeds with further warning following the stories of Abraham (as) and the torment sent down on the people of Lot (as).

Opening with the story of the story of Moses (as) and Pharaoh, they say that God Almighty sent Moses (as) with miracles including his walking stick and the shining hand as manifest Divine Signs, relying on his might, sovereignty, and the large number of adherents, Pharaoh turned away from the miracles of Moses (as) and showed indifference, since he claimed godhead and forced people to worship him.

However, might have inwardly acknowledged Moses' (as) Prophetic Call through Divine Signs, but he was deceived by his love for sovereignty and the large number of his courtiers and servants thereby he refrained from believing in monotheism.

As a consequence, he attributed sorcery and lunacy to the Prophet (as) attempting at deceiving people by claiming that Moses was either a sorcerer for transforming a walking stick into a dragon or a lunatic for his Call to worshipping the invisible God.

Since Pharaoh went to the extreme in obstinacy and confrontation with Moses (as), believed in his godhead, impeded his kith and kin from believing in God Almighty, and persecuted Prophet Moses (as) and

believers in monotheism, God Almighty gave him the ultimatum, afflicted him and his hosts with torments and drowned them in the Nile.

Pharaoh blamed himself at that time as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[1]:

"And We took the Children of Israel across the sea and Pharaoh with his hosts followed them in oppression and enmity till when drowning overtook him, he said: 'I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He [Allah] in Whom the Children of Israel believe and I am one of the Muslims.'"

It was said unto him:

"Now that you are close to perdition, your belief is of no avail and may not rescue you from drowning, since you refused to believe in God but waxed corruption in the earth."

When disbelievers and transgressors of Divine Bounds taste the torment and when they notice the evil consequences of their vicious deeds in mortal throes, their repentance will be of no avail, since his potential for turning away from denial of God Almighty and turning toward Him has come to an end and his repentance will be in vain; as the old saying goes:

"An ounce of precaution is better than a pound of cure."

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 41-42

وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ

مَا تَذَرُ مِن شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلاّ جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ

41. And [there are lessons and Signs] in [the story of] 'Ad when We sent against them the barren [destructive] wind;

42. It [the wind] spared nothing that it touched, but blew it into broken spreads of rotten ruins.

Prophet Hod (Hud AS) was sent by God Almighty to call his people to monotheism. Despite his warnings they did not pay any heed but paved the path for sending down Divine torment. Winds are sometimes rejuvenating but they may be barren and destructive at times. The Arabic phrase al-rih al-'aqim designates 'destructive wind' sent as a torment against the people of 'Ad.

It was so scorching and poisoning that it destroyed all men, animals, and plants on its way. The word ramim designates 'rotten, decaying' and tarmim denotes 'restoration of decay.' Despite their great physical strength, power, and high stature, the destructive wind shattered them like rotten bones.

The blessed twain Verses allude to the torment sent against the people of 'Ad who despite their strong body and high stature, their strength, power, and might could not keep them from being afflicted with the Divine torment, the barren, namely destructive wind, levitating them off the ground and dumped them onto the land thus turning them into rotten bones.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 43-45

وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّى حِينٍ

فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنظُرُونَ

فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِن قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنتَصِرِينَ

43. And in [the story of] Thamud [there are Signs and lessons], when they were told: "Enjoy yourselves for a while [in your lifetime]!"

44. But they insolently defied the Command of their Lord, so the Sa'iqa [awe inspiring cry] overtook them while they were beholding.

45. Then they were unable to rise up, nor could they ask for help.

Prophet Salih (as), the Prophet of the people of Thamud, brought out a camel at the request of his people and ordered them to refrain from harming the camel, but they killed it and denied his Prophetic Call.

The Arabic phrase hata hin indicates the three day respite granted them so that they may regret their evil deed and repent, but they kept on committing sins and succumbed to Divine Chastisement after three days, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"So he said: 'enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days.'"

Thus, recounting the story of the people of 'Ad and their affliction with Divine torment and the icy gale (sarsar) owing to their denial of the Prophetic Call is followed by an allusion to the torment inflicted upon the people of Thamud who, having killed Salih's (as) she-camel, were granted a three day respite so that they may compensate for their past evil deeds, but they disobeyed Divine Command and returned to their vicious deeds. As a consequence, the destructive torment was sent down upon them and caused their perdition.

It is said that the torment was Gabriel's awe-inspiring shout as a consequence of which they lost consciousness and perished

"while they were beholding."

It is also said that a group of them, Amalekites ('amaliqa), were out of town on those three days and were able to hear the awe-inspiring shout and the inhabitants' loss of consciousness; however, the following blessed Verse:

("Then they were unable to rise up, nor could they ask for help")

reveals that the people of Thamud did not die right after the awe-inspiring shout, but lost consciousness and lost their lives later on.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verse 46

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ

46. [And were] the people of Noah [AS] before them [whom We destroyed]. Indeed, they were a people transgressing Divine Bounds.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Muslims were able to take a lesson out of the story of Noah's (as) people whom Noah called to monotheism for a thousand years. The common run of people at times incline toward committing sins and pave the ground for Divine torment.

The opening conjunction particle 'and' connects the blessed Verse in question with the preceding ones, as per which the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty caused the destruction of the people of Noah prior to those of 'Ad and Thamud, since they were wrong-doers who were totally sinners disobedient to Divine Command.

They disbelieved Prophetic Calls as a consequence of which they were given the ultimatum and were afflicted with the recompense of their vicious deeds - the excruciating torment. These blessed Verses treat of five Prophets (as) and their peoples and the torments inflicted upon the disobedient peoples.

The reminder serves two purposes: firstly, warning others against disobedience to God Almighty which necessitates Divine torments illustrating those in store in the Hereafter and secondly, consoling the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) encouraging him to entertain no sorrow because of some people attributing unbefitting qualities to him including sorcery and madness.

He is thereby reminded that people have been the same at different times and those seeking truth are very few in number. Former Prophets (as) were patient against disbelievers' persecutions and persevered firmly in propagating their Prophetic Missions. The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is encouraged to persevere firmly in the Cause of Allah like former Prophets (as).

The same motif is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, including 46:35:

"Therefore, be patient [O Muhammad (S)!] as did the Prophets of strong will (ulu al-'azm)."

These blessed Verses encouraging him to be patient reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) suffered many abuses by the disbelievers from Quraysh and he was quite anxious because of their denial of his Prophetic Call.

Notes

1. 10:90
2. 11:65

Surah al-Dhariyat, Verses 47 - 60

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 47-48

وَالسَّمَاء بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ

47. With [indescribable] power did We construct the heaven. Indeed, We are Able to extend the vastness of space thereof.

48. And We have spread out the earth: how Excellent Spreader are We!

The Arabic word ayd may ad hoc be employed either as the plural form of yad ("hand"), as in

"Or have they hands wherewith they hold?"[1],

or as an infinitive designating 'support', as the derivatives of the root '-y-d ("support, back") attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, including:

"He it is Who has supported you with His Help and with the believers"[2].

The Arabic words farsh and mahd designate spreading something for taking rest. Following recounting the story of the Prophets and their peoples and nations, the blessed Verses in question treat of Divine Omnipotence, Beneficence, and Creativity reminding people to behold the manner through which God Almighty, unaided and without time created the heavens ex nihilo, established, and spread it out.

Only God Almighty, the Creator and the Provider, is Aware of the vastness of the heavens and the number of spheres, planets, and galaxies and despite the strenuous efforts made by astronomers, they have failed to gain full acquaintance with the number of all the stars and planets.

The number is seemingly infinite. Human knowledge is such that the more it is gained, it may still advance, since Divine Emanation is Infinite; consequently, the more human knowledge advances, it becomes finite against Divine Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse 48 proceeds with a treatment of Divine Favors bestowed upon mankind. God Almighty makes mention of His Omniscience and Omnipotence saying

that He spread out the earth like the carpet beneath man's feet and made it an abode for him.

The Arabic word mahd denotes cradle attested in 19:29, when to remove the unfounded accusations, Mary (as) was asked to point to baby Jesus (as) so that they may ask him and they replied:

"How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"

God Almighty likens the earth to a cradle since the earth is in permanent motion like the cradle moving for pacifying the child.

Ptolemaic astronomers maintained that the sun circles around the earth once in twenty four hours as a result of which a different exegesis was provided for the blessed Verse in question, but it is proved by modern scientists that the earth circles around the sun in twenty four hours and the blessed Verse 48 saying:

"How Excellent Spreader are We!"

is substantiated by modern discoveries and is regarded as one of Qur'anic miracles.

Two quite precise points may be derived from the blessed Verse concerning the creation of the earth.

The first clause:

"And We have spread out the earth"

likens the earth to a carpet prepared and spread for rest.

The second clause:

"How Excellent Spreader are We!"

indicates that the earth which serves as a carpet on which one may rest is like a cradle moving permanently. The beauty of expression lies in the point that despite its permanent motion, the earth likened to a carpet on which one may rest and its motion is not tangible.

God Almighty glorifies Himself herein and concerning Creation, the Creator and the Provider of the world says that He has created the world in the best manner. In other words, the expression "how Excellent Spreader are We!" is a delicate one reflecting that God Almighty prepared the earth with all the means of rest for the life of mankind. The Arabic word mahid is a cognate of mahd and the latter is applied to cradle or any place prepared for rest.

Such place is supposed to be quiet, safe, and comfortable and all these conditions are applicable to the earth. On the one hand, by Divine Command stones are softened and pulverized and on the other, rigidity of mountains and the crust of the earth make it resistant against the pressure caused by the ebb and flow; on the other hand, the atmosphere encompassing the earth preserves the solar heat blanketing the widespread bed shielding it against collision of meteorites burning them into ashes.

Thus, all the means of welfare has been Divinely prepared for human comfort on the globe.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verse 49

وَمِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

49. And of everything We have created pairs that you may remember [and take lessons].

The law of parity predominates all things - generation and continuity of life spring from parity. The blessed Verse in question is saying that pairs have been created for each species of creatures forming pairs.

"Of everything"

designates generality including all species of creatures.

Male and female pairs of mankind, animals, and their species are not solely intended by

"of everything"

as some people might have surmised, but it encompasses all particles and contingent existent beings. It is even a proven fact that the constituent elements, termed prime matter (madat al-mawad) or element consists of two constituents at times termed positive and negative charges, male and female, and/or energy and matter. In short, the blessed Verse is saying that all contingent existent beings are composite consisting of two things.

Unity solely belongs to the Divine Essence of God Almighty Who is Free from parity, elements, or constituents and He is One in His Essence, to His Essence, and in His Essence:

("There is no god but Allah").

The blessed Verse indicates that all contingent existent beings consist of constituent elements and any composite being requires a maker; likewise, pairs are in need of each other. Thus, contingent existent beings require the Necessary Being Whose Sacred Presence is devoid of composition, mate, partner, and equal. He is not in need of others in terms of Essence nor is He in need of aids in terms of Acts.

Furthermore, the blessed Qur'anic Verse in question says

"of all things,"

namely "of all existent beings" which may refer to the fact that all things in the world consist of negative and positive particles. Today, it is a proven fact that atoms consist of different particles including electrons, elementary particles with negative charge, and protons, those with positive charge.

It is worthy of note that the dependent clause:

"that you may remember [and take lessons]"

makes a reference to the point that parity, multiplicity, and duality in all things in the world remind man of the point that the Creator of the world is One, since duality is one of the characteristics of created beings.[3]

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 50-51

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

50. Therefore, flee to Allah. Indeed, I am a plain warner to you from Him.

51. And associate not any other object of worship along with Allah. Indeed, I am a plain warner to you from Him.

The phrase:

"plain warner"

(nadhir mubin) is repeated twice in these two blessed Verses.

Other instances, including;

"plain Book"

(kitab mubin)[4],

"plain Message"

(balagh mubin)[5],

"plain Arabic"

('Arabi mubin[6]) all bear witness to the clarity of Divine Message and Word and the Prophets' warning.

It is worthy of note that fleeing toward God Almighty is on a par with fleeing from shadows to light, ignorance to knowledge, anxiety to security, superstitions to truth, discord to unity, polytheism to monotheism, and sin to piety and fearing God Almighty. Imam Baqir (as) regards pilgrimage[7] to Mecca as an instance of fleeing toward God Almighty.

In the blessed Verse 50 as in some other Qur'anic Verses, God Almighty commands His Messenger (S) to proclaim that he is sent on a Mission by God Almighty to warn people against obedience to concupiscent desires and satanic deceits by the jinn and men surrounding their hearts placing them in the multiplicities of the world of phenomena and deliver them from the ruses of concupiscence through enlightening them on the manner of fleeing from them such that they may not fall prey to their deception but be able to draw a distinction between the path to deliverance and that to error and thereby rest in safety free from perils.

In other words, the metaphorical expression 'flee employed ad hoc is one of interest and delicacy, since 'flee' is commonly to instances when man is confronted with an awe-inspiring being or incident on the one side and he is aware of a place of refuge somewhere on the other; as a consequence of which he flees the place of incident and turns toward safe haven.

The blessed Verse in question is asking men to escape polytheism and idolatry as terrible belief and turn to monotheism as a safe haven. Escape Divine torment and turn toward His Mercy. Escape disobedience to God Almighty and turn to repentance. In short, escape evils, vices, disbelief, shadows of ignorance, and everlasting torment and find a safe haven in Divine Mercy and everlasting bliss and happiness.

The blessed Verse 52 is asking people to refrain from associating false gods as objects of worship with the One God. The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is sent unto mankind by God Almighty to warn them against disobedience to Him and manifest the path to obedience to Him.

Treating the manner of escape the multiplicities of contingent existent beings toward Divine Unity, the blessed Verse is saying that the first path to be opted by believers is to refrain from associating false gods with the One God and turn toward Him wholeheartedly. Then, they are asked to acknowledge and believe in the Prophet Call of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 52-55

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ

أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنتَ بِمَلُومٍ

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

52. [O Muhammad (S)!] Likewise [your Prophethood was denied], no Messenger came to those before them but they said: "[He is] a sorcerer or a madman!"

53. Have they [former people denying Prophetic Calls] transmitted this saying to these [polytheists to confront the Prophets likewise]? Nay, they are themselves a people disobedient [to God Almighty].

54. So turn away from them, you are not to be blamed.

55. And remind [people], for indeed, the reminding profits the believers.

The blessed Verse 52 concludes the material treated in the preceding Verses and is a consolation to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) suggesting that if Meccan polytheists confront you likewise, he is to know that former

Prophets were confronted in like manner. Since the Noble Prophet (S) fulfilled his Prophetic Mission and gave people the ultimatum on behalf of God Almighty, the Noble Prophet's (S) turning away from disbelievers and his refraining from engaging in disputes with them entails no censure.

The blessed Verses in question commands believers to turn away from disobedient disbelievers and also remind the believers so as to impede the false conception that disbelievers are solely in need of being reminded;

("then turn away"

and

"remind").

Hearing entails benefits which may not be found in knowing. The sincerity and the manner of expression of the speaker may better impress the audience. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) was commanded to remind the believers at all times.

The blessed Verse 52 is saying that thus were the people as mentioned in the preceding Verses who called all Prophets sent to guide their peoples as sorcerers or madmen. It becomes evident that Prophets were sent to guide peoples at different times in different regions since God Almighty gives ultimatum to all peoples.

According to tradition sources, the number of Prophets stands at one hundred and twenty four thousand. The false attributions to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) were not unprecedented since all Prophets were called sorcerers and madmen by disbelievers.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) the blessed Verses 53 and 54 ask whether former peoples had suggested their successors to maintain unanimity in their unfounded attributions of sorcery and madness to Prophets. Then the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is suggested to turn away from them since he fulfilled his Prophetic Mission and is not to be censured by God Almighty.

The blessed Verse 55 is suggesting the Noble Prophet (S) to turn away from disbelievers' unfounded attributions springing from their obstinacy and arrogance and remind the believers since they may benefit from reminder and admonition and their faith will be further consolidated, since warning them against Divine Omnipotence and Grandeur at times and talk about His Mercy, Forgiving, and Graciousness in order to encourage them to set their hopes on him entails profits for them.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 56-58

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُونِ

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُم مِّن رِّزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَن يُطْعِمُونِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

56. And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me.

57. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me.

58. Indeed, Allah is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong.

The blessed Verse 56 is saying that God Almighty did not create jinn and mankind but for being worshipped and glorified by them. The l- in li-ya'budun ("in order to worship") is employed in the dative case designating purpose. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is that the purpose behind the creation of jinn and mankind is that they worship God Almighty.

According to lexicographical sources, 'servantship' ('ubudiyya) designates the highest state of humbleness against the object of worship supposed to have granted Infinite Bounties and Blessings and He is solely God Almighty. Thus, 'servantship' is the zenith of human perfection and his closeness to God Almighty. It is the highest state of submission to Divine Pure Essence. It is unconditional obedience to God Almighty in all respects.

Finally, perfect servantship is that man does not entertain any thoughts other than those set upon absolute perfection, set foot on the Path toward Him, and consign to oblivion everything, even one's self, except Him! This is the final goal of human creation set as an ordeal by God for whose attainment man is provided with knowledge the final goal of which is to be immersed in the ocean of Divine Mercy.

Thus, servants need to know the Divine Essence as the Source of all perfect qualities, adapt themselves with the same, and avail themselves of whose light such that sparks of the attributes of Divine Perfection and Majesty may sparkle in their souls, since perfection and closeness to God Almighty are not possible unless one embarks upon assumption of dominical traits and such assumption is subsidiary to acquisition of knowledge.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from Imam Husayn (as), saying:

"God did not create mankind except for acquisition of knowledge of Him and when they acquired the knowledge, they worship Him; whoever worships him is needless of serving other objects of worship."[8]

According to a Divine Tradition:

"I was a Secret Treasure, but I intended to be known. I created beings to be known."[9]

The two traditions designate that the world of existence was created so that God Almighty might be known and such knowledge entails benefits for creatures rather than for Divine Needless Essence. It also reflects that Divine Emanation resembles His other Attributes bestowing Emanations to inferior creatures.

It is in this light and Mujahid and some other Qur'anic exegets interpret:

"they should worship"

to 'they should know,' namely God Almighty did not create jinn and mankind except for their acquisition of knowledge of God Almighty and the Divine Tradition;

"I was a Secret Treasure"

substantiates the interpretation in question, since it goes without saying that worshipping and glorification of God Almighty without knowledge entails no consequences and one who does not know the object of worship and glorification may not embark upon the latter.

Thus, the final purpose of creation of jinn and mankind is that they may acquire knowledge of Divine Essence of Unity. God Almighty created jinn and mankind with all His Most Beauteous and Majestic Attributes so that He may be known and their worship and glorification spring from acquisition of knowledge regarding all Divine Attributes, Most Beauteous Names, and Omnipotence.

The blessed Verses 57 and 58 are saying that one may not imagine that God Almighty is in need of the worship and deeds of jinn and mankind and thereby attain to perfection, since He expects neither provision nor food from creatures as He is the Needless Creator and all creatures are in need of Him, requiring the Absolute Provider to bestow continuity of existence and provision upon them.

Allah is All-Mighty, Omnipotent, All-Dominating, and All-Subduing. All creatures are in need of His Grandeur and Lordship but He is Needless of others by His Essence.

Surah al-Dhariyat - Verses 59-60

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذَنُوبًا مِّثْلَ ذَنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونِ

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

59. And indeed, for those who did wrong, there is a portion of torment like the evil portion of torment [which came for] their likes; therefore, let them not ask Me to hasten on [since they will taste it]!

60. Then, woe to those who disbelieved the Day which they is promised.

One who does not worship and glorify God Almighty and refrains from treading the Path for which he was created is a wrong-doer and disbeliever.

The Arabic word zanub literally denotes large bucket by which water is distributed, but it figuratively connotes disbelievers' deeds indicating that a large portion of Divine torment is in store for disbelievers in the same manner that it was sent down upon former peoples like 'Ad and Thamud.

"Let them not ask Me to hasten on"

is a response to disbelievers' derisive inquiry as to the time of Divine torment to be sent down upon them. The blessed Verses in question are addressed to them, saying that the time of your torment shall arrive and they need not hasten.

The last Verse is saying:

"Woe unto those who disbelieved, since they shall be afflicted with severe torments in store for them on the Day of Resurrection."

Notes

1. 7:195
2. 8:62
3. For a tradition narrated in this vein from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha, see Saduq's Tawhid; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 130.
4. 15:1

5. 16:82
6. 26:195
7. Usul Kafi, vol. 4, p. 256.
8. Tafsir Safi, vol. 5, p. 75.
9. Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan, p. 334.

Surah al-Tur, Chapter 52, Verses 1 - 28

(The Mount)

Section (juz'): 27

Number of Verses: 49

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter was revealed in Mecca and it has forty nine Verses. The title of the Chapter owes its designation to the opening Verse. The word Tur, connoting the Mount of Tur, the appointed place (miqat) where Torah was Divinely revealed to Prophet Moses (as), is attested ten times in the Holy Qur'an. Like other Meccan Chapters, Chapter 52 mainly treats of Resurrection, the Rewards to be granted to the pure, and the chastisement in store for disbelievers.

Mention is also made herein to defending the Noble Prophet (S) and the virtues of patience and perseverance.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"One who recites Surah al-Tur shall be safe from torment and shall enjoy Divine Favors in Paradise."

Another tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) reads:

"One who recites Surah al-Tur shall be grated Divine Good in this world and the Hereafter."

It is evident that such great Rewards in this world and the Hereafter fall into the share of those who recite the Chapter in order to preoccupy themselves with contemplation and make use of the same to act upon them.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 1-8

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

وَالطُّورِ

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ

فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ

مَا لَهُ مِن دَافِعٍ

1. By the Tur [Mount].

2. And by an Inscribed Book.

3. By a parchment unrolled.
4. And by the Prosperous House.
5. And by the roof [of the heaven] raised high.
6. And by the blazing sea.
7. Indeed, the torment of your Lord will surely come to pass.
8. There is no impediment for it.

The word tur denotes "mountain," but it ad hoc connotes a mount in the Sinai region which served as the appointed place where Prophet Moses (as) met with Divine Manifestation. The mount is a sacred place and the Holy Qur'an depicts it as al-Tur ("the Mount"). The Arabic phrase kitab mastur designates Scriptures like the Torah and the Holy Qur'an inscribed on thin pieces of paper which were unrolled rather than rolled.

The word raqq in the phrase fi raqq-in manshur deriving from raqqa denoting thin and delicate parchment prepared for writing. Manshur denotes "unrolled" and masjur signifies "ablaze" which also denotes "brimming, abounding, filled." The compound bayt al-Ma'mur ad hoc refers to the House of God Almighty which has always been prosperous through the presence of pilgrims.

The holy Ka'ba is designated twice as bayt;
("house");
the other instance is bayt al-'atiq;
("ancient house").

According to traditions, there is place above Ka'ba in the heavens where angels circumambulate it and it is also termed as bayt al-ma'mur.[1]

The phrase al-bahr al-masjur denoting blazing and agitated sea or those which shall be set ablaze on the Day of Resurrection, as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"And when the seas become as blazing fire or overflows"

or it may connote magma erupting at times through volcanoes.

It is also worthy of note that as mentioned above under 51:60:

"Therefore, woe unto those who disbelieve from their Day which they have been promised"

where it treats of the promise of the inevitable occurrence of Resurrection.

The Chapter in question, following five oaths, reads:

"Indeed the torment of your Lord shall certainly come to pass. There is no impediment for it."

In short, the blessed Verses in question make a reference to the torment in store for disbelievers saying that in the same manner that the constituent elements of the world of being follow a certain order unimpeded by any impediment, the torment in store for disbelievers and contenders and their abode in Hell is certain against which no impediment may arise.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 9-14

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاء مَوْرًا
وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا

فَوَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ
يَوْمَ يُدَعُّونَ إِلَى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعًّا
هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

9. The Day when the heaven shall shake with a dreadful shaking.
10. And the mountains shall move away with haste.
11. Then woe unto the beliers on such Day.
12. Who are immersed in falsehood preoccupied with vain talk [regarding Divine Signs].
13. The Day when they shall be pushed down by force to Hellfire with a forceful pushing.
14. This is the Fire which you used to recurrently belie.

The Arabic word mawr denotes speedy and circular, but disorderly and abyss like, movement, such that the wind scatters dust in the air and shakes everything. The word khawdh originally denotes "plunge into water and passing the same" but it is figuratively applied to being preoccupied with vanity and falsehood. The word da‘‘ designates pushing violently.

It is worthy of note that all the world of existence has been created for man and when his affairs come to an end in this world, the world of existence shall be rolled up as well;

("The Day when the heaven shall shake with a dreadful shaking").

Thus it is also attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

"We shall roll up the heaven like a scroll."

It is only God Almighty Who is not subject to alteration. The seven heavens shall shake as well and change into waves in motion.

The mountains which fixate the earth shall be restless on that Day;

"And the mountains shall move away with haste."

The blessed Verses nine to eleven are saying that following a reminder as to the Signs of His Mercy and the creation of all beings in the form of oaths, God Almighty is saying that in the same manner that everything is well-established in its proper place the heavens, the mountains, the seas, and the prosperous world and all beings have been recorded in the Preserved Tablet, the Divine Torment in store for those who deserve it is based upon order and justice and the same shall appear when the heaven shakes violently and mountains move away from their places.

The blessed Verses make a reference to the time of Resurrection saying that the material world which is established by Divine Order shall disintegrate upon Divine Will and changes into the Hereafter. In short, the material world shall be rolled up and the Hereafter shall appear. On such Day, wayl, which is said to be a bottomless pit for those who belied Divinely appointed Messengers and Prophets and attributed madness, sorcery, and lying to them.

The blessed Verses twelve to fourteen enumerate the characteristics of those who belie Prophets saying that they play in vanity with natural phenomena which are not well-established and are transient and unbefitting

compared to spiritual affairs and Divine teachings, since their words and acts resemble children and lunatics, devoid of reason and insight.

Had they not been preoccupied with vanity and attributing falsehood to Prophets nor had they called them sorcerers, liars, and lunatics, they would have perceived the truth.

"The Day when they shall be pushed down by force to Hellfire with a forceful pushing."

The adverb of manner da‘‘an ("with a forceful pushing") connotes that on such Day, Divine Torment shall fall into the share of disbelievers and they shall be pushed down by force to Hellfire and it shall be said unto them that it is the Fire against which you were warned by Prophets but you failed to investigate the veracity of their words and believe in truth; it was out of your prejudice and concupiscent desires that you regarded their words as legends and made attempts to bear animosity against Messengers of Truth and inflict harms upon them.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 15-16

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنتُمْ لَآ تُبْصِرُونَ

اصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَآ تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاء عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

15. Is this [torment] magic or do you not see?

16. Taste you therein its heat and whether you are patient of it or impatient of it; it is all the same. You are only being requited for what you used to do.

Polytheists and disbelievers claimed at all times that the Noble Prophet (S) was a sorcerer robbing them of their sense and casting veils on their eyes such that they might acknowledge miracles and Revelation. Thus, they shall be censured and rebuked on the Day of Resurrection by asking them if it is sorcery.

Are they not able to perceive the fire and sense its heat? These two blessed Verses censures disbelievers who term Divine Revelation and miracles as sorcery. They are inquired as to what they see of different kinds of torment is sorcery and something baseless or they are unable to see the torment in the same manner that that the eyes of their hearts were blind unable to perceive the truth and veracity of their words.

The reason is that they denied the Truth and the people of Truth in this world thereby they shall enter their abode in Hell abounding in torment and affliction which shall be the recompense of their deeds. It shall be all the same whether they be patient or fail to be so, since as mentioned in the blessed Verse, torment awaits them and nothing may impede it. Such torment is the recompense of their evil deeds.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 17-18

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ

فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

17. Indeed, the God fearing shall be in Gardens [of Paradise] and Abundant Bounties.

18. Enjoying in that which their Lord has bestowed on them, and their Lord saved them from the torment of the torment of Hellfire.

Fearing God Almighty is the key to Paradise;

("Indeed, the God fearing shall be in Gardens [of Paradise] and Abundant Bounties").

Following warning those who denied Divine Signs and followed concupiscent desires and wasted their lives in sport and play, the twain blessed Verses bear glad tidings to the God fearing who abstained from following Satan and concupiscent desires and obeyed the Truth and Divinely appointed Messengers and fearing God Almighty turned into their permanent disposition of mind such that they deserved the attribute of Fear God Almighty.

It should be borne in mind that fearing God Almighty is an exalted state ranking higher than belief, such that every believer does not fear God Almighty and such fear has not turned into his permanent disposition of mind.

In short, the twain blessed Verses in question treat of the exalted state of the God fearing. On the Day when the heaven shall be cleft asunder and the constituent elements of the earth shall be scattered and the world shall come to its end and disbelievers shall be pushed toward Hellfire, the God fearing shall be happy and delighted in Gardens of Paradise enjoying abundant Bounties and whatever shall be bestowed upon them by God Almighty while they shall be saved from excruciating torments of Hell.

The Arabic relative ma ("that") in:

"enjoying in that which their Lord has bestowed on them"

designates general applicability, namely it is not only applied to mundane Bounties but also it designates all worldly and spiritual Bounties bestowed upon the God fearing while they shall be saved from torment, suffering, and affliction;

("Indeed, the God fearing shall be in Gardens [of Paradise] and Abundant Bounties, enjoying in that which their Lord has bestowed on them, and their Lord saved them from the torment of the torment of Hellfire").

Surah al-Tur - Verses 19-20

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم بِحُورٍ عِينٍ

19. [It shall be said unto them:] "Eat and drink with happiness because of what you used to do."

20. They will recline on thrones arranged in ranks. And We shall marry them to hur [beauties with wide lovely eyes].

The twain blessed Verses are addressed to the people of Paradise saying unto them to eat and drink with happiness and enjoy the Bounties of Paradise without entailing any hardship or ailment. They shall recline on bejeweled thrones arranged in ranks. God Almighty shall marry them to beautiful hur with wide lovely eyes.

Those who abstained from watching those outside the circle of close kinship shall have beautiful spouses in the Hereafter.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 21

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُم بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُم مِّنْ عَمَلِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

21. And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in faith, to them shall We join their offspring, and We shall not decrease the Rewards of their deeds in anything. Every person is a pledge for that which he has earned.

The blessed Verse in question treats of other spiritual and material Bounties in store for the people of Paradise saying that those who believed and whose offspring followed them in believing in God Almighty shall join their offspring in Paradise without decreasing any of their Rewards for their deeds.

It is also a great Bounty that believers shall be joined by their offspring in Paradise enjoying their company without any decrease in their Rewards.

It is narrated from the Command of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) that the Messenger of Allah said:

"believers and their offspring shall be in Paradise reciting this Verse."[3]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the children of believers shall be taken to their fathers as a token of respect.[4]

It is worthy of note that it is another Divine Favor which shall be bestowed upon God Fearing believers such that their children shall join them in Paradise since they were the pupil of their eyes in this world and they wished to be with them as a consequence of which such great Favor shall be bestowed upon them in Paradise.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse closes by saying that "every person is a pledge for that which he has earned" thereby everyone shall be answerable for his own deeds and he shall not be censured for vices committed by others.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 22-23

وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُم بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَّا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ

22. And We shall provide them with fruit and meat such as they desire.

23. There they shall pass from hand to hand a cup, free from any vain talk and free from sin.

The blessed Verse proceeds with an enumeration of the Bounties which shall be bestowed upon the people of Paradise saying that We shall prepare whatever the people of Paradise desire of meat and fruit and We shall increase the Bounties they desire such that they shall bear neither hardship nor affliction for obtaining them.

"Such as they desire"

reflects that God fearing believers shall avail themselves of whatever they desire since they reflect Divine Creativity since they shall be able to create whatever they desire. The blessed Verse 23 is saying that the people

of Paradise shall pass from hand to hand a cup brimming with the wine of Paradise. The wine shall be such that it shall not take away reason nor shall it lead to committing vices.

It makes a reference to the point that Bounties in store for the people of Paradise shall be free from blights and afflictions unlike those of mundane ones which entail pains and afflictions.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 24

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَّهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَّكْنُونٌ

24. And there will go round pages of theirs to serve them as if they were pearls in shells.

While reclining on their royal thrones, the people of Paradise shall be served by most beautiful pages resembling pearls in shells. Pearls look so fresh, transparent, and beauteous in shells though they preserve their beauty without shells, but dust and other impurities decrease their freshness and brilliance. Pages of Paradise look so beautiful, fresh, and white complexioned that they are likened to pearls in shells.

The expression:

"go round"

makes a reference to their preparedness for rendering service at all times, though there shall be no need for servants in Paradise since the people of Paradise shall be provided with whatever they require. Such service reflects further respect for them.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that he was inquired:

"If servants resemble pearls in shells, how will be those being served, namely the people of Paradise?"

He replied:

"The superiority of those who will be served over those who provide them with service in Paradise is like the superiority of full moon over other planets."[5]

It is worthy of note that the expression "of theirs" reflects that each and every believer shall have his own servants and they serve them with utmost delight since there shall be no sorrow in Paradise.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 25-27

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءلُونَ

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ

فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ

25. And some of them [people of Paradise] draw near to others, questioning [the secret of being provided with so many Bounties in Paradise].

26. Saying: Aforetime [in the world], we were benevolent toward our families warning them against Divine torment.

27. "Thus, Allah has been gracious to us and has saved us from the torment of the Fire.

These three blessed Verses also treat of the state of bliss enjoyed by the people of Paradise saying that besides other Bounties bestowed upon them,

they associate with one another inquiring as to the virtues and merits leading to such exalted state to which they reply by saying that their virtues and merits included their association with the people of the world, entertaining fear of Divine torment and it was for the sake of such fear that God Almighty bestowed his favor upon them and saved them from excruciating and horrible torment.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 28

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِن قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ

28. Indeed, We used to invoke Him before. Indeed, He is the Most Benevolent, the most Gracious.

The last words uttered by the people of Paradise, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question, is that they acknowledge the reality that they feel Divine Graciousness and Benevolence more than before saying that aforetime, they would invoke God Almighty and would praise Him as the Most Merciful and the Most Gracious, but they perceive the reality and the profundity of such Attributes that

He bestowed so many Bounties and Favors upon them for their little deeds and despite so many defects of theirs, He bestowed His Mercy upon them. It is worthy of note that the Most Beauteous Divine Attributes manifest on the Day of Resurrection through Bounties and Favors bestowed upon believers in Paradise and believers, witnessing such scenes, perceive the Truth behind His Most Beauteous Names; even Hell reflects His Attributes like Divine Justice, Wisdom, and Omnipotence.

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
2. 81:6
3. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan.
4. Ibid.
5. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Kashshaf; Qurtubi; Ruh al-Bayan; Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir.

Surah al-Tur, Verses 29 - 49

Surah al-Tur - Verses 29-30

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمَنُونِ

29. Thus, remind [people] that by the Grace of Allah, you are neither a soothsayer, nor a madman.

30. Or do they say: He is a poet! We await his calamitous death!"

In the twain blessed Verses God Almighty thus addresses His Messenger bidding him to remind disbelievers of fulfilling their duty against Allah and says unto him to fulfill his obligations toward Allah. He is further told that God Almighty has bestowed upon him such exalted state. He is neither a soothsayer, nor a madman, nor a lunatic.

The word

soothsayer

is applied to someone who may perform extraordinary things through the medium of jinn and devils. Such person claims to be aware of the unseen thus rendering falsehood as truth for people and most of his words are false and baseless and there may have been soothsayers who falsely claimed to be Prophets.

The word

madman

is likewise applied to someone who performs acts beyond common practice and his acts are carried out without discipline and thought. Poetry is applied to rhythmical words adorned with rhymes.

It is however a source of surprise that the three characteristics attributed to the most prominent person in the world of existence, namely the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) are contradictory and one single person may not possess all the three attributes, since soothsaying springs from self-mortification and despite the fact that it is satanic, it is done through reason polluted with imagination and estimative faculty and the soothsayer intends to draw conclusions out of his own acts.

How may such characteristic be found in someone together with madness which stems from unconsciousness and alienation. The people of Mecca were speakers of the Arabic tongue and could notice the eloquence of the Holy Qur'an and were aware that Qur'anic Verses was different from poetry and their own speech, but they pretended ignorance and termed the Noble Prophet (S) as poet.

In short, all these baseless accusations stemmed from jealousy, envy, arrogance, and obduracy rather than from ignorance. It was out of their vile disposition that they expected some ailment or another affliction fall upon the Noble Prophet (S) such that he may cease his Prophetic Call and receiving Divine Revelation of the inimitable Qur'anic Verses and thereby people may not follow him through converting to the Islamic faith.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 31-32

قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُم بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ

31. Say [O Muhammad SAW unto them]: "Wait! I am with you among the waiters! [You await my death and I await triumph over you.]"

32. Do their minds command them this [to attribute such baseless accusations to the Noble Prophet (S)] or are they people transgressing bounds?

The twain blessed Verses are addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying unto him that reply to disbelievers by asking them to await some blight or affliction like death fall upon him and he will await that death or torment fall into their share thus they may know that who has lost his mind and commits vices.

The blessed Verse 32 addresses the chiefs of the Quraysh who imagined that they were people of reason and intelligence. It also addresses those who regard themselves as reasonable and knowledgeable inquiring whether their reason and intelligence bid them to deny the Truth, whereas such denial stands against reason. The point is that they are rebellious and disobedient and their reason follows their concupiscent desires.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 33-34

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَل لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

33. Or do they say: "He has forged it [the Holy Qur'an and has attributed it to God Almighty]?" Nay! [There is no such thing but the fact is that it is through their disobedience and envy that] They believe not!

34. Then if you speak the truth, produce a word like unto it.

Like other blessed Verses, these two Verses also treat of the Truth and Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an by saying that if they imagine that he has forged Qur'anic Verses, they are Arabs like him and as the Holy Qur'an says Qur'anic Verses are revealed in eloquent Arabic, they may make attempts at producing the like. The point is that they fail to convert because of their vile disposition of mind.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 35-36

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ

أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَل لَّا يُوقِنُونَ

35. Were they created out of nothing? Or were they themselves the creators?

36. Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm belief [so that they attain to certitude regarding the Existence of the Creator].

It is incumbent upon man to not cease his reasoning and guiding others against different kinds of accusations. Despite the fact that the preceding Verses treated of different baseless accusations against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), God Almighty raises a number of questions in order to awaken their dormant conscience.

The Holy Qur'an presents the most significant philosophical discussions in the simplest form of expression. The two blessed Verses present two assumptions, firstly is man created for a cause or without the same and secondly, is it possible that man is able to create himself? Both assumptions fail to stand against reason, since man is a phenomenon and every phenomenon is in need of a cause. Furthermore, man who did not exist before may not cause his own existence.

It is reflected in the blessed Verse 36 that polytheists were aware that God is the Creator of them, the heavens, and the earth. It is reiterated in the Holy Qur'an that if polytheists are asked concerning the creator of the heavens and the earth, they would reply that God is the Creator.

Thus the main question presented in theses blessed Verses is:

"Why do you not believe in Divine Guidance but you disobey Divine Command. It is worthy of note that such people do not respond to the bidding of their reason out of their vile disposition of mind and thereby fail to attain to certitude regarding the Existence of the Omniscient and Omnipotence Creator and thereby fail to obey His Command."

Surah al-Tur - Verse 37

أَمْ عِندَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيْطِرُونَ

37. Or are with them the treasures of your Lord? Or are they wield sway in this world?

The blessed Verse in question is asking if the treasures of the world are with them thereby they are needless and they may wield sway and authority as they intend to do so or they are in need of everything. It is worthy of note that polytheists believed in divine creatorship but they fail to acknowledge him as the creator of their existence and failed to acknowledge the Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verses present questions in order to censure them for failing to acknowledge the Call of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

They are thus rebuked:

"Why do you not accept the Noble Prophet's (S) words? Do you possess Divine Omnipotence and Possessions? Have you found a way leading to the heavens on your own and may directly receive Divine Revelation?"

Surah al-Tur - Verse 38

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُم بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

38. Or have they a stairway [leading to heaven] by means of which they listen [to secrets of the heavens]? If it is true, then their listeners should produce evident arguments.

The blessed Verse in question is asking if they have access to some stairway through which they may ascend to heaven and thereby attain to knowledge concerning the higher world and its angels and sacred intellects. If it is true, it is incumbent upon them to produce evident arguments as to what they have heard and learned.

It may intend to say that such people who have not transcended beyond the world of nature and are unaware of the metaphysical world but are immersed in the mire of nature may not claim to have availed themselves of

intellect and perfection and attribute baseless accusations as to madness and sorcery to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) whose Noble Spirit is conjoined with the metaphysical world since he possesses the supreme intellect and is the first being to be created by God Almighty.

If these disbelievers are aware of the higher world, they are supposed to produce arguments and substantiate their claims in the same manner that Prophets produced arguments in order to substantiate their statements.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 39

أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ

39. Or has He only daughters and you have sons?

The blessed Verse in question is saying that these disbelievers who are ignorant of the higher world and God Almighty may not attribute offspring to the Creator of the world regarding angels as daughters of God Almighty and select sons for themselves since they imagine that they are stronger and nobler.

It goes without saying that in terms of human values, sons and daughters are not different and the blessed Verse in question produces an argument to expose the falsity of the belief of opponents through producing the same argument against the opponent party. There are numerous references in the Holy Qur'an as to negating such superstitious belief through exposing the falsity of such baseless argument.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 40

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُم مِّن مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ

40. Or is it that you ask a wage from them [for your Prophetic Call] so that they are burdened with a load of debt?

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to something which may be made use of by them as a pretext thereby the Noble Prophet (S) is addressed by a rhetorical question:

"Do you ask some remuneration from them for your Prophetic Call such that it bears heavily on their shoulders?"

The Arabic word maghram designates the loss incurred without any cause. The word muthqal which is cognate with ithqal denotes imposing heavy burden and hardship on someone.

Thus the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is:

"Do you ask for indemnity against propagation of your Prophetic Call such that they are unable to settle their debt and thereby fail to convert to the Islamic faith?"

The same motif is recurrently used in the Holy Qur'an not only regarding the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but also for many other Prophets (as), since the latter opened their Prophetic Call by saying that they did not expect any remuneration against propagation of Divine Call, such that their impartiality be substantiated and there remains no room for making excuses by those who find faults with everything.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 41

أَمْ عِندَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

41. Or that the Unseen is with them and they write it down [on the Preserved Tablet]?

The blessed Verse in question once more addresses them by asking whether they are aware of the secrets of the Unseen and they write down by using them. They falsely claim that the Noble Prophet (S) is a poet and they are awaiting his death and everything will come to an end through his death and his Prophetic Call will be consigned to oblivion.

How do they know that they will be alive after his death? Who has told them such thing? The Qur'anic Verse may also say that if they claim to be aware of the secrets of the Unseen and Divine Injunctions and are needless of the Holy Qur'an and the Islamic faith, they are supposed to produce their arguments. Since they may not produce any arguments, their claim is a gross lie.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 42

أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ

42. Or do they intend employ some stratagem to efface the truth? But those who disbelieve are themselves plotted against!

The blessed Verse in question is asking if their denial stems from plotting, stratagem, and vanity that they intend to plot against the Noble Prophet (S)? But they are unaware that their stratagems will be used against themselves, since Divine Stratagems are far superior to theirs and they shall pay dearly for their plots.

If they imagine that they may be triumphant over the Noble Prophet (S) by getting together at Dar al-Nadwa, a town hall in Mecca at the time of the Noble Prophet (S), and plotting against him and falsely accusing him of soothsaying, madness, poetry, and the like, they are mistaken since His Omnipotence is superior to all powers and He guaranteed the safety, salvation, and triumph of His Messenger (S) in propagating his universal Call.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 43

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

43. Or have they a god other than Allah? Glorified is Allah from all that they ascribe as partners [to Him].

In this blessed Verse, the last question is asked from disbelievers:

"Do they imagine that they have a patron? Is there any object of worship for them besides Allah? The blessed Verse proceeds by saying that God Almighty is glorified from all the partners associated with him by them. Thus, no one may provide them with patronage and support. It is in this vein that they are faced with a series of eleven extraordinary questions. How pleasing and convincing are Qur'anic questions, investigations, and arguments against which anyone seeking truth submits and is convinced."

Surah al-Tur - Verse 44

وَإِن يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ

44. They are so obdurate that even if they see a piece of the heaven falling down, they would say: "Clouds gathered in heaps [but it is not Divine Wrath]!"

Resuming the discussion with obdurate polytheists and disbelievers enlightening any truth seeking man, the blessed Verses expose their prejudice and obduracy saying that they are so obdurate that even if they see rocks fall down from the heaven as a result of Divine torment, they will say:

"You are mistaken. This is not a rock but a condensed cloud falling onto the earth."

Such obdurate people who deny sense perceptions and interpret rocks falling down from the heaven as condensed clouds while it is common knowledge that clouds which descend upon the earth are nothing but fog and such delicate fog may not be condensed to change into rocks, such attitude toward spiritual truths is crystal clear.

Shadows of sin, lustfulness, obduracy, and animosity may darken human vision to the extent that he denies sense perceptions. There is no hope for the guidance of such people. It may be noted in passing that the Arabic word kisf denotes "piece" which ad hoc connotes "falling down a piece of stone from the heaven as a token of Divine torment. The word markum designates "condensed," connoting something placed above something else.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 45-46

فَذَرْهُمْ حَتَّى يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

45. Therefore leave them alone till they meet their Day in which they will be afflicted with Divine Wrath and lightning.

46. The Day when their plotting and stratagems shall not avail them at all nor shall they be helped from any side.

The twain blessed Verses address the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) bidding him to leave them alone until they taste the hardship of a Day on which they shall have neither refuge nor deliverance. On that Day their plots and stratagems may not save them but they shall be recompensed for their vicious deeds and vile words.

The blessed Verses bid the Noble Prophet (S) to not entertain any grief or sorrow for their words and deeds, since it is his obligation to propagate his Divine Call upon whose fulfillment he is supposed to leave them alone until the Day arrives on which they shall taste the recompense of their deeds and perceive that what they imagined to be their means of deliverance from torment shall be of no avail to them, but it has led to their loss.

It shall be on that Day that they may find neither support nor assistance. It may be noted in passing that the passive verbal form yus'aqun denotes unconsciousness and perdition as a result of lighting of torment.

Surah al-Tur - Verse 47

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

47. And indeed, for those who do wrong, there is another chastisement besides this in this world or in purgatory; but most of them know not.

At that time, disbelievers shall deserve torment for two reasons.

Firstly, they deserve torment for their disbelief thereby they associated other objects of worship besides Allah, since disbelief leads to torment.

Secondly, they not only have wronged themselves through depriving themselves of virtues and felicity but also have they left no stone unturned to wrong the Noble Prophet (S) and believers. Thus, their torment shall be different from that assigned for all disbelievers.

"Another chastisement besides this"

may indicate this worldly torment including being killed or captivated or it may designate torments descended from the heaven, like those sent down upon the peoples denying their Prophets (as) aforetime, including famine, awe-inspiring cries heard from the heaven as the consequences of their disbelief and harming Messengers of Allah. Such torments are besides those in store for them in the Hereafter. Such disobedient peoples tasted Divine Wrath in this world and it led to their perdition.

It may be noted in passing that according to Tafsir Qumi,

"another chastisement besides this"

makes a reference to the torment to befall those who wronged the family of the Noble Prophet (S) upon return.

Surah al-Tur - Verses 48-49

وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ

48. Therefore, wait patiently for the Decision of your Lord for indeed you are under Our Eyes and Protection. Glorify the Praises of your Lord when you get up from sleep.

49. And in the nighttime also glorify His Praises and at the setting of the stars.

In the twain blessed Verses, God Almighty addresses His Noble Prophet (S) and bids him to be patient against disbelievers who wrong him and persevere in the propagation of Divine Call despite the harms done to him by disbelievers, since he is protected by God Almighty. He is also bidden to wake up at daybreak when stars set and glorify the praises of the Lord.

Although the Noble Prophet (S) is bidden to remember God Almighty at all times and glorify his Lord in the day and at night, but it is said that all Divine Injunctions addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) are applicable to the Muslim community, unless it is proven that they are particularly addressed to the Noble Prophet (S).

Thus, it is incumbent upon believers to not forget God Almighty at any time owing to their worldly preoccupations but to obey Divine Injunctions and abstain from committing any wrong.

Many an exegete have interpreted:

"and in the nighttime also glorify His Praises"

as "night prayer" and maintain that:

"and at the setting of the stars"

refers to the two unite recommended prayer established at daybreak when stars disappear in daylight. It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that "at the setting of the stars" refers to the twain units of recommended daybreak prayer established before morning prayer when stars set.[1]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"The two unit recommended prayers established in the morning and at night are far better for you than the world and worldly possessions."[2]

It is worthy of note that worshipping and glorifying God Almighty in the heart of the night is quite different in terms of serenity and delight. May God Almighty bestow upon us the blessing of waking up early in the morning, praying silently to our Maker, and a prolonged life.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, under 50:40.
2. Tafsir Qurtubi, under the blessed Verses in question.

Surah al-Najm, Chapter 53, Verses 1 - 32

(The Star)

Section (juz'): 27

Number of Verses: 62

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, requiring obligatory prostration, has sixty two Verses and it was revealed in Mecca. The designation of the Chapter derives from the first Verse in which God Almighty swears by the star. Chapter 53 makes reference to the position of Revelation and the manner of its Revelation to the Noble Prophet's (S) heart and like Chapter 17 treats of the Noble Prophet's (S) Ascension to the heavens.

Another part of the Chapter deals with polytheists' superstitious and idolatrous customs and rituals and worshipping angels and the same is condemned herein. It also discusses the states of the virtuous and the evil people the standard of which is remembrance of the Resurrection Day and Divine Reward and Recompense.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

Significant merits have been enumerated in traditions for recitation of the Chapter among which is a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who always recites Surah al-Najm every day and night is recognized amongst people as a meritorious person and God Almighty will forgive his sins and will win popularity amongst people."[1]

Other traditions in this vein are not mentioned for the sake of brevity. Undoubtedly such great rewards are bestowed upon those who recite the Chapter as a means of contemplation and acting upon its Injunctions such that the teachings may shed their light on their lives.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَى

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى

1. By the star when it goes down.

2. Indeed, your companion [Prophet Muhammad (S)] has neither gone astray nor has erred.

The Chapter opens with the word najm "star" by which God Almighty swears

("By the star when it goes down").

Exegetes provide many a view regarding the contextual meaning of the word. Some maintain that it makes a reference to the Holy Qur'an since

such connotation is consistent with the following blessed Verses regarding Divine Revelation.

They hold that the expression alludes to the Arab's practice of terming as star what develops in time at different intervals.

Since the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Noble Prophet (S) in a period of twenty three years at different intervals, it is referred to as 'star' and the expression:

"when it goes down"

makes a reference to its Revelation to the pure heart of the Messenger of Allah (S). However, some other exegetes maintain that it alludes to a star like Pleiades or Jupiter since they are of particular significance.

Some also hold that:

"the star"

refers to meteors through which devils are repelled from the heaven and Arabs term such meteors as najm.

However, no evident argument has been provided for any of the four interpretations, but the blessed Verse, as far as the application of the word,

"the star"

requires, serves as an oath to all the stars reflecting Divine Manifestations of God Almighty, the great mysteries of the world of creation, and the extraordinarily great creatures created by Allah. Swearing by the great creatures of the world of creation like the sun and the moon are attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

The ascent of the stars are more remarkable, but the emphasis laid on their "going down" is owing to the fact that their descent bears witness to their temporal contingence (huduth) and the negation of star worshippers beliefs.

Thus, God Almighty alludes to both the ascent and descent of stars, since such allusion substantiates their temporal contingence and their being checked by the laws of creation.

It is worthy of note that the inner, rather than the outer, meaning of the Verse as attested in traditions, is taken by some exegetes to allude to the Noble Prophet (S) and accordingly,

"going down"

refers to his descent from the heaven on the night of Ascent.

Now, let us turn toward the reason lying behind the oath.

The blessed second Verse thus expounds that your companion, Prophet Muhammad (S) has never gone astray nor has he been in error,

("Indeed, your companion [Prophet Muhammad (S)] has neither gone astray nor has erred").

He always treads the Path of Truth and the slightest error may not be found in his words and deeds.

The word:

"companion" (sahib)

may indicate that what he says is out of his compassion and love for you.

Many an exegete draw no distinction between the Arabic past tense forms dhalla and ghawa ("go astray; be in error") but regard the twain as laying emphasis on each other. However, some exegetes maintain that

there is a difference between the twain such that the former connotes that one may never find the right path toward one's destination but the latter connotes that one proceeds on a path but his path happens not to be straight and free from error.

The former is like "disbelief" and the latter resembles committing sins and transgressing the bounds. It is worthy of note that in his Mufradat under gh-y-y, Raghib says that the latter signifies "ignorance accompanied by corrupt belief."

Thus, dhalala designates absolute ignorance but ghawaya signifies ignorance accompanied by false belief. However, in this blessed Verse, God Almighty intends to negate any form of error and ignorance from His Messenger (S) thereby repudiating the false accusations ascribed to him by his enemies.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 3-4

وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاّ وَحْيٌ يُوحَى

3. Nor does he speak of concupiscent desire.

4. His word is only a Revelation revealed to him.

The words of the Noble Prophet (S) arise from neither personal desires nor social milieu. Thus, the blessed Verses in question say that the Noble Prophet (S) does not speak of concupiscent desires but he merely imparts Divine Revelation. In this respect, he is different from common people who speak out of their natural inclinations and concupiscent desires, rather his words arise from the Noble Prophet's (S) heart connected to the higher world.

In this vein, a number of traditions will be quoted.

The late scholar, Saduq in his Amali narrates a tradition according to which the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) turned to people after early and late evening prayers saying:

"A star (light) will descend upon the house of one of you at day break and the owner of the house will be my successor."

All people were awaiting the descent at day break. Ibn ‘Abbas is quoted as saying that his father, the Noble Prophet's paternal uncle, was most eager to see upon whose house the star will descend.

However, it descended upon the house of Imam ‘Ali (as) and the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"O ‘Ali! By Allah Who called me to Prophethood, it is certain that you will be my successor."

Some hypocrites claimed that the Noble Prophet (S) praised his cousin out of concupiscent desires when these blessed Verses were revealed to the Noble Prophet (S).[2]

Regarding the fact that the satisfaction of all people may not be obtained nor may their tongues be checked, Saduq in his Amali says that some people even attributed entertaining concupiscent desires to the Noble Prophet (S).

Thus, God Almighty defended his Messenger (S) by saying:

"Nor does he speak of concupiscent desire. His word is only a Revelation revealed to him."[3]

It is narrated that Hamza asked the Noble Prophet (S):

"Why did you blocked all the gates opening to the mosque but left intact that of 'Ali's (as) house?"

The Noble Prophet (S) recited these Verses from Surah al-Najm:

"His word is only a Revelation revealed to him."

Thus, he intended to say that he did so based on Divine Command.[4]

According to the fourth tradition, in response to disbelievers who said that;

"Indeed, this [the Holy Qur'an] is not but the legends of the ancients"

God Almighty decisively says:

"His word is only a Revelation revealed to him."[5]

When Imam 'Ali (as) was assigned as the Imam and successor of the Noble Prophet (S) at the Ghadir Khum, the latter was criticized, but he recited the blessed Verse:

"His word is only a Revelation revealed to him."[6]

Surah al-Najm - Verses 5-9

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى

وَهُوَ بِالأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى

5. He has been taught [Divine Revelation, namely the Holy Qur'an] by the Omnipotent Lord.

6. The Most Powerful Lord Who conquered all.

7. While he was in the higher horizon.

8. Then he approached and came closer,

9. And was at a distance of two bows length or closer.

The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that Gabriel, the trustee angel of Revelation who possesses utmost power, is being intended by:

"the one mighty of power" (shadid al-quwa).

Gabriel is so powerful that eradicated the city of the people of Lot (as) and levitated it and turned it awry and also caused the people of Thamud to perish by one horrible cry. "Dhu mirra" is another characteristic of Gabriel which designates that the angel possesses utmost power, intellect, intelligence, and delibration.

Philosophers maintain that Gabriel is the active intellect and the intellects of all intellectuals of the world are connected to it. The Arabic past tense verbal form fa-'stawa indicates that Gabriel rose and became stable and showed its original form unto the Noble Prophet (S).

According to a number of traditions, the Seal of Prophets (S) was the only Prophet who saw Gabriel in its original form. Once he saw its true form on the eastern side of the earth and another time, he saw it on the Night

of Ascent close to Sidrat al-Muntaha, the lote tree of the Outer Boundary in the Seventh Heaven.

"While he was in the higher horizon"

may indicate that though Gbriel is in the metaphysical world,

"he approached and came closer"

to the Noble Prophet (S) while the proximity

"was at a distance of two bows length or closer"

which is seemingly an intellectible simile indicating perceptibility by which spiritual, rather than perceptive, proximity is being intended.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 10-11

فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى

10. Therefore, [Allah] revealed unto His servant whatever He revealed.

11. The [Prophet's] heart lied not in what he saw.

"Therefore, Allah revealed unto His servant, Muhammad (S), whatever He revealed."

According to Tafsir Manhaj al-Sadiqin, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that God Almighty is the antecedent of all pronouns in Verses five to ten and:

"the Most Powerful"

refers to the Omnipotent Lord, as it is also said elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"He is the All-Provider, the Most Powerful, the Constant."

The Proximity of God Almighty to the Noble Prophet (S) reflects the latter's elevated state in the Presence of the One God, the Creator of the world.

"Came closer"

indicates that God Almighty attracted His friend, Muhammad (S) to Him and such interpretation is substantiated by the tradition of Ascent according to which Muhammad (S) came closer toward God Almighty then came so close in terms of spiritual, rather than perceptible, proximity, that the distance between the two was to the extent of two bows or less.

It is narrated by Hasan ibn Fadhl that Muhammad (S) came close to Divine Throne; then, since he had not put his foot on a footing, he grasped the curtains of the Throne and was levitated in the air and God Almighty revealed Divine Revelation unto him.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that Muhammad's (S) love for and proximity to God Almighty reached such an extent that Divine Satisfaction is his satisfaction and what is accepted by him is accepted by God Almighty.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that replying to Dha'lab Yamani he said:

"The outer eyes have never seen Him but hearts through the truth of faith have perceived Him."[7]

However, it should be borne in mind that inner vision falls into two categories: intellectual vision accrued through reasoning and argumentation

and the state of intuition by heart that stands above intellectual perception as a vision beyond perceptible vision. Such state should be termed as the state of intuition rather than that of argumentation.

The point is that perception through heart and inward intuition is a state specific to saints possessing different hierarchies, since inward intuition is of many a hierarchy and degree the perception of its truth is hard for those who have not attained to such state.

Based on the preceding blessed Verses and with due attention to the aforesaid interpretation, it may be stated

that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) had the state of intuition and during his blessed lifetime he soared so high that he attained to the state of perfect intuition which once occurred in the beginning of his Prophetic Call and the other time it happened at the time of his Ascent.

He proceeded so close toward God Almighty that many a distance and veil were removed and even the closest angel to God Almighty, Gabriel, the Divine trustee, failed to attain to such state of proximity.

Another tradition is also worthy of note in this vein according to which ‘Ayyashi narrates from Imam Baqir (as) that upon being asked regarding the Divinely revealed Verse:

"Then He revealed unto His servant what He revealed,"

the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"It was revealed unto me that ‘Ali (as) is the master of the believers, the Imam of the God fearing, the most brilliant of the honorable, and the first successor to the Seal of the Prophets (S)."

Then people said:

"We believe in God and His Messenger (S)." [8]

The blessed Verse eleven is saying that in imparting what he had seen of his Lord's Signs, the heart of Prophet Muhammad (S) did not lie.

The blessed Verse reflects that God Almighty, rather than Gabriel, is the antecedent of the preceding Verses, since according to the consensus of Muslim community and consecutively transmitted traditions, upon receiving Divine Revelation through Gabriel, the Noble Prophet (S) was able to see Gabriel with his outward eyes and hear the angel through his outer ears and the blessed Verse in question attributes vision to the heart of the Noble Prophet (S).

The definite article al- in al-fu’ad may connote covenant (‘ahd), that is what Prophet Muhamamd's (S) saw was not a lie, but it was absolute Truth.

The article may indicate genus in that as a general rule, what man perceives through his heart, inward feeling, and conscience is not exposed to error, since outward senses, like vision and hearing, may err, but error may not penetrate intuitive cognition (wijdaniyyat) and the Noble Prophet (S) attained to such spiritual, rather than perceptible, proximity to God Almighty that inspired knowledge indirectly penetrated his heart.

It is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas (as) that Prophet Muhammad (S) saw God Almighty through his heart rather than outward eyes. Muhammad Hanifa narrates from his noble father (as) that the Noble Prophet (S) perceived his Lord through certitude by sight (‘ayn al-yaqin) using crystal clear Signs and

attained to such cognition through what he saw, though he was formerly aware of the same.

It is narrated from Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri in Manhaj al-Sadiqin that upon being asked about the meaning of the blessed Verse in question, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"I saw the Light."

It is narrated from the Imam (as) in Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa’iq that the Imam was asked:

"Did the Prophet (S) see his Lord in his Ascent?"

The Imam (as) said:

"Yes, he saw God through his heart."

Then he recited the blessed Verse:

"The [Prophet's] heart lied not in what he saw."

It is narrated from Imam Ridha (as), as quoted by Tafsir Nur under the blessed Verse in question, that he said:

"The Verses

'Indeed he did see of the Greatest Signs of his Lord"[9]

and

"The [Prophet's] heart lied not in what he saw"

reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) saw Divine Signs rather than Divine Essence."

Surah al-Najm - Verses 12-15

أَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَى مَا يَرَى

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى

عِندَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى

عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

12. Will you then dispute with him about what he saw?
13. And indeed he saw him at another descent.
14. Near Sidrat al-Muntaha.
15. Near it is the Paradise of Refuge.

The Arabic verbal form fa-tumarunahu

("will you dispute with him")

is derived from mira’ ("dispute accompanied with doubt"). Nazlatan designates "being revealed in whole." Sidrat al-Muntaha is the name of a place close to the promised Paradise abounding in Divine Favors and according to traditions, none, but the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was the only one who reached it.

According to traditions, Sidrat al-Muntaha is applied to the last state of the ascent of angels. It is also reflected in traditions that Sidrat al-Muntaha is the name of a Lote Tree with any one of whose leaves an angel glorifies God Almighty.

Since many people entertained doubts regarding the Ascent of the Noble Prophet (S) and it seemed incredible to them, God Almighty said in Surah al-Isra[10]:

"Glorified is He Who took His servant for a journey at night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, so that We might show him Our Signs."

The blessed Verse is saying that he is not exposed to error and there is a very exalted cause for Ascent.

"Will you then dispute with him about what he saw?"

Disbelievers indubitably may not believe in the Revelations of the saints of God Almighty and engage pessimistically in disputes with them.

It is worthy of note that Sidrat al-Muntaha is so significant that Paradise with all its greatness stands beside it and there is a state still higher than Paradise.

"Near Sidrat al-Muntaha. Near it is the Paradise of Refuge."

Although God Almighty bestows His Grace upon all people, but He at times provides certain people with further privileges.

"And indeed he saw him at another descent"

indicates that upon His Messenger's (S) Ascent, God Almighty bestowed special privileges upon him in the same manner that God Almighty is with all people;

("and He is with you"),

but His being with His Messenger (S) is certainly different.

"Indeed Allah is with those who fear [Him]."

Divine Grace and being with His servants are at times general and at times particular. He invited His Messenger (S) to the heavens and provided him with special privileges beside Sidrat al-Muntaha and the Promised Paradise.[11]

Surah al-Najm - Verses 16-18

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

16. When that covered the lote tree which did cover it!

17. The sight turned not aside nor did it transgress beyond the limit.

18. Verily, he did see of the Greatest Signs of his Lord.

"When that covered the lote tree"

reflects that Sidrat al-Muntaha is covered by a halo of light, beauty, and purity such that it is indescribable. It is said that a large number of angels cover the tree. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet that he had seen an angel standing on each leaf of Sidrat al-Muntaha glorifying God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet (S) saw Gabriel by its original form on the Night of Ascent when the lote tree was covered by a large number of creatures reflecting Divine Greatness and Magnificence.

The blessed Verse 17 is saying that the Noble Prophet (S) did not gaze at Gabriel but he looked constantly at the angel without being perplexed or erring. His sight did not turn aside nor did it transgress the bounds.

"Verily, he did see"

in the blessed Verse 18 indicates that by God Almighty! Upon his Ascent unto the heaven, the Noble Prophet (S) saw Divine Signs in such

manner that the Sign was the Greatest of Them. It was at that time that the wonders of the heavenly spheres were shown unto him. The Arabic partitive preposition min ("of, from") indicates that what the Noble Prophet (S) saw were some of Divine Signs rather than all of Them.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 19-22

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللاَتَ وَالْعُزَّى

وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَى

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَى

تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَى

19. Have you then considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza[12]
20. And Manat, the other third?
21. Is it for you the males and for Him the females?
22. That indeed is a division most unfair!

The Omnipotent God Who takes man to the highest point of the heavens and shows His Great Signs unto him is far different from useless stone idols. The names of nine idols are attested in the Holy Qur'an: Lat, 'Uzza, and Manat in the blessed Chapter in question, Ya'al in Chapter 37, and Wadd, Ya'suq, Yaghuth, and Nasr in Chapter 71. Lat, 'Uzza, and Manat were three important idols worshipped by Arabs in pre-Islamic times (jahiliyya).

There is consensus amongst Muslims that they were destroyed thanks to the Hashemite Messenger of Allah (S), but Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous on the nature of these idols, though their views are not mentioned herein for the sake of brevity.[13]

In short, since polytheists termed idols and angels the daughters of God, the blessed Verses in question were revealed to rebuke them through asking them rhetorical questions saying that Allah bestowed such exalted state to Prophet Muhammad (S) that He made him pass the lote tree such that the distance between Him and His Prophet (S) was the extent of two bows or less and bestowed Divine Emanation upon the pure soul of the Noble Prophet (S) and showed unto him the world of creation, but your idols may not provide you with such state.

Pagan Arabs are censured in rhetorical questions saying that you imagine that you have male offspring but attribute female offspring to God Almighty since you deem male offspring worthier and female offspring and you falsely claim that angels are daughters of God.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 23

إِنْ هِيَ إِلاّ أَسْمَاء سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُم مَّا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَانٍ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاّ الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءهُم مِّن رَّبِّهِمُ الْهُدَى

23. They are but names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority as to their veracity. Polytheists follow but a guess and that which they themselves desire, whereas there has surely come unto them the Guidance from their Lord!

The Qur'anic term sultan designates 'argument' which results in scholarly authority. Idolaters maintained that each and every idol represented a certain issue, e.g. might, knowledge, love, and wrath. The Holy Qur'an says that such pompous titles are devoid of usefulness and these names bear no significance. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that these idols which are your objects of worship to which you give rank and state are nothing but names devoid of significance.

They are inanimate objects devoid of truth. They lack authority and it is out of your ignorance and concupiscent desires that you imagine that they may be of any use and thereby take recourse to worshipping them in order to attain proximity to God Almighty. It is a source of surprise.

How may man who claims to possess intellect and knowledge and regards himself as the most superior creature bows down to an inanimate and manmade object and invokes it to answer his invocations and ascribes an exalted state to it without any proof and regards it as an intermediary between himself and God Almighty?

As it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[14]:

"We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah,"

but they were unaware that proximity to God Almighty is not attainable in such manner as one who purifies his heart from natural and moral impurities and obeys Divine Command and Messengers of Allah and fosters His love in his heart will attain to utmost closeness to God Almighty. It is also worthy of note that there is no need to intermediaries in attaining to Divine Favors.

Beliefs are supposed to rest upon arguments since conjecture and imitation are insufficient and error is consequent to fostering concupiscent desires. As it is reflected at the close of the blessed Verse, God Almighty has provided mankind with His Final and Decisive Argument through sending down His Revelation thereafter there remains no room for producing pretexts.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 24-25

أَمْ لِلإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى

فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى

24. Or shall man have what he wishes?

25. But to Allah belong the Hereafter and the world.

The twain blessed Verses ask whether polytheists believe that such idols possess power and might to fulfill their wishes and answer their invocations. However, the point is that they are insignificant, essentially transient, and need the Necessary Being and the Absolutely Needless Lord for their survival.

Whether polytheists seek the world or the Hereafter, they have to turn toward the Absolutely Needless Being and invoke Him for His Favors. It may be noted in passing that the Arabic word tamanna designates wish and desire be them possible or impossible, plausible or groundless.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 26

وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَآ تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلاّ مِن بَعْدِ أن يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيَرْضَى

26. And there are many angels in the heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and is pleased with.

The main emphasis in the blessed Verse in question is laid on the issue of polytheists saying that there are many angels in the heavens whose intercession is of no avail unless God Almighty gives leave for whom He wills and is pleased with.

When the angels of the heavens with their grandeur and greatness may not intercede with God Almighty unless He gives leave, such inanimate and insignificant idols may not be expected to be of any avail. When eagles swift in flight cannot soar that high, such ineffectual mosquitoes may not be expected to be of any use. Would it not be shameful that they say that they worship these idols so that they may intercede at Divine Threshold on our behalf?

The interrogative and exclamatory particle kam ("how many, how much") ad hoc designates generality, that is, none of the angels may intercede with God Almighty on anyone's behalf without His leave.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 27-28

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَآ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْـمَلَآئِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَى

وَمَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاّ الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَآ يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

27. Indeed, those who believe not in the Hereafter, name the angels with female names.

28. But they have no knowledge thereof. They follow but a conjecture and indeed conjecture may not indubitably render man needless of Truth.

The blessed twain Verses in question resume the discussion on the refutation of polytheists' beliefs, saying that those who do not believe in the Hereafter and name the angels as Allah's daughters.

Such shameful words are solely uttered by those who disbelieve in the Records and Recompense of deeds; otherwise they would not have taken the liberty to utter such words which are not substantiated by the least argument; nonetheless, logical arguments indicate that God Almighty has no offspring nor are angels female.

"Name the angels with female names"

makes a reference to the groundless words mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses such that these names are devoid of significance failing to transcend the bounds of nomenclature, since they are devoid of truth.

The blessed Verse 28 makes a reference to a crystal clear argument invalidating such nomenclature saying that they have neither knowledge nor certitude, but they follow their groundless conjectures. However, conjecture may not render man needless of the Truth and may not lead anyone to the Truth.

A believing and dutiful man never utters a word without knowledge and awareness nor does he ascribe any attribute to anyone without reason.

Reliance upon conjecture belongs to Satan and his followers and acknowledgement of superstitions beacons error and insensibility.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 29

فَأَعْرِضْ عَن مَّن تَوَلَّى عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلاَّ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

29. Therefore, withdraw from him who turns away from Our Reminder and desires noting but the life of this world.

Muslims are bidden to withdraw from those who turn away from the religion of God Almighty and do not give ear to Divine Injunctions, since turning away from God Almighty and mammonism are the most obvious tokens of error.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) bids him to withdraw from those who solely seek mundane life and reinforcement of bestial faculties and refrain from engaging in scholarly arguments and discussions, since their utmost extent of knowledge is to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh and they may not transcend perceptible bounds.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 30

ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدَى

30. That is their utmost extent of knowledge and cognition. Indeed, your Lord it is He Who knows best those who have gone astray from His Path and He knows best those who have received Guidance.

This is the utmost extent of the knowledge and efforts of those who have forgotten God Almighty, have turned toward mundane life, and have exchanged their human dignity and honor with mundane possessions. O Prophet Muhammad (S)! God Almighty is Omniscient and knows best those who have gone astray from the Path of Truth and may not receive Guidance and He also knows best those who deserve Guidance.

Your obligation solely rests in guiding all people toward the Path to Guidance so that thereby Divine Final Argument reaches everyone.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 31

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاؤُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى

31. And to Allah belong all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done and reward those who do good with what is best.

The blessed Verse in question proceeds with treating of Divine Omniscience as to the astray and the guided, saying that whatever exists in the heavens and the earth belongs to God Almighty. He is the Absolute Possessor and the Absolute Sovereign in the world of existence therefore He solely deserves to be worshipped and He is the only One of Whom man may expect intercession.

The main cause for the creation of the world of being is that man, the superior being in the world of existence, be guided toward the path of perfection through existential, legislative, and didactic schedules applied by

Prophets. Thus, the blessed Verse in question closes with the consequence of such Possession by saying that the creation of the world aims at requiting those who do evil with that which they have done and reward those who do good with what is best.

Surah al-Najm - Verse 32

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلاّ اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَآ تُزَكُّوا أَنفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

32. Those who avoid great sins and vices except the inadvertently committed sins, indeed your Lord is of Great Forgiveness. He knows you well when He created you from the earth and when you were fetuses in your mothers' wombs. Therefore, ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears Allah.

Following the promise given as to the Recompense and Reward for deeds, the blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty bestows further Favors upon those who have refrained from committing grave sins. Abstention from committing grave sins leads to Forgiving their lesser sins. It is worthy of note that persistence in committing lesser sins turns them into grave sins.

The Arabic word kaba’ir is the plural for of kabira

("grave sin")

and fawahish is the pluralized form of fahisha. The latter is applied to a sin whose vice is obvious to everyone, e.g. fornication. The Arabic word ithm originally denotes an act that makes man turn away from doing righteous good deeds. According to Raghib's Mufradat, the word lamam designates coming close to committing sins and the word is applied to lesser sins.

It is worthy of note that different senses have been attested for the Arabic word lamam in Usul Kafi[15] and lexicographic and exegetic sources, including:

An inadvertently committed sin which is not repeated.

An intended but unfulfilled sin.

A sin which is followed by repentance and apology.

A sin for which there is no warning against its Recompense.

A sin without specified bounds.

The point is that disobedience against Divine Commands is something gross but all sins do not rest on the same degree. Some sins, e.g. lying and backbiting, are grosser and entail more severe Recompense. Furthermore, the time, place, intention, knowledge, and ignorance at the time of committing sins and persistence in committing them or failing to do so impact the nature of committed sins.

The issue of grave and lesser sins is recurrently attested in the Holy Qur’an[16].

According to the Holy Qur’an all human deeds are being recorded:

("all lesser and greater [issues] are recorded")

as are all grave and lesser sins and the record of human deeds shall be unrolled on the Day of Resurrection;

("We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open,"[17]).

It shall be at the time that a cry shall be heard:

("Woe unto us! What is this book in which all our greater and lesser deeds are recorded in it,"[18]).

Grave sins are enumerated by Imam Ridha (as) as the following:

1. Murder
2. Fornication
3. Theft
4. Drinking wine
5. Parents' dissatisfaction and curse as to disinheritance (‘aq)
6. Consumption of blood
7. Eating pork
8. Eating what is slaughtered in any name other than that of God Almighty
9. Usury
10. Bribery
11. Gambling
12. Dealing in fraud by selling deficiently
13. Accusing chaste women
14. Sodomy
15. Perjury
16. Desperation of Divine Mercy
17. Regarding himself saved from Divine torment
18. Bearing assistance to and reliance on tyrants
19. False oath
20. Mortification of property and rights of others
21. Lying
22. Arrogance
23. Prodigality and extravagance
24. Dissipation and squandering
25. Treason and betrayal
26. Deficiency in performing pilgrimage rites
27. Animosity against friends of God Almighty
28. Engaging in libidinous pleasures
29. Persistence in committing sins.[19]

Disbelief, polytheism, and failing to establish prayers are also mentioned as grave sins in a number of traditions. Qur’anic Verses and sound traditions have been mentioned in relevant sources, but they were not mentioned herein for the sake of brevity.[20]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that regarding:

"Do not consider yourselves pure"

he said:

"Do not take pride in establishing prayer, paying alms, taking fast, and invoking God Almighty since God knows best the God fearing."[21]

Imam Sadiq (as) was inquired:

"Is it lawful if one praises himself?"

He replied:

"If some emergency arises, there is no problem in doing the same."

It is also narrated that a Jew came unto the Messenger of Allah (S) and bragged about the miracles worked by Prophet Moses (as).

The Noble Prophet said:

"It is unbefitting to praise oneself, but for your information, I say unto you that Prophet Adam (as) for repentance, Prophet Noah (as) for being saved from drowning, Prophet Abraham (as) for deliverance from fire, and Prophet Moses (as) for being saved from God Almighty, swore to God on the right of the family of Muhammad (S).

O Jew! Had Moses (as) seen me, he would have believed in me. Imam Mahdi (as) is my descendant for whose assistance Jesus (as) descends from the heaven and established prayer behind him."[22]

Following an enumeration of grave sins, the blessed Verse in question treats of Divine Mercy and other Attributes. Addressing His Messenger (S), God Almighty says that His Forgiving is so great that He forgives lesser sins because of abstention from committing grave ones and He forgives the latter by repentance.

His pre-eternal Omniscience encompasses everything. He created man from earth. He knows him best when he is a fetus in his mother's womb. He is All-Aware of man's inner and outer states.

Thus, the blessed Verse says:

"He knows you well when he created you from the earth and when you were fetuses in your mother's wombs. Therefore, ascribe no purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him."

There is no need to conceal your defects, pretend to have faith, or be vain, since God Almighty knows best one who fears Him and possesses virtues.

Finally, it is also worthy of note that certain acts lead to turning lesser sins to grave ones, including persistence in committing the former, underestimation of committing sins, being happy when committing them, committing sins out of disobedience, vanity in expectation of Divine respites, committing sins in public, committing sins by prominent figures.

The consequences of committing sins may also be enumerated in passing:

1. Callousness
2. Deprivation of Divine Bounties
3. Rejection of invocations
4. Changes in daily provision and sustenance
5. Deprivation from certain prayers, like night prayer
6. Sudden afflictions
7. Lack of rainfall
8. Destruction of one's house
9. Disgrace and humility
10. Brevity of lifetime
11. Earthquake
12. Grief and ailment
13. Conquest of the villainous.

There are Qur'anic Verses and traditions regarding each of the above. It is also mentioned in traditions that the friend of the Noble Prophet (S) is one who obeys God Almighty even if he is no relation to him and the Noble Prophet's (S) enemy is one who disobeys God Almighty even if he happens to be his relation.[23]

Notes

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 305.
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn and other Shi'i and Sunni exegetic works.
3. Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa'iq.
4. Tafsir Durr al-Manshur by Suyuti.
5. Tafsir Nur, under the blessed Verse in question.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn and other exegetic works.
7. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 179.
8. Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan under the blessed Verse in question.
9. 53:18
10. 17:1
11. Majma' al-Bayan; Hidaya;Atyab al-Bayan; Safi; Burhan.
12. Tafsir Jami' al-Jawami', vol. 6, p. 62.
13. Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan, vol. 6, p. 385.
14. 39:3
15. vol. 2, p. 433
16. e.g. 4:31; 18:49; 42:37:54:53
17. 17:13
18. 18:43
19. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
20. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Burhan; Safi; Makhzan al-'Irfan; Majma' al-Bayan; Usul Kafi.
21. Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa'iq.
22. Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 325.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15., p. 238.

Surah al-Najm, Verses 33 - 62

Surah al-Najm - Verses 33-34

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى

وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلاً وَأَكْدَى

33. Did you observe him who turned away

34. And gave a little then stopped [giving]?

The Arabic verbal form akda derives from k-d-y ("stint, cease from giving alms") and is a cognate of kady ("hard land").

It is said on the occasion of the Revelation of the twain blessed Verses that a certain man was in the habit of giving alms but he was warned by others that he would be needy later on. He ceased from giving alms and became entangled with niggardliness. A number of Qur'an exegetes maintain that the twain blessed Verses allude to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan who expended lots of his possessions on paying alms.

His foster brother, 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd said unto him:

"You expend much on paying alms. You may be poor some day."

'Uthman said unto him:

"I have committed many a sin. I pay alms so that I may expiate my sins."

'Abd Allah asked him to give his camel with its accessories unto him and he would pay for his sins. 'Uthman did so and asked witnesses to bear testimony and ceased from paying alms imagining that he was purified of his sins.

It was at the time that the twain blessed Verses were revealed saying O Muhammad! Did you see the man who turned his back on the day of the Battle of Uhud and fled?

He gave a little of his possessions to his foster brother so that the latter may carry the burden of his sins and ceased from expending on alms as a consequence of which he was censured and rebuked. There are also other views as to the occasion of the Revelation of the twain blessed Verses, but they were not mentioned for the sake of brevity.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 35-37

أَعِندَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى

35. Is with him the knowledge of the Unseen so that he sees the truths?

36. Or is he not informed about what is in the Torah of Moses (as) about bearing assistance to the deprived?

37. And of Scripture of Abraham (as) who fulfilled all that Allah ordered him.

Prophet Abraham (as) is called God's Friend owing to his obedience to and love for God Almighty. He was so loyal to Allah that he tolerated all hardships. Like unto other Prophets (as) he persevered in his obedience to Divine Lordship and passed all tests, including Nimrod's Fire and readiness

to sacrifice his son for Allah. He was so perseverant that he was called God's Friend.

In short, the interrogative particle (hamza) in a-‘indahu

("is with him")

and am-lam

("is he not")

in the blessed Verses 36 and 37 beacons the refutation of a false belief as per which he was aware of the Unseen world and he said that he took the responsibility for his sins. The following Verse is saying that it is recorded in the Scriptures of Moses (as) and Abraham (as) that no one may take the responsibility of others and each and every person stands accountable for his own sins.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 38-39

أَلَآ تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى

وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَانِ إِلاّ مَا سَعَى

38. [It is mentioned in all Scriptures that] that no one shall bear the burden of another.

39. And that man can have nothing but what he strives for.

The Arabic word wizr denotes heavy burden and it connotes sin which is actually a heavy burden. The Arabic word wazir is applied to vizier who shoulders the heavy burden of the administration of the state.

The blessed Verses are saying that God Almighty obliterates vices through committing righteous good deeds, forgives sins because of repentance, or turns vices into good, but never makes anyone bear the burden of sins committed by another.

In this vein, it is reported that the second caliph ordered a pregnant adulteress be stoned.

Imam ‘Ali (as) objected saying that the fetus in her womb was not supposed to bear the burden of its mother's sin in which he relied on the blessed Verse:

"No one shall bear the burden of another."

He said:

"Be patient until the ruling will be executed after delivery."[1]

The Messenger of Allah (S) aid:

"The sins of fornicating parents are not to be borne by the illegitimate children."

Then he recited the Verse:

"No one shall bear the burden of another."[2]

The blessed Verse 39 reads:

"And that man can have nothing but what he strives for."

The Arabic word sa‘y designates "move fast rather than run" but it often connotes "strive, make effort," since upon making efforts, rapid movements are being done whether the same aim at doing righteous good deeds or otherwise.

It would be of interest to note that man reaps the fruit of his efforts rather than fulfillment of something which connotes that it is of significance to

strive and make efforts even if one may not attain to his goal; if he intends to do righteous good deeds, God Almighty will grant him his reward, since he seeks good intentions rather than fulfilled tasks.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 40-42

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى
ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاء الْأَوْفَى
وَأَنَّ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الْمُنتَهَى

40. And that his deeds will be seen.
41. Then he will be recompensed with a full and the best recompense.
42. And that to your Lord is the return of all.

The blessed Verses 40 and 41 are saying that one who perseveres in the fulfillment of his tasks not only will soon receive the reward of his righteous good deeds in full but also will reap further rewards for the same. It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that each and every righteous good deed will accrue tenfold rewards and some believers and the God fearing will receive rewards several times as much.

The blessed Verse 42 says that everything shall indubitably return to your Lord, since He is the Efficient Cause and the Final Cause and the pivot of the world of creation, its beginning, and its end rests on Divine Pure Essence.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 43-44

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى
وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا

43. And that it is He Who makes [whom He wills] laugh and makes [whom He wills] weep.
44. And that it is He Who causes death and gives life.

Although Divine Acts are being done through intermediaries, but in fact He is the Main Cause.

Repetition of the pronoun;

"He"

reflects that He is the only Main Cause. Thus it is said: O Muhammad (S)! Your Lord toward Whom you guide people is the Lord and Fosterer of all things. Creatures in the higher and the lower spheres and the overt and covert attributes and traces of the beings of the world of creation all rest upon His Will.

Even laughing arising from the felicity of the soul and weeping stemming from grief and sorrow as well as life and death as two opposite existential phenomena rest on Divine Will and the Existential Command of the Fosterer of the world of existence.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 45-47

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالأُنثَى
مِن نُّطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّشْأَةَ الأُخْرَى

45. And that He creates the pairs, male and female
46. From semen when it is emitted [into the womb].
47. And that upon Him is another creation upon Resurrection.

The law of conjugality in the system of creation is legislated by God Almighty rather than a convention amongst human beings. It is the secret of survival. If removed, life will lose its vitality and will come to an end. The creation of female and female pairs is one of the wonders and the necessities of life.

The blessed Verses are saying that God Almighty creates the twain male and female pairs out of the semen emitted into the womb.

Following an enumeration of attributes regarding Divine Lordship and Fostering, the blessed Verses treat of Resurrection asking:

"Is not man aware that according to formerly revealed Scriptures, it is upon God Almighty to create another world?"

The Arabic word nash'a in the blessed Verse 47 denotes creation and fostering something.

The prepositional phrase:

"upon him"

reflects that as God Almighty created man and made him responsible for fulfilling certain obligations and granted them free will and some people are obedient and some disobedient, some are tyrants and some oppressed and none of them received their recompense and the rewards, it is upon the All-Wise Allah to create another creation so that justice be administered.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 48-49

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَى وَأَقْنَى

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى

48. And that it is He Who causes needlessness and need.
49. And that He is the Lord of Sirius.

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the verbal forms aghna and aqna are cognate with Ghana ("needlessness") and quniya ("wealth").

Concerning the interpretation of the blessed Verse 48, Imam 'Ali (as) said:

"God Almighty renders man needless and also makes him satisfied with what he has."

Sirius is the name of a star worshipped by some who imagined that it affected their poverty and needlessness. It is worthy of note that it has been identified by the name of an idol as well. Sirius is the most resplendent star that usually appears in the sky at dawn and it was due to its brilliance that some Arab pagans worshipped it.

The Holy Qur'an is asking:

"Why do you worship Sirius?"

Then the blessed Verse 48 is bidding people to worship the Lord, the Creator.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 50-54

وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الأُولَى

وَثَمُودَ فَمَا أَبْقَى

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَى

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى

فَغَشَّاهَا مَا غَشَّى

50. And that it is He Who destroyed the former ‘Ad [people]

51. And Thamud [people]. He spared none of them.

52. And the people of Noah (as) aforetime. Indeed, they were more unjust and more rebellious.

53. And He destroyed the cities of the people of Lot (as).

54. Therefore, He covered them out of His Wrath with that which he covered.

All chastisements will not be in the Hereafter. Some peoples have been destroyed by God Almighty in this world and we should take a lesson. Alluding to the preceding Verses, the blessed Verses in question refer to Divine Omnipotence saying that in the same manner that your Lord created beings and their states, He causes the destruction of tyrants and rebels.

In terms of Grace and Mercy God Almighty is the Most Beneficent and in terms of Wrath, He is Severe of Recompense. He caused the destruction of earlier ‘Ad and Thamud peoples without sparing any of them and the people of Noah (as) had been destroyed because they were more tyrant and rebellious.

The earlier ‘Ad were Prophet Hod's (as) people and a group of them, called Banu Laqim and later ‘Ad, resided in Mecca and were spared. It is also said that they were called earlier ‘Ad since they were the first people who were destroyed following the disobedient people of Prophet Noah (as).

The second Verse is saying that your Lord caused the destruction of the people of Thamud who were the people of Prophet Salih such that none of them were spared. The second and the fourth Verses say that Your Lord had caused the destruction of the people of Prophet Noah (as) as the recompense of their tyranny and disobedience before that of ‘Ad and Thamud.

The fourth Verse says that the city of Mu’tafaka inhabited by the People of Prophet Lot (as) was levitated by Gabriel and was cast down and some many hard pieces of clay rained upon them that the earth was covered with them. It is also said that Mu’tafaka was applied to four cities: Sawa’im, Adima, ‘Amura, and Sodom, and Gomorrah.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 55-56

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النُّذُرِ الأُولَى

55. Then which of the Graces of your Lord will you doubt?

56. This is a warner of the warners of old.

The main obligation of all Prophets and the main goal of all Scriptures is to warn mankind. Although the blessed Verse is seemingly addressed to the

Noble Prophet (S), but it actually addresses mankind saying that O man! You still entertain doubts despite observing so many tokens of Divine Omnipotence?

It sounds as if the traces of the destruction of the cities of ‘Ad and Thamud were still visible at the time of the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an as a reference is made to the same elsewhere[3];

("Indeed, you pass by them in the morning and at night; will you not then reflect [upon their disobedience and take a lesson out of the fate of the ancients]?"[4]).

As mentioned in the exegetic work Manhaj al-Sadiqin, it is narrated on the authority of Muhammad ibn Humayd A‘mash from Salih from Ibn ‘Abbas that when the Noble Prophet (S) was assigned to appoint ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) as his successor and impart the same unto people, the Noble Prophet (S) first concealed the same from Quraysh chiefs, since he was aware that they would oppose the same and they would not acknowledge such appointment out of arrogance and envy and they might even harm ‘Ali (as).

Then Archangel Gabriel descended and said:

"God Almighty will keep you from their evil deeds"

and revealed the Verse:

"If you fail to do the same, you will not fulfill your Prophetic Call"

unto him. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) appointed ‘Ali (as) as the Imam and made it obligatory for the Muslim community on the Day of Ghadir Khum to obey his Guardianship.

Following the appointment of ‘Ali (as) to imamate, the blessed Verse 55;

("Then which of the Graces of your Lord will you doubt?")

was revealed.[5]

In interpreting the blessed Verse 56, Qur’an exegetes maintain that the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun;

"this" (hadha)

may be the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who like his predecessors was Divinely appointed to warn people. The antecedent may be the Holy Qur’an that like former Scriptures was revealed for people's Guidance.

Then, it is a source of surprise that you do not believe in God Almighty. Some exegetes hold that the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun in question is the torment sent down upon former peoples and the blessed Verse warns people against such torment. God Almighty knows best.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 57-58

أَزِفَتْ الآزِفَةُ

لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ

57. The Day of Resurrection draws near.

58. None besides Allah can avert the torments of that Day.

The Arabic feminine present participial form azifa denotes "approaching, drawing near." We are not supposed to imagine that the Day of Resurrection is far away but we should know that all mundane

means and possessions may not decrease an iota of the afflictions of that Day;

("None besides Allah can avert the torments of that Day").

The only Support shall be provided by God Almighty with his All-Encompassing Graciousness and Mercy but none besides Him shall be able to avert the hardships on that Day.

Surah al-Najm - Verses 59-62

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ

وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَآ تَبْكُونَ

وَأَنتُمْ سَامِدُونَ

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا

59. Do you then wonder at this Word?

60. And you laugh and weep not,

61. Wasting your lifetime in pastime and amusements.

62. Thus, fall you down in prostration to Allah and worship Him.

According to Tafsir Furqan, it is narrated that following the Revelation of these blessed Verses, the Noble Prophet (S) ceased to laugh to his last day, but he merely smiled. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that he said that the word hadith in the blessed Verse 59 is the accounts of the ancients.

It is worthy of note that the interrogative particle (hamza) in a-fa-man

("do you then")

is a rhetorical question by which it is asked:

"Are you not surprised at this account of the ancients and the torments and afflictions sent down upon them? Do you deride the news of the Day of Resurrection drawing near? You should be weeping out of awe and grief."

The Arabic plural present participial form samidun in the blessed Verse 61 connotes;

"wasting one's lifetime in pastime and amusements."

The present participle in question derives from s-m-d "to raise one's head arrogantly. The Arabic expression samad al-ba'ir ("the camel erected its neck") connotes raising one's head in arrogance. Disbelievers are ad hoc likened to a camel erecting its neck while moving, since they disobey God Almighty and regard His Word a plaything.

The last blessed Verse addresses all mankind saying that they should fall in prostration before God Almighty, the Creator and Fosterer of their existence and solely worship Him, since He is the only One deserving to be worshipped. Manmade idols, stars, the sun, concupiscent desires do not deserve to be worshipped.

It is worthy of note that:

"fall you down in prostration to Allah and worship Him"

(fa-'sjudu wa ''budu) are both in the imperative mode designating necessity; as a consequence of which, all jurisprudents are unanimous that following the recitation of the blessed Verse 62, it is obligatory to fall in prostration to Allah. It is reported that upon the Revelation of the blessed

Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) fell in prostration to Allah and all beings including jinn and mankind did the same.

It should be borne in mind sijda:

("that falling in prostration)

reflects humbleness and ‘ibada

("worship")

designates obedience to Allah.

The former falls into two types: those reflected by bodily postures as the same is reflected in prayers and the other type constitutes the permanent and inward prostration and the same is solely possible for one whose heart is subjugated by Divine Grandeur, Greatness, and Glory and whose soul has attained to the exalted state of closeness to God Almighty.

Such person is humble and stands in awe of Divine Greatness inwardly and outwardly at all times. He is the true example of those who inwardly fall in prostration to Allah and worship Him. It is worthy of note that falling in prostration to Allah and worshipping Him may cure man of arrogance and vanity.

O Lord! We invoke you to shed the Light of Your Knowledge upon our hearts so that we worship none but You and we fall in prostration to none but You.

Notes

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 76, p. 49.
2. Tafsir Rahnama; Durr al-Manthur; and other exegetic works under the blessed Verse in question.
3. 37:133-139
4. 37:137-138
5. Tafsir Makhzan al-Asrar; Manhaj al-Sadiqin, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah al-Qamar, Chapter 54, Verses 1 - 32

(The Moon)

Section (juz'): 27

Number of Verses: 55

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The blessed Chapter has 55 Verses and was revealed in Mecca. The designation of the Chapter derives from the raising the question of Cleaving of the Moon (shaqq al-qamar). All the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question end in the letter r.

The preceding Chapter ended with the question of Resurrection and the blessed Chapter 55 opens with the same. The Chapter mainly treats of Resurrection, Prophethood, and an account of Prophets' opponents. The accounts of five peoples, namely those of Noah (as), 'Ad, Thamud, Lot (as), and Pharoah are being referred to in this Chapter.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet (S)

"One who recites Surah al-Qamar and perseveres will enter the Plain of Judgment in splendor on the Day of Resurrection on the condition that he acts upon Qur'anic Injunctions."

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

وَإِن يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ

1. The Hour has drawn near and the moon has been cleft asunder.

2. And if they see a miracle, they turn away, saying: "This is continuous magic."

3. They belied [Divine Verses] and followed their own desires. And every matter will have a place [for its own].

The first blessed Verse treats of two significant happenings. Firstly, mention is made of Resurrection drawing near entailing the most significant alteration in the world of creation serving as an opening to a new life in the other world, a world whose greatness and extent are indescribable and unintelligible to us, the captives of the mundane world.

Resurrection is inevitable and close to us. The life of this world is so transient and man is supposed to be attentive and prepare the provision for the Hereafter. Secondly, the blessed Verse deals with the great miracle of Cleaving of the Moon bearing witness to Divine Omnipotence over all

things serving as a token of the veracity of the Prophetic Call. God Almighty says that Resurrection draws near and the moon cleft asunder.

The question of the Cleaving of the Moon is recurrently mentioned in Shi‘i and Sunni tradition sources, according to which, disbelievers asked the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) to cleave the moon asunder because they imagined that magic and sorcery could not affect the heaven and if the moon happened to cleave asunder, Prophet Muhammad's (S) task could definitely be regarded as a miracle.

It is worthy of note that separation of the planets of the solar system off the sun and/or meteors reflect the possibility of the moon cleaving asunder. It is interesting to note that Cleaving of the Moon occurred at night without prior proclamation as to the same while people were asleep.

The travelers proceeding toward Mecca and Syria and even Indians could witness Cleaving of the Moon.[1] It is inscribed on some monuments in India that the completion date of those monuments was the time when the moon cleft asunder.

According to Muslim consensus, consecutively transmitted traditions, and the testimonies of many a Prophetic Companion, people witnessed Cleaving of the Moon. According to Tabarsi, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud, Anas ibn Malik, Hudhayfa, Ibn ‘Abbas, Jubayr ibn Mat‘am, and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar witnessed Cleaving of the Moon and bore witness to the same.

According to Tabarsi, it is also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that disbelievers got together one night in full moon and asked the Noble Prophet (S):

"If your claim to Prophethood is true, command the moon to cleave asunder into two halves."

The Noble Prophet (S) inquired:

"If I do so, would you believe?"

They replied:

"Yes."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) invoked God Almighty to command the moon to cleave asunder into two halves. The Noble Prophet (S) summoned disbelievers and asked them to observe Cleaving of the Moon.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ud that he said:

"By Allah in Whose Hand of Might rests my soul, I witnessed the Mount of Hira through the two halves of the moon when it was cleft asunder."

According to Qur’an exegetes, transmitted traditions, and historical sources, there is no doubt as to Cleaving of the Moon which happened by Divine Will and the Noble Prophet's (S) miracle.[2] Sunni exegetes and traditionists maintain that Cleaving of the Moon is consecutively transmitted[3] among whom mention may be made of Suyuti quoting the same on the authority of ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Ahmad, ‘Abd ibn Humayd, Muslim, Ibn Jurayr, Ibn al-Mundhar, Tirmidhi, Ibn Murdiwayh, Bayhaqi[4], and Qurtubi[5].

Other sources have transmitted the same on their authorities. It is a matter of consensus and is free from doubt. The sources are not mentioned herein for the sake of brevity.

The second blessed Verse is saying that when obdurate disbelievers witness the miracle proving the veracity of your Prophetic Call turn away saying that it is a magic repeated. The Arabic word mustamirr (continuous, repeated) reflects that they had repeatedly seen miracles worked by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) such that Cleaving of the Moon was another. Although such false ascription was a pretext for their disobedience to Truth.

Alluding to their opposition and its inauspicious consequences, the blessed Verse 3 is saying that they belied and followed their concupiscent desires and

"every matter will have a place [for its own]."

The point is that their denial of the Prophetic Call, the Noble Prophet's (S) miracles, and their denial of Resurrection sprang from their following concupiscent desires, since their prejudice, obduracy, and arrogance impeded their submission to Truth.

On the other hand, their lust for unconditional deriving pleasures of the flesh and their impurities stemming from committing sins and doing wrong served as obstacles in acknowledging the Call to Truth, since such acknowledgement entailed obligations. It has been always likewise and it will remain the same. The worst obstacle on the path toward Truth is following concupiscent desires.

"Every matter will have a place [for its own]"

designates that everyone will receive the Reward and Recompense of his own deeds. The good shall reap Rewards and the evil shall suffer the evil consequences of their vile deeds.

The expression seemingly makes a reference to the truth that nothing shall be effaced in this world, but any good or evil act shall stay the same until man receives his Reward or Recompense of the same. It is worthy of note that the shadows of night will end in the bright of the day and Truth shall be established on its stable place.

The Holy Qur'an says elsewhere[6]:

"Therefore, one who does righteous good deeds equal to the weight of an atom shall see it. And one who does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it."

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as):

"No servant shall be afflicted by any affliction unless he has committed sins."[7]

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 4-6

وَلَقَدْ جَاءهُم مِّنَ الْأَنبَاء مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ

حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نُّكُرٍ

4. And indeed there has come unto them news wherein there is to cease disbelief,

5. Perfect wisdom, but the words of the warners benefit the obdurate not.

6. Therefore, turn away from them. The Day that the Caller shall call [them] to a terrible thing and torment of Hell.

The Arabic word naba’ is applied a piece of news which has three characteristics. Firstly, the subject matter happens to be of significant occurrence, as any piece of news is not termed naba’. Secondly, knowledge and/or certitude is accrued of the same. Thirdly, the issue is true devoid of untruth.[8]

The Arabic word muzdajar derives from z-j-r ("drive back, hold back") which connotes the news that may impede man from committing sins. In other words, accounts of the ancients and their desperation and torments contain significant news embodying warning and disgust for believers.

The blessed Verse 5 is saying that the Holy Qur’an is wisdom par excellence in terms of eloquence, which resumes the points discussed in the preceding Verses.

As it was mentioned above, it may make a reference to the point that Cleaving asunder of the Moon at a certain time, all the miracles of the Prophets and the torment of the damned unfortunate (ashqiya’) as the Recompense of their deeds, and all other happenings that occurred at other times owing to the Preordination of the Most Exalted Lord constitute Wisdom par excellence.

"But the words of the warners benefit them not"

may allude to the fact that such obdurate, arrogant, and ignorant people were not convinced to believe by such significant miracle but they regarded it as magic and remained in their disbelief and animosity.

In short, all these blessed Verses indicate that Cleaving of the Moon at the command of the Seal of the Prophets (S) was done to bear witness to the veracity of his Prophetic Call and the same was worked according to the order of the world of creation.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 6 is saying that when disbelievers witnessed such great miracle but failed to believe, you are supposed to withdraw from them without taking troubles for their ignorance but remember the Day when the Divine Caller calls people unto a horrible thing - the Call to Record of deeds. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word nukur designates something horrible and unbeknownst.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 7-8

خُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ

مُّهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ

7. They will come forth with humbled eyes from graves as if they were locusts scattered,

8. Hastening with erect necks towards the Caller. The disbelievers will say: "This is a hard Day."

The Arabic word ajdath is the plural form of jadath ("grave, tomb"). Humbling of eyes is a token of intensity of fear or shamefulness leading to humbleness. The similitude of sinners on the Day of Resurrection to scattered locusts reflects their perplexity and astonishment upon coming out of graves hastening hither and thither out of witnessing the torment on that Day.

The blessed Verse 8 is saying that when they leave their graves upon the Call, they protrude their necks toward Calling angels out of the intensity of fear. The Arabic word muhti'in derives from h-t-' ("protrude one's neck").

Some exegetes interpret the word in the sense of gazing or hastening. Both senses are possible in the interpretation of the blessed Verse, though the former sense is seemingly more appropriate herein, since when a horrible sound is heard, man immediately protrudes his neck and then turns toward the source of the sound.

It is worthy of note that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question may refer to all these senses. Thus, upon hearing the Divine Caller, they protrude their necks toward the source of the sound, then gaze at it, and later on hasten toward it and make their presence at Divine Tribunal. Then, the horror of the hard incidents of that Day encompasses them all.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to add that disbelievers say that that today is a hard and excruciating. It is a hard day since all the things cause fear in sinners. May God Almighty bestow His Mercy upon His servants. On that Day, there shall be neither fear nor grief for believers.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 9-10

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ

9. The people of Noah (as) denied [him] before the disbelievers denying the Noble Prophet (S). They denied Our servant and besides denial of his Prophethood said: "A madman!" and that he was far from the true path.

10. Then Noah (as) invoked his Lord [saying]: "I have been overcome, so render [me] assistance!"

God Almighty consoles the Noble Prophet (S) saying that if disbelievers denied your Prophetic Call and miracles, do not entertain sorrow since people in aforetime were the same. The people of Prophet Noah (as) did so many wrongs to the Archprophet (as) and transgressed the bounds to such an extent that they attributed madness and ignorance to him.

They even threatened that they would kill him as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[9]:

"They said: 'If you cease not, O Noah (as), you will surely be among those stoned to death.'"

Finally, he was desperate of guiding them and said unto God Almighty that neither such people nor their offspring may be guided.

Thus, according to the blessed Verse 10, Noah (as) said:

"I am overcome, render me assistance."

Following nine hundred and fifty years of imparting Divine Guidance, his people, except for a small number, denied his Prophetic Call. Further, they transgressed the bounds to such extent that he was desperate and called his Lord saying that he could not guide them to the Straight Path and invoked him to take his vengeance upon them. Then, God Almighty answered his prayer as a consequence of which the torment of tempest encompassed them.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 11-12

فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاء بِمَاء مُّنْهَمِرٍ

وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاء عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ

11. Therefore, We opened the gates of the heavens with water pouring forth.

12. And We caused springs to gush forth from the earth. Therefore, the waters from the earth and the heaven joined for a matter preordained.

The blessed Verses make a telling and awe-inspiring reference to the manner of their torment saying that following Noah's (as) invocation, We opened the gates of the heaven and an incessant and heavy rain poured down.

The metaphor of opening the gates of the heaven is a beautiful one which is employed at the time of pouring down heavy rain. The metaphor is also used in the Persian tongue when it is said that it is as if the gates of heaven have opened and all the rain is pouring down.

The Arabic word munhamir ("pouring down, flowing down") derives from h-m-r ("pour down, flow") connoting heavy pouring down of rain or flowing of tears. The word is also figuratively employed to connote milking animals to the last drop. It would be of interest to know that according to some exegetes, they had been afflicted with famine for years and expected rain until a fatal rain, rather than a rejuvenating one, poured down.

The blessed Verse 12 is saying that such heavy rain poured down that water gushed forth from the earth, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question. God Almighty cleft the earth asunder and made many a spring gush forth from the same. The two waters intermingled as it was preordained and encompassed all over the earth.

In short, water gushed forth from all over the earth and springs flowed and a heavy rain poured forth and the waters met and formed an immense and agitating ocean.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 13-14

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ

تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاء لِّمَن كَانَ كُفِرَ

13. And We carried him on a [vessel] made of planks and nails,

14. The vessel upon which Noah (as) and his followers embarked Floated under Our Eyes. It was a Reward for him who had been denied.

The blessed twain Verses in question let go of the account of the tempest, since what had to be said is contained in the preceding blessed Verses.

Proceeding with the account of Noah's Ark, the blessed Verse 13 reads:

"We carried him on a [vessel] made of planks and nails."

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the Arabic word dasur, the plural form of disar, originally denotes "shove, push off severely." Since nails are hammered with heavy strikes into the wood and the like, it is called disar. However, some exegetes maintain that the word designates rope, applied to the ropes of the sail and the like.

It is worthy of note that the Qur'anic expression employed herein is meaningful and significant, since it reflects that in such harsh tempest encompassing everything, We commanded some pieces of wood and some nails to rescue Noah (as) and his followers and these inanimate objects fulfilled their obligation in the best manner and the same reflects Divine Omnipotence.

The expression may also allude to the simplicity of the vessels of that time in comparison with modern sophisticated vessels. Nonetheless, according to historical sources, Noah's (as) Ark was sufficiently large for whose building he spent years and it could accommodate one pair of different animals.

The blessed Verse 14 is a reference to the special Favor bestowed upon Noah (as) by God Almighty saying that the Ark cleaves waves asunder before Our Eyes and under Our Supervision.

"Before Our Eyes"

is a delicate metaphorical expression alluding to special attention to and perfect preservation of something, as it is elsewhere[10] attested in the Holy Qur'an:

"And build the vessel under Our Eyes and with Our Revelation and call not upon Me on behalf of those who did wrong; they shall certainly be drowned."

The blessed Verse 14 further adds:

"It was a Reward for him who had been denied."

Prophet Noah (as) like all other Prophets enjoyed the Great Favors and Bounties of the Lord, but ignorant disbelievers denied his Prophetic Call.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 15-16

وَلَقَد تَّرَكْنَاهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

15. And Verily, We left the vessel as a Sign. Then is there any that will receive admonition?

16. Then how terrible is My Torment and My Warning?

In these twain blessed Verses, God Almighty is saying that He made the account of Noah's Tempest and Ark and the perdition of disbelievers at the time remain until the Day of Resurrection such that it may serve as warning and admonition for all peoples and they learn that denying Messengers of Allah entails evil consequences.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying:

"Is there anyone who will receive admonition out of such all-encompassing torment and learn the manner of My torment in store for disbelievers and contenders?"

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 17

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

17. And We have verily made the Qur'an easy to understand and receive admonition. Then, is there anyone who will receive admonition?

The blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty truly made the Holy Qur'an easy to understand, such that anyone may easily comprehend the words and expressions therein and thereby find the path toward his happiness.

Thus, people may learn the accounts of former peoples like Prophet Noah's (as) tempest and Ark and the perdition of all peoples all over the earth except for his followers. Thus, they may learn the Recompense of their evil deeds and take a lesson.

Now, is there anyone who remembers God Almighty and receive admonition? It is in this vein that people may reflect upon the horror of torment in this world and attain to felicity. It is worthy of note that not everybody deserves to benefit from Qur'anic Verses since it is solely for those who remember God Almighty rather than those who are immersed in neglect.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 18-19

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ

18. The people of 'Ad belied their Prophet. Then how were My Torment and My Warnings?

19. Indeed, We recurrently sent against them a furious and icy gale on an inauspicious day.

Following the account of Prophet Noah (as) and the tempest, the Holy Qur'an proceeds with those of Prophet Hod (as) and the people of 'Ad so that it makes people aware of the manner of the torment of those who disobeyed Divine Command.

Although the people of 'Ad were strong, robust, and of high stature such that they extracted rocks from mountains and built their houses, they were afflicted with Divine torment in the form of an incessant icy gale on an inauspicious day. The inauspicious day mentioned herein may reflect Divine torment encompassing disbelievers on that day and led to their perdition.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 20-22

تَنزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُّنقَعِرٍ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

20. A harsh gale plucking out men as if they were eradicated stems of date-palms.

21. Then, how are My Torment and My Warning?

22. And indeed We made the Holy Qur'an facile to comprehend and remember. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

Depicting the aforesaid gale, the Holy Qur'an is saying that it plucked down people like the uprooted trunks of palm-trees and scatters them hither and thither. The Arabic word munqa'ir deriving from q-'-r designates the lowest point of anything though it is employed in the sense of 'eradicate.'

The expression may allude that the people of ‘Ad were strong and robust and as some exegetes say they had built underground shelters in order to preserve themselves from gales, but the gale blew so harshly that day that it eradicated them from their shelters and scattered them around. It is also said that the gale struck them unto the earth head down that their heads were severed.

The Arabic word a‘jaz is the plural form of ‘ijz denoting the lower or rear part of something and their similitude to the lower parts of palm-tree trunks is owing to the point that the gale was so harsh that their limbs were severed and scattered into the air and then their bodies were uprooted from the earth and were scattered hither and thither. It may also connote that the harshly blowing gale pounded them onto the earth head down and broke their necks and severed their heads.

The blessed Verse 21 is warning that people may see how Divine torment and warnings were. God Almighty thus chastised other peoples who trod the path of denial, arrogance, vanity, sinfulness, and rebellion. What do you think that you proceed on their path?

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that God Almighty made the Holy Qur’an facile to comprehend and derive admonitions thereof. Is there anyone who remembers God Almighty and receives admonition? Is there anyone listening to the Divine Call and Warnings?

It is worthy of note that the clause;

"Then how was My Torment and Warnings?"

is reiterated as to the people of ‘Ad - once in the beginning of the account and once at the close of it. The difference might lie in the fact that their torment was more severe and more horrible, though all Divine torments are severe.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 23-26

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ

أَؤُلْقِيَ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِن بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌ

سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مَّنِ الْكَذَّابُ الْأَشِرُ

23. Thamud belied the warners.

24. And they inquired: "Should we obey one single man amongst us? Truly then we should be deeply [entangled with] in error and madness!"

25. Is it that he is the only one from amongst us who receives Revelation? Nay, he is an very arrogant and a liar!"

26. Tomorrow they will come to know who is the liar, the arrogant one!

The people of Thamud are the third people whose account is precisely mentioned as a lesson. They inhabited in the land of Hijr, in the northern region of Hijaz. Their Prophet Salih (as) made his utmost effort to guide them onto the Straight Path, but his efforts were of no avail. They denied Divine Warnings.

The Arabic word nudhur herein connotes warning Prophets and the denial of the Prophetic Call by the people of Thamud is regarded as that of

all the Prophets, since the Prophetic Calls of all Prophets were consistent. Nonetheless, the Arabic word nudhur is herein the plural form of indhar denoting statements made accompanied by warning which are naturally included in the words of any Prophet.

The second Verse in question treats of their pretexts as to their denial of the Prophetic Call saying:

"They said: 'Should we follow a man of our community? If we do so, we will be in error and entangled with madness.'"

Arrogance and vanity served as veils between them and Prophetic Calls. They said that Prophet Salih (as) was a man like them. Thus, it would be in vain to follow him. What are his privileges over us so that we should follow his commands? Astray peoples often found the same fault with Prophets saying that they are people like us for which reason they may not be Divinely appointed Prophets.

The Arabic word su‘ur is the plural for of sa‘ir originally denoting blazing fire but it is employed at times in the sense of madness as well, since madmen are imbued with special excitement. Thus, naqa mas‘ura is applied to mad camel. It is worthy of note that the plural form su‘ur connotes emphasis and permanence, be it in respect to madness or as to setting fire ablaze.

In the third blessed Verse disbelievers are saying that taken for granted that Divine Revelation be sent to a certain man, would he be the only one receiving it where there are people enjoying more recognition, fame, and possessions?

They also say that he is an arrogant liar desiring to rule over them. The ignorant solely regard the form but are totally ignorant of significance and truth. Narrow minded people have always regarded Prophets human beings like them and have been ignorant of their spiritual truth.

They have been unaware of the their inward precious jewels thereby they are connected to the spiritual world and that of Divine Command and are prepared to receive Divine Revelation. It is through the nexus that they receive Divine Favors and impart the same unto their peoples. Therefore, they regarded Prophets liars. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word ashir connotes exuberance accompanied with lustfulness.

The fourth blessed Verse in question thus provides disbelievers with a reply saying that it will be known tomorrow as to who the lustful liar is. Divine torment will strike them into a handful of dust and ashes and Divine Chastisement shall entangle them in the Hereafter. Such false accusations may not befit Prophets but are worthy of disbelievers.

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 27

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُو النَّاقَةِ فِتْنَةً لَّهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ

27. Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as a test for them. Therefore, we said unto Salih (as) to watch their end and be patient!

The people of Thamud went to the extreme in denying Prophet Salih's (as) Prophetic Call and said unto him derisively:

"If you are a Prophet, command the mount to send forth a red haired ten month pregnant camel and we share the water with her such that she

may drink the water and provide us with milk and the next day we use the water."

To try them God Almighty granted their wish and it was through Divine Will and Omnipotence that a red haired and ten month pregnant camel came out of the mount thus addressing Prophet Salih (as):

"Watch and be patient so that you see what they will do to the she-camel."

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 28

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاء قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُّحْتَضَرٌ

28. And We inform them that the water is to be shared between them and the she-camel, each one of them receive the allotted share.

Addressed to Prophet Salih (as), the blessed Verse in question is asking him to inform the people of Thamud that they should divide the water between themselves and the she-camel. There was seemingly a fountain whose water sufficed to provide the people inhabiting the region with water.

The people of Thamud were assigned to make use of the water one day and leave it to the she-camel the next day and receive milk from her in return. However, they rejected the offer and suffered the evil consequences of their deeds and it will be reflected in the following Verses.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 29-30

فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

29. But they called their comrade and he took [a sword] and slew [her].

30. Then, how is My Torment and My Warnings?

The disobedient, vain, and obdurate people made up their minds to slay the she-camel though Prophet Salih (as) had warned them that if they harm her in any way, they would be afflicted with torment.

But, they ignored his warning and called one of their comrades and asked him to slay the she-camel. The Arabic word sahib may herein allude to one of the chiefs of the people of ‘Ad who was one of their most notorious scoundrels named in historical accounts as Qadara ibn Salif. He was an ugly villain and one of the most inauspicious people of the time.

The Arabic word ta‘ati originally denotes handling something or embarking upon some act, but it also connotes fulfilling significant, perilous, toilsome, and profitable tasks. It is worthy of not that all these interpretations are possible in the blessed Verse in question, since embarking upon slaying the she-camel required audacity.

Furthermore, it was toilsome and naturally entailed remuneration. The Arabic word ‘aqar is cognate with ‘uqr originally denoting root and basis, but employed as to camels, it connotes slaying or cutting sinews. Different reports exist as to the manner of slaying the she-camel. Some maintain that her sinews were severed with sword.

Some hold that Qadara lay in ambush behind a rock and shot her with an arrow and then attacked her with a sword. The following blessed Verse

in question opens the account of the horrible torment of the disobedient people: "Now observe the manner of My Torment and Warnings."

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 31-32

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

31. Indeed, as the Recompense of their crime, We sent against them an awful cry and the lightning and they became like the stalks scattered in a pen by cattle owners.

32. And verily, We have made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that God Almighty sent a horrible cry upon them; as a consequence of which, they turned into dried up and mashed plants gathered as fodder for cattle by their owners. The Arabic word sayha ad hoc denotes a loud cry from the heaven and it may connote the awe-inspiring lightning flashing above their city.

The word hashim denotes fragile things like stalks. The word is employed ad hoc in the sense of such stalks flailed and prepared as fodder by cattle owners. It is also applied to the stalks scattered beneath them. The Arabic word muhtadir is applied to one who gathers dried plants to feed his cattle.

The metaphorical expression employed in the blessed Verse in question regarding the torment of the people of Thamud is quite wondrous and meaningful, since God Almighty did not send hosts from the heaven and the earth to cause the perdition of the disobedient people, but smashed everything within a wide expanse solely through a loud cry heard from the heaven, an awe-inspiring lightning, an enormous explosion.

Their prosperous palaces and mansions turned into cattle fodder and their corpses became like flailed plants scattered beneath cattle. Comprehension of such meaning was rather hard for former peoples, but it is not thus today owing to awareness as to the aftermath of explosions shattering everything within their scopes.

It is however worthy of note that the Lightning of Divine Torment is not to be compared to such explosions and thus it becomes evident that such awe-inspiring lightning inflicted what a massive disaster upon such disobedient people.

The second blessed Verse in question asks whether such admonitory and excruciating fate is not sufficient to awaken mankind. Is there anyone who receives admonition out of the Holy Qur'an and its vivid and crystal clear expressions, accounts, and warnings?

Notes

1. A building was ruined in Beijing, the capital of China, on whose pillars it was inscribed that it had been erected in the second year after the Cleaving of the Moon (Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 24, p. 11).

2. See Shi‘i and Sunni exegetic sources including: Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Nur al-Thisqalayn; Tafsir Nimuna; Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan; Tafsir Nur; Atyab al-Bayan; Tafsir al-Mizan.

3. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 133.

4. in Dala’il

5. transmitting on the authority of Anas

6. 99:7-8

7. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, p. 269.

8. Raghib's Mufradat.

9. 26:116

10. 11:37

Surah al-Qamar, Verses 33 - 55

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 33-35

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلاّ آلَ لُوطٍ نَّجَّيْنَاهُم بِسَحَرٍ

نِعْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَن شَكَرَ

33. The people of Lot (as) belied the Warnings.

34. Indeed, We sent against them a violent gale along with stones, except the family of Lot (as), them We saved in the last hour of the night,

35. The rescue was a Favor from Us. Thus We reward him who gives thanks.

The second blessed Verse in question is saying that the people of Lot (as) denied their Prophet's (as) Prophetic Call and Revelation; as a consequence of which Divine Torment was sent down upon them in the form of a harsh gale pouring down stones over them. The Arabic word hasib is employed in the sense of violent gale moving sand and stones.

All the people of Prophet Lot (as) perished by that harsh gale with the exception of the family of Prophet Lot (as) who were rescued at dawn. The third blessed Verse is saying that the deliverance of the family of Prophet Lot (as) was a Divine Favor. The blessed Verse closes by saying that God Almighty thus rewards those who are thankful.

It is a reference to the fact that one who does not disobey God Almighty as a token of gratitude for His Favors and Bounties, but obeys Divine Commands and His Messengers, will find Divine Support and Assistance at all times in the face of hardships and vicissitudes in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 36

وَلَقَدْ أَنذَرَهُم بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ

36. And Lot (as) indeed had warned them of Our Wrath, but they were engaged in disputes regarding Our Warnings!

Prophet Lot (as) strove to warn his people of Divine Torment, but they entertained doubts regarding his Prophetic Call and Divine Revelation and ignored warnings and persisted in committing their vicious deeds until they were afflicted by Divine Torment.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 37-39

وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

37. And they indeed sought to shame his guests through conversing with each other. Therefore, We blinded their eyes. Then taste My Torment and My Warnings."

38. And indeed an abiding torment seized them early in the morning.

39. "Then taste My Torment and My Warnings."

The people of Prophet Lot (as) went to the extreme in transgressing bounds. Qur'an exegetes report that a number of angels entered Prophet Lot's (as) home in human form with beauteous and resplendent visages.

The people of Prophet Lot (as) intended to enter his home and derive pleasure out of their company asking the Prophet (as) to leave them unto them and entered into disputes with the Prophet (as). Prophet Lot (as) provided them with wise counsels against their will but it was of no avail. They shattered the gate and entered his home.

Upon their insistence as to transgressing bounds, Gabriel said unto Prophet Lot (as) to leave his people unto them. Upon their entrance, Gabriel struck its pinion onto their eyes and blinded them such that no traces were left of their eyes. The disobedient people rose and stumbled in perplexity and shouted that Lot (as) had cast his spell unto them.

The second and the third blessed Verses are saying that when the people of Prophet Lot (as) went to the extreme in their disobedience and rebellion, they were afflicted with a permanent torment such that they all perished and were sent to Hellfire.

Then it was said unto them:

"Taste the torment regarding which Our Messenger, Lot (as), had warned you but you belied his warning."

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 40

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

40. And indeed, We have made the Qur'an easy to comprehend. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?"

The blessed Verse 40 reiterates the meaningful and awakening statement:

"We have made the Holy Qur'an facile to understand. Then, is there anyone who will receive admonition and remember it?"

Nonetheless, the people of Prophet Lot (as) failed to receive admonition neither from Warnings nor from torments. Now, will those who are impure by committing the same sins, regret their vicious deeds and repent?

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 41-42

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

41. And verily, warners came unto the people of Pharaoh.

42. But, they belied all Our miracles. Therefore, We seized them with a Seizure of the All-Mighty, the Omnipotent.

The fifth and the last people mentioned in this series of blessed Verses are the people of Pharaoh. However, a brief reference is made thereof since the account of the people of Pharaoh is mentioned in detail in different Qur'anic Chapters.

The blessed Verse 41 is saying that Divinely appointed warners came unto them one after the other. The people of Pharaoh does not only include his family and kith and kin but it encompasses all his followers as well, since although the Arabic word al is often used in the sense of family but it may also be employed in a general sense.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the latter sense. The Arabic word nudhur is the plural form of nadhir denoting "warner." Nadhir may be either a human being or an incident warning mankind against the consequences of their deeds.

The former sense may herein allude to Moses (as) and Aaron and the latter one may make a reference to the nine miracles worked by Prophet Moses (as). However, the following blessed Verse reflects that the latter sense is being intended.

The blessed Verse 42 exposes the reaction of the people of Pharaoh against the two eminent Prophets (as) and their warnings saying that the people of Pharaoh denied Divine Signs. These arrogant wrong-doers belied all Divine Signs unexceptionally and regarded all of them as lies, magic, or coincidence.

The blessed Verses in question encompass a wide range of meanings including intellectual and narrational arguments and miracles. However, taking into account another blessed Verse[1] according to which God Almighty provided Moses (as) with nine crystal clear miracles, it becomes evident that these miracles are being intended herein.

Witnessing only one of these miracles with prior notice and then removal of the affliction through the Prophet's (as) invocation will suffice to convince the truth seeking man. But if one happens to be obdurate, all the miracles of the earth and the heaven may not suffice to convince him. It is at such time that only Divine Torment should be inflicted upon disobedient people and shatters their brains.

As it is mentioned in the blessed Verse in question;

"We seized them and chastised them"

and the seizure is done by One who may not be vanquished since He is All-Mighty and Omnipotent.

The expression mentioned in this account in unprecedented in others since the people of Pharaoh were above all proud of their might and rank and their sovereignty was well-known. However, God Almighty is saying that He seized them by His Might so that it may be known to all that such groundless might and grandeur is nothing against Divine Omnipotence and Glory.

It is a source of surprise that the great Nile, the source of their mighty, wealth, prosperity, and civilization was Divinely appointed to cause their perdition. It is even more surprising that small beings like locusts, frogs, and a kind of insect called qumal vanquished them rendering them desperate and led to their perdition.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 43-44

أَكُفَّارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أُولَٰئِكُمْ أَمْ لَكُم بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرٌ

43. Are your disbelievers better than these? Or have you immunity in the Divine Scriptures?

44. Or they say: "We are a great multitude backing each other and no might may conquer us."

After recounting the accounts of the ancients and the torments and chastisements of disobedient sinful peoples, the blessed Verses in question address Meccan polytheists asking them:

"Are you disbelievers better than those of the ancients? Is there immunity and quarter for you in Divinely revealed Scriptures? Is there any difference between you and the peoples of Pharaoh, Lot (as), and Thamud? They were afflicted with tempests, earthquakes, and lightning owing to their disbelief, disobedience, wrong-doing and sinfulness.

Why do you imagine that you will not suffer the same fate? Are you better than them or your disobedience, animosity, and disbelief less than theirs? Why do you think that you are immune from Divine Torment? Do you have a quarter attested in Divine Scriptures? Such claim is indubitably untrue and you have no evidence to prove it."

According to the second blessed Verse, they say that they are a great united multitude who take vengeance upon their enemies and conquering them. The Arabic word jami‘ in this blessed Verse is applied to a community who possess mighty and proceed toward a goal.

The word muntasir lays further emphasis on the same meaning since it denotes triumphant and taking vengeance. It would be of interest to note that the preceding blessed Verse was in the form of address, but the blessed Verse in question and the following ones speak about disbelievers in the third person which connotes a kind of humility, namely they do not deserve to be addressed by God Almighty any further.

In short, if they claim to possess such might, it is groundless, since the peoples of Pharaoh, Thamud, ‘Ad, and the like of them were mightier than them, but they could not resist in the least against Divine Torment dispersing them like a violent tempest blowing onto hay, let alone such insignificant and desperate people.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 45-46

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ

بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَدْهَى وَأَمَرُّ

45. Their multitude will be put to flight soon and they will show their backs unto each other.

46. Nay, but the Day of Resurrection is their appointed time and that Day will be more grievous and bitterer.

In order to refute their false claims, the blessed Verses in question decisively predicts them so that they know that their multitude will be soon defeated and they will show their back. It would of interest to know that the verbal form sayuhzamu ("they will be soon defeated") originally denotes pressing a dried up object such that it is shattered but it is figuratively employed in the sense of defeating and shattering hosts.

The expression may allude to the point that although they seem to be unified but they are inflexible and may be shattered by a heavy pressure. Au contraire, believers are unified but flexible and may thereby resists hardships and vicissitudes.

It is also worthy of note that the Arabic word dubur ("rear") is the opposite of qubul ("front") and the former is herein employed to indicate show one's back in battlefield. Such prediction realized in battles like Badr and finally the seemingly mighty hosts of disbelievers were defeated and put to flight.

The second blessed Verse is saying that defeat and misfortune do not fall into their share in this world but their appointed place shall be the Day of Resurrection when more horrible and bitterer chastisements shall be in store for them. Thus, they should await a bitter defeat in this world and a bitterer and more horrible defeat in the Hereafter.

The superlative adjective adha

("more grievous")

connotes that they shall be entangled with an incurable affliction. Finally, it is known that one of the aspects of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an is inclusion of news of the Unseen an instance of which is to be found in the blessed Verse in question. Is such news from the Unseen with such decisiveness and explicitness not regarded as a miracle?

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 47-49

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ

يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

47. Indeed, sinners are in error and blazing flames.

48. The day when Hellfire shall burn their faces, it will be said unto them: "Taste Hellfire!"

49. Indeed, We have created all things in its proper measure.

The first twain blessed Verses treat of the torments of evil-doers and sinners who may be the disbelievers warned against torment in the preceding blessed Verse or it may generally allude to those who disobey God Almighty and Divine Signs.

In short, disbelievers shall be dragged into Hell and it shall be said unto them:

"Taste the heat and hardship of saqar, one of the levels of Hell."

The third blessed Verse in question is saying that it may be imagined that theses torments are consistent with sins thus it further adds that God Almighty created everything in its due measure. Their excruciating torments in this world and the severe chastisements in the Hereafter and all creation are well measured.

The earth, the heaven, animate and inanimate beings, human limbs and organs, and all the means of life and sustenance have been created in due measure and there is nothing without measure in this world, since God Almighty is All-Wise and all His Acts are based on His Wisdom and Omniscience.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 50-51

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلاَّ وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

50. And Our Commandment is but a fast one as the twinkling of an eye.

51. And verily, We caused the perdition of your likes; then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

Divine Acts are carried out Well-Measured, Wise, and Fast. Thus the blessed Verse 50 is saying that Divine Command is but One and it is done as fast as the twinkling of an eye. Whatever He wills, He merely says "Be" and it will come into being.

Even the Arabic imperative form "kun" ("be") is employed due to linguistic restrictions of human language; otherwise, Divine Will is on a par with the realization of His Will. Thus, We God Almighty issues the Command as to Resurrection, everything will be resurrected in the twinkling of an eye and new life shall be given to bodies.

Likewise, on that Day, when God Almighty wills to chastise sinners by lightning, loud cries heard from the heaven, earthquake, tempests, and harsh gales, solely one single Command shall suffices to realize everything. They all serve as Warnings to sinners that they know that God Almighty is All-Wise and His Wills are decisive so that they may be aware of the evil consequences of disobeying His Commands.

The blessed Verse 51 addresses sinners and disbelievers once more and draws their attention to the fate of ancient peoples saying that God Almighty caused the perdition of peoples who were like you aforetime. Is there anyone who will remember and receive admonition, namely awakens and takes a lesson?

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 52-53

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌ

52. And everything they have done is noted in Records of deeds.

53. And any deed, small and large, is written down.

The blessed Verses in question makes a reference to the fundamental principle that the deeds committed by ancient peoples were not effaced following their death but whatever was done by them was recorded in the Records of their deeds; likewise your deeds are being recorded and preserved for the Day of Reckoning. The word zubur is the plural form of zabur denoting book but it is herein employed in the sense of the Record of deeds committed by mankind.

In order to lay further emphasis, the second blessed Verse adds that the Record of deeds shall be a complete and all inclusive record on the Day of Resurrection, such that upon receiving their Records of deeds, sinners shall cry:

"Woe unto us! What kind of Record is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers,"[2].

The Arabic word mustatir ("written down, recorded") is cognate with satr ("line, queue"), originally denoting "line" be it the line of people or trees or words on a page. As it is commonly employed in the last sense, the same occurs to mind. It is another warning to such ignorant sinners.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 54-55

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

54. Indeed, the God fearing shall be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers.

55. In a place of truth, near the Omnipotent Lord.

The Qur'anic tradition is that it presents righteous good-doers and evil-doers, the good and the bad by comparing them, since differences become more obvious in comparison. Following a reference to the fate of wrong-doing disbelievers, the blessed Verses in question briefly allude to the happy fate of the God fearing saying that the God fearing shall abide amidst Gardens and rivers of Paradise in the expanse of Divine Favors and Bounties.

The Arabic nah(a)r denotes abundantly flowing water and at times, it connotes expanse, great favor, and resplendent light. Thus, it may allude to the expanse of divine Favors and Bounties and the light of Paradise and its vastness.

The second blessed Verse in question which is the last Verse of the Chapter further depicts the place of the God fearing:

"They abide in a place of truth, near the Omnipotent Lord."

The blessed Verse provides an interesting depiction of the place of the God fearing in which two characteristics are being enumerated. Firstly, it is the place of truth. Neither falsehood nor vanity may penetrate it. It is thoroughly true.

All Divine Promises as to Paradise shall be realized there and their veracity shall be made crystal clear. Secondly, it is close to God Almighty. The Arabic word 'ind ("near, close to") ad hoc connotes spiritual, rather than material, proximity to the Omnipotent Lord. All Favors and Bounties rest in His Sovereignty and Lordship. Thus, He shall not deprive His guests of any Favor. He is the only One Who is All-Aware of what He has prepared for them.

It would be of interest to not that the last twain Verses treat of the Bounties and Rewards of the people of Paradise.

Firstly, mention is made of the material Bounties like vast Gardens and Rivers in Paradise and secondly, mention is made of their great spiritual Reward, namely presence at the Threshold of Proximity to the Omnipotent Lord such that man is prepared at different intervals so that his soul soars on high encompassed with vitality and happiness.

Particularly, expressions like Lord, Omnipotent, and place of truth all reflect the permanence and intransience of such spiritual proximity and presence.

Notes

1. 17:101
2. 18:49

Surah al-Rahman, Chapter 55, Verses 1 - 32

(The Most Gracious)

Section (juz'): 27

Number of Verses: 78

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter has seventy eight Verses and it was reveled in Medina.

The designation of the Chapter derives from the first blessed Verse,

"the Most Gracious"

(al-Rahman), one of the Most Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allah.

Imam Kadim (as) said:

"There is a bride [best thing] for everything, and that of the Qur'an is Surah al-Rahman."[1]

The blessed Verse:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

is reiterated thirty three times which constitutes the most reiteration throughout the Holy Qur'an.

It would be of interest to know that the blessed Verse in questin addresses both jinn and men asking them:

"Which of the innumerable Blessings of your Lord will you deny?"

It is worthy of note that Divine Warnings were reiterated in the preceding Chapter:

("My Torment and Warnings")

and the blessed Chapter in question reiterates Blessings.

The preceding Chapter opened with an account of Resurrection and closed with Divine Omnipotence:

("In a seat of truth, near the Omnipotent Lord")

and the blessed Chapter in question opens with Divine Graciousness and closes with Divine Majesty and Honor

("Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Owner of Majesty and Honor").

Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

Numerous traditions have been narrated regarding the merits of recitation of the Chapter,[2] but we suffice to quote only one tradition.

According to a tradition narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S):

"One who recites Surah al-Rahman shall be granted Divine Graciousness upon his inability to give thanks to Allah for all His Blessings and shall be rewarded for his gratitude against Divine Blessings."[3]

Generally speaking, the blessed Chapter treats of different material and spiritual Divine Blessings bestowed upon His servants encompassing them all such that the blessed Chapter may bear the designations "Divine Graciousness" or "Divine Blessings," as a consequence of which the

blessed Chapter opens with one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names and Attributes,

"the Most Gracious"

(al-Rahman) reflecting Divine encompassing Mercy and it closes with Divine Majesty and Glory.

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

الرَّحْمَنُ

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ

1. The Most Gracious [Allah]!

2. He taught the Qur'an.

His Messenger (S) is a Mercy;

("And We have sent you not but as a Mercy for the worlds [jinn and mankind],").

His Qur'an is also a Mercy;

("And We send down the Qur'an that which is a healing and a Mercy to those who believe,"[4]).

The Divine Attribute;

"the Most Gracious"

(al-Rahman) is attested 169 times 114 instances of which are to found in the opening of Chapters

("In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful").

As mentioned above, the blessed Chapter reflects different Divine Blessings, opening with the Divine Attribute;

"the Most Gracious"

(al-Rahman), a secret of His All-Encompassing Graciousness, since were it not owing to this Attribute of His, such Blessings would not have fallen into the shares of His friends and enemies.

The blessed Verses are saying that the Most Gracious Allah taught the Holy Qur'an. Thus, the first and the most significant Blessing is mentioned as teaching the Holy Qur'an. What an appealing and significant expression. If we reflect correctly, the Glorious Qur'an is the source of all Divine Blessings and the means to attain to any Blessing and benefiting from all material and spiritual Blessings.

It is worthy of note that treating of the Divine Blessing of:

"teaching the Qur'an"

is mentioned prior to the creation of man and teaching him, but the natural order would be to first make mention of the reverse order, namely creation of man, the Blessing of teaching man speech, and then teaching him the Holy Qur'an. However, the majesty and glory of the Glorious Qur'an necessitates the order in question.

The other point is that the blessed Verse is a response to Arab polytheists who upon hearing the Noble Prophet (S) calling them to prostrate before the Most Gracious Allah asked:

"What is Graciousness?"

("And when it is said unto them: 'Prostrate yourselves to the Most Gracious Allah!' They say: 'And what is the Most Gracious? Shall we fall down in prostration to that which you command us?' And it increases in them only aversion."[5]).

The Holy Qur'an is saying that the Most Gracious Allah is One Who taught the Qur'an, created man, and taught him speech.

It is worthy of note that second to "Allah" the Divine Attribute;

"the Most Gracious"

is the most encompassing concept from amongst the Most Beautiful Attributes and Names of Allah, since we know that God Almighty possesses two kinds of Graciousness, general and specific.

The Attribute;

"the Most Gracious"

reflects His All-Encompassing Graciousness.

The Divine Attribute;

"the Most Merciful"

(Rahim) designates His specific Graciousness bestowed upon the faithful and the obedient.

It is seemingly owing to this reason that the Attribute;

"the Most Gracious"

is never applied to anyone other than God Almighty, unless it is accompanied by the word

"servant"

(‘abd), but

"merciful"

may be applied to others, since All-Encompassing Graciousness only belongs to God Almighty. In other words, specific mercy in its feeble form may be found among mankind and other creatures.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as),

"the Most Gracious"

(Rahman) is All-Encompassing and is solely a Divine Attribute, but

"merciful"

(rahim) is specific. In other words, the former is a specific name but is all-encompassing, namely, it is a Divine Attribute reflecting that His Mercy is All-Encompassing.

But,

"merciful"

is a general name with specific application, namely it may be applied to anyone, but

"merciful"

is general name with specific application, i.e., it is applied to God Almighty and His Creatures.

Likewise, the Noble Prophet (S) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as:

"kind and merciful"[6]

(ra'uf al-rahim), but they designate limited and specific mercy.

Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous regarding the issue as to who received the teaching of the Holy Qur'an. Some maintain that Gabriel, angels, the Noble Prophet (S), and all mankind and even jinn received it.

Since the blessed Chapter in question treats of Divine Blessings bestowed upon jinn and mankind, and the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

is attested thirty one times following an enumeration of Divine Blessings, the last interpretation sounds to be more appropriate, namely God Almighty taught jinn and mankind the Holy Qur'an through His Messenger, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 3

خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ

3. He created man.

Following a treatment of the unique Blessing of teaching the Holy Qur'an in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse in question says:

"He created man."

It goes without saying that the word "man" (insan) designates mankind rather than Prophet Adam (as), since he rather than the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) will be mentioned in the following Verses, though the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is a man par excellence.

The All-Encompassing Blessing of speech which will follow serves as another argument substantiating the general application of the word "man." Thus, other interpretations are not seemingly true.

Indeed, creation of man as the most wondrous creature in the world of existence, i.e. the macrocosm included in man, the microcosm, is an unequalled Blessing, since each dimension of his being is a great Blessing.

It is worthy of note that man begins its being as an unworthy semen, narrowly speaking, a microscopic being afloat in that unworthy drop of semen. Nonetheless, the being, thanks to Divine Lordship, proceeds on the path of evolution and development such that he may be promoted to the state of the most exalted and the noblest being in the world of existence.

It is also worthy of note that the name of man follows the Holy Qur'an, since the Holy Qur'an encompasses all the secrets of the world of existence in their codified form and man is the synopsis of these secrets in the form of coming into being and development and each and every man reflects a version of this great and vast world!

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 4

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

4. He taught him speech.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to one of the most significant Blessings second to the creation of man, saying:

"God Almighty taught him speech."

The Arabic word bayan:

("speech")

enjoys a wide range of meaning, applied to whatever clarifies something. Thus, it not only encompasses speech but also it connotes script, writing, and different intellectual and logical arguments clarifying complicated and

sophisticated issues. The word encompasses all, though the core meaning is speech.[7]

Since men are habitually inclined toward speech, they underestimate it, but the fact is that speech is one of the most sophisticated and the most delicate of human acts.

It may even be said that nothing is as sophisticated and delicate as speech, since sound production systems work together to produce different sounds. Lungs pump down the air and emit the same in time through larynx.

Vocals tracts reverberate and produce totally different sounds to reflect satisfaction, wrath, requesting assistance, love, and hate. Then such sounds are produced with speed and particular delicacy through the tongue, lips, teeth, and the oral cavity. In other words, the monotonous and prolonged sound emitting from the larynx is fashioned in different forms and measures thereby different sounds are produced.

On the other hand, the coinage of words is raised such that owing to intellectual developments, man coins different words to meet his material and spiritual requirements. It is a source of surprise that there exists no limit as to the quantity of vocabulary and the number of languages spoken in the world is so large that it evades determination.

Novel words and languages are formed in time. Some say that the languages of the world run to three thousand, but some even maintain that the number exceeds the same.[8] They were seemingly after enumerating languages, since the number of regional dialects and accents far exceeds the aforesaid numbers as there are many instances in which the inhabitants of two adjacent villages speak two regionally different languages.

Another point is the rules of syntax governing clauses and also expression of arguments and feelings are carried out through intellect and reason as the soul of speech. Thus, speech is peculiar to man.

It is true that many animals produce sounds to communicate but the sounds produced by them is so limited in number and they are rather vague compared to human speech which is of wide application and boundless, since God Almighty has provided man with the required faculty of speech.

Furthermore, with due consideration of the role of speech in the developments of human life and the emergence and developments of civilizations, one may certainly believe that it is solely thanks to this great Blessing that mankind may pass down their knowledge and experience from one generation to the following one and thereby cause the advancement of knowledge and science and the developments in civilizations, religions, and ethics. Put the case that such great Blessing is withheld, human societies will rapidly move towards regression.

If the word:

"speech"

herein be applied to script and writing and even different kinds of arts, its extraordinary role in the life of mankind is furthered clarified. Now it becomes crystal clear why mention is made of God Almighty teaching man speech following the creation of man treated in the blessed Chapter in question which encompasses a compendium of Divine Blessings.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 5

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ

5. The sun and the moon follow their measured out calculation.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the fourth great Divine Blessing bestowed by the God Almighty, the Most Gracious. The blessed Verse is saying that the sun and the moon follow their courses with measured out calculation.

The existence of the sun is one of the greatest Divine Blessings bestowed upon man, since life would be unimaginable in the solar system without the light and heat of the sun. It was mentioned above that any motion on the earth springs from the solar light and heat. Growth of plants and production of provision, precipitation, and blowing of winds are all thanks to this Divine Blessing.

The moon, in its turn, plays a key role in human life. It is the light of his dark nights, its gravity is the sources of ebb and flow in oceans result in life in seas and watering of rivers flowing onto seas. Besides, the fixed course of the twain circulations, that of the moon round the earth and that of the earth round the sun results in the orderly emergence of nights and days, years, months, and seasons.

They make human life order through which man may make use of the same for his commercial, industrial, and agricultural activities. Without such order, human life could never have any order.

It is worthy of note that not only the movement of these celestial bodies are precisely measured out, but also the quantity of their mass and gravity and their distance from the earth and from each other are all well calculated, without which great disruptions would occur in the solar system and consequently in human life.

It is also worthy of note that although the sun is seemingly motionless in the solar system, but it should be kept in mind that it, along with all its planets is moving in the milky way galaxy toward a specific point, the star known as Vega, and such movement follows a certain order and speed.

For further information, one may refer to 36:38-40:

("And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term appointed. That is the Decree of the Omnipotent, the Omniscient. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions to traverse till it returns to like the old dried curved date stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.").

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 6

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ

6. And the plants and the trees both prostrate themselves to Him.

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the Arabic word najm is applied to "star" and "stemless plant." The word originally denotes "rise," and the designation najm is owing to its "rise."

It is common knowledge that all the food used by mankind originally derives from plants, some of which are directly consumed by man and some are used to feed those animals constituting human dietary ingredients. It is

applied to sea animals, since they feed on minute plants growing in millions throughout water under sun light floating in between waves.

Thus the word najm is applied to small, creeping plants like pumpkin and cucumber and the word shajar designates types of plants with stems, stalks, and trunks, like crops and fruit bearing trees.

The Arabic verbal form yasjudan; ("the two prostrate themselves") connotes unconditional submission against the rules of creation in vein with human benefits, a Divinely appointed fixed course which they follow without any alteration.

It also alludes to their monotheistic secrets since each leaf or seed contain wondrous Signs of Divine Greatness and Omniscience;

("Each leaf is a book of Divine Omniscience").

Some also maintain that the Arabic word najm may connote stars, but the aforesaid exegesis is more consistent with the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 7-8

وَالسَّمَاء رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

أَلاَّ تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ

7. And the heaven: He raised it high, and He set up two Balances.

8. In order that you may not transgress Balance.

Following a treatment of Divine Graciousness and the blessings of teaching, speech, calculation of the sun, the moon, and prostration of creatures which implies Divine relation with man and nature, the blessed Verses in question discuss the manner of man's relation with society.

Maintaining the balance refers to moderation as per which immoderation and inflicting loss is unjustifiable. It is worthy of note that the fifth creature upon which Divine Graciousness and Mercy are bestowed is the heaven that enjoys an exalted state.

The Arabic word sama' ("heaven, sky") is cognate with sumuw ("exaltedness, height, elevation from the earth") and the clause:

"He raised it high"

may connote the exaltedness of planets, stars, galaxies, and celestial spheres, such that these creatures are both higher and more exalted than the earth, since heavenly bodies are quantitatively and qualitatively higher than the earth and whatever exists on it.

The point is that man is the synopsis of all earthly and heavenly creatures and nobler and more exalted that most of the existent beings.

"He set upon two Balances"

is that setting up the two Balances constitute the sixth Manifestation and Gracious Emanation. Balance is employed for weighing and assaying something by something else like balance and scale, even if the thing happens to be immaterial, like assaying knowledge by something else.

It also connotes the equality and equilibrium between the constituent elements of the thing, as it is said that the constituents of these two things are in equilibrium. Some maintain that balance is used for weighing and

assaying and maintaining perceptible and immaterial equilibrium, since balance is a polysemous word with different implications.

Balance may be applied in all matters like beliefs and ethics and whatever may be assayed in everyday and natural issues in human society and civilization so that people may not be wronged in transactions and they may not incur loss and damage but the balance be maintained, namely justice be administered in human society. It may entail what exists in equilibrium like limitation of the irascible and concupiscent faculties.

The blessed Verse 8 provides an interesting conclusion of the same adding that the goal of setting up balance in the world of existence is that you may maintain the balance and refrain from transgressing the bounds. You are also a part of this great world and you may never live inconsistently with it.

There is a system and a balance in this world and you have to have the same. Without such balance and order, the world will perish. If you lack order and balance in your lives, you will tread the path to perdition. The truth behind monotheism is that the prevailing principles of it are all the same everywhere.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 9

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَآ تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

9. And observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient.

Failing to attend to balance, equity, fairness, and justice in respect to the rights of people will lead man to immoderation and injustice. Islam provides people with significant and precise injunctions for the maintenance of justice and balance such that according to traditions, a judge wearing tight shoes is not supposed to issue verdicts lest the tightness of the shoes may affect his judgment and lead him to haste and intemperance thereby he may err as to the administration of justice.

According to another tradition, valuable commerce rests upon truth.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as):

"Merchants are wrong-doers and wrong-doers shall abide in Hellfire, unless his transactions be based on truth."[9]

Imam ‘Ali (as) ordered that adulterated coins be cast into wells so that they may not be used for transactions.[10]

He walked in the market of Kufa and at times stopped in the middle of the market saying:

"O merchants! Ask God Almighty for good. Find Divine Blessing in being lenient toward people. Refrain from telling lies in transactions. Abstain from injustice. Be not involved in usury. The said tradition is attested in Kafi, Man la Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih, Majalis, and Tahdhib."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse emphasizes maintaining balance and justice saying:

"Observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient."

The word:

"balance"

is attested thrice in these blessed Verses, though it was possible to use pronouns in the second and third instances. It reflects that the word balance (mizan) is employed in three different senses and using pronouns may not do justice in conveying the meanings and the contextual meaning of the Verses also bear witness to the same, since the first instance implies the balance, criterion, and laws set up by God Almighty throughout the world of existence.

The second instance treats of abstention of human beings from disobedience in all the matters concerning individual and social lives which are naturally more limited. The third instance emphasizes the issue of weighing in the narrower sense of the word saying that one may not make the balance deficient in weighing things and the last instance is more restricted in scope.

Thus, there is an interesting consistency in the Verses in the hierarchy of balance from larger circles toward smaller ones. The significance of balance in human life in any of the aforesaid senses is such that taking out the balance in the narrowest sense will entail chaos, problems, and disagreement. The broader the sense, the more disorder will prevail.

Based on the above, it is clarified that the reason behind the interpretation of balance as the presence of Imam (as) is that the presence of the Infallible Imam (as) serves as a criterion for assaying truth and falsehood which may lead to perception of truth and finding guidance. Interpretation of balance to the Holy Qur'an is in this light.

It is, however, worthy of note that all these blessed Verses treat of Divine Blessings reflecting that the existence of balance in the entirety of the world of existence, human society, social relations, commerce, and transactions are all Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 10-11

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ

10. And He created the earth for mankind.

11. Therein are fruits and magnificent date-palms.

The blessed Verses in question descend from the heaven onto the earth, saying:

"God Almighty created the earth for the life of mankind."

The Arabic word anam is interpreted differently by Qur'an exegetes as mankind, jinn and men, and any animate being. It is worthy of note that the contextual meaning indicates that jinn and men are being herein intended.

The earth which is mentioned herein as a remarkable Divine Blessing is mentioned in other Qur'anic Verses as "cradle" serves as a secure and serene abode whose significance may not be normally perceived by most of us, but an earthquake disturbs everything and volcanic eruption may bury a city beneath magma, fire, and smoke.

Such phenomena indicate that the serene earth is such a great Blessing, particularly if we reflect upon what scientists say concerning the velocity of

the earth's rotation on its axis and its circling around the sun, the significance of such serenity despite the staggering velocity, it is further clarified that it entails different types of motion.

The employment of the past verbal forms wadha'a ("set up") and rafa'a ("raised") regarding the earth and the heaven both embodies a delicate expression in terms of juxtaposition or contrast and a meaningful allusion to the submission of the earth and its resources against mankind.

As it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"He it is Who had made the earth obedient to you. Therefore walk in its path and eat of His provision. And to Him shall be the Resurrection."

The blessed Verse 11 treats of the tenth Blessings, namely the provisions, saying that there are fruits and magnificent date palms. The Arabic word fakiha denotes any kind of fruit and some interpret it as any kind of fruit but dates which is unjustifiable. Date palms are mentioned separately, but the repetition may reflect the significance of dates and date palms.

The word akmam is the plural form of kum designating the sheath covering fruits. Kumma denotes sleeve covering arm and hand and kum is the night cap covering the head. The fruit of palm trees is initially covered by a sheath. Then, the fruit splits the sheath. The depiction used herein may refer to its astounding beauty or the benefits concealed in the sheath. It contains juice and essence which are both nutritive and medicinal.

Besides, like a womb, the sheath fosters the fruit for a while and preserves it from blights. The sheath will be removed when the fruit may be exposed to sunshine and air. Above all, the peculiar condition of dates is that it is initially in the sheath and then it splits and forms clusters making it facile to be picked. Were tall date palms like other fruit bearing trees like apple, it would be so hard to harvest the produce.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 12

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

12. And also corns, with leaves and stalks for fodder and sweet-scented plants.

Other earthly benefits include crops, like wheat, barley, millet, and lintel growing from the earth on which man feeds. The Arabic word 'asf denotes the stalk and leaf of grain preserving it until it grows fully.

After harvesting and flailing, they will be used as fodder. Another benefit of the earth is growing sweet scented plants, but the Arabic word rayhan may be applied to all flowers and sweet scented plants by smelling which man may derive pleasure.

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 13

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

13. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Reiteration of issues constitutes significant requirements for creating culture.

It is used at times for reminding different Blessings, like the blessed Verse in question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Repetition may also be used to warn sinners, like

"Woe unto the liars at that time."

It is worthy of note that following an enumeration of different material and immaterial Blessings, the blessed Verse in question thus addresses jinn and men:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Such Blessings are most precious, Blessings encompassing all your lives, each of which serves as a telling token of Divine Omnipotence, Graciousness, and Love. How may one deny them? The rhetorical question is employed herein to bid the addressee to make affirmations as to Divine Blessings bestowed upon jinn and men.

Thus, according to the tradition narrated in the beginning of the exegesis of the Chapter bids us to reply by saying:

"We do not deny any of your Blessings."

Although the preceding blessed Verses solely make mention of mankind without making the slightest reference to jinn, but the following blessed Verses reflect that the antecedent of the dual pronoun kuma

("both of you")

are jinn and men.

It is worthy of note that by mentioning such rhetorical question, God Almighty makes jinn and men encounter the reality to reflect upon such issues and without recourse to any other injunction ask themselves:

"Could any of these Divine Blessings be denied?"

If the answer is negative, why do they not recognize their Lord? Why do they not make use of showing gratitude toward their Lord as a means of recognizing His Lordship? Why do they not prostrate themselves at His Divine Threshold?

The phrase:

"which of"

(bi-ayya, lit. "to which") indicates that each of these Blessings is a telling token of His Lordship, Graciousness, and Beneficence, let alone all His Blessings.

The least reflection upon the aforementioned twelve Blessings (the Holy Qur'an, creation of man, teaching speech, well measured calculation of time, creation of plants and all kinds of trees, creation of the heaven, predominance of rules, creation of the earth with its characteristics, creation of kinds of fruit, creation of date palm, creation of crops, creation of flowers and sweet scented plants) along with the details, delicacies, and secrets concealed in each of them will suffice to make man show his gratitude toward God Almighty and cause him to search for obtaining knowledge as to the source of all these Blessings.

It is for the same reason that God Almighty asks the rhetorical question following an enumeration of His Blessings. The rhetorical question will be asked thirty one times in the following blessed Verses after enumerating further Blessings.

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 14-16

خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِن صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ
وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِن مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

14. He created man from dry clay like the clay of pottery.

15. And the jinn: He created from smokeless flames of fire.

16. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word salsal denotes "dry clay, argillaceous earth."

Fakhkhar designates

"pottery clay."

Marij indicates

"flame."

Following an enumeration of His Blessings, including making mention of the creation of man in passing, the blessed Verses in question (14-16) make an account of the creation of jinn and man.

It serves as a telling token of His Omnipotence and also provides everyone with lessons, saying:

"He created man from dry clay like clay of pottery."

The word salsal denotes dry, rattling clay. The word fakhkhar is applied to any kind of pottery which rattles upon being touched.

Different Qur'anic Verses and expressions regarding the source of human creation clearly reflect that man used to be earth in the beginning:

("O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, they indeed We have created you from dust, then from semen, then from a clot that We may make it clear to you. And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then that you may reach your age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down water on it, it is stirred and it swells and puts forth every beauteous kind of growth,"[12])

Then it is mingled with water and turns into clay:

("He it is Who created you from clay and then decreed a term and there is with Him another appointed term yet you doubt,"[13]);

("And when your Lord said unto angels: 'I am going to create man from dried rattling clay of foul smelling mud,"[14])

Then it became sticky

("Then ask them: 'Are they stronger as creation or those whom We created?' Indeed, We created them of a sticky clay,"[15]).

Later on it dried up and became rattling pottery clay as mentioned in the blessed Verse in question. How long did these stages take? How long did man stop at each of these stages? What were the factors leading to these transitional states? Our knowledge fails to uncover such secrets as the knowledge thereof rests with God Almighty alone.

What is certain is that such expressions serve as telling tokens of a reality which is significantly linked to educational issues of mankind - the primeval

mass forming human body was the most unworthy and the lowliest of all matters to be found on the earth, but God Almighty created such worthy creature out of such unworthy matter such that man became the noblest of His creatures.

It is also worthy of note that the true value of human being is the Divine Spirit as it is reflected in Qur'anic Verses:

("Therefore, when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him the soul which I created for him, then fall down prostrating yourselves unto him,"[16]).

Thus, man may find his path towards perfection through the recognition of this truth such that he may know which way he is supposed to tread to find his true value in the world of existence.

The blessed Verse 15 treats of the creation of jinn, saying:

"And the jinn: He created from smokeless flames of fire."

The Arabic word marij is cognate with maraj ("mingling, mixture") which herein connotes different flames of fire, since blazing fire appears in different colors, red, yellow, blue, and white. It is not known either how jinn were created from such colorful flames of fire.

Likewise, other characteristics of jinn are known to us by the True Dawn, namely the Glorious Qur'an, Divine Revelation. Our limited knowledge may never allow us to deny nor to ignore such truths, as they are proven through Divine Revelation, though they defy our knowledge. It is worthy of note that most of the creatures known to us were created out of water, earth, wind, and fire.

The source of human creation was water and earth but that of jinn is wind and fire, even if, like ancients, we regard them simple and element or like modern scientists who regard them to be composite, made up from different constituent elements. Such duality in the origins of creation causes many differences between the twain.

The blessed Verse 16 follows the enumeration of the Blessings one of which was the creation of man. It reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 17-18

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

17. The Lord of the two easts and the Lord of the two wests.

18. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 17 treats of another Divine Blessing saying that God Almighty is the Lord of two easts and two wests. It is true that each and every day in a year's time, the sun rises from a point and sets in another, thus the number of easts and wests run to the number of the days in a year, but taking into account the maximum northern and southern axes of the sun, we notice that other easts and wests fall between the twain.

Such order is the origin of the emergence of the four seasons of the year engendering abundance and it actually emphasizes and completes the contents of the foregoing blessed Verses treating of the well measured calculation of the course of the sun and the moon and the existence of the balance in the creation of the heavens.

Generally speaking, the blessed Verse reflects the precise order of creation, motions of the sun and the moon and the Blessings thereby bestowed upon man.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the two easts and the two wests herein connote the rising and setting of the sun and the moon, but the first interpretation is seemingly more appropriate, particularly owing to the fact that a number of Islamic traditions make references to the same and instance of which is a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) as per the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, he says that the easts of the beginning of winter and summer are discrete.

Do you not see that the sun approximates and distances. It is a reference to the rising of the sun in the heaven in summer and the setting of the sun in winter.[17]

The foregoing remarks clarify the reason behind Oaths like:

"Therefore, I swear by the Lord of all the points of sunrise and sunset in the east and the west that certainly We are All-Mighty,"[18]).

The reason is that reference is made to all the easts and wests of the sun during a year, whereas the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the solar ascending and descending arches.

Again, the following Verse thus addresses jinn and men asking them:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 19-21

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَآ يَبْغِيَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

19. He let loose the two salty and sweet seas meeting together.

20. Between them is a barrier so that none of them can transgress.

21. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic verbal form maraja designates:

"let loose"

and the Arabic noun barzakh denotes "a barrier between two things." Resuming the account of Divine Blessings mention is made of seas, but not all seas. The particular quality of certain seas is an astonishing phenomenon serving as a token of Divine Absolute Omnipotence. It also serves as a means of producing certain things used by men.

Thus, the blessed Verses are saying that He juxtaposed two different seas while they meet; however, there is a barrier between the twain such that one may not agitate and prevail over the other.

As it is reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an, the twain seas are the salty and the sweet seas:

"And it is He Who let loose the two seas: one palatable and sweet and the other salty and bitter and He set a barrier and a complete partition between them"[19].

Qur'anic exegetes disagree as to the location of the two sweet and salty seas and the fact that one does not prevail the other and the nature of the barrier separating the twain.

However, mention was already made of the point in the exegesis of Chapter 25 saying that great sweet rivers flowing into seas and oceans usually form a sea of sweet water beside the coast thus repelling the brine and it would be of interest to know that sweet and salty water, owing to the difference in the degrees of thickness, do not intermingle.

A bird's eye view of discrete salty and sweet waters clearly shows the partition between the twain. When the margins of the twain intermingle, fresh sweet water substitutes the mingled waters, such that the partition between the twain is visible at all times. It is interesting that at the time of flow, the level of oceans is raised, such that sweet water is repelled without being intermingled with the brine.

The blessed Verse 21 is again addressed to God's servants inquiring:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 22-23

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

22. Out of both seas come out pearl and coral.

23. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Resuming the account of Divine Blessings, the blessed Verse 22 is saying that pearl and coral come out of the twain seas. It is worthy of note that interesting adornments are made of pearl and coral. They are also used in medical treatments and they constitute commodities and merchandise as well. Many benefits are accrued out of them. Thus, they are being referred to as two Blessings.

Pearls are transparent and precious things fostered in mothers of pearl in the depth of the seas. The larger they are, the more precious they become. They are also used in many medical treatments. Former physicians made different potions out of them for strengthening the heart, the nervous system and warding off different kinds of breathing ailments, fear, kidney and eye complications, bad breath, kidney and bladder stones, and jaundice.[20]

Coral is herein interpreted by some exegetes as small pearl, but such interpretation is far from being true. It is an animate being similar to a twig growing in the depth of seas. It was regarded by scientists for some time to be a kind of plant, but later on it became evident that it belongs to the animal world. It sticks to the bottom of the sea and at times covers a vast area to increase in time and form coral islands.

The best kind of coral is red in color and the redder, the more precious it is. Besides serving as adornment, it is applied in medicine and many benefits have been enumerated for the same. Instances of its medical applications include potions made from it which are sued for strengthening the heart, removal of viper's venom, strengthening of the nervous system, treatment of diarrhea and womb bleeding. It is also said that it is useful for treatment of epilepsy.

The following Verse further emphasizes on Divine Blessings saying:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse:

"He let loose the two salty and sweet seas meeting together,"

according to which:

"'Ali and Fatima (as) are two deep seas, none of the twain transgresses the other out of the twain seas pearl and coral, namely Hasan and Husayn (as) came out."[21]

The same point is also attested in Tafsir al-Manthur[22]. It may be attested in most of Shi'i exegetic works, e.g. Tabarsi's Majma' al-Bayan and also in Tafsir Burhan, Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, Tafsir Safi, and also in some of Sunni exegetic works with slight variations.

However, it is known that the Glorious Qur'an has different layers thereby one single Verse may have several or tens of meanings. The content of the aforesaid tradition derives from Qur'anic layers and is not inconsistent with the literal meaning of the same.

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 24-25

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

24. And His are the ships built, like mountains.

25. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

In the treatment of other Blessings, the Holy Qur'an did not make use of

"His" (lahu),

but regarding ships, Divine Revelation says:

"His are built ships"

intending to say that even the product built by you is also His, since the idea, plan, and the physical strength required for building and making things all spring from Him. Thus, the Holy Qur'an is saying that ships floating in seas with sails resembling mountains are all manifestations of Divine Graciousness. Mujahid is quoted as saying that the Arabic word munsha'at is applied to sailing ships.

The point is that when you see the Signs of Divine Graciousness, Omnipotence, and Greatness, note that Divine Favors include ships made up of pieces of wood upon which you embark and travel in such vast seas. Then, how do you deny your Lord's Bounties and Blessings. Who, other than God Almighty, the Omnipotent, has given you such might and power?

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 26-28

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ

وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْـجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

26. Whatsoever is on the earth is transient.

27. And only the Essence of your Lord full of Majesty and Honor shall remain forever.

28. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The preceding blessed Verses treated of Divine Blessings and the blessed Verse 26 is saying that the time of benefitting from these Blessings is brief. Seize the opportunity since you are all transient. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse designates that all things are transient and trifling in their essence, but what remains is Divine Essence which is not subject to transience.

Now, a question arises here: how the question of transience may be regarded as a Divine Blessing? Such transience may not lead to absolute effacement and annihilation, but it is a window to the world of everlastingness, a tunnel or path leading to the abode of everlastingness. The world with all its bounties is a prison to believers and a way out of this world is a way out of the dark and small prison.

The blessed Verse 27 is saying that only the Honorable and Great Essence of you Lord shall remain. The Arabic word wajh literally denotes "face, countenance" perceived in the first encounter with someone, but employed regarding God Almighty, it connotes His Pure Essence.

The blessed Verse 28 addresses creatures once more asking:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 29-30

يَسْأَلُهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

29. Whosoever is in the heavens and on earth begs Him to meet his demands. Every day He is in some affair.

30. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Invocation may be expressed through verbal or non-verbal language. Man is in need of God Almighty at all times, whether he invokes him to meet his demands or he fails to do likewise.

The point is that God Almighty is in the process of creation at all times and each and every day He plans something anew and his meeting the demands of the needy and those who invoke him to meet their needs is likewise. One day He bestows might upon some people and the other day he ruins them owing to their disobedience and committing sins.

One day He bestows health and youth and the other day He inflicts weakness upon certain people. One day He removes grieves and sorrows from hearts and the another day He causes certain people to feel grief and sorrow.

In short, He creates something anew according to His Wisdom and the best order. Attending to this truth clarifies our constant need for His Pre Essence on the one hand and removes the veils of disappointment, desperation, neglect, and vanity from hearts on the other.

"Every day, He is in some affair."

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) that in one of his sermons he said:

"Praise and eulogy belong to God Almighty Who shall never die, nor shall end the wonders of His creation, since He is in some affair each and every day creating something new from nothing."[23]

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, God Almighty's affair include absolving people of their sins, removing their pains and sorrows, causing certain people to have a more exalted state, and denigrating some others.[24]

It is also worthy of note that the Arabic word yawm employed herein is the opposite of "night," since its semantic range encompasses a long period of time and also hours and seconds, connoting that God Almighty is in some affair at any time. The blessed Verse 30, following an account of the constant Blessings and meeting the demands of all creatures including those of the heavens and the earth asks the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 31-32

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَا الثَّقَلَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

31. We shall attend to your records, O you two classes [jinn and men]!

32. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic verbal form sanafrughu does not here in connote bringing to an end and completing something, but it designates giving special attention and dealing completely with some significant affair. The blessed Verse 31 is saying that attention shall be paid to the records of all Blessings.

All the preceding blessed Verses so far treat of different material and immaterial Blessings, but the blessed Verse 31 is saying that We shall shortly attend to your records. O jinn and men! God Almighty shall precisely attend to the records of all the deeds, words, and intentions of the jinn and men and Rewards and Chastisements proportionate to their words, deeds, and intentions shall be apportioned to them.

It is also worthy of note that according to the author of Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, since jinn and men are superior to other creatures and possess intellect, free choice, and distinction, they are being referred to as thaqalan.

The blessed Verse 32 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Notes

1. Wasa'il, vol. 4, p. 451.
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan.
3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 187.
4. 17:82
5. 25:60
6. 9:128
7. According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse

"He taught him speech,"

he said:

"Bayan is applied to the Greatest Divine Name (ism a'Ûam) through which everything may be comprehended."

(Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question).

8. Farid Wajdi's Encyclopedia, vol. 8, p. 368, s.v. Lugha.
9. Furu' Kafi, vol. 5, p. 150.
10. Kafi, vol. 5, p. 160.
11. 67:15
12. 22:5
13. 6:2
14. 15:28
15. 37:11
16. 15:29
17. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 190.
18. 70:40
19. 25:53
20. Tuhfa Hakim Mu'min; Lughat-nama-yi DihkHuda; etc.
21. Tafsir Qumi, vol. 2, p. 344.
22. vol. 6, p. 42
23. Usul Kafi; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, Tafsir Burhan, Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
24. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Bukhari's Sahih.

Surah al-Rahman, Verses 33 - 55

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 33-34

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَن تَنفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانفُذُوا لَآ تَنفُذُونَ إِلاّ بِسُلْطَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

33. O assembly of jinn and men! If you have power to pass beyond[1] the zones of the heavens and the earth, then pass beyond [them]. But you shall never be able to pass them, except with extraordinary power.

34. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word ma‘shar is cognate with ‘ashr ("ten") and ‘ashira ("relatives"). The word is attested thrice in the Holy Qur’an in all the instances of which jinn precedes men.

The reason lying behind such precedence may be the points that jinn exceed men in terms of quantity, jinn were created before men;

("And We created jinn before [men]"),

and jinn are more prepared to soar in the heavens. Nevertheless, men precede jinn in some other instances. The Arabic word sultan denotes material strength and might leading some to conquer others. It is also applied to academic authority and solid arguments leading to academic and intellectual authority.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question may also allude to the world, astronautics, transcending the atmosphere of the earth, and penetration into the heavens, since the depth of the earth, the farthest points in space, and celestial bodies may be conquered by jinn. The clause in astata‘tum in lieu of law astata‘tum connotes contingence.

The clause illa bi-sulttan-in alludes to the fact that it is possible to penetrate into the heavens and the earth, particularly to the effect that in the Glorious Qur’an, the Arabic word sultan connotes academic authority.

Taking into account, the contextual meanings of the preceding and the following blessed Verses, it may also make a reference to Resurrection and the impossibility of evading Divine Tribunal.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying:

"O jinn and men! If you truly intend to evade Divine Recompense and Chastisement, make an attempt to transcend the boundaries of the heavens and the earth and thereby leave the bounds of His Omnipotence. However, you may never embark upon the same, unless through Divine Might and such Might is not at your disposal. You may never evade the Tribunal of Divine Justice. Wherever you go, you shall be Divine Realm. Wherever you stand, it shall be His Sovereignty.”

Such weak creatures may never transcend the boundaries of Divine Sovereignty.

Likewise, Imam ‘Ali (as) in the exhilarating invocation of Kumayl says:

"No one may evade Your Omnipotence and Sovereignty."

The blessed Verse 34 is again asking the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 35-36

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَآ تَنتَصِرَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

35. There shall be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be able to defend yourselves.

36. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

To further emphasize the inability of jinn and men to evade Divine Justice, the blessed Verse 35 is saying:

"There shall be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be able to defend yourselves."

Then, they may not seek succor from anyone, since angels shall surround you on the one hand and burning flames of fire and dark and suffocating smoke surrounds the Plain of Judgment on the other. There shall remain no way out. The Arabic word shuwad designates great and awe-inspiring flames of fire.

The Arabic word nuhas denotes the smoky and red flames of fire that turn copper in color. It is a source of surprise that Divine Tribunal is surrounded by Divine agents, suffocating smoke, and blazing fire and there shall remain no way but to attend the Tribunal and submit to the Verdict.

The blessed Verse 36 further asks:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 37-38

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاء فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

37. Then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes red like molten oil [you shall not bear the horrible incidents].

38. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Resuming the account of the preceding blessed Verses regarding some of the incidents that shall occur on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verse 37 treat of further depictions of the scenes of Resurrection and the manner of attending to records and Divine Recompense.

Thus the blessed Verse 37 is saying that when the heaven is rent asunder and turns rosy like molten oil, horrible incidents shall occur such that no one may bear them. All the blessed Qur'anic Verses concerning Resurrection clearly reflect that the present order of the world shall be disturbed on that Day and very horrible incidents shall occur throughout the world.

Stars, planets, the earth shall undergo alterations and incidents shall occur which may not be imagined by us. Instances of such incidents include tearing asunder of celestial bodies turning rosy like molten oil. The word warda designates flower and most of flowers are red in color. The word

dihan is employed in the sense of molten oil which is often different in color.

The blessed Verse 38 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 39-40

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَآ يُسْأَلُ عَن ذَنبِهِ إِنسٌ وَلَآ جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

39. Therefore, on that Day no question shall be asked of men or jinn as to their sins.

40. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Following an account of the formative occurrences of Resurrection, the blessed Verse 39 treats of the state of sinners on that Day saying that jinn and men shall not be questioned concerning their sins, since everything shall be evident on the Day of Emergence (yawm al-buruz) and faces reflect everything.

It may be falsely imagined that the blessed Verse in question is inconsistent with those emphasizing the questioning of servants on the Day of Resurrection, e.g.

"But Stop them, indeed they are to be questioned,"[2]

and

"Therefore, by your Lord, We shall certainly question all of them for all they used to do,"[3]***;***

however, the point is that the Day of Resurrection shall be a very long Day and man has to pass different paths and stations and spend some time at each place. According to a number of traditions, such stopping places shall be fifty in number. Questions shall not be asked at some of these places, since faces reveal inward secrets.

At some of these places, mouths shall be sealed and bodily organs bear witness to deeds and words;

("This Day We shall seal up their mouths and their hands shall speak unto Us and their legs shall bear witness to what they used to earn,"[4]***).***

There are still other places where questions shall be precisely asked[5].

Further, men shall come up pleading:

("The Day when everyone shall come up pleading for himself and everyone shall be paid in full for what he did and they shall not be dealt with unfairly,")[6]***.***

In short, each and every scene has its own conditions and each scene shall be more horrible than another.

The blessed Verse 40 asks the rhetorical question once more:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 41-42

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

41. The sinners shall be known by their marks and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet [and shall be cast into Hell].

42. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Those who committed all kinds of sins and disobeyed Divine Command by all their beings from their hair to their feet shall be seized on the Day of Resurrection by their hair and feet to be cast into Hellfire.

The Arabic word sima is employed in the sense of:

"mark."

The Arabic word nawasi is the plural form of nasiya designating:

"forelock."

On that Day, questions shall not be asked since sinners shall be recognized by their marks and faces. Some shall have smiling and brilliant faces which reflect their faith and righteous good deeds and some other shall have dark, ugly, and sullen faces, reflecting their faithlessness and evil deeds.

The blessed Verse further adds that then they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet and they shall be cast into Hell. The scene is quite agonizing and awe-inspiring.

The blessed Verse 42 is a warning against Resurrection and a Favor bestowed upon everyone:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 43-45

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آنٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

43. This is the Hell which the sinners denied.

44. They shall move between Hellfire and the fierce boiling water.

45. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Denial of Paradise, Hell, and Resurrection lead man to join the people of Hell.

The antecedent of the Arabic demonstrative pronoun hadhihi:

("this")

in the blessed Verse 43 is the preceding blessed Verse. It is as if angels or guards of Hell say unto sinners that this is Hell against which Prophets warned you but you denied and belied it out of arrogance, vanity, enmity, and ignorance. The blessed Verse 44 further depicts Hell and its excruciating torments saying that sinners move between Hell and boiling water.

The Arabic word hamim denotes:

"boiling water"

and the Arabic word an employed herein designates the utmost degree of heat. Thus, they burn and thirst and ask for water on the one hand and boiling water will given unto them or boiling water will be splashed upon them on the other and it will be an excruciating chastisement. The blessed Verse 45 is a serious and awakening warning and a Divine Favor:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 46-47

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

46. But for him who fears the standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens.

47. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Fearing standing before God Almighty prevents man from committing sins and will lead to Paradise, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an[7]:

"But as for him who feared standing before his Lord and restrained himself from concupiscent desires, indeed, Paradise shall be his abode."[8]

The blessed Verse 46 is also saying that for he who fears standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens in Paradise. Fearing standing before Lord means that one who knows God Almighty through His Greatness, Glory, and Lordship, such knowledge causes fear in him and there shall be two Gardens in Paradise for him.

It may also mean the fear of Resurrection and its stations and standing before His Threshold for records of deeds and Divine Supervision and Constant Care for all mankind. It is worthy of note that fear is supposed to spring from knowing Divine Lordship.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"He who believes that God sees him and hears whatever he says, such belief restrains him from committing evil deeds. Such person fears standing before God Almighty and restrains himself from concupiscent desires."[9]

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) said unto Imam 'Ali (as):

"Several things lead to deliverance one of which is fear of God inwardly and outwardly."[10]

Fear of standing before God Almighty in this world shall lead to security from all fears in the Hereafter, as it is reflected in other Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"There is no doubt that indeed believers who love Allah no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve,"[11]**.**

In short, fear of God Almighty leads to submission to the Truth and doing righteous good deeds. Thus, there is no other condition besides fear of God Almighty. For one who fears standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens in Paradise.

The blessed Verse 47 repeats the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 48-51

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

48. [Gardens with trees] with spreading and fresh branches [with diverse Blessings].

49. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

50. In those two Gardens shall two springs be flowing.

51. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

These blessed Verses depict the two Gardens in Paradise saying that they have different Blessings and trees with fresh branches. The Arabic word dhawata is dual and designates "having, owing."

The Arabic word afnan is the plural of fanan denoting:

"fresh branch"

and also "kind, type." The word may connote both senses in the blessed Verse 48, namely it may refer to fresh branches of trees in Paradise which are unlike trees in this world which may have old, dead, or fresh branches and it may also make a reference to the diversity of Blessings in Paradise.

Both applications are accurate, though the trees in Paradise might be different in that one single tree might have different branches with different kinds of fruit.

The blessed Verse 49 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Since a verdant garden is supposed to have trees and flowing springs, the blessed Verse 50 is saying that:

"In those two Gardens two springs shall be flowing."

Addressing jinn and men, the blessed Verse 51 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 52-53

فِيهِمَا مِن كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

52. In those two Gardens shall be two kinds of each and every fruit.

53. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

There shall be abundance, diversity, and availability in Paradise. Regarding the fruits of the twain Gardens in Paradise, the blessed Verse 52 is saying that two kinds shall be found there of each and every fruit, a kind

available in this world and another which was not seen in the mundane world.

The rhetorical question is reiterated in the blessed Verse 53:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 54-55

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

54. Reclining upon the couches lined with silk, brocade, and the fruits of the two Gardens will be near at hand.

55. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Three characteristics of the twain Gardens in Paradise were enumerated in the preceding blessed Verses. The blessed Verse 54 treats of the fourth characteristic, saying that people of Paradise recline upon couches lined with brocade. One usually reclines upon something when he happens to be in peace and utmost security.

The depiction reflects perfect serenity of the souls of the people of Paradise. The Arabic plural noun furush denotes carpets and couches. Bata'in designates lining and istabraq is applied to thick brocade.

It would be interest to see that the most precious fabric in this world will be used as the lining of couches in Paradise, connoting that the covers shall be indescribable in terms of delicacy, beauty, and appeal, since lining is not visible and the lowliest kinds of fabric are used for lining in this world.

However, the most precious item in this world shall be the most insignificant in Paradise. Thus, what shall the precious items be in Paradise? Divine Blessings in the Hereafter shall be describable neither in our terms and nor by our imagination.

We may solely have a vague idea about such otherworldly Blessings. The fifth characteristic of the Blessings of these Gardens in Paradise is that the ripe fruits shall be near at hand there. It shall be unlike the ripe fruits for whose picking one has to take troubles.

The Arabic word jana designates "ripe fruit" and the word dan denotes:

"near."

The blessed Verse 55 is again addressed to all jinn and men:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Notes

1. The Arabic verbal form tanfudhu derives from n-f-dh, literally denoting "tearing asunder and pass through something."

2. 37:24
3. 15:92-93
4. 36:65
5. 37:24; 15:92-93
6. 16:111
7. 80:40-41
8. 80:40-41
9. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa’iq, under the blessed Verse in question.
11. 10:62

Surah al-Rahman, Verses 56 - 78

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 56-57

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

56. In both Gardens of Paradise shall be chaste females restraining their glances, desiring none except their husbands with whom no man or jinni has had intercourse.

57. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Five Divine Blessings of the twain Gardens in Paradise were enumerated in the preceding blessed Verses and the blessed Verse 56 treats of the six Blessing - chaste spouses in Paradise. The blessed Verse is saying that there shall be women in those palaces in Paradise who restraining their glances solely look at their husbands and love no one but them and no jinni or man has ever touched them. Thus, they shall be virgin and undefiled in any respect.

It is narrated on the authority of Abudhar Ghaffari that the woman in Paradise shall say unto her husband:

"By the Glory of my Lord! I find nothing better than you in Paradise. Praise be to God Almighty Who married me unto you."[1]

The Arabic word tarf denotes "eyelid" and since eyelids move while glancing, it figuratively connotes "glance." Thus, the expression qasirat al-tarf denotes "[females] restraining [their] glances" connoting that they love their husbands.

It is one of the best merits of a woman to solely think of her husband and only love him. The Arabic verbal form yatmithhunna ("they menstruate") deriving from t-m-th ("menstruate, deflorate") ad hoc connotes that females in Paradise shall be virgin.

The blessed Verse 57, addressed to jinn and men, poses the question anew:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 58-59

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

58. They are like rubies and coral.

59. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 58 further depicts spouses in Paradise saying that they are like rubies in terms of rosiness and purity and like coral in terms of whiteness and beauty. When the colors of rubies and coral, namely red and white, intermingle, a very beauteous color will be produced.

Ruby is a mineral which is usually red in color. Coral is a marine animal like branches and twigs of trees whose colors include white and red, but the white kind is seemingly intended herein.

The blessed Verse 59 again asks the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 60-61

هَلْ جَزَاء الْإِحْسَانِ إِلاّ الْإِحْسَانُ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآء رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

60. Is there any reward for good other than good?

61. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

By the word good (ihsan) mentioned herein, doing righteous good deeds and doing good to others are intended.[2]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The blessed Verse

'Is there any reward for good other than good'

applies to believers and disbelievers, since whoever does good to another, the latter is supposed to return the good done to him."[3]

Imam ‘Ali narrates from the Messenger of Allah (S) that God Almighty said:

"Is the reward of the one to whom I have bestowed Favor is other than Paradise?"[4]

In short the blessed Verse in question is saying that those who have done righteous good deeds in this world shall be granted Divine Rewards.

The blessed Verse 61 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 62-63

وَمِن دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآء رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

62. And besides these two Gardens, there are two other Gardens.

63. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Resuming the discussion the two Gardens in Paradise in store for the God fearing and the enumeration of Divine Blessings, the blessed Verse 62 makes mention of two Gardens in Paradise located on a lower level reserved naturally for those who are on a lower level of belief in and fearing God Almighty.

In other words, there is a hierarchy in terms of belief in God Almighty and doing righteous good deeds. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that two other Gardens are to be found on a level lower than that of the aforementioned Gardens. There are two interpretations for the blessed Verse one of which was already mentioned.

According to the other interpretation, the phrase:

"besides these two"

(min dunihima) connotes that there are two other Gardens for the same believers who may enjoy themselves in those two Gardens as well, since

man seeks diversity by nature and is delighted by the same. Nonetheless, taking into account the contextual meaning and the traditions narrated regarding the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, the former interpretation is seemingly more consistent.

Thus, according to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):[5]

"Do not say that Paradise is one since God Almighty says that besides those two Paradises, there are two others. Do not say either that there is solely one level, since God Almighty says some levels are higher than others and the difference in levels is a matter of degrees."

In this vein, there is a Prophetic tradition according to which

"Two Paradises are from gold for those near to God Almighty and two Paradises for the people of the Right Hand."

The blessed Verse 63 poses the oft-repeated rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 64-65

مُدْهَا مَّتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

64. [The two Gardens appear] dark green [in color owing to the density of trees].

65. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word madhamma deriving from d-h-m is cognate with idhimam denoting raven black color herein connoting a garden seeming black due to the density of its trees. Since such color reflects utmost freshness of plants and trees, the expression designates utmost verdure of the twain Paradises.

According to a number of traditions, water, verdure, and beauty engender happiness and delight.[6]

The blessed Verse 65 further asks:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 66-67

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

66. In the two Gardens shall be two springs gushing forth.

67. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word nadhdhakh denotes:

"gushing forth."

Thus, the blessed Verse 67 is saying that in those two Gardens, two springs shall be gushing forth. It goes without saying that looking at natural landscapes is the best delight. Water is a Blessing and its gushing forth is another Blessing.

The blessed Verse 67 further poses the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 68-69

فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

68. In the two Gardens there shall be fruits and date-palms and pomegranates.

69. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Regarding the fruits of Paradise, the blessed Verse 68 is saying that there is abundance of fruits and those like dates and pomegranates in the two Gardens. The Arabic word fakiha is certainly quite broad in its range of senses encompassing all kinds of fruit, but the significance of dates and pomegranates are mentioned owing to their significance.

Some Qur'anic exegetes falsely maintain that semantically speaking, the Arabic word fakiha excludes dates and pomegranates. Lexicographers disagree with this baseless view. Basically, specific in lieu of general in cases of expressing privileges and merits is quite common. In short, dates and pomegranates have their prime of place among fruits in Paradise, since they are rich in vitamins.[7]

The blessed Verse 69 repeats the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 70-71

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

70. There shall be women of fair face and good character in those Gardens.

71. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 70 further treats of other Divine Blessings, saying that there shall be women fair of face and good of character in these two Paradises. The Arabic word khayr generally connotes spiritual and immaterial good and beauty and the word husn generally designates beauty of looks and appearance.

A tradition narrated regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question enumerates many good characteristics for women in Paradise which may allude to those of women in this world and serve as a model for all women.

Such characteristics include: kindness in speech, cleanliness and purity, restraining from inflicting harms on others, and turning away their glances from those outside the circle of kinship. In short, all the physical and non-physical beauties expected in a desirable spouse may be found in them.

Likewise the blessed Qur'anic Verse expresses such good characteristics in a terse phrase:

"of fair face and good characters"

(khayrat hisan).

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Women in Paradise have fair faces and good characters."[8]

It is also mentioned in narrations that:

"of fair face and good characters"

refers to righteous good women in this world who shall be fairer than wide-eyed huri's in Paradise.[9]

The blessed Verse 71 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 72-73

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

72. Wide-eyed huri's of Paradise guarded in pavilions.

73. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Further depicting the women in Paradise, the blessed Verse 72 is saying that they are huris guarded in pavilions in Paradise. The word hur is the plural of hawra' denoting a woman the pupils whose eyes are raven black and the whiteness is quite transparent. It is also applied to women of fair complexion. The word maqsurat connotes that they only belong to their husbands and they are well guarded from others.

The Arabic word khiyam is the plural of khayma denoting:

"pavilion."

According to Islamic traditions, pavilions in Paradise are unlike those of this world in terms of vastness and beauty. It also worthy of note that according to lexicographers and lexicologists, the Arabic word khayma, besides denoting pavilion and tent, is also applied to wooden or any round dwelling place.

It is also said that the Arabic word designates dwelling places which are made of stones and the like.[10]

The blessed Verse 74 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 74-75

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

74. Whom no man or jinni has touched before people of Paradise.

75. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 74 enumerates another characteristic of huris in Paradise, saying that they have been touched neither by any jinni nor by any man. In other words, they are virgin.

Thus, by:

"women of fair face and good characters"

good and righteous women of this world are intended who have solely intercourse with their husbands.

However,

"untouched"

(lam yatmithhunna) is the attribute of huris in Paradise.

According to other Qur'anic Verses, men and women who are married to each other and are amongst the believers and the people of Paradise shall join each other in Paradise and shall enjoy their lives in the best manner there. According to traditions, owing to their invocations and righteous good deeds, such women are more exalted than huris in Paradise.[11]

The blessed Verse 75 poses the oft-repeated question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 76-77

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

76. Reclining on couches covered by the best and the most beautiful green fabrics.

77. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 76 provides the last depiction of the Blessings in Paradise, saying that the inhabitants of the twain Paradises recline on couches covered by the best and the fairest green fabrics.

The Arabic word rafraf originally denotes spread tree leaves, but it is figuratively applied to beautiful and colorful fabrics which are similar to garden landscapes. The word 'abqari originally denotes any rare or unrivalled person or thing.

Thus, the word is applied to scholars rare amongst people. It is also said that 'Abqar was the name of a city in which silk fabrics were made.12 The original sense is obsolete and the Arabic word 'abqari refers to an ingenious person who is hard to find. The Arabic word hisan is the plural form of hasan denoting "good, beautiful."

In short, all these expressions reflect that all things in Paradise, including fruits, food, palaces, mansions, carpets, and couches are all the best and unrivaled in terms of quality. However, it is worthy of note that such expressions may not fully express such great and unique concepts but they solely reflect shadows of them same.

The blessed Verse 77 poses the oft-repeated rhetorical question for the last time:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

It is saying that immaterial or even material Blessings in this world or Blessings of Paradise have encompassed you, but at times, owing to vanity and neglect, you consign them to oblivion and forget the One Who bestows

all these Blessings and also those which you expect to fall into your share in future. Which of these Blessings do you deny?

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 78

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِى الْـجَلَآلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

78. Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Owner of Majesty and Honor.

All Blessings, beauties, rewards, and recompenses are manifestations of Divine Lordship. Thus, the last blessed Verse of the Chapter in question is saying that the Name of your Lord Who is Majestic and Glorious is Blessed and Intransient. The Arabic word tabarak is cognate with bark denoting "camel breast."

Since camels lie down somewhere without moving and their breasts touch the earth, the word connotes constancy and intransience. As remaining capital engenders many a benefit, useful things are referred to as mubarak, the worthiest being for such designation is the Pure Divine Essence, the Source of all Good and Blessings.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that Great and Glorious is the Name of your Lord Who is the Absolute Owner of Glory, Greatness, Magnanimity, Graciousness, and Bountifulness. The blessed Chapter opened with the Divine Attribute "the Most Gracious" (Rahman) denoting the Vastness of Bounties and Graciousness of the One Lord, following which different kinds of His Bounties and Blessings are enumerated.

The blessed Chapter ends in the Name of the Owner of Glory and Greatness, connoting that what He bestows springs solely from His Greatness and reflects His Glory and Magnanimity.

It is saying that you are supposed to glorify the Origin of Bounties by praising His Attributes of Glory and Greatness.

Some Qur'anic exegetes say that His Name alludes to all His Attributes and His Attributes are in His Pure Essence and the expression:

"Owner of Majesty and Glory"

makes a reference to all His Most Beautiful and Glorious Attributes.

"Owner of Majesty"

alludes to His Negative Attributes and "Owner of Glory" refers to His Positive Attributes.

It would be of interest to read a few traditions in this vein.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that someone invoked God Almighty in his presence, saying:

"O Owner of Majesty and Glory!"

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Now that you invoked God Almighty by this Attribute, your prayer shall be answered. You ask Him to grant you anything you desire."[13]

According to a Prophetic tradition, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) noticed that a man was standing while establishing prayers. Following genuflexion (ruku'), prostration (sujud), salam, and tashahHud, he invoked God Almighty and called Him by His Attributes, Owner of Majesty, Owner of Glory, the Living (Hayy), the Ever Standing (or Self-Existent; Qayyum), the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"This man called Allah by a Great Name that whenever one calls Him by that Attribute, He shall answer his prayers."[14]

A tradition is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question according to which he said:

"We are Divine Majesty and Glory as He cherishes us by making his servants obey us."[15]

It goes without saying that the family of the Prophet (S) solely calls people unto God Almighty and obedience to Him. They are like guides and beacons and life boats in the agitated sea of this mundane life. Thus, they are the instances of Divine Bounties bestowed by the Owner of Majesty and Glory, since God Almighty provides people with Guidance through His friends.

O Lord! You are the Owner of Majesty and Glory. By Your Majesty and Glory! Do not deprive us from Bounties and Blessings of Paradise. O Lord! We deny none of your Blessings, but consider ourselves encompassed by them. Grant us Your Blessings at all times. Amen O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
2. Tafsir Rahnama; Tafsir Nur.
3. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir al-Mizan.
4. Shaykh Tusi's Amali, vol. 1, p. 182.
5. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan.
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 59, p. 44.
7. Fifteen nutritive elements and five vitamins are reportedly found in dates. Furthermore, some parts of date palms are rich in medicinal ingredients. Regarding pomegranates, according to a number of Islamic traditions, they are the best of fruits (sayyid al-fakiha; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 63). Nutrition experts enumerate many qualities for pomegranates, including refining the blood, richness in Vitamin C. Other good qualities have also been mentioned for sweet and sour pomegranates, including: strengthening the stomach, gums, the eyes, treatment of choleric fevers, jaundice, scabies, chronic ulcers, and diarrhea.

   According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):
   "Let your children eat pomegranates as they lead to their faster growth"
   (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 66, p. 164).
   According to another tradition,
   "Eating pomegranates by children makes them speak earlier"
   (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 66, p. 165).
   It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as):
   "Pomegranates were the Messenger of Allah's (S) most favorite fruit.”
   (Usul Kafi, vol .6, p. 352).
8. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. Usul Kafi, vol. 8, p. 156.
10. Lisan al-‘Arab; Majma‘ al-Bahrayn; al-Munjid.
11. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, p. 151; Usul Kafi, vol. 8, p. 156.
12. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir.
13. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 153; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Ibid.

www.alhassanain.org/english

15. Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah al-Waqi‘a, Chapter 56, Verses 1 - 40

(The Event)

Section (juz’): 27

Number of Verses: 96

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter was revealed in Mecca and it has 96 Verses. The title of the Chapter, Waqi‘a, is a designation of Resurrection whose imminence is prognosticated in the opening Verse. The majority of the blessed Verses of the Chapter treat of Resurrection, its qualities and happenings, and division of mankind into peoples of Hell and Paradise on that Day. Thus, recitation of the Chapter is awakening.

Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

Numerous traditions are to be found in Islamic sources concerning the recitation of the Chapter an instance of which is a Prophetic tradition according to which:

"One who recites Surah al-Waqi‘a will be excluded from the neglectful."[1]

The blessed Verses of the Chapter are so shocking and awakening that no room is left for human neglect. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Whoever recites Surah al-Waqi‘a every Friday night, God Almighty will like him and will make him to be loved by all people. He will never suffer hardships, poverty, destitution, and other worldly afflictions. He will be amongst the friends of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as)."[2]

It goes without saying that such Blessings may not fall into the lot of one who merely recites the blessed Verses of the Chapter without attending to their significance, but recitation is supposed to follow intellection and acting upon Divine Injunctions.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ

لَيْسَ لِوَقْعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ

1. When the Great Event [Resurrection] befalls.

2. There can be no denial of its befalling.

As reflected in numerous Qur’anic Verses, the Events of Resurrection are initially accompanied by great and shocking happenings.

The blessed Chapter in question focuses on Resurrection and similar Events are being enumerated in its opening Verses, e.g.

"When the Great Even befalls, There can be no denial of its befalling"

since the Events preceding Resurrection shall be so shocking and awakening that their manifestations shall be reflected in all the constituent elements of the world.

The Arabic word waqi‘a:

("event")

alludes to Resurrection, since it is inevitable. The word is also regarded as one of the designations of Resurrection. Some Qur’anic exegetes maintain that the Arabic word kadhiba is employed in the infinitive sense connoting that befalling of Resurrection shall be so crystal clear that it leaves no room for denial and discussion.

Some Qur’anic exegetes hold that it is used in its literal present participial sense saying that it reflects that befalling that Day is inevitable and there shall be no denial of the same.

It is worthy of note that following the blessed Qur’anic Verses on Divine Graciousness as attested in Chapter 55 (Surah al-Rahman) serve as a reminder of Resurrection which is owing to His Attribute of Graciousness and also designates that the posthumous survival of man constitutes the most exalted Emanation of His Graciousness.

According to some Qur’anic exegetes, the designation of the blessed Chapter alludes to the multiplicity of hardships to be inflicted at the Time. It is a source of encouragement for people to prepare themselves for such hard Day.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 3-4

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًّا

3. That Event lowers and elevates the system of creation and makes it upside down thus lowers the evil and elevates the good.

4. When the earth shall be shaken with a terrible shake.

Resurrection makes alterations in both the world and mankind. Thus, the blessed Verse 3 is saying that Resurrection lowers some people and elevates some others.

The arrogant, the disobedient, and the wrong-doers shall be denigrated whereas believers and righteous good-doers shall be elevated to the zenith of glory. The mighty shall be humiliated and sinners shall be cherished with no reason.

Some people shall fall into the depth of Hell and some others shall abide in the most exalted levels of Paradise. They are all the consequences of Divine Great and Encompassing Revolution.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question from Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (as):

"Resurrection shall be lowering since by God Almighty! Enemies of Allah shall be cast into Hellfire and it shall be elevating, since by God Almighty! The friends of Allah shall be elevated to the higher levels of Paradise."[3]

Honor and humility and exalted and lower ranks shall become crystal clear on that Day as great figures have said that true poverty and affluence

shall be manifest upon presenting the record of deeds before God Almighty.[4]

The blessed Verse 4 further treats of such Events, saying that Resurrection shall befall when the earth shall be shaken with a terrible shake as the occurrence of Resurrection and its terrible earthquakes is indubitable.

The word idha

("when")

is herein employed to connote inevitability.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 5-6

وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا

فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُّنبَثًّا

5. And the mountains shall be powdered to dust.

6. Therefore, they shall become scattering dust particles.

The blessed Verses 5 and 6 are saying that the earthquake shall be so enormous that it shall pulverize mountains into scattering dust particles. The Arabic word bussat derives from b-s-s denoting "grind by water."

The Arabic words haba’ and munbath denote

"dust"

and

"scattered"

respectively. By haba’ minute dust particles are intended which scatter and suspend in the air and are normally invisible unless one looks at them in sunlight penetrating into some dark place.

Now one may understand that the earthquake and the explosion are so enormous that they may pulverize colossal mountains proverbial for solidity into scattered dust particles and the shout heard from such enormous explosion shall be even more horrible. In short, Qur’anic Verses present different depictions as to different stages of the enormous explosion of mountains.

It is needless to say that only God Almighty is All-Aware of the course of such events which may not be describable in our own terms. However, such meaningful allusions all reflect the enormity of such enormous explosion.

It is worthy of note that the earth which is our abode and resting place on which we strive to make our sustenance shall be perturbed and restless on that Day such that an unprecedented earthquake shall severely agitate the earth and.

The same motif is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[5] as well:

"O mankind! Fear Lord and be dutifully to Him! Indeed, the earthquake of the Hour [of Resurrection] shall be a terrible thing."

Thus, we are supposed to obedient and do righteous good deeds such that we may restrain ourselves from committing sins in order to avoid entanglement in torment on such Day.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 7-9

وَكُنتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ

7. And you shall be in three groups on that Day.

8. Therefore, people on the Right Hand are as if they are personifications of happiness.

9. And people on the Left Hand, how unfortunate shall they be because of their vices and unhappiness.

Depiction of the Great Event of Resurrection is followed by a treatment of the conditions of people on that Day.

They are divided into three groups;

("And you shall be in the three groups on that Day").

The Arabic word jawj is not only applied to feminine and masculine but also it connotes similar objects.

Since certain people shall be similar on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verse 8 treats of the first group, namely

the people on the Right Hand (ashab al-maymana)

whom are being referred to as fortunate, since the record of their deeds are given to their right hands.

They symbolize the saved believers doing righteous good deeds. They shall be granted Divine Rewards. The Arabic word maymana is cognate with yumn which denotes happiness. Thus, the first group includes the happy and the fortunate.

The blessed Verse 9 makes mention of

the people on the Left Hand (ashab al-mush'ama)

who are the unfortunate people.

How unfortunate they are that the records of their deeds shall be given to their left hands owing to their misery and unhappiness. They symbolize those who committed sins and did wrong.

The expression:

"people on the Left Hand"

reflects their utmost misery and unhappiness.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 10-14

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ

10. And those foremost in doing righteous good deeds shall be foremost in receiving Rewards.

11. These shall be the nearest Divine Threshold.

12. In the Gardens abounding in Blessings.

13. A multitude of those shall be from the ancients and former nations.

14. And a few of those shall be from later generations.

Taking the lead in matters of faith and doing righteous good deeds is meritorious. Those who take the lead in doing righteous good deeds in this world shall be foremost in receiving Divine Rewards. Depicting the third group, the blessed Verses 10 and 11 are saying that "those foremost shall be nearest to Divine Threshold."

The Arabic word sabiqun is ad hoc applied to those who are not only foremost in matters of faith and belief, but are also foremost in doing righteous good deeds and in matters of human ethics. They serve as people's role models and leaders as a consequence of which they are nearest to Divine Threshold.

Therefore, different Qur'anic exegetes interpret their being foremost owing to their being foremost in obedience to Allah, establishing the five daily prayers, embarking upon jihad and emigration, repentance, and the like. Thus, Qur'anic exegetes address different aspects of such broad sense.

According to Islamic traditions, the Arabic word sabiqun is applied to Habil (Abel), the believer among the family of Pharaoh, Habib Najjar, and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) owing to their being foremost in their own communities, for instance Imam 'Ali (as) was the first man who converted to the Islamic faith.

Such instances do not restrict the semantic application of the word.

It is also worthy of note that Ibn 'Abbas narrates from the Messenger of Allah (S) that he asked the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question and he replied:

"Gabriel said unto me that they are 'Ali (as) and his followers who shall be foremost in being admitted to Paradise and they shall be nearest to Divine Threshold owing to the respect accorded them by God Almighty."[6]

These are actually the manifest and perfect instances of the aforesaid concept encompassing all who have been foremost in all nations and communities.

The blessed Verse 12 tersely depict the exalted state of:

"those nearest to Divine Threshold"

in the Gardens of Paradise abounding in Divine Blessings, saying that different material and immaterial Blessings of Paradise are in store for them. The depiction may also reflect that the Gardens of Paradise constitute the only place where Divine Blessings may be found. They stand in contrast against the gardens in this world which are the means of living and toil for mankind.

In like manner, the state of those nearest to Divine Threshold in this world is different than that of the Hereafter, since their exalted state in this world is accompanied by responsibilities, whereas the Hereafter is their resting place abounding in Blessings.

It goes without saying that "nearest" herein reflects their exalted state rather than spatial nearness, since God Almighty does not exist in space and is nearer to us than ourselves.

The blessed Verse 13 treats of the manner of diving people in former nations and the Muslim community, saying that:

"a multitude of those shall be from the ancients and former nations."

The blessed Verse 14 is saying that:

"and a few of those shall be from later generations"

in which the Arabic word thulla designates "group, multitude" and some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it denotes "piece, part" which ad hoc connotes "enormous part."

According to the blessed Verse, a great multitude of those nearest to Divine Threshold are from former nations and few of them are from the Muslim community.

It is also worthy of note that certain believers may not be amongst those foremost in matters of belief, but they may possess certain qualities and characteristics thereby they may be on a par with "the foremost" in terms of being granted Divine Rewards.

In this vein, traditions have been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) who said:

"We are the foremost of the foremost and we are the last ones."[7]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that addressed to a number of his followers, he said:

"You are the first and the last of those foremost in loving us in this world and the foremost in being admitted to Paradise in the Hereafter."[8]

It is also worthy of note that some Qur'anic exegetes interpret the foremost and the last as the first and the last Muslim communities that are accordingly the nearest to Divine Threshold.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 15-16

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ

مُّتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ

15. On thrones laid side by side adorned with precious stones.

16. Reclining thereon, face to face.

The blessed twain Verses treat of the material and immaterial Blessings granted to those nearest to Divine Throne on the Day of Resurrection. Such Blessings are innumerable, they are depicted in the blessed Verses in question such that man with his limited intellectual capacities be able to comprehend them.

The blessed Verses are saying that thrones shall be prepared for those nearest to Divine Throne, thrones adorned with different jewels like rubies, diamonds, and emeralds. The blessed Verse 16 is saying that the people of Paradise shall recline upon those couches and thrones while they shall be face to face enjoying each other's society without being bored of loneliness.

It might be a reference to numerous thrones laid together thus according further glory to their majestic mansions. The Arabic word surur is the plural form of sarir denoting throne and mawdhuna designates a special fabric adorned with pearls and rubies.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 17-19

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ

لَآ يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَآ يُنزِفُونَ

17. Immortal youths shall go around them in glory and freshness,

18. With cups, jugs, and a glass of flowing springs of Paradise [or pure wine],

19. Wherefrom they shall get neither any aching of the head, nor any intoxication.

The first two blessed Verses in question are saying that the people of Paradise reclining on those magnificent thrones are in a safe place around whom boys and youths of fair face and good character possessing utmost beauty move. They were originally created in Paradise and are immortal.

They serve the people of Paradise with jugs and glasses with or without handle, namely all kinds of vessels. The third blessed Verse is saying that the people of Paradise drink from bowels filled with the wine of Paradise and pure water which may allude to the water of springs flowing in Paradise, or pure wine mingled with camphor and ginger.

Such wine causes neither headache nor intoxication. The Arabic word akwab is applied to jugs without handles and narrow mouths, similar to mundane jugs. The Arabic word abariq is the plural of ibriq denoting a vessel with a handle and a narrow mouth. Ka's designates a glass brimming with wine or other drinks.

Ma'in is applied to drink. The verbal form yusadda'un denotes headache. The verbal form yunzafun derives from n-z-f originally denoting gradual extraction of water from a well but it ad hoc connotes "driving mad."

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 20-21

وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

20. And with fruit that they may choose.

21. And with the flesh of fowls that they desire.

The blessed twain Verses further treat of the material Blessings in store for the people of Paradise who are nearest to Divine Throne, saying youths in Paradise shall make available to them whatever kinds of fruits and the flesh of fowls which they desire. It is worthy of note that the precedence of fruit over flesh is that the former is healthier and consumption of fruit before meal is far better.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 22-24

وَحُورٌ عِينٌ

كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ

جَزَاء بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

22. And fair females with wide, lovely eyes,

23. Like pearls in shells.

24. A Reward for what they used to do.

The first twain blessed Verses are saying that the people of Paradise shall have spouses from amongst huris with fair complexions and wide black eyes who are preserved like pearls in shells. The Arabic word hur is the plural form of hawra' and ahwar, denoting those whose pupils of eyes are raven black and the whiteness of their eyes are quite transparent.

The Arabic word 'ayn, the plural forms of which are 'ayna' and a'yan, denotes "wide-eyed." The emphasis is owing to the fact that most of the beauty of mankind lies in their eyes. In other words, the spouses in Paradise are so beautiful that eyes shall be astonished by looking at them. The Arabic word maknun denotes "concealed" and it herein connotes being preserved in shells, since pearls are more transparent and more beautiful while they are still lying untouched in their shells.

The expression may connote that they are totally preserved from other people's eyes, since they are untouched and unseen by others.

The third blessed Verse is saying that the Divine Blessings shall be bestowed upon them because of their righteous good deeds, such that one may not falsely imagine that such innumerable Divine Blessings of Paradise shall be bestowed upon anyone with no reason, but being accorded such Blessings requires unfaltering belief and constant doing of righteous good deeds.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 25-26

لَآ يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَآ تَأْثِيمًا

إِلاّ قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

25. No vain talk shall they hear therein, nor any sinful speech.

26. But only the saying of peace, peace!

The Arabic word laghw denotes vain talk and ta'thim is applied to ascribing committing of sin to others. There shall be no psychological pain in Paradise. Mundane pleasures usually entail vain talk and committing sins, but it is different in Paradise since it is the abode of peace and serenity.

Vain talk and sin may not penetrate a peaceful and serene community. The people of Paradise shall not hear anything but the sayings of Peace by God Almighty, the angels nearest unto Him, and the salutations and greetings exchanged amongst them.

They shall attend sessions brimming with enthusiasm, friendship, love, and purity.

Paradise is the Abode of Peace, Serenity, and Security:

("For them shall be the Home of Peace with their Lord. And He shall be their Protector and Helper because of what they used to do,")[9].

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 27-29

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ

فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ

وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ

27. And those on the Right Hand, how [fortunate] shall be those on the Right Hand!

28. [They shall be] among thornless lote trees,

29. And among fragrant talh trees beautiful of color and abundant in leaves.

Following depictions of material and immaterial Blessings bestowed upon those nearest to Divine Threshold, the blessed Verses in question treat of the people of the Right Hand. They shall be the happy group whose brilliant record of deeds shall be given to their right hands.

The blessed Verse 27 makes mention of their exalted state saying that the people of the Right Hand are so fortunate. This is the best expression of their state connoting indescribable attributes. The blessed Verse 28 is saying that they shall rest beneath thornless lote trees.

It is actually the best depiction possible for human perception regarding trees in Paradise. It is narrated that a Bedouin asked the Noble Prophet (S) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) replied:

"God Almighty has cut off the thorns of this tree and has made fruits instead of thorns, such that the different fruits are unlike each other."[10]

The third blessed Verse is saying that they rest in the shade green, fragrant trees which are beautiful of color. Some Qur'anic exegetes say that banana trees are being intended which have quite broad, green, and beautiful leaves and sweet and delicious fruit. The Arabic word mandhud denotes "dense."

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 30-33

وَظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ

وَمَاء مَّسْكُوبٍ

وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ

لَآ مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَآ مَمْنُوعَةٍ

30. And in shade long extended,

31. And by waterfalls,

32. And fruit in plenty,

33. Whose supply is not cut off, nor are they out of reach,

The four blessed Verses further depict heavenly Blessings like long extended shades. Some Qur'anic exegetes interpret the long extended shade as a state between the twain risings when shades encompass everywhere.

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S),

"long extended shade"

connotes that the people of Paradise shall never be harmed by sunlight, but they shall rest in extended and pleasant shades at all times.[11]

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that the people of Paradise abide by quite beautiful waterfalls. The Arabic word maskub denotes flowing and since waterfalls create the most beautiful landscapes and its whispers gives delight to the soul and its scenery pleases the eyes, it is regarded as one of the Divine Blessings bestowed upon the people of Paradise.

The blessed Verse 32 is saying that such trees and flowing water are accompanied by different fruits. Thus, the blessed Verse 33 is saying that

fruits of Paradise are different from those of this world in that they are never cut off nor are they out of reach.

Fruits of this world are limited to certain seasons and solely appear on branches for a few weeks or months. Besides heavenly fruits never entail harms for certain people, namely, unlike fruits of this world, they possess general availability.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 34-37

وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ

إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنشَاء

فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا

34. And endeared women.

35. Indeed, We created them of a novel creation.

36. And made all of them virgins.

37. Loving their husbands and of equal age, fluent, and sweet of tongue.

Referring to another Blessing, the blessed Verse 34 is saying that the people of Paradise have cherished women. The Arabic word furush is the plural form of firash originally denoting any kind of bed spread for rest.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) that concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse he said:

"Precious carpets are herein intended which are spread on their couches."

Some Qur’anic exegetes maintain that by furush, women are intended, since woman is termed thus in the Arabic tongue. The adjective marfu‘a connotes their exalted state in terms of beauty and endearment.

The blessed Verses 35-37 enumerate four characteristics for huris in Paradise. Firstly, they are women in Paradise who have been created in Paradise rather than in this world. Secondly, they are virgins.

Thirdly, they love their husbands. Fourthly, they are thirty three years of age. According to some traditions, all the people of Paradise are fair of complexion, pure, and hairless of body and have black eyes and very beautiful hair.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 38-40

لأِصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ

وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ

38. All these are for the people on the Right Hand.

39. A multitude of those [on the Right Hand] shall be from former nations.

40. And a multitude of those [on the Right Hand] shall be from the later generations.

All these Blessings are in store for the people on the Right Hand who are righteous good-doing believers. Since the records of their deeds shall be

given to their right hands and they shall be called the fortunate and the happy, they are designated as the people on the Right Hand.

It is worthy of note that the state of those nearest to Divine Threshold may not be compared to that of the people of the Right Hand, because the former abide within the proximity of God Almighty whereas the latter dwell in the affluence of Blessings.

The Arabic word thulla in the third and the fourth blessed Verses in question originally denotes a piece of wool, though it connotes large number and multitude. Qur'anic exegetes differ as to the contextual meanings of "a multitude from former nations" and "a multitude from the later generations.

The majority of the exegetes, based on the contents of certain traditions, maintain that

"former nations"

and

"later generations"

both refer to those nations living before the Noble Prophet's (S) community. However, some Qur'anic exegetes hold that the former designates pre-Islamic nations and the latter refers to the community of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) whose population is twice the former.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Burhan.
2. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn. Other traditions narrated in this vein are to be found in tradition and exegetic sources; however, they were not cited for the sake of brevity.
3. Saduq's Khisal; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Ghurar al-Hikam.
5. 22:1
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Safi; Khisal; Ikmal al-Din; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question. The tradition is also attested in some Sunni sources including exegetic works.
7. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
8. Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan; see also other exegetic works.
9. 6:127
10. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma‘ani; Durr al-Manthur, under the blessing Verse in question.
11. Rawdha al-Kafi; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 216.

Surah al-Waqi‘a, Verses 41 - 96

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 41-44

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ

فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ

وَظِلٍّ مِّن يَحْمُومٍ

لَآ بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ

41. And those on the Left Hand, how [unfortunate] shall be those on the Left Hand!

42. They are in fierce hot winds and boiling water,

43. And shadow of black smoke,

44. That shadow is neither cool nor pleasant,

Following a treatment of the great Blessings of those nearest to Divine Threshold and the people of the Right Hand, the blessed Verses in question deal with the horrible and excruciating torments in store for the people on the Left Hand in order to make a comparison between the three groups, saying that the people on the Left Hand shall be so unfortunate that the records of their deeds shall be given unto their left hands symbolizing that they are sinners, impure, wrong-doers, and worthy of being cast into Hellfire.

Then, three torments of theirs are being enumerated: They are in fierce hot winds and boiling water; they are in a shadow of stifling and burning smoke; the fierce hot winds on the one hand and the boiling water and the stifling and hot smoke on the other side entangle them in such manner that they may not bear it any longer. Even if they be not chastised with further torments, their suffering suffices to punish them.

The blessed Verse 44 is saying that they shall be in a shadow which shall be neither cool nor pleasant. Shadows preserves man from direct sunlight, winds, and showers at times, but it is manifest they their shadows shall be unpleasant since they are but stifling black smoke which may solely harm.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 45-47

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ

وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَئِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

45. Indeed, before that they indulged in luxury,

46. And were persisting in committing grave sins.

47. And they used to say: "When we die and become dust and bones shall we then indeed be resurrected?

The sources of the sufferings of the people on the Left Hand are expressed tersely in three clauses. Firstly, they were vain and indulged in the pleasures of the flesh in this world. The Arabic word mutraf is applied to one who is vain and rebellious owing to indulgence in mundane pleasures.[1]

It is true that all the people on the Left Hand are not amongst those indulging in affluence and those who disobeyed Divine Commands. The

Holy Qur’an refers to their chiefs. Likewise we notice that corruptions in human societies are due to the vanity and obduracy of those who lead others astray.

Such wrong-doers are the main sources of all the battles and bloodsheds and concupiscent inclinations. Thus, the Holy Qur’an above all points at them. It is worthy of note that Blessings include youth, health, and long life besides material possessions which should be employed toward Divine Satisfaction.

The blessed Verse 46 is saying that they persisted in committing grave sins. The Arabic word hinth originally denotes any kind of sin, but the word is mainly applied to breaking one's promise and turning away from one's word, since they are manifest instances of sins.

Thus, the characteristics of the people on the Left Hand does not solely lie in committing sins, but their persistence in committing grave sins, since the people on the Right Hand may commit sins as well, but they never persist in committing sins and when they see that they have sinned, they immediately repent.

Some Qur’anic exegetes interpret the Arabic phrase hinth ‘adim as polytheism, since it is the gravest sin as it is reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur’an:

"Indeed, Allah forgives not that partners be associated with Him in worship, but He forgives except that anything else to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has verily invented a grave sin."

Some also maintain that:

"grave sin"

is applied to lying which is the gravest sin and the source of committing other grave sins, particularly instances which entail denial of Prophets (as) and Resurrection. However, the general meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that these are all instances of "great sin."

The blessed Verse 47 is saying that their evil deeds included their saying that when they die and turn into bones and dust, they may not be raised from the dead. Thus, denial of Resurrection is the source of many a sin and the same constitutes another characteristic of the people on the Left Hand.

The expression:

"they used to say"

reflects that they persisted in the denial of Resurrection even though they witnessed the scenes of Resurrection in this world. They saw that animate beings like plants withered away and turned into dust, but they were rejuvenated.

They neglected the fact that One Who basically created the world in the beginning shall be Omnipotent to recreate the world of existence, but they persisted in the denial of Resurrection.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 48-50

أَوَ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ

لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

48. "And also our forefathers?"

49. Say: "Indeed, those of old, and those of later times,

50. "All shall certainly be gathered together on an appointed Day.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verses in question say unto him that the former and the later generations of them from amongst their forefathers to their last generation see the light in this world and they shall all get together on an appointed Day when shall meet one another and the records of their deeds shall be investigated.

The Arabic word miqat ("meeting place") is cognate with waqt denoting a certain time appointed for carrying out something and it herein connotes the appointed time for Resurrection, in which all mankind shall meet so that their records of deeds be investigated.

The word miqat is also applied to a certain place appointed for carrying out something, like those of pilgrimage to Mecca where pilgrims put on their pilgrimage garbs (ihram). The blessed Verses in question clearly reflect that all mankind shall be resurrected on the same day and the same is also attested in other Qur'anic Verses.

It goes without saying that the appointed time of Resurrection is only known by God Almighty and others, even His Messengers (as) and archangels nearest unto Him, are unaware of it.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verse 51-53

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ

لَآكِلُونَ مِن شَجَرٍ مِّن زَقُّومٍ

فَمَالِؤُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ

51. "Then moreover, indeed you the erring deniers!

52. "You indeed shall eat of the tree of Zaqqum.

53. "Then you shall fill your bellies therewith.

Proceeding with the enumeration of the chastisements of the people on the Left Hand, the blessed Verses 51-53 address them saying:

"Then, O erring deniers! You shall eat of the tree of Zaqqum filling your bellies by it."

The preceding Verses just treated of the dwelling place of the people on the Left Hand in Hell, but the blessed Verses in question deal with their food. In this respect, they stand in contrast to those nearest unto Divine Threshold and the people on the Right Hand.

It is worthy of note that the phrase

"the erring deniers"

mentioned in the blessed Verse 51 is applied to those who besides erring they are obdurate against Truth and persist in their error. As mentioned above, Zaqqum is a bitter, foul of smell and taste, whose juice is inflammatory. It is at times applied to any disgusting food given to the people of Hell.[2]

The clause:

"Then you shall fill your bellies therewith"

reflects that they shall be so hungry that they devour such disgusting food and fill up their bellies with it.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 54-56

فَشَارِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ
فَشَارِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهِيمِ
هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

54. "And drink boiling water on top of it.
55. "And you shall drink it like thirsty camels!"

56. That shall be their preliminary entertainment on the Day of Resurrection!

The blessed Verses in question are saying that when they eat the disgusting food, they become thirsty. But, what shall their drink be? The blessed Qur’anic Verses reflect that they shall drink boiling water on top of the disgusting food such that they are likened to thirsty camels suffering from dropsy or edema. Camels afflicted with the disease get so thirsty and drink so much water that they perish.

This is the fate of the erring and the deniers on the Day of Resurrection. The Arabic word hamim denotes very hot and boiling water. The Arabic phrase wali hamim is applied to a very intimate friend.

The word hammam ("bathroom") is a cognate of the same. The word him is applied to burning thirst or dropsy with which camels may be afflicted. Some Qur’anic exegetes maintain that the word is applied to sandy deserts absorbing water even in large quantities.

The blessed Verse 56 makes another reference to the food and drink in question saying that they shall be their means of entertainment. Au contraire, the people on the Right Hand rest in very pleasant shades and eat of the best fruits and drink of sweet spring water and pure wine and are absorbed in Divine Love.

Thus, there shall be a great difference between the twain groups. The Arabic word nuzul is applied to the preliminary entertainment provided for the company who are ad hoc disbelievers and further excruciating torments shall be in store for them.

Thus, God Almighty is Just and His Chastisements are Fair. All hardships are the consequences of deeds and that Day shall be the Day of Recompense and Reward.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 57-61

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ
أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تُمْنُونَ
أَأَنتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ
نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ
عَلَى أَن نُّبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

57. We created you then why do you believe not?

58. Have you seen what is emitted into wombs?

59. Is it you who create it in the form of man, or are We the Creator?

60. We have decreed death to you all, and We are not outstripped.

61. To transfigure you and create you in forms that you know not.

Resuming the treatment of deniers of Resurrection, the blessed Verses in question deal with the arguments substantiating Resurrection. Such arguments strengthen the pillars of faith and belief in Resurrection and ensure man of the Divine Promises concerning those nearest unto Divine Threshold, the people on the Right Hand, and the people on the Left Hand.

They open with saying that God Almighty created you. Why do you not believe in recreation? Why are you surprised on Resurrection and physical raising of the dead after having been turned to dust? Did He not create you from earth? Why do you deny it?

The argument is like the one attested elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an[3] saying:

"And he puts forth for Us a parable and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have turned into dust?" Say: "He shall give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the Omniscient of every creation!"

The blessed Verses 58 and 59 read:

"Have you seen what is emitted into wombs? Is it you who create it in the form of man [through different embryonic stages], or are We the Creator [Who each and every day turns the insignificant and worthless semen into a new form and recreate everything]?"

Do you cause all these astonishing developments perplexing all thinkers or is it God Almighty Who causes them? Is the He Who is All-Able to Recreate everything unable to raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection?

Furthermore, taking into account the findings of modern scientists concerning this seemingly insignificant drop, it becomes manifest that it is a combination of male sperm and female ovum. Sperm constitutes microscopic cells and two to five hundred million spermatozoa, as large as the population of a number of countries, upon each ejaculation.[4]

It is a source of surprise that such microscopic cell grows with an astounding speed following its intermingling with ovum and makes human cells. Although all the cells are seemingly alike, but they immediately divide and form the heart, the limbs, the ears and eyes and each of them move to its particular place.

In short, semen undergoes drastic development in the embryonic stage until the infant sees the light. All these developments occur in the light of constant Divine Creatorship. It is worthy of note that the form of human beings is simply made through the ejaculation of semen into womb. Is it not a manifest argument for Resurrection substantiating that Divine Omnipotence shall raise the dead?

The blessed Verse 60 is saying that God Almighty decreed death to all and He is not outstripped by anyone. He shall never be vanquished. Decreeing death does not mean that He cannot bestow everlasting life.

Consequently, the blessed Verse 61 is saying that decreeing death aims at taking away some of you and substituting you with others and finally at

recreating you in another world unknown to you. Thus, the law of death clearly reflects that the world is a passage rather than a permanent abode. It is like a bridge rather than the destination, since had it been the destination, it would have been intransient.

In short, based on these blessed Verses, one may draw three conclusions. Firstly, the creation and emergence of human beings and all the world of existence is dependent upon Divine Omnipotence and he is outstripped by no one. Secondly, human survival and life span are dependent upon Divine Will. Thirdly, God Almighty Who created you out of nothing is All-Able to turn you into those like you.

It may intend to say that God Almighty is All-Able to make you perish and recreate human beings like you. It may also indicate that He is Omnipotent to turn you into beings upon Resurrection of whom you are unaware. In other words, God Almighty is All-Able to make you appear in your own dispositions and characters.

The last justification rests on the blessed Qur'anic Verse:

"And We make you in forms of which you are unaware"

and also many traditions reflecting that mankind shall enter the Plain of Resurrection in the forms of their deeds.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verse 62

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَى فَلَوْلَآ تَذَكَّرُونَ

62. And indeed, you have already known the first form of creation: why then do you not believe in recreation?

The blessed Verse 62 reminds man that he was created in this world and proceeded through the course of all the developments of creation from the time that he was a drop of semen to the last stage of development. He proceeded through all the stages constantly from potentiality into actuality and from deficiency to perfection.

Man comprehends through experiments and his experience that each and every being proceeds on the path toward perfection such that they may attaint to the goal of their creation. Now, why does he not acknowledge that as the noblest of creatures, he is supposed to proceed on the path of perfection to attain a certain goal?

It is evident that man may not attain to his final goal without another creation such that he may attain to his last actuality and the final goal of his existence. Failing to attain to such final goal, his creation as well as that of the world which is created for his perfection will be of no avail and the Absolutely All-Wise Creator may never act unwisely.

Thus, it shall be on Resurrection that each and every being shall attain to its final goal, perfection, actuality. Thus, man shall see the Recompense of his deeds and shall find everlasting life.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 63-67

أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ

أَأَنتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ

لَوْ نَشَاء لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ

إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ

63. Have you ever thought about what you have sown in the ground?

64. Is it you that make it grow, or are We the Grower?

65. Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry pieces and you would be left in perplexity.

66. Such that you say "Indeed, we are verily losers!

67. "Nay, but we are deprived and unfortunate."

The blessed Verses in question as well as the following ones refer to three arguments each of which bear testimony to Divine Omnipotence in human life: creation of seeds, water, and fire as the three pillars of human life.

Seeds of crops constitute the most important elements of nutrition; water is the most important drink; fire is the most important means for the preparation of food and carrying out other life issue.

Thus, the blessed Verse 63 asks:

"What you ever thought about what you sow in the ground?"

The blessed Verse 64 further asks:

"Do you make it grow or We make it grow?"

It would be of interest to notice that the verbal form tahruthun ("you sow seeds") derives from h-r-th "sow seeds and preparing them for growth" but the verbal form tazra‘un ("you cultivate") is from the root z-r-‘ ("to cultivate, to farm"). It is evident that man only sows but God Almighty is He Who makes the seeds grow.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"Do not say that you cultivated, but say that you sowed, since God Almighty is the True Cultivator."[5]

The reason is that man's role in the process of agriculture is like that of his in the process of procreation, namely he solely throws seeds or ejaculates semen and It is God Almighty Who causes the growth of a microscopic cell in favorable conditions. The seed uses the nutritive elements available in it, sprouts, and develops roots; then it uses the nutritive elements in the soil with an astounding speed.

The enormous laboratory of the plant functions and makes the stems, leaves, and clusters and at times one single seed engenders hundreds or even thousands of seeds. Scientists maintain that such laboratory is far more sophisticated and perplexing than those used in a highly developed industrial city with its numerous factories. Now, God Almighty Who created such system through His Omnipotence is also All-Able to raise the dead.

The blessed Verse 65 is saying:

"Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry pieces and you would be left in perplexity."

God Almighty is All-Able to cause venomous winds blow onto seeds such that they nip them in the bud or afflict them with other blights, like locusts. He may even cause lightning destroy them such that a bunch of withered pieces may remain. Then, you will be perplexed and regretful.

Now, were you the true cultivators, such things would have never happened. Therefore, you should know that such Blessings spring from another source.

The Arabic word hutam, deriving from h-t-m, originally denotes "breaking something" but it is often applied to breaking dried up things, like rotten bones or withered stems. The word herein connotes "hay."

Some Qur'anic exegetes also maintain that the word may ad hoc connote rotting of seeds underneath the earth and thus impeding them from growth.[6]

The Arabic verbal form tafakkahun ("you are left in perplexity") is a cognate of fakiha ("fruit") and fukaha ("witticism; jokes [as the fruit of friendly assemblies]") derives from f-k-h which is at times, as in the blessed Verse in question, employed in the sense of "to be perplexed."

The blessed Verses 66 and 67 read:

"You are astounded saying that you are verily losers. But we are totally deprived and unfortunate."

Were you the true cultivators, would you have the same fate? Such instances clearly reflect that He is the One Who makes an insignificant seed grow into a fresh plant which may engender hundreds or even thousands of seeds. Such plants are the food for men and their leaves, stems, and branches are fodder; even their roots and other parts may be used as herbs in curing different ailments.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 68-70

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاء الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ

أَأَنتُمْ أَنزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ

لَوْ نَشَاء جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلاَ تَشْكُرُونَ

68. Have you thought about the water that you drink.

69. Is it you who cause it from the rain clouds to come down, or are We the Causer of it to come down?

70. If We willed, We indeed could make it salt: why then do you not give thanks?

These blessed Verses further treat of Resurrection reflecting Divine Omnipotence over everything including raising of the dead.

The blessed Verse 68 asks:

"Have you thought about the water that you drink?"

The blessed Verse 69 poses the question:

"Is it you who cause it from the rain clouds to come down, or are We the Causer of it to come down?"

The Arabic word muzn denotes white rain cloud. The Arabic word ujaj is applied to salty and bitter water. These Verses make human conscience encounter a series of questions and make them acknowledge Divine Omnipotence. The blessed Verse 68 is asking men that have they ever thought about the water as their means of subsistence.

Who is commanding the sun to shine upon the face of oceans, purify salty and bitter water and make it into pure and sweet water and evaporate it? Who commands vapors to condense into rain? Who commands winds to move clouds and send them over scorched and dead lands?

Who has made higher strata of atmosphere to lose the capacity to absorb the vapor when it is cold as a consequence of which vapors turn into rain drops descending unfalteringly upon lands? If the sun ceases to shine for one year, winds cease to blow, higher strata of atmosphere keep vapors, and the heaven fails to send down rain, you shall die of thirst and your animals, gardens, and farms shall die.

God Almighty who is All-Able to bestow such blessings easily upon you through such means shall be Omnipotent to raise the dead like the dead lands which are rejuvenated through absorption of rain. All these instances reflect Divine Unity and Glory.

How is it that you do not show gratitude for Divine Blessings? Had He willed, he would have allowed aquatic mineral to evaporate into the heaven to form salty and bitter rain clouds raining bitter brine like sea water, but it is through His Divine Omnipotence that he does not allow minerals as well as noxious microbes to evaporate onto the heaven thus polluting rain drops.

Consequently, if the air happens to be free from pollution, rain water is the purest and sweetest water.

It is also worthy of attention that the Noble Prophet (S) when desiring to drink water said:

"Praise be to the Lord Who through His Graciousness, made pure and sweet water available to us without making available bitter and salty water unto us."[7]

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 71-74

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ

أَأَنتُمْ أَنشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِؤُونَ

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكِرَةً وَمَتَاعًا لِّلْمُقْوِينَ

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

71. Have you seen the fire which you kindle?

72. Is it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or are We the Grower?

73. We have made it a Reminder [of Hellfire] and an article of use for the travelers.

74. Then, glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Glorified.

The blessed Verses in question treat of the last argument presented for the acknowledgement of Resurrection. It is the creation of fire which is the most significant means of human life and the most effective means in all industries.

The blessed Verse 71 is asking:

"Have you ever thought about the fire which you kindle? Have you created the trees wherewith you kindle fire or We have created them?"

The Arabic verbal form tawrun

("you kindle")

is cognate with wara and ira' denoting "covering" and connoting the fire potential in the means of making fire which appears through sparkling. It is worthy of note that today we make use of matches, lighters,

and the like to make fire but formerly iron and flint were used for making fire.

Arabs of Hijaz used two trees growing in deserts named murkh and ‘affar for kindling fire such that the former was placed underneath and the latter was struck against it and they sparkled like flint stones.

Some Qur’anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verses in question reflect Divine Omnipotence by saying that it is through His Will that fire is potentially existent in the wood of such trees as He created fire in the "green tree" (shajar akhdhar) despite the fact that trees live by water.

God Almighty Who created fire and water beside each other or even one in the other. Then, why do you say that He cannot raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection?

The blessed Verse 73 further adds:

"We have made it a Reminder [of Hellfire] and an article of use for the travelers."

Emergence of fire from green trees reminds raising of the dead on the Day of Resurrection on the one hand and fire serves as a reminder for Hellfire on the other; as it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"The fire which you kindle
is one part of the seventy parts of Hellfire."[8]

Finally, fire is one of the most significant discoveries in making which God Almighty makes all the contributions and human contributions are quite insignificant. Furthermore, it was through the discovery of fire that man entered another phase of civilization. The Glorious Qur’an tersely alludes to all these truths by such brief clause.

It is also worthy of note that the immaterial benefit of fire, namely reminding man of Hellfire and the Day of Resurrection, precedes the material use of the same, since the former bears further significance and plays the fundamental role in this respect.

The blessed Verse 74 draws a conclusion by saying:

"Then, glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Glorified."

God Almighty, the Creator of all these Blessings each of which serve as a reminder of Resurrection and Divine Unity, Omnipotence, and Greatness, deserves to be praised and glorified of any defect and fault. He is the Lord and the Greatest, the All-Mighty, the Omnipotent. The blessed Verse seemingly addresses the Noble Prophet (S), but it actually addresses all mankind.

It would be of interest to make mention of three meaningful traditions regarding the blessed Verses narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as).

1. According to Tafsir Ruh al-Ma‘ani, it is narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as) that one night when he was establishing his prayer reciting Surah al-Waqi‘a, he came unto the blessed Verses:

"Have you seen what is emitted into wombs? Is it you who create it in the form of man, or are We the Creator?"

he said thrice:

"Yes, You are the Creator of man, O Lord!"

When he came unto the blessed Verse:

"Is it you that make it grow, or are We the Grower?"

he said thrice:

"Yes, You are the Tue Cultivator, O Lord!"

When he came unto the blessed Verse:

"Is it you who cause it from the rain clouds to come down, or are We the Causer of it to come down?"

he said thrice:

"Yes, You are the One Who send down rain from clouds, O Lord!"[9]

The tradition reflects that man is supposed to provide positive replies against the rhetorical questions attested in the Glorious Qur'an, as if God Almighty is speaking unto him. The, he is supposed to rejuvenate its truth in his soul and refrain from reciting Qur'anic Verses without paying attention to their significance.

2. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Never withhold your available extra water, pasture, and water from Allah's servants since God Almighty has placed it at the disposal of travelers and the needy."[10]

3. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that upon the Revelation of the blessed Verse:

"Then, glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Glorified"

he said

"Use it as your formula of genuflexion (ruku') in establishing your prayers,"

namely say:

"Glorified and Praised is my Great Lord" (subhan rabbi al-a'la wa bi-hamdih).

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 75-78

فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ

وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ

فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ

75. Therefore, I swear by the place of the stars and their places of rising and setting.

76. And indeed that is a great oath, if you but know.

77. That is verily an Honorable Qur'an.

78. Which is in the well-preserved Tablet.

The blessed Verses in question treat of the significance of the Glorious Qur'an, since the questions of Prophethood and Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, in terms of doctrinal fundamentals, stand second in significance to the questions of Creation and Resurrection. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an treats of profound discussions in the domains of the principles of Divine Unity and Resurrection thereby it forms the solid bases of the same.

The blessed Verses in this series open with a great oath, saying:

"Therefore, I swear by the place of the stars and their places of rising and setting."

The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that the Arabic particle la is herein employed in the sense of an emphatic particle rather than the negative particle, as it is attested in other blessed Qur'anic Verses regarding oaths taken to the Day of Resurrection, the concupiscent soul, the Lord of easts and wests, and the like.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic phrase mawaqi' al-nujum designates the resting place and motion of stars, since the oath taken to the course of celestial bodies is far more significant than that taken to them per se, as the greatness and vastness of the places of rest for stars are thousands times more than planets.

Today, it is known to us that each of the stars has its own fixed place and their orbits are determined and precisely calculated by the law of gravity and repellence and the velocity of their courses is determined by a specific order.

Although it is not possible to make precise calculations regarding remote planets, but the same is quite possible regarding the celestial bodies of the solar system and the order of their orbits is astoundingly precise.

Paying attention to the fact that according to scientists, there exist approximately one thousand million stars and planets in our galaxy and the fact that there are many galaxies in the world each of which follow a certain course, the significance of this Qur'anic oath is further clarified.

Astronomers maintain (and it is reflected in the Book of Allah and tradition sources) that these celestial bodies, whose number exceeds billions and solely some of which are visible and may be photographed by using astronomical equipment like telescopes, all move in their specific orbits and they may not transgress the gravitation of others and cause collisions.

Such scientific discoveries further clarify the significance of the aforesaid oath.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an proceeds to say that

"and indeed that is a great oath, if you but know."

The Arabic verbal form law ta'lamun ("if you know") clearly reflects that human knowledge at that time failed to fully comprehend the fact in question and it is regarded as one of the scientific miracles of the Holy Qur'an, since at that time some people still considered stars as silver nails driven into the firmament.

Thus, such expression is that milieu which is termed the age of ignorance is quite extraordinary.

Now let us turn to the reason lying behind such great oath. The reason is to be found in the blessed Verse 77:

"That is verily an Honorable Qur'an."

Thus, obdurate polytheists persisting in believing that such blessed Verses were a kind of soothsaying and they sprang from madness, or they had been inspired by devils as they thought that poets at the time were thus inspired, but the Holy Qur'an is saying that the blessed Verses are Divine Revelation reflecting greatness and originality and their contents indicate that they are Revealed by God Almighty.

It is quite evident and one is needless to provide arguments for the same. The Attribute karim employed for the Glorious Qur'an refers to God Almighty, the Most Generous and the Most Benevolent and the same attribute also designates a human virtue.

The Arabic word also reflects the great merits of the Holy Qura'n and its eloquence and rhetorical figures as well as its interesting contents; since it is revealed by the Lord Who is the Origin of perfection and beauty. God Almighty is the Origin of the Revelation as well as the Goal of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 78 treats of the Attributes of the Holy Qur'an, saying:

"Which is in the well-preserved Tablet."

The point is that Divine Omniscience is free from any error or alteration and it is evident that such Book originating from such Sublime Source whose original version is in the well-preserved Tablet is far from any error and alteration.

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 79-82

لَآ يَمَسُّهُ إِلاّ الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

تَنزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنتُم مُّدْهِنُونَ

وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ

79. Which none can touch but the purified.

80. A Revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

81. Do you regard the Word, the Holy Qur'an possessing the aforesaid Attributes insignificant?

82. And instead of thanking Allah for the provisions He gives you, you deny it?

The blessed Verse 79 treats of the third Attribute of the Holy Qur'an, saying:

"Which none can touch but the purified."

Following traditions narrated by the Infallible Imams (as), many Qur'an exegetes maintain that the Holy Qur'an may not be touched by the impure, namely those who have not performed the minor and major ritual ablutions (wudhu, ghusl).

However, some others hold that the blessed Verse refers to the pure angels who know the Holy Qur'an or served as intermediaries of Revelation conveying the Divine Message to the Noble Prophet's (S) heart. It stands in contrast to the polytheists' belief as per which such words were inspired by devils.

Some exegetes also believe that the sublime truths and meanings of the Holy Qur'an may solely be comprehended by the pure, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a Guidance to the God fearing."

In other words, possession of minimum purity required for the spirit of truth seeking is needed for the minimum comprehension of its meanings.

The purer one becomes, the more one may understand the meanings and the contents of the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note, however, that the three exegeses are not inconsistent and the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse may reflect all the three exegeses.

According to the traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt, Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (as) is quoted as saying:

"Do not touch the Holy Qur'an without having performed the minor and major ablution (wudhu, ghusl) as God Almighty says:

'None but the pure touch it.'"[12]

Similar traditions have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) with minor alterations.[13]

Similar traditions are attested in Sunni sources amongst which mention may be made of the tradition recurrently narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"None but the pure may touch the Holy Qur'an."[14]

A tradition is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas concerning spiritual touch:

"The Holy Qur'an is in the Concealed Book [the Preserved Tablet] recorded on pure pages and none but the pure, namely those nearest unto Divine Threshold, may touch it."[15]

The point stands to reason as well since although the Holy Qur'an has been revealed for guiding all mankind and we know that there were many people who heard the Noble Prophet (S) recite Qur'anic Verses and had access to the pure water of truth springing from the fountainhead of Revelation, but they were preoccupied with bias, obduracy, and enmity as a consequence of which they could not benefit from it in the least.

However, those who purified their selves and turned to Divine Revelation through their truth seeking attitude, attained to Guidance. Thus, the more one purifies himself and fear God Almighty, the more they comprehend more profound meanings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, the blessed Verse in question applies to both material and spiritual dimensions.

It goes without saying that the Noble Prophet (S), the Infallible Imams (as) and the Archangels nearest unto Divine Threshold are nearest to God Almighty and further comprehend the Qur'anic truths, since they are the treasures of Divine Secrets and the Trust of Divine Light and they are the interpreters and expounders of the Holy Qur'an and eminent scholars who have attained to the purity and knowledge emanating from the Light of Divine Guardianship according to their capacities stand second to them in the interpretation and exposition of Qur'anic knowledge and learning.

The blessed Verses 80 and 81 treat of the last Attribute of the Holy Qur'an saying that it is revealed by the Lord of the worlds, the Lord and Fosterer of all the inhabitants of the worlds. The Holy Qur'an was revealed to His Noble Prophet's (S) heart for the Guidance of mankind, such that as He is the Owner and Fosterer of the world of existence, all legislation is from Divine Source.

The blessed Verse 81 is asking whether disbelievers underestimate the Holy Qur'an possessing the said Attributes, whereas the tokens of its

Veracity and Truth are crystal clear. Divine Word is supposed to be acknowledged with utmost seriousness and encounter the same as a great reality.

"This word"

(hadha al-hadith) refers to the Holy Qur'an and the Arabic verbal form mudhinun ("you underestimate") derives from dahn denoting "oil," since it is used for softening the body or other things.

The Arabic gerund idhan denotes toleration and gentility and at times the same connotes softness and lack of serious encounter. Since liars and hypocrites are often mild in their disposition, the word may connote denial and belying and both meanings are possible for the blessed Verse in question.

The blessed Verse 82 is saying that disbelievers, instead of showing gratitude for Divine Blessings, particularly the great Blessing of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, they deny it. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse intends to say that their share of the Holy Qur'an is denying it or that they make use of such denial to earn their sustenance.

However, the former exegesis is further consistent with the preceding blessed Verses. It may also mean that the Holy Qur'an is their spiritual sustenance and it may rejuvenate their hearts and by attending to its blessed Verses they may strengthen their hearts and their souls, but owing to their denial and enmity, they deprive themselves of it.[16]

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 83-87

فَلَوْلَآ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلْقُومَ

وَأَنتُمْ حِينَئِذٍ تَنظُرُونَ

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنكُمْ وَلَكِن لَآ تُبْصِرُونَ

فَلَوْلَآ إِن كُنتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ

تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

83. Then why do you not intervene when the soul of a dying person reaches the throat?

84. And you at the moment are looking on,

85. But We are nearer unto him than you, but you see not,

86. Then why do you not, if you are exempt from the reckoning and recompense

87. Bring back the soul if you are truthful?

The last moments of life preoccupies man with serious thoughts, when nothing may be done to bring the person back to normal life conditions, when the people surrounding the dying person desperately look at them and see that they are dying like a burnt out candle bidding farewell to life and no one may do anything to restore their life.

Human weakness is reflected in such moments. Despite modern sophisticated technical and medical equipment, such weakness is evident like former times. To draw a conclusion out of the preceding discussions on

Resurrection and providing replies to liars and deniers, the Holy Qur'an provides a telling depiction of the last moments, saying:

"Then why do you not intervene when the soul of a dying person reaches the throat? And you at the moment are looking on".

The people surrounding the dying person are herein addressed. While looking at the dying person, they see that they cannot do anything, but notice that life and death are dependent upon Divine Will and they know that the same fate is in store for all of them.

The blessed Verse 85 is saying that We are nearest unto him than you and Our angels, prepared to take his life, are also nearest unto him then you, but you fail to see;

("But We are nearer unto him than you, but you see not").

We are fully aware of what is happening in the soul and the perturbed depth of his being as We have decreed that his life be taken at an appointed time, but you see him outwardly unaware of the manner of his departure for the other world and the violent tempests of that time. Thus, the blessed Verse reflects that God Almighty is Nearer unto the dying person.

Nonetheless, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse may reflect that the angels responsible for taking the life of the dying person are here being intended. However, the former exegesis is further consistent with the literal meaning of the blessed Verse. It is worthy of note that God Almighty is Nearest unto us than anyone else, not only at the time of dying, but at all times.

He is even Nearer unto us then ourselves, but we are far from Him owing to our ignorance. Above all, the point in question is quite manifest at the time of dying. It goes without saying that being near to God Almighty or being far away from Him is spiritual rather than spatial or temporal. It is like nearness to or remoteness from the Friends of God Almighty in common usage of the term.

However, nearness unto God Almighty entails a more sublime significance solely intelligible to

"those deeply rooted in knowledge"

(rasikhun fi al-'ilm), namely the Ahl al-Bayt.[17]

The blessed Verses 86 and 87 further emphasize and expound the same truth by saying that if you shall never be recompensed for your deeds, then bring him back if you are truthful. Your failure to carry out the same reflects that you have no authority over life and death, but it is God Almighty Who rewards and chastises you for your deeds and He is the One who causes death and gives life.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic word madinin is the oblique plural form of madin which is cognate with dayn ("recompense").

In short, the blessed Verses in question are addressed to deniers of Divine Origin and Resurrection warning them that you imagine that you may do anything, but when the soul of the dying person is at his throat, you notice that you may not do anything to bring him back to life.

Then We are Nearer to him than you, but you do not comprehend the manner by which We take his soul, whereas you have not authority over warding off death and keeping your beloved alive.

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 88-89

فَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّةُ نَعِيمٍ

88. Then, if he [the dying person] be of those brought near unto Allah,

89. [There is for him] rest and Mercy and a Garden abounding in Blessings.

The blessed Verses 88 and 89 sum up the points discussed in the preceding blessed Verses, thus depicting the differences between human dispositions at the time of death reflecting that some people pass away with utmost serenity, peace of mind, and happiness, whereas some others depart the mundane world with anxiety and horror when they see Hellfire from afar.

The blessed Verses are saying that if the dying person happens to be one of those nearest unto Divine Threshold, he shall leave this world with utmost peace and serenity since they know that they shall abide in Paradise which abounds in Divine Blessings. According to lexicologists, the Arabic word rawh originally designates breathing.

The word rayhan denotes sweet scented plant or something else. However, the word connotes the cause of life and peace and in this context the world is applied to Blessings. Thus, the words rawh and rayhan connote all Blessings and the means of human comfort and peace.

In other words, it may be said that the former alludes to all the things which rescues man from hardships such that he may feel peace and comfort. In contrast to the former, the latter refers to the Blessings granted to man following hardships and vicissitudes. Muslim exegetes present different meanings for the twain terms, but since the number of such interpretations amounts to ten, they are not mentioned for the sake of brevity.

However, they are all applications of the general and comprehensive meanings mentioned under the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.

It is also worthy of note that following making reference to rawh and rayhan, mention is made of janna na‘im ("Paradise abounding in Blessings") which may reflect that rawh and rayhan shall be bestowed upon the believers at the time of death, in the grave, in purgatory, and in Paradise.

Regarding the blessed Verse in question, a tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) according to which if the dying person happens to be one of those nearest unto Divine Threshold, rawh and rayhan shall be bestowed upon him in the grave and Paradise abounding in Blessings, namely in the Hereafter.[18]

Surah al-Waqi‘a - Verses 90-91

وَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

90. And if he [the dying person] be of those on the Right Hand,

91. Then, it shall said unto him: "Peace be unto you from your friends who are from those on the Right Hand."

The twain blessed Verses in discussion is saying that if he happens to be from the second group, those on the Right Hand, namely righteous good doing men and women whose records of deeds shall be given unto their right hands, symbolizing their victory and being admitted unto their everlasting abode, thus they shall be addressed:

"Peace unto you from your friends who are from those on the Right Hand."

Thus, the angels responsible for taking lives, convey the message of peace unto them from their friends.

The same idea is reflected in the blessed Verse 26 of the same Chapter:

"But only the saying of peace, peace!"

The blessed Verse may as well reflect the saying of peace by angels:

"Peace unto you! O you who are from those on the Right Hand!"

In other words, they are saying that you are so honorable as you are one of those on the Right Hand.

In short, the expression of

"peace"

uttered by angels or those on the Right Hand reflects rawh and rayhan and any kind of peace, serenity, and Blessing.

However, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is:

"O you who are from those on the Right Hand! Peace unto you since you are saved from Divine torment."[19]

Surah al-Waqi'a - Verses 92-96

وَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ

فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ

وَتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيمٍ

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

92. But if he be of the erring deniers,

93. Then for him is an entertainment with boiling water in Hell.

94. Then, it shall be his fate to enter Hellfire.

95. Indeed, this is an absolute Truth with certainty.

96. Therefore, glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Great.

In the first three blessed Verses in question, mention is made of the third group, aforementioned as ashab shamal:

("those on the Left Hand"),

saying:

"If he happens to be of the erring deniers, then for him is an entertainment with boiling water and venomous winds. Then it shall be his fate to enter Hellfire."

In other words, they taste Divine torments at the threshold of death. They experience the bitter taste of the chastisements of Resurrection in the graves

and purgatory. Since the blessed Verses treat of the disposition of the dying person, the phrase:

"an entertainment with boiling water"

(nuzulu min hamim) refers to torments in Hell, whereas:

"it shall be his fate to enter Hellfire"

(tasliyatu jahim) alludes to torments on the Day of Resurrection. The same significance is also attested in numerous traditions narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (as).[20]

It is also worthy of note that

"the erring deniers"

(mukadhdhibin al-dhalin) are mentioned together; "the erring" refers to those who have deviated from the Straight Path, whereas "the deniers" alludes to denying Resurrection, Divine Unity, and the Prophethood of the Noble Prophet (S).

Such emphatic expression may also reflect that those in error may include the oppressed, and the defaulters who entertain neither enmity nor obduracy against the Truth and Divine Favors may be bestowed upon them.[21] In contrast, obdurate deniers shall have the aforesaid fate. It is also worthy of note that the Arabic word hamim connotes boiling water or hot and venomous winds and the word tasliya denotes burning and entering fire.

The blessed Verses 95 and 96 are saying:

"Indeed, this is an absolute Truth with certainty. Therefore, glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Great."

Qur'an exegetes maintain that truth of certainty ("haqq al-yaqin") is appositive genitive, connoting that what was said about the three groups, those nearest unto Divine Threshold, those on the Right Hand, and the deniers is absolute truth and one of certainty.

It is also possible that since there are degrees as to certainty, the most sublime of which is truth of certainty, namely the true, perfect and undoubted certainty.

It is also noteworthy that the demonstrative pronoun:

"this"

(hadha) herein makes a reference to the states of the three aforementioned groups. Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun is the entirety of the contents of the blessed Chapter in question or that of the Holy Qur'an. However, the former interpretation sounds more consistent with the meaning of the blessed Verse in question.

Another noteworthy point is that the verbal form fasabbih

("then glorify")

with the ramification (tafri') particle fa' alludes to the truth that what was said above regarding the three groups is absolute justice.

Thus, man is required to glorify his Lord of any injustice. It may also connote that if man intends to avoid the fate of the third group, he is supposed to glorify God Almighty of associating any partners with Him or ascribing injustice to Him which entails denial of Resurrection.

Finally, in their exegesis on the last blessed Verse, many Qur'an exegetes maintain that following the Revelation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Recite it in your genuflexions [in your prayers],"

namely say

"Praise be unto God, the Greatest, and to His Praise."

When the blessed Verse 'Glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Great' he said:

"Recite it in your prostrations [in your prayers] and say: 'Praise be unto my Lord, the Most Sublime.'"[22]

O Lord, place us amongst those nearest to Your Threshold, those on the Right Hand, and Your close friends. Bestow upon us Your Rawh and Rayhan and Your Paradise abounding in Blessings. Amen! O Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Lisan al-'Arab.
2. Raghib'sMufradat; Lisan al-'Arab; Ruh al-Ma'ani.
3. 36:78-79
4. Awalin Kitab-i Danishgah, vol. 1, the discussion on embryology.
5. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani.
6. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir.
7. Tafsir Maraghi; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani.
8. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Qurtubi.
9. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Durr al-Manthur; Man la Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih.
11. 2:2
12. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 1, p. 269).
13. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 1, p. 270; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan, etc.
14. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 162.
15. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 162.
16. Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 546; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 5; Tafsir al-Furqan; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
18. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 228; Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 547; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
19. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
20. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
21. Tafsir Nur, vol. 11, p. 547; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
22. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir; Ruh al-Ma'ani, Qurtubi's Ruh al-Bayan; Durr al-Manthur; Maraghi's Tafsir; Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Minhaj al-Sadiqin; under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah al-Hadid, Chapter 57, Verses 1 - 15

(Iron)

Section (juz' 27)

Number of Verses: 29

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter, revealed in Medina, has twenty-nine Verses. Besides placing the doctrine on a firm basis, the Chapter in question treats of certain injunctions in the domains of society and government.

The opening Verses present twenty Divine Attributes. Then, the Chapter proceeds with the grandeur of the Holy Qur'an, the states of believers and hypocrites on the Day of Resurrection, accounts of former nations, spending in the Cause of Allah for the establishment of social justice, critique of monasticism, and social seclusion.

Imam Sajjad (as) said:

"God Almighty knows that a group well-known for the profundity of their thoughts shall appear in the last days of the world; as a consequence of which, He sent down Surah al-Tawhid (or Ikhlas, Chapter 112) and some of the Verses of Surah al-Hadid such that people may gain a better knowledge of God Almighty and be aware that whoever acknowledges other Divine Attributes shall be perished."[1]

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Interesting merits are mentioned in Islamic traditions concerning the recitation of the Chapter. It is worthy of note, however, that recitation must be accompanied by reflection and practice.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that:

"He who recites Surah al-Hadid shall be regarded among those who believed in Allah and His Messenger (S)."[2]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as):

"He who recites the Chapters opening with praises of God (musabbahat), Hadid (57), Hashr (59), Saff (61), Jum'a (62), and Taghabun (64), shall not die until he meets Imam Mahdi (may God Almighty hasten his arrival), but if he dies before Mahdi's arrival, he shall be the neighbor of Allah's Messenger (S)."[3]

For the sake of brevity, other traditions in this vein have not been mentioned.

Surah al-Hadid - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

1. Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah and He is the Glorious, All-Wise.

2. His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. It is He Who gives life and causes death and He is Able to do all things.

3. He is the First and the Last, the Manifest, and the Unmanifest. And He is the Omniscient.

In Divine world view, all the world of existence glorifies God Almighty, even if we do not perceive it. God Almighty is glorified of any defect and weakness all the world of creation bears witness to it.

It is worthy of note that the Chapter opens with an enumeration of approximately twenty Divine Attributes that increase human knowledge and reflect His Majesty and Beauty.

The more thinkers reflect upon these Attributes, the more they perceive novel truths. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) that being asked about Divine Unity, he replied:

"God Almighty know that certain peoples would come in the last days of the world who reflect profoundly upon issues; as a consequence of which He sent down Chapter 112 (Ikhlas) and Verses one to six of Surah al-Hadid. Whoever seeks beyond that shall perish."[4]

The tradition reflects that these blessed Verses lead seekers to the attainment of utmost possible knowledge.

The first blessed Verse of the Chapter in question opens with glorification of God Almighty;

"Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah and He is the Glorious, All-Wise."

The preceding Chapter came to its end with glorification of God Almighty and this Chapter opens with the same. The three instances of glorification are expressed through the Arabic past verbal form sabbaha (in Chapters 57, 59, 61 and in two instances in Chapters 62 and 64, the present verbal form yusabbih is employed). The different forms of expression may reflect that the creatures of this world have always glorified His Most Sacred Essence.

True glorification designates negation of any defect and deficiency and bearing witness by all the creatures of the world reflects that the Purity of His Most Sacred Essence is free from any defect and deficiency since the world of creation follows such order and wisdom and it abounds in such wonders that they all glorify God Almighty and praise their Lord Whose Omnipotence and Wisdom are boundless.

Thus, the blessed Verse ends with:

"He is the Glorious, All-Wise."

The blessed Verse may also reflect that all the atoms of the world of creation possess some kind of perception such that they praise and glorify God Almighty in their own spheres despite that fact that owing to our limited knowledge, we are unaware of their states.

It is also worthy of note that

"whatsoever"

(ma) in

"Whatsoever is in the heavens"

(sabbaha li-lah ma fi 'l-samawat) covers a broad semantic range including all the creatures of the world inclusive of those having intellect, animate, and inanimate beings.

Following an enumeration of two Divine Attributes, All-Glorious and All-Wise, in the first blessed Verse, the second blessed Verse treats of His Possession and Sovereignty in the world of existence as the pre-requisites of Omnipotence and Wisdom, saying:

"His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. It is He Who gives life and causes death and He is Able to do all things. Divine Possession of the world of existence is true and formative rather than statutory or hypostasized."

In other words, His Omnipotence and Wisdom encompasses everything and all the world of existence is dependent upon His Might, Will, and Command. It is in this vein that the blessed Verse treats of giving life and causing death and Divine Omnipotence.

Thus, so far mention is made of six Divine Attributes in these two blessed Verses. Giving life and causing death is reflected in numerous Qur'anic Verses. These two issues are secrets, namely no one but God Almighty is truly aware of life and death, but we are solely aware of the tokens. It is however a source of surprise life and death are nearest to us but the truth and secrets of the same of the most unraveled issues.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic present verbal forms yuhyi wa yumit

("gives life and causes death")

reflect continuity of life and death at all times and the twain encompass all forms of life and death ranging from the world of angels to other animate beings like animals and plants not only in this mundane life but also the forms of life in purgatory and the Day of Resurrection. Life and death in all forms are dependent upon Divine Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse three deals with five more Attributes saying:

"He is the First and the Last, the Manifest, and the Unmanifest. And He is the Omniscient."

The Divine Attributes

"the First"

and

"the Last"

are delicate expressions reflecting His Pre-Eternality and Everlastingness, since we know that His Being is Infinite and He is the Necessary Being, namely His Existence lies within His Essence rather than without as a consequence of which He has neither origin nor end but He is Pre-Eternal and Everlasting.

God Almighty is the Origin of the world of existence and He shall exist following the annihilation of the world. Thus, the expressions do not reflect the beginning and the end of some specific time span.

The expressions

"the Manifest"

and the

"Unmanifest"

also reflect His existential encompassing of all things. He is more Manifest than anything, since His tokens have encompassed everywhere. At the same time, He is more Unmanifest than anything, since profundity of His Essence is unknown to others.

It is noteworthy that one of the consequences of the aforesaid Attributes is that "He is Omniscient," since the Pre-Eternal and Everlasting Being, Manifest and Unmanifest in the world, is undoubtedly All-Aware of all things.

The traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Pure Imams (as) in this vein reflect interesting points elucidating these meaningful Verses.

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) included in Muslim's Sahih:

"O Lord! You are the First unpreceded by anything and the Last followed by nothing. You are so Manifest and All-Conquering that no one is superior to you. You are so Unmanifest that nothing is imaginable beyond you."[5]

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as):

"There is no beginning for His Pre-Eternality and there is no end to His Everlastingness. He is the First Who has always been. He is Everlasting superseded by no being. He is so Manifest that His Origin is unknown and He is so Unmanifest that His location is unbeknownst."[6]

Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) said in a sermon:

"Praise be to God Almighty Who is Pre-Eternal and Everlasting. His Attributes defy intellect, thought, and wisdom. No one may ever say anything about His Pre-Eternality, Manifestation, and Unmanifestation."[7]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 4

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاء وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

4. He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days [and period of time] and then rose over the Throne. He is All-Aware of what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

Preceded by an enumeration of eleven Divine Attributes of Divine Pure Essence, the blessed Verse 4 treats of five other Attributes, the first of which is Divine Creativity.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six days:

("He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days [and period of time] and then rose over the Throne. He is All-Aware of what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do").

"Creation in six days"

is attested seven times in the Glorious Qur'an the first and the last of which are mentioned in 7:54 and 57:4.

As mentioned above, the word

"day"

(yawm) in the blessed Verses in question do not denote a normal day but it connotes "period of time" be it brief or long.

It may even last millions of years. Such expression is to be found in the Arabic as well as other languages. For instance, it is said that today, it is the turn of such and such group to rule and tomorrow it will be the turn of others. The connotation of "periods" in this context was elaborated upon in details under 7:54.

It is worthy of note that God Almighty could create the whole world in one single moment, but creating in that manner could not reflect Divine Glory, Omnipotence, and Omniscience, but creating the world within a period of billions of years in different periods and forms based on an order and measure may reflect further manifest tokens of His Omniscience and Wisdom.

Furthermore, such creation in time serves as a model for the gradual development of mankind and lack of haste in attaining to different goals. The blessed Verse proceeds with world Sovereignty, saying that following the creation of the world, God Almighty rose over the Throne and took the reign of the Sovereignty of the world.

God Almighty has undoubtedly no body nor the word

"Throne"

mentioned herein denotes the royal throne, but this expression delicately reflects Divine Absolute Sovereignty and His All-Encompassing Omnipotence over the world of existence.

The Arabic word 'arsh denotes something with a roof over it or the roof itself. It is also employed to denote the royal throne, but it also connotes might, as it is said in the Persian tongue: "The feet of his throne collapsed," which connotes that he lost his power.

It is noteworthy that contrary to what some ignorant people imagine that God created the world and abandoned it, He is the Sovereign and the Ruler of the world and the dependence of the systematicity of the world on His Pure Essence is such that if He deceases His emanation and Grace for one single moment, everything will collapse.

Taking such truth into account bestows such perception and insight upon man that he may see, feel, and love God Almighty everywhere and in everything including his own heart.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of another aspect of Divine Omniscience saying that He is All-Aware of what penetrates into the earth and what comes out of it and also what descends from the heaven and what ascends to heaven;

("He is All-Aware of what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do").

Although all these points are encompassed in

"And He is All-Aware of all things"

mentioned in the preceding Verses, but an exposition of such meanings makes man attend further to Divine Omniscience. He is All-Aware of what penetrates into the earth, like rains drops and torrents. He is All-Aware of the seeds of plants disseminated on the earth by wind or insects penetrating into it.

He is All-Aware of the roots of trees penetrating into the depth of the earth in search of nutrients. He is All-Aware of all the mines and treasures which were on the face of the earth but they were interred thereafter.

He is All-Aware of treasures, corpses, insects making their subterranean nests, plants growing from the ground, fountains springing from the heart of rocks and soil, manifesting mines and treasures, humankind growing on it, volcanoes erupting from the heart of the earth, insects growing in their nests, gases emitting from the earth, gravitation waves arising from it, what descends from the heaven, ranging from rain drops to the life giving rays of the sun to the host of angels to the powerful waves of Revelation and Divine Scriptures, from cosmic rays to meteors and shooting stars absorbed by the earth.

He is All-Aware of what ascends to the heaven like angels, human souls, servants' deeds, invocations and devotions, different kinds of birds, vapors, and clouds. What is known and unknown to us are all manifest through His Omniscience.

If we reflect upon the facts that billions of different beings penetrate into the earth and billions of beings descend from the sky or ascend to it within one single moment and no one but God Almighty is aware of their numbers, we may be further acquainted with His Omniscience.

The fourth and the fifth Attributes emphasize that

"He is with you where ever you happen to be and as such, He is All-Aware of what you do. How could He be not with us when we depend on Him and His Grace for all the moments of our existence? He is the Spirit of the world of existence.

He is the Spirit of the world. He is superior to all. He was with us when we were scattered dust, when we were embryos in our mothers' wombs. He has been with us at all times. He will be with us in purgatory. How could He be unaware of us?"

Knowing that He is with us bestows majesty and grandeur to us on the one side and grants security and self confidence on the other. Such knowledge engenders bravery and boldness into man and also endows man with great obligations, since He is Omnipresent and watches over every being.

It is the greatest lesson of education, since it is the main root of fear of God, purity, and honest. The secret of His Majesty and Grandeur is that He is Omnipresent. It is not metaphorical and figurative, but such truth is both pleasant and satisfying on the one hand and entailing obligations and inspiring awe on the other.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"The most sublime degree of faith is that man be aware of Divine Omnipresence."[8]

According to another Prophetic tradition, Moses (as) inquired:

"Where may I find you, O Lord?"

Thus he was addressed:

"Whenever you will, you reach me."[9]

Such Divine Accompaniment of servants is so precise and delicate that any believing thinker may be aware of its profundity within the capacity of his faith and thought.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 5

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ

5. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and to Allah return all things.

Divine Sovereignty encompasses the heavens with such majesty and whatever is included in them like celestial bodies, and the vast earth and what is on it like mountains, oceans, animals of the land and seas and jinn and mankind visible or invisible whose existence depends on Divine Will.

All creatures return to Him Who is the Origin, the Point of Return, and the Agent and the Final Causes. God Almighty is the Creator of the world of existence and the Sovereign of all existential things. The world of existence shall return to Him.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 6

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

6. He merges night into day and merges day into night and He has full knowledge of the secrets and intentions in the hearts.

The procession, wane, and wax of days and nights reflect Divine Sovereignty.

The blessed Verse in question makes mention of two more Divine Attributes, saying:

"He merges night into day and merges day into night."

He decreases a certain amount of time from one and adds it to the other thereby altering the length of day and time, namely the alteration affected by the four seasons of the year entailing all the blessings for mankind.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that;

"He has full knowledge of the secrets and intentions in the hearts."

The Arabic word dhat denotes "having" herein connoting the intentions and beliefs controlling and ruling the hearts.

It is worthy of note that the preceding Verses reflect that God Almighty is All-Aware of our deeds;

("And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do")

and the blessed Verse in question designates that He is fully Aware of our intentions, beliefs, and thoughts;

("He has full knowledge of the secrets and intentions in the hearts").

Bura' ibn 'Azib narrates from the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as):

"I inquired:

'O Commander of the Faithful! I ask you to inform me, for the sake of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), of the best thing which the Noble Prophet (S) bestowed upon you that was revealed to you by God Almighty through Gabriel.'

He replied:

'Whenever you intend to call God Almighty by His Greatest Attribute, recite the first six blessed Verses of Surah al-Hadid and the last four blessed Verses of Surah al-Hashr. Then, raise your hands and say:

'O God! Such are You. I invoke you to pay homage to Muhammad and answer my prayer.'

Then, say what you need. By God Almighty, besides Whom there is no other object of worship, your prayer will be answered, if God wills.'"[10]

The tradition reflects the majesty of the blessed Verses and the significance of their contents. However, it must be borne in mind that the Divine Greatest Attribute is not just the form but it requires assuming Divine Attributes.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 7

آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُم مُّسْتَخْلَفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَأَنفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

7. Believe in Allah and His Messenger and expend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you who believe and expend in Allah's Cause, theirs shall be a great reward.

The blessed Verse addresses believers saying that the injunction as to believe in Allah and His Messenger (S) requires acting upon belief. Thos who claim to be believers should expend in Allah's Cause to substantiate their claims.

Being trustees in:

"He has made you trustees"

indicates that man is Allah's vicegerent on the earth as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"Verily I appointed [man] as the vicegerent."

Thus, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is:

"O believers! You are Allah's vicegerents on the earth and expend in Allah's Cause what you possess which is Allah's Possession vested with you."

It may also reflect that you people are the successors of your predecessors and your possessions used to be theirs. Thus, expend such possessions in Allah's Cause as they will be inherited by your heirs.[12] It is worthy of note that belief is valuable when it is accompanied by bearing assistance to the needy and such expending is valuable when it arises from belief in God Almighty.

Man must be aware of the fact that whatever he possesses is trusted with him and the true possessor is Allah. Although belief and expending in Allah's Cause are obligations but they will be rewarded by God Almighty.

The reward is the key to encouraging man to act;

("And such of you who believe and expend in Allah's Cause, theirs shall be a great reward").

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 8

وَمَا لَكُمْ لاَ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

8. And what is the matter with you that you believe not in Allah! While the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord and He has indeed taken your covenant through intellect, natural innate disposition, and the Prophets, if you truly believe.

Following a reference to having faith and expending in Allah's Cause, the blessed Verse further treats of the same in the form of an argument.

First, disbelievers are reproached for not having believed in the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic call by asking:

"What is the matter with you that you believe not in Allah! While the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord and He has indeed taken your covenant through intellect, natural innate disposition, and the Prophets, if you truly believe."

If you truly believe in Truth, the arguments thereof are crystal clear as such belief is substantiated by intellect, innate natural disposition, and narration. On the one hand, Allah's Messenger (S) called you with clear proofs, sings, and manifest miracles and on the other hand, God Almighty has taken your covenant by reflecting His tokens in the world of creation and your inward being.

Such covenant is formative. Believe in Him. But, you are indifferent toward intellect, the innate natural disposition, and Revelation. You fail to be prepared to believe since you are overwhelmed by ignorance, bias, and blind imitation.

The above reflects that:

"if you truly believe"

indicates that if you are prepared to believe in God Almighty and His Messenger, you must acknowledge the manifest arguments thereof. The point is that disbelievers saw the Noble Prophet (S), listened to his Prophetic call and witnessed his miracles, how could they produce any pretext?

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that he asked his companions:

"Whose belief is more wondrous?"

They replied:

"Angels."

Allah's Messenger (S) said:

"It is not a wonder that they believe, since they are near unto Divine Threshold."

They said:

"The Prophets'."

He asked:

"How may they fail to believe when they received Divine Revelation?"

They said:

"Ours."

He said:

"It is not a wonder if you believe since I am among you."

The companions were silent.

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"The most wondrous belief belongs to those who follow you and merely see some pages before them, but they believe in it, namely the Holy Qur'an."[13]

It is a fact that people who see the light a long time after the Noble Prophet's (S) demise and are solely informed of Prophetic traditions, but they acknowledge the Prophetic call and thereby are accorded great privileges. The term covenant (mithaq) may be a reference to the innate natural disposition toward Divine Unity reflected through intellectual arguments and witnessing the system of creation.

The phrase:

"in your Lord"

(bi-rabbikum) reflects Divine organicism in the world of creation. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that "covenant" herein reflects that taken in the world of pre-existence ('alam al-dharr). God Almighty knows better.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 9

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

9. It is He Who sends down clear and elucidating Verses to His servant that He may bring you out from shadows into light. And indeed, Allah is to you full of kindness, Most Gracious.

Sincere devotion paves the ground for the bestowal of Divine Favors. The Prophets mainly aimed to deliver mankind from the shadows of ignorance, polytheism, and discord and lead them to the path of Divine Light; all paths besides it lead to shadows.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question encourages man to believe in God Who send down the blessed Verses unto His servant, Muhammad (S). Divinely revealed Verses clearly reflect their Divine Origin of Truth and they bear witness to His obedient servant's sincerity such that mankind may perceive Divine Argument and find no truth in pretexts.

God Almighty appointed the Prophets and revealed Scriptures out of His Bounty and Mercy such that mankind may be delivered from the darkness of ignorance and corruption and find the path toward the light of knowledge and appropriate manners and ethical principles. Thus, they may be reminded of their convent taken by their Lord on the pre-eternal day.

It is noteworthy that:

"Allah is to you full of kindness, Most Gracious"

delicately reflects the truth that such Divine emphatic and passionate call to having faith and expending in Allah's Cause manifests Divine Mercy encompassing all in this world and the Hereafter.

Some Qur'an exegetes draw a distinction between Kindness and Graciousness saying that the former and the latter represent His Mercy toward the obedient and the disobedient respectively.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 10

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لاَ يَسْتَوِي مِنكُم مَّنْ أَنفَقَ مِن قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُوْلَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَنفَقُوا مِن بَعْدُ وَقَاتَلُوا وَ ُّ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

10. And what is the matter with you that you expend not in the Cause of Allah [whereas you leave whatever you possess and pass away]? And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquest [of Mecca]. Such are higher in degree than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all Allah has promised the best [to both of them]. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The blessed Verse in question criticizes those who fail to expend in Allah's cause despite the fact that they know that their possessions have been temporarily given to them by God Almighty Who is the True Possessor and whatever has been given to them will be inherited by their successors. God Almighty is the True Possessor of all possessions and whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth, namely they all reflect His Bounties and Graciousness and they shall all return to Him.

After encouraging believers to expend in Allah's Cause, the blessed Verse promises Divine Rewards to such expenders, saying that those who had expended in Allah's Cause before the conquest of Mecca and had waged wars with disbelievers and their concupiscent soul are not on a par with those who did likewise following the conquests and the dissemination of the Islamic faith.

The disparity is manifest since Muslims were few in number in the advent of the Noble Prophet's (S) call and Islam was not that strong against the great number of disbelievers. Thus, expending in Allah's Cause and participation in jihad entailed further significance and Divine Rewards compared to such acts carried out by later believers.

Both of them receive Divine Rewards, though there is a great difference between them in terms of degrees. Since the value of deeds lies in sincere devotion, the blessed Verse in question ends by saying that God Almighty is fully Aware of what you do in terms of quantity and quality as well as intention and sincerity.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 11

مَن ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ

11. Who is he that will lend Allah a goodly loan? Then Allah will increase it manifold to his credit and he will have a good reward.

In order to encourage believers to expend in Allah's Cause, the blessed Verse makes use of another interesting expression saying:

"Who is he that will lend Allah a goodly loan? Then Allah will increase it manifold to his credit and he will have a good reward."

It is a surprising expression since God Almighty Who bestows all Bounties and all the atoms of our being are emanated every single moment from His boundless ocean of Emanation and they are all possessed by Him regards us as the owners of possessions and asks us to give Him a goodly loan such that He will increase it manifold, hundreds or even thousands times more.

Furthermore, such great rewards may not be bestowed by others besides Him. The Arabic word qardh denotes cutting and portioning a part of possession. miqradh denotes scissors and qiradha is applied to apportioned possession. Giving loans to God Almighty shall be increased manifold on the Day of Resurrection.

The word is accompanied by hasan:

("goodly")

connoting that it shall be reimbursed immediately without any trouble.

The blessings arising from such goodly loans include decrease in enmity and increase in love, safeguarding people's prestige and impeding their bankruptcy, betterment of the economic structure of society, impeding the prevalence of usury, checking avarice and miserliness, just distribution of wealth, and growth in the culture of cooperation.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Kadim (as), the blessed Verse in question reflects contributions made to the Lord of the Age [namely, the Twelfth Imam (as)].[14]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 12

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُم بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِم بُشْرَاكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

12. On the Day you shall see the believing men and the believing women: their light running forward before them and by their right hands. [It is said unto them:] Glad tidings for you this Day! Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever! Verily, this is the great success.

The light of faith leads believers to Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying:

"O Muhammad! Remember the Day when you see believing men and women whose light forwards before them and on their right hand side bearing them the glad tidings of being admitted to Paradise. Such light surrounding believers is that of faith, monotheism, and righteous good deeds. It is the spiritual light of belief and certitude in Divine Origin and Resurrection shedding light before them and that of righteous good deeds on their right hand side.

In the same manner that faith serves as man's guide to happiness and spiritual and ethical virtues, it will shed light when the world will be plunged into shadows. Such light, emanated inwardly, is the light of monotheism and certitude possessed by those near unto Divine Threshold. They are the people on the right. The intensity of the light depends upon faith, righteous good deeds, certitude, and fear of God Almighty."

It is also reflected in traditions that the light of the good differs in terms of luminescence, namely, any God fearing believer will shed light before him and on his right depending the degree of his faith.

Thus, believers will be led to Paradise, the abode of Divine Grace, to dwell therein everlastingly. Angels of Mercy shall welcome them bearing them glad tidings of gardens under whose trees and arbors rivers of Divine Infinite Emanation and Bounties flow.

The best tidings for the people of Paradise are that they shall dwell therein forever.

"This is the great success"

reflects Divine Favors in store for the people of Paradise. Such happiness and merit shall be bestowed upon believers.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 13

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِن نُّورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا
وَرَاءكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَّهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِن قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ

13. On the Day when the hypocrites - men and women - will say to the believers: "Glance at us! Let us get something from your light!" It will be said: "Go back to your rear! Then seek light [from the world]!" Then, a wall will be put up between them, with a gate therein. Inside [namely Paradise] it will be mercy and outside it will be torment [Hell]."

Those who failed to be delivered from the shadows of ignorance, polytheism, and discord shall stay in darkness on the Day of Resurrection beseeching believers to allow them to avail themselves of their luminescence.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that on that Day, hypocrites - men and women - shall ask them to glance at them so that they may make use of their light. The Arabic word iqtibas derives from q-b-s denoting take or seek to take fire but it connotes taking other things.

"Glance at us"

(anduruna) is uttered by hypocrites plunged into shadows beseeching believers to take a glance at them such that they may make use of their light to find the path.

The clause may also connote waiting, namely

"wait for us until we may reach you and find the path through your light."

However, it is said unto them:

"God to your rear and seek light. It is no place for gaining light since you should have gained it in the world which you left by doing righteous good deeds. However, it is too late. Then, all of a sudden, a wall will be erected between the two groups in which there is a gate. The twain sides of such colossal wall or gate will be quite different - there is mercy within and torment without.

The Arabic word sur denotes the wall formerly surrounding cities and towns for security on which there were watch towers. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse is saying that there is mercy within and torment

without, namely believers like inhabitants of cities are protected within the walls but hypocrites, like strangers, will stay without.

Believers and hypocrites used to live in the same society, but there was a colossal wall between their beliefs and deeds. It shall be the same on the Day of Resurrection. The gate may be there so that hypocrites may see through it heavenly blessings and yearn or it may be there such that those with less impurities be able to pass through it and join believers.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 14

يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُن مَّعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ
وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّى جَاء أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغَرُورُ

14. [The hypocrites] will call the believers: "Were we not with you?" The believers will reply: "Yes! But you led yourselves into sedition and looked forward for our destruction; you doubted [the true religion] and were deceived by false desires, till the command of Allah came to pass [to cause your perdition]. And the chief deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah."

The Arabic verbal form fa-tantum denotes "you led yourselves into the sedition of discord. Tarabbus denotes awaiting and amani is the plural form of umniya denoting desire. gharur ("deceiving, deceiver") is one of the appellations of Satan.

The blessed Verse is saying that hypocrites will call believers asking whether they had not been living with them in the same society and they were with them there. What did happen that they were severed of a sudden and believers were admitted to Divine Mercy and Spirit and they were abandoned in torment?

Believers reply to them saying that they used to be together everywhere and at all times. They used to be neighbors or even shared the same roof, but they had been quite different in terms of beliefs and deeds. They had kept aloof from them as strangers alien to the principles of truth.

The blessed Verse further adds that they were entangled by gross mistakes, including:

1. They deceived themselves through treading the path of disbelief and caused their own perdition.

2. They always looked forward for the Noble Prophet's (S) demise and the perdition of Muslims and effacement of the basis of the Islamic faith. Besides, they procrastinated all righteous deeds and moves.

3. They always doubted Resurrection and the veracity of the Prophetic call and the Holy Qur’an.

4. They were always preoccupied with endless desires until the time when they died owing to Divine Command. Such vain desires impeded them from true reflection since they had plunged into dreams and imaginations thus living in a world of illusions. Thus, they were overwhelmed by gratification of concupiscent desires and attainment to mundane goals.

5. Furthermore, the deceiving Satan had solidified its basis in their hearts and thereby deceived you by temptations. At times, Satan made you believe

that the world was everlasting and the resurrection was not to be actualized. At times, Satan questioned the existence of God Almighty. These five factors caused the severance between hypocrites and believers.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 15

فَالْيَوْمَ لاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلاَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلاَكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

15. Therefore, this Day no ransom shall be taken from you [hypocrites], nor of those who disbelieved. Our abode is the Fire. That is your friend [you deserve such dire fate].

The blessed Verse draws a conclusion saying that neither hypocrites nor disbelievers may not be ransomed on the Day of Resurrection and thereby be safeguarded from Divine Chastisement. Thus, disbelievers and hypocrites share the same dire fate since they are entangled by their sins and vices and they may not find any deliverance.

The blessed Verse further adds that their abode shall be fire and their friend and guardian shall be Hell. What an unfortunate abode it is. In this world, people usually resort to paying ransoms or seeking assistance from their friends and mediators to deliver themselves from chastisement. However, there shall be neither friends nor mediators to assist hypocrites and disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection since all attachments and ties shall be severed then.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an elucidates that the only means to deliverance on that Day is to have faith and do righteous good deeds. Intermediation shall be limited to those who have faith and do righteous good deeds rather than those alien thereto who have severed all their ties from God Almighty and His friends.

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter.
3. Majma' al-Bayan.
4. Usul al-Kafi, Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 231.
5. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 9, p. 6406.
6. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 163.
7. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 236.
8. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 171.
9. Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 351.
10. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 171; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.
11. 2:30
12. Tafsir al-Mizan.
13. Bukhari's Sahih; Tafsir Maraghi, Tafsir fi Thalal al-Qur'an; Tafsir Nimuna; and other exegetic works.
14. Tafsir Safi, p. 522, under the blessed Verse in question.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Surah al-Hadid, Verses 16 - 29

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 16

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَن تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلاَ يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

16. Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe to be softened and humbled by Allah's Reminder, such that they be not amongst those upon whom the Divine Book was revealed and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened and many of them were disobedient to Allah?

Different occasions of Revelation have been mentioned for the blessed Verse in question including the following. Once the Noble Prophet's (S) adherents lived a hard life in famine in Mecca but after their migration they attained to abundance and bounties.

Thus, the hearts of some of them were hardened whereas their faith, certitude, and devotion were supposed to be increased owing to their acquaintance with the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed to serve as a warning to them.[1] It is worthy of note that all the awakening and severe warnings reflected in the preceding blessed Verses and the account of the hypocrites' and disbelievers' dire fate on the Day of Resurrection lead to the conclusion in the blessed Verse in question by saying that the hearts of believers should be humbled against remembrance of God Almighty and Divine Revelation and they should not be like those, including Jews and Christians, upon whom Divine Books were sent down, but they kept aloof from the Prophets. They lived long but failed to remember God Almighty.

Their hearts were hardened and many of them were sinners and disobedient to Divine Commands.

The Arabic verbal form takhsha'a derives from kh-sh-' denoting "observe manners against a notable person or an important truth."

It is crystal clear that when man remembers God Almighty in the bottom of his heart, listens to the blessed Verses revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S), and befittingly reflects upon the same, his heart must be softened and humbled. However, some believers are harshly criticized in the blessed Verse in question by asking why their hearts are not humbled by such things but they, like many former nations, have plunged into neglect and negligence.

Such neglect leads to the hardening of heart which in turn ends in disobedience to God Almighty. Would it be consistent with their claim to having faith to simply ignore such significant issues, be submitted to comfortable life, and being immersed in the pleasures of the flesh?

"The term was prolonged for them"

may reflect the temporal distance between them and their Prophets, long life and endless desires, Divine torment not being sent down for a long time, or all of them, since each of which may lead to neglect and hardening of heart that in turn leads to disobedience to Divine Command.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as):

"Do not hasten as to anything before its term arrives unless you will regret your haste. The distance between you and Truth should not be long as it will harden your hearts."[2]

It is narrated from Jesus (as) that it is incumbent upon believers not to speak for long without remembrance of God Almighty otherwise it leads to hardening of heart and hardened hearts are remote from God Almighty.[3]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 17

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

17. Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death! Indeed, We have made clear the Signs to you, if you but reflect [upon them].

Since giving life to dead hearts through remembrance of God Almighty and attainment to spiritual life in the light of humbleness and obedience to the Holy Qur'an to a great extent resembles the life giving rain drops rejuvenating dead lands, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death."

The blessed Verse is saying that We elucidated Our Sings in the world of creation as well as Our Verses such that you may reflect upon them. The blessed Verse actually makes a reference to rain giving life to dead lands and to giving of life to dead hearts through remembrance of God Almighty and the Holy Qur'an revealed to the pure heart of Muhammad (S). Both of them deserve reflection.

Thus, reference has been made to the twain in Islamic traditions. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the blessed Verse in question refers to giving life to the earth through propagation of justice following the effacement of injustice.[4]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question that God Almighty shall give life to earth following its death by Imam Mahdi (may God Almighty hasten his arrival) and the death of the earth reflects the disbelief of its inhabitants and disbelievers are dead.[5]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as):

"God Almighty gives life to dead hearts through the light of wisdom, the same manner that He gives life to the earth by sending down blissful rains on it."[6]

It goes without saying that these exegeses actually reflect the clear meanings of the blessed Verse and by no means restrict the contextual meaning of it.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 18

إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَّدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ

18. Indeed, those men and women who have given Allah goodly loans, their rewards shall be increased manifold, and theirs shall be an honorable good reward.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that men and women believing in God Almighty, acknowledging the Prophetic call, and expending their possessions for Allah's Satisfaction are favored by Him and great rewards shall fall into their shares.

Expending in Allah's Cause is so significant that although God Almighty is the Possessor of all things, He is so Gracious to His servants that He encourages them to expending in His Cause by saying that it is like giving Him goodly loans reflecting that in the same manner that loans will be reimbursed, expending in Allah's Cause will be returned manifold.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 19

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيقُونَ وَالشُّهَدَاء عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

19. And Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, they are the sincere believers and the witnesses with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, they shall be the dwellers of the Fire.

The blessed Verse makes mention of sincere believers as those who believed in God Almighty and Prophetic calls.

The Arabic intensified form siddiq

("sincere")

denotes one acting upon sincerity and truth in all his deeds, words, and beliefs and his outward reflects his inward and his inward is absorbed in the sea of spiritual and intuitive knowledge and sincerity.

Such people live according to truth and they will be rewarded for their righteous deeds and their light is the reward of their sincere belief. Au contraire, those who denied Divine Signs and Verses and belied the Prophets shall be friends and people of Hell.

According to Tabarsi, the eminent Shi‘i scholar, Harith ibn Mughayra narrates from Imam Baqir (as) who in turned narrated traditions from the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"Whoever of you knows the Imam of his time and awaits his authority resembles one who awaiting the rise of the riser (may Allah hastens his arrival) from the Noble Prophet's (S) descendants wages war in Allah's cause or he is likened to one martyred in the Noble Prophet's pavilion."

Then, the Imam (as) said that there is a Qur’anic Verse in this regard and upon inquiring as to which Verse, he recited:

"And Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, they are the sincere believers and the witnesses with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, they shall be the dwellers of the Fire."[7]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 20

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

20. Know that the worldly life is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. [It is] the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the farmer; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it

becomes straw. But in the Hereafter [there is] a severe torment and forgiveness from Allah and good pleasure. And the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment.

Since love for the mundane world is the origin of all sins and the springhead of all errors, the blessed Verse presents a telling depiction of the worldly life, its different stages, and the motives dominating each stage by saying:

"Know that the worldly life is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children."

The five cycles of human life consist of neglect, amusement, luxury, boasting, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. Childhood is spent in neglect, ignorance, and amusement. Adolescence is spent in playfulness and escaping from serious issues to amusement.

Youth is spent in lust, love, and luxury. Then, man reaches the fourth stage when man is inclined toward prestige and boastfulness. Finally, the fifth stage is when man is preoccupied with gaining more possessions and having more children.

The early stages are nearly determined by advancement in years, but later stages vary in different people and stages like gaining further possessions may occupy man to the end of his life. Some maintain, however, that each of the said stages occupies eight years of life totaling to forty years when man's character is fixed.

The blessed Verse proceeds with a similitude as to the beginning and the end of worldly life, saying:

"[It is] the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the farmer; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes straw."

The Arabic word kuffar herein denotes farmers since the word kufr originally denotes covering and since farmers sows the seeds by covering it by soil. Nonetheless, some exegetes maintain that the word is employed herein in the sense of disbelievers, since worldly possessions may solely deceive disbelievers and inspire wonder in them.

The Arabic word hutam denotes shattering and breaking into pieces and it is also applied to the straw scattered by wind. The word ghayth denotes good rain. The verbal form yahiju is employed in two senses: withering of plants and excitement.

It is worthy of note that human stages lasting seventy years and beyond are reflected in plants within a period of several months. Man may sit by the farmland and witness in brief the transience of life.

The blessed Verse proceeds with the fruits of life saying that consequent to one's deeds, either severe torment or Divine Satisfaction may fall into man's share. Finally, the blessed Verse ends by saying that worldly life is nothing but deception. The Arabic word ghurur denotes deception and mata‘ signifies the means of using something.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that worldly life is the means of deception, namely it serves as the means of deceiving oneself and others. It is worthy of note that the means of deception applies to those who regard

mundane life as their final goal. They attach themselves to and rely on it. they set their final goal on gaining further possessions.

However, if the bounties of the mundane world serve as the means of attaining to exalted human values and everlasting happiness, it will be like the farm of the Hereafter and a bridge which may be employed to attain to sublime goals. Attending to the world and its bounties as a passageway and temporary place of residence may lead man to two different orientations.

It may either lead to quarrels, corruption, injustice, tyranny, disobedience, and neglect or it may lead to awareness, awakening, sacrifice, brotherhood, and forgiving. In other words, what leads disbelievers to deception and chastisement may lead believers to growth, development, and Divine Forgiveness and Satisfaction.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 21

سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاء وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

21. Race with one another in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness and Paradise whose width is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

The preceding blessed Verse reflects that human deeds in this world will entail either severe torment or Divine Forgiveness and Satisfaction. The blessed Verse in question emphasizes racing in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness.

Thus, the blessed Verse says:

"Race with one another in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness and Paradise whose width is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers."

Divine Forgiveness is actually the key to Paradise encompassing the heaven and the earth which is now prepared for believers.

It is noteworthy that making a reference to Divine Forgiveness prior to receiving glad tidings of being admitted to Paradise delicately reflects the truth that so long as man is not absolved of sins, he will not deserve to being admitted to Paradise and be near unto Divine Threshold.

It is also worthy of note that racing toward Divine Forgiveness may be carried out through its means, including repentance and compensation for missed obligations and basically obedience to God Almighty and refraining from committing sins.

The blessed Verse ends by saying:

"That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty."

Undoubtedly, such vast Paradise with its great bounties may not be attained by such insignificant deeds, but it is Divine Grace, Mercy, and Favor that such great reward is bestowed against such insignificant deeds. Man may not expect otherwise, since rewards are always consistent to the generosity of the one bestowing rewards.

Thus, the expression clearly reflects that Divine Rewards are not bestowed on the basis of insignificant deeds, but they are Divine Bounties and Favors.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 22

مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن نَّبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

22. No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Tablet before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah.

The world of existence is well-measured and prior to becoming existent, all phenomena have been recorded.

Thus, to lay further emphasis on refraining from mundane attachments and not being affected by worldly possession and loss, the blessed Verse says:

"No calamity befalls on the earth or in you but it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah."

Calamities like earthquakes, floods, tempests, and different blights and also human afflictions like death, ailments, and undesirable occurrences have all been pre-ordained and recorded in the Preserved Tablet aiming to test mankind in encountering vicissitudes.

However, it is worthy of note that the calamities mentioned in the blessed Verse in question are solely inevitable ones beyond human control.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[8]:

"And whatever of misfortune befalls you is the consequence of what your hands have earned. And He is Oft-Forgiving."

The twain blessed Verses interpret each other reflecting that afflictions befalling man fall into two categories, the first of which include numerous chastisements and atonements of sins, e.g. injustice, treason, deviation, and neglect, constituting the consequence of our deeds.

The second category includes the inevitable afflictions beyond human control affecting individuals and societies aiming at trials. These two categories are discrete. Thus, many Prophets, friends of God Almighty, and pious believers were afflicted by such calamities for their trial or promotion of exalted states such that those who are nearer unto Divine Threshold suffer further calamities.

There is a precise philosophy for such afflictions which were mentioned above in discussions on theology, Divine Justice, and afflictions.

In this vein, it is narrated that upon Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin's (as) arrival in shackles and fetters at Yazid's meeting, the latter turned to the Imam (as) and recited Verse 30 from Surah al-Shura[9]:

"And Whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He is Oft-Forgiving,"

sarcastically connoting that the afflictions of their family are the consequences of their deeds. However, the Imam (as) refuted his claim by saying that the blessed Verse had not been revealed about them, but another

blessed Verse had been sent down as per which God Almighty had preordained such afflictions for them for the upkeep of the Islamic faith.[10]

It is worthy of note that afflictions befalling the unjust aim at warning them, but those befalling believers are the means of trial and growth and those befalling Allah's friends aim at promotion of their exalted states.[11]

According to another tradition:

"Afflictions of the unjust are for warning them, those befalling believers are for trial, and those befalling Allah's friends are for promotion of their states."

It is noteworthy that:

"And verily it is easy for Allah"

reflects that recording so many afflictions in the Preserved Tablet is facile for Allah. The Preserved Tablet indicates Divine Omniscience reflected in the world of creation and the system of causality governing it.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 23

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلاَ تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

23. In order that you may not grieve at the things that you fail to achieve, nor rejoice at what has been given to you. And Allah likes not prideful boasters.

Now let us turn to the philosophy of preordination of such afflictions in the Preserved Tablet as reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"[You are afflicted with such calamities such that] you may not regret the things that you fail to achieve, nor rejoice at what has been granted to you."

The twain brief clauses actually present a solution to one of the sophisticated issues of the philosophy of creation. Man faces unpleasant entanglements and problems in the world of existence and many a time raises the question as per which what are the reasons lying behind such excruciating calamities when God Almighty is Most Gracious, Most Merciful, and Most Compassionate?

Such calamities aims at warning man that he should not be attached to mundane possessions and glories, since the world is but a passageway or a bridge by which you are not supposed to be allured.

You are not supposed to regard it to be everlasting, since such attachment is the bitterest foe to your happiness as it makes you forget God Almighty and impedes your path toward development. Such afflictions serve as sirens alerting the neglectful and whips struck upon dormant souls. They symbolize intransience of the world.

The point is that worldly possessions allure men and make them forget God Almighty. They wake up when the caravan has departed for long and they are abandoned in the desert.

Thus, God Almighty preordained afflictions and vicissitudes such that human soul may ascend to such elevated states that he may not be affected by pleasant and unpleasant occurrences.

After the occurrences in Karbala', Zaynab (as) said:

"I did not notice but pleasant occurrences preordained by God Almighty."[12]

It is narrated that in his last moments in the battlefield, Imam Husayn (as) said:

"O Lord! I am satisfied with Your Satisfaction and I am patient in Your afflictions."[13]

Imam ‘Ali (as) likened his eagerness to martyrdom to that of the infant to its mother's breast.[14] If man becomes aware the reasons lying behind afflictions, he will not be envious, avaricious, wrathful, and hateful, since he knows that all afflictions have been wisely preordained.

If we know that Divine Bounties entail obligations, we will not rejoice at them and if we know that we have to compensate for them on the Day of Resurrection, we will not regret at losing them. The blessed Verse ends by saying that God Almighty does not favor the vain. The Arabic words mukhtal and fakhur denote arrogant and boastful respectively.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 24

الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

24. Those who are misers and enjoin people to miserliness. And whosoever turns away from expending in His Cause and giving loans, then Allah is Rich, Worthy of all praise.

The blessed Verse in question elaborates on the aforesaid points and depicts the vain arrogant, saying:

"Those who are misers and enjoin people to miserliness."

Severe attachment to mundane possessions requires arrogance and vanity which in turn require miserliness and enjoining others to the same. Such people are miserly since they regard mundane possessions as the means of arrogance and vanity.

They do not intend to lose them. But enjoining others to miserliness is owing to the fact that if others happen to be generous, they will be disgraced. Secondly, since they favor miserliness, they enjoin something by which they are enamored. God Almighty emphatically enjoins others to expend in His Cause and refrain from miserliness. Such encouragement does not stem from the need of His Pure Essence.

The blessed Verse ends by saying:

"And whosoever turns away from expending in His Cause and giving loans, then Allah is Rich, Worthy of all praise."

He is needless but all need Him, since He is the Origin of all things. He is also Worthy of all praise, since He encompasses all Perfect Attributes.

Although

"miserliness"

(bukhl) mainly reflects miserliness in expending possessions, but the semantic range is broader such that it includes miserliness in imparting knowledge, acting upon obligations, and the like.

In this vein, mention will be made of some traditions.

Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

"Do not consult with the miserly."[15]

Once circumambulating at night, Imam Sadiq (as) thus invoked God Almighty:

"O Lord! Keep me from miserliness."[16]

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"The true miser is one who hears my name but refrains from saluting me."[17]

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

"Glancing at the miserly and associating with them hardens man's heart."[18]

Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

"Miserliness is the attire of poverty and destitution."[19]

Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

The miserly are humiliated among their friends and beloved ones."[20]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best of you are your generous and chivalrous people and the worst of you are the miserly. Beneficence toward brethren and making efforts to meet their demands reflect pure faith."

Imam Ridha (as) said:

"The miserly are remote from God Almighty, Paradise, and people."[21]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 25

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

25. Verily, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and sent with them the Scripture and the Balance that mankind may keep up justice. And we brought forth iron wherein is mighty power as well as many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help Him and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible.

As mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses, racing toward Divine Mercy, Forgiveness, and Paradise requires the leadership of Divinely appointed leaders, the blessed and most significant Verse in question treats the same and precisely elucidates the goal behind sending the Prophets and their Prophetic calls, saying:

"We sent down Our Messengers with clear proofs and sent with them the Scripture and the Balance that mankind may keep up justice."

"Clear proofs"

(bayyinat) covers a broad semantic range embracing the miracles and intellectual arguments of Divinely appointed Messengers.

The singular noun 'Book' (kitab) connoting Scriptures reflects the unity of their spirit and truth, although their contents are further perfected with the passage of time and human development. The word 'Balance' (mizan) denotes the means of weighing but undoubtedly herein connotes its immaterial significance, namely something by which all human deeds may be assayed.

The word balance reflects Divine Commands and Laws thereby a distinction may be made between truth and untruth and good and bad. The Holy Qur’an is the clear proof and the Scripture and it elucidates Divine Laws and Commands. In other words, the Holy Qur’an constitutes three dimensions.

The goal of sending the Prophets, such great men, with such perfect equipment, is to keep up equity and justice.

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"that mankind may keep up justice"

reflects moves on the part of mankind rather than the Prophets making people keep up justice.

In other words, the blessed Verse is saying that people must grow such that they keep up justice themselves. Nonetheless, despite the exalted state of ethics, belief, and fear of God Almighty in any society, there are still people who disobey to God Almighty and stand in the way of keeping up equity and justice.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"And we brought forth iron wherein is mighty power as well as many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help Him and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible."

Thus, the three means of Divinely appointed Messengers may lead to their final goal when supported by the guarantee of making use of iron and its mighty power."

However, some maintain that the expression

"We have sent down"

reflects the alien origin of iron, but the fact is that such expressions connote the bounties bestowed from higher to lower levels and since all resources are with God Almighty and He created iron for different benefits of it, the expression:

"We have sent down"

is used herein.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as):

"Sending down connotes its creation."[22]

It is worthy of note that the Arabic word ba’s denotes severity, intensity, power, and might and it connotes war and struggle as well. Thus, some Qur’an exegetes maintain that it signifies military equipment employed for invasion and defense.

Thus, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) that the word in question connotes weaponry and other things.[23] Such instances clearly reflect its applicability. The word 'benefits' (manafi‘) reflects any use made by man of iron.

We know that iron makes many a contribution in human life and its discovery made a new epoch in the history of mankind knows as the Iron Age.

The discovery altered all spheres of human life reflected in the dimensions of the word 'benefits' in the blessed Verse in question that also refers to another goal behind sending the Prophets and sending down Scriptures and the creation of certain means like iron, saying that God Almighty sent them to know who assist Him and His Messengers in the Unseen.

Divine Omniscience herein reflects the objective actualization of His Knowledge, namely it reveals that who will rise to render support to God Almighty and His religion and thus rise toward the upkeep of equity and justice and who will refrain from acting upon such great obligation. Thus, one of the main goals is to test mankind and screen and purify them.

"Assisting God Almighty undoubtedly reflects support His religion and Messengers and propagation of truth, equity, and justice, although God Almighty is in need of no one but all beings are in need of Him.

Thus, the blessed Verse ends with:

"Indeed Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible."

He may turn the entire world upside down in one single moment and cause the perdition of all enemies and the triumph of His friends. However, the main goal of sending down the Messengers is the growth and development of mankind, thus they are called to assist the religion of truth.

Thus, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Only swords may make people rise and swords are the keys to Paradise and Hell."

Thus, Divinely appointed leaders hold the Scripture in one hand and the sword in the other. They begin with calling people to truth and justice by logical arguments, but if they fail to acknowledge the truth, they have to use force to make them believe.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 26

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُم مُّهْتَدٍ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

26. And verily, We sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their offspring Prophethood and Scripture. And among them there are some who are guided; but many of them are sinners.

The Prophets were appointed by God Almighty rather than by mankind. The preceding blessed Verse generally treated of sending the Prophets, but the blessed Verse in question deal with the Arch-Prophets, beginning with Noah and Abraham (as) and the Arch-Prophets, saying that God Almighty vested Prophethood and Scriptures with their offspring; nonetheless, all their offspring failed to benefit from such great heritage and Bounties. Some of them found Divine Guidance in their light, but many of them were faithless, corrupt, and disobedient to Allah.

Prophethood began with Noah (as) and it was passed down to Abraham (as) and other Arch-Prophets. Then, it was passed down to some of their offspring. However, a limited number benefited from the Light of Guidance, but the majority of mankind went astray.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 27

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاء رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

27. Then, We sent after them Our Messengers and We sent Jesus, son of Mary (as), and gave him the Gospel. And We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but they only aimed at pleasing Allah, but they did not observe it with the right observance. Therefore, We gave those among them who believed their reward; but many of them are disobedient to Allah.

The blessed Verse treats of sending the Prophets in succession by God Almighty for guiding mankind and sending Scriptures upon them such that God Almighty has provided mankind with Guidance imparted to them through His Messengers.

He also appointed Jesus, son of Mary (as), to Prophethood and sent down the Gospel unto him and made the hearts of his adherents merciful and compassionate. The compassion of Jesus' (as) people was like that of our Noble Prophet, Muhammad (S), such that concerning his companions, the Noble Prophet (S) said that there had been compassionate people among them.

Jesus' (as) people were so compassionate that if they were boxed in the ear, they not only did not take vengeance but also they turned the other side of their faces.

Today, Christians claim the same attitude and take pride in it but we notice that they cause the destruction of millions or billions of people by inventing weapons of mass destruction for their expansionist policies and they are even prepared to cause the destruction of their co-religionists.

"But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but they only aimed at pleasing Allah, but they did not observe it with the right observance."

The Arabic word ruhbaniyya

("monasticism")

is cognate with ruhban ("monastic, monk").

The latter, cognate with ruhba

("fear")

is applied to someone who is most pious, ascetic, and God fearing. The word designates a Christian monastic living in seclusion for worshipping God, asceticism, and fear of God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty did not oblige them to follow monasticism, but they were merely asked to gain Divine Satisfaction. In other words, monasticism was not in the Christian doctrine, but Christians innovated it later on.

Early monasticism was rather moderate, but it turned toward deviation, error, and corruption and it was misused to ensnare people. Thus, monasteries were turned into centers of corruption and abnormalities penetrated into the Christian faith.

Therefore, the blessed Verse is saying that their goal was set upon Divine Satisfaction, but they failed to observe it duly and appropriately. Thus, God Almighty rewarded those who believed, but the majority of them were disobedient and sinners.

It is owing to the same reason that monasticism has been severely criticized and condemned by the Islamic faith and the well-known tradition:

"There is no monasticism in Islam"

is mentioned in numerous Islamic sources.[24]

In his exegetic work titled Majma‘ al-Bayan, Tabarsi narrates from Ibn Mas‘ud that once he was mounted beside the Noble Prophet (S) when the latter asked:

"Do you know what was the origin of Christian monasticism?"

He replied:

"God Almighty and His Messenger know better."

He said:

"after Jesus (as), the disobedient and tyrants manifestly committed sins and disobeyed Divine Commands and believers could not tolerate their disobedience. Thus, Christian believers waged three wars with them and many monotheists fell in battles and few of them survived.

They said that if they waged further wars with them, all monotheists would fall and thought it would be better to leave the world to them and each of them live a life of seclusion and devotion in caves until Muhammad promised by Jesus (as) would arrive.

They had been leading a monastic life until I was appointed to the Prophetic call. Some of them believed in me, acknowledged my Prophethood, followed my injunctions, and were rewarded, but some of them failed to believe and perished."

Then, the Noble Prophet added:

"O Ibn Mas‘ud! Do you know where the monasticism of my community lies?"

I replied:

“God Almighty and His Messenger know better."

He replied:

"Migration, jihad in Allah's Cause, establishing prayers, fasting, paying alms tax, obligatory and supererogatory pilgrimage to Mecca, and rendering serves to Muslims."[25]

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 28

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

28. O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger such that He will give you a double portion of His Mercy and He will give you a light by which you shall walk in this world and the Hereafter and He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

The blessed Verse may address the Christians mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse encouraging them to truly observe monasticism and turning away from the world and believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) after Jesus (as) such that they receive the rewards for believing in Jesus (as) and Muhammad (S).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet that those Christians who believed in him truly observed monasticism.[26] It is worthy of note, however, that the

preceding Verse and the one in question may be interpreted independently thereby Muslims may deepen their belief in God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

The phrase:

"a double portion of His Mercy"

(kiflayn min rahmatihi) may connote Divine Light and Divine Forgiveness.

It may also reflect the portions mentioned elsewhere[27] in the Holy Qur'an:

"O Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which good."

It is also said that the twain portions are rewards for believing in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and former Prophets, since any Muslim is obliged to believe in and respect all former Prophets and their Scriptures.

Finally, pious believers shall be rewarded by Forgiving and absolution of sins, without which no Bounty shall be pleasing to man. In other words, man is supposed to feel secure from Divine torment and then he may find his path through the light of belief and fear of God Almighty and finally receive double portions of Divine Mercy.

It is noteworthy to say that according to the traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the word:

"light"

(nur) in this blessed Verse is applied to the infallible Imam representing Divine Light and followed by people.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 29

لِئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاء وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

29. So that the people of the Scripture may know that they have no power whatsoever over the Grace of Allah [and all double privileges and blessings belong to them] and that Grace is in His Hand to bestow it on whomsoever He wills. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

The blessed Chapter opened with glorification of Allah and ends with Divine Grace. It is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[28] that those among the People of the Scripture who believe in the Islamic faith shall be rewarded twice (ajrahum marratayn). The same theme is to be found in these blessed Verses.

Addressed to Muslims it is said that if they fear Allah and believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam, they shall also be rewarded twice, such that the people of the Scripture may not imagine that Muslims may not receive double portions of Divine Mercy and such portions solely belongs to them.

Taking into account the blessed Verses including the phrase

"Great Bounty"

(fadhl 'adim), it is elucidated that Great Bounty connotes Guidance, Paradise, Divine Forgiving, Prophethood, Following Divine Satisfaction, and possession of accurate insight and distinction which is not employed for mundane Bounties. All-Wise Allah selects certain people to receive His

Grace. Thus, Divine Grace is dependent upon His All-Wise Will rather than our imaginations.

Finally, the blessed Verse in question may be a response to the ambitions and groundless claims of some Jews and Christians claiming that Paradise and Divine Grace solely belong to them and others are deprived of them:

("And they say, 'None shall be admitted to Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their own desires. Say [O Muhammad!]: 'Produce your proof if you are truthful.'")[29].

O Lord! All Grace and Mercy are in Your Hand. Do not deprive us of such Great Grace and Mercy.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Durr al-Manthur.
2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 83.
3. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 328.
4. Rawdha Kafi; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
5. Ikmal al-Din; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 308.
7. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
8. 42:30
9. 42
10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, p. 247; ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.
11. Tafsir Nur.
12. Sayyid ibn Tawus' Luhuf.
13. Luhuf and Maqatil sources.
14. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon no. 5.
15. Nahj al-Balagha, epistle no. 53.
16. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 301.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 73.
18. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 75, p. 53.
19. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 238.
20. Ghurar al-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 53.
21. Safinat al-Bihar, under s-kh-y.
22. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
23. Ibid.
24. Majma‘ al-Bahrayn, under r-h-b; Ibn Athir's al-Nihaya.
25. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan; all under the blessed Verse in question.
26. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan.
27. 2:201
28. 28:54
29. 2:111

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 18

From Surah al-Mujadalah (58) to Surah al-Qiyamah (75)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 10
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 11
What is a 'Commentary'? 12
The Current Commentary 13
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 14
The Problems in Translating 14
Translators Note 15
Editor's Note 16
Notes 18
Acknowledgment 20
Notes 20
References 21
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 21
English Translations of Qur'an 21
Supporting Technical References 22
Phraseological and Philological Sources 22
A Presentation to Muslims 24
Notes 25
Surah Mujadila, Chapter 58 26
(The Disputing Woman) 26
Section (juz') 26
Number of Verses: 22 26
General Overview of the Chapter 26
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 26
Surah Mujadila - Verse 1 26
Surah Mujadila - Verse 2 27
Surah Mujadila - Verse 3 28
Surah Mujadila - Verse 4 28
Surah Mujadila - Verse 5 29
Surah Mujadila - Verse 6 30
Surah Mujadila - Verse 7 30
Surah Mujadila - Verse 8 31
Surah Mujadila - Verse 9 33
Surah Mujadila - Verse 10 33
Surah Mujadila - Verse 11 34
Surah Mujadila - Verse 12 36
Surah Mujadila - Verse 13 36
Surah Mujadila - Verses 14-15 38
Surah Mujadila - Verse 16 38
Surah Mujadila - Verse 17 39
Surah Mujadila - Verse 18 39
Surah Mujadila - Verse 19 40
Surah Mujadila - Verses 20-21 40
Surah Mujadila - Verse 22 41
Notes 43
Surah al-Hashr, Chapter 59 44
(The Gathering) 44

Section 28 (juz') 44
Number of Verses: 24 44
General Overview of the Chapter 44
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 44
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 1 44
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 2 45
Surah al-Hashr - Verses 3-4 47
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 5 48
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 6 48
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 7 49
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 8 53
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 9 54
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 10 57
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 11 58
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 12 59
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 13 59
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 14 60
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 15 60
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 16 61
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 17 61
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 18 61
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 19 62
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 20 63
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 21 63
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 22 64
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 23 65
Surah al-Hashr - Verse 24 66
Notes 68
Surah al-Mumtahana, Chapter 60 70
(The Woman to be Examined) 70
Section (juz') 28 70
Number of Verses: 13 70
General Overview of the Chapter 70
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 70
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 1 70
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 2 73
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 3 73
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 4 74
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 5 75
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 6 76
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 7 76
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verses 8-9 77
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 10 77
Occasion of Revelation 78
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 11 80
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 12 81
Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 13 82
Notes 83

Surah al-Saff, Chapter 61 84
(The Rank) 84
Section 28(juz') 84
Number of Verses: 14 84
General Overview of the Chapter 84
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 84
Surah al-Saff - Verse 1 84
Surah al-Saff - Verse 2 85
Surah al-Saff - Verse 3 85
Surah al-Saff - Verse 4 85
Surah al-Saff - Verse 5 86
Surah al-Saff - Verses 6-7 86
Surah al-Saff - Verses 8-9 88
Surah al-Saff - Verses 10-13 90
Surah al-Saff - Verse 14 93
Notes 94
Surah al-Jum'a, Chapter 62 95
(Friday) 95
Section (juz') 28 95
Number of Verses: 11 95
General Overview of the Chapter 95
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 95
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 1 95
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 2 98
Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 3-4 99
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 5 100
Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 6-8 102
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 9 103
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 10 105
Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 11 106
The Significance of the Friday Prayer 106
Notes 108
Surah al-Munafiqun, Chapter 63 109
(The Hypocrites) 109
Section (juz') 28 109
Number of Verses: 11 109
General Overview of the Chapter 109
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 109
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 1 109
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 2-3 111
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 4 113
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 5-6 114
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 7 115
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 8 116
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 9 116
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 10 117
Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 11 118
Notes 119

Surah al-Taghabun, Chapter 64 120
(Mutual Loss and Gain) 120
Section (juz') 28 120
Number of Verses: 18 120
General Overview of the Chapter 120
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 120
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 1 120
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 2 121
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 3 122
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 4 122
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 5 123
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 6 124
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 7 124
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 8 125
Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 9-10 125
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 11 126
Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 12-13 128
Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 14 128
Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 15-16 130
Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 17-18 132
Notes 134
Surah al-Talaq, Chapter 65 135
(The Divorce) 135
Section (juz') 28 135
Number of Verses: 12 135
General Overview of the Chapter 135
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 135
Surah al-Talaq - Verse 1 135
Surah al-Talaq - Verses 2-3 139
Surah al-Talaq - Verses 4-5 142
Surah al-Talaq - Verses 6-7 145
Surah al-Talaq - Verses 8-9 147
Surah al-Talaq - Verse 10 147
Surah al-Talaq - Verse 11 148
Surah al-Talaq - Verse 12 149
Notes 152
Surah al-Tahrim, Chapter 66 154
(The Proscription) 154
Section (juz') 28 154
Number of Verses: 12 154
General Overview of the Chapter 154
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 154
Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 1-2 154
Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 3-4 155
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 5 158
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 6 158
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 7 160
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 8 161

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 9 163
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 10 164
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 11 166
Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 12 167
Notes 169
Surah al-Mulk, Chapter 67 171
(Sovereignty) 171
Section (juz') 29 171
Number of Verses: 30 171
General Overview of the Chapter 171
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 171
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 1-2 171
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 3-4 173
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 5 175
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 6-8 176
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 9-11 177
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 12-14 178
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 15 180
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 16-18 181
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 19 182
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 20 183
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 21 184
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 22 184
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 23 185
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 24 185
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 25-27 186
Surah al-Mulk - Verses 28-29 187
Surah al-Mulk - Verse 30 188
Notes 190
Surah al-Qalam, Chapter 68 191
(The Pen) 191
Section (juz') 29 191
Number of Verses: 52 191
General Overview of the Chapter 191
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 191
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 1-4 192
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 5-7 193
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 8-11 194
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 12-14 196
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 15-16 197
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 17-20 198
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 21-25 199
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 26-30 199
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 31-33 201
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 34-38 202
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 39-41 202
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 42-43 203
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 44-45 204

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 46-47 205
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 48-50 206
Surah al-Qalam - Verses 51-52 207
Notes 208
Surah al-Haqqa, Chapter 69 210
(The Inevitable) 210
Section (juz') 29 210
Number of Verses: 52 210
General Overview of the Chapter 210
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 210
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 1-3 210
Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 4 211
Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 5 211
Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 6 212
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 7-8 212
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 9-10 213
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 11-12 213
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 13-15 214
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 16-17 215
What is the Divine Throne and who are these angels? 216
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 18-24 217
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 25-29 219
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 30-37 220
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 38-43 223
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 44-47 225
Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 48-52 226
Notes 228
Surah al-Ma'arij, Chapter 70 229
(The Places of Ascent) 229
Section (juz') 29 229
Number of Verses: 44 229
General Overview of the Chapter 229
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 229
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 1-3 229
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verse 4 230
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 5-7 231
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 8-9 232
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 10-14 233
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 15-18 234
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 19-23 235
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 24-28 236
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 29-31 237
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 32-35 238
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 36-39 240
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 40-41 241
Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 42-44 242
Notes 243
Surah Nuh, Chapter 71 244

(Noah) 244
Section (juz') 29 244
Number of Verses: 28 244
General Overview of the Chapter 244
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 244
Surah Nuh - Verses 1-3 245
Surah Nuh - Verse 4 245
Surah Nuh - Verses 5-9 246
Surah Nuh - Verses 10-14 248
Surah Nuh - Verses 15-16 249
Surah Nuh - Verses 17-20 250
Surah Nuh - Verses 21-22 251
Surah Nuh - Verses 23-25 252
Surah Nuh - Verses 26-27 253
Surah Nuh - Verse 28 255
Notes 256
Surah al-Jinn, Chapter 72 257
(The Jinn) 257
Section (juz') 29 257
Number of Verses: 28 257
General Overview of the Chapter 257
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 257
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 1-2 257
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 3-5 258
Surah al-Jinn - Verse 6 260
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 7-8 260
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 9-10 261
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 11-12 262
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 13-15 263
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 16-17 265
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 18-19 266
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 20-22 268
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 23-24 269
Surah al-Jinn - Verses 25-28 270
Notes 278
Surah al-Muzzammil, Chapter 73 280
(The One Wrapped in Garment) 280
Section (juz') 29 280
Number of Verses: 20 280
General Overview of the Chapter 280
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 280
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 1-5 280
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 6-7 284
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 8-10 285
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 11-14 288
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 15-16 289
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 17-19 290
Surah al-Muzzammil - Verse 20 292

Notes 294
Surah al-Mudaththir, Chapter 74 295
(The One Reposing in Bed) 295
Section (juz') 29 295
Number of Verses: 56 295
General Overview of the Chapter 295
The Merit of Reciting the Chapter 295
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 1-2 295
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 3-7 297
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 8-10 299
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 11-15 300
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 16-17 302
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 18-25 302
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 26-30 305
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 31 306
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 32-34 309
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 35-37 309
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 38-45 310
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 46-48 312
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 49-51 315
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 52-55 316
Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 56 317
Notes 318
Surah al-Qiyama, Chapter 75 320
(The Resurrection) 320
Section (juz') 29 320
Number of Verses: 40 320
General Overview of the Chapter 320
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 1-4 320
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 5-6 324
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 7-12 324
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 13-15 326
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 16-19 327
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 20-21 328
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 22-23 329
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 24-25 329
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 26-30 330
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 31-33 332
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 34-36 333
Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 37-40 334
Notes 336

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11]**.**

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12]**.**

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18]
.

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3

21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Mujadila, Chapter 58

(The Disputing Woman)

Section (juz')

Number of Verses: 22

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter in question has twenty-two Verses and it was revealed in Medina. The blessed Chapter opens with a question of disputation hence the designation. The blessed Chapter treats of the law of zihar, a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times; positive and negative aspects of whispering; greeting with those entering a meeting; distinction of the party of God and that of Satan.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Two traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as).

According to the former:

"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila and reflects and acts upon them, will be regarded as a member of the party of God."

The latter says:

"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila in their obligatory prayers will neither be afflicted with any torment in his life, nor will he or his family suffer from evil, nor will he be entangled with poverty and destitute."

The contextual meaning of these Chapters is clearly consistent with the said rewards indicating that the goal of reciting them is to apply them in one's life rather than mere recitation devoid of reflecting and acting upon them.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

1. Verily Allah has heard the statement of the woman who disputed with you concerning her husband and complained to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.

There was a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times called zihar as per which the husband was not allowed to revoke the divorce nor was the wife allowed to remarry.

A certain man divorced his wife in this manner at the time of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) thus addressing her:

"You are to me like my mother's back."

The man came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and informed him of the case.

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Allah has not specified such law."

Terrified, the woman said:

"I complain to Allah about my misfortune and my lost youth and health. If I leave my children to my husband, they will be ruined. If they stay with me, they will starve."

The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question were revealed before long according to which whoever acts in this fashion will be required to expiate. Further, it is said that there is no divorce.

Since the husband could not afford to purchase a slave and act upon the manumission ordainment nor could he feed sixty poor people nor was he able to fast for two months, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) rendered him some sufficient aid such that he could feed sixty poor people and thus expiated his sin and returned to his former life.[1]

It is worthy of note that in the blessed Verse in question, God Almighty says three times that He is the All-Hearing (sami') and people may speak unto Him. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to take heed of our words, since God Almighty hears them. He hears our supplications and invocations. Therefore, we may invoke him to answer our prayers. We may take refuge in God Almighty in vicissitudes.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 2

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنكُم مِّن نِّسَائِهِم مَّا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِنْ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ

2. Those among you who make their wives unlawful to them by saying to them "You are like my mother's back" (zihar), they cannot be their mothers. None can be their mothers except those who gave them birth. And indeed, they utter an ill word and a lie. And indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning.

Mention was made in the preceding Verse of the type of divorce in pre-Islamic times as per which the husband said:

"Sleeping with you is like sleeping with my mother."

Islam sanctioned this type of divorce and obliged the husband to expiate for this sin. Úihar, as an instance of injustice done to women, was sanctioned by the Islamic law and those committing such sin had to pay dearly for expiating it.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that those of you who say unto their wives:

"You are like my mother to me"

utter falsehood, since their wives are note like their mothers as their mothers are those who gave birth to them. Being a mother or a child depends neither on words nor sophistry, but it is an indisputable reality. If a husband says one hundred times unto his wife that she is like his mother, it would be merely falsehood and superstition.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"they utter an ill word and a lie and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning."

Therefore, in case a Muslim committed such vice prior to the Revelation of these Verses will be forgiven by God Almighty. It is noteworthy that the Arabic word zur denotes untruth and lie.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 3

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَّا
ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

3. And those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other. That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

Manumission as an expiation for involuntary homicide, unredeemed oath, and zihar is attested in the Holy Qur'an[2].

Since such abominable act could not be ignored by the Islamic faith, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other."

Qur'an exegetes have thought of different interpretations regarding the blessed Verse in question and in his Tafsir Kanz al-'Irfan, FaÃil Miqdad presents six interpretations.

However, the literal sense of the word, taking into account the clause:

"before they touch each other,"

is that they repent their words and intend to return to their family life and sexual intercourse. Such interpretation is also attested in traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt.[3]

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do,"

i.e. He is All-Aware of your zihar, refraining from expiation, and your intentions.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 4

فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَّا ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ
مِسْكِينًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

4. And he who finds not a slave for manumission must fast to successive months before they both touch each other. And he who is unable to do so, should feed sixty poor people. That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger. These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment.

The word hudud denoting limits and connoting laws is attested more than ten times in the Holy Qur'an most of whose instances are pertained to family law. Failure to act upon Divine Laws and indifference to the same are on a par with disbelief. It is worthy of note that Divine chastisement lead

to loss of property and physical strength, but one may thereby increase one's faith.

The blessed Verse is saying that one who cannot find a slave, as in our time, or may not afford to purchase one for manumission, he must fast for two consecutive months before touching his wife.

Jurisprudents maintain that the Arabic word mutatabi‘in in the blessed Verse designates two consecutive lunar months or sixty days; however, if one fasts for a month and a day, but breaks the fast thereafter and fast the remaining days later on, the fast is still valid, but he may not touch his wife before the completion of the two month fast.

Now, one who is unable to fast owing to decrepitude, weakness, or any other reason, it is incumbent upon such person to feed sixty poor people with the food, e.g. bread, wheat, and rice, consumed by the majority of the inhabitants of the city.

The Arabic word ta‘am (“food”) seemingly indicates that the person is supposed to fill them up in one meal. However, the measure has been specified in Islamic traditions as almost 750 grams, though some jurisprudents have specified the quantity as double the amount.

The blessed Verse proceeds to reiterate the main goal of such expiations, saying:

“That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger.”

Compensation for the sins through expiating strengthens the pillars of faith and makes man knowingly and practically committed to acting upon Divine Laws.

To make all Muslims regard such expiation as a serious question, the blessed Verse says:

“These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment.”

Surah Mujadila - Verse 5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

5. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger have been crushed, as those before them were crushed. And We have sent down clear Àyat (signs, Verses). And for the believers is a disgracing torment.

The Arabic clause yuhaddun Allah denotes “opposed Divine Bounds through either use of power and weaponry or animosity, sabotage, and conspiracy.” The verbal form kubitu derives from the root k-b-t (“crush, subdue”).

The last clause in the preceding blessed Verses warned all people against transgressing Divine Bounds and the blessed Verse in question treats of those who transgress such Bounds and thereby struggle against God Almighty and His Messenger (S) whose fate in this world and the Hereafter is explicated herein.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that those who oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are disgraced as the same was in store for their predecessors. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty

sent down clear Signs and Verses. Thus, ultimatum has been given leaving no room for any pretext as to opposition.

However, if they oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S), they shall be chastised in this world and a humiliating torment shall be in store for disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, the preceding sentence makes a reference to the torments in store for them in this world and this sentence refers to the torment in store for them in the Hereafter.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 6

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۚ أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

6. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together and inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is Witness over all things.

Depicting the torment in store for them in the Hereafter, the blessed Verse in question says that on the Day of Resurrection God Almighty shall resurrect and inform them of what they have done. God Almighty has kept account of their deeds even if they have consigned them to oblivion.

Consequently, when they see their record of deeds, they will cry:

"Woe to us! What kind of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has kept account of them all"[4].

It will be an excruciating torment when God Almighty reminds them of their forgotten sins hereby they shall be disgraced before all men on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse in question closes by saying:

"God Almighty is Witness over all things [and is Omnipresent]."

The closing clause substantiates the previous one by saying that Divine Omnipresence requires that He keeps account of not only our deeds but also of our intentions and He will disclose them all on the Day of Emergence (yawm al-buruz) such that those who committed the deeds and others know the reason behind severe chastisements and torments.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 7

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ مَا يَكُونُ مِن نَّجْوَىٰ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِن ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ۖ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

7. Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient.

The verbal form tara ("you saw") deriving from r-'-a denotes "see" but also connotes "perceive," intended herein.

Further, to emphasize Divine Omnipresence and Omniscience, mention is made of "confidential talk" (najwa), saying:

"Do you know not that God Almighty is All-Aware of whatever is in the heavens and the earth."

The blessed Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but It is actually addressed to all mankind.

It is in fact a prelude to the question of confidential talks:

"There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient."

It is worthy of note that God Almighty being the fourth or sixth of them connotes that He is Omniscient and Omnipresent rather than His Pure Essence were limited to spatial bounds or specified by numbers. His Unity is not subject to measurement, but the blessed Verse connotes that He is Unique and Unrivalled.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 8

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَىٰ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

8. Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold confidential talks, and afterwards returned to that which they had been forbidden and conspired together for sin and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger. But when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting wherewith Allah greets you not, and say unto themselves: "Why should Allah chastise us not for what we say?" The Hell will be sufficient for them in which they will enter. And worst indeed is that place and destination.

Two Occasions of Revelation have been transmitted regarding the blessed Verse in question each of which is related to one part of the blessed Verse. According to the former, a group of Jews and hypocrites held confidential talks and at times cast unpleasant glances at believers.

Thus, believers thought that Jews and hypocrites had been informed of unpleasant news about their kith and kin who had joined jihad. Sorrowful, they complained to Allah's Messenger (S) about their unpleasant glances.

The Noble Prophet (S) warned them against holding secret counsels before Muslims, but his warnings fell upon dead ears. Then, the blessed Verse in question was revealed and severely threatened them against holding such counsels.[5]

The second Occasion of Revelation is mentioned in Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihayn and many exegetic sources according to which, a group of Jews came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and instead of greeting him by saying al-salamu ‘alayka they said al-samu ‘alayka ya Aba al-Qasim intending to say death, weariness, and reproach be unto you.

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"The same unto you."

"À'isha is reported as saying:

"I noticed that they had said may death, God's curse and wrath be upon him. However, the Noble Prophet (S) asked me to be tolerant and refrain from violence and slander. I insisted:

"Do you not hear that they said: 'Death unto you'?"

He asked me:

"Did you not hear that I replied by saying 'Unto you'?"

Then, the blessed Verse was revealed saying that when such group come unto you, they greet you in a manner by which God Almighty has never greeted you."[6]

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on confidential talk by asking:

"Did you not see those who were forbidden from holding confidential talk but they engage themselves in the same thereby committing sins and disobeying Allah's Messenger (S)?"

It is explicitly mentioned that they had been forbidden from holding confidential talk and thereby casing suspicion and concern in others. Nonetheless, they did not act upon Divine Command but committed sins and disobeyed Allah and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic terms ithm, 'udwan, and ma'siyat al-rasul are different in semantic terms in that the first denotes sins against oneself, such as drinking alcoholic beverages, the second constitutes instances of transgressing the rights of other people, and the third is concerned with disobeying the commands issued by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith as the head of the Islamic state regarding the interests of the Muslim community.

Therefore, they raised any wrong in their secret counsels regarding themselves, others, Muslim state, and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). The present verbal forms ya'udun and yatanajun connote the recurrence of their deed thereby aiming to hurt believers. The point is that the blessed Verse disclosed their evil deed as a piece of news from the unseen thus revealing their deviation.

The blessed Verse makes mention of another evil deed committed by hypocrites and Jews, saying:

"When they come unto you, they greet you such that God Almighty has never greeted you."

The Arabic verbal form hayyuka, cognate with tahiyya ("greeting, salutation") connotes praying for someone else's health and life.

The clauses:

"greeting unto you" (al-salamun 'alayka)

and,

"God's greeting unto you" (salam Allah 'alayka)

are intended herein which is also recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an an instance of which is:

"And peace be on the Messengers"[7]**.**

However, they uttered the sentence:

"Death, censure, and weariness be unto you" (asamun 'alayka).

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they not only commit such grave sins but also are they so self-conceited that they say if their deeds are evil and God Almighty is All-Aware of them, how come that He does not chastise us for our words and deeds. Thus, they proved their disbelief in the Prophethood of Allah's Messenger (S) and Divine Omniscience.

Thus the Holy Qur'an replies to them:

"Hell is sufficient for them and there is no need to other chastisements. They will enter Hell before long and what a worst place it is."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse does not negate the torments in store for them in this world, but it is explicitly expressing the truth that even if there will be no other torment for them but Hell, it will be sufficient for them since they will meet the recompense of all their deeds there.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

9. O you who believe! When you hold confidential talk, do it not from sin and wrong-doing and disobedience toward the Messenger, but do it for righteousness and fear of God and fear Allah unto Whom you shall be gathered.

Holding secret counsels and confidential talks may lead to disclosure of secrets and thus it is obligatory when such act entails benefits to the Islamic faith and Muslims. It is unlawful and forbidden when it leads to fear and anxiety for others. It is supererogatory when it assists others and enjoins them to fear God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that believers must heed that when they hold confidential talks, they should not thereby commit sins and disobey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), but their confidential talks should be pure and divine. Believers are supposed to hold secret counsels regarding good deeds and fear of God Almighty. It is incumbent upon them to refrain from disobedience to God Almighty to Whom they shall all return.

The blessed Verse is saying that holding confidential talks by believers will create neither suspicion nor concern since such talks aim at enjoining righteous good deeds. But holding secret counsels by Jews and hypocrites is unlawful since they aim at hurting pure hearted believers let alone when the contents of such talks be satanic.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 10

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَىٰ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

10. Secret counsels are only from Satan in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits. Therefore, let the believers put their trust in Allah.

Any explicit or implicit talk leading to causing fear and anxiety among Muslims is satanic. Thus, the blessed Verse as the last one treating of the question reflects that such talk only stems from satanic temptations aiming at Muslims' concerns and grieves. However, Muslims should know that without Divine Permission, Satan may not harm believers, since no cause in the world of existence is dependent on Divine Command.

Even fire and sword may neither burn nor sever without God's Command. When God Almighty forbids something, even His friend may not do anything. Thus, it is incumbent upon believers to put their trust solely in God Almighty and set their hearts on no one but Him nor are they

supposed to fear one but Him. Relying on their trust in God Almighty, they may easily remove such problems and neutralize the designs and stratagems of Satan's followers.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُزُوا فَانشُزُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

11. O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

Regarding the Occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verse, some Qur'an exegetes, e.g. Tabarsi in Majma' alBayan and Àlusi in Ruh al-Ma'ani, maintain that the Noble Prophet (S) sat on a huge ledge (suffa) beside the Noble Prophet's (S) mosque on a Friday when he was encircled by people and there was enough room for others.

It was the Noble Prophet's (S) habit to revere Badr warrior irrespective of being from immigrants (muhajirun) or helpers (ansar). Then, a group of Badr warriors entered and paid homage to the Noble Prophet (S). The Noble Prophet (S) returned their greetings. They exchanged greetings with those present there. They were still standing awaiting people to make room for them, but none of them moved.

Annoyed by such conduct, the Noble Prophet (S) turned to some of the people encircling him asking them to move such that the newcomers may sit. Thus, he gave them a lesson to revere the veterans of jihad and faith. Those who had moved to make room for newcomers were annoyed such that their faces reflected such annoyance.

Taking advantage of the opportunity as usual, hypocrites said that the Noble Prophet (S) had failed to administer justice as he had made those lovingly encircling him move to make room for newcomers. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed indicating the manners required for attending meetings.[8]

The preceding Verses treated of abstention from holding secret counsels at meetings and restricting the same to few specific instances and the blessed Verse reflects another instance of etiquette to be observed at meetings, saying:

"O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

The blessed Verse is saying that if believers act upon the same, God Almighty will grant you spacious abodes in Paradise and better provisions, sustenance and a nobler heart in this world.

The verbal form tafassahu deriving from f-s-h denotes give room as a precept of etiquette according to which when a newcomer arrives at a meeting, those already present are supposed to make room for him lest he may be perplexed, weary, or ashamed. Such manners strengthen the ties of friendship. Au contraire, holding secret counsels at meetings, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, lead to hatred, suspicion, and animosity.

It is worthy of note that many a delicacy of moral questions and social life of Muslims are treated in the Holy Qur'an which is the constitutional law of Muslims where such delicate points are also mentioned amongst fundamental injunctions such that Muslims bear in mind that following general rules is sufficient for them. Those who act upon such precepts will be rewarded by God Almighty in this world.

It is to be noted that the blessed Verse in unconditional and its contextual meaning reflects Divine Generosity in this world, paradise, soul, thought, life, and sustenance. It is not a source of wonder that God Almighty, out of His Graciousness and Generosity bestow such great reward against such seemingly insignificant act as Divine Reward is bestowed upon people out of His Generosity rather than the significance of our deeds.

At times, meetings are so crowded that those already present must rise up to make room for newcomers lest there will be no suitable room for them to be seated. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that when people are told to rise, they are supposed to rise without procrastination or annoyance, since newcomers may be weary, weak owing to their advanced age, or highly respected as a consequence of which others must make a sacrifice and observe such Islamic precept of etiquette.

It was in the same vein that as mentioned above, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise up and give their place to some newcomers who were amongst the warrior fighting in the battle of Badr and were superior to others in terms of knowledge and virtue.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that rising is herein employed in a broader sense such that it reflects rising at the meeting as well as rising for jihad, establishing prayers, and doing other righteous good deeds. The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the rewards of such Divine Injunction saying that if you do so, God Almighty will grant elevated ranks to those who believe and possess knowledge.

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do"

reflects that obeying such Injunctions indicate faith, knowledge, and awareness. It may also reflect that if the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise and make room for newcomers since he aimed at a sacred and Divine goal which is revering forerunners in faith and knowledge.

The Arabic plural noun darajat connotes the exalted ranks bestowed by God Almighty upon those who possess both faith and knowledge. In fact, those who make room for newcomers beside them enjoy such rank and those who possess knowledge and faith and make room for newcomers, will be granted even more elevated ranks.

The blessed Verse closes with:

"Allah is All-Aware of what you do"

saying that God Almighty is fully Aware of those who are satisfied to do so and they are sincere in their acts and also those who are dissatisfied and annoyed or they act upon hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

12. O you who believe! When you intend to hold confidential talks with the Messenger, spend something in charity before your private counsel. That will be better and purer for you. But if you fail to afford it, then indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The blessed Verse completes the preceding discussion on holding private counsels, saying that if you want to hold private counsels with Allah's Messenger (S), expend alms in Allah's Cause beforehand.

According to the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, some people particularly some among the affluent bothered him by holding private counsels with him such that they annoyed others or aimed to seek privileges in vain. Besides, they wasted the precious time of the Noble Prophet (S). Revelation of the blessed Verse was a trial for them, a source of charitable offerings for the poor, and an efficient means for lessening such troubles.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"It s better and purer for you."

Expending alms was better for the affluent since it was to the benefit of them as well as the poor. It was purer since expending in the Cause of Allah purifies the hearts of the affluent from cherishing worldly possessions and those of the needy from hatred and grief. When the affluent were supposed to expend alms before holding private counsels with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) they held less counsels leading to purity for the intellectual and social milieu of the Muslim community.

The blessed Verse says:

"If you fail to afford [expending in Allah's Cause], God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious,"

thereby the poor were able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S).

Therefore, those who could afford expending in Allah's Cause, had to pay alms and those who failed to afford it were still able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S). The majority of Shi'i and Sunni exegetes maintain that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), was the only one who acted upon the Injunction.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam 'Ali (as), transmitted by Tabarsi, the Noble Imam (as) said:

"There is a Verse in the Qur'an upon which no one but me has acted or will act. I had a dinar which I converted to ten dirhams and whenever I intended to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S), I expended a dirham before meeting with him."[9]

Surah Mujadila - Verse 13

أَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَن تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

13. Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation? If then you do it not and Allah has forgiven you, then establish prayers and pay alms-tax and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The Injunction mentioned in the preceding Verse served as an interesting trial and engendered a wondrous effect such that except the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as), no one acted upon it. Muslims took a clear lesson out of the Injunction.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question abrogated the Injunction by saying:

“Are you afraid of spending in charity before you private counsel?”

It is then clear that loving worldly possessions is stronger than that for holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S). It also reflects that significant issues were not raised in such private consultations, otherwise such people could pay alms before holding such private counsels as no specific amount had been specified for paying alms and they could conveniently afford a meager amount to solve the problem.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that now that you failed to act upon the Injunction and noticed you negligence and God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and accepted your repentance, establish prayers, pay alms-tax, obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), and know that He is All-Aware of what you do.

It is worthy of note that the word repentance (tawba) reflects that they had committed sins in holding their private consultations either through dissimulation and hypocrisy or hurting the Noble Prophet (S) and poor believers.

Although there is no explicit permission in holding private counsels, but the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that the former Injunction was abrogated, but owing to their significance, people were called to establish prayers, pay alms-tax, and obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S). It also alludes that such private consultations should aim at the exalted goals of the Islamic faith and obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic word ishfaq denotes concern for some loss.[10] The blessed Verse reflects that paying alms before holding private consultation with the Noble Prophet (S) served as a test to distinguish sincere and loving believers from others rather than a retreat through the abrogation of the Divine Injunction.

The Arabic particle wa (“and”) in
“and Allah has forgiven you”

reflects that abrogation of the Injunctions was not due to people's failure to act upon it. Since some of the Companions of the Noble Prophet (S) abandoned holding private counsels with him owing to their fear of expending in Allah's Cause, they were censured by God Almighty though holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) was neither obligatory nor supererogatory.

Surah Mujadila - Verses 14-15

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مَّا هُم مِّنكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

14. Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to a lie to be amongst you while they know.

15. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Evil indeed is that which they do.

The blessed two Verses partially disclose hypocrites' conspiracies reflecting their tokens as well. Such disclosure preceded by the blessed Verses treating of holding private counsels reveals that there were also hypocrites holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) who used such stratagems to take advantage of their intimacy with the Noble Prophet (S).

Thus, the Holy Qur'an treats the same on general terms, asking:

"Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah?"

"A people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah"

seemingly reflects Jewish people, since they have been referred to in the Holy Qur'an by the clause

"They drew upon themselves the Wrath"[11].

The blessed Verse 14 proceeds to say

"They are neither of you nor of them [Jews]."

They are neither you friends in hardships nor are they their intimate friends, but they are hypocrites changing their masks each and every single day. They take false oaths to indicate that they stand by you, but they know that they are dissimulating. Hypocrites habitually cover their ugly and disgusting countenances through resorting to false oaths, whereas their deeds reflect their true identity.

The blessed Verse 15 makes a reference to such obstinate hypocrites saying:

"Allah has prepared for them a severe torment."

Such torments are just, since:

"Evil indeed is that which they do"

and evil deeds entail Divine torment and retribution.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 16

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

16. They have made their oaths a shield and hindered men from the Path of Allah. Therefore, they shall have a humiliating torment.

They take oaths saying that they are Muslims aiming at nothing but improvement, but they use such oaths as pretexts for their corruption, sabotage, and conspiracy. In fact, they take advantage out of the Sacred Name of God Almighty to impede men from treading the Path of Allah.

Taking false oaths disclose hypocrites. Their attributes are also found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12].

The blessed Verse closes by saying that as a consequence of their hypocrisy;

"they shall have a humiliating torment."

Surah Mujadila - Verse 17

لَّن تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

17. Their children and their wealth will avail them nothing against Allah's Wrath. They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever.

Qur'anic warnings are quite serious. Worldly possessions and children shall be of no avail in the Hereafter. Hypocrites often rely on their worldly possessions and children as economic and labor resources.

In this vein, the Holy Qur'an says that their worldly possessions and children may never be of any avail against Divine torment, but they serve as shackles and fetters leading to their excruciating torment. There shall be no refuge but God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection, since besides Him all others shall be inefficient.

The same theme is also reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[13].

"All their relations shall be cut off from them."

The blessed Verse closes by the warning:

"They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever."

The torments in store for them have been depicted as severe, humiliating, and everlasting, each of which proportionately reflects their evil deeds.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 18

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

18. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together, they will swear to Him as they swear to you imagining that they rely on something. Indeed, they are liars.

When lying turns into a natural disposition, liars even falsely swear on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is reminding people of the Day when God Almighty shall resurrect them and He shall present their evil deeds unto them.

God Almighty shall question them at His Just Tribunal, but they falsely swear to Him in the same manner that they falsely swore to people in this world. The Day of Resurrection shall be the scene of manifestation of human deeds and intentions.

Hypocrites take their intentions and deeds to their graves and purgatory, but they shall be manifest on the Day of Resurrection. They know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the Unseen. Nothing is concealed from Him. However, they are habitually inclined toward taking false oaths.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

They imagine that they rely on something through taking such false oaths and may thereby gain benefits and ward off loss, but it will be sheer

illusions. They had been accustomed to resort to such pretexts in order to ward off predicaments and losses from themselves, hence the reinforcement of such natural dispositions and their manifestations.

The blessed Verse closes by saying:

"Indeed, they are liars."

They are disgraced before all men in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah Mujadila - Verse 19

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

19. Satan has overpowered them. Thus, he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Satan. Indeed, it is the party of Satan that will be the losers!

The more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. Real loss lies in following Satan.

The antecedent of the pronoun

"them" ('alayhim)

are hypocrites overpowered by Satan such that they forget God Almighty and follow devils and concupiscent desires.

It is incumbent upon believers to be aware that the hosts of Satan have incurred loss, namely they have wasted their precious lives.

Satan works such that he absorbs men by steps, as it is reflected in 24:21:

"Follow not the footsteps of Satan."

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[14] that:

"Satan threw [some falsehood]."

At times, men follow Satan and he totally overpowers them. The blessed Verse is saying that the more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. In this vein, two traditions have been narrated.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

"Distinction between truth and falsehood does not entail evil consequence but confusion of the twain leads to seditions and Satan's conquest."[15]

Imam Husayn (as) is reported as saying unto Yazid's hosts at Karbala':

"Satan has overpowered you and made you forget remembrance of God Almighty…"[16]

Surah Mujadila - Verses 20-21

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

20. Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people.

21. Allah has decreed: "Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers. Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible.

Hypocrisy and dissimulation lead man to take a stance against God Almighty and His Messenger (S). As the Messenger's (S) commands are

those issued by God Almighty, struggling against him is on a par with struggling against God Almighty. We should know that God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are triumphant, so those who take a stance against them are amongst the most humiliated and disgraced people.

Thus, the blessed Verse 20 says:

"Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people."

It is substantiated by the blessed Verse 21, saying:

"Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers."

God Almighty and His Messengers are triumphant, since

"Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible."

It is worthy of note that according to traditions, the Divine Promise as to the decisive conquest of truth over falsehood shall be actualized upon the rise of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his arrival).

Surah Mujadila - Verse 22

لَّا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۖ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

22. You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, befriend those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved.

Satisfaction is more elevated in rank than submission, namely God's servant is not only submits to Divine Ordainments and His Commands, but also he is satisfied with them in his heart and accepts them out of satisfaction.

Thus in the last blessed Verse which is one of the most decisive Qur'anic Verses, God Almighty warns believers that one may not love God and His enemies, but they are supposed to select one of the two. If they are true believers, they should refrain from befriending God's enemies; otherwise they should not pretend being Muslims.

One who believes in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection should not befriend the enemies of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), even if the enemies happen to be their fathers, children, siblings, or other relatives. One may not foster love for the twain and those who claim to befriend both, are either weak of faith or hypocrites.

Thus, Muslims struggled against and even killed some of their own relatives in battles, since their relatives had joined the hosts of enemies. It is befitting to love one's father, children, siblings, and other relatives as such

love is a token of humane emotions, but when such love confronts that of God Almighty, it loses its value.

The blessed Verse further treats of the great rewards bestowed upon those who solely love God Almighty. In this vein, the blessed Verse treats of five points concerned with Divine assistance and triumph some of which are the fruits of such love.

The first two points indicate that such people are those upon whose hearts God Almighty has written faith in Him and His Messenger (S) and has also strengthened their faith;

("For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself").

The third point is that:

"He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever."

The fourth point is that

"Allah is pleased with them and they with Him."

There is no Blessing more exalted that such bilateral satisfaction as it leads to further Blessings and Bounties. When God Almighty is satisfied with someone, He will grant him whatever he desires, since He is All-Generous and Omnipotent. The expression is quite of interest, reflecting that God Almighty is satisfied with them and they are also satisfied with Him, namely they have attained to such rank that they and their satisfaction is mentioned beside God Almighty and His Satisfaction.

The last point which is a call addressed to all reflects another Blessing:

"They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved."

Such people are not only triumphant in the Hereafter and will be granted all kinds of material and spiritual Blessings and Bounties on the Day of Resurrection, but as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses, thanks to Divine Grace, they are also triumphant over enemies and the rule of truth and justice will be in their hands in the last days of the world.

In this vein, mention will be made of some traditions. Salman, the Persian, said unto the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that whenever he had gone to the Noble Prophet (S), he put his hand on his shoulder, referred to repentance and said:

"O Salman! This man and his party are triumphant."[17]

According to another tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"For believers, love for God Almighty is one of the most significant bases of faith."[18]

According to the third tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"No one's faith in God Almighty may be purified unless he loves God Almighty more than his life, father, mother, children, possessions, and all people."[19]

O my Lord! If you bestow such spirit of faith upon us, you have granted these weak servants the greatest of Bounties and they will grieve no more.

Notes

1. Tafsir Qurtubi; Durr; Ruh al-Bayan; al-Mizan; Fakhr Razi; Fi Úalal al-Qur'an; Abu al-Futuh Razi; Kanz al-'Irfan, and many other historical and tradition sources with minor alterations.
2. 4:92; 5:89; 58:3 respectively
3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
4. 18:49
5. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
6. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 13.
7. 37:181
8. Tafsirs by Fakhr Razi, Qurtubi, and Suyuti; see also Fi Halal al-Qur'an.
9. Traditions with the same theme have been transmitted by Shawkani (on the authority of 'Abd al-Razzaq), Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Íatim, and Ibn Marduya and they are also attested in al-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur'an, and Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur and also exegetic works by Fakhr Razi and Tabari. Such virtue is attributed to Imam 'Ali (as) in most of exegetic and tradition sources and it is so well-known that there is no need to quote further sources.
10. Tafsir al-Mizan.
11. ba'u bi-ghaab-in; 2:61, 91; 3:112; 5:60
12. 63:2
13. 2:166
14. 22:52
15. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 50.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. The tradition is mentioned in Tafsir Burhan (under the blessed Verse in question) transmitting it on the authority of Sunni sources.
18. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, Chapter on Love for God (hubb Allah), tradition no. 3; Safinat al-Bihar.
19. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 201.

Surah al-Hashr, Chapter 59

(The Gathering)

Section 28 (juz')

Number of Verses: 24

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter has twenty-four Verses and it was revealed in Medina.

The Arabic word

hashr ("gathering")

is mentioned in the second Verse, hence the designation of the Chapter. The word does not denote gathering on the Day of Resurrection, but it connotes people's gathering for migration.

The blessed Chapter opens and closes with the glorification of God Almighty by all the world of existence. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of hypocrites' collaboration with Medinan Jews against the Muslims, though the Holy Qur'an says that their stratagems lead to nothing but their humiliation and defeat.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Numerous merits have been mentioned for the recitation of the blessed Chapter in question.

According to a Prophetic tradition, whoever recites Surah al-Hashr, Paradise, Hell, Throne, the seven heavens and the earth, as well as animals, winds, birds, trees, creatures, the sun, the moon, and all angels invoke God Almighty that He may bestow His Mercy upon him and forgive him. Had he died on that day or night, he will be a martyr.[1] Such blessings will be bestowed upon the recite owing to reflection upon its contents as the same reflects in man's life.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The Arabic word sabbaha is attested 85 times in the Holy Qur'an. It is also used in different units of daily prayers in prostration and genuflexion. The word originally denotes moving rapidly in water and in the air but as a term, it connotes glorification of God of defects and promptness in worshipping him.

God Almighty possesses two kinds of attributes: affirmative and negative. The former reflect His Perfect Attributes, e.g. Omniscience and

Omnipotence, and the latter glorify Him of defects, e.g. need, ignorance, and weakness.

The words

hamad ("praise")

and

tasbih ("glorification")

allude to such affirmative and negative qualities. It is also worthy of note that by tasbih existential rather than legislative glorification, namely all the world of existence glorify God Almighty dispositionally rather than verbally.

It is also maintained that glorification by the world of existence is both dispositional and verbal, as it is thus attested in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"But you comprehend not their glorification."

Detailed arguments on the same are to be found in exegetic works.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth glorify Him and He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. All existent beings, including angels, mankind, plants, and inanimate things may verbally or dispositionally glorify God Almighty, since the wondrous system of the creation of each and every particle dispositionally reflect Divine Omniscience, Omnipotence, Glory, and Wisdom.

Some scholars also hold that each and every being possesses some share of reason, comprehension, and intelligence, though we may not be aware of the same. As a consequence, each and every being glorifies God Almighty in its own language, even if we may fail to hearken the glorification.

Glorification of God Almighty is widespread in the world of existence, but we are ignorant of the same. However, those who have transcended the inanimate realm and have attained to proximity to God Almighty possess eyes through which they may see the unseen and share the secrets with all the world of existence.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِن دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن
يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي
قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُم بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

2. He it is Who drove out the disbelievers among the people of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would get out [easily despite their utmost power]. And they thought that their strongholds would defend them from the Wrath of Allah. But Allah's [Wrath] reached them from a way whereof they expected it not, and He cast terror into their hearts so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Then take admonition, O you with eyes [to see].

Three Jewish tribes, i.e., Banu Nadhir, Banu Quraytha, and Banu Qaynuqa', emigrated to Medina and settled there and made a non-violation pact with the Noble Prophet (S). However, following the Battle of Uhud, some of them collaborated with Meccan polytheists against Muslims of which the Noble Prophet (S) was apprised and confronted them.

It was in the course of such confrontation that one of their notables, Ka‘b ibn Ashraf, fell and the Jews retreated and took refuge in a fortress to which the Muslims laid siege at the Noble Prophet's (S) behest. Consequent to the siege and confrontation, the Jews admitted to leave Medina.

They took away whatever property of theirs that they were able to but demolished their homes by their own hands lest they fell to the hands of the Muslims. The Arabic word hashr connotes gathering and driving out of one's inhabitation.

It would be of interest to know that inspiring fear into the hearts of the enemies is regarded as a Divine means of assistance:

(“He cast terror into their hearts”),

since it causes the enemies to flee as a consequence of which the Muslims attain to triumph without bloodshed. It is mentioned in traditions that three armies shall come to Mahdi (as) to render him assistance: angels, believers, and fear.[3]

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is He Who expelled disbelievers from amongst the People of the Book from their homes upon their first gathering and confrontation with the Muslims.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that you could never surmise that they would leave their inhabitation and they held that their strongholds could ward off defeat and Divine torment;

(“You did not think that they would get out [easily despite their utmost power]. And they thought that their strongholds would defend them from the Wrath of Allah”).

They were so self-conceited that they relied on their power and strongholds. The expression reflects that the Medinan Banu Nadhir Jews had been affluent in terms of means such that it neither crossed their minds nor those of others that they could be defeated with facility, but since God Almighty had willed to make it manifest to all that nothing might resist His Omnipotence, He caused them to be driven out of their inhabitation without any engagement.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that since they did not expect anything to befall on them, God Almighty inspired fear into their hearts such that they demolished their homes by their own hands as well as by those of believers;

(“But Allah's [Wrath] reached them from a way whereof they expected it not, and He cast terror into their hearts so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Then take admonition, O you with eyes [to see]”).

God Almighty sent fear, the invisible army, to render assistance to the Muslims in many an engagement thereby He cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers and held them back from any confrontation with Muslims. Disbelievers had prepared themselves to confront with armies but were ignorant of the inward army that led them to cooperate with their own foes in demolishing their own homes.

The blessed Verse in question concludes by saying:

“Then, take admonition, O you who have eyes,”

i.e., those who possess insight.

The Arabic words basar and basira denote "eye, sight" and "insight" respectively.[4]

"Possessors of eyes" (uli 'l-absar)

connotes those who are prepared to take admonitions. Thus, the Holy Qur'an warns them to take a lesson out of the incident.

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Fortunate is he who takes admonitions."[5]

Surah al-Hashr - Verses 3-4

وَلَوْلَا أَن كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَن يُشَاقِّ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

3. And had it not been that Allah had decreed exile for them, He would certainly have chastised them in this world and in the Hereafter the torment of the Fire shall be in store for them.

4. Such torment is the consequence of their enmity against Allah and His Messenger and whoever entertain enmity against Allah, then indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement.

The Arabic word jala' connotes exile owing to affliction and entanglement. The blessed Verse 3 is saying that had it not been that God Almighty had decreed exile for them such that they leave their land, He would certainly have chastised them in this world. Going into exile and leaving behind most of their property accrued in their lifetime was an excruciating torment for them.

The blessed Verse is saying that had it not be decreed by God Almighty to be driven out of their land, another affliction would befall on them that was being slain or captivated at the hands of the Muslims, but God Almighty willed that they roamed homeless in the world and such homelessness was more excruciating to them, since whenever they reminisced their strongholds, mansions, farms, and orchards fallen into the hands of others and recalled that they had become deprived of their possessions roaming homeless in the world, they saw that it was owing to their violation of their pact and involvement in conspiracies against Allah's Messenger (S) that they suffered so many torments and harms.

Thus, God Almighty willed that such self-conceited and deceitful unfaithful people be afflicted with such dire fate, though it was solely their torments in this world. The blessed Verse concludes by saying that torment in the Fire shall be in store for them in the Hereafter. Such is the dire fate in this world and the Hereafter of those who turn away from the truth and justice and immerse themselves in self-conceit and vanity.

Such incident alludes to Divine Omnipotence and the veracity of the Noble Prophet's Call. It also warns all people who act like Banu Nadhir Jews.

The blessed Verse 4 is saying that such torment in this world and the Hereafter befalls them owing to their disobedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S). Whoever rises in enmity against God Almighty shall be chastised by Him since He is Severe in chastisement.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic verbal form

shaqu (“they opposed”)

derives from the root sh-q-q (“split”). The Arabic verbal noun shiqaq originally denotes “splitting” and the same is applied to confrontation of the enemies since they split themselves from others.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 5

مَا قَطَعْتُم مِّن لِّينَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. What you cut down of the palm-trees, or you abandoned them, it was by Allah's Command such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient.

The blessed Verse provides a response to the criticism raised by Banu Nadhir Jews directed at the Noble Prophet (S), as mentioned above in the occasion of Revelation. It was at the behest of the Noble Prophet (S) that some of the palm-trees adjacent to the strongholds of the Jews were felled such that the Jews may leave their strongholds and confront the Muslims.

Then, the Jews asked the Noble Prophet (S):

“Did you not forbid such acts?”

The blessed Verse was revealed saying:

“What you cut down of the palm-trees, or you abandoned them, it was by Allah's Command such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient.”

The Arabic word layna is applied to an exquisite kind of palm-tree. Such decree as to felling palm-trees is an exceptional one the Islamic law as per which upon attacking the enemy, trees should not be felled nor animals be killed nor farms be set ablaze.

Such exceptions exist and according to the exception in question, trees may be cut down in order to provoke the enemies to leave their strongholds, to prepare the battlefield, and the like requisites. Likewise, the Islamic law forbids the consumption of carcasses, but the same is allowed as necessity arises.

The expression:

“such that He might disgrace and humiliate the disobedient”

reflects that at least one of the goals behind such act was to disgrace and humiliate the enemies and shatter their morale.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 6

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

6. And what Allah gave to His Messenger from their property, for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things.

The Arabic word afa’ derives from f-a-’ (“return”) and is cognate with fay’ (“return”) but it connotes the property and booties seized without bloodshed and expedition and put at the disposal of the leader of the Muslim community.

The sense "return" may allude that such property returns or is restored to the original possessor, namely friends of God Almighty, since God Almighty has created all the Bounties in this world for believers preceded by His Messengers and although others own them by religious or civil law, but they originally belong to these noble figures.

The Arabic verbal form awjaftum denotes galloping on horse or camel back. The Arabic words khayl and rikab denote "horse" and "camel" respectively.

The property falling into the share of Muslims fall into the following categories: booties falling into the hand of Muslims in battlefields which belong to warriors; the property fallen into the share of Muslims without engagement termed fay' whose law is stipulated in the blessed Verse in question; the property, e.g. uncultivated lands, mountains, reed beds, and rivers, which as per the blessed Verse falls without engagement into the disposal of the Noble Prophet (S) rather than warriors and such property will be distributed upon the Noble Prophet's discretion amongst certain groups of people.

Islamic injunctions are based on wisdom according to which warriors the booties in battlefields but what is accrued without toil belongs to the Divinely appointed guide.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse is saying that what God Almighty returned to His Messenger had not been fallen into the share of warriors through galloping on horse and camel back;

("And what Allah gave to His Messenger from their property, for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things").

Such property is to be totally falls into the disposal of the head of the Muslim community which will be distributed amongst Muslims based on Divine Injunctions and his discretion.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that triumphs are not always owing to the battles fought by Muslims, but God Almighty makes His Messengers conquer whoever He wills;

("But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Able to do all things").

In other words, conquering powerful enemies like Banu Nadhir Jews were owing to Assistance from the Unseen such that Muslims may know that God Almighty is Omnipotent since He may disgrace and humiliate a powerful people and make them be conquered by a limited number of people and transfer all the opportunities from one group to another. Thus, Muslims may learn Divine Admonitions in such battlefields as well as notice the tokens of veracity of the Noble Prophet's (S) Call, and devotion to and reliance on the Pure Essence of God Almighty in the course of their life.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 7

مَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنكُمْ ۚ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

7. What Allah gave as booty to His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah, His Messenger, the kindred, the orphans, the poor, and the stranded such that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you. And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement.

The blessed Verse provides an exposition regarding the use of booties mentioned in the preceding Verse by formulating a general rule as per which what God Almighty restored to His Messenger (S) from the inhabitants of such townships belongs to God Almighty, His Messenger, his kindred, orphans, the poor, and the stranded;

("What Allah gave as booty to His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah, His Messenger, the kindred, the orphans, the poor, and the stranded").

In other words, such property does not resemble war booties solely one fifths of which fall into the share of the Noble Prophet (S) and the needy and four fifths of which belong to warriors.

In like manner, when the preceding Verse is saying that all such property belongs to Allah's Messenger (S) it does not intend to say that the Noble Prophet (S) uses the same for his own benefit, but since he is the head of the Islamic state and he is particularly the protector and guardian of the rights of the needy, he uses the same to their benefits.

Generally speaking, the blessed Verse enumerates six uses for fay':

1. Allah's share since He is evidently the Possessor of all things though He is Needless of anyone or anything. It is a legislative relation whose purport is that other groups may not feel any inferiority but regard themselves on a par with Allah in this respect and thereby they may not lose their prestige in public.

2. The Noble Prophet's (S) share through which his personal needs as well as the requirements of his station and the people's expectations from him may be met.

3. The share of the Noble Prophet's kindred by which that of his relatives and Banu Hashim is being intended since they are not allowed to receive the alms-tax (zakah) which is regarded as the property shared by all Muslims.[6]

It would be basically meaningless had the word kindred designated all people, since it would unexceptionally include all Muslims since all people are relatives. Qur'an exegetes disagree on the conditions of need and poverty in being kindred, but the evidence attested in the close of the blessed Verse in question and the following blessed Verse substantiates such conditions.

4-6. The shares of orphans, the poor, and the stranded. Exegetes also disagree on the identity of such people since they are not unanimous regarding whether they should be from Banu Hashim or all the orphans, the

poor, and the stranded. The majority of Sunni Qur'an exegetes and jurisprudents maintain that the injunction applies to all people.

However, different traditions have been narrated from Ahl al-Bayt in this respect some of which designate that these three shares belong to the orphans, the poor, and the stranded from Banu Hashim. Nevertheless, some of such traditions explicitly reflect that the injunction applies to all people. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the shares of Allah's Messenger (S) and the kindred belonged to them and they share with people the remainder of the shares.[7]

The blessed Verses 8 and 9 provide an exposition for the blessed Verse in question as per which this share does not belong to Banu Hashim, since the contextual meaning makes a reference to all the poor from Meccan Emigrants (muhajirun) and Helpers (ansar).

Furthermore, Qur'an exegetes have reported that following the disobedience of Banu Nadhir, the Noble Prophet (S) distributed their property amongst the Meccan Emigrants who generally led a hard life in Medina and three people from Helpers who were in dire need to the same.

It substantiates the general application of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question and even if certain traditions be inconsistent with the same, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse should be taken into account.[8]

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the reason behind such well-measured distribution, saying that the reason behind such distribution is that such abundant property be not used by the rich amongst you and the needy be not thereby deprived of the same;

("such that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you. And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement").

Some Qur'an exegetes make mention of an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question to which reference was made above according to which following the defeat of Banu Nadhir, a number of Muslim notables came unto the Noble Prophet (S) asking him to take his own share as well as one fourths of the booties and leave the rest unto them so that they may distribute them amongst themselves as it was the common practice of pre-Islamic Arabs.

Then, the blessed Verse was revealed warning them against leaving them at the disposal of the affluent.

The blessed Verse reflects a fundamental principle of Islamic economy according to which despite respecting private ownership, the property is not supposed to be at the disposal of a limited number of people.

However, it does not intend to say that we may legislate laws of our own and thereby seize the property of a certain group and leave them at the disposal of another group, but it reflects that in case Islamic laws concerning the acquisition of property as well as the taxes like one-fifths tax (khums), alms-tax (zakah), and tributes and the laws of the Muslim public treasury (bayt al-mal) and war booties be properly attended to, public interests will

be met and Muslim community will not be polarized into a minority of the affluent and a majority of the poor.

Thus the blessed Verse closes:

"And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it] and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Severe in chastisement."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse was revealed regarding the distribution of the booties acquired from Banu Nadhir, but the general context implies an injunction applicable to all the spheres of Muslims' lives as per which it is incumbent upon Muslims to obey the Noble Prophet's (S) commands in terms of the Islamic state as well as economic and devotional issues. The blessed Verse also warns the disobedient against severe torments.

In this vein, it would be of interest to make a reference in passing to the tragic account of Fadak, a prospering village located in the vicinity of Medina, 14 km from Khaybar.

It was in the seventh year after the Noble Prophet's (S) migration (hijra) to Medina that the strongholds at Khaybar fell one after the other and the central power of the Jews collapsed as a consequence of which the inhabitants of the village surrendered to the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and handed over half of their orchards and land lots to the Noble Prophet (S) and kept the rest for themselves and assumed the responsibility to cultivate the lands transferred to the Noble Prophet (S) but received some remuneration for their work on them.

The blessed Verse in question reflects that the property belonged to the Noble Prophet (S) and the property or its proceeds could be used by him. Then, the Noble Prophet (S) transferred the property to his daughter, Hadhrat Fatima . The account has been narrated by many Shi'i and Sunni Qur'an exegetes.

For instance, see the exegetic work titled Durr al-Manthur, vol. 4, p. 177, where it is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that when the blessed Verse:[9]

"Therefore give unto the kindred his due and to the poor and to the stranded. That is best for those who seek Allah's Countenance and it is they who shall find deliverance"

was revealed, he gave it to his daughter, Fatima , as a gift.

It is mentioned in Kanz al-'Ummal[10], on the margin of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad that concerning the question of the observation of blood ties (sila rahim) it is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that upon the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, the Noble Prophet (S) summoned Fatima saying:

"O Fatima, Fadak belongs to you."

In his historical work, Hakim Nayshaburi reports the same account.[11] In his commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, Ibn Abi al-Hadid provides a detailed account of Fadak.[12] The account is to be found in many other sources.

Following the sad demise of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), certain people thought that possessing such economic means by Imam 'Ali's (as)

wife, Fatima , could intervene with their political power and thereby decided to fully seclude Imam ‘Ali's (as) adherents.

It was in this vein that they resorted to the fabricated tradition:

“We Prophets will not leave any inheritance”

and confiscated Fatima's property. It was against the law to ask for evidence and testimony for some property in someone's possession. However, Hadhrat Fatima produced testimony to the effect that the Noble Prophet (S) had transferred Fadak to her as a gift, but they ignored the testimony.

Later when each of the caliphs desired to show their respect to the Ahl al-Bayt, they restored Fadak to them, but it was shortly confiscated once more later on. Such instances of restoration and confiscation repeatedly occurred under Umayyad and ‘Abbasid caliphs.

The account of Fadak and the ensuing incidents in the early history of Islam and in later times are amongst the most tragic and admonishing events of the history of Islam which deserve precise studies that may reveal different occurrences in the history of Islam.

It is worthy of note that in his well-known work titled Sahih Muslim, the Sunni traditionist, Muslim ibn Hajjaj Qushayri Nayshaburi provides a detailed account of Hadhrat Fatima's claim to be the rightful owner of Fadak before the First Caliph, Abu Bakr, and narrates from ‘À’isha that following the refusal of the Caliph to restore Fadak to her, she refused to talk to him to her last day.[13]

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 8

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

8. [And there is also a share in this booty] for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Divine Bounties and Satisfaction, and helping Allah and His Messenger. Such are verily the truthful.

The blessed Verse is saying that the booties acquired from Banu Nadhir Jews which fell into the share of the Noble Prophet (S) belong to Allah, His Messenger (S), and the kindred as well as the poor emigrants who had lost their possessions when they left their homes, possessions, and land and emigrated with Allah's Messenger (S) from Mecca to Medina seeking Divine Bounties and Satisfaction.

They were the supporters of the Islamic faith and Allah's Messenger (S) and they were true in faith in Allah and His Messenger (S).

The point is that there is a token for everything thereby it may be known. The believers in the early period of the Islamic faith were tried by leading hard lives and leaving their possessions, children, peoples, and lands in the cause of the Islamic faith. They even sacrificed their lives. It is remarkable that such sacrifices were made by people who had been accustomed to idolatry all their lives.

Thus, they abandoned the religions of their ancestors and converted to monotheism. The believers in the early history of the Islamic faith made

such remarkable endeavors. Thus, those who are truthful in their belief are supposed to support Allah's religion and His Messenger (S) despite living in poverty and homelessness.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

9. And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants], love those who emigrate from Mecca to them and in their hearts they feel no need for the booties granted to Emigrants though they live in dire poverty, but give Emigrants preference over themselves. And those who are delivered from covetousness, such are they who shall find deliverance.

The Arabic verbal for

tabawwa'u ("had homes")

derives from b-w-' ("settle down, inhabit") and is cognate with bawa' ("settle, take place"). The Arabic noun khasasa is applied to poverty leading to split in life. The passive verbal form yuqa ("delivered, saved") derives from w-q-'. The Arabic nominal form shuhh denotes covetousness tinged with avarice.[14]

Following praising the Emigrants and those who emigrated with the Noble Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to praise the Helpers who had converted to the Islamic faith prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) entering Medina and had awaited him;

("And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants]").

The blessed Verse may allude to the believers who had settled in Medina. It may also make a reference to the point that in the same manner that they had settled in Medina, they were also rooted in their faith.

Following praising the Emigrants and those who emigrated to Medina with the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse praises the Helpers who had converted to the Islamic faith in Medina prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) arrival there and looked forward to his arrival.

"And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the faith [before the Emigrants]"

alludes to the believers residing in Medina. It may also reflect that in the same manner that they resided in Medina, they were also deeply rooted in their faith.

The blessed Verse treats of some of the noble attributes and merits of the Helpers.

Firstly,

"And [it is also for] those who before them had homes [in Medina] reflects that the Helpers had converted to the Islamic faith before the Emigrants."

It may also indicate that they had converted to the Islamic faith prior to the Noble Prophet's (S) arrival in Medina and their faith was so deeply

rooted in their hearts that it resembled their settlement in their homes, namely they were firm in their beliefs. Secondly, they favored that the Emigrants stay in their homes and be hospitable to them.

"Love those who emigrate to them"

reflects that they made no distinction among Muslims, but what mattered to them was faith and emigration. Such love was regarded as one of their permanent characteristics.

Thirdly, they were not envious of what the Noble Prophet (S) granted to the Emigrants from Banu Nadhir's property nor did they expected any remuneration which bears witness to the Helpers' high-mindedness and generosity of spirit.

Fourthly,

"And give them [Emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that"

reflects that despite their need and poverty, they sacrificed whatever they had to the Emigrants and preferred them over themselves. Thus, love, making sacrifice, and high-mindedness are the glorious attributes of the Helpers.

Regarding

"and in their hearts they feel no need for the booties granted to Emigrants though they live in dire poverty, but give Emigrants preference over themselves,"

Qur'an exegetes say that when the booties were seized from Banu Nadhir, the Noble Prophet (S) distributed them amongst the Emigrants and the Helpers were satisfied with the distribution, hence the Revelation of the blessed Verse.

However, some exegetes narrate that the Noble Prophet (S) summoned the Helpers and informed them of the distribution of the booties amongst the Emigrants inquiring if they expected a share of the booties seized from Banu Nadhir.

The Helpers said:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! We expect that you distribute them amongst the Emigrants and they stay with us since their stay is a blessing bestowed upon us."

The Noble Prophet (S) prayed for them and the blessed Verse was revealed, saying that despite their need and poverty, the Helpers preferred the Emigrants over themselves. It is narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud that one evening, following the establishment of the early and late evening prayer at the Mosque of Allah's Messenger (S), a man rose up saying that he was a stranded traveler in need of food.

The Noble Prophet (S) asked:

"Who will meet his demand for the night to receive the recompense of Paradise in return?"

The commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as), rose up taking the man's hand.

He took him to Fatima Zahra's home, saying:

"O daughter of Allah's Messenger! Feed the guest."

Hadhrat Fatima said:

"O cousin! There is some meager food at home and Hasan and Husayn (as) are hungry and your are taking fast. The food is only for one person."

'Ali (as) replied:

"Prepare the food."

Fatima prepared the food for the guest thinking that if she ate with the guest, he would not be able to take his fill but if she did not eat, he might be ashamed. Therefore, she pretended that she was lighting the lamp and made the lighting take longer such that the guest help himself to the food. When she brought the lamp, she noticed that the food was untouched.

'Ali (as) inquired:

"Why did you not eat?"

The man replied:

"I took my fill."

Then the Commander of the Faithful (as), Fatima , their children, and the neighbors took their fill but the food was still there. 'Ali (as) went to the Noble Prophet (S) the other day. Upon the Noble Prophet's (S) inquiry concerning feeding the guest he replied that it was alright. Then, the Noble Prophet (S) told him the story of the guest, the food, and the lamp.

The Commander of the Faithful (as) asked:

"Who did inform you of the story?"

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Gabriel came to me and let me know, revealing the blessed Verse

'and give them preference over themselves even thought they were in need of that.'"

The tradition is also narrated by 'Àsim ibn Kalb, a transmitter of traditions whose narrations are acknowledged by Sunnis and Shi'is. It is also narrated in exegetic works like Burhan, Nur al-Thiqalayn, Safi, Makhzan al-'Irfan, and Manhaj al-Sadiqin and some Sunni exegetic works.

The blessed Verse closes with further emphasis on such virtues and their consequences saying;

"and those who are delivered from covetousness, such are they who shall find deliverance."

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word shuhh denotes miserliness tinged with avarice such that the same becomes a permanent disposition.

The Arabic verbal form

yuqa ("is saved")

reflects that whoever is saved by God Almighty from such vice shall be delivered.

According to a tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said unto a companion of his:

"Do you know who shahih is?"

He replied:

"Miserly."

The Noble Imam (as) said:

"shahih is far worse than miserly (bakhil) as the latter is miserly regarding what he possesses, but the former is also miserly regarding the possessions of his as well as other people's. Such person is not satisfied

with what Allah has provided him with but intends to possess whatever possession he sees though lawful or unlawful means."[15]

According to another tradition, miserliness, avarice, and faith may not gather in the heart of a Muslim.[16]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best of you are your manly and generous people and the worst of you are the misers. Doing good to one's brethren and making efforts to meet their demands springs from pure and unadulterated faith."[17]

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 10

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

10. And those who came after them [the Emigrants and the Helpers] say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are verily full of kindness, Most Merciful."

Qur'anic attestations of forgiveness and the related vocabulary exceed two hundred in number. It is incumbent upon us to invoke Allah for forgiveness and also ask Allah's friends to pray for our forgiveness. The blessed Verse treats of another group of early Muslims designated as Successors (tabi'un) after the Qur'anic designation.

Next to the Emigrants and the Helpers, they form the third largest group of Muslims. They are also praised by the enumeration of their virtues and merits. Firstly, they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness not only for themselves but also for their brethren. It alludes to the fact that true faith may not be tinged by self-conceit as a true believer wishes for himself what he does for others.

Secondly, another virtue of the believers is that all their virtuous attributes springs from their pure heart unadulterated by hatred and enmity against believers.

It was in the same vein that believers in the early days of Islam invoked God Almighty to bestow purity upon their hearts and their prayer was seemingly answered such that they could united and defeat the enemies and raise the banner of the Islamic faith.

Today, we are indebted to them. Had we been treading the path of our ancestors, we would be pure in heart and our hearts would be unadulterated by covetousness, miserliness, hatred, envy, self-conceit, and other vices. Thus, we were even able to exceed our ancestors in making the Muslim community more prosperous and rid ourselves of the tyranny, disbelief, and bondage to unbelievers and cooperate with each other to add further glory to the Islamic faith and Muslims.

It is also worthy of note that the antecedent of

"and those who came after them"

is seemingly

"the poor Emigrants"

reflecting that the booties do not solely fall into the share of the Emigrants and the Helpers, but the Muslims in need down the centuries should have their own shares.

The word

"brethren"

and invoking Allah, the Compassionate, the Most-Gracious reflects the spirit of love, purity, and brotherhood that should prevail over the Muslim community such that it is incumbent upon believers to wish all good things for themselves and others and all members of the Muslim community are supposed to cooperate for the good of the community. The Arabic word ghill denotes hatred, enmity, and covetousness.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 11

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ
لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِن قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

11. Have you not observed the hypocrites who say to their friends among the people of the Scripture who disbelieve: "If you are expelled, we verily will go out with you, and we will never obey anyone against you; and if you are attacked, we will verily help you." But Allah is Witness that they indeed are liars.

Following praising the Emigrants, the Helpers, and the Successors mentioned in the previous Verses, the blessed Verse in question depicts the hypocrites and disbelievers who were united in resisting them.

It is worthy of note that some people attend to Divine Forgiveness and some others are preoccupied with obstinacy and resisting the believers. Hypocrites sent a message to the Jews who had violated their covenant and were disfavored by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) not to leave their vicious act since they supported them.

Thus, addressing the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verse is raising the question:

"Did you not see that hypocrites said unto their brethren from amongst the people of the Scriptures that if they were driven out of their land, they were prepared to wage war against the Muslims since they did not obey the Noble Prophet (S) and his Companions?"

The blessed Verse concerns a tribe of disbelievers residing in Medina. They were Banu Nadhir who failed to convert to the Islamic faith and were ordered by the Noble Prophet (S) to leave Medina or prepare themselves for a battle.

A group of hypocrites led by Ibn Ubayy and Ibn Nabtal deceived them asking them to prepare themselves for waging war against Muslims and they would render them aid and fight the Muslims and had Muslims defeated them they would accompany them in leaving their land.

Hypocrites were those who pretended to have converted to the Islamic faith but inwardly, they were disbelievers. It is in the same vein that the Holy Qur'an is explicitly saying that God Almighty bears witness that they are liars. It is the hypocrites' stratagem that they neither stand on their word nor do they keep their promise.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 12

لَئِنْ أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِن قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَئِن نَّصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ

12. Surely, if they [disbelievers] are expelled, never will they [hypocrites] go out with them; and if they are attacked, they [hypocrites] will never help them. And if they do help them, they will turn their backs, and they [disbelievers and hypocrites] will not be victorious.

The blessed Verse is saying unto Muslims that they should not be afraid of the hypocrites' pompous propaganda, since they are not people of their words but they flee the ground before long. The decisive and determined style of these Verses inspires awe in the hearts of all hypocrites and opponents.

It should be borne in mind that although the blessed Verse was revealed on this occasion, but it is applicable to all instances where hypocrites closely cooperate with other enemies of the Islamic faith and promise to render aid to each other, but all their promises are unfounded.

Similar instances are to be found in not only the early history of Islam but also in the intimate cooperation between hypocrites in Muslim countries with the enemies of the Islamic faith in modern times. If true believers act upon their obligations, they will conquer their enemies and their designs will become undone.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 13

لَأَنتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ

13. Indeed, the awe inspired by you in the hypocrites' hearts far exceeds their fear of Allah. That is because they are a people who comprehend not.

Being afraid of people rather than of Allah is an explicit token of hypocrisy. However, hypocrites are unaware of the fact that the Muslims' glory and might depend on Divine Will and Favor.

The blessed Verse analyses the reason lying behind the hypocrites' defeat saying that the awe inspired by you in their hearts exceeds that of Allah, since they are not afraid of God Almighty but they are fearful of everyone and everything, particularly of believing and persevering enemies like you, since they are ignorant. The Arabic word rahba originally denotes fear tinged with anxiety and self-consciousness. Such fear truly is deeply rooted and its tokens are to be found in their acts.

Although the blessed Verse concerns the Jews from Banu Nadhir and the reasons lying behind their defeat against the Muslims, but it is generally addressed to all hypocrites since human heart may not simultaneously entertain fear of Allah and fear all besides Him.

Everything depends upon Divine Will and whoever fears God Almighty and be aware of His Omnipotence should not be afraid of others besides Him, but the root of all misfortunes lies in ignorance of the truth of monotheism.

If Muslims today happen to be believers and Muslims in the true sense of the words, they will not entertain fear of the military and industry

superpowers but those superpowers will be afraid of them as its instances are evident such that they are afraid of a small but believing and sacrificing nation.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 14

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرًى مُّحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِن وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ ۚ بَأْسُهُم بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ ۚ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ

14. [Hypocrites are so fearful that] they fight not against you even together, except in fortified townships or from behind walls. Their enmity among themselves is more intense. You would think they were united, but their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who reflect not.

The Arabic word qura is applied to a place of gathering and settlement be it a town or a village. The word muhassana denoting fortified is cognate with hisn ("castle"). The noun phrase qura muhassana is applied to places fortified by walls, moats, and towers. Judur is a plural noun denoting "walls" and the singular form is jidar. The word shatta is the plural form of shatit ("scattered").

Resuming the discussion in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse is saying that hypocrites are so afraid of the believers that whenever the latter confront them, they hide behind walls and wage war against them from behind castle walls. Muslims may imagine that hypocrites are united and unanimous but the fact is that outwardly they are together but it is out of ignorance that their hearts are quite scattered and they intensely bear animosity against one another.

Reflecting upon these blessed Verses clearly indicates that the attributes ascribed to hypocrites herein are to be found in many a Muslim nowadays such that if they get together to decide on certain significant issues, they are not unanimous since they attend to their personal benefits and interests even if they lead to other people's loss.

Thus, the Muslim community is supposed to prevail over all nations in the world as addressing the believers, the Qur'anic Verse[18]:

"Therefore, do not become weak [against your enemy], nor be sad, and you will be the most triumphant people in the world, if they be firmly established in terms of faith."

Our backwardness reflects that we Muslims do not act upon the conditions on which faithfulness rests, otherwise, as reflected in the blessed Verse quoted above, we should have been the most triumphant and the mightiest of nations in the world.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 15

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

15. [In the similitude of the Jews from Banu Nadhir] they are like their immediate predecessors [deceived by the hypocrites' empty promises]. They tasted the bitterness and afflictions consequent to their deviation and for them a painful torment.

The Arabic word wabal denotes the evil consequences of something. Believers may not be stung from the same hole but the Jews from Banu

Nadhir were deceived by hypocrites' promises failing to be reminded of similar empty promises made to the Jews from Banu Qaynuqa‘. Believers are supposed to attend to people's backgrounds.

There are certain permanent laws and traditions in history. Disbelievers went astray and tasted the bitter consequences of their error. You will reap the same if you tread the same path. Favorable and unfavorable things are the consequences of our own deeds.

Cooperation with hypocrites entails torment in this world and the Hereafter

(“and for them is excruciating torment”).

Divine excruciating torment is in store for them.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 16

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

16. The people of the Scriptures' being deceived by hypocrites resembles that by Satan, when he said unto man: “Disbelieve in Allah.” Then when [man] disbelieved in Allah, Satan said: “I hate you and I detach myself from you. I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The blessed Verse reminds the believers of another attribute of hypocrites resembling a hypocrite to Satan who following having deceived his followers he uses different designs to tempt them to disbelieve in Allah. Satan does not keep his promise but leads his followers astray saying that he is fearful of the Lord of the worlds. It is to be noted that the hypocrites' temptations and provocations resemble those by Satan, but it is man who chooses to be led astray from the true path.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 17

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتَهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدَيْنِ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ

17. The end of both [Satan and disbelievers is that they] will be in the Fire for good. Such is the recompense of the wrong-doers.

The blessed Verse clearly expresses the fate of Satan and his followers as well as hypocrites and their disbelieving allies which is abiding in the Fire for ever. The general rule is that cooperation with disbelievers, hypocrites, Satan, and his allies entails defeat, misfortune, and torment in this world and the Hereafter; whereas, the cooperation of the believers and their allies is permanent and everlasting and it will entail triumph and being granted Divine Mercy in both worlds.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 18

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

18. O you who believe! Fear Allah and refrain from disobedience to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah since He is All-Aware of what you do.

Addressed to the believers, the blessed Verse draws a conclusion of the dire and excruciating fate of Banu Nadhir, hypocrites, and Satan saying:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and refrain from disobedience to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow."

To lay further emphasis, the blessed Verse adds:

"Fear Allah since He is All-Aware of what you do."

Fear of Allah leads man to reflect upon his fate on the Day of Resurrection and purify his deeds. As mentioned above, reiteration of fear of Allah lays further emphasis, since the springhead of all righteous deeds is fear of Allah.

The Arabic word ghad originally denotes "tomorrow" but it ad hoc connotes the Day of Resurrection, since taking into account the life of the world, we notice that the Day of Resurrection will arrive soon.

To reflect its significance, the Arabic word ghad is used in the indefinite form. The Arabic word nafs may connote everyone, namely each and every person is supposed to reflect upon his morrow without expecting others to do anything for him, since so long as he is in this world, he may send forth whatever he may.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 19

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

19. And be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget their own selves. Those are the disobedient.

Resuming the discussion on fearing Allah and attending to one's fate on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verse emphasizes fear of God Almighty saying:

"Be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget themselves."

Fear of God Almighty basically rests on two things: remembrance of God Almighty, namely permanently attending toward God Almighty and being aware of His Presence at all times and in all places; attending to Divine Justice and the Record of deeds in which each and every act, small and significant, is recorded.

It is in this vein that the Prophets and the friends of Allah fore and foremost attended to the two principles of Origin and Resurrection and their significance in purifying the individual and the society.

It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an is explicitly saying that forgetting God Almighty leads to forgetting one's own self. The reason lying behind such oblivion is that forgetting God Almighty leads man to drown in concupiscent desires and pleasures of the flesh and forget the goal of his creation and thereby neglect to make the required saving for the Day of Resurrection.

On the other hand, forgetting God Almighty entails consigning His Pure Attributes, e.g. Absolute Existence, Omniscience, and boundless needlessness, into oblivion, although all beings besides God Almighty are dependent upon and in need of His Pure Essence. Such oblivion leads man to regard himself as independent and needless and thereby forget the reality and identity of his human existence.

One of the worst afflictions of man is basically his forgetting his own self, since in this manner he forgets his God given inherent faculties which distinguish him from other creatures. Such oblivion is on a par with forgetting one's own humanity and such person degrades himself to the degree of a savage beast and may never think about anything but the pleasures of the flesh.

They all constitute the main cause of disobedience to God Almighty and such oblivion is the worst instance disobedience to God.

It is in the same vein that the blessed Verse closes with the clause

"They [such forgetful people] are the disobedient."

It is also worthy of note that the blessed Verse is encouraging people not to be like those who forgot God Almighty and He made them entangled with oblivion rather than asking people not to forget Him.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 20

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

20. Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise. It is the dwellers of Paradise that will be the saved and the victorious.

The blessed Verse makes a comparison between the two groups, namely that of God fearing believers attending to the Origin and the Day of Resurrection and that of the forgetful oblivious of God Almighty and their own selves, saying:

"Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise,"

neither in this world, nor in their beliefs, manner of thought, individual and collective manner of life, and their goals, nor in terms of the Hereafter, the Day of Resurrection, revival of sublime human values, and amassing savings for the everlasting life. The latter group is drowned in the pleasures of the flesh, worldly possessions, and oblivion. Thus, man is in a dilemma, namely he must either join the former or the latter, since there is no other path to tread.

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive conclusion saying that the dwellers are Paradise are solely the saved and the victorious not only in this world, but in the Hereafter, when serenity and deliverance will fall into their share.

However, total defeat in both worlds is in store for the oblivious. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that the dwellers of Paradise are those who obey Allah's Messenger (S) and acknowledge the Divine Guardianship of ‘Ali (as). The dwellers of the Fire are those who disfavored Imam ‘Ali's (as) Divine Guardianship and disobeyed him and waged war against him.[19]

It is worthy of note, however, that it is one of the explicit applications of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse and affects in no way the general application of the blessed Verse.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 21

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَا هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

21. Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rend asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect.

The preceding blessed Verses made use of different ways to penetrate into the hearts of mankind and most explicitly expressed the most significant issues. The blessed Verse in question, reflecting all Qur'anic Verses, reveals that the Holy Qur'an is so penetrating that had it been sent down on mountains, they would have trembled; however, it is a source of surprise that man is so stone-hearted that he hears it but he is not affected by it.

The blessed Verse is saying that

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rend asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect."

Many a Qur'an exegete have taken the blessed Verse as a simile maintaining that despite all their firmness, had mountains had intellect and perception, they would have trembled and rent asunder upon hearing Qur'anic Verses, but some hard-hearted people hear them without being affected in the least.

In this vein, the exegetes maintain that

"Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind"

substantiates the interpretation.

Some other exegetes, however, taking into account the outward meaning of the blessed Verse, say that all the creatures in this world, e.g. mountains, possess some sort of perception and had these blessed Verses been sent unto them, they would have verily rent asunder.

In this vein, they maintain that the interpretation is substantiated by the blessed Verse[20]

"Then, your hearts were hardened and turned into stones out of which rivers gush forth and verily there are of them which split asunder so that water flows from them and verily there are of them which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse is saying that mountains would have been humbled before the Holy Qur'an, then it proceeds to say that they would have been rent asunder, alluding that the Holy Qur'an would have penetrated into them in time whose tokens would have been reflected in them such that they would have lost their firmness like restless enamored people and then would have been rent asunder.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 22

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ

22. He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The recitation of the closing blessed Verses of the Chapter in question have been strongly recommended in traditions and different Blessings have been enumerated for the same instances of which include being absolved of sins and attaining to the elevated state of martyrs.[21]

It is through the recitation of these blessed Verses that man may attend to the Divine Attributes mentioned herein and find the Greatest Name of God, since fifteen, and according to some exegetes eighteen, Divine Attributes have been mentioned in these blessed Verses each of which reflect His Boundless and Absolute Perfect Attributes.

The true object of worship is the Being Whose Omniscience, Graciousness, Sanctity, Glory, and Grandeur is Perfect and such Attributes solely belong to God Almighty. Therefore, there is no object of worship but Him. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that He is the Lord besides Whom there is no other object of worship.

He is Omniscient of the seen and the unseen. He is the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. The blessed Verse, above all, lays emphasis on monotheism as the basis of all His Positive and Negative Attributes as well as knowing God Almighty. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to lay further emphasis on Divine Omniscience regarding the seen and the unseen.

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that presence (hudhur) is accompanied by observation, through the outward or inward eye. Thus, where human perception and observation penetrate, it is the world of presence and what lies beyond the realm of perception and observation is the world of the unseen or intuition.

It is worthy of note, however, that they are all equal before Divine Omniscience, since His Infinite Presence is Omnipresent.

Thus, nothing lies beyond Divine Omniscience and Omnipresence, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[22]:

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the shadows of neither the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but it is written in a Clear Record."

Attending to this Divine Attributes makes man aware of the fact that He is Omnipresent and Omniscient. Thus, man fear God Almighty and is aware that His Graciousness embraces all creatures particularly the believers.

Emphasis is laid on Divine Graciousness such that man sets his hope on treading the long path of perfection leading toward God Almighty being aware that he may not pass beyond the shadows and error without Divine Graciousness. Thus, besides, Divine Oneness, three other Divine Attributes are mentioned in the blessed Verse each of which leads to inspiration in some way or another.

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 23

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

23. He is Allah beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Sovereign, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of

security, the Dominant over all things, the Invincible All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him.

Besides emphasizing Divine Unity, eight more Divine Attributes are enumerated in the blessed Verse: there is no object of worship besides Him; He is the Sovereign and the Absolute Owner of all things; He is free from all defects; He wrongs no one; He bestows security upon all.

"Allah calls to the Home of Peace and guides who He wills to the Straight Path"[23]***.***

"Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace"[24]***.***

The believers'

"abode of peace is with their Lord."

The people of Paradise will be greeted by

"but only the saying of greetings with peace"[25]***.***

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that He bestows security and faith upon His friends, namely the believers. He is the Protector and Watcher of all things. He is so Mighty that He is Invincible. He improves everything through His Invincible Will.

The Arabic word jabbar is employed in ten instances in the senses of "compeller, dominant" and "improver" nine instances of which refer to wrong-doers, the disobedient, and the corrupt, but solely one instance, in the blessed Verse in question, refers to God Almighty.

The blessed Verse also says that He is Worthy of Grandeur and there is no being more exalted and sublime than Him. The Arabic word mutakkabir is applied in two different senses, one is praised applying to God Almighty denoting having grandeur, good deeds and attributes and the other is blameworthy used for beings besides God Almighty.

The latter sense connotes that insignificant people claim grandeur and ascribe attributes to themselves of which they are free. Since God Almighty is the only Being worthy of Grandeur and Magnificence, the word in its ameliorative sense is applied to Him. The word in its pejorative sense is applied to beings besides God Almighty.

The blessed Verse closes by laying emphasis on Divine Unity, mentioned in the beginning of the blessed Verse, saying:

"Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him."

Surah al-Hashr - Verse 24

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

24. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names and Attributes. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Unrivalled All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The Arabic word bari' denotes one who invents something unprecedentedly. God Almighty is the Creator Who in creating His

creatures bestowed forms on things without resorting to already existent patterns and forms.

The blessed Verse, the last Verse of the Chapter in question, proceeds to enumerate six more Divine Attributes, saying that He is the Creator (al-khlaliq) Who invented creatures in the best forms without resorting to already existent forms (al-bari'); the Creator who bestowed a specific form to each being (al-musawwir).

Since Divine Attributes are not restricted to these attributes, but They are Infinite like His Infinite Essence, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that The Most Beautiful Attributes belong to Him; consequently, He is free from any defect and all beings in the heavens and the earth glorify Him.

Finally, to lay further emphasis on the system of creation and the order prevailing over it, mention is made of two more Attributes of His: He is the Unrivalled All-Mighty, the All-Wise. The former reflects His Omnipotence over all things and the latter alludes to His Omniscience regarding the system of creation and the precise order prevailing over creation.

Therefore, besides treating of Divine Unity twice, the last three Verses enumerate seventeen Divine Attributes:

1. the Omniscient of the seen and the unseen (al-'alim al-ghayb wa al-shahada)
2. All-Gracious (al-rahman)
3. All-Merciful (al-rahim)
4. The Sovereign (al-malik)
5. The Holy (Quddus)
6. The Peace (al-salam)
7. The Bestower of Security (al-mu'min)
8. The Protector (al-muhaymin)
9. The All-Mighty (al-'aziz)
10. The Most Powerful (al-jabbar)
11. The Magnificent (al-mutakkabir)
12. The Creator (al-khaliq)
13. The Inventor (al-bari')
14. The Bestower of forms (al-musawwir)
15. The All-Wise (al-hakim)
16. Possessing the Most Beautiful Attributes
17. The One Glorified by all the creatures of the world.

Taking into account Divine Unity, eighteen Divine Attributes have been enumerated herein. It is to be noted that Divine Unity and All-Mighty have been mentioned twice. The enumeration of the Attributes follows a specific order in the three blessed Verses.

The first blessed Verse treats of the most general Attribute of Divine Essence, the Omniscient and the most general Attributes of Action, All-Gracious from which all Divine Acts spring. The second Verse treats of His Sovereignty and the aspects of His Absolute Sovereignty, e.g. the Holy, the Peace, the Bestower of Security, the All-Mighty, the Magnificent. The last Verse treats of creation and its aspects, e.g. order, bestowing of forms, Omnipotence, and Wisdom.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question guide those treading the path of knowing Allah at different stages, beginning with His Pure Essence, proceeding toward the world of creation, and guiding them from creatures to the Creator and thereby purifying the heart as the abode of Divine Attributes and the center of Divine forms.

Thus, they are fostered in the light of such teachings and their souls blossom with the fear of God Almighty and thereby deserve nearness unto Him. Thus, unanimous with all the constituent elements of the world, they glorify His Holiness.

Great significance has thereby been accorded to these blessed Verses in Islamic traditions.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Chapter in question opens and closes by the glorification of God Almighty and two Divine Most Beautiful Attributes, the All-Mighty and the All-Wise, since the final goal of the recitation of the Chapter is to know God Almighty, glorifying him, and knowing His Holy Attributes. It is also worthy of note that a detailed discussion is to found above under 7:18.

May God Almighty, by His Most Beautiful Attributes, humble our hearts before the Holy Qur'an and protect us, out of His Mercy, from satanic temptations.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, the opening of the blessed Chapter in question, vol. 9, p. 20; Qurtubi's exegetic work, the opening of the blessed Chapter in question.
2. 17:44
3. Ithbat al-Huda, vol. 7, p. 124.
4. Raghib's Mufradat.
5. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 16.
6. Such interpretation is maintained by Shi‘i exegetes and many Sunni exegetes, amongst whom mention may be made of the following: Fakhr Razi in Tafsir Kabir; Isma‘il ibn Mustafa Haqqi in Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan; Sayyid Qutb in Fi Halal al-Qur'an; Maraghi in his exegetic work; Àlusi in Ruh al-Ma‘ani.
7. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Wasa'il al-Shi‘a, vol. 6, p. 368.
8. Wasa'il al-Shi‘a, vol. 6, p. 356
9. 30:38
10. vol. 2, p. 185
11. Kitab Fadak, p. 49.
12. Ibn Abi al-Hadid's Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 16, p. 209.
13. Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1380, Kitab al-Jihad, tradition 52.
14. Raghib's Mufradat.
15. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 291, tradition 64.
16. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 307.
18. 3:139
19. Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
20. 2:74

21. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Manhaj al-Sadiqin; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Nur; Tafsir Burhan; Suyuti's Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, under the blessed Chapter in question.
22. 6:59
23. 10:25
24. 5:16
25. 56:26

Surah al-Mumtahana, Chapter 60

(The Woman to be Examined)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 13

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has thirteen Verses and owes its designation to the tenth Verse treating of the examination of Emigrant women. The blessed Chapter treats of love for God Almighty and forbidding believers from befriending His enemies. Muslims are also enjoined to regard Prophet Abraham (as) as a model.

Nine blessed Qur'anic Chapters, namely 9, 33, 47, 60, 63, 70, 98, 109, and 111, from amongst one hundred and fourteen Chapters, open with the recognition of enemies. Such Qur'anic Verses exceed those of revealed prescripts (ayat al-ahkam).

The Qur'anic instances of the words
dhull ("error"),
kufr ("disbelief"),
nifaq ("hypocrite"),
and
sadd ("aversion")
are attested 191, 521, 37, and 45 times respectively.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition, whoever recites Surah al-Mumtahana, all believing men and women will intercede on his behalf on the Day of Resurrection.[1]

Other traditions have been narrated on the merits of the recitation of the Chapter; however, such merits fall into the share of those who attend to the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question for the sake of liking, disliking, and waging jihad and application of their contextual meaning in Allah's Cause rather than being content with the passive recitation of the same.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُم مِّنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَن تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنتُمْ وَمَن يَفْعَلْهُ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

1. O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies as friends. You befriend them while they have disbelieved in what has come

to you of the Truth. Besides they have driven out the Messenger and yourselves [from Mecca] since you believe in Allah, your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure [, do not befriend them]. You show friendship to them in secret while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whoever of you does that, then verily he has gone astray from the Straight Path.

Occasion of Revelation. The majority of Qur'anic exegetes have explicitly mentioned that the blessed Verse concerns Hatib ibn Abi Bulta'a. In his Majma' al-Bayan, Tabarsi narrates that a certain woman by the name of Sara, from a Meccan tribe, departing from Mecca for Median, came unto Allah's Messenger (S).

The Noble Prophet (S) asked her whether she had converted to the Islamic faith and had come there. She provided a negative reply.

Upon being asked by the Noble Prophet as to the reason lying behind her departure, she replied:

"We were descended from you. Now that all my guardians have departed, I have been severely rendered in need. I have come here so that you may provide me with clothes and a mount."

The Noble Prophet (S) asked inquired:

"What happened to the Meccan youth?"

The question alluded to her profession as a vocalist performing for the youth."

She replied that following the battle of Badr, no one had asked her to perform on the vocals. The response reflects the severity of the polytheists' defeat at the battle of Badr. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered the children of 'Abd al-Muttalib to provide her with clothes, a mount, and some money for her travel.

The Noble Prophet (S) was preparing himself for the conquest of Mecca at the time when Hatib ibn Abi Bulta'a, a Muslim of fame who had participated at the battle of Badr and the Ridhwan Pledge (Bay'a) came unto Sara. He wrote a letter and asked her to hand it to the people of Mecca. He also provided her with ten dinars and some brocade.

In his letter, Hatib had informed the people of Mecca that Allah's Messenger intended to confront them and had asked them to prepare themselves for defending themselves. Sara took the letter and headed for Mecca.

Upon being apprised of the story by Gabriel, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered Hadhrat 'Ali (as), 'Ammar Numayr, Zubayr, Talha, Miqdad, and Abu Marthad to mount and head for Mecca. He told them that they would meet with a woman en route who would carry a letter from Hatib to Meccan polytheists. They were ordered to seize the letter.

Upon meeting with her, she denied carrying such letter and swore to the same. They searched her luggage, but they failed to find it.

Therefore, they made up their mind to return, but Hadhrat 'Ali drew his sword saying:

"Neither the Messenger (S) nor we forge lies. Produce the letter, or else I will behead you."

Appreciating the seriousness of the issue, she took out the letter from her hair.

The letter was taken to the Noble Prophet (S).

Having summoned Hatib, the Noble Prophet (S) asked him:

"Do you recognize the letter?"

He replied:

"Yes."

He inquired:

"Why did you send the letter?"

He answered:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! Since the day on which I converted to the Islamic faith, I have neither disbelieved for a single moment, nor have I betrayed you, nor have I accepted the polytheist's invitation from whom I have separated, but the point is that all Emigrants know people in Mecca who support their families against the polytheists and I am a stranger here and my family are their captives. I intended to curry their favor to ward off harm to my family.

However, I was aware that God Almighty would cause their defeat and my letter would do them no good."

The Noble Prophet (S) accepted his excuse, but 'Umar rose up asking Allah's Messenger to allow him to behead the hypocrite. The Noble Prophet (S) said that he was one of the warriors fighting at the Battle of Badr and God Almighty favored them. Then the blessed Verses in question were revealed and provided Muslims with significant lessons regarding refraining befriending the polytheists and Allah's enemies.[2]

The society of believers should not befriend Allah's enemies. It was mentioned in the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question that a Muslim without intending espionage expressed his favor for the enemies of the Islamic faith as a consequence of which the blessed Verses was revealed to warn Muslims not to embark upon such measures.

The blessed Verse opens by addressing the believers saying that Allah's and your enemies are not to be befriended, since they are Allah's and your own enemies. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that you express your affection for them whereas they disbelieve what has been revealed unto you of Truth, namely the Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an.

They drive you and Allah's Messenger (S) out of your homelands. They are against your beliefs and confront you regarding your greatest glory, i.e. belief in God Almighty as your gravest sin and crime as a consequence of which you have been driven out of your homeland by them. Thus, it would not be befitting had you expressed your affection toward them. It is incumbent upon you to strive beside the mighty army of Muslim warriors to liberate them from Divine Retribution.

The blessed Verse further expounds that if you have emigrated from your homeland to wage jihad in Divine Cause and Satisfaction, you are not supposed to establish friendly ties with them.

If you truly claim to be Allah's friends, having emigrated from your homeland in His Cause, seeking to wage jihad in His Cause and for His Good Pleasure, God Almighty is All-Aware of your overt and covert

intentions and it would be useless to keep secrets from the Omniscient Lord Who is All-Aware of the seen and the unseen.

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive warning to the effect that whoever from amongst you befriends Allah's and your enemies, he has indeed gone astray in that he has deviated from the Straight Path imagining that he may keep something secret from God Almighty and he has also gone astray from the path of faith, devotion, and fear of God Almighty.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 2

إِن يَثْقَفُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ

2. Should they gain the upper hand over you, they would be your bitter enemies and mistreat you with their hands and their tongues with evil and they desire that you should desist from believing in your faith and disbelieve.

The Arabic root th-q-f denotes "to find, to confront," connoting that your enemies will not be satisfied unless you disbelieve. The blessed Verse is saying that how could believers befriend their enemies if wherever they find them, they will reveal their enmity through mistreating, slandering, and slaying them. Disbelievers intend that believers desist from believing and turn into disbelievers like them.

In epistle 53 addressed to Malik Ashtar mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha, Hadhrat ‘Ali (as) says:

"Beware of the enemies' stratagems even after concluding the truce, since at times, the enemy approaches you to catch you by surprise."

In Ghurar al-Hikam, he also says:

"Do not feel secure from the enemy's harm even if he lauds you…"

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 3

لَن تَنفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

3. Neither your relatives nor your children will benefit you on the Day of Resurrection. He separates you on that Day and Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

The blessed Verse provides a response to people like Hatib ibn Abi Bulta‘a who replying to the Noble Prophet's (S) inquiry regarding the reason behind divulging the secrets of the Muslims to the polytheists said that they have relatives in hands of Meccan disbelievers and by divulging the intelligence they intended to preserve them.

In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that your relatives including your descendants will be of no avail to you since disbelieving relatives are neither regarded as fame, nor substance in this world nor a means of deliverance in the Hereafter. Why must believers embark upon certain measures which entail Divine Wrath and severance from His friends.

The blessed Verse further says that God Almighty will separate you and them on the Day of Resurrection. The believers and the disbelievers will tread the paths toward Hell and Paradise respectively substantiating the

statement as per which relation ties shall be totally severed on the Day of Resurrection and they shall be of no avail to them.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse resembles certain other Qur'anic Verses[3]:

"That Day shall a man flee from his brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children."

The blessed Verse closes with reiterates the warning that God Almighty is All-Aware of what you do, your intentions, and your secret intentions.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 4

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَآءُ مِنكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ رَّبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

4. Verily, there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him when they said unto their people: "Indeed we dislike you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you and there will be between us and you enmity and hatred for ever until you believe in Allah Alone" except the saying of Abraham to his father: "Indeed, I will ask forgiveness [from Allah] for you but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah." "Our Lord! In you we put our trust in You and to You we turn in repentance and to You is our final return.

The Arabic word

uswa ("model")

is cognate with ta'assi ("following, emulation"). Imam Husayn (as) is narrated as saying that he is the model in struggling against the enemies of the Islamic faith.[4]

Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his arrival) is quoted as saying:

"The Messenger of Allah's (S) daughter, Hadhrat Zahra' is my perfect model."[5]

Since the Glorious Qur'an presents significant examples of the world of humanity to complement Divine Teachings, the blessed Verse, following the strong forbidding against befriending Allah's enemies, makes mention of Prophet Abraham (as) as the great leader respected by all nations, particularly the Arabs, saying that Prophet Abraham (as) and his adherents serve as a good example for your life, as the Arch-Prophet's (as) life is thoroughly a model of worshipping God Almighty, waging jihad in His Cause and loving His Pure Essence.

The Muslim community takes pride in their designation of the nation of Abraham (as) may set him as a perfect example in this respect.

The expression

"those with him"

designates the believers, limited in number, who followed him in worshipping God Almighty. Some maintain that the expression connotes the Prophets following his example or those Prophets who were his contemporaries is seemingly far-fetched.

To further expound the meaning, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that on that day when they said unto their polytheist and disbelieving peoples that they dislike them and what they worship besides God Almighty. They neither recognize you as believers nor your beliefs as true beliefs. They dislike both them and their worthless beliefs. To lay further emphasis on their assertions, they said that they disbelieved in them.

According to some traditions, such disbelief is one of the five types of disbelief. They said that they would persist in their denial until they believe in the One God and thereby expressed their dislike of Allah's enemies with utmost decisiveness and assertiveness declaring that such separation was irrevocable for good, unless they changed their course and convert to monotheism.

However, since there were exceptions in Abraham's life aiming at guiding some polytheists, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that they severed all their ties with the disbelieving people and refrained from expressing and affectionate words with them, except for Abraham's (as) promise to his father, or paternal uncle, Àzar, to the effect that the Prophet (as) would ask forgiveness for him from God Almighty, though God Almighty is the Oft-Forgiving and he failed to do anything but invoking Him for forgiveness.

Such exception is truly indicative of Prophet Abraham's (as) and his followers' severance of any ties with idolaters aiming at certain specific circumstances as well as expedience, since the evidence reflects that Abraham (as) had seemingly noticed the preparedness of his paternal uncle, Àzar, to convert to monotheism, but the latter was concerned that if he converted to monotheism, what would happen to his span of life spent in idolatry.

Prophet Abraham (as) assured him that he would invoke God Almighty for forgiving him and stood on his word, though Àzar failed to believe. When Prophet Abraham (as) wa certain about Àzar's enmity against God Almighty, he desisted from invoking God Almighty for his forgiveness and severed all his ties with him.

It is worthy of note that that Prophet Abraham's (as) promise to Àzar for invoking God Almighty to forgive him aimed at inviting him to believe in God Almighty rather than for mundane goals.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that they said:

"O Lord! We put our trust in You, We turned to You in repentance, and all shall finally return unto You."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 5

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

5. "Our Lord! Make us not a means of error for the disbelievers but forgive us, Our Lord! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

The blessed Verse reflects the words of Prophet Abraham (as), Allah's friend, saying:

"O Lord! Do not make us the trial for those who disbelieved such that they have the upper hand over us and cause torments and troubles for us or make us turn away from the true faith. Forgive our sins and error, O

Lord! You are True in your Acts. You are Predominant over all beings. Assist us to rid ourselves of the evils caused by the polytheists and disbelievers."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 6

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

6. Certainly, there has been in them [Prophet Abraham (as) and his followers] an excellent example for one who sets his hopes in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away, indeed Allah is Needless, Worthy of all Praise.

It is certainly incumbent upon the believers to follow Abraham (as) and his righteous deeds, if they set their hopes on Divine Mercy and attaining to elevated states in the Hereafter.

The reiteration of

"excellent example"

reflects following Prophet Abraham (as) whose meritorious deeds and virtues were mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses including his dislike of Allah's enemies and expressing needfulness of the Absolute Needless, reliance and setting one's hopes on Him, and invoking Him for forgiveness.

The blessed Verses closes by saying that whoever disobeys God Almighty and befriends His enemies, has certainly incurred loss and God Almighty is Needless of Him.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 7

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُم مِّنْهُم مَّوَدَّةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

7. It is hoped that Allah will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies [through their conversion to the Islamic faith upon the conquest of Mecca]. And Allah is Omnipotent, Oft-Forgiving, and Most Merciful.

The blessed Verse treats of love for God Almighty and severance of ties with polytheists. Since such severance of ties created some emotional vacuum for some Muslims, though the true believers following the Noble Prophet of Allah (S) were steadfast in this vein, to provide them with Recompense and fill such vacuum, God Almighty bears them the glad tidings asking them to entertain no sorrow as the circumstances would change for the better.

The blessed Verse is saying that it is hoped that God Almighty will establish friendly ties between you and your foes through their conversion to the Islamic faith. Such promise was realized in the eighth year after the Noble Prophet's (S) migration to Medina when Muslims conquered Mecca and the people of Mecca embraced the Islamic faith in groups and the leaden clouds of enmity dispersed and faith shone with the warmth of love and friendship.

The point is that when Muslims notice that the beloved of theirs separate from their ideological line, they should not lose their hopes of their return,

since the Omnipotent Allah may alter the hearts and He is the One Who forgives the sins and faults of His Servants.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that

"And Allah is Omnipotent, Oft-Forgiving, and Most Merciful."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verses 8-9

لَّا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

8. Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Indeed, Allah loves those who deal with equity.

9. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion and have driven you out of your homes and helped to drive you out that Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whoever will befriend them, then such are the wrong-doers.

The blessed Verses provide further exposition on forbidding befriending polytheists. The blessed Verse 8 is saying that God Almighty does not forbid you to do good to and deal justly with those who did not struggle against you owing to your conversion to the Islamic faith nor did they drive you out of your homeland, since God Almighty loves those who deal with equity.

The blessed Verse 9 is saying that God Almighty solely forbids you to refrain from befriending those who fought against you on account of your faith and drove you out of your homeland or contributed to your being driven out. God Almighty strictly forbids you from establishing friendly ties with them and whoever befriends them is regarded as a wrong-doer disobeying Allah's Command.

Thus, non-Muslims fall into two groups. There were those who confronted Muslims by drawing their swords against them and driving them from their homeland and demonstrated their enmity against Islam and Muslims through their words and deeds. It is incumbent upon Muslims to sever all their ties with them and refrain from befriending them.

The group is explicitly represented by Meccan polytheists, particularly their chiefs, some of whom perpetrated such misdeeds and some others rendered them support. There were also disbelievers who neither entertained enmity against Muslims nor did they fought them nor contributed to driving them out of their homeland.

There were still non-Muslims who had made treaties of non-intervention with Muslims and befriending them entailed no loss. It was also incumbent upon Muslims to keep their treaties with them and strive toward the administration of justice.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 10

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَآتُوهُم مَّا أَنفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنفَقُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

10. O you who believe! When believing women [separated from disbelieving husbands] come unto you as emigrants, examine them [in terms of faith]. Allah knows best as to their faith. Then, if you ascertain that they are true believers, send them not back to the disbelievers. They are not lawful for the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. But give them that [amount of money] which they have spent on them. And keep not the disbelieving women as wives and ask for [the return of] that which you have spent [as mahr or bridal gift] and let them [the disbelievers] ask back for that which they have spent [had the women converted to the Islamic faith and had joined you]. That is the Decree of Allah by Which He judges between you and Allah is Omniscient, All-wise.

Occasion of Revelation

Some Qur'an exegetes narrate that Allah's Messenger (S) concluded a treaty with Meccan polytheists at Hudaybiyya as per which any Meccan who joins Muslims should be returned to Mecca, but if any of the Muslims forego his faith and returns to Mecca, he may not be returned.

A certain woman by the name of Subay'a converted to the Islamic faith at the time and joined the Muslims at Hudaybiyya. Her husband went to the Noble Prophet (S) and asked for her return to him as per the newly concluded treaty. The blessed Verse in question was revealed commanding the Muslims to examine the emigrant women in terms of their faith.

Ibn 'Abbas is quoted as saying that they were examined by being asked to take an oath to the effect that their emigration had not been owing to hatred against their husbands nor liking for the new land nor for any other mundane goal but they had emigrated solely for the sake of the Islamic faith. The woman in question took the oath.

Thus, Allah's Messenger (S) reimbursed the mahr paid by her husband and the other expenses borne by him saying that the treaty solely includes men rather than women. Such occasion of Revelation is mentioned in the majority of Sunni and Shi'i exegetic sources.

The blessed Verse depicts a clear picture of the Islamic faith as the one fostering justice. Firstly, the emigrated woman is not left on her own. Secondly, the right of the disbelieving husband is not ignored but the mahr and other expenses borne by him are reimbursed from the Muslim public treasury (bayt al-mal).

Thirdly, the female instinctual and emotional needs and also her financial needs are being met by the two commands

"marry them"

and

"pay them their mahr."

It is worthy of note that emigration may stem from fleeing from one's husband, liking for living a new life, espionage, gaining possessions, or reunion with relatives. Thus, the incentives are supposed to be clarified.

The blessed Verse in question treats of emigrant women and it includes seven decrees which mainly concerns emigrant women and some of them pertain to disbelieving women as follows:

The first decree regards emigrant women.

Addressing the believers the blessed Verse is saying:

"O you who believe! When believing women emigrate unto you, do not send them away but examine them."

Examination of believing women is owing to the point that some of them said the formula of faith, namely

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is Allah's Messenger (S)"

and thus they joined the believers but their belief was supposed to be ascertained by having them take an oath to the effect that their emigration had been for conversion to the Islamic faith rather than out of enmity against their husbands or love for other men or Medina and the like.

The twelfth blessed Verse of the Chapter in question may provide further exposition on the manner of the examination of emigrant women according to which they were supposed to pledge allegiance to the Noble Prophet (S) to the effect that they refrain from treading the path of polytheism, theft, immoral acts, slaying children and the like but they totally submit to the commands of Allah's Messenger (S).

According to the next decree, when their faith was ascertained and thereby there were recognized as true believers, they are not supposed to be returned to disbelievers. According to the imposed treaty of Hudaybiyya, Muslims emigrating from Mecca to Medina were supposed to be returned to Mecca, but it did not include women. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) never returned them to disbelievers since women were extremely weak in that society and returning them unto believers was quite perilous.

The third decree which in fact substantiates the preceding one proceeds to say that neither these believing women are lawful for those disbelieving men nor disbelieving men are lawful for these believing women, since belief and disbelief are mutually exclusive and the sacred bonds of marriage may not be established between believers and disbelievers as they tread opposite paths.

The point is that wedlock is supposed to establish some sort of harmony between the two parties and belief and disbelief may never stand in harmony with each other.

It was the common practice amongst Arabs that bridal gift (mahr) was paid in advance. Therefore, the fourth decree is saying that the expenses borne by disbelieving husbands for their marriage should be reimbursed to them.

Even though the husbands are disbelievers, but since the separation is motioned by the woman, Islamic justice necessitates that the husband should be compensated for the losses incurred. The significant point is that the Islamic government and the Muslim public treasury are seemingly supposed

to undertake the obligations for which no party has been specified. The plural form of address bears further evidence to the same effect.

The next decree says that there is no sin on your part if you marry such women when you pay their bridal gift. Even though such women have already received their bridal gifts from their former husbands and the money has been reimbursed to them, but the new husbands are supposed to pay the bridal gift to respect the believing women.

It is of worthy of note that the believing woman separates from her disbelieving husband without divorce, but she is supposed to keep the waiting term (‘idda) before remarriage whose detailed discussions are to be found in Jurisprudential sources, e.g. Kitab Jawahir, vol. 30, p. 54.

In case the husband converts to the Islamic faith but the wife remains in her disbelief, the marital bond is annulled, as the blessed Verse in question is saying that disbelieving wives are not supposed to be kept. The Arabic word ‘asam is the plural form of ‘isma denoting hindrance and hereby connoting hindrance to matrimony. The Arabic word kawafir is the plural form of kafira denoting disbelieving woman.

The last decree treats of those women who turn away from the Islamic faith to join disbelievers saying whoever of the women turning away from the Islamic faith is supposed to pay the bridal gift in the same manner as those women who turn to the Islamic faith and whose bridal gift is supposed to be paid to their former husbands.

It reflects justice and mutual respect in Islam. The blessed Verse in question closes by laying emphasis on the foregoing decrees saying that these are Divine Decrees through which God Almighty judges between you and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

Such Decrees spring from Divine Omniscience reflecting His Wisdom. The rights of all people are stipulated in such Decrees and They all stand in harmony with Islamic justice and equity. Taking into account the fact that they have been all decreed by God Almighty is the best security for their implementation.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 11

وَإِن فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقَبْتُمْ فَآتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُم مِّثْلَ مَا أَنفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنتُم بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

11. And if some of your wives have gone from you to the disbelievers, then you went out for an expedition [against them and] gained booty. Then pay from that booty to those whose wives have gone, the equivalent of what they had spent. And fear Allah in Whom you believe.

The losses incurred by Muslims owing to their conversion to the Islamic faith should be compensated by the Islamic state. It is in this vein that the blessed Verse is saying that in case some of your wives turn away from the Islamic faith and join disbelievers and you conquer disbelievers and gained booties, those who have lost their wives are to be compensated for their bridal gifts.

The preceding blessed Verse is saying that the bridal gifts of such women are supposed to be borne by disbelievers as it is considered the disbelievers'

right to receive compensation for the bridal gifts which they had paid to their former wives who had converted to the Islamic faith and thereby had emigrated to Medina. Nonetheless, according to some traditions, despite the fact that Muslims acted upon such just decree, Meccan polytheists failed to do the same.

Thus, is was decreed that to compensate the losses incurred by men whose wives had turned away from the Islamic faith and had joined Meccan polytheists, they were supposed to receive booties equivalent to the losses incurred by them and thereafter the remainder of the booties gained from the enemy could be distributed amongst Muslims.

According to Qur'an exegetes, the Arabic verbal form

fa-'aqabtum ("then you became triumphant")

connotes the victory of the Muslims over disbelievers and the retribution of the latter and gaining booties.

The blessed Verse closes by calling all Muslims to fear God Almighty saying:

"Fear Allah in Whom you believe and refrain from disobeying Him."

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَن لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

12. O Prophet! When believing women come unto you to give you the pledge that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood, and that they will not disobey you in the religious ordains, then accept their pledge and ask Allah to forgive them. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Compassionate.

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the Decrees concerning emigrant women and the blessed Verse in question expounds the women's pledge with the Noble Prophet (S). Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse was revealed on the day of the conquest of Mecca, when the Noble Prophet (S) was on the Mount of Safa taking men's pledge.

Then, the Meccan women who had converted to the Islamic faith came unto the Noble Prophet (S) to give pledge and the blessed Verse was revealed on that occasion expounding the manner of giving pledge.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying:

O Prophet (S)! When the believing women come unto you and give pledge on the conditions that they associate no object of worship besides God Almighty, refrain from theft, illegal sexual intercourse, slaying their children, uttering slander, and disobey you, accept their pledge and ask for their forgiveness since God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most-Compassionate.

Thus the Noble Prophet (S) took their pledge of allegiance regarding whose manner some sources indicate that the Noble Prophet (S) had some

vessel filled with water brought to him. He put his hand into water and women put their hands into the other side of the vessel.

According to some sources, he accepted their pledge while a thick piece of fabric or clothes covered his hand. It is also reported that the Noble Prophet (S) held a piece of fabric and the other side was held by women and thereby he accepted their pledge of allegiance. The author of the exegetic work titled Manhaj al-Sadiqin reports that the Noble Prophet (S) asked Ummaya, Khadija's sister, to accept the women's pledge of allegiance.

It is worthy of note that six conditions are stipulated in the preceding blessed Verse all of which are to be accepted by them.

The blessed Verse also reflects that the leader of the Islamic society, irrespective of the sexes of the believers, is available to all and women are regarded as independent, willful, and selective individuals possessing independent real and legal entities such that women talked to the Noble Prophet (S) without any intermediaries and provided him with their feedback.

Surah al-Mumtahana - Verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ

13. O you who believe! Befriend not the people who incurred the Wrath of Allah. Surely, they have despaired of the Hereafter, just as the disbelievers buried in graves are hopeless.

The friend of God Almighty does not befriend those who have incurred His Wrath. It is reported that the blessed Verse was revealed on the occasion that some Muslims from amongst the poor befriended the Jews and divulged the intelligence of the Muslims unto them such that they may receive some remuneration in the form of food, fruit, and money from them.

Addressing the believers, the blessed Verse forbids them to befriend those who have incurred the Wrath of God Almighty alluding to the point that the believers are supposed to set their hopes onto Divine Graciousness but it is incumbent upon them to desist from befriending those who have incurred Divine Wrath and divulge Muslims' secrets unto them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to present details substantiating such Decree by saying that the disbelievers have totally lost their hope of the Hereafter in the same manner as the disbelievers interred in graves have lost their hope of deliverance on the Day of Resurrection, since the latter are entangled with the consequences of their evil deeds in Purgatory but they have no way out.

Thus they are totally hopeless. Such living disbelievers are so immersed in the mire of sins that they may never hope for deliverance in the same manner that the dead disbelievers are hopeless of revival. Such people are assuredly dangerous and untrustworthy.

Their words, pretence to sincerity, and intimacy are not to be trusted since they have lost their hope of Divine Mercy and are thereby desperate for any crime. How could they be trusted and befriended by Muslims? The

opening and the closing blessed Verses of the blessed Chapter in question treat of keeping distance from the enemies of Allah and Muslims.

O Lord! Preserve us from Your Wrath. Embrace us in Your Mercy and Graciousness.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. The report has been narrated in sources, e.g. Ma‘ma‘ al-Bayan, Bukhari's Sahih, Ruh al-Bayan, Fi Halal al-Qur’an and the exegetic works by Qurtubi and Maraghi.
3. 80:34-36
4. Ibn Mikhnaf's Maqtal.
5. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 53, p. 18.

Surah al-Saff, Chapter 61

(The Rank)

Section 28(juz')

Number of Verses: 14

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has fourteen Verses. The designation of the Chapter derives from the Arabic word saff attested in the fourth Verse. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of the superiority of the Islamic faith over other Divine religions and the obligation of jihad in Allah's Cause and supporting Allah's Messengers.

Besides the blessed Chapter in question, Chapters 57 (Surah al-Hadid) and 59 (Surah al-Hashr) opens with

sabbaha ("glorifies"),

Chapters 62 (Surah al-Jum'a) 64 (Surah al-Taghabun) with

yusabbihu ("glorifies"),

Chapter 17 (Surah al-Isra') with

subhana ("glorified"),

and Chapter 87 with the imperative

sabbih ism-i rabbika ("Glorify the Name of your Lord").

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), whoever recites the Chapter of Jesus, namely the Chapter of the Rank, Prophet Jesus will salute him and as long as he is alive in this world, Jesus will invoke God Almighty to absolve the reciter of his sins and he will be his friend of the Day of Resurrection.

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites the Chapter of the Rank in his obligatory and supererogatory prayers and pursues the recitation of the Chapter, God Almighty will rank him with the angels and His Messengers. It is worthy of note, however, that such ranks will be in store for those who act upon Qur'anic Injunctions.

Surah al-Saff - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

According to the Islamic worldview, all the world of existence enjoys perception and glorifies God Almighty.

It is noteworthy that the One Who is the Omnipotent and the All-Wise is deserves to be glorifies

("And He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise").

It is mentioned above that the blessed Chapter deals with faith, Divine Unity, and knowing God Almighty. According attention to the physical and spiritual glorification of all beings and the wondrous system predominating over them which serves as the best proof for the Existence of the Omnipotent and the All-Wise Creator strengthens the pillars of faith in believers and paves the path for obeying the Injunction as to the jihad in Alla's Cause.

Surah al-Saff - Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

2. O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not act upon it?

Rebuking those who do not stand on their own words, the blessed Verse is asking them:

"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not act upon it?"

Although the blessed Verses were revealed concerning the jihad and desertion from the Battle of Uhud, but the Occasions of Revelation never restrict the broad contextual meanings of the blessed Verses. Consequently, any vain word deserves censure and rebuke, be it in terms of steadfastness in battlefield or any other positive and constructive act.

According to Imam Sadiq (as), the blessed Verse, among other issues, alludes to failure to keep one's word, saying that a believer's promise is like a vow, though expiation is not required for it.[1]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 3

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ اللَّهِ أَن تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

3. Most detestable it is with Allah that you say what you do not act upon it.

The Arabic word maqt denotes abomination and odiousness. Faith is to be accompanied by action and sincerity, otherwise it will deserve censure and rebuke. Some people utter empty words in friendly get-togethers but they fail to act upon their words when it is necessary to take action.

One of the significant tokens of true believers is that their words and deeds are totally in harmony and the more one distances from such principle, the more he distances from faith.

It is in this vein that in his epistle to Malik Ashtar, Imam 'Ali (as) said unto him:

"Refrain from making promises and failure to keep you word, since such failure will lead to severe wrath by God Almighty and the people as it is said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Most detestable it is with Allah that you say what you do not act upon it."[2]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 4

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ

4. Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in ranks as if they were an iron structure.

The Arabic word bunyan denotes construction. The word marsus is cognate with rasas denoting lead. The phrase bunyan marsus connotes a construction resembling lead in terms of solidity. The criticism mentioned in the preceding Verse may be addressed to those who were engaged in sloganeering but failed to act upon such slogans. Thus, God Almighty is saying that Divine Wrath is in store for those who did not act upon their words but those who act upon their words and loved by Him.

Therefore, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty loves those who wage war in His Cause like a construction of iron and a stronghold of steel.

Thus, the form of battle is of no significance, but what is important is that such war should be in Allah's Cause through perfect unity and solidity the similitude of which is a construction built of lead or iron. It is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim exegetic work that the blessed Verse is saying that warrior waging war in Allah's Cause form ranks like a construction which is never subject to ruin.[3]

Surah al-Saff - Verse 5

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تُؤْذُونَنِي وَقَد تَّعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. Remember when Moses (as)said unto his people: "O my people! Why do you annoy me while you know certainly that I am the Messenger of Allah to you? Therefore when they turned away from the path of Truth, Allah turned their hearts away [from the path]. And Allah guides not the people who are disobedient to Him.

The Arabic verbal form

zagha ("deviated")

is cognate with zigh connoting deviation from the path of Truth.

Man is spiritually inclined toward treading the Straight Path, but it is his concupiscence that deters him from doing so.

Making a reference to Prophet Moses' (as) people, the blessed Verse is saying that despite having observed so many miracles and proofs regarding his Prophetic Call, they failed to obey him, but they annoyed him to such an extent that they regarded his miracles as magic and ascribed forging lies by him despite the fact that they were certain of his Prophetic Call.

Thus, complaining from his own people, Prophet Moses (as) is saying:

"O people! Why do you annoy me so much when you know that I am Allah's Messenger sent unto you for your guidance? You are supposed to obey me if you follow your reason so that you may be saved."

Nonetheless, the people of Moses (as) failed to persevere in the Straight Path of Divine Unity and deviated from it such that owing to their evil deeds, God Almighty made their hearts turn away from the Path of Truth, since God Almighty never guides those who disobey His Messengers. Thus, it is reflected the blessed Verse that there is no affliction worse that being deprived of Divine Justice and one's heart be turned away from the Path of Truth.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 6-7

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُم مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

6. Remember when Jesus (as), son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! Verily, I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, acknowledging the Torah which came before me and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad. But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is plain magic."

7. And who does more wrong than the one who forges a lie against Allah while he is being invited to embrace the Islamic faith? And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.

The blessed Verse 6 is saying:

"O Muhammad (S)! Remember when Jesus (as), son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel [namely the Jews following Moses (as)]! I am Allah's Messenger sent unto you. I believe in Moses (as) acknowledging his Prophetic Call and bearing glad tidings to you that a Prophet (S) will come after me with a perfect religion and his token is that his name is Ahmad, namely praised in words and deeds or the Messenger (S) who will praise God Almighty."

The name Ahmad may reflect that he was Divinely appointed to praise God Almighty by the recitation of His Ninety-Nine Names such that people may known Him through His Most Beauteous Attributes, since it is not known whether other Prophets did not make Him known unto people through the same number of Names each of which reflect one of the Divine Attributes.

Narrating on the authority of his father, Muhammad ibn Mat'am says that the Noble Prophet (S) said that he had names such as Ahmad, Muhammad, Mahi, through whom God Almighty effaces disbelief, Hashir, namely under whose banner people would be resurrected, and 'Àqib, i.e. the last of the Prophets not to be followed by any other Prophet.[4]

According to a tradition narrated concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) Ascension (mi'raj), God Almighty addressed the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) several times by the name Ahmad which may possibly given rise to the saying that his name is Ahmad in the heavens and Muhammad (S) on the earth.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) has ten names five of which, namely Muhammad, Ahmad, 'Abd Allah, Yasin, and Nun, are attested in the Holy Qur'an.[5] The foregoing brief discussion reflects that one of the most well-known names of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is Ahmad.[6]

The blessed Verse closes with

"But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is plain magic."

The antecedent of the pronoun

"them" (hum)

is possibly the Seal of the Prophets (S) who had many proofs and miracles and Prophet Jesus (as) had formerly make known his name and tokens, but the Prophet Muhammad's (S) miracles were regarded as magic by his people saying that it was plain magic.

The antecedent of the pronoun may be Prophet Jesus (as) who performed miracles like raising the dead, curing the blind, and making pigeons out of mud and giving life to it, but the Jews regarded his miracles as magic. People are habitually inclined through concupiscent desires to turn away from the Truth and turn toward Falsehood, as a consequence of which they failed to obey the Prophets and their chiefs knew that people's obeying the Prophets would entail damages to their chieftainship.

In order to waive their obligations, they denied the prophets and regarded their miracles as magic.

Thus, God Almighty censures such people and asks them in the blessed Verse:

"And who does more wrong than the one who forges a lie against Allah while he is being invited to embrace the Islamic faith? And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers."

The point is that the Prophets call people unto Islam, namely Guidance, in which the people's physical and spiritual health lies.

Those who deny the Prophets are the worst of people since they not only wrong themselves and deprive themselves of happiness, and have contented themselves to stay with disbelieving and irreligious people and their bestiality without taking any step toward happiness, but also when man fails to seek Guidance and wrongs himself, God Almighty will not guide him.

Such wrongdoers wrong people as well since they impede them from being guided. God Almighty will never guide such people since wrong-doers are not subject to being guided.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 8-9

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

8. They intend to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths [namely their empty words and slanders]. But Allah will bring His Light to perfection even though the disbelievers dislike it.

9. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to make it triumphant over all religions even though the polytheists dislike it.

The enemy is pre-occupied at all times with extinguishing the Divine Light of Guidance. Allah's Religion is Light, namely it leads to knowledge, growth, treading the path toward Allah and Happiness. The stratagems and devices of the enemies aiming at confrontation with the Truth is fruitless and of no avail.

Thus, in order to reflect that the enemies of the Truth may not efface Divine Religion, the blessed Verse 8 presents a similitude saying that they intend to put out the Divine Light with their mouths, but God Almighty perfects His Light despite the disbelievers dislike it.

Disbelievers in their attempts are resembled to those who intend to extinguish the shining sun by blowing with their mouths. They are like bats imagining that if they close their eyes and seek refuge in the shadows may confront with the Spring of Light. The history of Islam is a clear proof as to the veracity of such Great Qur'anic Prediction, since from its emergence onward, numerous plots and stratagems have been demised by the enemies.

Such stratagems include mockery, harming, and hurting through economic and social sanctions, waging wars in the battlefields, e.g. those of Uhud, Ahzab, and Badr; domestic plots by hypocrites; casting discord amongst the ranks of the Muslims; occupation of Jerusalem as the first place toward which Muslims stood in their prayers; division of vast Muslim lands into more than forty countries; making Muslims change their course; making the youth sever their ties from their ancient culture; dissemination of evil deeds and moral corruption; deviation from the pure Islamic doctrines by the youth, military, political, and political colonialism.

As God Almighty wills, the Divine Light has daily broadened its scope and the dissemination of the Islamic faith has been ever on the increase. Statistics suggest that despite the common endeavors made by Zionists, Crusaders, and materialists of the East, the Muslim population is on the increase the world over.

The Qur'anic Verse is saying that they intend at all times to put out the Divine Light, but Divine Will is otherwise. It is the eternal miracle of the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note that such theme is to found twice in the Holy Qur'an, though the clause

"they intend to extinguish"

is reflected in two forms in the Arabic original: yuriduna an yutfi'u[7] and yuriduna li-yutfi'u[8].

In his Mufradat, Raghib Isfahani says that the former and the latter connote extinguishing without or with preparation respectively; namely, whether or not they make preparations, they fail to put out the Divine Light.

Therefore, the blessed Verse 9 lays further emphasis by saying that He is the One who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth in order to make the Islamic religion predominate all other religions, even though the polytheists disfavor it.

The expression

"He sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth"

symbolizes the triumph of the Islamic faith, since such triumph is essentially based on Guidance and the Religion of Truth. The Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an are the Divine Light and Light manifests itself everywhere and at all times and results in triumph; nonetheless, the polytheists' and the disbelievers' dislike may not impede the path in the least.

It would be of interest to know that the blessed Verse 9 is reiterated thrice with minor alterations in the Holy Qur'an[9], but it should be borne in mind that such reiteration and emphasis belongs to when the Islamic faith had not totally prevail the Arabian Peninsula let alone the other regions of the world.

The Holy Qur'an laid great emphasis on the question at the time and made such great prediction. Finally, the Islamic faith prevailed in terms of logic and practical advancement in contrast to other religions, made the enemies retreat from vast regions in the world substituted them and it is still spreading in the world.

It is noteworthy that the final stage of such spread to us will be realized upon the arrival of Imam Mahdi (May our souls be sacrifices to him) since these Verse indicate that great arrival. Further discussions on the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse 9, superiority in terms of logic or might, and it relation to Imam Mahdi's (as) arrival were mentioned above under 7:23.

It is narrated in consecutively transmitted traditions that the triumph of the Islamic faith over other Divine religions will realize upon Imam Mahdi's (as) arrival.[10]

It is narrated on the authority of 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi that the religion of Muhammad (S) will be complete upon the arrival of the Riser from the Prophet's (S) descendants such that God Almighty alone shall be worshipped. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that as the earth will have been brimming over with injustice, justice will be administered the world over upon his arrival.

Surah al-Saff - Verses 10-13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنجِيكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

10. O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?

11. Believe in Allah and His Messenger and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That will be better for you, if you but know!

12. Thus, He will forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in the everlasting Paradise. That is verily a great deliverance.

13. And also another bounty which you love, help from Allah and a near victory. And O Prophet (S) give glad tidings to the believers.

The triumph of the Islamic faith over other religions was promised in the preceding blessed Verse but there are three prerequisites in this respect:

1. The Perfect and Universal Law is the Holy Qur'an, a Light perfected by God Almighty, and no one is able to put out such Light.

2. The existence of the Infallible Leader who is Imam Mahdi (as), the Remainder of Allah and the Divine Treasure.

3. Preparedness on the part of the people which is reflected in these blessed Verses.

Therefore, one of the significant goals of the blessed Chapter is to call people unto the Islamic faith and jihad in Allah's Cause and the blessed Verses in question lay emphasis on these two principles through the expression of a delicate similitude that encourages man to make such Divine moves and such incentive is the prerequisite for the triumph of the Islamic faith over all religions as discussed in the preceding blessed Verses.

The blessed Verse 10 is asking:

"O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?"

Even though faith and jihad are among absolute obligations, but the question is posed as a commercial offer rather than an injunction and the offer is intermingled with expressions reflecting the Infinite Graciousness of God Almighty. The blessed Verse 10 asks the question but without expecting any answer, when the audience is according attention to the question elaborates on the lucrative transaction.

The blessed Verse 11 is saying:

"Believe in Allah and His Messenger and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That will be better for you, if you but know!"

God Almighty is indubitably in no need of such lucrative trade, but all the interests will belong to the believers.

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that

"It is the best for you if you know."

It is worthy of note that addressed to the believers, the blessed Verse calls upon them to have faith and wage jihad in Allah's Cause.

The expression may reflect that nominal and superficial faith is insufficient, but what is significant is profound and sincere faith as the fountainhead of sacrifice and jihad. Making mention of believing in God Almighty and His Messenger may further elaborate the faith briefly mentioned in the opening of the preceding Verse.

It is noteworthy that belief in the Prophet (S) is not different from that in God Almighty in the same manner that waging jihad in Allah's Cause with one's life may not be different from that with one's property, since waging any war requires financial means.

Some believers are able to wage jihad in two respects and some may be able to support jihad by their property and provide the logistics. Some are only able to wage jihad in Allah's Cause by their lives and they are prepared to sacrifice them.

However, the point is that triumph rests on the accompaniment of these two types of jihad. The precedence of jihad by one's possessions in the blessed Verse does not suggest that jihad by one's life bears further significance, but it suggests that such type of jihad is the prelude, since the path to jihad is paved through the provision of the required funding.

The blessed Verses 12 and 13 are saying that if you do so, God Almighty will forgive your sins and you will be admitted to the Gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow where you will reside in pleasant dwellings in everlasting Paradise. This is a great success.

The blessed Verses treat of the forgiving of the sins by God Almighty in terms of the Rewards in the hereafter, since man is above all preoccupied with his sins and when he finds certainty as to the forgiving of his sins, he will be free from preoccupation. The expression suggests that the first Divine Reward granted to the martyrs fallen in His Cause is that all their sins will be forgiven.

Now a question arises that forgiving of one's sins includes what is due to God (haqq Allah) Almighty or it also includes what is due to people (haqq al-nas). The absolute contextual meaning of the blessed Verse suggests generality, though granted that God Almighty vested people with waiving their own rights, some scholars have entertained doubts as to the generality of the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question.

Therefore, the blessed Verses in question treat of two types of faith, believing in God Almighty and His Messenger (S), two types of jihad, through life and possessions, and two types Rewards in the Hereafter, forgiving of sins and being admitted to the everlasting Paradise.

The blessed Verse 13 deals with two types of Divine Bounties in this world:

"And also another bounty which you love, help from Allah and a near victory."

Such trade is quite lucrative since it constitutes triumph over the enemies and Divine Bounties and Graciousness. That is why the Holy Qur'an terms it as the great triumph.

It is in this vein that the believers receive the glad tidings:

"And O Prophet (S) give glad tidings to the believers."

It is narrated that when the Noble prophet secretly met with some Medinans on the Night of 'Aqabih and they pledged him their allegiance, 'Abd Allah ibn Rawaha said unto him that the Noble Prophet (S) may ask for any condition for God Almighty and himself to which the Noble Prophet (S) replied that the condition for his Lord was that they may never associate any partners to Him, but for himself, he asked them to defend him in the same manner that they defend themselves and their possessions.

'Abd Allah inquired about the remuneration for such obligations to which the Noble Prophet replied that their remuneration would be Paradise. 'Abd Allah said that the transaction was quite lucrative and it would be totally irrevocable.[11] It is worthy of note, however, that the triumph promised in these blessed Verses repeatedly fell into the share of the Muslims in logical terms as well as in battlefields.

Qur'an exegetes present different exegeses as to the contextual meaning of the "near triumph." Many exegetes maintain that the conquest of Mecca is hereby intended. Some maintain that it alludes to the conquest of Persian and Rome. Some also hold that it indicates all Muslim conquests which happened briefly between conversion to the Islamic faith and the battles waged by the Muslims.

Since all the believers down the centuries, rather than solely the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions are addressed herein, the clause

"help from Allah and a near victory"

is quite broad in its application serving as glad tiding to them all, though it clearly designated the conquest of Mecca upon the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question.

It is mentioned in the closing sections of Nahj al-Balagha that meeting with someone who pretended to be a strict Muslim and repeatedly spoke ill of worldly possessions, Imam ‘Ali (as) said:

“You've erred, since the world is a great capital for those who are awake and aware.”

Then, the Imam (as) elaborated on his statement saying that the world is the trading house of Allah’s friends.[12] The world is likened elsewhere to the farm of the hereafter. It is in the trading house of the world that man sells the merchandise being granted to him by God Almighty to Him at the highest price and thereby receives the greatest Bounties in exchange for some insignificant merchandise.

In this vein, thus it is narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as):

“Your price is Paradise, do not sell yourselves cheaply.”[13]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as), he said that he was the same lucrative trade leading to deliverance from excruciating torment as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an:

“Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from the excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection?”

Surah al-Saff - Verse 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ اللَّهِ فَآمَنَت طَّائِفَةٌ مِّن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَت طَّائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ

14. O you who believe! Be you helpers in the Cause of Allah as said Jesus, son Mary to the disciples: “Who are my helpers in the Cause of Allah? The disciples said: “We are Allah’s helpers. Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved. Therefore, We provided those who believed Assistance against their enemies and they became triumphant.

The disciples of Prophet Jesus (as) were twelve in number whose names are mentioned in available Gospels.

The Arabic word

hawari (“disciple”)

derives from the root h-w-r which denotes to wash, to whiten. The designation is owing to their white clothes and pure hearts or that they were inwardly pure and called upon others to be the same.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying:

“Our followers are our disciples. The disciples of Jesus (as) failed to bear him assistance against the enemies and the Jews, but our followers render us help. They are tortured, sent into exile, or they fall martyrs in our cause and God Almighty will grant them good Rewards in exchange for so many afflictions that they tolerate for our sake.”[14]

The closing Verse of the blessed Chapter lays further emphasis on jihad that serves as the focal point of the Chapter.

However, the question is treated differently which bears more significance than the Rewards of Paradise and its Bounties as the blessed Verse is saying:

"O you who believe! Be you helpers in the Cause of Allah."

They help in the Cause of Allah Who is the Origin of all the powers and to Whom all return. He is the Lord whose Power is Infinite and Invincible.

It is surprising that God Almighty calls upon His servants to render help in His Cause which is an unequalled glory; though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse suggests rendering assistance to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Islamic faith, but the blessed Verse embraces wondrous Graciousness and Mercy.

To suggest that treading such path is not unprecedented, a historical illustration is mentioned herein by saying that in the same manner that Jesus (S), son of Mary, asked his disciples:

"Who are my helpers in the Cause of Allah?"

The disciples most proudly replied:

"We are Allah's helpers."

Thus, they rose up to confront the enemies of Truth. Some of the Children of Israel believed and joined the disciples and some disbelieved. Thus God Almighty provided those who believed Assistance against their enemies and they finally triumphed over them.

You are the disciples of Prophet Muhammad (S) and take pride in that you are Allah's helpers. In the same manner that the disciples of Jesus (as) triumphed over the enemies, you will become triumphant and the glory of this world and the world to come will be in store for you.

Notes

1. Kafi, vol. 2, p. 363.
2. Nahj al-Balagha, Epistle 53.
3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Tafsir Manhaj al-Sadiqin.
5. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur.
6. Tafsir Furqan; Ahmad-i Maw'ud-i Injil.
7. 9:32
8. 61:8
9. 9:33; 48:38; 61:9
10. Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi, Majma' al-Bayan, Nur al-Thiqalayn and other sources.
11. Tafsir Fi Hilal al-Qur'an, vol. 8, p. 87.
12. Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism 131.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 132.
14. Tafsir Kaz al-Daqa'iq.

Surah al-Jum‘a, Chapter 62

(Friday)

Section (juz’) 28

Number of Verses: 11

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eleven Verses. One of the fundamental goals of the Chapter is to encourage the Muslims to congregate for the weekly establishment of the Friday prayer.

The Chapter opens with the glorification of Allah and the Prophetic Call and proceeds to suggests that the Muslims are not supposed to be like the Jews to whom the Torah was granted but they failed to act upon it.

The Muslims are suggested to leave everything aside upon hearing the call to the prayers and hasten toward the remembrance of Allah, otherwise they deserve to be censured. It is enjoined that the blessed Chapter be recited in the first prayer unit on Friday night.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Numerous traditions have been narrated concerning the recitation of the Chapter independently or as a part of daily prayers.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites the Chapter, God Almighty will bestow ten good qualities upon him throughout the Muslim lands as many as the number of those who establish or fail to establish the Friday congregational prayer.[1]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that it is incumbent upon each and every believer following the Imams to recite Surah al-Jum‘a and

“Glorify the Name of your Most Exalted Lord” (sabbih ism rabbika al-a‘la)

on Friday night and Surah al-Jum‘a and Surah al-Munafiqin at Friday noon. Thus, he has followed Allah's Messenger (S) in his actions and God Almighty will reward him with Paradise provided that he also acts upon Qur’anic Injunctions.[2] Such Rewards are in store for him.

Surah al-Jum’a - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The preceding Chapter opened with

“glorify” (sabbih)

and the blessed Chapter in question opens with

“glorifies” (yusabbih)

to reflect that glorification was, is, and will be for God Almighty. Glorification of God Almighty is the basis of all true Islamic beliefs and doctrines. The blessed Chapter, opening with the glorification of God Almighty, makes a reference to some of the Divine Attributes of His Beauty and Glory as well as His Most Beauteous Names.

Such reference is the prelude of the prospective discussions. The blessed Verse is saying that whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorify God Almighty at all times and thereby physically and spiritually glorify Him of all defects and shortcomings.

He is the Lord Who is the Owner, the Sovereign, and free from all defects. He is the Sovereign, the Holy.

Thus, emphasis is laid on His Ownership, Sovereignty, and being from any wrong-doing or defect, since the Arabic word

malik ("sovereign")

connotes the innumerable wrong-doings of the sovereigns which are unholy, but such adverse connotations are all purified by the employment of the word

quddus ("holy").

On the one hand, emphasis is laid on might and knowledge as the pillars of the state. As it will be mentioned below, such attributes are closely connected with the prospective discussions hereunder reflecting that the selection of the Divine Attributes in different Qur'anic Verses follow a certain order and a particular interrelation.

It is worthy of note that elaborate discussions are to be found above under 17:44 and 24:41.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that whenever a servant utters

"Glorified is Allah" (subhan Allah)

whatever is beneath the Divine Throne will accompany him in his glorification and tenfold Rewards will be granted to the servant uttering such glorification; whenever he utters

"Praise be to Allah" (al-hamdu li-'llah),

God Almighty will grant him all the Bounties in this world until he meets with God Almighty when the Bounties in the Hereafter will be granted to him.[3]

Glorification of God Almighty is a kind of showing gratitude unto Him.

The Holy Qur'an is saying that whenever triumph falls into your share, glorify God Almighty

("Whenever the Help of Allah and the conquest comes unto you. And you see that the people convert to Allah's religion in multitudes. So glorify the praises of your Lord and invoke Him for Forgiveness. Indeed, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and the One Who forgives."[4]).

Glorification of Allah is the atonement for the words uttered or heard at gatherings.

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that upon his return from gatherings, he uttered the formula

"Glorified are You, their Lord, and in Your praise" (subhanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika)

saying that it was the atonement for the gathering (innahu kaffara al-majlis).

Glorification of Allah is a means of salvation.

Concerning the Prophet Jonah (Yunus; AS), the Holy Qur'an says:

"Had he not been from amongst them who glorify Allah. He would have verily remained inside its belly [the fish] until the Day of Resurrection"[5].

It is narrated that when man utters

"Glorified is Allah,"

all the angels salute him (sallu 'alayhi kullu malakin).[6]

According to another tradition, while prostrating himself in his prayers and at other times, Imam Sadiq (as) repeated the formula

"Glorified is Allah"

and at times he repeated it five hundred times.[7]

According to the religious worldview, man is not the only being that praises and worships God Almighty, but all creatures worship Him at all times. Asked by a certain man to work a miracle, the Noble Prophet (S) took a handful of sand from the ground and the sound of the praises by the sand was heard upon the Noble Prophet's (S) request and Allah's Permission.[8]

The Noble Prophet (S) once said:

"There are many a mount better than their riders, since they praise God Almighty more than their riders."

Allah's Messenger (S) forbade beating animals since they glorify God Almighty.[9]

Several points deserve attention is terms of the glorification by the creatures in the world of existence:

1. The Holy Qur'an regards the glorification by the Creatures to be out of knowledge and understanding;

("Each one knows verily their prayer and glorification,"[10]).

2. Everyone may not understand the glorification by other creatures;

("Though you understand not their glorification,"[11]).

3. The glorifications by creatures are different.

Imam Sajjad (as) narrates from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), that he said:

"Birds glorify God Almighty each morning invoking Him to provide them with their daily sustenance."[12]

It is worthy of note that according to the religious worldview, the world of creation glorifies God Almighty

("Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorify Allah").

It is noteworthy, however, that in terms of existential glorification, there exists no difference amongst the creatures of the heavens and the earth, including inanimate beings, plants, animals, birds, and man. The other point is that glorification is supposed to be based on certain criteria and reasons.

Glorification solely belongs to the One who possesses Sovereignty, Holiness, Might, and Wisdom;

("Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.").

Surah al-Jum’a - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

2. He it is Who sent amongst the unlettered ones a Messenger from amongst themselves to recite unto them His Verses, to foster them and absolve them of polytheism and discord, and teach them the Heavenly Book and Wisdom. And indeed, they had been formerly in manifest error.

This blessed and significant Verse treats of Divine Unity and Attributes as well as the Prophetic Call of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) interrelated with Divine Might, Wisdom, and Holiness, saying that He is the One Who appointed a Messenger from amongst the unlettered to recite His Verses unto them and purify them in the light of the recitation of these Verses from any kind of polytheism, error, and corruption and also teach them the Book and Wisdom, though they were formerly in manifest error.

It is worthy of note that the Prophetic Call, whose characteristics may not be interpreted but through inimitability reflect Divine Glory and Existence, saying that God Almighty is the One Who appointed the Messenger (S) and created such masterpiece in the process of Creation.

The Arabic plural noun umiyyin whose singular form is ummi (“unlettered,” attributed adjective from the nominal form umm “mother), denoting that the noble Prophet (S) did not receive any schooling but what he learned from his mother.

Some scholars maintain that the word ummi connotes “from Mecca,” since Mecca was called “the mother of dwelling places” (umm al-qura). According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the people of Mecca had neither Scriptures nor a Divinely appointed leader, hence the designation ummi was Divinely attributed to them.[13]

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is from the same unlettered people such that the significance and greatness of his Prophetic Call be reflected and it may also demonstrate the veracity of his Call, since the Holy Qur’an, a Book with such profound and great contents and an exalted culture like the Islamic culture may not be the fruit of human thought, let alone an unlettered person who had not received any formal education.

The Light shines from the shadows. It is a verdant and luxurious orchard in the heart of the desert. It is a plain miracle and a manifest proof reflecting the veracity of his Call.

The blessed Verse in question summarizes the goal of the Prophetic Call in three sections: one is of the preliminary aspect, namely the recitation of Divine Verses; the two other sections, i.e. purification of the soul and teaching the Book and Wisdom constitute two great final goals.

The Noble Messenger of Allah (S) was appointed to foster and educate people in terms of knowledge, ethics, and practice such that by means of the two wings, they may soar into the sky of happiness and proceed on the path toward Allah and attain to proximity with Him. It is also worthy of note that three out of four Qur’anic Verses give the precedence to self purification

and one Verse gives the precedence to teaching over fostering good qualities.

The point reflects that the two affect each other. Ethics is gendered by knowledge in the same manner that knowledge is gendered by ethics. The point refers to the originality of fostering good qualities. It is noteworthy, however, that rue sciences are hereby intended rather than those in the attire of sciences.[14]

The difference between the Book and Wisdom may be in that the former implies the Holy Qur'an and the latter alludes to the sayings and teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) termed as sunna ("tradition"). The word Book may also connote Islamic Injunctions and Wisdom may make a reference to its philosophy and secrets.

The phrase

"manifest error"

tersely alludes to the Arabs in pre-Islamic times and the error that had cast its shadow on their societies. They were in plain error since they fashioned idols out of stone and wood and resorted to such inanimate objects in time of need. They interred their daughters alive and even took pride in such villainy saying that thus they did not let aliens lay their hands on them.

Their worshipping rituals included clapping and whistling around the House of Ka'ba which was even circumambulated by stark naked women. All kinds of superstitions prevailed over their thought.

They took pride in waging war and shedding blood and plunder and regarded women as worthless merchandise on whom they gambled. Women were deprived of the most basic human rights. Hatred and enmity passed from fathers to their children as a consequence of which shedding blood and slaughter were quite common.

The Noble Prophet (S) came unto them and delivered them out of the shadows of error through the Book and Wisdom. Educating such people and saving them from error and leading them unto the Straight Path is one of the glories of the Islamic faith and one of the manifest miracles of our eminent Prophet (S).

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 3-4

وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

3. And a Messenger unto another group who have not yet joined them. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

4. That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace.

The Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is not only addressed to his contemporaries but it embraces all men from different races and regions and no one is able to impede the dissemination of the Islamic faith in future.

The blessed Verse is saying that he is appointed to proclaim his Prophetic mission unto other believers who have not joined former converts yet. Later

generations were fostered through the teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) and used the pure springhead of the Holy Qur'an and Muhammadan traditions (sunna) as they were also embraced by the great Prophetic Call.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question includes all the peoples from Arabs and non-Arabs who came into being following the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions.

It is narrated that upon the recitation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the identity of such people.

The Noble Prophet (S) put his hand on Salman's shoulder, saying:

"If faith happens to be on the star of Thuraya, proverbial for being farthest from the earth, men from this group, namely Persian, will attain to it.[15]

Since such things all spring from Divine Might and Wisdom, the blessed Verse 3 closes by saying that He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The blessed Verse 4 makes a reference to such great Divine Grace, namely the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic Call and his teachings, saying:

"That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace."

It is worthy of note, however, that the expression

"on whom He wills"

does not imply that God Almighty bestows His Grace and Mercy upon everyone without measure, but His Will is accompanied by His Wisdom, as it is reflected in the first Verse of the blessed Chapter in question by the Divine Attributes All-Mighty and All-Wise.

Elaborating on such Divine Great Grace, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in his Nahj al-Balagha says:

"Look at the Divine Graces bestowed upon this community when His Messenger (S) was appointed to proclaim his Prophetic Call unto them and thereby unified them. Behold that such Great Bounty was bestowed upon all of them and the rivers of His Graces flow onto them and the true religion with its Blessings embraced them. They are embraced by such Bounties and live happily thereby."[16]

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 5

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَاةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

5. The similitude of those who were entrusted with the Torah, but who subsequently failed in it, is as that of a donkey which carries huge burden of books [though they fail to understand them]. How bad is the example of the people who deny Allah's Àyat ("Verses, Signs"). And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.

The preceding Verses treated of the Prophetic Call, but the blessed Verse in question deals with the Jews who could recognize the Noble Prophet (S) on the basis on their Scripture, the Torah, but they were too obstinate to acknowledge his Prophetic Call. The Arabic word asfar is the plural form of sifr connoting a book that reveals the truth.[17]

The Torah consists of different books each of which, termed sifr, resembles a Qur'anic Chapter. The blessed Verse criticizes the Jews but it also alludes to the Muslims warning them against hearing the Qur'anic Verses but failing to act upon them.

According to some traditions, the Jews said that Muhammad's Prophetic Call was not addressed to them. Thus, the blessed Verse 4 is warning them that had you had read your Scripture carefully and have acted upon it, you would not have said such words, since the Torah bears the glad tidings of the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

The blessed Verses 5 and 6 are saying that those upon whom the Torah was sent and they were entrusted with it but failed to understand and act upon it resemble a donkey carrying the burden of books, but it may merely feel the burden. It is not different for it to carry rocks and wood or books containing the most precise secrets of Creation and the most fruitful lessons for a better life.

Such obstinate people contented themselves contented themselves with the recitation of the Torah without reflecting upon its contents and acting upon them, the similitude of such people is the animal proverbial for ignorance. It is the most telling similitude for those who claim to know something but fail to act upon their pretended knowledge, since they carry the burden of knowledge without being blessed by its blessings.

Those who deal with the words of the Holy Qur'an without being aware of it contents and fruitful lessons are like those mentioned herein. It is a warning to the Muslims to be aware such that they do not end up like the Jews.

Such Great Divine Bounty is not for merely keeping at home without reading it and reflecting upon it or pass beneath it before traveling or send it with a mirror to a new home. Thus, they degrade their Scripture to such extent. Their utmost efforts may be to recite it beautifully and commit it to heart without any reflection in their individual and social live through reflecting upon its Verses and acting upon its Injunctions.

The similitude proceeds to say that the people who denied Divine Verses and Signs will have a dire fate. Such people are likened to donkeys since they denied Divine Verses and Signs by their words and deeds.

It is in a similar vein that we read elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[18] concerning the Jews:

"Is it that whenever there came unto you a Messenger against your concupiscent desires, you turned arrogant? Some [of the Messengers] you denied and some you slew."

The blessed Verse 5 closes with a terse sentence:

"And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers."

It is true that Guidance is Divine Work, but it requires a certain background, which is the spirit of seeking the Truth that should be engendered by man and wrong-doers are far from it.

Finally, it would be of interest to read some traditions concerning the Jewish schlars and others who failed to act upon their knowledge:

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the preaching and admonitions of the scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge are effaced from the hearts in the same manner that rain drops fail to stay on rocks.

It is narrated from Imam Sajjad (as) that it was mentioned in the Bible that a scholar who failed to act upon his knowledge would not accrue anything but disbelief and being far from God Almighty.

In Mizan al-Hikma it is narrated from the Imam that a scholar who fails to act is likened to a candle from whose light other benefit but he perishes himself.[19]

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 6-8

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَى عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

6. Say: "O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allah, to the exclusion of other people, then long for death if you are truthful [so that you may receive the Rewards apportioned by Allah for His Friends].

7. But they will never long for it, because of what they have done before [e.g. distortion of the Scripture and concealment of the Noble Prophet's (S) virtues]. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrong-doers.

8. Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The Jews regarded themselves as the chosen nation and expected preferential treatment.

They even claimed to be the sons of God and at times considered themselves as His intimate friends, as it is reflected the Holy Qur'an[20]:

"And the Jews and the Christians says: "We are the children of Allah and His loved ones [even if they intended a figurative sense of the word]."

Treating of such unfounded ambitions entertained by those to whom the Scripture had been sent though they failed to act upon it, the Holy Qur'an is asking the Noble Prophet (S) to say unto them that if they imagined to be God's friends and different from other people and they were true in their claims, then they could yearn for death, since friends yearn for meeting their friends.

We know that the spiritual meeting with God Almighty will happen on the Day of Resurrection when the mundane veils will be cast and the dust of concupiscent desires subside.

Then, man may see the beauteous countenance of the beloved and set foot in His proximity and find his way into the Friend's Confines. If they are true in their claims to be His intimate friend, why are they immersed in the mundane life and are fearful of death. Entertaining such fear reflects that their claims are unfounded.

The blessed Verse 7 makes a reference to the main cause of their fear of death, saying that because of what they have already done, they never yearn for death. However, God Almighty is All-Aware of the wrong-doers. The point is that man fears death because of two reasons.

Firstly, he does not believe in the Hereafter and regards death as a monster of non-existence and the shadows of perdition. In such case, it would be natural to fear death and flee from non-existence. Secondly, one may believe in the Hereafter, but he is fearful to attend the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection because of the evil deeds committed in this world. Since the Jews believed in the Day of Resurrection and the hereafter, they were afraid of death owing to their evil deeds.

The Arabic plural noun

thalimin ("wrong-doers")

covers a broad semantic range encompassing all the evil deeds committed by the Jews ranging from slaying the eminent Prophets sent by God Almighty for their guidance to their accusations, transgression of bounds and rights, plundering people's possessions, and all ethical corruptions.

The blessed Verse 8 is saying that entertaining such anxiety and fear may not solve any problems, since death is in store for all human beings.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The law of death is one of the most general and all-encompassing laws of this world.

The eminent Prophets and the Archangels all die and nothing shall remain but the Pure Divine Essence, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an[21]:

"Whatever is on the earth will perish and the Countenance of your Lord full of Majesty and Glory shall remain forever."

Death, attending the Divine Just Tribunal and taking care of the records of the past deeds are of the certain laws of this world and God Almighty is All-Aware of all His servants' intentions and deeds. Thus, the only way to put an end to such fear is to purify ones heart from sinful impurities and refraining from committing evil deeds. One whose record is clean will not fear of the audition of his records.

Thus, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"By Allah! The son of Abu Talib [i.e. 'Ali (as)] loves death more than his mother's breast[22]"

and when the most wretched Ibn Muljam struck him a blow on his head and thereby split it, he cried:

"By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I was saved."

He elsewhere says that death is sweeter than honey [particularly for the friends of God Almighty who are virtuous and are close unto Him].

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِن يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

9. O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you if you did but know!

Friday is accorded particular attention in the Islamic faith and many a tradition reflect such significance. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Friday is the lord of the days of the week and possesses the most elevated rank before God Almighty.[23] Friday is the day of helping the deprived and the poor and it is narrated that Muslim are supposed to expend alms on Friday.[24] The Lord of the Age, the Twelfth Imam (as) will end his Occultation and will arrive on Friday.[25]

The Noble Prophet (S) says:

"God Almighty renders good deeds many folds and effaces evil deeds on Friday and promotes the ranks of the believers, wards off afflictions, and answers the prayers of the believers on Friday.26 Whoever visits the tomb of his parents or either of them, his sins shall be forgiven and his name will be recorded with the righteous.27 Other traditions have also been narrated in tradition sources regarding the merits of Friday."

It is worthy of note that the preceding blessed Verses treated of concise discussions on Divine Unity, Prophetic Call, the Hereafter, and criticism of the Mammonist Jews and the blessed Verse in question deal with one of the most significance obligations of the Muslims that is of great significance and constitutes one of the main goals behind the Revelation of the blessed Chapter in question and it is the Friday prayer and some of its laws.

The blessed Verse above all addresses all Muslims saying:

"O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you [than trade] if you did but know!"

The passive verbal form nudiya ("is called") connotes prayer call, since there is no call in the Islamic faith but that to establishing prayers. Thus, upon hearing the prayer call, it is incumbent upon Muslims to leave off trade and hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty.

The clause

"That is better for you" (dhalikum khayrun lakum)

connotes that the establishment of Friday prayer and leaving off business at that time entails significant benefits for the Muslims if they truly reflect upon it, since God Almighty is Needless of others and is Most Gracious toward all people. It also alludes to the philosophy and the benefits of the Friday prayer.

It is noteworthy, however, that leaving off trade encompasses any activity interfering with the remembrance of God Almighty. Another point worthy of note is that the Arabic word jum'a originally denotes congregation which ad hoc connotes the congregation of people for the establishment of the Friday prayer; though the connotation of the word is not restricted to what is mentioned.

It goes without saying that spreading on the earth and seeking daily sustenance are not obligatory acts but they are regarded as the permission to do the same. However, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the expression that procurement of daily sustenance after the establishment of the Friday prayer entails Divine Satisfaction and Blessings. It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) visited the marketplace after the establishment of the Friday prayer.

The imperative sentence

"Hasten toward the remembrance of Allah" (wa 'dhkuru 'llah kathiran)

denotes that man is supposed to remember God Almighty against the abundant Blessings bestowed upon him.

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word

"remembrance" (dhikr)

herein connotes "thought, reflection" (fikr) as it is narrated that one hour of thinking is better than one year of worshipping.[28]

There are some exegetes who hold that the Injunction reflects keeping God Almighty in mind while trading and refraining from transgressing the principles of truth and justice. Nonetheless, it is crystal clear that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is quite broad in the semantic range and encompasses all these interpretations.

It is also certain that the spirit of "remembrance" is "thought" without which it is devoid of meaning and what leads to salvation is the remembrance intertwined with thought at all times. Remembering God Almighty at all times basically makes it penetrate into the depth of soul and eradicates the roots of ignorance and negligence as the main causes of all sins, and set man on the path of salvation and deliverance.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 10

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

10. Then when the prayer is ended, you are free to disperse through the land and seek Allah's Bounty and remember Allah much that you may be saved.

Worldly possessions are Divine Bounties in Qur'anic terms. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that after the establishment of the Friday prayer, return to your trade and procuring revenue.

The Noble Prophet (S) is narrated as saying that whoever devotedly remembers God Almighty in the marketplace and place of trade while people neglect their obligations and merely attend to their business. Such person devotedly attending to the remembrance of God Almighty will receive the Rewards one thousand virtuous good acts and will be granted with Divine Forgiveness.[29]

The blessed Verse is saying that when the prayer comes to an end, you are free to disperse in the land, invoke God Almighty for bestowing His Bounties upon them, and remember Allah at all times so that you may attain to salvation.

The injunctive

"Seek Allah's Bounty"

and similar Qur'anic expressions oftentimes connote seeking daily sustenance and engagement in trade and business, but it is clear that the semantic range of such expressions are broad and trade and business are included in it. Therefore, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that such expressions connote visiting the ailing and the believer and gaining knowledge.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 11

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِندَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

11. And when they see some merchandise or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it and leave you standing [while reciting your sermon]. Say: "That which Allah has [of Bounties and Blessings] is better than any amusement or merchandise! And Allah is the Best of providers."

According to the exegetic sources, once the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting the sermons of the Friday prayer when a caravan of tradesmen entered Medina while beating their drums. Most of the Muslims left the Noble Prophet (S) leaving his sermon unfinished. It was on that occasion that the blessed Verse was revealed to censure their unworthy act.

The blessed Verse merely criticizes the Muslims for leaving the Noble Prophet rather than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. Showing disrespect to the Divinely appointed leader is worse than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. The blessed Verse, addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), is saying that what is with God Almighty is better than amusement and trade and God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The Blessings and Rewards that will fall into the shares of the Muslims for their attending the Friday prayer, listening to the Noble Prophet's (S) sermons and admonitions, and the spiritual education derived from them are not to be compared with anything else and if they fear that their daily sustenance be severed, they are wrong since God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The adverb of manner

qa'iman ("standing")

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) recited the sermons of the Friday prayer while he was standing. In this vein, it is narrated on the authority of Jabir ibn Samura that he never saw the Noble Prophet to recite the sermons while sitting and whoever says that he seated while reciting the sermons, reject his claim.[30]

The Significance of the Friday Prayer

Fore and foremost, the blessed Verse in question reflects the significance of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer as a religious obligation.

The Muslims are hereby commanded to hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty upon hearing the Friday prayer call and leave any trade or interfering activity such that when people are entangled with food shortage

and a caravan enters for the purpose of trade from which they may meet their demands, they are not allowed to turn toward it but it is incumbent upon them to continue the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.

Such injunction receives recurrent emphasis in Islamic traditions, including a sermon narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) by the proponents and opponents of its transmission according to which the Noble Prophet (S) says:

"The establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is a Divine Obligation and whoever degrades or denies it in my lifetime or after my demise, God Almighty will lead him to misfortune and will never grant His Blessing upon him. Behold that his prayers, alms giving, pilgrimage to Mecca and his virtuous good deeds will not be accepted by God Almighty unless he repents such evil deed."[31]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the establishment of the Friday prayer is an obligation and standing behind the Infallible Imam (as) for the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is an obligation and if a man fails to establish the Friday congregation prayers for three weeks without any excuse, he has neglected an obligation and no one neglects three obligations without any excuse unless he is a hypocrite.[32]

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that one who joins the Friday congregation prayer out of faith and for Allah, his sins will be forgiven and he will proceed with a new life.[33] According to a Prophetic tradition, in his Ascension the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) noticed that angels invoked God Almighty to forgive the sins committed by those Muslims who perform the Friday major ablution (ghusl) and establish the Friday congregation prayer.[34]

Numerous traditions have been narrated in this vein, but for the sake of brevity, merely another tradition will be narrated herein.

Once the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired:

"O Allah's Messenger! I have repeatedly prepared myself to go on pilgrimage to Mecca but I have failed to do so."

The Noble Prophet replied:

"It is incumbent upon you to establish the Friday prayer, since it is the pilgrimage to Mecca for the needy."

The tradition reflects that many Blessings of the pilgrimage to Mecca may be received through the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.[35]

It is worthy of note, however, that failing to establish the Friday congregation prayer has been severely censured and those failing to establish it are regarded as hypocrites when it is an individual obligation (wajib 'ayni), namely at the time of the Infallible Imam (as) assuming the leadership of the Muslim community.

However, at the time of Occultation of the Twelfth Imam (as), it is an optionally incumbent duty (wajib takhyiri; opting between the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer or the noon congregation prayer) in which case failing to establish it is not reprehensible in case its establishment be neither degraded nor denied.

It is noteworthy that the majesty of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer and its great significance are still the same. Jurisprudential sources may be consulted for further treatment of the subject.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the blessed Chapter opens with the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and it closes with the abandonment of the Noble Prophet (S) serving as a warning to the believers.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
2. Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 10, p. 30.
4. 110:1-3
5. 37:143-144
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 177.
7. Wafi, vol. 2, p. 157.
8. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, p. 96. The tradition is to found in some other sources.
9. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
10. 24:41
11. 17:44
12. Tafsir al-Mizan; Tafsir Burhan. The tradition is to be found in other exegetical and tradition sources.
13. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Tafsir Nur al-Qur’an, vol. 7; Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan; Tafsir Nimunih under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Tabarsi's Majma‘ al-Bayan; ‘Allama Tabataba’i's al-Mizan; Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur; Zamakhshari's Kashshaf; Qurtubi's and Maraghi's exegetic works; Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur’an; Bukhari's Sahih.
16. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 192 (Khutba Qasi‘a).
17. Raghib's Mufradat.
18. 2:87
19. For other traditions narrated in this respect, please refer to tradition sources.
20. 5:18
21. 55:26-27
22. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 5.
23. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 17.
24. Ibid, p. 67.
25. Kamal al-Din, p. 164.
26. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 63.
27. Ibid, Friday Prayer (salat al-jum‘a), p. 245.
28. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 289.
29. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan.
30. Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
31. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 5, p. 7, the Chapter on the Necessity of the Friday Prayer (Bab Wujub Salat al-Jum‘a), tradition 28.
32. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 4.
33. Ibid.
34. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. 6, p. 91.
35. Ibid, p. 5, tradition 17.

Surah al-Munafiqun, Chapter 63

(The Hypocrites)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 11

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Like the preceding Chapter, the blessed Chapter in question, revealed in Medina, has eleven Verses. The hypocrites' characteristics are not only treated in this Chapter, but some Qur'anic Chapters, particularly those revealed in Medina, make references to their psychological and behavioral qualities. Such characteristics are most comprehensively treated in Chapter nine (Surah al-Tawba) in which approximately one hundred Verses are devoted to such traits.

The recitation of the Chapter in the Friday prayer is enjoined. Such emphasis may be owing to the point that the Muslim community (umma) should at all times beware of the plots hatched by hypocrites.

According to jurisprudential sources, e.g. Jawahir al-Kalam, that if the leader of the Friday congregation prayer comes halfway to recite another Chapter following the recitation of the first Chapter (Surah al-Hamd), he may begin to recite Chapter 63 unless he began the recitation of Chapters 62 or 112.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), one who recites Surah al-Munafiqin will be absolved of any hypocrisy.[1] It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that it is incumbent upon all the believers following the Shi'i Imams to recite Chapter 62 (Surah al-Jum'a) and

"Glorified is the Name of thy Most Sublime Lord"

on Friday night and Chapters 62 and 63 in the Friday noon prayer.

Then, he went further to say that when such believer acts upon the same, it is as if he has done the Noble Prophet's (S) deeds and Divine Rewards will be in store for him.[2] It is worthy of note, however, that such Rewards will fall into the shares of those who act upon Qur'anic Injunctions, since the mere utterance devoid of reflection and action will be of no avail.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۘ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ

1. When the hypocrites come unto you, they say: "We bear witness that you are verily Allah's Messenger." Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

The Arabic word nifaq, derived from the root n-f-q, connotes the underground tunnels used for camouflage or flight. Some animals, like field mice and lizards dig nests with two holes. In like manner, hypocrites leave clandestine ways through which they may flee at the time of urgency. People may fall into four categories.

The first group consists of those who are devout believers and act upon their obligations. These are true believers. Those in the second group sincerely believe, but they fail to act. Such people are disobedient. The third group consists of those who do not believe in their hearts but pretend belief. These are hypocrites. The people in the fourth group neither sincerely believe nor act upon their obligations. They are disbelievers.

Imam 'Ali (as) is quoted as saying that hypocrisy stems from inward inferiority.[3] Hypocrites in the early days of Islam had found their way into decision making for society and even the Noble Prophet (S) was exposed to their conspiracies.

The exegesis of the blessed Verse in question requires a prelude regarding the point that the earliest instances of hypocrisy trace back to the Noble Prophet's (S) migration to Medina when the strong pillars of the Islamic faith and its triumph were reflected. There were almost no hypocrites in Mecca, since powerful opponents could utter and do whatever they liked against the Islamic faith without entertaining fear in their hearts. Thus, there was no need to act hypocritically.

The widespread of the Islamic faith in Medina weakened its enemies, since it was hard and at times impossible to explicitly deny the Islamic faith.

Consequently, the defeated enemies made attempts at destructive stratagems in a new guise and thereby pretended to join the Muslims, but they pursued their clandestine measures. It is natural that any revolution, following its manifest triumph, confronts the lines of hypocrites and the bitter enemies of yesterday appear in the guise of the infiltrators of today.

Therefore, the reason behind the revelation of numerous Qur'anic Verses in Medina rather than Mecca regarding the hypocrites is clarified.

It is, however, noteworthy that the question of hypocrisy and hypocrites is not particular to the time of the Noble Prophet (S) since any society, particularly the revolutionary society, confronts it.

Therefore, the Qur'anic analytical treatment of the subject, not only as a historical question but also as some current affair, requires precise scrutiny so that such treatment may inspire confrontation with the spirit of hypocrisy and hypocritical lines in the Islamic societies in modern times. The hypocrites tokens, extensively reflected in the Holy Qur'an, are to be accurately comprehended so that such tokens may lead Muslims to reveal their lines and stratagems.

Another point of significance is that the challenge posed to any society by hypocrites is worse than any enmity since it is not facile at all times to recognize them on the one hand and they are domestic enemies on the other

such that they infiltrate within the innermost of the society such that it is quite hard to screen them.

Furthermore, their interrelations with the other members of the society pose a harder challenge in confronting them. Consequently, the Islamic society has received the worst blows by the hypocrites and it is for the same reason that the Holy Qur'an poses the harshest challenges to them and attacks them worse than any other foe. The Holy Qur'an herein opens with the hypocrites' pretense to belief constituting the pivot of their hypocrisy.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that

"When the hypocrites come unto you, they say: 'We bear witness that you are verily Allah's Messenger.' Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars."

Thus, the first token of hypocrisy is revealed which is the difference between inward intentions and outward conduct. Hypocrites emphatically claim to be believers but their hearts entertains no belief. Fabricating such lies falls into the two categories of true and untrue claims and doctrinal truth and untruth.

In other words, the criterion for the former is to assay whether or not the claims conform to truth. The latter, dealing with conformity or non-conformity to beliefs, reflects that if one reports something which conforms to truth but it is against his beliefs, it is termed as doctrinal untruth. Nonetheless, if it conforms to his beliefs, it is truth.

Thus, the hypocrites' testimony to the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) did not embody untruth, but it constituted the truth, but since they disbelieved in it, their testimony was regarded as untruth. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an is saying that he is Allah's Messenger (S), though they forge lies.

The Noble Prophet said:

"I fear neither believers nor disbelievers, though I fear hypocrites."[4]

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 2-3

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

2. They have made their oaths a shield and thereby hinder people from the Path of Allah. Indeed, evil is what they do.

3. Such hypocrisy is because they believed and then disbelieved. Therefore, their hearts are sealed by the seal of misfortune as a consequence of which they understand not.

The word junna denotes "shield" which protects the body from arrows. The Holy Qur'an, many a time, treats of the false oaths taken by hypocrites saying that they pledge to satisfy you. Thus, the blessed Verse treats of the second token of the hypocrites saying that they use their oaths as a shield so that they may impede people from treading the Path of God Almighty.

They commit very evil deeds

("Indeed, evil is what they do"),

since they pretend belief but inwardly, they disbelieve and make impediments on the path of Guidance. What is worse and more evil than taking oaths swearing by the Sacred Name of God Almighty in order to disguise one's real intentions and attract people's sentiments and deceive them by hindering them from Allah's Path.

It is worthy of note, however, that such expression reflects that they are at war with believers at all times and believers are supposed to be deceived by their hypocritical conduct and sweet words, since shields are opted in battlefields.

The blessed Verse 3 treats of the main cause behind such unworthy deeds, saying that

"Such hypocrisy is because they believed and then disbelieved."

The blessed Verse may reflect that they hypocrites seemingly converted to the Islamic faith by uttering the formula

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (S) is Allah's Messenger (S)"

out of hypocrisy, fear, greed, or other mal intentions. Nonetheless, they reflected their disbelief later on as it was the case with 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy who converted to the Islamic faith but later expressed his disbelief.

The blessed Verse may also allude to the point that some of the hypocrites are likewise, since faith has not penetrated their hearts.

Upon hearing the inimitable Qur'anic Verses from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), they expressed their belief, though upon meeting with their chiefs, they said unto them that they were in their line. God Almighty exposes their hypocrisy. Taking into account the contextual meaning and the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, the former interpretation is more manifest.

"Therefore, their hearts are sealed by the seal of misfortune as a consequence of which they understand not."

Human heart is originally of two dimensions, one turns toward the heavenly and angelic realm and the other turns toward the natural and satanic world. When the former dimension is strengthened and human heart entertains the remembrance of God Almighty, it may accommodate the Throne of the Most Gracious Allah and Divine Inspirations where angels may frequent. Au contraire, when the former dimension takes the upper hand, devils tempt him and lead man to corruption.

In this vein, it is narrated in traditions that human heart has two ears: one hears the angels and makes man commit righteous good deeds; the other ear hears the devils and thereby inclines toward committing evil. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that had the devils not encompassed the hearts of the children of Adam (as), he would have looked at the heavenly realm as well as the earth.[5]

Therefore, man may use his own heart to understand that at times he is inclined toward committing good righteous deeds as prescribed by God Almighty and thereby perceive that such committing such meritorious deeds is inspired by angels. Au contraire, he may understand that satanic temptations provoke him to commit evils deeds against Divine Injunctions.

It goes without saying that human acts are not predestined, since they pave the path for their own acts.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 4

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِن يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ
يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ

4. And when you look at them, they have such looks that they make you wonder and when they speak, their speech is so beauteous and attractive that you listen to their words. They are as blocks of wood, dry, brainless, futile, relying on one another. They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemies; therefore, beware of them. May Allah slay them! How are they deviating from the True Path?

In Chapter 9 (Surah al-Tawba), God Almighty addresses the Noble Prophet (S) saying unto him that the worldly possessions and the children of the hypocrites are not supposed to make you wonder.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that their looks and speech should not make you wonder. Although the blessed Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but all Muslims are asked to beware of being impressed by the appearance and the speech of the hypocrites.

The Noble Prophet (S) in narrated as saying that believers are flexible like ears of corn; they bend against the wind, but they stand upright again. However, disbelievers are likened to black poplars, of hard wood, such that they are so inflexible that the harsh wind may eradicate them.[6]

The blessed Verse in question treats of further tokens of the hypocrites, saying that when one sees them, they wonder at their comely appearance and sweet words, and whenever they talk, you listen to them. Thus, even the Noble Prophet (S) may be impressed by their sweet words, let alone others.

Besides treating of their appearances, their inward states are also dealt with in the blessed Verse, saying that inwardly,

"they are like blocks of wood relying on the wall,"

reflecting that they lack in spirit as their bodies are hollow and dependent. They lack sincerity, light, will, resolution, and faith, hence the similitude of blocks of wood relying on the wall.

In this vein, it is narrated by some Qur'an exegetes that 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, was a robust, good looking, and eloquent man. Upon entering the meetings of the Noble Prophet (S) and his Companions, the Companions wondered at the appearances of 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy and his followers and listened to their words.

However, owing to their arrogance, they went to the wall and relied on it, impressing the Companions by their appearances and words, hence the Revelation of the blessed Verse.[7] The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they are so superficial. They neither trust God Almighty nor are they self-confident, such that they regard any cry to be against them.

Their hearts are encompassed by fear and their souls are enwrapped by suspicion and pessimism. As the saying goes "The traitor is fearful," they are even afraid of their own shadows. Thus, this is another token of the hypocrites.

The blessed Verse closes by warning the Noble Prophet (S) that they are your real enemies and he is asked to beware of them. The blessed Verse further says: May God Almighty slays them. How they deviate from the True Path.

It is clear that the sentence is not in the indicative mood, but it is a curse on them which reflects censure and degradation for the hypocrites, as similar expressions are used in daily speech. The point is that God Almighty uses the speech employed by people.

Thus, other tokens of the hypocrites are enumerated including their attractive appearances, their hollowness, fear, suspicion of everything and any event.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that believers have four kinds of enemies:

1. The Muslims envious of them
2. The hypocrites who hate them.
3. Satan who leads them astray.
4. The disbelievers who wage war against them.[8]

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verses 5-6

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُم مُّسْتَكْبِرُونَ

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

5. And whenever it is said unto them: "Come, so that Allah's Messenger may invoke Allah to forgive you," they twist their heads out of disbelief, arrogance, and derision and you would see them impeding out of arrogance the people from turning towards the Truth.

6. It is equal to them whether you ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them. Indeed, Allah guides not the people who are disobedient.

The Prophetic Calls lead to growth and attaining to an exalted state. The invocations of Allah's friends will be answered. The Prophet's (S) prayers for one who denies the True Call may not be answered. Arrogance leads to deprivation from the Divine Boundless Graciousness.

The blessed Verse 5 treats of further tokens of the hypocrites and their misdeeds, saying when they are asked to come so that Allah's Messenger (S) may invoke God Almighty to forgive them, they twist their heads out of derision and arrogance and they turn away from the Prophet's (S) words in arrogance. The point is that their arrogance impedes them from taking the opportunity to repent from committing sins and being absolved of them.

An instance of such arrogant denial, according to Qur'an exegetes, was 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy who talked evil of the Noble Prophet (S) and emigrant believers saying that upon their return to Medina, the mighty would drive out the humbled out of the city.

It was on that occasion that the blessed Qur'anic Verses were revealed and thereby he was severely censured. It was suggested that he went to the Noble Prophet (S) so that he may invoke God Almighty to forgive him.

However, he uttered further unworthy words, saying:

"I was asked to convert to the Islamic faith and I did. I was asked to pay alms-tax and I did. Then, you will ask me to prostrate before Muhammad (S)."

It is clear that the spirit of the Islamic faith is submission to the Truth and arrogance impedes such submission.

Therefore, one of the tokens of the hypocrites which is one of the motives lying behind hypocrisy is arrogance, self-conceit, and megalomania.

The Arabic word

lawwu ("they twist"),

deriving from l-w-', l-y-y, or l-w-y, originally denotes twisting ropes but it also connotes turning around or away one's head.

The Arabic verbal form yasudduna, as mentioned above, is used in two senses: "they impede" and "they turn away," though the contextual meanings of the blessed Verses 2 and 5 reflect the former and the latter senses respectively.

To disambiguate the intended meaning, the blessed Verse 6 adds that put the case that they come unto you and you ask for their forgiveness, they are not prepared for such forgiveness. Thus, it would make no difference to them whether you ask or not ask for forgiveness, since God Almighty will never forgive them, as God Almighty will not guide the disobedient.

It is also clear that by disobedient, any sinner is not intended, since the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to save the sinners, but those who persist in committing sins and are obstinate and arrogant against the Truth may not be absolved of their sins.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 7

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنفِقُوا عَلَىٰ مَنْ عِندَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ يَنفَضُّوا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

7. They are the ones who say: "Spend not on those who are with Allah's Messenger so that they desert him." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not.

The Arabic word khaza'in is the plural form of khazina ("treasure"). One of the stratagems devised by enemies is to boycott the believers and lead them to dire straits. The blessed Verse is saying that the hypocrites asked each other not to render aid to the Noble Prophet (S) so that his followers may abandon him.

It was in this vein that Mu'awiya issued a decree as per which the followers of Imam 'Ali (as) were deprived of the public Muslim treasury (bayt al-mal)[9] and the adherents of Imam Husayn (as) were denied of water at Karbala'. In modern times, superpowers employ economic sanctions and pressures to make the nations submit to their will.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 8

يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

8. They say: "If we return to Medina from this military expedition, the more honorable will expel therefrom the meaner." But honor, and power belong to Allah and to His Messenger and to the believers, but the hypocrites know not.

The hypocrites intend to overthrow the Islamic state. They regard themselves to be honorable and the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers to be lowly, whereas the honor and glory solely belong to God Almighty, the Noble Prophet (S), and the believers.

The blessed Verse makes reference to other detestable words uttered by them, saying that they say if we return to Median, the honorable will drive out the humbled from the city. Such words were uttered by 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy intending to say that they, as the inhabitants of Medina, will expel Allah's (S) Messenger and the emigrant believers from the city.

By

"return,"

return from the military campaign of Bani Mustalaq is meant. It is true that one person uttered such words, but since the hypocrites had the same policy, the Holy Qur'an intends a collective sense out of the same. Thus, a harsh reply is provided for them by the Holy Qur'an to the effect that glory exclusively belongs to God Almighty, His Messenger (S), and the believers, though the hypocrites are not aware of it.

It is worthy of note, however, that such words against the emigrant believers were not solely uttered by the Medinan hypocrites, but such words were formerly uttered by the chiefs of Quraysh in Mecca, saying that if they pressured the poor Muslims who were few in number by economic sanctions or if they expel them from Mecca, everything would go smoothly.

The colonial powers in modern times imagine that the treasures of the heaven and the earth are available to them and they try to impose economic sanctions on the nations who fail to submit to their will. Such blind disobedient people have been unaware of the point that their possessions and riches will be scattered to the wind by the Divine Will and their baseless might will perish.

Such attitude, regarding oneself honorable and others humbled is hypocritical and stems from arrogance and self-conceit on the one hand and imaginary independence before God Almighty on the other. Had they been acquainted with the truth of total submission to God Almighty and His Absolute Ownership, they would have never erred in this respect.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

9. O you who believe! Let neither your properties nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that is the loser.

Since worldly possessions and children constitute one of the most significant factors lying behind loving this worldly life, the blessed Verse warns the believers against such excessive affection, saying:

"O you who believe! Let neither your properties nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that is the loser."

It is true that worldly possessions and children are Divine Bounties to the extent that one makes use of them in Allah's Cause and attaining to happiness. However, they are regarded as the worst afflictions when excessive affection for them impedes man from treading the Path to the Truth. It is mentioned above that the same affection led the hypocrites astray.

The same motif is most explicitly depicted in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) according to which two wolves on either sides of a cattle may not inflict so many harms that mammonism and greed may adversely affect the believers' faith.[10]

Qur'an exegetes discuss different possibilities regarding the remembrance of God Almighty in this blessed Verse. Some maintain that the five daily prayers are hereby intended.

Some hold that it alludes to showing gratitude for Divine Bounties, patience at the time of affliction, contentment with Divine Decrees, pilgrimage to Mecca, paying alms tax (zakat), recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and all religious obligations. However, it is clear that remembrance of God Almighty is broad in its semantic range encompassing all the above. Thus, such interpretation makes a reference to the explicit instances of such remembrance.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 10

وَأَنفِقُوا مِن مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

10. And expend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to any of you when he says: "My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while, then I should give alms and be amongst the righteous.

Man expends alms in Allah's Cause and acts upon his religious obligations if he believes the he will die and there will be Resurrection in the Hereafter.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse in question enjoins the believers to expend alms in Allah's Cause, saying:

"expend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to any of you when he says: 'My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while, then I should give alms and be amongst the righteous.'"

Enjoining the believers to expend alms in Allah's Cause herein is interpreted by some Qur'an exegetes in the sense of the immediate

requirement of expending the alms tax and other religious obligations, though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that any kind of obligatory and supererogatory expending alms is hereby intended which may serve as a means of man's salvation in the Hereafter.

It would be of interest to note that the blessed Verse says:

"I should give alms and be amongst the righteous."

Such expression demonstrates the profound impression made by expending in Allah's Cause on righteousness. However, some Qur'an exegetes hold that righteousness herein connotes performing the rituals for pilgrimage to Mecca and there are traditions explicitly substantiating such interpretation, though it may be regarded as one of the explicit instances of the same.

The clause

"before death comes to any of you"

makes a reference to man's encounter with death and the reflection of its tokens, since one may not utter such words posthumously.

The clause

"of that with which We have provided you"

is not restricted to worldly possessions but connotes all Bounties reflecting that man has been granted such Bounties by God Almighty for a few days. Thus, niggardliness would be meaningless. Upon taking a glimpse at the purgatory in the last moments, many people find out that they are at the threshold of the Resurrection Day.

The veils of ignorance are cast asunder and they notice that they have to leave behind all their worldly possessions and regret that they have not made any provisions for such a long journey. Thus, they ask to return to this world even for a short while to compensate for their losses, but they are denied of such return, since Divine Decree makes it impossible to return.

Surah al-Munafiqun - Verse 11

وَلَن يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

11. And Allah grants respite to none when his appointed time comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The last blessed Verse most decisively adds that God Almighty grants respite to none when his appointed time of death comes, not even for one single moment.

The same motif is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"When their term comes, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it for a moment."

Finally, the blessed Verse closes with

"And Allah is All-Aware of what you do,"

reflecting that there are records available for Reward and Chastisement and everyone shall receive Divine Retribution before others.

May God Almighty encompass us with His Graciousness and makes us the dwellers of Paradise. Amen.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. Thawab al-A‘mal; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Ghurar al-Hikam.
4. ‘Awali al-La’ali, vol. 4, p. 39.
5. Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan.
6. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 6, p. 53f3.
7. Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 4, p. 540.
8. Nahj al-Fasaha, p. 481.
9. Ibn Hadid's commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 11, p. 44.
10. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the chapter on the love for this world, tradition 3.
11. 7:34

Surah al-Taghabun, Chapter 64

(Mutual Loss and Gain)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 18

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eighteen Verses and the designation of the Chapter derives from making mention of the Day of Resurrection in the ninth Verse as the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain (taghabun).

The Arabic word taghabun denotes mutual defraud and gaining personal benefits. The point is that on the Day of Resurrection, everyone aims to save oneself and put the blame on others. The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question bear stylistic resemblance to Chapter 57 (Surah al-Hadid) and they seemingly constitute a summary of the latter.

The blessed Chapter opens with Divine Unity and proceeds with warning people against watching their deeds and according attention to the Day of Resurrection and closes with urging people to expend in Allah's Cause and turn away from mundane attachments.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever recites Surah al-Taghabun in as a part of his religious obligations or on other occasions, he will be amongst the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection[1] provided that he acted upon Qur'anic and Islamic Injunctions.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝١

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. His is the Dominion and to Him belong all the praises and He is Omnipotent to do all things.

Aiming at gaining and maintaining power, the rulers in this world commit vices, but God Almighty is the Sovereign glorified by all the world of existence and He never wrongs anyone. It is worthy of note that praise belongs to the One Who is Free from any defect or shortcoming.

Thus, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty and it proceeds to treat of His glorification in genuflexion and prostration before Him. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that all creatures in the world of existence possess some sort of perception and accordingly glorify Allah. However, it is unfortunate that some men, failing to worship and glorify God Almighty and committing sins, act inharmoniously.

As mentioned earlier, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty, the Sovereign Lord Whose Omnipotence sways the entire world of existence, saying that whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth glorify God Almighty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that to Him belong Ownership and Sovereignty thereby all praises belong to His Pure Essence and He is the Omnipotence Lord.

Since the glorification of all the creatures of the world and different interpretations have been mentioned above, there is no need to reiterate them. Such glorification and praise reflect His Omnipotence and Ownership of all things, since Divine Majestic and Beauteous Attributes lie in the same.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنكُم مُّؤْمِنٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

2. He it is Who created you and granted you freedom such that some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

The antecedent of the pronoun

"He" (huwa)

is the word Allah in the preceding Verse. Besides being a Divine Attribute, the pronoun reflects that you are created by the Lord Who is the Absolute Owner and Sovereign, though some of you amongst human beings have shown ingratitude to the Lord following your creation and disbelieved Divinity and failed to glorify and praise the All-Glorious and All-Majestic God Almighty.

Nonetheless, some of you submitted to Divine Command and believed in and followed the Path of Truth. You are supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of what you have concealed in your hearts.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse indicates that man is free in committing his deeds, since he ascribes the Creation of mankind to himself. God Almighty is the One Who created you, but following the Creation, some of you disbelieved and some of you believed. In other words, men enjoyed the free choice to either believe or disbelieve.

The blessed Verse refutes the claims of the Ash'aris and the determinists who maintain that belief and disbelief stem from Divine Will, since God Almighty may accept or refuse to accept the belief or disbelief.

Furthermore, the deterministic claims are against Divine Justice and entail certain restrictions in tormenting the disbelievers, amongst which mention may be made of the nullification of sending Messengers and Revelation of Scriptures and Guidance as well as Divine Promises and Warnings.

In other words, determinists are supposed to abandon mankind like beasts, since God Almighty wills that some people believe in Divine Unity and others refuse to do so. Such unfounded claim stands against common sense and the beliefs held by all the wise the world over who maintain that man is capable of learning.

Furthermore, man is capable of making free choices rather than being predestined to act in any way. Man's deeds reflect his beliefs as a

consequence of which the blessed Verse says that God Almighty is All-Aware of your deeds rather than saying God Almighty is All-Aware of your disbelief and belief.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 3

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

3. He created the heavens and the earth with truth and He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes. And to Him is the return.

The blessed Verse in question proceeds with further elaboration on creation and the goals behind it, saying that God Almighty created the heavens and the earth out of Truth and there is a precise and true systematicity as well as Wise and True goals behind the creation of the world.

The blessed Verse further treats of the creation of man and urges us to proceed from the realm of the horizons and enter that of the souls, saying that He fashioned you with a comely and pleasing shape granting man a pleasant appearance and an embellished heart enlightened by reason and wisdom. God Almighty created specimens from the entire world of existence in man such that as put by Imam 'Ali (as), macrocosm is epitomized in microcosm.

However, the blessed Verse closes by saying that the final return of all things is toward God Almighty. Man is a constituent element of the organic world of existence. In terms of creation, the entire world in harmoniously proceeding toward a single goal, proceeding from the lowest degrees toward the proximity of the Boundless Being, the Infinite Existence of God Almighty.

The expression

"He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes"

includes the outward appearance and the inward form in terms of the body and the soul. A brief glimpse at the creation of man's body and soul reflects that he is the most beauteous of the beings in the world of existence and God Almighty created this being in the best form and His Omnipotence is manifest therein.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 4

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

4. He knows what is in the heavens and on earth and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is the Omniscient of what is in the breasts.

The best means to abstain from committing sins and maintaining the Fear of God Almighty is that He is Omniscient and All-Aware of our deeds. His Omniscience is not restricted to temporal and spatial spheres, but He is All-Aware of what is manifest and what is concealed as He is Omniscient of all things in the heavens and on the earth.

Since man is created for a great goal, he is supposed to be under Divine Supervision at all times. The Lord is Fully Aware of his outward appearance

and his inward feelings and intentions. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the heavens and what is on the earth and He is All-Aware of what you manifestly do or conceal the same. He is All-Aware of the intentions and the beliefs in the breasts.

The blessed Verse depicts Divine Omniscience in three stages: firstly, His Omniscience of all the creatures in the heavens and on the earth; secondly, His Omniscience of all the deeds of mankind irrespective of what they conceal or what they manifest; thirdly, particular emphasis is laid on inward intentions and beliefs and what predominates over human heart and soul.

Being aware of Divine Omniscience may greatly affect man's growth such that it may serve as a warning to man according to which no matter how far he may proceed and to whatever goals he may attain and whatever intentions he may foster in his heart and whatever moral traits he may have, they are all manifest before Divine Omniscience.

Attending to such truth indubitably may greatly contribute to human growth. Such teachings pave the way for man to attain to the goals of creation and tread the path of development and spiritual growth. In short, man is not abandoned on its own but he is under Divine Supervision.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 5

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

5. Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter.

The Arabic word wabal attested four times in the Holy Qur'an designates anything leading to loss and all the Qur'anic instances of the word connote mundane hardships and entanglements.

Divine torment is not restricted to those in store for people on the Day of Resurrection, but it may befall people in this world as well instances of which include the drowning of Noah's people, Hud's people being afflicted with gale, Salih's people being tormented by the awe inspiring cries from the heaven, Lot's people being stoned, and the people of the Elephant who tasted their dire fate by the burning rocks falling upon them.

One of the most effective means of fostering and warning is to make mention of the fates of ancient peoples.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question briefly mentions the fates of some of the disobedient peoples addressing people

"Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter?"

The blessed Verse is saying that you pass by the ruined cities on your way to Sham and other places witnessing the dire consequences of their wrong-doing and disobedience and read about them in historical works. Those people tasted torments and trod the path of perdition by tempests, torrents, lightning, earthquakes, and gales in this world and excruciating torments are in store for them in the Hereafter.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 6

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوا وَّاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

6. That was because there came unto them their Messengers with clear proofs but they said arrogantly: "Shall mere men guide us?" Thus, they disbelieved and turned away. But Allah was not in need of belief and obedience. And Allah is Needless and Worthy of all praise.

The demonstrative pronoun

"that" (dhalika)

alludes to the preceding blessed Verse, namely you are not supposed to imagine that God Almighty never wrongs anyone by afflicting him with excruciating torments in this world and the Hereafter, but the point is that He apprised mankind of the ultimatum by sending Messengers and revealing Scriptures and miracles such that the wise may entertain no doubts as to the veracity of the Prophetic Calls.

Nonetheless, some people disbelieved out of arrogance and failed to believe on the pretext that Messengers were human beings like them and how they may obey their likes unaware of the truth that they Messengers resemble people in form but they are attached to the metaphysical, higher realm from which they have obtained Divine Emanations and impart the same unto people.

God Almighty is Needless of people's belief and disbelief. He is absolutely Needless of all existent beings.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 7

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَن لَّن يُبْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

7. The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected. Say: "Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you shall certainly be apprised of what you did and that is easy for Allah.

The Arabic word za'm denotes unfounded claim and allegation and all the Qur'anic attestations of the world connote criticism. Imam Sadiq (as) is reported as saying that all the Qur'anic attestations of the word za'm connote falsity.[2]

Thus, the blessed Qur'anic Verse enjoins the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) to say that by my Lord! You shall be all resurrected and you shall be certainly apprised of your past deeds and it is easy to do for God Almighty. The blessed Verse opens with a decisive response to the unfounded claims of those who deny Resurrection with a tone in which emphasis and swearing are intertwined, reflecting the firm belief of the warner, namely the Noble Prophet (S).

The blessed Verse in question proceeds by saying that such thing is easy for God Almighty to do. We know that those who denied Resurrection cast doubts on the possibility of resurrecting the rotten bones turned into dust.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that the Omnipotent Lord shall have not difficulty in resurrecting them, since He created the world of existence

ex nihilo and resurrecting the dead is more convenient that creating the creatures.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the oath

"By my Lord!"

serves as a delicate allusion to Resurrection, since Divine Lordship requires that the path to man's development and growth within the limits of the mundane and worthless life be not ineffectual. In other words, so long as we do not acknowledge Resurrection, Divine Sovereignty and His fostering mankind on the path of growth would be meaningless.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 8

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنزَلْنَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

8. Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light which We have sent down. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

The word Light (nur) in this blessed Verse connotes the Holy Qur'an as it is reflected in the opening of Chapter 14 (Surah Ibrahim):

"We have sent down a Book unto you such that you may lead mankind out of the shadows of polytheism, ignorance, and discord into the Light of monotheism, knowledge, and unity."

The preceding blessed Verses treated of disbelief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and Resurrection leading peoples of the aforetime to torments, though the blessed verse in question is warning people against treading the path of the ancient people who tasted dire fates, but they are urged to believe in God Almighty and His Messengers.

Traditions reflect that the Light mentioned herein connotes the Infallible Imams (as), since they are the embodiments of the Holy Qur'an. Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that they are those who shed light on the believers' hearts.[3] Belief is valuable when it encompasses belief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and the Scripture and it is accompanied by action.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 9-10

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

9. Remember the Day when Allah will gather you on the Day of Gathering, that will be the Day of mutual loss and gain. And whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will absolve him of his sins and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. That will be the great salvation.

10. But those who disbelieved and denied our Àyat [proofs, Verses, Signs], they will be the dwellers of the Hell to dwell therein forever. And worst is that destination.

The Arabic word taghabun connotes that on the Day of Resurrection the envies and regrets shall be manifest when disbelievers regret for having failed to believe, the disobedient regret for having failed to do righteous

good deeds, and believers regret to having failed to do further righteous good deeds.

Tokens of such regretful people are mentioned in traditions including:

1. One whose two days be the same.[4]

2. Arrogance and vanity in this world entails poverty in this world and regret and loss in the Hereafter.[5]

3. One who deprives himself of night prayers.[6]

4. One who turns away from struggling in Allah's Cause.[7]

Two groups stand in lines against each other on the Day of Resurrection: the losers and the saved. Glad tidings and warnings are supposed to accompany each other in education. The blessed Verse 9 bears the glad tidings of the everlasting Paradise and the blessed Verse 10 warns against the everlasting Hell for disbelievers. The way out of regret and loss is belief and righteous good deeds.

It is worthy of note, however, that that the blessed Verses in question depict the Day of Resurrection saying that you shall be gathered on the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, and Recompense.

The Day of Gathering is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection recurrent references to which are attested in the Holy Qur'an, including 56:49-50:

"Say those of olden and those of later times shall be all gathered together for appointed Meeting of a Known Day."

It clearly reflects that the Resurrection of all mankind shall be on one single Day. The blessed Verse 9 is saying that that Day shall be the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain when losers and winners shall be recognized. It shall be on such Day that those who have incurred loss in this world shall be known to others.

Treating of the states of the believers on that Day, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that those who believe in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds shall be absolved of his sins by God Almighty and he shall be admitted to Gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow to dwell therein forever and it shall be a great success.

The blessed Verse 10 is saying that those who disbelieved and denied Our Signs are the people of the Hell to dwell therein for good and they shall have a dire fate. Disbelief and denial of Divine Signs are herein mentioned as the Causes leading to misfortune as they stand against belief and righteous good deeds. Thus, mention is made herein of the everlasting Paradise and the great salvation and also of the everlasting Hell and the dire fate.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 11

مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

11. No calamity befalls but by the Leave of Allah and whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. And Allah is the Omniscient.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the afflictions and the painful torments in this world perhaps to the effect that such afflictions have always served as pretexts for disbelievers to deny Justice in this world. Such reference may also reflect that there are impediments on the path to true

belief and doing righteous good deeds without confronting them the believer may not succeed. Thus, the link between the blessed Verse in question and the preceding Verses becomes manifest.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that no affliction befalls on mankind without Allah's Leave.

All the happenings in this world indubitably depend upon Divine Leave, since the Unity of Divine Acts requires that nothing may realize in the world of existence without Divine Will, but since befalling of afflictions has always raise questions, emphasis is laid upon it. It is worthy of note, however, that Divine Will reflects Divine Existential Will rather than His Legislative Will.

The significant question raised here is this: Do many of these afflictions befall on mankind consequent to the wrong doings of the oppressors and the will of the tyrants or man is entangled with them owing to his ignorance, negligence, and committing vices or they all befall on mankind owing to Allah's Leave?

To provide a response to this question one may say that all the Qur'anic Verses dealing with afflictions reflect that they are of two kinds: those essential to the nature of human life absolutely unaffected by human will, e.g. death and some of the natural excruciating disasters and those which are somehow affected by human will.

Regarding the first category, the Holy Qur'an says that they are all dependent upon Divine Leave. Concerning the second category, the Glorious Qur'an says that they are the consequences of human acts.

Therefore, one may not use such pretexts and regard all afflictions befalling on mankind by Allah and thereby remain inactive against wrong doers and refrain from confronting them. One may not even refrain from addressing and encountering ailments, blights, poverty, and ignorance. It is worthy of note, however, that the afflictions stemming from human acts befall man upon Divine Leave and any cause is rendered ineffectual upon His Will.

The blessed Verse proceeds with bearing glad tidings to the believers saying that God Almighty guides the believers' hearts such that they never abandon hope in the face of afflictions nor be turned restless. Man is granted Divine Guidance when he is grateful for Divine Bounties, patient in the face of afflictions, and submits to Divine Decree.

The Guidance of the heart embraces a broad semantic range from patience, gratitude, being content with Divine Satisfaction, submission to Divine Will to uttering the formula

"To Allah we belong and to Whom we return."

Some Qur'an exegetes have treated with one of these attributes, though the blessed Verse covers all of them.

The blessed Verse closes with

"and Allah is the Omniscient"

which may briefly reflect the causes behind the afflictions in store for fostering His servants out of His Infinite Knowledge aiming at giving warnings against arrogance and vanity such that His servants may not

consign into oblivion their obligations and refrain from disobedience to Him.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 12-13

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

12. Obey Allah [in terms of the injunctions prescribed in Divine Law] and obey the Messenger [with respect to his commands and traditions], but if you turn away, then the obligation of Our Messenger is merely to convey the Message clearly.

13. Allah! There is no god but He. Therefore, in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Since the knowledge of the origin and Resurrection, mentioned in the previous blessed Verses, certainly affects obedience to God Almighty and the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse in question is saying that it is incumbent upon the believers to obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

It goes without saying that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) reflects obedience to God Almighty, since he does not say anything of his own. The imperative verbal form obey (ati‘u) reflects herein that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) stems from obedience to God Almighty.

Furthermore, obedience to God Almighty rests in obeying Divine Laws but obeying in His Messenger concerns to the interpretations of Divine Laws and execution of the same. Thus, one is fundamental and the other is ancillary.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that if you turn away and fail to obey the Noble Prophet (S), he is not obliged to make you obey, since His Messenger (S) is only obliged to clearly convey the message. It is incumbent upon him to impart the Truth, but if you fail to obey Divine Command, you have to pay for the consequences of your disobedience. It entails an implied warning.

The blessed Verse 13 makes a reference to the question of Divine Unity in worshipping God Almighty serving as an argument for the requirement of obedience to Divine Command, saying that Allah is the One besides Whom there is no object of worship, hence the believers are supposed to solely put their trust in Him.

No one else is worthy of being worshipped, since Ownership, Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Needlessness solely belong to Him and all beings besides Him are in need of Him. Consequently, they are not supposed to bow down to and obey none but Him. Thus, the believers are to put their trust in Him and invoke solely Him in their prayers.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verse 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعْفُوا

وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

14. O you who believe! Indeed, amongst your wives and your children are your enemies [since they make you turn away from treading the

Divine Path]. Therefore, beware of them! But if you pardon, overlook, and forgive their faults, then know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The Arabic words
'afw ("pardon "),
safh ("forgiveness"),
and
maghfira ("remission")
constitute the three steps to be taken against the faults of others including spouses and children. Regarding the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that when some men intended to migrate from Mecca to Medina, their wives and children beseeched them to swear that they did not leave them since they would be abandoned without them.

Some men yielded to their persistence and intended to stay. Then, the blessed Verse was revealed warning them against yielding to their wives' and children's requests. There were some men who said unto their families that if they refrained from accompanying them in their migration and joined them later in Medina, they would not be welcome by no means. They were ordered to consign to oblivion the past and welcome the reunion and the Qur'anic Verse addresses such issue.[8]

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the unconditional obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S), though since excessive affection for possessions and families constitute one of the impediments in treading the Path of Truth, the blessed Verse in question warns Muslims in this respect saying:

"O you who believe! Some of your wives and children are your enemies. Beware of them."

Whenever you intend to act upon Divine Ordinance, e.g. migration in Allah's Cause, they beseech you to refrain from obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and thereby impede you from being granted such great Bounty.

At times, they wish that you were dead so as to possess your possessions. It is needless to say that all wives and children are not like that and the partitive proposition min ("from") designates the same connotation. The point is that some of them are like that and the believers are supposed to beware of them.

It is worthy of note, however, that such enmity is at times disguised as affection and good intention, though enmity and mal intention rest behind such affection aiming at procurement of personal benefits.

The significant point is that man may at times be perplexed at dilemmas when one way leads to God Almighty and the other toward one's family. Believers are not supposed to entertain any doubts since Divine Satisfaction precedes all things and salvation in this world and the Hereafter lies in the same.

Since family members may use the injunction as a pretext for violence, vengeance, and going to the extreme, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that

if you overlook and forgive their faults, God Almighty will forgive you, since He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious.

Thus, if they repent and apologize for their faults and join you following your migration, do not turn away from them, but forgive them as you invoke God Almighty for forgiveness.

The blessed Verse is saying that the believers, besides being decisive in maintaining their beliefs and refraining from yielding to the entreaties of their families as to deviate from the straight path, are supposed to endeavor to forgive the faults of others in the same manner that they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness since it is through such affection and forgiveness that they may invite them to obey God Almighty.

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 15-16

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عِندَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

15. Your riches and your offspring are only a trial and Allah with Him is the great reward grants rewards to those who stand the trial.

16. Therefore, fear Allah as much as you can. Listen to and obey His Words and expend in His Cause. That is better for you. And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.

The Arabic word fitna connotes the pains, afflictions, hardships, and entanglements which serve as trials. It also connotes the conspiracies and corruptions by enemies.

The Holy Qur'an[9] enjoins the believers to struggle against them such that there remains no corruption. It would be of interest to note that possessions and families are both means of trial and the embellishments in this world[10]. In this vein, Imam 'Ali (as) is reported as saying that the believers are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the face of trials quoting the blessed Verse in question.[11]

If we believe that possessions serve as means of trial, we will not be perturbed by their scarcity since standing such trials will be easier in this way. Possessions are supposed to be accrued through legitimate means and they should be expended in legitimate causes. The believers are obliged to pay the alms tax and thereby show their gratitude.

Children are also means of trial, since parents should accord due attention with respect to selecting worthy spouses for them, pay the religiously lawful mahr, i.e. the bridal money to the spouse, the children's healthy feeding, having affection for them, fostering and educating them in terms of matrimony, and pay utmost attention to their proper upbringing.

All these steps are hard trials and in case the parents be able to fulfill their obligations and thereby stand the trial, they will have their shares in all the righteous good deeds committed by their children.

Some of the spouses and children entertain enmity but all of them serve as means of trial. Thus, foregoing the affection for possessions and children constitute a great Divine Obligation for which God Almighty grants great Rewards. The blessed Verse in question reflects that possessions and

children serve as means of trial for the believers and if they stand the trial, they will be granted great Divine Rewards and Bounties.

God Almighty tries man at all times in order to make him tread the path of growth. Man is tried by different things and possessions and children serve as some of the most significant means of trial, since man's affection for possessions on the one hand and his affection for his children on the other serve as hard trials and man may not stand them and thereby fail to achieve Divine Satisfaction.

The Arabic adverbial form

innama ("nothing but")

is employed herein to reflect restriction connoting that above all, affection for possessions and children serve as means of trial.

In this respect, Imam 'Ali (as) is narrated as saying:

"No one is supposed to say

'O Lord! I seek refuge in You from the trials,'

since there are trials for each and everyone through possessions, however meager, and children and the life of this world serves as the crucible in which man is tried.

If anyone intends to seek refuge in God Almighty, he is to seek refuge in Him from errors, since God Almighty says:

'Beware that possessions and children are means of trial.'"[12]

In this vein, many a Qur'anic exegete and traditionist narrate that once the Messenger of Allah (S) was delivering a sermon on the pulpit when Hasan and Husayn (as) who were small children at the time entered and as they toddled. The Noble Prophet (S) noticed them.

He descended from the pulpit and embraced them saying:

"God Almighty is True in saying that your possessions and children are means of your trial. When I noticed that they toddled, I could not exercise patience. I cut my words short and came to embrace them."[13]

It is worthy of note, however, that such conduct served as a warning to all the Muslims so that they may recognize the exalted ranks of Imam 'Ali's (as) and Hadhrat Fatima's children.

A tradition is transmitted on the authority of Bura' ibn 'Àzib, the well-known Prophet's Companion, in Sunni sources as per which he saw Hasan ibn 'Ali (as) on the Noble Prophet's (as) shoulders saying that he loved him and invoked God Almighty to love him as well.[14]

According to some other traditions, when the Noble Prophet (S) was prostrating in his prayers and Husayn (as), while still a small child, sat on the Noble Prophet's (S) shoulders, he did not impede him from doing so and such conduct reflects the exalted ranks of these two Imams (as).[15]

The blessed Verse 16 draws a conclusion by saying:

"Fear God Almighty as much as it is within your capacity and listen to and obey His Injunctions and expend in His Cause since it would be better for you."

The blessed Verse opens with an Injunction, as per which the believers are supposed to refrain from committing sins, since fear of God Almighty mostly reflects refraining from committing sins. Then, the blessed Verse

proceeds to say that believers are supposed to listen to Divine Injunctions as the preliminary of obeying God Almighty.

Particular emphasis is laid on expending in Allah's Cause as one of the most significant Divine Trials making mention of the point that such things will be all to their benefit (khayr), though the word encompasses a wide semantic range. The emphatic expression reflects that those who save themselves from avarice and covetousness will be saved.

The Arabic word shuhh denotes both niggardliness and avarice and we know that these two vices are amongst the worst impediments to man's deliverance, since they impede man from expending in Allah's Cause and doing righteous good deeds.

Man may save himself from these two vices and achieve happiness through seeking Divine Grace from the bottom of his heart and striving toward the purification of one's self. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever pays the alms tax guarantees his happiness.[16]

It is worthy of note, however, that it solely includes one of the instances of refraining from niggardliness and avariciousness rather than encompassing all its semantic scope. It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that he circumambulated the Ka'ba from night to morning invoking God Almighty at all times to keep him from his niggardliness and avariciousness.

One of the Imam's companions asked him:

"May my soul be your ransom! I just hear this invocation of yours tonight. Why do you not make another invocation?"

The Imam (as) replied:

"What is worse than niggardliness and avariciousness since God Almighty says:

'And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.'"[17]

Surah al-Taghabun - Verses 17-18

إِن تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

17. If you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Prepared to appreciate and the Most Forbearing.

18. He is the All-Knower of the unseen and seen, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

To encourage believers to expend in Allah's Cause and refraining from niggardliness and covetousness, the blessed Verse 17 is saying that if you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will make it two folds for you and He will forgive you.

He is Most Prepared to appreciate and reward and He is Most Forbearing. Such wondrous expression is recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an with respect to expending in Allah's Cause. God Almighty who is the Creator of the world of existence and He bestows all Bounties and owns

all things asks us to lend Him a goodly loan and receive a twofold compensation in return.

He forgives us and appreciates our lending Him a goodly loan. Better rewards, affection, and compensation are unimaginable. It is impossible to transcend such Majesty and Graciousness. Our possessions all belong to Him but we will receive such great Rewards in return for lending such goodly loan. Such Reward reflects the significance of expending in Allah's Cause on the one hand and the Infinite Bounties bestowed upon His servants on the other.

The Arabic word qardh originally denotes "sever, cut," though when it is accompanied by the word hasan "good" it connotes separation from one's possessions and expending the same in a good cause. The Arabic verbal form yudha'if deriving from the root dh-'-f, denotes making twofold or manifold, though in terms of expending in Allah's Cause, according to the Holy Qur'an, it may reach seven hundred fold and may even exceed the same[18].

The clause

"He will forgive you"

reflects that expending in Allah's Cause leads to the forgiveness of one's sins.

The adjective

shakur ("Most Ready to appreciate")

is a Divine Attribute indicating that God Almighty is Most Ready to appreciate the righteous good deeds of His servants by granting great Rewards. His Patience (hilm) reflects His forgiving of sins and lack of haste in chastising the servants.

The blessed Verse is also saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of the seen and the unseen and He is the Omnipotence, the All-Wise. God Almighty is All-Aware of what His servants do in private and in public.

He is Omniscient of what they expend in His Cause. If He asks them to lend Him a goodly loan, it does not reflect His need and lack powerlessness, rather such request indicates His Infinite Affection and Grace. Such great Rewards in return for expending in His Cause reflect His Wisdom.

Therefore, the five Divine Attributes mentioned in the blessed Verse in question and the preceding One are all related to the encouragement to expend in His Cause, though according attention to such Attributes makes man more steadfast in his obedience to God Almighty and refraining from committing sins and grants him the spirit of fear of God Almighty, will power, and encouragement.

Finally, it would be of interest to make reference to a Prophetic tradition according to which no infant is born unless five Verses from Surah al-Taghabun are written on its skull[19] by which the last five blessed Verses concerning worldly possessions and children may be intended.

The inscription of these five blessed Verses on the skull reflected the certainty of the contents of these Verses applicable to all human beings without any exception. It clearly indicates that such dispositions are to be found in mankind.

O Lord! Render us aid in such great trial regarding affection for possessions and families.

O Lord! Assist us in warding off niggardliness, avariciousness, and covetousness since turning away from such vices leads to deliverance and salvation.

Notes

1. Majma‘ al-Bayan.
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 173.
5. Ibid, vol. 72, p. 173.
6. Ibid, vol. 83, p. 127.
7. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 262.
8. The exegetic work by ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsir Nur, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, and other exegetic works.
9. 2:193
10. Chapter 17
11. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
12. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
13. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma‘ani; Tafsir Fi Hilal al-Qur’an; Tafsir al-Mizan.
14. Muslim’s Sahih, vol. 4, p. 1883, the Chapter on the Merits of Hasan and Husayn (as), tradition 58.
15. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 296, tradition 57.
16. Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 301.
17. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 346.
18. 2:261
19. Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 24.

Surah al-Talaq, Chapter 65

(The Divorce)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 12

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter 65, revealed in Medina, has twelve Verses. The first seven Verses treat of divorce and the related rulings, hence the designation of the Chapter. The second section deals with the fate of those who disobeyed Divine Command and thereby suffered the consequence of their disobedient as well as that of those who obeyed the Prophets and did righteous good deeds and were thereby reward by Divine Bounties.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites Surah al-Talaq and acts upon its injunctions will pass away while following the Prophetic traditions.[1]

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۖ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِن بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَن يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرًا

1. O Prophet! When you divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods [i.e. while not menstruating and not having sexual intercourse with their husbands] and count their periods. And fear Allah, your Lord. And turn them not out of your homes nor shall they leave, except in case they are guilty of some open illegal act. And those are the set limits of Allah and whosoever transgresses the limits set by Allah, he has wronged himself. You know not; it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass.

Divorce is subject to certain conditions and specific rules and ethical principles. Likewise, there are certain requirements for confrontation with enemies and Muslims are not supposed to poison the drinking water, destroy the trees, and wrong children, women, and senior citizens. Significant factors leading to divorce include the partners' mistreatment of each other.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that bad temper hurts one's family.[2] The blessed Chapter mainly treats of divorce with which it opens by addressing the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as the great leader of the Islamic community and states the general ruling by a plural verbal form, saying:

"O Messenger! Whenever you intend to divorce your wives, do so at the time of their prescribed periods."

It is the first Injunction from amongst the five Injunctions mentioned in this blessed Verse. The Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse makes a reference to the ruling as per which the divorce formula should be uttered when the woman is neither menstruating nor had sexual intercourse with her husband.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3] that the prescribed time is specified as the passage of three menstrual periods (thalatha quru'). The blessed Verse in question emphasizes that giving divorce should follow the period of not having menstruation.

In other words, giving divorce is solely possible at the time of the woman's not having the menstrual period, since in case divorce is given at the time of menstruation, the beginning of the waiting period ('idda) will be separated from the beginning of the divorce and the beginning of the waiting period follows the period of not menstruating.

Likewise, in case the woman is not menstruating while having sexual intercourse with her husband, such not menstruating may not indicate that semen has not been ejaculated into the uterus. At any rate, it is the first requirement for giving divorce.

According to numerous Prophetic traditions, in case a man divorces his wife while she is menstruating, the divorce will be invalidated until the consummation of her waiting period.[4] Traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt recurrently bear testimony to the same and even it is mentioned as the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.[5]

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the second ruling concerning counting the waiting period, saying:

"Count the waiting period."

The blessed Verse urges Muslims to carefully attend to waiting period consisting of the passage of three menstrual periods ending in the beginning of the third period. Failure to attend to the point in question may result in going to the extreme in counting the required number of days and the woman may thereby incur some loss, since she may be deterred from remarriage.

Counting less than the required days may adversely affect the bounds of wedlock through failure to attend to the congelation of semen in the womb.

The imperative verbal form

ahsu ("count"),

deriving from the root h-s-y, is cognate with hasa ("pebble"), since it was common among ancient illiterate peoples to keep records of different things by counting with pebbles.

It is worthy of note, however, that men are herein addressed as those responsible for counting the waiting period, since they are responsible for providing women with alimony and accommodation expenses. The right to the revocation of divorce and remarriage is also vested with men, though women are also obliged to keep a precise record of their waiting periods.

The blessed Verse proceeds to call all people to the fear of God Almighty, the Lord and Fosterer of all the world of existence whose

Injunctions guarantees happiness. Thus, it is incumbent upon mankind to act upon His Injunctions and refrain from disobedience to His Commands. In this respect, particular attention is to be accorded to giving divorce and counting the days of the waiting period.

The third and the fourth Injunctions concern the husbands and the wives respectively, saying:

"Do not drive them out of their homes and they, i.e., the women, are not supposed to leave their homes during the waiting period."

It is worthy of note, however, that many ignorant people do not act upon such Injunction and upon uttering the divorce formula such ignorant men drive the women out of their homes and women imagine that they are free to return to their relatives' homes. Nonetheless, such Islamic ruling embodies a very significant point since besides paying respect to women, the ruling paves the way for the husband to revoke the divorce and strengthen the bonds of matrimony.

Failure to accord attention to such Islamic ruling which is attested in the Holy Qur'an leads many a matrimony to lead in permanent break up, though if the ruling were acted upon, it would entail settlement.

However, under certain circumstances women may not at times stay at their homes, as a consequence of which, the fifth Injunction, serving as an exception to the rule, is mentioned as per which women are obliged to refrain from committing open evil acts, e.g. mistreatment and slandering their husbands and their in-laws leading to further problems at home.

In this vein, numerous traditions have been narrated from the Imams.[6] ***It is noteworthy that any insignificant issue is not herein intended, since the Arabic word fahisha denotes a significant vice and it is described by the adjective mubayyina ("open, evident").***

The word fahisha may also connote transgression of bounds, substantiated by a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), designating driving out for being chastised and then returning home. Both interpretations are possible.

The blessed Verse emphasizes according attention to Divine limits, saying that whoever transgresses the limits set by God Almighty has wrong himself, since these Injunctions guarantee the interests of the obliged and failure to act upon them by either men or women adversely affects their happiness.

The blessed Verse closes by a delicate allusion to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period and the obligation of the women to stay at their homes, saying that you do not know, though God Almighty may bring some new things to pass thereby leading to some means of settlement.

The point is that the explosive fits of rage leading to taking hasty decisions concerning separation subsides in time and the presence of women at home during their waiting period reminds them of the evil consequence of divorce, particularly when they have children, and when one of them expresses their affection for the other, it may pave the path for their settlement and thereby the leaden clouds of hatred may be scattered.

It would be of interest to make mention of a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as per which the divorced woman at the time of the waiting period may wear make-up, perfume, and beautiful clothes, since God Almighty says that He may make new things pass such that women may win the affections of their husbands and the latter may consent to remarry them.[7]

As mentioned above, making decisions as to separation and divorce are consequent to fleeting excitements which may alter with the passage of time and the association of the partners during a relatively long period of time, i.e. the waiting period, and thus the stage may be set for settlement, provided that the aforesaid Islamic rulings concerning the woman's permanent stay at the ex-husband's home be strictly observed. God willingly mention will be mentioned below of the pint that such issues all concern the revocable divorce (talaq rij'i).

Now we turn to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Islamic traditions. Firstly, mention is to be made of the significance of such observance with regards to survival and pregnancy.

The second issue at hand concerns the revocation of the divorce and removing the obstacles leading to separation to which a delicate allusion is made in the blessed Verse in question.

Islam lays emphasis on the point that during the waiting period, the divorced woman is supposed to stay at the ex-husband's home as a consequence of which they associate for a period of several months that provides them with the opportunity to think about their separation free from fleeting excitements.

Another point is that the ex-husband may revoke the divorce without facing any impediment and any word or deed on the part man suggesting his inclination toward the revocation of the divorce may urge him to remarry his ex-wife.

However, in case they fail to reach any settlement as to resuming their matrimony, they had better separate and make a move in their lives. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that it would be far befitting before God Almighty when a husband stays with his wife than seeking seclusion at a mosque.[8]

One of the significant factors leading to divorce is the partners' mistreatment of each other. It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that whoever is a bad tempered man hurts his family.[9]

Islam enjoins that when differences emerge between a husband and a wife, sympathetic people are supposed to be selected to serve as arbiters so that they may attend to the differences and make attempts at their removal. Thus, the partners may reach some settlement and there would be no need for referring to the court of justice and applying for divorce.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10] that

"If you fear a breach between the man and the woman, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers."

According to the Islamic law, two just witnesses are supposed to attend the session in which decisions are taken for separation and bear witness to the same. Attending such witnesses may serve as an impediment to divorce,

since people, owing the hideousness of divorce in the society, refrain from bearing witness for such instances leading to breaking up of families. Secondly, those urged to serve as witnesses to divorce endeavor to make the partners reach some settlement.

Mention will be made hereunder of some traditions on the hideousness of divorce.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that no act is more hideous before God Almighty than the destruction of the pillars of a home through separation, namely divorce.[11]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Marry and do not divorce, since divorce makes the Divine Throne tremble.[12]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that before God Almighty, no lawful issue is more hideous than divorce.[13]

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying:

"It would be unbecoming of women to neglect their appearance and good looks which sweeten matrimonial life.[14]

Hasan ibn Jahm narrates that he was surprised to see Imam Kathim (as) having dyed his hair.

Noticing his surprise, the Noble Imam (as) said:

"The husband's comely appearance urges women to be chaster and some women turn away from chastity owing to their husbands' neglect in having a good appearance. Likewise, men do not favor to see their wives without adornment.[15]

Imam Baqir (as) is narrated as saying:

"A divorced woman staying at her ex-husband's home is supposed to wear make-up, perfume, and the beautiful clothes so that they may make decisions with further insight and the husband may thereby revoke the divorce and they may resume their married life.[16]

Islam enjoins men and women to abstain from looking at those outside the circle of close kinship (namahram) aiming at taking pleasure. Women are also urged to cover themselves from being looked at by those outside the circle of close kinship and refrain from attracting the attention of strangers.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying that a brief glance, many a time, may entail regret.[17] The Noble Imam (as) is also narrated as saying that it is incumbent upon men to be chaste with regard to women so that your women's chastity may be preserved.[18]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that some women deviate from the path of chastity owing to their husbands' neglect of their appearance.[19] Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as) with regard to marriage, divorce, and matrimonial life for which reference may be made to tradition sources.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 2-3

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ ۚ ءٍ قَدْرًا

2. Then, when they approach the end of the waiting period, either take them back in a good manner or part with them in a good manner [by paying their bridal money and other due expenses]. And take as witness two just persons from amongst you [at the time of divorce]. And establish the testimony for Allah's Satisfaction. That will be an admonition given to anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day. And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from all hardships.

3. And He will provide him from sources unimaginable to him. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.

The manners of matrimonial life and divorce are supposed to be approved by the religious law and reason. Resuming the discussion concerning divorce mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 2 makes a reference to some other rulings.

The blessed Verse 2 opens with saying that when the waiting period comes to an end, divorced women are supposed to be kept back by remarrying them or the ex-husbands are supposed to part with them in a becoming fashion.

"Approach the end of the waiting period"

is meant by

"the attainment of the appointed term" (bulugh ajall),

since revoking the divorce following the end of the waiting period is not permissible, unless divorced women be taken back through uttering the marriage formula once more. Nonetheless, such contextual meaning hardly sounds possible.

At any rate, the blessed Verse 3 includes one of the most significant and the most well-measured Injunctions concerning matrimonial life, saying that partners to matrimony are obliged to either live together in a befitting fashion or part with each other in a becoming manner. Likewise, matrimonial life should be based on accurate and humane principles and separation should be free from controversies, quarrels, slander, and transgression of rights.

It is quite significant that in the same manner that bonds are supposed to be established peacefully, separation should be accompanied by mutual understanding, since the ex-partners may consider remarriage, but mistreatments at the time of separation clouds their reflection such that they impede them from consideration of remarriage; even if they wish to remarry, they lose their intellectual and emotional background.

On the other hand, both of them are Muslims and belong to the Islamic community and break-ups accompanied by quarrels and unbefitting conducts adversely affect them and their in-laws and ruins their opportunities for future cooperation.

The above discussions clearly reflect that doing good righteous good deeds encompasses a broad semantic scope embracing the performance of

all obligatory and supererogatory and ethical deeds imparting a series of Islamic and ethical principles and manners. The blessed Verse proceeds to make a reference to the second Injunction, saying that upon separation and divorce, appoint two just witnesses from amongst Muslims so that in case and difference breaks out, none of the parties may be able to deny the facts.

The third Injunction makes mention of the obligations entrusted with the witnesses, as per which they are required to bear testimony for the sake of God Almighty free from inclinations towards either of the partners entailing bearing untrue testimony. Their sole incentive should be to obtain Divine Satisfaction.

The witnesses are required to be just, since justice may not necessarily ward of committing sins. Thus, they are warned against deliberate or inadvertent deviation from the true path.

It is worthy of note that the term

"just" (dhawi 'l-'adl)

indicates that the witnesses are required to be Muslims, just, and male. The blessed Verse closes with an emphasis on all the preceding Injunctions, saying that only those who believe in God Almighty shall reap the fruits of this admonition.

The pronominal phrase

"this for you" (dhalikum)

reflects the particular emphasis laid on these Injunctions, such that if they are not observed and lessons are to taken from such Injunctions, it is as if one does not believe in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection.

However, since certain issues concerning means of living, prospective life, and other domestic problems at times impede the partners or witnesses to deviate from the path of truth and justice at the time of divorce or remarriage, the blessed Verse closes by saying that whoever fears God Almighty and abstains from committing sins, God Almighty will deliver them from entanglements and will solve their problems.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that God Almighty will provide him from sources that he could have never imagined and whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him, since God Almighty will accomplish his purpose and He has set a measure for all things.

Thus, male and female witnesses are warned against entertaining fear of problems resulting from treading the path of truth, but they are enjoined to administer justice and invoke God Almighty for removing the impediments, since He guarantees that whoever puts his trust in Him, he will be delivered from entanglements. God Almighty is Omnipotent to fulfill such guarantee.

It is noteworthy that these Verses have been revealed concerning divorce and its Injunctions, but their contextual meaning embraces a wide semantic range that encompasses other affairs as well. These blessed Verses bear glad tidings by God Almighty to all those who fear Him and put their trust in Him as they will be granted Divine Grace and their impediments will be removed and they will be led to the shining horizon of happiness.

The Noble Prophet (S) was told by Muslims that they God Almighty guaranteed their sustenance they were engaged in worshipping Him. The Noble Prophet said unto them that whoever acted upon Divine Injunctions,

his invocations would be answered and it was incumbent upon Muslims to strive to act upon Divine Commands.[20]

The blessed Verse makes mention of putting one's trust in God Almighty by which it is intended that industrious Muslims are supposed to rely on Him and invoke Him for being delivered from entanglements. God is All-Aware of man's needs and is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate toward him. God Almighty is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that he asked Gabriel, the Messenger of Allah regarding putting one's trust in God Almighty. He was told that the truth behind such trust is that man creatures are neither able to inflict damage nor to grant benefits. In other words, they are incapable of granting favors and impeding others from gaining favors.

Man is supposed to turn away from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, human acts aim at Divine Satisfaction. Thus, man never sets his hopes on anything besides Him. He may not entertain fear of anything besides Him. He does not attach heart to anything besides Him. This is the spirit of trust.[21]

The blessed Verse is saying that trust designates that industrious Muslims put their trust in God Almighty and invoke Him to remove the obstacles. God Almighty is All-Aware of man's needs. He is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate. He is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Gabriel imparted to him that the truth lying behind trust in God Almighty is that it is incumbent upon man to be aware of the truth that creatures may not harm or benefit him. Man is supposed to abstain from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, the spirit of putting one's trust in God Almighty lies in that man solely acts to obtain Divine Satisfaction. He never sets his hopes on anyone besides Him.

He fears no one besides Him. He does not attach his heart to anyone besides Him.[22] Trust with such profound meaning gives man a new character and affects all his deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that on the Night of Ascension, he inquired God Almighty about the best deed to which Allah replied that nothing was more cherished by Him more than putting one's trust in Him and being satisfied with His Decrees.[23]

It is worthy of note, however, that such trust designates making efforts at all times rather than indolence and dodging obligations.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 4-5

وَاللَّائِي يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِن نِّسَائِكُمْ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ

أَجَلُهُنَّ أَن يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا

4. and those of your women who are hopeless of having monthly courses, for them the prescribed period, if you have doubt about their periods, is three months; and for those who have no courses their

prescribed period is three months likewise, except in case of death. And for those who are pregnant, their prescribed period is until they lay down their burden; and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.

5. That is the Command of Allah, which He has sent down to you; and whosoever fears Allah and deeps his duty to Him, He will expiate from him his sins, and will enlarge his reward.

Proceeding with the divorce Injunctions, the blessed Verse 4 is saying that those women who do not menstruate owing to advancement in years or certain ailments are supposed to wait for a period of three months in full and pregnant women are supposed to wait until they give birth to their child or children. Then, they may remarry.

There are different Qur'anic expressions for those who fear God Almighty:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk straight. And He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Compassionate,"[24];

"O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion to judge between right and wrong (furqan) and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you; and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty"[25];

"And whoever fear Allah and keeps his obligation to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from difficulties"[26].

Seemingly reference is herein made of a natural development, since the God fearing will be granted Divine Light thanks to with he is able to distinguish truth from falsehood and thereby find the way out of the entanglements. Thus, he is delivered from many a difficulty.

It is evident that Divine Injunctions are different as per different circumstances. Thus, there are different Injunctions for pregnant and menopausal women. The blessed Verse is saying that the women who do not menstruate any longer, their waiting period is three months, if you have doubts about their pregnancy.

Likewise, the women who do not have menstrual periods are supposed to keep a waiting period of three full months. It is incumbent upon the third group, the pregnant women, to lay down their burden, namely give birth to their children.

Thus, the first two groups are supposed to keep a waiting period of three months and the third group, the pregnant women, are supposed to give birth to their children and the period may take one hour or for instance eight months following the divorce.

Three possibilities have been suggested for the contextual meaning of

"if you have doubt" (in artabtum):

1. The doubt concerns the possibility of pregnancy, namely if the possibility exists regarding pregnancy after the age of menopause, fifty in ordinary women and sixty in Qurayshi ones, the woman is supposed to keep a waiting period. Although it is less probable but there are instances of its occurrence. It is worthy of note, however, that the term "doubt"

(rayba) in the sense of having doubts as to pregnancy is widely attested in traditions and jurisprudential sources.[27]

2. Those women are herein intended who are not known whether they have reached the age of menopause.

3. The blessed Verse suggests entertaining doubt as to the Injunction. In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that if you do not know Allah's Injunction, His Injunction is to the effect that such women are supposed to keep a waiting period. The first exegesis sounds more befitting, since

"and those of women who have passed the age of monthly courses"

indicates that such women are menopausal. It is noteworthy, however, that those women whose menstruation stops owing to ailments and other factors are subject to the same Injunction. Such Injunction is reflected in the principle of priority or the semantic referent of the blessed Verse in question. Further details regarding the question are to be found in jurisprudential sources.

The clause

"and those of your women who have not had monthly periods" (wa 'l-llati ya'isna min al-mahidh)

may suggest that those women who have attained the age of puberty, but they do not have monthly periods, in which case, it is indubitably incumbent upon them to keep a three month waiting period. It has been also suggested that the blessed Verse makes a reference to all women who have not had monthly periods whether or not they have attained the age of puberty.

However, the majority of Shi'i jurisprudents maintain that females prior to the age of puberty are not supposed to keep a waiting period following divorce. Some scholars disagree and substantiate their arguments with certain traditions and the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is seemingly on their side.[28]

The above mentioned exegesis is substantiated by the occasion of Revelation. Ubayy ibn Ka'b said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that the waiting periods of some women was not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In this vein, mention was made of the wives yet to attain the age of puberty and menopause and pregnant women. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed and stated the Injunctions as per their instances.[29]

It goes without saying that keeping the waiting period is required when there is possibility of pregnancy, since the blessed Verse makes a reference to menopausal women as well suggesting that the Injunction is the same for both.[30]

The blessed Verse closes by laying further emphasis on the question of fearing God Almighty, saying that whoever fears God Almighty, his difficulties will be removed by Him. Such difficulties may include those in this world and the Hereafter, including separation and divorce.

The blessed Verse 5 lays further emphasis on the Injunctions regarding divorce and the waiting period mentioned in the preceding Verses, saying that this is Allah's Command sent down unto you. Whoever fears God Almighty and refrains from disobeying His Command, He will absolve him of his sins and he will be granted Great Divine Rewards.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the term

"sins" (sayyi'at)

designates minor sins and fearing God Almighty refers to abstention from committing grave sins.

Thus, abstaining from committing grave sins leads to the forgiving of minor sins.[31] It is true that the word sayyi'at denotes minor sins at times, but the word in most of the Qur'anic Verses is employed in the sense of grave and mirnor sins[32]. It is needless to say, however, that faith and submission to Divine Will together with doing righteous good deeds lead to the forgiving of formerly committed sins.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 6-7

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنتُم مِّن وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِن كُنَّ
أُولَاتِ حَمْلٍ فَأَنفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأْتَمِرُوا
بَيْنَكُم بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِن تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتُرْضِعُ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ
لِيُنفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا
إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا

6. Lodge them where you dwell to the end of the waiting period according to your means, and do not harm them so as to make them straitened with respect to lodging and sustenance lest they have to leave their homes. And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they lay down their burden. Then consult each other and reach to some settlement regarding your infants and if you fail to reach some settlement, ask another woman to suckle the infants.

7. Let the rich man pay the alimony according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will soon grant ease after hardship.

The blessed Verse 6 presents further details as to the rights of women after divorce in terms of lodging, sustenance, and other things. The blessed Verse opens with the Injunctions regarding the lodging of the divorced women as per which they are supposed to reside where their ex-husbands live.

The ex-husbands are required to provide them with their lodging and sustenance according to their means. It is natural that when it is incumbent upon the ex-husbands to provide with lodging, other expenses fall into their share as well. What is mentioned regarding the rights of the pregnant women following divorce substantiates the statement.

The blessed Verse proceeds with another Injunction as per which it is forbidden to harm them or make their life straitened for them thereby forcing them to abandon their lodging and the sustenance provided by their ex-husbands lest hatred and animosity make them turn away from the path of truth and justice. Muslim men in such cases are not supposed to make their ex-wives deprived of lodging and sustenance since such straitened circumstances forces them to abandon everything.

The third injunction is saying that if the divorced women happen to be pregnant, their expenses until the time of delivery is incumbent upon their

ex-husbands, since, as long as they have not given birth to their children, they are keeping their waiting period and ex-husbands are responsible for providing them with lodging and sustenance.

The forth Injunction is saying that if the ex-wives happen to be willing to suckle their infants, they are supposed to receive their remuneration as per the time of suckling according to the common practice.

Since in many instances the infants and children cause difference between ex-spouses, the fifth Injunction enjoins Muslims to consult each other concerning the future of their children and make befitting decisions lest such differences adversely affect their children physically and emotionally. Parents are supposed to remember God Almighty in such instances without jeopardizing the future of their innocent children.

The imperative verbal form wa'tamiru baynakum bi-ma'ruf is used here in the sense of accepting a command or consulting someone.

The second sense sounds to be more fitting and the expression

"in a just way"

includes any consultation aiming at the good. Since the ex-spouses fail to reach the required settlement as per the good of their children including suckling, the sixth Injunction is saying that in case either of the twain parties make difficulties and if they fail to reach some settlement, another woman may be hired to suckle the child such that the differences may come to a halt.

The clause

"but if you make difficulties for one another"

reflects that if the differences continued, let another woman give suck to the child. It is the right of the mother to suckle the child, but taking into account such difficulties, the rights of the child may not be consigned to oblivion and suckling is supposed to be vested with a wet nurse.

The blessed Verse 7 includes the seventh and the last Injunction in this regard, saying that those who are opulent are supposed to expend their means in Allah's Cause and God Almighty never obliges anyone beyond his capacity.

The questions arising herein are: Is this Injunction, namely expending within one's capacity concerns the women who assume the responsibility of suckling the children or is it concerning the waiting period concisely referred to in the preceding Verses, or is it concerning both? The last meaning sounds more befitting, though some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it aims at the suckling women.

The point is that the word

"remuneration" (ajr)

rather than

"sustenance money"

or expending (nafaqa, infaq) is used in the preceding Verses. At any rate, those who possess sufficient means are not supposed to be strict in this respect and those who do not possess the same are not supposed to expend within their capacity and women may not find faults with the latter.

Since suffering from straitened circumstances may lead to deviating from the path of truth and justice and as none of the twain parties are supposed to

complain from the other, the blessed Verse closes by saying that God Almighty will soon provide them with ease and convenience following their hardships. In other words, they are not supposed to entertain sorrow and be restless since circumstances undergo alteration. Such awareness is significant unless fleeting entanglements may adversely affect patience. Such Injunction is applicable to all times, particularly under quite straitened circumstances experienced by Muslims. It bears glad tidings of a promising future for the patient. God Almighty will soon grant the patient with His Infinite Blessings and Bounties.

Surah al-Talaq - Verses 8-9

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا

8. And many a town revolted against the Command of their Lord and His Messengers. We called it to a severe account and We chastised them with an unknown torment.

9. Thus, they tasted the evil consequences of their deeds and the consequences of their deeds was loss.

The Arabic word qarya denotes a place of gathering for habitation be it a town or a village.

The past verbal form

'atat ("revolted against")

derives from '-t-w ("to be insolent, to be furious, revolt"). The Arabic nominal form wabal denotes severity and intensity herein connoting severe torment.

The preceding blessed Verses include Injunctions concerning the obligations against spouses and children even at the time of separation. The blessed Verses in question urge believers to seriously attend to the Injunctions since disobedience to God Almighty and His Messengers entails severe chastisements whose numerous instances are to be found in the history of nations down the centuries.

At any rate, God Almighty severely chastises those who disobey Him and His Messengers. Thus, the blessed Verse 9 is saying that those who disobeyed Divine Commands and Injunctions, tasted the dire consequences of their evil acts leading to loss. Severe torments and chastisement are in store for such people.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 10

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا

10. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Thus, fear Allah, O men of understanding who have believed! Allah has indeed sent down to you a Reminder.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the torments in the Hereafter in store for sinners, saying that God Almighty has prepared excruciating, horrible, disgracing, and everlasting torments for them in Hell.

Thus, refrain from disobeying Divine Command, O Men of understanding who have believed! Thought and reason on the one hand and faith and Divine Signs and Verses on the other warn you against being afflicted with the dire fates of disobeying and revolting peoples and take lessons lest they may join their ranks as God Almighty entangles the disobedient with excruciating, horrible, and unprecedented torments in this world and the Hereafter.

Addressing thoughtful believers, the blessed Verse 10 further adds that God Almighty has sent down upon you the Reminder by which the Holy Qur'an is hereby intended, since the Holy Qur'an embraces a comprehensive collection of all the Injunctions and Laws as well as the accurate forms of devotions and transactions and whatever is required by man in the affairs of this world and the Hereafter.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is hereby intended and some hold that a reference is made to Gabriel.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 11

رَّسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا

11. [The Reminder is] the Messenger reciting to you the elucidating Verses of Allah so that He may deliver those who believe and do righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light. Whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, he will be admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed granted them an excellent provision.

God Almighty has sent a Messenger (S) unto you so that he recites the Divine Elucidating Verses and thereby led those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light.

In other words, the final goal behind sending the Messenger and the Revelation of the Heavenly Book is to deliver mankind from the shadows of disbelief, ignorance, sin, and corruption through reciting the blessed Verses of the Holy Qur'an and lead them unto the light of faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty.

In fact, all the goals behind the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an are summarized in one single clause: to deliver them from the shadows and lead them unto Light.

It is worthy of note, however, that the Arabic nominal form thulumat appears in the plural and the Arabic nominal form nur is employed in the singular, since polytheism, disbelief, and corruption lead to disintegration and dispersion whereas faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty lead to unity.

The blessed Verse closes with a treatment of the Rewards bestowed upon those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds, saying that one who believes in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds and stands steadfast on the path of truth will be rewarded by being admitted into the Gardens of Paradise and God Almighty has prepared an excellent provision for him.

The present verbal forms

yu'min and ya'mal ("believes" and "does" respectively)

make a reference to the point that having faith and doing righteous good deeds are not restricted to some specific time, but they are ongoing.

The Arabic plural present participial form

khalidin ("dwelling everlastingly")

indicates the everlastingness of Paradise, thus the following adverb of manner

Abadan ("everlastingly, forever")

is employed for the sake of emphasis.

The Arabic indefinite nominal form rizqan makes a reference to the greatness and significance of the excellent provision with which the people of Paradise are provided by God Almighty.

Such provision embraces a broad semantic domain encompassing Divine Bounties in the Hereafter and even in this world, since the fruits of faith and fear of God Almighty are not solely to be harvested in the Hereafter and believing and God fearing people lead more serene, enjoyable and purer lives in this world.

Surah al-Talaq - Verse 12

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا

12. It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the Creation of the heavens and the earth and the organization of their affairs so that man may be apprised of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience as well as the spiritual growth as a consequence of monotheism.

In other words, the last blessed Verse of the Chapter makes a quite significant and crystal clear reference to Divine Majesty and Omnipotence in the Creation of the heavens and the earth as well as the final goal behind such Creation. Thus, the blessed Verse completes the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning the Great Rewards promised to God fearing believers and also those leading to the removal of their difficulties.

It goes without saying that God Almighty Who is Omnipotent to have created the world of existence is also Omnipotent to fulfill the promises given to the God fearing Believers concerning the Rewards in store for them in this world and the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is the One Who created the seven heavens and from the earth the like thereof, namely the earths, like the heavens, are seven in number. The reference to the seven earths is solely attested in this blessed Verse. Now let us turn to the seven heavens and the earths resembling them in terms of number.

Briefly speaking, the number seven may indicate multiplicity, as it is said in common parlance

"Even if you produce the seven seas that will be sufficient."

Thus, the seven heavens and the seven earths make a reference to the innumerable celestial spheres and heavenly bodies resembling the earth.

However, in case we take the number seven as connoting numbers, it may reflect the eight heavens.

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[33]

"Verily We have adorned the nearest heaven with the stars"

reflecting that what we perceive constituting human knowledge all pertains to the first heaven and beyond these celestial bodies, there are six other spheres lying beyond our perception and thus inaccessible to our domain of knowledge.

Now, regarding the seven earths, it may be said that they may make a reference to the different layers of the earth, since it is proven today that the earth constitutes different layers. Reference may be made to the seven climes on the earth as well, since the earth has been divided into seven regions, though such classification is different in former and modern times.

Today, the earth is divided into the Arctic, Antarctic, two tropics, one equatorial, and two temperate zones.

Nonetheless, the seven climes were classified differently in former times, though the number seven in this blessed Qur'anic Verse together with the expression

mithlahunna ("the like of them")

may refer to the different earths in the world of existence. Some astronomers maintain that celestial bodies like the earth revolve around suns in the vast cosmos whose number exceeds three hundred million.[34] It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as saying that the like the earth, there are cities in the stars in the sky.[35]

At any rate, taking into account our meager knowledge concerning the cosmos beyond the solar system, it would be hard to produce numbers, though astronomers lay emphasis on the fact that the galaxy which includes the solar system embraces millions of millions of celestial bodies whose conditions resemble those of the earth such that they are centers of forms of life.

However, scientific advancements in the future may provide us with further details concerning the exegesis of such blessed Verses.

The blessed Verse in question further treats of the organization of such vast world by Divine Command, saying that His Commands are sent down at all times.

It is needless to say that by the Arabic nominal form amr, the Divine Existential Command regarding the organization of such vast world and the

seven heavens and the seven earths is hereby intended, since He guides them with His Particular Command in a regular and precise course.

The blessed Verse resembles another Qur'anic Verse[36]

"He manages and regulates every affair from the heavens to the earth. Then, it will go up to him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning."

God Almighty manages the affairs of the entire world from the heavens to the earth. Had His management abandoned the world of existence for one single moment, the organization of them all would have been perished and they would have been led to non-existence.

The blessed Verse closes with the goal behind such great creation saying that the purpose of the creation of the world is that man may know that God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. The expression is of interest since the goal behind such great creation is mentioned as man's awareness of Divine Attributes including His Omniscience and Omnipotence.

Being aware of these two Divine Attributes suffices for human spiritual growth. Man is supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the secrets of his being and all his deeds and Divine Promises as to the triumph of the believers and those concerning the Resurrection and Retribution are all true.

Now, the Divine Injunctions concerning human life such as the Injunctions regarding divorce and obligations against women are all precise and well-calculated by the Omnipotent and Omniscient God Who manages all the affairs of the world of existence.

A detailed discussion on the goals behind Creation was mentioned above under 51:56. It is worthy of note, however, that different Qur'anic Verses make references to the goals behind the Creation of man or other creatures in the world of existence which may sound different at the first glance, though further reflection reflects one single truth.

The blessed Qur'anic Verse 51:56 mentions that the goal behind the Creation of mankind and jinn is worshipping God Almighty:

"And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me Alone."

The goal behind the Great Creation of the heavens and the earth is mentioned to be the trial of mankind[37]:

"And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth in six days and His Throne was on the surface of the water that He might try you as to which of you is the best in deeds. But if you were to say to unto them: 'You will indeed be raised up after death,' those who disbelieve would be sure to say: 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'"

The goal is regarded to be Divine Graciousness[38]:

"Except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Graciousness and for that He created them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled: 'Surely, I will fill Hell with jinn and men all together.'"

The goal is considered in the blessed Verse in question to be aware of Divine Attributes:

"It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all

times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things."

Reflection upon the blessed Qur'anic Verses reflects that some of them serve as preludes to others. In like manner, awareness and knowledge serve as preludes to worshipping God Almighty which in turn is a prelude to the trial and spiritual growth of mankind which in turn serve as a prelude to being granted Divine Graciousness.

O Lord! Now that you made us aware of the goal behind Your Great Creation, bear us Assistance so that we may attain to such Great Goal.

O Lord! You revealed the Holy Qur'an and sent the Messenger (S) to deliver the believing from the shadows to the light. Deliver us from the shadows of sins and concupiscent desires and lighten our hearts by the light of faith and fearing You. Amen! O Lord of the Worlds!

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
2. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 5103.
3. 2:228
4. Muslim's Sahih, vol. 2, p. 1903, the chapter on divorce.
5. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 348, the chapter on the manner of giving divorce following the waiting period.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, pp. 350-351.
7. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 352, tradition 24.
8. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 7884.
9. Ibid, tradition 5103.
10. 4:35
11. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 266, tradition 1.
12. Ibid, p. 268.
13. Ibid, vol. 15.
14. Majmu'a Warram, vol. 2, p. 121.
15. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 567.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 352.
17. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 559.
18. Shaykh Saduq's Amali, p. 238.
19. Makarim al-Akhlaq, pp. 91, 107.
20. Kafi; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 354.
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 373, tradition 19.
22. Ibid.
23. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 683, s.v. w-k-l.
24. 57:28
25. 8:29
26. 65:2
27. Jawahir, vol. 32, p. 249; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, chapter 4, tradition 7.
28. Further details are to be found in jurisprudential sources, e.g. Jawahir al-Kalam, vol. 32, p. 232.
29. Kanz al-'Irfan, vol. 2, p. 26.
30. Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan.
31. Tafsir al-Mizan.
32. e.g.5:71

33. 37:6
34. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 151.
35. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 15.
36. 32:5
37. 11:7
38. 11:119

Surah al-Tahrim, Chapter 66

(The Proscription)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 12

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has twelve Verses and its designation derives from the first blessed Verse in which God Almighty censures the proscription of what is religiously lawful, even though such proscription, owing to different individual and social reasons, deprives man of certain lawful pleasures.

The opening Verses treat of the Noble Prophet's mistreatment by some of his wives and the following Verses, addressed to the believers, enjoin them to take precaution as to treating and fostering their families so that Hellfire may not be in store for them.

The blessed Chapter proceeds to make references to women's merits and demerits and thereby depicts the women possessing such traits. The wives of Noah and Lot are presented as possessing demerits and that of the Pharaoh and Mary (as) are suggested as those possessing merits.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition, one who recites the Chapter will be granted the Divine Reward of sincere repentance.[1]

Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ ۖ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. O Prophet! Why do you forbid that which Allah has made lawful to you, seeking to please your wives? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

2. Allah has already ordained for you the absolution from your oaths. And Allah is your Guardian and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

Different occasions of Revelation have been mentioned for the first blessed Verse, though it is certain that the Noble Prophet (S) had different wives and at times he was entangled with their envious conducts and waived his lawful rights in order to please all of them.

Although such proscriptions were personal matters, but as the Noble Prophet has been the role model of the society, the possibility exists that others may feel that it is a religious decree and they have to act upon it. Thus, God Almighty warns His Prophet (S) against it and in fact makes

people understand that such conducts were the Noble Prophet's (S) personal affairs they are not supposed to be regarded as standards for others.

It is incumbent upon us to bear in mind to prioritize our affairs. Acting upon one's oaths bears significance, but acting upon religious decrees bears further significance. An eminent figure like the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) does not solely belong to himself, but he belongs to the Muslim society in its entirety and to the world of humanity.

Therefore, even though certain plots, however insignificant, be hatched against him, are not to be neglected as his prestige is not supposed to be taken lightly and such plots should be dealt with seriously and decisively. The opening Verses of the blessed Chapter in question reflect the Divine Decisiveness against such incidents threatening His Messenger's (S) prestige.

Addressed to His Messenger (S), God Almighty is asking him why he deprives himself of something made lawful by Him for the sake of his wives' satisfaction. It goes without saying that such proscription was not a religiously ordained one, but as it is reflected in the following blessed Verses, it was an oath taken by the Noble Prophet (S).

It is common knowledge that taking oaths as to refraining from certain acts does not entail any sin. Thus, the clause "why do you forbid" does not reflect censure, but it indicates compassion.

For instance, in common parlance, addressed to one who works hard to earn a living, his is asked:

"Why do you not deservedly benefit from your numerous troubles?"

The blessed Verse closes with saying that God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Compassionate. Such Forgiving and Compassion are addressed to the wives who paved the path for the occurrence of the incident saying that if they sincerely repent from their sins, they will be forgiven.

It may also reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) should not have taken such oath which may serve as a pretext for some of his wives to take liberties.

The second blessed Verse further adds:

"Allah has already ordained for you the absolution from your oaths"

in such circumstances through making atonements. It is worthy of note, however, that in case the oath has been taken as to preferable refraining from committing certain acts, the oath should be acted upon and breaking it entails committing sins for which atonements are to be made.

But, in case the oath concerns committing acts from which refraining is preferable, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question, it is permissible to break it, though in order to respect the oath taken, it would be better to make atonements.

The blessed Verse 2 proceeds to say

"Allah is your Guardian and He is the Omniscient, the All-Wise"

and has thereby solved your problem. According to traditions, following the Revelation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet made lawful to himself what he had already rendered unlawful though the manumission of a slave.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verses 3-4

وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهُ
وَأَعْرَضَ عَن بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنبَأَكَ هَٰذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ
إِن تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِن تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ
وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ

3. Remember when the Prophet disclosed a secret of to one of his wives, then she divulged it and Allah made it known to him. He informed him of a part thereof and left the other part. When the Prophet told let his wife know of it, she asked: "Who told you this secret?" He replied: "The Omniscient, the All-Aware Allah apprised me of it."

4. If you two turn in repentance to Allah, it will be better for you, since your hearts have turned away from the truth, but if you conspire against him, you may not achieve anything. Then, verily Allah is his Protector and Gabriel and the righteous believers,2 and furthermore, the angels are his helpers.

The blessed Verses provide further details as to the narrative saying:

"Remember when the Prophet (S) disclosed a secret of his to some of his wives, but she failed to keep the secret and divulged it. God Almighty apprised His Messenger (S) of such disclosure and he apprised his wife of some of the intelligence and refrained from informing her of the rest."

Now, what was the secret of which some of his wives were apprised? As mentioned above regarding the occasion of the Revelation, the secret consisted of two points, firstly eating honey before his wife Zaynab, the daughter of Jahsh and secondly prohibiting himself from eating honey in future. The wife who divulged the secret was Hafsa who upon being informed of the secret, she divulged the secret to 'À'isha.

Upon being apprised of the disclosure of the secret through Divine Revelation, he informed Hafsa of some of it but refrained from informing her of it all to prevent her from being ashamed. The first part might have consisted of eating honey and the second part might have consisted of the prohibition as per which he refrained from eating honey in future.

At any rate, upon informing Hafsa of the disclosure of the secret, she inquired about the source of intelligence. He replied that God Almighty, the All-Wise, had informed him of the disclosure.

The blessed Verse n question reflect that some of the wives of the Noble Prophet (S) disturbed him by their words; further, they lacked the merit of keeping secrets which is one of the qualifications of a loyal wife.

Au contraire, the Noble Prophet's (S) conduct was so magnanimous that he even did not apprised her of the whole intelligence, but merely alluded to some part of it.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as saying:

"Magnanimous people never to the extreme in obtaining their own rights, since God Almighty says that the Noble Prophet (S) apprised her of some of the intelligence and refrained from informing her of its entirety.[3]

Addressed to the two wives who had conspired in the above mentioned plot, the blessed Verse 4 is saying:

"If you repent and refrain from hurting the Noble Prophet (S), it will be better for you, since by doing such act, you hearts have turned away from truth and have become impure by committing sins."

All Shi'i and Sunni exegetes are unanimous in maintaining that Hafsa and 'À'isha, the daughters of 'Umar and Abu Bakr respectively, are hereby intended.

The Arabic verbal form

saghat ("inclined"),

deriving from the root s-gh-w/s-gh-y ("incline, bend"), designates inclination and tending toward something. In Arabic, it is said: "saghat al-nujum" meaning: "the stars inclined toward the west."

The verbal noun isgha' denotes eaves dropping and listening to other people's words furtively. The clause saghat qulubukum connotes that their hearts turned away from the truth and inclined toward committing sins.

The blessed Verse further adds that if you two conspire against him, i.e. the Noble Prophet (S), you may not achieve anything, since God Almighty is his Protector and Aid and also Gabriel, the righteous believers, and angels are also his helpers.

The blessed Verse reflects that the incident adversely affected the Noble Prophet's (S) pure heart and his magnanimous soul such that God Almighty defended him and although Allah is Omnipotent, but it is proclaimed that Gabriel, the righteous believers, and angels were his helpers.

It is worthy of note that as recorded in Sahih Bukhari, it is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that the latter asked 'Umar concerning the identity of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives who had conspired against him.

'Umar replied:

"By God Almighty we did not accord any attention toward women till God Almighty revealed some Verses regarding them and set out some rights for them and thereby they take liberties."[4]

The same theme is to be found in Tafsir Durr al-Manthur in a detailed tradition narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas as per which 'Umar said that he had been informed of the incident that the Noble Prophet (S) had turned away from all his wives and he was residing in a place named Mashraba Umm Ibrahim.

I went to him and inquired:

"O Allah's Messenger! Have you divorced your wives?"

He replied:

"No."

I further inquired:

"God is the Greatest! We, the Qurayshis, have been always dominating our wives, but when we came to Medina, we noticed that the Medinan women have the upper hand and our wives learned it from them. Once my wife quarreled with me and I regarded her act surprising and obnoxious."

She asked:

"Why are you surprised? By Allah the Noble Prophet's (S) wives treat him likewise and at times they fail to be on speaking terms with him."

'Umar said:

"I enjoined my daughter, Hafsa, to refrain from doing so and further added that if your neighbor, namely 'À'isha, acts similarly, you should not do so as her conditions are different from yours."[5]

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 5

عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِن طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَن يُبْدِلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنكُنَّ مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُّؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ تَائِبَاتٍ عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيِّبَاتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا

5. It may be that if he divorced you, his Lord will give him instead of you, wives better than you, Muslims, believers, humble, repentant, worshipping Allah sincerely, inclined toward emigration, previously married and virgin.

The blessed Verse enumerates six good qualities for good wives which may serve as models for all the Muslims while they intend to ask the hands of women in marriage. Such qualities as enumerated in the blessed Verse deserve attention.

Addressed to all the Noble Prophet's (S) wives, the blessed Verse in question is saying in a tone tinged with warning that if he divorces you, God Almighty will provide him with better wives who will be Muslim, believing, humble, repentant, worshipping God Almighty, obedient to Allah from amongst virgins and those previously married.

Thus, they are warned that they should not take it for granted that the Noble Prophet (S) would never divorce them and that if he divorces them, better wives will not replace them. They are enjoined to desist from conspiring against him, quarreling with him, and hurting him, or else they shall be deprived of the glory of being married to the Noble Prophet (S) and better and further meritorious women shall replace them.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

6. O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are appointed guarding angels, stern and severe, who disobey not from executing the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.

Following the censures and warnings to some of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives reflected in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to address all the believers enjoining them to strive toward fostering and educating their families saying:

"O you who believe! Preserve yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is mankind and stones."

Such preservation connotes refraining from committing sins and resistance against concupiscent desires. Preservation of one's family indicates fostering and educating them, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, preparing a pure family environment.

Such plan is supposed to begin from making preparations for marriage and be pursued upon the birth of the first child. Such plan is to be acted upon through all the stages by precise and accurate planning. In other

words, giving what is due to one's wife and children is not restricted to providing them with accommodation and sustenance, but helping them with gaining spiritual growth through accurate education bears further significance.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic imperative form

qu ("preserve, keep")

reflects that if you leave them on their own, they will proceed toward the Fire and it is incumbent upon you to preserve them from ending upon in Hell. The Arabic nominal form waqud denotes fuel or something flammable like firewood.

Thus, Hellfire is not like the fire in this world, since its flames rise up from the inward of human beings and stones. Some exegetes maintain that by stones, sulfuric stones are hereby intended, though the word hijara reflects a general denotation designating of all kinds of stone.

Today, we know that each piece of stone is comprised of billions of atoms and if the force preserved in them happen to be liberated, they make such huge fire that man will be surprised at it. some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word "stones" herein connotes the stone idols worshipped by polytheists.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that strict and severe angels are appointed to tend the Fire and they never disobey Allah's Command but they act upon the Commands of God Almighty unquestioningly. There shall be no way out of the Fire nor shall crying and beseeching be of any effect.

It goes without saying that whoever is appointed to some task is required to possess the suitable qualifications. Thus, the angels appointed to inflicting torments are to be naturally severe and rough, since Hell is not a place where one may expect compassion. It is the crucible of Divine Wrath. Nonetheless, such angels shall never transgress the bounds of justice but they merely act upon Divine Command without making any alterations in it.

It is narrated in a tradition that upon the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, a certain Companion of the Noble Prophet (S) inquired:

"How may I preserve my family from Hellfire?"

the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Through enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If they acknowledge your suggestions and act accordingly, you will preserve them from Hellfire. However, if they fail to act likewise, you have acted upon your obligations."[6]

According to another comprehensive and interesting tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) is reported as saying:

"Know that you are all guardians responsible for those whom you are appointed to guard. The leader of the Islamic community is the guardian of the people and is responsible for all of them. Men are the guardians of their families for whom they are responsible. Women are also the guardians of their husbands and children for whom they stand answerable. Know that you are all guardians responsible for all those under your guardianship."[7]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Divine Mercy shall be upon those who enjoin their families to attend to the establishment of ritual prayers, fasting, paying the religious tax, and care for the poor, the orphans, and the neighbors, distancing from committing sins."[8]

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an[9] that the Noble Prophet (S) enjoined his family to establish ritual prayers. According to a tradition, upon hearing the blessed Verse in question, a young man lost consciousness and passed away.

The Noble Prophet (S) promised him that he will be admitted to Paradise quoting the Qur'anic Verse[10]:

"And verily, We shall make you dwell in the land after him. This is for him who fears standing before Me [on the Day of Resurrection and fears My Chastisement] and also fears My Warning."

He also recited another Qur'anic Verse[11]:

"And enjoin your family to establish ritual prayers and be patient in offering them. We ask not of you a provision: We provide for you. And the good end is in store for the God fearing."

The discussion may be crowned by quoting a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as per which:

"The blessed Verse [in question] is enjoining the believing to teach their families to do righteous good deeds."[12]

It is worthy of note, however, that if someone committed a mistake, he may at any time torn to God Almighty in repentance and Divine Graciousness shall be bestowed upon him.

Turning to God Almighty in repentance is one of the quite significant principles of education in Islam. All sinners are enjoined to repent from their sins so that they may compensate for their wrong deeds and attain to spiritual growth.

In this vein, Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn in the supplications of the repentant says:

"My Lord! You have opened the door of forgiveness to your servants and called it repentance enjoining them to turn toward you in repentance sincerely rather than simply verbally. What is the pretext of those who neglect from entry following the opening of the door?"[13]

Numerous traditions have been narrated and many Qur'anic Verses have been revealed in this respect which are to be found in the Holy Qur'an and tradition sources.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 7

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

7. [It will be said unto disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection:] O you who disbelieve! Make no excuses on this Day, since you are being requited only for your deeds.

The blessed Verse includes the only instance in which disbelievers are being addressed and the blessed concerns the Day of Resurrection. Disbelief is not pardonable on the Day of Resurrection and the disbelievers' repentance shall be of no avail on that Day.

Obstinacy and prejudice against logic, preaching, and miracles are not excusable as a consequence of which the disbelievers are herein addressed saying:

"O you who disbelieve! Make no excuses on this Day, since you are being requited only for your deeds."

The blessed Verse in question follows the one in which believers were addressed which reflects that if you fail to be attentive toward your families you may be addressed thus on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, emphasis is laid on the point that sinners shall be requited for their deeds on the Day of Resurrection.

The point mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse as per which flames of Hellfire shall rise from the inward of men further substantiates it. It is also worthy of note that not accepting their excuses on the Day of Resurrection is owing to the fact that making excuses is a kind of repentance which is only possible in this world rather than the Hereafter when they will be admitted to Hell. At any rate, human deeds shall be requited on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 8

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

8. O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins and admit you into Gardens beneath which rivers flow - the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe in him. Their Light will run forward before them and in their right hands. They will say: "Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us and grant us forgiveness. Verily, Your are Able to do all things.

The preceding Verses treated of Hellfire, though the blessed Verse in questions deals with light. The preceding Verses treated of taking precautions, but the blessed Verse in question deals with cure, saying that now that you failed to refrain from committing sins, you may turn toward God Almighty in repentance lest you may despair.

The blessed Verse actually shows the true path toward deliverance from Hellfire, saying:

"O you who believe! Turn toward God Almighty in repentance sincerely."

The first step to be taken toward deliverance is to repent from committing sins and such repentance is to be sincere from all aspects. The motive behind such repentance should be obedience to Divine Command and fear of committing sins rather than mere fear of the social and worldly consequence of committing vices. Such repentance separates man from committing sins at all times those who sincerely repent will never turn away from the true path.

It is well-known that repentance is to regret having committed sins and one is required to make up his mind not to commit further sins in future.

Such person is supposed to compensate for the losses stemming from committing sins.

Thus the pillars of repentance may be summarized in five things: refraining from committing sins, regret, deciding to refrain from committing further sins in future, compensation for the losses within one's capacity, and uttering the formula of repentance (istighfar).

The Arabic nominal form nasuh, deriving from the root n-s-h, literally denotes sincere benevolence and since true benevolence should be accompanied by steadfastness, the word nush is at times employed in this sense.

Different interpretations have been suggested concerning the meaning of the word nasuh such that the number of such interpretations is mentioned to be twenty three.[14] However, all these interpretations almost share one single core and the peripheral issues surrounding it.

For instance, it is said that sincere repentance (tawba nasuh) has four qualifications: sincere regret, verbal repentance, refraining from committing sins, and deciding to refrain from committing sins in future.

Some maintain that sincere repentance is obtained when the repentant person bears his sins in his mind at all times and repents from having committed them.

Some others hold that sincere repentance implies the compensation of the losses incurred to others owing to having committed sins and asking forgiveness from the victims of the sins and the repentant person is supposed to be steadfast in his obedience to God Almighty.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that Mu'adh ibn Jabal inquired about sincere repentance and the Noble Prophet replied:

"Sincere repentance implies that the repentant person may never turn toward committing sins any longer, such that milk never returns to the breast."[15]

Such delicate expression reflects that sincere repentance engenders such drastic change in man that the way of returning to the past is totally blocked for him in such manner that milk may never return to the breast. Such theme, attested in other traditions, reflects the exalted state of sincere repentance, since return is possible in lower degrees of repentance. Steadfastness in repentance finally leads to permanent refraining from committing sins.

The blessed Verse proceeds to make reference to the tokens of such sincere repentance, saying:

"It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins and admit you into Gardens beneath which rivers flow - the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe in him."

The point is that the light of their faith and righteous good deeds runs forward as well as on their right thus shedding light on the Plain of Judgment and opens their way onto Paradise.

Then, they will turn toward God Almighty, saying:

"Make our light perfect and forgive us as you are the Omnipotent Lord."

Such sincere repentance entails five great consequences: forgiving of the sins, being admitted to the Bountiful Paradise, disgracing of the evil doing liars since on that Day the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers shall be honorable as what they used to say shall be realized, the light of their faith and righteous good deeds will run forward as well as on their right side thus leading them onto brilliant Paradise, and they will be further attentive toward God Almighty as a consequence of which they turn toward Divine Threshold invoking Him to make their light perfect and forgive all their sins.

Finally, repentance is the door leading to Divine Graciousness. It happens many a time that many, particularly when beginning his spiritual growth and treading the Path leading to God Almighty, commits mistakes.

However, if the return toward the Truth is blocked, he will despair and fails to further tread the path. Thus, the path toward Divine Graciousness and repentance is always open to him.

It is worthy of note, however, that repentance does not solely imply verbal repentance and uttering its formula, but there are certain requirements of which mention was made in the exegesis of the sincere repentance in the preceding blessed Verses. Acting upon such requirements leads to the purification of the soul from sins.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever repents from committing sins is like one who has not committed any sin and one who continues to commit sins while he is uttering the formula of repentance is like one who derides repentance.[16]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) on the authority of Imam Ridha (as) that

"A believer is like an archangel and before God Almighty, the believer is truly higher than angels in rank. Nothing is more lovable before God Almighty than the repentance of the believing men and women."[17]

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as), as saying:

"No support is better than repentance."[18]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Nothing is more lovable before God Almighty than the believing men and women who regret from having committed sins and repent of them."[19]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) on the authority of Abu Basir that when a man commits a sin, a black spot appears in his heart. If he repents, the spot will be removed, but if he commits further sins, the black spot grows such that it clouds all his heart and he may never attain salvation.[20] Numerous traditions have been reported on repentance for which tradition sources may be consulted.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

9. O Prophet! Struggle hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be severe against them. Their abode will be Hell and worst is that abode.

The Islamic faith is comprehensive and reflects compassion and severity in their proper places. The point is that disbelief and hypocrisy lead man to a state in which the compassionate Prophet (S) and censures him.

Since hypocrites were indubitable gladdened by the disclosure of his domestic secrets and the quarrels amongst his wives as mentioned above in the preceding Verses and even fanned the flames of the rumors, the blessed Verse in question includes severe Injunctions against their vices, saying:

"O Prophet! Struggle hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be severe against them. Their abode will be Hell and worst is that abode."

Such jihad against the disbelievers may emerge in the forms of armed and unarmed struggles, though the struggle against hypocrites is indubitably unarmed, since it is quite unprecedented in the histories of the Islam.

Thus, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Allah's Messenger never waged war against hypocrites, but he strove at all times to soften their hearts."[21]

Therefore, struggling against them implies censure, warning, threatening, disgracing and at times softening their hearts, since jihad encompasses a broad semantic scope embracing any kind of struggling and striving toward the fulfillment of goals.

The imperative form wa 'ghluth 'alayhim literally denoting

"be severe against them"

reflects severity in words, disclosure of their secrets, warning them against their hypocrisy, and the like. Such particular stance against the hypocrites who posed the most perilous threat against the Islamic faith was owing to the fact that they claimed to be Muslims and associated with the Muslims as a consequence of which they could not be treated like disbelievers.[22]

Such policy was taken as long as they do not take arms against Muslims as if they embarked upon armed struggle against Muslims, they were treated likewise since they were termed as 'belligerent' (muharib).

Although the hypocrites did not take up arms in the Noble Prophet's (S) lifetime, but after his sad demise, particularly under the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), they took up arms against Muslims and the Noble Imam embarked upon waging war against them.

Some have said that jihad against the hypocrites attested in the blessed Verse in question connotes their being chastised according to the religious law, since those who were chastised were hypocrites.

Nonetheless, the majority of Qur'an exegetes have opted for the former exegesis. It is worthy of note, however, that the blessed Verse is exactly reiterated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[23].

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 10

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ ۖ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِينَ

10. Allah has set forth a example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and that of Lot. They were under two of our righteous servants, but

they both betrayed them. So their relationships with the two Prophets availed them not against Allah's torment and it was said unto them: "Enter the Fire along with those who enter!"

Women may serve as role models of righteousness or corruption in history. Thus, the blessed Verse once more addresses the story of the Noble Prophet's (S) wives and in order to provide them with practical lessons, mention is made of the dire fates of the two women who lived with the two eminent Messengers of Allah (as). Reference is also herein made of the fate of two believing and sacrificing women one of whom lived with one of the most tyrannical figures in history.

The blessed Verse opens with saying that God Almighty has set forth a example for the disbelieving, namely the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as) who lived with two righteous servants of God Almighty, but they betrayed them. The point is that their relationships with the two eminent Prophets (as) were of no avail against Divine torments.

It was said unto them:

"Enter Hell along with those who enter it."

Thus, the two wives of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) who had conspired against him disclosing his secrets and hurting the Noble Prophet (S) are warned against their evil acts so that they may not imagine that their relationship with the Noble Prophet (S) may be of any avail against their chastisement, the same manner that the relationships of the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as) were not of any avail against Divine torments inflicted upon them owing to their betrayal and their severance of ties with the household of Prophethood and Revelation.

The blessed Verse also serves as a warning to all the believers from different walk of life against the severance of their ties with the Friends of Allah owing to committing sins and disobedience to Allah since such ties may not impede befalling of Divine torments.

It is worthy of note, however, that some Qur'an exegetes have mentioned the names of Prophet Noah's (as) wife[24] and that of Prophet Lot (as)[25] as Walihata and Wali'ata respectively.

At any rate, the two women betrayed the two eminent Prophets (as), though their betrayal did not imply deviation from the path of chastity, since none of the wives of the Prophets (as) were ever unchaste. In the same vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that none of the wives of the Prophets (as) were unchaste.[26]

The betrayal of Prophet Lot's (as) wife was that she conspired with the enemies of her husband and disclosed his domestic secrets unto them. Prophet Noah's (as) wife acted likewise. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that betrayal (khiyana) and hypocrisy (nifaq) constitute one reality except for the fact that the former is employed against covenant and trust whereas the latter is used in religious affairs.

The conformity of the story to the disclosure of the Noble Prophet's (S) domestic secrets reflects that betrayal is connotes the same sense. At any rate, the blessed Verse ruins the unfounded expectations of those who imagine that their relationship with an eminent figure like the Noble Prophet (S) may lead to their salvation, despite their impurities and vices.

Thus, no one may imagine that he is immune from Divine Retribution.

The blessed Verse closes with saying unto them:

"Enter Hell along with the people of the Hell";

namely, their relationship with the Noble Prophet (S) may not be counted as a privilege for them.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 11

وَ ۔َ ۔َبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ ِ عِندَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

11. And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people.

Two examples of evil women, namely the wives of Prophets Noah (as) and Lot (as), were presented in the preceding blessed Verses and two examples of good women, namely Pharaoh's wife and Mary (as), are introduced in the blessed Verses 11 and 12.

It is reported that the name of Pharaoh's wife was Àsiya and the name of her father was Muzahim. It is said that upon witnessing Prophet Moses' (as) miracle wrought before the sorcerers, the depth of her heart was lightened by the light of faith and immediately believed in Moses (as) but she concealed her faith.

However, belief in and love for God Almighty may not be concealed forever. Upon being apprised of her belief in Allah, Pharaoh warned her against it many a time and insisted that she should desist from believing in God Almighty, but the woman persevered in her faith and did not yield to his will.

Finally, Pharaoh ordered that her limbs be tied with nails and leave her under the scorching sun and lay a huge stone on her breast.

In her last moments, she invoked to God Almighty

"My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people."

God Almighty answered the supplications of the sincerely sacrificing believing woman and made her the companion of the best women of the world like Mary (as).

It would be of interest to know that by her words, Pharaoh's wife belittled the great palace of her husband and regarded it as nothing against the home located in the proximity of Allah's Graciousness and answers to the insistent entreaties of those who provided her with admonitions saying that all those marvelous privileges were available to her as the queen of Egypt and warned her against losing them consequent to her belief in a Shepherd like Moses (as).

Thus, she utters her disgust at Pharaoh and his crimes and wrong doings.

By saying:

"My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrong doing people,"

she reveals her disgust at the impure environment and her alienation from their crimes.

The last three sentences uttered by this cognizant and sacrificing woman are so well-measured that they may serve as inspirations for all the believing men and women in the world. Such utterances impede all those who find pretexts like the pressures of the environment and spouse from turning away from obedience to God Almighty and fearing Him.

The glory and splendor of the Pharaonic court were unsurpassed at the time and the pressures and tortures inflicted upon the victims at the behest of the criminal Pharaoh were unrivaled.

Nonetheless, such glory, splendor, pressures, and tortures could not make the believing woman yield to disbelief but she persevered on treading the path leading to Divine Satisfaction and sacrificed her life in the Cause of the true Beloved.

It is worthy of note that she invoked God Almighty to build a home for her in Paradise close to Him. Being in Paradise reflects the physical dimension and being with God Almighty is indicative of the spiritual dimension and she expressed both in one brief utterance.

Surah al-Tahrim - Verse 12

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ

12. And God Almighty has also set out the example of Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity against sins. Then, We breathed into her through Our Spirit and Jesus was born to her and testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord and the Scriptures and she was of the obedient to Allah.

The Arabic verbal form

ahsanat ("guarded her"),

deriving from h-s-n, is cognate with hisn which denotes "stronghold, castle" and used concerning women connotes "chastity." The blessed Verse in question enumerates four perfect qualities for Mary (as): chastity, blowing of Divine Spirit into her, testifying to the veracity of Scriptures, and absolute obedience to God Almighty.

According to Shi'i and Sunni exegetic sources, there were four perfect women: Àsiya, Pharaoh's wife; Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran; Khadija, the daughter of Khwaylid; and Fatima (as), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S). The only woman whose name is attested in the Holy Qur'an is Mary (as) whose name is attested thirty four times in twelve Chapters and her name appears as the designation of a Qur'anic Chapter.

At any rate, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to a noble woman who serves as a model for the believers, saying that God Almighty has set forth another example by making mention of Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran, who preserved her chastity and God Almighty breathed His Spirit into her and upon the Divine Command a son was born to her without having been married and her son was the Arch-Prophet Jesus (as).

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that she testified to the veracity of Divine Word and His Scriptures and believed in all of them and she was one of the obedient to Divine Command. She has an exalted rank in terms of faith and she believed in all Heavenly Books. She was obedient to Divine Command at all times in terms of deeds. She was a sacrificing servant and was attentive to Divine Commands.

The difference between Words (kalimat) and Books (kutub) may lie in the point that the latter makes a reference to all Scriptures revealed unto the Prophets (as) and the former alludes to the Revelations not recorded in Divine Books. Mary (as) believed in these Words and Books such that she is referred to as

"very truthful woman" (siddiqa)

in another Qur'anic Verse[27]:

"Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a very truthful woman [believing in the Words of Allah and His Books]. They both used to eat food. Behold how We make the Àyat ("Verses, proofs, Signs") clear to them; yet behold how they are deluded away."

At any rate, such Qur'anic expressions explicitly reflect Mary's (as) chastity against the false claims of some of the corrupt and criminal Jews concerning her who put to question her character and even her chastity and thereby inflicts and severe blow upon them.

As mentioned above, the expression

"We breathed into her through Our Spirit" (fa-nafakhna fihi min ruhina)

is indicative of the Most Majestic and the Most Sublime Spirit.

According to another interpretation, the genitive inflection of the word

"Spirit" (ruhi)

is an instance of exalting genitive (idhafa tashrifiyya) connoting glory and exaltedness, in the same manner that the word

"House"

is intertwined with

"God"

in the genitive case in the compound form

"House of God" (baytu Allahi),

though God Almighty has neither a Spirit nor a House.

Finally, it is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying:

"The most exalted women in Paradise are: Khadija, the daughter of Khwaylid; Fatima (as), the daughter of Muhammad (S); Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran; and Àsiya, the daughter of Muzahim and the wife of Pharaoh."[28]

It is narrated on the authority of 'Imran ibn Hasin that the Noble Prophet (S) asked Fatima (as):

"Are you not happy to be the most exalted of the women of the world?"

She replied:

"What about the rank of Mary (as), the daughter of 'Imran?"

He answered:

"O my beloved daughter! She was the most exalted of women in her times, but you are the most exalted of women in the world from the first to the last of them. By Allah Who appointed me as His Messenger, I gave you in marriage to one who is the lord of this world and the Hereafter. He is loved solely by the believing and he is disliked only by the hypocrites."[29]

Hasan ibn Ziyad, the perfume vendor, narrates from Imam Sadiq (as) that the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired whether Fatima was the most exalted of women in her times.

He said:

"Mary (as) was the most exalted of women in her times and Fatima is the most exalted of the women of Paradise from past and present.[30]

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 311.
2. According to numerous traditions, by the righteous believer, Imam 'Ali (as) is hereby intended, see Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan and Ihqaq al-Haqq (p. 311).
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 392.
4. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 196.
5. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 243.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 372.
7. Majmu'a Warram, vol. 1, p. 6.
8. Tafsir Maraghi.
9. 19:55
10. 14:14
11. 20:132
12. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 244.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 94, p. 142.
14. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6766.
15. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 318.
16. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the Chapter on Repentance, tradition 10.
17. Mahajja al-Baydha', vol. 17, p. 24.
18. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 6, p. 265; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 19.
19. Safina al-Bihar, the Chapter on Repentance.
20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 327.
21. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 319.
22. Next to the global disbelief, the heaviest blows were inflicted upon the Islamic Republic of Iran by the hypocrites.
23. 9:73
24. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 668.
25. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol 28.
26. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 245.
27. 5:75
28. Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 246.
29. Bisharat al-Mustafa, p. 69.
30. Saduq's Amali; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 21.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Surah al-Mulk, Chapter 67

(Sovereignty)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 30

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter opens the twenty ninth part (juz') of the Holy Qur'an. The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has thirty Verses. Another designation of the Chapter is Tabarak ("the Bountiful").

Both designations are derived from the first Verse and denote "Sovereignty" and "Bountiful" respectively.

The blessed Chapter generally treats of the following:

1. Topics regarding the Origin of existence, Divine Attributes, the marvelous system of the Creation of the world of existence and man, and man's means of gaining knowledge;

2. Topics concerning the Hereafter, torments of the Hell, and the conversations of the people of the Hell on the Day of Resurrection;

3. Warning the disbelievers and wrong doers against being afflicted with torments in this world and the Hereafter.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

The blessed Chapter is one of the most meritorious Qur'anic Chapters regarding which many a tradition have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) regarding the recitation of the blessed Chapter.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Tabarak is like one who wakes up praying in the Night of Ordainment.[1]

According to another Prophetic tradition:

"I wish Surah al-Tabarak were recorded in the believers' heart.[2]

Other traditions in this respect are to found in tradition sources.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

1. Bountiful is He in Whose Hand is the Sovereignty and He is All-Able to do all things.

2. The Lord who created death and life so that He may test you that which of you is better in deed. And He is the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving.

The blessed Chapter 25 (Surah al-Furqan) also opens with the word

"Bountiful" (tabarak).

The Arabic word tabarak, deriving from b-r-t, is cognate with the infinitive baraka ("permanent good") and barka ("pond, where water gathers").

All powers and states are subject to decline except for Divine Sovereignty which is everlasting.

The blessed Chapter opens with the significant issue of Divine Ownership, Sovereignty, and His Everlasting Pure Essence which serves as the key to all the discussions raised in the Chapter wherein it is said that He is Bountiful and Everlasting. He is the One in Whose Hand is the Sovereignty of the world of existence and He is Omnipotent.

The blessed Verse 1 is indicative of the Bountifulness of Divine Pure Essence, namely His Ownership and Sovereignty in the world of existence and His Omnipotence as the Everlasting and Bountiful Existent Being.

In other words, His Omnipotence, Majesty, and Infinite Might leave no room for any hopelessness, defect, and limit in the Omnipotence of the Absolute Mighty and Eternal Existent Being. His All-Mightiness in Infinite, His Knowledge encompasses all beings, His Omnipotence is Boundless, and the Emanation of His Existence embraces all creatures.

All intellectually possible existent beings, souls, essences of matter, and natural phenomena take their fill of the Infinite Ocean of Divine Emanation and are thereby existent and are dominated by His Existential Command. They all conspire to constitute such luxurious palace of the universe. It is through His Will that man comes into existence.

The second blessed Verse makes a reference to the goal of creation and man's death and life which are indicative of Divine Ownership and Sovereignty, saying:

"He is the Lord who created death and life so that He may test you that which of you is better in deed."

Death employed in the sense of non-existence is not created, since Creation concerns existential matters, though we know that death is truly transference from one world to another and in this sense, it is an existential matter which may be created. The precedence of death over life herein is owing to the profound impression made by according attention to death in performing good deeds. Besides, death temporally precedes life.

The blessed Verse also treats of the Divine Trial that as mentioned above is a kind of fostering such that it makes man enter the arena of action and thereby makes them experienced and pure deserving Divine Proximity.

Further treatment of the topic is to be found under 2:155. It is worthy of note that the goal behind trial is mentioned as performing good deeds rather than the quantity of such deeds. Deeds are supposed to be performed sincerely for the sake of God Almighty even if they happen to be few in terms of quantity.

It is mentioned in some Prophetic traditions that

"good deeds"

connotes perfect intellect, fear of God Almighty, and being fully aware of Divine Commands even if the good deeds happen to be few in terms of number.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the blessed Verse is indicative of proper acts which are accompanied by worshipping God Almighty and having pure intentions. He further says that preservation of deeds from impurities is harder than performing deeds and sincerely performed righteous good deeds are those whose agent does not expect praise from anyone besides God Almighty. [3]

Thus, the world is the arena of a great trial for all mankind. Death and life are the means of the trial and the goal behind it is to achieve performing good righteous deeds which are indicative of the development of inward knowledge, sincerity of intentions, and performing any kind of good righteous deeds.

In this vein, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"good deeds"

herein connote remembrance of death or preparation for death and the like. In fact they refer to different implications of the general sense of the word. Since man commits numerous mistakes in such great arena of trial, he should not despair of having committed such mistakes and thereby refrain from striving toward his spiritual growth.

The blessed Verse closes with the Divine Promise of Support and Forgiving of sins, saying that God Almighty is Invincible and Oft-Forgiving. He is the Omnipotent Lord Who forgives all repenting believers and His Might and Majesty is accompanied by Mercy and Compassion.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 3-4

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۖ مَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ مِن تَفَاوُتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

3. Who has created the seven heavens one above another and you can see no flaw in the Creation of the Most Gracious. Then, behold again: "Can you see any rifts?"

4. Then, behold time and again. Your sight will return to you in a state of humbleness and exhaustion.

The system of Creation is based on Divine Mercy. It is the best system of Creation into which neither defect nor flaw may find its way. Knowing God Almighty should be based on observation and exactitude so that many may strengthen his belief in Divine Omnipotence and the Majesty of the world of existence.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question treat of the universal system of Creation encouraging man to study the organic system of the world of existence so that he may prepare himself for the great trial, saying that the Lord created the seven heavens one above another. The seven heavens were briefly treated above under 65:12:

"It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things."

The Arabic nominal form tibaqan ("in layers, one on top of the other") reflects that the seven heavens are above on another and the cognate verbal noun mutabiqa literally denotes being placed on top of another.

Now, if we take the seven heavens a reference to the seven planets of the solar system, visible to the naked eye, having their fixed distance from the sun and one is above another. If we regard all the stars and planets visible to the unarmed eye as belonging to the first heaven, it may be said that other worlds exist in higher heavens that one is above another.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that man may find neither contradiction nor defect nor flaw in the Creation of the Most Gracious Lord. Despite all its greatness, the world of creation is based on systematicity, consistency, well-measured constituents, and precise laws such that had any disorder found its way into the world of creation, it would have caused its destruction.

The marvelous systematicity prevailing amongst atoms and their constituent elements, i.e. protons, neutrons, and electrons, and in the entirety of the solar system and other systems and galaxies reflect precise laws that make them proceed on specific courses. At any rate, laws, system, and well-measured plans are to found everywhere.

The blessed Verse closes with further emphasis, urging man to behold once more and observe the world further attentively to find out that there is neither flaw, nor defect, nor inconsistency in the system of the world of creation.

The Arabic nominal form futur literally means splitting lengthwise, though it also connotes breaking the fast, inconsistency, and corruption and the last sense is intended herein. The blessed Verse is saying that no matter how attentively man studies the world of Creation, he may not find the least defect or disharmony in it.

To lay further emphasis on the same point, the blessed Verse 4 says:

"Then, behold time and again. Your sight will return to you in a state of humbleness and exhaustion."

The Arabic dual nominal form

karratayn ("once more, again")

derives from the root k-r-r denoting attend and return to something. The nominal form karra denotes repetition whose dual form is karratayn. However, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the dual form herein does not designate duality, but it connotes repetitive and consecutive attentiveness.

Thus, the blessed Qur'anic Verses urges people to observe the world of creation thrice and thereby study the secrets of creation. In other words, they are encouraged to be attentive time and again so that they see for themselves that there is not a single flaw in such marvelous system of creation and thereby gain further acquaintance with the Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Creator of such system and the world of existence.

The Arabic adverb of manner khasi'an, employed concerning the eye, denotes "with exhaustion." When it is used about dogs, it denotes "drive away." The Arabic adjective hasir derives from the root h-s-r ("undress") since when man is exhausted it is as if he is "nude" of all his faculties, hence the meaning of "exhaustion.

At any rate, two significant conclusions may be drawn out of these blessed Verses:

1. The Holy Qur'an emphatically enjoins all those treading the path of truth to summon their utmost attentiveness as to the secrets of the world existence and the marvels of the world of creation without being content with insufficient observation, since many a secret may not be revealed at the first and second attempts but sharp eyes and insight are required in this regard.

2. The more man exercises attentiveness and precision, the more he may perceive the systematicity and total flawlessness. Many a phenomena, e.g. earthquakes, floods, ailments, and other afflictions, appear as blights and blemishes at the first glance, but further studies reveal that there are significant and precise causes behind them.

Further details may be found in the book titled The Creator of the World (Àfaridigar-i Jahan). The blessed Verses in question explicitly indicate that systematicity and organicism reflect the knowledge and might behind them.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 5

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِّلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ

5. And indeed We have adorned the heaven of the world with lamps and We have made such lamps as means of driving away the devils and have prepared for them the blazing torment.

The Arabic nominal form misbah denotes something like a lamp that sheds light at night and makes it as brilliant as the day.

Three expressions are to be found in the blessed Verse concerning the stars:

1. Lamp;
2. Adornment;
3. Driving away the devils.

Treating of the sky, the blessed Verse makes mention of brilliant and beauteous stars, saying that God Almighty has adorned the nearest heaven with brilliant lamps and has placed arrows in them to drive away the devils and has prepared for them the torment of Hellfire.

A glance at the dark but starry night and being attentive toward the remote dream-like worlds and reflection upon the systematicity and organicism prevailing in them and meditation on the beauty, delicacy, majesty, and the mysterious and awe-inspiring silence casting its shadow on them admits man to a world brimming with the knowledge and light of Truth and thereby lead him to reflect upon the profundity of the worlds created by God Almighty whose depiction is beyond the reach of expression.

The blessed Verse lays further emphasis on the point that all the stars visible to us constitute elements of the nearest heaven from amongst the seven heavens.

The Arabic nominal phrase

al-sama' al-dunya ("the lowest or nearest heaven")

is indicative of the same.

The Arabic plural noun

rujum ("arrows")

connotes meteors cast like arrows from one of side of the heaven to the other.

The Arabic plural noun shuhub alludes to the remnants of shattered stars. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty has made stars like arrows driving away the devils. The manner of shooting such arrows, namely the shooting stars, which are wandering in the heavens is treated in details above under 15:18 and 37:20.

Finally, it is worthy of note that although the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the backward milieu of pre-Islamic age of ignorance in the Arabian Peninsula, but emphasis is oftentimes laid on the point that Muslims are supposed to reflect upon the secrets of the majestic world of existence, something inconceivable to the Arabs living in the pre-Islamic age of ignorance which explicitly reflects that the Holy Qur'an was revealed from a Divine Source and the more scientific advancements are made, further greatness and majesty are reflected by Qur'anic emphases in this respect.

It is common knowledge that the earth, despite its colossal size is too small compared to the sun as the focal point of the solar system such that the size of the sun is equal to one million and two hundred planets the size of the earth. On the other hand, our solar system is merely one constituent element of an immense galaxy referred to as the Milky Way.[4]

Furthermore, the galaxies in the cosmos are innumerable and as soon as astronomical telescopes get further sophisticated, further galaxies are being discovered. How Exalted is the Lord Who has created such colossal and well-measured plan. Greatness belongs to Allah, the One, the All-Mighty.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 6-8

وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ

تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ

6. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord is the torment of Hell and worst indeed is that abode.

7. When they are cast therein, they hear a horrible sound out of it while they are perpetually boiled in it.

8. It almost bursts up with fury. Every time a group is cast therein, the keepers of the Hell will ask them: "Did no warner come unto you?"

Since the preceding Verses treated of the Signs of Divine Majesty and Omnipotence and their reflections in the world of Creation, the blessed Verses in question deal with those who neglect such Signs and tread the path of disbelief and polytheism and like the devils deserve Divine torment. The blessed Verse 6 is saying that torment in the Hell is in store for those who disbelieved in their Lord and Hell is the worst abode for them.

The blessed Verse 7 briefly treats of such horrible torment saying that upon being cast in the Hell, they hear a fearsome sound while it is perpetually boiling. When they are cast into it with utmost humility and

disgrace, they hear a horrible and long cry from the Hell enwrapping them in horror.

The Arabic word shahiq literally denotes an unpleasant sound like braying of a donkey. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word is cognate with shahuq denoting "length," hence the designation of a high mount as jabal shahiq.

Thus, the Arabic word shahiq connotes long wail. Some also hold that zafir denotes a moan reverberating in the through and shahiq is applied to a moan reverberating in the breast. At any rate, reference is herein made to frightening and upsetting sounds.

The blessed Verse 8 depicts the intensity of the rage of the Hell, saying that it is almost cleft asunder, like a huge vessel laid on an extraordinarily blazing fire boiling such that it may shatter into pieces at any time or like a person raging and shouting in such manner that he appears to be on the verge of explosion.

Thus is the depiction of the Hell, the focal point of Divine Wrath.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that when a group of disbelievers are cast into it, the keepers of the Hell ask them surprisingly:

"Did you not have a leader or a guide? Did not a warner come unto you? Why have you ended up with such dire fate?"

They may not believe that those who had access to Divine Guidance deliberately end up with such dire fate and opt for such evil abode.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 9-11

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِّأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

9. They will say: "Yes, indeed a warner came unto us, but we belied him and said: 'Allah never sent down anything, you are only in great error."

10. And they will say: "Had we but listened or used our intellect, we would not have been amongst the dwellers of the blazing Fire!"

11. Then they will confess to their sins. So, damned are the dwellers of the Fire!

These blessed Verses make references to three confessions made by disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection:

1. They confess that the Prophets came unto them, though they belied them;

2. They confess that they failed to use their intellect and listen to the word of truth;

3. They confess to having committed sins.

True intellection lies in listening to the truth and acknowledging and following it such that one may deliver oneself from Divine Wrath.

Nonetheless, as reflected in the blessed Verse 9, the disbelievers replied unto the keepers of the Hell that warners had come unto them, but they had belied them saying that God Almighty had never sent Revelation onto anyone so that they had been able to pursue their concupiscent desires.

They had even said unto them that they had been in dire error. They had not acknowledged their words nor had they listen to their life giving messages; rather, they stood against them and termed such spiritual physics as those who had been misled and belied them.

The blessed Verse 10 reflects the origin of their misfortune and error, saying that had they listened to the Messengers and made use of their intellect, they would have never been amongst the people of the Hell. It is in the blessed Verse 11 that they confess to having committed sins saying that the people of the Hell are deprived of Divine Mercy.

These Qur'anic Verses treat of the dire fate of the people of the Hell as well as the main cause of their misfortune saying that God Almighty had provided them with hearing, intelligence, and intellect on the one hand and His Messengers with clear proofs on the other thus they had the opportunity to tread on the path to happiness.

However, when man who has the hearing, vision, and intellect, but fails to perceive and think, may not be affected by all the Messengers and Divine Scriptures.

The Arabic word suhq literally denotes 'pounding, pulverizing,' and it is also applied to worn out clothes, but it ad hoc connotes being remote from Divine Mercy. Thus, the Arabic clause fa-suhqan li-ashab al-sa'ir reflects that the people of the Hell are deprived from Divine Mercy and since the curse is accompanied by its realization, the clause means that this group is totally remote from Divine Mercy.

It is worthy of note, however, that it is not the only instance where the Holy Qur'an makes a reference to the extraordinary value of intellect and the main cause of the misfortune of the people of the Hell as their neglect of such Divine faculty, but whoever acquainted with the Holy Qur'an knows that the significance of the issue is reflected on different occasions against the forgeries of those who regard religion as the opium of the mind and neglect of intellection.

The Holy Qur'an at all times addresses thinkers and scholars and those possessing reason.

Numerous traditions have been transmitted in this respect. It is noteworthy that the well-known work titled Kafi opens with a book titled 'The Book of Intellect and Ignorance' reflecting upon the same will be indicative of the profundity of Islamic perspective in this respect.

For the sake of brevity, only three traditions will be mentioned in this regard:

1. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Whoever possesses intellect has faith and whoever has faith shall enter Paradise."

Thus, Paradise is the abode of the wise.[5]

2. According to a Prophetic tradition, man's character depends on his intellect and whoever lacks intellect, lacks faith.[6]

3. It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

"Intellect is man's guide and ignorance entails error."

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 12-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ
أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

12. Verily, those who fear their Lord inwardly, theirs shall be forgiveness and a great Reward.

13. Whether you keep your talk secret or disclose it, Verily, He is the Omniscient of what is in the breasts.

14. Is not He Who has created All-Aware of the states of His creatures whereas He is the Most Precise, the All-Aware?

The blessed Verse 12, resuming the discussions raised in the preceding Verses regarding the disbelievers and their fate on the Day of Resurrection, is saying that those who fear their Lord inwardly, their sins shall be forgiven and they shall receive a great Reward.

The Arabic word

ghayb ("unseen, invisible")

may connote gaining knowledge as to the Unseen God, Resurrection, or both.

Some exegetes also maintain that the blessed verse makes a reference to fearing God Almighty in committing unseen sins, since if man does not conceal his sins, he will not make them apparent in the best possible way. Thus, reference is made of the significance of pure intentions in refraining from committing sins and disobeying Divine Commands, since keeping something secret is more remote than hypocrisy. All theses exegeses are in harmony.

The definite form of

maghfiratun ("forgiving")

and the phrase

ajrun kabirun ("great reward")

reflect the significance. In other words, such forgiving and Reward is so great that they may not be perceived by anyone. The blessed Verse 13 lays further emphasis in this regard, saying that whether you conceal or disclose your intentions, God Almighty is All-Aware of whatever is in the hearts.

Some Qur'an exegetes have narrated an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas to the effect that some of the disbelievers or hypocrites talked evil of the Noble Prophet (S) and Gabriel informed the Noble Prophet (S) of their slanders. Some of them said unto each other to conceal their words so that Muhammad's (S) God may not hear them.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed, saying:

"Whether you conceal or disclose your words, God Almighty is All-Aware of them."

The blessed Verse 14 serves as a proof for the preceding blessed Verse, asking:

"Is not the One Who has created the Creatures All-Aware of them, whereas He is Fully Aware of their innermost secrets as well as about everything in the world?"

Numerous possibilities have been mentioned regarding the clause ala ya‘lamu man khalaqa

(“Is not He Who has created All-Aware of the states of His creatures?”),

the best of which is that God Almighty Who has created the entire world of existence is All-Aware of all the secrets of the world. Are man’s secrets concealed from God Almighty Who has created him?

The adjective latif, cognate with the nominal form lutf, connotes any delicate point and any rapid movement and delicate body.

Thus, the Divine Attribute Latif reflects Divine Omniscience as to the delicacies and secrets of the world of Creation and the Creation of delicate and minute beings. The Attribute implies that God Almighty is All-Aware of innermost secrets concealed in the hearts, the words exchanged at secret sessions, and the sins committed in secret places.

It is narrated in Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn from Imam Ridha (as) as saying that the word latif does not imply delicacy and minuteness but the fact that Divine Omniscience penetrates all things, though others may not perceive it.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 15

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

15. He it is the One Who has made the earth subservient to you. So proceed on the path thereof and eat of His provision and know that toward Him will be the Resurrection.

The Arabic word mankab denotes “shoulder” which is the best organ for carrying burdens.

The

“shoulder of the earth”

connotes places where Provision may be found. The earth is subservient to man and despite a number of motions, it is tranquil.

It would not be subservient to man if it were subject to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions permanently or its distance from the sun were nearer or remoter or the existing measures did not predominate the earth. God Almighty has made the earth subservient to man so that he may make efforts on it. On the other hand, Provisions are granted by God Almighty, though efforts are required for obtaining them.

The Arabic adjective dhalul employed in the sense of subservient is the most comprehensive expression which may be used regarding the earth, since such subservient mount, despite its numerous and rapid movements sounds so tranquil that it seems to be absolutely still.

Some scholars maintain that the earth has fourteen different kinds of movements, three of which pertain to its rotation around itself and the sun. Furthermore, such movement is accompanied by that of the solar system in the heart of the galaxy. Such rapid movements are so gentle that before producing decisive arguments as to the movement of the earth, no one believed in such movements.

On the other hand, the crust of the earth is neither too coarse nor rough to impede habitation on it, nor too soft and smooth to impede its tranquility.

Thus, it is fully subservient to human life. Its agitation would be reflected if its surface were covered by mires swallowing everything, by fine sand in which men sank in it to their knees, and by sharp stones and rocks wounding men when they trod on them.

The earth's distance from the sun is not so less to scorch everything on its surface nor is it so remote from it so that everything be frozen. The atmospheric pressure of the earth is so moderate that it makes life possible without being at the extremes to asphyxiate or shatter human life. The same thing is true with gravity: it is not in the extremes to shatter the bones or cause beings to easily levitate in the air.

At any rate, the earth is subservient to man in all respects. It would be of interest to accord attention to the following theme, i.e. walking on the shoulders of the earth. The Arabic word manakib is the plural form of mankab.

The expression reflects that it is as if man sets his feet on the shoulder of the earth and it is so serene that man may easily keep his balance on it. At the same time, it implies that as long as one makes no efforts, he may not benefit from the provisions of the earth.

The Arabic word rizq ("provision, sustenance") is also a semantically comprehensive term encompassing all forms of mineral, vegetative, and animal nutritive material. However, man is supposed to bear in mind that these do not constitute his final goal of creation, but they serve as means to be used in treading the path leading to "growth", Resurrection, and eternal life.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 16-18

أَأَمِنتُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

أَمْ أَمِنتُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

16. Do you feel secure about the torments inflicted by Him, Who is over the heaven, will not cause the earth to sink with you and then it should quake?

17. Or do you feel secure about the torments inflicted by Him, Who is over the heaven, will not send against you a violent whirlwind abounding with gravel? Then you shall know how has My Warning been.

18. And indeed those before them belied Divine Signs, but behold how terrible was My Chastisement.

Resuming the foregoing discussions on the fates of disbelievers, the people of the Hell and the believers, the people of Paradise, the blessed Verses in question urge believers to join the lines of the people of Paradise and refrain from the practices of the people of the Hell. Following a treatment of Divine Bounties mentioned in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verses in question make a reference to some of His torments.

The blessed Verse 16 asks:

"Do you feel secure about the torments of the One Who is the Absolute Sovereign in the heavens? Are you aware that He may command that the earth be torn asunder and swallow you and permanently quake? If He

commands, the tranquil earth revolts and turns into a stubborn beast. Then, the earth will quake and clefts appear in the earth swallowing you and your houses and cities. The earth will still quake."

The Arabic clause

fa-idha hiya tamuru ("it will permanently quake and is agitated")

may indicate that God Almighty may command so that the earth swallows you and tosses you from one point to another.

Thus, your graves may not be tranquil and the earth may lose its tranquility forever predominated by permanent quakes. The inhabitants of the quake stricken regions perceive it with further facility since they inhabit regions that may quake for days depriving the inhabitants of their normal course of life. Au contraire, those accustomed to the tranquility of the earth may require further reflection upon the point to grasp the expression.

The phrase

man fi 'l-sama' ("One [Who is] in the heaven")

alludes to the Divine Pure Essence Whose Sovereignty predominates the heavens and the earth in their entirety. However, some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that a reference is hereby made of the angels in the heaven assigned to execute Divine Commands.

The blessed Verse 17 is saying that there is no need to experience earth quakes, since He may command whirlwinds abounding in gravel to bury you beneath heaps of them. You shall notice before long how Divine Warnings shall be realized. The point may be easily grasped by those who have experienced the sand and hasib winds, namely those moving the heaps of sand. They know that such winds may bury the dwellings and caravans in a few moments under heaps of sand and gravel.

Thus, the blessed Verses reflect that their torments are not restricted to those befalling them in the Hereafter, but God Almighty may put an end to their lives by earth quakes or gales. To further depict such torments, reference is made to similar disasters which befell the ancient peoples.

Therefore, the blessed Verse 18 says that those who were before them belied Divine Signs and Messengers, but behold the Divine Chastisements befallen them. Some were chastised by destructive quakes, some by lightning, and some by tempests and gales, leaving behind their ruined cities so that prospective generations may take lessons and obey Divine Commands.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 19

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَافَّاتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَٰنُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ

19. Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them in the sky except the Most Gracious Lord. Verily, He is the All-Seer of everything.

Birds, by their migrations and soaring in the sky for reaching remote places in the four seasons without any restrictions as to their permanent flight without falling down and collision serve as the Signs of Divine Omnipotence and Glory.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question asks:

"Have they not beheld the birds flying above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in?"

They soar in the sky resisting the law of gravity and easily fly in the sky for hours, and at times weeks and months in rows and find no restriction as to their gentle and speedy flight. Some of them oftentimes spread their wings (safat), as if a secret force puts them to flight.

Some of them flutter permanently and the Arabic verbal form yaqbidhna may imply the same sense. Some birds flutter and then spread their wings. The fourth group, like sparrows, flutter for some time, but when they reach the required speed, they fold in their wings and dive in the air. At any rate, they follow different patterns.

Who has created them such that they may easily soar in the sky? Who has provided them with the power to fly and has trained them to fly, particularly when they fly in flocks that at times it takes months of soaring above numerous lands, forests, mountains, valleys, and seas to reach their destinations?

Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that none but the Most Gracious Allah keeps them in the sky, since He is the All-Seer of everything and is All-Aware of the needs of His creatures and accordingly provides them with befitting means and different faculties. It is worthy of note, however, that a detailed discussion regarding the wonders of the world of the birds and their flight is to be found above under 16:79.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 20

أَمَّنْ هَٰذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُندٌ لَّكُمْ يَنصُرُكُم مِّن دُونِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ ۚ إِنِ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ

20. Who is he besides the Most Gracious that may serve as your host against God Almighty? The disbelievers are preoccupied with nothing but vanity.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the point that the disbelievers may not find any support against God Almighty, asking:

"Who may render you assistance against God Almighty? They are not only unable to render you support at the time of afflictions, but if God Almighty wills, He assigns them to cause affliction for you."

Water, wind, dust, and fire are subservient to you and constitute the pillars on which your life rests. Nonetheless, God Almighty assigned them to cause the perdition of the disobedient peoples. Numerous instances of such disobedience and the consequent torments befalling on the disobedient are to be found in the history of mankind.

The closest associates of the kings, Pharaohs, and the rebellious cause their perdition. Contemporary history also attests to numerous instances of the rebellions staged by the closest and the most loyal forces of the tyrannical regimes against them and causing their perdition. However, the disbelievers are solely preoccupied with their vanity and delusion.

The veils of vanity and ignorance have been cast on their intellect impeding them from taking lessons from historical instances.

The Arabic word jund originally denotes uneven and rough surface of the earth where stones and gravel abound, hence the connotation of hosts and

armies. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the term is herein applied to idols unable in the least to render assistance to the polytheists. However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is broad in its semantic scope and reference to idols merely constitutes one of the semantic elements of the same.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 21

أَمَّنْ هَٰذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۚ بَل لَّجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ

21. Who may provide for you if He should withhold His provision? However, they continue to be obdurate in their disobedience and evading the truth.

The preceding blessed Verse and the one in question allude to the causes of human misfortunes. In this respect, vanity, obduracy, disobedience, and evading the truth (‘utu) imply arrogance and transgressing the bounds set by the Truth. The Arabic word nufur connotes expression of disgust and evading the truth which pave the path for rebellion and disobedience which in turn pave the ground for hatred of and distancing from the truth.

It is worthy of note, however, that God Almighty is the only Provider Who provides in this world

(“He created you, then He provided for you,”[7])

the purgatory

(“Nay, they are alive with their Lord and they have provision,”[8]),

and the Hereafter

(“They shall enter Paradise where they shall be provided therein without limit,”[9]).

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that if God Almighty withholds His Provision, no one may meet your requirements and provide for you. If he commands the heaven to desist from sending down rain, plants may not grow on the earth, and numerous blights may destroy the cultivated lands and no one may provide you with your daily sustenance.

If the spiritual provisions and Divine Revelation be withheld, no one will be able to guide you. These are evident truths, but your obduracy and disobedience serve as veils impeding you from perceiving the truth. Thus, the blessed Verse closes by saying that they continue their obduracy and evading the truth.

It is worthy of note, however, that despite all the advancements in different spheres of human life, particularly those made in the domain of nutrition industries, if it does not rain for one single year, a disaster shall befall throughout the world and if the hosts of locusts and other blights spread every corner, a great disaster shall be inflicted upon the world.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 22

أَفَمَن يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّن يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

22. Is he who walks prone on his face, more rightly guided or he who walks upright on the Straight Path?

Following the discussion raised in the foregoing blessed Verses regarding the disbelievers and the believers, the blessed Verse in question

depicts the states of the two groups of the disbelievers and the believers by an illustration of interest, asking:

"Is he who walks prone on his face, more rightly guided or he who walks upright on the Straight Path?"

The disbelievers, they tyrants, and the arrogant obdurate people are likened to one who crawls on an uneven and meandering road; as a consequence of which he neither sees the road clearly, nor is able to control himself, nor is aware of the impediments and obstacles, nor moves with desirable speed, but he walks for a short while and despairs.

Au contraire, the disbelievers are resembled to those who walk upright and traverse an even and straight path with utmost speed, might, awareness, and facility. Such precise and interesting similitude is clearly reflected in the lives of these two groups.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the twain allude to the Noble Prophet (S) and his uncle, Abu Jahl; though such interpretation reflects few instances without restricting the general contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question.

Different interpretations have been provided for mukibban 'ala wajhihi, though the abovementioned meaning is more consistent with its contextual meaning, namely walking or crawling prone. At any rate, these are the sates of the disbelievers and the believers in the Hereafter or in both worlds and there is no reason as to the semantic restriction of the blessed Verse reflecting that they are so in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 23

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

23. Say it is He Who has created you and endowed you with hearing and seeing and hearts, though little thanks you give.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is the One Who created you and endowed you with hearing, seeing, and hearts, though you offer insufficient thanks.

In other words, God Almighty provided you with the means of observation and experience (vision), that of gaining awareness as to the products of other people's thought (hearing), and that of reflection on intellectual sciences (heart). Thus, you have been endowed with all the required means of obtaining intellectual and narrational knowledge, though there are few who offer their gratitude for such great Bounties.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 24

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

24. Say: "It is He Who has created you on the earth and to Him you shall return.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty Who created you on the earth and from the earth is All-Able to resurrect you. God Almighty disseminates mankind all over the world and He shall resurrect and gather them on the Day of Resurrection.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is saying:

"Say that He is the One Who created you on the earth and you shall return to Him and shall be gathered before Him."

The blessed Verse actually determines the course and the goal, namely man is enjoined to tread on the Straight Path of the Islamic faith, make use of all the means of obtaining knowledge and recognition, and proceed toward the everlasting life.

It is worthy of note that the preceding blessed Verse contains the verbal form ansha'akum and the blessed One in question includes dhara'akum. The former may allude to creating man ex nihilo, namely you were non-existent and God Almighty created you and the latter makes a reference to the Creation of man from the earth.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 25-27

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ

25. They say: "When will this promise come to pass if you are telling the truth?"

26. Say: "The knowledge is with Allah only and I am merely a plain warner.

27. But when they see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve will turn ugly and black and it will be said unto them: "This is what you were calling for!"

The clause

mata hadha al-wa'd ("when this promise [will come to pass]?")

is attested six times in the Holy Qur'an as uttered by the disbelievers to who the Noble Prophet (S) would reply:

"The Knowledge as to the Resurrection is solely with God Almighty."

The knowledge of the unseen falls into two categories: one granted His chosen believers

("This is of the news of the unseen which We reveal unto you,"[10])

and one which is solely with God Almighty and even His Messengers are unaware of it, instances of which include the specified time of Resurrection as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse[11] and the supplication including

"By the Knowledge which is solely with you."

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the words uttered by those who belie Resurrection, saying that they utter such derisive words but if they are true in their claim they may specify the exact time of Resurrection. Now that they may not act accordingly, why do they not state that they are unable to do so?

Two interpretations have been suggested for

"this promise":

firstly, the promise of Resurrection and the other the numerous chastisements inflicted in this world, e.g. earth quakes and lightning, though the twain are not inharmonious.

The blessed Verse 26 is thus replying unto them:

"Say unto them 'The knowledge of it is only with God Almighty and I am merely a plain warner."

The expression is reiterated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, including:

"They ask you about the Hour [Day of Resurrection]: 'When will be its appointed time?' Say: 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord alone. None may reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden.' They ask you as if you have a good knowledge of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is with Allah only, though most of mankind are unaware of it"[12].

The knowledge rests solely with God Almighty since if the appointed time of Resurrection were known and it happened to be far ahead, people would sink into the dire of neglect and if it happened to be close, the people would be too anxious for the fulfillment of the goals of human growth.

The blessed Verse 27 is saying that when they experience the Divine Promises and torments, the faces of the disbelievers turn ugly and black, such that they reflect their sorrows. It will be said unto them that it is what you called for. The verbal form tadda'un, deriving from the root d-'-a, implies that they called for Resurrection at all times and now there is no way to evade the reckoning of deeds at the time.

It is noteworthy that Hakim Abu al-Qasim Haskani in this respect says that when the disbelievers noticed the exalted rank of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), before God Almighty, their faces turned black out of rage.[13]

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying that the blessed Verse in question was revealed regarding the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) and his followers.[14] At any rate, the exegesis transmitted by the Shi'i and Sunni authorities is regarded as comparison and the blessed Verse teats of Resurrection and traditions are imbued with such comparisons.

Surah al-Mulk - Verses 28-29

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللَّهُ وَمَن مَّعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَن يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ آمَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

28. Say: "If Allah destroys me and those with me or He bestows His Mercy on us, who can save the disbelievers from an excruciating torment?"

29. Say: "He is the Most Gracious, in Him we believe and in Him we put our trust. So you will come to know who it is that is in manifest error."

The blessed Verse which is one of the last Verses of the Chapter opening with

"Say"

addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) resumes the discussions raised in the preceding Verses against the disbelievers and reflects the aspects reflected above.

The blessed Verse addresses those who awaited oftentimes the death of the Noble Prophet (S) and his followers and the disappearance of his religion, saying:

"If Allah destroys me and those with me or He bestows His Mercy on us, who can save the disbelievers from an excruciating torment?"

According to some traditions, Meccan disbelievers cursed the Noble Prophet (S) and the Muslims and called for his death under the false impression that had he passed away, his Prophetic Call would disappear, but the blessed Verse was revealed to provide them with a reply.

Some other Qur'an exegetes suggest another exegesis for the blessed Verse saying that addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse is asking him to say:

"Say: 'We believe in God Almighty but we are in a state between hope and awe, let alone you who disbelieve in Him."

However, the former exegesis sounds to be more accurate.

In this light, the blessed Verse 29 is saying:

"Say unto them that God Almighty is the Most Gracious. We believe in Him and put our trust in Him and you will notice before long who is in manifest error."

In other words, We believe in God Almighty and have chosen Him as our Guardian. The reason is crystal clear. He is the Most Gracious Lord. His Graciousness enwraps all things everywhere and friends and foes benefit from the Emanation of His Bounties.

A brief glance at the world of existence bears testimony to the argument, but what have your objects of worship done for you? Your error is plain herein, but it will be more obvious to you on the Day of Resurrection or even in this world when the Islamic faith, supported by Divine Aids, conquers the hosts of the disbelievers by a miraculous triumph and the truth will be more evident to you.

The blessed Verse is actually a kind of consolation to the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the believers in order to assure them of the all encompassing triumph of the truth and the total defeat of falsehood whose followers are all alone, but the Most Gracious Lord provides the believers with Support and Assistance.

Surah al-Mulk - Verse 30

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَن يَأْتِيكُم بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ

30. Say: "Say unto me! If the water of you land were to sink away, who then can supply you with flowing water?"

Flowing water is mentioned herein as an instance of Divine Graciousness.

The preceding blessed Verse said:

"We put our trust in Him,"

but the blessed Verse in question is saying that the believers put their trust in God Almighty since if the water sank away into the earth, no one can supply you with flowing water but God Almighty.

Thus, the closing Verse of the Chapter in question suggests an instance of Divine Graciousness enwrapping all the world of existence, though many people accord no attention to it:

"Say unto me! If the water of you land were to sink away, who then can supply you with flowing water?"

It is common knowledge that the earth consists of two different layers: the penetrable and the impenetrable layers. The former absorbs the water and the latter preserves it.

All fountains, wells, and subterranean aqueducts have come into being owing to the twain layers, since had all the earth been penetrable to a great depth, the water would have sunk into the earth so such depth that it would have been inaccessible. Now, had all the layers been impenetrable, the water would have stagnated and turned into mires or immediately found its way into the sea and thus all subterranean water reservoirs would have been lost.

It is merely one instance of the Divine Graciousness encompassing the world to which human life and death is closely associated. The Arabic word ma'in, cognate with ma'n ("water flow") and according to some with 'ayn whose /m/ is redundant, is taken by some Qur'an exegetes as connoting the water which is visible even though stagnant, though the majority of the exegetes maintain that it herein implies "flowing water."

It is noteworthy that drinking water is not restricted to flowing water, but they represent the best types of water, appearing in different forms, e.g. rivers, subterranean aqueducts, and artesian wells.

It is reported by some Qur'an exegetes that upon hearing the blessed Verse:

"Had your sources of water sunk into the earth, who would have provided you with flowing water?"

said:

"The robust men using pickaxes will draw water out of the depth of the earth,"

but while asleep at night he dreamt that black water encompassed his eyes and heard some voice saying:

"Bring those robust men and sharp axes to draw such black water out of your eyes."

Today, it is known that had the impenetrable layer of the earth disappeared, neither robust men nor sharp axes may extract water out of the earth.[15]

Finally, the traditions narrated from the Noble Shi'i Imams (as) reflect that the last blessed Verse alludes to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS, may God Almighty hasten his noble reappearance) and his world wide justice administration.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) on the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question as saying:

"The blessed Verse is revealed concerning the Imam (as) [namely Imam Mahdi, the Twelfth Shi'i Imam] who will rise to imbue the world with Divine Justice, saying that if your Imam entered Occultation and you were unaware of his whereabouts, Who will send you an Imam to expound to you the news of the heavens and the earth and the lawful and the unlawful of Divine Laws?'

Then he said:

'Its exegesis shall finally come to pass."[16]

Numerous traditions have been narrated in this respect, but it is noteworthy that they all serve to provide comparisons. In other words, the

literal sense of the blessed Verse concerns flowing water as the source of life for animate beings, though the esoteric meaning of it is on the existence of the Imam and his all encompassing knowledge and justice which in turn are the sources of the life of society.

It has been mentioned many a time above that the Holy Qur'an possesses numerous exoteric and esoteric meanings, but we lay emphasis on the point that the esoteric meanings of the Qur'an are exclusively known to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) and it is not permissible to suggest anything of one's own regarding the esoteric meanings of the Qur'anic Verses.

Likewise, what we say concerns the exoteric meanings of the Verses and the esoteric meanings of them are to be solely transmitted on the authority of the Infallibles (as).

Surah al-Mulk opens with Divine Sovereignty and Ownership and closes with His Graciousness which branches off from His Sovereignty and Ownership and thus, the opening and the closing of the blessed Chapter are consistent and harmonious.

O Lord! Grant us Your Graciousness bestowed upon every being and your particular servants. Allow us to drink the elixir of the Divine Guardianship of Your Friends! O Lord! Hasten the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (as), the fountain of the water of life and let those thirsty for his beauty be satisfied by his reappearance.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
2. Ibid.
3. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
4. Galaxies consist of series of stars which are also well-known as “the cities of the stars.” Despite their proximity, the distance amongst them at times approximates millions of light years.
5. Usul Kafi; Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 382.
6. Jami‘ Ahadith al-Shi‘a, vol. 13, p. 2840.
7. 30:2
8. 3:169
9. 40:40
10. 11:49
11. 67:26
12. 7:187
13. Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 33.
14. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 385.
15. Tafsir Abu al-Futuh Razi, vol. 11, p. 219.
16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 387.

Surah al-Qalam, Chapter 68

(The Pen)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 52

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 52 Verses. Some Qur'an exegetes have entertained doubts about the Revelation of all the blessed Verses of the Chapter in Mecca, though the Chapter stands in total harmony with Meccan Chapters in terms of tone and content, since above all, it treats of the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic call and confrontation with the foes who regarded him as insane, call to patience and steadfastness, and warning the opponents against Divine torments.

All in all, the topics discussed in the Chapter may be epitomized as follows:

1. The blessed Chapter opens with some of the excellences peculiar to the Messenger of Allah (S), particularly his nobilities, and proceeds to lay emphasis on them.
2. The blessed Chapter proceeds with an enumeration of his foes' vices.
3. Making mention of the people of Paradise actually serves as a warning against the evil polytheists.
4. Mention is also made of miscellaneous material regarding the Day of Resurrection and the disbelievers' torments.
5. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is enjoined to persevere and exercise patience against obdurate foes.
6. Warnings against polytheists.
7. Finally, the blessed Chapter in question closes with the glory of the Holy Qur'an and different conspiracies of enemies against the Noble Prophet (S).

The designation of the Chapter, mentioned by some as Nun, derives from the opening Verse. Though some of the traditions narrated on the merits of the blessed Chapter reflect that the title is Nun wa 'l-Qalam.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that one who recites the Chapter Nun wa 'l-Qalam shall be granted the Divine Rewards in store for those who possess moral nobilities.[1]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that one who recites the Chapter Nun wa 'l-Qalam in his obligatory or supererogatory ritual prayers shall be safeguarded by God Almighty against indigence for good and shall be secure against the pressures of the grave upon his demise and shall be granted Divine Graciousness.[2] It is worthy of note, however, that being granted such Rewards is subject to honoring religious obligations rather than paying lip service to the same.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

مَا أَنتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ

وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

1. By Nun, pen and by what they write.

2. You, by the Grace of your Lord, are not insane.

3. And for you shall be a Great and Everlasting Reward.

4. And you possess an exalted character.

The Chapter in question is the only One opening with the detached letter nun. Mention has been made above as to the detached letter, particularly under the opening blessed Verses of Chapters 2, 3, and 7.

What is worthy of note herein is that some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the detached letter is a hypochoristicon of and an allusion to the Arabic Divine Attribute rahman ("the Most Gracious"), though some have considered it as a metalypsis alluding to a river in Paradise.

The blessed Verse 1 contains oaths taken as to two most significant issues in human life, saying:

"By the pen and by what they write."

The oath is quite astonishing, since the object of the oath is seemingly an insignificant point, a piece of reed or something resembling the same and a little black material.

Nonetheless, it is the fountainhead of all human civilizations, advancements, and development of sciences, awakening of thought, formation of religions and schools of thought, and the springhead of human guidance and awareness such that human life thereby falls into pre-historic and historic eras.

Human history begins by the discovery of writing through which man was able to record the story of his life and left behind

"what they write."

The majestic nature of the oath is rendered further evident by according attention to the point that such blessed Verses were revealed when there were no writers in that milieu and the number of the illiterate inhabitants of Mecca, the focal point of devotions, politics, and economy of Hijaz, did not exceed twenty.

Thus, swearing by the pen in such milieu is of a particular majesty.

It would be of interest to make mention of the point that the earliest Verses revealed onto the noble and pure heart of the Noble Prophet (S) on the "Mountain of Light" (Jabal al-Nur) and at the "Cave of Hira" reveal the exalted significance of the pen:

"Recite! In the Name of your Lord Who has created [the world of existence]. He has created man from a clot [a piece of thick coagulated

blood]. Recite! And our Lord is the Greatest Who has taught man by the pen. He has taught him that which he knew not"[3].

The most interesting point is that an illiterate person recited such Words bearing testimony to the truth that the Holy Qur'an is but Divine Revelation.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Arabic word qalam ("pen, calamus") herein connotes the pen by which archangels record Divine Revelation or the records of human deeds, though the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is broader in scope and such interpretation may be considered as one of its senses.

Likewise

"what they write"

is also broad in its semantic implications encompassing whatever is recorded of treading the path of guidance and the intellectual, moral, and practical developments of mankind without being restricted to recording Divine Revelation or human deeds.

The blessed Verse 2 treats of the object of the oath, saying that owing to Divine Graciousness, you are not insane, namely those who unfoundedly allege that your are insane are blind in their hearts failing to behold all these Divine Blessings and Bounties conferred upon you, e.g. the Bounties of great intellect and insight, trustworthiness, sincerity, knowledge, Prophetic Call, and infallibility.

They are insane who falsely allege that the possessor of intellect par excellence is insane and thereby distance from the guide and leader of mankind through posing such unfounded allegations.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that Great and Everlasting Divine Rewards are in store for you, since you persevere on the Straight Path against such unfounded claims and even set your hopes on their deliverance and salvation without experiencing exhaustion consequent to your endeavors made on the path. The Arabic adjectival form mamnun derives from m-n-n ("sever") connoting endless and everlasting Rewards.

The blessed Verse 4 presents another depiction of the Noble Prophet (S), saying that he possesses great and marvelous nobilities of character, unrivalled purity and sincerity, and indescribable patience, perseverance, steadfastness, and forbearance.

He calls people unto obedience to God Almighty, worships Him more than anyone else, forbid people of committing vices, exercises forbearance, providing those harming and hurting him with admonition.

He invokes God Almighty to forgive the sins of those who slander him. He prays to God Almighty to bestow His Guidance upon those who hit him with rocks and cast hot ashes on his head. He is the focal point of love and the springhead of mercy. The Arabic word khuluq, cognate with khilqat ("creation") connotes the inherent purity of heart which becomes the second nature of man.[4]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 5-7

فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ

بِأَييِّكُمُ الْمَفْتُونُ

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

5. You shall see before long and they shall see as well,

6. Which of you is afflicted with insanity.

7. Your Lord is the Best Knower of him who has gone astray from His Path and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided.

the blessed Verses 5 and 6 serve as Divine Consolations to His Messenger (S) against his foes, saying that you and they shall see soon which of you is insane. The Arabic past participial form maftun, cognate with fitna ("affliction") herein connotes

"afflicted with insanity."

They ascribed such unfounded accusations unto him so that Allah's servants may distance themselves from you, but people are capable of intellection and they will acquaint themselves with your teachings in time.

Then, it will be manifest that such noble teachings have been revealed unto your pure and brilliant heart by God Almighty and it will be known that He bestowed you a great capacity for intellection as well as great knowledge.

Furthermore, you measures and stances and the rapid spread of the Islamic faith in future will reflect that you are the great source of intellect and insight and insane are those bats standing against sun shine and most assuredly such truths shall be further clarified on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 7 lays further emphasis on supporting the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"Your Lord is the Best Knower of him who has gone astray from His Path and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided."

The point is that God Almighty is Omniscient of His Path and thereby the Noble Prophet (S) is assured that he is on the Path of Guidance and his foes are in error.

It is narrated through a sound transmission chain that when the Quraysh noticed that the Noble Prophet (S) accorded precedence to 'Ali (as) over others, they talked evil of the latter saying that Muhammad was afflicted with insanity because of him. Thus, the Chapter in question was revealed in which God Almighty took an oath that the Noble Prophet (S) was not insane.

Further,

"those who have gone astray from His Path"

alludes to the Qurayshi foes of the Noble Prophet (S) who uttered such unfounded claims.

The clause

"He is the Best Knower of those who are guided"

alludes to 'Ali (as).[5]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 8-11

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ

وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ

هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ

8. So obey you not the deniers.

9. They wish that you compromised with them, so that they would compromise with you [a compromise adulterated by deviation from the Straight Path].

10. And obey not everyone who swears much and is a liar or is worthless.

11. One very inquisitive of other people's faults, a slanderer,

Making mention of the Noble Prophet's (S) nobilities of character in the preceding blessed Verses, his foes' vices are being treated herein such that a comparison of the two may shed further light on the question, enjoining him not to follow those who deny God Almighty, His Messenger (S), the Day of Resurrection, and the Islamic faith, since they are alluring and erring people transgressing all the Bounds set by the Truth as following such erring people entails but error and misfortune.

The blessed Verse 9 makes mention of their efforts to make the Noble Prophet compromise with them, saying that they wish that you made compromise with them so that they act likewise. Making compromise herein connotes neglecting some of Divine Commands for their sake.

Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse was revealed when the chiefs of Mecca called the Noble Prophet (S) to follow the beliefs of their ancestors, namely polytheism and idolatry, but God Almighty forbade him to obey them.[6]

It is also reported that Walid ibn Mughayra, one of the prominent chieftains of Quraysh, offered many possessions to the Noble Prophet (S) and swore that if he forwent his Prophetic Call, the possessions would be his.[7]

The tone of the blessed Verses in question as well as the material incorporated in historical sources clearly reflect that when the blind hearted polytheists noticed the rapid dissemination of the Islamic faith, they made attempts to make compromise with the Noble Prophet (S) and urge him to act likewise, as the followers of falsehood acted accordingly down the centuries, offering great possessions, worldly exalted positions, and beautiful women at times and thereby compared the Noble Prophet (S)'s exalted spirit with their limited and worthless ambitions.

The Noble Prophet (S) is enjoined many a time in the Holy Qur'an to accord no attention to their deviations and empty promises. The blessed Verse 10 enumerates the vices committing each of which leads to disobedience to God Almighty, warning him against following anyone who takes many an oath and is worthless.

The Arabic intensive adjectival form hallaf is applied to one who takes many oaths for any significant or insignificant matter and it such people are usually insincere in taking oaths.

The Arabic adjectival form

mahin ("worthless, lowly"),

cognate with mahana ("worthlessness, lowliness"), is taken by some Qur'an exegetes to imply thoughtless, lying, or evil people.

The blessed Verse 11 provides further depiction of such people saying that they are very inquisitive and slandering. The Arabic intensified adjectival form hammaz, deriving from h-m-z ("backbite, slander") is applied to one who indulges in slandering others. The Arabic phrase mashsha' bi-namim is applied to one who goes about slandering and backbiting people and thereby causes discord and enmity. The intensive forms indicate going to extremes in committing such vices.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 12-14

مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ

عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ زَنِيمٍ

أَن كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

12. One going to extremes in hindering the good, wrong doing, sinfulness,

13. Moreover vengeful, avaricious, coarse in manners, and notorious.

14. May it never come that you follow him owing to his affluence and offspring.

It is incumbent upon believers to disclose all the aspects of the foes so that such disclosure may lead to the people's salvation. Approximately ten characteristics are enumerated in these blessed Verses such that if someone has one of these vices, it is incumbent upon believers to distance from them, let alone those possessing all of these vile traits.

Thus, the blessed Verse 12 enjoins people to distance from one who makes many an effort to hinder the good and he is wrong doing and sinful. Such person not only does no righteous good deed, but also impedes other from doing good deeds. Furthermore, he transgresses Divine Bounds and rights bestowed upon people by God Almighty and his soul is adulterated by all sins such that committing sins is his second nature.

The blessed Verse 13 is saying that such person is gluttonous and notorious. He intends to avail himself of everything but impedes others from the same. Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Arabic adjectival form 'utull is applied to one who is bad tempered, vengeful, coarse in manners, and shameless.

The Arabic intensive adjective zanim is applied to someone whose descent is unbeknownst connoting "born out of wedlock."

The Arabic phrase

ba'd dhalik ("moreover, besides, furthermore")

indicates that these two vices are more abominable that the preceding ones, as suggested by some of the Qur'an exegetes. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that 'utull indicates grave disbelief and zanim is applied to one who is avaricious in his disbelief.[8]

At any rate, God Almighty makes such depiction of the liars and their vices, seemingly unparalleled elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, reflecting the vile characteristics of the opponents of the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an, and the Noble Prophet (S). Such people were liars, worthless, inquisitive, slanderous, disobedient, sinners, and of unbeknownst descent. They may not be expected to be otherwise.

The blessed Verse 14 is a warning saying:

"May it never come that you follow him owing to his affluence and offspring."

The Noble Prophet (S) indubitably never followed them, but theses blessed Verses lay emphasis on the point that so long as his doctrines and practices are not revealed to everyone, friends and foes are not expected to do accordingly.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 15-16

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ

15. When Our Verses are recited unto him, he says: "Tales of the ancients."

16. We shall brand him on the snout!

The former blessed Verse reflects the reaction of such people with such worthless traits against Divine Signs, saying:

"When Our Verses are recited unto him, he says: 'Tales of the ancients.'"

It is under such vile pretext that they distance from Divine Signs and thereby consigns them to oblivion and seduces others to deviate from the Straight Path; as a consequence of which it is incumbent upon the believers to refrain from following such people. It further completes forbidding the believers to follow them.

The latter blessed Verse unveils one of the torments to be inflicted on this group, saying that you shall behold before long that We shall brand them on the snout! Such eloquent expression reflects their utmost humility, since the Arabic word khurtum implies a reference to pigs and elephants.

It is worthy of note, however, that the word nose connotes magnanimity in the Arabic tongue. There is an idiom in the Persian language saying: "rub one's nose against the ground" connoting humiliating someone.

Furthermore, animals are branded but their snouts are not branded even. Such eloquent blessed Verses indicate that God Almighty humiliates such vain, disobedient, and wrong doing people and disgraces them before everyone such that others may take a lesson out of their dire fate.

The history of the Islamic faith bears witness to the same such that such obdurate opponents confronting the dissemination of the Islamic faith were so humiliated and disgraced that their humiliation and disgrace were unparalleled. Furthermore, further disgrace and humility are in store for such people on the Day of Resurrection.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"Do you want me to inform you of your most vicious people amongst you? Those who go to extremes in slandering and backbiting, cause discord amongst friends, and find faults with innocent people."[9]

According to another Prophetic tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) enjoined his companions to refrain from quoting him when the quote causes suspicion in any of his companions, since he would like to meet them with a pure heart.[10]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 17-20

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ

وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ

فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ

17. Indeed, We have tried them as We tried the people of the garden when they swore to pluck the fruits of the garden in the morning [without the poor being aware of it],

18. Without leaving anything aside.

19. Then, a [nightly] torment was afflicted on all of their garden while they were asleep.

20. So, the garden became black by the morning like a pitch dark night.

In vein with the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning the vain affluent who owing to their affluence and children turn away from everything, the blessed Verses in question serve as an allusion to some affluent people who had a verdant garden, but they trod the path of perdition due to their obduracy. The story was seemingly well-known at the time, hence the allusion to the story.

The blessed Verse 17 is saying that we tried them as we did the owners of the garden. Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous regarding the location of the garden, whether it was in the Yemen close to the populous city of San'a, or in Ethiopia, amongst the Children of Israel, or in Syria or in Ta'if, though the majority of the exegetes maintain that it was in the Yemen.

According to the story, the garden belonged to a believing old man who made use of its revenues to meet his needs and gave away the rest in charity. Nonetheless, after his demise, his children said that they were further entitled to the revenues since they had numerous children failing to follow their father's practice of expending the surplus on charitable means.

Thus, they intended to deprive the needy of the produce and their dire fate is reflected in these blessed Verses, saying that we tried them when they swore to pick the fruits early in the morning unbeknownst to the needy.

The blessed Verse 18 is saying that they did not leave anything for the needy. Such decision reflects that they did not act according owing to their need, but they thereby reflected their niggardliness and weak belief, since inasmuch as one happens to be in need, he may allocate a portion of the produce of a lucrative orchard to the needy.

The blessed Verse 19 proceeds to say that when they were asleep at night, they were afflicted by an encompassing Divine torment, such that a deadly lightning and a burning fire consumed the verdant orchard and darkened it like pitch black nights leaving behind but some ashes.

The Arabic word ta'if, cognate with tawaf ("circumambulation") denotes one who circumambulate something and at times connotes some affliction inflicted on someone at night. The Arabic word sarim denotes "separating" but herein connotes "pitch black night; fruitless tree; black ashes."

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 21-25

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ

أَنِ اغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَارِمِينَ

فَانطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَافَتُونَ

أَن لَّا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُم مِّسْكِينٌ

وَغَدَوْا عَلَىٰ حَرْدٍ قَادِرِينَ

21. Then, they called out one to another as soon as the morning broke.

22. [Saying:] "Go to your tilth in the morning, if you would pluck the fruits."

23. So they departed, conversing in secret low tones [saying]:

24. "No poor man shall enter upon you into it today."

25. And they went in the morning with a strong intention, thinking that they have power [to prevent the poor taking anything of the fruits therefrom].

The blessed Verse 21 is saying that at any rate the owners of the garden, imagining that the fruits of their orchard are ripe to be picked, called onto one another. The blessed Verse 22 says that they asked each other to proceed if they intend to pick their fruits. The Arabic word aghdu, cognate with ghadwa, implies the break of the day and the word breakfast is applied to the food eaten in the morning.

The blessed Verse 23 is saying that they proceeded toward their orchard whispering onto one another.

The blessed Verse 24 says that they said onto one another:

"Be careful lest a man in need approaches you!"

They whispered onto each other lest the needy might hear them and ask them for some meager amount of fruit to quench their hunger. The needy seemingly expected some fruit every year owing to the charity of their father. Nonetheless, such niggardly and unworthy children moved so furtively that no one learns that it was time to pick up fruits.

The blessed Verse 25 is saying that that proceeded toward their orchard at day break with all their might to turn away from the needy. The Arabic word hard connotes impeding wrathfully. Thus, they raged at the expectations of the needy and made up their minds to exercise all their might to ward off their requests. The Arabic word is also applied to the years when there is no precipitation.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 26-30

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَاوَمُونَ

26. But when they entered the garden and beheld it, they said: "Indeed, we have gone astray."

27. [Then they said:] "Nay! We are totally deprived of everything!"

28. The wisest among them said: "Did I not tell you: why do you not glorify Allah.

29. They said: "Glorified is Our Lord! Verily, we were wrong-doers."

30. Then, they turned to each other, blaming one another.

These blessed Verses proceed with the story of the owners of the orchard as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses. Aspiring to pick up their fruits unbeknownst to the needy, they intended to impede them from availing themselves of Divine Bounties.

They departed at daybreak, unaware of the lightning that had turned the orchard into ashes when they were asleep at night time. The blessed Verses reflect that when they beheld their orchard, they found it in such a mess that they thought it were not their orchard and they had lost their way.

The Arabic plural adjectival form

dhallun ("the astray")

may connote that they had seemingly lost their way to the orchard or to the Truth, as suggested by some Qur'an exegetes, though the former sense seeming further befitting herein.

The blessed Verse 27 reflects that they regarded themselves as the true needy who aspired to deprive those in need from the produce. Their attempt at such impediment led to their deprivation from the material gains as well as the spiritual blessings accrued through expending in Cause of Allah and helping those in need.

The blessed Verse 28 is saying that the wisest of them at the time said:

"Did I not ask you to glorify Allah and remember His Majesty and refrain from disobeying Him and give thanks by helping the needy by expending your possessions. However, you failed to hearken to my words and met such dire fate.

The blessed Verse reflects that one of them believed in God Almighty and warned them against niggardliness and avarice, but others failed to listen to him. However, following the incident he reproached them with further convincing logical arguments.

According to the blessed Verse 29, they experienced a rude awakening and confessed to their sins, saying that God Almighty is glorified and they were indubitably wrong doers and wronged themselves as well as others. The Arabic word awsat in the preceding blessed Verse connotes one who is moderate in terms of reason and sensibility.

The interrogative clause

"Why do you not glorify God Almighty"

alludes to the point that all righteous good deeds stem from belief in God Almighty, knowing and glorifying Him. However, some exegetes maintain that the Arabic verbal noun tasbih herein connotes giving thanks for the Bounties.

The blessed Verse 30 reflects that the brothers addressed each other and censured one another. Apparently, while confessing to his flaws, each of them tried to hold others accountable and severely rebuked others regarding

others as the main cause of the calamity as he was not that unaware of God Almighty and justice.

That is the fate of all the wrong doers who get entangled with Divine torment, confessing to their sins but holding others responsible for their own afflictions. Nonetheless, it is goes without saying that they are all accountable for the misdeeds and vices.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 31-33

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ

عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَن يُبْدِلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ

كَذَٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

31. They said: "Woe to us! We were disobedient.

32. We hope that our Lord will [forgive us and] give us in exchange something better. Truly, we turn to our Lord.

33. Such is Divine chastisement, but truly that of the Hereafter is greater if they but knew.

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that when they noticed the depth of their dire fate, they cried:

"Woe unto us!"

They had previously confessed to their wrong doing, since wrong doers may acknowledge the principle, though he may do wrong owing to being overwhelmed by his concupiscent desires. Au contraire, the disobedient never follow the rules nor does he acknowledge it. Wrong doing may herein connote doing wrong to oneself and disobedience may imply transgressing the rights of others.

It is worthy of note, however, that when arabs face a grave affliction, they say

wayla ("woe").

According to the blessed Verse 32, upon such rude awakening and confessing to their sins, they turned toward God Almighty saying that may their Lord forgive their sins and provide them with a better orchard, since they have turned towards Him, set their hopes on His Pure Essence, and invoke Him to render them Assistance in their hardships. It is narrated in some traditions that they sincerely repented and God Almighty pardoned them and provided them with a better orchard.

The blessed Verse 33 draws a general conclusion saying that thus is Divine torment and that in the hereafter is more severe than that if but they knew. Furthermore, the story reflects that there is an intimate relationship between committing sins and being deprived of Divine Sustenance and Provision.

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"Man at times commits a sin and is thereby deprived of his Divine Provision."

Then, the noble Imam (as) recited the blessed Verse in question.[11] It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas as saying that the relationship between committing sins and being deprived of Divine Provision is crystal clear such that God Almighty makes mention of the same in the Chapter in question.[12]

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 34-38

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ

إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ

34. For the God fearing are gardens abounding in Bounties with their Lord.

35. Shall We then treat the believers like the disbelievers?

36. What is the matter with you? How do you judge?

37. Or do you have a book wherein you learn,

38. What you choose belongs to you.

The accounts of the good and the evil are juxtaposed in the Holy Qur'an such that such comparisons may help people with a better understanding of their fates. Such method is quite impressive in terms of education.

Likewise, following an account of the dire fate of the owners of the orchard in the preceding blessed Verses, mention is made of the exalted position of the God fearing and the Bounties in store for them.

The blessed Verse 34 is saying:

"For the God fearing are gardens abounding in Bounties with their Lord."

Such gardens abound in whatever imaginable Bounty.

However, some polytheists and the vain affluent claiming that they are quite at comfort in this world and will enjoy the same state in the Hereafter are addressed in the blessed Verse 35 saying:

"Shall We then treat the believers [obedient to Allah] like the disbelievers?"

The following blessed Verse says:

"What is the matter with you? How do you judge?"

Anyone sound in mind readily acknowledges that the fates the just and the wrong doer, the obedient and the sinners, the sacrificing and the vain are not on a par before God Almighty Whose Acts are Wise and Well-Measured. Such vain people imagine that the world and the Hereafter belong to them.

The blessed Verse 37 further adds that if your reason failed to lead you to such understanding, could you produce any argument to substantiate your claim. Do you have a book to learn something from it?

The blessed Verse 38 says:

"Does your choice belong to you?"

Do you expect wrong doers like you to be on a par with the believing Muslims? Your false claim is neither reasonable nor is it mentioned in any authoritative book.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 39-41

أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۙ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ

سَلْهُمْ أَيُّهُم بِذَٰلِكَ زَعِيمٌ

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

39. Or have you oaths from Us, reaching to the Day of Resurrection that yours will be what you choose?

40. Ask them which of them will guarantee such thing?

41. Or have they partners whom they associate in partnership with Allah who intercede with Allah on their behalf? Then, let them bring their partners if they are truthful!

The blessed Verse 39 is saying that you may not produce logical and narrational arguments as to the veracity of your claims. Have we made a covenant with you which is valid to the Day of Resurrection that justifies what entails your benefits?

Who may claim to have made a covenant with God Almighty that He obeys to his inclinations and He unconditionally provides him with privileges such that sinners be ranked with believers?

The blessed Verse 40 proceeds with posing such questions to them and thereby leaves no room for such unfounded justifications, saying:

"Ask them which of them will guarantee that God Almighty will provide them with whatever they wish?"

It is in the last stage of such strange investigation that the blessed Verse 41 inquires whether they have objects of worship who intercede with God Almighty on their behalf and render them support. If they are true in their claims, they may present them.

Could they produce any argument to substantiate that such worthless and inanimate objects are associated with God Almighty in partnership?

Thus, the blessed Verses in question lead us to the conclusion that to substantiate their claim as to being a on a par with or even superior to believers, they have to make recourse to one of the four means: to provide arguments based on reason, heavenly Scriptures, Divine Covenant, or intercession and testimony of intercessors and witnesses. Their claims are unfounded since they may not provide affirmative answers to such questions.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 42-43

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۖ وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ

42. Remember the Day when the shin shall be laid bare out of fear and they shall be called to prostrate themselves, but they shall not be able to do likewise.

43. Then, their eyes will be cast down and ignominy will cover them. They used to be called to prostrate themselves, while they were healthy and good; however, they lack such power any longer.

The idiomatic expression

"the shin shall be laid bare" (yukshafu 'an saq-in)

connotes desperation. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the mouths shall be sealed on that Day; one shall be totally enwrapped in fear; eyes shall stare; and souls shall reach the throats.[13]

The blessed Verse 42 is saying:

"Remember the Day when the shin shall be laid bare out of fear and they shall be called to prostrate themselves, but they shall not be able to do likewise."

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the expression implies fear and gravity of the matter, since it was common practice amongst the Arabs to lay their shins bare against hard tasks and make their utmost effort to remove the impediments.

Everyone shall be called to prostrate themselves and show humbleness before God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection. Believers shall prostrate themselves, but sinners shall be unable to do likewise, since the vices deeply rooted in them in this world shall reveal themselves impeding them to prostrate themselves before Divine Pure Essence. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that Divine Light shall be unveiled on the Day of Resurrection.

Impressed by its Majesty and Glory, believers shall prostrate themselves, though hypocrites shall be unable to do likewise.[14]

The blessed Verse 43 is saying that then, their eyes will be cast down out of shame and regret and ignominy and disgrace will totally enwrap them. Having been tried at the Divine Tribunal, their eyes will be cast down and humility enwraps them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they used to be called to prostrate themselves, while they were healthy and good; however, they lack such power any longer and thus reflect their arrogance and disobedience on the Day of Resurrection.

How may they prostrate themselves on that Day? It is needless to say that people are called in this world to prostrate themselves through listening to ritual including congregation prayer calls. The Qur'anic Verses as well as the traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) bear witness to such call addressed to all mankind.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 44-45

فَذَرْنِي وَمَن يُكَذِّبُ بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۖ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ

44. Then, leave Me Alone with those who belie this. We shall lead them to torment in time from directions they know not.

45. And I will grant them a respite, since My Plans are well-measured and precise.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 44 says:

"Then, leave Me Alone with those who belie this Word, namely the Holy Qur'an, so that I chastise them."

In such strong Warning, the All-Invincible Allah is asking His Messenger (as) to leave Him Alone with such obdurate and disobedient deniers so that He afflicts them by the torments which they deserve.

We must bear in mind that such Words are uttered by the Omnipotent Lord. It is also worthy of note that such Warning entails consolation and support for the Noble Prophet (S) and the believers against the conspiracies of the enemies of the Islamic faith. The blessed Verse further adds that God Almighty shall lead them to torments before long while they shall be caught unaware.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that committing sins and leading comfortable lives serve as tokens of Divine torments to be inflicted in time.[15] Belying the Holy Qur'an entails grave torments, since God Almighty asks His Messenger to leave them to Him.

In the blessed Verse 47, God Almighty says that He will grant them a respite and He will not hastily inflict them with torments, since His Plans are well-measured and His torments are excruciating.

The expression

"I will grant them a respite" (umli lahum)

implies that God Almighty never hastily inflict wrong doers with torments, since one who makes haste is afraid of losing opportunities.

However, the Omnipotent Lord never loses opportunities to fulfill His Will. At any rate, it is a warning to all wrong doers and the disobedient against vanity caused by security and leading comfortable lives, but they have to expect Divine grave torments to be inflicted upon them at any time.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 46-47

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُم مِّن مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ

أَمْ عِندَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

46. Or is it that you ask them a wage so that they are heavily burdened with debt?

47. Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?

Resuming the investigations on the wrong doings of the polytheists and sinners, the blessed Verses in question pose two more questions:

"Or is it that you ask them a wage so that they are heavily burdened with debt? Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?"

In other words, if they refrain from listening to you under the pretext that acting likewise entails bearing heavy costs and they cannot afford them, they are lying since you, like other Prophets, expect no remuneration for imparting your Prophetic Call.

The Arabic word maghram, cognate with gharama, implies the losses incurred without having committed any wrong doing. The Arabic word mathqal, derived from th-q-l, implies heaviness and gravity. Thus, beliers are denied of further pretexts.

The blessed Verse 47 proceeds with the discussion by asking: "Or that they are aware of the unseen so that they can write it down and pass it onto others?" They claim that such secrets reveal that they are on a par with the believers.

It is a remote possibility to which disbelievers may take recourse. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an rejects their unfounded claims as per which they say that they have access to the invisible world through soothsayers and the like of them and they are thereby aware of the secrets of the unseen and they may write them down and pass them onto others.

Thus, they falsely claim that they are on a par with the believers or even superior to them. They apparently produced no such claims and the question is rather rhetorical. Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it is an allusion to the Preserved Tablet (lawh mahfuth) and predestination is herein intended by "writing," though such possibility is too remote, since they never claim to have predestination and the Preserved Tablet under their sway.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 48-50

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ

لَّوْلَا أَن تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ

فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

48. Thus, wait patiently for the Command of your Lord and be not like the Companion of the Fish [Jonah], when he made haste in invoking us to inflict his people with chastisement and was entangled with the chastisement of abandonment of priorities (tark ula) when he cried out unto Lord while he was in deep sorrow.

49. Had not a Grace from his Lord reached him, he would indeed have been cast out [of the stomach of the fish] while he was to be blamed.

50. But, his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous.

The obduracy and insensibility of the polytheists and the enemies of the Islamic faith imbued the Noble Prophet's (S) heart at times such that he was on the verge of cursing them. God Almighty consoles His Messenger and bids him to be patient and wait for Divine Command to pave the path for his and his companions' victory and the total defeat of his enemies.

He is asked to make no haste and be aware that the respites accorded to them are a kind of chastisement in time. Thus, the Muslims' victory is intended by Divine Command (hukm rabbika). Some Qur'an exegetes, however, maintain that the blessed Verse is bidding the Noble Prophet (S) to be patient and remain steadfast in imparting the Divine Message.

The blessed Verse forbids the Noble Prophet (S) to be like Jonah (as) who made haste in invoking God Almighty to inflict his disobedient people with torment and was thereby entangled with the chastisement for abandoning priorities calling onto God Almighty while he was in the stomach of the fish and his heart was imbued with sorrow.

The same invocation is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[16]:

"But he cried through the darkness, saying: 'there is no god, but You Alone."

Thus, Jonah (Dhu 'l-Nun) called unto his Lord from the shadows saying:

"Glorified are You! Truly, I have been of the wrong doers,"

thereby confessing to having abandoned the priorities and invoking God Almighty for forgiveness.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic past participial for makthum, derived from k-th-m, denotes throat and the Arabic kathm siqa' is used in the sense of tying the mouth of the leather bottle after its being filled.

The Arabic present participial form kathim is applied to those who suppress their intense anger and sorrow. The word kathm may also connote confinement, thus makthum may herein imply being imbued with anger and sorrow or being confined in the stomach of the fish, though the former sense seems to better fit the context.

The blessed Verse 49 is saying that had Divine Bounty and Grace not reached him, he would have been cast out of the stomach of the fish while he was worthy of being blamed. It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[17] that finally Jonah was cast on a desert, termed as 'ara', while his repentance had been accepted by God Almighty and he was granted Divine Grace and he was never blameworthy.

Thus, the blessed Verse 50 is saying that his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous and vested him once more with the obligation of guiding his people. He returned to his people and they all believed in him and were granted Divine Bounties for quite some time.

Surah al-Qalam - Verses 51-52

وَإِن يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

51. Those who disbelieve would almost cause your death with their eyes when they hear this Qur'an and they say: "He is insane!"

52. But this Qur'an is but a Reminder to all the worlds.

The closing Verses of the Chapter resumes the point mentioned in the opening of the Chapter regarding the false ascription of insanity to the Noble Prophet (S) by his enemies, saying the disbelievers would almost cause his death with their eyes upon hearing the Qur'anic Verses and falsely claim that he is insane.

The Arabic verbal form la-yuzliqunaka, derived from z-l-q ("tumble down, fall down") denotes that they would make you slip, namely cause your death. There are some Qur'an exegetes maintaining that upon hearing the Majestic Qur'anic Verses, the Noble Prophet's (S) enemies get into such rage and look daggers at him as if they would intend to make him slip and destroy him.

Some hold that the blessed Verse makes a reference to the evil eye in which some people believe and say that some eyes have certain secret powers through which they may cause ailment and death. Some also maintain that the expression connotes wrathful looks, though such light headed people are unaware of the truth and accord contradictory ascriptions to him.

The last blessed Verse of the Chapter is saying that this Qur'an is but an awakening and a reminder to the worlds whose teachings and warnings are enlightening, its illustrations are meaningful, its encouragements and glad tidings are promising to the spirit and all in all it awakens the neglectful and reminds them of their obligations.

How one may falsely claim that the Messenger of Allah is insane? The Arabic word dhikr denotes reminder as the Holy Qur'an serves as a Reminder to all. However, some Qur'an exegetes take it in the sense of sharaf ("eminence, dignity, glory, honor") holding that the Holy Qur'an is a source of eminence to all the world, though the former sense seems to better fit into the context.

O Lord! Protect us from the evil of evil doers and the enemies' deceits!

O Lord! Grant us steadfastness and forbearance in whose light we may obtain Your Satisfaction!

O Lord! Bestow upon us the capacity of making use of Your Bounties prior to their being substituted by deprivation consequent to ingratitude!

Amen! O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 387.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 330.
3. 96:1-5
4. Numerous traditions and narratives may be found in exegetic and historical sources concerning the moral nobilities of the Prophet (S), e.g. his forgiving, love, kindness, sacrifice, and fear of God Almighty treating which lies beyond our exegetic discussions.

However, mention may be made of a tradition narrated from Husayn ibn 'Ali (as) as saying that his father, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), had provided him with details on the Noble Prophet's (S) nobilities of character. Some of these nobilities will be mentioned hereunder. The Noble Prophet (S) was of good tempered and of a good disposition.

He always smiled. He was never rough, cruel, aggressive, and vile of speech. He was not a flatterer nor did he found faults with others. He never left anyone in despair but whoever came unto him returned with satisfaction. He neither entered into disputes nor was he prolix in speech nor did he reproach anyone. He was neither inquisitive nor did he uttered any words unless he had set his hopes on Divine Rewards.

His speech was so impressive that others were silent and they never uttered a word unless he became silent. People never entered into disputes before him. If a stranger who did not know him talked coarsely asking for something, he exercised patience and toleration and said unto his companions to meet the demands of the needy.

He never interrupted anyone unless he stopped talking.

(Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 83)

Without such moral nobilities and excellences, those backward pre-Islamic Arabs with their coarseness and inflexibility would never embrace the Islamic faith, but they would abandon him. It would be befitting to revive such Islamic moral nobilities and all Muslims be a beam of light reflecting the Noble Prophet's (S) moral excellences.

Numerous Islamic traditions have been narrated in this respect as to the Noble Prophet (S) and the obligations incumbent upon all Muslims, though for the sake of brevity, we content ourselves with making mention of a few traditions.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"It is my Prophetic Call to perfect moral excellences".

(Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 333)

Thus, one of the goals behind the Prophetic Call is to perfect moral nobilities.

According to a prophetic tradition, it is through moral excellences and the believers attain to such degree that they worship God Almighty at night and fasts during the day.

(Majma' al-Bayan, ibid.)

According to another Prophetic tradition, nothing shall be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection like good temper (ibid.).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that the most beloved of you before God Almighty are those who are of good temper and disposition, those who are humble, associate with others and people are also willing to associate with them and the most detested of you before God Almighty are the slanderers who separate the brethren and are inquisitive to find faults with the sinless (ibid.).

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that above all, fear of God Almighty and having a good disposition leads people to Paradise.

(Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 410)

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the best of the believers are those who excel in faith through possessing noble excellences.

(Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 8, p. 50)

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (as) as saying that the Noble Prophet said:

"it is incumbent upon you to improve your nobilities, since they lead you to Paradise and refrain from possessing an evil tempter, since it leads to the Fire."

(Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 108)

The traditions narrated in this respect clearly reflect that possessing a good temper is the key to Paradise, leading to Divine Satisfaction, serving as a token of the power of faith, and on a par with daily and nightly prayers and devotions. Traditions narrated in this respect abound in Islamic sources.

The author of Tafsir al-Mizan devotes approximately 27 pages (vol. 6, p. 183) to the Noble Prophet's (S) moral virtues, excellences, and nobilities as reflected in his biographical accounts. Further traditions and details in this respect are to be found in tradition sources.

5. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 334, where Tabarsi narrates the tradition on the authority of a transmission chain attested in the Sunni sources.
6. Fakhr Razi's exegetic work, vol. 30, p. 85; Maraghi's exegetic work, vol. 29, p. 31.
7. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 671.
8. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, Bab al-Hamir ("Chapter on Conscience"), tradition 1.
10. Abu Da'ud's Sunan; Tirmidhi's Sahih; Tafsir fi Hilal al-Qur'an.
11. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalay, vol. 5, p. 395, tradition 44.
12. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 37.
13. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 397.
15. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
16. 21:87
17. 37:49

Surah al-Haqqa, Chapter 69

(The Inevitable)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 52

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 52 Verses. The designation of the Chapter derives from the opening Verse denoting the inevitable. The blessed Chapter mainly treats of Resurrection, its attributes, and three designations of it, the Inevitable (al-haqqa), the Striking Hour (al-qari'a), and the Event (al-waqi'a), and those of the Hell, the Paradise, and the people of the Hell.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that one who recites Surah al-Haqqa, the burden of his sins shall be lessened.[1]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that it is incumbent upon Muslims to recite Surah al-Haqqa many a time, since its recitation in ritual obligatory and supererogatory prayers serves as a token of believing in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and whoever recites it, his faith shall be intact until he meets his Lord's Countenance,[2] provided that he acts upon his religious obligations.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

الْحَاقَّةُ

مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

1. The Inevitable [Day]!

2. What an Inevitable Day it is.

3. And what will make you know what the Inevitable is?

The Arabic word al-haqqa, cognate with haqq ("truth"), implies something which is inevitable. The word is a designation of the Day of Resurrection, since it is something truly Inevitable. The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word implies the Day of Resurrection, since it is indubitable inevitable.

The similar designation, the Event is also attested in Chapter 56 and the blessed Verse 16 of the Chapter in question. They all reflect the inevitability of that Great Day. The expression "the Inevitable" implies the Greatness of that Day. Likewise, it is used in common usage when it is said that so and so is such a man, namely the description of his humanity is indescribable.

The expression

"what an Inevitable Day it is"

lays further emphasis on the Greatness of the Events to happen on that Great Day, such that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is addressed by saying that he is unaware of the qualities of that Day. It is true, since the prisoners in this world like us are incapable of understanding the Events to occur on the Day of Resurrection in the same manner that understanding the affairs of this world in incomprehensible to the fetus in the mother's womb.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word al-haqqa implies the torments with which obdurate sinners and the vain disobedient are inflicted of a sudden. It is worthy of note, however, that the contextual meaning of following Verses stand in further harmony with the excruciating and destructive torments inflicted upon the peoples of 'Àd, Thamud, Lot, and Pharaoh.

In his exegetic work, 'Ali ibn Ibrahim also says that the word serves as a warning against sending down Divine torments like the one mentioned regarding the people of Pharaoh elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted against him, while an evil torment (haqq) encompassed Pharaoh's people."[4]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 4

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ

4. Thamud and 'Àd peoples denied Divine destructive torment!

The blessed Verse in question treats of the dire fates of the people who denied the Day of Resurrection and sending down Divine torment, saying that the peoples of Thamud and 'Àd belied Divine destructive torments.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 5

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ

5. As for Thamud, they were destroyed by an incontrollable torment!

the people of Thamud inhabited a mountainous region between Hijaz and Syria. Prophet Salih was Divinely appointed to call them onto obedience to God Almighty, though they never believed and rose against him and even asked him to send down the promised torment if he was true in his Prophetic Call.

Then, a destructive lightning was sent down on them. Their firmly built palaces and mansions trembled in a few moments and destroyed them all and their dead bodies were cast on the ground. It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an mentions an incontrollable torment as the cause behind their destruction.

Such incontrollable torment (al-taghiya) is also mentioned as

"earthquake" (rajfa)

in 7:78,

"lightning" (sa'iqa)

in 41:13, and

"loud cry" (sayha)

in 11:67 which all imply the same meaning, since lightning is accompanied by loud noises and makes the stricken place tremble and it is an uncontrollable torment.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verse 6

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ

6. And as for 'Àd, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale!

The blessed Verse proceeds with the dire fate of the people of 'Àd who inhabited the land of Ahqaf in the Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula. They were tall of stature and robust and had verdant lands and fertile gardens. Their Prophet was Hud (as).

They were so disobedient that God Almighty sent them an excruciating torment, as mentioned in these blessed Verses, and caused their perdition.

The blessed Verse is saying:

"And as for 'Àd, they were destroyed by a furious, violent, and venomous gale."

The Arabic word sarsar is applied to cold, harsh, and venomous gales. The three meanings are mentioned by Qur'an exegetes and the word may imply their entirety. The Arabic feminine adjectival form 'atiya, deriving from '-t-w ("to be raging"), denotes raging (of storms and gales) and uncontrollable, disobedient to the norms of regular winds and breezes rather than disobedient to God Almighty.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 7-8

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَىٰ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

فَهَلْ تَرَىٰ لَهُم مِّن بَاقِيَةٍ

7. Which Allah imposed the [raging gale] on them for seven nights and eight days in succession and had you been there you would have seen those men lying overthrown and dead, as if they were hollow trunks of date palms!

8. Do you see anyone of them remaining?

These blessed Verses make another depiction of the destructive gale, saying that God Almighty made it predominant over such people for seven nights and eight days consecutively. The Arabic adverb of manner husuman denotes destroying the remnants of something and at times it connotes cauterizing the wound.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse 7 reflects that the raging gale shattered eradicated the prosperous habitation of such great people in seven nights and eight days consecutively in the manner of a rotten and hollow trunk of a palm tree.

The similitude is of interest since it implies their high stature as well as their being eradicated and the hollowness and vulnerability against Divine torments, such that the harsh gales could easily move them. The Arabic adjectival form khawiya originally denotes empty and it is employed in the sense of hungry people, the stars devoid of rain (according to pre-Islamic Arabs), and empty walnuts.

The blessed Verse 8 poses a question:

"Do you see anyone of them remaining?"

There is no trace of the people of 'Àd and the ruins of their prosperous habitations, majestic edifices, and fertile farms.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 9-10

وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَن قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً

9. And Pharaoh and those before him and the inhabitants of the shattered cities [of the people of Lot] who had committed grave sins.

10. And they disobeyed their Lord's Messenger, so He inflicted them with a strong chastisement.

Following a reference made to the dire fate of the peoples of 'Àd and Thamud, the blessed Verses in question make mention of other peoples like those of Pharaoh, Lot so that the awakened may take lessons of them, saying that Pharaoh and those before them and the inhabitants of the shattered habitations (the people of Lot) had committed grave sins.

The Arabic word khati'a denotes mistake and error and it herein connotes different sins like polytheism, disbelief, wrong doing, and corruption. The plural nominal form mu'tafikat (sg. mu'tafika) implies revolution and undergoing drastic changes and it herein alludes to the habitations of the people of Lot which were shattered owing to a severe earthquake.

The phrase

"before him" (min qablihi)

alludes to the peoples antedating Pharaoh, like that of Shu'ayb and tyrants like Nimrod (Namrud).

The blessed Verse 10 is saying that they rose against their Lord's Messenger (as) as a consequence of which God Almighty inflicted them with a severe torment. The people of Pharaoh rose against Prophet Moses (as) and Aaron.

The inhabitants of Sodom rose against Prophet Lot (as). Likewise, other peoples disobeyed their Prophets (as) and each of them were inflicted with a different kind of severe torment: the people of Pharaoh were drowned in the Nile which was the source of life, blessing, and prosperity in their land; the people of Lot with a strong earthquake followed by a downpour of rocks leading to their perdition.

The Arabic word rabiya, cognate with riba' ("usury money, interest"), denotes increase and surplus and it herein connotes a very strong and severe torment.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 11-12

إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيَهَا أُذُنٌ وَاعِيَةٌ

11. When the water rose beyond its limits, We carried you on the floating Ark.

12. That We might make it an admonition for you and that it might be retained by the retaining ears.

The blessed Verses allude to the fate of the people of Noah (as) and their excruciating torment, saying:

"When the water overflew its banks, we embarked you on the Ark."

The water burst such that leaden clouds enwrapped the sky and heavy showers of rain were sent such that torrents were seemingly pouring down from the sky. Fountains appeared on the earth as well. Thus, everything was drowned, the gardens, farms, palaces, and the mansions of the disobedient people. The believers were only saved by embarking upon the Ark with Prophet Noah (as).

The verbal form

hamalnakum ("we carried you")

alludes to our ancestors, since had they not been saved, we would not have come into being.

The blessed Verse 12 makes a reference to the main goal behind such chastisements, saying:

"That We might make it an admonition for you and that it might be retained by the retaining ears."

In other words, God Almighty never willed to take vengeance, but the goal behind their being inflicted with torments is to lead people on the path of spiritual growth such that they tread the path of development and perfection and attainment to union with the desired object.

The Arabic verbal form

ta'iyaha ("retain it")

derives from w-'-a originally denoting preserving something in the heart, but owing to semantic generalization, any vessel was termed as wa'a, since it contains something. The verbal form is herein used in the sense of the ears listening to the truths and preserving them. In other words, one may at times hears something undesirable by one ear and the undesirable utterance instantly goes out of the other.

The idiomatic expression "it goes into one ear and out the other" implies the same sense in colloquial expressions. However, one may at times reflect upon something and preserve it in his heart and make use of it as the lamp shedding light on his life. The latter sense is intended herein.

Finally, it is narrated in many authoritative tradition and exegetic sources from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying that he invoked God Almighty to make 'Ali's (as) ears listen to the truths and preserve them.

Imam 'Ali (as) is reported as saying:

"Thereafter I never consigned to oblivion whatever I heard from Allah's Messenger (S), but I remembered his words at all times."[5]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 13-15

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ
وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً
فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ

13. Then, as soon as the Trumpet shall be blown with one blowing.

14. And the earth and the mountains shall be removed and crushed with a single crushing.

15. Then, on that Day shall the Event befall.

Resuming the opening blessed Verses treating of the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verses in question discuss the evens of such great Resurrection by moving and awakening expressions familiarizing man with the greatness of the events to befall in future.

The blessed Verse 13 is saying that

"as soon as the Trumpet shall be blown with one blowing."

As mentioned above, it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that the end of this world and the beginning of the world to come shall be of a sudden accompanied by a very loud sound which is intended by

nafkha sur ("blowing of Trumpet"),

deriving from blowing in the trumpet to marshal the army in alertness and dispatching them to their resting place by two different sounds: one for their rest and sleep and the other to be marshaled whereby they move in lines toward their garrisons and elsewhere.

The blessed Verse reflects that the end of this world and the beginning of the one to come against Divine Omnipotence is as easy as blowing in a trumpet and all the inhabitants of the heaven and the earth die of a sudden through one single Command and they will be raised and prepared to receive the Rewards and Chastisements of based on Record of deeds through another Command.

The qualities of the Trumpet, the manner of blowing in it, the times of blowing, and the interval between them were copiously treated above under 39:68, but it would solely suffice herein to make mention that the Trumpet shall be blown into twice: one for death and the other for being raised.

Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous concerning the reference herein to the former or the latter, since the some of the following blessed Verses stand in further conformity with the former and some with the latter. Generally speaking, these blessed Verses stand in further conformity with the former, i.e. blowing into the Trumpet to put an end to this world.

The blessed Verse 14 is saying that

"when the earth and the mountains shall be removed and crushed with a single crushing."

The Arabic word dakk denotes smooth land, but since leveling it requires crushing, it connotes severe crushing. Nonetheless, according to some lexicographical sources, the Arabic word literally denotes crushing and demolishing and since they entail leveling, the word connotes such sense.

At any rate, the word herein implies severe crushing of the mountains and uneven pieces of land such that they are demolished and leveled instantly.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying that

"on that Day, a great event shall befall in the world and Resurrection shall be actualized.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 16-17

وَانشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ

وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا ۚ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ

16. And the heavens shall be rent asunder, for that Day it shall be frail and shall collapse.

17. And the angels shall be on the sides of the heaven [and shall be prepared for assignments], and eight angels shall, on that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them.

The blessed Verse 16 is saying that not only the mountains and the earth shall be shattered, but the heavens shall be rent asunder and be frail. Such awe inspiring even shall affect celestial spheres and bodies, since they shall be shattered, scattered, and rent asunder in spite of their previous firmness.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[6]:

"Then, when the heaven shall be rent asunder and it shall be rosy like molten oil."

In other words, the earth and the heaven shall be destroyed and instead another world, far better, exalted, and perfect, shall be established on the ruins.

The blessed Verse 17 says:

"And the angels shall be on the sides of the heaven."

The Arabic nominal form arja' is the plural form of raja' denoting "side." The singular nominal form malak ("angel") connotes plurality, as if on that Day, the angels shall be prepared like agents surrounding a field to receive orders to fulfill some assignment. They seemingly stand in lines surrounding the heavens expecting the Commands of the Truth.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that

"eight angels shall, on that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them."

Such bearers of the Divine Throne are not explicitly specified to be angels or otherwise, but the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that they are angels, though it is not specified whether they are eight angels or eight small or large groups of them.

According to Islamic traditions, the bearers of the Divine Throne are four angels or four groups of them, but the number shall be twofold on the Day of Resurrection. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that now they are four in number, though they shall be reinforced by a twofold increase thus making eight of them.[7]

What is the Divine Throne and who are these angels?

The Arabic word

'arsh ("throne")

does not herein denote a royal and hence material throne, but as it was mentioned above on the explanation of the word, it connotes the constituents of the world of existence as the Throne of Divine Sovereignty whose affairs are being fulfilled by the angels.

It would be of interest to make mention of a tradition as per which the eight bearers of Divine Throne on the Day of Resurrection will be four angels from the first ones and four from the last ones. The first four consist of Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as) and the last ones are Muhammad (S), 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as).[8]

The expression may reflect their exalted rank of intercession with God Almighty for the first and the last time, though interceding with God Almighty shall be on the behalf of those deserving the same; however, such interpretation reflects the semantically broad scope of the word

"Throne."

Now, if the eight bearers of the Divine Throne be eight groups, it may be the case that groups of angels and those of the Prophets and Friends of God Almighty be vested to fulfill the task. Thus, the affairs of the Day of Resurrection shall be vested with the angels and the Prophets, though they shall all rest on Divine Command.

It is needless to say, however, that the events to befall on the Day of Resurrection may not be precisely known to us let alone the affairs of the bearers of the Divine Throne on that Day to us, the inhabitants of this limited and shadowy world. It would suffice to say that we merely behold the reflections from afar in the light of Divine Signs and Verses, though the Truth about such affairs shall be perceived on that Day.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 18-24

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَاؤُمُ اقْرَءُوا كِتَابِيَهْ

إِنِّي ظَنَنتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ

قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ

18. That Day shall everyone be brought to Divine Threshold, not a secret of you shall be veiled.

19. Then, as for him who shall carry his Record in his right hand shall say [happily and proudly]: "Here! Read my Record!

20. Certainly, I did believe that there shall be the Resurrection Day and I shall meet my Record of Deeds!"

21. So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing.

22. In a lofty Paradise,

23. The fruits in bunches whereof shall near at hand.

24. Eat and drink at ease for the deeds you did in days past!

It was mentioned above under the preceding blessed Verses that

"blowing into the Trumpet"

shall occur twice.

Upon the first blowing, all animate entities shall die and the world of existence shall perish; though it shall be upon the second that a new world shall be created and mankind and angels shall be revived.

As mentioned above, the opening of the blessed Verses reflect the first blowing where as the close thereof is indicative of the second. Proceeding with the same issue, the blessed Verses in question open by saying that on

that Day, you shall be all brought before God Almighty and none of our deeds shall be concealed.

The passive verbal form

tu'radhun ("you shall be presented")

derives from '-r-dh denoting present or show something in commercial transactions or otherwise.

It is worthy of note that men and other creatures are permanently before Divine Threshold, though it shall be reflected with further clarity on the Day of Resurrection. For instance, Divine Sovereignty over the world of existence is everlasting, though such Sovereignty shall be in utmost clarity on that Day.

The clause

"not a secret of you shall be veiled"

may reflect that the secrets shall be revealed on that Day, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[9]:

"The Day when all the secrets shall be revealed,"

thus disclosing all secret deeds, characters, and intentions.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that such event shall be even far greater than the shattering of the mountains and rending asunder of celestial spheres and bodies, since it shall be the Day of utter disgrace for the evil doers and unrivaled honor and glory for the believers, when men shall appear with disclosed secrets and intentions and nothing shall be concealed from anyone on that Day. It may so make a reference to Divine Omniscience on that Day. God Almighty knows best.

Thus, the blessed Verse 19 says:

"Then, as for him who shall carry his Record in his right hand shall say [happily and proudly]: "Here! Read my Record!"

He is seemingly quite happy that he is granted innumerable Bounties and Guidance.

He is totally grateful and utters

"Praise be to Allah."

Summarizing his greatest glory, in the blessed Verse 20 he says:

"Certainly, I did believe that there shall be the Resurrection Day and I shall meet my Record of Deeds!"

The Arabic past verbal form

thanantu ("I did certainly believe")

reflects that such person is saying that he has been rewarded Divine Bounties for his certitude regarding the Day of Resurrection.

It is true that belief in reckoning of the deeds on the Day of Resurrection imbues man with the spirit of fearing God Almighty and feeling the responsibility vested with him. It is the most significant factor in man's spiritual growth.

Some of these Divine Rewards are enumerated in the following blessed Verse 21:

"So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing."

Everything is included in the blessed Verse, though further clarification is to be found in the blessed Verse 22:

"In a lofty Paradise…"

so exalted that it is unimaginable, unseen, and unheard.

The blessed Verse 23 says:

"The fruits in bunches whereof shall near at hand,"

by which it is intended to say that there shall be no toil in picking the fruits, nor shall be any impediment to approaching the fruitful trees. All Divine Bounties shall be accessible to the people of Paradise. The Arabic word qutuf denotes picked fruit.

The blessed Verse 24 includes an affectionate address to the people of Paradise by God Almighty, saying:

"Eat and drink at ease for the deeds you did in days past!"

The point is that all these great Divine Bounties are well-measured bestowed upon people for their deeds done in this world and sent in advance. It is noteworthy of such insignificant deeds entail such Rewards in the light of Divine Graciousness and Mercy.

It is reflected in numerous traditions that the blessed Verse 19 concerns Imam 'Ali or him and his followers, though it is one of the obvious implications of the blessed Verse whose contextual meaning may not be restricted in semantic scope.

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 25-29

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيَهْ

وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ

يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ الْقَاضِيَةَ

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهْ

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهْ

25. But as for him who shall be given his Record in his left hand, he shall say: "I wish that I had not been given my Record!

26. And that I had never known how my Account is!

27. "Would that it had been my end!

28. "My wealth has not availed me;

29. "My power has gone from me!"

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the people of the right hand (ashab yamin) whose record of deeds shall be given to their right hands proudly calling the people on the Day of Resurrection, requesting them to read their records, and finding their abode in the everlasting Paradise. Nonetheless, the blessed Verses in question treat of their opposites, i.e. the people of the left hand. A comparison between the two groups may shed further light on their situations.

The blessed Verse 25 is saying that one whose record of deeds will be given in his left hand will say:

"I wish I had never been given my record of deeds!"

According to the following blessed Verse, he will say:

"I wish I had never been aware of my reckoning."

It is in the blessed Verse 27 that he says:

"Would that it had been my end!"

He intends to say that thus he could put an end to his dire fate. Such person, upon witnessing that all his past vices are disclosed, cries regretfully on that Day of Disclosure (yawm al-buruz), the Day of Uncovering (yawm al-thuhur) and wishes that he could totally sever his ties with his vicious past. He wishes that God Almighty would put an end to his miserable life and thereby deliver him from such ignominious fate.

The same theme is also reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10]:

"We have warned you against an imminent torment; the Day when man shall see that [the record of his deeds] which his hands have sent forth and the disbeliever shall say: "Woe unto me! Would that I were dust [and never a man]!"

According to the blessed Verses 28 and 29, he will say:

"[Not only] has my wealth not availed me, but also my power has gone from me!"

In short, neither wealth nor high positions shall be of any avail on that Day, since such miserable creatures shall stand with utmost ignominy and disgrace before Divine Just Tribunal. There shall be no source of aspiration, nor any means of deliverance from such dire fate.

The Arabic noun sultan used in the blessed Verse 29 is taken by some Qur'an exegetes in the sense of an argument leading to victory, namely the people of the left hand shall not be able to produce an argument to justify their past deeds before Divine Threshold.

Some exegetes also maintain that sovereignty and rule are not intended by sultan herein, since all the people who set foot in Hell were not rulers and sultans, but the word is indicative of checking one's self and having control over one's life. At any rate, the blessed Verses in question serve as lessons for those relying on wealth and positions despite having been entangled with vanity, neglect, and sins.

O Lord, do not chastise us for our deeds!

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 30-37

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ

ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ

وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ

لَّا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ

30. [It shall be said:] "Seize him and fetter him;

31. Then, throw him into Hell.

32. "Then, fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!"

33. He used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great,

34. And urged not people to feed the poor.

35. So no intimate friend has he here on this Day to protect him,

36. Nor any food except pus and blood.

37. None shall eat the food except the sinners.

Resuming the treatment of the state of the people of left hand who receive their record of deeds in their left hand and moan and wish they had been dead, the blessed Verses in question make a reference to some of their torments on the Day of Resurrection. According to the blessed Verse 30, the angels of torment are commanded to seize and fetter him.

The Arabic verbal form

ghuluhu ("fetter him")

derives from gh-l-l ("fetter, shackle"). The angels are ordered in the following blessed Verse to throw him into hellfire.

The blessed Verse 32 says:

"Then, fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!"

The Arabic nominal for silsila denoting chain is cognate with tasalsul denotes trembling and shivering, since chains tremble and move.

The expression

"seventy cubits"

may connote multiplicity and multitude, since the number seventy oftentimes implies large quantity and massive amount. It may have been used in its literal sense. At any rate, on that Day, sinners shall be shackled by such long chains thereby enwrapping them.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that such long chains are not for individual sinners but each group will be fettered by one chain. Such chastisement following a reference to shackles and fetters stands in further conformity with the preceding blessed Verses.

The Arabic word dhira' denotes the length of finger tips to the elbow which equals approximately half a meter. Such natural unite of measurement was used by Arabs.

Nonetheless, some exegetes hold that such dhira' is different from commonly used units, such that the former is applied to far lengthier units and all the people of the Hell shall be fettered by the same. It is worthy of note, once again, that the affairs of the Day of Resurrection may not be fully depicted by us, the inhabitants of this world, though they are dimly depicted by Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

The Arabic adverbial form thumma herein reflects that following being thrown into Hell, the sinners shall be entangled with a chain measuring seventy cubits as another chastisement for them whose causes are enumerated in the following two blessed Verses, namely 33 and 34, saying:

"He used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great, and urged not people to feed the poor."

Despite being called by Messengers to believe in Allah, they belied them and thereby had severed their ties with their Maker.

The blessed Verse 34 is saying that they did not urge people to feed the needy and thus they had severed their ties with creatures. Thus, the main cause of their misery lies in the severance of ties with the Creator and the Creation.

The expression explicitly reflects that the majority of religious obligations, devotions, and injunctions may be summarized in the twain, thereby indicating the extraordinary significance of feeding the poor and the dependence of such great and humane act upon faith. In this vein, it is said that disbelief in the worst of beliefs and niggardliness is the worst of vices.

It is worthy of note that it is said:

"he did not urge others to feed"

rather than he did not feed, reflecting that firstly, feeding one in need may never solve the problems of the needy, but others are supposed to be urged to act likewise such that it turns into a customary practice to feed the poor and those in need; secondly, one may not afford to feed the needy but he may be capable of urging others to act accordingly; thirdly, the niggardly are not only unwilling to offer others some of their possessions, but they are uninterested in other people's liberality and generosity.

The blessed Verses 35 and 36 say:

"So no intimate friend has he here on this Day to protect him, nor any food except pus and blood."

It is noteworthy that their deeds and chastisements stand in total conformity. It is owing to severing their ties with their Maker that they may not find any intimate friends there. Likewise, they are fed but pus and blood, since they refrained from feeding the needy in this world but they ate the most delicious food themselves.

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word ghislin denotes the water by which the disbelievers wash their bodies in Hell, but it is commonly accepted that the word is applied to the pus and blood oozing from the bodies of the people of Hell and Raghib might have intended the same.

The word

ta'am ("food")

stands in conformity with the same sense.

The blessed Verse 37 says:

"None shall eat the food except the sinners."

Some exegetes maintain that the Arabic word khati' is applied to one who intentionally commits vices, but mukhatti' is one who intentionally or inadvertently commits evil deeds. Thus, such food served in Hell is for those who intentionally disobey God Almighty and tread the path of polytheism, disbelief and niggardliness.

In this vein, Sa'sa'a ibn Suhan, a companion of Imam 'Ali (as), is reported as saying:

"An Arab came unto 'Ali (as) inquiring about the meaning of the blessed Verse

"None shall eat the food except the sinners,"

though instead of

khati'un ("sinners"),

he said khatun ("walker, wayfarer").

Thus, he inquired:

"All people walk, but shall they be served the same food by Allah?"

The Noble Imam (as) replied smilingly:

"O Arab! The accurate form is khati'un ("sinners").

The Arab asked:

"You are true. O Commander of the Faithful! Allah never chastises those who have not sinned."

The Noble Imam turned toward Abu al-Aswad who was a man of letters and said:

"Non-Arabs have converted to the Islamic faith. Take measures so that they may improve their knowledge of Arabic. Thus, Abu al-Aswad introduced nominative, accusative, and genitive markers (raf', nasb, jarr).[11]

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 38-43

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ

وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

38. So, I swear by whatever you see,

39. And by whatever you see not,

40. That this Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger.

41. It is not the word of a poet. Little is that you believe!

42. Nor is it the word of a soothsayer. Little is that you remember!

43. But this is the word sent down by the Lord of the worlds.

Resuming the discussions mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses regarding Resurrection and the fates of the believers and disbelievers, the blessed Verses in question clearly treat of the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Call, so that the discussions on Prophetic Call and Resurrection complement each other.

The blessed Verses 38 and 39 say:

"I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you see not."

It is commonly held that the Arabic particle la in such instances are non-lexical and emphatic. Instances of swearing by Allah's Name and otherwise abound in the Holy Qur'an.

The clauses

"what you see and what you see not"

are of a broad semantic scope embracing whatever is seen or not seen by mankind. In other words, it encompasses all the world of "intuitive perception" and the "unseen."

Qur'an exegetes have suggested other possibilities regarding the exegesis of the twain blessed Verses, e.g.

"what you see"

and

"what you see not"

make references to the world of creation and the Creator, outward and inward Bounties, mankind and angels, bodies and spirits, or this world and the Hereafter. However, as it was mentioned above, the broad semantic range of the twain impedes the restriction of its contextual meaning.

Therefore, the visible and the invisible are embraced by the oath, though its reference to God Almighty is rather a remote possibility, since juxtaposition of the Creator and the creation would rather be unbefitting, particularly owing to the fact that the Arabic particle ma is applied to insensible beings.

It is worthy of note, however, that the expression clearly reflects that many a thing may not be seen by the outward eyes. Modern science supports the argument as per which intelligible constitute a limited number of entities and what lies beyond the horizon of perception, e.g. colors, sounds, tastes, and waves, exceed further in terms of number.

Astronomers maintain that approximately five thousand celestial bodies are visible, though the invisible bodies exceed billions in number. The sound waves audible to man are limited, but there are thousands of sound waves inaudible to mankind. The colors perceptible to us are seven in number, though it is a proven fact that innumerable color spectra of ultraviolet and infrared imperceptible to human eyes.

Likewise, the world is imbued with innumerable microscopic organisms thousands of which are contained in a drop of water. It would be quite unfortunate to be confined in the perceptible world unaware of or belying what lies beyond perception. The world of spirits, proven by rational and even experiential proofs, constitutes an expanse far greater than our physical world. Thus, how may one confine himself within the perceptible world?

The blessed Verse 40 treats of the apodosis of such great and unique oath, saying that this Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger (S). The Arabic word rasul herein indubitably connotes the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) rather than Gabriel, since the following blessed Verse in clearly indicative of such implication.

We know that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God Almighty, but the Noble Prophet (S) is the one who imparted it, hence the emphasis laid on his Prophetic Call. Thus, the Divine Message is conveyed by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

The blessed Verse 41 is saying that this Qur'an is not the word of a poet, though little is that you believe.

The next blessed Verse says:

"Nor is it the word of a soothsayer. Little is that you remember!"

These two blessed Verses refute the unfounded ascriptions to the Noble Prophet (S) by the polytheists and opponents in alleging that he is a poet and the Qur'anic Verses are poetry. They also claimed at times that he was a soothsayer intending to say that he was in contact with jinn and devils to whom they revealed the secrets of the unseen by words embellished by rhythm and rhyme.

By such unfounded claims they meant that the Qur'an contained intelligence regarding the unseen and it was adorned with rhythmical sentences. They were unaware of the fact that the words of the Noble

Prophet (S) and those of soothsayers and poets were essentially different in nature.

It is also noteworthy that the clauses

"Little is that you believe!"

and

"Little is that you remember!"

herein ensure those who witness Divine Revelation through its clear tokens but call it poetry and poetry and fail to believe in it.

The blessed Verse 43 lays particular emphasis on the same by saying that this Qur'an is revealed by the Lord of the worlds, hence it is neither poetry, nor soothsaying, nor the product of the Noble Prophet's (S) thought, nor the word of Gabriel, but it is Divine Revelation sent down unto the pure heart of the Noble Prophet (S).

There are eleven Qur'anic attestations of the same theme with slight variations. It is also worthy of note that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in time, since the Arabic word tanzil implies the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in time in its entirety within a period of twenty three years following its Revelation in its entirety unto the Noble Prophet's (S) heart on the night of Ordainment (qadr) wherewith Divine Injunctions were imparted to the people through the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 44-47

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ

لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ

ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ

فَمَا مِنكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ

44. And if he had forged a false saying concerning Us,

45. We would have certainly seized him,

46. And We would have certainly cut off his artery,

47. And none of you could have withheld Us from [chastising] him nor could he render him support.

The Arabic verbal form

taqawwala ("he had forged a saying")

connotes false ascription of words. Watin the life artery and if it is severed, man will die instantly.

"Seizing by the right hand"

connotes power, since the right hand is stronger than the left hand. The point raised herein is that when God Almighty mentions such Words about His Messenger, others are supposed to take lessons and stand in awe as to their words and deeds.

At any rate, resuming the discussions on the Holy Qur'an, the four blessed Verses in question (44-47) produce original evidence as to the originality of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation, saying that had the Noble Prophet (S) had forged false sayings concerning God Almighty, He would have certainly seized him forcefully severing his life artery and no

human being would have been able to impede the same nor could have anyone render him aid.

The Arabic nominal form hajizin is the plural for of hajiz ("impediment, obstacle").

Surah al-Haqqa - Verses 48-52

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنكُم مُّكَذِّبِينَ

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

48. And this is a Reminder for the God fearing.

49. And We know that there are some amongst you that belie it,

50. And it shall entail regret for the disbelievers.

51. And it is an absolute truth with certitude.

52. Thus, glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most Great.

The blessed Verse 48 further emphasizes that the Holy Qur'an is certainly some admonition to the God fearing, since they are prepared to be absolved of their sins and tread the path of Truth, since they seek the Truth. However, those who have not attained to such degree of fearing God Almighty may never avail themselves of Qur'anic teachings. The profound and extraordinary impression engendered by the Holy Qur'an serves as further evidence of its veracity.

The blessed Verse 49 is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware that some people belie Divine Revelation, though such obdurate denial may never affect its veracity, since the God fearing and seekers of Truth are reminded by it and notice the reflection of Divine Signs in it and thereby tread steadfastly on the Path of Allah.

Thus, in the same manner that availing oneself of some brilliant light requires opening one's eyes, one is supposed to open up his heart in order to avail oneself of the Light of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 50 is saying that the Holy Qur'an shall lead to the disbelievers' regret. They belie it today, but tomorrow, on the Day of Emergence or Day of Disclosure, which is the Day of Regret, they shall comprehend that they have lost such great Bounty owing to their obduracy and have thereby caused so many excruciating torments for themselves. They shall compare the exalted positions of the believers and their disgrace and shall regret, biting their own hands in a rage.

The same motive is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12]:

"And remember the Day when the wrong doer shall bite at his hands, saying: 'Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger.'"

Impeding others from falsely imagining that entertaining doubts or belying of the opponents have a touch of certainty on their side, the blessed Verse 51 says:

"And it is an absolute truth with certitude."

The Arabic term

haqq al-yaqin (“absolute truth”)

is regarded by some Qur’an exegetes as a genitive construction denoting reference to oneself, since the Truth is the essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin) and vice versa; as it is said masjid al-jami‘ (“mosque of congregation”) and yawm al-khamis (“the fifth day, i.e. Thursday”) which are instances of appositive genitive (idhafa bayaniyya).

However, it would be further befitting the contextual meaning to say that it is an instance of the relation between the qualified and the qualifier. In other words, the Holy Qur’an is Absolute Certitude. Certitude consists of different degrees, at times engendered by rational arguments, an instance of which is some smoke observed from afar engendering the certitude as to the existence of fire, despite not having seen the fire per se.

This is termed knowledge by certitude (‘ilm al-yaqin). We may at times approach the fire and perceive its flames through our visual sense and thereby reinforce our certitude, which is termed the essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin).

We may even approach further and touch the flames and thereby attain to a higher degree of certitude, termed haqq al-yaqin (“absolute truth”). Now, the blessed Verse in question is saying that the Holy Qur’an is of the last type of certitude, i.e. absolute truth, though it is denied by those blind in their hearts.

The blessed Verse 52 which is the closing Verse of the Chapter is saying that thus, glorify your Lord the Greatest and glorify him of any defect or flaw. It is worthy of note that the Holy Qur’an is depicted by four Attributes: it is sent down by the Lord of the Words; it is a Reminder for the God fearing; it leads disbelievers to regret their lost opportunities; and it is the absolute Truth. They address everybody, the God fearing, the disbelievers, and those close to God Almighty respectively.

Now, let us turn toward a few traditions concerning the greatness and significance of glorification.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

“One of the most loved words before God Almighty is to say: 'Praise be to my Lord Who is Glorified.”[13]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

“One who glorifies God Almighty thirty times a times, He will remove seventy kinds of afflictions from him the least of which is poverty.[14]

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) is reported as saying:

“Saying 'Glorified is Allah' fills half of the scale of deeds, saying 'Praise be to Allah' brims the scale of deeds, and saying 'Allah is the Greatest' fills the distance between the heaven and the earth.”[15]

It is narrated from Allah’s Messenger (S) as saying:

“One who utters 'Glorified is the Great Allah and Praised is He' makes a palm tree grow for him in Paradise.”[16]

It is also narrated from Allah’s Messenger (S) on the authority of ‘À’isha that Allah’s Messenger (S), before his demise, repeatedly uttered:

“O Lord! Glorified are You! I praise You and ask You for forgiveness.”[17]

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, under the blessed Chapter in question.
2. Ibid.
3. 40:45
4. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s exegetic work, vol. 2, p. 383.
5. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6743; Abu al-Futuh Razi’s exegetic work as well as others, e.g. Majma‘ al-Bayan, Ruh al-Bayan, Ruh al-Ma‘ani, and al-Mizan, under the blessed Verses in question. The tradition is quoted by Ibn Maghazili Shafi‘i.

(Islamiyya edition, p. 265)

In this vein, 16 traditions are to be found in Ghayat al-Maram on the authority of Sunni and Shi‘i transmitters. In his Tafsir al-Burhan, Muhaddith Bahrani, on the authority of Muhammad ibn ‘Abbas, reports that 30 traditions have been narrated in this vein through Sunni and Shi‘i transmission sources.

It is the great merit of the great leader of the Islamic faith, Imam ‘Ali (as), that he was the treasury of the Noble Prophet’s (S) secrets and the inheritor of his knowledge in its entirety.

Consequently, following the sad demise of Allah’s Messenger (S), his proponents and opponents found in him a safe haven upon encountering scholarly issues in the Muslim community and asked him to provide them with solutions whose accounts are reported in details in historical sources.

6. 55:37
7. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s exegetic work, vol. 2, p. 384.
8. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 346.
9. 86:9
10. 78:40
11. Jalal al-Din Suyuti, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 263.
12. 25:27
13. Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 1, p. 466.
14. Saduq’s Amali, p. 55.
15. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p. 309.
16. Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 1, p. 459.
17. Muslim’s Sahih, vol. 1, p. 351.

Surah al-Ma‘arij, Chapter 70

(The Places of Ascent)

Section (juz’) 29

Number of Verses: 44

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter has forty-four Verses and is regarded as one of those revealed in Mecca, though some of the Verses were revealed in Medina. The designation of the Chapter, connoting the angels’ places of ascent, derives from the third Verse. Similar to other Meccan Chapters, it mainly treats of Resurrection and warning to the polytheists and opponents.

It also deals with the states of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection and the characteristics of the peoples of Paradise and Hell. The opening Verses of the Chapter concerns sending down torments in this world whereby one of the deniers of Imam ‘Ali’s (as) guardianship (wilaya) was afflicted and lost his life whose detailed account will be mentioned under the first Verse.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites the Sura Sa’ala Sa’il [namely, the chapter in question], God Almighty will grant him the Rewards of those who keep their covenants as well as those who are attentive toward the establishment of their ritual prayers.[1]

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites the Chapter constantly, he shall not be investigated on the Day of Resurrection regarding his sins, but he shall abide in Paradise beside Muhammad (S).[2] The bestowal of such Rewards is dependent on fulfilling one’s religious obligations.

Surah al-Ma’arij - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ

مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ

1. A questioner asked for befalling a torment which befell.

2. They are in store for disbelievers and none may avert them

3. They are from Allah, the Lord whose angels ascent to the heavens.

The late ‘Allama Amini (rh), in his invaluable work titled al-Ghadir, enumerates thirty eminent Qur’an exegetes and traditionists flourishing in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries who maintain that the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse 1 concerns a man who addressed the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"You ordered us to fulfill our obligations regarding pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj), fasting (sawm), and paying the alms tax (zakat) on the day of Ghadir to which we consented, but you are not content yet as you appointed your cousin to rule over us."

Then, he added:

"O Lord! If such appointment is true, send down rocks from the heaven [such that we be destroyed and do not witness such day].

A rock was sent down and he killed him.

Then the blessed Verse

'A questioner asked for befalling a torment which befell'

was revealed."[3]

It would be of significance to make mention of some individual and seemingly insignificant events so that others may take lessons. Likewise, it was an individual disobedience which led to Divine Wrath and his affliction and perdition.

The Qur'anic Verse makes a reference to the incident so that mankind may take lessons and be aware that partial, obdurate, and inappropriate requests may entail afflictions. It would be of interest to mention that the inquirer in question is maintained by some Qur'an exegetes to be Nu'man ibn Harith or Nadhr ibn Harith.

The blessed Verse 2 is saying that such torment is in store for the disbelievers and non one may impede it. The blessed Verse 3 makes a reference to the Source of such torment, saying that the torment was inflicted by Allah, the Lord of the heavens where angels ascend.

The Arabic word ma'arij is the plural form of ma'arij denoting place of ascent which herein connotes the heavens where the angels ascend or descend proceeding toward nearness to God Almighty following a certain hierarchy.

Such angels who are vested with afflicting the disbelievers and sinners with torments were the same angels who descended upon Abraham (as) informing him of their appointment to cause the perdition of the people of Lot (as).

They destroyed the cities of those people who had plunged into sins and disgrace. They are also vested with inflicting torments upon other sinners as well. It is to be noted, however, that some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word ma'arij implies Divine Bounties and some others hold that it connotes angels, though the former further befits the lexical meaning of the word.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verse 4

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

4. The angels and the spirit (an archangel) ascend toward Him on a Day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years.

Following the narrative of the person who had asked for Divine torment, the blessed Verse in question treats of Resurrection and the torments in store for sinners on that Day, saying that the angels and the spirit ascend toward God Almighty on a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years.

The ascension of the angels indubitably implies spiritual ascent rather than the physical one.

In other words, they hasten toward nearness unto God Almighty and on that Day, namely the Day of Resurrection, they are prepared to receive Divine Commands and implement them, as it was mentioned above under 69:17 that

"and the angels will be on its sides"

implies that they will surround the heaven and will be prepared on that Day to act upon Divine Commands.

The spirit (ruh) herein implies the archangel, namely the trusted spirit (ruh al-amin) or Gabriel, to whom there is a reference elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[4]:

"Therein descend the angels and the spirit by Allah's Permission with all Ordainments."

The angels and the 'spirit' descend by Divine Permission on the night of Ordainment (laylat al-qadr) to implement Divine Ordainments and Decrees. It is worthy of note, however, that the word ruh implies different senses according to the contextual meaning, e.g. man's spirit, the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Spirit (ruh al-qudus), the archangel of Revelation, as attested in different Qur'anic Verses.

The expression

"fifty thousand years"

reflects that the Day of Resurrection shall last fifty thousand years, taking into account the passage of time in this world which does not stand in disharmony with the

"one thousand years"

mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[5], since according to traditions, there shall be fifty stations on the Day of Resurrection each of which shall last one thousand years.[6]

Some Qur'an exegetes have also suggested that the number

"fifty thousand"

herein implies multiplicity rather than quantity, namely that Day shall last long.

At any rate, it concerns the sinners, wrong doers, and disbelievers. In this vein, it is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that following the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, someone asked:

"O Allah's Messenger (S)! How long shall be that Day?"

He replied:

"By the One in Whose Hands lie Muhammad's life, that Day shall be convenient for the disbelievers, more convenient than one obligatory ritual prayer established in this world."[7]

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 5-7

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا

وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

5. So be patient with a good patience.

6. They behold that Day from afar.

7. And We see it near.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 5 asks him to be patient with a good patience against their denial and harassment. The Arabic phrase sabran jamilan literally denotes becoming patience which calls for according attention to the same. Such patience entails steadfastness and constant forbearance unadulterated by despair, desolation, restlessness, and remonstrance.

The blessed Verse 6 is saying that they regard that Day as far remote, though, according to the following blessed Verse, God Almighty regards it to be close by. They actually do not believe in the existence of such Day wherein the records of deeds of all people as well as the least of their words and deeds shall be accounted.

That Day shall last fifty thousand years according to this worldly time measurement. However, they do not believe in God Almighty and they entertain doubts as to His Omnipotence, saying that it will be impossible for rotten bones and scattered dust to assemble once again in bodily form. Such unfounded doubts are to be met elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

They also raise questions about the duration of fifty thousand years for one single day. It would be of interest to note that according to modern science, time measurements are different on different celestial bodies, since they follow the time of their rotations on their axes.

Thus, one day on the moon equals two weeks on the earth. It is even suggested that through the passage time, the earth may reduce the velocity of its rotation on its axis, as a consequence of which one day may turn into one month, one year, or hundreds of years.

It is said that the Day of Resurrection will be at that time, but it is said that one day which equals fifty thousand years is not incredible as per our worldly measurements and analogies. At any rate, the present order of the earth and the heaven shall undergo alterations prior to the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers regarded Resurrection as a remote possibility that may not stand to reason, though it is certain and close by according to the blessed Qur'anic Verse.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 8-9

يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ

8. The Day that the heaven shall be like molten metal.

9. And the mountains shall be like dyed wool.

The blessed Verses in question further treat of Resurrection, saying that on that Day, the heaven shall be like molten metal and the mountains shall be like flakes of dyed wool. The Arabic word muhl herein denotes molten metal and at times it is applied to the sediment of olive oil. The former sense befits the contextual meaning, though, taking into account the use as a simile, the latter is not that different.

The Arabic word 'ihan denotes dyed wool. The heavens shall be torn asunder and they shall melt. Mountains shall be shattered and scattered through the wind like flakes of wool. Mountains are herein likened to dyed

wool owing to their different colors. Such destruction shall antedate the creation of a new world wherein mankind shall be revived.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 10-14

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا

يُبَصَّرُونَهُمْ يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيهِ

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ

وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ

وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ

10. And no intimate friend shall ask a friend about his condition,

11. They shall be made to meet one another [but they are preoccupied with their own affairs], such that he sinner would desire to ransom himself from the chastisement of that Day by his children,

12. And his wife and his brother,

13. And his tribe who protected him at all times,

14. And all the people on the earth, so that he may find deliverance.

On Resurrection day in the new world, mankind shall be so preoccupied with the records of their past deeds that they never think about others, even their intimate friends, but they think about their own deliverance from torments.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[8]:

"Everyone on that Day shall have enough to make him careless of others."

The blessed Verse 11 is saying that people shall recognize their intimate friends, since they shall be made to meet their friends, but they are careless of them owing to being preoccupied with their own affairs and they shall stand in such awe that they shall never think about others.

Proceeding with further depiction of that awe inspiring scene, the blessed Verse further adds that the sinners would desire to victimize their children so that they may find deliverance from the torments in store for them on that Day.

The blessed Verses 12-14 say:

"And his wife and his brother, his tribe who protected him at all times, and all the people on the earth, so that he may find deliverance."

The torments to be inflicted upon them on that Day shall be so awe inspiring that man shall desire to ransom himself by victimizing his beloved ones, his children, wives, brothers, and kith and kin who used to protect him at all times. He shall even desire to victimize all the people so that he may find deliverance from the torments on the Day of Resurrection.

The Arabic verbal form

yawaddu ("he would desire")

derives from w-d-d denoting "desire."

The Arabic verbal form

yaftadi ("ransom oneself from")

derives from f-d-' implying protecting oneself from afflictions against some payment.

The Arabic nominal form fasila is used in the sense of the tribe and family from whom one descends (literally: is cut off), though it connotes offering shelter and safe haven. At any rate, filial ties as well as those with one's spouse, brothers, and kith and kin shall all fall victims to deliverance from torments, though they shall be of no avail.

It is noteworthy that we are supposed to turn into the people of Hell for the sake of the welfare of our spouse and children and obtaining the satisfaction of our friends and relatives, since they shall be of no avail to us on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 15-18

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَظَىٰ
نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوَىٰ
تَدْعُو مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ
وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰ

15. By no means! It shall be flames of fire.
16. Taking away hands, feet, and head skin!
17. Calling those who turned their backs to Divine Command
18. And those who amassed wealth and concealed it.

Addressing all such desires, the blessed Verse 15 says:

"By no means! No ransom shall be accepted. There shall be burning flames of fire constantly ablaze consuming whatever lies beside it.

The blessed Verse 16 says that the flames take away hands, fee, and skin head. The Arabic word latha implies "flame" and it is also one of the names of Hell, both senses are possible in the blessed Verses in question. The Arabic word naza'a is applied to something which is consecutive.

Shawa is used in the sense of "hands and feet and the sides of the body," though it also connotes broiling; the former sense is herein intended, since when burning flames touch something, they first burn its sides and extremities and take them away.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the word is here in used in the sense of skin (of the body), though some others hold that it is applied to head skin and calf (foot). All these senses are applicable to the context, taking into account the aforesaid broad semantic domain. It would be surmising to note that despite all these afflictions, the victims shall not die.

The blessed Verse 17 makes a reference to those who fall prey to such fire, saying that theses burning flames call unto themselves those who turned away from Divine Commands and disobeyed him.

The blessed Verse 18 says that they amassed wealth and concealed it without expending it in Allah's Cause. Thus, the burning fire constantly calls unto itself the sinners by the God given verbal or non-verbal language.

The victims shall be those who turned away from faith disobeying God Almighty and His Messenger (S) on the one hand, and were preoccupied with amassing lawful and unlawful wealth and concealing it without according attention to the rights of the needy or even comprehending the reason behind the bestowal of Divine Bounties upon them.

Surah al-Ma’arij - Verses 19-23

إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا

وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

19. Man was created impatient and avaricious,
20. Irritable when evil touches him,
21. And impeding others when good touches him.
22. Except those who establish their ritual prayers.
23. Those who remain steadfast in establishing their ritual prayers.

Having recounted some of the torments in store for sinners on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verses in question treat of the character traits of the disbelieving and the truly believing, stating the reasons behind the torments and the deliverance in store for them.

The blessed Verses 19-21 reflect that man is created avaricious and impatient, irritable when evil touches him impeding others when good touches him. Some Qur’an exegetes and lexicographers maintain that the Arabic word hulu‘ denotes “avaricious,” though some others hold that it implies “impatient.”

The blessed Verses 20 and 21 provide further explanation as to the meaning of the Arabic word in question. The former meaning makes a reference to three moral vices of such people, namely avarice, restlessness, and niggardliness. The latter refers to restlessness and niggardliness. Both senses may be implied by the word hulu‘, since the two are dependent on each other. In other words, avaricious people are oftentimes niggardly and impatient against incidents and vice versa.

The blessed Verses 22 and 23 treats of further character traits of the believing preceded by the conjunction “except” (illa), saying that those who establish their ritual prayers are exceptions, those who are steadfast in the establishment of their ritual prayers.

Such characteristic of theirs establishes and maintains their constant ties with Divine Threshold. Such nexus is created and maintained by the establishment of ritual prayers that impede man from committing vices, fostering his heart and spirit, makes him remember God Almighty at all times, and thereby impedes him from plunging into vanity, arrogance, concupiscent desires, and bondage in satanic shackles and fetters.

It is needless to say that steadfastness in establishing prayers does not entail their establishment at all times, but it indicates that they establish their ritual prayers at certain times. Generally speaking, steadfastness in doing any good deed positively affects man’s heart.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

“The most beloved of acts before God Almighty is what is done constantly, even if it happens to be seemingly insignificant.”[9]

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that what is intended herein is that whenever man regards one of the supererogatory things as an obligation and constantly does the deed.[10] Another tradition narrated from the Noble Imam (as) reflects that the blessed Verse in question concerns the establishment of obligatory ritual prayers.[11]

The difference may lie in the fact that "protection" befits the establishment of obligatory prayers which must be performed at certain times, though "constancy and steadfastness" befit supererogatory prayers, since man may perform them and fail to do likewise at other times.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 24-28

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَعْلُومٌ

لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ

24. And those in whose wealth there is a recognized right

25. For the mendicant and the deprived,

26. And those who stand in awe against Divine Recompense,

27. And those who find no deliverance from the torment of their Lord.

28. The torment of their Lord is that before which none can feel secure.

Following a treatment of the establishment of ritual prayers as the best deed and the best state of the believing, the blessed Verses 24 and 25 dealt with those in whose possessions there is some recognized right for the mendicant and the deprived. Thus, they maintain their ties with both the Creator and the created.

In this respect, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"recognized right"

herein implies alms tax (zakat) whose measure is apportioned and it should be paid to the mendicant and the deprived. It is known that the Chapter in question is Meccan and the Divine Decree as to the payment of tax alms had not been revealed in Mecca, or even if it had been revealed, the measure had not been apportioned.

Thus, some other exegetes hold that

"recognized right"

herein implies something other than alms tax which one feels obliged to pay to the needy. In this respect, a tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that upon being asked as to the exegesis of the blessed Verse, he said that it was something other than the alms tax and the blessed Verse concerned those upon whom God Almighty bestowed wealth and they paid one to three thousand of which to help their next of kin and help with the removal of adversity from amongst their people.[12]

Regarding the difference between the mendicant and the deprived, it may be said that the former express their needs and ask for assistance, whereas the latter may not act likewise owing to shame and dignity. It is narrated

from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the deprived are those who take troubles to earn a living, though they are involved with financial straits.[13]

The blessed Verses 26-28 make a reference to the third and the fourth characteristics of theirs, saying that those who believe in the Day of Recompense and stand in awe against Divine torment, since they find no deliverance from Divine Chastisement. They believe in the Day of Recompense.

In this respect, it may be mentioned that the Arabic present verbal form yusaddiqun reflects progression, implying that they are attentive at all times that the records of past deeds shall be taken into account on that Day. Some Qur'an exegetes hold that the verbal form is indicative of the confirmation of certain acts, namely acting upon obligations and abstaining from committing unlawful acts.

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse implies theoretical and practical confirmation.

Since some people may believe in the Day of Recompense but imagine that they shall not be chastised, the blessed Verse is saying that the believers find not deliverance from Divine torments, namely they feel obliged at all times to act upon Divine Commands and regard their righteous good deeds as insignificant and their sins as grave.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that providing his child with admonitions, he said:

"O my child! Stand in awe before God Almighty such that even if you happen to have done all the righteous deeds in this world, He may not accept them and set your hopes on Him, such that even if you have had committed all the sins in this world, He may forgive your sins."[14]

Even the Noble Prophet said:

"No one shall be admitted to Paradise for his deeds.

Upon being asked:

"Even you?"

He replied:

"Yes, even me, unless I will be granted Divine Graciousness."

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 29-31

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

29. And those who guard their chastity.

30. And do not engage in sexual intercourse, except with their wives and female slaves [who are like their wives], but they are not blameworthy for having been engaged in sexual intercourse with them.

31. But whoever seeks beyond that shall be a trespasser [of Divine Bounds].

The preceding blessed Verses treated of four characteristics of the true believers and those who will be the people of Paradise and the blessed Verses in question deal with further characteristics.

The blessed Verses 29 and 30 say:

"They are the people who protect themselves from unchastity and do not engage in sexual intercourse, except with their wives and female slaves and they will not be blamed for such engagement."

The sexual drive is one of the easily unchecked human drives and the source of many a sin, such that some hold that its trace may be found in all serious criminal cases. Thus, checking the drive serves as a significant token of fear of God Almighty.

It is worthy of note that checking the drive follows acts like establishment of ritual prayers, helping the needy, believing in the Day of Resurrection, and fearing Divine torments.

The exception following the check reflects that the drive is not to be totally removed and people are to move against the laws of creation like monks, nuns, and some priests; it is logically impossible, since many a monk and nun have failed to remove the drive from their lives and even if they do not officially marry, but many of them privately engage in sexual activities.

Such instances of disgrace and ignominy abound in the world and Christian historians, e.g. Will Durant, have unveiled instances of such unchastity and indecency.

The Arabic plural nominal form azwaj comprises permanent and temporary wives. Some have imagined that the blessed Verse negates temporary marriage, since they do not notice that it is also a kind of marriage.

Laying further emphasis on the issue, the blessed Verse 31 says:

"But whoever seeks beyond that shall be a trespasser [of Divine Bounds]."

Thus, the Islamic faith plans a society in which innate natural drives may find vents without entailing unchastity and indecency. It is noteworthy that female slaves used to possess many a legal right of wives, but dealing with such issue is presently out of the question.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 32-35

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

أُولَٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

32. And those who keep their trusts and covenants.

33. And those who stand firm in their true testimonies.

34. And those who guard their ritual prayers.

35. Such shall be honored in the Gardens.

Reference is made to another characteristics of their in the blessed Verse 32, saying

"Those who keep their trusts and covenants."

It is noteworthy that the Arabic word

amana ("trust")

encompasses a broad range of meanings implying not only different earthly trusts of people but also Divine ones and also those of the Prophets and Infallible Imams (as). Each of the Divine Bounties is one of His trusts. Likewise, social positions, particularly leadership, are amongst the most important trusts.

Thus, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse

"Verily Allah commands you to restore the trusted things to their owners"

that people are commanded to restore rulership and guardianship to their worthy guardians.[15]

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[16]

"Verily We did offer the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it; but man bore it. He was unjust and ignorant."

Above all, it is incumbent upon Muslims to preserve Divine religion and His Book, as His Greatest of trusts.

The Arabic term

'ahd ("covenant")

implies a wide semantic range, including both people's and Divine covenants, since the term is applied to any kind of obligation vested with someone. Therefore, one who believes in God Almighty and His Messenger (S) has indubitably accepted great obligations. Great emphasis is laid by the Islamic faith on keeping one's trusts and covenants as one of the most significant tokens of true faith.

The blessed Verse 33 adds that it is the characteristic of the believers and those who rise bear true testimony, since bearing just witness and refraining from concealing the same are most significant pillars of administering justice in human society.

They inquire as to the reasons behind bearing testimony against people entailing in their animosity and thereby creating problems for themselves. Such people are indifferent toward human rights, devoid of social spirit, and irresponsible toward administration of justice.

It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an recurrently calls Muslims unto bearing true witness and regards its concealment as a sin[17]. The issue is of particular significance in Islamic law serving as the pillar of proving many an individual and social law governed by particular laws and rulings.

The last characteristic of the good is mentioned in the blessed Verse 34, which once again refers to the establishment of ritual prayers, mentioned above in the opening blessed Verses, saying:

"those who guard their ritual prayers."

Reference was made above of the point as per which obligatory ritual prayers are herein intended by salat. Reference was already made of supererogatory ritual prayers.

The first characteristic alludes to steadfastness in establishing such prayers, though the one in question make mention of acting upon the rules, pillars, and the characteristics of the same through which such prayers are

preserved from corruption and the spirit of salat, the presence of mind while performing it, is reinforced.

Thus, the moral impediments to its acknowledgement are removed and it is regarded by no means as a repetition. Such beginning and end reflect that above all, according attention to the establishment of ritual prayers is the most significant characteristic of the believers, since it is the most exalted school of spiritual growth and the most significant means of the purification of the soul and society.

Finally, the blessed Verse indicates the final goal of those who possess such characteristics.

In the same manner that the preceding Verses were indicative of the final goal of the sinners, the blessed Verse 35 reflects tersely that those who possess such characteristics shall dwell in the Gardens of Paradise and shall be cherished from all respects, as they are Allah's guests for whom all means of comfort and hospitality will have been available by the Most-Compassionate and the Omnipotent Allah.

The twain expressions,

jannat ("gardens")

and

mukramun ("honored")

allude to the material and spiritual Bounties bestowed upon such people.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 36-39

فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ

أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ

كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُم مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

36. What is the matter with the disbelievers who hasten to come to you,

37. In groups on the right and on the left expecting to be admitted to Paradise?

38. Does everyone of them aspire to enter the Paradise abounding in Divine Bounties?

39. No, that is not like that! We have created them out of that which they know!

The preceding Verses treated of the characteristics of the believers and the disbelievers and their fates. The blessed Verses in question deal with the disbelievers and their derision of sacred matters.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that these blessed Verses were revealed concerning some polytheists who upon hearing the Noble Prophet (S) reciting some Resurrection Verses to the Muslims in Mecca, gathered to utter that if there be Resurrection, they will enjoy a far better state in the Hereafter than those believing him, since they enjoy a further comfortable life compared to those believing in him.

The blessed Verses 36-38 respond to their claims saying:

"What is the matter with the disbelievers who hasten to come to you, in groups on the right and on the left expecting to be admitted to Paradise?

Does every one of them aspire to enter the Paradise abounding in Divine Bounties?"

How do they expect to be admitted to Paradise with their unworthy deeds? The Arabic plural nominal form muhti'in is the accusative plural form of muhti' denoting one walking hastily with his neck raised up in quest of something and at times walks with his neck raised up searching for intelligence.

The Arabic nominal form 'izin is applied to scattered groups and at times to being related to others, since groups getting together are somehow related or they pursue one single goal, hence the application of the word 'iza to a group.

At any rate, the vain polytheists produced numerous, similar, unfounded claims and regarded their comfortable life, consequent to their unlawful acts like plunder as their exalted rank before Divine Threshold resorting to baseless analogies as to their elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

It is true that they did not believe in Resurrection as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, but at times they treated of it as a possibility, saying that had there been Resurrection, they would have such and such exalted positions in the Hereafter. They might have aimed at deriding such beliefs.

The blessed Verse 39 responds to their false claims, saying:

"No, that is not like that! We have created them out of that which they know!"

Such response aims to shatter their vanity, since it is said that they know from what they were created: a worthless drop of semen. So, what is the reason behind their vanity?

Furthermore, the blessed Verse responds to those who deride the belief in Resurrection by saying that if they entertain doubts as to the veracity of Resurrection, they may accord attention to the fact that God Almighty creates perfect beings out of a worthless drop of semen that undergoes developments in womb each and every day and it is created anew each time.

The other point is that such people whose record of deeds abounds with sins may not expect to be admitted to Paradise, since a being created out of a worthless drop of semen is materially ignoble and nobilities are consequent to having faith and doing righteous good deeds which they lack. So, how do they expect to set foot in the Gardens of Paradise?

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 40-41

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ

عَلَىٰ أَن نُّبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ

40. Therefore, I swear by the Lord of all the points of sunrise and sunset in the east and the west that surely We are All-Able

41. To replace them by others better than them and We are Invincible.

Instances of the singular form of "east and west" are also attested in the Holy Qur'an, as in:

"And to Allah belong the east and the west"[18].

The expression at times appears in the dual form, as in:

"The Lord of the two easts and the Lord of the two wests"[19].

The plural form also appears, as in the blessed Verse in question. Some narrow-minded people have considered these expressions to be contradictory, whereas they harmoniously point to one point: the sun rises from a new point and sets in another new point each and every day, hence there are as many sunrises and sunsets as the number of the days of the year.

Furthermore, two easts and two wests are distinguished amongst so many easts and wests: the summer and winter solstices when the sun reaches its zenith in the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn. Besides these two distinct solstices, there are two spring and autumn equinoxes when the day and the night are equal.

Some maintain that

"the Lord of the easts and the Lord of the wests"

alludes to the same phenomenon, a point which is noteworthy.

However, the singular attestations solely lay emphasis on the east and the west without according any attention to individual instances. Therefore, the aforesaid expressions convey certain points urging man to heed the alterations in the sunrise and the sunset and the regular alterations of the solar orbits.

Surah al-Ma'arij - Verses 42-44

فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

42. Therefore, leave them to plunge in vain talk and play about, until they meet their Promised Day.

43. The Day when they shall come out of the graves instantly as racing toward their idols,

44. With their eyes lowered in fear, enwrapped by humility and ignominy. [It shall be said unto them:] That is the Day which was promised unto you.

These closing Verses of the blessed Chapter warn the obdurate disbelievers mocking Resurrection and belief in the Islamic faith, saying:

"Therefore, leave them to plunge in vain talk and play about, until they meet their Promised Day. The Day when they shall come out of the graves instantly as racing toward their idols, with their eyes lowered in fear, enwrapped by humility and ignominy. [It shall be said unto them:] That is the Day which was promised unto you."

Such decisive arguments are sufficient, since they are neither sensible nor prepared to wake up. They are abandoned to plunged into their false beliefs and engage themselves in child play until the Promised Day, namely the Day of Resurrection happens.

The blessed Verse 43 depicts that Day and its awe inspiring tokens, saying that they shall leave their graves instantly on that Day as if they hasten toward their idols in celebrations or mourning. Such dramatic juxtaposition aims at deriding their false beliefs in this world.

The Arabic word ajdath is the plural form of jadath. Sira'an is an adverb of manner used in the sense of "instantly."

The Arabic nominal form nusub is the plural form of nasb denoting something installed somewhere, though it herein connotes the stone idols installed at certain places to be worshipped by idolaters by shedding the blood of sacrificial animals on them. The difference between nasb and sanam is that the latter had a particular form, but the former was a formless rock worshipped by idolaters.

The Arabic verbal form

yufidhun ("race, hasten"),

cognate with ifadha, implies rapid movement like that of water running from its fountainhead. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that nusub implies the banners installed amongst armies or caravans at certain places toward which everybody hastens.

The blessed Verse 44 further treats of other tokens, saying that on that Day, their eyes shall be lowered owing to the intensity of horror looking at their surroundings with humility while they shall be enwrapped by ignominy and humility.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that that is the Day promised to them, though they used to deride it, saying that granted that such Day exists, they shall be far better in terms of convenience and comfort compared with the believers. Nonetheless, they dare not raise their heads owing to horror and disgrace. They shall be covered with the dust of humility. They shall plunge into sorrows, but their regrets shall be of no avail.

O Lord! Protect us by Your Compassion on that awe inspiring Day.

O Lord! Rank us amongst the believers who have kept their promise to You and have obeyed Your Commands.

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, the opening Verses of the Chapter.
2. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 350.
3. al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 239-246.
4. 97:4
5. 32:5
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 413; Shaykh Saduq's Amali.
7. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 353; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6761.
8. 80:37
9. al-Mu'jam al-Mufahris li-Alfa al-Hadith, vol. 2, p. 160.
10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 416.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 417.
13. Ibid.
14. Jami' al-Akhbar, p. 113.
15. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 1, p. 380.
16. 33:72
17. 2:140,283; 5:106; 65:2
18. 2:115
19. 55:17

Surah Nuh, Chapter 71

(Noah)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses and depicts the ongoing struggle of the Truth against Falsehood and treats of the stratagems to be employed by the followers of Truth.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic Faith (S) as saying:

"One who recites Surah Nuh shall be ranked amongst the believers enwrapped by the light of Prophet Noah's Call."[1]

Summary of the Account of Noah (as). The detailed account of Prophet Noah (as) is attested in Chapters 7, 11, 23, 26, 54, and 71, though it is most elaborated in Chapter 11, Verses 25-49.

His people claimed that he was in error;

("The leaders of his people said: 'Indeed, we see you in plain error"[2]***);***

they mocked him at all times;

("And when those who disbelieved see you, they take you not except for mockery"[3]***);***

they called him light-headed and insane;

("insane and scatterbrained"[4]***).***

However, the Prophet (as) still provided them with guidance. Like other Prophets (as), he acted upon his Prophetic call by calling people unto monotheism, obedience to the Divinely appointed leader, and fear of God Almighty.

He began by warning his people against disobedience to God Almighty and imparted his Prophetic call to all people, though confronted with their obduracy, he cursed them;

("And Noah said: 'My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!"[5]***).***

Noah (as) is the only Prophet whose term of Prophetic call (950 years) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He is the only Prophet (as) whose family and people disobeyed him. He also lived the longest lifespan.

Ordered by God Almighty, he built the Ark to rescue all animals and serve as a means of human deliverance from the tempest, hence the designation the second father of mankind (Àdam Abu al-Bashar al-Thani).

He was also the first Messenger of Allah upon whom the Book was revealed and he was appointed to impart his Prophetic call to the world (ulu al-'azm).[6] God Almighty had the earth drowned owing to his curse. He was the only Prophet (as) whose followers did not exceed ten in number after the passage of 950 years.

Surah Nuh - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُونِ

1. We sent Noah to his people and We said: "Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment."

2. He said: "O my people! I am a plain warner unto you,

3. "That you should worship Allah, refrain from disobeying Him, and obey me."

As mentioned above, the blessed Chapter in question treats of Noah's (as) Prophetic call thereby providing those who tread the Path of God Almighty with points of interest concerning calling people unto the Truth, particularly while confronting obdurate peoples.

Opening with Prophethood, the blessed Verse 1 says:

"We sent Noah to his people and We said: 'Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment.'"

Such excruciating torment may be this worldly or otherworldly. Both kinds of torment are further befitting, though the torments in this world better fit the context herein. The Prophets (as) were both warners and bearers of glad tidings, but the emphasis laid on warning is owing to the fact that it oftentimes entails stronger effects, in the same way that emphasis is laid on warning and chastisement the world over in order to guarantee law enforcement.

According to the second blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) was the first Prophet upon whom Divine Scriptures had been revealed and his Prophetic call addressed the world. Upon receiving Divine Command, he went to his people and said that he was a plain warner to them.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that the goal of his Prophetic call was to urge people to worship God Almighty alone, fear Him, and obey his commands which were Divine Commands.

Prophet Noah (as) thus summarized his Prophetic call: worship the One God, Fear Him, Obey His Commands and Injunctions imparted which consisted of doctrines, moral principles, and Divine Law. At any rate, following the Prophets (as) is consequent to believing in monotheism, fear of God Almighty, obeying the Prophet (as), and believing in Resurrection.

Surah Nuh - Verse 4

يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۖ لَوْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

4. "He will forgive you of your sins and respite you to an appointed term. But, when the term of Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if you but knew."

Believing in God Almighty and doing righteous deeds entail absolution of sins, longevity, and warding off afflictions.

There are two appointed times for man, one which may be postponed through worshipping and fearing God Almighty and it may be precipitated by committing vices and sins and the other is the irrevocable appointed time (ajal mussama).

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that longevity and death are due to beneficence and committing sins respectively and there are few people who live a natural life or die a natural death.[7] People are encouraged in this blessed Verse to answer to the Divine Call and be absolved of their sins.

It is worthy of note that the noble dictum "Islam covers and obliterates what precedes it" is not exclusive to the Islamic faith but is prevalent in all Divine and monotheistic religions. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty will respite you to an appointed time and will prolong your lifetime and will ward off the torment from you.

The point is that when the Divine, inevitable, and irrevocable appointed time comes, it may not be postponed, though some people are unaware of it. The topic in question may be further clarified by an illustration.

Man is physically incapable of enjoying an everlasting life and even if all bodily organs function properly, they, particularly the heart, will stop functioning through exhaustion. Nonetheless, following sanitary rules and taking timely precautions may prolong human lifetime, though failing to act upon such rules may seriously shorten it.

The blessed Verse in question clearly reflects that committing sins entails shortening of lifetime, since it is said that if you believe and fear God, He will prolong your life and postpone your death. Taking the severe blows inflicted upon human body and soul by committing sins, the point in question becomes further facile to comprehend.

The point is accorded particular emphasis in Islamic traditions. A detailed discussion regarding conditional and irrevocable appointed terms may be found above under 6:2. Now, let us turn toward three traditions narrated concerning the consequences of committing sins and worshipping God Almighty.

1. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"If you intend to prolong your lifetime, maintain your blood ties [namely take good care of your relatives, and if you wish that God maintains your health, pay alms in abundance."[8]

2. It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"Maintaining blood ties entails five advantages: acceptance of deeds [before God Almighty], affluence, warding off afflictions, convenience in the reckoning of one's deeds [on the Day of Resurrection], and longevity."[9]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The deeds of those who tell the truth are accepted. One who entertains good intentions will receive increase in his Provision. He who does good to his family will be granted longevity."[10]

Surah Nuh - Verses 5-9

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا

5. He said: "O my Lord! I have called my people unto you night and day,

6. "But all my calling added nothing but to their flight from truth.

7. And every time I called unto them to believe in You that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, persisted in their denial, and magnified themselves in arrogance.

8. "Then, I called to them openly to believe in and serve You.

9. And I proclaimed to them in public and I have appealed to them in private.

Proceeding with the account of Prophet Noah's (as) Prophetic Call unto his people, he is quoted in the blessed Verses in question as complaining to his Lord. His words are quite instructive and may be great advantages to all propagators of religious doctrines.

The Prophet (as) is quoted as saying that he called his people unto God Almighty and he spared no efforts in providing them with guidance, though his call was of no avail and added nothing but to their flight from truth.

It is a source of surprise that calling toward something may entail flight from it. Nonetheless, taking into account the fact that obdurate enemies of truth, upon hearing the calls of the men of God, deny the truth and such denial makes them further distance from God Almighty and reinforces their disbelief and hypocrisy.

The same theme is treated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[11]:

"And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe and it increases the wrong doers nothing but loss."

According to the Glorious Qur'an, the Divine Revelation is a guide to the God fearing[12], since human heart must entertain at least a flicker of fear of God Almighty so that it may pave the path for the acknowledgement of the truth. It is the stage of the spirit of seeking the truth and preparedness for acknowledging Divine Truth.

The blessed Verse 7 quotes Prophet Noah (as) as saying that whenever he called unto them to believe in God Almighty so that He might forgive their sins, they thrust their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted in their denial and disbelief, and their vanity waxed.

They thrust their fingers in their ears in order not to hear the truth and covering themselves with their garments implies that they made further attempts not to listen to the true call and thereby kept themselves from looking at the Noble Prophet Noah (as).

They made attempts to impede themselves from hearing his words and looking at him. It is quite surprising that such people had reached such extent of animosity against the truth such that they deprived themselves from seeing, hearing, and thinking.

The blessed Verse reflects that Prophet Noah (as) untiringly strove in his long life to call his people unto embracing faith.

It is also indicative of one of the most significant factors behind their misfortune, namely their arrogance and vanity, since they regarded it far below their league to obey a man, be he Allah's Messenger, whose hear was imbued with knowledge and fear of God Almighty. Such vanity and arrogance have at all times served as impediments to treading the path of Truth and the adverse consequence thereof are reflected throughout history in the lives of the disbelievers.

In the blessed Verses 8 and 9, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his invocations before Divine Threshold, saying that he called his people to monotheism and worshipping God and called them in public with a loud voice to believe in Allah.

He was not content with his public calls, but he expressed the truth of monotheism and belief in God Almighty in private as well. It lies in human nature that when he treads the path of falsehood such that corruption is rooted in his heart and turns into his second nature, he will be indifferent toward the calls of the men of God and clear Divine Calls.

Not only the people of Prophet Noah (as) thrust their fingers in their ears and wrapped themselves with their garments to deprive themselves of Truth, but also there were people at the time of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that upon hearing his sweet voice when reciting Qur'anic Verses made such clamor and havoc that they impeded others from hearing him.

According to a Qur'anic blessed Verse[13]:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'Listen not to this Qur'an and make noise in the midst of its recitation so that you may overcome.'"

In this vein, it is narrated in the account of the bloody battle at Karbala' that when the lord of the martyrs, Imam Husayn (as), intended to provide the foes with guidance and thereby wake them up, they created such havoc that people could barely hear him.[14]

Similar form of confrontation are to be witnessed today when we notice that the followers of falsehood have created such atmosphere with harmful recreations, devastating kinds of music, narcotics, and the like that people, particularly the youth, may not be able to hear the sweet voice of the men of God and the blessed Qur'anic Verses.

Surah Nuh - Verses 10-14

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُم مِّدْرَارًا

وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

10. "I said [unto them]: 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord since He is Oft-Forgiving.

11. 'So that he sends Bountiful rain unto you in abundance,

12. 'And give you increase in affluence and offspring and bestow upon you verdant gardens and rivers."

13. What is the matter with you that you do not believe in Divine Glory.

14. While He has created you in stages.

In these blessed Verses, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his impressive guidance addressing his obdurate and disobedient people by encouraging them and bearing glad tidings to them and promising them that if they desist from committing sins and disbelief, God Almighty will grant them His Bounties and Graciousness.

Addressing his Lord, he is saying that he asked them to ask their Oft-Forgiving Lord for forgiveness of their sins. The blessed following Verse reflects that He not only absolves them of their sins, but upon turning toward him they will be granted Bountiful rain from the heaven in abundance and thus they will be granted abundant material and spiritual Bounties.

The Arabic adverbial form

midraran ("showering abundant rain")

derives from d-r-r denoting to flow plentifully.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse s saying that abundant rain will be sent to you from the heaven, but as it will be the rain of Divine Mercy, it will entail neither devastation nor harm, but it will lead to verdure and abundance everywhere.

The blessed Verse 12 is saying that He will increase your affluence and offspring and will bestow verdant gardens and rivers upon you. Thus, five great material Bounties, timely, plentiful, and fruitful rain and rivers, and one great spiritual Bounty, absolution from the impurities of disbelief and disobedience, are promised to them. Believe in and fearing God Almighty, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, entail prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a number of traditions, upon turning away from Prophet Noah's (as) call, such obdurate people were entangled with famine; a large number of their offspring were destroyed; most of their women became sterile. Prophet Noah (as) said unto them that if they believed their afflictions would be removed, but they paid him no heed and persisted in their obduracy and disobedience such that the final torment was sent to them and cause their total perdition.

Surah Nuh - Verses 15-16

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا

وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا

15. Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?

16. And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp?

Against the obdurate polytheists, Prophet Noah (as) produced his logical and meaningful arguments in the preceding blessed Verses to make them acquainted with the depth of their being so that they may experience the material realm. He called them to behold and examine the Divine Signs in the great world of creation and intended to familiarize them with the spiritual realm.

Beginning with the heaven, he asks:

"Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?"

The Arabic verbal noun tibaq denotes comparison and contrast at times implies being laid on top of something and also harmony and accord between two things; both latter senses are herein intended. The former reflects that the seven heavens are created one above another as mentioned above in the exegesis regarding the seven heavens.

An exegesis worthy of note is that whatever is observed by armed and unarmed eyes concerning the celestial bodies constitutes the first heaven on which six other heavens are created one above the other, defying modern science, though man may be able to discover those surprising and vast realms one after the other in future.

The seven heavens were treated in details above under 2:29.

The blessed Verse 16 says that God Almighty has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp. It is true that billions of brilliant celestial bodies, far more brilliant than the suns and moon in our solar system exist in the seven heavens, but the latter two are of significance in our life since they give light in the day and at night respectively.

The Arabic word

siraj ("lamp")

implying the sun and the word

nur ("light")

reflect that the light of the sun are engendered from within in the manner of a lamp, but that of the moon is from without, since it is a reflection of the former.

Thus, the word nur, which is broader in its semantic domain, is applied herein. Such different expressions are reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an. Further details in this respect were mentioned under 10:5.

Surah Nuh - Verses 17-20

وَاللَّهُ أَنبَتَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا

لِّتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا

17. And Allah has brought you forth from the earth.

18. Then He will return you into it, and bring you forth.

19. And Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse,

20. That you may go about therein in broad roads and its valleys and reach your desired destination.

The blessed Verse 17 turns, once again, toward the creation of man, saying:

"Allah has brought you forth from the earth."

The employment of inbat denoting "to germinate, cause to sprout, make grow, cultivate" applied to man reflects that man was created from dust and all his nourishment by which he grows comes from the earth, directly, like vegetables, seeds, and fruit, or indirectly, like meat; furthermore, there exist many a similarity between man and plants and many a laws as to nourishment, growth, and reproduction also apply to mankind. Such expression is quite meaningful reflecting that in terms of Guidance, the Lord is not only an Instructor, but also He is like a Gardener who places the seeds of plants in the required environment so that their potentialities may come into view.

The blessed Verse 18 treats of Resurrection, a complicated issue to the polytheists and disbelievers, saying that He will return you to the earth from which you grew and he brings you forth once again. In other words, man is from dust and will return to it.

The One who was All-Able to create you from dust is Omnipotent to revive you after having been turned into dust. Such transfer from Divine Unity to Resurrection is quite interestingly reflected in the blessed Verses in question bearing witness to the intimate interrelation between the twain.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments as to Divine Unity and Resurrection to convince the disbelievers to pay heed to the system of creation.

The blessed Verse 19 further treats of the Sings of Divine Unity in this vast world, saying:

"Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse."

It is not that rough and uneven to impede rest and travel, not that soft to impede movement, not that hot to cause inconvenience, not that cold to impede a comfortable life. Besides, all the requirements of life are available on its expanse.

The blessed Verse 20 is saying that man may travel through the valleys. The vast expanse of the earth allows man to pass through vast paths and valleys and reach his desired destinations. The Arabic word fijaj is applied to a valley located between two mounts and also to vast roads.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) herein alludes to Divine diverse Bounties on the earth as well as human body and life serving as arguments proving Divine Unity and Resurrection. However, such warnings, tidings, and logical arguments may not impress such obdurate people, as they persisted in their denial and disbelief whose consequences are to follow in the following blessed Verses.

Surah Nuh - Verses 21-22

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَن لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهُ وَوَلَدُهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا

21. [Having despaired of guiding them] Noah said: "My Lord! They have disobeyed me and followed those whose wealth and children availed them of no increase but loss.

22. "And they have plotted a mighty plot.

Having made his utmost efforts for hundreds of years, he noticed that his people, except for a few, persisted in polytheism, idolatry, error, and corruption. Thus, he despaired of providing them with guidance and turned toward Divine Threshold invoking God Almighty to chastise them.

As reflected in the blessed Verses in question, Prophet Noah (as) said:

"O Lord! They disobeyed me and followed one whose affluence and offspring availed him of no increase but loss."

Reference is here made of the leaders of his people whose only privileges consisted of affluence and offspring, though they rendered no service to the community, failed to be humble against their Creator, and employed their means to further plunge into corruption, error, vanity, and disobedience.

Taking a glance at the history of mankind, we witness that many a leader of different peoples were like them whose sole privileges rested in amassing unlawful possessions and fathering unworthy offspring and left no stone unturned to disobey God Almighty and His Messengers (as) and to impose their false beliefs upon the deprived who led their lives in bondage.

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that such leaders who were in error and led others astray employed vile stratagems. The Arabic intensified adjectival form kubbar, cognate with kibr ("arrogance, vanity"), is here in employed indefinitely and implies that they had planned satanic stratagems and ploys to lead people astray and impede them from acknowledging Noah's (as) Prophetic call.

The nature of such stratagems and ploys is unknown, but they seemingly concerned idolatry, since as per certain traditions, idolatry was unprecedented before Noah (as) and his people were its progenitors.

It is reported that between the times of Adam (as) and Noah (as), there were righteous people in whom people were interested. Satan and his followers took advantage of such interest and urged them to fashion sculptures of those righteous men.

The prospective generations consigned to oblivion the historical context of sculpturing such figures and imagined that such righteous figures were supposed to serve as objects of worship. Thus, they preoccupied themselves with worshipping them and the wrong doing arrogant thereby led them to servitude and bondage and aforesaid vile ploys worked.

Surah Nuh - Verses 23-25

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا

مِّمَّا خَطِيئَاتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأُدْخِلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنصَارًا

23. "And they said: 'You shall not leave your gods: you shall leave neither Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr.

24. "And indeed they led many astray. And [O Allah]: Grant no increase to the wrong doers save error."

25. [At last] because of their sins they were all drowned and were made to enter Hellfire and they found none to help them save Allah.

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23 their chiefs asked them to neither abandon their gods and idols nor to acknowledge Noah's (as) Prophetic call to monotheism, worshipping an imperceptible god. They laid particular emphasis on five idols: Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr and bade them not to desist from worshipping them.

In the blessed Verse 24, Noah (as) says:

"O Lord! These vain and astray leaders led many people astray. O Lord! Grant the wrong doers no increase but error."

It is noteworthy that increasing error for the wrong doers and tyrants implies their deprivation from Divine Grace which leads them to misery. It may also connote some chastisement as a consequence of their wrong doing thereby God Almighty deprives them of the light of faith substituting it with disbelief.

It is noteworthy that error and disbelief are consequences of their misdeeds, though their entanglement with error and disbelief is attributed to God Almighty, since all the acts of His creatures are within His Command and it is not in contradiction with Divine Wisdom concerning belief, disbelief, guidance, and error, as such instances do not impede free will.

Finally, the blessed Verse 25 is indicative of the final Words of God as per which they were drowned consequent to having committed sins and they were made to enter the Fire.

They found none but Him to render them assistance against Divine Wrath. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that having been drowned they immediately were made to enter the Fire. It is a source of surprise that they were made to immediately leave water and enter the Fire which is that of purgatory, since a number of Qur'anic Verses reflect that some people will be chastised in purgatory posthumously.

According to some traditions, "grave" may be either a Garden in Paradise or a pit in Hell. It may also be indicative of the Fire on the Day of Resurrection, but since Resurrection shall indubitably come before long, the Arabic passive verbal form

udkhilu ("they were made to enter")

appears in the past tense.[15]

Some Qur'an exegetes have also suggested that reference is herein made to the Fire in this world, such that God Almighty willed that a Fire appeared in the midst of the tempest and devoured them.[16]

Surah Nuh - Verses 26-27

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا

إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا

26. And Noah said: "O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!

27. "Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants, and they will beget none but the wicked and the disbelieving.

Resuming his complaints to God Almighty from his people, Noah curses them, saying:

"O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!"

He uttered these words when he had totally been despaired of guiding them. He had made his last attempts to call them to monotheism, though only a few believed in him. The Arabic prepositional phrase

'ala 'l-ardh ("on the earth")

reflects that Prophet Noah's (as) call as well as the following tempest and the torment were worldwide. The Arabic word dayyar, cognate with dar ("house, abode") implies one who dwells in a house. The word is also employed to imply general negation, as in "There is no soul in the house."

In the blessed Verse 27, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments to substantiate his curse, saying

"Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants,"

reflecting that the curses of the Prophets (as), like that of Noah (as), did not spring from wrath, hatred, and vengeance, but he cursed his people after the passage of nine hundred and fifty years of imparting his Prophetic Call and forbearance and it was consequent to his total despair that he uttered the curse.

How did Prophet Noah (as) notice that they were not prone to believe in God Almighty, but they led God's servants astray and their offspring will be corrupt and they will lead others to error and corruption?

Some have suggested that God Almighty had granted him the knowledge of the unseen, though some have suggested that it had been thus revealed unto Noah (as), as reflected in the Holy Qur'an[17]:

"And it was revealed to Noah (as): 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed. Therefore, be not sorrowful owing to what they used to do.'"

The same theme is to be found in numerous traditions.[18] It has been also suggested that Noah (as) had thus inductively concluded by taking into account the natural courses of the event, since his people had been called by his impressive expressions, though they failed to believed and he could not set his hopes on guiding them; furthermore, no suggestions could stand against Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

The Arabic word fajir is applied to one who commits vile deeds. The Arabic intensive present participial form kaffar denotes going to extremes in disbelief. The difference between the twain rests in practical and doctrinal aspects respectively, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses in question that Divine torments are based on Wisdom.

The prospective generations of a corrupt people who lead others to error and corruption will be jeopardized by their vile deeds. Such people are not entitled to live according to Divine Wisdom and they will be entangled with afflictions such as tempest, lightning, and earthquake, hence their effacement from the face of the earth, as the tempest obliterated Noah's (as) vile and wrong doing people from the face of the earth.

Granted that such Divine Law is not particular to any specific time and place, we are supposed to bear in mind that Divine torments are in store for the corrupt people who lead others astray and whose offspring are

disobedient and disbelievers, since there is no exception to the Law and it is a Divine Tradition that such vile people meet their dire fate.

The Arabic clause

yudhdhilu ‘ibadaka (“they mislead Your servants”)

may suggest the scarcity of those who believed in Prophet Noah’s (as) Prophetic call in such long time, though it may also imply that the deprived are forced by their wrong doing leaders to follow their beliefs.

Surah Nuh - Verse 28

رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا

28. “O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!”

In the closing blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) thus invoked God Almighty:

“O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!”

Invoking God Almighty for forgiveness reflects that he is saying that he spent hundreds of years in incessantly imparting his Prophetic call and forbore all the hardships in the Cause of Allah, though he had to invoke God Almighty to forgive him since he might had had neglected some priority (tark ula).

The invocation reflects that Noah (as) did not regard himself as totally free from blame. Such friends of God Almighty, after making some many efforts in Allah’s Cause still think that they might have made mistakes, but, unlike people who within their small capacities magnify themselves to the extent that they regard God Almighty obliged to grant them His Grace, Allah’s friends are never entangled with vanity and egotism.

Prophet Noah (as) actually invoked God Almighty to forgive some people: himself, lest he had neglected some priority, his parents as a token of his gratitude for their troubles, for all those few who believed in his Prophetic call and embarked the Ark which was his home, and finally for all believing men and women in the world down the centuries, thus establishing his ties with all the believers worldwide and at all times. Nonetheless, he accords particular emphasis to the destruction of the wrong doers, implying that they deserved such torment.

It is worthy of note that Qur’an exegetes are not unanimous concerning the precise sense of the Arabic nominal form bayt in this context, but different exegetes have suggested four senses: private home, mosque, Noah’s Ark, his religion.

It is narrated in this vein from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the word bayt herein implies

“guardianship” (wilaya),

namely whoever enters it he enters the Prophets’ homes.[19] It is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that the mosque at Kufa was Noah’s abode and those

who entered his home are in fact those who enter the mosque at Kufa.[20] According to a tradition, Imam Husayn (as) did not slay some of the foes at Karbala', saying that he would not slay the foes whose offspring would include the believers.[21]

Finally, the story of Prophet Noah (as) possesses copious reflection in Arabic and Persian literature and particular emphasis has been accorded to the tempest and his Ark as a means of deliverance for the believers.[22] It is also worthy of note that his name designates that he invoked God Almighty and lamented for many years so that his people might be impressed and believe in God Almighty.

O Lord! When the tempest of Your Wrath comes, deliver us by the Ark of Your Mercy and that of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"My Ahl al-Bayt are like Noah's Ark, whoever embarks it will find salvation and whoever denies it will be destroyed."[23]

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 359.
2. 7:60
3. 21:36
4. 54:9
5. 71:26
6. Kanz al-'Ummal, tradition 32391.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 140.
8. Safinat al-Bihar, p. 599.
9. Usul Kafi, tradition no. 3.
10. al-Khisal, p. 42.
11. 17:82
12. 2:2
13. 41:26
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 45, p. 8.
15. Fakhr Razi's Tafsir, vol. 30, p. 145.
16. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir, vol. 11, p. 280.
17. 11:36
18. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 428.
19. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 429.
20. Tafsir Nur, under the blessed Verse in question.
21. Mawsu'a Kalimat al-Imam Husayn, p. 505.
22. For further details, see the relevant references, e.g. A'lam Qur'an; Farhang-i Qisas-i Qur'an; Dihkhuda's Lughatnama, s.v. Nuh; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'a; al-Gadir; Kanz al-'Ummal; Ihqaq al-Haqq; 'Abaqat al-Anwar; and other tradition sources.

Surah al-Jinn, Chapter 72

(The Jinn)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses. The designation of the Chapter reflects that it mainly treats of invisible creatures, the jinn, their belief in the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), the Holy Qur'an, and Resurrection, and the groups of believers and disbelievers amongst them. The closing Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen unknown to all beings besides God Almighty.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Jinn many a time will never suffer from the evil eye, magic, and ploys of the Jinn and magicians but will accompany Muhammad (S). O Lord! I believe in none besides him and I will never turn toward anyone but him.[1]

Reciting the blessed Chapter would be a prelude to the awareness of its contextual meaning and applying it to one's life.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

1. Say: "It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an,

2. 'That guides to the Straight Path. Thus, we have believed in it and we shall never associate anything with our Lord [in worship].

Occasion of Revelation

It is reported that the Noble Prophet (S) departed Mecca for the bazaar of 'Ukkath in Ta'if, aiming to call unto people to convert to the Islamic faith, though it was of no avail. On his way back to Mecca, he stayed for the night at a vale called Jinn where he recited Qur'anic Verses.

A group of the jinn heard him and converted to Islam and returned to other jinn to propagate the faith.[2] Another occasion of Revelation is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas as per which the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting Qur'anic Verses while performing his morning canonical prayers.

Upon hearing the Qur'anic Verses, a group of the jinn, engaged in investigating the reasons lying behind the disconnection of heavenly

messages, said that the same was the reason. They returned unto other jinn and called them to convert to Islam.[3]

Having said the above, now let us turn to the exegesis of the Qur'anic Verses.

The first blessed Verse says:

"Say: 'It has been revealed unto me that a group [of jinn] listened to me. Then, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an."

The clause

"It has been revealed"

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had not seen the jinn in person, but his awareness of their listening to the Qur'anic Verses had derived from Divine Revelation. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the jinn possess reason, understanding, perception, and linguistic knowledge, and they feel the responsibility.

They attend to the differences between "wondrous" Words and ordinary speech. Addressed by the Qur'anic Verses, they feel the obligation to propagate the Word of Truth. The aforesaid points reveal some of the characteristics of these invisible living creatures, though further characteristics of theirs will be mentioned below in the same discussion.

The jinn had a reason to regard the Holy Qur'an as

"wondrous Words,"

since the Holy Qur'an is wondrous in terms of tone, impressiveness, and significance.

The Noble Prophet (S) who was Divinely appointed to impart the Message was an illiterate person from amongst the illiterate people. Such Words, in terms of their outward and inward aspects, are wondrous and different from any other speech. Thus, the jinn confessed to the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed second Verse is saying that the jinn proceeded to discuss further points, as reflected the following blessed Verses in twelve clauses opening with the Arabic emphatic conjunction an.

The blessed Verse is saying that the jinn said that the Holy Qur'an leads everyone to the Straight Path; thereby we believe in it and associate nothing with our Lord in worship. It is worthy of note that the Arabic nominal form rushd encompasses a comprehensive and broad semantic scope including any privilege. The word denotes a straight, even, and clear path leading t happiness and perfection.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 3-5

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن تَقُولَ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

3. 'And that He, exalted is the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a child.

4. 'And that the foolish amongst us uttered against Allah unworthy words.

5. 'And we thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah.

Following making mention of their belief in God and negating any kind of polytheism, the jinn thus proceeded with Divine Attributes, saying:

"Exalted is the Majesty of our Lord and Glorified is He of any similitude to the creatures and any defect and He has never adopted any wife or child."

The Arabic nominal form jadd is a polysemous word whose numerous senses include: majesty; intensity; seriousness; share, lot; and becoming new. In terms of etymology, according to Raghib in his Mufradat, the root denotes "sever, cut off."

The connotations

"majesty"

is owing to the fact that any majestic being is separated from others. Likewise, other denotations and connotations of the word may be taken into account; for instance, the word denotes "grandfather" owing to his exalted rank or his advanced years.

At any rate, the connotation of

"majesty"

is consistent with lexicographical sources and its applications.

It is also worthy of note that the jinn herein lay particular emphasis on the point that God Almighty has adopted neither a wife nor a child, which seemingly implies the negation of the superstitious beliefs held by the Arabs in that they maintained that angels were fathered by god and born of his wife adopted from amongst the jinn.

The same theme is reflected in the exegesis of another Qur'anic Verse[4]:

"And they have invented a kinship between Him and the jinn."

The blessed Verse 4 says:

"[They said that they confessed] that the foolish amongst us uttered unworthy words against Allah."

The Arabic word safih may connote a collective sense in that some of the foolish amongst the jinn maintained that god had married and had fathered children. They had deviated from the Path of Truth by uttering such unworthy words and associating partners with God in worship.

Many a Qur'anic exegete maintain that the word herein alludes to Iblis who following disobedience to Divine Commands attributed false ascriptions to God Almighty and even objected the Divine Command as to Adam's (as) prostration before Him and regarded it insensible and deemed himself superior to Adam (as).

Since Iblis had been a jinni, all the believing jinn express their hatred for him and consider his words to be unfounded. He was seemingly a scholar and an ascetic, but scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge and the ascetics who are vain and deviant clearly represent the foolish.

The Arabic word shatat implies going to extremes, hence its application to untrue words. Thus, a high bank of rivers relatively far from water is called shatt.

The blessed Verse 5 says:

"We thought that men and jinn would not utter a lie against Allah."

The blessed Verse may be a reference to this group's blind imitation of others in associating partners, wives, and children to God Almighty, saying that they blindly acknowledged such beliefs owing to their optimism as they never imagined that mankind and the jinn dare to utter such lies against God Almighty; however, consequent to their investigations and comprehension of the truth and having believed in it, they are now aware of such unworthy imitation and hence they confess to their mistakes and the deviation of the polytheists from amongst the jinn.

Surah al-Jinn - Verse 6

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا

6. 'And there were men amongst mankind who took shelter with the males amongst the jinn, but they increased them in their error and disobedience.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that some men sought refuge in the male jinn and their error and disobedience to God were thereby increased. The Arabic root z-h-q etymologically denotes "to cover by using force" and since error, sins, disobedience, and fear overwhelm human heart and soul and thereby cover them, hence the connotation of the word.

The clause

"but they increased them in their error and disobedience"

reflect that superstitions engender decadence in thought, fear, and error.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse indicates that male and female jinn exist, since the blessed Verse says:

"there were men amongst mankind who sought refuge in the males amongst the jinn."

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is broad in its semantic scope such that it includes all instances of men seeking refuge in the jinn and the aforesaid superstition bear testimony to the same. There existed numerous soothsayers amongst the Arabs who claimed that they were able to solve many a problem by taking recourse to the jinn and predict the future.

In this vein, it is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that whoever goes to a sorcerer, a soothsayer, or a liar and acknowledges their words certainly disbelieves in all Divine Scriptures.[5]

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that who acknowledges the words of a soothsayer or an astrologer disbelieves what is revealed to Allah's Messenger (S).[6]

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 7-8

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن لَّن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا

7. 'And they thought as you thought that Allah would not send any Messenger.

8. 'And we have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows.

Proceeding with relating the words of the believing jinn who other jinn to convert to the Islamic faith in different ways, the blessed Verse says:

"And some men, like you, imagined that God Almighty would not appoint anyone to the Prophetic call [after Moses (as) and Jesus (as)] and thereby belied the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S). However, it was through listening to the blessed Verses of this Divine Scripture that we clearly noticed its veracity. Beware of disbelieving in God Almighty, like the polytheist men, and meet their dire fate."

The blessed Verse warns the polytheists that the jinn employ such line of argument and reach such conclusion and it is expected that men also awaken and believe in the Noble Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 8 makes a reference to the believing jinn who make mention of one of the proofs of the veracity of their words, comprehensible to all the jinn in the natural world, saying:

"We have sought to reach the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and blazing arrows."

The Arabic word lams herein connotes search and quest and the nominal form haras is the plural form of haris ("guard").

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 9-10

وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

9. 'And we used to sit there in stations to eavesdrop, but any who intends to eavesdrop now will find a shooting star watching him in ambush.

10. '[Having said that] we know not whether evil is intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether their Lord wills to Guide them.

Revelation of the Holy Qur'an had its impressions in the heavens. Before the Revelation, the jinn used to eavesdrop the heavenly messages, but they were thereafter impeded from doing likewise; as a consequence of which they say that formerly they would sit in the heaven to eavesdrop and receive heavenly messages and imparted them to their friends, though whoever intends to act likewise will find meteors targeting him in ambush.

What crosses one's mind is that drastic alterations were made in the world following the Prophetic call of Allah's Messenger (S) and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, since they were formerly able to eavesdrop, but no one is able to do likewise now.

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the dark age of ploys, soothsaying, and deception is over and the night has ended and the sun of Divine Revelation and the Prophetic call has risen. The Arabic word shihab lexically denotes flame, though it connotes the blazing flames emerging in straight lines in the heaven, namely shooting stars and meteors.

According to scientific research, meteors are small pieces of stone moving without the atmosphere of the earth. Upon approaching the earth, they gravitate toward it rapidly.

When they enter the atmosphere, namely the condensed gaseous later surrounding the earth, they turn into fireballs owing to the intensity of friction against it and the resulting incandescence turns into ashes scattering on the face of the earth.

It is recurrently reflected in the Holy Qur'an that meteors are arrows shot at devils aiming at eavesdropping in the heavens. Detailed discussions are to be found above under 15:18 and 37:10, though they are not reflected herein for the sake of brevity.

At any rate, the Arabic nominal form rasad implies preparedness for some occurrence and lying in ambush. The word is at times a present participial form employed in the sense of one waiting in ambush.

According to the blessed Verse 10, they further say that having taken into account the circumstances, they do not know whether such eavesdropping reflects that some bad intention is in store for the people on the earth or God Almighty is thereby willing to lead them to the Path of Guidance.

In other words, they have no idea whether it preludes afflictions to be inflicted by God Almighty or their Guidance. Nonetheless, the believing jinn are supposed to have comprehended that forbidding eavesdropping, simultaneous with the Noble Prophet's (S) prophetic call, preludes guiding people and consigning to oblivion soothsaying and like superstitious beliefs.

It is but the proclamation of the end of a dark period and the outset of a luminous one. However, the jinn were attached to eavesdropping and still failed to believe that such impediment entail Blessings and Bounties, but it is crystal clear that relying on eavesdropping, soothsayers in pre-Islamic times had a great impact in leading the people astray.

It is worthy of note, however, that Guidance is herein ascribed to God Almighty, but evil, used in passive voice, is not attributed to Him, reflecting that the good and Guidance comes from God Almighty and evil and corruption come from people themselves consequent to their misuse of Divine Bounties and the Blessings of Creation.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 11-12

وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قِدَدًا

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن نُّعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَن نُّعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا

11. 'And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways.

12. 'And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence.

The blessed Verses in question reflect that the believing jinn, having acknowledged Divine Revelation, perceive their weakness, free choice, and Divine Majesty and Omnipotence.

The blessed Verse 11, resuming the believing jinn's speech on the occasion of calling those in error amongst them, is thus quoting them:

"And there are amongst us some that are righteous and some impious; we are groups having different ways."

The blessed Verse may allude that the existence of Iblis amongst the jinn may create in some the false impression that evil, corruption, and mischief

are in their nature, impeding them to avail themselves of the Light of Guidance.

The believing amongst the jinn thereby reflect that they are also free to choose, since there are righteous and impious ones amongst them. Therefore, they are prepared by nature to find Guidance. Respecting others may lead to further receptivity of propagation though which the group may be paved for guidance and perfection.

The blessed Verse rectifies our assumptions concerning the jinn, since the word jinn connotes mischief, corruption, deviation, and error for some people; though the fact is that there exist different groups of the jinn, righteous and impious. The Arabic word qidad denotes "severed, separate" connoting different, separate groups.

The blessed Verse 12 reflects that the believing jinn proceed to warn others by saying:

"And we are certain that we cannot overcome Allah's Will on the earth nor can we flee His Omnipotence."

In other words, it would be quite unfounded to claim that one may flee Divine chastisement by escaping to some point on the earth or in the heavens. Thus, the former clause makes a reference to escaping Divine Omnipotence by resorting to some place on the earth, though the latter implies escaping from the earth and the heaven.

Another possibility is also suggested as per which the former implies that it would be impossible to overcome the Lord and the latter reflects that it would be impossible to flee from Divine Justice. Thus, when there is no way to overcome God Almighty nor to flee from Him, there remains no other choice but to submit to His Just Command.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 13-15

وَأَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ فَمَن يُؤْمِن بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا

وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ ۖ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا

13. 'And when we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed therein and whoever believes in his Lord shall have no fear, either of a decrease or injustice.

14. 'And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient.' And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path.

15. And as for the disobedient, they shall be firewood for Hell.

The believing jinn proceed to say:

"When we heard the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, we believed in it,"

intending to say that if they call others unto the Guidance of the Holy Qur'an, they have already acted upon the same; thus, they do not call others to something which they have already neglected.

The consequence of believing in God Almighty is expressed in a terse clause, saying:

"Whosoever believes in his Lord shall fear neither decrease nor injustice."

The Arabic word bakhs implies decrease stemming from injustice and the word rahaqa connotes to cover by force.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the distinction lying between the twain is that the former implies that nothing shall be decreased from their righteous good deeds and the latter reflects that nothing shall be added to their sins and vices.

Some also hold that the former implies decrease in righteous good deeds and the latter is used in the sense of hard task. At any rate, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that no matter whether the deeds are significant or otherwise, the believing shall be granted the Rewards without any increase or decrease. It is true that Divine Justice is not restricted to the believing, but since disbelievers do no righteous good deeds, they are not mentioned herein.

The blessed Verse 14 provides further explanation as to the believers' and the disbelievers' fates:

"And that some amongst us are Muslims and some are disobedient."

The present participial form

qasit ("just distributor"),

derived from the root q-s-t ("distribute or divide justly"), made from the fourth form of the root, if'al, implying transitivity, connotes administration of justice, though used in its trilateral form, as appearing herein, implies disobedience and digression from the Path of Truth.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"And whoever embraces Islam has opted for the Straight Path,"

proceeding toward Divine Guidance and Rewards.

The blessed Verse 15 adds:

"But as to the disobedient, they shall be firewood in Hell."

It is worthy of note that the verbal form

aslama ("believed"),

in preceding blessed Verse, stands in contrast with qasit (herein: "disobedient") in the blessed Verse in question, implying that faith impedes man from plunging into disobedience, as the disbelieving are certainly adulterated with disobedience and wrong doing.

It also implies that the true believers may never be adulterated with disobedience.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"A true believer is one from whose part people are assured of the security of their life and property."[7]

According to another Prophetic tradition,

"Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other are rest assured.[8]

The Arabic clause

"They have sought the Straight Path" (taharru rashadan),

appearing at the close of the previous Verse, implies that the believing proceed toward Guidance attentively and intentionally rather than blindly, and their most cherished Reward lies in attaining to the Truth thanks to which, they may avail themselves of all Divine Bounties; whereas the worst misfortune of the disobedient is that they shall be firewood in Hell, inwardly set ablaze.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 16-17

وَأَن لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُم مَّاءً غَدَقًا

لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَن يُعْرِضْ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

16. If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance.

17. It is intended that We try them thereby. And whoever turns away from the Reminder of his Lord, He will afflict him with an increasing and severe torment.

The blessed Verses in question seemingly proceed with the believing jinn talking with their people. Nonetheless, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that they are Divine Words inserted in between the words of the jinn, though the parenthetical statement bears particular similarity to the tone of the preceding blessed Verses, reflecting the words of the believing jinn and taking into account the contextual meaning, being not the words of the jinn sounds a remote possibility.

At any rate, the preceding blessed Verses treat of their Rewards granted in this world, saying:

"If they [the jinn and mankind] persevere on the path [of faith], We shall surely bestow upon them water in abundance";

in other words, God Almighty sends down His rain of Mercy upon them and makes the life giving springs available to them. Where there exists water in abundance, everything may be found copiously and thereby they are granted different kinds of Bounties.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"If people be steadfast with regard to our guardianship, they shall be granted knowledge in abundance."[9]

The Arabic nominal form ghadaq implies abundant water. Emphasis is laid many a time in the Holy Qur'an on the point that faith and fear of God Almighty are not only sources of spiritual blessings, but they also entail abundance of material provision, flourishing, and prosperity.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Qur'anic Verse reflects that steadfastness in faith, rather than the faith per se, entails abundant Bounties, since fleeting faith may not lead to such Bounties. In other words, steadfastness in faith and fear of God are of significance in which many people are weak.

Making a reference to the truth lying herein, the blessed Verse 17 proceeds to say that God Almighty tries them with abundance of Bounties to see whether the increase in the Bounties leads to their vanity and neglect or it entails awakening, gratitude, and according further attention to God Almighty.

Thus, it is clear that such abundance serves as a means of Divine Trial and it is noteworthy that such Trial is far harder and more complicated than that of torments, since the former naturally causes weakness, indolence, neglect, and indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh through which man turns away from God Almighty and paves the ground for satanic temptations.

Thos who remember God Almighty at all times may merely preserve themselves from the undesirable consequences of increase and abundance of Bounties, since such people preserve their hears from satanic temptations through remembering God Almighty at all times.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that whoever turns away from the remembrance of God Almighty shall suffer severe and ever increasing torments.

The Arabic root s-'-d denotes "climb, ascend" and it also connotes "mountain pass." Since, climbing such passes entails hardships, the Arabic cognate word sa'd implies vicissitudes and hardships.

Thus, many a Qur'anic exegete have provided the exegesis as to which the Arabic word in question implies severe torment, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[10]:

"I shall oblige him to face a severe torment."

The expression may also connote the increase of such torment, in that the blessed Verses in question reflect the nexus between faith and fear of God and increase in Bounties on the one hand and the link between such increase and Divine Trials on the other.

The blessed Verses also treat of the relationship between turning away from remembering God Almighty at all times and the severe and ever increasing torments.

The same themes are attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, instances of which include:

"But whoever turns away from remembering Me, for him is a life of hardship and WE shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection"[11];

"When he [Solomon (as)] saw it placed before him, he said: "This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful"[12];

"Know that your possessions and your offspring are but a trial and that surely with Allahis a great Reward"[13].

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 18-19

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا

18. The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah.

19. And when the servant of Allah [i.e. Muhammad (S)] stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.

The Arabic nominal form masajid is the plural form of masjid, literally denoting "place of prostration."

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) say saying:

"Since the Jews and the Christians associated partners with God Almighty in their places of worship, God Almighty decreed that Muslims are not supposed to associate anyone with God Almighty in worship in Muslims' places of prostration [namely the mosques] and God Almighty curses the one who shows disrespect at the mosques."[14]

Quoting the believing jinn in calling others unto monotheism, the blessed Verse 18 says:

"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."

The Arabic plural nominal form masajid indicate places where believers prostrate themselves before God Almighty whose most perfect instance is Masjid al-Haram [literally: the Sacred or Holy Mosque]. Other instances include other mosques, though in its broader semantic domain, it is applied to all the places where the believers establish their prayers and prostrate themselves before God Almighty.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet as saying:

"The earth in its entirety serves as my place of prostration and purification [namely tayammum: "ritual purification with sand, soil, or dust, allowed when water is unavailable"]."[15]

Thus, the blessed Verse in question provides a response to the Arab polytheists and the like of them who had turned Ka'ba to an idol temple. It also reflects the erring Christians who had resorted to trinity worshipping three gods in their churches. The Holy Qur'an is saying that all the places of worship belong to God Almighty and any other object of worship may not be worshipped.

Reference is also made herein to interceding with the Noble Prophet and Divine Guides. Such intercession stands in no contradiction to the truth of monotheism nor to Qur'anic Verses, but it lays emphasis on monotheism and the truth that all things come from God Almighty.

Intercession and invoking the Noble Prophet (S) to intercede with the believers for Divine Mercy is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, though some people who have been remote from Islamic teachings and the Qur'anic Verses unfoundedly deny any kind of intercession, referring to a number of the Qur'anic Verses, including the blessed Verse 18:

"The mosques are for Allah [Alone]. Therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah."

They falsely claim that the blessed Verse in question implies that the believers are not supposed to intercede with anyone for Divine Forgiving of the sins.

The point is that the blessed Verse is in no way related to their unfounded claim, but it makes a reference to refuting polytheism in sense that some people err in associating objects of worship with God Almighty and invoking them for granting them bounties. In other words, invoking objects of worship besides God Almighty and regarding them as independent and willful entails polytheism.

The preposition

ma'a ("with")

in the negative imperative sentence

"Invoke not anyone along with Allah,"

implies that nothing is supposed to be associated with God Almighty in worship nor should anything besides Him be regarded as an independent source of willful acts.

However, invoking Divinely appointed Prophets to intercede with God Almighty on people's behalf for Forgiveness or bestowal of Bounties is not only allowed herein, but Some Qur'anic Verses call the Noble Prophet (S)

to act likewise and others are at times called to intercede with the Noble Prophet for Divine Forgiveness.

In this respect, mention may be made of two Qur'anic Verses:

"Take alms from their possessions in order to purify them and sanctify them with it and invoke Allah for them, since your invocations are a source of security for them"[16];

"O our father! Ask Forgiveness [from Allah] for our sins, as we were sinners. He [Ya'qub] said: 'I will ask my Lord for forgiveness for you"[17].

Thus, interceding with God Almighty on behalf of the believers is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Discussions on intercession are to be found above under 2:48 and 5:35.

Making reference to the great effects created by reciting the Qur'anic Verses by the Noble Prophet (S) in his worships, the blessed Verse 19 is saying that when Allah's servant, Muhammad (S) stood up invoking Him in prayer, a group made round him a dense crowd.

The Arabic nominal form libadh denotes something whose constituent elements are condensed, though it herein implies the strange assembly of the believing jinn to listen to the Qur'anic blessed Verses in their first encounter with the Holy Qur'an as well as the extraordinary impression of the Noble Prophet's (S) prayers upon them.

Two further exegeses have also been suggested for the blessed Verse in question. Firstly, the believing jinn reflect the Noble Prophet's (S) companions, though limited in number in Mecca, who got together in crowds to listen to him. Thus, the jinn are instructed to proceed immediately toward the Islamic faith.

According to the other suggestion, the Arab polytheists surrounded the Noble Prophet (S) when he was engaged in establishing his prayers and reciting the Qur'anic Verses in order to deride and harm him. However, the latter exegesis does not befit the intention of those from amongst the jinn who intended to call others unto faith, but it befits one of the two preceding meanings.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 20-22

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

قُلْ إِنِّي لَن يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا

20. Say: "I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him."

21. Say: "It is not in my power to cause you harm nor to bring you to the Straight Path."

22. Say: "None can protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him.

To further solidify the pillars of monotheism and reject any kind of polytheism, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, the blessed Verses in question order the Noble Prophet to say:

"I invoke only my Lord and I associate none as partners along with Him. It does not lie within my capacity to inflict any harm upon you nor

may I lead you to the Straight Path. None may protect me from Allah's chastisement [if I disobey Him], nor can I find refuge except in Him."

Thus, the blessed Verses reflect total obedience before Divine Threshold. On the other hand, they reject any kind of extremist beliefs as to the Noble Prophet (S), as despite his quite exalted rank before God Almighty, he may not seek any refuge from His torment except in Him, let alone the useless idols.

Furthermore, these blessed Verses put an end to the irrelevant pretexts and expectations of obdurate people from the Noble Prophet (S) who requested him to work Divine Acts. These Qur'anic Verses clearly prove that intercession is dependent upon Divine Will.

The Arabic nominal form multahad, deriving from l-h-d, literally denotes a lateral hole or niche, though it herein connotes a safe haven and place of refuge. It is also suggested that the word is applied to a box wherein precious things are placed and locked.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 23-24

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا

23. [Mine is] but imparting Allah's Messages and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, Hellfire shall be in store for him where he shall dwell forever.

24. The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number.

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23, the Noble Prophet (S) is saying that it is his obligation to impart the Divine Message.

The theme is recurrently attested in the Qur'anic Verses, an instance of which is:

"It is Our Messenger's obligation to convey [the Message] clearly"[18].

Concerning the distinction between balagh ("imparting") and risala ("mission"), it is suggested that the former is applied to imparting the fundamentals of religion (usul), whereas the latter connotes conveying the secondary principles of religion (furu').

However, it is also suggested that the former reflects imparting Divine Commands and the latter implies execution of the Commands, though they seemingly imply the same meaning and lay emphasis on each other, as reflected in numerous Qur'anic Verses wherein both terms have been employed in the same sense, e.g.

"I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord" (uballighukum risalat-i rabbi;[19]).

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse 23 closes by warning people that whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger (S), Hellfire shall be in store for him wherein he shall dwell forever. The blessed Verse clearly indicates that only the polytheists and the disbelievers, rather than all sinners, shall enter Hellfire.

The blessed Verse 24 proceeds to say:

"The disbelievers' disobedience will continue until they see that which they are promised. Then they shall know whose helpers shall be more feeble and of less in terms of number."

Different exegeses have been suggested concerning the clause

"which they are promised,"

in that the torment in this world or both worlds is intended herein, though it seems befitting that reference is herein made to the general sense of the words, in that the increase and the decrease in the number of the helpers and the weakness and strength thereof further befits this world.

Thus, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse implies the explicit increase in the power of the Muslims in the battle of Badr. Numerous traditions reflect that the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS; may our souls be his ransom).

Therefore, the tone of the blessed Verse clearly indicates that the enemies of the Islamic faith recurrently bragged about their power and their large number regarding the Muslims as weak and feeble. Thus, the Holy Qur'an consoles the believers and bears them glad tidings that they shall be finally victorious and defeat shall be in store for the enemies.

The history of the Prophets (as), particularly the biographical accounts of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) reflect the manner in which large numbers of the disbelievers, despite their power against the few believers, despaired and were defeated. The same theme is clearly reflected in the Qur'anic Verses concerning the Children of Israel and the Pharaoh, Goliath (Jalut) and Saul (Talut), and those regarding the battles of Badr and Ahzab.

Surah al-Jinn - Verses 25-28

قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي أَقَرِيبٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا

إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

25. Say: "I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.

26. "He is the Omniscient of the unseen and He reveals to none His unseen secrets."

27. Except to a Messenger whom He has chosen and then He makes a band of watching guards to march before him and behind him.

28. [Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things.

The Qur'anic attestations of the Arabic imperative verbal form

qull ("Say!")

exceed three hundred in number, followed by responses, potential questions, and taking stances against the unbefitting expectations and illusions.

Since it is reflected in the preceding blessed Verses that the derision and disobedience of such people continues until Divine torment, as promised to them, sill be sent down, the question as to the term of the promise is raised.

As suggested by the Qur'an exegetes regarding the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verses in question, some of the polytheists, e.g. Nadhr ibn Harith, raised the same question following the Revelation of the preceding blessed Verses, the Holy Qur'anic Verses in question provide a response, saying:

"Say: 'I know not whether what is promised to you is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a term.'"

The knowledge of the appointed term solely belongs to the Pure Essence of God Almighty and He thus willed it to be unknown to His servants, such that it may serve as a means of Trial for the people, since had they been aware of its closeness or remoteness, the Trial would have been of less effect.

The Arabic nominal form amad denotes time, though according to Raghib's Mufradat, the Arabic word zaman connotes the beginning and the end, but amad is solely applied to the end of something in terms of temporality. It is also suggested that abad and amad are semantically similar, though their distinction lies in that the former is applied to infinite time, but the latter implies a limited span of time, however long it may be.

At any rate, the same theme is attested many a time in the Qur'anic Verses, as per which whenever the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the time of the Resurrection, he would say that solely God Almighty is Omniscient of the unseen.

According to a Prophetic tradition, once Gabriel, disguised as a Bedouin, appeared before the Noble Prophet (S) and raised a number of questions including the time of the Resurrection. The Noble Prophet (S) replied that the one whom he was asking was no more knowledgeable than the questioner.

The Arab repeated his question even louder to which the Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Woe unto you! The Day of Resurrection shall arrive. What have you done for that Day?"[20]

The blessed Verse 27 proceeds the discussion by suggesting a general rule concerning the knowledge of the unseen, saying that God Almighty is the Omnipotent of the Unseen, but He does not grant the Knowledge of the Secrets to anyone, unless, according the following blessed Verse, He appoints a Messenger and be content with him.

Thus, He grants him the knowledge of the unseen through Revelation.

A precise study of different Qur'anic Verses clearly reflect that there are two categories of Qur'anic Verses treating of the knowledge of the unseen: those in which such knowledge is particular to God Almighty negating the same of others besides Him, e.g.

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He"[21]***;***

"Say: 'None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah, nor may they perceive when they shall be resurrected"[22]***;***

"If I had the knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth and no evil should have touched me"[23];

"Say: 'The unseen belongs to Allah Alone"[24].

The second category of the Qur'anic Verses clearly indicate that the Friends of God Almighty are to some extent aware of the unseen, e.g.

"Nor will Allah disclose to you the secrets of the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He wills"[25].

Regarding the miracles wrought be the Noble Prophet Jesus (as), the Holy Qur'anic Verse[26] reads:

"I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses."

Taking into account the exception reflected in the following blessed Verse, it is clear that God Almighty grants His Chosen Messengers (as) partial knowledge of the unseen.

Further, numerous Qur'anic Verses concern the knowledge of the unseen, e.g.

"The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land and they after their defeat will be, before long [in a few years], triumphant"[27];

"He Who has given you the Qur'an will certainly bring you back to the place of return [i.e. Mecca]"[28];

"You shall enter Masjid al-Haram, if Allah wills in utmost security"[29].

The Divine Revelation sent down onto Allah's Messengers (as) is actually a kind of the knowledge of the unseen left at their disposal.

Then, how could one say that they are unaware of the unseen when Divine Revelation is sent onto them? Furthermore, numerous traditions indicate that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were to some extent aware of the unseen and imparted the same at times.

For instance, it is reported in the account of the conquest of Mecca that Hatib ibn Abi Balti'a wrote a letter to the people of Mecca and asked a certain woman by the name of Sara to hand it to the Meccan polytheists and thereby informed them of the imminent attack of the Muslim army. She concealed the letter in her hair and departed for Mecca.

The Noble Prophet dispatched Imam 'Ali (as) and some other Muslims to encounter her at a station called the garden of Khakh and seize Hatib's letter addressed to the Meccan polytheists. Upon facing them, she totally denied the claim, but finally confessed and handed them the letter. The details of the account and its transmission chains are to be found above in Chapter 60 (Surah al-Mumtahana).

Another instance of such knowledge of the unseen is reported in the account of the battle of Mu'ta and the martyrdom of Ja'far and some other Muslim military commanders as simultaneously imparted to the Muslims by the Noble Prophet (S) in Medina. There are many similar instances in the Noble Prophet's (S) biographical accounts.[30]

Predictions of many an event are to be found in the Nahj al-Balagha, reflecting that Imam 'Ali (as) was aware of such secrets of the unseen, an instance of which is to be found in the thirteenth sermon treating of the Basrans' vices, saying:

"It is as if I see that Allah's torments have come down upon you from the heaven and the earth and you have all drowned. The apex of your mosque is obvious like the breast of the ship in water."

Numerous such predictions by the Noble Imam (as) are to be found in other narrations recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources an instance of which include: he informed Hujr ibn Qays that he would be forced to curse him following his demise;[31] concerning Marwan, he said that advanced in years, he would carry the banner of error;[32] Kumayl ibn Ziyad said unto Hajjaj that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) had informed him that Hajjaj would slay the Noble Imam (as);[33] concerning the Kharijis of Nahrawan, he said that more than ten people from the Noble Imam's (as) adherents would not fall and more than ten people from the Kharijis would not be saved;[34] while passing by the land of Karbala', he informed Isbagh ibn Nubata of the burial place of Imam Husayn (as);[35] numerous narrations have been transmitted in Fadha'il al-Khamsa from the Sunni sources regarding the extraordinary scope of Imam 'Ali's (as) knowledge, making mention of them all will entail prolixity.[36]

Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) concerning the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen, amongst which mention may be made of the following: Kafi, vol. 1, different chapters, in which such knowledge is explicitly mentioned or implied.

Twenty two traditions are to be found in volume 26 of Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar. Generally speaking, the traditions concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen are transmitted on a recurrent basis.

Now, it remains to establish some harmony between the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions proving or negating the knowledge of the unseen granted to others. There exist different ways to achieve such goal.

One of the most well-known ways to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the knowledge of unseen attributed to God Almighty is essential and independent. Consequently, others have not independent knowledge of the unseen and their partial knowledge is granted them by God Almighty through His Grace.

In other words, the knowledge of the unseen bestowed upon others is merely secondary. The blessed Verse in question serves as evidence to the same argument, as per which God Almighty informs no one of the secrets of the unseen except for the Messengers (as) with whom God Almighty is satisfied.

Such implication is suggested in the Nahj al-Balagha, as per which while informing others of the events to happen in future, predicting the Mongol invasion of the Islamic lands, one of his companions inquired:

"O Command of the Faithful! Do you possess knowledge of the unseen?"

The Noble Imam replied smilingly:

"It is not the knowledge of the unseen, but I have learned it from a knowledgeable source [namely the Noble Prophet (S)]."[37]

Many a scholars have approved of such method of coincidence of the seemingly different sources.

The secrets of the unseen fall into two categories: those particular to God Almighty unknown by others, e.g. the time of Resurrection; and those imparted by God Almighty to His Messengers (as) and Friends, as reflected in the Nahj al-Balagha under the above mentioned sermon:

"The knowledge of the unseen solely rests in the knowledge of [the time of] Resurrection and what is mentioned in the Qur'anic Verse[38]: 'Allah, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain and knows that which is in the wombs. No one knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die.'"

To further expound the meaning of the blessed Qur'anic Verse, the Noble Imam (as) added:

"God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the wombs, whether it is a male or a female, homely or comely, generous or niggardly, fortunate or unfortunate, a dweller of the Hell or a dweller of Paradise… These constitute the knowledge of the unseen, unknown to anyone, but God Almighty. Such knowledge is different from what God Almighty taught His Messenger (S) and he imparted the same unto me."[39]

Some people may obtain some knowledge concerning sending down the rain and the like, but the precise and detailed Knowledge solely rests with His Divine Pure Essence. Likewise, we are unaware of the details of Resurrection, but our knowledge as to the same is quite partial. Such partial knowledge is reflected in certain traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) concerning the birth or the end of life of certain people.

Another way to reconcile the twain is to suggest that the secrets of the unseen are recorded in two places, the Preserved Tablet (luh mahfuth), the Treasury of Knowledge possessed only by God Almighty Alone which is not subject to any alteration nor is it shared by anyone else besides Him; and the Tablet of Effacement and Affirmation (mahw wa ithbat) which is the knowledge as to the requirements of the time rather than the complete cause ('illat tamma), hence its changeability. What others besides God Almighty are unaware concerns the latter.

In this respect, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"God Almighty possesses some Knowledge not shared by anyone, and He possesses some Knowledge imparted to His Angels and Messengers (as), such [the latter] knowledge is imparted to us."[40]

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) as saying:

"Had there been no Qur'anic Verses, I would have been aware of the past and the events to happen to the Day of Resurrection."

Someone inquired:

"Which Verse do you mean?"

He replied:

"God Almighty says that Allah effaces whatever He wills and He established on its basis what He wills and with Him is the Mother of the Book [the Preserved Tablet]."[41]

It is noteworthy that the classification of sciences in the aforesaid method of reconciliation is based on its inevitability or lack of the same, though the quantity of knowledge is intended in the preceding method.

The next method suggests that God Almighty is in actuality All-Aware of all the secrets of the unseen, but such knowledge is not shared by His Messengers (as) and friends, unless He imparts them to them and such imparting solely rests on His Permission and Satisfaction.

Therefore, the blessed Verses and the traditions reflecting that they are unaware of such secrets allude to the lack of knowledge in actuality and those claiming to know the same allude to its potentiality.

Likewise, one may ask another to carry a letter and give it to someone else. He carrier is unaware of the contents of the letter, though he may open it and obtain knowledge of the same.

In such cases, the writer of the letter may give him the permission to read it or he may not grant such permission. Such method is substantiated by the traditions recorded in the Kafi in a chapter entitled "The Imams are taught what they intend to know (Inna al-a'imma idha sha'u an ya'lamu 'ulimu)."

In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"When the Imam intends to know something, God Almighty teaches him."[42]

Such method of reconciliation solves many a problem with regard to the knowledge possessed by the Noble Prophet (S) and the Noble Imams (as).

For instance concerning the reason lying behind their consumption of some poisoned food or water, whereas it is not allowed that one jeopardizes one's life when he is aware of the danger, it may be suggested that in such cases the Noble Prophet (S) or the Imams (as) were not allowed to acquire knowledge as to the secrets of the unseen.

Likewise, it may be an expediency that they be unaware of something or it may be some trial through which they attain to perfection.

In this respect, it is reported in the account of the "night of the stay" (laylat al-mabit) that Imam 'Ali (as) slept in the Noble Prophet's (as) bed in lieu of him, though, as reported by the Noble Imam (as), he was unaware that the Qurayshi polytheists had intended to attack the Noble Prophet at dawn in which case he could have been martyred or saved his life.

It is in such case that the Imam (as) is not allowed to be aware of the secret so that the Divine Trial be actualized. Had the Imam been aware of jeopardizing his life while sleeping in the Noble Prophet's (S) bed in lieu of him and he could not be so proud of embarking upon such valiant act and the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions concerning such sacrifice would not have been that justified. Therefore, willful knowledge serves as a solution to all such problems.

Another method of reconciliation may be suggested for the knowledge of the unseen, though it is applicable to some of these traditions, in that these traditions addressed an audience with different backgrounds.

Those who were prepared to acknowledge the Infallible Imams' (as) knowledge of the unseen were introduced to the truth, but those who opposed the question or were feeble of faith and of quite limited capacity were introduced to what was not too strong for their early stomachs.

For instance, it is reported in a narration that Abu Basir and some of the eminent companions of Imam Sadiq (as) had attended at a session when the Noble Imam (as) entered in rage and took his seat saying that it was surprising that some people entertained the false impression that the Imams (as) possessed the knowledge of the unseen, but the fact is otherwise; only God Almighty is Omnipotent of the unseen.

He had intended to punish his maid servant, but she fled and he did not know in which of the rooms she was hiding.[43]

The transmitter of the tradition says that when the Noble Imam departed the session, he and some other companions of his went to his house and said unto him:

"May we be your ransom! You said thus regarding your maid servant, but we know that you are well-versed in many a science; however, we make no mention of the knowledge of the unseen."

Then, the Noble Imam (as) enlightened them in that respect reflecting his knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

It is crystal clear that some of the people attending the session were not intellectually prepared to perceive the exalted rank of the Imam (as). Further, it is worthy of note that these five methods do not stand in contradiction, but all of them are true and applicable.

There are, however, other methods by which the partial knowledge of the unseen as possessed by the Imams (as) and the leaders of the Muslim community may be proven.

Firstly, it is known that the scope of their mission was not limited to any specific place and time, but it was universal and everlasting. Now, how such an individual could be appointed to fulfill a universal mission through merely his own limited time and place? How could one appointed as the ruler of a vast region be unaware of it and succeed in the fulfillment of his mission?

In other words, the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) were vested with imparting and implementing Divine Laws such that they may meet the demands of all mankind in any place and at any time, and the successful fulfillment of such mission requires at least some partial knowledge of the secrets of the unseen.

Secondly, if we take into account three Qur'anic Verses, we will notice that they shed light on the question of the Noble Prophet's (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) knowledge of the secrets of the unseen:

1. Regarding Àsif ibn Barkhiya who brought the queen of Sheba's throne to Solomon (as) in the twinkling of an eye, the Holy Qur'an[44] says:

"One with whom was the knowledge of the Book said: 'I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye.' Then, when Solomon (as) noticed that it was placed before him, he said: 'This is by the Grace of my Lord."

According to another Qur'anic Verse[45]:

"Say: 'Sufficient as a witness between me and you is Allah and those too who have knowledge of the Book."

It is narrated in numerous traditions, recorded in the Sunni and the Shi'i sources, on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that he asked Allah's Messenger (S) concerning the meaning of

"one who has knowledge from the Book (alladi 'indahu 'ilm-un min al-kitab),"

to which he replied:

"He was the trustee of my brother, Solomon, son of David."

I inquired about

"and one with him is the knowledge of the Book (wa man 'indahu 'ilm al-kitab),"

to which he replied:

"He is my brother, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."[46]

It is worthy of note that

"knowledge from the Book"

concerns Àsif which is partial knowledge and

"knowledge of the Book"

concerns 'Ali (as) which is general knowledge; thus the difference between Àsif and 'Ali (as) in terms of their ranks is clarified.

Further, the blessed Qur'anic Verse[47]:

"We have sent down unto you the Book as an exposition of everything"

clearly reflects that one who possesses knowledge as to the secrets of such Book is supposed to know the secrets of the unseen.

It serves as evidence as to the possibility of the knowledge of the secrets of the unseen by Allah's friends through Divine Command. Further discussions on the knowledge of the unseen are to be found above under 6:50, 59; 7:188.

The last blessed Verse of the Chapter, Verse 28, makes mention of the reason lying behind the presence of such guardians:

"[Allah] protects them till He sees that they have imparted the Messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all that which is with them and He keeps a record of all things."

Actual Knowledge is herein intended by the Arabic word

'ilm ("knowledge").

In other words, the blessed Verse is not saying that God Almighty did not know something about His Messengers (as) but He gained the Knowledge thereafter, since Divine Omniscience is Infinite, Pre-Eternal, and Everlasting.

The blessed Verse is saying that such Divine Knowledge may be actualized in the world of existence in some objective form, namely His Messengers (as) actually convey their Prophetic Calls and provide mankind with the Final Argument.

O Lord! Bestow upon us the Blessings of inward knowledge and obedience to You!

Notes

1. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 390; other traditions have been narrated in this respect.
2. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Tafsir; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 19.
3. Bukhari’s Sahih; Muslim’s Sahih; Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s Musnad; Fi Hilal al-Qur’an, under the blessed Verse in question. For the sake of brevity, other reported occasions are Revelation is not mentioned here.
4. 37:158
5. Ibn Mahbub’s Mashyakha and Sara’ir.
6. Muhaqqiq Hilli, al-Mu‘tabar; Allama Hilli, Tadhkirat al-Fuqaha’; Shahid al-Awwal and Shahid al-Thani, Sharh Lum‘a.
7. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 195.
8. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, the chapter on the believer (mu’min).
9. Tafsir Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. 74:37
11. 20:124
12. 27:40
13. 8:28
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 355.
15. Wasa’il al-Shi‘a, vol. 2, p. 970.
16. 9:103
17. 12:97-98
18. 5:92
19. 7:62
20. Tafsir al-Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 105.
21. 6:59
22. 27:65
23. 7:188
24. 10:20
25. 3:179
26. 3:49
27. 30:2-3
28. 28:85
29. 48:27
30. Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 2, p. 237.
31. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, vol. 2, p. 358.
32. Ibn Sa‘d, Tabaqat, vol. 5, p. 30.
33. Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, vol. 5, pt. 3, p. 325.
34. Haythami, Majma‘, vol. 6, p. 241.
35. Riyadh al-Nasar, vol. 2, p. 222.
36. Fadha’il al-Khamsa, vol. 2, pp. 231-253.
37. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 128.
38. 31:34
39. ibid.
40. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 160. Numerous similar traditions have been recorded in the same source.
41. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 512.
42. Kafi, the aforesaid chapter, tradition no. 3. Similar traditions are to be found in the same chapter.
43. Usul Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on Rarities as to the Unseen (Bab Nadir-un fihi Dhikr al-Ghayb), tradition no. 3.
44. 27:40
45. 13:43
46. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 280-281; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 2, p. 523.
47. 16:89

www.alhassanain.org/english

Surah al-Muzzammil, Chapter 73

(The One Wrapped in Garment)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 20

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has twenty Verses. The tone of the Chapter clearly reflects its similarities to other Meccan Chapters. The majority of the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question indicate that when the Noble Prophet (S) had declared his Prophetic call, his opponents rose to confront and belie him. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely commanded to show tolerance to them.

The occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Chapter is reflected in some of the traditions according to which upon receiving the earliest of the Revelations, he was stood in awe. He came to Khadija, complained from physical discomfort and rested for a while.

He bade his wife to wrap him in a garment when Gabriel revealed the blessed Verse

"O you wrapped in garment!"

unto him.[1]

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Whoever recites Surah al-Muzzammil, he will not face hardships in this world and the Hereafter."[2]

Other traditions have been narrated concerning the recitation of the blessed Chapter, though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein made of them. It is worthy of note, however, that such merits and blessings are dependent upon acting upon religious obligations.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

نِّصْفَهُ أَوِ انقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

1. O you wrapped in garment!
2. Stand [in prayer] all night, except a little.
3. Half of it or a little less than that,
4. Or a little more. And recite the Qur'an slowly and meditatively.

5. Since, We shall send down unto you a weighty Word.

The tone of the opening Verses of the blessed Chapter reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) is Divinely called unto steadfastness and preparedness for an immense obligation acting upon which requires spiritual growth.

The blessed Verses say:

"O you wrapped in garment! Stand in prayer all night, except a little. Half of it or a little less than that or a little more and recite the Qur'an meditatively with utmost clarity and eloquence."

It would be of interest to note that the Noble Prophet is herein addressed as:

"O you wrapped in garment!"

rather than

"O Messenger!"

or

"O Prophet!"

reflecting that it would be befitting to rise up, grow spiritually, and prepare oneself for embarking upon such great mission, rather than leading the life of a recluse. He is urged to rise at night, since his foes are asleep at the time and people desist from following their daily routines, hence further preparedness for meditation and spiritual growth.

Likewise, he is urged to recite the Holy Qur'anic Verses, since they include all the required lessons in this respect. Recitation of the blessed Verses is the best means of strengthening one's faith, steadfastness, fear of God Almighty, and spiritual growth.

The Arabic word tartil denotes "regularity, articulation, and being well-ordered," though it herein implies articulate, eloquent, and meditative recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, reflecting upon their meanings and impacts on one's life.

It goes without saying that such recitation of the Qur'anic Verses may easily lead man toward spiritual growth, moral nobilities, and fear of God Almighty. Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that establishing canonical prayers is herein intended, since a major part of such prayers lies in reciting Qur'anic Verses.

The clause

"stand at night" (qum al-layl)

is contrasted with "sleeping," though it does not solely denote standing up.

The point is that the different expressions denoting the spans of time spent in nightly vigilance actually implies "choice"; thus, the Noble Prophet (S) is free to choose to stay awake half of the night or sometime more or less, devoting his nightly vigilance to the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses.

Firstly, mention is made of all night, except for a little, then the time span is reduced to half of the night and then to less than half.

Some exegetes hold that choosing amongst two thirds, half, and a third of the night is herein intended, as the closing Verse

"Your Lord knows that you stand [to pray at night] a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night"

reiterates the same statement.

It is worthy of note that the last Verse clearly reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) was not alone in

"standing at night",

but a group of the believers accompanied him in such spiritual growth and had recognized him as their model in this respect.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that

"Stand [in prayer] all night, except a little"

bids the Noble Prophet to stand in prayer all nights except for some of them. According to this view, there is no exception in terms of the nightly spans of time, rather some nights is hereby intended.

Nonetheless, such interpretation is not seemingly accurate taking into account the single nominal form

"night" (layl)

and the clause

"half or less than that."

Different exegetes suggest different interpretations for

"weighty Word"

as they address different aspects of the question. However, the weight of the Word seemingly implies that the Holy Qur'an, from different aspects, is herein intended. The Holy Qur'anic Verses are weighty in terms of contents, meaning, and their impacts on the believers' hearts.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[3]:

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on mountains, you would have seen them humbling themselves and rent asunder."

Such

"weight"

connotes the warnings, promises, obligations, hardships resulting from the propagation of the Prophetic call.

The

"weight"

alludes to the weight in the scales of deeds and their accounts on the Day of Resurrection and finally the burden of complete implementation of such plans.

Inasmuch as the recitation of the Holy Qur'anic Verses is convenient and delightful, though acting upon their contents is hard, particularly on the threshold of the Prophetic call, when his milieu was imbued with the dark clouds of ignorance, idolatry, and superstitions.

It was at that time that his obdurate and merciless foes were hand in hand against him and his companions, though they sought assistance from Qur'anic teachings, establishment of nightly prayers, and seeking closeness to the Pure Essence of the Lord and thereby succeeded in overcoming all hardships and carrying such heavy burden.

According to the exegetic work, Atyab al-Bayan, the

"weighty word"

implies the proclamation of the Noble Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib's (as) caliphate and imamate, obliging him to confront so many obdurate foes.

Accordingly, the Holy Qur'an is not herein intended, since it is said

"Recite the Qur'an so that you may receive the weighty word in future. Thus, the Holy Qur'an precedes the weighty word."[4]

Some traditions have been narrated from the Infallible Imams (as) concerning of the word tartil, each of which addresses one of the aspects of the question.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that tartil herein reflects articulate recitation, unlike the hasty recitation of poetry and scattering the same like sand.

One is supposed to recites the Verses in a manner that he may strike the hardened hearts and awaken them, without necessarily aiming at reaching the end of the Chapter [namely, it is significant to comprehend the meaning of the Verses].[5]

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying

"The Holy Qur'an is not supposed to recite the Qur'anic Verses hastily, but they should be recited articulately. Whenever you come to a Verse treating of Hell, stop your recitation and invoke God Almighty for forgiveness. But, when you come to a Verse treating of Paradise, stop your recitation and invoke God Almighty to grant you Paradise [and prepare yourself for the same]."[6]

It is also reported that the Noble Prophet recited the blessed Verses discretely and articulately with a sweet voice.[7]

Further Qur'anic Verses and traditions[8] treat of the same significance reflecting that the blessed Qur'anic Verses are not supposed to be recited as if they are devoid of meaning, but in reciting them, particular attention is to be accorded to all the issues deepening their impacts on the reciters and the listeners.

It should be borne in mind at all times that Qur'anic Verses are Divine Messages and it is incumbent upon the believers to act upon their contents.

It is unfortunate that many a Muslim have consigned such truth to oblivion and have contented themselves with reciting the mere words and completing the Chapters and the Holy Qur'an in its entirety, without according the least attention to the goals behind their Revelation and the Divine Messages imparted by them.

It is true that Qur'anic Words deserve attention and reciting them entails Divine Blessings, but it should be borne in mind that reciting the words is a prelude to the comprehension of their contents.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verses in question reflect that significance of nightly vigilance, establishing nightly prayers, and the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses when the neglectful are asleep.

As mentioned above, praying at night and particularly at dawn immensely impacts the purity of the soul leading to spiritual growth, purity and awakening of the heart, strengthening the faith and will power, and solidifying the pillars of the fear of God Almighty in human heart and soul, such that man clearly witnesses them upon his first trial.

Thus, praying at night is accorded particular attention in the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Three things include Divine particular blessings: nightly prayers, feeding those who take fast at the time of breaking it, and visiting Muslim brethren."[9]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the blessed Qur'anic Verse

"Righteous deeds efface the impressions of evil deeds,"

he said:

"Nightly prayers efface the sins committed in the day."[10]

A detailed discussion treating of the same topic is to be found above, under 17:79, where ten traditions of interest were also quoted.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 6-7

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ ـ َ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا

6. Your nightly prayers are certainly stronger and more steadfastly.

7. And you make prolonged and steadfast efforts by day.

The blessed Verses in question further treat of the nightly prayers and the spiritual growth engendered by the nightly recitation of the blessed Qur'anic Verses.

They actually further support the preceding blessed Verses by saying that such Divine Command as to the nightly prayers and the recitation of the Verses entails stronger and more steadfast prayers and spiritual growth.

The Arabic nominal form nashi'a denotes "occurrence," though three connotations are suggested for its contextual meaning herein: the night hours occurring consecutively or particularly the late hours of the night and the break of the day; the nightly standing in prayers and the recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, in which respect it is narrated from the Imam Baqir (as) and the Imam Sadiq (as) that standing late at night to perform nightly prayers is herein intended,[11] ***and according to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, rising from the bed with no intention but to pray to God Almighty is herein intended;***[12] ***the word implies a spiritual state of sublime exaltation engendered in the heart at such hours at night whose impressions on human soul is of further profundity and lasting.***

It is worthy of note, however, that the last two connotations are correlative and the twain are implied herein.

The Arabic adverbial form wata'an implies setting foot and also agreement. The Arabic adverbial clause ashaddu wata'an connotes the hardship and the trouble in standing at night for nightly vigilance and prayers.

It may also imply the strong and lasting impressions made in human soul in the light of such prayers. At any rate, the latter sounds further befitting. It may also suggest further harmony experienced on such occasions amongst human heart, vision, and hearing actualized at the time of prayers.

The Arabic comparative adjectival form aqwama, cognate with qiyam ("rising") denotes "firmer; more straight." The Arabic passive present

verbal form qila herein implies remembrance of God Almighty and recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is amongst those Verses that express most eloquently the merits of praying at night and at daybreak when the mind is not so preoccupied with worldly affairs and it may thereby purify and foster human soul. It is herein reflected that human soul is particularly prepared to worship God Almighty and be engaged in reflection and remembering Him.

The blessed Verse 7 reflects that it is owing to the fact that you persevere in your abundant efforts during the day, since you are occupied at all times with guiding people, imparting your Divine Message, and finding solutions to the lives of the individuals and the society; therefore, you do not find adequate opportunities to devote yourself to worshipping God Almighty and you may spend the night in prayer.

Another suggested exegesis, which is of more interest and stands in further harmony with the preceding and the following blessed Verses, is that since you have to carry the heavy burdens of you obligations, you may strengthen your soul by your nightly prayers and obtain the required preparedness for embarking upon such great endeavors.

The Arabic nominal form sabh denotes movement and it is also applied to swimming, since the latter entails frequent movements. The human society is seemingly likened to a boundless ocean in which many people are drowning.

The waves move toward different directions in the agitated ocean and wondering barks seek a safe haven. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is the only rescue guard and the Holy Qur'an is the only rescue boat in the ocean. Such great swimmer is supposed to prepare himself for such enormous mission that lies in imparting the Divine Call during the day.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 8-10

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

رَّبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا

8. And remember the Name of your Lord and solely attach your heart to Him,

9. The Lord of the east and the west. There is not god but He. Therefore, take Him Alone as your Guardian and the Disposer of your affairs.

10. And be patient with what they say and keep away from them befittingly.

Following the Divine Command as to rise at night in prayer and brief reference made to the profound impressions of prayers, mention is made of five complementary Commands, saying:

"Remember the Name of your Lord."

It goes without saying that the mere remembrance of His Name is not herein intended, rather reference is made to according attention to the point that verbal remembrance serves as a prelude to the remembrance of the heart

purifying the soul and fostering the tree of intuitive knowledge and fear of God Almighty in the heart.

The Arabic nominal form rabb herein indicates that whenever one utters His Sacred Name, one is supposed to pay heed to the boundless Bounties and ongoing fostering of human soul.

Different stages of remembering God Almighty are mentioned by one of the exegetes: the first state is remembering His Name, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question; the second stage is to remember His Pure Essence in one's heart, as reflected in 7:203:

"And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear; the third stage transcends that of Divine Lordship to the Divine Attributes of His Beauty and Glory signified by Allah,"

as indicated in 33:41:

"O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance."

Thus, such ongoing remembrance undergoes different stages of development and the one who remembers Him is transported to the zenith of perfection.[13]

The second Command is saying:

"Attach your heart unto God Almighty, sever all the aspirations from anything besides Him, and sincerely rise to pray to Him."

The Arabic imperative verbal form tabattal denotes

"sever the ties!"

Mary (as) is called Baul since she did not marry. Fatima (as) is also called Batul since she was different from and superior to other women at the time in terms of deeds, conduct, and knowledge such that she had reached the stage of severance from all things besides Allah.

The verbal for herein implies the state in which man whole heartedly turns toward God Almighty, severing his ties from whatever exists besides Allah. Thus, such man is absorbed in devotion to God Almighty and performs all his deeds solely for Him Alone.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that the verbal form herein implies the state of humbleness at the time of praying to God Almighty.[14]

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as saying:

"There is neither asceticism nor separation in Islam."

The tradition implies that turning away from the world as practiced by the Christian monks does not exist in the Islamic faith, since they do not marry and abandon all social activities, but a true Muslim devotes himself wholeheartedly to God Almighty while living at the heart of the society. It is narrated from the Infallible Imams (as) that the verbal form in question implies stretching one's hands while establishing canonical prayers.

However, it is crystal clear that it reflects one of the manifestations of devotion and severing one's ties from all besides God Almighty.[15] It is noteworthy that such remembrance of God Almighty and devotion to Him are the great sources used by the men of God in fulfilling their enormous obligations aiming at guiding the people.

The blessed Verse 9 treats of the third Command:

"The Lord of the east and the west besides Whom there is no other God. Take Him Alone as your Guardian and the Disposer of your affairs."

It is worthy of note that following the stages of remembering God Almighty and devotion, the third stage is to put one's trust totally in God Almighty, the Lord of the east and the west. In other words, the world of existence in its entirety is subservient to His Sovereignty and Lordship. He is the only God to be worshipped.

The blessed Verse supports putting one's trust totally in God Almighty, since in the wide expanse of the world of existence, man may solely rely on Him as the Disposer of all the affairs, since He is the only Sovereign, Fosterer, and Bountiful Lord Worthy of being worshipped.

Mention is made of the fourth and the fifth Commands in the blessed Verse 10:

"Be patient with what they say and keep away from them befittingly."

Thus, reference is made of the states of patience and separation, since the path of calling people unto the Truth abounds in the foes' slander and harassment. The gardener is supposed to bear the stings of the thorns in order to pick up flowers.

Thus, one is supposed to be indifferent to the foes and keep away from them at times in order to ward off their evil actions and give them lessons. It is worthy of note, however, that such separation does not entail leaving incomplete education, propagation, and calling people unto God Almighty.

The blessed Verses in question provide the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and all those people following in his footsteps a series of comprehensive and perfect rules, urging them to derive their inspiration from praying to God Almighty at night and at day break and foster the tree by remembering God Almighty at all times, devotion, total reliance on Him, patience, and at times keeping away from the foes. What an interesting and comprehensive set of rules!

The expression

"the Lord of the east and the west"

makes a reference to His Sovereignty and Lordship over all the world of existence. The same expression is used in common parlance when we say so and so rules over the east and the west, namely he rules over the whole globe rather than the points of the east and the west.

"Befitting separation" (hijr jamil),

as mentioned above, connotes keeping away out of empathy and calling people unto the Truth.

It is an educational method employed at certain times which stands in no disharmony against the question of jihad at other times, since each of them have their own proper places. In other words, such separation does not entail indifference, as it is a kind of paying attention. Some have mistakenly regarded the blessed Verse in question as abrogating those of jihad.

The late eminent scholar, Tabarsi, in his Majma' al-Bayan (under the blessed Verse in question) states that the blessed Verse reflects that the propagators of the Islamic faith and the callers to the Holy Qur'an are supposed to be patient in the face of hardships and associate with people

with toleration and a good disposition, such that the hearts of the audiences sooner welcome their words.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 11-14

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا

وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا

11. And leave Me Alone to deal with the beliers, those who are in possession of good things of life. And grant them respite for a little while.

12. With Us are fetters and the [Hell] Fire.

13. And a food that chokes and an excruciating torment.

14. On the Day when the earth and the mountains will be in violent shake and the mountains will be a heap of sand.

The blessed Verse 11 is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) urging him to leave the records of the deeds of such arrogant sinners with Him. The preceding blessed Verse made a brief reference to the harassments of the enemies of the Islamic faith.

The blessed Verses in question harshly attacks them by severe warnings against the torments awaiting them in this world and the Hereafter. Thus, they are urged to revise their evil deeds.

The early Muslims contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet (S) are also consoled against the harsh attacks by the enemies urging them to persevere and remain steadfast by saying:

"Leave the affluent beliers unto Me and grant them respite for a short while."

In other words, God Almighty is saying that the Noble Prophet is not supposed to confront them, but to leave them to Him, such that they avail themselves of a brief respite so that they may heed the ultimatum and reveal their nature and carry the burdens of further sins. Divine excruciating torments await them.

It is recorded in the history of Islam that the Muslims gained power before long and inflicted severe blows upon their enemies at the battles of Badr, Hunayn, and Ahzab. The arrogant enemies died before long and met their dire fate of Divine torments in the purgatory and those of the Hereafter are not too remote from them.

The Arabic phrase

ul-i 'l-ni'ma ("possessors of bounties")

herein implies the arrogance and neglect stemming from affluence leading the affluent oftentimes to entanglements. The history of the Prophets (as) and the Qur'anic Verses reflect that the affluent are the foremost enemies of the faith, though they are supposed to precede others in welcoming the call of the Truth as a token of their gratitude for the Divine Bounties granted them.

The blessed Verse 12 proceeds with further explicit warnings saying:

"With Us are fetters and the [Hell] Fire."

The Arabic plural nominal form ankal denotes heavy chains. The word lexically denotes feebleness and weakness, since the shackles and fetters binding the feet, the hands, and the neck impede movement and entail weakness, the word is employed in the sense of chains, fetters, and shackles. The point is that such affluent but disobedient people availed themselves of unrestrained indulgence in worldly pleasures, but bondage and Hellfire awaits them in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse 13 adds that such disobedient people shall be given

"a food that chokes and an excruciating torment."

They had palatable food in this world and indulged in the pleasures of the flesh, whereas a food that will choke and painful torments will be in store for them in the world to come. The severity of such torments is known to no one but God Almighty. In this respect, it is narrated that a Muslim was reciting the blessed Verse in question once while the Noble Prophet (S) listened to him.

The reciter of the Verse cried out of a sudden and lost consciousness.[16] It is also reported that the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting the blessed Verse and had the same experience.[17] Such people will choke on the food in Hell.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[18]:

"No food will there be for them but a poisonous thorny plant."

It is also mentioned in the blessed Verses 43 and 44 that the sinners shall feed on the tree of Zaqqum, the same bitter and poisonous plant of a foul smell.

The blessed Verse 14 concerns the day when such torments shall be inflicted on the sinners, saying:

"On the Day when the earth and the mountains will be in violent shake and the mountains will be a heap of sand."

The Arabic nominal form kathib denotes "dune, sand hill." The Arabic nominal form mahil implies pouring something soft like sand and flour on something else, though it herein connotes something which is never fixed and permanent.

The blessed Verse reflects that the mountains shall disintegrate on the Day of Resurrection such that they turn into soft sand in which feet sink. Concerning the mountains on the threshold of the Resurrection, there are different Qur'anic expressions all of which reflect that they disintegrate and change into soft soil and sand. Further details may be found above under 20:105.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 15-16

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا

فَعَ ١ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا

15. We have sent unto you a Messenger to be a witness over you as We did send a Messenger to Pharaoh.

16. But Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger and We chastised him severely.

The Noble Prophet (S) witnesses the deeds in this world and bears witness to the same on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse 15 compares the Noble Prophet's (S) call and the animosity of the Arab chiefs against him and the rise of the Prophet Moses (as) against the people of the Pharaoh, saying:

"We have sent unto you a Messenger (S) to be a witness over you [whose obligation is to guide you and watch over your deeds] as We did send a Messenger (as) to Pharaoh [to guide him and his people and watch over their deeds]."

Thus, the Qur'anic Verses and the traditions reflect that the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) witness all our deeds. Fulfillment of the call entails supervision and the Noble Prophet (S) supervises all the deeds of his community and bears witness to the same.

The blessed Verse 16 is saying that Pharaoh rose against the Messenger of Allah (as) and God Almighty inflicted severe torments on him. Neither his enormous army, nor his vast realm, nor his power, nor the possessions of his people could impede Divine torments and they were all drowned in the raging waves of the Nile in which they took pride. Now, you are far inferior to them in terms of means and number. How could you be deceived by your meager means and number?

The Arabic nominal form wabil originally denotes heavy shower, but it connotes any heavy and severe thing, particularly torments. The blessed Verse in question implies the severity of the torment that it showers upon the sinners like a heavy downpour of rain. Disobedience to the commands of Allah's Messenger entails torments and entanglements.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verses 17-19

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا

السَّمَاءُ مُنفَطِرٌ بِهِ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا

إِنَّ هَٰذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

17. Then, how can you avoid the chastisement, if you disbelieve a Day that will make the children grey-headed?

18. On such Day the heaven will be cleft asunder and His Promise shall certainly be accomplished.

19. This is a warning and whoever wills, he may take a Path toward his Lord.

The Arabic plural nominal form wildan, whose singular form is walid, is applied to newly born infants. The Arabic plural nominal form shiyb, whose singular form is ashyab, denotes the grey-headed and the old. Two meanings may be suggested for the blessed Verse 17:

1. The severity of the Day of Resurrection shall be such that the newly born infants grow old.

2. That Day shall be so long that the children grow old.

At any rate, the blessed Verse is addressed to the disbelievers contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), warning them that if you disbelieve, how will you be untouched by the Divine severe torments that make the children grow old?

The torments which shall be inflicted upon the sinners on that Day shall be so severe, harsh, and horrible that "they shall make the children grow old."

It is reported that some of the horrible afflictions in this world may instantly make people grey-headed. The blessed Verse is saying that even if you happen not to be entangled with the torments in this world, like Pharaoh and his people, what will you do with the torments which shall be inflicted upon the disobedient on the Day of Resurrection?

The blessed Verse 18 further depicts that horrible Day, saying:

"On such Day the heaven will be cleft asunder and His Promise shall certainly be accomplished."

Many a Qur'anic Verses treat of the incidents that shall happen on the last day in this world and the Hereafter including horrible explosions and severe earthquakes and spontaneous alterations.

The blessed Verse in question briefly deals with the same saying that the heaven and the celestial bodies with their enormous greatness shall not stand the colossal incidents to occur on that Day; how the weak and vulnerable man shall be able to impede such incidents? The Arabic nominal form infitar denotes cleaving asunder.

The blessed Verse 19 makes a reference to the foregoing warnings, saying:

"This is a warning and whoever wills, he may take a Path toward his Lord."

Whoever intends to find guidance and attain to everlasting happiness may opt for the path leading to his Lord. Treading such path nonchalantly is not regarded as a merit, since the merit lies in that man chooses the path willfully. At any rate, God Almighty has provided man with the path, vision, and the shining sun so that man be able to choose the straight path and obey Divine Commands willfully.

Different exegeses have been suggested by Qur'an exegetes concerning the clause

"This is a warning."

Some suggest that reference is made to the admonitions in the preceding blessed Verses. Some maintain that mention is made of the Chapter or the Holy Qur'an in their entirety.

Some also hold that reference may be made to the Divine Command as to establishing nightly canonical prayers, as reflected in the opening Verses of the blessed Chapter, addressed to the Noble Prophet, though the clause in question is generalizing it to the entire Muslim community. Thus, the word path (sabil) mentioned in the following clause as well implies nightly canonical prayers as a significant path leading to the Lord.

Finally, the blessed Verses in question warn the arrogant beliers intoxicated by affluence and bounties against four excruciating torments: shackles and fetters, burning Fire, rough, choking, and deadly food, and different kinds of torments contrasted with the bounties in this world, availing oneself of boundless freedom, comfortable life, palatable food, and comfort in different forms. Since they availed themselves of all these

bounties at the price of wrong doing, arrogance, neglect, and disobedience to God Almighty, they shall have such dire fate on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Muzzammil - Verse 20

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۚ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۚ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَرْضَىٰ ۙ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۙ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا ۚ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

20. Your Lord knows that you and also a group of those with you stand [in prayer] at night a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to [precisely] measure it, so He granted you Mercy. Therefore, recite the Qur'an as much as may be convenient to you.

He knows that there will be some amongst you who fall sick, others travel [for earning a living], yet others fight in Allah's Cause. Therefore, recite as much of the Qur'an as may be convenient to you, and perform canonical prayers and give alms, and lend Allah a goodly loan [expend in His Cause]. And [know that] whatever good deeds you send before you for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah, better and greater in Reward. And seek Forgiveness of Allah as Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.

The blessed Verse in question warns Muslims against being arrogant by doing good deeds like establishing nightly prayers, recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, and helping the poor, since they still need to invoke God Almighty to forgive their sins.

The blessed Verse herein reflects that shedding tears at night in prayer, doing jihad in the day, helping the poor, recitation of the Qur'anic Verses, going on business trips, and doing good righteous deeds are to be accompanied by seeking Divine Forgiving of one's sins. The preceding Verses urged Muslims to stand in prayer third, half, or two thirds of the night.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that calculating such measurements is hard lying beyond your abilities; as a consequence of which God Almighty forgives you, but you may stand in prayer, establish canonical prayers, and recite the Qur'anic Verses as much as they are convenient to you, particularly when you are sick or you are on some journey.

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Ridha (as) as saying:

"Recite the Qur'an to the extent of your humbleness and purity heart."[19]

Traveling for commerce and that aiming at jihad are juxtaposed in the blessed Verse, though the former is this worldly and the latter is otherworldly. It is narrated that if a merchant remembers God Almighty at all times and refrains from fraud, hoarding, selling less than the due

measure, and selling at an unlawful higher price, is like a warrior setting foot in the battle field to kill the enemy and safeguard security.[20]

Recitation of the Qur'anic Verses is not a religious obligation, but it is highly recommended herein such that the Divine Command as to the same is reiterated twice and is thus accorded particular attention. It is worthy of note that Divine Commands are harmonious with human capacities and they never entail hardships.

It is in this vein that the sick are supposed to perform ritual ablution with soil or sand (tayammum) in lieu of water and they may establish their canonical prayers in the manner convenient to them. The sick are not supposed to take fast, but they should help the poor by paying a certain amount of money or give them a specified amount of goods as a token of atonement (kaffara).

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware that you may not make precise calculations; as a consequence of which He forgives your mistakes. The point is that Divine Obligations are convenient to man and they never entail hardships.

The Arabic clause taba 'alaykum (literally: "He has turned unto you"), according to the majority of Qur'an exegetes, suggests lightening the obligation rather than repenting of one's sins. It may also be suggested that upon the removal of the obligation, no sin may be committed and it equal Divine Forgiving.

Mention is made of four other Commands at the close of the blessed Verse thereby completing the plan as to self purification, saying:

"Establish canonical prayers; pay alms, lend Allah a goodly loan through expending in His Cause and know that whatever good deeds you send forth for yourselves shall be Rewarded by Allah most befittingly; invoke God Almighty for Forgiveness as He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Gracious."

These four Obligations, namely establishing canonical prayers, paying alms and expending in Allah's Cause, invoking God Almighty for Forgiveness, and Recitation of the Qur'anic Verses and reflecting upon them, as mentioned above, constitute a perfect plan aiming at self purification and spiritual growth bearing indubitable impressions on believers at any time, particularly on the threshold of the Islamic faith.

Establishing prayers herein implies the obligatory canonical prayers performed five times a day. By alms, paying the obligatory canonical alms is herein intended. Further, lending God Almighty a goodly loan (qardh al-hasana) connotes the supererogatory expending in Allah's Cause.

The expression

"lending Allah a goodly loan"

is the most noble expression imaginable in this respect, since God Almighty is the Owner of all the Possessions and He is not expected by no means to request others to lend Him a loan, but He hereby urges the believers to expend and make sacrifices in His Cause and obtain merits by doing such noble deeds and tread the path of spiritual growth and attain perfection.

It is noteworthy that making mention of invoking God Almighty for Forgiveness, as mention at the close of such Divine Commands may reflect that by acting upon such Commands, man may not feel that he is perfect and God Almighty owes them something, but he is supposed to regard himself neglectful at all times and turn toward Him, since no one is able to praise Him most befittingly.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that laying emphasis on these Command reflects that the believers may not imagine that lightening the Obligations as to praying to God Almighty and reciting the Qur'anic Verses at night does not apply to other religious obligations, since the latter stand the way they are, namely other religious obligations are not subject to any decrease or lightening.[21]

O Lord! Grant us all the Blessing of standing in prayers at night, the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and treading the path of spiritual growth in the light of the Heavenly Light!

Notes

1. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 28, p. 101; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 6, p. 276.
2. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 375.
3. 59:21
4. Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan, vol. 13, p. 249.
5. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Usul Kafi, the chapter on the articulate recitation of the Qur'an (bab tartil al-Qur'an).
6. Majma' al-Bayan, ibid.; Usul Kafi, ibid.; Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
7. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
8. For instance, Usul Kafi; Nur al-Thiqalayn; Durr al-Manthur; and other tradition and exegetic sources.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p. 143.
10. Ibid.
11. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 378.
12. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 448, tradition 16.
13. Fakhr Razi's exegetic work, vol. 30, p. 177.
14. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 450, tradition 27, narrating from the Noble Imam Baqir (as).
16. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
17. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 29, p. 107.
18. 88:6
19. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
20. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur.
21. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 156.

Surah al-Mudaththir, Chapter 74

(The One Reposing in Bed)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 56

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 56 Verses. It was indubitably revealed in Mecca, though there exists no unanimity as to being the earliest of the Chapters revealed to the Noble Prophet (S), or it followed Chapter 96 (Surah al-'Alaq) in the sequence of Revelation.

However, according attention to the contents of these two Chapters (74, 96) reflects that the latter was revealed on the threshold of the Prophetic call, but the former concerns the time when the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to call the general public, when the clandestine call had come to its end.

Therefore, some of the Qur'an exegetes maintain that Chapter 97 was the earliest of the Chapters revealed on the threshold of the Prophet Revelation of the Noble Prophet (S), but Chapter 74 was the earliest of the Chapters revealed following his call to the general public.

At any rate, the nature of the Meccan Chapters, mainly calling people to turn toward the origin and the return, confrontation with polytheism, and warning the beliers against Divine torment, is explicitly reflected in the blessed Chapter in question.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as) that whoever recites Surah al-Mudaththir in their obligatory canonical prayers, God Almighty shall make them accompany the Noble Prophet (S) and shall grant them his elevated degree, and they shall not be entangled with misfortune and pain in this worldly life. Further traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as), though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein made of them.

It goes without saying that the mere recitation of the words of the blessed Chapter may not result in such great consequences, but one is supposed to accord attention to the contents and most precisely act upon them.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ

قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ

1. O you reposing in bed!
2. Arise and warn [the world]!

Different occasions of Revelation have been reported in Qur'an exegetic sources for the blessed Chapter in question, though for the sake of brevity, mention is not herein mentioned of them. However, the Noble Prophet (S) is undoubtedly addressed in these Verses, though no explicit reference has been made to him therein, but it is reflected in the contents.

The opening two blessed Verses say:

"O you reposing enveloped in bed covers! Arise and warn the world [against Divine torment, since the time of rest and repose has passed and the time of rising and propagation of the Islamic faith have arrived]!"

The particular emphasis laid on the Noble Prophet (S) as both a bearer of glad tidings (bashir) and a warner (nadhir) is owing to the truth that warning the people, particularly on the threshold of the Prophetic call, made significant contributions to awakening the neglectful souls.

Concerning the reason lying behind urging him to embark upon his Prophetic call while he reposed in bed, some Qur'an exegetes hold that the Arab polytheists assembled on the threshold of pilgrimage to Mecca and some of them, e.g. Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Walid ibn Mughayra, and Nadhr ibn Harith, consulted as to the manner of providing replies to the questions raised by non-Meccan pilgrims who had heard scattered material regarding the Prophetic call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

Following holding many a conference, they came to the conclusion that they had better call him a magician (sahir), since the consequences of magic include causing separation between couples and fathers and sons, and the Noble Prophet (S) had acted accordingly through his Prophetic call.

Having heard such words, the Noble Prophet (S) was deeply saddened and returned home morbidly and reposed in his bed. Then, the blessed Verses in question were revealed calling him to arise and struggle against them. Other suggested interpretations make mention of the same call to rising and guiding the society.

It would be of interest to know that the Arabic imperative clause fandhir ***("Warn!")***

makes no reference to the object of such warning, since it reflects the generality of the act. In other words, he is urged herein to warn the people against idolatry, polytheism, disbelief, wrong doing, corruption, Divine torment, the reckoning on the Day of Resurrection, and the like.

In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that the blessed Verse means

"shorten your clothes!" (thiyabaka faqsir).[1]

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that reference is herein made to wives, since it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"They are garments for you and they are your garments."

In other words, you maintain the dignity of each other and you are the adornments of one another. All these interpretations may be intended by the blessed Verse, reflecting the truth that Divinely appointed leaders may be charismatic when they are unadulterated and people be certain as to their fear of God Almighty. It is in the same vein, that the Command as to chastity follows that of rising and warning.

In the course of the third Injunction, the blessed Verse 5 says:

"Keep away from impurities and what entails Divine torment."

The generalization of the meaning of the Arabic word

rujz ("impurity")

has led to different interpretations for the same: idols, any kind of sin, vice, mammonism as the sources of any wrong and sin, Divine torment as the consequence of polytheism and committing sins, and anxiety and apprehension.[3]

The term is also applied to any kind of sin and polytheism, idolatry, satanic temptations, vices, and Divine torment leading to apprehension and deviation from the Straight Path. The comprehensive meaning of the blessed Verse includes any deviation and vice leading to Divine Wrath in this world and the Hereafter.

The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), as reflected in his biographical accounts acknowledged by friends and foes, is indicative of his keeping away from vices, though the point is accorded emphasis herein.

The fourth Injunction is intended by the blessed Verse 6, saying:

"Give not a thing in order to have more nor consider your deeds of obedience to Allah as a favor to him."

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse includes any kind of expecting obligation from God Almighty and the people because of good deeds. One is not supposed to expected indebtedness from God Almighty for struggling in His Cause, since He did favors to individuals by granting them such exalted degrees.

Likewise, God's servants are not supposed to think highly one one's good deeds, but they should at all times bear in mind their neglect and the truth that worshipping God Almighty is a great Divine Blessings.

In other words, your rising, warning, propagation of monotheism, making mention of Divine Glory and Majesty, purity of garments, and abstaining from sins are not sources of regarding God Almighty indebted to you nor should you think highly of them, but you are supposed to keep in mind that they are Divine Blessings for which you should be grateful and be absorbed in His Love such that you underestimate such great deeds.

In technical terms, omission of objects of a relation is indicative of generality which in this case includes the torments in this world and the Hereafter as well as the evil consequences of vices.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 3-7

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

وَلَا تَمْنُ تَسْتَكْثِرُ

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

3. And magnify your Lord!

4. And purify your garments!

5. And keep away from impurities.

6. And give not a thing in order to have more.

7. And be patient for the sake of your Lord!

Five significant Injunctions are revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) following his call to rise and warn. These injunctions serve as models for the people.

The first injunction concerns monotheism:

"Only magnify your Lord, your possessor and fosterer. Whatever you possess is granted by Him.

Laying emphasis on the word

rabb ("Lord")

which precedes the imperative verbal form kabbir ("magnify") indicates exclusivity and reflects the question of monotheism substantiated by an argument in such brief clause. It is so interesting and meaningful that the Qur'anic clause is so terse and concise.

The mere utterance of

"Allah is the Greatest"

is not intended, though such utterance is an implication reflected in the traditions as well, but the utterance is intended to say that the believers are supposed to magnify their Lord in terms of belief, words, and practice. God Almighty is supposed to be regarded as possessing the Attributes of Beauty and glorified of any defect.

He is too Glorious to be describable. It is narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt that

"Allah is the Greatest"

intends to say that God Almighty is far Superior to be described and comprehended by mankind. Therefore, uttering such clause is far comprehensive than glorification which merely includes being glorified of any kind of defect.

Proceeding with the question of monotheism, the blessed Verse 4 includes the second Injunctions as to purity from impurities, saying:

"Purify your clothes."

The word

"clothes"

may herein serve as a metaphor for human deeds, since the deeds are likened to clothes as the outward appearance reflects the inward beliefs and feelings. Some also maintain that the word "clothes" herein indicates heart and soul, namely purify you heart from impurities. Where the clothes are supposed to be cleansed, the one who wears them is accorded precedence.

Some have also held that the word denotes the outward clothes, since their purity constitutes the most significant token of character, education, and culture. Pre-Islamic Arabs hardly accorded attention to keeping away from impurities and their clothes were generally unclean. It was quite common, as in the case of those entangled in the age of ignorance, to wear quite long garments, such that their garments were soiled out of being dragged while they walked.

The blessed Verse 7 makes a reference to the last Injunction, saying:

"Be patient for the sake of your Lord!"

Once more, we are faced with a comprehensive meaning of patience and steadfastness against the ignorant polytheists' and the enemies' abuses.

The blessed Verse is urging the believers to be steadfast in obedience to Allah's Commands and be patience in struggling against concupiscent desires and the enemies of the faith. Patience is indubitably the basis and the safeguard of all the aforesaid plans. It is principally the best means of propagating the faith and guiding people.

Thus, patience is accorded attention is many a Qur'anic Verse.

As reflected in the Nahj al-Balagha, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Patience and steadfastness in the cause of the faith is like the head against the body."

Therefore, patience and steadfastness serve as the most significant of the plans of the Prophets (as) and the men of God. The more they faced hardships, the more they grew patient.

Regarding the Rewards of the patient, the Noble Prophet (S) is reported as saying:

"Allah says that whenever I inflict some afflictions upon my servants' bodies, property, or children, they face them patiently and I cannot measure their deeds nor may I open up their record of deeds."[4]

Having been inquired regarding faith, Allah's Messenger (S) replied:

"Half of faith lies in patience."[5]

In this respect, it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Ward off sorrows through good certitude and patience."[6]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 8-10

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ

فَذَٰلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ

عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ

8. When it shall be blown into the Trumpet.

9. That Day shall be a Hard Day,

10. Far from convenient for the disbelievers.

Proceeding with the Injunction as to the rise and warning reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, those in question open with a particular and eloquent emphasis, saying:

"When it shall be blown into the Trumpet that Day shall be a Hard Day, far from convenient for the disbelievers."

It is noteworthy that the Arabic nominal form naqur, derived from n-q-r, denotes strike so as to pierce something. The cognate form minqar is the birds' beak thereby they may pierce objects. Consequently, the Trumpet whose sound is so loud as if it pierces the ears and penetrates into the brain is termed naqur.

It is explicitly reflected in the Qur'anic Verses that the Trumpet shall be blown into twice in the last moment of this world and the beginning of the Resurrection Day, the first of such extraordinarily awe inspiring and shocking sounds is that of death and the latter is that of awakening and life encompassing the world over.

These two sounds are also terms the first and the second sounds of the Trumpet. The blessed Verse in question treats of the second sound whereby the Resurrection shall be established and the hardship of such Day for the disbelievers.

A detailed discussion on the Trumpet and its sound is to be found above under 39:68. At any rate, the blessed Verses in question reflect the truth that many a hardship shall await the disbelievers upon blowing into the Trumpet. That Day shall be so excruciating and agonizing that the strongest men shall be brought to their knees.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 11-15

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَّمْدُودًا

وَبَنِينَ شُهُودًا

وَمَهَّدتُّ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا

ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ

11. Leave Me Alone with the one whom I created alone.
12. I granted him abundant possessions.
13. And children to be by his side [serving him].
14. And prepared all the means of life for him.
15. He still desires further increase.

As reflected above, the disbelievers were collectively warned, though the blessed Verses in question particularly make reference to the most influential amongst them by eloquently and decisively warning them, saying:

"Leave me Alone with the one whom I created alone."

The blessed Verses in question allude to Walid ibn Mughayra Makhzumi, one of the most notorious chiefs of Quraysh. An occasion of Revelation is mentioned in many an exegetic sources, e.g. Majma' al-Bayan, Fi Hilal al-Qur'an, al-Mizan, and those by Qurtubi and Maraghi.

It is also mentioned that whatever service rendered to the people, irrespective of spiritual ones, e.g. propagation of the Islamic faith and guiding them or expending in Allah's Cause, are not supposed to be compensated by reminding people of them or desiring further increase in possessions granted by God Almighty, since such undesirable acts render the good deeds ineffective.

In this respect, it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[7]:

"O you who believe! Do not render in vain your expending in Allah's Cause by reminders of your generosity or by abuse."

The Arabic negative imperative verbal form la tamnun deriving from m-n-n herein implies any word reflecting the significance of something granted someone else. T

hus, its relation with the question of

"desiring further increase" (istikthar)

is clarified. Man is supposed to regard his services meager without expecting any remuneration, rather than desire increase which will lead to

rendering in vain the righteous good acts. In this vein, the theme of the blessed Verse is reflected in some of the traditions that one is not supposed to grant anyone anything if he desires further increase in return.[8]

Regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Do not overestimate the good deed done in Allah's Cause."

The tradition reflects one of the implications of the universal meaning of the blessed Verse.[9]

The Arabic adverb of manner wahidan may either modify the Creator or the created.

The former possibility allows two suggestions:

"Leave Me Alone with him so that I severely chastise him,"

or:

"I created him alone and granted him all these Bounties, but he showed ingratitude."

The latter possibility may also entail two interpretations either alluding to the point that in his mother's womb and upon his birth, he was alone, without any possessions or children, but such Bounties were granted him later on; or it may make a reference to the point that he regarded himself and his father unique and unrivaled amongst the Arabs.[10] However, the first of these four interpretations sound further befitting.

The blessed Verse 12 says:

"I granted him abundant possessions."

The Arabic past participial form mamdud originally denotes "stretched, expanded," though it herein implies the abundant possessions or expansion in temporal and spatial terms. It is also suggested that he possessed numerous gardens and farms and plenty of money and gold. The word implies all these senses, but they were of not avail to him owing to his showing ingratitude and confronting Allah and His Messenger (S).

The blessed Verse 13 alludes to the large number of people at his disposal, saying:

"And children to be by his side [serving him]."

They were with their father at all times, since they were neither pressed for means of life nor had they to leave their father behind and depart for a remote place. It is reported in a number of traditions that he had ten children.

The blessed Verse 14 makes a reference to other Bounties bestowed upon him, saying:

"And prepared all the means of life for him."

The Bounties bestowed upon him included healthy body, possessions, healthy children, and social prestige. The Arabic word tamhid, derived from m-h-d, originally denotes preparing a place, like a cradle, for the child, though it connotes all means and opportunities of life in terms of convenience, promotion, prestige, and generally speaking all the Bounties of life and the means of achievement and success.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying that in lieu of prostrating himself before God Almighty for all these Bounties, he showed ingratitude and desired further Bounties:

"He still desires further increase."

Reference is not only made to Walid ibn Mughayra, since all mamonists are alike in that their thirst may never be quenched and even if the entire world happens to fall into their share, they expect to possess more. The point is that worldly possessions all fall into the shares of men and the distribution depends on Divine Will rather than human knowledge and skills.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 16-17

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا

سَأُرْهِقُهُ صَعُودًا

16. It shall never be thus, since he opposes Our Àyat [Verses, Signs, proofs].

17. I shall soon oblige him to climb the summit of life [then, I shall thrust him downwards.

The disbelieving stranger is harshly rejected in the blessed Verse 16:

"I shall never be thus, since he opposes Our Àyat."

The disbeliever was fully aware that the Holy Qur'an is neither the word of the jinn nor that of mankind, but it possesses strong roots, fruitful branches, and unparalleled appeal. However, he regarded it as magic and its bearer a magician.

The Arabic adverb of manner

'anidan ("obdurately")

implies willful opposition and animosity, when one comprehends the truthfulness of something, but he rises against it. Walid was the personification of such obdurate animosity. The Arabic past verbal form kana implies progressiveness, in that he bore animosity against the truth at all times, rather than temporarily.

The blessed Verse 17 makes a terse reference to his dire fate:

"I shall soon oblige him to climb the hard to pass summit of life and then I shall thrust him downwards.

The Arabic verbal form sa-urhiquhu, derived from r-h-q ("to cover fiercely") connotes overburdening and afflicting one with different torments. The Arabic nominal form sa'ud denotes a place climbed by someone and the Arabic verbal noun su'ud is employed in the sense of climbing. Since climbing summits is hard, it implies any kind of hard task. Consequently, some exegetes maintain that it herein connotes Divine torment.

The blessed Verse may allude to the torments inflicted upon Walid in this world, since it is reported in historical sources that having reached the summit of achievements in his personal and social life, he fell down such that he recurrently lost his possessions and offspring.[11]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 18-25

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ

فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ

ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ

ثُمَّ نَظَرَ

ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ

فَقَالَ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ

إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ

18. He thought and plotted [against the Qur'an].

19. So let him be cursed: how he plotted [against the Truth]!

20. And once more let him be cursed: how he plotted [to employ his satanic stratagem]!

21. Then he cast a glance.

22. Then, he frowned and hastened;

23. Then he turned away [from the Truth] and was arrogant.

24. Then, he said: "This is nothing but appealing magic like that of the ancients,

25. "This is nothing but the word of a human being!

The blessed Verses in question provide further details regarding Walid ibn Mughayra Makhzumi whom God Almighty had bestowed abundant possessions and offspring, but he rose against the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S), striving to belie the Noble Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an by resorting to ploys.

It goes without saying that thinking is basically good, provided that it be in line with the Truth. One hour spent on intellection entails the merits of worshipping God Almighty for one year or more, since that one hour may totally alter the course of human fate. Nonetheless, if it be employed in the cause of disbelief, corruption, and vices, it will be reprehensible. Walid's thoughts fall into the second category.

The Arabic verbal form qaddara herein implies that he devised his vicious ploys.

The blessed Verses 19 and 20 say:

"So let him be cursed: how he plotted [against the Truth]! And once more let him be cursed: how he plotted [to employ his satanic stratagem]!"

Concerning the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Qur'an exegetes maintain that Walid intended to unify the polytheists urging them to disseminate false accusations against the Noble Prophet (S).

When it was suggested to call the Noble Prophet (S)

"the poet,"

he refused. He further rejected his being called a soothsayer or a lunatic.

Finally, the polytheists suggested that the Noble Prophet be called a magician and he accepted such false attribution, since he falsely imagined that magicians were in the habit of severing the bonds of friendship and establishing friendly ties between former opponents. He thought that such

things had appeared upon the emergence of the Islamic faith and the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, he embarked upon investigation and reflection, as reflected by the terse Qur'anic expression:

"He thought and devised his ploys."

Other polytheists made suggestions, but it was Walid who reflected upon the idea and made the choice. Such expression, particularly its reiteration, reflects that he was an expert in devising such evil plots, such that his ideas were a source of surprise.

The blessed Verses 21-25 say:

"Then he cast a glance [to make sure that everything was in order. Then, he frowned and hastened; then he turned away [from the Truth] and was arrogant. Then, he said: 'This is nothing but appealing magic like that of the ancients, this is nothing but the word of a human being [rather than Divine Revelation]!"

Thus, following persistent investigations and devising satanic ploys against the Holy Qur'an, he uttered his final words and notwithstanding all the stratagems employed by such mastermind of the age of ignorance and polytheism, he inadvertently extolled the Qur'an, reflecting that it was so unprecedentedly appealing that all hearts might be impressed by it.

He held that the Holy Qur'an engenders magical impressions bewitching the hearts. Since the Holy Qur'an bears no resemblance to the sorcerers' art, but its logical, rhythmical, and well-measured words clearly indicate that it is Divine Revelation whose source is Divine Omniscience encompassing all beauties consistently and coherently.

The Arabic past verbal form 'abasa denotes that he frowned. The past verbal form basara both implies hastened and frowned or grimaced. The second sense of basara would be in line with 'abasa, though intending the former meaning would imply making hasty decisions for choosing a false "label" for the Holy Qur'an.

The verbal form yu'tharu is used in the sense of relating a tale from the ancients as their vestige. However, some hold that it is cognate with ithar denoting choosing and deeming as precedent.

According to the former sense, Walid is saying that this magic is like what is reported from the ancients, but as per the latter sense, he is saying that magic is something that impresses the hearts owing to its sweetness and appeal, hence its precedence over any other thing by the people.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse includes an implied confession as to the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an, since it bears no likeness to the extraordinary tasks performed by sorcerers.

The language of the Holy Qur'an is imbued with dignity, spirituality, and unparalleled appeal, such that if Walid had been true in his claim as to it being the words of mankind, others would have been able to produce the like of it.

It is well-known that the Holy Qur'an many a time calls other to try to produce the like of it, though none of the obdurate enemies well-versed in the Arabic tongue have failed to produce the like or even something inferior to it. The miracle of the Holy Qur'an lies in its inimitability.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 26-30

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ
لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ
لَوَّاحَةٌ لِّلْبَشَرِ
عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ

26. I will cast him soon into Hell.
27. And you are unaware of the Hell.
28. Hellfire neither spares nor leaves anything [unconsumed].
29. It totally alters the skin!
30. Over it are appointed nineteen angels of torment.

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the denial of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic call of Muhammad (S) by one of the chiefs of the polytheists. The blessed Verses in question make a reference to his horrible chastisement on the Day of Resurrection, saying that God Almighty will cast him soon into Hell burning him in the Fire.

The Arabic nominal form saqar denotes alteration and melting down under the scorching heat of the sun. It is one of the attributes of the Hell, frequently mentioned in the Qur'anic Verses. The attribute alludes to the frightening torments awaiting the people of Hell. It is also suggested that it is the name of one of the horrible and lower stages of Hell.

Treating of the severity of the torments in store for the people of Hell, the blessed Verse 27 poses a question:

"What do you know about saqar?"

The question indicates that the torments in it will be so severe that they are imaginable in the same manner that the significance and the greatness of the Bounties in Paradise are unimaginable.

The blessed Verse 28

"Hellfire neither spares nor leaves anything [unconsumed]"

may reflect that unlike the worldly fire that affects one part of the body leaving other parts unscathed, for instance it affects the body leaving intact the soul, Hellfire consumes man in its entirety leaving nothing behind.

It is also suggested that Hellfire neither takes the life of the people of Hell nor does it keep them alive, but they are entangled at all times in a state between life and death, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"There he will neither die nor live"[12];

"We shall burn them in Fire such that their skins shall be roasted through, We shall make other skins grow that they may taste the chastisement"[13].

The blessed Verse 29 provides another depiction of such burning Fire of Divine Wrath:

"It totally alters the skin"

such that it shall be visible from afar. The Arabic clause lawwahatun li-'l-bashar indicates that the Fire blackens the complexion blacker than the dark of the night.

The Arabic nominal form bashar herein implies complexion or it may serve as an instance of synecdoche alluding to mankind. The Arabic feminine present participial form lawwaha, cognate with lawh ("tablet") implies becoming clear and apparent, though it also connotes altering and making changes.

The blessed Verse 30,

"Over it are appointed nineteen angels of torment"

reflects that they are not appointed to be compassionate, but they are supposed to severely chastise them.

Although the blessed Verse solely makes mention of the number

"nineteen"

without any explicit reference to the angels appointed to inflict chastisement, but the following Verse clearly reflects that the angels in charge of inflicting chastisement is intended herein.

It is worthy of note that we human beings are bounded by the restrictions of the mundane world, are not fully aware of the precise nature of Resurrection, Paradise, and Hell, but what our knowledge consists of generalities. Thus, it is reported in traditions that each of these nineteen angels is so powerful that it may easily cast a large tribe into Hell.

The frailty of the thoughts of people like Abu Jahl is reflected herein that upon hearing the blessed Verse in question, he said derisively unto the Quraysh tribe:

"May your mothers mourn your death! Do you not hear what the man is saying?"

Pointing at the Noble Prophet (S), he said:

"He is saying that nineteen guardians guard the Hell, though each of the guardians may not be overcome by ten brave men of your large tribe."[14]

These light headed enemies of the Islamic faith intended to impede the Light of Truth and rescue themselves from imminent perdition through such derisive remarks.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 31

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا مَثَلًا كَذَٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ
مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا ۚ إِلَّا ذِكْرَىٰ لِلْبَشَرِ

31. And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire. And We have fixed their number only as a trial for the disbelievers, in order that the people of the Book may arrive at a certainty [that the Holy Qur'an is the Divine Book, since the same number is attested in the Bible] and that the believers may increase their faith, and that no doubt may be left for the people of the Book and the believers; further [the number nineteen made] those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say: "What Allah intends by this example?" Thus, Allah leads astray whom He

wills and guides whom He wills. And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind.

As reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, God Almighty appointed nineteen angels (or nineteen groups) as the guardians of Hell and it led to controversy amongst the polytheists and the disbelievers. Some of them derided such words and few of them imagined that they could easily overcome them.

The blessed Verse in question, the longest one in the Chapter, responds to them and sheds further light on the point:

"We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire."

Such angels are so powerful and in the Qur'anic terms ghalath and shidad, i.e. stern and strict, that all sinners shall be feeble and week before them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say

"We have fixed their number only as a trial for the disbelievers."

The trial aimed at two things: firstly, they derived the number nineteen, whereas any other number could engender the same question.

Secondly, they regarded the number nineteen to be few and said derisively that they could appoint ten people against each of them and thereby overcome them. They were unaware of the truth that the angels are so powerful that according to the Holy Qur'an, a number of them sufficed to send the people of Lot (as) to perdition by totally destroying their prosperous cities.

Further, the preceding blessed Verses treated of the points lying behind the number of the guardians of Hell; however, the blessed Verse in question adds:

"So that the people of the Book may arrive at a certainty."

In this respect, it is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) was asked by his companions regarding the number of the guardians of Hell.

He replied:

"Allah and His Messenger (S) know better."

Gabriel was sent down and revealed unto him that they were nineteen angels appointed as the guardians of Hell.[15]

The people of the Book did not protest against the number which reflects that they had found the number in line with their Scriptures. Thus, they arrived at further certitude as to the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S). Besides, the believers' faith was further firmly established.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"[the aim was] that the believers may increase their faith."

Further emphasis is laid on the three goals: the faith of the people of the Book, that of the believers in the Islamic faith, and the trial of the polytheists and disbelievers:

"that no doubt may be left for the people of the Book and the believers; further [the number nineteen made] those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say: 'What Allah intends by this example?"

Regarding

"those in whose hearts is a disease,"

some Qur'an exegetes hold that the hypocrites are hereby intended, since the Qur'anic expression alludes to them, an instance of which is

"In their hearts is a disease and Allah has increased their disease"[16]**.**

Nonetheless, further investigation of the Qur'anic instances of the expression reflects that it does not solely include the hypocrites, but it encompasses all the disbelievers who take a belligerent stance against the Qur'anic Verses.

The blessed Verse further says:

"Thus, Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He."

The aforesaid remarks clearly reflect that Divine Will as to guiding some people and leading some others astray is well-measured. Those who are in error deserve no better than that and those obedient to Allah deserve such Guidance.

In other words, God Almighty does not intend to harm some people by leading them astray, but error is the disbelievers' chastisement. Put the case that a thief breaks into your home and you lock the doors. Confining him does not entail leading him astray, but it aims at chastising him.

What should be borne in mind regarding God Almighty leading some people astray, as reflected in a number of the Qur'anic Verses, that the Arabic word idhlal denotes abandoning someone, implying that God Almighty abandons those who do not deserve to be guided; the similitude of which is a farmer who abandons the rotten seeds but keeps the good ones and paves the ground for their growth.

The closing clauses of the blessed Verse read:

"And none may know the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind."

The nineteen guardians of Hell does not reflect the total number of the hosts of the Lord, but the number of the latter are so large that according to some of the traditions, the earth and the heaven are filled with them, such that there is no spot in the entire world of existence unless there is an angel glorifying God Almighty there.

For further details in this respect, one may refer to elevated words of Imam 'Ali as recorded in the first sermon of the Nahj al-Balagha.

Different suggestions have been made by Qur'an exegetes concerning the antecedent of the pronoun

hiya ("this, it")

in

wa ma hiya illa dhikra li-'l-bashar ("And this is nothing else than a reminder to mankind.")

Some maintain that the hosts of the Lord some of whom are the guardians of Hell are the antecedent.

Some hold that

saqar ("Hell")

is the antecedent.

There are some exegetes who believe that reference is made to the Holy Qur'an. Although they all lead to awakening, reminder, and awareness, but the first suggestion is more in line with the tone of the Verse, since the aim

is to state the truth that if God Almighty has selected hosts, it does not reflect that He cannot chastise all the enemies and sinners Himself, but they all serve as a reminder, awakening, and according attention to the seriousness of Divine torment.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 32-34

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذْ أَدْبَرَ
وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ

32. It is not what they imagine! By the moon!
33. And the night when it withdraws,
34. And by the dawn when it brightens.

Different oaths have been taken in the blessing Verses in question in order to lay emphasis on raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection, Hell, and the torments awaiting the disbelievers there, saying:

"It is not as they imagine. By the moon!"

The Arabic negative emphatic adverb kalla is employed to reject the words uttered by the other party.

It is also used at times to negate the following words. It herein negates the disbelievers' unfounded belying of Hell and its torments as well as their derision of the number of the angels guarding Hell, as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses.

An oath is taken to the moon, since as one of the greatest of Divine Signs, it is of significance in terms of creation, regular rotation, brightness, beauty, and the lunar phases used as the standard for preparing calendars.

The blessed Verses 33 and 34 say:

"By the night when it withdraws! And by the dawn when it brightens!"

These three oaths are related and complementary, since it is common knowledge that the moon shines at night and its light is overshadowed by sunshine such that it is hardly visible during the day. Night is serene and peaceful, when the lovers of the Truth may invoke their beloved and share their secrets.

However, the dark night would be of interest when it withdraws and the bright dawn approaches. The day break offers a beacon of the end of the dark night. It is the most delightful and the most beautiful ecstatic experience when the heart brims with light and purity. It is noteworthy that the three oaths stand in harmony with the Light of Guidance (the Holy Qur'an), withdrawal of the shadows of polytheism and idolatry, and the daybreak of monotheism.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 35-37

إِنَّهَا لَإِحْدَى الْكُبَرِ
نَذِيرًا لِّلْبَشَرِ
لِمَن شَاءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ

35. It [the frightful incidents on the Day of Resurrection] is but one of the greatest issues.

36. A warning to all mankind,

37. To any of you that chooses to go forward or to lag behind [namely proceed or not to proceed toward Guidance].

The blessed Verses in question treat of the objects of the oaths and frightening incidents on the Day of Resurrection, Hell, and the angels of torment indubitably constitute significant issues. The Arabic adjectival form kubar denotes "great, significant."

The antecedent of the pronoun in innaha is either

saqar ("Hell")

or

junud ("Lord's Host"),

or all the incidents to occur on the Day of Resurrection; the greatness of each and every of them is crystal clear.

The blessed Verse 36 proceeds to say that the goal behind the creation of Hell is not seeking revenge, but it serves as a warning to mankind against the frightening torment in store for the disbelievers, the sinners, and the enemies of Truth.

The blessed Verse 37 lay further emphasis on the point, saying that the warning is not particular to a specific group but it addresses all mankind, to anyone who opts for taking precedence by proceeding toward doing good righteous deeds and obedience to Allah, and to those who intend to lag behind. Good for those who takes precedence and woe unto those who intend to lag behind.

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that precedence and lagging behind herein reflects proceeding or not proceeding toward Hellfire. Some also hold that taking precedence indicates human self and its development and growth or its decadence and lagging behind.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 38-45

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ

إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ

وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ

38. Every person is a pledge for what he has earned,

39. Except those on the Right [whose records of deeds are given to their right hand as a token of their faith and fear of God Almighty].

40. In Gardens they will ask,

41. the sinners [inquiring]:

42. "What has caused you to enter Hell?"

43. They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the prayers,

44. "Nor we used to feed the poor;

45. "And we used to talk falsehood with vain talkers.

Proceeding with the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning Hell and the dwellers of Hell, the blessed Verse 38 says:

"Every person is a pledge for what he has earned."

The Arabic nominal form rahina, derived from r-h-n ("pledge") denotes the pledge provided as a guarantee against the loan. It sounds as if all human existence is a pledge against the fulfillment of his obligations, such that when he fulfils them, he will be set free, otherwise, he will remain in bondage.

Thus, the blessed Verse 39 adds:

"Except those on the Right [whose records of deeds are given to their right hand as a token of their faith and fear of God Almighty],"

who are free from such bondage since they have broken the shackles and fetters of bondage through faith and doing good righteous deeds as a consequence of which they freely enter Paradise.

Qur'an exegetes disagree on the meaning of

"the people on the right."

Some maintain that it makes a reference to those whose records of deeds are given to their right hand. Some hold that they are the believers who have committed no sins at all. Some others believe that a reference is made to the angels.

However, the Qur'anic evidence reflects the first suggestion - those who have faith and have done good righteous deeds and their few sins are overshadowed by their good righteous deeds, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[17]:

"The good deeds remove the evil deeds."

Their good deeds efface their evil deeds, or they freely enter Paradise, or the reckoning of their deeds shall be quite easy, as reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an[18]:

"Then as for him who will be given his record in his right hand, he shall receive an easy reckoning."

Qurtubi, the Sunni Qur'an exegete of repute narrates from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

"We and our adherents are

"the people of the right hand"

and whoever regards our Ahl al-Bayt as enemies, he shall be in the bondage of his deeds."[19]

The blessed Verses 40-42 say:

"In Gardens they will ask, the sinners [inquiring]: "What has caused you to enter Hell?"

The blessed Verses clearly reflect that the ties between the people of Paradise and those of the Hell shall not be totally severed, as the former may witness the dire fate of the latter and converse with them.

In the blessed Verses 43-45, the sinners respond to the question posed by the people of the right hand by confessing to their four grave sins:

"They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the prayers, nor we used to feed the poor; and we used to talk falsehood with vain talkers."

Had they offered their prayers, they would have remembered God Almighty forbidding them from committing evil deeds and calling them unto the Divine Straight Path. They confess that they did not feed the poor, seemingly implying that they refrained from attending to the urgent necessities and requirements of the needy, with respect to clothes and accommodation.

Qur'an exegetes maintain that reference is herein made to the obligatory alms, since failing to pay the supererogatory alms may not entail ending up in Hell, emphasizing that some of the Qur'anic Verses revealed in Mecca addressed the issue of paying alms, though the details and specifications of the same, particularly its concentration in the Muslim treasury (bayt al-mal) were specified in Medinan Verses.

They also confess that they used to associate with the followers of falsehood and whenever they heard some words against the Truth or upon being notified of some session aiming at the dissemination of falsehood, they joined them acknowledging their denial of Truth and derived please from deriding the words of Truth.

The verbal form

nakhudhu ("we entered"),

derived from kh-w-dh, originally denotes entering water and moving in it, though it is also applied to getting adulterated by impurities. The word is used in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of engaging oneself in unfounded and false affairs.

Mention is herein made of attending meetings held for deriding Divine Verses, anti-Islamic propaganda, dissemination of heresy, obscene jokes, and taking pride and deriving pleasure from the sins committed, slander and sportive vain talks. The blessed Verse in question mainly refers to attending the meetings held for destabilizing faith in God Almighty, sacrilege, and dissemination of disbelief.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 46-48

وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ

فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ

46. "And we used to belie the Day of Recompense at all times,

47. "Until there came to us the death."

48. Therefore, no intercession of intercessors will be of any avail to them.

The blessed Verses 46-47, the sinners confess that their sins included the denial of the Day of Reckoning at all times, until their death came unto them. It goes without saying that denial of the Day of Resurrection which is the Day of Reckoning destabilizes all Divine and ethical values, particularly when it continues to the end of life.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question clearly reflect that the disbelievers are obliged to observe the primary and the secondary principles of religion, and the four injunctions, namely establishing ritual prayers, paying religious obligatory alms, refraining from attending the meetings held by the followers of falsehood, and believing in the Day of Resurrection significantly contribute to human guidance and spiritual growth.

Thus, those who truly establish obligatory ritual prayers, pay alms, believe in the Day of Resurrection, and refrain from following falsehood shall not be cast into Hell. It goes without saying that establishing prayers entails worshipping God Almighty and it solely rests on faith. Thus, making a reference to it reflects believing in God Almighty and obedience to His Command.

It may be said that these four pillars begin with monotheism and end in Resurrection, encompassing the relations amongst the Creator, the created, and one's self. The majority of Qur'an exegetes maintain that death is herein intended by "certitude," since the believers and the disbelievers believe in its certainty.

Man may doubt anything, but death, as it is reflected elsewhere[20] in the Holy Qur'an:

"And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (of death)."

However, some hold that certainty herein indicates the awareness obtained posthumously as to purgatory and Resurrection. Such exegesis is somehow in line with the former.

The blessed Verse 48 makes a reference to the dire fate of this group saying:

"Therefore, no intercession of intercessors will be of any avail to them."

Neither the intercession of Allah's Messengers (as) and Imams (as), nor that of angels, nor the true believers, nor the martyrs, nor the righteous shall be of any avail to them, since intercession requires the right ground, and the disbelievers have totally destroyed such ground. It is like pure water by which a feeble sapling is irrigated. Now, when the sapling happens to be dead, such pure water may not give a new life to it.

It was mentioned above in the discussion devoted to intercession[21] that the Arabic word shafa'a derives from the root sh-f-', originally denoting "attach something to something else," connoting that the person for whom it is interceded is supposed to have traversed some part of the way, though he has faced hardships, vicissitudes, and impediments. Thus, he is interceded with to bear him assistance to traverse the remaining distance.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse in question once again emphasizes the question of intercession and the diversity of the intercessors interceding with the believers at Divine Threshold. It also serves as a harsh response to those belying the principle of intercession.

It lays further emphasis on the point that intercession is not unconditional; in other words, it is not a green light to committing sins, but may lead to spiritual growth such that he prepares the required ground for

being interceded with him. The ties of such person are not supposed to be totally severed from God Almighty and His friends.

It is also worthy of note, however, that the blessed Verse in question is not saying that intercessors intercede with such people, but it reflects that they cease to intercede with them as intercession shall be of no avail to them and Allah's friends may never perform vain deeds.

The blessed Verses in question and some other Qur'anic Verses indicate that there shall be different kinds of intercessors interceding with God Almighty on the behalf of the true believers. The numerous traditions transmitted in the Shi'i and Sunni sources reflect that such intercessors shall intercede on behalf of those sinners who have prepared the required ground for intercession.

Reference may be made here to such different intercessors:

1. The Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith, as reflected in the Prophetic tradition:

"I shall be the first intercessor in Paradise."[22]

2. All the Prophets (as) shall be intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, as per another Prophetic tradition:

"The Prophets shall intercede on behalf of all those who sincerely testify to Divine Unity and take them out of Hell."[23]

3. Angels shall be amongst the intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, as reported in the Prophetic tradition:

"The Angels, Allah's friends, and the martyrs shall be permitted on that Day to intercede."[24]

4-5. The Infallible Imams (as) and their followers shall also intercede on behalf of true believers.

In this respect, Imam 'Ali (as) is narrated as saying:

"We and our friends shall intercede [on behalf of true believers]."[25]

6-7. The religious scholars and the martyrs shall be among the interceders, as it is reflected in the Prophetic tradition:

"On the Day of Resurrection, the Prophets (as), then the scholars, then the martyrs shall be intercessors."[26]

According to another Prophetic tradition:

"The martyr's intercession on behalf of seventy people from amongst his family shall be accepted."[27]

As per another tradition recorded in 'Allama Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar[28], their intercession on behalf of seventy people shall be accepted.

8. According to Imam 'Ali (as), the Holy Qur'an shall be an intercessor on the Day of Resurrection.[29]

9. The intercession of those believers who are advanced in years shall be accepted.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"When man reaches the age of ninety [having proceeded on the path of faith], God Almighty shall forgive his past and future sins and his intercession on behalf of his family shall be accepted."[30]

10. Prayers and devotions shall be intercessors as well, as it is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) as saying:

"Fasting and the Qur'an shall intercede on behalf of the servants [of Allah] on the Day of Resurrection."[31]

11. Some traditions reflect that God Almighty shall intercede on behalf of the sinners, as it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

"The Prophets, the angels, and the believers shall intercede on the Day of Resurrection and God Almighty shall say:

'I am to intercede as well."[32]

12. It is reflected in a number of traditions that the good righteous deeds, like something for whose preservation man has made attempts, shall intercede on behalf of man on the Day of Resurrection.[33]

Numerous traditions have been transmitted concerning intercession, a few of which were mentioned above. It would fruitful to reiterate that there are certain conditions for intercession without which it may not be accepted by God Almighty.

In this vein, the blessed Verses in question clearly indicate that the intercessions of all intercessors shall be of no avail to some of the disobedient. It is of significance to pave the required ground for the acceptance of intercession, since intercession on behalf of some people may not be of any avail.[34]

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 49-51

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ

كَأَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنفِرَةٌ

فَرَّتْ مِن قَسْوَرَةٍ

49. Then, why do they turn away from the reminder?

50. As if they were frightened wild asses,

51. Fleeting from lions.

The blessed Verses in question proceeds with the dire fate of the sinners and the people of Hell clearly reflecting that such obdurate disbelievers' are afraid of hearing the word of Truth and any reminder and admonition.

The blessed Verse 49 asks:

"Then, why do they turn away from the reminder?"

Is it not surprising that they reject the cure of the Holy Qur'an?

The blessed Verses 50 and 51 say:

"As if they are frightened wild asses fleeting from lions [or hunters]."

The Arabic nominal form humur the plural of himar, denoting "ass," though it herein connotes "wild ass," taking the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse into account which includes "lions" or "hunters." In other words, the nominal form encompasses a broad semantic scope including the domestic and wild kinds of asses.

The Arabic nominal form qaswara, derived from the root q-s-r ("vanquish, overcome") is an attribute of lion, though it is also taken to imply "archer" and "hunter" as well. However, the former sense is more befitting herein.

It is said that the wild ass is strikingly afraid of the lion, such that upon hearing the lion's roar, it fleets away madly, particularly upon noticing a

lion's approach, they scatter away surprisingly. The animal is afraid of anything owing to its wildness, let alone its ferocious enemy, the lion.

At any rate, the blessed Verses in question reflect a very eloquent expression of the polytheists' fear of the life giving Qur'anic Verses. These polytheists are herein likened to wild asses, devoid of understanding that owing to their wildness, they are afraid of anything, whereas they hear nothing but the reminder aiming at their awakening.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verses 52-55

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُنَشَّرَةً

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ

52. Nay, everyone of them desires that he should receive separate letters [from God Almighty].

53. Nay! But it [The Qur'an] is but a reminder [to them].

54. But whoever desires may find admonitions in it,

55. So whoever desires may receive admonitions!

The blessed Verses in question say that notwithstanding their dire ignorance, they are so arrogant that they expect to receive separate letters from God Almighty. The Arabic nominal form suhuf is the plural of sahifa implying a page which is turned over.

The same theme is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And even then we will put no faith in your ascension until you bring down for us an epistle that we would read"[35];

"We shall not believe until we receive the like of that which the Messengers of Allah had received"[36].

Therefore, each of them expected to be an Arch-prophet and some Book be revealed unto them by God Almighty from the heaven. The point is that even if such Book had been revealed unto them, they would not have surely believed.

According to some traditions, Abu Jahl and some other people from Quraysh said:

"O Muhammad! We will not believe in you unless you bring us some Book from the heaven opening with: 'From God, the Lord of the worlds to so and so son of so and so' clearly specifying that we believe in you."[37]

Thus, the following blessed Verse further says that it is not like what they say, since the Heavenly Book being revealed unto them and the like of which are nothing but pretexts. They truly do not fear the Hereafter.

Had they been afraid of the torments in the Hereafter, they would not have resorted to such pretexts, denial of the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S), and derision of Divine Verses and the number of the angels of torment in the Hereafter.

The consequences of belief in the Hereafter and their effects in refraining from committing sins and purification from different kinds of grave sins are clearly reflected herein. The truth is that belief in the Day of Resurrection

and the recompense of deeds lead to spiritual growth such that the arrogant, the irresponsible, and the wrong doing may turn into committed, God fearing, humble, and just people.

The blessed Verses 54 and 55 once again emphasize that what they imagine concerning the Holy Qur'an is untrue. The Holy Qur'an is a Reminder and whoever desires may find admonitions in it. The Qur'an is the Guide unto the Straight Path and provides man with insight and sun light, such that man may find his path unto Truth.

Surah al-Mudaththir - Verse 56

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

56. And no one may receive admonition unless Allah wills. And He is the One, deserving that mankind should stand in awe of Him, and He is the One Who forgives [sins].

The closing blessed Verse of the Chapter says that receiving admonitions from the Qur'an is totally dependent upon Divine Will and Blessing. In other words, the disobedient may not receive admonitions unless God Almighty wills.

Besides the aforementioned exegesis, namely man may not proceed on the Path of Guidance unless he puts his trust in Divine Blessing and invokes Him to bestow His Blessings on him, other exegeses may be suggested for the blessed Verse. Unless there be not any attraction on behalf of the beloved, the unfortunate lover's efforts shall be of no avail (two lines of poetry).

It is worthy of note that Divine Aid is bestowed upon those who have prepared the required ground for such bestowal of Blessings.

Further, the blessed Verse 55,

"So whoever desires may receive admonitions!"

may create the wrong impression in some people that everything is totally dependent upon human will.

The blessed Verse 56 removes such wrong interpretation by saying that notwithstanding man's free choice, his will is dependent upon Divine Will, prevailing in the world of existence and creation. In other words, human free choice is dependent upon Divine Will and God Almighty may deprive him of his free choice at any time.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that they never believe unless God Almighty wills to make them believe and we know that God Almighty never makes anyone believe or disbelieve. Thus, the first two exegeses sound more befitting herein.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that

"He deserves that mankind should stand in awe of Him, and He is the One Who forgives sins."

It is befitting that Allah's servants fear His torments, associate any partners in worshipping Him, and set their hopes on His Forgiveness. The blessed Verse alludes to the states of fear, hope, Divine torment, and Divine Forgiveness, providing further support for the preceding blessed Verse.

Concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Allah says that He is Worthy of being feared such that My servant does not associate any partner with Me in worship and if My servant refrains from associating any partner with me in worship, I shall make him enter Paradise."[38]

Within the knowledge of the present author, all Qur'an exegetes hold that the nominal form taqwa;

("fear [of God Almighty]")

is herein employed in the accusative case, saying that God Almighty deserves that His servants refrain from polytheism.

However, it may be taken in the nominative case, implying that He neither does wrong nor act unwisely. The most exalted of the degrees of taqwa belongs to God Almighty and that of servants is nothing but a feeble flame of His Infinite taqwa, though the word in nominative case rarely refers to God Almighty.

The blessed Chapter opened with an Injunction as to warning and obligation and it closes with calling the believers to fear of God Almighty and the Promise of Forgiveness.

Thus, we invoke at His Threshold with utmost humbleness:

"O Lord! Make us of those who fear You and bestow Your Forgiveness upon us! O Lord! We may not succeed unless You grant us Your Favors and Blessings. Bestow Your Blessings upon us!"

Notes

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
2. 2:187
3. Raghib's Mufradat.
4. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 29, p. 120.
5. Ibn Hadid's Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha.
6. Kanz al-Fawa'id, vol. 1, p. 140.
7. 2:264
8. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 454; Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 400.
9. Ibid.
10. Fakhr Razi's, Maraghi's, Qurtubi's, and Zamakhshari's exegetic works under the blessed Verse in question.
11. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 131.
12. 87:12
13. 4:13
14. Majma' al-Bayan and other exegetic sources, under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 29, p. 134.
16. 2:10
17. 11:114
18. 84:7-8
19. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 6878.
20. 15:99
21. 2:48
22. Muslim, Sahih, vol. 2, p. 130.
23. Ahhmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 12.
24. Ibid., 5, p. 43.

25. Saduq, Khisal, p. 624.
26. Ibn Maja, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 1443.
27. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 15.
28. vol. 100, p. 14
29. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 176.
30. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 89.
31. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 174.
32. Bukhari, Sahih, vol. 9, p. 149.
33. Ibn Shahrashub, Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 14.
34. For further details, see above under 2:48.
35. 17:93
36. 6:124
37. The exegetic sources, e.g. those by Qurtubi and Maraghi.
38. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 405.

Surah al-Qiyama, Chapter 75

(The Resurrection)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 40

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has forty Verses. The designation of the Chapter, denoting Resurrection, derives from the opening Verse. The Chapter, as reflected in its title, mainly treats of the Day of Resurrection.

It opens with an enumeration of the harsh and frightening incidents to occur at the end of the world and proceeds to make mention of the happy and sad appearances of the good and evil doers.

Further, the blessed Chapter deals with the states of mankind in the throes of death, the creation of man from a drop of semen as a token of Divine Omnipotence in recreating him. It is noteworthy that four Verses in the middle of the Chapter treat of the manner of Revelation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

According to the traditions, one who perseveres in the recitation of the blessed Chapter and acts upon it shall be able to happily and smilingly cross the Bridge Spanning Hellfire (sirat).

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنسَانُ أَلَّن نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَن نُّسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ

1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection.

2. And I swear by the self-reproaching self [the awakened conscience reproaching committing sins].

3. Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones.

4. Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers.

The blessed Chapter opens with two meaningful oaths:

"I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And I swear by the self-reproaching self."

Qur'an exegetes disagree on the connotation of la; some maintain that it is an emphatic particle and thereby lays further emphasis on the oath rather than negating it; some hold that it is a negative particle implying that the

www.alhassanain.org/english

question is of such significance that an oath is not taken thereto, as it is said in common usage that someone's life is far dearer to be sworn on it.

The majority of the exegetes opt for the former, though some prefer the latter, maintaining that a clause may not be opened by the redundant la, but the emphatic particle occurs in the middle of the clause.

However, the former interpretation sounds to be further befitting, since the Qur'an swears by things more significant that the Day of Resurrection, e.g. the Pure Essence of God Almighty. Thus, it would be quite natural to swear by the Day of Resurrection herein.

Furthermore, the occurrence of the redundant la is common in Arabic. In this respect, certain opening lines by the pre-Islamic poet Imra' al-Qays have been quoted which are indicative of the usage of the redundant la in the Arabic tongue.

We maintain that discussing the redundancy or the negation of the la is not that significant, since the usage entails the same result, namely the significance of the object of the oath.

The point is that the existence of conscience in the heart reflects the inevitable Resurrection, as human soul is brimmed with happiness upon doing good righteous deeds and it is thereby rewarded. Au contraire, the soul is severely tormented and chastised upon committing evil deeds, such that man may commit suicide in order to deliver himself from pangs of conscience; thus, the verdict as to the severest punishment is issued by conscience and man executes the verdict.

The reflection of the self-reproaching self in human soul is so wide ranging that it may be studied and investigated from any aspect.

Taking into account the truth that there is a small means of trial in the microcosm, i.e. human existence, how may one imagine that the macrocosm with all its majesty be deprived of a great just tribunal? Thus, we learn about the inevitability of the Day of Resurrection through the conscience in human heart. The interesting link between the twain oaths are thereby manifested. In other words, the latter oath serves as an argument substantiating the former.

Qur'an exegetes suggest different interpretations for the nature of the self-reproaching self. A well-known interpretation was already mentioned according to which human conscience reproaches man upon his committing evil deeds and makes him to revise and compensate his past evil deeds.

Another interpretation is that it implies censuring all mankind on the Day of Resurrection, such that the believers reproach themselves for not having done more good righteous deeds and the disbelievers reproach themselves for having trodden the path of disbelief, polytheism, and sin.

Some exegetes hold that the self-reproaching self reflects that of the disbeliever that reproaches him for having done evil deeds. However, the first interpretation is in line with the preceding and the following blessed Verses.

The tribunal of the conscience is so majestic and cherished that God Almighty swears by it and regards it as something significant. It is truly majestic, since it is one of the most significant of human means of salvation provided that the conscience happens to be awakened rather than enfeebled

by the burden of sins. It is also worthy of note that the object of the oath (muqassamun lahu) is omitted as the contextual meaning of the following blessed Verses reflect the same.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

"By the Day of Resurrection and the self-reproaching slef that you shall be all raised on the Day of Resurrection and shall be recompensed for your deeds."

It is interesting that the blessed Verse swears by the Day of Resurrection that there shall be Resurrection, reflecting that it is regarded as a certainty by which one may swear against those who belie it.

Finally, different selves have been enumerated in the Qur'anic Verses, the traditions, and the prayers.

1. The soul that bids to evil (nafs ammara bi-'l-su') and may lead to decadence and corruption if it is unchecked by reason and faith.

Thus, it is reflected in the Qur'an:

"Verily [there is] the soul that bids to evil unless My Lord bestows Mercy [upon me]."

Such self bids man to commit evil deeds, unless God Almighty grants mercy. It persists in bidding man to evil so that he may be entangled with the evil consequences of his evil deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) that the soul bidding man to evil may be likened to a hypocrite who flatters a man and pretends to be his friend so that it may overcome him and lead him to the following stages.[1]

It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that having cast Joseph (as) into a well, his brothers returned to their father with his shirt smeared with blood, saying that a wolf had devoured Joseph (as).

The Prophet Jacob (as) replied:

"Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale,"[2]

namely your selves adorned such evil deeds in our eyes and provoked you to commit such evil deed.

According to a tradition, the believers are required to invoke God Almighty by saying:

"O Lord! Do not leave me with my self for a twinkling of an eye."[3]

In his prayers of the complainants (munajat shakkin) the Noble Imam Zayn al-'Àbidin (as) thus invokes God Almighty:

"I complain to You of the self bidding man to evil, hastening toward misdeeds and sins. Afflicted by any evil, it cries out. It is niggardly when some good is supposed to be done to others by it. It is quite prone to sports and indulgence. It is imbued with neglect and negligence. It leads me to hasten toward committing sins and impedes me from repentance."

2. The reproaching self (nafs lawwama) which is mentioned in the blessed Chapter in question and may imply conscience. It is in man's nature to reproach himself owing to committing misdeeds or decrease in the good ones in this world and the Hereafter. Such reproach is equal to repentance that may serve as a prelude to repenting from committing sins or it may lead to despair and self-alienation.

3. The peaceful self (nafs mutma'inna) that results from establishing ritual prayers and remembrance of God Almighty though which man attains to security and peace of mind.

Mention is made of the peaceful self in the Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"Establish prayers for My Remembrance"[4];

"Behold! In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"[5];

"O the peaceful self! Return to your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing! Enter among My servants. And enter My Paradise!"[6].

A man endowed with security and peace of mind does not entertain fear of death, but he is eager to fall a martyr in Allah's Cause. He is indifferent to mammon but is always satisfied with Divine Preordainments.

The blessed Verses 3 and 4 include a rhetorical question:

"Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones? Yes, We are able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers."

In this vein, it is narrated that a polytheist by the name of Ibn Rabi'a who was the Noble Prophet's (S) neighbor came to him and inquired about the nature and the time of the Day of Resurrection and said to the Noble Prophet (S) that even if he saw that Day, he would not believe in him as it would be incredible to God might assemble the bones.

Then the blessed Verses in question were revealed and replied to his question. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) invoked God Almighty to rid him of such evil neighbor.[7]

Qur'anic Verses with the same theme are to be found, an instance of which is

"And he puts forth for Us a parable and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?"[8].

One of the disbelievers held a piece of rotten bone in his hand and aiming at belying Resurrection he asked the Noble Prophet:

"Who will give life to these rotten bones?"

It is noteworthy that the verbal form yahsabu ("think, imagine"), derived from the root h-s-b, implies that these disbelievers did not truly believe in their own words but they solely relied on unfounded claims and illusions.

Particular emphasis is herein laid on bones, since compared to other bodily organs, bones last longer such that when it turns into dust and be scattered, shallow people set less hopes in their assembly.

Furthermore, bones constitute the pillars of the body by which all human movements and activities may be possible. The diversity of the sizes and the forms of the bones is one of the wonders of Creation and the mere dysfunction of a tiny vertebra in the backbone may entail the paralysis of the whole body.

The Arabic plural nominal form banan denotes fingers and fingertips, both of which imply that not only God Almighty shall assemble the bones, but He shall put the smallest and the most delicate of the bones, namely the fingertips, in their original form.

The expression may be a delicate allusion to the fingerprints which are different in men. In other words, these fingerprints reflect human character.

Thus, fingerprinting has turned into a discipline employed in criminology, such that if a burglar touches a door handle, window, lock, or box, a sample of his fingerprint may be taken to compare with the existing records of the thieves and criminals and lead to his arrest.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 5-6

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ

5. Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life.

6. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the true reasons lying behind belying Resurrection, saying that man does not entertain doubts concerning Divine Omnipotence to assemble the bones and raising the dead, but by his belying he aims at continuing to commit sins all his life. He desires to have absolute freedom to engage himself in concupiscent desires, sins, and wrong doing.

Thus, he aims to falsely satisfy his conscience and fail to regard himself answerable to Divine Creation, since believing in Resurrection, raising the dead, and Divine Tribunal of Justice serve as a great impediment to any form of disobedience and sin. He intends to enjoy absolute freedom to destroy such barrier and freely commit any sin.

It is not restricted to the people living in the past, but denial of Resurrection serves as a pretext for enjoying absolute freedom to commit sins, evading obligations and trespassing Divine Bounds, but the true reasons lying behind Origin and Resurrection are quite evident.

Regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Qur'an exegesis that reference is herein made to one who accords precedence to committing sins and procrastinates when he is supposed to repent from his sins.

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that the nominal plural form fujur herein implies belying, such that the blessed Verse is saying that man desires to belie the inevitable Day of Resurrection. Nonetheless, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting.

The following Verse adds that he belier inquires about the time of the Day of Resurrection. By his rhetorical question, he intends to evade his obligations and pave the ground for committing further sins. It is worthy of note, however, that inquiring about the time of Resurrection does not imply that they believed in the Day of Resurrection and they inquired about the time of its arrival, but the truth is that such rhetorical question served as the prelude to their denial of the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 7-12

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ

وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

يَقُولُ الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ
كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ

7. When the sight shall be dazed out of fear.
8. And the moon shall be eclipsed.
9. And the sun and moon shall be joined.
10. On that Day man shall inquire: "Where is the escape?"
11. No! There is neither refuge nor an escape!
12. Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest.

The preceding blessed Verses closed with a rhetorical question as to the time of its arrival posed by those belying Resurrection. Theses Verses provide replies to the question.

Making a reference to the occurrences to happen prior to Resurrection, namely the great developments to happen in the world and destroy its order, the blessed Verses 7-9 say:

"When the sight shall be dazed out of fear. And the moon shall be eclipsed. And the sun and moon shall be joined."

Qur'an exegetes have provided different exegeses as to the joining of the sun and the moon. Some hold that both of them rise in the east and set in the west and there are some who maintain that they share the characteristic of being eclipsed.

The moon may also approach the sun under the influence of the latter's gravity and finally join it, hence their being eclipsed.

It is noteworthy that mention is herein made of two of the most significant phenomena at the end of the world, namely the eclipse of the moon and the joining of the sun and the moon.

Similar references to the twain phenomena are more or less reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, an instance of which is:

"When the sun is darkened"[9].

It is common knowledge that the moon reflects the light of the sun and when the sun is plunged into darkness, the moon is also darkened and the earth plunged into frightening shadows. Thus, the world shall come to an end with an immense development and it shall begin by another great development, namely the second blowing into the Trumpet as the breeze of life blown into the world.

Then, mankind shall be raised from the dead. In the blessed Verse 10, man shall ask:

"Where is the escape?"

Yes, the disbelievers and the sinners who had formerly belied the Day of Resurrection shall search for a safe haven out of shame and look for some escape from carrying the burden of sins and fear of torments; in the same manner that upon facing a perilous incident, they looked for an escape in this world. They falsely imagine that they can find some way out of the torments in the Hereafter.

As reflected in the blessed Verses 11 and 12, it shall be said unto them:

"There is neither refuge nor an escape! Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest."

Other exegeses have been suggested, instances of which are as follows: the Final Judgment shall be in God's Hands on that Day; the final abode in Paradise or Hell shall be decreed by God Almighty; mankind shall stand at His Threshold for Reckoning of their deeds and their Recompense. However, taking into account the following blessed Verse, what we have chose as the exegesis of the blessed Verse sounds further befitting.

Some Qur'an exegetes hold that the blessed Verse in question is one of the Qur'anic Verses treating of the everlasting path of human spiritual growth, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

"To Him is the Final Return"[10];

"O man! You shall toil to return unto your Lord and you shall meet Him"[11];

"And all shall return unto your Lord"[12].

In other words, man is like a traveler having departed from the bounds of non-existence for the realm of existence and is proceeding toward the Absolute and Boundless Existence of God Almighty to proceed on this path of spiritual growth everlastingly, entering different stages of closeness unto God Almighty, unless they deviate from their course, fall down, and finally perish.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 13-15

يُنَبَّأُ الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

بَلِ الْإِنسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ

وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

13. On that Day man shall be informed of what he sent forward and what he left behind.

14. Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself,

15. Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses.

The blessed Verse 13 says that man shall be informed of all the deeds he sent forwarded or delayed in doing them. Different exegeses have been suggested for these two expressions.

Some say that a reference is herein made to the deeds one has sent forward in his life time or the posthumous vestiges of his good and bad deeds left behind amongst the people who act upon them and he shall be recompensed by the good and evil consequences of their deeds. Such vestiges entailing good and evil consequences include the books, buildings, and offspring.

There are some exegetes who hold that a reference is herein made to the earliest and the last deeds done in lifetime. In other words, man shall be notified of all his deeds, the possessions he sent forward, and the possessions he left for his heirs.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse makes alludes to the sins one put forward and the obedience delayed by him or vice versa. The first exegesis sounds further befitting, particularly when we taken into account a

tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.

The Noble Imam (as) is narrated as saying:

"On that Day man shall be informed of whatever good and evil deeds he sent forward or left behind, of his vestiges as traditions upon which the prospective generations will act. If such traditions happen to be evil, his recompense shall be equal to those who act upon them, without anything being decreased of their sins. Au contraire, if the traditions he left behind happen to be good, his rewards shall equal to theirs without anything being decreased of their Rewards.[13]

The blessed Verse 14 says:

"Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself."

The point is that God Almighty and the angels shall inform him of man's deeds, though there shall be no need to do so, since man shall be a witness against himself on that Day and he and his bodily organs shall testify then.

The blessed Verse 15 says:

"Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses."

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

"Their hearing and their eyes and their skins shall testify against them as to what they used to do"[14]***;***

"This Day We shall seal up their mouths, and their hands shall speak unto Us, and their legs shall bear witness to what they used to do"[15]***.***

Therefore, the best witnesses testifying against one's deeds at the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection shall be man himself, since he knows best about his own deeds, though God Almighty has assigned numerous other witnesses to provide him with further testimonies.

The Arabic infinitive or participial form basira denotes "insight, knowledge" and "knowledgeable" respectively. Thus, some exegetes suggest that the word implies enlightening argument and reason. The Arabic nominal form ma'adhir is the plural form of ma'dhara originally denoting what effaces the vestiges of sin which may imply true excuse and at times outward excuse.

It is also suggested that ma'adhir is the plural form of mi'dhar denoting veil and covering. Based on the later suggestion, the blessed Verse would suggest that man is aware of himself, even though he may cast a veil on his deeds. However, the first exegesis sounds further befitting.

God Almighty shall reckon the deeds on that Great Day and He is All-Aware of the inward and outward secrets and He shall leave man to reckon his own deeds, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a one who reckons against himself this Day"[16]***.***

The blessed Verses in question all treat of Resurrection, though reference is also made to this world.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 16-19

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ

16. Move not your tongue hastily in reciting it [i.e. the Holy Qur'an].

17. Its collection and recitation is upon Us.

18. And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation.

19. Then, it is for Us to make it clear.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an before its Revelation is completed to you"[17]***.***

The Holy Qur'an in its entirety was revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) on Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) then its Verses were revealed in time within a period of twenty three years of his Prophetic call.

Thus, the blessed Verse

"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an"

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had been already aware of the Revelation of the blessed Verses.

Thus, in the blessed Verse 18, God Almighty says unto him:

"And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation."

Some of the Qur'anic Verses concern the manner of the Revelation unto the Noble Prophet (S) and its Recitation by the people. In such Verses, God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S) to refrain from recitation upon the Revelation prior to its completion and be no in haste with His Word.

There is no room for concern as to consigning them to oblivion, since their preservation is upon Him. Thus, he is asked to let the Revelation be completed; then, he may recite the blessed Verses. Therefore, it is for God Almighty to clarify the Revelation to the Noble Prophet (S).

It is worthy of note that these Verses reflect the originality of the Holy Qur'an and its preservation from any distortion, since God Almighty has promised to collect, recite, and clarify it. It is narrated that when Gabriel was sent down to the Noble Prophet (S) to reveal the Verses unto him, he kept utter silence and upon the departure of Gabriel, he commenced the recitation of the blessed Verses.[18]

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 20-21

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ

وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

20. It is not as you imagine [that you regard as concealed the reasons lying behind Resurrection], but you love the fleeting life [of this world and absolute indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh],

21. And neglect the Hereafter.

The blessed Verses in question continues the discussions as to Resurrection and enumerates further characteristics of Resurrection and the unfounded arguments suggested to belie it, saying that it is not the case that the reasons lying behind Resurrection be concealed as a consequence of which you fail to comprehend its veracity, but the truth is that you love this fleeting worldly life for which you neglect the Hereafter.

The main reason suggested for the denial of Resurrection does not lie in entertaining doubts as to Divine Omnipotence in assembling the scattered dust of the rotten bones but your intense love for mammon and unchecked concupiscent desires lead you to remove all impediments. Now, since acknowledging Resurrection and acting upon Divine Injunctions entail numerous obstacles, you rise to belie to question in principle and totally neglect the Hereafter.

As mentioned above, one of the most significant factors leading to materialism and denial of Origin and Resurrection is enjoy absolute freedom in indulging in committing sin and the pleasures of the flesh. Compared to the past, it is further clearly reflected in our modern world.

The twain blessed Verses in question actually lay emphasis on the preceding Verses:

"Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 22-23

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ

إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

22. Some faces that Day shall be happy,

23. Looking at their Lord.

The blessed Verses treat of the states of the good doing believers and the evil doing disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

"Some faces that Day shall be happy, looking at their Lord."

The Arabic participial form nadhira, cognate with nadhra, connotes a particular kind of happiness which is consequent to affluence and welfare and is accompanied by felicity, beauty, and splendor. In other words, their appearance reflects their great happiness consequent to being endowed with Divine Bounties.

The same theme is to found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"You shall recognise in their faces [those of the people of Paradise] the splendor of delight"[19].

The blessed Verses 22 and 23 reflect the material and spiritual Bounties respectively. The blessed Verse 23 says that they only look at the Pure Essence of their Lord with their eye of heart and through inward intuition.

Such glance makes them absorbed in the Unique Essence and the Absolute Perfection and Beauty, such that one single moment of their exalted state is far superior to what exists in this world. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that they await their Lord's Rewards.[20]

It is noteworthy that the precedence of

"at their Lord"

over

"happy"

restricts the meaning, namely they solely look at Him not at anyone else.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 24-25

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ

تَظُنُّ أَن يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ

24. And some faces, that Day, will be gloomy.

25. Aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them.

Attachment to mammon and neglecting the Hereafter shall entail gloominess of appearance on the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers with their gloomy appearance shall stand before the believers with happy faces.

The Arabic participial form basira denotes "unripe, undue" and the nominal form busr is applied to unripe fruit and to gloominess of appearance, as a consequence of reaction against the angst against the torments in store for the disbelievers. Therefore, when they notice the tokens of torments and the records of their deeds imbued with sins and devoid of good righteous deeds, they entertain intense sorrow and frown at their unfavorable state.

The blessed Verse 25 says that they are aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them. The Arabic nominal form faqira denotes vertebrae or backbone, though it connotes any harsh incident that crushes the backbone.

The cognate form faqir ("poor, indigent") is applied to one who is burdened to the extent that his back has been crushed. The expression reflects the harsh torments awaiting the disbelievers in Hell.

They await painful torments, whereas the aforesaid group await Divine Graciousness and meeting with the Beloved. One group awaits the most painful torments and the other look forward to receiving the best material and spiritual Bounties.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 26-30

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

26. Nay, he will not believe till his soul reaches the collar bone,

27. And it will be said: "Who can cure him?"

28. And he becomes certain of parting from the world;

29. And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death].

30. The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord ['s Tribunal].

The blessed Verses treat of the throes of death opening a window to the other world, saying that he shall never believe till his soul reaches his throat. It will be on that Day that his purgatory eyes will open, the veils will be cast asunder, and he shall see the tokens of torment and chastisement. He will be aware of his deeds and will intend to believe, though it will be of no avail to him.

The Arabic word taraqi is the plural form of tarquwa ("collar bone"). The expression "the soul reaches the collar bone or throat" connote the throes of death, the last breath, and the last moments of life, since when the soul leaves the body, the organs further remote from the heart, e.g. hands and feet, fail to function earlier than other organs, as if the soul gradually leaves the body till it reaches the throat.

The blessed Verse 27 says that then the people around the person in the throes of death will hastily look for some way out, saying:

"Who can cure him?"

They utter the words desperately, though they know that it is all over and physicians may not cure him. The Arabic word raq, derived from r-q-y, denotes climbing and ascending and the cognate word ruqya implies the prayers and invocations leading to cure. The cognate raqi is used in the sense of physician, since he delivers man from diseases.

Therefore, the blessed Verse says that those surrounding the patient and at times the patient himself cry out of severe angst and inquire whether there is one to say a prayer and cure the patient.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse inquires:

"Which of the angels take his soul to the heaven, those in charge of torment or those of mercy?"

However, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting and accurate.

The blessed Verse 28 makes a reference to the total despair of the person in the throes of death, saying:

"He totally loses his hope and becomes certain of parting from the world."

The blessed Verse 29 says:

"And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death]."

Such twisting is owing to the intensity of the angst cause by the soul leaving the body or it may reflect that the limbs are rendered dysfunctional as the soul is leaving them.

Further exegeses have been suggested for the blessed Verse, an instance of which includes a tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as):

"The world twists around the Hereafter."

The tradition is to be found in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's exegetic work.[21]

The blessed Verse 30 says:

"The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord ['s Tribunal]."

Everyone shall return unto Him to attend His Tribunal of Justice. All paths will lead unto Him. The blessed Verse lays further emphasis on Resurrection and raising all His servants from the dead. It may also reflect the orientation of the spiritual growth of the servants toward the Pure and Boundless Divine Essence.

Some traditions have been narrated in this respect, three instances of which include:

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Zayn al-'Àbidin (as) that in reply to a question concerning death he said:

"Death to the believer is like taking off a filthy garment infected with insects, unfettering heavy shackles and turning them into the best attires, the most sweet smelling perfume, the most convenient of the mounts, and

the most comfortable homes; the similitude of death to the disbeliever includes taking off a majestic attire, and departing from comfortable homes and turning them into the filthiest and the coarsest of garments, the most horrible homes, and the most excruciating torments."[22]

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that he was inquired regarding a depiction of death.

The Imam (as) replied:

"It is like a sweet scent to the believer by which he falls into a state of sleep in which he is totally untouched by pain and torment, but to the disbeliever, it is like the bites of serpents and scorpions or even more painful than them."[23]

It is worthy of note that death is like a door to the world of survival. In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

"Every house has a door and that of the Hereafter is death."[24]

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

"Remembrance of death effaces the concupiscent desires and eradicates negligence from the heart. It inspires hopes and softens human disposition, withers the tokens of following the desires of the flesh, quenches the fire of avarice, and belittles the world in the eyes."

This is what the Noble Prophet (S) intended by saying that one hour spent on reflection is worth one year spent on worshipping.[25] The Prophetic tradition applies to one of the clear instances of reflection rather than the exclusive reference to the topic.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 31-33

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ

وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّىٰ

31. So he neither believed nor established ritual prayer.

32. But on the contrary, he belied and turned away.

33. Then he walked in conceit to his family.

Proceeding with the discussion on death as the first step taken on the path toward the Hereafter, the blessed Verses in question say that the disbelievers lack the provisions required for the journey.

The first two blessed Verses say that one who belied Resurrection might neither believe, nor acknowledge Divine Revelation, nor establish ritual prayers for Him, but he followed the path of denial and turned away from Divine Command.

The Arabic clause fa-la saddaqa implies that he did not acknowledge Resurrection, reckoning of deeds, Divine Revelation, monotheism, and the Prophetic Call of Allah's Messenger (S).

Some exegetes suggests that a reference is herein made to the disbelievers ceasing from expending in Allah's Cause, as it is accompanied by the establishment of ritual prayers. However, the second Verse clearly indicates that denial is the opposite of such acknowledgement. Therefore, the first exegesis sounds more accurate.

The blessed Verse 33 says that he walked arrogantly to his family. Having imagined that he attained to a great triumph though indifference and belying the Noble Prophet (S) and Divine Revelation, he walked in conceit to his family to recount, as usual, his glorious deeds and in doing so, the manner of his gait was indicative of such arrogance and self-conceit.

The Arabic verbal form yatammata, derived from the root m-t-w, originally denotes "he stretched his body," though it herein implies that he walked proudly, strutted, or swaggered. The word may also connote walking listlessly and lethargically, though the former sense fits the context herein.

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 34-36

أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى

34. Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!

35. Then, Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!

36. Does man think that he will be left in vain?

Addressing such disbelievers, the first two blessed Verses in question recurrently warn them:

"Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting."

Different suggestions have been provided for the clause

thumma awla la-ka fa-awla ("Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting"),

including: it is a warning to them against Divine torment; you deserve such entanglement, you deserve it; it would be more befitting to reproach you, it would be further befitting; woe unto you, woe unto you; may the worldly rewards be far from you, may the rewards in the Hereafter be far from you; may you be entangled with torments and afflictions, may you suffer the torments and afflictions; it is more befitting for you to suffer the torments which you notice in the battlefield of Badr, and the torments in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection are more befitting for you.

However, it is needless to say that the majority of such interpretations imply one comprehensive meaning, namely warning against the torments and the evil consequences of misdeeds awaiting the sinners in this world, in the purgatory, and on the Day of Resurrection.

It is reported in a number of traditions that the Noble Prophet (S) met Abu Jahl and gave him pieces of advice. Abu Jahl said:

"You warn me, but neither you nor your Lord may harm me. I am the most powerful of the inhabitants of this land."

It was on that occasion that these Qur'anic Verses were sent down to the Noble Prophet (S).[26]

The blessed Verse 36 treats of two appealing arguments concerning Resurrection, one of which is indicative of the goal behind human creation and also Divine Wisdom, and the other reflects His Omnipotence through making reference to the development of semen in the different embryonic stages.

The blessed Verse says:

"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"

The Arabic adverb of manner suddan denotes "in vain, aimlessly." The Arabic phrase ibl-u sudda is applied to a camel left unattended that may graze wherever it likes. The Arabic nominal form insan connotes that man who belies Resurrection.

The blessed Verse implies such questions: How may he believe that God Almighty creates the vast world with such majesty and so many wonders for man without any goal? Each any every organ is created for some particular goal or goals, e.g. eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, heart for pumping food, oxygen, and water to all the cells of the body, even there is a reason lying behind the creation of fingerprints.

How may one believe that there is no goal behind the creation of man and his is created in vain, without any plans, any obligations, e.g. as to enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If a man manufactures something aimlessly, he will be criticized and he will not be regarded as having a sound mind.

How may have God Almighty, the All-Wise, created the world in vain? If it be said that the goal lies in the fleeting life of man, aiming at recurrent feeding, rest, and entanglement with innumerable pains, such great creation may not be logically justified. Consequently, we may draw the conclusion that man is created for a greater purpose, namely the everlasting life in proximity to the Mercy of the Truth and incessant and endless spiritual growth.[27]

Surah al-Qiyama - Verses 37-40

أَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِيٍّ يُمْنَىٰ

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ

أَلَيْسَ ذَٰلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ

37. Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?

38. Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion.

39. And made of him two sexes, male and female.

40. Is He not Able to give life to the dead?

Creation is the first token of Omnipotence. The blessed Chapter opened with swearing by Resurrection and it closes with Divine Omnipotence to raise the dead on Day of Resurrection.

Alluding to the second argument mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 37 asks:

"Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?"

The following two Verses respond:

"Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion. And made of him two sexes, male and female."

It is in the last Verse (40) that the rhetorical question is posed:

"Is He not able to give life to the dead?"

Is He, who creates the little and worthless drop of semen anew each and every day in the dark womb and gives a new life and a novel form to it until it finally changes into a male or female human being and is born, not Able to give life to the dead?

It is actually a response to those who oftentimes belie the question of material Resurrection and refute being raised from the dead. In order to substantiate the veracity of Resurrection, the Holy Qur'an makes references to the threshold of human existence and the wondrous embryonic stages of development and thereby reflects Divine Omnipotence.

In other words, the best argument to substantiate the contingency of some object is its actualization. It is worthy of note that God Almighty has also demonstrated other instances of His Omnipotence through the recreations at the hands of His Messengers in this world. Prophet Jesus (as) breathed into two birds which he had made of clay and gave them life.

Prophet Abraham (as) called the birds which he had smashed and minced and thereby gave them a new life. Prophet Moses' (as) seventy companions who had accompanied him to the Mount Sinai (Tur) and had died following Divine Manifestation there, were given new lives by God Almighty.

Those who belie Resurrection have not truly gained some knowledge concerning God Almighty, since if human deeds be effaced upon his death, doubt will be cast upon Divine Wisdom, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses:

"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"[28];

"Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you would not be brought back unto Us?"[29].

The blessed Verses firstly treat of Divine Wisdom in raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection and secondly to Divine Omnipotence in the Creation of man, reflecting the contingence of his recreation.

The Arabic nominal form nutfa originally denotes trickle of water or pure water, though it is applied to semen discharge in the process of reproduction. The embryonic stages of development of semen constitute some of the most surprising phenomena in the world of existence, studied in the discipline of embryology, many of whose secrets have been unveiled in recent centuries.

The interesting point is that the Holy Qur'anic Verses had recurrently made references to such questions and had laid emphasis on them as tokens of Divine Omnipotence when such discoveries were not made yet.

They are the tokens of the Majesty and Glory of the Great Heavenly Book. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verses in question make mention of some of the embryonic stages, though further stages are to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an in the opening Verses of Chapters 22 and 23, the exegetic details of which may be found above.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic pronoun

dhalika ("that")

implies pointing at some object lying afar. The pronoun herein implies Divine Majesty and Greatness, connoting that His Divine Pure Essence is so Exalted that it lies beyond human reflection.

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet was reciting

"Glorious art Thou! O Lord! Thou possess such Omnipotence!"
when the blessed Verse 40,
"Is He not Able to give life to the dead?"
was revealed unto him.

In this respects, some traditions have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as).[30]

O Lord! We testify that You are Omnipotent to raise all the dead and grant them new lives in one single moment. There exists no impediment to Your Omnipotence.

O Lord! On that day when the souls reach the collarbones and we lose our hopes of all things besides you, we set our hopes on Your Pure Essence. Forgive us and grant us Your Mercy and Grace.

Amen! O Lord of the worlds!

Notes

1. Ghurar al-Hikam.
2. 12:18
3. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 346.
4. 20:14
5. 13:28
6. 89:27-30
7. Tafsir Maraghi; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi.
8. 36:78
9. 81:1
10. 64:3
11. 84:6
12. 53:42
13. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 406; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 1, p. 1891.
14. 41:20
15. 36:65
16. 17:14
17. 20:114
18. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
19. 83:24
20. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
21. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 465.
22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 155.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 20, p. 345.
25. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 133.
26. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 401.
27. For further details, see above under 23:115.
28. 75:36
29. 23:115
30. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 19

From Surah al-Insan (76) to Surah al-Ghashiyah (88)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 8
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 9
What is a 'Commentary'? 10
The Current Commentary..... 11
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 12
The Problems in Translating..... 12
Translators Note..... 13
Editor's Note 14
Notes 16
Acknowledgment 17
Notes 17
References 18
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 18
English Translations of Qur'an 18
Supporting Technical References..... 19
Phraseological and Philological Sources 19
A Presentation to Muslims 21
Notes 22
Surah al-Insan Chapter 76 23
(Human) 23
Number of Verses: 31..... 23
Contents of the Surah 23
Was the Surah Revealed In Medina? 23
Surah al-Insan, Verses 1-4..... 24
Explanation 27
Explanation: The Fetus and its Development 28
Surah al-Insan, Verses 5 - 11 29
The Occasion of Revelation 30
The Great Reward for the Righteous 31
Feeding the Starved is of the Greatest Good Deeds..... 35
Surah al-Insan, Verses 12 - 22..... 36
Great Rewards in Heaven..... 37
Surah al-Insan, Verses 23 - 26..... 43
Surah al-Insan, Verses 27 - 31..... 45
Supplication..... 49
Notes 49
Surah Mursalat, Chapter 77 50
(Those Sent Forth) 50
Number of Verses: 50..... 50
Contents of the Surah 50
The Virtue of Studying this Surah..... 50
Surah Mursalat, Verses 1-15 51
Allah’s Promises Surely Befall! Woe to the Rejecters of Truth! 51
Contents of the Oaths 55
Surah Mursalat, Verses 16-28 55
They See These Signs of Power, Yet They Reject the Resurrection! ... 56
Surah Mursalat, Verses 29-40 59

They Can Neither Defend Themselves Nor Escape 60
Supplication 61
Surah Mursalat, Verses 41-50 63
What Statement Will They Believe In, If They Do Not Believe in Holy Qur'an? 64
Supplication 66
Notes 66
Surah Nabaa, Chapter 78 68
(The Great News) 68
Number of Verses: 40 68
Contents of the Surah 68
Surah Nabaa, Verses 1-5 68
The Great News! 69
Why is the Resurrection Emphasized On So Much? 72
Surah Nabaa, Verses 6-16 73
Explanation: The Relation Between These Verses and the Resurrection 80
Surah Nabaa, Verses 17-20 80
Finally, the Promised Day Will Come 81
What are the meanings of 'be opened' and 'gates'? 82
Surah Nabaa, Verses 21-30 84
Hell is a Great Ambush! 84
Surah Nabaa, Verses 31-37 88
Some Great Rewards for the Righteous 88
Explanation: The Rewards of the Righteous and the Recompense of the Rebels 91
Supplication 92
Surah Nabaa, Verses 38-40 92
Supplication 99
Notes 99
Surah Nazi'at, Chapter 79 101
(Those Who Tear Out) 101
Number of Verses: 46 101
Contents of the Surah 101
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 101
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 1-5 101
By The Angels Who Try Hard 102
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 6-14 103
The Resurrection Will Happen with a Single Great Blast! 104
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 15-26 106
Pharaoh Used to Say: I Am Your Lord, Most High 107
Explanation: A Small Sample of the Elegance of Holy Qur'an 110
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 27-33 110
A Reason For the Resurrection: Are You More Difficult to Create or the Heaven He Built? 110
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 34-41 112
Those Who Restrain Their Soul From Low Desires 113
Explanations 115
What is the meaning of "the Presence of the Lord"? 115

The Relation Between the Rebels and Worldliness 115
There are only Two Groups 116
Surah Nazi'at, Verses 42-46 116
Supplication 118
Notes 119
Surah 'Abasa, Chapter 80 120
(He Frowned) 120
Number of Verses: 42 120
Contents of the Surah 120
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 120
Surah 'Abasa, Verses 1-10 120
The Occasion of Revelation 121
Surah 'Abasa, Verses 11-23 124
Only the Purified Ones Can Touch the Qur'an 125
Surah 'Abasa, Verses 24-32 130
Man Should Look At His food! 130
Explanation 132
Explanation:Wholesome Nutriments 134
Surah 'Abasa, Verses 33-42 135
The Resurrection Cry! 135
Explanation: Self-Perfection 137
Supplication 137
Notes 138
Surah Takwir, Chapter 81 139
(The Folding Up) 139
Number of Verses: 29 139
Contents of the Surah 139
The Virtue in Studying Surah Takwir 139
Surah Takwir, Verses 1-9 140
The Day When All the Universe Will be Dissolved 140
Surah Takwir, Verses 10-14 144
Explanation: The Order of the Verses 146
Will the Solar System and the Stars Darken? 146
Surah Takwir, Verses 15-25 147
Gabriel, the Bringer of Allah's Message Descends to him 147
Explanation: The Characteristics of a Qualified Messenger 152
Surah Takwir, Verses 26-29 153
O Neglectful Ones! Where Are You Going? 153
Supplication 155
Notes 155
Surah Infitar, Chapter 82 156
(The Cleaving Asunder) 156
Number of Verses: 19 156
Contents of the Surah 156
Surah Infitar, Verses 1-5 156
The Disturbance in Order and Symmetry 156
Explanations 159
Surah Infitar, Verses 6-12 160

O man! What Has Seduced You? 160
Explanation: The Angels; the Scribes 165
Surah Infitar, Verses 13-19 167
On That Day, No One Does Anything for Anyone 167
Supplication 169
Notes 170
Surah Mutaffifin, Chapter 83 171
(Defrauders) 171
Number of Verses: 36 171
Contents of the Surah 171
The Virtue in Studying the Surah 171
Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 1-6 171
The Occasion of Revelation 172
Woe to Those Who Deal in Fraud 172
Explanation: 'Dealing in Fraud' is One of the Factors of Mischief in the Land 175
Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 7-10 176
What Informs You What 'Sijjin' Is? 176
Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 11-17 179
Sin Works as Rust Upon the Heart 179
Explanations 181
Why Does Sin Work As Rust Upon The Heart? 181
A Curtain Over The Spirit 182
Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 18-28 183
'Illiyin is Anticipating the Righteous 183
Explanation: Who are 'the Righteous' and 'the Ones Nearest to Allah'? 187
Heavenly Drinks 188
Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 29-36 189
The Occasion of Revelation 189
Supplication 192
Notes 193
Surah Inshiqaq, Chapter 84 194
(The Rending Asunder) 194
Number of Verses: 25 194
Contents of the Surah 194
The Virtue In Studying This Surah 194
Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 1-9 194
Explanations 198
A Surprising Narration! 198
This Life is Full of Pain and Labour 199
Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 10-15 199
Those Who Hold Their Record Behind Their Back! 199
Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 16-25 201
Explanation 204
Supplication 205
Notes 205
Surah Buruj, Chapter 85 206
(The Constellations) 206

Number of Verses: 22 206
Contents of the Surah 206
The Virtue in Studying This Surah 206
Surah Buruj, Verses 1-9 207
The Believers and the Pyres 207
Explanations 213
Who Were 'The Makers of The Pit of fire'? 213
Resistance in Keeping Faith 215
Surah Buruj, Verses 10-16 216
Allah's Punishment for the Persecutors 216
Surah Buruj, Verses 17-22 219
Notes 221
Surah Tariq, Chapter 86 222
(The Night) 222
Number of Verses: 17 222
Contents of the Surah 222
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 222
Surah Tariq, Verses 1-10 222
O man! Consider of What You Are Created! 223
Surah Tariq, Verses 11-17 227
We Destroy the Enemies' Plans 227
Supplication 230
Notes 231
Surah A'la, Chapter 87 232
(The Most High) 232
Number of Verses: 19 232
Contents of Surah A'la 232
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 232
Surah A'la, Verses 1-5 233
Glorify Allah, The Most High 233
Surah A'la, Verses 6-13 235
We Will Make Everything Prepared For You To Do Good 236
Surah A'la, Verses 14-19 240
All Divine Books Contained A Definite Law 240
Explanation 242
Supplication 244
Notes 244
Surah Ghashiyah, Chapter 88 245
(The Overwhelming Event) 245
Number of Verses: 26 245
Contents of Surah Ghashiyah 245
The Virtue in Studying This Surah 245
Surah Ghashiya, Verses 1-7 245
They Are Weary, But With No Gain 246
Surah Ghashiyah, Verses 8-16 247
A Perspective of the Blessings in Heaven 248
Surah Ghashiyah, Verses 17-26 251
Look at the Camel; a Sign of Allah 251

www.alhassanain.org/english

Supplication 256
Notes 256

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement''.[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Insan Chapter 76

(Human)

Number of Verses: 31

(The Arabic meaning of 'Insan' is 'Human'. In the English language the words 'mankind' and 'man' are also used for 'Human' and we have used 'man' in the text.)

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

In spite of its brevity, this Surah presents a deep, varied and comprehensive theme which can be divided into five sections:

1. Man's creation from a drop of mingled sperm; his guidance and his free-will.

2. The reward offered to the Righteous /abrar/. (This part has a special occasion for its revelation in relation to the household of the Prophet (S), ie. Ahlul Bayt; which will be discussed at a later point.)

3. The merits which cause one to deserve the rewards.

4. The importance of The Qur'an, the manner of conducting its principles and the demanding road of self-perfection.

5. The dominance of Allah's Will (even though man has limited free-will).

There are different titles for this Surah; the most famous are "MAN" (Insan),"TIME" (Dahr) and

"HAS THERE COME" (Hal-ata)

each of which is taken from one of the words at the beginning of the Surah; however, in the traditions we will discuss, here, about the virtue of the Surah, only Hal-ata is mentioned.

Was the Surah Revealed In Medina?

The consensus of scholars and commentators is that all or at least part of the beginning verses, which explain the position or dignity of the Righteous and their good deeds, were revealed in Medina The occasion of revelation about them, that is, the story of Ali, Fatima, Hassan, Hosain (as) and Fezza (their house-helper); and their vows, will be explained in detail at the appropriate time.

From among the famous scholars, we can mention Qartabi the well-known commentator who points out:

"The consensus of scholars believe that the Surah has been revealed in Medina."[1]

In addition to this, we can also mention the following:

1. Hakim Ab-al-Qasim Haskani has, in detail, quoted from Ibn-Abbas the number of verses, which were separately revealed in Mecca and Medina. He has considered it as a Medinan Surah which has been revealed after Surah Al-Rahman and before Surah Al-Talaq.[2] Prof. Ahmad Zahid, the writer of 'Idah', has also quoted the same from Ibn-Abbas.[3]

2. Abu 'Abdullah Zanjani, in his book Tarikh-i-Qur'an[4] that a group of scholars have considered this Surah among the Medinan ones.[5]

3. From the same source[6], is quoted from Ibn-Abbas that this Surah is considered the eleventh Medinan Surah.[7]

4. Suyuti, in his book 'Itqan' has quoted from Dalayl-al-Nabowwa by Beyhaqi, who has in turn quoted from 'Akrama that:

"Surah al-Insan was revealed in Medina".[8]

5. In Durr al-manthur, the same comment from Ibn-Abbas is quoted in different forms.[9]

6. Tafsir-i Kashshaf, a commentary, is where Zamakhshari has pointed out that the occasion of revelation, in the beginning verses, was about the vows taken by Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hosain (as).[10]

7. There are still many other scholars, besides the aforementioned ones, who say that the beginning verses are about Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hosain (as).[11]

This verifies that the Surah has been revealed in Medina (since we know that Hassan and Hosain (as) were born in Medina). Among these scholars' books we can mention the master Vahidi's 'Asbab al-Noz-ul', Baqavi's 'Ma'alim-at-Tanzil', Sebt Ibn-Jouzi's "Tathkirah", Ganji Shafi'i's 'Kifayat-at-Talib' and so on. This verification is so reputable and well known that Muhammad Ibn-Idris Shafii has referred to it in his poem:

"How long, how long. up until when,
Will you reproach me my love
For this. gentle man?
Was not Fatima married but only to him?
And was not Hal-ata revealed
About only but him?"

There are many other evidences supporting these views some of which, will be pointed out later, when the occasion of revelation of the verses is discussed.

In spite of these facts, some enthusiasts still insist on counting the Surah among Meccan ones and reject all the narration's about the revelation of the Surah being revealed in Medina as well as the revelation of this Surah being about Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hosain (as).

The Virtue in Studying Surah al-Insan (man)

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) that says:

"One who studies Surah Hal-ata will be rewarded Heaven and clothes of silk (in Heaven) by Allah."[12]

There is also a narration from Imam Baqir (as) which says:

"One of the rewards for a person who studies Surah Hal-ata every Thursday morning is that he will be with the Prophet (S) on the Day of Judgement."[13]

Surah al-Insan, Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

هَلْ أَتَىٰ عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَذْكُورًا

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلَ وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا

1. Has there not been over man a long period of Time when he was a thing not worth mentioning?

2. Surely We created man from a drop of mingled semen, in order to try him: so We gave him hearing and sight.

3. Surely We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (is up to him).

4. We have prepared Chains, Yokes and a Blazing Fire for the Rejectors.

We transformed the lowly mixture of sperm (and egg) into man, then We made all the faculties of guidance available to him.

Though most of the details in this Surah are about Resurrection and the Blessings of Heaven, there is, at the beginning of the Surah, some discussion on the creation of man. It becomes understood that if one takes note of the creation then one may be able to act cautiously in anticipation of the Resurrection.

The question is asked,

"Has there not been over man a long period of Time when he was a thing not worth mentioning?"

The answer, undoubtedly, is in the affirmative.

For a long time the tiny essential particles of his being were scattered in different places. They could have been in the soil, among the tiny droplets of water in the seas, or in the atmosphere. In fact, each of these three environments was so vast that the particles were lost within them and were so small as not to be worthy of mention.

Does the term

'man',

in the first verse, refer to all the members of mankind or does it only refer to Adam?

The next verse continues:

"Surely we created man from a drop of mingled semen..."

so, we can say this is a clear indication that it is referring to all of mankind; (since it is a known fact that this is definitely how man reproduces, and not by any other means. It is not a condition of coming into existence only for Adam).

However, some commentators believe that the term

'man',

in the first verse, refers to 'Adam' and that 'man', in the second verse, indicates 'mankind' as a whole. However, this seems to be a contradiction in thought and does not appear to be probable.

In the following sentence,

"...he was considered a thing not worth mentioning?",

there are various ideas put forth on this issue and one of them is that when man was but mingled sperm (and egg), he was not worthy of mention,

however, later when the entity possessed the higher stage of development it became a worthy being.

[It has been narrated from Imam Baqir (as), the fifth Imam, that man's existence was known to Allah even though he was not mentioned as being a worthy entity until Allah created him in the physical form.][14]

Other interpretations indicate that the term 'man', in this verse, means learned people who were not recognized at first, but subsequently became so, after having obtained their knowledge. They were, then, mentioned everywhere, among all people, while they were alive and even after their death.

Now, we come to the process of the second stage which is the creation of man and his becoming worthy of mention.

The verse says,

"Surely' We created man from a drop of mingled semen, in order to try him: so We gave him hearing and sight."

The term /amshaj/ is the plural form of /mashaj/ or /mashij/ which means 'mingled' or 'mixed'. The creating of man from 'mingled semen' probably refers to the mixture of sperm and egg and their unification, or

It could refer to the various talents possessed by man through heritage; which exists in the genes, DNA, and Chromosomes that are in every sperm and egg. Or, perhaps it refers to a combination of all of the aforementioned cases. If so, the last idea is the most complete and suitable.

It may be possible that the term

'mingled'

refers to the process of development, upon unification of sperm and egg; which leads the mixture to develop into a fetus and then into man.

With the term

/nabtalih/, "We try him..."

we can understand that man deserves the honor of duty, undertaking, responsibility, examination and trial, which is one of the greatest divine blessings Allah has gifted to man.

Since duty and examination are not possible unless there is awareness; hence, hearing and sight are given to man. This fact is mentioned at the end of the verse; making it clear for us that the former cannot exist without the latter.

Some commentators have also suggested that the intention for the examination is the process of developing the sperm to fetus and, then, to a complete man.

However, upon careful examination of the phrase

"We try him..."

and

"man",

the first interpretation seems more suitable.

By accepting this definition, we can understand that the origin in all of the conception of 'man' is in his sensational understanding. In other words, sensational understanding is the basis of all rationality's. Most Islamic philosophers support this idea and Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher, approved of the idea, as well.

Since, in the duty and examination of man, two more factors are required, that is, 'guidance' and ‘free-will' are added to understanding; the next verse insists, then, that

“Surely We guided him to the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (is up to him).”

Guidance, it can be said, has a broad meaning containing the following three branches: divine guidance, natural guidance and religious guidance. This verse, of course, mostly intends to convey the third branch, i.e. 'religious guidance'.

Explanation

Since Allah has created man with a special goal in mind: 'examination and development', He has prepared the necessary faculties for these fulfillment’s in his being. This can be considered 'divine guidance'.

Thereupon, He has made man naturally eager to follow the Way and with the help of his natural inclinations, has shown him its direction. This can be considered 'natural guidance'.

Further, He has given a mission to some heavenly leaders and great prophets in order for them to train man, show him the right direction and teach him the clear religious laws; so that he may perform his duty correctly. This can be considered 'religious guidance'. These three kinds of guidance, of course, are for all members of mankind; without any exception.

On the whole, this verse indicates three points which are important for the destiny in the life of man: 'duty', 'guidance' and ‘free-will’ all of which are both interdependent and complementary to each other.

By the way, there will be no room for the case of fatalism to exist when it says:

“Surely We guided him to the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (is up to him)”.

The terms

/shakiran/ 'grateful'

and

/kafuran/ 'ungrateful'

are the most fitting, here, because those who obey Allah and assume to follow His guidance are thankful, but those who disobey and do not follow the direction are sinners gone astray.

No one can be completely thankful for Allah’s blessings, but those who repay this favor with ingratitude are the worst. They have neither appreciation for Allah’s guidance nor the many ways that He has provided this guidance; which are always available.

(In Arabic, there is only one term used for those who are 'ungrateful' and for the 'unbelievers': /kafur/. The same is noted in Mufradat by Raqib).

In the next verse, there is a short, but meaningful point that relates to the fate of those who are ungrateful; it says:

“We have prepared Chains, Yokes and a Blazing Fire for the Rejecters”.

The sense derived from the term

/a'tadna/,”We have prepared...”

is, an emphasis on the existence of punishment; which is unavoidable for the rejecters. We know that preparation is for common people who are

limited in their abilities and must make prior arrangements for their supplies, so that when they are in need they are sure that they will have everything ready.

This is not true when speaking of Allah because whenever He Wills something to

“Be”,

it will be done at once and preparation is meaningless. However, to show the certainty of the existence of punishment for the rejecters, He insists that there is a means for the punishment; it is ready-made and there is no doubt about it.

Further along in the sentence, we see that /salasil/ 'chains' is the plural form of /silsilah/ which, here, means:

1) A flexible series of jointed links or rings usually of some kind of metal.

2) That which binds, as a prisoner held in chains.

The term

/aqlal/ ‘yokes’

is the plural form of /qul/ ‘yoke' which means: a wooden frame or bar with loops or bows at either end, used for harnessing together a pair of oxen, etc. Here, ‘yoke', is a heavy iron ring held on the neck or hands and is fastened with a chain.

On the whole, chains, yokes and blazing fire, which are mentioned in this verse, indicate a great harmful punishment for the rejecters. This sense is also pointed out in several other verses of the Qur'an. They denote both captivity and torture as punishment.

man's using his free-will for following after his lusts during his lifetime, in this world, will be the reason for that pain in the next life. In fact, that ‘blazing fire' that man will encounter later, is the incarnation of the fire he, himself, has made by his evil deeds in this world.

Explanation: The Fetus and its Development

We know that the human zygote is an entity formed by the unification of the male sperm and the female egg.

The sperm, itself, its combination with the egg and the different steps of fetal development into man is a great marvel in human existence. Some of the mysteries have been uncovered in the study of embryology, but there are some further areas yet to be discovered. A few of the above mentioned wonders are as follows:

1. Sperm: Floating in the semen of men is a very microscopic creature that has a head, neck and moving tail. (And what a miracle it is!: The tail propels it through the inhospitable environment, inside the vagina, on its journey to fertilize the egg.

The environment of the vagina is very acidic and there are only a certain number of days in a month in which the platens are vertical, in the female secretions, so that the spermatozoa can travel the distance without hindrance. At other times the platens are in a hodgepodge array and this makes it virtually impossible for the sperm to move in a straight line. Also, some of the spermatozoa may be deformed and unable, themselves, to make the journey.)

Every time a man has an ejaculation, he discharges, in the seminal fluid, an average of 70 million sperm per milliliter or 100 million spermatozoa or more-this is equal to the population of several countries, but only one of them, most usually, succeeds in entering the ovum so that fertilization can take place.[15] This number is very large because, as mentioned above, many of the spermatozoa will be destroyed on their long and arduous journey.

2. Egg: The wonderful characteristic of the egg is that it allows one sperm to enter it. (However, on rare occasions more than one sperm enters resulting in 'identical' twins or more than one egg is released from the ovum sac resulting in 'fraternal' twins). Also, within the egg the miraculous cell division process takes place.

3. Uterus: The uterus is a muscular organ and serves as a place for reception, retention, and nutrition of the concepts, which it expels during labor. It resembles a flattened pear in shape and the size varies depending on the age of the female. The remarkable ability of the cervix to dilate results from dissociation of collagen. The blood supply of the uterus is derived principally from the uterine and ovarian arteries.

4. Amnionic Fluid: The fetus is in a thick, essentially colorless, fluid in a sac called the 'placenta'. This fluid protects the fetus against the mother's various quick, sharp movements or any other violent disturbances. Moreover, it regulates the fetal temperature, so that the changes in the outside temperature cannot easily effect it. The most interesting point is that, most generally, the fluid keeps the fetus in a weightless state, which is very efficient and prevents limb stress.

5. Placenta and Cord: The fetus receives nourishment through the placenta and umbilical cord. The mother’s blood is accompanied by food materials and oxygen that arrives at the placenta and after a refining process goes to the fetus heart through the umbilical cord and then moves through its body.

6. Conception: After fertilization, the mature ovum becomes a zygote, which then undergoes segmentation. Some biological scientists believe that the ovum carries positive electric charges and the sperm has negative electric charges, then they attract each other. However, when the sperms enter the ovum, the charge is changed to a negative charge.

In so doing, the other sperms in the surrounding area will be repelled. Other scientists maintain that when the sperm enters the egg, some chemicals will be released causing the remaining spermatozoa to move away. Whichever the case may be, in a couple of days the zygote attaches itself to the wall of the uterine cavity. From there, if there are no complications in the growth and development process, a new being will enter this world.

From the beginning of the fourth month, the fetus is capable of respiratory movement sufficiently intense to move amniotic fluid in and out of the respiratory tract.[16] Air-breathing is initiated by the rapid replacement of bronchial and alveolar fluid by air.[17]

Surah al-Insan, Verses 5 - 11

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا

فَوَقَاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا

5. "Verily, the Righteous drink of a cup; the mixture of which is (like) camphor."

6. "A fountain, where the servants of Allah drink, flows in abundance (wherever they wish)."

7. "They fu(fill (their) vows and fear a Day, the chastisement of which is widespread."

8. "And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive

9. (Saying): "We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks."

10. "We only fear from our Lord a Day, frowningly severe."

11. Therefore, Allah will guard them against the evil of that Day, and will grant over them a Light of Realty and a (blissful) joy.

The Occasion of Revelation

A great evidence for the superiority and excellence of Ahlul Bayt; the household of the Prophet (S).

Ibn-Abbas says that Hassan and Hosain (as) were sick. The Prophet (S) and a group of followers came to visit them. They suggested to Hazrat Ali to take a vow for their recovery. So, Ali, Fatima and Fezza (their house-helper) took a vow that if Hassan and Hosain recovered, they would fast for three days. (According to the same narration, Hassan and Hosain (as) made the same vow.)

After a short while both of them recovered. Therefore, the family fasted for the first day, but, as they were in dire need for food stuffs, Hazrat Ali borrowed some barley and Hazrat Fatima ground one-third of it into flour and baked some bread.

With the onset of evening, when they were preparing to break their fasts, an indigent person came to their door and said,

"Peace be upon you, the Household of Muhammad. I am a needy Muslim, so please give me some food. May Allah bestow upon you, in kind, from divine sustenance."

All of them gave priority to him and gave him their shares. That night, they broke their fast with only water.

The following day they fasted again, but, like the previous day, an orphan came to the door. Once more, they forfeited their bread and ate nothing but water.

The next day, they fasted for the third time. This day a captive came to their house and they repeated their charity.

On the fourth day, Ali took Hassan and Hosain with himself to see the Prophet.

When the Prophet observed their condition; they were trembling with hunger, he said,

“It grieves me to see you in this condition”.

Then, he stood up and walked with them. When he arrived at their home, he found Fatima praying. Her stomach was sunk in to her backbone and her eyes had become sunken, too.

The Prophet was greatly affected.

At this moment Gabriel descended and said,

“O, Muhammad receive this Surah. Allah congratulates you for having such a family...”

And then Gabriel recited, to him, Surah Hal-ata.[18]

The Great Reward for the Righteous

In the aforementioned verses (1-4) human beings were divided into two groups; the grateful and the ungrateful and reference was made to the 'punishment and penalty' for the ungrateful. But, in these verses there is a recount of the 'Rewards' offered to the Righteous.

First, it says,

“Verily, the Righteous drink of a cup; the mixture of which is (like) camphor.”

The term /abrar/ is the plural form of /barr/, which originally means 'broadness and expansiveness'. For this reason, dry land and vast deserts, as opposed to large bodies of water, are called /barr/. Thus, this term is applied to the Righteous (people who do good), because their good deeds have extensive effects on the society.

The word /birr/ means 'to be pious', 'Just', or 'to act justly'. it is said that making the distinction between /khayr/ and /birr/ is for the reason that the former has a general meaning of goodness while the latter has the specific meaning of 'goodness accompanied by intention'.

The term /kafur/ has various meanings; one of which is 'good smelling'. Another meaning is ‘fragrant plant' or a plant which has a sweet fragrance. Also, it has the common meaning of 'a sharp odor' that has medical applications, e.g. for sterilizing or disinfecting. The Other meaning has its importance as an extraordinarily white and cool substance, and it is famous, because of its coolness and whiteness.

Furthermore, this verse indicates that this purifying drink is so fragrant that it is enjoyed both through the senses of taste and smell. On the whole, /kafur/ has been considered as having the same value as musk and ambergris the famous sweet fragrances.

Then, it refers to the fountainhead from which this cup of divine drink is tilled; and says,

“A fountain, where from the servants of Allah drink, flows in abundance (wherever they wish)”.

This purified fountain is under their control in such a way that it flows wherever they wish.

It is worthy of mention that in a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) it is quoted that in a description of the fountain he said that this fountain is placed in the house of the Prophet and from there it flows to the houses of the previous prophets (as) and believers.

It is true that, as in this world, the fountains of knowledge and mercy flow from the Prophet's house toward the servants of Allah and the righteous, and in the next world (which is a great illustration of this condition) the fountain of the divine pure drink will originate from his house and therefore, to the houses of other believers.

The term /yufajjirun/ is based on the word /tafjir/ which, itself, is derived from the root /fajara/ which means 'to cause water to flow' or 'to break' on a large scale, whether breaking the earth or anything else. When, as it seems, the light of the morning breaks the dark curtain of the night; this light is called /fajr/. Also, they call an evildoer /fajir/ (wicked), because he breaks open the curtain of modesty and piety. However, in this verse it means 'the opening of the ground'.

It is remarkable that among the many blessings of Heaven, referred to in this Surah, the first to be mentioned is this 'special pure fragrant drink'. Perhaps, because after passing their account on the Day of Judgment and on their arrival into Heaven, by drinking this drink, they clear their hearts from any grief, discomfort and impurity. Then, they can benefit from the other divine blessings, while they are basking in the love of Allah.

In the following verses, the deeds and qualifications of the 'Righteous' and 'servants of Allah' are described. Their eligibility for such unparalleled blessings is reasoned through having five characteristics.

It says:

“They fulfill (their) vows and fear a Day; the chastisement of which is wide spread”.

The terms

'they fulfill (their) vows'

and

'fear Allah'

(including some later sentences, which are all said in the present tense) indicate that this is their ever-existing, routine practice.

As was explained, earlier, regarding the occasion of revelation, the true essence of these verses is targeted at Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hosain (as), for they fulfilled their vows of fasting for three consecutive days, and did not break their fast, at the end of each day, but by only drinking water and their hearts were filled with the fear of Allah and the Day of Judgment.

The term /mustatir/ means 'vast', or 'scattered', which refers to the great and various punishments on that Great Day.

When they fulfilled their own vow, they definitely respected and fulfilled what Allah has made obligatory. Their fear of the chastisement of the Great Day was due to their deep belief in the Resurrection, and to their intensive responsibility in regard to Allah’s command.

They truly believed in the Resurrection and the penalties which are waiting for the wrong-doers. This belief is made manifest by their own sincere actions.

Then, referring to the third worthy deed of the Righteous, it says:

"And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive."

Donating food at the time of severe self-need requires great generosity. It was not simply feeding someone, since their action demanded sacrifices at a time when they, themselves, were in the greatest need.

On the other hand, this has a broad implication which includes: the indigent, orphans and captives; and hence, their generosity covers a large variety of 'needy'. The embedded meaning in the Arabic text /`ala hubbihi/ refers to 'the food' and denotes the fact that they donated the food which they craved for.

This conforms with the sense of Surah Al-i-Imran, No. 3, verse 92 which says:

"By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you give freely (benevolently) of that which you love..."

The meaning of
/miskin/ 'indigent',
/yatim /'orphan'
and
/asir /'captive'
are clear, but, among the commentators, there is no agreement as to the exact meaning and the kind of
/asir /'captive',
which is mentioned in the verse; but on the whole, the word
'captive'
refers to one who was taken captive in the wars with atheists or polytheists.

According to the occasion of revelation, a captive had come to the door of Ali's house, when usually a captive would have been put in prison.

As we understand from history, the explanation is that at the time of Muhammad (S), there were no prisons at all.

The Prophet (S) distributed the captives among the Muslims to guard, however, he told them to be kind to the captives and to take good care of them. At times when those Muslims had problems in providing for their captives, they asked for help from other fellow Muslims. The 'guards' went with the captive or they sent him alone to seek their help.

It is known that at that period in history, Muslims had very difficult times. Later, as the Muslims' territory and rule spread and when the number of criminal captives increased, with the spread of government, jails were built and the expenses were paid from the Muslims' treasury.

In any event, we understand from the above verse that one of the best acts is feeding the poor and the needy; not only those of Muslims, but also the poor and the needy from other territories and even pagans are included as a matter of Islamic routine. It is so important that feeding them is considered one of the prominent good deeds of 'the righteous'.

It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) told the believers that they should treat the captives well and fair. When the Muslims heard this; giving priority to captives, they even, at times, donated their own food to them.[19]

The fourth prominent characteristic of the Righteous is considered to be 'pureness and sincerity'; it says:

"(Saying): 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.'"

They behave, thus, not only in the case of feeding the needy, but what they do is also sincere and for the sake of Allah. They desire no reward nor thanks from anyone.

Basically, in Islam, the value of an action is in its sincerity and pure immaculate intention, and hence, activities which have worldly motivations, whether they be hypocritical or for people's approval and appreciation or for lusts or for venal rewards, have no Islamic or moral value.

A famous tradition from the Prophet (S), which attests to this fact, says:

"No deed is accepted unless (it is done) with the pure intention for Allah."

The term /wajh/ means literally 'face, countenance' then, the meaning of /wajh-i-llah/ is 'The face of Allah', but we know that Allah does not have a bodily face.

'Face' is the symbol of personality or self, then the meaning is 'the essence of Allah' as we read in Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 272:

"...when you spend not except in search of Allah's countenance...".

And also from Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 28, it says:

"And restrain yourself along with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His countenance..."

On the last characteristic of 'The Righteous' it says:

"We only fear from our Lord a day, frowningly severe".

This statement can be made by their own tongue or by their mute mannerisms.

The term

'frowning'

is usually used to describe the persons who are distraught, hence it is used for the Day of Judgment, since the Day and its events are so stern and distressful that not only people are frowning, but the Day, itself, is also frowning. The term /qamtarir/ has often been used in the sense of 'being stern and calamitous'.

Here, a question arises: The Righteous act only for the sake of Allah then why are they afraid of His punishment? Does their divine motive match with the motive of fear of the punishments on the Day of Judgment? Paying attention to one point makes the answer to the question clear.

The Righteous do everything, in any case, for the sake of Allah. If they are afraid of the punishments on the Day of Judgment, it is because they are His punishments and if they love for the Blessings of Heaven, it is because they are His blessings.

This is the same fact that is discussed in Islamic jurisprudence about the intention of a devotional act which says: devotional acts, for gaining Allah's affinity, do not contradict the desire of reward and the fear of punishment or even asking Allah for worldly gifts, such as the prayer of asking for rain, because all of them relate to Allah; though the high stage of a devotional act

is that it is done totally only for the love of Allah, not for the desire of the Blessings in Heaven or for the fear of punishment in Hell.

The verse:

"We only fear from our Lord a Day, frowningly severe"

attests to the fact that this fear is also like having the fear of Allah.

It is noteworthy that the second and the fifth characteristics are both on the subject of fear, but with a difference, in that, the former only mentions the fear of the Day of Judgment, while in the latter it refers to the fear of Allah on that Day.

At one point,

'Day'

is described by 'the chastisement of which is widespread' and another time it is characterized as 'frowning and calamitous'. In fact, one shows its vastness and the other refers to its spiritual quality.

Verse No. 11 points to a part of the result of the good deeds and pure intentions of the Righteous.

It says:

"Therefore, Allah will guard them against the evil of that Day and will grant over them a Light of Beauty and a (blissful) joy."

The term /nadrah/ means 'a special refreshment and happiness resulting from the abundance of blessing and comfort'. Truly, their appearance shows their inner calmness and happiness on that Day. Therefore, if they feared the Day, because of their responsibility in this world, on that Day Allah would make them happy in return.

The term /laqahum/ 'they meet', used in this verse, is very interesting and meaningful. It shows that Allah receives them with His Grace, and places them in the Light of His Mercy and because of this, they are full of joy and happiness.

Feeding the Starved is of the Greatest Good Deeds

Feeding the needy is one of the prominent good deeds of 'the Righteous' and 'the servants of Allah'. This is mentioned not only in the above verses, but it is also emphasized in many other verses of the Qur'an. Hence, it is understood that this good deed is particularly appreciated by Allah.

Nowadays, according to the news broadcasts, every year millions of people die from starvation in some parts of the world, while in some other parts, so much extra food is discarded as garbage. If we pay attention to this, two points will become very clear. First, the absence of morals in today's world, and second, the need for Islamic instruction.

There are many Islamic narration's that seriously refer to this subject, some of which are as follows:

1. A tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"One who feeds three Muslims, will be fed, by Allah, from three lush gardens in the dominion of the heavens."[20]

2. A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"One who feeds a Muslim believer to his fill, will be rewarded on the Day of Judgment so much so that neither a man nor an angel nor a Prophet knows the amount except Allah, who is Lord for all."[21]

Another narration from the same Imam says:

"I prefer to feed a needy believer than only to visit him and I prefer to visit him than to free ten slaves."[22]

Notice that the narrations do not emphasize on feeding only the needy and the starved, but some of them denote that feeding the believers is as important as freeing a slave even though the believer is not in need of the food. This shows that the main goal, besides feeding someone, is gaining the hearts and strengthening friendly relations. However, the opposite case is seen among many people today.

Sometimes two close friends or two relatives go to a hotel and each of them pays his own share, as if paying the expenses of the other is something unheard of, especially if the number of the guests is large.

Some narration's stipulate that feeding the starved, in general, (irrespective of believers or unbelievers) is of the best deeds.

For example, a tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"One of the greatest deeds, in the sight of Allah, is to soothe the heartache and to feed the starved. By Him in Whose hand is Muhammad's soul; the Muslim who, being satisfied with food, sleeps at night while his Muslim brother or neighbor is hungry, has not really believed in me (my prophecy)!"[23]

Although the last part of the aforementioned tradition is about feeding the Muslims, the first part covers all the starved and the vastness of the meaning may cover even the animals.

Surah al-Insan, Verses 12 - 22

وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا

مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا

وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلَالُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوفُهَا تَذْلِيلًا

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِآنِيَةٍ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرَا

قَوَارِيرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا

عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّىٰ سَلْسَبِيلًا

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَنْثُورًا

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا

عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابُ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُّوا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

إِنَّ هَٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا

12. "And Allah will reward them for their patience, with a garden and clothes of silk (in Heaven)."

13. "Reclining therein upon raised thrones, they will see (find) there neither the severe (heat of) the sun nor the bitter cold (of the moon)."

14. "And the shades of the (Garden) will come low over them, and the bunches (of fruit), there, will hang low in humility (being easy to pick)."

15. "And amongst them will be passed vessels of silver and goblets of crystal."

16. "(Bright as) crystal, made of silver; they will determine the appropriate measure."

17. "And they will be given to drink, there, a cup (of pure drink) mixed with Zanjabeel (ginger)."

18. "(From) a spring, there, named Salsabeel."

19. "And round them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness): if you saw them, you would think them scattered pearls."

20. "And when you look, you will see a Bliss and a Realm Magnificient."

21. "Upon them will be Green Garments of fine silk and heavy brocade, and they will be adorned with Bracelets of silver and their Lord will give to them to drink of a Drink Pure and Holy."

22. "Verily this is a reward for you, and your endeavour is accepted and appreciated."

Great Rewards in Heaven

The aforementioned verses have a slight hint of the good and the Righteous and show that they are delivered from the evils and painful chastisements on Doomsday and are covered by Allah's light of beauty and blissful joy. Now, the following verses refer to at least fifteen blessings in Heaven.

First, some Heavenly clothes and the settlement of the blessed ones, in Heaven, are spoken about.

It says:

"And Allah will reward them, for their patience, with a garden and clothes of silk (in Heaven)."

Yes, Allah sets them in special gardens of Heaven and dresses them in the best clothes due to their constancy and their altruism, such as their loyalty to their vow, fasting and donating their food to the indigent, the orphan and the captive, at the time when they were in need of it and were preparing to break their fast.

Not only in this verse, but also in many other verses throughout the Holy Qur'an, this fact is stipulated: all rewards, in the Hereafter, are (paid) in full for man's patience and constancy, i.e. patience for obedience, patience for avoiding sins, and patience for standing firm against difficulties and hardships.

Surah Rad, No. 13, verse 24 denotes that angels will receive the blessed ones, in Heaven, in the following manner:

"Peace unto you for that you persevered in patience..."

And in Surah Mo'minun, No. 23, verse 111, it says:

"I have rewarded them, this day, for their patience and constancy. They are indeed the ones that have achieved bliss."

It goes on to say:

"Reclining therein upon raised thrones, they will see (find) there neither the severe (heat of) the sun nor the bitter cold (of the moon)."

Usually when people want to have a test they sit somewhere and recline and that is why the verse says:

"Reclining therein upon raised thrones..."

Then, to portray the complete comfort in the moderate weather, of Heaven, the end of the verse says: there is

"...neither the severe (heat of) the sun nor the bitter cold (of the moon)".

It does not definitely denote that the 'sun and moon' will not exist there, but, regarding the shade of the trees in the gardens of Heaven, the excessive heat of the sun will not exist.

The term /zamharir/ is based on /zamhar/ which has the following meanings:

1. 'excessive cold'
2. 'excessive anger'
3. 'redness of eyes due to anger'; the first meaning, however, is understood here and there is a narration that says there is a place in Hell where the limbs shatter due to the excessive cold.[24]

The term /ara'ik/ 'thrones is the plural form of /arikah/ 'throne' and originally means: 'a couch for the bride in the bride-chamber', but, here it means 'a seat covered with a canopy and highly decorated'.

Enumerating the blessings of Heaven, the next verse says:

"And the shade of the (Garden) will come low over them, and the bunches (of fruit), there, will hang low in humility (being easy to pick)".

In the Garden, there will be no hindrance, not a thorn to pierce the fingers, nor a need to lift a finger to pick the fruit.

It is necessary to note, again, that the life in that world is very different from the life in this world. The blessings mentioned in these verses, as well as other verses in the Holy Qur'an, are only some slight, albeit meaningful, hints to the great benefits in Heaven; and according to some narration's, there are blessings there that no eyes have ever seen, no ears have ever heard, and no minds have ever considered.

Ibn-Abbas says that

"The blessings the Lord has mentioned, in the Holy Qur'an, are those which their names we are only acquainted with".

For instance, He mentions a

'pure drink mixed with Zanjabil (ginger)'

and 'ginger' is an aromatic root which Arabs like for its smell.[25]

The next verse refers to the feast in Heaven, the Furnishings and those who will entertain in those surroundings.

It says:

"And amongst them will be passed vessels of silver and goblets of crystal."

The vessels are

"(Bright as) crystal, made of silver; they will determine the appropriate measure".

The mentioned vessels will be full of various Heavenly foods and the crystal goblets will be full of pleasant aromatic drinks. The quantity will be as much as they wish and according to their taste and desires and will be served by Heavenly youths.

The term /aniyah/ is the plural form of /ana/, which means 'dishes of any kind', and the term /akwab/ is the plural form of /kub/ which means 'a water

container without a handle', which is sometimes called 'goblet'. The term /qawarir/ is the plural form of /qarurah/ which means 'containers made of crystal or glass'.

It seems strange that the vessels should be (bright as) Crystal, but they are made of silver. In this world no one can find such a thing. Here, in this world, the crystal vessels are made of quartz. The stone is melted and then made into a crystal-type container. The Creator, Who makes it possible for us to change hard, dark stone into a clear, transparent glass, is capable of achieving the same results, for the next world, with a metal such as silver.

So, from this description we understand that the vessels, and the containers in Heaven, are both as bright as crystal and as beautiful and splendid as silver, so much so that the liquids contained therein can be clearly seen.

There is a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) which says:

"Man, in Heaven, can see through silver just as he can see through glass and crystal in this world."[26]

We also know that, today, scientists have found special rays (such as X-ray) which pass through solid matter and show the inner properties, similar to the way we can see through glass or crystal.

Continuing, it says:

"And they will be given to drink there, a cup (of pure drink) mixed with Zanjabeel ginger)".

many commentators have said that Arabs were pleased with drinking wine mixed with ginger, because it made the wine tastier.

Now, the Holy Qur'an speaks about 'a cup (of pure drink)' which is mixed with Zanjabeel (ginger), but it is obvious that this mixed drink is completely different from that of wine. In other words, the difference between these two kinds of drink is as far as the distance between this world and the next world.

It seems that Arabs, of the past, used to drink two kinds of wine in two forms: One of them was warm and stimulating, which was mixed with ginger; and the other one was cool and narcotic, which was mixed with camphor.

Since the other world's facts cannot be stated in worldly language, we are compelled to use our limited human vocabulary for explaining and trying to understand the sublime meanings to the wonderful facts found in the Holy Qur'an.

Commentators have given many different definitions for 'Zanjabeel' (ginger), but most of them have said that it means: a tropical plant grown for its aromatic root used for flavoring food and drink.

These Heavenly cups of drink are filled

"(From) a spring, there, named Salsabeel"

and according to Arabic terminology, Salsabeel is a very enjoyable drink which flows easily into the mouth and down the throat; being quite refreshing.

To describe the happy feast, held in Heaven, the next verse speaks about those who entertain, there, and it says:

“And round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness); if you saw them you would think them scattered pearls”.

The youths, themselves, their youthfulness, freshness, vigor, mirth and beauty are immortal, and, therefore, their entertainment would be eternal as well.

This idea is understood from the terms

/muxalladun/ 'of perpetual'

and

/yatuf-u-'alayhim/ 'round about them will serve'.

The term

'scattered pearls'

shows both the attractive beauty and brightness of the youths, as well as their presence, everywhere, at the Divine feast. It, also, implies that the blessings in the New World cannot be explained exactly.

Then, the next verse is expressed very meaningfully:

“And when you look you will see a Bliss and a Realm Magnificent”.

There are many commentaries on the word

/na'im/ 'Bliss'

and the terms

/mul-kan kabira/ 'Realm Magnificent'.

Among them are the following:

1. A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) cites:

“The verse means that it is an Estate (or Realm) that neither fades nor vanishes.”[27]

2. The blessings in Heaven are so plentiful and various that no one can explain them.

3. A

'Realm Magnificent'

is a place in Heaven where the angels enter by the permission of the Blessed, and greet them upon their arrival.

4. Whatever the Blessed wish for, there, they obtain.

5. The lowest Blessed (from the point of rank), in Heaven, has so large a domain that when he (she) looks he (she) can see a thousand years' distance.

6. A permanent immortal

'Realm'

where the wishes are completely fulfilled.

The word

/na'im/ 'Bliss'

and the terms

/mul-kan kabi-ra/ 'Realm Magnificent',

referring to the vast gardens in Heaven, have such vast meanings that they can cover all the above commentaries.

To this end, some Heavenly blessings were pointed out such as: provinces, thrones, shades, fruits, drinks, vessels and those who entertain the Blessed, in Heaven.

Then, attention is paid to some Heavenly ornaments of those who had just passed the great Event of Judgment and says:

“Upon them will be Green Garments of fine silk and heavy brocade...”

The term
/sundus/ 'garment'
means 'a thin silk cloth' while
/istabraq/ 'brocade'
means 'a thick silk cloth'. Some commentators say the latter is derived from the Persian term /setabr/ 'thick', but some others believe it is derived from the Arabic term /barq/ 'shining'.

The verse continues:

"...and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver..."

The silver, there, is so bright that it glitters like crystal and it is more beautiful than rubies and pearls.

The term /asawir/ is the plural form of /aswarah/ 'bracelet' and is originally derived from /dastvar/ 'a bracelet', a Persian word, with some phonetical changes in Arabic of course.

'Green' is the color of the Garments mentioned in the verse, because this color is the most refreshing to the eye; like the leaves on the trees, and fits in well with the 'Garden'. There are several kinds of green color, of course, each of which has its own elegance.

In some other verses of the Holy Qur'an, we see that the Blessed are decorated with golden bracelets, as for instance; in Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 31, it says:

"...they will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold..."

This does not contrast with the current verse in this Surah, because people may decorate themselves with a variety of ornaments.

The question may arise, "Aren't silver and gold bracelets used by women as ornaments, then, why are they both mentioned for all the Blessed, i.e. men and women?".

The answer is that among many groups of people, it is common for both men and women to use gold and silver for ornamentation, but the kind of bracelet is different (though in Islam using gold as an ornament, by men, is forbidden in this world).

In Surah Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 53 it says:

"Then why are not gold bracelets bestowed on him?..."

and it is understood that golden bracelets, used by men, had been a sign of dignity among ancient Egyptian people.

Moreover, as we have frequently said, the facts of the other world cannot be described, exactly, with our very insufficient, limited human vocabulary.

And, finally, at the end of the verse, as to the best and greatest Heavenly Blessing of these kinds, it remarks:

"...and their lord will give to them to drink of a Drink Pure and Holy".[28]

In the preceding verses, among the blessings mentioned were Drinks and Cups; which were filled from the fountain of 'Salsabeel' and quenched the thirst of the Blessed. But, there is a considerable difference between those drinks and what is expressed in this verse.

On the one hand, the
'ones who serve'
are
"youths of perpetual (freshness)";

while, here, the
'one who serves'
is Allah, Himself (and what a wonderful expression!)
The word
'Lord'
is especially stressed. The Lord Who has constantly cherished man and Who is his owner and trainer; Who has helped him to advance in the course of development until he has reached the last stage. And now, it is time to show the culmination of His Lordship and make the Righteous quenched and cheerful with the cup of Pure Drink, by His own mighty hand.

On the other hand, the word /tahur/ means something which is both pure and purifying. Thus, the Drink purifies both man's body and soul from any taint and impurity.

It gives him such spirituality, brightness, and merriment that it is indescribable with our limited human vocabulary.

It is quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) that,

"(This drink) purifies man's heart and soul from everything except Allah."

It removes any ignorance, unveils any curtain over the truth and makes man worthy of an eternal presence in close proximity to Allah. The pleasure of this pure Drink exceeds any other blessing and is superior to any other gift.

While the filthy wine of this world obliterates man's reason and takes him far away from Allah the pure Drink, which is given by the hand of
'the ones who serve',
alienates him from everything, but Allah and makes him immersed in His Beauty and Glory.

In short, the favor which is included in this verse and in this blessing, is above anything else.

It is concluded from one of the traditions quoted from the Prophet (S) that the fountain of Pure Drink is at the threshold of Paradise; then, with a sip of this Pure Drink, Allah purifies their hearts from envy (and any other vices).

Thus, the verse states:

"...and their Lord will give to them to drink of a Drink Pure and Holy."

It is worth considering that the word
/tahur/ 'pure'
has been mentioned for only two items in the Holy Qur'an.
The first is about the
'rain'[29]
which purifies and revives everything. And, the second is in the current verse about the special Divine Drink, which is also purifying and reviving.

In the last verse, of this part, the last point on this subject is presented. It states that these great blessings and unique gifts are a recompense for your deeds; and your efforts, struggles and diligence are accepted and thanked.

("Verily this is a reward for you, and your endeavor is accepted and appreciated.")

Never should one think that these gifts and great rewards are unduly given. Indeed, all these are a recompense for man's endeavors and deeds; and they are a reward for man's diligence, self-perfection and abandonment of pleasure in sin.

Thus point also mentions a particular pleasure that Allah, Himself, or His angels address to man and tell him:

"Verily this is a reward for you, and your endeavor is accepted and appreciated."

And perhaps according to some commentators, this blessing, where Allah thanks man, is superior to all other blessings.

The verb

/kana/ 'was'

which is in the past tense, perhaps refers to this point: that these blessings have been prepared for you (the Righteous) in advance. As when one pays careful attention to detail and prepares everything, in advance, for his guest.

Surah al-Insan, Verses 23 - 26

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا

23. "Surely We, Ourselves, have revealed the Holy Qur'an to you, revealing (it) in stages."

24. "Therefore be patient and constant to the command of your Lord, and obey not from among them a guilty or an ungrateful one."

25. "And remember the name of your Lord morning and evening,"

26. "And during the night prostrate thyself to Him; and glorify Him (a) long (part of the) night."

Five Great Instructions for the Fulfillment of Allah's Command

The aforementioned verses of the Surah are about the creation of man and then about his rebirth at the time of Resurrection. Now, the verses are referring to the Prophet (S), directly, with some emphatical instructions about the guidance of man and his patience and constancy.

In fact, these verses show the way of how to approach the incomparable immense blessings. This task is not possible except through taking hold of the Qur'an, following the Prophet's leadership and being inspired by his instructions.

At first it says:

"Surely We, Ourselves, have revealed the Qur'an to you, revealing (it) in stages."

Some commentators have said that the term

/tanzila/ 'revealing in stages',

which has appeared as a direct object in this verse, denotes the gradual descent of the Holy Qur'an, whose effect on man's training is clear.

Some others believe that it refers to the high position of this Heavenly book and emphasizes the fact that this book was sent down by Allah, in

spite of those who accused the Prophet (S) of being a necromancer, sorcerer, magician and calumniator of Allah.

Then, there are five important instructions given to the Prophet (S).

The first is for patience and constancy, and says:

"Therefore be patient and constant to the command of your Lord..."

Don't be afraid of the difficulties and the problems that occur in your way, the great number of your enemies or their obstinacy. Continue on your way and go forward.

It is noteworthy that, with regard to /f/ in the Arabic term /fasbir/ 'therefore be patient and constant', the instruction for patience is secondary to the revelation of the Qur'an by Allah.

That is: since Allah is your supporter then do stay firmly on the way. The term /rabb/ 'Lord, Cherisher' points to the same idea.

And in the second instruction the Prophet (S) is warned not to listen to or obey the unjust. It says:

"...and obey not from among them a guilty or an ungrateful one."

In fact, the second instruction is an emphasis on the first instruction, because numerous enemies tried, in different ways, to make the Prophet (S) adapt to their way of thinking.

It is said that 'Atabat-ibn-i-Rabi'ah' and 'Walid-ibn-i-Muqayyarah' told the Prophet (S) to leave his prophecy and they would give him as much wealth and the most beautiful ladies to marry as would satisfy him and other suggestions like this, but the Prophet (S) as a true, great leader, was instructed to be patient and constant against the evil temptations or the threats, which were made against him. He should not yield to either the allurements or the threats.

It is true that the Prophet (S) never yielded, and this is a sign for the greatness of his faith; an eternal model for other leaders of the Way.

Although some commentators have said that the term

'sinner'

refers to 'Atabat-ibn-i-Rabiah', and the term

'ungrateful'

refers to 'Walid-ibn-i-Muqayyarah' or 'Abu Jahl'; each of whom were among the pagan Arabs, it is clear that the terms have a vast meaning, which encompasses any sinner and unbeliever; but these three were the most vivid evidences of the words.

It is also noteworthy that 'sinner' has a general meaning which includes the ungrateful, too, then 'ungrateful' is a subdivision of 'sinner'.

However, since being patient and constant with many great difficulties is not easy to do and going on such a road needs two certain provisions, so, it says in the next verse:

"And remember the name of your Lord morning and evening."

"And during the night prostrate thyself to Him and glorify Him (a) long (part of the) night".

Under the light of

'remembering the Name of your Lord',

and with

'prostration and glorification'

you can build the necessary spiritual strength and sufficient support for overcoming the difficulties along the way.

The term

/bukrah/ 'beginning of the day'

is opposite to the term /asil/ 'evening, sunset', which is followed by praying at night and are mentioned in these two verses to show the necessity of continuous remembrance of Allah both day and night.

Some commentators have applied them to the five daily prayers; morning (Fajr), noon (Zohr), afternoon ('Asr), sunset (Maqrib) and evening ('Isha) prayers, or in addition to the optional prayers after midnight. At any rate, it seems that these prayers are examples for this continuous remembrance of the Lord and glorification and prostration to Him.

The last two terms in the verse, /laylan tawila/, refer to the glorification of Allah for a long part of the night.

It has been narrated that Imam Ali ibn-Musa-ar-Reza (as) was asked what

'glorify'

meant and he answered that it meant 'optional night prayer'.[30]

It is probable that the above commentary is one of the clear evidences of 'glorifiication' because the optional night prayer is very effective in strengthening ones faith and self-will for obeying Allah, and refining spirits.

It is worthy to note, here, that though the five instructions are addressed to the Prophet (S), they are, in fact, models for all those who have a role in spiritual and humane guidance of societies.

They should know that, after being sure of their strong belief in their goal and prophetic mission, it is necessary for them to be patient and constant and not to be afraid of mass difficulties in their way; since, guiding populations has always been with great difficulties especially when faced with some unyielding ignorant enemies. And no prophetic mission of theirs will survive unless the leaders are patient.

In the next stage, they must strongly stand against evil temptations of the sinners and the ungrateful; those who try to lead astray leaders with all kinds of deceit and hypocrisy in order to make their prophetic mission fruitless. They should neither be deceived by allurements nor be afraid of threats.

In any case, every morning and evening, they should prostrate themselves before Him to obtain spiritual power, strong will and firm decision, especially when they get help in their supplications and night prayers; victory will surely be their own.

And, if it happens that they have a failure or misfortune at some point, along the way, it is possible to compensate for this under the light of these principles. The Prophet's life and his prophetic mission, throughout his career of inviting people to Islam, are good examples for those who wish to follow the straight path.

Surah al-Insan, Verses 27 - 31

إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا

نَّحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ ۖ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا

إِنَّ هَٰذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَن شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

يُدْخِلُ مَن يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

27. "They love the fleeting life and put away behind them a Day (that will be) hard and grievous."

28."It is We Who created them and strengthened their joints and when We will We can substitute the like of them (in their place) by a complete change."

29. "Surely this is an admonishment, that whosoever will, (taking this straight way) may take a path unto his Lord."

30. "Yet you will not, unless Allah Wills; surely Allah is All-knowing, All-wise."

31. "He will admit to His Mercy whom He will, but (as for the) evildoers, He has prepared a painful penalty."

This Is An Admonition; But It Is You Who Choose the Way

In the aforementioned verses, the Prophet was admonished and told that he should never be affected by offenders and pagans.

Historical evidences exist which confirm that there were some people who wanted to have an effect on the Prophet's thoughts by alluring him to change his decision. They made offers of wealth, high social rank and beautiful women.

The following verse indicates the above and says:

"They love the fleeting life and put away behind them a Day (that will be) hard and grievous".

The scope of their thought is open only to eating, sleeping and sensuality. These bodily enjoyments are their ideal. They weigh the Prophet's great soul with the same criterion. They are some blind-hearted people who are not aware of their future hard day.

And what a hard day it will be! Hard from the point of punishment; hard from the point of reckoning, and hard from the point of the length of time of being dishonored and bearing the responsibility of spreading scandals for their vices.

In fact, they will have the day in front of them but, here, using the term /wara'ahum/ 'behind them'

instead of in 'front of them' is to denote carelessness, as if they put away the day behind them. But, some interpreters have said that the Arabic word /wara'/ has the meaning of 'behind' in some texts and of 'forward' in some others.[31]

In the next verse they are warned not to be proud of their strength, because it is Allah who gave it, and other faculties, to them so whenever He Wills He can take these back at once.

Look again at the sentiments of the verse:

"It is We Who created them and strengthened their joints and when We Will, We can substitute the like of them (in their place) by a complete change".

The term /asr/, in Arabic etymology, means: ‘to fasten with a chain' and that is why 'captives' are called 'asir' in Arabic. In the old days, captives were fastened with chains. But, here in this verse, 'asr' means 'to firm the joints' of man which strengthens him to move about and enables him to carry out his activities, efficiently.

Certainly, the Qur'an has touched on a most fascinating point: 'firming the different joints of man', which consists of small and large nerves; connecting tissues that bind muscles to each other; rope-like ligaments and the various muscles themselves.

Small and large pieces of bone, clothed in flesh, comprise the body and are so uniquely tied together that it totally forms a complete unit (man), which is able to do almost anything. On the whole, the statement is about man's strength.

This verse also makes it clear that Allah is self-sufficient (free from want) and is not in need of their faith and their obedience but, it is only to make them understand. If the verse insists on their faith, it is a grace from Allah’s favor to them.

There is a similar sense in Surah An'am No. 6, verse 133, which says:

“And thy Lord is self-sufficient, full of Mercy. If it were His will He could destroy you and in your place appoint whom He will as your successors...”

The next verse covers the general idea which the Surah conveys and, on the whole, it is a complete program for the happiness of man:

“Surely this is an admonishment, that whosoever will, (taking this straight way) may take a path unto his Lord”.

It is for Us to show you the Way. There is no compulsion on you to choose it. It is you, using your wisdom, that must distinguish between right and wrong and of your own free-will decide which way to follow.

In fact, this is an emphasis on what was stated at the beginning of the Surah:

“Surely We guided...”

ie.

'We showed him the Way; whether he be grateful (and assumes it) or ungrateful'.

Since some feeble-minded persons may think of the verse as meaning absolute free-will for the servants, the next verse negates their claim by adding:

“Yet you will not unless Allah Wills; surely Allah is All-knowing, All-wise”.

This is the confirmation of the principle of the medium status between, fatalism and the idea of chaotic free-will.

On the one hand, it remarks that

'Allah shows the way, and choosing it is up to you’.

On the other hand, there is another fact added to it that

“Yet you will not unless Allah Wills”;

that is, you are not completely independent, but your power and your free-will depends on Allah’s Will. It is He who has given them to you and whenever He Wills, He can take them back.

Thus, there is neither an absolute free-will nor an absolute compulsion, but it is a fine, subtle line between them. In other words there is a kind of freedom which depends on Allah's Will; that at any moment He can take it back, if He Wills. In such a way, the servants are able to fulfill their responsibility, which is the secret of their improvement, while at the same time, they do not feel any independence or self-sufficiency.

In brief, the reason for this idea is so that the servants will not feel independent divine providence, but are in need of His guidance and support. When they-are making a decision to do something, they call on his support.

Some of the commentators who believe in fatalism have taken this verse as an evidence of their doctrine.

Among them is Fakhr-i-Razi; who said:

"Take note that this verse is one of the versa in which the waves of fatalism surge".[32]

Yes, if we separate this verse from the former ones, this statement can be right, but paying attention to the fact that in one verse the possibility of the influence of man's 'free-will' is pointed out, and in another one the recognition of Allah's Will is mentioned, the same 'variety of conditions clearly approves these conditions, (a place between them; a place between two extreme ends).

It is ironic that those who believe in 'free-will' have seriously taken to heart this verse, to denote absolute free-will, and those who believe in fatalism have taken stock in the next verse, which addresses only fatalism.

Each of these two groups tries to explain away its own idea with that single verse that it has chosen, but, when a correct understanding of a statement in Qur'an (as in any other text) is read, it is meant to be read in relationship to the other statements around it, without any prejudice.

The sentence:

"Surely Allah is All-knowing, All-wise"

at the end of the verse, may be a point with the same understanding.

Allah's knowledge and wisdom is necessary for the servants' freedom on their way to success, otherwise there must be a compulsory success which cannot be a lasting one. Furthermore, His knowledge and wisdom does not compel some individuals to do only good deeds and some others to do evil, so that He would reward the former group and punish the latter one.

Finally, in the last verse, of this Surah, a short and meaningful statement refers to the happy end of the righteous and dreadful destiny of the evildoers.

It says:

"He will admit to His Mercy whom He will, but as for the evildoers He has prepared, for them, a painful Penalty".

It is worth noting that at the beginning of the verse it is said:

"He will admit to His Mercy whom He will",

but at the end of the verse it concentrates on the painful penalty for the evildoers. This shows that His Will for distributing pain, follows the individual's Will for seeking to commit sin and also the contrary is true: His Will for bestowing blessings, follows the individual's Will for perfecting

their faith in Allah and in doing good deeds. This is the very thing that is expected from Allah.

Though these clear evidences are available, there are some persons, such as Fakhr-i-Razi, who have taken the first part of the verse as an evidence for fatalism, and in so doing they have neglected the last part of the verse, which addresses free-will and the deeds of the evildoers.

Supplication

O Lord! Admit as to your mercy, and keep us away from the painful penalty prepared for the evildoers.

O Lord! You showed us the way and we will follow Please help us to stay firm and constant along Your way.

O Lord! We may not be of the righteous, but we love them. Please count us among them.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Qartabi vol. 10, p. 6909
2. Majma'al'Bayan vol. 10, p. 405.
3. Ibid.
4. The history of the Quran has quoted from 'Nazm'ad'Dorar wa Tanasiq'al'Ayat'l wa'l'Sowar
5. Tarikh'i'Quran p. 55.
6. Tarikh'i'Qur'an, quoting from Fihrist'i' Ibn Nadim
7. Ibid
8. Al'Mizan vol. 20, p. 221.
9. Ibid.
10. Kashshaf, vol. 4, p 670.
11. Ihqaq'al'Haqq, vol. 3, p. 157'170.
12. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 402.
13. Ibid.
14. Majma al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 406
15. Williams Obstetrics, 15th Edition, p. 87.
16. Williams Obstetrics, 15th Edition, p. 158.
17. Williams Obstetrics' 15th Edition, p. 385
18. Al'Qadir vol. 3, p. 107'111, Ihqaq'al'Haqq vol. 3, p. 157'171.
19. Kamil-i-Ibn-i-Athir, vol. 2, p 131
20. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Feeding', Traditions 3 and 6
21. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Feeding', Traditions 3 and 6.
22. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Feeding', Tradition 18.
23. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 369.
24. Durr-al-manthur, vol. 6, p. 300.
25. Majma"'al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 411
26. Majma"'aI'Bayan, vol. 10. p. 410.
27. Majma'al'Bayan vol. 10, p. 411
28. Nur'uth Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 485 tradition 6.
29. Surah Furqan, No. 48 verse 25
30. Majma"'al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 413.
31. If the term /wara'/ is added to the subject it means 'behind', and if it is added to the object it means if forward, front': Ruh'al'Bayan vol 8, p 439.
32. Tafsir'Fakhr'i'Razi, vol. 30. p. 262.

Surah Mursalat, Chapter 77

(Those Sent Forth)

Number of Verses: 50

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah belongs to the early Meccan period and its name, Mursalat is taken from the first verse. After making some oaths, the text refers to the horrors of the Hereafter for those who reject the Truth.

The refrain,

"Ah woe, that Day to the Rejecters of Truth"

is repeated ten times in the Surah and every time follows a new topic.

In addition to the oaths, the Surah gives some information about the fervent Hereafter and its grievous events, and then repeats the same refrain:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."

In the second stage, we learn about the woeful story of the sinners of past generations.

In the third stage, it lets us know a little about the creation's specialities.

In the fourth stage, we are informed of some divine Blessings on the Earth.

In the fifth stage, there are some messages in which the rejecters are warned of their painful penalty.

In every stage there is also a hint to an enlightening point and then the refrain follows. Sometimes, the blessings of just men are mentioned to show that both rewards and penalties are found, but the former is used for justification and the latter is for warning.

The refrain, in this Surah, has an association with the refrain in Surah Rahman, No. 55, but with the difference that: Surah Rahman speaks about the Blessings, but Surah Mursalat describes the rejecters' punishments.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) that:

"One who studies Surah Mursalat will be registered as a non-pagan".[1]

Another narration from Imam Sadiq (as) cites that:

"If one studies this Surah, Allah makes him familiar to Muhammad (S)".[2]

This reward is certainly for a person who studies it, thinks it over and acts accordingly. So, we see by a narration that some of the Prophet's close friends told him:

"Oh Muhammad, how soon you have grown old!"

He answered:

"Hud, Vaqiah, Mursalat, and Nabaa brought old age upon me".[3]

It is worth considering that in all these Surahs the circumstances of the Here after and the horrors of the Resurrection Day and the Great Judgment are illustrated; and are the very things that affected the Prophet's (S) holy soul.

Obviously, reading without thinking and acting cannot be very fruitful.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 1-15

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا

فَالْعَاصِفَاتِ عَصْفًا

وَالنَّاشِرَاتِ نَشْرًا

فَالْفَارِقَاتِ فَرْقًا

فَالْمُلْقِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا

عُذْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ

فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقِّتَتْ

لِأَيِّ يَوْمٍ أُجِّلَتْ

لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

1. "By those (Angels)(winds) sent forth one after another,"
2. "And those who move as a hurricane;"
3. "By those who scatter far and wide,"
4. "And those who separate (one from another);"
5. "And by those who reveal the (Divine) Reminder,"
6. "To justify or to warn;"
7. "Surely that which you are promised (for the Resurrection) will befall."
8. "Then when the stars are extinguished;"
9. "And when the heaven is cleft asunder;"
10. "And when the mountains are carried away;"
11. "And when the prophets are called unto their time appointed (for witness);"
12. "For what Day is this (portent) deferred?"
13. "For the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong)".
14. "What do you know about the Day of Sorting out?".
15. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!".

Allah's Promises Surely Befall! Woe to the Rejecters of Truth!

At the beginning of this Surah, there are five oaths in five verses about which many comments have been made and they are:

"By those (Angels) (winds) sent forth one after another,"

"And those who move as a hurricane;"

"And By those who scatter far and wide,"

"And those who separate (one from another);"

"And By those (the prophets) who reveal the (Divine) Reminder,"

"To justify or to warn;"

Now, let us see what these mysterious oaths, which announce some great events, mean.

Here are three known ideas:

1. All five parts mean winds and hurricanes, which have an effective role in nature.

If so, the verses mean:

"By the winds sent forth one after another.

"By the violent hurricanes which move;"

"By those which scatter clouds and bring down, to Earth, the lively droplets of rain through the clouds,"

"By those which scatter clouds after falling rain;"

"By the very winds which remind men of Allah,"

(Some others have said that the winds are of tormenting winds. This idea is opposite to the above, but it is also a reminder).

2. If all the oaths are sworn to Angels, then, the verses would mean:

"By the Angels sent forth (to the prophets) one after another,"

(or, the Angels sent forth with some definite known plans),"

"And by those who move, as a hurricane, to carry out their mission:

"By those who deliver the heavenly verses and scatter them,"

"And those who, by this action, separate purity from evil;"

"And those who give Allah's Messages and instructions to prophets,"

3. The first and the second oaths are about winds and hurricanes, but the third, the fourth and the fifth ones are about Angels and their mission: ie. distributing the verses, sorting out the right from the wrong and revealing Allah's instructions to prophets for justice and warning.

The first factor, which caused the third idea to form and separated these verses into two groups, is the conjunction 'and' in two of the verses, and another form of relative juncture; the Arabic letter 'ف' (f), which occurs in the rest.

The second factor is the important sense that verse seven consists of. All the oaths are for the subject matter of this verse, that is, the reality of the Resurrection and the Hereafter.

We know that at the beginning of the Resurrection there will be many great happenings that will change the world. There will be violent storms, earthquakes, and some other shaking events on the one hand, and on the other hand, formation of the Great Judgment, where Angels divide the individuals' records, and separate the believers from unbelievers, communicating Allah's decree to them.

If the above five verses are stated according to this idea, they are suited to what they are sworn to, and, from this point of view, the last idea is superior to the first two.

The last word in verse five,

/żikr/; ‘Reminder’,

means either the knowledge bestowed upon the prophets, or the verses revealed to them.

And we know that in the verses of Qur’an the word ‘Qur’an’, itself, means Reminder; as we see in Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 6,

“And they say: O thou to whom the Reminder is revealed! Thou art indeed a mad man!”

Gabriel, who revealed the Message to the holy Prophet (S), was only one angel, but

/mulqiyat/ ‘angels’

is in a plural form.

Since, according to some narrations, sometimes large groups of angels accompanied Gabriel to bring the verses; as in Surah Abasa, No. 80, verse 15 which denotes that verses are revealed to the Prophet (S)

“by the hands of Angels”.

What are these oaths for? The next verse uncovers the secret:

“Surely that which you are promised (for the Resurrection) will befall.”

There is no doubt that resurrection and bringing man to life again, recompense and punishment, reckoning and retribution (judgment) are right and proper.

This verse demands that all of Allah’s promises are sure irrespective of the promises to good-doers and evildoers in this world and in the Hereafter.

There is nothing mentioned about the Resurrection in this verse, but in the former verses there are some hints to Resurrection, which confirm that it exists. For example, giving life to the dead lands by sending down rain, which is an illustrative incident of Resurrection; revealing Allah’s instructions to the prophets; and appointing Messengers, all of which would be meaningless without the Hereafter. Then, the promised Resurrection is bound to come.

Similar to that is Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 22-23:

“And in heaven is your sustenance...”

and

“Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth...”

The oath to the Lord /rabb/ ‘the Owner, the Cherisher’ denotes that our sustenance is seriously true, and it is the Lord’s Wisdom which demands that sustenance be provided to the creatures.

Through the following three verses, the signs of that Day are pointed out:

“Then when the stars are extinguished;”

“And when the sky is cleft asunder;”

“And when the mountains are carried away;”

The word /tamasat/ is derived from /tams/ which means ‘to efface’ or ‘to obliterate (to destroy all trace of)’, may refer to the extinction of the stars or their dissolution, but the first rendition is more fitting.

A similar meaning is found in Surah Takwir, No. 81, verse 2:

"And when the stars darken;".

The word /nasafat/ is derived from /nasf/ which originally means 'to winnow as chaff, the act of winnowing', but here, it means: 'to reduce the mountains to powder and scatter them abroad'.

In general, from many verses of the Holy Qur'an it is understood that, at last, this physical world will end with some series of extremely horrible events, and its regularity will be terribly destroyed. Then the spiritual world will be substituted by a new order.

The events are so horrible and amazing that no single word or expression can describe them. Are the mountains which are reduced to powder and scattered abroad, and like events, describable?

Some commentators have said that, in comparison with these events, the greatest earthquakes man has ever seen are like tiny firecrackers, which little boys explode for fun, and liken these horrifying events with the greatest atomic bombs.

At any rate, these meanings, in the Holy Qur'an, indicate the great difference between the physical world and the spiritual world.

Then, in the following verse, one of the occurrences at the gathering place, on the Day of Judgment, is defined:

"And when the prophets are called unto their time appointed (for witness)".

The theme of this verse and that of Surah A'raf, No. 7, verse 6 are similar:

"Then shall We question those to whom Our Message was sent and those by whom We sent it."

And then it adds:

"For what Day is this (portent) deferred?"

"For the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong)."

This question, and its answer, shows the greatness of that Day, and what a clear and meaningful answer this is:

"For the Day of Sorting out".

It is the Day of sorting out right from wrong, believers from unbelievers, good-doers from evildoers, and the Day of Judgment for all.

And then:

"What do you know about the Day of Sorting out?"

What are we looking for when the Prophet (S), having such extensive and broad knowledge and keen insight; by which he was able to discover the secrets of that mysterious world, could not deeply appreciate all the dimensions of that Day?

As it was repeatedly mentioned before, it is impossible for us, prisoners in this world of a cage, to understand all the great secrets of the Hereafter; we may only see its silhouette, but we believe in it.

Then, the warning:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."

The term

/wayl/ 'woe'

is interpreted as 'punishment with destruction, any punishment, or, a site in Hell full of torment'. This word is usually said to anyone or anything for

whom or that which falls into misfortune and on whom one does not wish Allah's mercy to descend and, here, it is used for the painful fate of the rejecters on that Day.

'The rejecters of Truth'

are those who do not believe in the Hereafter. And we know that those who reject the Day of Judgment and the Day of Reckoning easily commit any sin or corruption. But a firm belief in the reality of that Day demands virtue and responsibility in human beings.

Contents of the Oaths

In the above verses, it swears to the winds and hurricanes. This is because they have an important structural role in nature: they move the clouds and take them over dead lands, pouring down rain, and then scattering them.

Winds scatter seeds far and wide, here and there, and produce forests. They fertilize many of the plants and flowers. They change the weather, hot and cold, or moderate it.

They clear the air of epidemics: they take the fresh air from green fields and bring it into cities to substitute its polluted one. They cause the seas to undulate and oxygenate the water, which is essential to the developing processes of living creatures in the seas. Surely, winds and breezes are beneficial to man in the world.

Some other verses of the above group swear to angels by which Allah's Messages and revelations, that cherish virtue and humanity, were gradually conveyed to the prophets' hearts like the winds that come gently as harbingers with blessings of rain and fertility. Winds are in the physical world while angels are in the spiritual world. Then Allah's oaths are to both the physical cherishers and the spiritual ones.

It is interesting to note that all the oaths are for the belief that His promise of mercy and justice in the Hereafter,

'the Day of Sorting out',

is indeed true.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 16-28

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ

ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ

كَذَٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ

فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ

إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَادِرُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا
أَحْيَاءً وَأَمْوَاتًا
وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَاءً فُرَاتًا
وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

16. "Did We not destroy the men of old?"
17. "Then shall We make following (generations) follow them."
18. "Thus do We ever deal with men of sin."
19. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."
20. "Did We not create you from a base fluid?"
21. "The which We placed in a safe abode; (firmly fixed)."
22. "For a period (of gestation) determined?"
23. "For We determine; and We are the best to determine (and then Resurrection is easy for Us to portend)"
24. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!"
25. "Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?"
26. "Both for the living and the dead,"
27. "And placed therein high mountains standing firm, and given you to drink (wholesome) sweet water?"
28. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!"

They See These Signs of Power, Yet They Reject the Resurrection!

Through these verses, Rejecters are warned in different ways and by various statements.

First, they are reminded of the old generation's fate:

"Did We not destroy the men of old?"

In our own times we can observe relics of old civilizations. Generations such as those of the 'Ad, the Thamud, Noah's, Lot's and Pharaoh's were destroyed as punishment for their evil deeds; partly by flood, lightning and hurricane, and some generations by earthquakes and meteorites.

"Then shall We make following (generations) follow them."

Allah's Law is always the same. Sin or corruption prepares its own destruction. Should some be punished for sinning while others not?

"Thus do We ever deal with men of sin."

In fact, this verse is a confirmation to the destruction of the old generations and for the present and future generations, as well. Since Allah's punishment is neither for revenging nor settling His own personal account, it, therefore, depends on their own sinful deeds and on His superior wisdom.

Some believe that the word

/awwalin/ 'old',

in this verse, refers to the generations of Noah, 'Ad and Thamud; and the word

/akharin/ 'following'

refers to the generations after them; such as those of Lot and Pharaoh.

But taking note of the term

/nutbi'uhum/ "...shall we make follow (generations) follow them",
which is in the future tense and
/alam nuhlik/ "Did We not destroy...",
which is in past tense it, then, becomes clear that 'old' refers to all the old generations who were destroyed by Allah's Will, and 'following' refers to the sinners of the Prophet's (S) time or those who will come into being after that and will commit sins and corruptions.

And, so, the warning:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."

The words
'that Day'
here, means the Hereafter, when they will have their main punishment and retribution. The repetition of the verse is for emphasis, though they may have a chastisement even in this world.

Then, it attracts their attention to the period of gestation which shows them the power and the authority of the Creator and also the abundance of His blessings to man. Consequently, they understand His force, in regard to the Resurrection, and, they, themselves, owe Allah for His numerous blessings and respect Him.

"Did We not create you from a base fluid?"

"The which We placed in a safe abode, (firmly fixed)".

A place where all the conditions for life, growth and protection of the fetus exist. It is so amazing and interesting that it causes everyone to wonder.

"For a period (of gestation) determined?"

A period of time that no one knows, but Allah. During this period many changes occur and every day the fetus enters a new phase in its development in that abode.

"For We determine; and We are the best to determine, (and then Resurrection is easy for Us to portend)".

This is the same reason for which the Qur'an has emphatically used in proving the possibility of the Resurrection.

For example, in the beginning verses of Surah Hajj, No. 22, mankind's attention is attracted to the process of their own physical growth; from lifeless matter to seed, fertilized ovum, fetus, child, youth, aged and death! How can they doubt that the author of all these wonderful stages in their lives, in this world, each of which is as important as the Resurrection, can also give them another kind of life after the end of this probationary life? How different is dust from sperm!

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

Woe to those who see these numerous wonders of His power and yet they deny Him.

In this respect, Imam Ali (as) has said:

"O creature who has been equitably created and who has been nourished and looked after in the darkness of wombs with multiple curtains. You were originated from the essence of clay and put in a quiet place for a determined length and ordained time. You used to move in the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then you were taken out from the place in which you stayed to a place that you had not seen, and you were not acquainted with awaiting its benefits. Who guided you to obtain your sustenance from the milk of your mother's breast?

Who taught you to express your demands with your cries? Verily, when you cannot fully understand your own self, how can you understand your Creator? It is impossible for you to understand Allah from the attributes which are meant only for His creatures."[4]

In another part of the verses, the external nature and His blessings, in this great world, are described. These are proofs for both His authority and Mercy, and for the reality of Resurrection, while the former verses were about the creation of man himself.

"Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?"

"Both for the living and the dead".

The term

/kifat/[5] 'a place where things are gathered together'

is derived from /kaft/ which means 'to gather together', or 'to attach one thing to another'. 'Birds flying fast' is also called /kifat/, since when they fly fast they gather their wings to their sides in order to move more quickly through the air.

It intends to say: Earth is a gathering place for all human beings; it gathers the living men and women over itself and gives them their needs totally, and envelops their dead bodies in its insides. If the ground were not fit for burial, the bad smell and various diseases would arise from the corpses and this would be a disaster for the living ones.

Yes, the land, like a mother who gathers her children around her, gathers individuals over itself, caresses them, feeds them, dresses them, gives them residence, gives them all their needs, keeps their corpses in its inside, dissolves them and then causes their harmful effects to vanish.

Some commentators have used /kifat/ in the sense of 'to fly quickly' and have said that the term refers to the Earth's rotation around the Sun, and other movements, all of which were not known by people at the time of revelation of the Qur'an.

In the next verse, that is:

"...the living and the dead",

it seems that the first meaning is more suitable. Particularly, if we consider the following narration from Imam Ali (as). When he was coming back from the Seffin Battlefield he reached a cemetery outside the gate of Kufa.

He looked across it and said:

"This is the abode of the dead and where they dwell",

and then he looked towards the houses of the city and said:

"This is the abode of the living".

He wanted to tell others that there is not a long distance between the abode of the living and that of the dead, then, he recited the above verses:

"Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?"

"Both for the living and the dead." [6]

Then, the Qur'an mentions one of the great blessings of Allah on the earth:

"And placed therein high mountains standing firm..."

These high mountains and their underlying formations united together, on the one hand, protect the earth, armor-like, against the inner pressures and the pressures resulting from gravity and, on the other hand, they prevent the air's friction with the land by providing a break in the air mass with their peaks, and thirdly, they control the violent winds and storms. Then, in this way, they afford peace and comfort to the earth's dwellers.

And, at the end of this verse, another gift from the mountains is cited:

"...and given you to drink wholesome sweet water?"

The 'wholesome sweet water' is useful and lively both for 'you' and for 'your' animals, agriculture, and gardens.

It is true that all the sources of sweet water are from rain, but mountains play the primary role in supplying life with water: many headsprings and aqueducts stem from mountains; many of the rivers and streams originate from the heavy thick melting snow on the high mountains tops.

The tops of the mountains, because of their altitude, are the most useful for human beings, as they are far from the plains surface and they are always cold. They can keep the snow there for years and then the sun melts the snow, gradually, flowing into the streams.

The refrain is repeated:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."

It is they who see these signs and the types of His Bounty and Power; the blessings by which they are continually benefited and, yet, deny the Resurrection, His Justice and His Wisdom.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 29-40

انْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

انْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ

لَا ظَلِيلٍ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ

إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ

كَأَنَّهُ جِمَالَتٌ صُفْرٌ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

هَٰذَا يَوْمُ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ

وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

هَٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأَوَّلِينَ

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُونِ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

29. "(On that Day it will be said unto them:) Depart you to that which you used to deny."

30. "Depart to a shadow failing threefold, (stifling smoke from fire)".
31. "(Which yields) no relief nor shelter from the flame".
32. "Indeed it throws about sparks (as big) as castles;".
33. "As if there were (a string of) yellow camels (marching swiftly)".
34. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."
35. "This is a day wherein they speak not, (they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defense or plea)",
36. "Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuses".
37. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".
38. "This is the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong). We have brought you and the men of old together".
39. "If you have a trick (to flee away prom punishment) use it against Me!"
40. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

They Can Neither Defend Themselves Nor Escape

The final fate of the rejecters of the Hereafter and the Divine Judgment is stated in these verses: a statement that takes one into deep thought, indeed, because it makes clear the horrors of the Event.

The command is:

"(On that Day it will be said unto them): Depart you to that which you used to deny".

Depart to the blazing fire (Hell) which you used to mock. Depart to the different kinds of punishment which you have prepared for yourselves in your previous life.

The term /inţaliqu/ is based on /inţilaq/ which means: 'to depart, go one's way without stopping, to be free or loose'.

In fact, it is an explanation of their state in the Hereafter. They will be kept a long time for their account, then, being given leave, they will be told to go to Hell promptly without any pause.

The presenter of the case may be Allah, Who commands them directly of the punishment to come, or it may be the angels. The tone of the statement is quite harsh, which is also a kind of torment.

"Depart to a shadow falling threefold, (stifling smoke from fire)".

A column of smoke falls from above, another from the right side, and the third one from the left side. This black and thick hostile smoke surrounds them to envelop them completely.

This shadow gives no comfort, nor coolness, since they themselves are from fire, so it says:

"(Which yields) no relief, nor shelter from the flame".

Some persons may think that a shadow is there which partly reduces the heat of the flames of the fire, but this verse conveys the contrary idea. It suggests that this shadow is not of the kind that you think of, but it is a hot stifling one rising from the thick smoke of fire that reflects the heat of flames, totally.

Surah Waqiah, No. 56, verses 41-44 attest to the mentioned subject and refer to the companions of the Left Hand:

"The Companions of the Left Hand - What will be the Companions of the Left Hand?".

"(They will be) in the midst of a fierce Blast of Fire and in Boiling Water,"

"And in the shades of Black Smoke."

"Nothing (will there be) to refresh, nor to please:"

It has been said that the threefold shadow denotes a reflection of their present triple rejection to the principles of religion, i.e. monotheism, prophecy, and Resurrection; because, rejection of the Resurrection is not separate from the rejection of the other two.

But some others have said that it refers to the triple source of their faculties of anger, carnality, and suspicion. The triple shadows of smoke illustrate the black stains of sins.

The following is the translation of a Persian poem:

Keep away from anger and carnality.

The smoke of which darkens the insight.

When anger appears, wisdom disappears:

And when lust dominates, the soul is impudent.

"Indeed it throws about sparks (as big) as castles",

They are not like the sparks thrown off by a fire in our human world, which are sometimes very tiny.

The term

/qaşr/ 'castle'

is meaningfully used here. Perhaps, it is more suitable to say: 'spark like the mountains'. But it should not be forgotten that, as it was mentioned for the verses before, mountains are the origin of many blessings as well as the headsprings of the wholesome sweet water, while castles of the oppressors are the source of blazing hot fire.

The next verse conveys another form of descriptive explanation for the sparks of this blazing fire:

"As if there were (a string of) yellow camels (marching swiftly)."

The term

/jimalah/ 'camels'

is a plural form of /jamal/ 'camel', and the word /şufr/ is a plural form of /aşfar/ which means: 'that which is yellow' because sparks of fire are usually a reddish yellow.

In the former verse the sparks, from the point of view of size, were likened to castles and in this verse, from the point of view of number, colour, and speed, they are likened to a number of yellow marching camels.

When the sparks are so, it is obvious what the blazing fire is! And, besides this, how many other punishments are there nearby?

Supplication

O Lord Please protect all of us against it with Your Mercy.

At the end of this portion, once more, the same refrain is repeated:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

Then another explanation about the characteristics of that terrible Day begins.

It says:

"This is a day wherein they speak not,

(they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defense or plea)".

Yes, it is true that on that Day the sinners will be dumbfounded.

This fact is also mentioned in Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 65:

"That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths...".

And, also at the end of the same verse it says:

"...But their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did".

And even more, in some other verses it is said that their skins will speak and bear witness to what should be said.

"Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuses".

They are allowed neither to say anything nor to excuse and defend, because the facts will speak plainly enough, against them, and they do not need to speak.

In the human world, this prevaricating tongue misused its freedom: falsely denied the prophets, mocked the righteous, canceled the right, and substituted the wrong in place of the right. So, in the spiritual world this tongue should be locked and shut as a punishment. The very state is a torment, too, because one cannot defend or excuse oneself.

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) in which he says:

"Allah is greater and more just than not to allow His servant to apologize to Him with his plausible excuse. But they have no plausible excuse, indeed, to bring up."[7]

From some of the verses, of course, it is understood that sinners can speak sometimes in the Hereafter, since, there are many halting places, therein, where some of their tongues are shut and their limbs bear witness, and in some others, their tongues are allowed to express their intensive begrudging, grief, and disaster.

Again it says:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

Next, the sinners are addressed. To describe 'that Day', it says:

"This is the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong). We have brought you and the men of old together".

All members of the human race, from the earliest ones to the latest, with no exception, are gathered for reckoning and the Great Judgment

"If you have a trick (to flee away from punishment) use it against Me!"

Can you escape from My domain?

Or, are you able to defeat My Power?

Or, can you ransom and redeem yourself?

Or, are you able to deceive the Accountants?

Do your best, but do know that you can do nothing.

In fact, this is a term used to show their inability and helplessness; the same demand as that which is made for the Holy Qur'an as we can see in Surah Baqarah No. 2, verse 23:

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed (from time to time) to Our servant, then produce a Surah like it..."

As Raqib says in Mufradat: /kayd/ means 'applying or thinking of a remedy, ' which is sometimes blameworthy and sometimes praiseworthy, though the former is more frequently used (as it is used in the above verse).'

On that Day, certainly, they can do nothing because, as we know, there is no means for man, of any kind, to use for his defense, which Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 166, points out:

"...and all relations between them would be cut off."

It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, that Day is called 'the Day of Sorting out' and, on the other hand, it is said that:

"We have brought you and the men of old together";

both occurring in the same section. At first, all are gathered in the Great Court of Justice, then they are divided into different rows in accordance with their belief and their deeds. Even those who go to Paradise, having different rows of different degrees; the likes of which are those who go to Hell, having different rows with various steps of descent.

Yes, that Day is the day of sorting out (right from wrong, and oppressor from oppressed).

Again, the warning and enlightening verse is repeated:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

Surah Mursalat, Verses 41-50

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٍ

وَفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُجْرِمُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

41. "The righteous are amidst shades and fountains (of Heaven),"

42. "And fruits such as they desire".

43. "Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated) in return for what ye did".

44. "Thus do We certainly reward the Doers of Good".

45. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

46. "(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while, (but be warned that an evil End in the Hereafter awaits you) for that ye are sinners".

47. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

48. "And when it is said unto them: Bow down, they bow not down".

49. "Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

50. "(If they do not believe in Holy Qur'an) then what statement, after that, will they believe in?"

What Statement Will They Believe In, If They Do Not Believe in Holy Qur'an?

We know that the Qur'anic style generally couples warning with glad tidings, threats with encouragement, and the fate of the Righteous with that of the sinners, so that the affairs are better understood.

On this basis, after describing various punishments of the sinners, in the Hereafter, in the aforementioned verses, there follows a short, but meaningful verse about the state of the Righteous on that Day:

"The righteous are amidst shades and fountains (of heaven) ".

Meanwhile, the sinners are in the shade of stifling smoke from fire, as it was understood from the previous verses.

The Arabic word

/żilal/ 'shadows'

is the plural form of /żill/ 'shadow'; whether in the shade of a tree and the like, during the day, or in the shadows of the darkness at night, while /fi'/ is 'to cast a shadow by only a single source of light' such as the shadow of trees which intercepts the rays of the sun.

Then it says:

"And fruits such as they desire".

It is clear that fruits, shadows, and fountains are a small part of the Blessings that Allah will bestow on them: a small part, describable in human language, is in comparison with all the Blessings in Heaven, but so plentiful and beyond the imagination of the Earth's dwellers, that it is indescribable.

It is interesting to note that they will be entertained so excellently and abundantly at Allah's feast that they are told:

"Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated) in return for what you did".

The statement which is said to them directly, whether by Allah or by Angels, is full of kindness and affection; clearly is a sustenance for their soul.

The phrase,

"for what you did",

denotes that these gifts are not given to anyone undeserving, and nothing is obtained by raw claim or imagination but, is actually prepared by good deeds.

As Raqib cited in Mufradat: /hani'/ means anything that is wholesome and has no pain afterward. So, water and the daily meal are thus called and it is sometimes used for life, too.

Therefore, this shows that the fruits, foods and drinks, in Heaven, are not the same as those in this world; of which we sometimes suffer malnutrition, pain and undesirable effects.

Some commentators believe that this imperative sentence denotes to the allowance of using these Blessings, lawfully, while some others believe that this is just a command.

But, on the whole, it should be understood that, at ceremonies, these commands are a kind of hospitality and the host's desire is that the guests would be asked to help themselves, as a kind of respect and dignity shown

to them, because he likes that his meal will be eaten completely, by the guests, and this shows that they honor him.

The next verse emphasizes that these gifts are not undeservedly given:

“Thus do We certainly reward the Doers of Good”.

Note that the first verse insists on ‘righteousness’ and ‘devotion’ then another verse is based on ‘deed’, and this verse emphasizes on ‘doing good’.

‘Righteousness’ or ‘virtuousness’ means avoidance of any sin, corruption, paganism and the denial of Allah; and ‘doing good’ is used for any good action; while ‘deed’ refers only to the activities which are piously done. So, the blessings bestowed by Allah are for these groups, not for the fake claimants of faith and committers of various kind of sin, though they appear to be among the faithful people.

At the end of this part, the refrain is, again, mentioned:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Woe to those who are deprived of these blessings and affections. The pain of the regret of this deprivation is not minor to the blazing fire of Hell.

Since being busy with worldly pleasures and the desire of having unconditional freedom for following after carnality, is one of the factors of the denial of Resurrection, the next verse addresses the sinners and in a threatening tone says:

“(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while, (but be warned that an evil End, in the Hereafter, awaits you) for that ye are sinners”.

The term

/qalila/ ‘a little’

can refer either to the short period of life in this world, or to the few blessings of this world in comparison with the countless, immense blessings of the next world.

In fact, the righteous are highly regarded in the Hereafter and are addressed with this affectionate sentence:

“Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated)...”,

but worldly men are addressed with this threatening sentence:

“(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while...”.

The Righteous are told:

“…in return for what ye did”,

but the unjust are told:

“...for that ye are sinners”.

Further, it makes it clear that it is man’s sin, originating from faithlessness or lusts, that paves the way for Allah’s punishment.

Then, the aforementioned warning is followed again by:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Woe to those who were deceived by this scintillating world and its lusts, and consequently prepared Allah’s punishment for themselves.

In the next verse another source of their disaster, that is: ‘pride and self-conceit’, is touched on where it says:

“And when it is said unto them: Bow down, they bow not down”.

many of the commentators have said that this verse was revealed about the Thaqif tribe when the Prophet (S) told them to say prayers and they answered that they would never bow; that it would be a disgrace for them.

Then he (S) said:

“Religion is worthless without bowing and prostration”.

They not only refused bowing and prostration, but also had this quality of pride throughout their life and permeating their ideas. They resigned neither to Allah’s Will nor to the Prophet’s instructions nor to people’s rights; they were humble neither to the Creator nor to other human beings. In fact, these two elements, ‘pride and carnality’, are the most important factors in committing crimes, sins, cruelties, and denial.

Then, finally, for the tenth time in this Surah, it says:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

In the last verse of Surah Mursalat, in a scorning tone and with profound astonishment, it questions:

“(If they do not believe in Holy Qur’an) then what statement, after that, will the believe in?”

One who does not believe in Qur’an; that which if it were sent down on a mountain, that mountain would humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah, would not resign to believe in any Holy Book or any rational logic, and this is a sign of enmity and obstinacy.

As it was mentioned, at the beginning of this Surah, the verse:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth,”

is repeated ten times for emphasis on one important fact: Resurrection. Repetitions, like this one, are found in the statements of all eloquent speakers for what they want to emphasize on; whether it be prose or verse.

But some commentators believe that each time the verse is repeated, it means that it is about a new subject, and which comes just before the one that the rejecters deny; so, therefore, actually there is no repetition of the verse.

We conclude this Surah with a sentence from ‘Ruh-al-Bayan’ which says:

“This Surah was revealed to the Prophet (S) in a cave somewhere close to ‘Qif Mosque’ Mina and I have seen the cave myself “.

Supplication

O Lord! Bestow on us Your Grace not to reject Your verses.

O Lord! Protect us against pride and carnal desires; the main sources of sin. O Lord! Set us in the Bliss of the Righteous among those who win be highly regarded at Your Feast.

Notes

1. Majma’’al’Bayan, vol. 10, p. 414.
2. ibid
3. Khisal’i’Saduq, Chapter 4, Tradition 10

www.alhassanain.org/english

4. Nahj'ul'Balaqa, Sermon No. 162 (Arabic Version); Sermon No. 166 (English Version).
5. /Kifata/ is the second object for its verb, and is infinitive; used as a subjective noun.
6. Tafsir'i'Borhan, vol. 4, p. 417.
7. Nur uth'Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 49.

Surah Nabaa, Chapter 78

(The Great News)

Number of Verses: 40

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Most of the verses of the last part of the Qur'an were revealed in Mecca. The nature of these Surahs is that they put emphasis on the Creation and the Resurrection, furnished with glad tidings and warnings; usually in a shocking and awakening tone.

All the verses of the Surahs, except a few, are short and full of implications. For the same reason, they affect, deeply, on any conscious person and they awaken some of the unaware, too. They give spirit to dead-like people and make the indifferent ones feel responsibility. On the whole, they have a specific case and an enthusiastic world of their own, full of enlightenment and attraction.

Surah Nabaa is not an exception to this general principle. It begins with an awakening question, and ends with a wonderful sentence full of warning.

The contents of the Surah can be divided into several parts:

The question that is stated in the first verse about the

"Great News" /naba'-in-`ażim/

or the Hereafter.

Examples of the types of Divine Power in the Heavens and on Earth, and also of men's lives and their gifts as evidences to the possibility of the Resurrection and the Hereafter.

Preliminary signs of the Resurrection.

Reference to the painful chastisement of the transgressors.

The encouraging gifts and blessings of Heaven.

Finally, the Surah ends with some intensive warnings about the dreadful punishment, and then, the sad destiny of the Unbelievers.

The name of the Surah, Nabaa, is taken from its second verse, but sometimes it is called /'amma/ which is the first word in the first verse.

The Virtue In Studying Surah Nabaa

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) which says:

"He who studies Surah Nabaa will be satiated, by Allah, with a cold drink in Heaven".[1]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq says:

"He who continues studying Surah Nabaa, everyday, will meet the Holy Shrine at Mecca (Kaaba) before the year ends".[2]

Again, another tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"He who studies it (Surah Nabaa) and learns it by heart, on the Day of Judgment, his reckoning will be concluded (so quickly) equal to the same length of time it takes to say a single prayer".

Surah Nabaa, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيمِ

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

1. "O what do they ask (one another)?"
2. "Of the Great News,"
3. "That in which they differ".
4. "Nay! they shall soon (come to) know,"
5. "Nay indeed! they shall soon (come to) know".

The Great News!

In the first verse, it astonishingly questions:

"O what do they ask (one another)?"

Then, without expecting them to reply, the Qur'an answers:

"Of the Great News".

"That in which they differ".

For the meaning of /naba'-in-`ażim/, the commentators have put forth different ideas. Some of them say it means: 'the Day of Resurrection' while some others have meant it as 'the revelation of the Holy Qur'an' and still others have said it means: 'The whole Islamic Principles'. In some narrations it has been commented on to mean 'vicegerency and guardianship'; which will be dealt with later.

Paying careful attention to all verses of the Surah, especially to some points in the following verses and specifically to the sentence:

"Verily The Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed",

which has come after mentioning some Signs of Allah's Power in the heavens and on the Earth, and also paying attention to the fact that the most intensive opposition of the Unbelievers was about the existence of 'Resurrection'; all in all most commentators approve of the first idea, that is, in the sense of 'Resurrection' for the phrase /naba'-in-`ażim/.

As Raqib says in his book, Mufradat, the term /naba'/ means: 'a great news which is useful and man is acquainted with it or has a strong conviction to it; and these three things are the conditions of /naba'/'.

Therefore, the term

/'ażim/ 'great'

is more emphatic and, on the whole, indicates that this news, about which some were doubtful, has been a known fact, great and full of importance, and therefore, its most appropriate meaning is 'Resurrection'.

The phrase

'they ask (one another)'

may refer only to the Unbelievers who used to ask each other about the Resurrection; of course, not for their research and comprehension, but, due to their doubts.

It is also probable that the question is from the believers or from the Prophet (S), himself.

Here, a question may arise that: if /naba'-in-`aẓim/ refers to the Resurrection, which apparently all the unbelievers denied, why does it say

"That in which they differ"?

To answer this question, we say that: the denial of the Resurrection, in an absolute form, does not decisively exist even among the unbelievers, because many of them assume that there is the existence of the spirit after death, or in other words, 'the spiritual Resurrection'.

Some of them were doubtful about the bodily Resurrection as in Surah Naml No. 27, verse 66:

"Still less can their knowledge comprehend the Hereafter: nay, they are in doubt and uncertainty regarding it, nay, they are blind thereunto!".

And some of them completely denied the Resurrection and even said that the Prophet (S) was mad, because of his claim about Resurrection; as in Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 7-8:

"The Unbelievers say (in ridicule): Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you, when you are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that you shall (then be raised) in a New Creation?".

"Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, or has a spirit (seized) him? Nay, it is those who believe not in the Hereafter, that are in (real) Penalty, and in farthest Error".

Thus, their rejection of the Resurrection is certain.

It further states:

"Nay! they shall soon (come to) know".

"Nay indeed! they shall soon (come to) know".

When they will be informed, they will cry and will be sorry for themselves; each of them saying:

"Lest the soul should (then) say: Ah! Woe is me! in that I neglected (my Duty) towards Allah..."[3]

On the Day that they are surrounded by massive punishment, and they wish to return to their former life, they ask:

"Is there any way (to effect) a return?"[4].

Even when they, being at the point of death, are sure about the partition and Resurrection; because all the curtains will be removed, then, and the facts of the next world will became obvious, they cry saying:

"...O my Lord! send me back (to life)",

"In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected..."[5].

The Arabic term

/saya' lamun/ 'they shall soon come to know'

begins with '

س

' (s) which is usually used as a sign for near future, and denotes that the Hereafter is near; that this whole life is just a fleeting moment in comparison to it.

Commentators have suggested different ideas about the twice repeated verse, mentioned above, which says the same facts for emphasis: To inform

them that the Hereafter is in the near future, or to tell them two separate matters:

(1) That they will see the punishment of this world in the near future, and

(2) that they will see the next world's punishment after that (of which, the first idea seems more appropriate).

It is also probable that this refers to the improvement and progress of man's knowledge, when there will be so many reasons and evidences for the possibility of the Resurrection that even the unbelievers cannot afford to deny, but can only confess, the Reality.

However, the fault in this commentary is that this kind of knowledge is for the later generations of mankind, which this verse refers to, and not for those who used to live at the Prophet's time (S) and differed on the existence of the Hereafter.

Explanation: The Proposition of 'Vicegerency' and '/naba'-in-'ażim/ (The Great News)

As was mentioned earlier, it has been said that the phrase /naba'-in-'ażim/ has several meanings: 'the Hereafter, the Holy Qur'an, the entire Islamic Principles', etc. But, the whole concept, taken from the verses altogether, leads us to 'Resurrection' as having the closest meaning.

There are a lot of narrations, some of which have been cited by the Household of the Prophet 'Ahlul Bayt' (as), and some others by Sunni commentators, that say the phrase /naba'-in-'ażim/ refers to Hazrat Ali's (as) vicegerency and Imamat (the leadership of the Islamic community), which is a matter of dispute among a group of Muslims, even today. Or it is interpreted as vicegerency, in general.

Three of the narrations are as follows:

1. Hafiz-Muhammad-ibn-Mo'min-Shirazi, one of the scholars of the Sunni Community, has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) on the commentary of the first verse of this Surah, and he (S) said:

"It means the vicegerency of Ali; about which everyone will be asked in the grave, and no one in the East or West, in the seas or over the land passes away without the angels asking him about the vicegerency of Amir-al-Mo'minin, and he will also be asked what his religion is, who his Prophet is, and who his Imam is".[6]

2. Another narration says that on the day of the Battle of Seffin, a man from the troops of Sham (Damascus), having his armor on and carrying a Qur'an with him, entered the battlefield while he was reciting Surah Nabaa.

Then Ali (as), himself, faced him and questioned him:

"Do you know what

/naba'-in-'ażim/ (the Great News),

in which they differ, is?"

The man replied:

"No, I do not know".

Imam Ali (as) said:

"I am, by Allah, the very

/naba'-in-'ażim/ (the Great News)

that you differ in and you quarrel against my vicegerency. You turned away from my vicegerency after you had pledged allegiance to it, and only

on Dooms Day will you really comprehend, once more, what you had understood about it before".[7]

3. A narration from Imam Sadiq says:

"'The Great News'

is the same as Vicegerency".[8]

To gather the contents of these narrations and the commentary of the verse, in the same sense as 'Resurrection', which was previously mentioned, is possible in two ways:

(1) The phrase /naba'-in-'aẓim/ has a broad meaning which includes all of the meanings previously given, though when these verses were revealed the Qur'an insisted on 'Resurrection' more than anything else. Still, this does not hinder us from finding more interpretations, of the verse, other than the above and

(2) as we know and as it has been mentioned repeatedly, the Qur'an has various meanings; that is, a verse may have several meanings, in different dimensions, among which only one is obvious by the apparent words and the other meanings are hidden, but they can be found with the help of other explanations and are not clear to anyone except 'the distinguished ones'.

This is not the only verse that has obvious and hidden meanings. There are many other verses, in the Holy Qur'an, of which the Islamic narrations contain different commentaries.

But, we emphatically state that it is not possible to understand the hidden meanings of the Qur'an without the clear explanations or commentaries from the Prophet or sinless Imams (as), and the existence of hidden meanings, in the Qur'an, should not be a possible way of misusing it by the mischief-makers who comment on the verses in whatever way they wish.

Why is the Resurrection Emphasized On So Much?

It was mentioned, before, that the most important thing which is emphasized on and spoken about, in the thirtieth part of the Holy Qur'an; whose Surahs are mostly Meccan, is the Resurrection and man's state in the Hereafter.

This is so because, for the improvement of man, the first step is to know that there is a Reckoning Day. And there is a flawless Court in which nothing is hidden from its Judges; a Court where you can find no transgression, no oppressor, and no mistake.

Neither recommendations nor bribes are useful therein. No one can tell a lie or deny the Truth. In short, there is no way to flee from the grip of punishment, there; the only way is staying away from sin, here; in this world.

The belief in there being such a Court shakes man, awakens the sleeping souls, makes the spirit of piety and responsibility come alive, and invites human beings to be careful of their duties.

Generally, the main factor in the appearance of corruption, in any environment, is one of two following points:

(1) the weakness of the watchmen, or

(2) the weakness of judicial organization.

If the watchful guards look over the deeds of man, and careful courts verify the offenders' crimes and let no mischief leave without penalty, then,

in such a safe and sound environment, surely inequity, corruption, transgression, and rebellion will decrease to the minimum.

When the worldly life, under the control of its watchmen and courts is so, then man's divine spiritual life is obvious.

Belief in an Omnipresent Unity that:

"...From whom is not hidden he least little atom..."[9],

and belief in the existence of Resurrection, which according to Surah Zilzal No. 99, verses 7-8:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it!".

"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it",

nothing will be forgotten and everything will be in front of man. This kind of belief supplies such a piety in man that can guide him to the path of charity and goodness throughout his life.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 6-16

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا

وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا

6. "Have We not made the earth as a (wide) expanse?"
7. "And the mountains as pegs?"
8. "And We created you in pairs,"
9. "And We made your sleep for repose,"
10. "And We made the night as a covering"
11. "And We made the day for (seeking) livelihood,"
12. "And We built above you seven firmaments"
13. "And We made (therein) a blazing lamp,"
14. "And We sent town from the clouds water in abundance"
15. "That We may bring forth thereby grain and plants,"
16. "And gardens of luxurious growth?"

These verses are, in fact, an answer to the questions of the rejecters of the Resurrection, and those who differ on /naba'-in-`ażim/ 'the Great News' since, these verses mention a portion of the wise order of this world of being and its reasonable gifts, which have a very effective function in man's life.

They are, on the one hand, a few of the clear Signs of Allah's power over all things; including the rebirth of the dead, and on the other hand, they point to the fact that this Wise order cannot exist in vain since, if with the end of this material world all other things end, too, this life will certainly be in vain.

Thus, these verses can be considered as some reasons for the Resurrection from two points of view:

(1) Through the 'reasoning of power', and

(2) through the 'reasoning of knowledge'.

In these eleven verses, twelve important blessings are pointed out, mixed with grace and affection and accompanied with reasoning and stimulation of the sentiments. As bare rational reasoning is not quite sufficient, sentiments and affections are needed.

At first, it begins with the earth and says:

"Have We not made the earth a (wide) expanse?"

The term /mihad/, as Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, means 'a level and tidy place'. It is derived from the term /mahd/ 'a bed, cradle'. Some commentators and philologists have rendered it to mean 'bed', which is both soft and comfortable.

The use of this term, for the earth, is full of meaning because, on the one hand, most parts of the land are so smooth and level that man can build houses thereon and prepares gardens and farms thereabout.

On the other hand, all his necessities are found over the Earth or hidden on its insides in the form of raw materials and valuable mines.

And, then again, the earth swallows up man's refuse, and the corpse of the dead are buried in it; (because of their dissolution and the absorption of their various microbes in the soil), to be vanished by the wonderful properties of dust.

Furthermore, the Earth, itself, rotates and then rotates around the Sun by which the days and nights and the four seasons of the year appear and these, too, play an important role in man's life.

In addition, the earth stores up, under its surface, much of the water that falls down from heaven and then, gradually, distributes it through springs and subterranean canals.

In short, everything useful for the comfort of the creatures living on the land, is supplied on this smooth bed; the Earth. The importance of this great blessing will be made clear only when some slight changes happen to it.

Then, in order that the importance of the mountains may not be forgotten, in contrast to the smoothness of the surface of the Earth, it says:

"And the mountains as pegs?".

Mountains have deep and expanding formations joined together under the ground. They, armour-like, protect the Earth's surface against the inner pressure caused by the central molten lava, and the outer pressure resulting from the moon.

Also, mountains stand as lofty walls in the way of terrible storms, and as safe abodes for men to rest, therein. If they were not so, man's life would be quite uncomfortable under the constant strikes of violent storms.

In addition, mountains are the source of sweet water as well as different precious mines.

Adding, still, to all of the above, the mountains' peaks; like gears of a wheel, restrain, by friction, the thick air mass around the globe, as if dragging it along with themselves.

Some scientists say that if the surface of the Earth were a flat plain, then, when the globe turns, the air would slide over it and great storms would develop. This constant turmoil would make the surface too hot and uninhabitable.

After mentioning these two phenomenal blessings of Allah, it refers to the spiritual signs of Allah and says:

"And we created you in pairs".

The term /azwaj/ is the plural form of the term /zauj/ which means 'mate, companion, a couple, and gender (husband or wife)' from which not only is a man created and through which his generation survives, but also his spouse is counted as the reason for his spiritual tranquility, as Surah Rum No. 30 verse 21 says:

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)...".

In other words, the genders (masculine and feminine) are the complement of each other then, they become complete and this makes them a whole.

Since the term /azwaj/ also means: 'kinds, species, and classes', some commentators have rendered it to mean: 'the variations in man from the point of color, race, language, different spiritual levels and talents'; which are signs of Allah's greatness and the cause of perfection in societies.

Then, it refers to 'sleep', a grand divine gift to man, and says:

"And We made your sleep for repose,".

The term /subat/ is derived from /sabt/ which originally means 'discontinue, rest' and then it was used for the 'suspension of work' for the purpose of resting, and that the term 'Saturday' in the Arabic vocabulary is called /yaum-us-sabt/, because it had been affected by the custom of the Jews who stopped working on Saturday.

Thus, the term /subat/ narrowly refers to the stopping of most of man's physical and mental activities when he sleeps. The very temporary stopping of activity causes refreshment and improvement for the tired organs, strengthening the soul and the body, renewing one's pleasure, removing any fatigue and uneasiness, and consequently, making man ready to start working again.

Though one-third of the human beings' lifetime is occupied by sleep and they have always been entangled with the question of 'dreams', still they wonder about the mysteries of sleep. Even yet, it is not exactly known why that at a special moment the mind fails to work well, the eyelids droop and all the limbs come to a peaceful state.

But, one thing is definitely known and that is: sleep is of great importance to one's health, and that is why psychiatrists try to make their

patients' sleep normally and regularly, because it is impossible to cure them without it.

Those who do not sleep enough are pale, withered, nervous, and dull. On the contrary, those who sleep normally, when they rise they feel, in themselves, much pleasure and vitality.

After a tranquil sleep, study progresses very quickly and mental activity and physical endeavors are often more successful. These facts show the important functional role of sleep in man's life.

There are few tortures, for a person, that are as painful as compulsory sleeplessness. Experiments have shown that man's tolerance for lack of sleep is very little and soon he loses his health and becomes sick.

The aforementioned statements about the importance of sleep mean, of course, a balanced sleep, because, over sleeping, like gluttony, is one of the graceless behaviors which causes various sicknesses.

It is interesting that there is not a certain time limit for the natural length of sleep in all persons, but everyone should find the amount of sleep that one needs regarding his physical and mental activities and according to one's own experience.

And stranger still is when human beings are placed in a difficult situation where they must stay awake for a long time. Their perseverance for sleeplessness increases, temporarily, so that sometimes they decrease their sleep to one or two hours, but it has often happened that when the circumstances have changed, man, both spiritually and bodily, has demanded the recompense of that sleeplessness and has taken it back.

There are, of course, a few rare individuals who are able to go without continuous sleep, for months at a time. In contrast, there are some people who fall asleep even when they are walking on the street or when they are speaking with another person.

Surely, this state is very dangerous for them, especially if there would be no one to look after them. Obviously, these kinds of people are sick and sooner or later they will be faced with physical and spiritual difficulties.

In short, this wonderful characteristic, which appears in man and is called 'sleep', contains many mysteries and is perceived as a 'miracle'.

Although the above mentioned verse is about 'sleep', as a divine blessing, it seems that death, and wakefulness could, also, symbolize Resurrection, so the verse could be a hint to both of them.

Then, again, concerning sleep, it speaks about the blessing of 'night' and says:

"And We made the night as a covering".

Following immediately after that, it says:

"And We made the day for(seeking) livelihood".

Contrary to the duelists (because of being uninformed about the secrets of Creation, where they thought that the light of day is good and the darkness of night is evil and they believed in a separate god, for both of them, while thinking that the former originated from 'God' and the latter from Satan) we should give a bit more thought to it, then we will recognize that both of them are great blessings and are the origin of other blessings, as well.

According to the above verses, the gloom of night is a cloth and covering over the body of the Earth and over all living creatures residing on it. Night, compulsorily, stops the exhausting activities of the life and makes the gloom of darkness, which is actually peace, calmness, and tranquility, dominate over everything in order to give the tired limbs a chance to recover and the gloomy spirit a chance to revive, since a good and quiet sleep is more likely to be obtained in the dark.

Besides this, when night comes, the sunshine disappears. If the sun were to shine continuously, all plants and animals would die from its heat, and the Earth could not be a dwelling place for them.

For the same reason, the Holy Qur'an has frequently emphasized on this matter.

Once, it says:

"Say, see you? If Allah were to make the Day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than Allah who can give you a Night in which you can rest?..."[10].

And after that it adds:

"It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you Night and Day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His Grace..."[11].

It is noteworthy that, in the Holy Qur'an, many great things have been made oath to, once, but 'night' has been made oath to seven times, which illustrates the importance of the darkness of night, since we know that an oath is made for important affairs.

Those who make the night bright with artificial light and sit up all night long and sleep during the daytime, instead, become rather afflicted and sickly.

People, in villages, who sleep soon, at night, and get up early in the morning, lead healthier lives.

Night has other useful advantages, too.

For instance, the period after midnight and before dawn is the best time to pray and supplicate to Allah and a very good occasion for self-perfection and devotional acts as Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 18, about the qualities of the Righteous, says:

"And in the hours (wee hours of the morning) of early dawn, they (were found) praying for forgiveness".

The light of the day, too, is a unique blessing. It produces movement, such as, preparing man for effort and endeavor, and causing the plants and animals to grow under its rays.

Then, the above sentence which says:

"And We made the day for (seeking) livelihood",

is truly so complete and meaningful that it does not need any further explanation.

In conclusion, the duration of the day and night and the precise regularity of their gradual changes, is one of the Signs of Allah in Creation. Moreover, it is counted as a natural calendar for the arrangement of man's life timetable.

Then, from the Earth our attention is turned to the heavens and it says:

"And We built above you seven firmaments".

The number ‘seven’, here, may be a multiplication figure which refers to the numerous celestial spheres, groups of systems, galaxies and the different firmaments, in the existing universe, which have a firm nature and are created massive and strong.

Or, it may be a figure of quantity in the sense that what we see from the galaxies belongs to the first sky, as Surah Saffat, No. 37, verse 6 states:

“We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars”,

and beyond that there are six more skies that are far from man’s reach.

It is also probable that the phrase

/sab`an shidada/ ‘seven firmaments’

refers to the several layers of the atmosphere surrounding the Earth which, in spite of being apparently transparent, is so dense that it protects Earth from the continually falling meteorites.

As soon as one of them enters Earth’s atmosphere it becomes hot enough to burn, because of its violent contact with the protecting layers and then it turns to ash and comes down slowly over the land. If this layer of atmosphere did not exist, our cities and farms would be exposed to the invasion of these meteorites day and night.

Some scientists have calculated the tenseness of the atmosphere, surrounding the Earth, as being more than one hundred kilometers thick, and equal to a steel ceiling ten meters thick!

And this is only one of the commentaries for the phrase

/sab`an shidada/ ‘seven firmaments’.

After a short description about the creation of the heavens, attention is paid to the Sun, the great world-illuminating gift, and says:

“And We made (therein) a blazing lamp”.

The term /wahhaj/ is based on the term /wahaj/ which means ‘light and heat’ issuing from fire. Therefore, the term with this sense ‘brightly burning’ used for the Sun, points to a couple of great blessings that arc the origin of all material gifts of this world, that is ‘light’ and ‘heat’.

The light of the Sun not only lights man’s surrounding environment and the whole solar system, but also is very effective in the growth of living creatures.

Its heat, in addition to the effect that it directly has on the lives of human beings, animals and plants, is the main cause of the existence of clouds, winds, and rainfall necessary for the irrigation of dry lands

Because of its ultraviolet rays, the Sun is very useful in destroying microbes. If it were not, generations of living creatures would perish in a short time.

The Sun constantly illuminates the whole world, free of charge, with its warm, bright light and from an appropriate distance. It is neither so hot and burning, nor so cold and dim; and it offers itself to all of us.

If we compare the value of energy produced by the Sun, with the price of other sources of energy, it adds up to a very large sum. Let us assume that we grew an apple tree with artificial light and energy. Each apple would cost an extraordinary amount. But now, indeed, we receive this worldly productive light, freely, from /siraj-an-wahhaj/ ‘a blazing lamp’.

The Sun is the star nearest the Earth, whose mean distance from it is nearly 93,000,000 miles (about 150,000,000 kilometers); its diameter is about 865,000 miles; its mass is about 322,000 times, and its volume more than 1, 300,000 times, that of the Earth, and its density is about one-fourth that of the Earth.

Its outer heat is about 6,000º C (10,000 F). (The Kelvin temperature scale uses a degree of which the unit of measurement equals the centigrade degree, but it is numbered from absolute zero, which is -273.16º C). All of these are arranged, in such a way, so that if they were a little more or a little less than what they are, it would be impossible for life to exist on the Earth.

Following the description of the gifts of 'light' and 'heat', it speaks of another important matter, about life, which closely relates to the subject of sunshine and says:

"And We sent down from the clouds water in abundance".

The term /mu`şarat/ is the plural form of the word /mu`şar/ which is based on the term /`aşr/ in the sense of 'pressure' and the term is used with the meaning of 'clouds emitting or pressing out rain', as if to press itself to pour water.

Some others have said that it means 'the clouds that are ready to rain', because the form of the word used in Arabic texts denotes to 'readiness for something'.

Some commentators have said that /mu`şarat/ is not an adjective for the word 'clouds', it is an adjective for the word, 'winds' which press on the clouds from every side in order for it to rain.

The term /thajjaj/ is based on /thajj/ which means 'to pour abundant water, continuously' and also it is used, here, in the Arabic intensive form. So, on the whole, the meaning of the verse is that: 'We sent down, continuously, abundant water from the clouds emitting rain'.

Rain, by itself, has some benefits and merits when it falls: it makes the air fresh, it washes the dirt away, it decreases the heat of the weather; it even moderates the cold weather, it decreases the cause of diseases and it brings man spirit and joy.

But the following verses point to three other great benefits of rain; it says:

"That we may bring forth thereby grain ant plants".

"And gardens of luxurious growth".

Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that the term /alfaf/ denotes that the trees of this garden are so thick and entangled that they are joined to each other.

In fact, in those two previous verses, all of the foodstuff that grows on the land and which men and animals use have been pointed out because a great part of it is compiled of grains /habba/, the vegetables and roots /nabata/ and, thirdly, fruits /jannat/.

It is true that in these two verses only three outstanding benefits of rain are mentioned, but its benefits, undoubtedly, are not limited only these.

Seventy percent of man's body weight is made up of water; the main origin of all living creatures, as the Qur'an says:

"...We made from water every living thing..."[12]

Therefore, water acts as the essential property in the life of living creatures, especially man.

Not only man's body, but also many factories are paralyzed without water, and a lot of manufactures would fold, too, without the availability of water.

The beauty and the livelihood of nature is due to water, and the best commercial and economical trade routes, of the world, are waterways.

Explanation: The Relation Between These Verses and the Resurrection

Through the above eleven verses, the greatest divine gifts and the most basic necessities of man's life are pointed out, i.e. light, darkness, heat, water, land, and plants.

The statement about this precise regularity, on the one hand, is a clear proof of Allah's power over everything.

Therefore, there would be no doubt for anyone as to how Allah can bring the dead to life again; as the Qur'an says, very clearly, for an answer to the rejecters of the Hereafter:

"Is not He Who created the heavens ant the earth able to create the like thereof? Yes indeed! for He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)!"[13]

On the other hand, this great and lofty establishment certainly has a definite goal, which undoubtedly cannot be construed as the mere 'life of this world' or being satisfied by simply eating, drinking, and sleeping, but Allah's knowledge requires an aim higher than this goal and, in another sense, the first life is an admonishment for the Next Life, an' a stopover on man's long journey, as Surah Mo'minun, No. 23, verse 115 verifies:

"Did you then think that We had created you in jest that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?"

And, too, sleeping and wakefulness can be seen as a kind of death and rebirth, and the dry and dead lands that are revived by falling rains again and again, every year, are before our very eyes the incidents that refer to the Resurrection.

They illustrate the Hereafter and the life after death. Surah Fatir, No. 35 verse 9 attests to this idea.

It, after pointing to the revival of the dead lands by rain, says:

"...even so (will be) the Resurrection!"

Surah Nabaa, Verses 17-20

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

17. "Verily the Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed".

18. "The Day when the Trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups".

19. "And the heaven shall be opened and become (wide as) gates,"

20. "And the mountains shall be set in motion as if they were a mirage".

Finally, the Promised Day Will Come

There were some various evidences for Resurrection referred to in the previous verses.

Here, as a consequence, the first verse says:

"Verily the Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed,"

The phrase

/yaum-al-fasl/ 'the Day of Sorting out'

is a very meaningful one which speaks of isolations on that Great Day: The separation of Good from Evil, the separation of the believing good-doers from disbelieving sinners, the isolation of parents from child, and brothers from each other.

The term /miqat/ is based on the term /waqt/ 'time' which means 'an appointed time'. The certain places, where the pilgrims to Kaaba put on

their pilgrimage dress, are called /miqat/, because they gather there at an appointed time.

Then, some of the specialties and the events of that Great Day are detailed:

"The Day when the Trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups".

It is well understood, from the verses of the Holy Qur'an, that two great events will happen

"...when the Trumpet shall be blown"

In the first incident, the order of the universe becomes disturbed and all the people, over the earth, and those who are in the heavens will die. In the second case the world will be renewed, the dead will return to life and the Resurrection will occur.

The term /nafx/ means 'blow' and the term /şur/ means 'trumpet' which is usually sounded for stopping or starting the caravans or troops, and the people, in them, understand this from its two different sounds whether they should stop or start.

This is a delicate point referring to those two great events. And what is said in the above verse, is a hint to the 'second blast', when 'the dead are revived and the Resurrection occurs'.

This verse says that on that Day,

"...you shall come forth in groups",

while Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 95 says:

"And every one of them will come to Him singly on the Day of Judgment"

and, also, Surah Asra, No. 17, verse 71 says:

"One day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams...".

To collect these senses together, we see that 'people being in groups' is not in contrast with

'every group enters the Resurrection with its respective Imam'.

And ‘every one of them will coming singly’ is stated for the reason that there are several stopovers in the Hereafter.

People may come in groups with their respective leaders; leading or misleading, at the first halting places, but when they stand before the throne of Justice, they stand individually, or as Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 21 says:

“And there will come forth every soul: with each will be an (angel) to drive and an (angel) to bear witness”.

It is also probable that they come one by one, because they are separated from their friends, partners and supporters Since, in the Hereafter, everyone is alone with one’s own deeds.

“And the heaven shall be opened and becomes (wide as) gates”.

What are the meanings of ‘be opened’ and ‘gates’?

Some commentators have said that it means that the doors of the ‘unseen world’ will be opened to the ‘intuition world’ where the curtains will be removed, thus making the world of angels open to the world of man.[14]

Some others think that this verse points to what is said in other verses of the Holy Qur’an, such as in Surah Inshiqaq, No. 84 verse 1 which says:

“When the Sky is rent asunder”,

and on another occasion in relation to the same sense, but using another word it says:

“When The Sky is cleft asunder”[15].

In fact, there will appear so many clefts in the celestial spheres that it will seem as if they have changed into open gates.

There is another probability that man, in the present conditions of this world, cannot venture through the heavens, and if it were possible for him to, it would be strictly limited, as if, the present circumstances had shut the gates of the skies to him. But, in the Hereafter, man will become free from the earthly world and the gate-ways to the heavens will be opened to him, and then the necessary conditions will become available.

In other words, on that Day, the skies will be ‘cleft asunder’ and after that new skies and earth will be substituted, as Surah Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 48 says:

“One day the Earth will be changed (into) a different Earth and so will be the heavens...”

On this occasion the gates of the skies are opened for the earthly men to go through and follow their ways: the righteous go into Heaven whose doors will be opened to them:

“...until behold, they arrive there; its gates will be opened; and its keepers will say: Peace be upon you...”[16]

It is in the same place that angels come to them from every door and congratulate them:

“…and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation)”[17].

And the doors of Hell will he opened to the Unbelievers:

“The Unbelievers will be led to Hell in crowds: until when they arrive there, its gates will he opened...”[18]

And. thus, man arrives in a place where the width is as wide as the phenomenal earth and heavens:

"...and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth..."[19].

And finally, the next verse, explaining the events of the Hereafter, illustrates the status of the mountains and says:

"And the mountains shall vanish as if they were a mirage".

As it is understood from all the different verses of the Qur'an about

'the end of the mountains in the Hereafter',

that mountains will go through stages: at first they will move:

"And the mountains are in motion"[20].

Then they will be taken off and crushed:

"...and the earth and mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow"[21].

And after that they will be as a poured heap of sand:

"...and the mountains become a slipping heap of sand"[22].

Then, they will change like fibers of teased or carded wool which can be moved about by the winds:

"And the mountains will be like carded wool"[23].

They will turn to dust, then, and scatter about:

"And the mountains shall be crumbled to atoms",

"Becoming dust scattered abroad"[24].

And finally, as the current verse denotes, there will remain only a trace of them as a mirage.

Thus, mountains will disappear throughout the earth at last, and the land will be level:

"They ask you concerning the Mountains: say, My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust";

"He will leave them as plains smooth and level"[25].

The term /sarab/ is based on the term /sarab/ and means: 'a mirage', a deceitful appearance as of water in the desert. Then anything that has an appearance, but is nothing, indeed, is called 'mirage'.

In fact, the mountains will turn into dust and will be scattered in the air in a state like a mirage. When high solid mountains will have a destiny like this, the state of other changes in the world and, also, the state of people of great authority, in this life, will be obvious there; a mere mirage.

The following question may arise: Do these events happen with the 'first blast', which is the end of this world, or with the 'second blast', which is the beginning of the Resurrection?

Since the verse

"The Day when the trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups"

certainly relates to the 'first blast', when people survive and arrive at the Hereafter in groups, this verse must be concerned with the same blast, too, but its beginning (the movement of the mountains) may occur with the 'first blast' and its end (changing as a mirage) with the 'second blast'

There is another probability that all the stages of the mountains relate to the first blast, however, since the range of these two blasts are almost close to each other, they are mentioned together, as in some other verses of the

Qur'an. The events of the first blast are mentioned with the events of the second blast (as in Surahs Takwir and Infitar).

It is noteworthy that in the former verses mountains were referred to as 'pegs' and the earth as a 'cradle'; but in these verses it is said that on the Day when the order of the destruction of this world will be issued, that cradle will be disturbed and those great pegs will be leveled and, hence, their tangible matter will become decomposed and shattered.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 21-30

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

لِلطَّاغِينَ مَآبًا

لَابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا

جَزَاءً وِفَاقًا

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا

وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَّابًا

وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا

21. "Surely Hell lies in ambush".

22. "For the transgressors a destination".

23. "To abide therein for ages".

24. "Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink".

25. "Except a boiling fluid and pus".

26. "A fitting recompense (for their evil)".

27. "Surely they used not to look forward to the reckoning (for their deeds)".

28. "And they rejected Our Signs with strong denial".

29. "And everything have We recorded in a book".

30. "So taste you (the fruit of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment".

Hell is a Great Ambush!

After presenting some of the evidences of Resurrection and a part of its incidents, attention is paid to the destiny of the Unbelievers and says:

"Surely Hell lies in ambush",

"For the transgressors a destination".

"To abide therein for ages".

The term /mirşad/ is a place-noun which means 'a place of observation, or of ambush'. Raqib cites in his book Mufradat: '/marşad/ and /mirşad/ both mean the same thing with a slight difference; that /mirşad/ is called a place that is made especially for an ambush'.

Some commentators have said that the term is in the Arabic intensive form, with the same sense as that of a person who lies in ambush, continuously. Of course, the first meaning is both more common and more appropriate.

The question of

'Who is lying in wait, in Hell, for the transgressors?',

has been answered with

'the angels of chastisement',

because according to Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 71 the whole of mankind, good or evil, will pass by the fire of Hell or over it, thus:

"Not one of you but will pass over it: this is with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished".

In this companion passage, the angels of chastisement are lying in wait to catch the transgressors.

If we comment on the term with the meaning of its Arabic intensive form, Hell is lying in wait and each of the transgressors, who passes by, will be absorbed inside, and in this passage it can be seen that none of them will he safe from fire since, either the angels of chastisement or the intensive absorption of Hell, will capture them.

The term /ma'ab/ means: 'a place of return', and sometimes means: 'residence'. It is used, here, with the latter meaning.

The term /aĥqab/ is the plural form of /huqb/ with the sense of 'a long space of time'. The 'space' has been commented on, differently, as to being 'forty', 'seventy' or 'eighty' years. In any case, this sense denotes that the transgressors will remain in Hell for a long time, but it will end at last. This contrasts with the verses that denote the eternity of chastisement for them.

The commentators have followed different tracks in commenting on this, for example:

Among the consensus of the commentators, a well-known commentary says that the term /aĥqab/, in this text, means that 'some long spaces of time will pass one after another without having an end; with each one that passes, another substitutes'.

In some traditions, it is said that this verse is about those evildoers who will finally be free from the fire, not about those who will be in Hell forever.[26]

Then, to point to a small part of the great punishments in Hell, it says:

"Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink".

"Except a boiling fluid, and pus".

And also, of course, the thick hot smoke mentioned in Surah Waqiah No. 56, verse 43 thus:

"And in the shades of Black Smoke".

The term /ĥamim/ means 'a boiling water' and the term /qassaq/ means 'pus' flowing from a wound or sore, and some have commented on it to mean 'bad-smelling fluids'.

The Righteous, in contrast with them, drink the wholesome pure drinks from the heavenly springs gifted by Allah:

"...and their Lord will give them to drink a Drink, Pure and Holy"[27].

And there are some drinks for them, in nice heavenly containers, which are sealed with musk:

"Whose seal is musk..."[28].

What a contrast between the righteous and evildoers!

Since these grave and dreadful punishments may seem surprising to some, in addition to this, it says:

"A fitting recompense (for their evil)".

And why not? Those who were cruel to the oppressed, in the world, and had no mercy on anyone; tyrannical branding all the hearts and spirits so that it seemed that they burnt their victims, violently, deserve to suffer painful punishments like that and their drinks should, also, be so.

Basically, as we have mentioned repeatedly, it is understood from the verses, of the Qur'an, that at least many of the chastisements in the Hereafter are the incarnation of men's deeds in this world.

For instance, Surah Tahrim No. 66, verse 7 says:

"O you Unbelievers! Make no excuses this Day! You are being but requited for all that you did!"

(And now you see them in front of you).

To explain the cause of these punishments, it says:

"Surely they used not to look forward to the Reckoning (for their deeds)".

And the same carelessness paid to the Reckoning and the Day of Judgment was the cause of their rebellion, tyranny, and cruelty, which resulted in this dreadful destiny for them.

In fact, the lack of Faith, about the Reckoning, is a certain cause of rebellion; that which is the cause of those grave chastisements.

The term /layarjun/ is derived from /raja'/ which means both 'hope' and lack of fear and terror'. In principle, when one hopes and expects a penalty, naturally he fears, and if he does not expect it, he does not dread it, and these two correlate with each other. Then, those who do not have hope in the Reckoning do not fear, either.

The term /inna/ shows emphasis; the term /kanu/ is a sign for the past continuous tense; the term /hisaba/ which has been used in an indefinite form, here, after the negative sign of /la/, means 'reckoning' and in general, all point to the fact that they, the transgressors, never expected any Reckoning or the Record, at all.

Or, in other words, they had forgotten about the Day of Judgment and they left no room for it in their lives. It is natural that such persons who become the doers of any great evil and sin will finally be involved in these painful punishments.

"And they rejected Our Signs with strong denial".

Their low desires had become so strong in them that they denied all the Signs of Allah in order to continue going astray and accomplish their unlawful wishes.

It is obvious that these verses carry some broad meanings, so that they include the verses consisting of the unity of Allah, prophecy, divine legislation, creation, the prophets miracles, precepts, and traditions And, regarding the denial of the extensive Divine Signs and evidences, that have

covered the world of creation and divine legislation, we should accept the punishment for these people as ‘a fitting recompense’ and just penalty.

Then, as a warning to these rebels and, also, for the emphasis on the balance of ‘sin’ and ‘penalty’, and the authority of a fitting recompense (for their evil), it says:

“And everything have We recorded in a book”.

We accept this warning so that we, therefore, would not imagine that something of our deeds will be left unrecorded and that we will not be punished for it, and also, that we would never consider the painful punishments as unjust.

Many of the verses, of the Qur’an, certify the fact that all of man’s deeds, irrespective of small or great, apparent or hidden, and even intentions and beliefs, are recorded.

Once it says:

“All that they do is noted in (their) Books (of Deeds): ‘Every matter, small and great, is on record’”[29].

Another time it says:

“...Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make!”[30]

In addition, it says:

“...and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind...”[31]

And then, when the records of the evildoers will be handed to them, they will cry saying:

“Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, hut takes account thereof!”[32].

Undoubtedly, the person who believes in this fact with all his heart, will be very careful in his deeds and the very belief creates a lofty wall between him and sin and is counted as one of the important factors, effective in good training.

In the last verse, of this portion under discussion, the style of speaking is changed from the third person to the second person, addressing them directly and in a threatening tone:

“So taste you (the fruit of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment”.

Whatever you cry, whenever you say

‘Ah woe to us’,

or ask to return to the world to do good instead of evil; all are in vain and you gain nothing, but your punishment.

This is the penalty of those who, when they were faced with the Prophets’ kind invitation to faith and piety, used to say:

“It is the same to us whether you admonish us or be not among (our) admonishers!”[33].

And again, this is the penalty of those who, when the messages of Allah, are recited get nothing from it:

“...but it only increases their flight (from the Truth)!”[34].

And finally, this is the penalty of those who avoided no sin and were fond of no act of charity.

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) said:

"This verse is the most intensive one in the Qur'an about those who deserve Hell".[35]

Why shouldn't it be so!? When the Merciful and Beneficent Allah addresses them with wrath and says:

"...for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment",

to make them completely hopeless.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 31-37

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا

وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا

وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَّابًا

جَزَاءً مِنْ رَبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَٰنِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا

31. "Surely for the Righteous there is a victory,"

32. "Gardens enclosed and vineyards"

33. "And comely maidens, with the freshness of youth, equals in age".

34. "And a cup overflowing".

35. "No Vanity shall they hear therein, nor Untruth,"

36. "A reward from your Lord, an award sufficing,"

37. "Lord of the heavens ant the earth and all between the two, the All-merciful, with Whom none shall have power to argue.

Some Great Rewards for the Righteous

The former verses were about the destiny of the rebels and about some of their painful punishments and the causes of their rebellion. The following verses are about the opposite group; the true believers, the Righteous, and some of their rewards in the Hereafter: compare them with each other so that the facts can be understood more clearly. This is the style, in the Qur'an, which sets the opponents facing each other and makes their state clear by showing the contrasts in their positions.

At first, it says:

"Surely for the Righteous there is a victory".

The term /mafaz/ is a place-noun which is derived from /fauz/ in the sense of 'gaining goodness safely' and also means: 'salvation and victory' which is necessary for paining the goodness safely'. Regarding the term /mafaz/, which is used in an indefinite form in this text, it means 'gaining a very great victory and salvation'.

Then, describing this felicity and salvation, it says:

"Gardens enclosed and vineyards".

The term /ĥada'iq/ is the plural form of /ĥadiqah/ which is a garden planted with trees surrounded by a wall. Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that /ĥadiqah/ originally means-: 'a piece of land containing water for

irrigation', like /ĥadaqah/, 'the eye-socket', where water exists, continuously, for lubricating the eye.

It is interesting to note that, among all the fruits, grapes are emphasized on, here, because of their extra advantages in comparison with the other fruits.

Since, according to statements of the scientists of nutrition, grapes are not only a complete food, from the point of their nutritive value, but are, also, counted as an article of foodstuff closely similar in comparison to mothers' milk. They produce calories, in the body, twice as much as meat does. Grapes have so many useful properties that they could be called 'a natural pharmacy'.

Further to this, they possess the characteristic of being antitoxins; useful in blood purification. They work as a remedy for rheumatism and gout, and are a factor in controlling the level of nitrogen in the blood.

In addition to these, grapes strengthen the nerves, bring happiness, and because of containing different kinds of vitamins, make man able-bodied and powerful.

These are only a few of the qualities of grapes.

And hence, it has been related that the Prophet (S) has said:

"Grapes are your best fruit"...

Then, referring to another gift, in Heaven, for the Righteous, it says:

"And comely maidens, with the freshness of youth, equals in age".

The term /kawa'ib/ is the plural form of /ka'ib/ which means 'a damsel entering puberty' which illustrates their prime youth. And the term /atrab/ is the plural form of /tirb/ which means 'persons of the same age' which is used mostly for the feminine gender. Some others have said that the term is originally based on /tara'ib/ meaning: 'ribs of the chest' which are very similar to each other.

It is probable that the maidens of Heaven, themselves, are 'equals in age' or they are 'equals in age' with the wives of the Righteous, for only by this standard can complete sympathy and understanding be figured. However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

Then, the fourth gift, allocated to the Righteous, is mentioned:

"And a cup overflowing".

It is not a drink like the worldly wine; which is filthy and makes man drunk unconscious and descends him lower than the lowly animals, but it is a drink that increases the wisdom and refreshes the spirit and soul.

The term /ka's/ means 'a cup full of drink', and it sometimes means the container, itself.

The term /dihaq/ is rendered as 'overflowing' by many commentators and philologists, but in 'Lisan-ul-Arab' by Ibn-i-manzur, two more meanings are cited for it: 'successive(ly), repeated(ly)' and 'limpid, clear'.

Therefore, if we consider all these senses, the verse means: 'in Heaven, overflowing cups of pure, limpid drink are brought, repeatedly, for the Righteous'.

In speaking about 'cup' and 'drink' reference is made to the disgusting association of the two in this world, while the heavenly drink is just the opposite to that devilish worldly wine.

Subsequently, the next verse says:

“No Vanity shall they hear there, nor Untruth”.

Two probabilities are suggested regarding the pronoun in /fiha/ and as to which noun it refers to. The first says it refers to ‘Heaven’ and the second, that it refers to ‘cup’.

According to the first commentary the verse means that: ‘they hear no foolishness or falsehood in Heaven’, as was said in Surah Qashiya, No. 88, verse 10-11:

“In a Garden on high”,

“Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity”.

And, according to the second commentary the verse means: there will not appear any deceit or worthlessness as a result of having that cup of drink as was said in Surah Tur, No. 52, verse 23:

“They shall there exchange, one with another, a (loving) cup free of frivolity, free of all taint of ill”.

In any case, one of the great spiritual bounties for the Righteous, in Heaven, is that they hear no vanity, no falsehood, no slander, no rejection of the truth, no justification of the unjust, and no worthless talk such as are usually associated with this earthly world which is indulged in by some corrupted people and causes pain to the hearts of the Righteous.

Verily, how nice and comfortable the environment where this kind of unbecoming speech is not found therein, and according to Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 62:

“They win not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of Peace:...”.

In counting the bounties in Heaven, for the Righteous, a spiritual gift is mentioned, at the end, which excels the others and says:

“A reward from your Lord, an award sufficing”.

What blessing and reward can be better and has a higher standard than that of a powerless servant, favored with the grace and love of his Great, Gracious Lord. Allah rewards him, honors him, and gives him a liberal and bountiful gift. This is the true Salvation, which is so delightful for the Righteous that no other blessing can match it.

The term /rabb/ ‘Lord’ followed by /ka/, the second person singular pronoun (addressee), together with the term /’ata’/ ‘an award’ are all signs of His superior favor which are involved in these rewards.

The term /hisaba/, according to many commentators, means ‘sufficient’, like /hasbi/ ‘enough’.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says that in the Hereafter Allah takes careful count of each good deed, of the Believers, and wards them, for every good deed, ten to seven hundred times more, as he has cited from the Qur’an:

“A reward from your Lord, an awardsufficing.”[36]

It is understood from this narration that though Allah’s rewards are paid out generously or bountifully as awards, they are based on the account of good deeds, i.e. His awards are in proportion with men’s good deeds. Hence, the term /hisaba/, in the above verse, can be commented on by its

common meaning: ‘account’. This meaning and the previous meaning, then, can be used interchangeably.

Then, in the last verse of this part, it says:

“Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between the two, the All-merciful...”

Truly, the One Who is the owner of the great universe, and is its Creator, too, Whose Grace is seen everywhere and covers everyone, does, indeed, award the Righteous, abundantly, in the Hereafter.

This verse, without doubt, points to the fact that if Allah promises the Righteous such rewards, then a small part of it; in the form of His general Grace, has been shown to those in the heavens as well as to those on the earth in this world.

And at the end of the verse, it says:

“...with Whom none shall have power to argue”.

The pronoun of the term

/layamlikun/, ‘none shall have’,

may refer to all creatures in the heavens and on the earth, or to all the Righteous and the rebels gathered in the Hereafter for the Reckoning and recompense. Whichever it may be, it points to this fact, that on that Day no one has the right to protest against the Record, because it is 50 precise and the recompense so just that no one can say anything.

Besides, no one has the right to offer intercession, but by Allah’s leave:

“...Who is there con intercede in His presence except as He permitteth?...”[37]

Explanation: The Rewards of the Righteous and the Recompense of the Rebels

There is an interesting comparison between the rewards of the Righteous, in these verses, and the chastisement of the disbelieving rebels in the former verses.

The contrast is between
/mafaz/ ‘a place of salvation’
for the Righteous and
/mersad/ ‘a place of ambush’.
The Upright will have and enjoy
‘gardens enclosed, and vineyards’,
but the transgressors will have fire
‘to abide therein for ages’.
The Righteous are awarded
‘pure drinks’
in
‘cups overflowing’,
but the evildoers are recompensed
‘a boiling fluid and pus’.
The Righteous, are
‘awarded sufficingly’
by Allah; the All-merciful, but the rejecters receive
‘a fitting recompense’

from Him; the Just.

The rewards are increased for the Righteous, but there is an increase of punishment for the rebels.

In short, these two groups are in contrast with each other in every respect, because they are different from the point of belief and action.

The Pure Drinks in Heaven

In different verses of the Holy Qur'an, the heavenly drinks are well-defined and specified. Studying these verses shows that those who drink these drinks attain such an ecstasy that no human language can describe it.

In Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 21 the drink is characterized as 'pure drink':

"And their Lord will give to them to drink of a Drink, Pure and Holy".

On some other occasions it is emphasized that this clear white drink is a drink that brings no headiness nor intoxication:

"Round will be passed to them a Cup from a clear-flowing fountain",

"Crystal-white, of a taste delicious to those who drink (thereof)",

"Free from headiness; nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom"[38].

And in another Surah it says:

"Verily, the Righteous drink of a cup; the mixture of which is (like) camphor"[39].

Also, it says:

"And they will be given to drink there of a cup (of pure drink) mixed with Zanjabeel (ginger)"[40].

In the current verse, it says:

"And a cup overflowing".

But most important is that it is Allah Who offers and serves them the drinks with His Favor and Grace:

"...and their Lord will give to them to drink..."[41].

Supplication

O Lord! We pray that You will give us the pure drink, also.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 38-40

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا

38. "The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed, they shall speak not except whom the All-merciful gives leave, and (who) speak what is right".

39. "That Day is certain; whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord".

40. "Surely We have warned you of a Punishment near, the Day when man shall see what his two hands have sent forth and the Unbeliever shall say: O! would that I were dust".

The Unbeliever shall say:

"O! would that I were dust".

A noticeable part of the chastisement for the transgressors and the reward for the Righteous, on Dooms Day, were mentioned in the previous verses.

Verses 38 to 40 introduce ‘That Great Day’, and expound on some of its events, by saying:

“The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed, they shall speak not except whom the All-merciful gives leave, and (who) speaks what is right”.

Undoubtedly, the act of the Spirit and the angels on that Day; ‘to stand arrayed and speak not except those whom the All-merciful gives Leave’, is only because of their obedience to Him. In this world, too, they fulfill His Will and serve His commands. Of course, their fulfillment, in that world, will be more apparent, more clear and more extensive.

What does

‘the Spirit’

mean, here? Commentators have yielded several interpretations for it, some of which extend to eight probabilities. The following meanings are the most important ones:[42]

1. ‘The Spirit’

is a creature other than the angels and greater than all of them.

2. ‘The Spirit’

is the angel Gabriel who is the greatest angel because he is charged, especially, with bringing Messages from Allah to the human Apostles.

3. ‘The Spirit’

may be the souls of men, collectively, that rise with the angels.

4. ‘The Spirit’

is an angel of the highest standard, higher than all angels, and greater than Gabriel. It is the very angel who was with all prophets and the sinless Imams (as) and remains so.

It is noteworthy that, in the Qur’an, ‘the Spirit’ is sometimes simply mentioned alone and without any definition.

In this case, it is often equivalent to the angels, as in this verse:

“The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him…”[43]

Or;

“The angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lard’s leave for every affair.”[44]

In these two verses,

‘the Spirit’

is mentioned after

‘the angels’,

and in the current verse it is mentioned before “the angels’, therefore, it may indicate the greatness of a distinguished one.

But in many verses of the Qur’an ‘the Spirit’ is mentioned with something else or with a specification.

For example,

/ruh-ul-qudus/ ‘Holy Spirit’

in Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 102 says:

“Say, The Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth...”

or
/uuh-ul-amin/ ‘the Spirit of Faith and Truth’
in Surah Shuaraa, No. 26, verse 193 says:
“With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth”.
In some verses Allah designates the word
‘Spirit’
for Himself as in the following:
“...and breathed into him of My spirit...”[45]
And in another verse it says:
“...Then We sent to her Our spirit...”[46].
It seems that the term
‘Spirit’
which is stated differently in these verses, may have different meanings whose explanations are stated, appropriate, under each of them in the commentary.

But, among these various commentaries, what seems the most fitting, to the current verse, is that the Spirit here, refers to one of the great angels of Allah that, according to some narration’s, is even higher than Gabriel, as a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“He is an angel greater than Gabriel and Michael”.[47]

And, it is cited in Ali-ibn-Ibrahim’s commentary that:

“‘The Spirit’
is an angel, greater than Gabriel and Michael, and he was with the Prophet (S) as wells as with the Imams”.[48]

Although in some narration’s quoting Ahlul Bayt, it is cited that the Prophet (S) has said: ·

The Spirit is an army from Allah’s armies, who are not angels and have a head, hands and feet

“and, then, he (S) recited:
‘The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed’,
and said:
‘These are an army and those are of another army.’”[49]

In any case, as it was pointed out earlier, the great creature of Allah’s, whether it be among the angels or is another kind of creature, will be with the angels in the Hereafter; all of them ready to obey Allah’s command.

In the Hereafter, everyone is so terrified that no one is able to say a word or offer intercession except by Allah’s leave. They praise Him, or intercede, as He permits, only for those who are deserving.

It is cited, in a narration, that once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about this verse and he said:

“By Allah, on the Day of Judgment, we will be given leave for them and we will speak”.

The narrator asked him (as) what he would say on that Day, and he answered:

“We praise our Lord, and send blessings on our Prophet, and intercede for our followers and our Lord does not refuse us”.[50]

It is understood from this narration that on the Day of Judgment the Prophets and the sinless Imams will be in the row of angels and

‘the Spirit’

who will be given leave to speak will praise Allah and intercede.

The term

/sawab/ ‘what is right’

an evidence that angels, the Spirit, prophets, and Saints will intercede for those who are deserving and their intercession will not be undue.

Then, it points to that Great Day which is the Day of resurrection for both men and angels, as well as The Day of Judgment for the transgressors, where they will be given their recompense, and the Righteous will be rewarded, and it says:

“That Day is certain”.

The term /ĥaqq/ means: ‘a thing that surely happens’ and ‘that which is right and proper, just and true’. This meaning is completely right for the Dooms Day, where the rights of everyone will be given to him; the oppressed’s rights will be taken from the oppressors, the ‘rights’ and ‘the hidden secrets’ will be manifested, and hence, it will be ‘right’ in all respects.

Since recognition of this fact can he the most effective motive for men to move towards the path of Allah and obeying him, then immediately after the previous sentence, in this verse, it says:

“...whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord”.

That is, all the means of this divine motion are prepared: right and wrong have been introduced; prophets have said enough about the Truth and Divine Reality; wisdom, which is an inner apostle, has clearly defined the end of the transgressors and the Righteous, and the court, the Judge, and the Judgment have been known. The only remaining thing is man’s firm decision that should be made with free-will; which Allah has bestowed on him, to go forth on the right path.

The term /ma’ ab/ means ‘a place of return’ and it is also cited with the sense of ‘road’ and ‘way’.

Then, as an emphasis on the sinners’ punishment, and as a warning to those who think that the Great Day is very far from them or it is on credit, stating that it is very near it says:

“Surely We have warned you of a punishment near...”

The life of this world, however long it may be, is as a mere moment in comparison with the life of the Next World. According to an Arab proverb: ‘Everything that is certain to come, is near’.

Then, for the same reason, Allah, in Surah Maarij, No. 70, verses 5-7 tells His prophet:

“Therefore do thou hold patience, a patience of beautiful contentment)”.

“They see the (Day) indeed as afar-off (event): ‘But We see it (quite) near’”.

Amir-al-Momineen Ali (as), also in this regard, says:

“Whatever is certain to come, is near”.[51]

It is near because the main source of men’s divine chastisement is their own deeds, which are always with them as we see from Surah Ankabut, No. 29, verse 54:

“...and most surely hell encompasses the unbelievers”.

Since on that Day a great number of people, being full of grief and sorrow, will be regretful of their actions, which, then, of course, will, be quite useless.

Following that warning, it says:

"...the Day when man hall see what his two hands have sent forth, and the Unbeliever shall say: O! would that I were dust".

Some commentators have considered the term /yanżur/, in the same sense of /yantażir/, that is: 'on that Day, men will wait for the recompense of their deeds'.

And some others have considered it to mean: 'looking at the Record and observing the goad and evil actions'.

And it has also been construed as meaning: 'to see the reward and the penalty of the deeds'

These commentaries originate from the idea that they have paid little attention to the existence of the embodiment of man's deed, on that Day, otherwise, the meaning of the verse is clear and no interpretation would be needed.

From the different verses of the Qur'an and Islamic narration's, it , understood that on that Day the deeds of man will be personified in some appropriate forms and will appear in front of him.

In fact. he will truly see his own deeds, himself, and when he observes his evil actions he will be both sorry and regretful, and when he observes his good actions he will be happy and delighted. As a matter of fact, one of the best rewards for the Righteous, and one of the worst punishments for the evildoers is the very personification and incarnation of their deeds, which will follow them everywhere.

Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49 says:

"...they will find all that they did, placed before them...".

And Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verses 7-8 say:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it".

"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it".

So, these are some of the wonders of the Hereafter that the deeds of man will be personified and the powers will be changed into a tangible substance and become a living thing.

The sentence

/maqaddamat yadahu/ 'what his two hands have sent forth',

is so stated because, man usually does most of his actions with his hands, but, surely they are not limited only to those actions which are performed by the hands. The actions which are done by the tongue, eyes, and ears are included, too.

Verse 40, of this Surah, has warned us about the matter before we reach that Day and it says:

"...And let every soul look at what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow.".

When the unbelievers see the deeds of their lifetime in front of them, they will be so sorry that they will say:

'O! would that I were dust',

and from it would never have been created as a human being.

Of course, they know that dust is better than themselves, because dust is not only harmless but also useful for all: it takes a single grain and makes a return of sometimes more than one hundred plants, instead. But humans have been the source of corruption in different forms.

In some verses of the Qur'an it is said that when the Unbelievers and the sinners see the Hereafter and the throne of Divine Judgment, therein, and the recompense of their deeds, they will react differently, all of which relates to the intensive grief they have.

Sometimes, they say:

"Ah! woe is me! in that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah...

And sometimes they say:

"Now then send us back (to the world): we will work righteousness: for we do indeed (now) believe".

And further still they say:

"Would that I were dust.",

which was discussed in the current Surah.

The Clear Solution For Fatalism and Free-will

This controversy is one of the oldest cases which has been discussed among the scholars, some of whom believed in man's free-will and some in another philosophy; each have stated some reasons to prove their ideas.

It is interesting to note that the fatalists and those adherents to the idea of free-will' have both approved the principle of free-will, in practice, and have accepted it. In other words, their scientific conflicts arc bound only to the circle of their discussions and not in practice. This clearly shows that the principle of free-will exists in the nature of all men, and by refusing the various temptations, everyone agrees with the principle of free-will.

One of the most clear evidences to free-will is the common conscience or the general nature of men that appears in man's life in different forms. Since, if man thought that deeds were obligations and did not believe in free-will, then why:

1. Do they sometimes repent of their behavior, for what they have done, or the actions they have not done, and decide to take benefit from their former experiences in their future conduct?

2. Condemn the evildoers. If they are obliged why are they scorned?

3. Are the good doers praised?

4 Do people try to train their children, so that they can gain felicity and be happy. If all are obliged, what is the use of training?

5. Do all the scientists, without exception, try to increase the standard of morals in societies? Why?

6. Does man repent of his errors? If the principle of fatalism is accepted, what does 'penitence' mean?

7. Does man become sorry about his negligence in carrying out his duties? Why?

8. Are criminals and evildoers, all over the world, strictly interrogated and tried in courts? The action beyond the limit of man's Will does not need interrogation and trial.

9. Throughout the world and among all sects, whether they are polytheist or materialist, do they believe in punishment for criminals? Then, is it a penalty for the deed that they were obliged to do?

10. Do even the fatalists, when their interests and honor is violated by someone, protest and call him as an offender in the court?

In short, truly, if man is not free in Will, then why should he have feelings of regret?

What is blame and scorn? Can a person whose hand is trembling. unwillingly, be blamed?

Why arc the good doers praised? Do they have a free will of their own to continue doing good?

In fact, when the effect of training and education is accepted, fatalism will be meaningless.

Besides, morals, without assuming free-will, have no sense at all. If we are obliged to do things, what is the meaning of repentance? What is regretting for? Then, the trial of an obliged person is the most cruel thing, and punishing him is worse than that.

All these point to the fact that the principle of 'free-will' is in human nature and it fits in with the general conscience of mankind. Not only the common people, but also all special classes and all philosophers are like that in their deeds, and then, even fatalists are actually free in Will.

It is an interesting fact that the Qur'an has frequently emphasized on this situation.

It says:

"...whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord".

Not only in these verses, but also in many other verses of the Qur'an, stress has been put on man's Will, however, to discuss this, here, will deviate us from our topic of discussion, so, suffice it to mention only three of them, thus:

"Surely We guided him to the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (is up to him)"[52].

"Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)"[53].

"Surely this is an admonishment, that whosoever will, (taking this straight way) may choose a path unto his Lord"[54].

Discussing fatalism and free-will is very time consuming and many books and articles have been written about these subjects. What we have mentioned, here, was only a small sample on the subject, from the point of view of the Qur'an and the conscience, which we will end on this important point:

The adherence to fatalism, from the view of some men, is not only for the philosophical discussions and the reasoning out of problems, but it is for some other important psychological and social matters, as well, which are undoubtedly factors in its appearance and continued popularity.

Many persons have assumed that the belief in fatalism' or fatal destiny' or 'fate' in the sense of fatalism, have a common source: to escape from personal responsibility, or to use it as a cover-up for the defeats and failures resulting from their negligence and carelessness, and/or due to their low desires.

Sometimes, colonizers, to break the perseverance of people and to extinguish the nation's fire of wrath, imposed this idea on them saying that their fate has been the same from the beginning, so, they can do nothing, but accept it.

Assuming that this belief is correct, the whole behavior of all criminals is permissible and the vice of all sinners becomes excused, then, there will be no difference between an obedient person and a criminal.

Supplication

O Lord! Protect us from these misled ideas and their consequences.

O Lord! On the Day that Hell lies in ambush for the transgressors and Heaven is a victory for the Righteous, we all have hope in your Grace.

O Lord! On the Day when all see their deeds in front of them, do not put us to shame.

Notes

1. Majma-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 420.
2. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4, p. 419.
3. Surah Zumar, No. 39 verse 56
4. Surah Shura No. 42 verse 44
5. Surah Mo'minun, No. 23 verse 99'100
6. Risa'lat'ul'I'tiqad, Abu Bakr'Muhammad'ibn'i'Shirazi (Based on Ihqaq'ul'Haqq, vol. 4, p. 484).
7. Tafsir'i'Borhan, vol. 4. p. 420, Tradition 9.
8. Tafsir'i'Borhan, vol. 4, p. 419, Tradition 3.
9. Surah Saba No. 34 verse 3
10. Surah Qaşaş No. 28, verse 72
11. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 73
12. Surah Anbiya, No. 21, verse 30
13. Surah Yasin. No. 36 verse 81
14. Al'Mizan, vol. 20, p. 265 (Farsi Translation)
15. Surah Infitar, No. 82 verse 1
16. Surah Zumar, No. 39 verse 73
17. Surah Rad, No. 13, verse 23
18. Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 71
19. Surah Al'i'Imran, No. 3, verse 133
20. Surah Tur. No. 52, verse 10
21. Surah Haqqah, No. 69, verse 14
22. Surah Muzzammil, No. 73, verse 14
23. Surah Al'Qariah, No. 101, verse 5
24. Surah Waqiah, No. 56, verses 5'6
25. Surah Ta'Ha, No. 20. verses 105'106
26. Tafsir'i'Nur'uth'Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p 494, Tradition 23 and p. 495, Tradition 26
27. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 21
28. Surah Mutaffifin, No. 83, verse 26
29. Surah Qamar, No. 54, verses 52'53

30. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 21
31. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 12
32. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49
33. Surah Shuara, No. 26, verse 136
34. Surah Bani Israil, No. 17, verse 41
35. Tafsir'i'Kashshaf, vol. 4, p.690 and Ruh al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 307
36. Nur'uth'Thaqalayn' vol. 5, p. 495, Tradition 29.
37. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
38. Surah Saffat, No. 37, verses 45'47
39. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 5
40. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 17
41. Surah al-Insan, No. 76. verse 21
42. Qartabi, The Commentary, vol. 10, p. 6977.
43. Surah Maarij, No. 70, verse 4
44. Surah Qadr, No. 97, verse 4
45. Surah Al'Hijr, No. 15, verse 29
46. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 17
47. Majma''al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 427.
48. Tafsir'i'Ali'ibn'lbrahim, vol. 2, p. 402.
49. Durr'al'manthur, vol. 6, p. 309.
50. Majma''al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 427.
51. Nahj'ul'Balaqa, Sermon No. 103 (Arabic Version). Sermon No 106 (English Version).
52. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 3
53. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 29
54. Surah al-Insan, No. 76. verse 29

Surah Nazi’at, Chapter 79

(Those Who Tear Out)

Number of Verses: 46

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The theme in this Surah, like Surah Nabaa, is about Resurrection and, on the whole, can be divided into six parts:

1. It emphasizes on the certainty of the Great Day and lays stress on its occurrence by emphatic statements, which relate to the Resurrection.

2. It points to one part of the frightening and dreadful incidents of that Day.

3. It precisely mentions the story of Moses and the end of the arrogant Pharaoh as a consolation for both the Prophet (S) and the believers, as well as giving a warning to the unbelievers, and also contains an indication to the fact that the denial of the Resurrection is the source of many sins.

4. It mentions a few of the countless Powers of Allah, which exist in the heavens and on the Earth; themselves, being evidences of the possibility of Resurrection and the new life after death.

5. It describes another part of the horrible events, on that Great Day, and the painful end of the unbelievers in contrast to the rewards of the righteous.

6. At the end of the Surah, it emphasizes on the fact that no one knows the date of that Day, however, it is certain that it is near.

The name Nazi’at is derived from the first verse of this Surah.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) said:

“For he who studies Surah Nazi’at the length of his stay and his reckoning on the Day of Judgment will last as long as the saying of a daily prayer and, thereafter, he will come into Paradise”. [1]

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“He who studies it (Surah Nazi’at) will not pass away but satisfied, will not be brought into the Resurrection but satisfied, and will not come into Paradise but satisfied”,

(with the infinite Grace of Allah).

The shocking verses of this Surah awaken the sleeping souls and draw their attention to their duties. Then, it is certain that only those who spiritually put the contents of this Surah into practice will receive these rewards; not those who content themselves with the mere reading of its words.

Surah Nazi’at, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا

وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا

وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا

فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

1. "By those (angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence;"

2. "By those (angels) who gently draw out (the souls of the Blessed);"

3. "And by those who glide along (on errands of mercy),"

4. "Then press forward as in a race,"

5. "And those who manage the affair,"

By The Angels Who Try Hard

There are five important matters sworn to in the above verses and whose aim is to settle the rightfulness and certainty of the Resurrection.

"By those (angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence,"

"By those (angels) who gently draw out (the souls of the blessed);"

"And by those who glide along (on errands of merry)",

"Then press forward as in a race,"

"And those who manage the affair,"

First, some particular terms used in these verses should be made clear before we proceed with the commentary of the verses.

The word /nazi'at/ is based on /naza'a/ which means 'to pluck out', or 'to draw out some what sharply, like drawing a bow to shoot arrows'. This word is sometimes used for spiritual matters, such as the detachment of enmity or love from the heart.

The term /qaraqa/, according to many philologists, means 'to sink, the act of drowning' and sometimes it has been used in the sense of 'being entirely busy in an event or a disaster'.

Or, the term /qarq/, according to Ibn-manzur in Lisan-al-Arab, is a noun replacing the infinitive with the meaning of /iqraq /'to exaggerate' which originally means 'to draw a bow to the extreme possible point', hence, to exaggerate in anything.

This clearly shows that, in the above verse, the word does not mean 'to sink, or to drown', but it means 'to do something to the extreme end'.[2]

The term /naŝiṭat/ is derived from /naŝt/ which originally means 'to untie the knots which are easily unfastened'. 'A shallow well', from which the bucket can be drawn easily at one pull, is called /inŝat/'. 'A camel which is instigated by a subtle hint and moves very fast' is called /naŝitah/. Therefore, this word is generally used in any case where a movement is fluently done.

The term /sabihat/ is based on /sabh/ which means 'a quick movement in water or air'. Hence, it is applied to swimming, or a swimming motion, or a swift gallop, or to perform a daily affair, quickly. The word /tasbih/ 'to praise Allah' is from the same root, as if the one who praises Allah goes quickly forward in worship of the Lord.

The term /sabiqat/ is derived from /sabqah/ which means 'to precede' and since the action is usually impossible without full speed, this term is sometimes used in the sense of 'speed', too.

The term /mudabbirat/ is based on /tadbir/ which means 'to mediate upon, or consider the end of an action', and since foresight causes one to arrange his affairs in a better manner, this word is used here in that sense.

Now, with due attention to what was explained about the words concerning the verses, we are going to proceed with the commentary.

To whom or to what do these five oaths refer? The oaths, at first sight, seem rather ambiguous, while at the same time this ambiguity stimulates us to mediate more deeply and thus causes our progressive thinking.

In this regard, commentators have given many different ideas and commentaries, which mainly revolve around three points:

1. The oaths are aimed at 'angels' who are ordered to tear out the souls of the wicked and the pagan, violently; those Souls who have never assumed to submit to the Truth and to the angels who are appointed to draw out the souls of the blessed, gently and smoothly.

Then, it refers to the angels who move fast and fluently to carry out the Divine Command. And in so doing, they race each other to fulfill their errands.

Finally, they arrange the affairs according to Allah’s plan.

2. The oaths refer to the 'stars', which continually set on one horizon and rise above another.

A group of them moves slowly, but another goes swiftly, from one place to another, with speed. They are floating above us in immense space, taking the lead one after another.

And finally, these stars, having their own influence and effect (like the effect of sunlight and moonlight on the Earth), arrange the affairs according to Allah’s plan.

3. The oaths are aimed at the fighters of 'Holy War' (Jihad), or at their horses, and who leave their own houses and cities with expressive grief, but, then they smoothly and happily leave for the battlefield taking the lead one after another directing and running the affairs of war.

On occasion, some commentators have tried to combine these three ideas by choosing one part from one commentary and another part from another one, but the framework is the same.[3]

There is no contrast, of course, among these commentaries and it is possible that the above verses refer to all of them. But, on the whole, first commentary, regarding its suitability to the main theme, Resurrection, and with the traditions by the sinless Imams, seems to be most fitting.

Surah Nazi’at, Verses 6-14

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ

تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ

قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ

أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ

يَقُولُونَ أَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ
أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَخِرَةً
قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ
فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ
فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ

6. "The Day on which everything that can be in commotion will be in violent commotion,"

7. "Followed by another mighty convulsion,"

8. "Hearts that Day will he in agitation,"

9. "Cast down will be (their) eyes."

10. "They say (now): What! shall we indeed he returned to (our) former state?"

11. "What! when we shall have become rotten hones?"

12. "They said: That then will be a losing return."

13. "But it shall be only a single blast."

14. "When behold they shall be in the awakened state."

The Resurrection Will Happen with a Single Great Blast!

The occurrence of the Resurrection, in the aforementioned verses, was described as a certain event confirmed by five strict oaths. Now, in the present verses, some of the signs and incidents on that Great Day are described.

"The Day on which everything that can be in commotion will be in violent commotion,"

"Followed by another mighty convulsion".

The term /rajifah/ is based on /rajf/ which means: 'an agitation or a violent quake'; and seditious news is called /arajif/, because it causes a society to become agitated.

The term /radifah/ is derived from /radf/ which means: 'a person or a thing streaming one after another'.

Many commentators believe that /rajifah/ refers to 'the first Blast of the trumpet' which is to precede the blast of the quake and the destruction of the universe, and the term /radifah/ refers to the second Blast after which the Resurrection will occur and the new life begins.

Therefore, this verse is somewhat similar to what was revealed in Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 68, thus:

"And the Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded when, behold, they will be standing and looking on!"

Some others have also said that the term /rajifah/ refers to 'the quake that will destroy the earth' and the term /radifah/ means: 'the quake that will wreck the sky'. However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

"Hearts that Day will be in agitation,"

Being anxious for the Reckoning and penalty at the Judgment, the hearts of the criminals, the sinners and the Unjust will severely tremble.

The term /wajifah/ is derived from /wajf/ which originally means 'to move fast'; where the term /aujaf/ is used with the meaning of 'to make a horse or camel move briskly with a bounding pace'; and since a quick movement causes shaking and anxiety, this word is also used in the sense of 'violent agitation'.

This inner anxiety is so violent that its effects appear in the whole body of the sinners.

"Cast down will be (their) eyes."

On that Day, the eyes will subside, coming to a stop and be dazed as if they are blinded by fear.

Then the scope of the speech changes from the Hereafter to this world.

"They say (now): What! shall we indeed be returned to (our) former state?"

The term /hafirah/ is based on /hafr/ which originally means 'to dig' and the cavity resulting from this action is called /hufrah/ 'ditch'. The hoof is also called /hafir/, because it is usually used to dig the soil. In any event, the term /hafirah/ is metonymically used in the sense of 'a beginning, or original state, or former condition'.

"What! when we shall have become rotten bones?"

This is the very thing that the rejecters of the Resurrection always used to emphasize on and said that it was not believable that rotten bones could come to life again, because they imagined that the distance between rotten bones of dust and living creatures was too far. They had forgotten that they had been created from that very same dust.

The term /naxirah/ is based on /naxr/ which originally means: 'a rotten tree which is hollow and makes a whistling sound when the wind blows'; hence, a nasal sound is called /naxir/; and, so, the word has been used for everything which is rotten and worn.

The unbelievers are not satisfied with the idea of Resurrection, so, they ridicule it.

"They said: That then will be a losing return".

Commenting on the verse, another probability can come about which is that they expressed their view in a serious manner. If so, then, they want to say: 'if there is a return it will be a uselessly repeated one, which will be injurious'. If this life is good why does Allah not continue the same one, and if it is bad why is there a return?

Regarding the term /hafirah/ which means: 'a ditch', the sentence

"Shall we indeed be returned to (our) former state?"

can, also, be an evidence for this commentary. But, the first is a more well-known commentary.

It is worth noting that in the former verses the term /yaquluna/ denoted that they used to say their words repeatedly, but in the current verse the word /qalu /shows that they did not always repeat the statement.

At the end of this part, the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is again mentioned in a decisive and shocking tone.

"But is shall be only a single blast."

"When, behold, they shall be in the awakened state."

It means that the event of the Resurrection will not be the fruit of a difficult and complicated action for Allah. It only depends on His command and when the second blow of the Trumpet occurs all rotten bones, which are scattered in the earth, will be gathered, revived and raised from their graves.

The term /zajrah/ means 'to cry for moving', and, here, it means 'the second blast'.

Regarding the content of the meaning of these two terms

/zajratun - waĥidah/ 'only a single blast',

they denote that the Resurrection is a sudden happening and it is easy for Allah's Power that with a cry of an order by the angel of the Trumpet, all the dead come to life again and are present in the Hereafter for the Reckoning.

The term /sahirah/ is based on /sahar/ which means: 'to sit up at night', and since this frightful occurrence removes the sleep of night from the eyes and, moreover, since the land of the Hereafter is horrible, so, the gathering place, in the Hereafter, is called /sahirah/. The term is also used for any desert, since, all deserts are generally frightful and it seems that this fright takes the sleep from the eyes.

Surah Nazi'at, Verses 15-26

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَىٰ

إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى

اذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

وَأَهْدِيَكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ

فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ

فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَىٰ

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَىٰ

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَىٰ

15. "Has the story of Moses reached you?"

16. "When his Lord called to him in the holy valley of Tuwa:"

17. "Go to Pharaoh, surely he has transgressed all bounds:"

18. "And say to him: 'Wouldst thou that thou shouldst be purified (from sin)?'"

19. 'And that I guide thee to thy Lord, so thou shouldst fear (Him)?'

20. "Then did (Moses) show him The Great Sign."

21. "But (Pharaoh) rejected it and disobeyed (guidance);"

22. "Further, he turned his back striving hard (against Allah)."

23. "Then he collected (his men) and made a proclamation,"

24. "And said: I am your Lord, Most High."

25. "So Allah seized him for an exemplary punishment in the Hereafter and in this life.

26. "Surely in that is a lesson for him who fears (Allah).

Pharaoh Used to Say: I Am Your Lord, Most High

After a considerable description in the former verses about Resurrection and the rejection of the unbelievers, in the following verses the painful end of Pharaoh, one of the great arrogant blasphemers and rebels of history, is pointed out, to show Pagan Arabs that those who were stronger than them could not stand against Allah's wrath and punishment, and encourages the believers not to be afraid of the apparent strength of their enemies, because it is easy for Him to destroy them all.

"Has the story of Moses reached you?"

It is interesting that it addresses the Prophet (S) and begins with a question to attract the attention of the listener in order to make him ready to hear this wonderful story.

"When his Lord called to him in the holy valley of Tuwa."

'Tuwa' may be the name of a sacred valley just below Mount Sinai, which was located in Sham (Damascus) between Madyan and Egypt, and where Moses, subsequently, received, in his heart, the first light of inspiration.

The term is also mentioned in Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 12 where Moses hears a voice say:

"Verily I am thy Lord! therefore (in My presence) put off thy shoes: thou art in the sacred valley Tuwa."

Or, it has a descriptive meaning derived from the term /tay/ which means 'the act of rolling up', as if the land is rolled up in holiness and sanctity, or as Raqib cites: Moses should cover a long distance to be prepared to receive the inspiration, but Allah rolled up the way and made it near for Moses to reach the goal.

Then, in three short, but meaningful sentences, it refers to the message that Allah sent to Moses in that valley where He commanded:

"Go to Pharaoh, surely he has transgressed all bounds."

"And say to him: 'Wouldst thou that thou shouldst be purified (from sin?'"

"And that I guide thee to thy Lord, so thou shouldst fear (Him)?"

And, since invitations should be accompanied by reasons, in the next verse it says:

"Then did (Moses) show him The Great Sign."

The Great Sign, whether being the 'white shining hand' or the rod that became a 'snake active in motion' or both of them, has been one of the Great Signs that Moses relied on in the prime of his prophetic mission.

There are some interesting points in these four verses that should be noted:

1. It says that Moses is told to go to Pharaoh, because he has transgressed, and this shows that one of the great missions that the prophets had was to guide the rebels or to oppose them decisively.

2. This invitation to purity, by Moses, with those conciliatory words and in the most benevolent terms, to Pharaoh, where Allah tells Moses to go:

"And say (to him) 'Wouldst thou that thou shouldst be purified (from sin)'?"

is similar to the sense found in Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 44 which says:

"But speak to him mildly...".

3. This meaning has a delicate hint to the fact that the goal of the prophecy of the prophets is to purify men and lead them to their real purified nature.

By the way, it does not say 'I purify you', it says:

"...Wouldst thou that thou shouldst be purified?...",

which indicates that purification should come about from inside and by one's own intention; not from an imposition from an outside source.

4. The statement of 'guidance' after mentioning the sense 'to purify' is a reason for showing that 'purification' is a preliminary step to 'guidance'.

5. The term

/rabbika/ 'your Lord',

indeed, is an emphasis on this fact that

'I take you to Him Who is your master and your cherisher. Why do you flee from the path of happiness?'.

6. 'Fear of Allah'

is the fruit of guidance. Truly, those who are guided to monotheism feel responsible before Allah, the Almighty, because fear of Allah never appears without knowing Him.

That is why in Surah Fatir, No, 35, verse 28 it says:

"...those truly fear Allah among His Servants, who have knowledge...".

7. First, Moses appeals to Pharaoh's emotional guidance and then, he evokes his rational and logical guidance by showing him his Great Sign, his great miracle. The most effective way of preaching is by influencing emotions and, then, presenting the reasons and evidences.

Now, we will deal with Pharaoh and his reaction to so much affection and love and the beautiful, reasonable speech and the Great Sign that Moses showed him.

The fact is that many signs were given, but Pharaoh and his men were steeped in arrogance.

"But (Pharaoh) rejected it and disobeyed (guidance)".

This shows that rejection is the primary step in transgression, as well as faith, and admitting the truth is paramount to obedience.

Pharaoh was not satisfied with only rejecting the guidance.

"Further, he turned his back, striving hard (against Allah)".

Since the miracle of Moses threatened the whole devilish unity of Pharaoh, he sent some men to different cities to gather the sorcerers and he also ordered to announce people to come to see the challenge between the sorcerers and Moses.

"Then he collected (his men) and made a proclamation".

Though the term /ĥaŝara/ is mentioned, here, alone, but with reference to the term /ĥaŝirin/ in Surah Araf, No. 7, verses 111-112 which say:

"...and send to the cities men to collect",

"And bring up to thee all (our) sorcerers well-versed",

and also referring to the term

/nada/ 'made a proclamation',

though it is absolute, it points to the invitation of Pharaoh to the people to gather and watch the challenge; with the evidence from Surah Shuara, No. 26, verse 39 which says:

"And the people were told: Are you (now) assembled?"

He did not quit with these plots and he made claims with the worst statements.

"And said: I am your Lord, Most High."

Verily, it is amazing that these arrogant transgressors, when riding on the horse-back of pride, know no limit for their selfishness. They are not content with their claim of being Lord; they want to be 'Lord of Lords'.

This statement denotes that he says,

"If you worship idols, it is accepted, but I am the highest of all and I am your Lord."

And, it is interesting that Pharaoh, himself, was one of the idol-worshippers as Surah Araf, No. 7, verse 127 attests to:

"...wilt thou leave Moses and his people, to spread mischief in the land, and so to abandon thee and thy gods?",

but here, he claims that he is their Lord, Most High, that is, he considered himself still higher than his own god; and this is in the vain statements of all transgressors.

And, more astonishing than this is that in Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 38 he claims

"...No god do I know for you but myself...";

but in the current verse he goes further and says:

"I am your Lord, Most High"

and this is the manner of these air-headed rebels.

He reached the ultimate point of disobedience and deserved the most painful punishments. He and his corrupted surroundings should perish by the order of Allah, that is why, in the next verse, it says:

"So Allah seized him with an exemplary punishment in the Hereafter and in this life".

The term /nakal/ originally means 'weakness' and 'disability', so it is said of a person who fails to pay his debt and since the divine chastisement makes people weak and stops others from doing sin; it is called /nakal/.

The term /nakal-al-axirah/ means 'the chastisement of the Hereafter' which will envelop Pharaoh and his people and because of its importance it is mentioned first and the term /ula/ 'former life' which meant 'the punishment in this world', is mentioned second and is that which destroyed Pharaoh and all his followers in waters of the sea.

There is another commentary which says that /ula/ means 'the first word that Pharaoh said claiming to be a deity'[4], and /axirah/ refers to the last word that he said in which he claimed that he was their Lord, Most High. Then, Allah punished him for these two blasphemous statements, even in this life.

This very idea is narrated in a tradition from Imam Baqir who added that 40 years had elapsed between the occurrence of these two statements (meaning that Allah did not just punish him to complete the argument). [5]

This commentary is more fitting with the term /axatha/ which is a verb in the past tense, and indicates that the punishment was completely fulfilled in the present world, and also with the next verse that considers the event to be a lesson.

"Surely in that is a lesson for him who fears (Allah)".

This verse clearly shows that learning a lesson from these events is possible only for those who, more or less, fear Allah and possess a feeling of responsibility in their hearts.

Yes, that was the destiny of Pharaoh, the blasphemer; an example to make other pagans and chiefs of the Arab unbelievers and all those who follow on the path of Pharaoh, in any age, understand the facts and know that Allah's law is always true, firm and unchangeable.

Explanation: A Small Sample of the Elegance of Holy Qur'an

Careful attention paid to the above eleven short verses is enough to show us the fine elegance and fluency of Qur'an; a summary of the statements and activities concerning Moses and Pharaoh the motive of prophet hood, its aim, the means of purification, the manner of invitation, kinds of actions and reactions, the description of Pharaoh's plot, some examples of his vain claims, and, finally, the painful punishment of this arrogant blasphemer, which can, consequently, teach a lesson to all those who have insight, are illustrated.

Surah Nazi'at, Verses 27-33

أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

رَفَعَ سَمْكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا

وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ دَحَاهَا

أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا

وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا

مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

27. "Is the creation of you harder or the heaven He built?"
28. "He raised its vault and regulated it,"
29. "And He made dark its night and brought forth its daylight,"
30. "And the earth, after that He spread it out;"
31. "He brought forth from it its water and its pasture,"
32. "And the mountains, He set them firm,"
33. "For use and convenience to you and your cattle."

A Reason For the Resurrection: Are You More Difficult to Create or the Heaven He Built?

With the story of Moses and Pharaoh as a lesson for all transgressors and rejecters, our attention is turned to the Resurrection. Again, and the statements are about some attributes of Allah's infinite Power, as a proof to the possible existence of Resurrection. These words convey the explanation of some of the unlimited blessings of Allah endowed to man to evoke a sense of gratitude, in the soul, which is the origin of knowing Allah.

At first, it addresses the rejecters of the Resurrection and, in a scorning tone, questions:

"Is the creation of you harder or the heaven He built?"

This statement is, in fact, a reply to their words in the former verses, thus:

"They say (now): What! shall we indeed be returned to (our) former state?"

Now, this verse says that those who have any degree of understanding know that the creation of this lofty sky, with so many celestial gigantic bodies and endless galaxies, is not comparable with the creation of man. He who has this authority, how could He be unable to return you to life again?

"He raised its vault and regulated it",

The term /samk/ originally means 'height, or altitude'. It has also been used with the meaning of 'ceiling'.

In Tafsir Kabir, a commentary by Fakhr-ud-din Muhammad Razi, it is said that when we measure from the top to the bottom of something it is called depth ('umq), and when we measure it from bottom to top it is called height (samk).[6]

The term /sawwaha/ is based on the term /taswiyah/ which means 'to make level or equal, to proportion something'. It refers, here, to the accurate regularity that dominates all the celestial bodies; and, if /samk/ means 'ceiling' refers to the thick atmosphere which, like a hard and safe shield, has surrounded the earth and protects it from the rush of meteorites and fatal cosmic rays.

Some have considered the above sense to mean the globular form of the atmosphere that covers all around of the earth. They believe that using the term, with the sense of 'equal', refers to the equal distance between the parts of the ceiling and its center, that is the Earth; and this cannot exist, but only by being globular.

It is also probable that the verse points to both the height of the sky and the extreme long distance of the celestial bodies from us, and the safe vault around the Earth.

In any case, this verse is similar to what Surah Momin, No. 40, verse 57 says:

"Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater (matter) than the creation of men; yet most men understand not".

"And He made dark its night and brought forth its daylight."

Each of these two has an extraordinary important role in the life of any living creature whether animal or plant. Man cannot live without sunlight, because all of his sustenance, his senses and movement depend on it, as well as his life is not possible without the darkness, which is the cause of his tranquility.

The term /aghţaŝa/ is based on /ghaţŝ/ with the sense of 'dark' but, Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that its origin is /aghţaŝ/, which means 'a person who has weak or dim eyes'.

The terms /wa duĥa/ means 'when the full brightness of the sun spreads in the heaven and over the earth.'

"And the earth, after that He spread it out".

The term /duĥa/ is derived from /daĥw/ which means 'to spread, to expand'. Some have also rendered it to mean 'to move something from its original place'. And since these two meanings are interdependent, they return to one root.

The objective meaning of /daĥw-ul-ard/ is that, at first, the surface of the Earth was totally covered with water from the prime rainfalls, the water of which was gradually sucked down through the holes and ditches in the ground, and then, parts of the land appeared. It expanded little by little, until it formed its present state. (And this happened after the creation of heavens and the Earth.)

"He brought forth from it its water and its pasture".

This idea shows that there was water stored in the layers of the earth. Then, it appeared flowing over the ground in the form of springs and streams and forming the seas and lakes.

The term /mar 'a/ is a place-noun and means 'pasture'. It is originally derived from /ra'y/ in the sense of 'animal protection' from the point of view of foodstuff or, feeding cattle, or in other respects; then the term /mura'at /has been used in the sense of protection and arranging the affairs.

The known proverb:

"Each of you all is a shepherd and responsible,"

is, also, a reference to the necessity of people needing to be protected by each other.

Even though different factors, such as continuous storms, gravitational pull; caused by the sun or the moon having an effect on the surface of the land, and earthquakes; produced from the pressure of the inner molten lava of the earth, could disturb the peace and calmness of the ground, it became still and peaceful due to the existence of high mountain ranges throughout the earth.

"And the mountains, He set them firm"

"For use and convenience to you and your cattle".

Yes, He raised the vault of the sky, and set the light and darkness regular. He expanded the earth, and put forth water and plants from it. He made the mountains over the face of the earth to protect it; preparing everything for the life of man, so that all of them obey and are at His service.

The reason is that man enjoys the bounties of life and should be grateful to Allah, Who created them all, and obey His laws.

These affairs are, on the one hand, the kinds of power He has over the Resurrection and, on the other hand, they refer to some reasons and signs along the path of the existence of unity and knowing Allah.

Surah Nazi'at, Verses 34-41

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ

يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ
وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَىٰ
فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ
وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ
وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

34. "But when the great calamity comes,"
35. "That Day man shall remember what he strove for,"
36. "And Hell-fire shall be manifest for him who sees,"
37. "Then as for him who transgressed,"
38. "And had preferred the life of this world,"
39. "Then surely Hell-fire will he the Abode."
40. "And as for him who feared his Lord's presence and restrained the soul from the low desires,"
41. "Then surely the Garden will be the Abode."

Those Who Restrain Their Soul From Low Desires

To continue stating the details of the Resurrection, mentioned in the former verses, the following verses refer to the subject, again, and explain the destiny of those who fear Allah and of those who disobey and follow their low desires.

"But when the great calamity comes"

The term /ţammah/ is derived from /ţamm/ which originally means 'to fill', and anything which is in a high state is called /ţammah/; hence, it is used for the great and difficult events and also for the grievous, disastrous happenings to come. Here, it refers to the Hereafter, which is full of horrible incidents.

It is characterized by the word

'great'

as an emphasis on the importance of this unique event.

"That Day man shall remember what he strove for".

But what is the use of this remembrance? How could it be helpful to him? If he asks to return to this world to recompense the past, his request will be denied and the reply will be: 'Nay!'.

If he repents for the pardoning of his evil deeds, it will be useless, since it will be too late for it.

Then, he can do nothing, but regret and as the Qur'an says:

"The Day that the wrongdoer will bite at his hands...".[7]

It should be noted that the term /yatathakkaru/ is a verb in the future tense, which usually expresses the constancy of an action, i.e. on that Day man will constantly remember all his deeds because on that Day the hearts and the souls of men will be unveiled and all the hidden facts will be made manifest.

www.alhassanain.org/english

“And Hell-fire shall he manifest for him who sees”.

Hell exists at the present time. Furthermore, according to Surah Ankabut, No. 29, verse 54:

“But, of a surety, Hell will encompass the rejecters of Faith!”,

however, the curtains of this world hinder it to be seen; hence, on the Day of Judgment, that is, the Day of the manifestation of everything, Hell becomes apparent and the most clearly visible.

The words

/liman yara/ ‘for him who sees'

denote that Hell, on that Day, will be so visible that everyone who has the ability to see, and with no exception, will see it. It will be covert neither to the righteous nor to the evildoers, whose abode is-Hell.

It is, also, probable that the words refer to those who have eyes to see with on that Day, because according to Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 124, some will be blind then:

“...and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment”.

But the first meaning which is accepted by many commentators seems more fitting, because Hell, for the evildoers, is a punishment and a doubled penalty. That some of them will be blind, perhaps, occurs at some definite sites in the Hereafter, not everywhere.

Then, attention is paid to the status of sinners and unbelievers in the Hereafter and, in a few short, but meaningful sentences, both the destiny of theirs and its causes are expressed:

“Then as for him who transgressed”,

“And had preferred the life of this world,”

“Then surely Hell-fire will be the Abode”.

In the first sentence, their corrupted belief is referred to since transgression originates from self-complacence and self-conceit, which, itself, is caused by the absence of knowledge of Allah.

One who knows Allah, the Almighty, finds himself insignificant and never rejects his servitude.

The second sentence points to their corrupted deeds, because transgression causes man to consider the glitter of the lusts of this scintillating world his highest values and prefers it to everything else.

These two, in fact, are the 'cause and effect' of each other. Transgression caused by corrupted belief is the source of corrupted deeds and also preferring this fleeting life to all, brings about the blazing fire of Hell.

Hazrat Ali (as) has said:

“He who transgresses, goes astray and acts not reasonably”.[8]

This is because of self-complacence in which man acknowledges his low desires and conceives them as being valuable.

Then, through two short and extremely meaningful sentences, it characterizes the Blessed, thus:

“And as for him who feared his Lord's presence and restrained the soul from the low desires...

“Then surely the Garden will be the Abode”.

Yes, the first condition of being 'blessed’ is 'fear' caused by 'knowledge' knowing the presence of the Lord and being afraid of disobeying His

command. The second condition, which is, indeed, the fruit of knowledge and fear of Allah, is restraining the soul from rebellion, since, all the sins, corruption's and disasters, come from low desires which is the worst god worshipped in the world.

The means of Satan to influence in man's entity, is still 'low desire'.

It is this inner evil that opens the gate for the outer Evil to come in, or else this case would never be possible, as Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 42 says:

"For over My servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee".

Explanations

What is the meaning of "the Presence of the Lord"?

It is worthy to note that in Verse 40, of the current Surah, it says:

"...as for him who feared his Lord's presence…"

but it does not say: 'as for him who feared his Lord'. Then, what is 'the Lord's presence'?

The following are some different commentaries to be considered:

1. It means 'the halting-places in the Hereafter' wherein man stands in front of the Lord for Judgment.

Therefore, 'the

Lord's presence'

is in the sense of 'his presence with his Lord', i.e. the standing of man before his Lord.

2. It points to 'Allah's knowledge and His protection' for all human beings; as Surah Ra'd, No. 13, verse 33 says:

"Is then He Who standeth over every soul (and knoweth) all that it doth, (like any others)?"

The next evidence to this commentary is the tradition that has been narrated from Imam Sadiq who said:

"He who knows that Allah sees him, hears what he says, knows what he does regarding good or evil, and this consciousness keeps him away from doing wrong, it is he who'...feared his Lord's presence and restrained the soul from the low desires"".

3. It means 'His Justice' since His Holy Essence is not frightening. The fear is for His Justice. In fact, this fear is obtained from the comparison between our actions and His Justice. Criminals tremble when they see the just judge, and fear when they hear the words 'court and Judgment', while an innocent person feels no fear of any of them.

These three commentaries do not contrast with each other and all of them may be gathered in the meaning of the verse.

The Relation Between the Rebels and Worldliness

In fact, the above verses clearly and in a beautiful style illustrate the principles of both man's happiness and adversity. The adversity of man is considered in his worldliness, and his happiness is found in his fear of Allah and the absence of low desires; the whole of which is the extract and essence in the teachings of all Prophets and Saints.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says:

“O' people what I fear most about you are two things: acting according to desires and extending of hope. As regards acting according to desires, this prevents from truth; and as regards extending of hopes, it makes one forget the next world.”[9]

Low desires put a curtain over man's mind, decorates his evil deeds to seem good in his sight, robs him of the sense of recognition; which is the greatest gift of Allah, is the privilege of man over animal, and makes him preoccupied with himself.

This is the very thing that Jacob, the conscientious prophet, told his guilty children:

“...Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you...”[10].

There are many things to say in this regard, but we will conclude this subject with two traditions from Ahlul Bayt (as) containing many facts.

Imam Baqir has said:

“Paradise is covered in pain and patience. Then he who shows patience in suffering and toils in this life, will enjoy Heaven. Hell is covered in (unlawful) pleasures and lusts. Then, he who leaves his soul in them, will enter into the fire.[11]

Imam Sadiq has said:

“Don't let the soul free in its low desires. Surely low desires cause the death of the soul, and if you leave the soul free in its low desires, it causes pain for it, and keeping it apart from its low desires is a remedy for it”[12].

Not only is the fire of the Next World the fruit of lusts and low desires, but, it is also the blazing fires of this world, such as: insecurities, chaos’s, wars, murders, conflicts, hatreds and vengeance’s which totally originate from them.

There are only Two Groups

In the above verses people are categorized in only two groups: the worldly rebels and the pious who fear Allah. The permanent abode of the first group is Hell, and the eternal site of the second group is Heaven.

Of course, there is, here, a third group who are not mentioned in these verses. They are those guilty believers, of minor sins, through human frailty, who had repented and been forgiven and if they deserve it will join the blessed, and if not, will enter Hell, but, they will not be there for ever.

Surah Nazi’at, Verses 42-46

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا

فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا

إِلَى رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرُ مَنْ يَخْشَاهَا

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا

42. “They ask you about the Hour, When will it come to pass?”

43. “Wherein art thou (concerned) with the declaration thereof?”

44. "With thy Lord is the limit fixed therefor"

45. "You are but a Warner to him who fears it."

46. "It shall seem to them on the day when they behold it, as though they tarried not (in their graves) but an evening or a forenoon.

Only Allah knows the Final Hour, the Resurrection.

In the aforementioned verses the Hereafter and the destiny of the righteous and the wrongdoers, on that Day, is described and, now, in the following verses the focus is on the common question of the rejecters of the Resurrection.

It says:

"They ask you about the Hour, When will it come to pass?"

Answering this question, to make them understand that no one knows when the final Great Event will take place, the Holy Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"Wherein art thou (concerned) with the declaration thereof?"

When the date of the occurrence of the Hereafter is hidden even from the Prophet, then the status of others is obvious. This is of the knowledge, which is hidden and exclusively belongs to Allah. It is out of reach for all.

It is mentioned, repeatedly, that one of the things that are veiled for everyone is the exact time of the Hereafter whose training effect is not possible save being secret; since, if the exact time appointed for it were revealed and it were far away, everyone would sink deeply in negligence; and if it were near, avoiding sin would be done confusingly and far from free-will and intention, both of which are worthless from the point of training.

There have been other probabilities cited, also, and among them is that: 'you were not appointed in order to tell the time of the occurrence of the Hereafter but, you are appointed to inform others of its existence and that it will certainly happen.

Moreover, 'your appointment shows that the Day of Judgment is coming nearer'.

So, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, showing his two forefingers:

"My appointment and the Hour are like these."[13]

But the first commentary is the most appropriate.

"With thy Lord is the limit fixed therefor".

It is only He Who knows the Hour. No man knows the mystery and no effort and endeavor is useful for finding the answer.

This is the same idea that Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 34 says:

"Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone)..."

And, again, from Surah Araf, No. 7, verse 187:

"...Say: 'the knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone)..."

Some have said that the objective point of the above sentence is that the actual occurrence of the Hereafter is under His control, and the sentence is a statement for the cause of what is said in the previous verse. To combine these two commentaries is possible, too.

"You are but a Warner to him who fears."

'Your duty is only to warn them and you are not responsible to tell them the final Hour.'

It is worthy to note that the warning referred to, here, is only to those who fear that Day and this is similar to what Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2 says:

“This is the Book; in it is guidance without doubt, to those who fear Allah”.

These kind of statements refer to the fact that when there is an absence in the soul for seeking the right and the truth and a lack of the sense of responsibility in front of Allah exists, then, man neither goes in search of the heavenly books for information about the Resurrection nor does he listen to the warnings of the Prophets and Saints.

Finally, to express that there is not a great deal of time until the Day of Judgment, it says:

“It shall seem to them on the day when they behold it, as though they tarried not (in their graves) but an evening or a forenoon”.

The length of the life, in this world, is so short and the period of the intermediate state (Barzakh) passes so quickly, that when they rise, again, for the Day of Judgment the whole period seems to them as if it were only a few hours.

This idea, that the life in this world is short and fleeting, is both practical and true and, in comparison with the Hereafter and the life of the whole Universe, it is like a moment.

The term /'aŝiyyah/ means 'evening', and /duha/ is used for 'a period when the sun has come up and its beam of light has spread'.

Some verses of the Qur'an indicate that on the Day of Judgment the sinners will talk about the length of their stay in partition (purgatory) or their life in this world, in this manner:

“In whispers will they consult each other: 'Ye tarried not longer than ten (days)”[14].

But those of them who think more soundly say:

“...their leader most eminent in conduct will say: 'Tarried not longer than a day!”[15].

In another sura, it narrates the sinners idea:

“On the Day that the Hour (of reckoning) will be established, the transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour...”[16].

The difference between these various statements is that the sinners want to compare the shortness of this time with an approximate length of their stay, therefore, each of them states his own feelings, and they all have one thing in common which is that the shortness of life in this world is compared to the life in the Hereafter. This, of course, is a matter that shakes man, and awakens him from the sleep of negligence.

Supplication

O Lord! Gift us the calmness and tranquility on that Great Day' in partition (purgatory) and in this world.

O Lord! No one can erase the troubles of that Great Day, but by your Grace. Then, we seek your holy Grace.

O Lord! Lead us so that you put us among those who fear your presence and restrain their soul from low desires and will reside in eternal Heaven.

Notes

1. Majma'al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 428
2. Lisan'al'Arab; Majma'al'Bayan, The Commentary; Kashshaf, The Commentary; and Majma'al'Bahrayn.
3. A fourth point of probability cited refers to the natural movements of creatures in the world
4. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 32
5. Majma'al'Bayan, vol. 10, p. 432
6. Tafsir Kabir, vol. 31, p. 46.
7. Surah Furqan, No. 25, verse 27
8. Nur'uth'Thaqalayn, vol 5, p. 506, Tradition No. 43.
9. Nahj'ul Balaqa, Sermon No. 42 (Arabic Version), No. 47 (English Version).
10. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 18
11. Nur uth'Thaqalayn, vol 5, p. 507, Tradition No. 46.
12. ibid., Tradition No. 45.
13. Tafsir''i'Fakhr'i'Razi, The Commentary, vol. 29, p. 29. This matter is mentioned referring to Surah 49, verse 18 in Majma-al-Bayan, Qartabi, Fizalal and others.
14. Surah Ta'Ha, No. 20, verse 103
15. Surah Ta'Ha, No. 20, verse 104
16. Surah Rum, No. 30, verse 55

Surah ‘Abasa, Chapter 80

(He Frowned)

Number of Verses: 42

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Abasa is short, but contains various important subjects, which especially emphasize on the Resurrection and can be summarized under five topics:

1. Allah’s serious admonishment to the one who did not show suitable behavior to a truth-seeking blind man.
2. The importance of the Holy Qur'an.
3. Man's ungratefulness toward the blessings of Allah.
4. A partial description about His blessings in the field of nutrition for Men and animals in order to stimulate a sense of thankfulness.
5. Some hints about the terrible incidents of the Day of Judgment' and the fate of the believers and unbelievers on that Day.

The name of the Surah is derived from its first verse.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

A tradition from Prophet Muhammad (S) says:

“One who studies Surah 'Abasa will arrive at the Gathering Place smiling and rejoicing will arrive at the Gathering Place smiling and rejoicing on The Day of Judgment.”

Surah ‘Abasa, Verses 1-10

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّىٰ

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَىٰ

فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّىٰ

وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَىٰ

وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ

فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّىٰ

1. “He frowned and turned away,”

2. “Because there came to him the blind man.”

3. "And what would make you know that he might (spiritually) purify himself,"

4 "Or become reminded so that the reminder might profit him?"

5. "As to one who regards himself self-sufficient,"

6. "To him do you address yourself!"

7. "Though it is no blame on you if he would not (spiritually) purify himself."

8. "But as to him who comes to you striving hard,"

9. "And he fears (Allah in his heart),"

10. "Of him wast thou unmindful."

The Occasion of Revelation

These words show that Allah has blamed someone for an action which gave superiority to a man or men of wealth rather than to a blind man who was seeking the truth. But who was the admonished one? There are a variety of ideas on this subject, but the most famous commentary among the scholars is the following:

Once the Prophet (S) was deeply engaged in trying to explain the Holy Qur'an to some pagan Quraish leaders such as 'Atabat-ibn-i-Rabi 'ah, Abu-Jahl, 'Abbas-ibn-'Abdul-Mutallib and some others. He was hopeful that it would attract them to Islam, and in so doing, surely a lot of others would come to Islam, too. And therefore, put an end to their sabotage. But, suddenly, he was interrupted by a blind man;

'Abdullah-ibn-Ummi-Maktum, who was apparently poor, so that no one took notice of him. He wanted to learn the Qur'an and asked the Prophet (S) to teach him. He repeated his statement again and again, because he did not know exactly whom he was talking to.

The Holy Prophet (S) naturally did not like the frequent interruptions and this was seen on his face.

"These Arab leaders",

he said to himself

"may think of Muhammad as a Prophet of the poor and the blind."

Then he turned away from 'Abdullah and continued the work at preaching Allah's Message to them.

At that moment he received the new verses stated above, which admonished the Prophet (S) for this action. Afterwards, he always held 'Abdullah in high honor, and whenever he saw him he used to tell him

"Hail to the one for whom Allah admonished me."

And, then, he questioned the man:

"Is there anything that I can do for you?"

The blind man became a true and sincere Muslim and as a direct appointment by the Prophet, himself, become a governor of Medina on two occasions when the Prophet (S) went to battle.

A second opinion about this revelation is given for these verses, which is that a man from the Umayyads was sitting with the Prophet Muhammad (S) when 'Abdullah-ibn Ummi-Maktum arrived. When this man saw 'Abdullah, he frowned and turned his back to him, as if he might become infected by him.

The aforementioned verses were about the man sitting with the Prophet (S) and the admonishment was for him. It has been narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) agreed with this opinion when he was asked about this occasion of revelation. The late Sayyed Murtaza, the great scholar of Islam, approved with this occasion of revelation, as well.

There is nothing, of course, in the verse, itself, to show clearly that the one who is addressed is Muhammad (S).

The only sign may be found in verses 8 to 10 where they say:

"But as to him who comes to you striving hard,"

"And he fears (Allah in his heart)."

"Of him wast thou unmindful."

This is the matter that can be true about the Prophet (S) more than anyone else. But, according to what 'Sayyed Murtaza' has said, there are some signs in the verses showing that 'the one' is not the Prophet (S). Some of them are as follows:

'To be frowning' was not one of the Prophet's character traits, especially for the Prophet of Islam. He spoke gently and with a kind face even to his own enemies and was even more kind to the truth-seeking believers.

Moreover, paying attention to the wealthy people and neglecting, the poor is not agreeable, at all, with what is said about him in Surah Qalam, No. 68, verse 4 which says:

"And thou (standst) on an exalted standard of character",

(with the particular note that Surah Qalam had been revealed before the revelation of Surah Abasa).

But, supposing the first occasion of revelation is true, this act is not more than 'leaving to the better' /tark-i-'ula/ and there is nothing in it that contrasts with the state of sinlessness.

Since, first, the purpose of the Prophet (S) was definitely to absorb the Quraish leaders in order to spread Islam and to stop their sabotage.

Secondly, it does not matter so much to frown at a blind man because he cannot see. Moreover, 'Abdullah-ibn-Ummi-Maktum did not keep the rules of etiquette, since, he should not have interrupted the Prophet (S) when he was busy talking to the people who were gathered there.

On the one hand, since Allah's emphasis is on love and affection for the poor and the afflicted, among the believers, it does not approve of the little amount of heedlessness from His prophet to that believing servant, so He admonishes him.

On the other hand, if we consider the Prophet (S) as a true, great prophet, from these verses we see that they are almost a miracle, because the great leader of Islam mentions such important responsibilities in the heavenly Holy Book, about himself, that he finds the slightest 'leaving to the better' an option: i.e. the little amount heedlessness to a blind truth-seeking believer, which Allah admonish him for.

This is an evidence for the fact that this Book is from Allah and he is a true prophet, because if the Book were not from Allah, surely it would not have such content.

A more astonishing matter is that according to the above mentioned narration, whenever the Prophet (S) saw 'Abdullah-ibn-Ummi-Maktum, he remembered the occasion a honored him very much.

The other aspect, which the verses contain, is that of the Islamic culture in relation to the behavior shown to the oppressed and to the arrogant: as to how it considers the blind, poor believer in comparison to those rich, powerful pagan Arab leaders. This clearly shows that Islam is a support for the oppressed and is against the arrogant.

In conclusion, we repeat that though the first thought about the occasion of this revelation is well-known among the commentators, it should be confessed that there is nothing vivid, in the verse, to prove the idea that the Prophet (S) is the clear target of the admonition.

Harsh Admonition For Heedlessness Shown to a Truth-Seeking Blind man

Keeping in mind what was said about the first idea regarding the occasion of revelation of the verses, we will now discuss the given commentary.

“He Frowned and turned away”.

“Because there came to him the blind man”.

“And what would make you know that he might (spiritually) purify himself”.

“Or become reminded so that the reminder might profit him?”

The reminder can be, at least, an advice to him. If it does not affect him to be really virtuous, it may make him aware and this awareness would change him a little.

“As to one who regards himself as self-sufficient”

“To him do you address yourself!”

And 'you' insist on guiding him, but he is entangled with pride due to his wealth and selfishness.

It is the pride from which rebellion and disobedience originate, as Surah Alaq, No. 96, verses 6-7 say:

“Nay, most surely man does transgress (all bounds),”

“For he thinks himself self-sufficient”.

“Though it is no blame on you if he would not (spiritually) purify himself”.

It is for 'you' only to deliver His message; they may take its advice or merely become annoyed. Therefore, you should not neglect the truth-seeking blind man or annoy him for the sake of the rich leaders, although you mean to guide them.

“But as to him who comes to you striving hard,”

“And he fears (Allah in his heart)”

The very motive, fear of Allah, has forced him to come to you in order to hear some truth and, thereafter, employ them in order to purify himself and grow in understanding.

“Of him wast thou unmindful.”

Indeed, the term /anta/ 'you, thee' is used to say that a person, such as the Prophet, should not divert himself, even for a moment, from such a truth-seeking man and should not pay attention to others although he definitely

wanted to guide them, because the priority is given to that of the pure-hearted oppressed.

In any case, this reproachful speech, whether to the Prophet (S) or to anyone else, clearly states the fact that Islam and the Qur'an give a special high regard to the servants of Allah, particularly to those of the oppressed.

Also, Islam takes a severe position against those who are intoxicated and become proud from the abundance of Allah's blessings, so much so that Allah is not content if the least annoyance is caused to the truth-seeking oppressed, because of giving attention to the affluent.

The reason is clear: such a message works first amongst the simple and lowly, the poor and despised folk, and the mighty ones, of the earth only come around when the masses stream in like an irresistible force. The oppressed always support Islam, sincerely, helping the great leaders of the religion in their affairs, and are the candidates of the battle fields "or martyrdom.

As Imam Ali (as) said in his famous order to Malik-i-Ashtar:

"...While the common men, the poor and apparently the less important section of your subjects are the Islam; of Islam; they are the real assemblage of Muslims and the power and defensive force against the enemies of Islam. Keep an open mind for them, be more friendly with them and secure their confidence and sympathy."

Surah 'Abasa, Verses 11-23

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ

فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ

مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ

قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ

كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ

11. "Nay surely it is an admonishment,"
12. "So let him who pleases mind it,"
13. "(It is) in Books held (greatly) in honor,"
14. "Exalted (in dignity) kept pure and holy,"
15. "In the hand of scribes,"

16. "Honorable and pious and just,"

17. "Cursed be man! How ungrateful is he"

18. "Of what thing did He create him?"

19. "Of a sperm-drop He created him, then molded him in due proportions;"

20. "Then He made the way easy for him,"

21. "Then He caused him to die, then assigned to him a grave,"

22. "Then, when it is His will, He will raise him to life again,"

23. "Nay, but (man) has not done what He commanded him".

Only the Purified Ones Can Touch the Qur'an

In connection with the aforementioned verses, which spoke about admonishing the one who was unmindful of a truth-seeking blind man, these verses are about the importance of the Qur'an, its pure origin, and the efficient effect it has on individuals.

Advising the one who was unmindful not to repeat this action again, it says:

"Nay, surely it is an admonishment."

'You' do not need to pay attention to those who are, apparently, gifted and self-sufficient and are, subsequently, proud, while neglecting the purified oppressed.

It, is, also probable that the verse:

"Nay, surely it is an admonishment"

could be an answer to all accusations the pagans and the enemies of Islam uttered about the Qur'an. They called it 'a poetry', 'a magic', and sometimes 'a kind of soothsaying'. The Qur'an demands that none of them are right, but that these verses of Qur'an are reminders for acknowledgment, awareness and faith. It contains the proofs and documents in itself. The people who approach it can get the facts, themselves, except its enemies.

"So let him who pleases, mind it".

This points to both the lack of obligation, and an evidence to exercise of free-will for everyone - that is, no one can obtain its merits unless one wishes to and makes the decision to follow its guidance.

"(It is) in Books held (greatly) in honor,"

The term /suhuf/ is the plural form of /sahifah /which means 'tablet' or 'sheet' or 'anything on which something can be written'. This shows that the verses of Qur'an had been written on some tablets before they were revealed to the Prophet (S), and the angels of revelation possessed them, therefore, it means that the tablets were in a very high position.

Some views have held that /suhuf/ means 'the Books of earlier prophets (as),' which does not seem agreeable with its pre and post verses. Some have also said that it means 'the Preserved Tablet', but this idea does not seem suitable, either, because /suhuf/ is in a plural form and has not been used in the form of 'the Preserved Tablet'.

"Exalted (in dignify) kept pure and holy".

It is beyond the reach of the aberrant ones; they cannot distort it; it is pure and kept far from tainted hands. Finally, it is pure from any contradiction, discrepancy and doubt.

Moreover, they are:

"In the hand of scribes,"

who are:

"Honorable and pious and just."

The term /safarah/ is the plural form of /safir/ based on /safar/, which originally means 'to unveil a matter or a thing', so, one who comes unto people with a special mission; to remove their difficulties and uncover the ambiguous matters for them is called /safir/ 'an ambassador'. A writer is also called /safir/ since he or she uncovers the meaning of a matter.

Therefore, /safarah/ means 'the Divine angels who reveal Messages or write them down'.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"One who learns the whole Qur'an by heart and acts accordingly is with the scribes, honorable and pious and just".

This clearly shows that those who know the Qur'an by heart, commentators, and those who act according to its instructions are in the same rank as the scribes. And it is a fact that when scholars and those who learn the Qur'an by heart, or preserve it, do something similar to what the angels and bringers of revelation do, then, they should be counted among them.

It is understood that, on the whole, any Muslim who tries to protect and keep the Holy Qur'an alive deserves a position as high as that of the 'honorable and pious angels'.

The term /kiram/ is the plural form of /karim/ which means 'honorable, or beneficent' and refers to the greatness of the angels of revelation.

It is sometimes said that it refers to their pureness of any sin, as Surah Anbiya, No. 21, verses 26-27 say about the angels:

"...Nay, they are honored servants, "

"They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act".

The term /bararah/ is the plural form of /bar/ based on /bar/ which originally means 'vastness', then, 'a vast land' is called /barr/, and since good people's generosity is vast and benefits many others, they are called /bar/.

The term

'pious'

used in this verse, of course, means 'obedient to His Command' and 'sinlessness'. Thus Allah characterizes the angels in three ways: first, they are His agents for His revelations, second, they are naturally pious and honorable; and third, they are pure, obedient and sinless.

Though there are so many signs of guidance from Allah in His

'Books held (greatly) in honor'

containing all kinds of reminders revealed by the angels, the ungrateful man does not resign himself to Him, hence, it says:

"Cursed be man! how ungrateful is he!"

The term /kufr/, may mean 'disbelief' or 'ingratitude' or 'any covering and denial of Allah', which can be suitable, here, because, in the last verses it refers to the signs of guidance and faithfulness, and in the next verses it mentions the different kinds of blessings from Allah.

In any case, the objective point of

"Cursed be man!"

is to express an intensive hatred toward the ungrateful ones.

Since the origin of disobedience and ungratefulness is generally pride, then to break it, the next verse says:

"Of what thing did He create him?"

"Of a sperm-drop He created him, then molded him in due proportions".

Why does man not think about the origin of his creation? Why does he forget his main source? Moreover, why does he not take note of Allah's ability in the creation of this strange creature from a sperm-drop? If he contemplated on his creation from a sperm-drop and, then, about the formation of his body and its limbs, and his faculties and abilities and even his necessities of life being in a suitable proportion, it could be the best guidance for his theological and divine knowledge.

The term

/qaddarahu/, 'He molded him in due proportions'

is based on /taqdir/ which means 'the act of measuring and well-balancing'.

We know that there are more than twenty metals and metalloids in the human body, each of which is at a determined level from the point of quantity and quality. If these levels change to a lower or a higher degree, the regularity of the body's chemistry will be disturbed.

Besides this, the condition of the body's structure and the relations between its organs, have exact limits. The intellect and instincts hidden in an individual, alone, and in human beings, all together, must be in a special arrangement to provide for man's happiness.

Allah is He Who fulfilled all the above proportions for the worthless life-germ in the form of a sperm-drop. The life-germ is so small that if we gathered, together, as many of them as the number of human beings, which exists today, they would not amount to a thimbleful. Yes, He designed so many colorful characteristics and embellishments on and in such a slight, tiny particle, and from this created a creature such as man.

The term /taqdir/ has been defined as: 'to make ready' by some commentators. It is also probable that the meaning of /taqdir/ is 'to make the unworthy life-germ powerful'. How great is the Creator Who makes this feeble substance so powerful; Who puts the sky, the earth and the seas at his disposal, and enables him to conquer all the forces of his surroundings.

Of course, all three of the above comments can be considered, together, also.

"Then He made the way easy for him".

Allah made the way for the fetus to develop in its mother's womb, and then made the way for moving to this world, easy for man.

One of the wonders of man's birth is that a few moments before the time of nativity the child is so located in the mother's womb that usually its head is right side up, its face is to the mother's back and its feet are toward the down side of the womb; but when the time of birth comes, the child turns upside down so that its head is downwards, and this very position makes the birth easier for both the child and its mother.

There are, of course, exceptions where some children are born under various complications and, therefore, their mothers encounter many difficulties.

Allah has made everything easy for him: after his birth he grows during his childhood, then his human instincts grow, and after that he grows along the path of faith and spiritual perfection by way of guidance from the prophets (as) and by his own reasoning.

“Then He made the way easy for him”.

What a completely meaningful and interesting sentence this is! It is very short, but it alludes to so many facts!

Another point which is noteworthy is that it says:

“Then He made the way easy for him”.

It does not say: 'Then He forced him to go the way'. This is an emphasis, again, on man's free-will.

Further, it declares the end of man's life and says:

“Then He caused him to die, then assigned to him a grave”.

Surely, the act of 'putting to death' belongs to Allah, but the act of covering the corpse, in a grave, apparently belongs to man, however, the required intelligence, for this action and, also, the other necessary means for it have been supplied by Allah, and that is why the assigning of a grave has been attributed to Allah too.

Some commentators have also said that the objective point of attributing the action to Allah is that He has created a grave for man which is under the ground, while some others have thought of it as a religious instruction, from Allah, about the burial of corpses.

One of the graces of Allah to human beings is the very burial of corpses. If they did not know what to do with their corpses or if there were not any instructions issued about the burial of corpses, the corpses would humiliatingly remain putrid on the ground, and the beasts and birds would feast on them, which would be a horrible debasement. Therefore, Allah’s graces are bestowed on man; not only during his lifetime, but even after his death.

Moreover, the instruction for burying the corpses of people (after the ceremonial bath, shroud, and prayer) is an inspirational one, because it is to say that the dead bodies of human beings must be purified and respected, even more than their live ones, because live people have the responsibility of keeping themselves pure.

Another noteworthy point is that the situation of death, in this verse, is counted among the blessings of Allah. This is really true if we care to understand, because, first, death is a release from the troubles and imperfections of this world and a close to the probationary period.

After which will dawn the full Reality in a world so much broader than this world. Secondly, the death of the present generations makes room for the later generations, and causes mankind to continue to live and to improve, or else the human population would reach such extremes that would be impossible for them to live on Earth.

It is interesting that this very idea is delicately mentioned in Surah Rahman, No. 55, verse 26-28 thus:

"Everything on earth will pass away;"

"And there will endure the Face of your Lord, the Lord of Glory and Honor."

"Then which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?".

There, again, according to these verses, death is one of the great gifts from Allah.

Yes, the world, with all its blessings, is a prison for a believer.

Moving from this world to the next world is a release from this prison. Besides, the abundance of blessings, in this world, sometimes causes people to neglect their position, then, the remembrance of death may awaken them, therefore, from this point of view, too, it is a blessing. If all of the past events of life were always alive, it would certainly be tiresome to continue it, but the immortal life, on the contrary, will be thoroughly full of joy and happiness.

Then, our attention is turned to the Resurrection of the human race, and, it says:

"Then when it is His will, He will raise him to life again."

The term /inŝaraha/ is based on /inŝar/ which means 'to spread abroad after gathering'. It is an interesting point which shows that the life of man is totally gathered up by death, but it will be spread out, again, through Resurrection in a higher and greater environment.

It is worthy to note that for 'death' and for 'burial' it says:

"Then He caused him to die, then assigned to him a grave",

but for Resurrection it says:

"When it is His will, He will raise him to life again"

and this makes it clear that no one knows the time of the Great Event (The Resurrection), but, it is only Allah, Who knows it, and death is an inevitable event where everyone, after living a willy-nilly natural life, will die.

The last verse of this group says that although these blessings and stages have been provided by Allah's grace, for the good of man, (from the time he was a lowly sperm-drop to the time he arrived in this world and went on the path of growth and, finally, passed away and was covered with dust in the grave), unregenerate man fails in carrying out the purpose of his creation and life:

"Nay, but (man) has not done what He commanded him".

The term /lamma/ is usually used with a negative meaning when something is still expected. It touches on this sense that man, having these divine gifts and the means of guidance, is expected to be earnest m obeying Allah and acting on His commands, but surprisingly he has not done it yet.

The following are two different ideas about the meaning of the term 'man' used in this verse:

The first idea says that it alludes to the persons who go the path of ungratefulness, denial, and injustice and corresponds with Surah Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 34 which says:

"...most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful."

The second idea says that it refers to all of mankind, because no one (irrespective of believers and unbelievers) has accurately carried out what

Allah has commanded him to do, to the extent that it deserves the greatness of His glory and dignity; as a Persian poem says:

Servants of Allah should ask Him to excuse them for their short comings.
Else, no one is able to do according to his Lordship.

Surah ‘Abasa, Verses 24-32

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِهِ

أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا

فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا

وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا

وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا

وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا

وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا

مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

24. “Then let man look to his food,”
25. “That We pour down the water, pouring it in abundance,”
26. “And We split the earth into fragments,”
27. “And We produce therein corn,”
28. “And grapes and grasses,”
29. “And the olive and the palm,
30. “And gardens, dense with trees,”
31. “And fruits and fodder,”
32. “Provision for you and for your cattle.”

Man Should Look At His food!

Since the aforementioned verses allude to the Resurrection and the next verses also refer more vividly to this very matter, it seems that these verses are a proof for the Resurrection. By explaining Allah’s authority over all things and, also, reviving the dead lands by sending down rain, which is a resurrection in itself for plants, proves the possibility of Resurrection.

By the way, since these verses mention the different kinds of nourishment that Allah has given to man and his cattle, they call him to thank Allah and pay heed to the knowledge of Him.

First, it says:

“Then let man look to his food;”

and considers how Allah has produced it.

The closest exterior substance, to man, is his food which, after some changes, is easily absorbed and becomes part of his body, therefore, if he cannot obtain it he will perish. That is why the Qur'an, among all things, puts emphasis on the nourishment; especially those produced from trees and plants.

It is clear that the aim of saying 'look to' is not a simple look, but it means with deep care and contemplating on the vital elements and

wonderful structure of the nourishment, and the surprising effects they have on him, so, consequently, he should think about the Creator, Who has created them.[1]

There is the idea which says that it may mean 'a superficial look, a look which stimulates the salivary glands and, as a result, helps the digestion'. This seems improbable because, in comparison with its pre and post verses, the verse does not carry such a meaning at all; but some food scientists look at the contents of the Qur'an with their own narrow view points, then, it is natural for them to have an idea like that about the verse.

Some others believe it to mean that when one sits at the table to eat, one must look carefully at the foods to see how they are prepared, whether they are permitted or forbidden, lawful or unlawful and, thus, one may consider the moral and religious aspects in eating.

In some narration's from the sinless Imams, the term

/ta'am/ 'food',

here, means 'knowledge', the sustenance of man's soul, then, one should be careful and 'look' at Whom he has taken it from.

Among these is a narration from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) for the commentary of the above verse, which says:

"Be careful from where and from whom you get your information."

Another narration, similar to this, has been quoted from Imam Sadiq (as).

Undoubtedly, the apparent meaning of the verse is about the bodily foods which are described in later verses, but the soul's sustenance can analogically be understood from it, since man is a combination of soul and body; as his body needs bodily food so his soul requires spiritual sustenance, as well.

When man should be careful about his bodily nourishment, and knows of its origin which, according to the next verses, is life-giving rain, he should also be careful about his spiritual nourishment, the Message revealed from above (like rain) to the Prophet's heart (S). The very place where the hearts of the sinless Imams got it from and store it like fountains of youth for others to make their own hearts fruitful with faith, virtue and morals.

Yes, one must completely be aware of the main origin of one's knowledge or one may call it 'spiritual nourishment', lest it may come from a corrupted source and, as a result, cause one's soul and body to become sick or die.

And the matter of things being lawful /halal/ or unlawful, /haram/, and permitted or forbidden can analogically be understood through the potential guidance, too.

This is also probable that the terms 'food' and 'look' both have vast meanings in this verse, hence all the three above commentaries can be gathered in it.

It is evident that the term

'man',

used in the verse, includes all members of the human race whether they are believers or unbelievers. They must care about what they eat and, also, the wonder of its creation in order for the unbelievers, to find the right way, and for the believers to increase in their faith.

Verily, each article of food: fruits, nutritious seeds, and vegetables have some interesting properties which can be studied, separately, in our lifetime and many things can be learned from them to enlighten us and give us insight into the wonders that they contain.

Then, to explain the nourishment’s and their origins, it says:

“That We pour down the water, pouring it in abundance”.

The term /sab/ means 'to pour water over from above', and here it means 'sending down rain'. The term /sabba/, at the end of the verse, is used for emphasis and to note the abundance of water.

Water, which is very necessary for every living creature, often comes down sufficiently, because of Allah’s grace. And we know that the essential source of water existing in rivers, streams, springs, subterranean canals and wells is rain, so that if it does not rain one year, all of them will dry up.

Thus, while studying articles of food, first and foremost, man should refer to the importance of the regularity of rainfall. The sun shines over the seas where vapor, in the form of clouds, rises from and moves above the earth where winds scatter the clouds high in the sky.

At cold points in the atmosphere, the clouds change into pure, harmless water again and fall gently on the ground in the form of droplets of rain or little pieces of snow that soak into the ground. Trees, plants and living things draw up water from the ground.

After mentioning water, which is an important factor in human life, it refers to another great factor; the earth, and says:

“And We split the earth in fragments”.

many commentators have said that this splitting is the splitting of; the land by plant seeding. It is really wonderful that a little smooth seedling can break the hard, solid land and sometimes it shoots up through stone. What a surprising power the Creator has given to this tiny smooth seedling which enables it to do so!

Some others have said that the split may be the splitting of the land when man ploughs it or even when some worms burrow through it; a kind of plowing for the purpose of some other life activities.

Plowing is one of man's activities, of course, but Allah has given him all its necessary means, therefore it relates to Allah.

The third commentary, which has been cited for the verse, and seems preferable for certain considerations, says that the meaning of

'splitting the earth'

is 'the act of breaking the stone into pieces on the surface of the earth.’

Explanation

At first the surface of the earth was covered with a mass of stone. Heavy rains fell, continuously, and cleft the stone asunder and spread its little parts onto the low lands and, thus, a mass of agricultural soil was formed, some of which is now carried to the seas by floods. But the new soil, produced by the succeeding rain and snow was replaced by it, otherwise man would be faced with the lack of agricultural soil.

Then, the verse points to one of the miracles of the Qur'an, in science, when it says it rains, first, then the earth cleaves asunder and becomes fit for

farming. This not only happened in the very early days, but also keeps occurring today.

This commentary seems more suitable, because the growth of plants and the production of grains are mentioned in the next verses.

Here, again, all three commentaries, together, can be probable.

After mentioning the two basic factors; i.e. water and soil, it refers to the eight items of plants, which contain the main nutrients for man and cattle.

“And We produce therein corn”.

Corn /habba/

is 'grain, the seeds of cereal grass; wheat, oats, rye or barely, or the plants producing them'. They are the essential sources of man's and cattle's nourishment’s during the year, the lack of which, because of drought, causes famine and starvation, a great plague for the world.

The term

/habban/ 'corn',

in a general sense, shows the importance and the variety of the seeds. Some others have only meant it as 'wheat' or 'rye' which is not reasonable, because the term 'corn' can include all seeds, which was mentioned before.

“And grapes and grasses”

The term /'inab/, which means both 'grapes and vine', in the verses of Qur'an, is mentioned, here, because it contains many nutrients, as a complete food and more than other fruits. It means only grapes in this verse.

The term /qathb/ originally means 'the vegetables which are cut several times', and, here, it means the different kinds of vegetables. Its occurrence after the term 'grapes' is for its importance as a food material.

Today, vegetables enjoy a high position in food science and are especially recommended.

The term /qathb/ is sometimes used with the meaning of 'to cut, or to pick'.

It is probable that /qathb/, used, here, in this verse, has a broader meaning which includes both vegetables and fruits.

“And the olive and the palm”.

It is clear that these two items are both from the most important articles of food which are useful, sound, and nutritious. This is why they are mentioned and emphasized on, here.

“And gardens, dense with trees”.

The term /hada'iq/ is the plural form of /hadiqah /which is 'a garden surrounded by a wall', but originally it means 'a piece of land containing water for irrigation'. The word is derived from /hadaqah/ 'eye-socket' where water exists, constantly.

Since these kinds of gardens are usually fruit gardens, the word may hint to the kinds of fruits in Heaven.

The term /qulb/ is the plural form of /aqlab/ and /qulba '/ which means 'thick-necked' and is originally derived from /qalabah/. Here, it means 'tall, thick trees'.

“And fruits and fodder”.

The term /abb/ means 'herbage not sown by men' or 'herbage prepared for pasture and for cutting'. Basically it means 'preparation' and, since these pastures are prepared for the usage, so, they are called /abb/.

Some others have also said that /abb/ is used for the fruits that are suitable for drying and storing to be used in winter, because they are always ready for use.

The late Mufid in his book, Irshad, has narrated from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) that the word meant 'herbage as a pasture', and he added:

“What God said in the verse 'And fruits and fodder' is a divine gift for His servants that He created as a part of their food and for their cattle, from which their lives receive merit and their bodies are strengthened”. [2]

In the former verses some special fruits were named, while here fruits, in general, are discussed. Moreover, the last verse spoke about 'gardens', which seemed to mean 'the fruits of gardens', then, how are the fruits dealt with, here, again?

The answer to this question is this: There, some definite fruits such as grapes, olives, and dates, which are of great importance among all fruits, were named; but, here, fruits are mentioned separate from 'gardens', perhaps because, besides fruits, gardens have some more advantages, such as, fresh air, nice views, etc.

Moreover, the leaves of some trees and the twigs, the roots, and the barks of some others (for example: tea, cinnamon, ginger and the like) are among the edibles; in addition to the leaves of many trees, which are suitable food for cattle. And it is a fact that the items stated in the aforementioned verses are edible for both human beings as well as their cattle.

For this reason, in the next verse, it says:

“Provision for you and for your cattle.”

The term /mata'/ means 'anything that man uses or enjoys'.

Explanation:Wholesome Nutriments

There are eight nutriments named, in these verses, for man and cattle. It is interesting that all of them are from herb ages and that is because of the importance of vegetables, grains and fruits in man's diet, so, in other words, they are the true original nutriments, while meat, obtained from animals, is in the second position and in a lesser amount.

Also noteworthy is that food science, which is one of the wide spread and important sciences and has a broad field with a large scope of investigation, is an explanation for what is mentioned in these verses and shows the magnificence of the Holy Qur'an, especially when this science emphasizes on the value and the efficiency of these food materials.

In any case, taking note of these materials and thinking about the creator of them may cause man's awareness of Allah’s grace and mercy to mankind.

Yes, paying attention to ones bodily food and, then, the sustenance of the soul from the points of both its structural content and how one obtained it, can push one forward along the path of knowledge of Allah, righteousness, and self-perfection.

Verily,

“Then let man look to his food”,

and what a meaningful sentence this short, single statement is!

Surah ‘Abasa, Verses 33-42

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاخَّةُ

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفِرَةٌ

ضَاحِكَةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ

تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ

33. “And when the deafening cry comes,”

34. “The Day on which a man shall flee from his brother,”

35. “And his mother and his father,”

36. “And from his wife and his children,”

37. “Each one of them, That Day, will have concern enough to occupy him.”

38. “Some faces That Day will be bright,”

39. “Laughing, rejoicing”.

40. “And some faces That Day will be dust-stained,”

41. “Blackness will cover them:”

42. “Those are they who are unbelievers, the wicked.”

The Resurrection Cry!

After describing a notable number of divine gifts and worldly blessings, the theme changes to talk about the resurrection and some of its happenings as well as the end of the believers and unbelievers. The purpose in this is to say that, firstly, these gifts, whatever they are, will have an end sometime; and secondly, they are some signs to prove the existence of Allah’s authority which is over everything and, of course, over the Resurrection.

“And when the deafening cry comes,”

The term /saxah/ is based on /sax/ which originally means 'a very loud noise', so loud that it almost deafens the ears, or actually deafens them. It points, here, to the second sound of the blast of the trumpet, the very great cry which brings the dead to life again and makes them go forth to the gathering place for the final Judgment.

Verily, the cry is so loud and shocking that everyone forgets all but one's end resulting from one's own actions.

“The Day on which a man shall flee from his brother”.

The same brother who was loved sincerely, was helped in everything favorably, now he flees from that brother, abruptly.

“And his mother and his father,”

“And from his wife and his children”.

Thus, individuals not only leave the nearest and the dearest members of their family such as their brother, father, mother, wife, and children, but also flee from them.

This statement shows that the horror and the fear of the Day is so much so that it makes individuals cease all their wishes and affections. In the probationary life, mother was loved by her child very much; father was highly respected by his son; wife was eagerly beloved by her husband; children were the best for their father, as the apples of his eyes; but now, in the eternal life, one flees from all of them!

The reason why he flees from them is stated in the next verse.

“Each one of them, That Day, will have concern enough to occupy him”.

The term

/yuqnih/ 'makes him self-sufficient'

shows that on That Day, man is so busy with his affairs that he does not pay attention to anyone; and the events are so terrible and overwhelming as to occupy him and his mind, totally.

It has been narrated that some of the households of the Prophet (S) asked him if one would remember one's close friend on That Day, and he answered:

“There are three halting-places where no one remembers anyone.

The first place is where the acts are weighed to see whether they are heavy (worthy) or light (unworthy); then, it is on the path where he wonders whether he can pass it (successfully) or not; and then it is the time when he is given his Record to see whether it is given to his right hand or to his left hand.

In these three halting-places no one cares for any one else: his supporter, his comrade, his companion, his very true friend, his child, his parents, and this is the same thing that Allah says:

'Each one of them, That Day, will have concern enough to occupy him'“.[3]

Then the situation of the believers and unbelievers is described when it says:

“Some faces That Day will be bright”

“Laughing, rejoicing”,

“And some faces That Day will be dust-stained,”

“Blackness will cover them”.

The term /musfirah/ is based on /asfar/ which means 'to appear, or to glitter' like the light of the early morning at the end of the darkness of night; the term /qabarah/ is based on /qabar/ which means 'dust'; the term /qatarah/ originally is based on /qatar/ which means 'smoke'; the term /kafarah/ and the term /fajarah/ are the plural forms of /kafir/ 'a unbeliever from the point of view of belief and /fajir/ 'a sinner from the point of view of action'.

The look on the face shows the inner self (mood), both physically and spiritually, good or bad.

It is understood from the verse that on That Day the faces show the righteousness or wickedness of persons during their lives in this world.

The dust on the faces of the sinners will be in contrast to the beaming light on the faces of the righteous; and the blackness (smoke) of the faces of

sinners, who are sad and regretful, in contrast to the 'laughing, rejoicing' faces of the righteous.

On the whole, on That Day, the faces show the facts and it is enough to look at the faces to know who is a sinner and who is righteous; as it is said in Surah Rahman, No. 55, verse 41:

“(For) the sinners will be known by their faces”.

Explanation: Self-Perfection

The ideas set forth in the short and meaningful verses, of this Surah, are a good collection for individuals to use as a guidance to self-perfection.

1. On the one hand, it leads man to refer to the origin of his creation to understand how he was created from a lowly sperm-drop in order that he should not be proud, because one of the greatest hindrances on the path of self-perfection is pride.

2. On the other hand, it introduces the divine leadership to man as the best provision of his way including both the Prophet's guidance, originating from revelation, and the guidance led by rational thinking and the observation in the regularity of the created world.

3. Then, it orders man to look to his food to see how it is created and prepared for him by the Beneficent and the Merciful Creator, and then, to obey Him in humility. Man should be careful to obtain his food, lawfully, because pure and lawful food is an important basis for self-perfection.

4. When he must be careful about his bodily food, then, he should certainly be careful about his soul's sustenance to see that it is not from a corrupted source; that which threatens his spiritual life.

It is surprising that some people are seriously careful about their bodily food, but they do not take care about their soul's sustenance; they read any book and they learn the tutorship of any misleading education and observe no limits or conditions for the sustenance of their soul.

There is a narration from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) that says:

“Why, I see that people light a lamp at nigh, to watch what kind of food they eat, but they do not mind what is the sustenance of their soul. They do not enlighten their mind by (the) rational knowledge, if they do they will be safe from the bad results of ignorance and sinfulness in their beliefs and deeds.” [4]

His son Imam Hassan-Mujtaba (as) also said something along these lines:

“I wonder at some people who think about their bodily food, but do not care for their soul's sustenance. They avoid eating harmful food, but fill their hearts with fatal materials.” [5]

5. One should remember that the Deafening Cry will raise up all from their graves, and everyone will be faced with one's Record. Then, the circumstances, there, will be so awful that one will forget all of one's dearest beloved. One should think about one's acts whether they be so good that one will deserve to have a 'laughing, rejoicing' and bright face That Day, or whether one will have an ugly, black and frowning face, then, and thus, will cause oneself to prepare for that Day.

Supplication

O Lord! Make each of us successful in self-perfection.

O Lord! Do not deprive us from a good sustenance for our spirits.

O Lord! Make us conscious of our duties to fulfill them before the occurrence of the deafening Cry!

Notes

1. The term /fal'yanzur/ my originally mean that 'if man is in doubt of his Creator and the Resurrection, then let him look to his food'.
2. Irshad'i'Mufid, From Al'Mizan, vol. 20, p. 319.
3. Borhan, commentary, . vol. 4, p. 439.
4. Safinat'ul'Bihar, vol. 2, p. 84.
5. ibid.

Surah Takwir, Chapter 81

(The Folding Up)

Number of Verses: 29

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is among the Meccan Surahs and there is a variety of evidence to verify this fact. For instance, the Surah denotes that the enemies of the Prophet (S) called him mad and this treatment used to happen in the early periods of his prophecy in Mecca, when his enemies did not take his statements seriously and were quite careless about them.

This Surah can be divided into mainly two themes:

The first theme is pointed out in the beginning verses of the Surah; those which contain the signs about the Hereafter and the occurrence of some great changes regarding the end of this world and the beginning of the Next World; the Resurrection.

The second theme is in a mystical passage showing how the Great Qur'anic Revelation was true, and was revealed through the angel Gabriel, and which has a remarkable effect on man's soul for his spiritual guidance. This part is accompanied by some enlightening oaths; full of meaning.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Takwir

There are many traditions narrated about the importance of this Surah and studying it, such as a tradition from the Prophet (S) that says:

“He who studies Surah Takwir (The Folding Up) will be saved by Allah from being exposed to shame when the book of deeds will be laid open.” [1]

Another tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

“He who wishes to look at me on the Day of Judgment, should study Surah Takwir (The Folding Up)”. [2]

The tradition has also been narrated in another form, which says:

“He whose looking at the Hereafter makes him glad (as if he sees it), studies Surah Takwir (The Folding Up), 'Infitar ' (Cleaving Asunder), and 'Inshiqaq ' (The Rending Asunder).”

(Since, in these Surahs, the signs of the Hereafter are illustrated so clearly that the reciter of them feels that the scene of the Hereafter is in front of him).[3]

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) was asked why he had grown old so early and he answered:

“Hud, Waqiah, Mursalat and Naba' made me old”.

(The reason is that the horrible events of the Hereafter are so clearly illustrated in them that it makes every conscious person prematurely old).[4]

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq who said:

“He who studies Surah 'Abasa and Takwir will be with the Mercy and Grace of Allah in the eternal Heaven and this is easy for Him when He wills.” [5]

The items mentioned in this narration vividly show that the goal, by recitation, is to produce knowledge, faith, and action in the reciter.

Surah Takwir, Verses 1-9

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ

بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ

1. "When the sun is folded up;"
2. "And when the stars darken;"
3. "And when the mountains shall be set in motion;"
4. "And when the pregnant camels shall be neglected,"
5. "And when the wild beasts shall be herded together,"
6. "And when the seas boil over,"
7. "And when the souls are reunited (like with like),"
8. "And when the girl-child buried alive is asked,"
9. "For what sin she was slain."

The Day When All the Universe Will be Dissolved

As it was mentioned earlier, the Surah opens with a series of highly mystical metaphors, with some short, but shocking hints, suggesting the break-up of the world, as we know it, and then, after the end of this world, the Resurrection comes forth. On the whole, eight signs out of all the Great Events are mentioned here.

First, it says:

"When the sun is folded up."

The term /kuwwirat/ is based on the word /takwir/ which, according to dictionaries and commentaries, originally means 'the act of folding up' and 'rolling or wrapping up something (like wrapping on a turban)', and it is sometimes used with the sense of 'casting' and 'darkening', both of which seem to refer to the original meaning.

In any case, it means, here, the folding up the light of the sun, and the darkening and shrinking of its body.

We now know that the sun is a globe, extremely hot and blazing, surrounded by intense burning gases whose flames shoot out hundreds of

kilometers, so that if the Earth were put in one of the flames it would change to ash and gas at once.

But, at the end of this world and at the threshold of the Hereafter this heat will end and the flames will be folded up, its light will be extinguished, and the sun itself will shrink. This is the meaning of the term /takwir/.

It is also a known fact, in modern science today, that the star; the sun, will darken gradually.

“And when the stars darken”.

The term /inkadarat/ is based on /inkidar/ which means 'to fall , or to scatter', and, it is derived from the root /kudurat/, meaning 'doom and darkness'.

Both of these two meanings can be combined for the commentary of the current verse, because at the threshold of the Hereafter, the stars will both lose their light, scatter and fall, and also the regularity of the Universe will be disturbed, as Surah Infitar, No. 82, verse 2 says:

“When the planets are scattered”.

In addition, Surah Mursalat, No. 77, verse 8 says:

“Then when the stars are extinguished”.

“And when the mountains shall be set in motion”.

And, as it was mentioned earlier, it is understood from various verses of the Qur'an that close to the time of the occurrence of the Resurrection the mountains pass through different stages: at first they move, and, in the end change into scattered dust[6].

“And when the pregnant camels shall be neglected”

The word /'iŝar/ is the plural form of /'iŝra/ and basically means 'she-camel ten months with young', which is just about to be delivered of her young. That is, in the near future it will be delivered of another camel and, therefore, will possess much milk.

At the time of the revelation of these verses such a camel was considered the most valuable property to the Arabs.

The term /'uttilat/ is based on /ta’til/ which means 'to leave without care'.

It means that the intensity of the horror and fear, on that Day, is so much so that everyone leaves his most precious things unattended.

The late Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayan that some have said it means 'clouds' and the term /'uttilat/ means that 'they are want of rain', that is, on that Day the clouds appear in the sky, but do not rain.

(The 'clouds' might be the ones which result from different gases or atomic clouds, or a mass of scattered dust produced from cleaving mountains at the threshold of the Hereafter, which contain no rain.)

Some have also commented that /'iŝar/ means 'the houses or farming lands' that at the threshold of the Hereafter will be left in suspension.

However, the first commentary is the most popular.

“When the wild beasts shall be mustered”.

There are some animals which normally live far from each other and fearing each other, flee, but the terror and the alarm of the events, prior to the Hereafter, is so great that these animals will gather together and forget every fear. It seems as if they feel safer gathered together.

Consequently, a lot of commentators believe that this verse refers to the Resurrection of the wild animals and their presence in the Court of the Hereafter. They will he judged on their limits and according to their knowledge which relates to their own responsibilities, and will be recompensed if they transgressed.

They have considered this verse similar to Surah Anam, No 6, verse 38 which says:

“There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings; but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end”.

The first commentary is more fitting, here.

“And when the seas boil over”

The term /sujjirat/ is based on /tasjir/ which originally means 'to light fire and to inflame the fire'.

In the old days this meaning seemed odd to the commentators, but today it does not, because now we know that water is formed by Oxygen and Hydrogen; both of which are flammable. It is not improbable that at the threshold of the Hereafter the water of the seas and oceans will be under such conditions that these two elements separate and turn totally into fire.

Some commentators have rendered the term in the sense of 'to fill', as a furnace full of fire is called /masajjar/. The earthquakes and the cleaving of the mountains asunder, nearly at the time of Resurrection, may cause the seas to fill and overflow, or meteorites to fall into them and their water flows over land, and then, everything would sink.

“And when the souls are reunited (like with like)”

The good-doers with the good-doers, the evildoers with the evildoers, the companions of the Right Hand with the companions of the Right Hand, and the companions of the Left Hand with the companions of the Left Hand, all will be like with like, in contrast to the world, today, where all of them are mixed. It sometimes happens that in the neighborhood of a believer there is an unbeliever, or the spouse of a good-doer is a wrong doer.

But on the Day of Judgment, which is also a 'Sorting Day’ and 'a day of separation', these groups are quite apart from each other.

In commenting on this verse, some other probabilities are also suggested including the following:

1) the souls return to their bodies

2) the souls in Heaven will unite with Heavenly maidens and the souls in Hell will unite with devils;

3) everyone will, again, be with his intimate companions after death has made them separate; or

4) everyone will unite with one's deeds.

However, the first commentary seems to be the most appropriate among all of them.

This is what Surah Waqiah, No. 56, verses 7-10 verify:

“And you shall be sorted out into three classes:”

“Then (there will be) the Companions of the Right Hand; What will be the Companions of the Right Hand?”

"And the Companions of the Left Hand?" What will be the Companions of the Left Hand?"

"And those Foremost (in Faith) will be foremost (in the Hereafter)".

"These will be those Nearest to Allah".

In fact, this verse, after mentioning six great incidents, which are the preliminary events to the Resurrection, refers to the opening sign of that Great Day, viz: The Day when everyone will be with his companions.

Then attention is paid to another event of the Resurrection, and says:

"And when the girl-child buried alive is asked",

"For what sin she was slain".

The term /mau'udat/ is derived from /wa'd/ which means 'a girl who is buried alive'. Some commentators have said that this word means 'heaviness' since when girls were buried alive the soil that was poured over them was heavy.

Some narration's denote to a broader meaning for the verse so vast that it has been commented on as 'cutting the ties of kinship' or cutting 'the friendship of the Prophet's household (as), (Ahlul Bayt)'.

In a tradition it is stated that once Imam Baqir was asked about the commentary of this verse, and he said that it meant this:

"The persons whom are killed for their friendship to us".

Another tradition says that the witness to this statement is the verse:

"...Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of these near of kin..."[7]

Of course, the apparent meaning of the verse refers to the first commentary, but the verse can, itself, carry a vast meaning.

Explanation: The Practice of Female Infanticide

One of the most dreadful and most savage actions of the pagan Arabs was female infanticide, which is made reference to, repeatedly, in the Qur'an.

Some commentators believe that this custom was committed only by one tribe of Arabs named 'Kindih', (or some other tribe), but, surely it was not a rare phenomenon, otherwise, the Qur'an would not emphatically refer to it on frequent occasions. In any case, it is so terrible and cruel that even its rare occurrence is notable.

Commentators have said that the pagan Arabs, when their wives were going to give birth, used to dig a hole and sit above it waiting for the child to be born and then bury her if it was female, and keep him if it was male. The cause of this crime might be due to various reasons, such as the following:

1. The lack of value for women, in mankind, by the pagan Arabs.

2. The problem of poverty among those people, especially, because females could not be as economically productive and beneficial as males, or were not able to take part in robberies like males were.

3. Also, that in the numerous quarrels between the tribes, of that time, women would be captured by the enemies which brought disgrace on their men. All of these excuses were seen as justified for committing this crime.

These factors contributed to the terrible custom of female infanticide and were committed under the guise of social plausibility in secret collusion.

But, unfortunately this cruelty is also seen in modern societies in the form of 'the freedom of abortion' by which fetuses are legally cast-off in many 'civilized' countries. The pagan Arabs used to commit infanticide after delivery, but these civilized people, of our time, kill them in their mother's wombs and under the guise of miscarriage.

It is noteworthy that the Qur'an condemns this action and counts it so disgraceful and hateful that it considers the crime of prime accountability prior to the Records in the Hereafter or pleading for justice about other matters. In addition to the value of woman, it shows the Islamic view on the importance of the matter, especially regarding the innocent persons.

Another point, which is also noteworthy, here, is that the Qur'an does not say that the murderers will be asked of what crime they committed, but it says that the innocent female-children will be asked about what sin it was for which they were slain so cruelly and indefensibly. It seems that the murderers are not worth questioning. Besides that, only the testimony of the murdered ones is enough.

Surah Takwir, Verses 10-14

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ

وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَا أَحْضَرَتْ

10. "And when the scrolls (of the deeds of mankind) are spread,"

11. "And when the heaven shall be unveiled,"

12. "And when Hell is set ablaze,"

13. "And when the Garden is brought nigh (for the righteous),"

14. "Every soul shall (then) know what it has produced (of its deeds)".

The first stage; the events as a preliminary to the Resurrection, viz: the destruction of the world, was described in the former verses. Now, in the following verses, the second stage of the Resurrection is pointed out, that is, the appearance of the Next World with its record and reckoning.

"And when the scrolls (of the deeds of mankind) are spread".

The term /suhuf/ is the plural form of the term /sahifah/ meaning 'a thing spread open like a face, or pages of a book; a book on which something is written'.

In the Hereafter, the records are spread in front of their owners to view, read and count the deeds themselves, Surah Isra, No. 17, verse 14 says:

"Read thine (own) record: sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee."

It is also open before the eyes of others; that which is a praise for the good-doers and a pain and punishment for the astray evildoers.

"And when the heaven shall be unveiled."

The term /kuŝiţat/ is based on /kaŝţ/ which as Raqib cites in his book Mufradat, originally means to 'remove, take off - the covering or skin of an animal', and as Ibn-manthur cites in Lisan-ul-Arab it means 'to remove a

curtain from something', then the sense, from verse II, the 'clouds separate and scatter' is derived from this word.

The term, in this verse, means that the curtains over the subjects hidden; such as angels, Heaven and Hell, which do exist, but are secret to people in this world, will be removed and man can see the Reality of the existing Universe, and as the next verses denote, the blazing Hell and eternal Heaven are brought near.

Verily, the Day of Judgment is when the reality of everything will be made manifest and the heavens will be unveiled.

According to the above commentary, this verse points to the incidents of the second stage of the Resurrection in which the process of mankind's rebirth will come forth and their new life will begin. The verses before and after it, also, confirm the same idea.

Many commentators have meant it with the sense of ‘folding up the heavens' which refers to the events of the first stage of the Resurrection, that is, the destruction of this world. This idea seems improbable, though, because it corresponds neither with the original meaning of the term /kuŝiţat/ nor with the arrangement of the verses before and after it.

For this reason, in the next verse, it says:

“And when Hell is set ablaze.”

As Surah Taubah, No. 9, verse 49 says:

“...And indeed Hell surrounds the Unbelievers (on all sides)”.

Hell exits now, today, but, in this world, the curtains cover it and do not let us see it, as well as Heaven which, according to many verses of the Qur'an, is prepared for the Righteous, at this very moment.[8]

Also, for the same reason, the next verse says:

“And when the Garden is brought nigh (for the righteous)”.

This very idea is mentioned in Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 90 with a difference that it contains the word 'Righteous' but, this verse does not.

The term /uzlifat/ is based on /zalf/ and /zulfa/ which means 'nearness, proximity, a near approach'. This nearness may be from the view point of 'place' or 'time' or from the view point of 'the means of preparation', or all of them, viz: Heaven is near to the believers both from the point of view of place and time of arrival and it is also easy for them to reach it.

It is worthy to note that it does not say that the Righteous approach Heaven, but it says 'Heaven is brought near for the Righteous' and this is the most honorable situation possible in this case.

As was mentioned earlier Heaven and Hen are present just now, hut, on that Day, Heaven is brought nearer and Hell is set more ablaze.

Then, finally, in the last verse of the current section which is, indeed, complementary to the previous verses and is a substantive clause for the conditional clauses occurred in the former twelve verses, it says:

“Every soul shall (then) know what it has produced (of its deeds)”.

This statement clearly shows that all the deeds of man are present there, and man's knowledge about them is a knowledge consisting of Observation and self conviction.

This tact is mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an, too, such as Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49:

“They will find all that they did, placed before them...”;
and Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verses 7-8 that say:
“So whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it”,
“And whoever who has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it”.

This verse also makes reference to the personification of deeds. Our deeds apparently have an end and vanish in this world, but this will never be so. They will be personified (incarnated) in appropriate forms, in the next world, and present in the Hereafter.

Explanation: The Order of the Verses

In the current and prior verses twelve events, in relation to the Resurrection, are mentioned. The first six events relate to the first stage viz: the desolation of this world; and the second six events relate to the second stage, that is, the rebirth and new life after death.

In the first group of verses, the word is about the darkening of the sun and the stars, the movement and agitation of the mountains, the exploding of the seas, the negligence about wealth, and the fear in wild animals.

In the second group of verses, the statement is about: the different groups of man coming into the Hereafter, the questioning of the girl-child buried alive, the spreading of the scrolls containing the deeds of mankind, the removing of the curtains from the heavens, Hell being ablaze, Heaven being brought near, and finally, man's full knowledge of his own deeds.

In spite of their brevity, these verses are so meaningful and awakening that they shake everyone and bring them into a thoughtful state such that they can visualize the end of this world and the circumstances of the Resurrection, in their minds, as if they see them with their very eyes. How nice and expressive the verses of the Qur'an are, and how impressive and meaningful its refined subtleties and pertinent details!

Will the Solar System and the Stars Darken?

First of all, we should know that the Sun is a star and a medium sized one among all stars, but by itself and in comparison with the Earth it is extraordinarily large. Its volume is more than 1,300,000 times that of the Earth, but since its mean distance from the Earth is nearly 93,000,000 miles (about 150,000,000 kilometers) we see it as it is now.

To understand the immenseness and greatness of the Sun it is enough to imagine that if the Earth and its moon, with the same distance that they have between them now, were transferred into the Sun; the moon could easily rotate around the Earth, inside the Sun, without protruding out from its inner surface.

The outside heat of the Sun is estimated to be about 6,000 C, and the heat of the inside is estimated to be several million degrees[9].

If we want to express the weight of the Sun in metric ton, we should write the figure 2 with twenty seven zeros behind it.

The height of the flames from the Sun's surface shoot up to about 160,000 kilometers, so that our Earth can easily disappear in them because, the Earth's diameter is not more than 12,000 kilometers.

The heat and the brightness of the Sun, in spite of George Gamof's statement, do not originate from burning coal forming the Sun's body, but

are from the energy produced by atomic decomposition and we know that this energy is extremely intense.

Therefore, the atoms of the Sun are always changing into energy through decomposition and reduction. According to the calculations of scientists, every minute, the Sun loses 4,000,000 tons of weight, but its body is so huge that it does not show an apparent change even after thousands of years.

It is worth mentioning, here, that the very loss of weight is effective in the destruction of the Sun over a length of time, and by becoming thinner and thinner at last, this great world-illuminating-lamp will gradually darken. This fate is also true for the other stars.

Therefore, what is said in the aforementioned verses about the darkening of the Sun and the destruction of the stars is a fact that is in agreement with modern science. The Qur'an has stated these facts when, not only in the Arabian Peninsula, but in all scientific meetings held by scientists of the world, at that time, no one knew anything about these statistics.

Surah Takwir, Verses 15-25

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ

الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ

مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

15. "No, I swear by the orbiting planets,"
16. "That run their course, (and) set,"
17. "And (by) the night when it ends,"
18. "And (by) the morning when it breathes."
19. "Surely it is the word of a gracious Messenger,"
20. "Endowed with power in the presence of the Lord of the Universe;"
21. "One (to be) obeyed, moreover faithful in trust."
22. "And (O people) your companion (Our Messenger) is not mad.
23. "Indeed he saw him (angel Gabriel) on the clear horizon."
24. "And he does not withhold concerning the unseen,"
25. "Nor is it the word of the accursed Satan."

Gabriel, the Bringer of Allah's Message Descends to him

In the previous verses the Resurrection and preliminary events, with some other incidents of that Great Day, were discussed.

The following verses speak about the importance of the Qur'an, showing how the Qur'anic Revelation is true, was revealed through the angel Gabriel, and was not merely ravings or rhapsodies from one possessed. In fact, they confirm what was said about the Resurrection, in the former verses, and emphasize on the matter while giving some additional information.

“No, I swear by the orbiting planets”,

“That run their course, (and) set”.

The term /xunnas/ is the plural form of /xanis/ based on /xans/ which originally means: 'shrink, hide away', and Satan is called /xannas/ because he hides himself at the name of Allah, as one tradition we find that it says:

“Satan tempts the servants of Allah and when His name is mentioned he slinks out of sight”.

The term /jawar/ is the plural form of /jariyah/, which has the meaning: 'running'.

The term /kunnas/ is the plural form of /kanas/ based on /kans/ which means 'to lie in hiding', and the term /kinas/ from the same root word is called both 'the nest of birds' and 'the hiding place of deer and wild beasts'.

Different opinions have been introduced for the meaning of these oaths. Many commentators believe that they refer to the five planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, which are visible with the naked eye.

If we look to the sky over several nights in succession, we see that all of the stars gradually appear, but, they sit all together without having apparent change in the distance between them. It looks like a piece of black cloth on which a great number of pearls have been sewn having defined spaces, and the cloth is pulled up from one side and taken down from another side depicting day and night.

Only five planets arc exceptions to this regulation. They move through the stars as if there were five unsewn pearls on the cloth that move freely among the others.

On the one hand, the above mentioned five planets are the very ones which are among the family members of the solar system. We see their movements, because they are close to us in comparison with the other stars in the sky; which also have similar movements, but we car not see this because of their very far distances.

On the other hand, these planets seem to have no retrograde and forward motion; apparently looking like they move forward for a length of time, then, they return a little and, again, continue moving forward. The causes for this status are discussed in astronomy.

The above verses may point to the same matter; that these planets move forward: /aljawar/, and along their way, they, apparently, and at last, in the morning at dawn, hide away: /kunnas/ like the deer which move in the deserts to find food at night, but conceal themselves in their hiding places; /kunas/, in the day time, from beast of prey.

It is probable that the meaning of /kunnas/ is that, when rotating round the sun, the planets hide or disappear completely at a point behind the sun, or are otherwise invisible. Astronomers call this case /ihtiraq/ in the Arabic language. This is a delicate point which can be understood with careful attention.

Some also believe that /konnas/ refers to the settlement of these planets in the Zodiac which resemble the deer concealing themselves in their brush-homes. It is obvious, of course, that the planets of the solar system are not limited to these five planets, but there are three more planets among them which are visible only by telescope and have been named Neptune, Uranus and Pluto.

All of them, together with the Earth, form the nine planets of our solar system. (Of course, some of the nine planets have a moon or moons which are different from the planets themselves).

By the way, the term /jawari/, the plural form of /jariyah/ (one of the meanings is 'ships in motion'), is a delicate analogy which compares the movement of these planets, in the ocean of sky, with the movement of ships on the surface of the oceans.

It seems that the Qur'an, by stating these meaningful oaths with a kind of ambiguity, tends to stir minds and make them contemplate and pay attention to the exceptional and various status of these planets from the millions of stars around them, in order to better understand the greatness of the Creator of this lofty establishment.

Others have suggested some commentaries on these verses which we will not mention here.

A narration, on the commentary of these verses, denotes that Amir-al-Momineen (as) said:

"They are five stars: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury."

"And (by) the night when it ends."

The term /'as'as/ is based on /'as'asah/ which originally means 'pale darkness' and since darkness is lesser at the beginning and at the end of the night this word is used for the coming and going of night, and that is why, in Arabic, 'he who goes round by night to keep watch', is called /'asas/.

Although, as was mentioned before, the term has two quite opposite meanings, here, and by the evidence of the next verse, it means the end of night.

In fact, it is similar to the oath mentioned in Surah Muddathir, No. 74, verse 33:

"And by the Night as it retreateth."

Night is one of the great gifts from Allah, and it is both the cause of man's spiritual and bodily tranquility, as well as an adjustment for the Sun's heat and, consequently, the continuation of vitality in living creatures.

The emphasis put on 'the end of night' may be for the reason that night moves toward light and brightness and it is the best time for praying to and the worshipping of Allah. Dawn, in this world, is the beginning of movement and struggle for living creatures.

"And (by) the morning when it breathes."

What an interesting analogy! Morning resembles a living creature whose first breath is dawn and blows vitality into all creatures, as if it had been captured in the grip of night and now with the first glow of day, becomes free and breathes.

This sense is similar to what is mentioned in Surah Muddathir, No. 74, verse 34 which occurs after the oath to the night, which says:

"And by the Dawn as it shines forth."

It is as though the gloom of night like a veil, has fallen on the face of morning which is removed now, at dawn, and the morning's glittering face, which is a sign of life, is shown to all in this world.

In the next verse, what all these oaths are for is mentioned:

"Surely it is the word of a gracious Messenger."

This verse is an answer to those who accuse the Prophet (S) by saying that the Qur'an is from him; not from Allah.

In this verse and the following verse there are five characteristics mentioned for Gabriel, the courier of Allah, which are necessary, indeed, for any qualified messenger.

The first attribute of Gabriel is that he is 'gracious' which shows his worthiness. Verily, he is a worthy creature with Allah, the Great.

Then, another characteristic of Gabriel is mentioned; it says:

"Endowed with power in the presence of the Lord of the Universe."

The term

/thil-'arŝ/ 'the Lord of the Universe'

refers to Allah. He is the Lord of all, but since the Universe, with whatever definition it has, is in a higher position than that of other things, so, He is characterized by the Universe.

The term

/thi-quwwah/ 'endowed with power'

is used to characterize Gabriel for the reason that taking such a great Message and carefully communicating it needs a great power. And, as a matter of fact, any messenger should have an authority fitting with his mission or the message He must be especially free from any forgetfulness of the message that he is responsible for.

The term /makin/ means 'one whose rank is firmly established', and, basically, a messenger should be a great and outstanding person who car fulfill his mission and should be quite close and beloved. And, surely, the term

/'ind/ 'in the presence of'

does not have the meaning of a special presence, because Allah does not exist in any one location; but it is the 'rank presence' and 'spiritual nigh'.

"One (to be) obeyed, moreover faithful in trust."

The term

/thumma/ 'moreover'

points to the fact that the bringer of Allah's Message, the Archangel Gabriel, has an angelic authority among angels and is obeyed there, and, beyond these, he is faithful to his trust in conveying the Message.

It is understood from some narrations that when Gabriel was conveying the revelation he was accompanied by a large number of angels who obeyed him.

There is a tradition, which says that when these verses were descended, the holy Prophet (S) told Gabriel:

"How well your Lord praised you when he said:

'Endowed with power in the presence of the Lord of the Universe, '

'One (to be) obeyed, more over faithful in trus'.

Then, what is your power? And what is your faithfulness in trust?"

Gabriel answered him that his power was such that he was told to destroy the four cities of Lot's people, each of which had four hundred thousand fighters; excluding their children. He destroyed those cities and took them to Heaven, so that the angels of Heaven even heard the sound of the peoples' animals, then he returned them to the Earth and turned them upside down.

Gabriel continued, in this way, so that there was no instruction that he did not fully carry out.

Furthermore, to tell people that the holy Prophet (S) is honorable and trustworthy, it says:

"And (O people) your companion (Our Messenger) is not mad."

The term /sahib/ means 'companion, friend', and besides pointing to the humility of the Prophet (S), toward all people, and that he did not seek any superiority for himself, it appeals to the people to take note of their own 'companion', the Prophet, (S) who had been born among them and had lived with them for many years.

He was known to be a wise, honorable, truthful, and trustworthy man. How could he be mad? The only thing is that, with his Prophecy, he brought some instructions to teach 'you' but, they are disagreeing with 'your' prejudices, blind imitations and low desires. So, to flee from obeying his instructions 'you' accuse him of demoniacal possession.

According to the verses of Qur'an, all Prophets were accused, by their enemies, of being mad:

"Similarly, no apostle came to peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, 'A sorcerer or one possessed'".[10]

They thought the wise man was he who would fulfill their vices and follow their lusts, knew well on which side the bread was buttered, and would avoid any revolutionary development. Then, on this level, all the Prophets seemed, to them, to be mad.

For laying stress on the relation between the holy Prophet (S) and Gabriel, it says:

"Indeed he saw him (angel Gabriel) on the clear horizon".

The meaning of the terms

/ufuq-il-mubin/ 'clear horizon'

is the same as 'the highest part of the horizon', where the angels were made manifest and where the Prophet (S) saw Gabriel.

Some believe that Surah Najm, No. 53, verse 7 which says:

"While he was in the highest part of the horizon;"

is an evidence for this commentary, but this verse, as well as the other verses of that Surah, talks about another fact.

Also, some have said that the Prophet (S) saw Gabriel twice in his genuine appearance: once, at the beginning of his prophetic appointment, and whose greatness made him (S) elated. He appeared to him (S) on the highest horizon.

The second time was on the Nocturnal Journey of the Prophet (S) where he saw Gabriel in the high heavens, in his real appearance, to which the current verse refers.

It is also probable that it refers to the Prophet's observation of Allah through a vision of inspiration.

“And he does not withhold concerning the unseen”.

Whatever he has, he puts it within the reach of the people. He is not like those who insist on keeping secret an important fact which the, have gained and is in their own control and it sometimes happens that they withhold it until they die.

The Prophet (S) is not such a person. He gives what he has received, as revelation, to all the needy and even to those who stand in opposition to him and value him naught, in hopes that they may be guided to the right path.

The term /danin/ is based on /dinnah/ in the sense of 'stinginess for the precious things', which is a characteristic that Prophets never have, because the source of their knowledge is Allah; Who is infinite.

“Nor is it the word of the accursed Satan”.

These Qur'anic verses are not like the statements of necromancers and soothsayers who take them from the devils. Those statements are full of lies and mistakes, and based on their own wishes, which come with envy, spite, greed, or other vices, but these verses are full of clear truth, under divine inspiration whose signs are apparent in them.

These two are completely different from each other, of course. It has been shown that the Qur'an is not the word of a mortal, but that it is full of divine wisdom; that its teaching is not that of a mad man, but from one sane to the core and in accordance with human needs.

The term /rajim/ is originally based on /rajm/ and /rijam/ which means 'stoned' and then, it is used in the sense of throwing stones in order to drive a person or an animal away. And it is used in the sense of any rejection or driving away. The Arabic term /ŝaytan ir-rajim/ means 'Satan who is driven away with stones from the rank of those close to Allah'.

Explanation: The Characteristics of a Qualified Messenger

The five characteristics, regarding the hierarchy, mentioned in the above verses for Gabriel, who was sent to the Prophet (S) of Islam by Allah, are required for every messenger, regarding the hierarchy.

1. Graciousness is the first spiritual characteristic, which respectfully makes Gabriel deserving of being a great Messenger.

2. Then his endowed power for the fulfillment of his responsibility comes forth which means that he is aloof from any weakness and feebleness or lassitude in bringing the Message.

3 His third highest rank, with the sender of the Message, is noteworthy in order to take all of the Message completely, and communicate them fearlessly.

4. If the Message is about an important thing, the messenger may have some assistants to help him on the errand; the ones who follow him obediently.

5. The fifth characteristic is that his messenger is qualified as being 'faithful in trust' so that the persons who are to receive the message, from him, trust in him and count on his words; the same as the words of the one who has sent them.

When someone is qualified with these five characteristics, he will be the most fitting messenger. The Prophet of Islam (S) used to choose his messengers carefully from those who were qualified among them. A clear example of his messengers is that of Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) who was sent, under that difficult situation, by the Prophet (S) to the pagans of Mecca to communicate the beginning verses of Surah Taubah, No. 9.

Surah Takwir, Verses 26-29

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

26. "Whither then will you go?"

27. "Surely it (the Qur'an) is naught but a Reminder to (all) the worlds,"

28. "For whoever of you who would go straight"

29. "But you cannot will, except as Allah wills, the Lord of the Worlds."

O Neglectful Ones! Where Are You Going?

In the previous verses it was made clear that the Holy Qur'an is the word Allah. Its contents show that it cannot be from a devilish source, but from Allah, the Merciful, from Whom Gabriel the powerful, faithful carrier of Allah's revelation, brought it to the sane Prophet (S) who communicated and taught it, completely, to people and did not withhold anything of it.

The following verses condemn the rejecters for their disobedience to this great word, the Holy Qur'an.

It reproachfully questions:

"Whither then will you go?"

Why have you left the straight path and gone astray? Why have you turned your back to this leading bright torch and gone toward darkness? Are you against your own happiness and safety?

"Surely it (the Qur'an) is naught but a Reminder to (all) the Worlds".

It advises and warns all to be aware and not to be neglectful.

Since training and guidance need not only the 'act of the actor' but, also 'the fitness of the fit', then it says:

"For whoever of you who would go straight."

It is noteworthy that the former verse says that the Qur'an is a reminder to all the worlds, but this verse says that it is for a special group of people; those who have decided to assume the truth and go on the straight way.

The reason for this difference is that the first verse speaks about the generality of this divine gift, while the second one states the conditions for obtaining benefits from it. And all the blessings in the world are the same: they are basically general, but their usage depends on 'will' and 'decision'.

Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2 carries a similar sense:

"This is the Book, in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah."

In any case, this verse is one of the verses, which shows that Allah has created man free; possessing free-will. Then, it is man who should decide which way to follow; the right way or the wrong one.

The term /yastaqim/ is used with an interesting sense which shows that the main road, the one in front of man, is the straight way to happiness and salvation and other roads are the false ones leading to aberration. All of man's talents, along with his hidden and apparent powers and his natural capacities, are equipped so as to help him move forward on the straight way.

When going to extremes, devilish temptations, and misleading propaganda do not interfere. Man, with the help of his nature, follows along the straight way, and we know that the straight way is always the nearest path to the goal.

It is possible, however, for man to imagine that this free-will is so infinite that he can do whatever he wishes and that he is not in need of Allah's help to follow the straight way.

The next and the last verse of the Surah points to the authority of Allah's Will and says:

"But you cannot will, except as Allah wills, the Lord of the Worlds"

In fact, these two verses illustrate the mid-way for man's limited will.

On the one hand, it says that man is free and can decide what he wills to do, but, on the other hand, it says:

"You cannot will, except as Allah wills."

It means that you are created free, but this free-will is from Allah and He has willed that you be so.

Man is neither obliged nor completely free in his deeds. Neither 'fatalism' nor 'infinite freedom' is correct. Whatever man possesses out of wisdom, intelligence, bodily ability and mental capacity for making decisions, all in all, are from Allah. It is this very fact that requires man to be in need of Him and, due to his freedom and his free-will, to be responsible for his own duties and actions.

The term

/rabbul-'alamin/ 'the Lord of the worlds'

shows, well, that Allah's Will follows along the path of man's training and development throughout the world. Allah never wills that anyone should go astray or commit sin and lose the nearness to Himself. He, according to His Lordship, helps all those who decide to travel on the path of spiritual development.

It is surprising that fatalists have grasped the second verse while the 'adherents of infinite free-will' have assumed the first verse. Separating these kinds of verses from each other often causes aberration and lands one in a state of being misled. Verses of the Qur'an should be considered inseparable and the benefits should be taken from all of them.

It is interesting that some of the commentators have said that when the verse:

"For whoever of you would go straight",

was revealed, Abu-Jahl, who was actually one of the adherents of infinite free-will, said that it became a good chance for them and they had all the authorizations at their disposal.

Then, following that, the second verse was revealed:
"But you cannot will, except as Allah wills, the Lord of the Worlds."

Supplication

O Lord! We know that we cannot be on the straight way unless you help us, so we seek your help.

O Lord! We hare decided to go on the guided way; we ask for your Divine Will, too.

O Lord! Your throne of Judgment, in the Hereafter, is very frightening, and our Records contain few good deeds. Please forgive us with Your Own Sublime Graciousness; not with your strict Justice.

Notes

1. Majma 'al'Bayan, vol. 10, p 441.
2. ibid.
3. Qartabi The Commentary, vol. 10, p. 7017.
4. Nur'uth'Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p 513.
5. Thawab'ul'amal, according to what is cited in the quotation of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol 5, p. 512.
6. More explanation is given in the commentary of Surah Nabaa, No. 78, verse 20
7. Surah Shura, No. 42. verse 23
8. Surah Al'i-Imran. verse 133, Surah Hadid, verse 21
9. For additional data about the Sun, refer to page 87, Surah Nabaa, No. 78, verse 13
10. Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 52

Surah Infitar, Chapter 82

(The Cleaving Asunder)

Number of Verses: 19

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The theme of this Surah, similar to that of other Surahs of the last part of the Qur'an is about the Hereafter and points to five different subjects.

1. The preliminary events, which happen at the end of this physical world and just a little before that, the new Spiritual World is established.

2. A hint to the blessings of Allah that encompass man's entity, and the breaking of his pride, in order for him to he prepared for the Resurrection.

3. A reference to the angels who are appointed to record the deeds of man.

4. The end of 'the Righteous' and 'The wicked' on the Day of Judgment.

5. A part of the hardship on that Great Day.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who recites those two Surahs: Infitar and Inshiqaq and considers them present before his eyes in his obligatory and optional prayers, nothing will separate him from Allah and there will he no hindrance between him and Allah. He will be in the continuous presence of Allah and Allah will be looking over him until all of the accounts he has with others are settled."

Surah Infitar, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

1. "When The Sky is cleft asunder."

2. "And when the planets are scattered."

3. "And when the seas burst forth,"

4. "And when the graves are over turned (emptied),"

5. "Every soul shall know what it has sent forward and (what it has) held back."

The Disturbance in Order and Symmetry

Again, at the beginning of this Surah, we are informed about a part of the horrible events that occur, throughout the world immediately before the Day of Judgment.

It says:

“When the Sky is cleft asunder”.

“And when the planets are scattered.”

The present phenomenal order will not last for ever. Then, constellations will lose their regularity and the order of this world will be disturbed. All stars and planets in the sky, revolving around special points, will leave their routine and, hitting each other, burst violently. All will be destroyed before the new Spiritual World is established.

The term /infatarat/ is based on /infitar/ which means 'being cloven asunder'.

It resembles the term used in some verses of the Qur'an, such as, Surah Inshiqaq, No. 84, Verse 1 which says:

“When The Sky is rent asunder”.

And, it also resembles Surah Muzammil, No. 73, verse 18 which says:

“Whereon the sky will be cleft asunder?...”.

The term /intatharat/ is basically derived from /nathr/ which means 'to disperse' and the term /intithar/ means 'to scatter', and, hence, scattered stars cause each one of them to be thrust in different directions, then many commentators have interpreted the term /intatharat/ as the 'falling of the stars' which is appropriate with the sense of 'scatter'.

The term /kawakib/ is the plural form of /kaukab/ which carries many meanings in the Arabic language, including: 'star', in the general sense, and 'Venus' in a proper sense: i.e. a white point in the eye, tall plants, blossoms, the shine of steel, a handsome lad, a sword, water, the chief of a group, etc.

However, it seems that the main meaning is 'a bright star' and other meanings are used metaphorically in relation to that meaning.

What factor or factors cause the stars to be scattered? Is it because of the disturbance of their polarization?

Does a mysterious power have an effect on them? Or is it the consequence of the world's gradual contraction, which is now approved of by the scientific community. No one knows the exact answer, but it is, at least, understood from them that when these great phenomena cannot resist and will be totally shattered then the position of man, a weak creature, is obvious.

This is an admonishment to man, in relation to the destruction of this phenomenal world, in order for him not to consider it immortal or not to be attached to it and avoid committing numerous sins for its sake.

After speaking about the sky the Surah says:

“And when the seas burst forth”.

Although the seas and oceans (other than the lakes), on the Earth, are now connected to each other, it seems that prior to the Hereafter the mountains will turn to rubble, because of earthquakes, and will fill them up, entirely, so that water will cover all the lands, and the seas will join to each other as a single ocean which will overwhelm the whole planet (Earth); as Surah Takwir No. 81 verse 6 says:

“When the seas boil over swelling”.

There is another probability, in commenting on these two verses, which interprets the term /fujjirat/ and /sujjirat/ in the sense of 'explosion in the

seas which turns the seas into fire', because, as was said before, water is formed with a combination of two elements; both of which are combustible. If something chemically separates the water of the seas into oxygen and hydrogen, a small spark can ignite it into an overwhelming, blazing inferno.

Then, speaking about the Resurrection, where the dead are thrown out for reckoning, which is the stage for the rebirth of the dead and the world, it says:

"And when the graves are over turned (emptied),"

The term /bu'thirat/ means 'to turn upside-down' or 'to be scattered'. Raqib cites in his book 'Mufradat' that the word may be combined from two parts: /ba'th/ and /athirat/ where both meanings are gathered in it, (like /bismillah/ which is formed from /bismi/ and /allah/).

In any event, what is said in the above verse is similar to what Surah Zilzal No. 99 verse 2 denotes:

"And the Earth throws up her burdens (from within)".

Or, it resembles Surah Naziat No.79 Verse 13-14 which say:

"But it shall be only a single blast",

"When behold, they shall be in the awakened state".

All these statements show that the rebirth, and the dead coming out from their graves, will occur suddenly and rapidly.

And, after pointing to some events that happen before and after the Resurrection; as a conclusion it says:

"Every soul shall know what it has sent forward and (what it has) held back."

Verily, on that Day, everything will be obvious to all and the curtains of arrogance and pride will be removed, then, the full Reality will be manifested.

Man will see his deeds altogether, irrespective of good or evil, and understands what sort of deeds he had sent forth and what kind of deeds, together with their effects, remained in the world, whose result reached him later after his death; such as, acts of charity done, any remaining voluntary alms and/or pious foundations and endowments, or the books and works he had left behind; whether with good intention or evil ones, of which other persons used after him, and, also, the good or bad habits that remain among societies for generations.

These are some of man's deeds that their result reaches him after his death and they are the examples of the term /axxarat/ 'what it has held back', which is mentioned in the verse.

It is true that in this world everyone is, more or less, familiar with what he has done, but forgetfulness, selfishness, and self-love often prevent man from keeping all of his actions in mind and understanding the depth of their final result. However, on the Day when everything changes and there will be a revolution in all things in the world, including man's spirit; he will have a complete knowledge and a precise comprehension of what he has done in his life.

Or, more than that, he will see all of them in front of himself as Surah al-i-Imran, No. 3, verse 30 says:

“On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done…”.

Some of the commentators have rendered the verse with some other interpretations, one of which is that it means the deeds that man has committed at the beginning of his life and the deeds that he has postponed to do at the end of his life. But, the first commentary is more appropriate in every respect.

By the way, the term

/nafs/ 'soul',

here, means every individual human spirit, and it includes all mankind, in general.

Explanations

Besides what is said in the above verses about the remaining result of man's deeds, there are some narration's which say that there may be some actions, fulfilled by man, whose effect; good or bad, lasts for many years or even forever, and he receives its fruit.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“There will be no reward for a man after his death except in three ways: the pious foundations that he has established in his life and that will continue after his death, a tradition of guidance for the benefit of people according to which they behave after his death, and a believing good child who asks forgiveness from Allah for him”.[1]

The things that are beneficial for the believers after their death are six according to another narration: a pious child, the Qur'an that he studies, a well he has dug (for its water), a tree he has planted, providing water, and, finally, a good tradition that persists after him and is beloved by all.[2]

Some narrations focus on the science that a person leaves behind amongst people.[3]

There are numerous narrations that warn people to be especially careful about their behavior, because their behavior may cause their societies to have some good or bad traditions later.

The late Tabarsi cites a tradition corresponding with the above mentioned verses that states: once a person, who was attending with the Prophet (S), rose and asked people to help him with some financial matter. No one responded to him. At this moment, one of the Prophet's (S) companions gave the beggar something.

Then others followed suit and everyone gave him something to help him and the Prophet (S) said:

“He who leaves a good tradition behind himself one that others follow, will have his own reward and, in addition to this he will have a reward similar to his followers' rewards; without decreasing anything from that which they gained. And he who leaves an evil tradition behind himself and others follow it, will have his own sin plus a sin similar to his followers' sins, both, without decreasing from any of them”.

At that moment Khathifah, one of the Prophet's companions (S), recited the verse:

“Every soul shall know what it has sent forward and (what it has) held back”.[4]

Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) says:

"What will your position be, then, when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down (to throw out the dead)? There, every soul shall realize what it has sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah their true Lord, and what they did fabricate (the false deities) will vanish from them". [5]

These verses and narrations illustrate man's responsibility for his deeds, from the Islamic point of view, so that they may result in some good rewards or painful punishments for him even after the passing of thousands of years.

Surah Infitar, Verses 6-12

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالدِّينِ

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ

كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ

يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

6. "O man! What has seduced you (away) from your Lord, the Gracious?"

7. "Who created you and fashioned you, and proportioned you in perfection?"

8. "In whatever form He pleased, He constituted you."

9. "Nay! but you disbelieve in the (day of) reckoning"

10. "And surely there are Watchers over you,"

11. "Honorable scribes:"

12. "They know (and understand) whatever you do."

O man! What Has Seduced You?

Concerning the previous verses about the Resurrection, the following verses; to awaken man and to direct his attention to the responsibility of that which Allah expects of him, the Qur'an kindly questions in an intensive scornful tone and says:

"O man ! What has seduced you from your Lord, the Gracious?"

Here,

'man'

is mentioned for the sake of his humanity, which is a privilege of his over all other creatures in the world. Then he is in the presence of Allah, Who is both Lord and Gracious.

Because of His Lordship He supports man and undertakes his training and improvement; and because of His Graciousness, He bestows innumerable material and spiritual blessings on him without expecting repayment or reward. He even overlooks his mistakes and forgives him.

Is it appropriate for this noble creature to be bold and disgraceful to such a great Lord?

Or, is it right for man to be neglectful of Him and not to obey His instructions that guarantee his own happiness?

That is why a narration from the Prophet (S) for this commentary of the verses says:

"His ignorance has caused him to be proud and neglectful."

This statement makes it clear that the main purpose is that by relying on His Lordship and Graciousness, the pride and negligence of man is removed.

The term /qarraka/ is based on the term /qurur/ which originally means 'negligence in wakefulness'; or, in other words, negligence where man should not be neglectful. Since negligence sometimes becomes the source of 'boldness' or the feeling of 'self-importance', the term /qurur/ has been interpreted in these senses. Satan is called /qarur/ because he seduces man with temptations and causes him to be neglectful and bold.

In commenting on the term /karim/, various interpretations have been cited:

Some have said that /karim/ is used for 'gracious one'; that all his actions are beneficent and he seeks for neither gaining benefit nor parrying loss.

Some others have said that /karim/ means 'one who donates what is for him to donate and what is not'.

Still others have said that /karim/ is 'one who pays a lot for a little'.

However, in fact, all of these commentaries are gathered together in the essence of the term when it refers to the utmost graciousness of one, such as Allah; the most Gracious, Who not only forgives the sinners, but also changes their sins into good deeds (for those who deserve forgiveness).

There are some wonderful statements from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) in commenting on the verse.

In the following one, he says:

"The addressee (in this verse) is devoid of argument and his excuse is most deceptive. He is holding himself ignorance."

"O man! What has emboldened you to (commit) sins; what has deceived you about your God and what has made you satisfied with the destruction of yourself'? Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep?

Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally when you see anyone exposed to the heat of the sun you cover him with shade, or if you see any one afflicted with grief that pains his body you weep from pity for him. What, then, has made you patient over your own disease?

What has made you firm in your own affliction, and what has consoled you from weeping for yourself although your life is the most precious of all lives to you? And why does not the fear of an ailment, that may befall you in the night, keep you wakeful although you travel on the road to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart by determination, and the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes by wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah, and love Him in remembrance, and picture yourself, running away

when He is approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and conceding your faults with His kindness, all the while you are fleeing away from Him toward others.

Certainly, Allah is Great; the Powerful, Who is so generous, but how humble and weak are you and yet so bold to commit disobedience to Him although you live in His protection and undergo changes of life in the expanse of His kindness...".[6]

Then to awaken the neglectful man, in four steps it points to a part of Allah's, favor and says:

"Who created you and fashioned you, and proportioned you in perfection".

"In whatever form He pleased, He constituted you."

Thus, the Qur'an mentions four great stages in the Creation of man, viz: the creation itself, the fashioning of him, his proportion afterward, and, finally, the constitution of man.

The first stage in the creation of man is from the lowly life-germ in the darkness of the mother's womb.

The second stage is his fashioning in a just form and with appropriate limbs in an astonishing regular formation. Eyes, ears, heart, blood vessels, and other organs of the body are created so surprisingly that if man thinks about their structures and regularities and understands Allah's Beneficence to him, each of them will be illustrated as a world of knowledge and power that Allah granted man, because of His Favor and Graciousness.

These are the Divine gifts that natural scientists have been thinking over, working on, and writing about for thousands of years, but they are still at the threshold.

The third stage is proportioning man and adjusting his faculties as well as his organs, and then, their internal coordination's and relations with each other.

The parts of man's body are created mainly symmetrically: hands, feet, eyes, ears, some bones, vessels and muscles are in pairs on both sides of the body.

Besides, different organs and limbs cooperate with each other to accomplish their functions, for instance, the respiratory system complements the circulatory system and vice versa. In swallowing a little piece of food, teeth, tongue, salivary glands, and muscles, around the mouth and throat, work together until the morsel enters the digestive system.

Henceforth, too, many other coordinations occur until the food is digested and absorbed, and subsequently, the required nutrition and vitality is supplied.

These processes totally are reflected in the phrase

/fa'adalaka/ 'and proportioned you in perfection'.

Some have interpreted this phrase in the sense of man's 'standing erect', his virtue and rank in comparison with other kinds of animals, which corresponds more with the latter stage, but the former meaning is more comprehensive.

Finally, the formation and constitution of man in comparison with other living creatures comes forth. Comparing him with them, he has well-

balanced features, good character and an awakened nature, which is alert and capable of accepting any training and knowledge.

Besides, the contenances of men are different as it is mentioned in Surah Rum No. 30 verse 22 which says:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variation in your languages and your colors..."

In addition to the external differences, there are many internal ones, as well, such as talents and tastes which are organized and arranged in some forms that requires only His knowledge, to establish a safe and sound society, complete for all of them; to supply the required necessities, and the internal and external powers of men to be complements of each other.

On the whole, Allah has created man in the best of molds, as Surah Tin, No. 95 verse 4 says:

"We have indeed created man in the best of molds."

In short, through the above verses, as well as in many other verses of the Qur'an, Allah wants the forgetful arrogant man to try to know himself.

He should research his existence from the very beginning, which means his creation in his mother's womb to the time when he is born, and from then until he matures and develops, in order to understand that in every stage and at every moment he has been receiving abundant new blessings from his Great Lord, and not to be neglectfully arrogant; by accepting His Lordship, worships Him.

Then, the Qur'an refers to the origin of their neglectful arrogance and says:

"Nay! but you disbelieve in the (Day of) reckoning".

Neither Allah's generosity nor His kindness is the origin of your carelessness, but the lack of belief in the Day of Judgment is the main cause for your arrogance.

Verily, when we seek deep into the souls of most neglectful arrogant ones we find doubt and denial of the Hereafter within them, while all their other words and deeds are mere excuses. That is why the more the basis of faith and belief in the Resurrection, in those hearts, are strengthened, the less this negligence and carelessness will remain there.

The term /din/, in this verse, means 'punishment' and the 'Day of Reckoning' and that some have suggested 'Islam' as a probable meaning of it seems inappropriate, because the main theme of the verses, here, is Resurrection.

Then, in order to remove the factors effective in arrogance and carelessness and to strengthen the belief in the Resurrection, it says:

"And surely there are Watchers over you,"

"Honorable scribes."

"They know (and understand) whatever you do."

The term /hafiżin/, used in the above verse, means 'some special angels who are scribes for the good and evil deeds of men, and with protection preserve them'; the ones who are called

/raqib/ 'watcher, guardian',

and

/'atid/ 'ready'

in Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 18 which says:

“Not a word does he utter, but that there is a sentinel over him, ready (to note it)”.

And, also, in the same Surah verse 17 says:

“When the two receivers (guardian angels) receive (his doings and note them) one sitting on the right and one on the left…”

Some other verses of the Qur'an point to the existence of these guardian angels, too.

Undoubtedly, Allah, sooner and better than anyone else, is a watcher and a witness to Men's deeds, but, for emphasis and to make men feel their responsibility more acutely, He has appointed, over them, a number of angels that witness, some of which are the very ones that we have spoken about.

In addition to them, there are other protectors who have surrounded man from every side, all of whom, by the name of 'witnesses of the Hereafter, ' are categorized in seven divisions:

The first witness is Allah Who says:

“...and whatever deed ye (mankind) may be doing, We are Witnesses thereof...”[7].

The second are the prophets and the vicegerents of the prophets:

“How then if We brought from each Prophet a witness, and We brought thee O a witness against these (people)”[8].

Then, the tongue, hands and feet or man's limbs, in general, are witnesses:

“On the day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them to their actions”[9].

Another witness is man's skin:

“They will say to their skin: 'Why bear you witness against us?”[10].

Angels are witnesses as stated in[11], and as the verse above denotes.

The land on which man lives and commits good or evil deeds is a witness:

“On that Day will she (the Earth) recount (all) her news”[12].

And the final classification of witnesses is the time when the actions are done. It bears witness, against Men, that they have committed certain deeds in their life.

Tabarsi cites in his book ‘Ihtijaj’ that once someone asked Imam Sadiq (as) what the reason was that there are some appointed angels for scribing man's good and evil deeds when it is known that Allah is aware of all things irrespective of their being obvious or hidden.

He answered:

“Allah invited those angels to His worship and appointed them as witnesses over His servants in order that they be the most careful of their obedience to Allah and least committers of sin because of the angel's presence.

There is many a servant who decides to commit a sin, but when he remembers their presence he stops and says:

'My Lord sees me and the angels are appointed to witness the deeds.'

Moreover, Allah, with His Grace, kindly appointed them, by His leave, to protect the servants from stubborn Satans by banishing them and also to keep the servants safe from numerous harmful animals and pests of the land, which are not seen until the time when Allah orders it and the end of their lives has come."[13]

It is clearly understood from this narration that angels, in addition to being scribes for man's deeds, protect him against unpleasant events, pests, and Satans' temptations.

It is noteworthy that in the above verses these angels are characterized as 'Honorable Scribes' in order to make man aware of being more careful about his own deeds, because the higher position the watchers of man's deeds have, the more careful man is before them and is more ashamed of Committing sins.

The term

'scribes',

used in this verse, is for emphasis, in that they are not satisfied with only memorizing the actions, but they also record them all precisely and then nothing will be left unrecorded or omitted; from the smallest item to the largest.

And the sentence:

'They know (and understand) whatever you do"

is also another emphasis on this fact that they are perfectly vigilant of everything you do and their record is completed according to the same knowledge.

By the way, all these details denote to man's free-will, because if man were not free there would be no reason or aim for appointing these guardian angels or for their records which contain so much information and warnings for him.

On the other hand, all of the details make this fact clear that the divine punishments and rewards are very severe and serious, since Allah has counted them extremely important for mankind.

Regard for this fact and believing in it are enough to train man and make him familiar with his responsibilities and, consequently, keep him far away from evils and corruptions.

Explanation: The Angels; the Scribes

Not only in the above verses, but, also in many other verses of the Qur'an and in Islamic narrations, this idea has come to light that Allah has appointed some angels to protect man and to scribe his deeds, both good and evil, preparing his record for the Day of Judgment.

In the Islamic narrations there are some meaningful qualities mentioned about these angels as a warning to man, among which are the following:

1. Someone asked Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (as),

"Are the two angels, appointed for recording man's deeds, aware of his retention and inner decision when he wants to do a good or an evil action?"

"Is the odor of sewage and perfume the same?"

Imam (as) asked him and he answered:

"No".

Imam (as) then told him:

“When a person decides to do a good action, his breath becomes sweet. The angel on his right (the scribe of the good deeds) tells the angel on his left to stand up, because he has intended to do good; and when the person fulfills it his tongue, as a pen, and his saliva, as the ink, are used by the angel to record it.

But, when he decides to do an evil action his breath becomes fetid, and the angel on his left tells the angel on the right to stand up, because he has intended to do evil. And when he concludes the act his tongue, as a pen, and his saliva, as the ink, are again used by the angel to scribe it.”[14]

This tradition clearly indicates that man's intention affects his whole entity and angels will be informed of his inner secrets by his outer signs. Certainly, they could not scribe the deeds correctly if they were not aware of man's intentions, because the value of an action relates fully to the kind of intention man has. The Prophet (S), too, in his famous tradition likewise concurred.

Another thing that is understood from the above tradition is that some means, which are used for man, are taken from himself.

2. The guardian angels are to note down a good deed on the record when the person intends to do good, and when he fulfills it they scribe it ten-fold, but when he intends to commit sin they will not note it down until he fulfills the act, then they scribe only one strike against him.[15]

This shows the Grace and Mercy of Allah for man. He forgives him his intention of doing sin and the punishment of the sin is equal according to Justice, but He gives him a good-deed for each intention of obedience, and rewards him according to His Graciousness not to His Justice. This encourages man to do good.

3. Another tradition from the Prophet (S) says that he, after pointing to the two Guardian angels who scribe each good action of a servant ten-fold, said:

“When a person does an evil, the angel on the right tells the angel on the left not to hasten in scribing the sin, he may do a good action which covers the sin, since Allah says:

'…these things that are good remove those that are evil...'[16],

or he may repent... Then the angel appointed to scribe evils waits about seven hours to see whether he does a good action or repents, if not the angel on the right tells him to note the evil action down in his record”.[17]

4. Another narration from Imam Sadiq says:

“When the believers are sitting in a private meeting and speaking together, the Guardian Angels tell each other that we should leave them alone. Perhaps the believers are discussing something secret that Allah has concealed”.[18]

5. Hazrat Ali (as) advises people toward piety (taqwa) and says:

“Know, O' creatures of Allah! that your ownself is a guard over you; your limbs are watchmen and truthful vigil-keepers who preserve (the record of) your actions and the numbers of breaths you take. The gloom of the dark night cannot conceal you from them, nor can closed doors hide you from them. Surely tomorrow is close at hand...”.[19]

Surah Infitar, Verses 13-19

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ
وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ
يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ
وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ
ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ
يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ

13. "Surely the Righteous shall be in Bliss,"
14. "And surely the Wicked shall be in blazing Fire,"
15. "Which they shall enter on the Day of Reckoning,"
16. "And never shall they be absent therefrom",
17. "And what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is?"
18. "Again, what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is?"
19. "The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command that Day shall be (wholly) Allah's."

On That Day, No One Does Anything for Anyone

Concluding the previous discussion about recording the deeds of men by the angels, the following verses speak about the account of man on the Day of Judgement and the end of the Righteous and the Wicked.

It says:

"Surely the Righteous shall be in Bliss",

"And surely the Wicked shall be in blazing Fire".

The term /abrar/ is the plural form of /bar/ and /barr/ in the sense of 'a pious person' and the term /berr/, which means any piety, here means both 'pious beliefs', 'good intentions' and 'good deeds'.

The term /na'im/ is singular and means 'a good thing, a blessing', and, here, it means 'Heaven, Bliss, Eternal Gardens'. The term is mentioned in an indefinite form, in Arabic texts, to show its greatness and vastness of which no one knows, but Allah. The Arabic special grammatical form of the term, which is used here, is for emphasis and denotes to the resistance and perpetuity of this great Blessing.

The term /fujjar/ is the plural form of /fajir/ which is originally based on the term /fajr/ meaning 'to open wide' and the phrase /tulu'-i-fajr/ is used for 'day-break' as if the curtain of the gloom of the dark night is torn wide open by the dawn; and the term /fujur/ 'wickedness' is used for the actions of those who tear away the curtain of piety and follow the path of sin and corruption.

The term /jahim/ is derived from the term /jahm/ which means 'to light a fire', and then /jahim/ is 'a burning-fire ' which, in the Qur'an, generally means 'Hell'.

And by the Surah saying

'that the Righteous are in Bliss and the Wicked are in blazing Fire'

it may mean that even now they are in Bliss and blazing fire, and in this world, too, Heavenly blessings and Hellish punishments encompass them, as Surah 'Ankabut, No.29, verse 54 says:

"...But, of a surety, Hell will encompass the rejecters of Faith".

Some scholars have said that these ideas are for an avoidable future and in Arabic literature things which are sure to happen in the future are said in present tense and sometimes the past tense of the verb is used. (The first interpretation is more appropriate with the appearance of the verse, but the second one seems better.)

The next verse further describes more about the destiny of the Wicked.

It says:

"Which they shall enter on the Day of Reckoning".

If the previous verse means that they are now in the blazing fire, this verse may mean that they will have more blazing fire stronger than this, on the Day of Reckoning. They will feel the perfect practicality of its heat, then.

The term /yaslaun/ is based on /saly/ which is cited with the meaning of 'entering the fire and suffering its roasting burning pain', and since in Arabic texts the verb is in the form of future tense, it denotes to continuity and being in the constant company of it.

And, again, for more emphasis, it says:

"And never shall they be absent therefrom".

Many of the commentators have considered this verse as an evidence for the continuity and eternity of the Wicked's punishment. Then they have concluded that 'the Wicked', mentioned in these verses, are 'the Unbelievers', because eternity and continuity of the fire is only for the Unbelievers.

Therefore, the Wicked are those who do not care for piety, because of lack of faith in the Hereafter and rejecting the Day of Judgement, not because of the force of base desires all the while having Faith.

This verse is stated in the present tense, which is an emphasis on what was said before: that these kinds of people are not far from the blazing fire; their life, itself, is a Hell and their graves, according to some Islamic traditions, is a ditch of fire. Thus, the Hell of this world, the Hell of the partition and the Hell of the next world all are now prepared for them.

By the way, this verse depicts that the blazing fire of Hell never fades, and they will never escape it even for a moment.

Then to illustrate the importance of that Day, it says:

"And what males you know what the Day of Reckoning is?"

"Again, what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is?"

When the Prophet (S), with his vast and profound knowledge about the Hereafter and the extraordinary insight he had about the Creator and the Resurrection, about the great and terrible events of that Day and its considerable horror governing there, was not well acquainted with the Hereafter, the situation of others is obvious.

This statement denotes to the fact that the horrible events of the Hereafter are so great and vast that it cannot be described with our present vocabulary. As we, the dwellers on earth, do not know well about Heaven and its

abundant blessings, we cannot grasp the full concept of the punishment in Hell, and in general, of the Final Judgement, as well. The question is repeated twice to emphasize this difficulty.

In the next verse, a simple but, complete and meaningful answer to the above question is suggested which points to one of the qualities of that Day.

The answer is suggested by a negative proportion:

''The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul; and the command That Day shall be (wholly) Allah's."

Surely, everything in this world, too, is with Allah, but, we all depend on one another in proximity, human law and institutions may hold large masses of mankind in their grip. Here, there are, apparently, worldly rulers, owners, and powerful members with whom some superficial persons, sometimes, consider the source of independent power. But, this period will be all over.

Then the ownership is totally His Own and is so perfected that their wills will be in complete consonant with Allah's Universal Will, the Absolute Command, on everything and more evident than ever, thenceforward will be wholly with Allah.

This is the same fact that is mentioned in many other verses, of the Qur'an, such as Surah Mo'min, No. 40, verse 16, which says:

"...Whose will be the Dominion that Day? That of Allah, the One, the Irresistible!"

As a matter of fact, everyone, on that Day, is so occupied with himself that if he had any power, he would not pay attention to anyone else; as Surah 'Abasa, No. 80, verse 37 confronts it:

"Each one of them, That Day, will have concern enough to occupy him".

A tradition from Imam Baqir (as) says:

"The command that Day and today is wholly Allah's, ...but on the Day of Judgement all the rulers and owners will be removed and there will be no sovereignty except Allah's."[20]

A question may arise such as: 'Does that state contrast with the intercession of prophets, saints, and angels? '

The answer simply is this: many verses of the Qur'an verify that intercession is also done by His leave for those who are allowed,

"And they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable..."[21].

Supplication

O Lord! On that horrible Day, everyone hopes for your generosity and, today, we rely on You.

O Lord! We seek Your Grace in this world and the Next World: please do not deprive us.

O Lord! The absolute command is Yours: save us from polytheism and relying on others.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 71, p 257.
2. ibid.
3. maniyyal-ul-Mured, p. 11
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 449
5. Nahj-ul-Balaqa, Sermon No. 226 (Arabic Version).
6. Nahj-ul-Balaqa, Sermon No 223 (Arabic Version), No 227 (English Version)
7. Surah Yunus., No. 10, verse 61
8. Surah Nisaa, No. 4. verse. 41
9. Surah Nur. No. 24, verse 24
10. Surah Ha-Mim, No. 41. verse. 21
11. Surah Qaf. No. 50, verse 21
12. Surah Zilzal. No. 99, verse 4
13. Nur-uth Thaqalayn", vol. 5, p. 522.
14. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter Good or Evil Action, Tradition 3.
15. Ibid., Traditions 1 and 2.
16. Surah Hud 110. No. 11. verse 114
17. Usm-i-KliDl, vol. 2, Chapter: (food or Evil Action, Tradition 4.
18. Ibid., based on Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 110.
19. Nahj-ul-Balaqa, Sermon Iqo. 157 (Arabic Version), No. 160 (English Version).
20. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 450.
21. Surah Anbiya, No. 21, verse 28

Surah Mutaffifin, Chapter 83

(Defrauders)

Number of Verses: 36

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Opinions are divided about this Surah on whether it is a Meccan Surah or a Medinan one.

One of the occasions of revelation of the Surah denotes that the beginning verses of the Surah, which are about shortchanging, can be about those tradesmen who dealt in fraud in Medina.

Other verses of the Surah mostly resemble, from the point of tone, the Meccan Surahs, whose short and meaningful verses warn of the Resurrection and the horrible events of the Hereafter. Particularly, the last verses of the Surah, which speak about the mockings of the disbelievers at the believers, match the earlier environment of Mecca where Muslims were in a minority and unbelievers were in a majority.

Perhaps, it is for this reason that some commentators consider a part of the Surah Meccan and another part of it belonging to the Medina period. But, on the whole, this Surah seems chronologically close to the Meccan period.

In any case, the theme of the Surah is divided into five categories:

1. It seriously warns and threatens the defrauders.

2. It points to the lack of strong belief in the Resurrection as being the origin of corruption and great sins.

3. There are some hints in this Surah showing the end of the Wicked on That Great Day.

4. It points to some of the great gifts and delightful blessings of the Righteous in the Garden of Bliss.

5. The unbelievers, foolishly mocking at the believers, in this life, and the reverse situation, in the Hereafter is briefly referred to in the Surah.

The Virtue in Studying the Surah

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) that says:

“The person who studies Surah Mutaffifin (Defrauders), Allah will make him drink of the pure, sealed drink on That Day 8.”[1]

And there is also a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) which says:

“The person who recites Surah Mutaffffin (Defrauders) in his obligatory prayers, Allah will keep him safe from fire on the Day of Judgement. Then, neither the fire will meet him nor will he meet the fire.”[2]

These great rewards are for the one who studies it and acts accordingly, of course.

Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 1-6

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَيْلٌ لِلْمُطَفِّفِينَ
الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ
وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ
أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ
لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ
يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

1. "Woe to the defrauders,"
2. "Who, when they take a measure from people, take it in full,"
3. "But when they give by measure or weight to men, they cause loss (give less than what is due)."
4. "Do they not think that they shall be raised (to life again)?"
5. "For a Great Day"
6. "The Day when (all) mankind shall stand before the Lord of the Worlds?"

The Occasion of Revelation

Ibn-Abbas says that when the Prophet (S) arrived in Medina large group of tradesmen used to deal fraudulently, then Allah sent down these verses and, thereafter, they did not commit further fraud.

Another tradition says that: a large number of the inhabitants of Medina were tradesmen at that time. They used to deal fraudulently and many of their dealings were religiously unlawful. Then, these verses were revealed and the Prophet (S) recited them to the citizens of Medina.

He also added:

''There are five for five."

They asked him which 'five' were for which 'five'. And he answered:

"No nation broke their promise but that Allah set their enemies over them."

"No society passed Judgement without suffering excessive poverty when they were heedless of the laws of Allah."

''No nation fornicated without being faced with abundant fatality"

"No sect committed fraud save those whose crops became rotted and famine plagued them."

"No community refused paying Alms tax except that they were parched by draught."[3]

The late Tabarsi has cited about the occasion of revelation of these verses that there was a man in Medina by the name of Abu -Jahinah who had two scales for measuring: one of them was big, which he used when he wanted to buy things, and the other was small, which was used when he used to sell things. (Then, this Surah was revealed and warned him and the likes of him).[4]

Woe to Those Who Deal in Fraud

In these verses, before everything, it addresses the shortchangers and says:

"Woe to the defrauders"

This is a threat, indeed, from Allah to these arrogant, unmanly oppressors who tread on the rights of the people.

The term /muţaffifin/ is based on /taţfif/ derived from /ţaf/ which means 'the edge of something'; and everything which is slight or insufficient has been called /ţafif/ as well as a measure which is not completely full viz., the content is up to the edge, but it is not sufficiently full. Then, the different forms of this term have been used for 'shortchanging'.

The word /wayl/, here, means; 'woe, or a great misfortune, or sorrow, or death, or punishment, or a very hot site in Hell'. It is usually used when it is meant 'an evil and lowly sense or damnation'. The word is very short, but it implies many ideas.

It is noteworthy that a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says that Allah has not used the term

/wayl/ 'woe',

in the Qur'an, for anyone unless He has called the one a pagan, as He says:

"...and woe to the Unbelievers because of the (coming) Judgement of a momentous Day"[5 6].

Thus, by this narration we understand that 'dealing in fraud' is akin to 'paganism'.

"Who, when they take a measure from people, take it in full."

"But when they give by measure or weight to men; they cause loss (give less than what is due)".

Some of the commentators have understood from the above verse that /mutaffif/ 'a defrauder' is a person who takes more than his right when he buys something and gives less than what is due when he sells it, and Allah has used the word

'woe'

against him, in both cases.

However, this idea is wrong because the term /yastaufun/ means that they take their right fully, but, there is nothing in verse 2 which indicates that they take something more than what is their right.

In comparison with these two circumstances of when they buy something they take it in full, but, when they must give in full what is due from them, they do not and cause a loss, Allah curses them.

This is noteworthy, too, that in dealing with others, when they take their own right, it is speaking of 'measure' and they take measure in full, but when they are going to give people's rights to them, it is speaking of both 'measure and weight' and they give them less than what is their due. This difference in the usage, of the words, may be due to one of the following reasons:

The first is that, in old times when wholesale trades used to occur the buyers mostly used big measures because, scales were not big enough for weighing very heavy loads, but smaller measures were more suitable and easily available. However in selling things they had both wholesale (by measures) and retail (by weights).

The second is that for taking a share, it is more suitable to use 'measure' because, shortchanging is more easy when weighing things and provides a greater possibility to commit fraud.

This point is also notable that though the verses speak about shortchangers, undoubtedly 'fraud' must be taken, here, in a more general sense: It consists of giving short measure and short weight, but it covers much more than that. It includes any shortchanging in numericals, (the countable items which are sold one by one). Or, it may include lazy workers or employees who do their duty insufficiently: so the verses condemn even them.

Some commentators consider a broader scope for the meaning of the verses. They say that any changes in 'limits set by Allah' and any deterioration in social relations and morals may be involved. Although there is no clear implication about them in the verses, the idea is not inappropriate.

Hence, it is narrated from 'Abdullah-ibn-Mas'ud, a companion of the Prophet's (S), who said:

"Prayer is measurable. If one fills its measure completely (and says a prayer perfectly) Allah will give him a complete reward, but if not, Allah's word about Mutafffin (defrauders) will be against him, too."[7]

Then, to threaten them (the defrauders) reproachfully, it questions:

"Do they not think that they shall be raised (to life again)?"

"For a Great Day".

On the day whose account, punishment, and primary events and horrors are all great.

"The Day when (all) mankind shall stand before the Lord of the Worlds?"

That is, if they believed in the Hereafter and they knew an account will be given there, and all their deeds are recorded for the Judgement, before the Lord, and whoever has done an atom's weight of good or evil shall behold it on That Great Day, they would not commit oppression and would never tread on the rights of anyone.

Many of the commentators took the term /yazunnu/, based on the term /zann/, to mean 'conviction'. It resembles Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 249 which says:

"...But those who were convinced that they must meet Allah said: 'How oft, by Allah's will, hath a small force vanquished a big one?'..."

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) for the commentary of the verse attests to the idea.

He said about the meaning of the verse:

"Do they not think that they shall be raised (to life again)",

That it renders:

"Are they not sure that they will be raised (to life again)?"[8]

It has also been narrated that he said:

"There are two kinds of /zann/ 'imagination': one is 'of doubt' and the other is 'of conviction'. What are given in the Qur'an about Resurrection are those of the ' imagination of conviction' and what are given about the World are those of the imagination 'of doubt'."[9]

It is notable that, as Raqib has said in his book Mufradat, the term /zann/ basically is a word used for that case which happens in a person's mind where there are some implications in a person's thoughts about something. If they are convincing, the knowledge and confidence rise, but if they are feeble, there will be a mere 'delusion'.

Thus, the term /zann/ 'imagination', inspite of its present day usage, has a broad meaning in the Qur'an that consists of the sense of both 'knowledge' and 'apprehension'. It has been used sometimes with the former meaning and sometimes with the latter one.

Explanation: 'Dealing in Fraud' is One of the Factors of Mischief in the Land

The Holy Qur'an frequently condemns fraud, for example, in the story of Shu'ayb in Surah Shu'ara No.26, verse 181 to 183 it says:

"Give just measure, and cause no loss (to others by fraud)."

"And weigh with scales true and upright".

"And withhold not things justly due to men, nor do evil in the land, working mischief".

Hence, dealing in fraud unjustly, with measure or weight, is counted as working mischief in the land. This is an evidence for the idea that shortchanging is one of the aspects of social evils.

And, also, in Surah Rahman, No.55, verse 7-8, justice in weights, which should be applied by people, is counted of the Balance of the firmament which Allah raised high, where it says:

"And the firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice),"

"In order that you may not transgress (due) balance."

This means that justice and balance of the scale should be observed seriously, because it is an important factor not only in social affairs, but it is, in fact, a part of the balance the regulation in all the world that Allah has created.

For the same reason, the great leaders of Islam have paid much attention to it.

For example, Asbaq-iln-Nabatah has quoted from Hazrat Ali (as) that when he was on the pulpit, he said:

"O tradesmen! 'practical theology' is first then trade."

And he repeated it thrice, then finally added:

"A tradesman is a wicked man and a wicked man will be in Hell except for those who take their right in justice and give people's right (in full)".[10]

Another narration from Imam Baqir (as) says that when Amir-al-Moimineen Ali (as) was in Kufa, every morning he used to enter the markets and walk through them carrying a whip with him over his shoulder (for the punishment of the offenders).

He would stand in the middle of the market and call:

"O traders, fear Allah!".

When people heard his voice they dropped what they were doing and listened to his words carefully.

Then he said:

“Ask Allah for goodness, and be easy in your dealing with people, to be blessed. And approach the customers (in dealing), and make patience a model of decorum for yourself. And restrain from swearing; and avoid telling fies. Stand against cruelty, and treat the oppressed justly.

Do not approach usury. Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evi1in the land with intent to do mischief.”

And, also, as it was mentioned for the occasion of revelation of the verses, the Prophet (S) said:

“No sect committed fraud save those whose crops rotted and famine plagued them.”

As a consequence from the above words, we find out that the use of short weights has been one of the great factors of destruction and punishment for some of the past generations, which caused disturbances in their economical order, and the descent of Divine Punishment.

It has been emphasized even in Islamic traditions about business behaviours that believers should give others a bit more when measuring or weighing something, and take from others a bit less than that which is due.

This is opposite to what is mentioned in these verses about the treatment of the defrauders,

''Who when they take a measure from people, take it in full,”

“But when they give by measure or weight to men, they cause loss (give less than what is due).”

On the other hand, as it was mentioned before, ‘fraud' has such a broad meaning that envelops any shortchanging in any business or problem or responsibility whether they are personal or social or Divine.

Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 7-10

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سِجِّينٌ

كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

7. “Nay.' Most surely the Record of the Wicked is (preserved) in Sijjin.”

8. “And what informs you of what 'Sijjin' is?”

9. “(It is) a Register (fully) inscribed.”

10. “Woe, That Day, to the deniers,”

What Informs You What 'Sijjin' Is?

To follow the theme of the former verses about shortchangers, and the relation between sin and the lack of strong belief in the Day of Judgment, a part of the destiny of the Wicked on That Day is mentioned in the next verses.

At first, it says that they, in vain, think that there is no Record of account given in the Hereafter, but,

“Nay! Most surely the Record of the Wicked is (preserved) in 'Sijjin’,”

“It is a Register (fully) inscribed.”

There are mainly two commentaries for these verses:

1. The meaning of /kitab/, here, is the record of man in which all the deeds, irrespective of great or small, are exactly inscribed.

The term /sijjin/ means a 'register' wherein the deeds of all mankind are recorded. In other words, it is like a ledger where the account of the creditors and the debtors are registered on separate pages, one by one. The thing that is understood, from this verse and the next verses, is that all the deeds of the Wicked are registered in a book by the name of ‘Sijjin’ and all the deeds of the Righteous are registered in another book by the name of ‘Illiyin’.

The term /sijjin/ is based on /sijn/ which has different meanings, such as: 'prison, hard, anything hard, a terrible place in the bottom of Hell'; the place where the records of the Wicked are held, and it is a proper name for the fire of Hell.

Tarihi says in Majma'-al-Bahrain for the root word of /sijn/:

“It is mentioned in the commentary that it is 'a complete work ' comprising the deeds of the Wicked, of Jinn and of mankind.”

(Tarih' has not made it clear as to whose commentary this is).

The symmetries that attest to the above idea are as follows:

1. The term

/kitab/ ‘book',

in cases like this in the Holy Qur’an, means 'Record'.

2. The last verse, which has come as a description for the term 'sijjin', says:

“(It is) a Register (fully) inscribed”.

Some commentators have not taken the verse as a description for 'sijjin', but, this idea certainly does not apply to the apparent meaning of the words.

3. Some have said that the term /sijjin/ and /sijjil/ have the same meaning. And we know that /sijjil/ means: 'a grand book'.

4. It is understood, from the verses of Qur'an, that the deeds of all mankind are inscribed, in several books, so that no one will have any excuse for their deeds.

The first 'book' is the personal record of the individuals, which will be given to the hand of its owner: for the Righteous to their right hand, and for the evildoers to their left hand; and there are many verses, in the Qur'an, that verify this idea.

The second is the one that can be called 'The Record of the Sects', as mentioned in Surah Jathiya, No.45, verse 28 which says:

“...Every sect will be called to its Record...”.

The third one is the Record of all humankind: The Wicked and the Righteous. The 'book' that, in these verses and the following ones, has been called 'Sijjin' for the former and 'Illiyin' for the latter.

In short, according to this commentary, 'Sijjin' is the ledger, the complete work, in which all the deeds of the Wicked are recorded. It is called 'Sijjin’, perhaps for the reason that its contents cause the Wicked to be imprisoned in Hell. Or, the book, itself, is in the bottom of Hell, in contrast with the book of the Righteous, which is in 'Illiyin’ of Heaven.

2. The second commentary says that 'Sijjin' means 'Hell', which is a very big prison for the Wicked, or it is a terrible site in Hell, and the meaning of

'The Record of the Wicked'

is 'the destiny of the Wicked' which is inscribed for them. Therefore, the verse means: surely the destiny of the Wicked is in Hell. There are many examples of the application of the meaning of the term 'book', in the Holy Qur'an, with this sense.

For instance, in Surah Nisa, No. 4 verse 24, after saying that:

"And (prohibited are) all married women except those whom your right hands possess",

it says:

".../kitaballah 'alaykum/, (this is) Allah's ordiance to you...".

And, Surah Anfal, No.8, verse 75 says:

"...kindred by blood have prior rights over each other in the ordinance of Allah...".

The matter that attests to this commentary is that 'Sijjin' has been commented on as being Hell, the same meaning as the narrations and Islamic works have.

In the commentary of 'Ali-ibn-Ibrahim for the meaning of the verse:

"Nay! Most surely the Record of the Wicked is (preserved) in Sijjin",

it is said that: their appointed chastisement is in

'Sijjin', (Hell).

A narration from Imam Baqir (as) also says:

"'Sijjin'

is the seventh earth and

'Illiyin'

is the seventh heaven (indicating the lowest and the highest places)". [11]

There are many narrations which say that the deeds which are not fit to be accepted by Allah will descend and fall in Sijjin.

A tradition from the Prophet (S) says that:

"Sometimes it happens that the appointed angel, for gathering up the deeds of a servant, ascends joyfully with a good deed of the servant. Then Allah says: 'Put it in Sijjin, because the servant did not seek My Countenance in it'."[12]

On the whole, it is understood from the narrations that 'Sijjin' is a very low place in Hell, where the wrong actions or the record of the evil deeds of the Wicked are sent to, or their destiny is for them to be imprisoned therein.

According to this commentary, the verse

"(It is) in Record (fully) inscribed"

is an emphasis on the verse

"...Most surely the Record of the Wicked is (preserved) in Sijjin,"

(not as a commentary for Sijjin). Then the verse means that this is a punishment inscribed for them, surely.

The term /marqum/ is based on /raqm/ 'large, bold writing' and since these writings are clear and unambiguous, the term may refer to the decisiveness and clearness of it.

These two commentaries can be considered together, because in the first commentary 'Sijjin' means 'the ledger of the deeds of the Wicked', and in the second one it means Hell or the bottom of the earth. And it is clear that these are 'causes and effects' for each other. That is, when the record of a person is

registered in 'the ledger of the deeds of the Wicked', it results in their being sent to the lowest point of Hell.

In the last verse of this portion, in a startling short sentence, the end to come of those who deny the Resurrection is pointed out.

It says:

"Woe That Day, to the deniers."

It is the denial from which the various sins, including dealing in fraud and transgression, originate. In the first verse it says:

"Woe to the defrauders",

and now it says:

"Woe, That Day, to the deniers",

which briefly, but meaningfully, points to the kinds of painful and horrible chastisements awaiting them.

It is noteworthy that in the first verse

'the defrauders'

and then in verse seven,

'the Wicked'

and in verse ten

'the deniers'

are mentioned. This shows that there is a close connection between denying the Resurrection and those deeds. The relationship between these will be dealt with more clearly in the following verses.

Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 11-17

الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ

وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُو الْجَحِيمِ

ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

11. "Those who deny the Day of Judgement"

12. "And none denies it but every Transgressor, the Sinner!"

13. "When Our Signs are recited to him, he says: 'Myths of the ancients'."

14. "Nay, Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts."

15. "Nay, most surely on That Day they shall be debarred from their Lord,"

16. "Then, they will enter the fire of Hell."

17. "Then it will be said (to them): 'This is that which you used to deny."

Sin Works as Rust Upon the Heart

The previous verses made clear the dreadful end of the unbelievers. The following verses begin with an introduction to unbelievers also.

It says:

"Those who deny the Day of Judgement."

"And none denies it but every Transgressor, the Sinner"

It means that the denial of the Day of Judgement is not based on reasoning and logical thinking, but those who want to be oppressors, whenever they wish, and to be the sinners of any corruption, take joy in denying the Hereafter.

They want to continue their evil deeds, freely and without thinking about their responsibilities. They do not pay attention to their conscience. They know no laws. The case is similar as can be found in Surah Qiyamat, No. 75, verse 5.

It says:

"But man wishes to do wrong (even) in the time in front of him,"

(then he denies the Hereafter).

Hence, as belief has an affect on deeds, the same evil deeds affect on the formation of beliefs. This very idea will be divulged, clearly, in the commentary of the next verses.

Now, the third characteristic of the deniers of the Hereafter is mentioned.

It says:

"When Our Signs are recited to him, he says: 'Myths of the ancients' ".

They are not only Transgressors and Sinners, but mock the Signs of Allah and say that they are old myths like a series of ancient stories belonging to the very early periods of man, which have no real value. In this way, and under the pretext of calling them myths, they want to withdraw themselves from the duties that the verses of the Qur'an define for them.

The sinners raise the subject as an excuse to flee from the truth and do not accept Allah's invitation.

This idea is mentioned not only in this verse, but there are also nine other verses that denote just the same matter, about the sinners, and their excuse of calling these myths including Surah Furqan, No. 25, verse 5, which says:

"And they say': 'Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening'."

In Surah Ahqaf, No.46, verse 17 when an ungodly son is being advised by his godly parents that the promise of Allah is true and all will be called to life again, after death, he mocks their words and says:

"...this is nothing but tales of the ancients."

However, wrong doers always seek some vain excuses to make their conscience content, on the one hand, and to get rid of the just people's protests, on the other hand. It is a wonder how these kind of persons have often had some similar behaviour, as if they had been whispering the same things into each others ears throughout history, matters such as: sorcery, divination, madness, myths and the like.

The Holy Qur'an points to the main origin of their wickedness in the next verse where it says:

"Nay! Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts."

What an alarming sense it is! What they do works as rust on their hearts and vanishes the first light and the early brightness that is really from the divine nature which Allah created in them. That is why the characteristic of

truth, the shine of Revelation; with its full beaming brightness, does not reflect on their hearts.

The Qur'anic term /ran/ is based on /rayn/ (rust). As Raqib says in Mufradat, it means: 'the coating or film formed on the precious things'. And some other philologists meant it as 'the radish-brown or redish yellow coating formed on iron or steel, and the like, by oxidation'; as occurs during exposure to air and moisture and it is usually a sign of the decay of the metal. Then, as a consequence, naturally its radiance disappears.

There will be a description, under the title of 'Explanation' that you will study later about the destructive effects of sin which dulls the light and radiance of the heart, even to the point of wiping it out.

"Nay! most surely on that Day they shall be debarred from their Lord."

And this is the most painful punishment of the evildoers in contrast with the spiritual meeting and the presence of the Righteous before their Lord, which is the best of blessings and the highest reward for them.

The term

/kalla/ 'Nay'

is usually used to negate a previous statement. For this case, commentators have delivered many probabilities; some of which are as follows:

It is an emphasis on the term

'Nay',

in the former verse, and it is not true what they say about the Hereafter being myths of the ancients.

Or, it is not so that the rust, which sin causes upon their hearts, will be wiped off. They shall be debarred from seeing Allah both in this world and the Next.

Or, as it is said in some other verses of the Qur'an, that they think that even if they are brought back to their Lord, they shall surely be given some kind of blessings there.

It is not as they think, though, and they will have the worst punishments and the most severe tortures in the Hereafter.

Truly, there will be a return, to us, of our worldly actions in the Hereafter. Those who neglect the truth, in this life, and their deeds have affected their hearts like rust, will be deprived from the Mercy of Allah and will never be able to see His appearance in the spiritual world, and they will never meet Him; the Sublime.

"Then, they will enter the fire of Hell."

This entrance into the fire, is the result of deprivation from Allah, and nothing else. Verily, the heat of this deprivation is hotter then the heat of the fire of Hell, itself.

Explanations

Why Does Sin Work As Rust Upon The Heart?

Not only in this verse, but also in many other verses of the Holy Qur'an it talks frankly about the effect of sin in darkening the heart.

Once, in Surah Mo'min, No.40, verse 35 it says:

"Thus does Allah seal up every heart of arrogant obstinate Transgressors."

Then another time, in Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 7 describing a group of stubborn sinners, it says:

"Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur)."

And Surah Hajj, No. 22, verse 46 says:

"Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts."

Verily, the worst result of continual sinning is a heart sealed up, which is the extinguisher of the light of knowledge. The substance of sin flows from the limbs to the heart and changes it into something like a stagnant swamp. It is in this condition that man cannot distinguish between good and evil, and commits such horrific wrongs that everyone becomes astonished.

This self-destructive sinner undermines himself and ruins his own happiness by his own hands.

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) which says:

"Abundant sins cause the heart to decay."[13]

And another tradition from him (S) says:

"When a servant commits a sin, a black stain appears on his heart. If he repents and leaves off committing the sin and asks for forgiveness from Allah, his heart will be polished. And if he digresses again, the stain will spread until it covers his heart completely.

This is the very rust that Allah has mentioned in the Holy Qurtan in the verse that says:

'Nay! Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts'."[14]

The same idea has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) with a slight difference in Usul-i-Kafi.

And in the same book, there is another tradition from the Prophet (S) that says:

"Speak with each other, and visit each other, and tell of the traditions (of ours). Surely the traditions refine the hearts. Verily, hearts become rusted as a sword does, and the traditions are the polish."[15]

It has also been proved psychologically that man's behaviour effects on his soul and gradually varies it to that qualification. It is effective in his thought and Judgment, even.

It is also notable that the more man continues sinning, the thicker the darkness covers his soul until the point where he considers his evil deeds as his good deeds and he is even sometimes proud of them. At this time the back doors are shut and the bridges are broken for him to return. This is the most dangerous position that a person can be in.

A Curtain Over The Spirit

Although many of the commentators have tried to insert something into the verse:

'Nay, most surely on That Day they shall be debarred from their Lord',

and say: the sinners shall be debarred from 'the mercy' or 'the honour' or 'the reward' of Allah, the verse apparently does not need anything added, but, they are really debarred from Him; While the Righteous will meet with

Allah in Heaven and enjoy the greatest possible pleasure there, where the Sinners, the Hellish Disbelievers, are deprived of that (Him); the unmatched blessing.

Some good-doers of the believing people may have the emanation even in this world, but the wrong doers never will.

In one respect, the former are always in front of Allah, but the latter are so far from Him.

The Righteous are so delighted in supplicating to Him that it is indescribable, but the sinners are so entangled with their sins that they cannot be saved.

Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) says in his supplication called 'Kumayl':

"Supposing that I am able to endure Thy chastisement, how can I endure separation from Thee?"

Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 18-28

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ

كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ

يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ

عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ

يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ

خِتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

وَمِزَاجُهُ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

18. "Nay, verily the Record of the Righteous is (preserved) In 'Illiyin',"

19. "And what explains to thee what 'Illiyin' is?"

20 "(It is) a written record,"

21. "(Which is) witnessed by the ones Nearest (to Allah)."

22. "Surely the Righteous will be in Bliss:"

23. "(Sitting) on thrones (of Dignity), they will command a sight (of all things):"

24. "You will recognize in their faces the radiance of Bliss"

25. "Their thirst will be slaked with pure drink sealed"

26. "Whose seal is musk, and for that let (all) those strive who strive (fo Bliss)"

27. "And whose mixture is of 'Tasnim' "

28. "A spring from which drink the ones Nearest (to Allah)."

'Illiyin is Anticipating the Righteous

In contrast to the destiny of the Record of the Wicked, which was described in the previous verses, the following verses talk about the

Righteous, whose honour and merits, compared with those of the Wicked, will make the situations of them, both, more clear.

At first, to negate their false thoughts about the resurrection, it says:

"Nay, verily the Record of the Righteous is (preserved) in 'Illiyin'."

The term /'illiyin/ is the plural form of /'ulayy /which basically means 'properly, High places or the persons who sit in high places, or the dwellers of high parts of the mountains'. Some commentators have rendered it, here, to mean 'a name of the upper part of the skies or upper part of Heaven'.

Some have also said that the term is mentioned in the plural form for emphasis where it means 'highness over highness'.

Furthermore, similar to the two commentaries we had about 'Sijjin', in the former verses, we have the same about "Illiyin', as well.

The first commentary says that /kitab-al-abrar/ means 'the Record of the Righteous'. They intend to say that the record of their deeds is registered in a ledger, (a complete work), which shows the whole deeds of all believers, and is in a very high and honourable position.

Or, it means that their record is preserved in the highest and the most honourable abode in Heaven over their places, all of which illustrate that their own rank is extremely high. A tradition from the Prophet (S) says that ' 'Illiyin' is the seventh sky and is below the throne of Allah'. And this is just contrary to the record of the Wicked, which is in the lowest part of Hell.

The second commentary says that /kitab/, here, means 'destiny' and 'the definite end' that Allah has defined for the Righteous in the highest levels of Heaven.

Of course, these two commentaries can also both come together, i.e. their Record is registered in a ledger and the ledger resides totally in heaven. Meanwhile, the Divine command governs high over them concerning the position of the Righteous, themselves, and considers them to be in the highest levels of Heaven.

Then, to make the greatness and the highness of ' 'Illiyin' clear, it goes on to say:

"And what explains to thee what ' 'Illiyin' is?"

This means that it is a position beyond the imagination and comprehension, so high that no one, not even the Prophet (S), can know the peak of its highness.

Then, the Qur'an, itself, explains it further and says:

"(lt is) a written record".

This idea is according to the commentary that means: "Illiyin' is a ledger for the righteous deeds, while according to the second commentary the verse means that this is a decisive destiny that Allah has written for the Righteous that their position is in the highest stages of Heaven.

(Note: Therefore, 'a written record' is an interpretation for 'the Record of the Righteous' not for "Illiyin').

"(Which is) witnessed by the ones Nearest (to Allah)".

Some of the commentators have interpreted the meaning of 'the ones Nearest (to Allah) ' mentioned in this verse, as being 'the angels that are close to the throne of Allah', the guardians for the record or the destiny of the Righteous.

The next verses express clearly, that a special group of the elected believers are 'the ones Nearest (to Allah)' who possess a very high rank and are witnesses to the records of the others from the Righteous.

As Surah Waqi'ah, No. 56, verses 10-11, with the names of the following two groups:

'The Companions of the Right Hand'

and

'The Companions of the Left Hand',

say:

“And those foremost (in faith) will be foremost (in the Hereafter)”,

“These will be those Nearest (to Allah)”.

And Surah Nahll, No. 16, verse 89, which says:

“One day We shall raise from all peoples a witness against them, from amongst themselves: and We shall bring thee as a witness against them...”.

Then, concerning a part of the rewards of the Righteous, it says:

“Surely the Righteous will be in Bliss.”

The basic meaning of the term /na'im/, as Raqib says, is 'immense blessing'. Besides that, it is mentioned in an 'indefinite form' which, here, denotes to its greatness and importance. That is, they possess the blessings and comforts that are indescribable. And this is a complete and hidden definition referring to the whole material and spiritual blessings of Heaven.

Then, to describe some of them, it says:

“(Sitting) on thrones (of Dignity), they will command a sight (of all things)”.

The term /ara'ik/ is the plural form of /arikah/ 'throne'. Basically, it is used with the meaning of 'a beautiful royal throne', or 'a couch for the bride in the nuptial chamber', but, here, it means 'highly decorated seats in Heaven where the Righteous sit'.

The term

/yanzurun/ ‘they look'

is mentioned, here, without any object or objects and is to be meant in a broad sense: i.e. they look at Allah's Mercy, His unique essence, the variety of Divine blessings and the surprising beauties in Heaven.

'They look',

because one of man's pleasures is 'the pleasure of sight'.

Thereafter it says:

“You will recognize in their faces the radiance of Bliss.”

It means that a special refreshment and delight is seen on their faces, so that you need not question them. On the contrary, when you look at the Wicked, you can see grief and sorrow together with pain and misery on their faces.

The term /nadrah/, as it was mentioned before, means a special refreshment and happiness resulting from the abundance of blessing and comfort seen on the faces of well-off people.

After discussing about the blessings of 'throne', 'look', and 'ease with happiness', it refers to another blessing: The pure drink of the Righteous.

It says:

“Their thirst will be slaked with pure drink sealed”.

The pure drink of the Next World is not like the devilish drink of this world. It does not bring alcoholism and madness, for committing sin in them, hut, it increases their wisdom and intelligence safely and with complete joy.

Most of the commentators have interpreted the term /rahiq/ in the sense of 'pure drink', a drink that is not obscene and is not of a polluted mixture; it is flawless.

And the term

/maxyum /'sealed'

is used as an emphasis for its pureness, soundness, and a state of being intact.

Moreover, the use of such complete containers is a high honor and respect to the guests; a sealed container whose lid will be opened only by the guests.

"Whose seal is musk..."

The pure drink of Heaven is not the same as the sealed wine bottles of this world which are closed tightly sometimes with a wafer of molten wax (or clay) into which is pressed the distinctive seal of the sender or the company, that may make the hands dirty when opening them, but it is sealed with musk and, when it is being opened, it smells like the perfume of musk.

At the end of the same verse it says:

"...and for that let (all) those strive who strive (for Bliss)."

Tabarsi, the great commentator, says in Majma'-al-Bayan that the term, /tanafas/, means that two persons long for a worthy thing, each of which tries to obtain the same precious thing that the other one has.

In Majma'-al-Bahrain the term, /tanafas/, is defined in the sense of 'proceeding the other, or friendly competition'. Each of them wishes and tries to own the precious thing that the other has.

Raqib in Mufradat says: /munafasah/ means 'a man's attempt to be associated with the outstanding people and joining them without causing harm to others'.

In fact, the meaning of this verse is similar to that of Surah Hadid, No. 57, verse 21, which says:

"Be you foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth...".

Or, it is similar to the meaning of Surah ali-'Imran-, No. 3, Verse 133, which says:

"Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that of the heavens and the earth..."

However, the meaning of the verse is the nicest one that can be considered for the encouragement of men, to send them forth for receiving these unmatched blessings by the way of true faith and good deeds. It is a very wonderful evidence to show the eloquence of the Holy Qur'an.

"And whose mixture is of 'Tasnim'"

"A spring from which drink the ones Nearest (to Allah)".

It is understood from these verses that /tasnim/ is the highest drink, among the heavenly pure drinks, which the ones Nearest to Allah drink, only, but the Righteous drink some of /tasnim/, which is mixed with

/rahiq/, 'the pure drink sealed',
which is another kind of pure drink in Heaven.

Some commentators believe that this pure drink is called /tasnim /because this spring flows down from Heaven, while some others say that it is a special drink which falls from the sky of Heaven.

The heavenly drinks are different, indeed. Some of them flow in rivers, as many verses of the Qur'an point out, such as is found in Surah Muhammad, No. 47, Verse 15:

"...rivers of milk... rivers of wine... rivers of honey..."

And some of them are in sealed containers, like the one mentioned in the former verses. The most important one is the drink which falls from Heaven whose name is 'Tasnim', the one that none of the other drinks, in Heaven, can be compared with. Then, the effect that it has on the soul of the Righteous is, consequently, the deepest and the most attractive, whose spiritual pleasure is indescribable.

It is necessary to make note of this truth, again, that these are only some hints to those heavenly facts, indeed, because our human vocabulary cannot describe the unique blessings of Heavens completely.

And even more than that, no one can imagine them, as Surah Sajdah, No. 32, verse 17 says:

"Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them..."

Explanation: Who are 'the Righteous' and 'the Ones Nearest to Allah'?

The names of
/abrar/ 'the righteous'
and
/muqarrabun/ 'the ones Nearest to Allah'
are frequently highly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an along with their rank and their rewards.

They are so high that as Surah ali-'Imran, No. 3, verse 193 says that
'The men of Understanding'
ask Allah that their souls be taken to Himself in the company of the Righteous.

And there are many great rewards mentioned, for them, in the Qur'an including Surah al-Insan, No. 7 & 6, verses 5-22 and, also, Surah Infitar, No. 82, verse 13 and some other verses in Surah Mutaffifin talk about Allah's Grace, to them, as well.

The term
/abrar/ 'the Righteous'
is the plural form of /birr/ and they are the believers who have a great soul and a firm belief and do good deeds.

'The ones Nearest to Allah', /muqarrabun/,
are those who have a close position to Allah.

Then, it seems that all
'the ones Nearest to Allah'
are among the

Righteous, /abrar/,
but all of the latter,
Righteous /abrar/,
are not among
'The ones Nearest to Allah'.

There is a narration, from Imam Hassan Mujtaba (the second Imam) which says:

“By Allah, everywhere in the Qur'an where Allah says
/inn-al-abrar/ (surely the Righteous),
He means no one save Ali-ibn-Abu Talib, Fatimah, me, and Hosain” (as).[16]

Undoubtedly, the five holy ones, i.e. Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Hosain (as) are the most clear examples of the Righteous and
'the ones Nearest to Allah';
and, as it was mentioned in the commentary of Surah al-Insan, No. 76, the very Surah is mainly about Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Hosain. Eighteen verses of Surah al-Insan are especially about their achievements, though the revelation of the verses about them does not hinder the broadness and generality of the meaning of those verses.

Heavenly Drinks

It is clearly understood, from many of the verses of the Holy Qur'an, that there are numerous kinds of pure drink with many names and various qualities, in Heaven, that are entirely different from the worldly impure beverages; which are the origins of enmity, murder, and corruption.

They are offensive, distasteful, and impure. But, the drinks of Heaven are sweet-smelling, perfumed, and purified, so that they increase wisdom, pleasure, and love. Those who drink of them will languor in a kind of spiritual joy and delight that cannot be described.

Two varieties of the drinks of Heaven are named in these verses:

/tasnim/ and /rahiq-i-maxtum/, while some other varieties are mentioned in Surah al-Insan, No. 76, and even other Surahs of the Qur'an, each of which are appropriately explained.

It is interesting to note that the Divine drinks are also the reward for those who avoid drinking the worldly alcoholic drinks, as well as those who quench the needs of the deprived and extinguish the fire of sadness in the hearts of the believers.

Once the holy Prophet (S) told Hazrat Ali (as):

“O Ali! the person who leaves drinking wine, Allah will make him a drink from 'the pure drink sealed,”.[17]

And, it is even more interesting to find that another tradition from him (S) says that if a person leaves off drinking wine even for the sake of anything besides Allah, He will make him drink from the pure drink.

Hazrat Ali (as) says:

“I questioned him 'the sake of anything save Allah? “,
and he answered:

“Yes, the person who avoids drinking wine for the sake of protecting his life, Allah will make him a drink from the pure drink sealed'“.[18]

Verily, those who avoid drinking wine for the sake of their health are in fact from

'the men of Understanding'.

And, as it is understood in Surah ali-'Imran, No. 3, verse 193 that

'the men of Understanding'

are also among the Righteous, who drink from the pure drinks of Heaven.

A narration from Ali-ibn-Hosain (as) says:

"The person who quenches the thirst of a believer, Allah will make him a drink from 'the pure drink sealed".[19]

And, another narration says:

"The person who fasts on a hot day in summer for the sake of Allah, He will make him a drink from 'the pure drink sealed'."[20]

Surah Mutaffifin, Verses 29-36

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ

وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ

وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ

وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظِينَ

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ

عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ

هَلْ ثُوِّبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

29. "Surely those who committed sin used to laugh at those who believed,"

30. "And when they passed by them, they were winking at one another (in mockery;)"

31. "And when they returned to their people they returned jesting,"

32. "And when they saw them, they said: 'Surely these have gone astray'".

33. "While they had not been sent as guardians over them!"

34. "So, on this Day (of Judgement) the Believers win laugh at the Unbelievers:"

35."(Sitting) on thrones (of Dignity) they will command (a sight) (of all things)".

36. "Have not the Unbelievers been paid back for what they used to do?"

The Occasion of Revelation

The commentators have quoted two occasions of revelation for these verses:

The first is that: Once Hazrat Ali (as) and some of the believers, were passing by a number of pagans from Mecca when the pagans laughed at them and mocked them, then the above verses were revealed and made their destiny clear on the Day of Judgment.

Hakim Abu-Qasim Haskani has narrated from Ibn-i-Abbas in Shavahid-al-Tanzil that: The phrase 'those who were guilty' targeted the hypocrites of Quraish and 'those who believed' meant 'Ali-ibn-i-Abutalib and his devotees.

The second occasion of revelation is that the above verse has been revealed about some people such as: 'Ammar, Suhayb, Khabbab, Bilal, and some others of the poor believers who were mocked by some pagans of Quraish like Abujahl, Walid-ibn-Muqayrah, and 'as-ibn-Wa'il.

These two occasions of revelation can both be considered together, too.

Once They Used to Mock the Believers But, Today…

The previous verses talked about the great rewards and the blessings of the Righteous, while these verses point to a part of the troubles and the difficulties that the believers may be faced with, in this life, for their Faith and Righteousness, to show that those great rewards are not undue.

These verses speak about the position of the pagans and their revolting treatment against the believers. Four varieties of their revolting behavior are mentioned here.

First, it says:

"Surely those who committed sin used to laugh at those who believed."

They arrogantly laughed at them to insult them. And the wicked have always been, in this world, smug against the believers.

By the way, the application of the term

/ajramu /'those who committed sin'

instead of the term /kafaru/ 'those who disbelieved' makes it clear that the disbelievers can be known by their sinful deeds since disbelief is always the origin of mischief.

In the next verse, the second wrong action of the unbelievers is mentioned, where it says:

"And when they passed by them, they were winking at one another (in mockery)".

In this way and by these innuendoes and sarcasm's the unbelievers, having evil motives, want to say that: 'Look! these poor people say that they are the nearest to Allah: and claim that the divine verses are revealed for them. Look! these foolish people say that the dry and rotten bones will be called to life again!'. Unbelievers usually say some unbecoming and nonsensical words like this.

It seems that the unbelievers" laughs were obviously done when the believers passed by them and their mocking sarcasm's were meted out when they passed by the believers. And since they could not laugh at the believers and mock them easily, they winked and made gestures to convey their thoughts to each other. But, when they were in their own gatherings and the believers passed by them they could commit their evils more freely and boldly.

The term /yataqamazun/ is derived from /qamz/ which means: 'to point or wink at anyone or anything which is the object of criticism'. And sometimes this word is used for any fault-finding, even when it is done orally.

This refers to their behavior when they met the believers. But when they went home and they had private meetings with their family members and

their relatives they continued mocking in the absence of the believers. They explained happily how they had mocked them.

So the next verse says:

"And when they returned to their people they returned Jesting".

They talked to each other so proudly and boastingly as if they had won a great victory.

The term /fakihin/ is the plural form of /fakih/ which is based on /fakahah/ which means 'to be joyful' and 'to laugh'. It is originally derived from /fakihah /with the meaning of 'fruit'. It seems that these frivolities and amusements are like sweet juicy fruit of which they find pleasure in. Also, friendly sweet speaking is called /fukahah/.

Though the term /ahl/ usually means 'family' and 'relatives', it may have a broader meaning, here, and includes 'close friends', too.

Their fourth evil action against the believers was that:

"And when they saw them, they said 'Surely these have gone astray'."

Since the believers had left the belief and the worship of the gods that the unbelievers used to follow, so, the wrongdoers thought of the believers Faith; believing in Allah, as a wrong way and said that they had gone astray.

The type of behavior that the unbelievers had may refer to the early period of Islam, when they did not think of the Divine Religion as a serious and everlasting one. Therefore, they laughed and mocked it.

But, gradually, when groups of people came to Islam and the unbelievers felt threatened, they stood firmly and step by step they intensified their enmity. The verse above depicts the first stage of their enmity against the Muslims; the one that gradually changed into several bloody battles in later stages.

Since the believers were mostly from among the poor people who had not possessed high ranks in their society or a great deal of money, the unbelievers regarded them as lowly and counted their faith unworthy, and, consequently, mocked them and their belief.

"While they had not been sent as guardians over them!"

With what right and according to what rationale do they find fault with the believers?

The rich and the arrogant, from the sect of Noah, told him:

"...We see (in) you nothing but a man like ourselves; nor do we see that any follow you but the lowliest"[21].

And he answered:

"...Nor yet do I say, of those whom your eyes despise that Allah will not grant them (all) that is good: Allah knoweth best: what is in their soul..."[22]

This is, in fact, an answer to those arrogant braggarts saying that it is none of their business what type of people the believers are. They should notice the message of Allah in the invitation of the Prophet (S) to Islam.

But, in the Hereafter the tables will be turned as in the next verse:

"So, on this Day (of Judgement) the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers."

It is because the Day of Judgment is a day that, according to Divine Justice, everyone will receive the results, of his own deeds, which he incurred in this world. All these tricks and falsehoods will be shown or what

they really are, and that is why the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers; which is, itself, a kind of painful punishment for the arrogant ones.

Some narration's, from the Prophet (S), denote that on that Day a door in Heaven will be opened to the disbelievers and they, thinking that they are free from the fire of Hell, go toward it. But, when they reach the door, it will be closed quickly. This will occur several times and the Believers, watching them from Heaven, will laugh.

“(Sitting) on thrones (of dignity) they will command a sight (of all things)”.

What will they be looking at? They will be looking at the immense Blessings of Eternity; at the Great Gifts therein; at His endless Grace; at the Dignity and Respect together with the calmness they have n Heaven, and at the painful chastisement that the obstinate arrogant Unbelievers are faced with in Hell.

Finally, in an interrogative sentence, the last verse questions:

“Have not the Unbelievers been recompensed for what they used to do "

This statement, whether coming from the side of Allah, or of the angels, or from the Believers, is a type of sarcasm leveled at the imaginations and the claims of the arrogant Unbelievers, who expected to receive rewards and prizes from Allah for their vices.

To confront the vanity of these wrong imaginations, it says:

“Have not the Unbelievers been recompensed for what they used to do?”

Some of the commentators have counted this sentence as a separate and independent sentence while some others have considered it as dependent on the previous verse; i.e. the Righteous are sitting on their decorated thrones and looking to see whether the wicked have received the merit of their wrong actions. Verily, they should get their reward from Satan. Can the cursed Satan give them any reward?

The term /thuwibb/ is based on /thaub/ which basically means 'to return to the original state', or 'to return to a place to which one has come before', and /thawab/ is said for a recompense or the reward which is given to a person for his deeds, since it is the result of his deeds which returns to him.

This term is used for the compensation of a good action and an evil one both, but more specially and more frequently for good ones. Therefore, the above mentioned verse denotes a sort of sarcasm to the Unbelievers, and it must be so, because they used to mock both the Believers and the Messages of Allah, so, on That Day, they should be paid back for their mockeries which they committed in this world.

Supplication

O Lord! Save all of us from pride, ignorance, and vanity.

O Lord! Grant us the spirit of justice, truthfulness, and humility.

O Lord! Set our Record in "Illiyin' and take it out from 'Sijjin'.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 451.
2. Thawab-ul-a'mal, based on Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 527.
3. Tafsir Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. 31, p. 88.
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 452.
5. Surah Maryam, No. 19. verse 37
6. Usul-i-Kafi, based on Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 527
7. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 452.
8. Borhan, Commmentary, vol. 4, p. 38.
9. Nur-al-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 528.
10. Al-Kafi, vol. 5, Chapter: 'Trade'.
11. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 530, Tradition 15
12. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol, 5, p. 530, Tradition 19
13. Durr-al-manthur, vol. 6, p. 326.
14. Ibid., p. 325.
15. Nur-uth-Theqalayn, vol. 5, p. 531, Traditions 22 and 23.
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 533 (Tradition 33).
17. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 534 (Tradition 35).
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 456.
21. Surah Hud No. 11, verse 27
22. Surah Hud No. 11, verse 31

Surah Inshiqaq, Chapter 84

(The Rending Asunder)

Number of Verses: 25

(After reading certain verses of Qur'an it is an obligation to do prostration after their recitation, so we have chosen this mark * to help you find these verses within the text.)

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, like many other Surahs of the last part of the holy Qur'an, talks about the Resurrection. First, there are some references to the awful events of the time when this world ends and the New World begins.

Then, it speaks about the resurrection and The Reckoning of the good-doers and evildoers and their ultimate end. Further, it refers to the deeds and beliefs of the disbelievers which bring about Allah's punishment on them. And then, after some oaths, it touches on the different stages man goes through during and after his life. Finally, it returns to speaking about the good and evil actions of man and his rewards or punishments on That Day.

The Virtue In Studying This Surah

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) which says:

"He who studies Surah Inshiqaq Allah will make him safe from being given his Record from behind his back (on the reckoning Day)".

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq, written in the book 'Thawab-al-A'mal', which says:

"He who recites those two Surahs: Infitar and Inshiqaq, and considers them present before his eyes in his obligatory and optional prayers, nothing will separate him from Allah. He will be in he continuous presence of Allah and Allah will be looking over him until all of the accounts he has with others are settled."

Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 1-9

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ

فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا

وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا

1. "When the Sky is rent asunder,"

2. "And obeys its Lord, and it must;"

3. "And when the Earth is flattened out,"

4. "And casts forth what is within it and becomes empty,"

5. "And obeys its Lord, and it must;"

6. "O man! Surely you are ever toiling on towards your Lord; painfully toiling, until you meet Him."

7. "Then he who is given his Record in his right hand,"

8. "Soon he will be reckoned with by an easy reckoning,"

9. "And he will return unto his people in joy."

A Hard Struggle Towards Absolute Perfection:

As it was said in the description of the content of the Surah, at the beginning of the Surah it talks about the awful and amazing events which will happen at the end of this world.

It says:

"When the Sky is rent asunder,"

(and the celestial bodies burst asunder and lose their order and regularity).

An idea similar to that is mentioned at the beginning of Surah Infitar, No. 82, verses 1-2 where it says:

"When the Sky is cleft asunder,"

"When the planets are scattered",

and this is an announcement for the destruction and the end to this material world.

"And obeys its Lord, and it must;"

No one might suppose that the Sky, which is great and seemingly vast and limitless, would have the least resistance against this divine order. It, like an obedient person, resigns to the Order, perfectly.

The term /athinat/ is derived from /uthun/ 'ear' meaning 'to listen to'; and here, metaphorically means 'to obey the Command'.

The term /huqqat/ is based on /haqq/ and means 'fit, need, or deserve'.

How can the earth and the sky not obey when they are created things and they must necessarily obey their Creator since their very nature as a created being requires that they must hearken to the call of their Creator, and they not only did so from the beginning as Surah Fussilat, No. 41 verse 11 says:

"...they said 'we do come (together), in willing obedience'",

but they also obey Allah's' command for their dissolution.

Some have also said that the purpose of the term /huqqat/ is that the fear of the Hereafter is so terrible that the Sky deserves to be cleft asunder. However, the first commentary seems more fitting.

Then it points to the state of the earth and says:

"And when the Earth is flattened out".

Many verses in the Qur'an say that mountains will be uprooted, totally, and left as plains; smooth and level, and the earth will be flattened and large enough for all human beings to gather on.

This is said in Surah ‘Ta-ha No. 20, verses 105-107:

“They ask thee concerning the Mountains: say, 'My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust;'“

“He will leave them as plains smooth and level;”

"Nothing crooked or curved will thou see in their place”.

And the Great Judgment, where all human beings, from the beginning to the end, are gathered, needs such a large and level place.

Some commentators have said that on That Day Allah spreads the present earth, much larger than it is now, in order to make room enough for all of His creatures.

“And casts forth what is within it and becomes empty.”

The consensus of scholars say that the meaning of the verse is that the Earth will suddenly cast forth what it has within its soil, of dead bodies, who will then have a re-birth for the eternal life.

This is the same idea set forth in Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verse 2:

“And the Earth throws up her burdens (from within).”

And, it is also similar to what is said in Surah Nazi’at, No. 79, verses 13-14:

“But it shall be only a single blast,”

“When, behold, they shall be in the awakened state.”

Some commentators have said that besides human beings, mines and treasures, hidden within the soil, will erupt.

It is also probable that the verse refers to the idea that molten lava, within the earth, will be carried out by violent and terrible earthquakes which then covers the surface of the earth and makes it level. Thereafter, the interior of the earth will be empty and quiet.

All of the above three commentaries, combined, are also possible.

“And obeys its Lord, and it must.”

These events, which correlate with the submission of all creatures, indicate the destruction of the universe: the earth, the sky, treasures which, all-in-all, come to an end and give way to a new stage of life; the Eternal life.

Moreover, as signs, they make it clear that Allah domain is over everything, especially the Resurrection.

Verily, man will be faced with the result of his actions; good or evil, when these events occur.

Then, addressing mankind, it tells them of the fate on their path:

“O man! Surely you are ever toiling on towards your Lord; painfully toiling, until you meet Him.”

The term /kadh/ means ' toil ' and 'labour', or 'striving hard’.

In the commentaries of 'Kashshaf ' and 'Fakhr-i-Razi' and also 'Ruh-al-Amin' the term has been meant as 'a scratch on the skin of the body'. That is why it is used for the struggles which affect man's spirit.

This verse points to a great principle throughout everyone's life. It says that this life is perpetually saturated with pain and labour, when it is for obtaining the articles of this world, and even more so for the eternal happiness and for gaining Allah’s favour. This is the nature of this world. Even those who live a very good life are not at all free from pain and labour.

The term

'meet'

used in this verse refers to either the meeting at the Gathering Place, in the Hereafter, before the throne of Allah's Absolute Judgment for all, or meeting His Reward or Punishment, or meeting Him through one's intuition, and shows that the pain and the labour will continue until That Day. When it finishes, one meets his Lord after death, with one's pure and good deeds, of course.

man, in the sense of all human beings, and stressing on the humanity of the human, is addressed by the verse, and this tells us the fact that Allah has created the required faculties in man to pave the way from the beginning to the end.

The emphasis on the term

'Lord'

points to another fact. That is, that this troublesome effort of life is a part of the Divine program towards man's development.

Verily, we are travellers, from nothing, who have entered the realm of existence and are going to the Abode of Love with the hope that we shall meet Him.

This idea is mentioned in some other verses, of the Qur'an.

For example, in Surah Najm, No. 53, verse 42 it says:

"That to thy Lord is the final Goal".

And also in Surah Fatir, No. 35, verse 18 it says:

"...and the destination (of all) is to Allah."

And there are also other verses, in the Qur'an, all of which denote that the permanent process of development for all creatures is unto Almighty Allah.

But, here, men are divided into two groups, as it says:

"Then he who is given his Record in his right hand,"

"Soon he will be reckoned with by an easy reckoning,"

"And he will return unto his people in joy."

This group of people are those who act and use their gifts in the same way that Allah has guided man to do. All their efforts and endeavours are for the sake of Allah and their entire movements are always unto Allah.

There, they are given their Records in their right hand and that shows the purity of their deeds, the correctness of their faith, and their deliverance in the Hereafter that will bring them joy and happiness; an honour to all human beings gathered there.

When they stand in front of the Scale (for reckoning), that which is very just, Allah reckons with them easily: He forgives them of their faults and, because of their strong faith and good acts, changes their sins into good deeds.

Some commentators have said that the meaning of 'an easy reckoning ' is an account which is taken easily and not with accuracy and severity; in which sins are forgiven and good deeds are given reward.

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) which says:

"Allah takes the account easy of he who has three characteristics and lets him go into Heaven with His Mercy."

"What are they?"

They asked, and he answered,

“To be generous to the person who deprived you; to join to the one who ceased from you; and to forgive those who hurt you”.

This matter is also understood from some narrations that accuracy and severity with reckoning, in the Hereafter, depends on one's wisdom and knowledge, as a narration from Imam Baqir (as) says:

“In the Hereafter and on the Day of Judgment, Allah, the Almighty, will exact a detailed account from his servants, in exact proportion to the reason with which He has endowed them in the worldly life”.[1]

The opinions for the commentary about /ahl /are divided. Some commentators have said that the objective meaning is 'one's believing wife and children' that only believers will obtain in Heaven. The very thing, that a person meets his beloved members, in Heaven, and is with them there, is a great blessing in itself.

Some other commentators have said that it means 'the angels belonging to the believing servants in Heaven'. Still others have meant /ahl/ as the believing persons whom were loved by one in this life and they were on the same level with him.

All of them combined are also probable.

Explanations

A Surprising Narration!

It is narrated from Amir-al-Mo’mineen Ali (as) who commented about the verse:

“When the Sky is rent asunder”

and said:

"The skies will separate from the galaxy”.

This narration is meaningful and noteworthy. It is considered among the miracles of science. It opens a secret which none of the scientists of that time knew.

But, nowadays astronomers, with the help of their observations through their great and powerful telescopes, have proven that the universe is a collection of galaxies, each of which is in the form of many systems and stars, and that is why they are called 'star cities'. The Milky Way, a known galaxy, is visible at night and is a great collection of these very systems and stars.

One side of it is so far from us that its stars seem to be only a massive white cloud, but actually it is a group of lights close together, indeed.

The other side of it, which is nearer to us, is formed by visible stars; the same stars which we see in the sky at night. Then, our solar system is a part of this galaxy; the Milky Way.

According to the above narration, Hazrat Ali (as) says that at the threshold of the Hereafter the stars that we primarily see in the sky will separate from the galaxy and lose their order completely.

In those days, no one knew that the stars we see in the sky were really parts of the Milky Way, but only he whose heart was connected to the unseen world and whose knowledge was derived from the divine source could know.

This Life is Full of Pain and Labour

The term /kadih/, used in the verse, denotes that every effort and endeavour is with pain and trouble. The verse addresses all individuals and states the fact that the nature of life, in this world at any stage, is full of toil and misery, bodily, mentally or both, combined, and no one is an exception.

There is a very meaningful tradition narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-al-Hosain (as) which says:

"There is no ease and comfort in the world for the people of this world. It is found only in Heaven and for the people of Heaven. Toil and labour are in this world and for the people of this world.

Each one of them who gets a share of it, has doubled the greed. And those who have more property and things of this world are more needful, because they need other people and some tools to keep and protect the things that they have accumulated. Then, there is no comfort in the wealth of this world."

So Imam (as) adds at the end that:

"Nay, the friends of Allah never bear pain in this world for this world, but they bear it in this world for the Next World."[2]

Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 10-15

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ

فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا

وَيَصْلَىٰ سَعِيرًا

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ

بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا

10. "But he who is given his Record behind his back,"
11. "Soon he will cry for Perdition,"
12. "And enter a Blazing Fire."
13. "Truly, he was (erstwhile) joyful among his people!"
14. "Truly he thought that he would never return (to his Lord)"
15. "Yes indeed! Surely his Lord was (ever) watchful of him"

Those Who Hold Their Record Behind Their Back!

In contrast to the aforementioned verses, which were about those who are given their Record in their right hand, these verses are about the unbelievers and how they are given their Records.

At first, it says:

"But he who is given his Record behind his back,"
"Soon he will cry for Perdition,"
"And enter a Blazing Fire."

The commentators have delivered different ideas about this verse which says

'They are given their Records behind their back',

and those verses which say

'Their Records are given to their left hand'.

Some commentators have said that their right hand is tied to their neck with chains so, that is why their Records are given to their left hand from their back and it is a sign of degradation and shame.

Some others have said that their hands are not free; they are tied behind their back like those of captives and, thus, they can only receive their Records in their left hand behind their back.

Then, still others have said that by noting Surah Nisa. No.4, verse 47 which says:

"...before We alter faces then turn them on their back...",

it can be understood that the faces of this group of wicked ones have been turned to their back and they have to read their Records themselves; the Records are given to their left hand behind their back.

It is more agreeable to say that the doers of good take their Record happily in their right hand and call, with pride and boasting to others in the Hereafter:

"Ah here! Read ye my Record!"[3].

But, when the wicked are given their Record in their left hand, they will keep it behind their back shamefully in order for it not to be seen by others, but unfortunately it is of no use, because nothing is hidden there.

They cry for perdition, but it will be in vain and they will receive the command:

"And enter n Blazing Fire";

that is, they will arrive at the blazing fire of Hell.

Then, the cause of this awful case is described and it says:

"Truly, he was (erstwhile) joyful among his people."

It was a joy of pride, and the pride originated from neglect and being forgetful of Allah. His self-complacence and self-conceit, in his lower life, will now give way to weeping and misery.

It is clear that joy or happiness is not naturally blamed or forbidden, but a believer should be hopeful and happy of Allah's Grace, and be always rejoicing and good tempered with others when interacting with them. That joy is blameworthy which makes people forgetful of Allah, and entangles them only in their lusts.

"Truly he thought that he would never return (to his Lord)!".

In fact, the true source of his misery and corrupted idea was his denial of the Resurrection, that which made him proud and exaltant and, thus, he became drunk with lusts and far from the Reality; Allah, in so far as he mocked the Mission of the prophets, and when he went to his people he was happy with this mockery.

This very idea is mentioned in Surah Mutaffifin, No. 83, verse 31:

"And when they returned to their people they returned jesting ,"

and also in the story of the wealthy Qarun who was doubtful of Allah, some of his people told him

"...Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches)"[4].

The term

/lanyahur/ 'he would never return'

is based on /haur/ which originally means 'go to and fro' whether in deed or in thought.

The term /mihwar/ 'axis', /muhawarah/ 'answers for answers, dehate', /hiwar/ 'a loud voice in dialogue', /tahayyur/ 'astonishment', and

/hawariyun/ 'companions of Jesus'

are from the same root.

But, on the whole, this word which has been used in this verse means 'return' and 'resurrection'.

Meanwhile, this verse shows that the lack of belief in the Resurrection is the origin of carelessness, pride, and corruption.

In the last verse of this portion of the verses, for the negation of their false belief, it says:

"Yes indeed! Surely his Lord was (ever) watchful of him",

and recorded all of man's acts, totally, and kept the Record for the coming Reckoning Day.

The idea, in this verse, is an evidence for the Resurrection, as verse 6 was:

"O man! Surely you are ever toiling on towards your Lord; painfully toiling, until you meet Him".

Both of them emphasize on the term

'Lord',

because the process of man's development towards his Lord can never end with his death. The final goal is beyond the only life in this world.

Allah's watchfulness over man's actions and the record of the deeds are not done in vain. They are certainly primary to the final Judgment and, consequently, to the Reward and the punishment.

Surah Inshiqaq, Verses 16-25

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكَذِّبُونَ

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

16. "But nay! I swear by the glow of the sunset,"

17. "And by the night and that which it gathers together (in one herd)".

18. "And the moon when it grows full,"

19. "That you shall most certainly enter one stage after another."

20. "What then is the matter with them that they do not believe?"

21. "And when the Qur'an is recited to them they do not fail prostrate"
22. "Nay, those who disbelieve reject (it)."
23. "And Allah knows best what they keep secret (in their breasts)."
24. "So announce to them a painful punishment,"
25. "Except those who believe and work righteous deeds: for them is a reward unending."

You Are Continuously Changing.

After the description of man's development, stage by stage, unto his Lord that we had discussed in the former verses, we will see a conformation of the same fact, with more details, in the following verses.

It says:

"But Nay! I swear by the glow of the sunset,"

"And by the night, and that which it gathers together (in one herd)".

"And the moon when it grows full,"

"That you shall most certainly enter one stage after another."

The word /la/ in the term /fa-la-uqsimu/ is expletive and is used for emphasis, here.

The term /ŝafaq/, here, as Raqib cites in Mufradat, means 'redness' of the sky after sunset which mixes with the darkness of nightfall.

Fakhr-i-Razi believes that the term /ŝafaq/ originally means 'thinness', and therefore, a very thin dress is called /ŝafaq/ and /ŝafaqat/ is used in the case of one having a 'thin' heart. (But, Raqib's statement seems to be more appropriate).

In any case, Allah swears by it to make everyone think about this beautiful natural phenomenon, because 'sunset' announces a deep revelation in the world, that is, the day ends and the night begins, and also, it is the time of the sunset prayer; 'Maghrib'.

To swear by the night is for the reason that night is a hiding place for secrets and mysteries.

The term /wasaq/, conveying the meaning of 'to gather together (in one herd)', points to one of the great secrets of the night. At nightfall all the wandering flocks and herds come home. The men that had scattered abroad, for their livelihood, return home to rest and sleep.

The night collects them in their homes.

This idea is also carried in Surah Mo'min, No. 40, verse 61 when it says:

"It is Allah who has made the Night for you, that you may rest therein..."

The moon and its glorious silver light, especially when it is full at night, is one of Allah's signs and that is why He swears by it.

It is interesting to note that these four parts point to the cases and varieties that continually occur in the created world: the sun sets, its redness appears in the sky, living creatures rush to their home, and the moon rises in full.

It should be noted that on the night before the fourteenth day of the month, the moon rises from the beginning of the night, by which these oaths are said, and that is a basis for the verse:

"That you shall most certainly enter one stage after another",

which illustrates the different states in the life of man.

There are various commentaries for this sentence. Some of them are as follows:

1. Man travels and ascends, stage by stage, towards the Absolute perfection. He strives hard; first in this world, then in the partition and then in Resurrection, with the different states that they have.

2. Man has different stages of development, from the time he is the sperm form, until death. They are considered about thirty seven stages by some people.

3. Man bears various opposites in his life: health and sickness, chess and happiness, hardship and ease, war and peace.

4. Man will face many different hard situations in the Hereafter until he receives the consequence of his reckoning; Heaven or Hell.

5. In ancient times people had many varieties of pleasant and unpleasant adventures; or that the unbelieving people among the Muslim community displayed various denials and rejections of Islam. This idea is said to be narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

All the above commentaries are possible, of course, and the verse may refer to all of them together.

In any event, the occurrence of these states to man and the lack of constancy in his position, on the one hand, is an evidence to the fact at he is 'a created thing' and necessarily has a Creator, because every changeable thing is a creature and all creatures have a Creator; and on the other hand, it is an evidence to the lack of immortality for this world; also it is a sign for man's constant movement and development toward his Lord, to the Resurrection; as was mentioned in verse 6:

"O man! Surely you are ever toiling on towards your Lord; painfully toiling, until you meet Him."

Then, as a general consequence it inquires:

"What then is the matter with them that they do not believe?"

How can they ignore the immense gifts and benefits they have from Allah? They have clear evidences and signs for theism, theology and Resurrection, both in outer nature like day and night, sun and moon, light and darkness, sunrise and sunset with its redness; and inner nature from the mother's womb in the form of sperm; to other stages one after another until death, but they do not believe. Why do they not accept of Allah's grace instead of disputing about it?

Then it turns from the creation to the revelation and says:

"And when the Qur'an is recited to them they do not fall prostrate." *

The Holy Qur'an is so bright and clear that it is a good evidence for itself and that its content is from the Divine source.

'Prostrate',

here, means 'humble gratitude to Allah', and

'to fall prostrate'

which is the act of putting the forehead on the ground for the prayer, is one of the examples of this general sense. Perhaps for the same reason, as it is narrated, when the Prophet (S) recited these verses he fell prostrate.

"Nay, those who disbelieve reject (it)."

The verb form used in the Arabic text, which is usually applied in a continuous case, shows their constant rejection. That constancy was not because of the revelation being inadequate, but it was based on their blind imitation of their father's behaviour and following their own interests and their lusts.

“And Allah knows best what they keep secret (in their breasts)”.

Allah is aware of their thoughts and aims, and, also, of the motives causing those constant rejections. Then, whatever more they keep secret, finally He will punish them.

The term /yu'un/ is derived from /wi’a'/ 'container'. The very word is used in a statement narrated from Hazrat Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balagha which says:

“Verily these hearts are containers. The best of them is that which has a better ability to preserve its contents and a bigger capacity to hold more”.

“So give them tiding of a painful punishment”.

The term /baŝŝir/ is usually used for 'announcing good news' but, sometimes, it is used ironically. The believers are informed of the immense blessings of Heaven while blame is put on the unbelievers and causes them to be regretful and begrudging.

In the last verse of this Surah, the fate of those good-doers from among the believers is again mentioned as an exception where it says:

“Except those who believe and work righteous deeds: for them is a reward unending.”

The term /mamnun/ is derived from /mann/ which means both 'cease' and 'decline' and also 'indebtedness'.

The word

/manun/ 'death'

is, also, based on it. All these senses may be understood from the term, in this verse, because, inspite of the blessings in this human world, which are diminishable and ever changing and often mixed with undesired consequences or indebtedness given by this person or that person, the blessings of that spiritual world are followed by no indebtedness, declension or undesired consequences.

This exception is apparently joined to the earlier descriptions, about the unbelievers in the former verses, in order to give a way to the disbelievers and to say that certainly that painful punishment will be removed from those who repent and believe and do good and they will given a Reward that will never fail.

Explanation

The late 'Tabarsi' in 'MaJma'-al-Bayan' has rendered the last verses of this Surah to mean 'free-will', since it is not praiseworthy for Allah, the Wisest, to blame those who do not fall prostrate and believe, when they are forced to.

And, when it says:

“What then is the matter with them that they do not believe?”,

“And when the Qur'an is recited to them they do not fall prostrate”, *

is a clear evidence for 'free-will'. Again, blame for leaving the prostration is a reason for the fact that the disbelievers should not only follow the

primary Principles of religion, but, also should perform the secondary precepts of religion, as well.

Supplication

O Lord! Take our reckoning easy on the Day when all attend at Your Judgment.

O Lord! Help us to go the Right Path when all human beings are ever toiling on towards You until they meet You.

O Lord! We have obeyed Your Message, the Holy Qur'an, bestow on us the grace to act accordingly.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 537.
2. Khisal-i-Saduq, vol. 1, Chapter: 'This World and the Next World'
3. Surah Haqqa, No. 69, verse 19
4. Surah Qasas. No. 28, verse 76

Surah Buruj, Chapter 85

(The Constellations)

Number of Verses: 22

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The early Muslim believers of Mecca lived in turmoil especially at the beginning period of Islam. They were always faced with torture; bodily and spiritually, by the pagan Arabs who forced them to leave their Faith. Some of them, the weak ones, succumbed, but, the stronger ones resisted.

This is a Meccan Surah whose main objective seems to be the spiritual strengthening of the believers against that process, and encouraging them to persevere.

Concerning this point, it tells the story of 'the makers of the pit of fire', those who dug some ditches in which they burnt people for their Faith. They threatened them and burnt them, but the true believers did not loose their Faith.

In another section of the Surah, the pagans are threatened with the blazing fire of Hell for the persecution of Allah’s votaries, while the believers are given good news about the gardens of Bliss.

Then, to attract their attention to past generations, it illustrates the story of Pharaoh, the people of Thamud and some other arrogant sects. They lived in such great authority, in the past, that the pagans of Mecca were naught in comparison with them, but they could not stand for Allah’s command and perished. Besides, these examples are for soothing the heart of the Prophet (S) and of the believers.

Finally, the Surah ends wilh an explanation about the greatness and the extraordinary importance of the Holy Qur'an.

On the whole, this is a Surah of resistant perseverance, and patience from the side of the believers against the persecutions of the enemies, amongst which the promise Allah’s victory is found.

The name of the Surah is taken from the oath which occurred in the beginning verse of the Surah.

The Virtue in Studying This Surah

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) for the virtue of this Surah which says:

“Allah will give reward for the good-deeds ten times the number of all peopie gathered in 'Friday Prayer' and all people gathered on the day of 'Arafah (the ninth day of Zilhajj), to the person who studies this Surah. Its recitation saves man from fears.”

These rewards fit in with the content of the Surah and it is obvious when we consider that: one of the commentaries for the verse:

“By the Witness and the Witnessed”

is 'Friday' and ‘Arafah Day', and that the Surah denotes to the severe perseverance of the early believers against the enemies' persecutions. By the

way, it also confirms that these rewards belong to those who study the Surah, then contemplate on it and act accordingly.

Surah Buruj, Verses 1-9

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ

وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ

قُتِلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ

النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ

إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ

وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ

وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

1. "By the Sky full of constellations,"
2. "By the promised Day (of Judgment),"
3. "By the Witness and the Witnessed."
4. "Cursed were the makers of the pit (of fire),"
5. "Of the fuel-fed fire (kept burning),"
6. "When they sat by it,"
7. "And they were witnesses of what they did to the believers."
8. "They were vengeful towards them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy,"
9. "Him, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Witness over everything."

The Believers and the Pyres

We know that the believers of Mecca were in terrible trouble, at the beginning, and their enemies did whatever they could to torture them. As it was mentioned earlier, the objective of the revelation of the Surah is to warn these persecutors so that they may consider the destiny of the past tyrannical generations and, on the other hand, it is a soothing message for the early believers of Mecca and a strengthening for their spirits. Furthermore, it is a lesson to Muslims throughout history.

"By the Sky full of constellations".

The term /buruj/ is the plural form of /burj/ which originally means 'a castle' or 'a tower'. Some have rendered it to anything that is apparent, manifest or conspicuous, high or elevated; hence /burj/ is applied to a certain kind of structure. Also, /burj/ is used to define an angle of a fortress, or of a surrounding wall of a city, which is more conspicuous; and sometimes a fortress, itself, is called /burj/.

The celestial bodies are either the bright stars of the sky, or the 'constellations', that is, 'a number of fixed stars arbitrarily considered as a group' usually named after some mythological beings that they supposedly resemble an outline, or the broad belt of the constellations marking the twelve Signs of the Zodiac.

Each makes the solar path through the heavens, as we see it, month after month. (Indeed, the sun is rather fixed and the earth rotates round the sun, but, to us it seems to be the contrary.)

Whichever of them the oath is made to, it denotes to its greatness which, perhaps, was not completely known to Arabs at that time, but it is clear to us, today, though it seems that the meaning is 'the bright stars of the sly'.

The holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, on the commentary of the verse, that:

"It means the stars."[1]

"By the promised Day (of Judgement)"

The appointed Day that all the prophets spoke about and hundreds of verses of the Holy Qur'an warned of.

The Day that

"Those of old and those of later times."

"All will certainly be gathered together for the meeting appointed for the Day"[2],

and the account of all will be made clear.

And, in the third and fourth oaths, it says:

"By the Witness and the Witnessed."

There are many commentaries given on the meaning of the terms /ŝahid/ 'witness' and maŝhud/ 'witnessed'.

There are more than thirty, of which the following are the most outstanding:

1. The

'Witness'

is the Prophet (S) as Surah Ahzab, No. 33 verse 45 says:

"O prophet! Truly We have sent you as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings and a Warner".

And the

'Witnessed'

is the Day of Judgment, as Surah Hud, No.11, verse 103 says:

"...that is a Day for which mankind will be gathered together: that will be a Day of Testimony".

2. The

'Witness', /ŝahid/,

is the witnesses to man's deeds like his limbs, as mentioned in Surah Nur, No. 24, verse 24:

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions".

And the

'Witnessed', /maŝhud/,

is people and their deeds.

3. The

'Witness'

is Friday which is witness to the community of Muslims in the great ceremony of 'Friday Prayers'.

And the

'Witnessed'

is ‘Arafah Day' when the pilgrims, of Kaaba, are the visitors on that Day (the ninth day of Zilhajj). This very commentary has been narrated from the Prophet, Imam Baqir, and Imam Sadiq (as).[3]

4. The

'Witness'

is 'the Feast of Sacrifice', and the

'Witnessed'

is ‘Arafah Day’.

A narration says that once a man came into the Mosque of the Prophet (S), /masjid-an-nabi/, and saw a person who was reciting traditions of the Prophet (S). He asked him for the commentary of this verse and the person there answered in the affirmative that

/ŝahid/ the 'Witness'

is Friday and

/maŝhud/ the 'Witnessed'

is 'the Feast of Sacrifice Day'. He passed him and saw another person who was also reciting.

Then he asked him about the commentary of the verse and he answered:

/ŝahid/ the 'Witness'

is Friday and

/maŝhud/ the 'Witnessed'

is 'the Feast of Sacrifice Day'. He continued walking, and met a young man who was very handsome and he, too, was narrating traditions from the Prophet (S).

He asked him to tell him about the commentary of the verse and the young man answered:

/ŝahid/ 'the Witness'

is Muhammad (S) and

/maŝhud/ the 'Witnessed'

is the Day of Judgment.

He added:

“Have you not heard that Allah says:

'O Prophet! Truly We have sent you as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings and a Warner',

and have you not also heard that He says:

'That is a Day for which mankind will be gathered together: that will be a Day of Testimony'?”

The writer of this incident says:

“I asked about the first person and I was answered that it was Ibn-Abbas, the answer for the second person was 'Abdiullah-ibn-'Umar, and the third one was Hassan-ibn-'Ali (as).”[4]

5. The

'Witness'

is 'nights and days', and the

'Witnessed'

is 'mankind' whose deeds they witnessed, as it is said from Imam Zayn-al-'abidin (as) in 'the morning and evening supplications':

“This is a new day which is witness to our deeds. When we do good, it leaves us praiseworthy, and when we do evil, it leaves us scorned.”[5]

6. The

'Witness'

is 'angels' and the

'Witnessed'

is 'the Qur’an'.

7. The

'Witness'

is 'the Black Stone' and the

'Witnessed'

is 'the persons who have performed pilgrimage to Mecca’ who pass by 'the Black Stone' and touch it.

8. The

'Witness'

is people and the

'Witnessed'

is Allah.

9. The

'Witness'

is the 'Muslim Community', and the

'Witnessed'

is other nations, as Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 143 says:

“...that you might be witnesses over the nations”.

10. The

'Witness'

is the Prophet of Islam (S) and the

'Witnessed'

is other prophets, as Surah Nisa No. 4, verse 41 attests:

''and We brought you as a witness against these.”

11. Or the

'Witness'

is the holy Prophet (S), and the

'Witnessed'

is Amir-al-Momineen Ali (as).

Of course, the quality of this verse, in comparison with the previous verses, demands that

/ŝahid/ the 'Witness'

be the Day of Judgment, whether it be the Prophet of Islam or other prophets over their nations, the angels, man's limbs, and the like; and

/maŝhud/ the 'Witnessed'

to be mankind or their deeds.

Thus, most of the above mentioned commentaries join and come under one category with a broad sense.

However, the commentaries such as ‘Friday', 'Arafah Day’, and 'the Feast of Sacrifice Day' are separate from this meaning; though they are also among the witnesses of the Day of Judgment and the witnesses of man's deeds. Each of them, consisting of a large number of people even in this life, metaphorically resembles the Resurrection.

Taking note of the above explanation, it will be obvious that there is no contrast in the mentioned commentaries. All of them may gather in the meaning of the 'witness' and the 'witnessed' in a vast scope. This is one of the signs of the importance of the Holy Qur'an whose meanings are so broad that many different commentaries can be applied to them.

It is because

/ŝahid/ the 'Witness'

concludes any witness and

/maŝhud/ the 'Witnessed'

covers anything that can be witnessed. They are mentioned in 'indefinite form', which shows their importance which was explained, definitely, in the above commentaries.

It is noteworthy that there is a delicate relation between these four parts, on the one hand, and the subjects that the oaths are for, on the other hand. The sky and its bright stars and ordered constellations are signs of regularity and account.

'The promised Day (of Judgment)'

is a definite scene of

'reckoning'

upon

'the book'.

The

'Witness'

and the

'Witnessed'

are also some means by which reckoning is precisely done. The oaths are for the persecutors to be warned that surely their evil deeds against the believers are recorded and kept for 'the promised Day of Judgment'. And the witnesses around us, from angels, limbs of the body, the days and nights, and the like, are watchful of these deeds and they will bear witness to them on that Day.

Then, after these oaths, it says:

“Cursed were the makers of the pit (of fire),”

“Of the fuel-fed fire (kept burning),”

“When they sat by it,”

“And they were witnesses of what they did to the believers.”

The term /uxdud/, as Raqib says in his book 'Mufradat', means 'a wide and deep ditch spread on the land', or in other words, the vast pits or trenches are called 'Okhdud' whose plural form is /axadid/ and is basically derived from /xadd/ which means 'a deep trench in the ground, or a pit, a ditch' or the like, dug, or excavated; and originally it is derived from the /xadd/ of man with the sense of 'the part bordering upon the nose, on either side (on the right and on the left where the tears flow when one weeps)'.

It is used metaphorically for the ditches that appear on the surface of the earth; (and later, as an active meaning in practice).

To answer the question of who the makers of the pit of fire were, in which they burnt people for their Faith, and while they were alive; the commentators and historians have delivered some different ideas which will be dealt with under the title of 'Explanation' later. But, it is certain that they had excavated and prepared some deep pits of fire to make the true believers leave their Faith. When the believers persisted, the persecutors threw them into the fire and burnt them alive.

The term /waqud/ basically means a substance by which fire is made (like wood). Any fire needs something, such as wood, and the like to be burnt, but /that-al-waqud/ points to the abundance of fire that they used; then naturally, the resulting fire had been an immense one; and that is why the term has been interpreted to 'burning fire'.

Some authorities think that /waqud/ carries two meanings: one is 'wood' and the other is 'flame'. But, this idea is not acceptable.

The objective point in the verse:

"When they sat by it,"

and the verse after that, is that some pagans were sitting and watching them burning not only indifferent, but, also enjoying it. That was a sign of their utmost hard-heartedness.

Some have also said that these persons were the appointed interrogators and the persecutors of the believers to cause them to leave the true religion.

Still others believe that they were two groups of people: one group was the persecutors and the other was the spectators; and since the spectators were pleased with what the persecutors did, then, this action was attributed to all of them. And, it is natural that in situations like this a group of men are always performers and some others are spectators. Besides, chiefs usually instruct while subordinates obey.

It is also said that there were some people sitting and watching the persecutions to see that the persecutors did not offend their duties and bore witness, before the king, that they had done their duties well.

The combination of these different groups, for the fulfillment of the action, does not seem improbable. Therefore, all of the above mentioned commentaries can be considered together.

At any rate, the form of the verb in the Arabic text denotes that the action was continued for a length of time.

"They were vengeful towards them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy,"

Verily, the believers had no fault, but that of their Faith in the True God, Allah. They believed in Allah, the Absolute Perfection, Who is Mighty, and is Worthy of all Praise. Was the belief in such a God a sin, or was the belief in powerless irrational gods?

The term /naqamu/ is derived from /naqam/ which means: 'to devour, to dislike, to reject' by tongue, or by practice through punishment and vengeance.

Surely an action like that is done in great sin, not for the Belief in Allah, Who is exalted in Power and Worthy of all Praise. This makes it clear that

how ignorant they were and how low their culture had been that they considered their greatest sin as their greatest pride.

This resembles the idea in Surah A'raf. No.5, verse 126 that sorcerers, after believing in Moses and being threatened with persecution and death by Pharach, told him:

"But thou dost wreak thy vengeance on us simply because we believed in the Signs of our Lord..."

The terms

/'aziz/ 'the Almighty'

and

/ĥamid/ 'the praiseworthy'

are, indeed, a reply to their iniquities and a proof against them. Meanwhile, they are also a threat and warning to all the doers of persecution, throughout history, that Allah, the 'Almighty', and the 'Praiseworthy', keeps watch over them.

Then, talking about two other divine qualities, it says:

"Him to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Witness over everything."

Indeed, these four divine qualities: 'Almighty, (Omnipotent), Praiseworthy, ownership of the kingdom of heavens and the earth, and Omniscient' are of those that establish the propriety of servitude.

Also, it is a glad tiding to the believers that Allah is attentive and watchful over their perseverance and patience in defending Faith, and He sees their sacrifices and devotions. These are the facts that give them power and satisfaction.

On the other hand, they are threats and warnings for their enemies to know that Allah is Mighty but, He leaves them alone in order to examine them; and, at last, they will receive the painful chastisement for their evil deeds.

Explanations

Who Were 'The Makers of The Pit of fire'?

It was said before that /uxdud/ means 'a wide and deep ditch' and here, it means 'some great pits full of fuel-fed fire prepared by the persecutors for the purpose of burning the believers'.

There is no agreement among the authorities, both commentators and historians, as to the time and place of the incident whether it has been a single event or the happening refers to numerous events similar to that in different parts of the world.

The most famous one is that of Zu-Nuwas, the last Himyrite king of Yemen.

Zu-Nuwas, who was by religion a Jew, named himself Yusef. The members of Himyrite followed him as Jews. Then, after a length of time, he was informed that a group of people in Najran, a zone in the north of Yemen, were still Christian. His companions compelled him to force the group to be Jewish. He moved to Najran and gathered the inhabitants of the area.

Offering them the Jewish religion, he insisted that they accept it, but they did not. They refused the religion and accepted to suffer death, instead.

Zu-Nuwas ordered his men to dig a large ditch and fill it with wood, then he lit a great fire. Some of them were thrown into it and burnt alive. Some others were killed by the sword and were torn into pieces. Altogether, the number of deaths was about twenty thousand.[6]

It is cited that one of the Christians of Najran fled from the event and went to the Roman Caesar in Rome and asked him for help against Zu-Nuwas.

Caesar replied that Najran was far from his country, but, he would write a letter to the king of Abyssinia, who was a Christian and whose country was neighbouring to the man's, and would ask him to help.

He wrote that letter and demanded that the Abyssinian king to take revenge on that terrible murderer. The man from Najran went to the King, Najashi, who became very saddened when he heard the story of Najran. He felt pity for the extinguishment of the light of Christianity, there, and decided to take revenge.

The Abyssinian army hastened to Yemen and defeated Zu-Nuwas' troops, killing a great many of them. Then, before long, they took Yemen and Najashi rulled it as a state of Abyssinia.[7]

Some commentators have cited that the length of the ditch was 40 cubits and its width was 12 cubits. (A cubit was equal to half a meter. Sometimes, in other places, it was used instead of /gez/ which was a measure for one meter.) Some other commentators have cited that there were seven ditches each of which had been as large as the above mentioned one.

This event has been narrated, differently, in numerous books of commentary and history including Majma'-al-Bayan by Tabarsi, Abul-Futuh Razi's Commentary, Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi, Ruh-al-Ma'ali by Aloosi, Qartabi’s Commentary, Sirah by Ibn- Hosham, and many others.

As it was mentioned before, the cruel persecutors were finally punished in this world and were revenged for the murders they had committed. The punishment of blazing fire in the Hereafter is waiting for them, too.

These 'crematoriums', which were made by those Jews, are said to be probably the first ones in history. But, it is surprising that this very cruel innovation was used against the Jews, themselves, and, as it is known, many Jews were burnt in crematoriums, on Hitler's orders, in Germany; and the example of the 'Punishment of the Burning Fire' happened to them even in this world.

In addition to this, Zu-Nuwas, the main establisher of this horrible innovation, himself, was not safe from his evil deeds.

The above lines about 'the makers of the pit of fire' are according to popular attitudes, but there are also other narrations which say that 'the makers of the pit of fire' were not only those in Yemen at the time of Zu-Nuwas, but in other locations and at different times. Commentators have cited up to ten narrations about them.

A narration that has been cited from Amir-al-Motmineen Ali (as) says:

“And the Magi had a 'Book' and they acted according to their Holy Book. One of their kings married with his sister and the woman wanted him to

announce that marriage with ones' sister' is lawful, but his people did not accept this. So, the king had some of the believing people, who opposed his instruction, thrown into a pit of fire."[8]

This is about 'the makers of the pit of fire' in Fars (Old Persia, i.e. Iran). There is a citation about 'the makers of the pit of fire' in Sham, as well, where there lived some believing people who were burnt in a pit of dire by Antiyakhus.[9]

Some have also referred this event to the companions of Daniel, he famous prophet of the Israelites who are mentioned in the book of Daniel from the Torah, and Tha'labi has applied 'the makers of the pit of fire', in Fars, to them.[10]

It is not improbable that 'the makers of the pit of fire' includes all of hem, although the most famous example of it is the story of Zu-Nuwas in Yemen.

Resistance in Keeping Faith

There are numerous examples, in history, of people who suffered fatal persecutions for their beliefs. They agreed, eagerly, to be killed but, did not leave their Faith. History has so many stories of this kind: some of the Faithful were hanged, some were murdered by the sword, and some were burnt to death.

The story of 'asiya, Pharaoh's wife, is well known. She was persecuted terribly for her Faith to Moses, the son of 'Imran, so much ao that she died because of the torture.

A narration from Amir-al-Momineen Ali (as) says:

"Allah appointed a man to prophethood from among the people of Abyssinia for them, but they refused him. They fought against him and his followers in which, finally, some of the prophet's votaries were killed and some others were captured and kept along with the prophet himself as captives.

Then they prepared a ditch full of blazing fire, and called people to come beside it. They commanded that any of them who followed the same religion as theirs could go aside and those who believed in the prophet's religion and that of is votaries should throw themselves into the fire. The prophet's followers, who could do nothing, bravely threw themselves into the fire. They outran each other (as if in a competition).

Then, at that moment there came a woman carrying a one-month-old baby. She went to throw herself into the fire but suddenly her motherly affection stopped her. Then the little baby called her and said:

'Do not fear, Mother, throw yourself and me both. By Allah, surely this is a little thing on the path of Allah...'

And this baby was one of those who spoke in the cradle." [11]

This story tells us that there had been another example of

'the makers of the pit of fire'

in Abyssinia.

The story of 'Ammar-Yasir's parents and some others, like them, in addition to the story of Imam Hosain and his companions who proceeded to be killed as martyrs, are famous in Islamic history.

In our time, we ourselves, have seen or have heard many examples of young and old people who willingly wished to be martyred for the sake of

their Faith and religion. Then, as a conclusion, it should be said that the existence of the Divine religions, in the past and present, depended on these devotions and martyrdoms.

Surah Buruj, Verses 10-16

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ

إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ

وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ

ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ

فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

10. "Surely (as for) those who persecute (or draw into temptation) believing men and believing women, yet repent not, for them is the punishment of Hell and for them is the punishment of the Burning Fire."

11. "Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, for them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, that is the great salvation, (the fulfillment of all desires),"

12. "Surely the Grip of thy Lord is severe."

13. "It is He Who creates (everything) from the very beginning and causes to return,"

14. "And He is All-forgiving, All-loving,"

15. "Lord of the 'Arsh (Throne), the Glorious,"

16. The Doer of whatever He wills."

Allah's Punishment for the Persecutors

After describing, in the former verses, the terrible persecutions carried out by some past generations who burnt the resisting believers, in the following verses it points to the grievous punishment of Allah, for them, in contrast with the great rewards for the believers.

The warning is quite clear:

"Surely (as for) these who persecute (or draw into temptation) believing men and believing women, yet repent not, for them is the punishment of Hell and for them is the punishment of the Burning Fire."

The term /fatanu/ is derived from /fatn/ which originally means 'to try or prove' (as gold in the fire to ascertain its purity), then the term is used in the sense of examination and persecution (by burning) or both. It is also used with the meaning of either punishment or leading into temptation.

In this verse, it is used with the meaning of 'punishment and penalty', similar to Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verses 13-14 which say:

"(It will be) a Day when they will be tried (and tested) over the Fire!"

"Taste ye your trial! this is what ye used to ask to be hastened!".

The words

'yet repent not',

in the verse, shows that it is possible for the persecutors to repent, and this signifies the highest Mercy of Allah to the sinners. In the meantime, it warns the pagans of Mecca to leave off with the persecuting of the believers and return to the way of Allah before it is too late.

In principal, the Qur'an does not close the door of repentance on anyone. Then, it can be understood that the settlement of the painful punishments are for the improvement of the sinners and returning them to the way of Allah as a consequence.

It is noteworthy that there are two kinds of distinguishing chastisements, mentioned in the verse for the persecutors: the first is

'the punishment of Hell',

and the second is

'the punishment of the Blazing Fire'.

The case is, perhaps, for the reason that there are many kinds of punishment in Hell, one of which is 'the Blazing Fire' and it is especially mentioned for those persecutors who burnt the believers of Mecca with fire and should be punished with Fire on That Day. But, how different these two kinds of fire are!

Some commentators have cited that 'the punishment of Hell' is for their 'disbelieving' and 'the punishment of the Blazing Fire' is for their deeds of persecuting others.

Then, paying attention to the rewards of the Righteous, it says:

"Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, for them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, that is the great salvation, (the fulfillment of all desires)".

What a great Salvation! What can be better or higher than being the Nearest to Allah, honourably, in the midst of the Gardens of Bliss, the Etemal blessings? But, it should be noted that the essential means of obtaining this 'great Salvation' is 'Belief and doing good deeds'.

The phrase

/'amal-us-salihat/ 'do good-deeds'

denotes that a mere good action, or a few of them done temporarily, are not enough, but good deeds must be done continuously by the believers.

The term

/thalika/ 'that',

in Arabic, is generally used for pointing to something or someone that is in the distance. But, here it is used to show importance and highness, then it means that their 'great Salvation' is so important and high that imagination cannot touch it.

Then, threatening the pagans once more, it says:

"Surely the Grip of the Lord is severe."

So, it emphasizes that one should not think that there is no Hereafter and that one does not return to life again.

Nay, it says:

"It is He Who creates (everything) from the very beginning, and causes it to return".

The term /bataŝa/ means 'to take or seize by force' and since this action is the cause of punishment, then it is used in the sense of 'chastisement'.

The term
/rabbika/ 'your Lord'
is for soothing the Prophet (S) and is an emphasis on Allah's support for him.

It is noteworthy to mention that there are five emphases concentrated on here:

1. The term /batasa/, meaning 'to take by force', contains the connotation of severity.
2. A noun-phrase is usually used for emphasis.
3. The term
/sadid/ 'severe',
itself.
4. The word
/inna/ 'surely'.
5. The Arabic letter 'lam' (ل), used in cases like this, is also used for emphasis, here.

Therefore, the Holy Qur'an threatens them precisely about the punishment. And the sentence:

"It is He Who creates (everything) from the very beginning, and causes it to return"

is an evidence for the Resurrection which can be counted as another emphasis, added to the above ones.

Then, five qualities of the divine attributes are mentioned. It says:

"And He is All-forgiving, All-loving,"
"Lord of the Throne, the Glorious,"
"The Doer of whatever He wills."

The terms
/qafur/ (All-forgiving),
and
/wadud/ (All-loving)
both are 'of the utmost amplification' which refer to the extreme forgiveness and love of Allah: He is 'forgiving' of the sins of those sinners who repent, and is 'Loving' to the servants who are good-doers.

In fact, these divine attributes are mentioned to be added to the threats given in the former verses to illustrate the fact that the sinners can repent and be forgiven because, while Allah is strict in punishment, He is
'All-forgiving'
and
'All-loving'.

The term /wadud/ has the sense of being in the subjective case, which fits the other attribute, i.e. 'All-forgiving'.

The third attribute is
/zul-'arš/ 'Lord of the Throne ('Arsh)'.

And 'Arsh, which means 'Royal throne', in such cases, refers metaphorically to power and Sovereignty. This touches on the fact that the rulership of all creatures is His, and Allah's Will is, itself, the Word and the Deed. There is no interval between them. No circumstance whatever can

come between His Will and the execution thereof. Therefore, it is quite easy for Him to call the dead to life, again, and punish the persecutors and the oppressors.

The term /majid/ is derived from /majd/ which means 'to excel in glory' which is used only for Allahas a quality.

The association of these five Divine attributes are clear, because Allah is All-forgiving and All-loving under the absolute Power (Omnipotence), Graciousness and with His Will so that nothing can stop Him, no one is able to confront Him, nor does His Will fade.

Surah Buruj, Verses 17-22

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ

فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ

وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ

فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ

17. "Has the story reached thee, of the Forces"
18. "Of Pharaoh and (the tribe of) Thamud?"
19. "And yet the unbelievers (persist) in rejecting (the Truth)!"
20. "But Allah encompasses them from every point!"
21. "Nay! it is a glorious Qur'an,"
22. "(1nscribed) in a Tablet Preserved!"

Did You See What Happened to the Forces of Pharaoh and the Tribe of Thamud?

The previous verses were about the Absolute Power of Allahand His Sovereignty with some threats for the unbelieving persecutors.

Then, to make it clear that these threats are not a mere statement and they are practicable, in the next verses it addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"Has the story reached thee, of the Forces"

These forces are some large and great troops which fought against Allah's prophets in the past, but all of them perished.

Then two examples of the forces are mentioned: one of them is very ancient, and the other waa not so ancient then.

It says:

"Of Pharaoh and (the tribe of) Thamud?"

These peoples were those who governed throughout of the world at their time from east to west. Some of them exploited the stable stone of the mountains and built splendid houses and castles with them, so that there were no other people who could match them, in those times.

But Allah destroyed them all. Pharaoh was a proud monarch of a powerful kingdom, with resources and organization, material, moral, and intellectual, as good as any in the world. When he pitted himself against Allah's Prophet, he and his forces were destroyed through water in the Nile.

The 'Thamud', a very old generation, were great builders, and had a high standard of material civilization. But, they defied the law of Allah and perished in a dreadful earthquake and cold terrible storms, which threw them prone on the ground and buried them with their fine buildings. These two factors, water and wind, were of the main necessities of life, but they worked as the means of their inevitable destruction.

Pharaoh and Thamud are two examples who were both very powerful; chosen from all past arrogant generations. They are selected because the Arab pagans knew their names and were partly familiar with their history.

Then, in the next verse, it says:

"And yet the unbelievers (persist) in rejecting (the Truth)."

Truth is obvious to all, but the arrogant ones do not follow the 'Way' and do not obey the 'Right'.

The term

/bal/ 'and yet'

is used, here, for varying the matter and saying that these pagans are as if they are worse than Pharaoh and the tribe of Thamud from the point of arrogance and rejecting the verses of Qur'an. They used all possible means to gain their goal.

So, they should know that:

"But Allah encompasses them from every point!"

and they are all always within His grasp.

If Allah leaves them alone for a while, it is not due to inability, and if He does not punish them immediately, it is not because they are out of His reach.

The term

/wara-'i-him/ 'from behind'

points to the sense that they are encompassed by the Divine forces, not only in conditions that they foresee but from a variety of unexpected directions; and cannot escape from Justice and Penalty.

It is also probable that it points to the Knowledge of Allah in regard to their deeds, so much so that none of their words, behaviour, and thoughts are hidden from Him.

Then, pointing to the vanity of their persistence in rejecting the Qur'an and their claim that it was magic, or poetry it says:

"Nay! it is a glorious Qur'an. (Inscribed) in a Table! Preserved!"

It will remain safe and unchanged from the hands of the Wicked, the Satans, and the Soothsayers. Therefore, O Prophet (S)! pay no attention if they call you a poet, or sorcerer, or soothsayer, or even mad. Do not be worried.

Your support is Mighty and your Way is clear. As it was mentioned before, the term /majid/ is derived from /majd/ which means 'to excel in glory' and is completely appropriate for the Qur'an, because its contents are broad and glorious and its meaning is vast and exalted both about Divine theology, and ethical morals, as well as religious laws.

The term /lauh/ means 'a broad tablet to write on', while /louh/ means 'thirst', and also: 'atmosphere'.

The verb, derived from the former, means ' appear and glitter’. But the word is used here in the sense of 'the Tablet on which the Holy Qur'an is inscribed and is preserved'. It, of course, does not mean the ordinary tablets that we use.

It is cited in a commentary from Ibn-Abbas that the length of 'the Preserved Tablet' is as long as the distance between the sky and the earth, and its width is as long as the distance between East and West.

Hence, it seems that 'the Preserved Tablet' is the very Knowledge of Allah, which encompasses all the world and is safe from any distortion and alteration.

Surely, the Qur'an originates from the endless knowledge of Allah, and is neither from man's thought, nor a production from the Satans. Its content, itself, proves this fact.

This is probably the same thing that the Holy Qur'an has called

/kitab-un-mubin /'a Record Clear'

and sometimes

'Umm-ul-Kitab' 'the Mother of the Book',

as Surah Ra’d, No.13, verse 39 says:

“Allah doth blot out or confirm what He pleaseth: with Him is the Mother of the Book”.

And in Surah An'am, No. 6, verse 99 it says:

“...nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear (to those who can read)”.

It should also be noted that this is the only situation in 'the Holy Qur'an' in which the term 'the Preserved Tablet' has occurred.

Notes

1. Durr-ul-manthur, vol. 6, p. 331
2. Surah Waqi'ah, No. 56, verses 49-50
3. Majma.-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 466.
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 543.
5. Sahifah-Sajjadiyah, Sixth Supplication.
6. Tafsir-i- 'Ali-'bn-lbrahim-Qummi, vol. 2, p. 414.
7. Qisas-i-Qur’an, Balaqi, p. 288.
8. A'lam-i-Qur'an, p. 137-138.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Tafsir-i- Ayashi; narrated in Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 377.

Surah Tariq, Chapter 86

(The Night)

Number of Verses: 17

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The subjects in this Surah are mainly divided into two groups:

1. Resurrection and
2. The Holy Qur'an and its value.

At the beginning, after some reflective oaths, it points to the existence of some divine protectors of man.

To make manifest the possibility of Resurrection, it refers to the first stage of man's life and his creation from a sperm drop and then it draws a conclusion that the Creator, who is able to create him from such a lowly life-germ, can give life again, to him.

In the following part, it describes the Resurrection and the uniqueness it has. Then, it offers some meaningful oaths to verify the importance of the Holy Qur'an; and finally, it finishes the Surah by mentioning Allah’s punishments for the unbelievers in order to give a warning to them.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) for the virtue of this Surah which says:

“For the person who studies this Surah, Allah will reward this action ten times the number of stars in the sky.”[1]

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq which says:

“Anyone who recites Surah Tariq in his obligatory prayers will have a high rank with Allah in the Hereafter, and will be the prophets ' close friend and companion in Heaven.”[2]

Obviously, it is the content of the Surah and acting accordingly which deserves such great rewards; not its mere recitation without following by action.

Surah Tariq, Verses 1-10

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ

النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ
إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ
يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ
فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ

1. "By the Sky and the Night-visitant (therein)"
2. "And what will explain to thee what the Night-visitant is?"
3. "(It is) the Star of piercing brightness,"
4. "There is not a soul but has a protector over it."
5. "So let man contemplate on from what he is created!"
6. "He is creased from a drop emitted."
7. "Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs:"
8. "Surely He is able to bring him back (to life)!"
9. "On the Day when hidden things will he made manifest,"
10. "man will have no strength, and no helper."

O man! Consider of What You Are Created!

This Surah, like many other Surahs of the last part of the Holy Qur'an, begins with some beautiful oaths to reflect upon which express a great fact.

"By the Sky and the Night-visitant (therein)"
"And what will explain to thee what the Night-visitant is?"
"(It is) the Star of piercing brightness,"

The term /tariq/ is derived from /tarq/ 'to pound'. And /tariq/ means 'way' because the path is pounded by the feet of pedestrians. The term /matraqah/ 'a sledge hammer' is used for pounding iron and materials like this.

And since the doors are closed at night when people arrive they have to pound on them to gain permission to enter, then, that which comes at night is called /tariq/ 'the night-visitant'.

Amir-al-Motmineen Ali (as) said about Ash'ath-ibn-i-Qays, the hypocrite, who came to the door of his house at night and thought that he could bribe Hazrat Ali by giving him some honey paste so that he would not judge against him, then Hazrat Ali said:

"A stranger incident than this is that a man came to us in the night with a closed flask full of honey paste."[3]

The Qur'an has defined 'tariq', itself, where it says:

"(It is) the Star of piercing brightness."'

This Night-visitant is the brilliant star that appears very high in the sky as if it almost pierces its depth; and it is so bright that it splits the thick darkness and penetrates to the eyes.

There are many different ideas said about the kind of 'star' mentioned in this verse. Some of them, from the point of its distance and highness, say that it may be 'Pleiades'. Some others, from the point of its brightness, say that it is 'Saturn', or 'Venus', or 'a meteor'. Some ideas say that it can be any star which glitters in the sky.

But, taking note that the modifier 'piercing' mentioned in the verse for the star, shows that the star is not any star, but it is a forceful bright star whose light passes through the darkness of night and penetrates to men's eyes.

Some narrations denote that the 'star' is 'Saturn' which is one of the planets of the solar system and is very bright.

This very idea is also understood from a narration of Imam Sadiq (as) when he was asked by an astronomer regarding what Allah meant by /thaqib/ in that verse and he answered:

"It is 'Saturn' which appears in the seventh sky. But its light passes the skies and reaches the first sty. That is why Allah has called it 'the star of piercing brightness'."[4]

It is noteworthy that Saturn is the last and the farthest star to us in the solar system which is visible simply by the naked eye. And from among the planets of the solar system, it is the sixth in distance from the sun, but if we count the moon's circle, it will be the seventh, so Imam Sadiq (as) has considered its circle as the seventh sky in the mentioned narration.

Having some outstanding characteristics, Saturn deserves to be sworn to. It is the farthest visible star in the solar system and everything which is very high is exemplified in Arabic literature.

Saturn is notable for several concentric bright rings, which revolve around it in the plane of its equator, and are the most amazing celestial phenomena about which meteorologists have delivered various ideas. But, there are still more secrets about it that must be discovered in the future.

Some experts believe that there are ten moons around Saturn eight of which can be seen through ordinary telescopes, but, two of them can only be seen by very great and powerful telescopes.

It is clear that when the Holy Qur'an was revealed no one knew all of these facts and it is after many centuries that we know them now.

Moreover, the commentary of 'the star of piercing brightness' may cover any bright star, and Saturn, being one of its examples, does not contradict the above idea.

'Piercing star' is one of the wonders of the celestial creations and may be one of the examples of the above mentioned commentary.

As in Surah Saffat, No. 37, verse 10 which says:

"Except such as snatch away something by stealth, and they are pursued by a flaming fire, of piercing brightness."

The occasion of revelation recorded in some commentaries for the above mentioned verse, attests to this idea.

Now let us see what these oaths are for.

In the next verse it says:

"There is not a soul but has a protector over it."

This protector is for recording one's acts and retaining them for the Reckoning Day.

It is similar to what Surah Infitar, No. 82, verses 10-12 carry over.

They say:

"And surely there are Watchers over you,"

"Honourable scribes:"

"They know (and understand) whatever you do."

Thus, you are not alone. Whoever you are, and wherever you are the angels of Allah watch you. This is a subject that can be very useful in training and improving man, if he will only consider it.

It is noteworthy that the
'protectors'
are not defined in the verse as to who they are, and what kind of things they protect, but some other verses of the Qur'an clearly certify that they are angels and the things that they protect are 'man's deeds'; irrespective of good or evil.

Some probabilities denote that this protection is the protection of humans from accidents and fatal events. Verily, if Allah did not protect them, there would be few people who would die of natural causes, because the number of terrible accidents is so large that no one can escape from them, particularly young children.

Or, the protection may be the protection of humans against the whispers of Satans, of Jinns and of men. They are so many that if Allah did not protect them, no one would remain safe.

But the first commentary seems the most suitable, because the latter verses talk about Resurrection and Reckconing, though all three commentaries, together, do not seem improbable.

It is praiseworthy that the aforementioned oaths have a close relationship with the protection of angels from the deeds of man; that which the oaths are for.

Since, the stars, rotating in a regular order high in the sky, are as an evidence for the existence of a definite regularity in the universe, then how can man's deeds be left alone without a reckoning and protection from the divine protectors?

Then, to prove the possibility of the Resurrection for those who consider it impossible, it says:

"So let man contemplate on from what he is created."

And, thus, the Qur'an asks and advises all mankind to think about that which they were created from in the beginning.

But, immediately after that the Qur'an answers the question, itself, and says:

"He is creased from a drop emitted."

A gushing fluid in which his life-germ was floating.

And in another description for 'that water pouring forth' it says:

"Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs."

There are many different ideas for the commentary of the terms
/sulb/ 'backbone'
and
/tara'ib/ 'ribs',
as mentioned in this verse, where the fluid comes forth from between them. In these ideas the commentators mostly try to comment on these two terms referring to man and woman from which the egg and sperm form the foetus.

But, primarily it should be noted that the verse is speaking only about a man's fluid, because
'a drop emitted'
belongs to a man not to a woman since that of a woman does not emit and it says that the gushing fluid is so that:

"Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs."

Then, it is not appropriate to bring woman into this discussion. It is better to say that the Qur'an points to one of the two main parts of the life-germ, viz: a man's seed, which is understandable to all[5].

And
'backbone'
and
'ribs'
are a man's back and front; the area between which his fluid comes from.

This is a clear commentary and the meanings of the terms simply conform to what is found in a dictionary. Meanwhile, there may be greater facts hidden in the verse that modern science has not found yet, however, scientists may uncover them in the future.

Then, as a consequence it says that the Creator who created man from a sperm drop:

"Surely He is able to bring him back (to life)."

At first it was dust. Then, after some changes, it varied to a sperm drop, and eventually it turned into man, after passing some amazing and complicated stages, of course. So, it will not be difficult for Allah to bring him back to life again.

This fact is similarly mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an such as in Surah Hajj, No. 22, verse 5 which says:

"O mankind! if you have a doubt about the Resurrection (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm..."

And also in Surah Maryam, No.19, verse 67 which says:

"Does not man call to mind that We created him before, when he was nothing?"

In the next verse it describes the Great Day when it says:

"On the Day when hidden things will he made manifest."

The term /tubla/ is based on /balava/ 'to prove by trial or examination' and since the facts will be made manifest upon examination then the term is used, here, in the sense of 'appearing'.

The term /sara'ir/ is the plural form of /sarirah/ 'a secret; or inner thought, case, mood'.

Yes, on that Day, the day of appearing and the day of sorting out, the secrets will be uncovered and everything from good or evil, truth or falsehood, pure or impure will become quite evident. The believing people will be proud, then, and will be honoured by additional rewards, but the unbelieving ones will be ashamed and blamed because of this clear manifestation.

What a painful time he will have who lived a life respectfully, but with hidden evils; then, everything will become obvious to all! Surely he will be completely sorry and regretful on that Day. This may be more painful for him than the flames of fire in Hell.

Surah Rahman, No. 55, verse 41 also says:

"For the sinners will be known by their Marks...".

In some other verses of the Qur’an we read that in the Hereafter there are some people whose faces are white and bright, but there are others that have dark and dusty faces[6].

Verily, similar to the Night-visitant and other stars that appear at night and everyone can see them in the sky, the protectors of man, who record and keep his deeds, will unveil everything there, also.

It is narrated from Ma’ath-ibn-Jabal who asked the Prophet (S) about the interpretation of the term

/sara'ir/ 'secrets',

in this verse regarding what secrets there are by which Allah will examine the people in the Hereafter and he answered:

“Your secrets are your deeds such as prayers, fasting, religious tax, ablution, wet dream ceremonial bath, and any other obligatory acts. All of them are hidden, because if a person wills he says he has said his prayers but in fact he has not, he says he has made his ablution, but he has not, and this is the commentary of which Allah says:

'On the Day when hidden things will be made manifest’”.[7]

But, the great difficulty is that, on that Day:

“man will have no strength and no helper.”

He will have no power to hide his evils, and no one to help him to ward off Allah's punishment. Many verses of the Qur’an denote that, on the Day of Judgment, man will have no helper, no use of ransom, no way of returning and no chance of fleeing. The only useful means to make one safe from torments will be pure belief and good deeds.

Surah Tariq, Verses 11-17

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ

وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

فَمَهِّلِ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهِلْهُمْ رُوَيْدًا

11. “By the rain giving heaven, (the returning rain),”

12. “And by the earth splitting (with plants):”

13. “Most surely it (the Qur'an) is a decisive word,”

14. “And it is not a thing for amusement.”

15. “Surely they are plotting a scheme (against the truth),”

16. “And I am (also) planning a scheme (against them),”

17. “Therefore grant a delay to the unbelievers: give respite to them gently (for a while).”

We Destroy the Enemies' Plans

Their plots will be of no avail, and Allah’s purpose will prevail.

To follow the previous verses which were about the Resurrection and realizing it by taking note of the creation of man from sperm, the following verses continue the same theme, however, for further emphasis and with more evidences.

It says:

"By the rain giving heaven, (the returning rain),"

"And by the earth splitting (with plants)"

"Most surely it (the Qur'an) is a decisive word,"

that you will return to life.

"And it is not a thing for amusement."

The term /raj'/ is based on /ruju'/ 'return'. In the Arabic language 'rain' is called /raj'/, because water evaporates from the earth and the seas, rises to form clouds and then once again comes back down as rain; raining intermittently.

The term /sad'/ means 'to split' and together with what was said about /raj'/ 'rain' it means splitting of dry, hard earth after rainfall and, also, the growth of plants.

In fact, these two verses point to dead lands which survive by life-giving rain. This is what the Qur'an has repeatedly mentioned as an evidence for the Resurrection.

For example, in Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 11 it says:

"…And We give (new) life therewith to land that is dead: thus will be the Resurrection."

So there is an obvious relation between these oaths and what the oaths are taken for. This is one of the wonders of the Qur'an's eloquence, that there is an interesting relationship between the oaths and what the oaths are for.

Surah Hajj, No.22, verse 5, confirming the Resurrection, refers to both evidences of man's creation from sperm and its various stages in the form of foetus, and giving life, again, to dead lands by sending down rain, and in this very Surah, Tariq, it emphasizes on both of them as well.

The phrase

/qaul-un-fasl/ 'a decisive word',

is a statement that definitely separates Good from Evil. A group of commentators, considering the aforementioned verses, have related the statement to Resurrection while some others believe it means 'the Holy Qur'an' as some narrations of Ahlul-Bayt (as) confirm, too.

Of course, the terms /yaum-ul-fasl/ with the meaning of 'Hereafter' is used and mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an.

It is, also, probable that the terms /qaul-un-fasl/ mean 'the verses of Qur'an' some of which announce the Resurrection. Then, both of the above commentaries can be combined.

A quotation from the Holy Prophet (S) has been said to have been narrated by Hazrat Ali (as), thus:

"'There will be a sedition among you soon, '

the Prophet said.

I asked him what the remedy for it was, and he answered:

'Qur'an is the remedy which tells you about the past and the future and your Judgement. It is a statement that separates right from wrong. It is a serious word. It is not in vain. Allah will defeat any oppressor who leaves Qur'an. And the person who seeks divine guidance anywhere save Qur'an will be led astray by Allah'."[8]

Then, to console the Prophet (S) and the believers both, on the one hand, and for threatening the enemies of Islam, on the other hand, it says:

"Surely they are plotting a scheme (against the truth),"

"And I am (also) planning a scheme (against them),"

"Therefore grant a delay to the unbelievers: give respite to them gently (for a while)."

Verily, they always plan wicked schemes to oppose you. Sometimes they mock you. Sometimes they lay siege on you, economically. Sometimes they torture the believers. Sometimes they tell others not to listen to the Qur'anic recitation and make noise in order to be victorious. Sometimes they call you a soothsayer, mad, etc.

Sometimes they believe Islam in the morning, but they disbelieve in the evening on the same day to attract some believers to follow them. Sometimes they tell you that only the poor and miserable people believe you and follow you, then leave them until they (the unbelievers) come to you. Sometimes they ask you to accept some of their gods, at least, until they follow you. And, sometimes they plan a scheme to banish you or kill you.

In short, every moment the unbelievers can try a new plot to disperse your followers and oppress the believers, or abolish you in order to extinguish Allah's' light.

But they should know that Allah will not allow them to do so, and He has taken a decision to spread the light of Islam over the world and then the light of Allah cannot be extinguished with a blow from their mouths.

This bright ever-shining light will not be put out by the plots of these unregenerate men who plan; but Allah, too, plans.

The term

/kayd/ 'to plot against'

is applied both to plotting with an evil purpose (which is used more than the other usage), and planning with a good purpose, such as Surah Yusef, No.12, verse 76 which says:

"...Thus did We plan for Yusef (Joseph)."

The meaning of

"the enemies' plot",

in this verse, is clear with the above explanation about some of the evils of the unbelievers.

There are many evil plots and wicked plans of this kind, with an evil purpose, mentioned in the Qur'an, but what is the meaning of Allah's plan, in this verse, of having a good purpose? Some commentators believe that 'granting a delay to the unbelievers 'which ends with their painful punishment, is its meaning. Some others think that ' the punishment itself ' carries the meaning.

It is more suitable to say that it means the same beneficence that the Prophet (S) and the believers got from Allah. They, after respiting the

enemies, caused them to be neglectful and rendered their efforts ineffective, then, their plans remained fruitless.

In these verses the Prophet (S) is deliberately ordered to act toward them moderately and give respite to them and not hurry to destroy them; to let them have the final notes, to wait for a few of them who have a little readiness to come to Islam.

It is noteworthy that, at first, it says:

“Therefore grant a delay to the unbelievers”,

and then it emphasizes:

“...give respite to them gently (for a while)”.

It says the same matter twice for emphasis, but in a different way and with various words so as not to be taken unpleasantly.

The term /ruwayda/ is based on /rud/ 'to try to do something gently', but, here it means: give respite to them for a while.

Thus, in this short verse three times Allah orders His Prophet to act with them moderately, and this is a good example for all Muslims to be patient and careful in their affairs especially when they are faced with their powerful and dangerous enemies. They should avoid haste and doing things undesigned or at an inappropriate time.

Moreover, it is better for the Prophet (S) to be patient in delivering the Message of Allah in order to respite all those who may believe, and to complete the argument and reason for all of them.

The reason why this respite has been counted short, may be because Islam overcame its enemies in a short time and their plans did not profit them. The first failure was at the battle of Badr. Then, later their plans failed, again, in the battles of Ahzab, Kheybar, Seffin and so on. At the end of the Prophet's life, they were completely weak when the light of Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula; and before the end of one century, it covered most parts of the world at that time.

Or, it may be that the punishment of the Hereafter is near and basically everything which is definite and sure is counted close.

However, this Surah begins with oaths to the sky and stars, and ends with threats to the unbelievers who plot and scheme against the beneficent purpose of Allah. There are also some nice evidences to the Resurrection in some elegant sentences about the angels, who are the protectors of man, and for soothing the believers. These verses are not only short and meaningful, but also beautiful and decisive.

Supplication

O Lord! The plots and schemes of the enemies are many in our time. Turn them to themselves and make their evil plans invalid.

O Lord! On the Day when all the secrets will be made manifest, please put us not to shame.

O Lord! We have no power or helper save You. Leave us to no one else, but to Yourself.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Majma'-al-BayaAn, vol. 10, p. 469:
2. Thawab-ul-A'mal, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 549.
3. Nahj-ul-Balaqa, Sermon 224 (Arabic Version), Sermon 228 (English Version),
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 550, Tradition 4
5. see also Surah Najm, No.53, verse 46 and Surah Qiyamat, No. 75, verse 37
6. Surah ‘Abasa. No. 80, verses 38-41
7. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 472; and a similar meaning is found in Durr-al-manthur, vol. 6, p. 336.
8. 'Sahih-i-Tarmathi’ and 'Sunan-i-Darami’ based on the quotation of 'Ruh-al-Ma'ani, The Commentary, vol. 3, p. 100 and 'Tafsir-i-Maraqi, vol. 30, p. 118.

Surah A'la, Chapter 87

(The Most High)

Number of Verses: 19

Contents of Surah A'la

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is made up of two parts. In the first part, the words are directed to the Prophet (S), himself, containing some instructions regarding the praise of Allah and the fulfillment of his prophecy. Corresponding to that, it names seven attributes of Allah the Most High.

The second part is about the humble believers, and the wretched rejecters. It expresses, concisely, the cause of their felicity and wickedness. At the end of the Surah, it is stated that these facts (pointed out in these verses) are mentioned not only in the Holy Qur'an, but are also mentioned in the earlier Scriptures; as well as the Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

There are many narrations cited on the virtue of reciting this Surah; among them is a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad (S) which says:

“Allah will reward him, who recites this Surah, the number of words, tenfold, which were revealed to Abraham, Moses and Muhammad.”[1]

There are several narrations which denote that whenever the Prophet (S) or one of the twelve Imams (as) recited Surah A'la, they used to say /subhana rabbi-al-a'la/ 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High'.

Another narration says that one of the companions of Hazrat Ali (as) said that he prayed twenty consecutive nights behind him (as) and he (as) did not recite any Surah, except Surah A’la. Also, he (as) said that if they knew what a blessing it has, every single one of them would recite the Surah ten times each day. He added that he who recites the Surah has, in essence, recited the Book and the Scriptures of Moses and Abraham.[2]

In short, as it is understood from all the narrations about it, this Surah stands out with special importance. Again, a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says that Surah A'la was beloved by the Holy Prophet (S).[3]

Opinions are divided over this Surah as to whether it was revealed in Mecca or Medina, but the popular idea among commentators is that it was revealed in Mecca.

Al-'Allamah-as-Sayyid Muhammad Hosain at-Tabataba'i (may Allah have mercy on him) prefers to consider the first part of the Surah Meccan and the last part Medinan, since it contains words about prayer and alms and, according to the narrations from Ahlul Bayt, (as) the words mean 'the prayer and alms on the feast of fast-breaking day', and we know that the instruction of the fasting month, with its relevant actions, were revealed in Medina. [4]

However, it is probable that the instruction of prayer and alms, mentioned at the end of the Surah, is a general instruction and 'the prayer and alms on the feast of fast-breaking day' are counted as its 'clear

examples'. We know that commentary on the phrase 'clear example' is found abundantly in the narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as).

Therefore, the popular idea denoting that the Surah is Meccan is not improbable, particularly because the beginning verses, of the Surah, are completely compatible with the ending verses. Then, it is not easy to say that the Surah was revealed partly in Mecca and partly in Medina. There is also a narration which says that each group of people who arrived in Medina recited this Surah to some people in Medina.

This probability; that only its beginning verses were recited and the last verses were revealed in Medina, is very improbable.

Surah A'la, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ

1. "Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High,"
2. "He Who has created and fashioned (all things)"
3. "And He Who has determined and guided'"
4. "And He Who brings out the Pasturage,"
5. "Then makes it dried up; dust-coloured.

Glorify Allah, The Most High

This Surah contains the essence of the Prophet's Doctrine and mission, and begins with the praise of Allah.

The very first verse addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High".

Some commentators believe that the word 'name', here, means 'that which is named', while some others have said that 'name', itself, means 'Allah', a name, of course, which refers to 'that which is named'.

In any event, there is not much difference between these two commentaries, when both of them mean that His name would not be mentioned among the names of idols; in the way some idol worshippers wanted to regard His name, adding it along with the names of their own idols, or by those who consider Him material or corporeal.

The term

/a'la/ 'the Most High'

points to the fact that He is High and the Most High to any other persons or things that can be thought of, or beyond any apparent idolatrous or hidden polytheism.

Along with these two attributes, viz: 'Lord, the Cherisher', and 'the Most High', five more characteristics are expressed, here, all of which are about His very High Lordship. It says:

“He Who has created and fashioned (all things)”.

The term /sawwa/ is based on /taswiyah/ and means 'to proportion, fashion, perfect, make level and equal'. It has such a broad meaning which involves all the regularities of the world, containing the regulations over the stars and celestial bodies, or over the earthly creatures; particularly mankind, from the view point of body and spirit.

Some commentators have meant it to be the special fashioning of man's eyes, hands, legs, or his body standing erect, but, in fact, it is only a limited example of the vast concept of this term.

On the whole, the regularities of the Universe; from the greatest celestial systems to the simplest matters, such as the grooves in the finger tips; which are pointed out in Surah Qiyamat, No. 75, verse 4:

“Nay We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers”,

all are clear evidences of His Lordship and the affirmation of the one true Allah. This short statement, in itself, contains abundant meanings.

Following the matter of creation and its fashioning, attention is paid to the subject of the laws and decrees that He has ordained for the development, and guidance of the creatures to progress, on the Way.

It goes on to say:

“And He Who has determined and guided”.

The objective point of the term /taqdir/; the root for /qaddara/, is the very proportioning in the whole scheme of development towards the goal that creatures are created for.

And the objective point for the term /hidayat/; the base of /hada/, is 'the divine guidance’ in the form of instincts and inner creeds dominating on every creature (irrespective of their inner or outer motives.)

For instance, on the one hand, a mother's breasts and the milk therein are created for the child's nourishment and she has been gifted with strong motherly love, and on the other hand, it includes the instinct of the child moving toward its mother's breast, an instinct which is created in him. This preparation and mutual attraction, on the path to the goal, is seen in all living creatures.

In short, an alert observation upon the structure of any creature and the process it passes through in its life, makes this fact clear that there is an exact scheme in the course of development and, also, a powerful authoritative guidance supporting it and helping the program to be put into effect. This is another sign of His Lordship.

Of course, for human beings, in addition to divine guidance, there is another kind of guidance which is conveyed through revelation and by prophets and is called 'religious guidance'. It is interesting to note that man's religious guidance is complementary to his divine guidance, in all ways and under all circumstances.

A similar meaning is stated in Surah Taha, No. 20, verses 49-50 where Moses answers Pharaoh who asks:

"...Who, then, O Moses, is the Lord of you two?",

and he replies:

"Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance."

Although the meaning of this statement was partly known at the time of Moses or in the days of the revelation of Qur'an, today, with the development of science and man's knowledge about different kinds of creatures; especially living creatures and plants, it has become more clear than ever before.

There are thousands and thousands of books written on the subject of /taqdir/ and 'the divine guidance', and they confess that there are still more unexpressed facts than what have already been stated.

Then, referring to plants, particularly pastures for cattle, it says:

"And He Who brings out the Pasturage".

The term /axraja/ is based on /ixraj/ which is used with a sense as if all of these had been inside the land and Allah has brought them out. It is obvious that the nutrition of animals is a preparation for the nutrition of man and, finally, the result of which eventually comes back round to human beings.

"Then makes it dried up; dust-coloured."

The term /qutha'/ basically means 'stubble, light straw, and dried plants that float over-flood waters', also, the foam that appears on the surface of a boiling liquid is called /qutha'/. Hence, the word is used for everything that is waste and perishable and, in the current verse, it is used in the sense of 'dead, dried leaves and plants'.

The term /aĥwa/ is based on /ĥawaya/ and /ĥuwwa/, and means 'dark green' and 'black coloured'.

Both of them are used in one sense, because the colour of ' dark green ' is usually close to a black colour; and the colour of dried plants gradually turns to black when they are covered over.

The choice of this meaning, even though reference is made to the divine blessings, may be for one of the following reasons:

1. These plants are symbols to tell human beings about the meaning of mortality conveyed in this world.

2. When dried plants are piled up they rot and change into compost which is useful for the growth of plants.

3. Some believe that there is a hint, in this verse, to the formation of underground coal by plants and trees which occurred over millions of years ago.

Of course, the verse can have a collective meaning consisting of all three of the above commentaries.

In any event, the 'dried up dust-coloured' material made from 'pasture' is both a good food for grazing animals in winter and a substance for men to burn, while also being a good fertilizer for farm lands.

In fact, the subject of

'Lord, the Most High',

is characterized, well, by the last five characteristics in these verses; the study of which makes man familiar with His High Lordship.

Surah A'la, Verses 6-13

سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنسَىٰ

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَىٰ

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

6. "We will make you recite, so you shall not forget,"

7. "Save what Allah wills, surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden."

8. "And We will ease you (your way) to a (state of) ease,"

9. "Therefore do mention for mentioning does profit (mankind)."

10. "He who fears will heed,"

11. "But the most reprobate will shun it'"

12. "Who wll enter the Great Fire"

13. "Then he will neither die therein nor will he live."

We Will Make Everything Prepared For You To Do Good

The contents of the former verses are about His Lordship and 'Oneness', while in the following verses reference is about the Qur'an and the 'prophecy' of the Prophet (S).

In those former verses (No. 1-5) general guidance is given while these verses refer to the guidance of man in particular. And finally, in the former verses the 'praise of the Lord; the Most High' is indicated, while in the following verses the Qur'an, itself, which conveys that very praise, is specified.

"We will make you recite, so you shall not forget".

Therefore, (O Muhammad!), at the time of revelation be patient and do not make haste, you will never forget the Message. He Who descends them to you for the guidance of mankind, Himself, will protect them and keep them fresh and pure, firmly in your mind, so that they will not be forgotten.

This idea is similar to what is mentioned in Surah Taha No. 20, verse 114 which says:

"...Be not in haste with the Qur'an before its revelation to thee is completed, but say, 'O my Lord! advance me in knowledge'".

Also Surah Qiyamat No. 75, verses 16-17 say:

"Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste there with".

"It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it".

Then, referring to Allah's bountiful providence and noting that all gifts are from Him, it goes on to say:

"Save what Allah wills, surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden".

The verse does not mean that the holy Prophet (S) forgets something of the verses, or that his statement would be untrustworthy, it means that the memorization of them is a gift from Allah and, then, whenever He wills He can retrieve it from His prophet. In other words, the idea is to state the difference between Allah's intrinsic knowledge and the Prophet's gifted knowledge.

This verse, in fact, is similar to what is mentioned in Surah Hud , No. 11, verse 108 about the eternity of those who dwell in Paradise, which says:

"And those who are blessed shall be in Gardens: they will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord willeth: a gift without break."

It is certain that the Blessed will never be sent out of Paradise as the last part of the verse attests to, but the expression 'except as thy Lord willeth' denotes to the Authority and Dominion of Allah's Will and that everything depends on His Will, both for the beginning of creation and its existence.

What confirms this sense is that keeping some data in mind and forgetting others is common for all human beings and cannot be a luxury that Allah counts as a privilege for His prophet. Hence, in this verse the objective is for Prophet (S) to know, by heart, all the verses of Qur'an and ordinances of Islam.

Some have also said that the objective point of this exception is the verses whose content and recitation both have been abrogated.

But this commentary is completely improbable, since, basically, the existence of these kind of verses is not certain.

The sentence

'...Surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden'

is, in fact, the reason for the following phrase

/sanuqri'uka/ 'We will make you recite',

remarking that Allah, Who knows all that is manifest and what is hidden, informs the Prophet (S) about what is necessary for human beings, by means of revelation, and nothing in that connection will be left out.

It is also likely that the Prophet (S) would not make haste when receiving revelation and would not be afraid of forgetting it, because Allah has promised him that he would not forget anything of the facts and He knows all things which are manifest or hidden.

Furthermore, one of the miracles of the Prophet (S) was that he learned all the Surahs, long and short, by heart, which Gabriel recited only once and he always remembered them forgetting nothing.

Then, to console the Prophet (S), it says:

"And We will ease you (your way) to a state of ease".

In other words, the objective is to state the fact that there are many difficulties on the way which he has in front of him: by way of receiving the revelation, preserving it and communicating his prophecy, together with its fulfillment, and also by doing good deeds; in all of which Allah helps him and eases the problems for him.

This statement may refer to the content of the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) and the divine duties of the believers, viz: its content is easy to

follow, his (S) religion is an easy one for the believers to practice and there are no hard, backbreaking duties contained in it.

Therefore, the above mentioned verse has a vast meaning, though many of the commentators have limited it to only one of its dimensions.

Verily, if it were not for the help and success of Allah, the Prophet (S) could never win out over those many difficulties.

The life of the Prophet, himself, was also a complete example for teaching this fact.

He was not a taskmaster in any aspect of his life: he ate any suitable food; he wore any clothes that were not repulsive; he slept sometimes in a bed and sometimes on a simple rug, or even on the sand. He was free from any formality; that is, he was friendly and informal.

After referring to revelation and Allah’s promise for success and ease for the Prophet's affairs, his greatest duty is mentioned, thus:

“Therefore do mention for mentioning does profit (mankind)”.

Some have said that this means that mentioning is always useful. There are few whom it does not profit. Besides, at the least, it completes the argument and gives reasons to the unbelievers; which in, itself, is of a great benefit.

Some others believe that it means 'do mention whether it be useful or useless'.

In fact, it is like what Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 81 says:

“...He made you garments to protect you from heat...”.

In this verse only

'heat'

is mentioned while 'to protect you from the cold' is also understood.

Still other commentators say that the conditional sentence, here has some meaning and its point is that when mentioning is useful 'do mention' but, when it is not useful it is not necessary to do so.

It is also probable that the term /an/ is not used here for conditioning, but for emphasis. If so, the sentence means 'Do mention, for mentioning is useful'.

The first commentary, out of these four commentaries, seems to be the most appropriate.

The practical program of the Prophet (S) verifies this fact.

He put no condition or limit on his citings and used to teach and give the warning to all.

Next, attention is paid to the reaction of people, before giving a speech and warning, and they are divided into two groups.

Note the following:

“He who fears will heed.”

“But the most reprobate will shun it”.

Truly, when the spirit of the fear of Allah, or, in other words, when the truth seeking spirit, which is a stage of righteousness, does not exist in man, he does not derive profit from the admonitions of Allah or the sermons of prophets.

For this very reason, at the beginning of Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2 it is said about the Holy Qur’an, that:

“In it is guidance sure, to those who fear Allah”.

Some narrations denote that Ibn-Abbas has cited that the verse

“He who fears will heed;”

was revealed about 'Abdullah-ibn-Maktum, the truth-seeking blind man, and some have said that the verse:

“But the most reprobate will shun it”

was revealed about Walid-ibn-Muqayyarah and 'Atabata-ibn-Rabi'ah who were among the chiefs of the pagans.[5]

Some have said that the term

/aŝqa/ 'the most reprobate',

here, means those who are the enemies of Truth and they dishonour Allah’s Message.

As people are divided into three groups; in this respect:

a) those who are aware and knowledgeable,

b) those who hesitate and stand in doubt,

c) and those who are the enemies of Truth, it is natural that the first and the second groups derive benefit from admonitions, but, for the third group the admonition is useless.

The only thing that can be mentioned about them is that admonition is useful to complete the argument and as a reason for them to be warned.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that the Prophet (S) proclaimed Allah’s Message to the third group, too, but they ran away from it and did not accept it.

It is noteworthy that in these two verses 'the most reprobate' contrasts with 'he who fears Allah' and basically stands opposite to felicity. It is because the main origin of the felicity and salvation of man is the very fear of Allah and perception of responsibility.

In the next verse, the destiny of the last group is proclaimed:

“Who will enter the Great Fire”

“Then he will neither die therein nor will he live.”

That is, they neither die to be free of the fire nor can the state in which they are in be called 'life'. They are always swinging between life and death; and this is the worse possible state to be in.

For the meaning of the phrase

/an-nar-al-kubra/ 'the Great Fire'

different attitudes have been formed. Some have said that it means 'the lowest place in Hell', /asfal-us-safilin/, because they are the most reprobate among people and their penalty also should be the worse and the most painful one.

Others have said that 'the Great Fire' is the final Penalty or disaster in the Hereafter, as contrasted with the minor penalties or disasters in this very life.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that he said:

“Verily your simple fire here is a part out of seventy parts of the fire in Hell. It has been extinguished seventy times with water and has flamed again. If it were not so, mankind could not bear to be close to it".[6]

In the supplication of Kumail, Hazrat Ali (as), comparing the fire of this world and that of the next world, says:

''It is a tribulation and ordeal whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little and whose period is but fleeting."

Surah A'la, Verses 14-19

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّىٰ

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ

14. "Indeed, he (alone) who has purified (himself) shall succeed",
15. "And remembers the name of his Lord and prays."
16. "Nay, you prefer the life of this world,"
17. "While the world to come is better and more lasting,"
18. "Surely this is in the earlier Scriptures,"
19. "The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses."

All Divine Books Contained A Definite Law

The former verses point to the dreadful penalty of the enemies of Truth while the next verses touch on the salvation of the believers and also the effective causes for this felicity.

It begins:

"Indeed, he (alone) who has purified (himself) shall succeed".

"And remembers the name of his Lord and prays."

Thus, the causes of salvation, felicity and success are counted as three: 'purification', 'remembrance of the Name of Allah', and 'prayers'.

Various commentaries have been cited for the meaning of the term /tazkiyah/ 'purification'.

First of all, it means 'purification of the soul from polytheism', in comparison with the former verses, and also that this is the most important purification.

Another meaning is 'purification of the heart from vices' by doing righteous deeds according to the verses of felicity in the Holy Qur'an, such as the beginning verses of Surah Mo'minun, No. 23, which says that salvation is a pledge for righteous deeds; or Surah Shams, No. 91, verse 9 which, according to the questions of righteousness and impiety, says:

"Truly he succeeds that purifies it".

Also, the term means 'alms of the fast-breaking feast' which would be paid first and, then, the special two rak'ah prayer of the day may be said, as this meaning has been cited in several narrations from Imam Sadiq (as).[7]

The same idea is narrated from Hazrat Ali (as) in other Muslim texts.[8]

A question may arise, here, as to is this Surah a Meccan Surah or not because there was nothing said, in Mecca, about fasting in the fasting month, alms of the fast-breaking feast, or the special two rak'ah prayer of the day. ('id-i-Fitr)

The answer to this question may be that some have said that the first part of the Surah was revealed in Mecca and the last part of it was revealed in Medina.

It is also probable that the above commentary expresses one clear example, out of many, and is conforming the verse with a vivid example of the above meaning.

Some have also said that the term /tazkiyah/, here, means 'alms-giving'.

It is important to know that /tazkiyah/ has such a vast meaning that can involve all of the following: the purification of the soul from polytheism, purification of the heart from inquities, purification of deeds from prohibited ones and from hypocrisy, and purifying the soul and property by alms-giving in the path of Allah, because based on verse

"Of their goods take aims, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them", [9]

alms-giving causes the soul and spirit to be purified.

Therefore, all the above commentaries can be concentrated in the broad meaning of the verse.

It is worth mentioning that in these verses, at first, purification is mentioned and, then, the Name of Allah and prayer are pointed out.

It is also noteworthy that

'prayer'

is mentioned secondary to the Name of Allah. This is for the reason that one will not stand for prayers unless he remembers Allah and the light of Faith has enlightened his heart. Besides, prayer is worthy and acceptable when it is said wholly with the Name of Allah and His remembrance.

And that some have commented on

'the remembrance of Allah'

only by 'Allah-u-akbar' or

/bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ (In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful)

which is said at the beginning of the prayers, are, indeed, examples of this.

Pointing to the main cause of disobedience on the path of salvation, it says:

"Nay, you prefer the life of this world,"

"While the world to come is better and more lasting".

And this is the very fact that is, also, stated in traditions:

"The love for this world is the prime origin of all vice"[10]

There is no sound reason that lets man exchange the everlasting next world for this fleeting world and prefer these short low desires, which are often mingled with different kinds of pain and sorrow, to those tremendous eternal blessings which are free from any unbecoming harmful vice.

And it should not be forgotten that:

"Surely this is in the earlier Scriptures,"

"The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses."

Opinions are divided as to what the demonstrative /hatha/ 'this' points to. Some have said that it points to the last instruction about 'purification', 'prayer', and 'consider the life of this world superior to the Next World',

because these have been the most basic teachings of all the prophets and are found in all of the Divine books.

Some others believe that it denotes to the whole Surah, because the Surah begins with monotheism, continues with prophecy and ends with practiced programs of religion.

In any case, this structure shows that the splendid content of this Surah, or its last verses in particular, are in the principles of all religions and among the basic teachings of all prophets; that which is a sign of greatness for the Surah and the importance of these teachings.

The term /suhuf/ is the plural form of /sahifah/ which, here, means 'a tablet or a page on which something is written.'

The above verses show that Abraham and Moses did, indeed, have Divine books.

A narration from Abuthar says that he asked the Prophet (S) how many prophets (Nabi) there were and he answered that there were one hundred and twenty four thousand (124,000).

Then he asked about the number of their messengers (Rasul), and the Prophet (S) answered him:

"They were three hundred and thirteen and the rest were only prophets (Nabi)."

He asked whether Adam was a prophet, and he (S) agreed and said that Allah spoke to Adam and it was He Who created him, Himself.

Then the Holy Prophet (S) added:

"O Abuthar, four prophets were Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, and your prophet."

Also, Abuthar asked the Messenger of Allah how many books Allah revealed, and he replied:

"One hundred and four books were revealed; ten books to Adam, fifty books to Shith, thirty books to Okhnukh (Enoch) and he is the first one who wrote by pen, ten books to Abraham, and Torah to Moses, Ingeel to Jesus, Zaboor to David, and Qur'an to Muhammad, (the Prophet of Islam)".[11]

The words

/al-suhuf-il-ula/ 'the earlier Scriptures'

refer to the books of Abraham and Moses that are compared with the latter books which were revealed to Jesus (as) and the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

Explanation

An analysis on the tradition:

'The love of this world is the prime origin of all vice'.

The Qur'anic calculation, in the aforementioned verses, for comparing this world with the Next World, saying:

"While the world to come is better and more lasting,"

is surely quite clear for the believing persons, but, regarding it, how does a believing person neglect his knowledge and commit sin and crimes?

The answer to the question is 'the predominance of desires on man's entity', whose main origin is also the love for the world. Love of this world is irrespective of the love of wealth, ambitions, sensuality (lusts), self-indulgence, vengefulness, mammonism, and the like.

They may sometimes be so forceful and violent, in man, as to cause him to set aside all his knowledge and wisdom which removes his sense of recognition and, consequently, he gives priority to this world rather than the Next World.

In Islamic traditions and narrations love of this world is repeatedly considered as the source of all sins and it is, in fact, an experienced truth that has been examined frequently in our own lives as well as in that of others.

Therefore, for eradicating sins from our lives, there is no other way but, to quell the love we have for this world.

We should know that this world is a probationary place and it is considered as a means, a passage, a bridge or as a farm through which we pass.

It is impossible for a lover of this world, when he is to choose either the property of this world or attaining Allah's contentment, to accept the second idea.

The files of criminal persons in courts prove, clearly, the truthfulness of the above tradition.

When fights (even between brothers and friends), wars or murders are deeply examined, the hand of the love for this world is seen.

But, how can we get rid of the love of this world when we are born and raised as the children of this world; and the love of a child for its mother is a natural phenomena?

To accomplish this task, mental, cultural and ideological training is needed and, then, purification of the soul is necessary.

The most helpful thing in this process, for those who have decided to travel this path, is the contemplation on the outcome of the lovers of this world.

What did the Pharaohs finally do with that abundant wealth that they had?

What happened to Qarun whose

"Treasures were such that their very keys would have been a burden to the body of a strong man?"[12]

And how much could he finally take with him from the coffers?

The present great forceful powers of our time, whose lives and authority have easily vanished and their kingdoms have changed into nothing after a single night or only over a short time, are the best examples for us to learn from.

We conclude this long and vast theme with an expressive tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-al-Hosain (as) who was asked what act Allah considers the best, and he answered:

"Next to having the knowledge and consciousness about the Messenger of Allah, no act is better than having enmity for the world".

Then he added:

"Because there are many paths on the road to the love of the world, and there are numerous ways of committing sin. The first thing, by which sin against Allah began, was lblis (Satan) when

'he refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject Faith'"[13].

“The second thing was 'greed' which caused Adam and Eve to leave the better when the Almighty Allah told them:

‘O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; but approach not this tree, or you ran into harm and transgression'[14].

But they went to something that they aid not need and (the result of) that very action remained and will be for his children until the Day of Judgement, since most things that man demands he does not need”.

(Necessities are not often the source of sin, what is the origin of vice is vain desires and those things which are extra to the main necessities).

“Then it was 'envy' which was the cause of sin in Adam's son who envied his brother and killed him”.

Some other forms of love of the world are:

1. lust for women,
2. coveting this world (length of life, having all wishes fulfilled),
3. love for position; (prestige, status),
4. love for comfort (no responsibility: always wanting to be merry),
5. love to be superior,
6. love of speech, and
7. love for wealth.

All these seven characteristics are found in the love of this world.

The prophets and learned men, having considered this fact, say:

"Love of this world is the prime origin of all vice.”[15]

Supplication

O Lord! Clear our hearts from 'the love of the world’, the source of all vice.

O Lord! Always guide us on all routes to the path of development.

O Lord! You know the manifest and what is hidden, forgive us of our apparent and hidden sins with your Grace.

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 533.
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 544.
3. Majma'-al Bayan, vol. 10, p. 472.
4. Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 386.
5. Qartabi Commentary, vol...10. p. 7110.
6. Behar-al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 288, Tradition No. 21.
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 556, Traditions 19 and 20.
8. Ruh-al-Ma`ali, vol. 30, p. 110, Kashshaf Commentary, vol. 4, p. 740.
9. Surah Taubah, No.9, verse 103
10. This tradition, with a little difference, is narrated from Imam Sadiq, which Ali-ibn-Hosain and the prophets (as) shows its extreme importance (Nur-uth-Thaqaiayn, vol. 5, p. 556-557.)
11. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 476.
12. Surah Taubah, No.9, verse 103
13. Surah Baqarah, No. 2. verse 34
14. Sura Baqarah. No. 2, verse 35
15. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Love For The World', Tradition No. 8

Surah Ghashiyah, Chapter 88

(The Overwhelming Event)

Number of Verses: 26

Contents of Surah Ghashiyah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is one of the Meccan Surahs which contains mainly the following three themes:

The first subject is the 'Resurrection' and the contrast between the destinies of the Good and the Evil in the 'Hereafter'.

The second subject is 'Monotheism' with reference to the creation of the sky, the earth, and the mountains. Man should consider these wonderful matters as admonishments.

The third subject is ‘Prophecy' and some of the duties that the holy Prophet (S) was required to perform. On the whole, the Surah strengthens the idea for the basis of religion and faith, as well as all Meccan Surahs do.

The Virtue in Studying This Surah

As for the virtue of studying this Surah, there is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) that says:

“He who recites this Surah will be reckoned with an easy Reckoning by Allah.”[1]

And another narration from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“He who continues reciting this Surah in his obligatory or voluntary prayers, Allah will put him in His Grace both in this world and the Next, and will keep him safe from fire in the Hereafter.”[2]

Certainly it will be so, if the person would only think about the Surah and act accordingly.

Surah Ghashiya, Verses 1-7

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ

عَامِلَةٌ نَاصِبَةٌ

تَصْلَىٰ نَارًا حَامِيَةً

تُسْ َ ٰ مِنْ عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ َ ِيعٍ

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ

1. “Has the story reached thee, of Ghashiyah (the Overwhelming Event that covers all)?”

2. “Some faces, that Day, will be down cast;”

3. "Labouring (hard), weary,"
4. "Entering into Blazing Fire,"
5. "They will be given to drink from a boiling hot spring,"
6. "No food will there be for them but of Dari (a bitter and thorny plant loathsome in smell)."
7. "Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger."

They Are Weary, But With No Gain

In the first verse of this Surah we are introduced to another name for the Hereafter; Ghashiyah:

"Has the story reached thee, of Ghashiyah (the Overwhelming Event that covers all)?"

The term 'Ghashiyah' is based on /qiŝawat/ 'to cover'. The choice of this name for the Hereafter is for the reason that the terrible events of it will suddenly cover everything.

There are some other commentaries about the term 'Ghashiyah', but the one mentioned above is the most suitable.

The verse apparently addresses the Prophet (S) and it is he who is being questioned in order to show the importance of the Day. Some commentators have said that all human beings may be the addressees; which seems improbable.

Then, to explain the mood of the sinners, it says:

"Some faces, that Day, will be down cast"

They are full of shame and fear, because of the horrible chastisement of the Day. Since it is man's face which mostly reflects spiritual moods, so, their faces will clearly show their complete debasement and horror.

This commentary is the most appropriate among the others.

"Labouring (hard), weary,"

They gain no profit, in their lives; only weariness, from their arduous efforts and endeavours. They have neither approvable good deeds nor can they take anything of their wealth with them, nor do they leave fame among people or a good child after them. They are tired from their striving, but, in fact, they own nothing.

What a suitable sentence about them:

"labouring (hard), weary,"!

This commentary seems to be the most agreeable.

Finally, those who struggle, in vain; who are weary, arrive at the blazing fire, so it says:

"Entering into Blazing Fire,".

The term /tasla/ is based on /saly/ which means 'to enter into burning fire to suffer the pain of being burnt'.

This will not be their only punishment.

When they are thirsty:

"They will be given to drink from a boiling hot spring,"

The term /aniya/ is the feminine form of /ani/ 'boiling hot water, the temperature of which is at the highest degree'.

A similar meaning for the hot water is noted in Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 29:

"...if they implore relief they will be granted water like melted brass that will scald their faces. How dreadful the drink! How uncomfortable a couch to recline on!"

In the next verse, it tells about their food when they are hungry:

"No food will there be for them but of Dhari (a bitter and thorny plant loathsome in smell)."

The opinions of the commentators are divided about the meaning of /dhari'/:

Some of them have said that it is a sort of plant, having large thorns and grows close to the ground. The people of Quraysh call it /ŝibriq/ when it is in its fresh state; and it is called /dhari'/ when it is in its dry state. It is also said to be a poisonous plant which no beast will approach, because of its harmful quality.

'Khalil', a philologist, says: /dhari'/ is a green plant with a bad smell which is cast out of the sea upon the beaches".

'Ibn-Abbas' has said that

"it is a tree of fire, fit for Hell, that if it were in this world, it would burn the earth and all the things on it."

But there is a narration from the Prophet (S) which says:

"/dhari`/ is something in Hell. It is like thorns, more bitter than aloes, more fetid than a putrid corpse, and more burning than fire. Allah has named the thing /dhari`/".[3]

Other people have also said that /dhari'/ is a hellish food, of which the condemned, in Hell, cry to Allah to get rid of it.

The above commentaries relate to each other and all of them may be correct for defining the meaning of the word.

Then, again about the same food, it says:

"Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger."

It is certain that such a thing is a food that will neither give nourishment, to the body, nor in any way satisfy the burning pangs of hunger.

It is a punishment for the unbelievers as Surah Muzzammil, No. 73, verse 13 says:

"And a food that chokes and a Penalty Grievous".

They prepared sweet and delicious foods of many varieties for themselves, in this world, through cruelty and the violation of people's rights: they forced the oppressed to use unedible, choking food.

So, the oppressors should have a kind of food in Hell that is

'a Penalty Grievous'

for them.

As it has been mentioned several times, neither the blessings in Heaven nor the punishments in Hell can be thoroughly described for us; we prisoners of this world. In fact, these are but some allusive hints to the Reality.

Surah Ghashiyah, Verses 8-16

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ

لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ

www.alhassanain.org/english

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ
لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً
فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ
فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ
وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ
وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ
وَزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ

8. "(Other) faces that Day will be joyful,"
9. "Pleased with their Striving"
10. "In a Garden on high,"
11. "Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity."
12. "Therein is a fountain flowing,"
13. "Therein are thrones raised high,"
14. "And goblets placed (ready),"
15. "And Cushions set in rows,"
16. "And rich carpets (all) spread out."

A Perspective of the Blessings in Heaven

After the description of the sinners' status, in the Next World, and their punishments in Hell in the aforementioned verses, the following verses refer to the situation of the believers and good-doers and their heavenly blessings; to inform them about both Allah's Wrath and Grace; punishment and reward.

"(Other) faces that Day will be joyful,"

These faces contrast with the sinners' 'down cast, weary' faces that were described in the former verses.

The term /na'imah/ is based on /ni'mat/ 'comfort and convenience of life'.

Here, it means the joyful faces which beam bright with the comfort of Bliss; as is said in Surah Mutaffiffin, No. 83, verse 24:

"Thou wilt recognise in their faces the beaming brightness of Bliss".

These faces look happy, because they are:

"Pleased with their Striving".

They are content with the result of their hard struggle, in contrast with the sinners who are

"Labouring (hard), weary"

and gain no profit from their striving.

The doers of good, under the light of Allah's favour and beneficence, have gained additional rewards; sometimes tenfold, sometimes seven hundred times as much, and sometimes even more than that.

And, sometimes, they may be given

'rewards without measure'

for their deeds, as Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 10 says:

"Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward wihout measure".

Then, to describe that state, it says:

“In a Garden on high,”.

The term /'aliyat/ may refer to the height of a place that means 'they are in a high place in Heaven', or it refers to the highness of their rank, or both of them, but, the second commentary seems more suitable, though both of the ideas are probable.

Then, it describes Bliss from a spiritual point of view, and says:

“Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity.”

They will hear neither hypocrisy nor enmity or conflict. They will hear nothing, there, unbecoming, foolish or vain: no word of discord, enmity, hatred; not a die, accusation, back-biting, nor idle talk.

And what a comfortable environment is such a place where none of these inappropriate words is heard. In fact, they are the origin of many troubles, and discomforts of our life in this world. They disturb the peace of our spirit and the regularity of societies; which lights the fire of sedition.

After the explanation about the existence of the spiritual blessing of hearing no vain word, it continues and explains a part of the material blessings of Heaven, saying:

“Therein is a fountain flowing,”

The word 'fountain' is singular in its Arabic text. Similar cases occur in the Qur’an, like Surah Zaiyat, No. 51, verse 15 which says:

“As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Springs”,

where 'spring' is used in the plural form, then the indefinite singular form of

/'ayn/ 'fountain’,

in this verse, means ' some numerous other fountains'.

Some commentators have said that since there is a spring in every castle, in Heaven belonging to the believers, which flows in every direction that they wish it to, without digging special canals, so,

'spring'

is mentioned in the singular form, but they are numerous, indeed, and are useful for their beauty, different wholesome sweet water, and whenever the Righteous wish to, they drink, therefrom.

Then attention is paid to thrones and says:

“Therein are thrones raised high”.

The term /surur/ is the plural form of /sarir/ based on /surur/ 'a throne' (which is usually used in felicitous gatherings).

The thrones are raised high for the Righteous to see all of their surroundings, enjoy the beautiful breath-taking sceneries and find great pleasure in them.

Ibn-Abbas says that these high thrones are set in such a way that when the Righteous are going to sit on them they lower themselves in humility, for their owners, and then when the righteous sit down the thrones rise again.

It is probable that 'the thrones are raised high' means that they are very precious, because it is said that they are made of gold and are decorated with topaz, pearls, and rubies.

However, both commentaries are possible.

As they need some kind of utensil to drink the pure drink from the springs, it says:

“And goblets placed (ready)”.

Whenever they wish, the goblets are filled from the springs and are ready, in front of them, to drink and enjoy, to their hearts content. Its pleasure is impossible for the dwellers of this world to describe. The term /akwab/ is the plural form of /kub/ which means 'either a goblet or any cup with a handle'.

It is necessary to note that there are different names given for the containers of 'the pure drink', in Heaven, mentioned in the holy Qur’an.

Here, in this verse, as in some other verses, it is called /abariq/, the plural form of /ibriq/ a cup with a spout and handle to pour the drink; or /ka's/ 'a cup full of drink' as Surah Waqi'ah, No. 56, verses 17-18 say:

"Round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual freshness)”.

“With goblets, (shining) beakers, and cups (filled) from clear-flowing fountains”.

It describes further details about Heaven and says:

“And Cushions set in rows”.

The term /namariq/ is the plural form of /numruqah/ 'a pillow or soft pad for sitting or kneeling on, or reclining against usually for relaxing'.

And the term

/masfufah/ 'set in rows'

denotes that there are numerous cushions arranged in order for some people to have a meeting in which they hear no vain talk, but the words are about the endless blessings of Allah and being saved from both the troubles and struggles of the physical world and the punishments of the spiritual world. It is so enjoyable and excellent that nothing can match it.

Finally, it points to the splendid carpets in Heaven and says:

“And rich carpets (all) spread out”.

The term /zarabiyy/ is the plural form of /zaribah/ which means ‘piled, lush carpets off high quality, that are both comfortable, with a high nap, and costly'.

It is clear that there are also other facilities equal to what is mentioned above; which are a means of enjoyment and comfort, of which only a few examples are given, indicating that there are numerous of them in Heaven.

There are seven heavenly blessings mentioned in these verses; each of which is finer than the other.

In short, Heaven, an eternal home, is a unique place of no fear or grief, free from any toil or weariness, no vanity or untruth; completely in peace and security; joyful, with different kinds of fruits and pure drinks in attractive goblets and cups of gold placed, ready, over some bejewelled thrones of dignity raised high, with rich carpets spread out, beside the flowing springs with youths of perpetual freshness serving among good companions and chaste women.

In conclusion, there are immense blessings that one can neither describe with the limited human vocabulary of this world nor can one conceive in the imagination. All of them, and beyond what anyone can contemplate, are

ready-made for the Righteous who obtain permission to enter Allah’s Bliss because of their righteous deeds.

Besides the physical pleasures, there are the spiritual pleasures, the best of which is the meeting with Alah, in Heaven, while Allah is well pleased with them, and they also with Him.

Surah Ghashiyah, Verses 17-26

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ

وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ

وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ

17. “Do they not look at camels, how they are created?”
18. “And at the Sky, how it is raised high?”
19. “And at the mountains, how they are fixed firm?”
20. “And at the Earth, how it is spread out?”
21. “Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish.”
22. “Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs.”
23. “But whoever turns back and disbelieves,”
24. “Allah will punish him with a mighty punishment.”
25. “Surely to Us will be their Return;”
26. “Then surely upon Us will be the taking of their account.”

Look at the Camel; a Sign of Allah

In the commentary of the last verses, there was a broad discussion about Heaven and its blessings. The next verses refer to 'the knowledge of Allah'; the necessary key that enables us to obtain those blessings. In these verses, four examples of Allah’s signs of power, in His wonderful Creation, are mentioned. Meanwhile, they point to Allah’s endless power which can be a solution to the question of Resurrection.

First, we are encouraged to observe camels:

“Do they not look at camels, how they are created?”

The first thing mentioned is a domesticated animal; the camel. But, why is the camel mentioned first and before all others? Commentators have put forth many ideas, but it is clear that in the beginning, the Arabs of Mecca were addressed; those who often dealt with camels in their everyday lives more than any other animal.

Moreover, this animal has some wonderful characteristics which separate it from other animals, and truly he is one of the signs of Allah.

Some of these characteristics are as follows:

1. Some of the domesticated four-footed animals are useful only for their meat, some others mostly for their milk; the rest are used only for riding or carrying loads, but the camel is used for all of them. The flesh can be eaten. The milk can be used. It can carry men, goods, and so on.

2. The camel is the strongest and the most persevering domestic animal which can carry heavy loads. It is also a wonder that when it is lying on the ground and loaded heavily with goods, it can rise easily, in a motion, while other beasts cannot do so.

3. The camel can bear thirst for a long time (about seven to ten days), and can remain hungry for a time, also.

4. The camel can travel a long distance, every day, on impassible roads and sandy deserts where no other animal can, and that is why the Arabs call it the 'ship of the desert'.

5. The camel can live on a diet of thorny plants, so, its food is inexpensive, and it is also a valuable asset when one wants to purchase a camel, because it is one of the least expensive beasts of burden.

6. Having this wonderful structure, the camel is par excellence for the sandy deserts where terrible storms hurt the eyes and ears, because Allah has created him with special eyes, ears, and nose that allow him to continue to walk through the blowing, stinging sand, and its limbs are adopted to this life, as well.

7. The camel is a very gentle animal. It is so gentle that a little child can hold the lead-rope of a string of camels and take them wherever he or she wishes.

In short, the specialties of this animal, are so amazing that anyone who takes into consideration its creation realizes that the Creator of the animal; his Creator, is very great. In the case men neglect the Hereafter and think of it as of no account, they are asked, in the Qur'an, to contemplate on the camel which they can see in their everyday lives and which is full of meaning in its unique design and is of the goodness Allah bestows upon man.

It is quite clear that the word

'look'

in the verse does not mean a simple look, but it means 'a careful look' with deep contemplation.

Attention is then paid to the second sign; the sky, and it says:

"And at the sky, how it is raised high?"

The lofty sky with its wonders: bright stars, galaxies and all other beauties that attract everyone's attention so that one, comparing himself with this great and glorious universe, which is full of order and regularity, finds himself as if he is nearly nothing before the Creator of them, the Infinite.

How wonderful these great celestial bodies are fixed on their orbits! They have no pillars, but stand firm. Stars and planets in the solar system are millions of years old, but their orbits are unchanged.

Although the creation of sky has always been a wonder, its facts seem more surprising and its glory glitters more brightly, today, than ever before under the light of recent scientific investigations and amazing explorations.

Are we not to contemplate on the Creator and the Wisdom of this great world and approach the main goal of its creation?

Then our attention, which was previously attracted to the sky, is turned to the ground and says:

"And at the mountains how they are fixed firm?"

Mountains, whose underlying formations have joined to each other and have formed a shell over the earth, work like a shield against the inner shaking resulting from molten lava and outer fluxes and refluxes produced by the gravities of the moon and the sun.

If these safe shelters and storm controllers, the mountains, were not on the ground, there would be only deserts all over the earth. Mountains store wholesome water for both man and green plants.

High mountains symbolize grandeur and generosity as well as grace and blessings. Perhaps this is why man can meditate and contemplate, there, better than at any other place, and perhaps it was for the same reason that the holy Prophet (S) spent a lot of his time praying in 'Jabal-un-Nur' and the cave of Hirra in the side of Mount Hirra near 'Arafat before his appointment to prophecy.

The term /naşabat/ is based on /naşb/ which means 'to place, fix, erect', and it may touch on the conditions of the creation of the mountains, at the beginning. The science of geology considers some various factors for the formation of different kinds of mountains:

1. Mountains are formed by folds in the earth.
2. Mountains are formed by volcanoes.
3. Mountains are formed by erosion.
4. Mountains are formed in the seas by sediments and the remains of animals.

Each of these ideas is noteworthy for the formation, merit, and grandeur of mountains. They are good signs of Allah's power for those who pay careful attention.

Then, attention is paid to the Earth and says:

"And at the Earth, how it is spread out?"

man should look at the earth and how rain washes the mountains away, continually, and spreads their dust into furrows and makes the land both level and fit for him to farm or to build houses on.

Suppose the Earth were totally covered with hills and valleys. How difficult would it be to live on? Who had made it smooth and flat for our use before we came to being? The Holy Qur'an advises us to contemplate on these facts and find the real answers.

Here, there is a question about what kind of relation there is between these four things: the camel, the sky, the mountains, and the Earth.

In his commentary, Fakhr-i-Razi says:

"This is because the Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language. Arabs often traveled here and there since they did not have enough farmlands and agricultural products for their lives. Those trips were made on camels.

When they were traveling in the frightful lonely deserts, where there was no habitant to talk with and nothing to look at or to listen to, they would contemplate on: the wonderful camel, the only animal they were riding on; the sky, the only vault they could see high above them; the mountains they had on their right and left; and the Earth, their only companion when they looked down."

It seems as if Allah makes them contemplate on these four things (naturally) when they are alone."[4]

If we think about Islam, not only for the people of the Arabian Desert, but also as a religion for the people of a very vast environment, the four things mentioned, in these verses, can be considered as the basis of man's life; besides water and air, we receive our light and warmth from the sky. The Earth is a bed for the growth of different kinds of food products.

The mountains are the site of quietude and the storing of water, as well as minerals. And the camel is a good example, from domesticated beasts, which humans can use.

Therefore, these four things contain both agricultural and industrial affairs and contemplating about them takes man to the thought of their Creator and causes him to be thankful to Allah; this contemplation is his beginning step towards the knowledge of the one god; Allah.

After this monotheistic description; it addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

"Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish."

"Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs."

Verily, the creation of the sky, earth, mountains, and animals indicate that there is a plan and purpose for the creation of man and the world. The Prophet's mission is to make people acquainted with the goal of that creation, with his admonishments and lead them to the path of development and nearness to Allah.

Of course, the path of development is paved when they do it willingly and without any outer forces, otherwise it is meaningless. The Prophet (S) cannot force them to obey Allah and even if he could, it would be useless.

Some have supposed that this instruction has been abrogated when the verses of the command for Holy War were revealed.

What a great mistake! The Prophet's mission for publicity of Islam and admonition began from the early days of his prophecy and continued until the last moments of his life. It has been continuing since then; at first by his sinless successors and then by the Islamic scholars. This responsibility will never stop.

The lack of obligation on the people, in accepting Islam, is also a permanent principle. However, Holy War is different. The goal is mainly to stand against transgressors and remove the hindrances from the path of true believers.

This matter is somewhat similar to that of Surah Nisa, No.4, verse 80 which says:

"...But if any turn away, We have not sent thee to watch over their (evil deeds)".

It is the same in Surah An'am, No. 6, verse 107 and Surah Shura, No. 42, verse 48.

The term /musaytir/ is based on /satr/ ‘a line of a book or writing' and means 'a person who arranges the lines of a book' or 'one who has absolute authority over a thing or a person and writes down its manner of action, or makes him do something by force’.

In the next verse, as an exception, it says:

“But whoever turns back and disbelieves.”

Opinions are divided about the commentary of this 'exception':

The first idea says that the exception is from the object of the verb /fathakkir/ to 'give admonition'. Accepting this, it means 'you do not need to give ad monition to the enemies who reject Allah and do not take your advice'.

This is similar to what is said in Surah Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 83:

“So leave them to babble and play (with vanities) until they meet that Day of theirs, which they have been promised “.

The second idea denotes that if the sentence is considered as a conditional sentence, there is something omitted in the sentence and hence the meaning is, 'Do thou give admonition, because admonishment is useful for all, unless they are enemies of Allah'.

It is similar to what is said in Surah Ala, No. 87, verse 9:

“Therefore give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer)”.

The third idea says that the exception is from the pronoun /'alayhim/ in verse 22, then it would mean: 'Thou art not one to manage (men's) affair, except in so far as you receive authority to do so against those who reject Allah and do wrong with you.'

This commentary seems more agreeable.

The 'exception' may be unrelated; if so, the meaning is: 'But those who turn back and reject Allah, He has authority over them, or He will punish them with a mighty punishment'.

'Mighty punishment'

is the punishment in the Hereafter and is compared with the punishment in the present life as it is said in Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 26:

“So God gave them a taste of humiliation in the present life, but greater is the punishment of the Hereafter.”

It is probable that the purpose of the 'mighty punishment' is a definite intensive punishment in Hell for some sinners in the Hereafter, because the punishment of all evildoers will not be the same in Hell.

At the end of the Surah, it says with a threatening tone that:

“Surely to Us will be their Return;”

“Then surely upon Us will be the taking of their account.”

This is, in fact, a kind of consoling for the Prophet (S) in order for him not to be upset about their obstinacy and to keep his responsibility in view. It is also a threat for all those who are obstinate in understanding who it is that will reckon with them.

Thus, Surah Ghashiyah which began by speaking about the Hereafter, ends by speaking about the Hereafter also, but in between, 'monotheism' and 'prophecy', are discussed which is the basis of Resurrection.

Meanwhile, in the beginning verses, a portion of the severe punishments for the evildoers, and then a great part of the rewards of the good-doers are

mentioned. By the way, people are free either to believe and follow the way or not, but they are warned that their return will certainly be to Allah and it is He Who will take care of their account.

Therefore, it clearly states that the Holy Prophet (S) is sent to teach and direct people on the way and he is not responsible for people's rejections and corruptions. All prophets of Allah have been commissioned in like manner.

Supplication

O Lord! On the Day that all human beings will return to you and upon you will be the taking of their account, bestow your Grace on us.

O Lord! Save us from the mighty Punishment on That Day.

O Lord! Your heavenly blessings, a few of which You described for us in this Surah, are very valuable and encouraging. If we do not deserve them, with Your beneficence, please bestow them on us.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10. pg. 477
2. Ibid.
3. Tafsir-i-Qartabi, voL 10. page 7119
4. Tafsir Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. 31, p. 158.

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 20

From Surah al-Fajr (89) to Surah an-Nas (114)

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, *"An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an"* compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

Author: Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani and A Group of Muslim Scholars

Translator(s): Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli

Publisher(s): Imam Ali Foundation

WWW.ALHASSANAIN.ORG/ENGLISH

Table of Contents

Introduction 10
Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable 11
What is a 'Commentary'? 12
The Current Commentary 13
Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary 14
The Problems in Translating 14
Translators Note 15
Editor's Note 16
Notes 18
Acknowledgment 19
Notes 19
References 20
Arabic, Farsi Commentaries 20
English Translations of Qur'an 20
Supporting Technical References 21
Phraseological and Philological Sources 21
A Presentation to Muslims 23
Notes 24
Surah al-Fajr, Chapter 89 25
Surah al-Fajr (Break of Dawn) 25
Number of Verses: 30 25
Contents of the Surah 25
The Virtue of Studying Surah Fajr 25
Surah Fajr, Verses 1-5 25
An Oath to the Dawn! 26
What an interesting concept! 29
Surah Fajr, Verses 6-14 30
Surah Fajr, Verses 15-20 35
Do Not Be Proud of Receiving His Blessings Nor Disappointed When He Puts You in Dire Straights 36
Surah Fajr, Verses 21-26 39
They Will Awaken On a Day When It Is Too Late 39
Surah Fajr, Verses 27-30 42
O, You Possessor of the Serene Soul! 42
Supplication 44
Notes 44
Surah Balad, Chapter 90 45
(The City) 45
Number of Verses: 20 45
Contents of this Surah 45
The Virtue in Studying Surah Balad 45
Surah Balad, Verses 1-7 45
By This Sacred City! 46
Surah Balad, Verses 8-10 49
The Gifts of Eyes, Tongue and Guidance! 49
Surah Balad, Verses 11-20 51
An Arduous Uphill Climb! 51

Supplication 54
Notes 55
Surah Shams, Chapter 91 56
(The Sun) 56
Number of Verses: 15 56
The Contents of the Surah 56
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 56
Surah Shams, Verses 1-10 56
Explanation 62
Surah Shams, Verses 11-15 62
The Fatal End of the Wrongdoers! 63
Explanation: The Brief Story of the Thamood 65
Notes 67
Surah Lail, Chapter 92 68
(The Night) 68
Number of Verses: 21 68
Contents of the Surah 68
The Virtue in Studying Surah Lail 68
Surah Lail, Verses 1-11 68
The Occasion of the Revelation of Surah Lail 69
Piety and the Divine Assistance 70
Surah Lail, Verses 12-21 73
Payment of Charity Causes the Fire to Be Kept Away 74
Supplication 77
Notes 77
Surah Duha, Chapter 93 78
(The Glorious Morning Light) 78
Number of Verses: 11 78
The Contents of Surah Duha 78
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 78
Surah Duha, Verses 1-5 79
The Occasion of Revelation 79
Explanation: The Philosophy Behind the Discontinuation of the Revelations 82
Surah Duha, Verses 6-11 82
As a Sign of Gratitude for the Bounties of Your Lord 82
Supplication 86
Notes 87
Surah Inshirah, Chapter 94 88
(The Expansion) 88
Number of Verses: 8 88
Contents of the Surah 88
The Virtue in Studying Surah Inshirah: 88
Surah Inshirah, Verses 1-8 88
We Endowed You With Various Bounties! 89
Explanation 94
Supplication 94
Notes 95

Surah Tin, Chapter 95 96
(The Fig) 96
Number of Verses: 8 96
Contents of Surah Tin 96
Surah Tin, Verses 1-8 96
We Have Created Man In the Finest of Moulds 97
Supplication 101
Notes 101
Surah ‘Alaq, Chapter 96 102
(The Clot) 102
Number of Verses: 19 102
Contents of Surah 'Alaq 102
The Virtue of Studying this Surah 102
Surah ‘Alaq, Verses 1-5 102
The Occasion of the Revelation 103
Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord! 104
Explanations 106
The First Revelation Was Accompanied by a Societal Movement 106
Remembrance of Allah in any Condition 107
Surah ‘Alaq, Verses 6-14 107
Do You Not Know That Allah Surely Sees What You Do? 108
Does such a person not deserve the Divine Punishment? 109
Explanation: All the World is Before the Presence of Allah 110
Surah ‘Alaq, Verses 15-19 110
Prostrate Yourself and Draw Nigh (to Allah)! 110
Explanation: Rebellion and Self-Sufficiency 112
Supplication 113
Notes 113
Surah Qadr, Chapter 97 114
(The Night of Honour) 114
Number of Verses: 5 114
Contents of Surah Qadr 114
The Virtue of Studying this Surah: 114
Surah Qadr, Verses 1-5 114
Explanations 118
Which Affairs are to be Fixed on the Night of Honour? 118
Which Night is the Night of Honour? 119
Why is the Night of Honour a Mystery? 119
Was there the Night of Honour for Former Nations? 120
How is the Night of Honour Better Than a Thousand Months? 120
Why Was the Qur'an Descended on the Night of Honour? 121
Is the Night of Honour the Same Night in Different Zones? 121
Supplication 122
Notes 122
Surah Bayyinah, Chapter 98 123
(The Clear Evidence) 123
Number of Verses: 8 123
Contents of the Surah 123

The Virtue in Studying Surah Bayyinah 123
Surah Bayyinah, Verses 1-5 124
The Religion Right and Straight 124
Surah Bayyinah, Verses 6-8 127
The Best and the Worst Creatures 127
The Necessity of Intention in Adorations 131
The Wonderful Heights and Depths to Which Man Can Reach 131
Supplication 132
Notes 132
Surah Zilzal, Chapter 99 133
(The Quaking) 133
Number of Verses: 8 133
Contents of Surah Zilzal 133
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 133
Surah Zizal, Verses 1-8 133
The Day When Man Sees All His Deeds 134
Does this surprise and question thereby depend on whether it is the First or the Second Blast? 135
Explanation: Accuracy and Severity at the Divine Reckoning 137
An Answer to a Question 138
The Most Expressive Verses of the Qur'an 139
Supplication 139
Notes 139
Surah ‘Adiyat, Chapter 100 140
(The Chargers) 140
Number of Verses: 11 140
Contents of the Surah 140
The Virtue of Studying Surah 'Adiyat 140
Surah ‘Adiyat, Verses 1-11 140
The Occasion of Revelation 141
By Those Which Raid At Dawn 142
Explanation: Is Man Naturally Ungrateful? 146
Supplication 147
Notes 147
Surah Qari’ah, Chapter 101 148
(The Calamity) 148
Number of Verses: 11 148
Contents of Surah Qari'ah 148
The Virtue of Studying this Surah 148
Surah Qari’ah, Verses 1-11 148
The Calamity 149
Weighing the Good Deeds; the Deciding Factors 151
Supplication 152
Notes 152
Surah Takathur, Chapter 102 153
(Vying in Exuberance) 153
Number of Verses: 8 153
Contents of the Surah 153

The Virtue of Studying Surah Takathur 153
Surah Takathur, Verses 1-8 153
The Occasion of Revelation 154
The Affliction of Vying in Exuberance! 154
Explanations 156
The Source of Vying 156
Yet, What is This Mass of Yying and Pride For? 156
Certitude and its Degrees 157
All Will See Hell 158
What Bounties Are Asked About in the Hereafter? 158
Supplication 159
Notes 159
Surah Asr, Chapter 103 160
(Time) 160
Number of Verses: 11 160
Contents of the Surah 160
The Virtue of Studying Surah 'Asr 160
Surah ‘Asr, Verses 1-3 160
The Only Path to Salvation 160
Explanation: Salvation Through Four Principles 163
Supplication 166
Notes 166
Surah Humazah, Chapter 104 167
(The Slanderer) 167
Number of Verses: 9 167
Contents of the Surah 167
The Virtue of Studying Surah Humazah 167
Surah Humazah, Verses 1-9 167
The Occasion of Revelation 168
Woe to Every Backbiter, Slanderer! 168
Divine Justice Requires a Penalty on Them Similar to Their Behaviors 171
Explanations 172
Pride, the Origin of Great Sin 172
The Lust For Amassing Wealth 173
Supplication 174
Notes 174
Surah Fil, Chapter 105 175
(The Elephant) 175
Number of Verses: 5 175
Contents of the Surah 175
The Virtue in Studying Surah Fil 175
Surah Fil, Verses 1-5 175
The Occasion of Revelation 176
The Story of the Companions of the Elephants 176
Explanation: This House Has An Owner 180
The Gravest Punishment By the Least Means! 180
A Certain Historial Event 181
Supplication 182

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes 182
Surah Quraish, Chapter 106 183
(Custodians of the Ka'aba) 183
Number of Verses: 4 183
Contents of the Surah 183
The Virtue of Studying Surah Quraish 183
Surah Quraish, Verses 1-4 183
Supplication 185
Note 185
Surah Ma'un, Chapter 107 186
(Neighbourly Needs) 186
Number of Verses: 7 186
Contents of the Surah 186
Occasion of the Revelation 186
The Virtue of Studying the Surah 186
Surah Ma'un, Verses 1-7 186
The Harmful Fruit of the Denial of the Hereafter 187
Explanation: Subjects Discussed in this Surah 189
A Great Social Pest; Pretense and Hypocrisy 189
Supplication 190
Notes 190
Surah Kawthar, Chapter 108 191
(The Abundance) 191
Number of Verses: 3 191
Contents of the Surah 191
Occasion of Revelation 191
The Virtue of Studying the Surah 191
Surah Kawthar, Verses 1-3 192
Explanation: Lady Hazrat Fatimah and Kawthar 194
The Miracle of this Surah 195
Allah and the Plural Pronoun 195
Supplication 196
Notes 196
Surah Kafirun, Chapter 109 197
(Disbelievers) 197
Number of Verses: 6 197
Contents of the Surah 197
The Virtue of Studying Surah Kafirun 197
Surah Kafirun, Verses 1-6 198
Occasion of the Revelation 198
He Never Agrees with the Idol Worshippers 198
1. Why Does the Surah Begin With the Command: 'Say'? 199
2. Did the Idol Worshippers Deny Allah? 200
3. What Is This Repetition In the Verses For? 200
4. Is the Phrase: 'To You Be Your Religion' A Licence For Idolatry? . 201
5. Not Even For One Moment Did He Collude With Polytheism 201
Supplication 202
Notes 202

Surah Nasr, Chapter 110 203
(Help) 203
Number of Verses: 3 203
Contents of the Surah 203
The Virtue of Studying this Surah 204
Surah Nasr, Verses 1-3 204
Allah's Help Brings Multitudes to Allah's Religion 204
Supplication 206
Notes 207
Surah Lahab, Chapter 111 208
(The Flame) 208
Number of Verses: 5 208
Contents of the Surah 208
The Virtue in Studying this Surah 208
Occasion of the Revelation of the Surah 208
Surah Lahab, Verses 1-5 209
Explanations 211
Prophecy: A Sign of the Miracle of the Qur'an 211
Relationship is Not a Reason for Faith 212
Supplication 212
Notes 212
Surah Ikhlas, Chapter 112 213
(Monotheism) 213
Number of Verses: 4 213
Contents of the Surah 213
Occasion of Revelation of the Surah 213
The Virtue of Studying this Surah 213
Surah Ikhlas, Verses 1-4 214
Explanation: The Belief in the Oneness of Allah 219
1. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Himself 219
2. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Attributes 220
3. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Actions 220
4. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Worship 220
Supplication 221
Notes 222
Surah Falaq, Chapter 113 223
(The Daybreak) 223
Number of Verses: 5 223
Contents and Virtue of the Surah 223
Occasion of Revelation 223
The Virtue in Studying Surah Falaq 224
Surah Falaq, Verses 1-5 224
I Take Refuge With the Lord of the Dawn 224
Explanations 227
1. The Most Important Sources of Vice and Corruption 227
2. The Influence of Sorcery 227
3. The Evil of the Envious 227
Supplication 228

Notes 228
Surah Nas, Chapter 114 229
(Mankind) 229
Number of Verses: 6 229
Contents of the Surah 229
The Virtue in Studying -Surah Nas 229
Surah Nas, Verses 1-6 229
I Take Refuge With the Lord of Mankind 230
Explanation: Why Do We Take Refuge With Allah? 232
Supplication 232
An Expressive Tradition 232
Notes 233

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"[1].

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three

years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of 'References') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahlul Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (as) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled 'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an', begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation

from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10]**.**

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the

commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul Bayt (as) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance"[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly

in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of 'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...[14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found -no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible -nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21]**.**

Wa Salam.

Notes

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-

ul-Islam:

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the Qur'an) from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest."[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَافِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'an), verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".[3]

وَ نُنزّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe..."[4]

Notes

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

References

Arabic, Farsi Commentaries

1. Tafsir-i-Nemuneh, by A Group of Shi'a Scholars with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi; Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1990/1410.

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Fadl-ibn-il-Husain-il-Tabarsi, Dar-u-Ihya'-it- Turath-il' Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1960/1380 AH.

3. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by 'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain at- Tabataba'i, al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1972/1392 AH.

4. Atyab-ul-Bayan fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an by Sayyid 'Abdul-Husain Tayyib, Muhammadi Publishing House, Isfahan, Iran, 1962/1382 AH.

5. Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur fi-Tafsir-il-Ma'thur by Imam 'Abd-ur-Rahman al-Suyuti, Dar-ul-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983/1403 AH.

6. Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir by Imam Fakh-ir-Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-'islmiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393.

7. Al-Jam'li -Ahkam-il-Qur'an (Tafsir-ul-Qartabi) by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad al-Qartabi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il Misriyyah, 1967/1387.

8.Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn by 'Abd-i-'Ali-ibn Jum'at-ul-'Arusi al-Huweyzi, al-Matba'atul-'ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran, 1963/1383 AH.

9. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Janan by Jamal-ud-Din Abul-Futuh Razi, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Islamiyyah, Tehran, 1973/1393 AH.

10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan by Isma'il Haqqi al-Burusawi Dar-u-Ihya'-ut-Turath-il-' Arabi, Beirut.

English Translations of Qur'an

1. The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Publication of the Presidency of Islamic Courts & Affairs, State of Qatar, 1946.

2. The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text by a Group of Muslim Brothers, English Translation and footnotes by M. H. Shakir, Tehran, Iran.

3. The Glorious Koran, Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, printed in Great Britain by W. & J. MacKay Ltd., Chatham, Kent, London.

4. Al-Mizan, An Exegesis of the Qur'an by al-Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn-at- Tabataba'i, Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Vol. 1, Tehran, WOFIS, 1983.

5. The Koran translated with notes by N. J. Dawood, Penguin Books Ltd, New York, U.S.A, 1978.

6. The Koran Interpreted, Translated by Arthur J. Arberry, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

7. The Glorious Koran, Translated with Commentary of Divine Lights by Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy, Printed at the Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secanderabad-India, 1954.

8. Holy Qur'an, Shakir, M. H., Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1993.

9. The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait by S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, published by Tahrike- Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York, 1988.

10. A Collection of Translation of the Holy Qur'an, supplied, corrected and compiled by Al-Balagh Foundation, Tehran, Iran, (unpublished).

Supporting Technical References

1. Nahjul -Balagha by as -Sayyid ar -Radi Dar -ul -Kitab al -Lubnani, Beirut, Lebanon, 1982.

2. Sharh -i -Nahjul -Balagha by Ibn-i Abi al-Hadid, Dar -u -Ihya' -il -Kutub -il -' Arabiyyah, Eypt, 1959/1378 AH.

3. Nahj-al-Balagha of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected and compiled by as-Sayyid Abul-Hassan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ar-Radi al-Musawi, Translated by Sayyid Ali Raza, World Organization For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, Iran, 1980.

4. Nahjul Balagha -Hazrat Ali, Translated by Sheikh Hassan Saeed, Chehel Sotoon Library & Theological School, Tehran, Iran, 1977.

5. Al-Kafi by ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni ar-Razi, Translated and published by WOFIS, Tehran, Iran, 1982.

6. Shi'a, by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba-i, translated by Sayyid Hosein Nasr, Qum, Ansariyan Publications, 1981.

7. Williams Obstetrics, Pritchard, Jack A., 1921; MacDonald, Paul C., 1930, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, U.S.A, 1976.

8. The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, 1962.

9. Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index, F.E. Compton Company, printed in U.S.A, 1978.

10. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Second Edition, by Noah Webster, Published by the World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, U.S.A, 1953.

Phraseological and Philological Sources

1. A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms Persian-English, by M. T. Akbari and others, Edited by B. Khorramshahi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1991.

2. Al-Mawrid, a Modern Arabic-English Dictionary, Third Edition,by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm Lilmulmalayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991.

3. Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English, by Elias A. Elias & Ed. E. Elias, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

4. An Introduction to Arabic Phonetics and the Orthoepy of the Qur'an, by Bahman Zandi, Islamic Research Foundation, Astan, Quds, Razavi, Mashhad, Iran, 1992.

5. A Concise Dictionary of Religious Terms & Expressions (English-Persian & Persian-English), by Hussein Vahid Dastjerdi, Vahid Publications, Tehran, Iran, 1988.

6. Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, Librarie Du Liban, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

7. A Dictionary and Glossary, by Penrice B.A. Curzon Press Ltd., London, Dublin, Reprinted, 1979.

www.alhassanain.org/english

8. Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, by David B. Guralnik, Simon & Schuster, New York, U.S.A, 1984.

9. The New Unabridged English-Persian Dictionary, by Abbas Aryanpur (Kashani), Amir Kabir Publication Organization, 1963.

10. The Larger Persian English Dictionary, by S. Haim, published in Farhang Moaser, Tehran, Iran, 1985.

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّه وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَ ْ رِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".[1]

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الا ر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم وسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن وسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الا رض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'[2]

قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3]

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4]

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5]

Notes

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Fajr, Chapter 89

Surah al-Fajr (Break of Dawn)

Number of Verses: 30

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, like many other Meccan Suras, contains short, meaningful, awakening verses with abundant warnings.

There are several oaths mentioned in the first part of the Surah that have no precedent and are primarily for warning the transgressors about the divine punishment.

Another part of this Surah points to some of the ancient rebellious nations, such as the 'Ad and Thamood people; and also to Pharaoh. The transgressor, and the divine punishment that destroyed them, which is a lesson for all arrogant powers so that they may take careful account of their situation.

In the next part of the Surah, which relates to the previous parts, Man's trial is mentioned and his neglect, in doing good deeds, is very sharply criticized.

In the last part of the Surah the discussion is about the Hereafter and the fate of the sinners and unbelievers, and presents a contrast in regard to the great rewards that the believers will receive; those whose souls are at rest.

The Virtue of Studying Surah Fajr

Regarding the virtue of studying this Surah, a tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"Allah forgives the mistakes of whoever recites, Surah Fajr, on the

'Ten Nights',

(i.e., the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj), and it will become a light on Dooms Day for the one who recites it at other times ((of the year)".[1]

Also, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Recite Surah Fajr, which is Husain-ibn-Ali's Surah, in your prayers, whether they be obligatory or optional. He who recites it will be with him (Husain ibn Ali) at the same place in Heaven on the Day of Judgement".[2]

Introducing this Surah as Husain-ibn-Ali's Surah may be for the reason that the clear example of the 'serene soul'

as mentioned at the end of the Surah, is Husain-ibn-Ali (as), as the idea has also been cited from Imam Sadiq (as) about the same verses.

Or, perhaps, it is for the same reason that one of the commentaries about the 'Ten Nights' means the first ten nights of Muharram, (the first month of the Muslim new year), which is closely relevant to Husain-ibn-Ali (as).

At any rate, these great rewards and outstanding merits are for the ones who recite the Surah as a preparation for their own self-improvement and self-perfection.

Surah Fajr, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالْفَجْرِ

وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ

1. "By the Break of Dawn,"
2. "And the Ten Nights;"
3. "By the Even and the Odd;"
4. "And by the Night when it departs;"
5. "Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

An Oath to the Dawn!

There are five awakening oaths at the beginning of the Surah.

At first, it says:

"By the Break of Dawn,"

"And the Ten Nights;"

The term /fajr/ originally means 'break open', and since the light of the dawn breaks the gloom of night it is called /fajr/.

We know that the meaning of /fajr/ is two fold:

(1) /fajr-i-kaoib /'the false dawn' which rises without extending laterally and appears to be black, presenting itself like an obstacle on the horizon, and is compared to the tail of a Fox whose narrow end is onto the horizon and its conical shaped end is in, the mid-sky,

(2) /fajr-i-sadiq/ 'the true dawn' and is like a stream with white water that becomes visible, rising, filling the horizon with its whiteness and thereafter, spreads throughout the sky with a special brightness by which the night ends and the day begins.

It is the time when everything by which fasting would be broken becomes unlawful to the faster, and when the Morning Prayer can, then, be performed.

Some commentators have carried the term /fajr/, in this verse, to its absolute meaning, that is; whiteness, which is certainly one of the signs of Allah's Greatness. It is a reference point in the lives of human beings and all earthly creatures, and the prime glory of the victorious light and the end of faded darkness when the calm sleep ends and the movement of living creatures begins. It is for this very life that Allah swears by it.

However, some commentators have said that it means 'break of dawn at the beginning of Muharram'.

Still, others have commented on it as meaning 'break of dawn on the day of the Feast of Sacrifice' where the important rituals of the pilgrimage to Mecca are fulfilled and it follows close to the Ten Nights. Finally, there are some who have commented on it as meaning 'break of dawn for the month of Ramadan', or 'break of dawn on Fridays'.

All in all, the verse has such a broad meaning which involves all, the above commentaries, though some of its examples are clearer and more important than the others.

Some have considered its meaning even beyond this and have said that the objective point for the term 'break of dawn' is 'any light that glitters in the dark’.

Therefore, the glitter of the light of Islam and Muhammad (S) in the gloom of ignorance at that time, is one of the examples of

/fajr/ ‘break of dawn'.

Also, the glitter of the break of dawn for the Rise of Hazrat Mahdi (the twelfth Imam) (as), when the world will be completely darkened by corruption. transgression and injustice, is considered to be another example of this[3]

The rise of Imam Husain (as) on the bloody plains of Karbala, is another example, when he pulled back the black curtains of deceit revealing the tyrannies of the Ummayides and unveiling the real face and nature of those devils. Furthermore, all the true revolutions that have occurred in the history of the world, against disbelief, ignorance, transgression and cruelty are, also, examples of /fajr/.

Even the first light of wakefulness that appears in the darkened hearts of sinners and makes them move to repent, is

/fajr/ ‘break of dawn'.

Of course, this is an expansion on the concept of the verse, while the apparent meaning of the verse has the same meaning /fajr/ with the sense of 'the break of dawn’.

The oath

'By the Ten Nights'

is generally understood to be the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj; nights which are witness to the largest and most devoted gathering of Muslims in the world, and this is an idea which is narrated by Jabir-ibn-' Abdillah in a tradition from the Prophet (S).[4]

Some have also commented on them to mean 'the last ten nights of Ramadan' in which the nights of /qadr/, (when the Qur'an was revealed) are hidden:.

Some have meant

'the Ten Nights'

to be the first ten nights of Muharram; the first Arabic lunar month.

It is also possible to combine these three commentaries together.

Some narrations, containing the hidden meanings of the Qur'an. say that /fajr/ refers to the existence of Imam Mahdi (as), and

/layalin-'asr/ ‘ten nights'

refers to the ten sinless Imams who came before him (as), and /saf'/’ even' refers to Hazrat Ali (as) and Fatimah Zahra (sa); the latter term is mentioned in the next verse.

In any event, the oath to these ten nights is an evidence of their great importance, since oaths are always made to very important things.

“By the Even and the Odd”

Commentators have cited many different meanings for the terms /saf'/ and /watr/ ‘even and odd' mentioned in this verse: Some of them have given twenty meanings,[5] while some others have gone further and narrated over thirty-six meanings. [6]

The following are the most important ones:

1. The objective point, here is the' even' and 'odd' numbers. According to this commentary, Allah has sworn by all even and odd numbers, they are figures around which all calculations and regularities revolve, and cover the existing universe.

It seems as if He had said: 'By the regulation and calculation'. In fact, in the world of existence the most important things are regularity, calculation and numbers which shape the main foundation of Man's life.

2. The objective meaning of /Saf'/ is 'creatures' because they are all in pairs, and the objective point of

/watr/ 'odd'

is 'Allah', Who is unique and has no equal.

In addition, created things are all combined, by substance and existence which, in philosophy, are called 'combined pairs'. The only infinite entity which is non-material is Allah. (This meaning has been used in some narrations from the sinless Imams). [7]

3. The objective idea of 'even and odd' is that all the creatures of the world, in one respect or another, are either 'even' or 'odd’.

4. The meaning refers to prayers, some of which are 'even' from the point of the number of 'rak'at' and some are 'odd’. (This idea has been narrated from the sinless Imams (as), too.) Or it means the elective prayers of 'Shaf’ (two rak'ats) and 'Watr’ (one rak'at) at the end of 'the night prayers’.

5. The meaning of /Saf'/ is the day of /tarwiyah/ (the eighth day of Zul-Hajj when the pilgrims, in Mecca, travel to 'Ararat), and /watr/ is the 'Arafah Day, when the pilgrims in Mecca remain at 'Arafat. Or /Saff/ is the day of the 'Feast of Sacrifice', (the tenth of Zul-Hajj) and /watr/ is the day of Arafah. (This commentary is also mentioned in narrations from the sinless Imams).

The main thing is that if the Arabic sign /al/, in these two terms, is used in general, all the above meanings can be applied, as each of these commentaries indicates only one example from the given examples of /saff/ ‘even' and /watr/ ‘odd'. Mentioning each of them does not mean that it is the exclusive interpretation, but that it is one clear example among the rest.

However, if /al/ refers to a particular even and odd number, here concerning the former oaths, two meanings are the most appropriate. The first is that the objective point is the day of the 'Feast of Sacrifice' and the day of arafah', which corresponds with the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj, and the most important pilgrimage rituals are practised, then.

Or, pertaining to the oath

'By the break of Dawn’;

the objective point is concerning the prayers which are said at the end of the night and before the break of day, which is the most suitable time for praying and supplicating to Allah; particularly when both of the

commentaries are mentioned in the narrations cited from the sinless Imams (as).

For the final oath in this group, it says:

"And by the Night when it departs."

What an interesting concept!

The movement of the night is in relation to night, itself, (the term /yasr/ based on /Surah, /to walk at night' here is written as an analogy instead of /yasri/ due to the pause at the end of the verse) as if

'night'

were a living creature with senses and movement and travelled in the darkness by itself, moving toward a bright dawn.

Yes, the oath is taken to the darkness which moves to the light; a moving darkness, not a stationary one. Darkness is frightening when it becomes fixed and immobile, but when there is movement unto the light, it becomes valuable.

Some people have said that the gloom of night is moving over the face of the earth and basically, it is that very moving night which is useful and livable, that is, night alternates-continuously with day. So, if night stopped permanently on one half of the globe, both the dark and the sunlit halves would die.

What does

'Night'

mean here? Does it mean every night or is it a special definite night? Again, there is no agreement among the commentators. If /al/, the Arabic definite article, is used in a general sense, it refers to all the nights, which itself is a blessing from the gifts of Allah and is a phenomenon from the great phenomena of creation.

Although, if it refers to a definite night, relating to the previous oaths, it means the night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice' when the pilgrims of Mecca go from 'Arafat to the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/, and spending the night in that sacred place, go toward Mina at sunrise. (This commentary is also cited in some narrations from the Sinless Ones).

Those who, themselves, have seen the view of 'Arafat and the Sacred Monument, at night, know how thousands and thousands of people move here and there in the same way and feel that night, with all its entity, is moving.

The pilgrims, in reality, do move here and there, but the movement of night is so vast that it seems the whole world, heavens and earth are moving.

This condition is felt only when a person, himself, visits the place on the night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice' and sees, with his own eyes the exact meaning of this verse:

"And by the night when it departs."

In any case, night, with either meaning it has (general or definite), is one sign among the many signs of the Divine Dignity, and is one of the very important factors in the existing world. It moderates the temperature of the weather. It gives calmness to every creature, and prepares a still and quiet atmosphere for worship and supplication to Allah.

The night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice', which is called 'the gathering night', is also one of the most wonderful nights of the year at the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/.

Furthermore, if these five items (the oath by break of dawn, the Ten Nights, Even, Odd, Night when it departs) can be considered as relating to the specific days of Zul-Hajj and the great rituals of Hajj, their relationship will be clear.

And, if it is not clear yet, a collection of great events of the divine creation and divine religious rituals are pointed out, which are signs of the Dignity of Allah and are a wonderful phenomenon in the existing world.

After expressing these meaningful awakening statements, it says:

"Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

The term /hijr/ here means 'sense, understanding' and originally means, anything forbidden', for instance, it is said: the judge forbade him to use his wealth'. A skirt is also called /hijr/, meaning protection and forbidding others entrance, and since /'aql/ 'wisdom' also forbids man from doing wrong deeds it has been rendered /hijr/ the word /'aql/, itself, means 'keeping back'; therefore, the rope with which the leg of a camel is hobbled is called /' iq'al/.

What are these oaths for? There are two possibilities. The first is that they are for the sentence of verse 14:

"Surely your Lord is ever watchfull".

The second is that what they are for is not mentioned, but means that they are about the punishment of the wrong doers. The meaning may be found in verse 13, in that, a scorge of diverse chastisement will be poured on the unbelievers and transgressors. In this way, the oaths and what they are for can be made clear.

Surah Fajr, Verses 6-14

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ

وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ

فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

6. "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people),"

7. "Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"

8. "The like of which were not created among (other) cities?"

9. "And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley"

10. "And Pharaoh- of the many stakes"

11. "Who (all) transgressed in the land,"

12. "And made much corruption therein "

13. "Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement:"

14. "Surely your Lord is ever watchful."

"Your Lord is Ever Watchful"

The following verses, contain some meaningful oaths about the punishment of the transgressors, of which a few powerful ancient nations are referred to; each of which had great authority in their own right, but were arrogant and went astray.

They did not believe and disobeyed Allah, and these verses illustrate their painful destiny to show the pagans of Mecca and other similar nations, who were probably much weaker than them, to understand their own status and awaken them from their neglectful sleep.

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people),"?

The term

/tara/ 'see',

here means 'know or understand', but since the story of these sects were so clear and known to all, it seems that the people of later generations had also been able to see them With their own eyes. In this verse of course the addressee is the Prophet (S), but the warning is for all.

The 'Ad people with their prophet Hud (as), are, as some historians believe, mentioned separately in two groups:

(1) the first lived in very ancient times and they are called in Qur'an

/'ad-al-ula/ (the early generation of 'Ad)[8]

who probably used to live in prehistory,

(2) a remnant from the former group, also known by the name 'Ad, existed during recorded history, which may be about 700 B.C., and lived in Ahqaf, Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people were tall and strong in stature and likewise, were considered excellent fighters.

Moreover, they were very advanced in their material civilization, having lofty buildings in large cities with cultivated lands of verdant fields and luxuriant gardens.

Some others say that 'Ad is the name of an ancestor of the people, and a tribe was usually called by the name of its ancestor.

"Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"

Opinions are divided about the name 'Iram' as to whether it is the name of a person or a sect or a city.

In Kashshaf, Zamakhshari cites, from some others, that 'Ad was a son of 'Aus (Uz), the son of Iram (A'ram), the son of Sham (Shem), the son of Nuh (Noah). And since the name of the ancestor of a tribe was used for the tribe, the 'Ad people were also called Iram.

Still others believe that Iram is the same as

/'ad-al-ula/ (the early generation of 'Ad)

and that 'Ad is the second group of people. Then, there are others who believe that Iram is the name of a city and the land where they lived,[9] and corresponding with the next verse, Iram is the name of their matchless city.

The term /‘imad/ means 'pillar' whose plural form is /'umud/.

According to the first commentary it points to the strong pillar-like stature of the people of 'Ad; and taking the second commentary into consideration, it points to their great, lofty buildings with strong pillars, both of which illustrate the strength and the power of the 'Ad people, but the second commentary, i.e., the great lofty pillars of their buildings is more appropriate.

That is why in the next verse, it says:

“The like of which were not created among (other) cities?”

The sense, here shows that the meaning of Iram is 'a city' and does not mean sect or tribe, and this may be why some great commentators have accepted that this is the correct commentary, and we have preferred it, too.

Some of the commentators have told long stories about the recent excavated beautiful, supposed city of Iram, in the deserts of Arabia, and the lands of Eden, speaking of its high, splendid buildings and its extraordinary jewellery. Of course, they seem more mythical or dreamlike than real.

There is no doubt, however, that the people of 'Ad were of the strongest and the most advanced people of their time and their cities were the best. As the Qur'an says, there was not any city like that among other cities.

There are many stories told about Shaddad, who was a son of 'Ad, and Shaddad's Paradise. [10] These stories are told by people and written in books so abundantly and frequently that 'his paradise' and 'the gardens of Iram' are used proverbially in the language, but they are all myths developed over time which have some roots in reality.

Then, the Qur'an refers to the second group of transgressors of ancient times and says:

“And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley”

The Thamood were among the most ancient of people, and whose prophet and warner was Salih. They lived in a land between Medina and Damascus named / wadi-al-qura/ and had an advanced civilized life with comfortable houses and lofty buildings.

Some have said that 'Thamood' was the name of the father of the tribe and so, they took their name from him.

The term /jabu/ is originally from /jaubah/ which means 'low land', so, it is used with the sense of 'to split, cleave, or cut out any piece of land’. An answer is called /jawab/ because it cleaves the air when it comes out from the mouth of the speaker and reaches the ears of the listener, or because it carves out a question and puts an end to it.

In any case, here it means cutting the rocks of the mountains and making safe and sound houses as Surah Hijr, No. 15, Verse 82 says about the Thamood people:

“Out of the mountains did they hew (their) edifices, (considering themselves) secure.”

Similar to this idea, it is also mentioned in Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 149:

“And you hew houses out of the mountains exultingly”,

but here the word

/farihin/ ‘exultingly',

is an evidence to show that they lived with pleasure and were making merry in those houses.

Some have said that the Thamood were the first people who carved the rocks-and produced firm houses inside the mountains for themselves to live in.

The term /wad/, which was originally /wadi/, means 'river bed, or flood route' and sometimes it has been used with the meaning of 'valley' since the flood waters pass through valleys at the base of the mountains.

Here, the second meaning is more apt to explain the word, because as it is understood about these people, from the verses of the Qur'an and also from the above verse, they used to build their houses in the mountain sides to make safer living quarters.

A tradition from the Prophet (S) says that on his way to the North of Arabia, riding on horse back for the battle of Tabuk, he reached the valley of Thamood, and ordered the others to make haste, because they were in a cursed land. [11]

Undoubtedly, the Thamood had an advanced civilization with grandiose cities in their time, but, the descriptions written about them are exaggerated and mythical. For example, some commentators have written that they had one thousand seven hundred (1700) cities all made of stone.

Then, the third group is spoken about:

“And Pharaoh - of the many stakes”

The meaning, in the form of a question, is: 'Did you see what Allah did to the Pharaohs who were powerful, but transgressed and were cruel? '

The term /autad/ is the plural form of /watad/ which means 'peg or stake'.

The reason why Pharaoh was called

/Oi-'l-autad/ ‘of the many stakes'

has three different intepretations:

The first is that he possessed a large army, many of whom used to live in tents. The army tents were made firm and stable by using stakes.

The second is that Pharaoh persecuted those whom he hated by ordering that their hands and feet be fastened to the ground with stakes; or that they be laid on a piece of wood and their hands and feet nailed to it with stakes, and thereby confining them and leaving them to die.

This commentary is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as).[12] As it is understood from history, Pharaoh even persecuted and killed his wife, 'Asiyah, in the same manner, when she followed on the path of Moses and confessed the faith.

The third is that

'many stakes'

means ‘a large army camp ready to fight’.

Of course, these three interpretations do not contradict each other and all of them may be combined in the meaning of the verse.

In conclusion, referring to the behavior of these three groups, it says:

“Who (all) transgressed in the land,”

“And made much corruption therein,”

Corruption, which consists of any tyranny, transgression, cruelty and lust, was, in fact, one of the results of their disobedience, and any disobedient people will finally sink entirely into the depths of corruption.

Then, in a meaningful, but short sentence, it points to the painful punishment of all those groups, saying:

"Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement"

The term /saut/ means 'a scourge' but orginally meant' to mingle', then it has been used in the sense of 'a whip' (woven with strips of leather and the like). Some have resembled it to a kind of punishment which will be mingled with the flesh and blood of Man, and which causes him extreme pain.

Hazrat Ali (as) says in one of his sermons:

"By Allah Who sent the Prophet (S) with faith and truth, you will be severely examined as if vigorously shaken through a sieve, and thoroughly blended as if stirred in a cooking pot".[13]

The term /sabb/ originally means 'to pour water' and here it refers to the graveness and continuity of the punishment. It may refer to the clearing from the land of these disobedient ones. But, on the whole, from all the meanings of /saut/ the first one, i.e., 'scourge' is the most suitable. It is a term that is also used in current vocabulary.

This short statement illustrates the various chastisements which were cast on those groups of people.

The 'Ad people were destroyed by a terrible blast of cold wind, as the Qur'an says:

"And 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind exceedingly violent"[14]**.**

About the Thamood, it says:

"But the Thamood, they were destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning!"[15]

The Pharaoh and his men were utterly drowned in the Nile River:

"...and We drowned them all "[16]**.**

Finally, as a warning to all, it says:

"Surely your Lord is ever watchful."

The term /mirsad/ is derived from /rasada/ which means 'lie in wait' and also' an ambush, or a place of observation'. It is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them.

On the whole, it means that no one should think that he can escape from the divine punishment, because all are under His authority and Power and whenever He wills, He may administer His punishment.

It is obvious that Allah is not confined to a particular place and time and does not lie in wait in a pass, but, it means that His Power is over all transgressors, tyrants and sinners.

On this subject, a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"Surely your Lord is capable of recompensing the doers of sin for their evil deeds". [17]

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"/mirsad/ is a bridge on 'the Way over Hell' on which a person who has transgressed another person cannot pass". [18]

In fact, the divine ambush is not limited merely to the Hereafter and that known passageway over Hell, it is also watchful of the transgressors in this world. The punishment cast on the aforementioned three groups of people is an illustration of this.

The term

/rabbika /'your Lord'

touches on the meaning that Allah's law, for the punishment of the ancient, arrogant nations, is, also true for every sect including one's own, which is a solace for the Prophet (S) and the believers both, to know that their spiteful enemies cannot escape from the wrath of Allah and the disbelievers should also know that those who are more powerful and miserly than themselves can be destroyed easily by a violent storm, a sound or even lightning.

Then, by doing their wrong actions, how do they think that they can be saved from divine punishment?

In a tradition from the holy Prophet (S), it says:

"Ruh-al-Amin (Gabriel) informed me that at the time when Almighty Allah gathers, in the Hereafter, all creatures from the earliest ones to the latest ones, He will bring Hell nigh and set

/sirat/ 'the way'

over it. The way is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, and there are three bridges over it. On the first bridge honesty, grace and affection are waiting; on the second one, prayer; and on the third, Justice of the Lord of the worlds.

All people will be ordered to pass over it, then those who had been dishonest and cruel will stop on the first bridge, and those who had been neglectful in their prayers will stop on the second bridge, and those who finally pass on to the third will be faced with the Justice of Allah.

This is the meaning of (the verse:)

'Surely your Lord is ever watchful'".

In one of his sermons, Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"If Allah has allowed time and opportunities to any tyrant, it does not mean that He has completely lost control over him. He can wait before bringing down His punishment which none can escape and no one can offer protection from it, not even death..." [19]

Surah Fajr, Verses 15-20

فَأَمَّا الْإِنسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ

كَلَّا بَل لَّا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

15. 'And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, 'My Lord has honoured me'."

16. "But when He tries him and straitens for him his subsistence, he says, 'My Lord has disgraced me'."

17. "Nay! but you honour not the orphans!"

18. "Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy!"

19. "And you devour the inheritance - all with greed,"

20."And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

Do Not Be Proud of Receiving His Blessings Nor Disappointed When He Puts You in Dire Straights

After the previous verses, which are full of warning to the oppressors and threaten them by mentioning the divine punishments, the following verses refer to the divine trials as a scale for His rewards and punishments. Trial is considered as one of the most important concerns in Man's life.

"And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, My Lord has honoured me'."

One does not realize that the trials from Allah are sometimes given through blessing and sometimes occur through disaster. Neither the abundance of blessings should cause Man to be proud nor should disasters make him disappointed, but impatient Man forgets the essence of the trial in both cases and when he receives the blessings of Allah he thinks that He has honoured him and that the blessings are the sign of that honouring.

It is noteworthy that in the first verse it says: Allah 'honours him and blesses him', but at the end of the verse Man is scorned because of feeling himself honoured by Him. This is for the reason that in the first case of honouring it means 'Bounty' and the second means 'Nearness to Allah'.

But, when He tries him and puts him in dire straights for his subsistence, he says:

"My Lord has disgraced me."

Despair covers him thoroughly and he becomes disturbed and displeased with Allah, forgetting that these are some of the ways Allah tests him; a trial in which is the key to Man's development and consequently, causes him to deserve rewards, and if he disobeys, causes him to deserve punishment.

These two verses warn that neither the blessing is the reason for the proximity to Allah, nor is adversity and the lack of blessings the evidence of being far from Him. They are but diverse factors by which, Allah, according to His Wisdom, examines people.

It is the human being who sometimes becomes proud, and sometimes hopeless, because of his limited capacity to understand and endure. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 51 also says:

"When We bestow favours on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us) and when Evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!"

Also, Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 9 says:

"If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him. Behold! He is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy".

These two verses, in addition to relating the various kinds of divine trials, also conclude that one being blessed abundantly or being deprived of some blessings by Allah, is not a sign of special favour and high rank for him or a disgrace for him, but the only standard has always, and in all respects, been ‘Faith with Virtue’.

There have been many prophets who were involved in diverse kinds of tasks and calamities in this world, and in contrast, there have been many cruel pagans who, possessed every kind of facility in this life. This is the nature of life in the present world. By the way, this verse also points indirectly to the philosophy of the existence of disasters and painful events.

Then, attention is paid to the deeds that cause Man to be far away from Allah and to be caught in the grips of His punishment.

Pointing to the fact that wealth is not evidence to the high rank of a person with Allah, it says:

“Nay! But you honour not the orphans!”

“Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy!”

It is worth noting that the verse does not speak about 'feeding the orphans’, but it speaks about 'honouring the orphans'.

This is because the subject matter about an orphan is not only his hunger, but that sympathy, as a remedy for his deficiencies, is more important than his hunger, alone. An orphan should not be put in conditions which make him feel misery and worthlessness, just because of his being orphaned. He should be respected and honoured so that he does not feel the lack of his parents. That is why in some Islamic texts, affection and sympathy for orphans is considered especially important.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“There is no servant who touches an orphan’s head, affectionately, except that Allah will bestow on him, on the Day of Judgement, as many rays (of blessings) as the number of the orphan's hair. [20]

Also Surah Duha, No. 93, verse 9 says:

“Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness”.

This is just opposite to the treatment that ignorant people in the faithless ancient societies showed and also the same is true today in the disbelieving, modern ones which not only use different schemes and make various tricks to oppressively take the orphan's property, but abandon him in the society so that he tastes his plight in the most bitter of ways.

As is understood from what was said, respecting an orphan is not limited to preserving his property, but, according to some commentaries, it has a broader meaning which covers both that sense and many other matters.

The term /tahaddun/ is based on /haqq/ which means ‘to incite anyone’, denoting that feeding the indigent is not enough, but people ought to encourage each other to do this good deed until the time when it actually becomes a custom in the society.

In Surah Haqqah, No. 69, Verses 33-34 the subject is counted as being parallel to the lack of faith in Almighty Allah, thus:

“This was he, that would not believe in Allah Most High,”

“And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent”.

Then, pointing to their third disgraceful action and reproaching them, it says:

"And you devour the inheritance -all with greed,"

Surely, devouring the lawful inheritance is not blameworthy, so, the reproach, in this verse, may be for one of the following:

1. It means 'to assemble the wealth of one's own and that of others', because the term /lamm/ originally means 'to assemble, to collect', and some commentators such as Zamakhshari in his book 'Kashshaf', have commented on it especially with the sense of 'the collection of lawful and unlawful wealth'.

In particular, the pre-Islamic Arabs used to disinherit women, children and minors. They collected their interests and took it all for themselves as if it were their own inheritance. They believed that only those who were fighters and strong enough to take part in plunders should inherit property, since most of their wealth would be gained through plunder and pillage.

2. Whenever they inherited property, in their own right, they did not usually donate anything to the poor and the deprived members of their society. When they donated nothing from the inherited property for which they suffered naught, they will certainly have economic excess to the income which they earned by effort and endeavour. This is a great shame.

3. It means 'devouring the orphan's inheritance and the rights of the minors' and there have been many examples of some selfish disbelieving persons who, having an opportunity of receiving an inheritance, pay no attention to orphans or minors' interests, and take the most advantage of the property of these defenceless persons. This is the greatest defect and the most disgraceful sin.

However, all three commentaries can be considered together.

Then, the fourth despicable trait of theirs is mentioned:

"And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

They are worldly, mammonish people who love amassing wealth. Such people surely do not care whether the wealth is lawful or unlawful and of course, never pay the rights of Allah, or do not pay them completely. Also, such people whose hearts are occupied, completely, by the love of money, cannot have the love of Allah in their hearts, either.

Thus, after mentioning Man's trial by blessing and disaster, the Holy Qur'an directs our attention to the fourth great examination in which these sinful people failed. The examinations are about the treatment toward orphans, feeding the needy, devouring the lawful and unlawful interests of inheritance, and finally, the trial of gathering wealth without any regard for the limits.

It is interesting to note that all these trials are monetary and in fact, if one passes the financial trials, other trials will be easy for him.

It is the wealth of this world that causes Faith to decay, and the greatest faults found in human beings are based on this.

There are some people who are trustworthy with a limited amount of wealth, but when the amount is great they tend to surrender to the temptations of Satan and commit treason. The real believers are those, who

under any condition and with any amount of wealth, are honest and observe the rights of others, whatever they are (obligatory or recommended).

These are those who are believers and are virtuous. They are trustworthy and pious, indeed, and can be counted as the best of friends. They are also pure and honourable in other affairs aside from financial ones. The emphasis in the above verse, regarding financial trials, is for the same reason.

Surah Fajr, Verses 21-26

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى

يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ

وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ

21. "Nay! When the earth if crushed with crushing upon crushing,"

22. "And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed,"

23. "And Hell, That Day, if brought (face to face), - on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?"

24. "He will say: O, would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life!"

25. "For none can punish like His punishment on That Day,"

26. "Nor can anyone bind like His binding."

They Will Awaken On a Day When It Is Too Late

In the former verses the transgressors who love the wealth of the world and oppress the rights of others are described. In these verses the oppressors are warned that there will be a Reckoning Day and a violent punishment waiting for them. So, they should expect it.

At first it says:

"Nay!"

that is, it is not as they think such that there will be no record and a Reckoning Day, and they should not think that the worldly property which Allah has given them is for their honouring and not for their trial.

Then it continues:

"...When the earth is crushed with crushing upon crushing."

The term /dakk/ originally means 'a level land' so, then, it is used in the sense of 'to pound the hills and buildings level, into dust', and /dakkih/ is 'a platform levelled and flat for sitting'. The repetition of /dakk/, in the verse is for emphasis.

On the whole, the idea touches on the earthquakes and the horrible events at the end of this world and the beginning of the Resurrection.

There will be such a great revolution in all creatures that all mountains cleave as under and the land will be levelled and smooth as Surah Taha, No. 20, verses 105-107 say:

"They ask thee concerning the Mountains: Say, 'My Lord will Uproot them and scatter them as dust;"

"He will leave them as plains smooth and level"

"Nothing crooked, or curved with thou see in their place'."

When the first stage of the Resurrection ends, that is, after the dissolution of the world, the second stage will begin and all human beings will return to life again, they will be present for the Divine Judgement:

"And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed".

The angels will surround all who are attending the gathering place of resurrection to carry out Allah's command to them.

This is an outline on the glory and greatness of That Day and the inability of Man to escape from the grips of Justice.

The term

/ja'a rabbuka/ 'your Lord comes'

means that the command of the Lord comes for verifying Mankind's reckoning.

Or, it means that the signs of the appearance of Allah's Glory and Greatness come.

Or, still, it means that the appearance of the knowledge of Allah will come on That Day in such a way that no one can deny it, in so much as all will see His Supreme Being with their own eyes. In any case, it is certain that His coming does not mean a material coming which would mean that He has a body and needs space to move in; He is far superior to that of having bodily properties.

This very idea is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-Musa-al-Riza (as).[21]

A witness to this commentary is Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 33 which says:

"Do the (ungodly) wait until the angels come to them, or there comes the command of the Lord (for their doom)?"

The term

/saffan saffa/ 'in ranks arrayed'

points to the idea that the angels will enter the Hereafter in different rows, or perhaps the angels, of every heaven, will be in a row and surround the human beings there.

"And Hell, That Day, if brought (face to face), - on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?"

It is understood, from this verse, that Hell is movable and approaches the wrongdoers, the same as Heaven does for the Righteous:

"To the righteous, the Garden will be brought near"[22].

Some commentators tend to define, metaphorically, the appearance of Heaven and Hell in front of the eyes of the good-doers, and the wrong doers, and while there is no evidence available to contrast their evident meaning, still it is better to simply leave them as such.

Nevertheless, the facts of the Hereafter are not precisely clear to us and the circumstances, there, are completely different with those here so, it is of

little concern whether, on That Day, Heaven and Hell move from one place to another or not.

A tradition about the Prophet (S) denotes that when the above verse was revealed he turned pale. That change was hard for his companions to bear, so, some of them went to Hazrat Ali (as) and told him of the event.

He came and kissed the Prophet (S) between his two shoulders and said:

"O, Messenger of Allah! May my parents be thy ransom, what has happened today?".

The Prophet (S) answered:

"Gabriel came and recited this verse (the current verse) to me".

Ali said that he asked the Prophet (S) how Hell would be brought (face to face), and he replied:

"Seventy thousand angels will drag and bring it by seventy thousand halters. Hell is so unyielding that if it were left free, it would bum all. Then I will stand against Hell (Jahannam) and it will tell me that it has no business with me and Allah has forbidden my flesh for it.

On That Day, all will he busy with their own affairs, but Muhammad (S) will say:

'O, Lord! My community! My community.'"[23]

Verily, when a sinner observes this, he may be shaken and awakened. A kind of grief and sorrow may envelop him and he will become regretful for his past wrongful deeds, but this regretfulness profits him naught.

Man will desire to come back to this world and recompense his dark past, but there will be no gate open to return. He wants to repent for his faults, but it is too late. He wishes to do good deeds to repay his evil deeds, but the Records of Deeds will be rolled up.

Hence, it is for this that he cries and

"He will say: O, would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life!"

It is noteworthy that he does not say: 'for my future life' but he says:

'for (this) my life',

as if the term

'life'

is not used for anything but the life in That World; and the fleeting life of This World, which is full of pain and suffering, is not counted as life.

Surah Ankabut, No. 29, Verse 64, says:

"And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement but verily the Home in the Hereafter -that is life indeed, if they but know".

Truly, those who devoured the wealth of orphans, did not feed the needy, took the lawful and unlawful inheritance from others, and loved the property of this world with all their hearts, will wish, on That Day, that they would have forwarded some good deeds for their next life, which is eternal and is, indeed the real life. However, this wish is useless and will not benefit them.

Then, in two short sentences, it describes the violence of the divine punishment on That Day:

"For none can punish like His punishment on That Day,"

And why not? Those oppressors, who committed the worst vices in this world, will be punished, on That Day, so that the like of which, had not been

seen before. Just as the righteous will be rewarded, to such an extent that no one could have imagined it before; since Allah is the Most Merciful to those who show mercy, and vice versa.

"Nor can anyone bind like His binding,"

Neither His
'binding'
nor His
'chastisement'

can be compared with anything else. Why should He bind and chastise? Because they oppressed the helpless servants of Allah, in this world as much as they could and persecuted them with the worst of tortures, they themselves should be tightly bound and chastised.

Surah Fajr, Verses 27-30

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

27. "(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

28. "Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

29. "So enter among My servants,"

30."And enter into My Garden."

O, You Possessor of the Serene Soul!

In contrast to the previous verses about the terrible chastisement of the transgressors and the lovers of this world in the Hereafter, the following verses are about the calmness of the righteous on Doomsday.

The Qur'an addresses them very kindly and says:

"(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

"Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

"So enter among My servants,"

"And enter into My Garden."

How interesting and delightful these words are; full of grace, peace, tranquility and confidence!

It is a direct invitation from Allah to the souls who are at peace with confidence, because of their Faith.

Allah invites them to return to Him, to their Possessor, and Cherisher. It is an invitation combined with mutual satisfaction; the satisfaction of the lover with the beloved and the satisfaction of the beloved lover, the one being worshipped.

Consequently, he is being honoured with the crown of servitude and being placed in a position of high rank by Him.

Then, he is invited to enter the Garden with the words,

'And enter into My Garden'

which denotes that the host is only Allah, Himself.

What An Invitation! What a Host! What Serenity!

The term

/nafs/ 'soul',

here means the spirit of Man, and the term

/mutmainnah/ 'serene'

denotes to the peace and rest that is attained by Faith, as the Qur'an says:

"...now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts confident"[24]**.**

Such a soul is both confident in Allah's promises and is sure of the way he has chosen. He is aware of both excesses and afflictions and also about the disasters and terrible events of this world but has faith in Allah's Mercy. The most important point here is the soul's confidence in that, even in the great horror of the Hereafter he is at peace and rest.

Some commentators believe that the objective point of

'Come back to your Lord'

is 'returning to His virtue and Mercy', but, it is better to say 'return to Him, Himself', i.e., to be placed close to Him, which is a spiritual return not a corporal or spatial one.

Does this invitation to return to the Lord occur only in the Hereafter, or at the time of departure of the soul from the body?

The context of the verses, of course, refers to the Hereafter, but the meaning of the verse, by itself, is broad and general.

The term

/radiyah/ 'well-pleased'

is used, because the soul will see that all of the promises for the divine rewards are perfectly true and also so great that they are beyond his imagination. The soul-will receive Allah's Mercy and Grace, so much so that he will become utterly delighted.

And the word

/mardiyyah/ 'well-pleasing'

is used to mean that 'his deeds' have been contentedly accepted by Allah.

Such a servant, with these characteristics who has attained the rank of perfect submission and has reached true servitude which is donating all for Allah's sake, and has joined 'the high ranks' will certainly have no abode, but Heaven.

Some commentaries denote that these verses were revealed about 'Hamzah, Saiyed-ash-Shuhada', but regarding the Surah, which is Meccan, this attitude is indeed a kind of verification, not used for the occasion of revelation, as it was also mentioned about Imam Husain, at the beginning of the Surah.

It is interesting to note that a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) which is cited in 'al-Kafi' says that one of his companions asked whether a believer may become discontented when his soul is being taken.

He (as) replied:

"By Allah, No! When the angel of death comes to take his soul the believer shows restlessness and the angel says:

'O, Lover of Allah! Be not upset! By He Who has appointed Muhammad (S) to prophethood, I am more sympathetic to you than a kind father. Look carefully!'"

He looks carefully and sees Prophet Muhammad, Amir-al- Mo'mineen Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husain and other Imams from their descendents (as). The angel tells him to look and see that they (as) are all his friends.

He opens his eyes and watches. A caller from Almighty Allah suddenly beckons and says:

"O, you serene soul! Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into My Garden".

At that moment there is nothing better and more beloved than that his soul separates from his body as soon as possible and moves unto his Lord. [25]

Supplication

O Lord! Uplift us to such a peace and rest that we can discern this beautiful invitation.

O Lord! To attain this rank is not possible save by Your Grace. Please bestow on us Your Grace and Mercy.

O Lord! Certainly Your Graciousness will not decrease if You count us among the possessors of the 'Serene Soul'. We seek it from You. Please cast a favor over us and forgive us.

O Lord! We know that this rank is not prepared except by our remembrance of You. Leave us with the success of this remembrance.

Notes

1. Majma-al-Bayan Vol 10, p. 481.
2. Ibid.
3. Borhan Commentary, vol, 4, p. 457, Tradition 1, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).
4. Abulfutuh Razi, Commentary, vol. 12, p. 74.
5. Fakhr-i-Razi Commentary, vol. 31, p. 164.
6. al-Mizan, 'Allamah Tabatabaie Commentary, vol. 20, p. 406; Ruh-al-Ma'ali, al-Tahrir wat-Tahayyur Commentary, vol. 30, p. 120.
7. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 485, narrated by Abusa'id Khidry from the Prophet (S).
8. Surah Najm, No.53, Verse 50
9. Kashshaf Commentary, vol. 4, p. 747, and Qartabi also narrated this idea in his commentary.
10. Hayat-al-Qulub, vol. 1, p. 107.
11. Ruh-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 425.
12. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 571; 'Ilal-ush-Sharayi', Tradition, 6
13. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 16 (Arabic Version).
14. Surah Haqqah, No.69, verse 6
15. Surah Haqqah, No.69, verse 5
16. Surah Zukhruf, No 43 verse 55
17. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 487.
18. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10, p. 487.
19. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 100, (Arabic Version).
20. Bihar-al-Anwar. vol. 15. p. 120 (old edition).
21. al-Mizan Commentary, vol. 20, p. 416.
22. Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 90
23. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 489. (A similar meaning is mentioned in Durr-al-Manthur; al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 415.)
24. Surah Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28
25. al-Kafi, vol. 3, Chapter: Believers and the Departure of the Soul, Tradition 2.

Surah Balad, Chapter 90

(The City)

Number of Verses: 20

Contents of this Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Surah, in spite of its brevity, contains some thought provoking ideas:

In the first part of the Surah, after mentioning some meaningful oaths, this fact is pointed out that Man's life, in this world, is always full of toil and struggle which prepares him to be able to face troubles and difficulties and therefore, he should not expect absolute tranquility and comfort in the present world; that which is possible only in the next life.

In the next part of this Surah, a few of the greatest divine bounties created for Man are enumerated and then, discussion is given showing his ingratitude.

In the last part of the Surah, people are divided into two groups: the people of the Right Hand and the people of the Left Hand. Then, some characteristics of the good deeds of the first group and their final fate are stated and are compared to the destiny of the opposite group; the Unbelievers and sinners.

The senses derived from the verses of this Surah are decisive and vigorous, the statements are short and categorical and the words are extremely effective and explicit. The form and content of the verses show that the Surah is one of the Meccan ones.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Balad

Regarding the virtue in studying the Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

"He who studies it, Allah will make him safe from His wrath on the Day of Judgement."[1]

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who recites Surah Balad in his obligatory prayers will be known as a good-doer in this world, and in the Next World he will be considered among those who have rank and privilege with Allah, and he will be of the friends and companions of the prophets, martyrs, and the pious men."[2]

Surah Balad, Verses 1-7

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

وَأَنتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّن يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ
يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُّبَدًا
أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ

1. "Nay! I swear by this city (Mecca)"
2. "And you are an inhabitant of this city,"
3. "And by the begetter and whom he begot,"
4. "Certainly We have created man to be in distress."
5. "Does he think that no one has power over him?"
6. "He says: I have squandered wealth abundant!"
7. "Does he think that no one, sees him?"

By This Sacred City!

It is the style of the Qur'an when stating facts of very great importance, to often begin with oaths. These oaths, themselves, evoke thought and intelligence in Man.

Here, too, in order to state the fact that Man's life, in the present world, is always associated with toil and struggle, it begins with a new oath and says:

"Nay! I swear by this city (Mecca),"

"And you are an inhabitant of this city".

Mecca is not directly mentioned in these verses, but regarding the Surah, on the one hand, which is Meccan, and the extraordinary importance of this sacred city, on the other hand, it is clear that it is in reference to Mecca. The consensus of commentators concur.

Of course, the holiness and greatness of Mecca requires that Allah makes oath to it. The first center of monotheism and worship to the Lord has been built here and great prophets have circumambulated it.

But the verse:

"And you are an inhabitant of this city"

contains a new matter. It says that this city is so highly sacred and holy because of the Prophet (S), and his blessed existence in it, that it deserves to be sworn to.

The fact is that the spiritual value of land is due to the value of those who dwell there. The pagans should not think that the Qur'an has made worthy this land and made oath to it because it is their home or that it is the central place of their idols. Nay, it is not so. The value of this city, besides its special historical background, is for the sake of the blessed existence, in it, of Muhammad (S); Allah's unique servant.

There is also another commentary which says: 'We do not swear by this sacred city when they treated you disrespectfully and bid that your life, wealth and honour be free and permissible for all. '

This is a terrible disgrace to the pagans of Quraish who considered themselves the servitors and protectors of the temple of Mecca and respected it so highly that if a murderer of their father were seen there, he would be left safe. It is said that even those who took the bark of the trees of Mecca with them were safe because of this respect. Ironically, in showing this kind of respect they did not observe these customs and traditions regarding the Prophet (S)

Why did the pagans hurt him and his companions with every kind of torment that they could, so that they even counted the slaying of them lawful?

This commentary is also narrated in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as).[3]

"And by the begetter and whom he begot".

To answer the question of who is the parent and who is the child, different commentaries have been cited:

1. The father is Abraham and the child is Ismail. Referring to the oath in the previous verse made to the city of Mecca, and we do know that Abraham and his son were the founders of Kaaba and Mecca, this commentary seems very appropriate; in particular, that the pagan Arabs maintained an extraordinary importance for Abraham and his son and they were very proud of them. Many of them have claimed that they have descended from Abraham.

2. The begetter is Adam and whom he begot is his children.

3. The meaning is Adam and all of the Prophets who came from his descendents.

4. It is an oath to any father and child because the process of human reproduction and its survival throughout history is one of the most wonderful things in the creation to which Allah has sworn.

To gather, these four commentaries, together, is not impossible, but the first one seems the most fitting.

Then, the attention is paid to a thing which is the final purpose of these oaths:

"Certainly We have created man to be in distress."

The term /kabad/, as Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayan, originally means 'intensity'.

But, as Raqib cites in Mufradat, the word /kabad/ means 'a disease in the liver of a person'. and so, it is used for any trouble and misery. Whatever the root of this word might be, its present use means trouble and misery.

Yes, from the early moments of life, even as a foetus in the womb, Man passes through different, difficult stages with pain and toil until the time he is born, and even from then on; during his childhood, the period of his adolescense, and the most difficult times, his mature years, he is always faced with many kinds of trouble and misery. This is the nature of the present world. Those who have other expectations, about this world, other than that there is pain and toil, here are wrong.

The lives of the prophets and saints of Allah, who have been the best of all creatures, have been full of diverse difficulties and painful situations. When the world has been like this for them, then, the status of others is clear.

We may see some people or some societies which have no apparent trouble and seem to live in ease. It is either because of our insufficient information about them, and when we approach them and study their outwardly comfortable lives, we see the depth of their pain and suffering; or their comfortable situation exists for a short time or in an exceptional period, but, however, it does not change the general law of the world.

"Does he think that no one has power over him?"

The verse denotes that the life of Man, which is mixed with pain and toil, is an evidence that he has no power.

But, Man is proud and commits any sin and crime as if he were quite safe and were out of the limits of AlIah's punishment. When he gains power, he neglects all the laws of Allah and disobeys Him, totally. Does he really think that he can escape from the grips of divine punishment? What a great error!

It is also probable that the objective point of the verse is directed toward the rich people who thought no one could take their wealth from them.

Also, it has been cited that the objective point is of those who thought that they will never be questioned about their deeds. The scope of the concept, of the verse, is so vast and wide that it may cover all of these commentaries, combined.

Some have said that the above verse is about a man from the tribe of Jamh by the name of Abul-Asad. He was so powerful that when he sat on a piece of leather and ten men tried to take the leather out from under him they failed. Sometimes the leather might have been torn to pieces, but he would remain sitting. [4]

In any case, the verse pointing to these arrogant people does not limit the generality of its meaning.

Then, on the same theme, it continues stating:

"He says: I have squandered wealth abundant!"

The verse is about those of whom when they were told to spend some money on good deeds, they would respond, boastfully, that they had spent much in that way; but they had spent nothing; and if they had given something to anyone it had been for personal intentions and hypocritical aims.

Some have said that the verse refers to the ones who had spent much wealth on enmity against Islam and the holy Prophet (S) and for the plots against Islam, and for this they boasted.

As an evidence, a tradition says that in the battle of Khandaq when Hazrat Ali (as) invited 'Amr-ibn-i-'Abdud to Islam he protested thus:

"What about that which I have spent, abundantly from my wealth, against you?" [5]

Some have also said that the verse points to some of the chiefs of Quraish such as one of the worst enemies of the Prophet (S). Harith-ibn-'Amir, who had committed a sin and asked the Prophet (S) what he should do about it and Hazrat ordered him to pay atonement, then he replied:

"From the day I became a Muslim I have squandered wealth abundant". [6]

It is of no consequence whether all of these three commentaries are combined, though the first one is more fitting with the next verse.

The term

/ahlakta/ 'I have squandered'

denotes that he has, indeed, wasted his wealth, but has not gained anything beneficial.

The term /lubad/ means 'a dense crowd or thing' and. here it means 'much wealth'.

"Does he think that no one see him?"

He does not pay attention to the fact that Allah not only sees the deeds he has done in private and in public, but He also knows all that goes through his mind and what he keeps hidden in the depth of his heart or what he intends to do in the future. Is it possible for the infinite Creator Who knows everything not to be able to see or know about a single thing'? These neglectful people think that they are out of the scope of His constant watch, but it is because of their own ignorance.

Yes, Allah knows where they have obtained their wealth and how and for what purpose they have used it.

A tradition is narrated by Ibn-Abbas that the Prophet (S) said:

"(On Dooms Day) no servant can walk forth unless he is asked about four things:

1) about his lifetime and how he spent it,

2) about his wealth and where he gathered it from and what he spent it for,

3) about his deeds and what he has done, and

4) about his love for us; the Ahlul-Bait". [7]

In short, how can Man be proud of his wealth and boast that he is powerful while all his life is spent in pain and toil, and if he has some wealth it can disappear in one day and if he has strength it can be removed by a fever?

Furthermore, how can a person claim that he has spent much wealth for the sake of Allah when He knows his intentions? Allah knows both the source of that unlawful wealth and how he spent it hypocritically and grudgingly.

Surah Balad, Verses 8-10

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

8. "Have We not made for him two eyes?"

9. "And a tongue and two lips?"

10. "And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)?"

The Gifts of Eyes, Tongue and Guidance!

In the former verses the discussion was about the pride and negligence of neglectful Man, but in the following verses, a part of the greatest material and spiritual gifts of Allah to Man is described, in order to break his pride and negligence, on the one hand, and to make him think about the Creator of these gifts and on the other hand; for stirring the sense of gratitude inside his soul, which sends him forth to the knowledge of Allah.

"Have We not made for him two eyes?"

"And a tongue and two lip?"

"And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)?"

Thus, in these short sentences, three great material gifts and a great spiritual gift, all which are from the most important divine gifts, are pointed

out. The gifts of eyes, tongue and lips are on one side, and the gift of knowledge and guidance is on the other side.

(It should be noted that the term /najd/ originally means 'an open highway' and here /najdayn/, in contrast with /tihamah/ 'low land ', is to be understood as 'the two highways of good and evil ').

For the importance of the above gifts it is enough to know that the eyes are the most important means by which to communicate with the outside world. The wonder of the eyes is such that makes Man humiliate himself in front of the Creator of them.

Each of the seven parts of the eye; the sclerotic cornea, choroid, iris, dermoid, aqueous humor, vitreous humor, and retina has a wonderful, special and delicate structure in which the laws of light and mirrors, physically and chemically, are so precisely coordinated that the most modern cameras are worthless in comparison to them.

In fact if there were nothing in the world except Man and of all parts of his body only his eye was studied, its wonders would be enough to recognize the greatness of the knowledge and power of Allah.

Next, the tongue is referred to, which is the most important means of speech and speech itself is the most important means of communication for human beings. It is with language that humans are able to convey the experience and information of one nation to another, or from one generation to another one. If it were not so, Man could never develop so well in knowledge, science, and civilization both in material and spiritual affairs.

Then, the lips are mentioned. They have an effective function in speech because many sounds and phonemes, in language, are produced by the lips. Besides, the lips are useful in eating foods, preserving the moisture of the mouth, and drinking water.

If they were not so, the function of eating and drinking would be difficult for Man, and even his face, with water flowing out of his mouth and the absence of some phonemes in his speech, would be in a disgraceful state.

We know that the first steps in learning many facts are doubled with the help of eyesight and language.

Therefore, the gifts of reasoning and guidance, which are natural and intellectual, are pointed out. The verse can even cover 'religious guidance' which is introduced by prophets and Saints.

In fact, Allah has given us eyesight and the light; i.e. guidance to use them which enables us to discover what is right and what is wrong and to know them and then we choose between them, ourselves. Thus, if we go the wrong way and stray we deserve the fruits of our decision.

The sentence:

"And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)",

besides stating Man's free will, regarding. 'his way' denotes that going the right way is not free from difficulties and toil, as even climbing the high lands has some difficulties, doing wrong has some troubles, too. So, Man should try to choose the right way.

It is Man, himself, who chooses the way for which he can use his eyes and tongue in a lawful direction or an unlawful one and then, follows the good way or the evil one.

That is why the Prophet (S), in a tradition has said:

"Allah told mankind:

'O children of Adam! If your tongue wants to make you commit sin, I have supplied you with two lips to control it, and if your eyes are going to attract you to something unlawful, two eyelids are with you; close them!'" [8]

Thus, Allah has given Man the means of controlling these gifts which is one of the great blessings that He has bestowed on him.

It is noteworthy that in the above verses, when speaking of the tongue, the lips are mentioned but, in talking about the eyes, eyelids are not referred to. Apparently, it is for two reasons: the first is that the function of the lips in eating, drinking and speaking is more important than the function of the eyelids with the eyes; and the second is that the ability to control the tongue is more effective than that of the eyes.

Surah Balad, Verses 11-20

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ

أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ

أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ

أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ

عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤْصَدَةٌ

11. "But he would not attempt the uphill road,"

12. "And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is?"

13. "(It is) freeing of a slave (or a captive)"

14. "Or the feeding on a day of hunger,"

15. "Of an orphan near of kin,"

16. "Or to the indigent (down) in the dust."

17. "Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin on each other to patience, and enjoin on each other mercy."

18. "These are the people of the Right Hand."

19. "And those who disbelieve in Our signs, they are the people of the Left Hand."

20."On them shall be afire closed over."

An Arduous Uphill Climb!

After mentioning some great gifts, in the previous verses, which are given to Man, the ungrateful persons who, having all the means of felicity, have not taken its path, are blamed in the following verses:

"But he would not attempt the uphill road,"

The term

/'aqabah/ 'the uphill road'

is commented on in the next verses.

"And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is?"

"(It is) freeing of a slave (or a captive)"

"Or the feeding on a day of hunger,"

"Of an orphan near of kin,"

"Or to the indigent (down) in the dust."

Therefore, this arduous uphill road, for which the ungrateful persons have never prepared themselves to pass, is a collection of good deeds and pivots on helping people, especially the poor, and is also a collection of the pure, righteous believers which are mentioned in the following verses.

Truly, regarding the intensive love of most people for wealth, climbing this arduous uphill road is really difficult.

Being a true Muslim and having true Faith are not obtained simply by raw claims and merely stating such.

There are some difficult uphill roads in front of every Muslim believer which he must pass, one after another, and by the help of Allah and under the light of Faith and Sincerity he can succeed.

Some have rendered the term /'aqabah/, here in the sense of 'low desire' and standing against these is called 'the Inner Warfare' as a tradition by the Prophet (S) denotes.

Of course, regarding the interpretation of the verses, themselves, about /iaqabah/ 'uphill road' the meaning of this commentary must be such that the main uphill road is considered 'low desire', and freeing the captives and feeding the indigent are considered as its clear examples.

Some other commentators have said that the meaning of /'aqabah/ is 'an arduous uphill road in the Hereafter'; as a tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"There is an arduous uphill road in front of you, those whose load is heavy cannot pass it. I try to lighten your load to enable you to pass that uphill road."[9]

This tradition from the holy Prophet (S) has not been cited for the commentary of the current verse, but the commentators have applied it to this verse. However, regarding to the commentary clearly expressed in the verses, their application does not seem appropriate.

The objective idea is that the uphill roads of the Hereafter are illustrations of the hard arduous climbs, here in this world and whose paths are subdivisions of the paths of this world.

It is worth noting that the term /iqtahama/ based on /iqtiham/ which originally means 'to undertake a task which is frightful'[10], or 'to enter and pass somewhere with toil and difficulty'[11]; denotes that passing this uphill road is not an easy thing to accomplish.

This is an emphasis on what was mentioned at the beginning of the Surah:

"Certainly We have created man to be in distress".

That is, both his life and his obedience to Allah are full of difficulties.

It has been narrated that Hazrat Ali (as) has said:

"Paradise is surrounded by unpleasantness while Hell is surrounded by desires."[12]

Some points that should be noted, here are:

1. The phrase /fakka raqabah/ seems to mean 'the act of freeing captives'.

2. The term

/masqabah/ 'famine'

is based on /saqab/ 'to suffer from hunger'. So, the words /yaumin thi masqabah/ mean 'on a day of hunger' which emphasize on feeding the needy in the time of famine, drought and the like.

3. The term /maqrabah/ means 'relationship' and it is an emphasis on the orphans of relatives who are close to the person, or else, we should feed all orphans whoever they are, but this shows that we are more responsible for the orphans who are of our kith and kin.

4. The term /matrabah/ is derived from /tarab/ but, originally is from /turab/ which means 'soil' and is used for 'a poor person intimately acquainted with his mother Earth'. This is, again, an emphasis on those types of indigent ones who are more deserving of help but of course all indigent ones should be helped.

In the next verse, to continue commenting on the 'uphill road', it says:

"Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin (on each other to) patience, and enjoin (on each other) mercy."

Thus, such believers can pass this arduous uphill road who have both faith and the humane characteristic of self-restraint and enjoining patience along with doing good deeds such as freeing captives and feeding orphans and the indigents.

In other words, these persons are those who have shown strong sincerity in three dimensions of Belief, morals, and action and can be successful in climbing that uphill road.

The term

/thumma/ 'then'

does not always mean 'next in time or order' to indicate that they should feed and help the needy first and then they will believe. But, in these cases, as some commentators have mentioned, it is for priority of rank because, the position of Faith and enjoining patience and compassionate kindness is definitely higher than the value of helping the indigent, or, it is better to say that good deeds originate from Faith and high morals.

Some others have also said that the term /thumma/, here may mean 'next in time', since good deeds are sometimes the cause of Faith and they are especially effective in fixing the basis of high morals, because Man's behavior manifests itself, first, into 'practice' then, into 'mood' and then, into 'habit', and finally, into the form of' 'a firm characteristic', and settles in his spirit or nature as a result of that constant practice.

The term /tawasau/ with the sense of 'enjoin each other to (charity and good deeds)' contains an important point.

It shows that patience and perseverance on the path of obedience to Allah, and the challenge against one's own desires, and also strengthening the principle of compassionate kindness should not occur in the society only

in the form of individual behaviour, but it should appear as a common current in the whole society, and all the members of a society should enjoin observing and preserving this principle on each other in order to make their social relationship, in this way, closer and stronger.

Some have said that the term

/sabr/ ‘patience'

here means 'to be patient in obeying Allah's command and being studious in practising His instructions'.

And the term

/marhamat/ ‘compassionate kindness'

points to 'love shown to the creatures of Allah' and we know that the relation between the Creator and His creatures establishes the foundation of religion. In any event, patience and perseverance are the main causes of any obedience and servitude and also of avoiding sin and rebellion.

After describing these characteristics, the position of the possessors of them are introduced:

“These are the people of the Right Hand.”

They are those whose record will be given to their right hand, indicating that their deeds are accepted by Allah.

It is also probable that the term /maymanah/ is derived from another root with the sense of 'grace'. If so, it means that they are merciful and helpful both to themselves and to others in the society.

Then, the contradictory group is pointed out; i.e., those who were not successful in passing the arduous uphill road.

It says:

“And those who disbelieve in Our signs, they are the people of the Left Hand.”

This position shows that they do not possess good deeds and their records contain nothing but sin and corruption.

The term /mas'amah/, based on the root /sum/, contrasts with the term /maymanah/. It means that these disbelievers are some ominous people who cause disaster both for themselves and for others in the society. But, since being fortunate or unfortunate, in the Hereafter, is known about people by having their 'record' in their right hand or left hand, some commentators have accepted this idea for it, in particular, that the term /sum/ in Arabic philology refers to’ a tendency to the left’.

In the last verse of this Surah, there is a short, meaningful hint to the punishment of the latter group.

It says:

“On them shall be a fire closed over.”

The term /musadah/ is based on /isad/ which means 'to close the door, and secure it'. It is obvious that when a person is shut in a room with hot, stuffy air, he wishes to open the doors and let the fresh air come in; making the room comfortable to live in. With this thought in mind, we may now consider the status of the fervent Hell with all the doors closed. What a suffocating condition it will have![13]

Supplication

O Lord! Save us from such a painful punishment!

O Lord! To pass the uphill roads we have in front of us is not possible save with Your help. Please bestow Your help on us.

O Lord! Please count us among the people of the Right Hand and make us successful to be with the good-doers and the Righteous in the Hereafter.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 490.
2. Thawab-al-A'mal narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 578.
3. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 493.
4. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10. p. 493.
5. Nur-al-Thaqalayn. vol. 5. p. 580. Tradition 10
6. Majma. -al-Bayan. vol. 10. p. 493.
7. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10. p. 494. (Also Ruh al-Bayan, vol 10, p 435)
8. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 581.
9. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 495.
10. Raqib: Mufradat
11. Kashshaf Commentary
12. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 176 (Arabic Version).
13. Tafsir, Abulfutuh Razi, vol. 12, p. 97.

Surah Shams, Chapter 91

(The Sun)

Number of Verses: 15

The Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, which is in fact a Surah on the purification of the 'carnal soul' and sanctification of the heart from vice and impurities', explains the same themes as in previous Suras, but at the beginning of the Surah eleven great subjects from the world of creation and Divine essence are mentioned and to prove that salvation depends upon 'purification of the carnal soul' some oaths are made. These oaths envelop most of the Qur'anic oaths collectively.

At the end of the Surah, the Thamood, as an example or a disobedient people, are briefly pointed out. They defied Allah's sacred Law and His prophet, Salih (as), and were destroyed for their crime; which was the fruit of neglecting 'the purification of the carnal soul'.

This short Surah, in fact, restates one of the most important instructive points for the destiny of Man's life, and leads him to true Islamic values.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, we refer to a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"He who recites it (Surah Shams) is like he who has given charity (in the way of Allah) to all things that the sun and the moon shine upon."[1]

And certainly, this great excellence belongs to the one who keeps the sublime content of this short Surah alive in his spirit and knows that the 'purification of the carnal soul' is his constant duty.

Surah Shams, Verses 1-10

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا

وَالسَّمَاء وَمَا بَنَاهَا

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا

1. “By the Sun and its Brightness,”
2. “By the Moon when it follows it (reflects the Sun's light),”
3. “By the day when it unfolds its glory,”
4. “By the night when it enshrouds it,”
5. “By the heaven and He Who made it,”
6. “By the Earth and He Who spread it,”
7. “And by the soul and He Who perfected it,”
8,”Then inspired it to understand what is wrong and (what is) right for it,”
9. “Indeed he succeeds who purifies it,”
10. “And indeed he fails who corrupts it.”

'Salvation is Due To 'the Purification of the Carnal Soul'

There are some considerable oaths pointed out at the beginning of this Surah. By one consideration, they are eleven oaths, and by another one, they are seven. In any case, in this position the number of oaths is the largest throughout the Qur'an and this shows that in these verses the solemn appeal is made to something very splendid. The matter is as important as the solemnity of the heavens, Earth, sun, and moon; that which is effective in the fate of Man.

First, the oaths will be described and commented on and then, attention will be paid to the great subject that these oaths are made to.

“By the Sun and its brightness”,

As it was mentioned earlier, Qur'anic oaths are generally for two purposes. First, the oaths pertain to the importance of the subject which the oath is made to. Second, they pertain to the importance of the affairs themselves, since oaths are always made to great matters. In this way, the oaths make Man contemplate and evoke his thoughts to work on the great objects of Allah's sublime creation through which he may find a path to Him.

The sun plays a most important role in Man's life and in the life of all living creatures on the earth, because it is not only a source of heat and energy; the essential factors necessary for life, but also it is the origin of some other life giving factors such as; winds, rains, plants, running rivers and waterfalls, and even the energy mineral sources; oil, coal, and the like, all depend on the sunlight so that if this world- illuminating-lamp ceased one day, darkness, silence and death would dominate everywhere.

The term /duha/ originally means 'those hours of the morning which follow shortly after sunrise', and here it means 'the full brightness of the sun’.

The particular emphasis put on the term /duha/ is for its importance, when the glory of sunlight dominates the land.

“By the Moon when it follows it (reflects the sun's light)”,

This sense, as some commentators have said, refers to the full moon, i.e. on the fourteenth night of the lunar month; since on this night the moon appears on the eastern horizon nearly at the time of sunset and with its silver light, introduces itself in the sky and to the world when the world is in its most beautiful state to which swearing is done.

It is also probable that the above mentioned meaning refers to the constant dependence of the moon on the sun and getting light from it, but in this case the sentence: "...when it follows it" will be an adverbial time clause.

There are also other commentaries cited about this verse, however, this discussion will conclude here.

"By the day when it unfolds its glory",

The term /jalla ha/ is based on /tajliyah/ which means 'revealment'.

The commentators are divided on the meaning of the pronoun / ha/ in the term /jalla ha/. Many of them believe it refers to the earth (as was mentioned earlier).

Some also believe that the pronoun refers to the sun, that is; 'by the day when it makes the sun manifest'. It is true that the sun makes the day appear, but, figuratively speaking, it can be said that the day makes the sun apparent. However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

At any rate, the swearing is done in the names of these great celestial phenomena, because they are extremely effective both in the life of Man and of all living creatures, and day, itself, is the sign of movement and struggle; a mystery to any intelligent, active mind.

"By the night when it enshroud it,"

Night, with all its blessings and effects, which, on the one hand, moderates the heat of the sun and on the other, brings quietude to living things, is completely necessary for life. It provides Man, and the majority of living creatures, with rest. If the darkness of night did not exist and the sun were to shine, continuously, there would be no tranquility, because the piercing heat of the sun would destroy everything.

Even if the regularity of day and night were not as it is, now the same situation would exist. For instance, like the moon whose one night is equal to two weeks time on our globe, as well as in the middle of one of its days, the heat of its atmosphere; almost three hundred degrees centigrade, or at midnight when the weather is so cold no living creature, that we know of, could live there.

It is noteworthy that the verbs, in the former verses, were in the past tense while, in this verse, the verb is in the present tense. This variety of tenses may be for the fact that some phenomena, such as day and night, are not peculiar to a definite time; they belong to both the past and the future to show the generality of these incidents over a length of time.

In the sixth and seventh oaths heaven and its Creator is referred to.

It says:

"By the heaven and He Who made it,"

The creation of the glorious heaven with its beautiful heavenly bodies and their wonderful regularities, is one of the manifestations of Allah's might and wisdom which none else, besides Him, could ever produce.

It is worthy to note that /ma/, in Arabic, usually refers to non-intellectual beings and using it for Allah, All-knowing, is inappropriate.

Then, some had to consider it 'ma masdariyah' (the word after 'ma' is infinitive), and construed the verse as: 'by the heaven and its structure'.

But, regarding verses 7 and 8, whose commentaries will be dealt with later, we have to consider / ma/ as a relative pronoun that refers to Allah, the Creator of all heavens.

Using /ma/, for intelligent persons, referring to the word 'women' in the following verse, is not uncommon in the Arabic language, either, as in Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 3:

"...Marry women of your choice..."

A group of commentators believe that the term /ma/ with the meaning of 'something', here is for mentioning the origin of the world in an ambiguous form and consequently later, after careful study some become familiar with His Knowledge and Wisdom and can change the concept of 'something' to 'someone'. But, the commentary on 'He' is more fitting.

Continuing with the eighth and ninth oaths the reference is to the Earth and the Producer of the Earth.

It says:

"By the Earth and He Who spread it,"

The Earth, which is a cradle of life for Man and all living creatures, with all its wonders; mountains, seas, valleys, forests, springs, rivers, mines, and other precious sources, is a collection of the Divine Signs, each of which if studied intelligently, is an evidence of His might and wisdom, and more important than the Earth is the Creator of the Earth Who spreads it out.

The term /taha ha/ is derived from /tahw / used with the sense of 'to spread, spread out' and also with the meaning of 'to repel or to destroy' and here it means 'spread or expand', because:

1) the earth was totally submerged under water at the beginning and then, gradually the water subsided into the low lands causing high points of land to appear and spread which is called /dahw-ul-ard/,

2) At first the earth was totally in the form of high and low lands with steep slopes that were uninhabitable.

Continuous heavy rains washed the high lands and thereby, filled the valley, so, little by little, dry level lands appeared, becoming suitable for Man to live and farm on.

Some commentators believe that there is also a slight hint, in this sense, to the movement or the Earth, because one or the meanings of /tahw/ is 'repel' and it may point to the 'driving' or the Earth around the sun or around itself or both or them.

Finally, attention is paid to the tenth and eleventh oaths, the last oaths or this portion, saying

"And by the soul and He Who Perfected it,"

Man is an essence or the world or creation; the best on the earth and in the heavens. The human soul is one or the greatest mysteries of the universe. Its importance is so much so that Allah swears by it and by its Producer, both.

Commentators have delivered some different probabilities as to whether the term /nafs/, here means Man's 'soul' or his 'body and soul'.

If it means 'soul' the term /sawwa ha/ (based on /taswiyah /) refers to the proportion and order of Man's soul and his spiritual faculties including his external and internal senses such as comprehension, memory, apprehension,

imagination, faculty of origination, love, will, and the like, all of which can be studied in psychology.

If it means 'soul and body', both, it covers all the wonders and regularities found in the body and its different systems and these can be studied in anatomy and physiology.

However, the term /nafs/, in the Qur'an, refers to both of them. Regarding the use of /nafs/ for both the soul and the body the Qur'an says about the

'soul':

"It is Allah that takes the souls (of man) at death...",[2]

and about the body (a man) it says

"He said, 'O my Lord! I have slain a man among them, and I fear lest they slay me'.[3]

But, here both meanings are involved since the wonders of the Divine Power are seen in both the soul and body not in only one of them.

It is interesting that the

'soul'

is mentioned, here in an indefinite form which may refer to the importance of Man's soul something which is beyond the imagination and also full of ambiguity that introduces him as an 'unknown being'; the very title that some scientists have used for Man.

In the next verse, concerning the creation of Man, one of the most important things is referred to. It says:

"Then inspired it to understand what if wrong and (what if) right for it,"

Yes, when the creation of Man was completed and he came into being, Allah taught him how to discriminate between right and wrong. This is the most precious gift of all granted exclusively to Man. Thus, an entity out of clay and Allah's spirit, into which He breathes an understanding of what is sin, impiety, and wrong doing and what is piety and right conduct, in the special circumstances in which it may be placed, was formed as Man.

By those faculties and talents, and these various tokens, Man should learn that his success, prosperity, salvation, and position, where he can be in a rank higher than the angels, depends on himself, on his keeping his soul pure as Allah has made it, and his failure, his decline; to the lowest degree even lower than the beast, and his perdition depends on himself soiling his soul by choosing evil.

The term /alhamaha/ derived from /ilham/ originally means 'to ingurgitate, swallow up something greedily', then, it has been used with the sense of 'to inspire a matter from Allah to the soul of Man', as if Man's soul ingurgitates the matter with all its entity.

Sometimes, it has also been used in the sense of 'revelation' while some of the commentators believe that the difference between 'inspiration' and 'revelation' is that in the former, the one to whom something is inspired does not understand where he has gotten it from, but in the latter, he knows well where he has received the revelation from and how.

The term /fujur/ is based on /fajr /and as it was said before, it means 'break open', and since the light of dawn breaks the gloom of night it is called /fajr/, and also, since committing sin breaks the curtain of piety and

religion, it is called /fujur/.

Of course, the purpose of using the term /fujur/ in the verse under discussion, is to denote the means of this breaking and also the means and ways of its occurrence.

And the purpose of using the term /taqwa/ based on /wiqayah/ with the meaning of 'protection', is that Man protects himself from sin, crime, corruption and vice.

It is necessary to note that verse 8 does not mean, as some have considered, that Allah put the means of committing / fujur/ and /taqwa / inside the soul of Man; the very means which cause him to do wrong actions and break the curtains of piety, or the means and ways that push him towards piety and good actions.

They have thought of the verse as an evidence for the existence of some contrariety in the entity of Man.

It says that Allah inspired him and taught him these two facts.

In simpler words, He showed him the difference between right and wrong, as is mentioned in Surah Balad, No. 90 verse 10:

"And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)".

And expressively, the soul is inspired by Allah; its Almighty and All-wise Author, with the consciousness and the faculty of discretion to distinguish between piety and impiety, right conduct and the wrong ways in life, by the means of his 'wisdom' and 'primordial nature'.

This is why some commentators believe that this verse, in fact, refers to the proposition of the idea of 'rational goodness and rational badness' and that Allah has gifted Man with the ability to distinguish between them.

It is noteworthy that Allah has given Man many blessings, but, among all of them the Qur'an emphasizes, here on the inspiration of understanding 'piety' and 'impiety' and the recognition of right and wrong, because this is the most important factor in the destiny of Man.

Finally, after these numerous important oaths, attention is paid to the result of them and says:

"Indeed he succeeds who purifies it,"

The term /zakkaha/ is based on /tazkiyah/ which originally means 'to grow'; and /zakat / basically means 'growth'.

This meaning is used in a narration from Hazrat Ali (as), thus:

"...wealth decreases if you keep spending it and knowledge increases the more you make use of it".[4]

Later, the term was used to mean 'to purify', perhaps because the purification of wealth from putridity causes it to increase. In the current verse both meanings are suitable.

Yes, 'salvation' depends upon preserving the soul in its original purity against its getting soiled, polluted and clouded from' carnal desires, by submitting it to the will and the pleasure of the Lord. This is the main, right goal in the life of every human individual, male and female, to succeed in salvation by the way of /tazkiyah/, otherwise, he or she will be in perdition.

Then, our attention is directed to the contrary group of people and says:

"And indeed he fails who corrupts it."

The term /xaba/ is based on /xibah/ which means 'to be in a hopeless state, deprived, damaged'.

The term /dassaha/ is based on /dass/ which basically means 'to foist something unwillingly', as the Holy Qur'an says about the pagan Arabs who hatefully buried the baby girls alive:

"...Or bury it (alive) in the dust..."[5]

And hidden, harmful actions, in Arabic, are termed /dasisah/.

It is also said that the term refers to sin and corruption because wrongdoers and sinners hide themselves.

Further, it has been said that the objective meaning of the term is that sinners conceal themselves amongst the good-doers, or one conceals his soul in vice, or, yet still, one hides vice and corruption inside his soul.

In any case, it refers to sin and evil which contrasts with piety.

It is also possible to gather all these ideas in the vast meaning of the verse.

Thus, those who are successful and those who fail in their lives, in this world are defined here. The characteristic of these two groups is only the following: Piety and the growth in the spirit of virtue and obeying Allah, or impiety and polluting the soul with sin and corruption.

A tradition from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (as) commenting on this verse, says:

"Indeed he succeeds who obeys and he is deprived who disobeys."[6]

Again, commenting on these two verses, the Messenger of Allah (S) is narrated to have said in a tradition:

"The soul succeeds that Allah purifies, and the soul is deprived that Allah deprives of every goodness".

Explanation

Discussion on the relation of the Qur'anic oaths and their solemn affirmations follows:

What relation is there between these eleven highly important oaths and the truth for which the adjurations are fulfilled?

It seems that the main purpose is that Allah wants to tell Man that everything, either material or spiritual, was made ready for him to enable him to reach his salvation. On the one hand, He made the world illuminated and fruitful with sunshine and moonlight for him to live in, and brought the regularity of day and night into existence on the Earth to make his life calm and useful.

On the other hand, He created him with a soul gifted with all applicable talents and merits necessary for this aim, such as; a wakeful conscience and a sense of understanding piety and impiety for paving the way to felicity. Yet, he does not purify his soul, but, follows the intrigues of Satan.

Surah Shams, Verses 11-15

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

إِذِ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا

11. "The Thamood (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong doing,"

12. "When rose up the most reprobate of them,"

13. "Then the Messenger of Allah (Salih) said to them: 'It is a she-camel of Allah and (bar her not from) having her drink!"

14. "But they rejected him and hamstrung her, so their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground),"

15. "And for Him if no fear of its consequences."

The Fatal End of the Wrongdoers!

Following the previous awakening verses about the end of those who pollute their soul, in the next verses one of the clear examples of these people, of the past, is referred to and the destiny of the Thamood is explained with some short, expressive, decisive sentences.

It says:

"The Thamood (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong doing,"

The terms /taqwa/ and /tuqiyan / both have the same meaning, which is 'transgression'; and here it means 'exceeding all the Divine bounds and disobeying His Law'.

The Thamood people, whose prophet was Salih (as) are the most ancient people to have lived in a zone between Hijaz and Sham (Syria). They lived comfortably and care-free on a fertile, level land in strong, splendid castles.

They not only showed ingratitude for the abundant blessings they had, but disobeyed their Lord by acting rebellious to the instruction of the Apostle Salih (as) and mocked His Sign, the she-camel. This conduct brought perdition to the people by means of a sudden, violent blast from heaven which was accompanied by an earthquake.

Then, the Qur'an illustrates one of the clear examples of this rebellious group and says:

"When rose up the most reprobate of them,"

The term /asqa/ means 'the most wretched' among them, referring to the person who hamstrung the she-camel which was sent to them as a trial and whose murder was a sign of rebellion against their divine Prophet (S).

Some commentators and historians have said that the most wicked man among them, who dared to commit that heinous crime, was Qudar-ibn-Salif.

In some traditions it is narrated that the holy Prophet (S) of Islam said:

"The most wicked person among the ancient ones was the murderer of the harmless she-camel of Salih (as), and the most wicked person of the latter age is the murderer of Ali-ibn-Abi-Taleb. A wicked one, who will make his beard dyed (red) from the blood of his forehead."[7]

In the next verse there is more about the rebellious impieties of the Thamood people.

It says:

"Then the Messenger of Allah (Salih) said to them: 'It is a she-camel of Allah and (bar her not from) having her drink."

The meaning of

'the Messenger of Allah',

here is Salih (as), the prophet of the Thamood people; and

'a she-camel of Allah'

refers to the fact that it was no ordinary she-camel, but it was a miracle from Allah sent to those people to prove that the prophet was a true prophet and from Allah. One of the specialities of the camel, according to a known narration, was that she exiled from inside the mountain to be a clear miracle for the arrogant disbelievers.

It is well understood from other verses of the Qur'an that Salih (as) told the people that they should divide the water of the town between the camel and themselves so that on one day they could drink the water and in turn the next day the camel could drink, without them bothering each other:

"And tell them that the water is to be divided between them: Each one's right to drink being brought forward (by suitable turns)"[8].

And he particularly told them:

"Touch her not with harm, lest the Penalty of a Great Day seize you,"

"But they rejected and hamstrung her, so their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground)."

The term /aqaruha/ is based on /uqr/ which basically means 'origin, basis' and then 'to cut the basis, or to kill'.

Some have said that the objective meaning here is 'to hamstring an animal', that is to cut the legs of the animal and make it fall so that it consequently dies.

It is interesting to note that the man who was deputed to do the impious deed of hamstringing the she-camel was only an individual whom the Qur'an considers 'the most reprobate' but had of course the sympathy and cooperation of the whole people as the verse too mentions the subjective pronoun of the verb in the plural form / aqaruha/ 'they hamstrung her' which means that others of the Thamood tribe had a share in committing the act also.

An action like that is usually plotted by a group and then is fulfilled by one or a few definite individuals. Furthermore, they are content to do it and pleased with it, which unequivocally introduces the group as participants.

That is why Hazrat Ali (as) has said:

"…for only one individual killed the camel of Thamood, but Allah punished all of them, because all of them joined him by their acquiescing in their contentment to it. Thus, Allah, the glorified has said:

'Then they hamstrung her, and turned (themselves) regretful,'[9]"[10].

But, it was too late for that regretfulness.

It was the fruit of their own rejection and impiety that destroyed them and then they were buried in their houses by the punishment of Allah.

The term /damdama/ is based on the term /damdamat/ which is sometimes used in the sense of 'to destroy' and sometimes 'to make shared punishment fall upon people' or 'to cut the roots of them', or 'to pound, crush' and sometimes 'to disfavor' or 'to surround, involve', all or which can

be applicable, in this verse, because that penalty originated from the wrath of Allah due to their sin which resulted in their being made level with the ground.

The term /sawwaha/ is based on /taswiyah/ which means 'to make level or equal', and it may mean that their houses were levelled to the ground, Allah sent an equal destruction upon them all so that no one could escape. All these meanings can also be accepted.

The pronoun /ha/ in the term /sawwaha/ refers to the tribe of Thamood or to their cities and buildings which Allah destroyed and levelled with the ground.

Some have said that the pronoun refers to the term /damdama/ ‘destruction' which is understood from the next sentence, i.e. Allah divided this wrath and destruction equally between them all.

However, the first commentary seems more appropriate. By the way, this verse denotes that their penalty was the fruit of their sin and was in proportion to it and this adopts to Divine Justice and Wisdom.

It is said about many nations that when they felt that they were receiving punishment and saw its preliminary signs, they became regretful and repented; but as some narrations denote, the situation about the Thamood is different.

They decided to find Salih (as), their sincere prophet and kill him when they saw the first signs of the Divine penalty for their disobedience. This shows the depth of their rebellion and disobedience, against Allah, and the Messenger of Allah (S), Salih (as), whom He saved by His Mercy and then destroyed all the rejectors.

Finally, in the last verse of the Surah, in order to clearly warn all those who go on the same path, it says:

“And for Him is no fear of its consequence”,

There are many rulers who have the authority and power to punish others, but, they fear the consequence that it may have and the reactions of the people. For this very reason they do not use their power completely or putting it more directly, their power is based on weakness and inability, and their knowledge is mingled with ignorance hence they fear of being unable to afford the unknown results that they will face with.

Allah, the Almighty, the All-knowing, has created and can create at will, and there can be no question of any such apprehension in His case, that is why He does decisively what He pleases.

Transgressors and wrongdoers should be careful of their conditions, lest they will be involved in the wrath of Allah for their evil actions.

The term /uqba/ means 'end, finite', and the pronoun /ha/, at the end of the Arabic word, refers to

/damdamah/ ‘destruction'.

Explanation: The Brief Story of the Thamood

As it was mentioned before, the Thamood flourished in a territory between Medina and Sham (Syria). The plain was known as 'wadi-ul-Qura’ which forms the southern boundary of Syria. They worshipped a part of a mountain when Salih (as) was sent to them as an Apostle of Allah.

He preached to those people and tried his best to correct their faith and conduct, but it was to no avail at all. At last the people challenged Salih (as) saying that they would believe in Allah and obey His Apostle, Salih, if Salih could cause a she-camel to come out of the mountain with a young one.

Salih (as) did cause the miracle and yet the people did not believe and correct themselves. It was then fixed that on one day the she-camel would drink of the water of the town and on the next day the people would have the water.

As some narrations denote, even on the day the she-camel drank the water, she gave so much milk that the whole town was supplied.

Salih (as) had already warned them that if they caused the least harm or hurt to her a chastisement from Allah would overtake them. But, the cup of their inequities was full enough to plan to kill both Salih (as) and the she-camel who were obstacles to their carnal desires.

They cruelly hamstrung the poor, harmless she-camel by the hand of the most wretched man among them, Qudar-ibn-Salif. But, they failed to find Salih (as) to slay.

After that he had warned them that they had only three days time in which to enjoy themselves in this world:

"But they did hamstring her. So he said: 'Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days. (Behold) there is a promise not to be belied!'"[11].

Just three days time for further thought and repentance! However, they were not only heedless, but also increased their impiety.

Then, by night came a terrible earthquake as a Divine punishment, and buried them in their own fortress homes which they thought to be such places of security:

"The (mighty) Blast overtook the wrongdoers, and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning."[12]

They were destroyed and the light of life in their land was extinguished so that no one there remained alive, but, Allah saved Salih (as) and his believing followers:

"When Our Decree issued, We saved Salih and those who believed with him, by (special) Grace from Ourselves..."[13]

Supplication:

O Lord! You are our hope in avoiding carnal desires; please help us.

O Lord! You inspired in us the understanding of what is 'piety' and what is 'impiety'. Bestow upon us the success of taking benefit from this inspiration.

O Lord! The temptations and intrigues of Satan are mysteriously concealed in the soul of Man. Open their mysteries to us so that we may know them and be able to avoid them.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol, 10. p. 496
2. Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 42
3. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 33
4. Nahj-ul-Balagha. Saying 147.
5. Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 59
6. Majma-al-Bayan. vol, 10. p. 498
7. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 499; and also in Tafsir-e-Qartabi, vol. 6, p. 7168.
8. Surah Qamar, No. 54 verse 28
9. Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 157
10. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 201 (Arabic Version).
11. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 65
12. Surah Hud, No. 11, Verse 67
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, Verse 66

Surah Lail, Chapter 92

(The Night)

Number of Verses: 21

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is a Meccan Surah and has the same qualities that other Meccan Suras have; short verses. Their contents are expressive and awakening and they are generally about the Hereafter and Divine chastisement.

At the beginning, after making three oaths, the verses divide people into two groups: Those pious believers who give in charity and fear Allah; and those disbelievers who are greedy misers and think themselves self-sufficient. The fate of the first group is introduced as being in ease and happiness, and the destiny of the second group is affliction and misery.

At one point in the Surah, after mentioning the fact that Allah guides His servants, the Qur'an warns all of us of a blazing fire. Then, it introduces the conduct of those who enter the fire and that of those who are kept away from it.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Lail

On the virtue of this Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

"He who recites it (Surah Lail) Allah awards him so much so that he is satisfied, and He protects him from toil, and makes (the path of his life) smooth for him."[1]

Surah Lail, Verses 1-11

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى

فَأَمَّا مَن أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

وَأَمَّا مَن بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى

1. "By the night when it enshrouds,"
2. "By the day when it brightens up,"
3. "By Him Who created the male and the female,"
4. "Verily (the ends) you strive for are diverse."
5. "Then as for him who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah),"
6. "And (in all sincerity) testifies to the Best,"
7. "We will ease him to the state of ease."
8. "But he who is a greedy miser thinks himself self-sufficient,"
9. "And gives lie to the Best,"
10. "We will ease him to the path of affliction,"
11. "And his wealth will not avail when he perishes."

The Occasion of the Revelation of Surah Lail

Commentators have cited an occasion of revelation for the whole Surah on the authority of Ibn-Abbas.

Here is what the late Tabarsi has said in Majma'-al-Bayan:

There was a man among the Muslims who had a palm tree, a branch of which was bent towards the house of a poor man who had a large family. Sometimes the owner of the palm tree would collect the fruit and if by chance some dates fell in the poor man's yard and his children picked them up, the owner would come and snatch them away from their hands and even from their mouths.

The poor man complained to the holy Prophet (S) who, in turn requested that the man leave until he (S) could investigate the situation.

Then, it happened that the Prophet (S) met the owner of the palm tree and asked him if he would give him (the holy Prophet) the tree in question, in return for a palm tree in Paradise. The man declined with the plea that the dates of that tree, among all his numerous trees, were so delicate that he could not give it up.

There was another man, according to some narrations, named Ahul-Dahdah, who heard what the holy Prophet (S) promised the owner.

He said,

"O Messenger of Allah! Would you promise the same to me if I get the palm tree from the owner and give it to you?"

The holy Prophet (S) said,

"Yes".

So, the man went to the owner of the palm and talked with him and questioned him as to if he knew that the Prophet (S) had offered a palm tree in Paradise instead of the one he had and he answered that he had many palm trees but, the taste of the dates of that tree was the most delicious.

Then, the man asked the owner whether he wanted to sell it, and he refused unless he received a sum that he supposed no one would pay. The man asked about the price and the owner answered that it was forty palm trees.

The buyer was astonished and told him that it was an expensive price that he demanded for a bent palm tree-forty palm trees!

Then, after a short pause the buyer agreed to give him forty palm trees. The greedy seller asked him to call some people as witnesses for the

exchange and the buyer did. After that, he went to the holy Prophet (S) and presented the palm tree to him.

The Messenger of Allah went to the poor man and told him that the palm tree was in his and his children's possession.

It was there that Surah Lail was descended and stated what it declared about the righteous and the wrongdoers.

Piety and the Divine Assistance

At the beginning of this Surah, again, we find three reflective oaths about the 'creation' and the Creator of the world.

It says:

"By the night when it enshrouds,"

The use of the term

/yaqsa/ 'enshrouds'

is because night, like a creature, covers half of the globe and brings it under her authority, or is for the reason that the light of the day or the rays of the world-illuminating sun 'hides' when night comes forth.

In any case, it is an evidence to the importance of Night's effective role in men's lives, including the adjustment of the sun's heat, the resting of the living creatures in it, and the adoration of the night by awake, vigilant believers.

Then, our attention is attracted to another oath.

It says:

"By the day when it brightens up,"

'Day'

begin from the moment that the light of dawn breaks the curtain of the gloom of night and removes the darkness and dominates the expanse of heaven, filling everywhere and everything with its glory and light; the very light that is the secret of the life of all living things.

In the Qur'an, the contrast of 'light' and 'darkness' and their effect in Man's life is repeatedly stated and emphasized upon, because they are two perpetual great blessings and are also two Divine Signs.

Then, the last oath of this Surah is mentioned.

It says:

"By Him Who created the male and the female,"

The existence of the mystery of the sexes runs through all life in human beings, animals and plants. The process of development that occurs in the life-germ from the very beginning until the time of birth, the characteristics of both sexes due to their functions and actions, and the secrets hidden in the sex phenomena are all Signs of the glorious world of creation through which we may understand the greatness of its Creator.

The term /ma/ 'something, a thing' used, here for Allah is for the extraordinary greatness or His Entity that has an ambiguous state which is beyond the imagination and human concept.

Some have also said that /ma/, here in Arabic is 'masdariyah'. If so, the sentence means: 'By the creation of male and female'. But, this interpretation seems feeble.

In fact, the first two oaths refer to the celestial Signs while the third oath points to the human signs.

The conclusion of the aforementioned oaths is stated in the next verse.

It says:

"Verily the (ends) you strive for are diverse."

People have different or diverse aims in life for which they strive. One might be talking of the pleasures of this world while another may be mindful of the life in the Hereafter. No one lives aimlessly, but we should be careful of the way in which we use our divine talents and powers in order to understand if it is for good or evil.

The term /satta/ is the plural form of /satit/ and is derived from /Satt/ which means 'separate, divided'.

Then, the Qur'an, dividing people into two groups; addressing the first says:

"Then as for him who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah),"

"And (in all sincerity) testifies to the Best,"

"We will ease him to the state of ease."

The purpose of using the term /a'ta/ is for the meaning of charity in the way of Allah and helping the needy.

Then, immediately after that, it emphasizes on 'piety' which may refer to the necessity of pure intention in practicing the action lawfully and with permitted wealth, without any reproach or harm or hurt, because all of the meanings are gathered in the sense of 'piety'.

Some have said that /a'ta/ refers to financial actions done for Allah, and /atqa/ refers to other religious actions of worship. However, the first commentary is better, because it adapts both to the appearance of the verse, and to the occasion of revelation that was mentioned before.

The idea of 'testifying to the Best' indicates 'the faith in the Divine blessed rewards', as Abul-Dahdah, the believing man mentioned in the story on the occasion of revelation of the Surah, who with faith in the Divine blessed rewards spent his wealth.

This meaning is also mentioned in Surah Nisa, No. 40, verse 95

"...unto all (in Faith) hath Allah promised good..."

Some have said the phrase means 'the best religion', i.e. 'the faith in Islam' which is the best religion.

Some have rendered the words thus:

"I testify that there is no god besides Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah."

But, regarding all conditions, the first commentary seems more fitting.

The sentence:

"We will ease him to the state of ease"

may refer to the success given by Allah and making the path of obedience for such persons easy; or paving the road to paradise for them and the act of relieving and greeting them by angels; or it may include all of them.

No doubt, those who give charity and alms piously and believe in the Divine rewards, their difficulties will be changed into easy affairs for them and will have enjoined a special calmness both in this world and the next.

In the beginning the payment of the alms-tax and giving charity may seem difficult for us, but with continued and frequent practice it will become easy, so that we will gain enjoyment from it.

There are many generous people who are happy to have guests present at their meals but, if they do not receive anyone on a particular day, they will be rather sad. Therefore, for them to receive guests is a kind of ease in their lives.

We should not neglect that, in principle, belief in the Resurrection and in Divine, immense rewards changes Man's tolerance of different hardships and makes them easy for him. This kind of believing man will spend eagerly not only his wealth, but will also give up his dear sweet life for the love of martyrdom on the path of Allah.

The term /yusra/ is derived from /yusr/ that basically means 'to saddle a horse and make it ready to ride on', and the term has been used for any easy deed.

In the next verse attention is paid to the contrary group and says:

"But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient,"

"And gives the lie to the Best,"

"We will ease him to the path of affliction."

Here, the term

/buxl/ 'miser'

is mentioned opposite to /a'ta/ 'being generous' which we find in the first group; and

/istaqna/ 'demands self-sufficiency'

is either an excuse for the conduct of avarice and a means of heaping up wealth, or it refers to an imagination of being self-sufficient of the divine rewards. This characteristic is just opposite to that of the former group who always seek Allah's favour. Or, since the latter group think that they do not need to obey their Lord, then they always commit sin.

Among these three commentaries the first one seems more appropriate, though all of them may be combined.

The purpose of the phrase

"gives the lie to the Best"

is for signifying disbelief in the rewards of the Next World or rejecting the religion and the good ways of the prophets.

The sentence:

"We will ease him to the path of affliction"

is a state opposite to the case in the sentence: "We will ease him to the state of ease" where Allah brings forth his favor and the righteous succeed on a smooth path of obedience and charity which makes them free from the difficulties of life.

But, the members of the other group are in absence of success, and travelling the path is difficult for them. They will be involved in hardships in this world and the next.

In general, the fulfillment of good deeds and especially payment of charity and the alms-tax in the way of Allah is difficult for the disbelieving, greedy misers, while it is easy, exciting and pleasant for the righteous.

At the end of this part of the Surah, the blind-hearted, greedy misers are warned:

"And his wealth will not avail him when he perishes."

He can neither take anything of his worldly property with him, nor could it prevent him from the fire of Hell.

The term /ma/, at the beginning of the verse, may be a negative sign (as it was mentioned above), or for questioning in the negative. If so, the sentence means: 'What benefit can he take from his wealth when he falls in the grave or Hell?"

The term /taradda/ is based on /rida 'at/ and /radaya/ which means'to perish, to fall' and since falling from a high place usually causes one to perish, it is also used in the sense of 'perdition'. In the current verse it may mean 'to fall into the grave, or Hell, or perdition as a punishment'.

Thus, the Qur'an, in these verses, speaks about two groups of people: the first is the righteous who are pious, generous believers; and the second is the group of unbelievers who are impious and miserly. The examples of both groups are clearly pointed out in the description of the occasion of revelation.

Surah Lail, Verses 12-21

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى

وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى

فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى

لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاء وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

12. "Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide,"

13. "And certainly to Us (belongs the End) the Hereafter and (the Beginning) the first (life)."

14. "Therefore, I warn you of a Fire that blazes:"

15. "None shall reach it but the reprobate,"

16. "Who gives the lie (to Truth) and turns away,"

17. "And from which shall the most devoted to Allah be kept away,"

18. "Who gives away his wealth, purifying himself;

19. "And bestows no favour on anyone for the sake of reward,

20."But only the desire to seek for the countenance of his Lord, the Most High,"

21. "And he shall soon be well-pleased."

Payment of Charity Causes the Fire to Be Kept Away

In the former verses, people were divided into two groups; pious, generous believers and impious, miserly unbelievers, and then, their different fates were pointed out. Now, in the following verse, we are told that Allah guides us to the straight way, so, the choice is up to us without being obliged to it. It is our own duty to decide and act accordingly. Going along the right path is beneficial for us, ourselves; Allah has no need of it at all.

"Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide."

This guidance is irrespective of guidance by way of genesis (through natural position and intellect) or guidance by way of religion (through books and traditions). All other necessary means of guidance have already been provided.

"And certainly to Us (belongs the End) the Hereafter and (the Beginning) the first (life)."

'We are not in need of your Faith and obedience. Neither does your obedience profit Us nor does your sinning hurt Us.' All things and the means of guidance are provided, fully, for the use of Man to take benefit from.

According to this commentary 'guidance' means 'showing the way'. It is also probable that the purpose of these two verses is to encourage the generous believers, and to say that they are guided better by Allah and their way is easy for them in this world and the Next World, and since all this world and the Next World are in His possession, He is completely capable of this.

It is true that this world comes before the Next World but, because of its importance and because it is the main, final goal, the Hereafter is mentioned first.

And since one of the branches of guidance is the act of warning, in the next verse it says:

"Therefore, I warn you of a Fire that blazes."

The term /talazza/ is derived from /laza/ in the sense of 'a smokeless flame or fire', and we know that this kind of fire has a hotter heat. The term /laza / has sometimes been used for Hell, itself.

Then, it points to those who enter this blazing fire, saying:

"None shall reach it but the reprobate,"

"Who gives the lie (to truth) and turns away,"

So, the scale for happiness and unhappiness is Faith and disbelief, respectively, and the fruit that each of them brings forth. Allah, in His infinite Mercy, has provided full guidance to His creatures. Man, having mental and spiritual faculties and talents, with all the inspired prophets and heavenly Books, and all Divine signs and possibilities of guidance at his disposal, rejects the truth and goes astray. So, such a person is surely the clear example of the reprobate.

In the sentence

"Who gives the lie (to truth) and turns away",

the idea

"gives the lie"

may refer to 'blasphemy' and

"turns away"

to 'the negligence of doing good'; as this is a condition of blasphemy.

Or both of them may refer to the negligence of Faith, in this way that at first, they reject the prophet and then turn their backs and go away from him forever.

The commentators have a question and answer thus: the above mentioned verses indicate that the fire of Hell is only for disbelievers, but, this idea does not adapt to what the other verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations say from which it is understood that the sinful believers will have a share from the fire, too. That is why some misled classes, taking these verses as their evidence, believe that with the existence of Faith sinning is possible without punishment.

In answering the question, two points should be made: the first is that the purpose of the phrase

'reaching the fire',

here is the same as 'being immortal in Fire' that we know it belongs to disbelievers, with reference to the verses that mean besides blasphemers, there are some who enter Hell.

The second point is that the idea that the above verses and the following ones say that being kept away from the fire is only for the most God-fearing people, i.e. on the whole the situations of the two groups are to be indicated thus: the miserly unbelievers and the generous, pious believers. From these two groups only the first one reaches Hell and the second group enters Heaven. Thus, the third group, that is, the sinful believers is not in question at this point.

In other words, limitation, here is 'an additional limitation'; as if Heaven is created only for the second group. This statement makes other objections clear in connection with the contradiction of the current verses and the next ones which restrict salvation to the righteous.

Then, the words are about some people who are kept away from this blazing Fire. It says:

"And from which shall the most devoted to Allah be kept away."

"He who gives away his wealth, purifying himself"

The usage of the term /yatazakka/ is in fact for the meaning of 'purity of intention' since the Arabic root word /zaka/ implies both increase and purification in morals and wealth, as:

"Of their goods take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf. Verily prayers are a source of security for them..."[2]

Then, to emphasize on their pure intention in their giving of charity, it says:

"And bestow no favour on anyone for the sake of reward,"

"But only the desire to seek for the countenance of his Lord, the Most High."

In other words, many charities or good deeds are done with a motive; that of returning someone else's favour and compensating and rewarding someone for some service done or expecting some reward in return for ones

own good deeds. But the above mentioned verses denote that the sole motive in a pious, believing Man's mind is that he desires the Countenance or, Good Pleasure of the Lord, the Most High.

This countenance or

/wajh/ ‘face',

here with the meaning of 'essence', implies good pleasure or the approval of Allah.

The phrase

'his Lord, the Most High'

shows that the act of 'giving charity' is done with a good understanding of His Lordship and that He is the Most High.

Finally, in the last verse of the Surah, the unique great reward of these good believers is pointed out in a short sentence.

It says:

“And he shall soon be well-pleased”.

Yes, one who is whole-heartedly devoted to Allah shall find Allah's pleasure as he expects; an absolute pleasure, vast, illuminated and conditionless which contains all the blessings, of His Bliss. It is something that, today, we cannot imagine at all; and what a grand, splendid blessing this reward is!

Some commentators have thought that the pronoun in the term /yartda/ may refer to Allah. If so, the verse means: 'And Allah shall soon be well-pleased (with him), which is, itself, a great, unique gift that the Lord, the Most High, has bestowed upon His servant, and certainly such a pious believing servant will be well-pleased with Him, because these two correlate with each other. Surah Bayyinah, No. 98, verse 8 verifies this idea.

It says:

“...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him...”,

and also the verse:

“Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing”.[3]

But, the first commentary is more appropriate.

Explanation:

The Moral Excellence of Spending in the Way of Allah:

Spending in the Way of Allah and giving financial help to the needy; especially to the respectable ones, with pure and good intention, is one of the themes that is repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and is one of the characteristics of 'True Faith'.

There are many Islamic narrations on this subject so much so that the culture of the religion indicates that financial spending, which has no motive but for the countenance of Allah and which is free from any hypocrisy, reproach and hurt, is the best of deeds.

Here are some meaningful traditions on the matter:

1. A narration from Imam Baqir (as) says:

“The best actions with Allah is the bringing of joy to the soul of a believing Muslim, feeding him until he is satisfied, or clearing his debt”.[4]

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) is narrated to have said in a tradition:

"Good temper, feeding (others) and blood shed (offered in sacrifice for the sake of Allah) are (signs) of Faith".[5]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"I have not seen anything equal to visiting a (Muslim) believer but that of feeding him, and it is for Allah to feed from Heaven the (believing) one who feeds a believer."

4. In another tradition the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have answered the man who asked him what the best actions were:

"Feeding (others), and (saying) good words."[6]

Again, a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"The one who maintains a Muslim family (entertaining them) for a day and a night's time, Allah forgives his sins."

Supplication

O Lord! Give all of us the success of having a share of this great, good action.

O Lord! Cause the purity of our intention to be increased.

O Lord! We seek your Grace and Mercy so that You will be well-pleased with us and we will be well pleased, too.

Notes

1. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 395, Traditions 35 and 38.
2. Surah Tauba, No. 9, Verse 103
3. Surah Fajr, No. 89, verse 28
4. Ibid.
5. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, on 'Feeding a Believer', Tradition 17.
6. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 388, Traditions 113.

Surah Duha, Chapter 93

(The Glorious Morning Light)

Number of Verses: 11

The Contents of Surah Duha

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, which is one of the Meccan Suras, according to some narrations, was revealed after a brief interval that happened in revelation and the holy Prophet (S) was anxiously awaiting its arrival because the enemies had become obnoxious and began to gossip. Then, the verses descended on him, like refreshing rain and gave him a new strength, which ceased his enemies taunts.

This Surah begins with two oaths and then informs the holy Prophet (S) of the good news that Allah has never forsaken him nor left him alone.

It adds that, soon, Allah will provide for him so abundantly that he will become content.

And in the last verses of the Surah, He reminds the Prophet (S) of his past life to illustrate how Allah has always bestowed His loving care on him and in the most difficult moments has supported him in the past and so his future was sure.

That is why, at the end of the Surah. He bids him, (in appreciation of the very great bounties) to be kind with the orphans and the needy, thus:

"Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness,"

"And for the one who asks, repulse not,"

"And as for the bounties of your Lord, do announce (it)".

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

For the virtue of this Surah it is enough to say that there is a tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) which says:

"He who recites this Surah will be among those Allah is pleased with; and it is possible that Muhammad (S) intercedes for him, and he will be rewarded ten 'good deeds' for each orphan or needy (or petitioner)". [1]

All of these virtues are for the believer who recites the Surah and acts upon it.

It is noteworthy that according to many narrations this Surah and the next one, Inshirah are together one Surah; and since in prayers we should recite a complete Surah after Surah Al-Hamd; then, in reciting this Surah the next one should be added, too.

(A similar idea has been given for Surah al-Fil and Surah Quraish)

And if we think carefully of the contents of these two Suras, we can see the close relation of their subjects and find that they are certainly together, even though the invocation:

*'**In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**'*

separates them into two Suras.

We should refer to the books of religious jurisprudence to answer questions such as: 'Are these two Suras the same in every respect' or, 'should

we consider them as one Surah in prayers?'. In any case, the consensus of scholars agrees that, in prayers, we cannot recite merely one of the two Suras.

Surah Duha, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالضُّحَى

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى

1. "By the Glorious Morning Light,"

2. "And by the Night when it is still,

3. "Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased."

4. "And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life)."

5. "And soon your lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased."

The Occasion of Revelation

Many narrations have been cited about the occasion of revelation of this Surah, of which the following is the most clear:

Ibn-Abbas says that fifteen days had passed since the Prophet (S) had received any revelation. During this time, the pagans of Mecca taunted Muhammad and said that his Lord had forsaken him and was displeased with him. They added that if he had been right about his divine mission, the revelation would not have ceased for him. Then, the aforementioned Surah descended (and put an end to their statements).

It is noteworthy that when this Surah was revealed, according to a tradition, the holy Prophet (S) told Gabriel:

"You delayed while I was looking forward to seeing you."

And then Gabriel answered him:

"I was more eager than you, but I am a missionary servant and do not descend unless by my Lord's leave."

Another tradition cites that a number of Jews came to the Prophet (S) and asked him some questions about the stories of Zul-qarnain, the men of the cave, and the creation of the Spirit.

He told them that he would inform them the next day, but he did not add to his statement:

"If Allah wills".

This caused the inspiration to cease for a length of time and consequently, the enemies began talking and jearing at him. Hence, the Prophet (S) felt sad and lonely, but later this Surah was revealed to comfort him.

(This occasion of revelation does not seem so fitting since the Jews and their meeting with the Prophet (S), as well as these kinds of questions, usually occurred in Medina, not Mecca).

There is no agreement in narrations as to the exact length of time he had to wait, when the moments of inspiration were stilled. Some have cited it as 12 days, some 15 days, some 19 days, some 25 days and some forty days. Some narrations also denote that it was only for 2-3 days.

The Prophet promised to be blessed to his heart's content.

At the beginning of the Surah, again, we are faced with two oaths sworn to the Light and sworn to the Night, saying:

"By the Glorious Morning Light".

"And by the Night when it is still".

The term /duha/ means the beginning hours of the day when the sun rises high in the sky and it brightens up everywhere. This is, in fact, the best time of day or, in other words, it is the youth of the day. At this time of day, in summer, the heat of the sun is not so tormenting, and in winter, it has defeated the coolness of the weather, and it is at this time that we are, both bodily and spiritually, full of energy ready to do whatever we need to do.

The term /saja/ is derived from /sajw/ and originally means 'to be quiet, tranquil'; and it has also been used with the meaning of 'to cover, to darken' but, here it confers the meaning of 'quietness' and 'tranquility', hence, on the nights when the wind does not blow the terms; laylatun- sajiyah; 'a quiet night', and for the sea, with the lack of any storm and roaring waves, the term /bahrun saj/ 'the quiet sea' are used in the Arabic language.

In any case what is important about 'night' is its peace and stillness which naturally gives tranquility to Man's nerves and makes him prepared for his next day's struggles or days of spiritual life and work. From this point of view 'night' is very important and it deserves to be sworn to.

There is a close similarity and relationship between these two oaths and their contents. The 'Glorious Light' of the day is, metaphorically, the descent of the revelations to the holy heart of the Prophet (S), and the stillness or quiescence of the night is compared to the days and periods of waiting for revelation, which is sometimes necessary in some cases.

Then, following these two great oaths, it refers to the conclusion and the response of the oaths and says:

"Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased".

The term /wadda'a/ is derived from /taudi/ which means 'to leave'. The term /qala/ is based on /qila/ in the sense of 'hate and enmity", and is derived from the root /qalw/ meaning 'to throw'.

Raqib believes that these two refer to one thing, because when one hates another it is as if he throws his heart away and does not accept it back.

In any event, in this verse, there is particular assurance given to the holy Prophet (S), for him to know that if after inspiration there were days and periods of waiting, it was due to valid reasons as which only Allah knew, but He would never be angry with him nor forsake him as the taunts of his enemies suggested Allah's Care and Mercy are always around him and supporting him.

Then, it continues by saying:

"And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life)."

O Prophet! You are under His care and Mercy, here in this world and you will be in a better condition in the Hereafter. He will not be displeased with you either in this fleeting world or in the next eternal world. Briefly speaking, you are dear in the present world and dearer in the Hereafter.

Some commentators have said that the words /axirat/ and /ula / refer to the first and the last parts of the Prophet's life, they believe the verse means: 'O, Prophet you will be more successful in the last part of your life than at the first'; that which refers to the expansion and development of Islam when the Muslims were frequently victorious in battles against their enemies, which occurred one after another, and the light of Islam removed the gloom of paganism and idolatry in many areas.

To combine these two commentaries is also possible.

And, finally, He has given him the highest glad tidings where it says:

"And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased,"

This is a very high respect and honour from Allah to His devoted servant, Muhammad (S), when He states:

'Your Lord will grant you so much so that you shall be well-pleased';

That is, in this world he will win over his enemies and Islam will spread all over the world, and in the Next World, he will be granted the greatest rewards.

Undoubtedly, the holy Prophet (S), as the last Prophet and guide of all Mankind is not content with his own salvation alone; certainly he will be pleased and satisfied when his intercession for his followers is accepted, too. For the same reason it is understood from some narrations that this verse is one of the most optimistic verses of the Holy Qur'an and is also, an evidence that his intercession will be accepted.

There is a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) from his father Imam Zayn-al-'abidin (as) from his uncle Muhammad-ibn-Hanafiyah, from his father Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) which says that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"On doomsday, I will stay in the state of intercession and intercede for the sinners of my community so much so that Allah will say:

'Did you become satisfied, O Muhammad?'

and twice I will reply in the affirmative."

Then, Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) addressed a group of the citizens of Kufa (a city in Iraq) and added:

"Do you believe that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an if the verse:

'Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah...'[2]?"

The group responded that they did indeed believe it.

Then he said:

"But we, the Household of the Prophet (Ahl-ul-Bait) say that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an if thus:

'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased'". [3]

Needless to say, the intercession of the Prophet (S) demands some conditions. He will not intercede for just anyone nor can any sinful person have such an expectation.

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The Messenger of Allah entered Fatima's home when she, wearing rough clothes of camel wool, was grinding grain with one hand and nursing her child with the other.

He, having tears in his eyes, advised his daughter to tolerate the hardship and the bitterness of this world for the sweetness of the Next World, because Allah had revealed to him

'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased'. [4]

Explanation: The Philosophy Behind the Discontinuation of the Revelations

Looking at the aforementioned verses, altogether, it is well understood that the Prophet (S) was not absolutely free and all that he had were from Allah, even the revelation; there can be a pause in descending revelation whenever Allah wills and it continues to be descended when He wills.

May be the pause happened in order to be an answer to those who wanted the Prophet (S) to bring them miracles extemporarily according to their definite wishes or to change some creeds or some verses. However, he would answer that it was not for him, of his own accord, to change them[5].

Surah Duha, Verses 6-11

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

6. "Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)?"
7. "And He found you wandering and guided (you)."
8. "And He found you in need and made you free of need."
9. "Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness,"
10. "And for the one who asks, repulse not,"
11. "And as for the Bounties of your Lord, do proclaim (it)."

As a Sign of Gratitude for the Bounties of Your Lord

As we mentioned before, the Surah mostly tends to comfort the Prophet (S) and enumerates the Divine graces granted to him.

Then, in relation to the former verses containing this very meaning, the following verses begin by mentioning three particular blessings of Allah's Bounties to the holy Prophet (S); and along with them it gives him three important instructions:

"Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)?"

'(O' Muhammad) you were in your mother's womb when your father, 'Abdullah, died. I caused you to be raised in the lap of your grandfather ('Abdul-Muttalib).'

'You were six years old when your mother died and you from this point of view became lonely but! I increased the love for you in the heart of your uncle (Abu-Talib)'.

'You were eight years old when your grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalib, died'.

'I appointed your uncle to serve you and support you and he showered you with love and care in protecting you'.

'Yes, you were an orphan and I sheltered you'.

Some commentators have cited many other meanings about this verse that are not compatible with its appearance. For example, the meaning of orphan, here is said to be a person who is unique in grace and holiness just as a unique piece of jewellery is called 'an orphan jewel'. According to this idea the meaning of this verse would be, 'Allah found you unique in grace and honour, therefore, He selected you and gave you the prophethood'.

Another meaning is that: 'You, yourself, were an orphan one day but We selected you to be a protector of orphans and a leader for mankind'.

Without doubt, the first interpretation is the most appropriate in every respect and is more harmonious with the content of the verse.

Then, attention is paid to the second blessing and says:

"And He found you wandering and guided (you)",

'Yes, you were not acquainted with prophecy at all and it was Us Who enlightened your heart with a Light by which you could guide Mankind'; as, in another occasion it says:

"...Thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith, but We have made the (Qur'an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will..."[6].

It is clear that before receiving his prophetic mission, the holy Prophet (S) lacked this Divine emanation. Allah helped him and guided him, as Surah Yusuf. No 12, Verse 3 says:

"We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of) Qur'an: before this, thou too were among those who knew it not."

Surely if Allah had not helped the Prophet (S) with His hidden assistance in guiding him, he would have never succeeded an the path to his goals.

Therefore, the term

/qalalat/ 'aberration',

here does not mean 'the absense of faith, monotheism, piety and virtue', but referring to (the above verses and according to the statements of many commentators, it means 'unacquaintance with the secrets of prophecy, the laws of Islam and similar facts, but, later and after being appointed to the prophetic mission, the Prophet (S) learned them all with Allah's help and guidance.

In Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 282 when stating the philosophy of severalty of witnesses for writing loan documents involving future payment, it says:

"...so that if one of them errs, the other can remind..."

In this verse the term /qalalat/ is used only with the sense of forgetfulness with reference to the phrase

/fathakkir/ ‘then remind'.

There are additional commentaries given on the verse. For example, it means that 'you were unknown and Allah bestowed on you so many gifts of His blessings that you became quite well-known everywhere'.

Or, you were lost several times:

Once in the valleys of Mecca when you were supported by Abdul-Muttalib.

Another time when your nursing period had finished and your foster mother, Halimah Saidiyah, was taking you to Mecca to give you to Abdul-Muttalib, then you became lost on the way and the third time when your uncle was going to Sham (Syria) in a caravan and you were with him, and you lost the way in the dark of night Allah guided you, on all occasions, and led you either to your loving grandfather or uncle'.

It is worthy to note that the term /qall/, from the point of terminology has two shades of meaning: 'lost' and 'misled'.

For instance, it is said: 'knowledge is the lost item of a believer' (meaning that a believer is always searching for more knowledge), and thus, it is also used with the meaning of 'hidden' and 'absent', as:

“...What! When we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a Creation renewed?”[7]

If the word /dall / mentioned in the verse under discussion, is used with the meaning of 'lost', or if it means 'misled or astray', the purpose is that the path of prophecy was out of his reach before his appointment or in other words the Prophet (S) had nothing from his own and what he had was from Allah. Thus, there will be no problem in using either term.

Then, referring to the third blessing, it says:

'And He found you in need and made you free of need'

'Allah attracted the attention to you of that sincere pious lady Khadijah, so she could give you all her wealth to use for your great and holy aims on the way of Islam. And, later, at the time of the glory of Islam. He paved the way for you to reach abundant riches through wars, enabling you to become independent in attaining your great goals. '

On commenting about these verses, there is a tradition from Imam Ali-ibnMusa-ar-Riza (S) who said:

'Did He not find you an orphan or a unique person among His creatures and sheltered people with you; and He found you wandering or unknown among the people who did not know your greatness and then He led them to you; and He found you as a custodian for them from the point of knowledge and made them free of need by you.”[8]

This tradition, of course, refers to the hidden meaning of the verse, otherwise the outward appearance of it is the very same that was said in the above.

We should never think that by making the above comments, which are understood from the appearance of the verses, that it would decrease the high value of the Prophet (S), or that it is a negative idea from Allah about

Muhammad (S). On the contrary, it is indeed the statement of His grace and respect towards the holy Prophet (S) which refreshes his great soul.

With the conclusion of the previous verses, the next verses command the Prophet (S) with three important instructions. Although they are directly addressing Muhammad (S), they are surely applied to everyone.

At first, it says:

"Therefore, treat not the orphans with harshness",

The term /taqhar/ is based on /qahr /and as Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, it means 'prevalence with contempt'. But, the term is used with either of these two senses, separately, and here 'contempt' seems to be more fitting.

This shows that in relation to orphans, even though feeding and donating are considered highly commendable actions, it is more important to respect them and to be kind and spiritually helpful to them, or to satisfy their emotional needs.

That is why it is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) that he said:

"He who touches an orphans' head, affectionately, Allah will bestow on him as many rays (of blessings) on the Day of Final Judgement, as the number of the orphans' hair which touch under the person's hand".

It seems as if Allah is telling the Prophet (S) that 'you, yourself, have been an orphan and suffered from the pain of orphanhood. Now, be careful of the orphans with all your heart and treat them with tender affection and respect, and quench their thirsty souls with kindness'.

In the next verse another command is presented:

"And for the one who asks, repulse not",

The term /tanhar/ is derived from the root /nahara/ which means 'to repulse' or 'to repel by discourtesy or coldness', and it is not improbable that its root is the same as the term /nahr/ with the meaning of 'the running stream', since it flows with violence.

In order to specify who is meant by the term /sa'il/ 'petitioner', there are several commentaries which have been put forth. It could mean:

1. Those who have some questions on scientific, religious and theological matters. This, as a subdivision, is understood from the verse:

"And He found you wandering and guided (you)".

'Then you too spread this divine guidance and tried to guide the needy and did not repulse any petitioner'.

2. Those who are in need of finance and come to you, help them and do not make them feel hopeless by repelling them.

3. Those who are poor in both knowledge and finances. Allah orders Muhammad (S) to respond positively to those who make a request of any type. This idea is fitting both with divine guidance to the Prophet (S) and sheltering him when he was an orphan.

Strangely enough, some commentators, in order to prove that the term /sa'il/ 'petitioner',

here means only 'a petitioner who is asking for knowledge', have said that the term has never been used in the Holy Qur'an with the sense of financial help'.[9]

But, it has frequently appeared in the Qur'an with this meaning, such as Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 19:

"And in their wealth and posessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking)".

Also from Surah Ma'arij, No. 70, verse 177 and Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 177 are other examples containing this idea.

Finally, in the third and last command, it says:

"And ask for the Bounties, of your Lord, do proclaim (it)".

Announcing the bounties is sometimes done by statements, containing thankfulness and gratitude and that is far from pride and haughtiness, and sometimes by action through donation and charity from those bounties, on the path of Allah, in a way that shows He has given him much Bounty.

This is the style of generous noble people that when a blessing befalls them they proclaim it and thank Allah and their behavior also confirms and reinforces this fact. On the contrary, the jealous, begrudging, miserly persons groan and moan all the time and even if they were to get the whole world they would insist on covering over the favours; their appearance is poor, their statements are full of weeping and complaining; and their actions illustrate poverty too.

This is when the holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

"When Allah gives a servant a bounty, it pleases Him to see the signs of the bounty on him."[10]

Therefore, the concluding meaning of the verse is that in appreciation of the fact that Allah made you free of need, bountifully, when you were in need; your duty is that you should make that Divine Bounty spread far and wide and proclaim it and share it by speech and action.

But, some commentators have said that

'bounty',

here means only spiritual bounties, such as, prophethood and the Holy Qur'an which the Prophet (S) was called to announce and spread. And this is the meaning of 'announcing the Bounty'.

It is, also, probable that it applies to all material and spiritual bounties.

So, on commenting on this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"Announce them all, whatever Allah has endowed to you, from merits, sustenance, goodness, and guidance". [11]

Another tradition from the holy Prophet (S), as a general admonition, says:

"He who is endowed a blessing and it is not seen on him, is called an enemy of Allah and an opponent to His Bounties". [12]

We conclude this subject with a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) who is reported to have said:

"Surely Allah, the Most Bountiful, likes bounties; and also likes to see the signs of His bounties on His servants."[13]

Supplication

O Lord! Your Bounties are beyond what can be announced. Do not restrain them from us, and increase them with your generosity.

O Lord! We are encompassed by your grace in this world. We hope for the same in the Next World.

O Lord! Help us to be always the advocators of the deprived and the supporters of the rights of the orphans.

Notes

1. Majma -al-Bayan- vol. 10, p. 503.
2. Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 53
3. Abul-Futuh Razi,vol. 12, p. 110.
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 55.
5. as Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 15 avows
6. Surah Shura, No. 42, Verse 52
7. Surah Sajdah, No. 32, verse 10
8. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 506.
9. Ab-duh Commentary. 'Amma. p. 111
10. Nahj-ul-Fisahah, Tradition 686.
11. Majma-'al-Bayan,vol, 10, p, 507,
12. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, vol, 10, p. 7192. A similar meaning is found in al-Kafi, vol, 6, Tradition 2.
13. Furu'-i-Kafi. vol. 6, p. 438.

Surah Inshirah, Chapter 94

(The Expansion)

Number of Verses: 8

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

It is commonly said that this Surah was revealed soon after Surah Duha and its contents confirm this since, again in this Surah some of the Divine Bounties are counted for the holy Prophet (S).

In fact, there were three important Bounties mentioned in the previous Surah (Duha) and there are three magnificent Bounties mentioned in Inshirah too. Those Bounties were material and spiritual Bounties, whereas in this Surah, all are spiritual ones.

The theme in this Surah, mainly pivots on three different subjects:

The first is the expression of these triple Bounties; the second is the good news for the Prophet (S) informing him that his burden and difficulties of his prophetic mission will be removed soon; and the third is that attention should be paid to Allah, alone, and be hopeful and encouraged in worship and supplication to Him.

As it was mentioned before, according to the traditions of Ahlul-Bait (as) these two Suras are considered as one and then, in recitation of prayers, both of them are recited to form one complete Surah.

A careful examination of the contents of these two Suras leaves no doubt that they are quite closely related to each other. Again, a similar case is found for Surah Fil and Surah Quraish which will be dealt with later.

The above statements make it clear that this Surah (Inshirah) has been revealed in Mecca, but with regard to the verse:

"And We exalted for you your reputation",

some believe that it has been revealed in Medina when the name of the Prophet (S) and Islam had been known everywhere. But, this statement is not enough to prove their idea, because the Prophet (S), with all the problems that he had in Mecca, was completely known and his rise and invitation to Islam were talked about everywhere and in most gatherings, and also his reputation was spread in all parts of Arabia, especially in Medina, by the annual gathering of Hajj pilgrims.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Inshirah:

On the virtue of studying this Surah, the holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"He who recites this Surah will be rewarded the same as the one who met Muhammad unhappy and brought the grief out from his heart."[1]

Surah Inshirah, Verses 1-8

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ
وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ
الَّذِي أَنقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ
وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ
فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا
إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا
فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ
وَإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

1. "Have We not expanded for you your breast?"
2. "And We removed from you your burden,"
3. "Which weighed down your back?"
4. "And We exalted for you your reputation?"
5. "Then, surely with hardship comes ease:"
6. "Surely, with hardship comes ease,"
7. "So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil),"
8. "And to your Lord turn (all) your attention."

We Endowed You With Various Bounties!

The verses are stated in a loving and affectionate tone which shows the extreme grace of Allah to the holy Prophet (S).

In the first verse, pointing to the greatest bounty of Allah, it says:

"Have We not expanded for you your breast?"

The term /nasrah/ is based on /sarh/ which, according to Raqib cited from his book, Mufradat, means 'to stretch pieces of flesh and produce the thinner layers'. Then, he adds that the objective point of 'expansion of the breast' is its expansion with the Divine Light and His bestowed stillness and tranquility.

Further, he says that 'explaining the difficulties of speech' means its expansion and to explain its hidden meanings. In any case, undoubtedly, the objective point of 'expansion of the breast' is its metaphorical meaning, here which refers to the expansion of thought and the holy spirit of the Prophet (S).

The very expansion can have a broader meaning that consists of both the expansion of knowledge of the Prophet (S) through inspiration and revelation, and the expansion of his patience and perseverance against the sabotage and obstructions of his enemies and opponents.

It is in the same light as when Moses is told

"Go thou to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds"[2],

The response is:

"(Moses) said: O my Lord! Expand me my breast"[3].

In another Surah the Prophet (S) is told:

"So wait with patience for the command of thy Lord. and be not like the companion of the fish… ";

(Jonah met with hostility, but fled from his enemies and suffered so much trouble[4]).

In fact, the phrase

'expansion of the breast'

is in contrast with the phrase 'distress of the breast', as this verse:

"We do indeed know how your heart is distressed at what they say"[5].

Basically, no great leader can face his difficulties without the expansion of his breast.

In this process he whose mission is the most important among the others, like the holy Prophet (S), should have the greatest expansion of breast of all in order to be strong enough to withstand all difficulties and obstructions of the enemies; and be capable of answering any complicated question and solve the grievous problems standing in his way and this was the greatest divine gift endowed to the Messenger of Allah.

That is why the Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

I asked a favour from Allah but I wished I had not done it.

I said:

O, Allah! Some of the prophets before me had the ability to order the wind to blow or to make the dead come alive; and I was told by Allah

'Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered you?';

I answered that I was.

Then, I was told further:

'And He found you wandering and guided you?',

and I answered that I was;

then, He questioned:

'Have We not expanded for you your breast?',

and I answered:

'Yes, my Lord'".[6]

This tradition shows that the gift of the

'expansion of the breast'

is something beyond the miracles of the prophets.

If a person studies the Prophet's conditions, carefully, and sees the amount of his

'expansion of the breast'

in difficult, complicated situations in his life, he will, indeed, be certain that it could not be done through ordinary ways, but it was surely with divine approval.

Here, some have said that the objective point of the phrase

'expansion of the breast'

is the event that happened to the Prophet (S) when he was a child or youth in which the angels of Heaven came, (and spiritually) opened his breast, took out his heart, washed it purified and filled it with knowledge, mercy and grace. [7]

It is obvious that the tradition does not mean his bodily heart. It metaphorically points to the divine assistance to the Prophet (S) from the point of spirit and intention, and his purification from any frailty or devilish temptation.

But, whatever the case may be, there is no reason that the current verse relates particularly to this event. It has a broader meaning of which this story may be considered one of its examples.

It was by the very

'expansion of the breast'

that the holy Prophet (S) could solve all the problems of his prophecy most successfully, and fulfilled, very well, all the duties concerned.

Then, attention is paid to another gift of His great gifts bestowed on the Prophet (S).

It says:

"And We removed from you your burden,"

"Which weighed down your back?"

The term /wizr/ means 'weight'; the term /wazir/ 'minister' is derived from the same meaning, since he carries the weight of responsibility of the government. Sins are called /wizr/ because they are weights on the back of the sinner.

The term /anqada/ is based on /naqd/ which means 'to untwist, to untie the knot of a rope', then, the word means 'to untwist, as a load, getting loose on the back. '

Thus, the above verse means that Allah took that heavy load from your back.

What kind of load was it that Allah took from the back of His Messenger? The evidences from the verses clearly show that its objective meaning has been the difficulties of the path of prophecy and the invitation to the monotheism and unity of Allah, and removing the traces of corruption in that environment.

Not only the Prophet of Islam (S) but, also, all the prophets were faced with such great difficulties at the beginning of their missions. They overcame those difficulties by only the help of Allah, with the difference that the conditions of time and environment, for the Messenger of Islam, were more grave and heavier.

Some have commented on the term /wizr/ with the sense of the' weight of revelation' at the onset of its descent. Others have rendered it to mean the misled and enmity of the pagans. Still others have related it to their extraordinary tortures. Yet still, some have related it to the grief caused by the death of his uncle, Abu- Talib, and his wife, Khadijah and finally, some have commented on it as his sinlessness and infallibility.

But, apparently, the first commentary is the most fitting among all and the others are its embellishments.

For the third gift, it says:

"And We exalted for you your reputation?"

'Your name, accompanied with the name of Islam, stands the highest everywhere and among all leaders. A higher rank is that your name is always mentioned with the name of Allah all mornings and evenings at the time of prayer-call', that is, the profession of your prophecy is completed together with the profession of Allah unity which is the only phrase needed, in Islam, denoting the evidence of being Muslim.

What a magnificent honour it is! And what a lofty rank higher than this could be thought of!

On commenting about this verse, there is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) that says:

"Gabriel told me that Allah says:

'Whenever My name is mentioned your name is also mentioned following it (which itself is enough to show your high rank)'."

The word /laka/ is used as an emphasis to say that, inspite of all those impediments and enmities, the name and fame of the Prophet (S) were wide spread.

A question arises, here as to whether this Surah was revealed in Mecca or not, however, the spread of Islam, the removal of the difficulties of prophethood, the conversion of the prophet's galling burden into joy and triumph, and the expansion of his reputation, all over the world, happened in Medina.

To answer this question, some have said that the Prophet (S) was previously informed of its glad tidings and it removed the burden of grief from his heart. Some others have said that the verb, in the past tense, here conveys the future meaning, which is glad tidings for the future.

Some parts of these affairs happened in Mecca especially during the last year of the thirteen years, there, when the Prophet (S) was busy inviting people to Islam and the divine religion penetrated into the hearts of many individuals and consequently, the difficulties partly decreased. Then, he was known everywhere and the way was fairly paved for the future great triumphs.

In the next verse, Allah gives His Messenger the most important glad tidings of hope:

"Then, surely with hardship comes ease".

Again, it emphasizes that:

"Surely, with hardship comes ease".

O, Prophet! Do not grieve for the difficulties and troubles. They will convert to ease and comfort. The impediments of the enemies do not last too long, and the financial deprivation and economical difficulties of Muslims will not continue with the same form of poverty for ever.

He who suffers the hardships and stands against the storms of miseries with patience will surely taste the sweetness of its fruit. It will he the day when the voice of the enemies faints, their impediments remain in vain, the ways of success and progress are paved, and following the path, the path of Allah, is easy.

Although some of the commentators have rendered these verses into the general financial poverty of Muslims at the beginning of Islam, the broadness of the meaning of the verses envelops all the difficulties. These two verses are stated in a style which shows that they are not allotted only to the holy Prophet (S) himself or his time.

The rule is general and for all. They encourage the pure Muslim believers to know and be sure that whatever difficulties or troubles are encountered by men, Allah always provides a solution a way out, a relief, a way to lead to

ease and happiness. Moreover, the solution or relief does not merely come AFTER the 'difficulty': it is provided WITH it.

It is the glad tidings or promise of Allah that enlightens the heart, makes it hopeful for triumph, and clears Man's soul of the dirt of its hopelessness.

The holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

"Do know that surely with hardship comes ease, and surely with patience comes victory, and surely with distress comes relief"

There is a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) which says that a woman complained about her husband to Hazrat Ali (as) that he did not provide anything for her but, it was in the case that he was, indeed, poor.

Hazrat Ali (as) withheld imprisoning him, and advising her to patience, replied to her:

"Surely, with hardship comes ease".

Finally, in the last verses of this Surah, it says:

"So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil)".

Never be idle or lazy at all. Do not put striving and effort aside. Always be busy and when you finish one task, begin another.

"And to your Lord turn (all) your attention."

In any condition, seek His contentedness and try to approach His nearness.

According to what was said, the verse has a vast meaning that contains the sense of 'relieving of a task go to the next' which recommends the accomplishment of all activities for the sake of Allah. But most of the commentators have cited some limited meanings for the verse, each of which can be accepted as a justification.

Some have said that it means 'When you finish your obligatory prayers pay attention to supplication and ask Allah to give you what you want'.

Or, when you finish your religious duties, get up for night prayers.

Or, when you finish the affairs of the material world, refer to the spiritual world and say prayers and do religious duties.

Or, when you finish the religious duties, go to the recommended acts advised by Allah.

Or, when you finish the holy war against the enemy, stand up for worship.

Or, when you finish the holy war against the enemy, combat against your low desires.

Or, when you did finish your duty of prophecy, you would offer intercession'.

Among the numerous narrations that the famous scholar Hafiz Hakim Huskani has cited in Shawahid-al-Tanzil, there is one from Imam Sadiq (as) in which, commenting on the verse as a meaning, he said:

"When you finish, appoint the leadership (williyah) of Ali (as)".[8]

In his commentary, Qartabi has narrated from some that the meaning of the verse is that 'when you finish, do appoint an Imam, who is your substitute'. (Although he, himself, did not assume the meaning).

Regarding this fact that the verse does not define what matter he finishes, and furthermore, the term /fansab/ derived from /nasb/ meaning 'suffer and

toil', the verse refers to a general principle of which the aim is to prevent the Prophet (S), as a model, from being in rest after finishing an important task and to notify him of the continuous effort in life.

Considering this idea, it is made clear that all the above commentaries are right, but, each of them is as one justification of this vast and general meaning.

What an instructive plan it is! It consists of the secret of success and development. Basically, leisure and full tranquility cause fatigue, decrease freshness, bring laziness and weariness; and in many cases they are the origin of corruption and many kinds of sin.

It is noteworthy that different statistics show that the scope of iniquity sometimes goes up to seven times as much when the schools and educational institutes are closed and the students are on holiday.

In any event, the whole Surah states the special favour of Allah to the holy Prophet (S) and encourages him to stand firm against the difficulties of his Mission and also, promises him victory on the path of divine prophecy.

Meanwhile, the statements are promising, hope-instilling, constructive and creative for all human beings, particularly those who follow on the road of justice.

Explanation

As it was stated in the aforementioned text, there are many traditions (cited by different groups of Muslim scholars) narrated on the meaning of this verse:

"So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil)",

which say that the purpose of the verse is (as the statement of one justification) the appointment of Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) to the caliphate (leadership) after the fulfillment of the mission of prophethood. Still, some, suggesting various misleading ideas, show some prejudice on the opposite way.

Supplication

O Lord! Empty our hearts from self-love and fill them instead with love for you.

O Lord! You, Yourself, have promised that there is ease with any hardship. Relieve the present Muslims from the great difficulties and hardships originated from their enemies.

O Lord! Your gifts and bounties endowed to us are abundant. Bestow on us the success of being grateful for them.

Notes

1. Majma-'al-Bayan,vol, 10, p, 507.
2. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 24
3. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 25
4. Surah Qalam, No. 68, verse 48
5. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 97
6. Majma' -al -Bayan. vol. 10. p. 508.
7. Tafsir-i Durr-al Manthur. (cited in Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 452) and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, vol 32, p. 2.
8. Shawahid-al-Tanzil, vol. 2, p. 349 (Tradition 1116-1119).

Surah Tin, Chapter 95

(The Fig)

Number of Verses: 8

Contents of Surah Tin

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The theme in this Surah, indeed, pivots on the subject of the creation of Man; the finest mould, and the processes of his development and his lowliness. The subject begins with some comprehensive oaths at the beginning of the Surah, and then, after enumerating some of the sources of Man's victory and salvation, it concludes with the emphasis on Resurrection and the absolute Sovereignty of Allah.

The holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

"Allah will endow, in this world, the two qualities of safety and certainty to the person who recites it (Surah Tin). and when he dies, He will give him rewards equal to the reward of fasting one day (multiplied) by the number of all those who have recited this Surah."[1]

This Surah has been revealed in Mecca.

The evidence is the verse, itself:

"And this city of security (Mecca)",

containing the demonstrative adjective

'this'

which refers to something near.

Surah Tin, Verses 1-8

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالتِّينِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ

وَطُورِ سِينِينَ

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّينِ

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ

1. "By the Fig and the Olive,"
2. "And (Mount) Tur of Sinin,"
3. "And this city of security (Mecca),"
4. "We have indeed created man in the best of moulds,"
5. "Then We render him the lowest of the low,"

6. "Save those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward unending."

7. "What then makes you reject thereafter the Last Judgement?"

8. "1s not Allah the Most Just of judges?"

We Have Created Man In the Finest of Moulds

There are four meaningful oaths at the beginning of this Surah to be as an introduction to an important statement.

It says:

"By the Fig and the Olive,"

"And (Mount) Tur of Sinin,"

"And this city of security (Mecca),"

The term /tin/ means 'fig', and the term /zaytun/ means 'olive'; the same fruit that is the source of a useful oil.

The oaths are to these two well-known fruits or to something else. There is much difference of opinion among the commentators as to the exact meaning.

Some, of course, say that they mean the same two fruits that contain the extraordinary nutritive and creative properties. Some others believe that they refer to the two mountains on which the two cities of Damascus and Jerusalem are located, since these two sacred cities are the lands where many great prophets of Allah have appeared. These two oaths coordinate with the third and fourth oaths that refer to the other sacred lands.

Some have also said that these two mountains are called

/tin/ 'fig'

and

/zaytun/ 'olive',

because the fig trees are cultivated on one and olives on the other.

Again, some believe that

/tin/ 'fig'

refers to the time of Adam when he and Eve clothed themselves with the leaves of the fig tree, in Heaven; and

/zaytun/ 'olive'

refers to the last stage of the deluge at the time of Noah when he sent a pigeon out to search for a piece of land appearing after the flood and it came back bringing a small branch from an olive tree by which Noah understood that the flood was over and dry land had appeared, (hence, the olive branch is a symbol of peace and security).

Furthermore, some think that the term

/tin/ 'fig'

refers to Noah's Mosque which was built on Mount Judi of the Ararat range; and that

/zaytun/ 'olive'

refers to Jerusalem.

The appearance of the verse, at first glance, denotes to the two known fruits, but with paying close attention to the following oaths they are apt to be two mountains or two sacred centers that are respected.

There is a tradition from the Holy Prophet (S) which says that Allah selected four cities, among all cities, and He stated these first three verses about them:

"By the Fig and the Olive,"

"And (Mount) Tur of Sinin,"

"And the city of security (Mecca),"

that /tin/ is Medina, /zaytun/ is Jerusalem, /tur-i-sinin/ is Kufa, and

/hath-al-balad-il-amin/ (the city of security)

is Mecca.[2]

The purpose of using the term /tur-i-sinin/ as rendered by some commentators, seems to be

/tur-i-sina/ (the Mount of Sina)

where olive trees, full of fruit, are found.

Sina is interpreted as a Mount full of bounties, or full of trees, or beautiful; it is the same Mount that Moses used to visit to perform his supplications.

Some, also, believe that it is a mountain near Kufa and in the land of Najaf.

Some have cited that /sinin/ and /sina/ are one in the same which mean 'bountiful'.

It is certain that 'the city of security' refers to Mecca, a land which was known as a secure region even in pagan times. Its sacred character was always respected, and no fighting was allowed in its territory even against criminals and murderers; so, when they reached there they were in complete security.

This land is considered especially important in Islam; so important that its animals, trees and birds should be left in complete security; even more so is the state of people.

It is noteworthy that the word

/tin/ 'fig'

is mentioned only in this Surah, which is only once in the whole Qur'an, while the word /zaytun/ 'olive' is seen in six clear occurrences of all the verses of Holy Qur'an and once it is mentioned by implication where it says; "Also a tree springing out of Mount sinin, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food".

Even if we render these two oaths (about Tin and Zaytun) to their first common meanings, i.e. the known

'fig'

and

'olive',

They are meaningful oaths, because: the fig is a very good, nutritious food; a suitable morsel for anyone and any age; free from skin, stone, or commercial additives.

Scientists of nutrition say that the fig can be used as a natural sugar for babies. Sportsmen and also those who are weak or are decrepit, due to old age, can use the fig for food.

It is said that Plato liked figs so much so that some have called it a friend of philosophers; Socrates knew the fig as an absorber of useful materials, in the body, and a repulsor of harmful ones.

Galen arranged a special diet of figs for athletes. In ancient Rome and Greece, too, the champions were given figs to eat.

Scientists, experts on nutrition, say that the fig is full of various vitamins and sugar. It can be used as a remedy for some diseases, particularly when the fig and honey are equally mixed which can be very useful in curing stomach ulcers. Eating dried figs is useful in strengthening the memory. In brief, because of having mineral elements which cause the balance between the bodily faculties and the blood, the fig has been introduced as a food appropriate for all at any age and in any condition.

A tradition narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Musa-ar-Riza (S) says:

"The fig removes the bad smell of the mouth. It strengthens the gums and bones, causes the hair to grow, puts an end to some ailments so that medicine is not needed."

Then he added:

"The fig is the most comparable things to the fruits of heaven."[3] [4]

Now, let us consider the

'olive'!

Food specialists and some scientists who have spent a large part of their lives studying the various properties of fruits, think of the olive and its oil as being of extraordinary importance. They believe that those who wish to be always healthy should use this elixir of life.

Olive oil is a close companion of the liver in Man. Furthermore, for treating the troubles of the kidneys, biliary calculus, renal colic, hepatic colic, and for treating constipation, olive oil is very effective.

Olive oil also contains a variety of vitamins, besides having phosphorus, sulphur, calcium, iron, potassium and manganese.

Ointments made of olive oil and garlic are recommended useful for some rhematism ailments. The crystals of cholesterol in the gall bladder may be dissolved by a diet of olive oil.

It is narrated from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) thus:

"(the people of) the house where vinegar and olive oil are used in their meal will not be in poverty, and this has been in the prophets' meal."

A tradition narrated from Imam Ali-ibnMusa-ar-Riza (S) says:

"Olive oil is a good food stuff. It makes the smell of the mouth sweet, removes phlegm, makes the colour of the face cheerful, strengthens the nerves, puts an end to sickness and weakness, and quenches the fire of wrath."

Let us conclude this subject with a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

"Have olive oil in your food and grease your body with it since it is from a Holy Tree."

After mentioning these four significant matters, it refers to what the oaths are for; thus:

"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds."

The term /taqwim/ means to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation: the broadness of the meaning refers to the fact that Allah has created malt proportionately in all respects; both from the bodily point of view and from the spiritual and rational point of view, because He has settled all faculties in him and prepared him appropriately to cover a great path towards development.

Although man is a 'microcosm', He has set the 'macrocosm' in him and has promoted him to such a high position that it is said:

"We have honored the sons of Adam..."[5]**,**

and man about whose creation He says:

"…So blessed be God, the Best to create!"[6]**.**

But, if the same 'man', with all his privileges, deviates from the path of truth he will fall so deep as unto 'the lowest of the low' and will be abased to the lowest possible position.

Hence, in the next verse, it says:

"Then We render him the lowest of the low."

As it is known, there are always deep valleys beside high mountains. Similarly, for Man's exalted position as Allah's vicegerent, there is a greivous lowness. And why not? If Man uses his faculties aright and follows Allah's law, he will reach the high and noble destiny intended for him.

But, if he rebels against Allah, and using his talents and faculties, follows after evil, he will fall even lower than the beast;

'the lowest of the low'.

Save those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward unending."

The term /mamnun/ is based on /man/ which, here means 'broken off' or deficiency', hence, the term /qayru mamnun/ is rendered as 'an uninterrupted reward without any deficiency'. Some have interpreted it as 'the lack of obligation', but, the first meaning seems more suitable.

Some have commented on the sentence,

"Then We rendered him the lowest of the low"

with the sense of 'weakness and extreme feebleness of mind due to old age', but, this does not fit with the exception in the next verse. Therefore, with regard to all the verses before and after it, the first commentary seems more proper.

The next verse, addressing ungrateful Man who is careless about the signs and evidences of the Resurrection, inquires:

"What then makes you reject thereafter the Last Judgment?"

The structure of your body, on the one hand and the structure of the endless universe, on the other, all indicate that the fleeting life of this world cannot be the final goal of the creation or of this splendid, vast universe.

All of them are preliminary to a wider and more complete world; and as the Holy Qur'an points out 'the first form of creation' warns you of that:

"And you certainly know already the first form of creation: Why then do you not celebrate His praises?"[7]

Every year, plants, in nature, and before our very eyes become renewed and remind us of the scene of death and rebirth, again and again. Each of the uninterrupted stages during the developing period of a foetus is counted as a

new resurrection and a new life, and yet, how is it that Man can deny the Reckoning Day?

Considering what was stated in the above, it is clear that the addressee, in this verse, is Man, collectively. The possibility that the addressee is the Messenger of Islam (S) with the meaning of 'having the evidences of the Resurrection, who or what if able to deny you' seems improbable.

And, also, it becomes clear that the objective meaning of the word /din/, here is not 'religion'; it means 'the Day of Reckoning'. The following verse also attests to this idea.

"Is not Allah the Most Just of judges?"

So, if we take the word /din/ with the whole meaning of 'religion', this verse means: 'Are Allah's laws and decrees not wisest of all?, or 'Allah's creation of Man is full of knowledge and wisdom in all respects.'

But, as it was said before, the, first meaning seems more fitting.

According to a tradition from the holy Prophet (S), whenever he recited Surah Tin and after reciting the verse:

"Is not Allah the Most Just of judges'!"

He used to say:

"Yes, and I am the witness to this (that Allah is the Most Just of judges.")

Supplication

O Lord! We also confess that You are the Most just of judges.

O Lord! You created us in the best of moulds. Please help us to be the best, and most successful in our deeds and manners.

O Lord! Going on the path of faith and doing righteous deeds is not possible save with Your Grace; please bestow Your Grace on us.

Notes

1. Majma-'al-Bayan,vol, 10, p, 510.
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p 606, Tradition 4.
3. Kafi, vol. 6 p. 358. Behar-al-Anwar, vol. 66. p. 184
4. The First University and the Last Prophet, vol. 9, p, 90
5. Surah Bani Isra-il, No. 17, verse 70
6. Surah Mo'minun, No. 23 verse 14
7. Surah Waqi'ah, No. 56, verse 62

Surah ‘Alaq, Chapter 96

(The Clot)

Number of Verses: 19

Contents of Surah 'Alaq

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

It is commonly known among the commentators that this Surah is the first Surah that was revealed to the holy Prophet (S) of Islam. The contents of the Surah also confirm this idea. Some have said that the first Surah is Surah Fatihah, or perhaps Surah Muddaththir, but again this is contrary to what is commonly thought.

First, this Surah addresses the holy Prophet (S) and commands him to read or proclaim (the Message).

Then, it refers to the creation of Man out of a mere clot.

Further, it refers to the development of Man, who is taught from the bounty and by the Grace of Allah; the soul in him reaching out to knowledge sublime, and the instrument of it, the sanctified Pen.

Thereafter, it speaks about ungrateful Man, and that despite all the blessings and graciousness that Allah bestows on him, he rebels.

Following this, it points to the painful chastisement of those who cause a hindrance on the road to guidance and righteous deeds.

Then, the Surah ends with a command to prostration, and of drawing closer to Allah.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, there is a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“He who recites Surah 'Alaq on a day or a night and passes away on the same day or night, at the time of the Day of Judgment, he will be considered as a martyr and Allah will raise him to life again as a martyr and He will resurrect him as one who has fought the holy war, on the way of Allah, in the presence of the Messenger of Allah.”[1]

Because of the different words used at the beginning, this Surah is called: 'Alaq, Iqra', or Qalam.

Surah ‘Alaq, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

1. "Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord Who created"
2. "Created man, out of a clot (of congealed blood)."
3. "Read (Proclaim), and your Lord is the Most Generous,"
4. "Who taught by the Pen,"
5. "Taught man that which he knew not."

The Occasion of the Revelation

As it was mentioned in the description of the content of this Surah, the majority of commentators believe that this is the first Surah that came to the heart of the holy Prophet (S). Some have even said that all the commentators believe that the first five verses, of the Surah, were the first direct Revelation to the holy Prophet (S). Their contents confirm this idea, too.

Some narrations denote that the holy Prophet (S) had gone to Mount Hira when Gabriel came and told him:

"Iqra'" (Read/ Proclaim).

He said that he was not 'versed'. Gabriel embraced him and told him again to proclaim; and the Prophet (S) repeated the same answer. Gabriel embraced him for a second time, but was given the same answer.

Then, for the fourth time he told him:

"Read (Proclaim!) In the name of your Lord Who created",

(and recited the first five verses).

Finishing the verse, Gabriel then took leave from the; Prophet (S).

The Messenger of Allah, his energy spent due to receiving the first rays of Revelation, went to his wife, Khadijah, and told her:

"Cover me; wrap me in a mantle".

The following is a tradition from Tabarsi in Majma'-al-Bayan, and he cites that the Messenger of Allah told Khadijah that whenever he was alone he heard a voice.

According to Tabarsi, Khadijah told Muhammad (S):

"Allah will not bring anything on you but goodness because you are trustworthy and pay the deposits, you observe bonds of relationship, and you are truthful in speech."

Khadijah said this statement and then, she went to see Waraqah-ibn Nufil.

(He was Khadijah's cousin and was of the knowledgeable Arabs.)

She described to him what had happened to Muhammad (S) and added that he had heard the voice say:

"O Muhammad say:

'Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim, al-Hamd-u-lillah-i-Rabb-al-'alamin (to the end of Surah Fatihah)';

and say:

'La Ilaha Illallah'".

Waraqah said:

"Rejoice thou! Rejoice thou! According to what is mentioned in Taurat and Ingeel it is clear that he is the Messenger of Allah and he is the very one that Jesus Christ told about in his glad tidings. He has a religion like that of Moses; he is an apostle. He will be told to fight in the Holy War

soon after this, and if I am alive then, I will be with him in that Holy War."

Later, when Waraqah died, the Messenger of Allah said:

"I saw him in Heaven (the Heaven of the Lesser Judgment) having a high rank for he had believed in me and confirmed me."

There are, of course, some unflattering statements cited in various history books or some commentaries about this period of Muhammad's life which seem incorrect. They are probably inserted by the enemies of Islam to taint both the idea about this divine religion and the person of the holy Prophet (S). Regarding what was said above, we are only concerned, here with these commentaries of the verses, which will be cited in this text.

Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord!

In the first verse of the Surah, it addresses the holy Prophet (S) and says:

"Read (Proclaim)! In the Name of your Lord Who created".

Some have said that the object is not mentioned in the sentence, which basically would be:

'Read (Proclaim) the Qur'an in the Name of your Lord',

and that is why they have considered this verse as an evidence that /bismillah/ is combined with the Suras of Qur'an.

It is worthy to note here first of all, that the emphasis is on the proposition of Lordship and we know that /rabb/ means a 'reformer Lord', the one Who is both the master and the cherisher.

Then, to establish the Lordship of Allah, it emphatically refers to the 'creation and the existence of this universe', because the best reason for His Lordship is, His Creative attribute. The One Who runs and sustains the universe is its Creator.

This is, indeed, an answer to the pagan Arabs who had accepted the creative power of Allah, but, they assumed the lordship and device of this world for their own idols and gods. Besides, the Lordship of the Lord and His Device, in this World, are the best evidence for proving His Being.

Then, amongst all the creatures of the world, it emphasizes on the best and the most important of them, i.e. Man, and referring to his creation, it says:

"Created man out of a clot (of congealed blood)".

The term /'alaq/ originally means 'to adhere to something', and hence, some congealed blood or a leech which sticks to the body to suck blood, is called /'alaq/.

Since the life-germ, in the course of its first processes until it becomes a foetus, changes to a type of sticking clot which is apparently very worthless, it is, indeed, the basic origin of the creation of Man, then, it makes the power of Allah clear that it is He Who is able to create such a worthy creature from such a lowly unworthy thing.

Some have also said that the objective point of using /'alaq/, here is due to the clay of which Adam came from and which was sticky, too. It is obvious that the Creator Who creates this wonderful creature from that sticky piece of clay is apt to be worshipped.

Furthermore, some have considered the term /'alaq/ as meaning 'a possessor of kindness and affection'. This refers to the social and gregarious

manner of men and the love they have for each other which is the main basis of Man's development and progress in the history of his civilization.

Again, some have thought of the term /‘alaq/ as referring to 'the male seed' which they thought much resembled a 'leech'. It was their understanding that this microscopic creature, which swims in the fluid of men, approaches the woman's 'seed', in the womb, and adheres to it and that by the combining of these two complete 'seeds' Man came into being.

It is true that at the time of the appearance of Islam these problems were not known to Man, but the Holy Qur'an, as a scientific miracle, unveiled the true meaning.

Among these four commentaries, the first one seems more clear, although to combine all of them, together, is also possible.

It is understood, then, from what was said in the above that 'man', according to one commentary, means Adam, and according to the other three commentaries, means only 'Man'.

To emphasize the matter, again it says:

“Read (Proclaim), and your Lord is the Most Generous”.

Some believe that the second

/iqra'/ 'read (proclaim)’,

is an emphasis on the first /iqra'/ in the previous verses, while some others say that they are different. In the first sentence, the term requires the Prophet (S) to read (proclaim) to himself and in the second sentence, it means to read (proclaim) to people. But, the idea of emphasis seems more appropriate because there is no evidence available to show the difference between them.

In any event, this verse, in fact, is an answer to the statement of the Prophet (S) who responded to Gabriel saying:

'I am not versed’;

and it means: 'you can read (proclaim) because of the extreme graciousness and the extraordinary generosity of your Lord'.

Then, it tells about Allah Who is the Most Generous and says:

“Who taught by the Pen”.

“Taught man that which he knew not”.

In fact, these verses are also an answer to that very statement of the Prophet (S) who said:

'I am not versed'.

Now, it replies that it is the same god Who taught the human being by the 'pen',

and taught him the things that he did not know, and Who is capable of teaching a servant, like 'you', who does not know how to read.

The verse

“Who taught by the Pen”

can be rendered in two ways.

The first is that: Allah taught writing and the book to Man and it is He Who is able to do this portent; to establish the origin of all sciences, knowledge and civilizations in him.

The second meaning is that through this way and by this means Man is taught all of the sciences and knowledge.

In short, according to one commentary, the objective meaning is 'teaching how to write' and another commentary says the objective meaning is 'the sciences taught to man by writing'.

In any case, this is an expressive statement, full of meaning, that was issued in these great verses at the sensitive moments of the onset of revelation.

Explanations

The First Revelation Was Accompanied by a Societal Movement

These verses, as was mentioned before, according to the belief of most or all commentators, are the first rays of the Divine Light that glittered into the holy heart of the Prophet (S). This incident was a new door opened to humanity, and a new chapter was founded in the history of the human race, and then, Mankind was bestowed one of the greatest Blessings of Allah. the most complete divine religion, which was the last of all religions, was descended.

And after that descent, all the precepts of the religion, the ordinance of Allah, was completed according to the sense of

"...This day have I Perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"[2]**.**

It is interesting to note that the fact is the Prophet (S) was unlettered and was not taught, and at the time when the territory of Hijaz was filled with ignorance, in the first verses of this Surah, of the revelation, the proposition of 'science and the Pen' is emphasized which is mentioned immediately along with the great blessing of 'creation'.

In fact, at first these verses tell about the development of the 'body' of Man from such an unworthy thing as a clot, and on the other hand, they speak about the development of his 'soul' by means of training and education, especially by the pen.

On the day when these verses were revealed, not only in the territory of Hijaz, which was the territory of ignorance, few people valued the pen, but also in the civilized world of that time, the pen was worth little.

Today, however, we know that the basis of whole civilizations, different kinds of knowledge, and the progresses of Man in different fields pivots on the existence of the 'pen'. The rank of scholars has preceded that of the martyrs, because the source for the appearance of the martyrs is really in the ink of the scholars' pen, and basically, it is their 'pen' that can change the destiny of individuals in different societies.

In communities, improvements often start by the pen of faithful, believing people who feel responsibility, but, also, vice and corruption originate from poisonous pens, too.

That is why the Holy Qur'an makes an oath to the

'Pen'

and to what the

'Pen'

produces, thus:

"Nun. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write"[3]**.**

We know that the whole life of the human being is divided into two distinct periods: the historical period and the prehistorical period.

The historical period begins from the time that the invention of writing appeared on the scene and Man used the

'pen'

and was acquainted with reading and writing and as a consequence, Man could leave some trail's from his life for later generations. Hence, the history of Man can be dealt with from the date he could use the 'pen'; when the 'pen' and 'writing' appeared in the history of Man's life.

Therefore, from the very early beginning, Islam was founded on the basis of the

'Pen'

and 'knowledge'; and it is for this same reason that backward people of early Islam could progress in science so much so that they succeeded in introducing and exporting new scientific findings to Europe and all over the world.

As the popular European historians confess, it was the light of the knowledge of Muslims that enlightened the darkened feature of medieval Europe and let them enter the gate of the Golden age.

There are many books, in this field, supplied by the European writers, themselves, under different titles such as 'the History of the Civilization of Islam', or 'Islamic Heritage'.

How disgraceful is a nation with this historical background and with a rich religion like this to fall behind in the path of science and be in need of non-Muslim nations or even dependant on them!

Remembrance of Allah in any Condition

At first, the invitation of the Prophet (S) started with the remembrance of the Name of Allah:

"Read (Proclaim)! In the Name of your Lord..."

And it is interesting that the whole fruitful life of the Prophet (S) was associated with His remembrance.

The remembrance of Allah accompanied each of his breaths; in his rising, sitting, sleeping, walking, riding, starting, stopping, all in all; he was always with the Name of Allah.

When he awakened he used to say:

"Praise be to Allah, Who raises us after our death: and unto Him is the Resurrection".

Several traditions similar to the above-mentioned one are also cited which conform to this idea. [4]

Surah 'Alaq, Verses 6-14

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَيَطْغَى

أَن رَّآهُ اسْتَغْنَى

إِنَّ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَى

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى

عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى
أَرَأَيْتَ إِن كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَى
أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى
أَرَأَيْتَ إِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى
أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى

6. "Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)."
7. "For he thinks himself self-sufficient."
8. "Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all)."
9. "Have you seen him who forbids"
10. "A servant when he prays?"
11. "Have you seen whether he is on (the road of) Guidance?"
12. "Or enjoins piety?"
13. "Have you seen if he rejects and turns away?"
14. "Does he not know that Allah surely sees?"

Do You Not Know That Allah Surely Sees What You Do?

Following the last verses in which some material and spiritual gifts of Allah bestowed on Man were mentioned, that which demands his gratitude and absolute submission to Him, here it says:

"Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)".

"For he thinks himself self-sufficient".

This is the nature of most human beings, the nature of those who are not acquainted with revelation and are not trained wisely that, when they think they are self-sufficient, they rebel.

Although all of our knowledge and capacities come as gifts from Allah, Man, in his inordinate vanity and insolence. Misinterprets Allah's gifts as his own achievements. So, he neither obeys Him nor follows His guidance, nor pays attention to his conscience, nor observes the right and justice.

Not only Man, but, also, no creature will be self-sufficient and free from the help of Allah. All of them are always in need of His Grace and His blessings. If His Mercy stops for a moment, just at the same time, all will be destroyed. Man sometimes makes mistakes and as the verse points out, thinks himself self-sufficient.

The delicate sense of the verse is that it says:

'For he thinks himself self-sufficient'

and not: 'For he becomes self-sufficient'.

Some think that the word 'Man' in the verse, here means, Abu-Jahl', who opposed the invitation to Islam from the Prophet (S) in the very beginning. But, 'Man', here certainly means Mankind collectively and persons like Abu-Jahl are only an example.

At any rate, the verse seems to mean that the Prophet (S) should not expect that all people will accept his invitation easily, but he should be prepared to be opposed by the denial and enmity of the transgressors and know that the road in front of him is full of ups and downs.

Then, warning the rebels, it says:

"Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all)".

And it is Allah Who punishes the transgressors for their deeds. Originally, just as the return of all is to Him and

"...To Allah belongs the heritage of the heaven and the earth..."[5]**,**

everything has also been from Him, from the beginning, then, it is not reasonable for Man to think that he is self-sufficient and to become bold and rebel.

Next, our attention is turned to a on the behaviour of the arrogant transgressors who prevent believing people from doing righteous deeds, and says:

"Have you seen him who forbids."

"A servant when he prays?"

Does such a person not deserve the Divine Punishment?

In traditions it is said that Abu-Jahl inquired of the people around him:

"Does Muhammad put his face on the ground (for prostration) amongst you, too?"

They answered that he did.

Then, he said:

"By what we take an oath to, if I see him in that state I will tread His neck under my foot".

At that moment they told him to look; that the Prophet was praying thereabout.

Abu-Jahl went to tread the Prophet's (S) neck under his foot, but when he approached him he stopped and it seemed as if he was pushing something away from himself with his hand. He was asked what was the matter with him, and he answered.

"Suddenly, I saw a ditch of fire between me and him; a frightful thing, and I saw some wings and feathers, too."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said about this:

"By the One in Whose hand is my life, if he had come close to me, the angels of Allah would have torn his body to pieces and taken them away one by one."

It was on this occasion that the above verses were revealed.[6]

In conformity with those traditions, the above verses were revealed at the beginning of the Prophetic mission. They were not revealed later when the call of Islam was known to all. Hence, some believe that only the first five verses of this Surah were revealed at the beginning of the Prophetic mission and the rest were revealed after a considerable length of time.

In any case, this occasion of revelation can never stand as a barrier for the broad meaning of the verse.

To show further emphasis, it says-

"Have you seen whether he is on (the road of) Guidance?"

"Or enjoins piety?"

Is it right for him (a man such as Abu-Jahl) to forbid? Can the punishment of such a man be anything but the fire of Hell?

"Have you seen if he rejects and turns away?"

"Does he not know that Allah surely sees?"

The aforementioned conditional sentence indicates that this proud rebel should, at least, think of the possibility that the Prophet (S) is on the path of piety. This contingency is enough to stop his rebellion.

Therefore, these verses do not contain the meaning that there is doubt about the invitation of the Prophet (S) of people to guidance and piety, but they point out the above delicate case.

Some of the commentators think that the pronoun in the Arabic word /kana/ or /amr/ refers to the one who prohibits, like Abu-Jahl. So, the verses mean that if he assumes the guidance and instead of prohibiting the saying of prayers, invites to piety, how beneficial it will be for himself!

Yet, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

Explanation: All the World is Before the Presence of Allah

Taking this fact into consideration that all the deeds that Man does are in front of Allah and for that matter, all the world is in front of Him, so that nothing of Man's deeds and thoughts is hidden from Him, this still has little effect on the routine of Man, in his whole life, or prevents him from doing wrong except when faith, in this fact, actually settles in his mind and establishes a certain belief in him.

There is a saying which goes:

"Worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you."

It is said that once a heedful believer, who had repented for his sin, was weeping.

Someone asked him:

"Why are you weeping? Do you not know that Allah, the Almighty, is forgiving?".

He answered:

"Yes, He might forgive, but how can I keep away the shame of that which He has seen from me?"

Surah 'Alaq, Verses 15-19

كَلَّا لَئِن لَّمْ يَنتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ

نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ

فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَه

سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ

كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

15. "Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly seize him by the forelock,"

16. "A lying, sinful forelock!"

17. "Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades),"

18. "We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!"

19. "Nay! Heed him not: but prostrate yourself and draw nigh (to Allah)"

Prostrate Yourself and Draw Nigh (to Allah)!

The description of the previous verses is about the disbelieving rebels and their disgraceful treatment towards the holy Prophet (S) and those who pray.

Now, in the following verses these rebels are warned most violently. It says that it is not so as Abu-Jahl imagines.

(He thinks that he can tread on the neck of the Prophet (S) when he is prostrating himself and restrain him from doing this divine action):

"Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly seize him by the forelock."

"A lying, sinful forelock!"

The term /la nasfa'an/ is based on /saf '/ which carries different meanings such as: 'laying hold upon, or seizing; to drag; to slap a man or his face with one's hand; to blacken the face; to make a mark upon something', and 'to abase';[7] the best choice being the first meaning, here though there are also some other possibilities in the current verse.

Therefore, the phrase /la nasf 'an bin-nasiyah/ means: 'We will assuredly take him by the forelock to the fire (of Hell); or 'We will assuredly lay hold upon his, forelock and drag him thereby with violence to the fire'; or 'We will assuredly blacken his face", the

/nasiyah/ 'forelock'

being used for the face because it is the fore part, or '"We will assuredly mark him with the mark of the people of the fire, making his face black, and his eyes blue"; or 'We will assuredly abase him or render him despicable'.

In any event, the objective meaning that Abu-Jahl, or the likes of him, will be seized by his forelock and dragged on to the blazing fire, is that this happening occurs in the Hereafter or in this world or in both of them. Its witness is the narration cited in Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi[8].

The term /nasiyah/ means 'forelock', and 'its seizing' is said for the case when a person is to be taken to something with humiliation, because when the forelock of a person is seized he can do nothing but submit to the circumstances.

The word /nasiyah / of course, is used for both men and precious things. It is used in some other senses, too.

The words

"A lying, sinful forelock"

refer to a person with a forelock who was both a lier and sinful like Abu-Jahl.

A narration from Ibn-Abbas denotes that once when the Messenger of Allah (S) was praying around 'the standing place of Abraham (at Mecca)', Abu-Jahl went to him and told him that he had prohibited him from praying. The Holy Prophet loudly called at him and sent him away.

Abu-Jahl said:

"Do you call at me and send me away? Don't you know that the men in my tribe are more numerous of all others in these surroundings?"

At this time the next verse was revealed, saying.

"Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades),'.

"We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!'

It is then that the punishment of Allah encompasses him when this neglectful, arrogant Man will understand he can do nothing.

The term /nadi/ is derived from /nida/ with the sense of 'call' which means 'common meeting', and sometimes it is used fur an activity center, since, therein, the members usually 'call' each other.

Some have said that it is based on the root /nida/ with the sense of 'graciousness', because they entertain each other there.

But, the purpose of using /nadi/, here is to refer to the people who gather in that meeting, or, in other words, the people and comrades which persons like Abu-Jahl rely on for their power in their affairs.

The term /zabaniyah/ is the plural form of /zibniyah/ which originally means 'disciplinary guards', and here it appears to refer to 'the Angels who keep guard over Hell'.

In the last verse, of this Surah, (that is; the verse of compulsory prostration), it emphasizes that it is not as he imagines and persists on not bowing in adoration, it says:

"Nay! Heed him not, but prostrate yourself and draw nigh (to Allah)."

Those, such as Abu-Jahl, are naught to be able to stop 'you' from prostration, or to be a hinderance on the path of progress for 'your' religion. 'You' do cover the way by prostration and adoration to draw yourself closer to Allah.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that prostration causes Man to be close to Allah; so a tradition from the Messenger of Allah says:

"The time when a servant of Allah is closest to Him is the time when he prostrates himself".

We know of course, that, according to the narrations of Ahlul-Bait, there are four obligatory prostrations in the verses of Qur'an. The Suras containing them are: Sujdah, Fussilah, al-Najm. And here 'Alaq; the rest are only recommended prostrations.

Explanation: Rebellion and Self-Sufficiency

Most corruptions and vices raise their ugly heads amongst rich and oppressive people who have always been at the head of the line against prophets.

These people are the same ones who are mentioned in the Qur'an under the names of

/malaa/ 'the leaders',[9];

or

/mutrafin/ 'wealthy ones',[10];

and sometimes

/mustakbirin/ 'oppressors'[11].

The first refers to the rich whose outside appearances look valuable but, their real insides are empty; the second means the ones who enjoy the good things of this life and live in comfort and are completely proud, self-sufficing, and unaware of others' pain; and the third is applied to those who, talking nonsense about the Qur'an, insolently transgress the bounds of Allah and the rights of His servants.

The origin of them all is the imagination of being self-sufficient, the characteristic of those of low capacity who, when they obtain some

blessings, wealth, tranquility or high position, feel self-sufficient and forget their Lord, quite neglectfully.

But, we know that the wealth of a person may disappear easily in a few minutes, or be wholly destroyed by a flood, an earthquake or lightning. One's health too, is in danger by such a slight thing as drinking water.

What kind of negligence is it that dwells in some people to the point that they think they are self-sufficient, and transgress on others proudly in the society?

In order to remove this vice from himself, Man should think of his own weaknesses, on the one hand, and on the other hand, he should contemplate on the Great Power of Allah, and study the history of the destruction of arrogant people of ancient generations, who were much stronger and more powerful than him.

He must learn humility: This is his defence.

Supplication

O Lord! Protect us against pride and arrogance; the main vices which cause us to be far from You.

O Lord! Please do not leave us alone, even for a moment.

O Lord! Please bestow on us such an ability that we valiantly overcome the oppressors who hinder our path, and make their evil plans fruitless.

Notes

1. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4, p. 478.
2. Surah Maidah, No. 5, verse 4
3. Surah Qalam, No. 68, verse 1
4. Fi-Zalal-il-Qur'an, vol. 8, p. 619.
5. Surah 'Imran. 'No. 3, verse 180
6. Majma' -al- Bayan, commentary, vol. 10. p. 515
7. Fakhr-i-Razi vol. 32, p. 23.
8. vol. 32, p. 23
9. 7:60
10. 34:34
11. 23:67

Surah Qadr, Chapter 97

(The Night of Honour)

Number of Verses: 5

Contents of Surah Qadr

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

As it is understood from the name of the Surah, it refers to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an on the Night of Honour and then, it describes the importance of the night and the Blessings thereon.

The chronological order of this Surah has no significance. Among the commentators it is known as a Meccan Surah, although some hold that it was revealed in Medina; as a narration denotes that the holy Prophet (S) dreamed that the Ommayides were climbing his pulpit. This was disturbing to the Prophet, to have such a dream, and he disliked it. Then, Surah Qadr was revealed to comfort him.

(Therefore, some believe that the verse:

"The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months"

refers to the length of time that the Ommayides governed, which was about one thousand months), and we know that Mosques and pulpits were established and formed in Medina, not Mecca.[1]

But, as it was said above, the Surah is known as Meccan and this narration may be a kind of application, not an occasion of revelation.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah:

On the virtue of studying this Surah, there is a narration from the holy Prophet (S) which says:

"He who recites it (Surah Qadr) will be rewarded like the one who has fasted the whole month of Ramadan and has kept vigil the night of Qadr, (the Night of Honour)."[2]

Another narration from Imam Baqir (as) says:

"He who recites Surah Qadr loudly and openly like a person who fights in the Holy War on the path of Allah and he who recites it hiddenly like a person who swims in his own blood for the sake of Allah". [3]

It is obvious that these rewards are for he who recites the Surah and comprehends its real meaning, or they are for he who studies it, understands it and acts accordingly with regard to the Qur'an, and in his life obeys its verses.

Surah Qadr, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ
سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

1. "Surely, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour,"

2. "And what makes you know what the Night of Honour is?"

3. "The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months."

4. "The Angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lord's leave for every affair."

5. "Peace! It is till the rising of the dawn."

The Night When the Qur'an Was Revealed...

It is completely evident, in the verses of Qur'an, that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in Ramadan:

"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an..."[4]

and apparently, it seems that the whole Qur'an was descended in this month.

But, the first verse of Surah Qadr says:

"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."

The word 'Qur'an' is not clearly mentioned in this verse, but it is certain that the objective pronoun existing in the verse refers to the Qur'an and its seeming ambiguity is for stating its importance.

The phrase

"Surely We sent it"

is another sense to show the importance of this great heavenly Book of which Allah has attributed its descent to Himself especially with the plural pronoun,

'We',

which proves its greatness.

The descent of the Qur'an on the Night of Honour (Qadr), the very night on which the fates of men are decided, is another reason to show the importance of this great Divine Book in the destiny of men in this world.

With the combination of the senses of this verse and the above said verse from Surah Baqarah, it is concluded that the Night of Honour (Qadr) is in Ramadan. It is not clearly understood, from the Qur'an, which night of the nights of this month is the Night of Honour and has been left a mystery. But, there are many ideas about it in the narrations which will be dealt with later in this present Surah.

Here, a question arises regarding the history and the content of the Holy Qur'an in connection with the events in the life of the holy Prophet (S) which evidently denote that this heavenly Book was sent down gradually and during the entire period of 23 years, then, how does this coincide with the above verse which says:

"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour",

and in Ramadan?

The reply to this question as many scholars have said is to say that the Qur'an has two kinds of revelation:

One kind is that the whole Qur'an came down, at once, in one night to the holy heart of the Prophet (S) or to Bait-ul-Ma'mur, or from the 'preserved tablet' to the lowest heaven of this world.

The second kind of revelation is that the Holy Qur'an came down in portions, gradually, during the entire period of the Call which was twenty three years.

Some have also said that the beginning revelation of the Qur'an began on the Night of Honour; not the whole Book.

But, the idea does not fit with the apparent meaning of the verse which says:

"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."

It is noteworthy that in some verses the descent of the Qur'an is used with the word /inzal/ and in some others, with the word /tanzil/.

The difference between these two Arabic terms is that /inzal / has a broad meaning and here it implies 'bringing down all at once', while /tanzil/ implies 'bringing down gradually'. This difference, which is seen in the verses of Qur'an, can be taken as an indication to the above two kinds of descent.

In the next verses, referring to the greatness of the Night of Honour it says:

"And what makes you know what the Night of Honour is?"

"The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months".

This sense shows that the importance of this night is so much so that even the holy Prophet (S), with his vast knowledge, did not know it before the revelation of these verses.

We know that a

'thousand months'

is equal to more than eighty years. Truly, what a great night it is which values as much as the length of a fairly long blessed life.

It is cited in some commentaries that the holy Prophet (S) has said:

"One of the members of the Israelites had spent one thousand months having his fighting dress on and being always prepared for the Holy War on the path of Allah."

The companions of the Prophet (S) became surprised and wished that there might have been that sort of virtue and honour for them, too.

Then, the above verse came down and said.

"The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months."[5]

Another tradition denotes to what the holy Prophet (S) had said about the four Israelites who had worshipped God for eighty years without offending His Limits and then his companions wished they would have had such a success, and the above verse was revealed in this connection. [6]

Some have said that the figure

'a thousand',

mentioned in this verse, is for augmentation denoting that the value of the Night of Honour is more than thousands of months, but the above said narrations indicate that the figure is used in order to show tile amount, and generally figures are used to show numbers except for the time when clear evidence for augmentation is available.

Then, describing the Night of Honour (Qadr) in details, it says:

"The Angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lords leave for every affair".

Regarding the term /tanazzala/ which is originally /tatanazzala/ and which is a future tense verb with the sense of continuity, makes it clear that the Night of Honour (Qadr) is not only for the period of the Call and the descent of the Qur'an, but it is a permanent fact and it is a night that repeats annually.

For the meaning of

/ruh/ ‘spirit'

some have said that it refers to Gabriel, the trustworthy, who is also called /ruh-ul-amin/, while some others have rendered /ruh/ to mean 'inspiration' in comparison with:

“And thus, have We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee...”[7]**.**

Therefore, the meaning of the verse becomes thus:

“The Angels of Divine inspiration descend therein for every affair”.

Here, there is a third commentary which seems the most appropriate of all. It says: /ruh/ is an important creature greater than Angles.

It is said in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) that a person asked him whether 'Ruh' is the same as Gabriel and he replied:

“Gabriel is one of the Angels and Ruh (Spirit) is greater than angels. Has Allah, the Exalted, not said: 'the Angels and Spirit descend'?”[8]

This means that in the sequence of comparison those two are different. There are also other commentaries cited here on the word 'Ruh', but they do not have supporting reason so we do not mention them here.

The objective meaning of

/min kull-i-amr/ ‘for every affair'

is that the Angels descend to proportionate and assign the fates, and to bring any blessing and goodness on that night. The fulfillment of these actions is the purpose for their descent.

Or, they bring with them any good affair and any fate.

Furthermore, some have also said that the meaning is that they descend by the command of Allah, however, the very first meaning is more fitting.

The sense of

/rabb-i-him/ ‘their Lord',

of which the emphasis is on the subject of Lordship and assignment of the world, has a close agreement with the action of these angels, saying that they descend to proportionate and assign the affairs, and their accomplishment is a part of the Lordship of the Lord.

And in the last verse of the Surah, it says:

“Peace! It is, till the rising of the dawn.”

It is a night on which both the Qur'an has descended and worship and vigilance, therein, is equal to a thousand months. On this night, the divine blessings come down, and His special Grace covers the creatures, and the Angels and Spirit descend.

Thus, it is a night full of safety from the beginning to the end in which, according to some narrations, even Satan is fastened in chains, and from this point of view, that night is in security, too.

Therefore, the use of

/salam/ ‘peace'

which means safety (instead of safe) is, indeed, a kind of emphasis, here.

Some have also said that using
/salam/ ‘peace'
on that night is for the reason that on that night the Angels greet each other or greet the believers, or attend at the presence of the Prophet and his sinless substitutes (as) and greet them.

To combine these commentaries is also possible. In any case, it is a night with light, grace, mercy, blessing, goodness, spiritual safety and felicity that which is unique in any respect.

It is cited, in a tradition, that Imam Baqir (as) was asked if he knew which night the Night of Honour, Qadr, was and he replied:

“How do we not know it whereas the angels go round us therein?”[9]

In the story of Abraham (as) we find that a few of the divine angels came to him and greeted him[10], and gave him glad tidings of a son (Isaac). It is said that all this world was worthless in comparison with the delight that Abraham (as) took in that greeting. Now, we may consider that the Night of Honour is one on which Angels come to the believers, in groups, and greet them. How delightful it is!

When Abraham was thrown into the fire which Nimrod ordered, for persecution, Angels came and greeted him and he remained safe. Does not the Fire of Hell, under the grace of Angel's greeting to the believers on the Night of Honour, become cool and a means of safety for the believers?

Yes, this is the sign of the importance of Muhammad's (S) followers that, there, they appeared to Abraham (as) like that and here to the believers of Islam.[11]

Explanations

Which Affairs are to be Fixed on the Night of Honour?

To answer this question of why this night is called the Night of Honour, a lot of ideas are stated, including the following:

(1) the night is called the Night of Honour because all the affairs and the destinies of men for a years' time are determined on that night.

Surah Dukhan, No. 44, verses 3-4 serve as witness to this idea, saying:

“We sent it down during a night: For We (ever) wish to warn (against Evil)”.

“On that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom”.

This meaning harmonizes with the numerous narrations that say: On that night the affairs and destinies of men are determined; sustenances, the end of lives and other affairs are made distinct and clear.

This matter, of course, does not contradict 'man's free-will' because Divine Wisdom is carried out by the angels based on men's efficiencies and abilities on the level of their Faith and. virtue in purity of their intentions and actions.

That is, everyone is sustained with what he deserves, or in other words, the path is paved by the person, himself; and this not only does not contradict his 'free-will', but, also, emphasizes it.

(2) Some have also said that the night is called the 'Night of Honour' because it is of great importance and honour, like the case that is stated in Surah Hajj, No. 22, Verse 74:

"No just estimate have they made of Allah..."

(3) Some others have said that it is called the 'Night of Honour' because the Holy Qur'an. with all its grand rank, was descended to the grand Apostle of Allah by the means of His grand angel.

(4) Or, it is a night on which the descent of the Qur'an is appointed.

(5) Or, the person who keeps vigil on that night obtains a grand rank.

(6) Or, one of the meanings of /qadr/ is 'restriction' used in Surah Talaq, No. 65, Verse 7:

"...and the man whose resources are restricted...",

there descend so many angels on that night that the expanse of the Earth is restricted and does not have enough room for all of them.

The combination of all these commentaries on the vast meaning of the 'Night of Honour'

is quite possible, yet the first commentary is the most appropriate and common.

Which Night is the Night of Honour?

No doubt the Night of Honour is taken to be a night in the month of Ramadan since the combination of the verses of the Qur'an attests to this very fact.

Once in Surah Baqarah, No. 2, Verse 185 it says:

"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an...",

and in the Surah under discussion it says:

"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour".

But, which night of the nights of Ramadan does it refer to? Commentators and literalists point to some particular night on the calendar, but there is no agreement as to which it is. The 1st, 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 27th, or 29th night of Ramadan have all been suggested.

But, the most popular in the narrations is that it is in the last ten nights of the month, emphasizing on the 21st or 29th night. The evidence is referred to in a narration which says that the holy Prophet (S) kept vigil and was busy praying all the nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that the Night of Honour is the 21st or 23rd night of Ramadan, and when a man insisted and asked that if he could not worship on both of them, then, which one he would choose, he (as) replied:

"How easy is two nights for what you seek!"[12]

But, in numerous narrations, from Ahlul-Bait, the 23rd night is emphasized, while the narrations of Sunni scholars tend toward the 27th night.

Further, a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) also says:

"Determining the proportions is in the Night of Honour, the 19th night; its confirmation is on the 21st night, and its signing is on the 23rd night". [13]

Thus, the senses of all narrations gather together. However, a kind of mystic ambiguity covers the Night of Honour and the reason will be discussed later.

Why is the Night of Honour a Mystery?

Many commentators believe that the Night of Honour, being hidden among the nights of the year or in the nights of Ramadan is for the reason that people consider all the nights as important, because Allah has hidden His pleasure in all kinds of obedience and worship so that people practice all of them, and He has hidden His wrath in sinning, in general, so that they avoid all kinds of sin.

He has hidden His votaries among all members so that the whole people will be honoured. He has concealed the supplication to which He listens, among all supplications and devotees refer to all of them when they call on Him. He has hidden /ismi-a'zam/ His Greatest Name, among His several universal names so that they will remember and consider all the divine names of the Lord. The time of their death is hidden so that they will always be prepared.

And this is a fitting philosophy.

Was there the Night of Honour for Former Nations?

The verses of this Surah apparently show that the Night of Honour is not specialized to the time of the descent of the Qur'an and the period of the Call of the Messenger of Islam, but it repeats annually until the end of this world.

The application of the verb /tanazzala/, in the Surah, which is in the future tense and indicates the continuity of the verb, and also using:

"Peace! It is till the rising of the dawn",

which is a noun phrase, shows perpetuality, both conform to this idea, too.

Besides, there are also many narrations which, perhaps, on the frequency of successive transmission attest to the idea.

Now, the question is that whether the old communities, too, had it or not.

Many narrations clearly indicate that this is of the divine blessings endowed to this group of people, Muslims.

In a tradition, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

"Surely Allah has bestowed on my community the Night of Honour which He did not give to any of those (peoples) who were before them".[14]

In commenting on the above verses there are some other narrations that indicate the same idea.

How is the Night of Honour Better Than a Thousand Months?

Apparently, this night as being better than a thousand months is for the value of worshipping and keeping vigil on that night. The narrations on the virtue of the Night of Honour and the virtue of worship on it are abundantly mentioned in the books of both major groups of Muslims, Shi'ite and Sunnite, that certify this meaning.

Furthermore, the descent of the Qur'an on this Night and the descent of the divine blessings and Grace cause the night to be better than a thousand months.

A tradition says that Imam Sadiq (as) told Ali bin abu Hamzah Thamali:

"Seek the virtue of the night of Honour on the 21st and 23rd night and do say one hundred rak'at prayers on either of them and if you can, do

keep vigil both nights till the break of dawn, and perform ritual bathing therein".

Abu-Hamzah says that he asked Imam Sadiq (as) that if he could not pray so many prayers in the standing position, what should he do and he (as) replied:

"Pray in the sitting position".

Again, he asked that if he could not do that, what should he do and he (as) answered:

"Pray in bed, and it does not matter if you sleep a little at the beginning of the night and then begin praying because, in Ramadan, the gates of Heaven are open, Satans are bound in chains and the deeds of the believers are accepted. What a good month Ramadan is!"[15]

Why Was the Qur'an Descended on the Night of Honour?

Since, on the Night of Honour, the destiny of one year of ours is determined based on our worthiness, we should keep vigil the whole night and repent of our sins, practice self-perfection and refer to Allah to gain more and better worthiness for His mercy.

Yes, we should be aware of the moments that our fate forms and not spend the time in negligence and sleeping, otherwise our destiny will be regretful.

As the Qur'an is a book of destiny and leads to the path of happiness and guidance, for Man, it should be sent down on the Night of Honour, the night of determining fates. What a nice connection there is between 'the Qur'an' and the Night of Honour! And how meaningful their relation with each other is!

Is the Night of Honour the Same Night in Different Zones?

We know that the beginning of the months is not the same in all parts of the world, that is, in one zone today is, for example, the first day of a month, but in another zone that very day is the second day of the month. Therefore, the Night of Honour cannot be a definite night in the year as, for instance, the 23rd of a month in Mecca may be the 22nd of that month in Iran, or Iraq, and hence, each of them must, as a rule, have a Night of Honour for itself, separately.

Does this fact fit with the meaning understood from the verses and the narrations that say the Night of Honour is a definite night? Taking note of the following point, the answer to this question will be clear:

The words 'rotation' and 'revolution' mean nearly the same thing. But, in describing the Earth's movements, each word is used for a different kind of motion.

Revolution refers to the motion of the Earth in its yearly orbit around the Sun. Rotation refers to the spinning around of the Earth on its own axis every 24 hours in relation to the Sun. It is 24 hours from high noon on one day to high noon on the next.

In its permanent rotation on its axis, half of the surface of the Earth is towards the sun, whereon it is day, and on the opposite part, at the same time, it is night. Night, which is the shade of the Earth, itself, turns around in a complete circle for 24 hours all over the Earth.

Therefore, the Night of Honour may be a night of a complete circle round the Earth; that is, during 24 hours, where darkness covers all the points of the Earth, itself, is the Night of Honour whose beginning starts from a point and it ends at another one.

Supplication

O Lord! Bestow on us such a wakefulness and acknowledgement that we take sufficient benefit from the virtue of the Night of Honour.

O Lord! We hope, only, that our predestined fates be determined based on Your Grace.

O Lord! Do not put us among those who are deprived from this month, because it is the worst deprivation.

Notes

1. Ruh-al-Ma'ali, vol. 30. p. 188; and Durr-al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 391.
2. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 516.
3. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol, 30, p. 516.
4. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 185
5. Durr-al-Manthur. vol. 6, p. 371.
6. Durr-al-Manthur, vol. 6. p. 371.
7. Surah Shura, No. 41, verse 52
8. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4. p. 481
9. Borhan, Commentary, vol. 4, p. 488, tradition 29.
10. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 69
11. Tafsir-i Fakhr-i-Razi, Commentary, vol. 32, p. 36.
12. Nur-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 625, Tradition 58.
13. Nur-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 626, Tradition 62.
14. Nur-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 626, Tradition 62.
15. Nur-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5. p. 626, part of tradition 58.

Surah Bayyinah, Chapter 98

(The Clear Evidence)

Number of Verses: 8

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The contents of the Surah attests to the fact that it was revealed in Medina, because, the People (Jews and Christians) of the Book (the Scripture) are repeatedly talked about, and we know that at the time of revelation the communication between the Muslims and the people of the Book occurred mostly in Medina.

Furthermore, the words of the Surah are both about prayers and alms. It is true that the duty of paying the alms-tax was issued in Mecca, but the act of spreading this idea with the necessary formalities, was extended in Medina.

In any case, this Surah refers to the universal message of our holy Prophet (S) in the same line of prophecy that the Jews and Christians received their scriptures. They should have prepared themselves for the Advent of the greatest and last of the prophets, but when the awaited Prophet, whom they were waiting for, came with clear signs and evidences, they rejected him, because they were not really searching for truth; they only followed their own desires to gain worldly profits.

By the way, this Surah shows the fact that the doctrine of the prophets such as Faith, monotheism, prayers and fasting are eternal and unchangeable principles in all Divine religions.

In another part of the Surah the different reactions of the pagans and the People of the Book, regarding the invitation to Islam, are referred to saying that those who believe and do righteous deeds are the best of all creatures, and those who disbelieve and refuse to worship Him are certainly the worst of all creatures.

The most popular titles of this Surah are: ‘Bayyinah’, ‘Lam Yakun’, and ‘Ghayyimah’; titles which come from the text, itself.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Bayyinah

On the virtue in reciting this Surah, there is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who has said:

“If people knew how blessful this Surah is (Bayyinah), they would leave their property and family to learn it”.

Someone from the' Khaza'ih’ people asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! What is the reward for reciting it?”.

He (S) answered:

“Neither a hypocrite nor those in whose hearts contain doubt about Allah recite it. By Allah, the near-stationed angels have been reciting it from the time the heavens and the earth were created and do not languish in its recitation.

There will be no servant who recites it at night but that Allah sends angels who protect him in his Faith and his present life and that seek forgiveness and mercy for him; and when on the day he recites it, he will be rewarded as much as what the day sheds light upon and what the night darkens."[1]

Surah Bayyinah, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ

وَمَا أُ ِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاء وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ

الْقَيِّمَةِ

1. "Those who reject (Truth) from among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence,"

2. "A Messenger from Allah, reciting pure scriptures;"

3. "Wherein are laws right and straight."

4. "Nor were those divided who were given the Book, except after the Clear Evidence had come to them."

5. "And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, to keep up prayer, and pay zakat (poor-rate) and that is the religion right and straight."

The Religion Right and Straight

At the beginning of the Surah the situation before Islam, the People of the Book and the pagan Arabs, is referred to.

It says:

"Those who reject (Truth) from among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them the Clear Evidence,"

"A Messenger from Allah, reciting pure scriptures;"

"Wherein are laws right and straight."

Yes, they said that they were convinced of the coming of the Prophet of Islam (S), but later when his heavenly Book was revealed the circumstances changed and they differed in their ideas about the religion of Allah.

It says:

"Nor were these divided who were given the Book, except after the Clear Evidence had come to them."

Thus, the aforementioned verses reveal that the claim of the People of the Book and the disbelievers was that they insisted on a prophet having clear evidences to accept. But, when the clear evidence, Islam, and the awaited

prophet, in the person of Muhammad (S) arrived, they rejected the religion of Islam and resisted the Prophet except for a minority of them.

The preceding verse is similar to the content of Surah Baqarah, No. 2 Verse 89 which says:

"And when there comes to them a Book from Allah, confirming what if with them, although from of old they had prayed for victory against those without Faith, when there comes to that which they (should) have recognized, they refuse to believe in it, but the curse of Allah if on those without Faith."

We know that the People of the Book expected such an Advent and too, the Pagan Arabs, who knowing the People of the Book to be more learned than themselves, customarily followed the same idea and adopted it as their own, but after reaching their goals they changed the way and joined the opponents.

A group of commentators have another idea on the contents of these verses. They say that the objective meaning is that the mentioned people, not simply by mere claim, but, in actuality, did not leave their old belief until they had clear evidences.

This statement means that after having such clear evidences they accepted the Prophet, but this contrasts with the following verses which indicate that they did not. Or, it may be said that the objective meaning is that some of them believed, though they were in the minority.

But, this idea seems improbable and perhaps it was for the same reason that Fakhr-i-Razi in his commentary considered the first verse which to him is in contrast with the next verse, one of the most complicated verses of the Qur'an and then, in order to solve the problem he gave some explanations the best of which is the very one that we have mentioned above.

A third commentary exists which says that the objective meaning is that Allah does not leave the People of the Book and disbelievers to themselves unless He completes the argument; sends them an evidence, and shows them the straight way. For this reason He sent the Messenger of Islam to guide them.

In fact, this verse is a reference to 'the principle of favor' which is discussed in 'speculative theology' and states that Allah sends clear evidences for every sect to complete the argument.

In any case, the meaning of /bayyinah/, here is 'Clear Evidence' and whose example, according to the second verse, is the Messenger of Allah (S), himself, who had at his disposal the Holy Qur'an for his teachings.

The term /suhuf/ is a plural form of /sahifah/ which means 'a leaf or page of a book', or 'some leaves of paper on which something is written' and here it means 'the contents of them', because we know that the holy Prophet (S) could not read anything from the pages and therefore, was teaching the 'contents' of them.

And the purpose of using the term /mutahharah/ is that it was exactly the very truth, the original Word of Allah, in its purity, without corruption having polluted it, and far from the evil hands of Jinn and the human race; as is mentioned in Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 42:

"No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it..."

Now, Verse 3

"Wherein are laws..."

refers to the fact that, in these scriptures, there are, without doubt, decrees contained therein that are right and straight.

Therefore, /kutub/, here means 'what is written', or it means 'the laws or decrees appointed by Allah', because / kitabat/, in Arabic, has been used in the sense of 'prescribing a decree' as in Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 183:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may learn self-restraint."

Then, the term /qayyimah/ means 'smooth, straight, right, strong, confirmed, valuable, worthy' or all these meanings collectively.

It is also probable that since the Qur'an contains all that the former scriptures had, besides many other additional points, then, it is said that therein are the right ordinances of the past.

It is worthy to note that in the first verse 'the People of the Book' is mentioned prior to 'the polytheists' but, in the fourth verse only 'the People of the Book' is mentioned and while 'polytheists' is not stated, the verse refers to both of them.

Apparently, these differences may be for that, in this matter, the People of the Book were the main rejectors and the polytheists were their dependants; or for that the People of the Book deserved more blame, because they had many men of knowledge among them and had a higher standard of theology than the polytheists therefore, their rejection was more disgraceful and blameworthy.

Then, the Qur'an reproaches 'the People of the Book' and the polytheists saying:

"And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and to keep up prayer, and pay zakat (poor-rate) and that is the religion right and straight."

On the phrase

/wa ma umiru/ "and they were ordered no more",

some have cited that the purpose of using this phrase is that the People of the Book already had the three eternal principles in their own religion: Unity of God, prayer, and alms. These are some fixed principles, but those people were not true to their promise concerning these principles.

Furthermore, the same decrees, in Islam, are, also, pure monotheism, prayer and alms which are the same eternal principles. So, why did they refuse to accept them?

Using this phrase, then, seems more suitable, because, /umiru/ 'ordered', refers to the acceptance of the new religion, that which was mentioned in the preceding verse, over which 'they divided'.

Some of the commentators believe that using the word /din/ 'religion', here means 'worship' and the phrase 'no more than that they should worship Allah (alone)', confirms this idea.

The term /hunafa/ is the plural form of /hanif /derived from /hanaf/ 'pure in faith' and as Raqib cites in Mufradat it means 'to decline from aberration to the straight way'. All those who make pilgrimage to Kaaba or were

circumcised were called /hanif/, by the Arabs, referring to the fact that they had believed in Abraham's religion.

On the whole, this word in lexicology and in various dictionaries originally means 'crookedness or inclination', but, in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions it has been used with the sense of 'declining from polytheism and inclining toward monotheism and the straight way'.

The phrase 'the religion right and straight' denotes that those principles, i.e., pure montheism, prayers and alms, are eternal and unchangeable in all religions, or it can be said that they are found within the nature of all human beings.

So, the destiny of Man leads him to monotheism and his nature invites him to being grateful to his Lord, knowing His divine essence, and further, Man's social spirit calls him to the service of the deprived by practicing deeds of charity.

Therefore, the root of these characteristics, in general, exists in all humans and that is why these laws are also found in the teachings of all the former prophets and are the core in the teachings of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (S).

Surah Bayyinah, Verses 6-8

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ

جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَّضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ

6. "Surely those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of Hell, therein dwelling forever; they are the worst of all creatures."

7. "Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures."

8. "Their reward with their Lord will be Gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher."

The Best and the Worst Creatures

In the former verses, it was mentioned that the people of the Book and the polytheists were waiting for clear evidence to be sent by Allah, but when it came they were dispersed and everyone went his separate way.

In the following verses, from the point of Faith in truth, people are divided into two groups believers and disbelievers, and then the fate of each is pointed out.

At first it says:

"Surely those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of Hell, therein dwelling forever, they are the worst of all creatures."

The term /kafaru/ ‘they disbelieved', here refers to their blasphemy rather than their being Muslim, otherwise their previous infidelity was not a new matter.

The phrase

“They are the worst of all creatures”

is a startling statement which shows that among all the living and non-living creatures there is nothing worse than those who left the right path and went astray after the truth became clear and the argument and reason became complete.

This is, in fact, like that which is mentioned in Surah Anfal, No. 8, verse 22:

“For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb. Those who understand not”.

Or similar still, to what Surah A'raf, No. 7, verse 179 says after referring to the people of Hell with the same characteristics:

“...they are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning)”.

There is also a point in the current verse which goes beyond these matters, because it introduces them as

“The worst of all creatures”,

and this is, indeed, a statement of evidence for their perpetual stay in the fire of Hell.

And why not! They were the worst of all creatures, because all the means of salvation were being prepared for them, but they refused it intentionally, due to their pride, deceit and enmity.

In this verse, again, the phrase 'the People of Book' is mentioned prior to 'polytheists' perhaps for the reason that they had heavenly Books and learned men among them and also possessed some signs and information about the Prophet of Islam which were clearly mentioned in their Books. Therefore, their rejection was more hideous and indecent.

In the next verse, the contrasting group, who are in a higher position, are referred to.

It says:

“Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures.”

Then their rewards are pointed out:

“Their rewards with their Lord will be Gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher”.

This high rank and the splendid, unparalleled rewards are for the one who fears his Lord:

“That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher”.

It is worthy to note that when speaking about the righteous, it also mentions 'doing good deeds', which is in fact the fruit of Faith, and indicates that a mere claim of Faith is not enough. Man's conduct should adapt to this Faith, too. But blasphemy itself even with the lack of evil action causes

aberration in Man and this is apart from the fact that blasphemy is usually the source of many kinds of sin, crimes, and wrong actions.

The phrase:

"They are the best of all creatures"

clearly shows that good believing people who do righteous deeds are even higher than the angels, because the verse is general and there is no exception made in it.

There are other verses, also, that are witness to this idea like the verses concerning the prostration of the angels to Adam, and the verse:

"We have honoured the sons of Adam..."[2].

However, in this verse, the material and physical rewards of the righteous; gardens full of different blessings in Heaven, are mentioned first, and then, their spiritual reward is referred to, that is;

"...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him".

They are well-pleased with Allah because whatever they have asked of Him, He has given them and if they erred He forgave them by His Grace. What pleasure can be better or higher than that one feels that his beloved, his Lord, accepts him and is pleased with him and he succeeds to be close to Him.

Yes, the Paradise, for Man's body, is the eternal Gardens of the next world, but the Paradise for his soul is the Lord's pleasure.

The sentence:

"That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher"

shows that all these gifts come into being because of the existence of the 'fear of Allah' since it is the motive of all obedience, piety, and righteous deeds.

It should also be noted that the 'fear of Allah' is the fear to offend His holy Law, the fear to do anything which is against His holy Will. Such fear is akin to love; for with it dawns the consciousness of Allah's loving care for all His creatures.

Some of the commentators have combined this verse with Surah Fatir, No. 35, Verse 28:

"...those truly fear Allah among His servants, who have knowledge...",

and have concluded that Paradise is, in fact, the incontestable right of the scientists and learned people.

Of course, regarding the fact that the 'fear of Allah' has stages and degrees as well as knowledge, which has hierarchies too, the meaning of this statement is clear.

By the way, some believe that the position of /xasiyat/ is higher than that of /xauf/ because the latter is used for any fear, but the former is a kind of fear mixed with exaltation and respect.

Explanation: Hazrat Ali (as) and His Followers are 'the Best Creatures'

There are a great many narrations quoted by famous Sunnite and Shi'ite sources in which the verse:

"...they are the best of all creatures"

is rendered to mean Hazrat Ali (as) and his followers.

Hakim Haskani Neyshaburi, one of the famous Sunnite scholars, in the fifth century A.H., has cited some narrations with different references whose number is more than twenty in his well-known book Shawahid-ut-Tanzil.

The following are some examples:

1. Ibn-Abbas says that when the verse:

"Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures"

was revealed, the holy Prophet (S) told Hazrat Ali (as):

"It is you and your followers who will come on the Day of Reckoning when you and your followers are well-pleased (yourselves) and well-pleasing Him and your enemy will come angrily pushed (into Hell)".[3]

2. Abu Barazah has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) who recited the verse and said:

"They are you and your followers. O' Ali! The appointment for you and me is (beside) the Pool of Abundance"[4]

('Haud' is the pool of 'Kawthar').

3. Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah-Ansari narrates in another tradition that they were sitting with the holy Prophet (S) in the Sacred House when Ali (as) came to them.

As soon as the Prophet (S) saw him, he said:

"My brother is coming to you".

Then, he turned toward the Ka'ba and said:

"By the Lord of this Structure! Surely this man and his followers will be triumphant on the Day of Judgement".

Then, he addressed them and added:

"By Allah! Truly he was formost to all of you in believing in Allah; and among you all he is the most correct in obeying Allah; the most faithful in fulfilling the covenant of Allah; the hardest to the decree of Allah, the best distributor of the (treasury) in equality, the justest to the citizen and the most important in position with Allah".

Jabir said it was then that Allah sent down the verse:

"Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures",

and from then on whenever Ali came, the Helpers of the Prophet (S) would say:

"The best of all creatures next to the Messenger of Allah came".[5]

The descent of this verse, in Mecca, does not contrast with the idea that the Surah is Medinan, because it might have been revealed, again, there. Further, the descent of this verse might have happened on one of the holy Prophet's trips from Medina to Mecca, in particular that the reporter of the narration is 'Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah-Ansari' who joined the Prophet (S) in Medina. Then, terming these kinds of verses 'Medinan' is not improbable.

Some of these traditions are cited by 'Ibn-Hijr' in 'Sawa'iq' and some others by 'Muhammad Shablanji' in 'Nur-ul-Absar'. [6]

A great part of the last narration is narrated from Ibn- 'Asakir, from Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah by Jalal-id-Din-Suyuti in Durr-ul-Manthur.

4. It is narrated from Ibn-'Abbas in Durr-ul-Manthur that when the verse.

"Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creature."

was revealed the holy Prophet (S) told Ali:

"It is you and your followers who, on the Day of Reckoning are well-pleased (yourselves) and well-pleasing (Him)."[7]

5. In another tradition, the above mentioned person narrates from Ibn-Marduyah from Hazrat Ali (as) that the Prophet (S) had told him (Ali):

"Have you not heard the word of Allah:

'Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creature'?

You and your followers are those and the appointment place of mine and yours will be at the Pool of Abundance'. When I come for the account of nations you will be invited in the case that your foreheads are white (to be known)".[8]

Many other Sunnite scholars have also cited the same meaning in their works including: Khatib Kharazmi in 'Manaqib', Abu-Na'im Isfahani in' Kifayat -ul -Khisam', 'Allamah Tabari in his famous commentary, Tabari, Ibn- Shabbaq Maliki in 'Fusul-ul-Muhimmah', Allamah Shoukani in' Fath-ul-Qadir', Shaykh Sulayman Qanduzi in 'Yanabi' -ul- Mawwadah', Alusi in' Ruh -ul -Ma'ani', and some others.

In conclusion, the above mentioned tradition is one of the famous traditions that is accepted by a great many scholars of Islam. And this, in itself, is an important, matchless excellence for Hazrat Ali (as) and his followers.

By the way, this narration makes this fact clear that the term 'Shi'ah' was applied and was spread among Muslims by the Prophet (S), himself, at that time, and it refers to the particular followers of Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as).

The Necessity of Intention in Adorations

Some of the scholars of the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence have taken the verse:

"And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience..."

as an evidence for (niyyat) 'intention' with divine motive being necessary in 'worship' and this depends on the word 'din', here to be meant 'worship' so that it becomes a reason for the necessity of sincerity in worship.

We should also take the term

/amr/, 'command'

in this verse, unlimited in order to have a sense of necessity of intention with divine motive in all commands. However, the meaning of the verse does not seem to be either of them, but the purpose of the verse is to prove monotheism in contrast with polytheism. It means they are only invited to monotheism.

The Wonderful Heights and Depths to Which Man Can Reach

We understand, clearly, from the verses of this Surah that there is no creature in the world like, Man to be able to gain the highest ranks and being the best of all by doing righteous deeds, (note that 'righteous deeds'

www.alhassanain.org/english

includes all good deeds; not only a part of them), and if he goes on the path of blasphemy and aberration he will fall so deep that he can be the worst of all creatures.

The vast, great distance between these two extremes of highness and lowliness of Man; although a very sensitive and dangerous status for him, indicates his dignity and capability of development. It is natural that Man, with such an efficiency and extraordinary potentiality, is also quite close to the possibility of extraordinary aberration.

Supplication

O Lord! We look to You, Your Grace, to gain the high rank of "The best of all creatures".

O Lord! Count us among the followers of the man who deserves this title the best.

O Lord! Endow us with such a sincerity that we worship and love nothing but You.

Notes

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 521
2. Surah Bani Israel, No. 17, verse. 70
3. Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, vol. 2, p. 357, tradition 1126.
4. Shawahid-ut-Tanzil, vol. 2, p. 359, tradition 1130.
5. Shawahid-ut- Tanzil, vol 2, p 362, tradition 1139
6. al-Sawa'iq ul Muharraqah, p 96, and Nur-ul-Absar, p 70, 101
7. Durr-ul Manthur, vol 6, p 379
8. Ibid

Surah Zilzal, Chapter 99

(The Quaking)

Number of Verses: 8

Contents of Surah Zilzal

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Opinions are divided as to whether this Surah was revealed in Mecca or Medina. It is generally referred to as being of the early Medinan period, by some commentators, while some others believe that it can be of the late Meccan period.

The style of its verses, which are about Resurrection and the preliminary signs of its occurrence, appears to be like the Meccan Suras, but there is a tradition which says that when this Surah was revealed, Abu-Sa'id-Khudri asked the holy Prophet (S) a question about the following verse:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it",

and we know that Abu-Sa'id joined the Muslims in Medina.[1]

In any case, whether it is Meccan or Medinan, it does not change the meaning and the commentary of the Surah.

This Surah mainly pivots on three points: First, it speaks about the preliminary signs of the appearance of the Hereafter, and then, it tells us about the Earth as a witness to all of Man's deeds.

In the third part, people are divided into two groups; good and evil, each of which will receive the fruit of their own actions.

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

There are some expressive meanings in the Islamic reports on the virtue of reciting this Surah.

For instance, a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"He who recites it (Surah Zilzal), it is the same as if he had recited Surah Baqarah, his reward is as much as the one who would have recited one fourth of the Qur'an."[2]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Be never tired of reciting it (Surah Zilzal), because everyone who recites it in his optional prayers will never be involved in an earthquake and he will not die by it, nor should he be hurt by lightning or any worldly pests until he dies".[3]

Surah Zizal, Verses 1-8

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

وَقَالَ الْإِنسَانُ مَا لَهَا

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَى لَهَا

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ

فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

1. "When the Earth shall quake with a mighty quaking."
2. "And the Earth shall cast forth her burdens,"
3. "And man shall say (distressed): What has befallen her?"
4. "On That Day, she will recount (all) her news:"
5. "For that your Lord will have given her inspiration."
6. "On That Day, people shall come forth in groups to be shown their deeds."
7. "So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."
8. "And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."

The Day When Man Sees All His Deeds

As it was pointed out about the contents of the Surah, the beginning of the Surah refers to the horrible end of the phenomenal world and some terrible signs it has before the Resurrection befalls.

At first, it says:

"When the Earth shall quake with a mighty quaking,"
"And the Earth shall cast forth her burdens,"

The term

/zilzalaha/ 'her earthquake'

points either to the idea that, on that day, all the globe will quake (this is different from the ordinary earthquakes that we know of which are local and periodical), or to the promised earthquake, that is, the final earthquake of the Resurrection.

Commentators have delivered different ideas on the term

/athqal/ 'burdens'.

Some have said that the purpose of using it so signify men who will be thrown out from their graves by the quake of the Resurrection, like that which is found in Surah Inshiqaq, No. 84, verse 4 which says:

"And casts forth what is within it and becomes empty."

Some others have said the purpose is that it cast out the minerals and treasures from within the earth which causes the mammonists to sigh for them.

It is also probable that it means some enormous boulders and lava, from beneath the crust of the earth, which are usually thrown up when earthquakes and volcanoes occur. At the end of this world and through the great and final convulsion, whatever is inside the earth will be thrown out.

The first commentary seems more appropriate, though all of them can be combined, as well.

However, on That Day everyone, observing that supreme world-shaking Event, will become completely terrified

"And man shall say (distressed): What had befallen her?"

Some have rendered

'man',

here to mean the unbelieving men, in particular, who had doubt about the Resurrection. But it seems that the word 'man' has a vast meaning, here so that it includes all human beings, because the situation of the earth, on That Day, will be so surprising that everyone will wonder, so it is not limited to the unbelievers, alone.

Does this surprise and question thereby depend on whether it is the First or the Second Blast?

The circumstances will show that it is the First Blast, of the end of this world, because the Great world-shaking Event happens at that time.

However, it has been presumed that it refers to the second Blast and the raising of the dead when all people come out from beneath the earth. The later verses are all about the Second Blast, too.

But, since the events of these two blasts are frequently seen together, in the verses of Qur'an, the first commentary, regarding the terrible final earthquake, seems more fitting.

If so the use of the term

/athqal/ ‘burdens'

is in reference to minerals, treasures and molten lava hidden in the earth.

More important than this is that:

“On That Day, she will recount (all) her news'“.

On the Day of Judgement, the earth will manifest all good and evil deeds that were carried out on it. This very earth, on which we live and do our actions, is one of the greatest witnesses to Man's deeds on That Day.

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who asked:

“Do you know what the purpose of

'her news'

is?”

the people replied that Allah and His Messenger are more informed.

Then, he added:

“'Her news'

is that she is witness to all the deeds that every servant has done on her surface. She will say: So and so had done such and such on a particular day.

And this is

'her news'“.[4]

In another tradition the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

“Be careful of your ablution; and the best action of your deeds is prayer. Then, protect the earth, because she is your mother; and there is no one on her who does good or evil, but that she reports it.”[5]

Abu-Sa'id-Khudri has narrated that when they were in the desert they would call to prayer, loudly, because he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

“There is no Jinn or human or stone that hears it, but does not bear witness to it (on the Day of Judgement).”[6]

Does the Earth really speak by the command of Allah? Or, is the purpose that the effects of Man's deeds appear on the face of the earth?

We know that every action which Man does has an effect on his surroundings even though they are not tangible for us, but they all will be made manifest on That Day and the Earth speaking is not anything save one example of this great manifestation.

In any event, this is not a strange matter because, even today with the development of science and Man's experiments, there are inventions that can record the voice of people or take photos and films of the actions that anyone does, at any time or anywhere and which can be kept as proper documents to be offered to the court in a form that no one can deny or reject.

It is worthy to note that Hazrat Ali (as) is narrated to have said:

"Say your prayers at different points in the Mosques, because on the Day of Judgement every part will bear witness for the one who has prayed thereon".[7]

Another tradition denotes that when Hazrat Ali (as) finished the act of dividing the public treasury of the Muslims, he used to say a two-rak'at prayer and then said (addressing the place):

"On the Day of Judgement bear witness for me that verily I ruled you justly and emptied you rightfully."[8]

In the next verse, it says:

"For that your Lord will have given her inspiration."

And the Earth obeys this command fully. The term /auha/ is used, here to indicate the extent of the divine revelation and that even the earth shall have some sort of receiving the revelation by which she will be able to speak or it is contrary to the nature of the earth to speak.

Some have said that the purpose is that He inspires the Earth to cast out what she has written, herself.

But, the first commentary seems more correct and more appropriate.

Then, it says:

"On That Day, people shall come forth in groups to be shown their deeds".

The term /astat/ is the plural form of /satt/ with the meaning of 'scattered fragments', the separation and diversity of people may be for that on the Day of Judgement the followers of different religions will arrive separately; or the people of every part of the earth will come by themselves; or some people will appear with beautiful, happy faces and some others with dark, frowning, dull faces.

Or, all sects are with their leaders as is pointed out in Surah Asra, No. 17, verse 71:

"One day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams..."

Or, the believers with the believers and the disbelievers with the disbelievers will come forth on the Day of Judgement.

To combine these commentaries, together, is also quite possible, because the meaning of the verse is vast.

The term /yasdur/ is derived from /sadr/ and means 'camels excitingly coming out of the watering place, in groups', and here it refers to 'different sects coming out of their graves for their reckoning'.

The purpose of the phrase
/liyarau-a'malahum/ ‘to be shown their deeds'
is that they will see the outcome of their deeds.

Or, they will see the record of the deeds in which every action, good or bad, is recorded.

Or, it refers to the esoteric observation with the sense of knowing the quality of their deeds.

Or, it means the embodiment of deeds and observing the deeds, themselves.

The last commentary adapts to the appearance of the verse most of all. This verse is considered the most clear, among the verses, on the matter of 'the embodiment of deeds' which on That Day men's deeds are incarnated in their forms and appear in front of every individual. This correlation with deeds causes Man to be joyful or afflicted according to the various levels of his merits and demerits.

Then, the fate of these two groups, believers and disbelievers, good-doers and evildoers, are pointed out, saying:

“So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it”

“And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it.”

Again, there are different commentaries cited as to whether the person shall see the outcome of his deeds or whether he shall see the record of the deeds or the deeds, themselves.

The appearance of these verses emphasizes again on the embodiment of deeds and seeing the deeds, themselves, good or evil, on the Day of Judgement even for the slightest one.

The term /mithqal/ means both 'weight, heaviness' and 'a scale' by which the weight of things are weighed, and here the first meaning is used.

Commentators have rendered the word /tharrah/ differently, such as: 'a small ant', 'the dust that sticks on the hand when one puts it on the ground'; or particles of dust floating in the air that are seen when a beam of sunlight shines through an opening into a dark room.

We know that, nowadays, the word /tharrah/ is also used in the Arabic language for 'atom' and 'atomic bomb' is called /qunbulatun tharriyah/.

Furthermore, an atom is a tiny particle of anything; or any of the smallest particles of an element that combine with similar particles of other elements to produce compounds: Atoms combine to form molecules and consist of a complex arrangement of electrons revolving around a positively charged nucleus containing (except for hydrogen) protons and neutrons and other particles.

In any case, whatever it means, the purpose, here is the smallest weight.

However, this verse is one of the verses that shakes Man and shows that the account of Allah, on That Day, is extraordinarily proper and sensitive, and the scales for weighing Man's deeds are so delicate and just that they count the smallest weight of his actions.

Explanation: Accuracy and Severity at the Divine Reckoning

Not only the verses of this Surah, but, also different verses of the Qur'an clearly show that on the Day of Judgement the Reckoning is extremely precise. Surah Luqman, No. 31, Verse' 16 says:

"O my son!" (said Luqman), 'If there be (but) the weight of a mustard seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: For Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well acquainted (with them).'"

Mustard is a small seed from a famous plant and it is proverbially a small, minute thing that people may ordinarily pass by.

These senses warn Man of the strictness which he will be dealt with in accounting for his deeds. Even the smallest deed, good or evil, will not escape the accounting. By the way, these verses warn us not to think that lesser sins are unimportant nor the good actions, insignificant. Whatever Allah counts cannot be considered unimportant.

That is why some commentators have said that these verses were revealed when some of the followers of the holy Prophet (S) were heedless of little acts of charity and used to say that the reward is given for the things which we like and little things are not among those that we like. They were heedless of the lesser sins, too. These verses were revealed and encouraged them to do even the little acts of charity and to admonish them about small vices...

An Answer to a Question

A question arises, here as to whether, according to these verses, Man will see all his deeds, good or evil, small or great on the Day of Judgement. How does this idea adapt with the verses about the good deeds cancelling the bad ones (or vice-versa), excommunication, forgiveness, and repentance?

The verses of cancellation say that some actions and beliefs like blasphemy destroy all the good actions of Man, for example: Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 65 says:

"...If you were to join (gods with God), truly fruitless will be thy work (in life)..."

And based on the verses of excommunication, sometimes

"...good actions remove those that are evil..."[9]

Also, the verses of forgiveness and repentance say that with the forgiveness by Allah and repentance by Man, sins will be obliterated. Then, how do these senses match with the seeing of all good and evil deeds in the Hereafter?

To answer this question we must pay attention to the fact that the idea mentioned in these verses is that 'whoever has done an atom's weight of good or evil shall behold it' is a general rule, and we know that there are exceptions to most rules and the verse of forgiveness, repentance, cancellation, and excommunication are, in fact, exceptions to this general rule.

Another answer is that in the cases of 'cancellation' and 'excommunication', indeed, there occurs a balance and division, just like 'claims' and 'debts' that are reduced from each other. When Man sees the remaining balance, he has, indeed, seen all his good and bad actions. This word is also true about forgiveness and repentance, because forgiveness does not happen without it not being worthy of the case, and repentance is, itself, one of the good actions.

The appearance of the verses shows that they refer to the actions of this world and the fruit of them in the Next World.

The Most Expressive Verses of the Qur'an

It is narrated from 'Abdillah ibne Mas'ud that the most decisive verses of the Holy Qur'an are those very verses that say:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."

"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it".

He has rendered them to mean 'consistent'. and verily, the true belief in their contents is enough to bring Man on the right path and keeps him far from committing any vice and corruption.

There is a tradition which says that once a man came to the holy Prophet (S) and asked him to teach him something from what Allah had taught him. The holy Prophet (S) sent him to one of his followers to teach him the Qur'an. He taught the man Surah Zilzal to the end. Then, the man was ready to leave saying that that was sufficient for him.

(Another narration has cited that he said:

'That very verse alone was sufficient for him').

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Let him go since he became a scholar."

(And according to another narration he said:

"He returned as a scholar.")[10]

The reason is clear because, he who knows his deeds will be counted later, even those that are as small as a mustard seed, will pay careful attention to his actions today; and this is the best lesson to train him. Furthermore, on the Day of Judgement one good action will be counted ten to seven hundred times as much for those that Allah wills, while one sin will be counted as only one for divine punishment; and Allah is forgiving.

Supplication

O Lord! When Your Messenger, with that great rank he has, is hopeful only to Your forgiveness, our condition is obvious.

O Lord! Our good deeds are naught to save us, but happy is when Your Grace comes forth to help!

O Lord! On the Day when all deeds, good and evil, will be embodied in front of us, we hope for Your profound Favor alone.

Notes

1. Ruh-al- Ma'ani. Vol 30 B p. 208
2. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol, 10, p, 524
3. Usul-Kafi as narrated in Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol, 5, p, 347
4. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 649.
5. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 526.
6. Ibid.
7. Li'a1-il-Akhbar, vol. 5, p 79 (New edition) ,
8. Ibid,
9. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 114
10. Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 495 and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5. p. 650.

Surah ‘Adiyat, Chapter 100

(The Chargers)

Number of Verses: 11

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Opinions are divided as to the place where the revelation of this Surah took place; whether it was at Mecca or Medina.

The verses of the Surah are short; where oaths are emphasized on, and the Resurrection is seriously referred to. These are some characteristics which confirm that the Surah is Meccan.

But, on the other hand, the content of the oaths, of this Surah, refer mostly to the affairs of Holy War, which we will discuss in detail later, and also to the existence of the narrations which denote that this Surah was revealed after the war known as /that-us-salasil/, indicating that the Surah is Medinan, even though we consider that the introductory oaths of the Surah point to the movement of pilgrimages toward Mash'ar (Sacred Monument) and Mina.

(This war happened in the eighth year AH. in which many pagans were captured. They were bound in chains and that was why it was called the battle of /that-us-salasil/.)

With attention to all of the above, we prefer to consider this Surah Medinan.

From the aforementioned statements, it is understood that at the beginning of the Surah there are some awakening oaths and then, reference is made to some human weaknesses like blasphemy, miserliness, and mammonism. Concluding the Surah, a comprehensive hint is made to the Resurrection, and the fact that Allah knows everything about His servants.

The Virtue of Studying Surah 'Adiyat

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

“He who recites this Surah will be rewarded ten good deeds as many as the number of the people who stay at Muzdalafah (Mash'ar, Sacred Monument) and gather witnessing it.”[1]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“He who recites Surah 'Adiyat and continues reciting it Allah will raise him up with Amir-al-Mo'mineen (Ali, (as)) on Doomsday and he will be with him (as) and his companions.”[2]

Some narrations denote that the virtue of reciting this Surah is as much as the virtue of reciting half of the Qur'an. [3]

It is clear, without any explanation, that all these excellences are for those who believe in its contents thoroughly and act accordingly.

Surah ‘Adiyat, Verses 1-11

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

www.alhassanain.org/english

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالْعَادِيَاتِ ضَبْحًا

فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا

فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا

فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا

فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا

إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ

وَإِنَّهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ

وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ

1. "By the panting chargers,"
2. "And by those that sprint striking fire (with their hooves),"
3. "And by those which charge at dawn,"
4. "And stir thereby the dust aloft,"
5. "And penetrate into the midst (of the enemy) En masse.
6. "Surely, man is ungrateful to his Lord;"
7. "And surely he is a witness to that;"
8. "And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth."
9. "Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is raised,"
10. "And that which is in the breasts is made known,"
11. "Surely their Lord is aware of them on That Day?"

The Occasion of Revelation

A tradition says that this Surah was revealed after the occurrence of the war/ that-us-salasil/. the description is as follows:

In the eighth year A.H. the Prophet (S) of Islam was informed that twelve thousand strong had gathered in Yabis to make a sudden and very heavy attack on Medina to kill the Muslims, the holy Prophet and Ali (as) as well.

Upon receiving the news of this gathering of hostile forces. The holy Prophet (S) sent a group of the Muslim followers to them under the command of some of his companions, but they returned without gaining any positive result. Finally, he sent Hazrat Ali (as) with a great number of the emigrants (Muhajirs), and the helpers, under his command, to meet them.

They marched by night and kept themselves concealed by day and thus, they reached the enemy. Surrounding the enemy's forces, Hazrat Ali (as) offered them (to follow the religion of) Islam at first, but they did not accept it.

Then, the Muslims attacked them in the early hours of dawn when it was still dark and won an easy victory. Most of the enemy's men were killed,

www.alhassanain.org/english

and those who remained, Ali (as) put them in chains and took them, with their collective properties, to the holy Prophet (S) in Medina.

Before the Muslim forces reached Medina, this Surah was revealed. The holy Prophet (S) came out early that very morning and recited this Surah in prayer. After finishing the prayer some Muslim followers told him that they had not heard that Surah before. Then, he agreed and added that Ali (as) defeated the enemies, and Gabriel, bringing that Surah, had informed him of it the previous night.

A few days later Hazrat Ali (as) entered Medina with the 'spoils of war' and captives. [4]

Some believe that this is one of the clear examples of the verse and it is not an occasion of revelation.

By Those Which Raid At Dawn

As it was said earlier, this Surah begins with some awakening oaths.

At first, it says:

"By the panting chargers."

Some believe that the verse means: 'By the camels, of pilgrims, which run with panting breath from 'Arafat to Mash'ar (Sacred Monument) and run from Mash 'ar to Mina.'

The term /'adiyat/ is the plural form of /'adiyah/ based on /'adw/ that originally means 'to pass; to separate' and also 'enmity; running', but, here it means 'to run swiftly'.

The term /dabh/ means 'the sound of breathing hard of a running horse. '

As mentioned above, there are two different ideas in commenting on this verse.

The first idea says that the objective point of the oath is the horses which run swiftly towards the battlefields of Holy War, and since Holy War is a sacred action, these animals that run on its path are so worthy that they deserve to be sworn to.

The second idea considers the oath to be to the swift camels, of pilgrims, that run fast between the sacred places of Mecca and for the same reason they have a kind of sacredness that is fit to be sworn to.

On the occasion of revelation, of this Surah, some people, such as Ibn-Abbas and so on, have said that they are the horses that the Muslim fighters rode on to fight in the Battle of Badr, but Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) is narrated to have rejected this idea and said that there were only two horses in the Battle of Badr: One belonged to Zubayr and the other was Miqdad's.

On the contrary, they were the camels that ran from Arafat to Mash'ar and from Mash'ar to Mina'. Ibn-Abbas said when he heard that meaning from Hazrat Ali (as) he changed his mind and accepted the latter.

It is also probable that /'adiyat/ has such a vast meaning, that consists of both the horses of the fighters and the camels of the, pilgrims, and the purpose of the above narration is that its meaning should not be limited to horses, because this meaning is not right everywhere such as the clear example of it being the camels of pilgrims.

In some respects, this commentary seems more appropriate.

"And by those that sprint striking fire (with their hooves)."

The chargers pant, in war, obeying their masters. They sprint so fast that fire, which can be seen brighter at night, strikes from their hooves. Or, the camels, in Hajj pilgrimage, that run swiftly from one station to another, kick gravel from under their feet which strike each, other and sometimes causes sparks to appear.

The term /miiriyat/ is the plural form of /muriyah / derived from /ira'/ which means 'to make fire'; and the term /qadh/ means 'to strike pieces of stone, wood, iron or flint to each other in order to produce sparks. '

Then, in the third oath, it says:

"And by those which charge at dawn."

It was a custom of the Arabs, as Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayan, that they used to approach their foe by night and waited until dawn to make their attack.

In describing the occasion of revelation of these verses (or one of its clear examples) it was said that the troops of Islam under the leadership of Hazrat Ali (as) went toward the enemy by night. After reaching the foe they waited nearby until dawn when they attacked them quickly and violently and defeated them before they could show a considerable reaction.

And if the oaths refer to the camels of pilgrims, the purpose of this verse is 'the rush of camels from Mash'ar to Mina at the dawn of the Day of Sacrifice'.

The term /muqirat/ is the plural form of /muqirat/ based on /iqarat/ with the sense of 'to invade; raid; attack', and since this invasion is sometimes done with the purpose of taking the wealth of others, it is also used in the sense of 'predatory invasion'.

Then, it points to another speciality of those warriors and the mounts they ride on, saying:

"And stir thereby the dust aloft".

Or, because of the invasion of the camels, of pilgrims, from Mash'ar to Mina, the dust raised in the air.

The term /aearna/ derived from /itharah / has the meaning of raising 'dust or smoke' and sometimes, it has been used in the sense of 'evoking, stirring' and also with the meaning of the 'broadcasting of the sound waves in space'.

The term /naq'/ means 'dust' and it originally means 'to sink in water; to soak' and since going through dust is similar to that, this word has been employed for it.

For the last characteristic of their specialities it says:

"And penetrate into the midst (of the enemy)".

That attack was so quick and all of a sudden that the believers could cleave the enemy's force in a very short time and rushed into the midst of them to destroy them. That victory was obtained because of a swift action and the awareness, preparedness and courageousness of the believing warriors.

Or, it refers to the arrival of the pilgrims from Mash'ar into the center of Mina.

On the whole, we can conclude that the oaths are made to the chargers, to the brave defenders of Faith, to the panting breaths of the mounts of the warriors, to the striking fire from their hooves, to their swift attack, to the

particles of dust scattered in the air, and finally to their penetration into the midst of the foe and to their victory.

Although these ideas are not totally mentioned in the meanings of these oaths, they are all gathered in the implication of the words. Furthermore, they show how important the Holy War is.

Some have said that the oaths refer to the persons who can convey their virtues to others, make the sparks of knowledge manifest with their thoughts, attack at low desires and raise the level of the love for Allah both in themselves and others, and finally, dwell in the midst of those who are in

'llliyin, 'Heaven'.[5]

But, it clearly seems that these interpretations cannot be accepted as the commentary of the above verses except as being as a comparison regarding the commentary of the verse which is under discussion.

The substantive proposition of the great oaths, that is, what the oaths are taken for, is mentioned in verses 6-8 below.

It says:

"Surely, man is ungrateful to his Lord".

Man, i.e. unregenerate man who forgets or denies the divine guidance and the Prophets' preachings, and submits himself to his lusts, is surely ungrateful, and grossly selfish to his Lord and Cherisher.

The term /kanud/ is used for 'a land wherein nothing grows, or a person who is ungrateful and miserly'.

Commentators have cited about fifteen different meanings for the term /kanud/, but, they are, more or less, branches of the same as the original meaning cited above.

The holy Prophet (S) said about it in a tradition:

"The one who with holds his help (from others), and beats his servant is 'kanud'.[6]

On the whole,

/kanud/ 'an ungrateful man',

here is in contrast with those who receive guidance and wage unceasing war with evil, then, some have commented on it as being an 'unbeliever'.

"And surely he is a witness to that".

Man is a witness to that because he has insight into himself. If he could conceal his true inner character from others he would not be able to hide it from Allah and his own conscience; whether he confesses this fact or not.

Some have said that the pronoun in /innahu/ refers to Allah, i.e. Allah is the witness to Man who has the quality of being

'ungrateful'.

But, regarding the verses before and after this verse whose similar pronouns refer to Man, this possibility seems very improbable, though many commentators have preferred this commentary.

It is also probable that the purpose is the witness of Man to his sins and wrong actions on the Day of Judgement, as many verses of the Qur'an confirm.

This very last commentary, here goes without saying that Man is his own witness. The verse has a broad meaning so that it envelops the idea that Man is witness to his own ungratefulness and miserliness in this world, too.

It is true that Man is sometimes unable to know himself so he deceives his conscience and then his hideous evil behaviour with the ornament of Satan, appears to him beautiful and correct; but for the problem of ungratefulness and miserliness, the case is so clear that he cannot conceal it or deceive his conscience.

Again, in the next verse, it says:

"And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth".

And the same tenaciousness in the love of wealth causes his ungratefulness and miserliness.

The term /xayr/ has a vast meaning including any good or goodness such as charity, gifts of money or kind, public welfare, knowledge, Heaven, happiness, etc. Certainly, the love of them is not a reproachable thing that the Qur'an blames in the above sense. That is why the commentators have rendered it, here into 'wealth' which has sense both in the above verse and in some other verses of the Qur'an.

For example, Surah Baqara, No. 2, verse 180 says:

"It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if you leave any goods, that you make a bequest to parents and next of kin..."

Surely using the term /xayr/ for the sense of 'wealth' is for the sake of wealth, itself, which is a good thing because it can be the means of doing numerous kinds of good, however, the ungrateful disbelieving man changes its real goal and uses it in the way of self-interest.

Then, in the next verses, where interrogation is for an emphasis, with a threatening tone, it says:

"Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is raised"?

"And that which is in the breasts is made known?"

"Surely their Lord is aware of them on That Day"

The term /bu'thira/ is based on /ba'tharat/ and originally means 'to scatter abroad; turn upside down' and since the graves turn upside down when the dead rise and what is in them appears, then, this meaning has been used for the Resurrection.

The term /qubur/ is the plural form of /qabr/ 'grave' and is used for the place that covers the corpse from the sight of Mankind, because some people have no grave, for instance, like those whose corpses are sunk in the sea or are burnt and the remaining ashes scattered, so the term has a broad meaning here.

The term /hussila/ is derived from /tahsil/ which means, here 'to make manifest'. The deeds of everyone, good or evil, will be made manifest on the Day of Judgement and they will be rewarded accordingly.

It is similar to what Surah Tariq, No. 86, verse 9 says:

"On the Day when hidden things will be made manifest".

We know that Allah always knows everything, but the idea of 'That Day' is an emphasis on this matter that He knows all their secrets and on that Day, which is the day of retribution, He will reward them their deeds and beliefs.

Yes, Allah is always aware and in all circumstances, knows any secret that we have, inside or out, but the fruit of this awareness is more clear and more tangible for us in the Hereafter when we receive our reward or penalty.

This is also a warning to all Mankind, the belief of which is a firm barrier between them and sins whether they are clear or hidden, outside or in. The training effect of this belief is not concealed from anyone.

Explanation: Is Man Naturally Ungrateful?

It is possible that some persons think of the verse:

"Surely man is ungrateful to his Lord"

in a way that the state of being

'ungrateful'

is within the nature of all men. If so, how does it adapt to the invitation of Man's innate nature and wakeful conscience to giving thanks to the Benefactor?

A similar state to this question is found in many verses of the Holy Qur'an which introduces Man to some cases of his weaknesses.

For example, in Surah Ahzab, No. 33, Verse 72 it says:

"...He was indeed unjust and foolish (ignorant)".

Surah Ma'arij, No. 70, Verse 19 qualifies Man as

'impatient',

saying:

"Truly man was created impatient".

Surah Hud, No 11, Verse 9 says:

"...he is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy".

And Surah 'Alaq, No. 96, Verse 6 says about him:

"Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)".

Are all these weaknesses really found in Man? Surah Asra, No. 17, Verse 70 stipulates that:

"We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and confessed on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation".

Taking note of one point makes the answer to this question clear. The point is that Man has two poles in his entity and it is for the same reason that he can be the best of all in one dimension, or be the worst unto the lowest of the low in another.

If he accepts the guidance of the divine educators, the lessons of the prophets, and follows the inspirations of his conscience in self-perfection, he will become an example of those about whom Allah says:

"We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation".

But, if he turns his back on Faith and piety and goes astray from the path of the divine prophets, he changes into an 'unjust', 'ignorant', 'desperate', 'impatient' and 'ungrateful' ingrate.

Thus, there would be no contrast found in them, but, each of them refers to one of the dimensions (poles) of Man.

Yes, Man can obtain all the good things, virtues, and honours whose origin is inside Man's own nature, as he can go unto the farthest point of the opposite direction. That is why no creature in the world is able to cover such a large and long distance between these two extremes of high and low.

Supplication

O Lord! Bestow on us the success of being in the Holy War on the way of gaining Your pleasure.

O Lord! The despotic soul tends towards ungratefulness and blasphemy; please, save us from its harm.

O Lord! You know the apparent and hidden secrets of all, and You know our actions; treat us with Your Mercy and Kindness.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10, p. 527.
2. Ibid
3. Durr-al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 383.
4. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 21, p. 66 ; and Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 528.
5. Tafsir-i-Baydawi, p. 495.
6. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 530.

Surah Qari’ah, Chapter 101

(The Calamity)

Number of Verses: 11

Contents of Surah Qari'ah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, on the whole, describes the Resurrection Day and its preliminary events. The style is alarming and awakening with some clear warnings. According to this Surah, people are divided into two definite groups: Those whose good deeds weigh heavy by the Divine Scales will rejoice in a pleasant life; and those whose good deeds weigh light will have the abyss as their abode.

The name of the Surah, Al-Qariah, is taken from the first verse.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

On the virtue of reciting the Surah, a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) says:

“He who recites Al-Qari'ah, Allah secures him from the calamity of (believing in) Dajjal (the deceiver) and also from the hideousness of Hell on the Day of Judgement, Allah willing,”[1]

Surah Qari’ah, Verses 1-11

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الْقَارِعَةُ

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنفُوشِ

فَأَمَّا مَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَهْ

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

1. “The Calamity”
2. “What is the Calamity?”
3. “And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is?”
4. “(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about,”
5. “And the mountains will be like carded wool.”

6. "So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"
7. "He will be in a life well-pleasing."
8. "And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,"
9. "Then his abode will be Hawiyah' (the abyss)."
10. "And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"
11. "(It is) a Raging Fire."

The Calamity

In these verses, which are about the circumstances of the Judgement Day, first it says:

"The Calamity"
"What is the Calamity?"

The term /qari'ah/ is based on /qar'/ which means 'to beat or strike something on something else so that a sound is heard', hence 'whip' and 'hammer' are termed /miqra'ah/, and further, any important, grievous event is called /qari'ah/.

Regarding the senses put in verses 2 and 3 that even the holy Prophet (S) is told:

"And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is",

clarifies the fact that this event is so great that no imagination can comprehend it.

In any event, many commentators have said that /qari'ah/ is one of the names of the Day of Judgement. They have not clarified that this sense refers to the events before the Hereafter when this world will be destroyed, the Sun and the Moon will become dark, and the seas will overflow. If it is so, the name selected for the event, Qari'ah, has a clear reason.

Or, if the purpose is the second stage, i.e., the resurrection of the dead and the new design in the world of being, the use of the word 'qari'ah' is for the reason that fear and terror of that Day will strike the hearts.

The verses following that verse partly agree with the incident of the world destruction, and partly refer to the resurrection of the dead, but, on the whole, the first probability seems more appropriate, though both incidents, in these verses, are mentioned one after another; (like many other verses of the Qur'an which inform about the Hereafter).

Then, to describe that amazing Day, it says:

"(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about."

The term /faras/ is the plural form of /farasah/. Many commentators have considered it as meaning 'moths' while some others have rendered it to mean 'locusts'.

The meaning of the word, itself, is the former one, of course, so they may have adapted it to the meaning in Surah Qamar, No. 54, verse 7 in which people, on That Day, are likened to 'scattered locusts':

"They will come forth - their eyes humbled - from their graves, (torpid) like locusts scattered abroad."

It is probable that likening people to 'moths' is for the reason that the state of moths in a violent storm gives some idea of the confusion, distress, and helplessness of which men are overwhelmed with on the Day of Judgement.

Again, the question arises, here thus: is this confusion, distress and horrible helplessness because of the end of this physical world, or, is it because of the beginning of the spiritual world, the Hereafter?

The answer to the question is clearly found in what is said above.

Then, referring to another speciality of that Day, it says:

"And the mountains will be like carded wool."

The term /ihn/ means 'colored wool', and the term /manfus/, based on /nafs/, means 'teased, carded (wool)' which is usually done by special means on a wool-carder.

It was mentioned before that according to the different verses of Qur'an, at the threshold of the Hereafter, first, mountains will move, then, they will cleave as under and break into pieces, and finally they will turn into dust and scatter in the air, which, in this verse, is likened to colored-carded wool; the wool which travels with storms and will be seen only by its color. This is the last stage in the destruction of the mountains.

This idea may also refer to the various colors of the mountains, because the mountains, on the earth, range in color and each has a special color.

In any case, this meaning shows that the above verses speak about the first stage of the Hereafter; that is, the stage of destruction and the end of the world.

Then, reference is made to the Resurrection stage and the reviving of the dead and their division into two groups.

It says:

"So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"
"He will be in a life well-pleasing."
"And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,"
"Then his abode will be 'Hawiyah' (the abyss)."
"And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"
"(It is) a Raging Fire."

The term /mawazin/ is the plural form of /mizan/ which means 'scales, balance'; an instrument which was used for weighing material things, at first, and then, figuratively, was used for measuring spiritual things, too.

Some believe that, on That Day, the deeds of Man will appear in the form of corporeal beings which can be weighed, and they will actually be weighed by deed-scales.

It is also considered that the record, itself, may be weighed and if it contains good deeds recorded, it weighs heavy, otherwise, it is light or weightless.

But, apparently, it does not need these explanations.

The instrument for measuring deeds is not necessarily the ordinary weighing which is done with two scales, but it can be by any means of weighing, as a tradition says:

"Amir-al-Mo'mineen and other Imams from his descendents (as) are the scales by which our deeds are measured."[2]

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that when he was asked about the meaning of /mizan/ he answered:

"The scales and Justice are the same."[3]

Thus, with the existence of Allah's saints and /or the divine laws of justice by which the deeds of Man are compared, will be weighed and valued due to their similarity and adaptability to them.

By the way, the term /mawazin/, in its plural form, shows that the saints of Allah and the divine laws are individually separate scales of measurement, otherwise, the variety of the form and kind of Man's attributes and deeds demand different means of measurement.

Raqib cites in Mufradat:

"In the Holy Qur'an /mizan/ is sometimes used in the singular and sometimes in the plural form; the former refers to the One Who reckons, the Lord, and the latter refers to those who are reckoned with."

The term

/'isat-ir-raqiyah/ 'a life well-pleasing'

used in the verse, is a very interesting sense about the favourable life of the good-doers in Heaven which is thoroughly calm and peasant.

It is so pleasant that the life, itself, is

'well-pleasing',

which is the subjective case, instead of being 'well-pleased', which is the objective case.

This great privilege is only for the next life, because however much happy, favourable, safe, and pleasant the life of this world may be, it is still not free from many unpleasant factors. It is only the next-world-life that is thoroughly favourable, happy, and pleasant with full safety, tranquility and bounty.

The word

/umm/ 'mother',

mentioned in the verse, is for the reason that mother is generally a shelter for the child when. There is trouble and here it indicates that the sinner whose scale of good actions is light has no shelter, but Hell, and woe unto the one whose shelter is 'Hell'.

The term /hawiyah/ is based on /hawaya/ in the sense of 'to fall' and it is one of the names of Hell, because sinners fall into it and also, it denotes to the depth of the blazing fire of Hell.

The term /hamiyah/ is based on /hamy/ with the meaning of 'violent heat', and /hamiyah/, here refers to the extraordinary burning, hot fire of Hell.

In any case, the phrase

"And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"

"(It is) a Raging Fire"

is an emphasis on the idea that chastisement of the Hereafter and the fire of Hell is beyond the consideration of all men.

Weighing the Good Deeds; the Deciding Factors

No doubt, the values of the deeds of good-doers are not the same. They are very different from each other. So, some good actions, which are the cause of the scales of deeds being heavier on the Day of Judgement, are emphasized on more than others.

(According to a tradition, commenting on the phrase

'there is no god, but Allah'

the holy Prophet (S) said:

"It points to the Oneness of Allah and no action is accepted by Allah without it. It is the word of virtue by which the scales of deeds will be weighed heavy on the Day of judgement."[4]

In another tradition, from Hazrat Ali (as) about the attestation to the Oneness of Allah and the prophecy of the holy Prophet (S) he has said:

"The scales by which deeds are measured without these two are light and they are heavy with them."[5]

Another tradition from Imam Baqir or Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"There is nothing on the scales heavier than the benediction upon Prophet Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad".

Then, he continues saying:

"On the Day of Judgement some people will come for their account whose scale of (good) deeds are light, but, these will become heavy when the 'benediction upon Prophet Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad is added to it."[6]

Supplication

O Lord! Change the scales of our good deeds to heavy from our love for Muhammad (S) and the progeny of Muhammad (as).

O Lord! It is impossible for us to approach the state of 'being in a life well-pleasing', but by Your Favor. Might You, Yourself, help us to reach it.

O Lord! The Fire of Hell is a blazing inferno and we cannot bear it. By Your Grace keep us far from it.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 530.
2. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 7, p. 251.
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 2, p. 5.
4. Nuruth Thaqalayn. vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 12.
5. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 8.
6. Ibid. , tradition 7.

Surah Takathur, Chapter 102

(Vying in Exuberance)

Number of Verses: 8

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Numerous commentators believe that this Surah has been revealed in Mecca; then the subject mentioned in the Surah about vying and self-glorification is, customarily, referring to the tribes of Quraish who used to boast to each other, in vain, about worthless affairs.

But, some others, such as the late Tabarsi who cited his idea in Majma'-al-Bayan, believe that the Surah was revealed in Medina, and what is said is it about vying and boasting in each other's sight refers to the Jews or to two tribes among the 'Ansar'. But, regarding the close similarity that this Surah, being Meccan, has with the Meccan Suras, seems more proper.

The content of the Surah in general is firstly, a scorn on those people who, based on things of no value, boast to each other and secondly, there is a warning about the proposition of the Hereafter and the Hell-fire; and finally, warning that we will be questioned about the bounties in our life.

The name of the Surah is derived from the words in the first verse.

The Virtue of Studying Surah Takathur

On the virtue of reciting the Surah, a tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"He who recites it, Allah will not account the bounties he was given in the world and He will award him such a reward as if he had recited one thousand verses (of the Qur'an). [1]

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that

"The recitation of this Surah in the obligatory and optional prayers has a reward similar to Martyrdom." [2]

It is obvious that these total rewards are for the one who recites it, practices it in his daily life and harmonizes his mind and soul with it.

Surah Takathur, Verses 1-8

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

أَلْهَاكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ

حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

1. "Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance."
2. "Until you visit the graves."
3. "Nay! You shall soon know,"
4. "Again, Nay! You shall soon know."
5. "Nay! Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware!)"
6. "You shall certainly see the blazing fire,"
7. "Again, you will surely see it with certainty of sight!"
8. "Then, on that Day you will surely be questioned about the joy (you indulged in)."

The Occasion of Revelation

As we mentioned before, commentators believe that this Surah was revealed against the tribes who vied in boasting with one another and prided themselves on increasing their wealth, position, and the number of their adherents so to add to the number of men in each tribe, they even went to the cemetery and counted the tribal graves.

Some believe that the meaning refers to two tribes from the tribes of Quraish in Mecca, while some others think it refers to two tribes from the helpers of the Prophet (S), the Ansar, in Medina; and still, some relate it to the vying of the Jews to others, though to consider the Surah Meccan seems more appropriate.

But, it is certain that whatever these occasions of revelation could be, they never limit the meaning of the verse.

The Affliction of Vying in Exuberance!

In these verses, at first, in a scorning tone, it says:

"Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance",
"Until you visit the graves",

To enumerate the graves of your dead.

In commenting on the verse, this probability has also been conveyed that 'vying' has engaged them so much so that it will continuously persist until they enter their graves.

But, the first meaning,

'Until you visit the graves'

considering the occasion of revelation and also the words of Hazrat Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balagha, which will be dealt with later, is more fitting.

The term /alhakum/ is based on the root /lahw/ with the meaning of 'amusement, being busy with unimportant small things and neglectful of great aims and ideas.' Raqib cites in Mufradat: "The word /lahw /means something that amuses one with itself and detains him from his real goals."

The term /takathur/ is derived from, /kithrat/ with the sense of 'vying, glorifying and boasting in each other's sight'.

The term /zurtum/ is based on /ziyarat/ and /zaur/ which originally means 'the upper part of the chest' and later, it has been used in the sense of 'to visit' and 'to face with'.

The term /maqabir/ is the plural form of /maqbirah/ with the meaning of 'the place of the grave of a corpse'; and visiting the graves metaphorically means "death" (according to some commentaries), or it has the meaning of 'going to the graves in order to vie for the number of the dead'.

As it was said earlier, the second meaning seems more proper.

One of the evidences to this idea is the words of Hazrat Ali (as), on this matter, cited in Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon, No. 221, that after reciting

"Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance",

"Until you visit the graves",

he said:

"Row distant (from achievement) is their aim, how neglectful are these visitors and how difficult is the affair. They had not taken lessons from things which are full of lessons, but, they took them from far off places. Do they boast on the dead bodies of their forefathers, or do they regard the number of dead persons as a grounds for feeling boastful of their numbers?

They want to revive the bodies that have become spiritless and the moments that have ceased; those which are more entitled to be a source of lesson than a source of pride and those are more suitable for being a source of humility than of honour."[3]

In the next verse they are severely threatened:

"Nay! You shall soon know,"

"Again, Nay! You shall soon know."

A group of commentators have considered these two verses as a repetition and emphasis on one matter. They, in a general form, inform of the punishments waiting for these vying, proud people.

Some have related the first verse to the chastisement in the graves and purgatory after the death that Man is faced with, and the second to the punishment in the Hereafter.

It is narrated that Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as), in a tradition, said:

"Some of us were in doubt about the chastisement in the grave until the time that Surah Takathur was revealed, (the verse) says:

'Nay! You shall soon know'

which indicated (the punishment) in the grave, and (the verse)

'Again, nay! You shall soon know'

(refers to it) in the Hereafter."[4]

Then, it adds that it is not such as you vying, proud people think.

If you believed in the Hereafter and knew it with the you would never indulge in such vain affairs and vie for foolish things:

"Nay! Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware!)".

Then, for a stronger warning and a more emphatic statement it says:

"You shall certainly see the blazing Fire,"

"Again, you will surely see it with certainty of sight!"

"Then, on that Day you will surely be questioned about the joy (you indulged in)."

On That Day, you must clarify how you enjoyed the bounties of Allah, in your life, and whether you used them in the way of obeying Allah or committing sin and consequently, wasting them.

Explanations

The Source of Vying

It is understood from the above verses that one of the main factors in vying and pride is ignorance of the rewards and punishments given by Allah, for our deeds and the lack of Faith in the Resurrection.

Besides, Man's ignorance of his weaknesses, his creation and his final destiny are among the causes of the existence of this pride and vying. That is why the Holy Qur'an, to break this vying and pride, tells the story of the destruction of some earlier nations in different verses, and how they were simply vanished while they had much power and possibilities. They were destroyed by wind, lightening, earthquake, excessive rain and sometimes, small baked clay carried by little birds.

Yet, What is This Mass of Vying and Pride For?

Another factor for this status is the feeling of weakness and helplessness originating from defects some people have, themselves, and they want to cover them with vying and pride. Concerning this, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"No one is proud or behaves arrogantly except for the disgrace that he finds in himself."[5]

Another tradition from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) says:

"Two things have killed people: the fear of poverty (which forces man to gather wealth by any means and any way), and demanding pride."[6]

And verily, this very unreasonable fear of poverty and vying between individuals, tribes, and societies are among the greatest causes of greed, lowliness, mammonism, destructive rivalries and many other social vices.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"I do not fear you for poverty, but I fear you because of lying."[7]

All it was said before, the term 'Takathur' originally means 'vying', but, it is sometimes applied to the 'act of multiplying' especially in piling up wealth.

We conclude this subject with a meaningful tradition from the Prophet (S) who commenting on the verse

"Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance"

said:

"Man says 'My wealth, my wealth' but you have not from your wealth save the food you eat, what you wear, and what you spend in the way of Allah."[8]

This is, of course, a delicate, interesting point that everyone's share from the total wealth he gathers and sometimes does not pay the least attention to whether it is lawful or unlawful, is only the very small portion that he eats, drinks, wears, and spends in the way of Allah; and knows that what he uses, himself, is little, then, it is better to increase his share by spending a part of it in the way of Allah; and the more the better.

Certitude and its Degrees

'Certitude' (yaqin)

is the opposite case to 'doubt' as 'knowledge' contrasts with 'ignorance', and means 'the clarity and positiveness of something'. According to what is understood from the Islamic narrations and traditions, one of the strongest features of Faith is called 'yaqin'.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Faith is one degree higher than IsIam, and 'Taqwa' virtue, is one degree higher than Faith, and yaqin', certitude, is one degree higher than 'taqwa'.

Then, he added:

"Nothing is divided less among people than certitude (yaqin)".

Then, he (as) was asked what 'yaqin' meant and he replied:

"(It is) trust in Allah, obedience to Allah, well-pleasing with the Will of Allah, and leaving all of (one's) affairs to Allah". [9]

This highness of the position of 'yaqin', certitude, to the positions of virtue, Faith, and Islam is somewhat like that which is mentioned and emphasized in other Islamic narrations, too.

From these statements and other evidences we clearly realize that when a person obtains the position of 'certitude' (yaqin) a special calmness and quietness fills his heart and his soul, completely.

In any event, certitude (yaqin) has degrees which are referred to in the verses of the Surah under discussion and in Surah Waqi'ah, No. 56, verse 95:

"Verily, this is the very truth and certainty".

Certainty of knowledge (yaqin) has been described as having three stages:

1. Certitude of knowledge or certainty of mind ('Ilm-ul-yaqin) which is the Faith that a person obtains by various means such as the one who sees smoke and believes there is fire there.

2 Certainty of Sight ('Iym-ul-yaqin) which is what one sees with one's eyes; for instance, one sees the fire, himself.

3. The absolute truth of assured certainty (Haqq-ul-yaqin) which means the 'realization' or the 'knowledge proper' and is the personal experience as when the one who arrives in the fire oneself and feels the heat of it and takes the attributes of fire into his entity. This very state is the highest degree of 'yaqin'.

In fact, the first stage is general; the second stage is for pious people; and the third stage is for those who are in some way chosen above others.

A tradition from the Holy Prophet (S) denotes that some people asked him about a matter that they had heard about some of the companions of Prophet Jesus (as) who used to walk on water, and he (S) said:

"If their certitude was in a highest position they could walk in the air." [10]

The late 'Alamah Tabatabai, after mentioning this tradition, adds that everything pivots on the certitude to Allah, the Glorified, and to know no other means of the effects of this world, but Allah. Therefore, the more the

Faith and certainty, in a person, is the absolute power of Allah, the more objects, in this world, will be obedient to him.

And this is the secret of the relation of certitude (yaqin) and the 'extraordinary interference' in the world of creation.

All Will See Hell

The phrase /latarawonn-al-jahim/ has two different commentaries. The first is the observation of Hell in the Hereafter, by disbelievers, or generally for all humans and Jinn.

The second meaning is its observation by spiritual intuition in this very world. In this case the phrase is the answer to the conditional proposition.

It says:

"...Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware)".

"You shall certainly see the blazing fire"

in this very life and with the sight of spiritual intuition, because we know that Paradise and Hell are prepared and exist just now.

But, as was said earlier, the first commentary is more fitting with the following verses which refer to the Day of Justice, therefore, this is a decisive proposition, not a conditional one.

What Bounties Are Asked About in the Hereafter?

The last verse, in this Surah, denotes that on Doomsday we will be questioned about the bounties we have incurred. Some have said that it means the bounty of health and mind-security; some others believe it refers to healthiness and security and finally, some have considered all bounties in its meaning.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"Bounty (na'im)

is a 'ripe date' and 'cold water'".

According to another tradition, Abu Hanifah asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the meaning of this verse, then, he (as) returned the question to him and asked him what he thought

/na'im/ 'bounty'

was, and he replied that it was 'food' and 'cold water'.

Then, the Imam said that if Allah kept him before Him to ask him about every morsel he ate and every drop of drink he drank, his stay, there, would be very long.

Abu Hanifah asked again about the meaning of /na'im/ and Imam (as) said:

"It refers to us, Ahlul-Bait, for whom Allah has given His servants bounties, and made them united after they were diverse and joined their hearts together in brotherhood after they had been enemies (with each other) and He has guided them to Islam through us and this is the bounty that will not cease, and Allah asks them about the 'right' of the bounty which He has given them and guided them to Islam by us.

Yes,

'bounty'

is the Prophet (S) and his household."[11]

The meaning of these apparently different traditions is that the term /na'im / has a very vast sense so that it covers all the divine bounties; from spiritual ones such as religion, Faith, Islam, Qur'an and vicegerency to material ones whether they are personal or social. But, the more important bounties like the bounty of 'Faith and vicegerency' are asked about more from them than if they had fulfilled their complete duty to them or not.

How could it be possible that these bounties would not be asked for when they are great, useful assets endowed to Man and each of which should be appreciated, thanked and used in their appropriate ways.

Supplication

O Lord! Shower upon us, ceaselessly, Your, unlimited bounties especially the bounty of 'Faith and vicegerency'.

O Lord! Give us the success of fulfilling our duties for them as their right is.

O Lord! Please increase these bounties for us and never deprive us from them.

Notes

1. Majma -al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 532.
2. Ibid.
3. Nah-jul-Balagha, Sermon No. 221 (Arabic version).
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 534.
5. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 236, tradition 17.
6. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol, 73, p, 290, tradition 12.
7. Durr-ul Manthur, vol, 6, p. 387.
8. Sahih-i-Muslim (as Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 534 quotes).
9. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 138, tradition 4.
10. Al-Mizan, vol. 6, p. 200.
11. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 535.

Surah Asr, Chapter 103

(Time)

Number of Verses: 11

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

It is known that this Surah was revealed in Mecca, though some commentators have also said that it is probably Medinan. Its short verses, as well as its tone and style, attest to the first idea, too.

In any event, the completeness of this Surah is so much that, according to some commentators, all the knowledge and objectives of Qur'an are briefly gathered in this single Surah. In other words, this short Surah leads Man to a total complete program for his happiness.

It begins with a meaningful oath to 'Time', whose commentary will be delivered later, to refer to the loss existing in nature along the gradual path in the lives of all human beings except for the persons who have: Faith, good deeds and who enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience. These four principles involve, in fact, the theological, practical, personal, and social doctrine of Islam.

The Virtue of Studying Surah 'Asr

On the virtue of reciting the Surah, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who recites (Surah) 'Asr, in his optional prayers, Allah will raise him with a shining, bright face, cheerful features, and delighted eyes (looking upon the blessings of Allah), until when he enters Paradise on the Day of Judgement."[1]

It is obvious that these honours and pleasures belong to the one who practices these four principles in his life and does not suffice only to the mere reciting of the Surah.

Surah 'Asr, Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالْعَصْرِ

إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

1. "By Time",

2. "Surely man is in loss,"

3. "Save those who believe and do good deeds, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.

The Only Path to Salvation

At the beginning of this Surah we are faced with a new oath, thus:

"By Time,"

The term /‘asr/ literally means 'to press, to squeeze' and then, it has figuratively been used for 'evening' meaning 'the affairs of the day are rolled and squeezed into the evening'.

After that the word has been used in the sense of -absolute time, in general; the course in the history of Man or a part of it, such as the appearance of Islam and the Call of the holy Prophet (S), and the like. This is why commentators have provided different probable meanings for the commentary of the oath which are given as follows:

1. Some have rendered it to mean the time of 'evening' with the evidence that in some other verses of the Holy Qur'an an oath is taken to the beginning of the day, like Surah Duha, No. 93, verse 1:

“By the Glorious Morning Light”,

or Surah Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 34:

“And by the Dawn as it shineth forth”.

This oath is made due to the importance that this time of day has, since this time is the time when the regularity in the life of Man varies; daily activities end, people return to their homes, birds and cattle come back to their shelters, the sun sets on the horizon in the West, and night gradually falls.

This variation attracts Man's attention to the endless, everlasting power of Allah dominating over this regularity. It is, indeed, a sign out of the signs of the Divine Unity that deserves an oath to be taken to.

2. Some others consider it to be the

'Time'

through the ages of the history of Mankind, which is full of lessons and teachings from the startling events which have occurred. For the same reason, it has such a dignity that matches the Divine Oath.

3. Some have emphasized on a proper part of the time like the Age of the Holy Prophet (S) or the Rise of the twelfth Imam, 'Mahdi' (as), which has peculiar specialities and a definite glory in the history of Man, to which, they say, the oath refers to. [2]

4. Some have also referred to the original meaning of the term and say that the oath points to the various kinds of stresses and difficulties that happen during the lives of people which awaken them from their neglectful sleep, reminds them of Allah, and develops the spirit of patience and constancy in them.

5. Some other commentators have taken it to mean 'the chosen ones' who are the 'pick of the crop' in the world of creation.

6. And finally, some others have rendered the word' 'Asr' to mean the ceremonial afternoon prayer for its special importance among the obligatory prayers, because they interpret /salat-i-wusta/, on which the Qur'an emphasizes particularly, as afternoon prayer.

The above ideas are not contradictory to each other and they may be all correct for the meaning of the verse, and the oath could be taken to the whole of those important matters, but among all of them the most fitting one is 'Asr with the meaning of

'Time'

and the history of Man; because, as it was said repeatedly before, the oaths of the Qur'an are in relation to the subject that the oath is taken for, and it is certain that the loss human beings incur in their lives is the consequence of passing their lifetime, or passing the Age of the Call of the Prophet (S), because the command of 'four principles', mentioned in the, last part of the Surah, was revealed in that very life.

Referring to the above explanations, it makes the greatness of the Qur'an and the vastness of its meaning clear when one word of it is so expressive and deserves so many profound and diverse interpretations.

In the following verse it refers to the object that this great oath is made to. It says:

"Surely man is in loss".

They, willy nilly, will lose the capital of their existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline and abilities fade.

Yes, Man is like a person who possesses great capital and without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss.

The term /xusr/ as well as /xusran/, as Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, means 'declining the capital'. Sometimes it is concerned with humans and it is said that such and such a person has suffered loss; and sometimes it is concerned with the action, itself, and it is said that the persons' bargain showed a loss. This word is often used for outward capital such as wealth and position, but it is sometimes used also for inward capital, like that of health, wisdom, faith and reward.

This is the same thing that Allah has referred to as 'the evident Loss' in Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 15; where it says:

"...truly those in loss are those who lose their own souls and their people on the Day of Judgement: Ah! That is indeed the (real and) evident Loss!"

Commenting on the verse under discussion, Fakhr-i-Razi cites:

One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller who had been calling again and again:

'Have pity on him whose capital is melting'.

He said to himself that it was the meaning of

'surely man is in loss'.

Time passes and one's lifetime ends, but, he does not obtain any reward. Then, he, in the case, is in loss. [3]

However, according to Islamic world-view, this world is a market of bargaining, as a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-Muhammad Naqi (the tenth Imam) (as) says:

"The world is a market wherein some people gain and some others lose".[4]

The verse under discussion denotes that all lose in this market except a select group of people, whom will be referred to in the next verse.

Yes, there is only one way to avoid this great compulsory loss; the only way which is pointed out in the last verse of the Surah.

It says:

"Save those who believe and do good deeds, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience".

In other words, the thing that can change this great loss to profit, a wonderful gain, is that in place of losing this capital we try to obtain a more valuable and better capital in order not only to fill its empty room, but, also to earn something thousands and thousands times better and more valuable than that.

Every breath we take is a step toward death, as Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"The breaths of man are his steps (put forward) towards his death".[5]

Of course, nothing can match the priceless capital of Man; his life-time, save the pleasure of being close to Allah with gaining His pleasure.

Or, as Hazrat Ali (as) has said:

"Verily there is no price for you save Heaven. Beware not to sell it; save for it".[6]

There is reason for one of the names of the Hereafter being

/yaum-ut-taqabun/ 'a day of mutual loss'[7],

a day when it will be made clear who has lost.

The beauty of the matter is in that on the one hand, the buyer of the capital of the souls of the believers is Allah, the Almighty, as Surah Taubah, No. 9, Verse 11 says:

"Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise)..."

On the other hand, He buys the little and small materials, too, when it says:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it"[8]**.**

And further, He pays a great deal for a little; sometimes tenfold and sometimes upto seven hundred times as much, or more than that.

For example:

Surah Baqarah, No. 2, Verse 261 says:

"...of a grain of corn: It groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth..."

Still more, having given all the capitals to us He, Himself, is so Gracious that He purchases them back for the dearest price.

Explanation: Salvation Through Four Principles

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an offers a complete program with four principles which can make us free from that great loss.

The first principle is Faith which forms the basis of all activities of Man, because all the practical movements he has originate from his theological doctrines, outside the realm of animals whose movements are from their instincts.

In other words, the actions of Man are reflections of his beliefs and thoughts. For the same reason all prophets used to improve the basis of the Faith of their people first and before anything else, and worked especially against blasphemy which is the source of many kinds of corruptions and miseries.

It is interesting to note that Faith, here is mentioned in an abstract form in order to include the Faith in all things sacred, like belief in Allah and His

attributes, belief in the Hereafter and Reckoning, reward and punishment, the Divine Books and prophets as well as their vicegerents.

In the second principle it refers to the worthy product of the fruitful tree of Faith, the Good Deeds.

What a vast and expressive sense the phrase

'good deeds'

is!

Yes, verily

'good deeds'

are indeed not only 'worthy deeds', adorations, charity for the sake of Allah, Holy War on the path of Allah, and learning divine knowledge, but it also includes every worthy action that can be a means applied in the way towards soul-perfection, moral improvement, nearness to Allah, and the progression of the human society in all fields.

This meaning envelops all good deeds from even the tiny ones like moving a troublesome stone out of people's way to saving millions and millions of men from aberration, perdition and going astray.

When in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as)

'good deeds'

is rendered into 'equivalence and generous help to bretheren', it is a statement of a clear example.

Sometimes 'good actions' may be issued by some unbelieving persons, but this behaviour is not certainly so profound and vast, because they are not based deeply on divine motives, thus they are hollow.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned the word /salihat/ particularly in the plural form and especially with (al ال) at the beginning with the meaning of 'generality' and indicates the fact that the shield against that natural automatic loss is, next to Faith, the fulfillment of all good deeds, and not to suffice just one or a few of them. and truly, if Faith settles deeply in the soul of a person, this very effect will be produced in him.

Faith is not a mere single thought or belief in the mind, free from any affect, it changes the whole entity of Man to, its own essence.

Faith is like a bright lamp inside a room which not only gives light to the room, but the beams penetrate through all the windows and spaces to the outside so that everyone who passes by, outside, can realize the existence of that bright light inside the room.

Similarly, when a person has the light of Faith bright inside his soul, his tongue, eyes, ears, hands and feet reflect that light to others and the movements of every limb, outside, show that there is a light inside.

For that reason, in the verses of Qur'an the words

'good deed'

and

'Faith'

often come together as interdependent; for example, Surah 'Nahl, No. 16, verse 97 says:

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure..."

Also, in Surah Mo'minun, No. 13, verses 99 and 100, the wrong doers, after departing from this world, regret that they had not done good deeds, so, they insist on saying:

"...O' my Lord, send me back (to life),"

"In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected..."

Again, in the same Surah, verse 51, Allah bids to His apostles:

"O ye apostles! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness..."

And since

'Faith'

and

'good deeds'

cannot endure in a society unless there is an invitation to the right and truth, and the acknowledgement of it, on the one hand, and an invitation to patience and constancy along the path of the achievement of that invitation, on the other hand, for completing the first two principles,

'Faith'

and

'good deeds',

the second two principles are, now, pointed out.

The third principle, the general invitation of all to

'Truth'

is referred to, so that all the members of the human race will fully recognize right from wrong and observing it will never forget it throughout their lives.

The term /tawasau/ is based on /tawasi /and as Raqib cites in Mufradat, it means 'to enjoin or recommend to one another'.

The term /haqq/ means 'Truth' or 'adapting to Truth'. There are twelve meanings used or applied for this term in the Holy Qur'an, as are mentioned in 'Wujuh-i-Qur'an', such as: Allah, Qur'an, Islam, theism, justice, truthfulness, sincerity, clarity, obligation and the like, all of which refer to the root word mentioned above.

In any case, the phrase /tawasau-bil-haqq/ has such a vast meaning that includes both 'enjoin the good and forbidding of wrong' and 'guiding with teaching the ignorant' or 'admonishing the neglectfull' and 'encouraging and preaching Faith together with good deeds'.

It is needless to go into the details about those who enjoin on others truth, because it is understood that they should be advocators and administrators of it in their own lives.

The fourth principle is based on patience, perseverance, and enjoining these on each other. Next to the acknowledgement of them, in the course of practice, everyone faces with some difficulties which need patience and constancy, otherwise, he can never adjudicate and do a righteous deed or preserve his Faith.

Yes, adjudication and execution of truth and fulfilling it in the society is not possible, except by a common decision and having constancy and perseverance against the problems.

The word

www.alhassanain.org/english

'patience',

here has a vast meaning that involves both the patience of obedience and the patience against motivations of committing sin, and patience for bitter happenings like losing members, forces, wealth, etc.

Regarding what was said here about the four principles towards salvation, which are truly the most complete program for men to follow in their lives, it makes it clear why some narrations denote that the followers and companions of the holy Prophet (S) used to recite Surah 'Asr when they reached each other or before saying good-bye and separating from each other, they reminded each other of the magnificent content of this short Surah.

Verily, if the Muslim believers of today would carry out these four principles in their personal and social lives, their problems and difficulties will be solved, their retardation will be amended, their defeats will be changed to victories, and the vice of their wickedness will be removed from them.

Supplication

O Lord! Bestow on us the patience and constancy needed for accepting and supporting the Truth.

O Lord! All of us are in loss and it is impossible for us to recompense it save with Your Grace.

O Lord! We wish to follow the content of the four-principle-command in the Surah; please help us to be successful.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 545.
2. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 666, tradition 5.
3. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi. vol. 32, p. 85.
4. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, p. 361.
5. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Saying 74.
6. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Saying 456.
7. mentioned in Surah Taqabun, No. 64, Verse 9
8. Surah Zilzal, No. 99, Verse 7

Surah Humazah, Chapter 104

(The Slanderer)

Number of Verses: 9

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is a Meccan Surah and condemns all sorts of scandal, and backbiting, and all those who do their best to gather and pile up wealth; for which they lose the whole value of their humanity, and defame, insult and mock those who do not possess that (wealth).

These selfish people, who are arrogant with their wealth, enjoy talking or suggesting evil of men or women by word, innuendo, behaviour, mimicry, sarcasm, or insult.

At the end of the Surah, the painful destiny of theirs is referred to. It says that they will be disgracefully thrown into Hell. Before their other belongings, the blazing fire of Hell will begin burning, withering their hearts and minds; the center of all their pride and arrogance. This ceaseless fire will be with them forever.

The Virtue of Studying Surah Humazah

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, a tradition from the Holy Prophet (S) says:

"He who recites this Surah will be rewarded 'ten good deeds' as many as the number of those who mocked Muhammad (S) and his companions".[1]

Also, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that he who recites it in any of his obligatory prayers, poverty will stay away from him, sustenance will approach him, and a hideous death will be repelled from him.[2]

Surah Humazah, Verses 1-9

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

كَلَّا لَيُنبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ

فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ

1. ***"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer",***
2. ***"Who amasses wealth and hoards it,"***
3. ***"Thinking that his wealth will make him immortal".***
4. ***"Nay, he will certainly be hurled into the 'Hutamah' ",***
5. ***"And what makes you know what the 'Hutamah' is"?***
6. ***"(It is) a fire kindled by Allah",***
7. ***"Which rises above the hearts".***
8. ***"Surely it will be closed over upon them",***
9. ***"In columns outstretched".***

The Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have said that the verses of this Surah were revealed against Walid-ibn-i-Muqayyarah who used to backbite the holy Prophet (S) and made sarcastic remarks and mocked him (S).

Some others believe that they are said against some of the chiefs of the pagan Arabs and the known enemies of Islam, such as: Akhnas-ibn-i-Shariq, Umiyat-ibn-i-Khalaf, and 'As-ibn-i-wa'il.

But, even if we accept these occasions of revelation, again the generality of the meaning of the verses remains unchanged, and it covers all those who have these characteristics.

Woe to Every Backbiter, Slanderer!

This Surah begins with the strongest terms of a threatening nature.

It says:

"Woe to Every Backbiter, Slanderer!"

They are those who sting others with their speech, behaviour, mimicry, or sarcasm at their backs or in front of them. They mock them and defame them with evil motives.

The Arabic terms /humazah/ and /lumazah/, both, are in 'the intensive amplification form'. The term /humazah/ is based on /hamz/ which originally means 'to break', and since backbiters and slanderers break the personality of others, the term /humazah/ is used for them. The term /lumazah/ is derived from /lamz/ with the meaning of 'to backbite' and 'defame'.

Commentators are divided in saying that these two terms refer to one meaning, 'backbiters', and therefore, these two are mentioned for emphasis; or there may be a difference between them.

But, some have said that the term /humazah/ means 'backbiter' and /lumazah/ means fault-finder'.

Further, some others believe that the term /humazah/ means 'those who make innuendos with their hands and face when trying to find faults in others', and /lumazah/ is meant for those who do this action with their tongues.

Also, some have meant the first term in the sense of 'fault-finding' in the face of people, and the second when done at their backs.

Again, some think the first means 'apparent fault-finding' and the second means 'subtle fault-finding done with the eyes and eyebrows'.

And sometimes, both of the terms have been meant 'the one who defames people by using low titles for them'.

But, from all of the above ideas it is understood that these two terms are used in the same sense with a vast meaning, so that it includes any fault-finding, defaming, backbiting, sarcasm, and mockery by tongue or mimicry.

In any event, the term

/wayl/ ‘woe'

is a strong threat against this group of people, and basically, the Qur'an takes a serious stance on these kind of persons, and there are some special meanings against them in it which are not said for any other sin similar to that.

For example, in Surah Tauba, No 9, verse 80, after threatening those blind-hearted hypocrites with a 'grievous penalty' for their ridicule of the Believers, it says:

“Whether thou ask for their forgiveness, or not, (their sin is unforgivable): If you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them...”

Similar to this idea in Surah Munafiqun, No 63, verse 5, about the hypocrites who mocked the holy Prophet (S) it says:

“And when it is said to them, 'Come, the Apostle of Allah will pray for your forgiveness', they turn aside their heads, and thou wouldn't see them turning away their faces in arrogance”.

Basically, from the point of Islam, the honour of people is considered highly respectable, hence, anything that causes them to be insulted is a great sin.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

“The lowest (one amongst) people is he who insults people”.[3]

Then, it refers to the source of their hideous behaviour.

It often originates from arrogance and pride caused by wealth, saying:

“Who amasses wealth and hoards it”.

He likes wealth so much so that he always counts his golden coins, or other things among his riches, and enjoys them as if each of them is an idol for himself, and wealth is the center of everything in his personality. It is natural that such a foolish, astray person always mock, the poor believing people.

The term /addadah/ is originally based on /‘add/ with the sense of 'to number, reckon'. Some have said that it may be based on /‘uddah/ ‘provision' with the meaning of 'preparing and storing properties for future difficult days'.

Some have also rendered it into abstinence and maintenance. But, the first comment; is the most clear of all.

At any rate, the verse refers to those who pile up wealth not as a means of help, but, as a goal. They observe no limit or condition in gathering it, gathering it whether it is lawful or unlawful, by honourable or dishonourable ways, from their own right or others' rights, oppressively, and they know it as the only sign of dignity and personality.

They do not want wealth to use for their necessities, that is why they never become satisfied and however much they increase their wealth they are more eager and avaricious to make it greater.

Otherwise, gathering wealth on a reasonable scale and through lawful means not only is not blameworthy, in Islam, but, it is sometimes referred to in the Holy Qur'an as

'the Bounty of Allah',

such as Surah Jumu'ah, No. 62, Verse 10 says:

"...And seek the Bounty of Allah...",

and in another occurence it is rendered to /xayr/ 'good':

"It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods, that he make a bequest..."[4].

Such wealth is, certainly, neither a cause of rebelling, nor a means of pride, nor an excuse for mocking others. But, the wealth which is the object of worship and is the final goal and invites its owner to rebellion, such as Qarun, is shame and scorn; is misery and adversity; is the cause of being far from Allah and dwelling in Hell-fire.

Gathering this kind of wealth, in abundance, is usually not possible except by committing numerous sins.

A tradition from Ali-ibn-Musa-ar-Rida (as) says:

"Wealth is not piled up but with five qualities: Intense stinginess, endless hope, dominant greed, breaking off connections with one's kindred, and preferring this world to the next world".[5]

Those who are gracious and not tied up in infinite hopes, observe the laws of the lawful and unlawful, serve their kindred, and do not hoard wealth, usually have considerable income.

"Thinking that his wealth will make him immortal".

It is interesting that the verb /axladah/, here is in the past tense form with the meaning that he thinks his wealth has made him as an immortal creature, - neither death nor sickness nor incidents can produce difficulties for him, because he thinks money, which he has in abundance, can solve every problem.

What a false imagination! Qarun had such treasures that

"Their keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men"

but, at the time of the rush of divine punishment, that wealth could not postpone his death even for a little while and Allah caused a short earthquake suddenly to swallow up him and his treasure:

"Then, We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself "[6].

The Pharoahs of Egypt had the most abundant of riches for, themselves, but, as Surah Dukhan, No. 44, verses 25-27 state:

"How many were the gardens and springs they left behind,"

"And corn-fields and noble buildings,"

"And wealth (and conveniences of life), wherein they had taken such delight".

They were easily delivered to others during a short time:

"Thus (was their end) and We made other people inherit (those things')"[7]

That is why, in the Hereafter, when the curtains will be removed and they realize their previous big mistake, they cry in agony saying:

"Of no profit to me has been my wealth!"
"My power has perished from me!"[8]**.**

In general, man dislikes destruction or mortality and tends to immortality and perpetuality. The existence of this very tendency helps us, In the discussions of Resurrection to know that Man has been created for eternity, otherwise he would not have the instinct of the love of perpetuality.

But, this arrogant, selfish, mamonish Man sometimes finds his perpetuality in some things that are just the cause of his destruction; for example, he considers wealth, which is often the enemy of his being, as a means of eternity.

This statement makes it clear that the thought of perpetuality by the means of wealth is a reason for gathering it, and gathering wealth is also a factor for having the right to mock others; or so they think.

To respond to this group of people, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Nay! He will certainly be hurled into the Hutamah,"
"And what makes you know what the Hutamah is?"
"(It is) a fire kindled by Allah"
"Which rises above the hearts…"

The term /layunbthanna/ is based on /nabth/. As Raqib says in Mufradat, it means 'to discard something because of its being an insignificant or small amount'.

That is, Allah will throw these proud, arrogant, selfish, self-content fellows; in the form of mean, unworthy creatures, into the Hell-fire so that they may see the fruit of their pride.

The term /hutamah/ is an amplification form based on the word /hatam/ with the meaning of 'to wreck; break to pieces' which shows that the blazing fire of Hell breaks their limbs violently, although some Islamic narrations denote that /hutaman/ is not the name of the whole Hell, but it is the name of an extraordinarily hot part of it.[9]

Using the phrase /narallah/, here shows the greatness of the fire, and the term /muqadah/ is an evidence to refer to the continuity of that fire kindled to a blaze.

It is a wonder that this fire, in spite of the fires in this world that first burn the skin and then, penetrate inside to burn inner tissue, burns the heart and interior of the mind and bones, first, and then, comes to the other parts.

What kind of fire is this fire whose first effect appears on the heart of Man? What kind of fire is it which burns inside before outside'? Everything of the Hereafter is surprising and different from that of this world, even the effect of its blazing fire.

And why does the fire of the Wrath of Allah not dominate their hearts first and before occupying their other limbs when, in this world, they put pain in the hearts of the believers with their mockeries, backbitings, fault-findings, slanders and taunts. ?

Divine Justice Requires a Penalty on Them Similar to Their Behaviors

"Surely it will be closed over upon them,"

The term /mu'sadah/ is derived from /isad/ with the meaning of 'to close a door firmly', hence, the rooms made inside the mountains for gathering riches therein were termed / wasid/.

In fact, the same as they kept their riches in safes, locked indoors and in secret storage, Allah, too, puts them in a punishment shut up in Hell without having a door to flee from.

And, finally, it says:

"In columns outstretched"

The term /'amad/ is the plural form of /amud/ which means 'pillar, or any tall thing like a wooden pole, post, or shaft', and the term /mumaddadah/ means 'extended, stretched (out)'.

A group of commentators believe that this idea refers to the' long iron nails by which the doors of Hell are fastened so that no exit might be found.

So, it is an emphasis on the previous verse which says:

"Surely it will be closed over upon them".

Also, some others have cited that this idea refers to a kind of torture and punishment, similar to the act of putting a person in stocks and fetters; a chain by which a person or an animal is confined by the feet. And this is the result of the tortures that they used against the innocent people in this world.

Furthermore, a third commentary is also given with reference to the new explorations which says that the blazing flames of Hell-fire are upon them in the form of some tall, stretched pillar shaped beams.

These commentators say that it is proven in modern research that X-rays, different from other rays which expand in the conical shape, spread in cylindrical shape just like a pillar, and it is interesting to note that this ray penetrates through the whole entity of Man, and even goes into the heart and that is why it is used for taking photos of the inside of the body. It is understood that there is a ray in Hell rising from the blazing fire, therein, which is not unlike the above-mentioned ray.

Among these commentaries, the first one is the most appropriate.

Explanations

Pride, the Origin of Great Sin

Arrogance or self-aggrandizement is a great pest which is considered to be the source of many vices; neglecting Allah, ingratitude of the bounties from Him, drawn into lusts, detracting from the character of others and mocking the believers are all the fruit of this hideous quality.

When persons of little capacity find themselves in some position of prestige they become enveloped by pride and arrogance so that they consider others of no value, and this quality causes them to be separated from the society and the society deserts them, too.

Then, they live in their own imaginations and think that they are somewhat different from others, and count themselves among 'the nearest to Allah' which causes them to think of others' honour, character, and even, lives as unworthy and they continue to commit their slandering, backbiting, and fault-finding against them, in order to increase their own dignity, or so they think.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) denotes that he said:

"On the Night journey (of Ascension) I saw a group of people (of Hell) whose flesh of their sides were taken and they were made to eat it, being told to eat what they used to eat of the flesh of their brothers. I asked Gabriel who they were, and he answered that they were backbiters; slanderers, from my community."[10]

The Lust For Amassing Wealth

There are many different ideas given about the quality of amassing wealth in the way of excess and deficiency. Some consider wealth so important that they think it is the key to solving any difficult problem. So, it is no wonder that they are always busy gathering wealth without any pause and without observing any limit or condition for it. Therefore, the status of lawful and unlawful riches is indifferent in their eyes.

In contrast to them, there are some people who do not give any importance or value to wealth. They praise poverty as a valuable quality and believe that wealth is still a hindrance for piety and being near to Allah.

But, besides these two contradictory ideas, which are on the two ends of 'excess' and 'deficiency', what is understood from the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations is that wealth is praiseworthy, but, with some conditions: First of all, it should be a means of service, not a goal.

The second is that wealth should not make Man its captive and dependant, but he should control it and be its master.

The third condition is that wealth should be earned through lawful ways and be spent on the path of gaining Allah's satisfaction.

Love for this kind of wealth not only is not mammonism, but it is evidence for the love of the next world. That is why we see, in a tradition, that when Imam Sadiq (as) was condemning 'gold' and 'silver', one of his Muslim followers wondered what he meant and asked him about it.

He (as) replied:

"It is the 'gold' by which Faith (religion) disappears and it is the silver which causes blasphemy".[11]

There are some avaricious people who are always busy piling up wealth until the end of their lives, and finally, the wealth will be left for others to take advantage of its benefit, while they, without enjoying anything, must give the account of it.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) denotes that he was asked:

"Who is the most sorrowful of people?"

And he replied:

"The one who sees his wealth in the scales of others, and Allah brings him into Hell because of his wealth, but He brings his heir into Heaven, (for spending that wealth on charity)".[12]

Yes, people are different when facing riches. Some of them worship it as an idol, while some others use it as a means for their salvation.

We conclude this subject with an expressive statement from Ibn-Abbas who said:

"When the first gold and silver coins were made on the Earth, Satan looked at them and after observing them, took them and put them on his eyes and then on his chest.

Then, he squealed happily and put them, again, on his chest and said (to them):

'You are the light of my eyes and the fruit of my heart. When the sons of Adam love you it does not matter to me that they do not worship idols; it is enough for me that they love you (since you are the greatest idols)'". [13]

Supplication

O Lord! Save us from the negligence originating from wealth, position, and lusts.

O Lord! Make us free from the mastership of Satan over us and from being the slaves of coins; gold or silver.

O Lord! Hell-fire is shattering so that it is impossible to be free from it, but with your Grace. Bestow Your Grace on us.

Amin, O Cherisher of the Worlds.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10. p. 536.
2. Ibid.
3. Bihar-ul-Anwar. vol. 75. p. 142,
4. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, Verse 180
5. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 668, Tradition 8.
6. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 81
7. Surah Dukhan, No. 44, verse 28
8. Surah Haqqah, No. 69, verse 28, 29
9. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol, 3, p. 17 and 19, traditions 60 and 64.
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p 667, tradition 5
11. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol 73. p 142
12. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol 73. p 142
13. Ibid p 137 tradition 3

Surah Fil, Chapter 105

(The Elephant)

Number of Verses: 5

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, as its name indicates, refers to the well-known historical event that happened in the year of the birth of the holy Prophet (S) when Allah protected the Ka'aba against the attack of the army of pagans who, riding on the backs of elephants, came from Yemen intending to destroy it.

This Surah is a recollection of the miraculous event which many people of Mecca remember, because it happened not so long ago.

Its remembrance is a warning against the proud, arrogant pagans to make them aware that they have no power to stand in the way of the Power of Allah, Who destroyed that great army of elephants by little, tiny birds who pelted them with 'small stones of petrified clay' and He can punish these stubborn oppressors, too.

Their equipment was no more than that of Abrahah nor did the number of their fighters match his. In other words, they had seen that event with their own eyes and yet, were so arrogant.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Fil

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who recites Surah Fil in his obligatory prayers, any level land, mountains or any clods of dirt will bear witness for him, on the Day of Judgement, that he has been one of the prayerful (believers). and on that Day, a herald calls saying,

'You are right about My servant I accept your witness for him or against him Let him enter Paradise without Reckoning him. Verily, he is the one of whom he and his action I like.'"[1]

It is obvious that these magnificent, abundant bounties and rewards are for he who, with its recitation, gets down from the horse of arrogance and goes on the right path along side which he seeks the satisfaction of Allah.

Surah Fil, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

تَرْمِيهِم بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

1. "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?"

2. "Did He not make their stratagem go awry?"

3. "And He sent upon them birds in flocks,"

4. "Pelting them with stones of petrified clay,"

5. "Thus He made them like straw eaten up."

The Occasion of Revelation

Ali-ibn-al-Husain (as) says in a tradition:

"Abu-Taleb always defended, with his sword, the Messenger of Allah (S), in the wars."

He continued and said:

"(One day) Abu-Taleb said:

'O my nephew, are you appointed for all peoples, entirely, or only for your own people in particular?'

The Prophet (S) said that he had been appointed for all the human beings, entirely, whether they are white or black, Arab or non-Arab, and by Him in Whose hand was his soul, he was (appointed) to invite to the portent (the religion), all peoples, either white or black whether they were on the tops of the mountains or in the depths of the seas, and he was (appointed) to invite (the speakers of all) languages in Persia (Iran) and Rome,

"Then, the Quraish, (hearing that), became astonished and considered it great and said:

'Do you not hearken to your nephew and what he says? By Allah, if Persians and Romans hear this, they will snatch us from our land and surely they will break the Ka'ba into pieces of stone'.

Hence, Allah sent down this verse:

"They say: 'If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land'. Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary, to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds..."[2]

And for the phrase that they said:

'they break the Ka'ba into pieces of stone',

He sent down Surah Fil (in order to tell them that no one could accomplish such an action)",

The Story of the Companions of the Elephants

Commentators and historians have cited this story differently and they are divided as to when it had happened. But, the story, on the whole, is so well-known that it is counted in the line of widely transmitted chains of narrations. Here is a summary of it according to what is mentioned in 'Sirah' by Ibn-i-Husham, Buluq-ul-Irab, Bihar-ul-Anwar, and Majma'-al-Bayan.

Zu-Nuwas, the king of Yemen, persecuted the Christians of Najran, who lived there, in order to force them to leave their Faith.

(The Qur'an has pointed out with the terms of /ashab-i-uxdud/ 'the makers of the pit of Fire' in Surah Buruj, No. 85. The story of that persecution is mentioned in Volume 1 of this commentary, pages 295-296.)

After that terrible massacre, a man by the name of 'Dus' was able to escape and went for refuge to the Caesar of Rome, who was Christian, and described to him the event.

Since there was a long distance between Rome and Yemen, Caesar wrote a letter to Najaishi, the king of Yemen, advising him to take revenge on the murder and sent the letter by the man, himself.

Najashi prepared an army of about seventy thousand men and sent them to Yemen under the leadership of 'Irbat'. Abrahah was also one of the commanders of that army.

The army invaded Yemen and before long defeated Zu-Nuwas, and 'Irbat' became the ruler of Yemen. But, after a short time, Abrahah rose against him and killing him, substituted Irbat.

The news reached Najashi who decided to punish Abrahah. Abrahah shaved the hair of his head and with some soil of Yemen sent this to Najashi as a sign of complete submission and loyalty.

When Najashi understood the situation, he forgave him and retained him in his position.

Then, to show his good behaviour and gratification, Abrahah had built a great, beautiful, splendid church unsurpassed in the world at that time. After that he introduced it as 'Ka'ba', to the people of Arabia, instead of the real Ka'ba and decided to make it the center for the Arab Haj pilgrimage and to transfer the great central place of gatherings of Mecca to that place.

For this purpose, he sent many preachers to different places and among the Arab tribes in Arabia. But, Arabs, who intensely loved Mecca and the Ka'ba and knew it as the greatest sign of Prophet Abraham, the Khalil (as), felt danger.

According to some narrations, a group of people hiddenly burnt the church, and according to some other narrations some people hiddenly desecrated it and thus they showed their intense reaction against that vast invitation and discredited Abrahah's church.

Abrahah became very angry and decided to destroy the Ka'ba, totally, both in order to take revenge, and to attract Arabs to the new temple. He set out to invade Mecca with an army which consisted of soldiers and elephants.

Approaching the outskirts of Mecca, Abrahah's men captured 200 camels belonging to Abdul-Muttalib, the grandfather of the holy Prophet (S).

Abrahah sent a man to Mecca to find the supreme chief of Mecca and tell him of his intentions of destroying the Holy Ka'ba and to inform the authorities that if they did not stand against him he would not kill anyone.

The man arrived in Mecca and looked for the chief of the city. Everyone showed Abdul-Muttalib to him and he gave him the message.

Abdul-Muttalib said that they were not in a position to fight with them and the Ka'ba would be protected by Allah, Himself.

The man told Abdul-Muttalib that he should accompany him to see Abrahah. When Abdul-Muttalib approached the military camp he was received, respectfully, and Abrahah gave him an honourable seat near him and then he asked him about the purpose of his visit. Abdul-Muttalib said that he had come to complain to Abrahah about the two hundred camels that Abrahah's men had taken away and to request him to return his animals to him.

Abrahah was taken aback when Abdul-Muttalib spoke like this.

The conversation between the two is reported thus:

"What? I have come to destroy your place of worship, the Ka'ba, and you, instead of pleading to save the Holy House, speak of your camels!"

Abdul-Muttalib replied:

"The camels belong to me and I, as the owner of the camels, have come for them. The Ka'ba belongs to Allah and it is the concern of the Owner of the Ka'ba to save it or to leave it to its fate in your hands".

(This statement shook Abrahah and he ordered that the camels be returned to Abdul-Muttalib).

Abdul-Muttalib returned to Mecca and advised the citizens to take refuge in the mountains around the city so as to be safe from being hurt by the invaders and he, himself, with a group of men went beside the Ka'ba to pray to Allah and ask for help.

O Lord! I hope not against them save thee.

O Lord! Withdraw Thou therefore Thy protection from them.

O Lord! Verily he who is the enemy of this House is Thine enemy.

Verily, they have not defeated Thy forces.

Then, Abdul-Muttalib went to the valleys around Mecca with a group of the Quraish and sent one of his sons over Abu-Qubays mountain to see what was happening. He returned and said that he had seen a black cloud coming from the Red Sea.

Abdul-Muttalib became happy with that news and said:

"O citizens of Quraish! Return to your houses because Allah has sent you His help".

This was the scene on one side. On the other side, when Abrahah, riding on his elephant by the name of 'Mahmood' and intending to destroy the Ka'ba, entered the city, a huge flock of tiny birds, like a cloud, appeared in the sky; each bird with three small stones, as small as a pea, carrying one in its tiny beak and two in its claws. They dropped them on the invading soldiers and they were killed at once.

Abrahah tried to go forth on elephant-back, but the animal did not move until it turned its head and moved swiftly toward Yemen, and there Abrahah, too, died in San'a, the capital of Yemen.

Ideas are divided as to the number of elephants that Abrahah had brought with himself in that invasion. Some have mentioned only one, Mahmood; some others have cited eight elephants; some ten; and some have considered them twelve elephants.

In the same year, the holy Prophet (S) was born and brightened the world with the light of his being. Some believe that there is a relation between these two happenings.

At any rate, this miraculous event was so important that that year was called /'amulfil/ 'the year of the elephant' and was known as a beginning date in the history of Arabs.

In the first verse, of this Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is addressed and questioned:

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant"?

They had come, with that massive army and power, to destroy the Ka'ba when Allah, with an apparently very small army; tiny birds and small stones, destroyed it to show them that no power, even with those strong elephants, can prevail over the plan of Allah, and made Man's weakness, in that case, manifest.

The phrase

'Have you not seen'

refers to the occurence of the event which was very close to the time of the birth of the Prophet (S) though he was not born yet, or at his birth time. Besides, the happening was so well-known and famous as if the Prophet had seen it with his own eyes, and of course, some people of his time like Abdul-Muttalib had witnessed it.

The term

'the companions of the elephant'[3],

used in the verse, refers to the few elephants that were brought from Yemen both to scare the Arab defenders and their horses and camels, on the battlefield.

"Did He not make their stratagem go away?"

They intended to destroy the Ka'ba hoping that they would make the new established church, in Yemen, the Center for all Arabs of Arabia. But, they not only did not succeed in discrediting and destroying the Ka'ba, but it increased the fame and importance of the Holy Ka'ba and Mecca throughout Arabia, and attracted more loving thoughts and eager hearts to Mecca than ever before; it proved to be a location of security and of sanctuary; better and more wide spread.

The purpose of using the term /tadlil/ which means 'to lead astray' is that 'they never succeeded'.

Then, describing the details of the happening, it says:

"And He sent upon them birds in flocks",

The term /ababil/, inspite of what is known among people, is not the name of that kind of bird, but, it has an adjectival sense. Some have considered it with the meaning of 'separate groups', i.e. the mentioned birds came from all sides in 'separate groups' towards 'the army which had elephants'.

However, the term /tayr/, here has the plural meaning and these two terms, /tayr/ and /ababil/, both mean 'birds in a flock'.

What kind of birds were those birds? As it was mentioned in the description of the story, it is commonly known that some birds, like swallows, appeared from the side of the Red Sea as hosts above the head of that army of Abrahah.

"Pelting them with stones of petrified clay".

Further, in the description of the event which has been compiled from history, commentaries, and Islamic narrations, it was said that each of these small birds had three tiny stones with them as small as a pea, or smaller than that of which one was carried in its tiny beak and two in its claws. Anyone of these small stones would immediately kill anyone on whom it was dropped.

"Thus He made them like straw eaten up"

The term /‘asf/ means 'leaves and stalks of corn or plants of which the grain has been eaten by cattles in other words, it means 'straw'.

The phrase /ma'kul/ ‘eaten up' indicates that this straw has been ground and smashed, completely, by the teeth of the animal, then, in the stomach of the animal, it has been ground for the third time. This meaning shows that the small stones would smash the one upon whom it would fall.

This idea, besides being an evidence for the intense action of crushing, points to the weakness and unworthiness of that tyrant, arrogant group who were apparently forceful.

Explanation: This House Has An Owner

It is interesting that as a means of waking Man up, the Holy Qur'an tells this long story in a few short sentences which are extremely eloquent and expressive, and illustrates the weakness of arrogant Man compared to the great Power of Allah.

This happening shows that it does not necessarily need, as some people think, miracles to occur by the intercession of the Prophet or sinless Imams (as) but in any condition that Allah wishes or necessitates, He does it. The purpose is that people may become acquainted with the greatness of Allah and the legitimacy of His religion.

This miraculous punishment has a clear difference with the miracles that happened for the punishment of other disobedient nations such as in Noah's Flood, a shower of stones for Lot's people, the storm for 'Ad's people, and lightning for Thamood's people.

They were a series of natural happenings which were miracles only in those special circumstances, but the story of Abrahah and the birds pelting his army with little stones from their beaks and claws is not something like a natural event.

The raising up of these little birds, coming towards that army, carrying the little stones, their accurately pelting exactly upon the soldiers of Abrahah, and destroying a very large army simply with some little stones is something extraordinary, but we know that they are naught compared with the Power of Allah.

Allah, who has put the power of the atom inside the very little stones which produces a great explosion when it is released, can easily charge them with a property that makes the bodies of Abrahah's army like 'straw eaten up'; and there is no need of saying, as some Egyptian commentators did to justify the event as a natural occurence, that the stones were poisoned with some microbes of plague, typhoid fever, small pox, or some other justifications.

The thing that we can say is that the stones contained such a surprising effect which destroyed the bodies, and we know no more, but, in any event, there is nothing difficult for the Power of Allah to perform.

The Gravest Punishment By the Least Means!

It is noteworthy that Allah has shown the oppressors His Power in the most surprising ways.

There may be no divine punishment, in the world, more grievous than the punishment of Abrahah's army where a great many forces were so destroyed

that they changed into a state of 'straw eaten up' and that they were destroyed by the means of tiny clay-stones carried by some little birds which is, itself, astonishing to all the arrogant, tyrant, oppressors of the world, and is a sign for them to know how weak they are when the Power of Allah works.

Still, sometimes Allah gives these grand missions to some smaller agents to perform. For example, He commissions a microbe, which is never visible to the naked eye, to increase into a very large. massive number through reproduction, in a very short time. Then they infected the strong members of a society or societies with a dangerous, contagious disease, such as a plague, during a short length of time which rapidly destroys them all. This is the Power of Allah when He wills.

The Purposes of the Story of the 'Elephant'

The Surah after this one, Surah Quraish, illustrates, well, that one of the purposes of Surah Fil is the remembrance of the splendid blessings of Allah for the Quraish tribe to show them that had it not been for the Grace of Allah neither any trace of this sacred center, i.e. Mecca and Ka'ba, would remain nor of the Quraish tribe, themselves, in order that they might reduce their pride and arrogance and accept the invitation of the holy Prophet (S).

On the other hand, this event, which was nearly close to the time of the birth of the holy Prophet (S), in fact, paved the way for that great advent, and was the messenger of the importance of that rising. This is the same thing that is called /irhas/ ‘indication' by commentators.

And, again, on the other hand, it is a warning to all arrogant ones in the world, whether they are from the Quraish or not, to know that they can never stand against the Power of Allah; they should submit to His Command and accept the right and justice.

And, further, it refers to the importance of the Holy House, the Ka'ba, that when the enemies plotted to destroy it and decided to transport its center of importance, which had a background from Abraham's (as) time, to another land, Allah taught them such a lesson which serves as an example for all others and increased the importance and honour of that sacred center.

Moreover, providence, Who accepted the supplication of Abraham, the Khalil (as), about the security of that sacred land and guaranteed it, proved in that event that the Will of Allah has designed this center of monotheism and worship to remain secure forever.

A Certain Historial Event

It is interesting to note that the story of 'Ashab-i-Fil', 'the companion of the Elephant', was so well-known and certain, among Arabs, that it became the beginning point of the date in history for Arabs and as it was said before, the Holy Qur'an mentions it with the phrase

/a lam tara/ ‘Have you not seen?'

and also, addressing the Prophet (S) who was not present at the event and did not see it, which is another sign of the certainty of that happening being sure. Besides, when the holy Prophet (S) recited these verses for the pagans of Mecca no one denied it.

If it were a doubtful matter, at least a group of people would reject it and that rejection, like their other rejections, would be recorded in history, especially since the Qur'an has stated the matter with the phrase

/a lam tara/, 'Have you not seen?'

By the way, the splendor of this Sacred House is evidently proven with this certain historical miracle.

Supplication

O Lord! Grant us the success to protect this great Center of Monotheism.

O Lord! Cut off the hands of those who intend to keep only outward aspects of this Sacred Center and not to hearken to its real message from it.

O Lord! Sustain us, its Pilgrims, to visit it with complete acknowledgement.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10. p. 539.
2. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 57
3. The word 'elephant' is used here In the singular, but, it has the meaning or the plural form.

Surah Quraish, Chapter 106

(Custodians of the Ka'aba)

Number of Verses: 4

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Meccan Surah is, indeed, the supplement to the preceding one; Surah Fil. The verses of the Surah are a clear evidence for this idea. They describe the blessings the Quraish tribe were given to enjoy; might they be thankful to Him and worship Him, the Lord of the Sacred House (Ka'ba) from which they obtained all their honour and high social status.

As was said at the beginning of Surah Duha, which is considered one Surah with Surah Inshirah, the same as Surah Fil is with Surah Quraish, the unity and similarity of the matters, in both of them (Fil and Quraish), are so much so that they can be taken as an evidence for the unity of Surah Duha and Surah Inshirah.

That is why both of them must be recited together, one set or the other in one 'rak'at' of a prayer, as a complete Surah if one chooses them in his obligatory prayers.

For more explanation on this subject, books of jurisprudence (chapters on prayers and recitation) are at your disposal.

The Virtue of Studying Surah Quraish

On the virtue of reciting the Surah, a tradition is adequate to cite from the holy Prophet (S) who has been narrated to have said:

"He who recites it is rewarded ten 'good deeds' as many as the number of those who perform the ritual circumambulation of the Ka'ba, and spiritual retreat in the Sacred Mosque".[1]

Assuredly such a virtue is of a person who humbly worships Allah, Who is the Lord of Ka'ba, and protects the nobility of the House and hearkens to the message of the shrine with the ear of his soul and practices it.

Surah Quraish, Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ

إِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ

1. "For stabilizing and unifying the Quraish,"

2. "(We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer,"

3. "So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'ba),"

4. "Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear."

In the previous Surah (Fil) the story of the destruction of the possessors of the elephant and Abrahah's army, who came to Mecca intending to destroy the Ka'ba and obliterate that Sacred House, was stated. In the first verse of this Surah which is, in fact, the supplement to it, followed to the idea that

'We destroyed the companions of the elephant and made them like straw eaten up'

before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S), it says:

"For stabilizing and unifying the Quraish"

The term /ilaf/ is an infinitive which means 'uniting together', and the term /ulfat/ means 'a gathering with intimacy and union'.

Some have construed / ilaf/, deriving from another root, to mean 'agreement, compact' which is not appropriate with the content of the Surah. So, the purpose of using it is for the familiarity and union amongst the Quraish tribe who, together with all the citizens of Mecca, had settled there because of the honour, importance and security of the Holy Ka'ba for which, every year, many people from Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula came to that city for pilgrimage, also taking profit from some commercial and literacy exchanges.

All of them were obtained under the existence of that peculiar security.

If the army of Abrahah, and the like, could have disturbed the security or were successful in destroying the Ka'ba, no other people would become familiar with the region.

"(We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer."

The purpose of the unifying and familiarity of the Quraish may be due to their love for their sacred land. The political and economical importance of the Holy Shrine (Ka'ba), for the Quraish, then secure from the invasions of the hostile tribes in the Arabian Peninsula thus made them monopolize the trade of the area from the North to the South and vice-versa.

In the summer, they used to go to Syria which had moderate weather and in winter to Yemen where they enjoyed a warm climate, for the purposes of trade, and it was by Allah's Grace that they travelled safe and undisturbed on their journeys, otherwise, the routes were not safe and none could travel without being plundered and suffering death and destruction or suffering heavy losses. (Of course, for the same love, they did not leave Mecca to settle in these places).

It was the position of the Quraish with regard to their connection with their services to the Holy Ka'ba that they received, by the Will of Allah, the security and honour from the people. He planned to keep them safe, by His Grace, for the advent of Islam and the holy Prophet (S) to emerge from that tribe and in that sacred land.

But, the same tribe, the Quraish, whose protection, safety and honour was due to the Holy Ka'ba being in their city and they being its guardians, later became the prime enemies of Islam.

At the beginning, the main cause of their opposition, to the advent of Islam, was the fear of losing their supremacy in the political and economical fields; and later, vices in different forms were committed by the Ommayyid

www.alhassanain.org/english

and Abbaside Kalifs who were of the Quraish tribe, for other worldly motives. They were so hideous that history will never forget them, although all of whatever they had, were from Islam; the command of Allah.

"So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'ba)".

"Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear".

When the Quraish had been granted such great blessings; security in trade for gaining profit and in life for being honoured, they should have gratefully worshipped the Lord of the Ka'ba, Who, inspite of their land being only a desert and thus unproductive, provides them with every kind of good food and the other provisions of life, through merchandise and the pilgrimage, which is brought to their very door. And Allah had protected them from the most formidable enemy, Abrahah.

This was an open admonition to the Quraish who, at the start of the ministry of the holy Prophet (S), had been the most persistent enemies of the apostle of Allah and the message of the Unity of the Lord which he preached. It was as well as a warning inviting their attention to the Mighty power of Allah Who could also destroy them and humiliate them as He did with their mighty foe, Abrahah.

Supplication

O Lord! Give us the success of worshipping You, being grateful for the blessings, and guarding this Great House.

O Lord! Increase the glory and respect of this important Islamic Center every day, and set it as a link for the connection between the Muslims in the world.

O Lord! Cut off the hands of all wicked enemies from it and banish away all those who abuse this great center.

Note

1. Majma-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 543, and Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 14, p. 235.

Surah Ma’un, Chapter 107

(Neighbourly Needs)

Number of Verses: 7

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Many commentators believe that this Surah was revealed at Mecca. The tone of the verses, which are short and awakening about the Hereafter, and the deeds of the deniers of the Judgement Day, attests to this idea.

On the whole, the deeds and characteristics of the deniers of the Hereafter are stated in five references. Consequently, they deny the Final Judgement, repulse giving charity on the path of Allah, or helping the orphan and the indigent. They are heedless of their prayers, by saying them only hypocritically, and refuse to supply even neighbourly needs.

Occasion of the Revelation

On the occasion of the Surah's revelation, some have said that it was revealed about Abu-Sufyan who used to slaughter two big camels every day from which he and his men ate. But one day it happened that an orphan came to his door and asked for some help. Abu-Sufyan beat him with his stick and repulsed him.

Some others have said that the verse was revealed about Walid-ibn-i-Muqayrah or 'As-ibn-i-Wa'il.

The Virtue of Studying the Surah

On the virtue of the recitation of the Surah, a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) says:

“He who recites it (Surah Ma'un) in his obligatory and optionall prayers, Allah accepts his prayers and his fasting, and does not count the (evil) acts he committed in this world.”[2]

Surah Ma’un, Verses 1-7

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ

فَذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ

وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

1. “Have you seen him who denies the Final Judgement?”

2. "Then such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness),"
3. "And encourages not the feeding of the indigent."
4. "So woe to those praying ones,"
5. "Who are careless of their prayers,"
6. "Those who (want but) to be seen (of men),"
7. "But refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs."

The Harmful Fruit of the Denial of the Hereafter

In this Surah, at first, the holy Prophet (S) is addressed and some unfortunate reflections of the denial of the Hereafter, in the deeds of the rejectors, are expressed.

"Have you seen him who denies the Final Judgement?"
"Then such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness),"
"And encourages not the feeding of the indigent."

The purpose of using the term /din/, in this verse, is for the Day of the Final Judgement; its denial as well as the Great Court, therein, which has a very bad effect on the acts of the rejectors of it. In this Surah, five effects out of these effects, such as, repulsing the orphan with harshness, and the lack of encouraging others to the feeding of the indigent, are referred to.

Some have said that /din/, here may mean the Qur'an or the religion, Islam, but the first meaning seems more appropriate.

Similar to this sense is seen in Surah Infitar, No. 82, verse 9:

"Nay, but you disbelieve in the (day of) reckoning,"

and also in Surah Tin, No. 95 verse 7:

"What then makes you reject thereafter the last Judgement?"

that, taking into consideration other verses of these Suras, the purpose of using the word /din/, is for 'the Day of Judgement'.

The term /yadu'/ is based on /da'a/ with the meaning of 'to push, drive away with violence'; and the term /yahudd/ is derived from /hadda/ which means 'to urge, prompt'. Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that '/ hass/ is an urging in movement and travelling, but / hadd/ is not so'.

At any rate, since these two terms are used in the future tense, the case indicates the continuity of their action, in regard to the orphan and the indigent.

Again, the substantial point, here is that when we are dealing with the orphan, affection and humane treatment is more significant than food, because an orphan must tolerate the lack of affection and spiritual feeding rather than the bodily food which is in the secondary stage. Of course, feeding the needy, mentioned in these verses, is one of the most important good actions, so that, if we cannot feed a needy one we must encourage others to do so.

Those who lack Faith in the Resurrection and the Reckoning in that Great Court and receiving reward and punishment dare to commit sin and therefore, all kinds of vice can be seen in their behaviour.

"So woe to those praying ones,"
"Who are careless of their prayers."

They neither consider any value for their prescribed daily canonical prayers, nor lay stress on its proper time, nor observe its conditions and rites.

The term /sahun/ is derived from /sahw/ which originally means 'a mistake which is done unintentionally or neglectfully' whether one is guilty in its preparation or not. In the first case, one is not excused, but in the second case one is. here the purpose is negligence with guilt.

We should note that it does not say 'they make mistakes unintentionally in their prayer' which happens, in any case, for everyone, but it says that they are careless of their essential prayers, totally.

It is clear that if it happens once or occasionally, it may be of negligence, but he who always forgets his prayers and lets it be forgotten, it is obvious that he does not take it seriously or he has no fear of people, or the like.

In addition to what was said, there are some other commentaries cited on the purpose of /sahun/ mentioned in this verse. Among them are regarding those who do not offer the daily prayers punctually, and let the exact time for the prayers elapse, to pass their time away in idleness or in worldly business and enjoyments.

Or those who pray to show their prayerfulness and would-be piety to the public, but, do not do it when they are alone. (This idea is mentioned in the next verse).

Of course, all these meanings can be combined whereas, the first commentary seems more fitting.

In any case, when these kind of neglectful praying ones deserve the wrath of Allah, what can be the state of those who never pray?

"Those who (want but) to be seen (of men),"

"But refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs".

It is certain that one of the headsprings of pretence and hypocrisy is the lack of Faith in the Day of Judgement and disbelief in the divine recompense, otherwise, how can a person leave the rewards of Allah and pay attention to the mere pleasure of people?

The term /ma'un/ is based on /ma'n/ with the meaning of 'a little thing'. Many commentators believe that the purpose of it, here is for things of insignificant price that people, especially neighbors, take from each other; things like salt, water, matches for fire, dishes, and the like, which are the necessities of life.

It is self-evident that a person who withholds giving such insignificant things to others is a very miserly, faithless one. These things do not cost too much, but, they are sometimes very helpful, so when they refuse to give them this produces some notable difficulties in the lives of people.

Some believe that the purpose of /ma'un/ is poor-rate, alms, because alms, in comparison with total wealth, is often a little.

The occurence of these two things (hypocrisy and refusing to supply neighborly needs), being cited together, refers to the idea that whatever is for Allah, they do to show people, and whatever is for people, they refuse to give them, and thus, they pay no right to its owner.

We conclude this subject with a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who is reported to have said:

"The person who refuses to supply his neighborly needs, on the Day of judgement Allah will refuse to give him His goodness and leaves him to

himself, and what a bad case it is for the one whom He leaves to himself".[3]

Explanation: Subjects Discussed in this Surah

A collection of low qualities are under discussion, in this short Surah, which are the signs of infidelity and meanness in anyone who possesses them. It is interesting that all of them are subdivisions to the rejection of the Hereafter; that is, the Recompense or the Day of Retribution.

The qualities of despising the orphan, refusing to feed the needy, being heedless of the prescribed prayers, hypocrisy, not being cooperative with people even in giving them insignificant materials, form this collection.

Thus, it illustrates the miserly, self-conceit and showy persons who have neither connection with people nor join with the Creator. They carry no light of Faith and responsibility in their entity. They neither think of the divine rewards nor are they in fear of His punishment.

A Great Social Pest; Pretense and Hypocrisy

The value of any action depends upon the motive of that action. In other words, from the viewpoint of Islam, the basis of every action is formed by intention; 'pure' intention, of course.

In Islam, actions, before anything else, are judged by their motives. It is one of the fundamental principles of law in all ages and environments that motives and intentions are the criterions by which actions of men are judged.

So, actions are held to be good or bad, just or unjust, criminal or innocent according to the motives, in order to define them as good or bad, just or unjust, criminal or innocent.

If a man gives away something in charity with the intention of seeking the satisfaction of Allah, he will certainly be rewarded by Allah; but if he does it to become prominent, in the public eye or hypocritically, for show, he may be able to attain that object, but with no benefit in the Next World which is the goal. in a Muslim's life[4].

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) who is narrated to have said:

"Actions are to be judged by intentions. There is surely for man what he intends. So, whosoever fights for Allah in the Holy War his reward is with Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious; and whosoever's fight is for this world which he seeks or even for a hobble rope (of a camel) to gain, he may have only that (and no more)". [5]

Islamic traditions and narrations on the criticizing of hypocrisy are many; among which are the following:

1. A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"There will come a time for people when their inward aspects are filthy, and their outward appearances seem charming. This is because of their greed, in this world, and not in gaining the rewards with Allah. Their religion will be hypocrisy. They do not have the fear of Allah, and He will punish them with a grevious chastisement. Then, whenever they call on Allah, like (the behavior of) a drowned person, their supplication will never be accepted". [6]

2. Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says that he told one of his companions, by the name of /zurarah/:

"O Zurarah, anyone whose actions are for the sake of people, the reward is for the people (to give it). Every hypocrisy is polytheism". [7]

3. The holy Prophet (S) has been narrated to have said in a tradition:

"On the Day of Judgement, the hypocrite will be called by four names: O' pagan, O' sinner, O' treacherous, and O' loser; your deed was of no avail, and your recompense was cancelled; there is no rescue for you today; ask your recompense from the one for whom you used to act". [8]

Supplication

O Lord! Purity in intention is very difficult; help us on this path, Yourself.

O Lord! We seek from You such a Faith that will cause us to think that but for Your recompense and punishment on Your Way, the pleasure or hatred of people will be indifferent for us.

O Lord! Forgive us whatever sin we have committed on this path.

Notes

1. "Supererogatory. has been used for this type of prayer, however, since this word, also, means something depreciative or offensive, 'optional was preferred as it is optional"
2. Majma-al-Bayan. vol 10, p. 546.
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn. vol. 5. p. 679.
4. see 42:20
5. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 35, tradition 10.
6. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Hypocrisy', tradition 14.
7. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 49, tradition 11.
8. Ibid, p. 51, tradition 16.

Surah Kawthar, Chapter 108

(The Abundance)

Number of Verses: 3

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah is known as a Meccan Surah, but some believe that it may be Medinan. Some others have said that this Surah might have been revealed twice; once in Mecca and once in Medina, but the narrations cited on the occasion of its revelation attest to the first idea which says it is Meccan.

Occasion of Revelation

The following is a story told about the occasion of the revelation of Surah Kawthar: 'As-ibn-wa'il, who was one of the chiefs of the pagans, met the holy Prophet (S) coming out of the Sacred Mosque. He spoke with him (S) for awhile.

In the meantime, a group of authoritative men of the Quraish were sitting in the Mosque watching him from a distance.

When 'As-ibn-Wa'il entered the Mosque they asked him:

"To whom were you speaking?"

He answered:

"With this abtar one".

He used this word for the holy Prophet (S) to taunt him, because he (S) had two sons born of Lady Khadijah; Ghasem and Taher (also called 'Abdullah) who died in Mecca and so, there was no live male issue from the holy Prophet (S). Hence after, the Qur'an applied this name to the enemies of the Prophet. [1]

The Arabs used to call the one who had no son /abtar/, and 'abtar' means 'the animal whose tail is cut off'. So, then. it means the one whose succession in his seed has ceased, i.e., the one who has none to inherit him. To console the holy Prophet (S), this Surah was revealed with the glad tidings of the greatest amount or the highest degree of the grace of Allah, bestowed on him.

Those people traditionally considered the male child extraordinarily valuable and thought of him as a substitute for the father. They happily imagined that with the demise of the Holy Prophet (S) his program would cease because he had no son to substitute him to continue it.

The revelation of this Surah was, in fact, an answer to the enemies of the Apostle to inform them that Islam and the Qur'an would remain and ceaselessly continue, forever.

The Virtue of Studying the Surah

On the virtue of the recitation of this Surah, a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"He who recites it (Surah Kawthar) Allah will quench his thirst from the streams of Heaven and will recompense him good rewards as many as the number of every sacrifice which the servants of Allah make on the day

of the Feast of Sacrifice, together with those sacrifices which are of the People of the Book and the pagans."[2]

The name of this Surah, Kawthar, is taken from the first verse of the Surah.

Surah Kawthar, Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

1. "Surely (O Muhammad) We have given you abundance (of good (Kawthar)."

2. "Therefore to your Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice."

3. "Surely your enemy is the one who will be without spring."

In this Surah, similar to Surah Duha and Surah Inshirra, the holy Prophet (S) is addressed. One of the objective points in all three Suras is that of consoling him when he was faced with a magnitude of painful incidents and numerous taunts by the offensive language of his enemies.

"Surely (O Muhammad) We have given you abundance of good (Kawthar)."

The term /kauthar/ is a descriptive case derived from /kathrat/ with the meaning of 'a lot of goodness, or blessing'; while gracious persons are also called 'Kawthar'.

What is the purpose of using the term 'Kawthar', here? A narration says that when the holy Prophet (S) sat on the pulpit and recited this Surah, some of the companions asked him what it was that Allah had given him and he answered:

"It is a stream in Heaven, whiter than milk, more clear than a goblet (of crystal) with dome-shaped ornaments from pearls and rubies..."[3]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Kawthar is a stream in Heaven that Allah granted His Apostle for his son (who died in his lifetime)".

Some have also said the purpose of using the word 'Kawthar' is for the Pool of Abundance (haud-i-kauthar) that belongs to the Prophet (S) wherefrom the believers quench their thirst when arriving in Paradise.[4]

Some have commented on it as being 'prophecy' and some others as 'the Qur'an'; still others as 'abundance of the Prophet's companions and followers', or the 'abundance of the descendants' all of whom came from his daughter, Fatimah Zahra (as), and they multiplied to such an extent that it is impossible to count them.

They are not only, now, but, until the advent of the Hereafter, the reminders of the holy Prophet (S). Some have also commented on it as being 'intercession', narrating a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) in this connection, as a reference.

Even, Fakhr-i-Razi has narrated fifteen different narrations on the meaning of 'Kawthar'.

But, it seems that most of them are the statements of the clear examples of this broad concept, because, as was mentioned before, 'Kawthar' means 'goodness and blessing in abundance', and we know that Allah, the Graceful, granted the holy Prophet (S) so many blessings so that each of those mentioned in the above is one clear example of them. There are also many other examples that may be cited as example commentaries for the verse.

However, all the divine gifts granted to the holy Prophet (S) in all aspects, even the victories in his expeditions against his enemies, and the scholars of his followers in the Muslim community, who guard the burning torch of Islam and Qur'an, in every period and age, and carry it throughout the world, all in all are involved in this 'abundance of good'.

It should not be forgotten that Allah revealed these verses to His Prophet's holy heart at the time when the manifestations of this 'abundance of good' had not yet appeared. It was a miraculous piece of news which informed about the near future and the remote future regarding the legitimacy of the holy Prophet (S).

This great blessing and the

'abundance of good'

needs a lofty thankfulness, although creatures can never thank the Creator for His blessings, fully, because even the success of being thankful is another blessing from Him which needs thankfulness.

When it is so;

"Therefore to your Lord turn in prayer and Sacrifice".

Yes, He is the One Who grants these blessings, therefore, prayer, worship and sacrifice, which is also a kind of worship, itself, have no meaning save for Allah, particularly in regard to the meaning of the term Lord which indicates the constancy of grace, providence and Lordship of Providence.

Briefly, 'worship', in the form of prayer or making a sacrifice, is only the Lord's and Benefactor's privilege, and it is exclusively for the Pure Supreme Being.

This refers to the behaviour of the pagans who used to prostrate and sacrifice to the idols while they knew their affluence belonged to Allah. and in any case, the phrase 'your Lord', used in the verse, is a clear evidence for the necessity of 'intention with divine motive' in worship.

Many commentators believe that the purpose, involved here refers to the prayer on the Feast of Sacrifice, and making sacrifice on the same day. But, the meaning of the verse is apparently general and inclusive, even though prayer and sacrifice of the Feast on the day are of its clear examples.

Perhaps, using the term /wanhar/ based on /nahr/, which is specific to butchering a camel, is for the reason that sacrificing a camel, amongst other offerings, enjoyed a higher importance for the Muslims of that time who liked it very much, and thus, its butchering was not possible without the showing of generosity.

Here are two more commentaries on the above verse:

1. The implied meaning of the phrase /wanhar/ is 'facing Qiblah (the direction of the Ka'ba) when saying a prayer', because the word /nahr/ originally means 'throat' then, it has been used with the meaning of 'standing in front of anything'.

2. The purpose involved, here is the 'raising of the hands up to the throat and face'.

A tradition says that when this Surah was revealed, the holy Prophet (S) asked Gabriel:

"What is this /nuhayrah/ that my Lord has commissioned me to do"?

Gabriel said:

"This is not /nuhayrah/. Allah has, however, commanded you to raise your hands at the beginning of prayer when you say /allahu akbar/ and when you are going to perform bowing or prostration and after that, because our prayer and that of the angels, in the seven heavens, are like this. Everything has an adornment and the adornment of prayer is raising the hands at the time of saying /allahu akhar/". [5]

There is another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who, on the commentary of this verse, indicating with his holy hands, said:

"The purpose is that you raise your hands so that your palms be towards Qiblah (the direction of the Ka'ba)". [6]

There is no problem in combining all these meanings, in particular, there are many Islamic narrations about raising the hands at the time of saying /allahu akbar/. Thus, the verse has such a vast meaning that it covers all of them. However, the first commentary is the most appropriate.

In the last verse of this short Surah, regarding the taunts made by the chiefs of the pagans to that holy being, it says:

"Surely your enemy is the one who will be without offspring".

The term /sani'/ is derived from /sana'an/ with the meaning of 'enmity, spitefulness, and peevishness'; and /sani'/ is the one who possesses these characteristics.

It is worthy to note that /abtar/ originally means 'the animal whose tail is cut off' and the enemies of Islam taunted the holy Prophet (S) by saying this with the hope that after his departure from this world and having no son to inherit his position, the dissolution of Islam's sovereignty would happen. But, Qur'an, consoling the holy Prophet (S) tells him that it is not him who will be without offspring, but surely his enemy is.

Explanation: Lady Hazrat Fatimah and Kawthar

It was said earlier that 'Kawthar' has a vast inclusive meaning which is 'goodness in abundance' and the examples are many.

A large number of scholars of the Shi'ah school believe that one of the most clear examples of that word is the auspicious existence of Lady Fatimah Zahra (as), because the occasion of the revelation of the verse says that they accused the holy Prophet (S) of being without offspring, but the Qur'an says:

"Surely (O Muhammad) We have given you abundance of good (Kawthar)".

From this meaning we understand that this 'abundance of good' is the very Lady Fatimah Zahra (as) of whom the descendants of the Prophet (S)

increased abundantly and thousands and thousands of them scattered in the world preaching his religion and preserving it.

It is a fact that none can correctly count the number of descendants of Hazrat Ali and Fatimah (as) who are recognized as the descendants of the holy Prophet (S), among whom so many great scholars, scientists, writers, commentators, jurisprudents, traditionists and splendid leaders left some outstanding works and unmatched fame in this world, and tried to protect Islam with their donations and devotions.

Here, we encounter a very interesting discussion from Fakhr-i-Razi who, along with other commentaries on 'Kawthar', says:

"The third statement is that this Surah has been revealed to reject those who criticized the holy Prophet (S) for his lack of progeny, therefore, the meaning of the Surah is that Allah shall give him a generation which will remain stable through all ages.

And consider this, that although a number of Ahlul-Bait have been martyred, the world is replete with them, where as from the Ummayads (who were the enemies of Islam) there remains no mentionable figure in the world. Then, behold and see how many of the great men of leadership such as Baqir, Sadiq, Rida, and Nafs-i-Zakiyyah[7] are found among them, (the household)."[8]

The Miracle of this Surah

This Surah virtually contains three important miraculous predictions.

On the one hand, it informs the Prophet (S) of the, glad tidings of the 'abundance of good',

(although the verb /a'tayna/ is in the past tense form, but it may be as the indisputable tense common to the present and future which has been stated in the form of the past tense) and this 'abundance of good' encompasses all victories and successes that were obtained, later, by the holy Prophet (S); were not predictable in Mecca at the time of the revelation of this Surah.

On the other hand, the Surah foretells that the holy Prophet (S) shall not be without posterity, and his generations and descendants shall exist abundantly in the world.

The third prediction of the Surah is that the enemies of the Prophet (S) will be 'abtar', i.e., without posterity. This, too, actually happened and those enemies were so rooted out that no trace of their generations can be seen today. Tribes such as the Ummayads and Abbasids, who opposed the Prophet (S) and his prophecy and who enjoyed such a population that their family and children could not be counted, today, of which there is not one of them to be introduced.

Allah and the Plural Pronoun

It is noteworthy that, here and in many other verses of the Holy Qur'an, Allah introduces Himself by the first person plural pronoun, thus:

"Surely We have given you abundance of good (Kawthar)".

This sense, and the likes of it, is for the expression of Glory and Power, because when the nobility talk about themselves, they announce not only themselves, but, also their commissionaires, and this refers to the power and

nobility as well as to the presence of those in obedience along with the commands.

In the verse under discussion the term /an/ is also another emphasis on this meaning and the phrase

/a'taynaka/ ‘We have given you',

rather than /ataynaka/, is an evidence to the fact that He has awarded him / kauthar/, which, itself, is a great glad tiding to the Prophet (S) in order to keep his holy heart aloof from annoyance resulting from the nonsensical remarks of the enemies, and consequently, languor does not affect his firm determination, and for him to know that Allah is his support Who is the source of all welfare and grace in abundance.

Supplication

O Lord! Do not deprive us from the blessings of that 'abundance of good' that You granted to Your Prophet (S).

O Lord! You know that we heartily love Your Prophet (S) and his pure progeny (S); include us among them.

O Lord! The glory of his essence and his religion is much noteable; add to this grandeur, majesty and honour.

Notes

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) had another son by the name of Abraham, born of Mariyah Qibtiyyah in 8 AH. He, too, died before he was 2 years old.
2. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 548
3. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 549
4. Ibid.
5. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 550
6. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 550
7. Nafs-i-Zakiyyah is another name for Muhammad-ibn-Abdullah, the son of Imam Hassan Mujtaba (as) who was martyred by Mansur-i-Dawaniqi in 145 AH.
8. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. 32, p. 124.

Surah Kafirun, Chapter 109

(Disbelievers)

Number of Verses: 6

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah was revealed in Mecca. Both the content and the occasion of revelation of the Surah clearly confirm this idea.

The statements of the Surah show that at the time of its revelation Muslims were in a minority and disbelievers were in the majority, of whom the holy Prophet (S) was under great pressure. They urged him to collude with them, but, he refused all of them and without having any conflict with them, made them completely hopeless.

This is a good example for all Muslims that under no conditions should they collude with the enemies of Islam against the basis of the religion, and if it happens that disbelievers ask them to follow such suggestions they should make them totally hopeless.

The phrase

"I worship not what you worship"

is, in particular, repeated twice, in this Surah, for emphasis. This emphasis is made in order to disappoint the enemies.

Again, the verse:

"Nor do you worship Whom I worship"

is also another emphasis showing their stubbornness which ends with the conclusion:

"To you be your religion, and to me my religion".

The Virtue of Studying Surah Kafirun

There are many narrations on the excellence of reciting this Surah which illustrate the extreme importance of its content.

For example, it is narrated in a tradition from the holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"The person who recites (the Surah)

'Say: O you disbelievers'

it is as if he has recited a quarter of the Qur'an, and the insolent Satans will recoil from him, and he will be free from polytheism, and he will be saved from the Great Terror (on Doomsday)."[1]

Salvation, on the Day of Judgement, will be attained only through monotheism and the negation of polytheism; it is the theme on which this Surah is based.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says that he asked Jabir-ibn-Mat'am whether he wished to have the best companions and the most amount of provisions with him when he was on a journey, and he said he did, then, the Prophet (S) said:

"Recite these five Suras,: Kafirun, Nasr, Ikhlas, Falaq and Nas, and begin your recitation with /bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/."[2]

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"My father has said that Surah Kafirun is one fourth of the Qur'an, and when he recited it he used to say

'I worship only Allah, I worship only Allah". [3]

Surah Kafirun, Verses 1-6

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

وَلَا أَنتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ

وَلَا أَنتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

1. "Say: O you disbelievers,"
2. "1 worship not what you worship,"
3. "Nor do you worship Whom I worship,"
4. "Neither shall I worship what you worship,"
5. "Nor will you worship Whom I worship,"
6. "To you be your religion, and to me my religion."

Occasion of the Revelation

Islamic narrations denote that this Surah was revealed about some of the pagan chiefs of the Quraish tribe such as 'Walid-ibn-i-Muqayrah', 'As-ibn-i-wa'il,' Harith-ibn-i-Qays'.' Umiyyah-ibn-i-Khalaf and so on.

They said:

"O Muhammad Follow our belief and we will follow yours and we will let you enjoy all our privileges. For one year you should worship our gods and the next year we will worship your God. If your belief is better, we have enjoyed it with you; and if our belief is better, you have enjoyed it with us".

The Prophet (S) said:

"I take refuge to Allah that I make no match of anything with Him".

They said:

"You may touch some of our gods, at least, and take a good omen from them. If you do this, we will confirm you and worship your God".

The Prophet (S) said:

"I am waiting for the command of my Lord".

At that moment this Surah was revealed. Then, the Messenger of Allah went to the Sacred Mosque. A number of the chiefs of the Quraish were gathered there. He stood on a place above them and recited this Surah, wholly, to them. When they heard the message of the Surah they became completely hopeless of their aim and began hurting him and his followers.

He Never Agrees with the Idol Worshippers

The verses of this Surah address the holy Prophet (S) and the command is:

"Say: O you disbelievers,"

"I worship not what you worship",

"Nor do you worship Whom I worship",

Thus, he clearly defines his way which is totally different from their way. He frankly states that he never worships idols and that they, with their stubbornness and the blind following of their ancestors and their persisting in it, never agree with worshipping Allah, which is free from polytheism, nor do they leave their unlawful great amounts of income gained from other idol worshippers.

Again, in order to disappoint the idol worshippers aim, completely, of him (S) leaving monotheism and accepting idolatry, it says:

"Neither shall I worship what you worship",

"Nor will you worship Whom I worship".

Therefore, he is stating that they not urge him, uselessly, upon accepting idolatry; it is impossible.

"To you be your religion, and to me my religion."

Many of the commentators have clearly said that the objective of using the term /kafirun/, here is for a particular group of chiefs among the idol worshippers of Mecca.

Perhaps, their reason for saying this, in addition to the matter mentioned for the occasion of revelation is that, finally, many of the idol worshippers of Mecca believed in Islam.

So, when he says:

"Nor do you worship Whom I worship,"

"Neither shall I worship what you worship"

it is certainly about those chiefs among the idol worshippers who never believed the truth even to the end of their lives; while many pagans had entered Allah's religion in crowds at the time Mecca was captured.

Here, there are some questions which should be answered:

1. Why Does the Surah Begin With the Command: 'Say'?

Would it not be better to begin with

'O disbelievers'

without having added. Say, at the beginning?

In other words, the Prophet (S) should carry out the command of Allah and tells them only the phrase

'O disbelievers'

without repeating

'Say'

along with it.

Regarding the content of the Surah, the answer to the question is clear, because the pagans had invited the holy Prophet (S) to collude with them regarding idols, so it means he should repel this from himself and say that he would never agree with them in idolatry.

If the word

'Say'

were not at the beginning of this Surah, the statement would be the statement of Allah not that of Muhammad, and thus the sentence:

"I worship not what you worship",

and the like, would be meaningless.

Moreover, the word

'Say'

was in the message that Gabriel brought from Allah.

The holy Prophet (S) had to retell exactly what was stated, in order to preserve the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an.

This would illustrate that Gabriel and the holy Prophet (S) did not make the least variation in the Divine revelation, and have actually proved that they have been obedient missionaries to the command of Allah; as Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 15 says:

"...Say: It is not for me, of my own accord to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me..."

2. Did the Idol Worshippers Deny Allah?

We know that idol worshippers never denied Allah, and according to the clear verses of Qur'an if they were asked about the creator of the heavens and the earth, they said that it is Allah:

"If thou ask them who it is that created the heavens and the earth they will certainly say, Allah..."[4].

Then, how is it that it says, in this Surah:

"Neither shall I worship what you worship,"

"Nor will you worship Whom I worship'?

Regarding the proposition which is not on the 'creation', but, the subject matter is upon 'worshipping', it makes the answer to this question clear, too.

Idol worshippers knew Allah as the creator of the world, but they believed that they should

'worship'

the idols so that the idols would become intercessors in the Court of Allah, or that they, themselves, are not worthy enough to worship Allah, but, that they should worship the man-made idols.

This is the point that the Qur'an rejects firmly and refusing their false imaginings, it says worship must be performed only to Allah; not to idols, alone, nor to both of them.

3. What Is This Repetition In the Verses For?

So many different ideas have been given on the purpose of the repetition for the lack of worship of idols by the Prophet (S), and the lack of worship for Allah by the disbelievers.

Some believe that this repetition is for emphasis and for disappointing the polytheists and distinguishing the ways of Islam from their ways, and for logical reasoning of the impossibility of collusion between monotheism and polytheism. In other words, since they insisted on inviting the Prophet (S) to polytheism and repeated it, the Qur'an, too, repeats the refusal of their proposal.

A tradition denotes that Abu Shakir Disani a disbeliever, asked Abu Ja'far Ahwal, one of the followers of Imam Sadiq (as), why the same

proposition is repeated, in this Surah, the act of which is opposed to the excellence of eloquence.

Abu Ja'far, who knew no answer for the question, went to the sixth holy Imam Ja'far ibn-i-Muhammad As-Sadiq (as) in Medina and asked him for the answer.

The holy Imam said that the cause for the revelation of these verses and its repetition, in the Surah, was just in reply to the repetition in the proposal by the disbelievers who told the holy Prophet (S) that he should worship, for one year, what they worshipped and the next year they would worship what; he worshipped. These verses were revealed and refused all their proposals. [5]

Some others have said that this repetition is for the reason that one refers to the present and the other refers to the future; that is, 'I never worship what you worship, neither at the present nor in the future'. (But apparently, there is no evidence for this commentary).

There is also a third commentary which says that the first repetition states the difference of what is worshipped, and the second refers to the difference in worship. That is, 'neither do I worship what you worship nor is my worship like your worship, because mine, free from any other motives, is pure and only for Allah, the One True God. '

Besides, 'your worship of the idols is based on ancestral custom, social conviction or imitative instincts, but my worship, of Allah, is based on acknowledgement and thankfulness'. [6]

However, it seems that the repetition, as was said before, is for emphasis, as the aforementioned tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) refers to, also.

4. Is the Phrase: 'To You Be Your Religion' A Licence For Idolatry?

It is sometimes considered that the last verse, of this Surah, which says:

"To you be your religion, and to me my religion"

has the concept of 'a general peace' and it lets them remain in their religion, because it does not urge them to accept Islam.

But, this consideration is very weak and baseless, because the tone of the statement in the verses clearly shows that this meaning is a kind of scorn and warning, i.e., let your religion be yours and you will see its fatal consequence soon.

This idea is similar to Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 55:

"And when they hear vain talk, they turn away therefrom and say: 'To us our deeds and to you yours; peace be to you; we seek not the ignorant".

There are a great deal of verses in the Qur'an that condemn polytheism in any form. The verses count it as the worst thing and consider it as an unforgivable sin.

There are some other answers to this question, but the first meaning, as an answer, seems the most appropriate.

5. Not Even For One Moment Did He Collude With Polytheism

What is stated in this Surah is, in fact, a statement of fact that monotheism and polytheism are two distinct separate ways, completely

opposite to each other. They have no similarity in each other. Monotheism leads Man to Allah, but polytheism makes Allah a stranger to him.

Monotheism is the secret of unity in all aspects, while polytheism is the source of dispersion and separation in all affairs.

Monotheism promotes Man from the world of materialism; high up beyond the natural world, and joins him to the eternal world, to the infinite being of Allah. But, polytheism drops Man down into the well of materialism. It joins him to limited, weak, perishing creatures.

For the same reason the holy Prophet (S) and all other great prophets not only did not collude with polytheism, but their first and greatest duty was also to fight against it.

Now, it is to all those who seek truth and the scholars and preachers of this religion to follow the same way, and they must proclaim their detachment and their hatred of any polytheism and. collusion with polytheists, everywhere. This is the true way of Islam.

Supplication

O Lord! Keep us aloof from any polytheism and any polytheistic deed and thought.

O Lord! The temptations of the polytheists, of our time, are also very dangerous. Protect us from falling into their traps.

O Lord! Bestow on us such clarity and decisiveness that, like the holy Prophet (S) we can refuse any proposal of collusion with blasphemy and polytheism.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 551
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 25
5. Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-lbrahim, vol. 2, p. 445.
6. Abulfutuh-i-Razi, Commentary, vol. 12, p. 192.

Surah Nasr, Chapter 110

(Help)

Number of Verses: 3

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah was revealed at Medina after the migration of the Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina. It contains the glad tidings of a great victory for Islam, after which, people, in droves, flocked to the banner of Islam.

Then, to thank Allah for that great gift, the holy Prophet (S) is invited to
'glorify'
and
'praise'
Allah, and to pray for His
'forgiveness'.

There were many victories for Islam, but no triumph was as important as the bloodless conquest of Mecca, especially the Arabs believed, according to some narrations, that if the Prophet of Islam (S) could conquer and capture Mecca, then, it was a sign of his legitimacy because if he were not right, Allah would not let him do so, as He did not allow Abrahah and his great force to destroy the Ka'ba. It was for this reason that the Arab pagans entered Islam, in groups, after the conquest of Mecca.

Some have said that this Surah was revealed alongside the 'Hadibiyyah Peace'; six years after migration and two years before the conquest of Mecca.

But, it is completely improbable to say, (as some have said), that it was revealed at the time of the farewell Pilgrimage after the conquest of Mecca, in the year 10 A.H. because, the ideas involved in the Surah, which inform of the incidents regarding the future, not the past, do not fit with this meaning.

One of the names of this Surah is /taudi'/ 'leave-taking',” because it implicitly implicates the death of the Prophet (S).

A tradition indicates that when this Surah was revealed and the holy Prophet (S) recited it to the followers, they all became happy, but Abbas, the uncle of the holy Prophet (S), began shedding tears. The holy Prophet (S) asked him why he was crying. He answered that he supposed the Surah contained the implication of the Prophet's death.

And he (S) said:

“It is so, my uncle”[1]

The commentators are divided on how this meaning is understood, from the Surah, when there is nothing apparent in it to imply the idea. The Surah is wholly about the victory, and it seems that the Prophetic mission of the holy Prophet (S) is completely fulfilled and his religion is fixed. It is clear that in such a case the departure of the Prophet (S) from this fleeting world to the next, eternal world, is completely predictable.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

A tradition from the holy Prophet (S) says:

"He who recites it (Surah Nasr), it is the same as if he had been with the Messenger of Allah (S) at the conquest of Mecca". [2]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He who recites Surah Nasr in his optional[3] or obligatory prayers, Allah makes him successful in defeating his enemies, totally, and on the Day of Judgement he will come with a letter which talks. Verily Allah has brought him out of his grave with that letter as an immunity from the heat and fire of Hell..."[4]

It is clear that this virtue and honour is for the person who, with reciting it, follows the way of the Messenger of Allah (S) and practices his religion and his tradition, not only suffices its recitation with the tongue.

Surah Nasr, Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِذَا جَاء نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

1. "When there comes the help of Allah and victory",

2. "And you see people entering Allah's religion in multitudes",

3. "Then celebrate the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, (for) surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy)".

Allah's Help Brings Multitudes to Allah's Religion

"When there comes the help of Allah and victory",

"And you see people entering Allah's religion in multitudes".

"Then celebrate the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, (for) surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy)".

In these three short, but, expressive verses, there are some elegant, elaborations whose careful observation helps us to understand the final goal of the Surah.

In the first verse, it says that the victory belongs to Allah.

It is not only in this occurence that this meaning is mentioned, but, in many other verses of the Qur'an the idea is reflected, including Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 214:

"...Ah! Verily the help of Allah is, (always) near!";

and Surah Al-'Imran, No. 3, verse 126; and also Surah Anfal, No. 8, verse 10, says:

"...there is no help except from Allah..."

It is true that preparation and supplying forces are necessary for defeating the enemy, but a believing person knows the victory comes only from Allah, and for the same reason when victory comes he does not become deluded or proud, but thanks and praises Allah...

In this Surah, the words are about, at first, the help of Allah, then, the victory, and then, the influence and spread of Islam, and finally, the entering of people, in groups, into the religion of Allah. All of them are causes and effects for each other.

Victory is absent unless there is the help of Allah, and people do not enter Islam in multitudes unless there is triumph and victory in order to remove the barriers and hindrances from the way. Of course, along with these stages, each of which is a great, divine blessing, the stage of being thankful and praising Allah; comes forth.

On the other hand, the help of Allah; and the victory are all for the final goal, i.e., people entering Allah's religion in multitudes, and guidance for all.

Victory, here is stated in general, and with some evidences that were mentioned before, the purpose is, undoubtedly, the conquest of Mecca which had such a wide effect and verily, the conquest of Mecca introduced a new chapter in the history of Islam, because the main center of polytheism was disturbed; idols were destroyed; the hope of the idol worshippers changed into disappointment; and the barriers in the way of people's faith in Islam were removed.

That is why the conquest of Mecca should be considered as a stage of the settlement of Islam in Arabia and then, in the world. It was after the conquest of Mecca that no opposition from the pagans was seen (except once, which was quickly controlled) and people from all parts of Arabia came to the holy Prophet (S) to accept Islam.

There are three important instructions, in the verse, given to the holy Prophet (S) (and naturally to all believers) which are, in fact, a gratitude for this great victory and an appropriate response to the help of Allah: the instructions of celebrating, praising, and seeking His forgiveness.

This great victory caused the polytheistic thoughts to disappear; the perfection and beauty of Allah to become more clear; and those who had lost the right way to return to the truth.

Further, it is possible that at the time of victory, some disgraceful behaviour appears in a person and he becomes involved in pride and self-conceit, or tries to take revenge and clear the personal accounts against his enemy.

These three instructions train him 'to remember the attributes of perfection and the beauty of Allah at the sensitive moments of victory'; and 'to know all of the effects from Him'; and 'to seek His forgiveness in order to both remove pride and negligence from himself; and avoid revengefulness'.

It is certain that the holy Prophet (S) of Islam, like all other prophets (a.s.), was sinless; then what is the instruction of seeking His forgiveness for?

To answer this question, it should be said that this is a model for the whole community, and on the part of a sinless, infallible one like the holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul-Bait (as) who have already been purified by the Lord, Himself[5] will mean seeking further grace and greater blessings or futher protection of the Lord against the forces of Satan.

Here, /istiqfar/ means holy Prophet's beseeching the protection of the Lord, for himself and his followers, against the forces of evil, and seeking pardon of the Lord on behalf of his faithful adherents who, might have been prey of human weakness, as did Moses for his people who had yielded to the worship of the calf.

The phrase

/innahu kana tawwaba/ ‘surely, He is Oft-retuming (to mercy)’

is the statement of reason in proportion to 'seeking forgiveness', that is, seek forgiveness and repent because Allah is Oft-returning (merciful)’.

By the way, it may also refer to the meaning that 'when Allah accepts your repentance, you, too, should accept the repentance of the guilty after victory, as far as you can, and do not repulse them from yourselves as long as there is no sign of offence or plot coming from them.’ So, the holy Prophet (S), himself, on the event of the conquest of Mecca, showed the feature of Islamic grace and mercy to his defeated, hostile enemies at its highest standard.

It was not only the holy Prophet (S) who celebrated Allah's grace and glory on his final victory against his enemies, but all prophets throughout history also did so.

For example, when Joseph (as) became exalted in Egypt and his parents and his brothers succeeded in seeing him after a very long time, he said:

“O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events, O Thou Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protector in the world and in the Hereafter. Take Thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to Thy Will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous”[6].

Or, when Solomon (as) saw the throne of Bilqis (Queen of Sheba) ready before him, he said:

“...this is by the grace of my Lord! -to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful!...”[7].

The conquest of Mecca was the greatest victory. After that conquest, whole tribes from all parts of Arabia gave their allegiance to the holy Prophet (S), collectively, and before his earthly ministry was finished, the ground was prepared for the introduction of Islam to the world.

What was the lesson to be learned from this episode in world history? It was not about Man's self-glory, but humility; not power, but, service; not an appeal to Man's selfishness or self-sufficiency, but, a realization of Allah's Grace and Mercy, and the abundant outpouring of Allah's Praises in word and conduct.

Supplication

O Lord! You are able to give that glory back, again, to Muslims under the light of following the traditions of the Apostle.

O Lord! Set us among the true advocates of the Messenger of Islam.

O Lord! Bestow on us such a success that we can spread Islamic Justice in the world so that the people of the world eagerly accept it in multitudes.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 554. (also see Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 532.)
2. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 553.
3. See footnote 1 in Surah Ma'un, page 249, of this volume.
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, 553.
5. 33:33
6. Surah Yusuf, No. 12, verse 101
7. Surah 'Naml. No 27, verse 40

Surah Lahab, Chapter 111

(The Flame)

Number of Verses: 5

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Meccan Surah, which was revealed at the beginning of the open invitation to the holy Prophet (S), contains the name of one of the enemies of Islam and the holy Prophet (S), at that time, Abu Lahab, for whom a strong warning is given. The content of the Surah shows that he harbored a special enmity toward the Apostle and both he and his wife committed whatever vice they could against him.

The Qur'an clearly says that they both will enter Hell from which they cannot escape. This prophecy actually happened and finally they died without having faith in Islam. This is an explicit prediction of the Holy Qur'an.

It is cited in a tradition, that the holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who recites it (Surah Lahab), I hope that Allah will not gather him and Abu Lahab in the same abode".

(i.e., he will be in Paradise while Abu Lahab will be in Hell).[1]

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

It is obvious that this virtue is of the person who, with reciting it, goes another way diverse from Abu Lahab's, not of the one who recites it with the tongue, but, acts like Abu Lahab.

Occasion of the Revelation of the Surah

It is narrated from Ibn Abbas that when the verse:

"And admonish the nearest kinsmen,"[2],

was revealed, the holy Prophet was commanded by Allah to gather his close relatives and announce, openly, the invitation of Islam for the first time, and that he was the apostle of Allah. Then, he climbed to the top of Mount Safa and called: /ya sabaha/. (This phrase was use to inform all people to prepare to defend themselves when an enemy was about to attack.)

When the people heard the call of Muhammad (S), they went to him. He pointed out the different Arab tribes by name and addressing the assembly, asked:

"If I tell you that there is a huge enemy army camping at the foot of this mountain, on the other side, will you believe me?"

The whole assembly unanimously said:

"Certainly we will believe, for thou hast never told a lie".

"Then",

said the holy Prophet (S):

"I have come from Allah as a warner to preach the Unity of the Lord".

Hearing this, Abu Lahab exclaimed:

"Perdition to thee! Was it for this that thou assembled us?"

It was at that moment that this Surah was revealed, saying:

"May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish".

the danger and enmity of Abu Lahab and his wife was not limited only to that action. They were the worst people of that time and the most habitual enemies of early Islam. That is why the Qur'an clearly and scornfully reproaches them. Some other details will be pointed out later, Allah willing.

Surah Lahab, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

وَا ْمرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

1. "May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish ".
2. "His wealth avails him not, neither what he had earned".
3. "Soon will he roast in a flaming fire",
4. "And his wife, the bearer of the firewood,"
5. "Upon her neck a rope of twisted palm-fibre."

Perish the Hands of Abu Lahab! As it was said in the 'Occasion of Revelation of the Surah', this Surah is, indeed, an answer to the disgraceful words of Abu Lahab; the Prophet's uncle and the son of Abdul Muttalib. Among those people he was one of the strongest enemies of Islam.

When he heard the clear, general invitation of the holy Messenger of Allah (S) and his warning of the punishment of Allah, he said:

"Perdition to thee! Was it for this, that thou assembled us?"

then, the Holy Qur'an answers him:

"May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish."

The terms /tab/ and /tabab/, as Raqib cites in Mufradat, mean 'the constant loss', but Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayan' that 'the meaning is a loss which leads to perdition'.

Some of the philologists have rendered it to mean 'to cut' which, perhaps, is for the reason that a constant loss naturally leads to a stop. However, from all these meanings it is concluded that it is the same meaning that was said in the verse.

Of course, this perdition may refer to this world or to the spiritual world or both of them.

Why does the Holy Qur'an, inspite of its common style, mention Abu Lahab, so strongly scorned, by name?

To make the answer of this question clear, Abu Lahab should be introduced.

Abu Lahab, i.e. the Father of the Flames, whose name was 'Abdul-'Uzza and means the servant of the idol 'Uzza, was a man of fiery temperament with a reddish face. This nickname, perhaps, was chosen for him, because, 'lahab', in Arabic, means 'a flame of fire'.

He and his wife, Umm-i-Jamil; a sister of Abu Sufyan, being specifically mentioned as the cursed ones among the enemies of Islam, hurt the holy Prophet (S) very much.

A person by the name of 'Tariq Muharibi' says that once Abu Lahab was found going behind the holy Prophet (S) passing through the market place called 'Zul-Mujaz'; (it is close to' Arafat, a short distance from Mecca). He was following behind him (S) shouting to the people not to listen to the holy Prophet (S) saying that he was a mad man and pelting his feet with stones, causing the holy Prophet (S) to walk with bleeding wounds.

There are many stories of this kind narrated about the ceaseless, hideous treatment and futile statements of Abu Lahab against Prophet Muhammad (S) which can be counted as reasons for why the verses, under discussion, criticize and curse him and his wife so clearly and severely.

He was the only person who did not sign the supporting agreement of Bani Hashim from the holy Prophet (S) although, he took part in the agreements of the enemies of Islam, and persisted to remain his (S) enemy. Regarding these facts, the reason for the exceptional case of this Surah can be made clear.

"His wealth avails him not, neither what he has earned".

It is understood from this statement that Abu Lahab was a rich, proud man who boasted about his wealth and used it against Islam.

"Soon will he roast in a flaming fire".

His punishment, as well as his name, Abu Lahab, flourished with great, blazing flames.

Not only the wealth of Abu Lahab, but, also, no wealth or social position of infidels and wrong doers avails them in rescuing them from the fire of Hell, as Surah Shu'ara, No. 29 verses 88-89 say:

"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,"

"But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart".

It is certain that the fire mentioned in the verse;

"Soon will he roast in a flaming fire"

is the fire of Hell, but some believe that it can involve the fire of this world, too.

It is narrated that after the defeat of the Meccans at Badr, Abu lahab, who had not participated in the battle, asked Abu Sufyan, when he returned from the battlefield, about its details.

Abu Sufyan described to him the event of how the Quraish were defeated and then, he added:

"By Allah, we saw, in the course of battle, some riders between the earth and heaven who had come to help Muhammad".

Here, Abu Rafi', one of the servants of Abbas tells the story thus:

"I was sitting there and I raised my hand and said that they were the angels of Heaven. Then, Abu Lahab became so angry that he sharply struck my face and lifted me up and I fell hard upon the ground.

He continued beating me because of his grief from his disappointment.

At that moment, Ummul-FadI, Abbas' wife, who was attending there, took a stake and struck it hard on Abu Lahab's head, and said:

'Have you found this weak man alone?'.

The head of Abu Lahab became wounded and bloody. One week later he died from a contagious disease and since his body gave off an unbearable, foul smell no one approached it. It was left for three days and at last, some slaves were hired to carry it out of Mecca. They watered it from a distance and then piled stones on top of it until it was buried."[3]

"And his wife, the bearer of the firewood,"

"Upon her neck a rope of twisted palm-fibre".

It is no wonder that Umm-i-Jamil, the sister of Abu Sufyan and Mu'awiyah's aunt, was Abu Lahab's wife. She was a squint-eyed woman equally bad tempered, like her husband; mischievous and grossly wicked. She cooperated with him in hostilities and hindrances against Islam. But, as to why the Qur'an describes her as 'the bearer of the firewood' several commentaries have been given.

Some have said that it is because she used to tie bundles of thorny branches with ropes of twisted palm leaf fibre, carrying them and scattering them about on dark nights along the paths, which the Prophet (S) was expected to take, with the expressed intention of wounding his feet and causing him bodily injury.

Some others believe that

'the bearer of the firewood'

may also be symbolic for carrying tales between people to embroil them (in the web of backbiting). This was also one of her vices.

Some commentators have said that she will carry the heavy load of the sins of others on the Day of Judgement.

The first meaning, among these commentaries, seems the most appropriate, though the combination of them all is not impossible.

The term /jid/ means 'neck and the upper part of the chest', whose plural form is /ajyad/. But,/ 'unuq/ means 'the back part of the neck', while / raqabah/ means 'the neck' on the whole.

The term /masad/ is a rope made of palm leaf fibre. Some have said that it is a rope with the harshness of palm fibre and the heat and heaviness of iron which will be put on her neck in Hell.

Some have also said that Umm-i-Jamil had a very precious necklace. She had sworn that she would spend it against the holy Prophet (S). For this behaviour, perhaps, Allah has appointed for her such a punishment.

Explanations

Prophecy: A Sign of the Miracle of the Qur'an

We know that these verses were revealed in Mecca, and it was announced that Abu Lahab and his wife will roast in the fire of Hell, i.e. they will not believe in the Truth. Finally, many pagans of Mecca believed, indeed, and some only apparently believed, but, of those who believed neither truly nor apparently were these two people.

This is one of the predictions of the Holy Qur'an that was concealed. There are some concealed facts which are discussed in a separate book under the title of 'Miracles of the Qur'an' and in the commentary, they are referred to accordingly.

Relationship is Not a Reason for Faith

Abu Lahab and his wife being specifically mentioned as the cursed ones, among the enemies of Islam, is just to emphasize that no relationship whatsoever, even with the holy Prophet (S), can be of any benefit when the person lacks in Faith. The men of Faith show no inclination toward those who go astray and never follow them in their wrong way, even when they are their close relatives.

Abu Lahab was the uncle of the Prophet (S) but, when he did not follow the command of Allah he was blamed and warned of the divine punishment as other disbelievers are, even more than others, because, his behavior was worse than others.

On the contrary, those who not only were not among the Apostle's relatives but, also were from other countries even with different races and languages, but, believed and practiced with their true Faith, were so close to the Prophet of Islam (S) that, for example, according to a tradition, the apostle said about Salman-Farsi:

"Salman is of our Ahlul-Bait".

It was as if he were one of the family members of the Prophet (S).

It is true that this Surah is about Abu Lahab and his wife, but it is clear that they are cursed because of their behaviour and thoughts, and hence, every individual or group of people who possesses their qualities will have the same destiny as theirs.

Supplication

O Lord! Clear our hearts from any grudge.

O Lord! We are all afraid of the final result. Give us security and ease and arrange our destiny in a good condition.

O Lord! We know that in that Great Court neither wealth nor relationship will avail us but by Your Grace.

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 558
2. Surah Shu'ara, No. 16, verse 114
3. Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 19, p. 227.

Surah Ikhlas, Chapter 112

(Monotheism)

Number of Verses: 4

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, as its name indicates, is about the Unity of Allah, and His Oneness. In its four verses, the Surah describes monotheism completely.

Occasion of Revelation of the Surah

On the occasion of revelation of this Surah, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"A Jew asked the holy Prophet (S) to describe the identity or to relate the geneology of Allah. He remained silent and gave no answer for three days, then, the Messenger Angel brought (him) this Surah and he (S) gave them their answer."[1]

Some other narrations denote that the Jew who asked this question was, Abdullah ibn Suriya, one of the known chiefs of the Jews. Another narration says that 'Abdullah ibn Salam asked this question from the holy Prophet (S), in Mecca, and believed (in Islam). But, he kept his faith concealed.

Another narration says that the pagans of Mecca asked such a question.[2]

In some narrations it is also said that the Christians of Najran asked the question.

There is no contradiction in these narrations because the question may have been asked by all of them, separately, which is, itself, an evidence to the extraordinary importance of this Surah, which answers the questions of different persons from various groups.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

On the virtue of reciting this Surah, numerous narrations from the holy Prophet (S) and Ahlul-Bait (as) are cited in Islamic sources which refer to the extraordinary greatness of the Surah. The author of Atyab-ul-Bayan Commentary, collected 25 of them.[3]

The holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said in a tradition:

"Is there anyone of you unable to recite one third of the Qur'an in one night"?

One of his listeners asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Who is able to do that"?

The Prophet (S) said:

"Recite

'Say: He, Allah, if One! (Surah Ikhlas)".[4]

A tradition says that the recitation of this Surah, when arriving at a home, causes the increase of sustenance and removing poverty from the people therein.[5]

There are ninety different traditions and narrations mentioned, with their approved references, on the virtue and commentary of this Surah in Tafsir-i-Nur-uth- Thaqalayn.[6]

On the idea that reading this Surah is equal to one third of the whole Qur'an, some have said that it is for the reason that the Holy Qur'an contains ordinances, creeds, and history, and this Surah states the creed part in an intensive form.

Some others have said that the Qur'an is made up of three main themes; origin, end, and what is in the middle between these two, and this Surah is about the first theme.

This meaning, that about one third of the Qur'an is the description of monotheism, is also acceptable; the extract of which has come in this Surah.

In conclusion, of this statement, we cite a tradition on the splendor of the Surah.

Imam Ali-ibn al-Husain az-Zain-ul-Abideen (as) was asked about Surah Ikhlas (Monotheism), and he said:

"Verily Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, knew that at the end of time there will come some people who will be precise and careful (in affairs), then, He sent down the Surah (Ikhlas), and the beginning verses of Surah Hadid up to

'And He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts'.

Everyone who seeks beyond this will perish". [7]

Surah Ikhlas, Verses 1-4

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

1. "Say: He, Allah, is One,"

2. "Allah, the Eternal,"

3. "He begets not, nor is He begotten,"

4. "And there is none like unto Him."

The first verse of this Surah, is an answer to the repeated question of many persons from different groups of people or tribes who asked about the attributes and identity of Allah.

The command is:

"Say: He, Allah, is One,"

It begins with the Arabic term

/huwa/ 'He'

which is a pronoun-third-person-singular and refers to something known to all, but ambiguous and not identified with any, as against the usual reference in the term of first person singular 'I'.

It is, indeed, a code referring to the fact that His Holy Being is extremely concealed and no human thought or imagination can touch it, though the signs of His Existence have filled the world, totally, and are more apparent and clear than all things, as Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 53 says:

"Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth..."

Then, it makes this unknown fact manifest by saying that

'Allah is One'.

By the way, the term /qul/, here means 'express thisfact and tell others'.

A tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) says that after expressing this statement he has said:

"Pagans and idol worshippers used to point to their idols using demonstrative pronouns and say:

'O Muhammad, these are our gods that can be seen. You, too, describe your God so that we can see and understand'.

Allah revealed these verses:

'Say: He, Allah, is one',

and the /h/ in the word /huwa/ refers to the confirmation of the matter and takes it into consideration. And /w/ is a third person pronoun which refers to the meaning that it is concealed from the sight of the eyes and it is beyond the limits of the touch of the senses".[8]

In another tradition, Imam Amir-ul-Mo'mineen Ali (as) says:

"On the night before the battle of Badr I saw 'Khidr' in my dream. I asked him to teach me something with which I would defeat the enemies.

He told me:

'Say: /ya hu ya man la huwa illa hu/.'

The next morning I told the Messenger of Allah (S) what had happened, and he (S) said:

'O Ali, you have been taught the Greatest Name (of Allah)'.

Thereafter, I repeatedly said the phrase in the battle of Badr ".[9]

When 'Ammar Yasir heard that Hazrat Ali (as) was reciting this phrase, habitually, while he was fighting on the day of Siffin, he asked him what it was, and Hazrat Ali (as) replied:

"It is the Greatest Name (of Allah) and the pillar of monotheism".[10]

Allah is a proper name for God, and the meaning of the Imam's expression is that in this very word are gathered all His attributes of Bounty and Glory, and due to this it has been called 'the Greatest of Names'.

This proper name is used for nothing but God, while other names for Allah, each of which usually refers to one of His qualities of Beauty and Glory, are often used for other than Him.

The root of the word is mentioned differently; /ilahat/, /alahah/, /alilahah/, /ilah/, /walih/; however, Allah, from whatever root it is, has been used as a proper noun, applied to 'the Being Who exists necessarily, by Himself; comprising all the attributes of perfection; a proper name denoting the true god, containing all the excellent, divine names; a unity having all the essence of existing things'.

This Sacred Name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an almost one thousand times, which is more than any other name of His Holy Names. This name brings light in our heart, makes us firm and calm, and takes us into a world full of purity and serenity.

The term /ahad/ is derived from /wahdah/, and some believe that /ahad/ and /wahid / are the same in many cases. In this case, /ahad/ is interchangeable with /wahid/ when it is used as an epithet applied for Allah, because /al-ahad/, as an epithet, is applied to Allah alone, and signifies 'the One'; the Soul; He Who has always been one and alone; or the Indivisible; or He Who has no second (to share) in His Lordship, nor in His Essence, nor in His attributes.

One can say /huwal wahid/ and /huwal ahad /and in like manner, /ahad / without the article being used as an epithet, especially in relation to Allah. It is interchangeable, in this case, (but not in other cases) with / wahid/. In this verse / ahad/ is a substitute for Allah, just as an indeterminate noun is sometimes a substitute for a determinate noun.

But, some others believe that there is a vast difference between the two Arabic words /ahad/ and /wahid/ both commonly thought to mean 'Oneness'. To indicate the Unity of God, it is said, in this verse, that God is Allah, i.e. One; One in the sense of Absolute Oneness of His Essential Existence, not in the numerical sense of the word, which has its second and third, but, the One which has no second.

The expression

'One',

is in the sense of being the 'ONLY' and in conceiving Whose existence, all faculties of the human intellect are helpless. He is such a One that even His attributes are His Essence and are not and can never be separate from Him.

It is a death blow which Islam has rendered, about the All-Divine, to all imaginary concepts of any kind of polytheistic doctrines and the phenomena of plurality.

He is One with none comparable to Him, without any beginning or end, unlimited by time, space or circumstances. A reality before which all others have no existence. He is the Creator, One, and everything is His creation.

A tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) says:

"Ahad' and 'wahid' both have one concept which is One with nothing comparable or similar to it, and monotheism is the confession to His Oneness".[11]

In the Qur'an /wapid/ and /apad/, both, refer to Allah, the One, the Only.

In the next verse, another epithet of that Holy Essence is referred to:

"Allah, the Eternal"

Many meanings are mentioned for /samad/ in Islamic narrations, commentaries, and lexicons.

Raqib cites in Mufradat that 'Samad means a Lord; one to whom reference is made in matters of importance'. Some others have said that 'Samad' means 'something whose inside is not hollow, but it is full'.

It also means 'a Lord', when applied for Allah, because affairs are dependant upon Him. 'Samad' signifies one who is high or elevated in the utmost highness, and a Lord to whom one resigns himself, has recourse to, or is in need of, or One above Whom there is no one, or One Who continues, after His creatures have perished.

Imam Husain ibn Ali (as), in a tradition, has stated five meanings for 'samad '

1. Samad is a Lord Whose Lordship has attained its utmost point or degree.

2. Samad is an Essence and Being that continues or continues for ever or is everlasting.

3. Samad is the Existence that has not a hollow inside.

4. Samad is the One Who takes no nourishment, food or drink.

5. Samad is One Who does not sleep.[12]

A tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-al Husain (as) says:

"Samad' is One Who has no partner and it is not difficult for Him to protect things, and nothing is hidden from Him".[13]

Some others have said /samad/ means 'independent of anyone' - All perfect - the One to Whom recourse is made by everything: Eternal for its needs, both for existence and for perfection; the One Who needs no sustenance of any kind-Self-existing to understand, Whose existence, every mind is captured in marvel and wonder. Nothing is hidden from His all-enveloping knowledge-is not accommodatable in anything, not even in intellect: Infinite in all aspects of existence and attributes.

The term 'samad' has such a vast meaning that we cannot mention them, completely, or in other words, the names or the attributes, mentioned to describe its nature, cannot be translated to covey the exact sense to the fullest meaning of the terms.

A tradition denotes that the citizens of Basrah wrote a letter to Imam Husain (as) and asked him the meaning of /samad/.

He replied:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful:

then do not plunge in vain talk about the Qur'an and do not dispute about it and do not speak about it when you do not know (it).

Verily, I heard from my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, who said:

'the person who talks about the Qur'an without knowing (it), his abode will be in fire'.

Allah, Himself, has rendered 'samad' to mean:

'He begets not, nor is He begotten',

'And there is none like unto Him'...

Yes, Allah is 'samad' Who is not from anything and is not in anything or on anything; He is the Creator of everything and all are from Him by His Power; what He has created to perish will perish at His Will, and what He has created to remain will remain in His Knowledge. This is Allah; al-Samad".[14]

In the next verse, it rejects the idea of the Christians, the Jews, and the pagan Arabs who declared that Allah had a child or is a father.

It says:

"He begets not, nor is He begotten"

Different from this is the statement of those who believe in Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Christians know 'Jesus' as the son of God. The Jews believe 'Ezra' ('Uzair) was the son of God:

"The Jews call 'Uzair a son of God, and the Christians call Christ the son of God. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the Truth!"[15]

The Arab pagans believed that angels were the daughters of Allah:

"...And they falsely having no knowledge, attribute to Him sons and daughters..."[16]

It is understood from some of the Islamic narrations that

'begets',

in the verse under discussion, has a broader meaning. It negates any material and delicate things emerging from Him, or He, the Sacred Essence, emerging from any material and delicate thing.

In the above mentioned letter of Imam Husain (as) to the people of Basrah, about the commentary of the term /samad/, he commented on the current verse, saying:

"/lamyalid/, i.e. there emitted nothing from Him - neither material things nor a child, nor other things that emit from creatures, nor a delicate thing like a soul.

Nothing appears in Him, such as sleep, imagination, grief, sadness, happiness, laughter, tears, fear and hope, courage and discouragement, hunger and satiety.

Allah is more exalted than that something should emit from Him, or that He begets something material or delicate, nor is He begotten from something material or delicate...

Similar to a living creature coming out from another one, or a plant from the earth, water from a spring, fruits from trees, nor the like, emitting delicate things from their sources, such as vision from the eye, hearing from the ears, smelling from the nose, tasting from the mouth, speech from the tongue, knowledge and understanding from the heart (insight and soul), and particles of fire from stone..."[17]

According to this tradition,

'begets'

conveys a vast meaning, so that it may envelop any emitting things of any kind from anything else, and this is, in fact, the second meaning of the verse whose first and apparent meaning was the meaning that was mentioned in the beginning.

Besides, the second meaning, with the analogy of the first meaning, is quite adaptable and understandable; since, if Allah has no children, it is because He is aloof from the qualities of material. This meaning is also right for other qualities of matter.

"And there is none like unto Him".

The term /kufw/ originally means 'equal from the point of position and rank', then, it is used for any similarity.

Considering this verse, the Holy Essence of Allah is free from all qualities or obstacles that creatures have, and free from all defects and limitations. This is 'Unity of Attributes' that corresponds with 'Unity of Number'.

Therefore, He is One in Essence, in attributes, and in deeds; and He is unique in every aspect.

Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) has said:

"...no change can take place in Him and no lessening, diminishing, dwindling, decay and dissipation of His Mighty and Glory is possible, that He is not begotten from anyone nor does He beget anyone... He has no peer and no equal. He can destroy things created by Himself in such a way that they will cease to exist and disappear into nothingness..."[18]

This is an interesting commentary because it discusses the narrowest points of Unity. It warns us not to ascribe our qualities and attributes to Allah and thus, not to create our glorified image as a personal diety.

Explanation: The Belief in the Oneness of Allah

The belief in Allah, as the Creator of the great universe, is the basis of Islam, and the criterion of thought, education, behaviour and action of the Muslim. All the details of the doctrine, nature and life's philosophy, etc. are built on this foundation

Belief in Allah, in Islam, is based on logical evidence Islam disapproves of imitation.

In this respect, Imam Ali ibnAbi. Taleb (as) is quoted to have said

"The first step of religion is to accept, understand and realize Him (Allah) and a perfection of understanding lies in conviction and the true way of conviction is to sincerely believe that there is no god but He…"[19]

Islamic doctrine is rooted in the pure belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Glorified, and that there is no one but Him, no one like Him, or opposite to Him, etc Allah is, also, above human qualities as these are characteristic of mortals. Allah is the Absolute, the Independent, and the Sufficient.

Believing in the Oneness of Allah, can according to Islamic doctrine, be understood from four distinct points:

1. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Himself

Allah, the Glorified, is One, Unique in Himself, not one of His creatures is like Him

"And there is none like unto Him".[20]

It is a fact dictated by sound intellect and scientific reasoning. It is logically accepted that the self of the cause is different from the effect.

It is worth mentioning that the human intellect can only perceive that which has an image which Man invokes in his own mind. Allah, the Glorified, is far from being reducible to this, and that is why the mind cannot fathom His Essence.

How can Man perceive the Essence of the Divine self while he is unable to discover the truth about the material of the universe, though he can see and feel it and can describe it and know its effects. He, still, cannot know its essence, even if he can break it down into its component parts.

How could he perceive the Essence of the Great Creator, while the Qur'an presents this fact:

"...yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah, with the strength of His power (supreme)!"[21]

2. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Attributes

He alone has the most glorious attributes. He has complete absoluteness in knowledge, power, will, wisdom, independence, etc. He is above all faults, and no one is like Him in His attributes. It is logical that the attributes follow the self, and so the qualities of the sun are different from that of the dust. Likewise, Allah's attributes are different from that of the creatures.

This is the meaning of Allah's saying:

"The most beautiful names belong to Allah: So call on Him by them..."[22]**,**

or

"Most Gracious, Most Merciful"[23]**.**

It clarifies that He, alone, possesses the praised attributes.

This is the meaning of Allah's saying:

"Glory to thy Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him)!"[24]**.**

That means that Allah is above any fault the polytheists attribute to Him. The belief in the Oneness of Allah in His attributes cannot be comprehended except after stating the attributes which are truely Allah's.

They are called 'the attributes of perfection', like having power, knowledge, will, choice, life, eternity, perpetuity, and wisdom, etc. This entails denying whatever attributes that are not His, like that of imperfection and fault, the need for time land space, doing evil, incarnation, movement, having appendages like hands and legs, etc. These are called 'the attributes of greatness' or 'the negative attributes'.

3. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Actions

It is a self-evident truth that actions are expressions of the self and of attributes. As the hand can by no means act like the mind, due to the natural difference between the two in essence and attributes, and as the wind cannot act like electrical current, so no one can act like Allah, the Glorified.

The inventions of Man are merely a process of making good use of the natural laws set by Allah. It is done through the mind which is granted to Man by Allah. Man's role is confined to arranging the particulars according to natural laws.

Allah alone can create, provide Man's provisions, raise up from death, cause to die and resurrect. He can do whatever He wills, for He is the Lord Who can do anything.

None can, other than Allah, affect the creation. None can repeal Allah's Will or do what He does.

4. The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Worship

True belief in the Oneness of Allah is incomplete without worshipping Allah, faithfully. He is the Creator and the Owner of His creatures. He grants them His grace. He is, for such consideration, entitled to be worshipped. All divine messages have called Man to submit and yield to Allah alone.

The Most Exalted says:

"Verily, I am God (Allah): there is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise"[25]**.**

He taught Man to say:

"Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek".[26]

Worship is the gratitude shown to the source of grace and blessing, and acknowledgement of His favor, and performance of the duties ordained by Allah. Simultaneously, it leaves its perfecting impact on the human spirit, by guiding the instinct of religiousness buried in the depths of the human soul to the right direction. Thus, Man does not go astray, or wind up in the grip of tyrants.

Being a slave to Allah propels Man, really, to break the shackles which servitude intensifies in Man. Moreover, being a slave to Allah means turning one's face to Him, the source of grace, and beauty and rightness.

The soul yearns for such attributes and seeks to attain perfection and progresses towards them. They become the sublimest objective and the highest ideal of Man's thought and actions. The Muslim knows with certitude that his Creator owns the most glorious attributes. He is the Just, Merciful, Wise, Oft-returning to Mercy, Kind to His servants who sin, Truthful, etc.

Man works to reflect the coloring of these attributes on his life, and to build human society and relations on the basis of these attributes. Consequently, he objectifies justice, love, mercy and grace in his life.

Islamic rites of worship have, moreover, educational and reformatory effects on the life of the individual and the group.

Supplication

O Lord! Make us firm in monotheism throughout our life.

O Lord! Polytheism, like monotheism, has many branches. Being saved from polytheism is not possible but by Your Grace; envelop us in Your Mercy and Your Grace.

O Lord! Keep us alive with monotheism, put us in death with monotheism, and unite us on the Resurrection Day with the reality of monotheism.

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notes

1. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 564.
2. Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 546.
3. Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. 14, p. 259.
4. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 561 (and other commentary sources).
5. Ibid.
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 699-715.
7. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1 Chapter Nesbat, tradition 3.
8. Bihar-al-Anwar. vol. 3, p. 221, Tradition 12.
9. Ibid. , p. 222.
10. Ibid.
11. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 3, p. 222.
12. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 3, p. 223.
13. Ibid.
14. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 565.
15. Surah Tauba, No. 9, verse 30
16. Surah An'am, No. 6, verse 100
17. Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol, 3, p. 224, and Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 566.
18. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 186 (Arabic version).
19. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 1.
20. Surah Ikhlas, No. 112, verse 4
21. Surah Ra'd, No. 13, verse 13
22. Surah A'raf, No. 7, verse 180
23. Surah Fatiha, No. 1, verse 2
24. Surah Saffat, No. 37, verse 180
25. Surah Ta-Ha, No. 10, Verse 14
26. Surah Fatiha, No. 1, Verse 5

Surah Falaq, Chapter 113

(The Daybreak)

Number of Verses: 5

Contents and Virtue of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Some commentators believe that this Surah is Meccan while some others know it to be Medinan.

The Surah contains some divine teaching commands to the holy Prophet (S), in particular, and to all Muslims, in general, to seek refuge with Allah from every kind of ill arising from outer nature, dark and evil plotting and envy on the part of others.

Occasion of Revelation

On the occasion of revelation of this Surah, there are some narrations cited in most of the commentary books to the effect that the holy Prophet (S) was affected by some magic incantations, practiced by a few Jews, and became sick. Gabriel came down and indicated the place of the magic paraphernalia, which were hidden at the bottom of a well, by the Jews. They were taken out of the well and then, these verses were recited and the physical condition of the Prophet (S) improved.

But, the late Tabarsi and some other researchers reject these kind of narrations whose reference is limited to only Ibn-i-Abbas and 'Ayishah, because:

Firstly, the Surah is popularly known as Meccan, and the tone of the verses are also similar to Meccan Suras, while the problems which the holy Prophet (S) had, with the Jews, occured mostly in Medina, which is, itself, a testimony that these kinds of narrations are not correct.

Secondly, if the holy Prophet (S) could, so easily, be affected by the witchcraft of sorcerers, so much so, that he became sick and stayed in bed, it would have, also, been easy to stop him from reaching his great goal. Surely the Providence, Who had sent him for such a great and important mission, the Prophecy, protected him against the witchcraft of sorcerers.

Thirdly, if sorcery is to have had an effect on the body of the holy Prophet (S), then, people might imagine that witchcraft could affect his holy soul, too, and his thoughts would be subject to the witchcraft of sorcerers, so, this idea would destroy the principle of confidence in the holy Prophet (S).

The Holy Qur'an opposes the idea that the Prophet (S) was bewitched:

"Or (why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he (not) a garden for enjoyment? The wicked say: 'Ye follow none other than a man bewitched'".

"See what kind of comparisons they make for thee! But they have gone astray, and never a way will they he able to find!"[1].

Here,

'bewitched',

whether mentally or bodily, is a witness to our objective point. However, with these very doubtful narrations, in regard to understanding the meaning of the verses, the sanctity of the position of the Prophet (S) cannot be questioned.

The Virtue in Studying Surah Falaq

On the virtue of this Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said:

"Some verses have been revealed to me, the likes of which have not been revealed before; Surah Falaq and Surah Nas".[2]

Another tradition from Imam Baqir (as) denotes:

"He who recites Suras Falaq, Nas, and Ikhlas, in his 'Watr (odd number rak'at) prayer', will be told,

'O servant of Allah, he happy that Allah accepted your 'Watr prayer' ".[3]

Another narration says that the holy Prophet (S) asked one of his companions whether or not he wished to be taught two Suras which were the best Suras of the Qur'an and he answered:

"Yes, O Messenger of Allah";

then, the Prophet (S) taught him Suras Falaq and Nas, then, he (S) recited both of them in the morning prayer and told the man:

"Read them whenever you get up and whenever you go to bed."[4]

It is clear that these virtues are for the person who harmonizes his own soul, mind, belief and actions with the content of the Surah.

Surah Falaq, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

مِن شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

وَمِن شَرِّ ِ سِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

وَمِن شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

وَمِن شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

1. "Say: I take refuge with the Lord of the dawn,"

2. "From the evil of what He has created,"

3. "And from the evil of the dark night when it comes,"

4. "And from the evil of those who blow on knots (practice Secret Arts),"

5. "And from the evil of the envious (one) when he envies."

I Take Refuge With the Lord of the Dawn

In the first verse of the Surah, the holy Prophet (S), himself, as a model and leader, is addressed and the command is:

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of the dawn,"

"From the evil of what He has created,"

We should seek refuge with Allah from the evil of all wicked creatures, wicked men, jinn, animals and evil happenings; and from the evil of the 'carnal soul'.

The term /falaq/ is based on /falq/ which originally means 'to split, to separate some from others, daybreak'; and since at the time of the appearance of daylight the black curtain of night breaks open, this word is used with the meaning of 'daybreak', as well as, /fajr/ which is used for the 'break of dawn'.

Some know the word with the meaning of 'the creation of all living creatures' which includes men, animals and plants, because they come forth from splitting seeds, eggs, and the like, which is the most surprising stage of their existence. In fact, when it comes forth, a great change happens in that being and it transfers from one world to another.

Surah An'am, No. 6, verse 95 says:

"It is Allah Who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead, and He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah; then how are ye deluded away from the truth?"

Some have considered a broader meaning for /falaq / than what was said above. They think that its meaning covers any creation, in general, because it is by the creation of every being that the curtain of nothingness breaks and the light of existence appears.

Each of these three ideas is a surprising phenomenon which is an evidence for the greatness of Allah, its Creator. That Allah is qualified with this attribute conveys an intensely profound content and a wide ranging concept.

Some Islamic narrations denote that /falaq/ is a well or a prison in Hell which appears clearly in the midst of it.

This narration may refer to one example out of its examples, but, it is not to limit the vast meaning of /falaq/, of course.

The phrase in the second verse does not mean that the divine creation, by itself, has an evil because creation is the same as existence and existing is absolute goodness.

The Qur'an says:

"He Who has made everything which He has created Most good..."[5].

Evil appears where the creatures diverge from the laws of creation and separate from the appointed path; for example, the sting (of insects) or the keen teeth of animals are their weapons to defend themselves against their enemies, and the same is true for the weapon we use against our enemies.

If this weapon be used appropriately it is 'good', but if it be used inappropriately and against friends it is 'evil'.

Besides, there are many things that we, from their appearance, count as 'evil', but they are, indeed, 'good' like startling and warning events or infestations of pests, which awaken Man from the sleep of neglect and move him to seek the path of Allah and they are certainly not 'evil'.

Then, explaining and commenting on the subject, it says:

"And from the evil of the dark night when it comes,"

The term /qasiq/ is derived from /qasaq/ which, as Raqib cites in Mufradat, means 'the intense darkness of the night which appears at midnight' and that is why the Qur'an, referring to the end of the time of the sunset prayer, says:

"...till the darkness of the night..." [6]**.**

Some books of lexicon have rendered the word /qasaq/ to mean 'the darkness of the beginning of the night' which, regarding the root of the word, seems improbable; and it is certain that the darkness of the night becomes full when it rushes into the midnight. One of the concepts that is essential for this meaning is 'attack, or rush'. So, it has been applied with this meaning, too.

Therefore, the term /qasiq/, in the verse under discussion, means either 'attacker' or any 'evil creature' that uses the cover of the darkness of the night to attack, because not only the wild and biting animals come out of their dens at night and cause damage, but also filthy, defiled persons often misuse the darkness of the night for their wicked aims.

The term /waqab/ derived from /waqb/ means 'hole, ditch', so, its verb with the meaning of 'to enter into a hole' has been used; or, it means 'to overspread'.

"And from the evil of those who blow on knots (practice Secret Arts),"

The term /naffathat/ is derived from /naffth/ which originally means 'to emit a little water out of the mouth' and since its done by blowing, the term has been applied with the meaning of 'to blow'.

But, many commentators have interpreted /naffathat/ with the meaning of 'witches' who blow on knots with a kind of incantation by which they practice sorcery, while some others have rendered the term in the sense of 'temptating women'[7], especially their own wives, who continuously murmur in the ears of men to weaken them from doing positive actions. Examples of these women are known in history.

Fakhr-i-Razi says that some women, to influence the affections of dignitaries' hearts, occupy their thoughts. [8] This idea is more apparent in our time than in olden times, because one of the most important means of spy-influence in statesmen and politicians, of the world, are women spies who, with their 'blowing on knots', and their constant temptation and communication, unlock the safes of secrets and obtain the most vital information and deliver it to the enemy.

Again, some have interpreted /naffathat/ to mean 'mischievous souls' or inciteful societies who loosen the 'knots' or decisions with their constant propagations.

Of course, it should be noted that, apart from the former occasions of revelation, there is no trace, in the verse, to show that it properly refers to the witchcraft of sorcerers, and supposing that the verse be rendered so, it is not an evidence that the occasion of revelation is right. It only denotes that the holy Prophet (S) sought refuge to Allah from the evil of sorcerers, just like healthy people who seek refuge to Allah from the disease of cancer, though they have never been attacked by it.

"And from the evil of the envious (one) when he envies"

This verse shows that envy is the worst and the most disgraceful quality of the wicked actions, because the Qur'an has counted it equal to the behaviour of savage animals, biting snakes, and tempter Satans.

Explanations

1. The Most Important Sources of Vice and Corruption

At the beginning of this Surah, the holy Prophet (S) is bidden to take refuge with Allah from the evil of all creatures.

Then, in its description three kinds of evil are pointed out:

a) the evil of

'the dark night when it comes';

b) the evil of

'those who blow on knots'

and loosen the decisions of faith, belief, and love and relations, with their temptations and evil communications;

c) the evil of the

'envious one'.

From this short, but meaningful, explanation it is clearly understood that the main origins of evil are these three sources which should be noted, completely.

2. The Influence of Sorcery

The explanation about the reality of sorcery in old times and today, and the viewpoint of Islam on sorcery, and whether it is effective or not, is described by commenting on some other verses of the Qur'an, for example, Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verses 102 and 103. In those statements the effect of sorcery and witchcraft is somehow accepted, but, not in the form that some superstitious people talk about.

The point that should be mentioned, here is that, on the one hand, when, in these verses, the Prophet (S) is bidden to take refuge to Allah from the evil of the witchcraft of sorcerers, and the like, it does not mean that the Prophet (S) has been bewitched by their evil arts; but, it is just that the Prophet (S) takes refuge to Allah from any errancy or mistake and sin, i.e., he, under the light of Allah's Mercy, will be safe from the harm of those evils, and if it were not for the Mercy of Allah, the effect of witchcraft, on him, would be possible.

On the other hand, it was previously said that there is no evidence to support that the objective meaning of

/naffathat-i-fil -'uqad/ ‘those who blow on knots'

refers to 'sorcerers'.

3. The Evil of the Envious

Envy is a hideous, evil quality which comes forth due to different factors, such as, weakness in faith, the existence of miserliness in the unity of a person, and which demands or wishes the destruction of another person's blessing.

Envy is the origin of many great sins.

Envy, as mentioned in many Islamic narrations, eats away and destroys the faith of Man.

Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Verily, envy eats Faith as fire eats wood".[9]

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The decay of religion is envy, arrogance and pride".[10]

This is because an envious person, in fact, protests the Divine Wisdom of why He has given such blessings to some people and has covered them under His Grace, as Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 54 says:

"Or do they envy mankind for what Allah hath given them of his bounty?"

For the reproach of envy, it is enough to mention, as an example, the first slaying that Man committed, in the world, where Cain killed his brother Abel, and the motive was envy. The envious ones have always been one of the hindrances on the way of prophets and Saints, and that is why the Holy Qur'an commands the holy Prophet (S) 'to take refuge with the Lord of the dawn'.

Though the holy Prophet, himself, (S) is the addressee, in this Surah and the next one, certainly he is an example and all should take refuge with Allah from the evil of the envious ones.

Supplication

O Lord! We, too, seek refuge to You from the evil of the envious ones.

O Lord! We ask You to protect us from being envious of others, too.

O Lord! Keep us safe and sound from the evil of those who 'blow on knots' and from their temptations against the path of Justice and Truth.

Notes

1. Surah Furqan, No. 25, verse 8-9
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5. p. 716, and Majma-al. Bayan, vol 5, p. 567
3. Ibid.
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn. vol. 5. p. 716. and Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 567.
5. Surah Sajdah, No. 32, verse 7
6. Surah. Bani Isra'il, No. 17, Verse 18
7. It must be noted here that this is a biased male opinion and no13 statement from the Holy Qur'an. It would be just as possible to write 'temptating men'. In either case, it is an ignoble trait and highly discouraged in the Holy Qur'an
8. Fakhr-i-Razi Commentary, vol. 32, p. 196.
9. Bihar-ul-Anwar. vol. 73. p. 237
10. Ibid.

Surah Nas, Chapter 114

(Mankind)

Number of Verses: 6

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The human is always exposed to devilish temptations and the Satans, of Jinn and men, try to penetrate into his heart. The higher the standard of his knowledge and degree of his social position, the more intense the temptations of the Satans will be until they divert him from the straight way and send him astray.

This Surah commands the holy Prophet (S), as a leader and as an example, to seek refuge with Allah from the evil of any temptations.

The content of this Surah corresponds with the previous one, Surah Falaq.

The subject is supplementary to that of the previous Surah. In both of them, Man is asked to take refuge with Allah by using His name

/rabb/, 'the Lord',

with a difference that in Surah Falaq various kinds of external evil are mentioned, but in this Surah the evil of internal, hidden tempters is emphasized.

Opinions are divided as to whether this Surah is Meccan or Medinan, but the tone of the statements is more agreeable with other Meccan Suras.

Regarding the fact that this Surah and Surah Falaq, according to the Islamic narrations, have been revealed together, and in many commentators' opinions Surah Falaq is Meccan, this Surah can be considered Meccan, too.

The Virtue in Studying -Surah Nas

There are numerous traditions on the virtue of reciting this Surah; for example, a tradition says that the holy Prophet (S) became gravely ill. Gabriel and Michael, two great angels of Allah, came to him. Gabriel sat beside the head of the holy Prophet (S) and Michael sat near his feet. Gabriel recited Surah Falaq and by it placed the Prophet (S) in the refuge of Allah; and Michael recited Surah Nas. [1]

In a tradition from Imam Baqir (as), which was formerly mentioned, it is said:

"He who recites Surah Falaq, Nas, and Ikhlas in his Watr[2] prayer he will be told

'O servant of Allah, rejoice that Allah accepted your Watr prayer'. [3]

Surah Nas, Verses 1-6

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ
مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ
مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَ النَّاسِ

1. "Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind,"
2. "The King of Mankind,"
3. "The God of Mankind,"
4. "From the evil of the slinking whisperer,"
5. "Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind,"
6. "From among Jinn and Mankind."

I Take Refuge With the Lord of Mankind

In this Surah, which is the last Surah of the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (S), again, is personally addressed, as an example to and a leader of people, and the command is:

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind,"
"The King of Mankind,"
"The God of Mankind,"

It is interesting that, here three attributes of the magnificent attributes of Allah; Lordship, Ownership, and Divinity, are emphasized, all of which are directly concerned with the training of Man, and his rescue from the grips of the tempters.

Of course, the objective of 'taking refuge with Allah' is not that a person says this phrase merely with his tongue, but he should accomplish it with his thoughts, Faith, and actions. He should avoid devilish routes, devilish programs, devilish minds and communications, and devilish societies and meetings; and travel the divine paths; otherwise, the person who follows those devilish ways and lets himself fall into the hands of those temptations cannot be safe by only reciting this Surah.

With saying
'the Lord of Mankind',
he confesses His Lordship and places himself under His guidance.
By saying
'the King of Mankind',
he knows himself as His object, and His obedient servant.
By saying
'the God of Mankind',
he goes on the path of worshipping Him, and avoids worshipping others but Him. Undoubtedly, the person who is actually qualified with these three attributes, and truly believes in them, will be safe from the mischief of the tempters.

In fact, these three attributes are three important lessons of instruction and three means of rescue from the evil of temptations which keep Man safe.

"From the evil of the slinking whisperer,"
"Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind,"

"From among Jinn and Mankind."

The term /waswas/ has the infinitive meaning 'to tempt' and sometimes it is used, as in this verse, with the subjective meaning, 'tempter'.

The term /xannas/ is derived from /xunus/ with the meaning of 'to gather, to remain behind', and /xannas/, here means 'Satan', because he hides himself at the name of Allah and hiding is with the action of remaining behind, so, the word has been used in the sense of 'to hide'.

Therefore, the meaning of the verses are: 'Say I take refuge with Allah from the devilish tempter who runs away and hides himself from the name of Allah'.

Basically, the devilish ones act hiddenly, and sometimes they murmur temptations into our ears so that we believe that the ideas are our own thoughts. This very kind of thinking causes us to go astray.

The method of Satan is alluring and shows injustice in the form and under the guise of justice; lies inside a shell of truth; sin in the semblance of worship, and aberration in the appearance of guidance.

In short, they, themselves, and their affairs, both, are hidden, and this is a warning to all followers, of the right and the path of truth, not to expect to see Satans in their real form, or observe their activities in their true, crooked shape, No it will never be so. They are 'slinking whisperers' and their job is to plot, lie, be mischievous, be hypocritical, commit fraud and deceit, simulating truth, and hiding the right.

If they appear on the scene in their real form, if they do not mix wrong with right, and if they speak clearly and honestly, the truth would become apparent; as Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"The fact is, had falsehood been allowed to appear separately from truth, seekers of truth would have easily discerned it and would have kept away from falsehood..." [4]

They always take parts of truth and falsehood and mix them together to get control over people; as Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as), continuing the above sermon, says:

"...and Satan took advantage of this situation and gained complete control over the minds of its followers."[5]

The words
'whispers'
and
'hearts'
used in the verse:
"Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind"
are an emphasis on this idea.

All of these are on the one hand, and on the other hand the phrase:
"From Jinn and Mankind"
informs us that
'the slinking whisperer'
is not among only a group of people or a special class of Man with a particular sign, but they can be found here and there among Jinn and Man with any form and in any society. We should be careful of them and take refuge with Allah from the evil of all of them.

Explanation: Why Do We Take Refuge With Allah?

At any moment it is possible that one may go astray, and when Allah bids His Apostle to take refuge with the Lord from the evil of the 'slinking whisperer', it is an evidence that becoming involved in the trap of the tempters, who whisper evil in people's minds, is possible.

So, everyone must seek refuge to Allah, with His name /rabb/, i.e., the Lord of Man, i.e., the Cherisher and Sustainer. By invoking this great attribute, Man can be hopeful and expect an especially particular retreat.

Everyone should seek refuge with Allah as their King and Owner, invoking His authority over the affairs of Man, i.e., He is the One Who can independently act over His creation to seek the protection by invoking the divinity of the Lord as the God of Mankind, for it is His authority which must necessarily be obeyed, i.e., it is His command or His Will which is always done.

Therefore, against the evil of these whisperers, there are heavenly angels, for the believing servants of Allah and seekers of Truth, to come to help them; as Surah Fussilat, No. 41, Verse 30 says:

"In the case of those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah', and further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time)..."

But, in any case, we should never be proud and feel that we are not in need of the Divine lessons, admonishments and assistance. We should always take refuge with Him and be aware and prepared.

Supplication

O Lord! Protect us all from the evil of every tempter and dark inspiration.

O Lord! The trap is deep, the enemy is wakeful, his plots are hidden, and rescue is impossible but with Your Grace.

An Expressive Tradition

عنه، عن أبي الجارود قال: قلت لأبي جعفر (عليه السلام): يا ابن رسول الله هل تعرف ودتي لكم وانقطا إليكم و والاتي إياكم؟ قال: فقال: نعم، قال: فقلت: فإ أسألك سألة تجيبني فيها فإ كفوف البصر قليل المشي ولا أستطيع زيارتكم كل حين قال: هات حاجتك، قلت: أخبر بدينك الذي تدين الله عز وجل به أنت وأهل بيتك لأدين الله عز وجل به قال: إن كنت أقصرت الخطبة فقد أعظمت المسألة والله لأعطينك ديني ودين آبائي الذي ندين الله عز وجل به، شهادة أن لا إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) والإقرار بما جاء به من عند الله والولاية لولينا والبراءة من عدونا والتسليم لأ رنا وانتظار قائمنا والاجتهاد الورع.

Abil-Jurud said:

"I asked Imam Baqir (as) whether he knew about my love and sincerity for him and he answered he did. Then, I said I had a question for him to answer me, for my eyes were blind and I scarcely walked, so I could not always go to visit him. He wanted me to express my question. I requested him that he informed me of the creed by which he and his household

adored Allah, Almighty and Glorious, so that I could worship Him, too, by it.

He responded:

'You asked a great thing, though you stated a short expression.

By Allah, I give you (your answer of) my religion and the religion of my fathers by which we worship Allah, Almighty and Glorious.

It is the confession of faith that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah, with affirmation that what has come to him (the Quran) is from Allah, having affection for us and the lovers and obedients of us (Ahlul-Bayt) and hatred to our enemies, surrender to our cause, awaiting our Gha'im (the twelveth Imam, for whom there is a domination that will come whenever Allah wills), and struggles (for establishing divine obligatories and lawful matters) and is pious, (he avoids unlawful things)'."[6]

Notes

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 7645, and Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 569.
2. 'watr ' means 'odd number rak'at'.
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 7645, and Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 569.
4. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 50, (Arabic Version).
5. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 50, (Arabic Version).
6. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 34

All rights reserved for Al-Hassanain (p) Network Imam Hussain (p) Foundation

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

www.alhassanain.org/english